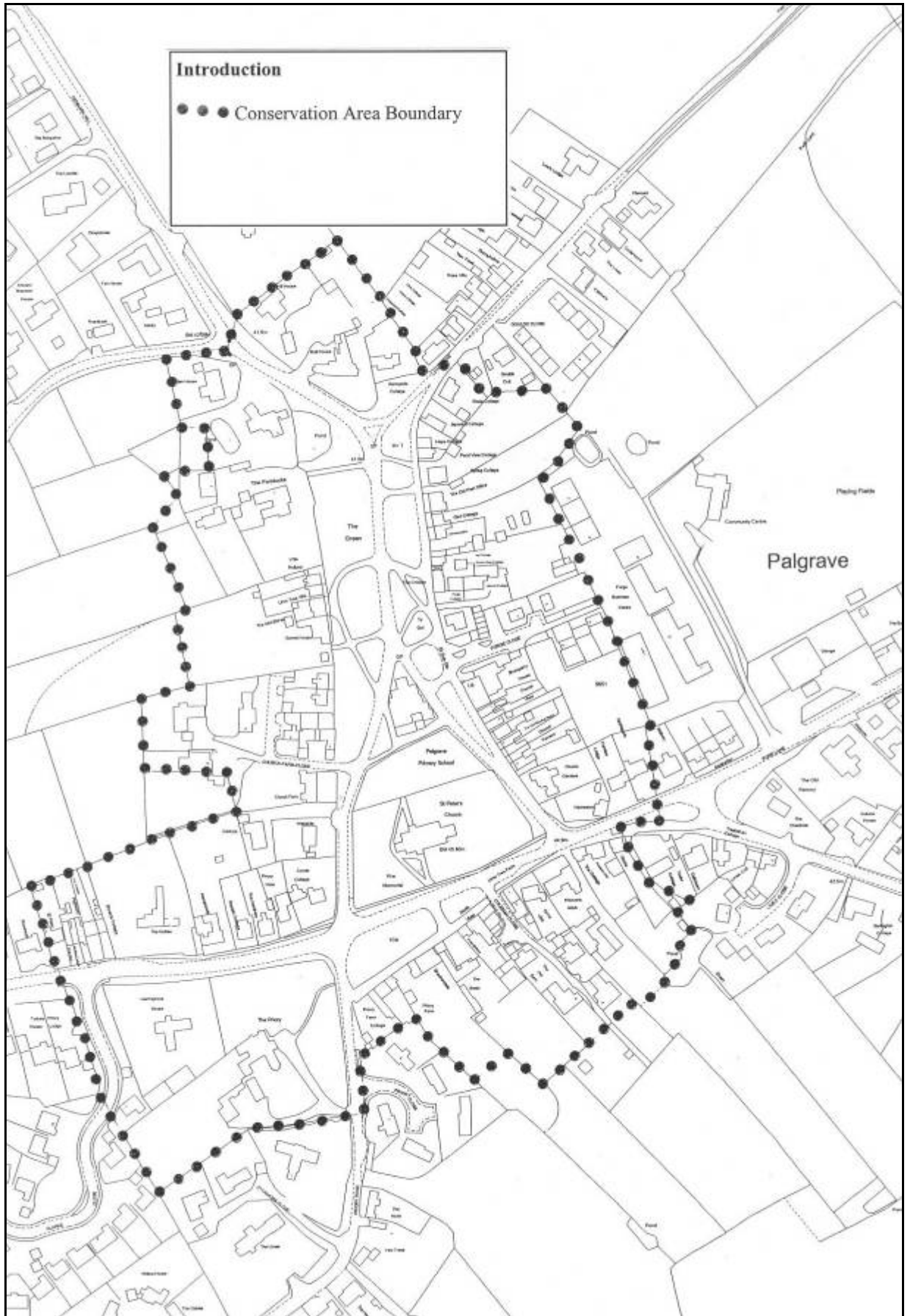


conservation area appraisal



Introduction

The conservation area in Palgrave was designated by Mid Suffolk District Council in 1975.

The Council has a duty to review its conservation area designations from time to time, and this appraisal examines Palgrave under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's new 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006).

