



Neighbourhood Area
context analysis

03

ELM COTTAGE

3. Neighbourhood Area context analysis

This chapter describes the local context and key characteristics of Penn Parish related to history, built environment, streetscape, landscape and locally important views.

3.1 Rural context

Penn Parish is nestled between the towns of Amersham and Beaconsfield. It is unusually structured in that the villages lie in a ring round the edge with open countryside at the core. This means its land and woodland face particular pressures, as amenity space.

Typically for land in the Chilterns AONB, much of this land is actively farmed. The mixture of small and large fields, often divided by large and ancient hedges, is also a key influence on landscape character of Penn.

The Chilterns Building Design Guide states that nearly all settlements in the Chilterns can be found in four types of location. These include: in valley bottoms, at the foot of the scarpface, on the ridges and plateau (where they are often associated with common land) and along the north bank of the River Thames. Penn Parish is on the ridges and plateau and indeed is heavily characterised by its village commons. These are located in Winchmore Hill, Penn Street, Penn and Knotty Green.

Winchmore Hill and Penn Street are the most rural of the settlements. Penn village shares a boundary with Tylers Green which is a village in its own right and a suburb of Wycombe. Knotty Green shares a boundary



Figure 09: Housing in Winchmore Hill

Figure 10: Houses in Penn

Figure 11: Green belt land in the parish

with Beaconsfield and is a village with a more suburban feel. Forty Green's boundary is with Knotty Green and it is smaller and far more rural in character than its neighbour.

The five villages are well connected by public footpaths and roads which allow for these communities to integrate. The footpaths are generally used recreationally and are not used to move between communities in 'everyday life'. The settlements are geographically separated by the rolling hills of the Chilterns and Green Belt. This helps give the area its rural feel despite being so close to the towns of Beaconsfield and Amersham.



