



Cerne Abbas, Charminster, Sydling St Nicholas & Godmanstone Conservation Area Appraisal

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Introduction & Executive Summary

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The District Council is required by Section 71 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. This can be achieved through Conservation Area Appraisals.

West Dorset has 79 Conservation Areas and the council has agreed on a programme of character appraisals. Cerne Abbas, Charminster, Sydling St Nicholas and Godmanstone Conservation Areas form part of this appraisal work, grouped together because of their geographical proximity.

The four Conservation Areas were designated as follows:

- Cerne Abbas, July 1971;
- Charminster, December 1973, amended in February 1990;
- Sydling St Nicholas, June 1973;
- Godmanstone, November 1990.

In order that designation is effective in conserving the special interest, planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the Conservation Areas' character. Appraisals are therefore essential tools for the planning process. They are also of prime importance for any enhancement works and may provide a longer-term basis for effective management of Conservation Areas.

The appraisal document is prepared following advice from English Heritage. There are **common core elements** (planning policy context, landscape setting, historic development and archaeology, introduction to the spatial analysis section, community involvement, general condition, local generic guidance, recommendations for management action and developing management proposals) that either relate to all four settlements or are linked by the need to provide a reasoned overview of the whole area, highlighting the broader characteristics. There are also more detailed **place specific descriptions** (character analysis and definition of the special interest of the Conservation Area), which concentrate on each Conservation Area, and will only be found within each individual chapter.

The appraisal, including initial ideas on management needs and priorities, was the subject of a public consultation (July-August 2007), during which, an information event was held in the villages, manned by district council officers. Following consultation, officers recommended a number of amendments to the appraisal and in December 2007, the district council adopted the appraisal as a technical document supporting policies in the West Dorset District Local Plan (Adopted 2006).

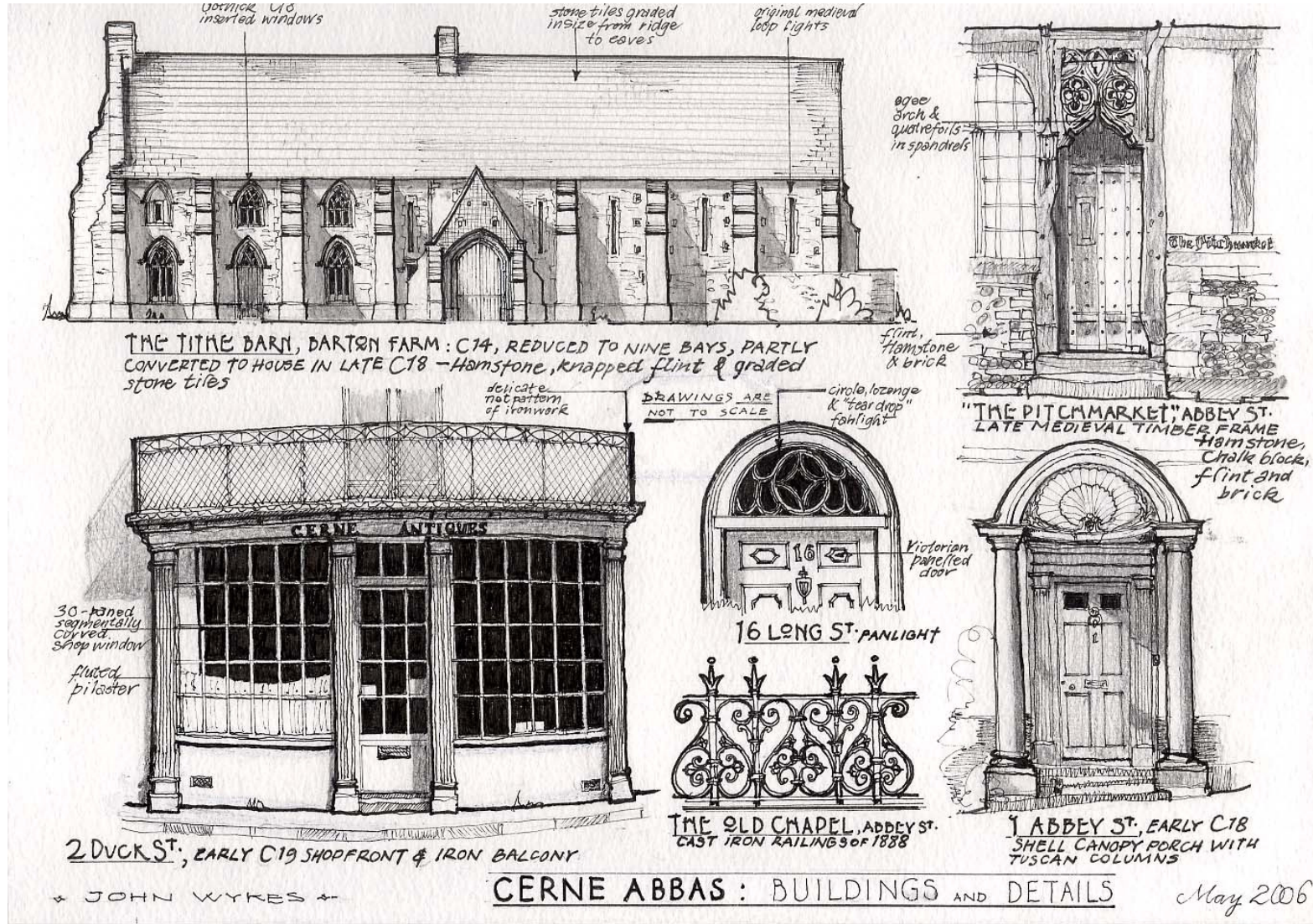


Fig 1. Buildings & details of Cerne Abbas

The **Executive Summary** sets out the key characteristics of each village and any issues associated with them:

Cerne Abbas

The key points of quality analysis are:

- A fine landscape setting, with dramatic topography, an attractive river course, mature trees, hedged lanes and views out from the settlement core;
- Good clean edges to the settlement to the north and NE and a potentially strong boundary to the south;
- Related to this, well defined entry points, particularly from the south, on the A352 and the east, down Piddle Lane and Alton Lane;
- A rich archaeological heritage, with prehistoric earthworks and settlement sites, the Giant, the Abbey site and surviving buildings, an intact village plan and many plot divisions, post-medieval larger houses and cottages and industrial sites;
- 74 Listed Building entries, including a Grade I church, former Abbey buildings and Abbey Farm, several large gentry houses and farmhouses, and a strong underpinning of smaller cottages and public buildings;
- About 15 important local buildings of character and/or group value;
- Coherent groups of Listed and unlisted buildings, boundary walls, trees and details, notably on The Folly, Long and Abbey Streets and the Abbey Farm buildings;
- Consistent use of local flint and chalk block, thatch and vernacular building details that give an overall unity to the village;
- Some good details, including shop fronts, doorways, stone plaques and Abbey fragments and ironwork.

There are a few problems: the pressure for infill housing development with potential loss of gardens and boundaries; poor boundaries on some key sites; buildings requiring major intervention, particularly in parts of Mill Lane; the need to provide a firmer southern boundary to the village; and the problem of parked cars at the Long and Abbey Street junction.

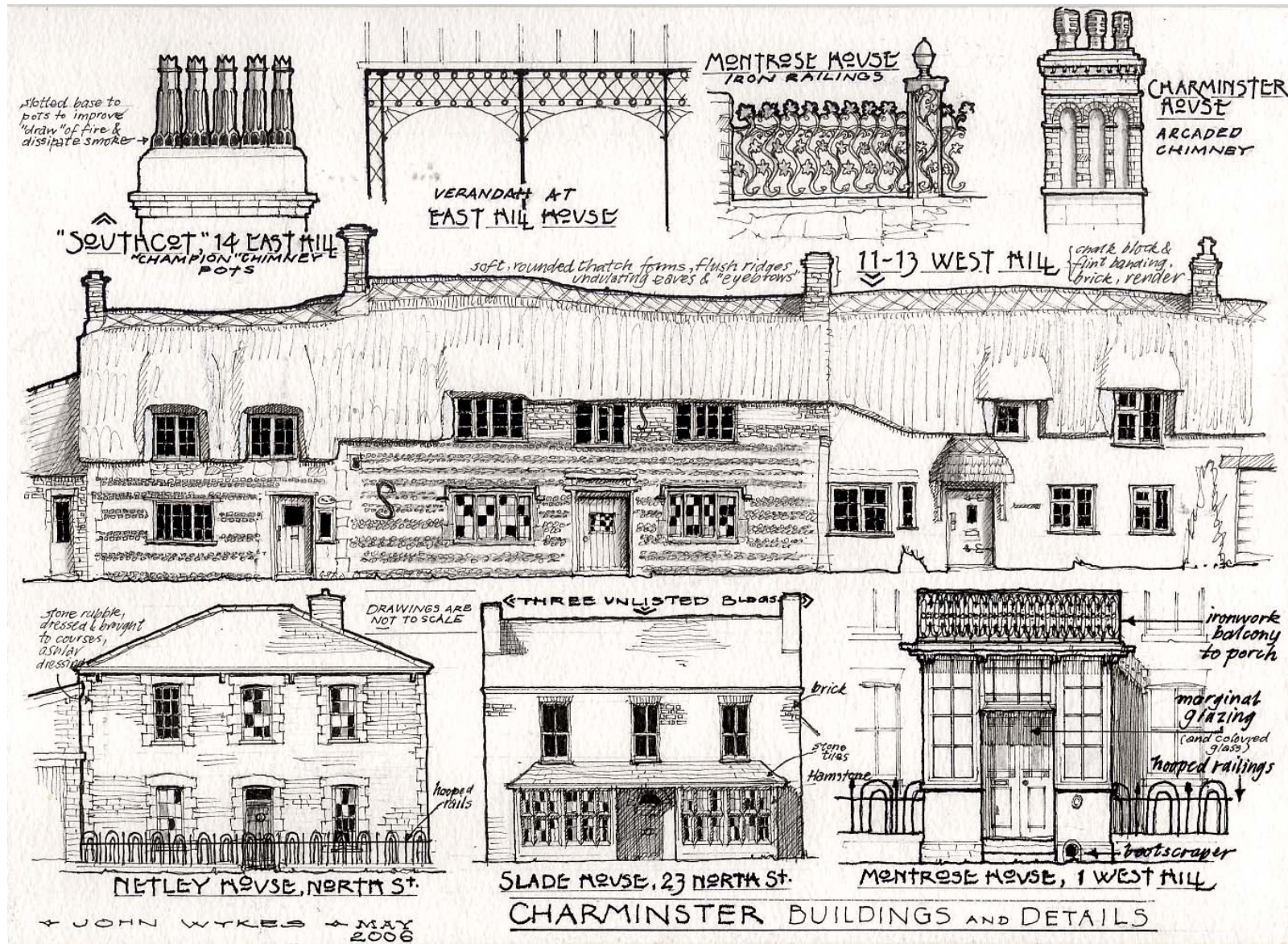


Fig 2. Buildings & details of Charminster

Charminster

The particular qualities of the Conservation Area are:

- Areas of good quality landscape adjacent to or within the Conservation Area, particularly the river and mill channels, water meadows, several large gardens and areas of amenity green space;
- Important walls, hedges and trees that enhance the setting of buildings and link groups together;
- A rich archaeological heritage, notably the sites of six medieval deserted settlements in the wider Parish (one in the Conservation Area), cultivation remains and prehistoric earthworks;
- Within the village core, a largely intact historic plan form, with many of the public and private key buildings intact or converted to other uses;
- 21 Listed Building entries, including two Grade I buildings (the Church tower and earlier portions of Wolfeton House are of particular significance) and a nationally rare building type in the Grade II* Riding House;
- About 20 important local buildings of character and group value;
- Coherent groups of buildings around The Square; North Street; between West and East Hills, around the Church and Wolfeton Manor; and around Wolfeton House;
- A rich palette of building materials and details, including local limestone, flint, chalk block and cob, smooth renders, brick, stone tiles, thatch, clay plain tiles and pantiles; there is a range of architectural detail from the C11, late medieval period, C16, early C17, C18 and early/mid C19; there is some good ironwork seen in railings, gates, balconies and verandas.

The detriments include the pressure for infill housing development with potential loss of gardens and boundaries; the condition of the Riding House; erosion of details on a number of good quality, unlisted buildings; the visual impacts of extensive areas of development on the landscape setting and on the historic fabric; and the loss of or damage to historic boundaries.

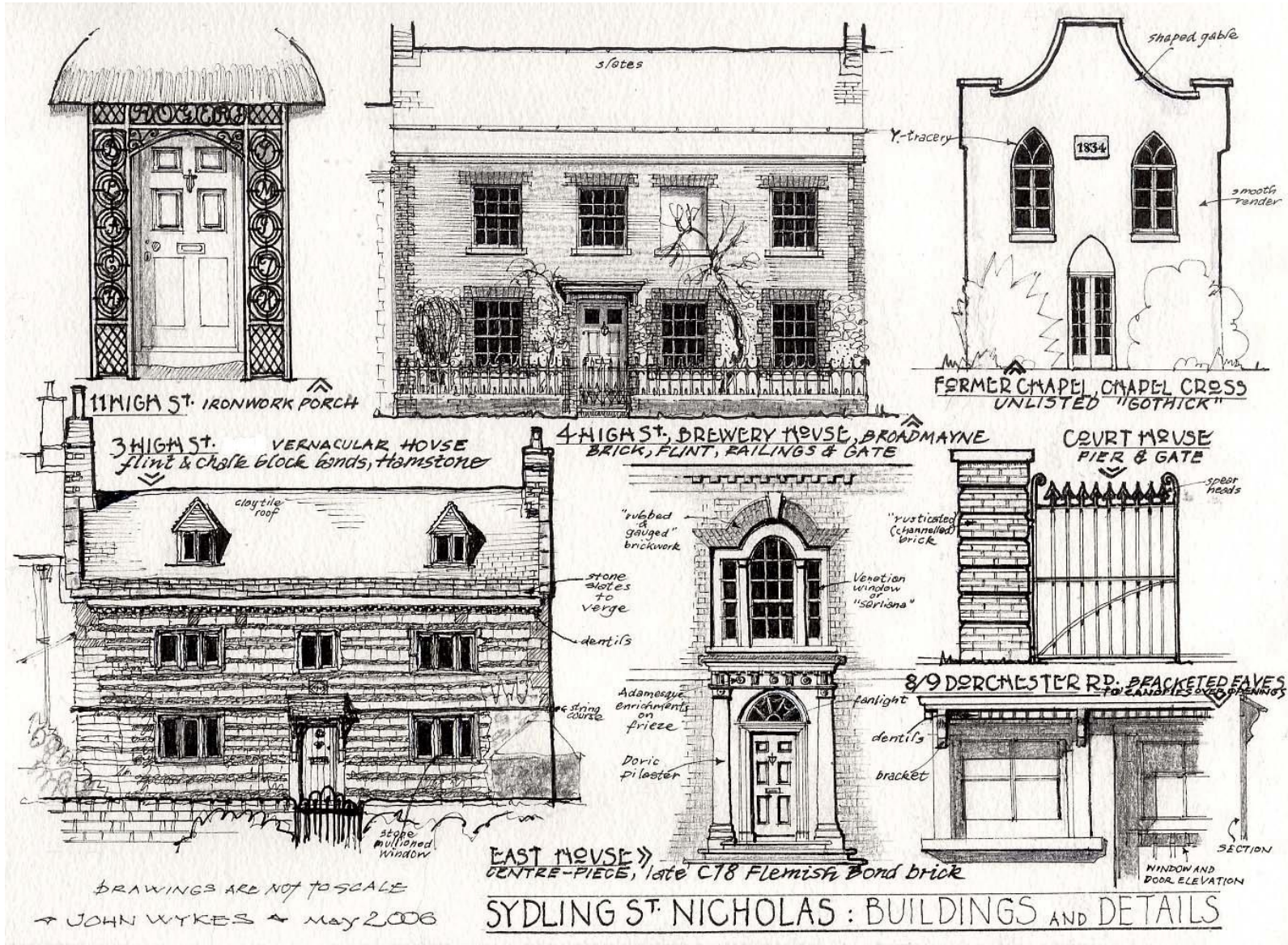


Fig 3. Buildings & details of Sydling St Nicholas

Sydling St Nicholas

The overall quality of Sydling St Nicholas may be summarised:

- A distinctive and attractive landscape setting, in a chalk valley set amongst rolling hills and by a river, with some fine trees, within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Well defined entry points, on the north by Chapel Cross and from the south, by the crossroads with East Street and Church Lane;
- A particularly undeveloped western edge, around the churchyard and Court House gardens, with mature trees and good views of escarpments and combes;
- A rich archaeological heritage, ranging from prehistoric earthworks, settlement sites and field systems, a medieval deer park, remnants of an open field system, the garden history related to the Court House and Second World War features;
- A largely intact village plan;
- 50 Listed Building entries, of which one is Grade I and four are Grade II*, with a fine Parish Church, several large gentry houses and farmhouses, a late C16 Tithe Barn and a strong underpinning of smaller cottages;
- Over a dozen unlisted buildings of character and group value;
- Coherent groups of Listed and good quality unlisted buildings, boundaries, trees and details, particularly on High Street, East Street, and the Church, Court House and Tithe Barn;
- A rich mixture of building materials, with flint, chalk block, imported limestones, render, brick, thatch, tile and slate;
- Details such as date stones, plaques, signs and ironwork.

Problems include the pressure for infill housing development with potential loss of gardens and boundaries; the poor relationship with the village core and some areas of modern development; some individual poor quality modern infills, loss of details on some Listed and unlisted buildings of character; a weak boundary to The Greyhound pub; intrusive garaging and car parking; a wirescape in High Street; concerns over the condition of the Tithe Barn; a broken DCC sign post and the potential for improving the grounds around the Village Hall.

