



Beaminster

Conservation Area Appraisal

Working for West Dorset

Distribution list

In addition to public consultation, this appraisal was distributed for comment to the following organisations:

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Introduction



Fig.1 The White Hart

The Beaminster Conservation Area was designated in December 1969 and its boundary subsequently amended in 1977, 1994 and 1998. Section 71 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 describes a Conservation Area as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

In this appraisal of Beaminster's Conservation Area, an emphasis is placed upon the clear definition of character in a way that all relevant local authority interests may understand and work together to ensure that preservation or enhancement are effectively pursued. The many other "stakeholders", the public utility companies, local businesses and the wider community, should also understand the character of the Conservation Area and have ownership of it. Their active participation in new investment or enhancement schemes is essential.

This appraisal will be used by West Dorset District Council to inform development plan policies and development control decisions for the management of change. The appraisal may also encourage regeneration, guide investment and develop proposals for enhancement in the form of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

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

Executive Summary

The main document describes the **planning policy context**, concentrating on the relevant West Dorset District Local Plan (Adopted 2006) historic landscape, building conservation and archaeological policies.

The main part of the report focuses on the assessment of special interest of the Conservation Area, describing:

- **Location and setting**, the quality of the bowl of high hills to the north and the Powerstock Hills to the south and the wider AONB is underlined; the town has good edges on the south and SE, but a less defined edge, with considerable modern development, to the north and west; there are fine views into and out of the Conservation Area from and into the surrounding countryside;
- **Historic development and archaeology**, the importance of late medieval and 18th and 19th century economic growth and the effects of relative decline and regular fires on the town plan and individual buildings; there is undoubted potential for archaeological research and investigation around the Parish Church, within the historic core, and on the industrial archaeology of the town;
- **Spatial analysis**, including the town plan, the character and interrelationship of spaces and key views and vistas; there are sequences of townscape experiences (feelings of enclosure and exposure, changing views and the contribution of buildings in defining spaces and providing landmarks) along all of the radial approach roads; The Square is the physical and spatial focus of the town;
- **Character analysis**, dividing the Conservation Area into three distinct Sub-areas or character zones: the radial approaches; The Square; and the southern area around the Parish Church. Each Sub-area is examined, its building uses and types, the key Listed Buildings and the contribution made by unlisted buildings, building materials and details, and "green" elements. The rich palette of building stones, bricks, roofing tiles and slates, along with typical architectural details, window types, doors, ironwork, shopfronts and street furniture is a particularly attractive aspect of Beaminster. Its many fine tree groups, individual trees, gardens and stone boundary walls are also highlighted. The detrimental features are also described, notably the effects of traffic, parking (particularly in The Square), loss of architectural details on unlisted buildings, overhead wires and other eyesores.

These elements are brought together in a summary of the **overall special interest** of the whole Conservation Area, particularly the 140+ Listed Buildings, the quality of the landscape setting, the rich materials and details, the potential value of the town's industrial archaeological history and the quality of some of the modern development.

The **general condition** of the building stock and of the public realm is assessed and the main issue is the loss of character of many unlisted buildings because of changes allowed by Permitted Development Rights. This is



Fig.2 Robinson Memorial



Fig.3 Prout Bridge and the River Brit

one of the topics brought out in a **summary of issues** and it is possible that standards could be raised by the provision of additional or revised **local generic guidance**.

The report then focuses on **recommendations for management action**, including a review of traffic and parking management; landscape and tree monitoring, the question of Permitted Development and ways of improving repair and improvement work; and suggestions for environmental enhancements. All of these are formalised into **management proposals** that the local authorities, land and property owners and the wider local community should consider.

The Planning Policy context

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

- *Safeguarding Assets*, Policy SA1 seeks to protect the natural beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); development must be in keeping with the landscape character of the area (SA3); Policy SA9 seeks to protect Sites of Nature Conservation Interest; SA16 seeks to protect Historic Parks & Gardens of International and National Importance; 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.
- *Avoiding Hazards*: Policy AH1 relates to restrictions on development in Flood Risk Zones;
- *Settlement Policy*: Policy SS1 relates to development within Defined Development Boundaries (DDB); SS3 relates to development outside the DDBs;
- *Housing, Employment and Tourism, Community Issues, and Transport and Infrastructure*: there are a number of general policies relating to these issues and associated land use;
- *Design and Amenity*: a specific chapter contains several policies regarding design and amenity considerations, including Policy DA1, relating to retention of woodland, trees and hedgerows and other important landscape features.

