



Boxley and Boxley Abbey

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Maidstone Borough Council
Adopted March 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. Boxley Conservation Area

Boxley Conservation Area was designated in 1977, and it has not undergone a review since then. The area has a history of settlement that dates back to the Norman period, indicating the potential for archaeological remains that reflect this early history.

The age and quality of the architecture within the Conservation Area provide tangible connections to its historical layers, greatly enhancing its significance. The primary reason for designating this area is the high-quality historic buildings present.

Furthermore, the village has a strong historical and visual relationship with St. Mary and All Saints Church, which has influenced the development of the surrounding area.

1.2. The purpose of a Conservation Area

Conservation Areas were first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967.

A Conservation Area is defined as:

“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The individual Local Planning Authority has the responsibility to designate and review Conservation Areas from ‘time to time’, assessing their special qualities and local distinctiveness.

The aim of Conservation Area designation is to protect historic places and to assist in positively managing change, so that their special character is preserved and supported. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic layout, and use of characteristic or local materials, style, or landscaping. However, many Conservation Areas will have a combination of some or all these special characteristics which merits designation.

Above all, Conservation Areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are of special architectural or historic interest.

Conservation Area designation provides protection in the following ways:

- Local planning authorities have control over most demolition of buildings.
- Local planning authorities have extra control over householder development.
- Trees in Conservation Areas are protected.
- When assessing planning applications, the local planning authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area and its setting.

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- Policies in the Local Plan positively encourage development which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. (Refer to Appendix 2 for further information)

1.3. The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Boxley Conservation Area was designated by Maidstone Borough Council on 19 October 1977.

The purpose of this Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy is:

- To identify the significance of the heritage asset – i.e. the value that the Conservation Area has to this and future generations because of its heritage interest – which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest.
- To increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area.
- To provide a framework for making planning decisions, to guide positive change and regeneration.
- To review the Conservation Area boundary in accordance with Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- To highlight issues and features which detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, which offer potential for enhancement or improvement through positive change.

A **Conservation Area Character Appraisal** is an assessment and a record of the special architectural or historic interest which contributes to the character and appearance of a place. The appraisal is a factual and objective analysis, which seeks to identify the distinctiveness of a place by defining the attributes that contribute to its special character. It should be noted, however, that the appraisal cannot be all-inclusive, and that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest. In some cases, significance may only be fully identified at such time as a feature, a building or site is subject to the more rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

An important part of this Boxley Conservation Area is to assess whether the area still possesses the special architectural and historic interest which merits its continued designation. It also provides an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the designation over the last 48 years and whether the boundary of the Conservation Area should be either extended or reduced.

The appraisal includes a **Management Strategy** to help the Borough Council and other stakeholders positively manage the Conservation Area in the future.

A Management Strategy may include action points, design guidance and site specific guidance: It can identify potential threats to the character of the area and identify buildings at risk or where there is potential to add new Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHA) to the local heritage listing.

An appraisal may serve as the basis for the formulation and evaluation of policies in the council's development plan (Local Plan). It is a material consideration in development management (planning application)

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decisions by the local planning authority and by the Planning Inspectorate in determining planning appeals.

It can also heighten awareness of the special character of the place to help inform local Parish Councils in the formulation of Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, and individuals in their design choices.

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been compiled in consultation with local organisations, elected representatives, and council officials. It has been the subject of public consultation and is prepared with a view to being formally adopted for development management purposes.

2. Character Appraisal

2.1. The history and development of Boxley

The name Boxley is recorded in the Domesday Book as "*Boseleu*" and referenced in the Textus Roffensis as "*Boxele*" and "*Boxle*". It is suspected that the origins of the village's name come from "*Boc Leah*," an Anglo-Saxon term meaning for a glade in woodland where box trees tend to grow.

The earliest records mentioning the land refer to it as being granted to Odo by William the Conqueror¹, Odo's half-brother. The area, which held a manor, recorded forty-seven villagers and mentioned twenty acres of pasture land.

¹ First Norman King of England (1066-1087)

A few years later, the manor was granted by Richard I² to Robert de Beaumont, 3rd Earl of Leicester, as Odo had been exiled from England. During that time, the King also permitted the village to hold a weekly market at a location known as Farthings, situated to the west of the current abbey.

Boxley is mentioned again in 1146, when William D'Ipre, the Earl of Kent, founded the Abbey, which was inhabited by monks from France. This abbey, known as the Abbey of St. Mary, remained operational until 1537, when it was dissolved by Henry VIII.

The land and its manorial estates were subsequently granted to Sir Thomas Wyatt in 1540 by the King. A few structures have survived, including Boxley Abbey House and some ruins of the church.

Among the structures surrounding the cloister, the most significant remains are found in the south. Currently, the warming room is still used as an outbuilding, and remnants of the refectory can still be seen.

Additionally, the Boxley Abbey Barn, a large stone building from the 13th century that once served as the abbey's hospitium, still stands and is categorized as a Grade I listed building. The abbey's precinct, in private land, is designated as a Scheduled Monument, enclosed by the ruins of the precinct wall and accessible through a ruined gatehouse.

² King of England from 1189 to 1199.

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Figure 1 Boxley Abbey Farm from the public footpath.

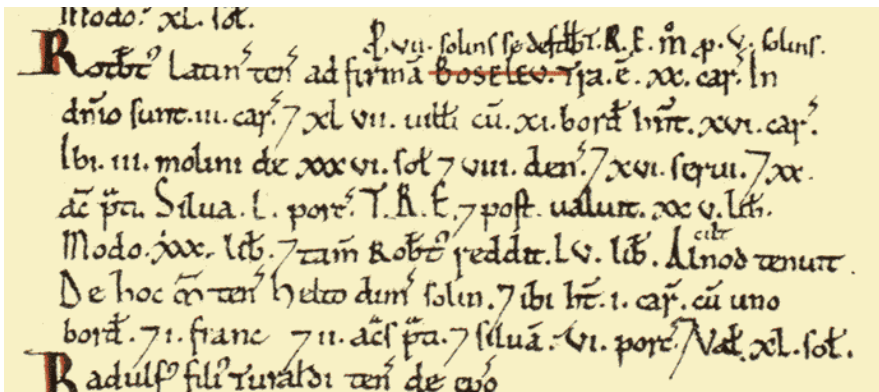


Figure 2 Domesday abstract mentioning the land of Bishop Odo of Bayeux

In 1359, King Edward III offered free warren, use of the area for private hunting, over land located in the west, mentioned as Farthings and other manors around the land. He also offered the right to hold Courts.



Figure 3 King Arms during the 19th century

The village was originally divided into four quarters; Sandling, Weaving, The Hill and Boxley Street, with the existing Boxley village comprising almost all of the latter section.

In 1606, the earliest records of the existing Kings Arms Public House emerged. At that time, it was a stable building, but in 1634, it was purchased by a Maidstone brewer and began to be referred to as The Sun (Ye Sunne).

The current structure may date back to the late 15th century, as shown by old maps, or to the 18th century, according to its listing description. Due to the lack of detailed investigation and the refacing of most buildings in the area, the exact date remains uncertain. In the 20th century, the southern end of the property served as the village shop and post office.

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The Victorians changed the look of many of the original timber framed houses in the village by adding vertical hanging tiles. Today, the houses and farm buildings appear to be almost entirely of Victorian construction.

Boxley House was built during the 17th century. On the edge of the former estate, East Lodge and Workhouse Cottages still remain. Outside the village, Court Lodge Farm, Street Farm, and Harbourland Farm were also part of the old estate.

In 1887, the road leading to the village was redesigned. Up to that time it was very narrow; heading south from the village it led to the Vicarage and then dropped across what are now fields. Back Lane or Sandy Lane was originally the main way from Boxley to Maidstone.

A forge was present in Forge Lane until the mid-20th century. Now lost, it still gives the name of the street.

During the Second World War, the area was bombed by aircraft as it was a common route from Germany to London. Despite this, none of the buildings were significantly damaged.



Figure 4 St Mary and All Saints Church during the 19th century

Boxley Village Green was created in 1970 and forms a central part of the village's Conservation Area

The village's street layout has changed little since the Norman period. With only a few alterations, the area retains much of its historic character and layout, making it a significant historical part of the borough.

