

North Hertfordshire District Council

Great Wymondley

Conservation Area Character Statement



Report for

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Great Wymondley Conservation Area was designated by North Hertfordshire District Council in 1969 and its boundary was amended in 1979. The boundary includes the whole of the developed area of Great Wymondley, centred on the meeting of Hitchin Road, Arch Road, Graveley Road and Willian Road. To the east it extends to include the Scheduled Monument of Great Wymondley Castle.

1.1.2 This report has been produced for the purpose of appraising the character of Great Wymondley Conservation Area. It includes a character assessment highlighting key features, a statement of special interest, a list of designated heritage assets, undesignated heritage assets and key views within the Conservation Area, and opportunities for improvement. It is accompanied by an annotated map of the Conservation Area which can be found in Appendix A. This report does not consider potential boundary changes in the Conservation Area.

1.2 Setting of Conservation Area

1.2.1 Great Wymondley Conservation Area retains its historic rural setting, despite the contemporary proximity of Hitchin to the west, Letchworth Garden City to the north, the A1(M) to the east, and the A602 to the south. The Conservation Area boundary includes all the developed area of the settlement and for its full extent, opens onto agricultural land.

1.3 Historical Development

1.3.1 Great Wymondley is a dispersed parish (with other, smaller parts south of the Conservation Area) that has its origins pre-Conquest. The Scheduled Monument in the east of the village contains the remains of a Norman motte-and-bailey castle and manorial complex.

1.3.2 The Church of St Mary the Virgin to the west of this has 12th century origins and it is assumed that the village originally had its focus around the castle and church. Later development spread west, with building extending to the crossroads north-west of the church and along Arch Road running south from it.

1.3.3 There are some medieval buildings in the village, centred on the crossroads, while early post-medieval development is spread up and down Arch Road. Later, 19th century buildings have filled some of the gaps between these older structures, and there is 20th century development along Arch Road and Graveley Road.

2. Character and Special Interest

2.1 Character

- 2.1.1 Great Wymondley Conservation Area is dominated by the linear development along Arch Road, south of its junction with Hitchin Road, Willian Road and Graveley Road. However, the Conservation Area also includes land east of this which, in the form of the Great Wymondley Castle scheduled ancient monument, attests to the early origins of the settlement here.
- 2.1.2 Buildings in Great Wymondley fall into three main periods, medieval, early post-medieval and 19th century to modern. Box Tree Cottage (NLE 1175687) and The Manor House (NLE 1347429) sit on opposite corners (south-east and north-west respectively) of the cross-roads. The two are remarkably similar in appearance, their early origins and timber framing hidden by later refronting. Both have exposed brick ground floor levels with painted roughcast first floors below steeply-pitched roofs in red ceramic tile. Long Close (NLE 1175765) is of a slightly later date but sits on the north-east corner of the same crossroads and can be considered to be part of a group of significant older buildings in this part of the village. It has some exposed timber-framing at first floor level. All of these earlier buildings have casement windows and are set back from the road in varying degrees, all behind gardens and other planting (Fig 2.1).
- 2.1.3 To the south, part of Delamere House (NLE 1175691) dates from the 15th century, though most is later and the timber frame has been encased in red brick. The windows of the building are latticed casements set into moulded stone surrounds and the roof is of the same red ceramic tile seen on the older buildings discussed above. Delamere House is set apart from the rest of the historic part of the settlement (see KV3), presumably set within lands it farmed, and was formerly the manor house of the village, dated to the late medieval or very early post-medieval period. Today it is adjoined by a series of brick and timber/weatherboarded barns with a variety of uses and a mixture of ceramic tile and slate roofs, including a 17th century granary (NLE 1102496).
- 2.1.4 The Church of St Mary the Virgin (NLE 1102497) is the largest medieval building in the Conservation Area, with materials dating from the 12th century (Fig 2.2). It occupies a prominent position within the village, amplified by the green spaces to its east, south and west (see KV1 and KV2). It is in flint rubble and underwent major restorations in the later 18th and 19th centuries. It is surrounded by a small churchyard bordered with hedges and tree-planting.
- 2.1.5 Other post-medieval buildings are spread along and just off Arch Road. Of particular note is the timber-framed, roughcast and painted Castle Cottage (NLE 1102498), of 1 ½ storeys with casement and dormer windows and the same red ceramic tile roof seen elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Perhaps the most distinctive building in Great Wymondley is the early 19th century 1-5 Hornbeam Court (NLE 1347443) which is divided into five cottages named after those wives of Henry VIII who were either divorced, beheaded or died before his own death. It is timber framed and roughcast, painted white, and has a thatched roof with seven distinctive eyebrow dormers unevenly spaced along its length (Fig 2.3). Other windows are small casements.
- 2.1.6 There are a number of later brick buildings in Great Wymondley, the most notable of which (other than the earlier Delamere House) are Manor Cottages (NLE 1175728), a terrace of six estate cottages on the north side of the 'village green' space west of the Church of St Mary the Virgin. They are notably regular in design, with each cottage having a central entrance and chimneys between each. These are separated from the green by a hedge, planting and front gardens, and the westernmost cottage has a rear driveway from Arch Road (Fig 2.4).

