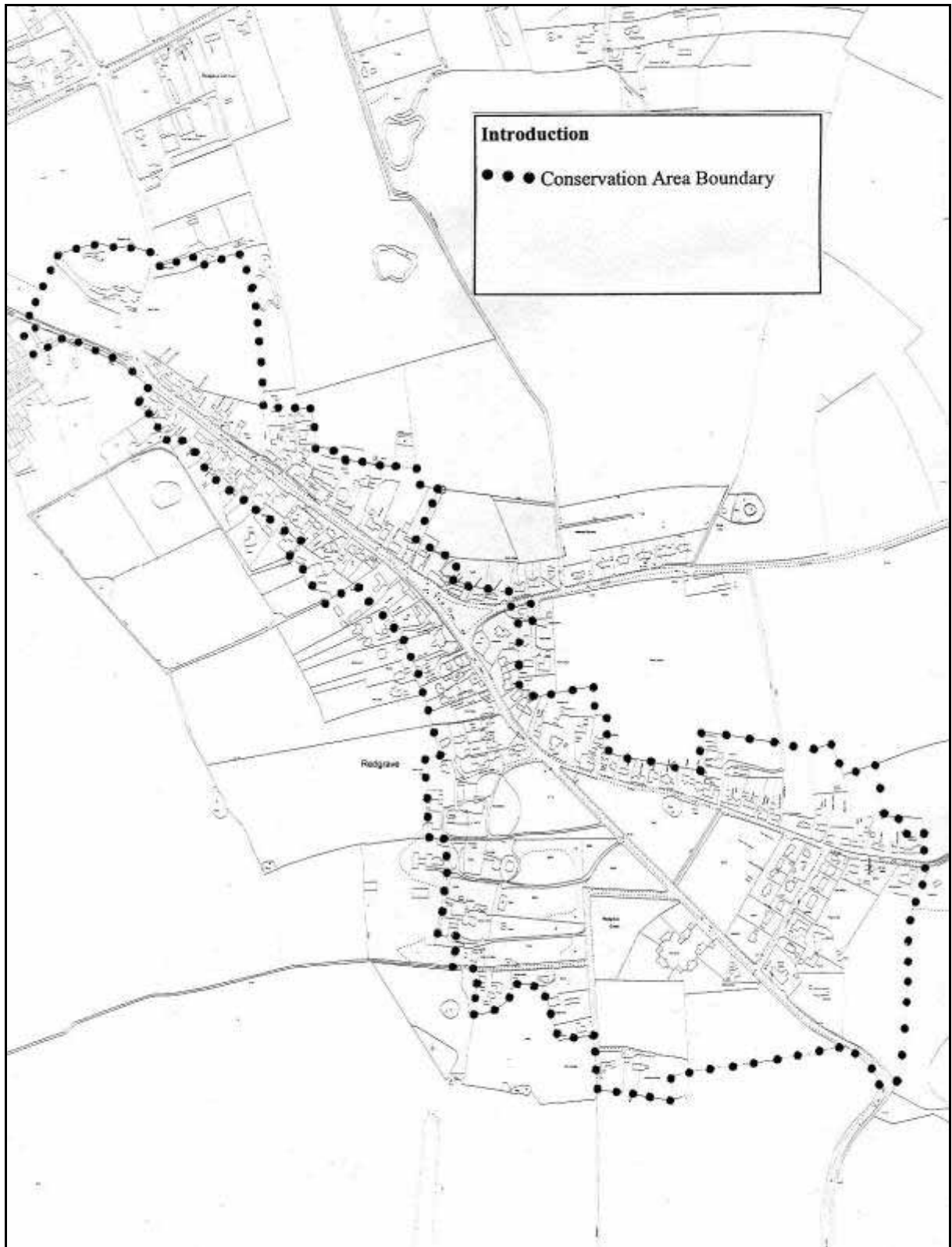




conservation area appraisal



Introduction

The conservation area in Redgrave was originally designated by East Suffolk County Council in 1973, and inherited by Mid Suffolk District Council at its inception in 1974.

