

# **Coombe Keynes Conservation Area**

# **Appraisal document**



**Adopted Document** 

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## Introduction

### Background

- 1. This appraisal has been prepared for Coombe Keynes Conservation Area which was designated on 10th July 1990.
- 2. Conservation areas are defined within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as:

"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

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

### Planning policy framework

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

### Development within a conservation area

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

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

## Preparation and survey limitations

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

### Community involvement

9. In line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement a six week period of consultation was arranged. This involved a formal consultation on the draft boundary proposals and appraisal which ran between 2nd March and 10th April 2015. Consultation materials were available online and at Westport House. A leaflet was posted to every property affected. Officers attended a Parish meeting at which many local residents were present. The consultation was advertised through local media and Council channels. Consultation responses were taken into account in preparation of the final version of this document.

## Summary of special interest and significance

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

### Special historic interest

11. The conservation area is notable for its collection of traditional agricultural buildings, which despite heavy domestication still strongly evoke the historic agricultural character and function of the village. The settlement itself is a good example of traditional nucleated village which has not expanded much beyond its nineteenth century limits.

### Special architectural interest

12. The conservation area contains a relatively high proportion of listed buildings, amongst which one is likely to have originated as a 'long house', and others have seventeenth century components.

## Conservation area: site and situation

### Location and setting

13. The village is located within agricultural land between Wool and West Lulworth. It stands on gently rising ground, just west of the dry coombe from which its name is derived (see FIG. 1).

### Socio-economic profile

14. Agriculture dominated the village historically, its northern half made up of former farm buildings. Following a wave of conversions the village has been residential in function since the 1970s. Several properties now operate as holiday lets or bed and breakfasts, making this a quaint base for visitors to the area. The village church closed in 1967, and though a telephone kiosk remains, its cobwebbed condition suggests limited use.

## History of development

### Medieval

- 15. The tower of Holy Rood Church is the oldest structure in the village (see FIG. 2), dating to the thirteenth century. The church stands on the highest and was historically centre of a large parish which once incorporated Wool. In later times this arrangement was reversed.
- 16. The village took its name from the dry coombe which historically lay at its centre, but which now lies in farmland to the east (see FIG. 1 below), and from the de Keynes family, tenants of the de Newburghs of East Lulworth.







FIG. 1: The medieval village. The former parish church (top right), whose tower dates to the thirteenth century. once stood closer to the centre of the village. During the medieval period a lane ran along the coombe immediately east of the modern village (top left), with houses and enclosures on the west side, and enclosures on the east. The 1770 Estate plan of the village (bottom – D/WLC/P1.5 courtesy of Dorset History Centre) shows that hedged boundaries and a track existed here many years after the houses were cleared. Following removal of hedgerows little visual evidence now remains, though the archaeological value of the site is recognised in its scheduling. Note strip fields south of the village - a vestige of the medieval open field system.

17. During the medieval period, and probably prior to the sharp decline in population caused by the Great Plague of 1348, the village extended further to the east of its current position (see FIG. 1 above). Though ploughing and the removal of hedgerows have removed many physical clues, the traces of house platforms, lanes and enclosures are recorded over an extensive area within the fields immediately south and east of the church, and east of East Coombe Farmhouse. Consideration of the former extent of the village partly helps to explain the detached position of the church, which would have been more integrated historically.

#### Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

- 18. With the end of the de Newburgh line in 1515 the manor passed into the hands of the Howard family by 1526. In 1581 this was united with the Poynings estate, which consisted of the former lands of Bindon Abbey (much of which originally belonged to the de Newburghs).
- 19. The 'Long House' is thought to have sixteenth century origins The mixing of good quality block stone with rubble seen here, suggests the active recycling of materials in its construction, the corbels incorporated on the outer wall of the adjoining barn clearly derived from an earlier building of high status. Though there was a forty year gap between dissolution of Bindon Abbey in 1541, and consolidation of the former abbey estates within the same landholding as Coombe Keynes in 1581, it seem likely that materials derived from demolition of monastic buildings found their way to the village. It is also likely however that building materials were reused from the area of abandoned settlement east of the existing village.
- 20. Nos. 7/8, which was originally a single property, were also built during the seventeenth century, whilst the rear wing of West Coombe Farmhouse, which represents the original part of the building, was probably built at the very end of the period (see FIG. 2 below).



