

# OVER CONSERVATION ARE APPRAISAL



**South Cambridgeshire District Council**

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C.W.M. Fletcher B.A., M.Sc.

## **INTRODUCTION.**

This document is one of a series produced by the District Council which look individually at South Cambridgeshire's Conservation Areas.

The purpose of this appraisal is twofold:

- To act as a guide for development control in the Conservation Area.
- To identify the features which contribute to the special character of Over and those features which need to be enhanced.

This document was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance by South Cambridgeshire District Council on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1999.

## **THE REASONS FOR THE CONSERVATION AREA.**

The designation of a Conservation Area is recognition of the architectural quality and historic interest of the area.

The reasons for the designation of a Conservation Area include the quality of the buildings, the spaces in between them, the landscape, trees, and street furniture. All of these factors can affect and combine to form the character of the area.

The following section is an analysis of these features showing why Over warrants its Conservation Area status. It will also identify areas where these features have been eroded, lost or replaced. The Parish has always been mainly agricultural, however in the 20<sup>th</sup> C. market gardening has become important and many orchards were planted, mainly to the south of the village.

## **VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT.**

As with so many of the fen edge villages, the form of Over has been immensely influenced by water levels. The River Ouse has been a recurrent cause of inundation up until the mid. C20, and the village is surrounded by a network of drainage ditches, some of which were navigable. One such ditch is Chain Ditch, which ran from the Ouse at Over Cote to the north of the village.

The present village contains two nuclei which have joined together. The church occupies a gravel knoll at the north west end of the village; its site at the end of a low ridge probably gave rise to the name Over. The High Street curves gently away from the church to the south east, once lined on part of each side by elongated farm settlements. Stretches of back lanes survived on both sides until recently. The name Church End which currently applies only to the stretch of road opposite the church, once referred to the whole settlement centred on the

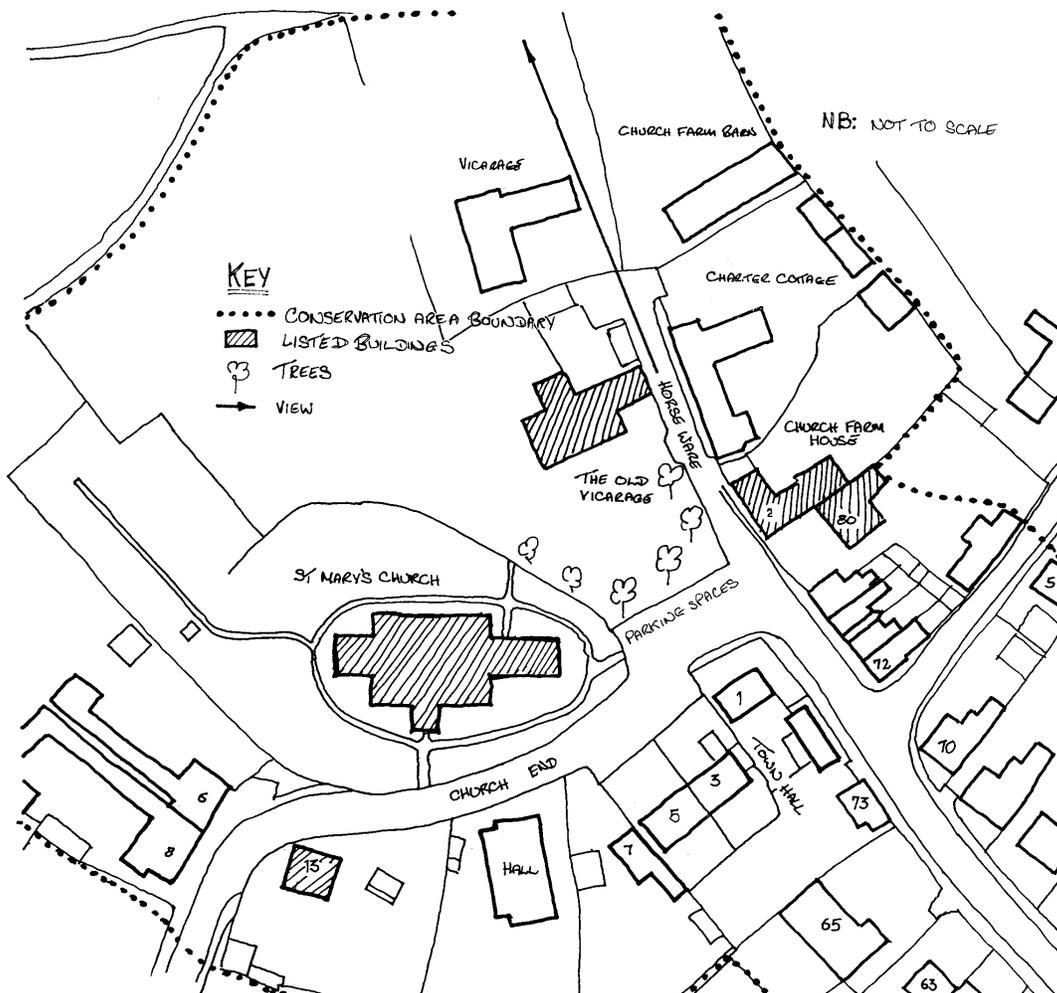
church. This area also included the Manor house of the Abbot of Ramsey, and a market place, on the rectangle of ground in front of the present Old Rectory now used for car parking.

