

## MAKING PLACES TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of Tring is complex, distinguishing it from the typical valley towns of Dacorum. According to the Dacorum Borough Council Urban Nature Conservation Study the town is located within the 'Tring Gap', a 'wide break within the Chiltern escarpment created by erosion of the chalk and resulting in the valley of the River Bulbourne. The northernmost edge of the town, the ancient Icknield Way follows the line of the chalk scarp from Wessex to East Anglia.

As a result of this complex geology, the town is quite undulating and is surrounded by a number of hills. The town centre itself is impacted by a small valley created by the north-south brook that runs toward the centre. The significant intersection of Akeman Street and the High Street occurs at an unusual dip in both streets.

As a result of Tring's undulating quality there are a number of interesting views through the town centre, views of the church, and vistas out to the surrounding countryside.

### KEY ISSUES MP5: TOPOGRAPHY

#### MP5A

Tring's complex topography creates a number of unusual views into and out of the town.

#### MP5B

As a result of the topography, Tring's town centre is quite hilly, exacerbating the narrowness of the old medieval street grid.



The Tring topographical rendering reveals that the town's landscape does not have the consistency of a river valley. The landscape has gentle undulations.

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## CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE TOWN MORPHOLOGY

The morphology drawing shown at the right illustrates only the areas of built form. The drawing highlights a number of particular features with regards to street pattern, building type and building density.

The most obvious aspect of Tring's morphology is the clear definition of the town's edges, created originally by two ancient roads and reinforced by the Metropolitan Green Belt. There only a few deviations from this pattern.

### Street pattern

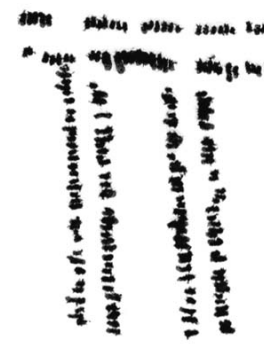
The morphology of Tring shows a variety of street patterns that spans over eight centuries, beginning with the tight medieval network of the town centre, moving westward to the dense Victorian residential grid, and then northward to a series of 20th century developments which include linear and ribbon-style development and cul-de-sacs.

### Building type and density

The employment areas (1), with their larger building footprints, can be seen at the periphery of the town with a number of smaller employment areas located close to the town centre. The retail uses (2), as represented by dense shops, do not appear with any significance outside of the town centre with the important exception of the Tesco's just to the east of the town centre. In terms of residential buildings, there appears to be a predominance of detached and semi-detached housing with isolated areas with terraced and larger housing developments. The more recently developed areas in the eastern part of Tring show that buildings have not been developed directly facing the street (3).



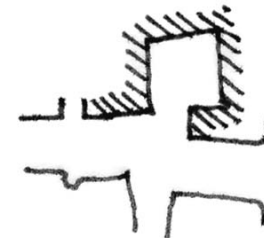
Medieval street fabric



Gridded through streets



Cul-de-sac streets



Close development



### KEY ISSUES CEI:TOWN MORPHOLOGY

#### CEIA

Areas of Tring have been developed at specific times in history, creating a series of different street patterns.

#### CEIB

Recent developments have created buildings that do not directly face the street.

#### CEIC

There are no significant retail areas outside of the town centre.

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## CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE TOWN CENTRE MORPHOLOGY

Tring town centre has remained remarkably consistent in form over the last 200 years, as seen in comparison to the inset map of 1799 (courtesy of Hertfordshire County Records Office).

Both maps reveal a compact town centre with gaps along the High Street that open up into service courtyards. These yards and passageways (1) are most likely to be a remnant of the medieval burgage plots and were widened over time to take carts and carriages, perhaps with stabling and other outbuildings to the rear. Some of these openings continued to be used for servicing. Dolphin Court (2) has been expanded to be used as an internal courtyard shopping centre.

