

BLACKMORE

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



Cover illustration: Church Street, looking north.

This document was produced by Essex County Council for Brentwood Borough Council.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Brentwood Borough Council commissioned Essex County Council to prepare this Conservation Area Appraisal and Review in May 2007. The research and fieldwork were carried out in July and November 2007.

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.

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 Planning Policy Guidance 15, *Planning and the Historic Environment*, emphasises that the character of Conservation Areas derives not simply from the quality of individual buildings, but also depends on 'the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular "mix" of uses; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of advertisements; shop fronts; street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of space between buildings' (para. 4.2).

2. PLANNING POLICIES

The *Brentwood Replacement Local Plan*, adopted August 2005 contains the following statements under Conservation and Protection of the Environment: Conservation Areas.

9.52 Some parts of the Borough are of significant townscape value worthy of special protection. These areas are usually characterised by groups of buildings of particular architectural or historic interest, the spaces between them and their general setting and character. Designation of such areas as Conservation Areas provides additional statutory powers to control the demolition of buildings and prevent the loss of trees. The design of new development will be carefully controlled to protect and preserve the character of these areas.

9.53 A total of 13 Conservation Areas have been designated so far within the Borough.

9.54 The Council not only has greater power to control development within the Conservation Areas but also has a duty to devise schemes to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. The Council will, therefore, seek to carry out Conservation Area character appraisals, in accordance with PPG15, in order to clearly

assess and define their character, allowing informed planning decisions and identification of what should be preserved and enhanced.

9.55 Within Conservation Areas it is necessary to carefully assess the design and materials of any new development proposals. This assessment plays an essential part in determining whether or not a scheme is acceptable in principle. Therefore, in order to ensure a high standard of design and materials, detailed schemes rather than outline applications will normally be required.

3. HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AREA AND OTHER DESIGNATIONS

The Blackmore Conservation Area was first designated on 12 December 1975 and is one of thirteen Conservation Areas in the Borough. It covers an area encompassing the oldest parts of the medieval village of Blackmore, from just north of The Green to the moated site of the original Priory and bounded by Blackmore Road and Ingatestone Road on the west and east respectively (*Fig. 1*).

There are 25 listed buildings, of which one (the Church) is listed Grade I and the rest are Grade II. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Conservation Area although Fingrith Hall is a SAM 2km to the north. There are seven 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 southern part of the Priory grounds is a County Wildlife Site (formerly known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) and parts of the Green are Common Land.

A public right of way passes north-south through the churchyard, forking beyond the south of the churchyard.

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.

4. CHARACTER STATEMENT

Blackmore is a small rural village with a historic monastic core. At its heart is the Priory (now demolished apart from the Church) with a village street and Green to the north. Blackmore is one of the few historic nucleated settlements in the district, and may have originated as a planned settlement. The conservation area includes some fine historic buildings, including Jericho Priory and Laurences. There is a good survival of buildings from the 17th century and earlier. The church of St Laurence is quite exceptional with its impressive timber tower. The village is fortunate to have retained historic pubs, a post office, village hall and shop and garage. Most of the buildings are domestic properties attractively arranged along The Green, Church Street and Blackmore Road, and in the narrow Alleys. These are a mix of historic buildings and modern infill. Enclosures formed by historic brick walls, hedging and buildings close to the road edge are characteristic of much of the village, with open greens as contrast. The river and water in the form of ponds and the Priory moat are important visually and to the history and character of the village.

BLACKMORE CONSERVATION AREA **DESIGNATION MAP**

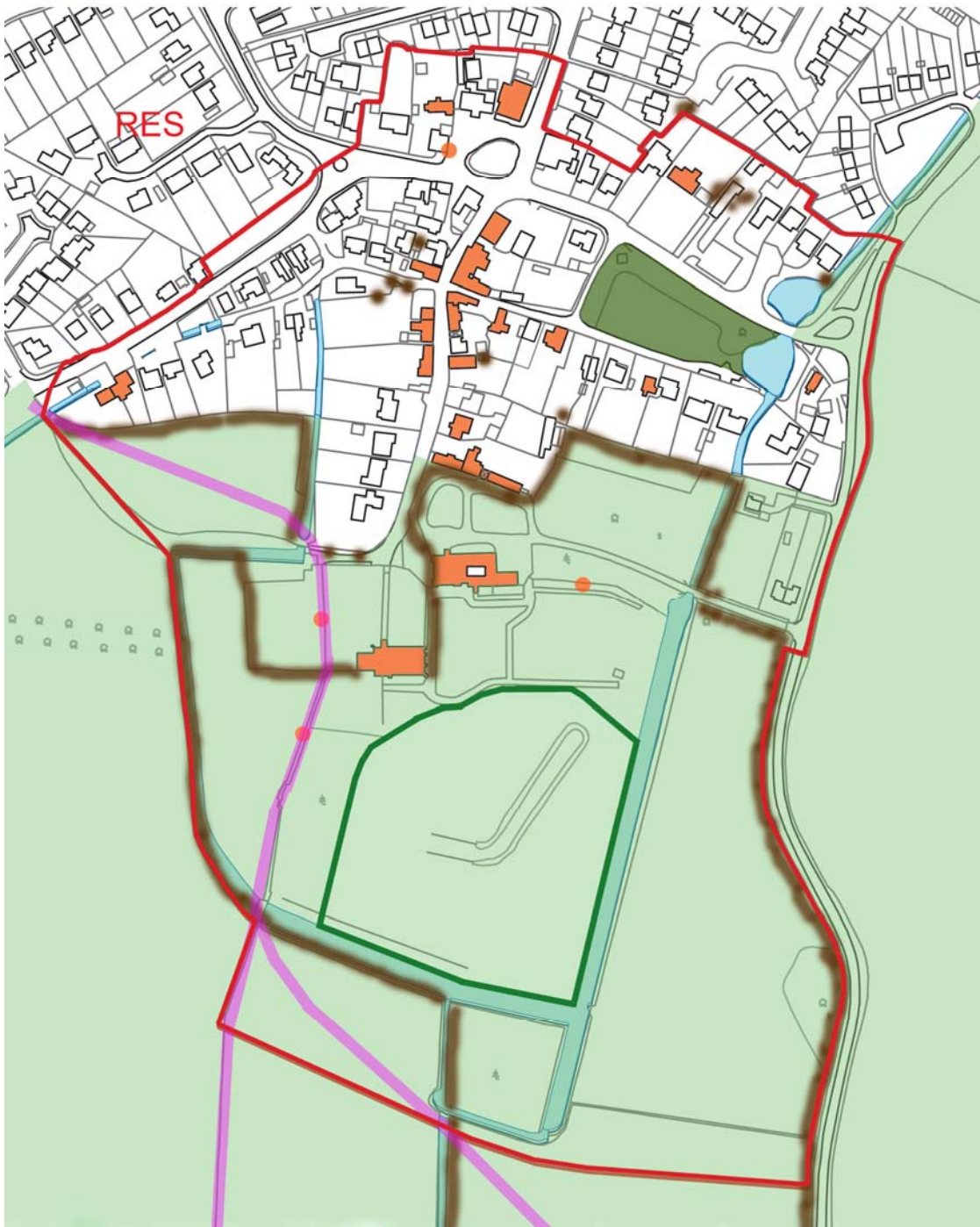


Fig.1 Conservation Area boundary and other designations.

5. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Location and Landscape Setting

Blackmore is a remote settlement to the north-east of Brentwood and east of Ongar. It is on a relatively flat site surrounded by open fields in lightly rolling countryside. The village is attractive, well defined and self contained, substantially enclosed by hedges and trees. The river Wid flows around and through the village, extended by ponds and the Priory moat.

The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) shows significant finds in the immediate area with evidence of Roman building and settlement on land close to the Priory.

Historical Development

There is no evidence for prehistoric settlement at Blackmore. Roman material was recorded in two fields west of the Priory in 1975 and 1983 (Essex Historic Environment Record 850) suggesting there was a substantial Roman building in the area (Medlycott 2002).

The original Saxon settlement at Blackmore was located at Fingrith Hall to the north of the present village. The Domesday book records 14 households there in 1086 when the settlement was recorded as '*Phingheria*' (Rumble 1983). The settlement shifted from Fingrith Hall in the medieval period, probably in the later twelfth century when the Augustinian Priory was founded (1152-62). The priory site lies in the gardens of Jericho Priory house south of the church.

The first mention of Blackmore was 'La Blakemore', in 1213, which Reaney (1935) translates as 'black swamp' referring to the low lying site amidst many springs.

In 1232 the Prior was granted a charter to hold a three-day fayre at Blackmore on the Feast of St Laurence. It is presumed that this was held on the green that formed the basis of the medieval village. This green was encroached upon by buildings by the 14th century. The Chapman and André map of 1777 is a good indication of the medieval village, showing the main settlement arranged around a central green, extending along what are now Blackmore Road and The Green (*Fig. 3*). The existing street plan comprising Church Street, The Green, Blackmore Road, Ingatestone Road and the lanes preserve the medieval village layout. With the exception of the church the earliest surviving buildings in the village today date from the fourteenth century, including Longbeams in Church Street. The nucleated form of medieval Blackmore is exceptional within Brentwood District; contrasting with the dispersed settlement pattern which generally characterises the district (Medlycott 2002).

