



WARNDON COURT

Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2018



Contents

01

Page 3
Introduction

02

Page 7
Historic
Development

03

Page 11
Streetscape
Character

04

Page 17
Built Environment
and Architecture

05

Page 20
Architectural
Features

06

Page 21
Landscape
Character

07

Page 25
Management
Proposals

08

Page 30
Appendix One -
Historic Mapping

09

Page 33
Appendix Two -
List descriptions



01 Introduction

Warndon is an ancient rural parish which lies approximately 2 miles to the north east of the city of Worcester. The small historic settlement is an area of approximately 1.7 hectares that lies within the parish and is designated as Warndon Court Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was designated in 1986 to recognise the importance of this once prominent moated medieval site replete with manor house, church and latterly farm outbuildings and barns.

The Conservation Area is bounded to the north by St. Nicholas Lane and to the east by Parsonage Way (A4440) and open fields which abut the M5 motorway. To the west and south lies the edge of the large area of modern development of Warndon Villages.

A Conservation Area is defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as an 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 of the Act places a duty on the local authority to designate conservation areas and to review their extent. Section 71 places a further duty 'to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement' of conservation areas. Designation, review and appraisal helps to ensure that an area which has been identified for its special architectural and historic significance continues to be protected and managed appropriately.



St. Nicholas Church



Timber-frame barn

Conservation is the management of change to a significant place in a way that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations. The conservation area appraisal is a means of assessing the special architectural and historic interest of an area and how this contributes to the character of the place. Conservation area appraisals are a material consideration in planning applications and should be read in conjunction with the management proposals for the conservation and enhancement of an area.

National planning policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), draws attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Subject to appropriate assessment and justification, this can include adaptation and change. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development

within conservation areas...to enhance or better reveal their significance.' Development proposals that preserve elements which make a positive contribution to the conservation area, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets, should be treated favourably.

Local planning policy is contained within the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). SWDP 6: Historic Environment and SWDP 24: Management of the Historic Environment are the policies most relevant to Warndon Court Conservation Area, and SWDP 5: Green Infrastructure and SWDP 38: Green Space are particularly relevant to the setting of the conservation area. *Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* is the national conservation area guidance to support this document. Further advice and guidance can be found in *Historic England Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*.

Over time the pressures and demands of development can result in changes within a conservation area and its setting, and as such local authorities have a duty to review these areas and their boundaries periodically. This appraisal forms part of a systematic review of all 18 conservation areas within Worcester City and is intended to be used by planning officers, developers and landowners alike to ensure that the character is preserved and enhanced, not eroded.

The settlement of Warndon once formed part of a historic group of dispersed farming settlements in the area; nearby Trotshill is a former farming hamlet which survives to the south, whilst Lyppard Grange to the west has since been lost, rebuilt and swallowed up



by a modern shopping complex. The survival of early Warndon and its designation as a conservation area recognises the importance of the area in the historic development of rural farming communities on the outskirts of Worcester.

The character of the Conservation Area is one of a small nucleated farming settlement set on a small hill. Once set in a far-reaching rural landscape of agricultural fields, the setting of the conservation area was identified in the original designation report (1986) as being of 'paramount importance', and its remote hilltop position surrounded by fields as a key feature that must be protected. The report also pointed out that stringent development control policies should be applied equally on the periphery of the conservation area as well as within it.

The Warndon Local Plan (1988) addressed the then imminent pressure of both residential and industrial development on the northern and western fringes of historic Warndon, and relevant historic environment protection policies were put in place as a result. The Plan assessed ways in which to limit the impact of the scale of the development on this small rural settlement, including siting new roads at a distance from the conservation area and retaining land between the conservation area and the new development in order to protect its setting.

Today Warndon Court Conservation Area survives within the context of the largely built-up area of Warndon Villages, large commercial units and busy road networks. There is no doubt that the rural setting of the conservation area has been much compromised as a result of this development and