- 2.1.7 There are occasional 20th century buildings in the village, but these are generally discretely located. At the south of the Conservation Area is a row of semi-detached cottages in red brick dating to the late 19th and early 20th century. Along Graveley Road, north of the Scheduled Monument, there are two groups of inter-war council houses of standard designs. Lastly, worthy of mention is Great Wymondley Village Hall on Arch Road, apparently in timber and corrugated tin with a slate roof. It seems to date to the first half of the 20th century and is an attractive addition to the village (Fig 2.5).
- 2.1.8 The key green space in the Conservation Area is the scheduled ancient monument to the east of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, and this is publicly accessible via footpaths. It is generally open and the earthworks appreciable, though it contains a lot of floral growth (see KV1). On the other side of the church is a 'village green' space, although this appears to be a 20th century reinstatement of an earlier space planted with trees, which in 1922 had a road diagonally across it. There is also open space between this green and Delamere House (see KV3), which plays an important role in the setting of this significant building.
- 2.1.9 Significant individual trees bound the scheduled site of Great Wymondley castle (NLE (1010761) to the east and west. Elsewhere, the Conservation Area is well planted, with hedges and trees forming the boundaries between most properties. There is a stone-kerbed footpath along most of the length of Arch Road, though elsewhere the roads are edged with grass verges.
- 2.1.10 An interesting feature of the village is the frequent occurrence of trapezoidal concrete bollards, which juxtapose a stone example at the south end of Hornbeam Cottages (Figs 2.6).

2.2 Statement of Special Interest

- 2.2.1 Great Wymondley Conservation Area preserves the character of the whole developed area of the settlement of Great Wymondley, a settlement with pre-Conquest origins. The eastern part of the village is dominated by the Scheduled Monument of Great Wymondley castle, while the character of the western part of the Conservation Area centres on linear development along Arch Road. Of interest are a group of medieval and early post-medieval buildings at three of the corners of the meeting of Arch Road, Hitchin Road, Willian Road and Graveley Road, while Delamere House and Hornbeam Cottages are architecturally distinctive.

3. Key Assets and Views

3.1 Designated Heritage Assets

Scheduled Monuments

- 3.1.1 In the east of the village is the Scheduled Ancient Monument (1010761) 'Great Wymondley Castle: a motte and bailey castle and associated manorial enclosure 20m east of St Mary's Church, Great Wymondley', designated in 1923.

