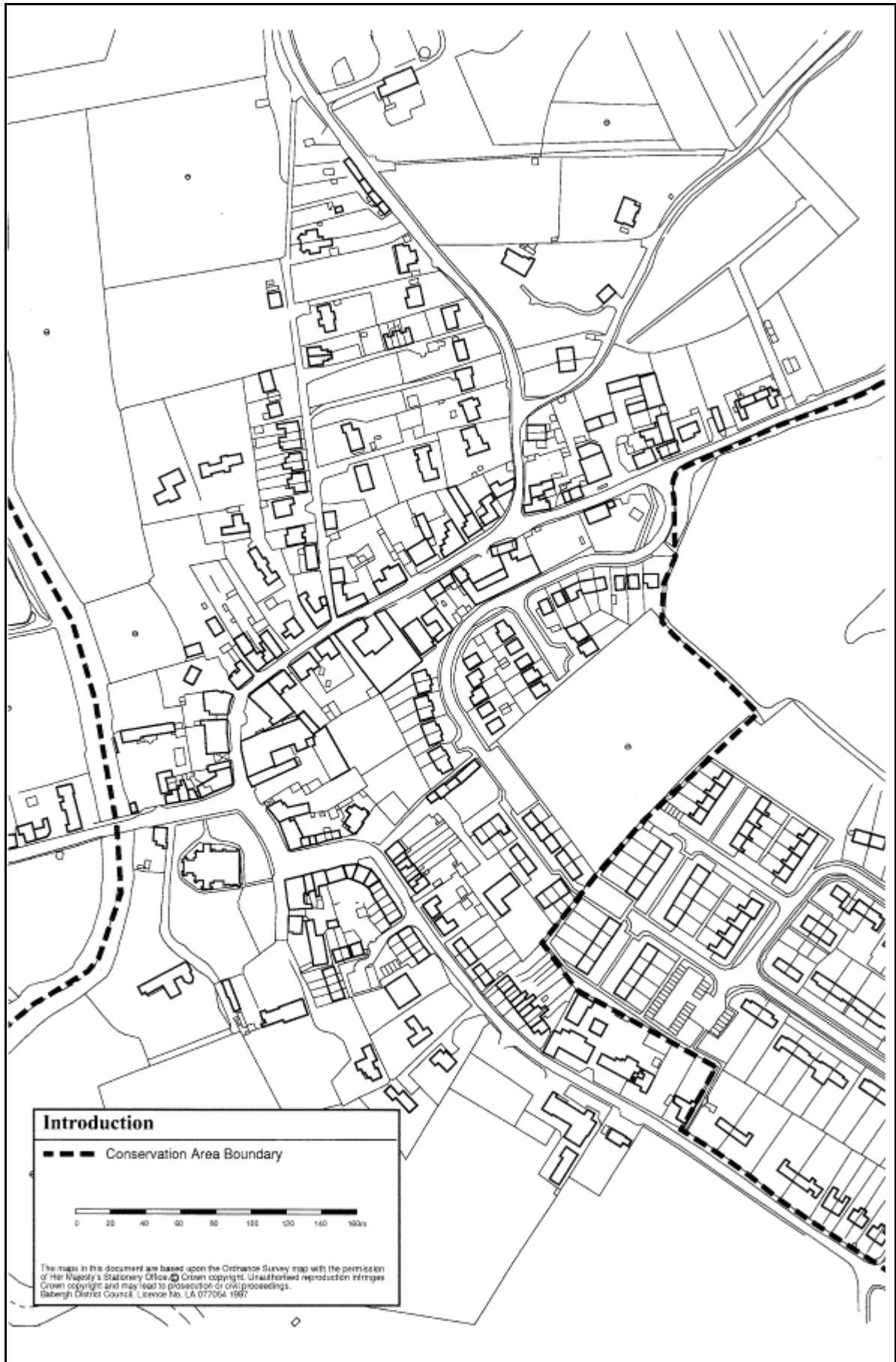


*Bures  
St Mary*

*conservation area appraisal*



# Introduction

*The conservation area in Bures St Mary was originally designated by West Suffolk County Council in 1973, and inherited by Babergh District Council at its inception in 1974.*

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

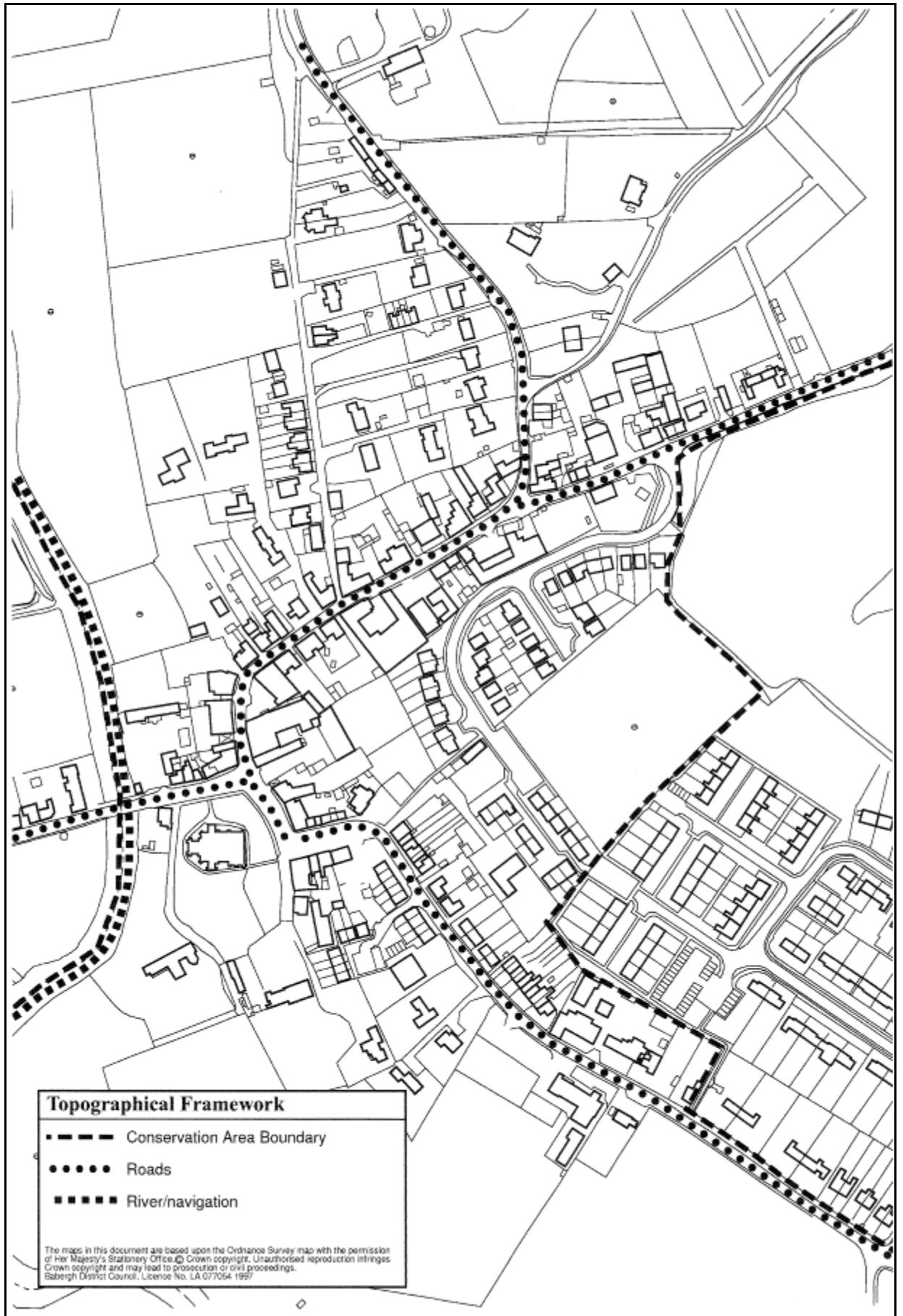
*As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Bures St Mary's built environment in conservation terms and is essentially an update on a draft document produced back in 1997, when the village was considered for a rural grant scheme that never came to fruition.*