There are a few distinct changes from the 1799 map. The northwest corner of Frogmore and the High Street has been redeveloped to create a new internal service court followed (3) (to the north) by a series of buildings which open into Dolphin Court and a large commercial building. Additionally, the buildings in front of the church have been removed to create a new public space (4).

### KEY ISSUES CE2:TOWN CENTRE MORPHOLOGY

CE2A  
The structure of Tring town centre has remained remarkably consistent over time.

CE2B  
The adaptive re-use of the internal yards has opened up new possibilities, such as the Dolphin Court shopping centre.



Photograph courtesy of HCRO

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## CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE BUILDING LINES, SETBACKS AND GAPS

Building lines establish the way in which a series of building structures meet the street and pavement. A continuous building line facilitates a clear image of the street. Setbacks and gaps, while sometimes providing interesting features or key gathering spaces, can impact the clarity of the building line.

The building lines drawing of Tring town centre shows a clear street wall on the High Street. The building line on Akeman Street, particularly on the western side (1), has become less clear over time. The drawing also shows the pedestrianised courtyard wall created by Dolphin Court (2).

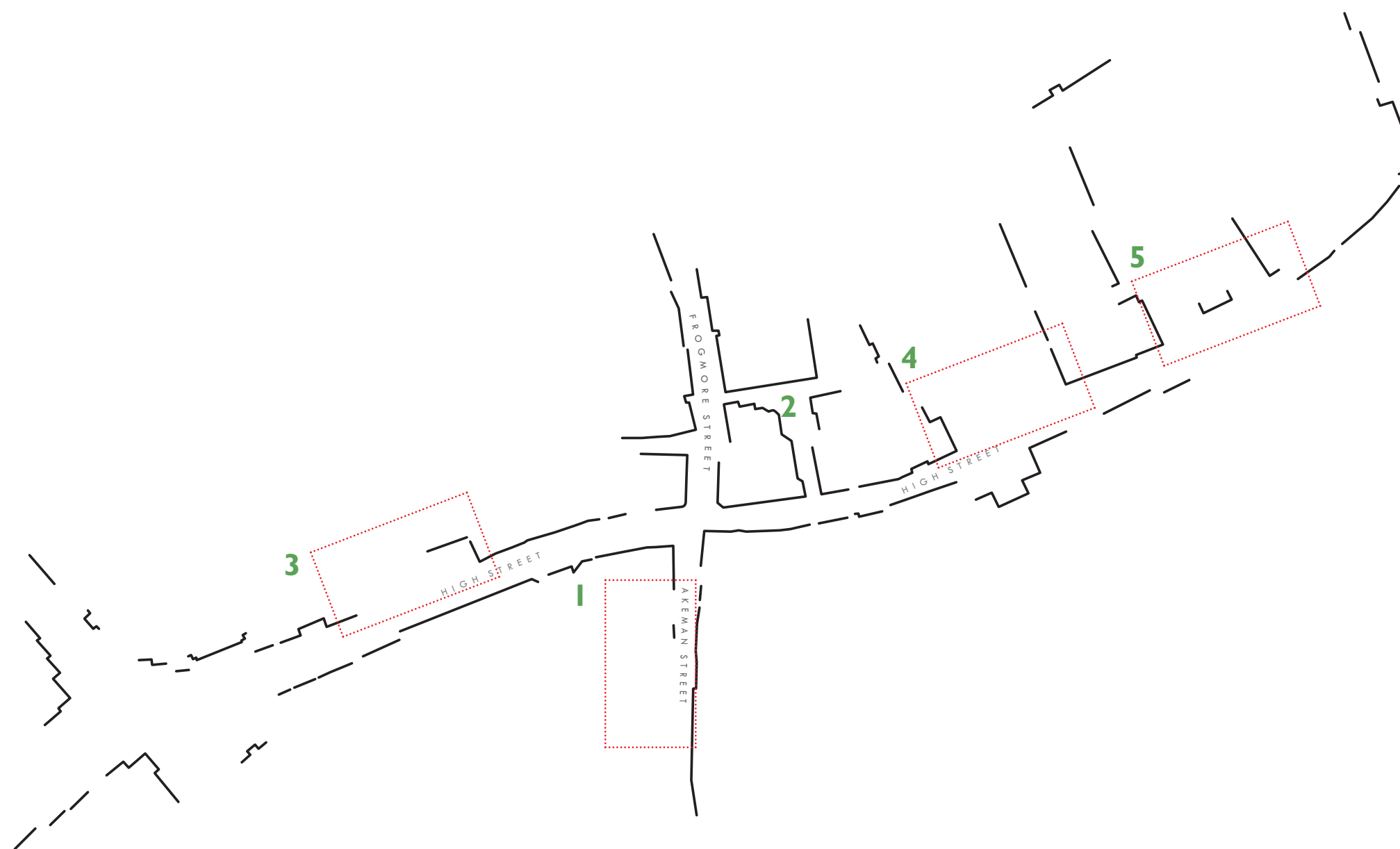
There are three significant setbacks and gaps along the High Street. Moving from east to west, the first major setback is the opening to the car park. While serving an important function, the car park detracts from the eastern gateway to the High Street (3). The next gap in the street wall is Church Square (4). This space forms an important public space which also connects at the rear to the back of Dolphin Square. Finally, the major setback and gap to the west of the Akeman Street/High Street intersection is for the library and adjacent car park. The area in front of the library is a pleasant but infrequently used public space. The car park also occupies a significant amount of space on the High Street.

