



*The Green*

# **EAST GRAFTON CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT**

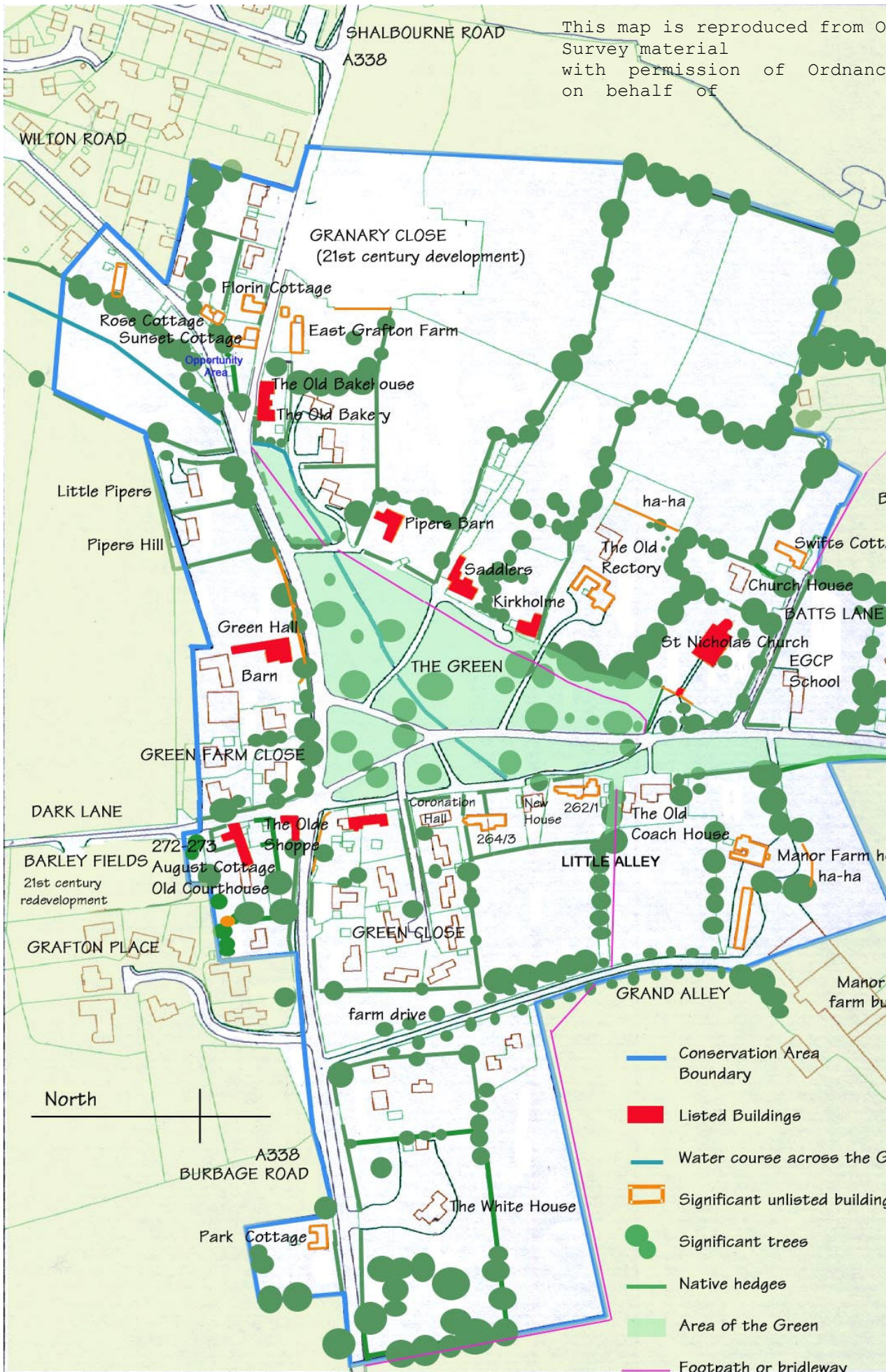
**COMMITTEE DRAFT**

February 2005

*Keeping Kennet Special*

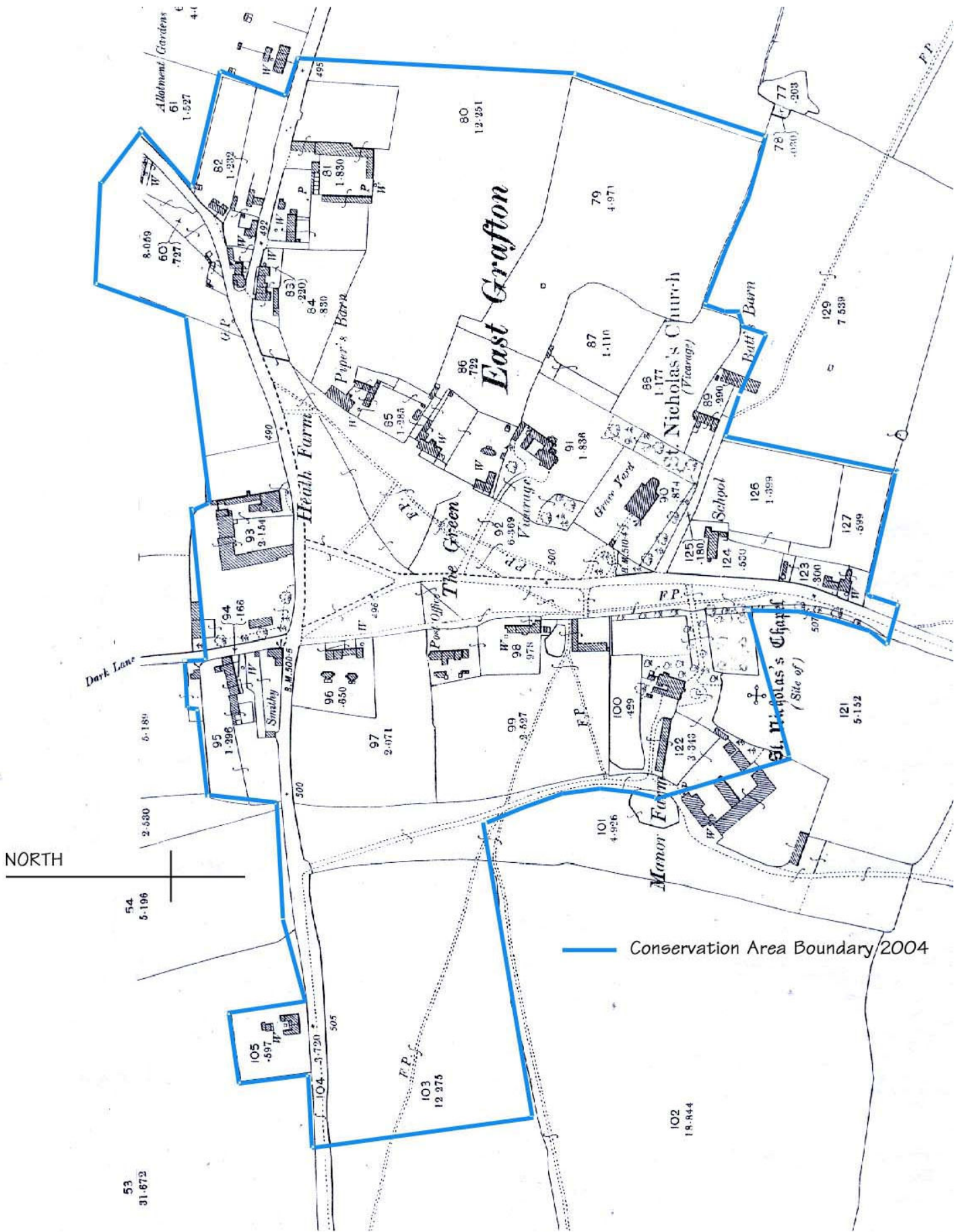


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## EAST GRAFTON CONSERVATION AREA





**EAST GRAFTON HISTORICAL MAP From the 1900 OS**





*The wooded village in the open landscape. Wilton Water lies in the valley beyond while Savernake forest is distant.*



*The bridleway out of the village to the south*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Statement is to identify and record those special qualities of East Grafton that make up its architectural and historic character. This is important in providing a sound basis for the Local Plan policies and development decisions, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area. The Conservation Area was designated in 1974. This Statement includes a review of the East Grafton Conservation Area and is intended for all those with an interest in the village, or undertaking work on the buildings, landscape, roads or public spaces. It is also essential reading for anyone contemplating development within the area. By drawing attention to the distinctive features of East Grafton it is intended that its character will be protected and enhanced for the benefit of this and future generations.

## **LOCATION**

East Grafton is in the eastern part of Wiltshire and lies on the A338 1.5 miles east of Burbage and 7 miles south of Hungerford which is on the A4.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

East Grafton is a medium sized village of about 350 population of which only part is within the Conservation Area. Much of this area is the large and beautiful Green enhanced by immense mature lime and chestnut trees. Most of the historic and traditional buildings are spaced around its perimeter and include several thatched cottages, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Parish Church of St Nicholas and the Old Rectory. The active Manor Farm lies to the south west adjoining its arable land while other farmhouses including Green Hall and East Grafton Farm lie to the north and east adjacent their former farmyards now redeveloped as residential areas. Further groups of traditional cottages are clustered around the Crofton and Wilton road junctions.



*The A338 from Shalbourne approaching the Wilton Road junction*





*The southern edge of the village*



*Pasture to the west of the village*



*The Parish Church of St Nicholas of 1845*