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

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

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

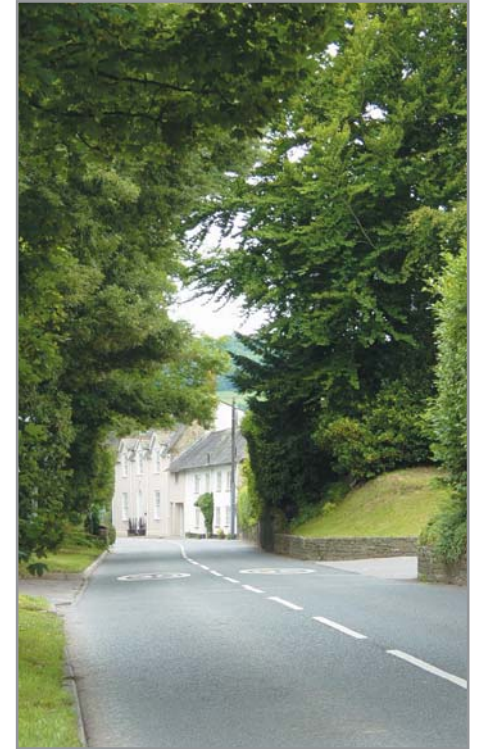


Fig.4 Bridport Road

Assessment of special interest



Fig.5 View from the north-east



Fig6 Southern approach on Bridport Road

a. Location and setting

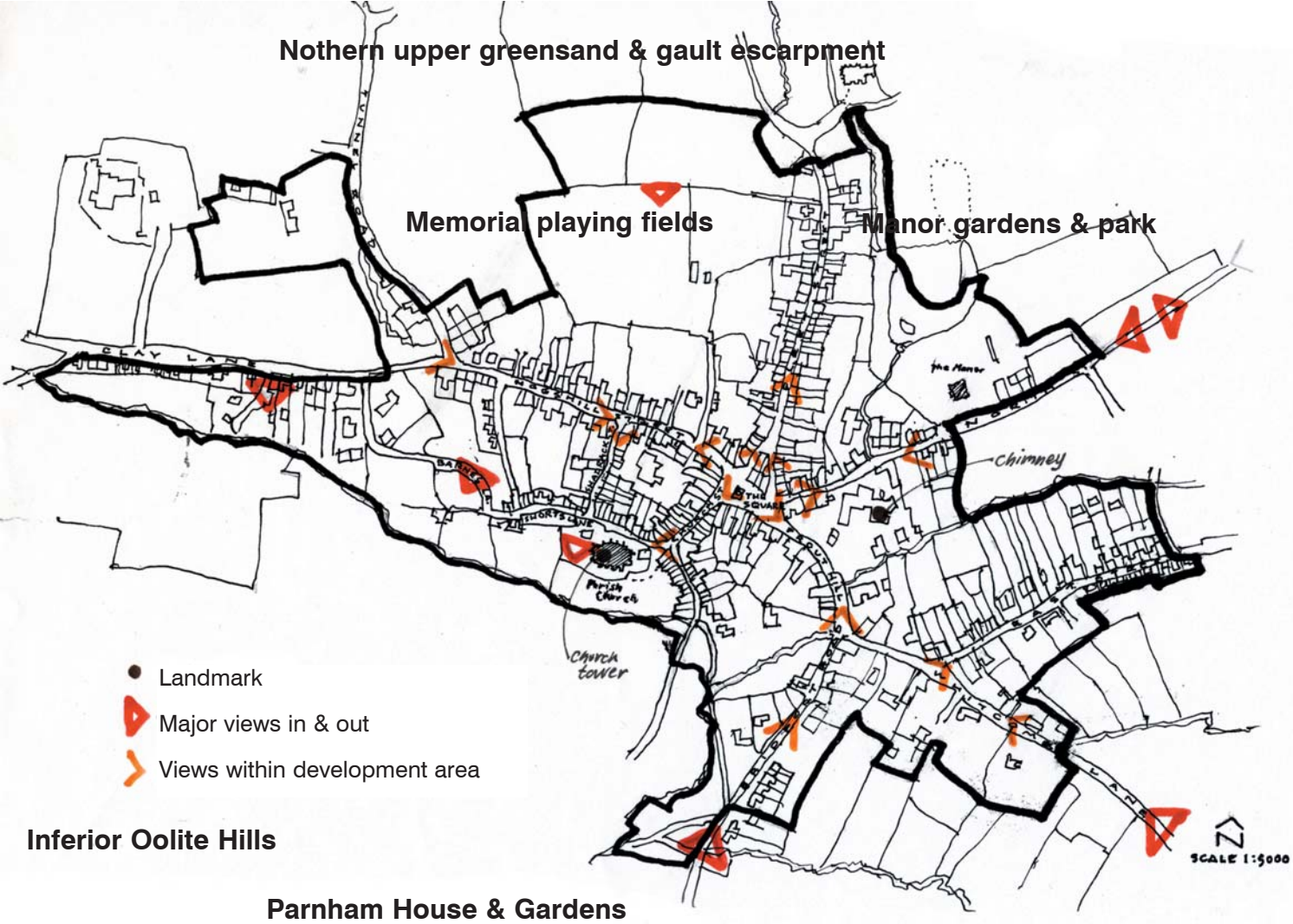
Beaminster is located about six miles north of Bridport, on the A3066. It is sited at the source of the River Brit and at its confluence with several smaller streams, within a natural bowl created by the escarpment to the north and east and by the Powerstock Hills to the west and south, where the Brit flows due south through a narrow valley.

Roads follow the watercourses, which within the town have been largely culverted. The town itself lies at the junction (a natural crossing point of the streams and river) of several roads: the A3066 from Bridport, through The Tunnel to Mosterton, the A356 and the A30; the northern cul-de-sac comprising Fleet Street to Newtown and other joining cul-de-sac at the foot of Buckham Down; a NE route up North Street to White Sheet Hill and the A356; and an eastern route to Dorchester along the B3163 on Whitcombe Road, with a medieval spur on East Street. Several minor lanes and paths connect to this star-shaped pattern, which focuses on the medieval Market place, The Square. The town lies on a slight rise, around The Square, with a marked fall down Church Street and Prout Bridge and gradual rises up Fleet and North Streets.

The town has an impressive landscape setting, completely within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): the southern approach by road or the Brit Valley Trail is enclosed by high limestone hills, including Gerrard's Hill (174m) and Coombe Down Hill, and by the ornamental grounds of Parnham House. Open countryside flows right up to the southern part of the historic core, adjacent to the Parish Church. To the north and east, a bowl-shaped Upper Greensand and Chalk escarpment, rising to over 200m at Horn Hill, Buckham and Beaminster Downs, White Sheet and Hackthorn Hills provides a dramatic backdrop to the town. Parts of the lower slopes sweep down to the town centre, in the landscaped grounds of The Manor and down to The Memorial Playing Fields. These form green wedges between modern ribbons of development along the route ways. There is also valuable green space, hedges and trees between the East and North Street development wedges.