To the east the High Street is crossed by a road called Long Furlong to the south and Fen End to the north. Long Furlong has only recently been developed, but Fen End was laid out in the middle ages and is lined by long tofts on the south east side and in part by shorter ones opposite.

**NOTE ON THE TEXT.**

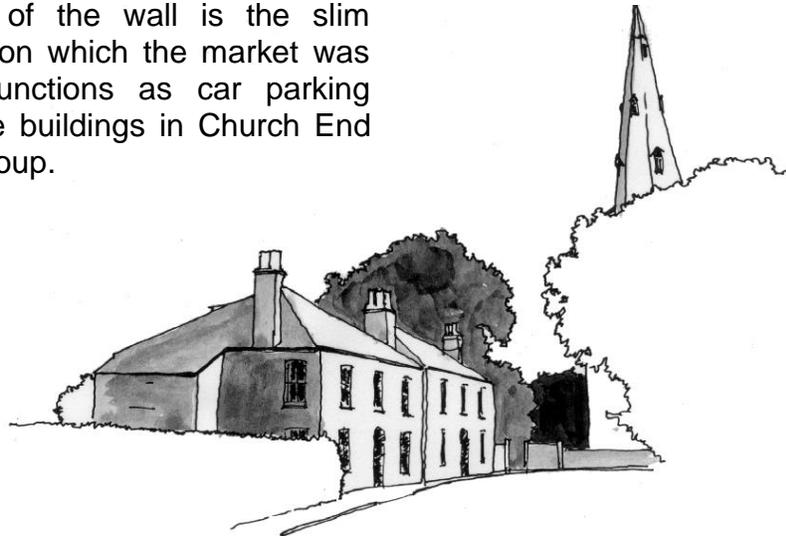
Within this document are descriptions of buildings under the heading, "Buildings of Special Note". This list is intended as a guide to buildings which exemplify the character of Over, but it is not exhaustive. Buildings not included in the list should not therefore be assumed to be without interest.

**Church End.**



Church End has the feel of an enclave separate from the rest of Over. The road snakes around two sides of the churchyard giving a number of good visual stops, most notably no. 80, a large C17 red brick house and nos. 6 and 8, C19 gault brick dwellings. These and other buildings cluster around the churchyard. Most are C19 villas or C17/C18 houses of similar size but with steeper pitched roofs. No 13 is one of the few timber framed cottages in the conservation area. A great sense of intimacy and enclosure, somewhat akin to the atmosphere of a cathedral close is here accentuated by the trees which in many cases overhang the footpath. There are views to the open countryside towards Chain Ditch through Horse Ware.

The Old Vicarage stands in large grounds adjacent to the church, behind high gault brick walls and mature Yew trees. The view of it from the street can have changed little. In front of the wall is the slim rectangular open space on which the market was once sited, but now functions as car parking spaces. Almost all of the buildings in Church End form a single cohesive group.



