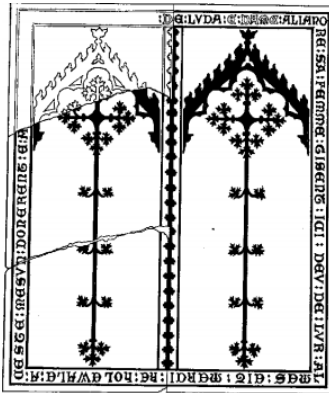


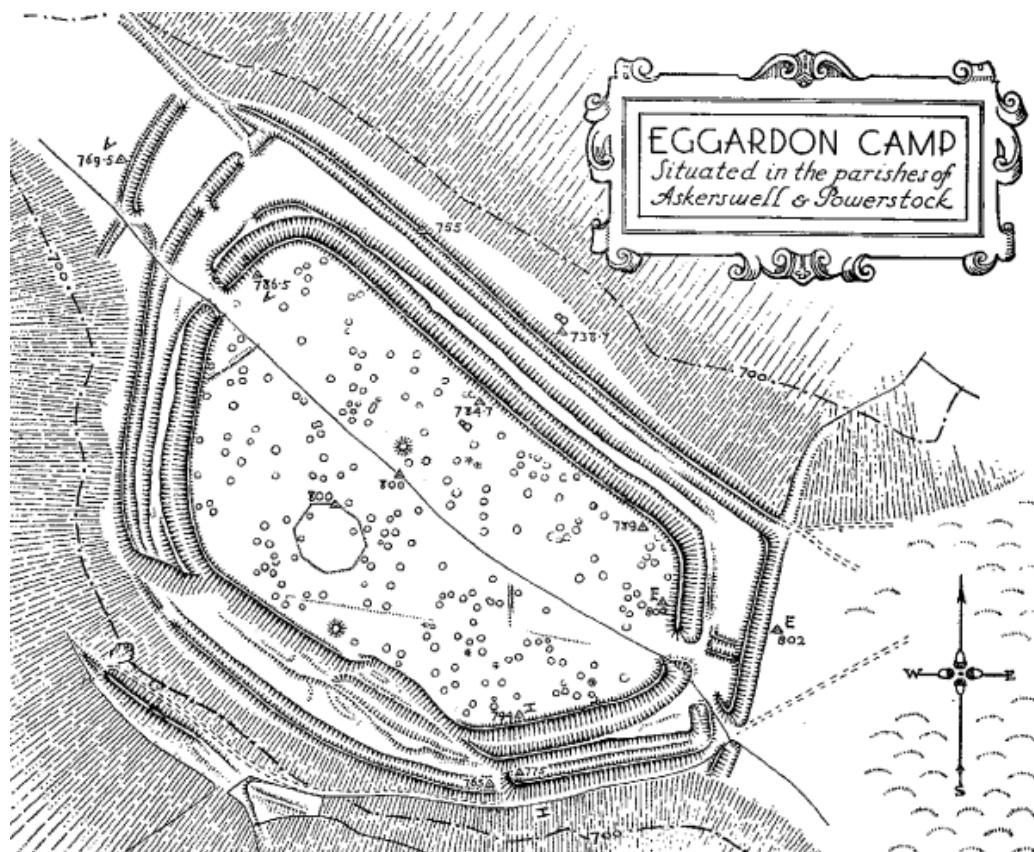
Review of development potential and heritage implications Askerswell Neighbourhood Plan



Memorial to Thomas de Luda and Eleanor his wife c.1320 in west tower of St Michael & All Angels

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Askerswell is a small village within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty approximately 12 miles west of the county town Dorchester. The Parish church (1858), dedicated to St Michael and All Angels stands on the south side of Askerswell and is the most visible high-status building in the settlement. It is a Grade II* listed building, one of only two in the village, the other being South Eggardon Farmhouse. The public house, which is at the opposite side of the village on the Eggardon foothills on the probable line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Exeter.