The edges of development are characterised by sudden, clean transitions from town to country on the south and eastern approaches (Bridport and Whitcombe Roads), where cuttings, hedge banks and overhanging trees form framed views into the town. Fleet Street has modest modern residential development at its junction with Shortmoor and Hogshill Street/ Clay Lane/Broadwindsor Road have considerable modern development, in the form of residential estates, business parks and the St Mary's School site. There is also a large modern residential block at the end of East Street and south of North Street. North Street itself has a clear transition to parkland on its northern, Manor, side, but the southern edge has an older ribbon up towards White Sheet Hill, thickened and infilled by modern development at Gerrards Green. The western edge has modern development

Map one: setting



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Fig.7 View of countryside from North Street

on the northern side of Broadwindsor Road (school, fire station and housing) and residential estates up Tunnel Road, although the effects of an undeveloped field and large trees adjacent to Beaminster House give a rural character to the Clay Lane/Tunnel Road entry point into the town centre. The Conservation Area forms about 50% of the total developed area, but it is only on the western part of the town that modern development is visually predominant.

The overall impact of modern extensions is to blur the contrast between town and country along the two northern entries and to dilute the presence of the historic buildings on the south side of Clay Lane. Notwithstanding this, the views of the town from the high ground to the north are outstanding, with lower hills and woodland flowing around the town's edges; the church tower and factory chimney forming dominant landmarks; and distant views of Bridport and the World Heritage Coast. There are equally fine views from the west, on the Broadwindsor road, where the northern escarpment frames the town.

Within the Conservation Area, there are many fine views out into countryside, dominant hills and groups of superb trees, for example, southwards over The Square to the Church tower which is framed by a rounded hill and a belt of woodland; east over Prout Hill from The Square; and west along Hogshill Street. The southward views over the town centre from the higher slopes of The Memorial Playing Fields are also a major asset.

b. Historic development and archaeology

There is little evidence of prehistoric or Roman settlement in the area of the existing town. There is documentary evidence of an early Saxon minster and ownership by the pre-Norman Bishops of Sherborne. Beaminster was probably a small but thriving place, with the rebuilding of St Mary's church in the 13th century. At the same period, market and fair grants seem to have been made. The cloth industry developed in the late medieval period, which helped finance the rebuilding of the church and the construction of the splendid western tower around 1503. It is possible that East Street represents a largely planned suburb of over sixty houses. The immediate evidence for this is the very distinctive regular, long plots, which contrast markedly with the rest of the historic core.

In the 1620's, the market-house was rebuilt and the chantry priest's house in the churchyard was replaced by an almshouse. There were two disastrous fires in 1644 (associated with the Civil War) and 1684, evidenced by the relative lack of pre-Georgian houses in the area around The Square and the survival of groups of older houses on the periphery, on Whitcombe Road and St Mary Well, Church and North Streets. In spite of these calamities, the population was about 1,500 by 1700. The cloth and flax/hemp manufactories were

supplemented by tanning, brewing and malting. By the end of the 18th century, Samuel Cox, at Yarn Barton, was said to have employed nearly 600 people manufacturing sailcloth.

By 1775, the population had grown to 1,955 and by 1841 to 3,270. New development at the end of Fleet Street (Newtown and Shortmoor) and at The Green, up North Street, necessitated the provision of a new church, Holy Trinity. There were other fires between 1781 and 1871. Mid-19th century population decline was probably the result of the frequent fires and the failure to acquire a railway link. There was some infill development, in the form of gentry houses and Victorian villas and cottages. The market house was demolished in 1886 and the produce market declined into the early 20th century. The late 19th century saw the establishment of state schools and the introduction of a milk factory in 1904 (now Danisco Beaminster Ltd).

The 20th century saw residential development, both Rural District Council and private housing on the west, north and NE of the historic core. The town escaped the ravages of bombing and post-War redevelopment.

In terms of **archaeological potential**, the most obvious sites and issues are:

- i. Evidence for an early Minster site and the Bishop's residence, possibly in the vicinity of the existing Parish Church;
- ii. Research and potential limited investigation of plots within the historic core, including those affected by fires and the long, regular ones on East Street;
- iii. Research and site investigation of industrial sites, for example flax, yarn and cloth mills on Fleet and Hogshill Streets, and the mills on Bridport Road. Sometimes small industry is situated in the same location as earlier industrial activity.

c Spatial and character analysis

Although already referred to in Location and Setting (page 7), the **plan** of the historic core is nucleated in form, focused on a central market place, with radial route ways running along watercourses and historic tracks down from the northern escarpment and through the Powerstock Hills to The Square to form a star pattern. The Parish Church is set away from this focus, on the Shorts Lane cul-de-sac, with a footpath extension, connected to The Square by Church Street and to Hogshill Street by the short length of Shadrack Street. This may reflect the importance of an early church site before the market place was firmly established. St Mary Well Street forms a southern spur from the Church/Shorts Lane link, which diminishes to a lane access to an outlying farm and a footway along streams and leats back to Bridport Road.