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

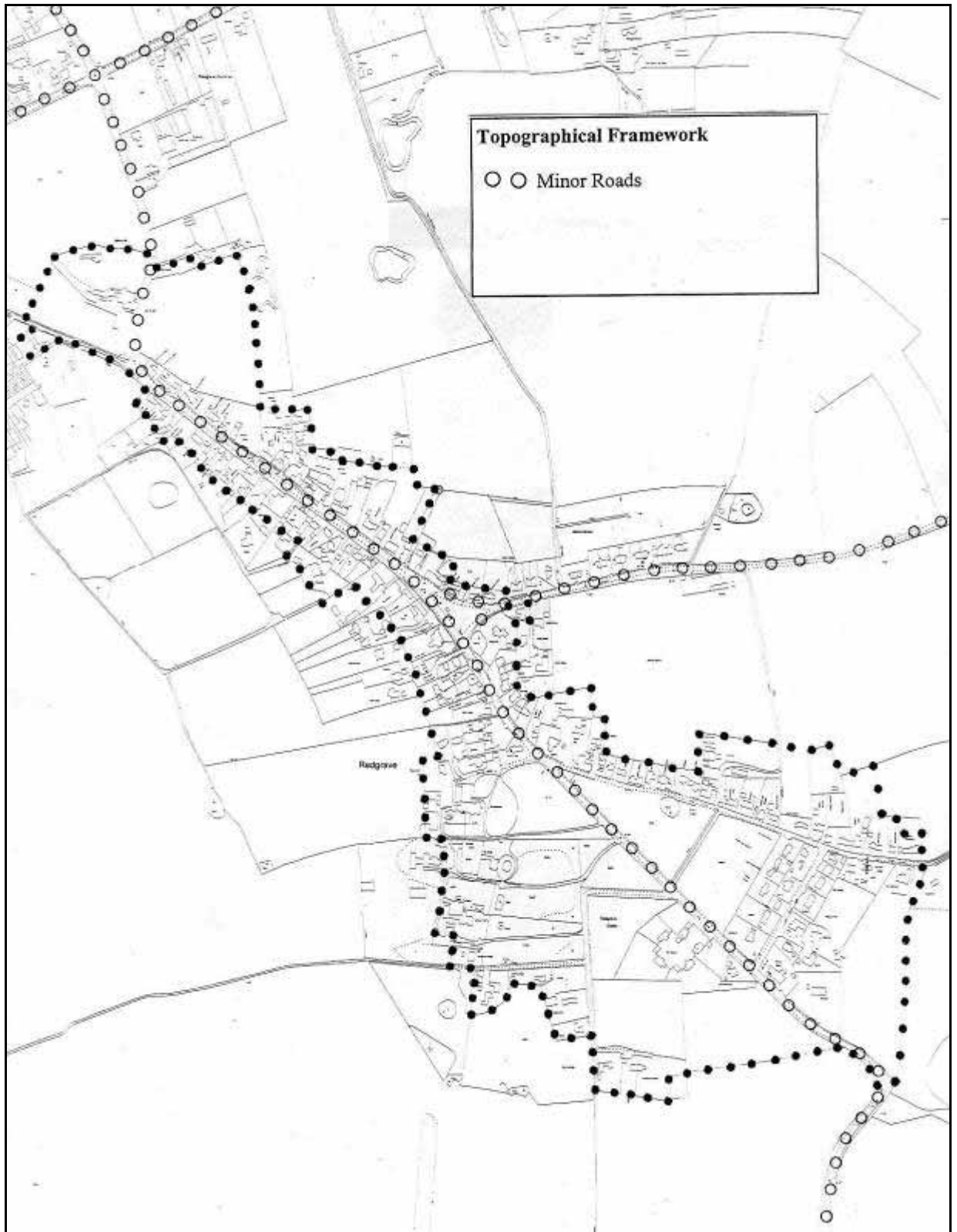
As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Redgrave's built environment in conservation terms.



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 2008.



Topographical Framework

The village of Redgrave is situated about four miles west of the Norfolk market town of Diss, in the far northern part of Mid Suffolk District.

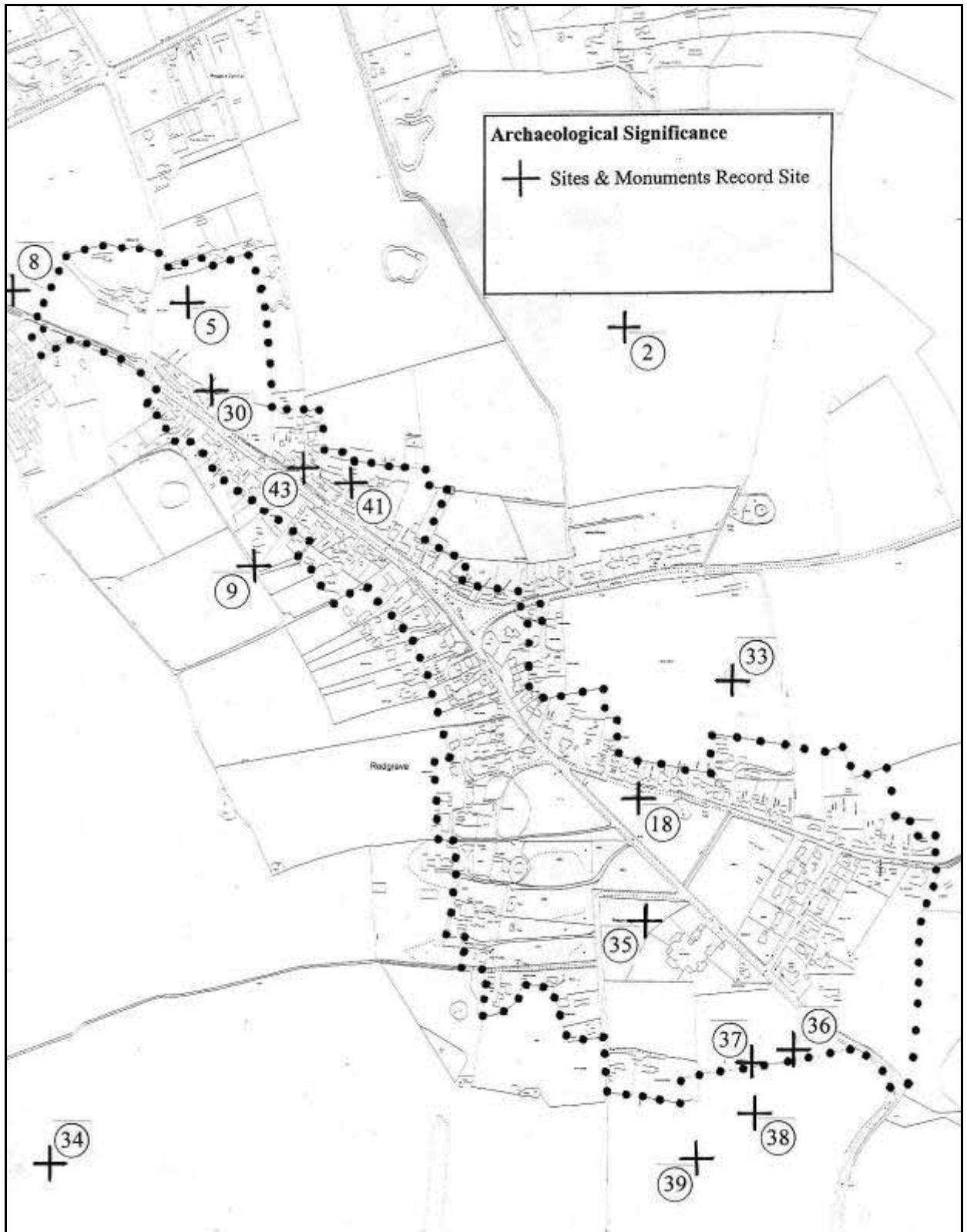
It sits on a spur of slightly higher ground just south of the watershed between the westerly flowing Little Ouse and the easterly flowing river Waveney that here form the county boundary with Norfolk.

