



Funtley Road, Fareham

Meon Valley village precedent study

27 February 2019

Rummey design

r.
reside

introduction

Purpose of the study

This study reviews particular characteristics of villages in the Meon Valley and nearby in order to identify precedents that could serve as inspiration for future development.

Looking at precedents helps to:

- explore urban characteristics and review how they are achieved
- review features that may serve as an example to help in justifying a design of an analogous kind
- identify conventions established by long practice in the locality.
- analyse design situations that may serve as a model.

This study reviews villages in the Meon Valley and asks:

- why does it look good?
- what is characterful and sets it apart from other similar situations?
- what makes the design successful in its layout or arrangement?
- what lessons can be learned for a modern context?

Of particular interest are the settlements' relationship with water, roads/pathways and the landscape beyond. Beyond this architectural details such as materials and how they are used, windows and overlooking, front doors/main entrances and how they are distinguished could all offer 'clues' to modern development. The aim is not to copy (these villages are all of their time and social attitudes and technology changes), but to learn so that the qualities of the past can be reinterpreted for the future.





... a variety of village streets with a variety of urban solutions

Meon valley character

The landscape of the Meon

Hampshire County Council's Landscape Integrated Character Assessment 2012 states: *"The river Meon rises near East Meon and its valley incorporates downland mosaic, lowland mosaic clay and coastal plain landscapes before finally meeting the Solent at Titchfield Haven and the small harbour of Hillhead. The upper edge of the valley is defined by the crest of the slope and has been drawn along the apparent skyline of the valley as seen from the valley bottom. This is considerably less clearly defined in the lower reaches of the valley. Settlements include Titchfield and Wickham which are located in the lowland landscapes whilst the smaller ones of Droxford, Corhampton, Meonstoke, Exton and West and East Meon are in a downland setting."*

The assessment states that the valley has a "strong pattern of nucleated settlements within the valley at strategic river crossing points with relatively little 20th century expansion". Whilst this is mostly the case there are several largely linear settlements such as Soberton Heath and Meonstoke that align along the valley sides. There are very few industrial or other modern developments that detract significantly from the rural historic villages north of the M27. Road improvements in the 1930s on several sections of the main north-south road through the valley saw several villages bypassed to improve military access to the south coast. Late 20C roads have had a rather poor effect on edges of Bishop's Waltham and Wickham though their centres remain largely intact examples of historic downland villages.

Settlement character

Settlements respond to their topography, especially slope, drainage and aspect. Their architectural expressions have been shaped further by historical farming practice, land tenure and owner's status, use for other purposes (such as inns, forges, shops, farms and community) and materials used for construction. The valley had iron age and bronze age Celtic occupation, Old Winchester Hill being a key fortified site. It has a Roman villa and a temple remains at Exton, though its current pattern was mostly established between the fifth and sixth centuries predominantly by Jutes.

Thirty villages are recorded as being in the valley in the 8th century by Bede. Settlements were later heavily influenced by ownership of the church through the middle ages and much of the later centuries. Present building types are very much influenced by the historic availability of materials such as flint, and were only briefly affected by the coming of the railway branch line from Alton to Fareham, which only opened in 1903 (late by national standards) and closed finally to all services in 1968.

Study area

This study considers five villages within the valley and three nearby in adjoining valleys of the Hamble to the west and Wallington tributaries to the east. The villages within the Meon Valley are:

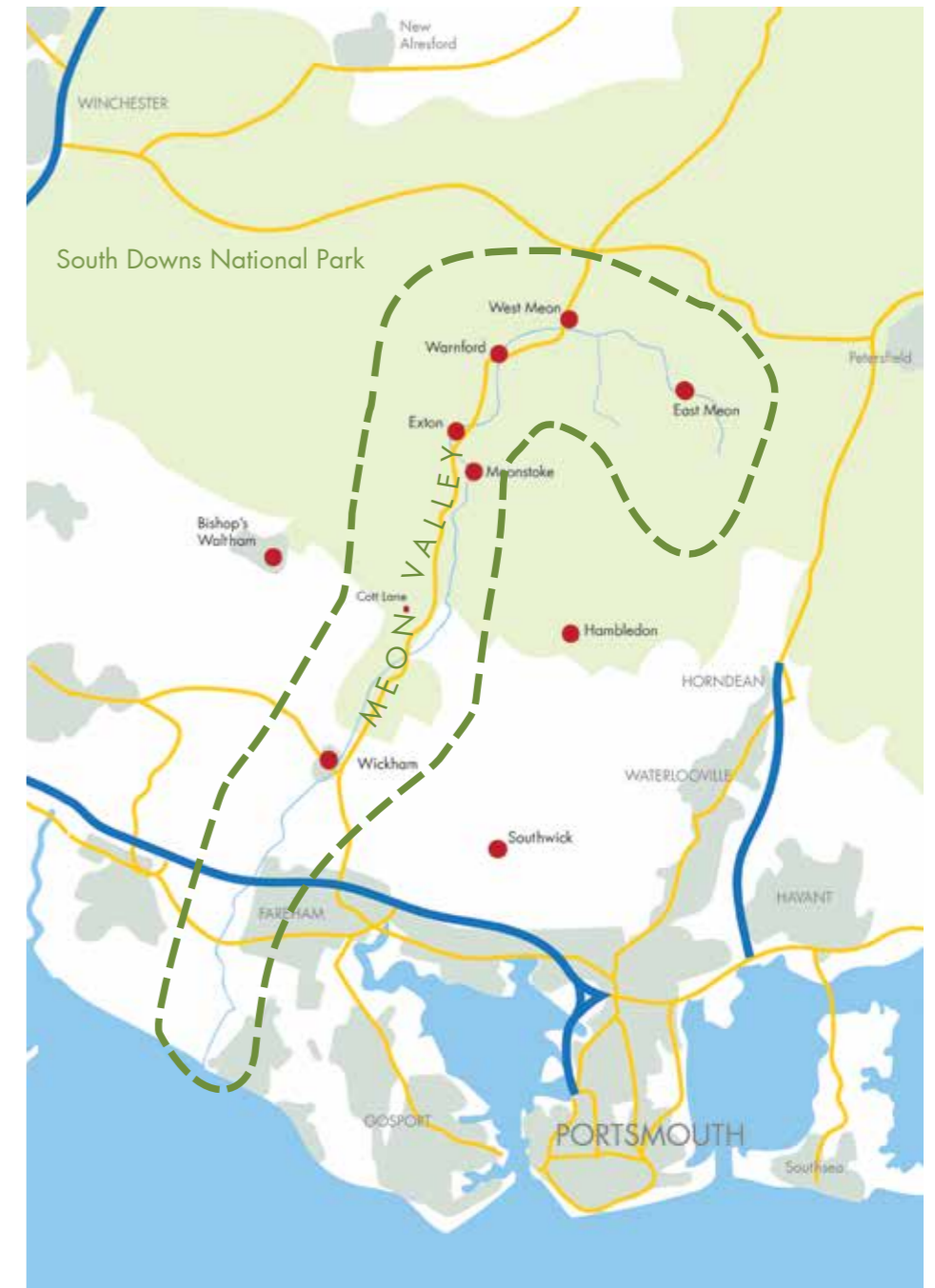
- East Meon
- West Meon
- Warnford
- Exton
- Meonstoke
- Wickham

The adjoining villages reviewed beyond the valley watershed, but with cultural and historic association, are:

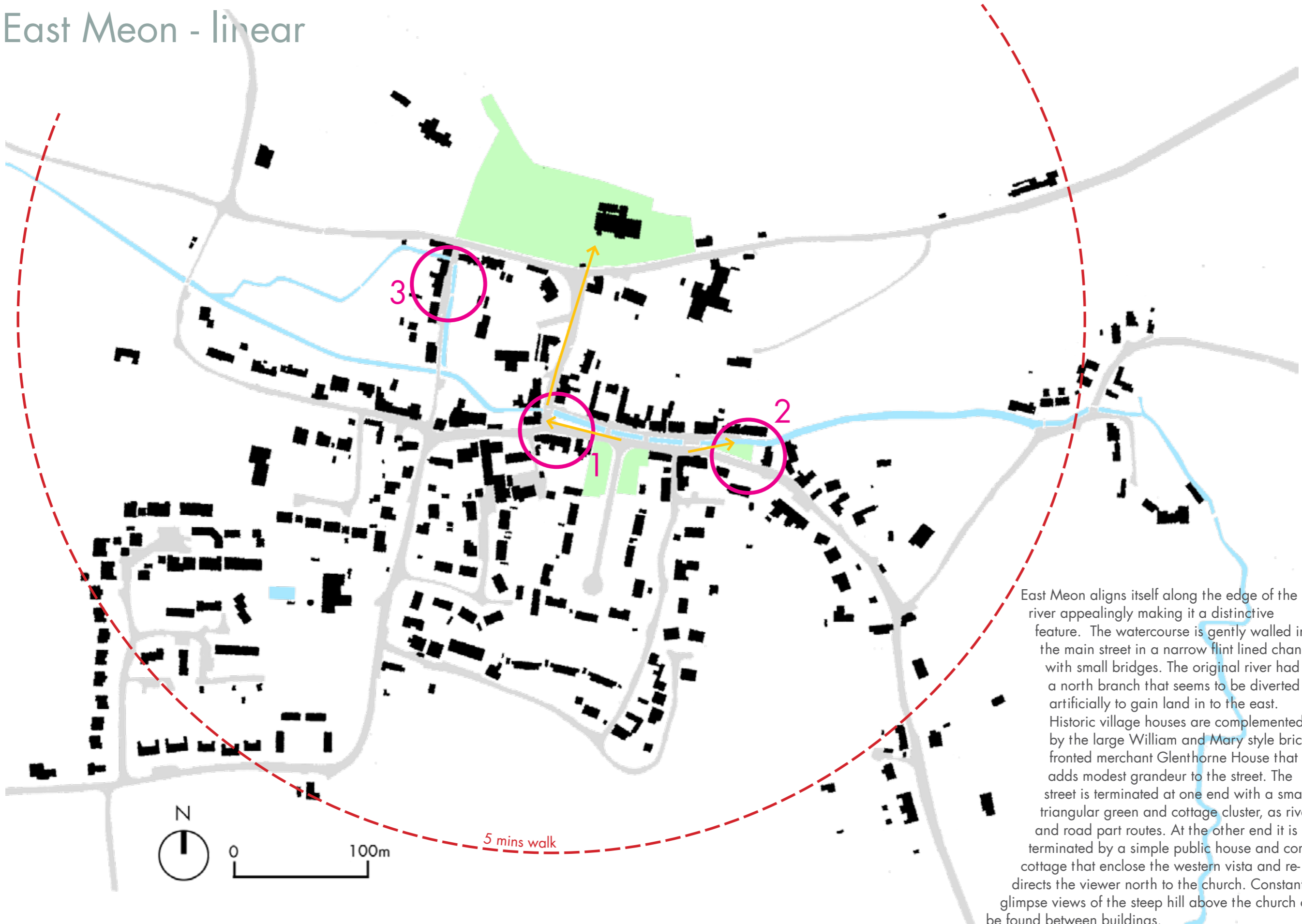
- Hambledon
- Southwick and
- Bishop's Waltham

Planning

All of these villages, apart from Warnford, are covered in whole or in part by Conservation Area designation. The north of the valley lies in the South Downs National Park.



East Meon - linear



East Meon aligns itself along the edge of the river appealingly making it a distinctive feature. The watercourse is gently walled into the main street in a narrow flint lined channel with small bridges. The original river had a north branch that seems to be diverted artificially to gain land in to the east. Historic village houses are complemented by the large William and Mary style brick fronted merchant Glenthorne House that adds modest grandeur to the street. The street is terminated at one end with a small triangular green and cottage cluster, as river and road part routes. At the other end it is terminated by a simple public house and corner cottage that enclose the western vista and re-directs the viewer north to the church. Constant glimpse views of the steep hill above the church can be found between buildings.

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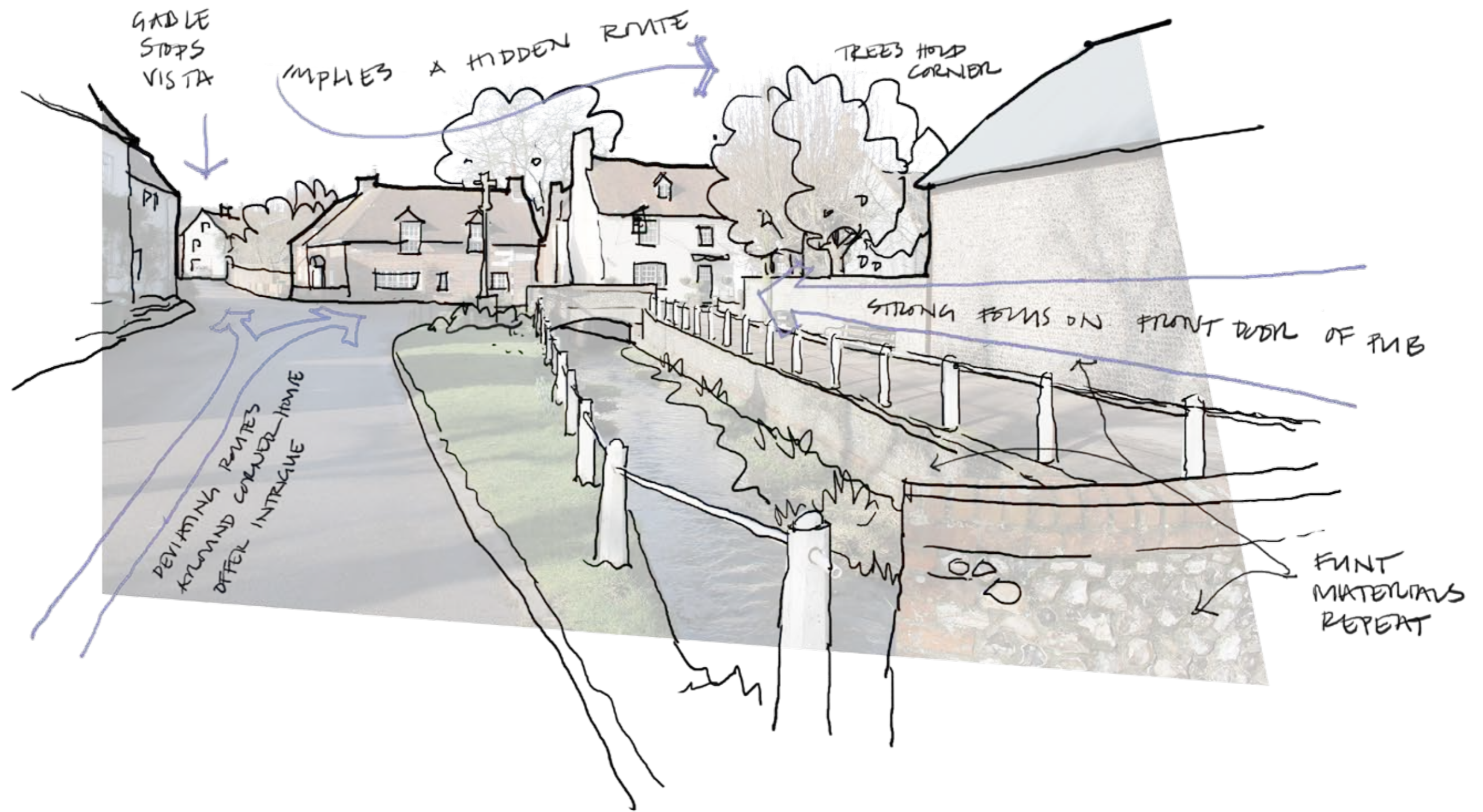


1

Simple combination of canalised stream, narrow verge, public memorial all accompanied by a few trees create a pleasing centre to the village.