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Summary of other heritage assets

Scheduled Monuments include earthworks on Askerswell Down on either side of the A35, a dyke on Haydon Down, a bowl barrow and earthworks to the north of the village on Spyway Road, a mound (disturbed barrow to the south west), two bowl barrows and a group of 5 barrows south east of Eggardon Camp Hill-fort and strip lynchets to the east of the church.

Listed Buildings – there are 14 Grade II entries on the statutory list excluding table tombs in the churchyard, which are of C17 date with the exception of Askerswell House and Coach House and these are of two storeys, the walls are of rubble and the roofs are thatch and slate. In addition, a number of buildings, many dating from the C19, have been identified and considered by the community as contributing to not only the character of the village but also the setting of the existing heritage assets.

Other quality buildings

The following is a definition of Important Local Buildings from Historic England:

‘There may be many buildings and sites in a local planning authority’s area that make a positive contribution to its local character and sense of place because of their heritage value. Although such heritage assets may not be nationally designated or even located within the boundaries of a conservation area, they may be offered some level of protection by the local planning authority identifying them on a formally adopted list of local heritage assets.’

There are several important local (unlisted) buildings in Askerswell:

- Around the Square, Fir Tree Cottage and K6 telephone box on a small green. This thatched cottage is constructed of rubble coursed stone and timber, white painted multi- pane casements with a matching thatched porch roof.
- Buildings on Parsons Lane, The Granary to the south, The Grey Cottage & Little Grey Cottage grouping (including Millstream behind incorporating elements of an earlier building) to the north, including a 3 storey former mill building and a 1.5 storey outbuilding between the stream and the lane.
- Sherwood Cottage set back behind a front garden on Hembury Road adjacent to listed thatched Stonebridge (with its matching privy), with stone porch. Both houses accessed via a footbridge across the stream.
- The group along School Lane, The Old School House, Rose Cottage set high up on a bank behind a front garden and Candida, one of only two rendered houses. Askerswell School opened in 1857, as a local initiative, and became an elementary school in 1871. It was enlarged in 1901 to cater for seventy children. It celebrated its centenary, although it closed in 1965 and is now a dwelling.

All of these buildings make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness of Askerswell.



Rose Cottage boundary treatment

Strong Boundary Treatment

There are good examples of stone walls, with copings or with cock & hen detailing, as seen above at Rose Cottage which contribute strongly to the character of the area. Later buildings have more utilitarian boundaries and some are accessed across the watercourse.

Palette of Materials

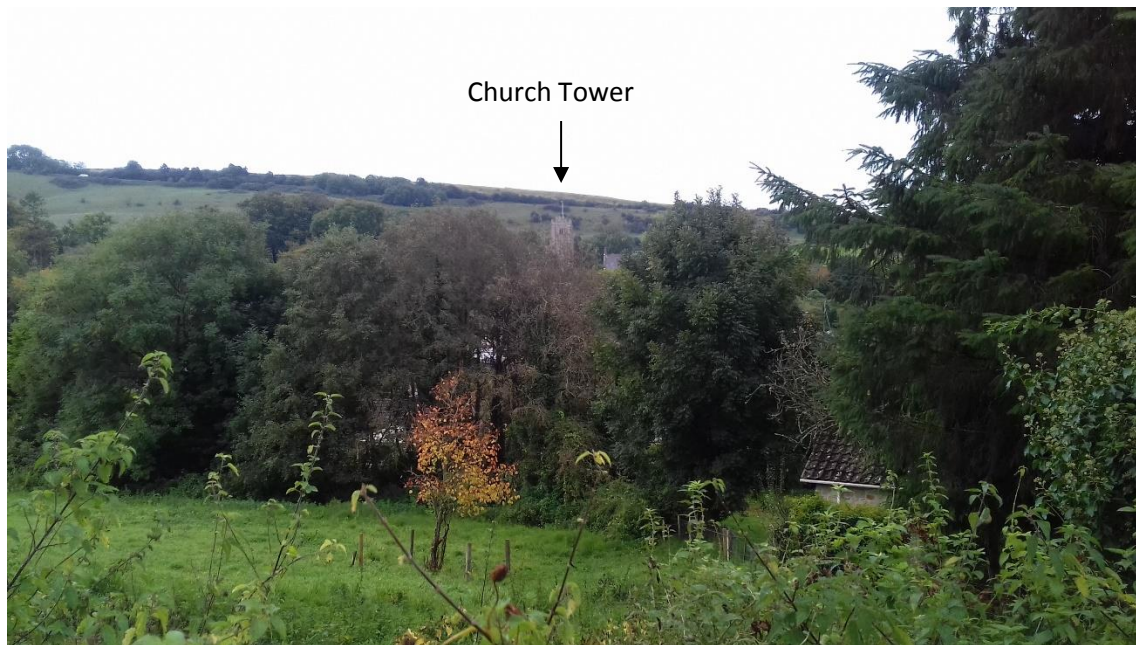
There is a consistent use of local limestone, coursed and rubble work, with some Hamstone dressings, more commonly brick quoins and gauged arch brick heads to windows and doors under thatch, slate and clay tile roofs with stone gable copings evident on gentry houses. Porches are either of thatch (in the Dorset style) or simple timber structures with slate. Chimneys are conspicuously of red brick with terracotta pots.

