



Kimmeridge Conservation Area

Appraisal document



Adopted Document

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Introduction

Background

1. This appraisal has been prepared for Kimmeridge Conservation Area which was designated on 4th June 1975, and whose boundaries were revised on 9th December 2014.
2. Conservation areas are defined within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as:

“areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
3. Conservation areas are designated to cover the streets and places in towns and villages which hold sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant special consideration and conservation as part of the planning process. While bringing some added controls the object of designation is not to prohibit change but rather to manage its quality. The purpose of this appraisal is to provide an in depth analysis of the architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the conservation area in order to both assist the planning process, and to promote careful management and enhancement.

Planning policy framework

4. Conservation areas are designated by local authorities as a duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the same Act makes it a duty for local authorities to consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising planning controls. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides policy guidance, whilst at District level, policies within the Purbeck Local Plan are also relevant, and are supported by the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

Development within a conservation area

5. Restrictions apply to the types of work you can carry out to properties within conservation areas, principal amongst which is the legal requirement to gain planning permission for carrying out ‘relevant’ demolition of unlisted buildings and structures. To find out more about restrictions see guidance on the Council’s website: www.dorsetforyou.com. Where you are considering undertaking works within a conservation area that requires planning permission, the Council will be happy to provide you with pre-application advice. A charge is made for this service. See the Council’s website for details.

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6. New development should conserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. You should use this character appraisal to assist you in formulating appropriate designs for new development, and in making sensitive alterations to existing properties.

Preparation and survey limitations

7. This document was formally adopted by Purbeck District Council at its meeting on 9th December 2014.
8. When you are reading or using this document it is important to note that its contents are not comprehensive. For instance, some aspects of the survey information are limited to areas which can be viewed from the public highway and other accessible land. You should not take failure to mention a particular element or detail to mean that it is of no importance, and thus of no relevance in the Council's assessment of planning applications.

Community involvement

9. In line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement a six week period of consultation was held on the draft boundary proposals and appraisal between 3rd March and 6th April 2014. Consultation materials were available online and at Westport House. A leaflet was posted to every property within the conservation area and officers attended a meeting of the Parish Council to discuss boundary proposals and the draft character appraisal. Consultation responses were taken into account in preparation of the final version of this document.

Summary of special interest and significance

10. The purpose of the following paragraphs is to provide a brief (non-exhaustive) summary of the special interest and significance of the conservation area, which forms the basis for its designation. A more detailed analysis of its historic and architectural character and appearance will follow in subsequent sections.

Special historic interest

11. The conservation area contains a good collection of domestic listed buildings, a large proportion of which may be dated to the seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries.

Special architectural interest

12. The conservation area contains a high proportion of listed buildings, all of which are constructed from local materials, and many of which represent good examples of the local vernacular. The combination of Purbeck stone with thatch is a distinctive feature, as too the reflection of historic social distinction seen in the spatial variation of architectural character within the village.

Conservation area site and situation

Location and setting

13. Kimmeridge is a relatively 'remote' village located deep within the rural landscape, though many visitors to the coast pass through it each year. The settlement stands on what is geologically known as Kimmeridge Clay, on ground sloping south from the Purbeck limestone ridge. Quarries made into the ridge for extraction of 'Portland' or 'Purbeck-Portland' stone, are visible above the village. Though Kimmeridge lies inland of the sea, it lends its name to the bay which lies to the south west; the beginnings of this marked on the skyline by Clavell Tower.



FIG. 1: *Kimmeridge within its landscape setting. Viewed from higher ground to the north the village is nestled within the landscape. Kimmeridge Bay and Clavell Tower are visible in the distance.*

Socio-economic profile

14. Kimmeridge is chiefly residential in character, with the Smedmore Estate a principal property owner. Agricultural land surrounds the village, and farming activity continues within the village, though most of the traditional agricultural buildings present have been converted for domestic use. Services and facilities within the village consist of the village hall, church, telephone kiosk and a shop and café sustained by visitors to the coast, though a new village hall/fossil museum has also been granted planning permission. The museum, to house fossils recovered from shale in Kimmeridge bay, is likely to draw an increased number of visitors to the village once complete.

