



Yetminster 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. Yetminster Conservation Area forms part of this appraisal work.

The Yetminster Conservation Area was designated in September 1970 and extended in December 2009 and October 2010.

In order that designation is effective in conserving the special interest, planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the Conservation Area's 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. Included are summaries of the planning policy context, landscape setting, historic development and archaeology. There is also a more detailed description of the character of the village's buildings, groups, building materials and architectural details, green elements and detrimental features. All of these are brought together into a definition of the special interest of the Conservation Area. Finally, there are recommendations for management action and their development.

The appraisal was subject to public consultations (May-June 2009 and May-June 2010), during which, an information event manned by district council officers was held in the village. Following consultation, officers recommended amendments and the district council adopted the appraisal as a technical document supporting policies in the West Dorset District Local Plan (Adopted 2006) in December 2009 and approved further extensions to the conservation area in October 2010.

The **Executive Summary** sets out the key characteristics of the conservation area (see also boundary review page 22) and any issues associated with them:

- The fundamental influence of the three manorial prebends on the development of Yetminster, including Brister End;
- A pleasant landscape setting, with undulating topography, mature trees, a small river, visually and historically important green spaces in the centre of the village and views out of distant hills;
- Some specimen trees in the churchyard and gardens and some attractive private gardens visible from the public realm;
- An interesting medieval and post-medieval archaeology, related to ownership and tenure and their effects upon plan form and building types;
- A particularly rich assemblage of late medieval and post-medieval vernacular houses displaying a range of plan forms;
- 56 Listed Buildings within the conservation area, including a Grade I parish church and two Grade II* larger houses;

- About a dozen important local buildings, including late C19 cottages, farm buildings, a mid-C19 Nonconformist chapel and a K6 telephone box;
- A large coherent group of quality buildings covering most of the village centre, linked by stone boundary walls, gardens and green space;
- Valuable details, such as boundary walls and gate piers; iron railings and gates; stone date stones and plaques and churchyard memorials;
- The consistent use of two local limestones, together with Hamstone dressings, stone and clay tiles, thatch and slate.

There are a number of detrimental features including poles and wires; several spaces that would benefit from better boundary definition and the reduction of clutter; the loss of traditional details on a number of historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted; several buildings in poor repair and at risk and an area of business uses by the railway that would benefit from visual improvement. There are also problems created by volumes and speeds of traffic on High Street and Brister End.

The Planning Policy Context

The **Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (Adopted 2000)** contains policies relating to the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

Contained within the **West Dorset District Local Plan (Adopted 2006)**, there are a number of planning policies relevant to the settlement:

- *Safeguarding Assets*: 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); Policy SA10 seeks to protect sites of local importance for nature conservation interest; 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.
- *Settlement Policy*: Policy SS1 relates to development within Defined Development Boundaries (DDB); Policy 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.

National Planning Policy and Legislation

Flood risk is addressed in the Government's Planning Policy Statement 25.

Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines were adopted by the district council in February 2009. This contains 10 design policies that apply to different types and scales of development. Accompanying this is the **West Dorset Landscape Character Assessment**, adopted February 2009, which addresses the 35 landscape character areas of the District.

The West Dorset District Local Plan, Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines and Landscape Character Assessment are available at district council offices. The document 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 a description of location and setting; and historic development and archaeology; and spatial and character analysis, providing detail on topics such as spaces within the developed area, 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

Yetminster is a large village (2001 population of 1095) located in the NW part of the District, south of and almost equidistant from the towns of Yeovil and Sherborne (about six miles/ten kilometres). It is situated between the north-south A37 and A352, served by a number of minor roads linked to smaller villages such as Ryme Intrinseca, Chetnole and Thornford and the two main roads. The Weymouth-Bristol railway line runs through the village, immediately to the east of the historic core.

The village is sited in gently undulating landscape at about 70-80 metres AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). Its landscape setting is on a boundary between several major types, the gently undulating Blackmore Vale and the Wriggle Valley to the north; the higher Limestone Ridges, Cornbrash and Forest Marble, on and around the site of the village; and a series of geological exposures of clays, sands and greensand to the south, leading up to the Central Dorset Downs, an extensive massif of chalk. The River Wriggle flows to the east of the village, in a meandering course and with a number of small tributary streams. To the north, there is a gradual descent to the broad valley of the River Yeo; to the NE the pronounced ridge created by Knighton and Lillington Hills, rising to over 150m; and to the south there is the dramatic northern escarpment of chalk hills that cover much of central Dorset rising to over 260m.

The village centre has marked changes of level that add to its character and attractiveness. There is a gradual slope from the Thornford Road junction down High Street to the railway line and river and a rise up from High Street to the Parish Church on Church Street and a continuing rise along Birch Lane back to Melbury Road. Mill Lane drops away steeply from the junction of Church Street and Birch Lane and, in views from the east of the village, Church Lane shows up on its ridge above the railway and river valley. Adjoining the conservation area to the east, beyond the railway and river crossing is the historic settlement of Brister End, stretching along the lane to Leigh.

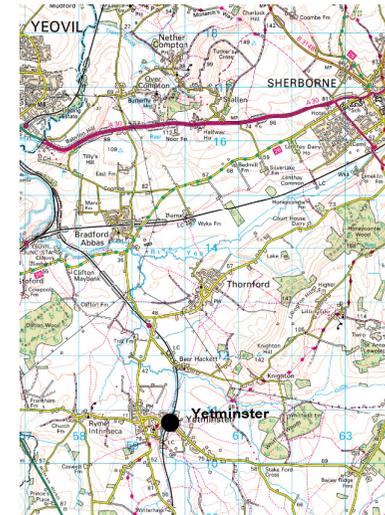


Fig 1. Location map
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B. Historic Development and Archaeology

There is no current evidence of Roman settlement in or immediately around the village and the name and a Saxon stone cross shaft suggest Saxon settlement. The name appears in Domesday, where two mills are mentioned, and it may possibly relate to the nearby royal forest of Blackmore. There were four manors (including *Yetminster Prima*, its manor house being Upbury Farm, and *Yetminster Secunda*, its manor house being Gable Court), one held by the Bishop of Salisbury (Sussex Farm in Brister End was possibly the manor house) and the others were held as prebends by canons of the cathedral. Land was leased to tenant farmers and there was notable continuity in boundaries and field systems into the C20. This continuity included the road system, at least medieval in origin, linking Yetminster with its fields and neighbouring villages, although today some are access tracks with or without footpaths, the Yetminster to Beer Hackett public way being a good example. The medieval three field system also influenced land holdings, fragmented throughout the parish, and created a concentration of farm houses in the centre of the village, the latter feature still apparent along High and Church Streets. High Street has some particularly interesting layout characteristics, possibly relating to medieval manorial land ownership and agricultural practice. There is a most useful study by Nora Windridge titled *The Prebends of Yetminster*. There are a series of nine surviving, very regular, linear plots or crofts (small enclosed fields) extending back from the north side of High Street, most or all linked to a farm or gentry house positioned on or very near to the road frontage. The houses include The Old Court House; Higher, Pettie's and Holm Farms; the Manor House; Devon House and The Grey House, as well as The White Hart inn. Several plots retain stone barns and sheds to the rear of the main houses. In Church and Queen Streets, plots seem to be smaller (although some have been subdivided), but they still have reasonable regularity and straight boundaries, again suggesting possible planning in the historic layout. Houses and cottages tend to be set parallel to the highway (with the notable exception of Edgmoor, in Queen Street) and either on the road line or set behind small front gardens.