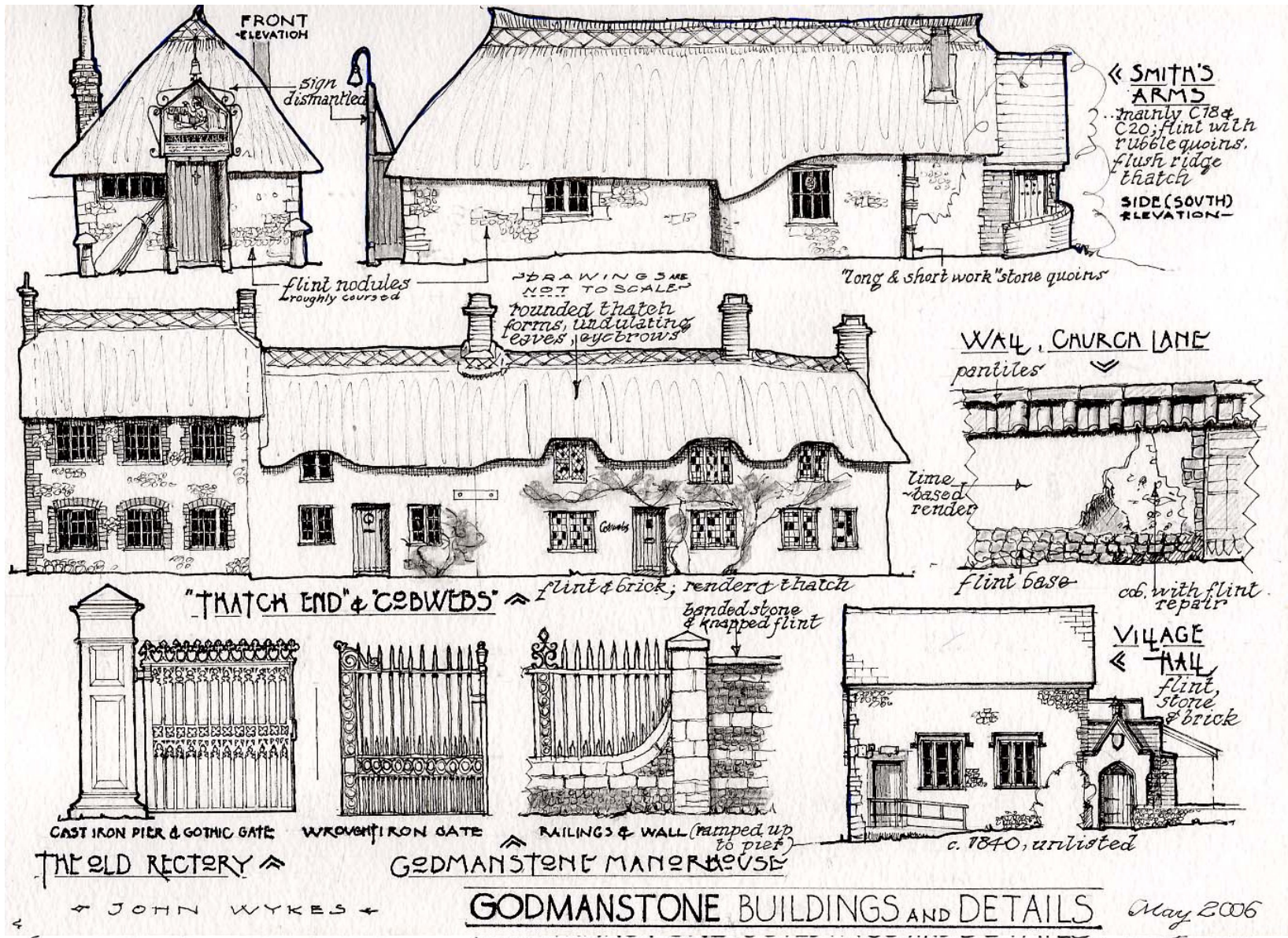


Fig 4. Buildings & details of Godmanstone

Godmanstone

The key features are:

- A setting typical of chalk valleys, with significant ridges and slopes and a contrasting riverside character with watercourses, mill leats, trees and green space;
- A strong linear plan form, with intact buildings and uses;
- 13 Listed Building entries, with an interesting small church, several gentry houses of differing character and detailing, unspoilt smaller cottages and a lacing of simple but characterful agricultural buildings;
- A number of important local buildings and structures of design quality and/or group value;
- Several good, coherent groups of buildings, walls and trees, particularly around the Church Lane and Manor Farm track that run off the main road;
- Firm edges to most of the settlement, with definite north and south edges and clean entry points;
- A wide range of building materials, typical of chalk valley areas and some attractive detailing, such as flint and stone banding, simple thatch forms and several early C19 ironwork railings, gates and gate piers;
- Examples of sensitive conversions of older buildings to new uses.

Problems include the current closure of the Smiths Arms pub and the redundant Listed portion; the large gap created by the pub car park; a wirescape in the southern part of the village; and some assertive modern development whose visual impact is further emphasised by non-native hedging and planting.

Common issues

- The importance of details in repairing or maintaining structures: respecting local thatching traditions, avoiding gentrification, using lime mortar for pointing repairs and avoiding strap pointing or other projecting types;
- The problems of sourcing materials where local quarries have closed and the care needed in matching colours and textures of available sources;
- The number (about fifty) of important local buildings in the villages, most of which have group value and some of which have definite visual qualities and may be potential additions to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest;
- The importance of trees, green wedges and gaps and the wider landscape setting of the conservation areas;
- The gaps in archaeological knowledge, particularly the monastic site at Cerne, village growth and shrinkage, vernacular houses and industrial archaeology.

The Planning Policy Context

Contained within the **West Dorset District Local Plan (Adopted 2006)** are a number of planning policies relevant to one or more of the four settlements:

- *Safeguarding Assets*, Policy SA1 seeks to protect the natural beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); development must be in keeping with the landscape character of the area (SA3); protection is given to areas of Land of Local Landscape Importance (SA6); Policies SA9, SA10 and SA13 seek to protect natural environment assets, particularly Sites of Special Scientific Importance, Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites; SA18, 19 and 20 cover the demolition, alterations to, and the settings of Listed Buildings; SA21 seeks to protect the character or appearance of Conservation Areas; SA22 is concerned with demolition within a Conservation Area; and SA23 relates to the protection of sites of national archaeological significance.
- *Avoiding Hazards*: Policies AH1 and AH9 relate to restrictions on development in Flood Risk Zones and Consultation Zones due to Unpleasant Emissions respectively;
- *Settlement Policy*: Policy SS1 relates to development within Defined Development Boundaries (DDB); SS3 relates to development outside the DDBs;
- *Housing, Employment and Tourism, Community Issues, and Transport and Infrastructure*: there are a number of general policies relating to these issues and associated land use;
- *Design and Amenity*: a specific chapter contains several policies regarding design and amenity considerations, including Policy DA1, relating to retention of woodland, trees and hedgerows and other important landscape features.

West Dorset 2000, a Survey of the Built and Natural Environment of West Dorset, provides a description of archaeological and built environment assets and it includes bullet points on broad generic characteristics (related to 22 Landscape Character Areas). It was adopted by the District Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in February 2002. It is a useful reference for this current document.

The **Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004-2009** contains a number of relevant policies relating to the **Historic Environment** (historic landscapes, archaeology, historic parks and gardens) in Policy Objectives H1-9; the **Built Environment** (historic buildings, Conservation Areas and other developed areas) in Policy Objectives BE1-9; and **Landscape** in Policy Objectives L1-14.

The West Dorset District Local Plan and West Dorset 2000 are available at district council offices, whilst the Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan is available from Dorset County Council. The documents can be viewed on www.dorsetforyou.com and main libraries will hold relevant printed copies. Information on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is also available on www.dorsetforyou.com

Assessment of Special Interest

This includes two common core elements: location and setting; and historic development and archaeology; and a series of individual settlement descriptions of spatial and character analysis, providing detail on topics such as spaces within the developed areas, important edges, key views and vistas and a whole range of character components, such as land uses, building plan forms and types, the architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and structures, local details and building materials, the contribution made by greenery and the extent of loss, intrusion or damage.

A. Location and Setting

The four settlements are situated in the central part of the District, north and NNW of Dorchester, in river valleys associated with the River Frome and its tributaries. Charminster is sited about 2kms north of the main Frome Valley, near its confluence with the River Cerne. Most of the historic settlement relates to the shallow valley of the Cerne, either in a linear layout above its floodplain or associated with a crossing point (near the Parish Church). The village has moderately high hills to the NW (Charminster Down, rising to 150m AOD) and east. The wide valley of the Frome lies to the south. Godmanstone and Cerne Abbas lie further to the north, in the Cerne valley, about nine and twelve kms respectively from Dorchester. Godmanstone has developed in a linear fashion along the A352, entirely on the west bank of the river. Hills rising to over 200m AOD flank the valley. Cerne is a markedly nucleated settlement, sited on both sides of the river, at a route centre and with the main A352 as a western outlier. It is sited in a flat space between a number of chalk spurs, which rise to over 240m AOD on the south (Black Hill), east (Yelcombe Bottom) and NE (Giant Hill)

Sydling St Nicholas is set in a parallel chalk valley, on the Sydling Water, which flows south to the Frome at Grimston. The village is developed in a generally linear fashion either side of the watercourse, with a backdrop of rounded hills, rising to over 200m, to the north, east and west.

The general landscape is attractive, with grand sweeps of chalk downland, steep valley slopes and verdant river courses, with meadows and trees. The area is geologically dominated by the chalk uplands of the South Wessex Downs. The four villages lie within the Chalk Upland, Valley Slope and Valley Floor landscape character areas (as identified in the West Dorset 2000 project) and Charminster also has an area of Meadow Pasture, related to the Frome. All the settlements, except Charminster, are within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

B. Historic development and archaeology

The four parishes have a rich and varied archaeology, with in excess of 170-recorded sites or finds on the Dorset Sites and Monuments Record, of which about twenty are Scheduled Monuments. The chalk downland has a very rich prehistoric archaeology, with a long barrow on Smacam Down, bowl barrows at Godmanstone, many other Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age dykes, settlement sites and field systems on the chalk downs and valley sides adjacent to all four villages. The Cerne Giant is perhaps the most spectacular example of landscape manipulation, whose date is debatable, as he may originate in the prehistoric, Roman or post-medieval periods. The Giant is adjacent to The Trendle, a rectangular earthwork above the chalk-cut figure.



Fig 5 Location plan
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Near Charminster are two known Roman settlement sites, at Charlton Higher Down and Charminster Down and the modern A37 largely follows the course of a Roman road. The medieval archaeology is extensive and rich: Cerne Abbey was a Saxon Benedictine foundation that became one of the Order's larger, richer houses. The church and conventual buildings seem to have disappeared shortly after the dissolution in 1539, but there remain a number of buildings adjacent to the precinct, notably the outer gatehouse (incorporated in Abbey Farm); the former guest house or Abbot's Lodging; the early C15 porch to the Abbot's Hall; and a barn. There are massive and extensive earthworks to the east of the Abbey site that may represent an early ecclesiastical site or some form of post-medieval activity. At the SW edge of the village, the massive Tithe Barn, in truncated form, has been partly converted into a house. The monastic church seems to be located in the later graveyard, where there are remains of St Augustine's Well. The conventual buildings possibly lay in the area north of the churchyard (RCHM, but Penn shows a tentative location to the south, related to the essential water supply for consumption and drainage). There is much medieval building detail reused in village buildings. The medieval town seems to have been of some importance, related to the Abbey and the effects of the Dissolution must have been severe on its economy and social well-being.

The four villages each have largely medieval parish churches: Cerne's has C13 and C15 portions, with a fine late medieval west tower, possibly indicating Abbey patronage. Charminster has substantial early C12 evidence and, again, a late medieval showpiece tower, prominently marked with the initials of its patron, Thomas Trenchard. Sydling is mainly a C15 rebuild, with later alterations and extensions. Godmanstone has mid-C12 chancel and south door arches, C15 elements and early C16 south aisle. Late medieval houses are represented by Wolfeton, at Charminster and the range of partly timber-framed (guest?) houses in Abbey Street, Cerne.

There are deserted medieval settlement sites at Wolfeton, Charlton, Herrison and Burton. There is a clearly defined earthwork to the south of the Cerne Tithe Barn that may represent settlement shrinkage or movement and there is another area north of the Abbey site. Some house plots in Long and Abbey Streets are fairly regular and may indicate an element of planning. Acreman St may also represent the development of a medieval suburb. There are earthworks associated with deer parks at Cerne and Sydling St Nicholas and extensive remains of lynchets and ridge and furrow fields elsewhere. Undoubtedly, some track ways and hedges have significance in landscape history, as visual features or as boundaries.

There are some significant post-medieval gentry houses, notably the C16/C17 Abbey House at Cerne, incorporating early and late medieval material; the Court House and Vicarage at Sydling; the early C18 Charminster House; Godmanstone Manor and Manor Farm at Godmanstone. Cerne Abbas has a wide range of larger houses including the substantial New Inn, the smaller Royal Oak, and several C18 and early C19 houses in Long and Abbey Streets. The C17 and C18 town had a guildhall, corn market and shambles. At Wolfeton House, there is a nationally rare example of a late C16 Riding House. The barn at Court Farm, Sydling, has a date of 1597 on its timbers.

The Victorian contribution is not insignificant: there is a Village School and former Police Station at Cerne. Modern buildings have replaced Charminster's school and that of Sydling St Nicholas has become a house. There remains the shell of a water mill at Godmanstone and Charminster had its own corn mill. There are remains of Cerne's mill in Mill Lane and Sydling has buildings related to its former Upper and Lower Mills. The River Cerne and Sydling Water both had eight water wheels for corn milling. Cerne was a fairly substantial centre for local industry, noted in the C19 for malting and brewing, a tannery, silk and glove making outworking and the production of ticking, a heavy cotton cloth. Godmanstone had its own small brewery of

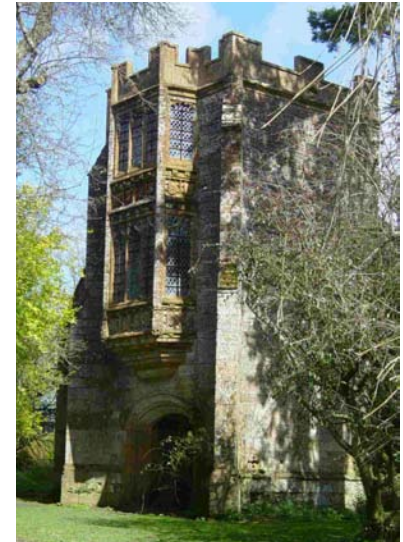


Fig 6. Abbot's Porch, Cerne Abbas



Fig 7. Parish Church, Sydling St Nicholas

1842, which was bought out by John Groves of Weymouth in 1905. The Cerne Valley was the first choice for the route of the Somerset and Weymouth Railway's Yeovil to Weymouth route (in the 1850s), but landowner opposition caused a successful choice of the Frome Valley. Cerne's history may have been very different, with substantial population and economic growth, rather than a slow decline in both and the current economy based on tourism and residential demand.

The archaeological resource continues into the C20, with World War II rifle ranges on the edge of Sydling St Nicholas.

The **archaeological issues** are:

- Lack of understanding of the resource, particularly the Cerne Abbey site, the origins of the Giant, industrial archaeology and vernacular houses (only Listed Buildings have some description, mainly confined to the exterior);
- The potential for research into the street pattern and plot development of Cerne Abbas, in particular, undoubtedly constrained by the preponderance of Listed Buildings.

The latter issue may be addressed by the creation of a partnership project – the Dorset Historic Towns Project (Extensive Urban Survey) - designed to collate known material on historic towns' (including Cerne Abbas) historic development and urban topography, drawing on Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER) resources, and further work on the historic fabric and townscape of the selected settlements.

C Spatial and character analysis of each village

Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside and it is very difficult to generalise. Within Conservation Areas (usually the historic core of the village), there are unique progressions of spaces, with varying degrees of physical and psychological enclosure and exposure, depending upon the density and height of buildings, their position relative to the highway, the character of boundaries and the dominance or dearth of trees, views out to countryside or into the village core, and the effects of topographical levels – the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths. These are all elements of **townscape**, a method of giving visual coherence and organisation to the mixture of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the village environment. Townscape enables places to be described, using three elements:

- The sequence of views obtained in passing through an area, depending upon road alignment, positions of buildings, views etc. The chain of events is usefully termed *serial vision*;
- The feelings of relative exposure and enclosure depending upon the size and shape of spaces and buildings;
- Content: colour, texture, scale, style, personality and the many little details of materials, street furniture, signs and other local distinctiveness characteristics.

C1 Cerne Abbas

Cerne Abbas is a large village with an extensive Conservation Area and a very significant number of Listed Buildings and unlisted buildings of value. Although there are potentially sub-areas that have differences in development density or layout and particular historical influences, the Conservation Area has an overall physical coherence and interdependence between core and historic suburbs or development adjuncts. It is therefore proposed to describe the settlement as one character area.

Spatial Analysis

The wider setting of Cerne Abbas shows a settlement on the valley floor, astride a river and slightly offset from the crossroads of a main north-south route from the Frome Valley to Sherborne (A352) and an east-west route from an eastern ridge route and a road from the Piddle Valley (Piddle Lane) to the Sydling Valley. The east-west route runs through the village along Alton Lane and Long Street. The main coach road ran into The Folly and up Duck Street, back onto the Sherborne Road and Acreman Street was a narrow road with a junction to the main route. The A352/ Folly/ Sydling road crossroads only took their present form after a road improvement in 1960.

