

Baldons

Design Codes and Guidelines

October 2024

Quality information

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Introduction

01

1. Introduction

This chapter explains the importance of good design, with a brief summary of the scope and steps taken towards the final report, followed by an overview of the location, key features and policies influencing the content of this report.

1.1 The importance of good design

The government is placing significant importance on the quality of design through the development of design guidelines and codes. The role of design guidelines in the development of a Neighbourhood Plan is expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2023, paragraph 133:

'To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety.'

1.2 The purpose of this document

This document sets out design guidance and codes based on the existing features of The Baldons. The document is intended to sit alongside the Neighbourhood Plan to provide guidance for applicants preparing proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) and as a guide for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and South Oxfordshire district council when considering planning applications. With the Baldons' capacity for further new housing already exceeded, most future development pressures are likely to be for alterations and extensions to existing housing with the possibility of some pressure on potential infill sites. Therefore this report will focus upon these types of development and the relevant guidance and coding needed to ensure good quality design which reflects local character.

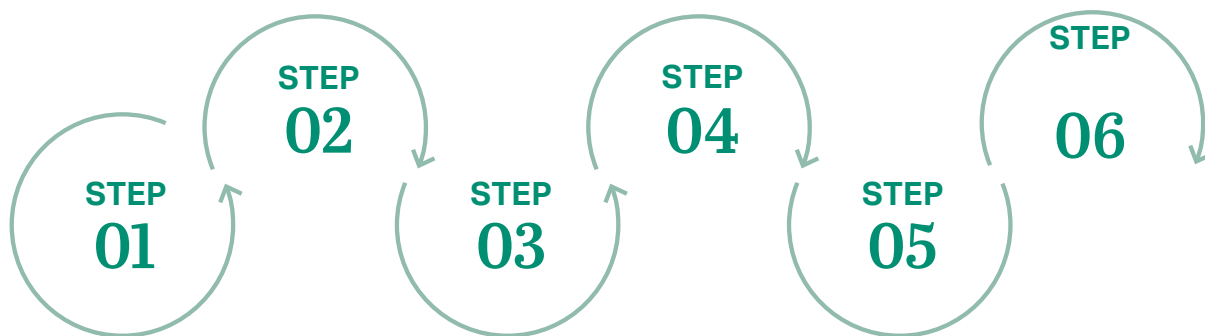
AECOM's Design Codes and Guidelines report will supersede the existing Design Guide produced by Baldons Parish Council. This report will draw on the previous Design Guide, providing additional updates, graphic illustrations, maps, photographs and diagrams. The aim is to ensure that any future design proposal contributes to a consistent and high quality standard of design and reflect the Parish Council's vision to preserve the rural character, gaps, landscape and history of the settlements, whilst promoting views towards the open countryside.

Process of producing the design code and guidance report:

02 Driving and walking tour of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and photographic study.

04 Preparation of draft design guidelines and codes in consultation with group members.

06 Final design code report issued to the group to form a part of their plan.



01 Inception meeting and site visit with the Neighbourhood Plan group members.

03 Character analysis based on site visit, photographic study and further desktop analysis.

05 Draft design codes report reviewed by Neighbourhood Plan group and Locality.



Figure 01: View of The Green, Marsh Baldon and houses looking out onto The Green.



Figure 02: Road through Toot Baldon with a stone cottage overlooking the road.

Key terms and definitions:

Term	Definition
Acceptable development	New development which would be permitted. 'Development' encompasses virtually all construction activities and changes of use.
Backland development	Development of 'land-locked' sites behind existing buildings such as rear gardens and private open space, usually within predominantly residential areas. Such sites often have no street frontages. The BNP does not support backland development.
Biodiversity	The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.
Brownfield land and sites	Previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
Building lines	The setback line which defines the boundary between the frontage of a building and the property line or street.
Conservation area	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
Green belt	<p>A designation for land around certain cities and large built-up areas, which aims to keep this land permanently open. The purposes of the green belt are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas • Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another • Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment • Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns • Assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land <p>Green Belts are defined in a local planning authority's development plan with changes only being permissible in exceptional circumstances and with justification, as part of a Local Plan review. Not all 'green' land is Green Belt. A local planning authority's proposals map will clearly set out the extent of any adopted Green Belt in the plan area.</p> <p>Any development in the Green Belt is significantly restricted, with some exceptions which are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>

Key terms and definitions:

Term	Definition
Heritage asset groups	Particular areas where listed buildings and notable vernacular buildings are grouped in a form that can be said to best characterise the built form of the Baldons.
Infill development	The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. Generally in the Baldons NPA infill development would only be appropriate for single houses, other than in exceptional circumstances, for example where a generous gap could accommodate a pair of small houses or semi-detached house with no adverse impact on surrounding properties and landscape.
Permitted development	Permission to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application to a local planning authority, as granted under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.
The Green	Common land with the right to roam and a designated green space. It cannot be built on.
Unacceptable development	New development which would not be permitted. 'Development' encompasses virtually all construction activities and changes of use.

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1.3 Area of study

The Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) is the combination of the parishes of Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon. The closest city is Oxford which is located approximately 10km north of the Baldons NPA. The NPA covers an area of about 970 hectares and has a overall population of about 440 residents, with approximately 300 in Marsh Baldon and 140 in Toot Baldon, according to the 2021 census¹.

With the Baldons NPA there are two main settlement areas of Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon, with a small area of housing and cluster of employment buildings at Little Baldon.

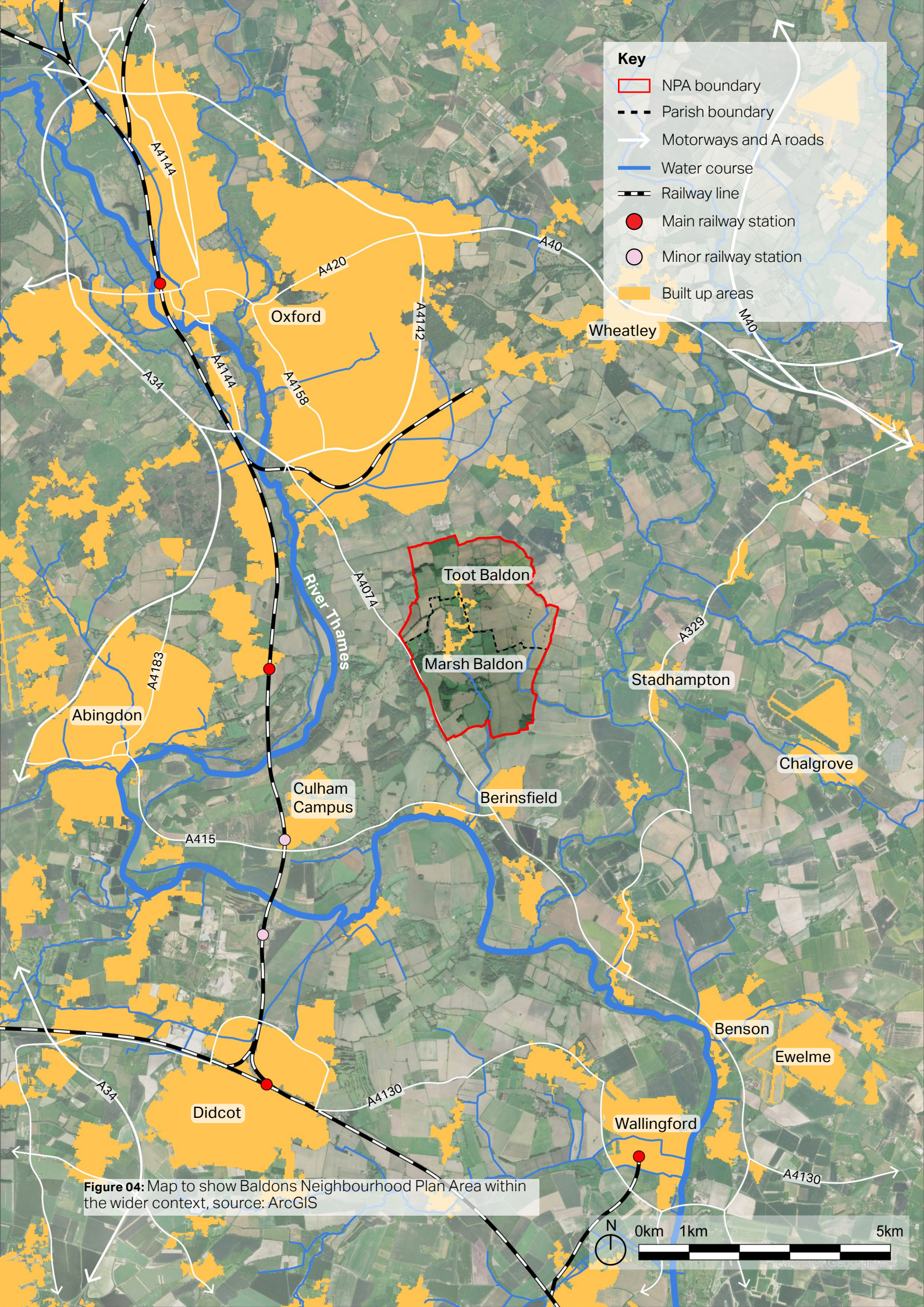
The entire NPA is part of the Oxford Green Belt and the villages are set within large scale and predominantly arable landscape. The River Thames runs close to the NPA, from Oxford in the north passing west and then south of the NPA boundary.

The wider connections to the Baldons NPA include the A4074 which runs along the western boundary. The nearest, accessible railway stations are Didcot Parkway (Great Western Railway), Oxford (Great Western Railway, Chiltern Railways and CrossCountry trains), Oxford Parkway (Chiltern Railways) and Haddenham and Thame Parkway (Chiltern Railways). All of these railway lines provide onward connections to London.

¹ Office for National Statistics, South Oxfordshire Parishes, <https://explore-local-statistics.beta.ons.gov.uk/areas/E07000179-south-oxfordshire>



Figure 03: Birds eye view over The Green, Marsh Baldon and the surrounding countryside (image provided by Baldons Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group).



Key

- NPA boundary
- Parish boundary
- Motorways and A roads
- Water course
- Railway line
- Main railway station
- Minor railway station
- Built up areas

Figure 04: Map to show Baldons Neighbourhood Plan Area within the wider context, source: ArcGIS

N

0km 1km 5km

© 2018 Geographics

1.4 Planning policy and guidance

This section summarises the relevant design policy and guidance produced at national and local levels which have informed this design guidance and codes document. It specifies how the relevant policies and guidelines have been incorporated in the production of the design codes included in this document. Any new development application should be familiar with those documents.

1.4.1 National Planning Policy & Guidance

The following are key relevant policy and guidance documents at the national level. Further information on these documents is given in the appendix of this report.

2023 - National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG)

2021 - National Model Design Code (MHCLG)

2019-2024 - National Planning Practice Guidance (MHCLG)

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England)

2007 - Manual for Streets (Department for Transport)

1.4.2 Local policy and guidance

The following section summarises key relevant policy and guidance documents at the local level:

Emerging Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse 2041

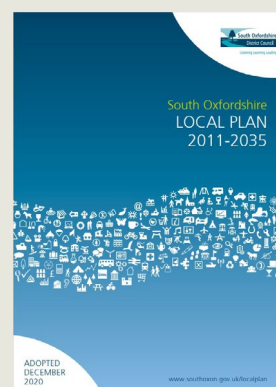
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Expected to be adopted in 2025, the Joint Local Plan will set out the strategy for growth in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District up to 2041. The relevant policies for the Baldons NPA are detailed in the appendix of this report.

