

Hawkesbury

CONSERVATION AREA

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

A Conservation Area is an area of "Special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance."

Designation is a recognition of the group value of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect, not just the individual buildings, but the distinctive character of the area as a whole. The special character usually derives from a combination of many features, such as - trees, hedgerows, walls, open spaces, groups of buildings, the degree of enclosure, the massing and detailing of buildings. Each area is unique.

WHAT CONTROLS APPLY?

Within the Conservation Areas a number of special controls apply. Planning policies seek to ensure that any development accords with the areas' special architectural or visual qualities. These are set out in the Local Plan and further details are given in the **CONSERVATION AREA ADVICE NOTE** available from the Council. The emphasis is on preserving those buildings, spaces and features which give each Conservation Area its special character. Where changes can be justified, great care must be exercised to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on this character.

PURPOSE OF THE LEAFLET

- 1 To provide a detailed appraisal of those buildings, features and spaces which characterise the Hawkesbury Conservation Area.
- 2 To set out a strategy for its preservation and enhancement.
- 3 To provide guidance for development proposals.

Hawkesbury Upton, Hawkesbury Village and Hawkesbury Somerset Monument were originally designated as individual conservation areas on 19th August 1981. The boundary was amended on 15th April 1999 to protect more of the surrounding landscape and features which contributed to the historic character and setting by creating one large conservation area.



The conservation area is located in a rural area in the north east part of South Gloucestershire (just off the main A46 road the once important Cirencester to Bath Turnpike). It comprises the historic settlements of Hawkesbury, a small hamlet; the larger village of Hawkesbury Upton; and the scattering of farm buildings on the fringes as well as the Somerset Monument. These are all set in an attractive and varied landscape of open fields, woodland, ridges, steep valleys and hidden coombes on the edge of the Cotswolds within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

It is an area of contrasts and the conservation area designation seeks to protect the unique character of the area with its historic buildings and settlements and its important relationship with the surrounding landscape.

The main elements include :-

- the historic settlement of **Hawkesbury Upton** with a number of 17th and 18th century buildings lining the High Street and farm buildings on the edges. It is a linear spring line settlement which lies in an exposed position on the south west edge of the Cotswold scarp, about 183 metres above sea level.
- Further to the west lies the small 12th century hamlet of **Hawkesbury Village**, clustered around the church which was previously an important estate in medieval times. It enjoys a sheltered position as it nestles in a wooded coombe below the Cotswold scarp adjoining the distinctive landscape feature of Hawkesbury Knoll.
- Taking advantage of the higher land to the north is the **Somerset Monument** which overlooks the surrounding area and is a notable landmark.