The oldest house seems to be Upbury, a late medieval hall house. The associated farm has extensive fields to the west and north, the former 'in-fields' of the wider holding, related to land elsewhere in and around the village. Gable Cottage also has late C15 elements, reflecting its ownership by the Sherborne Almshouse of St John the Evangelist and St John the Baptist. The other major medieval building is the Parish Church of St Andrew, possibly a Saxon mother church whose priests served a wider area. The building has the base of a Norman font, a C13 chancel and a late C15 nave, aisles, porch and west tower.

The village has a particularly rich heritage of C17 stone houses, resulting from a combination of decent building stone, secure tenure and successful pastoral farming (at a period where, in other areas, arable prices fluctuated or declined and many smaller tenant farmers were driven into penury by voracious landlords). In 1711, Boyle's School was founded for twenty poor boys of Yetminster, Leigh and Chetnole. By the mid-C18, new building was less evident. The most notable resident was Benjamin Jesty, a pioneer of vaccination against smallpox who lived at Upbury Farm. There was a sailcloth industry in the C17 and C18, based on local flax, with a manufactory at the Upper Mill. The railway arrived in 1857, and by the station, a milk factory was built in 1867. In 1849, a Methodist Church was built in Chapel Lane, a National School in Church Street in 1877 and the nearby Church Hall in 1922. The latter necessitated the demolition of cottages that were formerly the Old Rectory and the manor house of *Yetminster Ecclesia*. The C19 village had a wide range of businesses, with nearly twenty different crafts, eight inns and several shops in High Street and Brister End.

The Victorian village also experienced marked population fluctuations, reflecting agricultural prosperity or depressions, with 666 in 1851, 557 in 1901, 620 in 1911 and 438 in 1931. The later C20 saw economic recovery and growth, with population

over 1000, a new village school at Stoneyacres and new residential areas to the west and east of the village core, with some infilling and conversions on High and Church Streets and Chapel Lane.

The Dorset Sites and Monuments Record shows eight sites and features in the parish, notably the Saxon cross shaft, medieval green ways in the southern half of the parish, and five lime kilns. None of the sites are Scheduled Monuments.

The **archaeological issues** are:

- Lack of understanding of the resource: potential research into Saxon and early medieval features (the four manors, land ownership); the questions of village plan form and plot layouts (was there an element of planning in the substantial C17 building activity?);
- The importance of the surviving historic layout features, for example, the northern High Street 'crofts' and the 'infields' related to Upbury Farm and their vulnerability to change, including small incremental actions and larger development proposals;
- Industrial activity, flax, sailcloth and water mills, the value of surviving railway structures;
- The potential for further work on vernacular houses, consolidating or updating the excellent work by Robert Machin.

C. Introduction to Spatial and Character Analysis

Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside. 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. These sensations depend upon the density and height of buildings, their position relative to the highway, the character of boundaries and the dominance or dearth of trees, and views out to countryside or into the village core. Also important are the effects of topography – the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths. These are all elements of **townscape**, 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.

Spatial Analysis (see also Review of the Conservation Area Boundary, page 22)

The High Street lies along the northern slope of an east/west ridge that is cut in half by the River Wriggle, which formed the eastern limit to the street (until the arrival of the railway that altered road patterns and communications with neighbouring Brister End) in contrast to an historic crossroads at Townsend that acted as a westerly stop or limit. Of primary, historical importance is Mill Lane that travels up the ridge from the south, becomes Church Street and runs downhill to join High Street. Church Street, which has the Parish Church and several large gentry or former manor houses, and High Street impress a T shape on the **plan form** of the village, and their junction marks The Cross. This T shape along with the lesser Queen Street (also known as Church Lane) and Chapel Lane, generally remained the extent of the village up to C20. Modern development



Fig 2. The Cross



Fig 3. From High St, view south across the field towards the landmark of the parish church

has taken place on high and gently sloping meadows and crofts to the west and NW of the village's historic envelope with a thickening-out on and near Chapel Lane and either side of Brister End.

There is a large 'hollow core' of infields (fields nearest to a farm) in the rectangle formed by High and Church Streets, Birch Lane and Melbury Road (also known as Back Lane). These fields are quintessential to village agricultural history. Agricultural history has been greatly influenced by the establishment of manorial prebends, a study of which was undertaken by Nora Windridge in 1999.

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the Conservation Area

It is possible to describe the townscape character of the village by taking a walk through the centre. The chosen route is from Townsend, down High Street, up and down Queen Street, back onto High Street to the beginning of Brister End. There is a return to High Street to the Church Street junction and thence up Church Street, with a short diversion down Mill Lane and then a return to Melbury Road via Birch Lane. Other routes would be equally instructive but the route chosen aims to accommodate views back and across spaces and important views out of the village, as well as describing the shape and feel of spaces, their progression, and the many subtleties of colour, texture and detail.

Upper High Street

Starting from the Thornford Road junction, there is a narrow defile of buildings and boundary walls leading into High Street, with part views of buildings downhill. There is an alternative entry further south, from the Melbury Road and the two entries create a triangular block of buildings at the entry point. From either approach, the main street becomes more visible, revealing a series of serial views of gable ends, facades in perspective and curving rows of cottages, particularly on the left, north, side. Trees and large shrubs project into the street over walls.

Queen Street

On the right, south, the large bulk of Rock House is elevated above the narrow junction with Queen Street, the bow window marking the corner. Queen Street rises sharply and its buildings are set at various angles to the lane, creating informal townscape. The building ends suddenly at Muntins and The Red House where a rural lane, hedge and large paddocks give views of the church and Upbury Farm. Grope Lane runs west back to Melbury Road, bounded by walls and high hedges, and a footpath runs east to the churchyard and Church Street, with a long sinuous stone wall on its northern boundary and speared railings to the churchyard side.

Middle section of High Street

Returning to High Street, the constant curve of the road line and the slope down continue to give a series of townscape views. There is interplay between building lines and positions of buildings, particularly between the 'White Hart' and the Manor House. The pub is L-shaped with a gable end to the road and a setback range; Petties Farm is at right angles and a modern building is set behind a garden. The Manor House then breaks forward hard onto the road line. Beyond, a more or less continuous row of houses and cottages hugs the curve down to Oak House. Added to all this are stone boundary walls and the occasional tree or large shrub. The southern side, the inside of the curve, plays a lesser role, with individual fine houses and some indifferent infill. Two elements, however, are important: the grassed and treed bank by Priors Cleve (which frames long views along the street) and a sudden fine view across fields of the church tower and large trees, where there is a significant and important undeveloped gap. East of Priors Cleve, a long stone barn defines the southern boundary right up to Cross Farm House.



Fig 4. Queen St looking north



Fig 5. High St looking east

The views back west along High Street are equally enjoyable, with the long curve on the northern side, the interplay of frontages, gable ends, rows on the road line, gardens, trees and boundary walls. The pub seems to be in a crucial central point of the curve, emphasised by the projecting gabled units either side of the central frontage.

Church Street junction and lower end of High Street

At the junction with Church Street, there are splayed building lines on the two corners, creating a funnel-shaped road space (partly filled with an island of grass and shrubs). Cross Farm House, in particular, addresses this space and, to the north, Manor farm House firmly stops views from Church Street into High Street. High walls and trees provide a slightly more transparent boundary around Yewland, in the SE corner. There is a glimpse of the church tower and large trees, due to the effects of a slope and a curving street line. Continuing, for a moment, down the High Street corridor, the road line sharply performs a reverse curve and there is a raised pavement on the southern side backed by high boundary walls and the elaborate gate piers of Gable Court. Opposite is a narrow view into Chapel Lane. High Street rather ends in an anticlimax, with modern development leading up to the hump of the railway bridge, but there is a small grass triangle at the junction with the eastern return of Chapel Lane and a large tree. Bridge House, opposite, is set below the road level and largely hidden. The railway bridge gives views up and down the line and the adjacent river crossing affords views along the pleasantly treed Wriggle. Brister End appears to be a curving corridor of old cottages interspersed with Victorian red brick terraces and modern infill. There is an important undeveloped green space between Eastlands and the railway line.

