

# The Essex Design Initiative



## St Osyth

### Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Cover illustration: Mill Street and the Causeway over the Mill Dam Lake.

This document was produced by Essex County Council for Tendring District Council.

The appraisal was prepared by Valerie Scott, with assistance from Libby Brown and other members of Essex County Council's Historic Buildings and Conservation Team.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Tendring District Council and St. Osyth Parish Council commissioned Essex County Council to prepare this Conservation Area Appraisal and Review in October 2009. The research and fieldwork were carried out in November and December 2009.

The appraisal provides a brief history of the development of the village, followed by a description of the Conservation Area and an assessment of its character. The contribution of different elements to its character is identified through detailed street by street analysis.

Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). They were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Local Authorities have a duty to designate Conservation Areas, to formulate policies for their preservation and enhancement, and to keep them under review. Unlike other forms of designation, conservation areas are concerned with the quality and condition of places and the wider built environment, rather than particular buildings or sites. Crucial to them are not just individual buildings, but the spaces between buildings, views along roads, public realm, architectural character and materials, and street frontages and shop fronts. These factors combine to endow the conservation area, or its various parts, with a distinct character, the existence of which will have been the reason for its designation. The wider setting of a conservation area, including views into and out of it, is also essential to the preservation of its character.

Designation of a Conservation Area extends planning controls over certain types of development, principally the demolition of unlisted buildings and works to trees. Local Authorities will also formulate policies in their local plans or local development frameworks to preserve the character of their Conservation Areas. However, designation does not prevent any change within Conservation Areas and they will be subject to many different pressures (good and bad) that will affect their character and appearance.

Government policy for conservation areas is set out in *Planning policy Statement 5: Planning for the historic environment* (PPS5), supported by its *Statement on the Historic Environment 2010*, and the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (see Appendix 2 for further details). Conservation areas are treated as part of the wider historic environment, and are considered to be a 'heritage asset' like listed buildings and other parts of the historic environment which have some degree of statutory protection. PPS5 states that 'The Government's overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.' The historic environment is valued not simply for its cultural importance, but also for its contribution to the quality of life, and its potential for facilitating regeneration and economic growth, and in adapting to a more sustainable life style.

The original draft of this document has been modified in the light of feedback from a public consultation comprising an exhibition at St.Osyth, questionnaires, and publicity on Tendring District Council's website (see Appendix 3).

## 2. PLANNING POLICIES

Local authorities formulate policies in their local plans or local development frameworks to preserve the character of their conservation areas. The Tendring Local Plan was adopted in 2007 and covers the period to 2011. Work has begun on a Local Development Framework, as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which should replace the Local Plan in 2010. Relevant policies are formulated to protect existing landscape and nature conservation, and to ensure that development is sympathetic and of high quality.

**Local Plan Policy EN1 – Landscape Character** states that: ‘The quality of the district’s landscape and its distinctive local character will be protected and, where possible, enhanced. Any development which would significantly harm landscape character or quality will not be permitted.’ Development control will be used to conserve, *inter alia*, rivers and estuaries, skylines and views, the setting of settlements, and historic landscapes and parks and gardens. The Conservation Area west of Colchester Road and south-west of Spring Road falls in the Coastal Protection Belt, an area zoned to protect the special landscape, ecological and historic qualities of the Essex coast. **Policy EN3 – Coastal Protection Belt** says: ‘New development which does not have a compelling functional need to be located in the Coastal Protection Belt, as defined on the Proposals Map, will not be permitted.’

**Local Plan Policy QL9 Design of New Development**, emphasises the importance of good design, saying: ‘All new development should make a positive contribution to the quality of the local environment and protect or enhance local character’, and lists certain criteria which have to be met. In addition, **policies EN17-20** are specific to conservation areas, stipulating that development will only be allowed if it enhances or preserves their character, and placing constraints on the design of shopfronts and advertisements. The importance of listed buildings, and the protection extended to them, is highlighted by **policies EN21-25**. These include a strong statement on protecting the setting of a listed building.

In practical terms, local authorities normally have the following objectives in trying to implement these policies: good quality public realm; the retention of original features such as windows, doors and roof coverings in older properties to avoid erosion of character; the prevention of the loss of the setting of buildings through paving over of gardens for car parking; well designed shop fronts and signage; and ensuring that development is confined to less sensitive and significant parts of the Conservation Area, does not compromise its setting, and is carried out to a high standard of design.

St. Osyth is identified as one of the thirty or so historic towns in the county by the Essex County Council *Historic Towns Survey*. Policies **EN29 Archaeology** and **EN30 Historic Towns** are designed to ensure that development does not take place without proper account being taken of, and provision made for, their archaeological interest.

The Plan identifies the Colchester and Spring Road area of St. Osyth as one of six rural Local Centres, as defined in a hierarchy set out in **Policy ER31**. Key planning issues for rural settlements are set out in para. 13.3a. St. Osyth is also one of six Principal Defined Villages with better than average key facilities, where proposals for six or more houses will be allowed (**Policy RA4**).

**Policy EN27a** commits the Council to the conservation, preservation and restoration of St. Osyth Priory, and envisages the possibility of enabling development to fund it. Criteria for enabling development are set out in **Policy EN27**.

### 3. HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AREA AND OTHER DESIGNATIONS

The Conservation Area was first designated in 1969, and was amended in 1982 and 1988. It is one of 20 Conservation Areas in the Tendring District. The Conservation Area was last reviewed in 2006.

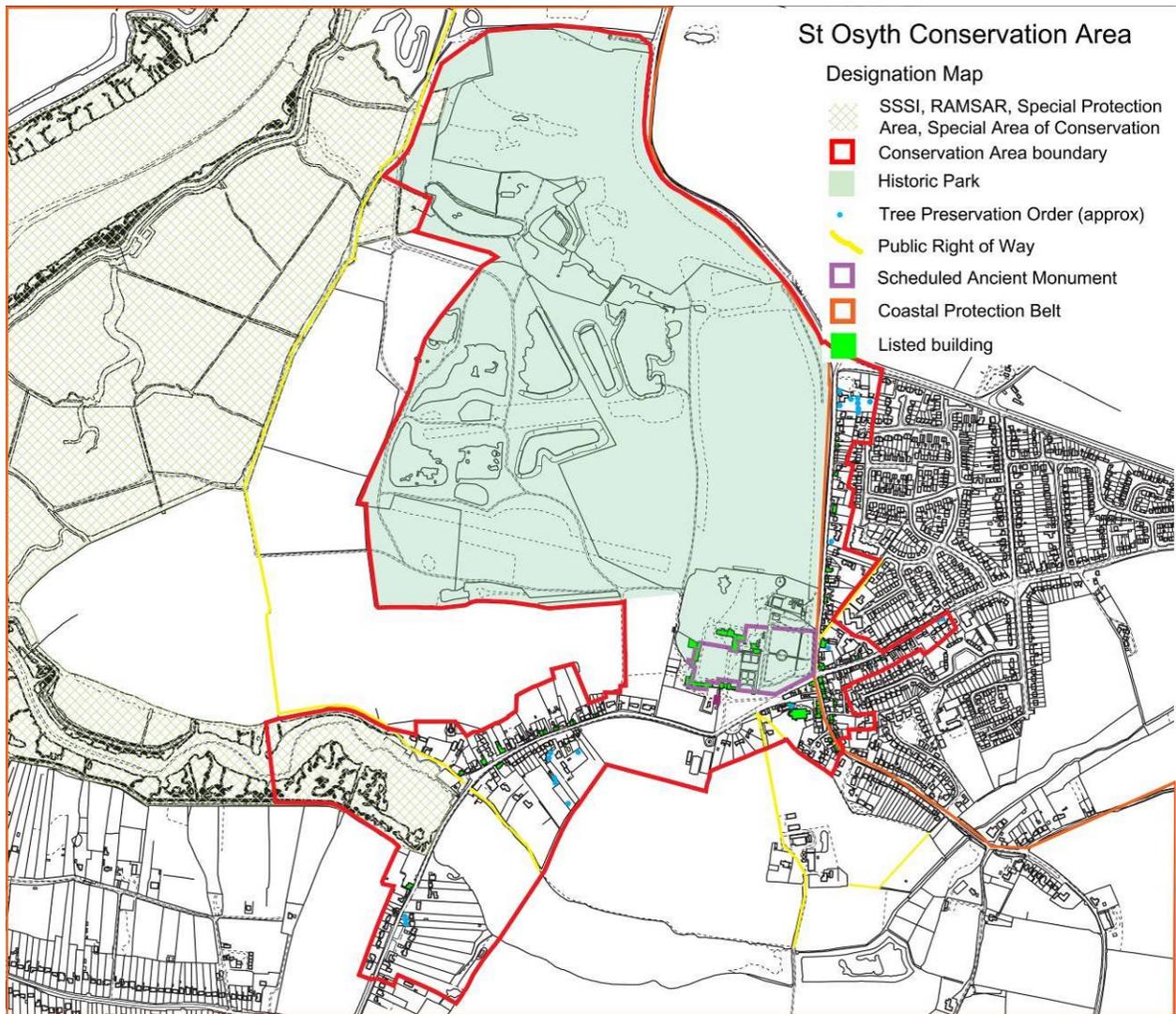


Figure 1: Heritage and other designations in the Conservation Area. See Appendix for a larger copy of this map.

There are 61 listed buildings in the Conservation Area. The Priory contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The boundary is drawn to enclose the non-residential Priory buildings and the garden area known as the Wilderness to the east. The park which partially surrounds the Priory is a grade 2 Registered Park and Garden extending to 95ha. Registration brings no statutory protection to the Park, though local planning authorities are required to make provision in their policies for the protection of the historic environment, and registration is a material consideration in planning terms. There are about 22 Tree Preservation Orders covering trees or groups of trees in the Conservation Area. Trees within

the Conservation Area enjoy protection inasmuch as anyone carrying out works to a tree in a conservation area must give written notification to the planning department at least six weeks beforehand.

The village envelope or Development Boundary includes the eastern part of the Conservation Area, basically to the east of the Colchester and Spring Roads, together with parts of Mill Street. The Mill Dam Lake and St. Osyth Creek area is a High Flood Risk zone. The Creek west of the Mill Dam enjoys several designations, being a RAMSAR site, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation and a SSSI.

The footpath, the Chase leading to the Coffin Path, running north-east off Colchester Road, is a public right of way. Two public rights of way lead south from the Bury, one to the east following the boundary of the churchyard and the built-up area, and the other going south to Warren Farm. Another public right of way follows the north side of the Mill Dam Lake and the Creek, and then turns north running parallel to the park boundary.

## 4. CHARACTER STATEMENT

St. Osyth is a large and diverse Conservation Area which embraces the Priory and Park and the adjacent village focused on the church and former marketplace, but which extends to the west down to St. Osyth Creek and the surrounding marshland, where there was a port and where there is still a quay. The Priory, the Creek, and the former marketplace are the significant historic features of the settlement, little altered in their visual relationship since the 16th century. The Priory is central to the Conservation Area, especially prominent being the gatehouse, the Abbot's Tower, the boundary walls and the Park. Ribbon development from the Creek along Mill Street, and down the Colchester road which follows the Park boundary, leads to the more tightly built-up village centre which is busy with shops and food outlets, and where the narrow streets struggle to accommodate heavy traffic flows. Housing typically comprises 17th- to 19th-century cottages, interspersed with some late medieval and some larger 18th- or 19th-century houses, and 20th-century infill.

## 5. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Location and Landscape Setting

St Osyth is in north-east Essex, at the eastern end of the Tendring peninsula, within a few miles of the sea to the south and west. It is some 3 miles to the west of Clacton, and about 10 miles to the east of Colchester. It occupies low-lying land which is flat except for the sloping borders of St Osyth creek, which skirts the Conservation Area to the south, runs through it to the west, and goes on to join Flag Creek and the River Colne.

The Conservation Area consists of three distinct components, which combine to give it a special character and a high level of historical interest. First is the village centre, a medieval settlement around the crossroads, and later development extending up the four roads. Second is the site of the early 12th-century priory and deer park, dissolved in 1539 and substantially replaced by a post-medieval great house, an 18th-century landscaped park, and a 19th-century garden. Third is the site of the medieval settlement and quay on the creek, some 600 metres to the west of the village. The village is laid out on a crossroads. The roads consist of The Bury, leading into Mill Street and Point Clear Road to the west, Colchester Road to the north, Clacton Road to the east, and Spring Road leading to Beach Road to the south. The Priory and Park are located in the north-west quadrant, the parish church in the south-west, and the modern extension of the village in the two eastern quadrants.

### 5.2 Historical Development

Its coastal position and access to the Creeks have made the St. Osyth area attractive for settlement from early times. Archaeological finds, and the results of excavations, as well as other heritage information, can be found in the Essex Historic Environment Record. At St. Osyth Lodge east of the village, a major prehistoric site has been discovered, a Neolithic causewayed enclosure being succeeded by a Middle Bronze Age barrow cemetery, a Roman field system and a medieval farm. Traces of late Bronze Age or early Iron Age activity were found in the Old School Chase housing development in 1999, together with a medieval clay floor, and medieval and later pits, as well as two Saxon potsherds. On the Bury, adjacent to the former Barehams butcher's, late Iron Age pottery and a possible Saxon sherd were found. The frontage here had been built up from early in the Middle Ages, there being a sequence of occupation from the 12th century onwards, concluding with an 18th century building which had been demolished by the end of the 19th century. Work by the Time Team in 2004 revealed a quay or similar structure on St. Osyth Creek, datable to the late 15th or 16th century, and also included the investigation of the older houses in the village, which led to the recording of several notable timber-framed buildings, including a guildhall.

In c.1000 the area was known as Cicc, possibly meaning creek, but was later renamed Chiche St. Osyth, after the 7th-century female saint of that name. She married Sighere, king of the East Saxons, who granted her a nunnery at Chiche, to which she retired as abbess. It is thought to have been located to the north of the later priory site, in Nuns Wood. She was murdered by a raiding party of Danes in 653 and died on the steps of her chapel. The handful of Saxon potsherds from the village indicates that there was settlement here, and no doubt there was also activity in the area of the Creek as well.

The Domesday Book (1086) records a thriving settlement at St Osyth, although it mentions no religious community. An Augustinian Priory was founded about 1121 by the Bishop of

London, which became an abbey c.1200. By the time it was suppressed in 1539 it was one of the richest monasteries in Essex, exceeded in wealth only by Barking and Waltham Holy Cross. Much new building occurred in the period before the Reformation, including the late 15th century great outer gatehouse, and Abbot Vintner's handsome brick gatehouse of 1527.



Figure 2: Detail from the Chapman and Andre map of Essex, 1777, showing St Osyth.

The medieval town had a market, recorded from 1189. It was held on the north side of the church, on land since built over and infilled, where Church Square and Stone Alley are today. There was also a fair, held on the green to the south of the Priory gatehouse. Oyster fishing was an important component of the local economy.

At the Reformation, the Priory passed to the Darcy family who remodelled it as a Tudor mansion. Damaged in the Civil War, the property was revived in the 18th century by the earls of Rochford who built a new brick house adjoining Abbot Vintner's gatehouse, and landscaped the park.

In modern times, St. Osyth has lacked the economic stimuli of the busy port and the wealthy abbey. The village had expanded little by the 18th century. In the 19th it grew to the east along Clacton Road, no doubt encouraged by the establishment of the seaside resort of Clacton after 1870. In the 20th century significant new housing developments were added to the east of the village, while ribbon development linked the medieval town around the crossroads with the site of the early settlement on the creek to the west. The popular beaches to south and west of the village have attracted one of the largest concentrations of static caravans in the country, raising the summer population to an estimated 24,000 and underpinning the local economy.

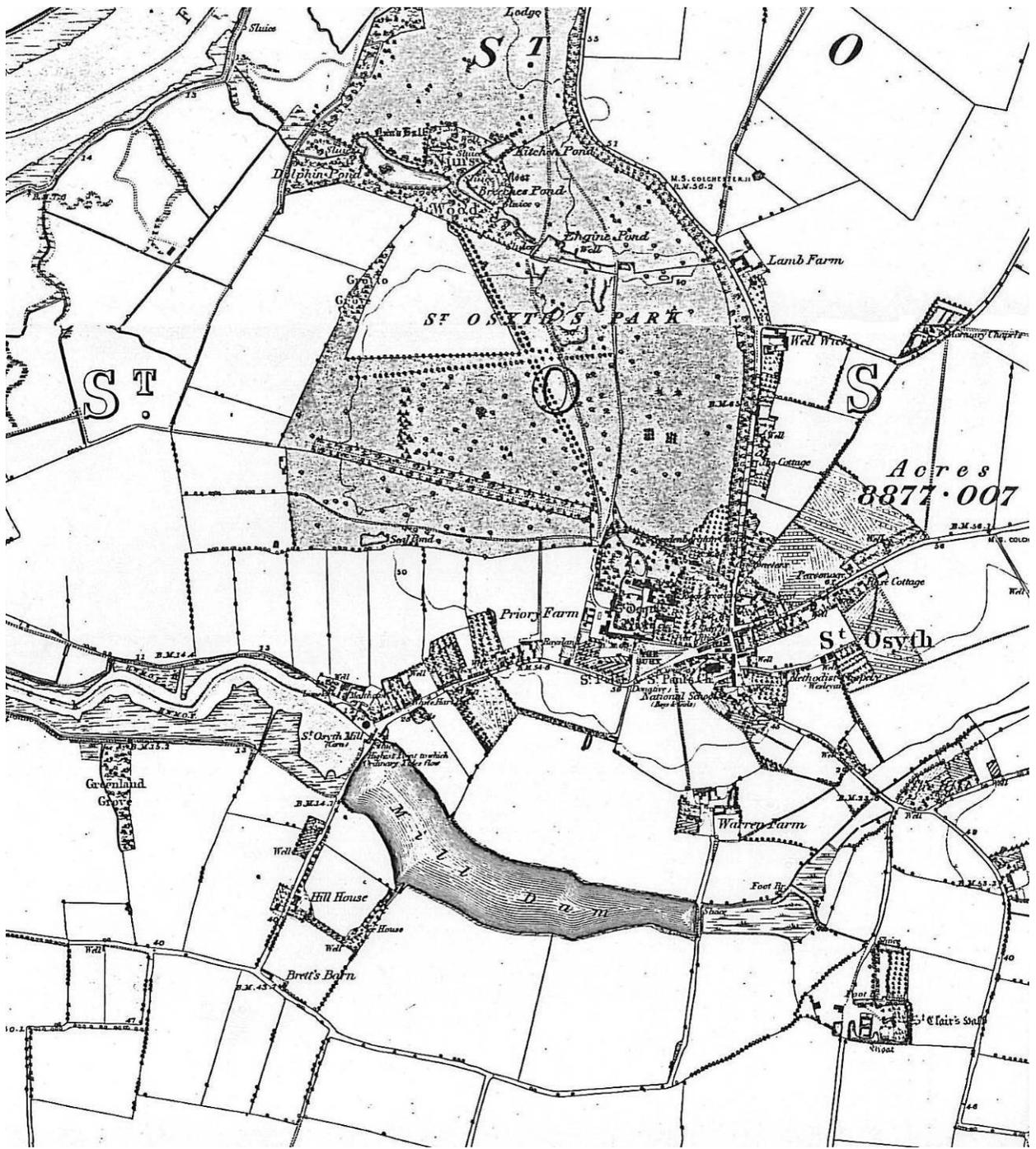


Figure 3: St Osyth from the first edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch map, 1876.

