

THE MORPHOLOGY OF ELSENHAM

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INTRODUCTION. (1)

The aim of this project is to discover whether Elsenham has grown up like a typical settlement as show in diagram 1.

Explanations of why the village has developed as it has, will be given.

BACKGROUND. (1a)

Elsenham is a rapidly expanding village of over 2000 people (*in 1985*).

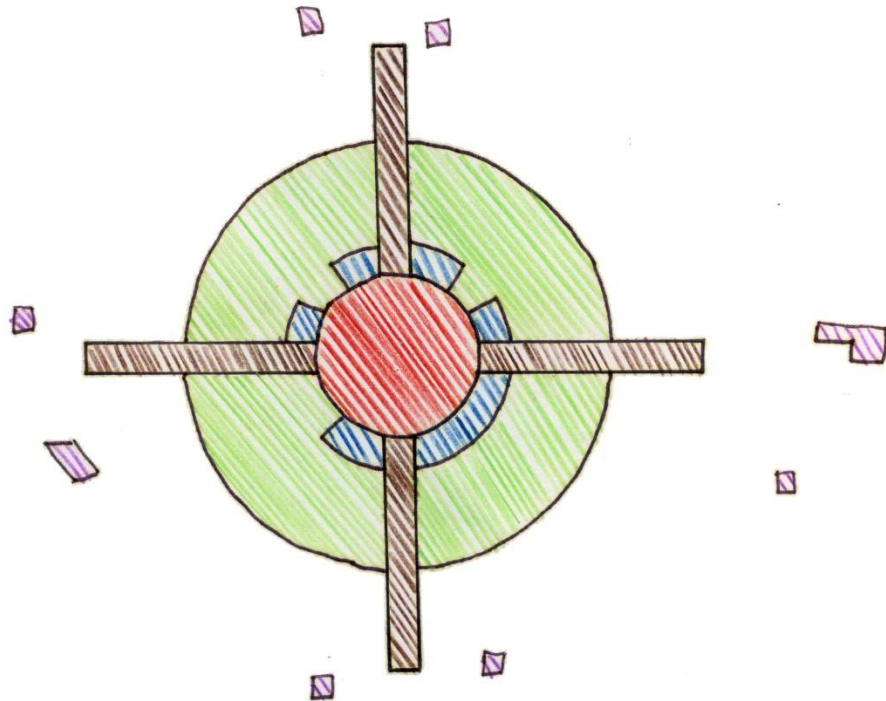
The settlement lies on relatively flat land, but the southern margin of the village falls gently down into the valley of the Stansted \Brook. To the west of the village there is the Alsa Wood which has been cut in two by the M11 motorway.

The village lies 6 miles from Bishops Stortford and 2 miles from Stansted and is situated on the B1051 road which continues through to Thaxted. Four minor roads to the North-West and South-East of the village provide further access. The main London to Cambridge railway line passes through the centre of the village.

The village is now dominated by twentieth century housing developments, which have been attracted by the presence of the railway station but some older properties still remain particularly around Elsenham Cross. There is a good range of services and facilities including: two grocers, a butcher, a post office, a confectioners and newsagents, a hardware store, a hairdresser, two garages, two public houses, a church, a community centre and a large recreation ground. There is also a modern doctor's surgery which serves Elsenham and several surrounding villages. Elsenham has its own primary school and a joint use village and school hall has been recently added to it.

A bus service to Stansted and Bishops Stortford operates six days a week. A coach service to and from London passes through Elsenham five days a week. There is a good train service to both London and Cambridge available from the village's own station. Work to electrify the line has recently begun.

Diagram 1



Original Village Core with Infills and Modifications



Accretions in close proximity to the Village Core



Ribbon Accretions in close proximity to the Village Development



Large Modern Additions



Dispersed Settlement both Old and New

ZONAL DIAGRAM

METHODS.

The main method employed by this project is the Zonal method. In this method each area of housing is analysed and put into housing types either by studying maps or the usual method as shown on page: 4 – 12.

The housing is then shown on a map on its position but it is coloured the relevant colour relevant to the colour of its type, (ELSENHAM page 13.

The zone or type of housing is in one of the following groups.

1. Original village core
2. Accretions in close proximity to the village core.
3. Ribbon developments.
4. Large modern developments.
5. Dispersed settlement both old and new.

The model that this project is based on is **Diagram 1**, “A typical settlement pattern” and it uses the zonal method. It is this which will be compared to the information gathers during the project in order to discover the findings of the project.