View of the church from the west.

**Buildings of Special Note:**

- No. 13 Church End Cottage, probably late C17 or C18. Timber framed, plaster rendered on brick sill with gault brick gable end. Reed thatch roof with C19 brick stack to right hand and C18 red brick stack to left hand gable end. Said to have been the curate's house. Listed grade II.
- Parish Church of St. Mary. Parish church, with C13 origins but mainly early C14. Restored 1840. Barnack stone ashlar part rendered. Listed grade I.
- No.2 Horse Ware. A house of c1700 but with an earlier stack. Redbrick, mostly Flemish bond with a tiled roof, hipped, with a ridge stack between the front and rear ranges. A plain eaves cornice. Of two storeys and attics lit by two hipped dormers. Segmental arches to five later flush frame windows, including three C19 or C20 hung sashes of twelve panes each in

open boxing. Central doorway with later doorcase and panelled door. Listed grade II.

- No.80 (High Street). A house, formerly the White Swan P.H. of late C17 or early C18 date. Part rebuilt and enlarged in the mid C20. The brick is generally Flemish bond; the roof is tiled, with a saw tooth eaves cornice and tumbled gable end parapets on kneelers. Two storeys and attic lit by two dormers. Segmental arches to three flush frame hung sashes, C20, in open boxing. Two similar windows on either side of off centre doorway. Forms a good visual stop to the east of Church End. Listed grade II.
- No.4 (The Old Vicarage). Built in 1727 for Dr. Bentley, classical scholar and master of Trinity Collage, Cambridge. Constructed of yellow gault brick with red brick dressings. Tiled roof, hipped, with wood dentil eaves cornice and end stacks. The house is double pile with two storeys and attic. There are gauged red brick segmental arches and rusticated surrounds to four window openings at first floor. The house was to befit a person of rank and quality. Listed grade II.
- No.6 Church End. Good C19 villa with unusual high hipped roof.

