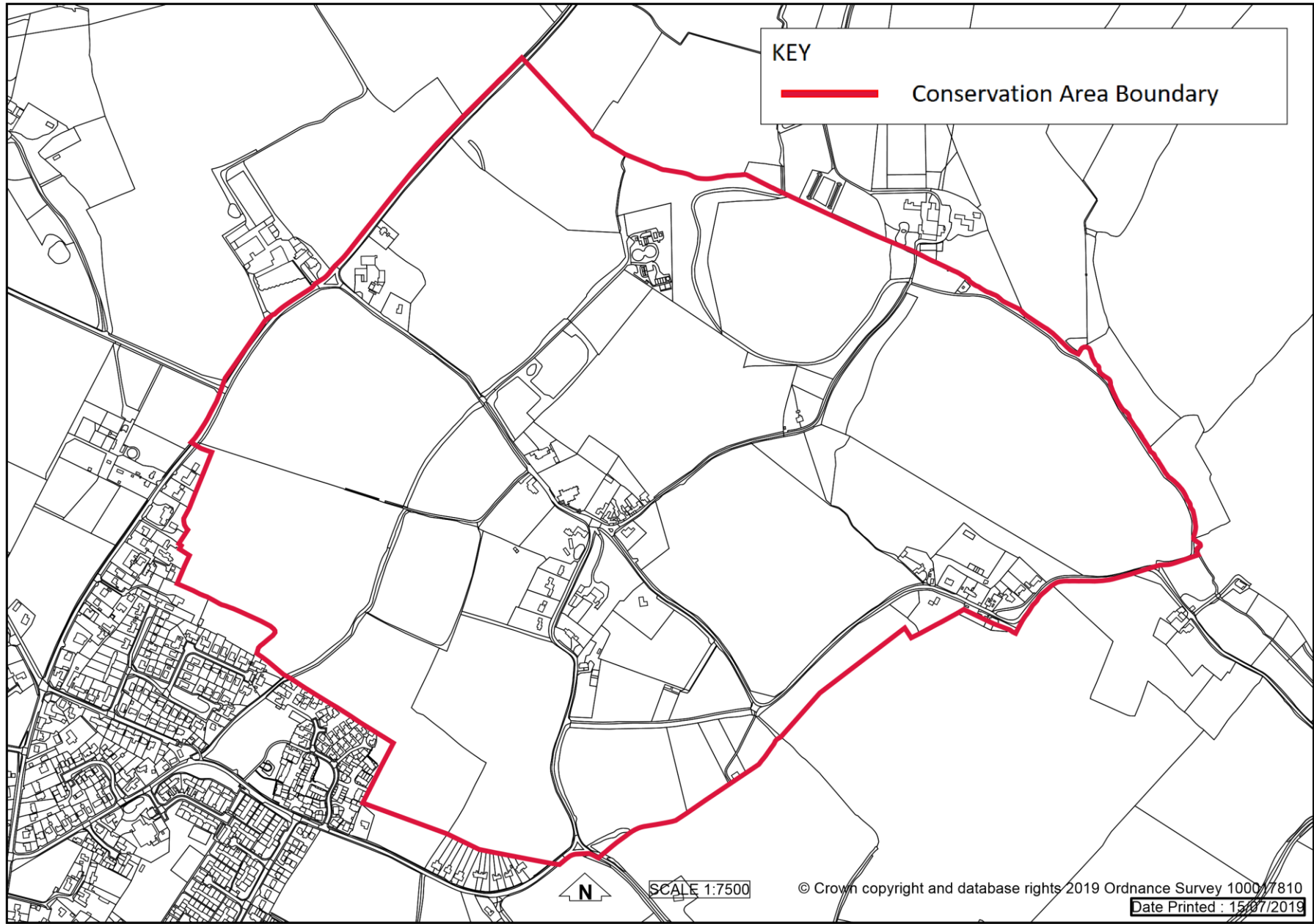




Conservation Area Appraisal



KEY



Conservation Area Boundary


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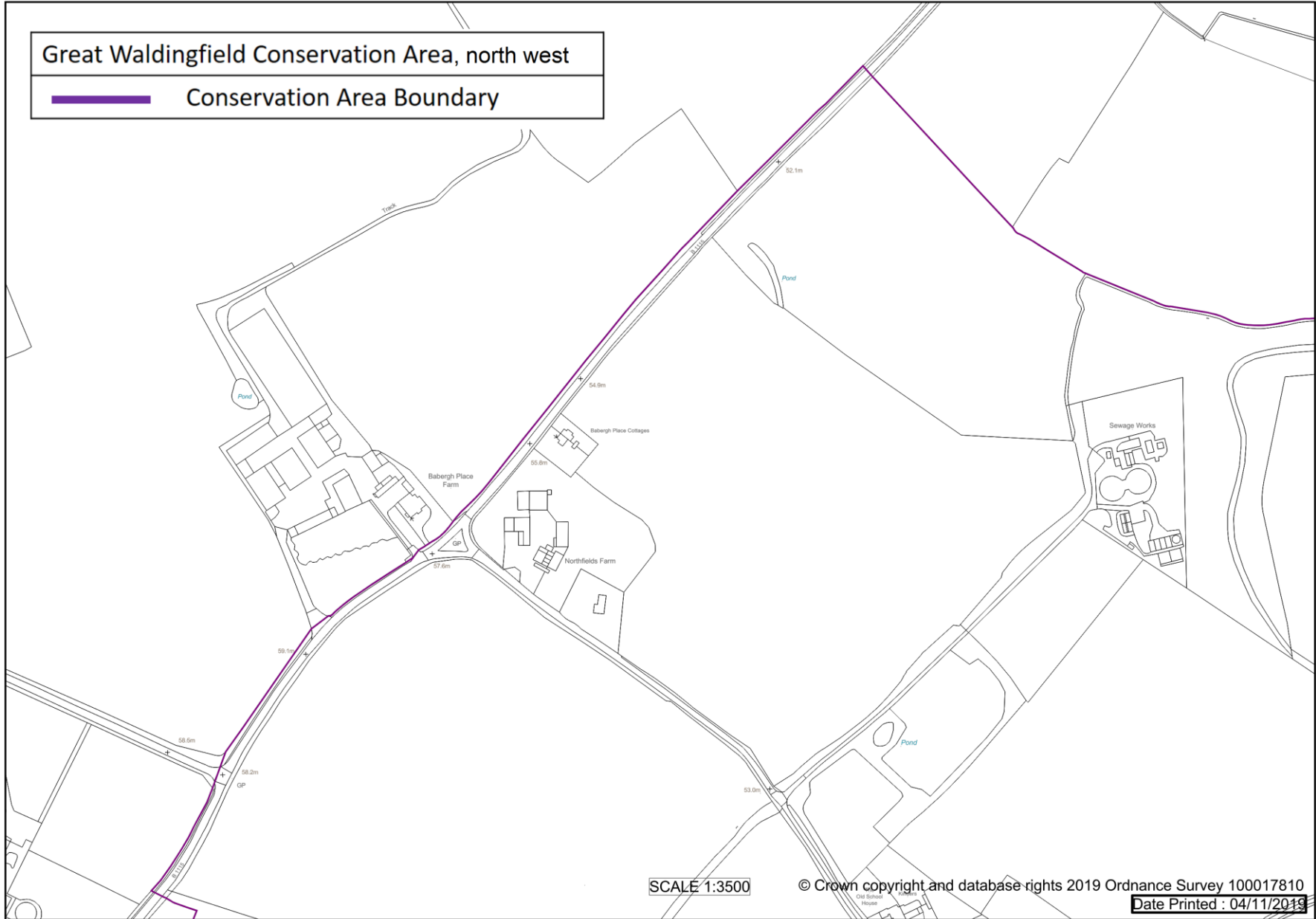
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Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, north west

 Conservation Area Boundary




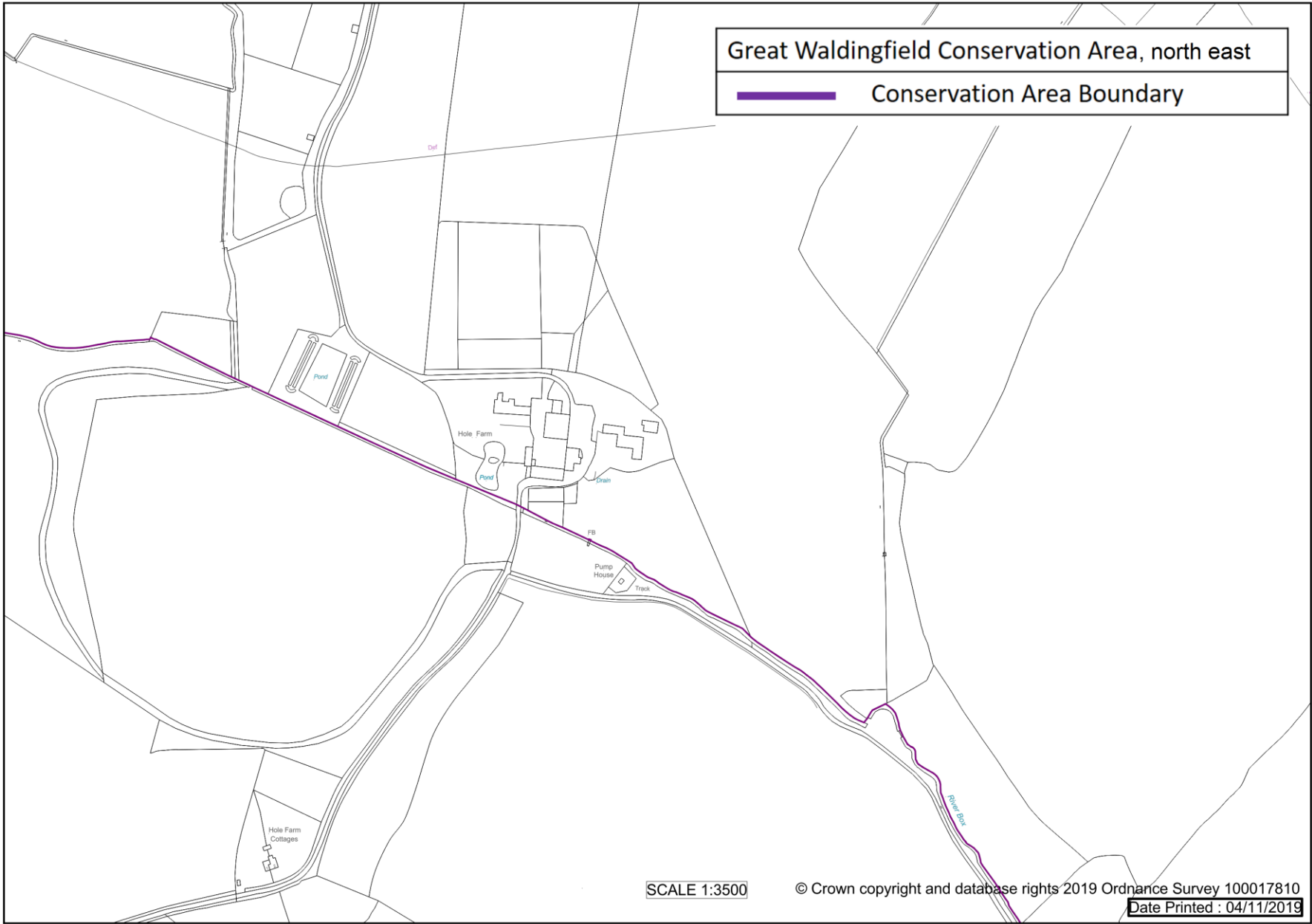
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Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, north east