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

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

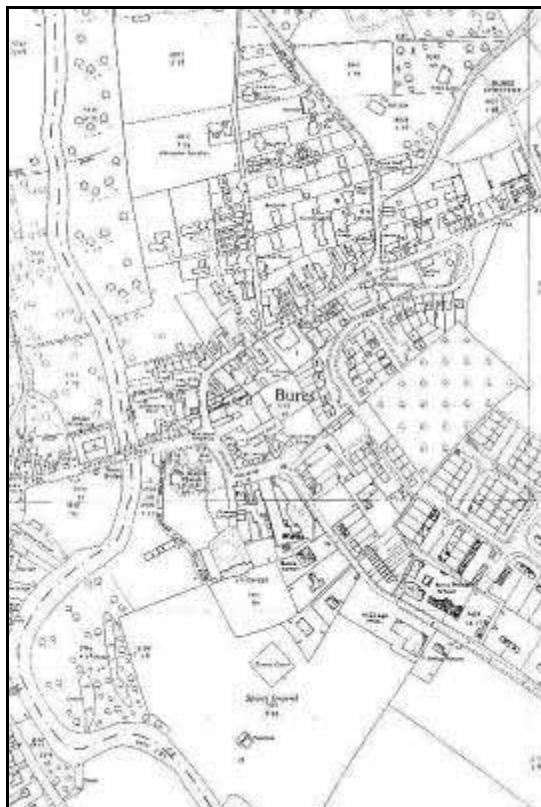
*Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Babergh District Council 2007.*



# Topographical Framework

*Bures St Mary is the Suffolk half of a large village that straddles both the river Stour and the county boundary with Essex, about five miles south-east of Sudbury in south-west Suffolk.*

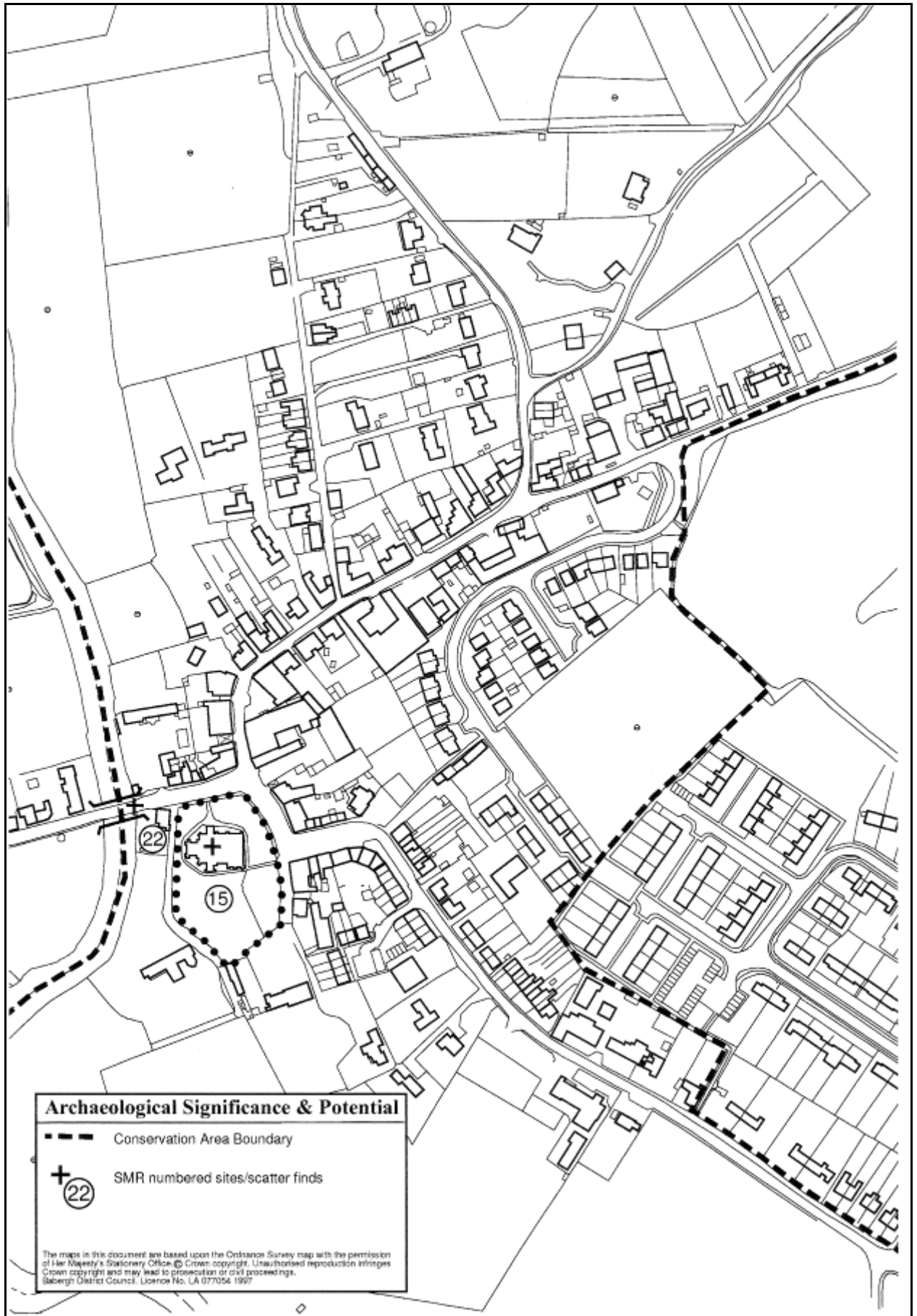
*Bures is for the most part sited on the alluvial deposits laid down by the river since the ice ages. During that time the river itself has cut down through the overlying boulder clay of High Suffolk and the glacial sands and gravels immediately beneath, into the underlying London clay. The latter here, at the edge of its range, only thinly covers the more prevalent chalk at depth.*