*The Vicarage of 1848 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century*

## LANDSCAPE SETTING AND GEOLOGY

The village is at the eastern end of the Vale of Pewsey within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with Savernake Forest to the north. The village also includes many trees, but lies in open country sloping north from one of the headstreams of the river Dun to downland in the south. From the edge of the valley above Wilton there is an increasingly steep rise over arable land to Chute Forest and the eastern end of Salisbury Plain in the south. To the east and west are areas of pasture known as the Sands. Soil types are generally Upper Greensand of the pasture with Clay over Lower Chalk of the southern and downland arable land.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

Several finds have been recorded in the village including two Neolithic flint axes and Iron Age and Romano-British pottery sherds. The village itself has medieval origins being first recorded in Domesday as 'Graftone'. The foundations of a medieval chapel were excavated and a Pax found in a field south of Manor Farm house in 1845 and a portable chalice found in 1936 in the former moat. On the edge of the village a double ditched enclosure to the north and a square enclosure to the west have also been noted.

## ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1086 land in East and West Grafton lay in four or more estates. By 1167 The Manor of East Grafton had been established and was held by Alan de Neville and continued in his family until 1359. In 1350 John Holt granted his estate in East Grafton to St Margaret's Priory, Marlborough, which in 1245 was taking two thirds of the great tithes of East Grafton Manor and giving 2 acres of wheat to the prebendary of Bedwyn. The Manor then descended to the Havering family until about 1405. From 1428 part of the estate passed to Sir Thomas Barnardiston and then to his son who sold it in 1543 to Edward Seymour earl of Hertford. Sir William Butler held another part and passed it down in 1411 to his family who sold it to Edward Seymour sometime after 1522. On the latter's execution in 1552 the lands were again classified as one estate and held by the Crown until 1611 when it was sold to the second Lord Hertford who on his death passed it to Sir Francis Seymour. The manor remained part of the Ailesbury estate until the sale of 1929 when farms and other property in East Grafton were sold in separate lots. The main areas of land were Manor Farm, Green Farm and East Grafton Farm.