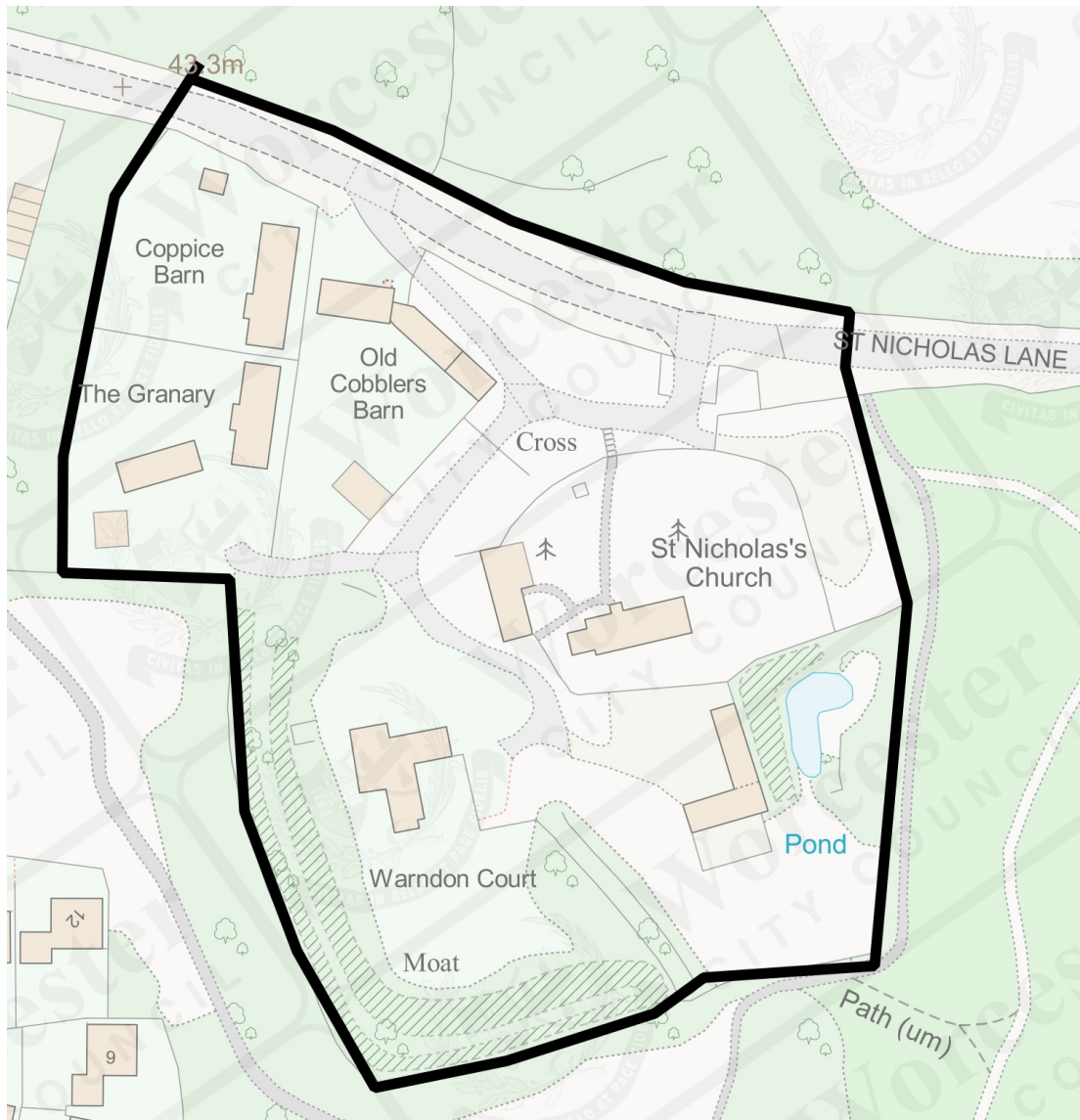
Warndon Court

further development pressure continues to threaten the character of the conservation area. This appraisal will define the special character and appearance of the Warndon Court Conservation Area and the related management proposals will seek to provide proposals to help protect the conservation area and its setting from harmful development.

As part of the appraisal process the boundary of the conservation area has been reviewed. Following public consultation it is proposed to extend the boundary slightly to include the north side of St. Nicholas Lane. At present only the south side of the lane is within the conservation area boundary and it would make sense to include both sides of the lane. Historically this area formed part of the original settlement boundary and although the road has been realigned it is now firmly assimilated into the streetscape of the area. The cohesion of the high hedges and deep grass verges along the lane make an important contribution to the character of the area and enhance the enclosed nature of the settlement.



Warndon Court Conservation Area Map



— Conservation Area Boundary



02 Historic Development

The ancient settlement of Warndon is surrounded by modern development and infrastructure, however it was once a small isolated farming hamlet set in a wide reaching agricultural landscape.

Warndon has its origins as a manorial settlement and was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as part of the manor of Northwick. Medieval Warndon included the church and manor house which lay within a moat, on raised ground. A larger medieval village is believed to have existed in the vicinity, although the exact location of this is unclear.

The name 'Warndon' derives from *Warmedun*, made up of an Old English personal name 'Waerma' and 'Dun' meaning hill, thus 'Waerma's hill'. Domesday records Warndon as a manor held by Urse d'Abitot, and the manor as being in 'the Forest', which covered a wide area east of Worcester in the medieval period.

Descendants of Urse, the Beauchamps, held the manor after the 13th century; the Beauchamp coat of arms is represented on surviving 15th century floor tiles in the church. The Bracys held the manor through the 14th century until it passed to the Lygons through marriage in c.1420. The Lygon family then sold it to the Berkeleys in 1594 who rebuilt the manor house shortly after this date. The house remained in the ownership of the Berkeleys for 400 years.

At the time of Bishop Wulfstan in the 1090s, Warndon was a chapel of St. Helens, Worcester. The chapel was controlled by the Prior of Worcester until the 12th century when Hugh le Poher became patron. By c.1300 it was classified as a church, although the actual recorded consecration of the church and churchyard was in 1542 when the Dean of Worcester, Henry Holbeche, dedicated it to St. Nicholas.

Although the church may have had Anglo-Saxon origins, the earliest fabric is undated and may be early Norman. The nave and the chancel date from c.1180 and it was rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries, when it was re-roofed and the wooden belfry built. This was subsequently replaced with the extant timber-framed tower in around 1500. Some further rebuilding was carried out in the 18th and 19th centuries.



The land was agricultural from medieval times and post-medieval Warndon continued to develop as a farming hamlet through the 17th and 18th centuries. Warndon Court was re-built in the early 17th century and became the farm house; a number of barns and outbuildings subsequently developed around farmyards to the north and east of the Court. The tithe map of Warndon records a good sized farmstead by the mid-19th century, with two ponds which are likely the remains of the medieval moat.

Described by Houghton in the 1920s as 'a small secluded parish with no village and almost no road', farming in the area continued well into the 20th century and Warndon remained in its isolated, rural setting. In the 1950s the area was ear-marked as housing land and housing estates started to develop further west.

Tithe map of Warndon 1843





Following the opening of the M5 motorway to the east of Warndon in 1962, the parish still managed to retain much of its surrounding agricultural landscape. The settlement pattern and road layout to the north of the historic settlement remained the same until this time, although the country lane which ran to the north of the settlement became the main thoroughfare from the motorway into the city. By the early 1970s the road had been aligned slightly further north but remained the main route into the city from the motorway.



Aerial photograph of Warndon, 1960s

The rural isolation of Warndon significantly changed and the landscape quality of the area was greatly altered in the 1980s and 1990s when a large urban extension to Worcester was planned. The development, known as Warndon Villages, saw over 4000 homes built, along with large commercial and industrial units, and modern infrastructure. The development spread east from the city reaching the edge of the historic settlement to the west and north and dramatically altering its setting.

Original proposals to site the main road, now Berkeley Way, along the existing road to the north of the settlement faced objections in the 1980s due to the anticipated proximity of proposed industrial development directly to the north of this road. It was considered important to retain an open area of land to the north of the church and the decision was made to modify the location of the road. Subsequently Berkeley Way was constructed further north of the historic settlement, thus retaining a landscape buffer between the historic settlement and the industrial development. The existing road reverted back to a country lane, now St. Nicholas Lane.

