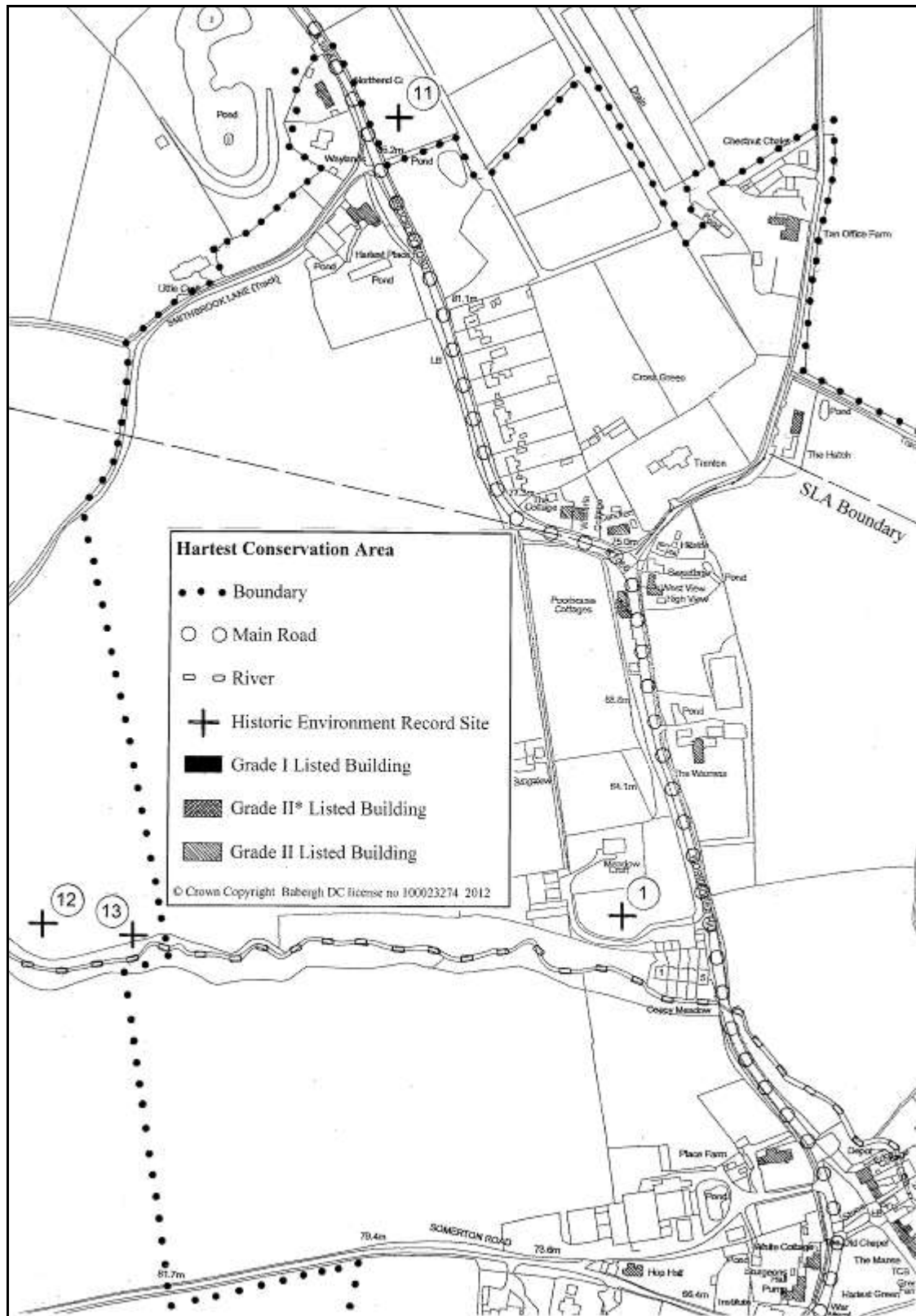




conservation area appraisal

Hartest NW



Introduction

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

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

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

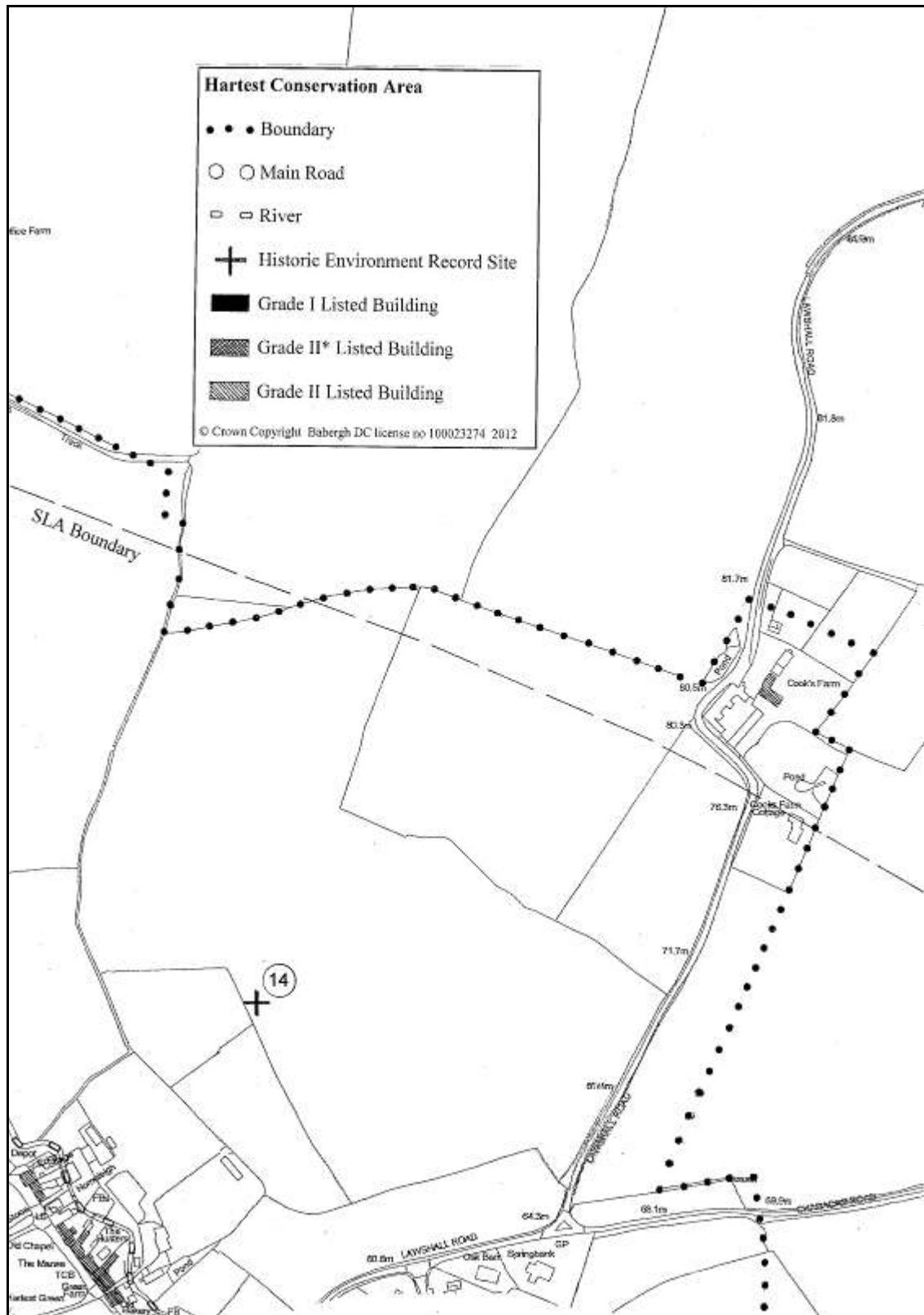


As a document it is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient to inform those considering changes in the area. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.

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

Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Babergh District Council 2012.

Hartest NE

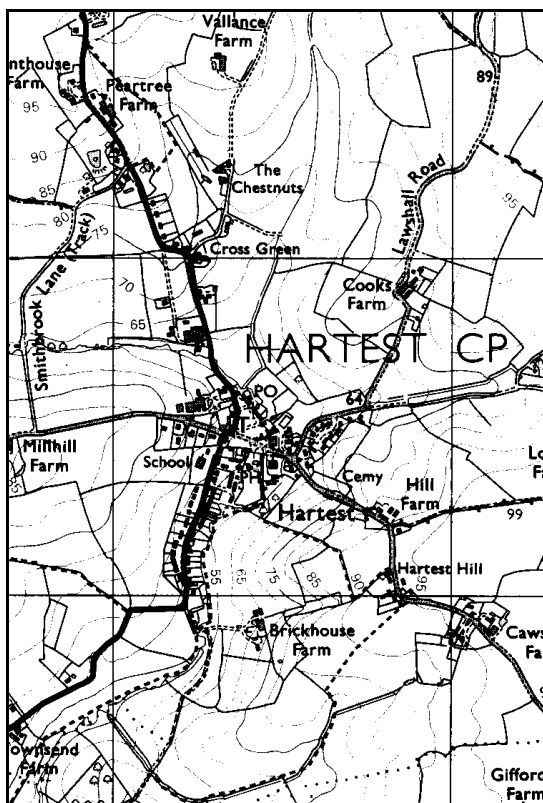


Topographical Framework

Hartest is a village in west Suffolk about seven miles north-north-west of Sudbury. It is set mainly on the west bank in the valley of a tributary of the River Glem, which flows south from here to join the River Stour, which then continues south-eastwards to Sudbury and its eventual meeting with the sea at Harwich.

The local geology is mostly the boulder clay of High Suffolk overlying chalk, but there are patches scattered around the village of glacial sands and gravels. The valley itself contains mainly alluvial deposits.

The large stone at the north end of Hartest Green is believed to have been put there in 1704, a glacial erratic found in nearby Somerton.

