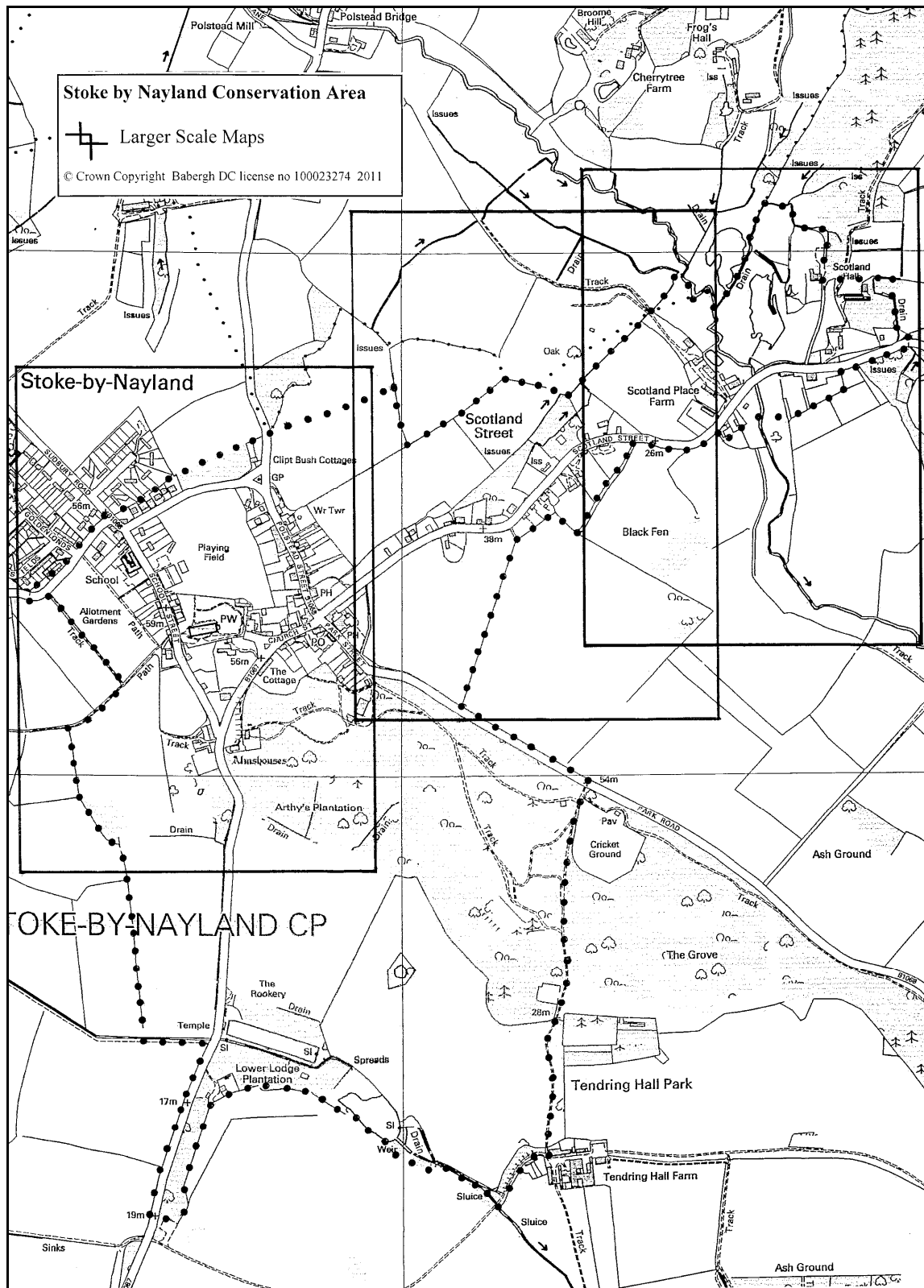


Stoke by Nayland



conservation area appraisal



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Introduction

The conservation area in Stoke by Nayland 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 Stoke by Nayland under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's new 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006).