Map 1, a zonal model of Elsenham uses the above method together with the visual method (observation).

VISUAL METHOD OF BUILDING CLASSIFICATION

On walking around the village of Elsenham several distinct building styles are in evidence, which once studied may be used to determine the age of the building. The oldest houses in the village fall into two groups.

Timber Framed / Thatched (pre 1850)

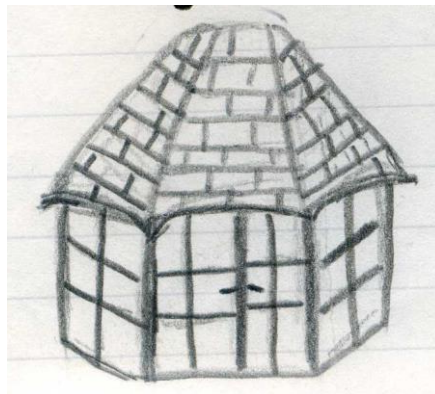
At first glance a major clue telling if the building is timber framed is the absence of any brickwork at the base of the house. Closer inspection may reveal exposed timbers in ceilings or inner walls. Small or no window sills denote thin walls a characteristic of timber framed houses.

The majority of timber framed properties were originally thatched and some are still in evidence in Elsenham at the two original village cores and in the High Street (**photographs 2,4**) Among those originally thatched are the Crown and

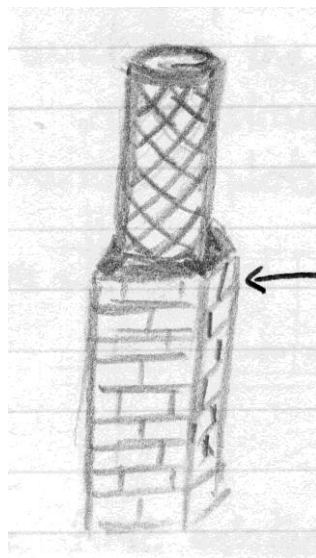
the pair of cottages undergoing renovation at the Cross. These cottages are protected by a preservation order and renovations being carried out clearly show the timber frame (**pictures 6, 8, 9**).

The frame was then covered with strips of wood with narrow gaps between them (**photographs 5, 7**).

Many of these old buildings are characterised by bay windows with small tiles roofs shielding them, easily visible to a bystander.



The chimneys are taller and more ornate than those on modern buildings.



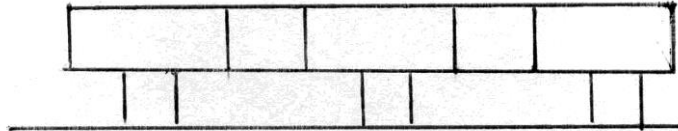
GILBEY HOUSES.

Built in and around Park Road those houses have many special characteristics.

They have open ended gables and several different rooflines, the “Old Post Office” (**photograph 10**) but partly hidden by the Pump has as many as five.

BRICK LAYOUT

The houses are built of a dusty, dark red/brown brick which is no longer in use. Some were built from a specially sized brick, manufactured in Sir Walter Gilbey's own brickworks. They are larger than the standard brick, all "Gilbey" houses are built using a specific brick structure.



BRICK LONG WAYS THEN SHORT WAYS ORIENTATION

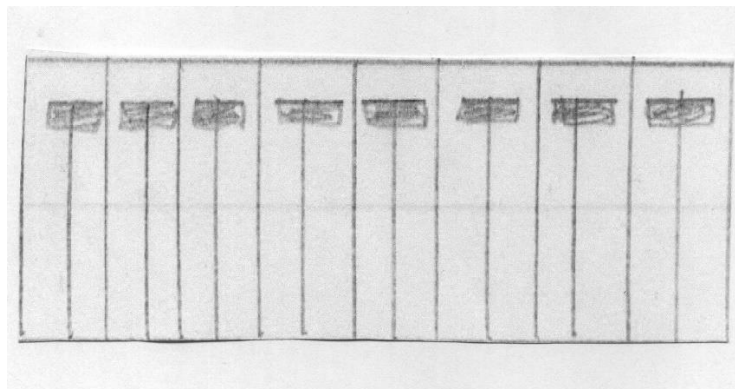
The upstairs windows are often dormer windows. Many have extended tiled porches (photographs 10,11).

They are predominately pebble-dashed or weather boarded (photograph 10).