Church Street

Returning back up High Street, the tall gable end and chimneys of Gable Court stand up above the road and the Church Street junction is marked by the handsome façade of Cross Farm House (fig 12), set on the canted corner of the junction. Climbing up the slope, the urbane frontage of Hill House is revealed, behind walls and railings, on the left (east), followed by a long row of Victorian Tudor Revival, where the projecting tower of the former school provides a punctuation mark. Opposite are two modern houses but one fine beech tree is a landmark, framing views of the church beyond. Tall stone piers herald the churchyard and iron gates and the yews stand amongst memorials. The spacious burial ground also has individual trees, such as a tall monkey-puzzle tree. There are views over the boundary wall to Upbury Farm and the green space behind.

Back on Church Street, the east end of the church is set above the lane, with several silver birches delicately set off against the gables and buttresses. A double curve in the road line and a narrowing, created by the church, the Old Vicarage and Church Cottage (both set on the road edge) leads to the impressive length of Stone House (former inn) on the east and the wide space fronting Upbury Farm to the west; the latter flanked by stone barns. Towards the junction with Birch Lane, Church Street is defined by Greystones on the east side and boundary wall and hedgerow on the west, and at the junction, is further complemented by attractive topiary at Yew Cottage and the close proximity of fields. Mill Lane falls steeply and curves down to the river and a level crossing over the railway. Birch Lane is partly suburban and partly hedged and there are views of the green space over to the end of Queen Street and behind Upbury Farm.

Key views and vistas are:

- Panoramic views north from Birch Lane over the village and beyond to Lillington Hill, and south over countryside to Batcombe Hill;
- An important view of the Parish Church from the High Street gap east of Croft Cottage;
- A more restricted view from the railway bridge west up High Street and towards the church;



Fig 6. Church St looking south



Fig 7. View towards the parish church from a footpath in the field south of Birch Lane

- Views out to countryside from the east side of Church Street and from its southern end, between buildings;
- Views over the village and out to open countryside from public right of ways that cross the field south of Birch Lane;
- From the churchyard west across the meadows behind Upbury Farm and also from the lane at the southern end of Queen Street south across the same open area;
- A good long view of the church and Church Street, with a wooded setting, from the footpath between Mill Lane and Brister End;
- A sequence of townscape experiences, examples of *serial vision*, down High Street to the junction with Church Street and to the railway line and back westwards;
- Along Church Street in both directions;
- Down Queen Street back into High Street.



Fig 8. The Old Court House

The various **gateways** into the historic core are important, marking transitions from countryside to development and providing some of the above views into the historic core. They are particularly noticeable at the Melbury Road junction with Birch Lane; the High Street/Thornford Road entry point and at the railway bridge. Brister End is as an important gateway into Yetminster having several historic properties, plots and the bridge points over the river and railway line. Mill Lane forms the pedestrian gateway from the countryside into and through the historic milling area of Yetminster.

The obvious **landmarks** are the Parish Church; Boyle's School at the western gateway into the village core; the 'White Hart' (fig 15) on the inside of the curve of High Street; individual houses on High Street, notably Rock House, The Old Court House; Manor Farm House, Gable Court and Cross Farm House (fig 12).

Character Analysis (see also Review of the Conservation Area Boundary, page 22)

Building Uses

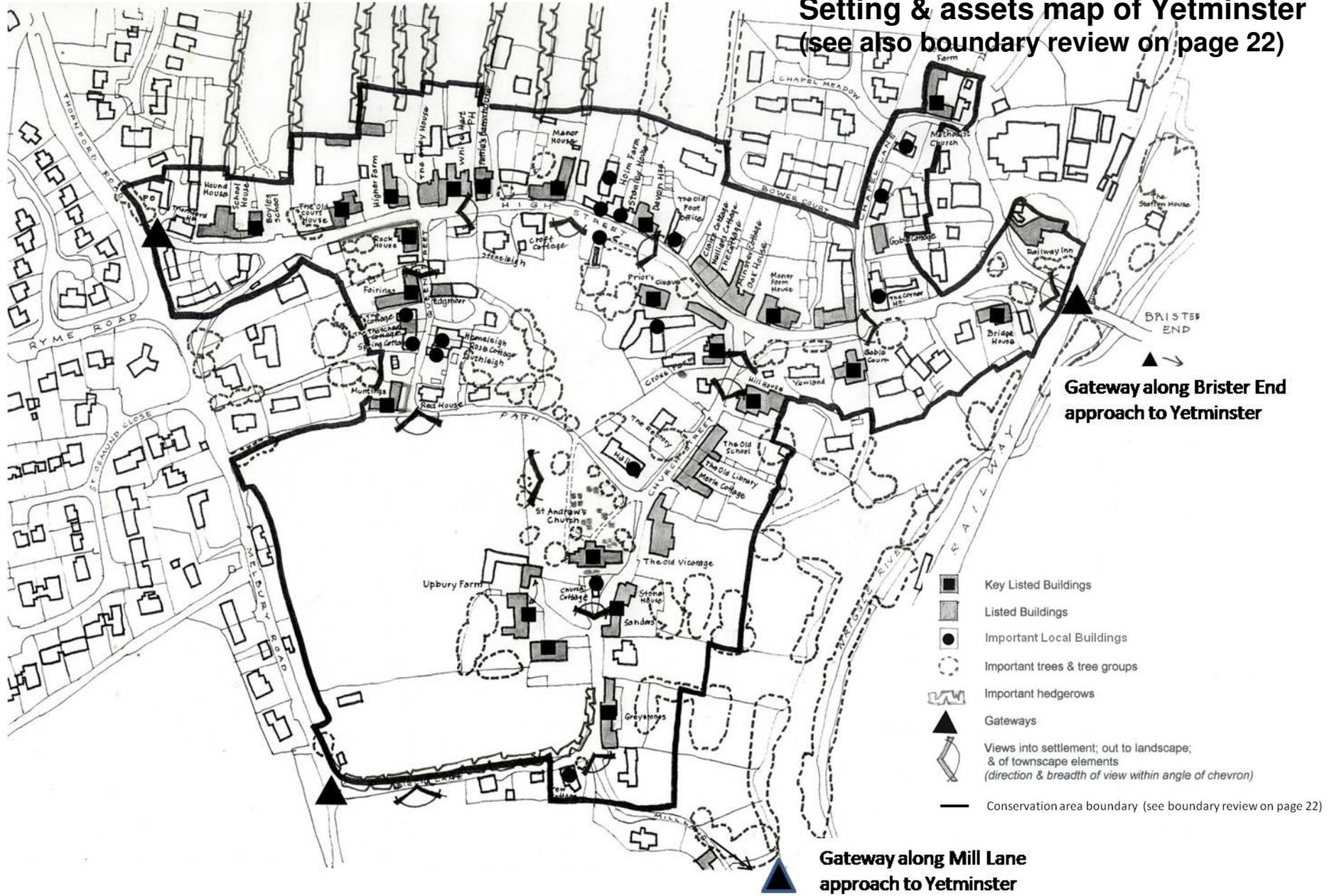
Historically, the village core contained a range of building uses, including the Parish Church, Methodist Church, public uses such as the Church Hall, Boyle's School and the Primary School in Church Street, a number of public houses, shops, and trades such as a carpenter, wheelwright, builder, stonemason and thatcher. There was a blacksmith on the junction of High and Church Streets, butcher, draper and grocer in various High Street premises. The current Oak House Stores (fig 18) seems to have been a shop since the middle of the C19. Most of these uses have disappeared, being replaced by residential use, as have all the licensed premises apart from the 'White Hart' ('The Railway Inn' closed recently). Other buildings, such as the telephone exchange, on High Street, have converted to business or residential uses. Boyle's School (fig 12) and the former Master's House and the Victorian Primary School in Church Street have all become houses, with little apparent loss of architectural interest. The railway station and goods yard buildings have all disappeared apart from the former stationmaster's house. There is a collection of small business units at The Sidings, by the railway station, on the site of a Victorian creamery.