History of development

Medieval

15. The English Place Names Society suggests that the name Kimmeridge, recorded as 'Cameric' in 1086 originally derived from the term 'convenient road', referring to the fact that it is the only access point for two miles either way. 'Ridge' they suggest was a linguistic evolution the name which confuses the original meaning.
16. Kimmeridge was one of three settlements recorded in the parish during the medieval period, the other two – Little Kimmeridge and Smedmore – since becoming defunct. The church (see FIG. 10), which was only recently dedicated to Saint Nicholas, contains some fabric dated to the twelfth century. Its position at the head of the village, and on the highest ground, appears intentionally symbolic, clearly expressing and emphasising both the importance of the church and the social hierarchy within the village. Indeed the settlement lay in the hands of Cerne Abbey during the period and until dissolution during the 1530s. As is generally to be expected, no domestic dwellings survive from before the seventeenth century, though evidence of agricultural activity linked to the settlement before this time is clearly preserved in the remains of 'strip lynchets' (cultivation terraces) on Smedmore Hill.

Sixteenth-seventeenth centuries

17. In 1554 the village passed into the ownership of the Clavell family, who established a seat nearby at Smedmore. Today much of the property in and around the village remains in the ownership of the Smedmore Estate. A number of buildings have been dated to, or find their origins within the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These are No. 20 (see FIG. 2 below), No. 22/23 which was originally a single house of possible open hall type, No. 29, and Kimmeridge Farm (see FIG. 10). Standing adjacent to the church, Kimmeridge Farm appears to occupy a similarly symbolic and important position at the head of the village. It is interesting to speculate whether this reflects earlier use of the site as location of a principal farm or 'grange' on Cerne Abbey's monastic estate (see for example Chaldon Herring).



FIG. 2: No. 20. The cottage has its origins in the seventeenth century, albeit altered and extended later. The pronounced lines of the two dormers to the right are one indication that the building has been rethatched. The old village 'fire ladder' hangs on the front wall.

Eighteenth-nineteenth centuries

18. Many cottages dated to the period appear to be represented on John Cole's map of 1720, suggesting the possibility of earlier origin. Nos. 2/3, 6/7, and perhaps also the old post office fall into this category. Later properties have a more formal architectural character, containing standardised details such as segmented arches over windows and doors, suggesting common development in estate ownership. Into this category fall Nos. 24, 25-28, 30, 31 4/5 and Kimmeridge Farm (see examples in FIG. 3 below). The 1720 map shows a grouping of three cottages northeast, southwest and southeast of the junction at the head of the village. At least one of these appears to have made way for the parsonage during the 1830s, whilst the others were removed at some point later giving rise to the current 'gaps'. The quality of materials, build and the style of the parsonage clearly contrast with those used in the broadly contemporary cottages found in the village below, strengthening the impression of social differentiation.
19. The school, in common with most other village schools, was added during the 1870s as part of the national movement to provide education following passage of the Elementary Education Act 1870.
20. Whilst various attempts were made to establish industries based upon the extraction and processing of oil extracted from shale within the Kimmeridge Clay during the nineteenth century, this activity was at a sufficient distance from the village to have avoided leaving any marks.



FIG. 3: *Nineteenth century cottages. Left: No. 24, with date stone '1848'. Right: and Nos. 4 and 5, with date stone '1854'.*

Twentieth/twenty-first centuries

21. Change mainly occurred during the second half of the twentieth century, and principally included conversion of Kimmeridge Farm from agricultural to domestic use, and the infilling of gaps within the village street with modern housing. The village hall dates to the period, though is due to be replaced by a combined hall/museum facility opposite the old post office, with a relocated playground to be established at the southern end of the village. These new developments will have a significant impact upon the character and use of the village once completed.

Townscape analysis

Village structure

22. Kimmeridge has a roughly 'T' shaped layout, with a generally linear arrangement of development along the street frontage. A track extends the line of the main street north to the hill above. The historic social hierarchy of the village appears to be reflected in the distribution (combined with style and historic role) of buildings, with the church, parsonage and principal farmhouse prominently positioned and separated by open spaces from the bulk of cottages below. This would not always have been the case however given the historic presence of buildings within these spaces recorded in eighteenth century mapping.