Despite the continued urbanisation of the area, and the much altered surroundings, historic Warndon still retains a strong sense of its former rural character, and survives as a 'hidden gem' in the midst of busy, modern day life.



The approach to Warndon from the east prior to the construction of Berkeley Way, 1980s



Archaeology

Archaeological remains of the prehistoric and Roman periods have been found in surrounding areas. The most prominent archaeological feature within the conservation area is the remains of the medieval moat.

Undated but probably prehistoric finds in the area have included a ditched enclosure, and a group of small pits containing burnt daub, and there have been occasional worked flint finds. Roman finds are much more widespread, and indicate a pattern of small farms in the area. Remains of a former channel of the Barbourne Brook were found during road construction just to the north-east, and deposits here are thought to have dated to the Roman period. Other sites are evidenced by cropmarks, including medieval ridge and furrow field systems.

Within the conservation area, archaeological work has focused on the medieval and post-medieval periods. Detailed work on the church has identified the building sequence, although it has not provided any certainty about its claimed Anglo-Saxon origins. Excavation in advance of the restoration of Warndon Court found numerous medieval postholes relating to earlier buildings. No dating material was found during excavation of a section across the moat.



Warndon Court and barns prior to restoration





03 Streetscape Character

The settlement is focused around St. Nicholas Church and Warndon Court. The Court and former associated farm buildings cluster round the 12th century church, whilst hedgerows and mature trees shield the settlement from modern day intrusions. The prominence of the historic buildings in this small area means that from most vantage points the architectural quality and historic importance of the buildings can be truly appreciated, not just individually but in their coherence of layout and their relationship to each other.

The Conservation Area occupies a prominent hilltop position; the buildings dominate the skyline and are a focal point within the surrounding landscape. Views of the conservation area are afforded when approaching from the east and despite being interrupted by a busy roundabout, St. Nicholas Church remains the dominant feature.

Approaching along St. Nicholas Lane, the seemingly remote rural character of Warndon becomes

apparent. High hedgerows enclose the entrance to the conservation area and deep grass verges extend right up to the lane, reinforcing the rural feel. A tarmac track leads into the settlement and views of the church are framed by trees and hedges. Grass verges continue to line the track as it runs just to the north of the churchyard and sweeps gently round the embankment and up to Warndon Court.



Views of St. Nicholas Church approaching from the east





The approach to the conservation area along St. Nicholas Lane



Views of the church are framed by trees and hedges

St. Nicholas Church and Warndon Court dominate the setting and are key landmark buildings in the conservation area. The distinctive black and white tower of the church is clearly visible throughout and is prominent in a number of views. When viewed from the north the Court stands out against the sky; its assertive fenestration with light red sandstone mullions, steeply pitched clay tiled roof and gables add great presence to this elevated site and reinforces its architectural and historic importance.



View of Warndon Court from the north



Footpath to church

The main entrance to the churchyard is through simple timber gates set between brick piers. Framed by two large ancient yews, the church is approached by a footpath through a well-kept and simple churchyard. Passing the remains of the 15th century stone cross the full splendour of the church with its timber-framed tower and lime rendered walls is fully appreciated once in the churchyard.



15th century stone cross

The almost circular churchyard surrounds the church on all sides and is enclosed by iron railings and walls. The southern churchyard boundary is defined by a curved red brick wall with blue brick copings, which abuts a much older stone wall with distinctive 19th century brick buttresses. An iron gate set between brick piers gives access to the churchyard from within the settlement, and to the east of the churchyard is an un-surfaced car park.



Churchyard viewed from the east



Brick and stone churchyard wall

Adjoining the churchyard and forming a group with the church and the Court is a mid-18th century stable building. Sitting on the top of the embankment its simple but pleasing elevations occupy a prominent position and its brickwork makes an attractive contrast against the black and white church tower. Of further interest is the survival of some historic cobbled surfacing to the west of the building. The stable was restored in the 1990s and is now a community hall known as St Nicholas Church Barn.

The former farm track curves round to the south of the churchyard, where a late 17th /early 18th century timber-framed barn sits on a stone plinth on the upper embankment of the moat. The barn originally formed part of a U-shaped courtyard along with some red brick farm buildings, however this setting was altered in the 1990s when the brick buildings were demolished. A rebuilt red brick outbuilding is now used as garaging, and the yard area as domestic parking.



Historic surface at stable building



Rebuilt red brick farm buildings

Beyond the barn, a public footpath winds through a large grassed area that leads to the southern boundary of the conservation area. From here good views are afforded of the barn, church and stable building, allowing the character and qualities of the area to be fully appreciated.

To the north of the Court is a group of single-storey red brick dwellings, re-built from former farm buildings; the gated track which runs to the north of the buildings identifies the former historic route into