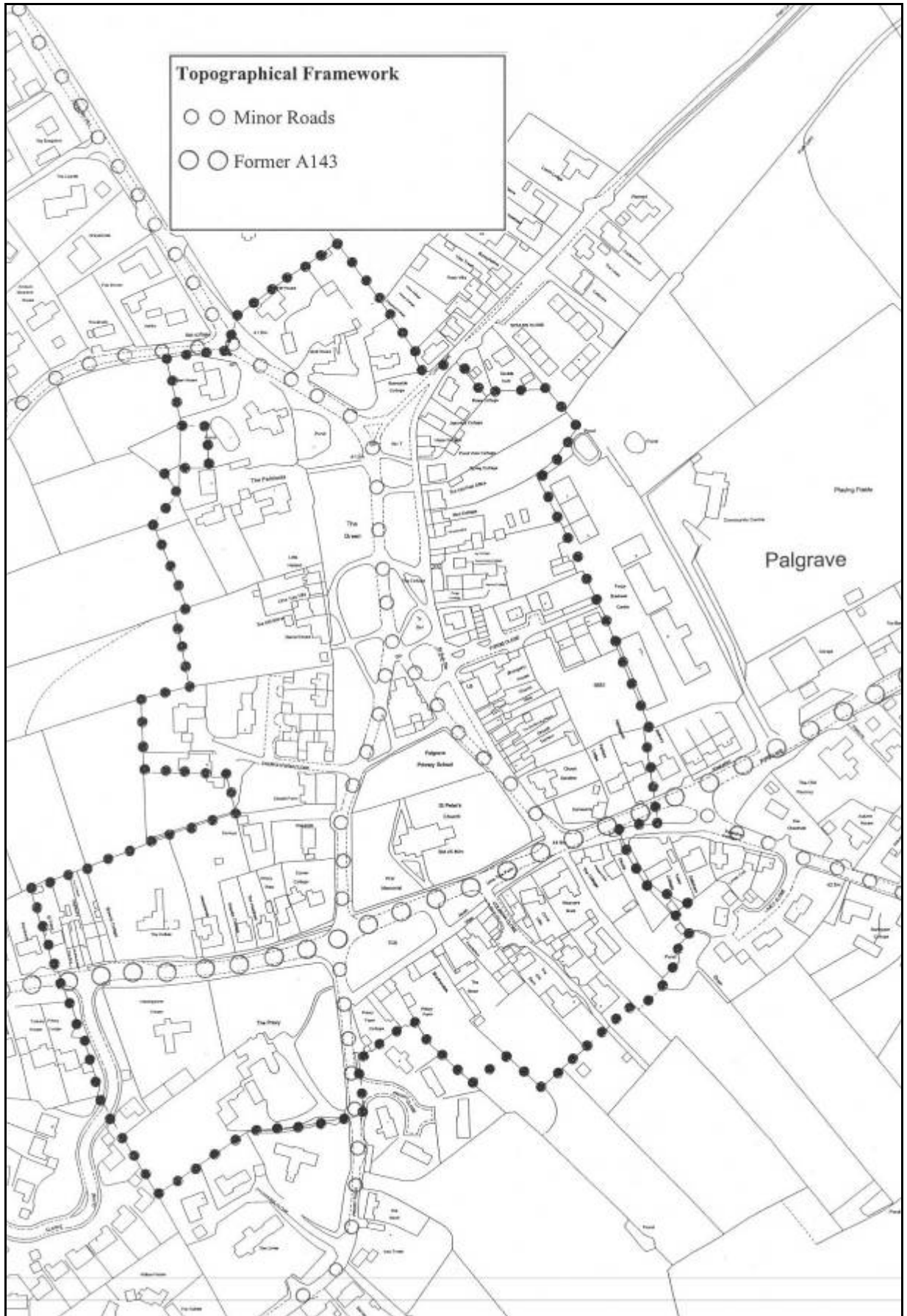
As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Palgrave's built environment in conservation terms.



This document is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient for the briefing of the Planning Officer when assessing proposed works in the area. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.

As the English Heritage guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.

Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Mid Suffolk District Council 2007.



Topographical Framework

The village of Palgrave is situated about one mile south of the Norfolk market town of Diss, in the far northern part of Mid Suffolk District.

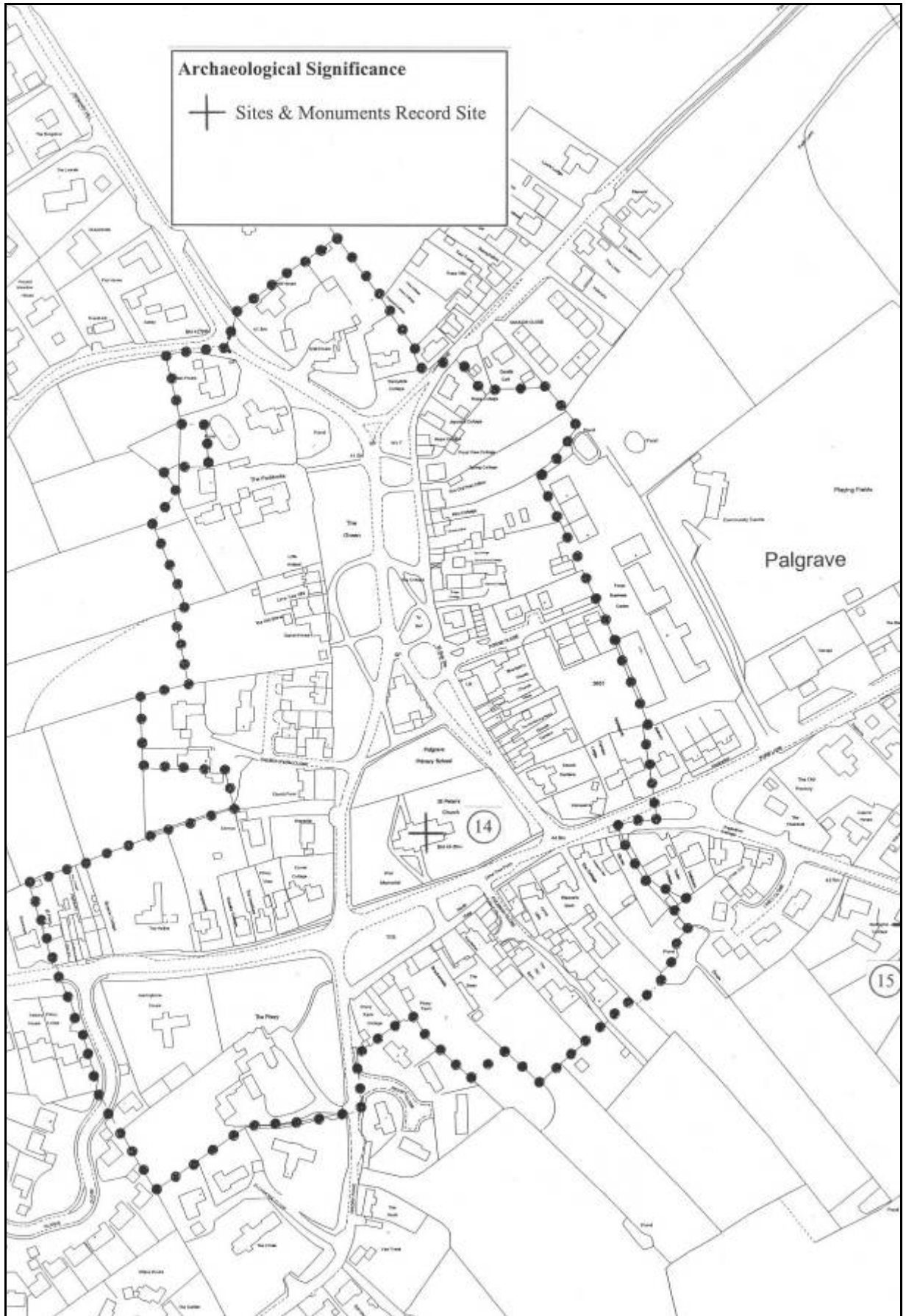
It sits on a spur of slightly higher ground between the southern bank of the river Waveney that here forms the county boundary, and a tributary joining the river from a south-westerly direction.