*Bures has grown up where the B1508 riverside road south from Sudbury crosses into Bures Hamlet, Bures St Mary's Essex counterpart. This was probably an older route into Colchester than the current A134 that runs parallel to the east.*

*The river itself was made navigable as the Stour Navigation, approved by Act of Parliament in 1705 and opened in 1709.*

*Further transport connections up the river valley followed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the Sudbury branch line of the Eastern Counties Railway from Colchester was built in 1849 with a station at Bures Hamlet.*



# Archaeological Significance

*The parish of Bures St Mary extends well beyond the village proper and contains ancient remains from as far back as the Neolithic period, including one of only nine examples in Suffolk of a type of oval enclosure, which may have been a long barrow.*

*In the later Middle Saxon period of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, a royal vill was sited in Bures, one of only seven known in Suffolk as a whole.*

*The domesday survey of 1086 lists a church with 18 acres, as well as two manors for the parish.*



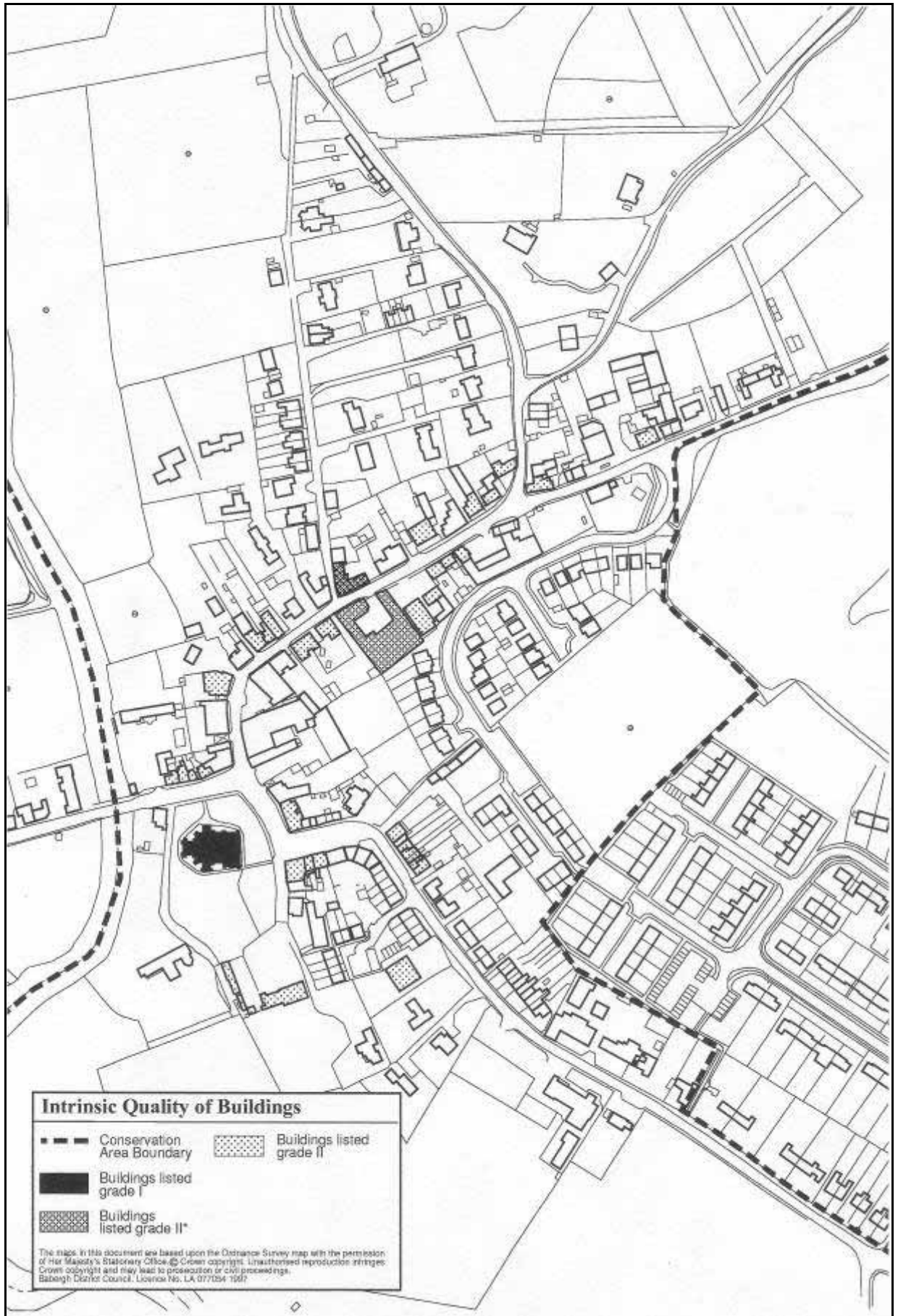
*B. BERGA. DFO. H. In bure nōs & Wigg. T. R. E. xviii. libi hoen de tōnd 7 fca 7 dca 7 poterat uend. H. T. R. E. sine licencia ei & tūc. fcl qui non poterat uende. & xviii. hat. s. cad. tūc 7 dim. & xxi. fcl. t. cad. & dim. tūc. 7 hi tres lint fultis 1 mill. 7. viii. bord. 7 iii. car. 7. xiii. ad pū. 7 uat. xxx. fcl. 7 hi xviii libi hat. sub fe. s. bord. Semp. ii. car. 7. xiii. ad pū. Sicut. vi. pōca. 7 i. molin 7 uat. xxx. fcl. Bura ha. t. i. i. in longo 7 dimid in lato. 7 de gelto xxxiii. d. Sy alii tēi ibi. Ecclia de. xviii. ad līte tūc.*

**BABERGH Two Hundreds**  
 In BURES Withgar [held] 18 free men before 1066, with the patronage and full jurisdiction; they could sell the land before 1066 without his permission. Also 4 Freeman who could not sell. The 18 (free men) have 1½ carucates of land. 3 Freeman (have) 1½ carucates of land.  
 The 3 (Freemen) have under them  
 1 villager, 7 smallholders.  
 3 ploughs. Meadow, 4 acres.  
 Value 30s.  
 The 18 free men have under them  
 10 smallholders.  
 Always 2 ploughs.  
 Meadow, 4 acres; woodland, 6 pigs; 1 mill.  
 Value 30s.  
 Bures has 1 league in length and ½ in width; 24d in tax. But others hold there.  
 A church with 18 acres of free land.