North of the village there was common pasture known as the Heath and although not far from Savernake Forest little of the land in the parish was wooded although in 1347 the lord of the manor was licensed to plant a wood north west of the village that by the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a deer park of 70 acres. In the Middle Ages there were various home close pastures within the village while the Green was established as common pasture on to which sheep were brought in the winter.

Green Farm was merged with Manor Farm in 1970 and East Grafton Farm was merged with Marten Manor Farm in 1996. The farmhouses and farm buildings of 1929 except Manor Farm have ceased to be in farming use and the farmyards have been redeveloped as housing.

The National School in the village was founded in 1845 as a Church of England Foundation School and by 1858 was attended by pupils from East and West Grafton, Crofton and Wexcombe. The highest role was in the 1930s when there were 125. In 2002 there were 27 children attending, most of whom came from within the parish.





*The Parish Church of St Nicholas is situated towards the south of the village on the east side of the large Green*



*The lych gate and railings were erected soon after the Church of St Nicholas of 1845*



*The former Vicarage built in 1848 is now known as the Old Rectory with its adjoining coach house*

The church of St Nicholas was built in 1845 on land donated by the marquis of Ailesbury. It was designed by Benjamin Ferrey and funded by public subscription.

In 1950 there was a bakery on the Shalbourne Road near the junction to Wilton, a post office on the Green at No.265, a shop on the corner of Dark Lane and a smithy stood nearby on the Burbage Road.

East Grafton was formerly within Bedwyn parish. Worship was at a chapel-of-ease known as St Nicholas that existed from 1300 to 1580. East Grafton became a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1844 and a separate civil parish in 1895.

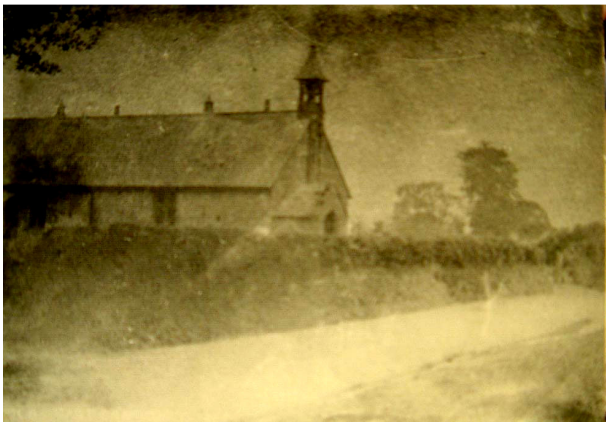
#### **ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER**

The historic buildings of the village are generally widely spaced around the Green and include the parish church of St Nicholas. The tower and nave are of an unusual Romanesque revival design at a time when ecclesiastical buildings of this mid 19<sup>th</sup> century period were usually of the later Gothic revival style. The lych gate is part of the architectural composition in the same style and includes a fine range of cast iron railings to each side. The railings separate the graveyard from the gravelled turning area around the stone Celtic cross war memorial.

Formal yew shrubs line the straight stone paved path to the west door and there are several mature broad leaf trees around the east end of the church and a dense belt of lime and ash along the boundary with the former vicarage.

Known now as the Old Rectory the 1848 building is of a large scale two storeys and attics in Ailesbury Estate buff brick with stone





*East Grafton School when built soon after 1845 had a bellcote and an entrance porch attached to the main west gable wall. From an old photograph*



*The 20<sup>th</sup> century extension attached to the east gable end of the Primary School and the pleasant sports field.*



*The Old Coach house is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century house recalling a former use of the site. To the right-hand side Little Alley leaves the Green towards the west.*



*Manor Farm. The farmhouse built circa 1830*

dressings, mullioned casement windows, slate roof and gable chimney stacks with multiple pots. To the north side there is a coach house with a single storey link surmounted by a central clock in a small cupola.

The entrance façade faces west with a 2-storey porch in a partly gabled front elevation. To the rear gabled wings of different lengths form an internal angle into which a matching single storey flat roofed extension was built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This extension faces out over grounds that include wide lawns and a paddock beyond a ha-ha wall to the east. The trees of the churchyard screen the grounds along the south boundary.

Church House is another former vicarage house to the east of the church approached off Batts Lane and situated in a pleasant garden of lawn trees and shrubs. It is a house planned for a vicar and family of the 1950s built of orange/buff brick with a hipped concrete tile roof.

Batts Lane bordered on each side by high hedges separates the church from the village school.

The Grafton Church of England Controlled Primary School, originally part of the 1845 planned development of church, vicarage and school, has been much altered and extended from the original. No longer now with a bellcote and porch it has a modern lobby to the west and an extension for pre-school children to the east. The former detracts from original character but the latter looks pleasantly out over a lush green playing field enclosed by native hedges and shaded by mature trees to the south and east.

The Old Coachhouse built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century occupies a site also related to the church of 1845. The Ailesbury family donated not only the land for the building of the church, the school and the vicarage but this site to accommodate the horses and carriages of church-goers. Originally a much larger site than today it became in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a timber yard and a carpenter's shop with a saw pit and was known as 'The Stores'. Described in the particulars of the 1929 estate sale as 'a brick, timber and thatched building comprising a skillen, double barn and implement shed'.

