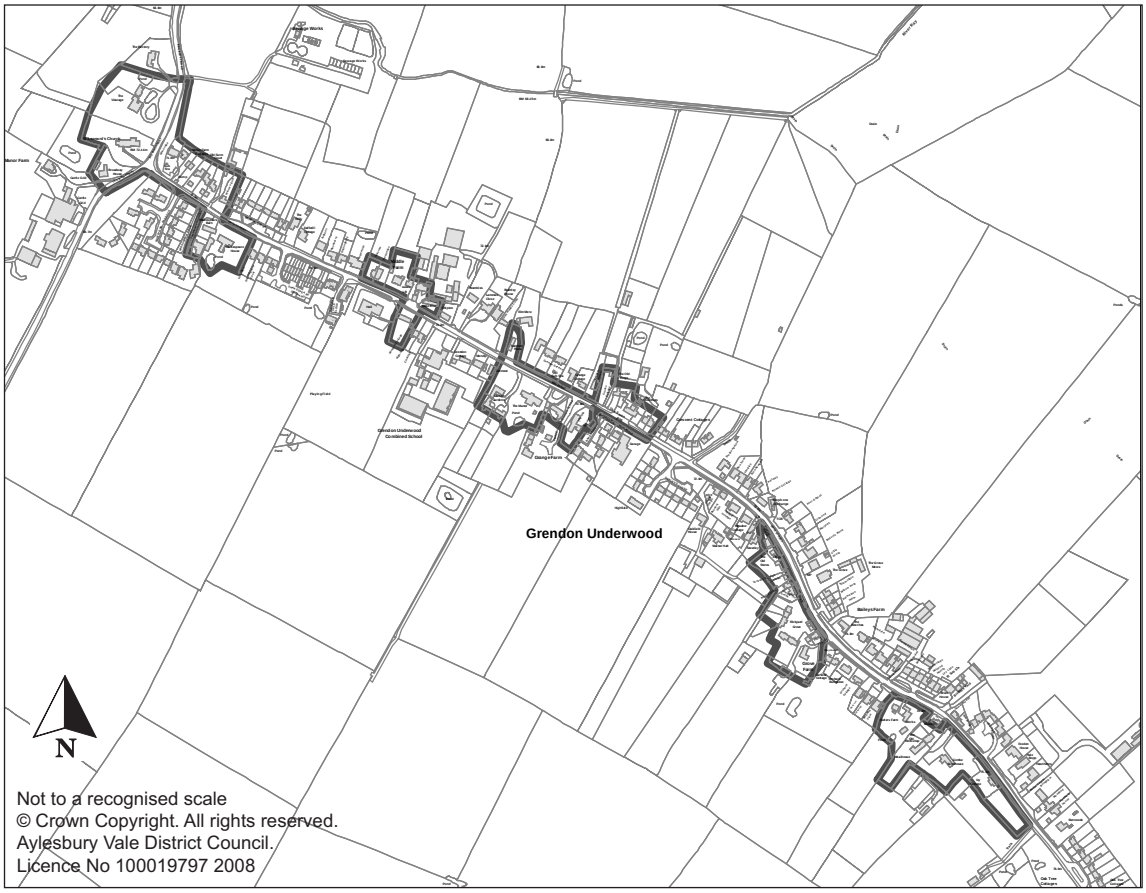
GRENDON UNDERWOOD CONSERVATION AREA

Designated 19th July 1989

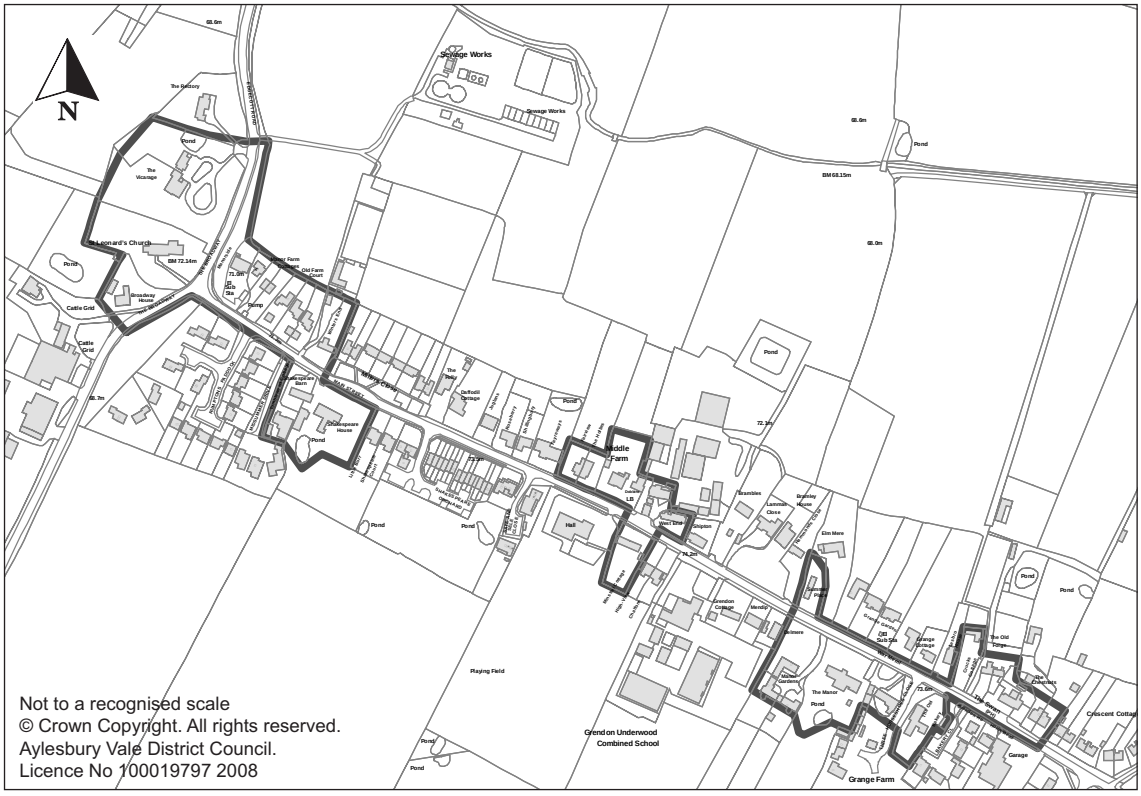
The village of Grendon Underwood, which lies nine miles north west of Aylesbury and one mile north of the A41 trunk road between Aylesbury and Bicester, forms a straggling ribbon extending east – west for about one mile along Main Road and terminating at its western end with the Church of St. Leonards and the Old Rectory.

Originally dating from the pre Norman Conquest days, most of the older properties we see today date from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Extensive infill development has taken place in the last twenty or so years, but small clusters of the older buildings survive to maintain a microcosm of its past character and charm.



Entry to the village is gained by one of three hedgerow lined lanes which wind down from Edgcott to the north, Kingswood to the southeast or the A41 trunk road to the south. Much of the hedgerow, so characteristic of the approach roads to the village, is continued within the village, along either side of Main Road. Occasionally, between a tight ribbon of houses and sporadic farms, fine landscape views are glimpsed, for example: at Butlers Farm, at the eastern end of the village; northward from the tiny field lane at Crescent Cottages and southward, across the playing fields at the Village Hall.

The Village contains a number of fine mature trees, particularly around many of the older properties, which are for the most part Listed. The best groupings are those fronting The Manor, Middle Farm, and, most outstanding of all, those around the Church of St. Leonards and The Old Rectory.