*The only sites of archaeological interest listed in the county Sites and Monuments Record for the central part of Bures, however, are the Medieval church itself and the adjoining Post Medieval bridge.*

*The presence of both of these does give weight to the likelihood of an older settlement on the site built around an early crossing point. The remains of this probably lie buried beneath the many listed buildings making up the historic core of the village.*

*The village had its own medieval market and fair granted in 1271, although this was defunct by the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.*



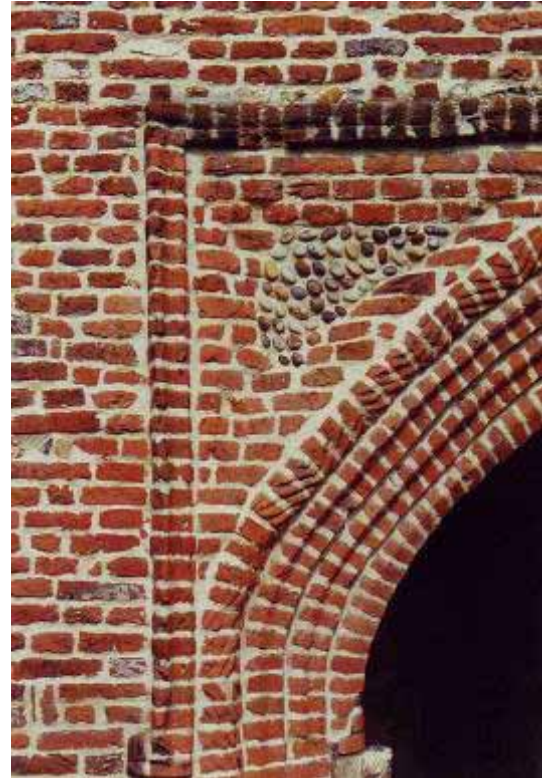


# *Intrinsic Quality of Buildings*

*Whilst the parish of Bures St Mary contains a number of historic houses listed grade II and II\* scattered around the periphery, the historic core's listed buildings are grade II houses with but few exceptions.*

*St Mary's Church is grade I on account of its Architectural, Historical and Topographical value, described by Pevsner as 'A stately church'. It is mainly 14<sup>th</sup> Century with some 16<sup>th</sup> Century additions including a fine brick south porch and adjoining Waldegrave chapel of 1514 in 'Ornate Perp'.*

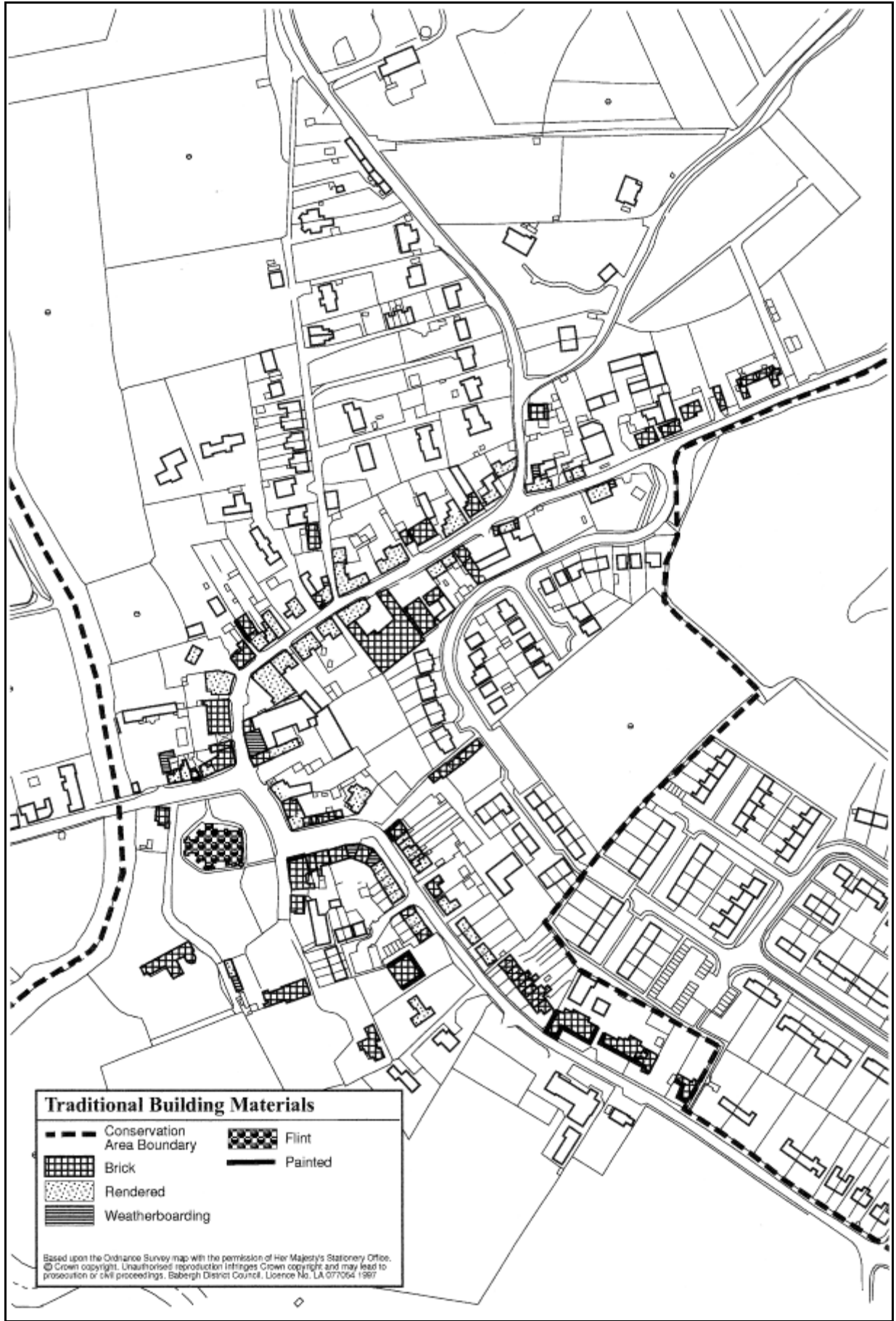
*In the High Street are to be found two fine grade II\* listed houses of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. To the north side The Old Bakery, timber-framed and plastered with some exposed framing.*