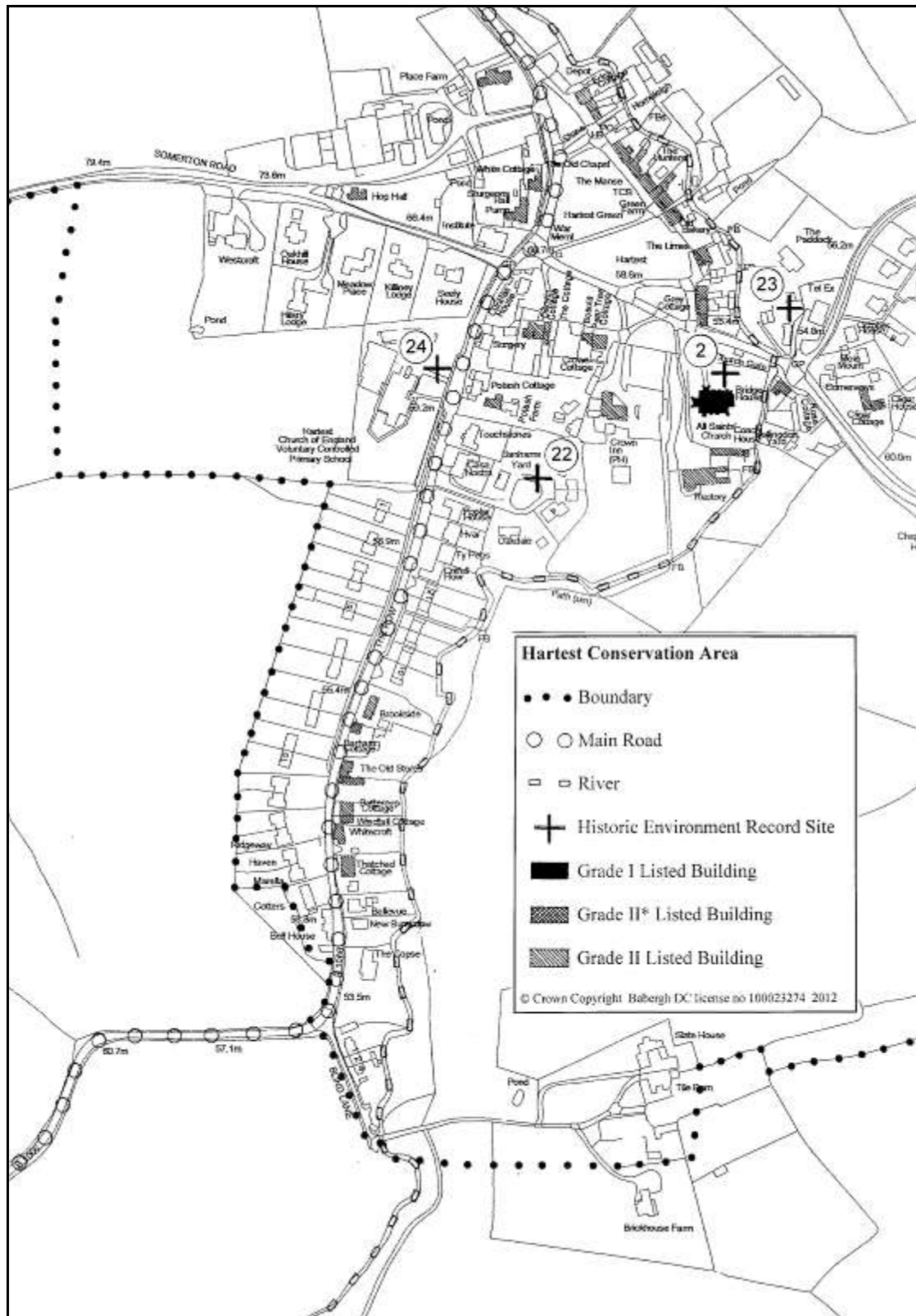


Historically the river valleys were the main routes of communication, the Stour valley having been canalized up to Sudbury by 1709. This is now also the terminus of the railway branch off the east coast line, which formerly continued both north to Lavenham and west as the Stour valley line with a station at Glemsford, the nearest to Hartest.

The Stour valley at Glemsford also contains the A1092, former turnpike road from Sudbury to Clare. Coming off this to the north the Glem valley contains the B1066 running on through Hartest towards Bury St Edmunds.

Hartest has a few outlying hamlets such as Cross Green a little to the north of the main settlement and Hartest Hill to the south-east.

Hartest SW



Archaeological Significance

Hartest parish has about twenty sites listed in the Suffolk County Historic Environment Record, a few of which are within the built up area.

The oldest of these are probably of Bronze Age date: cropmarks out in the fields indicating three ring ditches and an enclosure, all given as 'undated'.