2011-2035 South Oxfordshire Local Plan

South Oxfordshire District Council

Adopted in December 2020 the Local Plan sets out the strategy for delivering growth in South Oxfordshire in the period of 2011-2035. The plan identifies appropriate areas and sites for development and details how valuable historic and natural environments will be protected and enhanced. The vision for 2035 is described as: "South Oxfordshire will remain a beautiful and prosperous place to live. It will be an attractive place for people to work and spend their leisure time."



The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035, adopted in December 2020, categorises Marsh Baldon as a 'smaller village' and Toot Baldon as 'other village'. Both these categories of settlement have no defined requirement to contribute towards delivering additional housing with sufficient supply of housing reached by strategic allocations and existing planning permissions. The Plan leaves it to the Parish Council to allocate any sites. Within Baldon parish no housing sites have been allocated. Therefore development within the NPA will be limited to infill, redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings, extensions and conversions from other uses.

2022 South and Vale Joint Design Guide (SPD)

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which has been produced by a collaboration of the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils to promote best practice in design and with the ambition of helping to improve the standard of design in developments in South Oxfordshire and the Vale. All applicants will be required to test their proposals against the criteria set out throughout the guide. The guide will be a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to the council.



2019 Baldons Neighbourhood Development Plan Village Character Assessment

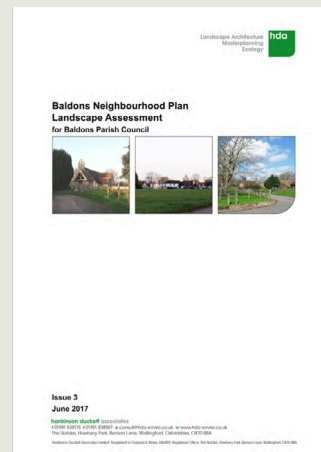
Baldons Parish Council

This assessment provides an indepth analysis of the characteristics of the village including the building types, materials, designs and heritage assessment with a complete table of listed buildings within the NPA. The report details the features of vernacular and the unique characteristics of the Baldons which are important to retain.

2017 Baldons Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Assessment for Baldons Parish Council

Hankinson Duckett Associates (HDA)

This report was produced by HDA for the Baldons Neighbourhood Group to inform the Neighbourhood Plan and assesses the landscape character of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The assessment identifies key characteristics as well as evaluating the landscape and visibility sensitivity. The report also sets out development guidelines for any future potential development which comes forward.



Local character
analysis

02



2. Local character analysis

2.1 Parish-wide analysis

This analysis chapter establishes the basis for the design guidelines and codes in [Chapter 3](#).

2.1.1 Access and movement

Road network: All roads within Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon have a rural character: narrow and with no road markings. There are two primary routes into the NPA, which are access only lanes. One is from the west where Baldon Lane leads into Marsh Baldon from the A4074 and Nuneham Courtenay. The other from the north-east leading into Toot Baldon from the B480 and Garsington village.

At the entrance to Marsh Baldon village area there is a pinch point with a white fence and gatepost narrowing the road. This serves as a natural speed reduction and signifies the entrance into the main village area. Additionally all roads within the main settlement areas of Marsh and Toot Baldon have a 20mph speed limit. There is a lack of pavements throughout the NPA. In combination with the informal roads which encourage low speeds this is considered part of the rural character.

Public Rights of Way: There is an extensive network of existing footpaths and bridleways which are, in many cases, well marked with signs. These provide rural walks and cycle routes across the NPA and between the two villages of Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon.

Public transportation: There is limited public transportation with no trainline within the NPA and no formal bus service with only one council run bus which runs into and out of Oxford city centre once weekly from outside the Seven Stars pub.

The nearest bus station with a regular service is just west of the border of the NPA along the A4074 in Nuneham Courtenay. As a result of limited public transport options, car reliance is high, as is often the case with rural settlements.



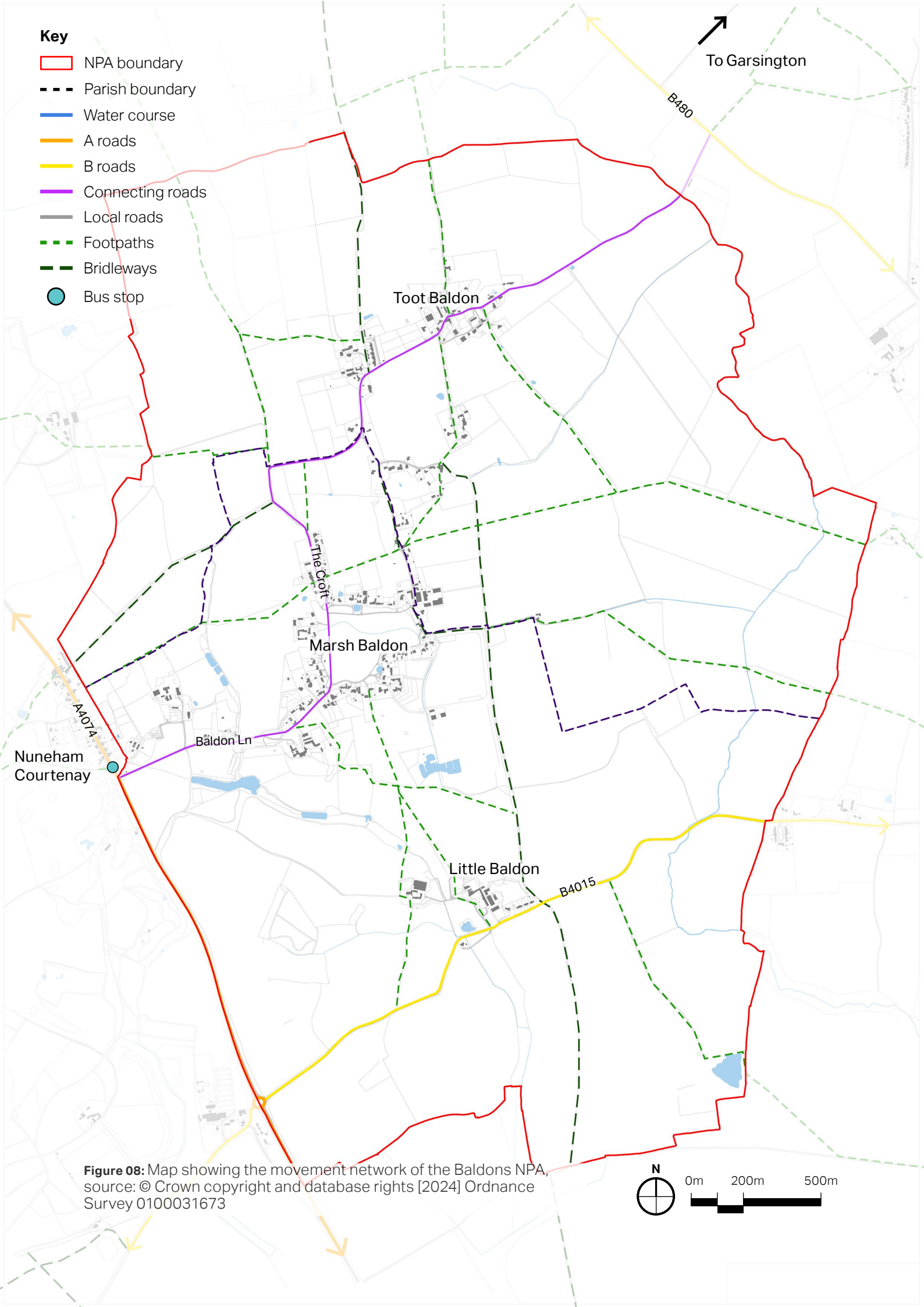
Figure 05: White gates and road narrowing creates a pinchpoint at the entrance to Marsh Baldon.



Figure 06: Adopted road through The Green, Marsh Baldon.



Figure 07: Sign showing the routes of a public bridleway and a footpath in the NPA.



Key

- NPA boundary
- Parish boundary
- Water course
- A roads
- B roads
- Connecting roads
- Local roads
- Footpaths
- Bridleways
- Bus stop

↗
To Garsington

B480

Toot Baldon

Marsh Baldon

The Cleft

Baldon Ln


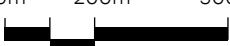
Nuneham Courtenay

A4074

Little Baldon

B4015

Figure 08: Map showing the movement network of the Baldons NPA, source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673

N

 0m 200m 500m


2.1.2 Green and blue infrastructure

The green and blue infrastructure of the NPA are key parts of the area's character. Detailed analysis of the landscape character, as well as landscape guidelines for future development can be found in the HDA Baldons Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Assessment (NPLA). This section provides a brief summary of important landscape characteristics. Any development proposals must refer to the NPLA for further guidance.

Landscape designations within the NPA include:

- **Oxford Green belt:** The green belt washes over the entire NPA.
- **Priority habitat deciduous woodland:** There are several areas of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat deciduous woodland, mainly concentrated to the west and south of the villages.
- **Ancient woodland:** There are 3 areas of ancient woodland: Sands Corner Copse, Hanginglands Copse and a small area in Little Baldon.
- **Registered park and garden:** Just south-west of the NPA is Nuneham Park, designated as a Grade I listed 'registered park and garden of special historic interest' (LEN 1000122). The majority of the Park is, however, a privately owned estate comprised of a large country house surrounded by 18th century landscaped grounds. Additionally the University of Oxford Harcourt Arboretum forms part of this registered landscape. The Arboretum is open to the public with ticketed access and comprises a variation of landscape including woodland and meadows.

Apart from these designated assets both the surrounding landscape and the landscape within the village are of high

sensitivity and value. The wider landscape is large scale, open and exposed, primarily arable fieldland.

Marsh Baldon is centred on the village green, a large, informal green open space, with a belt of trees running east-west across the length of it. It is surrounded on all sides by houses looking onto it. The green is an important asset for the village hosting various events throughout the year, including the Baldon Feast in the summer and regular cricket matches. Toot Baldon is located on higher ground in the north, with extensive and panoramic views over the rural landscape and towards Oxford.

The NPLA identifies 18 landscape character areas within the NPA and includes a description of each landscape character, the landscape and visual sensitivity and the landscape value of the area.

The analysis of the landscape characters concludes that the whole of the Baldons landscape is of high sensitivity and value and therefore has low capacity for development. In particular the NPLA highlights the importance of the open spaces between areas and the settlement pattern of the villages within the landscape: loose linear groupings, one dwelling deep, which must be preserved.

Flood risk: There are areas of flood risk within the NPA, primarily associated with the Baldon Brook with runs north south through the eastern part of the area. These include significant areas of zone 3 flood risk. There are also flood risk zones 2 and 3 from the south of the NPA north into Little Baldons.

Topography: There is higher land in the west looking out over lower land in all directions, with especially dramatic changes in topography to the north and east. This affords numerous and impressive long distance views. Key views can be found in the NPLA.