Buildings either sit in larger plots, surrounded by garden or parkland (restricted to the largest gentry houses)

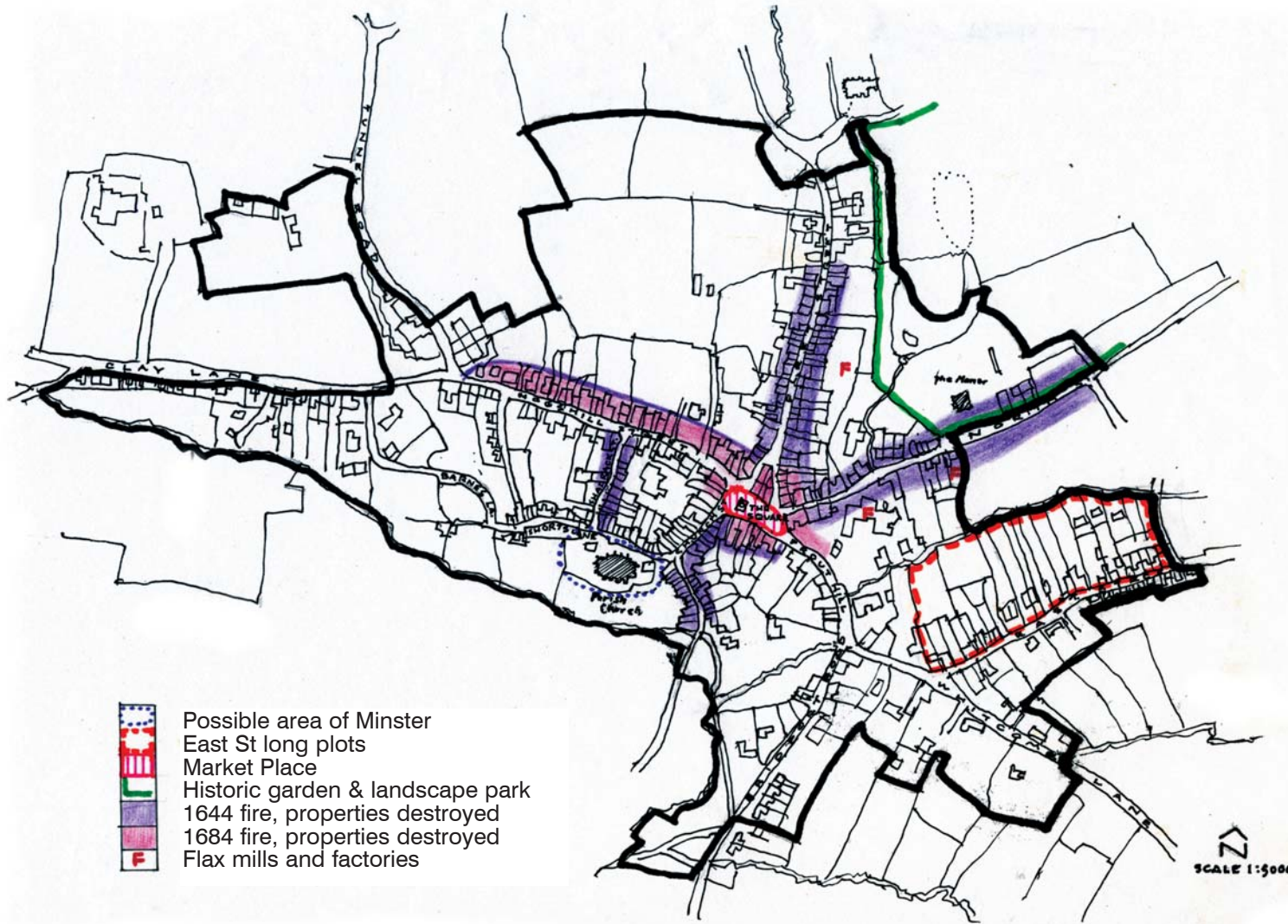


Fig.8 Fire survivors in North Street



Fig.9 Former Mill, Whitcombe Lane

Map two: historical & archaeological factors



-  Possible area of Minster
-  East St long plots
-  Market Place
-  Historic garden & landscape park
-  1644 fire, properties destroyed
-  1684 fire, properties destroyed
-  Flax mills and factories

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or are positioned at the street edge of a plot, actually on the carriageway edge or set back slightly behind a wall and small front space. Plot size is small and compact, except for a group of markedly longer and regular ones on the north side of East Street. East Street may be a planned suburb but it is difficult to ascribe a date to it.

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the Conservation Area is a major element of the town's form. The firm boundary between town and country on the southern and SE entry points has already been described, as has the greater impact of modern development on the NE, north and west. Even here, there are rural edges, either on one side of the entry route (Fleet and North Streets) or alluded to by the empty field and trees at the Hogshill Street/ Tunnel Road/Clay Lane junction. The Memorial Playing Field allows green space to penetrate down to the town centre, although a car park, the playgroup building and sports pavilion dilute the effects of pure countryside.

The major space is in the form of The Square, which is the true focal point of the town. It is a funnel-shaped area, about 100m x 60m (at its wider western end, narrowing to 30m on the east), not truly level, with a slope to the south and to the east. It is firmly edged by buildings on its north, south and west sides and the east, the mouth of the funnel, has a sudden drop down Prout Bridge. The northern side has a series of narrow openings either side of "The Greyhound" (the western lane is Fore Place) meeting at the foot of Fleet Street in a relatively wider space, fronted by No 5 and NFU offices (No 7) and the Public Hall, which, with its rather monumental front and flagpole has the appearance of a French town hall overlooking a small place. The NFU office (No 7) is set at an obtuse angle to the right-hand (eastern) opening and forms an interesting composition with the bay windows of the framing buildings.

The opening to North Street is also narrow, with a view of bays in perspective, the modern flank of Danisco Beaminster Ltd and older cottages towards The Manor.

