

# Church Place Conservation Area

## Conservation Area Appraisal

*Adopted June 2012*



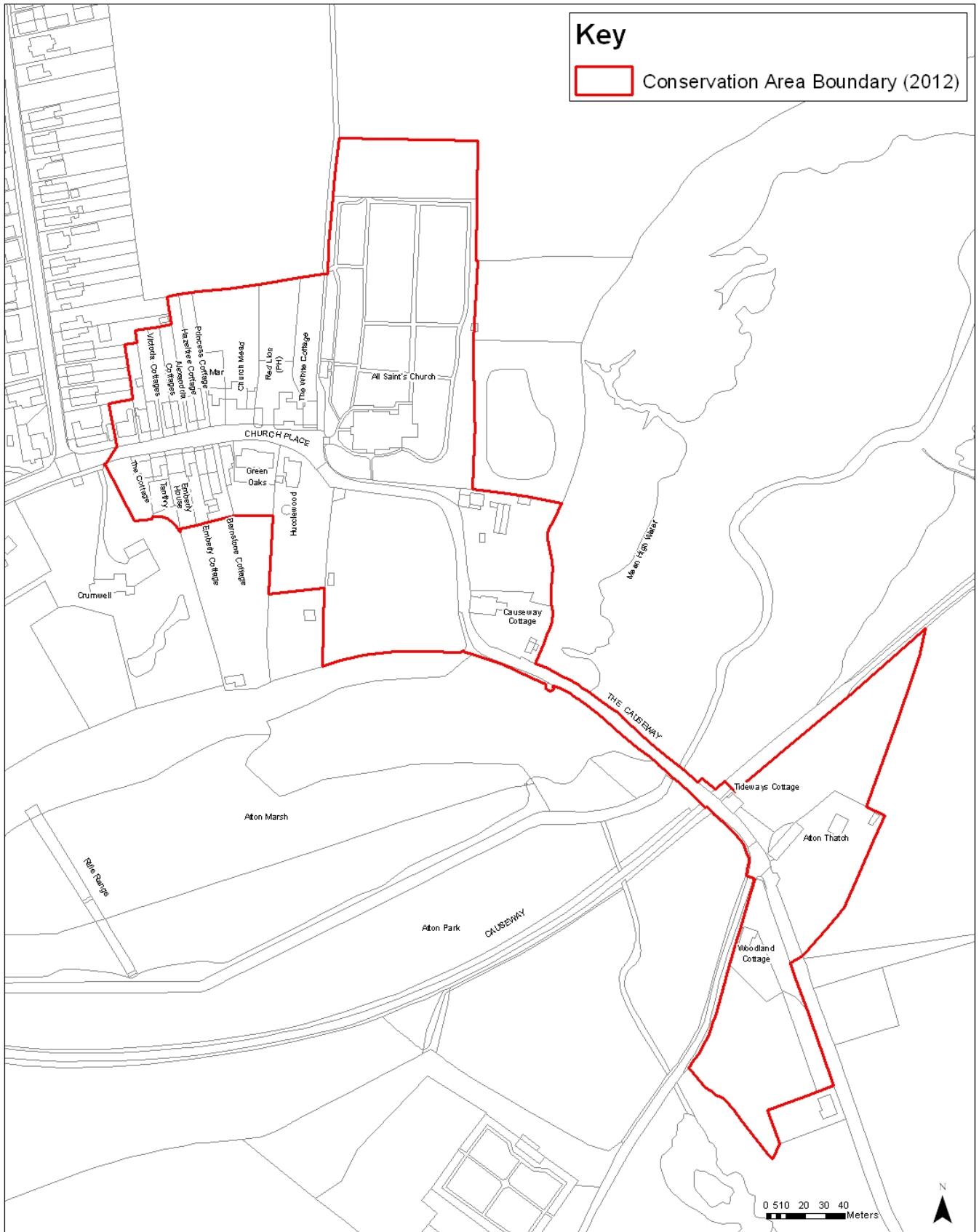
Conservation and Design  
Planning & Regulatory Services

01983 823552  
conservation@iow.gov.uk



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Church Place Conservation Area



## 1 Introduction

1.1 The Church Place Conservation Area falls within the parish of Freshwater on the western peninsular of the Island. Freshwater has 3 existing conservation areas and these are Briary, Pound Green and Freshwater Bay. Briary and Pound Green were designated in July 1979 and Freshwater Bay 30 years later in December 2009. This conservation area appraisal has been undertaken as part of a review of areas with special character and Church Place with the Causeway is considered to have historic and architectural character that is worthy of protection. Named the Church Place Conservation Area, the Causeway and the handful of buildings on the east side of the River Yar are also included.

1.2 This appraisal has been produced using information contained within the Freshwater Village Design Statement (2007/08), Freshwater Parish Plan (2004-6), Isle of Wight History Centre website, Isle of Wight Industrial Archaeology Society website, Historic Environment Records (HER), the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), the Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP), and the Isle of Wight Records Office. A full list of references can be found in the bibliography at the back of this document.

1.3 This document does not identify all the known heritage assets within the conservation area, therefore any omission of any building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

## 2 Planning policy context

2.1 The Isle of Wight Council recognises that a quality built environment is an essential element in creating distinctive, enjoyable and successful places in which to live and work. Our Ecoland Sustainable Community Strategy and Island Plan Core Strategy recognise that our historic environment assets attract investment and tourism, can provide a focus for successful regeneration and are highly valued by local communities.

2.2 As part of a rolling programme of conservation area designation and review, the Council proposes to designate Church Place as a Conservation Area. Local Planning Authorities have a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any areas considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

2.3 The legislation also makes provision for schemes to enhance the area. Therefore, the inclusion of areas of potential allows for schemes to be put forward that will improve the area, in keeping with its own individual character, and to a high standard. Further policy guidance and information for land and property owners can be found [www.iwight.com/conservation](http://www.iwight.com/conservation).

2.4 Designation **does not** mean that development cannot take place within the conservation area or within its setting. Designation means that special consideration will be given to applications within the conservation area to ensure that any demolition is fully justified and that schemes (which are acceptable on all other planning grounds) are of a suitable design, are high quality and appropriate to the special character. This additional level of consideration allows the Council to insist upon the best possible standards of design within a conservation area, and equally to refuse development proposals on the grounds of poor design or quality.

2.5 Conservation area appraisals are produced in partnership with the community. By means of a 6 week period of public consultation (in this instance December 16<sup>th</sup> 2011 to January 27<sup>th</sup> 2012), local communities are able to input to the research to identify areas of special character and to map the development of their distinctive streetscapes. Conservation area appraisal documents produced in partnership with local people in this way can assist with community planning to explore the best ways for an area to develop and grow whilst ensuring that it keeps its local character and sense of identity.

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### 3 Definition of special interest

3.1 History, architecture and the natural environment combine to create a picturesque and tranquil area. The concentration of the historic buildings, in particular around the church and the spectacular views out across the estuary and marshland all combine to create this special area.

### 4 Location, context and setting

4.1 Freshwater is situated in the west of the Isle of Wight. It extends from the Parish of Totland to the west to the town of Yarmouth and the Parishes of Thorley, Shalfleet and Brighstone in the east. The eastern boundary is formed by the River Yar that rises at Freshwater Bay in the south and proceeds in a northerly direction before joining the Solent at Yarmouth. The western edge is represented by cliffs that run from the Needles to Cliff End while the northern boundary is the low slumping cliffs of Norton.

4.2 The Church Place Conservation Area includes the early development around the Parish Church of All Saints extending eastwards to include the Causeway up adjacent to the secondary entrance to Afton Manor. Known locally as Old Freshwater, Church Place is located to the north east of Freshwater. Church Place is linked to other settlements via Copse Lane to the A3054 towards Yarmouth, Hooke Hill to the A3050 to Freshwater Village and The Causeway to the B3399 towards Newport. Newport, the Isle of Wight's administrative centre is 16km (10 miles) to the east. Freshwater's economy is mainly based on agriculture and tourism, with a small number of manufacturing and service companies. The population of Freshwater is just over 5,000<sup>1</sup>.