- Key**
- NPA boundary
 - Parish boundary
 - Water course
 - Registered park and garden
 - Woodland
 - Harcourt Arboretum
 - Ancient woodland
 - Village green
 - Fieldland
 - Flood risk zone 2
 - Flood risk zone 3
 - Contour lines (2m)

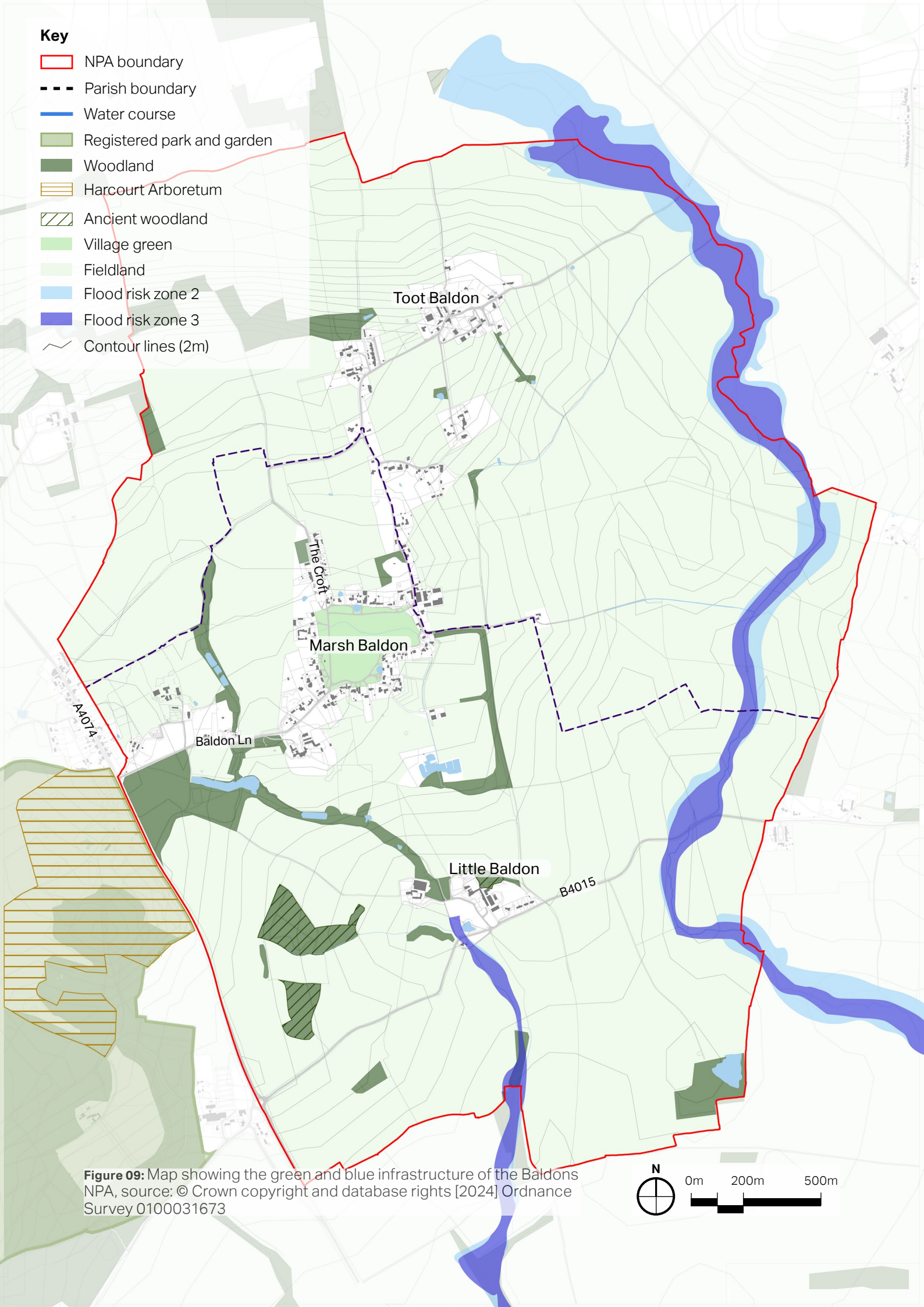


Figure 09: Map showing the green and blue infrastructure of the Baldons NPA, source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673

2.2 Village character

The detailed assessment of the village character in the Baldons Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) Village Character Assessment provides an indepth analysis of the characteristics of the village including:

- Settlement pattern;
- Scale;
- Heritage;
- Building types;
- The Green at Marsh Baldon;
- Post-19th century development;
- More isolated development;
- The hamlet of Little Baldon;
- Open spaces and gaps; and
- Village landscape.

This assessment is relevant to all design guidance and codes in this report and should be read in conjunction with it to ensure a full understanding of the village character.

To summarise the overarching themes of the report:

- Overall, the village character is defined by its rural setting, gaps and its close relationship with the surrounding countryside.
- The scale of residential development in the Baldons is modest with an open and spacious feel everywhere. There is an absence of high, dominant or crowded buildings and the vernacular and built form are generally simple and understated.

- There is a rich heritage value in the Baldons through both the listed buildings and the unusual and special landscape character and value.

The section in this report builds on the BNDP Village Character Assessment, focusing on key spatial characteristics for the two main settlements of Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon, accompanied by maps, diagrams and photos. Both parishes have important historic value with designated conservation areas. The historic form of the villages has been well preserved, with remarkably little change of the built form layout over the last four hundred years.

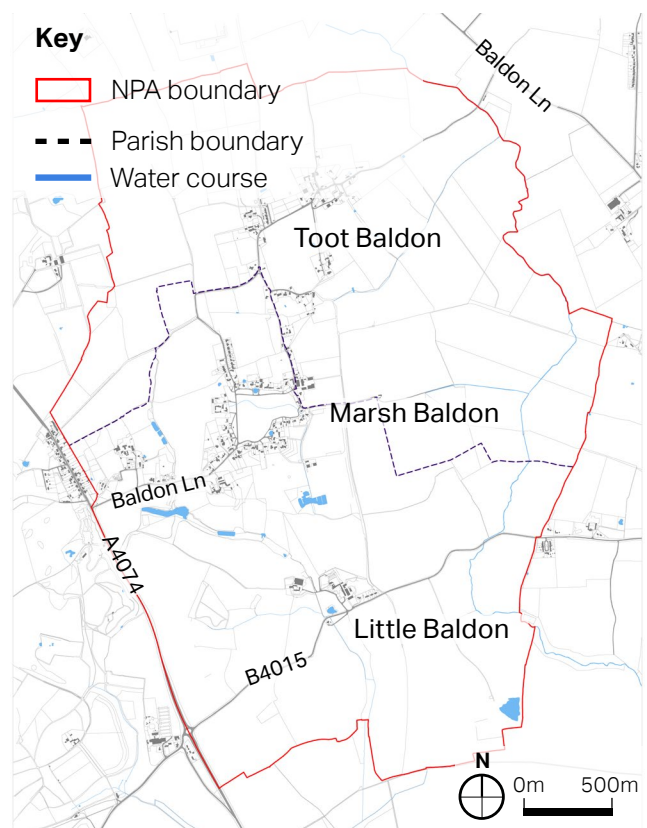


Figure 10: Map showing the two parishes of Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon and the 3 settlements which make up the Baldons NPA, source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673

Marsh Baldon

Marsh Baldon is a village and parish in the Baldon NPA and is the larger of the 3 settlement areas. It is formed primarily around the central green, also comprising of dispersed linear development along the main entrance road into the NPA along Baldon Lane from the A4074. Marsh Baldon Church of England school is located to the north of the village green. There is also St Peter's Church, and the village pub, the Seven Stars, which has been bought by the residents of the villages so is an important community asset. The village hall is on The Croft to the north of Marsh Baldon.

Road network: The main road into Marsh Baldon is Baldon Lane. This rural road leads into the village through a pinch point just before the main village area. The roads around The Green are informal in character with no road markings.

Built pattern: There is a loose and informal built pattern of one-property deep. The most recent building development is The Rickyards, a small cluster of six 21st century semi-detached and detached houses. There is also a linear 20th century development to the north of The Green along the Croft.

Heritage value: There are 32 listed buildings in Marsh Baldon consisting of 20 houses, 4 barns and 6 other heritage assets. Of these 2 are Grade II* listed: Baldon House and St Peter's Church, with the remaining Grade II listed. These are nearly all concentrated within the conservation area. There are two ancient ponds on The Green at Marsh Baldon, which are of historical importance.

Boundary treatments: There are good examples of low brick and stone walls, trees, hedges, low timber and iron fencing and gates with gaps. These types of boundary

treatments define the private and public realm without obscuring views between houses and the surrounding countryside and, especially for the houses around The Green, allow for natural surveillance and overlooking onto public spaces.

Building heights and roofline: Buildings heights in Marsh Baldon are generally one to two storeys. There are some buildings of two storeys with rooms in the roof and pitched dormers. Baldon House is one of the only taller and larger scale buildings in the area, though still is only 2.5 storeys. The roofline of buildings sit beneath the surrounding treeline, maintaining the rural character. All buildings have pitched or hipped roofs, with variations in style through use of pitched dormers, eyebrow dormers and cross-gabled roofs.

Building typologies: There are primarily detached and semi-detached houses. Most buildings around The Green are detached, whilst the linear development along the Croft is comprised of mainly semi-detached properties.

Views: The large village green and building gaps maintain an open feel at the centre of Marsh Baldon; however this area of the NPA has more woodland and trees than Toot Baldon, which results in less long distance views out into the surrounding countryside. Further out from the centre along the public rights of way views are generally open, but are curtailed by hedgerows and tree belts which form field boundaries. Some long views are available from the footpaths to the east of the village, which look out over the low lying landscape to the east. Important views from the eastern edges of Marsh Baldon are: north-easterly towards Garsington hill and south-easterly towards the Chiltern Hills.

