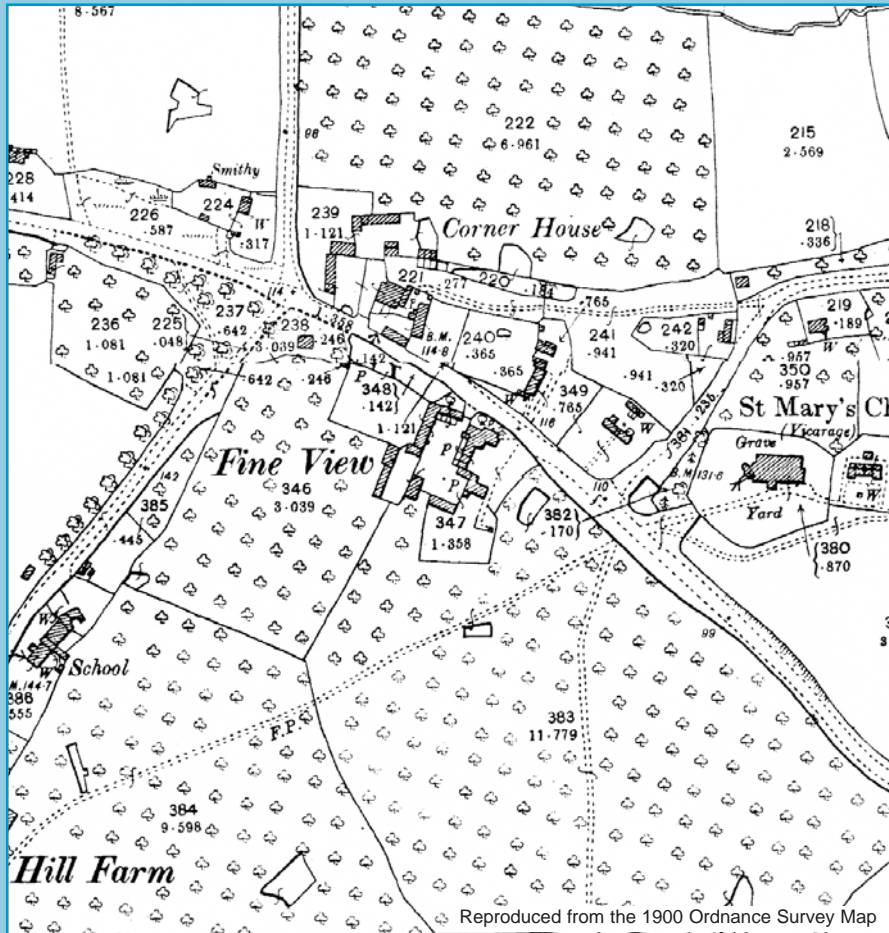


# Forthampton



Reproduced from the 1900 Ordnance Survey Map

## CONSERVATION AREA Character Statement

February 2004

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**Purpose of the Conservation Area**

The purpose behind conservation area designation is not to prevent any future change; rather it is to ensure that whatever change does occur is carefully managed. The definition of a conservation area is "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69 (1) a. Changes should be sympathetic to what has been identified as the character and appearance of the area. In that way it can be preserved and enhanced if necessary, not just for our enjoyment, but also for that of generations to come.

**Purpose of the Conservation Area Character Statement**

This document identifies the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of Forthampton. It indicates how these will be preserved and enhanced and will be of use to residents, businesses, potential developers and the Council in the making of development control decisions and environmental improvements.

**INTRODUCTION**

Forthampton is a small, scattered rural settlement, much of which has remained in the ownership of the Yorke family for two centuries. Fine views of the Severn Vale are to be had from certain vantage points between buildings and several roadside ponds are a memorable feature.



The main street looking towards Vine Farm, showing one of the distinctive roadside ponds

**SITUATION**

The settlement lies in Forthampton Parish, in the Vale of Gloucester, near to the Gloucestershire and Worcestershire County boundary, with the eastern boundary of the parish following the River Severn.

**EVOLUTION**

The earliest records of the settlement show that Forthampton was originally owned by the Church, hence such street names as 'Bishop's Walk' and 'Church Lane'. The abbots of Tewkesbury used Forthampton Court as a residence from the mid twelfth to mid sixteenth centuries.