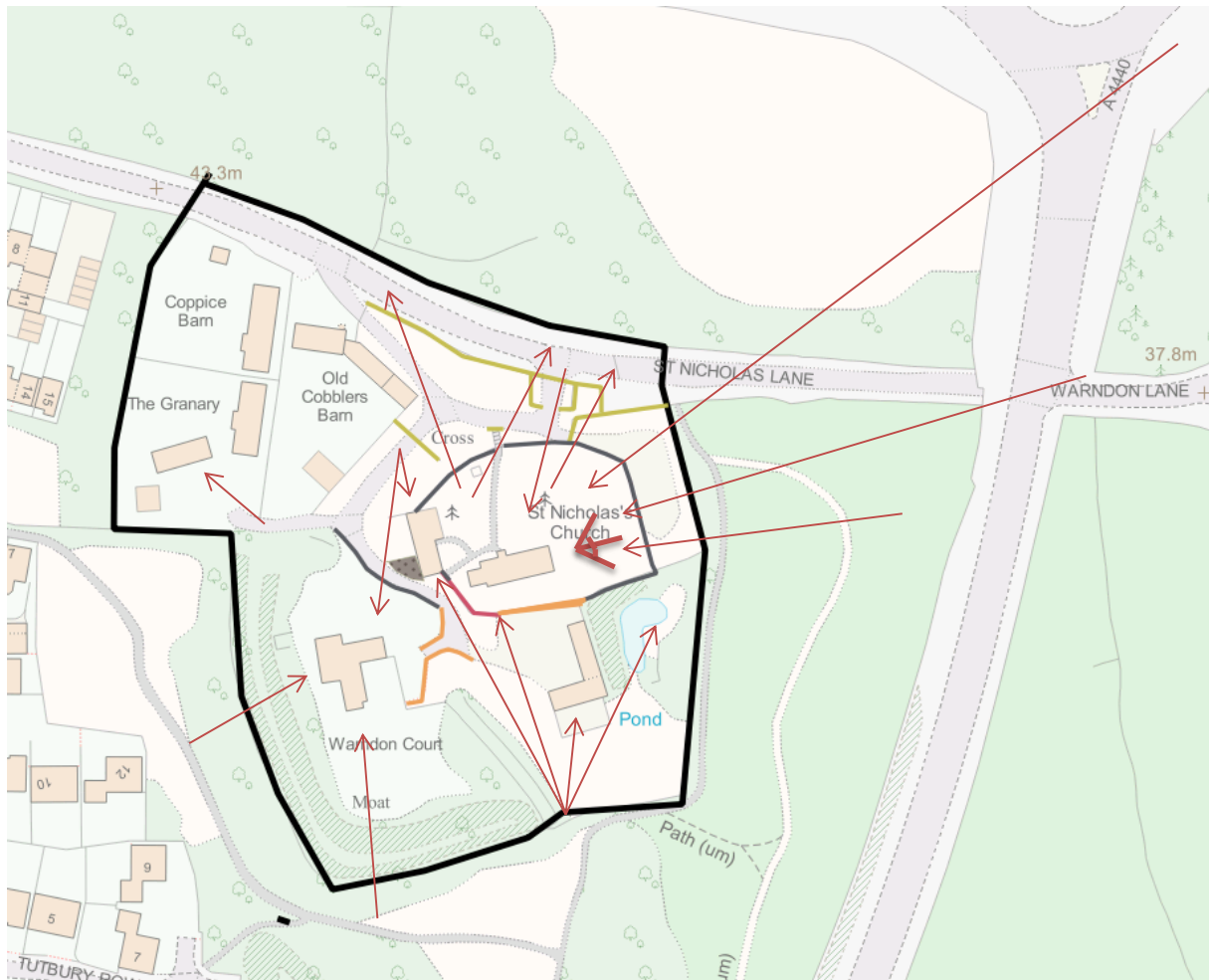









Modern developments complements historic barn

the settlement. West of these, the introduction of two timber weather-boarded 'barn-style' dwellings on earlier stone plinths forms a cohesive group of buildings along with the nearby historic timber-framed barn, which helps to redress the balance of the modern developments. The redevelopment of this farmyard area in the 1990s is a good example of development which respects and complements the scale, form and materials of the historic buildings and sits well within the established character of the conservation area.



Streetscape Map



- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------------|---|------------------|
|  | Historic brick wall |  | Timber gates and fencing |  | Historic surface |
|  | Historic stone wall |  | Iron gates and railings | | |
|  | Important views |  | Panoramic views | | |



04 Built Environment and Architecture

The small group of vernacular buildings are historically associated with agricultural activities and provide an important visual link to the historic farming history of the area. Apart from the church and converted stable, the buildings of the conservation area are all in residential use.

St Nicholas is the parish church of the ancient parish of Warndon and contains many significant features including medieval font, stained glass, floor tiles, and 18th century box pews. The grade I listed church has a timber-framed tower (tree-ring dated to around 1500) and is an excellent example of a medieval church which was unaffected by Victorian alteration and restoration; it was sensitively restored in the 1990s and retains its character.

Built from Blue Lias and ashlar sandstone, the church has two Norman arched doors and a large three-light window dominates the east wall. There are five Perpendicular style windows with square heads to the north and south elevations. A doorway in the east wall suggests the possible presence of an earlier structure on the site.



St. Nicholas Church



Warndon Court



Warndon Court is a grade II* listed, early 17th century farmhouse. Thought to be the earliest brick-built farmhouse in the county, the stone foundations indicate that it was built on the site of the medieval manor house. Dating to c.1600, the Court is of two storeys plus attic and sits on a Blue Lias plinth on a T-shaped plan. The building has a two-storey hall range and cross wing with central brick chimney and four diagonal stacks. Of red brick with a clay-tiled roof, the Court retains its original stone mullioned windows. Now a residential dwelling, the building declined for many years before being restored in the late 1990s.

A two-storey red brick and clay tile roofed stable dates to the mid-18th century. This grade II listed building was converted for use as a parish hall (St Nicholas Church Barn) in the 1990s, and is two storeys over three bays set on a stone plinth. The building retains its stable doors and fenestration to the west elevation. To the north gable is a contemporary lean-to and to the east elevation a modern entrance porch.