FIG. 2: Buildings of 1600-1700. Left: Nos. 7/8, originally a single dwelling. Right: the original part of West Coombe Farm.

21. The manor was purchased by the Weld family together with the broader estate in 1641. Much of the land surrounding the village remains part of the Lulworth Estate.

#### **Eighteenth and nineteenth century**

22. The Old Parsonage, April Thatch and Dairy Barn have been dated to the late eighteenth – early century. The early nineteenth century saw construction of numerous buildings within the village, including many of the former agricultural structures on the north side of the village and Nod cottages. The latter were originally built as a terrace of six small dwellings with paired entrances. Each of the current dwellings formed in relatively recent times by merging two cottages. The blocked entrances of the defunct cottages are still clearly visible alongside those currently used.

#### **Twentieth century**

23. The twentieth century saw a transformation in the character and function of the village from an agricultural to a residential settlement. A wave of barn and other agricultural conversions took place during the mid-1970s, some of which appear overly domestic in their features and landscaping (see FIG. 3). Development of houses on the south side of the village occurred during the 1970s and 80s, occupying the sites of two sets of buildings which had disappeared earlier in the century. Other structures shown on earlier maps stood east of Odd Nod and to the north east of East Coombe Farm. It is unclear at what point these were removed. Holy Rood Church became disused in 1967.



**FIG. 3:** Barn conversion. A high proportion of the buildings in the conservation area are converted agricultural structures. These include Red Roof Barn. Much of the functional character of these buildings has been lost through over domestication of appearance and setting.

## Townscape analysis

### Village structure

24. A single through road runs east-west through the village. This passes through a large, roughly triangular space, composed of a green and verges, and around which the majority development is arranged. From the broadest western end of this space, a further lane runs south to the church, reverting to the status of a farm track beyond this.



FIG. 4: View through the village from the west. Note the broad verges.

## Building density

25. Whilst the settlement is compact, domestic buildings are generally spaced along the road frontage. The majority of buildings are either detached or were originally built as such. Nod cottages offer one obvious exception, the three cottages once having been a row of six. Reflective of their historic function and use, former agricultural buildings are more closely knit, in some cases adjoining domestic structures. Conversion has therefore had the effect of increasing residential density within the village.

### Building height

26. The majority of domestic buildings within the conservation area stand at two storeys, though No. 10, and perhaps also the original wing of West Coombe Farmhouse (see FIG. 2), were raised from a single storey historically. No. 7/8 provides an exception to the rule, standing at one and a half storeys. Though a number of converted agricultural structures now in domestic use have a single

storey, these generally retain the character and appearance of outbuildings, and do not provide a suitable model for new residential development.

### Plan form and massing

27. Buildings of both agricultural and domestic origin are generally rectangular in form, with plans based on a broad frontage, shallow depth arrangement of internal space. In a number of cases development has a strongly linear character, such as at East Coombe Farmhouse and Nod cottages. The largest buildings, and longest frontages are generally associated with former agricultural structures, the most bulky of which are the former threshing barns.

### Edges and enclosure

- 28. A large proportion of historic domestic buildings face directly onto verges, the latter cultivated as unenclosed gardens around the green. Walls enclose the yard and garden frontages of West and East Coombe Farmhouses, and part of the Old Parsonage (see FIG. 5 below). These walls are of interest for the variety of materials they contain, and style of coping they employ. Those at East Coombe Farmhouse and the Old Parsonage are 'roofed' much in the cob building tradition, and those at West Coombe Farmhouse carry a simple half round clay coping.
- 29. Hedgerows play an important role in providing enclosure around the fringes of the village, helping the settlement to merge into the broader agricultural landscape. Hedges have also been favoured in modern development on the south side of the village. Close boarded fencing at Rooks appears intrusive in the rural context.



**FIG. 5:** Boundary walls. Left: Old Parsonage, pale brick with stone base and slate with stone ridge coping. Right: East Coombe Farm, wall containing elements of reused brick, stone and tile alongside cob, with a tiled coping.