The Historic Context

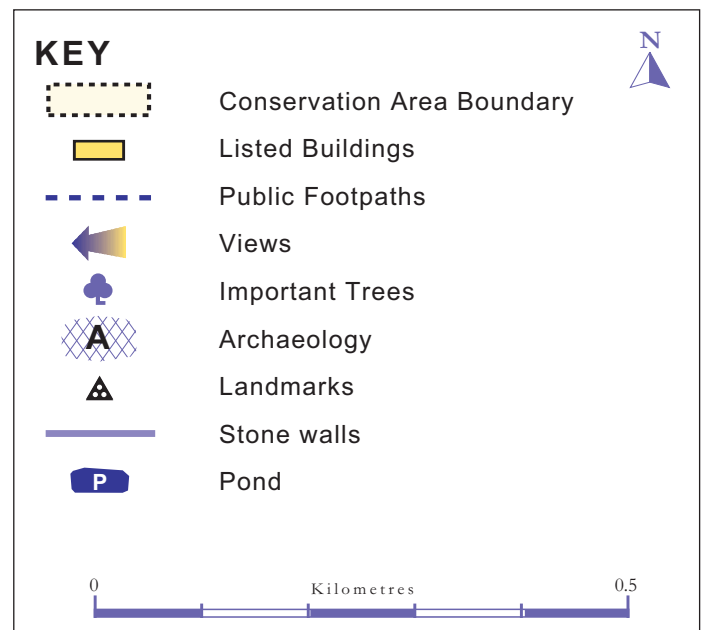
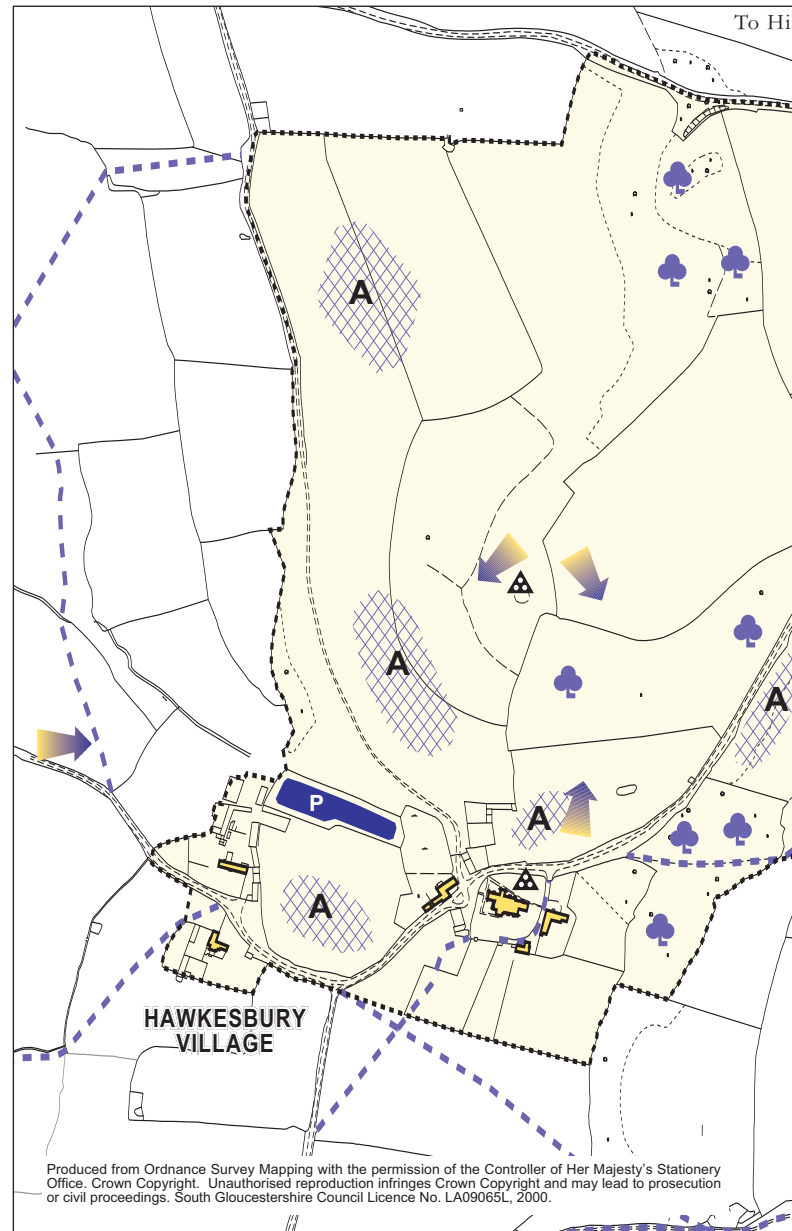
The presence of the Neolithic Long Barrow and iron age remains at Hawkesbury Knoll indicates that this area has been shaped by man from ancient times. The settlements of Hawkesbury and Hawkesbury Upton however, probably date from the Saxon era. Originally Hawkesbury was more important being the former site of a Monastic Grange and subsequently a Medieval Manor. Church Farm (grade II listed) to the west of the church is thought to include parts of the Monastic Grange constructed around 1500. This would formerly have been used by the Abbot of Pershore on his regular visits to collect taxes and administer justice. The main north-east wing of Church Farm was formerly the monastic malthouse where barley would have been laid out to dry prior to brewing.