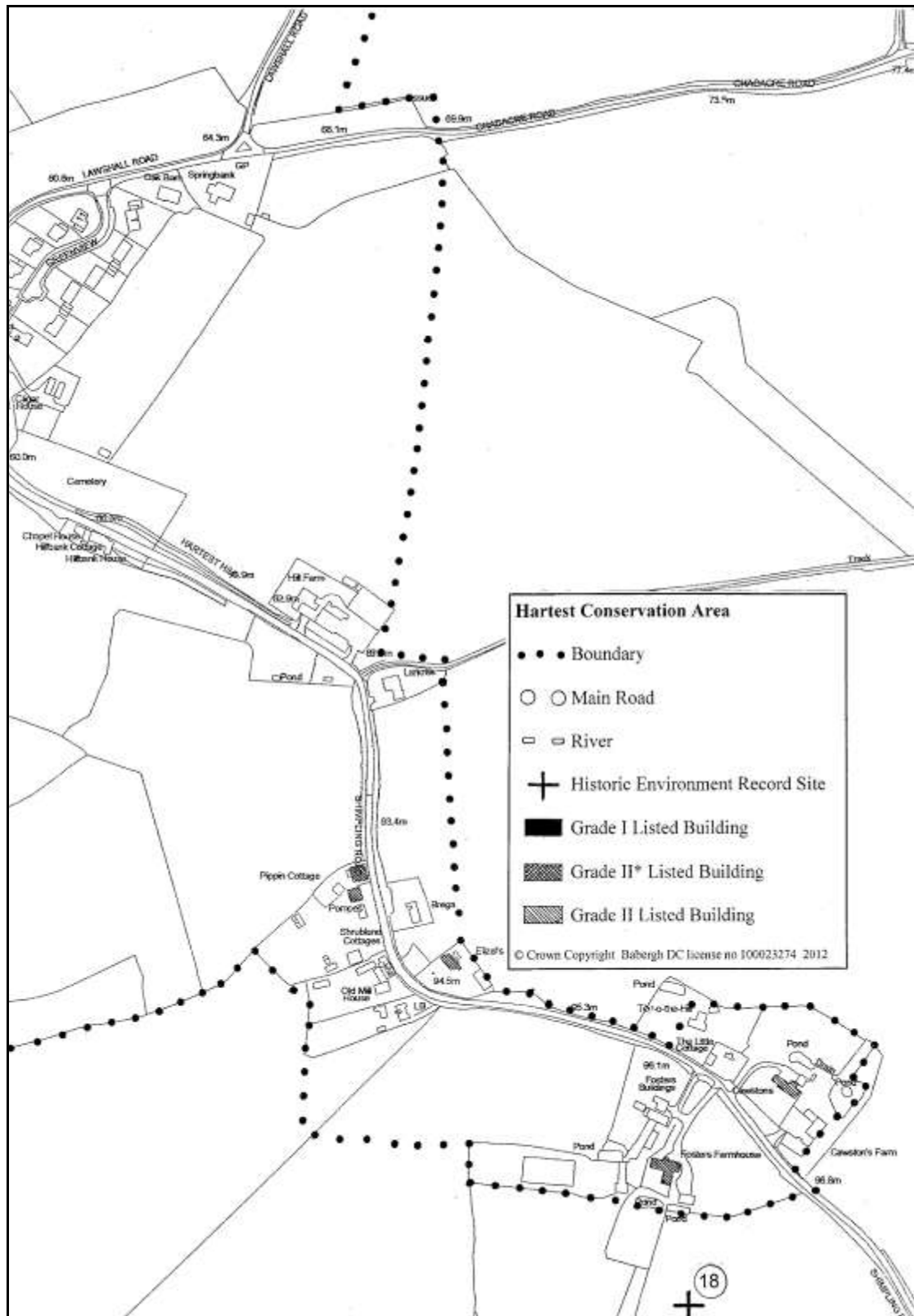
Iron Age and Roman remains comprise scatter finds, sherds and a kiln site, whilst from the Saxon period there is a stray find and a book clasp.



The Medieval period is represented by the church, a moated site and two areas of ancient woodland, both 'undated', and finally of Post Medieval date there is a windmill site.

Hartest reputedly means 'stag's wood' and its entry in the Domesday survey of 1086 mentions woodland for six pigs and a church with 80 acres of free land, all held by St Etheldreda's.

Hartest SE



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Intrinsic Quality of Buildings

The listed buildings in Hartest are mostly grade II listed houses of timber-framed construction.

The only grade I listed building is the Church of All Saints, mostly 15th Century in flint with stone dressings and a plaintile roof. The top of the west tower has been rebuilt in red brick with blue diaperwork. Pevsner describes it as 'Nicely placed in a dip. All Perp,' but suggests that the arcades might be earlier.

The nearby Crown Inn is only grade II, but its north wing, jettied on two sides and very different from the rest of the building, is believed to have been the Church-house or Gildhall for the parish. Records indicate the existence in Hartest of a Gild of St Margaret in 1524.



Also of interest is the grade II listed Congregational Chapel on the east side of The Green. Although the use dates from the 19th Century it is not the usual newer brick building, but an older house in rendered timber-framing with a black glazed pantile roof, adapted presumably by the removal of the first floor structure.



The best unlisted building is perhaps the Boxted and Hartest Club (now the Hartest Institute) building on the corner of Somerton Road. It is of Edwardian date, in red brick with a plaintile roof with two large oriel windows either side of a central ornate chimney stack.



Traditional Building Materials

Hartest is fairly typical of south Suffolk in terms of the building materials employed there. Many of the older buildings, the majority of those listed, are timber-framed, almost universally rendered over without exposed studwork and some with decorative panels of pargetting.

Later buildings are more often in brick, usually the local soft Suffolk red variety and occasionally in the harder Suffolk white brick, the latter most probably sourced from nearby Sudbury.

Traditional black stained weatherboarding can be found on some side elevations and on barns at the outlying farmsteads.