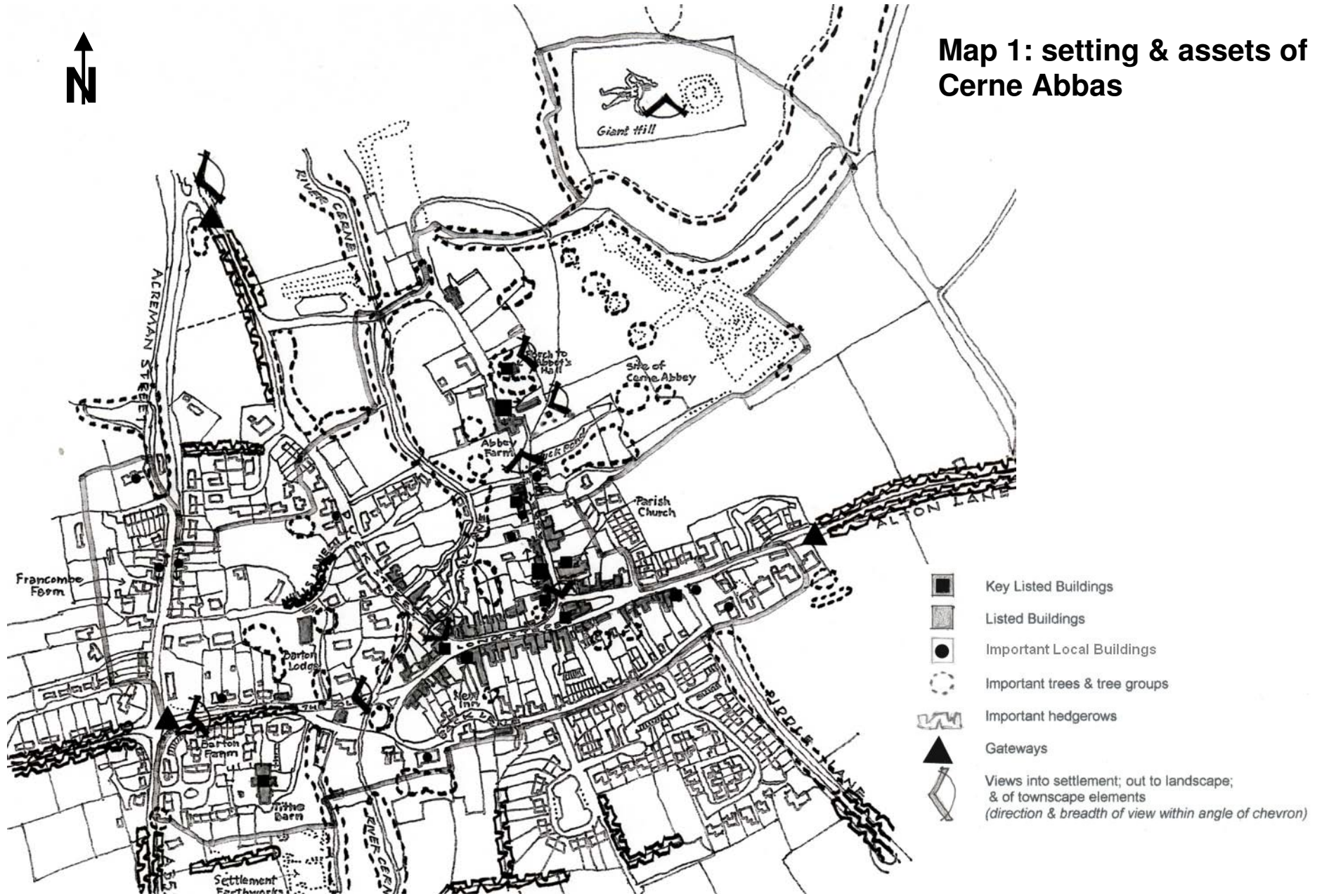
The village has a very definite nucleated **plan form**, with a densely developed core of mixed uses on Long and Abbey Streets, formed into a T-shape, with the parish church, possible site of the guildhall, two public houses, gentry houses and a number of shops around the junction between the two streets. The medieval town was owned by the Abbey and grew at its gates, represented by Abbey Farm, at the northern end of Abbey Street. There is a range of late medieval houses south of the former outer gateway, which may have been purpose-built guesthouses for the Abbey. The Parish Church is located on the southern end of the same street, near the main Long Street junction and a minor link (Blood and Guts Lane) to the eastern end of Long Street, with the Market House or Guildhall set in an island adjacent to the former market place, which was presumably either side of the island, where Long Street widens out. The Royal Oak pub may represent encroachment of the market space, in the mid-C16.



Fig 8. Abbey Street looking towards Abbey Farm



Map 1: setting & assets of Cerne Abbas



Long Street has a parallel southern Back Lane and there are two western development adjuncts, Duck and Acreman Streets. All of these seem to be, at least, medieval features, the latter, possibly, representing a medieval suburb, indicated by its name (identical to a medieval street in Sherborne) and its position, as a linear development along a subsidiary north-south route. Older maps show development as far north as the junction with Duck Street and there appears to have been shrinkage, related to population decline in the second half of the C19 (from 1343 in 1851 to 643 in 1901). Mill Lane and Wills Lane provide links between main routes and the former obviously relates to the former corn mill, which is probably of C18 date but closed in 1933. C18 maps show a link between Abbey Street, across Long Street, to Back Lane and thence along the surviving track to Black Hill.

Building plots within the historic core tend to be long and thin, with most properties tight on the road line (but with a greater preponderance of front gardens towards the edges of the core) and long rear gardens. This may be evidence for medieval planning. Modern development has tended to be in the form of extensions to the historic core (Abbey Close, the southern edge of Long Street and an area west of the A352/Sydling Lane crossroad) or as infill and building conversion (Riverside Close on Duck Street, Barton Farm and Barton Lodge).

The spatial character of the village is complex and richly varied. Development is reasonably compact, with clean edges to surrounding countryside, apart from the small extension (Acreman Close) along the Sydling Road and the Chescombe and Abbots Walk closes to the south. This southern boundary is currently very much in a state of balance: new development could and should have strong edges to the fine countryside towards Black Hill, in the form of hedge planting. The grounds of Abbey Farm, the former Abbey precinct, continue to form a relatively undeveloped area to the north; there is no development south of the Tithe Barn, or on the A352, south of the Barton Farm access. In the NE, there is very limited modern extension to the historic ribbon of Acreman Street and green space forms a good edge to Duck Street, although Springfield rather compromises the clarity. The eastern edge, along Alton Lane, has been encroached by a limited amount of recent development. The modern Surgery has a good new hedge boundary, although the older Abbey Close has flimsy fences to the playing field to its east. Apart from the Abbey Farm grounds, there is undeveloped green space on the northern side of Wills Lane, east and south of the Tithe Barn and, although surrounded by development, a sense of *countryside in the town* along the eastern portion of Mill Lane.

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the Conservation Area

It might be useful to describe a route across the Conservation Area, from west to east and north, to characterise a representative mixture of spaces, landmarks, views and sensations of relative enclosure and exposure: the elements of townscape.

The A352 approaches are both interesting: from the north, there is a fine view of The Giant and Giant Hill, across the well-designed car park, a short ribbon of older cottages, Francombe Farm and Swanhills Camp Site and modern infill; from the south, there are wider views of the chalk spurs and ridges of the Cerne Valley and the church tower, and a sudden transition to the village, with a glimpse of the bulk of the Tithe Barn. The main entry point is by The Folly, with a first view of a subtly curving street, flanked by short rows of older cottages to the left (north) and a ramp up to the Barton Farm development to the right (south). There are large trees just on the second part of the road curve, overhanging the street and forming a backdrop to the older cottages. A hedge bank runs along the southern part of the lane and the access to the Tithe Barn rises modestly to a footpath and informal front garden to reveal the tremendous flank of the Tithe Barn. On The Folly, Barton



Fig 9. Properties in Long Street



Fig 10. View of the countryside from the south side of the Tithe Barn

Lodge is set above the road, surrounded by fine trees and new infill development. The attractive flint and stone mix to the right is followed by a blocking of the eastern view by a curving terrace set obliquely to the approach route. A small green marks an entry to Back Lane and the beginning of Long Street. Back Lane is a sinuous corridor, with a mixture of older houses and modern development, with some glimpses of the Church tower and, from the modern closes to the south, extensive views of the village edge and the wider landscape.

Back on Long Street, a red K6 telephone box sits on the green. The road line curves left and right, tightly edged by more or less continuous development, and the Church tower rises above the roofs on the approach to the junction with Back Lane. All of the building lines around the junction curve subtly, creating a sequence of views and partial closure. Duck Street has a curving line, adding to the interest and each side of the junction is marked by good early C19 shop fronts, the western one's central doorway being set exactly on the corner. To the right, The New Inn dominates the frontage of Long Street, with a rich mixture of building materials and colours. The eye is led through its carriage arch into a back area. Its adjoining car park creates a gap in the frontages and lessens the visual tension, but Long Street's continuous run of historic buildings, set on the edges of the carriageway or pavement, raises expectations again. Varying styles, materials and details excite the eye and the whole of Long Street becomes visible, in a long funnel, partly blocked by The Royal Oak pub, but with a very narrow view of the rest of the street beyond.

One detached brick and flint house, The Old Manse and Manse Cottage, is set back in a garden and a green space is a contrast to the previous urbanity. Nearby is a well-designed bus shelter and a curving boundary wall and the creeper-clad front of the Royal Oak and the adjacent Market House, fronting a minor triangular space, and, suddenly, the tall tower of the Parish Church becomes totally dominant, set right on the road line of Abbey Street. There is a fine view northward, framed by a stone classical porch at the corner (west) and the jettied fronts of medieval timber-framed buildings and the mass of the Church to the right (east). The grassed churchyard, with War Memorial, is rather bare and slightly reduces the impact of the turn from Long to Abbey Streets.

There is a small diversion past the narrow defile (Blood and Guts Lane) at the Long Street side of The Royal Oak and back behind it to the bottom end of Abbey Street, where the attractive columned porch of No. 1 can be seen in a framed view.

Abbey Street is clearly terminated by a stone, gabled house in the distance and by large trees and the green hump of Giant Hill, but a slight incline means that its intermediate character is revealed slowly, with an unfolding of timbered, rendered, brick and stone houses and former barns, a small watercourse on the east side, a gazebo-like modern entry north of the Church tower, glimpses of the polychrome former chapel and farmyard by The Barn, and an unexpected roadside area of water, with waterfowl and landscaping at the NE end. The views back to Long Street are noteworthy, with a sequence of two storey cottages and the spectacular form of the tower, backed by the lower roofs of Long Street.

Abbey Farm has an informal grassed area and a more private garden in front of its southern façade. The walker may then squeeze along to the right, up a narrow track, past the archway and gates into the churchyard, enjoying views of woodland and Giant Hill and, perhaps, reflecting that this was the position of the Abbey's west front. At the back of Abbey Farm, a courtyard reveals more beautifully textured stone and flint walling and the unrestored and picturesque former monastic guesthouses. A verdant garden leads to the early C16 front of the porch to the vanished Abbot's Hall. Beyond, through the arch, is an empty pasture with earthworks, woodland and Giant Hill.



Fig 11. Long Street with the New Inn on the right



Fig 12. View into Abbey Street

Returning to Abbey Street, a turn west down a narrow, muddy lane leads to a sharp turn, the sound and sight of channelled water and arrival in a curious precinct of generally run-down buildings, Mill Lane. This runs out into Duck Street, with a more-or-less continuous run of buildings on its east side and water and gardens on the west. Returning southwards, the street narrows appreciably and buildings on either side of the Long Street junction perfectly frame a view of The New Inn.

If the walk had been continued northwards beyond the Abbot's Hall Porch, over the probable site of monastic buildings and through the woodland, up Giant Hill. The chalk-cut figure of The Giant would have been skirted (unintelligible at close quarters) and the summit would reveal a fine view of the whole village and its setting.

Key views and vistas are the view of The Giant from the A352 car park; the sequential views from The Folly into Long Street; the northern glimpses up Duck Lane and Abbey Street; the view from Abbey Farm down Abbey Street to the Church tower; the view across the pond towards St Augustine's Well, views of the churchyard, Abbey site and Giant Hill from the track at the side of Abbey Farm and through the Abbot's Hall Porch; from Giant Hill over the village and from other high points outside the Conservation Area, Yelcombe Bottom and Piddle Lane, as roads climb up to the ridge to the east of the village.

The obvious **landmarks** are the Church tower and the Giant, from distant views and, in the case of the tower, from within the village, and the Tithe Barn from a limited area around the A352/Folly junction.

Character Analysis

Building Uses

Existing uses reflect the village's primary functions as a residential and tourism centre. The Parish Church, Abbey House and several other gentry houses, a range of smaller houses and cottages, Housing association and sheltered housing reflect the existing social hierarchy. The village school has survived and there are other modern amenities, such as a surgery and village hall. There remain three public houses and a range of shops, including a Post Office.

Historically, the Abbey had an extensive range of buildings for different functions: church, conventual buildings, guesthouses, barns, mill, gateways, fishponds, gardens and steward's office. Of these, some of the guesthouses and two barns have become houses and a veterinary surgery and the south gate is part of Abbey Farm. In the post-medieval period, Cerne had a variety of economic activity, with several breweries, a tanyard, forge, cloth manufacture and outworking for the silk and glove-making industries. Mill Lane was a focus for some of these uses and was also the location for a late C18 private school, replaced by a National School in 1870, and a Salvation Army Citadel, closed at the end of the C19. The village had thirteen public houses in the mid-C19 and population and economic decline, fires and road improvements have accounted for most of the losses. Some have become private houses, such as The Old Bell in Long Street and The Elephant and Castle (now Sound O' Water) in Duck Street. The Police Station and Court Room of 1860, in Long Street, have been converted to houses, as has the 1888 Congregational Chapel in Abbey Street.

Building Types and Layouts

The Abbey layout is largely unknown, but Benedictine plans followed broad principles, with an outer court of guest houses and service buildings, entered by a gateway; conventual buildings (chapter house, dormitory, refectory, kitchens, warming house, infirmary etc) north or south of the church, depending upon drainage and topography; and, later in the medieval



Fig 13. The churchyard



Fig 14. From Abbey Street, a view across the pond towards St Augustine's Well

period, a separate, more commodious Abbot's lodging near the outer court, where visitors could be met and business undertaken. A corn mill and barns were usually related to the wider land holding. The surviving buildings relate to other known examples: the luxurious late medieval Abbot's Hall by the inner precinct, two storey, with a show porch and remnants of large hall and services and cellars at ground floor. The Guest House at the rear of Abbey Farm was more probably an earlier abbot's lodging, and, as such, had two floors and a first floor oriel window. The other guesthouses in Abbey Street, Nos. 3-6, may have been built as tenements, with ground floor shops, to rent. They are two storey, timber framed, with a first floor jetty and stone bressumers forming firebreaks. The outer gate is subsumed within Abbey Farm and only reveals fragments of the former whole. The Tithe Barn (see fig 1) is a fine example of the large, multi-bayed medieval types, of cruciform shape, due to two large cart entrances and a cross passage (overall length truncated in the post-medieval period to the existing nine bays, length 130').

The Parish Church is a good example of a C14-early C16 accretion and rebuilding to create a chancel, nave, aisles, south porch and west tower. The tower and nave clerestory probably attest to late medieval prosperity and monastic patronage.

Cerne Historical Society has evidence that buildings are older than that suggested by their C18 and C19 appearance. Such information is available on the society's website.

Post-medieval houses vary greatly in their planning. Abbey Farm is an agglomeration of medieval and C18 elements, in two basic units, the former gate and porter's lodge and an attached former cow-house that became servants' quarters. Barton Farm is an example of a farmhouse and attached barn in a continuous range. No. 10 Back Lane (Chescombe Cottage) has a particularly interesting plan: originally two rooms, with a heated kitchen/hall and extended by two further rooms in line with a doubling-up of the now central chimney and subsequent conversion into two room cottages and a final restoration to one house. There are several larger former farmhouses in Long Street, Nos. 38 Crown House and 44 The Old Farmhouse that show organic layouts and accretion of parts over time. The New Inn possibly dates from the C13 at its eastern end, becoming a coaching inn by C18 with seven front windows and an integral carriage entrance. The Old Bell has an off-centre entrance and a substantial rear wing. Most houses would have been built as single pile structures, but were subsequently extended by rear wings, pentice lean-tos and a doubling-up of the plan to form a double pile. In Duck Street, Forge Cottage was originally an attached cottage and schoolroom at right angles.

Larger late C18 and early C19 houses tend to have symmetrical planning, with central doorways and hallways, exemplified by Barton Lodge (circa 1828) and The Old Manse. The latter is a detached house, set back behind a small front garden, with an attached service wing, now Manse Cottage. Two storeys are the norm, with occasional dormer windows. 1 Long Street (Brook House) has its gable end at right angles to the street line and is likely C17 in origin with other phases of development, such as a northern, cob extension, in the C18. Most medium sized houses tend to be attached, in a row, parallel to the street. Nos. 2 and 4 (Holly Lodge) Long Street are mid-C19 semi-detached houses, originally with very similar plans and external appearance. There are a number of buildings with ground floor shops (see fig 1) and first floor accommodation, dating to the early C19, usually with central entrance doors to symmetrical display windows and with access to living accommodation through the shop or by a separate side entrance.

There are a number of agricultural buildings, some of which have been converted to houses. The stables and coach house at Barton Farm are 1.1/2 storeys, with a loft over. Nearby there is a former granary raised on staddle stones. The Primary



Fig 15. Abbey Farm



Fig 16. Shops in Long Street

School is based on the National School of 1870, which was probably originally built as one block, subdivided internally into two or more classrooms.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 74 Listed Building entries in the Conservation Area, of which there are nine Grade I and four Grade II* buildings. The key Listed Buildings are:

- The Parish Church, with many important elements and details, but of great importance visually in the centre of the village;
- Abbey Farm and former monastic buildings (Guesthouse/Abbot's Lodging, Porch to Abbot's Hall, barn and mill remains: rarity value, unrestored medieval structures and a good example of conservative repair and adaptation to the south block of Abbey Farm; very important position, terminating views up Abbey Street;
- The Tithe Barn, a major building in terms of historical value, size and visual quality, interesting C18 domestic Gothick details and Pitt- Rivers associations;
- Nos. 3-9 and 15 Abbey Street, an attractive row of picturesque buildings (15 possibly being part of the terrace?), with rare features, for South/Central Dorset, of partial timber framing and jettied fronts; important townscape and group element;
- No. 1 Abbey Street, The Old House, early C18 and earlier core, valuable naïve Classical details, notably the columned, shell canopied porch (see fig 1); key position on hinge point of Abbey and Long Streets;
- No. 1 Duck Street, The Old Saddler, good shop front details, but important position on the junction with Long Street;
- The New Inn and The Royal Oak, two very different pubs, both with attractive materials and details and of fundamental importance in townscape terms: the former dominating the entry from The Folly and down Duck Street and the latter partially stopping views eastwards along Long Street;
- No. 44 Long Street, The Old Farmhouse, mid-C18 brick, urbane, and a good position at eastern entry to village, interior features;

There are many other attractive buildings in Long and Abbey Streets in particular that would merit special attention in other villages, but the overall quality of architecture is such that it is difficult to single out other key buildings.