Since 1849 the Ipswich to Norwich railway line has passed to the south-east of the village going over a level crossing at the village's Crossing Road on its approach to the station at Diss.



The modern A143 road from Bury St Edmunds to join the A140, for some time cut through the southern end of the village, but this has now been relieved. The current by-pass route further south was formerly the Bury St Edmunds to Scole Turnpike Trust's road of 1762, which continued from Scole on towards Norwich.

The village is situated on the 'High Suffolk' claylands, deposited in the Ice Ages over the chalk that underlies most of Suffolk. The area is thus good for arable farming.



Archaeological Significance

The Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record lists over 20 sites of archaeological interest from all periods in the parish of Palgrave. These include some cropmarks, ring ditches and a skull of unknown date.

The earlier of the dated finds include three Neolithic flint axes. The Iron Age has left us some scatter finds of pottery.

Roman remains include potsherds, bone and some coins, one of them from the reign of Claudius, relatively early in the Roman occupation.



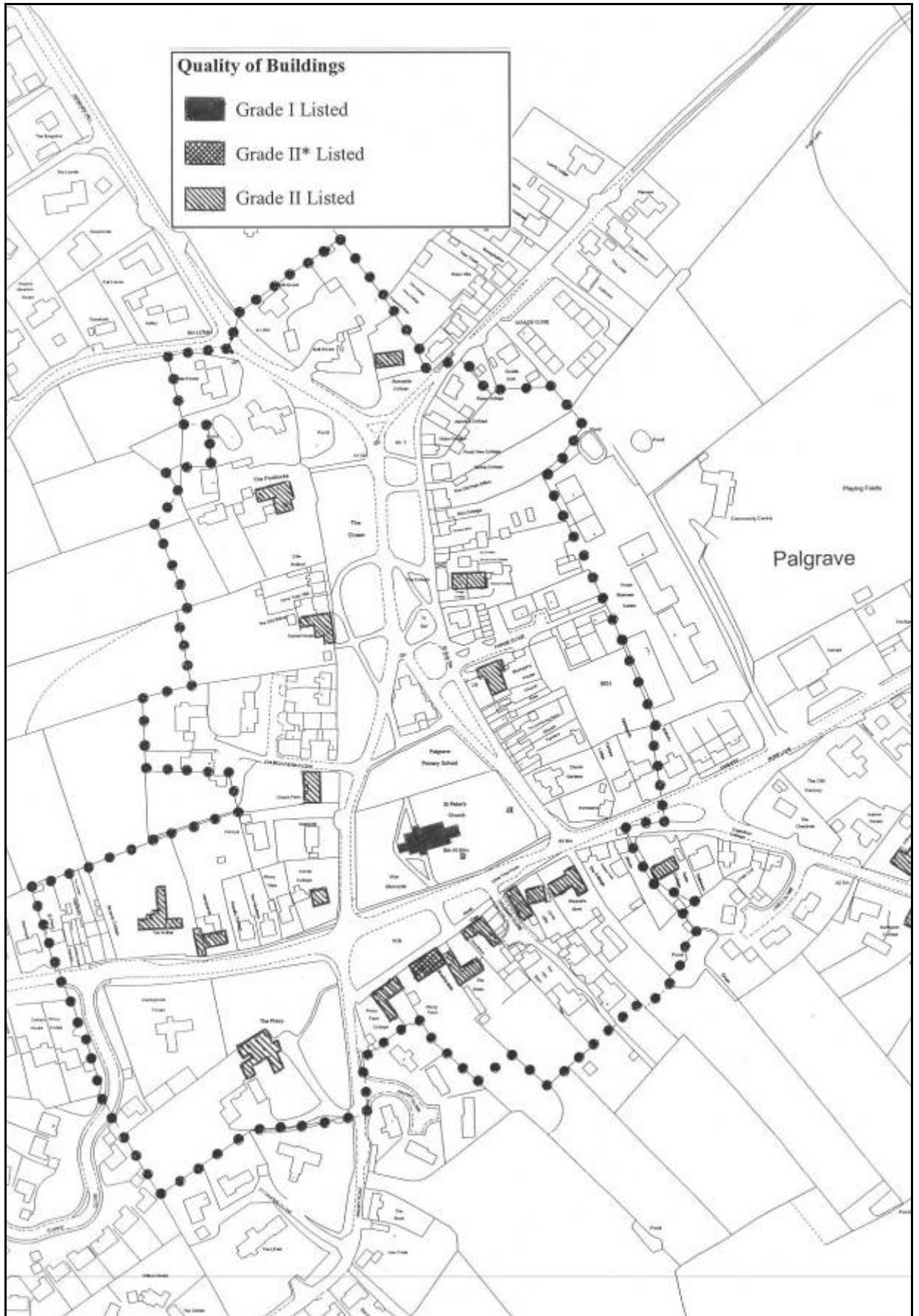
Palgrave tūn S. E. t. r. e. 1111. car. tūe. p. mān sēp. xi. uiff. 7 xvii.
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 fol. Soci. 7. dōm abtōis. tū. 1. iē in long. & dūm in lat. 7. xii. d. de gl.