Redgrave and Lopham fens, that occupy the valley between those two villages, are today important nature reserves, the last haunt of the Raft Spider, but in the past they were heavily cultivated for the supply of Norfolk Reed for thatching.



The modern A143 road from Bury St Edmunds joins the A140 just east of Diss and originally ran through Botesdale about a mile south of Redgrave. Here there survives a toll-house that served the former the Bury St Edmunds to Scole Turnpike Trust's road of 1762.

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.



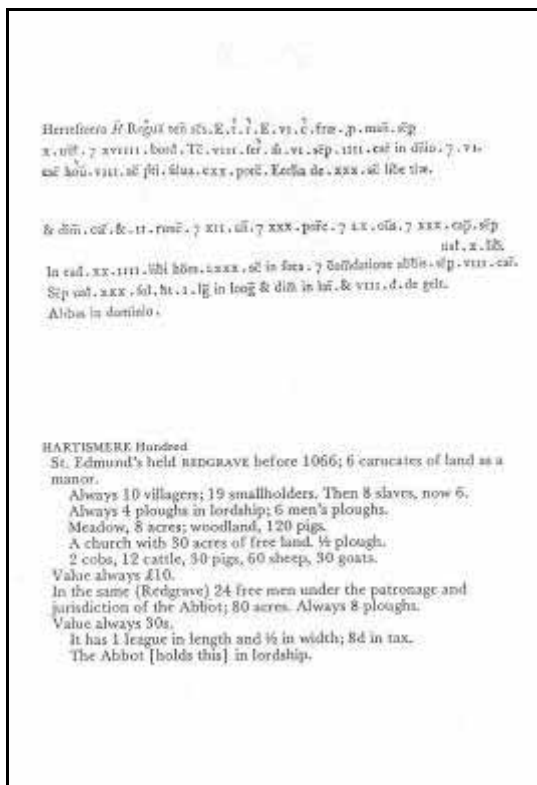
Archaeological Significance

The Suffolk County Sites and Monuments Record lists over 50 sites of archaeological interest in the parish of Redgrave.

The earliest of the dated finds include some Mesolithic flint flakes and a quartzite macehead. From the later Neolithic there are polished flint axes, a flint knife and part of a flint arrowhead.

There appear to be no Bronze Age finds, but a couple of tumulus sites of unknown date may belong here. The Iron Age has left us part of a sandstone quern and some black Belgic pottery and an early gold coin, along with a settlement site either side of Bier Lane north of the Church.