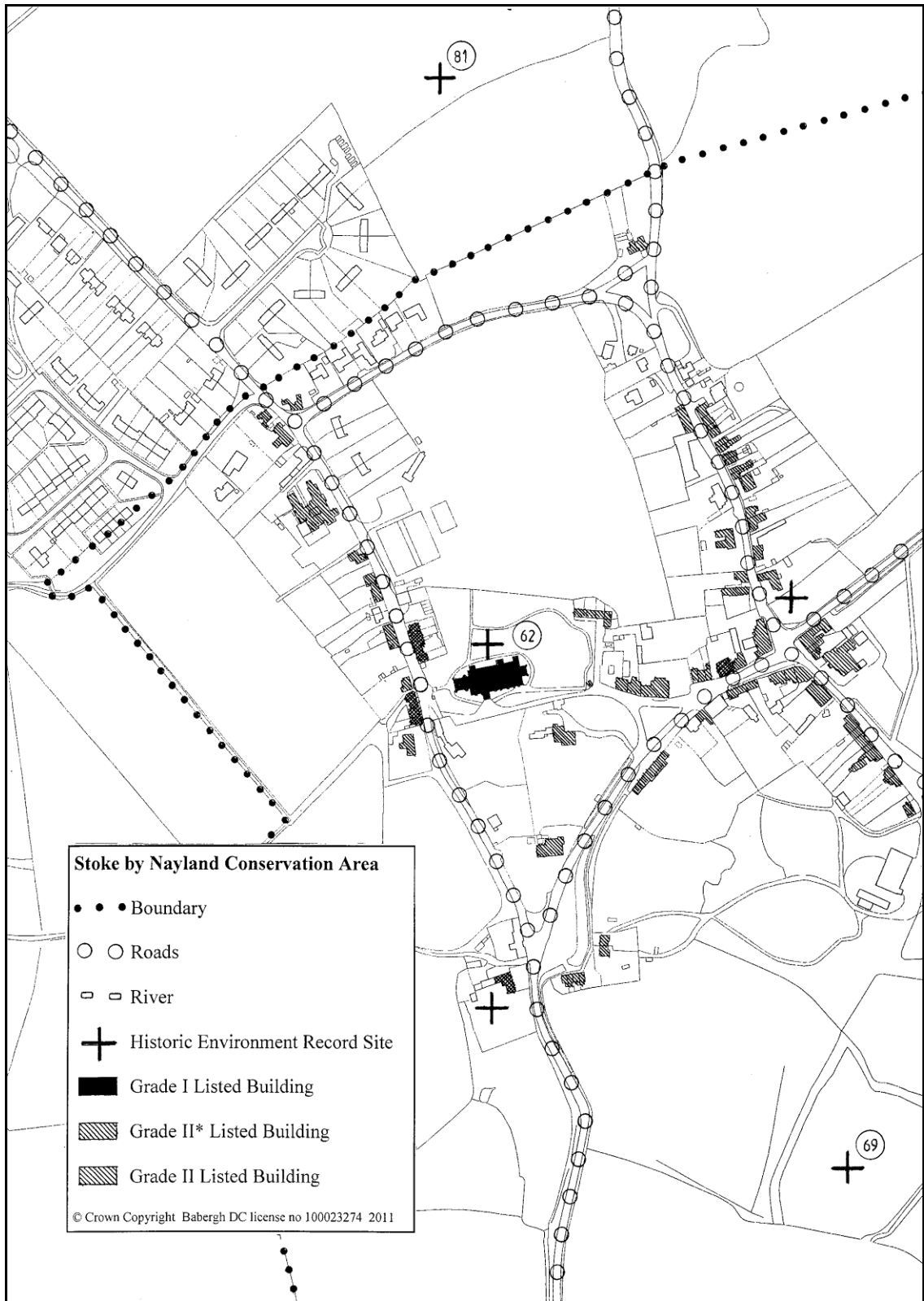
As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Stoke by Nayland's built environment in conservation terms.



As a document it is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient to inform those considering changes 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.

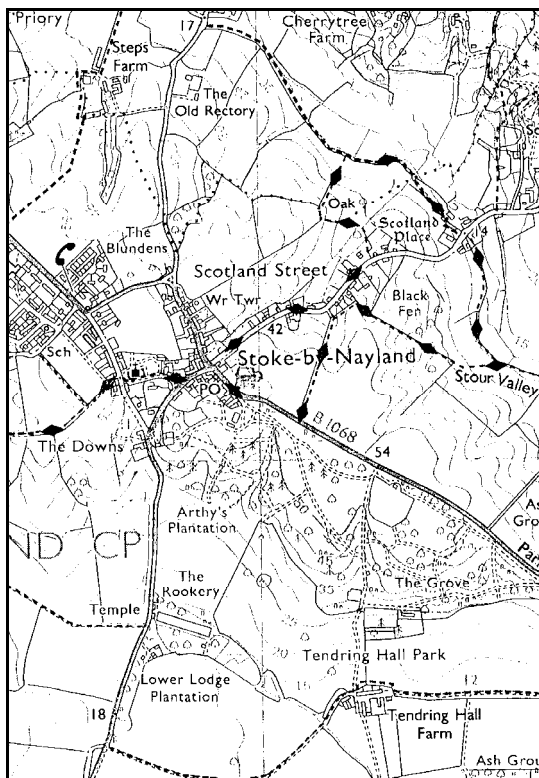
Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Babergh District Council 2011.