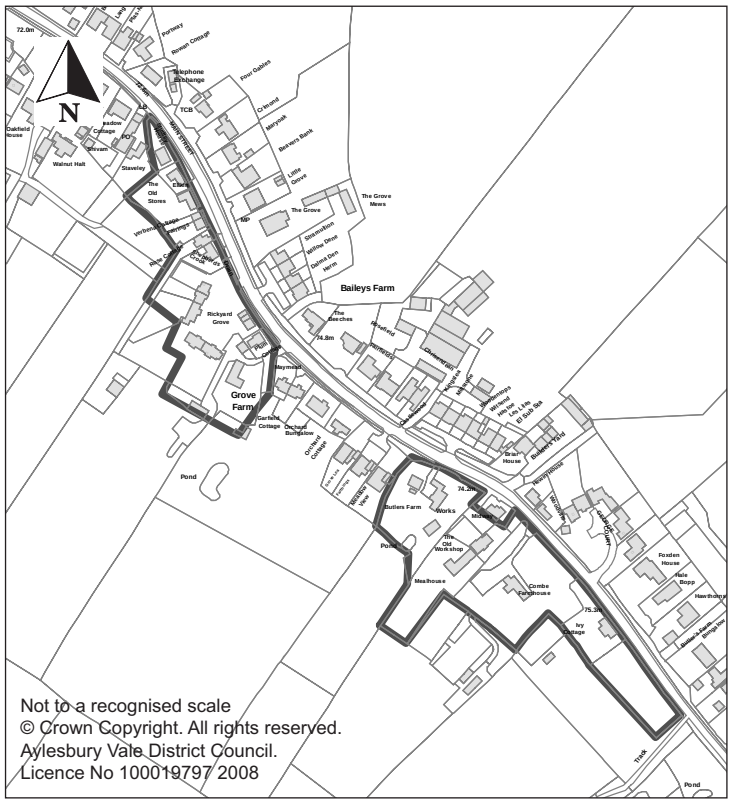


The village centres upon the War Memorial, on its tiny grassed lawn, The Manor, Grange Farm, The Forge, and five timber framed thatched cottages known as Grendon Cottage, Summer Place, The Old Bakery, Crucks Cottage and The Swan Inn public house. Here the main Road is enclosed on either side by hedgerows of varied height and by a large number of tall lime and yew trees fronting The Manor. These trees form a significant visual feature in the street scene juxtaposed dramatically with the small green on which the Memorial stands. Despite the more modern development which has taken place between Summer Place and Crucks Cottage, the remaining buildings, trees and hedgerows form a distinctive grouping whose appearance and character is worthy of preservation.

The second distinctive area worthy of conservation area designation is that area centred upon Middle Farm. Although small in area, containing just six properties: Middle Farm, with its associated outbuildings, West End; West End Cottages, Fairview, Sunnyside and the sixteenth century thatched and listed Minstrel Cottage, they form a cohesive grouping. With the exception of Minstrel Cottage, with its timber framing and white painted brick infill, the remaining properties are of red brick and of uniform scale; their character, appearance and setting being enhanced by enclosure in the form of trees, in front of Middle Farm, a wrought iron railing fence, in front of West End and trees and hedgerows elsewhere.

A third area, at the western end of the village, contains perhaps the three most important properties in the village, namely St. Leonards Church, the Old Rectory and Shakespeare Farm House. The remaining properties within this area being Shakespeare Barn, the detached timber framed and thatched Winters End, the pair of brick cottages known as Manor Farm Cottages, Manorside, which is included for group value and the farmyard between Winters End and Manor Farm cottages. The special character of this area is derived from the particularly fine appearance of the historic buildings, the magnificent stand of trees both in front of and opposite The Old Rectory and Church, along Edgcott Road, and the mature hedging around all the properties.

Two areas towards the eastern end of the village stand out as possessing a special character when compared with their surroundings. The first area extends between the Listed properties, Studley House and Grove Farm and includes The Stores, Verbena Cottage, and Fairings. Here, the characteristic roadside enclosure is provided by a railing fence, fronting Studley House, the brick front elevations of The Stores, Verbena Cottage and Fairings, which closely abut the footpath and a tall hedgerow which extends between Fairings and the outbuildings to Grove Farm. The hedgerow extends back from the roadside along a field boundary and fine views of it are afforded from the east, along Main Road when the road swings sharply to the north. The second area extends along the southern side of Main Road between Butlers Farm and a small copse of trees adjacent Ivy Cottage at the extreme eastern end of the village. Other properties included are Mealhouse and the Grade II listed Coombe Farmhouse. As important to the character and appearance of this area as the buildings, are the trees, of which there are many fine examples.



September 2008