After the dissolution of the Abbey of Pershore in 1539 the medieval manor developed. The Manor House stood to the north of the church, in large part replacing the Monastic Grange. By 1779 however the Manor House is described as having been uninhabited for sometime and “gone to decay”, and was eventually pulled down in the early 19th century. Hawkesbury Manor is now a buried site and its most impressive remains are its formal garden terrace. Also associated with this Manor are the earthwork remains of a manorial hunting park, warrens and fishponds. To the north east, the remains of a deer park have been found.

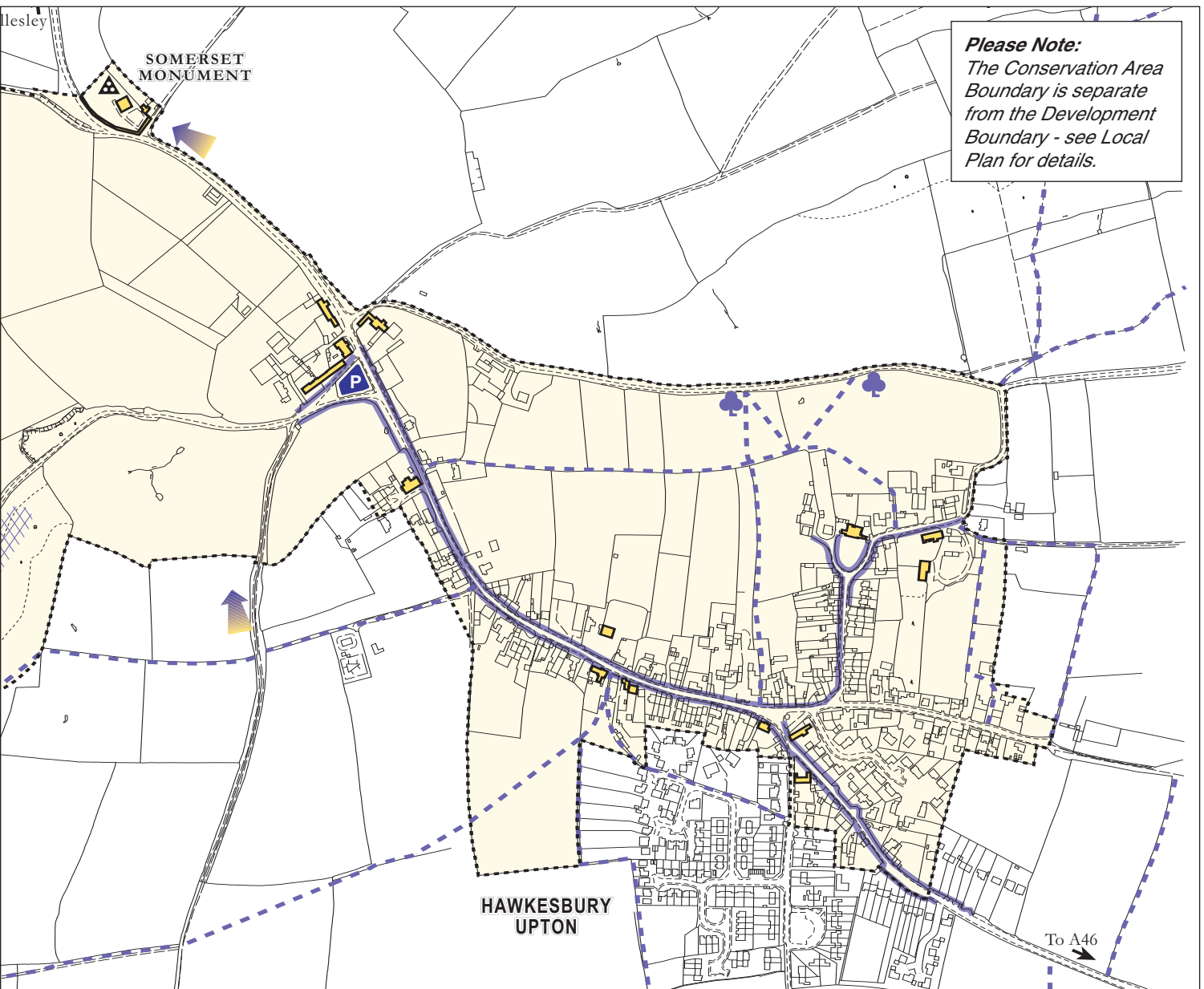
In 1252 the Abbot of Pershore was granted the right to hold a weekly market and fair on his manor at Hawkesbury. This grant seems to have been a spur to the Abbot to lay a new urban settlement adjacent to the existing hamlet at Upton. This layout today is probably the basis of High Street and Park Street; and many buildings still along those streets still have long narrow property boundaries typical of new medieval towns. In the case of Hawkesbury Upton these property boundaries are slightly curved and it looks as though the new town was planted directly onto one of Hawkesbury’s open field furlongs, which would have been divided into slightly-curved, long, narrow strips.