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Figure 5 1579 CANTII, Southsexiae, Surriae et map



Figure 7 Cantium vernacule Kent 1659



Figure 6 1596 Ordnance Survey Map

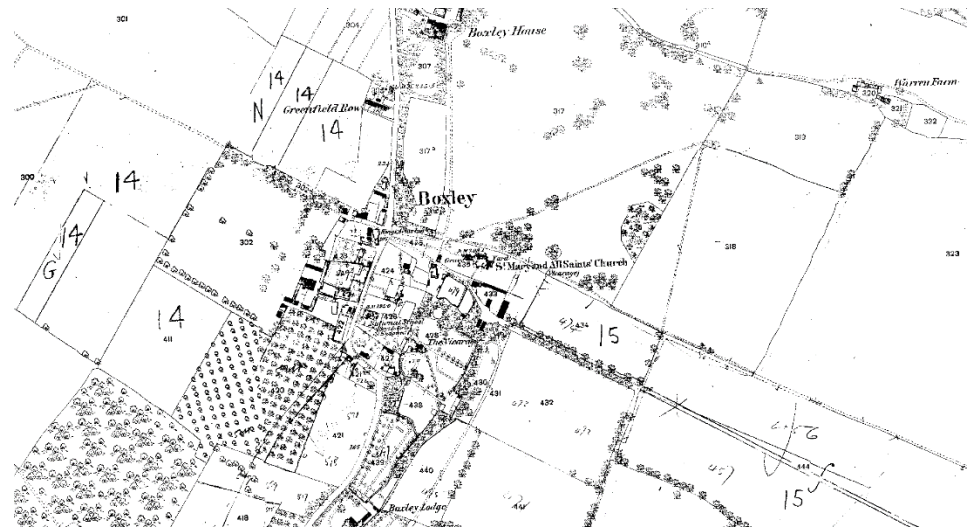


Figure 8 1876

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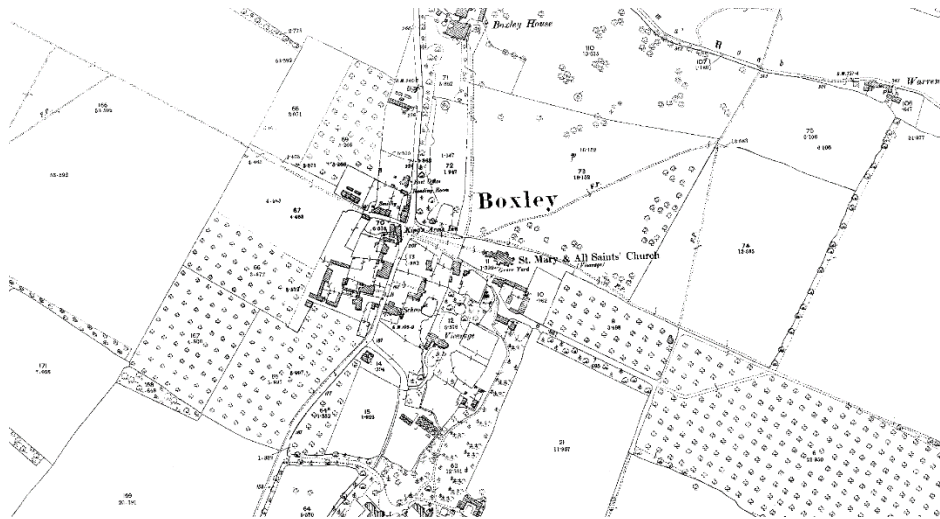


Figure 9 1896

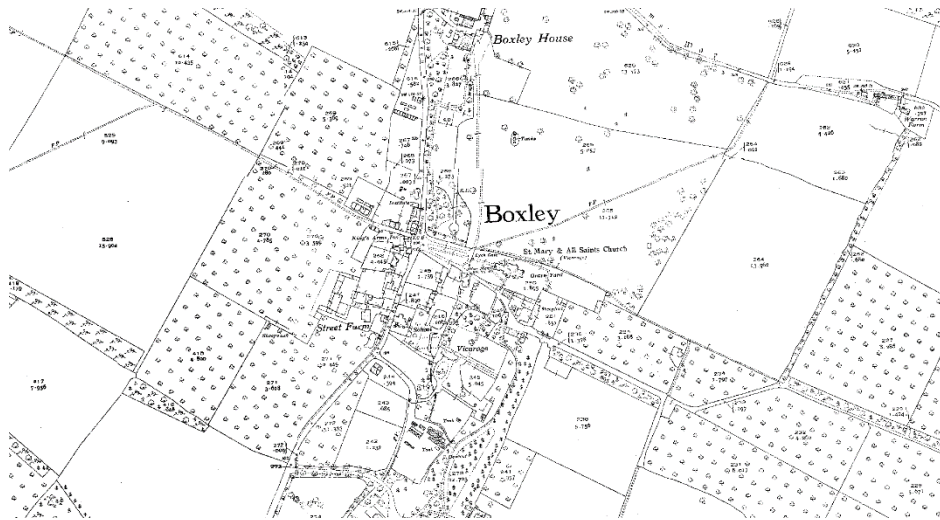


Figure 10 1936

2.2. Topology, Geology and Landscape

The Conservation Area topography is primarily flat, sloping gently northward from the Green. The layout, along with the overall appearance and experience of the area, is mainly shaped by the Street Road, which runs from south to north. On the west side, there is arable land that historically separated the Abbey from the village, while on the east side, St. Mary's and All Saints Church and its open fields dominates the landscape.

Boxley Village is located within the southern part of the North Downs National Landscape (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

2.3. Urban Grain and Spatial Character

Urban grain describes the relationship between the street pattern, block sizes, and the pattern of buildings. The spatial composition of the Conservation Area is focused on the intrinsic relationship between the open landscape and Street Road, which is the central point of adjoining roads. The open green spaces that surround the village create a sense of enclosure and isolation to the rest of the surrounding villages.

The Street, which serves as the connecting road to Maidstone town, runs through the Conservation Area from south to north. In some areas, the perception of the buildings along this road is obstructed by large brick walls and greenery, making these properties less visible.

A few side elevations can be seen in the southern section of the road until Boxley Church Hall, creating a visual gap. The middle section of the road opens up to a large open space, added to the village in the 1970s, that connects the public house and Boxley church with the green.

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On the east side, we find St Mary's and All Saints Church and the village graveyard, as well as older buildings associated with the church, such as the Old Vicarage.

Forge Lane is positioned south of The Street and surrounds the village in the west, connecting with the main road in the middle junction. To the south, Forge Lane has views to an open field on the west side of the road. Few glimpses of rural buildings can be appreciated and the lane features modern agricultural buildings outside the Conservation Area boundaries. On the northwest section of Forge Lane which connects to the Street, the lane has no pathway and is flanked by semi-detached houses with small front gardens.

The K6 Telephone Kiosk is still located in the side elevation of the Old House, and is designated as statutory Listed Grade II.

2.4. Buildings

The layout and buildings in the area have remained generally unchanged, and therefore retain their original features. The area features a mix of housing types, including detached houses, semi-detached homes and cottages. The historic core of the village contains the main collection of listed buildings. During the 18th and 19th centuries, new structures were added around this core, with the oldest houses modernising their facades to reflect the architectural styles of the period.

The area developed around The Street, which was the main connection to Maidstone market town, provides architectural interest and a cohesive townscape. The area's rural character remains, including footpaths and cottages in the village.

Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are designated as statutorily Listed Buildings. There are 11 listed buildings within the boundaries and three outside it.

In the southern section of the street is the entrance to the village from Maidstone, where the first building visible is Park Cottage. This arts and crafts building features a prominent front gable adorned with an exposed timber frame and vertical hanging tiles. The buildings in this part of the street are set back behind brick boundary walls from the main road, allowing for large side and back gardens that enhance the area's greenery.



Figure 11 Park Cottage

The Old Vicarage is situated at the end of the road, which branches off from the Street and encompasses Park Cottage. It stands behind an estate entrance, surrounded by expansive lawns.