*Opposite on the south side also timber-framed and plastered, are the premises occupied by W A Church. This is jettied with exposed timber framing and an elaborately carved bressumer depicting heraldic devices, oak leaves, animals and figures at work.*

*This is adjoined by an 18<sup>th</sup> Century maltings with a surviving circular brick malt kiln, complete with a rotating timber cowed chimney.*

*The Waldegraves were also responsible for the grade II\* listed Great Bevills, a late 15<sup>th</sup> Century timber-framed manor house set in parkland and woods to the north of the village. This has red brick herringbone nogging to the west and crowstepped gables, north and south.*



**Traditional Building Materials**

	Conservation Area Boundary		Flint
	Brick		Painted
	Rendered		
	Weatherboarding		

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# Traditional Building Materials

*The materials used in Bures St Mary's buildings generally come from the usual palette of Suffolk's vernacular and express its variation over the ages.*

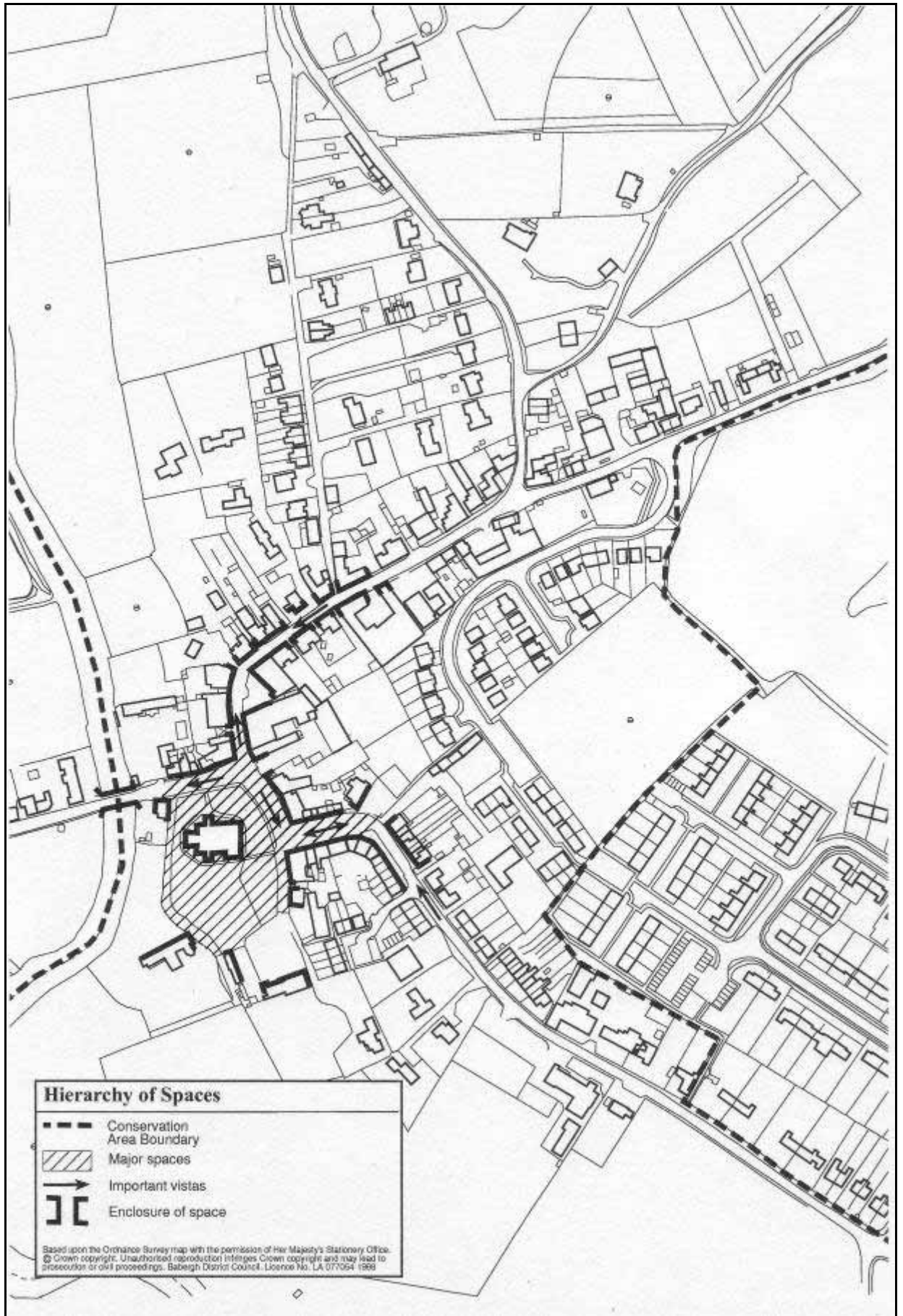
*The older buildings are predominantly rendered timber frames of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries with steep plaintile roofs. Variations on this basic theme occur with a scattering of examples of both exposed timber frame construction and some buildings of this type with newer brick fronts.*



*The other major group of buildings are of brick construction with slate roofs and date from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.*

*These are predominantly in local soft 'Suffolk red' brick, some of which have now been painted or rendered. There are a few in the local 'Suffolk white' brick, probably from nearby Sudbury, which was very fashionable in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.*

*In addition to these two major groups of buildings, there is also a scattering of other local materials, such as clay pantile roofs and white painted weatherboarding.*



