Shenington with Alkerton Conservation Area Appraisal

February 2009

Planning, Housing and Economy

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

This document is the first appraisal of the character and appearance of Shenington and Alkerton and marks the designation of the two villages as a conservation area.

The boundary includes the historic parts of the two villages, which face each other across the attractive valley of the Sor Brook. The intervening landscape and the landscape backdrop are also included as they contribute much to the rural character.

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1. Introduction and policy context

1.1
The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon local planning authorities to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, through an appraisal process, and to designate them as conservation areas. There are fifty five conservation areas in Cherwell District.

1.2
The Act does not require Local Planning Authorities to carry out public consultation prior to designation, however the Council considers it good practice. Following the request of the Parish Council on 28 March 2008 that the Council undertake an appraisal, public consultation was undertaken on the Draft document and the results are outlined at Appendix 2. The outcome of the consultation was reported to the meeting of the Council's Executive on 2 February 2009 and the amended appraisal was approved and the conservation area designated.

1.3
The appraisal is based on a standard recording format derived from advice by English Heritage (2005a). By designating Shenington with Alkerton a Conservation Area and by writing a full conservation area appraisal, the special character and appearance of the villages can be identified and protected by ensuring that any future development preserves or enhances that identified special character. The appraisal is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the Conservation Area and its setting.

Figure 1: Conservation Area boundary

Conservation Area Boundary

0m   200m

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Legend

- Conservation Area
- Public Rights of Way
- Listed Building (Grade I)
- Listed Building (Grade II*)
- Listed Building (Grade II)
- Building which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Tree Preservation Order
- Archaeological Site

0m   200m

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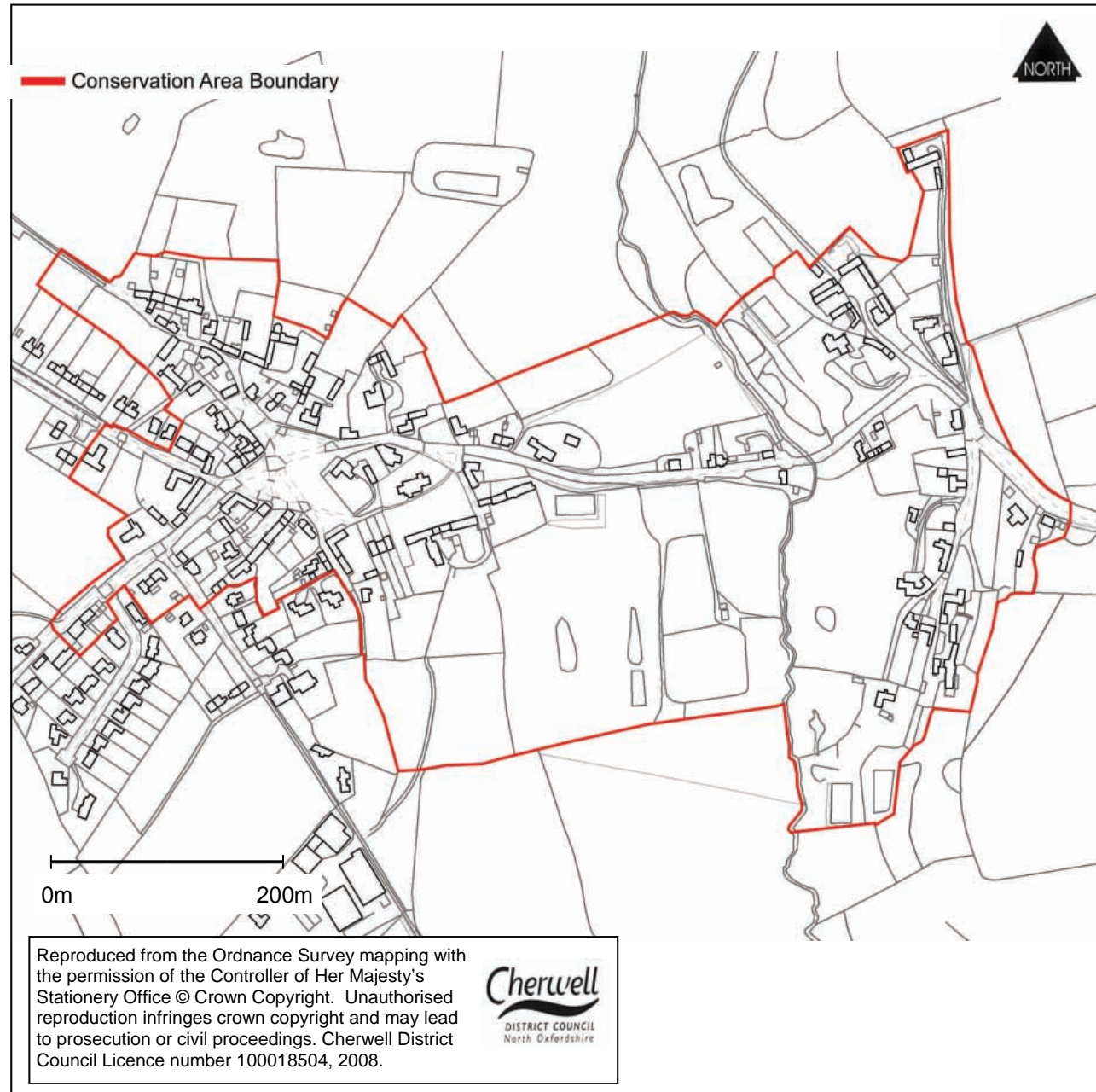
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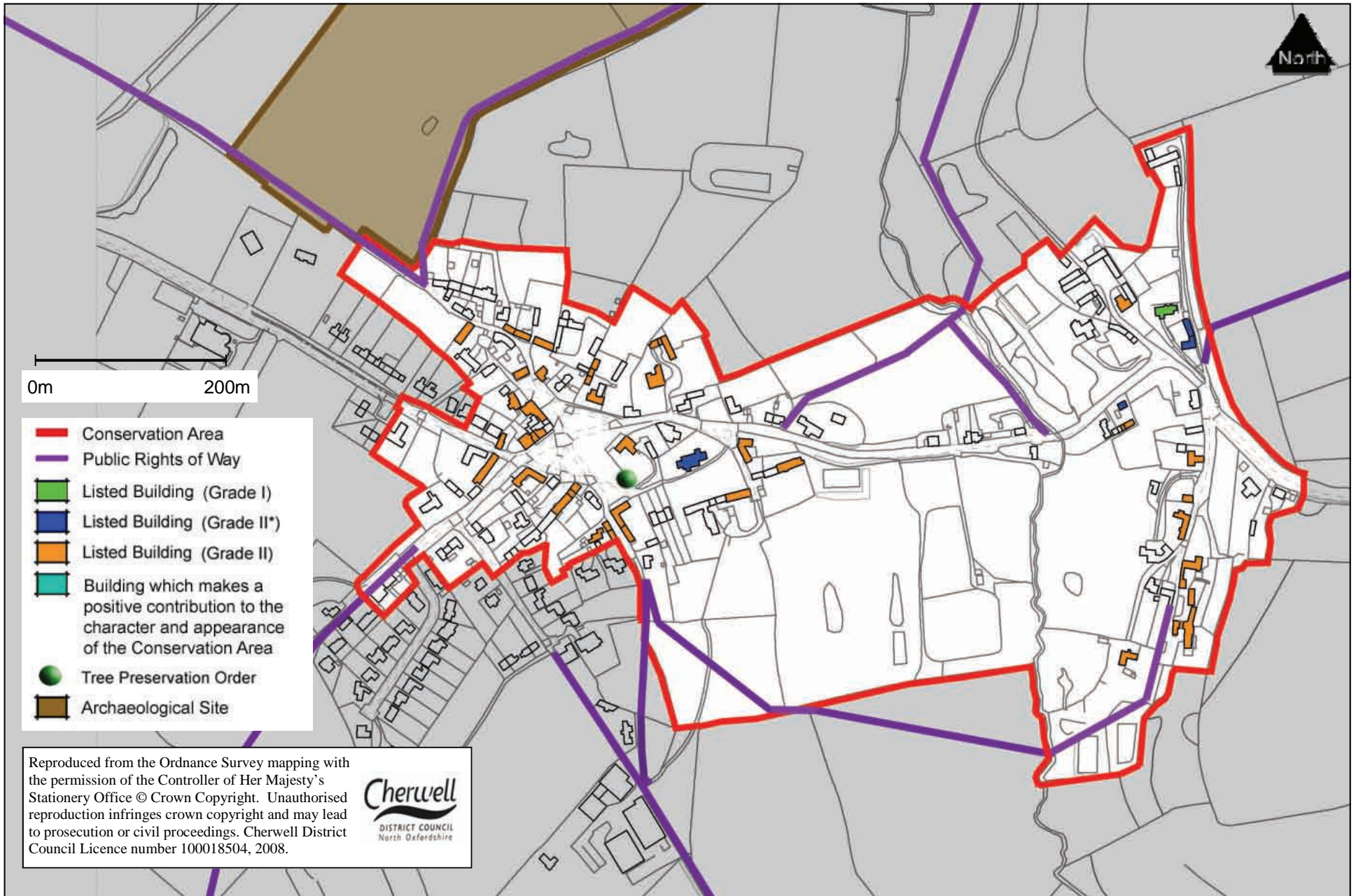DISTRICT COUNCIL
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Figure 2: Area Designations

2. Location and Topography

The villages of Shenington and Alkerton lie in in the ward of Wroxton, North Oxfordshire, approximately 9.3km (6 miles) north-west of Banbury and are amongst the most attractive villages in the Ironstone belt.

The Ironstone plateau is cut into by incised valleys and the two villages face each other across the attractive valley of the Sor Brook, which runs north-south, Shenington to the west on the plateau at 170m and Alkerton to the east along the valley side at 140m.