Blackmore Priory was one of a number of small priories dissolved by Cardinal Wolsey under authority granted to him by Henry VIII in 1524. The Priory transferred to Wolsey in 1527, but after he fell out of favour with the King it passed to the Abbey at Waltham Cross. Much of the Priory was demolished although the Priory church was kept¹. The church and Priory lands

¹ Information kindly supplied by Andrew Smith, 2007, cited from his guide to the church of 2005.

were subsequently sold to the Smyth family, who built a new house on the site, Jericho Priory, possibly incorporating or re-using parts of the original Priory buildings.

Later medieval and post-medieval development was largely confined to infilling of the green. By 1848 White's Directory records the parish as having a population of 709. There were infants' and ladies' schools, two public houses and a full range of tradesmen. These were concentrated in the village centre, although the parish as a whole remained mainly agricultural. The population declined to 571 by 1881 as a result of migration² The settlement remained focussed around the green until new housing estates and roads were built around the village edge in the 20th century, particularly to the north and north-west. Further development has concentrated on infilling garden sites and encroachments onto the Green.

The approximate construction dates of buildings that make up the village today are shown in Fig. 2.

Cartographic Evidence

The arrangement of streets shown on the Chapman and André map of 1777 is essentially that which is seen today (*Fig. 3*). It shows several streets converging on the settlement, with a route skirting around to the north and west - Redrose Lane and what was referred to on the First Edition OS map as Service Lane, now a track. Local tradition says that Service Lane and Red Rose Lane were used by travellers to avoid the village centre during the Black Death in 1349, and to carry the dead around the outside of the village (Blackmore Parish Council 2000). The First and Third Edition OS maps (1881 and 1920) show very little change in the overall settlement form, but the partial infilling of The Green is evident (*Figs 4 and 5*).

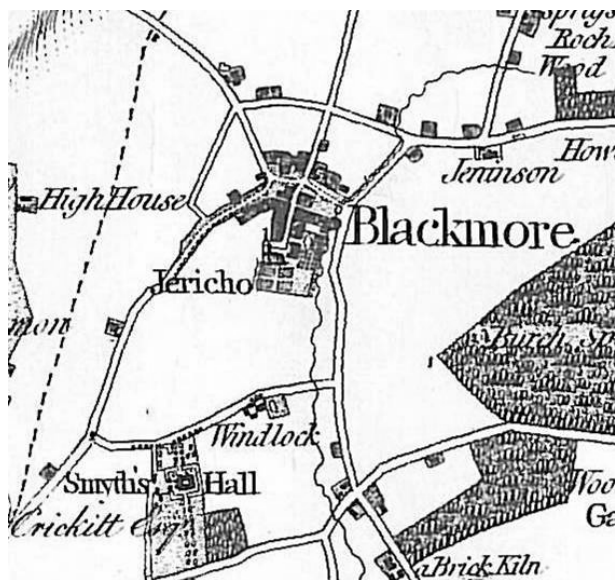


Fig. 3 Detail from Chapman and André map of Essex, 1777.

² This information was supplied by Andrew Smith, who provided valuable comments and historical information for this document for which we are grateful.