### KEY ISSUES CE3: BUILDING LINES, SETBACKS, GAPS

**CE3A**  
Two car parks occupy significant street frontage on the High Street.

**CE3B**  
Church Square is a valuable gap in the street frontage.

**CE3C**  
Many of the small gaps in the street lead to internal yards, which are used for a variety of purposes.



## CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE BUILDING ORIENTATION

Active building frontages can be a key factor in the success of a commercial street, providing both vitality and 'eyes on the street'. A site survey was conducted to establish which buildings fronted onto the High Street and Akeman/Frogmore Streets.

There are very few notable places without active street frontages on the High Street. Active frontages are also present in Dolphin Court (1) and along Church square.

The strongest space stretch of active frontages is along the High Street from the eastern end to the intersection with Akeman and Frogmore Streets. The western end of the High Street and Frogmore Street do not have as many active frontages. The library frontage, setback from the street, signals the end of the High Street (2). There is also a large inactive frontage on the east side of Frogmore Street (3).



### KEY ISSUES CE4: BUILDING ORIENTATION

**CE4A**  
The inactive frontage on Frogmore Street disrupts the continuation of the active town centre northwards.

**CE4B**  
Dolphin Court presents an example of active frontages in a pedestrianised courtyard.

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## CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE DESIGNATED OPEN LAND

The town of Tring is clearly delineated by Icknield Way and Park Road/Aylesbury Road and surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt. Walking paths into and throughout the Green Belt are popular and frequently used. Tring Park, to the south and west of the town centre (1), represents an important open land.

There are few open spaces within the town itself other than those connected to school grounds (2). These grounds have a character more closely related to school recreation grounds. Consultation participants noted a lack of playground space for young children.

There are two open spaces at the northern end of Tring. According to consultation participants, the open land with Dundale Lake (just off Icknield Way) is used less frequently by residents due to the sound of traffic (3). The other open land follows the brook down toward the town centre.(3).

The Churchyard, Church Square, and the Memorial Gardens (4) are all significant small open spaces near the town centre.

### KEY ISSUES CE5: DESIGNATED OPEN SPACES

CE5A  
There are few open spaces within the town of Tring itself other than those connected to schools.

CE5B  
Consultation participants noted a lack of playground space.

CE5C  
The Green Belt represents a significant amenity.



N.B. Green shading signifies Green Belt as well as designated open land.

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