Figure 12: View of the Green Belt and ancient woodland from the edge of Penn



Figure 13: Low scale housing from Winchmore Hill common

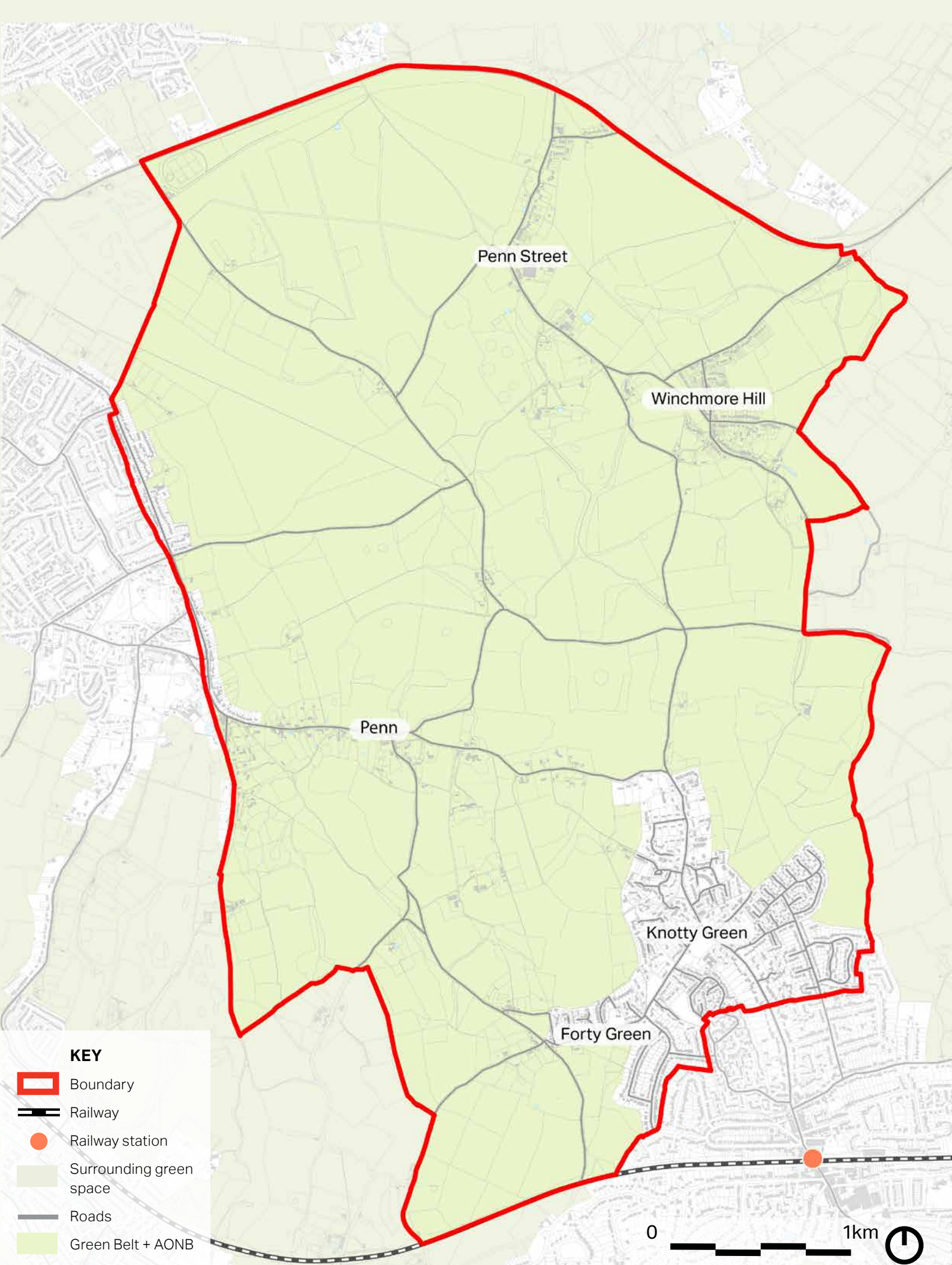


Figure 14: Map showing Penn Parish and the settlements within it.

3.2 Green infrastructure and views

The Chilterns is a landscape that is shaped by chalk hillsides, characterful villages, and dense woodland. As can be seen by the contour lines on the figure below, the undulating topography allows for several spots which offer stunning views of the countryside and the villages.

Much of the woodland in the parish is a combination of ancient and semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland. Ancient woodlands are the richest and most complex terrestrial habitat in the UK, and they are home to more threatened species than any other. Given this, they should be respected and preserved by any future development. Much of the woodland includes footpaths which allows people to benefit from the natural beauty that surrounds them in their parish. There are also areas of land where there are woodland grant schemes which create incentives for farmers and landowners to invest in woodland creation as a mitigation measure for climate change.

In addition, there are also ancient orchards scattered throughout the parish, and allotments in Winchmore Hill, Beacon Hill in Penn and Knotty Green.



Figure 15: Open space to the east of Knotty Green

Figure 16: View from Penn into open Green Belt farmland

Figure 17: One of the many scenic footpaths in the parish from Winchmore Hill towards Penn Street