Beside this yard there was a pond and a footpath known as Little Alley leading off the Green to Manor Farm yard. The pond has now been filled but the footpath still leads across the paddock beneath high leylandi trees to connect across the farm drive with a path going west to meet the Burbage Road on the edge of the village.

Manor Farm house lies west off the Green beyond a hedge and a wide lawn. It is approached over a beech tree lined drive to a south facing front door of this handsome house. The entrance portico is the central feature in a formal façade of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is of similar proportions, design and detail as Green Hall with wide eaves, a fully hipped slate roof and sash windows. It is built of facing brick rather than the stucco of the latter and planned rather differently at the rear. South of the gravel turning area is a ha-ha bounding meadow land and the site of the medieval St Nicholas chapel-of-ease which stood there from about 1300 – 1580.

The house, while a tenant farmhouse on the Ailesbury estate was surrounded on three sides by a moat. However water in the moat flowed from the farmyard pond and, probably because of the smell, the Hosier family chose to fill it in sometime after their purchase of the farm in 1929. The ha-ha of today probably utilises a length of earthwork from the former moat.





*Manor Farm. The Grand Alley leads off the A338 as a drive lined with silver birch to the farmyard*

Prior to 1845 both the farm house and the farmyard were only approached by the drive known as the Grand Alley, a long drive off the Burbage Road. The latter is now principally the farm yard entrance while the farmhouse is approached off the Green. The Grand Alley is distinguished by its avenue of birch trees planted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century following a serious fire in the stables. The many farm horses that died in the fire were buried along the sides of the Grand Alley with a tree planted by each.

The farm buildings described in the particulars of the 1929 estate sale were evidently of brick, timber slate or thatch and must have been still quite extensive as they included ‘stables for 3 ‘nags’ and 11 carthorses. There was a cowhouse for 38, one for 40, another for 13 and a barn for 24, together with chaffhouses, a cattle shelter and yard, a granary on staddles, a 6 bay cartshed, a drillhouse and an engine house’.



*Manor Farm. The active modern farmyard*



*Most of the traditional farm buildings have been cleared away except for this 19<sup>th</sup> century brick and tile stable block range west of the house.*

Wide span steel framed and sheeted structures now form the buildings of the modern working farm.

The sale particulars of 1929 described the water supply as having been installed by the last tenant and obtained from an ‘excellent well pumped to a reservoir’ that not only supplied Manor Farm but Green Farm, East Grafton Farm, the vicarage house, several cottages on the Green and what are now the White House and Park Cottage. Four labourers’ cottages attached to the farm were No.s 233, 237, 262 and 264 on the Green.

To the east of the Green between the church and the school Batts Lane led directly to Batts Barn passing the gable end of a row of four farm labourers’ cottages attached to Green Farm as recently as the 1950s and known as Batts Cottages. When Green Farm was sold the cottages were sold separately. The barn was demolished but the 17<sup>th</sup> century cottages survive and are now combined into one and known as Swift’s Cottage. It is an unlisted structure probably dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century of timber frame with a thatched roof and dormer windows.

‘Oldways’ has until recently been two cottages, the southern most was the school teacher’s cottage and known as the Old School House. The combined building is listed as being of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century of timber frame with brick noggin although the southern gable is hung with clay tiles.



*‘Swifts Cottage’ of 17<sup>th</sup> century origins*



*‘Oldways’ 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century*





*No.s 261 and 262 Savernake Cottage 18th century .*



*No. 267 18<sup>th</sup> century and 269 17<sup>th</sup> century altered*



*The 'Olde Shoppe' on the corner of Dark Lane is of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with rear premises of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Several windows are 20<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Green Farm Close*

Off the Green on the west side are cottages No.s 261 and 262, a row of several 2-storey 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched cottages that are now combined into two. No. 261 has been extended forward with a two storey thatched roof wing on a larger scale. This has mid-20<sup>th</sup> century glazing bar casements that may indicate the date of the whole extension. The front door is under the low thatch of the original single storey end lean-to.

No 267 - 269 is a row of possibly five, now three listed cottages dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century but raised in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century to a full two storeys with a simple eaves. No.267 appears to be a complete rebuild of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in brick and stone all painted white. No.268 retains, between its brick ground floor and the first floor casement windows, a section of 17<sup>th</sup> century braced timber frame. No.269 was formerly one of the village shops and has attached complete 20<sup>th</sup> century brick and render lean-to with metal casements.

Another former village shop is a listed building of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries known as the 'Olde Shoppe'. It is significantly sited at the junction of Dark Lane and the main road. The principal symmetrical 2 storey part is of early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick with a three deep brick string course. To the rear is the 18<sup>th</sup> century wing of a single storey and attic. The shop premises occupied the outhouse to the side. It was entered by a single wide door that is now partially blocked to form an additional window.



*The shop on the corner of Dark Lane in 1929*

The site to the north and west was originally part of the land belonging to the manorial court building in the row behind. This building evidently dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Workshops for carpenters and blacksmiths occupied other parts of the site from generations of the same Grafton family. A smithy facing the Burbage Road is shown on the 1900 edition Ordnance Survey map.

One of the farmyards redeveloped as a residential area in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was that of Green Farm. It ceased to be a farm in the 1970s when the owner emigrated. The land, buildings, its cottages at Batts barn and the house were all sold separately. The farm buildings close to the house were described in the 1929 sale as 'being of timber, slate and thatch comprising cooling house, cowhouses for 40 and 11, stables for 4 horses, a 4 bay cart shed, feed and mixing houses and a fowl house'. What remained of these were demolished and the site cleared for Green Farm Close. In the 1980s a timber frame barn was imported and re-erected at Green Hall. The close was planted with trees and hedges, now mature, which together with the houses and garden walls have mellowed to become quite an asset to the village.