Listed Buildings

List Entry	Name	Grade	NGR
1102473	THE GRANGE	II	TL 21314 28599
1102496	GRANARY AT DELAMERE HOUSE ON ROADSIDE TO WEST OF HOUSE	II	TL 21292 28363
1102497	CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN (CHURCH OF ENGLAND)	I	TL 21475 28530
1102498	CASTLE COTTAGE	II	TL 21402 28499
1347429	THE MANOR HOUSE	II*	TL 21348 28700
1347442	POST OFFICE ROW	II	TL 21248 28226
1347443	HORNBEAM COURT, HOWARD COTTAGE, SEYMOUR COTTAGE, BOLEYN COTTAGE, ARAGON COTTAGE, CLEEVES COTTAGE	II	TL 21245 28222
1175687	BOX TREE COTTAGE	II	TL 21366 28627
1175691	DELAMERE HOUSE AND BARN ATTACHED ON WEST	II*	TL 21317 28368
1175700	LAVENDER COTTAGE	II	TL 21267 28424
1175728	MANOR COTTAGES	II	TL 21388 28565
1175739	OLD SCHOOL HOUSE	II	TL 21432 28494
1175765	LONG CLOSE	II	TL 21412 28708

3.2 Non-designated Heritage Assets

Buildings of Local Interest

- 3.2.1 Recommendations for buildings to be included on North Hertfordshire's Register of Buildings of Local Interest will be included in the Summary Report at the conclusion of the project.

Buildings or Features that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area

- 3.2.2 The following non-designated buildings are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of Great Wymondley Conservation Area.

- Two barns south of Delamere House
- The Croft, Arch Road
- Village Hall, Arch Road
- The Green Man public house
- Barn east of Manor Farm

3.3 Key Views

3.3.1 Three key views have been identified within the Conservation Area:

- KV1: From footpath Wymondley 005 looking west across the Scheduled Monument towards the Church of St Mary the Virgin.
- KV2: From Arch Road, adjacent to The Croft, looking east towards the Church of St Mary the Virgin.
- KV3: From Church Green looking south across fields to Delamere House.

4. Opportunities for Improvement

4.1.1 Great Wymondley Conservation Area has the following opportunities for improvement:

- The concrete bollards are a clear feature of the village and if the relation to the stone bollard at Hornbeam Cottages can be understood, it would be worthwhile taking a cast of this to use in the production of future bollards.
- Off-street parking in the village is generally good, but car parking around the 'village green' west of the church has potential to impact the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