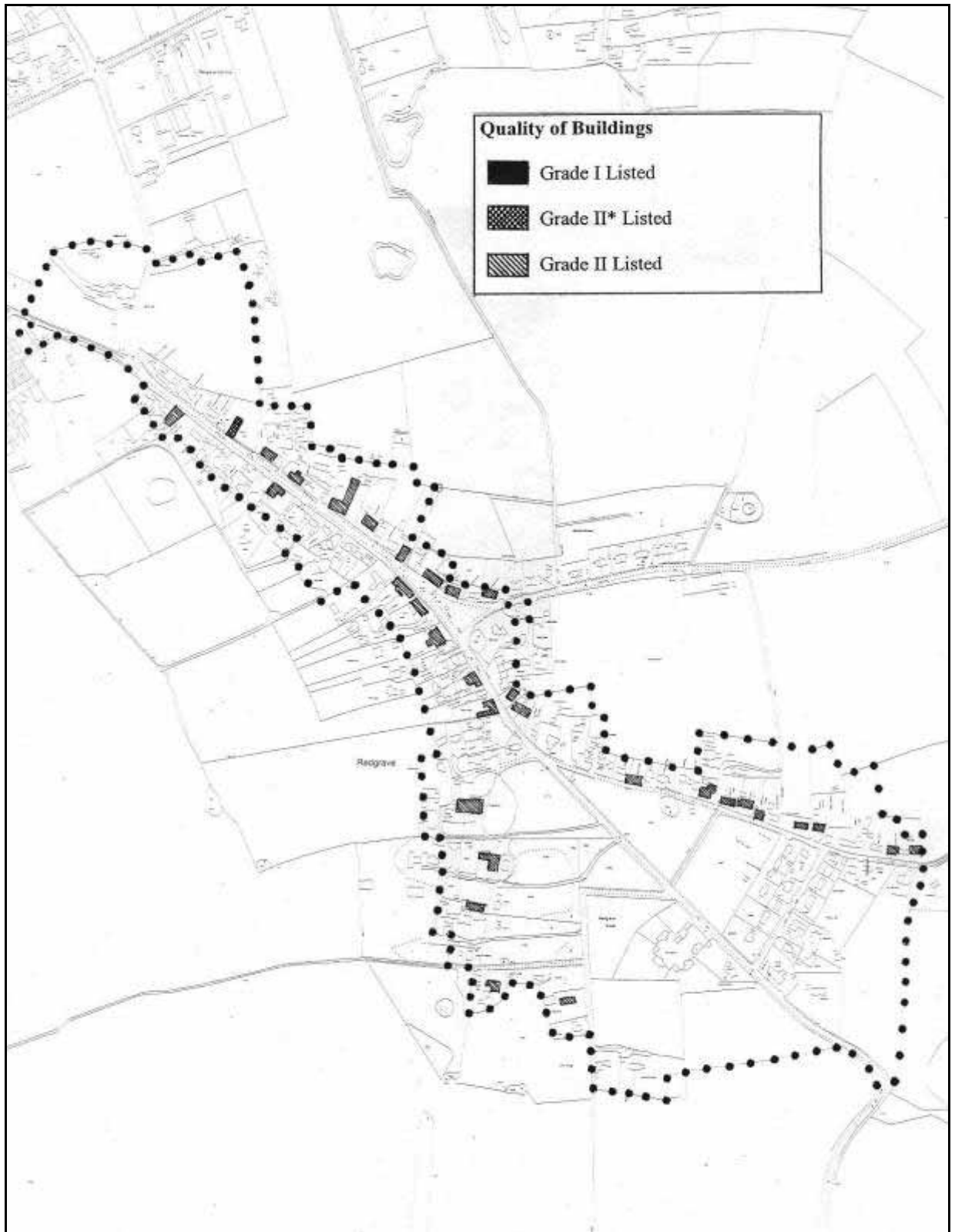
Roman remains include potsherds, some brooch fragments and several coins.



In their turn the Saxons have left a cinerary urn and further brooch fragments. Medieval sites listed include the parish churchyard and a former deer park plus various metalwork and pottery finds.

There is also some Post Medieval interest, represented by the sites of a windmill, the bridge over the Waveney and various buildings associated with Redgrave Park. Overall we see a rich tapestry of remains, indicating that Redgrave has long been a centre of human activity.

Redgrave has only one mention in the Domesday survey of 1086. It was held by St Edmund's and had a church with 30 acres of free land and sufficient woodland for 120 pigs.

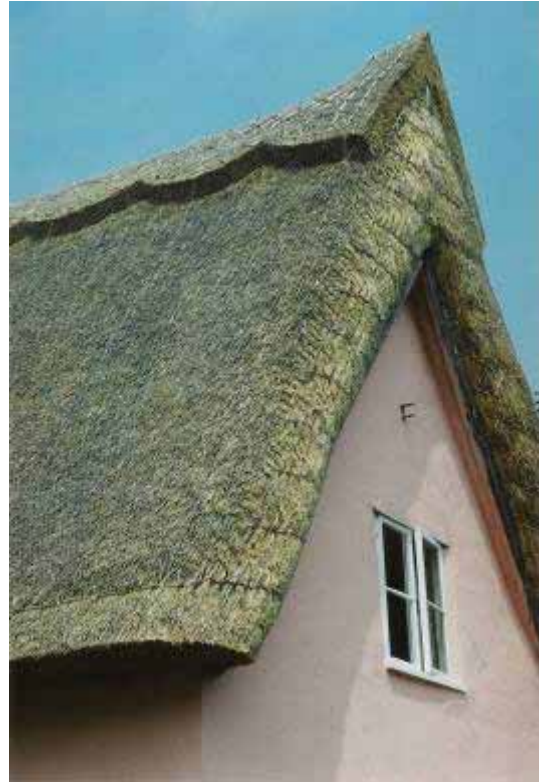


Intrinsic Quality of Buildings

There are 49 listings covering the parish of Redgrave, half of which are within the conservation area.

The remotely sited and now redundant grade I listed Church of St Mary the Virgin provides the usual parish exception to this pattern of building with its flint rubble walls and slate and leaded roofs. It also has a fine 'Suffolk White' brick tower and black glazed pantiles to the south porch. According to Pevsner it is 'all Dec except for the Perp S aisle windows and fine clerestory'.

Thomas Wolsey, later the famous Cardinal, is said to have been the rector of Redgrave in 1506.



Two other buildings warrant grade II listing, one of them also remote in the form of Folly Lodge, a former keeper's lodge in the wooded grounds of the former Redgrave Hall. It is octagonal, in white brick with a leaded domical roof and may have been designed by Capability Brown.*

The other grade II building is the Pink House on The Street, originally a house and shop but now all one dwelling. Of late 15th Century date it is more traditionally constructed in plastered timber frame with a thatched roof.*

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



Traditional Building Materials

Many of the unlisted buildings in Redgrave 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'.