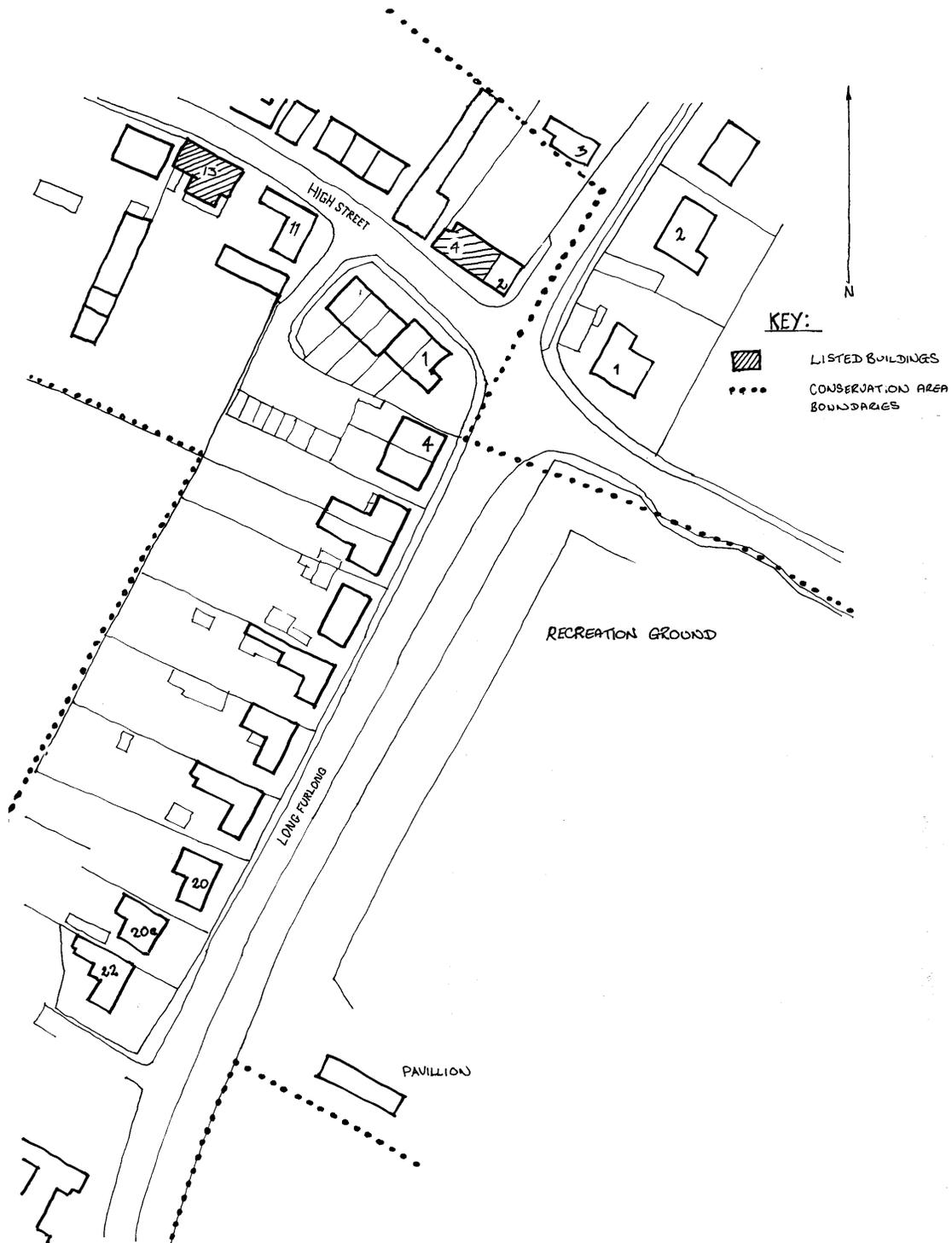


*Left: No. 6 Church End. forms another in the opposite direction.*



*Right: No.80 The High Street forms a good visual stop*

## High Street.



This is a gently meandering street in which the architecture reveals itself gradually as one travels along it. Almost all of the houses are situated hard on the back edge of the pavement or with very small front gardens. Once again

C17/C18 houses are interspersed with those of the C19, the colours varying between gault and soft red for the brick, while the roofs are slate or Cambridgeshire clay tiles. There are occasional houses of modern type with darker brick which appear alien. A few late C19 chalet style bungalows exist with small front gardens.

Most of the houses are sited with their ridges running parallel to the street, however between Randall's Lane and no.22 on the northern side of the Street, there is a rhythm of gables given by a number of bay windows, the axially sited Cymmer House and the cross wings of no.22.

### **Buildings of Special Note.**

No. 4. A house of the early C18 but possibly 1795. Plum red brick with steeply pitched asbestos roof originally thatched. End parapets on kneelers and axial ridge stack, part rebuilt. Listed Grade II.

No.13 House of early C18 date with kitchen wing of 1771. Clear red facing bricks to front wall with red and some yellow brick to end walls in English bond. A steeply pitched roof with end parapets on kneelers and brick dentil eaves cornice. Listed grade II.