Of the historic houses, most of the former manor and gentry houses have retained their uses but the farm houses and subsidiary sheds and barns have tended to become private houses and the outbuildings have been converted to garage or storage uses. There is a modern rectory and The Red House was the Baptist manse.



Fig 9. Methodist Church

Setting & assets map of Yetminster (see also boundary review on page 22)



Building Types and Layouts

The village has a range of types and layouts, reflecting historical activities, adaptation and growth. The Parish Church is an example of a C13 or older building that has retained its chancel but the nave and aisles and west tower have been rebuilt in the late medieval period. Newman and Pevsner's 'The Buildings of England, Dorset' comment that "the main street of Yetminster is as good a place as any in Dorset for learning the vernacular range in stone buildings from. Say, c. 1530 to c. 1730" is apposite. Machin's book (see bibliography), 'The Houses of Yetminster', underlines this observation and is a very thorough investigation of local vernacular architecture, based on work done in a University of Bristol Extra-Mural Studies class. The work concentrates on domestic buildings of the C16 and C17 and combines archaeological and documentary research. The plan forms reflect national types and are interesting compromises between practicality (comfort of heated rooms, accommodating service uses and dairies) and fashion, where the desire for symmetrical façades was more evident towards the later C17 and early C18. In summary, the following types of house plan were identified:

- Late medieval hall houses, such as Upbury Farm House, originally with a central two bay open hall flanked by two bay, two storied rooms; the hall was ceiled in the C17 and the plan and details altered subsequently; the house represents a high status manor house; Gable Cottage was a smaller single storey hall with a later attic inserted;
- Houses of three rooms in line with a central hall chimney stack backing onto a cross passage, all of one build, exemplified by Gable Court, dated to 1600 and with an attic storey lit by large gables; Fairlings has (or had) a similar plan form;
- Three rooms in line with an upper end stack in a central hall, seen at Cross Farm, where a newel stair projects at the rear of the cross passage;
- Upper end hall stack, rebuilt below the cross passage, a rare type of long-house, originally incorporating a byre, seen at Rose Cottage; this plan type dispenses with medieval and post-medieval plans as there are stacks at the two gable ends and the central room is unheated; The 'White Hart' (fig 15) and Manor Farm (fig 12) are other examples and the latter has its gable end to the street (nearly all other houses run parallel); The Thatched Cottage originally had the same plan form;
- Two unheated central rooms either side of a central cross-passage, allowing a symmetrical façade, seen at Bridge House;
- Unheated central room, without cross-passage but with an entrance lobby, set asymmetrically, at Pettie's Farm; plans with a central entry were characterised by a lack of lighting to the entrance lobby; Sussex House (date stone 1649) is a good example; Lower Farm, dated 1707, overcomes the problems of lighting by small circular windows either side of the door;
- Smaller houses of two rooms (parlour and scullery) with one end gable chimney stack, seen on the edges of the village at Townsend and Brister End, at The Cedars and Yew Tree Cottage; two gable stacks may indicate a desire for a symmetrical façade, as at Higher Farm;
- Unusual plan forms, with 'L' shaped plans at Court House, Gable Court and the Manor House;
- 'Unit system' plans, created by the addition of later cottages to an original house, usually at a right angle, seen at Sunnyside, Fairlings, Gable Court and Manor Farm.



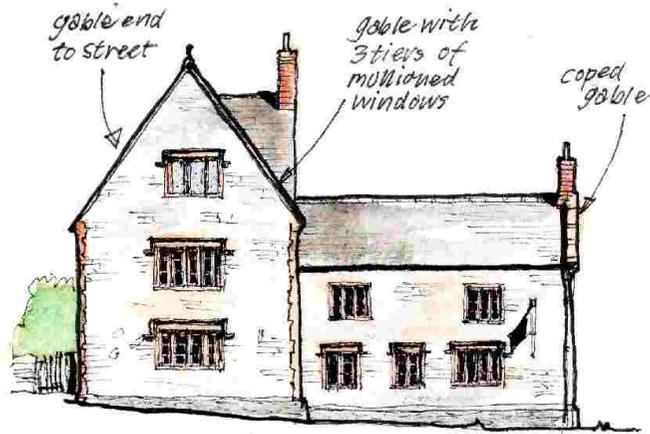
Fig 10. Lower Farm



Fig 11. Gable Court

YETMINSTER: BUILDINGS AND DETAILS!

NOT TO SCALE

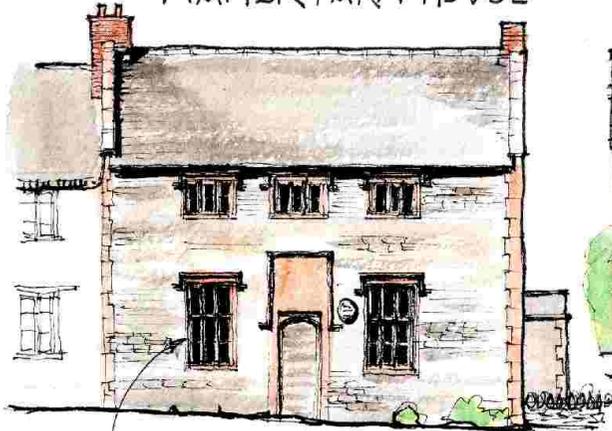


MANOR FARM HOUSE



PLAN FORM IS THREE ROOMS IN A LINE, INCLUDING A CENTRAL HALL AND A CROSS PASSAGE

CROSS FARM HOUSE

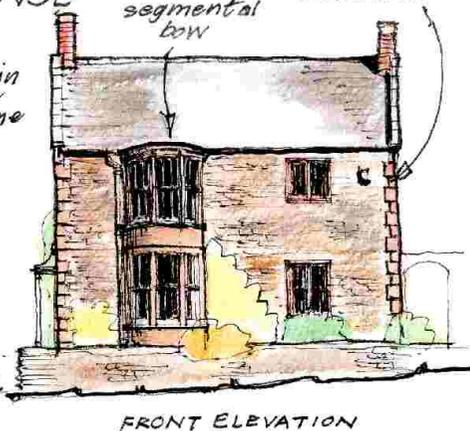


BOYLE'S SCHOOL



SIDE ELEVATION

ROCK HOUSE



FRONT ELEVATION

- JOHN WYKES -

Fig 12. Buildings & Details

Boyle's School (fig 12) and the attached School House are early C18 two storey buildings, in a terrace, the School having a contemporary single storey wing. Devon House is a mid-C18 transitional design, with vernacular and classical elements, two storeys with a parallel rear range and a rear wing incorporating (originally) a stable and barn. Rock House is a c. 1720 L-shaped house with classical detailing. The later C18 and early C19 house is relatively rare in the village. Greystones, in Church Street, seems to have an early C18 five bay house (still employing vernacular window forms) and single storey elements linked by a later central block; the nearby Stone House has a C17, C18 and C19 mixture, the projecting wing at right angles to the main house was the C19 school. Wholly C18 houses, such as Hill House, have classical details, with three storeys, a central porch and vertical sashed windows. The Old Vicarage seems to be wholly C19 but is a detached two storey plus gabled attics house in a Tudor Revival style. There is a late C19-early C20 terrace from The Old School to The Surgery, informally planned but all the four units with two floors and Tudor Revival details.

