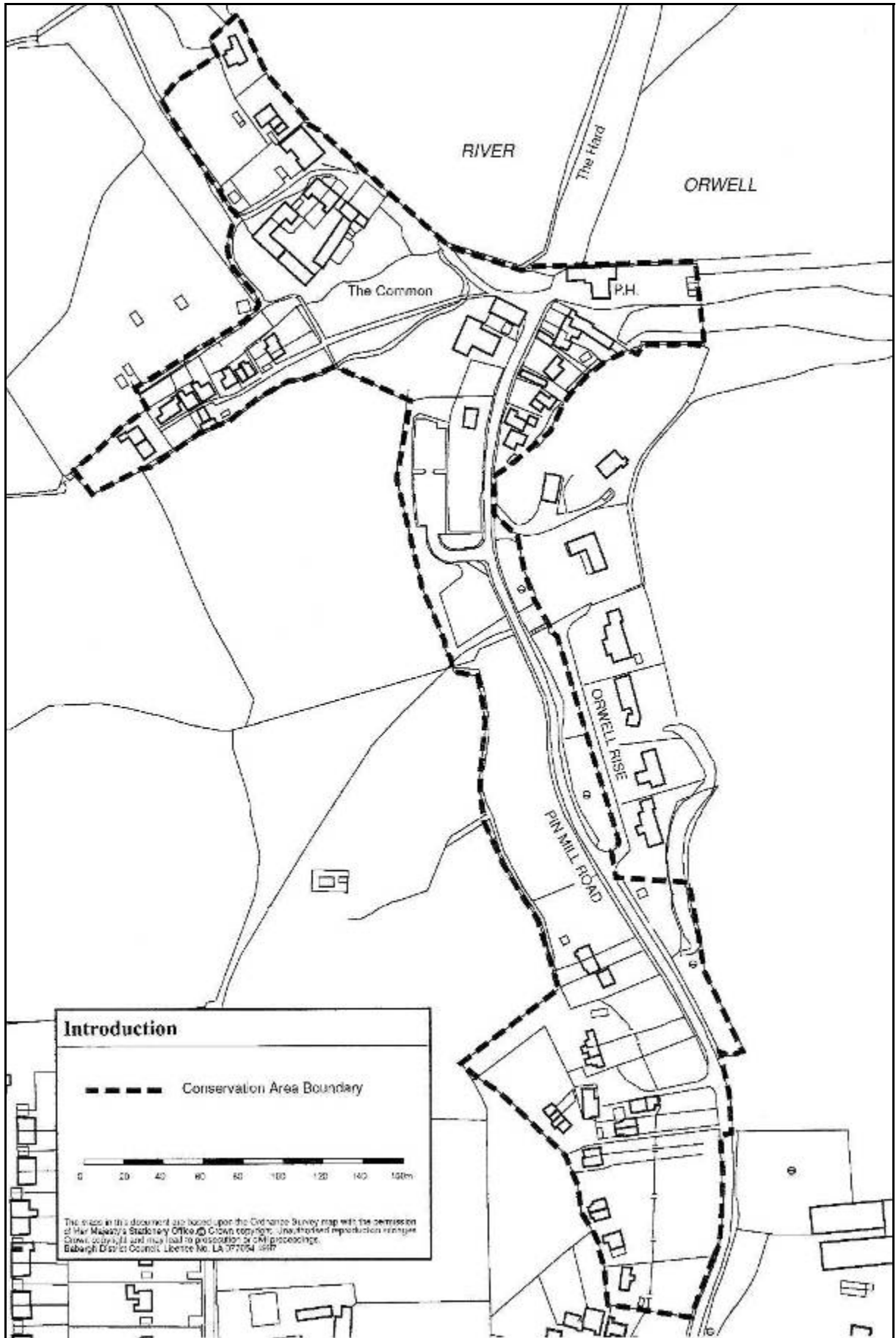


*conservation area appraisal*



# Introduction

*The conservation area in Pin Mill was originally designated by East Suffolk County Council in 1972, 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 Pin Mill under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's new 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006).*

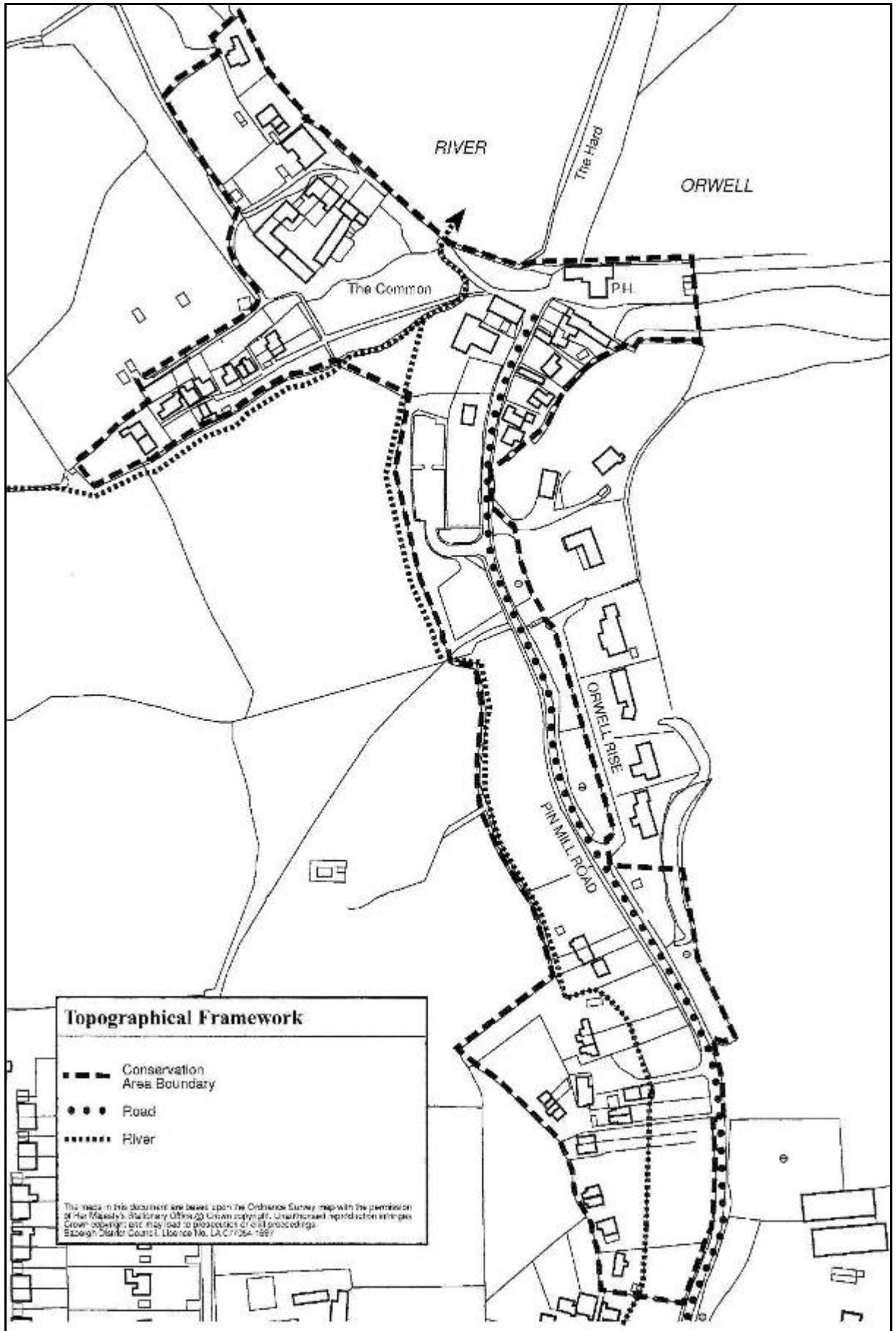
*As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Pin Mill's built environment in conservation terms and is essentially an update on a draft document produced back in 1997, when the hamlet was considered for a rural grant scheme that never came to fruition.*