The buildings of inn and corner house that terminate the vista along the street have a restrained palette of local building materials. Note there are no street markings or signs other than the traditional fingerpost.

East Meon



Further thoughts on the essence of this distinguished street.

East Meon

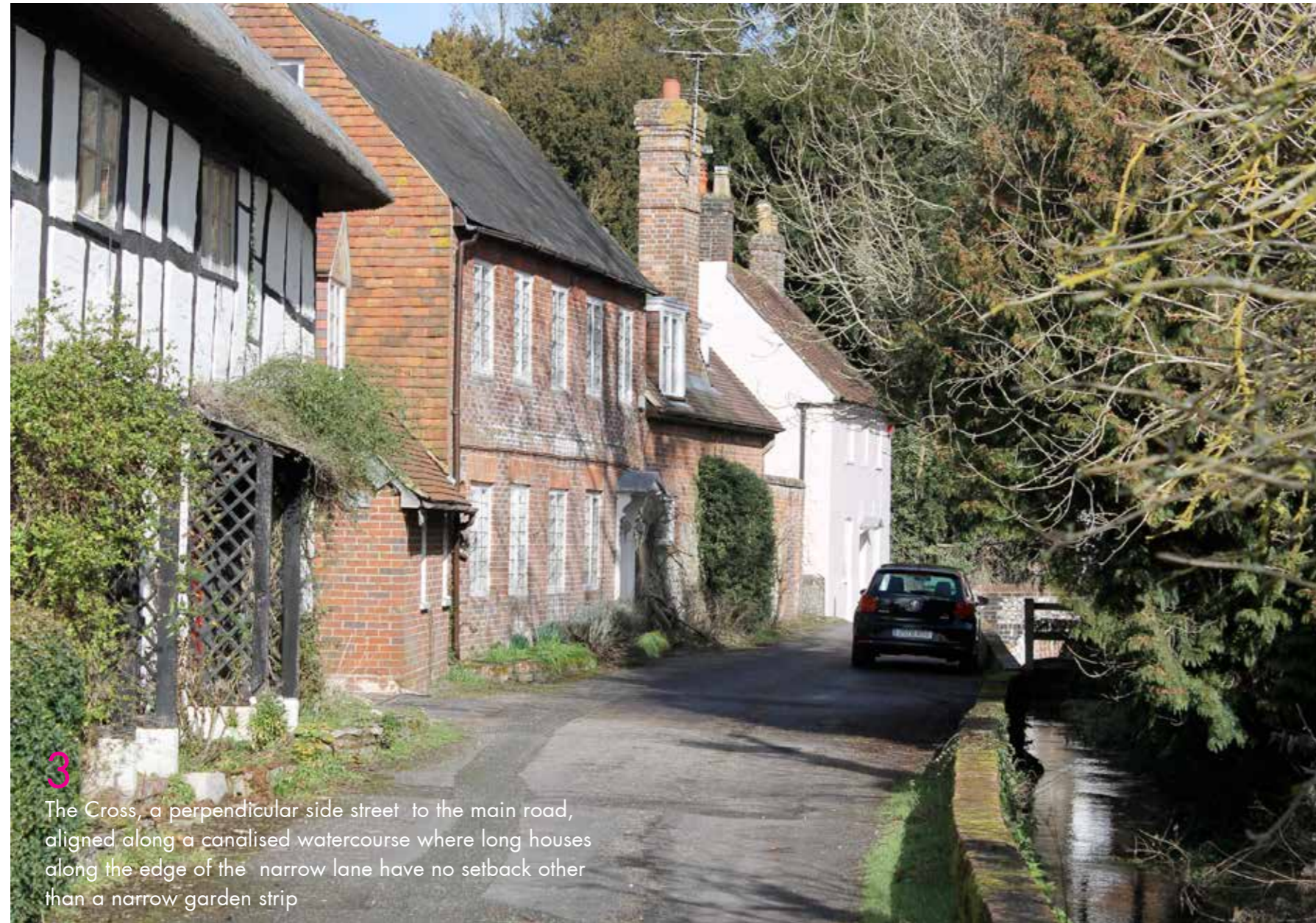
The adjoining hills rise above the skyline in many vistas across the village. Prominent use of clay tiled roofs, gabled, half hipped and hipped along with dormers with below eaves windows, painted, red brick and flint walls all in streets with no footways or kerb upstands, produces a mellow, rustic ambience.



East Meon



2
a pair of long houses with steep pitch roofs line the triangular green that branches away from the road and forms the other end of the main street. Whilst materials vary, the general form and placing of buildings does not. The relationship with the street is consistent.



3
The Cross, a perpendicular side street to the main road, aligned along a canalised watercourse where long houses along the edge of the narrow lane have no setback other than a narrow garden strip

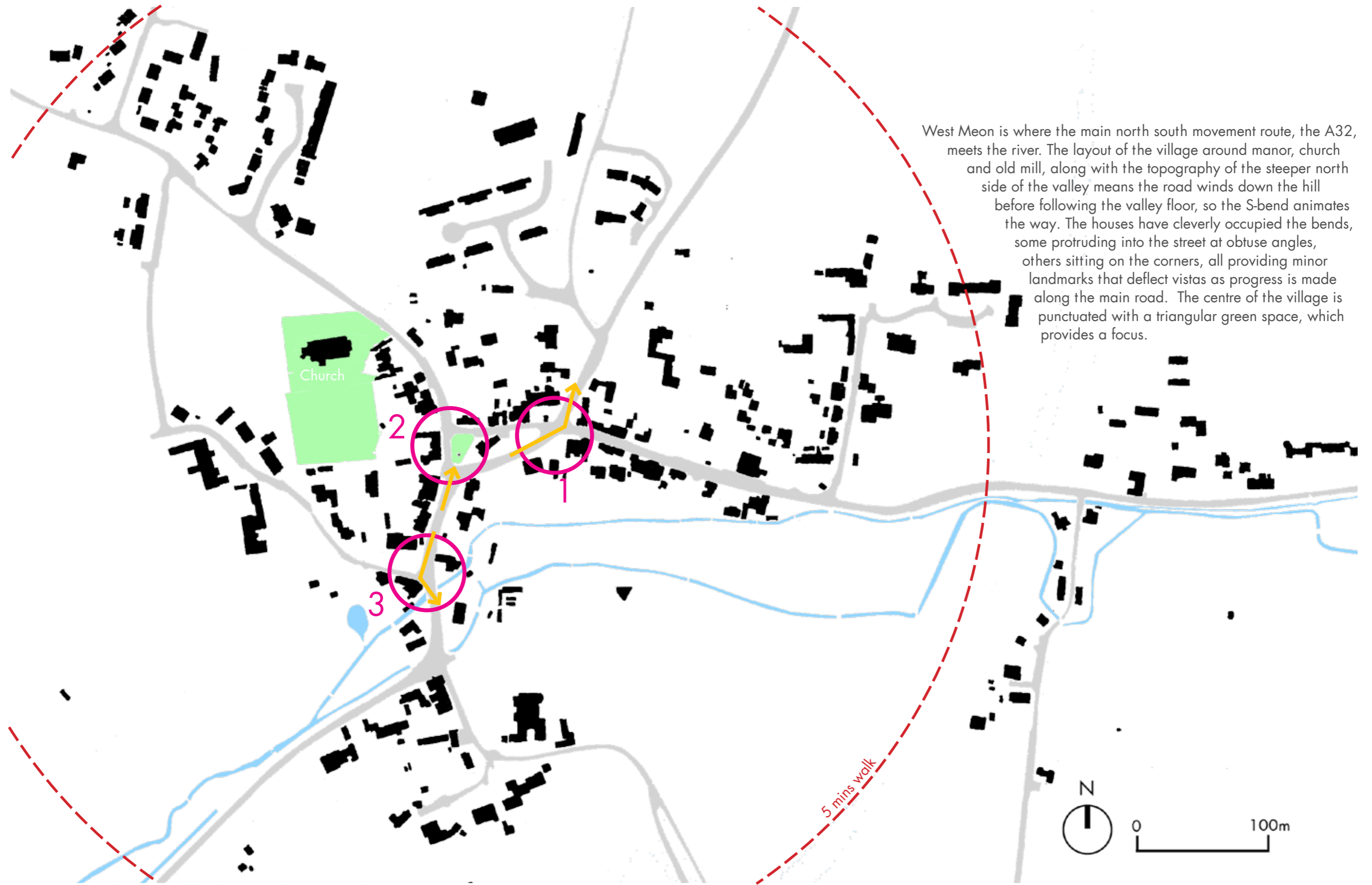


Buildings front directly onto the street.

