

# WILLINGHAM

## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



Published by  
South Cambridgeshire District Council

©08/09/1999

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## **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 Willingham 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 Willingham warrants its Conservation Area status. It will also identify areas where these features have been eroded, lost or replaced.

### **Village Development.**

The church, the rectory and the Manor house were built a short distance to the north of the Anglo-Saxon settlement, near to the unloading point for Willingham Lode, which was constructed to import their building materials. At the other end of the village, around the green, another village centre developed, the pair joined by what is now known as Church Street. The economy was, of all the fen-edge villages, the most easily affected by the peculiarities of its location. Only about a



*The High Street In 1890.*

quarter of the land was used for arable farming, and most villagers managed to keep significant amounts of livestock even if they did not own any land of their own. Fishing, fowling and cutting reeds were always lucrative. A striking feature of Willingham is the variety of architecture to be found; the fine gothic church testifies to a prosperous medieval period, as the substantial timber framed farmhouses point to a wealthy agricultural economy. The Swing Riots in the C19 led to the burning down of a number of these farmhouses, resulting in their rebuilding in gault brick. The C19 also brought Gothic Revival architecture and terraced housing. The conservation area encompasses the whole of Church Street and the adjoining sections of George Street, the High Street, and Green Street.

## Church Street.

Church Street is the spine of the oldest surviving part of the settlement of Willingham. At the western end it has a junction with both George Street and the High Street, at which point the character of the conservation area is at its most urban. Throughout the whole of Church Street most houses are situated on or close to the back edge of the pavement, but with a few notable exceptions. The large variety of building styles found in Willingham is nowhere better illustrated. There can be found Gothic Revival almshouses, a classical chapel, numerous sub-classical houses, a gothic church, C19 terraces and a timber framed and thatched farmhouse. This difference in building styles is reflected in the roofs: mansard, hipped, plain pitched, half hipped and gambrel roofs set either gable end or otherwise facing the street, are clad in a range of materials which gives a picturesque variety to the street scene.



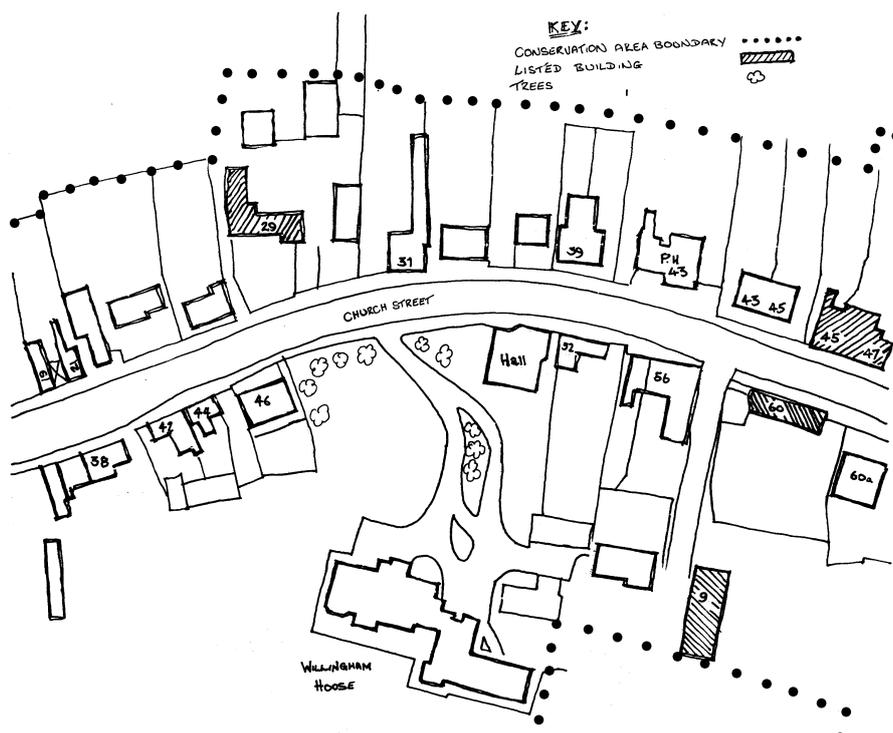


Left: View down Church Street to The High Street (left). This view shows the importance of nos. 2, 4 and 6 as a visual stop at the end of Church Street. The Shop front and the corrugated roof of no.2 are areas where significant enhancement could be made.