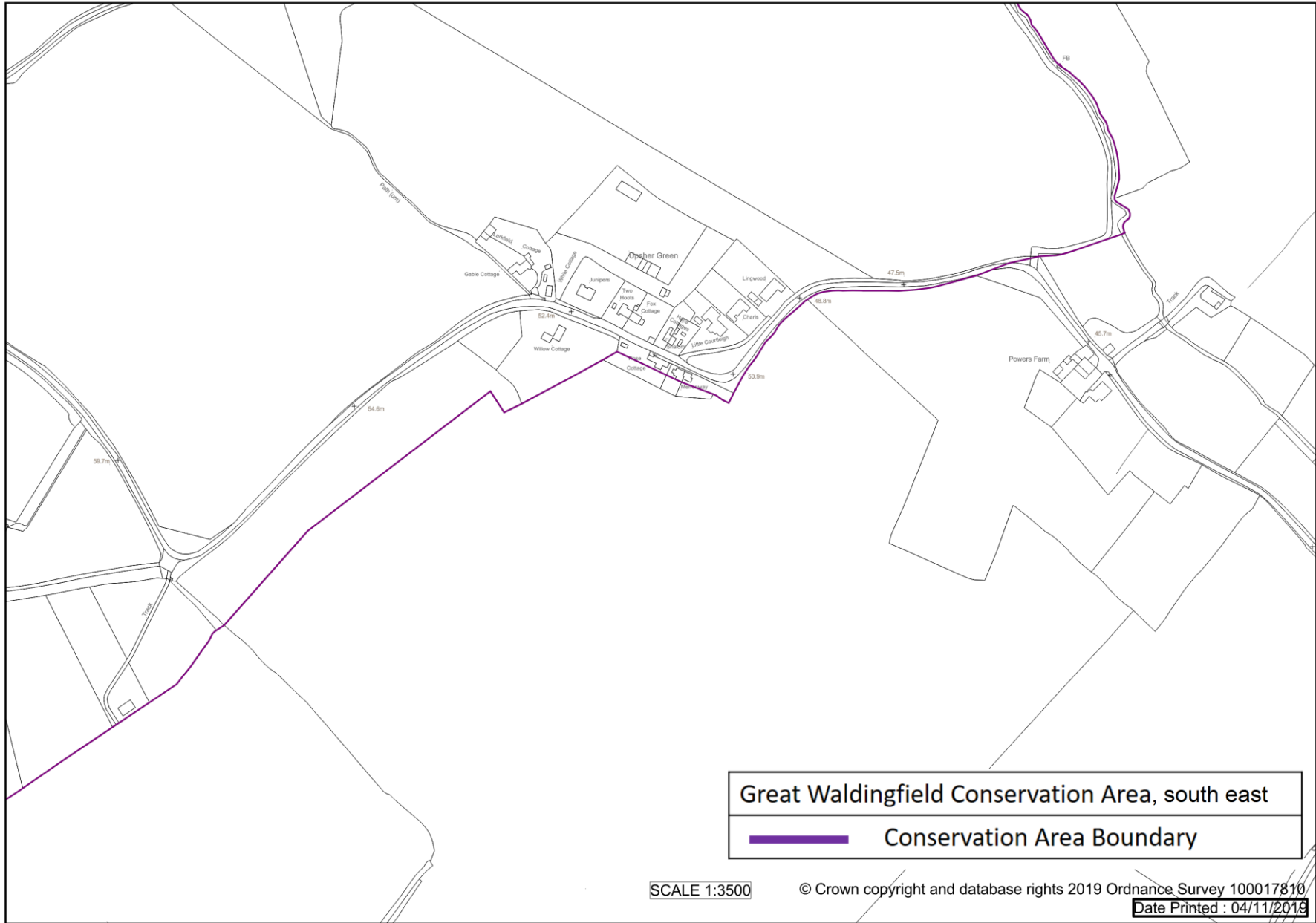
 Conservation Area Boundary

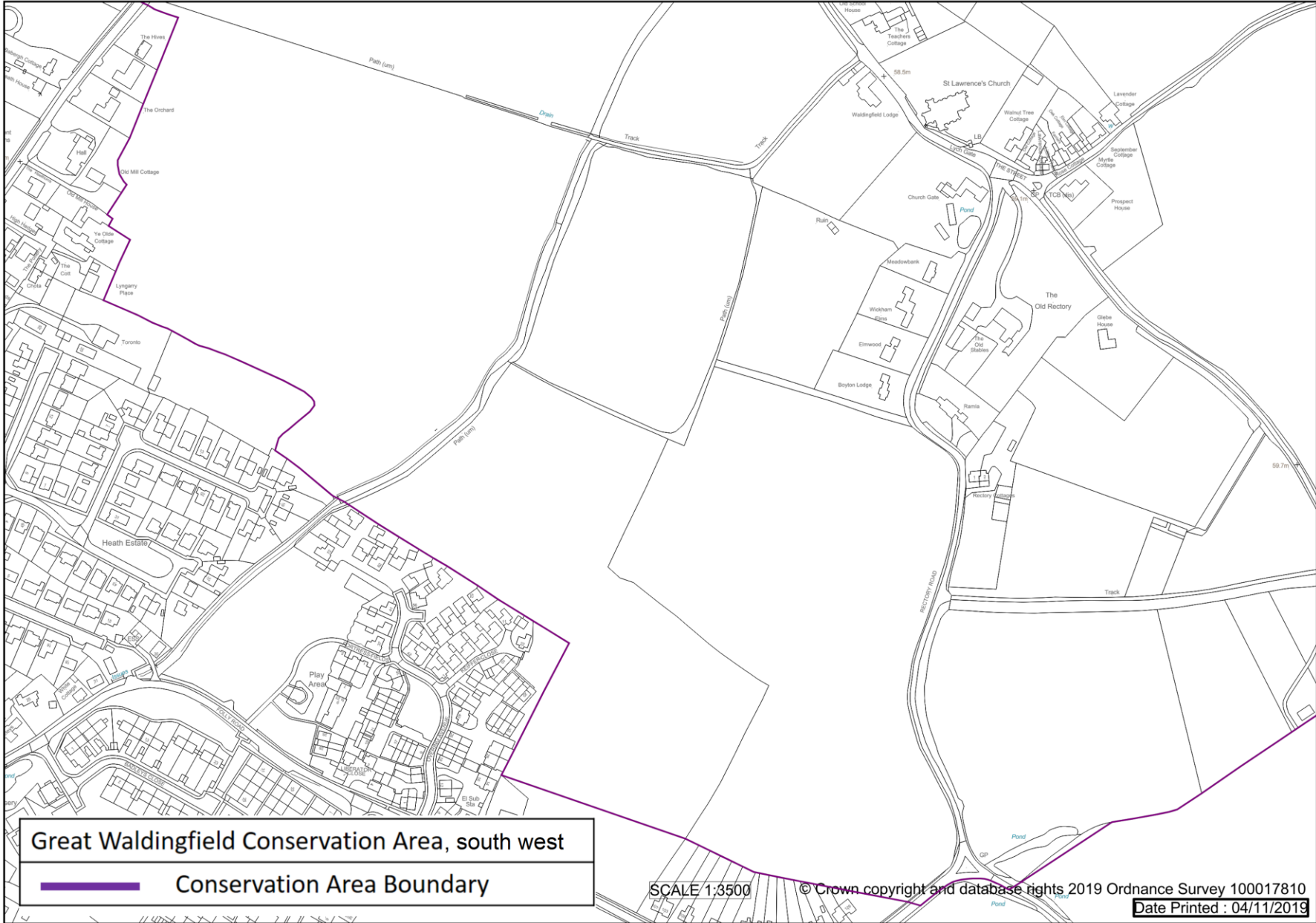


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Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, south west

— Conservation Area Boundary

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Introduction

The conservation area in Great Waldingfield 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 Great Waldingfield under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006) and having regard to Historic England's new guidance (2016).

This brings the village in line with Babergh's other conservation area appraisals in the same format. As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Great Waldingfield's built environment in conservation terms.



As a document it is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient to inform the Planning Officer and others considering changes or assessing proposed works there. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.