These were all late Victorian houses.

The ribbon development in the village (Stansted Road (Photograph 12), Station Road and New Road," were built in the 1940s and 50s. The houses in them all lie in a straight line along the road side on long and narrow plots.

ROAD



PLOTS TO THE REAR OF PROPERTIES

The first estates built in Elsenham (Broom Farm, Elm Close, Alsa Gardens and Ridley Gardens) were largely semi-detached homes. Built in the standard estate format with houses on a cul-de-sac, each house having a small plot.

The later estates (Oziers, DeMandeville, Markwells, Alsa Leys, Hailes Wood (photograph 3 & Glebe End) differ. These have a number of different building styles ranging from terraced to detached houses. A common feature on most estates is weather boarding which links the old and new village together (photographs 10,13). These modern estates have no chimneys signifying electric heating systems as there is no gas supply to the village.

PHOTOGRAPHS



THE CROWN PUBLIC HOUSE & BARKER'S STORE (1)

THE CROSS



A typical thatched cottage & timber framed cottage (2)

ROBIN HOOD ROAD



The Robin Hood Public House (3)



A pair of of thatched timber framed cottages (4)

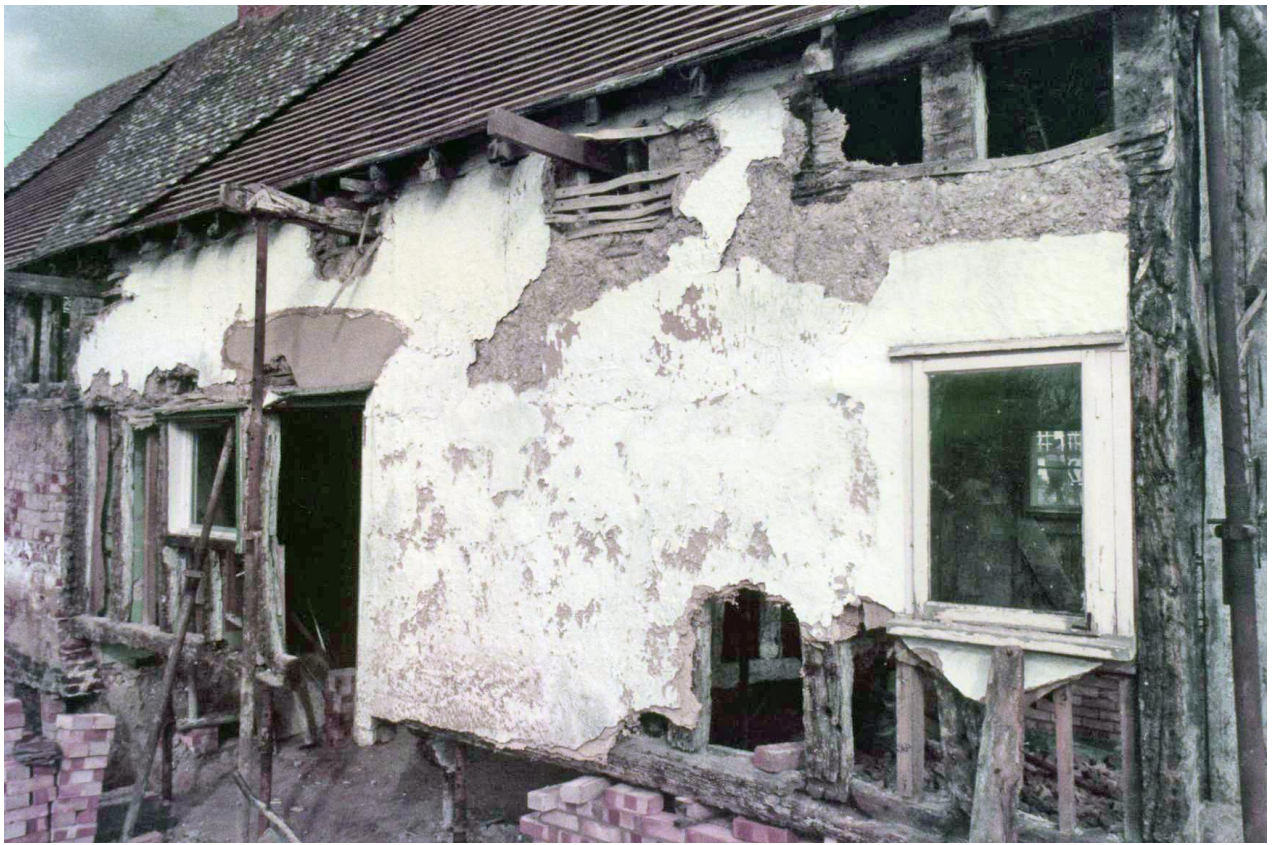
Two cottages at The Cross



Note the strips of wood (lathe) showing beneath plaster (5)



