

**ALFRICK AND LULSLEY
PARISH COUNCIL**

THE PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT

APRIL 2009

(Updated September 2011)

PREFACE

The Parish Design Statement for Alfrick & Lulsley Parish Council was published in April 2009 and has since guided the Council in planning matters. However, in 2011 several important changes have occurred in the Parish which affect some aspects of the Design Statement. This has necessitated a review of the Design Statement. The principal changes in the Parish are as follows:

- The designation of Alfrick as a Category 2 settlement has been changed to a Category 3 settlement
- The closure of the village shop and post office and a project to restore the facility on the Village Hall site as a community shop
- The completion of the refurbishment and extension of the Village Hall
- Changes to the bus services serving the Parish

This revised Statement reflects those changes.

INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2006 the Parish Council published a Parish Plan. During the process of developing the Plan a strong thread of opinion emerged for producing a document that provided a framework for helping to determine planning issues in the Parish as they might arise from time to time.

The Table below sets out the key action points from the Parish Plan that relate to planning. These resulted from a wide consultative process and reflected the importance that the community attached to planning and development across the Parish.

Set up and maintain a planning group of the Parish Council
Maintain links with Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) planning and housing functions to ensure proper access and consultation on any future development proposals
Consider developing a Village Design Statement for MHDC to adopt as Supplementary Planning Document
Ensure any future development in the Parish is consulted upon as widely as possible

In April 2006 the Parish Council established a small group of its members to progress the development of a Parish Design Statement, to maintain links with MHDC planning officers and to keep the Parish Council informed of planning issues as they might affect the community.

An initial draft of a Statement was presented to planning officers for comment and discussion. The strong advice emerging from that was not to pursue the objective of adoption of a Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document since, as a document with legal implications, it would require considerable time and costs on the part of MHDC for a full sustainability analysis for the Parish.

Instead the advice received was to develop a Statement that could be treated more as a narrative of the community's views of what constituted the good elements of the built environment and those that were not liked. Such a Statement could then be used by planning officers as a record of the community's views that could be taken into account when determining planning matters. It would also be employed by the Parish Council in exercising its function of providing comments to MHDC on all planning applications in the Parish.

This advice was accepted by the Parish Council in the further development of the Parish Design Statement.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT

The first task was to consider the development of the Statement in relation to the overlaying policies that impinge on the determination of planning matters in rural communities. Particularly relevant are Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) at a national level and MHDC Local Development Plan 2006-2011 (LDP).

The Statement takes account of these policies but if further reading into the detail is required, the relevant extracts can be found on the Parish website.

The next step was to employ the policy guidance as a context for evaluating both the visual and environmental aspects of the built environment. This evaluation was informed by undertaking a photographic record of those elements of the Parish that could be regarded as characteristic of it. Extracts from that record are included in the Statement to illustrate some of its key elements. The evaluation was also assisted by the compilation of a written account of the Parish Today and its history.

The final step was to identify what might be regarded as the key factors that should influence planning matters in the Parish. These are expressed as key themes and together they constitute the essence of the Parish Design Statement.

CONSULTATION

The draft Statement incorporating the potential key themes was presented to the community at a consultation weekend in November 2008.

The event was held in the Village Hall with display materials, a rolling visual presentation and questionnaires available for residents to complete. Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk were also on hand to respond to questions and comments. The event was widely publicised on notice boards, in the 'Sphere', the Church Magazine, and in the Parish Newsletter which is delivered to every house in the Parish.

A large number of people attended over the two days and over 40 questionnaires were completed. They were focused on the emerging themes of the Statement and sought to uncover how far parishioners agreed or disagreed with the statements that underpinned each theme. The detailed analysis of the responses is set out below. It will be seen that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the draft.

A copy of the questionnaire is attached as **Appendix 1**

Section	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1	The Parish is fundamentally rural and this characteristic should be retained						
	1.1 Development outside the boundaries of the villages should only be permitted in the most exceptional circumstances	67.5%	25.0%	5.0%	2.5%	37	92.5%
	1.2 Large clusters of development either within the villages, or in open countryside, will detract from the nature of the Parish and should not be permitted	85.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40	100.0%
	1.3 The natural character of the parish is defined by its dispersed development. Infill development which seriously undermines this dispersed appearance should be discouraged	65.0%	25.0%	7.5%	2.5%	36	90.0%
	1.4 Urbanisation of the Parish, through development such as kerbing of roadsides, increased street lighting or street furniture should be strictly controlled	87.5%	7.5%	2.5%	2.5%	38	95.0%
2	The Parish has a mix of housing ranging from semi-detached dwellings to the substantial "Court" houses at Alfrick, Lulsley and, just outside of the Parish at Hopton. This housing mix leads to a reasonably socially diverse population and should be retained						
	2.1 Any replacement of existing property should be limited to the original footprint where practicable and should be similar to the adjacent buildings in style and scale	57.5%	27.5%	7.5%	7.5%	34	85.0%
	2.2 Extensions which radically change the size of an original dwelling, eroding the stock of smaller housing in the Parish, should be subject to particular scrutiny	60.0%	25.0%	10.0%	5.0%	34	85.0%
	2.3 Any further development in the Parish should be consistent with the maintaining the existing diversity of housing provision	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40	100.0%
3	Any new building, conversion or renovation in the Parish should meet the sustainable development agenda						
	3.1 Development should take account of accessibility issues to reduce reliance on transport by private car and encourage travelling by public transport, cycling or walking	57.5%	27.5%	12.5%	2.5%	34	85.0%
	3.2 Development which results in a significant increase in commercial and private traffic on the Parish's roads should not be permitted	67.5%	22.5%	7.5%	2.5%	36	90.0%
	3.3 Any development should be to the highest standards of energy efficiency and use renewable power where possible.	79.5%	20.5%	0.0%	0.0%	39	100.0%
4	Re-use of redundant buildings should be encouraged						
	4.1 Development for commercial or employment use should be explored fully before consent for conversion to residential use is granted	62.5%	27.5%	10.0%	0.0%	36	90.0%
	4.2 Any development of redundant buildings should be sympathetic to their character and environment and avoid "urbanising" their appearance and locality	87.5%	10.0%	2.5%	0.0%	39	97.5%
	4.3 Should be permitted as re-use of brownfield land ahead of permitting other development outside of the settlements or on Greenfield sites	79.5%	17.9%	2.6%	0.0%	38	97.4%
5	Further affordable rural housing should only be developed where:						
	5.1 A full consultation has been carried out with the local community	94.9%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	39	100.0%
	5.2 There has been a proven and verifiable local need demonstrated by a housing needs survey, initiated by the Parish Council with the process remaining under the control of the Council	84.6%	12.8%	0.0%	2.6%	38	97.4%
	5.3 It can be sited within or immediately adjacent to the settlement	82.1%	17.9%	0.0%	0.0%	39	100.0%
	5.4 It is developed sympathetically to the rural nature of its location, in harmony with character and appearance of the buildings surrounding it	95.0%	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%	39	97.5%
	5.5 It remains affordable and can be preserved in perpetuity for local needs	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	40	100.0%