4.3 The geology of Church Place and the estuary comprises of alluvium<sup>2</sup> underlying the marshy land of the Yar Estuary and gravel terraces that occur along the valley side. Notably the Parish Church stands on a gravel deposit commanding the highest point of the Yar Estuary.

### 5 Historic development of Freshwater

5.1 A Neolithic mortuary enclosure on Tennyson Down indicates that Freshwater area was significant in the early prehistoric with the natural chalk ridge rising toward the west providing a possible processional route for ritual. Some prehistoric material has been recorded from this area but there is no known evidence that this was a heavily populated landscape.

5.2 An Anglo-Saxon settlement may have grown up beside the parish church on gravel deposits beside the Yar Estuary, close to the lowest fording point of the River Yar and north of the estate centre at Kings Manor. By the late Anglo-Saxon period Freshwater was a royal estate. The estate centre was at Kings Manor (known at the time of the Domesday Survey as Kings Freshwater). The bounds of this estate may have corresponded with the mother parish of Freshwater before the Norman Conquest, including land to the east of the Yar Estuary. Freshwater Parish Church of All Saints has some Anglo-Saxon fabric with its walls but should not be considered as the focus for settlement in this area as the church was divorced from the agrarian community that it served.

5.3 In the 12th century further land was granted out of Kings Freshwater to form the manor of Weston Braboef. A planned settlement may have been laid out after the Norman Conquest in the area later known as School Green.

5.4 Field patterns show clear evidence of enclosure from medieval open-field. In medieval times open-field arable seem to have occupied a significant percentage of land within this area. There are no references in Domesday Book to woodland within Freshwater. This apparent lack of woodland may be a much older phenomenon. Extensive woodland clearance may have taken place by later prehistoric or Roman times, allowing the development of relatively large areas of open-field in the later Anglo-Saxon period. However, elsewhere on the Island extensive prehistoric woodland clearance is associated with archaeological evidence of contemporary settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, 2001 Census data

<sup>2</sup> An unconsolidated accumulation of stream-deposited sediments, including sands, silts, clays or gravels.

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5.5 In the 17th century, the Freshwater region was a predominantly agricultural area, made up of scattered, small hamlets and farmsteads, dispersed throughout Freshwater Isle amongst a mixture of enclosed and open field systems. There was no single focus to the settlements in the area and therefore, even in the 17th century, there existed no significant nucleated settlement. From Saxon times, the development of the settlement pattern had resulted in a polyfocal pattern, based on a loosely associated and dispersed collection of settlements. The Freshwater parish therefore consisted of small pockets of habitation, centred on a 'green': More Green, Freshwater Green, Pound Green, Sheepwash Green, Middleton Green, Stroud, Easton, Norton and the settlement round the parish church. However, there were two areas of significant settlement: one centred on School Green and another crowding around the west end of the parish church, in what is today Church Place. Small fishing hamlets existed at Freshwater Gate, Brambles Chine and Norton.

5.6 By using the Hearth Tax records, the population of Freshwater Isle can be estimated at around five hundred in the last half of the seventeenth century. The majority of this population earned a living from agriculture: in the wills for Freshwater, most people are described as 'husbandman' or 'yeoman'. Almost seventy five percent of the population were involved primarily in agriculture. The other occupations are allied agricultural trades, such as blacksmith, miller and carpenter, and service trades, such as grocer and butcher.

5.7 Appreciation of the Island by the wealthy from late 18th century led to building of isolated larger houses at Norton, Westhill and Farringford. In mid 19th century Lord Tennyson lived at Farringford and other well-to-do and artistic residents also came to Freshwater Isle. Weston Manor dates from 1870s. Farringford and Weston Manor added parkland and estate buildings to the landscape. As well as larger Victorian and Edwardian villas, modest semi-detached cottages were built around Freshwater. The present village centre at Freshwater grew up around the existing hamlet of School Green (shown as 'Freshwater Green on the OS 1793 map) developing from the late 19th century when Tennyson Road and Avenue Road were laid out to the west of School Green Road.

5.8 In 1885 Afton Road was built on the east side of the river, providing a new route into Freshwater Isle via Bow Bridge and easier access to Freshwater Bay. Railway links between Newport, Yarmouth and Freshwater were created from 1889 to 1953. Considerable residential development continued in the later 20th century.

5.9 There are strong cultural associations in this area, in particular with painter G.F. Watts, the poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson and the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Freshwater had a distinctive creative community, although many writers, painters and intellectuals were summer visitors rather than permanent residents. The local environment both influenced this creative community and was influenced by it, seen today by some of the properties present.

## **6 Archaeological potential**

6.1 Archaeological remains often contribute to the sense of place of an area, providing historic context which includes evidence of 30,000 years of human intervention in the landscape. Whilst the current evidence can only demonstrate a high degree of potential for archaeological remains in this area it should be understood that each period overlies the preceding chapter of human history producing a time depth that has resulted in the current unique character of the area. In this instance, the conservation area is best considered within the context of the Freshwater Isle area, comprising of land to the west of the River Yar and to the north of the chalk downs. Historically, Freshwater Isle was isolated from the rest of the Isle of Wight and had developed a distinctive landscape character by medieval times, with green rolling down land and an intricate network of routes and pathways connecting a series of small hamlets.

6.2 A variety of prehistoric material has been recorded from this area, including worked flint and metal work but no clear evidence survives of landscape use or for settlement other than the Headon Hill Bronze Age round barrows. A Bronze Age axe hoard has been recorded at Moons Hill

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and Bronze Age urn fragments recorded at Totland. Roman burials, coins and pottery have been recorded but no Roman buildings have been recorded to date. However, it has been predicted that the site of a Roman villa may exist in this area.

6.3 This document does not identify all the known heritage assets within the conservation area, therefore any omission of any building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

## **7 Character areas**

7.1 Church Place is a hamlet comprising of a settlement of houses that cluster around the Parish Church. The Causeway includes a collection of isolated historic buildings either side of the crossing with a rural setting benefitting from spectacular views out across the marshland and estuary. There is a difference in character between these areas and this is why the conservation area is defined by 2 separate character areas.