Important Local Buildings

The contribution made by important local buildings is relatively small compared to the great number of Listed Buildings, but there are a small number of individually attractive and interesting unlisted buildings, most of which contribute to the value of larger groups:

- The Old Vicarage, Back Lane, dated 1711 (likely to be accurate), rebuilt 1840s, brick and stucco with decorative barge boards;
- The Old Chapel, Abbey Street, The former Congregational Chapel, 1888, a rather startling example of Victorian polychromy, at odds with the general character of the village, but with good detailing, iron railings and well converted to residential use;
- The Primary School and former schoolhouse, Duck Lane, 1870, an essay in Tudor Revival, with flint and chalk block banding and Hamstone dressings, render and stone on the attaches schoolhouse, attractive and a good entry feature when entering Duck Lane from the north;



Fig 17. The Old Chapel, Abbey Street



Fig 18. The Primary School & former schoolhouse, Duck Lane

- Nos. 3 & 5 The Folly, C18 origins, late C19 appearance, a pair of rubble and brick cottages, with casements, a good entry feature;
- Nos. 11-11a Abbey Street, a pair of rendered pre-war houses, with Hamstone dressings and metal casements, and the effect of a jetty on corbels in the centre, reflecting medieval and C16 houses adjacent, in an understated manner;
- The Barn and parallel range to the north, by the duck pond, Abbey Street: one converted to a house and one used for garaging and storage, brick, rubble and flint former agricultural buildings, with a buttress to the street, interesting roof shapes and textures, of undoubted group value;
- No. 1 Piddle Lane, a large detached, white rendered house, early C20, with Tudoresque details and marginal glazing to the front porch, on site of Antelope Inn and forge: a strong if well-hidden, entry feature;
- Outbuilding to No. 1 Piddle Lane, roughcast, probably over chalk block, tiled roof, casements, an important entry feature, with simple, unspoilt detailing;
- Detached barn to No. 32 Long Street, Maltsters, of flint, rubble and brick, half-hipped thatched roof, Listed by virtue of its position within the curtilage of a Listed building, but worthy of separate note;
- Several older houses and cottages on Acreman Street: on the west side, the flint and brick barn, with a tin half-hip roof, Francombe Farmhouse and attached row, Nos. 13-17 to the north (all flint and brick); No. 19, a very unusual thatched house at a lower level than the main road further north, with two windows (casement above a sash) that actually are inset into the wall angle and run on two planes; on the east side, 10-18, a row of rendered and flint and brick cottages opposite Francombe Farmhouse, one rendered with sashes and its neighbour with a thatch roof with a noticeable ramping down on the eaves and then several rendered cottages, one with a reset medieval head and a 1858 plaque.



Fig 19. No 19 Acreman Street with unusual corner windows

Building Groups

Good groups are numerous and difficult to differentiate due to the overall quality of the village core:

- Abbey Farm and monastic buildings set in its garden
- The whole of Abbey Street
- The Folly from the A352 to the junction with Back Lane
- The whole of Long Street to the boundary with Abbey Close on its north side and Piddle Lane on its south
- Acreman Street, from The Folly northwards, on both sides of the road, as far as the row attached to Francombe Farmhouse on the west and the row opposite as far as the former local authority bungalows on the east.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Cerne displays a wealth of materials relating to its history and its location. The Parish Church and remaining monastic buildings (including the Tithe Barn) are of Oolitic limestone (from the South Dorset Ridgeway quarries?) and flint (the flint often knapped and banded) with Portland/Purbeck or Hamstone ashlar dressings. Hamstone ashlar gives a warm tone to the Church tower and the Abbots Porch. The southern flank of the Church has Hamstone and flint banding, with a grey stone plinth. The New Inn has an attractive mixture of the two limestones, flint, chalk block (clunch) and brickwork. Other older cottages have a mixture of stone or chalk block and flint (The Old Bell and The Royal Oak in Long Street). It is conceivable that some of the squared stone blocks on C16 and C17 buildings originated from Abbey buildings. There are several examples of architectural elements, panelling, brackets, label stops etc., reused in later buildings. Boundary walls are built of stone rubble and unworked flint nodules, sometimes with brick banding and quoins and there are cob walls, interspersed with the other materials, with a pantiled cap, on the south side of the graveyard.



Fig 20. Nos 10-18 Acreman Street

Timber framing with a flint and stone base and stone bressumers or party walls is displayed in the guest-house range in Abbey Street (timber displayed at The Pitchmarket (see fig 1) and two neighbours and rendered on properties to the north). Raleighs, No. 6 Long Street, was cob-fronted until about 1953 and now has thin, first floor studding.

Brick makes an appearance in the mid-late C18 in several gentry houses in Long and Abbey Streets. The Old Manse in Long Street displays burnt headers and a dentil brick cornice and Manse Cottage has brick and flint banding. There are several nearby properties (Middle House and Pitt House) with immaculate rubbed and gauged brickwork over window and door openings. In a more mundane fashion, brick is also used for quoining on rubble and flint buildings.

Render, either rough-cast, smooth or stucco, covers a considerable number of rubble and chalk-block walls, including The Old Market House and Barton Lodge and Holly Lodge on The Folly.

The Victorians used chalk block and flint in chequered blocks on Nos. 8-12 Long Street (the former Police Station). The Red Lion has harsh red brick from the turn-of-the-century and ornamental moulded or rubbed brick pilaster buttresses. The Old Chapel in Abbey Street is a startling example of polychromatic brickwork designed in contrasting banded and diaper patterns of red, buff and blue bricks.

Traditional roofs range from lead (the Church), stone tiles graduated in size from ridge to eaves (Abbey Farm, Tithe Barn, Abbey Street medieval guest houses, New Inn), thatch (Royal Oak, Old Bell, cottages on The Folly and on the east side of Abbey Street, in Duck Street and the eastern end of Long Street), clay tiles and slates. The unlisted barn by the duck pond in Abbey Street has clay tiles with two courses of stone tiles at the eaves. Thatch detailing is traditionally of soft, rounded forms, with eyebrow dormers, undulating eaves lines and flush, wrap over ridges. Gable ends or hips and stone verges are all seen.

The stone paving on the church side of Abbey Street is a significant enhancement. Opposite, in front of the medieval timbered row, pebbles have been used as a small strip against the front walls. There are traditional stone setts under the rear yard entry of The New Inn.

Windows vary from late medieval cusped stone mullions; a handsome, canted, stone oriel on the north elevation of the Abbey Farm Guesthouse; later ovolo stone types, with moulded labels over and inset metal casements; side hung wooden or metal casements with only one or two horizontal bars or multi-pane divisions; vertically hung sliding sashes, with thin glazing bars and later C19 types with larger glazed areas and fewer bars or solely the two horizontal meeting rails. No. 17 Abbey Street has early C18 sashes that are set flush with the wall, an interesting comparison to later types set behind reveals. Nos. 8-12 Long Street, the former Police Station and Court Room, have metal casements with foliated bosses at the intersections of the diaper pattern comes. Abbey Farm has Georgian Gothick tripartite stone windows of Venetian Window type, but with a pointed central light. No. 17 Abbey Street has a naïve Venetian window with a filled-in central tympanum and dummy glazing bars. Amongst the predominantly flat fronts, there are several first floor canted bay windows. The Old Saddlery has a segmental bow, more akin to Weymouth types than a rural village. No. 7 Abbey Street also has a bow of more pronounced curvature. The village has a number of good early C19 timber shop fronts, with features like side pilasters, moulded entablatures, multiple panes and inset doors. There is a cluster around the Duck/Long Street junction, at No. 1 Duck Street, The Old Saddlery, No. 2 Duck Street (see fig 1), Nos. 7 and 9 Long Street; examples are also seen at The Old Market House



Fig 21. Bressumer at 15 Abbey Street



Fig 22. Barn by the duck pond in Abbey Street

and Nos. 26 and 28 Long Street (partially rebuilt). No. 17 Long Street has a large canted bay of 52 panes on its three faces, with fluted pilaster divisions and Adam-style enrichments on the cornice.

Doors vary with building age and status, ranging from plank and muntin, fielded and sunk panels, with doorcase architraves, pilasters, friezes over, rectangular and semi-circular fanlights (the latter breaking into a pedimented top to the flat doorcase at The Old Manse), usually of simple radiating bars, but with some more complicated geometrical examples, such as the concave-sided lozenge and tear-drops at No. 16 Long Street. No. 16 Long Street (see fig 1) also has an eight-panelled door, with ribbed surrounds to decorative panels, later C19 in date. There are elegant, late C18/early C19 flat canopies or pediments, supported on shaped and scrolled brackets. No. 1 Abbey Street has an interesting, naïve stone Tuscan porch, with columns and a wooden semi-circular canopy, with shell ornament (see fig 1).

There is some good ironwork (see fig 1) in the Conservation Area, ranging from simple spear-topped, wrought iron railings in front of The Old Manse and Manse Cottage; hooped wrought gates at Abbey Farm and the churchyard entrance; elaborate scrolled, cast Victorian railings at The Old Chapel; wrought iron brackets and projecting signs (some redundant) in Long Street; and a delicate early C19 balcony, with a diagonal mesh and interlaced top band at 2 Duck Street. There is a VR wall post box at The Folly, unused and with a missing front plate and boot scrapers at Nos. 15 and 22 Long Street and a wall inset type at the rear of The Royal Oak. There are many other details, such as the 1576 initialled stone on the corner of the churchyard wall, south of the tower, the three obelisks and flanking shell niches around the entrance to the graveyard by Abbey Farm and the northern gateway with what appears to be a becherubed gravestone over, the modern commemorative stones nearby and at St Augustine's Well, and the various Abbey fragments that can be spotted around the village.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

The playing fields on Duck Street, allied with the course of the river and the footpath link to Abbey Street are important assets, which enable the walker to quietly enter the heart of the village. Similarly, the path off the A352 to the Tithe Barn and The Folly encompasses green space and views of the wider countryside. The garden of Abbey Farm is a delightful private/public space that is a fitting complement to the former monastic buildings. The duck pond further south, in Abbey Street, is again an asset for the wider village and visitors. The green space on the north side of Wills Lane is also valuable as a village feature, although reduced and compromised by current development. The graveyard and St Augustine's Well is of historical importance and is used by walkers heading towards Giant Hill. The smaller churchyard contains the War Memorial and is valued by local people.

The village core has few front gardens and the back areas are usually not visible, but they may be enjoyed in the June village gardens open days. There are occasional small shrubs and climbers on front walls in Abbey Street and Duck Street.

The village edges are blessed with a number of fine, mature trees, on The Folly, around Barton Lodge; along Wills Lane; to the north, east and west of Abbey Farm; at the base of Giant Hill; on many of the approach roads: on the northern end of Duck Street; on the road to Sydling and on Acreman Street; along Alton Lane and, dramatically, down the final slope of Piddle Lane. The river channel has a line of trees and there are important hedges along the A352 south of The Folly; on the southern side of The Folly; at the northern end of Duck Street, and (more sporadically) around the southern edge of the village, parallel to Back Lane, from the base of Black Hill east to Piddle Lane. The importance of trees is recognised by a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs): large blocks at Barton Farm, adjacent to the Tithe Barn and the A352; on the



Fig 23. No. 17 Abbey Street



Fig 24. Small churchyard & War Memorial in Abbey Street

boundaries of Barton Lodge; north of Abbey Gardens, near the duck pond; at the rear of 32 Long Street; south of Chescombe Close; and south of 52 Long Street, at the Alton Lane entry.

Detrimental Features

There are a number in this large village:

- The former council bungalows on Acreman Street have a bare verge (with one tree) and poor fencing which could be improved;
- The weak southern boundary behind Back Lane, with new building up to three storeys and in need of bold planting;
- The industrial building adjoining Francombe Farm has a bare concrete car-park and retaining wall with an equally bare hard-standing by the road edge;
- Duck Street has an untidy wirescape;
- Mill Lane remains a problem, at its western end, with some derelict or semi-finished buildings and unsightly garages;
- The toilets in Long Street break the building line at a crucial point and are built of poor materials (planting attempts to camouflage them);
- The wide junction in front of the Royal Oak is often used as a car park rather than an uncluttered entry to Abbey Street and there could be a larger sitting-out area for the pub with some redesign and further management of parking into Abbey Street;
- Parked cars are often visually detrimental in Long and Abbey Streets, particularly exacerbated by visitor parking;
- There is a barren garage court, with concrete surfacing, by Simsay at the eastern edge of the Abbey Court development on Long Street;
- There is an unsightly corrugated iron fence on the boundary of the amenity area by St Augustine's Well;
- The New Inn car park lacks an adequate boundary and a higher wall would underline the importance of enclosure of the space at the Long Street/Duck Street junction;
- Green tarpaulin across west slope of 46 Long Street's thatched roof.

Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

- A fine landscape setting, with dramatic topography, an attractive river course, mature trees, hedged lanes and views out from the settlement core;
- Good clean edges to the settlement to the south, north and NE;
- Related to this, well defined entry points, particularly from the south, on the A352 and the east, down Piddle Lane and Alton Lane;
- A rich archaeological heritage, with prehistoric earthworks and settlement sites, the Giant, the Abbey site and surviving buildings, an intact village plan and many plot divisions, post-medieval larger houses and cottages and industrial sites;
- 74 Listed Building entries, including a Grade I church, former Abbey buildings and Abbey Farm, several large gentry houses and farmhouses, and a strong underpinning of smaller cottages and public buildings;
- About 17 unlisted buildings of character and/or group value;
- Coherent groups of Listed and unlisted buildings, boundary walls, trees and details, notably on The Folly, Long and Abbey Streets and the Abbey Farm buildings;

- Consistent use of local flint and chalk block, thatch and vernacular building details that give an overall unity to the village;
- Some good details, including shop fronts, doorways, stone plaques and Abbey fragments and ironwork.

C2 Charminster

Spatial Analysis

Charminster is situated at the confluence of the rivers Frome and Cerne on the A352 to Cerne Abbas and Sherborne and across the River Cerne towards a parallel north-south road that runs on the crest of the valley side. It is a large village and Conservation Area and it is proposed to divide it into two Sub-areas, to describe and analyse its character:

- Sub-area i, West Hill and the A352 ribbon, the village core and East Hill;
- Sub-area ii, Wolfeton House and surrounds.

Historically, there seems to have been a development focus towards the Frome Valley and its Roman route. Turnpike Trust improvements in the early C19 (particularly the extension of North Street southwards of The Square to the new Frome Valley route, the present A37) encouraged growth along North Street and the village began to extend up East Hill and along adjacent lanes.

The overall **plan form** is that of a nucleated core with historic outliers and development ribbons and considerable modern housing development to the west and east and, in the form of infill, along the historic A352 ribbon. The core forms an east-west cross piece, related to a river crossing, between two clusters placed on higher ground (West and East Hills) above the river channel and flood plain. West Hill is a small cluster of development, related to The Square, west of the A352, which has been extended along Weir View back to the A37. The A352 has a ribbon of development south and north of the crossroads formed by the main road, West Hill and continuation of West Hill into the main village street. The long northern ribbon runs as North Street for about 2kms towards Higher Charminster, embracing two older farms and several C19 houses and cottages, in a single plot depth. Church Lane is a narrow highway extending from North Street to the west entrance of the churchyard.

The core contains some of the main village facilities, Church, Vicarage, former Mill, Hall and one of the major gentry houses. A bridge crosses the river and there are footpath links to the north, along the river and to the south, towards Wolfeton. Mill Lane provides a loop from the top of East Hill around to the river and in a continuation to the Mill. The ancient way to the mill, that avoids the steep East Hill, commences by Bridge Cottage (1 East Hill), runs northwards along the riverbed and connects to Mill Lane – observable from footpath S14/1. East Hill continues southerly as far as the former Wolfeton entrance gates (by No. 26 East Hill) and thereafter is a private road to Wolfeton House. There was medieval settlement around Wolfeton, which has shrunken to a farm and a few cottages adjacent to the House. The river and the churchyard bring open space and greenery right into the village core and the water meadows continue to the south west of East Hill and the entry to Wolfeton.

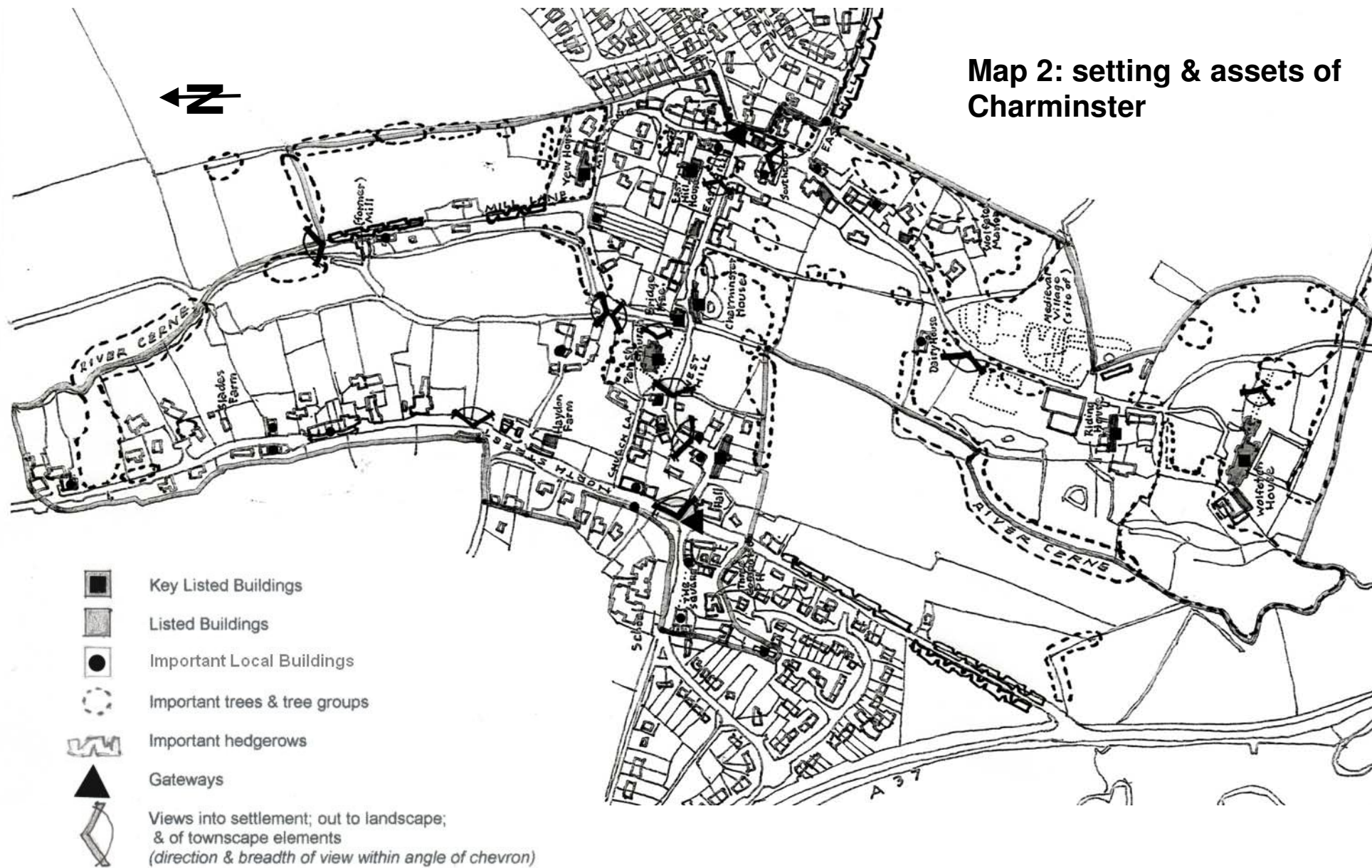
Most of the historic development is set along the network of lanes, either in single, detached plots or in short attached groups of buildings. Gentry and farm houses tend to be set in gardens or yards, behind walls and hedges; the Church has a capacious square graveyard on the main street, but smaller cottages are often set right on the highway edge, with no front spaces. Apart from parts of the A352, the older parts of the village do not have pavements.