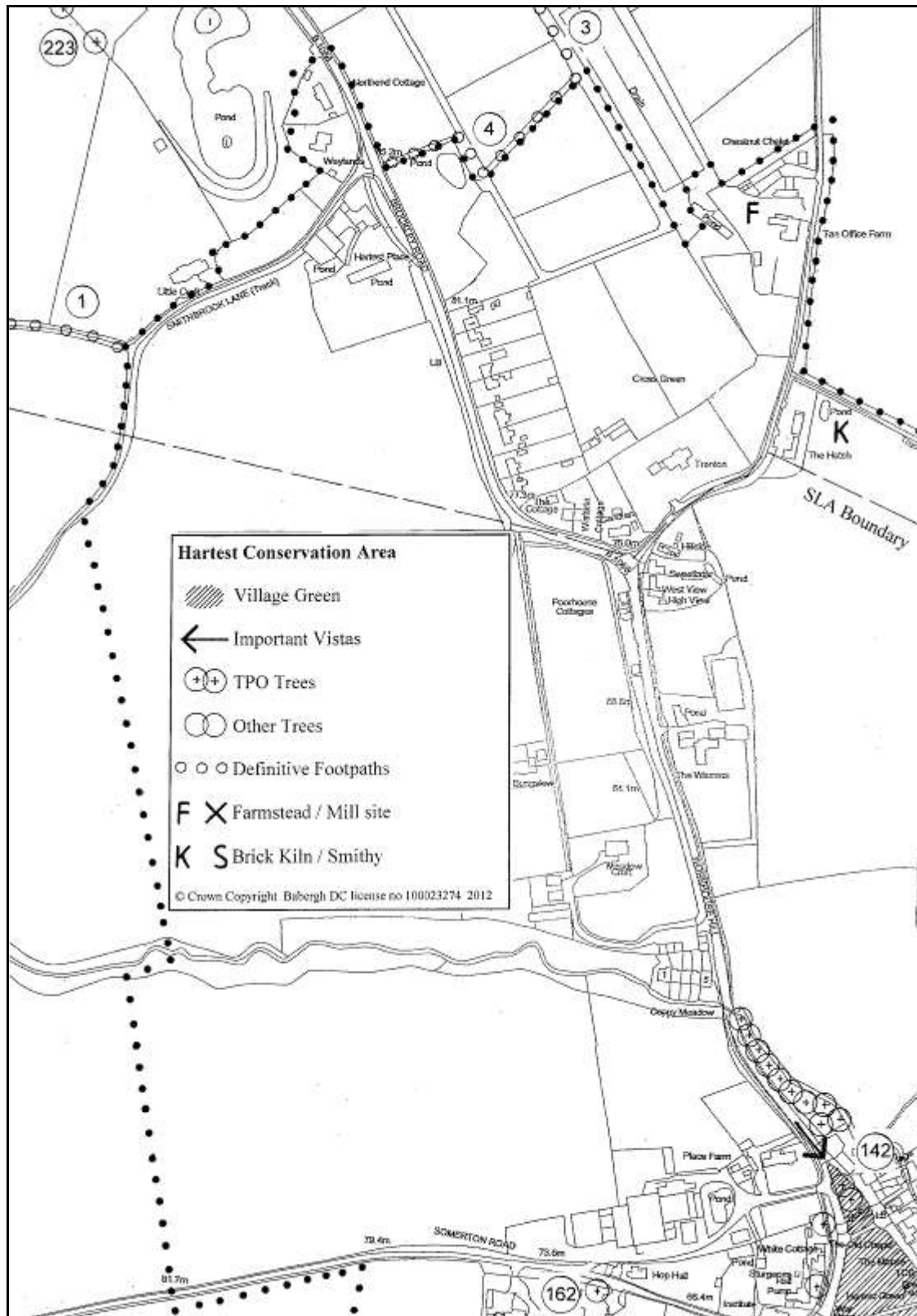
Flintwork is not confined to the church and can be found in some front boundary walls, most notably with a decorative red brick coping detail in front of the red brick cottages in Blind Lane.

Roofs are variously thatched on the older buildings, or plaintiles where this has been replaced.

Slate can be found on the more recent brick buildings and there is also a scattering of clay pantiles, most often on outbuildings, and some of them are the black glazed variety.



Hartest NW



Hierarchy of Spaces

The centre of Hartest is essentially an historic cluster of houses around a triangular village green, formed where a minor road from Shimpling approaches from the south-east, crossing the river to join the north-south B1066 road through the village.

This latter road holds to the higher ground and the green, which is registered, thus drops away to the east, giving good views down through the trees towards the green's eastern perimeter buildings.

To the south the B1066 runs along the west bank of the river and ribbon development has extended this central part of the settlement southwards along The Row.