There are some good examples of agricultural buildings in the village, such as the C18 Upbury Farm barns, one with a cart porch and lean-to extensions and the other of L-plan. The barn related to Cross Farm House (fig 12) is two storeys and possibly a stable with upper hayloft, although the farm became a tannery in C18. Hamlet House's barn has two opposed cart entrances and its former stables and coach house is an early C19 two storied building. Manor Farm had a large barn (now Bower Court) with a gabled cart-porch and an attached stable with hayloft over. The Garden House at The Alcove is an interesting C18 brick and stone structure. Mill Farm House, outside the conservation area, is a combination of a three storey main house, an attached two storey cottage and former water mill.

The Methodist Church is a simple mid-C19 building with entrance porch at the front gabled end, a pewed interior with an organ at the other gable end and a subsidiary side annexe.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 54 Listed Building entries in the Conservation Area, with a Grade I Parish Church and Grade II* status for Upbury Farm House and the Manor House. Seven of the Grade II entries are churchyard monuments. The key Listed Buildings are:

- The Parish Church of St Andrew, important for its building history, architecture and details and also for its landmark status in the village;
- Upbury Farm House and its adjacent barns, an important late medieval hall house and an exceptional grouping of both buildings and space;
- The C17-C18 gentry and farm houses located throughout the village, notably the Manor House, Boyle's School (fig 12), Devon House, The 'White Hart' (fig 15), Priors Cleve, Petties Farm House, Milford House, Cross Farm House (fig 12), Fairlings, Muntins, The Old Court House, Lower Covey, Higher Farm House, Stone House, Sussex Farm House, Bridge House, Devon House and Gable Court; these all share common materials and details and a variety of plan forms, as well as being visually conspicuous elements in the townscape progression along High, Queen and Church Streets.



Fig 13. Parish church



Fig 14. Devon House

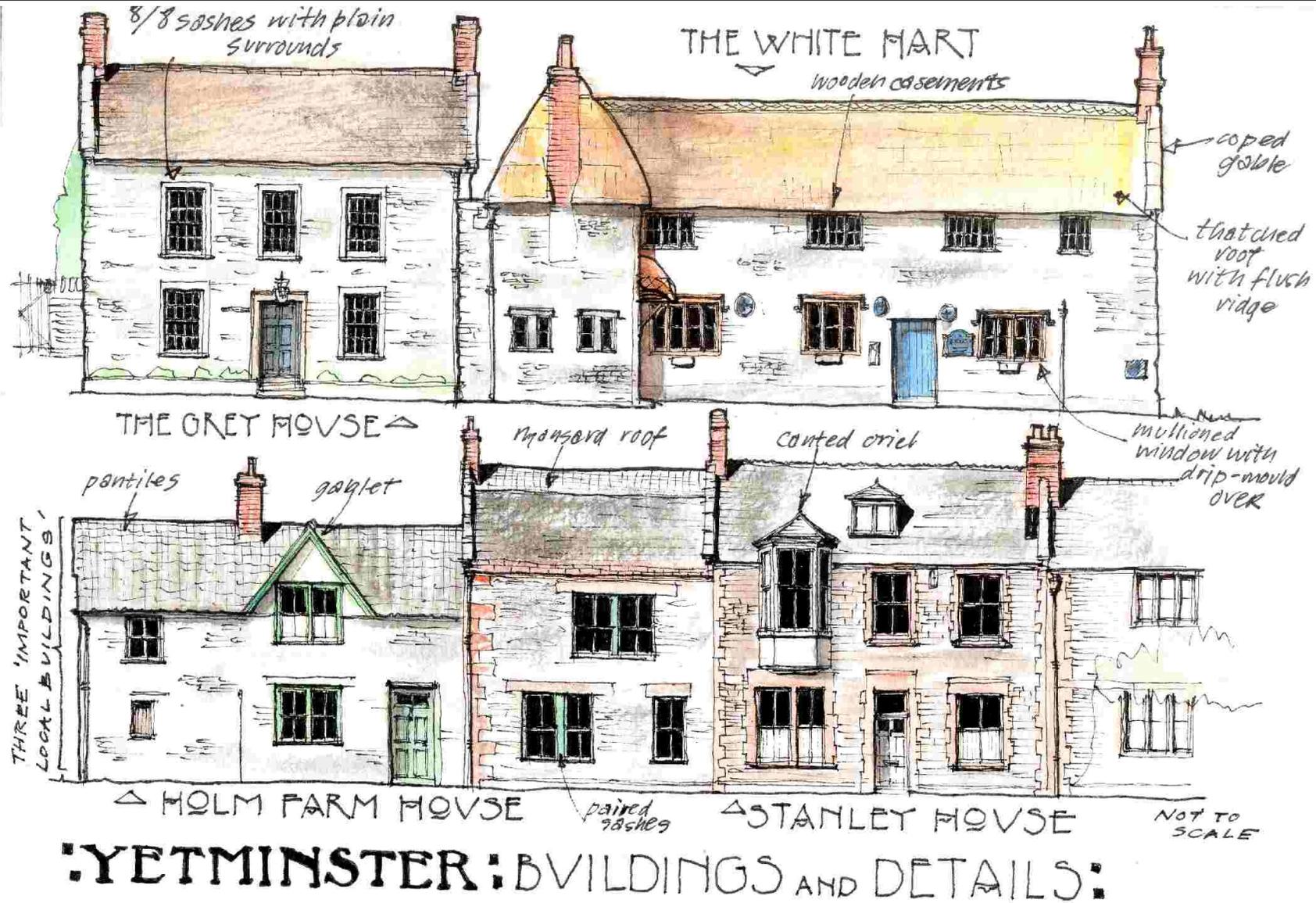


Fig 15. Buildings & Details

Important Local Buildings (see also Review of the Conservation Area, page 22)

The contribution made by important local buildings is, in spite of the high proportion of Listed buildings, significant and there are a number of individually attractive and interesting unlisted buildings, most of which contribute to the value of larger groups. These are:

- Holm Farm and Stanley House (fig 15), High Street, a good group on a curving row on the highway edge, the farm having one and two storey sheds and barns of rubble, brick and pantiles, the street front house of rubble and pantiles with a gablet and late C19 sashes; a rubble and slate with a tile verged roofed unit next door with a mansard roof and the front having paired sashes; Stanley House is rubble with Hamstone dressings, sashes, a large canted oriel, hipped dormer and prominent chimneys; all mid-late C19 of group value;
- The Methodist Church, early Victorian 'First Pointed' gothic, neat and characterful;
- Hillview and The Corner House, Chapel Lane, two late Victorian properties, turning the corner well with a large coped gable end, rubble and Hamstone dressings and two former shop fronts;
- St Andrew's Church Hall, Church Street, 1920's Tudoresque and with a good recent extension, it holds its own in a high quality setting;
- The Cottage, Spring Cottage, Homeleigh, Rose Cottage and Blackamoor's Head (formerly Southleigh) in Queen Street, mid-late C19 houses of group value, various combinations of rubble, brick, pantiles and slate, Rose Cottage being a L-shape and presenting a coped gable to the road and Blackamoor's Head having a completely sashed south front;
- Yew Cottage, on the Church Street, Mill Lane and Birch Lane junction, mid-C19 rubble with brick dressings, pantiles, casements, central door with a monopitch roof and a catslide roof to a rear extension
- A K6 telephone box in High Street.