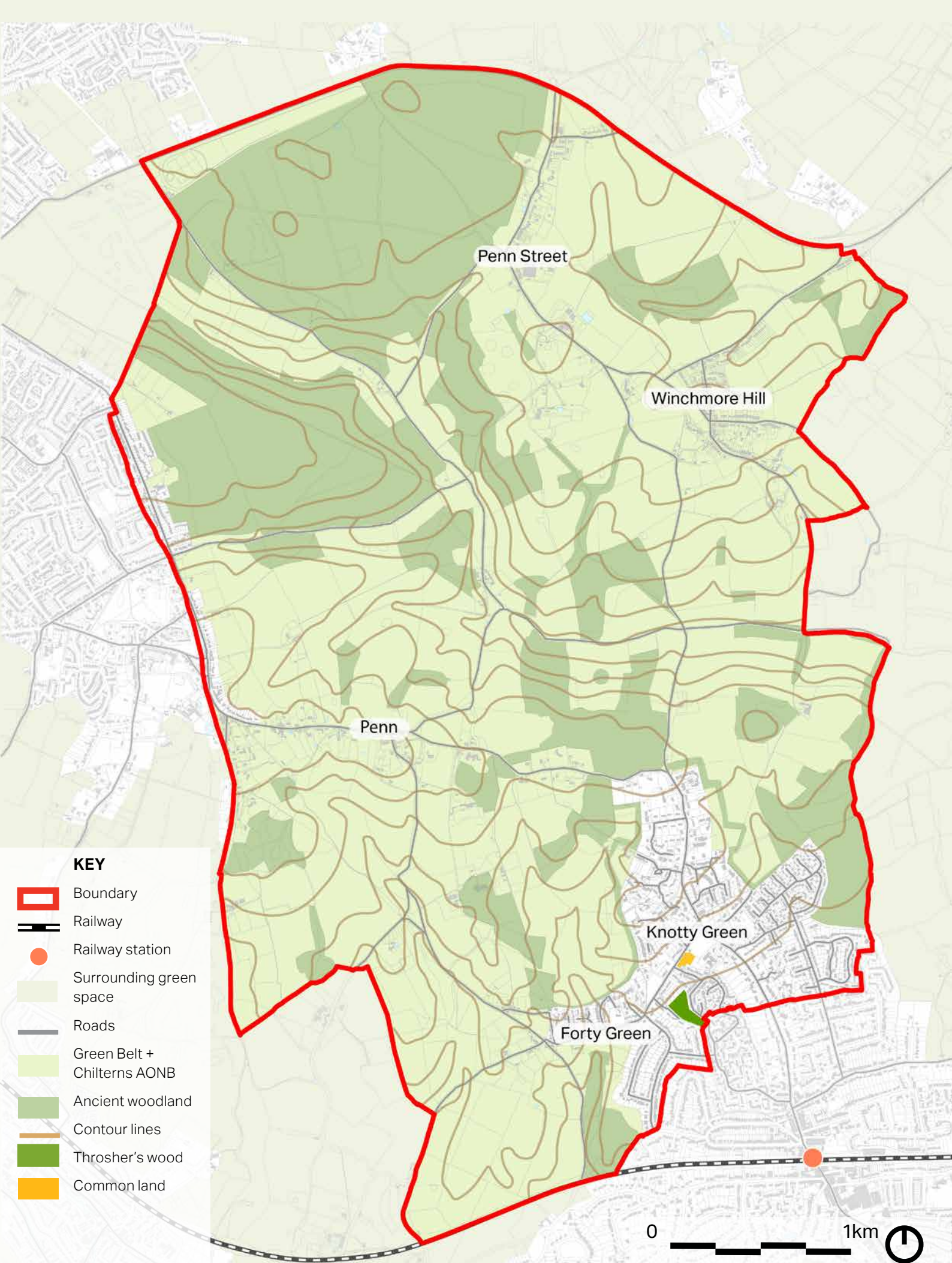


Figure 18: Map showing the green infrastructure assets within and surrounding Penn Parish.

3.3 Movement networks

The A404 provides direct access to the parish and Amersham and via the motorway network. Gravelly Way and Penn Street both have junctions with the A404 as does School Lane in Penn Street. Church Road and Common Wood Lane provide the west to east connectivity while the B474 rises to the south in Beaconsfield heading north into the parish. The latter provides the parish with an excellent link to the Beaconsfield railway station where there are further connections to London and Birmingham.

Most of the buildings in the parish are set along the primary, secondary and tertiary roads, with the few examples of cul-de-sacs being mainly in the more suburban areas of Knotty Green and Forty Green (in the south of the parish) with a few located in Penn village, Penn Street and Winchmore Hill. Smaller roads include: Gravelly Way, Whielden Lane, Fagnall Lane, Clay Street, Common Wood Lane and Church Road which link the villages. Many of the streets in the parish are single carriageways and are bordered by vegetation (trees and hedgerows) and residential uses.



Figure 19: One of the many cross country footpaths in the parish



Figure 20: Penn Street, cutting through the ancient woodland in the north of the parish.