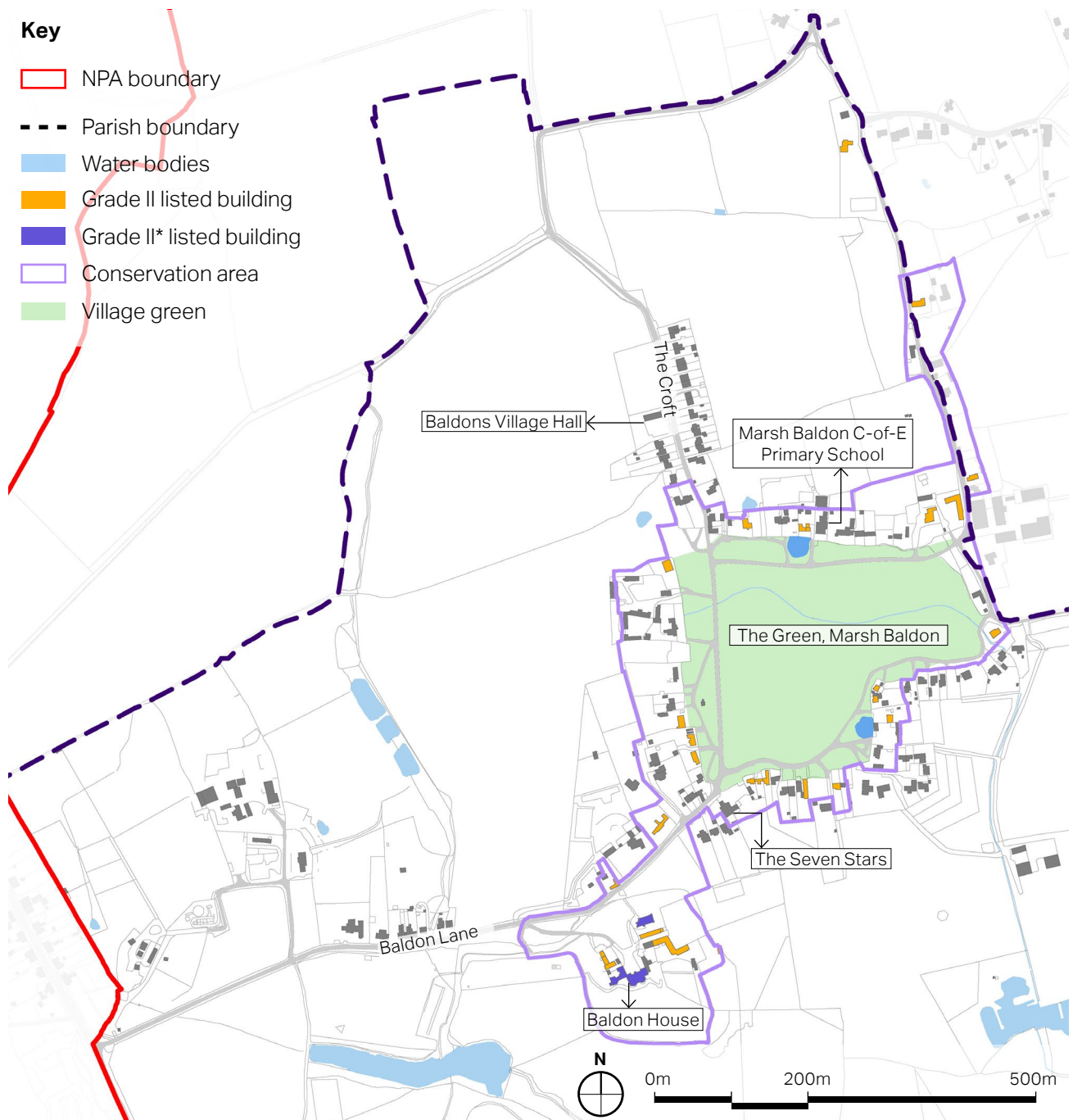


Figure 11: Map showing built form heritage assets of Marsh Baldon settlement, source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673.



Figure 12: Thatched cottage overlooking The Green, Marsh Baldon with a low stone wall boundary.



Figure 13: The Seven Stars pub in Marsh Baldon, which is owned by the local community.

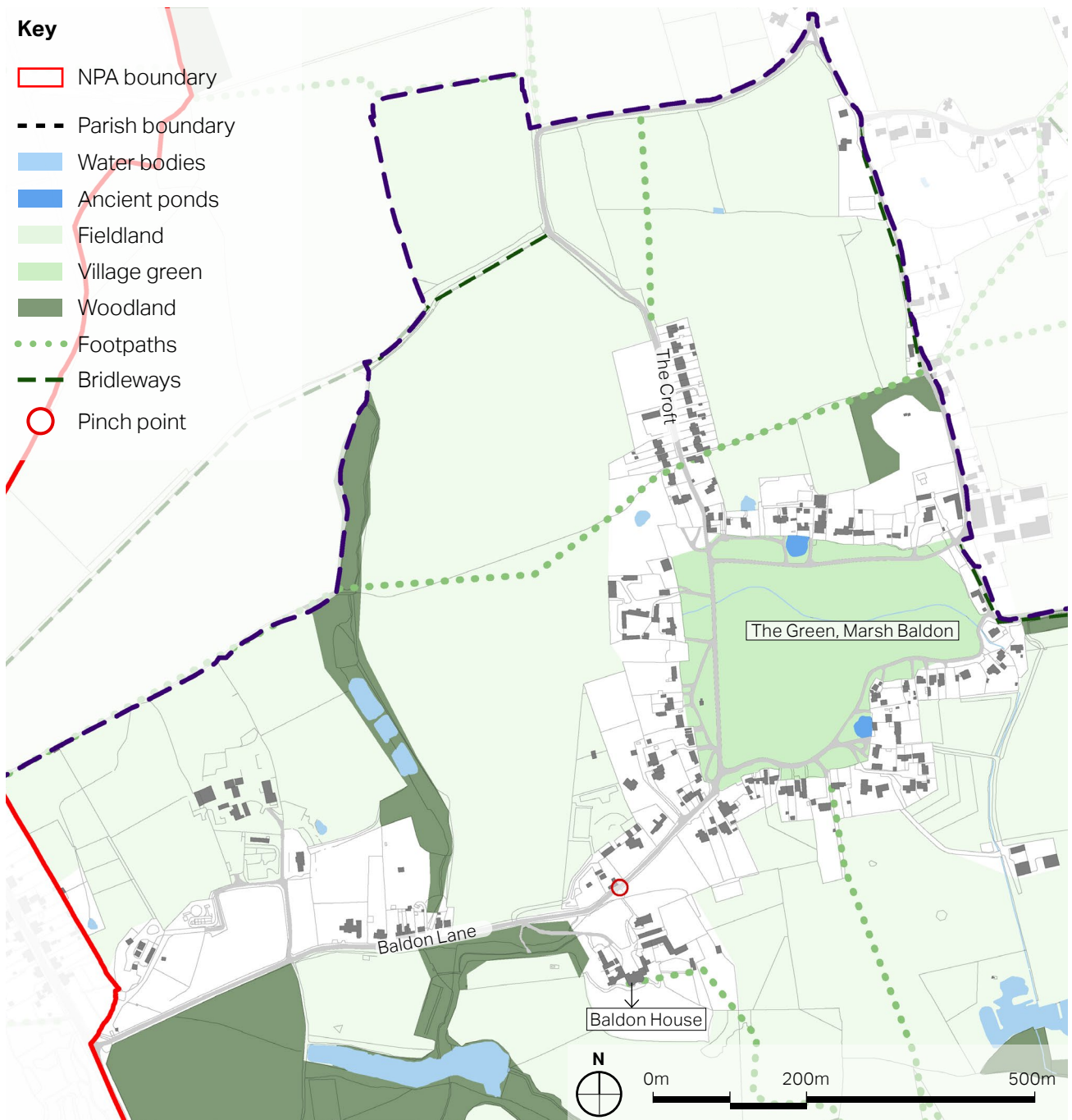


Figure 14: Map showing landscape aspects of Marsh Baldon settlement, source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673.



Figure 15: The School House, overlooking one of the ancient ponds on The Green, Marsh Baldon.



Figure 16: Thatched houses overlooking The Green.

Toot Baldon

Toot Baldon is a village and parish in the Baldon NPA. It is comprised of loose, informally arranged development on higher land than Marsh Baldon. The village is more dispersed than Marsh Baldon with no central green and the character is more open. There is a 12th-13th century church, St Lawrence Church, a pub - The Mole Inn and two larger, relatively grander houses - The Manor House and the Court House, which are both listed.

Road network: The main road through the village is an un-named, narrow and rural road leading from The Croft in Marsh Baldon. In between settlements the road is lined on both sides with hedgerows. There is a tree-lined, narrow, dead-end road towards the church from the main cluster of buildings in Toot Baldons. There are no pavements on the roads, which show the rural and informal character. The only exception is the Wilmots, a short 20th century close which has a pavement on one side.

Built pattern: There is sporadic and dispersed development with large gaps between settlement areas. There is a loose, informal pattern of plots, the most uniform is the 20th century development on Wilmots.

Heritage value: There are 22 listed buildings in Toot Baldon consisting of 13 houses, 1 barn and 6 other heritage assets. There are 2 grade II* listed buildings: The Manor House and St Lawrence Church and the remaining listed buildings are grade II. Court Leys, a large Victorian Rectory near St Lawrence's Church is under review to be listed (at the time of writing). The conservation area covers nearly all of the main settlement area of the

village, though there are a number of listed buildings outside of this area, including St Lawrence Church. At the time of writing an extension to the conservation area is being considered by Heritage England to include the Avenue and St Lawrence's Church as indicated in **Figure 19**.

Boundary treatments: Stone walls with vertical coping have a strong presence in the main settlement area of Toot Baldon. There are also low timber fences with gaps and some low brick walls, as well as use of trees, plants and hedgerows. There are areas where roads have open fields on both sides, such as the road to the church; however the majority are enclosed by trees and hedges.

Building heights and roofline: Building heights are generally low with most buildings of 1.5 to 2 storeys. Even the larger scale Manor House is only 2.5 storeys (2 storeys with rooms in the roof). Roofs are predominantly pitched, often steeply pitched with low ridges below the treeline and frequent use of dormer windows.

Building typologies: Buildings are detached and semi-detached. There are a range of typologies from cottages, farm buildings, manor houses to small 20th century development on Wilmots and modern infill.

Views: There are extensive views given the village's position on high land surrounded by open countryside. These long distance occur at many places around the village, for example at Manor House to the north, and from St Lawrence churchyard to the south and east. Important views from Toot Baldon are north-easterly towards Garsington Hill and south-easterly towards the Chiltern Hills.

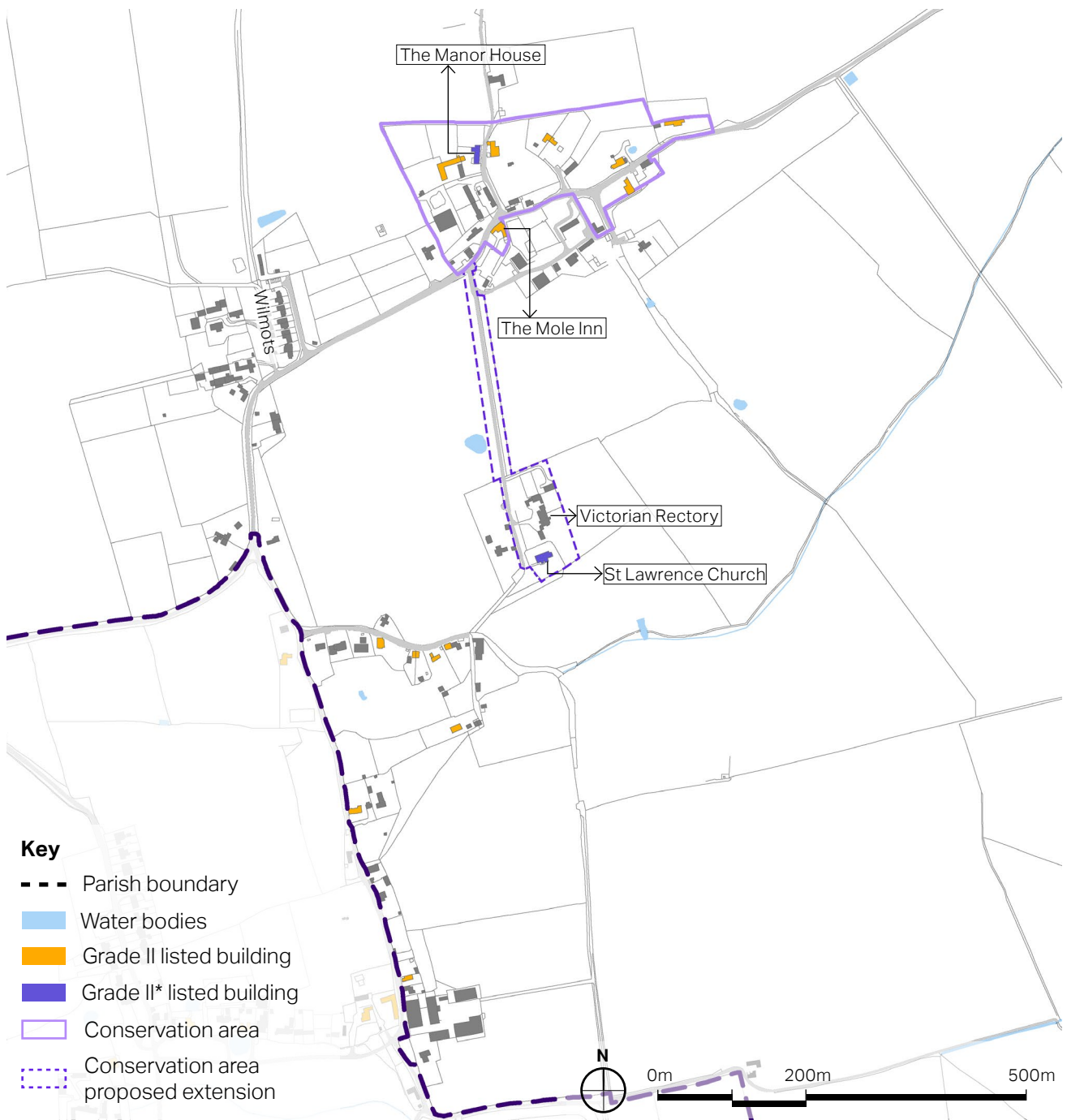


Figure 17: Map showing built form heritage assets of Toot Baldon settlement source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673.