BLACKMORE CONSERVATION AREA EARLIEST DATES OF BUILDINGS

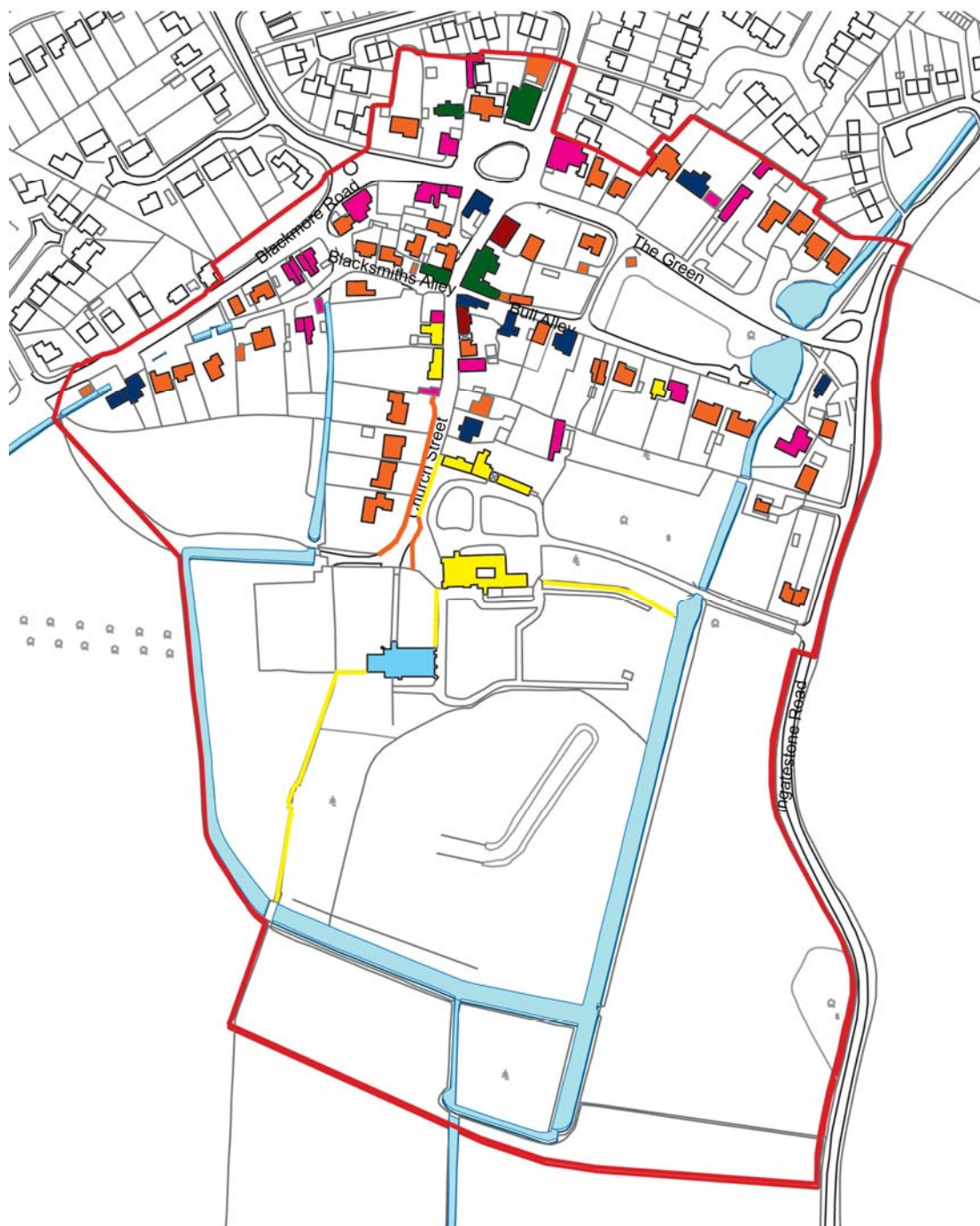


Fig. 2 Dates of Buildings

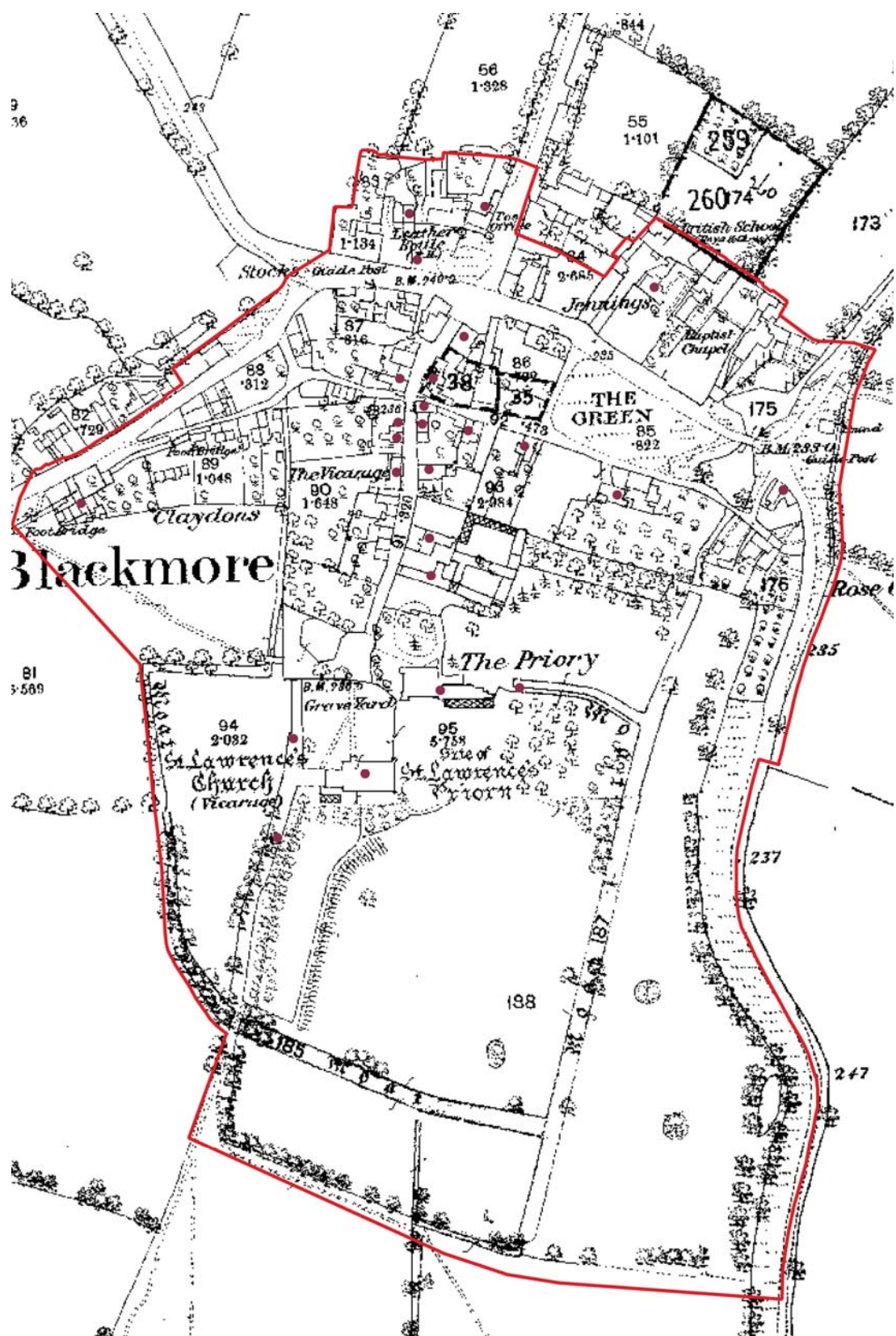


Fig. 4 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1881.

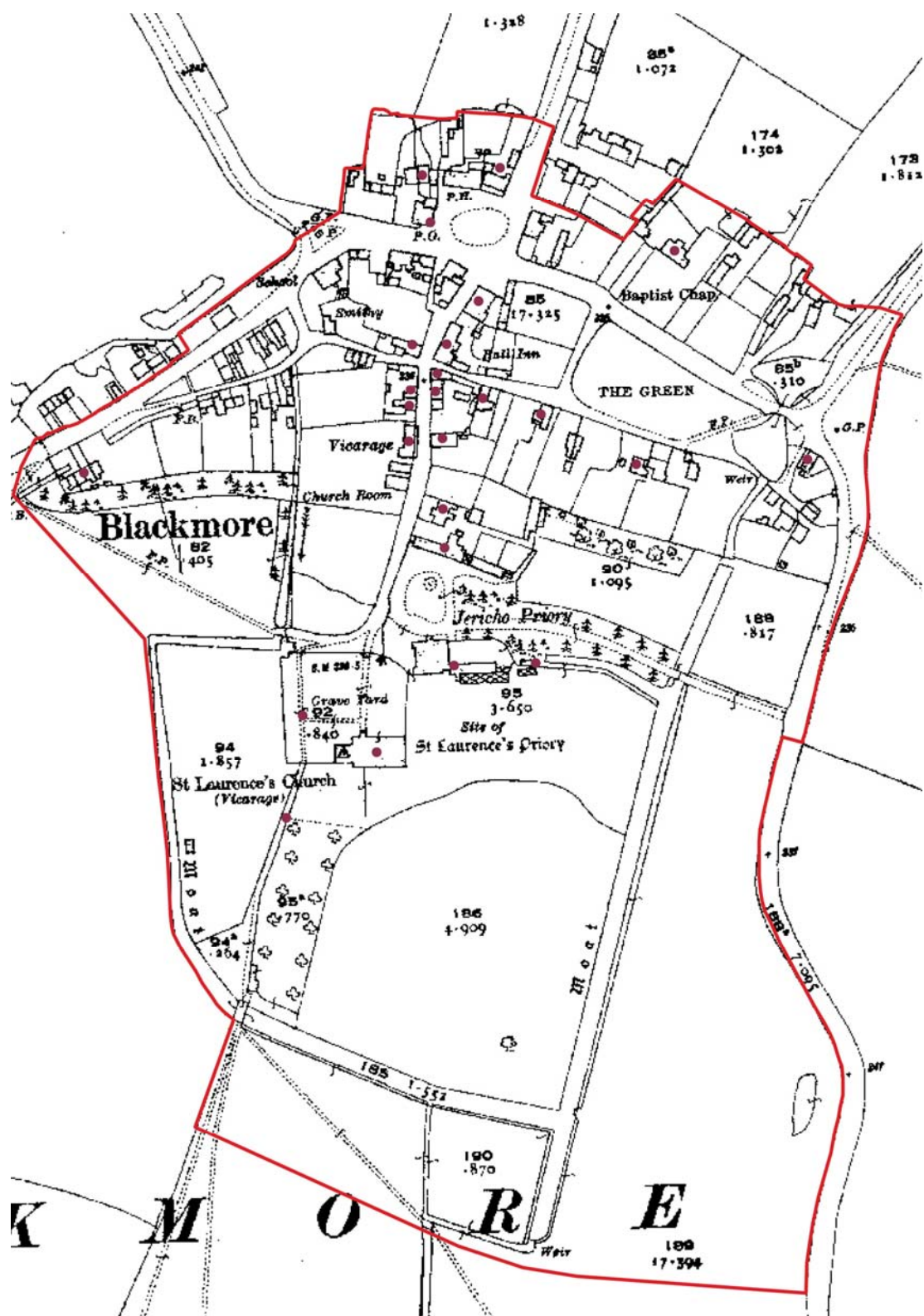


Fig. 5 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1920.

6. MATERIALS AND DETAILING

Brick and render are the primary wall materials, although the church is in stone. Weatherboard is used on some ancillary and rear buildings. Most of the brickwork is soft red brick in a traditional bond (*Fig. 6*). Exceptions include the gault brick frontage of The Old Manor House, and contextless modern brick usually in monotonous stretcher bond on modern infill buildings. Significant seventeenth century Flemish bond walls in red brick with checkerboard patterns of darker headers are characteristic of Church Street, the Church boundaries and the Priory site to the south.

Roofs are primarily red clay handmade plain tile on steep roofs, with later welsh slate on shallower pitched nineteenth century buildings, and less attractive modern materials, usually concrete profiled tiles, on modern buildings (*Figs 7 and 9*). Occasionally outbuildings have red clay pantiles.

Windows are primarily painted timber (*Fig. 8*). Their styles range from seventeenth century to modern. There have been some UPVC replacements but currently these are isolated examples. Doors are also primarily painted timber, although there are occasional new oak boarded doors in a medieval style.



Fig. 6 Traditional brickwork.



Fig. 7 Slate roof.



Fig. 8 Original timber window.



Fig. 9 Plain clay roof tiles.

Boundary treatments can make a significant impact on the Conservation Area. The Flemish bond red brick walls of Church Street form a major part of the sense of enclosure and are very important (*Fig. 10*). Less complete sections and remnants of brick boundary walls remain elsewhere such as along the north of The Green and the rear of the Library site in Blacksmiths Alley and should be preserved. Less attractively a mix of short-lived fence panel boundaries can be seen throughout the residential areas, primarily in backlands around the more modern houses.



Fig. 10 Part of brick boundary wall, Jericho Priory, Church Street.

Apart from the walls of Church Street and its environs, hedging and trees are the most extensive boundaries within this Conservation Area and essential to the retention of its rural and enclosed character (*Fig. 11*). Hedging is in traditional species such as hawthorn, beech and blackthorn. Mature oaks are numerous along the hedgerows. Within the churchyard and Priory site to the south are numerous varieties such as mature chestnut, horse chestnut, oak and ash, with willows characteristic of the moat and river edges.



Fig. 11 Hedging and trees, Blackmore Road.

The roads are tarmac. Grit rolled into the surface of Church Street softens its appearance. Church Street, Ingatestone Road and the Alleys have no pavements but along The Green and Blackmore Road there are concrete kerbs (*Fig. 12*).

The greens are planted with established trees and shrubs (*Fig. 13*).



Fig. 12 Tarmac with concrete kerb stones, Blackmore Road.



Fig. 13 Established planting around The Green.

7. USES

Most of the buildings are residential, although the village does retain a shop, two pubs, a tea room/antique shop, a post office and a phone box. The library has recently closed and the adjacent old school building is lacking maintenance and vulnerable, being under threat of redevelopment. The different uses of buildings in the Conservation Area are shown in Fig. 14.

Historically the village was self sufficient. The 1882 Kelly's Directory list of local commercial enterprises includes, amongst others, two grocers, a baker and pork butcher, a boot and shoe maker, a confectioner, a beer retailer and a surgeon

Recent development has been in the form of new houses and extensions to existing houses. Most of the newer buildings date from the 1960s – 1980s and show little respect for the materials and character of the area. More recent buildings such as Tubbs in Church Street show more effort to integrate them into the character of the village, although at times the scale and details are not entirely successful.

Blackmore has a strong community spirit which gives the village a general well maintained appearance and to some extent has controlled clutter. There is still some unattractive and unnecessary clutter within the central Green, obscuring views, and the problems of the Library/old school building and Coachmans Cottage sites need to be addressed to stop the increasing dereliction of the buildings.