Settlement Pattern

The majority of houses are aligned with their eaves parallel to the street, Grey Cottage is an exception to this rule presenting a gable onto the street. New development is located in pockets around the village, accessed often on higher ground from long entrance drives, set back behind the established building line. Most properties are set back behind generously proportioned front gardens and often raised above road level, bounded by walls or high hedges.

Key Views

The most iconic view is of the Parish Church of St Michael & All Angels from public footpaths, on higher ground either side of the valley, also from the A35 and the approaches from Eggardon and beyond seen here in the centre of the frame.



View of the church tower from the car park adjacent to the Village Hall looking south towards the A35

Development sites

The focus of this report is the assessment of the potential heritage impact of possible infill sites if included within a defined development boundary

The defined development boundary as proposed by the Neighbourhood Forum for consultation, was arrived at following input from landscape advisors in respect of avoiding harm to the Dorset AONB, reducing the proposed boundary by taking out the areas to the north and west. Within the reduced boundary 3 potential sites (Nos 3, 6 and 7) had been identified, as shown on the following map. The following provides a brief analysis of each of these sites and potential heritage impacts.



No 3. The plot identified as north of the Village Hall was formerly occupied by Rocky Farm Cottage. The plot of land is elevated above the level of the Back School Lane, now heavily overgrown but remnants of the stone boundary wall survive. Despite being demolished in 1972, the land was used with a greenhouse and beehives until 1998, after which the land lay dormant (WD/D/15/002041 refers).

A substantial house and garden occupied this northern edge of settlement as confirmed by Plot No 304 on the Tithe Map and Apportionment (Dorset History Centre) see below.



Plot No 304 was owned by Rev. Alfred Cox and was occupied by John Way as a house and garden, extract from Askerswell Tithe Map 1846 and Apportionment, Dorset History Centre. (The School does not feature at this date)

The site is not conspicuous from a heritage perspective. The historic images provide some clues for the design of new development, which given the site area, could reasonably accommodate a pair of cottages. The site is in a sustainable location close to the village hall, church and pub.

New development should be sited below the ridge and in this location, be limited to 2 storeys (+ attic) typical of the settlement. The nearest neighbour, Rose Cottage is set on a terrace above School Lane, cut into the hillside and any new building would ideally be similarly aligned, possibly at 90 degrees as shown in the pre-1972 images relative to the School (in the foreground).



Historic images define the scale, mass and appearance of Rocky Farm Cottage with a second floor in the roof (see gable end window in LH photograph), porch and lean-to

Although access directly off Back School Lane was previously a planning issue, this can be overcome with access and parking from the track to the north east, giving shared access to outbuildings and a static caravan on the site of Rocky Close Farm on the plateau above the site. Any potential development on this site should relate well to the adjacent dwellings at the top end of School Lane, and will require careful design to overcome the topographical challenges of building in a hillside location. Any proposals on this site should contribute positively to the local identity and distinctive character and the quantum of development should be guided by the characteristics of the plot and surrounding area. Although there is currently dense tree cover, this will need selective thinning, and any new scheme rather than appearing conspicuous in long views, if constructed of local materials should meld into the landscape over time. In this way any potential impact on heritage assets will be diminished.