The medieval town of Hawkesbury Upton, unlike its neighbours at Wickwar and Chipping Sodbury, does not seem to have prospered as a market, probably because of poor communications.

Hawkesbury declined in importance and it seems likely that much of the population moved to Hawkesbury Upton during the 17th and 18th centuries which was involved in the weaving trade.



The Special Features



- **Historic buildings** - There are many traditional buildings (including 20 listed buildings and 54 listed tombs) which contribute to the distinctive historic character.
- **The historic layout and plan form of the settlements** - including the village green, the road layout, the arrangement of plots and boundary walls are an important element of the historic character.
- **Stone boundary walls** - are important features in the landscape providing enclosure along the roads and delineating field and property boundaries, some form part of the former Burgage plot boundaries.
- **Building Materials** - predominantly a mix of Cotswold stone and render with stone tiles.
- **Archaeology** - there are many sites on the Sites and Monuments Record reflecting the importance of the settlements eg Long Barrow, former Manor House and deserted village at Hawkesbury village.
- **Field patterns** - the hedgerows and earthworks of former cultivation eg strip lynchets.
- **Water features** - springs, village pool and former medieval fishponds.
- **Trees** - the mature trees and areas of woodland particularly around Hawkesbury Village contribute to the attractive character.
- **Landmarks** - the church tower, the monument and the Knoll

Hawkesbury Village & Knoll

Hawkesbury enjoys a hidden and sheltered position as it nestles in a wooded coombe at the foot of the Cotswold scarp. It comprises the church and a small scattering of historic buildings and farms set informally in an attractive landscape. The impact of the surrounding landscape makes an important contribution to the character of the settlement and provides a rich and historically important backdrop to the village with the distinctive landscape feature of Hawkesbury Knoll with its strip lynchets and Neolithic Long Barrow.

Approaching the settlement from Upton one plunges down to Hawkesbury via a steep narrow road tightly enclosed by the valley sides and woodland. Adjoining the church at the bottom of the coombe the landform opens out allowing attractive views up Hawkesbury Knoll and Warren and to the wooded backdrop to the church and vicarage.

The grass verges and grassed area by the Church are an important element which contribute to the informal rural character and care needs to be taken to ensure they are not eroded.

This landscape of fields, trees and woodlands, hedgerows, stone walls and Hawkesbury Knoll with its distinctive strip lynchets provides an attractive setting to the hamlet. Views in and out are important.

Dominating the hamlet is the Church of St Mary which dates back to the 12th century and is on the site of a Saxon church. The height of the church is particularly striking, as is its formidable size which gives some indication of the previous importance of the settlement. Within the churchyard there are a number of chest tombs which form a fine collection of classical and local tomb forms contributing greatly to the setting of the church though many are in need of repair. Alongside the church are the Old Parsonage and Church Farm with Pound Farm and Court Farm further away round a bend in the road. These buildings are all listed of special historic interest and it is important to ensure alterations do not harm their character.

Materials are traditionally rubble stone and render with stone tiles to roofs.



Hawkesbury Knoll is a distinctive feature and an attractive backdrop to the buildings.