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The building feels distinct from the surrounding village, creating a peaceful atmosphere enhanced by a pond on the left side of the entrance and tall hedges that provide screening and contribute to the separation of the building from the village



Figure 12 The Old Vicarage

Back at The Street, the Boxley Church Hall and Street Farm Cottage are two brick buildings located directly opposite each other on the road. The Boxley Church Hall, which maintains a strong connection with the village, has unfortunately added unsympathetic UPVC windows and roof lights. However, the original lancet window has been preserved, providing a positive feature for the area.

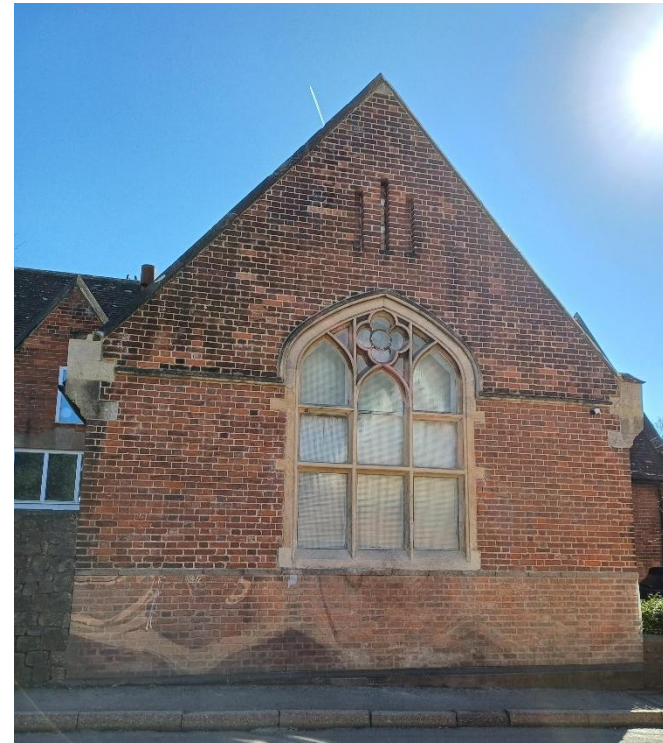


Figure 13 Boxley Church Hall

The Old Malt House (GII) retains its character as a traditional oast house, showcasing its long, vernacular features and two square kilns.

The Hermitage and Hermitage Cottages are concealed behind a tall brick boundary wall, though some areas of their front elevations remain visible, such as the two-storey bay window of The Hermitage.

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Figure 14 The Old Malt House

In the centre of the village, The Kings Arms (GII) and the Old House (GII) stand next to the large Green. Unfortunately, this area is not very welcoming for pedestrians, as it is primarily used for car parking. When the public house is crowded, the visual intrusion of parked cars detracts from the enjoyment of the open space and the view of the church at the end of the Green.

On the west side of The King's Arms, a gravel path leads to Forge Lane. In this part of the village, two-storey semi-detached cottages line both sides of the road. The first group of cottages has small front gardens enclosed by low ragstone walls. These rendered brick buildings feature hanging tiles on the first floor and characteristic hipped roofs.

Old Forge Cottage is a single storey rendered brick building attached to the semidetached cottages. It features well-preserved steel windows at the front and has a charming side garden, which enhances the overall appearance of the area. In front of this group stands Anvil Cottage, a two storey brick building. Unfortunately, the original windows have been replaced with unsympathetic UPVC windows, which detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Most of the northwest section of Forge Lane is not part of the Conservation Area. However, its open landscape significantly enhances the village's setting and rural character. In the southern section, you can find Boxley Oast, which preserves two kilns and a barn with weatherboarding on its front elevation.



Figure 15 The Old Forge Cottage

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Saint Mary and All Saints Church (GI) serves as a principal point for the village, with all surrounding buildings oriented towards it. Its tall Norman tower is visible from most areas of the Conservation Area and acts as a landmark for Boxley. The church entrance features a Lychgate (GII) and is enclosed by a flint wall that encompasses both the church and its graveyard.

Adjacent to the church is Court Lodge Farmhouse (GII), notable for its hanging vertical tiles and rendered ground floor.

Continuing along the path, The Granary stands out with its exposed timber framing on its side elevation, although the rest of the building has been refaced with red brick.

Parsonage Farm is located next to the village green, behind a tall ragstone wall and hedges. Glimpses of Watercress Cottage are visible, featuring dark weatherboarding and a stone ground floor. The neighbouring main house is not visible from public view.

The northern section of the Conservation Area is primarily made up of modern detached buildings, mostly constructed from brick. Greenfield Cottages, formerly related to Boxley House Estate, consists of a group of four terraced cottages arranged at a right angle to the road.

Their front elevation includes a garden and parking space, which contributes to a feeling of separation from the main street. These cottages are constructed of brick and are rendered in white.



Figure 16 Parsonage Farm entrance (Below) Figure 17 Greenfield Cottages (Above)



Public Houses

The King's Arms features a well-recognised timber framed façade and is situated in the village's main core. There are no other public houses nearby.



Figure 18 The Kings Arms

Other structures

Boxley War Memorial is located next to the Saint Mary and All Saint Church. The War Memorial consists of a cross set upon two stone drums. The memorial contains 34 names from the Great War (or First World War) of 1914-1918 and 14 names from the 1939-45 Second World War.



Figure 19 War Memorial

The red Post box is marked with the Royal cypher of GR (George V), which corresponds with the period when that section of the Kings Arms was used as the village post office.

A K6 Telephone Kiosk, is located at the junction with Forge Lane and The Street, next to Old House. The kiosk, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scot is made by cast iron.

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A Drinking Trough is cement built and located on the south corner of the Green, and used as a flower pot. Its origin and period is unknown.



Figure 20 Red post box



Figure 21 K6 Telephone Kiosk in Forge Lane

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Figure 22 Drinking Trough

There are a total of six Grade II listed tombs in the Saint Mary and All Saints Church cemetery:

- Table Tomb 1/2 Yard South Of South Aisle And East Of Porch
- Table Tomb 6 Yards South Of South Aisle, To East Of Porch Of Church
- Head Stone To Wife Of Thomas Sell 4 Yards South Of South Vestry Of Church
- Monument To Members Of The Dunning Family CIRCA 4 1/2 Yards South East Of Chancel Of Church
- Head Stone To Mr John Wise Adjacent To Tombstone To Mrs Elizabeth Wise At Church

- Head Stone To Elizabeth, Daughter Of Mr John Wise Adjacent To Head Stone To Mr John Wise At Church



Figure 23 The Graveyard, the Granary in the back

2.5. Building Materials

2.5.1 Timber framed

Within the village, most of the buildings are thought to be timber framed but rendered or covered with brick or vertical hanging tiles.

Within the Conservation Area, only two exposed timber framed buildings can be seen:



Figure 24 The Granary

The first is The Kings Arms which features brick painted in white, and exposed timber can be seen in some elevations. The second is The Granary, which has a side elevation with an exposed timber frame.

2.5.2 Kentish Ragstone

Ragstone is extensively used for walls although there are also examples of walls being constructed with flint, notably the wall around St Mary and All Saints Church.



Figure 25 Ragstone Wall in The Street

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2.5.3 Weatherboarding

There are some examples of painted weatherboarding within the Conservation Area, which can be found on both domestic dwelling and outbuildings.



Figure 26 Horseshoe Cottage

2.5.4 Vertical Hanging Tiles

Few examples of vertical hanging tiles can be found in the core of the village.



Figure 27 Vertical hanging tile in Forge Lane

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2.5.5 Kent Peg Tiles

This is the dominant roofing material, used on many varieties of buildings within the area and clay tiles can also be found in modern developments.



Figure 28 Boxley Church Hall and School Hall

2.5.6 Brick

The predominant building material in the area is brick. Stock brick in yellow, cream, and various shades of red are especially prominent on The Street.



Figure 29 Red and yellow brick in The Street

2.5.7 Boundary treatments

Brick boundary walls are common to the Area, and their appearance is often softened by bushes, hedges, trees, and ivy which add a green setting and enhance the character of the area.

Sections of ragstone walls can also be found in the east side of The Street.



Figure 30 Yew Trees House boundary treatment

2.6 Setting

The setting of the Conservation Area often contributes to the character and how the Conservation Area is enjoyed, and this can include areas that fall outside of the Conservation Area.