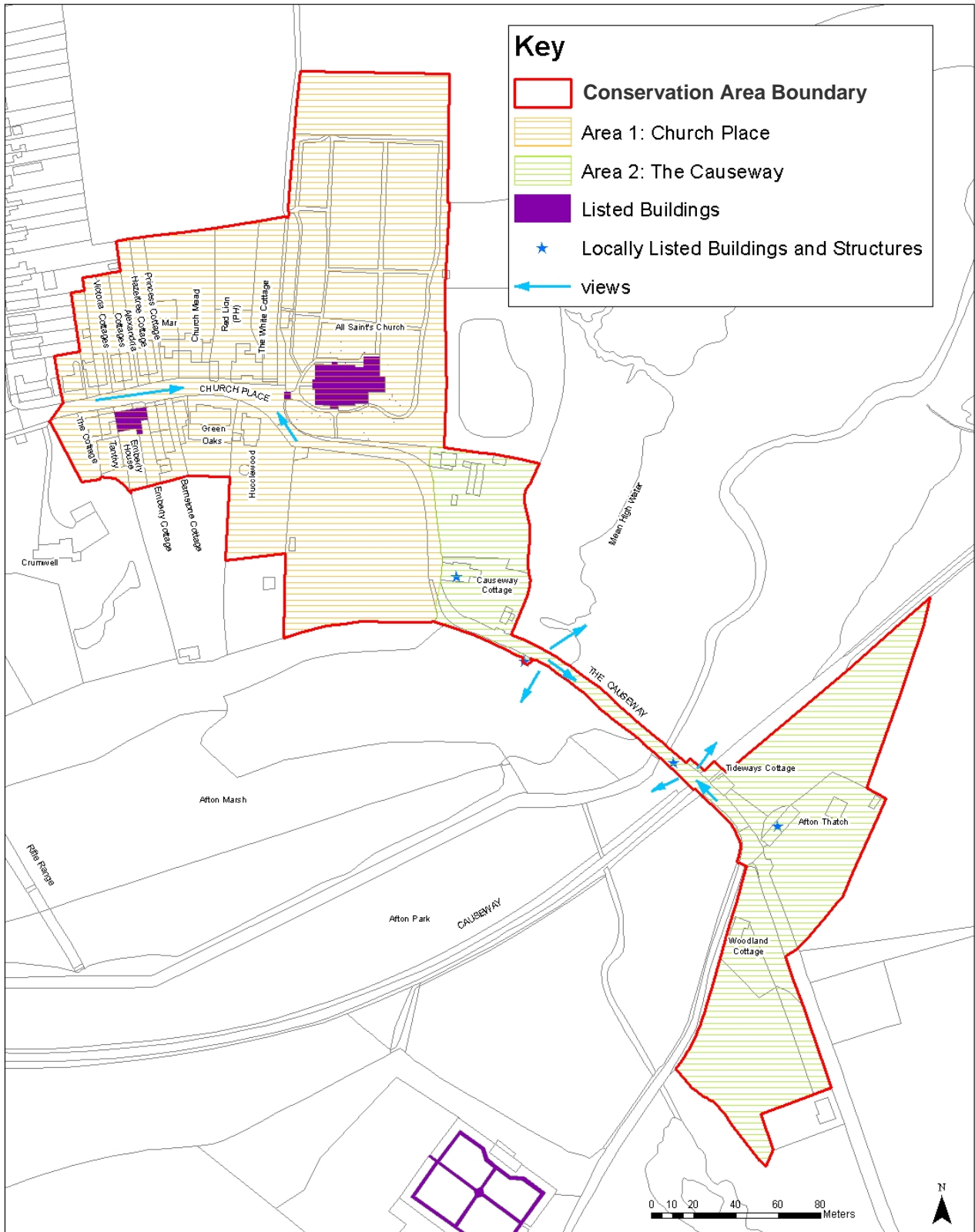
- Area 1: Church Place
- Area 2: The Causeway

7.2 The analysis of the character of these individual areas is examined in depth in the following chapters. The character areas are identified in the map below (Figure 1).

## **8 Key views**

These are referred to specifically within each character area analysis.





