

ADOPTED VERSION

# Silk Willoughby Conservation Area Appraisal



3 OCTOBER 2019



**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Scope of appraisal</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Planning policy context</b>	<b>3</b>
L National policy	<b>3</b>
L Local policy	<b>4</b>
L Additional planning controls	<b>4</b>
<b>Boundary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Location and setting</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Historical development and archaeology</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Character appraisal</b>	<b>9</b>
L Landscape and Open Spaces	<b>9</b>
L Public Realm	<b>9</b>
L Sense of Enclosure and Boundary Treatments	<b>10</b>
L Architectural Details	<b>10</b>
<b>Landmarks, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and buildings of local interest</b>	<b>12</b>
L Landmarks	<b>12</b>
L Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments	<b>12</b>
L Buildings of local interest	<b>14</b>
<b>Positive features</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Negative features</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Local List methodology and criteria</b>	<b>16</b>

Certain photographs used in this report are © Copyright J Thomas and John Sutton and are licensed for reuse under [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0) via the website [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk)

# Introduction

A Conservation Area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The conservation of the environment can enhance the quality of life of those who live or work in the area. Under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, Local Authorities are required to review existing Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, consider the designation of new ones.

Factors which contribute to the special quality of a Conservation Area may include:

- the architectural quality of the buildings themselves
- the materials of which they are made
- their relationship with one another and their setting in the landscape
- the character of the spaces between buildings, including walls, hedges, trees, grass verges and ground surface materials
- views both within the area and from outside
- the way in which buildings, spaces and landscape reflect the historical development of the area

North Kesteven District Council has identified the village of Silk Willoughby as having a special and distinctive architectural and historic character and has therefore designated part of the village as a Conservation Area. The purpose of this document is to evaluate and record the special character and identify potential areas for enhancement of that character.

## Scope of appraisal

The purpose of the appraisal is to assess the qualities which make the area special and identify opportunities to enhance them. The appraisal will:

- Identify and record the special character of the conservation area
- Identify the conservation area boundary
- Identify and record buildings and structures of local interest
- Provide a framework against which future development can be assessed
- Identify any negative factors which harm the special character of the conservation area

## Planning policy context

### National policy

Section 69 of the ‘Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990’ states that every local planning authority, from time to time, shall determine which parts of its area are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate those as conservation areas. Section 71 of the Act places a statutory duty on the District Council to consider how to both preserve and enhance its conservation areas as areas of architectural and historic interest.

Paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Paragraph 200 requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 201 states that not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

Further, more detailed guidance is available from the Planning Practice Guide which accompanies the NPPF and can be found at [www.planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk)

## Local Policy

### Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2017)

Policy LP25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan also refers to conservation areas and requires that development within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should preserve, and enhance or reinforce it as appropriate, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting. In particular, proposals should:

- a. Retain buildings/groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces;
- b. Retain architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the area;
- c. Where relevant and practical, remove features which are incompatible with the Conservation Area;
- d. Retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, massing, scale, form, materials and lot widths of the existing built environment;
- e. Assess, and mitigate against, any negative impact the proposal might have on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape;
- f. Aim to protect trees, or where losses are proposed, demonstrate how such losses are appropriately mitigated against'.

## Additional planning controls within conservation areas

### Planning permission

Planning applications, which, in the opinion of the Authority, would affect the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, must be advertised and opportunity must be given for public comment. This may include proposals outside a Conservation Area which nevertheless affect its setting. Planning permission is normally needed to demolish all or the very substantial majority of any building with a total cubic content exceeding 115 cu m within a conservation area. Consent is also needed for the entire removal of any gate, wall, fence or railing more than 1 metre high abutting a highway, public footpath or open space, or more than 2 metres high elsewhere in a conservation area.

### Works to trees

Within a conservation area there are restrictions to the work that may be carried out on trees. Under section 211 of the 1990 Planning Act any one proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area (with the exception of trees under a certain size, or those that are dead, dying or dangerous) is required to give 6 weeks' notice to the district planning authority. The purpose of this requirement is to give the authority the opportunity to make a tree preservation order which then brings any works permanently under control.