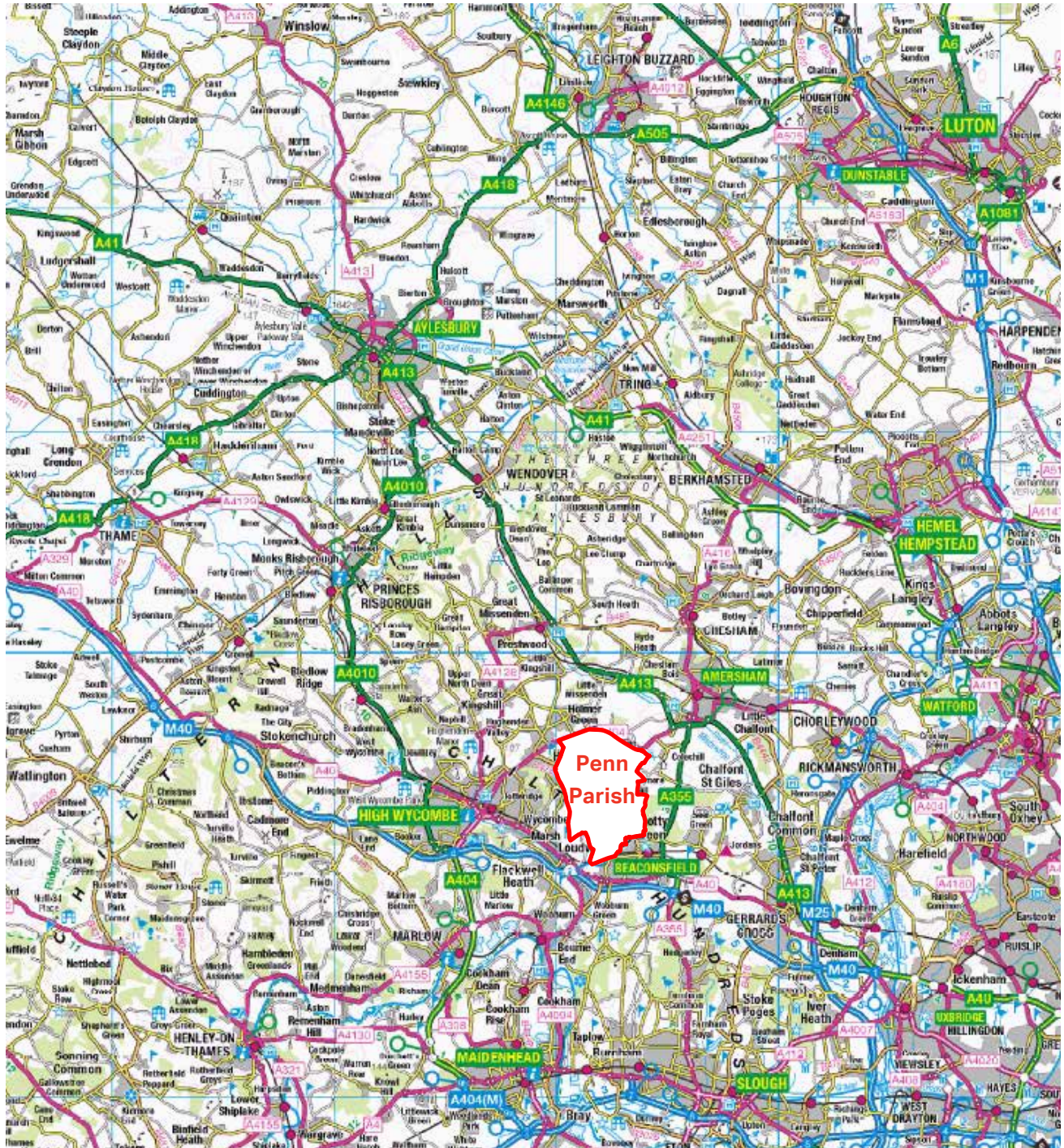


Figure 21: Penn wider connections, map using OS mapping

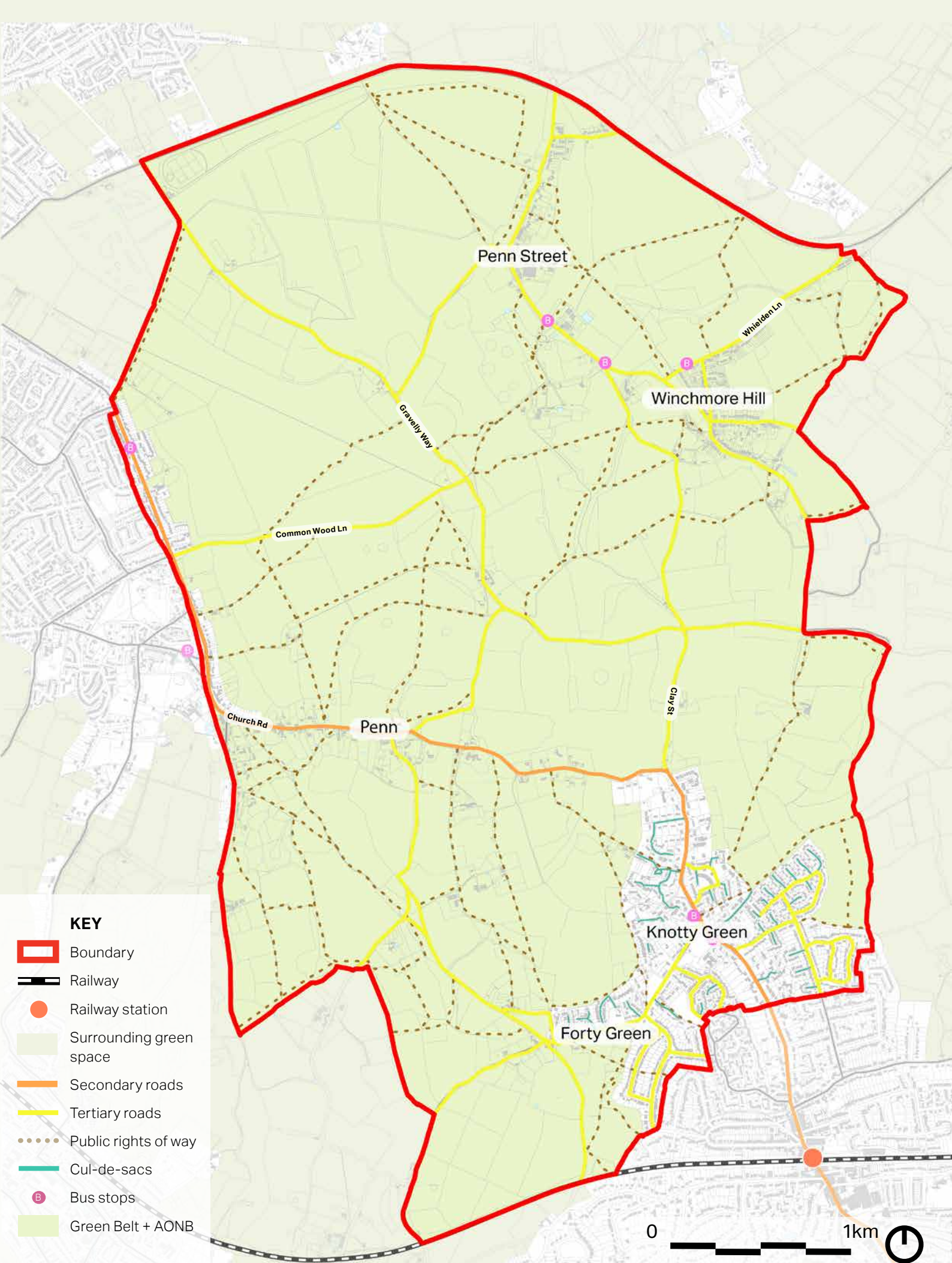


Figure 22: Map showing the movement network within and surrounding Penn Parish.

3.4 Heritage

The parish has 77 listed buildings. The majority of these are grade II listed with three grade II* buildings. The only grade I listed building is the Holy Trinity Church which is in Penn village.

Winchmore Hill, located in the north east of the parish, developed around a common. The village has 4 Grade II listed buildings.

Penn Street is in the north of the parish and has a very linear feel to it. It also has a common as well as ancient woodland. There are 16 listed buildings in the area, the most significant of which being the Church of Holy Trinity which is Grade II* listed (Figure 23).