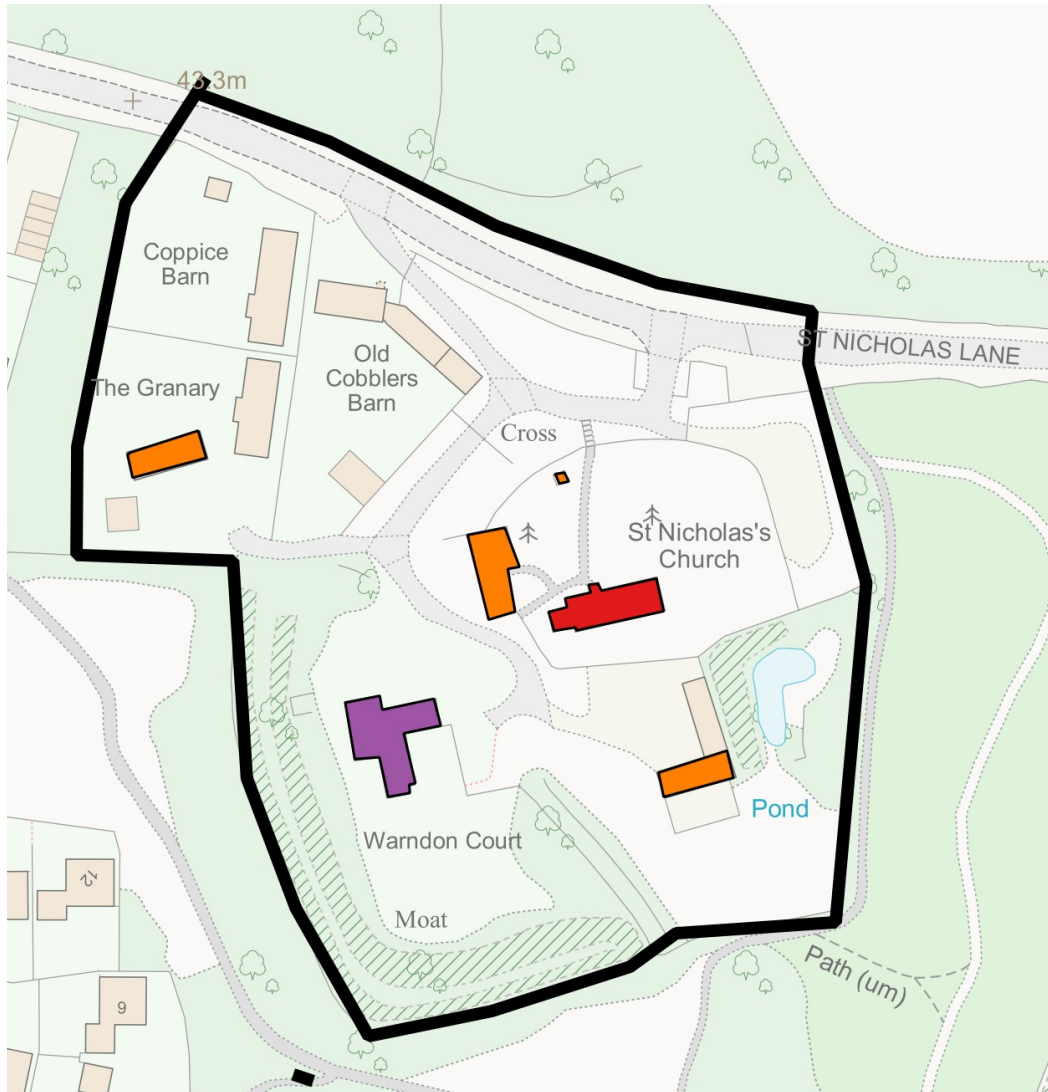
Former stable building and barns are grade II listed




Two grade II listed barns, to the north and east of the Court, reflect the local vernacular architecture of the area. The timber-framed barns both date to the late 17th /early 18th century and are weather-boarded and set on stone plinths. While the barn to the north of the Court retains its clay tile roof, the roof of the barn to the east has unfortunately been replaced with corrugated iron. The other buildings in the conservation area are rebuilt examples of former farm buildings and some modern, weather-boarded barns, all of which are now dwellings or have domestic ancillary use.





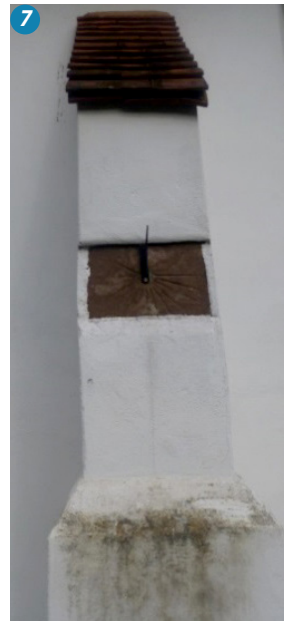
Historic Buildings Map



-  Grade I listed building
-  Grade II* listed building
-  Grade II listed building



05 Architectural Features



1. Porch, St. Nicholas Church

2. Stone mullion window, Warndon Court

3. Chimney stacks, Warndon Court

4. Barn door

5. Tracery windows, St. Nicholas Church

6. Brickwork detail, St. Nicholas Church Barn

7. Sun dial, St. Nicholas Church

8. Norman arch, St. Nicholas Church

9. Retained stable door, St. Nicholas Church Barn



06 Landscape Character

Sitting in an elevated position within the surrounding landscape, the elevated topography of the settlement gives it the benefit of key views both into and out of the conservation area. Surviving landscape characteristics are a significant contributor to these views, and to the setting of the conservation area.

The landscape quality and remote setting of the conservation area has been greatly altered as a result of development, and the rural character of the conservation area has been much compromised. Large areas of agricultural land and many historic field boundaries which once surrounded the settlement have been lost in order to accommodate the housing estates and supporting infrastructure.

Parcels of land do still survive and the surrounding landscape remains rich in wildlife habitats, comprising fields and wooded areas to the east and south, including ancient woodlands. Areas of ridge and furrow have been identified in many of these areas

providing evidence of historic farming activity in the area, although little of this is now visible.

Hillwood Meadow is an area of managed grassland which forms the immediate backdrop to the conservation area to the south and east. Part of the Warndon Woods Local Nature Reserve, this area of open green space is an important factor in allowing the settlement to maintain a degree of its former landscape character, and offers several vantage points for good views of the church and court beyond. To the north, an area of land separates the conservation area from the industrial development of Shire Business Park, and forms part of the local green network.



Hillwood Meadow forms the backdrop to the conservation area to the east and south



The rural character intensifies once within the conservation area, enhanced by areas of green space and mature trees, particularly to the grounds of Warndon Court. The front gardens of the Court are raised and provide a formal setting for this prestigious building, whilst the side gardens merge into more informal areas of green space.



The open grounds to Warndon Court are important areas of green space



The open grounds to Warndon Court are important areas of green space

The churchyard forms a key area of open green space at the heart of the settlement and, in its elevated position, offers good views of the conservation area and its wider setting. Two distinctive yew trees are prominent landscape features and enclose the view of the church from the north, giving an enclosed and intimate feel to this side of the churchyard. By contrast, at the east of the churchyard, the feeling is one of openness with views across Hillwood Meadow, and panoramic views beyond to the north of Hindlip and its escarpment.