Fig 25. West Hill with the parish church in the background



Fig 26. River & footbridge in Mill Lane



i. Sub-area: West Hill, the A352 ribbon, the village core and East Hill

The character and interrelationship of spaces

It is possible to walk through the core, from west to east (and *vice versa*), from West Hill to the top of East Hill to obtain a cross section of the interaction of buildings, spaces, open countryside, topography and the myriad of details.

West Hill has a small cluster of older buildings set off the main road crossroads, up a slope and set around a square space (registered village green) in front of The Three Compasses pub. The paved space is effectively a car park, but a curved building line of older houses on the eastern side leads the eye downhill to the A352 and the elaborate upper stages of the Church tower, sitting in the valley. The main road has a rather open, bleak character, due to road improvements and grass verges. Further north, there is a contrasting funnel of older cottages, pub, two larger houses set at right angles to the road, hedges and trees. Modern development tends to open up this corridor effect, with road widening, pavements and generous visibility splays.

Back at the crossroads, West Hill falls rapidly past the Village Hall and a clever modern infill house, to a picturesque thatched and banded wall row of cottages on the right (south). The road takes a very definite right-angled turn to the left and a stone and flint shed (known locally as the cheese house) on the left and older buildings ahead, stopping the view, create enclosure. The road again curves to the right, in another near right angle and an impressive projecting porch and iron balcony and stone boundary walls frame a fine view of the Church tower. The greenery of the churchyard invites a detour to the well-treed northern portion and a view of the river, with a wooden footbridge over towards Mill Lane. There are views north to meadows and south back to a low brick bridge and the main street.

There is a good view back west on the main street to the buildings on the double curve. Opposite the Church, there is a long cob boundary wall. Over the bridge, there is a visual pinch-point created by buildings either side, set on the road line. The road climbs steeply in a straight line, bordered by mature trees, stone walls and a variety of houses, cottages, grander detached houses, the inset gate piers to Charminster House and details like the George V wall inserted post-box at No. 3, the former Post Office. At the top of the hill, the pale stuccoed block of East Hill House is glimpsed behind its boundary and there is a view downhill, framed by hedges and trees, of the Church tower.

The summit has a staggered junction of lanes, with two urbane brick houses on the east side; a southward view along the continuation of East Hill of long boundary walls, trees and cottages; a sudden change in character along Vicarage Lane to modern estate development; and a narrow squeeze north down a constantly curving Mill Lane. The latter turns west to reveal tantalising glimpses of Yew House above its boundary hedge, a terraced row facing the northern continuation of Mill Lane up the river valley, with hedges, trees and vistas across the mill leat and wider water meadows; and a final western spur across a footbridge back to the churchyard.

From the above, the **key views and vistas** are the first views of the Church tower from the North Street/West Hill crossroads; the sequence of townscape experiences around the double bend of West Hill to the Church and up East Hill; the view down the latter to the Church; the view of East Hill House from the churchyard; and the views up and down the river from the footbridge at the NE corner of the churchyard, from gaps between buildings along North Street and from the northern continuation of Mill Lane.



Fig 27. View down East Hill towards the parish church



Fig 28. The river on east side of the parish churchyard

Obvious **landmarks** are the Church tower and East Hill House, when seen from the west, either from the North Street crossroad or from the churchyard.

Character Analysis

Building Uses

The village retains some of its key buildings in their original uses: the Parish Church, larger gentry houses like Charminster House, East Hill House and Yew House. The Hall was formerly a Working Men's Institute and three pubs remain. Bridge Cottage on East Hill was also a former public house, The Royal Oak. The Old George in North Street commemorates another former licensed premises. The 1874 Junior School has been rebuilt; several farmhouses, such as Haydon Farm remain but the gristmill has been converted to residential use, as has the Post Office. House names also mark other former uses, such as the village bakery (West Hill) and malthouse (Mill Lane). A former Wesleyan Chapel in North Street is now Chapel Cottage and the United Free Methodist Chapel in East Hill has become Wesley Cottage. Smaller cottages have tended to remain as such, often with additions and changes to their internal plans.

Building Types and Layouts

The Parish Church is a particularly interesting example of adaptation, addition and alteration from the C11 to the C17, with Victorian rebuilding. It has a nave with aisles, south chapel and porch, chancel and north and south vestries and a particularly notable west tower.

There are several larger gentry and farmhouses: Charminster House is an early C18 detached house, of five bays and central entrance, altered in the early C19. It has a circular staircase and a drawing room on the first floor. It has an attached eastern block. East Hill House is a good example of a mid C18/early C19 detached villa, of two storeys with cellars and attics, of a symmetrical plan (with a central hall and staircase and a first floor oval gallery that is lit by a lantern). The House has a substantial later C19 addition. Yew House also displays symmetrical planning with a later extension and a continuous outshut to the rear. Haydon Farmhouse and Netley House (former bakery) are other early-mid C19, symmetrical houses. Nos. 3 and 4 West Hill are an example of early/mid C19 semi-detached houses.

There are a number of smaller cottages that display less formal layouts. No. 7 West Hill has an off-centre entrance with side walls that are not at right angles to the front elevation. Nos. 11, 12 and 13 West Hill (see fig 2) have irregular fenestration, one-and-a-half and two storeys, and offset doorways. No.12 has a large hall with an early C19 dogleg stair.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 14 listed Building entries in the Sub-area, all Grade II, apart from the Grade I Parish Church. The key Listed Buildings are:

- The Parish Church, late C12 arcades, Trenchard monuments and particularly handsome early C16 west tower, with stylistic affinities to those of St Peter and St George, Dorchester; a real visual focal point for the village;
- Charminster House, early C18 and Regency alterations, good details, including a bay window, verandah and decorated brick chimney stacks; the garden frontage is only visible from the footpath to Wolfeton, but the East Hill frontage is an attractive mixture of materials and details and holds an important position by the river bridge; the long cob boundary wall is also a foil to the Church and churchyard;



Fig 29. East Hill with East Hill House on the horizon



Fig 30. Parish church

- Yew House, excellent brickwork and a handsome porch, fairly invisible behind its hedge, but a fine example of polite architecture;
- East Hill House, with Regency villa characteristics, its white rendered form is prominent from West Hill and the churchyard; delicate iron verandah and notable internal planning;
- Bridge Cottage, early C18 and C19 alterations, situated hard on the road line in the centre of the village core and also by the river and the road bridge; townscape importance;
- Nos. 11-13 West Hill (see fig 2), a vernacular row, thatched, with some late C16 details and an attractive mixture of materials; a major townscape feature that is situated on an important corner and, in particular, stops views from the Church end of West Hill.

Important Local buildings

There are a number of buildings of group and townscape interest:

- Nos. 2-5 The Square and 18 West Hill, forming a group adjacent to the Three Compasses, of mixed materials (brick and render, clay and concrete tiles and slate) and character, with substantial alteration and coarsening of details (uPVC windows and doors in 3 and 4);
- Bramble Cottage and No. 21 West Hill, two thatched and rendered early C19 cottages, contrasting markedly with adjacent modern development;
- Netley House (see fig 2), North Street, a handsome stone, symmetrical early/mid-C19 front, the sash windows are original but were reinstalled to pivot at the top;
- Slade House (see fig 2), 23 North Street, brick and Hamstone, set at right angles to the road line; of architectural presence and visible when travelling north; the nearby Slades Farm barn conversion has an attractive mixture of rubble, flint and brick;
- Nos. 18-22 North Street, a stone, flint and render mixed group, of townscape and group value;
- Nos. 24, 25 and 25A North Street is a rendered short terrace with intact sashes;
- No. 29 North Street, Brooklands, a detached white rendered mid-C19 house, with some refinement, sashes, incised lines on the render, and a bracketed eaves on the gable end; the adjacent Old Coach House has vitrified brick headers on the road front and has been converted to a house;
- Glebe House Farm and shed opposite (Old Farm), on West Hill, two characterful flint, rubble and chalk block structures that are of group value and fulfil a major townscape function, defining the second sharp bend; there is a (reset?) mullioned and labelled window at Old Farm;
- No. 1 West Hill (see fig 2), Montrose House, a mid-C19 rendered block, with a prominent central porch, projecting onto the street, attractive ironwork and glazing and an important townscape element;
- The former granary to Haydon Farm, on staddles with timber framing;
- Nos. 4-5 Mill Lane and No. 12, two thatched and rendered cottages, of group value, the former relating well to the ford and visible from the northern continuation of the Lane and the latter to the former mill;
- No. 9 East Hill, Offley's, a mid-C19 flint and stone Tudoresque detached house, with decorative bargeboards and arched heads to the casements, prominently sited on the corner with Mill Lane;
- A K6 telephone box, on North Street.



Fig 31. Nos. 4-5 Mill Lane



Fig 32. No. 9 East Hill

Building Groups

Good groups include the whole of West Hill from the Village Hall east to the Church and Charminster House and East Hill up to the junction with the top of Mill Lane; and two minor groups of unlisted buildings: around The Square, with No. 18 West Hill, Nos. 2-5 The Square, The Three Compasses, Bramble Cottage and No. 21 West Hill; and, along North Street, the unlisted Nos. 24, 25 and 25A, Slade House, the adjacent Slades Farm barn with large cart door, and Nos. 18-22, with many details coarsened by replacements, but displaying varied materials and rooflines and retaining some elements of village character.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

The Sub-area has a rich variety of building materials, typical of chalk valleys near the Ridgeway, from where Oolitic limestone of the Portland-Purbeck series was available, as well as chalk block (clunch), chalk-based cob, flint and clays suitable for brick making, all available more locally.

The grey Portland/Purbeck limestone is usually in rubble form, either on its own, roughly coursed or banded with flint or chalk block. The banding is fairly informal lacking the precise forms of squared stone and knapped flints of other parts of the central chalkland valleys. The stone is rarely used in ashlar form, mixed with Hamstone on the Church tower. It is squared and brought to courses, with ashlar dressings to door and window openings on Netley House, North Street (see fig 2). Hamstone was imported for prestige building work, such as the Church tower, where it was employed as fine ashlar. It was also used on the War Memorial. It appears on a few domestic buildings, on the mullioned windows of Nos. 11 and 12 West Hill and the late C19 bays of Slade House, No. 23 North Street. Bath Stone ashlar is seen on the late Victorian bay window of No. 5 East Hill, Hillside House.

Chalk block is used on parts of West Hill boundary walling, mixed with stone rubble and flint panels or banding. Cob appears on the long boundary wall on the south side of West Hill, opposite the Church and on the wall on the east side of Charminster House's grounds. Render often provides a weatherproof coat to clunch, cob and stone rubble, in the forms of smooth, lime-based covering, stucco and roughcast. Smooth finishes are sometimes scribed with lines to simulate masonry, as seen on No. 29 North Street. Cob walling is enhanced and protected by tile capping, as seen on the long Church Lane and North Street boundary wall at Haydon Farm, the two sections either side of Glebe House Farm and the Charminster House boundaries.

Late C18 and early C19 brick is an attractive red/orange colour, seen with blue vitrified headers at Yew House, where there is fine rubbed and gauged brick over window and door openings, at Charminster House, which has burnt headers on the window heads of its eastern block, and also at The Old Coach House in North Street. From the early C19, Broadmayne brick was extensively used. It is characterised by its buff/grey colour, with a flecked texture (seen characteristically at the stable block to Yew House).

Roofs vary between wheat reed thatch, with simple, flush ridges and, generally, rounded forms, flowing eaves lines and the occasional appearance of eyebrow dormers, clay plain tiles and pantiles, which provide subtle textures, and slate is common on C19 buildings. Stone tiles are seen on the pentice roof over the bays of No. 23 North Street. There are stone coped gable ends, gables with bracketed eaves, hips and half-hips, gablets and dormer windows of varying forms: eyebrows, gabled and



Fig 33. Cob & pantile boundary wall to Charminster House



Fig 34. Stable block of Yew House

monopitch roofed dormers set into the roof. Nos. 3 and 4 The Square have early C19 mansard roofs - a rare feature outside the larger towns of South Dorset. There are timber bargeboards of an elaborate pattern on Offley's, 9 East Hill.

Chimneys (see fig 2) are usually of brick, with simple banding, but sometimes with more elaborate corbelling and oversailing courses and very prominent arcading on Charminster House (similar to some Dorchester examples, including Colliton House).

Windows range from stone mullioned late C16 types; wooden casements with a basic division by one or two horizontal bars or multi-paned examples; metal casements with leaded lights, vertically-hung sliding sashes with thin glazing bars, commonly six over six lights, marginal glazing bars (on East Hill House and the front porch of No. 1 West Hill), and larger, undivided panes with strengthening horns on the meeting rails, usually after 1850 in date. There are several canted bays (Bridge Cottage, river frontage) and a segmentally curved bay on East Hill House. Rose Cottage, on East Hill, has a circular ox-eye window in the centre of its front elevation.

Doors include basic planked types, with or without lights, six or four panelled (flush or fielded) with two lights glazed or with a glazed light over, and examples of round-headed doorways with spoked fanlights. There are porches with columns and architraves (Yew House has thin Roman Doric columns and a triglyph frieze over) or less sophisticated tiled or thatched examples.

Boundary walls are also built of random rubble or unworked flint, flint and stone or brick banding and cob. Copings are of chamfered stone or tile capping. The long wall by Brooklands on North Street is built of flint and brick bands, with a stone coping.

There are many traditional details that add greatly to the enjoyment of the Sub-area. There are gate piers with ball finials and ramped timber side screens at the entrance to Charminster House; the bold cross of the churchyard War Memorial; the stone and brick arched bridges over the river; the enamelled post box plate on East Hill and a variety of other wrought and cast iron work. There are basic spear-headed railings; vertical, round-cornered balcony panels on No. 1 West Hill (see fig 2) and hooped (also at Netley House) and sinuous vine leaved railings at the same location; and a delicate verandah (see fig 2) at East Hill House, with cobweb spandrels and lattice work. Charminster House has a similar cast iron verandah with a pentice roof. Rose Cottage has very slender railings and standards, with dog rails and a similar gate. This appears to be modern and may not agree with the Listed Building description. There is a traditional cast iron finger post at the junction of North Street and West Hill.

Parks, Gardens, Trees and Open Spaces

There are particularly good trees, along the course of the river; on the northern edge of the churchyard; in the grounds of Charminster House, particularly the eastern edge against the footpath from Wolfeton; west of Yew House and at the ford end of Mill Lane. There are a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs): the grounds of Yew House; south of Greenacre; individual trees on the eastern side of the river valley north of Yew House; on North Street, north of Slades Farm; and in the grounds of Old Farm, on West Hill.

There are a number of gaps and open spaces, notably The Square (registered green) on West Hill, the break in North Street's development north of Haydon Farm; the garden of Charminster House; the churchyard to the north; the whole of the



Fig 35. No 7 West Hill with canted bay window

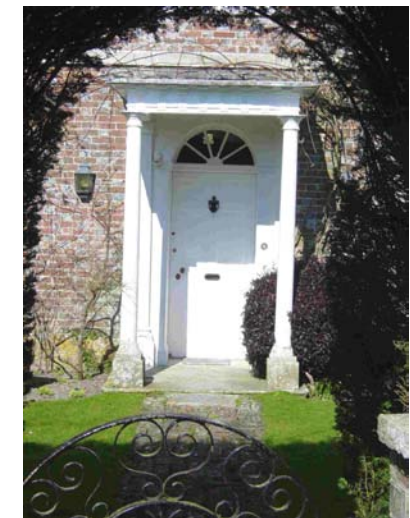


Fig 36. Yew House entrance porch

river corridor, including Mill Lane and the Miller's Community Orchard green space. The Parish Council is very amenity conscious and has contributed a number of green spaces and has undertaken considerable tree planting throughout the village. The gardens of some of the other larger houses, including East Hill House and No 9 Mill Lane also add to the enjoyment of the village core. Magnolia House, attached to East Hill House, has a fine magnolia that adds much to the top end of Mill Lane.

Detrimental features

There are a number of issues in the Sub-area:

- The impact of modern development, particularly residential areas of the 1970s and 80s, and some individual houses within the core, on West Hill and Mill Lane;
- The road improvements to the West Hill and North Street junction, creating wide spaces and a loss of village character;
- The damage to and loss of traditional boundaries, due to modern development, particularly on Mill Lane;
- A wirescape at the junction of North Street and West Hill;
- Poor quality additions and repairs to a listed building at West Hill, with replacement casements and front door and inappropriate garage door, all in a key position;
- The erosion of details on unlisted buildings, with the introduction of some intrusive UPVC windows and doors, inappropriate repointing and detached garages.

ii. Sub-area: Wolfeton House and surrounds

The character and interrelationship of spaces

Starting from the highest point of East Hill, there is a long view back westwards to the Church tower and river crossing. To the south, East Hill/private road (known locally as Wolfeton Lane) runs sinuously towards Wolfeton Farm and House, on a shelf above the river, but falling gradually until Wolfeton House's position a few metres above the channel. East Hill provides a sequence of enclosure, provided by boundary walls, cottages on the road line and hedges, and contrasting exposure to wider views, particularly across the river and associated ponds.

In more detail, the sequence, two tall brick houses stand right on the eastern edge road line and Southcot dominates the western side, with a long brick boundary wall. The lane divides and No. 17 sits in the angle. There is a sense of a definite pinch-point, with small cottages on both sides and a gradual fall in levels. Nos. 20 and 22 sit at right angles to the road and Nos. 23 and 24 are set back behind front gardens. On the right (west), there are sudden views of a thatched house (Dairy House) and the river channel and ponds. Wolfeton Manor and modern buildings sit up on a bank on the left and there is a view of a firm transition between the Cocklands estate and a large undeveloped field.

The lane falls towards Wolfeton Farm's sheds and barns and the humps and hollows of a deserted medieval village appear on either side. The gable end of the Riding House is seen on the right and, through a gate, the buttressed flank is glimpsed. The track performs a right angle, exposing a fuller view of the Riding School, set in a yard with other sheds and a small cottage. The track becomes bordered with trees and shrubs and another right angled turn leads to an enclosed stable yard and a perspective view of a range of stone buildings, with a twin towered gateway at right angles. Through the arch, green



Fig 37. River Cerne



Fig 38. Dairy House, Wolfeton

lawns are glimpsed. Beyond (on private ground, occasionally open to the public), there are views of Wolfeton House's towers, a straight drive with gate piers and some fine, mature trees.