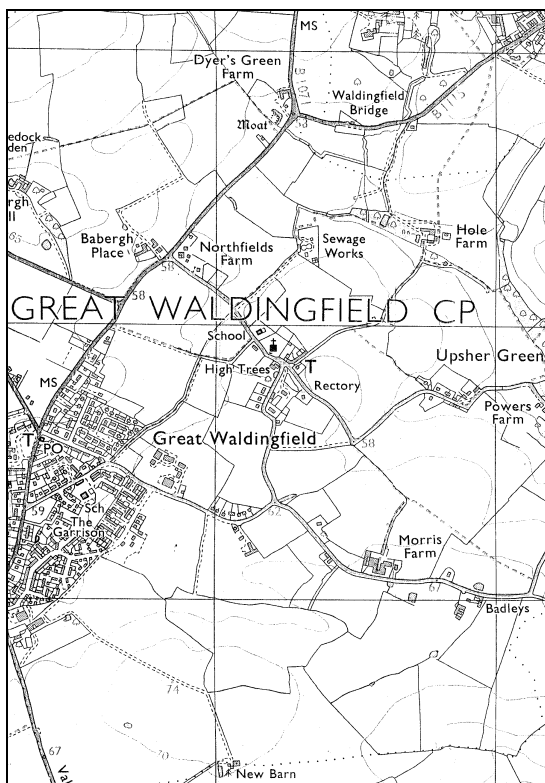
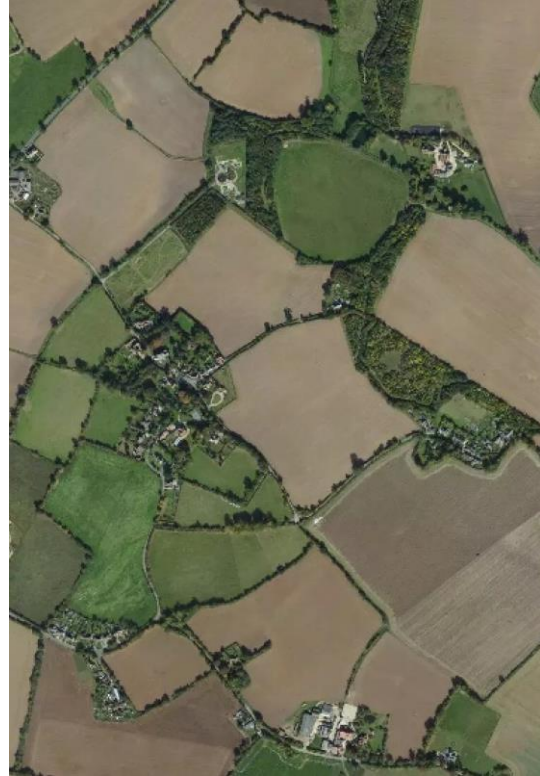
As the Historic England guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.

Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, for Babergh District Council 2019.

Topographical Framework

The village of Great Waldingfield lies about two miles north-east of the market town of Sudbury in south-west Suffolk, and about four miles south of the historic village of Lavenham. It is situated on an area of higher land between 60 and 70 m above O.D., just east of a large level area that served as a WWII airfield. Land to the north-west drops into the valley of the River Box, that flows south-east to eventually join the River Stour at Thorington Street.

The modern village, known as The Heath, adjoins the B 1115 from Sudbury towards Bildeston, but the hamlet around the church and an adjoining hamlet of Upsher Green are the original settlements. Together these comprise the conservation area and lie off this road about half a mile to the east.



Whilst the surrounding countryside is essentially covered with the usual overlying layer of boulder clay of 'High' Suffolk's claylands, the village sits upon a pocket where this is hidden by overlying glacial sands and gravels, which continue as a minor ridge to Newton and Assington further south.

The higher ground on which the church and its adjoining hamlet sit appear like an island within a surrounding sea of agricultural land. This separation from the rest of the village should be maintained and any development required locally placed further west.

The village lies about two miles from the main A134 Colchester to Sudbury road and the nearest rail link is at Sudbury, where a branch off the east coast main line now terminates.

Archaeological Significance

Great Waldingfield has no site of great significance in archaeological terms, but the County Sites and Monuments Record lists about forty sites around the parish.

The oldest of these is a Palaeolithic hand axe and there is a relatively more recent Neolithic axe head.

A stone mace head and a gouge date from the Bronze Age and a number of ring ditches and enclosures are likely to be of similar age.

The Romans have left us a puddingstone quern, pottery scatters and a section of Roman road, whilst in their turn the Saxons have left a bronze figurine and various other bits of metalwork.



In Walingafella

ten ulmer³ tein⁹ sub heroldo T. R. E. i. car¹ tfe. cum soc.
 Semp. i. uilt. 7 v. bor. tē. i. fer. m¹ nuft, Sep. ii. car. in dno.
 Silua. iiii. por. 7. iiii. ac pti. Semp. i. eq. Sep. ii. an. tē xii.
 por. m. nuft. Tūc uat. xxx. fol. p⁹ 7 m redd xl. fol. hē diū
 leū in long. 7 dim in lato. & de gelt. vii. d. 7 ob dcaq;
 ibi tenent. Eccla de xxx. ac.

In WALDINGFIELD Wulfmer, a thane, held under Harold before 1066;
 1 carucate of land with the jurisdiction.
 Always 1 villager; 5 smallholders. Then 1 slave, now none.
 Always 2 ploughs in lordship.
 Woodland, 3 pigs; meadow, 4 acres. Always 1 horse. Always 2
 cattle. Then 12 pigs, now none.
 Value then 30s; later and now it pays 40s.
 It has ½ league in length and ½ in width; 7½d in tax, whoever
 holds there.
 A church with 30 acres.

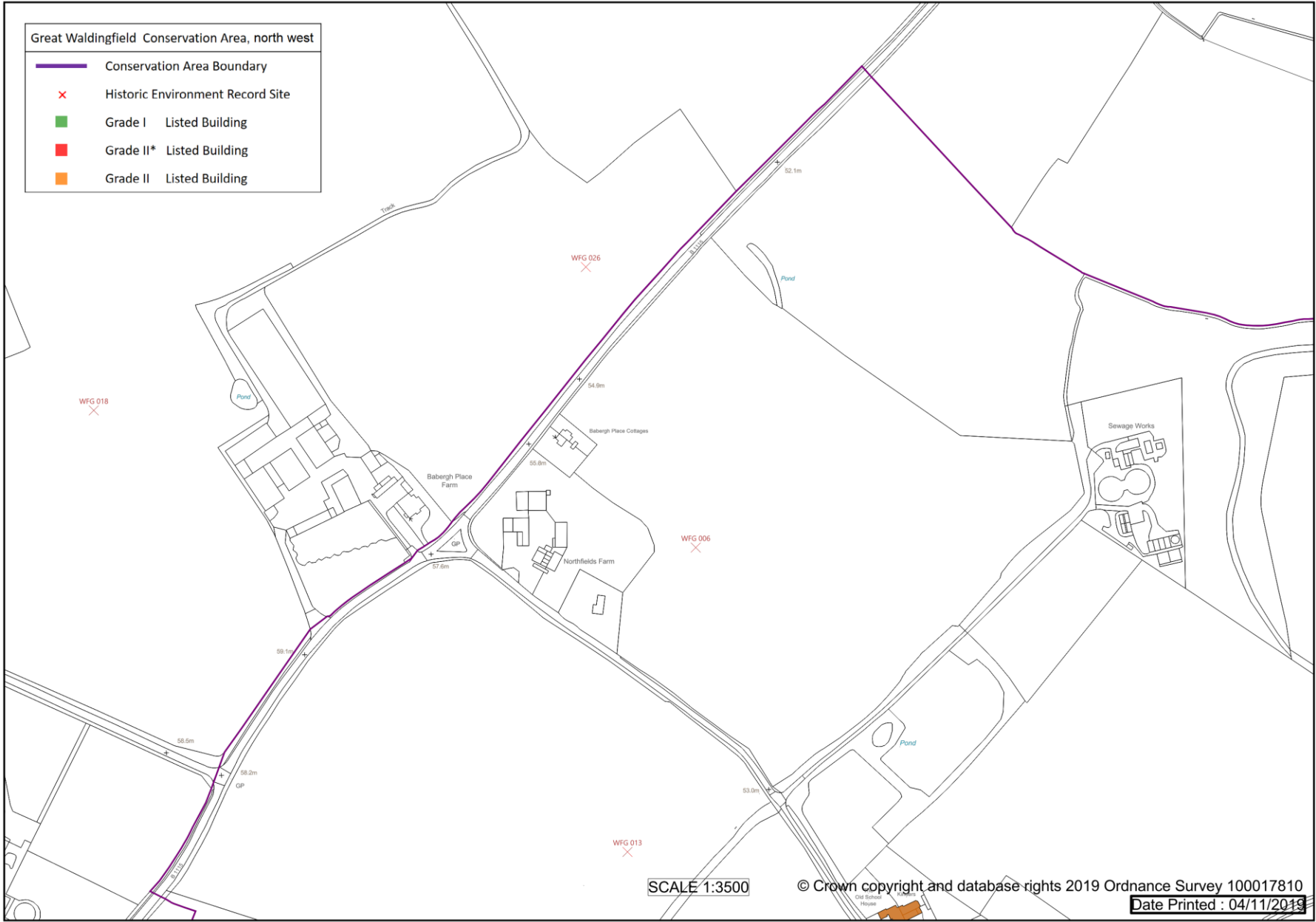
The Domesday survey of 1086 lists two manors and one church for Waldingfield as a whole, but makes no distinction between Little or Great.

The church and churchyard provide the usual Medieval interest, the church walls containing significant amounts of what could be Roman tile. There are also three potential Medieval moated sites, along with a Post-medieval windmill site.

Babergh Hall is in Great Waldingfield, the ancient meeting place for the Hundred of Babergh, from which the modern District Council takes its name. The name of the village is reputed to mean the 'open area (field) of the dwellers by the wold (wood)'.

Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, north west

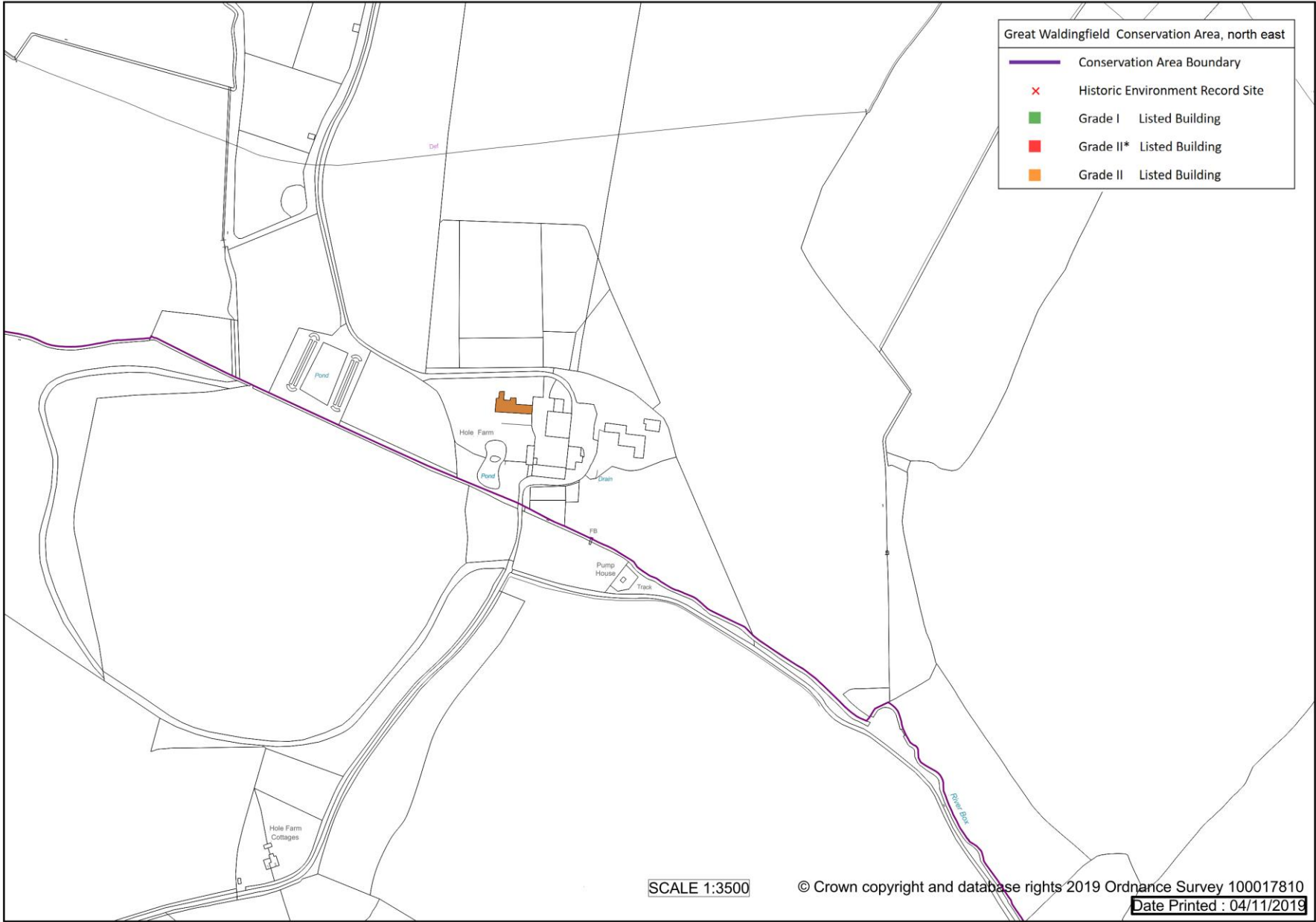
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Historic Environment Record Site
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building



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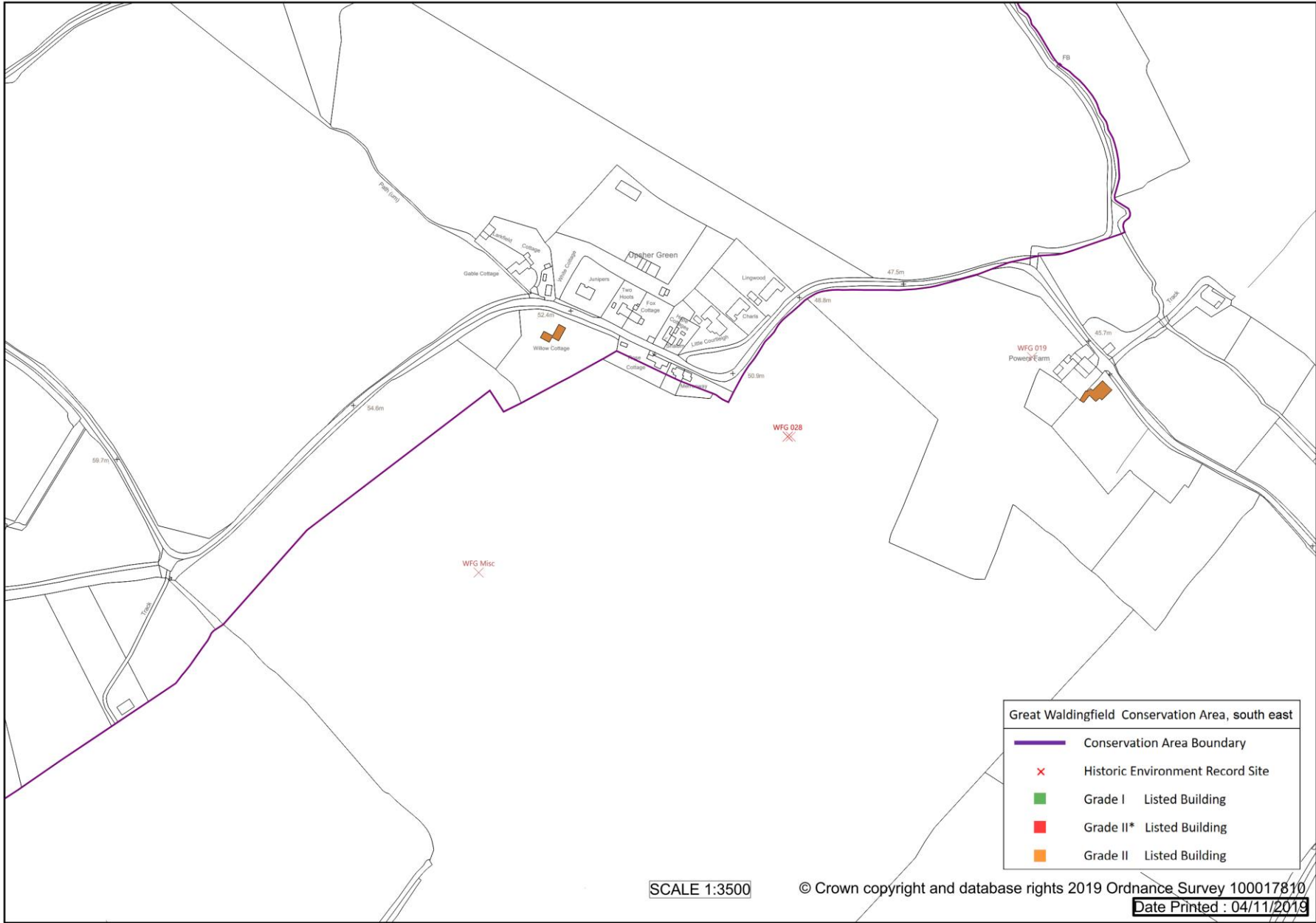
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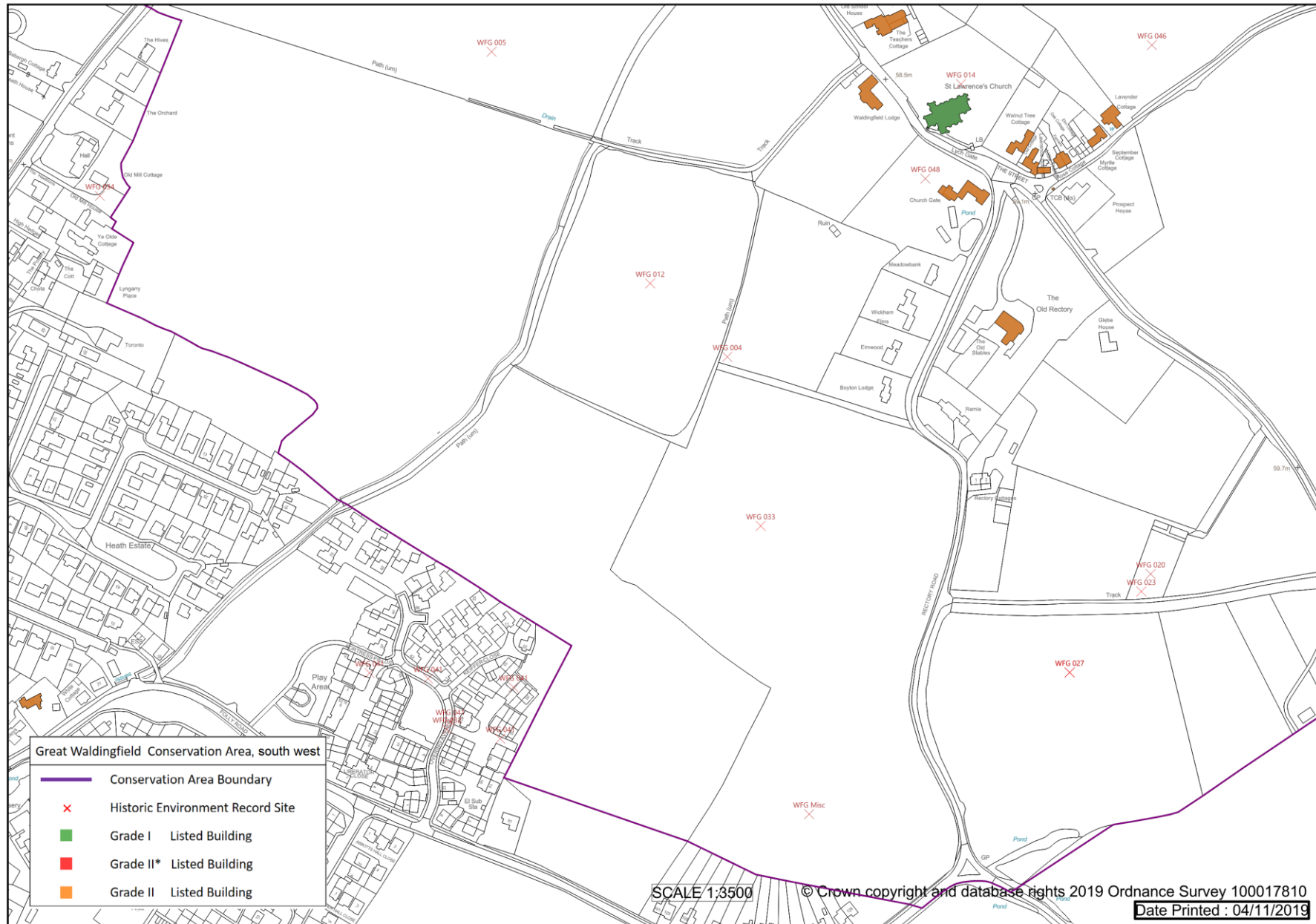
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Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, south west

- Conservation Area Boundary
- × Historic Environment Record Site
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building

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Intrinsic Quality of Buildings

Great Waldingfield has its fair share of listed buildings, although only the Church is grade I, Babergh Hall is grade II and the rest are grade II.*

The Church of St Lawrence was built at the end of the 14th Century of flint and stone in the Perpendicular style with a fine west tower. The chancel was rebuilt in the late 1860's, designed by William Butterfield, the great gothic revivalist.