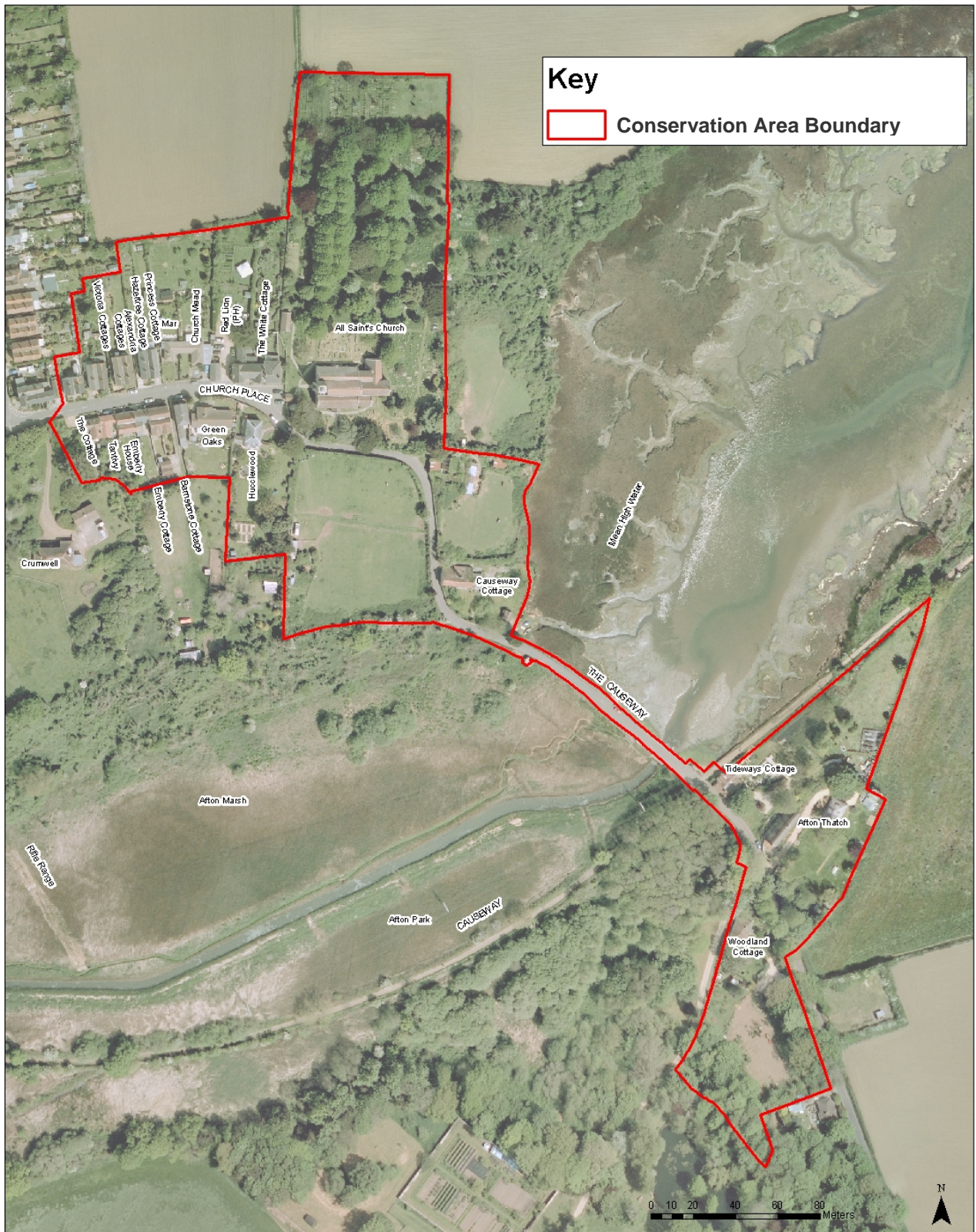
Church Place Conservation Area



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Figure 1: Character Areas





**Church Place Conservation Area**

Conservation Area Boundary

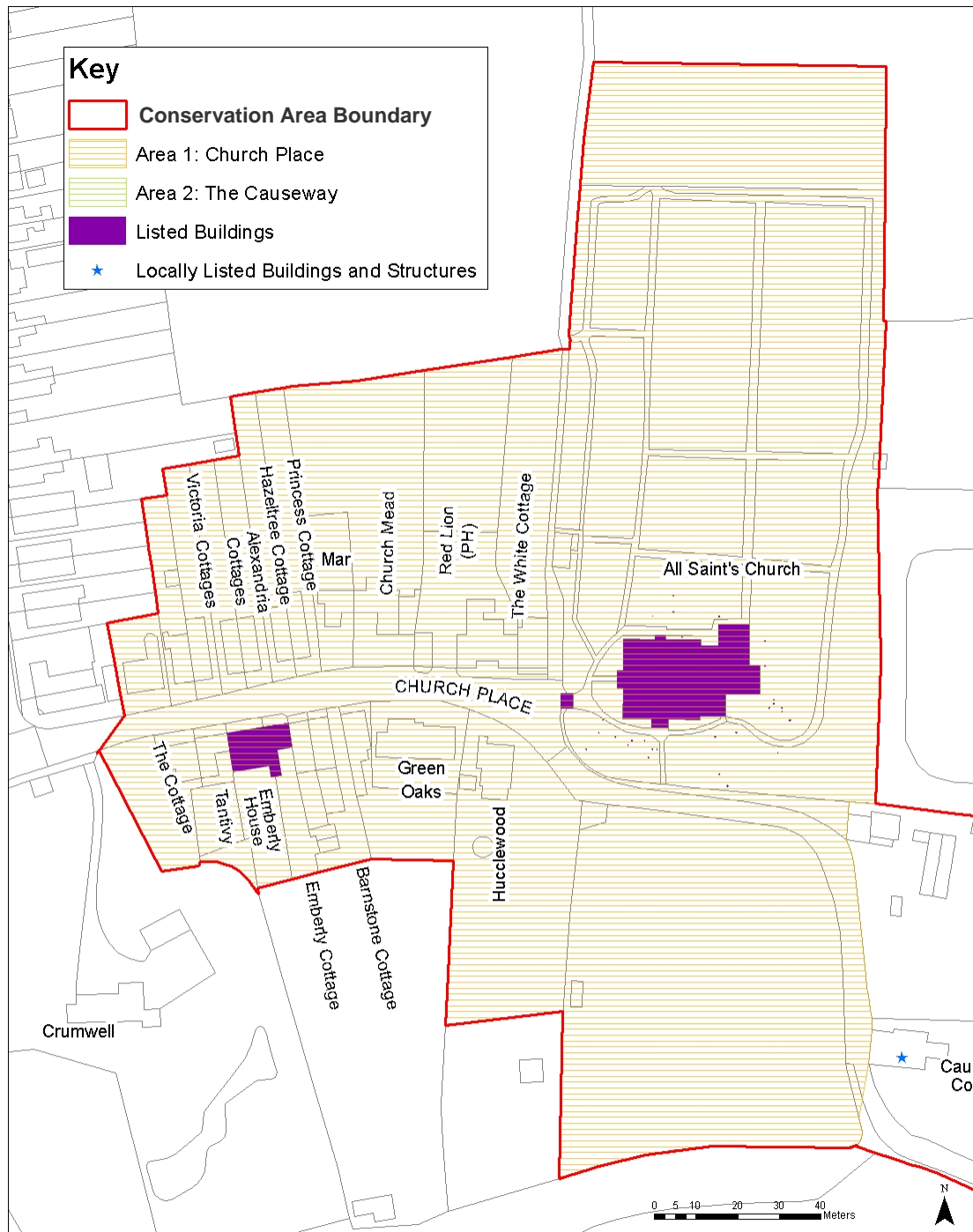


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**Figure 2: Aerial photograph, 2005**

**CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

**Character Area 1: Church Place**



**Church Place Conservation Area**

Character Area 1: Church Place



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**Summary of special interest**

The concentration of historic buildings surrounding the church and the history associated with being one of the first significant early settlements in Freshwater.



## 9 Church Place

9.1 Church Place is a hamlet comprising of a settlement of houses that cluster around the Parish Church.

## 10 Historic development

10.1 As referred to above in the Historic Development of Freshwater section, there were two areas of significant settlement: one centred on School Green and another around the west end of the parish church, in what today is known as Church Place.

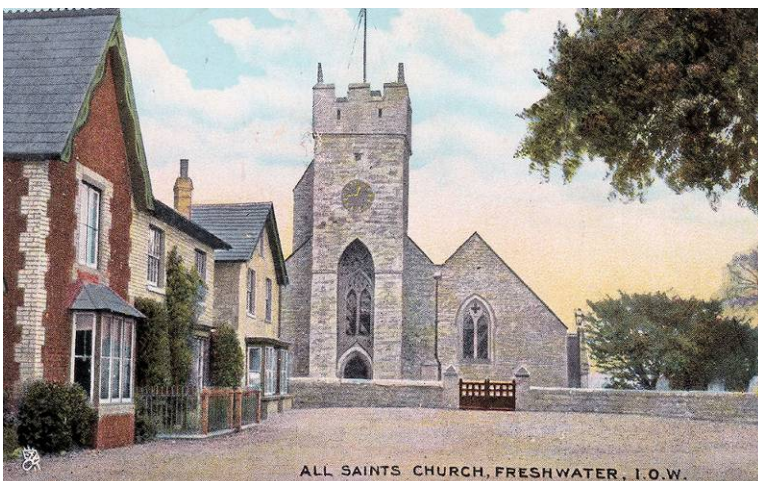
10.2 The church figured highly in all of the locals lives. Much of people's psychological world and mental maps revolved around the parish church. The church looks largely 19<sup>th</sup> century outside due to its restoration in 1875-6 by W.T.Stratton. Only once inside is the buildings historic complexity apparent. There was a late Saxon church, of which some elements remain but in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century various alterations and extensions took place. The medieval chapels were restored and in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century the present tower was formed, replacing what was previously probably a stone bellcote. The towers top storey above the arch is quite plain, with small square headed belfry lights and a tall castellated parapet. The church which has sittings for 650 people was rebuilt and partly restored in 1876 at a cost of three thousand pounds which was raised by public subscription. Kelly's Directory of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (volumes between 1889 – 1894) makes reference to the church saying:

*"The living is a rectory, yearly value gross income £740, with residence and 6 acres of glebe (is an area of land within a manor and parish used to support a parish priest) in the gift of St Johns college, Cambridge. Adjoining the rectory is the parish room, a substantial building of stone".*

Curiously the 1861 Ordnance Survey map refers to a Rectory but its position is not clear.

10.3 The Church contains a memorial tablet to Lord Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate who resided at Farringford House and his wife, Lady Tennyson who died in 1896 is buried in the churchyard.

10.4 Figure 3 below illustrates the Church prior to the construction of the lych gate. It shows the earlier boundary wall of the church which was closer to its tower and the gabled yellow brick/rendered building immediately next to it which appears to have been demolished between 1907 and 1939. During this time the lych gate, mortuary and the new church stone boundary wall were constructed. It is also apparent that the grave yard expanded northwards between 1861 and 1907 to the current northern boundary and between 1907 and 1939 westwards to the existing western boundary. The stocks for the area were apparently located outside the churchyard gate, where any troublemakers could be assured maximum exposure to the view of the locals.



**Figure 3:** The front of All Saints Church prior to the construction of the lych gate (circa 1911). Note the presence of the building between White Cottage and the Church, now demolished.

10.5 Interestingly, in addition to the church being a listed building, over 30 of the monuments/headstones/memorials within and surrounding the church are also individually grade II listed.

10.6 The properties known today as Emberly House and Emberly Cottage appear to be present on the 1793 unpublished Ordinance Survey map (Figure 4 below) and the property known today as Anson Cottage is also present and so there may be an earlier building behind its current pebble dash finish.



**Figure 4:** Extract from the 1793 unpublished and 1861 published Ordnance Survey Maps respectively showing Emberly House and Emberly Cottage. Also note the presence of the Parish Church.

10.7 The 1861 Ordnance Survey map shows buildings in the locations of Hucklewood, the Red Lion Pub and the White Cottage. All three have the more discreet rear and side elevations constructed from coursed stone rubble whereas the prominent elevations are faced with the more fashionable red brick with yellow brick dressings around windows and used for quoins. Whilst many properties elsewhere were constructed from stone and then refaced with brick in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century these buildings appear to have been purpose built to this effect.

10.8 Notably the small stone outbuilding adjacent to the Red Lion Pub was also present. This building appears to have been part of a collection of buildings which were located to its west side. References to a farm in Freshwater village are made in Kelly's Directory of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (volumes 1889 – 1894) and this type of building would accord with such uses but unfortunately evidence to this effect is elusive.