Figure 18: Manor House and Court House, two of the larger and relatively grander buildings in Toot Baldon.



Figure 19: The Mole Inn in Toot Baldon.

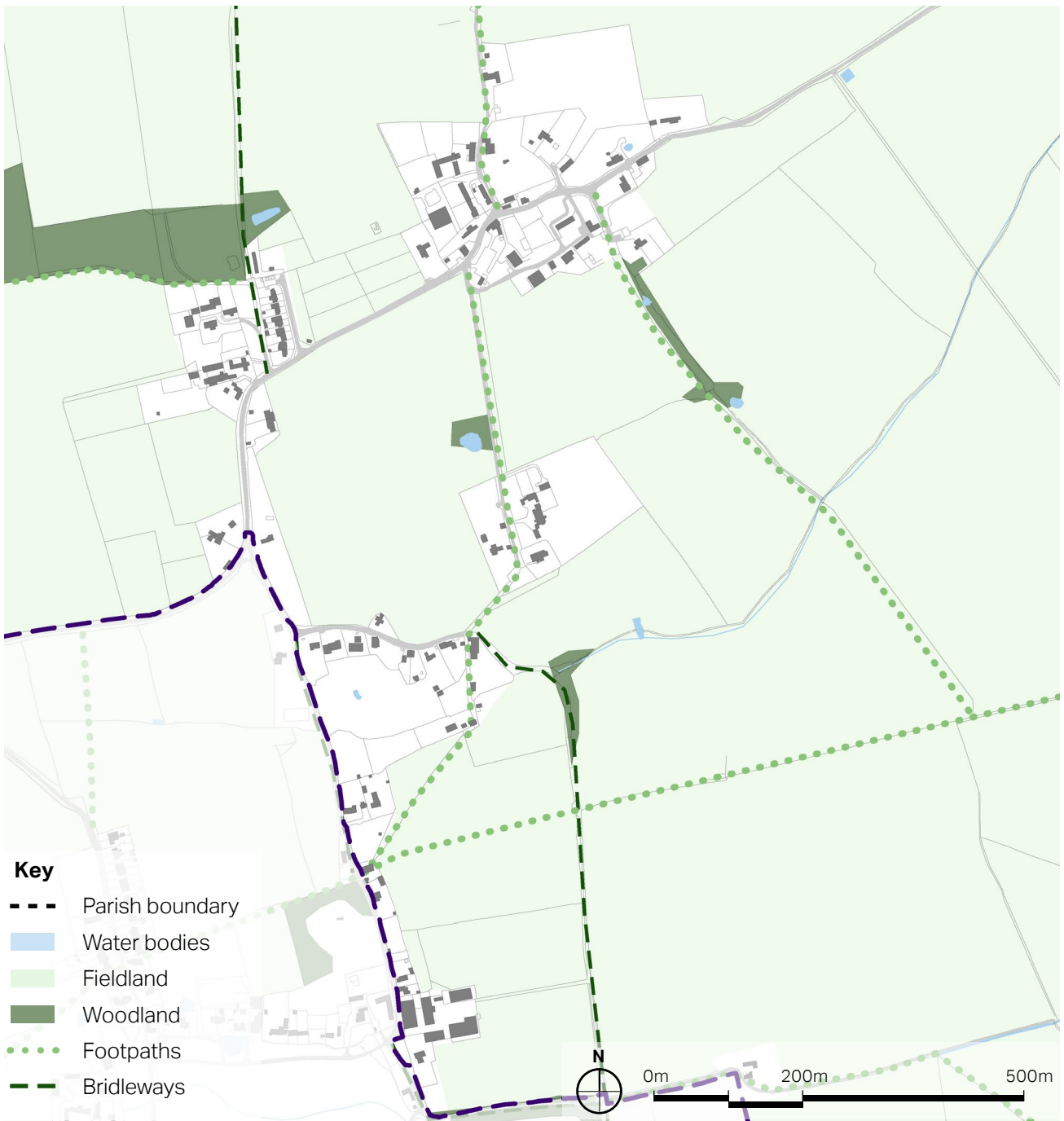


Figure 20: Map showing landscape aspects of Toot Baldon settlement source: © Crown copyright and database rights [2024] Ordnance Survey 0100031673.



Figure 21: Tree-lined road from St Lawrence Church to Toot Baldon main village area.



Figure 22: Grade II* listed St Lawrence Church.

Building materials and design

Buildings in the Baldons vary in style and design and there are a range of vernacular materials which contribute to the local character. Overall, however, the built form is simple and understated and follows a material and colour palette which reflects the rural context.

The most common wall construction materials seen in the NPA are: limestone in various forms - most often rubble; red brick and timber frame. Timber framed buildings are infilled with brick or render, in mostly white or off-white colour. There are many examples of buildings using a combination of these materials, for example stone buildings with red brick window headers and dressings. Other, less prominent materials in the area include timber weatherboarding, which reflect the area's agricultural heritage.

Roofs are either hipped or pitched, with cross-gabbling and use clay tiles, slate tiles and thatch. There are many examples of dormer windows, normally small with pitched roofs and in thatch roofs, eyebrow dormers. This is especially common for the thatched houses with one-and-a-half storeys. Lidded roof dormers are also seen. There are a few examples where large dormers overwhelm the roof form and use of flat roof dormers which are out of character.

The vernacular design has windows with vertical proportions and split by timber panels. Small and simple, pitched porches are common across the NPA and have mostly clay tiled roofs, with a few thatched examples. Chimney stacks are commonly seen, all in red brick and often with clay pots.



Figure 23: Limestone building with clay tiled hipped roof and brick chimney stacks with clay pots.



Figure 24: Terraced, red brick cottages with yellow brick detailing, a clay tiled pitched roof and a pitched roof porch.



Figure 25: Limestone house with small amounts of red brick detailing and a steeply pitched roof with lidded dormer window and brick chimney stacks.



Figure 26: Combination of colourwashed limestone rubble, timber framing and painted brick with red brick detailing between the central dormer. The roof is half-hipped with clay tiles, small pitched dormers and brick chimney stacks with clay pots.

Summary Table

Key qualities and characteristics in the Baldons NPA that should be preserved/enhanced or improved over the years
Open and rural landscape setting of high value and sensitivity.
Development and building gaps with an open and spacious feel everywhere.
Close relationship between the built form and surrounding countryside - the development is interconnected at all points with the surrounding countryside.
Informal and rural development patterns and road network.
Abundance of extensive views across the open countryside with especially dramatic views from places in Toot Baldon.
Small scale, low density of vernacular and more recent development. Absence of high, dominant or crowded buildings.
Numerous listed buildings which are important heritage assets and contribute to the distinctive character of the area.
Conservation areas of the villages with well preserved built form and settlement layouts that are relatively unchanged from the historic settlements.
Low building heights and generally modest scale with the built form sitting below the treeline allowing the rural elements of the area to dominate.
Most of the vernacular and built form is of a traditional, simple and understated character. There are a few grander houses such as Manor House, but these should generally remain the exceptions.
Palette of good quality local materials which contribute to the rural character.
The Green, Marsh Baldon which provides a large open, space in the centre enjoyed by the community.



Design guidance
and codes

03

3. Design guidance and codes

This chapter provides design guidance aiming to shape future development in the parish which is expected to be limited to infill development and house extensions or conversions.

3.1 Introduction

The design guidelines and codes set out in the following pages should be used to assess the design quality of future development in the parish.

AECOM's Design Codes and Guidelines report will serve as the updated version of the current Design Guide, including additional and more detailed design guidance accompanied with graphic illustrations, maps, photos and diagrams.

Design concept for Baldons Parish

As highlighted in [Chapter 2](#), the parish is characterised by a unique rural character and landscape which must be retained, as well as promoted and enhanced by new development. It is important to take a landscape led approach when considering new development, given the integral part of the landscape within the Baldon's character.

The design guidelines and codes will ensure that any future development compliments the existing village character and does not detract from it.

3.2 Design guidance and codes

The design guidelines and codes will focus on small scale residential environments including mainly housing extensions and conversions, as well as infill developments.

The following headings set out the structure of the design guidance and codes:

- **Infill development**
- **Housing extensions**
- **Conversions of agricultural sites and buildings to residential**
- **Material palette**
- **Building styles and design**
- **Building line and plot layout**
- **Landscape led**
- **Parking and servicing**
- **Sustainability**

Infill development

Infill development

Some small scale infill development may be appropriate if designed with care. The impact of proposed new building(s) on the village as a whole should be tested against the Village Character Assessment. New houses must sit comfortably with neighbouring properties and fit within the context of the village as a whole and should follow these design codes and guidance:

Materials

- Infill development should use materials which are complementary to surrounding buildings and respond to the local palette. Acceptable and unacceptable materials are further detailed on [Page 38](#). Infill development must follow this guidance when choosing materials.

Design

- New buildings must avoid being overly prominent - in terms of both physical bulk and design. They should be designed with appropriate consideration to the context of the site and adjacent existing buildings. Further guidance on building styles and designs appropriate for development in the NPA are detailed on [Page 42](#).
- Designs for all proposed new development should seek to show all proposed buildings: wherever possible including outline plans for anticipated future outbuildings, including garages and sheds etc.

Plot layout

- In order to maintain the village character new development should remain only one building deep.
- Infill development should harmonise with the surrounding street landscape. This includes boundary treatments, building lines, plot sizes and orientation and front and back gardens. It is vital to keep a reasonable distance from existing buildings, preventing an overshadowing or overpowering presence.
- Infill development's building-to-plot size ratio should guarantee a sufficient outdoor amenity space. Across the parish, there is variability in the sizes of front and back gardens, but generally, most properties have both. Larger gardens are more prevalent at the rural edges of development.
- If neighbouring a heritage asset it is important for development to be designed sensitively. This could be through use of set back and green buffering.