The Square has a late-Victorian centrepiece in the Robinson Memorial (Julia), a stone, covered memorial, used for shelter. Parked cars dominate the surrounding area and it is difficult to enjoy the space or the buildings. In one corner, there is a narrow exit, south down Church Street, marked by a grand, Victorian, former bank.

The entry routes are linear spaces, sometimes sharply defined by cuttings and steep gradients. In several places, the judicious presence of trees defines and frames the edges of the historic core, notably on Bridport Road, Whitcombe Road, North Street and the eastern end of Clay Lane. The radial routes are not straight, but curve, plunge and rise according to topography, providing strong townscape effects of partial or complete



Fig.10 The focal point of The Square is the Robinson Memorial



Fig.11 Shorts Lane



Fig.12 Shadrack Street

closure of vistas and a sense of expectation due to curving road lines. For example:

- Bridport Road enters through an arch of roadside trees, has a high bank on its right (east) side, a tight building line on a sweeping curve to Prout Bridge, followed by a glimpse of water on the left, partial closure created by Bridge House and a sharp curving climb up to The Square;
- Whitcombe Road enters through a cutting and tall trees, walls and hedges at either side of the East Street junction lead the eye downhill towards Prout Bridge;
- North Street sweeps downhill past parkland on one side and a ribbon of old and modern development on the other to a fine group of trees and a tall, ramped up stone wall at The Manor and then past a tight building line, including older cottages at various angles to the street, a rise and fall of the roadway and a curve, and a final narrowing lead into The Square. The Church tower predominates in this series of views;
- Fleet Street is narrow and tightly bounded by development for most of its length, but a curved northern part, near the junction with Shortmoor, provides closure and variety, contrasted with the straighter southern portion, which narrows, opens out by Yarn Barton and then divides into two narrow canyons either side of The Greyhound block into The Square;
- Hogshill Street (see street townscape on next page) is a splendid example of the subtleties of curve, level, building line and the contribution of buildings and trees: from the west it has a slight but telling reverse curve and slight rise and fall, tight building lines (prominent gable end at Eglinton); one glimpse of gardens and Church tower on the south, by No.19, and a wider vista down Shadrack Street to the Church; a dominating Victorian frontage with prominent cornice and chimneys (No. 34) on a slight rise and curve to the north and then a continual curve round to The Square, marked by the trees in front of Champions and the severe late-Regency front of The White Hart on the north. The carriageway narrows at the entry into The Square, exaggerated by the angled building line of the southern building. This progression has other subtleties, notably two examples of building lines angled slightly to the carriageway on the northern side, creating long, thin triangular spaces behind the pavement.

The lesser routes from The Square down to the Church have specific qualities: a tight exit into Church Street, a sharp slope downhill, with a stepping down of facades and a stopping of the view by a long façade at the junction with Shorts Lane and St Mary Well Street. The junction has a slight space formed by a broadening out of the roadway. Both St Mary Well Street and Shorts Lane have visual qualities, the former having a pronounced curve and enclosure by tight building lines and the latter having an informal terrace and a curve to Shadrack Street on the northern side and a dramatic change of level up to the Strode Room and churchyard to the south. Walls and trees dominate the smaller cottages and there is a good oblique view of one of the best Georgian houses, Minster View, at the western end of Shorts Lane.

Hogshill Street townscape



Hogshill Street contains a sequence of rich and varied visual experiences, both east and west along its length and into side streets and narrow openings.

A sense of anticipation and enclosure are created by the curving street line, undulating road levels, the varied height of buildings and their angle to the road. The church tower and trees around The Lodge can be seen in longer distance views.

The street line is broken by several focal points, notably large trees in front of Champions, bold chimneys of London House and the projecting porch of Daniel's House.

- Views**
- 1. East to The Square
 - 2. Through slot to church
 - 3&4 West to London House
 - 5. West towards trees of The Lodge



Fig.13 St Mary Well Street



Fig.14 Whitcombe Road

There are other ancillary spaces: the churchyard on its plateau, with old grave stones and a copper beech and a setted ramp up from the east, surmounted by elaborate iron Victorian Gothic gates and piers; Champions garden on Hogshill Street with a link to the Memorial Playing Field; the green related to the new housing at Barnes Lane; and the footpath from Bridport Road to St Mary Well Street, along Shorts Lane and through to the Barnes Lane green. There are private spaces in the form of gardens, NE of The Manor, by Fars in Whitcombe Road; and the gardens fronting Beaminster House.

Key views and vistas complement and, in some cases, are part of the various townscape sequences described above. The entry points into the urban area give views of the two vertical **landmarks**, the Parish Church tower and chimney of Danisco Beaminster Ltd. The chimney and the buildings around The Square dominate the view from the south, along Bridport Road; on Whitcombe and North Roads, the tower rises above roofs, with a backing of green hills and trees. The tower again marks the western entry, at the junction of Clay Lane, Tunnel Road and Hogshill Street. From the latter, the view downhill to Church Street and the Parish Church is framed by stone walls and cottages. There is a more limited view of the tower's elaborate skyline over The Square from Fore Place and a view of cottages, trees and hills down Church Street from the SW corner of The Square.