THE PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT

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THE SETTING AND CHARACTER OF THE PARISH

A detailed review of the history and current character of the Parish is attached as **Appendix 2**. In summary the salient points are as follows:

Alfrick and Lulsley sits in the northern half of the MHDC area. It is roughly equidistant north of Malvern and west of Worcester and between the A44 and A4103 trunk roads.

The parish is characterised by one large settlement of Alfrick and two settlements of Lulsley and a proportion of Alfrick Pound. Between these main settlements are scattered a large number of individual houses, smallholdings and farms. In one area of the parish, Old Storridge, the original temporary dwellings have been replaced by permanent houses interspersed through a heavily wooded hilly landscape.

Table 1

Population and Dwellings Data for Alfrick and Lulsley

	Population			Dwellings			Average Occupants per Dwelling
	Alfrick	Lulsley	Total	Alfrick	Lulsley	Total	
1851	427	141	568	95	34	129	4.40
1861	474	149	623	99	34	133	4.68
1871	434	159	593	100	37	137	4.33
1881	450	160	610	91	34	125	4.88
1911	358	182	540				
1921	368	144	512	86	34	120	4.27
1931	365	164	529	108	41	149	3.55
2001	511	94	605	216	50	266	2.27

Data from National Census

Alfrick and Lulsley is a relatively small parish of 266 dwellings and 605 residents. Despite recent developments the population has remained almost unchanged compared with 150 years ago but the size of individual households has halved. The parishes adjoining to the north west are similar in character, being small, rural and with a dispersed population. The parish to the south, Leigh and Bransford, has some rural aspects but includes Leigh Sinton and so is more akin to an urban parish with over 1,200 residents.

Alfrick

Most of the housing in Alfrick has been added since around the 1950's, see the conveyance map (**Appendix 3**) showing at that time only a scattering of dwellings around a war memorial, Clay Green Farm and The Swan public house. The greatest concentration of development in the parish over the last 50 years has been in this

area. The village is formed around a crossroads and has a mix of privately owned and local authority housing. A development of 8 affordable homes was added in 2006 on Leigh Road at the south eastern entrance to the village. These developments are largely characterised by small clumped groups of housing, in Swan Orchard, Clay Green, Orchard Lea and, most recently, Chapel Meadow with some ribbon development along St Mary's Crescent and Folly Road.

Amenities in the village include a shop, post office, the parish memorial hall and recreational facilities including a playing field and tennis court.

Lulsley

Lulsley is a smaller and dispersed settlement developed in two ribbons along the road frontages that pass through the village. It includes The Fox and Hounds public house but lacks any other amenities. Again the housing mix is some new development (mainly local authority housing) mixed with older houses and some newly developed dwellings in barn conversions.

Landscape

The landscape in the parish is characterised by a patchwork of arable and grassland fields on undulating land rising steeply to the north and west into the Suckley Hills. It deserves its designation as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and, further north and west as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A map of landscape designations is appended to this document (**Appendix 4**). The area is relatively heavily wooded and there are three Reserves within the Parish: Knapp & Papermill, Ravenhill Woodland and Crews Hill Nature Reserves. The Worcestershire Way passes along the western boundary of the Parish and then turns along its southern edge by Old Storridge.

A significant element in the character of the Parish is the extent of woodlands and other belts of trees and hedgerows and these features need not only to be conserved but also, where appropriate, to be enhanced when planning applications are considered.

From much of the Parish there are views towards the Malvern Hills and from the Worcestershire Way are views across Bringsty Common to the Black Mountains. From Lulsley to Brockamin a byway tracks along the Teme Valley skirting derelict hop yards in the river valley and ancient woodland to the west.

The villages tend to nestle in low ground with housing sprinkled between the settlements on higher ground. The agriculturally important history of the Parish is reflected in a number of hamlets where there are, or were, farm steadings. The rationalisation of the farming industry in the 20th century, particularly since the end of World War 2, has resulted in a reduction in the agricultural workforce and consequently a decrease in the need for tied housing. As a result many of these houses are now owned by people who do not work in the Parish.

Listed Buildings

There are, proportionally, a significant number of listed buildings in the Parish. Out of 216 properties in Alfrick, 15 are listed and of 50 in Lulsley, 8 are listed. Other built assets such as the Church, several barns and other features such as milestones and a monument in the churchyard are also listed. A schedule of listed properties is at **Appendix 5**. Clearly any planning determination in respect of these must be sympathetic to their listed status and in full compliance with a listed building consent.