Other planning factors noted:

- Some of the conifers along the ridge may have to be felled (for access / daylight and due to possible risk to any occupants if unstable) but as they are non-native their landscape value would be low.
- Some mature deciduous trees along Back School Lane (some of which are growing within the stone wall just east of Rose Cottage) will need to be removed. These are not subject to TPO and could be felled at any time. As such these are not considered a constraint that would preclude the development of the site, although the retention of some trees may be sought as part of any planning application due to their landscape / wildlife value, if this were feasible.
- Due to the difficulty of the terrain the costs of developing this site may impact on viability.
- The loss of woodland would suggest an ecology survey should be carried out.

No 6. The site east of the Old Wheelwright Shop is set back behind an established hedgerow, parallel to Parsons Lane, but at a lower level, gently sloping towards the water course. It is accessed from Parsons Lane via a field gate opposite the curtilage listed walled garden of Askerswell House, whose rectangular plan is visible from the aerial view below. The entrance from Parsons Lane to the former rectory (which burned down in 1851), has now been extinguished. The boundary trees (seen in both views) overhang Parsons Lane beyond the walled garden. The site is hidden behind the hedgerow therefore is not visible in public views from Parsons Lane, from the north and south approaches. The Old Wheelwright Shop is a single storey building of clunch (chalk block) located midway along the lane, currently in use as a small scale carpentry workshop which is entirely compatible with residential development.



Drone images of Nallers and Parsons Lane LHS and with walled garden in background and Old Wheelwright Shop and adjacent site obscured by trees RHS ©WA Surveyors.com

This site is not prominent in the street scene or views and development could demonstrate the continuation of the pattern of ribbon development along Parsons Lane. Sensitivity is required in respect of scale relative to street elevation of any new dwellings in close proximity to the single storey Old Wheelwright Shop.

Other planning factors noted:

- Possible privacy issues (the lancet window at the east of the Wheelwrights) do not appear to a significant issue (as it appears to be part of a workshop and not the dwelling) and could be taken into account in any detailed design.
- The loss of hedgerow and proximity to the wood / stream would suggest an ecology survey should be carried out.

No 7. Although there are no obvious heritage impacts, the plot north of the Old Wheelwright Shop by Beck Cottage is considered unfavourable. There are too many constraints which would render this site undesirable to develop due to its inaccessibility, poor ground conditions and potential ecological value.



Site behind Old Wheelwright Shop adjacent to public footpath and view along Parsons Lane

Planning factors noted:

- The site is not readily accessible - it would either need a new bridge to access across Wheelwrights or an entry via Beck Cottage, which may not be feasible.
- Flood risk and ground conditions – the site is very close to the Asker flood risk areas and the ground was very wet and contained plants indicative of marshy conditions
- There are several mature trees to the rear of the site - if retained would reduce developable area further (although not subject to TPO).
- Uncultivated nature and wet conditions also suggest higher likelihood of wildlife interest, and an ecology survey should be carried out if the site were to be retained within the boundary.

Additional (windfall) sites considered

From the walk about the proposed development boundary, the view of the consultants was that there could be further limited opportunities for windfall development (such as from garden infill, conversion or subdivision), with three possible locations discussed. Given that the landowners had not been directly approached, the sites in question have not been specifically identified.

Additional Factors for consideration by the Neighbourhood Forum

The number of Listed Buildings is very low (14) and there are many buildings which are certainly worthy of inclusion on a list of important local buildings. The Parish could formerly request that the Local Authority include this cluster of historic buildings around the Square on their List of Important Local Buildings, which through the Neighbourhood Planning process would be subject to public consultation. The significance of any important local building (in its own right and as a contributor to the Local Planning Authority's wider strategic planning objectives), can be better taken into account in planning applications affecting the building or site or its setting.