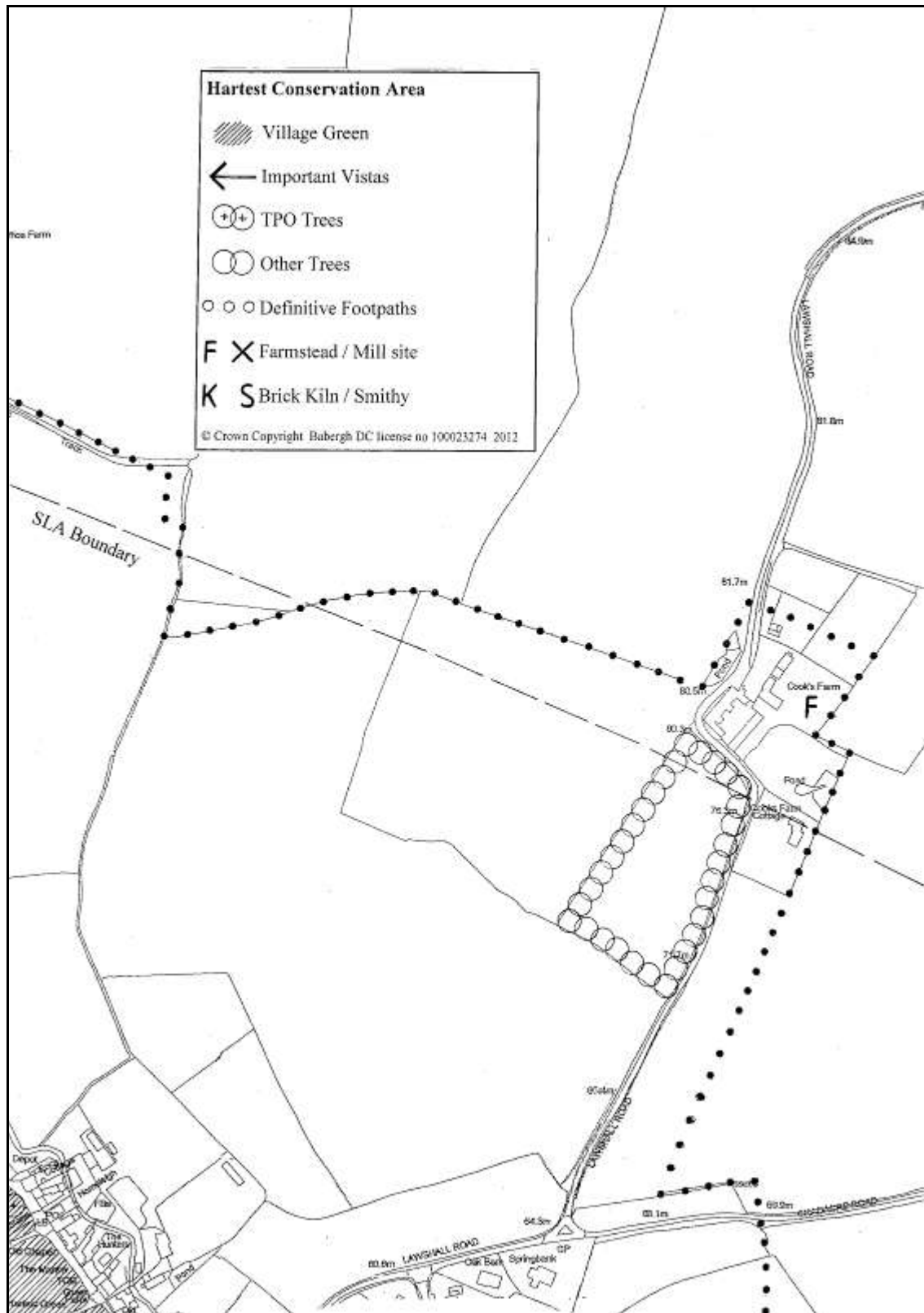


To the north of the green, development stops abruptly and the road drops down to cross the river before ascending Poorhouse Hill opposite. Atop this further to the north there remains the outlying hamlet of Cross Green.

Another outlying hamlet can be found at Hartest Hill to the south-east whilst up Lawshall Road to the north-east of the green is Cook's Farm.

These outlying areas are all on higher ground on the north-east side of the river and all included in the conservation area along with the fields between them and the main central green. The conservation area boundary is thus fairly widely drawn, including more areas in agricultural use than not.

Hartest NE



Trees & Planting

The trees on and around the village green are perhaps the most important within the village. These include individual specimens of Lime and Ash plus two groups and a short avenue with Horse Chestnut, Lime, Rowan and Sycamore.

All of these, plus a belt of Beech and Horse Chestnut trees north of the green, between the road and river, are protected by Tree Preservation Order 142 made by West Suffolk County Council in 1970.

Slightly further afield TPO 162 (1971 WSCC) covers an Oak adjoining Somerton Road to the west, TPO 182 (1990 BDC) ten Poplars behind houses in The Row to the south and TPO 216 (1991 BDC) a Horse Chestnut and a Beech just south-west of the green.