The Bishop of Worcester was lord of the manor by 1751 and on his death in 1759 his daughter inherited the estate. In 1762 she married James Yorke, 5th son of the Earl of Hardwicke. After his death in 1808 the estate remained in the Yorke family, who continue to live at Forthampton Court and retain ownership of much of the village. In the nineteenth century the Yorke family was responsible for building the brick estate workers' cottages which are such a distinctive part of the village and the almshouses next to the church.

## SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORIC INTEREST

The special architectural or historic interest of a place depends upon more than just its buildings; the layout of streets, spaces between buildings, views, ground surfaces, boundary treatment and trees - features which can loosely be described as 'landscape' - are also important. The level of noise and activity, such as traffic, will also contribute or detract.

The special interest of Forthampton derives from the following sources:-

The strong characteristic of estate ownership as shown by model workers cottages and almshouses, which retain much of their original appearance.

Farms, with extensive historic buildings clustered around farm houses, situated at the centre of the village

Low density of building, with roadside ponds and grass verges around and between buildings and significant panoramic views.

An avenue of lime trees planted by the estate, lining the approach road from the west.

## CHARACTER & APPEARANCE

The key sources of the special interest given above can be analysed further, by looking at their character and appearance in detail. This will act as a source of reference when planning new development and changes to existing features.

## LAYOUT

The buildings are scattered along four roads whose intersection may be regarded as the heart of the village. Here is situated the war memorial. The main axis is east to west and the buildings are widely spaced, set back from the road, with generous gardens. To the south the road climbs upwards to Mill Hill Farm and the village hall, the elevated situation offering impressive views over the village and beyond. Originally there was a fifth road which left the crossroads and went to the north of Corner House Farm, but this was abandoned in about 1824, probably because the road to the Upper Lode ferry was not used so much after the opening of Telford's Mythe Bridge, which was begun in 1823.



The war memorial, thatched cart shed and Corner House Farm at the crossroads: the heart of the village

## BUILDINGS

### Significant Historic Buildings

Many buildings in Forthampton are listed and these are shown on the conservation area map.

There are also unlisted buildings of locally significant historic interest, such as the pair of brick estate cottages to the west of the church, built in 1871, which stand out prominently on a site slightly elevated above the road. These have retained original windows, doors, porches, chimneys, barge boards and finials and also their outbuildings. Corner House Farm house, which probably dates from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, complements its listed farm buildings and the thatched timber framed cart shed opposite is also noteworthy. To the south the village hall, formerly the school, built in the 1830's in a gothic style and hardly altered, forms part of an attractive group with adjacent listed houses.



Nos 31 & 32 are attractive, well preserved 19th century estate cottages

## Building Types

The parish contains a number of farms, three of which, Vine Farm, Mill Hill Farm and Corner Farm, are in the conservation area. Their groups of buildings, of various functions, make a prominent contribution to the character of the place. Small cottages make up the rest of the building stock; there are no large houses other than those connected with the farms.

## Scale

Most buildings are of traditional two storey construction.

## Materials - General History

The use of building materials reflects what would have been available locally at the time, as materials were only transported long distances for very expensive, high status buildings. The earliest buildings would have been timber-framed, with wattle and daub nogging (infill panels) and thatched roofs. Later, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the use of stone and brick became more widespread, both as nogging for older timber buildings, and as a structural material for new ones, and thatch was gradually replaced by hand-made flat clay tiles. The development at Forthampton illustrates this general pattern.

## WALLS

Blue Lias is the local stone, which weathers poorly and cannot be dressed easily, as it crumbles. It is therefore common to find it used in conjunction with a more durable freestone (stone which can be carved easily) around openings and corners, where crisp detailing is required. This can be seen on the church.

Vine Farm exhibits the type of timber frame construction known as close studding. This refers to the vertical timbers being spaced at short intervals, so that the area of infill panel is approximately the same as that of timber. Usually in timber framed construction the area of panelling is much larger compared with the framing. Close studding uses a lot of timber, was therefore more costly, which in turn indicates a higher status of ownership. Red brick is the predominant material used in the village, which would have supplanted timber framing from the eighteenth century, as stocks of oak declined and brick production accelerated. Most places had a local clay pit where bricks were made before improved transportation enabled concentration at major factories in the nineteenth century. Corner Farm house probably uses local

bricks, as they are quite coarse in shape, whereas

the brick cottages by the church, dating from the later nineteenth century, are likely to be built from factory made bricks, judging by the finer joints.