The timber frame construction (6)



The lathe and plaster covering (7)

Photos showing the structure of beams supporting the building 8 & 9



Photo 8



Photo 9



The Old Village Pump (10)

Gilbey Houses



“Littleton” showing large porches, bay windows & dormer windows (11)

Ribbon development of the 1950s



Gilbey Cottages (12)



Haileswood housing estate (13)

MODERN DEVELOPMENTS



Ambrose corner shops 14)

FACTUAL INFORMATION

1896. There were two cores of settlement. The main core was situated at Elsenham Cross. It consisted of:

A school, a public house, a smithy (blacksmith), a vicarage, a mission room, a post office and fourteen houses. Water supply was also in evidence.

The second core, which could be found in the lower part of Robin Hood Road consisted of:

A public house (The Robin Hood) and a further 6 houses. There was also an isolated settlement of five houses on Stansted Road.

1881 High Street Mission Room by The Society of Friends (Quakers)

1920s Onwards New Road, a ribbon development of forty-one houses.

1923. Further growth:

Five houses adding to the isolated settlement in Stansted Road. Mill Farm, a small farm in close proximity to the isolate in Stansted Road.

one house at the northerly end of Station Road.

one house at the southerly end of Station Road.

Park Road: an accretion of the main core

Two houses in the High Street.

A shop adjacent to the Railway Station.

1947/48 Gilbey Cottages, ribbon development, eighteen Council Houses in Stansted Road.

1951. Four houses to the north of Stansted Road, adding to the existing isolate.

Six Council Houses to the south of Stansted Road, opposite the isolate.

Seven houses on Robin Hood Road in various positions.

A ribbon development of thirteen houses in the North end of Station Road.

One house in The High Street adjacent to the School.

1956 Mill Close

1961. Broom Farm, a housing Estate of thirty- two houses in Station Road.

1969 Elm Close, a housing estate of thirty-five houses in Station Road.

Ridley Gardens, a housing estate of twenty-three houses in Station Road.

Alsa Gardens, an estate development of forty-eight houses.

Infills to existing developments in Station Road, Robin Hood Road, Park Road and the High Street.

1976 to 1979. Large estates in Station Road consisting of De Mandeville, Oziers and Markwells with thirty-seven, fifty-three and thirty seven respectively.

Gold Close and Jenkins Drive, the latter being council properties for pensioners in New Road.

Glebe End, a housing estate of forty-six houses on the north of the High Street.

Alsa Leys, a housing estate of thirty-one houses, an addition to Alsa Gardens.

Fourways, a small housing estate of ten houses on Station Road.

Cranmore Close, a small housing estate of seven houses, on Station Road.

Infills to existing developments in Station Road, Park Road and Stansted Road. Ambrose Corner, three shops, General Store, P. O., Butcher and Hairdresser. Playing Field, on Station Road.

Between 1981 and 1991 Hunters Court, Maytree Gardens, The Croft, Spencer Close and Hailes Wood, a housing estate of fifty-nine houses on the north of the High Street.

1985/86 . Industrial Estate, housing estate under construction & general infills.

Industry and Retailing within the Village.

Industry.

Although Elsenham is in the middle of an agricultural area there are very few opportunities for employment in agriculture owing to the high degree of mechanisation. Employment within the village is limited and largely unskilled. There is a new building firm, "Causeway Construction," a haulage contractor, "Sewells," and "Elsenham sand Quarries." There is the opportunity to do full or part-time work at-

 "Triflex," (Warehouse and Packing).

 "Willis Toys," (Administration and Packing).

 "Elsenham Quality Foods," (Sir Walter Gilbey's Jam Factory)

 Five retail shops and a Hairdresser.

Stansted Airport, five miles to the south of the village is a valuable source of local employment. There is also an industrial estate under construction in the village (New Road), which will provide further employment.

Retailing.

There are five retail shops in Elsenham, they are:

Barker's General Store, this is at Elsenham Cross. This was the original village store. It stocks, groceries, fresh fruit and veg., home baked pies and cakes, bread, haberdashery, locally grown garden plants and is an agent for a dry-cleaning firm. See photo 1.