BLACKMORE CONSERVATION AREA

Uses of buildings

■ Residential

■ Religious

■ Pubs

■ Shop, business

■ Community

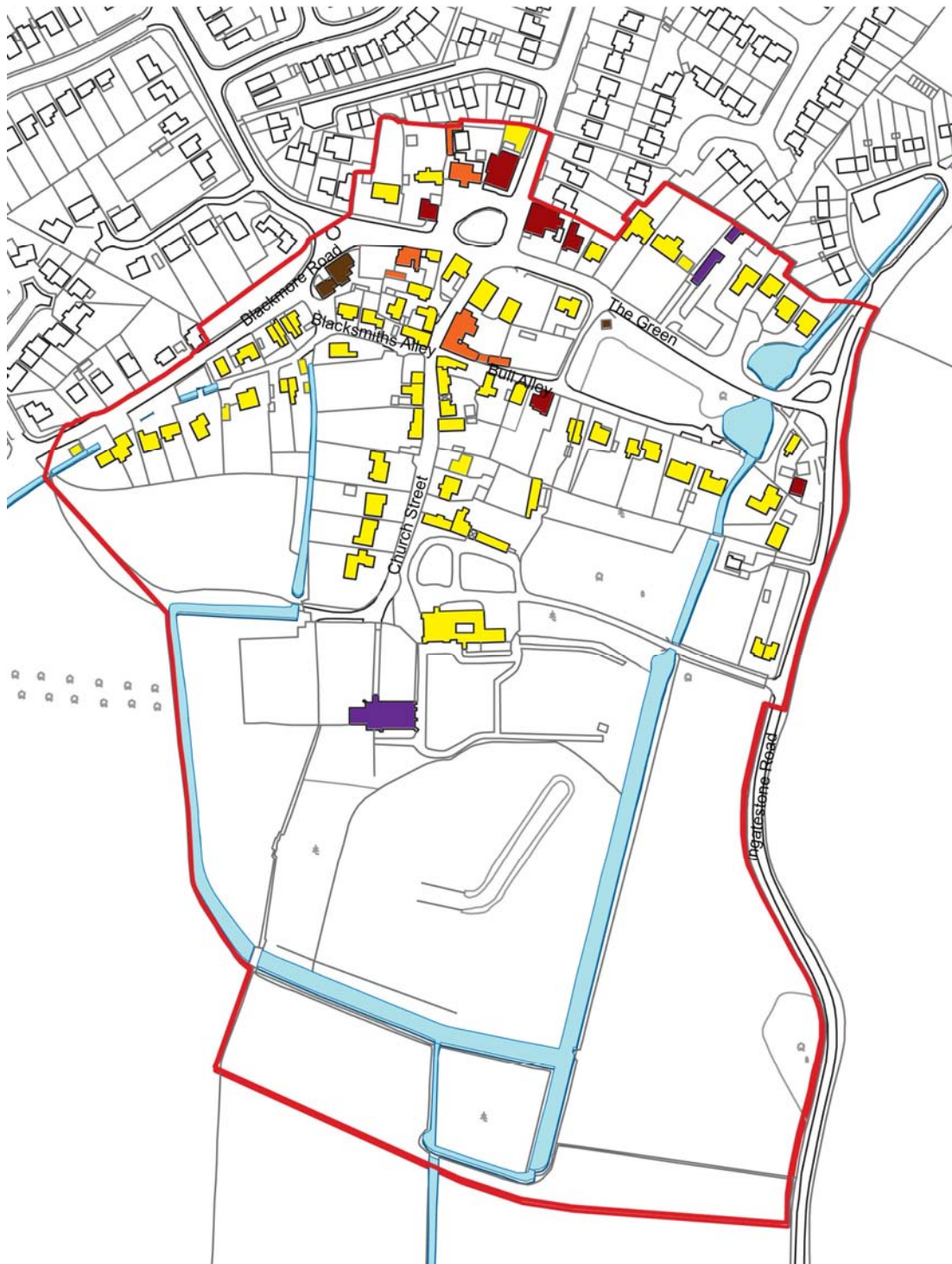


Fig. 14 Uses of buildings in the Conservation Area.

8. TOWNSCAPE AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The Conservation Area layout is fundamentally the medieval village, held together by a surviving core of historic buildings. Although it has been encroached upon by later development, the remaining parts of the Green are still identifiable open spaces and the largest part of the Green still feels spacious.

The Conservation Area consists of two main roads running generally north to south at the edges of the village (Blackmore Road and Ingatestone Road), a central road running east to west following The Green, a central street connecting The Green to the church (Church Street) and smaller interconnecting alleyways (Bull Alley and Blacksmiths Alley). These are all historic routes.

The spatial character of the Conservation Area is characterised by the contrast between enclosure and open space. As well as the historical significance of the layout, this arrangement adds visual interest and drama. The Green formed the historic centre of the village in the medieval period. Its original form consisted of a roughly rectangular block with a long 'tail' to the south-west on either side of Blackmore Road (Medlycott 2002). It now survives in three sections, the largest of which lies to the east.

The open green spaces of The Green, the churchyard and Priory grounds and associated countryside are all defining features of the Conservation Area. The green and rural character is particularly strong to the south of the Conservation Area, providing good local walks. In places the original boundary of the historic green is preserved in the building line set a long way back from the road edge. This is of historic and visual importance to the special character of the area. Water is also a strong element in the landscape of the area, in the form of ponds, the moat and river. This creates attractive views, at the east end of The Green for example.

The historic core of the village along Church Street includes tightly built up development at its northern end, and the narrow alleys also contribute to a strong sense of enclosure. Changes in direction along routes create a sense of progression and changing views with movement. The sense of enclosure is enhanced by traditional brick boundary walls.

The area known as Horsefayre Green provides a focal point for the village, with a central green surrounded by local shops and services.


Mature trees give a strong green character and form a strong boundary between the village and surrounding farmland. Trees on The Green are particularly important, and provide screening from some less sympathetic modern development.

The spatial inter-relationship between streets, buildings, green spaces, trees and hedges can be seen in the aerial photograph of the village (*Fig. 15*). An analysis of the key elements in the townscape character of the conservation area are indicated in *Fig. 16*.




Fig. 15 Aerial photograph with conservation area boundary.

BLACKMORE CONSERVATION AREA TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

 Landmark buildings & walls

 Public green open spaces

 Trees & hedges

 Footpaths

 Good views

 Car park

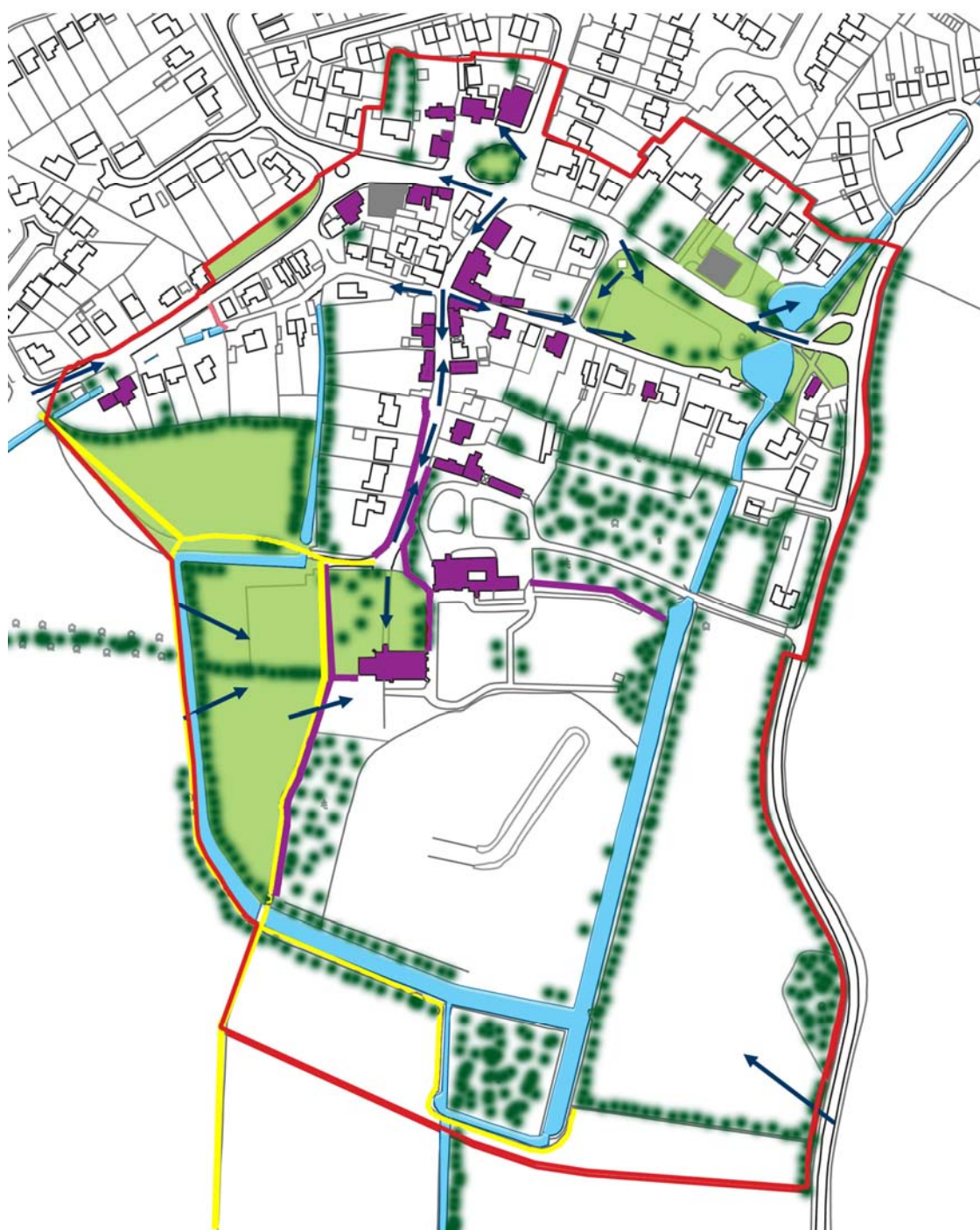


Fig. 16 Analysis of the townscape character of the conservation area.