Building density

23. Whilst Nos. 26-30 are closely packed and positioned directly on the pavement, development within the village generally comprises relatively well spaced detached, and semi-detached properties, which stand within their plots. Front gardens are therefore frequent, though in some cases have been turned over to parking with resulting reduction of visual quality. The clustering of buildings around Kimmeridge Farm is reflective of their historic agricultural function. As within other villages, infill development has resulted in the gaps which were historically present between buildings becoming progressively filled. Significant gaps do however still occur in the southern part of the village, and for the time being, at the top of the village (though as noted above, historic maps suggest presence of buildings in the latter during the distant past).



FIG. 4: View down the main street. Nos. 26-30 form a pavement edge block on the right hand side of the street, though development opposite and further along the street is more broken, spacious and set back from the pavement edge.

Building height

24. Aside from Kimmeridge Farm whose two full floors with attic rooms above is exceptional, most buildings within the conservation area fall between one and two storeys in height, with a majority one and a half (i.e. ground floor with accommodation partially contained within the attic space above, and lit by half dormers). This format is shared by buildings of varied construction type and date, though is typified by the village's historic thatched cottages. Modern attempts to emulate the latter are of mixed quality and sometimes inappropriate scale.

Plan form and massing

25. Buildings within the conservation area are mostly of broad frontage, narrow plan type, which form linear arrangements generally positioned parallel to the road (though variations in this pattern, such as seen at Nos. 6/7, 22/23, provide some visual interest). Extensions sometimes elongate plan form further – such as seen at Nos. 2-3 – though modern insertions to the rear can appear obtrusive.

Edges and enclosure

26. The street and pavement where present, are generally well enclosed and defined by a mixture of stone walls, hedges and buildings. This pattern has unfortunately broken down in a number of places where parking spaces or driveway accesses have been formed or widened.



FIG. 5: *View up the main street. The street edge is well enclosed by a combination of stone walls, hedges and buildings. Note the presence of Greylings to the left.*

Visual qualities

27. Viewed from higher ground to the north, the main street and the buildings lining it appear nestled within the landscape (see FIG. 1). Upon entering the village and

travelling south, few glimpses of the landscape setting are allowed, though falling ground levels, and sharp bends in the road provide a series of vistas within which Kimmeridge Farm is the first building fully viewed. Travelling north through the village a greater appreciation of the landscape setting is allowed, with the view of Smedmore Hill just beyond No. 6 particularly notable (see FIG. 6 below). Rising ground does however also lend undue prominence to certain buildings, the glazed gable end of Long Walk House being particularly noticeable in long views.



FIG. 6: *View of Smedmore Hill. Strip lynchets can be seen on the slope.*

Trees, green and open spaces

28. Trees are particularly noted upon entering the village from the north, these crowding round the parsonage, and forming a loose grouping in the field opposite. The large ‘veteran’ ash tree outside the village hall is an important feature, prominent in views along the main street (see FIG. 7 below).



FIG. 7: *Trees and green spaces. Left: open space below Kimmeridge Farm - site for the new village hall/ fossil museum. Right: ash tree outside the village hall.*

29. Hedges are a notable feature within the conservation area, enclosing both agricultural land and front gardens. Gardens on the west side of the main street make a positive contribution to the character and attractiveness of the street, and

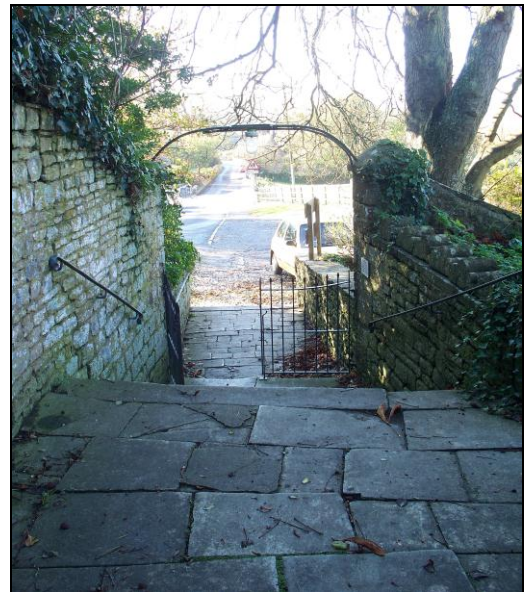
the setting of the buildings with which they are associated. That to side of No.22 provides a notable break in the continuity of development.