Pope's Hardware Store, this is in the High street. It stocks everything for the home, D.I.Y. equipment, electrical goods, pet foods cigarettes and sweets.

Post Office & General Store, at Ambrose Corner. Stocking, groceries, wines and **spirits**. See photograph 14.

Butchers also at Ambrose Corner (photograph 14).

Station Shop, adjacent to the railway station, stocks newspapers, magazines, sweets, tobacco, toys, records and video hire.

Although shopping facilities in Elsenham are good, most people go outside of the village owing to the high price of goods from village shops.

The influence of Sir Walter Gilbey on Elsenham.

Sir Walter Gilbey was Elsenham greatest benefactor and from the time he moved into Elsenham Hall in 1876 to his death in 1914 he helped the residents and the village.

Sir Walter was an important and distinguished man. He owned the majority of Elsenham and the surrounding land. He was friends with the Prince of Wales and was a major breeder of the Shire horse (bred in the Elsenham Paddocks) and for his famous work in this line he was made a baronet in 1892.

In 1891 he founded what is known locally as the “Elsenham Jam Factory.” At this time, fruits grown in the orchards of Elsenham Hall, situated just outside Elsenham, in Green Street, were made in the kitchens there. Sir Walter was also a partner, with his brother, in the wine and spirits industry and they founded the company now known as Gilbey Vintners.

Sir Walter was responsible for the building of several houses in the village around the turn of the century. These include the village policeman’s house in Park Road, now known as, “Curmes Rest.” His own butlers house in Park Road, named, “Littleton,” and the Post Office in Park Road, now named, “The Old Post Office.” He also built the village pump House in memory of his wife who died in 1896. Park Road, the area in and around which most of the houses built by Sir Walter are, was originally intended to be a private road for Sir Walter to access Elsenham Railway Station but he died in 1914 before it was completed

In 1896 Sir Walter held a meeting to plan the Elsenham to Thaxted Railway. The plan was submitted and approved, in 1911 the land was donated by Sir Walter and other landowners and work commenced. The railway was opened in 1913 by Sir Walter and was initially a great success but later the demand reduced forcing the closure in 1951. The railway had supplied many jobs and increased trade, wealth and employment in Elsenham but especially in Thaxted.

In 1914 Sir Walter died aged 83 and the Estate was taken over by his son, Sir Henry Walter. But sadly he spent little time in Elsenham Hall and in 1922 the estate was split up. See final map showing extent of Gilbey Estate.

REASONS FOR THE GROWTH OF ELSENHAM

As previously stated, Elsenham originally had its core around Elsenham Cross. This was due to the fact that this was the only real meeting place of roads within the village, The road layout being somewhat different to that of modern times. The main road within the village was the High Street which was then linked to Robin Hood Road another lane was used to get to Bishops Stortford. This lane starts opposite the Robin Hood public house and ran along the path now taken by the railway.

A blacksmith was sited at Elsenham Cross suggesting that this part of the village was originally a coaching halt. The Robin Hood, like the Crown would once have been a coaching inn. These facts explain why Elsenham's cores were sited where they were as both cores are at major junctions and so became coaching halts.

With the coming of the railway in 1843 the road network expanded considerably to the size it is today, but the village expanded slightly. First of all, the areas around the Robin Hood expanded by adding two or three houses to it. Then when the railway station was moved from the bottom of Robin Hood Road to the top of the new station road the growth at that time ended at Robin Hood road and two or three houses were built on Station Road.

From this time until the turn of the century very little development occurred. Then Sir Walter Gilbey decided to build a road to the station which would be easier for him to use for himself. This was an extension to Park Road. He built houses for his workers along it and along the opposite side of the road in the High Street. This was the biggest development for some time and was brought along by Sir Walter's wish to help the community. The road was sited where it is, as it is close to the railway and there is also a pump there. Also at this time five houses were built on Stansted Road. A pump was already sited there and this served those houses.

From this time until the 1950s little or no development took place. From the 50s the village has grown tremendously. This is mainly due to people having more disposal income and cars. Therefore more can afford to live in rural areas but still commute to work. This makes Elsenham an ideal place to live with new housing an excellent links to London and Cambridge using the railway and the A11. The M11 has now become a better link to London than the A11 but it was not constructed when the village started its major growth. The majority of people moving into Elsenham were young couples, also by the commuter facilities.