## 6. AGE OF BUILDINGS

St. Osyth preserves a surprising number of late medieval buildings. Their presence was highlighted by the research and tree-ring dating carried out when the Time Team investigated the village in 2004. Some, like the Old House in Spring Road, are readily recognisable; the age of others (e.g. 8 Spring Road) is not so apparent today. Most of the cottages so typical of the Conservation Area are 17th-, 18th- or early 19th-century in date. More substantial houses of the 18th and 19th centuries are relatively few in number. Most have had their gardens infilled in the 20th century, when most other gaps and available spaces have become built up, notably the south side of Point Clear Road and Mill Street. The later 20th century has seen the village expand considerably to the east, but only small developments in the Conservation Area (Old School Road off Spring Road, and Mill Court and Dower Court on Mill Street).

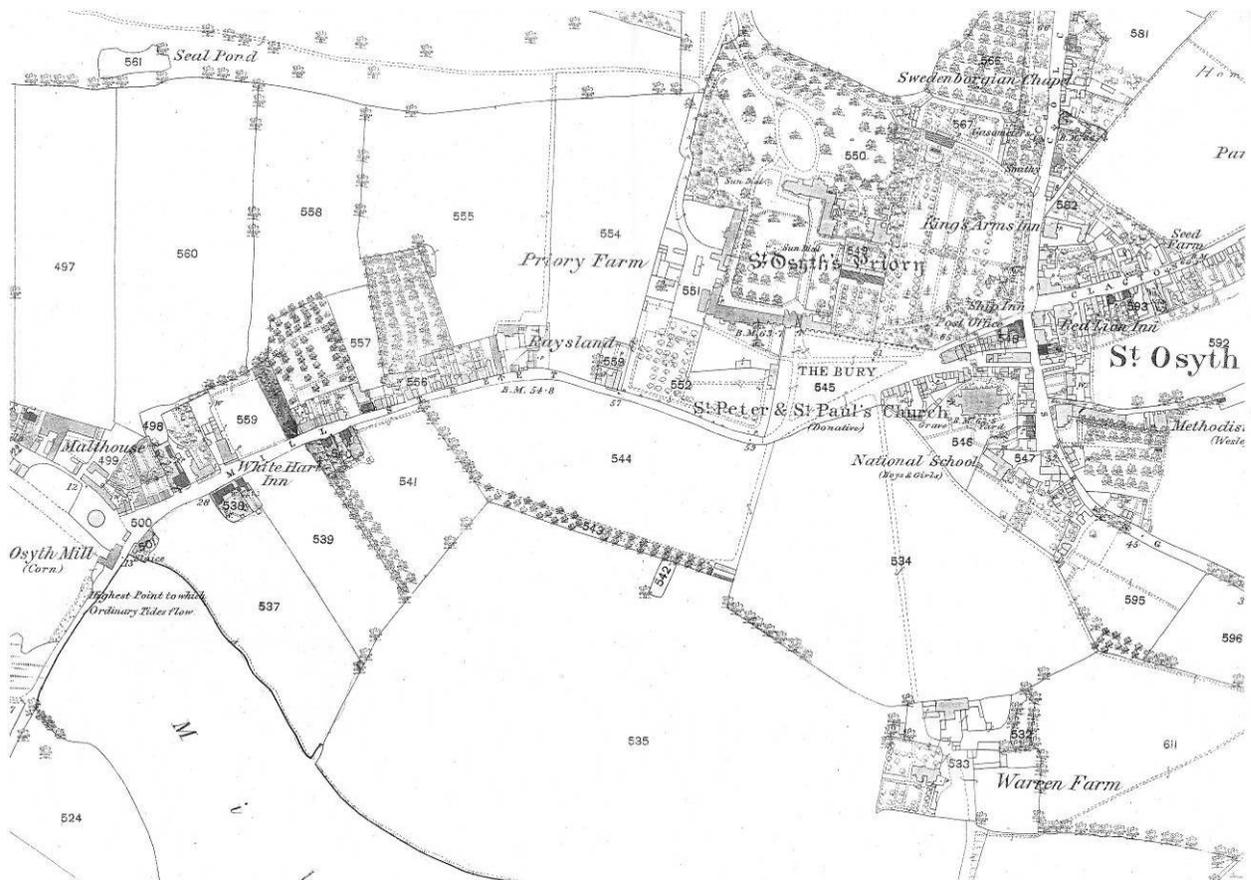


Figure 4: St Osyth from the 1st edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey map, 1874.

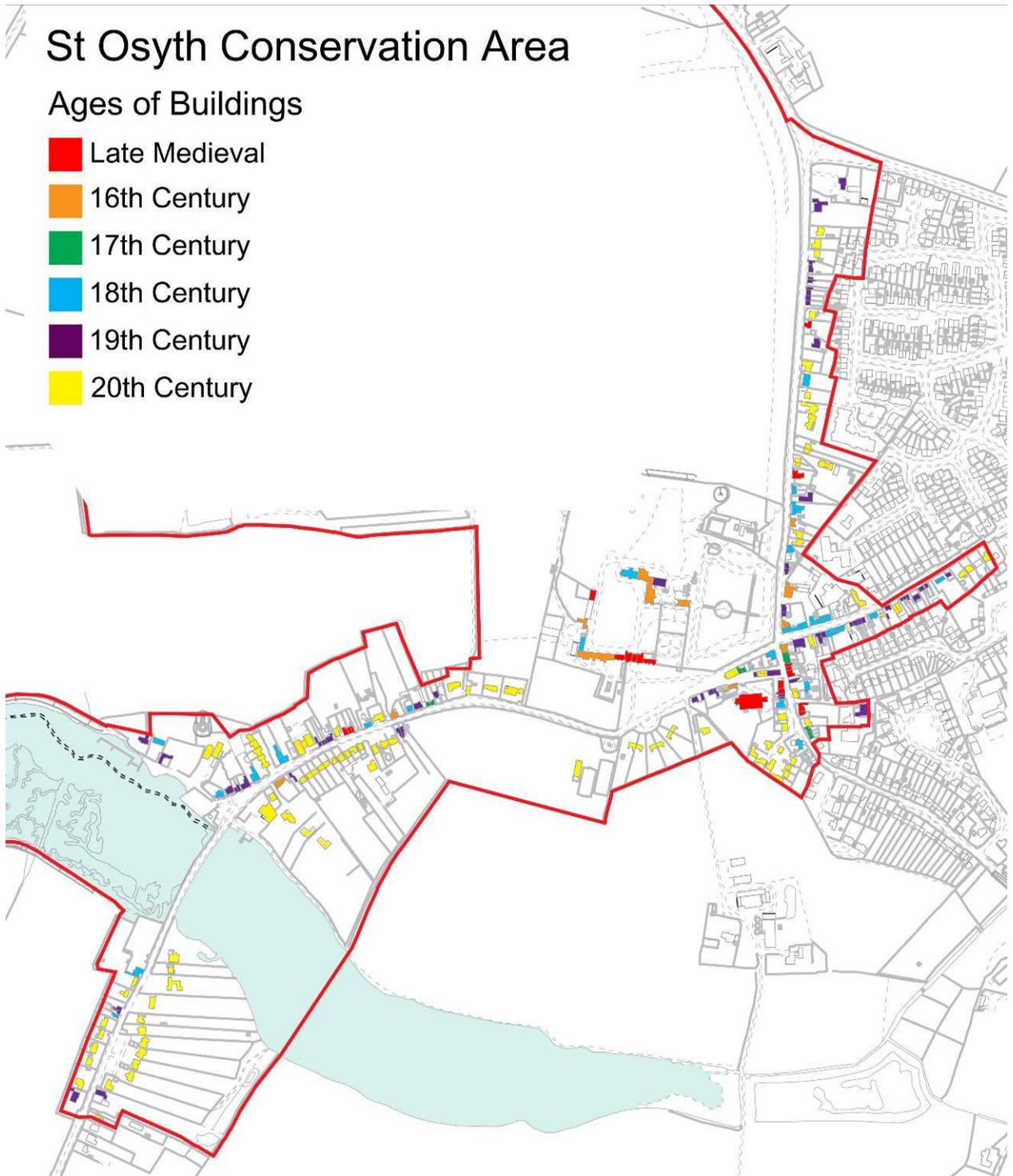


Figure 5: Map showing the approximate age of buildings in the Conservation Area. See Appendix for a larger copy of this map.

## 7. MATERIALS AND DETAILING

The predominant building type of the Conservation Area is a post-medieval vernacular cottage, although within this category there is much variety. Most are one or two storeys tall and timber-framed, with walls either weather-boarded or rendered, although some are brick. Only rarely is timber-framing visible, and that in older medieval buildings as at 84 Clacton Road, 38 Colchester Road, and Field Cottage 72 Colchester Road which also has brick nogging.



Figure 6: Field Cottage, 72 Colchester Road, a 15th-century cross-wing with brick nogging in the timber framing.

Pebbledash was extensively used on timber-framed cottages in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A number of cottages in Clacton Road and Spring Road preserve intact this undervalued material, a product of the local geology, today often unfortunately overpainted.

Most roofs are peg-tile with chimney stacks, and gables or more rarely hips, and many have had dormer windows introduced, with variously flat, catslide, or pitched and gabled roofs, to provide attic accommodation. Gambrel roofs (e.g. Old Mill Cottage, Mill Street, and 24 Colchester Road) are ones designed to provide more head room at the attic storey. Most cottages are rectangular in plan, with roofs parallel to the street, but some have cross-wings, with a roof at right-angles to the street, presenting a gabled front. Houses with cross-wings include 1 Spring Road (without a jetty), 38 Colchester Road, and 45-49 Mill Street (both with a jetty). Cross-wings are sometimes disguised by later alterations, as at 31-33 Mill Street and 38 Spring Road. 8 Spring Road is a former medieval guildhall.



Figure 7: Pebbledashed cottages in Clacton Road (nos 58-76).



Figure 8: Colchester Road, Rose Downey no. 84 and Freda Cottage no. 86, 19th century weatherboarded cottages, with the slate-covered slack pitch roof typical of the period, and the small pane sash windows which are such a feature of the Conservation Area.

The housing ranges in date from late medieval (Priory Cottage, 1-4 Church Square, 3-9 and 8-14 Spring Road, 45-49 Mill Street), to post-medieval (21-23 and 39 Mill Street, 22-30 Clacton Road, Anvil Cottage in Church Square, 37-41 Spring Road), and 19th century (21-27 and 42-46 Clacton Road, 89-91 Mill Street, 86 Colchester Road, 46-48 Spring Road). Vernacular buildings are difficult to date precisely without detailed investigation of their interiors and timber-frames, and accordingly the dating often remains uncertain. Roof-forms, however, can be a useful guide. Steeper pitches and gables with internal chimneystacks suggest an earlier date, shallower pitches and hips with external chimneystacks are generally post-medieval, while a slate roof is likely to be Victorian, reflecting the ease of importing materials in the railway age.

The Conservation Area also has a number of more substantial houses of different dates. The Old House and Little Priory on Spring Road has two jettied cross-wings (figure 26), which recent research has shown to date respectively from c.1300 and the late 15th century, making it perhaps the outstanding house in the Conservation Area.

Others are 38 Colchester Road (late 15th century), 60 Colchester Road (18th century), Mill House on Mill Street (18th and 19th century), and the Vicarage at 73 Clacton Road (19th century), which is at present just outside the Conservation Area. Mill House and 60

Colchester Road have the double-pile plans characteristic of the 17th and 18th centuries. All five houses have intrinsic architectural interest, play a prominent role in the appearance of the Conservation Area, and provide evidence of St. Osyth's continuous prosperity over several centuries. Several larger buildings are inns: the Red Lion on Clacton Road, the Kings Arms on Colchester Road, and the White Hart on Mill Street. Some were inns in previous centuries, for example 15-19 Spring Road, formerly the White Hart.

Some of the modest vernacular cottages have interesting touches of polite architecture, making a piquant combination. Examples include a classical door case at 29 Clacton Road, open pediments at 95 Mill Street, a raised parapet to disguise a steeply-pitched roof at 1 Clacton Road and at 81 Mill Street. The village has many good shop fronts, mainly early 19th-century classical forms applied to earlier buildings, e.g.,



Figure 9: Old peg tile roof in Colchester Road, rich in variety and texture.

at the corner of Clacton Road and Colchester Road, and 9 Spring Road.

No original windows are discernible in the timber-framing. Most windows are either casement or sliding sash, with wooden frames and glazing bars. The sash windows are variously eight-paned, six-paned, three-paned, or two-paned, reflecting successive dates in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some windows have pentice boards (e.g. 21-23 Mill Street).

There is also some creditable modern building, including the simple red brick house at 69 Mill Street, and the adjacent maltings development at 65-67 Mill Street.

The Priory precinct is enclosed on three sides by massive walls, which are an arresting sight in the public areas of the village, and lend the Conservation Area a distinctive character. They run along Colchester Road (beginning opposite number 28), The Bury, and Mill Street, and flank the Priory Farm, with the fourth side of the Priory open toward the park. The walls are punctuated by the Priory gatehouse and several different gateways, and they turn four corners with salient angles, and one corner with a re-entrant angle at the gatehouse. The walls at the crossroads form a pervasive feature of the village, closing the views west along Clacton Road, and north up Spring Road. The walls vary in form and date, and employ diverse materials including septaria, stone rubble with flint galletting, knapped flint, and red brick.

Old red brick boundary walls are a distinctive feature of parts of the Conservation Area, often having been preserved, to the advantage of the street scene, when the gardens they enclose have been developed in the 20th century.



Figure 10: Old red brick boundary walls are a feature of parts of the Conservation Area.

St Osyth also retains small items of historic paraphernalia, mainly of the 19th century, which are interesting although easily over-looked. They include a 1930s mains water pump at 47 Mill Street, a pump in the Priory Farm (both of cast-iron), a milestone opposite 76-82 Colchester Road, a K6 design phone box on the Bury, and a finger-post at the crossroads.

## 8. USES OF BUILDINGS

The Conservation Area is mostly residential, but the village centre, and particularly Clacton Road, is well provided with small shops and other facilities. These include pubs and food outlets, which are also to be found at the end of Mill Street where the quay and Mill Dam Lake are attractive to visitors. There are also good community facilities, in part the legacy of former owners of the Priory, notably the Social Club and Recreation Ground.

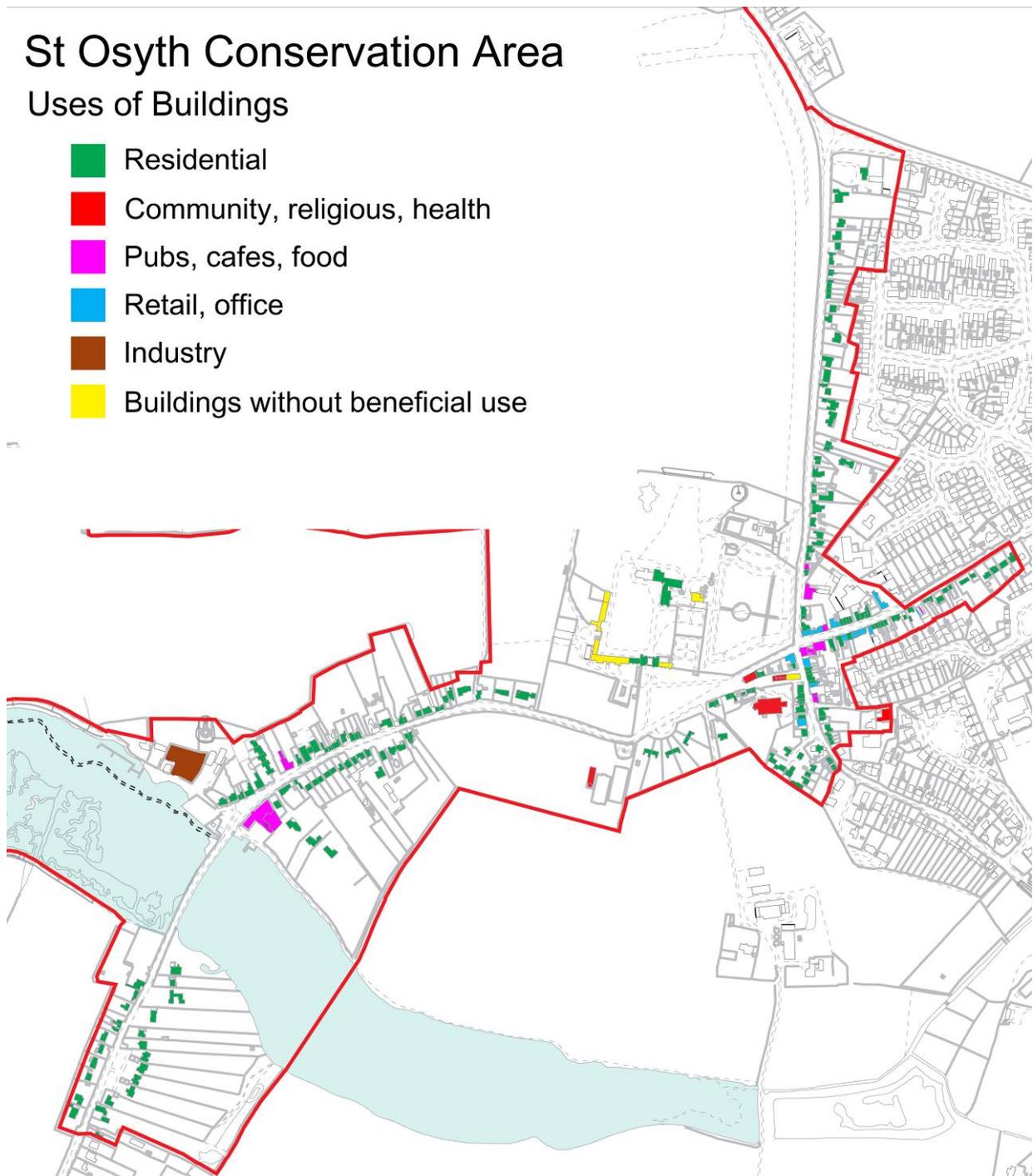


Figure 11: Map showing uses of buildings. See Appendix for a larger copy of this map.