St. Edmund's held PALGRAVE before 1066; 4 carucates of land as a manor.
 Always 11 villagers; 17 smallholders. Then 3 slaves, now 1.
 Always 1 plough in lordship; 4 men's ploughs. Meadow, 6 acres.
 2 churches with 30 acres. ½ plough.
 2 cobs, 12 cattle, 6 pigs, 8 sheep.
 Value then £8; now [£] 8.
 The jurisdiction (is) the Abbot's.
 In the same (Palgrave) 29 free men; 2 carucates of land less 12 acres.
 Always 8 ploughs.
 Meadow, 2 acres.
 Value 40s.
 The jurisdiction and patronage (are) the Abbot's.
 It has 1 league in length and ½ in width; 12d in tax.

Medieval sites listed include the parish churchyard and the site of the former St. John's Chapel, south-west of the main village towards Wortham.

There is also some Post Medieval interest, represented by the sites of a windmill and two bridges over the Waveney. Overall we see a rich tapestry of remains, indicating that Palgrave has long been a centre of human activity.

Palgrave has only one mention in the Domesday survey of 1086. It was held by St Edmund's with two churches and 30 acres of land.



Intrinsic Quality of Buildings

There are 42 listings covering the parish of Palgrave, half of which are within the conservation area.

The older buildings are predominantly domestic in scale, a few having former commercial uses, and mostly timber-framed and plastered with pantile roofs.

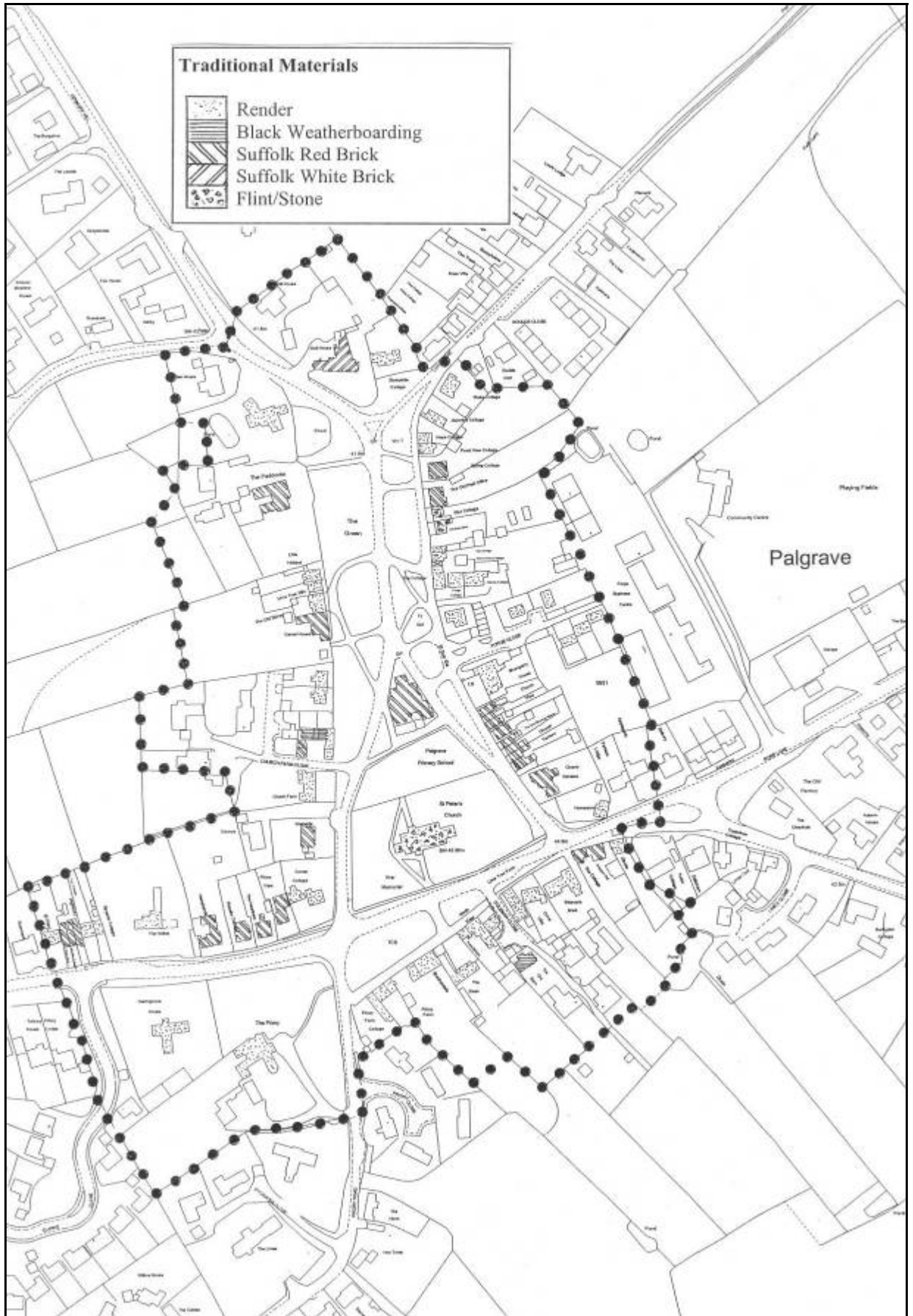
The grade I listed Church of St Peter provides the usual village exception to this pattern of building with its flint rubble walls and plaintile roof. It has a fine hammerbeam roof structure with in Pevsner's words 'rafters prettily painted with tracery patterns'. It is mostly 15th Century and Perpendicular in style although the chancel arch is early 14th Century.