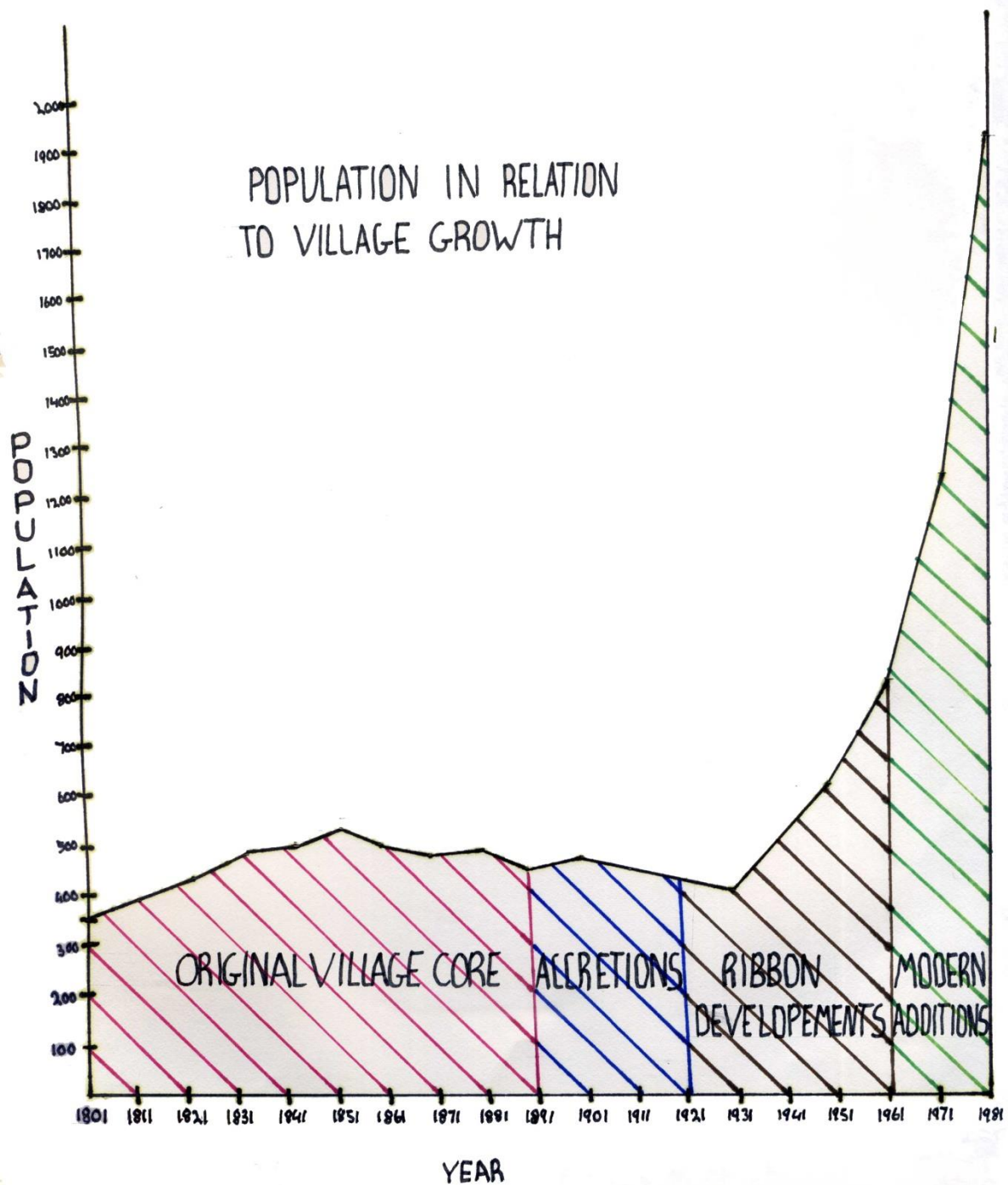
Over the 60s and 70s over 500 two and three bedroomed houses were built on new estates. The population in Elsenham is constantly changing due to the fact that families outgrow their estate accommodation. Many families wishing to remain within Elsenham have built extensions to their homes or moved to older properties. Further development in the village must include larger houses.