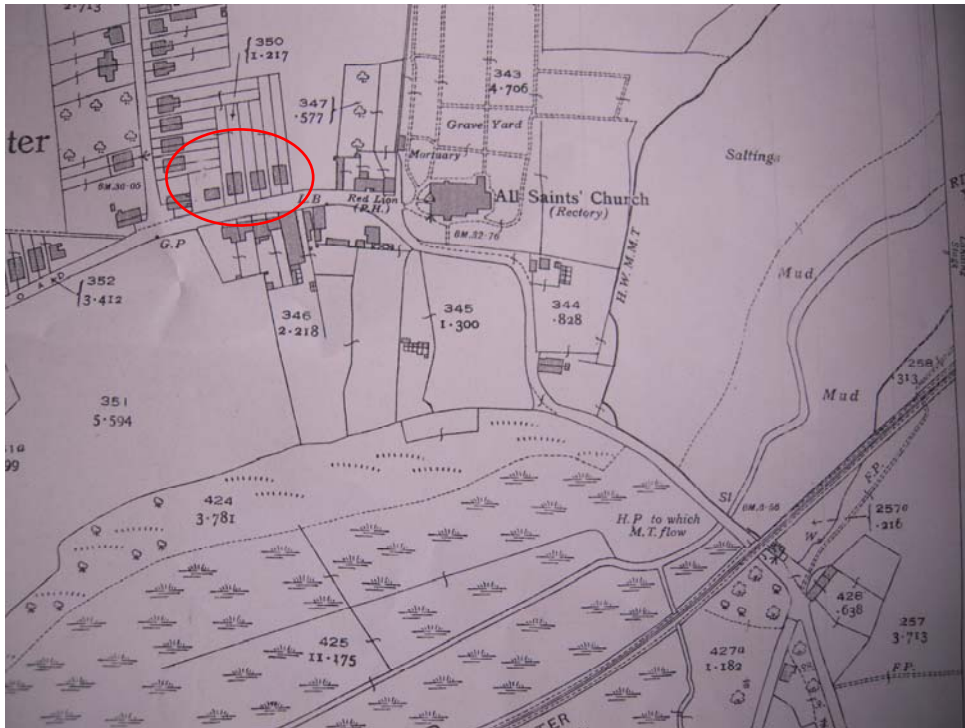
10.9 On the south side of the street, the pattern of development present in 1861 is similar to that seen today with the exception of the obviously later buildings/infill developments. Figure 5 below, although dated 1909, illustrates this.



**Figure 5:** The view (dated 1909) towards the Red Lion (left) and the Church.



10.10 Between 1861 and 1907 the Edwardian red brick buildings on the north side of the street appear, along with many other similarly designed properties in Hooke Hill and Copse Lane (see Figure 6 below).



**Figure 6:** Extract from the 1907 Ordnance Survey Map illustrates the Edwardian red brick buildings

10.11 Regarding the type of people that lived in this area, Kelly's Directory of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (volumes 1889 – 1894) refers to the following trades being located in Church Place, with some recognisable property names:

- Church House - chimney sweep and umbrella maker
- Ivy Cottage - builder and contractor
- Emberly – maltster & brewer
- Freshwater farm
- Veterinary surgeon
- General shop
- Boot maker

10.12 Pre 20<sup>th</sup> century roads were little more than single-carriage track ways, whose surface had been strengthened with a coating of compacted gravel of variable thickness. Where potholes appeared in the thinner sections, further gravel or gathered stones were deposited in the holes. Gravel terraces around the parish church and at Easton provided a convenient source of gravel.

## 11 Qualities, materials and local details

11.1 Two- storey residential properties line the street, leading the eye towards the grade II\* listed church at the eastern end with its dominant stone tower. The Red Lion Public House is the only commercial property in the street and it is located in prime position next to the church (Figure 7 below). The front and side elevations are constructed of red brick with yellow brick quoins and yellow brick chamfered window surrounds whilst the rear elevation, prior to the extension is constructed of simple coursed Island stone with red brick dressings. The steep weathered grey



slate roofs have large red brick chimneys with decorative yellow brick banding protruding through which are imposing architectural features.

11.2 The Parish Church of All Saints (Figure 8 below) commands the main vista and unsurprisingly it is the largest, tallest building in the street. Constructed of Isle of Wight stone rubble with a tiled roof and enclosed by the stone rubble churchyard walls it is nestled between trees and the Red Lion. The stone boundary wall, trees within the churchyard and the 20<sup>th</sup> century clay tiled lych gate combine to make a pleasing focal point in the street.



**Figure 7:** Looking across to the Red Lion Public House

**Figure 8:** All Saints Church

11.3 Hipped roofs are prominent along the south side of the street where the buildings are located close to the highway in a clear delineated line; all with small front gardens (see Figure 9 below). On the north side there are steep gabled roofs that flow in a regular manner towards the church. These properties are set back further from the street with slightly larger front gardens; some of which have unfortunately been altered to accommodate vehicles.



**Figure 9:** Looking westwards along Church Place

11.4 The residential properties are mainly semi-detached. There are 2 examples of later 20<sup>th</sup> century detached developments. Unfortunately these do not reflect the character of the area, being single storey and located further back within their sites.

11.5 Emberly House and Emberly Cottage (both grade II listed buildings - Figure 10 below) are notable double pile properties with steep clay tiled roofs, probably replacing earlier thatched coverings. Both these stone rubble cottages are two-storey and have red brick dressings and red brick chimney stacks with partial render applied. These and the other properties along the south side of the street have entrance doors facing the highway. On the north side the Edwardian semi-detached properties (Figure 10 below) tend to have entrance doors to the sides. All properties however are orientated towards the highway and most tend to fill the width of the plots and have long but narrow rear gardens.



**Figure 10:** *Emberly House and Emberly Cottage and the Edwardian red brick buildings respectively*

11.6 All of the stone cottages tend to have red clay tiles and red brick chimneys. Both natural and painted stone is present. The stone appears to be local limestone and is either coursed rubble or random rubble construction. The Edwardian red brick buildings have steep double pitched gable roofs covered with slate (mainly natural slate) and central valley's, red brick chimneys, decorative orange terracotta ridge tiles and deep overhanging painted timber bargeboards (of both plain and decorative designs). Single storey bays are located to their fronts with predominantly small slated pitched roofs. The later 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalows have concrete tiles and the Red Lion public house has dominant gable roofs with deep overhanging verges with timber plain barge boards. To the west side of the Red Lion there is a small coursed Island stone outbuilding with red brick quoins and a natural slate roof which may have formed part of the earlier Freshwater Farm.

11.7 Physically attached to the Red Lion pub is White Cottage. This property extends out to the east from the Red Lion and has a smooth rendered finish to its facade with hipped slated roofs carrying red brick and partly rendered chimneys. Striking with its crisp white render, small paned timber sliding sash windows and boundary ironwork this building contributes positively to the quality of the architecture in the street.

11.8 Opposite the Red Lion is another prominent building, Hucklewood. Despite the missing stone boundary wall, it is notable for its architectural quality; principally red brick with yellow brick dressings, small paned timber casement windows, decorative porch and its low pitched slated roof with large chimneys. These combine to present a detached Georgian residence in a prime location opposite the church and unusually orientated to face the estuary.

11.9 Interestingly, similar to the Red Lion, both White Cottage and Hucklewood have their more discreet rear and side elevations constructed from coursed stone rubble whilst the prominent



elevations are faced with the more fashionable red brick with yellow brick dressings around windows and used for quoins (see Figure 11 below).



*Figure 11: The rear elevations of White Cottage and the Red Lion*

11.10 Windows tend to be white painted and generally their appearance respects the character of the building, although some historic windows have been replaced with less sympathetic white upvc windows. Interestingly sliding sash windows dominate the north side of the street and casement the south, reflecting the style of architecture of the buildings. Doors where visible are later 20<sup>th</sup> century but they do tend to generally respect the properties and have solid bottom panels with glazed top panels.