### Visual qualities

The grouping of thatched cottages around the green is particularly attractive viewed from the west and from Church Lane (see FIG. 7). The quality of views to the west of the green is spoiled by modern development, though West Coombe Farmhouse provides a point of interest. Looking east from the green, East Coombe Farmhouse plays an attractive role in partially closing the view (see FIG. 6), whilst a similar role is played by April Thatch at the west end of the village. Glimpses into spaces which formerly served as farm yards provide interest on the north side of the village (see FIG. 6).



**FIG. 7:** Views around the conservation area. Left: View into the former farmyard at West Coombe Farm. Right: Looking east from the centre, East Coombe Farmhouse closes the view.

### Landscape: trees and green spaces

31. The oak that stands on the green is the principal tree of note within the conservation area (see FIG. 7 below). This plays an important role in views around the centre of the village. Trees and shrubs otherwise line Church Lane and the entrance into the village from the west, and generally provide a green backdrop and setting for buildings.



**FIG. 7:** The green. The triangular space provides a focal point in the composition of thatched cottages at the 'centre' of the village. The oak tree is a notable feature.

32. Verges and the unenclosed front gardens which have spilled out onto them play an important visual and spatial role in the conservation area. Verges provide an attractive green edge to the street throughout the village, narrowing alongside boundary walls, and widening out in the centre of the village. Planting to the front of The Long House and Cuckoo Nod provides a 'chocolate box' cottage scene (see cover). Whilst similar planting occurs to the front of Red Roof Barn (see FIG. 2) and some other converted agricultural structures, the domestic character this creates is not entirely in keeping with the historic functional character of the buildings or spaces concerned. By contrast the lack of such planting in the yard to the front of Coombe House (see FIG. 6) better reflects the historic character of the space.

## Public realm

#### Groundscape

33. Consistent with its historic rural character, the village does not contain pavements. A tarmacked lane provides the route through the settlement, the edges of which are defined by stone kerbs. The lower part of Church Lane is also tarmacked though beyond the church the surface reverts to that of a rough farm track, connecting the village to its agricultural hinterland.

#### **Street furniture**

34. The conservation area contains an archetypal red telephone box, and a pillar mounted post box. Aside from these a finger post and a tap stand on the green.

#### Lighting and wiring

35. The conservation area contains no street lighting. This helps to contribute to the rural character of the settlement. Overhead wiring is very evident moving around the conservation area, and this spoils some otherwise attractive views.

#### **Public space**

36. The churchyard provides a now informally managed public open space, movement around which is constrained by vegetation. The village otherwise has a spacious feel due to the presence of broad verges and the triangular green at its centre.

## Building style, materials and details

## Architectural style

37. The majority of historic domestic buildings within the conservation area may be described as 'vernacular' in their architectural character (i.e. built according to local tradition). These buildings are generally make use of similar materials and elements, though their composition is informal. Greater formality exists in buildings dating from the nineteenth century onwards, whose architectural style is more recognisably influenced by contemporary fashion. This is clearly seen at East Coombe Farmhouse (see FIG. 8), the east range of West Coombe Farmhouse, and to a lesser extent the Old Parsonage.



**FIG. 8:** Architectural character. Left: The Long House exhibits characteristics of the historic local vernacular. Right: East Coombe Farmhouse demonstrates more standardised nineteenth century style.

### Walls

#### Stone

- 38. Stone was a favoured building material in the village up until the early nineteenth century, and thus plays an important role in characterising vernacular development. Heathstone, limestone, and less frequently flint, were all utilised, most often randomly mixed (see FIGs. 5 and 9). As noted above, the mixing of material, together with the presence of carved and block stone within buildings of relatively humble status, suggests that the supply of building materials was both inconsistent, and at least partly derived from demolished buildings (Bindon Abbey and structures in the abandoned part of the village are obvious candidates). Interestingly this pattern is also seen in the thirteenth century tower of the church, suggesting that the practice of recycling had a much longer history in the village.
- 39. A regular supply of heathstone appears to have been established by the nineteenth century, as suggested by its exclusive use in the boundary walls of

East Coombe Farmhouse, the upper portions of West Coombe Farmhouse, and within the rebuilt nave of the parish church. By this time however, brick had displaced stone as the favoured building material in the village.