Built Environment

There is no consistent formal structure to the built environment through the parish and even within settlements there is a singular lack of cohesion of building styles, materials and appearance. However several themes can be determined both across and within the four main areas of the parish. These are set out in the Section below headed Key Themes in the Determination of Planning in the Parish.

OTHER FACTORS DEFINING THE PARISH

Roadways

In the main roadways are largely un-kerbed and bordered by multi-species hedges outside of the settlements. Some footpaths do exist, particularly along the main road in Alfrick but these tend to be limited to one side of the highway. With the exception of name boards at the entrances to the villages and some speed limit signs, the roads remain distinctly rural in their appearance with very little street furniture, signage or traffic calming measures.

Conclusion: That the rural appearance of the roadways should be maintained

Lighting

With the exception of one or two isolated sites, the Parish is devoid of street lighting and the Parish Plan consultation revealed a strong thread of opinion that this situation should continue. The only real light pollution is from private security lighting on buildings and significant discussion of this has occurred in Parish Council meetings.

Conclusion: The broad principle is and should remain that any such security lighting should not spill beyond the boundaries of the particular property.

Open Space

Only Alfrick has a formally defined settlement boundary and so would have identifiable open spaces inside the defined settlement. The space which is mostly defined is around the war memorial and the post office and,

while not perhaps constituting a traditional village green, does lend a village character to the settlement and does constitute designated public open space.

Conclusion: This open space should be preserved.

The majority of open space in the parish exists outside the settlements and is designated as open countryside. Again this largely defines the core character of the parish and development within open countryside should in general be resisted. Much of the countryside between the settlements is designated as either AGLV or AONB. Much of the farmland and woodland is also committed to environment schemes for the enhancement of landscape and habitat.

Conclusion: Development within open countryside should in general be resisted.

Public Rights of Way

The parish is well served with rights of way including footpaths, bridleways and two key byways along Dingle Road to Hill Road and down Sandy Lane. These rights of way are generally well maintained as a result of liaison between the Parish Council and the Worcester County Council rights of way department. Waymarking and gates and styles are generally well maintained facilitating easy use of these important recreational resources.

Conclusion: To maintain these important recreational facilities.

ACCESS TO SERVICES

The Parish has a number of amenities and services available to its residents. **The Village Hall in Alfrick has been refurbished and extended. There is also a Church in Alfrick and a Public House in Lulsley. However the Post Office and Shop was closed in July 2011. A project has been developed to establish a community shop on the Village Hall site but at the time of the review of the Design Statement it is uncertain whether this will be successful. There is also a sporadic bus service.**

Access to **nearly all services currently** requires a journey out of the Parish, including **shopping, Post Office services**, the General Medical Practice at the Knightwick Health Centre, dentistry, library facilities and primary and secondary schools.

There is a limited bus service (Route 423) connecting to Worcester (Monday to Saturday). This is difficult to use for those travelling to work as it comprises only one service in the morning and a return service in the evening. There is also a single bus to and from Malvern operating only on Fridays (Route 425). Under a County Council review in 2011 these services are subject to timetable and route changes and their long term future is uncertain.

Access to key services is a major issue for the Parish. Residents are almost exclusively reliant on private transport for access. Consequently any additional residential or commercial development in the Parish would increase traffic on the rural road network and be counter to the overall sustainability agenda.

In the context of escalating fuel costs, the finite availability of fossil fuels and the Climate Change agenda to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, any development in the Parish should be determined within the requirements of “accessibly” as defined in both PPS7 and the Local Development Plan. This is about the need to reduce reliance on the private car and encourage travel by public transport, cycling and walking in order to access employment and services.

Conclusion: Any development in the Parish should also take account of the carbon reduction agenda and be sustainable in its construction and ongoing energy requirements to address carbon emissions and the potential for fuel poverty as fossil fuel prices escalate further in the medium to long term.

KEY THEMES IN THE DETERMINATION OF PLANNING IN THE PARISH

The following key themes have been developed in reconciling the views of the residents of the Parish with the need to continue to develop facilities to maintain the life and vibrancy of the local community. Freezing development altogether is neither possible nor desirable but any development should be on terms agreed by the majority of the community.

Five themes emerged during the drafting of this Design Statement and these have been tested in consultation with the local community. A copy of the questionnaire incorporating these themes is appended to this document.

- 1 The Parish is fundamentally **rural** and this characteristic should be retained
 - Development outside of settlement boundaries other than that required for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor leisure or recreation should be resisted
 - Large clumps of development within the boundaries, or natural limits of the settlements where no formal boundaries are defined, should not be permitted
 - The natural character of the parish is defined by its dispersed development. Infill development which seriously undermines this dispersed appearance should not be permitted
 - Urbanisation of the Parish, through kerbing of roadsides, increased street lighting and proliferation of street furniture should be strictly controlled
 - Woodland and other belts of trees and hedgerows should be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced by any approved development
 - Any modification of listed buildings must be sympathetic to their history and compliant with the instructions of the listed buildings officer
 - The relative tranquillity of the Parish should be conserved