*The Old Courthouse, Nos.273, 274 and No.274A August Cottage. A row at right angles to Dark Lane*



*Green Hall (formerly Farm) built circa 1830*

Off the Green in Dark Lane is a row of four listed thatched cottages gable end on to the road. Three are said to have origins in a building that housed the medieval manorial court of which the western one is named The Old Courthouse. The most easterly cottage was added in about 1780 when Green Farm required more accommodation for labourers.

The structure today appears to be a 17th century timber frame of single storey and attic raised at the front to a full 2 storeys when No 274A was built in brick. The frames of the others are almost entirely infilled with brick noggin. Since 1929 gabled brick porch/lobbies have been added somewhat to the detriment of the appearance.



*The trompe l'oeil*



*Cottages No.s 273 –274A in 1929*



*Green Hall. The grounds of lawns, shrubs and trees compliment the house and are an asset to the Conservation Area*

Since Green Farm ceased as a farmhouse it has become known as Green Hall. It is a listed building circa 1830 of stucco walls with 12 and 16 pane sash windows, a Tuscan portico and a low pitched slate roof over a wide eaves. The rear wing and a single storey range have casement windows except for a 20<sup>th</sup> century extension which is of some quality with 12 pane sashes to match the west side of the house. One first floor side window is blocked but has been painted in as an interesting 'trompe l'oeil'. The pleasant garden is mainly to the east while the gravelled turning area and the substantial re-erected timber barn occupy the north and west sides.





*Farleigh and Kintore are 20<sup>th</sup> century 'cottages'.*



*No.247 and Pipers Barn 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> century*



*'Saddlers' an 18<sup>th</sup> century house*



*'Kirkholme' a 17<sup>th</sup> century house*

To the east of Green Hall are two early 20<sup>th</sup> century 2 storey brick thatched 'cottages' set back and screened from the main road in wooded gardens. Pipers Hill backs on to open farmland in the north and has been extended to a house with a rear wing while Little Pipers is more secluded and of smaller scale.

South of the A338 there is a further group of three 20<sup>th</sup> century white painted thatched 'cottages'. These are set in the eastern corner of the Green with 'Kintore' and 'Farleigh' set around a small self-contained area. All have 20<sup>th</sup> century proportions and casement windows. 'Hopcrofts' is quite a substantial house. Thatch and white paint confer a version of rural character on the development and, with the planting now matured, the design of the development is softened enough for its impact on the character of the Conservation Area to be neutral.

Pipers Barn is the southern wing of a listed building No.s 247-249. Originally a large farmhouse with a ground floor and attics of the 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> century of timber frame in an 'L' shaped plan. Both wings are of three bays each with a mix of painted brick nogging and wattle panels, thatched roof and dormer windows. The whole building has been as many as 5 cottages but is now two. Pipers Barn takes its name from the large square barn with a high fully hipped thatched roof that once stood north of it until demolished in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Native hedge and a gravel drive enhance their rural character.



*Pipers Barn in about 1929. The five cottages and the barn. The view is from the north east*

'Saddlers' is a listed building dated 1723 built originally as a single storey and attics but raised to a full two storeys in the 19<sup>th</sup> century incorporating the original dormers with small casements. Ground floor casements are wider than the original under unusual relieving arches with key blocks. The timber framed lean-to on the northern end was the saddlers workshop, its front glazed with two windows, one was the shop window but larger with multiple panes. Between the windows was a single solid plank shop door. The 19<sup>th</sup> century timber palings fence has been extended across the former shop front in appropriate style.

Cottage No. 253, 'Kirkholme', is a listed building built as a single timber framed cottage in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Once it was extended north and divided into three cottages. Also until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was covered by a corrugated sheet roof raising it to a full 2 storeys high with gable weatherboard siding. It is now again a single storey and attic cottage with a hipped thatched roof. The frame is exposed, the brick noggin is unpainted and there is a native hedge across the front. It is generally a good example of restoration and an asset to the Green.





*The Old Bakery and The Old Bakehouse of the 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century with a 20<sup>th</sup> century east extension.*



*No.236 Sunset Cottage Early 19<sup>th</sup> century and extended in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*



*The plain character of 20<sup>th</sup> century brick and tile of the roadside aspect of East Grafton Farmhouse*



*Traditional buildings and roadside trees cluster around the pinch point on the Shalbourne Road*

To the east of the Green there is a further cluster of traditional cottages and East Grafton Farm house. The first two are a former bakery and baker's cottage of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These are listed buildings of small scale single storey and attic in a narrow range close beside the A338. They are in painted brick with a thatched roof. Windows are timber casements, some with leaded lights, while the roadside doors are of a 19<sup>th</sup> century plank design.

The A338 passes through a distinct pinch point between the bakery buildings and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages that includes Sunset Cottage, at right angles to the road, and No.237 behind it. Access to it is sensibly off the quieter Wilton Road.

Sunset Cottage faces due west over a garden that lies between the roads at the junction of the A338 and the Wilton Road part of which was a pond up to the 1950s. The cottage is partly mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and partly a 20<sup>th</sup> century extension in the same style and materials. The different pattern of casement window of the two periods is the main external distinction. The extended cottage improves the clustered quality of the group in the area.

Florin Cottage though small is also a significant member of the group and stands close to the road edge. The thatched roof and colour washed lime rendered walls tightly enclosed by yew trees and high hedging combine to result in a distinctively strong traditional character.