#### **Article 4 Directions**

The Local Authority may also decide to adopt extra planning controls within Conservation Areas by the use of an Article 4(2) Direction. Article 4 Directions are not automatically applied when a conservation area is designated. An Article 4 Direction removes the normal Permitted Development Rights from a building, group of buildings or piece of land, meaning that planning permission is required for works that would normally be exempt from planning control, for example comprising the extension, enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house, works to roofs, the provision of freestanding buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling and the erection or demolition of walls, fences, gates or other enclosures.

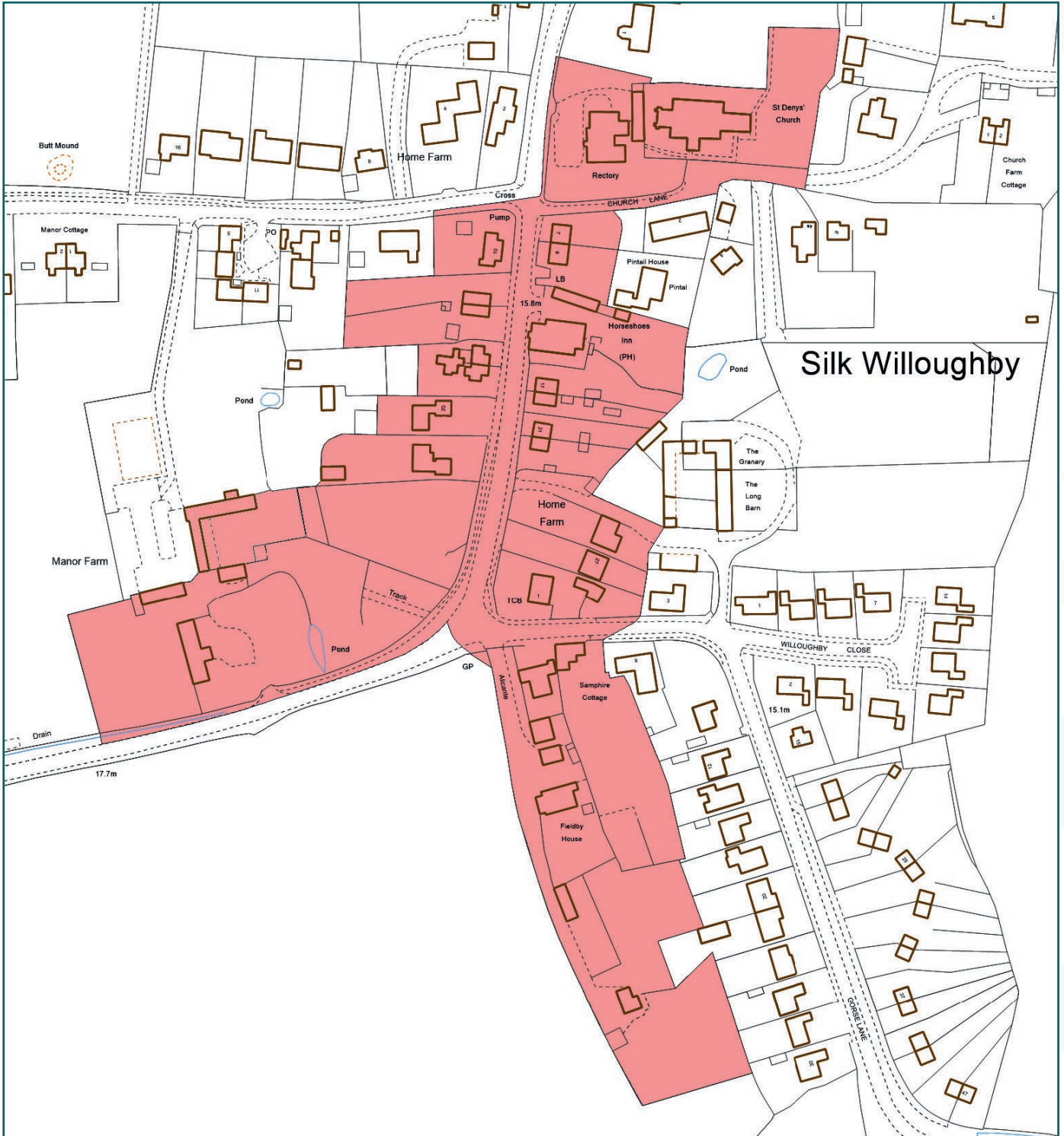
Article 4 Directions can be used selectively, for example to remove permitted development rights relating to fenestration while leaving the remainder intact.