The other top quality building within the central area is the grade II listed former gild-hall opposite the church, south of the main road, now called Brackendale. This is timber-framed and plastered with some exposed timbers and a jettied first floor with some carved enrichment.*



Outside Brackendale there stands a grade II listed K6 telephone box, whilst in the churchyard a chest tomb and headstone, both from around 1790, are also listed.



Traditional Building Materials

Many of the unlisted buildings in Palgrave are of traditional form and grouping, and although not up to "listing" quality as individual buildings, still have interest for their visual impact. A first glance would seem to indicate an abundance of rendered and brick buildings either painted or left natural as soft 'Suffolk Reds'.

This local red brick features throughout the village, principally on some cottages dating from Victorian times and on the School at the south end of the Green.

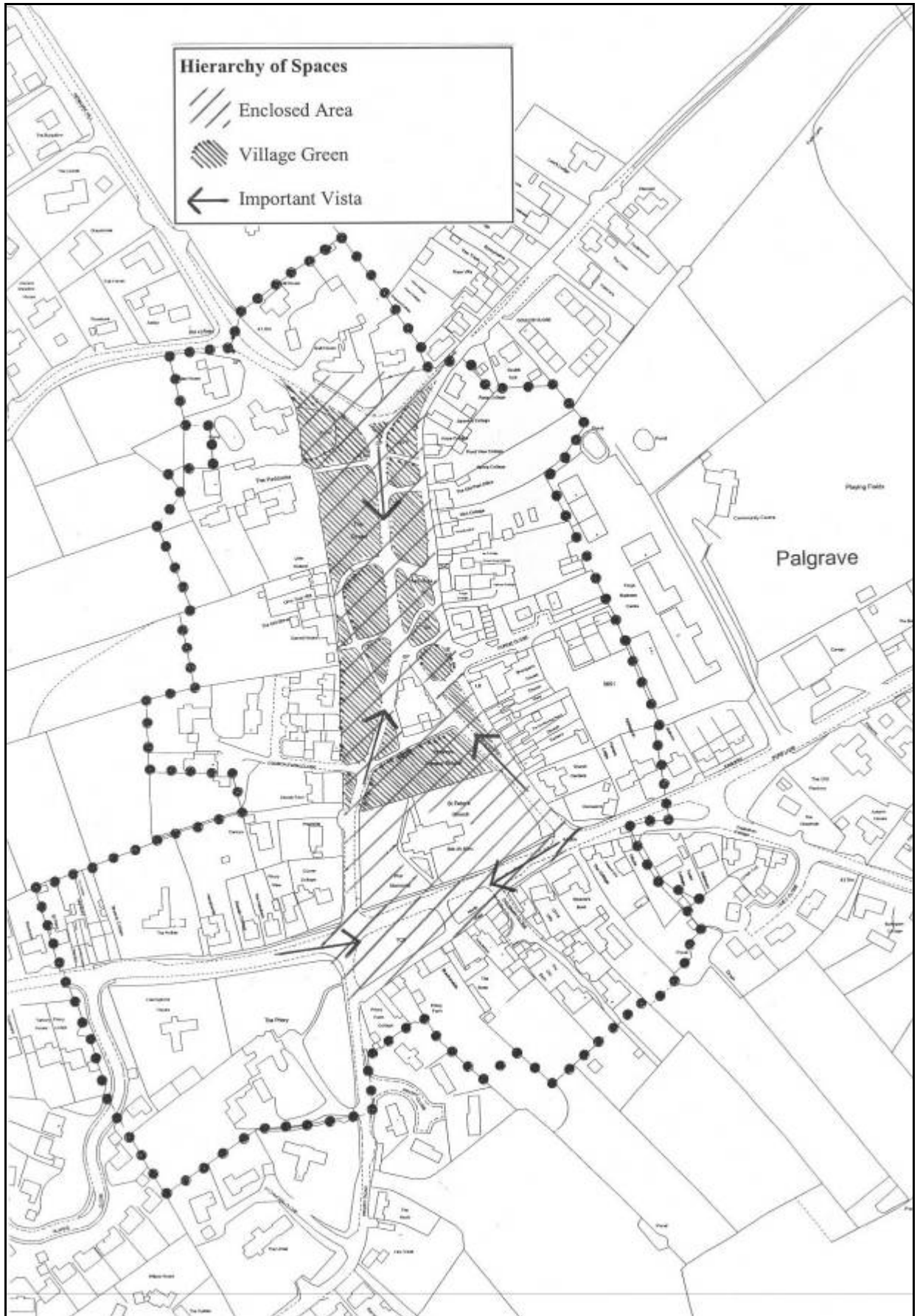
There are also examples of 'Suffolk White' brick, notably on the large unlisted house called 'Sunnyside' at the north end of the Green.



A small amount of flintwork is also evident around the village, most notably on the church and both its boundary wall and that of 'Sunnyside', plus a pair of cottages east of the Green.

'Sunnyside Cottage' the only listed building within the conservation area to retain its thatched roof, is partly built of clay lump. Several others outside the boundary, especially along Crossing Road, are also thatched, and more would have been so in days gone by, the steep roof pitches now the only clue remaining.

The prevalent roofing materials now are pantile, mostly the black glazed variety so common in the Waveney valley, or plaintile on the older timber-framed buildings. There are also a few instances of slate and modern concrete pantile around the village.