*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

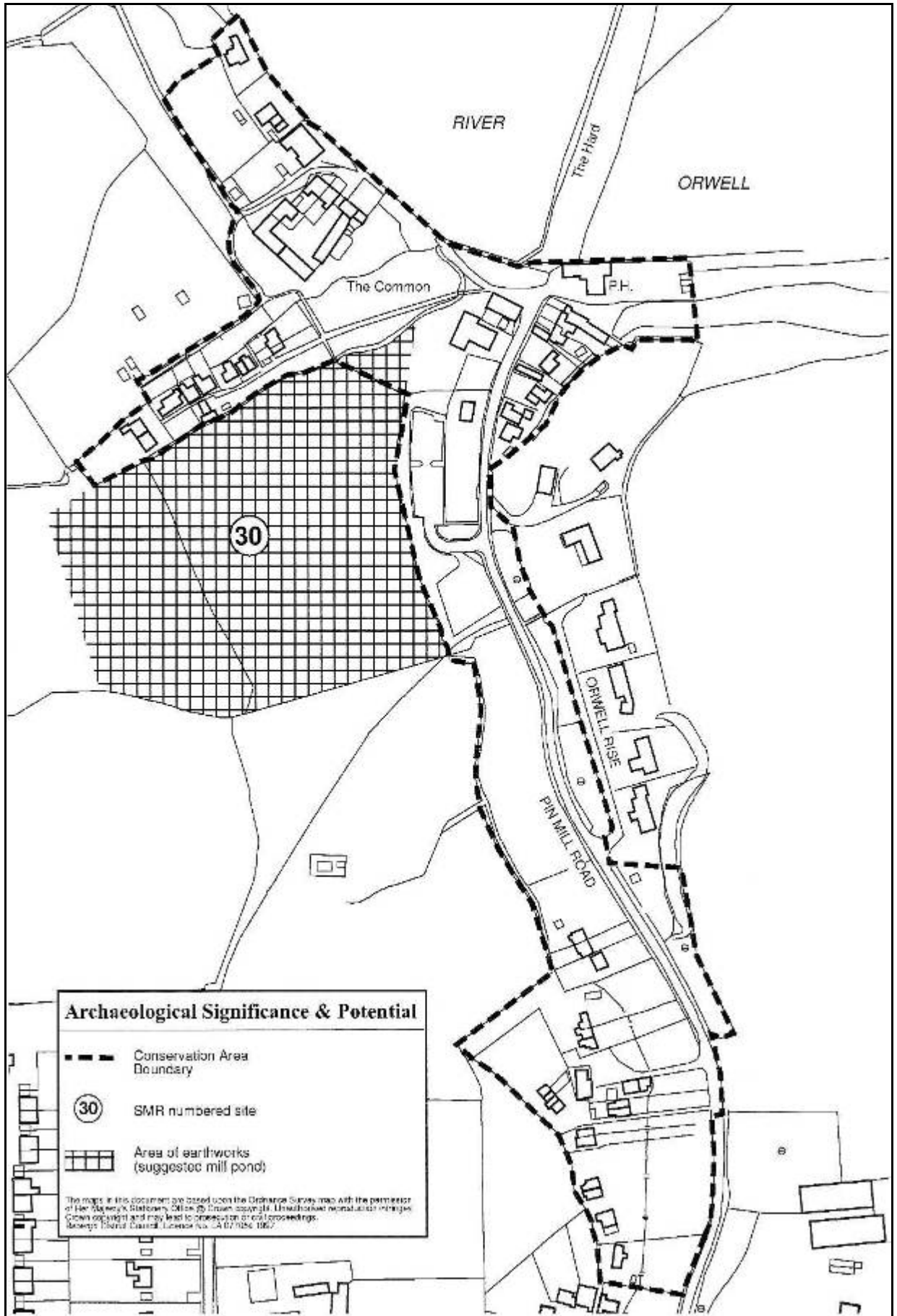
*Pin Mill is a small hamlet situated in the Shotley peninsula on the south bank of the tidal River Orwell, between 0 and 15m above O.D. It lies roughly midway between the town of Ipswich at the head of the estuary and the two towns of Felixstowe and Harwich either side of the mouth.*