# Boundary

The map below shows the boundary of the Silk Willoughby conservation area.

The boundary has been drawn to include only the historic core of the village in those areas where a traditional architectural character and streetscape survives in an appreciable form. It also includes important open space which contributes directly to the special character of the conservation area, and a few sites which, while not having any buildings of architectural or historic interest, are prominent parts of the overall fabric of the historic centre.

## Conservation Area Boundary



# Overview

The conservation area covers the historic centre of the village, from the parish church in the north to Manor Farm and Fieldby House in the south, a total area of about three and a half hectares. Within this area, development along London Road, the main street, is characterised mainly by late nineteenth century estate cottages of stone and brick, built as pairs of semi-detached houses but with considerable variety of design.

There has been some limited modern infill development but this is generally set back behind landscaping which retains a rural feel.

To the south west, the grounds of Manor Farm with large trees along the road frontage form an important green foil at the entrance/exit to the village street and also contain the earthworks of a medieval moated site.

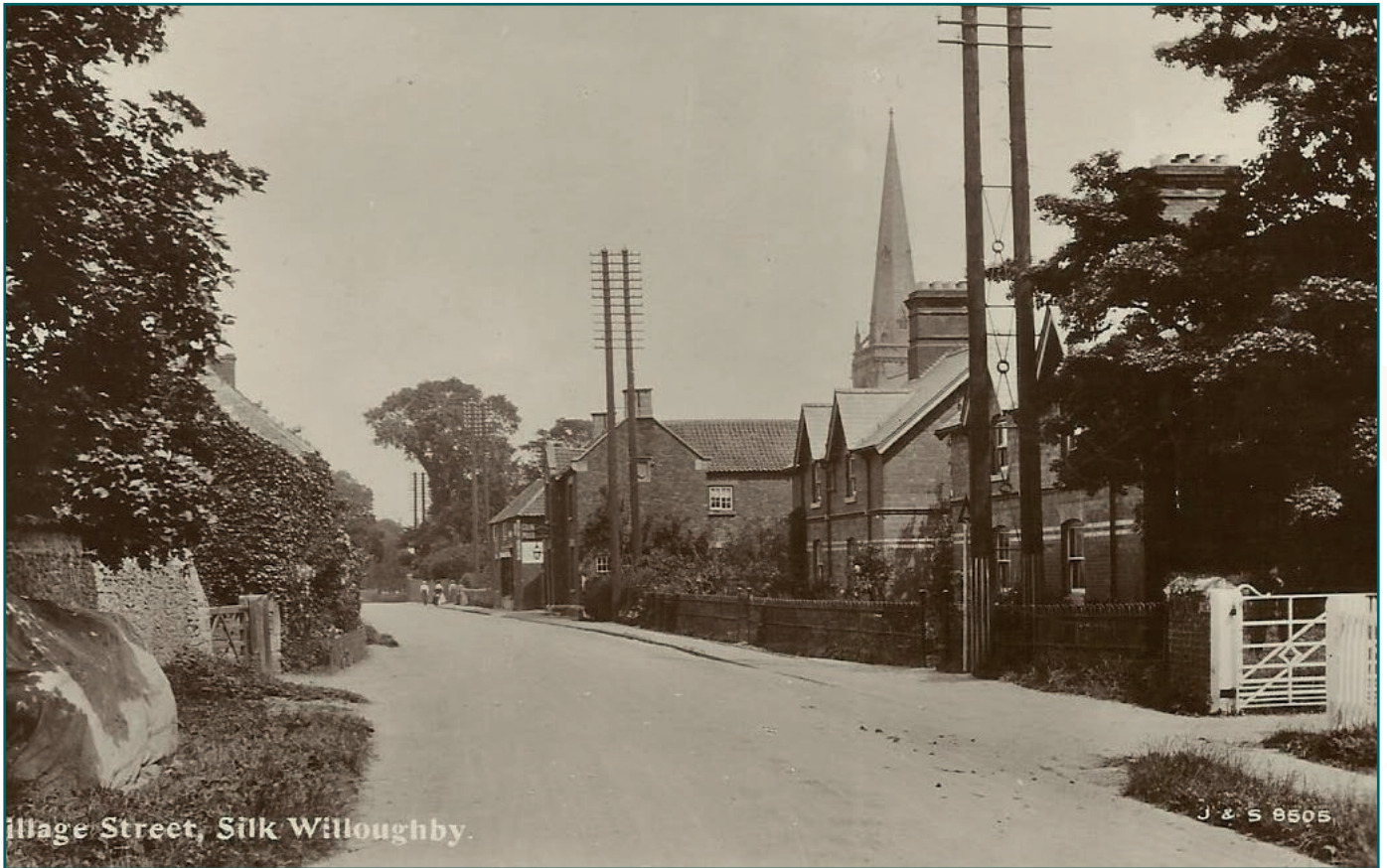
## Location and setting

"The approach to it from the south is exceedingly pleasing whence the church is seen embosomed in trees its spire rising above their summits and the curling smoke of the humble dwellings winding its way through their leaves and branches." That description, from 1825, still holds true today though central heating has reduced the number of smoking chimneys.

Silk Willoughby is about two miles south west of the centre of Sleaford. Though now relatively quiet, the village sits along the old main road from Lincoln to Peterborough (and eventually London), on slightly rising ground about 15m (50 feet) above sea level around the church, which rises more sharply to around 30m (100 feet) where the modern A15 now bypasses the village.

Although there has been twentieth century and later development to the west and south east, the historic centre of the village is still compact and bordered by open countryside where the main road enters and leaves it on the north and south.