The setting of Boxley Village Conservation Area is based around The Street and the surrounding landscape. The connection to Boxley Abbey, strongly linked with the village in the past, has been lost with the privatisation of orchards and farm land in the west. Further to this, the creation of the motorway has exacerbated disconnection between the former abbey and the village .

2.7 Significant Views

Views contribute to the way in which the character or appearance of a place is experienced, enjoyed and appreciated. Identifying these views allows them to be protected by effective management of development. These views may be subjected to change over time, with the loss of a historic tree or building, and therefore views will need to be continually reassessed.

At the time of drafting this Appraisal, the following views were noted as being significant:

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St Mary's and All Saints Church



Figure 31 Views from the Green toward the church

Forge Lane



Figure 32 Forge Lane views

2.8 Archaeology

There has been very little archaeological investigation conducted within the Conservation Area, although some work has been done at Boxley Abbey and its surrounding buildings, which are part of the Scheduled Monument. In the village, there is potential to discover archaeological finds, as there has been a settlement in the area since around 1146 AD.

Additionally, the historic Pilgrims' Way passes through the village (leading to Canterbury Cathedral, home of the shrine of the martyred archbishop St. Thomas Becket).

In recent years, SPAB (The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) has conducted archaeological research and surveys around Boxley Abbey House. You can find the results here:

<https://www.spab.org.uk/content/boxley-abbey>

2.9 Trees and Landscape

Boxley nestles at the bottom of the North Downs escarpment and is part of the North Downs National Landscape (previously known as Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Beauty, or AONB).

The tree lined streets and green space in front of the church and the green space adds to the rural character of the Conservation Area.

Several ponds are situated around the village, primarily on private land, creating a habitat for local wildlife. It is thought that these ponds were established by the monks of the Abbey; however, due to the lack of historical records and the passing of time, this remains uncertain.

Trees make a valuable contribution to the character of Boxley Conservation Area. They enhance most views within and from the Conservation Area, and often help to define the domestic spaces from the wider landscape. They enhance biodiversity and wildlife opportunities.

2.10 Public Realm

In the Conservation Area, public space is limited to the Village Green. The Green is located on the center of the village, connecting with a cobbled path the Church entrance to The Street.



Figure 33 Benches in the Green

3 Boundary review

The current boundary of the Conservation Area is still considered valid in terms of the area and assets it encompasses.

Part of the review process involves an assessment of the existing Conservation Area boundary, and whether this should be amended, and either enlarged or reduced.

The proposed boundary extension would encompass the north and east of the Street, including significant sites such as Boxley House (GII), Warren Farm (GII), Hatchetts (GII), the Pump House (GII), and Styles Cottages (GII). This extension also includes the Boxley waterworks buildings. The justification for including this group of structures is due their historical connection to the village, along with their design and architectural quality, which collectively contribute positively to the rural character of the area:

Boxley House, in particular, has a strong relationship with the village and retains most of the buildings associated with the Estate within the Conservation Area. Its inclusion would safeguard this historic relationship and preserve the approach from the west, which has remained intact since the Norman period.

4 Boxley Abbey Conservation Area

The Boxley Abbey Conservation Area was designated by Maidstone Borough Council on 19 October 1977.

Within the Conservation Area, there are eight statutorily listed buildings:

- Nos. 1–6 Abbeygate Cottages (Grade II)
- Barn at Boxley Abbey (Grade I)
- Boxley Abbey House (Grade II*)

The area centres around the precinct of Boxley Abbey House. It includes the ruins of the gatehouse on the western side and a wall that traces the original layout of the precinct, featuring several historic doorways. Excavations conducted in the late 19th and 20th centuries uncovered key structural elements of the former abbey. Embankments in the current garden indicate the locations of the east cloister range and the south aisle of the church. A former latrine drain has been transformed into a walled garden, while the church's nave is now represented by what was once a water garden. It is believed that additional remains, such as stables, granaries, and timber agricultural buildings, remain buried beneath the current ground level. Fishponds and watercourses also survive as visible earthworks throughout the site.

The most prominent standing structure within the nine-hectare precinct is the Hospitium, originally built to accommodate abbey visitors and now repurposed as a barn.

Outside the precinct lie the Abbeygate Cottages, believed to have originally comprised two dwellings and now forming a group of six. These cottages feature ground floors constructed in chequered red and grey brick laid in Flemish bond, with first floors hung with plain tiles.

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Each cottage has a small front garden enclosed by low picket fences, all well-maintained and enhanced with planting that contributes positively to the group's appearance. This isolated group of houses, situated adjacent to the gatehouse and facing a ragstone wall, likely a historic boundary of the precinct, maintains a strong visual and contextual relationship with the barn and surrounding open landscape, reinforcing their connection to the former abbey.



Figure 34 Nos. 1–6 Abbeygate Cottages



Figure 35 The Barn viewed from the public path



Figure 36 The ruined gatehouse

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Figure 37 Proposed boundary extension

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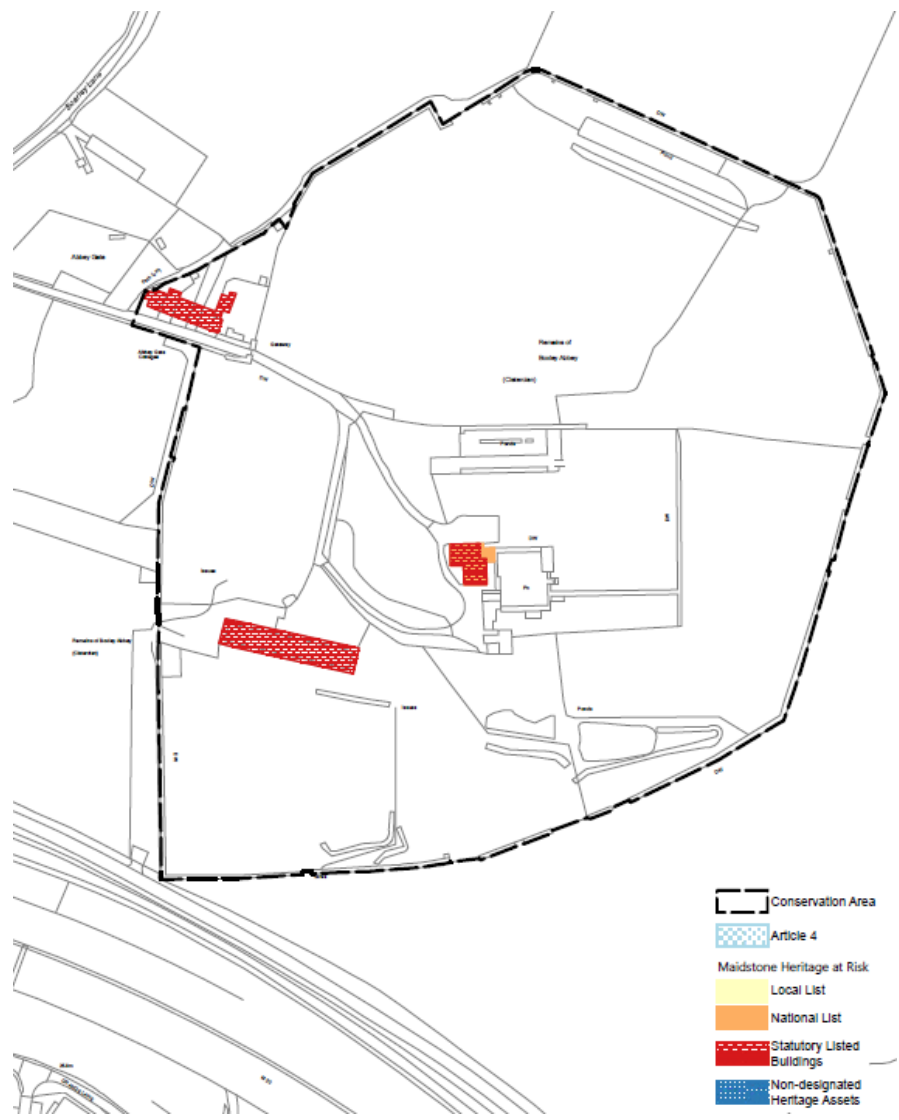


Figure 38 Boxley Abbey Conservation Area

5 Summary and Conclusion

Key positive characteristics:

The special architectural or historic interest which forms the character or the appearance of the Conservation Area, can be summarised as follows:

- Retention of rural character with views to the National Landscape
- High quality of listed buildings
- Retention of traditional materials such as the ragstone walls, vertical hanging tiles and Kent peg tiles in the roofs.
- New developments are sympathetic with the area in terms of scale and design.