Figure 3: Location of Conservation Area
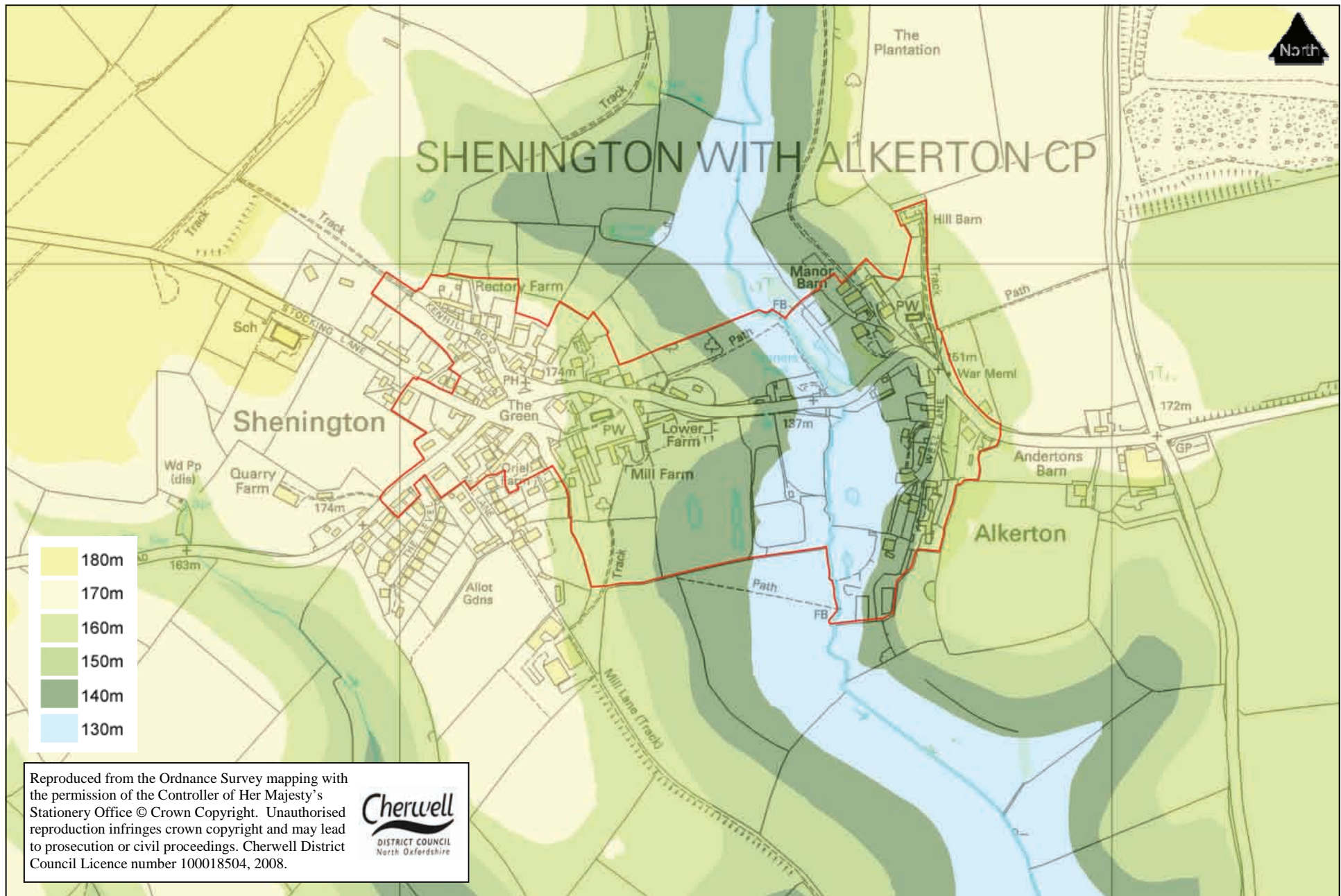

Figure 4: Aerial view of Conservation Area

Figure 5: Topography

3. History and Development

3.1 Origins

3.1.1There is little evidence of the origins of either Shenington or Alkerton, but it seems likely that they are Anglo-Saxon settlements. The Domesday book records Shenington as Shenedon, the first element of which may be Sciena, an Anglo-Saxon leader whose burial mound may have been Shenlow Hill. Alternatively the name could originate from Scenan Dune—or beautiful hill. Alkerton is also a Saxon name and is recorded in the Domesday book as Alcrintone or 'The tun of Ealhere's people'. Tun being an Anglo-Saxon

3.1.2 Shenington has examples of ancient strip–lynchets to the north of the village and possibly to the south west, these Medieval cultivation terraces cover around 8 acres. They represent the oldest construction in the area and are designated a scheduled ancient monument.

3.2 Manors

3.2.1The earliest recorded, and probably the original, Shenington Manor was attached to the lordship of Tewkesbury which was held by Brictric, a prominent Anglo-Saxon Theign, in 1066. At the conquest the lands were granted to Queen Maud. Shenington was among the lands confiscated in 1194 in King John's rebellion and stayed in the Kings hands until 1197. It was the division of the Manor in 1314 amongst the sisters of Gilbert de Clare that probably created the three separate Shenington Manors that eventually converge in the ownership of Oriel College.

3.2.2 The Manor of Sugarswell, just north of Shenington, was first recorded in 1258 under

the ownership of William Sutton. The Manor was held by Simon de Montfort in the mid 15th century but when he was hanged in 1495, for his support of Perkin Warbeck's

Rainald Wadard tenant of Bishop Odo who was granted Alkerton Manor in 1086 (from the Bayeux Tapestry)

Bishop Odo first owner and possibly builder of the oldest Alkerton Manor (from the Bayeux Tapestry)

insurrection, his estates reverted to the crown. The Manor was then granted to the Earl of Kildare and passed to Sir Thomas and Sir James Fitzgerald. In 1534 Sir James was accused of complicity in the rebellion of his nephew and was hanged in 1536, yet again the manor reverted to the crown. The Manor continued its complex descent, coming into the ownership of the eminent divine Calybut Downing in the mid 17th century and finally to the Goodwins in 1732 where Sugarswell was merged with another of Shenington's Manors before being purchased by Oriel College.

3.2.3 The other three Shenington Manors had similarly complex routes to ownership by Oriel, the final manor coming to the College's ownership in 1780.

3.2.4 Alkerton is recorded as having three manors while Shenington appears to have had four as a result of complications in the line of descents.

The oldest Alkerton Manor was first recorded as belonging to Bishop Odo of Bayeaux in 1086 but when the bishop was arrested the manor was granted to Rainald Wadard. The manor passed through the St. Amand family, the Danvers, Bletsoes, the Lydiats and a number of short successions to 1959 when it is recorded as held by Marcus Richard Samuel, Viscount Bearsted.

3.2.5 A further Alkerton Manor is recorded in the 13th century. This manor follows the descent of Horley and Hornton before being held in 1258 by William Sutton but the references to the manor after this date peter out.

3.3 History

3.3.1 According to the historical map of Shenington, in 1732 dwellings were grouped irregularly round the village green and the parish church. From the green radiated three main roads towards different field systems, Rattlecom Lane, Stockin Way and Stratford Way.

3.3.2 Alkerton however developed as a more linear village with the houses strung out along a terraced road looking across the brook to Shenington. The road runs from the 12th century church past the 17th century rectory and manor house towards the Barn House with no remaining trace of the village green recorded in the 18th century.

3.3.3 Alkerton declined to fewer than 10 households in 1428; this decline is likely to have been the result of the Black Death, which ravaged northern Oxfordshire in 1349. During the 16th and 17th centuries however, as with elsewhere in the area, the population recovered. However, the population remained poor with the majority of the wealth in the hands of just a few men. This was probably as a result of the distance of the village from Banbury where yeoman farmers and the wool trade was beginning to give a greater spread of wealth.

3.3.4 Alkerton has always been the smaller village. In 1641, there were 29 adults in the parish. The figure was increased to 69 adults in 1676. The increase in population and dwellings are more obvious in the 18th century. Six farm-houses and eight town-houses were recorded in 1738 which increased to 38 houses in 1831 and the population to 201 in 1871. However, it dropped dramatically to 88 in 1951 due to the agricultural depression.

Survey of Shenington 1813 from Oriel College archives

3.3.5 Shenington followed a similar pattern to Alkerton but on a larger scale. In 1676 there were 110 adults recorded in the parish, in 1712 the number had grown to 280 rising in the 19th century to a high of 463 before declining again to 233 in 1961.

3.3.6 The second half of the 20th century saw significant new housing developed to the west of the historic core of Shenington taking the present day population to 387.

3.3.7 Other than small scale conversion of agricultural buildings there has been no significant new development in Alkerton since the mid 20th century.

3.3.8 Shenington has 4 outlying farms including Sugarswell (originally Shokerswell or robber's spring) which stands on the site of the 12th century hamlet of the same name.

Correction sheet in Customs of the manor of Shenington, 1693-1756, from Oriel College archives