There is a very instructive and attractive footpath back to the flank of Charminster House from the Dairy House, which provides views over the river, of the garden front of the House and of the village core, as well as a contrasting, narrow part, defined by the long cob boundary wall to the House.

Key views and vistas are the view from the top of the hill south towards the pinch-point created by the group of cottages by No. 17 and The Old Gig House; the views over the river from the Dairy House southwards; and the view of the south front of Wolfeton House from its garden.

Wolfeton House is the one significant **landmark** and the Riding House shows up in views at the southern end of East Hill.

Character Analysis

Building Uses

Most of the buildings seem to retain their original functions, of large gentry houses, farmhouses and agricultural buildings and smaller cottages. The Riding House is a rare example of a purpose-built structure, which acquired various agricultural uses before becoming redundant.

Building Types and Layouts

Wolfeton House was a large early C16 courtyard house, much of which has been demolished. It has a part of the SW corner and an attached gatehouse surviving from the original house and a later C16 western extension. It was altered and restored in the C19. The older elements have a late medieval character, with some pretence at defensive features, with North Italian-inspired Renaissance details. The late C16 block has a more definite Elizabethan style, in its planning and architecture. It has an entrance hall and stone stair, of monumental character and a long gallery, which has been later subdivided.

The nearby Riding House of seven bays and evidence of a capacious ground floor and a smaller upper floor in the roof space. It seems to date from the late C16 and has the external character of a barn, with domestic windows. It is an example of a nationally rare building type. Nearer the House are one-storey stables with lofts in the roof space, of some architectural quality, of late C17 date and with C19 alterations. There is a restored Ice House and store hut in the garden of No. 26 East Hill.

Wolfeton Manor is an example of a Victorian, detached, large house, originally set in its own landscaped grounds. Southcot is a mid-C19 detached house, set in a large plot, but more related to the core of the village.

There are a number of vernacular thatched, rubble and flint cottages along East Hill, all with informal, asymmetrical plans, notably Nos. 17, 19, 23 and 24. The Dairy House was converted in 1962 from two agricultural cottages built around 1800. Nos. 10-12 and 20-22 are C19 stone rubble, brick and render houses, set in short rows, with more symmetrical layouts. Nos. 11 and 12 are particularly interesting, of three storeys, brick and with front entrances either side of the party wall, surprisingly urban for a village setting.



Fig 39. South front of Wolfeton House



Fig 40. Nos 18&19 East Hill

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are seven Listed Building entries in the Sub-area, Wolfeton House being Grade I, the Riding House Grade II* and the remainder Grade II. The key buildings are:

- Wolfeton House, with important early and late C16 elements and an important position, at the south end of the Conservation Area, set in fine grounds and visible from the A37;
- The Riding House, an attractive structure in its own right.

Important Local Buildings

There are a number of vernacular buildings and later, polite, ones that add to group value:

- No 14, Southcot, a Victorian Tudoresque house, with a characterful silhouette, its stone and brick wing and panelled and buttressed boundary wall, with two brick colours, along East Hill, are important features, particularly when viewed from the eastern branch of East Hill;
- No. 17 East Hill, Well House, thatched and rendered, much altered, but in a key position at a branch in the road, of group value;
- Nos. 23 and 24 East Hill, semi-detached thatched and rendered cottages, of group value;
- Dairy House, converted in 1962 from two agricultural cottages, built around 1800;
- A K6 telephone box on the eastern spur of East Hill, on the boundary of the Conservation Area.

Building Groups

The best group is that formed by Wolfeton House, stables, the Riding House, sheds, gardens and gate piers. There is a minor group created at the pinch point on East Hill, where Nos. 17, 18 and 19 and the short row, Nos. 20-22, define the road line, and Nos. 23 and 24 are set back.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Wolfeton House and the Riding House are both built of Portland/Purbeck limestone, generally of rubble, squared and brought to courses, with ashlar work to windows and doors and on three walls of the Riding House. There appear to be some Hamstone (Victorian?) dressings also. Rubble walling is seen in some of the cottages, sometimes with brick quoins. Smooth or roughcast render characterises cottages that may have rubble or chalk block walls. Flint is less evident than in the rest of the Conservation Area.

There is dark red brickwork, Flemish Bond, with vitrified blue headers on Nos. 11 and 12. The boundary wall to Southcot has Broadmayne brick and a more orange brick inset panels.

The House has diminishing stone tile roofs and the Riding House has slate, seen also in C19 houses. The vernacular cottages have combed wheat reed thatched roofs, with simple rounded forms and flush ridges. Several have subtly undulating eaves lines to accommodate first floor windows, rather than full eyebrows that are typical of one-and-a-half storey cottages. The Wolfeton House stable block has clay pantiles.

No. 14 East Hill, Southcot, has seven glazed ceramic, tall, conical flues with slotted bases (see fig 2). Peytons made these Victorian Champion Chimney Pots. The Hamstone chimney stacks are C19 imitating C16 forms.



Fig 41. No. 17 East Hill



Fig 42. Stable block of Wolfeton House

Windows vary from the stone mullioned types, some with transoms, the early C16 ones with arched heads, at Wolfeton House; later C16/early C17 types with square labels over; metal and wooden casements; and wooden vertically hung sashes on part of Wolfeton House (also a canted bay with sashes) and Nos. 11 and 12 East Hill.

Doorways display most of the phases of architectural fashion, from the moulded stone gatehouse arch at Wolfeton House, late Elizabethan round arches, with mouldings and carved ornaments, such as keystones and lion masks. The smaller cottages have timber or brick lintels, often with thatched porches and wooden supports.

Boundary walls are of stone rubble or brick. There are dressed stone walls with copings, related to stone piers with ball finials at two entrances to the House.

There are a number of notable details, including the various cartouches and armorial stones at the House, the carved stops with animal and human figures, the bold buttresses of the Riding House, and the panelled and buttressed wall by Southcot.

Parks, Gardens, Trees and Open Spaces

The Sub-area has a number of important, undeveloped gaps, notably south of Charminster House to Wolfeton Farm, including the site of the deserted medieval village, the river valley and the grounds of Wolfeton House. Here are remains of C16 garden features, a former bowling green, pleasaunce and kitchen garden. Low walls still provide an element of compartmentalisation. The varied landscaping, of golden and common yews, deciduous trees and varied shrubs, is probably Victorian in date. The trees on the western edge, towards the A37, are of great importance as a visual and noise barrier.

There are trees along the course of the river and in the grounds of Southcot (particularly a beech). Four very large horse chestnuts lead down towards Wolfeton Farm. The hedges on the west side of Wolfeton Lane, by the Dairy House, are also visually important. There are TPOs in the former grounds of Wolfeton Manor; and to the north, either side of the eastern spur of East Hill.

Detrimental features

There are a small number of issues in the Sub-area:

- The parlous condition of the Riding House, in urgent need of emergency repairs to the roof and basic structure and, longer-term comprehensive repair and the establishment of an appropriate new use; a building repair trust has been established and resources are currently being sought;
- Examples of unsympathetic repairs and additions to unlisted buildings of character, including hard cement repointing and a large conservatory in a very prominent position.



Fig 43. Gatehouse of Wolfeton House

Definition of the special interest of the Conservation Area

The particular qualities of the whole Conservation Area are:

- Areas of good quality landscape adjacent to or within the Conservation Area, particularly the river and mill channels, water meadows, several large gardens and areas of amenity green space;
- Important walls, hedges and trees that enhance the setting of buildings and link groups together;
- A rich archaeological heritage, notably the sites of six medieval deserted settlements in the wider Parish (one in the Conservation Area), cultivation remains and prehistoric earthworks;
- Within the village core, a largely intact historic plan form, with many of the public and private key buildings intact or converted to other uses;
- 21 Listed Building entries, including two Grade I buildings (the Church tower and earlier portions of Wolfeton House are of particular significance) and a nationally rare building type in the Grade II* Riding House;
- About 20 unlisted buildings of character and group value;
- Coherent groups of buildings around The Square; North Street; between West and East Hills, around the Church and north of Wolfeton Manor on East Hill; and around Wolfeton House;
- A rich palette of building materials and details, including local limestone, flint, chalk block and cob, smooth renders, brick, stone tiles, thatch, clay plain tiles and pantiles; there is a range of architectural detail from the C11, late medieval period, C16, early C17, C18 and early/mid C19; there is some good ironwork seen in railings, gates, balconies and verandas.

3C Sydling St Nicholas

The Conservation Area is large, but the core of the village is focused on High Street and the junctions with East Street and the lane to The Court House and Church and it is possible to describe it as one area.

Spatial Analysis

Sydling St Nicholas is sited on the broad valley floor of the Sydling Water, on both sides of the watercourse, with the original channel running behind the east side of High Street and a mill leat flowing further east along Waterside Lane and then running along East Street to join the river behind the Village Hall. The **plan form** is markedly linear, running down the river and the road from Up Sydling, crossed by an east-west road from the A37 to Cerne Abbas, to Grimstone, on the A37. There is a thickening of the linearity south of the main High Street cluster of development, where there is a western spur up Church Lane to a slightly isolated Church and Court House, and an eastern lane along East Street, which has two northern links in Waterside and Back Lanes (the former back to the northern entry to the village by a track and a riverside footpath, and the latter becoming a green lane) and a modern termination around a large green by Church Hill View and a more obvious outlier in the Three Acres cul-de-sac. With High Street, Church Lane and East Street form a crossroads (The Cross), the village centre in earlier times.

The key village buildings are dispersed, big house, Court Farm and Church at one extremity, the Greyhound Inn half-way along the main development cluster, and, at the crossroads, a minor focus of Old Vicarage, East House, the base of the medieval cross, the former schoolhouse and the modern Village Hall. Scattered around the core are a number of farm houses, Rock and City on East Street, Sherrin's and Ham, to the north of the pub, and a series of more isolated houses on the long southern approach, Burnt, Lamperts and Huish.

Most of the older houses are built parallel to the road, on the highway edge, or set behind small front spaces. The gentry houses are set in larger plots, often with front and rear gardens and former coach entrances. There is a marked difference in the size of plots either side of High Street, with extensive plots to the west and much smaller plots to the east (because of the watercourse and possibly because land has been sold east of the stream for modern development). The 1902 OS map shows a hollow core between High and East Streets and Waterside Lane. The plots, large and small, are fairly regular in shape, possibly suggesting a degree of planning in the original layout that may be related to medieval ownership by Milton Abbey and later by Winchester College.

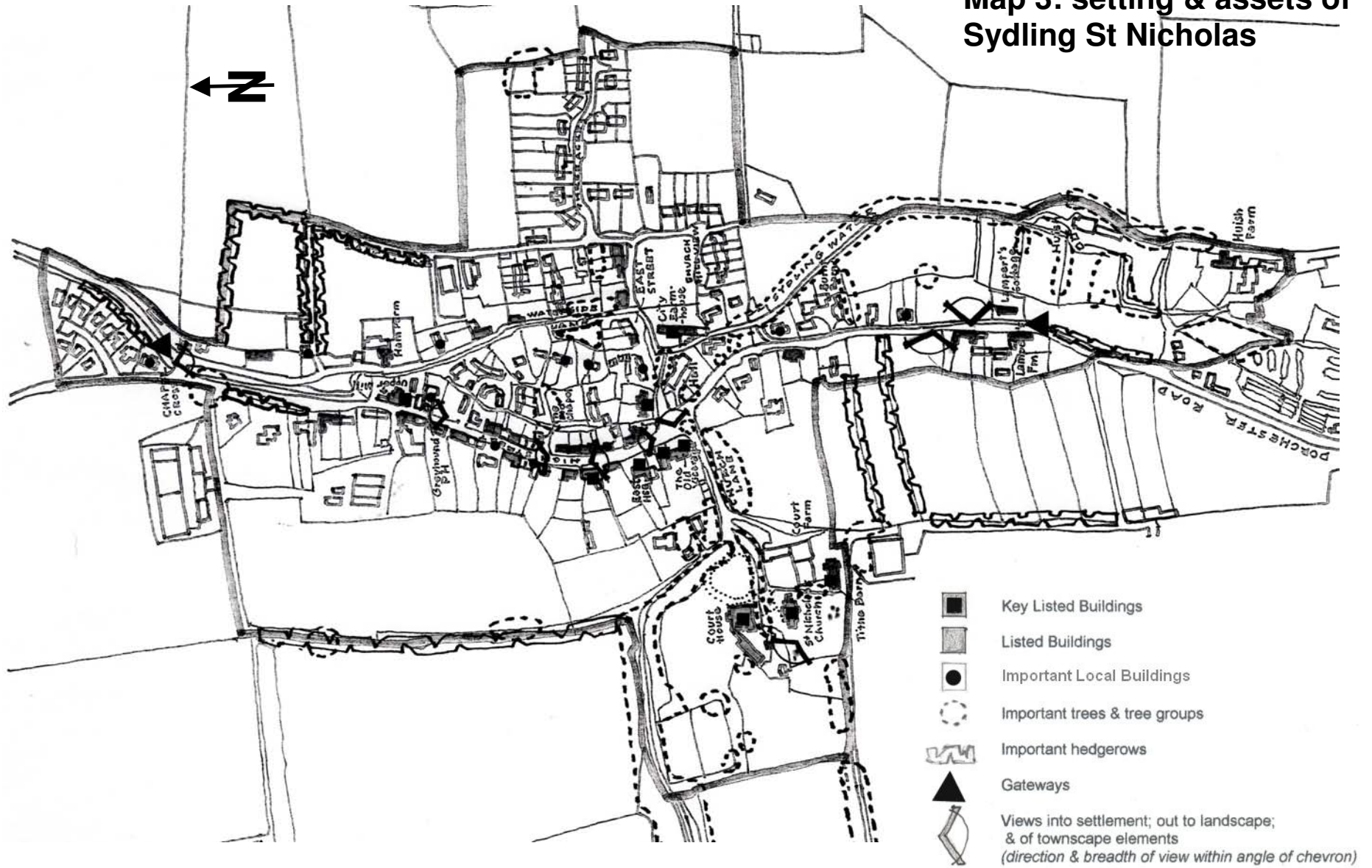


Fig 44. Church Lane looking towards The Cross (crossroads)



Fig 45. The Cross & High Street

Map 3: setting & assets of Sydling St Nicholas



The character and interrelationship of spaces within the Conservation Area

There is an interesting progression of landscape character and spaces experienced whilst travelling up or down the valley. Approaching from the south, on Dorchester Road, there are views of green slopes and ridges, with inset dry coombes, and areas of woodland and hedgerows. The river is a constant companion to the main road and isolated farms may be seen off the main route. Huish Farm and a few cottages give way to countryside again and the site of the former Lower Mill heralds the start of the core of the village, with a bend in the road and a group of older buildings by Lamperts Farm. Lamperts Cottage, on the right (east) is set across the river, necessitating the first of a number of bridges across its course. There are two important breaks in development north of Lampert's Cottage on the eastern side of the road, and north of Lampert's farm on the west, where green pastures, trees and views of hills or the Church tower underline the informality of the grouping and position of older cottages. Northwards, there is modern infill, where there was previously green space. The road then curves markedly to the left, exposing the modern Village Hall, surrounded by green and paved space. A particularly fine horse chestnut tree marks the crossroads and beyond, to the north, High Street winds in a long curve, with three larger houses set behind hedges and walls to the left side and smaller cottages closely defining the road line beyond.



Fig 46. East Street

Taking the left (west) fork up Church Lane, there is the character of a rural lane, with a row of large trees on its southern boundary and walls and hedges on the northern side. The lane rises to a sharp curve, where the piers and gates of The Court House face the walker, a track continues right (north) along the boundary of the Court House, with large trees, a green lane and open countryside, and, left of the Court House entrance, a narrower lane climbs to the Church. This squeezes past a leaning, heavily buttressed wall and into a large graveyard dominated by the handsome Church, with its west tower, yews and views into the Court House precinct, its rear service yard and a distant prospect of hills, trees and a spectacular topiary garden of cones, pyramids and globes of varying shapes and sizes. To the south of the Church, the strong gable end and corrugated iron roof of the Tithe Barn are glimpsed.



Fig 47. Green from Waterside Lane

Back at the crossroads, the right turn into East Street reveals an attractive row of thatched and tiled cottages, fronted by water for the western part, stretching sinuously towards chalk hills. The stream joins the main river on the south side, in an attractive treed waterside space and the boundary wall and thatched roof of City Farmhouse provide a quality backdrop. There is a glimpse of the watercourse up Waterside Lane and via a footbridge a narrow path runs north to the rear of the Greyhound, a weir and, over another bridge, to Ham Farm. The eastern end of the spur gives to modern development, Church Hill View, around a large green space, with trees and play facilities.

Back, again, at the crossroads, High Street starts with the three bigger houses, which display contrasts in styles and materials, with the late C18 red brick East House and the older stone and flint houses to the south. There is then a linear progression of smaller cottages, with thatch and tile, stone, flint, pale render and brick, curving round to the west and then in a NNE direction. This produces a sequence of views framed by the houses on the outside (west) of the curve and the tightly set row on the inside. The outside of the curve again dominates views until the white gable end and sign of The Greyhound focus views on the eastern side. The pub car park produces a leaking-away of space. Then, Upper Mill is set at right angles to the road and its white render elevations provide another strong focus on the eastern side.

The feeling of enclosure is then relaxed by the setting back of individual plots of larger houses to the west and a hedge and bank to the east. A road junction is firmly marked by the white façade of the former Chapel, enhanced by water and trees. On

the right, Cerne Abbas, fork, there is an immediate junction with a track by the river and views of several older cottages effectively hidden from the main road by the hedge bank.

Key views and vistas include a series of views of the wider landscape setting at various points along Dorchester Road from the south, including the breaks in development north of Lampert's Farm and Cottage; the view at the crossroads along East Street to Eastfield and Cowdown Hills; the western view from the graveyard of the ornamental grounds of the Court House and Combe Hill and The Combe beyond; the sequence of townscape experiences along High Street (this is experienced in both directions of travel); and a southward vista of the valley setting and the river from the Chapel Cross junction. The Church tower and Court House are too offset from the main route to be seen and the **landmarks** are the red brick façade of East House, the sign and white gable end of The Greyhound, the white mass of Upper Mill, and the white Gothick southern elevation of the former Congregational Chapel (see fig 3). Colours rather than size or intricacy are the common factor in all of these features.