# Hierarchy of Spaces

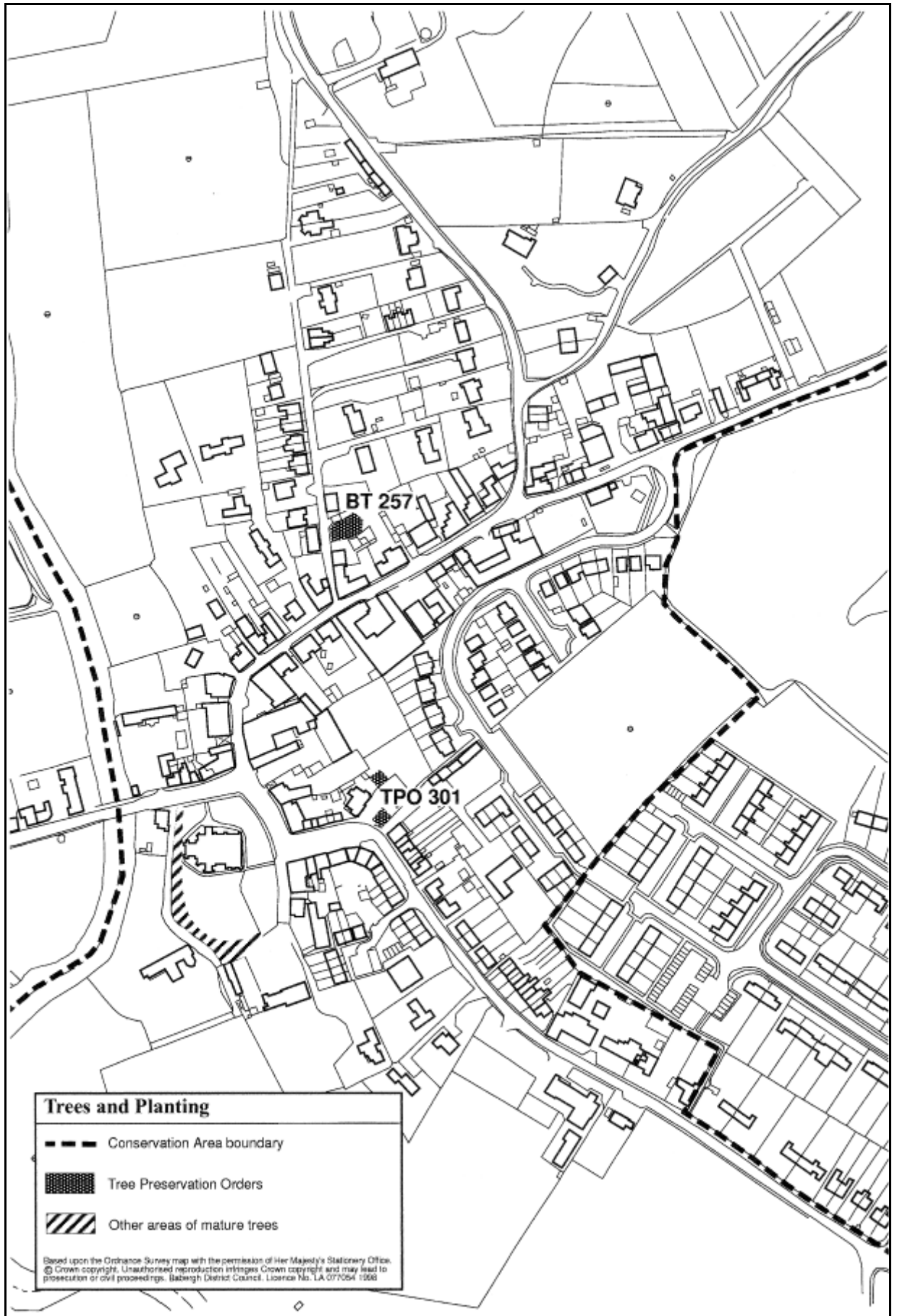
*The historic core of Bures St Mary has good tight urban spaces, very much focussed on the area of adjoining the churchyard. This is called Suffolk Knowle, as compared to its Essex counterpart over the river, and from here you are invited to explore in three different directions.*

*Firstly, south-westwards just over the bridge into Essex on the left hand side there is an area of wet meadowland, and the built up feel is immediately dissipated.*



*Secondly, north and then north-eastwards the High Street is very enclosed and sweeps around a tight right hand bend ascending the hill, not really opening up until the junction where Sudbury Road and Cuckoo Hill meet. A number of small intimate lanes lead off this road on its northern side.*

*Lastly, to the south and south-east is Church Square where the road double bends left then right into Nayland Road, Here vistas are at first closed by nos. 2 to 6 Church Square and then nos. 1 to 4 Nayland Road.*



# Trees & Planting

*The centre of Bures St Mary is so filled with buildings that trees are relatively scarce.*

*Two tree preservation orders cover a Walnut and a Copper Beech in the grounds of the Three Horseshoes off Church Square (WSSC 301), and a small group comprising two Silver Birch and Copper Beech at the rear of Bolberry House on the north side of High Street (BT 257).*

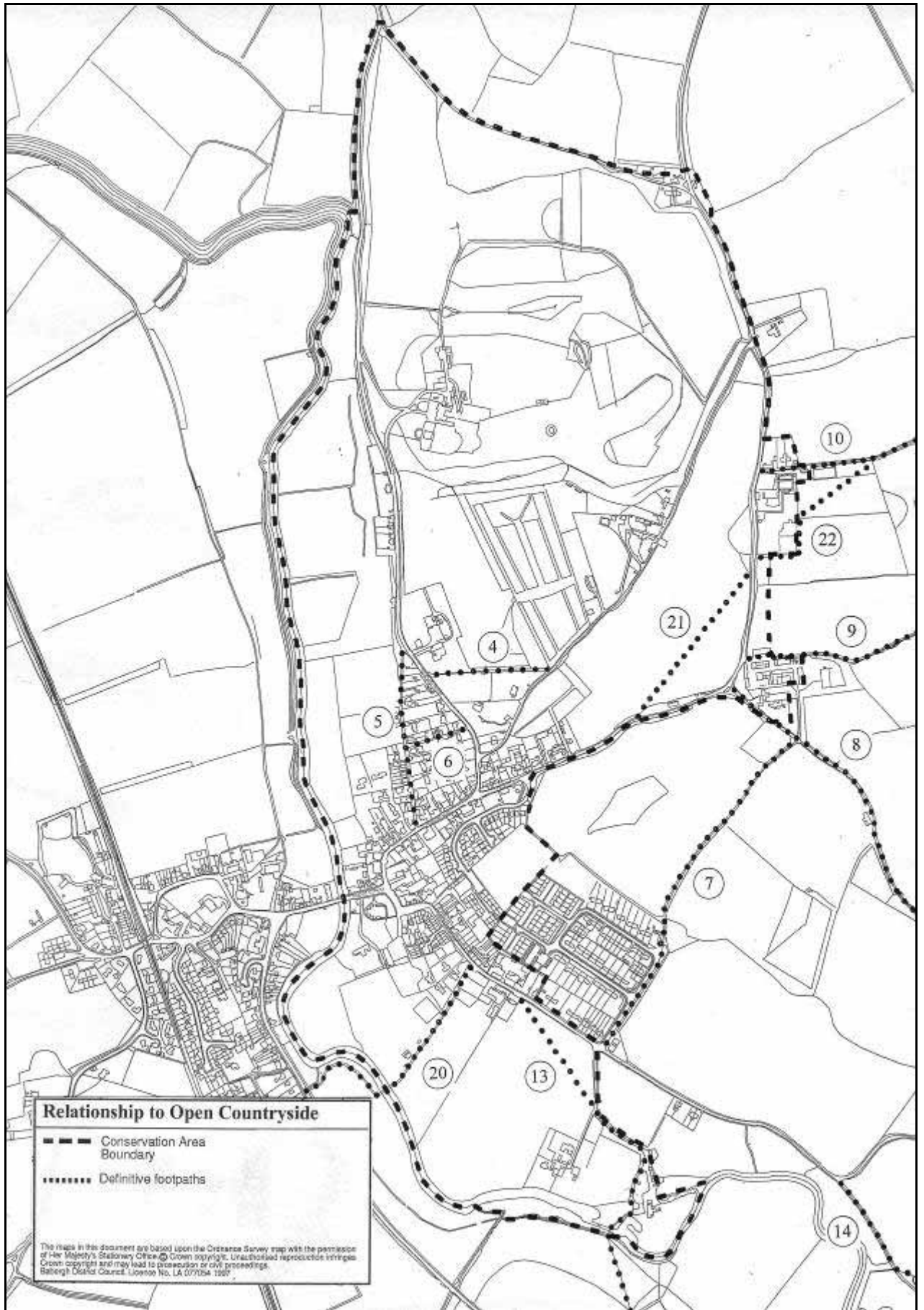
*Apart from this in the centre there is only the churchyard and adjoining areas by the river with any greenery at all.*