Fig 6 Historical maps of Shenington from Oriel College
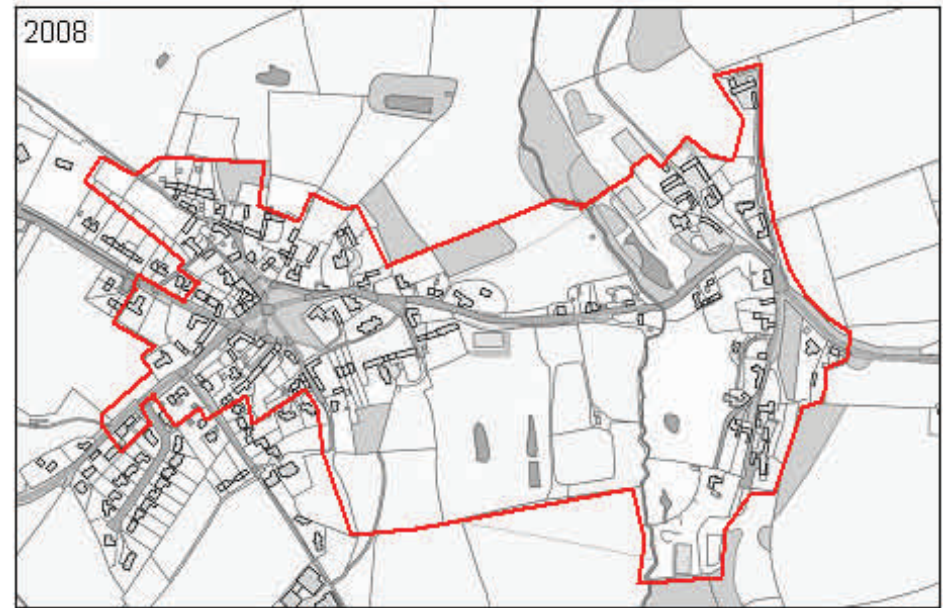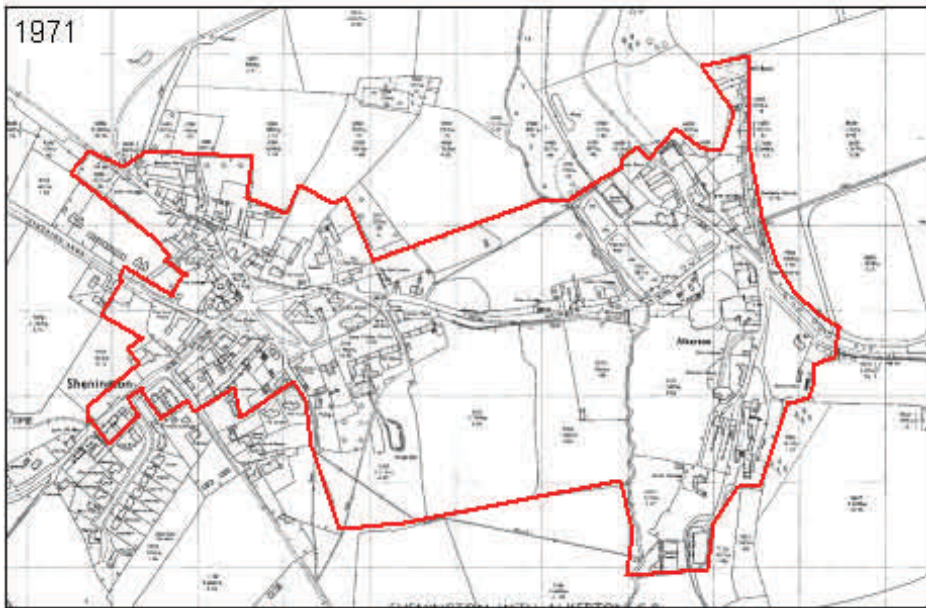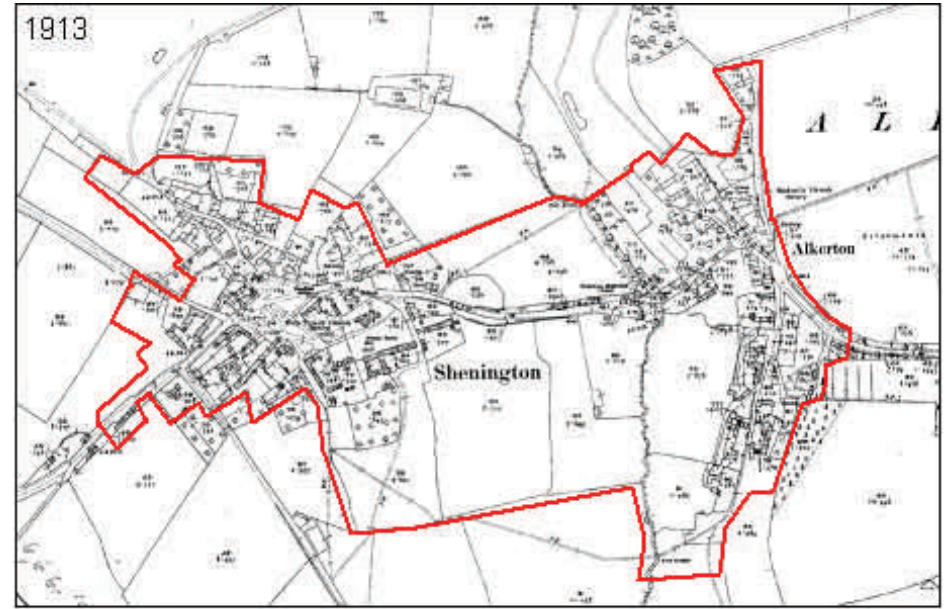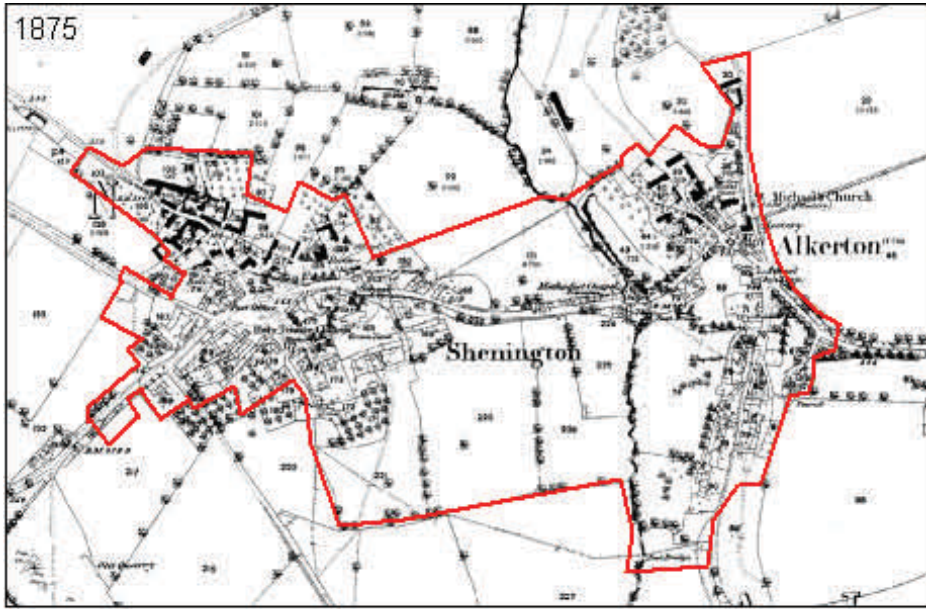
Fig 7 OS maps from 1875 to the present day illustrating development

3.4 Development

3.4.1 Accounts of 1327 suggest that Shenington was a fairly prosperous settlement although the hamlet of Sugarswell was included in tax assessments at this time. In the 17th century, although land around Sugarswell Farm in the north had been inclosed by 1609, the majority of Shenington had no dominant inclosing landlord. Open fields covered most of the parish with evidence of piecemeal clearing of land near Shenlow Hill in the field names including the word 'stocking' (clearing). Early 17th century terriers show that Alkerton's fields were divided into lands (a strip in an open field), ridges, 'hades' (an area of grassland within the arable field) and leys (areas kept for hay and pasture, two leys to the acre), lying on both the north and south of the village in furlongs. There is also evidence that the village had water meadows and lot meadows in 1619 as well as heathland. The fields around the parish were farmed on a complicated rotation system. The arable land was interspersed with 'leys', a characteristic method of farming in this area of Oxfordshire. In 1732 meadow land was recorded along the Alkerton Brook under the names of Iron Meadow, Drinkwater Meadow, Comptons Meads, Townside Meadow and Mill Meadow. The open fields contained small holdings of single acres, butts (a short strip) and leys right up until the inclosure, the map of 1781 shows the dramatic change of appearance as a result of land being consolidated into farms. This continued during the 19th century, especially after the Napoleonic Wars when greater arable production was badly needed. The surrounding landscape was improved by tree planting which continued until the 1960s. By the mid 19th century there were less than half the number of farms recorded before inclosure.

Fig 8 Map of field systems from Victoria County History p.146

3.4.2 Both villages had water mills, Shenington's mill and miller's house lay on Shenington Brook in the south east corner of the parish while the site of Alkerton's mill is uncertain. The mill, like Shenington Manor, was divided into fifths resulting in Oriel College owning four-fifths in the 17th century. The Shenington corn-mill is recorded in 1855 as working with two pairs of stones but could only function for a short period each year because its reliance on a few uncertain springs. It had disappeared by 1882.

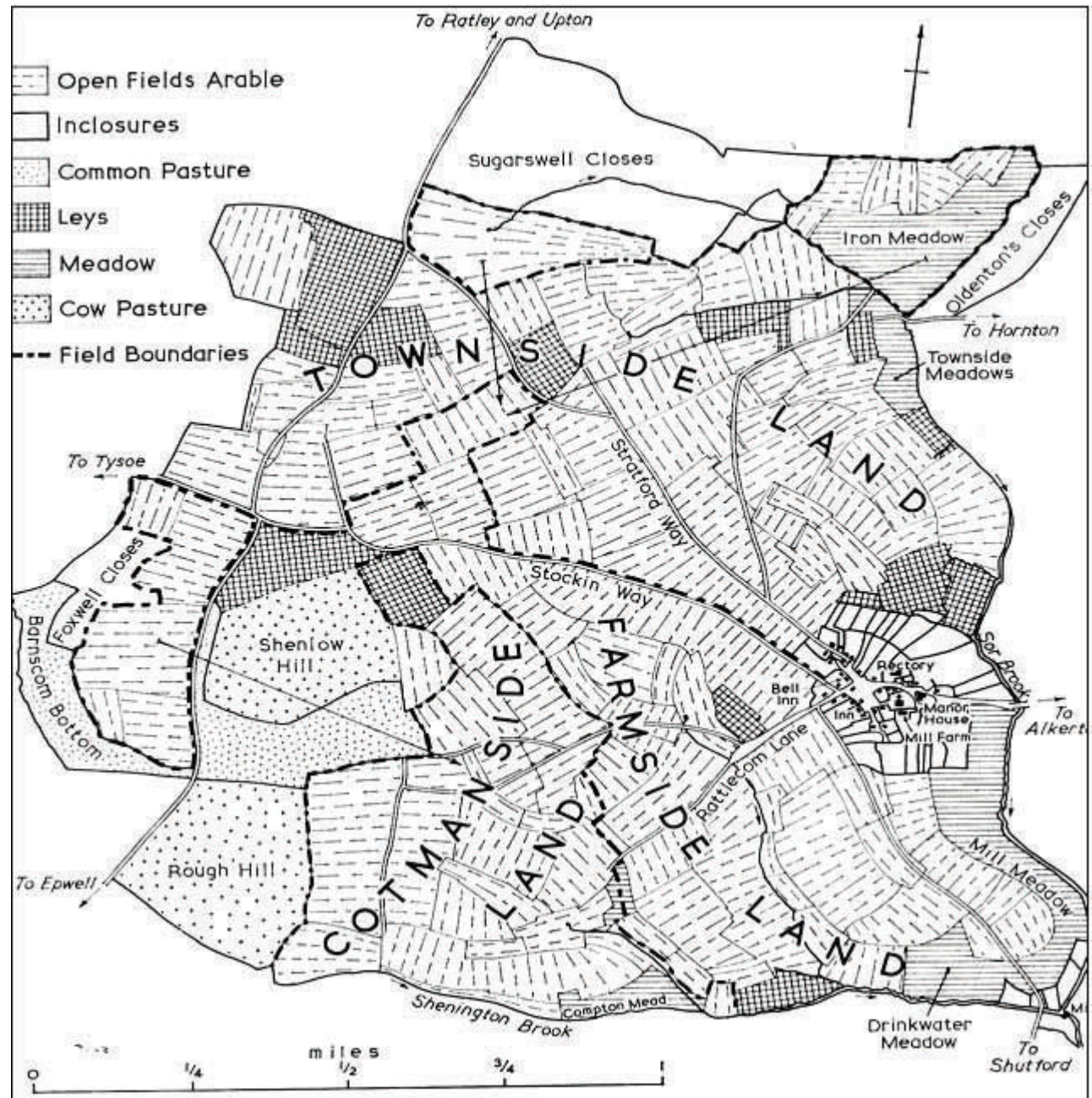3.4.3 As at Shenington, the traditional village craftsmen of Alkerton, such as the cooper, carpenter and stonemason, slowly disappeared during the last century. As recently as 1916 Alkerton was felt to be too far from Banbury and too hilly for the delivery of manure and sending away of produce. By 1959 only two land-owners owned the majority of the land in the parish, a far cry from the numbers farming in the 17th century. Two family run farms remain in the parish but agriculture is no longer a source of much employment.