9. CHARACTER ZONES

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, combined with the age, uses and appearance of the buildings. Although the boundaries are arbitrary to some extent, the zones reflect differences in the character of the Conservation Area which should be taken into account when development proposals are considered.

The following provides a summary of the main characteristics of the character zones. The zones are identified in Fig. 17.

Zone 1: The northern part of the Conservation Area, including the historic area of The Green, Blackmore Road, Blacksmiths Alley and Bull Alley.

Development is loosely and informally arranged around the three surviving pieces of green, and in the alleys. Buildings are of varying date; the earliest are late medieval. Victorian development is concentrated in this zone. Traditional buildings are generally domestic in scale, of two storeys, and are typically timber-framed and rendered or of red brick, with plain clay tile or slate roofs. This zone includes the village's commercial and community buildings, notably around Horsefayre Green. Trees are important especially on the surviving pieces of green.

Zone 2: The central core of the Conservation Area including the main length of Church Street.

This includes high quality historic buildings closely built up to the street edge. Traditional buildings are of two storeys, and are generally timber-framed and rendered, sometimes with weatherboard on secondary elevations, and clay tile roofs. Occasionally warm red brick adds interest and colour. Roof pitches are typically steep but varying pitches and ridge heights create a lively roofscape. Brick chimneys are also characteristic. Traditional red brick boundary walls are important at the southern end of the street.

Zone 3: The southern part of the Conservation Area comprising the historic area of the Priory and associated lands.

This includes the church and churchyard. This zone is distinctively green, open and rural. The church and Jericho Priory are landmark buildings, both of great historical importance. Their red brick boundary walls are also important old features of the Conservation Area.

BLACKMORE CONSERVATION AREA

Character Zones

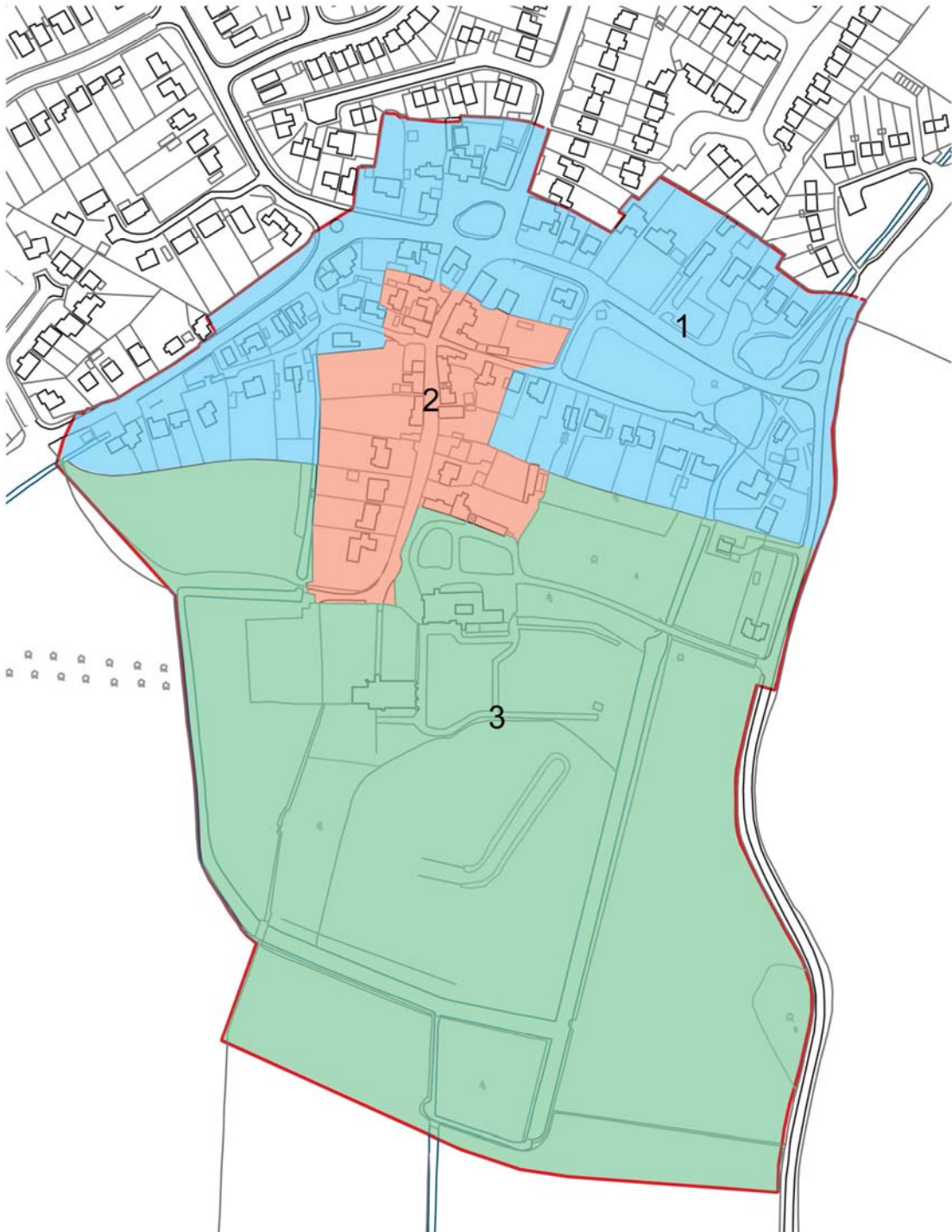


Fig. 17 Main character zones of the conservation area.

10. AREA ANALYSIS

The core of the village is medieval, with succeeding generations of buildings giving interest and good examples of their periods. The buildings are generally vernacular and the importance of the Priory and Church are still evident.

The following paragraphs will define the special character of the Blackmore Conservation Area, by aid of description and visual annotation. Fig. 18 indicates the location of the named buildings.

10.1 THE GREEN

The Green itself comprises a mature open green to the east, more built over in the west but retaining a small green at the junction with Fingrith Hall Lane. The road called The Green is the main traffic route passing through the historic heart of Blackmore, and at times carries heavy lorries which impinge on the otherwise peaceful rural character of the village.

On the west, The Green starts at a roundabout at odds with the more rural character of the rest of the Conservation Area. This has been landscaped to improve its appearance although softer planting would be more in keeping. The buildings near the roundabout entrance are modern and set back, with an open car park, providing little sense of enclosure and an inadequate preparation for the beauty of the village.

The nineteenth century **old school** building is the exception to this group (*Fig. 19*). Known as the Blackmore Centre, this is a charming example of a Victorian village school. Its fine brick detailing, original welsh slate roof, well detailed chimney, gables and deeply moulded windows make an irreplaceable contribution to the Conservation Area, and it is located close to the road edge making it a landmark building visible from a distance.



Fig. 19 Blackmore old school.

There is a pinch point slightly further to the east where the **Prince Albert Public House and Cottage** and the **Post Office** are all close to the road edge and provide a good framing to the entrance to The Green (*Fig. 20*). These form an attractive grouping of domestic-scale 18th and 19th century buildings. **The Prince Albert** dates from 1757, and has a distinctive frontage with tile hanging. The open car park of the pub would benefit from screening and some enclosure in order to enhance the street scene at this point (*Fig. 21*).