Key negative characteristics:

Aspects that cause neutral or negative benefits, can be summarised as follows:

- Replacement windows, generally timber to UPVc
- Inappropriate boundary treatments, such as close board fencing
- Increase in Heavy Goods Vehicles using the Street which is causing significant vibration and erosion to properties adjoining the road in the existing Conservation Area.
- Lack of pedestrian footpaths/accessibility
- The area lacks public realm and sufficient open space
- The use of the Village Green as a car parking space.

Boxley Conservation Area remains essentially unaltered, with a few modern developments on the northern side.

The buildings along The Street have preserved historical features and a strong architectural character, being generally all statutorily listed or locally listed. The area is well preserved, but there are some unsympathetic external finishes, satellite dishes and replacement of original windows which have a negative effect on the character and appearance of buildings.

The overall conclusion of the Appraisal is that all areas of the Conservation Area are worthy of inclusion. There is an opportunity of enhancement with the preservation and enhancement of the historic character of the area and the encouragement of the retention of original features, and enhancement using traditional methods to preserve them.

6 Boxley Conservation Area Management Plan and Strategy

Conservation is not about preventing change, but recognising what is special and unique about the area and ensuring that any future works look to protect or enhance these features and characteristics. The Character Appraisal in Section 2 recognises this significance, with this section encouraging active involvement in the future management of the Conservation Area, and its setting.

This section provides an opportunity for the Borough Council, the Parish Councils, local amenity groups, Kent Highways, Kent County Council, and

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individuals, including householders and business owners to take part in positively managing the area.

6.1 Statutes and policies

When a Conservation Area is designated, there are statutes, planning policies and regulations that govern which types of development require planning permission and the way that the local planning authority undertakes plan making and decision taking. The statutes and policies that directly affect designated Conservation Areas are outlined in appendix 2 below.

It is these statutes and policies that provide the formal framework for managing change in Conservation Areas.

Most significantly, the local planning authority is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in the exercise of all its planning functions.

6.2 Design Guidance

Historic England recommends that the Appraisal is a source of guidance for applicants seeking to make changes that require planning permission, helping to make successful applications.

The guidance below will set out design guidance which encourages good quality of design, which will help to both preserve and enhance the Conservation Area.

6.3 New Development

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2024 states that the Conservation Area is appropriate for minor residential development but this would normally be restricted to proposals for one or two houses. It will be necessary for any new housing development proposals to illustrate that any development is appropriate within the context of the Conservation Area and will not harm its special character. It is considered that the scope for new developments within the Conservation Area is very limited, but in dealing with any proposals the Council will have regard to the vernacular building materials that dominate the Area.

The overriding consideration in dealing with any proposal for development will be whether or not it would either preserve or enhance the special character of the Conservation Area. Any proposal which fails to do so will be refused.

The Council will not insist on any particular architectural style for new building works, but the quality of the design and its execution will be paramount. The Council encourages the use of high-quality contemporary design, where appropriate and subject to proposals being appropriate to their context in terms of scale and use of materials; however, there may be instances where a traditional approach is appropriate – in such case, designs should be high in quality and well-researched, resulting in a scheme which accurately reflects the design, scale, massing, detail, and materials of local tradition. A mix of architectural styles and ethos within the area should not be used to create a single dwelling or building as this creates a poor quality, confusing design.

Buildings should respect the predominant scale. Buildings should not generally exceed 2 storeys in height.

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The social hierarchy of buildings should be respected, responding to the scale and appearance of the building, together with the prominence or position within the street scene.

6.3.1 Layout

The proposed layout of a scheme should recognise the existing, historical development pattern of the settlement. Where more modern development has introduced new patterns, this will not generally be accepted for future development.

Developments should preserve trees and hedges which are healthy and make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. All substantial trees within the Conservation Area are protected and a notice must be served prior to any works to a tree of the prescribed size.

You can find more information about TPO Orders in Maidstone Borough here: https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/heritage-and-landscape/tree-preservation-orders#conservation_areas_160661

The Council will seek to protect the attractive peaceful environment of the Conservation Area. Special areas, such as churchyards and protected gardens shall have extra consideration for impacts of harm to ensure that these spaces can continued to be enjoyed.

6.4 Existing Buildings

Except in the most exceptional circumstances, planning consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings identified as being 'essential' to the character of the Conservation Area and is unlikely to be granted for those rated as 'positive'.

Buildings cited as 'neutral' may be considered appropriate for redevelopment, subject to the quality of any replacement scheme constituting an improvement over current circumstance.

The redevelopment of sites and buildings judged to be 'negative' will usually be encouraged so long as any scheme is appropriate to its context.

Where a building has been recognised as having 'neutral' or 'positive' contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, there will need to be sufficient justification to clarify the reason for the loss of the building or structure.

In dealing with applications for the redevelopment of existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the detailed building assessments provided within a Heritage Statement.

In dealing with proposals for extensions and other alterations to existing buildings, the Council will have regard to the following considerations:

- Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale.
- Satellite dishes will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.

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- Shop fronts and signage should respect the character of the Conservation Area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature. (Refer to [Shop Front Design Guidance](#)).

6.4.1 Window and Door Replacement

Replacement Windows can have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area. It is encouraged that traditional and historic windows and doors are retained, and where there is a need to replace, these will be undertaken with timber, and of a design responding to the dwelling.

Dormer windows may be acceptable, depending on their position, number, scale, and design. No more than one or two dormers per elevation will normally be considered appropriate and as a general rule a dormer should not occupy more than about one third of the overall height of the roof. Large 'box' dormers will not be considered appropriate; neither will dormers which extend above the existing ridge height.

Roof lights may be considered acceptable and will be subject to the same considerations as dormers in relation to numbers, position, and scale. 'Conservation' roof lights which sit close to the roof slope should be used. Rooflights should not be placed on principle elevations unless screened by a parapet or similar.

6.4.2 Extensions

Extensions should normally be of sympathetic materials, design and detailing to the host building, and should be subservient in scale.

Any extensions should respect the spacing and character of the street scene, and not look to overcrowd or dominant the street scene.

For further information, refer to our SPD [Residential Extensions Guidance](#).

6.4.3 Boundary Treatments

Boundary enclosures can have a significant effect on the character of the Conservation Area. The most appropriate forms are considered to be hedging, low brick walls or wooden open fencing. The better choice of boundary treatment will depend on the location, type of dwelling, and common style used in that area.

Close-boarded fences or similar will not be considered appropriate in any situation.

The demolition of boundary walls to allow for off-road parking will be refused where the loss of the boundary treatment will have a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Further details can be found in the [Boundary Treatments Guidance](#)

6.4.4 Commercial and Retail

Retail and commercial functions within many of the Conservation Areas offer many advantages and can often help create a vibrant and attractive street scene. The retention of shops and services will be encouraged, though it is recognised that there has been a decline in the use of shops over recent years. Creative change of these buildings can often find new uses, and by recognising that places need to be adaptable, it is possible to adjust to changing retail and social trends and offer shoppers and visitors the experience they want and need.

Where there is a proposed loss of a shop, evidence must be provided to show that all efforts have been undertaken to retain the shop.

Shop fronts and signage should respect the character of the Conservation Area and materials and typefaces should be appropriate to its historic nature. Large scale signage and covering of principle windows will be discouraged as this provides a negative appearance.

6.4.5 Parking

The creation of parking for both domestic dwellings and for commercial/retail/business use can have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area. It is acknowledged that for many businesses to survive, especially retail, then ease of parking is important.

A balanced judgement will be undertaken to ensure that the parking for business purposes does not have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.

Parking for private dwellings will be considered on a case by case basis. Where conversion of a building is proposed, parking will be taken into consideration for the impact on the harm to the significance and setting of the heritage asset. This will include incremental impact from previous development within the area.