Topographical Framework

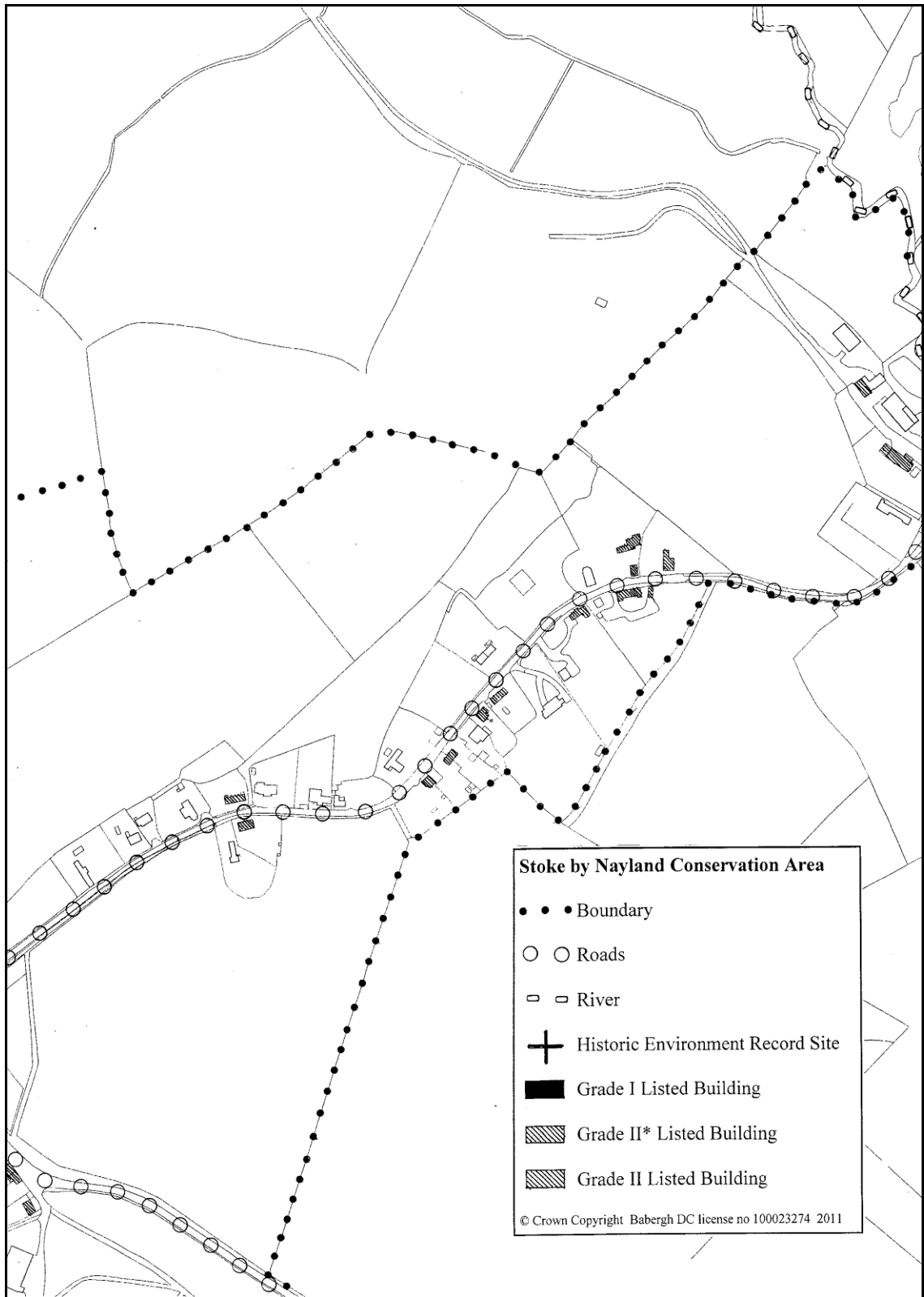
The village of Stoke by Nayland lies in south Suffolk about five miles south-west of the market town of Hadleigh. It is sited on a hilltop promontory between the western bank of the River Box and the northern bank of the River Stour. The hilltop at 55 metres above Ordnance Datum, is some 40 metres above the river level. The 36 metre high west tower of the church is a prominent landmark visible from many miles around and appeared in paintings by Constable.

About a mile south of the village the River Stour forms the county boundary with Essex. The main river was made navigable in 1709 as the Stour Navigation and took barge traffic from Mistley, at the head of the estuary above Harwich, some 25 miles further upstream to Sudbury.



Stoke by Nayland is not served by any main roads, being some four miles distant from the main A12 Ipswich to Colchester route and three miles south of the A1071 Ipswich to Sudbury road. The nearest railway stations are at Colchester and Manningtree (just upstream from Mistley), both on the main Ipswich to London line of 1854.

Stoke is for the most part sited on the overlying boulder clays of High Suffolk, but the rivers nearby have cut down through this and the glacial sands and gravels of the Crag deposits immediately beneath and into the underlying strata of London clay. Like the rest of Suffolk, all of this is ultimately underlain by a great thickness of Chalk.



Archaeological Significance

The most striking thing about Stoke by Nayland's archaeology is that over half the eighty or so entries in its parish Historic Environment Record are ring ditches or cropmarks indicating such.

Although mostly undated, the sheer numbers of these make the area a significant Neolithic or Bronze Age burial site, which in its turn suggests substantial early settlement in the area too.

Apart from these sites the record also lists the finding of a Mammoth tusk which is probably Palaeolithic and a Neolithic axehead, but nothing else of any great age.



There are some scatter finds, the site of Gifford's Hall and the Churchyard all listed as of Medieval date and a number of Post Medieval entries including several bridges and a windmill site.

The Domesday survey of 1086 lists Stoke as held by Swein of Essex, whose father Robert had held the manor prior to 1066. It includes the church and 60 acres of free land, along with woodland for 60 pigs and two mills, which at that time would have been water powered.

*BABERGH, DVO. H. Stokes tenet Rotb. t. r. e. p. man
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BABERGH Two Hundreds

In STOKE (by Nayland) Robert [held] before 1066; 4 carucates of land as a manor, with the jurisdiction.

Then 25 villagers, now 15; then 32 smallholders, now 23; then 8 slaves, now 6.

Then 2 ploughs in lordship, now 3; then 12 men's plough, now 7. Now 2 mills; meadow, 25 acres; woodland, 60 pigs. Now 3 horses; now 8 cattle; now 20 pigs; now 70 sheep, now 4 goats.