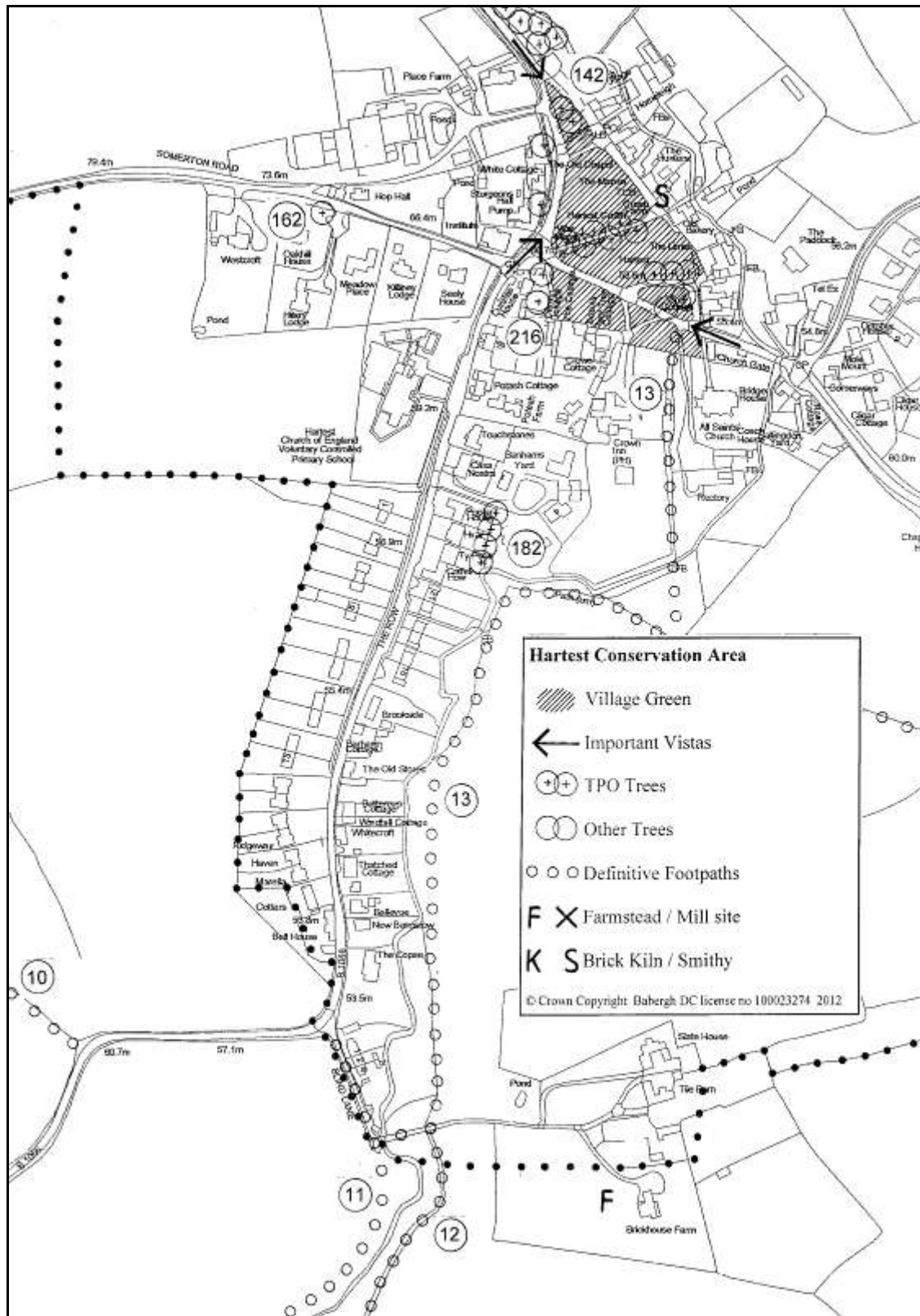


With relatively open farmland all around, most of the other trees in the area are confined to back gardens and as a winding strip through the village following the line of the river around the eastern boundary of the central built up area.

The two areas of ancient woodland recorded as archaeological sites are both in the far east of the parish adjoining Chadacre Park. Trees for the future can also be found in the form of 'Hartest Wood', just south of Cook's Farm, planted to mark the millennium.



Hartest SW



Relationship to Open Countryside

The majority of development thus far in the village (around Hartest Green, along The Row and more recently off Somerton Road to the west and at Greenview off Lawshall Road to the east) is but one plot deep with farmland to the rear of most properties.

The north to south running B1066 through the village, along with Somerton Road to the west and the two lanes heading off north-eastwards and south-eastwards from the east bank of the river provide a good set of radial routes in and out of the village.