Creating a parking space by installing hardstanding to a front garden is generally not permitted in Conservation Areas, as it can negatively impact the area's appearance and character. If you have a designated parking space, options like loose gravel and permeable or porous surfaces might be acceptable, depending on the specific case and setting.

6.4.6 Traffic Management

The impact of traffic within most Conservation Areas has a critical impact on the area.

The Management Plan alone cannot reduce traffic concerns, but additional consideration for the proposed conversion of buildings into HMO's or flats, and the associated car parking and traffic should be undertaken as part of the consideration for conversion.

The position of the carparking on a proposed scheme should be considered as parked cars (or the open hardstanding) can have a negative impact on the character of the area. It may not always be appropriate to locate parking to the front of the building.

The formation of crossing points and other Highway interventions should consider the character of the Conservation Area.

6.4.7 Public Realm Improvements

The public realm is often managed by different organisations, including Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, and the parish council. Where practical and possible, consideration for improvements should be undertaken.

These could include actions such as:

- Resurface High Streets and key/ main road within the Conservation Area
- Avoid urban road schemes in rural areas, and where this is not possible, mitigate the impacts
- Parking controls within more sensitive areas
- Reverse process of inappropriate modifications to buildings to restore original features
- Improve quality and consistency of shop fronts, signage, and lighting
- Improve green and communal spaces
- Reduce clutter in some areas to improve the Highway such as thinner yellow lines, removal of unnecessary signage
- Restore front boundary treatments
- Improve pathways and connectivity

6.4.8 Carbon Reduction Incentives and Schemes

Within Conservation Areas, it is possible to install carbon neutral or environmentally sustainable features, though they will require

consideration. A holistic, whole building approach should be undertaken to the building, rather than a presumption of a single solution, such as double-glazed windows.

Where a planning or listed building consent application is submitted, it will be expected that holistic consideration for the buildings has been undertaken by providing a simple statement, either within the Design & Access Statement or within the Heritage Statement.

There are numerous options available, many will be Conservation Area and site specific, but the general considerations are:

Solar panels should not be installed on buildings where visible from the public realm, or if the building is listed. Consideration for any associated plant, including the batteries should be considered, and should not be within the public realm.

Double glazing is generally not permitted within listed buildings. With other buildings within Conservation Areas, it is preferred that it is not installed to primary routes or buildings of local or national interest. The installation of double glazing creates a strange reflection, and the additional weight of the glass requires a larger or chunkier frame, both of which can alter the appearance of the building negatively.

The manufacture of double glazing has a high carbon contribution due to the use of glass and UPVc, and therefore it is recommended that existing windows are overhauled, repaired and secondary glazing installed.

Secondary glazing can be installed to improve the thermal efficiency of buildings. This often provides a better solution than installing double glazing. The use of shutters on buildings can improve the heat-loss of the building and could be found in many older buildings.

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Awnings to windows are generally associated with shops, but they have been traditionally used on domestic houses to provide sun screening and to protect the glass from weather. The use of awnings where appropriate, may assist against solar warming.

Ground and Air Source Heat Pumps can be installed for buildings within the Conservation Area. The external air source should not be visible from the public realm.

External insulation will not be considered acceptable to a majority of buildings within the Conservation Area due to the visual impact on the appearance of the property.

Retrofitting is a wide subject, with some aspects that would not need permission to be undertaken, such as loft insulation.

External Electric Car Charging points could be formed via a pole or connected to the wall, depending on the building and its setting. Where a pole or freestanding system is not practical, the unit should not be placed on the principle and/or front façade of the building and be positioned as discreetly as possible.

The point should be a socket system and not a tethered (ie, with fixed cable). The cable connecting the socket to main supply should not be run where visible and should consider the fabric and details of the building.

Electric Vehicle Charge Arms are not permitted, as they negatively impact the streetscape. As these often require dedicated off-street parking, works to create the off-street parking should be considered. The demolition of historic front boundary walls will not generally be allowed within a Conservation Area due to the impact on the character.

6.4.9 Ecology Measures

Integrated biodiversity enhancements, such as bird/bat bricks/tiles/tubes, and bee bricks, should be included with any new builds or extensions.

With listed buildings, some consideration for these should be undertaken to enhance biodiversity. Alternative positions may be a more sympathetic solution, such as the grounds, existing boundary walls (if brick or stone), or associated outbuildings.

Where replacement roof coverings or alterations are proposed, then integrated biodiversity enhancements should be included if the building is not already hosting ecology (such as bats).

6.4.10 Services

There is a growing demand for services and the associated equipment to domestic houses. Consideration for the character of the area, and the setting of listed buildings should be undertaken. Examples include:

- Satellite dishes (one per building) will only be considered acceptable when they cannot be readily seen from the streets or other public spaces.
- Air conditioning units (and associated plant) should not be placed where it can be seen from the public realm.
- Meter Boxes should not be placed on the front façade of the building
- Alarm boxes should be positioned with consideration to ensure that they do not form the main focus of an elevation or cover architectural details.

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-Security Cameras will not usually be supported unless a strong business case is provided. Where they are needed, they should be sensitively positioned, with the minimum number of cameras required.

-Security measures, such as grills and shutters will not be permitted where visible from the public realm as these often provide a negative impact on the appearance of the street scene. Where there is a strong business requirement for shutters, these should be internal and open to allow for passive security protection.

6.5 Trees and planting

Trees and hedgerows play a vital role in the special character of Boxley Conservation Area and also contribute significantly to wildlife habitat and biodiversity. The retention and active management of trees and hedgerows should be encouraged and opportunities for new native planting should be considered where appropriate.

Planting which contributes to the rural character of Boxley should normally be comprised of native species, although other species now assimilated into the Kentish rural scene may also be appropriate.

All trees within the Conservation Area are protected. Six weeks' notice must be given to the Borough Council in writing before any works are undertaken to trees within Conservation Areas.

Trees and planting: Opportunities for enhancement

- An audit of trees and hedgerows may be undertaken to establish whether there is any scope for better management, additional protection through [Tree Preservation Orders\(TPO\)](#), or for further planting.

- Planting and tree management should be carefully considered to enhance, preserve, restore or open up significant views or vistas.

6.6 Local heritage list – Non-designated Heritage Assets

Maidstone Borough Council have compiled a Non-designated Heritage List.

The Local Heritage List:

- raises awareness of an area's local heritage assets and their importance to local distinctiveness;
- informs developers, owners, council officers and members about buildings within the local authority boundary that are desirable to retain and protect;
- provides guidance and specialist advice to owners to help protect the character and setting of those buildings, structures, sites and landscapes;
- helps the council in its decision making when discussing proposals and determining planning applications;
- records the nature of the local historic environment more accurately.

The impact of any development on a building or site included within the Local Heritage List will be a material consideration when the council considers an application for planning permission.

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In this appraisal the following buildings have been recognised as locally listed:

- The Granary
- Forge Lane, Nos.1 to 4
- Greenfield Cottages
- Boxley Church Hall
- Boxley Oast
- Hillside Cottage
- Boxley waterworks buildings

6.7 Heritage at risk

Currently, there are no designated heritage assets within the Boxley Conservation Area listed on either Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register or Maidstone Borough Council's equivalent register. However, Boxley Abbey House, which lies within the Boxley Abbey Conservation Area, is identified on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

This appraisal has not identified any buildings/structures in poor condition.