Fig 16. Yew Cottage



Fig 17. Building group in Mill Lane

Building Groups

The north side of High Street, parts of the south side (boundary walls and Rock House, Prior's Cleve and Gable Court), the whole of Queen Street and most of Church Street (excluding the modern houses between Cross Farm and the churchyard) form a large group of coherent character and quality.

Outside the conservation area, Mill Farm House, Mill Cottage and the Mill building are a good group, of visual and industrial archaeological interest.



Fig 18. Buildings & Details

Building Materials and Architectural Details

The predominant local building material is Forest Marble, a Jurassic limestone from a local quarry at Quarr Close. It is shelly and grey coloured. Also available locally was Cornbrash, usually too rubbly for quality building, but its lowest bed is massive and has been used for building. It often has a cream or pink colour. Both stones are used in combination with the orange-brown Ham Hill stone, which is used for ashlar detailing whilst the local stones are usually roughly coursed rubble, sometimes squared. Pointing has been traditionally of lime putty, recessed behind the wall face but there are examples of hard cement struck or raised pointing that alters the texture and hue of stone walls.

There are a few examples of rendered finishes over rubble (Hill House, Manor Farm House and The Old Court House) and late C19 houses on Queen Street (The Red House) and Brister End employ a red-orange brick. There are a few stone rubble buildings with brick dressings, such as Mill Farmhouse Cottage. Clay tile hanging is seen at Greystones. Modern houses at Chapel Meadow use the Blue Lias stone from Somerset.

Boundary walls are of great significance along High Street and Church Street, usually of random rubble or roughly coursed, with flat or cock-and-hen coping and dressed stone gate piers. The latter include some elaborately shaped ones at Gable Court and more conventional types at the churchyard entrance (balls on a moulded base). There are a few low boundary walls topped with iron spear railings and features like standards with urned finials, at Hill House and Cross Farm House. The churchyard gates are an impressive example of wrought ironwork, with a lamp overthrow.

Both Hamstone and Forest Marble have been used to produce stone roofing tiles, the former orange and the latter grey when seen in section or where fresh pieces are exposed by breakage. Stone tiles are graded in size down from ridge to eaves and are a most attractive material (seen, for example, at Upbury Farm House, Cross Farm House and Gable Court). Many roofs are of clay plain tiles, with the Manor House and a few rear sheds or barns employing Double Roman pantiles. The Old School, in Church Street, has patterning produced by courses of scalloped or fish-scale tiles, a mid-late C19 fashion. There are properties where clay tiles have been replaced by modern concrete tiles. Slates are also fairly common. Thatch is also evident, originally of long straw or combed wheat reed, with typical Dorset details of rounded forms, eyebrow dormers, wavering ridge lines and flush ridges. Some rethatching has introduced blockier ridges and decorative ridge flourishes but the excesses of fancy ridge shapes seem to have been avoided. Many of the currently tiled roofs were undoubtedly thatched.

Roofs tend to have stone coped gables on C17 and C18 houses. Subsidiary gables to wings and attic rooms are distinctive features on post-medieval vernacular buildings and on C19 Tudor Revival architecture. Smaller dormer windows are otherwise uncommon. Some of the barns and sheds have half-hipped gables. Chimney stacks are important visually, of stone, with simple flared tops or brick, set diagonally on Gable Court. A number of houses have small pinnacles at the top of the gable coping and there is a full column or pillar on the end of Oak House.

There are few traditional floor surfaces, with traces of stone setts at the thresholds of properties, such as the entrance to the churchyard. Stone House has larger areas of stone pitching in its front yard. Cross Farm House has an attractive stepped front pedestrian entry, as has The Old Court House.



Fig 19. Greystones



Fig 20. Gable Court walls & piers

The great majority of windows are of the stone mullioned type, usually protected by drip moulds, returned and labelled, over. Continuous drip moulds sometimes link several windows and door openings. Mouldings vary from splayed and ovolo sections to plainer rectangular bars (into the C18). The individual lights are either composed of leaded lights or inset casements with wooden or metal frames. There are Victorian ashlar mullioned windows at The Old School and The Old Vicarage with a minimum of mouldings and segmentally arched heads. A distinctive feature is the circular and oval small windows on some of the C17 houses, a South Somerset detail, exemplified by those at the Manor House, The Old Court House and Greystones (the latter with several, both upright and horizontal ovals). Some of the smaller cottages have wooden casements set under wooden lintels. Vertical sashes are relatively rare, seen on Rock House (between plain stone mullions), Hound House and the Grey House (fig 15). Rock House has a rounded stone, two storey bow window but projecting bays and oriels are conspicuous by their absence.

Door surrounds are usually of stone, moulded and with a flat arch or straight lintel (usually a sign of C18 building). Porches are confined to some of the larger houses, stone at Hill House and Lower Farm House and an attractive swept canopy on the Queen Street elevation of Rock House. Both The Old Court House and Gable Court have stone porches with lean-to roofs in the angle between two wings. There are also gabled and segmental stone and wood canopies on shaped brackets, that at Pettie's Farm House having frilly bargeboards. Doors tend to be of vertically planked form, often with single glazed lights. C19 houses may have four or six panelled doors, the latter with two glazed top lights.

The buildings of the core show a remarkable consistency of window and door details, with the stone mullion, arched door and coped gable being used well into the C18 and, again, in the Tudor Revival buildings of the C19 and early-C20. On vernacular buildings, there are small and subtle changes, such as plainer mullion mouldings and more obvious symmetry and organisation of window and door openings, from the late C17 and into the C18.

There are many interesting details, such as the twin three light shop front at The Oak House Stores (fig 18); many date and initial plaques; a DCC finger post at the western crossroads; an iron kissing gate on the south side where Birch Lane and Church Street meet and an iron kissing gate and spear-headed railings on the path between Queen and Church Streets; and other speared and urned railings.

Parks, Gardens, Trees and Open Spaces

The village has a number of important green spaces that are historic, visual or amenity assets, which contribute positively to the character, and setting of the village and conservation area. These comprise: the extensive churchyard around St Andrew's church; the field called Bucklers Orchard, behind Cross Farm (where the village fair was held) and the fields of Upbury Farm, providing a setting for the church and creating a buffer between the development on their edges and a valuable 'green wedge' at the heart of the village; the historic rectangular plots behind the properties on the north side of High Street that are a wedge of countryside flowing to the heart of the village as well as a buffer between parts of the settlement too the west and east; and large areas of fields and woodland outside the conservation area but very important to its setting. These include the slope down from the east side of Church Street to the river and railway, a buffer between development and the railway line and an attractive setting for the river; a triangular field to the west of Eastlands at Brister End, and the extensive Vecklands area, further south and now a Woodlands Trust plantation.



Fig 21. The Cottage, Queen St



Fig 22. River Wriggle

There are a number of attractive gardens in the village, some of which are visible from the public realm. These are found along High and Church Streets in particular, with trees and shrubs appearing over walls and through railings. Mature trees are a particular feature, with those at Rock House and The Old Court House enhancing High Street and specimen trees in the churchyard being important in intimate and long views. The Wriggle channel also has a corridor of trees. Individual trees are also conspicuous in Church Street, particularly the copper beeches in front of The Rectory and to the rear of Hill House.