- 2 The Parish has a **mix of housing** ranging from modest, semi-detached dwellings to the substantial “Court” houses at Alfrick, Lulsley and, just outside the Parish at Hopton. This housing mix gives a reasonably socially diverse population and should be retained
- Any replacement of existing property should be limited to the original footprint where practicable and in any event should be congruent with the adjacent buildings in style and scale
 - Extensions which radically change the size of an original dwelling, taking it into a different market sector and eroding the stock of smaller housing in the Parish, should be subject to particular scrutiny
 - Any further development in the Parish should be consistent with maintaining the existing diversity of housing provision
- 3 Any new building, conversion or renovation in the Parish should meet the criteria for **sustainable development** set out in PPS7 and the Local Development Plan. These documents have, to some extent, been overtaken by events as the Climate Change agenda has gathered momentum and an acceleration of the sustainability requirements to meet the Government’s greenhouse gas reduction targets of 20% by 2020 and 60% by 2050 which have been given legal force since the publication of both PPS7 and the LDP. Parish specific criteria can be overlaid on these overall policy frameworks
- Development should take account of accessibility issues to reduce reliance on transport by private car and encourage travelling by public transport, cycling or walking
 - **Development of multiple housing units at any location in the Parish should be accompanied by a travel plan for the Parish that offers genuine sustainable travel choices**
 - Development which results in a significant increase in commercial and private traffic on the Parish’s roads should not be permitted
- 4 Re-use of **redundant buildings** should be encouraged in accordance with PPS7
- Where it is considered that the preservation of architectural integrity of a redundant building is better achieved by non-residential development, then proposals for very small-scale commercial or employment use should be considered in preference, particularly where it can be demonstrated that there would be local employment opportunities created
 - Any development of redundant buildings should be sympathetic to their character and environment and avoid “urbanising” their appearance and locality
 - Should be permitted as re-use of brownfield land ahead of permitting other development outside of the settlements
- 5 Further **affordable rural housing** should only be developed where

- A full consultation has been carried out with the local community
- There has been a proven and verifiable local need demonstrated by a housing needs survey, initiated by the Parish Council with the process remaining under the control of the Council
- It can be sited immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary
- It is developed sympathetically to the rural nature of its location, in harmony with character and appearance of the built environment surrounding it
- It remains affordable and can be preserved in perpetuity for local needs
- **Local housing need cannot be met in neighbouring Category 1 or 2 settlements**

IMAGES OF THE PARISH

The following images are illustrative of different characteristics of the built environment and landscape that are important to the design of any future development in the Parish.

Softening of development using planting



Retention of traditional features such as oast houses





Both buildings use small dormers to good effect



Preservation of redundant buildings for other uses but developed sympathetically



Diverse development forming an interesting street scene



New build can be incorporated provided it can be designed sympathetically and softened using planting



Some developments are out of character and out of scale



Very rural parts of the Parish require particular attention in blending development with location



Roads around the Parish are rural lanes, unsuited to high traffic volumes.



Key facilities must be preserved



The villages nestle into the landscape



It is the spaces between development which define the character as much as the buildings



There are still old buildings worthy of saving



Consultation Questionnaire

The Parish Council is developing a statement of how our community views any future development in the Parish. This “Design Statement” can be used by the Parish Council and by the planners at Malvern Hills to take account of local opinion when considering planning applications. Your views are important to this process and we would ask you to take a few minutes to complete the following few questions. **If you would like to, please do give your name, but you must give your postcode to verify that you live in the Parish.** This data will be retained only for the purposes of producing the Parish Design Statement and will not be used for any other purpose.

Name..... Postcode.....

Please leave completed form with the Councillors on the show stand or post to New Barn, Swan Orchard, Alfrick WR6 5HZ

Tick 1 if you strongly agree, 2 if you agree somewhat, 3 to disagree or 4 to strongly disagree

Agree←-----→ Disagree

1 The Parish is fundamentally **rural** and this characteristic should be retained

		1	2	3	4
1.1	Development outside the boundaries of the villages should only be permitted in the most exceptional circumstances				
1.2	Large clusters of development either within the villages, or in open countryside, will detract from the nature of the Parish and should not be permitted				
1.3	The natural character of the parish is defined by its dispersed development. Infill development which seriously undermines this dispersed appearance should be discouraged				
1.4	Urbanisation of the Parish, through development such as kerbing of roadsides, increased street lighting or street furniture should be strictly controlled				

2 The Parish has a **mix of housing** ranging from semi-detached dwellings to the substantial “Court” houses at Alfrick, Lulsley and, just outside of the Parish at Hopton. This housing mix leads to a reasonably socially diverse population and should be retained

		1	2	3	4
2.1	Any replacement of existing property should be limited to the original footprint where practicable and should be similar to the adjacent buildings in style and scale				
2.2	Extensions which radically change the size of an original dwelling, eroding the stock of smaller housing in the Parish, should be subject to particular scrutiny				
2.3	Any further development in the Parish should be consistent with the maintaining the existing diversity of housing provision				

3 Any new building, conversion or renovation in the Parish should meet the **sustainable development** agenda

		1	2	3	4
3.1	Development should take account of accessibility issues to reduce reliance on transport by private car and encourage travelling by public transport, cycling or walking				
3.2	Development which results in a significant increase in commercial and private traffic on the Parish's roads should not be permitted				
3.3	Any development should be to the highest standards of energy efficiency and use renewable power where possible.				

4 Re-use of **redundant buildings** should be encouraged

		1	2	3	4
4.1	Development for commercial or employment use should be explored fully before consent for conversion to residential use is granted				

4.2	Any development of redundant buildings should be sympathetic to their character and environment and avoid “urbanising” their appearance and locality				
4.3	Should be permitted as re-use of brownfield land ahead of permitting other development outside of the settlements or on Greenfield sites				

5 Further **affordable rural housing** should only be developed where

		1	2	3	4
5.1	A full consultation has been carried out with the local community				
5.2	There has been a proven and verifiable local need demonstrated by a housing needs survey, initiated by the Parish Council with the process remaining under the control of the Council				
5.3	It can be sited within or immediately adjacent to the settlement				
5.4	It is developed sympathetically to the rural nature of its location, in harmony with character and appearance of the buildings surrounding it				
5.5	It remains affordable and can be preserved in perpetuity for local needs				

THE PARISH TODAY AND ITS HISTORY

The Parish of Alfrick and Lulsley is located about 8 miles West of Worcester and about 7 miles from Malvern. Of a roughly oval shape it lies in an approximately North-South line, bounded by the River Teme in the North and ends to the South of Old Storridge Common. It is approximately 3.5 miles long by 2.5 miles wide. At the last census (2001) there were some 266 houses in the Parish with a population of just over 600. Alfrick is designated as a category 2 settlement with Lulsley a category 3 settlement. There are some 20 businesses registered in Alfrick with 6 in Lulsley, mainly characterised as one or two person enterprises.