Alkerton Rectory

3.4.4 In 1625, Alkerton Rectory was rebuilt by Thomas Lydiat, son of Christopher Lydiat who acquired Alkerton Manor in 1567. Thomas was a Fellow of New College, Oxford. He was also a mathematician, chronologer, cosmographer and Reader to Henry, Prince of Wales. He was a well known scholar in his day and is mentioned by Dr Johnson in The Vanity of Human Wishes:-

"See Nations, slowly wise and meanly just
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend, Hear
Lydiat's life, and Galileo's end."

3.4.5 During the Civil War Alkerton was raided several times by parliamentary troops based in Compton Wyniates. There is also evidence that a clause 'to provide free quarter for soldiers' was written into every lease in the village for a number of years in this period. There are few records of events within the villages during the Civil War but Anthony a Wood wrote that 'Calybute Downing, a son of Calybute of Shenington was a violent preacher to stir up the Rebellion against King Charles the first. He dyed in 1644'. Records that may have enlightened us further may well have been lost in the later fire.

3.4.6 In 1721 a fire damaged large numbers of dwellings in the village of Shenington, including the rectory house, which was later rebuilt. Many houses lost their thatch roofs and the hardship this caused was recorded in the Whitehall Evening Post.

3.4.7 The road from Banbury to Stratford (the present A422) runs to the north of Alkerton and was turnpiked in 1743-4. However both villages remain fairly secluded being connected to their neighbours by minor roads only.

Alkerton Church

3.4.8 St Michael at Alkerton has features that date from the 12th century, but there is no documentary evidence for its existence before 1233. The living was poor and had some trouble attracting residence until it was united with Shenington in 1900. Attempts had been made in 1869 to unite the livings but a protest signed by over 70 people, mostly from Alkerton, stated that the villages were 'perfectly distinct' and the journey between them would be 'most tedious and difficult'.
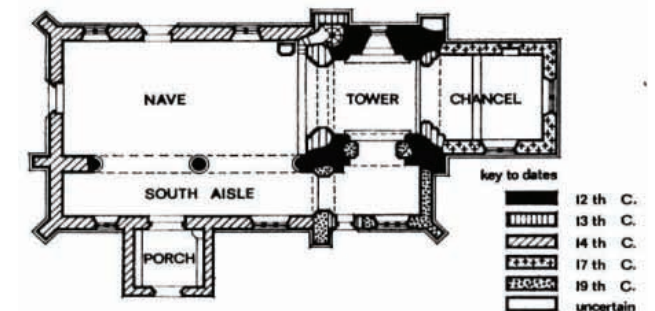
Plan of Alkerton Church from Victoria County History

3.4.9 The church of Holy Trinity in Shenington has elements of a 12th century origin visible in its architecture and records place its existence in the first half of that century when Robert Sor gave the advowson to Tewkesbury Abbey. Unlike Alkerton non-residence was common throughout the Middle Ages despite Shenington being a better living. Shenington church retains two annual customs: grass (from a piece of ground near Kennel Lane) strewing for three weeks at Whitsun first recorded in 1720 (although this may have been an earlier tradition, the records were lost in the 1721 fire); and the Oddfellows or Amicable service on Trinity Monday, which has continued since 1841. Until 1948 an annual village festival was also held on this day on the village green.

Holy Trinity Church, Shenington

3.4.10 Shenington had no meeting house in the 17th century and it is likely that the 6 quaker families recorded in 1676 attended the house in Shutford. In 1815 a blacksmith in Shenington was using his house for dissenting meetings and in 1819 a Methodist Chapel was founded just on the Shenington side of the Sor Brook. The chapel was described as Primitive Methodist only in 1869 and was in use until 1962. Alkerton nonconformists probably visited the Shenington Methodist chapel although a meeting house was recorded in Alkerton in 1854.

3.4.11 Despite the name 'School-House Close' recorded in Shenington in 1732 there is no evidence of a school house in the village until the 19th century. A small school was started in Alkerton in 1811 in the chancel of the church but this was not large enough and in 1818 the parish established a National School with Shenington.

The Old School in Shenington

This was supplemented in 1868 with a night school for the children of Alkerton in the winter. In 1871 Alkerton established a mixed elementary school with accommodation for 58 children but the attendance was low and by 1905 the school had closed.

Alkerton children returned to the Shenington elementary school, which continues as the Shenington with Alkerton school. A new building for the school was constructed in 2003. The primary school has some 80-90 pupils and a nursery school operates from the Village Hall.

Alkerton School House

3.4.12 In the sixteenth century, most of Shenington was owned by Oriel College, Oxford. Between 1920 and 1924, Oriel sold the last of its Shenington properties. Oriel Farm is a potent reminder that it was a working farm until 1939 when the Air Ministry commandeered the land. 'Olde Grimes Cottage' is another link to the college, and Oriel House is a reminder that it was leased to Thomas Grime, the Butler to Oriel College in 1569, which was subsequently used as the Rectory for a period in the 1800s and recently as a doctor's surgery.

3.4.13 The village acquired notoriety in 1810 when a prize fight was arranged by Morant Gale of Upton between Molyneaux, a Negro pugilist, and the English champion, Thomas Cribb. The ring was in Shenington Hollow (field names suggest this was on the slopes to the east of the village facing Alkerton), well away from the vigilant watch of the Gloucestershire J.P.s, and the match was fought on 3 December. The two hundred guinea stake-money was won by Thomas Cribb after 39 rounds.

Fight between Thomas Cribb & Molyneaux
From:http://www.greatmodernpictures.com

3.4.14 In the 18th century Alkerton is recorded as having a town green but no trace of it remains in the village.

3.4.15 The village pond on Shenington green had disappeared by 1813 but records of its maintenance still remain in the churchwardens accounts. The pond may have been fed by a spring that dried up but is likely to have been artificial, created in a clay lined pit as a watering hole for passing horses.

3.4.16 In 1845 Shenington, which until this point lay within Gloucestershire, became incorporated into Oxfordshire and joined to Alkerton parish.

Children playing on village green, (1900)

3.4.17 The Shenington Amicable Society was formed in 1841; there were never to be more than 121 members who each paid 3 shillings a quarter. The object of the society was to provide payment of up to 7 shillings a week to any sick member from the subscriptions. If a member died money was given towards the funeral and every member within the parish would have to attend. In 1971, Sir John Betjeman spoke on the character of the countryside and the buildings in the village at the society's annual service on Trinity Monday. In 1972 its members joined with Hook Norton Lodge and the services continued to be held until 1987.

3.4.18 Following the agricultural changes in the 20th century, the character of the village has been substantially changed due to the introduction of machinery and the amalgamation of farms. Nowadays, residents mostly work outside the village and very few are involved in agriculture.
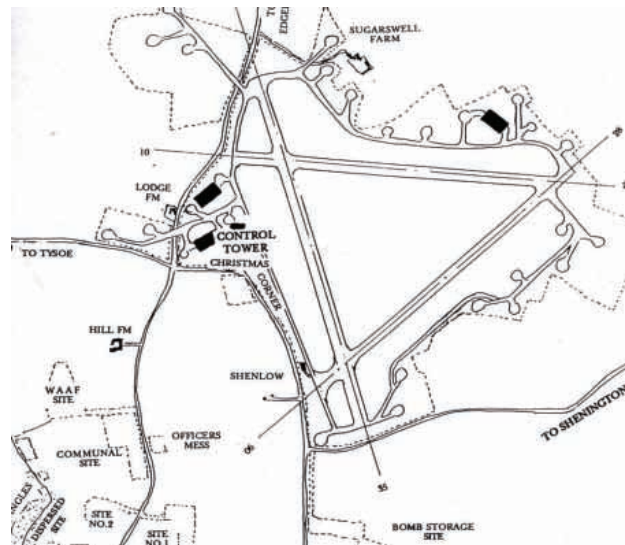
RAF Edgehill in 1945

3.4.19 The flat land to the north west of Shenington was used as an airfield during the second world war. It was built to fulfil a wartime requirement and during the 1940s was used as a satellite station for both 21 and 12 Operational Training Units, training bomber aircrew. RAF Edgehill played a significant role in developing the first jet propelled aircraft. The Gloster E28/39 Pioneer (the Whittle jet) came to Edgehill at the beginning of 1942 after completing its initial test flying at RAF Cranwell. A hangar was built to house the jet in secrecy on the aerodrome perimeter between Christmas Corner and Shenington turn. After the end of the war Edgehill became a sub storage depot for 25 Maintenance Unit but by the end of the 1940s the aerodrome was falling into disrepair. It was abandoned in 1955 and has since been used as a course for go-karting and gliding. The Kart club has been active since the 1960s and is now a Grade 3 heritage motor racing venue. Although new buildings and hangers have been erected, there are still a variety of wartime buildings in a fairly derelict state but still recognisable around the airfield and local area.

Gloster E28/39

4. Archaeology

There has been little investigation in either of the villages. Three watching briefs were maintained during works at Oriel Farm, The Nook (formerly Longwalls) and Old School. No archaeological features were discovered at Oriel Farm and only a few Victorian finds were discovered in the front garden of Longwalls. The watching brief at Old School revealed that the site had been heavily truncated in the 20th Century, probably removing any material relating to the 12th Century church or village, once believed to have been on the site.

Most of the discoveries have been to the west of Shenington. The reason for this could be due to the land use at the time when the aerial photographs were taken, which are used to display cropmarks or the underlying geology, which could affect which areas show up as cropmarks.