## ROOFS

A brownish red clay tile is the predominant roof material in the village, although some older buildings retain thatch.

## WINDOWS

The majority of windows are small casements in timber or metal, typical of cottage architecture.

## LANDSCAPE FEATURES

### Spaces, Views and Focal Points

The village has a spacious, strongly rural character, imparted by the low density of building and significant areas of open space. Features or views of particularly high quality, where buildings and the landscape combine to form memorable views, are the church on its commanding hill-top setting, the open spaces surrounding the crossroads, the large roadside pond by Vine Farm, the pond by Church Lane and the pond along School Lane. At the eastern end of the village there are long distance views across fields to the valley of the Severn and from the raised church yard, over the village, towards Mill Farm. The view from School Lane, between the Village Hall and Mill Farm, is especially fine, with Tewkesbury Abbey prominent in the distance. The survival of roadside ponds is a particularly important part of the picturesque character of the village.



A memorable view towards Tewkesbury Abbey across the Severn valley, from School Lane

## Trees

There are no trees with Tree Preservation Orders, but two tall pine trees in the churchyard are significant landmarks in the village. The yew lined path to the entrance porch is also memorable. The tree cover around the crossroads lends a strong feeling of enclosure to the centre of the village, whereas the opposite ends are more open, with few trees to obscure distant views. The approach road from the west, known as Bishops Walk, is lined with Lime trees planted by the estate, creating an impressive vista.



The parish church and prominent pine trees in the churchyard

## Boundary Treatment

Low brick walls enclose Corner Farm, but boundary walls are not common; many properties have hedges instead. Old iron railings surround the churchyard and the pond adjacent to Church Lane.

## PRESERVATION

In order to ensure that the special interest of the conservation area is preserved, any applications that affect the conservation area will be considered in relation to the following guidelines:

### Existing Buildings

Existing buildings within the conservation area will be preserved in the following ways:

### Listed Buildings

Buildings (and other structures and monuments) that have been included by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are protected by the 1990 Act. This states that no works which involve the demolition, or which would affect the character or material appearance of

a listed building (alterations, extensions etc.), may be executed without first obtaining listed-building consent.

Whilst the aim of listed-building legislation is to preserve these buildings for their own sake, any changes affecting them will also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area and the design guidance below.

## Unlisted Buildings DEMOLITION

The demolition of unlisted buildings within the conservation area requires Conservation Area Consent (there may be certain exceptions). Demolition of unlisted walls, fences or other means of enclosure over one metre high facing a highway or open space and over two metres high elsewhere also requires Conservation Area Consent.

## ALTERATION

Although many alterations to all types of buildings can be controlled by the need for planning permission, changes could still take place to unlisted dwelling houses that would damage the character of the conservation area, but that are ordinarily classed as 'permitted development' (that is to say, they do not ordinarily require planning permission). That many of the houses retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved their buildings. However, there is no guarantee as to the future. An Article 4 (2) Direction has been made which will provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations. Certain alterations which formerly did not require planning permission now do need it, but only where the change affects those parts of a house fronting a highway or public open space. There is no fee for applications required because of the direction.

In Forthampton Conservation Area, the Article 4(2) Direction is limited to those unlisted dwellings which are considered to have features of historic interest, such as old windows and doors, which are particularly well preserved. These are: Numbers 31 & 32 and Corner House Farm house.

The direction covers alterations to all external features, such as windows, doors, porches, chimneys, bargeboards, roof coverings and painting the exterior where it has not previously been painted. (This list is not exhaustive).

The installation of satellite dishes on elevations facing a highway and stone, timber, plastic or tile cladding require planning permission in a conservation area.

All applications for planning permission and Conservation Area Consent within the conservation area will be considered with reference to the Conservation Policies in the Tewkesbury Borough Council Local Plan to 2011, Revised Deposit. Those policies most immediately relevant to Forthampton are listed below (the entire Local Plan may be viewed at the Council Offices, or most public libraries).

**SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREAS-GENERAL  
POLICY CON1**

Within conservation areas special attention will be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character and appearance. Proposals which preserve or enhance the historic built environment and landscape quality will be supported. In appropriate cases environmental enhancement schemes within conservation areas will be implemented.