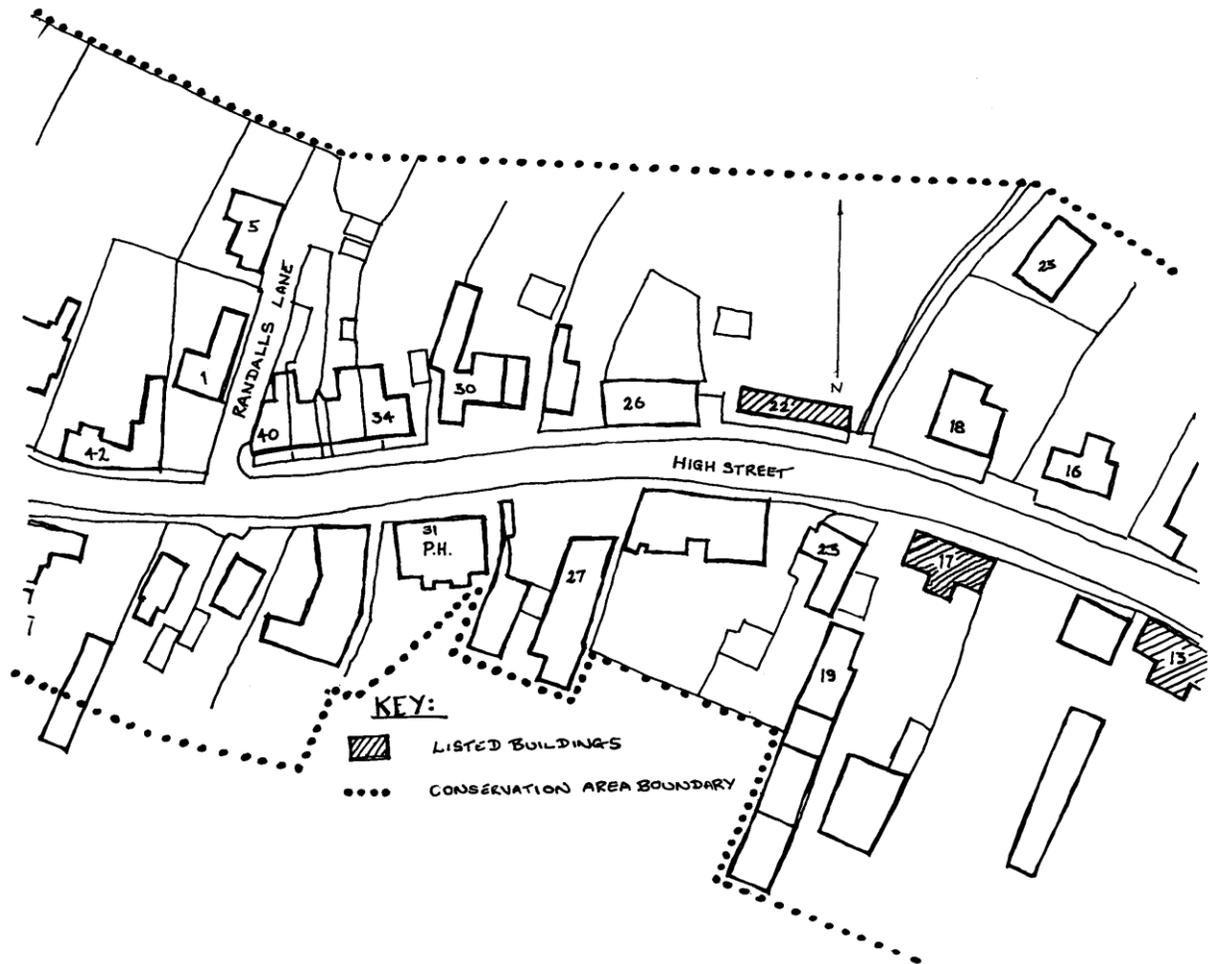
At the eastern end of the High Street the Recreation Ground is an important open space in a village which otherwise has no village green. The houses which line Long Furlong to the west of the green are mainly C19 and are all of a similar three bay detached type which form a strong rhythm of chimneys and sash windows. This group terminates at the school, an early C19 house extended to form a school in the late C19. The group is a valuable contribution to the conservation area. The views across the recreation ground are important.

Nos. 16 and 18 are two identical and unusual double fronted dwellings the style of which can possibly be best described as colonial. Each has a two storey verandah on the front constructed out of timber and cast iron. Nos. 13, 15 and 17 form a group, no. 15 having been constructed between the two older listed properties around a century ago. Between it and no. 17 is a gap. If this gap is to be developed the scheme will have to be very sensitively designed indeed as it will effect the settings of not only nos. 13 & 17, but also no. 22 across the street. Nos. 2 & 4 have between them divided a single dwelling which would have been contemporary with many of the listed buildings in the