Hierarchy of Spaces

The conservation area in Palgrave is very much centred on the village Green. This is aligned north-south with the Victorian School at its southern end, although at one time the green would doubtless have stretched unhindered as far as the Church.

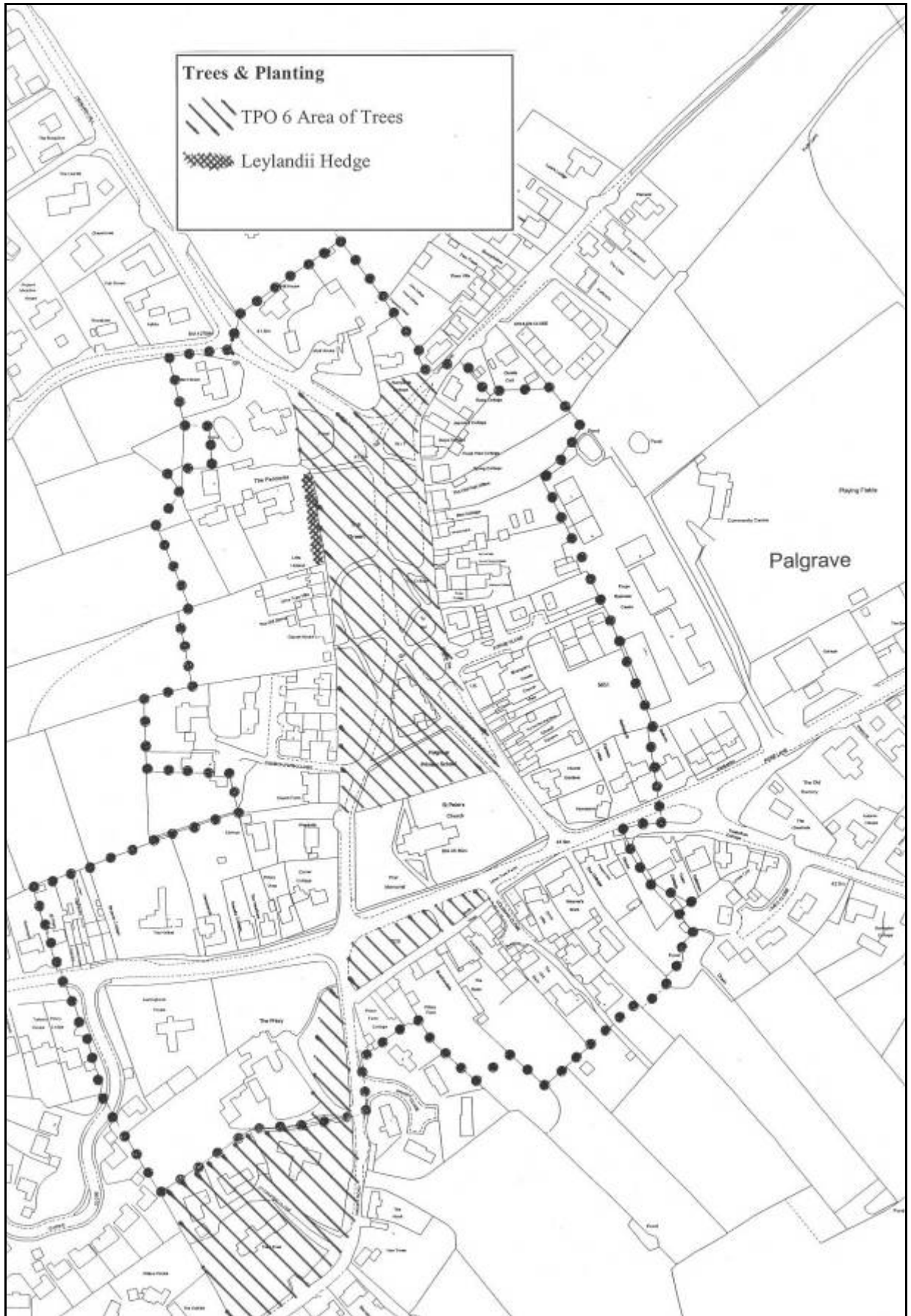
There is a central north-south running road, with wide grassed areas either side. A fork in the road at either end contains 'Sunnyside' in the northern and the School in the southern fork. Overall the scene is one of a green oasis surrounded by buildings in the near distance.

With its mature tree cover, the space is now somewhat broken up, but probably comes more into its own as a single space without the leaves in winter.



The Green is very much terminated to the south by the Church surrounded by its solid flint wall containing a graveyard kept as meadow, a space in marked contrast to the short turf of the Green itself. Immediately adjoining this wall, an area that was probably formerly grassed has been fenced off for a school play area and is now losing its grass to excessive wear and tear.

Beyond here a further space more akin to the Green borders the old road south of the Church. Whilst wide grass verges and mature trees are again to the fore, here the width and straightness of the old main road itself sets a slightly more suburban character.



Trees & Planting

The most prominent trees within Palgrave are those on the Green. Here can be found good specimens of Lime, Ash and Oriental Plane. There are also smaller examples of Oak, Silver Birch, Sycamore, Sweet Chestnut and Field and Norway Maples.