Key:
- **01** Bronze Age settlement and find spot.
- **02** Mesolithic flints.
- **03** Scheduled Ancient Monument. Medieval strip fields where the ridges follow the contours of the land rather than running down the slope.
- **04** Medieval arrowhead.
- **05** Old Quarry
- **06** Shrunken village and fishponds
- **07** Bronze Age artefacts
- **08** Undated lynchet (ridge or ledge formed by ancient ploughing on a slope)
- **09** Old stone quarry
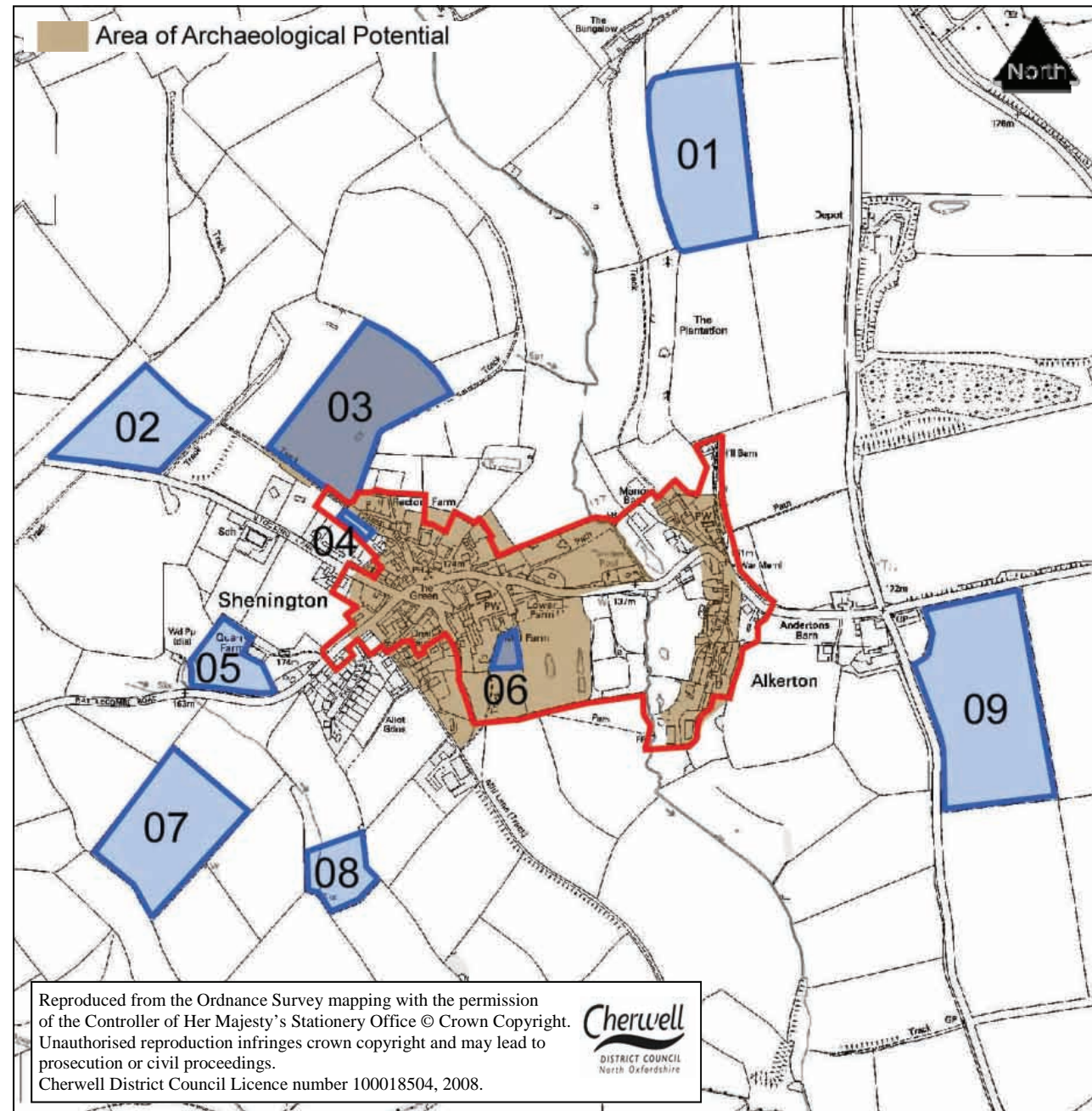

Area of Archaeological Potential

Figure 9: Archaeological Map

5. Architecture

5.1   Both Shenington and Alkerton display excellent examples of polite and vernacular Ironstone properties, mainly dating from the 17th century onwards.

5.2   Approximately 1/3 of the properties within the conservation area are statutorily listed, including the 12th century Grade I St Michael's Church, Alkerton, which is therefore one of the top 2% highest quality buildings in England, and three Grade II* buildings (The Old Rectory and The Beeches, Alkerton and Holy Trinity Church, Shenington), which are therefore within the top 6% highest quality buildings in the country.

5.3   The many Grade II buildings date predominantly from the 17th century, with later additions and /or alterations. These include

- Former farm houses, for example Top Farmhouse and Mill Farm, Shenington, and Manor Farmhouse, Alkerton
- Gentleman's residences, for example The Limes and Oriel House, Shenington
- Former cottages, for example The Nook, The Bay and Old Alms Houses, Shenington.
- A former rectory, Cotman House, Shenington,
- Former barns and stables, for example those associated with Senedone House, Shenington
- Former shops, for example Knapp House and Longwoth, Shenington.

5.4   Unlisted buildings also make a positive contribution and include:

- Tanners Pool, Alkerton, thought to date from 1665
- Former school houses in both Shenington and Alkerton,
- Converted barns, for example Hill Barn, Alkerton
- Buildings with former uses, for example, The Old Bakery, Shenington
- Good examples of labourers' cottages, for example Honeysuckle Cottage and cottages on Rattlecombe Road

as well as ironstone boundary walls.

5.5   Some properties are even older, such as Alkerton House, which has the date stone 1415, or have earlier origins, for example the Barn House complex, Alkerton. A major fire of 1721, commemorated on the inscription on Mizpah Cottage, destroyed many properties in Shenington and others lost their thatch, which explains the flurry of building activity at that time in the village.

5.6   It is the homogeneity of construction materials in both villages that is quite spectacular. The use of the very distinctive local ironstone for elevations and boundary walls is
almost universal. This attractive stone can be carefully cut, squared and coursed as illustrated at Cotman House, Senedone House and Lower Farm House, Shenington and   Alkerton House.   In more humble properties it is used as rubble roughly brought to courses, for example at Mitzpah Cottage or uncoursed, for example at Olde Grimes Cottage, Shenington.

5.7   Original roofing materials were stone slate on grander properties and thatch on others, but Stonesfield slates remain only on

The Limes and Old School, Shenington and the Church of St Michael and Old Rectory, Alkerton. Although many thatched buildings remain, for example The Cranny and Old Grimes Cottage, Shenington, and The Beeches, Alkerton, the traditional long straw with a flush ridge has been mainly replaced by wheat straw or wheat reed and
block cut ridges. Other replacement roofing materials include a high proportion of Welsh slate with plain clay and concrete tiles, but the steeply pitched roofs indicate that thatch was the original material in many cases.

16.8 Most of the buildings, being of a vernacular type, have 2 and 3 light timber casements, but Mill Farm, Shenington, and Alkerton House still have their original stone mullion   windows   and   Oriel   House, Shenington has 10-paned leaded three-light metal windows.   More polite, or later, buildings have vertical sliding sash windows, such as Lower Farmhouse, Shenington, and Windwistle respectively, but these are not common.   Some of the grander properties have small pitched roofed dormers set off the purlin in the roof, for example Top Farmhouse, Shenington,   Brook Cottage, Alkerton.   and

5.9   Virtually all properties are two storey, although there is a remarkable variation on scale, ranging from the former farmhouses, to small workers' cottages originally one-above-one roomed hovels, such as those along Rattlecombe Road. Victorian development is limited, but this also displays a grander, more formal scale, such as Colebroook Cottage, off The Green, and Fuschia / Lilac Cottage, Rattlecombe Road.

Legend:
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Church Character Area
- Village Green Character Area
- Village Fringe Charatcer Area
- Valley Slopes Character Area
- Alkerton Character Area
- The Barns Character Area

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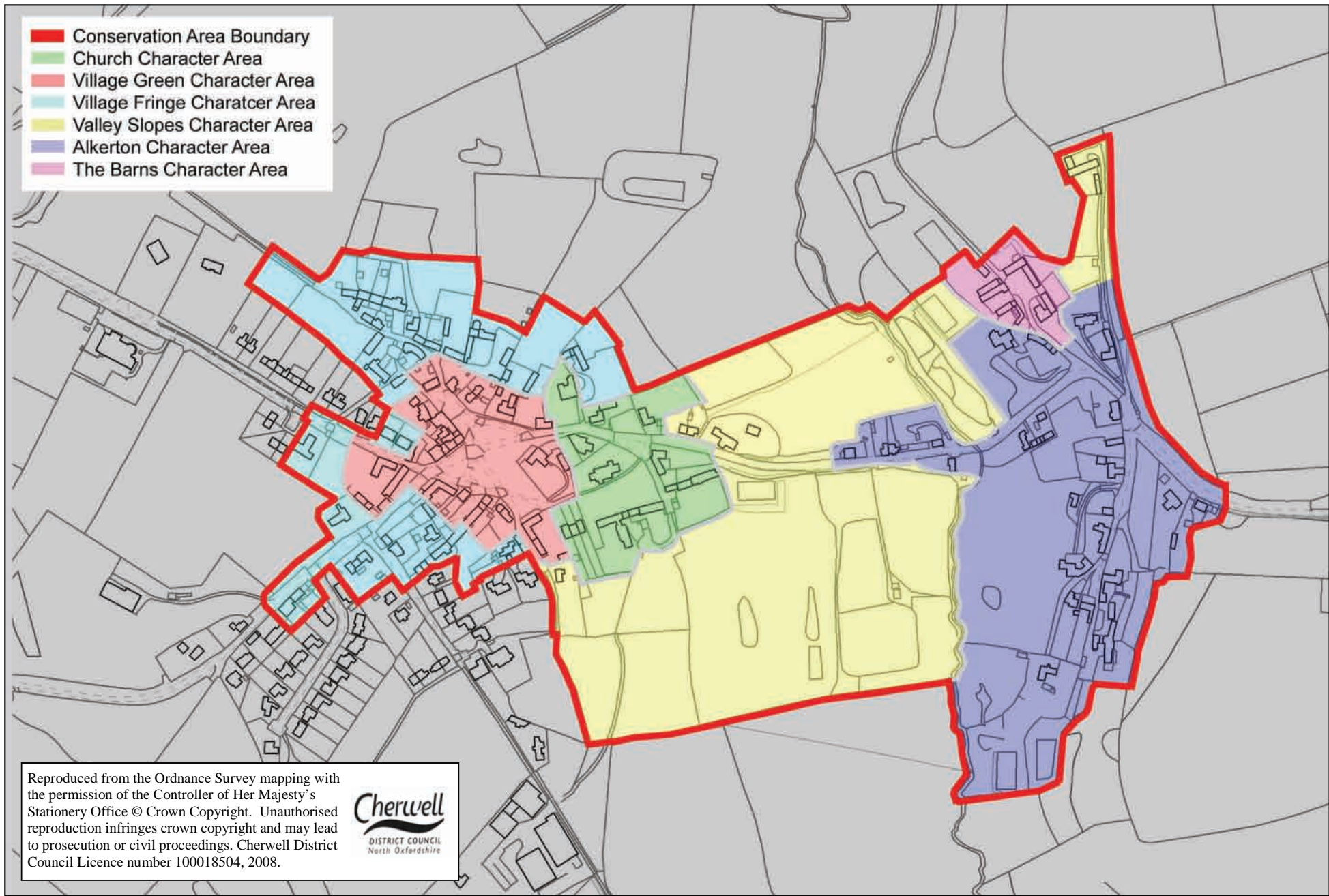
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Figure 10 Character Areas

6. Character Areas

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Shenington and Alkerton are amongst the finest examples of the villages of the Ironstone belt that runs through north Oxfordshire into Northamptonshire.

6.1.2 The area is particularly known for its rich coloured Ironstone Hornton Stone which is the traditional and still predominant building material in the area. It is a soft stone, easily worked and many properties display fine ashlar elevations.

