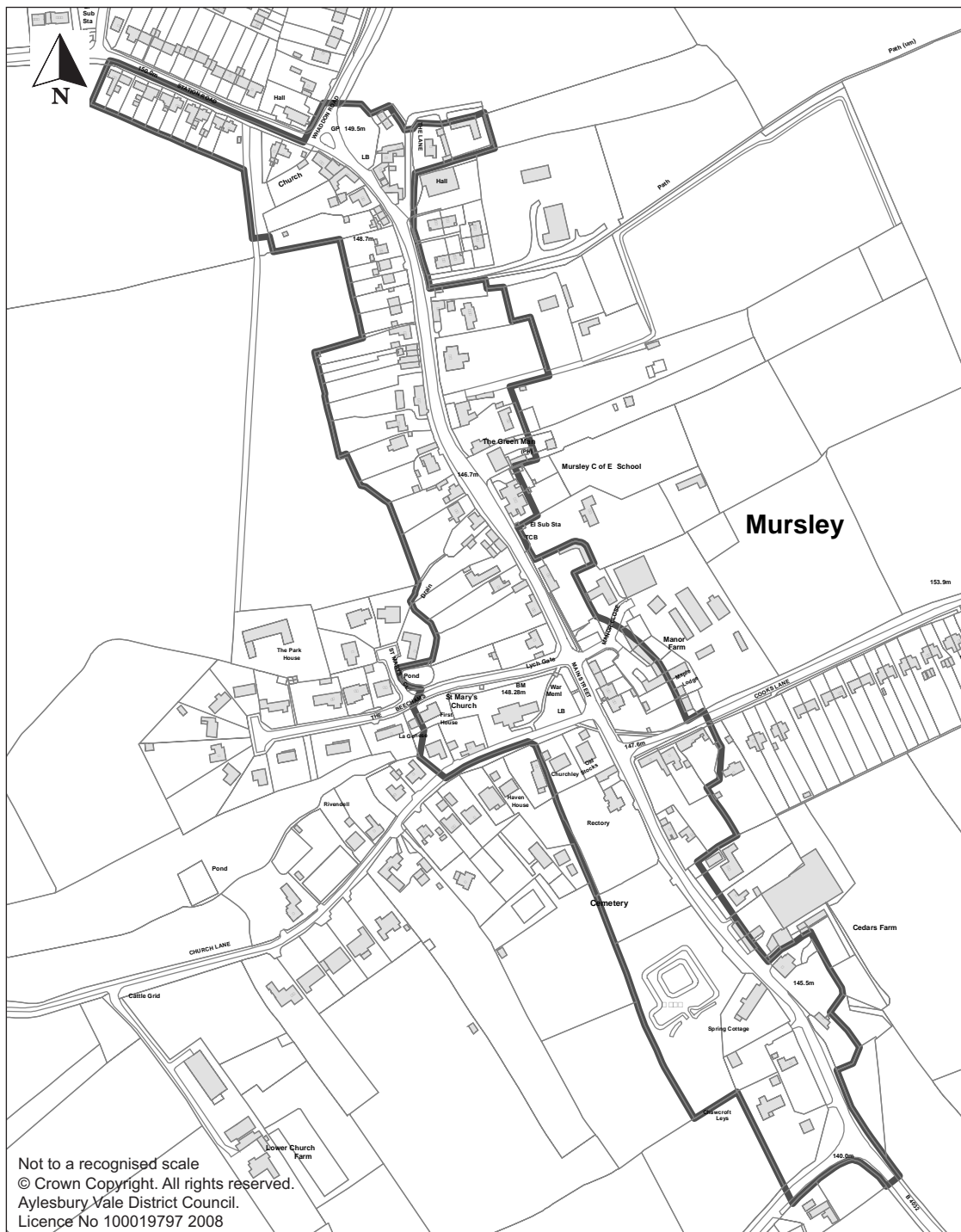


## MURSLEY CONSERVATION AREA

Designated 16th October 1991

The picturesque village of Mursley is situated on a ridge top site four miles east of Winslow and amidst attractive rolling countryside. Its high position affords fine views, particularly from Cooks Lane, across fields which still show evidence of ancient ridge and furrow farming systems prevalent in the area. The high position of the village also allows views of the splendid white painted water tower in Whaddon Road from a distance as well as within the Conservation Area.



The village is primarily linear in form, extending north/south along the B4032 Main Street. Development which extends off the Main Street, along Swanbourne Road, Church Lane, Cooks Lane, The Beechams or Station Road tends to be relatively short in depth and, for the most part, featuring twentieth Century dwelling houses.

Approaches from the village either from Stewkley or Swanbourne to the south or Little Horwood and Whaddon to the north are along attractive tree and hedgerow lined lanes. Mursley is an ancient, formerly manorial, settlement which was recorded in the Norman Domesday Book as 'Murselei' and owned by one Walter Giffard. Later, in the thirteenth and fourteenth Centuries, the village, which lay on the main droving routes, was granted a licence to hold a market. Later still, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth Century, the village was owned by Queen Elizabeth I's Chancellor Sir John Fortesque, who built a magnificent house at Salden, one mile northeast of Mursley. The remains of that house were used extensively in the construction of the Grade II\* Listed Salden House Farmhouse, and also in a number of the other houses in Mursley.

In the late 1800's Thomas Beecham, who produced the famous Beechams Pills, built Mursley Hall to the west of the Church. He employed many local people and to accommodate them ordered the construction of Beechams Row in Station Road, a terrace of cottages with the date of erection and the initials TB depicted in black on red brick. Later the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham lived at the Hall. Unfortunately, the Hall was demolished in the 1940's.

Within Mursley village there are a significant number of period buildings, chief of which is the Grade II\* Listed Church of St. Mary at the junction of Main Street and Church Lane. This fourteenth/fifteenth Century stone church with brick frontage wall dominates the centre of the village. Elsewhere in the village there are a further eleven properties all Listed Grade II. Most are timber framed and six of them have thatched roofs, whilst the remainder, with the exception of the steeply pitched slate roof of Cedars Farmhouse, have clay tiled roofs.

A characteristic feature of the village is the predominant use of brickwork in the construction of the buildings and walls around the southern end of Main Street and along the initial parts of Church Lane and Cooks Lane. These walls, together with the hedgerows and buildings which abut the roadside, afford a very tight sense of enclosure along Main Street.

*December 2008*