Special attention will be given to the protection and enhancement of historic features which contribute to the townscape and historic character. Particular importance will be attached to the retention of traditional materials in the repair and refurbishment of existing buildings, and in the construction of new buildings and other works.

**SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREA:  
SETTING AND IMPACT  
POLICY CON2**

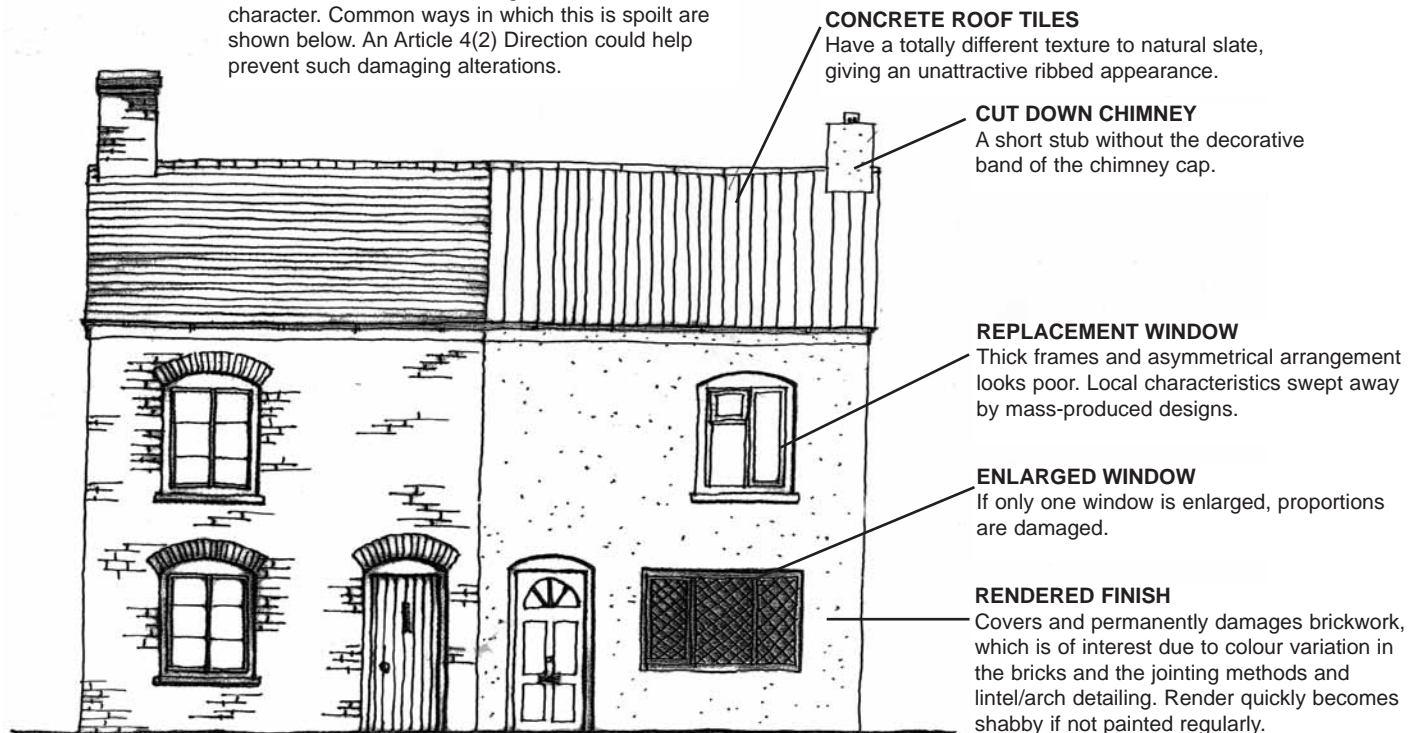
In proposals for development within or in close proximity to a conservation area, particular attention should be paid to the development's impact upon the conservation area and its setting, including any existing trees. Full details of design and materials to be used will normally be required in such cases.

Thus planning applications in outline form will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Where new development or re-development is proposed within a conservation area, it must be to a high standard of design and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, form, materials and quality. Drawings (and in the case of major development or development within particularly sensitive sites, scale models), must normally be submitted which clearly show the proposed development in its townscape context or setting.