# Historical development and archaeology



The settlement of Willoughby is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. Land there belonged to the Bishop of Durham, the Bishop of Lincoln, Gilbert de Gand, Waldin the Breton, Odo the Arblaster and Robert of Stafford.

The population in the 11th century was probably a little over a hundred, and although this is the first documentary record, Silk Willoughby still shows evidence for a much longer history.

In Butt Lees, on the north side of School Lane, are two low mounds known as the Butt Mound and the Folk Moot. Both are believed to be Bronze Age (c.2000 BC) burial mounds, the survivors of at least four such mounds which in later centuries marked the boundary between the settlements of Willoughby to the east and Silkby to the west. The surviving mounds are thought to have been reused as archery butts in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The Folk Moot may also have been reused as a beacon or as a meeting place, possibly as the central assembly point of the Wapentake (county division) of Aswardhurn.

Also in Butt Lees is the site of the chapel which served the hamlet of Silkby. The population of Silkby diminished in the late Middle Ages and the hamlet was amalgamated with Willoughby, to become Silk Willoughby, with the centre of the village around the present parish church. The Silkby chapel was used as a barn before finally being demolished in the early 19th century.

Despite its location on the main road from London to Lincoln, Silk Willoughby never "boomed". 42 families, perhaps about 200 people, were recorded as living in the parish in 1563, while the first census in 1801 records 225 inhabitants. In 1837, 197 people lived in the parish, and 258 in 1872. The present day population is about 300. Nineteenth century directories record, along with eight or nine farmers, a couple of blacksmiths, as might be expected in an agricultural village where horses were vital, together with a carpenter, the innkeeper (who was also a farmer), a schoolteacher, a shoemaker and one shopkeeper. The village shop occupied a building which has since been demolished, at the entrance to the Horseshoes car park.



The architectural character of the village changed in the later nineteenth century with the building of a number of pairs of estate cottages in the vicinity of the pub. These are very distinctive and are now the most characteristic historic domestic building type in the village centre.