### **Brick**

40. Reading clay is available within the immediate vicinity, and was exploited by a small brickworks west of the village from the mid-nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. Locally produced organge-red bricks (see FIG. 9) can be seen around the village, predominantly used in construction of agricultural buildings, outbuildings and boundary walls of nineteenth century date. It seems likely that brick was manufactured on a more ad hoc basis prior to this time, as may have been the case for the early brickwork seen in the original wing of West Coombe Farmhouse. Aside from its use as a principal building material, brick also finds use in forming openings within buildings of stone masonry construction.



FIG. 10: Walling. Left: Heathstone and limestone masonry seen in the walls of the former barn alongside the Long House. It is likely that this high quality material was salvaged from elsewhere. Right: It is likely that brick seen in the walls of agricultural buildings fronting the main street was manufactured at works historically located just west of the village.

### Roofs

41. Roof forms are generally pitched, with quarter and half hips common. April Thatch has the only fully hipped roof. Buildings within the conservation area feature a mixture of roofing materials, with no one material in a clear majority.

#### Roofing

42. Use of thatch is characteristic of vernacular construction, and this is best viewed in the cluster of buildings at the centre of the village. With the exception of April Thatch, which carries a flush ridge, all thatched buildings carry ornamental block ridges on their roofs. The latter are not traditional local features, and their use undermines the distinctive historic character of the area. Until relatively recently

Rooks carried a thatched roof, the replacement of which with slate has not enhanced the character or appearance of the conservation area.

- 43. Slate and slate substitutes are frequent on the north side of the village. Here they cover West Coombe Farmhouse, and many of the former agricultural buildings adjacent. Given that import of slate became common during the nineteenth century, slate often forms part of the original design of buildings dating to this period and later. Where present on earlier, or parts of buildings within the conservation area however, it is quite likely to have displaced thatch.
- 44. Plain clay tiles were historically produced at the village brickworks, and are a notable feature of East Coombe Farmhouse. Some former agricultural buildings make use of double Roman tiles. These were historically manufactured at Bridgwater in Somerset, and were often used to roof outbuildings around the District during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The pantiles seen on Red Roof Barn are unusual in the local context, and appear to have been introduced more recently.
- 45. In common with many churches around the District, Holy Rood Church carries stone tiles. As stone tiles do not otherwise feature in the palette of traditional materials used in the village, they play an important role here in imparting status, and differentiating the church from other buildings in the village.

#### Chimneys

46. Chimney stacks are an important feature of houses and cottages within the conservation area. These are generally brick built, with buff pots in the majority. The addition of chimney stacks to agricultural buildings during conversion has domesticated the appearance of these buildings, and harmed their historic functional character.

### Windows and doors

- 47. Amongst historic domestic buildings, timber multi-pane horizontally sliding sash (or 'Yorkshire sash') windows are frequent, alongside standard casements. Many of these windows are modern replacements, however historic examples may be seen at West Coombe Farmhouse. Vertically sliding sash windows are found on the nineteenth century elements of both West and East Coombe Farmhouses, and the Old Parsonage. East Coombe farmhouse and the Old Parsonage also feature polygonal bay windows, which were a popular motif during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These fashionable elements provide an interesting contrast with the informality of vernacular design, and mark out the dwellings of historically higher status within the village.
- 48. The insertion and blocking of openings within converted historic agricultural buildings has generally domesticated their appearance, and harmed their historic functional character. Former threshing barns such as Red Roof Barn (see FIG. 3) and Dairy Barn have been most significantly affected.

49. Due in part to the number of listed buildings within the village, replacement UPVC windows and doors do not blight the character or appearance of the conservation area.

## Important unlisted buildings and structures

- 50. Unlisted buildings and structures which make a 'positive' contribution to the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area are detailed on Map 2. Alongside listed buildings, these should form a focus for conservation, and where applicable, may provide inspiration for new development. Key examples are provided below.
  - *K6 telephone kiosk:* a 'jubilee' model K6 telephone kiosk (installed 1935-1952), listing to one side and showing few signs of regular use, is located in a somewhat peripheral location. The future of the kiosk is uncertain, though given lack of use eventual removal or deactivation are probable. The option exists for the parish to 'adopt' the kiosk.
  - Converted agricultural buildings: a number of these buildings are listed in their own right or may be listed by association with former farmhouses. Those which are not remain important in terms of the historic character they bring, in spite of harm caused through sometimes insensitive conversion.
  - *Finger post*: The home made finger post on the green pointing the direction to the church is a quirky feature.