Proposals retaining traditional building lines within designated conservation areas will be favoured and consideration may be given to relaxing approved policies and standards if, by doing so, features of particular townscape merit in the conservation area under serious threat can be retained.

**TYPICAL MODERN ALTERATIONS**

Even unlisted, humble buildings can have a lot of character. Common ways in which this is spoilt are shown below. An Article 4(2) Direction could help prevent such damaging alterations.



**OVERALL EFFECT**

The harmony of this pair of houses is destroyed: in a terrace the effect is magnified

**SUBJECT: VISUAL IMPACT OF PARKING PROVISION, STREET FURNITURE AND THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF LOST FEATURES AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW FEATURES IN CONSERVATION AREAS  
POLICY CON3**

Within designated conservation areas, the materials used and the design and layout of parking areas and the provision of vehicular access must minimise the adverse visual impact which may arise from such development. Consideration may be given to relaxing approved policies and standards if features of particular townscape merit under threat can be retained.

Within designated conservation areas new and replacement street furniture should be of appropriate design and materials to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding street scene.

Proposals for the reintroduction of a lost historic feature or for the introduction of a well designed new feature will be encouraged where it can be shown that preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area will result.

**SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING DEMOLITION WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA  
POLICY CON4**

There is a presumption in favour of retaining existing buildings, walls and structures within a conservation area. Only in exceptional circumstances, where an existing building, wall or structure of importance to the character of the conservation area is proved to be completely beyond repair will its demolition be permitted. Any proposals for replacement should be in accordance with Policy CON2. Demolition of a building in a conservation area will only be permitted where the proposals for the re-use of the site are acceptable. The implementation of planning permission for demolition will be conditional upon the letting of a contract for the approved redevelopment of the site.

**SUBJECT: OPEN SPACES, WATER FEATURES, HEDGEROWS AND TREES WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS  
POLICY CON5**

Planning permission will not be granted for development that adversely affects important open spaces, water features, hedgerows and trees within designated conservation areas.

Notification must be given to the Council before felling or lopping trees in the conservation area.

**NEW DEVELOPMENT:  
DESIGN GUIDANCE**

The designation of a conservation area does not automatically preclude any further development, however, it does seek to ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area. Any proposed development should therefore be in accordance with the following guidance:

New buildings or extensions should reflect the general pattern of building within the area, especially in scale and proportion, although there is scope for some architectural invention, provided that this is sympathetic to the existing architecture of the place.

Materials used should be in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the conservation area, and should maintain a similar mix.

Any new buildings or extensions should be located on their sites in a similar way to the general pattern of building in that part of the conservation area.

Boundary treatment should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to that already in existence in that part of the conservation area, and these should use similar materials and detailing.

The local plan policies referred to above will form the basis for making development control decisions with regard to new development and extensions.

**WINDOW REPLACEMENT**

Windows have become the most frequently replaced parts of a building in recent times and failure to respect traditional materials and patterns has ruined many an otherwise untouched façade. Mass produced windows may be appropriate on modern buildings, but they almost always damage the character and appearance of old buildings. This

is because the use of heavier glass, poor quality timber and modern materials, like UPVC, means that glazing bars and frames usually have to be thicker and less elegant than was traditional practice, to give the strength of an equivalent piece of good quality, slow grown pitch pine. Rubber beading strips to the glass, instead of mitred painted putty, alter both the appearance and texture of the window and can be recognized instantly even from a distance. Where double-glazing can be accommodated into traditional timber frames it will be acceptable on unlisted buildings, but frames to patterns which complement the building's style will be encouraged.

The Council has produced guidance on the significance of windows in historic buildings and the policies which govern their replacement. Copies are available from the Conservation Team.

## **ENHANCEMENT**

Possible areas for improvement are:

Removal or replacement of modern agricultural buildings at Vine Farm and Corner House Farm.

Maintenance of roadside ponds.

Repair of the thatched cart shed by the war memorial.