Public realm

Groundscape

30. Pavements run along the west side of the main street and between the church and Kimmeridge Farm. The former is finished in tarmac though employs stone kerbs, and is likely be of relatively modern origin. The latter has a 'pitched' surface of Purbeck stone set on edge. A fine pavement of Purbeck flagstones exists at the entrance to and runs along the side of the churchyard (see FIG. 8 below).

FIG. 8: *Paving. Below: area outside the church, with pavement running left of shot along the boundary wall of Kimmeridge farm. Right: paving at the church.*



Street furniture

31. The conservation area contains two items of street furniture: a K6 telephone kiosk (see FIG. 9 below), and a commemorative stone bench installed to mark the Silver Jubilee in 1977.
32. The kiosk is a 'jubilee' model (date range 1935-52), identified by use of the Tudor crown. An essential feature of the village scene, this telephone kiosk is painted battleship grey. This livery was originally applied to telephone kiosks located in areas of natural beauty, and the glazing bars would originally have been picked out in red. Most such kiosks were subsequently fully repainted red. Together with a kiosk in Milton Abbas, this represents a rare survival in Dorset and also nationally. Following identification as part of the conservation area review process an application was made for listing to English Heritage, following which the kiosk was formally listed on the basis of its rarity.



FIG. 9: *K6 telephone kiosk. The grey livery is a rare survival, and protected from change by listing.*

Lighting

33. A light is provided above the entrance to the churchyard, but consistent with the rural character of location, the village otherwise lacks street lighting.

Public spaces

34. Public spaces within the village are limited to the church yard and play ground though there is reasonably free and ready footpath access to the surrounding countryside.

Building style, materials and details

Architectural style

35. The conservation area is predominantly characterised by vernacular architecture – buildings constructed according to local tradition and for the most part making use of local materials – albeit formalisation of style is seen over time. This is chiefly expressed in terms of form, detailing and the composition of elements. Earlier buildings, including Nos. 20, 22/23, 2/3 and 6/7, generally inconsistent and irregular in terms of each, whereas standardisation is evident in estate building between the late eighteenth and mid nineteenth century (epitomised by Nos. 25-28 which may perhaps have taken some inspiration from No. 29). The Old Parsonage emulates the simple Gothic styling typical of larger seventeenth century houses around the Isle of Purbeck, whilst detailing contemporary with this period can be seen in the hood moulded windows of No. 29.

Walls

36. Traditional construction is strongly characterised by use of Purbeck limestone, though the way in which it used in building varies. In most cases an attempt has been made to sort and bring squared rubble to level courses, though more crudely constructed random rubblework does also occur. As is often the case, modern stonework does not quite fit the pattern, that at the Greylings for example utilising an inconsistent coursing of relatively high quality squared rubble. Application of render to the side elevation of Kimmeridge Farm appears to have been an attempt at weatherproofing. Though many stone buildings in Purbeck historically carried a protective render or limewash, the finish here looks more modern.

Roofs

Roof forms

37. Roofs within the conservation area are principally pitched, though a scattering of hips and half hips are also seen. Half dormers are sometimes incorporated at the eaves.

Roofing materials

38. The apparent physical differentiation between development at the head of the village, and that lying below, appears further reflected in roofing materials. All of the principal buildings at the head of the village are roofed with Purbeck stone tiles, whereas historic buildings in the village below are either thatched or slated – the latter in most cases a replacement roof covering for the former. This is almost certainly true of No. 30, whilst in the case of Nos. 8-9 the original shift to solid

roofing is recorded as having taken place in 1890 following a fire. The historic pattern has been eroded to some extent by the use of artificial stone tiles in modern development in the lower part of the village, typically in conjunction with heavily boxed eaves. These materials and details erode the architectural character and distinctiveness of the conservation area.



FIG. 10: *Buildings at the top of the village. Construction of both walls and roofs in Purbeck stone characterises development here, in contrast to the pattern seen in the village below.*

39. Use of clay tiles for roofing is not generally characteristic of historic development within the village, though somewhat unusually, tiles are a historic covering of the north wing of Kimmeridge Farmhouse. The presence of plain clay tiles with stone easing course on other buildings within the group is a modern feature introduced when former agricultural structures here were converted/reconstructed during the 1980s. As such this should not be taken as a model for future development.
40. Use of thatch within the village is distinctive in its frequent combination with Purbeck stone, though most thatched roofs on historic buildings are modern replacements. The lack of depth seen in such coverings lends visual prominence to dormers. It is of note that with the exception of No. 6/7, all thatched roofs carry traditional flush ridges.