## 9. STREETScape AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 9.1 Setting

The Conservation Area is flanked on its east side by modern housing development, which has blurred the boundary of the historic village. The remaining sides, on the other hand, retain their original setting largely intact, and the limits of the historic settlement are still discernible. There are open views either side of Mill Street, on the south to land lying between the Recreation Ground and the Creek, which was once the rabbit warren attached to the Priory, and on the north to arable farmland with the park of the Priory beyond. Both spaces afford long views.

Water courses are another important characteristic of the setting of the Conservation Area. The land slopes down to St. Osyth Creek in the south, and to Flag Creek in the west, which join at Brightlingsea and flow west into the river Colne. The creeks are visible from parts of the Conservation Area, St. Osyth Creek from Mill Street and Point Clear Road, and Flag Creek from the Priory Park and Martins Farm. The surrounding land is criss-crossed by smaller water courses.



Figure 12: The Creek down by the quay.

## 9.2 Green space

A large proportion of the Conservation Area consists of green space, and accordingly it has a relatively low building density overall. In contrast with the predominantly built up eastern half, where there is little green space apart from the churchyard and private gardens, the western half includes large swathes of open land and water.

The major verdant expanse is the garden and park surrounding the Priory. Colchester Road is developed only on the east side, while the park occupies the west side. The Priory gardens form the backdrop to north side of The Bury, which has smaller green spaces either side, with the churchyard and war memorial garden on the south, and a triangular green, once the fair ground, to the north. The east end of Mill Street retains a green and open character, with the Priory Farm to the north and the Recreation Ground to the south, leading on to farmland and the banks of the Creek. Although it is built up further west, open space is visible beyond the buildings. To the north is arable land with far-reaching views, glimpsed from the street along farm tracks. Further west again the thoroughfare turns into a causeway which crosses the open space of St. Osyth Creek. To the east the Creek is dammed and forms a large expanse of water, the Mill Dam Lake, once a mill pond, while to the west it remains tidal, forming a significant water course at high tide, and ebbing to a trickle between extensive mud flats at low tide.



Figure 13: Looking across the priory gardens to the Bury and nos 1-6, and the Creek and coast beyond.

### 9.3 Built environment

Clacton Road and Spring Road, on the other hand, are consistently built up on both sides. Building is dense toward the crossroads at the historic village centre, with contiguous edifices, but more spacious further out, with houses set in gardens. The tightly built-up crossroads is a visually interesting and attractive space, but a nightmare for pedestrians and motorists because of the narrowness of the streets and pavements.



Figure 14: Looking west down Clacton Road the crossroads at Bar Corner.

The vernacular cottages, which are the characteristic buildings of the Conservation Area, usually front the street without gardens, and therefore boundary fences are not a leading feature of the village. Nonetheless there are isolated examples of good boundary treatment. Low walls enclose front gardens at the Old House & Little Priory, Spring Road, and at 93 Mill Street, with ramped side walls and central gate piers. Picket fencing and gates, an appropriate historic form for cottages, set off 37-39 and 38-40 Spring Road, and 95 Mill Street, where they are much enhanced by white paint. There are good black-painted railings at Tulip Hall, Clacton Road, and excellent cast-iron railings with open-work gate posts and finials at 60 Colchester Road. Seemly means of controlling car parking include the bollards of Old School Close, Spring Road, the cast iron railings in Church Square, and the stout wooden posts at 1-6 The Bury, which are in keeping with the vernacular character of area.



Figure 15: Picket fencing in Spring Road.



Figure 16: Car parking area in Church Square defined by good quality cast iron railings.

The buildings of the Conservation Area serve diverse functions, which help retain the character of a complete, fully-functioning, self-sufficient village. They include houses, inns, restaurants, tea shops, retail shops including a butcher's, offices, and churches. The continuity of functions is important for the historic interest of the area, particularly in the case of the shops in the village centre.

## **9.4 Views**

The western part of the Conservation Area has long views over expanses of water, marsh, and cultivated fields, bounded in places by housing and the monumental buildings of the Priory. The intervisibility of these elements makes for interest and even drama, and is an intrinsic feature of the Conservation Area. It is important that these views remain preserved and essentially uninterrupted. Apart from the Abbot's Tower which can be seen in the distance from many directions, the only part of the Priory to command a significant view from within the village is the great gatehouse which dominates the Bury and creates a unique space in the Conservation Area. The Priory walls, with their diverse mix of building materials, are a significant and similarly unique feature of views in Mill Street, the Bury, and Colchester Road, and a potent reminder of the village's history. In the more developed parts of the village, views are less striking, essentially rather urban with closely built-up frontages, but with sufficient variety of building type yet overall uniformity of scale to be visually satisfactory. In Clacton and Spring Roads, and Church Square, parked cars can be a negative feature. In this part of the village, the tightly built-up spaces of Stone Alley and Church Square, representing infill of the former marketplace, with the squat church tower to one side, are particularly notable.

## **9.5 Negative Features**

There is considerable modern development in and around the Conservation Area. Although most of the buildings concerned are neutral when considered individually, they have a more negative impact when considered cumulatively. They dilute the character of the Conservation Area, especially on Mill Street, and blur the boundaries of the historic settlement, particularly on Clacton Road and Spring Road. In some cases new buildings detract from the setting of listed buildings, e.g., the single-storey commercial street-front structures before 15 Spring Road.

Negative features are mostly minor in themselves, but they are numerous, and cumulatively have an appreciable effect on the character of the Area, and mar the setting of listed buildings. Replacement windows detract from the character of a number of the cottages, for example UPVC at 42-44 Clacton Road and The Cottage, Church Square, and stained softwood at 33 Mill Street, a listed building. Large modern plate glass windows mar shops at 4 Spring Road, the barber's in Church Square, and 18-20 Clacton Road. The rear elevations of the cottages at 22-30 Clacton Road suffer from a surrounding car park surfaced in asphalt. Hard surfacing around the various inns detracts from the historic character of their setting.

Commercial signage is mostly in historic forms appropriate for the character of the area, but sometimes intrusive through proliferation, e.g. the Priory Restaurant. There are some inappropriate brightly coloured vinyl signs, notably on the chip shop at 62 Clacton Road and the DIY shop at the corner of Colchester and Clacton Road.

Modern lamp posts, telegraph wires, and street signage are detrimental to the historic character of the village and the street scene. The satellite dishes on, for example, the front

elevation of 93 Mill Street and elsewhere, are regrettable. Car parking is not particularly obtrusive, but is present on most roads and obscures buildings in Church Square.

Unsympathetic walls and fences are a pervasive negative feature, especially regrettable in juxtaposition with the Priory walls, which are a major element of the interest of the village. Among the many examples may be mentioned the wire-mesh fencing of the Recreation Ground, and the barbed wire and concrete posts around the pumping station, both on Mill Street; the galvanised steel railings at 47-61 Clacton Road; the close-boarded fencing around the churchyard; the wire fencing round the Bury; and the concrete walls at 20-22 and 25 Mill Street, and at 15 Spring Road. The nadir is the modern walling of a parking space adjacent to 16 Spring Road and the church, introducing a jarring note in one of the most picturesque views of the Conservation Area.

Traffic detracts from the Conservation Area on a seasonal basis, being dense and troublesome in the summer months, but with less significant impact off-season, though the central crossroads is at all times likely to be busy and potentially dangerous.

## 10. CHARACTER ZONES

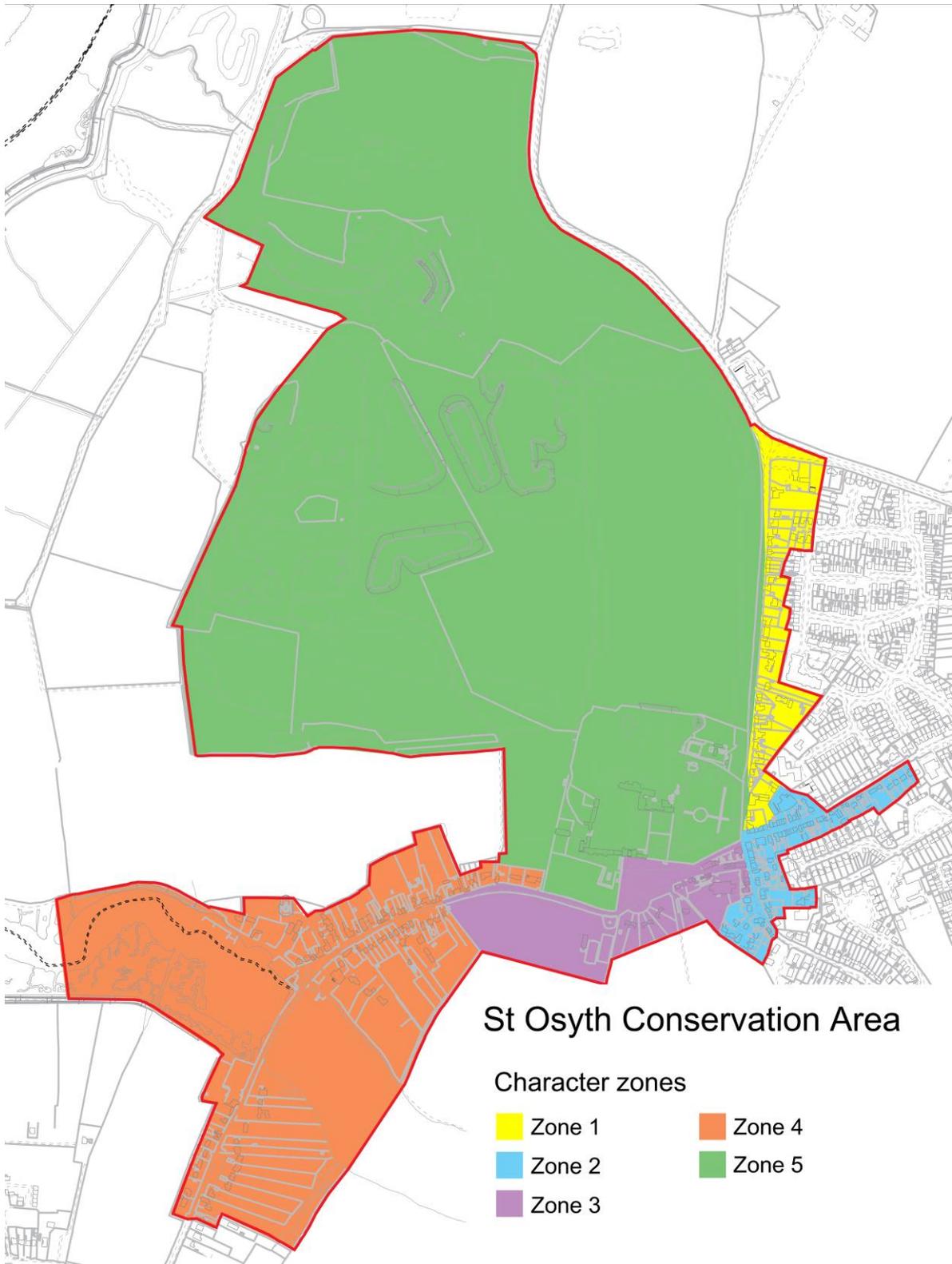


Figure 17: Character zones in the Conservation Area. See Appendix for a larger copy of this map.

The Conservation Area can be divided into character zones on the basis of visually unifying factors arising from the character and density of the built environment and its relationship to the surrounding green spaces and roads. They are:

1. Colchester Road, an unusually straight road, with ribbon development, much of it historic, along one side, contrasting with the Park on the other, which can be glimpsed between the trees and hedges forming its boundary.
2. Clacton and Spring Roads, the part of the Conservation Area most densely built up, with most shops and food outlets.
3. The Bury, parish church and Church Square, including the site of the former marketplace. These are inter-linked spaces, both historically as is evident from the buildings around them, and by virtue of their largely open character with generous public and private green spaces.
4. Mill Street and Point Clear Road, ribbon development along the road which winds down and out of the valley of the Creek, where water, marsh and associated activities predominate.
5. The Priory and its Park, the former defined by its walls and overt historic character, and the latter by its landscape and open space.

# 11. AREA ANALYSIS

## 11.1 Character zone 1

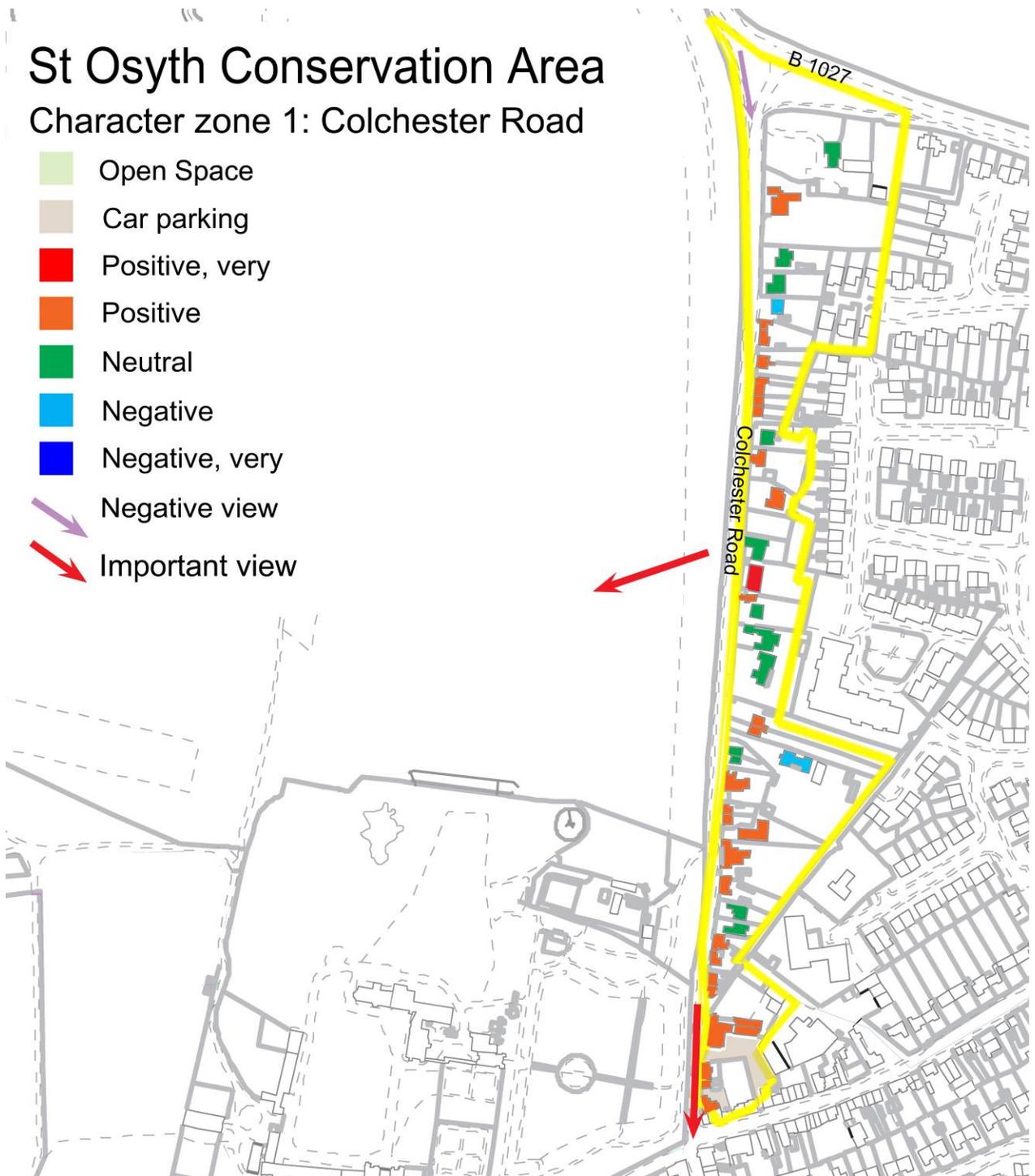


Figure 18: Character Zone 1

### 11.1.1 Colchester Road

The junction of Colchester Road with the B1027 forms the northern limit of the Conservation Area. It does not form an inviting approach to it. The roads are busy, and the junction is marked by a plethora of signs, lamp standards, telegraph poles and road markings. A patch of shrubs surround two large blocks of stone in an attempt to provide soft landscaping in the greensward on the east side. On the west side, a village sign marks the entrance to the Conservation Area.



Figure 19: Junction of the Colchester road with the B1027: an excess of signage and street furniture do not make for an attractive entrance to the Conservation Area

Colchester Road is long and unusually straight. It has been newly surfaced, as has the tarmac footpath with concrete kerbs on the west side. The tarmac footpath on the east side is old and patched, and in places very narrow to non-existent.

To the west of the road is the Priory park, fringed by a wire fence and a mainly elm hedge and a belt of young trees beyond in the north part of the road, and by an old brick and then stone wall to the south. This tall and imposing wall is a unique feature of the village centre and a strong visual link with the venerable past of the Priory. Predominantly 16th-century in date, the fabric of the wall awaits, and would repay, detailed study. A long section of the brick part of it was rebuilt in 2003. On the west side of the road, opposite nos 76-82, is a grade II listed milestone.

The east side of the road is, in contrast, residential, presenting a pattern of rows of low 18th- and 19th-century cottages set right on the street frontage, and larger houses in more spacious settings, which have now largely been infilled with late 20th-century development. The result is a variety of architectural styles and materials, only the cottages showing some degree of uniformity. This is a suburban street, which reflects a gradual transition to the more densely built up village centre. As the land around the older properties has been

developed, the old brick boundary walls have often been retained and make an important contribution to the streetscape. Elsewhere new boundary treatments are often not so satisfactory.

By the road junction is no. 100, Well Wick, a 19th-century red brick house, its main front facing south where there are two bay windows, the roadside elevation now rather altered and unbalanced through the addition of a later wing. To the north, its former coach house (no. 110) is invisible behind trees and hedges. To the south, its garden has been recently subdivided, and awaits development.

Nos 92-96 are late 20th-century houses, traditional in form, though 92 has a row of classical columns and railings with gold painted decoration. The older cottages begin with nos 88-90, a 19th-century pair, largely weatherboarded, 90 with replacement windows and door. Nos 84-86 are a better preserved pair, grade II listed, weatherboarded to the front, windows and doors intact, with hoods over the doors. Nos 76-80, incorporating 1-2 Park Cottages, are a longer terrace, with slate roofs, pebbledashed and painted except for no. 76. All have replacement windows. To the rear, they have unsympathetic flat-roofed extensions.



Figure 20: Looking south down the Colchester Road, the row of cottages at nos 88-76, and at the end, the 15th-century cross-wing at no. 72 built right at the frontage.