Scale and density

- New development within the settlement boundaries should propose maximum height of 2 storeys to preserve the existing context, as well as respecting the surrounding vegetation and countryside. In both scale and height, proposed new buildings must be commensurate with adjacent buildings, avoid appearing large

Infill development

and overbearing in comparison with neighbouring buildings and should never be a storey height higher.

- Roofline should be set lower than the vegetation backdrop, avoiding hard lines of the silhouette against the sky.
- Low density levels across the Baldons NPA, as shown in **Figure 30**, must be maintained. Any infill development must not lead to significantly increased density.

Landscape

- The siting of any proposed new building(s) should be fully respectful of the site that they will occupy and ensure the maintenance of the character of the village and its landscape surroundings. A landscape appraisal of the site should be undertaken to inform the design that is proposed.
- Proposed new building(s) should not negatively impact neighbouring owners. Care should be taken to avoid undue overshadowing and obstruction of views from neighbours.
- Design proposals should be 'landscape led', more detail can be found on [Pages 48-51](#).

— Roofline



Figure 27: Houses facing onto The Green, Marsh Baldon which are one-and-a-half to two storeys in height with rooflines below the treeline.

Infill development



Figure 28: The images show Baldon Row and Toot Baldon have similar densities. Marsh Baldon has slightly higher density, though the large green in the centre maintains an open feel to the village. The newer linear developments of semi-detached houses along The Croft, north of The Green, Marsh Baldon and also the Wilmots development in Toot Baldon have the highest density. However these are constrained to only a small area of development so do not overly affect the density levels of the village with an overall low density level maintained through the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Any new development must respect the density level of the immediate context as well as retaining the overall low density of Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Housing extensions

Housing extensions

Expanding the living space of a dwelling through extensions can better accommodate the specific spatial needs of its residents. House extensions can be found across the entire Neighbourhood Plan Area. While many household extensions fall under permitted development rights, meaning they do not require planning permission, the design guidelines outlined here serve to establish expectations for the desired design outcomes. Designs must be in line with South Oxfordshire Local Plan and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Some general design guidance and codes are:

- Careful consideration should be given to the existing building's character, scale, form, materials and details. External extensions must uphold or improve the visual aesthetics of the original structures and contribute positively to the broader street scene's character.
- Privacy and daylight considerations are paramount, necessitating that extensions safeguard the privacy and daylight amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Extensions should either replicate the materials and details of the existing building or employ contrasting materials and details with a contemporary design approach. Further insights into the local architecture and materials are explored in [Page 38](#).
- To maintain visual harmony, extensions should be subordinate in both scale and form, avoiding dominance or greater height compared to the existing building. The extensions' roof form should align

with that of the original structure and the use of flat roofs is generally discouraged, with exception of rear extensions where it can be acceptable.

Types of extensions

Side extensions:

- Side extensions should not distract from the appearance of the building, its surrounding and the wider rural setting;
- Single-storey and double-storey side extensions should be set back from the main building and complement its materials and detailing, while the roof of the extension should harmonise with that of the original building
- Side windows should also be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that they would not result in overlooking of neighbouring properties

Rear extensions:

- Expanding a house through single storey rear extensions is typically the most straightforward method, offering additional living space
- The extension should be positioned beneath any first-floor windows and crafted to minimize any potential impacts on neighbouring properties, such as obstructing daylight
- The roof form and pitch of double storey rear extensions should reflect the original building and sit slightly lower than the main ridge of the building. A flat roof can be generally acceptable for a single storey rear extension.

Housing extensions

Front extensions:

- If front extensions are suggested, they should mimic the structure of the current building, matching the roof pitch, reproducing or having a lower cornice height, and ensuring that their ridge is positioned below the existing ridge height
- The extension can extend up to a maximum of 2 metres beyond the front facade and should not occupy more than 50% of the front elevation.

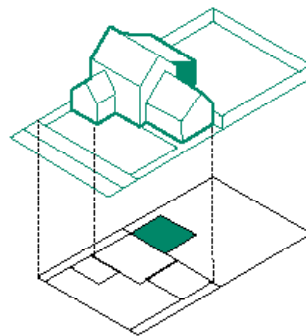


Figure 29: An example diagram of a rear extension.

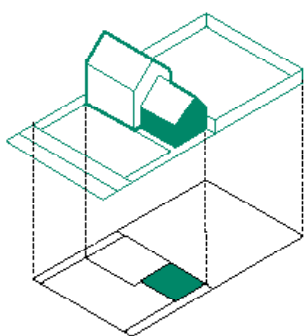


Figure 30: An example diagram of a side extension.

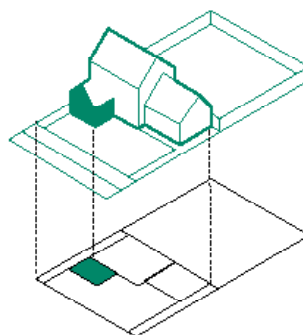


Figure 31: An example diagram of a front extension.



Figure 32: Local example of a side extension to a thatch property, Marsh Baldon. The extension sits behind the property line and matches the materials and design of the existing building.



Figure 33: Local example of a side extension to a stone property. The extension is subordinate to the main building, whilst not using the same materials the brick colour matches that of the dressings on the main house which helps to maintain visual harmony.

Housing extensions

Upward extensions:

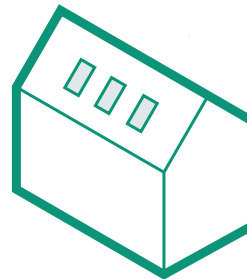
Based on government guidance, the new permitted development rights for upward extensions mean that houses, amongst other building types, can add additional storeys to create housing space. It must be noted that upward extensions will not be supported within the conservation areas.

- Upward extensions should be sensitive to the surrounding context in terms of materials and massing.
- Upward extensions should minimise overlooking to preserve the privacy of adjacent properties and gardens.
- Upward extensions should not disturb the existing roofline setting.

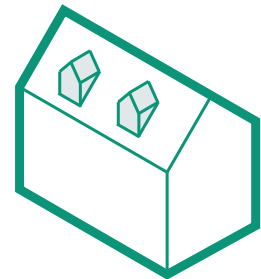
Loft conversions:

Loft conversions can provide extra liveable space in a house. Additional considerations should apply if the property is located in a conservation area or is a listed building, with respect to the heritage and surrounding historic assets.

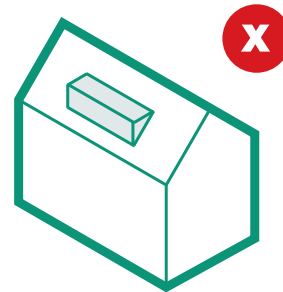
- Use of skylights are generally the most acceptable form of loft conversion and do not alter the shape of the existing roof. Any skylights should be proportionate in scale to the building and excessive use of glazing should be avoided.
- Generally, gabled dormers should use forms which are proportionate to the roof and should reflect the existing window rhythm of the building.
- Three-storey development, including the installation of dormer windows at second floor is not appropriate in the Baldons NPA.



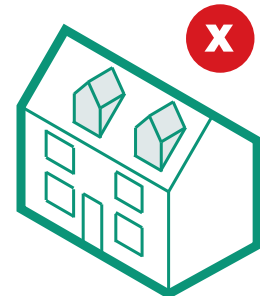
Loft conversion incorporating skylights that are proportional to the roof and existing window rhythm.



Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers may not be appropriate within the local context of the parish.



Loft conversion incorporating a long shed dormer which is out of scale with the original building.



Loft conversion incorporating gable dormers which are out of scale and do not consider existing window rhythm or frequency.

Figure 34: Examples of loft conversions.



Figure 35: Local example of a dormer window which is proportionate to the roof and uses appropriate materials.

Conversions of agricultural sites and buildings to residential

Conversion of agricultural sites and buildings into residential

Farmsteads are a dominant feature of the NPA. However, over time, working buildings of farms have fallen out of use. There are examples in the Baldons of previous agricultural sites used for residential buildings where these brownfield sites are approved development sites by the BNP. In these cases old agricultural buildings are replaced with residential buildings. In other cases agricultural buildings can be converted into residential units.

In both cases design guidance is needed to ensure that any other future conversion of sites or buildings do not undermine the original setting and local context and retain the character.

For conversions of agricultural buildings into residential:

- For a conversion project to be feasible, there needs to be an existing disused building of some architectural merit and in reasonable condition. An appraisal of the existing building needs to be provided including an explanation as to its redundancy. Most modern agricultural sheds would not provide an appropriate basis for conversion.
- The general layout and original features of the building's setting which indicate its historic use must be retained. For instance, this may refer to loose courtyard arrangements of buildings, physical boundary treatments, openings or wagon doors. New openings should

generally be avoided and kept to a minimum.

- The use of domestic add-ons such as chimneys, porches, satellite dishes, domestic external lighting and hanging baskets should be avoided.
- Wall treatments should reflect the existing materials of the building and be sympathetic to its surroundings. Boundary brick or flint walls should be left intact and integrated into the new design.
- Features such as dormer windows must be avoided. If rooflights are used, they should be sited discreetly so as to not become dominant in the landscape.
- Courtyards should be surfaced in a material that reflects its rural setting. Farmyards should remain open and not be divided by fences or walls.
- Any conversions should not be higher than the existing building's roof line and ridge.



Figure 36: Example of an agricultural building in the Baldons which has been converted to a residential house.

Conversions of agricultural sites and buildings to residential

For use of agricultural sites for new buildings:

- The quality of the new design is paramount; it must represent a significant improvement over what currently exists. Supporting documentation should be provided by an appropriately qualified expert: historian, planner, architect, etc. Proposals should refer to [Page 42](#) for more guidance on building styles and designs appropriate for Baldons NPA.
- Use of materials which are sensitive to the local context. Proposals should refer to acceptable and unacceptable materials on [Page 38](#).
- Use of existing footprint and volume. New buildings must not extend the existing building footprint in the site.
- Scale and massing should respond to local context and neighbouring properties. Building heights must be limited to two storeys and should not be higher than the existing roofline and ridge.
- It must be noted that most of the existing agricultural sites in Baldon NPA are within or just outside the conservation areas. Any proposals must consider and mitigate the impact upon the conservation area. Proposals for sites in close proximity to listed buildings must also be designed sensitively. This could be through use of set back and green buffering.



Figure 37: Local example of building on brownfield land on Baldon Lane, which uses appropriate modest scale and massing.



Figure 38: The Rickyard, local example of building on former agricultural site, which uses appropriate building materials and design.

Material palette

Material palette

There are a range of materials used in the NPA which contribute to the local character.

- Locally sourced and sustainable materials are encouraged.
- Typically rural Oxford, Thames Valley, Cotswolds and Chilterns vernacular materials should be used wherever possible. There is a detailed list of acceptable materials for external walling, roofing, doors and windows over the following pages which should be referred to for any development.
- Green and alternative technology materials (especially when using locally based materials) are encouraged. Proposals should be justified and supported by appropriate data, descriptions and details.
- Untypical materials must be avoided to preserve the character of the local area. These are listed in the table below.