11.11 Notable traits are the Edwardian properties on the north side of the street which tend to have higher eaves than those on the south side but because of their larger roofs the ridges on properties on the south side tend to be a similar height. Also chimneys dominate this area, mainly red brick although White Cottage exhibits the only use of yellow bricks, with some later render applied, but all with their terracotta or buff coloured pots. With the exception of White Cottage with the dark ridge tiles, terracotta ridges are used on slate roofs.

11.12 There is a slight but noticeable difference in the colour of the red brick between the later Edwardian buildings and the red brick used elsewhere. The former having a slightly darker deeper red but both are noted as being of good quality stock brick.

11.13 There are a variety of boundary treatments comprised of fences, masonry or vegetation. Unfortunately many original walls have been lost and replaced with later walls, comprising of red brick, painted brick or concrete blocks. Some low walls have railings placed upon them. Vegetation is present in front gardens and the boundaries fronting the highway are characterised by their low height giving clear views of the properties behind. The railings enclosing White Cottage are of particular interest.

## **12 Public realm**

12.1 The street surface is tarmac and there is no formal arrangement for pedestrians. The road is sufficiently wide for vehicles to pass by the parked vehicles that tend to line both sides of the street and vehicles and pedestrians seem to pass with ease. There are no parking restrictions in

force. Some properties benefit from off-road parking although generally parking tends to take place in the street which does adversely affect the overall character of the area. Notably the informal arrangement of parking outside the church alongside the grass verge seems self managing despite affecting the view of the church. Importantly there are few road markings and so when vehicles are not present the character of the street is pleasantly rural.

12.2 Wires/cables strung between telegraph poles and properties are vast in number and whilst this area has a strong character it would benefit from their removal. Sensibly street lights have been placed on existing telegraph poles, which has helped to minimise the street clutter.

### 13 Green spaces and biodiversity value

13.1 Much of Freshwater area is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the coastline as Heritage Coastline. In particular the southern and eastern side of Church Place are included within the AONB. The parish also includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Golden Hill to Compton Part of Colwell Cliffs, the River Yar valley and Afton Downs), a RAMSAR site for breeding birds, a nature reserve and two country parks (Fort Victoria Country Park and Golden Hill Country Park).

13.2 The churchyard and rear garden of the pub are notable open spaces. The former is lined by mature trees and presents views of the long windswept grass between the graves. This helps soften the appearance of the grave stones and monuments creating a visually pleasant area. Interestingly, in addition to the church being a listed building, over 30 of the monuments/headstones/memorials within and surrounding the church are individually grade II listed. The churchyard has an interesting and diverse flora and there are also some interesting specimen trees in the churchyard. The older monuments and church walls support a rich lichen flora.

13.3 There are references to the field opposite the church being associated with the use of the church. A blocked access is evident in the curtilage wall opposite the field (Figure 12 below). The orientation of Hucklewood takes advantage of this open space with views towards the estuary.



**Figure 12:** The blocked access from the Church to the lane opposite the field

## 14 Key views and vistas

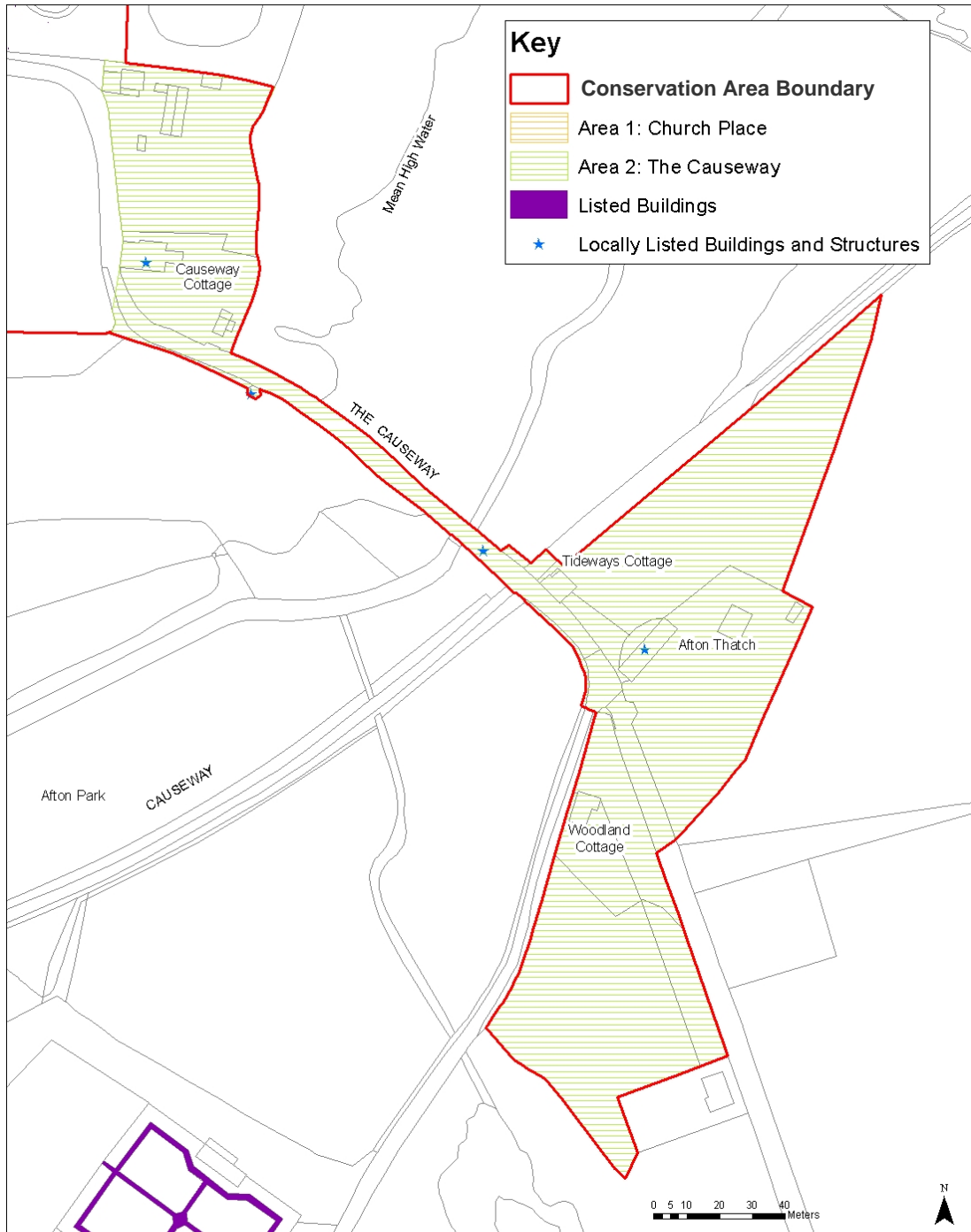
14.1 Standing in the west end of the street looking eastwards towards the parish church of All Saints, this view encapsulates the historic buildings enclosing both sides of the street and terminates with the dramatic/imposing church tower (see Figure 13 below).



*Figure 13: The view towards the church looking eastwards*



**Character Area 2: The Causeway**



**Church Place Conservation Area**

**Character Area 2: The Causeway**



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**Summary of special interest**

The isolated historic buildings either side of the causeway with a rural setting benefitting from spectacular views out across the marshland and estuary.

## 15 The Causeway

15.1 An historic link across the river Yar that connects the Isle of Freshwater with the rest of the Island.

## 16 Historic development

16.1 Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century there had been only two means of access to Freshwater Isle: by ferry boat at Norton across the mouth of the Yar estuary to Yarmouth and by foot across a narrow neck of land called Freshwater Gate at the southern end of the creek formed by the River Yar. This neck of land most probably consisted of a bank of shingle that separated the sea to the south from the marshes of the upper reaches of the Yar estuary to the north. However, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, another communication link had been added in the form of a causeway that extended from near the parish church of All Saints across to Afton.