Chimneys

41. The majority of chimney stacks are constructed from brick, though use of stone is also seen. A large proportion of stacks appear to have been renewed. The monolithic chimney stacks of The Greylings accentuate the impression that the development has an exaggerated scale.

Windows and doors

Windows

42. Timber casement windows are employed throughout the conservation area, with the noted exception of Kimmeridge Farm, where sash windows help lend vertical emphasis to the building.

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43. Segmented brick arches above openings are frequent features, and are a repeated motif of late eighteenth/nineteenth century development or remodelling work. Earlier cottages make use of either timber lintels or segmented stone arches, though No.29 is unusual for its use of hood moulds. The latter also feature in the Old Parsonage and the former school built during the mid nineteenth century
 44. Half dormers, and dormers positioned on the wall head, are a repeated feature of thatched cottages. Some solid roofed buildings, including those of more recent date, have sought to incorporate dormers of similar type with very mixed results.
 45. Plastic windows currently have very limited presence within the conservation area, partly due to the frequency of listed buildings. This helps to conserve a sense of traditional character that would be eroded should greater use of plastic occur in the future.

Doors

46. Where historic doors survive these are typically formed from broad planks, sometimes with a small vision panel inset. More sturdy versions exist at the Old Parsonage and church.

Important unlisted buildings and structures

47. Unlisted buildings and structures which make a 'positive' contribution to the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area are detailed on Map 2. Alongside listed buildings, these should form a focus for conservation, and where applicable, may provide inspiration for new development.

Ecology and biodiversity

48. Buildings and the conservation area's trees, hedges, garden and green spaces provide nesting, roosting and feeding opportunities for birds, bats and small mammals (see FIG. 11 below). Various mosses and lichens soften the appearance of stonework.



FIG. 11: *House martin nests. House martins have nested beneath the deep eaves of No. 30.*

Issues and opportunities

Problem areas

49. The appearance of the visitor car park adjacent to Clavell's detracts from the visual quality of the conservation area. This prominent, large and rough surfaced space at the top of the village is often largely empty off-season, and is otherwise used to store a trailer and trade dustbins. Such limited use appears unfortunate given the apparent necessity for residents to park on-street further down the road.

Evaluation of condition

50. Timber windows are in a noticeably poor condition at a number of properties.
51. The pavement through the village is heavily patched and has an irregular surface. This may not be helped in places by parking on pavements.

Buildings at risk

52. Listed buildings and structures are termed 'at risk' where aspects of their condition, use or context threaten those features which provide special historic or architectural interest. In Kimmeridge Conservation Area no listed buildings or structures appear to be at risk.

Threats, pressures, challenges

53. Ash die back disease could pose a threat to the noble tree outside the village hall.
54. The character of the village will inevitable change if and when the new village hall/museum is constructed. As a major new facility this will have a significant presence, giving rise to a major increase in visitors. Whilst injecting a sense of vitality, it will be important to anticipate and manage increased pressures on parking, and to avoid commercialisation of the type seen at West Lulworth.

Recommendations

Boundary redefinition

55. As originally designated in 1975, the conservation area contained large tracts of open agricultural land. Changes were made to the conservation area boundary in December 2014 in order to more appropriately focus the designation on the historic townscape. This ensured that the designation was fit for purpose, in line with its statutory definition, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. Elements removed in 2014 comprised open agricultural land forming the immediate setting of the village, and adequately protected by the AONB designation. Elements removed are summarised as follows:
- *Fields to the rear of Nos. 24 – 30.*
 - *Fields to the rear of No. 1 – Ashfield.*
 - *Field opposite Nos. 6 and 8.*
 - *Fields to the rear of the Old Parsonage – Long Walk House.*
56. Two fields were retained within the designation. That to the south west of No. 20 was retained due to development currently proposed within its boundaries, whilst that opposite is largely bounded by, and forms an important break in the continuity of development.