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The History of Boxley Parish. J.Cave-Browne

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Kent Historic Environment Record. Available at :
<https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ExploringKentsPast.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx>

The Open Domesday Book. Available at: <https://opendomesday.org/>

8 Appendix 1– Buildings Gazette

ASSET	STATUTS	DESCRIPTION	VALUE
Kings Arms	Grade II 1185825	Public House. Timber-framed with painted brick infilling on first floor and plain tile roof.	Positive
Boxley Church Hall	NDHA	Built in 1845-6 by John Whichcord as the National School in Tudor Gothic.	Positive
Boxley Oast	NDHA	Two storey oast (two kilns) house with outbuildings.	Positive
Forge Lane (1 to 3 odd)	NDHA	Group of three semi-detached houses. Ground floor rendered, first floor vertical hanging tiles.	Positive
Le Jardin		Two storeys, modern development.	Neutral
Horse Shoe Cottage		Two storeys, Dutch gable roof, modern development	Neutral

Northdowns		Two storeys, modern development.	Neutral
Woodmans		Two storeys, modern development.	Neutral
Greenfield House		Two storeys, modern development.	Neutral
Greenfield Cottages	NDHA	Group of 4 terrace cottages. Two storeys, rendered brick. Well preserved front gardens.	Positive
Little Hails		Two storeys, modern development.	Neutral
Park Cottage	NDHA	Two storeys, Arts and Crafts, hanging vertical tiles and distinguish bargeboard in projecting gable roof.	Positive
Street Farm Cottage		Two storeys, Victorian villa built in red brick.	Positive
Hillside Cottage	NDHA	Two storeys, brick cottage	Positive

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The Granary	NDHA	Partially exposed timber frame farm building.	Positive
St. Mary and All Saints Church	Grade I 1185730	Parish church. From the 13 th century. Built in ragstone and flint. Remains of earlier church forming narthex to west tower.	Positive
Court Lodge	Grade II 1336242	16 th century house with 19 th century alterations. Timber framed. Said to have been built for Thomas Vicary, Surgeon to Henry VIII.	Positive
Old Vicarage	Grade II 1336241	Vicarage, now house. Early 18 th century. Chequered red and grey brick with plain tile roof.	Positive
The Old House	Grade II 1086214	Originally three houses, now one. Mathematical tiles on most of front elevation, right end of front	Positive

		elevation brick, gable ends rendered.	
Engine House	Grade II 1086230	19th century house with red brick in Flemish bond with buff brick quoins and plain tile roof.	Positive
Yew Trees House	Grade II 1086211	Red brick in English bond with traces of red paint and possibly tuck pointing. Moulded plinth with plat bands above ground and first floor windows	Positive
Malthouse Cottage And Maltings Adjoining	Grade II 1086213	Maltings or oasts. Built in the late 18 th century. Part converted to cottage. Cottage built in chequered red and grey brick.	Positive
Parsonage Farm	Grade II* 1185727	The structure dates back to the early 14th century, with additions made in	Positive

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		the 15th, 16th, and 18th centuries. The south range is constructed of ragstone, the east range is timber-framed, resting on a galletted flint plinth. The ground floor is covered with 18th-century brick, while the first floor is rendered.	
Watercress Cottage In Garden Of Parsonage Farm, And Wall Adjoining	Grade II 1086244	Cottage from the 18th century, built partly with reused medieval stone. The ground floor of the north elevation features galletted stone with brick patches and a brick band, while the first floor is made of ashlar and chalk lumps. The west gable end	Positive

		has tarred weatherboarding.	
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Outside boundaries but positively contributing to the conservation area:

ASSET	STATUTS	DESCRIPTION	VALUE
Hatchetts Cottage Styles Cottage	Grade II 1086245	Timber-framed with a chequered red and grey brick ground floor, tile-hung first floor.	<i>Positive</i>
Boxley House	Grade II 1086210	Formerly a house, now offices. The core dates to the 17th century with additions and alterations from the 18th and 19th centuries. It features brick facades topped by a plain tile roof. The red brickwork includes occasional grey headers	<i>Positive</i>

		arranged in Flemish bond.	
Waterworks buildings	NDHA	Red brick pumping station, built in 1939. Small valve house in the north.	<i>Positive</i>
Engine House	Grade II 1086230	19th-century red brick in Flemish bond with buff brick quoins and a Kent Peg tiles roof.	Positive

9 Appendix 2 – Policy

Legislation, national policy, and local policy

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66 General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions:

(1) In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 69 Designation of conservation areas:

(1) Every local planning authority— (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and (b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as a conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area.

(4) The designation of any area as a conservation area shall be a local land charge.

Section 71 Formulation and publication of proposals for preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

(1) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.

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(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

Section 72 General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions:

(1) In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection

(2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National policy and advice regarding Conservation Area matters is given in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is available to at the link given below (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

Paragraph 203 outlines a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and it emphasizes that enhancing and sustaining the significance of heritage assets should be taken into account.

Paragraph 204 states that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Local Plan (2021-2038)

Maidstone Borough Council published its Local Plan in 2024, which can be found online at - <https://localplan.maidstone.gov.uk/home/local-plan-review>

The Management Plan outlines the application of national and local policies in the ongoing management of the Conservation Area. However, it is not a planning policy document itself. Local Plan policy LPRENV1 - Development Affecting Heritage Assets- references Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans as supporting documents. Therefore, these documents are relevant to planning considerations.