Character Analysis

Building Uses

The C19 village had the Church, Court House, Vicarage, farmhouses and a few other gentry houses, two corn mills, many smaller cottages, two Nonconformist chapels, two pubs, two shops, a forge and a school. The Parish has experienced considerable population decline, with an 1861 Census peak of 692 falling to 401 in 2001. Shops, one pub (now No. 9 East Street), the school, both mills and chapels have all been converted to other uses, mainly residential. There are agricultural buildings in the farms outside the core, but only Court and Ham Farms have actively used buildings in or near the centre. There are examples of conversions to residential use at Rooks Barn and The Stock Barn, adjacent to Lavender Cottage in East Street.

The Village Hall dates from the 1950s and was extended in 2000. There is considerable modern housing development at the east end of East Street, up Back and Waterside Lanes, at Chapel Cross and, as an infill scheme, at Greyhound Yard.

Building Types and Layouts

The Parish Church is an example of a C15 rebuilding, with west tower, nave, aisles south chapel, north porch and a chancel refurbished in the C18. The older large houses are organically planned. The Old Vicarage, first recorded in C14 and restored in C18, has two front gables and an originally recessed centre, with an offset doorway. The Court House is a reordering of an older house with C18 and early and mid-C19 additions. It has an approximately central entrance between two gabled wings, but the overall layout is informal and asymmetrical. City Farmhouse (C17 if not earlier) was originally a hall house (with no cross passage) and has an attached dairy and stable. By the stable, is an original, first floor granary. The C17 house north of The Old Vicarage, No. 3 High Street (see fig 3), is symmetrical, a reflection of C18 changes, although its architectural details are vernacular rather than Classical. East House is an example of a late C18 two storey with cellars and attics, square, totally symmetrical house, with a large central chimneystack and an impressive central entrance and hall. Upper Mill and Ham Farmhouse are other examples of a symmetrical layout, the Mill set at right angles to the street line and the Farmhouse having a lower attached range. It is not known if the two former mills have any machinery intact.

Smaller houses show this same contrast between unplanned and planned layouts. Older cottages are characterised by offset front doors and many of the thatched buildings are of one and a half storeys, with eyebrow dormers set into the roof (Nos.



Fig 48. View of wider landscape on east side of Dorchester Road



Fig 49. Upper Mill

10, 33, 35 and 37 High Street, 6 Waterside Lane and The Old School). Additions are often in the form of cat slide-roofed units. No. 11 High Street has a central door with an attached smithy. Nos. 13 and 31 High Street have central doors, reflecting their late C18 and early C19 dates, as do 4 Dorchester Road (with an attached barn), No. 1 East Street (Rocks farmhouse, with its former attached service range now a separate property) and No. 9 East Street (a former pub, with a rear wing). No. 16 High Street had a mid-C19 shop front set either side of a central doorway, but this has been removed and sash windows inserted.

There are some interesting agricultural buildings. The Tithe Barn is now a nine and a half bay aisled structure (the most westerly aisled barn in Dorset, according to the List description), with two sets of opposed entrances and a porch on one entrance doorway. It is probably late C16 but follows medieval precedents. The Court House has several outbuildings, including an early C19 coach house and stable, with loft over, and a detached granary or dovecot, dated 1773, with a pyramidal roof and entrance raised off the ground.

There are two former C19 chapels, the earlier Congregational one with a gable end entrance and two large windows to light a gallery, and the later Methodist, with a seemingly similar arrangement, although this building has been affected by residential conversion.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

The Conservation Area has 50 Listed Building entries, of which one (the Church) is Grade I; four (Court House, Tithe Barn, Old Vicarage and East House) Grade II*; and six of the Grade II structures are churchyard monuments.

The key Listed Buildings are:

- The Parish Church, a mainly C15 building with a fine tower and a spacious graveyard with some good table tombs and early C18 headstones;
- The Court House, with some earlier elements, mainly early C19 Gothick in appearance, a complement to the Church, with interesting outbuildings, a topiary garden of value and good entrance gate piers and gates;
- The Tithe Barn, a rare aisled barn, with important roof structure;
- The Old Vicarage, an attractive 1640 vernacular house that is an important feature at the crossroads by the core of the village;
- East House, an example of late C18 planning and details, with excellent brickwork, part of the important entrance group;
- No. 3 High Street (see fig 3), C17 with 1733 date stone, an interesting example of late vernacular survival with some symmetry and detailing that anticipate Classicism; of particular value in the important entry group of buildings;
- No. 1 East Street and Lavender Cottage, a particularly attractive attached pair, thatched and of a mixture of materials that is another important entry feature by the crossroads, facing travellers from the south;
- City Farmhouse, C17, a large thatched house with stone mullions and a particularly elegant sweep of thatch from the main block to the attached stable; partly hidden behind high stone walls;
- No. 11 High Street, one of several attractive thatched and tiled houses on the west side, but embellished by a characterful iron trelliswork porch with lettering advertising the blacksmith;



Fig 50. Granary & stables of the Court House



Fig 51. No 1 East Street

- Upper Mill, High Street, an urbane mid-C19 house, rendered, with sashes and canted bays and another iron porch, railings and gate; a very obvious feature at the northern end of the village core, at right angles to the road and a major townscape element.

Important Local Buildings

Sydling has several later C19 buildings of distinction that have group value:

- The former Congregational Chapel (see fig 3), Chapel Cross, dated 1834, mentioned in the RCHM descriptions, with a shaped gable and pleasing Gothick windows, well converted and a real focal point at the entry from the north;
- The Greyhound pub, a pleasant Victorian white render and slate block, with subsidiary lower buildings, set mainly at right angles to the road, of no great architectural value but a major visual focus on High Street; the flint and brick elements, either side of the main block are of group value;
- Nos. 15-21 High Street, a mixed group of early-mid C19 cottages: 15 is flint and brick with a central, segmental arched door; 17 and 19 are rough cast rendered, with central doors and blank spoked fanlights, 17 has a ground floor bay window (all windows and doors have had replacement uPVC inserts); 21 is rendered; they have group value, in spite of various alterations;
- Rocks and The Stock Barns, East Street, residential conversions, flint and chalk block banding, flint and brick, pantiles, group value;
- A K6 telephone box on the west side of High Street;
- No. 6 Dorchester Road, flint and brick, pantiles, with a chalk block and flint banded north gable end;
- No. 5 Dorchester Road, set behind the river channel, flint and brick, slate roof, stone gable copings, with sashes and one apparent casement, c.1840, unspoilt;
- Nos. 1-4 Waterside Lane, two semi-detached blocks of one storey plus large dormers, prominent chimneys, brick and tile cottages, dated 1927 and with a Winchester College plaque, unassuming and with touches of Arts and Crafts detailing, with replacement windows, but grouping well with a treed green space towards the river;
- No. 7 Waterside Lane is set at right angles to the mill leat, rendered, but with an exposed flint gable end, a hipped tin roof and remnants of eyebrow half dormers;
- April Cottage, Waterside Lane, thatched, rendered and painted flint and brick, much altered, but of some visual and historic value



Fig 52. No 5 Dorchester Rd



Fig 53. April Cottage

Building Materials and Architectural Details

There is a wide range of materials that are typical of the central, southern chalk valleys. Hamstone ashlar appears at the Church, Old Vicarage and its northern neighbour, No. 3 High Street (see fig 3). The Church has a mixture of Ham and grey oolite banding with flint, in its walling. This grey oolite, probably Ridgeway limestone, appears in worked and rubble forms, often banded with flint. No. 9 East Street has boldly banded Hamstone and flint walls. The latter may be carefully knapped and brought to courses or left as unworked nodules. It is also seen with chalk block/clunch banding and, occasionally stone, block and flint are mixed together and brick quoining may be added to the mixture. Clunch, being not particularly weatherproof, is often coated with a smooth render (scribed to represent ashlar in a few late C18-early C19 houses, such as 18 High Street) or roughcast. It is seen with a flint base at Lampert's Cottage. Roman Cement appears on The Court House. No. 43 High Street has a tile-hung south gable end, possibly as another form of protection for chalk block.

The local clays provided the material for the particularly attractive orange brick of East House, Flemish Bond, with fine rubbed and gauged work on window and door heads. Later C19 buildings show extensive use of the grey brown Broadmayne brick (for example, at the Ham Farm outbuildings). No. 4 High Street, Brewery House (see fig 3), has buff brick window lintels that contrast with red brick on the main walling.

Boundary walling varies from carefully coursed and graded flint nodules (seen along Waterside Lane, at the backs of some High Street properties and on the narrow passageway back to High Street, by the side of the pub), uncoursed flint with roughly chamfered or round copings, sometimes of stone or cement; brick and flint banded walls around parts of the Court House's rear gardens; flint with brick quoining and brick walls and gate piers (with rusticated channelling on those of the Court House).

Roofs are equally varied, with the soft, flowing lines of central/south Dorset thatch (originally of long straw or combed wheat reed), with flush, wrap-over ridges, eyebrows and meandering eaves, where there is a need to ramp up or down to an attached building. There are also clay tiles, some with stone tiled eaves, slate and pantiles on farm buildings. There are stone, coped gables, with shaped kneelers, on thatched and tiled roofs, as well as hips and half-hips on thatched examples. The Old Vicarage has decorative bargeboards to its front gables. Corrugated iron roofs, over or replacing thatch, are seen at the Tithe Barn and No. 7 Waterside Lane.

Windows vary between stone hollow or ovolo mullioned types, with and without drip moulds, fixed leaded lights; metal and wooden casements, with simple horizontal glazing bars or multiple-paned; and vertically hung sashes, usually with thin glazing bars. East House has sashes, with projecting keystones over, a central Venetian window and C17-type stone mullioned windows to the basement (conservatism, rather than incorporation of older features). Nos. 8 and 9 Dorchester Road (see fig 3) have unusual bracketed wooden hoods over doors and windows. Trout Cottage and Nos. 6 and 7 Waterside Lane have wooden lintels to their casements. Doors are equally varied; with simple planked cottage doors and more sophisticated six flush or fielded panelled types, often with the top two panels glazed. There are thatched canopies on timber posts, on a decorative iron trellis at No. 11 High Street, and flat, wooden types on bracketed supports. The doorcase to East House (see fig 3) has pilasters with paterae or bosses, a triglyph frieze and cornice, with an Adamesque character. It also has a simple, spoked, semicircular fanlight. Nos. 6, 17 and 19 High Street have blind, spoked fanlights.

The village has some very good ironwork, with trellised porches at 11 High Street (see fig 3 - *ROGER J* on the horizontal member and *BLACK* and *SMITH* on the two vertical stanchions) and Upper Mill. The latter has sinuous, running foliage, possibly vine stems and leaves, with a matching gate. The porch has a tented roof. There are broad arrow-headed railings at the Court House (see fig 3) and more delicate spearheads with curved spandrels between uprights and horizontal members, at No. 4 High Street. No. 8 has later Victorian floriated trefoil topped railings and 1 East Street has two plain spears interspersed with ogee-headed panels enclosing circles and oblongs.

There are other distinctive details: date stones, the 1953 Coronation bus shelter by the Old Vicarage, the armorial adornments to the Court House's gate piers, the carved plaque commemorating the restoration of No. 7 High Street; the old petrol pump at No. 16 High Street; the late medieval tracery fragment on No. 18; the painted sign of The Greyhound and the flint, diamond shaped, wall feature at the north corner of Diamond and Waterside Lanes. There are the remains of a DCC finger post in the middle of the Chapel Cross road junction.

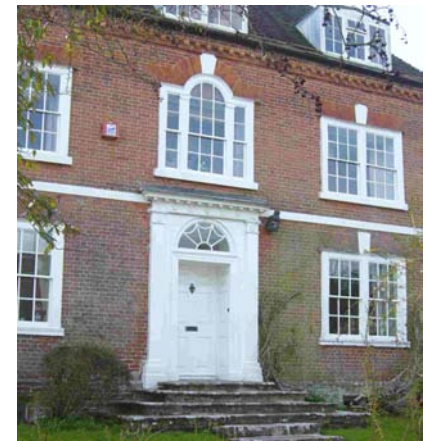


Fig 54. East House



Fig 55. Petrol pump outside No 16 High St

Parks, Gardens, Trees and Open Spaces

The Court House has a distinctive walled garden consisting of two colours of yews, planted in the 1860s by Sir William Marriott. The topiary shapes are fantastic and are seen from the churchyard.

The churchyard is an important green space, with good views to the west. There is a play area immediately SE of The Old Chapel off High Street and the new village green at Church Hill View is a major asset. There is also a small, triangular, grassed and treed space on the west side of Waterside Lane. The space around the Village Hall is partly grassed and paved and is fenced. The rest of the village is characterised by small front gardens, facing onto the street or a watercourse. On High Street, grass verges, dwarf walls and informal shrub planting provide a good setting for the buildings. There is a delightful riverside space immediately to the west of City Farmhouse, with trees, shrubs and flowers. The river and former mill leat are attractive linear features throughout the Conservation Area.

The breaks in development on Dorchester Road are particularly important in affording views out to the surrounding countryside and in underlining the informal character of development, contrasted with the more densely built-up village core.

The village has many fine trees: waterside trees and roadside hedges along Dorchester Road on the southern approach; the horse chestnut tree at the Cross; a row on the south side of Church Lane; the approaches and grounds of Court House (a large beech at the corner by the lane to the Church and several other beeches, ash and horse chestnuts); yews in the churchyard; to the west and south of the Tithe Barn; in a thick avenue on the track running north and west of the Court House; along parts of Waterside Lane; and to the NE and south of Chapel Cross. There are parkland-type trees west of Court House, which may be a remnant of an historic landscaping scheme. The hedge bank south of Chapel Cross, separating the main road from the river, is also of visual importance, along with the hedge opposite and several individual trees. There are a number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs): on Waterside Lane and along the course of the river south of East Street; south of Burnt Barn; in the grounds of No. 3a Dorchester Road; and a large group on Church Lane, around the entrances to Court Farm, Court House, Birches and the northern and eastern boundaries of the grounds of Court House.

Detrimental Features

There are a number of problems:

- The poor relationship between some of the modern development on the east side of the village and the historic core;
- One or two modern infill houses on High and East Streets that are either of inappropriate material or imitate Georgian design;
- The loss of some details on listed Buildings and the erosion of character on some good unlisted ones, including the introduction of a uPVC windows and front doors in High Street and the particularly insensitive conversion of the former Methodist Chapel;
- Concerns over the condition of the Tithe Barn and the visual impact of its corrugated iron roof;
- Intrusive side garage and car standing spaces on parts of High Street, with one or two particularly inappropriate garage designs;
- An over-wide access at the side of The Old Chapel;
- A neglected and broken DCC sign post at Chapel Cross;
- Poles and wires on High Street and East Street.



Fig 56. The topiary at Court House

Definition of the special interest of the Conservation Area

The overall quality of Sydling St Nicholas may be summarised:

- A distinctive and attractive landscape setting, in a chalk valley set amongst rolling hills and by a river, with some fine trees, within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Well defined entry points, on the north by chapel Cross and from the south, by the crossroads with East Street and Church Lane;
- A particularly undeveloped western edge, around the churchyard and Court House gardens, with mature trees and good views of escarpments and combes;
- A rich archaeological heritage, ranging from prehistoric earthworks, settlement sites and field systems, a medieval deer park, remnants of an open field system, the garden history related to the Court House and Second World War features;
- A largely intact village plan;
- 50 Listed Building entries, of which one is Grade I and four are Grade II*, with a fine Parish Church, several large gentry houses and farmhouses, a late C16 Tithe Barn and a strong underpinning of smaller cottages;
- Over 12 unlisted buildings of character and group value;
- Coherent groups of Listed and good quality unlisted buildings, boundaries, trees and details, particularly on High Street, East Street and the Church, Court House and Tithe Barn;
- A rich mixture of building materials, with flint, chalk block, imported limestones, render, brick, thatch, tile and slate;
- Details such as date stones, plaques, signs and ironwork

3D Godmanstone

The Conservation Area is related to the main road development and a small area around the Parish Church and can be described as an entity.

Spatial Analysis

Godmanstone is situated on the floor of the Cerne valley, on the right (western) bank of the river, astride the A352. In terms of **plan form**, it is a linear settlement, consisting, on the east of the A352, of single plots from the main road to the river, mainly detached properties, but with a courtyard of converted agricultural buildings on the southern edge, adjacent to Field Farm House. The Old Rectory and Trinity Lodge are attached and, at the northern end, there is one short terrace of cottages. The older properties are either set right on the road edge, parallel to it; at right angles (Rew Hollow, Field Farm House and the Mill, the latter at an angle, to relate to the line of the adjacent river); or set back behind high walls, with a yard and gardens. This latter type relates to the large gentry house, The Old Rectory. The pub, The Smith's Arms, has its original single storey building set at an angle to road and river, but its Victorian extensions are set firmly on the road-line.

On the west side of the main road, the pattern is more complicated and diverse, with two lanes towards Crete hill and the ridge between the Cerne and Sydling valleys and a track to the church (Church Lane). The southern one, Fry's Lane, has a group of modern houses, by the main road junction and in two short cul-de-sacs off the Lane. Northwards are infill plots of modern, detached houses and bungalows. Older development begins at The Smithy, where a terrace of cottages and barns (on the edge of the carriageway, in marked contrast to the modern development, which, on both sides, is set back in gardens) lead to a track to Manor Farm Cottages. Manor Farm and Godmanstone Manor House are set centrally in large plots, bounded by walls and railings and are separated by Church Lane in which are small cottages (related originally to the Manor) and the village hall.

The character and interrelationship of spaces in the Conservation Area

A walk from the southern entry northwards to the northern end is instructive in viewing the character and progression of spaces. Field Farm Dairy's gable end projects to the road and is echoed by a parallel shed, providing a strong entry feature. A glimpse is had of converted farm buildings around a yard. The high ride of the eastern valley slopes and riverside trees are seen through the gap, features that are seen further up the road, at Manor Cottage, where there are gaps in development or a yard off the main road. Sheds then run along the road edge and trees overhang the road by Manor Cottage, framing the views north and south and providing a gateway feature. Opposite, the junction with Fry's Lane is marked by modern detached, vernacular houses and hedges, which help to retain a sense of enclosure. The gable end of Crains Cottage again forms a punctuation mark on the road edge.

The main road climbs to a minor summit and the character of the surrounding spaces changes, with a progression of modern houses and bungalows set back, above the road on the left (west) and level or below on the right (east). Boundaries are either weakly defined or are comprised of alien plant and hedging species. There are, again, views across the river course to the eastern hills.