No. 74 in contrast is a late 20th-century chalet with large flat-roofed dormer windows. No. 72 is a grade II listed 15th-century cross-wing, located right on the frontage, with exposed framing and brick nogging (of uncertain antiquity) at the first floor, where there is a nice horizontal sliding sash window. The wing is a fragment of a larger late medieval house. The weatherboarded side extensions were originally flat-roofed but are now disguised behind pitched roofs, an improvement. No. 70, Robins Acre externally has an envelope which is all modern, but traditional in form and could disguise an earlier origin. Unlike, 72, it is set well back from the road.

No. 62 is a late 20th-century house, red brick with pantiles, its front garden now a hard standing for cars. The Cottage, grade II listed, belies its name, being a double-pile 18th-century house with a rendered front wall with a parapet at roof level, and a porch with Tuscan columns. Like most of the older buildings, it is set close to the frontage, in this case behind cast iron railings. On the south side is a nice weatherboarded outbuilding with

machine made tiles, which goes with no. 56, one of three (nos 50-56) late 20th-century houses, traditional in form, all set back from the road behind an old red brick boundary wall originally associated with The Cottage.

Nos. 44-46 are a pleasant early 20th-century semi-detached pair, set back from the road, now with UPVC windows. Distant from the road, down a track, is no. 42, an ugly modern house in a neglected condition. No. 40, Rayleigh, is a late 20th-century house on the frontage, traditional in form if not composition, with some UPVC windows. No. 38 is a grade II listed 15th-century timber-framed long-wall jetty house of c.1500, with a gable to the north. It has been scaffolded for several years and has been on the County Building at Risk Register since 2006, but is now undergoing slow restoration.

Nos 32-34 are a pair of grade II listed 17th- or 18th-century cottages with substantial chimney stacks, no. 34 picturesque and weatherboarded, no. 32 rendered with replacement windows. Set back from the road is no. 30, a former Swedenborgian chapel, built 1860, now a house. Originally single cell, it has been much extended to the rear, but the character of the front elevation is preserved, with three gothic windows, now with replacement casements, its brickwork painted. The footway in this part of the road is so narrow that lamp standards have had to be set in the gardens. No. 28 Hazeldene is an 18th-century house, three bays of small pane sash windows at the first floor, projecting 20th-century bays at the ground floor, black painted joinery and cream render, very complete looking with a hipped roof and end stacks.



Figure 21: Colchester road, no. 60, The Cottage. Beyond is the weatherboarded coach house, now with no. 56.

No. 24 Binders (formerly the Falcon Inn) is a grade II listed fragment of a 16th-century long-wall jetty house, subsequently enlarged probably in the 18th century with gambrel roofed extensions. Nos 22-20 are modern houses, traditional in form, set back behind an old brick wall which partly conceals parked cars. The wall originally enclosed the garden of no. 18 Old Forge House, a double pile building, the front range with a central chimney stack which suggests a lobby-entry plan and a 17th- or 18th-century date. The house is rendered and has concrete tiles. Next to it is the single storey weatherboarded forge. No. 16 was originally three cottages, 19th-century to judge from the roof pitch, with well preserved old small pane sash windows and a door case with consoles and corner pieces. At the southern end is the town Cage, identified by a plaque which records that the witch Ursula Kemp was

imprisoned there before being hanged in 1582. From this point the public right of way, the Chase leading to the Coffin Path, runs obliquely north-eastwards, originally to the Clay Lane cemetery, now to Castle Way and new estates. It is wide, tarmac surfaced, tree lined, bounded by an old brick wall one side and a fence with concrete posts the other, and well frequented.



Figure 22: Colchester Road, no. 16 with the former village Cage incorporated in its southern end. In the background, Old Forge House no. 18, with the single storey weatherboarded forge next to it.

The Kings Arms is grade II listed, 16th-century in origin. It stands detached on a large plot, a well proportioned building with a hipped roof with hand made peg tiles, and a small flat-roofed extension on the north side. Georgian in appearance, it has sash windows at the first floor, but large ground floor ones created for the public house use with ventilators at the top and etched glass advertising. To the rear is a range of old stable buildings. The extensive car park is largely screened from the road, though the Colchester Road access is quite wide and flanked by some unattractive signage.

Nos 6-8 are a pair of nice early 19th-century brick cottages under a low pitch slate roof, no. 6 requiring better maintenance, and no. 8 having unfortunately had its sash windows replaced in UPVC. On the south side are views into a scruffy car park. There is a very large flue to the rear of no. 8. Nos 2-4, Waterloo House, is an old grade II listed building, rendered, with a cross-wing with a brick gable which makes it look late medieval or Tudor in origin. It has small pane sash windows, all slightly different.



Figure 23: Nos 2-4 Colchester Road, and the unsympathetic sign on the side of no. 1 Clacton Road.

## 11.2 Character zone 2

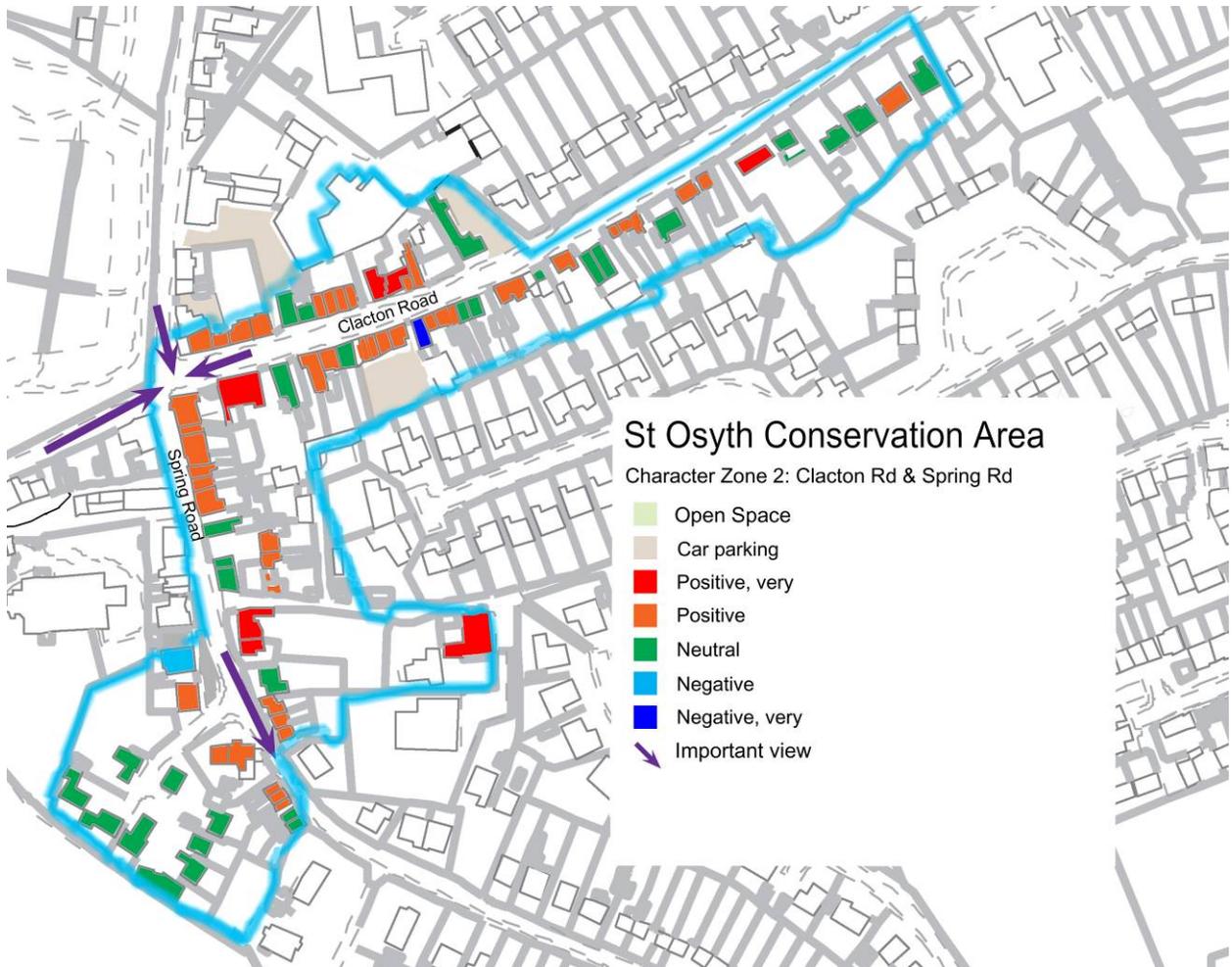


Figure 24: Character Zone 2

### 11.2.1 The central crossroads (Bar Corner)

Arrival in the centre of the village from the north is signalled by a plain low-key welcome sign on the rear of nos 1-3 Clacton Road, with the exhortation to drive carefully. This is warranted as the junction is offset, the pavements narrow, and the buildings at the north end of Spring Road set very closely together. The previous Conservation Area review described it as an 'unhappy space', an inevitable conclusion not because it is visually unattractive, but simply because of the large volume of traffic and the treacherous conditions this creates for pedestrians. At the corner of Colchester Road and The Bury, there is an old cast iron finger post made by the Maldon Ironworks Company.

### 11.2.2 Spring Road

The Conservation Area extends for only a short way along Spring Road and is well-provided with architectural interest, enhanced by the views of the Priory walls to the north, the parish church to the west, and a terminal feature of nos 38-40 to the south. There is virtually no modern building on Spring Road within the boundary, except for nos 18-20, and 35, and the transition from the Conservation Area to the modern development beyond it is discernible.

On the east side, no. 1 is a 16th-century timber-framed house with a central gabled cross-wing and a 19th-century shop front. Nos 3-9 form a late 14th- or early-15th-century timber-framed building, with a 19th-century brick facade and shop front at no. 9, with four lights and classical surround. It was originally a single house, but is now a row of cottages. No. 15, once the White Hart, has an 18th-century front with a pedimented door case on a timber-framed and possibly earlier building, with lower cottages attached at nos 17-21. They are set well back from the road behind a garden and form an important break in the street frontages.



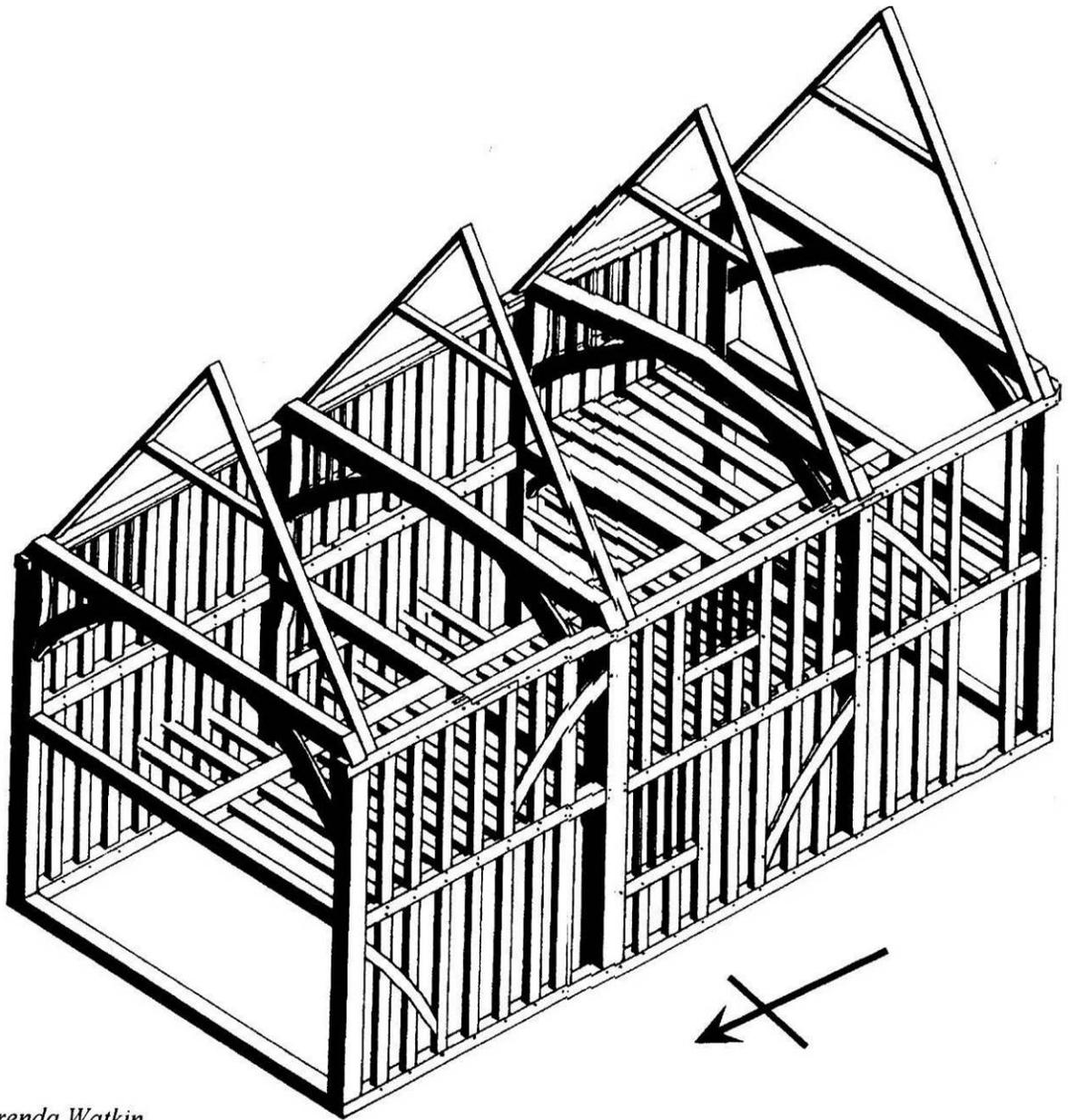
Figure 25: Spring Road, looking north. On the left-hand side no. 16 and beyond it the brick gables of nos 12-14.

The Old House and Little Priory is the outstanding building of the Conservation Area apart from the Priory and parish church. It has an imposing appearance with two jettied and gabled cross-wings, the narrower southern wing of c.1300, with a cellar of the same date, making one of the earliest uses of brick in the county. The wider northern wing and central range are late 15th century.



Figure 26: Spring Road, the Old House and Little Priory.

A lane between these buildings leads to the Methodist church off the road to the east. It is a plain red-brick building dating from 1855, with lancet windows and Y-tracery in the style of the 13th century, and twin west front porches (Fig 46). Its original rural setting is now lost. Nos 37-41 are 17th-century cottages with an unusually complete timber-frame and back-to-back inglenook fireplaces (Fig 14). The 19th-century front extension with a chimneystack has historic interest because it is thought to have been a bakehouse.



© Brenda Watkin

Figure 27: Spring Road, the timber frame of no. 8, the former guildhall (Brenda Watkin)

On the west side, the front range of no. 4 is a brick building dated 1784, with a modern shopfront, but with an earlier timber-framed rear wing. Nos 8-14 are late medieval in origin, and formerly the Dukes Head. No. 8, tree-ring dated 1494-1500, has been shown to be a former guildhall, typically located close to the church, and so of great historic interest. It is of three bays, with an undivided open space at the first floor. Behind the 19th-century front of no. 10, there is a late medieval cross-wing with the cross-passage its adjacent hall. Nos 12-14 at the south have two gabled cross-wings faced with early 19th-century gault brick.

No. 16 is a timber-framed building of the 18th century or earlier. It consists of a gabled main range at two different heights, brick to the rear, and weather-boarded to the street, with a catslide outshot, and a hipped-roof bay window, and good detailing including margin

lights. Even its garage is a historic outbuilding and a positive feature. It forms an extremely appealing whole, well set-off by the two gables of numbers 8-14 to the north, and by the many gables of the parish church to the west, all in contrasting materials.

No. 22 is a historic building, probably late 18th century, with a symmetrical front and classical doorway, although badly reroofed. Old School Close is a small modern development on the site of the former National School. It takes its inspiration from the Essex Design Guide, but is let down by inadequate detailing. Nos 38-40 are a timber-framed and plastered house with a cross-wing to the rear, and an irregularly shaped weather-boarded cottage to the west. Nos 46-48 are a neat pair of timber-framed and weather-boarded 19th-century cottages with slate roofs, and good fenestration and doors.

### 11.2.3 Clacton Road

The west end Clacton Road by the cross-roads is busy and animated, the views down it relieved by a slight bend. The road features appealing groupings of historic cottages, particularly at the west end, although few listed buildings.



Figure 28: Clacton Road looking east from the cross-roads.

The two shops, formerly one, at nos 1-3 at the north-west corner of Clacton Road are 18th-century timber-framed and grade II listed, their steeply-pitched roof disguised by a parapet wall. They have a good 19th-century shop front featuring a window with round-headed lights, and a surround with a fascia and pilasters. No. 1 however has unsatisfactory signage to both the front and flank elevations (Fig. 23).

To the east, nos 21-27 are a well-preserved terrace of almshouses, of Tudor origin, now 19th century in appearance, with uniform sash windows, boarded doors, and a peg-tile roof with a shallow pitch and hips. Tulip Hall, formerly Folly Farm House and dairy, grade II listed, is timber-framed and dates from the 17th century, with the later additions of a Doric door case and bay windows. No. 33 presents an asymmetric gable to the street and has

some attractive waney edged weatherboarding. The three buildings form a good trio, united by their pink walls.

On the south side is the former Priory restaurant, now The Hoy fish and chip shop, grade II listed, 16th-century and later, a complicated building but comprising a main range parallel to Spring Road which collides with another at right angles to Clacton Road, the result being an irregular jumble of roofs and heterogeneous windows. A distinctive building in a prominent position, very much what the visitor sees on first arrival in the village centre, it would benefit from better maintenance and more carefully arranged window displays.



Figure 29: Clacton Road, the Priory restaurant.

The Red Lion Inn has a striking 19th-century range to the street, with applied timber-framing above and pilasters below, and interesting and probably older rear wings, one with a half-hipped gambrel roof.

There follows good groups of cottages of considerable scenic value. The first group, nos 18-30, retains historic fenestration in an eloquent variety of forms on the upper floors, notwithstanding modern shop windows and regrettable treatment of the rear elevation. Nos 22-28 have a section of raised parapet, articulated by a cornice with dentils. In the second group, nos 40-42 retain their sash windows on both floors, while 44 and 46 suffer from modern fenestration and doors, but retain classical door-cases of particular interest in modest cottages.



Figure 30: Clacton Road, nos 26-32.

Further east, away from the historic village centre, buildings are detached rather than grouped. Noteworthy are nos 50, 96, and 84, the latter a cottage with exposed timber-framing. There are modern buildings without special interest at numbers 35, 37, 54, 70, 72, 78, 94, and 98.