Management and enhancement

57. The character and appearance of the conservation area can be preserved and enhanced by the efforts of all who have an interest in the land and property within it. Maintaining those buildings, structures and aspects of which make a ‘positive’ contribution to the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the conservation area (see Map 2) should be a key priority. On the other hand, buildings, structures and aspects which have marked ‘negative’ impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area (see Map 2) provide a focus for positive change. Buildings marked ‘neutral’ on Map 2 are a diverse and harmless group which lack importance. Whilst improvements or change here may deliver benefits, these are unlikely to be as significant as for those marked negative. Use of this appraisal to inform the design and assessment of planning proposals helps to ensure that conservation objectives are achieved through the planning process.
58. The list below provides a summary of potential areas for action, implementation of which will depend upon opportunity, priorities and funding, and may involve or be achieved by a range of different stakeholders.

Improved landscaping of the car park

59. Sensitive landscaping of the car park adjacent to Clavell’s (old post office) could greatly improve the entrance to the village. Enclosure of commercial wheelie bins would also help to improve the appearance of the site.

Maintenance of the phone kiosk

60. The grey K6 telephone kiosk opposite the old post office was listed in March 2012. The kiosk sees relatively low use, though this may hopefully increase should the fossil museum be constructed, helping to preserve the service. The grey paint scheme is a rare survival and would benefit from being refreshed. A similar kiosk at the Royal Crescent in Bath has had an information board attached explaining its history and rarity. The same could be done here.

Resurfacing of pavements

61. The removal of irregularities and renewal of the patched surface would help to improve the appearance of the conservation area.

Public awareness

62. It is important to raise awareness amongst the public of both the existence of the Conservation Area, and the crucial role they play as property owners in conserving and enhancing its character and appearance. Here parish plans and other locally produced documents can play an important role in identifying actions that can be taken. Development of the village hall/fossil museum could provide an opportunity to promote not only the prehistory of the coastal geology, but the history of the village itself.

Appendix

Appendix A – Further information and advice

Legislation, guidance and policy

- *Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*
- *National Planning Policy Framework.* DCLG, 2012.
- *Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.* Purbeck District Council, 2012.
- *DETR Circular 01/01.* 2001.
- *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management.* English Heritage, 2011.

Design

- *District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.* Purbeck District Council, 2014.
- *Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them.* CABE, 2006.

Historical development, archaeology and architecture

- *Dorset (Pevsner Buildings of England).* Newman and Pevsner, 1972.
- *Kimmeridge, Smedmore and the Bay: Guide and History.* Mansel, JC.
- *National Heritage List.* www.english-heritage.org.uk.
- *Place Names of Dorset, Volume I.* English Place Name Society.
- *The Kimmeridgians.* Brachi. D and G.

General

- *A Stitch in Time: Maintaining your Property Makes Good Sense.* SPAB and IHBC.

Further enquires

Enquiries regarding this appraisal should be addressed to:

Design and Conservation Officer
Purbeck District Council, Worgret Road
Wareham BH20 4PP
Tel: 01923 557388
conservation@purbeck-dc.gov.uk

Enquiries regarding archeology and the County Historic Environment Record should be addressed to:

Environmental Services Directorate
Dorset County Council, Colliton Park
Dorchester DT1 1XJ
Tel: 01305 224921
www.dorsetforyou.com

Appendix B – Listed buildings within the conservation area

Below is a table of the principal listed Buildings within the conservation area. For further information on these buildings see the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Please note: The table does not include ancillary structures or those within the curtilage of named buildings which are also likely to be covered by the listing where pre-dating 1948. Names of properties given below are those recorded at the time of listing and thus under which they are officially listed. It is possible that some names may have changed. This does not affect the listing itself.

Address	Grade	English Heritage reference number
Church of St. Nicholas	II	1120476
Kimmeridge Farmhouse, including garden wall extending east from the house to the churchyard	II	1120477
Barn and cow house south of Kimmeridge Farmhouse	II	1120478
The Old School	II	1120479
Nos. 2 and 3	II	1120480
Nos. 6 and 7	II	1120481
Nos. 25/26 and 27	II	1120482
No. 29	II	1120483
The Old Parsonage, including outbuilding to rear	II	1172581
No. 31	II	1172584
The Old Post Office	II	1172600
Nos. 4 and 5	II	1172604
No. 28	II	1172615
No. 20	II	1305056
No. 24, including front boundary wall to road	II	1305058
Nos. 22 and 23	II	1323328
K6 at SY 91644 7984	II	1407576