Babergh Hall is a fine late 18th / early 19th Century house standing in its own parkland a little to the north-west of the settlement, in neither the main village nor the conservation area. It is built to a U-shaped plan in Suffolk white brick with a slate roof.

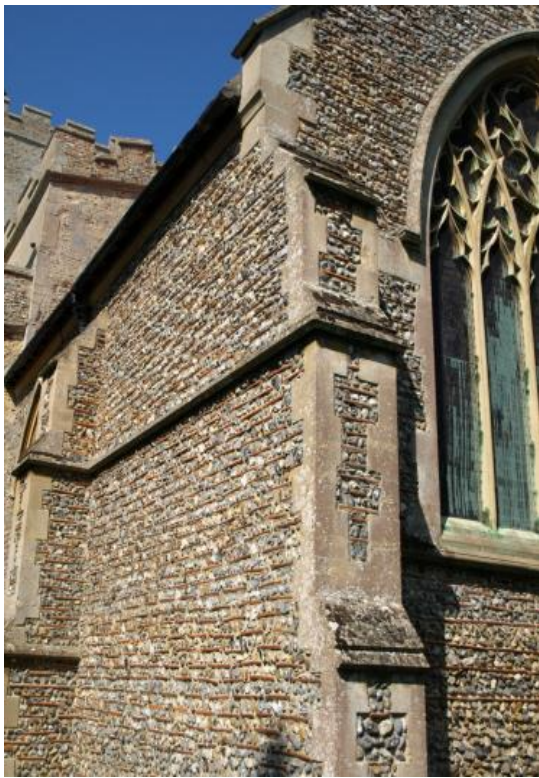


The remaining grade II listed buildings are for the most part domestic and variously timber-framed or brick built, but also include a K6 telephone kiosk outside Prospect House, on The Street.

Pevsner makes note of two particular houses for their chimneys: High Trees (now known as Church Gate) is near the Church and has 3 octagonal shafts with star cappings, as well as a vine pattern carved bressummer dated 1670.

He also claims one 16th Century chimney at White Hall, about a mile to the south-west, is even better, but it seems not to be listed.





Traditional Building Materials

Great Waldingfield has examples of most of Suffolk's local building materials that have been used through the ages.

Timber-framed construction is there but not in an immediately obvious way, as there is little in the way of jettied first floors or exposed timbers. Brick or rendered fronts have hidden most of the clues and steep plaintiled roofs are all that remain visible.

Examples of timber-framed houses near the church look more authentically ancient with their thatched roofs and various large brick chimneys.



Soft 'Suffolk red' bricks appear as chimneys on many buildings, whilst at Upsher Green there is a concentration of 19th Century brick cottages with slate roofs, many with pleasing polychrome brick patterning in the local red and 'Suffolk white' bricks, the latter probably from nearby Sudbury.

Suffolk white bricks (wrongly described as 'grey gault' in the listing) can also be seen to good effect on The Old Rectory, an older timber-framed building refronted in the early 19th Century.

The flint and stone of the church is mirrored in the nearby Victorian school building built in pebbles with white brick dressings.

Hierarchy of Spaces

The Heath, the main built up part of the village of Great Waldingfield is situated about half a mile south-west of its original historic core.

The latter, that forms the bulk of the Conservation Area, comprises the Church with an adjoining hamlet of mainly historic buildings, plus a further hamlet at Upsher Green about a quarter mile further east.

The Church is approached by turning south-eastwards off the B1115 Sudbury to Stowmarket road, just beyond the new village centre. The Street climbs then passes by the Church leading to a staggered junction with Rectory Road to the south-west, beyond which the Street turns to the north-east.

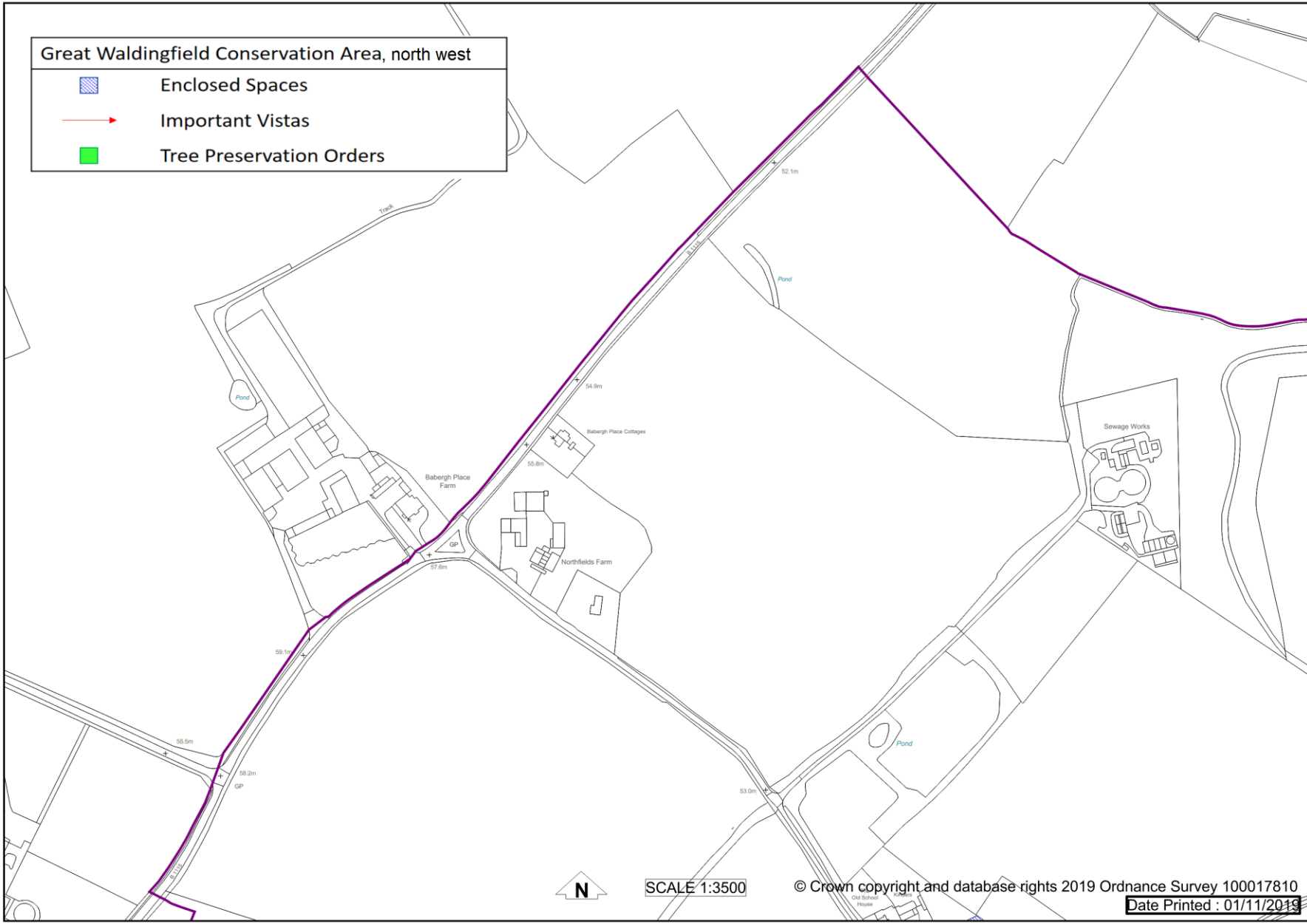


Beyond this central junction of the hamlet with its small triangular green, the lane continues to the south-east before turning abruptly left leading to Upsher Green where there is another cluster of dwellings.

Because the commercial centre of the village lies in the newer part to the south-west, there is not the usual built up feeling within the hamlet, which thus retains a very rural character. This rural character could perhaps best be preserved by extending the Conservation Area to include a complete green belt of agricultural land around the historic core. This should extend as far as the River Box to the north-east, the B1115 Sudbury to Bildeston road to the north-west and as far as the existing developments of The Heath to the south-west.

Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, north west

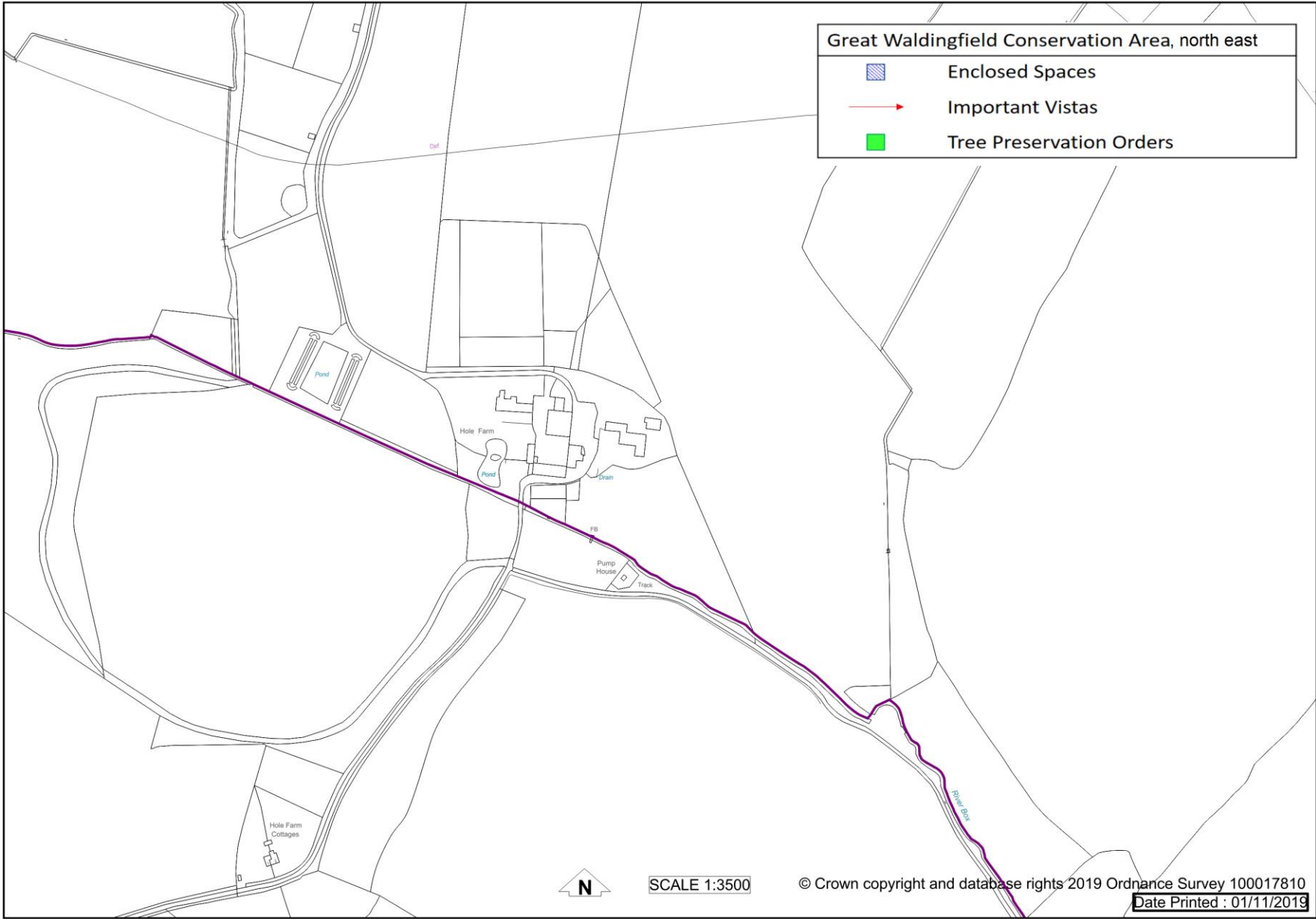
- Enclosed Spaces
- Important Vistas
- Tree Preservation Orders

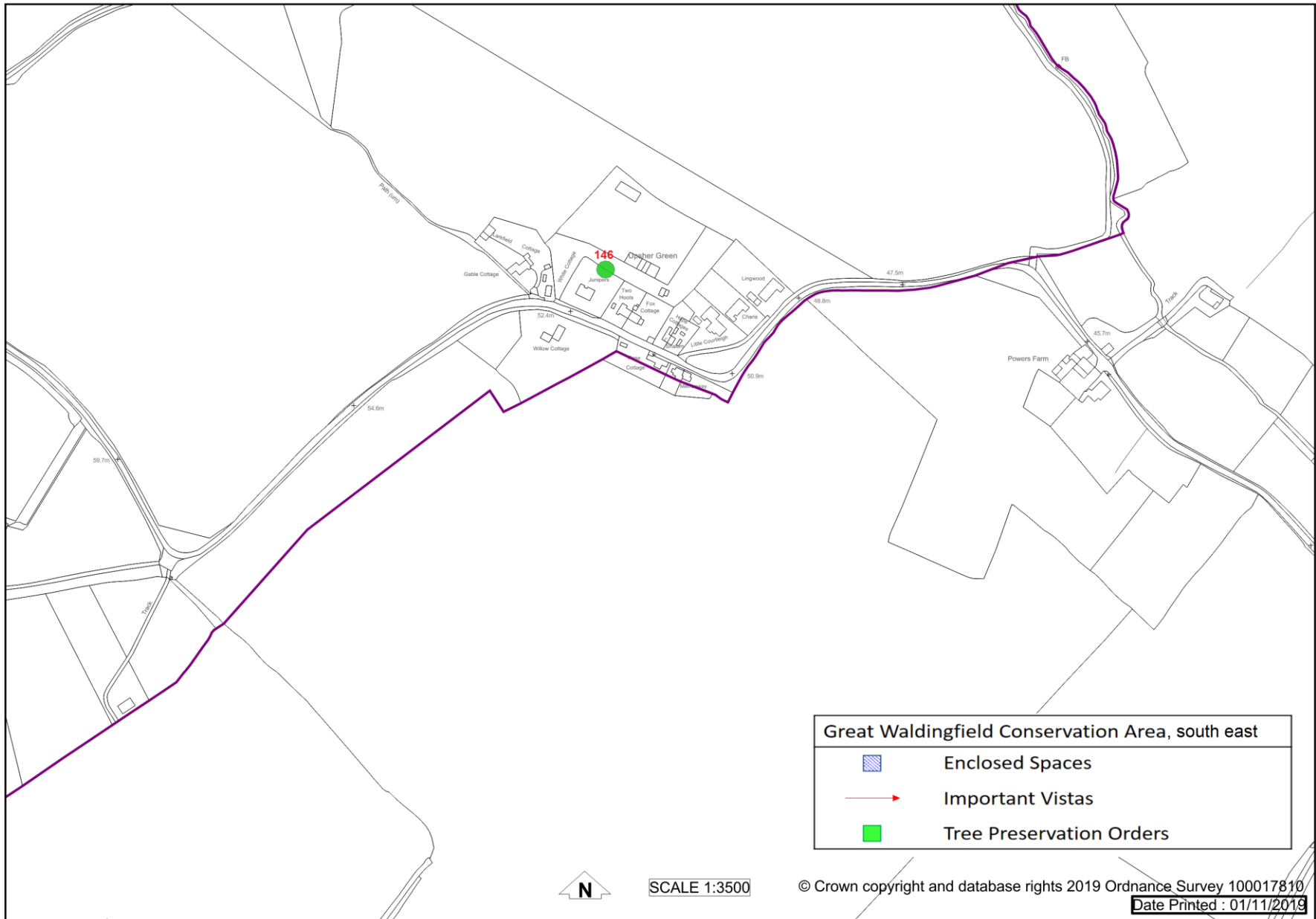


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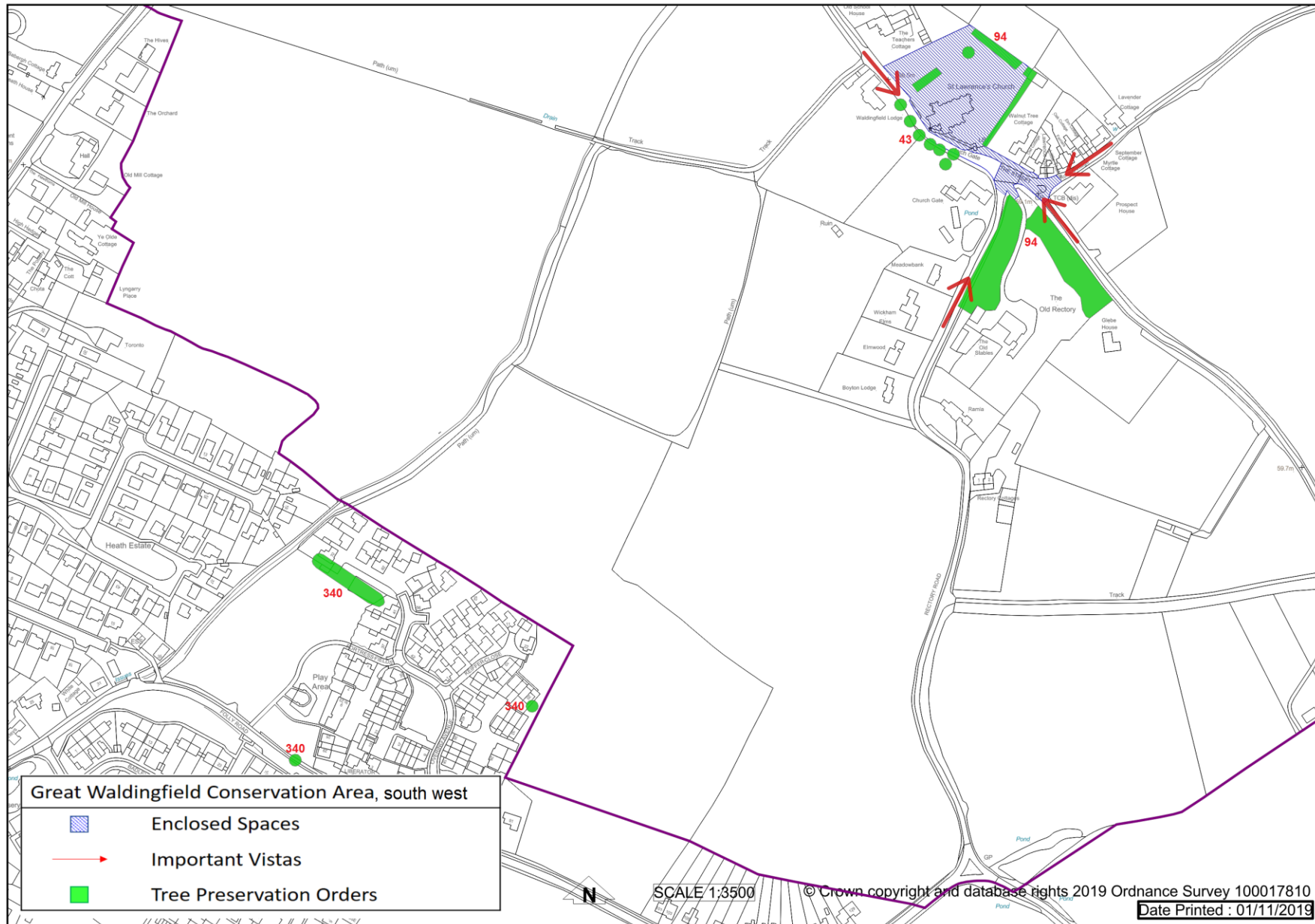


Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, south east

-  Enclosed Spaces
-  Important Vistas
-  Tree Preservation Orders

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Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, south west

-  Enclosed Spaces
-  Important Vistas
-  Tree Preservation Orders

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Trees and Planting

The raised 'island' that comprises the older part of the village is also notable for its density of tree cover, exceeding that of the surrounding farmland.