### 11.3 Character zone 3

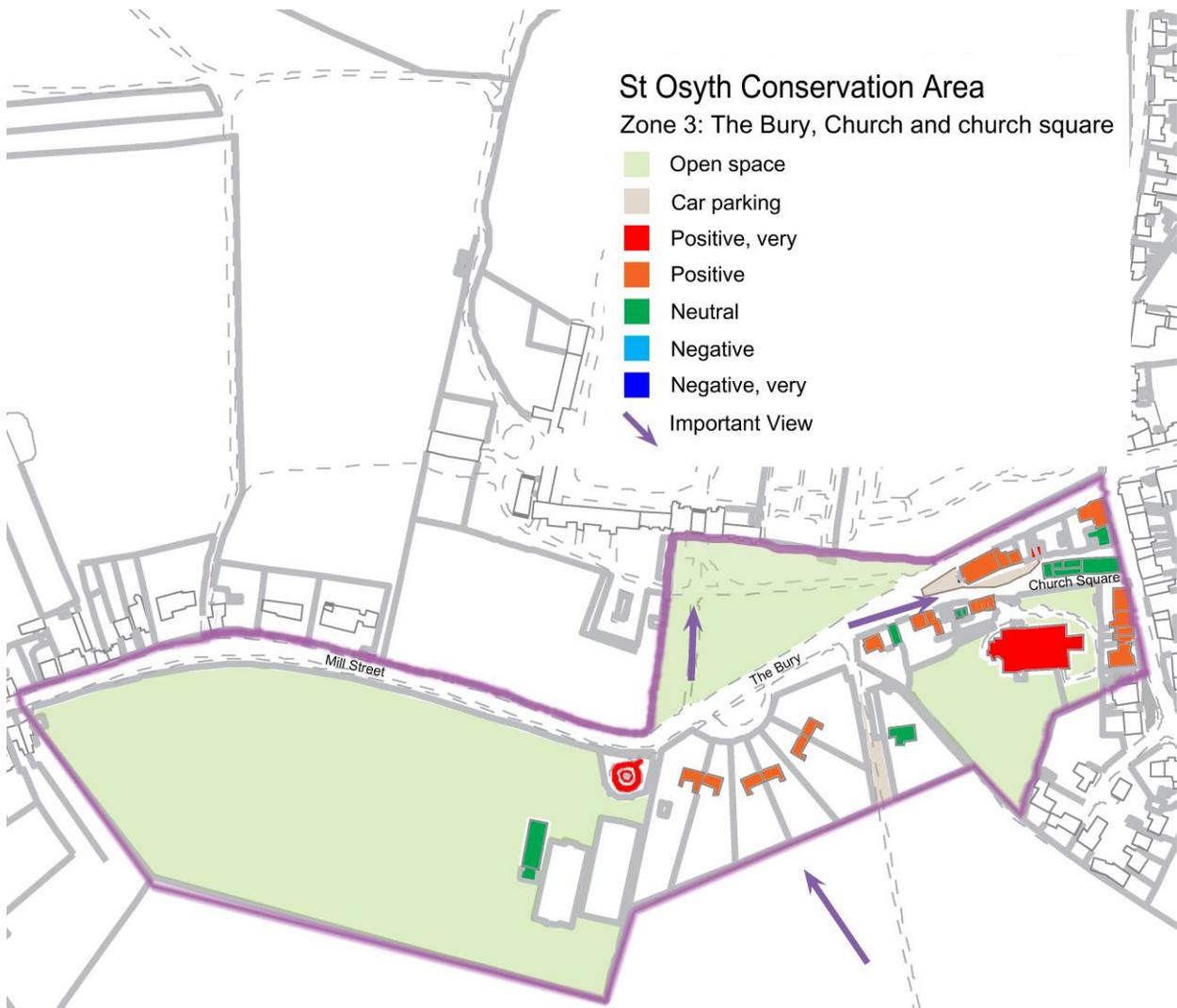


Figure 31: Character zone 3.

#### 11.3.1 Church Square

Church Square occupies the south-west quadrant of the village and consists of the parish church and churchyard to the south, historic cottages to the north, and later cottages and shops occupying the former market square.

The church of St Peter and St Paul includes a 13th-century chancel and early 16th-century nave and aisles. It has a highly individual profile, with a short massively-butressed west tower (Fig. 16) and tall discrete aisles with steeply-pitched gabled roofs, while at the east end the nave, chancel, and both aisles are each separately gabled. Equally distinctive is its patchwork of different materials, particularly brick, rubble and flint. The interior is very unusual for its tall brick-built nave arcades, with compound piers and moulded four-centred arches, contrasting with white rendered walls.

The lych gate (dated 1909) north of church is an open-work timber structure with traceried openings, on plinth walls of dressed stone and flint, beneath a steeply-pitched tile roof with

plain bargeboards. The close boarded fence round the churchyard is not a boundary treatment worthy of this location, and could be improved with a hedge planted behind it. Hedges would also benefit the look of the plain railings which divide the churchyard from the new housing in School Close.

The Social Club or Johnson Institute, dating from 1911, is important for its location immediately north of the parish church, its public function, which it still retains, its historical association with Sir John Johnson the then owner of the Priory whose daughter gave it to the community, and its distinctive architecture by H.P.G. Maule. It is built in the Arts and Crafts style, the final form of English vernacular style, and is a tall building, with fine brick work, a deep and steeply-pitched roof with hipped dormer windows, crow-step gables to the west end and the central dormer, windows with brick mullions and transoms, and prominent lateral chimney stacks.



Figure 32: The lych gate in the churchyard, and beyond the social club dating from 1911.

Among the cottages the most important are 1-4 Church Square which date from c.1500, although Church Cottage, St. Edmundsbury and Anvil Cottage all contribute to the character of the area and provide a fine setting for the church. The market infill buildings are less interesting architecturally but complement the character of the village through their scale and detailing. The lane, Stone Alley, on the north side was pedestrianised and resurfaced in the 1980s.



Figure 33: Stone Alley, looking west to Anvil Cottage, St. Edmundsbury and Church Cottages with the Social Club beyond. These buildings are 'market rows', permanent infill of the once larger marketplace.

### 11.3.2 The Bury

The Bury has much interest and includes the entrance to the Priory; nonetheless it has a disparate and unresolved character, with much open land. The triangular greensward in front of the Priory is an appropriately informal space, looking like a village green though in fact belonging to the Priory. It would benefit from more care and attention to improve the setting of what is a focal feature of the village as well as that of the gatehouse. In particular the wire fencing on the road is unworthy of this space. The valuable car parking provided on the east side of the greensward generally does not obtrude on the view of the gatehouse.

On the opposite side of the road, a footpath leads south past the modern vicarage to the Creek; to one side of it, there is some much needed but unofficial off-road parking. There are long views here over to the Mill Dam Lake and beyond, as well as views back to the Conservation Area, which is enclosed by hedges and fences which in places would benefit from improvement.

Nos 1-6 comprise three pairs of large semi-detached houses, laid out on a quadrant, built in 1923 by Tendring Rural District Council in a vernacular revival style with hipped roofs with gablets and cat-slides and lateral chimney-stacks, and first-floor tile-hanging (Fig 13). Adjacent is the war memorial, well set in its own garden and backed by evergreens, in the form of a pillar on a pedestal and steps, carrying a finial, with relief sculpture and inscriptions.



Figure 34: The Bury, looking towards the Priory Gatehouse.

### 11.3.3 East end of Mill Street and Recreation Ground

At the east end of Mill Street, the open character of the Bury is continued on the south side with the Recreation Ground, a protected recreational space, well used and well equipped, with a skate park and a children's play area. The chain link fence used for the long boundary on the road is unfortunate, but it is good to see that a hedge has been planted behind it. The utilitarian tubular railings at the edge of the road have recently been replaced in superior cast iron, though this improvement now makes the galvanised hooped railings by the War Memorial look inadequate. The hedge on the south side of the Recreation Ground

forming the Conservation Area boundary is rather gappy, though this does afford glimpses of the views out to the landscape beyond. Parts of the Priory wall in this area are in urgent need of repair.



Figure 35: The east end of Mill Street, looking west along the boundary of the Recreation Ground.

## 11.4 Character zone 4

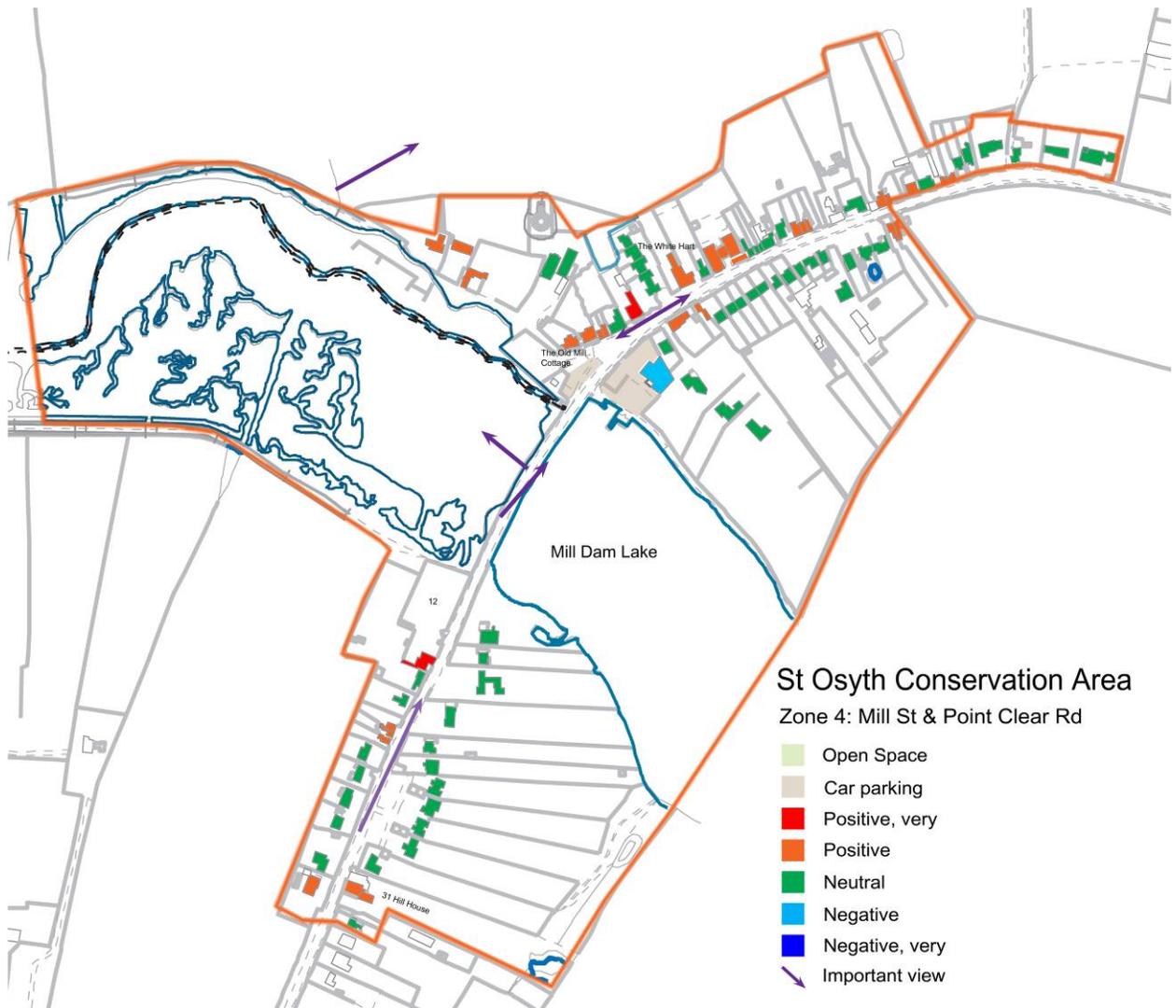


Figure 36: Character zone 4.

### 11.4.1 Mill Street

Mill Street combines buildings of ample architectural interest and buildings of no architectural interest in almost equal proportions. It includes several cottages in the local vernacular, with a particularly good example, kept very spick and span, at no. 39. This is timber-framed, single-pile, one-and-a-half storeys, weather-boarded, with a peg-tile roof and slate-covered catslide-roof dormers. The cottages at nos 21-23 are similar in character.

There are two-storey cottages at nos 27, 31-33, 45, 52, 54, and 53-61, some hiding special interest within. The hipped roof at nos 31-33 is the remains of a cross wing, suggesting that it was originally a larger and grander building. No. 45 is a jettied and gabled cross-wing, tree-ring dated 1427-59, while no. 49 has the remnant of two arched doorways, once part of a medieval screens passage and hall. The Old Bakery, no. 54, has a central chimney stack which surmounts back-to-back inglenook fireplaces of the 17th century. Although the White Hart Inn, no. 71, presents a rather ordinary 18th-century range to the street, marred by

concrete tiles and a 20th-century porch and shutters, it has an interesting earlier rear range, timber-framed and weather-boarded.



Figure 37: Mill Street, north side, cottages at nos 61-45.

Cowley Cottage, no. 27, has a distinctive character and a very quaint skyline, with the low tiled roof and central chimneystack of the street front intersected by the two taller tiled roofs of its cross wings. It is flanked by a highly appropriate allotment garden. Equally distinctive is no. 52, a cake-slice of a house, with a very narrow front elevation, of brick with a pitched roof, contrasting strongly with its tall, deep side elevations, weather-boarded and gabled. It was perhaps once part of a longer structure. Nos 53-61 are two groups of historic cottages, weather-boarded to the east, with purlins visible in the gable, and rendered to the west.

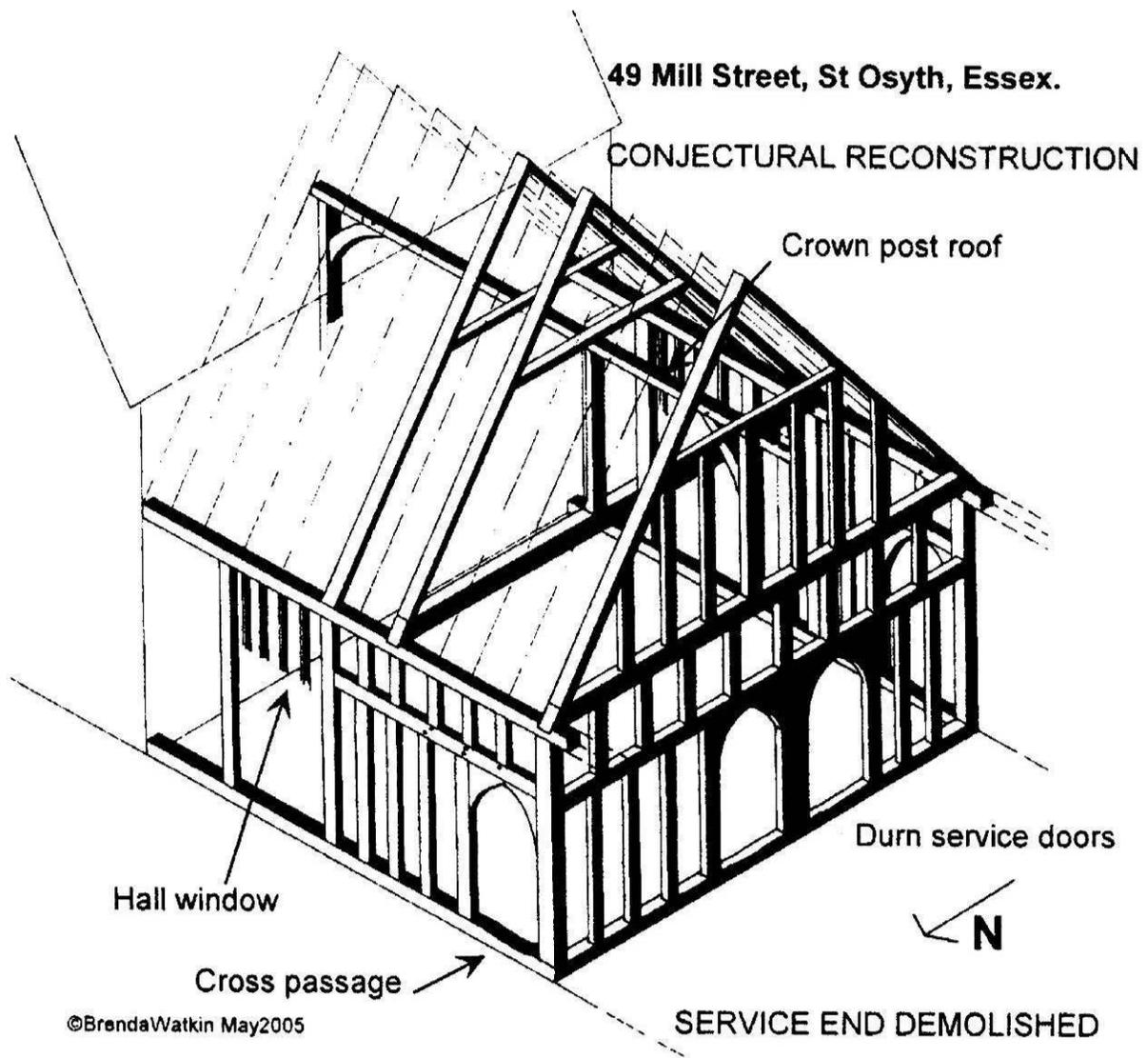


Figure 38: The timber frame of 49 Mill Street, a 15th-century hall with the cross-passage door and the pair of doors to the now demolished service end (Brenda Watkin).

There is a picturesque grouping of diverse historic houses at nos 81-95 Mill Street, set off by falling ground and the waters of the Creek and old Mill Pond. It includes Mill House, no. 81, the most imposing house on the street by reason of its height and refined classical character. It has a double-pile plan with classical proportions and decoration, including a parapet with a fluted frieze, and a dainty classical door-case with Greek key frieze, Doric columns and bats-wing fan light. Its street front is of gault brick, suggestive of stone, in contrast to the red brick of the other elevations. It is also important historically, as the house occupied by the miller, alluding to the mill which once stood on the causeway. The same allusion is made by Old Mill Cottage, no. 95, a relatively grand vernacular building of two-and-a-half stories, and an important terminal feature of Mill Street. There is a good pair of late Georgian brick cottages at 89-91, and a double-pile plan at 93.

Mill Street has a number of Victorian houses, mostly distinguishable by slate roofs. A prominent example are nos 20-22, a pair of brick villas embellished by classical stone dressings, bay windows with pillar mullions, and a crested roof ridge with open work trefoils.



Figure 39: The Lakeside pub and the north side of the Mill Dam Lake seen from the causeway.