Materials to avoid

- Large areas of tile hanging: as a cladding material this is unlikely to fit in well in the Baldons.
- Large and unbroken areas of flintwork: this is also not characterful and therefore discouraged.
- Cement-based pebbledash and roughcast renders: there is a preference against these types of render finishes as they do not weather well and generally require a lot of maintenance which could lead to future poor quality external appearance, detracting from the character of the area.
- Metal or plastic cladding: these are discouraged for main façades.
- uPVC: uPVC windows and doors must be avoided. They cannot be adapted, altered or repaired and have been shown to be unsuitable on economic, aesthetic and environmental grounds.
- Other: Mass-produced factory made materials that are manufactured overseas (not local) should generally be avoided. Various materials which would not incorporate well into the Baldons and do not reflect the rural character. This includes any materials that are shiny and highly reflective (e.g. ceramic tiles) and fair-faced concrete or blockwork.

Material palette



External walling

- Stone: stone walling of various types can be appropriate including ashlar, stone dressings and mouldings, coursed cut and rubble stone, random rubble stone
- Brick: brickwork walling should always be of fair-faced local bricks and be of a texture and colour that is typical of Oxfordshire and the Chilterns
- Brick and flint: refer to The Design Guide to Chiltern's Flint by the Chiltern's Conservation Board.
- Patterned brickwork: diaper brickwork and other patterns can be very suitable for the Baldons and there are many examples of this in the villages.
- Renders: external renders should preferably be lime based or be based on a recognised pre-mix.
- Timber frame: timber frame and lime render (or boarded, or brick infilled) panels in simple 'modern' format can be used successfully here in the Baldons
- Timber cladding: timber boarding of various types is a suitable cladding material including feather-edged or shiplap boards, waney edged boarding, thermally treated boarding and many other examples. Timber supply should be as local as possible and always from certified renewable resources.



Figure 39: Limestone rubble walls

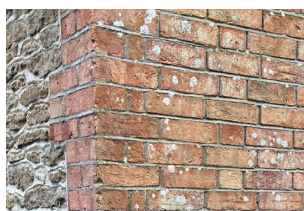


Figure 40: Flemish bond brickwork



Figure 41: White rendered walls.



Figure 42: Timber frame with brick infill.



Figure 43: Limestone rubble with some timber framing and brick infill.



Figure 44: Flemish bond red brick in varying shades



Figure 45: Limestone rubble with red brick dressings.

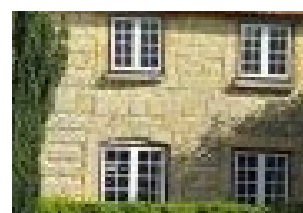


Figure 46: Coursed squared limestone with ashlar dressings.



Figure 47: Colourwashed limestone rubble with painted brick extension to the right.

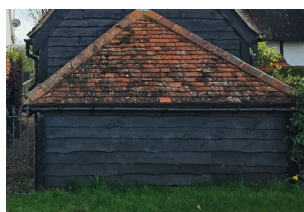


Figure 48: Dark timber weatherboarding.

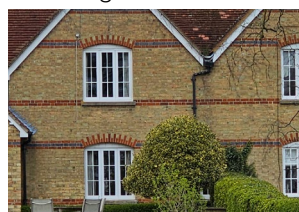


Figure 49: Yellow brick with red brick dressings.

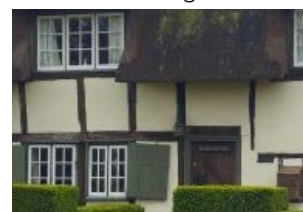


Figure 50: Timber frame with rendered brick infill.

Material palette



Roofing materials

- Stone tiles: historically, natural 'Stonesfield' tiles have often been used locally but they are now difficult to come by and expensive. Good quality cement-based reproductions can be acceptable, subject to specification and detail.
- Slates: Welsh slates are suitable for extensions and outbuildings but not for large prime areas of roofing (where clay tiles are the norm)
- Clay tiles: Hand made clay tiles are encouraged and preferred. Some machine made (cement-based) tiles can also be acceptable, subject to design, specification and detail.
- Pantiles: Sometimes pantiles (terra cotta or cement-based) can be suitable for roofing, subject to design, specification and detail
- Thatch: Combed wheat thatch is a common and traditional roofing material in this area, but needs handling with due care and attention to detail and specification. Studies of the local vernacular suggest that thatch appears natural and best when cladding of a low roof (no more than one-and-a-half storeys high) and can look out of place on any building of a full two storeys or more. Ridges and crests should be kept simple with no extravagant decorative features
- Shingles: Cedar or oak shingles can make a very pleasing roof but they are probably best for extensions and outbuildings rather than prime roofing.
- Sheet metal: In certain circumstances sheet lead or aluminium roofing can work well but their highly visible use in the Baldons would need design justification
- Rainwater goods: Powder coated metal (cast iron or aluminium) rainwater downpipes and gutters are preferable to any form of plastic



Figure 51: Thatch on a one-and-a-half storey building with a simple design and form.



Figure 52: Hand made clay plain tile roof.



Figure 53: Clay plain tile roof details.



Figure 54: Clay pantiles - these can sometimes be suitable and age relatively well.



Figure 55: Clay pantiles.



Figure 56: Slate tile roof.



Figure 57: Thatch roof on the main house with clay tiled roof on the extension.



Figure 58: Cedar shingles - suitable for extensions and outbuildings.

Material palette



Doors and Windows

- Timber: Painted or stained timber external doors and windows are preferred and encouraged.
- Metal: Dependent upon design and specification details, good quality painted or powder-coated metal external doors and windows can also be acceptable.
- Glazing: Leaded lights should only be used for buildings of appropriate style



Figure 59: Dark painted wooden plank door.



Figure 60: Vertical panelled white painted casement windows.



Figure 61: Painted timber panelled casement window in a pitched dormer.



Figure 62: Painted timber panelled sash window with brick dressing.



Figure 63: Painted timber panelled sash window with dark timber frame.



Figure 64: Small timber framed vertical windows in an eyebrow dormer.



Figure 65: Metal windows in stone surrounds - a traditional way to fenestrate with dressed stone features



Figure 66: Stone walling and dressings with metal casement windows - modern version of Figure 65.



Figure 67: Conservation metal rooflight laid in with the tiling.



Figure 68: Lidded dormer windows.



Figure 69: Modern metal window.



Figure 70: In-keeping modern porch on older, 18th Century townhouse.

Building styles and design

Building styles and design

The local vernacular and built form is generally of modest scale, simple and understated in character. Design guidance for styles and design include the following:

- Building style should fit with the local character. Therefore ostentatious building designs should be avoided. Buildings should not be overly grand and ostentatious classical styles are not appropriate. Flamboyance and extravagant modern designs should also be avoided. Quiet and understated designs are instead encouraged.
- Designs and styles can use elements of established historic styles but pastiche 'period reproductions' should be avoided. Recommended historic styles to draw on are detailed on [Page 45](#).
- Building design should always have interest and integrity with good quality detailing and should add character to the area. Thus, dull design or use of muddled detailing must be avoided.
- In general design styles should reflect the local vernacular. Excellence of design and innovation is encouraged, however, and a proposal using contemporary design can be considered if it is an exceptional design of the highest quality in terms of its architecture and landscape design. Nevertheless, such a proposal would need to demonstrate that proper account has been taken of the characteristics of the local area as defined in the Village and Landscape Character Assessments

as part of the Baldons Neighbourhood Plan. The exceptional quality or nature of any design exception should be truly outstanding or innovative, reflecting high standards of architecture and enhancing its immediate setting.

- Designs should use colours which fit with the local palette for the Baldons. In general muted colours are preferable and anything gaudy or too bright should be avoided, especially for visible elevations. The suggested colour palette for the Baldons is detailed below:

Facade:



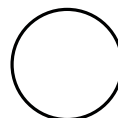
Stone



Off-white render



Natural coloured timber weatherboarding



White render



Dark painted timber weatherboarding



Red brick

Roof:



Grey slate



Dark brown clay/ thatch



Dark red-brown clay

Detailed design guidance for roof and external walling is given on the following pages.

Building styles and design

Roof design

- Roof pitches: Traditional pitched roofs are likely to fit best with the local vernacular and are therefore preferred. Dependent upon the particular site and design, other forms of roof may be appropriate but suitable justification and back up detail should be provided.
- Tiled roof details: Ridges, crests, hips and valleys should follow the vernacular for the roof materials being used
- Dormers: On most 'domestic' buildings, dormer windows can be quite suitable. There are many local forms of dormer and design proposals should seek to fit in accordingly. However, traditional farm outbuilding conversions should generally avoid having dormer windows as their inclusion can change the character of those buildings and disrupt the architectural evolution of the building.
- Chimneys: Facing brickwork would be normally expected on houses in the Baldons and is therefore encouraged. Occasionally, stone and render can be suitable. Traditional clay pots are also the norm here
- Stove pipes: On farm building conversions, black-painted 'stove pipe' terminals can be more suitable; they are less likely to 'domesticate' the architectural character.
- Rooflights: Any large area of glass on a roof in the Baldons is likely to be at odds with the general roofscape pattern here. However, traditional rooflights can be quite appropriate; dark metal 'conservation' types of rooflight are preferable to normal 'velux' windows on prominent roof slopes.
- Leadwork: Traditional sheet metal (typically leadwork) flashing and abutment detailing is encouraged.
- Dishes and aerals: Dishes and aerals should be kept away from principal elevations and off any silhouette rooflines.
- Solar panels: Wherever possible, solar panels should be located in hidden valleys and away from principal elevations of buildings.

External walling design

- Façades and elevations: The design as a whole - and the principal elevations in particular - should be clear and look like the sort of house or cottage that fits with the Village Character Assessment. Avoidance of very large areas of glazing to main façades is encouraged. If a particular design depends upon a lot of glazing, then it should be discretely screened from main public views by suitable evergreen landscaping - to mitigate against something visually out of keeping with (and harmful to) the local character.
- Porches: Porches and canopies should be in keeping with the general appearance and architecture of the house and their design and materials should avoid drawing too much attention to them.

Building styles and design

Examples of existing good design detailing in the Baldons



Figure 71: Clay tiled roof details.



Figure 72: Pitched dormer window example.



Figure 73: Eyebrow dormer windows in a thatched roof.



Figure 74: Eaves example.



Figure 75: Rooflights.



Figure 76: Metal stove pipe.



Figure 77: Traditional clay chimney pot.



Figure 78: Metal rainwater goods.



Figure 79: Canopy porch example.



Figure 80: Modern brick chimney stack.



Figure 81: Traditional sheet metal detailing.



Figure 82: Pitched roof porch example.

Building styles and design

Historic styles which are useful and encouraged to draw on and take inspiration from in any new design in the Baldons are detailed below. These historic styles are either seen in the NPA or are appropriate and would fit well within the local context.

Historic styles:

17th and 18th century	Simple rural 17th and 18th century houses and cottages, especially from the Thames Valley, Cotswold and Chilterns area.
Victorian	Small-scale rural Victorian domestic architecture is appropriate to draw on but not in its Gothic or ecclesiastic forms.
Arts & Crafts	Arts and Crafts houses of the late 19th and early 20th century can provide a wide range of styles and materials that can inform designs for new houses.
Picturesque	Picturesque architecture dating from the early 19th century can be an appropriate source of design ideas. Examples of 'cottage ornee' can be found at Blaize Hamlet near Bristol and dotted around many large estates throughout southern England.
Edwardian	Simple rural Edwardian architecture is appropriate and can be useful to refer to.
1930's	Houses from the 'Art Deco & Modernism' of the 1930's are also a useful design resource.
Simple modern	Simple modern design and construction is fully appropriate and there are many good examples locally. Turn End at Haddenham (1960's) is an interesting case in point.
Traditional farm vernacular	In particular circumstances (dependent upon the site and layout) a design based around traditional farm building vernacular could be appropriate.