The Old Parsonage set against the wooded backdrop

The legacy of the former settlement

In medieval times Hawkesbury was the centre of a large and important estate with its monastic grange, manor house and church which served a large rural area. It declined in importance and many inhabitants left following the establishment of the nearby Hawkesbury Upton in about 13th Century. Today the earthworks and lumps and bumps in the landscape reveal the evidence of the former settlement including the remains of houses and roadways. Opposite the church are the remains of a formal garden terrace to the former Hawkesbury Manor House which was pulled down in the early 19th century. Other features are the earthwork remains of a manorial hunting park, warrens and three great fishponds, also associated with the Monastic Grange. These ponds are situated at the foot of the Cotswold scarp behind Church Farm and were once used for breeding fish. Much evidence of medieval strip farming exists in the form of earthworks or steps and ridges, eg strip lynchets especially around and beyond the Knoll and to the south of the church on both sides of the road to Horton. To the west of the village lies the village pound, almost certainly medieval in origin.

Enhancement Strategy

- seek removal of the overhead cables.
- seek to ensure careful design & siting of modern farm buildings so they are not prominent in views
- ensure agricultural practices do not harm distinctive archaeological features and field markings eg strip lynchets.
- retain trees and hedgerows as 'enclosure' to roads. Consider a replacement planting strategy.
- retain informal grass verges and grass area by the church.
- seek careful control over road signs and markings to avoid harming the character.
- encourage repairs to stone boundary walls, to the tombstones in the Churchyard and to the adjoining barn to prevent further deterioration.



The Church which dominates the hamlet.

Hawkesbury Upton

Hawkesbury Upton is characterised by a mix of 17th and 18th century buildings and comprises the High Street, the adjoining area by Back and Park Streets and around the pool to the west. Although part was originally planned as a market town by the Abbot of Pershore in 1242, today it is no more than a large village with much modern development on the edges.

The High Street

This is single main thoroughfare of Hawkesbury Upton and has a linear character with mix of 17th and 18th Century buildings set parallel or at right angles to the road giving a feeling of enclosure. This is reinforced by mature trees onto the street. The houses are of a domestic scale and nature many of which were probably connected with the prosperous 17th century weaving industry in the village. The buildings are generally 2 storeys in height though the roofline varies quite considerably along the length of the street with its mix of small cottages and larger buildings. Despite more recent development many of the buildings still have long narrow property boundaries, separated by stone boundary walls, typical of burgage plots in the new medieval towns.

Recent modern development and unsympathetic alterations to the older properties has resulted in the dilution of the historic character.

The village green

At the eastern end the road widens and divides by the village green which provides a focal point and has a more open character. It is probably where the market place was situated, being the site for booths and temporary stands on fair and market days. At one time this was the centre of village activity where the maypole and stocks stood. Now the site is occupied by the village memorial cross and the village pump.



Attractive group cottages just off the High Street - care is needed over details such as windows and doors, and the grassed verges need to be retained to ensure the informal historic character is not lost.



The grassed areas contribute to the informal rural character.

The Pool

Just outside Upton is the village pool, triangular in shape and bordering the road. Animals on their way to market would have been watered here, as there were few other opportunities on the high ground. The pool provides a pleasant and picturesque setting for the listed farm buildings grouped along the northern side. It has an informal rural character with the adjoining grass verges, stone walls, hedgerows and fields.

Back Lane and Park Street

The roads off the High Street tend to have a more diverse and informal character. They include a mix of small cottages and big houses as in Back Street and a number of farm buildings and barns some of which have been converted into dwellings. The roads are partially enclosed with a mix of high and low stone boundary walls, hedgerows and grass verges giving a more rural and informal character.

The Village Edges

The location of the settlement on the Cotswold escarpment enables far reaching views from the village edges over the surrounding countryside and of the big skies. This landscape of open fields, with stone walls, hedgerows and small tree groups provides an attractive setting to the village. However, recent modern development on the village edge and approaches as well as increased domestication and changes in the use of land eg for horses and recreational uses is having an adverse impact on the rural character and it is important that this is carefully controlled. Additional planting and landscaping on the settlement edges and approaches should be encouraged where appropriate, to help minimise the impact of modern development so it blends into the landscape.