The Parish comprises gently rolling hills with fields, woodland, streams and deep, wooded dingles. The undulating nature of the land cuts through a variety of soil types giving a pronounced patchwork appearance to the fields. The predominant soil type is heavy clay. Part of the Parish, mainly to the West and South-West, is designated as having AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) status with other areas designated as Open Countryside Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Additionally, the Parish contains two nature reserves, the Ravenshill Woodland Reserve in Lulsley and the Knapp and Papermill Reserve near Old Storridge. It is as fine a landscape as will be found anywhere in Worcestershire, appreciated by the many visitors who come to walk the 29.4km of paths and 5.5km of bridleways within the Parish. These rights of way are generally very well maintained as a result of close co-operation between the Parish Council and the Worcestershire County Council Rights of Way Department. The Worcestershire Way long distance path skirts the Western boundary of the Parish.

The main settlement areas within the Parish are Alfrick with Alfrick Pound at the centre, Lulsley to the North and Old Storridge to the South, each different to each other. Additionally, many of the houses, farms etc in the Parish exist as scattered, individual buildings, many hardly visible within the overall landscape. This is a key feature of the Parish where, with the exception of the settlement centres, the landscape is the wholly predominant view with houses blending in to a degree where they do not impinge. From most positions within the Parish the observer would not be aware of the number of houses nearby. Indeed, in the higher parts of the Parish the views are long distance. To the East across the Severn plain the view encompasses much of Worcestershire with Broadway Tower a distant landmark. To the West the Welsh mountains with Hay Bluff and the Brecon Beacons are readily visible.

Access into and within the parish is via small lanes, many narrow with quite a few only capable of single file traffic. This is combined with high hedges and many twists and turns as the lanes follow the old field boundaries. These lanes are occupied by walkers, cyclists, horse riders, ordinary cars, a higher-than-average number of 4X4 vehicles, tractors, combine harvesters, buses, fuel tankers and delivery trucks. It takes care to negotiate these lanes, particularly at some points in the farming year. The lanes would not take any significant increase in traffic without serious congestion. Heavy or persistent rain often results in localised flooding at low points in the lanes especially where they cross the Leigh Brook, making them impassable to normal cars though the larger 4X4's can usually get through. With the exception of one or two isolated sites there is no street lighting within the Parish.

Alfrick, with the adjoining areas of Suckley and Leigh, is connected to Worcester (Route 423) Monday to Saturday comprising one bus into Worcester in the morning and a return bus in the evening. There is also a single bus to and from Malvern operating on a Friday only (Route 425). For those without access to private transport these services represent the only means of travel out of the village. Following a review of bus services in 2011 the County Council proposed that these services be terminated but have since withdrawn the proposal. There will however be timetable and route changes and the longer term future of these services remains uncertain.

Housing styles within the Parish encompass almost every variety from black and white timbered houses, now over 400 years old, Victorian houses, large Georgian properties, bungalows, minor manor houses and modern 1970's and onwards styles. It cannot be said that the Parish has anything that could be described as a vernacular style but having said that care is needed to ensure that any changes are in keeping with the buildings immediately adjacent. Houses that have been built as single units on plots large enough to provide green screening in the form of trees and hedging which break up the direct view of the house probably represent the ideal within the Parish, particularly if it is a re-development of a pre-existing building. The most intrusive building forms are those that have resulted in larger blocks of uniform style. Of the 216 properties in Alfrick 15 are of listed status, for Lulsley the figures are 8 out of 50 properties.

However, the Parish is not just a collection of houses and landscape views, it is where a community of people live and work. From a former predominantly agricultural base the Parish has evolved to bring in a wide variety of other occupations. Most professions and many trades are represented with a number of small businesses and a significant proportion of people who have chosen to retire within the Parish. The result is a strong community of people with a wide range of skills, many of whom give their time and abilities to the benefit of the Parish. Most weeks there are events of one form or another, usually centred on the Alfrick village hall, which are strongly supported. There are clubs for different interest and age groups (eg, gardening, Yoga, over 60's, cricket) with all the news and events in this and neighbouring parishes covered by the locally produced Sphere Magazine.

Although farming and other agricultural businesses are no longer the predominant factor that they once were much of the life of the Parish is still governed by the needs of the countryside and the farming year. Ploughing, the movement of animals, harvesting, ditch clearing, tree felling, fence mending etc set a basic rhythm to the year. Equally traditional is the annual **Alfrick and Lulsley Show**, held on the first Saturday in September. The show is organised and run by a small group of volunteers with many others pressed into service during the event. Started in 1952 it is a traditional village fete and horticultural show with many other events within it to appeal to a wide age and interest range. From small beginnings it has grown to having approximately 3,500 visitors in 2007, no small undertaking for such a small community. Profits from the show are distributed to local charities.

Once a month there is an organised walk in or close to the Parish led by a local resident. These walks are well supported, attracting up to about 50 people.

The **Harvest Supper**, held in October, is another important event within the Parish calendar, always fully sold out.