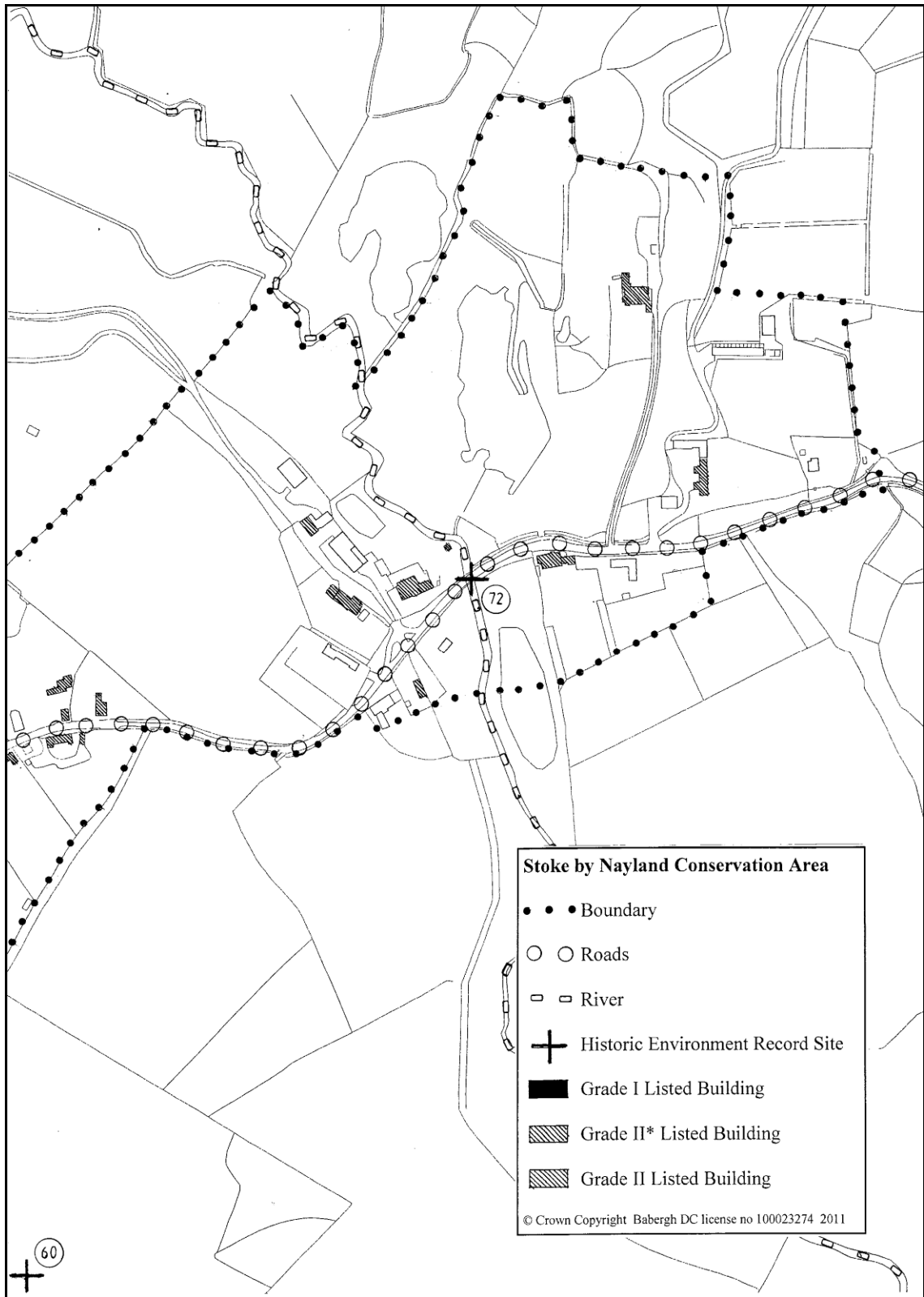
Value then £10; now [£] 12.

A church with 60 acres of free land. In the same village 11 free men under the patronage and jurisdiction of Robert; 1 carucate of land between them all, but they could sell. 1 free man with 12 acres, under the patronage of Robert but the full jurisdiction (was) St. Edmund's.

Between them all, then 1 1/2 ploughs, now 1.

Value 30s.

It has 8 furlongs in length and 4 in width; 20d in tax.



Intrinsic Quality of Buildings

Stoke by Nayland's many listed buildings consist mainly of grade II houses and cottages, mostly timber-framed and rendered with plaintile roofs, although some are thatched or slated.

Grade I status is reserved for just two buildings, Gifford's Hall away to the east in the Brett valley and the Church of St Mary in the centre of the village. The latter is mainly 15th Century of freestone rubble and brick with stone dressings and has a lead roof. It incorporates 13th or 14th Century remnants of an earlier church within its south porch and St Edmund's Chapel.

Pevsner describes it as a "large Perp[endicular] church" of which "the tower is remarkably ornate".



Five other buildings are grade II listed: Thorington Hall in a separate hamlet (and conservation area in its own right) to the south-east of the village, is the only one of these not near the church. The other four comprise two pairs: Downs Farmhouse is south of the church and Street House is in Church Street east of the church, both with plaintile roofs above timber-framed construction hidden behind a render finish.*

The other two grade II buildings are just west of the church almost facing each other in School Street. The Maltings backs onto the churchyard and The Old Guildhall faces it across the road, both with exposed timber-framing and jettied fronts very much designed to be seen. Both these buildings are of four bays divided into tenements.*



Traditional Building Materials

Stoke by Nayland's older buildings are for the most part of timber-framed construction with render covering the frame in the usual Suffolk manner rather than exposed as in the few higher status buildings. Occasionally buildings of lower status have been stripped back to show off less good framing.