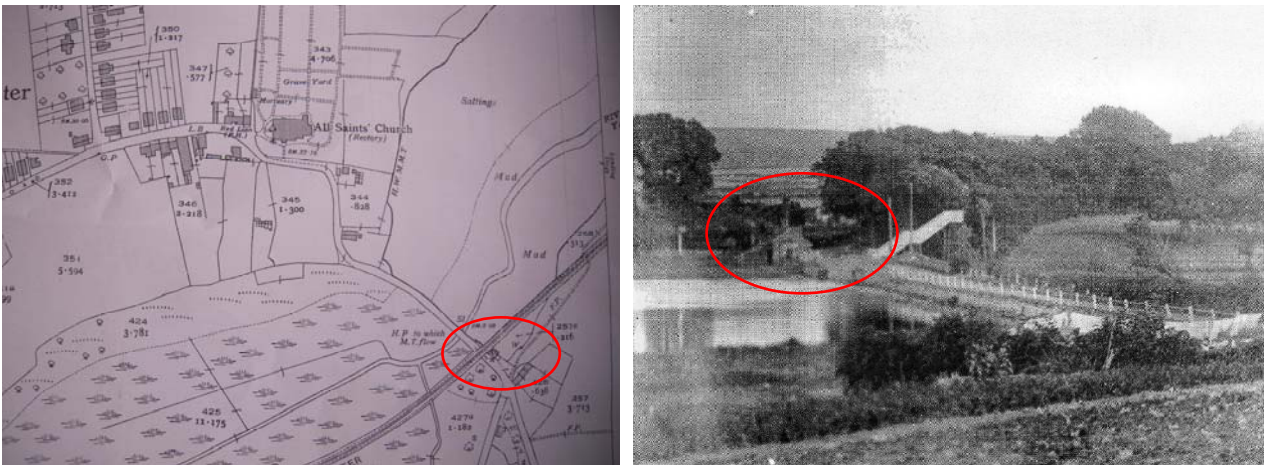
16.2 The causeway was possibly constructed as the dam wall for a tide mill that existed at the east end of the causeway. When the mill was built is uncertain, but it existed by the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century and in 1694 it was described as a "water corn mill". The 1793 unpublished Ordnance Survey map (Figure 14 below) shows a watermill on the Afton side of the Freshwater Causeway and a millpond on the south west side of the causeway but the mill disappeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the millpond was drained, turning the area into marshland. The sluice at the Causeway still divides the brackish waters of the Yar estuary to the north from the freshwater marshes of Afton Marsh to the south.



**Figure 14:** A 1793 map of Freshwater village. Note the presence of the Mill.

16.3 In 1880 the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport railway was promoted to serve the sparsely populated West Wight and was mainly a speculative venture in the hope that new ferry routes and a Solent rail tunnel would emerge in their area. Goods traffic started in 1888, but the line was to be somewhat impoverished throughout its life and was worked intermittently by the I.W. Central Railway from 1914. The route was opened to passengers on 11 July 1889, and closed on 21st September 1953. The 1907 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 15, page 18) illustrates the railway line which ran between Freshwater, Yarmouth and Newport and also the Level Crossing Keepers Cottage which was constructed in 1888 and which (whilst altered) can be seen today.

16.4 Behind the level crossing keeper's cottage is Afton Thatch. An early stone constructed building it is present on the unpublished Ordnance Survey map of 1793. Little is known about this property other than it is likely to have originally have been two dwellings.



**Figure 15:** The 1907 Ordnance Survey map illustrates the railway line and also the level crossing keepers cottage. The picture shows the footbridge over the railway, undated but around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

16.5 Opposite Afton Thatch is the northern entrance to Afton Manor. The Manor itself is a grade II\* listed building and is believed to date from 1725 with early 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations. The manor came into the Urry family in 1591 when purchased by David Urry. In 1779 David Urry of Afton died without sons and left everything to his daughters who were married to Sir John Oglander and Charles Holmes. The present manor house was built in 1700 by David Urry and his wife Ursula Cheeke. The manor is outside of the conservation area because it does not form part of the character of this area but this rear entrance is included as is the small timber boarded building which may have been a gatekeeper's cottage. This was constructed between 1907 and 1939.

16.6 On the opposite side of the causeway, below the church, Causeway Cottage with what appears to have been two outbuildings was present during the survey for the 1861 Ordnance Survey map (see Figure 16 below).



**Figure 16:** 1861 Ordnance Survey map illustrating Causeway Cottage

16.7 Figure 17 below is a photograph dated 1918 and this shows Causeway Cottage and outbuildings adjacent the churchyard. The timber post and rail boundary marking the edge of the road up to the bridge (present today) can also be seen here. These are an effective and discreet method of enclosing the highway.





**Figure 17:** The Causeway in 1918, the church is in the centre of the picture (the tower cannot be seen). The photograph on the right shows a similar position today.

16.8 Little development has taken place in this area. Notably the last construction appears to have been the World War II hexagonal type 22 Pill Box which is located below Causeway Cottage on the edge of the estuary. The Pill Box commanded the broad crossing of the River Yar and railway line and formed part of the Yar defence line. It was built by the Royal Engineers attached 12th Infantry Brigade and could at one time also be fitted with an anti-aircraft gun on the roof. It comprises a concrete interior anti-ricochet wall, two small vertical embrasures either side of the doorway and a square embrasure in each of the other five elevations.

## 17 Qualities, materials and local details

17.1 The marshland and estuary dominate this area and there are only a handful of buildings, each detached with plenty of amenity space around them.



**Figure 18:** Afton Thatch



**Figure 19:** Causeway Cottage

17.2 Natural stone is the dominant material in this area. Causeway Cottage, Afton Thatch, (Figures 18 & 19 above) the causeway bridge and boundary walls are constructed from natural stone, principally random construction. The notable exception to this is the entrance walls to Afton Manor which unsurprisingly are a more formal arrangement of coursed random construction with stone copings and stone pillars each side of the entrance. Whilst the Manor is not visible from this entrance, it is worthy noting that Afton Manor is two-storey construction of rubble stone and ashlar dressings and a hipped tiled roof. Causeway Cottage, a locally listed building is a substantial early stone cottage with a steep outshoot to the rear and traces of alterations to window spacing.



17.3 Whilst the two stone cottages are two-storey construction, Tideways Cottage and Woodland Cottage (Figure 20 & 21 below) are single storey, with the former constructed from painted brick and the latter timber frame clad with timber boarding.



**Figure 20:** *Tideways Cottage*



**Figure 21:** *Woodland Cottage*

17.5 Red tile is the prominent roofing material with the exception of Afton Thatch. This particular thatched building utilises large stone for the quoins, whilst the majority of quoins on buildings are red brick which matches the red brick used for window and door dressings. Red brick chimneys are prominent with their terracotta pots and windows are casements. Unfortunately window material tends to be later upvc but the style generally reflects what would have been originally present. The locally listed Afton Thatch is the exception with timber windows.

17.6 The Causeway Bridge (Figure 22 below) is locally listed and comprises a single arch bridge structure spanning a sluice. The arch is mainly of coursed rubble and dressed ashlar Bembridge limestone. The parapet is a low random rubble wall with chamfered copings.



**Figure 22:** *The locally listed Causeway Bridge comprises a single arch bridge structure spanning a sluice.*

17.7 Boundaries are either formal stone walls or informal vegetation. Tideways is notable for having minimal enclosure which helps blend its curtilage into the landscape.



