



**Settlement Name: Mendlesham**

**District: Mid Suffolk**

**Settlement Description:**

Mendlesham lies about 5 miles north-east of Stowmarket and to the west of the A140, a road which runs along the line of the Roman Pye Road. The settlement is situated on the 'High Suffolk' claylands, on slightly higher ground between two tributaries of the River Dove. There is a conservation area which encompasses the church and all but one of the listed buildings within the settlement.

**Summary History:**

The earliest evidence within the settlement is a find of a Neolithic stone axe. A Roman quernstone was found near to the church, and a number of Roman coins, metalwork and pottery sherds have come from outside the settlement area just to the south-east. All of which suggests that the area was occupied during this period.

A Saxon bronze wrist clasp was found just to the east of Church Farm, suggesting later inhabitation, and the settlement was definitely in existence by the late eleventh century, as it is recorded in Domesday Book as Mundlesham (meaning the homestead or village of 'Myndel'). This relates that the manor was held by Burghard in 1066, but that by 1086 it had passed to King William. It is recorded in 1086 to have comprised of 45 households, and to have had a church.

The grade I Church of St Mary is located at the east end of the historic core and dates from the 13th century, with 14th and 15th century additions. It was restored in the mid to late 19th century. There are a number of listed houses which date from, or had their origins in, the 15th century, but other listed buildings in the historic core date mostly 16th or 17th century, suggesting a rebuilding or expansion of the settlement in this period. The settlement is recorded as having a market, the location of which has been suggested to be the area between Old Market Street and Front Street. This area was certainly originally a market place or a green, but has been built up since at least the medieval period.

There are several farmhouses of varying dates located outside the settlement area, including Elms Farmhouse, which is listed grade II\*, and dates from the 15th century. To the east of the settlement is Mendlesham Manor a farmhouse of sixteenth and seventeenth century construction, but which stands on the site of the historic manor house.

There was evidence of industry within the settlement, including a post-medieval mill located which is located just within the settlement area on Mill Road, but has since been demolished.

The settlement expanded in the twentieth century, first in the 1950s to mid-1970s to the north of the historic core, but later from the mid-1980s to 2000, housing was constructed to the south.

**Historic Environment Designations**

**Conservation Area:**

Mendlesham Conservation Area

**Listed Buildings: within the village**

Grade I:  Grade II\*:  Grade II:

**Scheduled Monument:**

None



#### Registered Park and Garden:

None

### Landscape Designations

#### AONB:

None

#### SSSI:

None

#### SAC:

None

#### Ancient Woodland:

None

### Key Characteristics

#### Settlement:

*Note: The key positive features or qualities, which if lost or changed there would be a significant consequence for the current character.*

The historic core is located along two parallel east-west streets with a church at the eastern end and a moated manor further to the east. To the south and west are several farm complexes with areas of modern development on the northern and southern edges of the settlement. The parallel streets appear to enclose the location of the historic market place near to the church.

This settlement plan is relatively well intact, as is the relationship between the church and the site of the manor hall. The built form is linear in nature and set in close proximity to the road frontage. The dominant and relatively uninterrupted nature of the historic built form, and the interrelationship between these assets, both within and outside the settlement, is important to their historic character.

#### Surrounding Landscape:

*Note: The key positive features or qualities, which if lost or changed there would be a significant consequence for the current character.*

The settlement is located within a rural agricultural landscape with dispersed farmsteads, a number of which contain listed buildings. This includes the grade II\* farmhouse at Elms Farm, which has been partially divorced from its historic setting by its proximity to the immediately adjacent modern development. These surrounding farmsteads are all significant, but of particular significance is the moated complex of Mendlesham Manor to the east of the main settlement

### Key Views

*Note: The key views towards, through, across and away from the settlement*

1. View looking west from Mendlesham Manor towards the settlement. This not only emphasises the prominent



position of the church and eastern edge of the settlement but also the highly significant relationship between Church and Hall

2. View looking East from Hobbies Lane towards the settlement. The open fields between Hobbies Lane and the edge of the settlement provide an important buffer between the farm complexes to the east and north east of Mendlesham and the settlement. They also provide important views of the church.
3. Views along Front Street which emphasise the linear nature and character of the historic core
4. Views along Back Street, which also emphasise the linear character of the settlement.

## Value

*Note: Based on designation status (including setting of AONB/heritage assets, relationship of the settlement to the heritage assets), local or community interest or use (access/enjoyment & amenity value), setting for the wider settlement. Condition/rarity/quality.*

The historic core, encapsulated mainly within the conservation area, is a relatively unaltered example of a medieval settlement around a market. There is also an important surviving church and manor on the eastern side. The inter-relationship between the settlement and the manor, and the settlement and the outlying farms is relatively well preserved with only isolated areas of intrusion on the southern and northern edges. Due to this extent of survival, the settlement is therefore of high value.

## Susceptibility

*Note: The ability of the receptors (features, qualities, characteristics, condition) to accommodate the changes without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline.*

The historic core is particularly susceptible to modern infill, as this would noticeably alter its character, as the settlement has previously been relatively well protected from such incursion. Similarly the land between the church and manor is highly sensitive due to the historic inter-relationship between these two assets, which is still readily readable.

The land to the west remains open and provides not only views of the church but is also important in preserving the historic context of the settlement and its outlying farms. These were historically sited away from the settlement for practical and functional reasons, and are therefore susceptible to development which would enclose them within the settlement boundary.

## Potential Enhancement

*Note: Areas that could potentially be improved or enhanced.*

The character of the settlement has been altered by the number of historic commercial buildings becoming redundant or changing to more residential uses. A presumption in allowing sensitive commercial uses, most particularly in the form of community assets such as public houses and cafes/restaurants, would be beneficial.

## Recommendations

The open land between the church and Mendlesham Manor to the east of the settlement is highly significant and should be preserved. The land to the west of the settlement forms the agricultural setting of several farmsteads and provides long views of the church. Development within this area should seek to preserve both. There has already been large areas of development to the south and north and these areas are less sensitive although any development should seek to mitigate the impact on Elms Farm, a grade II\* building to the south of the settlement.

Settlement Plan