Some modern development can be said to add to the character of the area, for example the small brick house at no. 69, through its simple design, calculated proportions, and good quality materials, and the Maltings complex, 65-67, through its distinctive architecture in a historic idiom including a weather-boarded gantry on the street front. Most of the modern houses are neutral features, including numbers 3-17, 35, 37, 73-79, and 83, although no. 9, by virtue of its greater height, has a negative impact. Most of the south side is modern development, including numbers 24-50, 58, 60, 62, and the Lakeside pub. This is a nondescript building surrounded by an extensive car park. The site occupies a key position at the edge of the Mill Dam Lake, and is very prominent in views down towards the quay and Mill Street from Point Clear Road. Northward views in the same direction are marred by poor landscaping and boundary treatments on the land and properties on the north side of the lake. On the opposite side of the road by the Creek, there is a small area of public parking which would benefit from sympathetic resurfacing.

#### 11.4.2 The Creek

The Creek has diverse interest and gives long views to the west. The north bank was the site of early medieval settlement which gives it considerable historic importance, and although no buildings from the period remain, it has yielded significant archaeological finds. An investigation by the Time Team in 2004 uncovered a timber wharf datable to the 15th and 16th centuries, whilst a sherd of Spanish pottery is a reminder of the extent of the trading networks conducted from the late medieval port. Later the quay became a focus of the fishing industry, especially oyster catching, reinforcing the economic prosperity of the market town. It remains a working quay to this day, with a boat-building yard, and moorings with pontoons, representing great continuity of use. It was the site of the corn mill, built 1730 and demolished 1961, and of a lime kiln and malthouse.

It also has appreciable architectural interest, represented by Quay House, Summer Cottage and Mariners, respectively a mellow brick house with a tiled hipped roof, a white weather-

boarded vernacular cottage with a gambrel roof and dormers, and a rendered Victorian house with a gabled slate roof, forming a contrasting group in a verdant and aquatic setting.

### 11.4.3 Point Clear Road

Point Clear Road was developed principally in the 20th century and has few significant historic buildings. Hillside, no. 12, is a grade II listed late Georgian rendered house with a slate roof and classical doorcase with canopy, Ionic columns and frieze with patera. It stands in a striking location on the south bank of the creek, with its main elevation facing Mill Street to the north, making a prominent feature of the conservation area. Hill House, no. 34, lies on the boundary of the Conservation Area, and is a fragment of a larger 19th-century house, its land now developed for four new houses. Also of some interest are no. 40, Hill Top House, dating from the 19th century and originally associated with no. 34, and the weather-boarded cottages at nos 14, 20-22, and 24. The remaining eighteen buildings are all modern 20th-century houses



Figure 40: Looking down Point Clear Road to the quay and Mill Street, the area known as Overdam.

## 11.5 Character zone 5

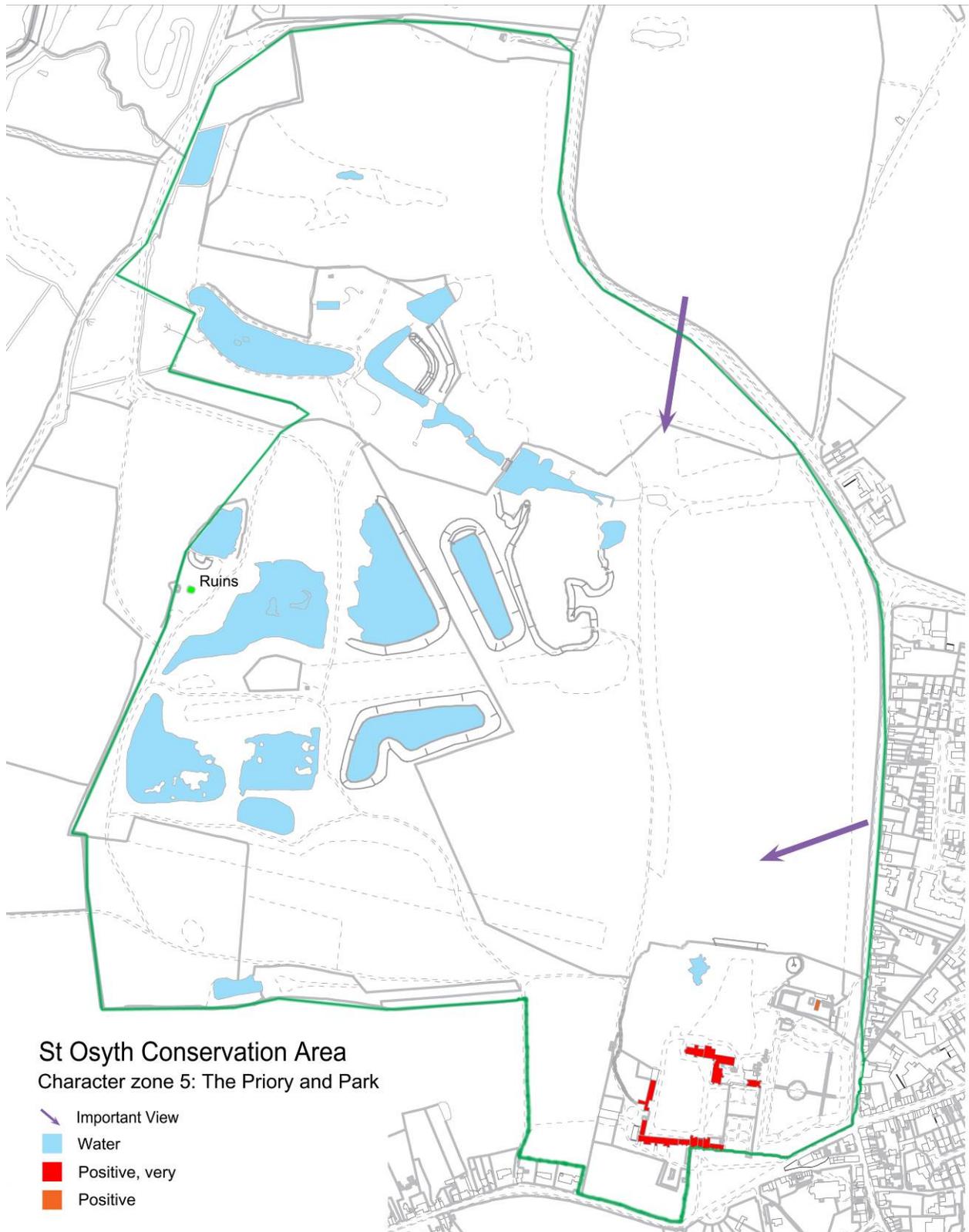


Figure 41: Character zone 5.

### 11.5.1 The Priory buildings

The village still has very much the sense of a settlement which has grown up at the gates of the Priory, and this sense of history gives St. Osyth a special character which has also, with its coastline, had a role in making attractive to visitors. The relationship between Priory and village is clearest in the area of the Bury, where the great gatehouse looks out on the greensward once used for fairs and the buildings which occupy the site of the former marketplace.

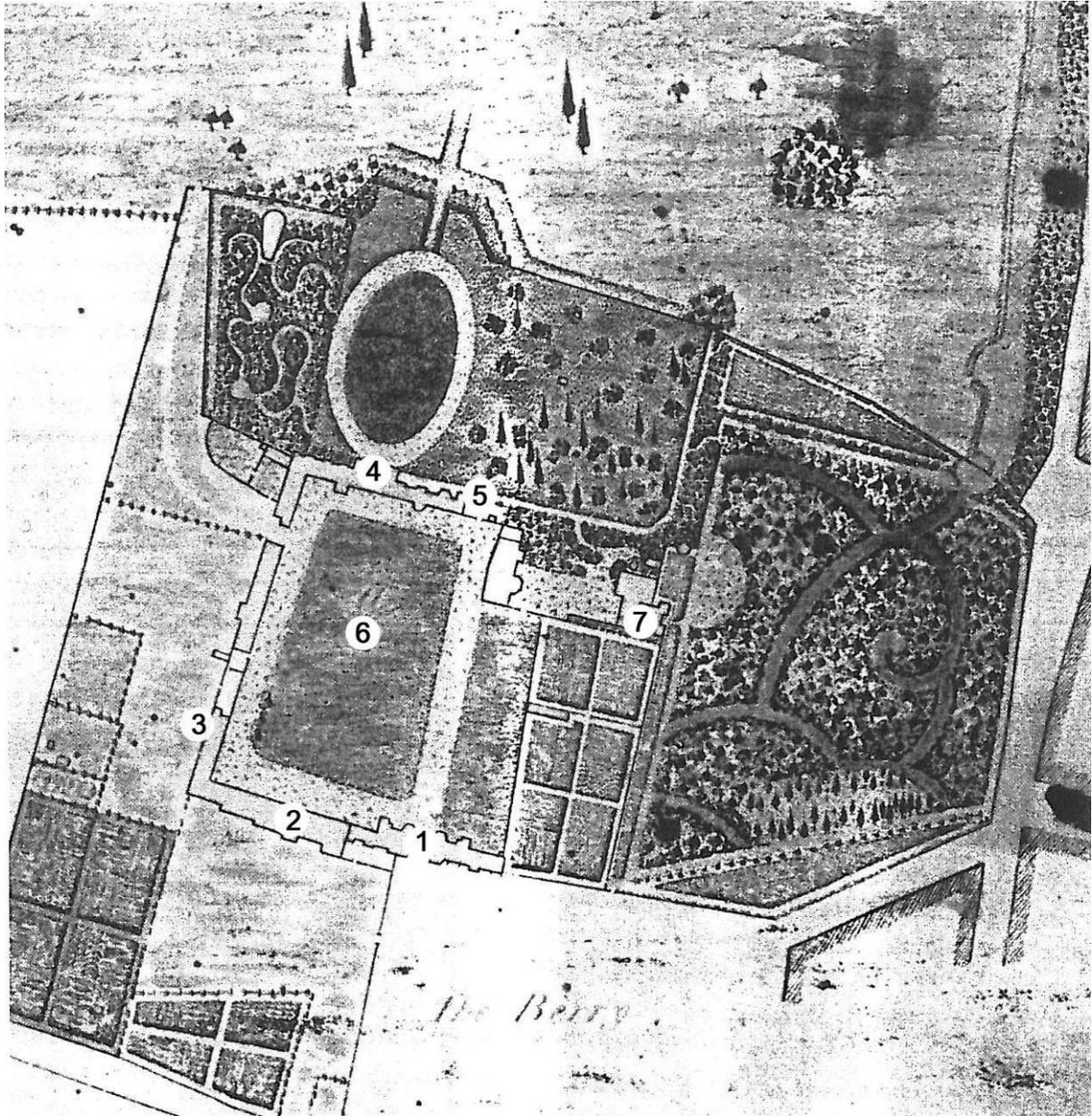


Figure 42: Plan of the Priory from the 1762 estate map. 1 - gatehouse. 2 - eleven bay barn. 3 - Old dairy and brew-house. 4 - Darcy House. 5 - Vintoner's gatehouse. 6 - The Green or South Lawn. 7 - Abbots Tower

To a large extent, however, the Priory is screened from public view by the tall imposing perimeter wall, which with its varied building materials and blocked crenellations, gives

Colchester Road and the east end of Mill Street a unique character. The gatehouse is the focal point of the Bury, but otherwise, there are only glimpses of the tithe barn from Mill Street, and views of the Abbot's Tower which can be seen above the wall from many directions.

The Priory contains a scheduled ancient monument, the boundary of which encloses both ruinous and unused buildings and those in residential use. There are 22 individually listed structures, seven at grade I and two at II\*. The Priory buildings date from four main periods; the 12th and 13th centuries, preserved mainly in the core of the surviving cloister ranges and largely obscured by later rebuilds; the late 15th- and early 16th-century rebuilding phase, represented by the outer gatehouse and Abbot Vintoner's brick gatehouse; the later 16th-century mansion built by the Darcys; and the Georgian Darcy House, built by the earls of Rochford despite its name.

The great outer gatehouse built in the later 15th century is an outstanding and nationally important example of the technique of flint building known as flushwork, in which decorative panels framed in ashlar stonework are filled with carefully knapped flints. It was refurbished as residential accommodation in 1958. The arch spandrels of the gateway are enlivened with carvings of St. Michael and the dragon, whilst the archway itself is vaulted. The gatehouse probably represented a reorganisation of the entrance into the Priory precinct. It leads into the vast quadrangle largely enclosed by buildings and walls, known as the Green or South Lawn, which is simply laid to grass and has a collegiate feel to it.



Figure 43: Looking from the Abbot's Tower to Vintoner's gatehouse and the Darcy House, with the 19th century Johnson wing in the foreground. The chequerwork clock tower is part of the remains of the Darcy mansion.

To the west are former agricultural and service buildings, often of rather uncertain use and date. Adjoining the gatehouse is the eleven-bay Tithe barn, which presents a stone septaria

wall to the courtyard but is weatherboarded on the south face where there are three midstreys or porches. This mixture of stone and timber construction is unusual, but was clearly done for aesthetic reasons. The barn has a collar purlin roof with windbraces, and was probably built by the Darcys in the second half of the 16th century.

On the west side of the Green, the Old Dairy runs north from the west end of the barn. A brick 18th- or 19th- century building, it was originally apparently a stables, and more recently has been used as a cowhouse and dairy. To the north are the so-called Brewhouse, the West Barn and Bailiff's Cottage. The Brewhouse is of stone and brick, two-storeys, dating from the 16th century, with a later lean-to or outshot on one side. Its original use is uncertain; at the time of listing in 1950 it was used as a dairy. The West Barn presents the typical mixture of reused building materials and is of uncertain date and original function; most recently it has been used as a barn and chicken shed. The Bailiff's Cottage is a one-and-a-half-storey stone building which was of uncertain age until removal of a plasterboard ceiling in 2006 revealed a smoke-blackened scissor-braced roof tree-ring dated to 1285-93. This suggests that it was originally a bakehouse or brewhouse for the Priory.

On the north side of the Green, the Georgian Darcy House built by the 3rd earl of Rochford adjoins the gatehouse built by Abbot Vintoner. The house is a plain brick building with sash windows and a bow-fronted bay; it was once more extensive,



Figure 44: The Abbot's Tower, and to the left the brick wall of the demolished Darcy mansion.

filling the gap at the north-west corner of the Green, but this part of it was demolished in the 19th century. Vintoner's gatehouse, aligned on the outer gateway and leading originally to the abbot's lodgings, is a remarkable example of Tudor brickwork, with a great oriel window at first floor with Italianate decoration and the date 1527. It was remodelled internally and on the north side by Sir John Johnson in the late 19th century.

On the north-east part of the courtyard, and joining Vintoner's gatehouse, there is a range of gabled brick buildings, corresponding approximately with the western cellarer's range of the cloister. The lower northern part is contemporary with the gatehouse. The taller southern portion incorporates 13th-century fabric, but was enlarged and remodelled by the Darcys.

From the southern end of this range, a two-storey Tudor brick wall runs east to the Abbot's Tower. This stands in front of the

demolished north or refectory cloister range which is believed to have been adapted as the hall of the Darcy mansion. It represents an addition on the south side of that range made in the later 16th century or c.1600 by the third lord Darcy to improve and enlarge his grandfather's mansion. This range would have overlooked the walled garden to the south; today the ruined wall with its blocked windows is a picturesque feature enhancing that garden. Of the refectory range, all that has been preserved is an Early English vaulted passage at its eastern end, converted into a chapel in the 19th century.

The Abbot's Tower, so-called though it too was built by the Darcys in the chequerwork masonry characteristic of their buildings, contained a stair which led from the hall to the private chambers at the first floor of the remodelled dorter range to the north. This range, which projected north of the cloister, is largely 12th or 13th century at the ground floor, but Tudor above. Today it is a picturesque ruin. North of it, and now detached from it, is a more fragmentary ruin, comprising an octagonal tower and a wall with a gateway in it, perhaps the remains of a gatehouse serving a former eastern approach to the Tudor mansion.

### 11.5.2 The Priory Park

The Park lies to the north and west of the Priory, between the Colchester Road to the east, and Flag Creek to the west. This was the Little Park of the Priory. The Great Park was situated to the east of the village. Roman finds have been made in the Park, from the area of the Grotto and the former North Lodge. The medieval park would have been more extensive than its present 95ha. No features relating to it have survived except possibly for the Splayed Avenue, the shape of which suggests it may have been used for hunting deer, and the cluster of ponds which in origin were probably fish ponds. The Domesday Oak on a mound at the east end of the Splayed Avenue may be 5-600 years old. The Park supports a number of statutorily protected and Biodiversity Action Plan mammal and bird species, and is ecologically very important, both in its own right and also because of its close relationship to the adjoining wetlands and nature reserve.



Figure 45: All that remains of the ruin of the Grotto, a folly remarkable for its exaggerated rustication and the reuse of a fine 13th-century doorway.

The wall running south from the ruined red brick two-storey wall towards the gatehouse and the Bury enclosed what was the formal pleasure garden of the Tudor mansion. It is predictable that there would have been other walled enclosures around the mansion of the sort shown on the late 16th- and early 17th-century estate maps of manor houses made by the Walker family of surveyors.

Documentary evidence for the later development of the park and gardens comprises estate maps of 1762 and 1814. The 1762 map shows the Park in the time of the 4th Earl of Rochford, a diplomat known to have horticultural interests. It clearly represents a designed landscape overlaid on earlier ones. East of the ruined Tudor mansion was the

Wilderness, later altered and today an area laid largely to lawn. Immediately north of the Georgian mansion was the Pleasure Ground, with an oval carriage circle and lawn flanked by an informally planted area to the east, and a parterre to the west laid out with winding pathways. Extending north of the house and gardens was a long rectangle of grassland known as the Mowing Ground which survives clearly today. Within it, six regularly planted clumps of trees led the eye due north, without apparently being aligned on any particular feature. To the east of them were three mounts, and the Belt, a narrow band of trees to screen the Colchester Road. At the north-east corner of the Park there was an entrance from which a drive ran south following closely the edge of the Belt to the Carriage Circle. Detached within the Park stood a rectangular block of woodland, the New Plantation, traversed by straight and curvilinear paths. To the north of the Plantation was the Splayed Avenue, running east-west, and readily recognisable today. Further north still is Nuns Wood, which showed evidence of careful management, enclosed with a fence, with paths running through it, and a group of what were probably Lombardy poplars, a tree introduced by the 4th earl. The ponds in this area also showed evidence of management, having straight sides though their shape was irregular. A building to the east of the ponds is indicated as the Deer House. A fence ran roughly north-east from the south boundary of the Park, west of the Plantation. Attached to it was an enclosure labelled Hermitage, an area now known as The Grotto. Within it were two picturesque buildings or follies, the Grotto and the Kitchen. These survived until about 40 years ago, but the former is now a roofless ruin and the latter no more than foundations. The south part of the area west of the fence line was divided into three paddocks. To the north there was more parkland with five clumps of trees.

By the time of the 1814 map, the area west of the north-south fence line had been disparked and divided into fields by straight hedgerows. This map shows the drive from the north now entered the Park at a lodge on the northern boundary and ran to the west of the Mowing Ground, rather than along the edge of the Belt. Features shown on the first edition OS map of 1874, but almost certainly earlier, are the Western Avenue and Nuns Wood Avenue, both of which radiate out from the same point at the north-west corner of the gardens. The Plantation was felled sometime about the middle of the 19th century.