6.1.3 The stone is not suitable as a roofing material and long straw thatch with a plain flush ridge was the traditional roofing material. Although this was largely replaced by Welsh slate following the construction of the Oxford Canal, the steep pitches of the formerly thatched roofs generally remain, giving an indication of the original material.

6.1.4 Although facing each other on opposite sides of the valley of the Sor Brook and united by a common palette of materials, each village exhibits a character quite distinct from the other.

6.1.5 Within each village there are smaller areas displaying homogeneity of character and the valley itself displays a particular character.

6.1.6 These character areas are identified on Fig 10 and analysed in the following sections of the appraisal.

6.2 The Villages

6.2.1 Shenington is a nucleated hill top settlement, with the village green dominating its historic core, the church and associated buildings slightly off centre and the village fringes, mainly of later construction, wrapping around the historic core. There has been some residential development since the mid 20th century, which has assisted in supporting and retaining village facilities. The village enjoys expansive views in most directions, but particularly east across the Sor Valley. The historic core of the village and its associated landscape, but not later development of no special architectural or historic interest, is included in the conservation area.

6.2.2 Alkerton is a smaller, linear hillside settlement, generally running along the contours of the west facing valley side. The single street allows only limited views out, but individual properties boast magnificent views west towards Shenington. The whole village including its landscape backdrop is included within the conservation area.

6.2.3 The differences between the villages stem from their relationship with the topography, which results in the nucleated and linear form. This is illustrated graphically on *Fig 12 Figure Ground Plan*, which indicates only built form and walls that enclose the public domain. Shenington can be seen to be inward looking, with 6 historic routes, meeting at the Green. Alkerton, on the other hand, is strung out along a single route, off the through route terminating at farm groups.

6.3 The Sor Valley slopes

6.3.1 North and west of Banbury the landscape character is described as Incised Ironstone Plateau by Cobham Resource Consultants(1995). The area type is described as "exposed with rough grazing predominating, with some level and gently sloping areas under arable cultivation. The fields tend to be large and lacking in enclosure while the hedges are low and closely trimmed. The upland landscape is very open with long views down the valleys

6.3.2 The Sor Brook has its source just north of the villages, close to Upton Park, which is located on top of the scarp slope of the Ironstone Downs, and flows through an incised and attractive valley between the villages and via Broughton and Adderbury into the River Cherwell.

6.3.3 The Sor Valley creates an attractive landscape along its entire length, but it particularly stunning here where, the network of well used public rights of way that crosses the area opens up vistas along and across the natural landscape which incorporate a range of man made interventions, from the strip Lychettes to woodland plantations, farms and village buildings.

6.3.4 It is the views across the Sor Valley that visually connect the two settlements and the importance of the views is set out at section 13.

7. Church Character Area
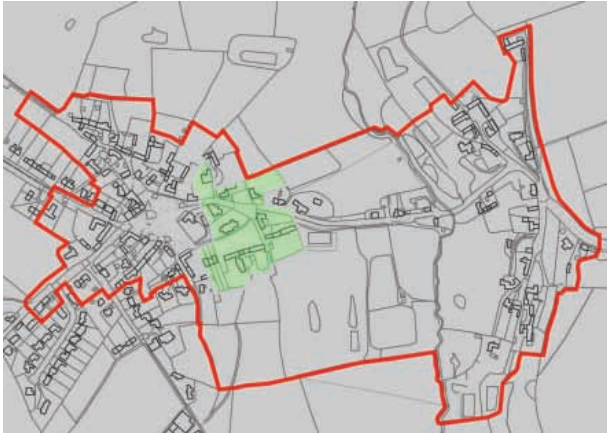
This area is the heart of this nucleated village, composed of the church, churchyard and those buildings that contribute to the setting of the Listed church.

7.1 Land use

The area, other than the church itself, is residential. The village school north of the church, closed in the early years of this century, is currently being d converted to a dwelling.

7.2 Street pattern

The tarmacadam road from Alkerton emerges from its incised lane climbing up the hillside and cuts this area in two. The trees and hedges create a tunnel-effect down the road. An informal un-named lane surfaced in tarmac and then unbound gravel, enclosed by vegetation and newly constructed high stone walls runs south to Mill Farm, giving access to the recently converted buildings effectively from the rear, creating a discrete area enjoying expansive views south down the Sor Valley, but effectively severing the former farm buildings from the holding physically with extensive walling and soft landscaping. At the

junction informal yet kerbed grass verges provide a setting for Lower Farm, which is dual fronted and angled to lead the eye down the lane. The remains of a concrete platform constructed around the time of WWII is visible beside the church wall and was used until the early 1970s for the milk churn collection from Mill Farm. The access to the church yard is from east and west through iron gates from this junction and from the Green.

The lane to Mill Farm enclosed with vegetation

7.3 Building age, type and style

The mainly 12th century Holy Trinity Church was extended from the 13th—16th centuries, and restored heavily in 1879. The restorations included the insertion of a new chancel arch in 13th century style.

Fronting the road the 17th and 18th century vernacular cottages are former businesses, a hint of their use being given by their names such as The Old Bakery (remembered by current residents as Grant's Bakery) and these would have provided both workspace

and living accommodation, but are now much altered.

The former school, built in 1818, has distinctive regular stonework and pointed gables, commanding a highly visible place on the corner of the main road.

The terrace of three large cottages south west of the church are Victorian with some neo-Gothic elements, possibly indicating a period of wealth on the late 19th century. Bramley's Barn and Lower Farm Barn are recent conversions reflecting the decline in the practice of farming from the village.

7.4 Scale and massing

Excepting the church and Lower Farm Barn conversion, the properties are mainly two storeys, some with attics. Most buildings are detached and enjoy relatively spacious grounds around them. The former school nestles by the road to the north of the church. The area is slightly lower than the village green to the west, and so the church is not particularly dominant in the streetscene.

*Mainly 12th century Holy Trinity Church*

7.5 Construction and materials

Ironstone is the exclusive building material in the church area but the traditional thatch has largely been replaced by plain concrete tiles or Welsh slate roofing. The church and old school are exceptions with stone slate roofs. Interesting features include rubbed stone lintels at Lower Farm.

Windows are mainly timber framed casements. Mill Farm has a series of splendid stone mullions with deep moulding and metal casements. Some projecting rooflights have been inserted on Lower Farm Barn, which are not entirely sympathetic, but are situated on the rear slope to mitigate the effect on the property's appearance. The majority of properties have chimneys which break up the skyline, the materials ranging from stone at Mill Farm to blue brick at Lower Farm and Cotman House. The conversion of Bramley's Barn has incorporated local materials into the building.

Stone mullion windows at Mill Farm
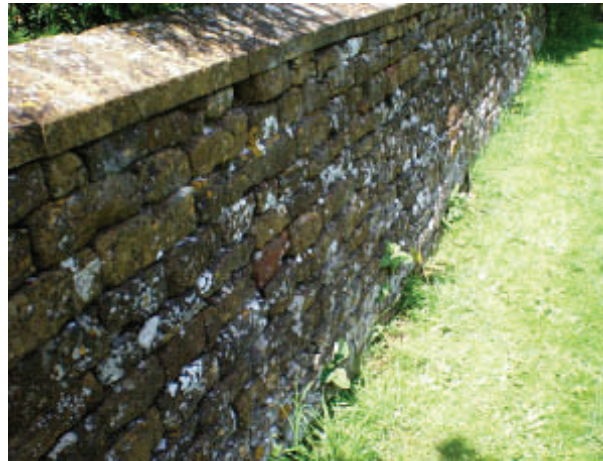
Church yard wall

7.6 Means of enclosure

Walls are a significant feature of this area, making a particularly positive contribution to its character and appearance. The churchyard is enclosed by stone retaining walls with rounded stone capping, varying in height as the land falls away towards the main road. These are suffering from damp, but the lichen, which is prevalent within the churchyard, has not reached this wall.

On its south side the churchyard is bounded by the historic and unassuming rear elevations of the Mill Farm complex, which remain relatively unaffected by the recent conversions and present a very attractive setting for the church. The former school is bounded by a significant stone wall, recently partially demolished and under reconstruction to enable vehicular access as part of a conversion to residential use.

7.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

The churchyard is dotted with evergreen trees, shrubs and wild flowers, and is a testament to low key maintenance, with wild flowers and grasses softening the edges of the enclosure wall and the headstones. Lichen covers the soft ironstone headstones and several of the older graves are now illegible due to this attack, however the aesthetic appeal of this combined with the un-manicured character is highly pleasing.

Trees in private gardens overhang walls, and the wisteria and lavender at the front of The Old Bakery opposite the church is a colourful contrast to the ironstone backdrop.

The grass verges and banks give way to the front gardens and some on-street frontages, and kerbing is minimal and granite. An informal on-street parking area has been established outside Cotman House.

The Old School House bell

7.8 Features of special interest

- The school house currently retains its bell. It would be desirable for the bell to be retained as part of the conversion. The school is part of the community triangle together with the nearby church and hall which were meeting places for villagers.

- The three Victorian cottages close to the church are almost identical to the three cottages of a similar age on Rattlecombe Road, and were all constructed using the stone from the former Shenington Mill, demolished in 1882. It is likely that these were connected to Oriel Farm through the college.

- Mill Farm is a fine example of a rural farm building, with its long rectangular form and regular windows. It is visible across the valley and provides an interesting contrast to the church within the area, being set low into the landscape and its simple form emphasising its long roofline.

The Fire Insurance plaque at Lower Farm

- Lower Farm retains a New Fire Office Insurance mark depicting a phoenix rising from the flames and the word 'Protection' underneath. The earliest this would date from is 1782 and was the sign of a company commonly used in London by sugar refineries. Unfortunately the spear which originally lay diagonally behind the plaque is only visible from its remnants, however the survival of this feature adds character to what would have been a fairly high status building within the character area.

The view east along the main road towards Alkerton

7.9 Carriageway, pavements, footpaths

The main road through the village is tarmac with some gravel egress from driveways onto the highway. There are no obvious footways, however the steep incline and twisting road slows traffic to some extent. The lanes are not kerbed, however granite setts are evident around the corners of the small green area outside Lower Farm.

7.10 Threats

- The lack of footways may generate fears for pedestrian safety, however inserting footways would detract from the rural character of the village.

- The church currently has a damp problem which may lead to crumbling stonework. This is particularly evident at the base of the tower, and the interior walls of the ringing chamber are frequently slick with water and minerals released from the stonework.

- The headstones within the churchyard are mainly ironstone and are suffering from weathering and lichen. The ground is also difficult to drain, and several stones are now angled due to the soft earth underneath them giving way. While this may be of concern to churchwardens, and not be structurally sound for the stone, the overall visual effect is quite charming and adds to the rural appeal of the churchyard.