More recent demolitions include an attractive stone cottage on the south west side of London Road (above) which was replaced by two houses in 1980, and the farm buildings and smithy at the corner of School Lane. In both cases the replacement buildings do not show a great deal of sympathy to the traditional character of the village. In total, about 90 new houses have been built in the village since 1945, mostly on School Lane to the west of the historic centre and Gorse Lane to the south.



# Character Appraisal

## Landscape and open spaces

The historic core of the village consists largely of a single street, London Road, which runs north-south and then curves round to the west. Towards the south end of the village, the grounds of Manor Farm are an important open space which, although private, serve visually as a "village green", mirrored on the other side of the road by the setting back of the houses behind large front gardens. The mature trees along the roadside at this point are also visually important. Beyond this point to the south and west is open countryside.



The churchyard is rather tucked away on the east side of the main road but also allows views through from the centre of the village to the open countryside to the north.

## Public Realm

Roads and footpaths are generally of standard tarmac construction. This makes for a slightly compromised setting for the village cross and pump opposite the church. The broad verges further south, however, reinforce the rural atmosphere of the village and the replica milestone, installed in 2012, is a good example of a community-led heritage project which celebrates the distinctive identity of the village.

## Sense of Enclosure and Boundary Treatments

Historically, boundaries of houses along the roadside were a mixture of stone walls, wooden picket fences and hoop-topped iron railings, sometimes backed by hedges. While many of these survive, others have been removed to allow car parking in front garden areas.

## Architectural details

The most characteristic buildings of the village are the several pairs of estate cottages along the main road – others are to be found outside the conservation area boundaries. These are semi-detached and of three



basic types, reflecting their slightly different dates of construction. As there is relatively little planting in their front gardens they form a very prominent element of the street scene.

The oldest appear to be the stone-built pairs on the west side of the road, L-shaped on plan with two gables facing the front. The northernmost pair, on the corner of School Lane, are now a single house. On the east side of the road are two pairs of simpler cottages in red brick with dormer windows to the front, dated 1885 and 1886. Their plainness is relieved by the use of bands of yellow brick above the ground floor windows. Opposite, between the two pairs of stone cottages, is a pair of cottages dated 1892, with a stone ground floor and brick upper parts, with a half-hipped roof and a single central gable containing sham half-timbering.

The Horseshoes is earlier, with a datestone of 1831, and has more of the characteristics of late Georgian architecture though also with an eclecticism in the gables with their exaggerated kneeler stones and the stone chimneys and window heads.

To the north of The Horseshoes is an earlier pair of cottages with a hipped slate roof. Their age is no longer immediately apparent since they have been rendered and all the windows have been replaced.



North of Church Lane, the Old Rectory is a substantial house with early seventeenth century origins, probably on the site of an even earlier Rectory, with a plain but handsome Georgian front. The boundary wall to the street is an important feature at the north end of the village.

South of the village centre, properties are set back from the road. On the west, before the grounds of Manor Farm, are two late twentieth century houses which replaced an old stone cottage and outbuildings. Unfortunately they offer little to the street scene.

On the east side of the road, also set back, Home Farm is a house of c.1800 with the "moustache" lintels that were the hallmark of a Grantham-based builder of the period. This is followed by two more modern houses which again are not particularly reflective of the historic character of the village. The buff brick one occupies a very important site at the corner of Gorse Lane.

Most of the recent houses along the street do at least have the merit of being quite simple and straightforward in form, without extraneous "features" which would make them more prominent.

Manor Farm is a house of c.1590, altered in the nineteenth century. It too is set back from the road and only glimpsed through the hedge and trees. Its outbuildings, however, form the backdrop to views across the field at the south end of the main street. These are currently (2019) being converted to residential use.

Approaching from the south west, the grounds of Fieldby House form a prominent hedged boundary between the open countryside and the village, with the gables and roofs of the house and its outbuildings rising against a backdrop of trees. On Gorse Lane, Samphire Cottage is an attractive red brick house set close to the road. With the sympathetically-designed new house opposite it forms a gateway between the older part of the village and the newer development further east. The stone-built workshop that formerly adjoined it to the west has unfortunately been replaced by a bungalow.