The vistas along the main radial streets are a series of smaller townscape experiences, closed or partly framed by buildings, walls, hedges and trees. The sequence along Hogshill Street is described in some detail above and the changing compositions of building lines, buildings parallel to roads or set firmly at right angles (with gable ends dominating), walls, the entrances to back yards or lanes and mature trees are also characteristic and pleasant features of Bridport Road, Prout Bridge, Whitcombe Road, East Street, North Street and Fleet Street. The area around the Parish Church (Shadrack, Church and St Mary Well Streets and Shorts and Barnes Lanes) offers occasional views of the tower and the nearby hills, interspersed by enclosed areas of terraced frontage, high walls and embankment.

d Character analysis

This includes a summary of the important individual buildings, including unlisted ones, groups, local details and building materials, the contribution made by greenery and green spaces. Negative factors (the extent of loss, intrusion or damage) and the existence of any neutral areas (which neither strongly enhance nor detract from the area and which appear to have some capacity for improvement) will be described.

The Conservation Area is large and complex, containing over 140 Listed Building entries (some relate to more than one property and thus there are more actual buildings) on the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*, and it may be divided into discrete sub-areas, whose particular characters have been created by a combination of natural elements, the form and scale of man-made features, their historic and current uses, the actual buildings and structures, both historic and recent. As shown on Map 3, they are:

- **The radial approaches, Bridport Road, Whitcombe Road, East, North and Fleet Streets, Clay Lane and Hogshill Street;**
- **The Square and Fore Place;**
- **The southern area adjacent to the Parish Church, Barnes and Shorts Lanes, Shadrack, Church and St Mary Well Streets.**

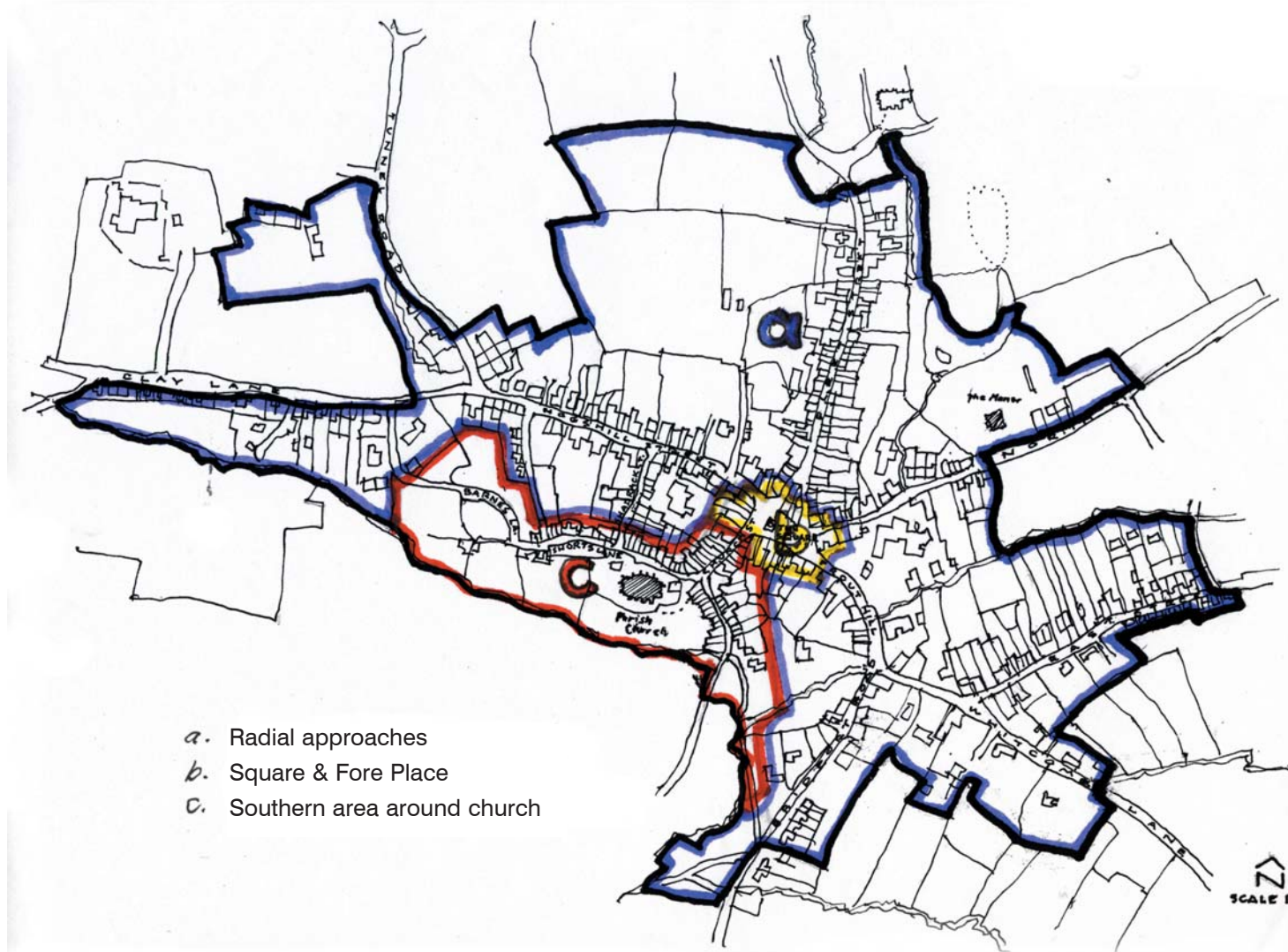
Although each sub-area description will follow a pattern in the description of features, it is important not to place undue emphasis on this at the expense of an understanding of the character of the whole Conservation Area. In order to provide an easily understood overview, the next chapter (page 31) will attempt to summarise and draw together detail in the form of the Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area.

Because the appraisal incorporates a number of architectural terms, reflecting the town's rich heritage, a Glossary has been provided on page 38.