The angled headstones in the churchyard

8. Village Green Character Area
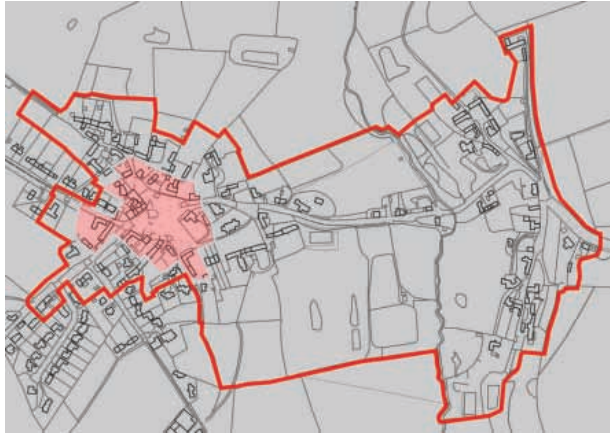
This area is the core of Shenington village. The green is evident on the earliest maps and has not changed in form since.

8.1 Land use
The area is mainly residential, with a large area of public green, a public house and the village hall. The green is the focus of this nucleated village, and is used by residents throughout the year. The village hall, originally donated to the village as a reading room by the Earl of Jersey, has a lively programme of nursery school and other events, some of which spill out onto the Green. Children from the nursery play on it on sunny days, and fetes are held each summer.

The view west along the main road showing the access roads crossing the green

8.2 Street pattern
The main road through the village divides the village green unequally in two. The perimeter of the green is defined by a number of single carriageway roads to the south; the smaller triangular green to the north is also contained by narrow roads in front of The Limes and the Bell Inn. These unclassified access roads are adopted by Oxfordshire County Council.

The Limes screened by formal pollarded lime trees

8.3 Building age, type and style
Although there is a uniformity of building materials, the scale and style of the buildings varies. There are three larger dwellings; The Limes, Oriel House and Senendone, which are 17th century or earlier in origins as former farm houses or gentleman' residences, but were re-faced in the 18th century to give modest Georgian features with large windows and balanced proportions. The majority of dwelling around the green are smaller 18th-19th century workers cottages and converted farm buildings, with origins before the 1721 fire, and all are vernacular in style.

Longworth, formerly one of the village shops

8.4 Scale and massing
The properties surrounding the Green are all two or two and a half storeys, many of which bound the highway with only a small garden as an enclosure. Being set back slightly from the main roads means that the properties do not dominate the Green, as the wide open space allows them to be large without overwhelming the area. The built form is balanced with vegetation and so neither dominates the area.

The Bell Inn

8.5 Construction and materials

Ironstone provides an underlying uniformity of appearance, enhanced by variations in the use of the material, for example Oriel House has ashlar, Windwistle is coursed ironstone, whereas Thimblestone Cottage is ironstone rubble.

It is likely that many of the properties within the village were once thatched. The three remaining thatched properties, Thimblestone Cottage, Rayners Cottage and The Cranny, are situated on opposite sides of the character area. Replacement of traditional roofing materials has led to small plain concrete tiles as the main roofing material. The majority of windows are timber framed, although several are painted white which contrasts well with the ironstone, making the windows stand out clearly. Oriel House is an exception with metal casement windows. The village hall has a fine range of stone mullion windows with metal casements. There is a general lack of cills underlining the vernacular style of the village. The rubbed stone lintels at Longworth are an unusual feature.

View of the church across The Green

Thimblestone Cottage -
Ironstone rubble with one of the few remaining thatches

Above: Oriel House - the steep pitch of the ties roof
suggests it was once thatched

Village Hall -
Stone mullioned windows with metal casements

8.6 Means of enclosure

The majority of the properties front the Green and have low ironstone walls generally under one metre in height. Mulberry Cottage has a particularly pleasant example of this, coursed ironstone with two white painted wooden gates betraying its history as two properties, its capping hidden under layers of thick green ivy.

In contrast, the high ironstone walls around Oriel House and the three metre high retaining wall at The Limes could easily be an imposing sight, but with the church as a backdrop and the open area of the Green in front, the height is mitigated and suits the grandeur of the houses.

Senendone has an unusual enclosure for the village—white posts with chains between them. This does not negate from the grandeur of the property, however it emphasises how the use of sympathetic materials for other enclosures adds to rural atmosphere of the village.

The low retaining wall outside Oriel House

8.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

The green is the defining characteristic of the village. Criss-crossed with informal lanes, it contains several fine trees, a high proportion of which are evergreen, and ivy is plentiful. Although this plant is known for damaging wall structures, here it supplies a continual flash of green throughout the winter.

There is a formal line of eight pollarded mature lime trees outside The Limes, a distinct contrast to the informal open space of the green. It underlines the difference between the vernacular cottages and the more grand larger houses within the area. The general lack of front gardens makes the vegetation overhanging from the private rear gardens even more important to the conservation area.

Several trees stand out against the buildings as landmarks, such as the horse-chestnut in front of Longworth and Knapp House, and the mature beech *(Fagus sylvatica)* and two bushy deciduous lime trees *(Tilia spp.)* on the small green in front of the Bell Inn, which provide a covered and secluded entrance to the residential areas beyond the Green. Opposite these stands a mature *rubinia* which is also deciduous, and mirrors in size and appearance those on the other side of the road.

The trees on the north side of the Green, which add life and colour to the character area

The trees are currently in good condition and appear to have been well-managed. The importance of these trees cannot be emphasised enough, as their loss would be detrimental to the visual landscape, leaving the green a more static and barren place.

8.8 Features of special interest

- There was once a clay-lined pond in the middle of the Green, which would have been useful for watering horses at the nearby inn, and for dealing with any fires, particularly those involving the thatched roofs.
- The large open space of the Green, which is the key characteristic feature of the village.

- Stone steps on the road beside Oriel House, used for crossing to the local surgery, previously located within Oriel House.

8.9 Carriageway, pavements, footpaths

The highways are tarmacadam with granite kerbs and generally without adjacent footways. except in front of The Limes and Glasfryn to the north of the character area. The main road has no central white line and this should encourage drivers to slow down. The verge in front of The Limes is pleasantly edged with granite setts, albeit poorly jointed with concrete, which detracts from their rural appeal.

The line of pollarded Limes   Stone steps beside the road at Oriel House

Outside Mulberry Cottage, the rather pristine green contrasts with the soft verge now slightly eroded by parking.

Aesthetic granite setts failing due heavy vehicles over-riding the kerb

8.10 Threats

- Over-riding the edge of the green by cars and large vehicles has dislodged some of the granite setts. The use of bollards to reduce this should be avoided due to the visual clutter that would result.

- The main trees which give character to the area are not subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Although they will receive a degree of protection under conservation area designation, the loss of these trees would be visually detrimental to the village, and the implementation of TPOs is worthy of consideration. Routine maintenance of the trees can be covered by a Notification covering up to 2 years arborecultural work.

- The green is the heart of the village, and although many of the buildings surrounding it are listed, there are some key properties which are not, such as Windwistle and Thimblestone Cottage. It is appropriate that owners are mindful of the visual contribution their properties make to the green and to continue the high standard of repairs which can currently be seen in the area.

- Although the traditional long straw thatch has been replaced by wheat reed and slate, which affects the character and appearance of the conservation area, the loss to concrete tile, particularly I prominent positions, has a greater effect and encouragement is given to replacing these with traditional materials when the opportunity arises
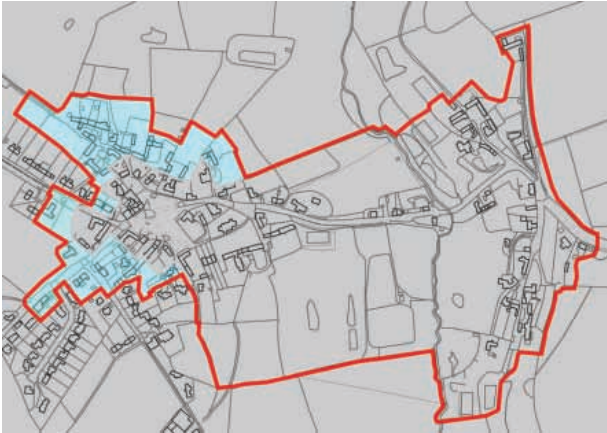

The Cranny - one of the few remaining thatches

Windwistle: an example of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution in a prominent position on the Green

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9. Village Fringe Character Area

Set back from the main areas of the village green, smaller cottages grew up, often accompanied by farm buildings.

9.1 Land use
This area comprises former farm buildings, now converted into dwellings, and some later properties to the west. It is principally residential, although there is a small area of allotments to the north.

9.2 Street pattern
Located on three roads radiating from the Green, the three areas have a mixture of carriageways. Kenhill Road leads northwest to the former medieval strip-fields; narrow and winding it weaves its way through the cottages, many of which are set forward very close to the carriageway. This is an attractive and informal rural lane, opening up onto the quarries and rolling hillside landscape at the northern end. As with Mill Farm, access to the converted farm buildings north of Kenhill Road is not from the public domain but from the rear, which is slightly disorientating but opens up an expansive vista northeasterly.

Rattlecombe Road leads west towards Rough Hill with former arable fields on either side. Later development has occurred to the south of the road, however to the north the fields still stretch into the distance.

Stocking Lane, formerly known as 'Stockin Lane' confirming its former agricultural use, leads northwest from The Green towards former meadows which are now the remains of the former aerodrome.

Kenhill Road leading to the scheduled monument

9.3 Building age, type and style
There are examples of the earliest cottages, possibly originally one-roomed squatters cottages with early vaulted cellars, remaining on Rattlecombe Road, although now much altered. The barns at the end of Kenhill Road were converted in a sympathetic style respecting the linear form, scale and materials of surrounding properties. Few of the newer properties are entirely infill as, according to Victorian maps, they occupy sites of former farm outbuildings, such as Rectory Farm and The Dairy Well.

The Victorian terrace on Rattlecombe Road is very different in style to the other properties in the character area. The projecting gables and dormer are typical of the period rather than the local vernacular. Both Foxstone and Oriel High on Stocking Lane, while more modern in style, use local materials which aids their integration.

9.4 Scale and massing
Scale contrasts throughout the areas, with the Victorian terrace on Rattlecombe Road being two storeys with high internal ceilings in the fashion of the time, compared with the Old Almshouses on Kenhill Road also two storeys, slightly sunk into the ground emphasising their origin as small cottages with poorer occupants. Kenhill Road could easily be dominated by larger properties, however a combination of varied heights, setting back and enclosures prevents the buildings overpowering the road. The Victorian and 20th century properties have greater depth than the earlier dwellings.

Victorian terrace on Rattlecombe Road

9.5 Construction and materials

The predominance of ironstone is continued throughout the fringe areas of Shenington, being used for both boundary walls and elevations. There are examples on Rattlecombe Road of both ironstone rubble and mud construction and also of finer coursed ironstone. Many of the chimney stacks have been replaced in brick, and these range in colour from black to red.