## Landmarks, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and buildings of local interest

### Landmarks

Some buildings and structures stand out from their surroundings because of their height, scale, design or location. They may also stand out because they have particular significance to the community. They can act as focal points and navigation aids. There are a number of such buildings within the conservation area which are shown on the map below.

---

### Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

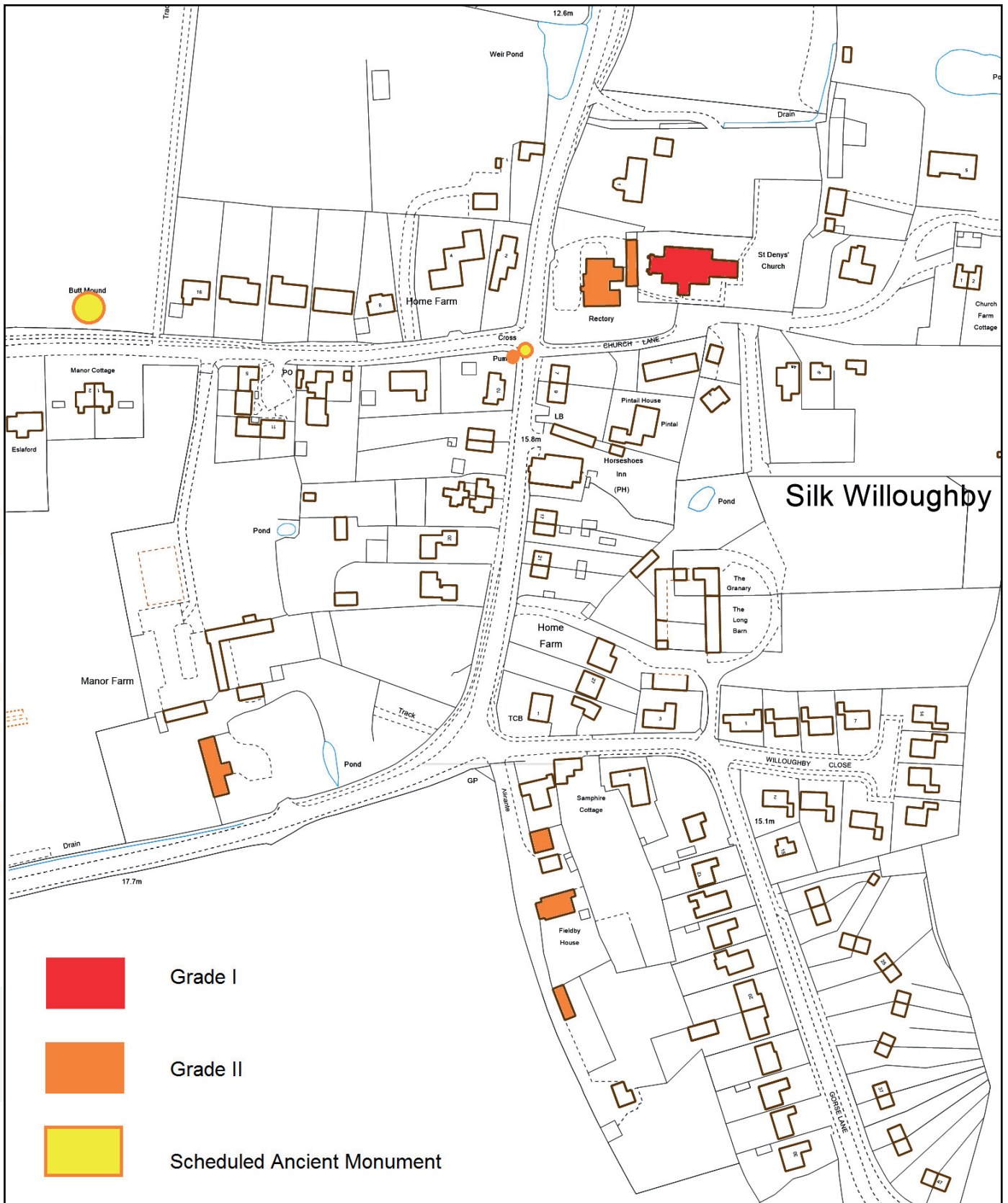
A map showing all the listed buildings within the conservation area is below. It was correct at time of going to press but for up to date information on listed buildings please see <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