10. Appendix 3 – Old Maps

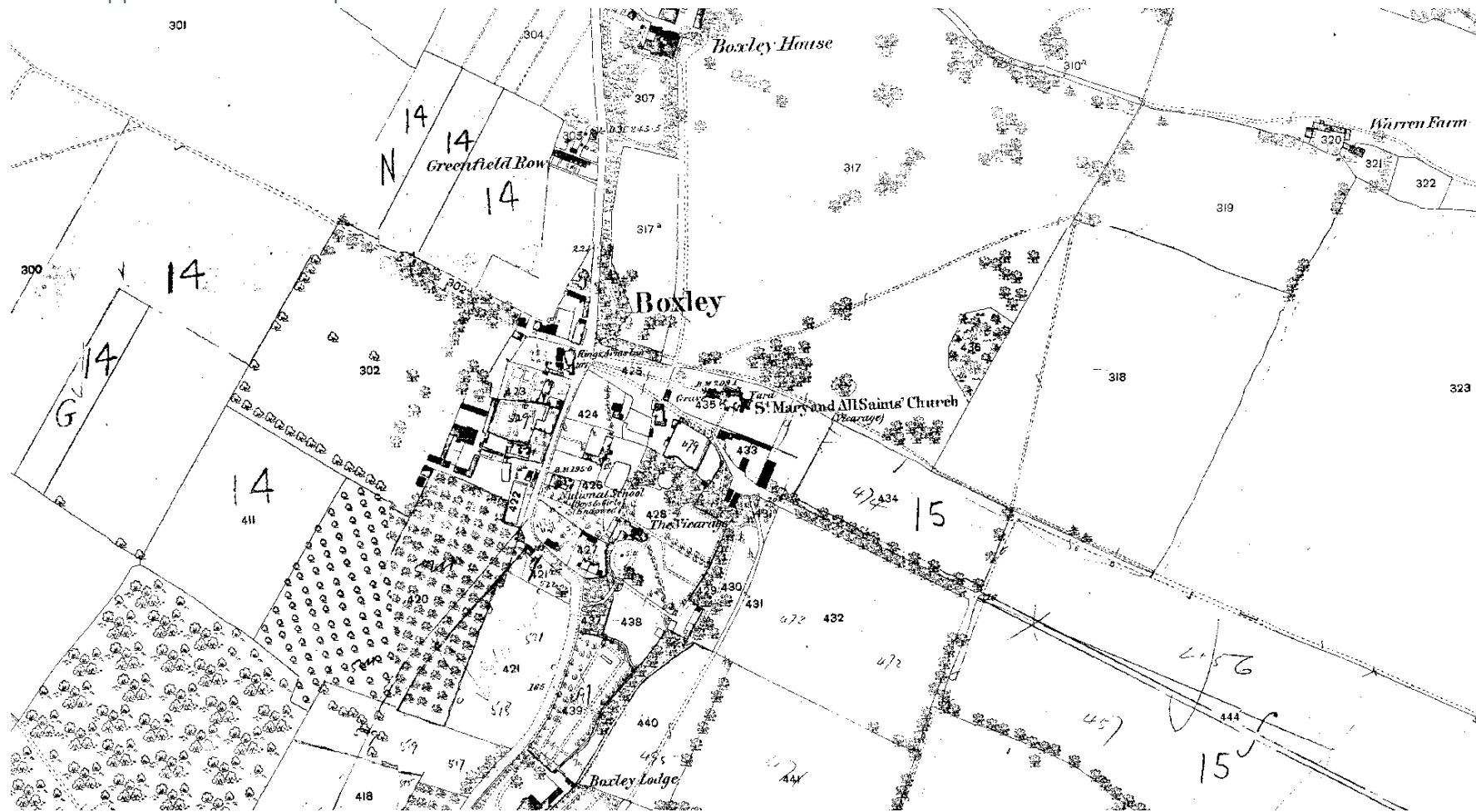


Figure 39 1876 OS Map

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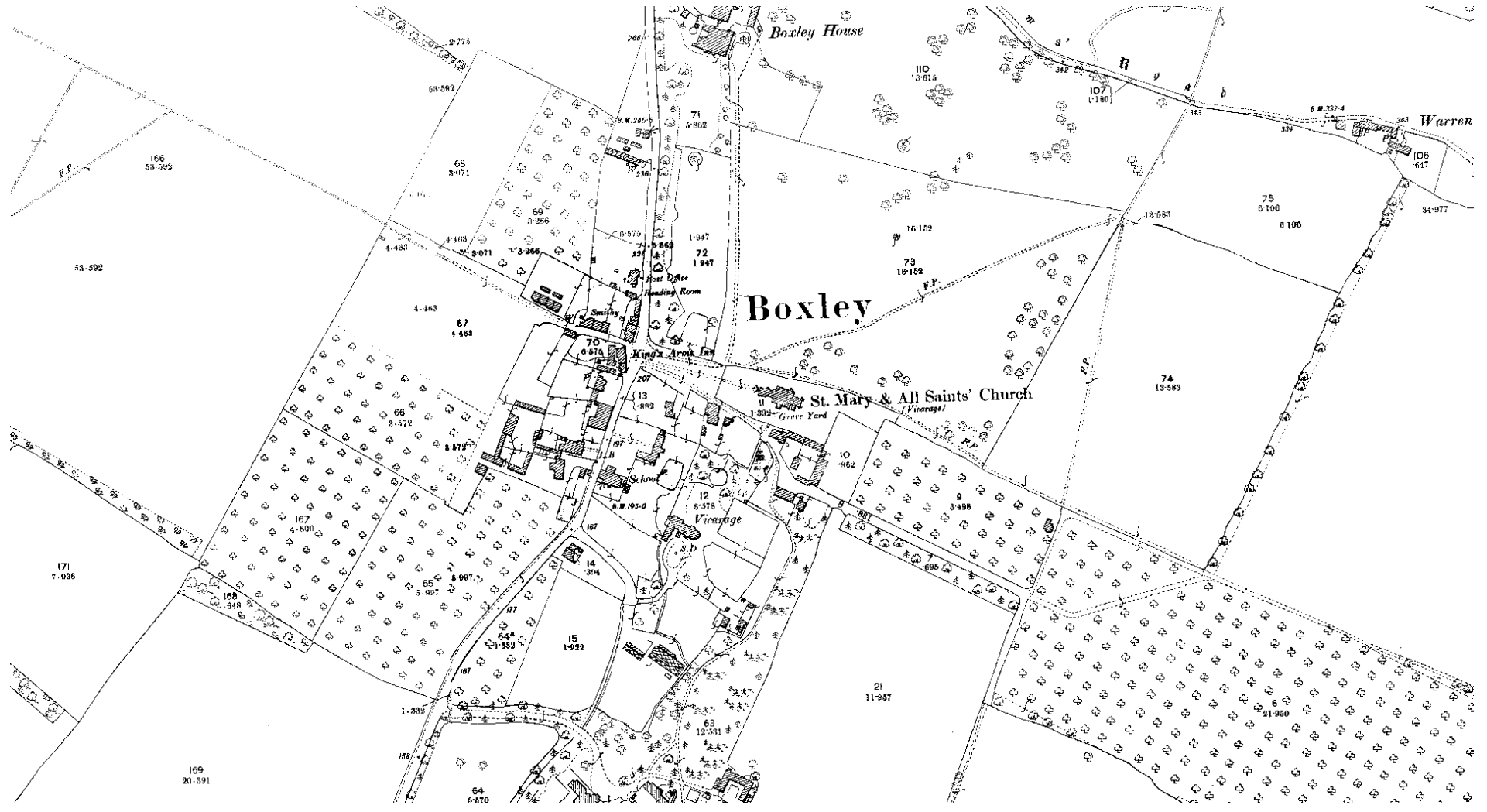


Figure 40 1896 OS Map

Boxley Conservation Area
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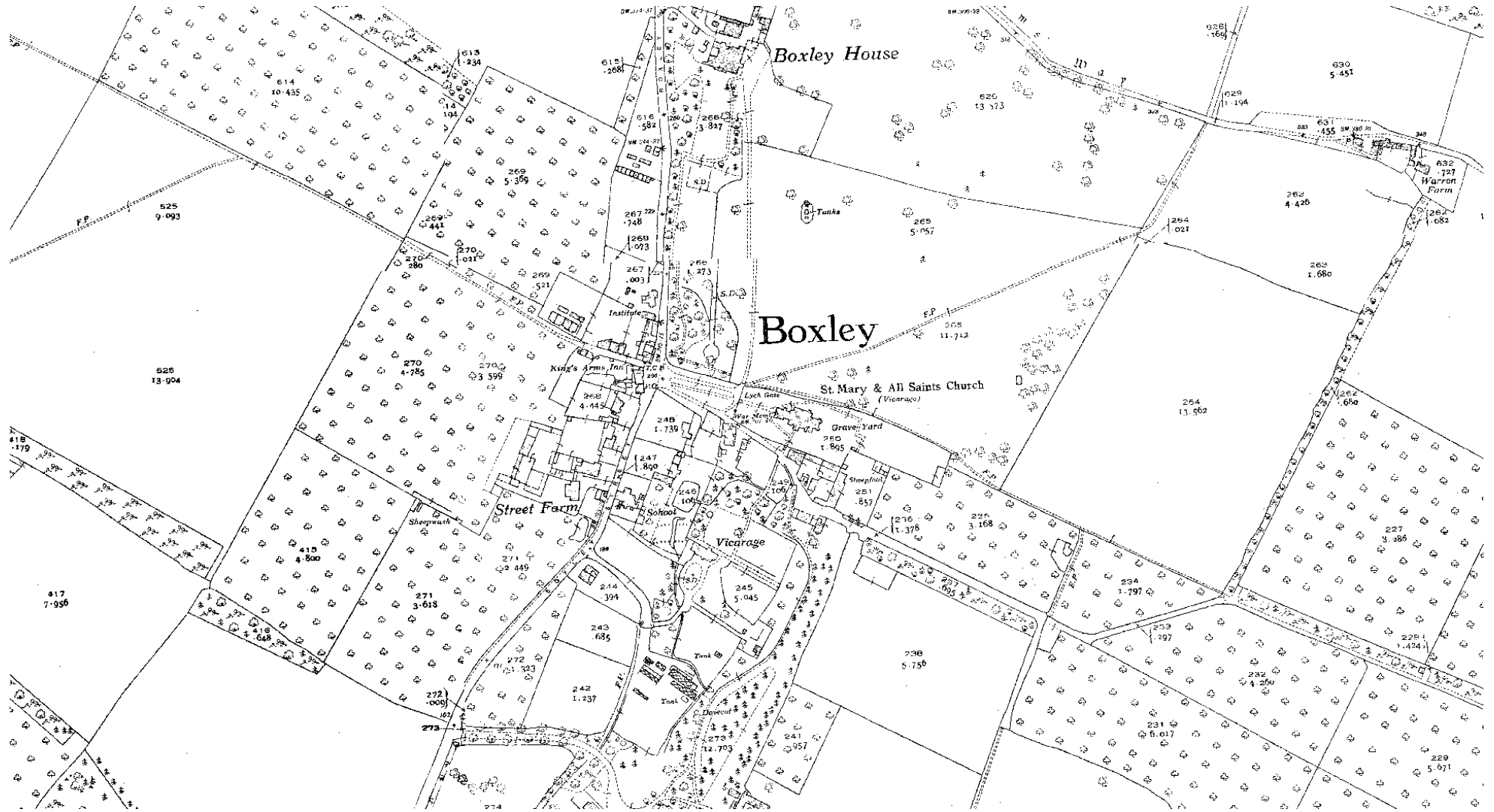


Figure 41 1936 OS Map