*No.13 High Street*

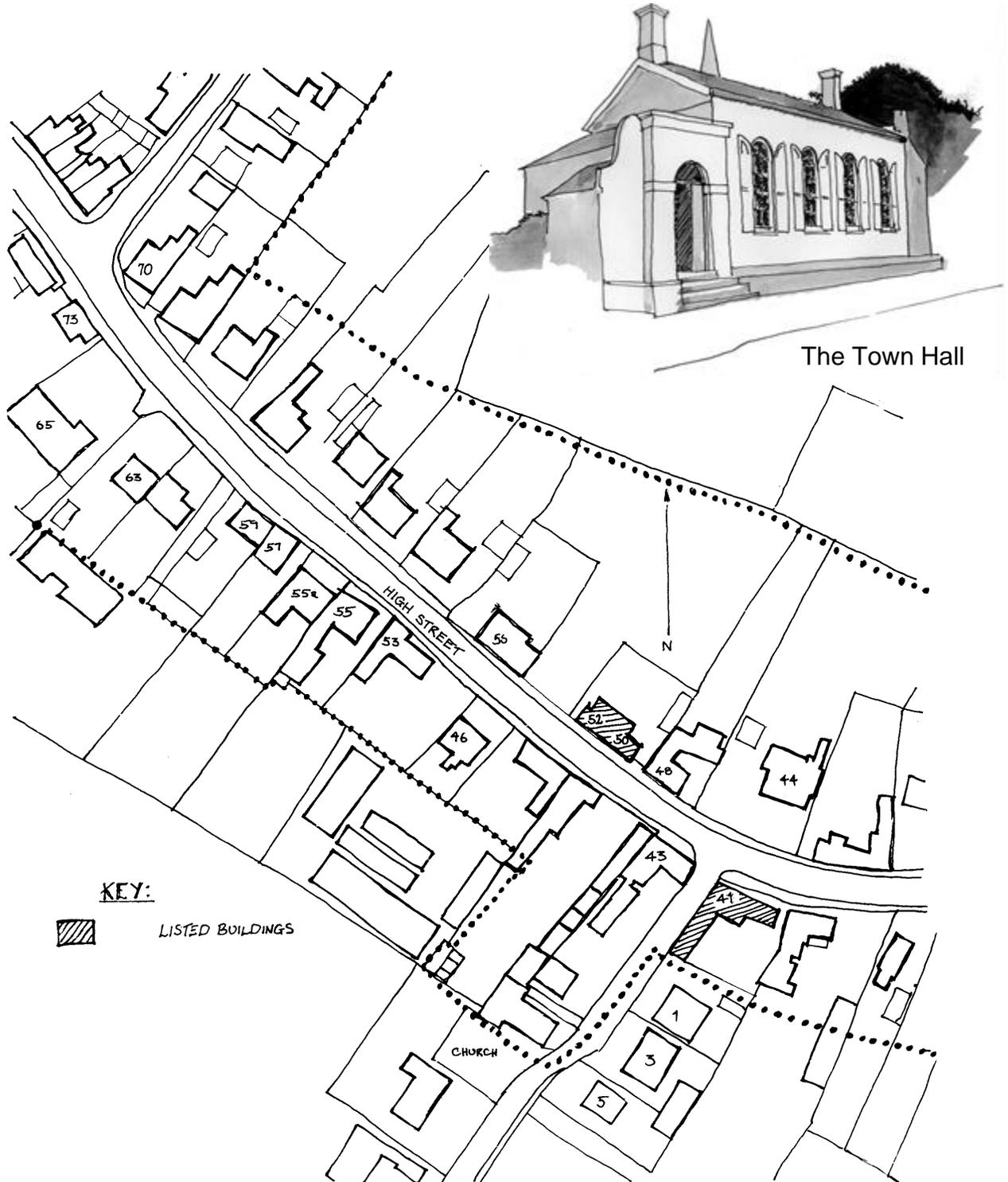
village. It is a baffle entry, parapet gabled house with a steeply pitched roof constructed of local brick which has been painted on no.2 and cement rendered on no.4. The roof is now covered with corrugated asbestos. It would be beneficial to this end of the conservation area if at some stage in the future steps could be taken to restore the house to its original appearance.



Next door, no 6, the Old Golden Lion is a double piled late C18 former public house with possibly earlier origins, which has lost its original pub entrance.