Key lessons

- vista to landmark is subservient to main street
- termination of vistas by modest landmark buildings
- watercourses controlled with walls within main streets
- hierarchy of dwellings with manor in grounds, larger merchant house on main street, single cottages close together and finally terraces
- paved street both sides of stream in centre, one side when further out
- narrow sliver of grass space still implies a public green

West Meon - distorted linear

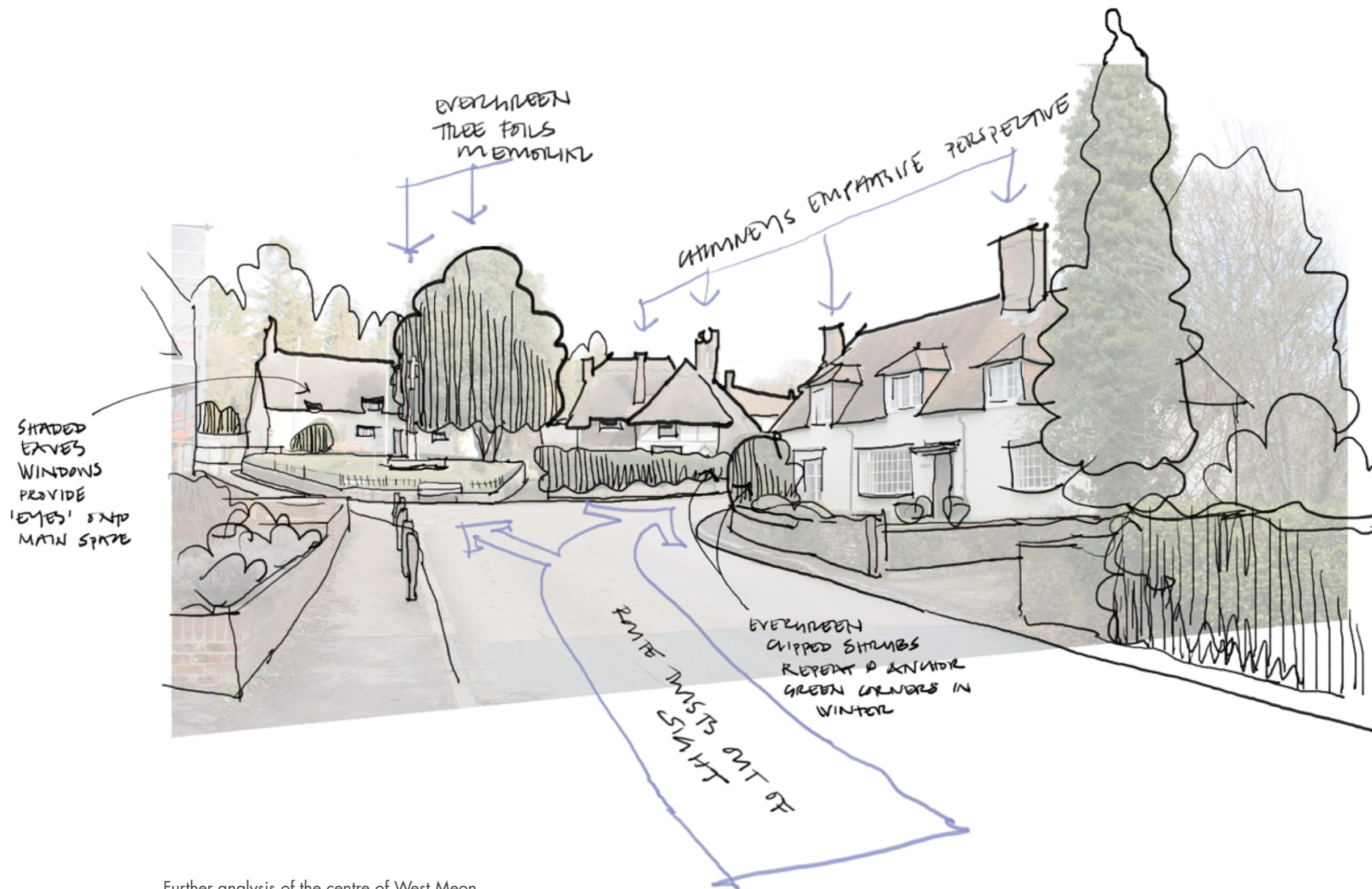


West Meon is where the main north south movement route, the A32, meets the river. The layout of the village around manor, church and old mill, along with the topography of the steeper north side of the valley means the road winds down the hill before following the valley floor, so the S-bend animates the way. The houses have cleverly occupied the bends, some protruding into the street at obtuse angles, others sitting on the corners, all providing minor landmarks that deflect vistas as progress is made along the main road. The centre of the village is punctuated with a triangular green space, which provides a focus.



The A32 rises up the hill against the corner cottage that tucks into the ground against the slope. The architectural form of the buildings often reflects the time when they were built. The corner cottage is probably the oldest building in the group and appears to 'grow' from the landscape (although the A32 is probably wider than it was originally). The house on the left is more recent (probably Edwardian) and 'surveys' its landscape, overlooking the junction.

West Meon



Further analysis of the centre of West Meon ...

West Meon

Street/road scale is important in place-making, but so is enclosure of the street by hedges, walls or buildings.



West Meon



Buildings press up against the street and deflect the road around them, creating spaces off them that lead to lanes and alleys.