Detrimental Features

There are a few problems in the Conservation Area:

- Poles and wires on parts of High and Church Streets;
- Occasional problems with traffic density and speeds, along High Street, around the western crossroads and over the railway bridge into Brister End;
- A visible and obtrusive pair of garages on the south side of High Street, linked to a bungalow and a wide highway access, all detracting from the overall coherence of the street;
- A rather bare space at the side of Boyle's School, currently used for parking;
- Concerns over the condition of Upbury Farm and its outbuildings, with the latter, in particular, at risk; exceptional grouping requiring a comprehensive overall strategy;
- A broken finger to the DCC post at the western crossroads;
- Some examples of insensitive treatment of Listed and unlisted buildings of value, notably harsh, raised cement pointing and (for unlisted properties) some unworthy replacement doors and windows; there are two poor modern windows and a large garage door between The Old School and The Old Library
- The untidy and fragmented nature of the business area by the station, with poor surfacing, recent brick walls with poor detailing, a mixture of materials, and second hand cars scattered throughout the site; its employment value is fully recognised but the area is not a good 'gateway' to arriving rail travellers; it would benefit from careful improvement;

Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area (see also boundary review page 22)

Yetminster is a very attractive village with a large number of Listed Buildings and a remarkable concentration of post-medieval gentry and farm houses. The historic core is largely unspoilt with very few detriments. The assets are:

- The fundamental influence of the three manorial prebends on the development of Yetminster, including Brister End;
- A pleasant landscape setting, with undulating topography, mature trees, a small river, green spaces in the centre of the village and views out of distant hills;
- Some specimen trees in the churchyard and gardens and some attractive private gardens visible from the public realm;
- An interesting medieval and post-medieval archaeology, related to ownership and tenure and their effects upon plan form and building types;
- A particularly rich assemblage of late medieval and post-medieval vernacular houses displaying a range of plan forms;
- 56 Listed Buildings within the conservation area, including a Grade I parish church and two Grade II* larger houses;
- About a dozen important local buildings, including late C19 cottages, a mid-C19 Nonconformist chapel and a K6 telephone box;

- A large coherent group of quality buildings covering most of the village centre, linked by stone boundary walls, gardens and green space;
- Valuable details, such as boundary walls and gate piers; iron railings and gates; stone date stones and plaques and churchyard memorials;
- The consistent use of two local limestones, together with Hamstone dressings, stone and clay tiles, thatch and slate.

Community Involvement

Throughout May-June 2009 and May-June 2010, public consultations were held, including information events in the village. Comments received in 2009 helped finalise the appraisal, whilst comments received in 2010, helped finalise amendments to the conservation area boundary.

Review of the Conservation Area Boundary as amended in 2010

The existing conservation area boundary includes much of historic Yetminster but it has been extended to include other significant areas. The 1840 Tithe Map of Yetminster is a valuable representation of the prebendal village plan and subsequent modest changes (prior to the arrival of the railway) and has assisted in the following conservation area extension:

- Behind properties (from School House to The Old Post Office inclusive) fronting the north side of High St are land plots comprising gardens and crofts (fig 23) that are historically associated (as shown on the 1840 Tithe Map) with those properties, except the crofts (small enclosed fields adjoining properties) are outside the conservation area. Together, the crofts represent an early field system with mature hedgerow and small patches of woodland and their amenity value is observable from public footpath N34/11 and from approaches off High St. Including these crofts



Fig 23. Conservation area extension north of High St

within the conservation area would recognise the historic field system and land tenure.

- Before the railway disrupted it (fig 24), Mill Lane was a medieval road that crossed the River Wriggle and led into Church St and The Cross at the centre of Yetminster. The northern section of Mill Lane is still highway but it now crosses the railway line as well as the river, after which it becomes a private road with a public right of way in the form of a footpath. A passage under the track links the footpath with the highway on the opposite side of the line. Conversely, from the village, Mill Lane led to a mill, first mentioned in Domesday Book. Once known as Upper Mill and now called Mill Farm, the listed, former C17 mill is one of a group of listed buildings (former stables and dairy of Mill Farm) which together with the unlisted Mill Cottage are all situated on the east side of the railway line. On the west side of the line, is the unlisted The Old Mill House, as indicated on the 1888 OS map which is a building of local importance because of its association. In total, much remains of the milling legacy, including original land plots, which is an integral part of Yetminster's historic interest.

North of the mill area (fig 24), next to the main line crossing, is Crossing House, which together form a locally important group and represent an important continuity of railway history. Progressing northwards, on the west side of Mill Lane are narrow plots that are found elsewhere (Briser End and Melbury Rd as evident on the 1840 Tithe Map), contributing to local distinctiveness and an historic form of squatting. In one such plot is the listed St Francis Cottage and in the other, the unlisted, thatched The Pottery whose apparent early origins make it a building of local importance. On the east side and extending into Church St and High St are properties (such as The Garden House, Greystones, Framptons, Bridge House, Gable Court and The Old Vicarage) that part of their land plots (comprising garden and croft) outside the conservation area. Extending the boundary to include all of their land plots, as shown on the Tithe Map, would recognise historic land tenure in this particular area, as would including the land on which 3-6 (inclusive) Mill Lane are situated. On the Tithe Map, 5 & 6 Mill Lane were built on a large plot associated with a single property and between 1888 and 1903, 3 & 4 Mill Lane occupied land that was presumably part of Greystones.