Views from the churchyard to the east



Two large yew trees are a prominent feature of the churchyard



One of the most significant landscape features is the remains of the moat which originally enclosed the church, churchyard and Court. Its eroded embankments still exist on the eastern boundary of the conservation area, and to the south and west of the Court where the moat is identified by a band of self-seeded sycamore trees. Apart from a small area to the east which forms a pond, the moat is now completely dry.

The conservation area is bounded on all sides by trees and hedgerows giving a strong sense of enclosure and softening landscape views. The modern development to the immediate west of the conservation area is well screened by trees. A number of mature trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), including sycamore, ash and yew; these are predominantly in the grounds of Warndon Court.



The remains of the moat are an important landscape feature



Landscape Character Map



- Important trees and hedgerows
- Trees with TPOs
- Important green space
- Pond
- Moat



07 Management Proposals

The management proposals work alongside the character appraisals to identify issues and manage change in Worcester’s conservation areas, helping to ensure that they retain the special qualities that led to their designation. These documents fulfil the Council’s duty under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area. These proposals are particularly relevant where there is pressure for development and where cumulative minor changes may be affecting the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Owners, landowners and developers must give attention to the requirement for planning permission for certain works in conservation areas and to listed buildings and their curtilage. Planning applications affecting conservation areas will be determined with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012), the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP), and the approved conservation area management proposals, and having regard to advice from the Council’s Conservation Area Advisory Committee. The NPPF is supported by the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (2014).

Some works that could harm the character or appearance of a conservation area can be carried out under “permitted development rights” which means that home owners do not need to apply for planning permission. Owners are nevertheless encouraged to take heed of the special historic character and appearance of the conservation area when carrying out these works.

The key factors that give Warndon Court Conservation Area its special interest are identified in the Character Appraisal. These are the things that make up the character and appearance of the area “which it



is desirable to preserve and enhance” through management action. Any new development should reinforce this character and be sympathetic to the historical evolution and character of Warndon.

Development opportunities which preserve the character and enhance, or better reveal the significance of, the conservation area will be looked upon favourably by the council. Those proposals that threaten the identified character of the area and its setting will be resisted. Consideration should be given to the significance of the historic buildings and their setting, the historic layout and street pattern, significant spaces, massing, volume and scale of the existing and proposed buildings and the employment of building materials and architectural features.

In recent years the large scale development of Warndon Villages and Shire Business Park has significantly altered the wider setting of Warndon Court Conservation Area. The high density of modern residential and commercial development has meant that the former rural character of the conservation area has been significantly compromised. The edge of the Warndon Villages development now lies adjacent to the conservation area to the west, with the busy main roads of Parsonage Way to the east, and Berkeley Way to the north.

At the time of the draft Warndon Local Plan (1986) the retention of land between the conservation area boundary and the roads was identified as a key factor in maintaining a degree of rural character, as was retaining existing hedges and trees as a buffer



between residential and industry. The published Warndon Local Plan (1988) put in place historic environment policies to ensure that the character of the conservation area and its setting was protected from the imminent development. Today the conservation area no longer sits in rural isolation, however the survival and retention of the land which forms the immediate setting of the conservation area is considered to be an important factor in preserving these former rural qualities.

Current local historic environment policies which relate to designated heritage assets and their setting, including conservation areas, are now contained in the SWDP. The conservation area and its immediate setting are also identified as designated green space in the SWDP, and additional policies exist to protect these areas.

There has been some residential development in the conservation area which has been well planned to complement the character of the area. Good design and use of quality modern materials in conservation areas can enhance the built environment, and sited well can preserve the built and natural environment.

In order to manage change in the conservation area and its setting, individual management proposals have been formulated to address identified issues. Successful management of the area can only be done through responsible action which addresses these issues and it needs to be considered in the context of the area as a whole.



	Location	Issue	Action	Responsibility
<p>1</p> 	Setting of the conservation area	Impact of development on the setting of the conservation area	Ensure that careful consideration is given to the retention of identified green space in the immediate setting of the conservation area to conserve setting and maintain views. Retain and manage hedge boundaries.	Planning Officers Conservation Officers Developers and owners
<p>2</p> 	Views	Views into and out of the conservation area	Views including, but not limited to, those identified in the appraisal, must be protected	Planning Officers Conservation Officers Developers



3



Location	Issue	Action	Responsibility
Churchyard	Railings in poor condition and damaged in some areas	Discuss possible repairs/ replacement with owners	Conservation Officers Church PCC