Fig.15 Westerly end of Shorts Lane

Map three: sub-areas



- a. Radial approaches
- b. Square & Fore Place
- c. Southern area around church

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Sub-area A: the radial approaches

Building Uses

Residential use predominates, with a mixture of historic cottages, the occasional grander town house and modern infill, in former back yards or gardens. This use has been augmented by the conversion of large houses and industrial, school and chapel buildings. The White Hart public house in Hogshill Street will also be converted. More traditional mixed use is represented in the former Congregational Church in Whitcombe Road becoming a town museum; Bridge House at Prout Bridge a hotel; and Beaminster Public Hall in Fleet Street retaining its original use. Importantly, there are small shops and offices on Prout Hill, the western end of North Street, the southern end of Fleet Street (No 7 and Town Council offices) and the middle and eastern parts of Hogshill Street. Other commercial uses include the large precinct of Danisco Beaminster Ltd on Prout Bridge and North Street; a petrol filling station and repair garage at the western extremity of Whitcombe Road. The Bugler and Elliot Engineering offices and associated buildings on Hogshill Street and Clay Lane respectively have current planning permissions for mainly residential use.

Building Types and Layouts

All of the radial routes have a mixture of cottages, larger gentry or town houses, purpose-built public buildings and commercial premises.

The earlier 17th century houses that survived the various fires tend to have ground floor rooms in line, with little attempt at a symmetrical layout (Edgeley Cottage, 9 Whitcombe Road, has a cross passage and rear continuous outshut). Bridge House, Prout Bridge is a larger example of the asymmetrical plan, with an off-centred main entrance. Even Hitts House, with an apparent central doorway, has a less-formal plan.

By the early 18th century, symmetry, expressed by a central door and hall and two principal downstairs rooms, with fireplaces (marked by gable end chimneys), became the norm. Some 17th century houses were rebuilt, particularly after the 1781 fire, or refronted, creating a mixture of formal classical frontages and, often, older wings at right angles (Barton End, Fleet Street and Champions, Hogshill Street). The Manor is an example of more gradual growth and adaptation, with major early 19th century additions to an older core. Later 18th century examples of town houses include Wynford and 11 Whitcombe Road. Town Houses, for the professional classes, were built up to 1850, London House on Hogshill Street being a fine example of an imposing frontage with two large gable end chimneys. The grander town or gentry house usually displays the use of ashlar, often with rubble side or rear elevations, has two or three storeys and attics, vertical sash windows and a variety of door canopies and porches. It may be positioned directly on the street line (where



Fig.16 Shops in Hogshill Street



Fig.17 Barton End, Fleet Street



Fig.18 Cottages in East Street



Fig.19 Champions, Hogshill Street

there was some kind of office, surgery or shop associated with the family business), but a garden, with stone boundary wall and hedge or a smaller private front area, defined by low walls and railings gave some privacy. There are examples of front cart or coach entrances to rear service yards (6 & 26 Prout Bridge).

There are many examples of humbler cottages in the area, both detached and in terraced form, particularly in Bridport Road, East Street, Fleet Street, Clay Lane and Hogshill Street. Usually built of rubble, with casement windows as often as vertical sashes and with gable end and party wall chimneys, they usually face directly onto the pavement or road edge. An occasional layout at right angles to the street provides more privacy and garden space.

Specialised buildings include town houses with shop premises built into them from one of the 18th or 19th century rebuilds; the two chapels in Whitcombe Road and Fleet Street; the two late 19th century schools in East Street (1875) and Hogshill Street (1868 and 1897); the Flax Mill in Whitcombe Road (three storeys at front entrance, four to the rear); a toll cottage nearby; 6 Prout Hill, an early 19th century Police House and Court; the purpose-built early 19th century hotel and public bar at The White Hart, Hogshill Street, with its central carriage entrance and rear yard; and the 1902 Public Hall. South Lodge, on Bridport Road, has the remnants of a tollhouse within its fabric.

There are several modern residential infill schemes: a block of flats on Fleet Street; a new in-keeping Regency row on Bridport Road; and small enclaves of stone and render semis and terraces on the west end of Hogshill Street, into Tunnel Road. These are not too intrusive, set behind the main frontages, screened by walls and hedges or respecting old plot patterns and building details.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 97 Listed Buildings and structures in the Sub-area, of which nine are Grade II*. There are a number of important 17th century large houses, with later additions, notably high quality Georgian or Regency front façades: The Manor, with its stables and garden features, notably the gateway reassembled from Clifton Maybank elements and grotto; The Yews, Hitts House and Farris, Whitcombe Road; Champions, Hogshill Street; Barton End, Fleet Street; and Hams Plot, Bridport Road.

Devonia, in Hogshill Street, is a good 18th century house, as is Daniels House, whose projecting Doric porch is a townscape feature. Beaminster Lodge is an example of an early 19th century villa, set in landscaped grounds. The White Hart, an imposing public building, has a great presence on the curve of Hogshill Street. No 7, Fleet Street, has a late 18th century frontage with elaborate fanlight, iron railings and splendid contemporary bowed shopfronts.

There are many other important Listed Buildings in the Sub-area, notably Bridge House (another 17th century survivor); Edgeley Cottage in Whitcombe Road, 17th century; Woodlands, 9 Bridport Road (17th and early 19th century elements); 52 Fleet Street, an early 18th century house; similarly, 11-15 North Street; Le Vieux Four, 2 North Street, with Venetian window and attractive shopfront; 18th and 19th century chapels at Fleet Street and Whitcombe Road, the latter, former Congregational Chapel having mid-18th century elements; The Old Vicarage, 1859-61 asymmetrical Victorian Gothic; London House, Hogshill Street, with strong Victorian details and a bold shopfront; the Public Hall at Yarn Barton, dominating its little space. Trefoil House, formerly Holy Trinity, just outside the Conservation Area boundary acts as a focal point for the northern end of Fleet Street.