At the north-western end, the approach to the village off the main road will in time accentuate this as a small field below the Old School has recently been planted for the Millennium and subsequently extended.

The churchyard is well defined by its mature Oak, Sycamore, Horse Chestnut and Yew trees enclosing the space. Opposite at Church Gate there was until 1976 a 'Great Waldingfield Elm', a distinct sub-species identified by Dr. Oliver Rackham. Further south the grounds of the Old Rectory are more 19th Century in character with a notable Cedar.



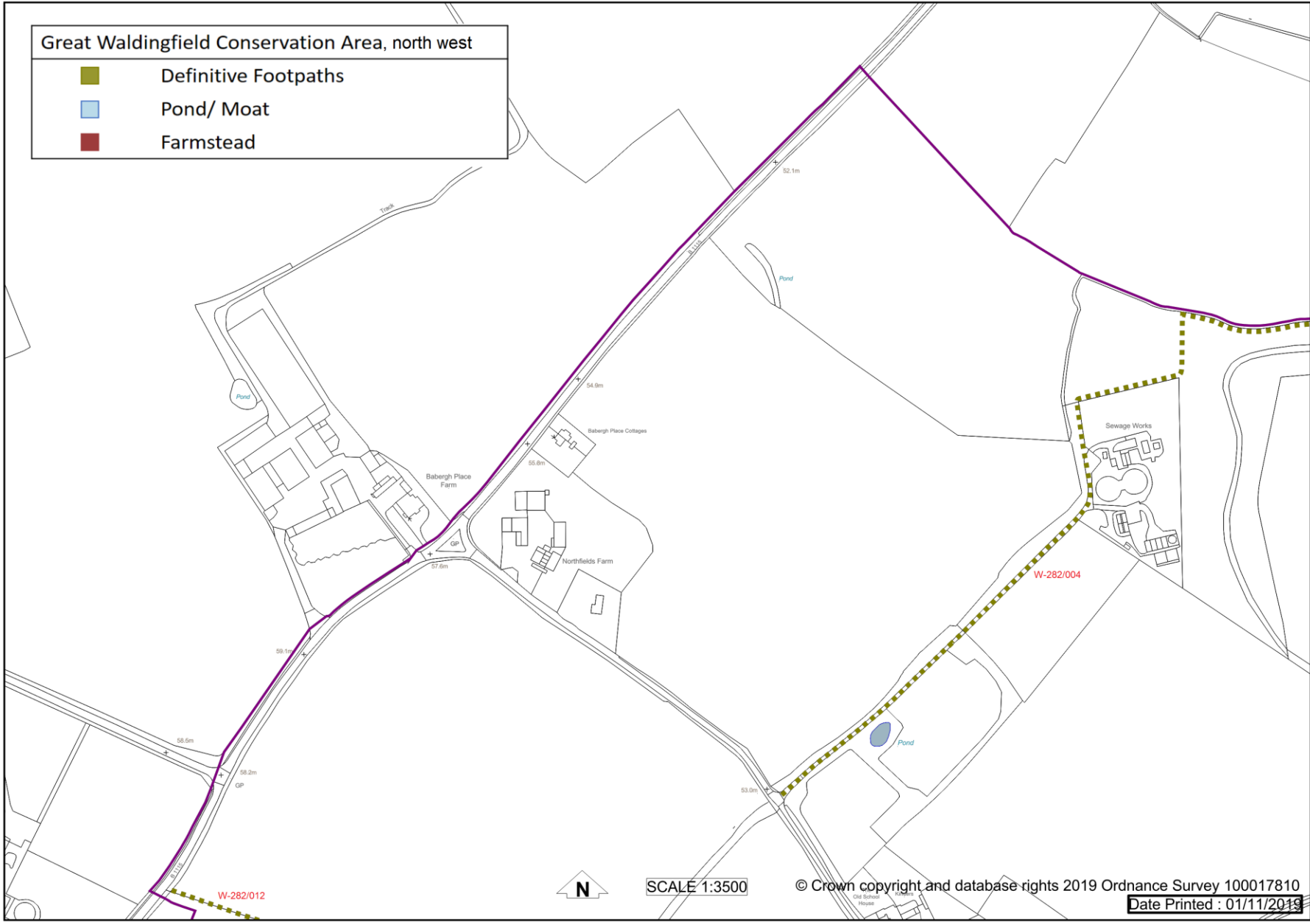
The hedgerows along the lane to Upsher Green contain the usual Oak, Ash, Field Maple and other native trees.

Many of the trees within the village are the subject of tree preservation orders (TPO), West Suffolk CC TPO 43 covering an important strip of Elm (now gone) and Ash with Red Oak and Lime opposite the churchyard wall. Similarly, their TPO 94 made in 1968 covers the churchyard trees and two strips of mixed species defining the roadside boundaries to the Old Rectory.

Later TPOs pick up a single Ash tree at Upsher Green (reference 146), and a number of other trees threatened by development around The Heath, the orders put in place by Babergh DC.

Great Waldingfield Conservation Area, north west

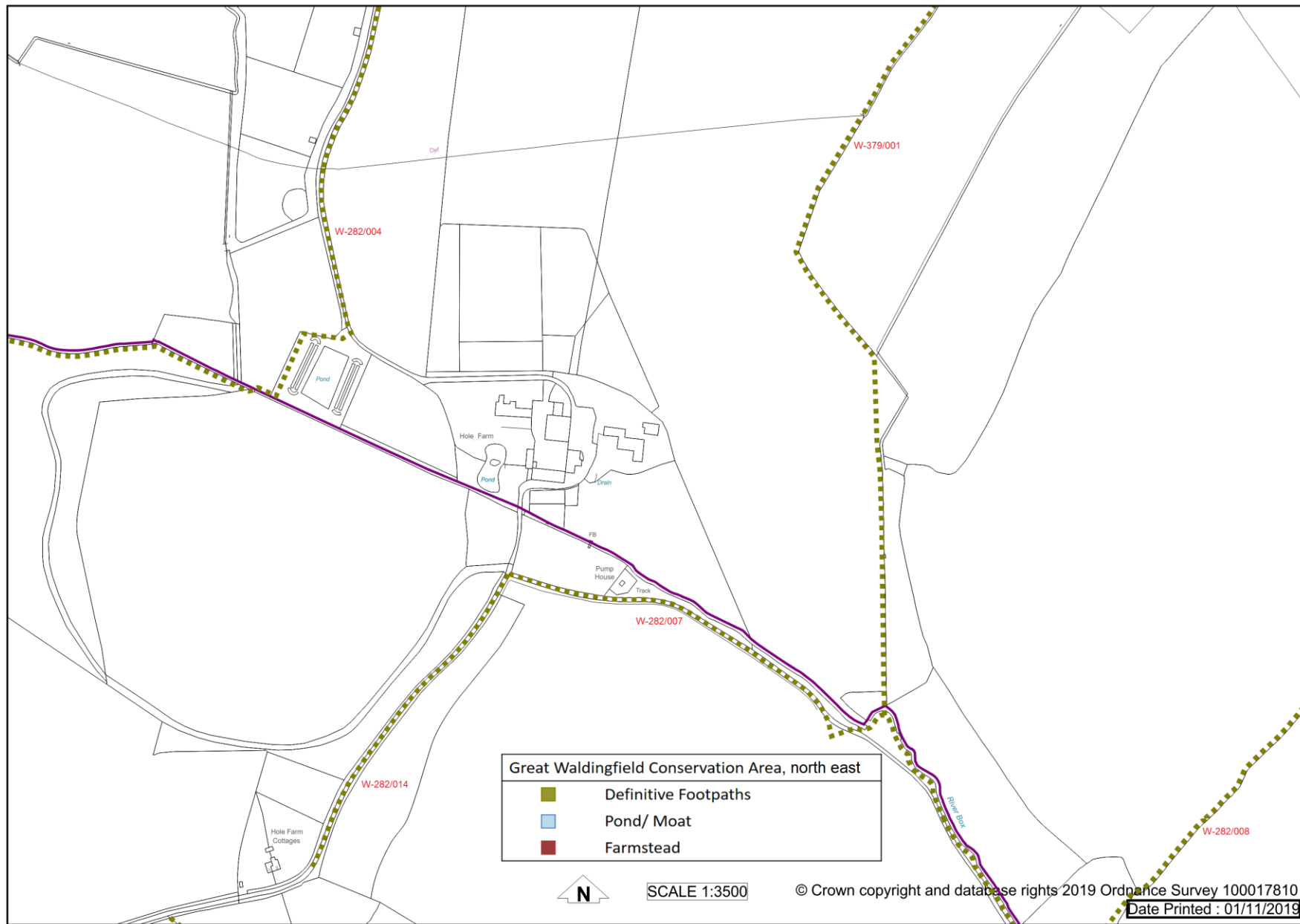
- Definitive Footpaths
- Pond/ Moat
- Farmstead