*Although very much focussed on the waterside, the historic settlement stretches to the south, away from the water's edge, up two gentle valleys towards the larger settlement of Chelmondiston, of which parish it forms part.*



*Situated clear of the high Suffolk claylands, effectively on the coastal sandlings strip, the underlying geology is basically glacial sands and gravels, with exposures at low level of the Red Crag more prevalent in the coastal strip to the north.*

*These exposures occur both along the foreshore cliff and up the two river valleys and are underlain in their turn by the older London Clay, itself more prevalent to the south. Within this clay are to be found nodular concretionary masses of a clayey limestone, known as 'septaria', which were at one time dredged from this locality to make a form of Roman Cement.*



# Archaeological Significance

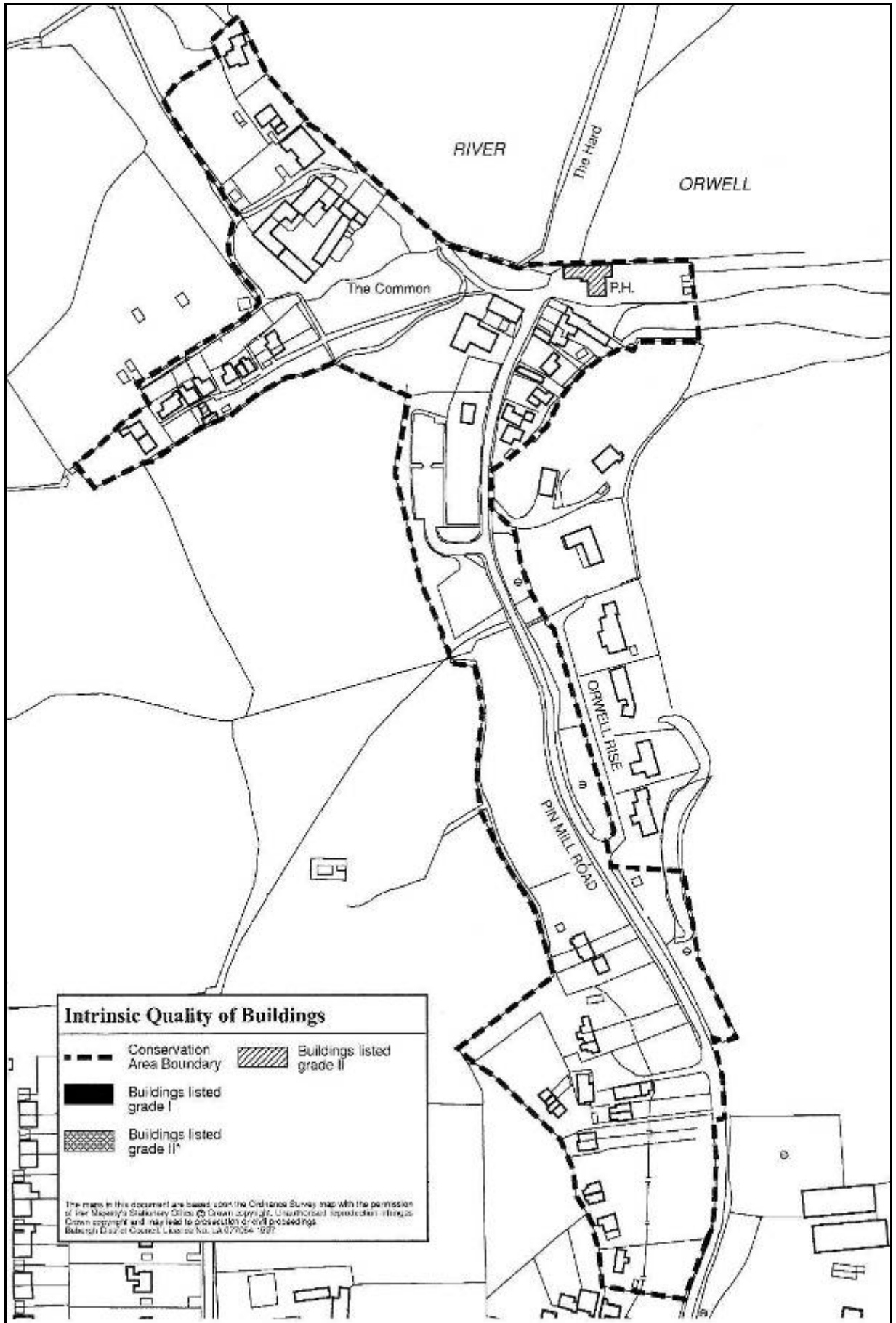
*The parish of Chelmondiston (supposedly 'Ceolmund's dwelling', although neither Pin Mill nor Chelmondiston appear in the domesday survey of 1086) contains a number of Bronze Age barrow sites within its boundaries on the higher ground to the south.*

*The County Sites and Monuments Record, however, lists one site of interest for Pin Mill itself, a cropmark of unknown date. This consists of a series of rectilinear earthworks, visible on an aerial photograph, and located in the field between the valleys of the two streams - this area is listed in the Tithe Apportionment of 1839 as Butt Meadow.*



*Little is known of the origin of this suspected earthwork, but it might be the outline of the pen or pond believed at one time to have supplied a mill there with water. Today the area of Butt Meadow is noticeably contained within a bank and still collects standing water within it.*

*This 'pen' may thus have given the hamlet its name, but another story is that a family named Pynne at one time owned a mill there. Whilst the confluence of these two streams is the optimum site for a water mill, there is the likelihood that the foreshore below this site is actually made ground, which makes a tide mill a distinct possibility.*