Randall's Lane is a very small, narrow lane with a short view out to what would originally have been orchards beyond. No 5 is a mansard roofed timber framed property which has fallen into some disrepair, but which still has interest and which could be of great townscape value if sympathetically restored. The entrance to The Lanes originally would have given view out of the village to fields and orchards beyond. This impression has not altogether been lost as a number of hedges and trees block off the view to the modern housing development.

At the north western end of the High Street, the Town Hall is an important, prominent and unusual building in the street scene which contributes to the quality of both Church End and the High Street.



## Buildings of Special Note.

- No. 22. A house of c1660 restored recently (1984). Clear red brick with some burnt brick to the side walls. Steeply pitched tiled. This building is possibly associated with Dutch prisoners of war who were used for the construction of the New Bedford River and who remained at Over after peace was concluded in 1654. Listed grade II.
- No, 17 . House, built c.1700. Narrow red brick, Flemish bond, with steeply pitched roof now of interlocking tiles. Tumbled gable end parapets on moulded brick kneelers. The tympanum is filled with thistle design in plaster. A brick at ground floor left hand has 1700 and initials A C. It has been suggested that the thistle is associated with Scottish prisoners of war (taken at Battle of Dunbar (1650) some of whom were used in drainage of the fens and who settled at Over. Listed grade II. <sup>15</sup>
- No.13 House of c.1660 restored recently (1996). Clear red brick with some burnt brick to side walls. Steeply pitched tiled roofs with repaired end parapets on moulded brick kneelers to cross wing. Also possibly associated with Dutch prisoners of war. Listed grade II.
- Nos. 50 & 52 Cottage, Late C17 to C18, restored mid C20. Timber framed, rendered on sill, with long straw thatched roof and grey gault brick ridge stack. One storey and attic. Two dormers. Listed grade II.
- No. 41 House of 1723 but possibly of earlier origin. C19 alterations. Yellow gault brick with red brick details to quoins, bands and door and window openings. Steeply pitched tiled roof with tumbled end parapets on kneelers. Dentil eaves cornice. Main range with stair turret at rear and kitchen wing, forming an L-plan. Two storeys and attic. The house is probably on the site of the manor house. Listed grade II.
- Town Hall. C19 gault brick hall with arched sash windows, slate roof with finials, and heavy classical doorcase.
- No.5. C18/19 mansard roofed cottage, formerly two.

## **Summary.**

### **Important Open Spaces.**

- The Churchyard.
- The recreation ground.
- The gardens of the Rectory.

### **The Scale of Buildings.**

Almost all of the buildings in Over are of one and a half to two storeys in height. The spans of individual elements in the buildings are generally between four and six metres.

### **Style.**

There are a number of types of building construction and style in Over, ranging from rendered timber frame buildings, which are very small, through to the larger brick villas of the C19. By far the most prevalent is the late C18-C19 brick type, either as a double fronted villa, semi-detached or as part of a terrace.

### **Detail.**

Features which characterise the timber framed buildings include:

- High pitched roofs.
- Clay peg or pantile, or longstraw thatch.
- These buildings have sometimes been encased in brick in the C18-C19, but are for the most part rendered.
- Exposed rafter feet or sprocketed eaves.
- Timber casement windows, side opening, set flush with the outside walls.
- Drip boards set in the gable ends and over the windows.
- Four or six panel, or planked doors.

Features which characterise the C18-C19 brick houses include:

- Low pitched slate roofs; the oldest ones have steeper pitched peg tile roofs.
- Hung sash windows set in reveal,
- Four or six panelled doors,
- Simple classical door cases incorporating rectangular fan-lights.
- Gauged or segmental matching brick arched lintols.
- Shallow stone sills.
- Dentil or saw-toothed cornices.
- Chimneys incorporated within the building at the gables.

- Tumbled brick parapet gables.

## **Materials.**

Walls - Rendered timber frame, red brick, often with diaper  
patterning, gault brick.  
Roofs - Clay pan-tiles, clay peg tiles, slate, longstraw thatch.

## **Siting.**

Most buildings are sited on the back edge of the pavement or have very small front gardens.