Penn, in the centre of the parish also has a linear feel to it and gets more rural as it moves south and eastwards towards Knotty Green. Penn has over 30 listed buildings including both a Grade II* and Grade I listed buildings, thus highlighting the historic relevance of the area.

Knotty Green in the south of the parish has a more suburban feel to it. It has 5 listed buildings.

Forty Green which has a rural feel to it and just one listed building which is the Hill Farm Cottage and Barn.

As well as this there are 2 Conservation Areas within the parish. One in Penn Street and one in Penn. This shows that the areas have rich history which must be protected from any future development. Some of the historic buildings are listed below:

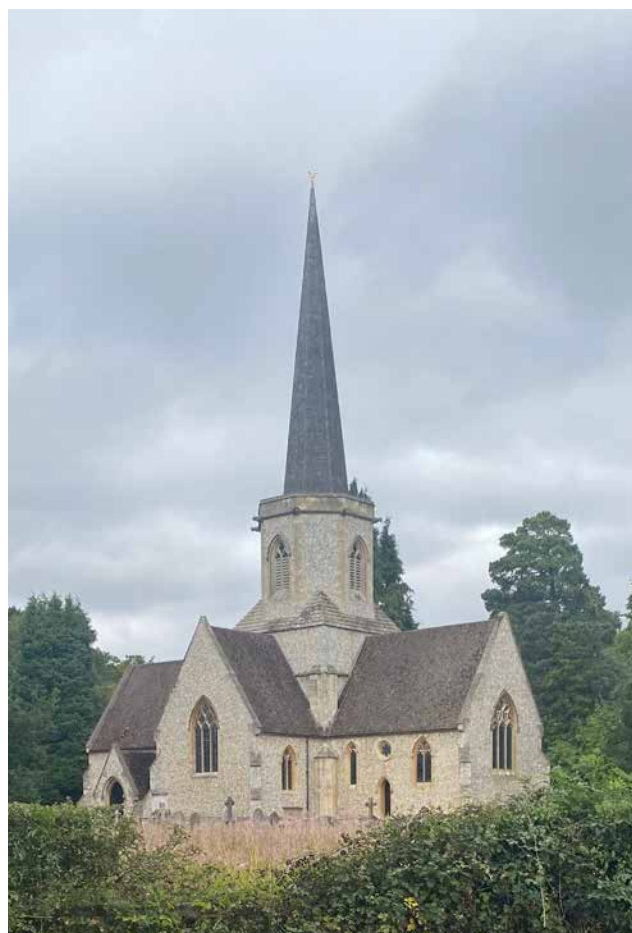


Figure 23: Holy Trinity Church, Penn Street



Figure 24: Listed building 'Holy Mount'

Listed Buildings (examples)

Church of the Holy Trinity, grade II*. 1849 by Benjamin Ferrey. Flint with stone dressings. Some local sarsen or greyweather, some imported limestone. Decorated style. Cruciform plan with central octagon tower above square stage and capped by shingled spire. Concrete tiled roofs (see Figure 23).

April Cottage, grade II. C17 origin: front elevation C18 and early C19. Two storeys, red brick with purple headers. Two 3-light leaded casements. Brick eaves cornice. Old tile roof with ridge at higher level on right. Two stacks. Basically, timber framed.

Holy Mount, grade II*. C20 built of roughcast with stone dressings, tarred plinths and green slate roof with 2 roughcast chimneystacks. Two storeys; 3 windows (see Figure 24).

Church Cottages, grade II. C18 refronting of C17 timber framed structure with exposed timbers at rear and internally. Flint rubble, red brick dressings, old tile roof; 2 storey, 5 bays. Three right hand bays with paired wood mullions casements; 2 left bays with modern 3 light casements.

Hill Farm Cottage, grade II. Late C16 or early C17. Two storeys. Timber frame, brick infill. Old tile roof with 2 gables. Letter L-plan; 2 casements (see Figure 25).

Fagnall Farmhouse, grade II. C17. Two storeys. Timber frame, brick ground floor and infill to first floor, 3 casements. Old tile roof (see Figure 26).