1



Key lessons

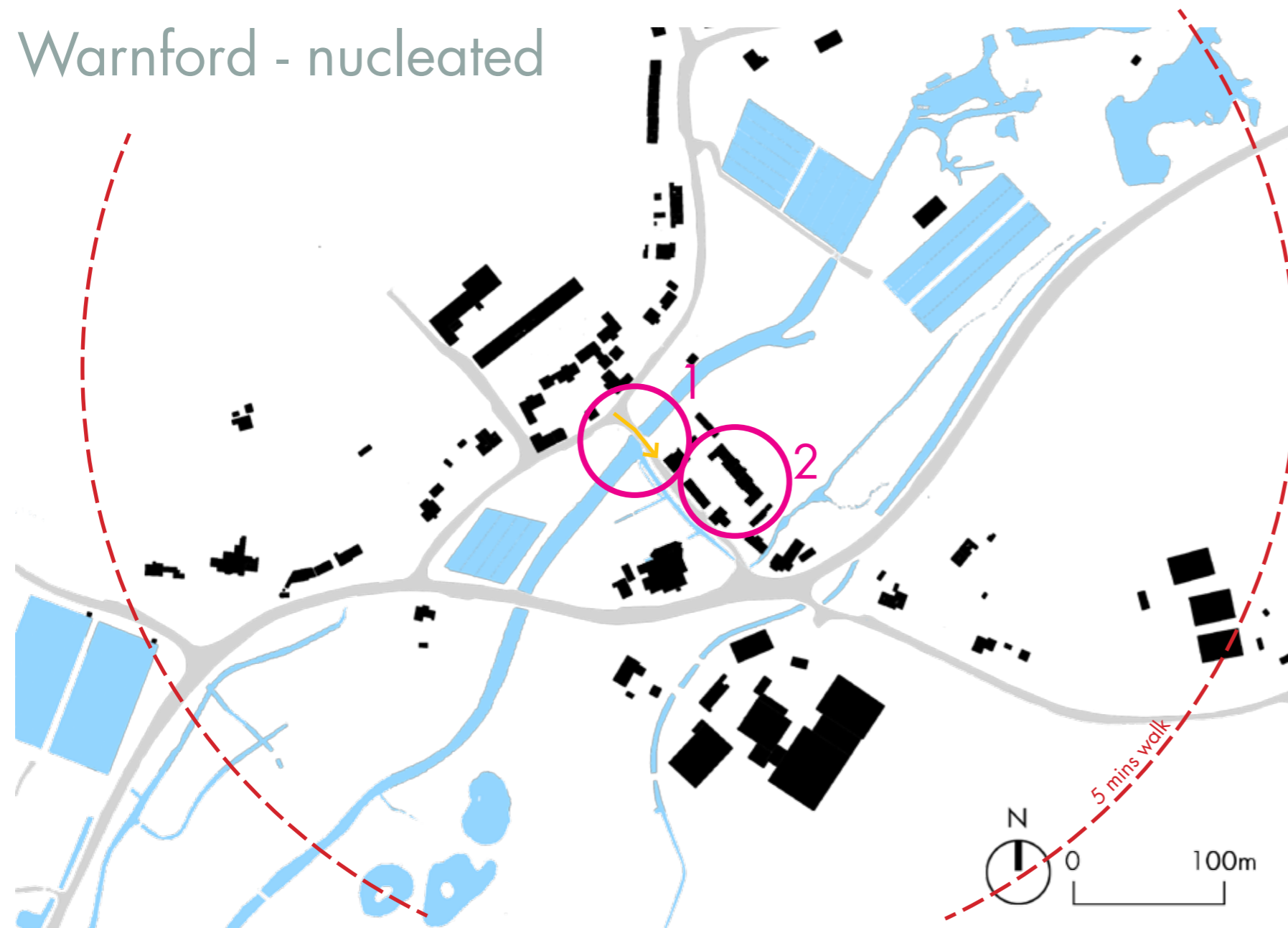
- use buildings of different from to hold important corners
- repeat materials in adjoining buildings and overlap along a row
- use abruptly placed buildings to deflect bend in road and adjust route

These cottages create a strong impression due to the common use of materials from walls in brick to render at the farthest and from thatch to clay tiled roofs. The overlap creates a harmonious combination that borrows from each other and maintains balance in the street scene.

The cottage position tight against the back of the highway and the combination of half hipped gable end roof and stepped positioning of windows produces a strong feature that 'holds' the street corner well. The simple mullions, the shadow of the thatch overhang, eyebrow window and hints at older timber frame add to the charm of this set of buildings. These features show that the building has been altered many times in its history; there is depth to the architectural story for those who can read it.

The adjoining cottage in matching brick has similarly steep pitch roof angles and full hips. The dormers sit at the same height. The farthest cottage has contrasting render but similar clay roof tiles. The cart entrance bridges the gap between the furthest buildings and again shares materials and colours from both.

Warnford - nucleated



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Key lessons

- open watercourse on lane connects village to river
- ford alongside bridge
- farmyard glimpse views into communal spaces



Warnford village is a watercress farm centre as the chalk river valley widens and flattens here and becomes fordable. A plethora of working farms and cottages lines the streets with the farms on the valley sides and the island sites in the valley floor. There is limited public space but there are quiet side lanes off the main road.



kerbless lane with verges and watercourse. Barn to right used to enclose courtyard housing

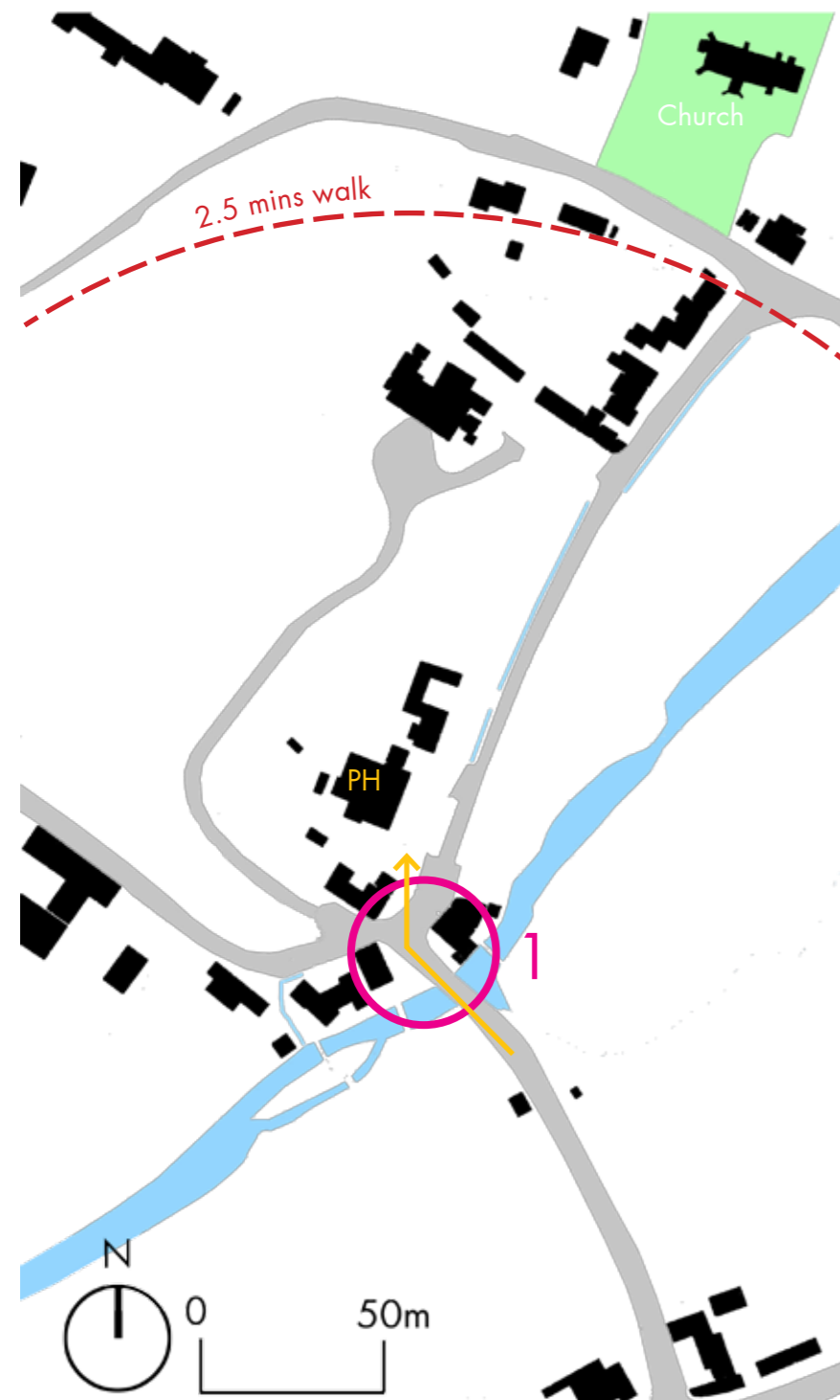


courtyard off street with several cottages and barns used as parking. The narrow entrance, widening out to the farmyard add drama to these modest buildings.



The ford and bridge on the side road by Lippen Lane where water, homes and lanes work closely together. This integration between 'architecture' and 'landscape' is a direct reminder of the forces that created the settlement and it has great distinctiveness.