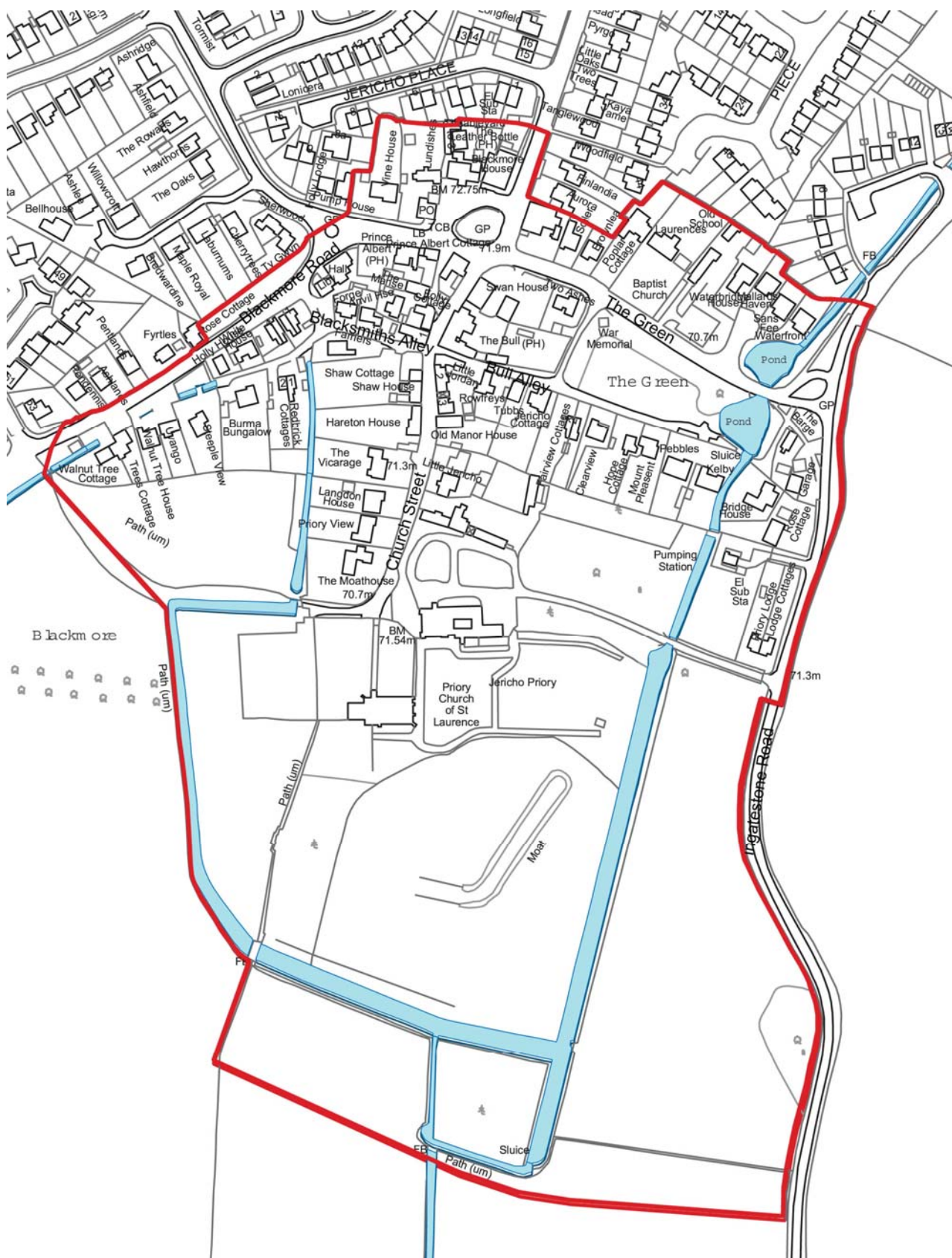


Fig. 18 Key map with names of buildings.



Fig. 20 Prince Albert Cottage and the Prince Albert pub.



Fig. 21 Open car park for Prince Albert pub.

The buildings widen out again immediately around Horsefayre Green which has mature trees and an attractive and significant historic group of buildings surrounding it. The posts and chains around the green were erected for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and should be retained (Blackmore Parish Council 2000). This area provides a focus for the village. Commercial premises and community facilities are concentrated here around the green. Prominent historic buildings include the Post Office, Lundishes, The Leather Bottle and Blackmore House as well as the listed telephone box. The nineteenth century shopfront at **The Post Office** is particularly significant as the only easily recognisable historic shopfront (*Fig. 22*). **Lundishes'** early fifteenth century shopfront next door predates this and is very important but not so obvious (*Fig. 23*). **Blackmore House** (previously known as Dadds Village Stores) dates from around 1400, and was probably a high status house originally (*Fig. 25*). The shop front to the right has been sympathetically rebuilt in recent times, and there is a modern rear extension along Fingrith Hall Lane which is reasonably well integrated into the historic setting. **The Leather Bottle** was rebuilt following a fire in 1954, although there had been a pub on the site for generations previously³. It has some unsympathetic modern blinds and a satellite dish on the front elevation (*Fig. 24*).



Fig. 22 Post Office.



Fig. 23 Lundishes.

³ Personal communication, Andrew Smith, 2007.



Fig. 24 The Leather Bottle.



Fig. 25 Blackmore House.

There are numerous signs which detract from the appearance of this area, and these should be rationalised. For example a redundant pole on the green should be removed. The eastern boundary of this part of Horsefayre Green along Fingrith Hall Lane is also less attractive. **The corner shop** is very prominent and basically of good design, but made much less sympathetic by the details of a front lean-to extension, clutter, prominent car parking and the over-use of tarmac. The shop has plastic signage some of which is internally illuminated; this is not appropriate to the sensitive historic setting (*Fig. 26*).



Fig. 26 The shop.

Along with the shop, the modern houses **Soller**, **Brownlea** and **Two Ashes** are sited on the original Green. The trees in front of Two Ashes provide a valuable screen from this modern house and create framing to the entrance to the main Green. The other two houses are of modern design and their proportions and details are unsympathetic in this historic context.

The Green is a very significant historic space which contributes to the spatial character of the Conservation Area. Its original extent can still be seen on historic maps. The boundary is preserved in the building line of historic and modern properties including the **Baptist Church** and **Laurences**, which are set far back from the road edge. This historic spatial character should be preserved, but has been undermined to some extent by car parking. Any further incremental erosion of this setting should be strongly resisted.

The Green is surrounded and enclosed by houses but is open to Ingatestone Road on the east beyond the ponds. The war memorial, **The Barge** and the ponds are important landmarks within the Green (*Fig. 27*). The mix of historic and modern houses of appropriate

scale forms an important and varied backdrop to The Green. The modern houses on the north-east corner including **Sans Fee** and **Waterfront** are rather cramped and have too-deep plans but do not detract from the attractive views across the pond (*Fig. 28*). Generally buildings around The Green are comfortably spaced and proportioned. The railings at the eastern end of The Green, which comprise timber and concrete posts with tubular steel rails, are in poor condition, partly due to vandalism, and should be repaired or replaced. The western edge of the Green is less successfully enclosed along the boundary with **The Bull** where clutter is evident and it would benefit from a hedge.



Fig. 27 The war memorial and green.



Fig. 28 Waterfront viewed from The Green.

The **Baptist Church** and **Infant School** are landmark buildings halfway along the Green and well set back on the original Green edge (*Fig. 29*). The original church was built in 1841, by Ashley Barrett (Whites Directory 1848). The Church has been recently extending to the front and although it is a little heavier in character, impressive care has been taken over the materials and details such as Flemish bond brickwork and good sash windows. There is a short length of historic iron railing in front of the Church which is rare in this village and therefore important.



Fig. 29 Baptist Church.

The red brick wall in front of **Laurences** is significant and allows only limited but attractive views of the building, a substantial early seventeenth century and earlier house with distinctive decorative brick chimneys (*Fig. 30*).



Fig. 30 Laurences.

10.2 BLACKMORE ROAD

The entrance from the roundabout is well framed by the distinctive old school and mature trees on the Green, albeit the numerous sign posts and litter bin detract from their appearance.

The Green survives on the north-west with mature trees and a rather tatty backdrop of fence panels. The original Green has largely been lost by later development on the east side of the road. Next to the old school is the simple late twentieth century **Library** (Fig. 31). The Library has been closed and the site is being considered for redevelopment. Any new building would need to be subsidiary to the old school but worthy in its own right as a landmark building on this prominent site. The current Library does this well even though it is not derived from the local architecture or materials.



Fig. 31 Redundant library building.

Numbers 1-4 Blackmore Road are significant nineteenth century semi-detached houses (*Fig. 32*). They have all been altered but retain their original welsh slate roofs and brick chimneys. Nos 1-2 have been rendered and nos 1-2 and 3 have had porches added; windows and doors have been changed on all the houses, one with uncharacteristic leaded casements, and only one front garden retains a picket fence or original front boundary. Any further loss of front gardens should be resisted. The replacement windows on the fronts of nos 1 & 2 have been sympathetically done, albeit not matching and not painted as they would originally have been.

The **White House, Holly Cottage, Steeple View, Uvongo and Walnut Tree House** are all modern and although they have wall finishes of brick and render, it is not the local brick and it is laid in modern stretcher bond. Little heed has been taken of their context. **Holly House** is in too prominent a position.

Steeple View has a hedged front boundary but many of the houses are set back behind open lawns which would be better behind traditional hedging. A watercourse follows the route of the edge of the original Green; much of its course has been piped but efforts have been made elsewhere to make a feature of it.

At the entrance to the village along Blackmore Road is a significant group, set back behind hedging, **Walnut Tree Cottage** and **Trees Cottage**, originally a single house from circa 1600 (*Fig. 33*). Trees Cottage has an unattractive front extension, once a shop.



Fig. 32 Nos 1-2 Blackmore Road.



Fig. 33 Walnut Tree Cottage.

10.3 CHURCH STREET

Church Street is an attractive historic narrow street, leading from The Green to the church. It has a high quality historic built environment with many listed buildings, some of which are

medieval in date (*Fig. 34*). It is closely built up on the northern approach and more rural and tree-lined towards the church on the south. It has strong distinctive red brick walls, softened by trees, which unite the street and provide concentrated views and a strong sense of enclosure. However the tall *Leylandii* conifer trees along the boundary of **Jericho Priory** are overly-dominant in these views having been left to grow unchecked (*Fig. 35*) The church and lychgate provide significant focus on the southern end and jettied and varied houses along the road edge provide visual interest. There is a slight change of direction along the road with distinctive landmarks at this point giving variety to the views. There are no pavements and the simple relatively undisturbed road scene enhances the historic and rural nature of the street.