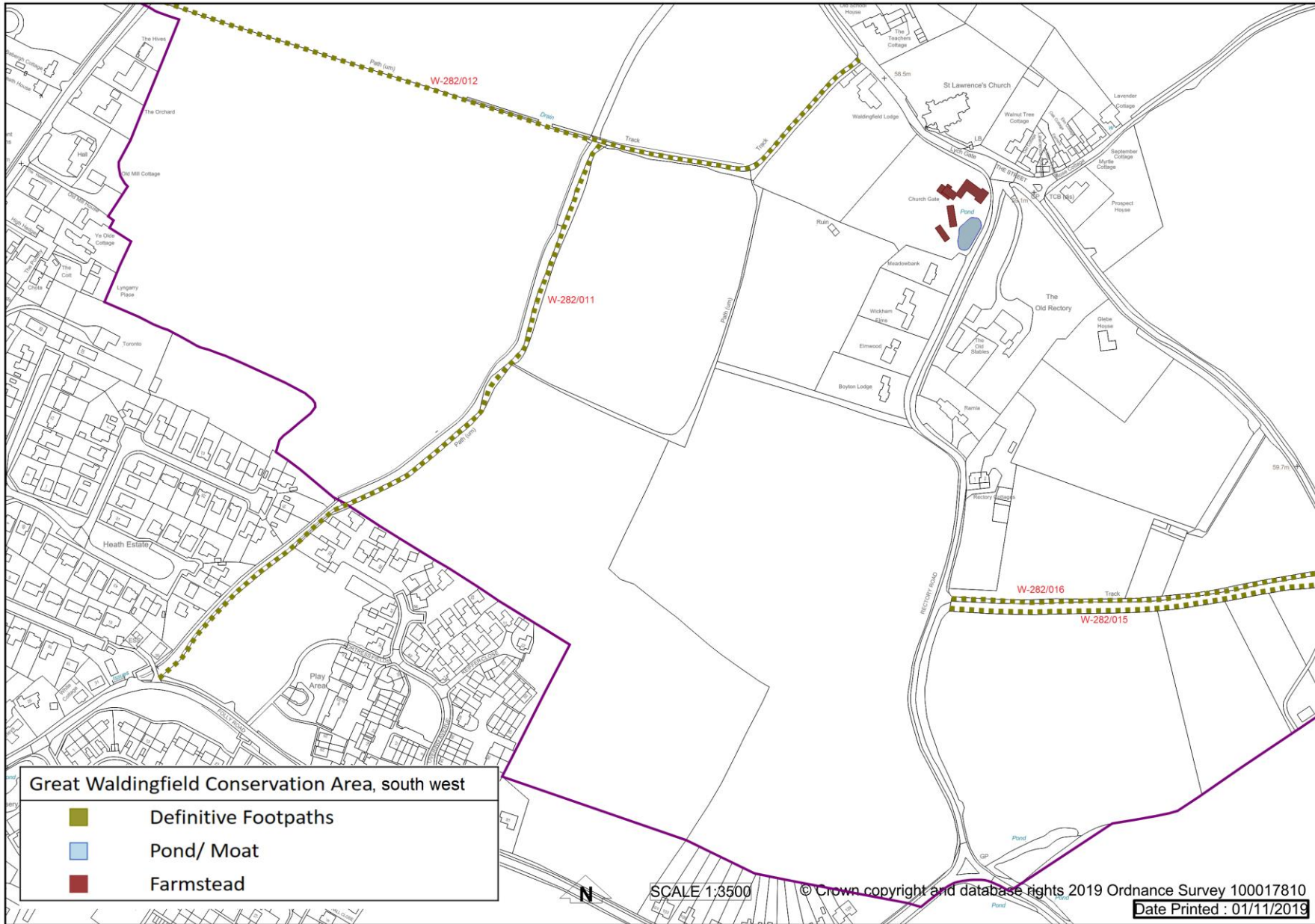


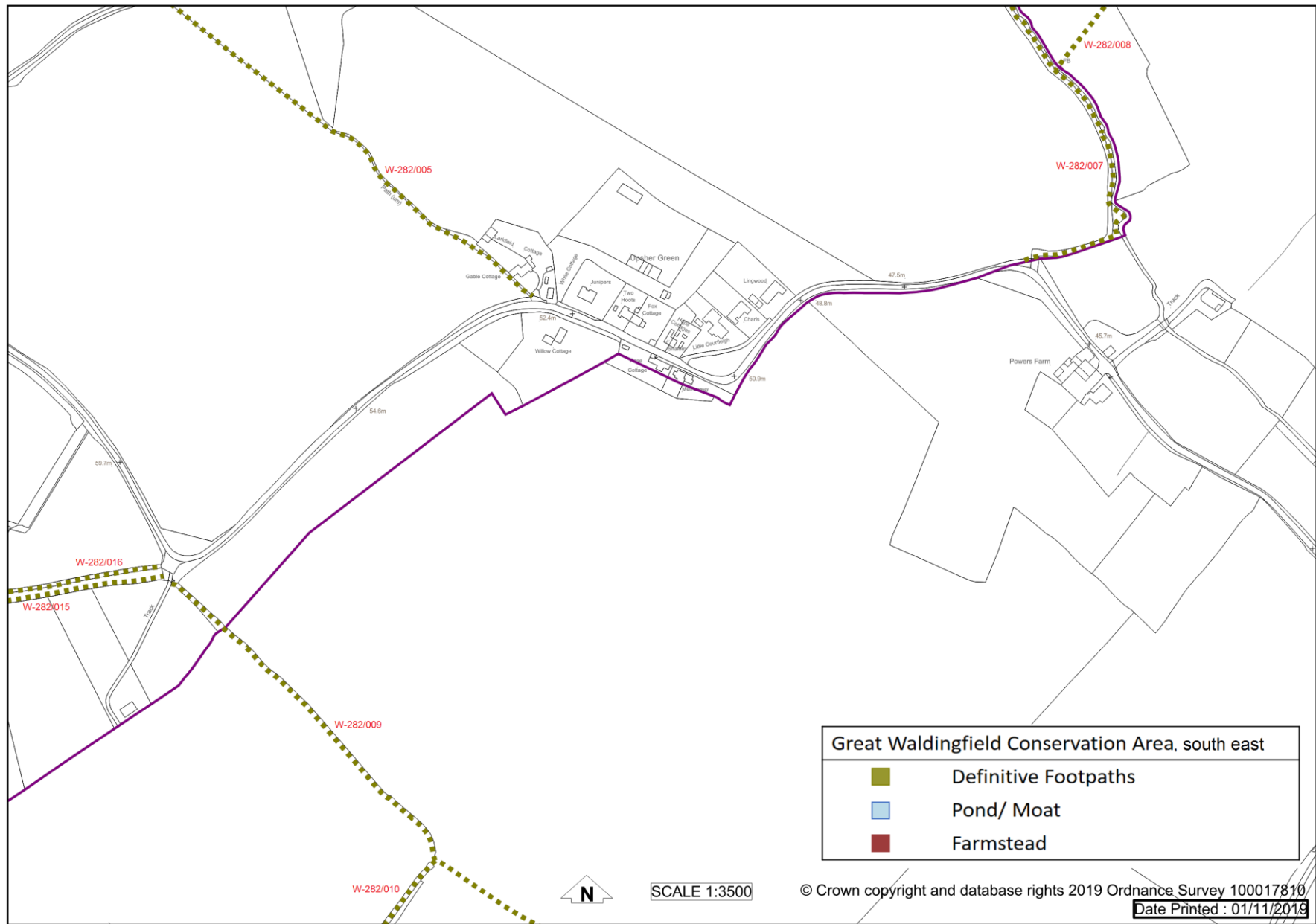
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Relationship to Open Countryside

For the most part, Great Waldingfield's development around the two hamlets of its historic core has only been one plot deep.

The presence of working farms not far from the centre of the old village amplifies the rural character to be found there. The fields in this encircling ring of green should be protected from future development, any growth of the settlement preferably going to the old airfield area west of The Heath.

A number of footpath links, radiating out into the surrounding countryside, head towards the farms across these fields, Footpaths 4, 6 and 8 linking north-eastwards into neighbouring Little Waldingfield's footpath network.



To the south and west Footpaths 11 and 12 connect radially to the east and north respectively of The Heath.

Some of these radial routes have become lanes and are now surfaced roads that occasionally stop or turn abruptly and now continue as footpaths such as Footpaths 14, 9 and 16.

Other paths such as footpaths 5 and 16 partly encircle the village centre joining together nearby radial routes. Overall the old village presents a good choice of available footpath routes giving immediate access to the countryside.

Prevailing and Former Usage

From the 15th to 17th Centuries Great Waldingfield played a small part in Suffolk's then thriving woollen cloth industry as an outpost to the nearby important centres of Lavenham and Sudbury.

In the early 17th Century records show two clothiers plus one each of comber, weaver and clothworker there, in addition to three husbandmen, ten yeomen, two carpenters and a blacksmith.

By 1844, directories list fifteen farmers in the parish, along with two carpenters, three blacksmiths, a hurdle maker, a bricklayer and a wheelwright all served by four beerhouse keepers.



The local economy was still primarily agricultural, but did exploit the land in other ways too, as witnessed by the 1838 Tithe map's reference to fields named Winding Field, Osier Ground, Sawpit Meadow, Malting Field, Brick Kiln Field and Mill Field.

The more commercial malting and milling component of this was down at The Heath, whilst the winding and osiers were to be found east of Upsher Green alongside the River Box's upper reaches.

A smock mill was shown on a map in 1824 at the northern edge of The Heath, but this was demolished in 1912 and nothing remains.



Losses and Possible Gains

Great Waldingfield has suffered no major negative effects, but rather more of a gentle erosion at the edges.

The recent housing development north-east of The Heath has encroached a little into the older settlement's 'buffer zone' of agricultural land and should creep no nearer.

Protecting the older settlement could be achieved by extending the conservation area boundary to include such a buffer zone.



Some modern development within the old village, particularly along Rectory Road towards The Heath, has given little regard to the local vernacular with foreign materials and forms being introduced here, eroding the character of the village, producing a suburban rather than rural feel.

Further erosion has been caused by the introduction of uPVC windows in some of the unlisted cottages, particularly at Upsher Green.

There is scope for undergrounding some of the overhead wiring in the village, particularly near the Church. The pole mounted transformer nearby is away from the buildings, but perhaps more of an intrusion site as it is above a field's hedge boundary.



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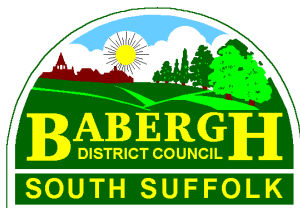
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*This Appraisal adopted as
Supplementary Planning Guidance by
Babergh District Council Cabinet
7 March 2019*