# *Intrinsic Quality of Buildings*

*Pin Mill boasts but two listed buildings, both grade II:*

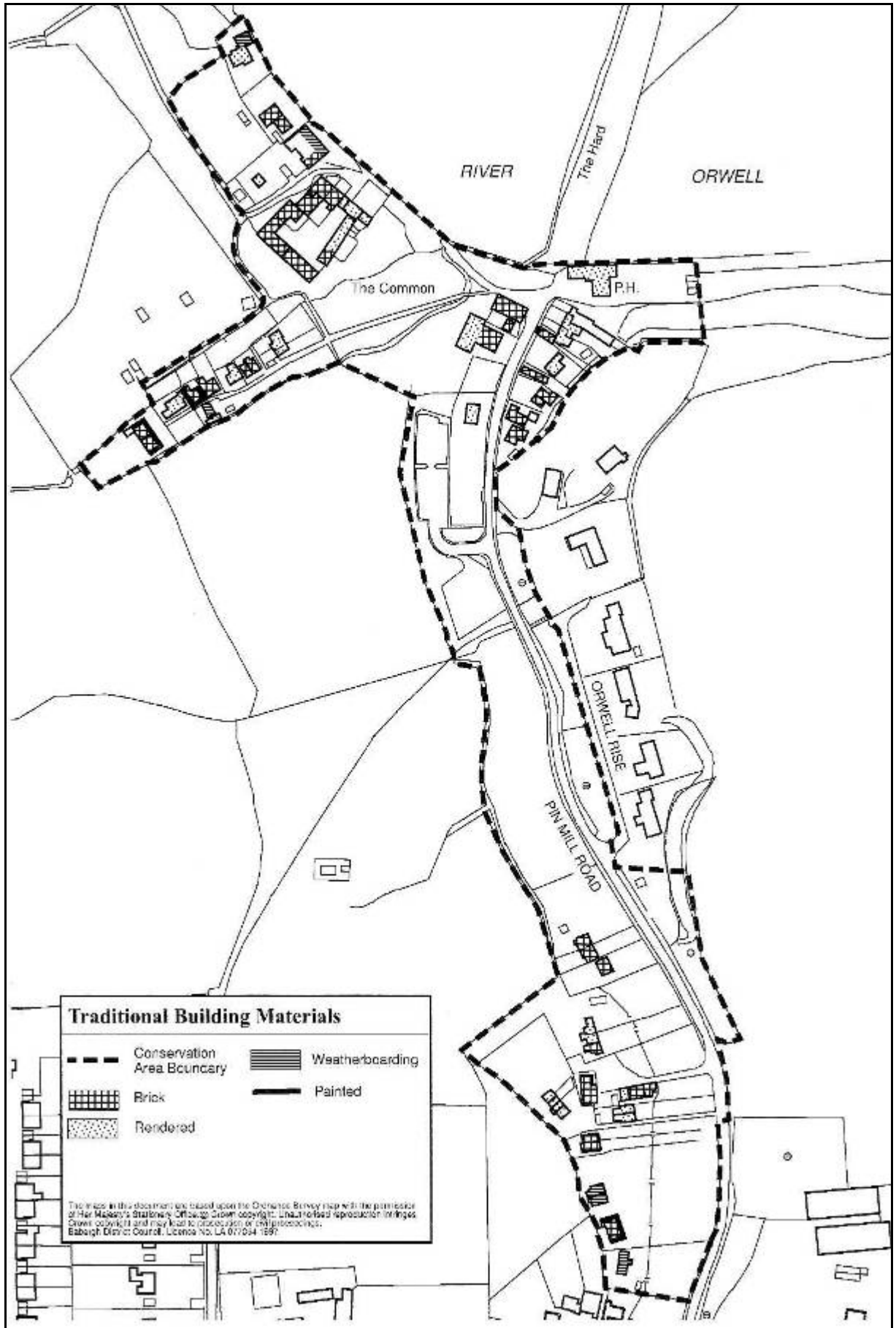
*The Butt & Oyster public house, hard on the foreshore with oversailing bay windows, is basically timber-framed and rendered with both plain and pantile roofs, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century building with 19<sup>th</sup> Century additions.*

*'River View', the other listed building is an 18<sup>th</sup> Century cottage, again timber-framed, but this time weather-boarded and pantiled with a recent extension.*



*Elsewhere, the parish of Chelmondiston has six other grade II listed buildings, but nothing of greater value; indeed Pevsner says of it “not an inkling of any development of architecture since the turn of the century”.*

*Even St Andrew’s Church there was bombed out during the Second World War and rebuilt in 1955-7.*



# Traditional Building Materials

*Pin Mill's buildings are generally domestic in scale, unlisted and 19<sup>th</sup> Century in date. The majority were built in the local soft red brick, some with Suffolk White brick detailing, and usually roofed in slate.*