One thatch remains, Green End, which stands to the south of the village green opposite Senendone. There are examples of new stone and Welsh slates at Stone Holt and Yew Cottage respectively. Concrete roof tiles are again prevalent, with some new concrete tiles being highly visible.

The properties of Green End and Top Farm have retained their wood and metal casements, and the area has a mixture of timber and uPVC windows. In the majority of cases, the main styles and shapes of windows have been retained to complement the existing buildings.

The later properties and conversions in the area have fortunately respected the use of local materials, and as such are able to co-exist with the surrounding properties with ease. There are some obviously modern additions, such as the 'industrial' steel flues of the New Barn developments, the uPVC windows of the Victorian terrace and the uPVC conservatory of The Old Barn. However, the main integrity of these properties has been retained.

9.6 Means of enclosure

Stone walls and hedging predominate the area and stone walls in particular help define the entrances into the village, particularly the strong high stone wall with its strong corner that encloses The garters on Stocking Lane. However, one notable ironstone wall at the western entrance to the village has been partially demolished recently and its restoration would be desirable. Elsewhere, low ironstone walls contain many other curtilages in the area, reinforced with hedging and trees which are currently well maintained.

Other enclosures include metal railings on top of a stone retaining wall at Stone Holt where the wall is being pushed apart by the trees which have grown above it, and p Picket-style' wooden fencing has at The New Barn development has to denote a garden boundary.

Traditionally the main houses are built close to the carriageway, as along Kenhill Road, Green End and Mizpah.

Partially demolished stone wall along Rattlecombe Road

Fine historic stone wall around The Garters, Stocking Lane

9.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

There is a group of trees immediately north of Top Field farm, that help to enclose the Farm group fro the adjacent agricultural land.

Although there is no open public space within the area, there are allotments at the end of Kenhill Road, and here also the view opens out across the former medieval strip-fields, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which is bounded on two sides by a public right of way. Although outside the proposed conservation area, this open space is important to the village as a connection to their farming and industrial heritage.

Verges with soft kerbs provide a rural character to the western entrance and individual flagged steps across the verge in places add charm.

The long elevation of Stone Holt at 90 degrees to the route

9.8 Features of special interest

- The linear building at Stone Holt, constructed at 90 degrees to the route, which serves to emphasise its long elevations.
- There are "hidden gems", such as the manor House and The Nook, which are not immediately evident I the street scene.
- The well still exists at Dairy Well, as do the dairy steps, which have been con-

The well at Dairy Well

9.9 Carriageways, pavements and footpaths

The character of the lanes, with their winding orientation, buildings tight to the route and resultant short deflected views, contrasts with the straight routes, generous proportions and wide verges of the Rattlecombe Road and Stocking Lane, which reflect the open and flat plateau top topography.

Kenhill Road is an attractive winding single carriageway with no kerbs or footways as far as the New Barn development at the northern end. There is a sudden change from tarmac to a dirt track at the end of the road as the area moves from residential into the allotments. Combined with the views across the Scheduled Monument Quarry area, this reinforces the rural charm of the village. Stocking Lane and Rattlecombe Road quickly become main carriageways after leaving the Green, which serves to emphasise the importance of the open space that they leave behind. The lack of footways slows traffic, and the verge along Rattlecombe Road provides a safe haven for pedestrians as vehicles enter the village. All roads have tarmac surfacing and are pock-marked with highways repairs, however the lack of concrete kerbstones is pleasing, appropriate to the rural location.

9.10 Threats

- Additional development that would cause changes to the informal character of Kenhill Road should be avoided.

- The loss of ironstone boundary walls in this area would have an adverse effect

upon the character and appearance of the area

- Alterations, incremental changes, modern materials etc could damage the streetscene away from the village centre. Residents should be aware of the visual impact any one property can have on the collective streetscape and its contribution to the village scene as a whole.

- Within the area opposite the Old Almshouses, currently used for parking, there is an opportunity for enhancement. The area plays an important role as a passing place on the winding road but could be better maintained.

- Several buildings in the area have been subject to modern pointing techniques, which are often unsuitable for historic buildings. More sympathetic techniques such as brushing back the mortar would enhance, rather than detract from the structure.

'Ribbon' pointing detracts from the stonework

10. Alkerton Character Area
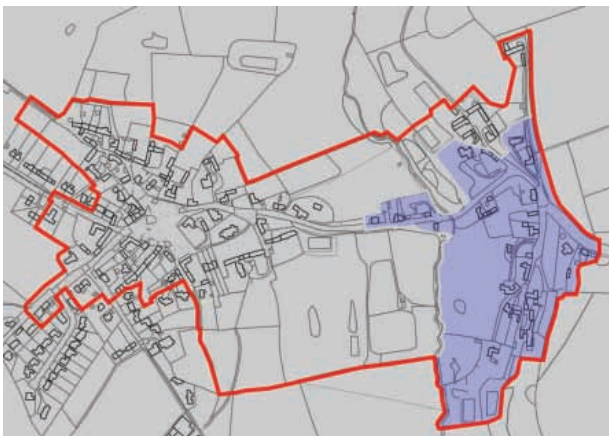
Alkerton is a small settlement comprising three groups of properties:
- the church, vicarage and cluster of farm buildings to the north of the main road;
- dispersed cottages along the road to Shenington;
- linear development on Well Lane running due south along the 140m contour that terminates in Brook Cottage

Barn House has an elevated position within the main village

10.1 Land use

The village of Alkerton is entirely residential, with the exception of the slightly elevated position in the north of the settlement; although now not visually prominent from within the village, due to being shrouded in large trees. There is less evidence of former trades or agricultural activity than in Shenington, however the surviving barns and farm outbuildings highlight Alkerton's previous dependency on agriculture.

2-5 The Beeches: Grade II Listed, set apart from the main village on the road to Shenington

10.2 Street pattern

The main eastern entrance into the village is down a steep hill from the outlying enclosure farm, Anderton's Barn. Several of the residential properties lie on Well Lane, which runs south from the main through road. Other properties are situated off on the main road in small pockets of land. The properties adjacent to the Sor Brook are isolated, possibly by their former functions; potential remnants of a tanning trade. A isolated location would have been customary due to the smell and natural chemicals involved in

the process. In contrast to this theory is the appearance of 'Methodist Chapel' on 19th century maps of the area. Tanner's Cottage is a likely site for this, as it was known as Chapel Cottage until around 1970, and further analysis of the structure suggests a high gable, typical of a Wesleyan chapel.

10.3 Building age, type and style

The Grade I Listed Church of St Michael dates from the early 13th century with later additions and alterations, and boasts some interesting internal carvings and memorials. This early construction date raises the question: was the church was built purely for the existing manors, or was there an earlier timber village, possibly destroyed by fire or abandoned by plague fears; or were the houses replaced by the ones we see today?

The properties are mainly 17th and 18th century detached buildings with a terrace of four cottages (2-5 The Beeches). The oldest dwelling is Alkerton House, its origins being mid-15th century with later additions. A fire of

Grade 1 listed Church of St Michael, Alkerton

The Grade II Listed property at The Beeches*

uncertain date damaged several properties, evidence of which can be seen on the western elevation of The Beeches. By comparing the modern plan of the village with a map of 1875, it can be seen that very few changes have occurred and infill has been kept to a minimum, retaining the village character. The village has not had any major 20th century building, the majority of any new development comprising barn conversions.

Tanner's Cottage — under the concrete render lies a Victorian red brick structure:

10.4 Scale and massing

The properties within the settlement are exclusively two or two-and-a-half storeys in height, often set into the falling valley landscape, which mitigates this height. Those along Well Lane and the conversions beside the Manor House are much larger in scale than the cottages of The Beeches. Barn House and its outbuildings, located at a higher level than the main road, are set back from the main village and therefore do not dominate the streetscape. The main house and impressive outbuildings are located

Tanners Pool: a modern re-build of an older property

seem one-removed from the dwellings fronting the lane. Built at a similar time, the scale of the vernacular cottages in The Beeches contrasts to the grand houses of the village. The Rectory, Alkerton House and Barn House (part-conversion), are buildings that reflect the status of their previous owners within the village. Tanners Pool with its outbuilding, is also of a building of considerable size. Possibly an earlier building with later additions.

10.5 Construction and materials

Alkerton has more of a mixture of building styles than Shenington, but the almost exclusive use of ironstone for the walls and elevations unites the village.

The existing concrete render on the houses in the river valley is a contrast to the main village. Although unlisted, these properties appear to date from the Victorian period; the render not only masks the original character and material of the buildings, but could, if poorly applied, also be detrimental the original fabric.

Originally many of the properties would have been thatched using local materials. Now the only remaining thatched properties are Barn House and The Beeches, which possibly have some evidence of 18th century fire damage. These buildings cast a striking and pleasing aspect on the landscape when viewed across the valley. The replacement of the traditional roofing has given rise to the use of concrete tiles. Red clay tiles and Welsh slate have also been used, on Gardeners Cottage and The Cottage respectively.

Windows are mainly timber or metal casements with leaded inserts, with some modern fenestration, with only a few examples of modern replacement windows. Both Brook Cottage and Barn House have stone mullions consistent with their age.

10.6 Means of enclosure

High ironstone walls are a key feature of this area, with some key buildings being almost totally screened, such as The Rectory and also along Well Lane, where properties are oriented to enjoy the view over the valley.

A striking wall is that of Barn House on the eastern side of Well Lane. This imposing structure is now crumbling due to damp.

There is an example of rural fencing along the eastern side of Well lane – split rail fencing with vegetation behind shielding the cottages from main road. In contrast, there is a short section of closed panelled fencing at the side/rear of Mullinahogle, which could be detrimental were it not mostly covered by vegetation.

The properties of the Beeches create their own yard and feel insular. Individual spaces are designated using wooden picket fencing, although the main area remains open as turning space.

A rural solution to fencing on Well Lane

General internal view of Alkerton indicating importance of vegetation

10.7 Trees, hedges, verges, open spaces

Alkerton is full of vegetation; it shrouds most of the buildings when viewed from the other side of the valley and makes the extent of the village hard to discern. on the valley side.

The tall overhanging vegetation beside the main road is a key feature, for example the line of trees by the war memorial provides an important backdrop for the village and separates it from the fields beyond, clearly defining the village boundary. Trees are also used to extend the height of enclosure walls, and soften the edges of these definite boundaries and the trees in and immediately north of the churchyard do this to great effect.

The nationally renowned four-acre garden of Brook Cottage is famous for its hillside rock garden, water garden and flourishing herbaceous borders. Its display includes many alpines and over fifty species of clematis amongst other non-native species, which, whilst providing a plethora of colour

The natural valley landscape has been altered by gardening and the introduction of non-native species

which ends with the brightly coloured leaves of autumn, means that this and adjacent gardens contrast dramatically with the rough pastoral natural valley hillside on the western side of the Sor Brook.

The post box and listed pump on Well Lane