Exton



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Mix of housing types and ages, with terraces, steeply pitched red tile (presumably previously thatched) alongside a few slate roofs. Sloping and hipped dormers, provide articulation and differentiation. Occasional rendered buildings provide contrast with the predominantly warm reds and browns of clay materials. Terraces mix setbacks with a variety of front garden depths. Low flint walls with brick pillars, copings and details form garden boundaries. Lanes are unkerbed or kerbed with setts set low.

Exton is a small settlement adjoining Corhampton set around its manor and church, the buildings revealing the original social hierarchy of the village. Its simple composition of individual but tightly positioned houses clustered around the river crossing of the Meon and its short terraces of cottages rendered and tile hung in the local red clay tiles create a strong impression pressed up against the flood plain. Gardens and small orchards onto the river, meadows and small watercourses passing under thresholds, demonstrate how the rich meadow landscape continues to be an attraction.

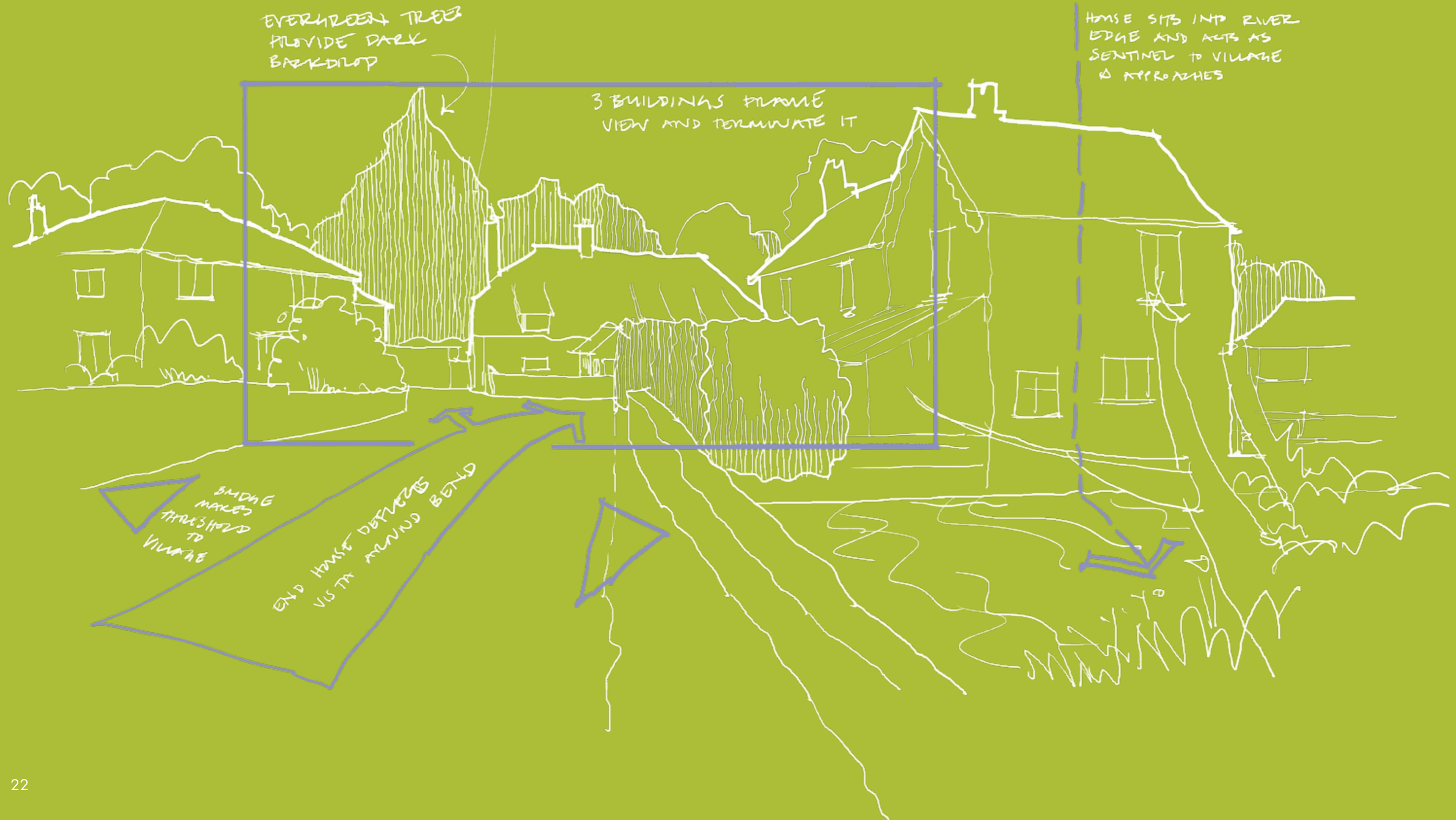
Key lessons

- tight cluster of several individual houses at bridge crossing of river provide a mix of vistas
- parking spaces informally sit within junction space



Gardens borrow addition of uncultivated meadow on other side of river using simple footbridge access. Gardens 'borrow' the landscape of uncultivated meadow on the other side of the river using simple footbridges. The relationship with water is used to great advantage.