There are ten listed buildings within the conservation area boundaries:

St Denys' Church	Grade I
Village Cross Base	Grade II*
Village Pump	Grade II
Home Farmhouse	Grade II
Manor Farmhouse	Grade II
The Old Rectory	Grade II
Old Rectory outbuildings	Grade II
Fieldby House	Grade II
Stable and trap house at Fieldby House	Grade II
Barn at Fieldby House	Grade II

In addition, the village cross is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

# Conservation Area: Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments



## Buildings of local interest map

As part of the appraisal process the local list of sensitive buildings (non-designated heritage assets) for the conservation area was reviewed against the Councils' assessment criteria. The following buildings and structures in the conservation area were identified as suitable for inclusion having regard to those criteria:

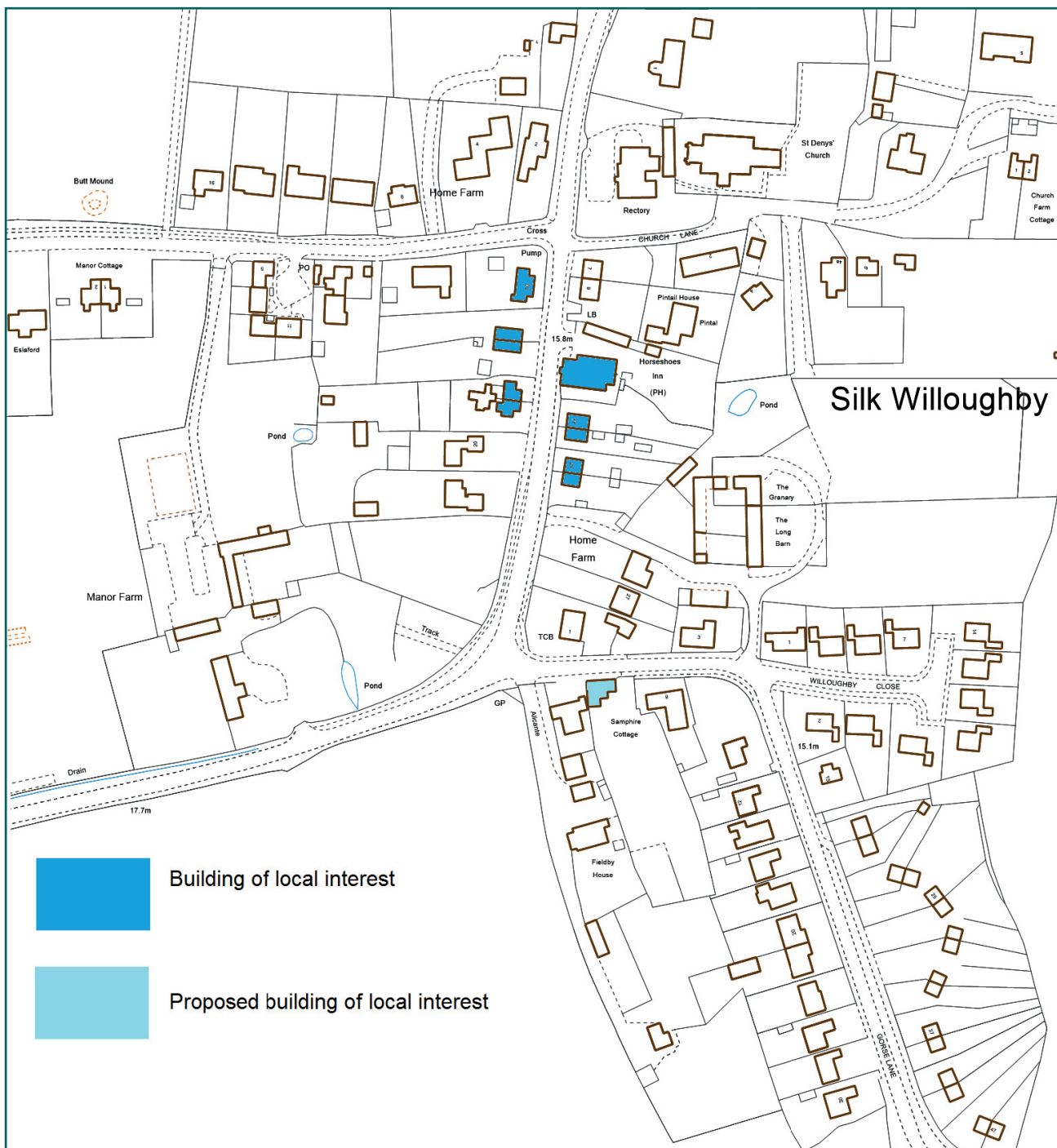
The following list only shows sensitive buildings (non-designated heritage assets) that are inside the boundary of the conservation area.