## 18 Public realm

18.1 The Causeway descends south east from All Saints Church through the narrow winding tarmac road enclosed both sides by trees and vegetation. There are no formal arrangements for pedestrians and the road is barely wide enough for vehicles to pass. There are no parking restrictions in force and vehicles tend to park along the causeway and opposite Tideway's. All properties benefit from off-road parking. Along the causeway the highway is bounded by simple post and rails which enclose the road without drawing the eye away from the landscape beyond. These have been present since at least the early C20th century (refer to figure 17 above) and they are recognised as being a positive element. Telephone and electricity cables and their posts have been removed and the wires relocated underground which has helped to preserve the natural appearance of this area.

18.2 The existence of the Pill Box adds much interest to the area and is an important visual reminder of the Island's role in recent military history (see Figure 23 below).



**Figure 23:** A hexagonal type 22 pillbox, which commanded the broad crossing of the River Yar and railway line.

## 19 Green spaces and biodiversity value

19.1 Much of Freshwater area is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the coastline as Heritage Coast. In particular the southern and eastern side of Church Place are included within the AONB. The parish also includes Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Golden Hill to Compton Part of Colwell Cliffs, the River Yar valley and Afton Downs), a RAMSAR site for breeding birds, a nature reserve and two country parks (Fort Victoria Country Park, Golden Hill Country Park).

19.2 The saltmarshes of Western Yar are designated as a Special Area of Conservation, a Special Protection Area, Ramsar and SSSI. To the immediate south lies Freshwater Marshes SSSI.

19.3 This is the principle open space within the conservation area. The marshland and estuary dominate the landscape with the low soft windswept grasses leading views towards the Downs to the south and the often muddy tidal water of the Yar forming the foreground of glimpses of Yarmouth town in the north some 3 km away.

19.4 The area is not heavily wooded but there are some visually prominent trees located to the rear of All Saints Church (on the north side) and on the eastern side of the river Yar, within Bucket's Copse and Afton Park. Afton Park has the benefit of an area Tree Preservation Order.

19.5 The Causeway bridge has a small brackish water mollusc living in the interstices between the stones, below high water mark. It is *Truncatella subcylindrica*, a nationally rare species known

from only ten sites in the U.K. Special care needs to be taken when maintaining the bridge to ensure that this rare snail can continue to survive here.

## 20 Key views and vistas

20.1 Views out across the marshland and estuary are important, with the low soft windswept grasses leading the eye towards the Downs to the south and the often muddy tidal water of the Yar forming the foreground of glimpses of nearby Yarmouth town. The stone tower of All Saints Church is clearly visible from the causeway and is an important viewpoint (Figure 24 below). This area is very popular with walkers and cyclists especially along the old railway line. The Causeway Bridge affords fine views of the saltmarshes of Western Yar; it is frequently a good vantage point for viewing wintering waders and waterfowl.



**Figure 24:** The view from the Causeway looking across to Church Place with the stone tower of All Saints church peering through the tree line.

## CONDITION ANALYSIS

The preceding chapters have defined the character of the conservation area and listed a host of positive elements that are essential for its continued existence as an area of special interest. However there are a number of factors that are recognised to have a cumulative negative affect.

### Problems, pressures and the capacity for change

P1 The creation of hard standings for vehicles within front gardens can result in the loss of the front amenity space, destroying historic boundary treatments and harms the setting of buildings.

P2 Pressure for development and redevelopment may result in applications for inappropriate infill dwellings and inappropriate extensions to buildings of local interest which fail to respect the size, scale and materials of the original buildings. Such applications will not be supported.

P3 There are examples where traditional windows and doors have been replaced with later less sympathetic units. Care should be taken to retain existing windows and doors and where replacements are required consideration should be given to the type, design and profile of any replacements.

P4 The area in front of the church has a collection of telegraph posts and associated wires which collectively harm the special character of this area.

P5 Trees are important across the conservation area and should be maintained.

P6 Given the location of the area there are environmental pressures from climate change such as flooding of the causeway.

P7 The Red Lion's advertisements are a potential for harming the character of the area. Currently they are noticeably restrained yet effective with an illuminated hanging sign visible from the front and further down the street.

### Potential for enhancements

E1 A key opportunity for improvements will be the Council's Highways PFI project involving renewal and like for like replacement across the Island from 2013 and to include road surfacing, street furniture, road signs and lighting. This is an opportunity to safeguard the local distinctiveness through improving the poor aesthetics of the public realm, in particular reducing the cluttered elements of the public realm around Church Place. The general approach to all highways works throughout the conservation area will follow the less-is-more principle and an audit of the public realm should be undertaken to inform decision making. Detailed guidance is contained in the Council's Guidance for Works on Highways and the Public Realm document. Where cost savings permit, natural or traditional materials will be sought, stretches of historic material re-laid and specific local designs replicated in order to sustain important local character.

E2 Outside of the PFI project, the Council will work in partnership to secure sensitive public realm enhancement schemes in the conservation area. We will work with the Parish Council to identify public realm improvement projects which will sustain the historic interest and local distinctiveness of the conservation area.

E3 The Council will continually seek improvements to both vehicle and pedestrian movements whilst respecting the character of the area.

E4 Within the designated conservation area boundaries, the local planning authority will apply stricter policies and tighter controls on all types of development, paying particular attention to the need to sustain and enhance the character of the conservation area and to consider its setting in line with National Planning Policy Framework and the Isle of Wight Council Core Strategy Island Plan (Policy DM11). Where new developments are proposed in the conservation area or its setting, the local planning authority will seek to encourage ingenuity and quality in design, appropriate to its

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particular historic context. The need to sustain various characteristics such as the historic plan form, views, traditional materials and relationships between buildings will be key considerations in determining applications within the designated area. Proposals which lack quality materials or applications which are poorly detailed will not be supported. Key information on the external finishes, profiles and fenestration detailing will be sought as part of the application in order that the effect of a proposal on the character of the conservation area can be determined.

E5 In line with English Heritage guidance on sustaining and enhancing the character of a conservation area, residential dwellings may be subject to an Article 4 Direction to remove certain permitted development rights. This will control certain types of development and may prevent the loss of original material. Where loss is acceptable steps should be taken to control the type, design and profile of certain features (for example, replacement windows).

E6 Where appropriate the local planning authority will work with owners and the Parish Council to improve the local environment and take action to address disamenity, unlawful development, inappropriate land uses and to secure investment in and sensitive management of vacant land or buildings in the area.



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## Appendix A—Boundary description

- Starting at the Pill Box on The Causeway (opposite Causeway Cottage) follow the road west up to the first right hand bend.
  - At the bend head directly west following the southern boundary of the field opposite All Saint's Church to the south westerly point of the boundary in line with the eastern boundary of Hucklewood.
  - Turn north until the south easterly point of Hucklewood and turn west to follow the southern boundary to the south westerly point.
  - Turn north until the junction with Green Oaks boundary.
  - Turn west and follow the southern boundaries of the group of properties up to the western boundary of The Cottage.
  - Turn north until Church Place and cross the road to the south western point of Keld Cottage and follow the western boundary until the north western point.
  - Turn east and follow the northern boundaries of the properties from Keld Cottage to The White Cottage.
  - Turn north and follow the west, north and east boundaries of All Saint's Churchyard until reaching outbuildings to the south east.
  - At the outbuildings head east up to the marshland and then head south until The Causeway, following the eastern most boundary of Causeway Cottage until rejoining The Causeway.
  - Follow the northern edge of The Causeway across the marsh in a south easterly direction until Tideways Cottages and turn east to follow the boundary line of the property, continuing north east and then turning sharply south west until meeting the boundary of Afton Thatch.
  - Follow the boundary first south east, then south west to The Causeway.
  - Cross the road and head south to the southern most point of Woodland Cottage boundary line, turn and follow the boundary around the rear of the property and rejoin The Causeway.
  - Follow the southern edge of The Causeway in a north westerly direction to rejoin with the start point.
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