Exton

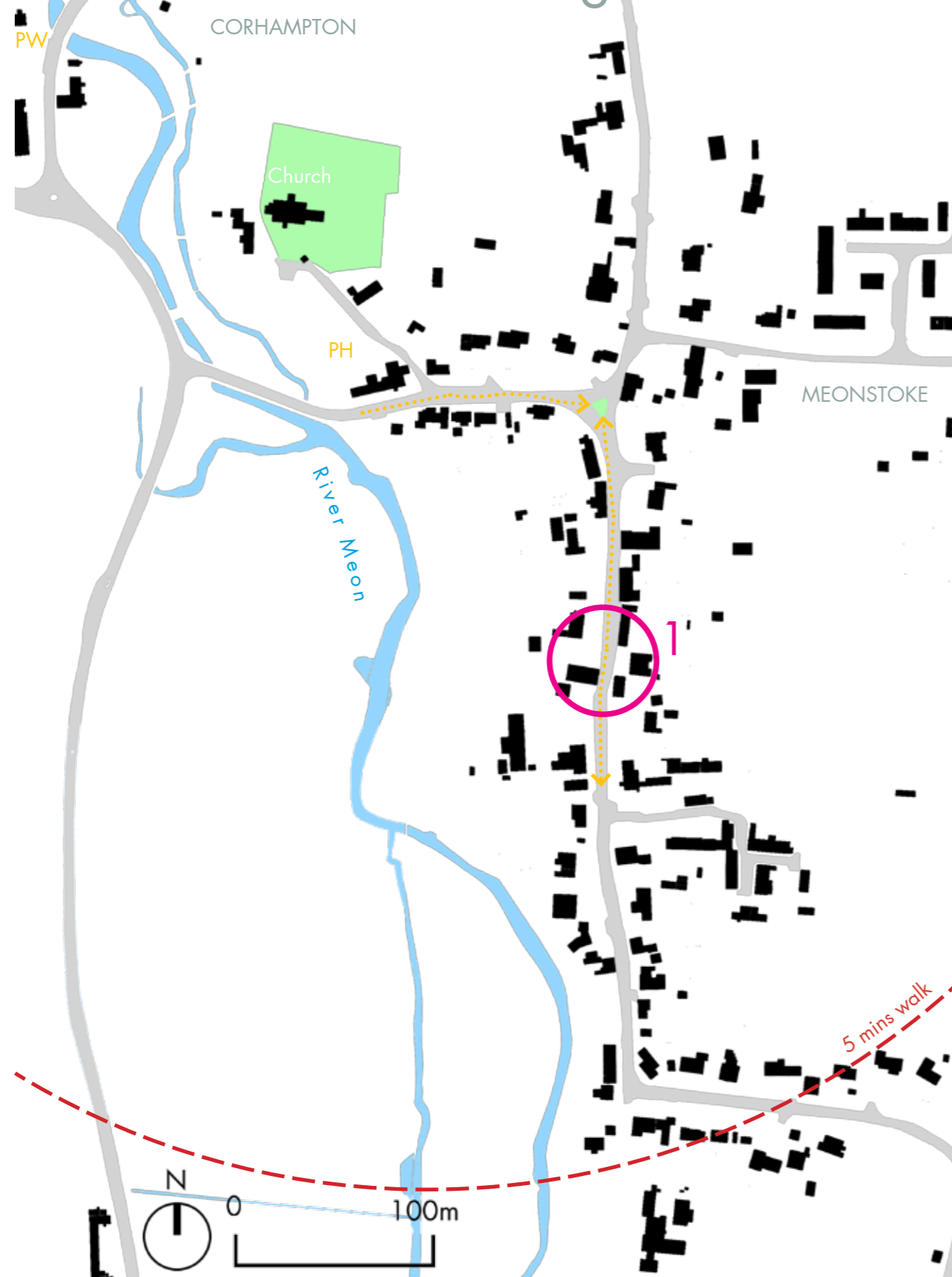


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One and half storey cottage with steeply pitched roof (probably originally thatched) acts as corner turner. Prominent gabled porch adds to its feature as a stop end to the approach into the village but is clearly a later addition. The low curved flint and brick walls emphasise the dynamic quality of this space.

Meonstoke - linear village



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A linear village situated on the shoulder of the valley sides above the river floodplain, with church and pub on lower slopes. Focal points include the small triangular green with mature oak that occupies the small scale road junction and the large historic barn that protrudes into the street at right angles half way along the High Street. The alignment of long houses on the upper side of the street at the edge of the road provide a strong counterpoint to the segments of street with garden frontages and set back houses. The whole main street character is influenced by the set back distance and angle of houses to the street.

Meonstoke almost merges with adjoining Corhampton with a few small fields between.

Key lessons

- long houses against street provide strong enclosure to lane
- mix of setbacks - gardens and no setbacks opposite
- contrast of barn gable end interrupts straightness of lane
- single bay windows punctuates and overlooks lane
- stepped doorways project curtilage into street

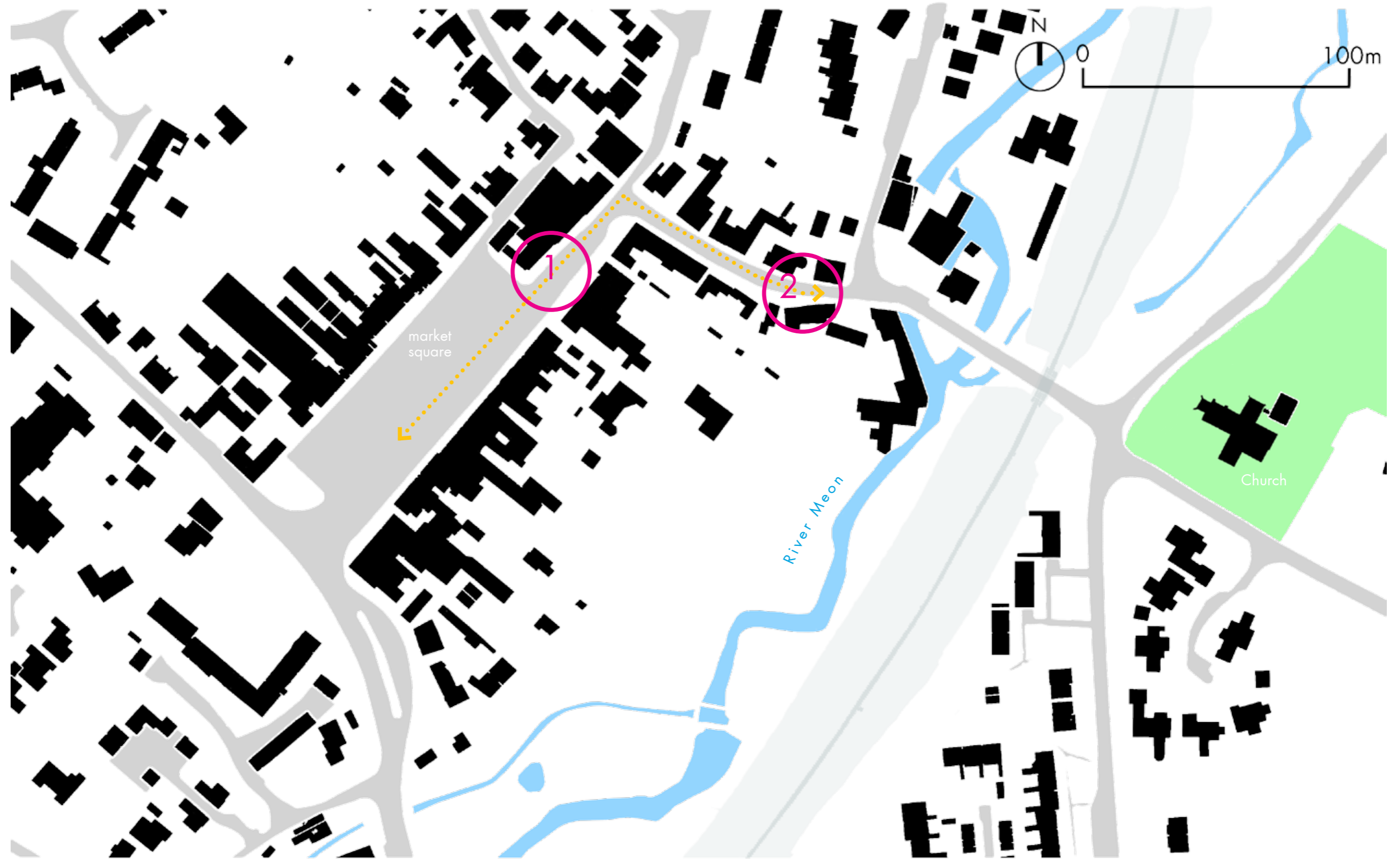
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Meonstoke



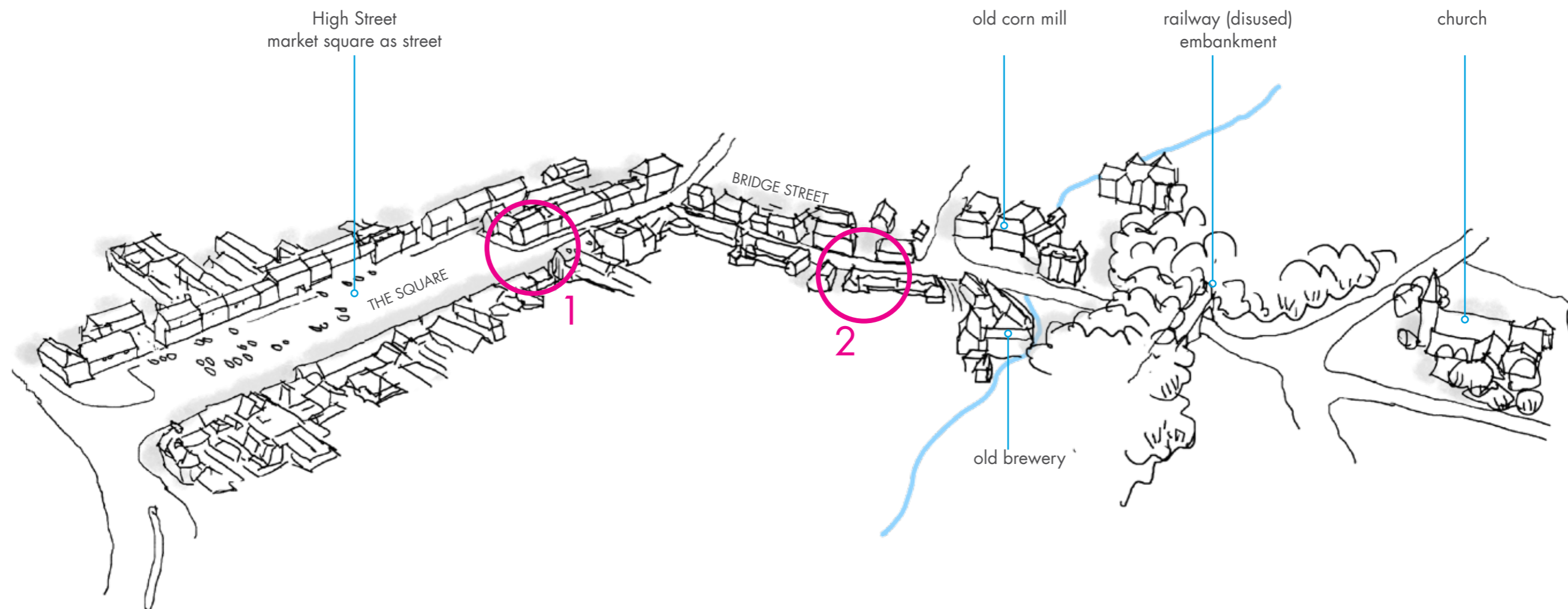
Long houses of varying materials and roof types line the edge of the main street (centre one was formerly The Malthouse pub) with narrow footway. Bay window provides outlook up and down the street.