Fig. 34 Church Street, looking north.



Fig. 35 Church Street, looking south.

The **Church of St Laurence** is Norman, and was originally erected as the church of the Augustinian Priory (*Fig. 36*). The flint rubble west wall of the Norman church still survives. The remarkable timber bell tower has been tree-ring dated to c.1400 (Bridge 2004). Pevsner described the tower as one of the most impressive, if not the most impressive, of all English timber towers (Bettley and Pevsner 2007). The church was restored by Frederick Chancellor 1896-1902. St Laurence is of exceptional importance, and visually picturesque. The attractive



Fig. 36 Church of St Laurence.

and informally planted churchyard, along with the trees, greensward and historic landscape features extending southwards are key elements in the distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.

Although the church is only visible close-to, the lychgate provides a landmark visible along most of the street. The walls to the churchyard continue along the street, hiding the modern houses behind and contributing to the street scene. **Jericho Priory** is arguably the most interesting and important building in the Conservation Area, very hidden behind the conifer trees as well as the wall, but prominent in views from the churchyard (*Fig. 37*). The brick boundary walls of the Priory around the churchyard and along Church Street are visually and historically important, but the condition is poor in places with encroaching vegetation and cracks.

Jericho Priory was, according to Morant (1768), one of the houses of pleasure to which Henry VIII resorted, and where his natural son, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and Somerset was born. When the king was here, his courtiers said he was gone to Jericho, a bye name which the house still retains. The river Wid, which runs near it, is sometimes called the Jordan. The Smyths sold the mansion to Sir Jacob Ackworth around 1714, who modernised and greatly enlarged it. The windows and facing bricks have the Georgian appearance of this period, but the plan is more suggestive of the mid-16th century (Bettley and Pevsner 2007). How much, if any, of the original Priory building remains within the structure is unclear.



Fig. 37 Jericho Priory viewed from the churchyard.

Next to the church on the western side of the road are modern houses on infill sites. They do not continue the local characteristic architectural styles or materials, but are much hidden by the red brick wall (Fig. 38). Beyond them is **Hareton House**, purchased as a Vicarage in 1891⁴, a substantial and significant Georgian house well set forward on a prominent site at a slight change of road direction (Fig. 39). Continuing northwards from Hareton House the buildings are more urban and closely set. They are a mix of modern and historic of a similar scale, and include the Grade II listed **Shaw House** and **Shaw Cottage**. **Shaw House** is substantially 18th century in date but incorporating late medieval timbers probably re-used from the building known as the Blue Boar that previously stood on the site⁵. **Shaw Cottage** is an early 19th century timber-framed and rendered vernacular cottage. **Church Street Cottage**, with two gables ends to the street and tall 18th century external brick chimney stacks on the side return, is one of the best of the historic buildings on the street (Fig. 40). It occupies a prominent corner site at the junction with Blacksmiths Alley.



Fig.38 Priory View, one of the modern houses behind traditional brick walling, Church Street.



Fig. 39 Hareton House.



Fig. 40 Church Street Cottage.

⁴ Personal communication, Andrew Smith, 2007.

⁵ Information based on documentary evidence kindly supplied by Bruno Giordan, 2007.

There are fewer modern buildings along the eastern side of the road and greater spacing between buildings, giving longer prominence to the boundary walls. **Coachmans Cottage, Little Jericho** and **The Old Manor House** are distinctive and significant buildings in this part of the street. The Grade II listed **Coachmans Cottage** and associated 18th century stable range are in a sorry state, and are included on the Essex County Council Buildings at Risk Register (2007) (*Fig. 41*). **Little Jericho** is a house of c.1600, timber-framed and rendered, with a 17th century two-storey central porch. **The Old Manor House** is positioned at right angles to the street, and is an early 19th century house with a façade of white gault brick, which is unusual within the conservation area (*Fig. 42*). **The New House** occupying a previously vacant plot between Little Jericho and The Old Manor uses some good materials but is bulky and a little too cramped and has less satisfactory details such as bland stretcher bond to the brickwork (*Fig. 43*).



Fig. 41 Coachmans Cottage and stables.



Fig. 42 The Old Manor House.



Fig. 43 The New House, Church Street, built 2005.

To the north of The Old Manor House the street changes direction and the buildings are more urban in character. The jetty of **No. 2 Church Street** (Longbeam Cottage) gives interest and modelling on the most prominent site at this change of direction. This is the earliest house in the street and dates from the early 14th century. The front wall was rebuilt c.1600 (Bettley and Pevsner 2007). **Little Jordan** on the corner of Bull Alley dates from c.1600; although it has sash windows on the Church Street elevation, on the Bull Alley side return there are original 17th century windows. **The Bull Public House** was, according to Bettley and Pevsner (2007), originally two houses of the 15th and 16th centuries. This pub, along with the narrow entrance into Bull Alley, Longbeam Cottage and Little Jordan are a very important group, together with Church Street Cottage immediately on the other side of the street (*Figs 44 and 45*).



Fig. 44 The Bull.



Fig. 45 Bull Alley.

There are alleys leading both east and west from Church Street at this point, providing attractive views to the side and valuable and well used pedestrian routes to The Green and Blackmore Road.

On the northern end there is a slight offset of the road before it reaches the Green, making the unattractive garage and fencing to the rear of **Crosse House** unduly prominent. A traditional red brick wall would improve the view here significantly and draw the viewer's eye towards the attractive buildings around the Green.

At the junction of Church Street and The Green are **Crosse House** and **Swan House**, both on prominent sites. **Crosse House** is an attractive house dating from 1634 that served as a shop until recently, but it has an unsympathetic UPVC window facing Church Street. Swan House is a 14th century timber frame house now with a rendered brick façade. It was previously an inn and later a shop, before becoming a private residence (*Fig. 46*). The render has modern pargetting.



Fig. 46 Swan House.

10.4 INGATESTONE ROAD

With the exception of the modern **garage** and the rather more attractive **Barge** which are on exposed sites, this part of the Conservation Area is characterised by trees and hedging (*Fig. 47*). The **garage** is a utilitarian building, but nonetheless a rare survival of its kind in a rural location. **The Barge** is a prominent building at the east end of The Green and a former ale house and shop; it has a delightful rural vernacular character with weatherboard and handmade clay tiles, and is believed to date from 1584 (Blackmore Parish Council 2000). It is Grade II listed. Where other buildings are visible at this point they are in limited views behind the greenery. To the south of the Conservation Area, tall hedging and trees (primarily oaks) form the boundary to a field and a small oak woodland along the road.



Fig. 47 View towards Ingatestone Road from The Green, with The Barge and the garage.

Priory Lodge and **Lodge Cottage** are picturesque 20th century lodge houses. They adjoin the attractive wrought iron gateway at the entrance to the long drive to The Priory (not itself

visible from this point). From beyond this entrance the grounds of the Priory are quite breathtaking as they sweep away to the south, although they are not visible from the road.

10.5 BULL ALLEY

Bull Alley is the historic alley leading from Church Street to The Green and is of great visual significance (*Figs 48 and 49*). It is closely defined by historic buildings at its western entrance at Church Street and opens up to the east, giving good views in both directions. On both sides are significant buildings including the weatherboarded service buildings to **The Bull** and **Little Jordan**, **Rowfreys** and **Jericho Cottage**. **Rowfreys**, formerly known as Rare Tree Cottage, is set back behind a good brick wall. It is an early 17th century timber-frame and rendered cottage (*Fig. 50*). **Jericho Cottage** is also 17th century in origin and timber-framed and rendered. It now serves as an tea shop/antiques shop (*Fig. 51*). The modern infill building (**Tubbs**), between Jericho Cottage and Rowfreys, is appropriate to the scale of the adjacent buildings and generally well detailed (*Fig. 49*). The rather tatty fence panels at the rear of **The Bull** detract from an otherwise charming route. Along the southern edge of The Green, **Hope Cottage** is a diminutive Grade II listed vernacular building, 18th century or earlier. Around it are largely modern properties of varying quality. At the south-east end Kelby is an empty property that appears neglected and is falling into disrepair.



Fig. 48 Bull Alley looking towards Church Street, with Little Jordan (left) and outbuilding of The Bull (right).



Fig. 49 Bull Alley looking west. Tubbs is the new house on the left. The boundary treatment of the rear plot of The Bull on the right is poor.



Fig. 50 Rowfreys.



Fig. 51 Jericho Cottage.

10.6 BLACKSMITHS ALLEY

This alley follows the edge of the original Green commencing behind Church Street Cottages (*Fig. 52*). It has fewer early period historic buildings and comprises predominantly nineteenth and twentieth century houses. **Steeple View** and **Burma Bungalow** are located on the site of the first parish poor-house, Claydons, the rental of which was granted to the poor in 1580 (Medlycott 2002). Claydons was still extant at the time of the second edition OS map of 1896. The most significant buildings are **Redbrick Cottages**, the garage to 1 Redbrick Cottage and the traditional group of buildings at **Church Street Cottages** (*Fig. 53*). Views along the alley are of interest due mainly to a mix of hedging and brick walls giving good framing and visual surprise as you walk the route. The alley also gives interest by a change of direction, and the original nineteenth century brick wall at the rear of the Library is significant at this point.



Fig. 52 Blacksmiths Alley viewed from Church Street.