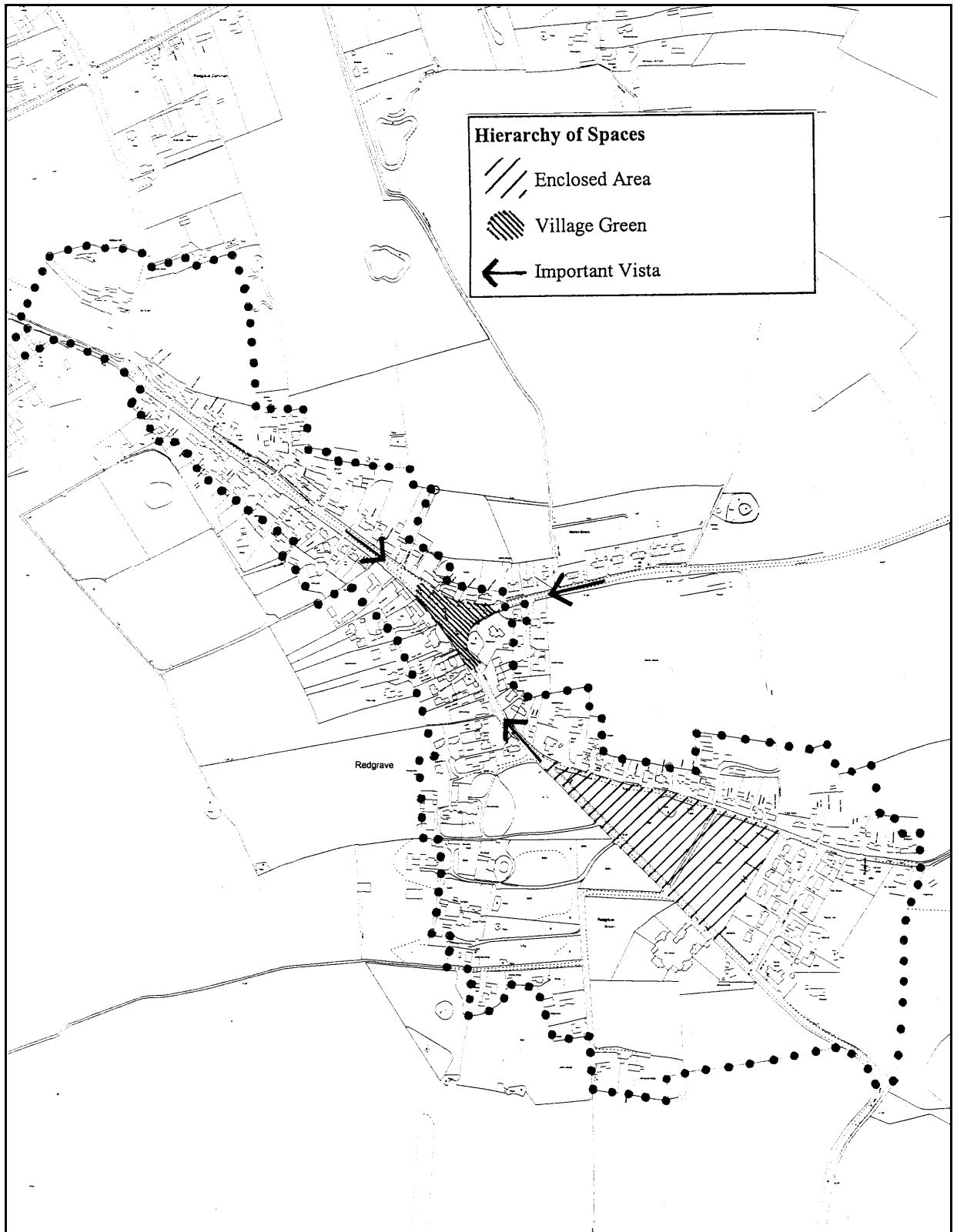
This local red brick features throughout the village, principally on cottages dating from Victorian times, often painted over and occasionally employing Rat-Trap Bond. Away from the church, there are also other examples of 'Suffolk White' brick, most often used as a dressing to the red brick, as on the Old Chapel, the Old School or the former Mission Room, now used as All Saints Church.



A small amount of flintwork is also evident around the village, most notably as boundary walls, but also on The Cottage with white brick dressings, just south of the Old Rectory.

Many of the older timber-framed buildings are thatched, and more would have been so in days gone by, the steep roof pitches now the only clue remaining.

The other prevalent roofing material now is pantile, either natural red or the black glazed variety so common in the Waveney valley. There are also a few instances of slate and plaintile and a fair scattering of modern concrete pantile on newer buildings around the village.



Hierarchy of Spaces

The settlement at Redgrave is basically linear in form, a typical Suffolk 'street' strung out along the road from the river crossing south-eastwards towards an adjoining larger more diffuse area of settlement around Redgrave Green.

Although a green by name there is no public open space here, but rather enclosed grazing land. On the eastern side there are good views across fields towards the scattered houses.