Figure 25: Listed building 'Hill Farm Cottage'



Figure 26: Listed building 'Fagnall Farmhouse'

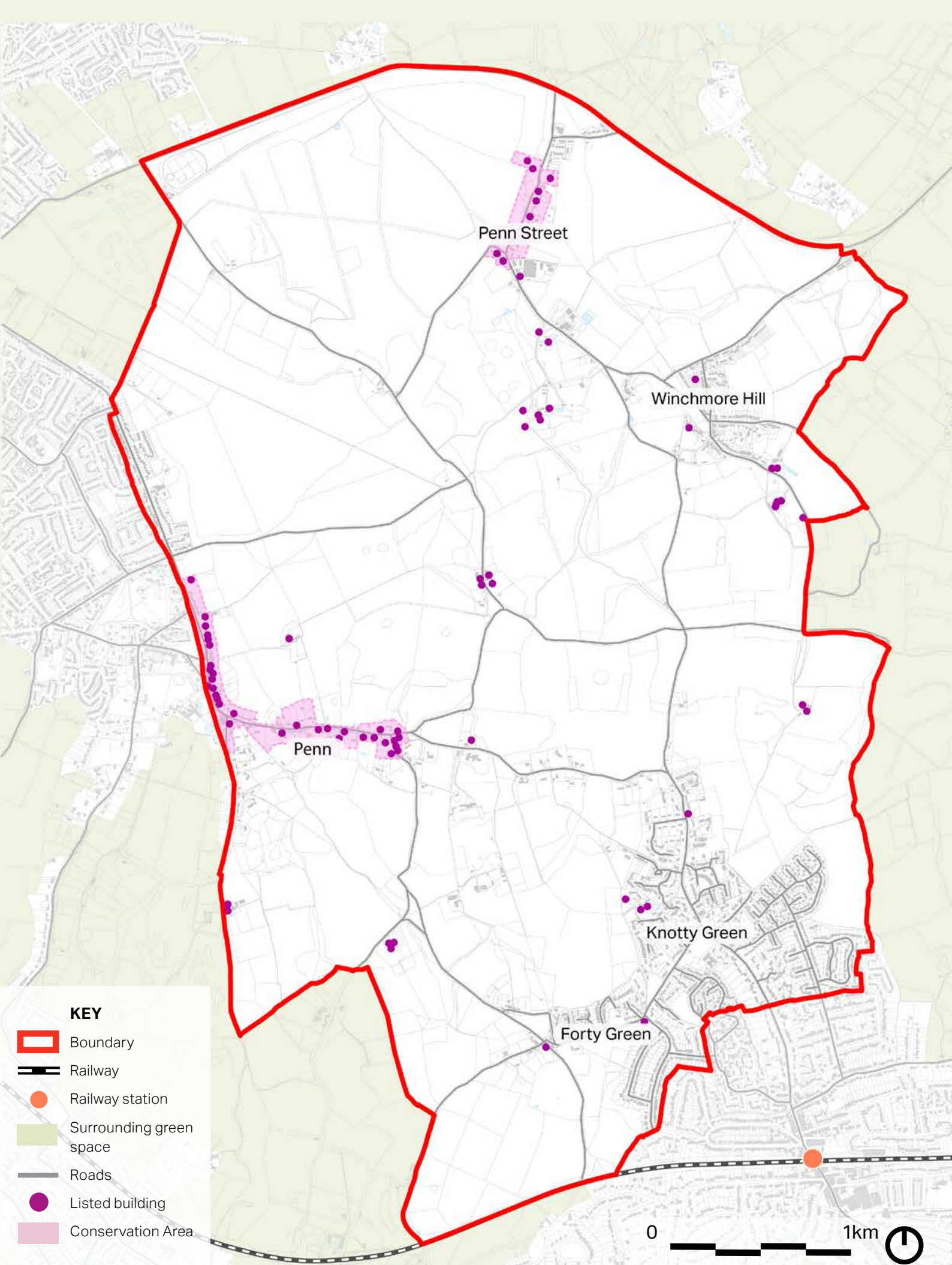


Figure 27: Map showing the historic assets within and surrounding Penn Parish.