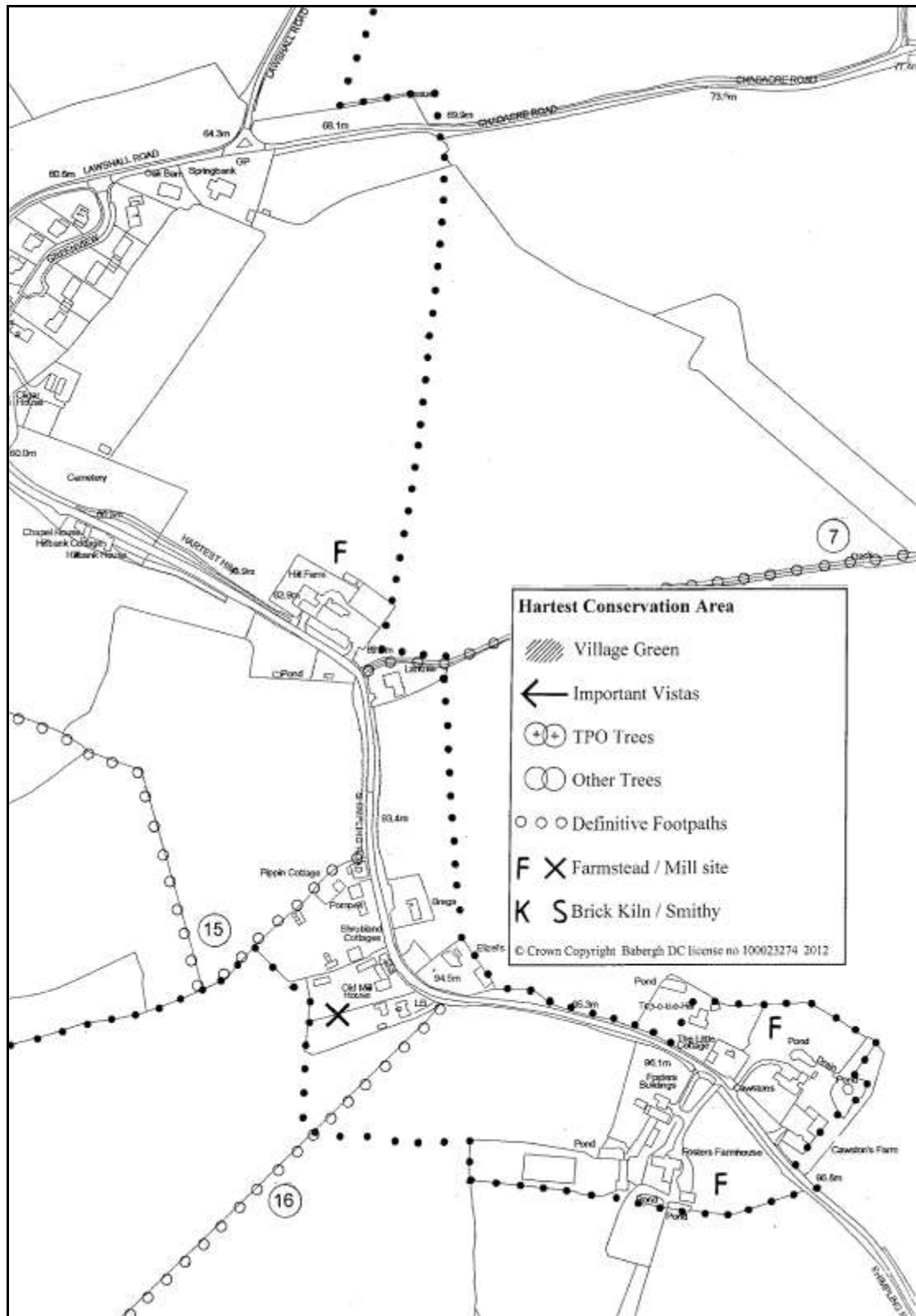
In addition to these, definitive footpath 13 runs southwards off the green, past the church and along the back of The Row on the eastern bank of the river.



Footpath 15 comes off this at the river crossing, heading south-eastwards parallel to the lane up Hartest Hill.

The river valley here forms part of a Special Landscape Area 'south of Bury St Edmunds', but Cook's Farm and Cross Green north of the road junction fall just outside its northern boundary. The deeper valley areas immediately south-west of the village are not only 'SLA' but also in the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley countryside project area.

Hartest SE



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Prevailing & Former Usage

Hartest's former heyday was during the 16th Century when it was a minor centre for Suffolk's woollen cloth industry, which explains the quality of some of its timber-framed buildings.

Records indicate in the early 17th Century the presence there of 20 yeomen, 6 husbandmen, 2 weavers and 3 tailors along with a miller and a blacksmith. By the late 17th Century this was 17 yeomen, a husbandman, 2 weavers, 3 clothiers, a sayweaver and a wool comber along with 2 wheelwrights, 2 carpenters, a joiner and a tanner.

The picture is similarly agricultural in 1844, when directories indicate 15 farmers, a saddler, a blacksmith, a miller and a malster there, along with 2 grocers, 5 shoemakers and 2 tailors.



The tithe map of 1839 confirms many of these, allowing some identification of sites: a windmill site off Shimpling Road, another half a mile west of The Row at TL 826520, of which only fragments of the round-house remain. There was a malthouse south of this last at Townsend Farm and also a smithy on the Green.

In addition to such agriculturally based industries the various extractive industries were represented by gravel pits in the valley fields just east of The Row, clay pits off Lawshall Road and a brick kiln near Cross Green.

Relics of earlier ages seem to survive in Hartest: the old garage with its petrol pumps at the north end of the green and nearby an old steam driven engine in a paddock.



Losses and Possible Gains

Away from the central green area there have been some intrusions of a non-traditional nature. Modern infill development, both as individual houses and a row of bungalows, has brought in non-traditional forms and modern materials that are less appropriate as part of a traditional Suffolk village.

Busy traffic passing through the village on the main road is also at odds with some of the traditional buildings there. A better solution is needed to discourage random ill-considered parking and thus prevent the occasional damage to buildings very close to the road edge.



Parts of the conservation area, including around the Green, suffer from excessive overhead wiring. This could be improved by an undergrounding scheme, should funds become available.

The Green itself has historically been bisected by the lines of desire of tracks to various buildings around it. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the motor car does not cut it up any further.

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Committee 17 January 2013*