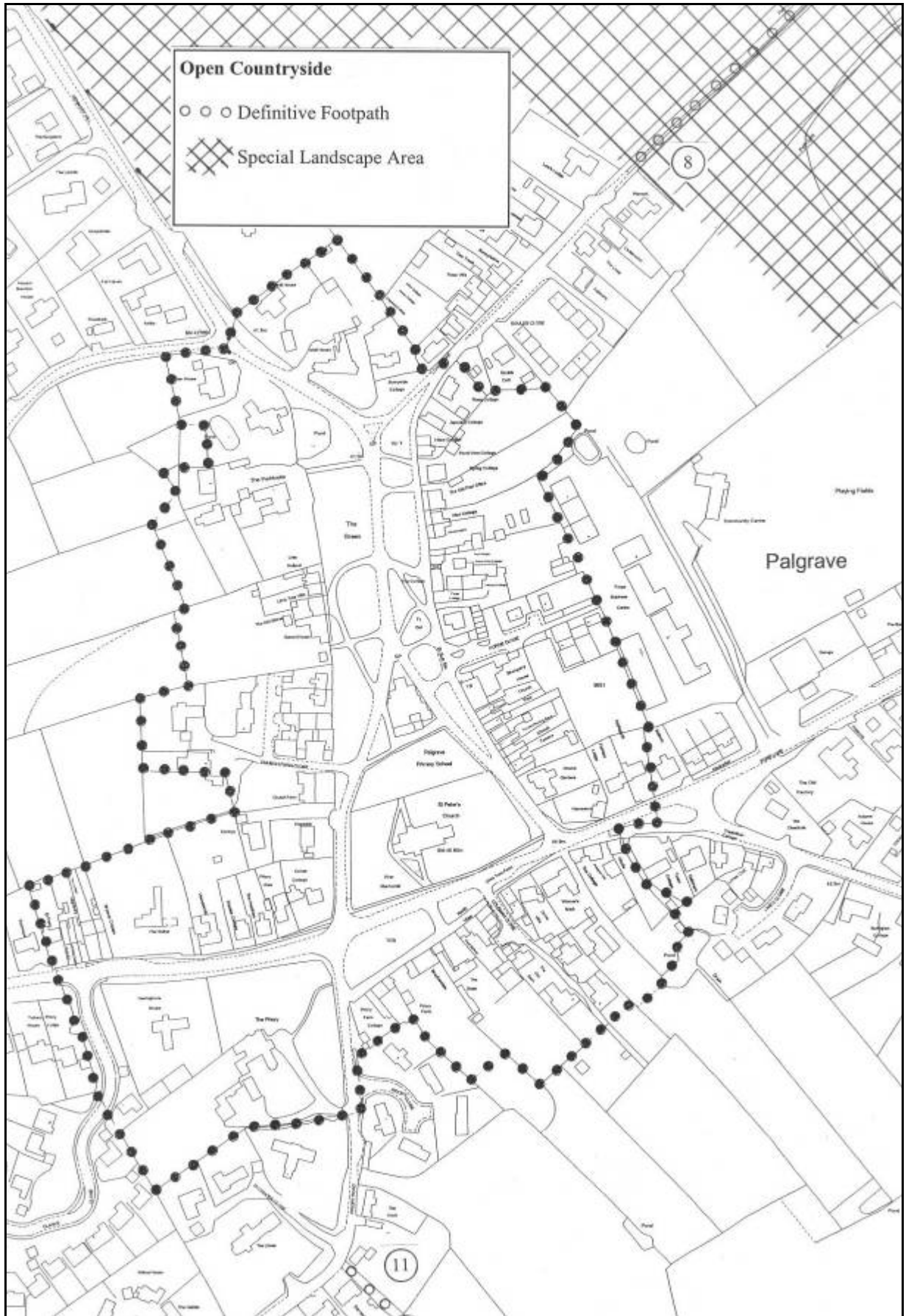
The area adjoining the main road south of the Church also has mature Limes and Horse Chestnut, whilst the grounds of The Priory adjoining has many varieties including a large Swamp Cypress.

All of these are protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO 6), which also includes a single Oak near Crossing Road.



Further afield in the parish there are other trees, which have also been felt at risk and thus been made the subject of tree preservation orders. These include more Oaks in Crossing road (TPO 170) and groups of Ash, Yew, Lime, Field Maple and a Copper Beech at Burlington Lodge (TPO 302).

The sylvan setting of the village is spoilt by one slightly incongruous group of trees: the oversized 'leylandii' hedge at The Paddocks, adjoining the north-west side of the Green, illustrated later.



Relationship to Open Countryside

The settlement pattern in Palgrave, with houses clustered around the green and along the approach roads is mostly one plot deep. This means that, although not often visible, the countryside is never far away. Indeed, immediately north of the village, the Waveney valley is designated as a Special Landscape Area.

Beyond the initial bifurcation of the roads at the north and south ends of the green, there is a further fork a short distance along each branch, with roads effectively fanning out in all directions from the village centre.

In the immediate vicinity of the village there are thus no footpaths, the roads taking all traffic, vehicular or otherwise. Further out some footpaths remain, not having been upgraded to roads.