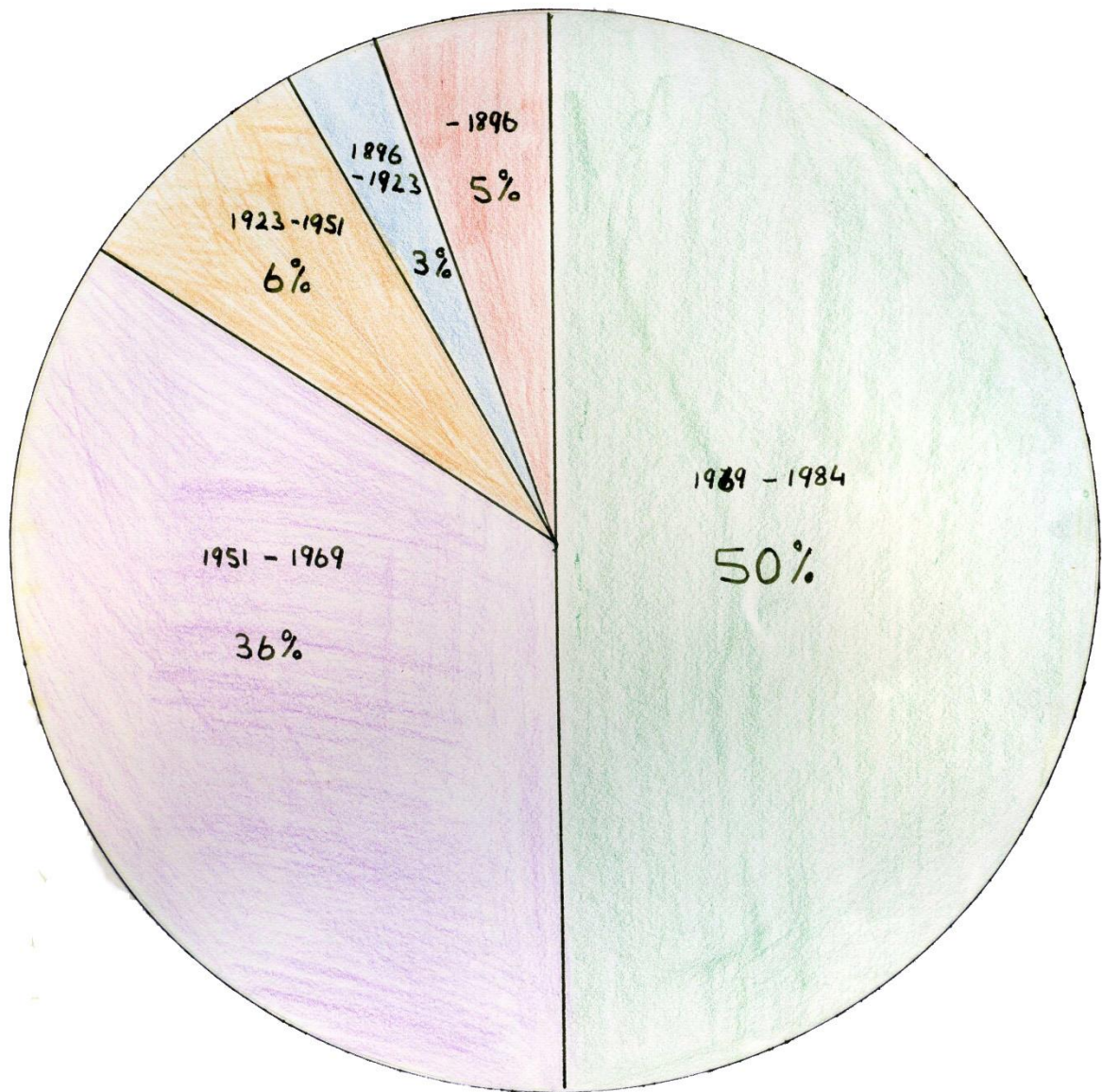
DISADVANTAGES OF THE ZONAL METHOD

Having used the zonal method of building classification several disadvantages with the method have come to light.

Due to the method of classification new houses which have not been built in the modern addition zone may be wrongly classified as in the core etc. This can also occur in reverse with an old house being classified as a modern addition as it is in a modern area, surrounded by new houses.

Accompanying maps and diagrams





Percentage of houses built in relation to time.