Also of traditional character is the small thatched out building opposite. This is aligned with the roadside fence of East Grafton farmhouse and is significant to the character of the approach to the historic village with its steep overhanging roof on weatherboard walls.



*The garden side of East Grafton Farmhouse in 1929*

East Grafton Farmhouse backs closely on to the road. Formerly thatched its rear walls have been extensively rebuilt and tiled in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century but retain traditional form and fenestration. East Grafton Farm yard has recently been redeveloped as Granary Close with large houses that include office space and although within the Conservation Area is alien to its character.

However the traditional buildings clustered about the junction of the Wilton Road and the A338 with its trees, garden shrubs and grass verges have a character that is an asset to the Conservation Area.





*Wilton Road. Rose Cottage and 232. 18<sup>th</sup> century The porches and the white paint are 20<sup>th</sup> century*



*Wilton Road. Cottages No. 230 and No 229. The roadside concrete wall, pavement and low kerb*



*Burbage Road. Park Cottage 19<sup>th</sup> century*



*Burbage Road. The White House. 1924*



*The junction of Wilton Road with the Shalbourne Road in 1929 was without pavement or kerbs and had a very rural character. The alignment of the road from the west clearly favours the Wilton Road where Cottages No 231 and 232 stand. The pond in the eastern corner of the Green existed until the 1950s.*

No.231 Rose Cottage and No.232 are members of the clustered group significantly sited on the outside of the bend in the Wilton Road. They are a pair of brick thatched cottages dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century of one storey and attics. Iron frame leaded light casements in the attic dormers are of original pattern but the ground floor windows are traditional casements of late 19<sup>th</sup> century pattern. Attached to the front are 20<sup>th</sup> century porches of which one is a lean-to with an outer door that detracts from the appearance of the pair. The setting on the rural roadside bank is also somewhat marred by the railing in front of Rose Cottage.

No.229 and 231 are two cottages set obliquely to the Wilton Road define the northern limit of the pattern of traditional village development. No.229 is of traditional proportions and materials and enhances the character of the Conservation Area while the other is of 20<sup>th</sup> century design and materials but contributes by its pairing with the older cottage.

West along the Burbage Road are the grounds of two properties that each side of the road define the western limit of the Conservation Area.

Outlying to the west of the village north of the A338 Park Cottage is solidly traditional in style and built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century as a pair of cottages but now combined into one house. The brick was unfortunately painted at some time but the slate roof is original. Historically its name may relate to the ancient park of 1347 that lay to the north. Mature trees and a high hedge enhance the roadside and its garden boundaries.

South of the road is the White House built in 1924 as a residence concurrently with Forest View, a bungalow for an estate gamekeeper.

The house is skewed from the roadside and orientated to face south west amid spacious lawned grounds including a small area of woodland, the edge of which defines the limit of the Conservation Area. The house is of unusually complex form and layout with interesting varied roofs of water reed thatch and slate and a variety of fenestration which together with the woodland is significant to the character of the approach to the village.



## BUILDING MATERIALS AND DETAILS

### WALLS

**Brick** is a universal material that was made in the many small clay pits of the Vale of Pewsey. It became more readily available in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century for chimneys and dressings in combination with local traditional materials and then from the 18<sup>th</sup> century for complete walls. Several cottages in the village from the later period have solid brick walls and those from the 17<sup>th</sup> century have brick nogging in their timber frames. Sadly much of it is painted and the original quality and colour cannot be appreciated. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century clay pits dug on the Ailesbury Savernake Estate produced bricks from the nearby Dodsdown. Rust Brown estate facing bricks have been used in the façade of the Manor Farm house. Also buff bricks from the estate were built for prestigious buildings. The Old Rectory built in 1848 is an example of this type of brickwork with similarly coloured special dressings of limestone.

### Timber Frame

Surviving buildings of the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century are largely made of timber frame where the frame was originally infilled with hazel wattle. The wattle daubed with a mix of lime, dung, hair, grit or sand and then lime rendered. The most common are 17<sup>th</sup> century frames that are widely studded with large panels. Today surviving exposed timber frames may often be filled in with brick nogging. The bricks are usually painted or rendered to maintain the original appearance. Brick nogging however is heavier and of inferior thermal insulation value to the wattle and daub.

### ROOFS

**Thatch** was the roof covering for most buildings in the village until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wheat was, and continues to be, grown over large areas of the parish and produces vast quantities of straw. Roofs could be regularly re-thatched at low cost. Any alternatives would have had to be brought in by cart. Historically all the farm houses, farm buildings and cottages were thatched in 'long straw'. Few examples remain in the traditional 'long straw' and thatch about the village is mainly of 'combed wheat reed'. Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century slates have become increasingly prominent but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century thatched roofs continue to be a characteristic of the village.

### The principles of design for extensions in thatch.

- a) Extensions to existing buildings in thatch should respect certain principles: Thatch should be pitched at 50 degrees or more and continue the local tradition of 'Long Straw' where existing.
- b) The layout plan should be of simple rectangular form without irregularities or acute angles. Round or curved plans are practicable in thatch but any inside radius must be generous.
- c) The creation of valleys and large dormer windows should be avoided.
- d) Single storey extensions added to the rear of a 2 storey building may be covered by a continuation of the main slope or a 'catslide'. The span of the extension must be limited to allow the pitch of the thatch to continue consistently down.
- e) Thatch should not rest on an existing flat roof surface. Clear ventilation and drip space under eaves is important.
- f) Mortar weatherings to chimneys are preferred by thatchers to those in lead.