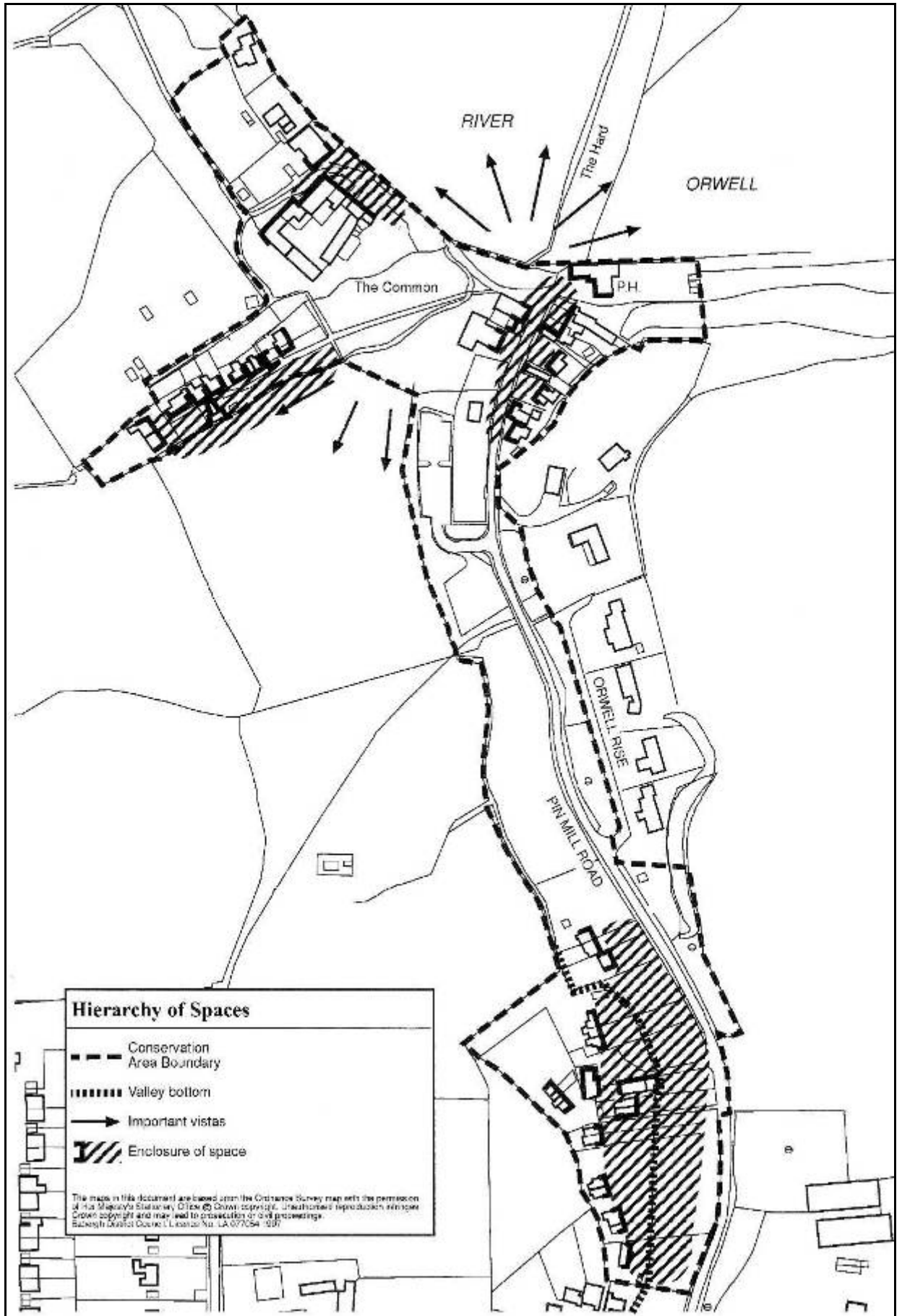
*The hamlet's appearance, however, is more traditional and varied than this might indicate, as a number of the brick buildings have more recently received coats of paint and some have been rendered.*

*In addition there are also examples of weather-boarding, mostly painted white, with both slate and pantile roofs.*



*There is also a good scattering of clay tile roofs. Some of these are plain tiles, but mostly they are red clay pantiles with one instance of the black glazed variety and even one rare example of the green glazed that was fashionable in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*

*Whilst a very few properties have incorporated modern materials, e.g. in the form of concrete roof tiles, there are a number of instances where modern building elements have crept in somewhat incongruously. Examples can be found of flat roofs, bungalows, double garages and replacement uPVC windows. In view of the scarcity of Listed Buildings here, an Article 4(2) Direction would help to control this.*



# Hierarchy of Spaces

*Space in Pin Mill is to a large extent dominated by the long slow narrow lane descending from Chelmondiston to its terminus at the waterfront: a cul-de-sac that opens out to new watery vistas at its end.*

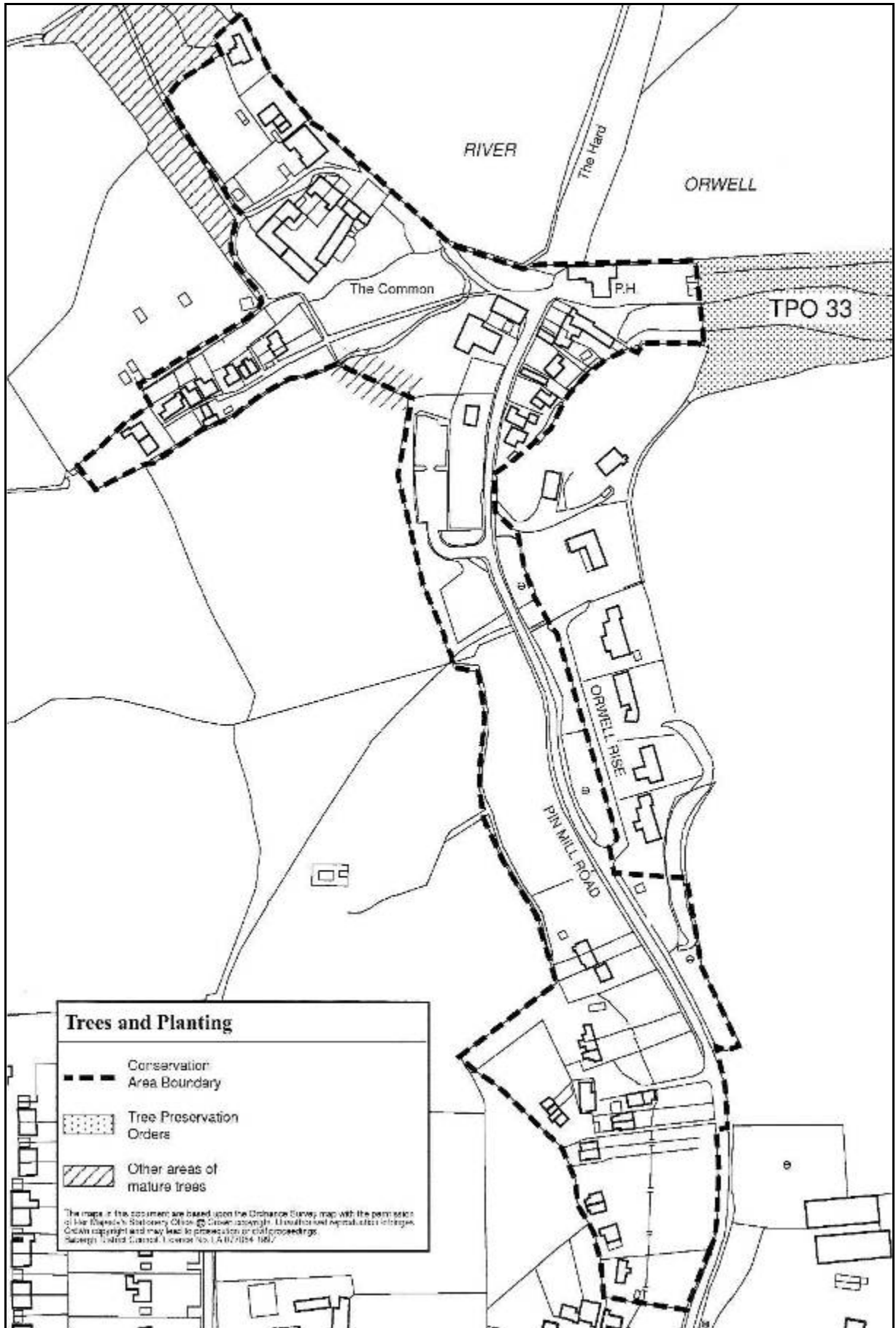
*At low tide this becomes a sea of mud, which is colonised on its eastern side by a large collection of houseboats, clustered beneath the tree-clad cliff.*