*In the churchyard itself the planting is relatively modern with a predominance of flowering cherries, a Purple Norway Maple but no large elderly trees as might be expected.*

*The effect of such a dearth of greenery is to give Bures a very urban feel, despite its relatively small size.*

*Further afield there are trees in plenty: the parkland and woods around Great Bevills to the north and more recently planted around the recreation ground adjoining the river to the south.*





# Relationship to Open Countryside

*Bures falls within the Stour Valley's Special Landscape Area, as designated in Babergh District Council's Local Plan. Within this area the Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project oversees various sections of countryside.*

*As part of this project, the Stour Valley long distance path passes through the village centre on its way from the estuary to the source of the river.*

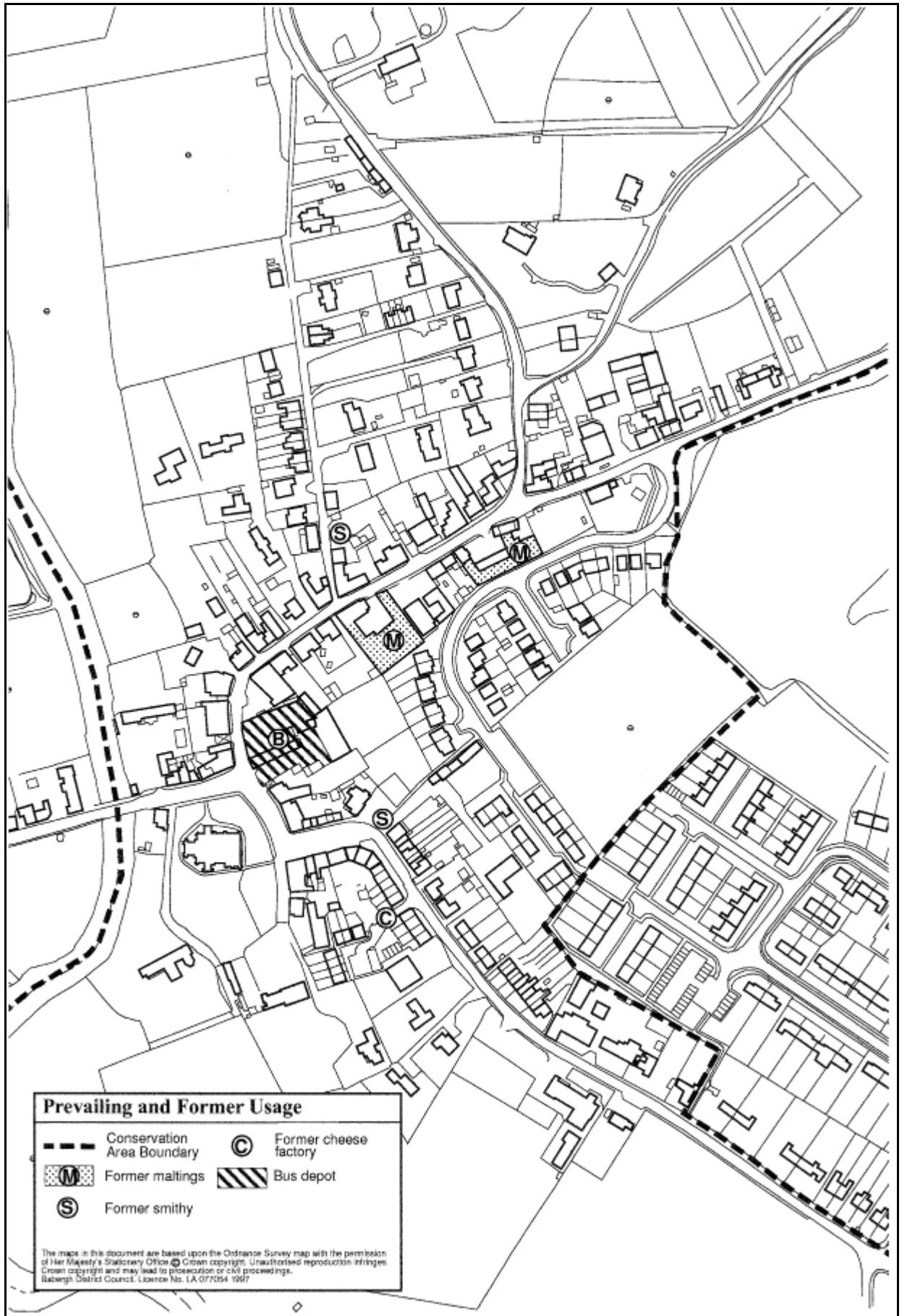
*Following public consultation, the proposal to reduce the conservation area to include only the built up 'urban' core of the settlement (more in line with other conservation areas in the district) has now been dropped. The full extent of the conservation area is shown adjoining.*








*Although not immediately visible from the central core of Bures St Mary, there are fields and meadows very close by. These include the water meadows on the flood plain of the river and fields up the road off Cuckoo Hill.*

*The only definitive footpath anywhere near the centre runs northwards up The Croft, a lane off the High Street, with a branch off about halfway along eastwards towards Sudbury Road. To the south a well used new footpath runs across the recreation ground before crossing the river to Bures Hamlet.*

*Other paths do exist further afield in the parish, but access to these from the centre is initially by road.*



**Prevailing and Former Usage**

	Conservation Area Boundary		Former cheese factory
	Former mailings		Bus depot
	Former smithy		