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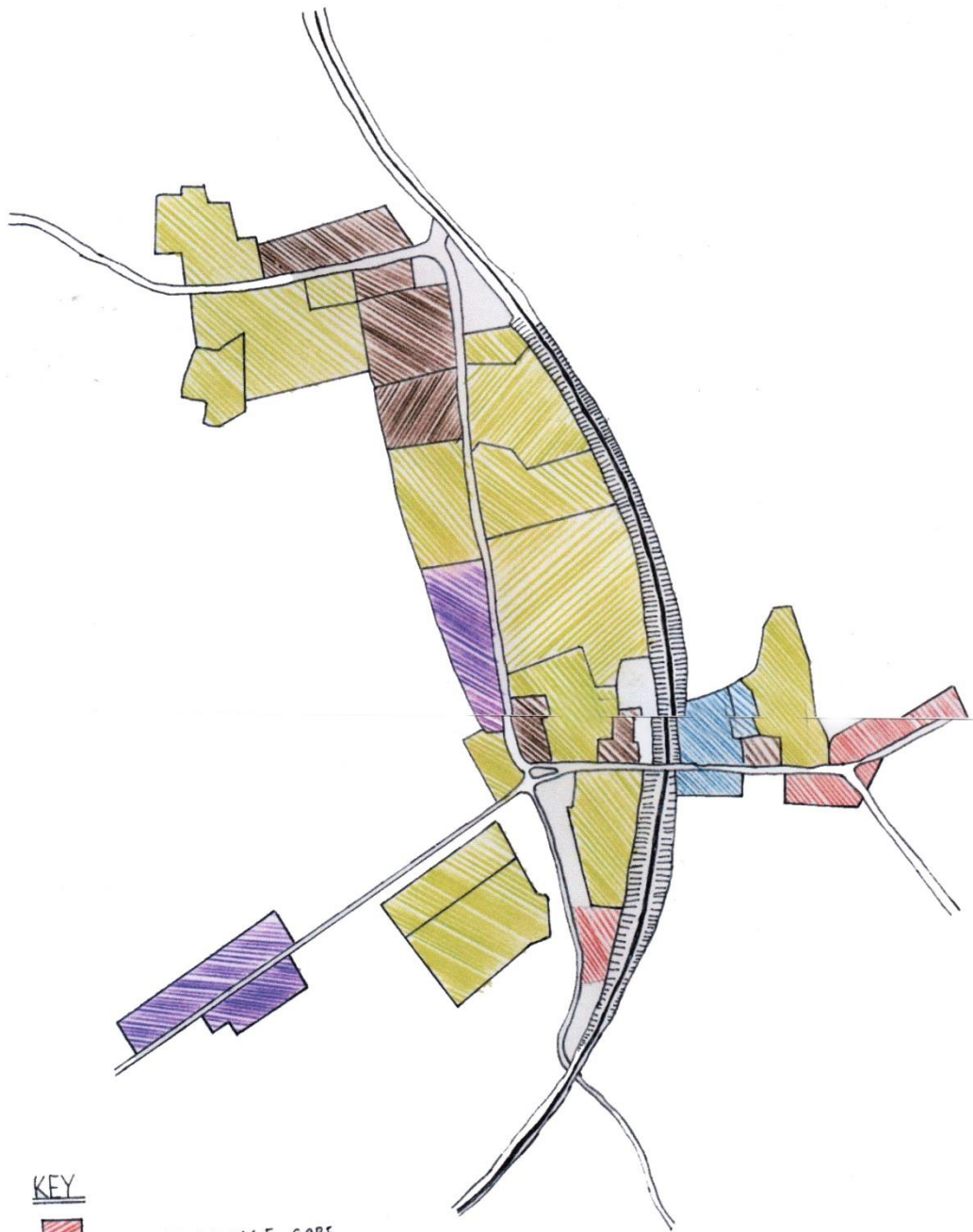
Elsenham: showing extent of the Gullbey Estate.








Key

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Elsenham Hall & Park + 6 cottages (1A) | 8. 2 Cottages. |
| 2. Stud Farm & Paddocks + 5 cottages (2A) | 9. Pennington Hall Farm. |
| 3. Grass field. | 10. Mill Farm. |
| 4. Broom Farm and Land + field (4A) | 11. Pledgon Hall Farm. |
| 5. Post Office and premises. | 23. Home Farm. |
| 6. Estate Yard, cottage and land + 2 cottages (6A) | 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 cottages |
| 7. Elsenham School & premises. | & Park Road. |

The SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF ELSENHAM USING ZONAL METHOD



KEY

-  ORIGINAL VILLAGE CORE
-  ACCRETIONS (small additions)
-  RIBBON DEVELOPMENT
-  MODERN ADDITIONS
-  ISOLATES