The village of **Alfrick** lies at the centre of the Parish. The name of the village is said to derive from the Saxon "Ealdred's Wic" meaning the dwelling or farm of a man called Ealdred. Later, the name appears as "Alferwyke" and "Alfredeswic" until the 15th/16th centuries when, amongst other variants, the modern name of Alfrick emerges. Alfrick is a compact village which nestles in the fold of the hills which means that it is largely screened from most viewpoints. It contains the full range of housing styles described earlier. At the centre of the village is a small village green and war memorial close to the village shop and Post Office. **There was formerly a Post Office and Shop here but this closed in July 2011. In tough economic conditions the owners were unable to sell the business as a going concern and are planning to convert these premises into residential accommodation. The shop acted as an informal hub for the surrounding area and its loss will have a considerable impact on the lives of many who depend on the services it provided. The response to this loss has been the formation of a group, initially led by the Parish Council, whose objective is to establish a community shop run by volunteers and plans are well advanced on this project. However, it is unclear at this stage if such a venture will come to fruition and, if so, whether it will have long-term viability.**

Close to the shop is **The Church of St. Mary Magdalene of Alfrick and Lulsley**. This beautiful, little church stands in an immaculately maintained churchyard on high ground near the centre of Alfrick and is a focal point within the Parish. The church, together with those of the surrounding parishes of Leigh, Bransford and Suckley, now form a single benefice. The oldest part of the church, at the West end, dates back to the 12th Century with later additions in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries. The church underwent a major restoration in 1885 when the transept and North vestry were added. The Transept is now known as the Lulsley chapel when, in 1972, the church at Lulsley was closed and various items transferred to the church in Alfrick. In the 19th Century the curate at Alfrick was the Revd Skeffington Dodson, the brother of Charles Dodson, better known by his pen name of Lewis Carroll, author of "Alice in Wonderland". Charles Dodson visited his brother in Alfrick several times and preached in the church.

The **Alfrick and Lulsley Village Hall** is located a short distance from the centre of Alfrick and provides facilities for the various clubs and organisations in the Parish including the Parish Council. It is adjacent to the playing field that is used for cricket and football as well as being the location for the Annual Village Show. The Village Hall is run by a committee elected annually who organise events and raise money for the maintenance and improvement of the hall. **In 2008, after a long planning process, the committee succeeded in obtaining a Big Lottery Grant for a major refurbishment of the hall. This project was carried out between October 2009 and July 2010 and the hall now offers a very high standard of facilities, among the best in Worcestershire. The hall is now the single most important community facility within the Parish but its continued existence depends upon the ability of the elected committee to manage the hall so that it remains financially viable as there is no public funding.**

Adjacent to the village hall is the playing field with facilities for cricket and football together with a tennis court managed by the village hall committee. At the end of 2008 it was announced that the village hall had been awarded a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to provide for a major refurbishment of the hall.

The main entry into the village is a fairly sudden transition from open countryside to a built up area but this area is very compact; the village comprises housing along four arms of a cross roads, one arm of which is a dead end. Trees and open countryside are visible at all points within the village giving an open aspect. Many houses lie outside of the immediate village boundary and are dotted about in small numbers around the village and mould into the landscape as noted earlier. Apart from the church there are no buildings that could be said to be outstanding but the overall effect is a pleasant environment. The low density of the housing, even in the village centre, undoubtedly contributes to this.

In the past the village contained a Public House (The Swan), a bakery, a basket maker and a blacksmith, all now converted to private houses. A once thriving village school, opened in 1876, fell victim to falling rolls and closed in 1984, also transformed into a private house. The sale of the former school building formed the basis of the Alfrick Educational Trust, a locally run charity benefiting local schools together with individuals in higher education.

From Alfrick a narrow lane runs south to a junction with the Suckley Road, the centre of the small (formerly Hamlet) of **Alfrick Pound**. The majority of the houses are close to this road junction, the remainder are strung out along the road, including the Old School House, now a private residence, which predated the Alfrick village school. Visually, the settlement comprises a cluster of houses and isolated houses set in sloping ground with extensive views across open fields to wooded hills. A former Public House, The Wobbly Wheel, is also now a private house.

To the North of the Parish is **Lulsley**. The road from Alfrick (The Knightwick Road) runs between fields with woods on the higher slopes before entering Lulsley. The village is strung out along this road and in a loop road (Hill Road) with clusters of a few houses/cottages/bungalows/ and now only one farm which continues in this form until the buildings peter out near the Parish boundary. There is no identifiable centre but Lulsley possesses the only Public House in the Parish, The Fox and Hounds. Again, the range of styles and ages of the houses is very large, from the black and white Lulsley Court through to relatively modern bungalows.

Near the Southern end of Lulsley is one of the two Nature Reserves in the Parish, **The Ravenshill Woodland Reserve**, privately owned and covering an area of approximately 50 acres.

Lulsley also contains remains of the **Worcester/Bromyard/Leominster Railway** with the old Knightwick Station now a private house. A substantial section of a listed viaduct is visible at Broad Dingle and the bridge abutments still stand on both sides of the road between Lulsley and Knightwick, posing a hazard to the unwary. The railway line had a chequered history being first promoted by Act of Parliament in 1861. Sections of the line were built but it was not until the works were taken over by GWR that the whole line was finally completed in 1897. The railway utilised the existing Worcester to Hereford track, the branch line connecting at a point close to Bransford. Because of the relatively sparse population along the length of the line there was generally little regular traffic, the exception to this being the seasonal influx of hop-pickers from Birmingham and the Black Country. It was, however, important to the Parish and surrounding areas for transporting produce, notably cherries. With the appearance of rural bus services the already sparse passenger traffic was

further reduced and the closure of the line became inevitable. The first part to close to normal traffic was the section between Leominster and Bromyard in 1952 with the remainder of the line closing in September 1964

The River Teme forms the Parish boundary along the northern edge as well as part of the eastern edge. The Teme can rise quickly during periods of local heavy rain causing local flooding. A local landmark at the rivers edge is Osebury Rock, a sandstone cliff which is steep and densely wooded.