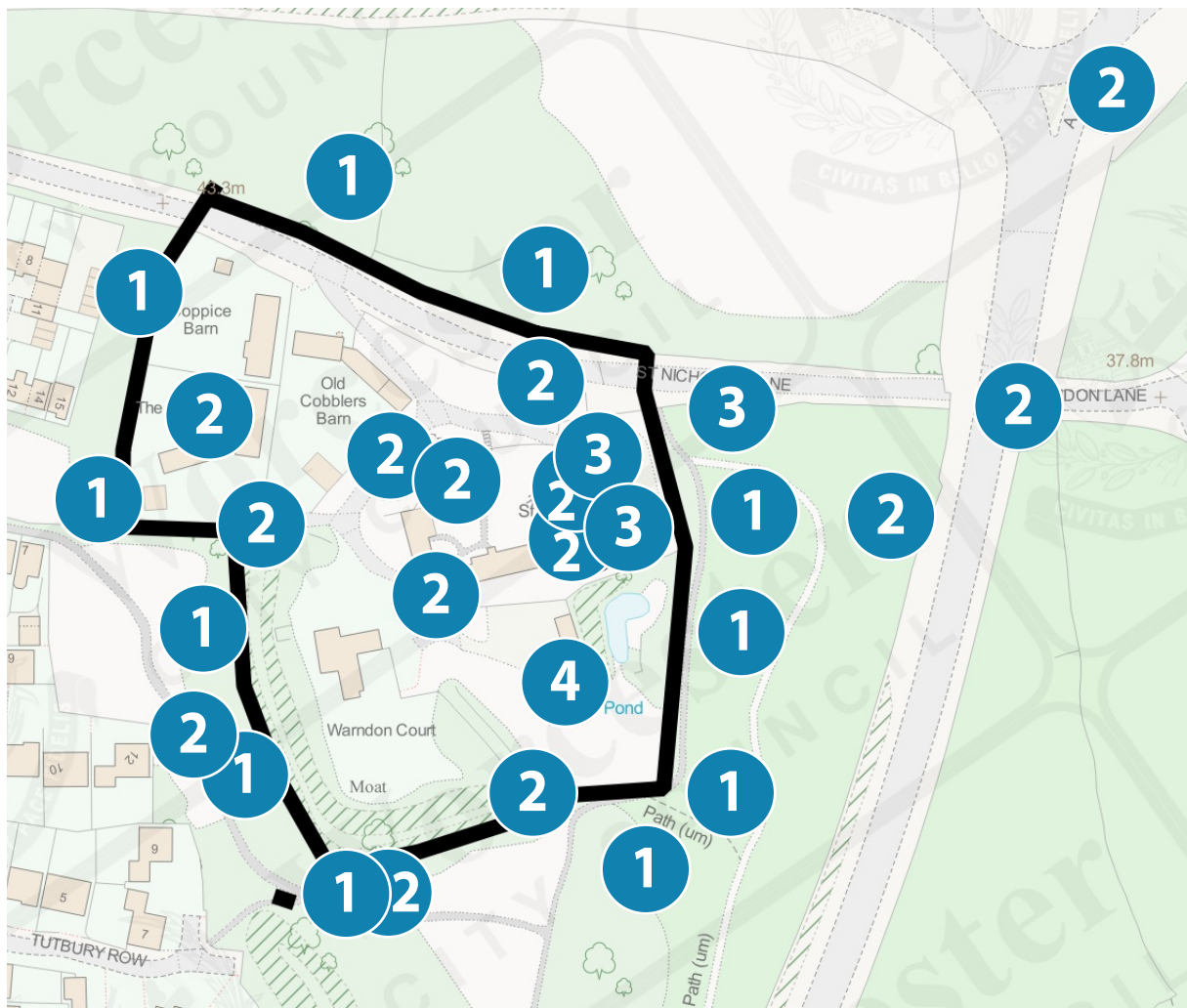
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Listed barn to south-east of Warndon Court	Original tile roof now replaced with corrugated iron roof.	Recommend any future replacement roof material to be tile.	Planning Officers Conservation Officers Owners
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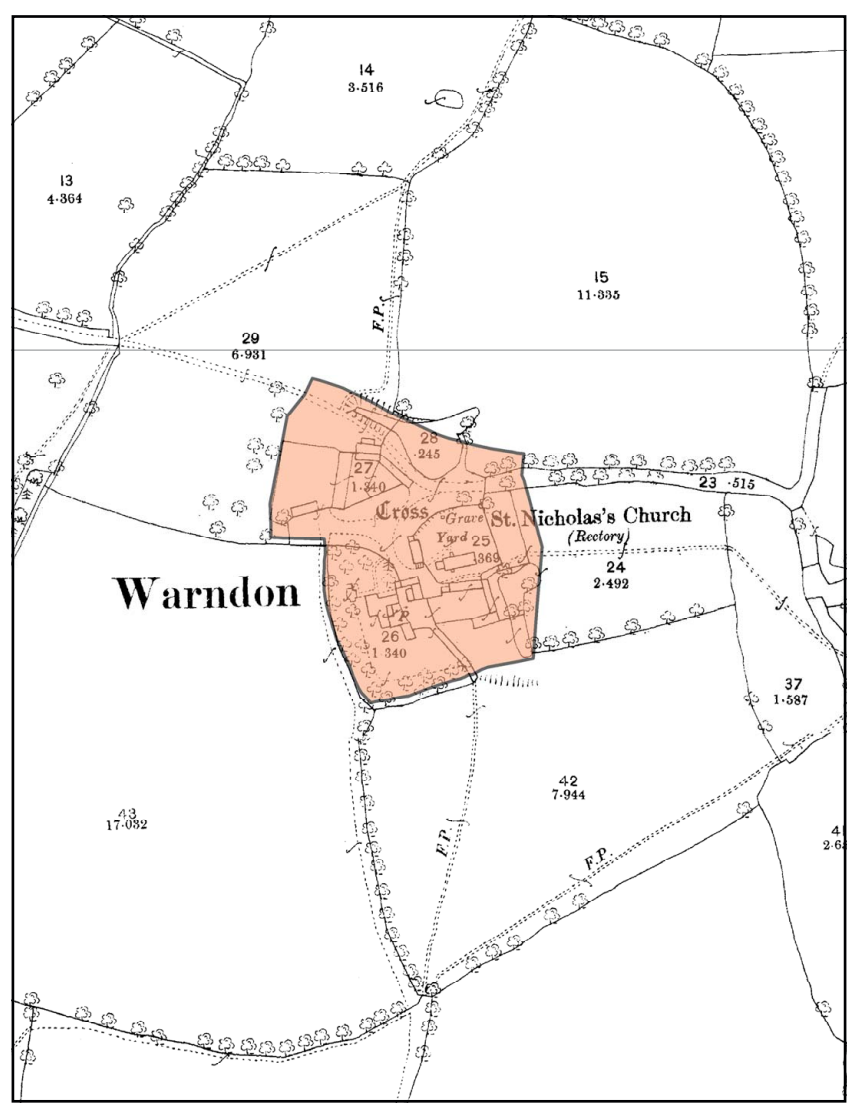
Management Proposals Map