*The houses along the descending lane are either very visible perched up on the hillside to the east, or relatively well hidden tucked down in the valley of the 'Grindle' to the west.*



*The second valley further west has only a narrow rear vehicular access, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was accessed across a common now filled with boatyards. It is consequently very intimate in scale, with many a pathway leading through gardens to further properties.*

*The boatyards themselves are clustered around the meeting of the two streams and in their jumbled ad hoc way make a major contribution to Pin Mill's unique character. Any enhancement undertaken here will have to be very subtly done, as uncalled for 'tidiness' would stand out rather like a sore thumb.*



# Trees & Planting

*The parish of Chelmondiston and the adjoining parishes of Woolverstone and Shotley are covered by a large Tree Preservation Order (TPO 33). Within Pin Mill this is now further boosted by Conservation Area status, whilst the well wooded cliff area behind the foreshore to the east now has the extra protection of being owned by the National Trust.*

*This woodland contains a good mixture of native trees such as Oak, Ash, Elm, Birch, Hazel, Hawthorn, Cherry, Alder, Holly, Willow, Poplar and Blackthorn, with a few continental species thrown in for good measure such as Sycamore and Sweet Chestnut.*

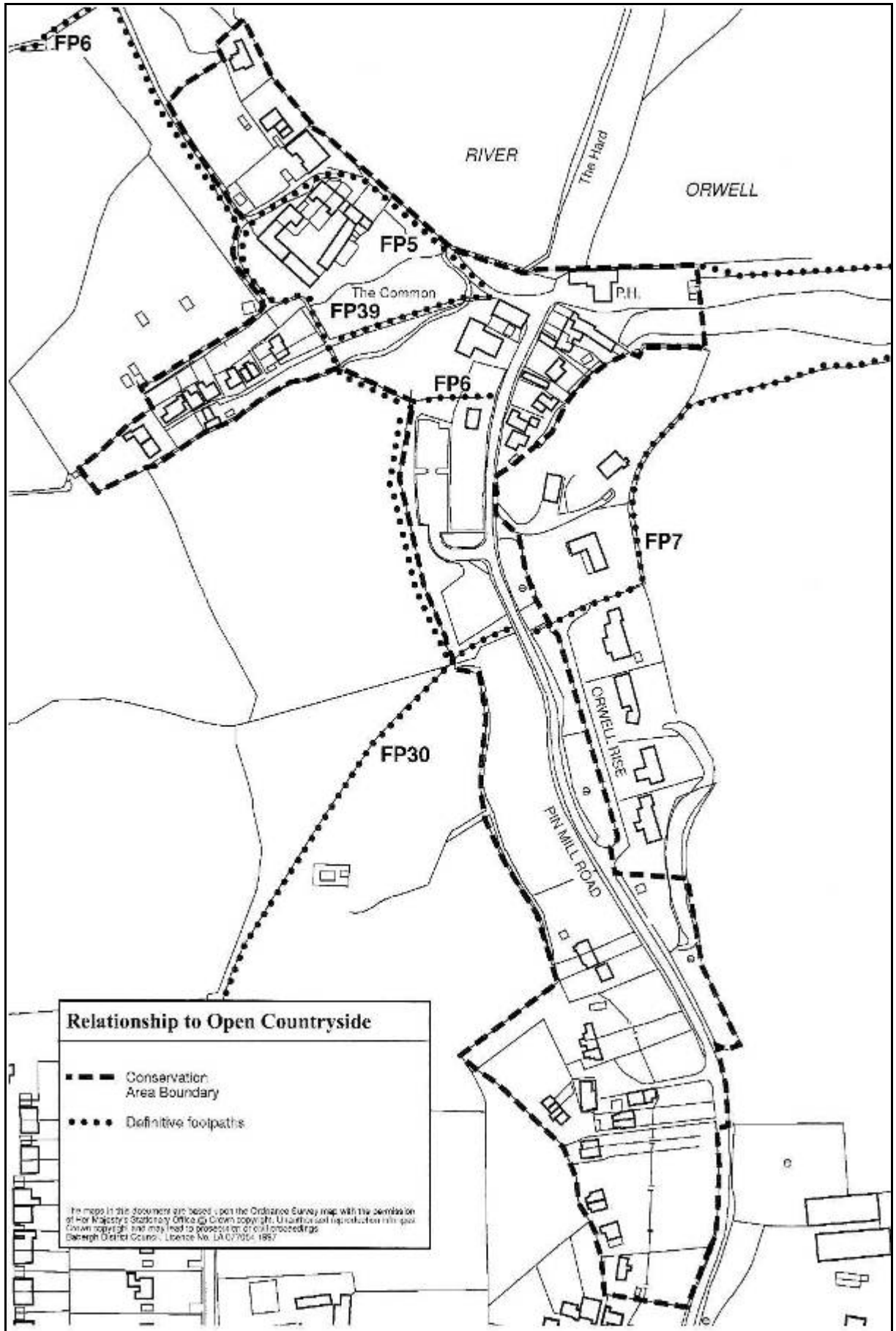


*This area is supplemented further by a plantation of conifers inland behind the cliff, also owned by the National Trust, and containing Pine, Larch and Douglas Fir.*