### London Road

- 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23.
- The Horseshoes
- (NB, 20 London road was previously included in the local list but was demolished in the late 1970s)

### Gorse Lane

- Saphire Cottage



## Key views and vistas

The tower and spire of St Denys' church is a prominent landmark across the village and is the principal element of views along London Road, and also along School Lane, where it is seen rising above the trees in the grounds of the Old Rectory.



### Positive features

The historic centre of Silk Willoughby still retains an attractive village character, which is generally well maintained, as reflected in the several "best kept village" award plaques displayed on the verge at the south end of the main street.

### Negative features

More recent (post-1945) development has tended to be of a standard type which does not reflect the special character of the village. Some of this development has been at the expense of historic buildings demolished to provide sites.

There has been some replacement of original timber windows and doors with crude approximations in PVCu.

The loss of front boundary walls, fences and hedges, and the conversion of front gardens into parking areas, has caused some harm to the street scene and the character of the village centre.

# Appendix 1

## Local List methodology and criteria

The Local List of non-designated heritage assets has been compiled in order to act as a planning tool. Heritage assets are usually included in a list because they are the best of their kind within a local authority area. Other assets are included because of the contribution that they make to the character of the local area.

By their very nature, buildings will make up the bulk of the list as they are the most visible of the historic assets and contribute greatly to the character of an area.

Conversely, archaeological sites will be greatly under-represented on the list due to the difficulty in establishing the nature and extent of any individual assets without first excavating, particularly within the urban environment. Designed Landscapes, pieces of art and other assets are low in overall number and so will make up a minor part of the list; they are also the least likely to be affected by development.

### Criteria for the identification of locally listed (non-designated) heritage assets

A non-designated heritage asset can be a building, monument, designed landscape, definable site or place identified as having a degree of significance. Development proposals affecting an identified non-designated heritage asset will be assessed against the requirements of Policy LP25 'The Historic Environment' of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, any relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), including paragraph 197.

### General criteria

The general criteria for particular asset types will be informed by Historic England's National Heritage List Listing Selection Guides. To be included on the North Kesteven District Council local list, non-designated heritage assets must meet all three of the following general criteria:

1. They must be a building, monument, designed landscape, definable site or place, and should retain the majority of their historic fabric and character.
2. They must possess heritage interest that is able to be conserved and enjoyed. This can include physical considerations such as appearance and materials as well as associations with people or past events. The physical features of an asset can help illustrate these associations.
3. Their value to the character and identity of the area must go beyond personal or family connections or the interest of individual property owners.

Heritage assets should stand out as being of greater significance than the general historic environment of which they form part.

The absence of any particular heritage asset from the local list does not necessarily mean that it has no heritage value, simply that it does not currently meet the selection criteria or that it has yet to be identified.



### **Detailed criteria**

In addition to meeting all three general criteria, an asset must also meet at least one of the criteria in two of the sections below in order to be considered for inclusion on the list, namely;

- Interest (historic, architectural or artistic)
- Local value (association, illustration, evidence, aesthetic or communal)
- Local significance (North Kesteven's identity and history, age, rarity, integrity, group value, or other)

Further information can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building/planning/conservation-and-heritage/local-list-of-non-designated-heritage-assets/>



**North Kesteven**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Council Offices, Kesteven Street, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 7EF  
Telephone Number: (01529) 414155  
190618-JA2