17th & 18th century examples:



Figure 83: Nuneham Courtenay cottages, in red brick with clay tile, pitched roof and small, pitched roof dormers.



Figure 84: Timber-framed house with rendered panels, a thatched roof and extended at either end. Located on the south west corner of The Green, Marsh Baldon.

Building styles and design

17th & 18th century examples:



Figure 89: Thatched cottage on the south-east corner of southern Green, Marsh Baldon.

19th century & Victorian:



Figure 90: Rubble stone cottage with brick dressings, located on the eastern end of southern Green, Marsh Baldon.

19th century & Victorian:



Figure 85: Brick cottage with brick dressings located on the north side of The Green, Marsh Baldon.



Figure 86: A cottage on the Green in neighbouring Warborough.

Arts & Crafts and Picturesque:



Figure 87: Picturesque detailing on a cottage in nearby Dorchester with decorative ridges, dormers and other detailing.



Figure 88: Classical picturesque cottage by John Nash from the 19th century.

Building styles and design

Early 20th century & Edwardian:



Figure 91: Early 20th century cottages in nearby Warborough showing design and detailing of the period.

Pre- and post- war:



Figure 92: Post war cottage with painted rendering, located in Clifton Hampden.

Simple modern:



Figure 93: A modern extension to an older building. Use of the farm building vernacular materials means the extension sits well with the much older stone building.



Figure 94: A modern Thames-side house between Dorchester and Clifton Hampden.

Traditional farm vernacular:



Figure 95: Barn conversion in Toot Baldon.



Figure 96: Farm outbuilding conversion in nearby Appleford.

Building line and plot layout

Building line and plot layout

An key characteristic of Baldons NPA regarding plot layout is the one-plot deep development pattern. With exception of agricultural buildings arranged on courtyards, residential developments are mostly one building deep. Plot layouts generally follow an informal pattern, with some variations across the different areas in the NPA.

- Infill development, conversions or extensions should respond to the local context and knit into the surrounding development pattern by mimicking buildings lines, setback and orientation.
- The one-plot deep development pattern of residential buildings must be retained to ensure the historic character of the Baldons is preserved.

Key features of specific areas which should be retained are detailed as follows:

Baldon Row

1. Informal pattern of development which is one-plot deep.
2. All development is on the southern side of the road, with exception of one building from the late 20th century which is at odds with the historic plot layouts.
3. Generous garden sizes and building gaps with low development to plot ratio.

Toot Baldon

1. Informal plot pattern which is generally one-plot deep.
2. Generous garden sizes and building gaps with low development to plot ratio.
3. Variety in setbacks - long driveways generate generous building setbacks, whilst other buildings front directly onto the road. Street frontage of historic building gives a rich character which should not be undermined by any infill, conversions and extensions. Screening and setback is important to maintain the streetscape character.

The Croft, North of The Green, Marsh Baldon

1. Linear layout with relatively regular building lines.
2. Building rotations are generally regular.
3. Plot sizes and front and back gardens are generally consistent.

Marsh Baldon - village green area

1. Meandering road layout and informal pattern of development with generally one-plot deep building pattern.
2. Large variety in plot sizes, building lines and orientation.
3. Overall balanced mix of larger plots and smaller plots. Examples of very long back gardens, up to approximately 92m in length and large green development gaps.
4. Buildings are orientated towards The Green.

Landscape led

Landscape led

Key to the character of the Baldons is the landscape. Proposals should refer to the Landscape Character Assessment and a well thought through landscaping scheme should always accompany any new design proposals. Such a scheme should fully respect the character of the village and its landscape.

Elements which will need to be considered for any new development are:

Green spaces and feeling of openness:

- Development gaps should be retained to ensure the openness of the NPA is maintained. Development will only be supported within the settlement boundaries.
- Frequent and generous building gaps should be retained to preserve the infiltration of open countryside and to protect the green corridors these provide for wildlife.

Lighting

- Baldons NPA is an area of dark skies, which must be preserved to maintain the rural character and minimise light pollution, benefitting both residents and local wildlife.
- In general garden lighting is not encouraged. Where lighting is necessary it must be low-impact. Further guidance on protection of dark skies can be found in *Towards a Dark Sky Standard*, UK Dark Skies Partnership¹. All proposals must meet dark sky policies in the current Local Plan.

¹ *Towards a Dark Sky Standard*, UK Dark Skies Partnership, <https://darksky.uk/>



Figure 97: Green gaps in the NPA as outlined in the Baldons Neighbourhood Plan.



Figure 98: Building gaps allow open views through development.

Landscape led

Boundary enclosures:

- Garden walls and fences should never block or severely obscure important views between houses and the surrounding countryside. There is therefore a preference against high solid walls and close-boarded fences.
- Open fencing and railings that allow the enjoyment of views are in general preferable to any form of solid enclosure.
- Hedges that form boundary enclosures should generally not be higher than 1.5 metres.
- Solid 'security' gates are not encouraged.
- Boundary treatments should be of forms and materials appropriate to the character of the settlement and that of the wider parish area. To maintain the rural character soft surfaces such as trees, planting and hedgerows should prevail. Low height brick and stone walls are also characterful and can be used.
- Native species of vegetation are encouraged to maintain the local character and also to ensure plant species are suitable for the local climate conditions.



Figure 99: Use of low height hedges.



Figure 100: Use of low-level planting.



Figure 101: Use of low height stone wall with vertical stone coping.



Figure 102: Use of low height stone wall combined with vegetation creates an attractive boundary treatment.

Landscape led

Views:

One of the key characteristics of the parish is the open views to the countryside and the surrounding vegetation. There is a list of views identified in the Baldons Neighbourhood Development Plan namely: long and landscape views, views onto landmarks and other heritage assets, as well as screened views, due to vegetation. These contribute to the rural character of the settlements, whilst also enhancing the open or enclosed feel along the streets.

- New buildings must neither block nor impair important gaps or open countryside views.
- Spaces between buildings must be preserved to ensure views towards the countryside and the visual openness of the settlement is maintained
- Short-distance views interrupted by buildings, trees or landmarks, aid navigation and create memorable routes. Thus, these should be retained and not obstructed by any new development.
- Listed and/or landmark buildings, open spaces, public art, historic signage or large trees can help navigation and legibility within the settlements, whilst creating interesting views along the streetscape. Thus, these features should be preserved and any modern addition should be sensitive in style and scale
- Strategic signage could also be placed in the countryside to highlight local assets and destinations as well as encouraging walking and cycling

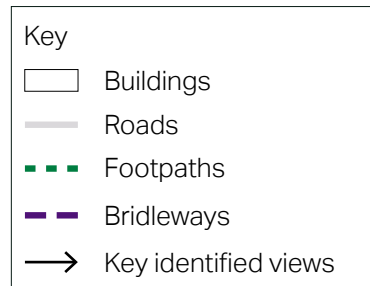


Figure 103: Map showing the key identified views by the NP Steering group in the parish.

Landscape led



Figure 104: Identified KV5 view south west from near Lawrence Church.



Figure 105: Identified KV3+4 view west from the road leading to Lawrence Church.



Figure 106: Identified KV2 view north from Toot Baldon.



Figure 107: View across The Green, Marsh Baldon (KV11+12+13 views).



Figure 108: Expansive view labelled as KV7.

Parking and services

Parking and services

Due to the remote location of the parish, the demand for private cars and car parking remains high. It is important for developments to provide adequate amenity space for pedestrian access as well as parking. Details including parking areas, garages, bin storage and amenity space should be provided at the same time as any associated development outline design. The level of car parking provision must be in accordance with current South Oxfordshire district and Oxfordshire County Council guidance as set out in South Oxfordshire Local Plan and Oxfordshire County Council parking standards.

Garages

- Garages should be designed sensitively to integrate well with the main building and surrounding context. This includes use of appropriate scale and materials. Garages must not dominate the appearance of dwellings and must not reduce the amount of active frontage to the street.
- Open car barns are seen in the NPA and can offer an attractive parking solution that harmonises with the surrounding rural character.
- If garages are proposed as car parking spaces they must meet South Oxfordshire district and Oxfordshire County Council guidance as set out in South Oxfordshire Local Plan and Oxfordshire County Council parking standards.



Figure 109: Local example of garage of appropriate scale and materials,



Figure 110: Local example of car barn.

Sustainability

Sustainability

There are several aspects to ensure any future development is sustainable. Proposals should refer to the national policy as well as current South Oxfordshire district and Oxfordshire County Council guidance. It should be noted that compliance with the Future Homes Standard is expected to become mandatory by 2025. Elements of sustainability which should be considered in accordance with these national and local policies and guidance are:

- Minimising energy use through use of passive design principles, on-site renewable energy generation and building form and thermal efficiency.
- Lifetime and adaptability of homes to provide flexibility for people as well as to respond to climate change and the future by reducing carbon dependency.
- Water management through use of SuDS, permeable paving and rainwater harvesting.
- Electric vehicle charging points.
- Biodiversity Net Gain.

In the context of the Baldons it is important to ensure any sustainability measures are implemented with due consideration of the rural context and character. Therefore some additional guidelines for the Baldons are:

- Eco-design features should avoid detracting from the local character. Solar panels should be placed with consideration of visual impact. This could be on the non-street facing roof side or on a less visually prominent part

of the roof for example on outbuildings, extensions and subordinate structures to the main building where possible.

Guidance on sensitive eco-design features for listed buildings can be found in Historic England draft guidance: 'Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptations (November 2023).



Figure 111: PV panels on the roof of a side extension to a property in the Baldons.

3.3 Next Steps

The Design Guidelines & Codes will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in the Baldons. They will be used in different ways by a variety of actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table.

Actors	How they will use the design guidelines
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

4. Appendix

Emerging Joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse 2041

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils

Amended Policy 2 in the revised BNP draft:

- Policy SP1 - Protection of the Green Belt. No circumstances are envisaged to warrant any relaxation of this protection.
- Policy SP2 - Settlement Hierarchy. In Tier 4 villages, of which Marsh Baldon is one, the only development allowed will be in brownfield sites within the existing built-up area.
- Policy SP2 - Settlement Hierarchy. Toot Baldon forms part of the countryside and lies outside the settlement tiers. As such the policy states. "Development in the countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the development plan or national policy or comprising a replacement dwelling consistent with its location in the countryside".
- Moreover, Policy HOU2 identifies more sites in South Oxfordshire than are required to satisfy planned future demand.

2023 - National Planning Policy Framework

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Development needs to consider national level planning policy guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In particular, NPPF Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places stresses the creation of high-quality buildings and places as being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It sets out a number of principles that planning policies and decisions should consider ensuring that new developments are well-designed and focus on quality.

2021 National Model Design Code

MHCLG

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. This guide should be used as reference for new development.

2019-2024 National Planning Practice Guidance

MHCLG

Development needs to consider national level planning guidance as set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. This is a collection of planning practice guidance which sets out national guidance for a range of categories within planning including biodiversity net gain, climate change, first homes, the Green Belt and historic environment.

2020 Building for a Healthy Life

Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the crucial role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

2007 Manual for Streets

Department for Transport

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.

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