5. Bibliography

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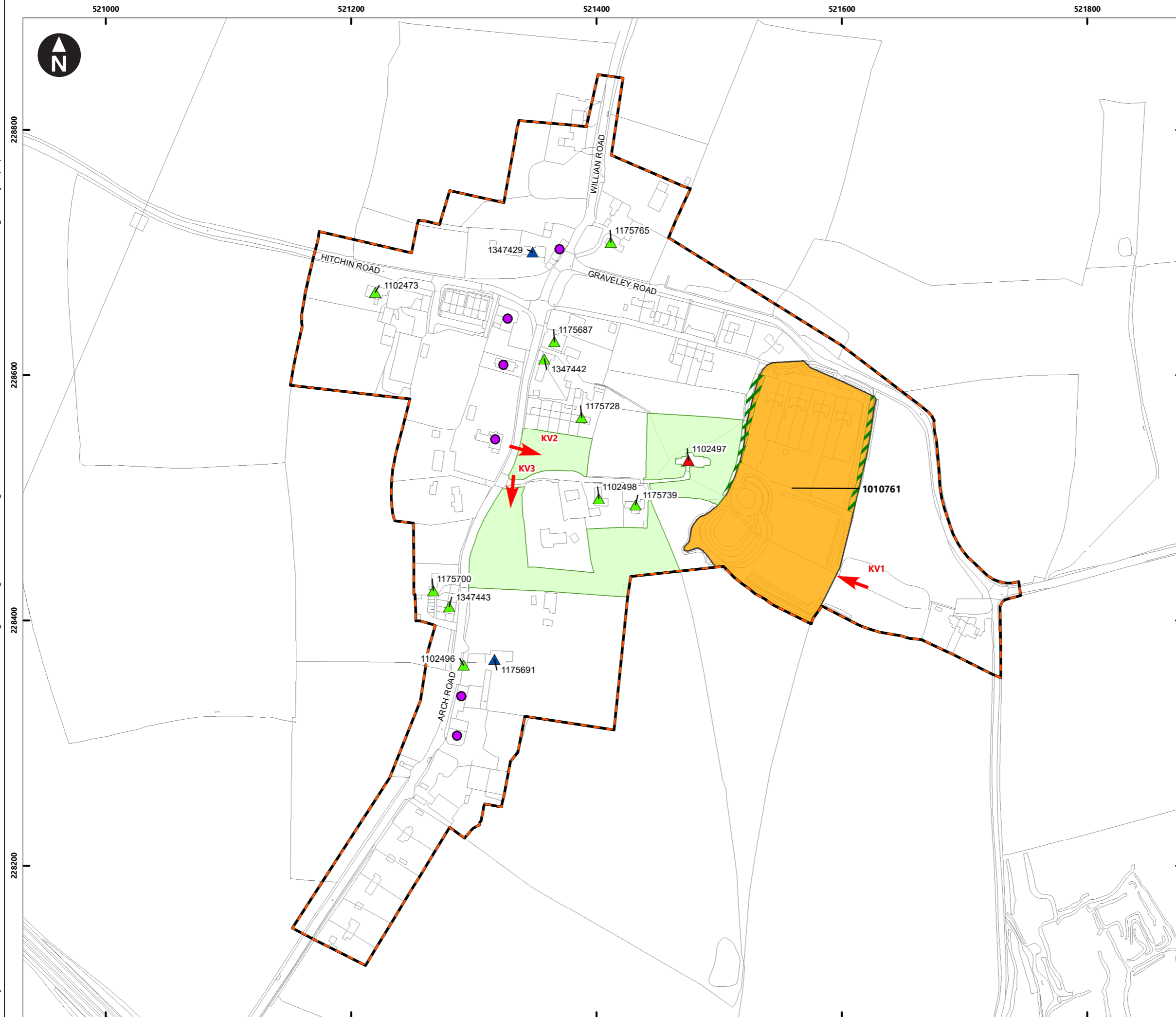


Appendix A

Conservation Area Map



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- Key
- Conservation area
 - Listed Buildings**
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II
 - Scheduled ancient monument
 - Historic parks and gardens
 - Heritage at risk
 - Significant key view
 - Building or feature that contributes to the character of the Conservation area
 - Significant areas of trees
 - Significant tree
 - Significant green space
 - Significant blue space

Note:
The Historic England GIS data contained in this material was obtained on 26/06/2019. The most publicly available up to date Historic England GIS Data can be obtained from <http://www.historicengland.org.uk>

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Scale at A3: 1:3,000
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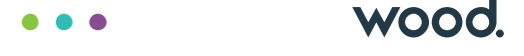
NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



North Hertfordshire District Council
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Great Wymondley

February 2020



Appendix B Photographs

B.1 Character Photographs



Fig 2.1 The Manor House (NLE 1347429), at the corner of Hitchin Lane and Willian Lane.



Fig 2.2 Church of St Mary the Virgin (NLE 1102497).



Fig 2.3 Hornbeam Cottages on Arch Road, (NLE 1347443) with the stone bollard visible on the near side of the driveway.



Fig 2.4 Manor Cottages (NLE 1175728) on the north edge of the village green.



Fig 2.5 Great Wymondley Village Hall, on Arch Road.



Fig 2.6 One stone and four concrete bollards on Willian Road, these are among around 15 examples through the Conservation Area.

B.2 Key Views



KV1: From footpath Wymondley 005 looking west across the Scheduled Monument towards the Church of St Mary the Virgin, showing the prominence of the church tower and earthworks on the eastern approach to the village.



KV2: From Arch Road, adjacent to The Croft, looking east towards the Church of St Mary the Virgin, demonstrating the open nature of this part of the village and the 'village green' feel of this green space.



KV3: From Church Green looking south across fields to Delamere House, demonstrating the prominent location of this important building on the outskirts of the historic settlement core.

wood.