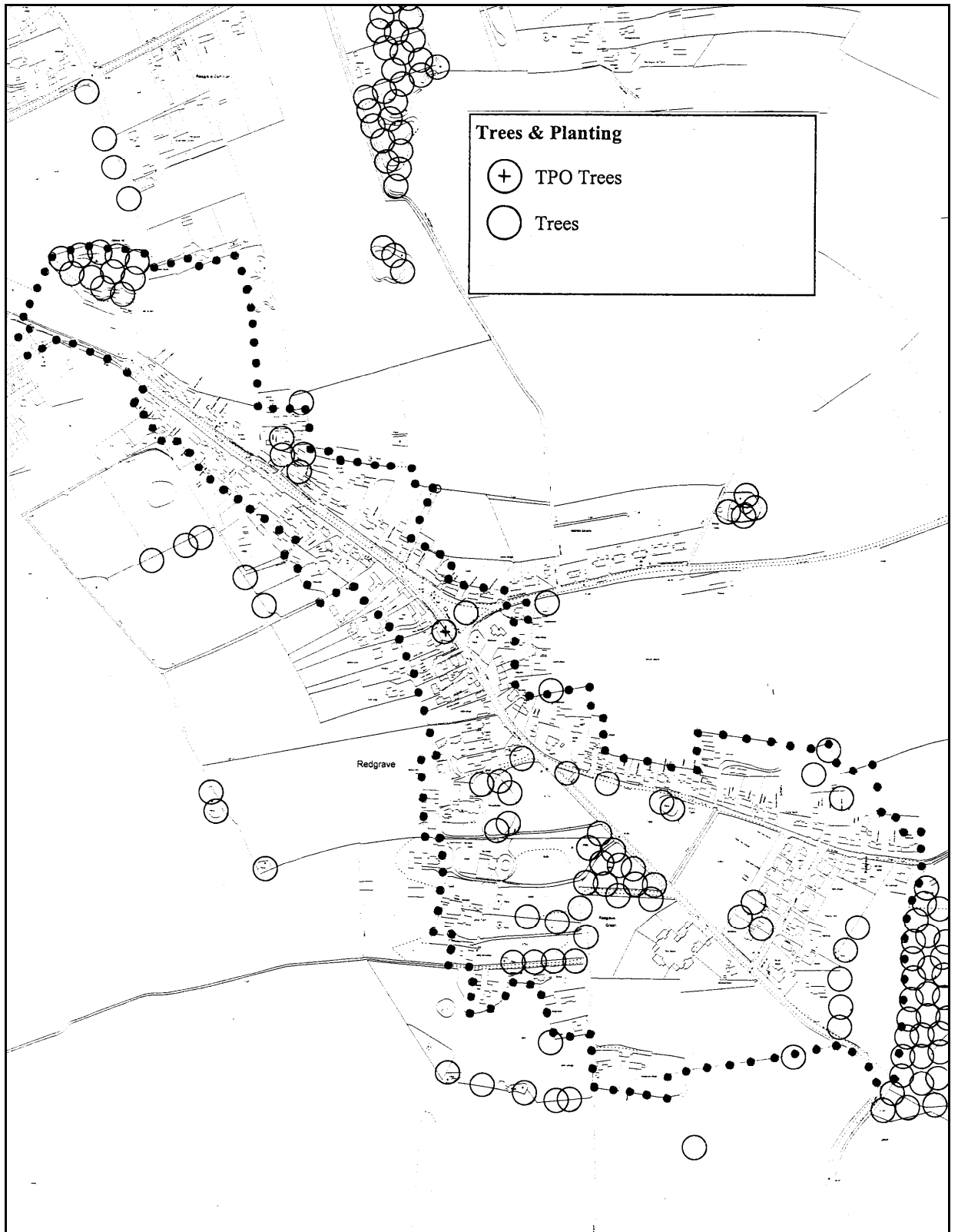
The western part of Redgrave Green is more secluded with private unmade roads serving a scatter of dwellings amongst mature trees.



Redgrave Green adjoins Redgrave Park, where the Hall once stood set amongst the dense woodland of plantations along with some more open parkland.

Along the road to the north-west, just north of Redgrave Green, a smaller publicly accessible triangular green and a pond adjoin the junction where Church Road sets off to the east towards the church, some three quarters of a mile distant.

This green has the village sign and is at the heart of the settlement with both the Cross Keys pub and a former Methodist Chapel close by.



Trees & Planting

The most prominent trees in Redgrave are those within Redgrave Park, to the east outside of the conservation area. Here there is a mixture of parkland and plantation.