*Other trees occur behind the western part of the foreshore, along with a cluster of Willows in the wet ground near where the two streams meet.*

*In historical times the area around Pin Mill was not tree covered, but would have been mainly heathland: poor sandy soils grazed by sheep, being the southernmost outpost of Suffolk's sandling heaths.*







# *Relationship to Open Countryside*

*Pin Mill is relatively well served by footpaths, a through route running east-west along the top of the tree lined cliff parallel to the shoreline. This is augmented by further paths along the bottom of the cliff to the east serving the houseboats and an additional path to the west that branches off inland where the main path enters the grounds of Woolverstone Hall.*

*A further footpath link from Pin Mill runs up the valley inland to Chelmondiston via Butt Meadow, the field between the two streams. Here the countryside penetrates right to the heart of Pin Mill.*

*Access to the adjacent fields and woods is therefore easy from Pin Mill.*

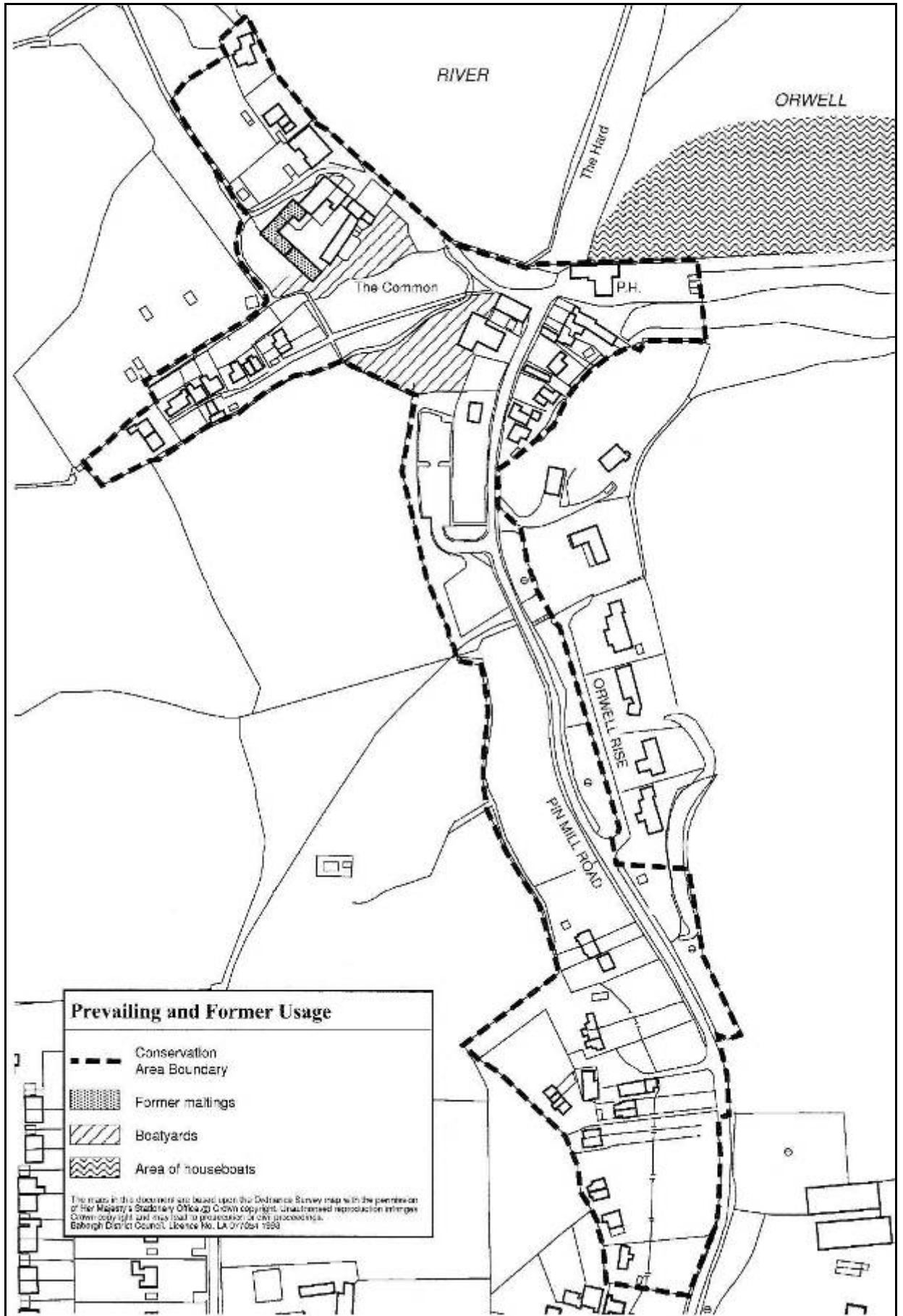


*Indeed Pin Mill with its distinct absence of street lighting and other suburban accoutrements is very much part of the countryside.*

*The entire coastal strip thereabout is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This covers an area from the Orwell Bridge, just south of Ipswich, right around the edge of the Shotley peninsula and up the river Stour as far as Brantham. It is managed as part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Project.*

*The mudflats on the foreshore are also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) because of their wildlife value.*





# Prevailing & Former Usage

*Whilst there may or may not have been a water mill in Pin Mill itself, to the west of Chelmondiston there once stood Elmer's Mill, a post and roundhouse type windmill which was demolished in 1913.*