A number of timber-framed buildings identifiable by their steep roofs have been re-fronted in brick, both the local soft 'Suffolk Red' and the harder 'Suffolk White', the latter probably sourced from Sudbury.

Other wall materials include weather-boarding, which can be found in both the white and black varieties.

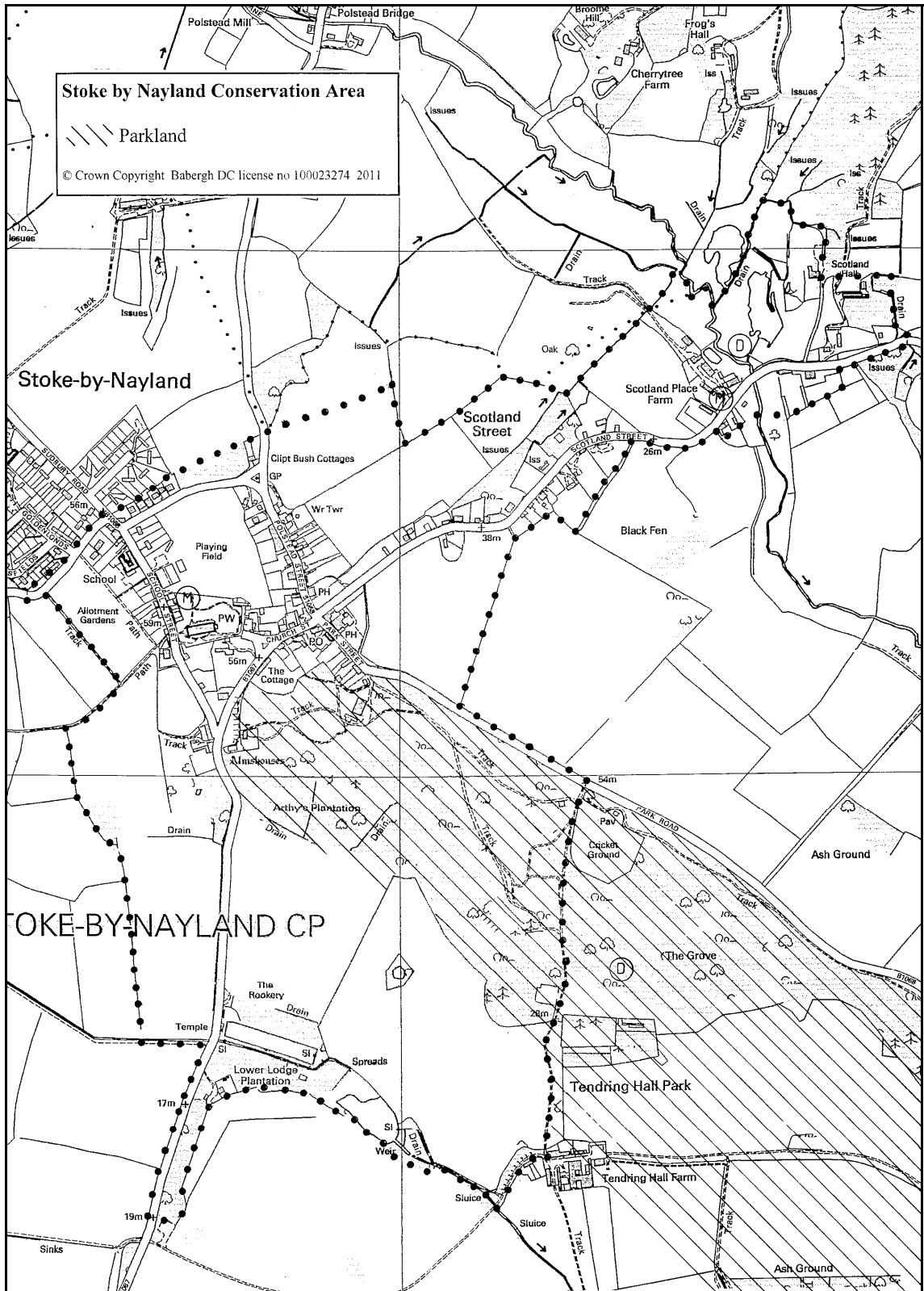


Thatched roofs remain the norm in outlying Scotland Street, however roofs of plaintile have become fairly ubiquitous within 'Stoke Town'.

In addition to thatch and plaintile, slate and pantile roofs also make an appearance, mostly on more recent buildings, extensions and outbuildings.

Overall virtually the full palette of Suffolk's vernacular building materials can be found around the village, displayed in a variety of combinations.





Hierarchy of Spaces

Stoke by Nayland is one of those villages where there always seems to be another bit just around a corner. Very roughly, four roads approach it from the north-west (Sudbury), north-east (Polstead), south-east (Higham) and south-west (Nayland). These do not however meet at a cross-roads, but rather at a large central rectangle, around which the roads connect on the higher ground.