The Pool with its attractive group of farm buildings



The stone boundary walls are a distinctive feature



New development on the village edge would benefit from planting to lessen the impact



Horiculture uses have adversely affected the character of the settlement edge with the splitting of fields and the erection of stables, fences and loss of hedgerows.

Enhancement Strategy

- seek improvements to the village core area by the Fox Inn, and a more appropriate use for the coach depot site.
- enhancement of the Pool.
- undergrounding of the overhead wires.
- seek to repair / reinstate stone walls.

- new planting / landscaping - particularly to strengthen and reinforce the village edges and approaches.
- ensure alterations and new development is in character & encourage the reinstatement of traditional details such as windows, doors, chimneys etc.
- maintain enclosure to the High Street and along approaches.

Somerset Monument

Located high on the Cotswold, southern ridge, the Somerset Monument to the west of Hawkesbury Upton towers over the Vale as one of the hills, last grand gestures. It was built in 1846 to commemorate Lord Edward Somerset, a Napoleonic war hero who was a general at the Battle of Waterloo and nephew of the sixth Duke of Beaufort. The slightly tapering square stone tower is about 100 feet high and a notable landmark, especially when viewed with the Tyndale Monument at North Nibley to the north west.

There is an entrance on the north east side which gives access to a viewing area near the top however, access is currently restricted as the monument is in need of repair. From atop there are views over a wide area and Bristol and its busy northern outskirts can appear as remote as the Welsh hills beyond the Severn.

The Lodge adjacent to the Monument was also built in 1846 and is by contrast small in scale, being one storey with attics above. It is similar in style to the small workers cottages built in the nearby Badminton estate but has been marred by a number of unsympathetic alterations. Around the base of the monument the enclosed garden has an ornamental character with a number of attractive trees and plants which contrasts with the surrounding more natural rural landscape.



The Monument is a prominent landmark rising above the trees.



The Monument, an impressive structure, is in need of repair.

Enhancement Strategy

- *encourage repairs and improvements to the monument and the stone boundary walls.*
- *consider further planting and landscape improvements to enhance its setting.*
- *seek to protect views of the monument and of surrounding landscape which contributes to its setting*
- *consider a strategy for enabling public access to the top of the monument along with improvements to parking provision for visitors.*
- *encourage improvements or planting to minimise the impact of the unsympathetic alterations and extensions to the Lodge.*