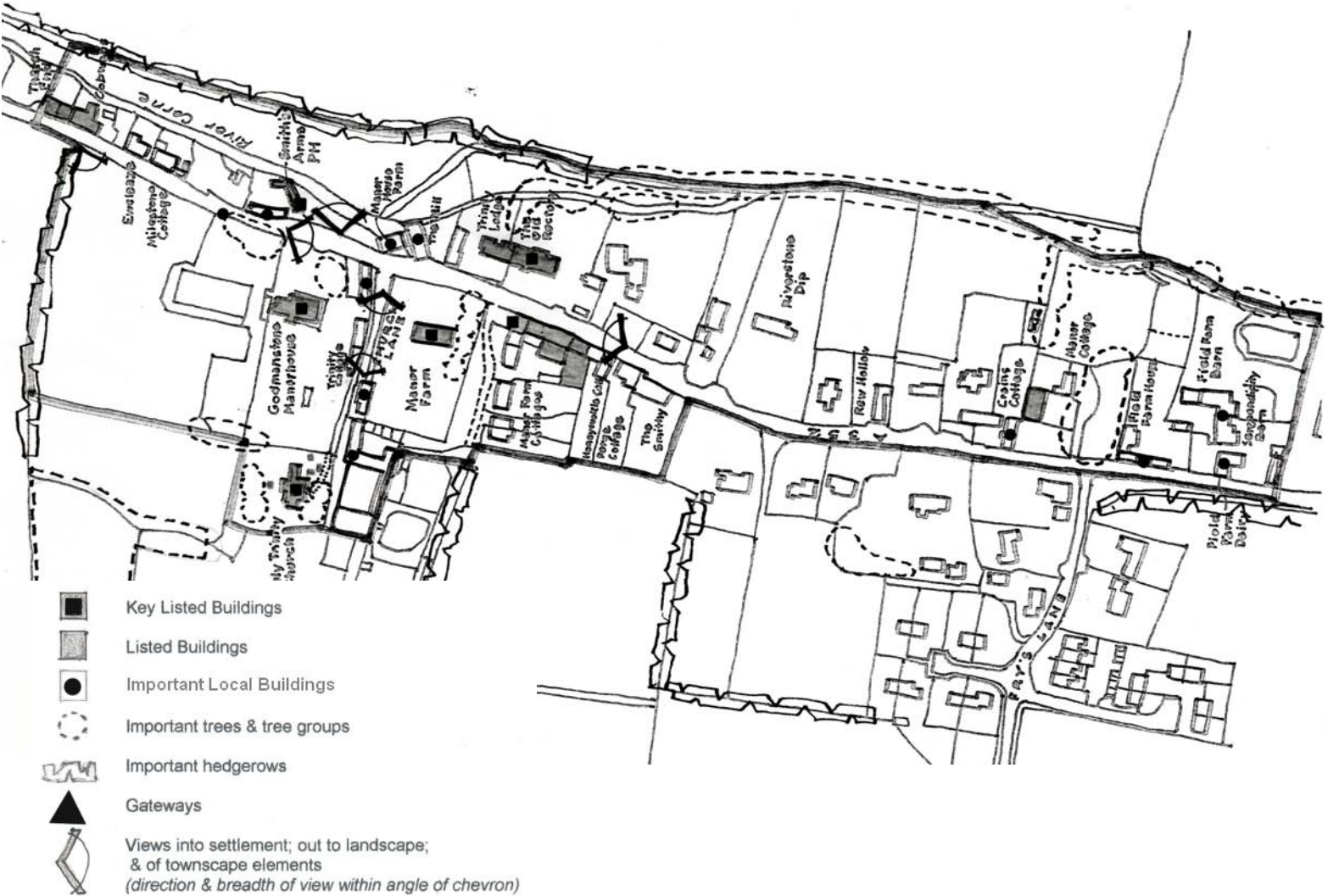


Fig 57. Properties on the road edge



Fig 58. Church Lane

Map 4: setting & assets of Godmanstone



The road line falls gently downhill and curves right and left. This change in alignment is marked by the re-establishment of traditional townscape, with a row of cottages and barns on the left and, after a final flourish of modern infill, the high walls and gate piers of The Old Rectory to the right. The track to the Manor Farm buildings on the left reveals a wide linear space at right angles to the main road, bordered by Manor Farm Cottages and heralded by an unspoilt barn that turns the corner from the main road. Manor Farm is not easily seen, partially hidden by walls and hedges. On the right, the former Mill building and Manor House Farm are set hard on the road line, at right angles to each other. Godmanstone Manor House has a pale coloured barn on the northern corner of Church Lane that, combined with the two buildings opposite, creates a real pinch point, underlined by a narrowing of the road width. Manor House Farmhouse has a distinctive banded end elevation that makes it very conspicuous when entering the village from the north.

Church Lane is the one real variation from the general north-south linearity of the progression. It is a narrow defile, running slightly uphill, bordered by high flint and cob walls, two small cottages and the village hall. There is a glimpse of the church tower over boundary walls, framed by yews. The churchyard gates form a sudden visual focus, emphasised by gates. The churchyard forms a relatively large space, bounded by hedges and with views of the countryside to the west.

Back towards the main road, Manor House Farm forms a terminal feature in the eastern view down the lane. Going north, Godmanstone Manor House is glimpsed through a thick laurel hedge and fine ironwork gates. Opposite, the visual tightness and tension dissipates with a grassed verge and trees and a good view to the river and the wider countryside. The older part of The Smith's Arms modestly reveals itself and a taller, bulkier Victorian block runs along the edge of the road. There then follows the visual poverty of the pub car park. Looking back south, there is an evergreen large shrub or tree in Godmanstone Manor House grounds that overhangs the main road and forms a dramatic gateway feature, corresponding with the trees by Manor Cottage, at the southern entry.

The village finishes with a mixed group of cottages on the right and a hedge on the western side.

Key views and vistas are the views across the river from various points on the main road, particularly from the green space south of the pub; and an example of serial vision along the main road, with particularly good views to the village core from The Smithy north to Manor Farm and south from The Smith's Arms south towards the barn on the southern corner of the lane to Manor Farm. The view up Church Lane and back down to Manor House Farm on the main road are also important. There are views across the valley from the churchyard and a view of the church tower and backing hills from a gateway opposite Cobwebs at the northern entry.

There are no obvious **landmarks**, as the major houses and church are all well hidden by walls and hedges. The thatched part of the pub is the one most obvious visual symbol of the village, but it has to be viewed at a walking pace.

Character Analysis

Building Uses

Most or all of the historic buildings retain their original uses: church, gentry houses, farmhouses, sheds and barns and smaller cottages. The Village Hall (see fig 4) was originally the school, built in 1849, whereas the pub is purpose-built. The exceptions are the conversion of the Field Barn Farm buildings and The Mill to residential uses.



Fig 59. River Cerne by the Smith's Arms



Fig 60. View across the valley from the churchyard

Building Types and Layouts

The parish church is a good example of an accretion of nave, chancel, north and south chapels, porch and west tower over a period of four hundred years, with particular evidence of late Romanesque and late Gothic elements. The larger gentry houses, such as Godmanstone Manor House, The Old Rectory/Ilington Lodge and Manor Farm are early-mid C19 with symmetrical layouts and central entries. Godmanstone Manor House is a double-pile cube house and has an attached service block, as has The Old Rectory. Older houses, such as Manor Cottage, may have a less formal plan, with offset entrances and rear outshuts. Thatch End has its main entrance in the north gable end. Cobwebs (see fig 4) is an example of a one-and-a-half storey pair of cottages, with eyebrow dormers set into a thatched roof.

The Smith's Arms (see fig 4) has its older single storey unit, basically one space, with small additions to its east end. There are several barns, either in agricultural use or converted to residential use, single storey, with loop lights or simple casements and entry or loading doors.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are thirteen Listed Building entries in the Conservation Area, of which the Parish Church is Grade I and one table tomb is Grade II*.

Key Listed Buildings are:

- The Parish Church, C12, C15 and early C16, with 1848 restoration and extensions: an attractive building, using flint, limestone rubble and freestone dressings;
- Godmanstone Manor House, stuccoed stone, with pilasters and some original internal fittings; with its ironwork gates and railings, a grand (although partly hidden) feature;
- Manor Farm and barn to the south of entry lane: unpretentious architecture of house, with very incorrect window proportions, but distinctive stone and flint banding, ironwork gates and conspicuous garden plants; the large barn turns the corner into the lane entry to the farm and is a very conspicuous feature in views along the main road, particularly from the north, where the lane elevation acts as a partial stop to views south;
- The Old Rectory, attractive mixture of materials and colours, interesting iron entrance gates and railings, partly visible in townscape sequence.

The above are the most important buildings in architectural terms. The thatched Smith's Arms (see fig 4) is perhaps the most known to visitors.

Building Groups

There are a number of good building groups:

- At the northern entry, the row of cottages on the eastern side: Thatch End and Cobwebs (see fig 4);
- The area around the junction with Church Lane: Godmanstone Manor House walls and trees, the church and churchyard, the Village Hall, Trinity Cottage and neighbour, the nearby shed related to Godmanstone Manor House, Manor Farm, Manor House Farm and The Smith's Arms;
- The Manor Farm barn, The Old Rectory, its boundary walls and Honeysuckle Cottage, Main Road Cottage, Forge Cottage and The Smithy;
- Crains Cottage, Manor Cottage, Field Farm House, converted barns and the trees overhanging the road.



Fig 61. Barns at Manor Farm



Fig 62. The Old Rectory

Important Local Buildings

There are several good, characterful buildings and structures that contribute to group value:

- The K6 telephone box opposite the Smith's Arms car park;
- The Victorian/early C20 rendered block of The Smith's Arms, with four units stepping-up from the north and combining to give an ordered whole;
- Manor House Farm, with its distinctive banded gable end, a key townscape feature and of group value;
- The barn or shed opposite, related to the Manor, rendered, of townscape importance;
- The Mill, much altered, but with some external features and, logically, in an interesting position relative to the river;
- The Village Hall (see fig 4), flint, rubble and Hamstone dressings, 1840-ish Tudor Revival, handsome and of group value;
- The adjacent stone and brick single storey shed belonging to Manor Farm, which is of group value related to the church and churchyard;
- Crain's Cottage, a thatched cottage to the west of Manor Cottage, with a very prominent gable end on the road edge and flint and stone banding;
- The sheds related to Field Farm House, along the main road, of group value, combined with the good-quality conversion of the Field Farm Dairy group of barns, all combining to give a positive entry feature.



Fig 63. The Manor House

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Godmanstone is a village of flint walling, mostly uncoursed, but with some knapping and banding with stone and thin lacing courses of brick (see fig 4). Manor Farm House, some of its barns, The Old Rectory, Manor Cottage, Manor House Farm, Thatch End, The Mill and Crains Cottage all have very distinctive flint and stone bands. Flint boundary walls, either in the form of uncoursed flint nodules or knapped, squared flints with brick banding (seen particularly well at Godmanstone Manor House front boundary wall) are particularly prevalent in the north of the village. Stone rubble and stone bands and freestone dressings are found on the Church. The southern elevation of The Smith's Arms pub has stone quoins arranged in a *long and short* pattern, seen on Anglo-Saxon churches (obviously, an unconscious C18 repetition, related to building technology and materials).

Stucco or render is found on Godmanstone Manor House and on the first floor of The Old Rectory. There are other rendered cottages and roughcast or pebble-dash (notably on the front elevation of Manor House Farm). Brick makes several appearances, with blue vitrified headers amongst the Manor Farm barns. A red/orange brick is the more common method of forming corner quoins and window and door openings in rubble or flint. There is evidence of cob in the northern boundary wall of Manor Farm, with a flint base and large pantiled capping. The Listed barn on the corner of the Manor Farm lane has an instructive mix of squares flint and limestone banding, larger blocks of Hamstone and areas of brickwork above, with some vitrified headers in the Flemish Bond coursing.

Roofs range from stone tiles (Church); clay tiles with stone verges; thatch; pantiles (particularly on farm buildings) and slates. There are several tin roofs on outbuildings. Thatch is traditionally in soft, rounded shapes, with undulating eaves lines (eyebrows around dormers or a step up as seen in the side elevation of The Smith's Arms) and flush ridges. Windows vary between stone mullions at the rear of Manor Cottage, vertical sashes at the gentry houses (with ill-proportioned panes at Manor Farm and 1840-ish marginal glazing at The Old Rectory) and more common wooden casements, with simple transom



Fig 64. The Victorian part of the Smith's Arms

bars or more intricate sub-divisions. Doors range from fielded or flush panelled types on the larger houses to simpler planked types on some of the cottages.

There are several good iron boundary railings and gates, notably at Godmanstone Manor House (where there are spear-headed railings, dog rails in the lower parts and vertical panels of running circles), iron gate piers and elaborate gates on The Old Rectory (with a Victorian Gothic character) and simple spears with urn standards at the churchyard entrance (see fig 4). There is a stone milestone in front of the Listed Manor Farm barn. There is a medieval floriated capital or bracket on the gable end of Crains Cottage, in the angle of the projecting chimney (from the parish church, or more probably, Cerne Abbey).

Parks, Gardens, Trees and Open Spaces

The churchyard is a large public space, enhanced by large yews and a carefully laid boundary hedge. It is a fitting setting for the church and gives views into the grounds of the Manor. There is a small registered green in Church Lane which is by the village hall and entrance to the churchyard. The most usable public spaces are the west bank of the river, along which runs a public footpath and the green area south of the pub, where there are pleasant views of the river. The larger houses have reasonably large gardens, with shrubs and trees, some of which, notably at Manor Farm and Godmanstone Manor House, encroach beneficially into the public realm. The trees by Manor Cottage are important to the quality of the southern entry. There are gardens fronting the modern infill housing north of Fry's Lane and Pond Cottage, but they contain many exotic tree, hedge and shrub species. They do, however, have the virtue of softening the visual impacts of some of the less sensitive examples of materials and details.

There are significant groups of trees along the course of the River Cerne and one large block of woodland north and NNE of the church, which forms a good backdrop to the church when seen from the northern entry into the village.

Detrimental Features

- A large, bare car-park for The Smith's Arms that could benefit from better boundary definition;
- The obviously closed character of the pub, with the loss of the characterful sign (kept in a safe place); the thatched building may become at risk if it remains unused;
- The poor pebble-dash render and replacement windows at Manor House Farm;
- There is a minor wirescape at the southern edge of the village;
- Some examples of modern infill development that are unsympathetic to overall character because of siting, architectural style and materials;
- The alien plant species and boundaries that further underline the damage done by some of the newer infill development;
- The introduction of inappropriate UPVC windows (with fake glazing bars) on a prominent unlisted building of group value;
- The new 'in-keeping' housing is generally of reasonable quality but there is a tendency to reproduce traditional materials without due care and attention to details e.g. large flint and brick bands whereas old walls tend to have stone and flint banding or, less commonly, thin brick lacing courses; and elaborate thatch ridges rather than simple flush ridges.



Fig 65. Garden of Godmanstone Manor House

Definition of the special interest of the Conservation Area

The key features are:

- A setting typical of chalk valleys, with significant ridges and slopes and a contrasting riverside character with watercourses, mill leats, trees and green space;
- A strong linear plan form, with intact buildings and uses;
- 13 Listed Building entries, with an interesting small church, several gentry houses of differing character and detailing, unspoilt smaller cottages and a lacing of simple but characterful agricultural buildings;
- A number of unlisted buildings and structures of design quality and/or group value;
- Several good, coherent groups of buildings, walls and trees, particularly around the Church Lane and Manor Farm track that run off the main road;
- Firm edges to most of the settlement, with definite north and south edges and clean entry points;
- A wide range of building materials, typical of chalk valley areas and some attractive detailing, such as flint and stone banding, simple thatch forms and several early C19 ironwork railings, gates and gate piers;
- Examples of sensitive conversions of older buildings to new uses.

Community Involvement

The local community, Parish Councils, district councillors and statutory authorities were consulted on the appraisal during July – August 2007. Comments received helped finalize the appraisal which was adopted by the district council in December 2007.

General Condition

The villages are characterised by a general good condition of the building stock, boundaries and the public realm. The Riding House at Charminster, the Tithe barn at Sydling St Nicholas and The Smith’s Arms at Godmanstone are the main causes for concern.

Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

CONSERVATION AREA ISSUE	PROPOSED ACTION/S	LEAD PARTNER	OTHER PARTNERS
Standards & methods of repair and maintenance of historic buildings and structures	Upon request provide advice	WDDC	
Sourcing local materials & continuation of building traditions	Upon request provide advice on known sources & building traditions	WDDC	

Design standards in the public realm (overhead cables, traffic signs, road space with amenity value & use)	Identify opportunities to enhance & consider traffic management	DCC (Highway Authority), WDDC	Parish Council & Group Parish
The contribution of trees & the landscape setting to the character & appearance of the conservation areas	Contribution to be perpetuated as far as possible & support suitable schemes through availability of Countryside & Conservation Grant	WDDC	DCC, Group Parish, Parish Council
A number of unlisted buildings have architectural & historic interest	Additions to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest should be considered	WDDC	
Exchange of archaeological information	Consider how to assist the Dorset Historic Environment Record & benefit from the Dorset Historic Towns Project (Extensive Urban Study)	WDDC, DCC	English Heritage, Cerne Historical Society

Developing Management Proposals

Based on the Summary of Issues & Proposed Actions, the following objectives might be set out as the basis of a long-term management plan:

- The contribution of the landscape setting and trees to the conservation areas to be perpetuated using all means possible. Suitable schemes could qualify for the Council's Countryside and Conservation Grant Scheme (offers limited financial support subject to criteria and availability). Details available on *dorsetforyou.com* website;
- Consider additional buildings for listing;
- Provide the Dorset Historic Environment Record with relevant information as available;
- Agree a method for the receipt of information from the Dorset Historic Towns Project (Extensive Urban Study).

Advice

The District Council can advise on the need for Listed Building Consent or any planning permission that may be required, and can provide advice on matters such as methods of maintenance and repair, shop fronts, alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings and suitable materials. Contact details are provided below.

Information and Contact Details

Criteria used for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings

In line with English Heritage guidance, an "important local building" is one that makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, and where this is the case, the building will be included in a local list within the conservation area appraisal. Two basic criteria were used; the actual design characteristics, such as mass, skyline, interesting details, materials and existing or former use; and position relative to the wider setting, individual or groups of Listed Buildings.

Contacts: West Dorset District Council, Design & Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or e-mail <planning@westdorset-dc.gov.uk>

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Maps

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