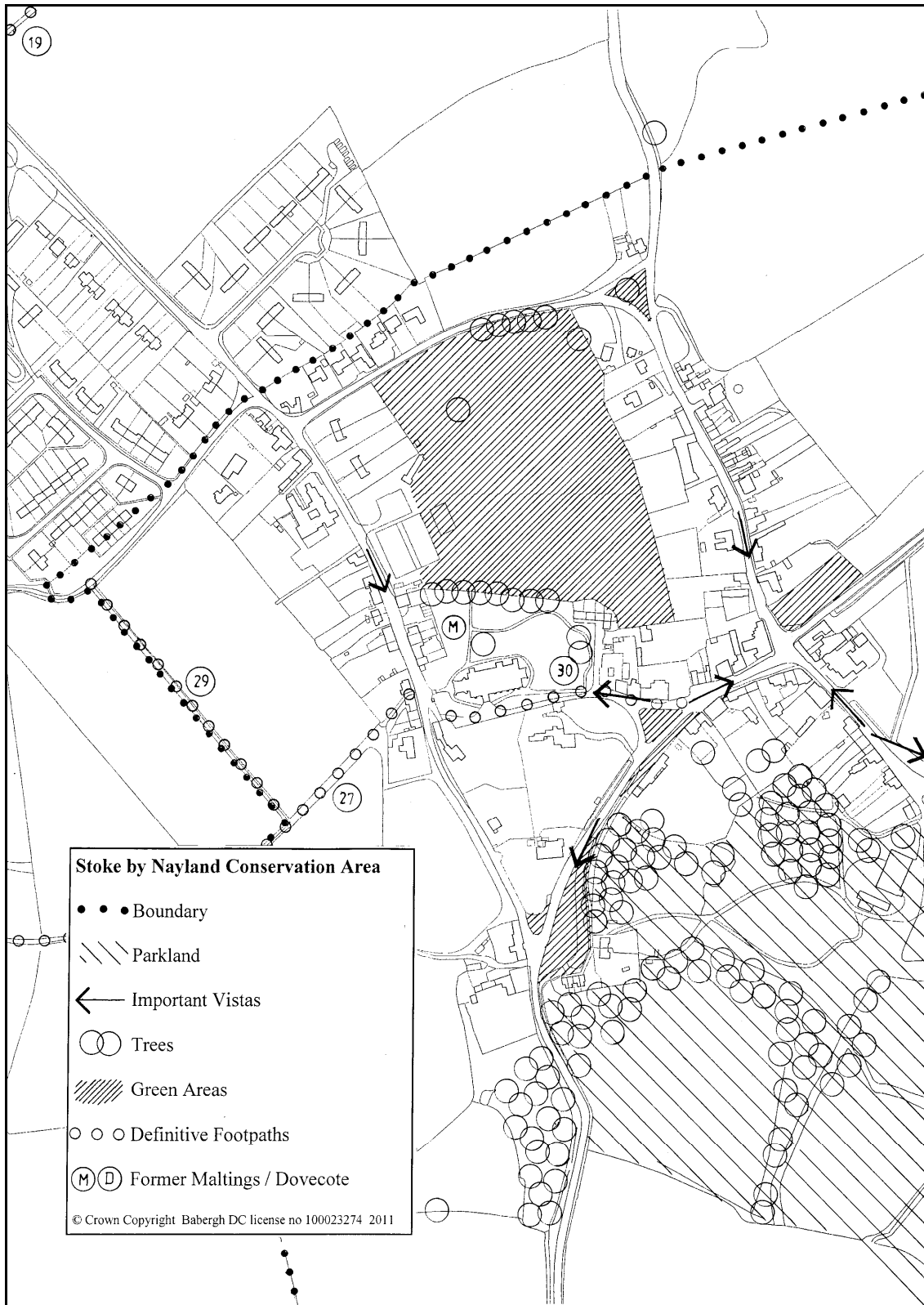
Central to this rectangle is the green space of the Recreation Ground with the churchyard at its southern side. The main route through thus comes in on Sudbury Road, turns along the north side of the rectangle until it meets the road from Polstead at a small sloping triangular green, and then turns south down Polstead Street and on by way of Park Road to Higham.



Church Street, the end of the road from Nayland, forms the southern side of the rectangle and joins the southern end of Polstead Street at a T-junction. This forms a more urban area with buildings tight on the back of pavement, if anything the centre of the settlement.

East of this junction a country lane drops away down to the more rural hamlet of Scotland Street, whilst the other end of Church Street beyond a small triangular green drops away towards Nayland.

Down this hill, The Downs presents another green area backing onto the former parkland of Tendring Hall to the east, the road here being joined by School Street, the western side of our rectangle that started as the straight on option at our first bend.



Trees & Planting

There are two main areas where trees abound within the village of Stoke by Nayland. The churchyard itself is largely open but its perimeter has Cedar, Horse Chestnut, Yew and Ash, and away along the north edge of the Recreation Ground there is a belt of mature Corsican Pines.

The other area is the former parkland of the now demolished Tendring Hall, which forms a green belt at the southern side of the village. This is a grade II Registered Park containing remnants of a formal 18th Century landscape with a canal and an oak grove. To the west it spills over into The Downs, where old Oak and Sycamore woods within the park give way to Cherry, Copper Beech and other ornamentals.