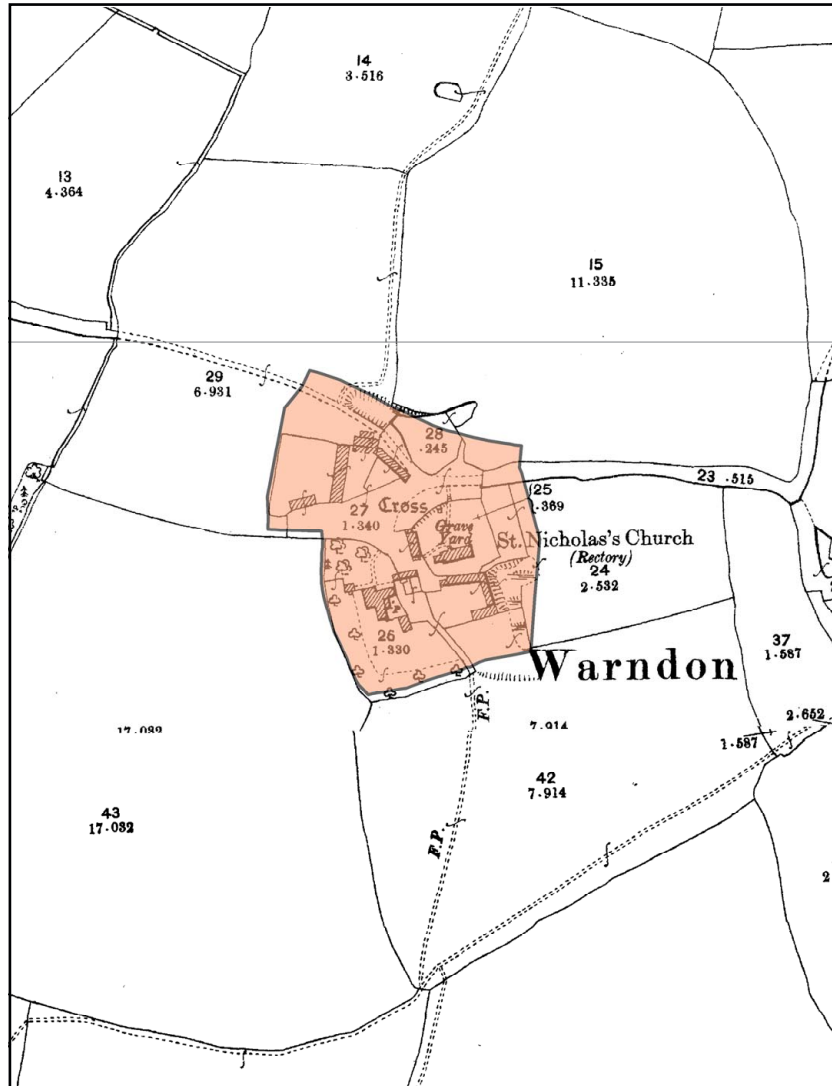
08 Appendix One - Historic Mapping

1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, circa 1885



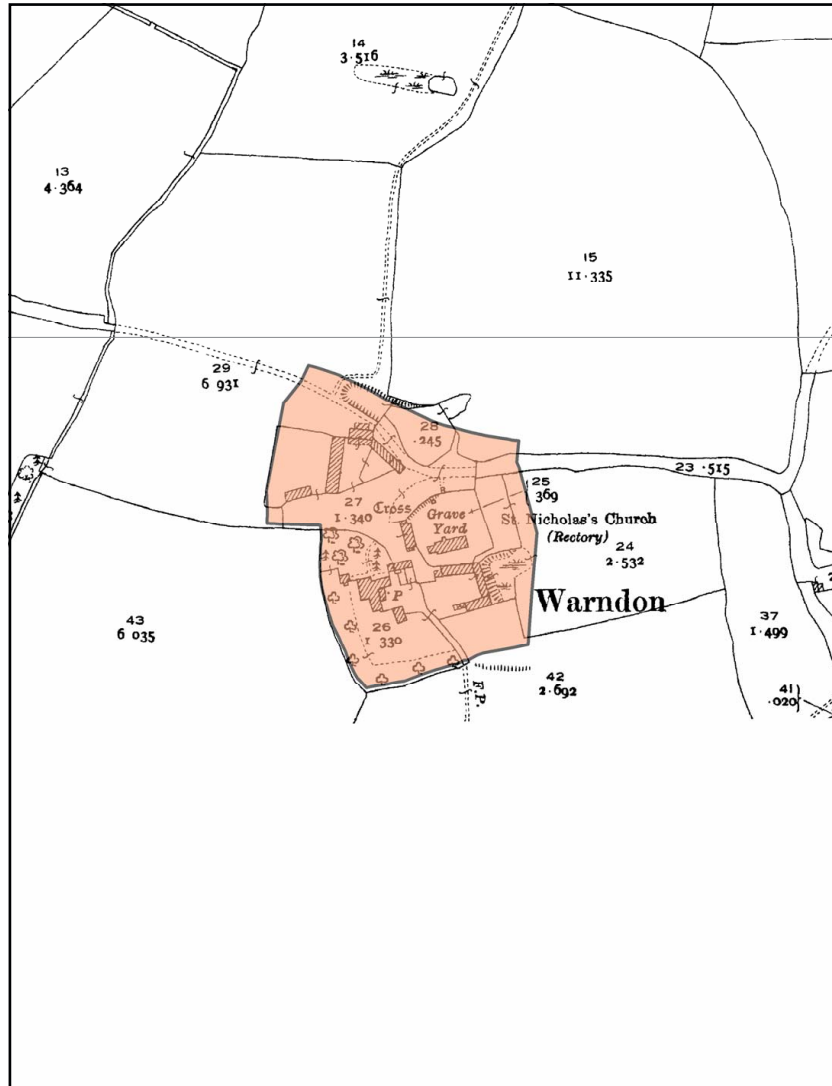


2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map, circa 1901





3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Map, circa 1928





09 Appendix Two - List descriptions

The following buildings in Warndon Court are Grade I and II listed.
Follow the link to view the list description:

- 1301320 St.Nicholas Church, Grade I
- 1350429 Churchyard Cross, Grade II
- 1166562 Warndon Court, Grade II*
- 1095990 Stable Building, Grade II
- 1166567 Barn SE of Warndon Court, Grade II
- 1095991 Barn NW of Warndon Court, Grade II



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