## Ecology and biodiversity

51. Buildings and the conservation area's many trees, hedges, garden spaces and verges provide nesting, roosting and feeding opportunities for birds, bats and small mammals. Swallows are still present around the village despite the fact that barn conversions have caused loss of traditional nesting places. Wildflowers are present along the verges in Church Lane, and the churchyard itself appears to be maintained as a wildlife space, though is undergoing invasion by bracken. During survey work a slow worm was noted basking amongst the tombstones (FIG. 10). The churchyard contains lichens attached to monuments and stonework, and these are also present on, and mellow the appearance of masonry and roofs around the village.



FIG. 10: A slow worm in the churchyard.

## Issues and opportunities

### **Problem areas**

52. No specific issues were identified.

### Evaluation of condition

53. From external view buildings within the conservation area appear to be generally well maintained.

### Buildings at risk

54. Listed buildings and structures are termed 'at risk' where aspects of their condition, use or context threaten those features which provide special historic or architectural interest. In Coombe Keynes Conservation Area no listed buildings appear to be at risk, though the redundant nature of Holy Rood Church may leave it vulnerable.

### Threats, pressures, challenges

55. The telephone kiosk remains under threat of removal. In the absence of greater use, or local support for its retention, the kiosk is likely to be removed at some point in the near future.

## Recommendations

### **Boundary redefinition**

- 56. As originally designated in 1990, the conservation area included not only the village, but great tracts of open agricultural land and dispersed dwellings around it. Such land would not ordinarily suit designation and can be more appropriately considered to form the setting of the village. Changes were made to the conservation area boundary during 2015 in order to more appropriately focus the designation on the built up area of the historic village. This ensured that the designation was fit for purpose, in line with its statutory definition, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. A description of elements removed in 2015 is given below:
  - Agricultural land surrounding the village, including all the properties standing within this at Kimbert's End and Kick Hill Farm. This land is better considered to form the broader landscape setting of the village and is protected by the Dorset AONB designation. Buildings within it have no close spatial relationship with the village, whilst remains of the medieval village (which leave few traces above ground) are adequately protected by scheduling.

### Management and enhancement

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

#### Management of the graveyard

59. The ecological value of the churchyard could be improved by more active management. If the spread of bracken is left unchecked the space could become choked by the plant in years to come.

### Undergrounding of overhead wires

60. Visual clutter caused by wiring could be removed by placing telephone and other cables underground.

#### **Public awareness**

61. It is important to raise awareness amongst the public of both the existence of the Conservation Area, and the crucial role they play as property owners in conserving and enhancing its character and appearance. Here parish plans and other locally produced documents can play an important role in identifying actions that can be taken.

## Appendix

## Appendix A – Further information and advice

### Legislation, guidance and policy

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

### Design

• District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. Purbeck District Council, 2013.

### Historical development, archaeology and architecture

- Dorset (Pevsner Buildings of England). Newman and Pevsner, 1972.
- Historic landscape of the Weld Estate Dorset. Keen and Carreck (eds.), 1987.
- National Heritage List. www.historicengland.org.uk.

### General

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

### **Further enquires**

Enquiries regarding this appraisal should be addressed to:

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

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

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

## Appendix B – Listed buildings

Listed Buildings within the conservation area are shown in the table below. For further information on these buildings see the National Heritage List (searchable online at www.historicengland.org.uk.).

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

Address	Grade	Historic England Reference No.
Former Church of the Holy Rood (now redundant)	П	1120491
Cuckoo Nod, Church Lane		1120492
Odd Nod, Main Street	II	1172303
Mini Nod, Church Lane	II	1305228
Dairy Barn, including attached outbuildings on north and south	П	1120493
Boundary walls to East Farm House, Main Street	П	1120494
The Old Parsonage, Church Lane	II	1172215
Former stable, and west boundary wall to the Old Parsonage, Church Lane	П	1323335
West Coombe Farmhouse, Main Street	II	1172225
East Farm House, Main Street	II	1172277
April Thatch, Main Street		1172294
No. 10. (Formerly listed as "No. 9 Myrtle Cottage", including attached barn on east)	П	1323336
Nos. 7 and 8, Main Street		1323337