Fig. 53 Blacksmiths Alley with Redbrick Cottages and associated outbuilding.



Fig. 54 Blacksmiths Alley, Farriers on the right.

Farriers is in a very prominent position at the change of direction (*Fig. 54*). Although it has some hedging (laurel, not traditional) most of its boundary is unfortunately dark stained vertical boarding. There is a muddle of timber fencing and panels along the rear of the cottages in Blackmore Road, becoming tattier towards Holly House.

11. 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. 55*.

Although to some extent this is a subjective judgment, it can be helpful to inform the planning process. Each building has been graded on a scale of one to five according to the following criteria:

1. Negative, buildings of no architectural quality detrimental to the character of the area, either by reason of mass, design, materials or siting.
2. Negative, buildings of indifferent design or detailing, or that do not relate well to the special character of the Conservation Area.
3. Buildings which have a neutral presence in the Conservation Area, fitting satisfactorily into it.
4. Positive contribution through design, age, materials or detailing.
5. Positive, listed buildings or landmark buildings.

BLACKMORE CONSERVATION AREA CONTRIBUTION OF BUILDINGS TO CHARACTER

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 Positive, listed or landmark buildings | 2 Negative |
| 4 Positive | 1 Negative, detrimental to character |
| 3 Neutral | |

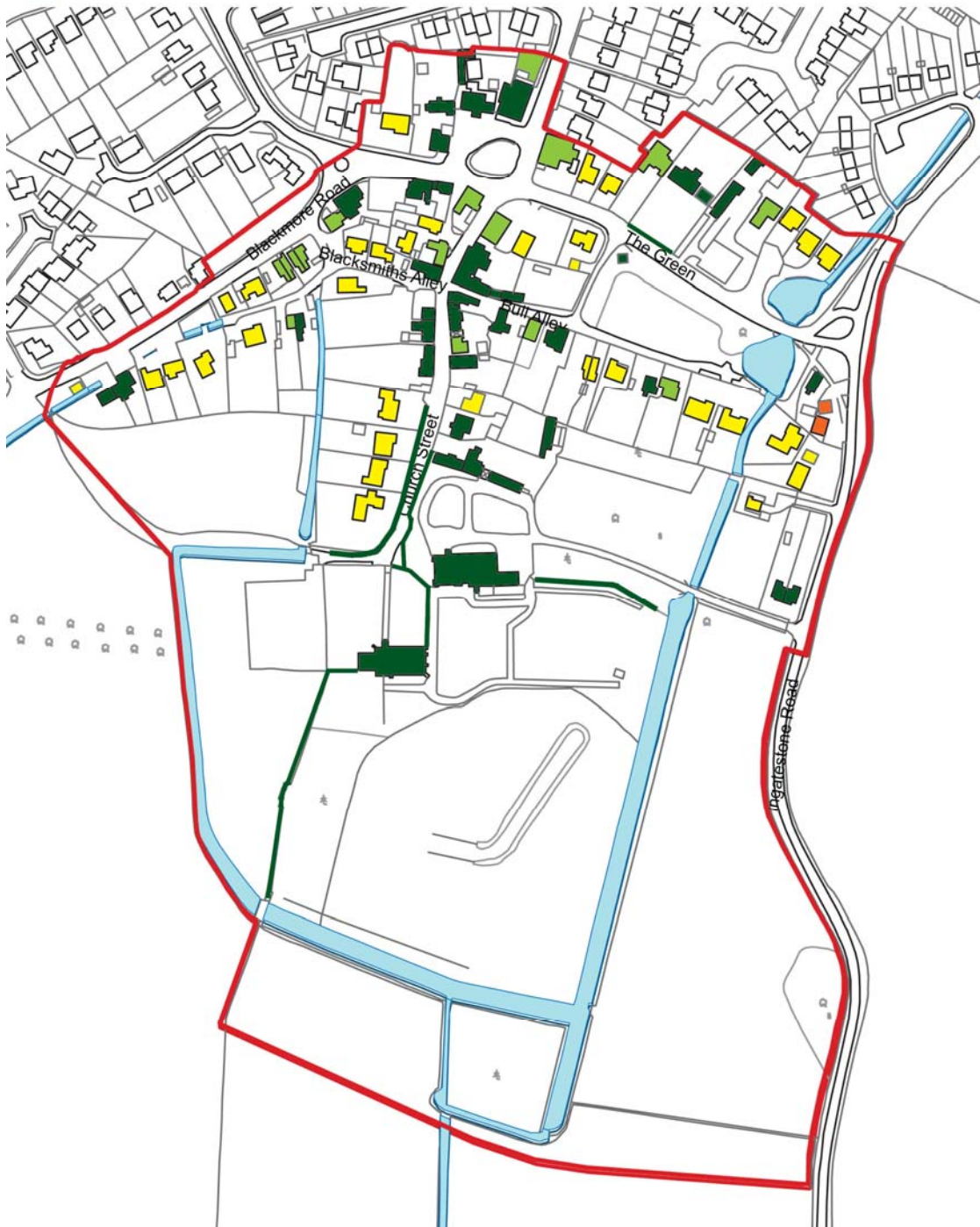


Fig. 55 Contribution of buildings to the character of the conservation area.

12. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Public Open Space

The greens are extremely significant elements of the character of Blackmore. They have been historically encroached upon by development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and whilst there would be great resistance to their loss, further erosion of the green character by alterations, such as incremental changes like car parking, should be resisted.

It is recommended that these strong open green areas, the established trees and shrubs within the greens, and the very strong mature tree and hedge boundary to the Conservation Area should be preserved and not eroded by any new development that might take place.

Boundary Treatment

The red brick walls with traditional bond provide distinctive character to the boundaries of gardens to properties particularly along Church Street, the Green and Blacksmiths Lane. These should be valued and preserved and any new development within these areas should incorporate similar walls. The brick boundary walls around the Priory are particularly important and in places (on Church Street and north-east of the churchyard) these require maintenance and repair using traditional methods. The small number of railings within the Conservation Area should be protected and further railings encouraged.

It is recommended that the mature hedging, trees and old brick walls and railings in the Conservation Area be preserved and that any future development respects them or incorporates complementary boundary treatments.

Redevelopment Sites within the Conservation Area

The old school is a distinctive and significant building and its original brick boundary walls and outbuildings are important to its character and to local views. These should be retained in any redevelopment of the Library site, and any new development should be subservient to the old school and respect its scale and the prominent location of this site.

It is recommended that the old school together with its walls and brick outbuildings should be preserved in any new development that might take place.

The listed Coachmans Cottage and attached Coach house are longstanding buildings at risk.

The recommendation is to implement a maintenance programme within the Coachmans Cottage and Coach house site to prevent further deterioration to the buildings and to consider repairs notices as necessary to halt further decline of these vulnerable buildings.

12.4 Signage

There are small areas within the Conservation Area where signage has an adverse effect on its appearance, on Horsefayre Green for example.

The recommendation is that existing unsatisfactory signage is rationalised, and that in any future development within the Conservation Area, signage should be kept to a minimum to preserve its character. Similarly road markings should be limited to reduce the adverse impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area.

12.5 Services

The clutter of above ground electricity, telephone cables and associated poles make a considerable intrusion into the Conservation Area.

It is recommended that relocation of cables below ground is encouraged as part of any development of the Conservation Area.

12.6 Locally listed buildings

Brentwood Borough Council at present do not hold a local list of buildings which, whilst not of sufficient national importance to warrant listing, are considered to be of local importance. However the *Replacement Local Plan* at paragraph 9.57 states that they will seek to compile a list of buildings of local or historic interest. The buildings will be assessed using defined criteria and are likely to be good examples of a particular design, type of construction, the work of a local architect or a building associated with an important local figure. Inclusion in the list will be a material consideration in determining planning applications, in an effort to retain important original features and fabric, and to control alterations or extension so as to maintain the character of the building.

The old school is a building central to the Conservation Area and prominently positioned. Although extended to the rear it retains its original external and internal details largely complete.

It is recommended that the old school should be considered for inclusion on a 'local list' if one were to be adopted by the Local Authority.

12.7 Site of the Priory and Moats

Blackmore Priory is a significant historic site of archaeological and historic interest. Whilst the remains incorporated within the church are protected by its listing, the archaeology and historic landscape are relatively unprotected. They were considered and rejected for scheduling in English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme, but this is a decision which should possibly be reviewed and reconsidered.

It is recommended that the Priory site including moats be reconsidered as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

12.8 Boundary changes

The original boundary is well considered and no changes are required.

12.9 Additional planning controls

The greatest threat to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is their gradual erosion by minor changes, most of which do not currently require planning permission. The benefit of the planning process is that it can ensure proper care and thought is given to their impact and to more sympathetic alternatives, before these changes take place.

The Local Planning Authority can bring many of these changes within the remit of the planning system, with the use of Article 4(2) controls. Changes and alterations have begun to take place within the Conservation Area to a damaging extent: traditional details, such as window types, doors, materials, boundary treatments all play an important role in defining the character of the area. It is recommended that an Article 4(2) direction is sought to control the following works within the Conservation Area:

- *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.*
- *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 construction within the curtilage of a dwelling house of a vehicle hard standing incidental to the dwelling house.*
- *The painting of the exterior of any wall of a dwelling house with a different colour.*
- *The installation of solar panels and wind turbines.*

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