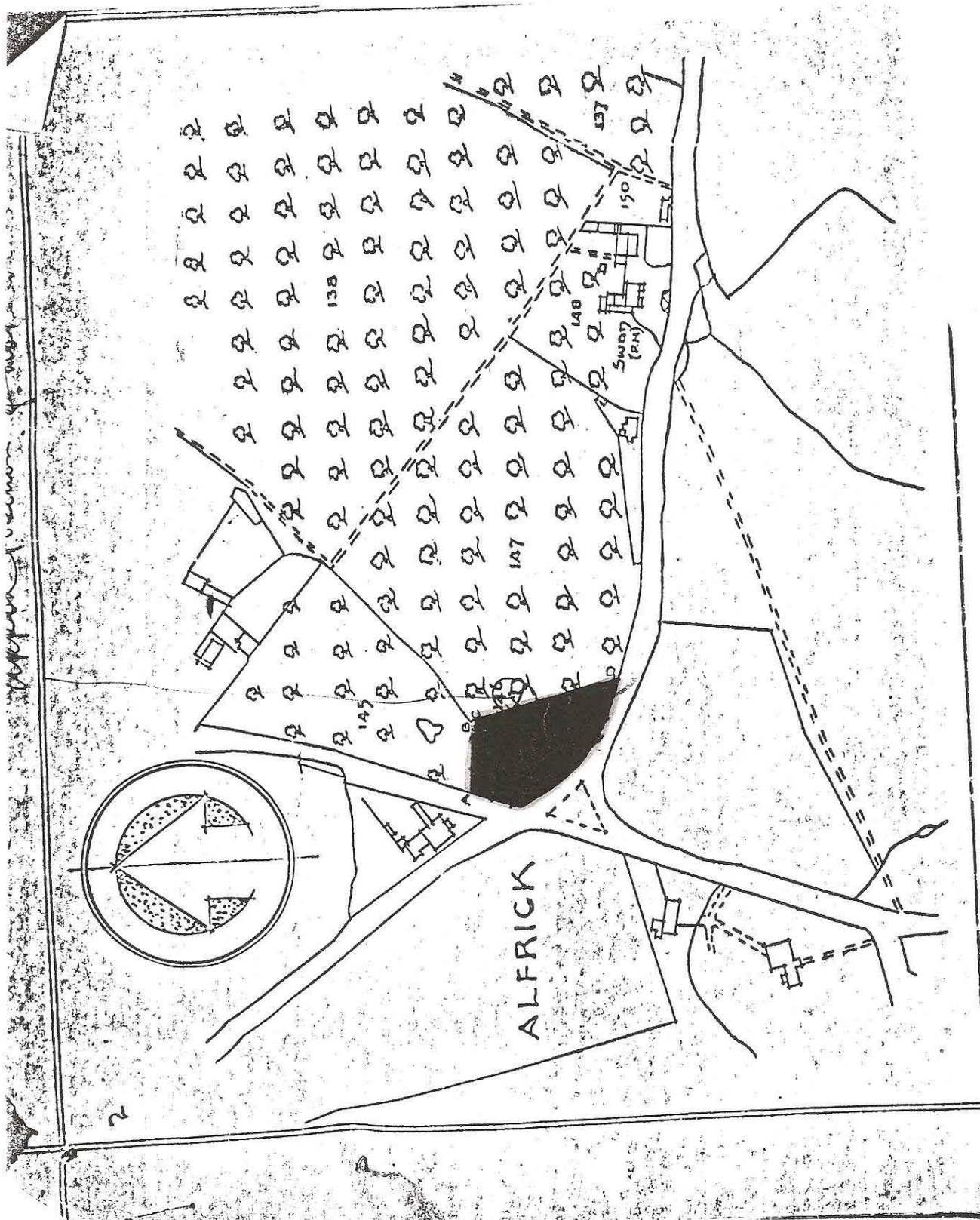
At the southern end of the Parish on steeply rising ground is the settlement of **Old Storridge**, much of it lying within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area is thickly wooded and access is via a single road that terminates in Old Storridge, just before Old Storridge Common. This has long ceased to be common land but is a high point in the Parish with extensive views.

There have been quarries here providing stone for roads and building and timber has been extracted from the area in the past together with some farming, now only Millham and Birchenhall farms remain. The area had small farm cottages for workers and some wooden houses were built for the use of the Cadbury family. Gradually, these various properties were bought up and most transformed into large houses, though a few of the original wooden houses survive. However, the screening provided by the dense trees is so effective that, combined with the steep slopes, these modern houses are scarcely visible in spite of the considerable size of some of them.

Old Storridge overlooks the second nature reserve in the Parish, **The Knapp and Papermill Reserve** managed by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. It was established in its present form in 1971 and encompasses about one mile of the heavily wooded Leigh Brook valley. The Leigh Brook has in the past powered a number of mills within the area, processing corn and clover amongst other things. The brook is normally little more than a stream but, like the River Teme, it rises rapidly during periods of heavy rain. There are records of disastrous flooding in 1852 which did considerable damage to the Bridges Stone Mill, and drowned an old lady at Nightinggale Bower at the south end of the reserve. Further damage occurred downstream at Hopton Court and again in Leigh. The story was repeated again in the 2007 floods though with less damage.

This, then, is our Parish as it exists today, perhaps 1,000 years in the making. During that time by luck or foresight the man made environment has not destroyed the natural beauty of the area. though some developments have lacked the care that the landscape deserves. The landscape and the settlements within it have undoubtedly shaped the character of those who live within its boundaries, giving a community which is self reliant and mutually supportive.