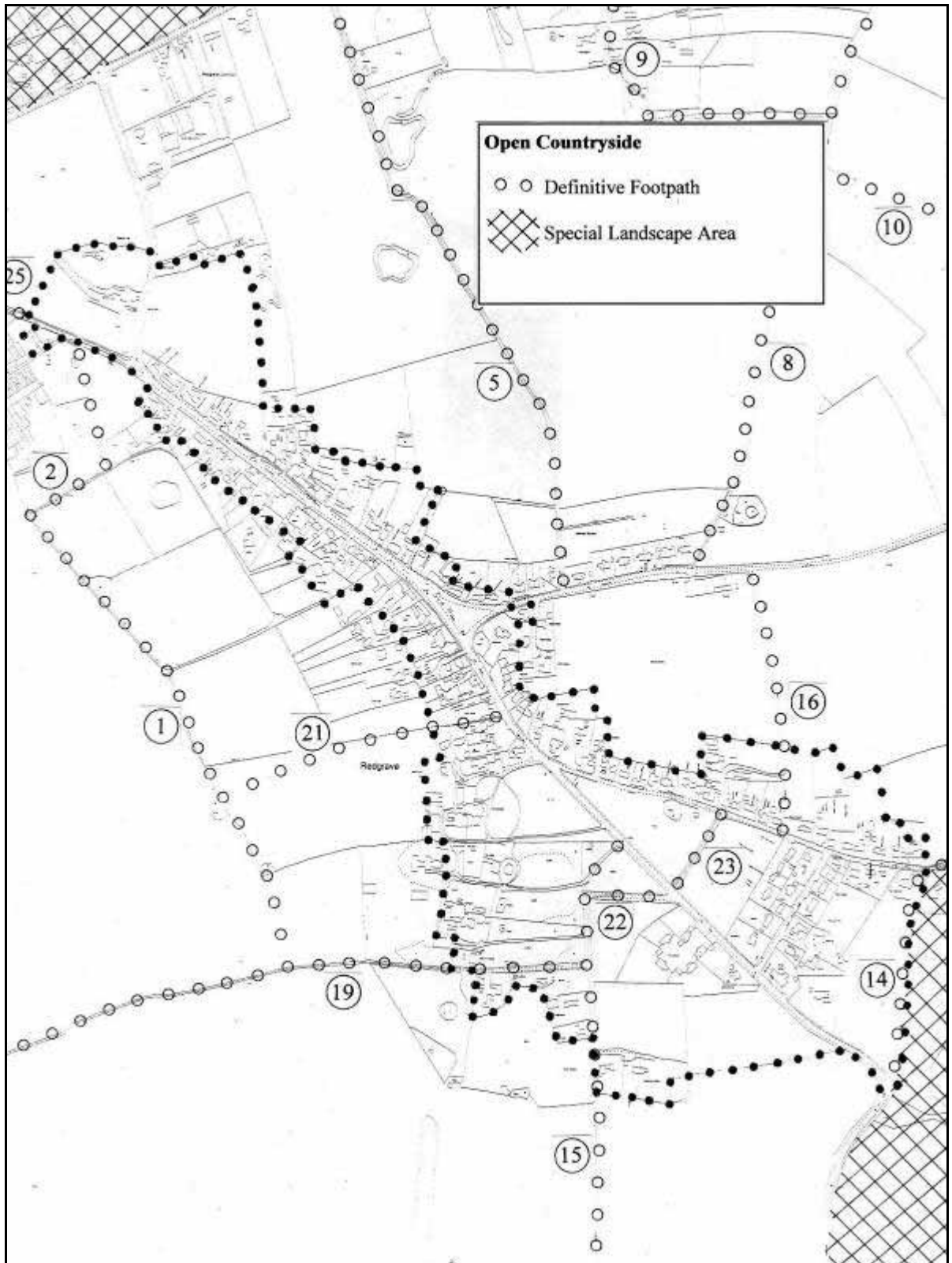
Within the conservation area near the centre of Redgrave Green, a small area of woodland sits either side of the drive serving The Cottage and other dwellings to the west. South of here mature trees line the unmade access tracks to the scattered houses.

A young Oak graces the centre of the village, a relatively recent planting on the small triangular green adjoining the Church Road junction.



Nearby other trees can be found skirting the pond and just over the road outside 'Tudor Limes' a single Lime tree is the subject of Tree Preservation Order no.138.

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 a number of Oak, Ash, Scots Pine, Hornbeam and Field Maple south of the village off Hall Lane and Lizzies Lane (TPOs 2 and 36) and another group of Oak and Ash adjoining Church Way to the east (TPO 46).



Relationship to Open Countryside

The settlement pattern in Redgrave, with houses clustered around the green and along the approach road from the north-west is mostly one plot deep. This means that, although not often visible, the countryside is never far away.

The road pattern immediately through the village is aligned north-west to south-east with the roads fanning out at either end. Also at either end there are designations of Special Landscape Area, to the north the Waveney valley, to the south Redgrave Park.