*The Old Rectory datestone 1848. Savernake Estate buff brick with limestone dressings.*



*Timber framing of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with both surviving wattle and brick nogging infill panels*



*Green Hall. c1830 Stucco on brick with finely barred sash windows, panel door, over-light and timber entablature with columnar supports.*





*The Old Rectory. Slate roofs on the coach house*



*'Oldways' Thatch and plain tile hanging*



*St Nicholas Church. A slate roof on the lych gate limestone walls and fine quality iron railings .*



*Grafton Place. Exposed large scale houses of a development in an open green field site on the edge of the village. The excessively wide visibility splays detract from the vulnerable rural character of the Conservation Area. Some tree planting on the western edge of the housing and hedging along the roadside would soften the impact of this standard type of development.*

Balanced flue outlets should not be positioned so as to emerge from walls under a thatched eaves or close under a gable verge.

**Welsh slates** were brought to the area by canal barge via Bristol and coastal shipping from North Wales. Exported in vast quantities from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, slate, at a reasonable cost, offered an alternative to thatch. It is a durable roof material requiring low maintenance, easy to lay, light in weight, and incombustible. Numerous examples of buildings in the village with roofs of slate include St Nicholas Church, Green Hall, Manor Farm house, the Old Rectory, Park Cottage and Sunset Cottage.

#### **Plain clay tiles.**

Use of plain clay tiles in the village is not traditional. Their use has been comparatively recent and contemporary with the almost universal use of bricks for walls in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Use of plain clay tiles on historic and traditional buildings in the village is confined to small recent alterations. Examples are to be found at Oldways as a vertical cladding on the gable end wall part of the timberframe and to Swift's Cottage where there is a small lean-to roof at the rear.

Recent examples are more common and include East Grafton Farm house that was previously thatched and the 20<sup>th</sup> century houses such as the Old Coach house and new developments on the former farmyards : Green Farm Close, Grafton Place and Granary Close.

#### **Iron railings**

There are few examples of railings around the village. Those of St Nicholas Church are exceptional. These are fine examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century cast iron rails and enhance the approach and the stone lych gate to the church with a transparency and pattern that cannot be equalled by a mere hedge or wall.

#### **PROBLEMS AND EYESORES**

If there is a problem with the village it is, with the exception of Manor Farm, that few outward signs of rural activity remain and the most recent residential developments are not of rural character.

Within the Conservation Area there are few real eyesores with the possible exception of overhead telephone and electricity supply cables and poles. The buildings, the roadsides, the house gardens are all generally neat and traditionally fenced or hedged. However an entrance gateway at Grafton House is flanked by alien white painted rendered walls. Also the children's entrance into the Primary School grounds is a mere gap in the roadside hedge with a complicated utilitarian combination of timber paling, tall posts and mesh, brickwall and concrete steps. In comparison with the railings and gate at the church the quality of the school entrance design and materials is very poor.

Parts of the Green are mown whereas other areas are rough and weedy with docks and nettles. Some trees are in need of remedial surgery work. In parts of the village rural hedgerows contain dead elms that should be replaced with species such as Field Maple.

In the case of recent residential developments, even allowing for their newness, planting in and around them is sparse. The houses, some of which are of much larger scale than has hitherto been usual in the village give the appearance of being exposed in the landscape. Also the recently formed road junctions with the A338 have produced excessive areas of grass verge defined by poor fencing. An extreme example of both these characteristics is Grafton Place.



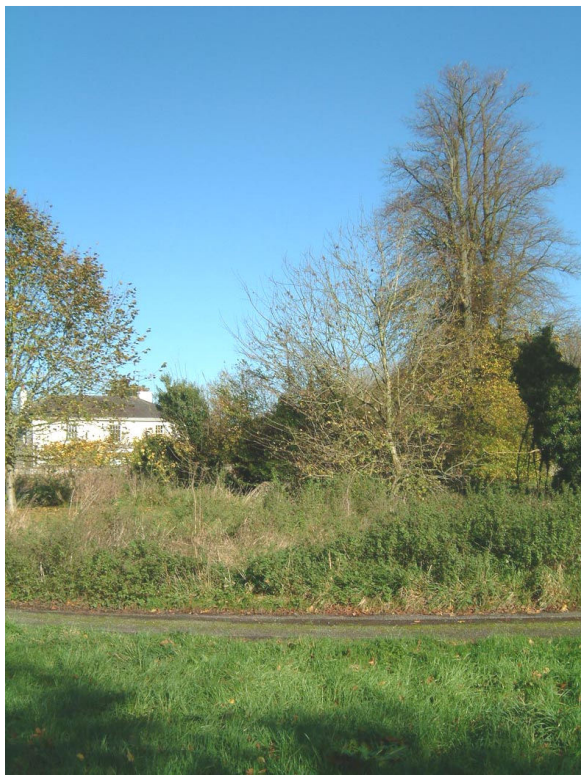
## **PRESERVATION OF EXISTING CHARACTER.**

In order to preserve the rural character of the village its traditional and historic features should be maintained as existing.

Over the last 50 years many interesting historic outbuildings of traditional design and materials have been demolished to the detriment of the rural character of the village. All surviving traditional out-buildings should be preserved with new uses that would justify their continued and proper maintenance. In preservation their original character should be maintained through the minimum of alterations including to the doors and windows.

Most importantly traditional materials of all buildings should not be rendered or painted for the first time.