Sir John Johnson, who owned the Priory from 1863-1909, is less conspicuous for alterations to the Park than for reorganising the gardens, which in his time extended to 10 acres and included 13 glass houses. There was formal planting on the Green or South Lawn, the vast quadrangle between the main house and the 15th-century gatehouse. This planting has not survived, but the existing layout of the gardens south of the Darcy mansion was largely established in Johnson's time.

In the 20th century, the Park and grounds were neglected, their maintenance left largely to rabbits and deer, and the buildings allowed to collapse. After World War 2, mineral concessions were granted and the western part of the Park is now occupied by extensive water-filled gravel quarries. Dutch Elm disease and the gales of 1987 and 1990 have wrought further damage and reduced tree cover. Nevertheless, the essential framework and elements of the 18th-century designed landscape and earlier parkland can still be traced, even if no longer well defined. They represent a valuable survival, particularly in a county which has now lost most of its formerly very extensive parkland.

## 12. EVALUATION OF CONTRIBUTION TO CHARACTER

A map showing an assessment of the contribution of individual buildings to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area is shown in Fig. 46.

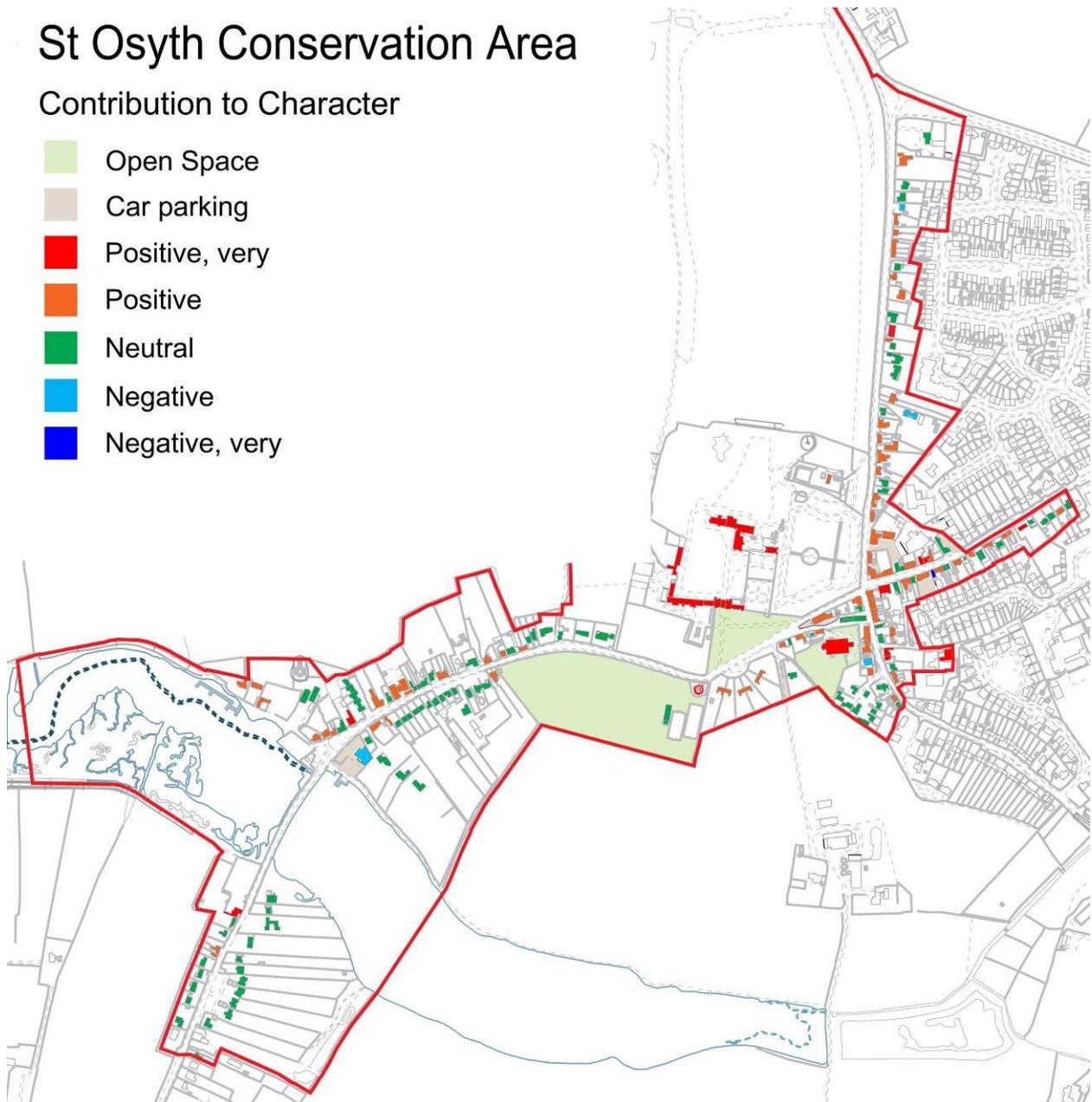


Figure 46: Contribution of buildings to the character of the Conservation Area. See Appendix for a larger copy of this map.

Each building has been graded on a scale of one to five according to the following criteria:

1. Positive contribution, landmark and listed buildings.
2. Positive contribution through design, age, materials or detailing, or through historic interest.

3. Buildings which have a neutral presence in the Conservation Area, fitting satisfactorily into it.
4. Negative buildings of indifferent design or detailing, or that do not relate well to the special character of the Conservation Area either by reason of mass, design, materials or siting.
5. Negative contribution, with an adverse effect on the Conservation Area.

Although this analysis is inevitably to some degree subjective, it can be of value to inform decision-making in the development control and planning process. These grades reflect the original design and character of the buildings, their condition and maintenance, and their appearance today and the effect of alterations, both positive and negative. Unsympathetic alterations can move a building down a grade, and their removal can have the effect of upgrading them.

## 13. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

### 13.1 Boundary changes

The Conservation Area is large, its boundaries enclosing the older parts of the settlement where it spreads out from site of the Priory and the crossroads. It has been proposed in previous reviews of the Conservation Area that it be contracted to exclude a large area comprising St. Osyth Creek, and most of Mill Street, Overdam and Point Clear Road. It is acknowledged that these sections include considerable numbers of modern buildings. Nonetheless, it is considered that the Conservation Area designation is justified by the exceptional historic interest of the Creek, and the architectural interest of both it and Mill Street, which include about ten listed buildings and ten historic buildings (as described above). The Overdam section of Point Clear Road may seem of less architectural interest, but it does include a listed building and some houses of historic interest, and this part of the road does relate closely to the setting of the Creek and the Mill dam Lake. For these reasons this proposal is not supported in this appraisal.

Two extensions are recommended to the Conservation Area boundary.

#### 13.1.1 Boundary extension: Clacton Road, north side, eastern end

It is suggested that the Conservation Area be extended along the north side of Clacton Road, to terminate at the same point as the boundary on the south side of the road. This small extension would embrace seven further buildings, of which five contribute to the character of the Area. They include four semi-detached houses (nos 47-61), built in the early 20th century in vernacular revival style by Tendring Rural District Council. They follow two different designs, one with gabled cross-wings, the other composed of an in-line range with hipped roofs, tile-hung gablets and catslide roofs, prominent chimneystacks and eaves, bay windows, and rough cast render with central pargetted panels at the first floor. The second design is the same as that of 1-6 The Bury, although there the first floor is tile-hung rather than rendered. The four houses have evident architectural interest, notwithstanding some detrimental alterations including UPVC windows and concrete tile roofs in the case of nos 55-57. The fifth building to be included is the Old Parsonage (no. 73), which has historic interest through its former function, as well as architectural interest through its design. It is a distinctive and prominent early 19th-century building in two parts, with white rendered walls and slate roofs. The western part has Victorian bay windows added, while the eastern section has a projecting upper floor supported by a slender cast iron column. Only two modern buildings without interest would be included (nos 43 and 65). The extension would provide the Conservation Area with a clear and rational termination point on Clacton Road, which it lacks at present.

#### 13.1.2 Boundary extension: open land between Mill Street and St Osyth Priory Park

This proposal addresses the open land bordered by Mill Street on the south, the park of St Osyth Priory on the north, the Priory Farm on the east, and farmland leading to Flag Creek on the west. Although as arable land it has no architectural interest, it probably formed part of the medieval Park. Today it forms a key part of the setting of the Conservation Area, particularly of the Priory and its Park and farm, and of Mill Street and the hinterland of the Creek. The new boundary could follow the line of

one of the old north-south field divisions, as recorded on early O.S. maps, which could be re-instated with a new hedgerow.

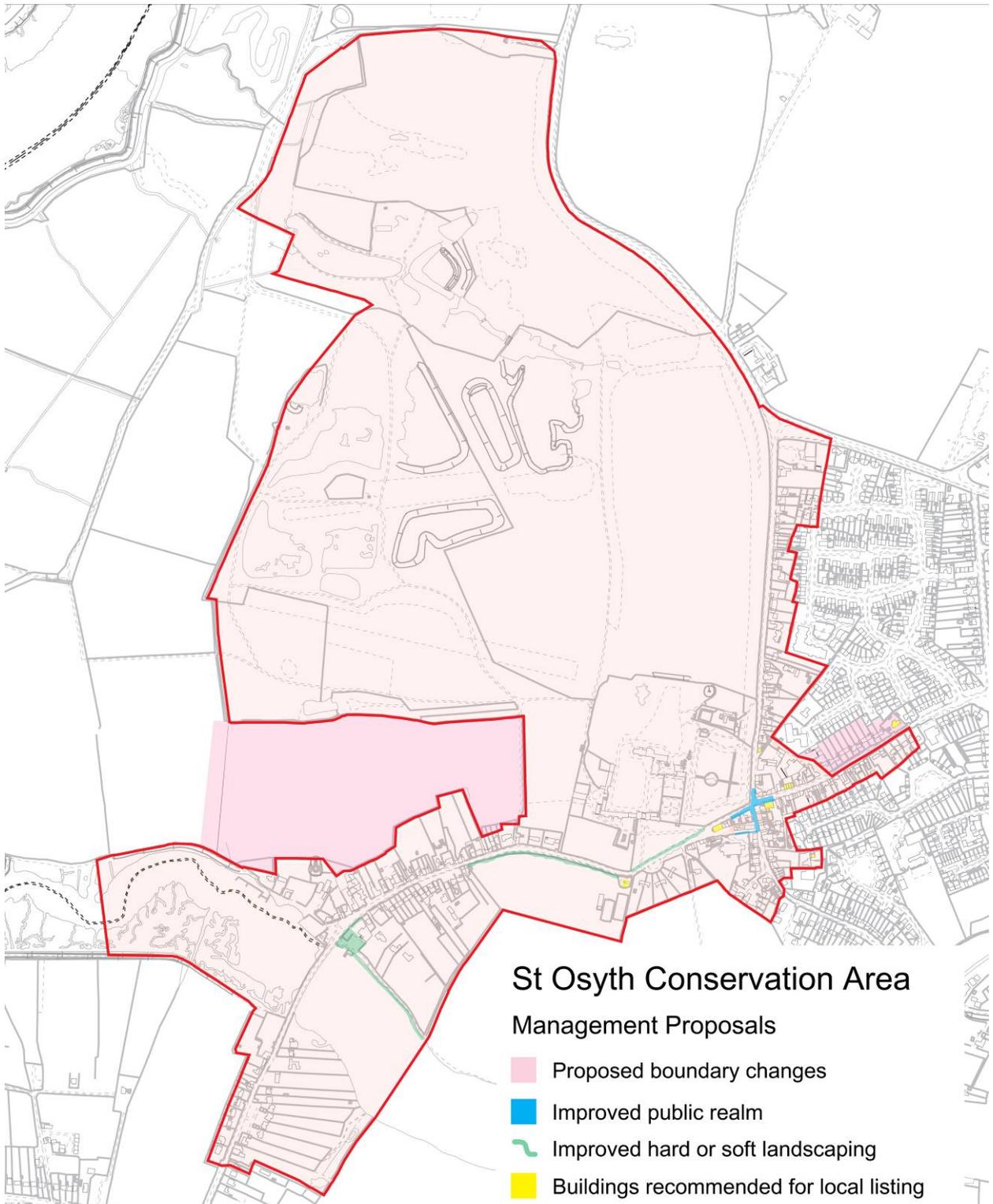


Figure 47: Map to illustrate the management plan recommendations for the Conservation Area. See Appendix for a larger copy of this map.

## 13.2 Problems and pressures

The Conservation Area is generally in fair condition. However, it shares many of the problems typical of places where it is attractive to live. Traffic and parking have an adverse effect upon it. Any available land is an opportunity for development and infilling, people want to extend their houses and to surround them with ancillary buildings, and to improve them in ways and with materials which are not always sympathetic.

Traffic blights the centre of the Conservation Area. The tight crossroads at Bar Corner is both very busy and dangerous, the narrow footpaths making it hazardous for pedestrians. Better public realm could make this location pleasanter and safer (see below). There is a shortage of off-road parking. Such as there is seems mainly to be provided through the generosity of private landowners. The resulting parking on the street does little for the appearance of the Conservation Area. With present patterns of car use likely to continue, it is predictable that these problems will become worse.

St. Osyth is a mature settlement which has seen a considerable degree of infilling and building on larger gardens. Further scope for this is now limited and unlikely to be possible without prejudicing the character of the Conservation Area. The more substantial older properties require the setting provided by reasonable sized gardens. Backlands are important features of old town centres, being part of the grain of the historic town plan and representing areas that had a service function in relation to the main street frontages. Those that survive in St. Osyth provide flexible spaces useful for service areas and off-street parking.



Figure 48: Unsightly development site in the Bury.

Two sites warrant more detailed comment in this context. One is that next to the shop, formerly Bareham's Butchers, in the Bury, where consent has been obtained for development which has not got beyond excavation of foundation trenches. This is currently an eyesore in a prominent part of the Conservation Area. Action, possibly in the form of a Section 215 notice under the 1990 Planning Act, could be taken to get this site tidied up. In Clacton Road, between nos 33 and 37 there is a neglected garden enclosed by a derelict fence. In the absence of adequate maintenance, this is a case where the Conservation Area might benefit from sensitive development.

Alterations and extensions to existing buildings, and any new build, should be carried out to a high standard of design, as required by

Tendring District Council's existing planning policies. Account should be taken of the materials and features of the Conservation Area which contribute strongly to its character. It should be recognised that the predominant architectural form in the Conservation Area is the vernacular cottage.

To date the Conservation Area has not suffered greatly from the adverse effect of unsympathetic small scale modern improvements and alterations. An example of these is

the satellite dishes on the front walls of some buildings. These are not permitted development and should be the subject of enforcement action by the local authority. Other alterations, such as replacement windows and doors, are permitted development, and if unchecked, seriously damage the character of the Conservation Area. Provision should therefore be made for dealing with this problem, which can be done most effectively through additional planning controls.

### **13.3 Additional planning controls**

The greatest threat to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is their gradual erosion by minor changes, such as the replacement of windows and doors or the creation of hard standings in front gardens, most of which are permitted development and thus do not require planning permission. Under the 1990 Planning Act, the local planning authority can bring many of these changes within the remit of the planning system, with the use of an Article 4(2) Direction. Conservation areas enjoy little protection unless permitted development rights are curtailed, and it is therefore recommended that an Article 4(2) Direction be introduced to control the following works:

- Alteration of a dwelling house affecting windows, doors or other openings to the front and side elevations including the insertion of dormer or other windows in the roof and the change of roof materials.
- The application of any form of cladding or rendering to the external walls and front and side elevations of a dwelling house.
- The painting of the exterior of any wall of a dwelling house with a different colour.
- The painting of the external brickwork of the walls of a dwelling house.
- The replacement of the roof covering of a dwelling house.
- The erection or construction of a porch outside the front or side door of a dwelling house.
- The erection or construction of any fences, walls, gates or other forms of enclosure to the front or sides of a dwelling house.
- The demolition, removal or alteration of any fences, walls, gates or other forms of enclosure to the front of a dwelling house.
- The construction within the curtilage of a dwelling house of a vehicle hard standing incidental to the dwelling house.
- The installation of solar panels and wind turbines.

In the Conservation Area, an Article 4 (1) Direction for the Bury was introduced in 2008 (see 13.5 below).

### **13.4 Public realm**

The public realm in the Conservation Area is of a basic standard, there having been no attempt to introduce superior materials or fittings, save in Stone Alley where there is better paving (Fig. 33), and where good cast iron railings have been used for the area of car parking in Church Square (Fig. 16) and in Mill Street by the edge of the Recreation Ground. Improvements to the public realm would highlight the identity of the Conservation Area and reinforce its special character. The lamp standards in particular look shabby.

The northern end of Colchester Road has had its carriageway and pavements resurfaced, but elsewhere, particularly in Clacton Road, the tarmac footpaths are in poor condition and much patched. When resurfacing is carried out, the existing stone kerbs should be retained and stone kerbs, or at least conservation style concrete ones, should be used. Double yellow lines are to be found on most of the roads in the Conservation Area, and can be very obtrusive as, for instance, in views down Point Clear Road. None of them are of the narrow

2 inch (50mm) type allowed in conservation areas. When next renewed, the narrower less obtrusive lines should be adopted. High quality surfacing materials for both roads and pavements would enhance the approaches to the crossroads at Bar Corner, and might also encourage motorists to proceed more carefully. Granite sett rumble strips might also be appropriate here. The better paving in Stone Alley could be extended to Church Square, giving it more the sense of a shared space. At the bottom of Mill Street, the appearance of the small area of public parking would be much improved if it were resurfaced with bound gravel.

As in most places, there is scope for improvements to the public realm by carrying out an audit of street signs and furniture, and rationalising them. Of particular concern is the junction with the B1027 where there is a forest of signs as well as a lot of road markings. These should be reduced in number and arranged to convey their message more efficiently.

Two benches have been installed in the Bury in what is an appropriate position, looking towards the Priory, but they are of glass reinforced plastic, and not of a quality consistent with the Conservation Area. The fingerpost at Bar Corner would look better for a coat of paint and the damaged signs straightened out. A very useful and informative historic map of the village located by the toilets on the Bury will soon need the polycarbonate in front of it replacing as it is beginning to become opaque.



Figure 49: The Bury, bench made of glass reinforced plastic and the neglected K6 telephone box.