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# Prevailing & Former Usage

*About half a mile downstream from Bures St Mary is the former Bures Lock, part of the navigation being restored by the River Stour Trust, affiliated to the Inland Waterways Association. Adjoining this is Bures Mill, a former roller flour mill.*

*The two halves of the village either side of the river seem to have turned their backs on it as there is no apparent waterside development.*

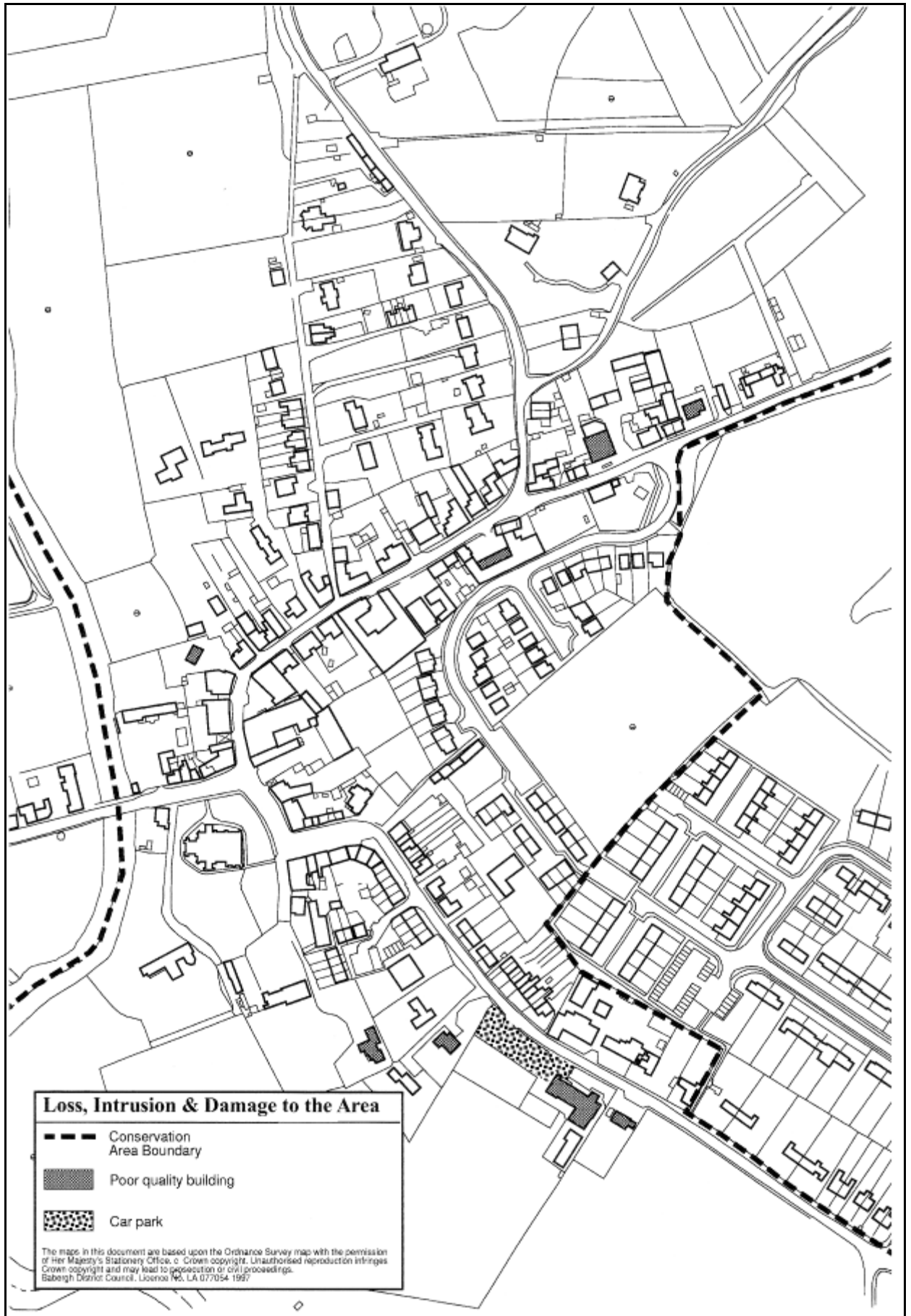
*Transport undertakings, however, do have their impact on the village, the local bus company's yard and sheds being very much part of the street scene.*



*Bures St Mary's early development was as a centre in Suffolk's woollen cloth trade, hence the many timber-framed buildings of the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

*Remnants of other agriculturally based industries include the surviving maltings and malt kiln, which were further augmented by a brewery.*

*There is also evidence for at one time two smithies, a tannery and a wheelwright's shop, whilst the careful modern development at the end of Church Square occupies the site of a former dye works, more recently a cheese factory.*



# Losses & Possible Gains

*Bures St Mary remains relatively unscathed by modern built intrusions, most new developments having been tucked away behind the historic centre. The village's main problem, and probably its saving grace too, is one of neglect, especially on some of the more industrial properties.*

*The bus shed's roof and gables were apparently originally asbestos sheeting, but could be upgraded to a more traditional material. The maltings has suffered some serious spalling to the brickwork along its northern elevation facing the chapel.*

*Near the bridge, Bank House, formerly on the Buildings at Risk Register, has recently been repaired after remaining boarded up for many years.*



*Elsewhere in the village windows can be found in a very poor state of repair. Some have already succumbed to uPVC salesmen, whilst many more on unlisted buildings must be regarded as at risk.*

*There is also scope for undergrounding some of the overhead wiring in the village, particularly in the High Street.*

*This would present an opportunity to upgrade the paving finishes. A softer approach than the current blacktop and concrete kerbing could be achieved using a chipping based surface dressing to footways and exposed aggregate kerbs. A more formal type of paving, such as York Stone, could be used in the historic central area around Church Square and Bridge Street.*

# References & Further Reading

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*English Heritage 2006 Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals HMSO*

*Flint, B 1979 Suffolk Windmills Boydell*

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

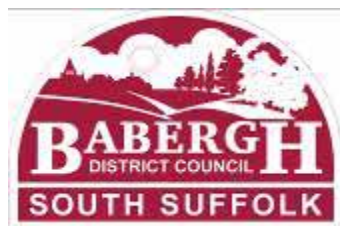
*Pevsner, N 1976 The Buildings of England: Suffolk Penguin*

*Suffolk County Council 1997 Sites and Monuments Record*

*Taylor, P 2005 Living in a Conservation Area Babergh District Council*

*Tithe Map & Apportionment 1840 Bures St Mary Suffolk Records Office*

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*This Appraisal adopted as  
Supplementary Planning Guidance by  
Babergh District Council Strategy  
Committee 15 November 2007*