Right: No. 32 Church Street

No.2 the High Street forms a good visual stop at the street's junction with the High Street and George Street, which would be greatly improved if the roof, presently corrugated, had thatch reinstated. Also at this point, much of the character of nos. 4 and 6 High Street has been lost through an unsympathetic shop front which cuts across the frontages of these properties. Any future scheme for remodelling should redress this. An aspect of Willingham which should be preserved is the good variety of shops present in the village. This all too often vanishing aspect of villages imparts a sense of community and identity.



The central section of Church Street follows a gentle curve. As one travels along it the view subtly changes to reveal different buildings. This gives interest as the buildings are of diverse types and are irregularly sited. The gardens of Willingham House are a valuable open space and gap in the street frontage where mature trees partially obscure this large Victorian building.

No 52 Church Street is a very small cottage constructed of timber frame, clay bat and brick. Several years ago it caught fire, and has since remained uninhabited. If the thatch were replaced, and the building made habitable, it would once again be an asset to the street scene.

A replacement building of a suitably modest scale with appropriate proportions, details and materials could also be an appropriate solution. Further towards the Green, no.47 is a portion of Osborne House, a substantial early C18 dwelling which has unfortunately lost its original windows and door. Their reinstatement would enhance the character of the house and this part of the street considerably. The eastern end of Church Street opens out on its southern side to the Green, giving views from the Green of the buildings on the northern side of the street.

## **Buildings of Special Note.**

- High Street  
No 2. House, c1600. Timber framed, roughcast and pebbledash rendered with steeply pitched roof now covered with asbestos. Two bay, lobby entry plan. Two storeys with first floor jettied to road. Two casements at first floor and two hung sashes on either side of doorway with c1840 reeded doorcase with boss enrichments at corners. The gable end to the right hand has the date 1756 applied to the pebbledash. Listed grade II.
- Church Street.  
Church of St Mary and All Saints. Parish church, mainly early C14, with South aisle and spire restored 1825 and general restoration of 1891. Coursed limestone, and limestone rubble with dressed stone to quoins. Some clunch. Tiled nave roof, and stone slates to sacristy roof; the roofs of the chancel and South aisle are obscured by parapets. West tower with broach spire, early C14. Listed grade I.
- No. 32 (Keri Holme). House, c1830. Gault brick with low pitch slate roof and end stacks. Single range with outshut at rear. Two storeys and double fronted. Range of three flush frame hung sashes with open boxing, of sixteen panes each. Central doorway with reeded doorcase and boss enrichments. Dentilled and reeded frieze with narrow flat hood. Listed Grade II.
- George Street  
No 1. Cottage C18. Timber framed, rendered. Steeply pitched roof now covered with asbestos and ridge stack of gault brick. Two room plan and one storey and attic. One C19 shop window of five lights each with

arched pane in square head, and a hung sash. Doorway at rear. Listed grade II.

- No.5. An early C19 house of gault brick with a slate roof. Has a good set of multi-pane sash windows. Unlisted



*Above: No. 60 The Homestead. (above) Good C18/19 three bayed house with parapet gables, largely intact. Gault brick English bond to the rear wall with some red brick particularly to gable ends. Tiled roof, steeply pitched, with dentil eaves. Central doorway with doorcase of plain pilasters and narrow hood on moulded scroll brackets. To left hand is a horseman's cottage, now a kitchen. Gault brick front wall but side walls and stack are of earlier red brick. Listed Grade II.*

*(Below) Nos. 19 & 21 - A pair of unusual C19 brick houses with semi-circular arched headers.*