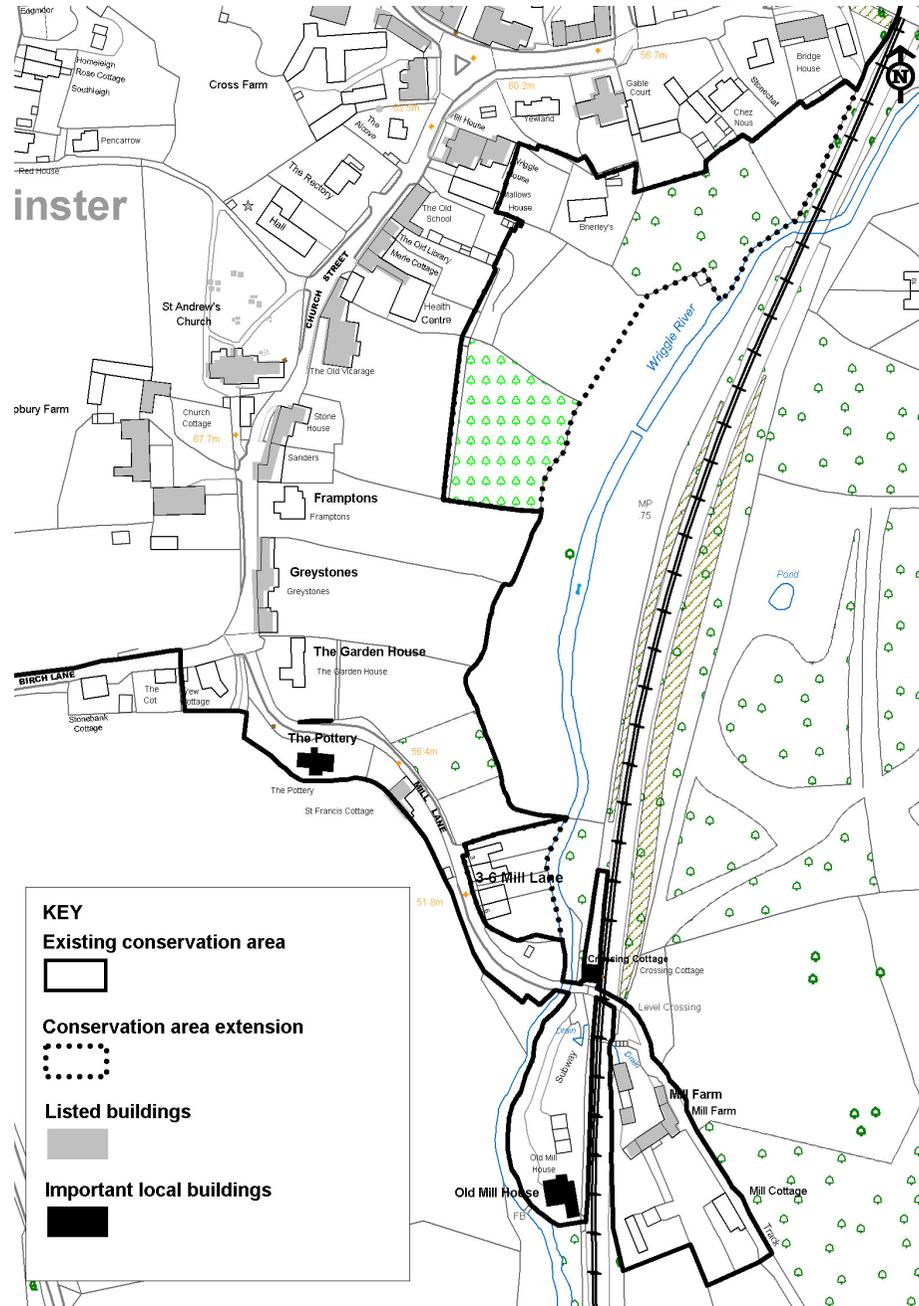


Fig 24. High St, Church St and Mill Lane conservation area extension

- Brister End is a gateway (entry) into Yetminster (fig 25), being attached to it by a bridging point over the railway and the river. Similarly to Mill Lane, railway history is reflected in the close proximity of The Station House, (with its stepped access beside the railway bridge), to the main line. The brick and slate, well-constructed Station House is of local importance because of its obvious association and focal nature. Just east of the Station House is the attractive tree lined river, and on the opposite side of the road, is a triangular field bounded to the W and NW by the river and an impressive bank of trees. This field is now an important part of the gateway, providing visual amenity.

On the 1840 Tithe Map, Brister End is mostly, narrow plots along the highway (as seen in Mill Lane), except for the deeper land plots of garden and croft where Whittle's Lane meets Brister End. The land plots, some with mature gardens and trees, are discernible today and three of their properties are listed (Yew Tree Cottage, Thatch Cottage and Sussex House Farm), whereas others are unlisted, some of which, are important local buildings: Nos. 1 & 2 Eastleigh, which are attractive, intact, semi-detached cottages. - No. 2 comprises render and thatch whereas No.1 is slate and local stone; Eastleigh and Laurel Cottage with a datestone of 1907 which are relatively intact (Eastleigh more so), well constructed semi-detached houses built of slate and red brick. These four properties help define a bend and form a group.

The purpose built and terraced, Victorian workers cottages, 2-6 (inclusive) Ray Buildings with their small back gardens and position on the edge of the highway, comprise an uncommon plot form and type of development.

Marking the entry into Brister End are four yew trees (each with a Tree Preservation Order) belonging to Yew Tree Cottage and its garden across the road. The highway boundaries are characteristically either retaining walls of local stone or hedgebanks, and set into the boundaries at intervals, are arched openings with grills, forming highway drains.

- To recognise Yetminster's railway heritage fully, in Station Rd, the railway platform, small store and the access steps from the railway bridge are included in the conservation area (fig 25).

- As evident on the 1840 Tithe Map which indicates Yetminster's historic layout, the land plots (Craggs, Stonecroft, Little Croft, Mount View) on the east side and parallel to Melbury Road (fig f) remain intact, as does the nearby old highway (now public footpath N34/30). North of the old highway is modern development (Bram Lee, Casella, Tara, Meadowside, Springthorpe Court, Orchard House) occupying former land plots (Fairings, Muntings, The Thatched Cottage) attached to properties on the west side of Queen St. Whilst these particular plots are less intact, they do represent the historic limits in this part of the village (fig 26).

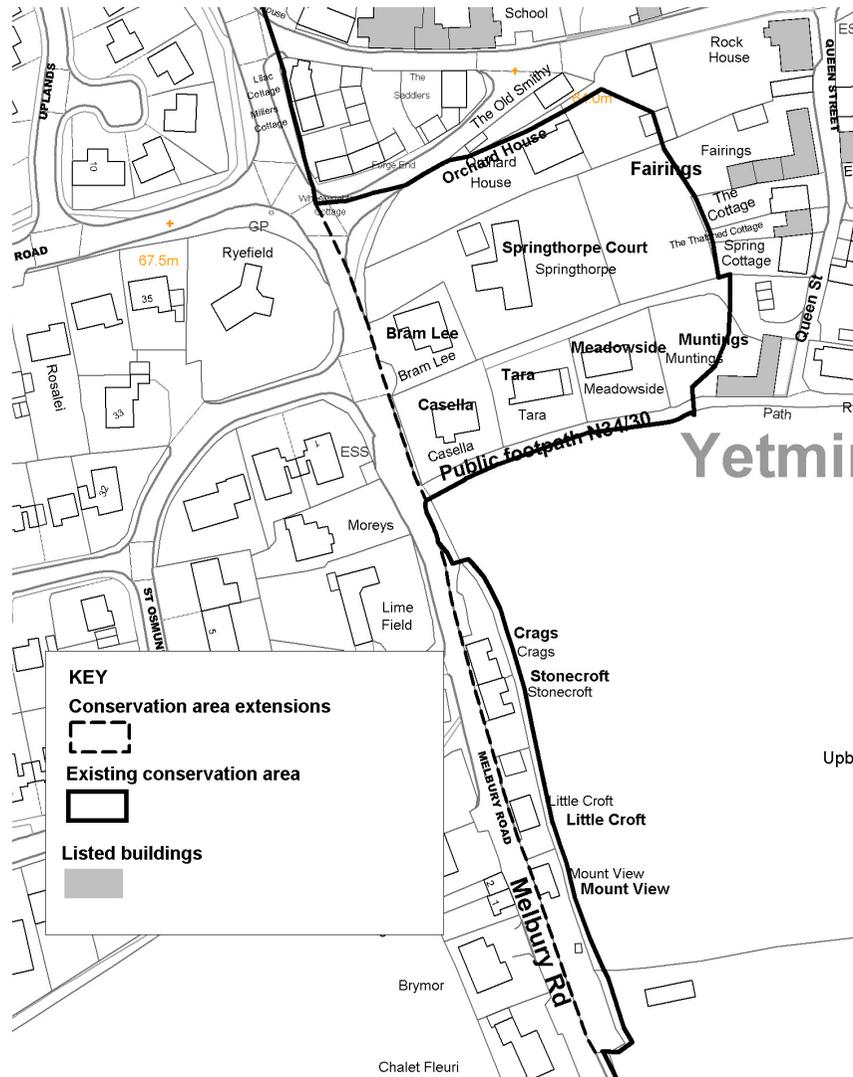


Fig 26. Melbury Rd and Queen St conservation area extensions

General Condition

The village is characterised by a general good condition of the building stock, boundaries and the public realm. There are, however, concerns about the condition of Upbury Farm, particularly the two Listed barns, where there are holes in the roofs and exposed timbers. The former 'Railway Inn' and Ford House are also unused and in poor condition.

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 Electrical Power Utility	Parish Councils
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, Parish Councils
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 Dorset Historic Environmental Record and local heritage projects	WDDC, DCC	English Heritage

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 area 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;
- Small-scale improvements could qualify for the Council's Countryside and Conservation Grant Scheme (see above).

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 important local 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 Design & Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or e-mail planning@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

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Maps

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