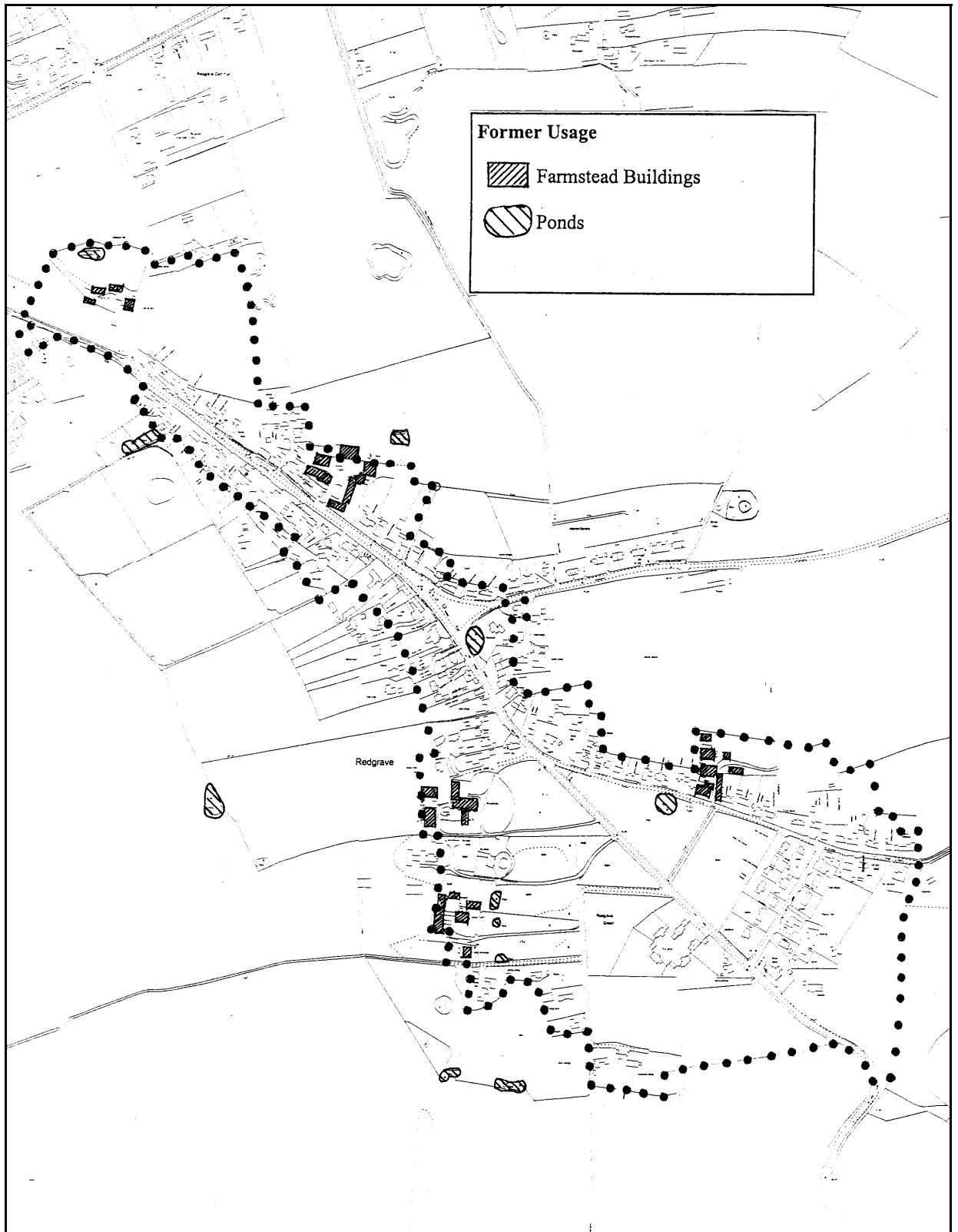
Although there are no roads, in the immediate vicinity of the centre of the village there are footpaths, which fill in and connect up to the hinterland.



Branching off Church Road east of the village, footpaths 5 and 8 give access to the area to the north-east, within which can be found further footpaths 9, 10 and 11.

South-west of the village, access is gained via footpaths 15 and 19 from the south, 21 and 1 in the centre and footpaths 2 and 25 from the northern end.

The modern route through the village and over the Waveney has now superseded an earlier road network comprising Fen Street parallel to the river across the north of the village, with three green lanes off it to the south, Southern Lane (footpath 20), Mill Lane (5) and Bier Lane (11).



Prevailing & Former Usage

Redgrave 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, a tailor and a cordwainer were recorded in the village in the late 17th Century.

Being too far up either river valley, there were no watermills here, however two windmills are recorded, one a post mill the other a tower mill, although nothing now remains. In the mid 19th Century, directories for the village list two millers, two carpenters, 11 farmers and a host of tradesmen and shopkeepers.



The now demolished former Redgrave Hall would have been very important to the local economy in its time. Originally a hunting lodge for the Abbot of St Edmunds set in its own deer park, it had been rebuilt in 1545 and remodeled in 1763 faced up in Woolpit brick, the attached park to designs by Capability Brown. The house was demolished in 1958 although some outbuildings remain.



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



Losses & Possible Gains

Overall Redgrave seems to have resisted too much modern intrusion. There are a few infill houses where asymmetric modern uPVC windows, oversized modern detailing or inappropriate concrete roof tiles have been used, which do not complement the local vernacular.

Elsewhere the unsightly bits are the result of gentle decline: the Mission Room has fortunately had its corrugated tin roof upgraded to slate during its conversion for Church use and Ivy is getting too good a grip on a couple of buildings in the northern section of The Street.



Like many small villages, Redgrave also suffers from a surfeit of overhead wiring carrying the village's telephone and electricity supplies. This is quite overpowering in places, a tangled web preferably not seen silhouetted against the sky. The under-grounding of these utility supply lines would greatly improve the appearance of the village.

References & Further Reading

Chatwin, C P 1961 East Anglia and Adjoining Areas British Regional Geology HMSO

D.C.L.G., D.C.M.S. & English Heritage 2010 Planning Policy Statement: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5) TSO

D.o.E. 1988 List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest: District of Mid Suffolk: Parish of Redgrave

Domesday Book 1986 Suffolk Phillimore

Dymond, D & Martin, E (eds.) 1988 An Historical Atlas of Suffolk Suffolk County Council

English Heritage 1995 Conservation Area Practice HMSO

English Heritage 2006 Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals HMSO

Flint, B 1979 Suffolk Windmills Boydell

Goult, W 1990 A Survey of Suffolk Parish History Suffolk County Council

Pevsner, N 1976 The Buildings of England: Suffolk Penguin

Redgrave Parish 2005 Redgrave Parish Plan

Suffolk County Council 1997 Sites and Monuments Record

Tithe Map & Apportionment 1838 Redgrave Suffolk Records Office

The maps in this document are based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. M S D C Licence no 100017810 2006



*This Appraisal adopted as
Supplementary Planning Guidance
by Mid Suffolk District Council
Environment Policy Panel
29 March 2011*