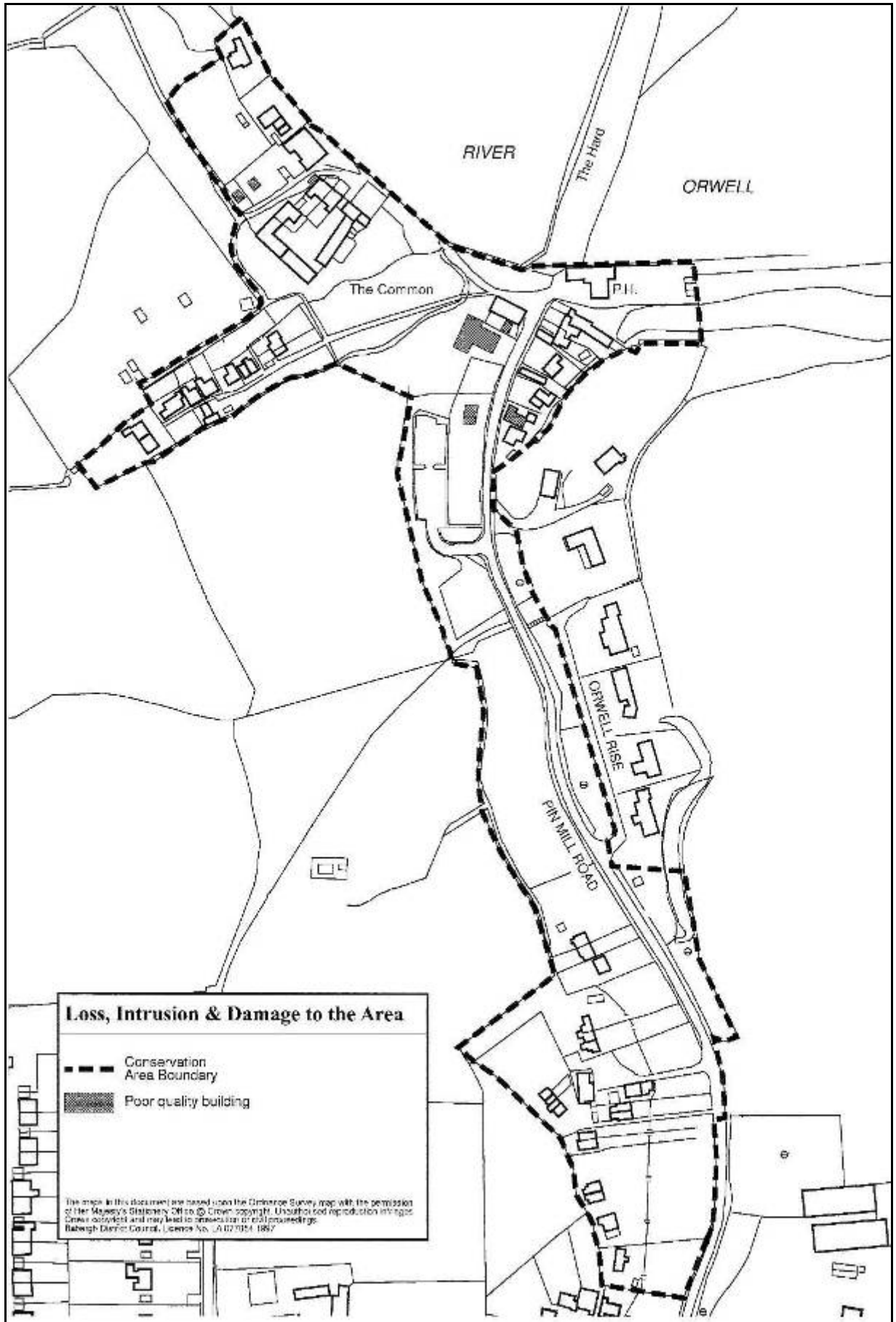
*Chelmondiston also had its own brewery at one time and there was a smithy located in the former sand-pit off the lane down to Pin Mill.*

*Although it can boast its own maltings, now converted to housing minus the malt kiln, Pin Mill itself is more nautically orientated in terms of former trades. The Port of Ipswich's bailiffs and burgesses held Admiralty Courts at the Butt & Oyster between 1546 and 1552.*



*There is a long tradition of boat building and repair at Pin Mill. The annual Barge Match held in June celebrates the days of the Thames barge fleet that worked the east coast from the Medway up to Great Yarmouth. Barges would stop off in Butterman's Bay near Pin Mill to offload goods in transit for Ipswich, and beyond via the Gipping Navigation. Many of this fleet, at one time 5,000 strong, were built in Ipswich or Harwich, but came to Pin Mill for repairs. The local tradition of boat repair continues to this day.*

*Also based at Pin Mill was a fleet of smacks and bawleys, 30 strong in 1844, that dredged the seabed near Harwich for 'septaria', which were transported up to Ipswich for the manufacture of Roman Cement.*



# Losses & Possible Gains

*Whilst the painting and rendering of a number of the hamlet's brick buildings could be regarded as a loss of original texture, it has actually increased the apparent diversity of materials there, more in line with an older Suffolk village.*

*A few incongruous instances of poor design are to be regretted however: a cement rendered bungalow with low-pitched concrete roof tiles; a flat roofed weather-boarded extension on a red brick and slate cottage; rendered bungalow style double garages; flat roofed black weather-boarded extensions to the former maltings; one very prominent gabled detached house, part rendered, part brick and far too suburban in style for Pin Mill and a few instances of uPVC windows.*



*Ubiquitous double yellow lines, attempting to keep the car in its place, succeed along the lane down to Pin Mill, and turn the corner at the end into where the road merges in a rather ill-defined manner with both the foreshore and private land of boatyard.*

*This area has recently been tidied up in a rather utilitarian manner with bare concrete, galvanized railings and plastic seating. A difficult task without losing the scruffy charm so characteristic of a working settlement like Pin Mill, where a delicate balance has to be struck between the needs of visitors and the local residents and businesses.*

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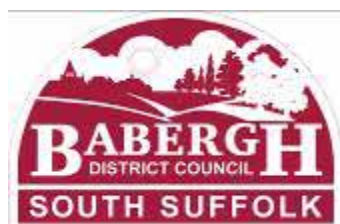
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*White, A 1977 Tideways and Byways in Essex and Suffolk Ian Henry*

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*This Appraisal adopted as  
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Babergh District Council Strategy  
Committee 15 November 2007*