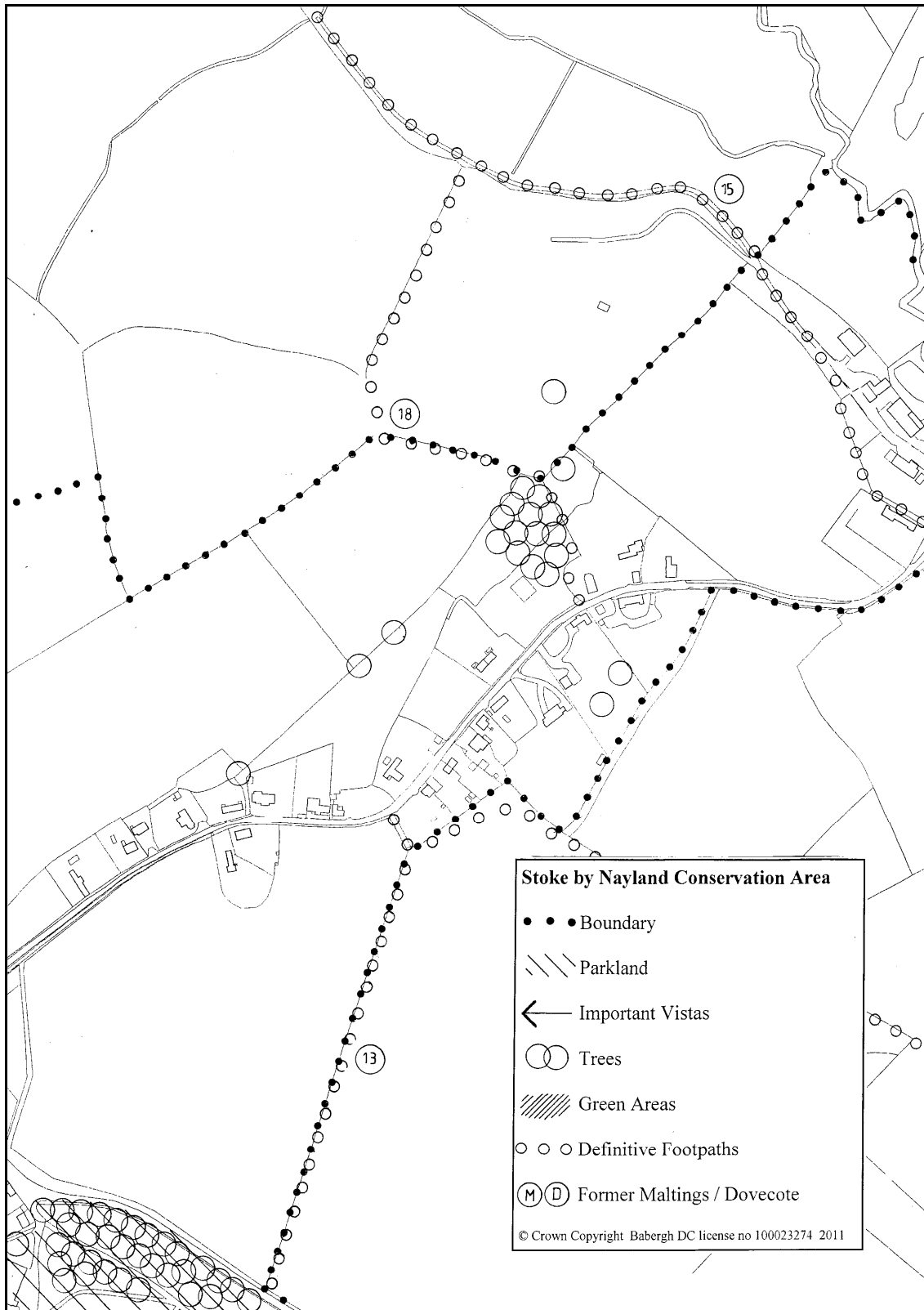


Both The Downs and the central village green on Church Street are Registered Village Greens.

Out of the village centre the more usual countryside trees abound in hedges and down at Scotland Street adjoining the river these give way to the usual wetland trees, Willow, Alder and Poplar, lining the riverbanks and drainage ditches.

In general the trees in the village seem well looked after and none have been felt sufficiently at risk to warrant protection by Tree Preservation Orders.





Relationship to Open Countryside

Stoke by Nayland and the adjoining valley of the River Box are in the heart of the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The majority of development in the village is but one plot deep, so that except for the central area around the Playing Field, the countryside is immediately to hand at the rear of most properties.