Although the Green is within several private ownerships it is historically common land. The character of public open space over the full extent of the Green is especially important to preserve. No roadside fences, hedges or demarcation of separate ownerships should be introduced. Owners should be prepared to agree with the parish council as to the level of regular maintenance of the water course, grass, trees, footpaths, driveways and roads. Overall mowing should be considered but not to a lawn standard. Some larger areas may lend themselves to recreational use and receive a higher level of maintenance. Grazing by sheep might be a possibility for other areas.



*Thistles, nettles and rough ground on the Green*

Soft edged grass verges are an intrinsic part of the roadsides of the Green. A single sided footpath and kerbs have been introduced to roadsides in the village. Soft edges should be respected by drivers and not over-run by vehicles. Ruts should be made good as they occur. Further surfaced footways and kerbs would erode rural character.

There are several buildings that were formerly thatched but are now covered by tiles or slates. Further loss of thatch in and around the village would severely detract from its rural character.

The community has changed in character during the last 50 years from agricultural to almost exclusively residential. This is reflected in the uses put to its buildings and grounds. The exceptions are the church, the school and the Coronation Hall.

Further residential developments of suburban character set in meadows adjoining the roads and lanes around the village can only be detrimental to the rural character of the Conservation Area.

## **THE PLANNING CONTEXT**

Policy HC24 'East Grafton does not have a range of facilities and is a village where housing development will be restricted.'

Policy NR5 'In the interests of promoting sustainable development and the protection of the countryside, development that is unrelated to the economic or social needs of the rural community will be restricted......'

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are "Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" and to designate them as Conservation Areas. The Act,



*A traditional outbuilding at East Grafton Farm is worthy of care and preservation.*



*Although not historic this thatched and timber clad outbuilding at the Old Courthouse has been maintained in traditional style and materials.*





*A typical green field north of the village under threat from the spread of further speculative residential development. Barley Fields in this view has recently been developed on the west side of Dark Lane.*



*This pasture extends into the centre of the village and is under threat from the spread of housing development which would detract from the rural character of the village.*



*This site is within the Conservation Area off the Wilton Road where tidying up could enhance the locality.*

and advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - *Planning and the Historic Environment*, states that the local planning authority should formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of all Conservation Areas and this assessment, published as the *East Grafton Conservation Area Statement* is part of the process. This Conservation Area Statement was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on ..... SPG provides additional information on the interpretation and implementation policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan.

Consultation procedures, consistent with the advice contained at paragraph 4.7 of PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment*, have been undertaken during the preparation of this Statement. Paragraph 3.16 of PPG12 – *Development Plans*, also states that adequate consultation is a requirement for adoption of SPG. The Council considers that the consultation undertaken meets with obligations set out in PPG12.

The Kennet Local Plan 2001-2011 has been adopted by the Council and became operative on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2004 and provides background information for the detailed interpretation of policies contained in the Replacement Local Plan, particularly Policies PD1, HH5, HH6, HH8, HC5, HC24, HC32a, ED9, ED11a, NR5 and HH12.

**AN OPPORTUNITY AREA**

An Opportunity Area is the small triangle of land north of the junction of Wilton Road and the A338 confined by the stream and the cottage gardens to the east. Currently it is an eyesore that is largely overgrown with fencing and existing buildings of poor design and condition.

Although unsuitable for a built development it could be enhanced by tidying up, with the possible renewal of the garaging and a planting with more of a species of an appropriate tree. Fencing of the roadside should not be necessary although a native hedge would not be inappropriate.





*Barley Fields. A view from the Conservation Area. This standard form of open fronted development has effectively widened Dark Lane. The open frontage and wide verge detract from the rural character of the original 'enclosed' lane still existing to the north and south.*

*The nearby 'Old Courthouse' row is set at right angles to the original narrow Dark Lane to the south. These 21<sup>st</sup> century 'cottages' could have been similarly arranged.*



*The Celtic cross of the war memorial contributes to an area of high environmental quality.*

## SUMMARY

East Grafton is now largely a collection of residential properties in the surviving environment of an historic farming village. It has a potentially first rate Green with exceptional trees covered by a tree preservation order. There are twelve listed buildings with a further fourteen of local interest. This character is nonetheless under threat. Its one time close community that supported a shop, smithy, saddler and the range of agricultural activities that surrounded the farmyards has largely faded. The village is now almost entirely residential, some of it out-of-keeping, with little perceived activity except domestic. This is reflected in the type of buildings that are almost all houses or garages. The single farm, the school, the village hall and the parish church are the notable exceptions.

## CONCLUSION

National economic and social changes are continuing to bring about pressure for development on the village regardless of local need. The suitability of the Conservation Area for additional residential development is very limited. Plots for residential infilling around the Green would be quite inappropriate. Standard forms of development of the green fields bordering the Conservation Area seriously erode rural character.

Changes to the natural environment both private and public may occur through neglect, lack of expertise or attention to traditional rural practices. In particular some coordination in the maintenance of the Green is required to ensure that the ground does not become increasingly rough, appropriate areas are mown, rolled and prolific weeds are kept down and the trees are lopped when necessary. Also additional trees should be planted around the village to replace losses of elm from the hedgerows.

Generally however preservation of the 'status quo' is the preferred policy of conservation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Victoria County History  
Hidden Depths, Wiltshire Geology and Landscapes. Isobel Geddes  
KDC Landscape Assessment Conservation Strategy  
Grafton Village Design Statement

## CONSULTATIONS

Grafton Parish Council  
Wiltshire County Council  
The Director of Environmental Services  
The County Archaeologist  
Wiltshire Buildings Record  
The Campaign to Protect Rural England  
English Heritage

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This booklet and future www.pages is one of a series of Conservation Area Statements and Guidance Notes.

If you require any further advice or information please contact:-

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