- No 6. Cottage, C17 and C20. Original early C17brick to front wall. Gable end has some C19 gault brick and the roof is of C19 slates. Two storeys with one C20 window to each storey. The present doorway with an original brick band carried over the lintel, originally opened onto a passageway and the entry was formerly from the rear. Listed grade II.
- No 10. House, formerly George and Dragon Public House, 1672. Timber framed, brick and render with steeply pitched slate roof and original ridge stack. Single range lobby entry plan. Two storeys. Three

horizontal sliding sashes with small panes possibly in original openings. Listed grade II

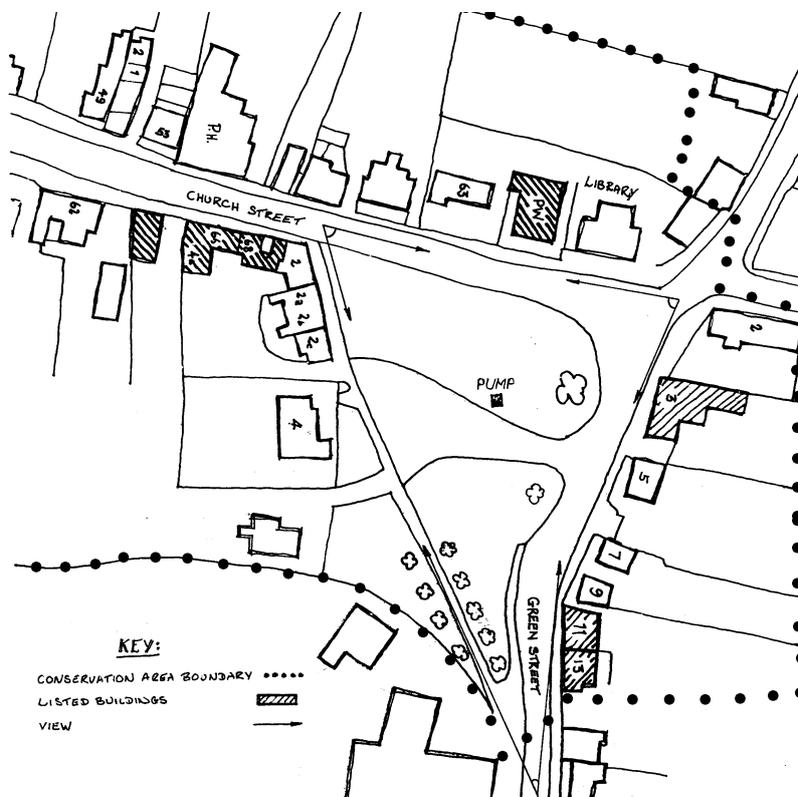
- The Three Tuns. (no.41) Public house, poss. early C20. Has leaded bow window to the ground floor. Unlisted.
- No.29 (Church Farmhouse). House, C15 and c1670. Timber framed, pebbledash rendered, with long straw thatched roof, half hipped, with grey, gault brick ridge stack. The cross wing is jettied at first floor and has one window to each storey. Listed Grade II.
- No.39. A good C19 three bay house of water moulded gault brick, with paired sash windows. Unlisted.
- No.52. A small one and a half storey cottage, timber frame, clay bat and brick with a corrugated tin roof. Unlisted
- Nos. 45 & 47. House, now two dwellings, 1715. Soft redbrick, part timber framed, part rendered, to left hand gable end. Steeply pitched roof now of corrugated iron, with grey gault brick ridge stack on site of original. The base of the stack has the date 1715 inscribed on a small recessed date panel. Early C19 reeded doorcase. Listed grade II.
- Barn to the Rear. Barn, C17. Timber framed, with a corrugated iron. Has been converted to a house. Listed grade II.
- Nos.43 & 45. A pair of C19 Gothic Revival almshouses. A very unusual and picturesque addition to the street scene. Unlisted.