1950 Conveyance Map of Parish

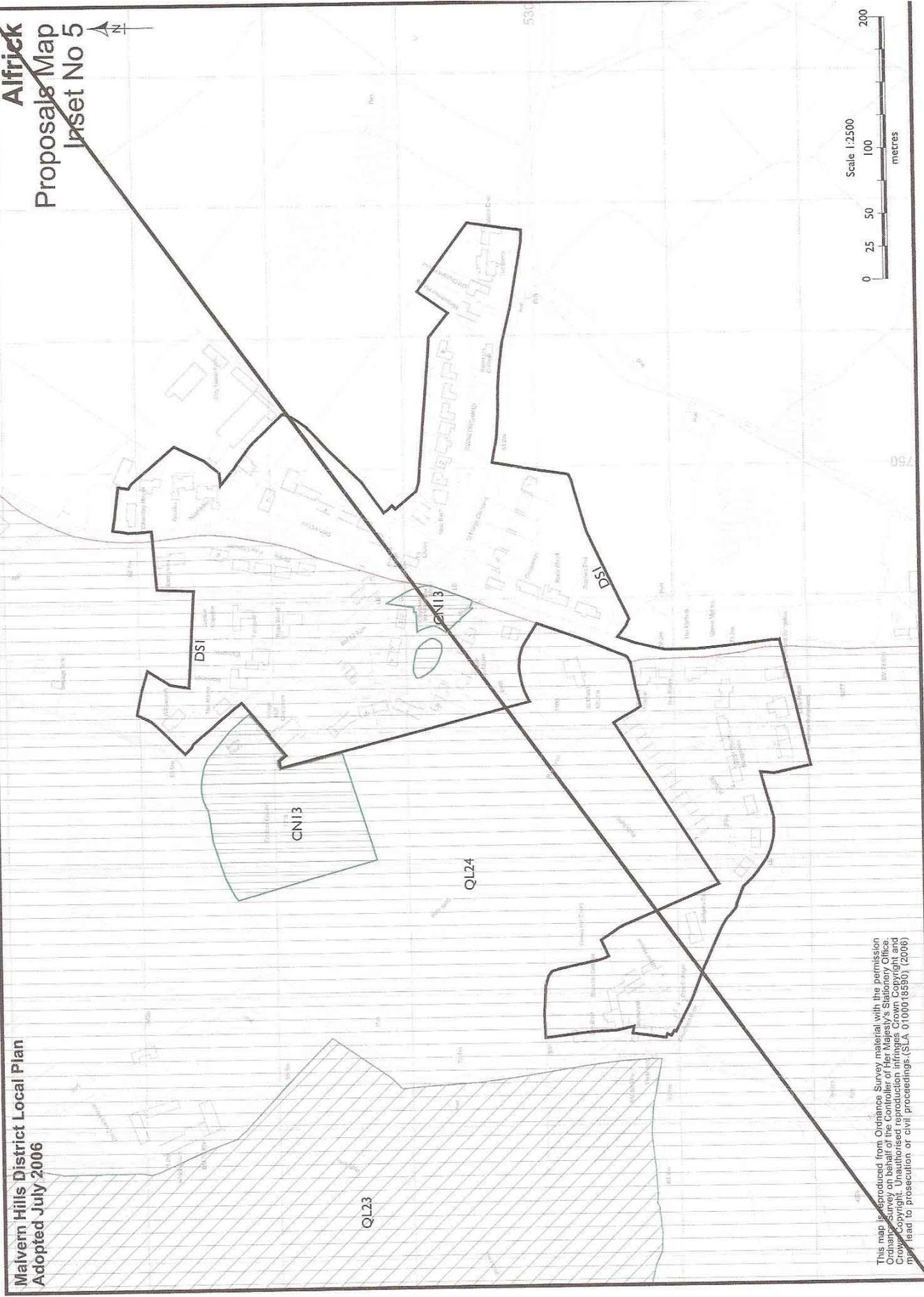
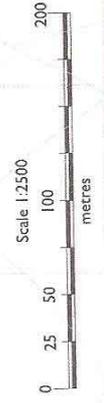


area Coloured pink.

Dotted area

2

Alfrick
Proposals Map
Inset No 5



Matvern Hills District Local Plan
Adopted July 2006

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Listed Buildings

Appendix 5

INDEX	Alfrick CP	INDEX	Lulsley CP
3/3	Alfrick Court	1/46	Balls Cottage
3/4	Barn adjoining west wing Of Alfrick Court	1/58	Barn at Upper Court
3/5	Bewel House	1/48	Barn west of Charlton House
3/6	Catterhall Farmhouse	1/59	Blacks Well No. 2
3/7	Cherry Green	1/47	Charlton House farmhouse
3/1	Church of St Mary Magdalene	1/53	Church Cottage
4/8	Clay Green Farmhouse	1/54	Cold Place
4/19	Cottage adjoining SE of Birchenhall Farmhouse, Old Storrige Common	1/55	Lulsley Court
4/17	Folly Farmhouse, Folly Road	1/52	Outbuilding 30 yards SE of Charlton House Farmhouse
3/18	Hayley Cottage, Green Street	1/50	Outbuilding & hop kiln at NW of Charlton House Farmhouse
3/14	Milestone at NGR SO 739529, Crew Hill	3/56	Pucks Hill, Ravenhills Green
3/2	Monument 10 yards west of parish church	1/49	Stables 35 yards SE of Charlton House Farmhouse
3/15	Newhouse Farmhouse, Crews Hill	1/51	Stables & cowhouse 22 yards SE of Charlton House Farmhouse
4/9	Outbuildings 4 yards west of Clay Green Farmhouse	1/57	Upper Court & terrace to NE
3/11	Tan House		
3/20	The Dell, Old Storrige Common		
4/10	The Mill House, Bridges Stone		
3/13	The Old School House, Alfrick Pound		
3/12	Upper House		
3/16	Yew Tree Cottage, Crews Hill		

REFERENCES

1. Parish Plan: Your Vision for Alfrick & Lulsley: Spring 2006
2. Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7)
3. Malvern Hills District Council Local Development Plan 2006-2011