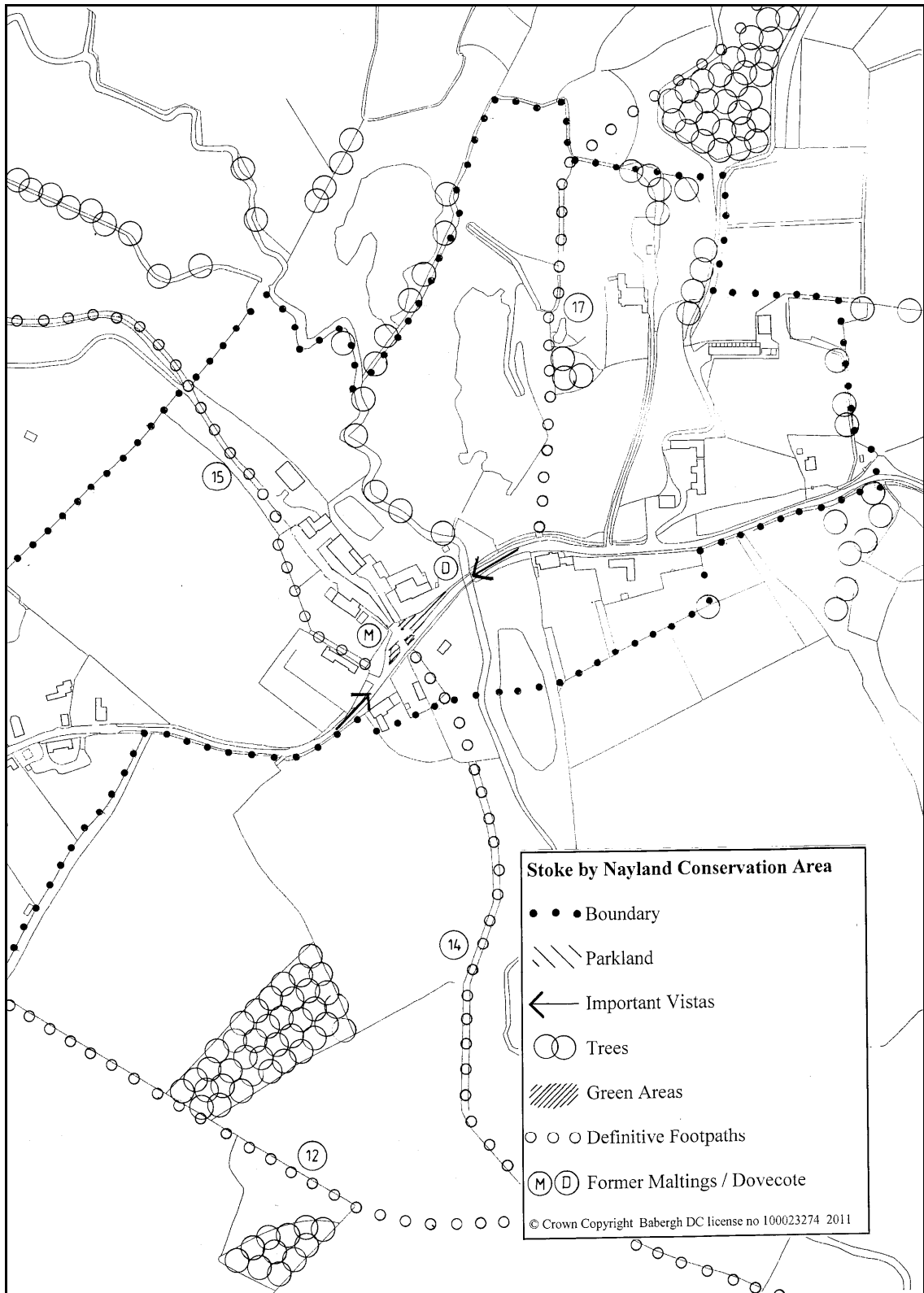
Leaving the village by any of the roads is for the most part picturesque, on account of the generally falling ground leading down into the valleys below. The route towards Sudbury to the north-west provides the exception, where the road does not drop, but passes through some more recent development, before it comes to open farmland.



The only radial route out of the village that has not become a road is that of definitive footpath 27, which heads down into the valley south-west of the church, eventually joining a lane north of Nayland.

Other footpaths tend to link between these radial routes: footpath 29 runs northwards off footpath 27 parallel to School Street, footpath 19 comes off the Sudbury road heading down into the valley near Steps Farm and footpaths 18, 17 and 15 come southwards out of Polstead parish to join the road at Scotland Street.

South of Scotland Street, footpaths 12 and 14 join after a short distance and continue down the river valley, whilst footpath 13 climbs back up the valley side to Park Road.



Prevailing & Former Usage

Stoke by Nayland certainly played a part in Suffolk's woollen cloth industry of the 15th to 17th Centuries, as testified to by records from the early 17th Century indicating 23 yeomen, 7 husbandmen, 4 clothiers and one each of weaver, say worker and linen weaver amongst those living there.

By the later 17th Century this had changed to 18 yeomen, 5 husbandmen, 3 clothiers, 2 say weavers and one each of wool comber and broadcloth weaver.

In the 19th Century directories show a more general agricultural basis to the village economy. There were then 16 farmers, 3 malsters, 3 blacksmiths, a miller and a saddler along with a number of shopkeepers.



The tithe map of 1837 confirms this picture, identifying the built up area as 'Stoke Town' and confirming the continuance of a cloth industry with field names such as 'Hempland' and 'Winding Piece' indicative of the linen industry. 'Mill Meadow', 'Ozier Ground', 'Hop Yard' and 'Malting Field' give clues to other agriculturally based undertakings, whilst 'Gravel Pit Field', 'Clay Pits' and 'Brick Field' show the diversity of the various extractive industries.

The Tendring Hall estate's proximity has also left its mark on the village. There is a fishing lodge, known as The Temple, on the Nayland road and a Dovecote within the park. Two other dovecotes can be found within the parish, one at Gifford's Hall and the other next to the river at Scotland Place.



Losses & Possible Gains

Apart from the loss of Tendring Hall, from which only the grade II listed entrance porch survives, Stoke by Nayland has suffered relatively little loss in recent times.

There is some intrusive modern development, which includes the use of non-traditional forms and materials such as uPVC windows, concrete roof tiles or brown stained timber, inappropriate in a conservation area.

There are also places where modern wide driveways and a commercial garage forecourt have locally eroded any sense of enclosure. The redundant concrete water tower behind Polstead Street is now even more unsightly covered with radio antennae.



Overhead wiring, providing both power and telephones to homes, is intrusive particularly on School Street near the Church and Guildhall. This should be placed underground if the opportunity arises.



Elsewhere there is perhaps a little too much street furniture, particularly the cluster of signs at the start of Scotland Street. The weight limit applied here would be welcome in the rest of the village, plagued as it is with through traffic short-cutting between the A12 and A 1071.

References & Further Reading

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