### 13.5 Boundary treatments and soft landscaping

There is scope for improving the appearance of parts of the Conservation Area through better boundary treatments and soft landscaping. The greensward at the Bury is a key space in the Conservation Area but one that does not provide a setting equal to the buildings round it. It is a question of achieving a balance between controlling the car parking on the grass so that it does not interfere with the view of the great gatehouse, and at the same time maintaining the open and informal character of the space. Further to planning applications to enclose the Bury, which led to an unsuccessful appeal at which the Inspector concluded that this would harm the openness of the Bury which is 'very much part of the historic setting of the listed structures', an Article 4(1) Direction under the 1990 Planning Act was introduced in 2008, preventing the erection of any form of fence, wall, gate or enclosure without planning permission. The existing post and wire fence and five bar gate were unaffected by this Direction. The fence is unworthy of this location, and a solution should be sought to this problem.

At the edge of the Park, on the Colchester Road, it would be an improvement to substitute estate railings for the existing wire fencing. The hedgerow and trees along the side of the road will also need some degree of management as the trees grow larger and the elms, a major constituent of the hedge, die back.

The long chain link fence enclosing the Recreation Ground on Mill Street is not satisfactory. A hedge has recently been planted behind it, but this is a rather bleak stretch of road where some additional standard trees would improve the streetscape and also provide a much needed sense of enclosure. The chain link fence should be removed once the hedge is established. Landscaping and better boundary treatments to the Lakeside pub and the land and gardens and land to the east of it would greatly improve the setting of the Mill Dam Lake and the important views across it from Point Clear Road.

On its south side, from the area of the church to the Recreation Ground, the Conservation Area is enclosed by hedges and trees, with fences where these are interrupted. These form an important visual boundary which in places warrants better maintenance. In particular, the gap formed by the new development in School Close should be closed with a hedge.

The churchyard boundaries are capable of improvement, especially those to the new housing in School Close. The car parks in the eastern part of the village, notably those of the King's Arms and Red Lion, and that to one side of 6-8 Colchester Road, would all benefit from better surfacing and some soft landscaping. By reason of the absence of green space in this more developed part of the Conservation Area, private gardens assume an important role in providing soft landscaping, and advantage should be taken of any opportunities that might arise for tree planting.

### **13.6 Heritage at risk**

The Priory is entered on the 2009 Essex Building at Risk Register, and on the English Heritage Heritage at Risk Register. No detail is given in either as to the condition of the buildings. Condition reports on the Priory buildings were carried out for the owners by the architects Carden and Godfrey in 2000 and 2009. The outer gatehouse, Vintoner's gatehouse and the Tudor range to the south of that, are all used for residential accommodation and in reasonable condition, if in need of some refurbishment and repair. The agricultural and service buildings on the south and west side of the Green are all roofed and basically weatherproof. Of these, the one building that is in need of urgent work is the Bailiff's Cottage. The roof, currently covered by a tarpaulin, has spread causing the walls to move out, and major repairs are required.

The ruined buildings to the east of the Green which represent the remains of the Darcy mansion are by definition dilapidated, and in places in a precarious condition. The picturesque quality of the ruins is very much a feature of the character of the Priory and its gardens. There is no doubt that a programme of repointing and consolidation will have to be carried out if they are to survive. Work has started on the Abbot's Tower with the aid of English Heritage grant, but has been halted by the financial failure of the contractor. The perimeter walls on the Colchester Road have been repaired and restored. Elsewhere parts of them are in poor condition and need repair. Whilst there is no question as to the importance of the Priory buildings and their need for repair, the extent and likely cost of the works are unclear and the subject of negotiation. From the point of view of the rest of the Conservation Area, urgent priorities would be those parts that are visible to the public, namely the scaffolded structures on the Bury and the worst parts of the perimeter wall.

Like the Priory buildings, the condition of the Park is problematic and its future uncertain. The decades of neglect have left it in poor condition, though this has led to the creation of important wildlife habitat. The quarries were not properly remediated or landscaped when extraction ceased, but there is a school of opinion that this modern landscape has a character of its own which should be retained, even though it represents a dramatic break with its previous appearance. Further decline is being held in check, the trees are being

managed, and a start has been made on restoring the ponds in Nun's Wood. But if the landscape is to be improved and partially restored, there should be structured programme of work. The Park has been researched, and a restoration plan was drawn up by Liz Lake Associates in 2003, with a view to work being done in the framework of a Countryside Stewardship scheme.

If the renovation and future care of the listed park and garden is to be successful, it will be vital to ensure that English Heritage, the Garden History Society and the Essex Garden Trust are consulted at all stages. It will also be important to engage with the Essex Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and other organisations involved in the protection of wildlife to ensure no harm is done either to the habitat types forming part of the adjacent wetlands and Howlands Marsh Nature Reserve, or to the wildlife that inhabit them. In the absence of real progress being made, it is recommended that the Park be added to English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register.

The only other entry on the Building at Risk Register, no. 38 Colchester Road, is now substantially restored. A listed structure in a parlous condition is the K6 telephone box which is a conspicuous feature of the Bury but currently in desperate need of redecoration and reglazing (Fig. 50).

### 13.7 Locally listed buildings

Tendring Council is compiling a Local List of buildings which, whilst not of sufficient national importance to warrant statutory listing, are considered to be of local significance, and of value to the local community. The buildings will be assessed using set criteria and are likely to be good examples of a particular design or structural type, or of the work of a local architect, or to have significant historic associations. Inclusion in the list would be a material consideration in determining planning applications, and should thus ensure that important original features and fabric are retained, and that alterations do not damage the character of the building.

The following buildings in the Conservation Area have been identified as worthy of inclusion in a local list for St. Osyth:

Building	Address	Details etc
Social Club	Church Square Fig. 32	Given to the community by Sir John Johnson, owner of the Priory, dated 1911. Prominent brick building in the Arts and Crafts style by H.P.G. Maule.
Red Lion	Clacton road Fig. 28	Very prominent building with an attractive and architecturally ambitious 19th-century front elevation; rear ranges look older, potentially 17th- or 18th-century
St. Osyth Almshouses	21-27 Clacton Road, Fig. 52	Of historic interest, well presented terrace of four cottages, restored in 1897 and 1937, but about 400 years old.
The Old Parsonage	Clacton Road	If the Conservation Area boundary is extended to include it, this house should be locally listed. It is in two parts, one Georgian with two projecting bays, the other more vernacular in style, but both white painted with blue shutters and doors.
Town Cage	Colchester Road	Of historic interest. Last used in 1903.

War Memorial	Fig. 22 Mill Street Fig 51	Ursula Kemp was imprisoned here before being hanged for witchcraft in 1582. Attractive and well designed obelisk in Portland stone, in a carefully landscaped setting at the corner of the recreation ground
Methodist church	Spring Road, on lane to the east Fig. 53	Plain but attractive red brick building in the Lancet style dating from 1855.



Figure 50: St. Osyth Almshouses in Clacton Road.



Figure 51 (left): The War Memorial. Figure 52 (right): The Methodist chapel off Spring Road.

## APPENDIX 1. Statutory designations

The statutory list of buildings of architectural and historic interest in St. Osyth was first drawn up in 1952, and resurveyed in 1986. There are 60 listed buildings within the Conservation Area, eight of which are grade I, three are grade II\*, and the remaining 49 are grade II. Fifteen of these listed buildings, all within the Priory site, are also Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). In the list below, a building is grade II and not a SAM, unless otherwise indicated. St Osyth's Priory also has a grade II registered park and garden, the historic interest of which is summarised as 'Late C19/early C20 gardens laid out within C16 garden walls beside medieval buildings, set within a park developed over the C18, with C19 alterations.'

### St Osyth Priory (22)

Gatehouse and east and west flanking ranges	SAM	I
Precinct wall running east of gatehouse	SAM	
Precinct wall to south-west of gatehouse	SAM	I
Precinct wall flanking Mill Street	SAM	
Garden wall with attached small outbuilding	SAM	
Garden wall attached to precinct wall to south	SAM	
House (former convalescent home)	SAM	I
Urn and pedestal 50m north of gatehouse		
Ornamental steps flanked by urns		
Urn and stone pedestal 50m north-east of Abbot's lodging		
Wall between southern wing of house and Darcy tower	SAM	II*
Chapel and ruins attached to north	SAM	I
Darcy Tower and vaulting to west	SAM	I
Ruined east range and tower	SAM	I
Barn adjoining west range of gatehouse	SAM	I
Cartlodge adjacent to west of barn		
Brewhouse north-west of gatehouse		
Outbuilding adjacent to north-west of brewhouse (dairy)		
Outbuilding adjacent to north of dairy	SAM	II*
Cottage adjoining outbuilding		
Stable block adjacent to north-west of barn		
St Osyth's Priory, pump 20m west of cottage		

### The Bury (1)

K6 telephone box

### Mill Street (9)

21 and 23, Little Thatch and adjoining cottage

31 and 33

39, and 41 Gilbros

45, 47, and 49

Hydrant south of 45, 47 and 49

54, The Old Bakery

White Hart Inn

Old Mill House

81, Old Mill Cottage

**Point Clear Road (1)**

12 Point Clear Road

**Church Square (4)**

Church of St Peter and St Paul

1-4 Church Square

Church Cottage and St Edmundsbury

Anvil Cottage

I

**Spring Road (11)**

1, Bretts Stores

3, 5, 7, 9, St Osyth Bakery

Pump to rear of 7

4

8, 10, 12, 14, W.G. Ayers, The Duke Stores  
and Cottage to the left

15, Cranfield, Cranfield Cottages attached to south,  
and 17, 19, 21,

16, Bay House

The Old House and Little Priory

37, 39, 41

38, 40, Chestnut Cottage

46, 48

II\*

**Clacton Road (3)**

Priory Tea House and Baker's Shop

St Osyth DIY Centre and BG Stores

29, Tulip Hall

**Colchester Road (9)**

2, Waterloo House

Kings Arms Hotel

24, Binders

32 and 34, Elm Cottage and Manor Cottage

36, 38

60, The Cottage

Ivy Cottage, 72

Milestone opposite 76-82

Rose Downey, 84

## APPENDIX 2. Public consultation

The following is an example of the questionnaires used for the public consultation, filled in with an analysis of the results of all the returned questionnaires, the numbers of responses to individual questions being in bold.

Number of responses	
1. Is it important to you that St. Osyth has a Conservation Area?	YES – <b>78</b> NO – <b>0</b>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is important that the historic centre of the village is preserved.</li> <li>- The draft plan illustrates how unusual the area is in terms of natural environment.</li> <li>- The village retains openness.</li> <li>- To maintain the old buildings in their entirety.</li> <li>- A unique and lovely village should remain unspoilt for future generations to enjoy.</li> <li>- The village will become too urbanised.</li> </ul>	

### The boundaries of the St. Osyth Conservation Area.

Number of responses	
2. Should the Conservation Area be extended to include the land North of Mill Street adjoining the St, Osyth Priory Park?	YES – <b>76</b> NO – <b>3</b>
If so, is the boundary shown in the new Appraisal correct or should it be amended?	YES – <b>46</b> NO – <b>28</b>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The boundary should include all land north of Mill Street and adjoining The Priory Park all the way down to St. Osyth Creek.</li> <li>- Include all land from the historic park across to the Creek.</li> <li>- Extend Mill Street to the west.</li> <li>- Extended to include the whole of the Priory Grounds and Martins Farm.</li> <li>- The unique wildlife area needs extending to protect and look after the environments.</li> <li>- No amendments.</li> <li>- Increase of traffic, noise, etc.</li> <li>- Does not want a property development on The Priory ground.</li> </ul>	

Number of responses

<p>3. Should the Conservation Area be extended to include further properties in Clacton Road as shown in the Appraisal?</p>	<p>YES – <b>65</b></p> <p>NO – <b>8</b></p>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conservation Area should extend along the quay area.</li> <li>- The Conservation Area should include the North of Clacton Road as far as The Vicarage.</li> <li>- The quay is a reasonable and quite attractive 'period' feature.</li> <li>- The Council houses built in 1923.</li> <li>- The Clacton Road Alms Houses should be included.</li> <li>- Beautiful and full of history.</li> <li>- Farmlands, Residents businesses are all part of the charm of village life.</li> <li>- Not wanted.</li> <li>- The buildings included are important in their style and period.</li> <li>- If residents want/need to have extensions, they should be permitted.</li> </ul>	

Number of responses

<p>4. Should there be any other boundary changes – extensions or reductions?</p> <p>If so, what changes would you like to see?</p>	<p>YES – <b>31</b></p> <p>NO – <b>36</b></p>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All Priory land down to the creek should be in the conservation area.</li> <li>- All land North of Mill Street should be included.</li> <li>- Area extended to provide a conservation 'envelope' for the village.</li> <li>- The gravel works.</li> <li>- All of priory ground.</li> <li>- Conserve as much as possible.</li> <li>- To include properties in Daltes Lane.</li> <li>- More protected areas, more countryside and less building.</li> <li>- No more new homes.</li> </ul>	

**Draft Appraisal & Management Plan for the St. Osyth Conservation Area.**

Number of responses

5. Do you think the text identifies the challenges the area faces?	YES – <b>64</b>  NO – <b>5</b>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The wire fence on the Bury should be taken down. No fence should be around The Bury.</li> <li>- I strongly object to the suggestion that The Bury should be fenced off.</li> <li>- Last paragraph 13.4 – The bench should not be moved off of Bar Corner.</li> <li>- Limit further development around the village.</li> <li>- To ensure that no large scale development can increase pressure on services available and destroy the ‘feel’ of the village.</li> </ul>	

Number of responses

6. Do you think the text identifies the opportunities?	YES – <b>59</b>  NO – <b>7</b>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well presented.</li> <li>- The Parish Council is delighted with the lead the document queries.</li> <li>- Depends on how strongly T.D.C. support the C.A.A. once agreed.</li> <li>- Protect the character of the village.</li> <li>- It could take into account the natural beauty of the area.</li> </ul>	

Number of responses

7. Are there other improvements you would wish to see?	YES – <b>42</b>  NO – <b>16</b>
<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TDC should enforce the removal of the wire fence from The Bury.</li> <li>- The phone box opposite The Bury is in need of repair and repainted.</li> <li>- The new benches on The Bury are not appropriate to the area and should be replaced.</li> <li>- Some means of traffic calming along Mill Street.</li> <li>- Improve litter collection in odd corners – Meadow Way, Seawalls and Beacher.</li> <li>- Traffic calming measures at the Bar corner cross roads.</li> <li>- Protect conservation area around the village.</li> <li>- More protection and extension of wildlife areas.</li> <li>- Improvements welcome as long as they are sympathetic to the area</li> </ul>	

<p>and effect the lives of the residents including countryside and wildlife.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attempts to prevent fly-posting in the summer a real nuisance.</li> <li>- Cost effective conservation.</li> <li>- Changes more in character with the historic setting.</li> <li>- Enhance in as many ways as possible.</li> <li>- Some pavements are dirty – more cleaning needed.</li> <li>- Move control over lake side.</li> <li>- Present owners should be able to maintain their properties.</li> </ul>
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Number of responses

<p>8. What would you see as the main priority?</p>	<p>YES – <b>16</b></p> <p>NO – <b>2</b></p>
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<p><u>Summary of Comments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remove the fence from The Bury.</li> <li>- Do not allow The Bury to be fenced off.</li> <li>- Protection of the village from overdevelopment and heavy traffic.</li> <li>- Maintain the village for posterity.</li> <li>- Protection of the village from overdevelopment and heavy traffic.</li> <li>- Protection of all wildlife and natural beauty.</li> <li>- Improve public realm at crossroads. Discouragement of any further development the wrong side of crossroads.</li> <li>- Main priority is Mill Street no more housing.</li> <li>- Need traffic lights its very dangerous.</li> <li>- Not building there.</li> <li>- Ensure St Osyth retains its historic village character, and avoid allowing it to become swallowed by an urban sprawl.</li> <li>- Keep character of the village.</li> <li>- Wildlife and green belt.</li> <li>- The introduction of 13.3 planning controls and 13.4 the public realm upgrade.</li> <li>- Keeping Bury open to all.</li> <li>- Keep the conservation area building free.</li> <li>- Keep the village as it is.</li> <li>- Preservation of village, no becoming a small town.</li> <li>- The Lake.</li> </ul>	
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<p>9. A number of Historic Buildings have been suggested for inclusion in a Local List for St. Osyth. Are there any others which should be considered?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alms house 21-27 Clacton Road.</li> <li>- Every building mentioned is of utmost importance; preserve the essence of our village life.</li> <li>- Martello Tower at Point Clear Bay.</li> <li>- Would add 100 Colchester Road known as Wellwick House.</li> </ul>
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<p>10. Please add any other comments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 13.5 - Page 51 should be removed from the Management Plan.</li> <li>- TDC should Enforce the order to remove the wire fence.</li> <li>- Under no circumstances should the Bury be fenced off.</li> <li>- The Bury is and always has been common land.</li> <li>- Any type of fencing would be detrimental to the view of the priory.</li> <li>- Understands that the current fence was erected without planning permission and should not be there.</li> <li>- There is a right for villagers to use The Bury and compromising this will lead to that right being lost.</li> <li>- There is huge opposition to any fence around The Bury.</li> <li>- Village to remain the same and not turned into a town.</li> <li>- Protect wildlife.</li> <li>- The enabling development will be intolerable for all residents and must be rejected. Too much contractor traffic – noise and destruction of wildlife insufficient infrastructure.</li> <li>- The whole of the Priory grounds should be part of Conservation Area together with the adjacent nature reserve.</li> <li>- Strong and well upheld policies for the conservation area are essential to maintain the attraction of the village. Regular appraisals must continue, possibly annually.</li> </ul>
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**Total Questionnaires - 79**

## APPENDIX 3. Government guidance on heritage and conservation

Department for Communities and Local Government 2010 *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the historic environment*, TSO.

Department for Communities and Local Government, English Heritage and Department of Culture Media and Sport 2010 *PPS5 Planning for the historic environment: Historic environment planning practice guide*.

Department for Culture Media and Sport 2010 *The Government's statement on the historic environment for England 2010*.

English Heritage 2008 *Conservation principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment*, London: English Heritage.

## LARGE SCALE MAPS



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, D.D. 2006 *St. Osyth's Priory. The roof of the Bailiff's Cottage*, Essex County Council, unpublished report.

Archaeological Solutions 2006 *The Tithe Barn and Brewhouse, St. Osyth's Priory, St. Osyth, Essex*, unpublished report.

Debois Landscape Survey Group 2003 *St. Osyth Priory, Essex. Historic landscape survey*, unpublished report, 2 vols.

Essex County Council and Essex Planning Officers Association 2005 *The Essex Design Guide for residential and mixed use areas*, Chelmsford: Essex County Council.

Liz Lake Associates 2003 *Restoration plan and Countryside Stewardship application. St Osyth Priory, Essex*, unpublished report.

Medlycott, M. 2001 *St. Osyth Historic town assessment report*, Essex County Council unpublished report.

The unpublished reports listed here can be found in the Essex Historic Environment Record at County Hall, Chelmsford.