Wickham - market street



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The form of the village is a reflection of its landscape and the buildings' economic and social organisation; the market square, the corn mill, the brewery and the church are all important. Later the railway came, and its disused embankment now introduces significant vegetation into the village.



Key lessons

- square linked by right angled street to mill and river
- terraces used to cascade down hill with footway above road
- large square abruptly changes to narrow street

Wickham



The scale of the market square is a contrast to Bridge Street and other roads. Cars have replaced cattle and agricultural produce, but this is still an impressive space.



A terrace of houses cascades down Bridge Street to the river. The higher footway level and painted rails emphasise the drop and minimises the scale of the hard surfacing. The gable dormer on the end house interrupts the vista.

nearby village/town studies

Hambleton



A short High Street on a long straight street connected perpendicularly to a miniature market square leading uphill, tapering narrower as it does, to the church. Cobbled pavements line the square whose higher status houses are marked by ground floor bays.



The aerial photo reveals that this is a crossroads town centre formed by enlarged farm accessed on the main street.



Key lessons

- main streets in the hierarchy has higher status houses depicted as much by bay windows as by size of building.
- modest barns and workshops face onto main streets spaces
- no setbacks to buildings in central core - emphasising street enclosure

Southwick

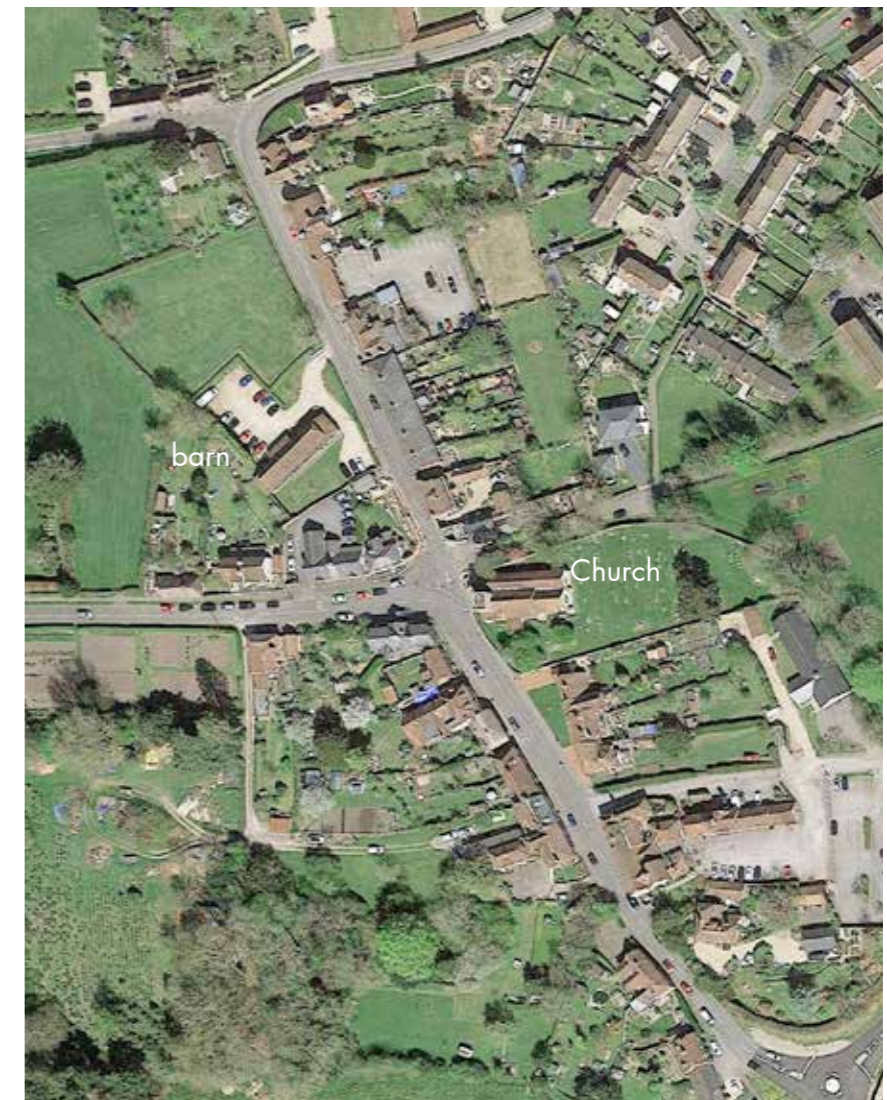
An estate village of the Southwick estate, the village remains in private ownership though the historic main house is now part of adjoining MOD facility. Simple T junction focuses on church with perpendicular street providing interest too with its small triangular green and terraces aligned behind it so views of church are maintained. The red front doors mark the estate owned houses. The feature charred weather-boarded barn in own plot off the main street is used as business premises.

Key lessons

- angled terraces used to line green that acts as foil to landmark building



Terraces form both sides of the approach streets to the church. The angle back of the right terrace reveals the church and provides opportunity for a small triangular green that sets off the church and provides a welcome public space.



The wider streets are the result of a deliberate 'plan' rather than organic growth.



Bishop's Waltham

Bishop's Waltham is a town of 6,500 people in the adjoining Hamble valley. For much of its early history it was a large village, and like much of the Meon Valley, in the demesne of the bishops of Winchester. Its elevation came through its being chosen in the 12th century as location for a bishop's palace and it 'only' accomplished town status for fairs in the 17C. The medieval High Street and market square, St George's Square, speak of a large village with its intimate scale retained.

Key lessons

- formal main street acts as foil to more informal back lanes
- punctuate frontages with gables and corners with different types



Bishop's Waltham



Small scale town High Street terminating in the market square. Mix of materials including red brick and blue leaders seen at East Meon as well as more modest render. Gabled roof of inn at end of street acts as landmark without pretensions.

Bishop's Waltham



Mix of uses integrated into the main streets including old forge (above) and malt house with upper store door (bottom right). These economic uses instilled a variety into the street scene without resulting in a jarring appearance.



contemporary buildings



New buildings

There are few new residential dwellings in the valley. Notable contemporary designs show interpretations of local vernacular in modern materials and construction.



top: Cott Lane near Soberton with PV roof panels and timber weatherboarding.
bottom: new home on river at Exton with an uncomfortable mix of window types. Note the leaf under the driveway covered with removable timber slats`.



Car parking barn in side road plot with local materials with built in store and roof space use. The use of wheely bins without place to store them does compromise the clarity of the space.

Key lessons

- simple building forms with local materials
- place for wheely bins

common materials and features

external walls



walls



The materials, and to an extent the details, are a reflection of what is locally available.

common materials and features

roofs



windows and doors