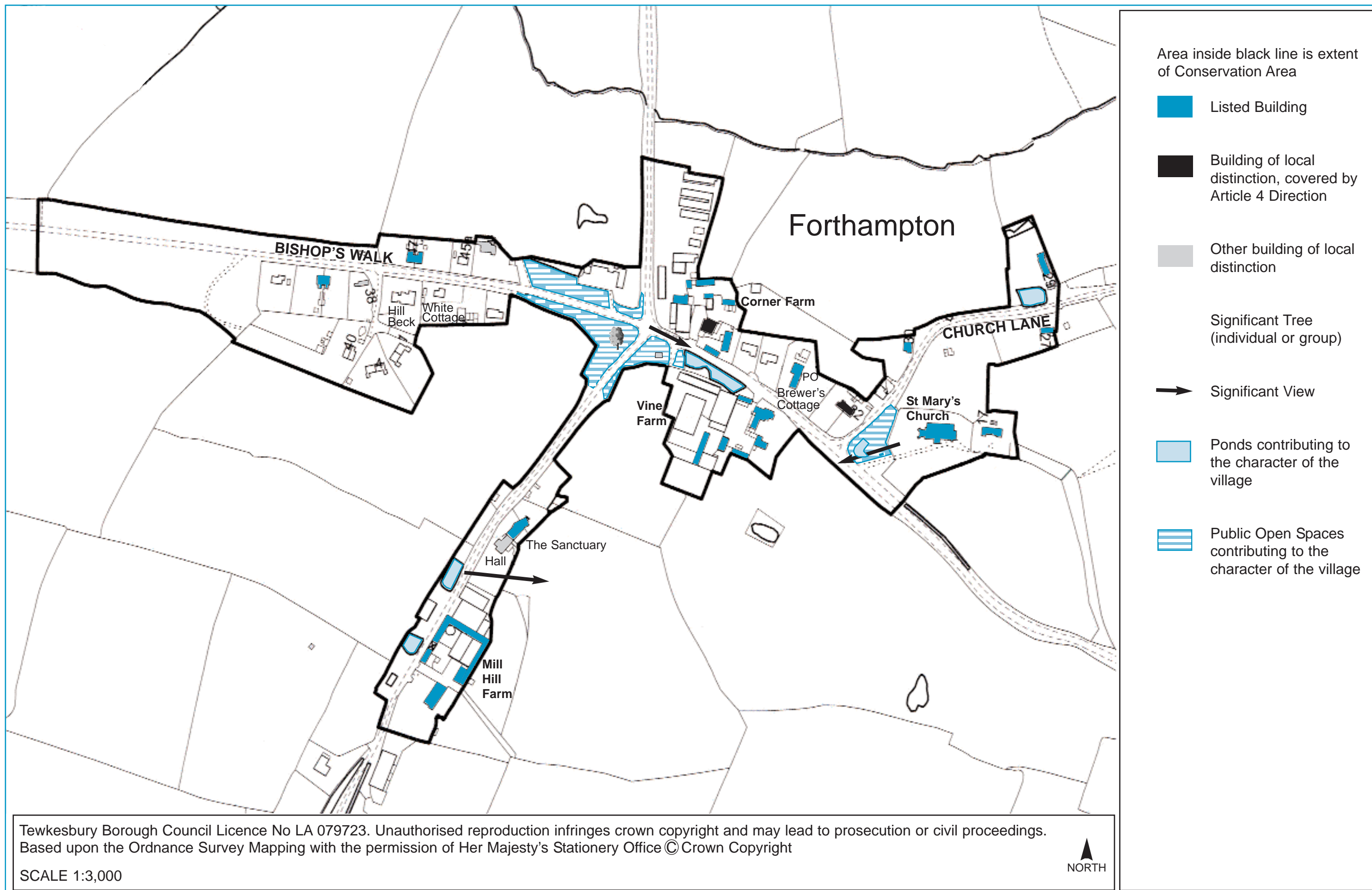
The Council is willing to work in partnership with the parish council and residents in promoting schemes which they consider will enhance the village.

## **GRANT-AID**

Tewkesbury Borough Council offers 'Environmental Improvement Grants', aimed at encouraging schemes to protect and enhance the environment of the borough, including both natural landscape environment, and historic built environment. The aim of the scheme is to preserve and encourage local distinctiveness and variety through the use of traditional methods and materials.





# Forthampton Conservation Area: Designated 25th November 2003




Area inside black line is extent of Conservation Area


 Listed Building


 Building of local distinction, covered by Article 4 Direction

 Other building of local distinction

 Significant Tree (individual or group)

 Significant View

 Ponds contributing to the character of the village

 Public Open Spaces contributing to the character of the village

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