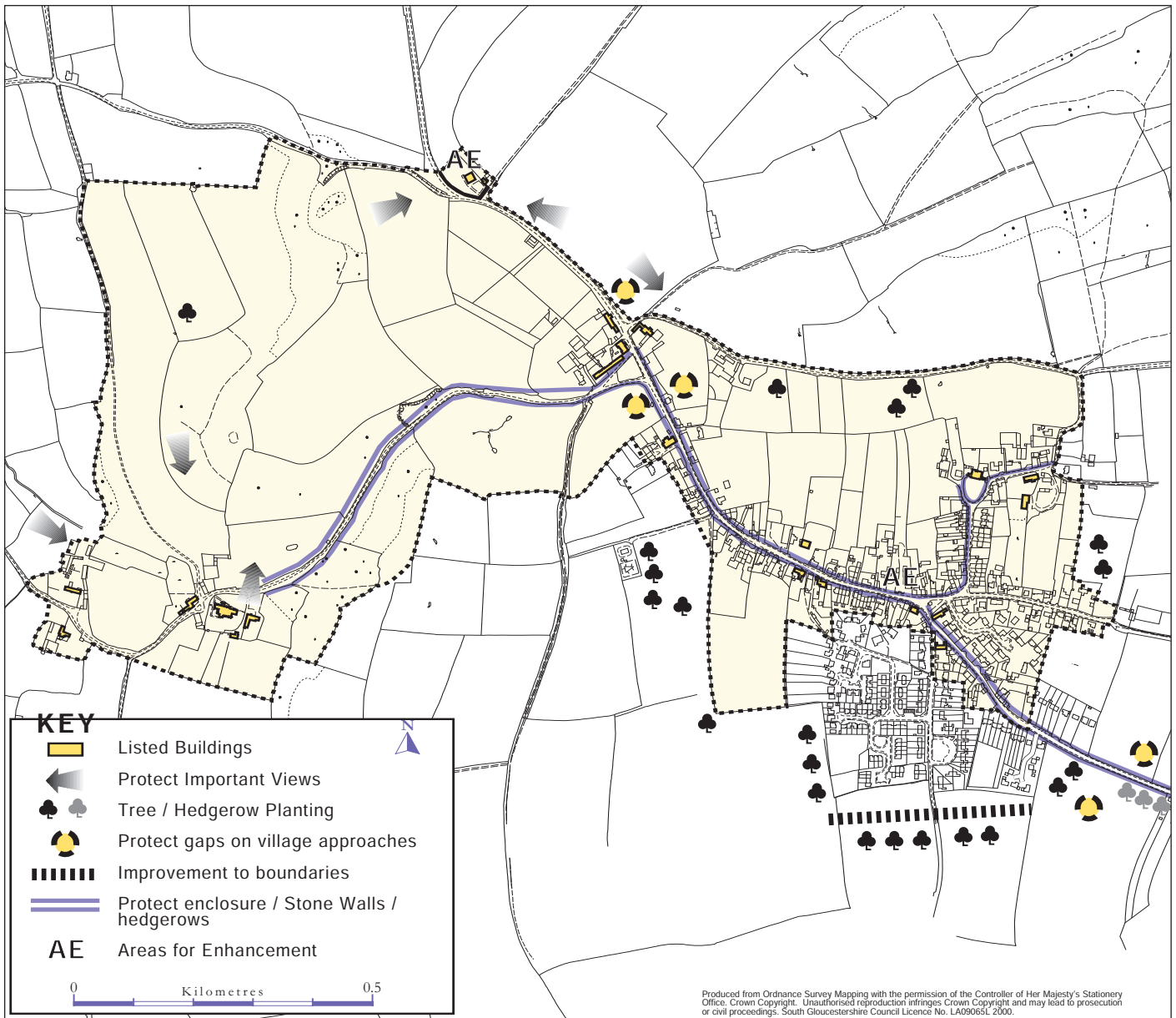
Other features

Architectural details, materials and other features

Details are very important - retaining the original materials and architectural details - windows, doors, roof materials and chimney stacks etc are all essential to keeping the period character. Materials typically would be painted wood for windows and doors with render and Cotswold stone walls and stone tiles. The unsympathetic replacement of windows and doors and the removal of other architectural features can result in the downgrading of the property, village and conservation area as a whole.



Preservation & Enhancement Strategy



The main objective is to preserve and enhance the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area, its historic buildings, features and setting as follows:-

1) To preserve and reinforce the historic character.

By encouraging repairs and ensuring that any works to both the listed and unlisted buildings, features and surroundings are considered in relation to the historic context and use appropriate materials and detailing.

2) Minimise the impact of modern development.

The historic core area is surrounded by modern development which is starting to impinge on the historic character and setting. Enhancement proposals will seek to reduce this impact by protecting important views and using landscaping to help soften the impact of obtrusive features.

3) Ensure that any new development or alterations are sensitive to the historic context.

Any new development needs to be small scale and sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is important that it does not adversely harm the setting of the existing historic features or harm the underground archaeological resource.

GRANTS AND FURTHER ADVICE

Financial support (up to 50%) and other forms of assistance may be available towards enhancement or tree planting schemes. For information and advice please contact **The Director Planning, Transportation & Environmental Services, Environment & Conservation Section**, Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, South Gloucestershire BS15 9TR. Tel: 01454 868004

This advice note was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 9th December 1999. It supplements the policies of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan, the guidelines will be taken into account when assessing the merits of planning applications.

The leaflet takes into account the Good Practice Guide on Conservation Areas from English Heritage & PPG 15. This leaflet should be read in conjunction with the **Conservation Area Advice Note** which gives general advice & details of special controls and policies which apply in Conservation Areas.