*Nos.43 & 45 Church Street. A pair of Gothic Revival almshouses.*

## The Green.

The Green is bounded by the eastern end of Church Street and the northern end of Green Street. Green Street contains a number of interesting buildings of differing styles, sizes and periods which as a group form a picturesque backdrop to The Green. The Green is an important open space which contains mature trees that make a positive contribution to its character. It has however been breached in the middle by a very wide access road. If the visual impact of this access could be reduced this would be a considerable enhancement. At the southern end of The Green, no.8 (a brick villa) plays a crucial role in containing the green and providing a focal point to the view across The Green from the north. Any redevelopment of the site upon which it stands should retain this quality.



*The Duke of Wellington P.H.*



*The Methodist Chapel.*

### Church Street.

- No.64 This mansard roofed cottage is gable onto the street. The varigated gault bricks on the ground floor change to soft reds on the first floor. It has double sliding sash windows on both floors, probably replacing others. Refronted 1785 with a C20 restoration to gable end. Above the key block are two small stone panels, the upper having the initials T B incised and the lower 1785. Listed grade II.
- Methodist Chapel. Nonconformist chapel, 1851. Gault brick with some red brick in side walls. Slate roof with boarded eaves to front. Gable end to road. Front wall in three recessed bays with elliptical, gauged brick arches. Central doorway with double doors. Listed grade II.
- Nos. 66 & 68. House, of C17 origin but much rebuilt in early C19, and now two dwellings. No 66 of gault brick with steeply pitched roof of slate and end stack. No 68 is also of gault brick and was rebuilt in 1823 (dated brick). Slate roof. Two storeys. Listed grade II.

### Green Street.

- Water pump. Late C19 or early C20. Cast iron on raised and rebuilt base.
- No.3. House. c1830. Gault brick with slate roof and end stacks. Three storeys including the smaller attic storey. Symmetrical facade of three twelve pane hung sashes to each storey. Central doorway in double recessed elliptical arch. C20 door. Listed grade II.
- Nos.11 & 13 Cottage, now two dwellings. Mid C17, C18 and early C19. Timber framed, plaster rendered, with front wall cased in brick in C18 and now painted. Long straw thatched roof and C19 gault brick stack. No 11, has C18 mansard roof addition at rear. Listed grade II.
- The Duke of Wellington P.H. C18 and C19, once a pair, now a substantial single building of 1.5 storeys with unusual tripartite fenestration. Unlisted

## **Summary.**

### **Important Open Spaces.**

The Green, the Gardens of Willingham House, the Churchyard.

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

Almost all of the buildings in Willingham are of one and a half to two storeys in height, however there are some notable and valuable exceptions. The width of individual elements in the buildings are generally between four and six metres.

### **Style.**

There are a number of types of building construction and styles in Willingham, ranging from rendered timber frame buildings, of various sizes, 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, longstraw thatch, or corrugated tin.
- These buildings have sometimes been encased in brick in the C18-C19, but are for the most part rendered.
- The use of lay boards instead of a bell-mouth detail above window openings.
- Exposed rafter feet or sprocketed eaves.
- Side opening timber casement or horizontal sliding sash windows, set flush with the outside walls.
- Drip boards set in the gable ends.
- 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.
- Sliding sash windows set in reveal,
- Four or six panelled doors,
- Simple classical door cases incorporating fan-lights.
- Gauged or segmental matching brick arched lintels.
- Shallow stone sills.
- Dentil or saw-toothed cornices.

- Chimneys incorporated within the building, at the gables.

There are also a small number of C19 gothic revival buildings in Willingham which are constructed using a finer water moulded red brick.

## **Materials.**

Walls - Rendered timber frame, red brick, gault brick.  
Roofs - Clay pan-tiles, clay peg tiles, slate, thatch, corrugated tin.

## **Siting.**

There is a subtle variation in the siting of buildings on Church Street which gives something of a syncopated rhythm to the street scene. The situation is similar in other parts of the conservation area, where for instance rows of shops on the back edge of the pavement give way to the grounds of substantial villas set back from the street.

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