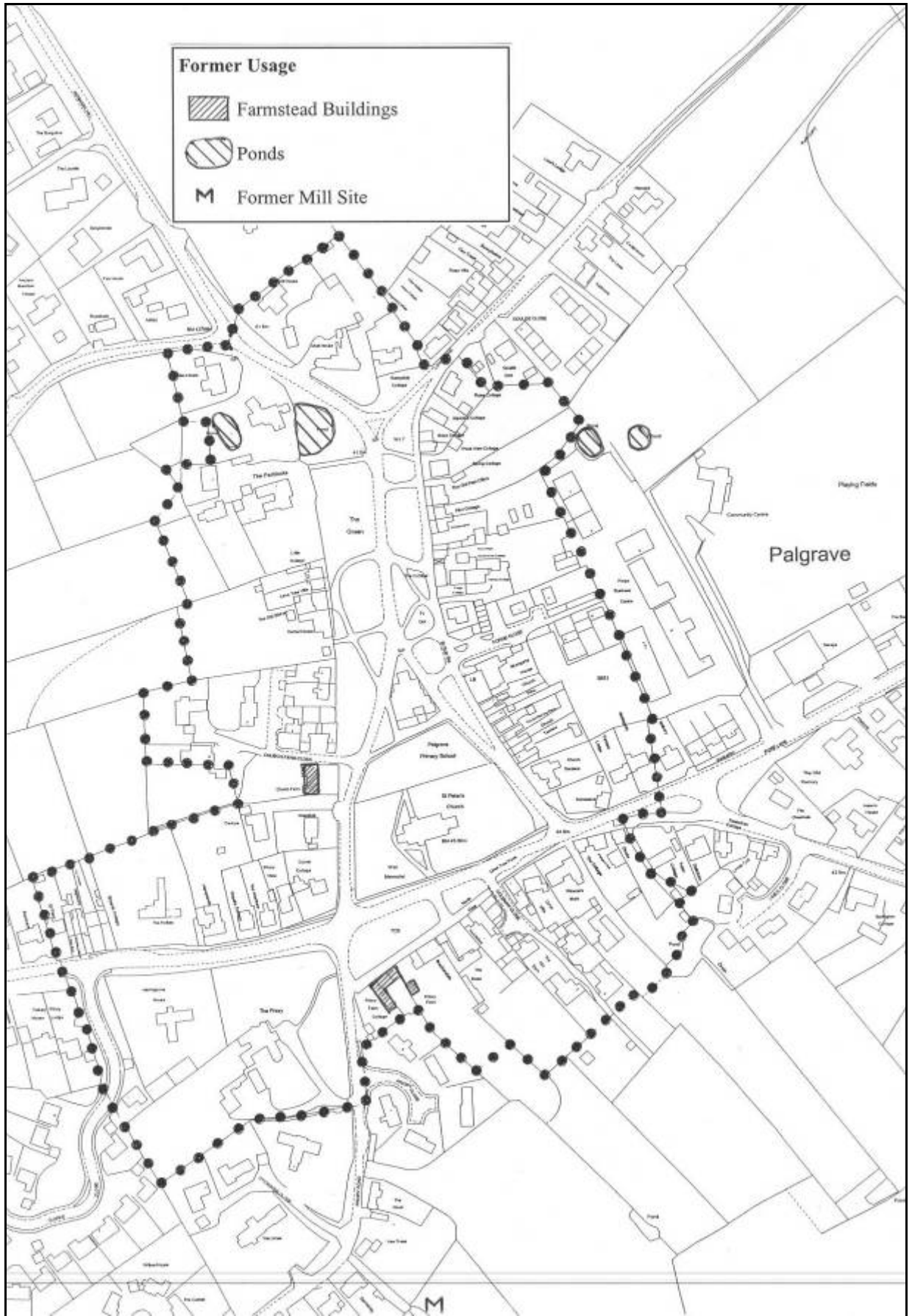
Branching off the lane to the north-east of the village footpath 8 crosses the Waveney on its way into Diss.

Crossing Road, heading south-eastwards towards Brome, has footpath 10 branching off it beyond the level crossing.

To the south footpaths 11 and 12 branch off the road to Thrandeston, to the south-east and south-west (Job's Lane) respectively.

Whilst on the western side, Lion Road (the former A143) and Millway Lane are linked by footpath 4.





Prevailing & Former Usage

Palgrave has its origins as an agricultural community mainly involved in the growing of hemp. Its proximity to the large linen market in Diss made this the primary local industry. Five linen weavers and a malster were recorded in the village in the late 17th Century.

There are a number of ponds remaining scattered around the periphery of the village and one large one at the northern end of the Green.

This general agricultural picture is borne out by field names in the Tithe Map Apportionment of 1838. Here along with many fields called 'Hempland', can be found field names such as 'Malthouse Fighle' and 'Malting Field'. There are also two 'Gravel Pit' entries plus a Mill Piece, a Mill Yard and a Mill Way.



Two windmills are recorded for Palgrave, both of the smock type, although nothing now remains. One was shown on the tithe map of 1837 south of the village centre and later moved to nearby Botesdale, the other was further out off the Brome road and demolished around 1937.

In the mid 19th Century, directories for the village list two millers, a carpenter and 15 farmers.

There was a forge in the village, as remembered on the village sign and in Forge Cottage and Forge Close. Here on the east side of the Green, historic development is denser than elsewhere, with ranges of outbuildings off alleyways to the rear.





Losses & Possible Gains

Overall Palgrave seems to have resisted too much modern intrusion. There are a few infill houses at Forge Close and Spring Cottage east of the Green, where asymmetric modern windows and inappropriate concrete roof tiles have been used and the bricks are perhaps a little too brown to fit with the local vernacular.

These could be improved by overpainting the brickwork in a traditional colour, whilst elsewhere the original mix of render and brick has been obscured by the similar overpainting of buildings that would not be out of place stripped back to their original local brick finish.

Church Farm is the one historic building that would benefit from some sympathetic repair to its rendered walls.



Like many small villages, Palgrave suffers from a surfeit of overhead wiring that is quite overpowering in places, a tangled web preferably not seen silhouetted against the sky. The undergrounding of the village's telephone and electricity supply lines would greatly improve its appearance.

With the A143 now by-passing the village, traffic is no longer a major problem in Palgrave. The motor car can still have a detrimental effect if parking is allowed to overrun the green leading to erosion of the grassed areas. Any control of this needs to be carried out in a restrained and low key manner.

The 'leylandii' hedge fronting the Green could be less imposing if reduced in height or replanted in native species.

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Supplementary Planning Guidance
by Mid Suffolk District Council
Environmental Policy Panel
22 July 2008*