Key Unlisted Buildings are:

- 45 Hogshill Street, Woodstock House, a strong Victorian façade;
- The former Flax Mill, 7 Whitcombe Road, a plain, strong building with industrial archaeological interest;
- 54-6 Fleet Street, a simple stone group with stone paving to the street;
- The former Church School on East Street, Victorian Gothic chimneys and porch, gate piers and ironwork;
- The brick chimney of Danisco Beaminster Ltd.

These are all buildings that could be considered for inclusion in the Statutory List.

Coherent Groups are the whole of the north side of Hogshill Street, from no.62 to The Square and the south side from the Tunnel Road junction (there are one or two weak points but the whole length stands up well); Fleet Street, the whole of the eastern side south of the former Abbot Brown site, and the western side from 53 southwards; the western entry into North Street, south side to No.4 and the whole of the north side as far as the Manor Stables; the eastern side of Bridport Road, to the Whitcombe Road junction; Bridge House and the whole of the west side of Prout Bridge to The Square; Fars, the western entry into East Street and the group on Whitcombe Road, including Hitts House and The Yews.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

The historic buildings are constructed with the local yellow-brown Inferior Oolite limestone, in squared ashlar, squared coursed rubble and random rubble forms, the latter mainly seen in humbler cottages and boundary walls. Rubble with ashlar dressings, in the form of quoins, door and window surrounds, is commonly seen. Ham Hill limestone is seen in some ashlar detailing. The blue/grey harder Bothenhampton Forest Marble stone may be seen in a small number of cottages and, more commonly, on boundary walls. Forest Marble and Blue Lias from Lyme Regis or Keinton Mandeville, South Somerset, were used for paving and there are numerous



Fig.20 Former Church School in East Street



Fig.21 The Old Vicarage, 3 Clay Lane



Fig.22 Smooth rendered shopfronts in Hogshill Street



Fig.23 Inferior Oolite limestone, Town Museum

remains, partly covered by tarmac or evident on the thresholds of cart and carriage entrances.

In the early 19th century, smooth stucco and lime-based render became fashionable and Beaminster has good examples of this, sometimes with false joint lines to simulate ashlar work (Larcombe's, Hogshill Street/The Square). Roman Cement is another, often unpainted, covering for rubble stone or brick.

The local Fullers Earth clay has contributed material for good quality dark red and brown bricks and clay roofing tiles. The brickwork, on a few 18th century houses, is Flemish Bond, with occasional patterning using blue vitrified header bond. Pure header bond appears on the gable end of Brook House, Bridport Road. On the few brick houses, windows may have fine rubbed and gauged work on window heads or there may be contrasting stone aprons, with keystones. Brick may be used in conjunction with other ashlar stone detailing, such as quoins or cornices, and rubble stone flank walling. There are two red/orange brick Victorian houses at Prout Bridge with yellow decorative brickwork.

Welsh slate is the most obvious roofing material, the result of 19th century rebuilding or repair. Stone tiles, laid to diminishing courses, are beautifully displayed at Fars. Dark brown, clay plain tiles appear on a number of buildings, hand-made up to the early Victorian period and machine-made in the later 19th century and embellished with fancy fish-scale patterning (Edgeley Cottage and the former Church School in East Street). There are many examples of clay pantiles, possibly made locally, which give a pattern and rhythm to a roof. Normally orange or brown, black tiles appear at Myrtle Cottage, on Tunnel Road. Chimneystacks tend to be simple, brick constructions, with more elaborate stone examples on Victorian buildings.

Windows vary greatly, according to the original status of the house and date of construction. The stone mullion, often with drip-mould and labels, characterises buildings up to the early 18th century. Thereafter, wooden, vertically hung sashes were fashionable, with, as a general rule, glazing bars becoming more slender and the whole frame set back behind deep reveals. There is one known Palladian window in North Street. By 1840s, new glass technology created larger panes and the typical sash without glazing bars. Humbler buildings employed wooden and metal casement windows, sometimes wooden with a central metal opening light.

There are several decorative fanlights, with radial or intersecting bar patterns. There are also several examples of late 18th and early 19th century shopfronts, simply corniced and divided by delicate mullions, with reeded pilasters at Larcombe's; and more elaborate multi-paned ones and the elaborate double serpentine example at No 7 Fleet Street. London House is a Victorian example of an arcaded shopfront (see shopfront details, page 27).

Doors vary from early ledged and braced examples, with external studs, 18th century six panelled and 19th century four panelled examples. Door surrounds are characterised by pilasters with cornice or pediment; channelled strips; projecting porches with columns; or bracketed canopies. There are several examples of wooden or iron trelliswork porch surrounds.

There is an abundance of good ironwork in the Sub-area, with spear-topped, urn finialed or hooped railings, and simpler safety rails of lozenge section at Prout Bridge (see details, page 22) and just north of Fleet Street. The Manor has an elaborate wrought iron entrance gate and Woodland Manor, on Bridport Road, has a lamp overthrow. No 2 East Street/5 Whitcombe Road has an iron balcony with wooden Chinese trelliswork and a flared pentice roof over. Hams Plot has a trelliswork verandah and a continuous iron balcony. There is a handsome cast iron lamp standard at Prout Bridge.

Boundary walls add much to the area's character, ranging from simple rubble structures, with a projecting horizontal cap, topped by a half-round coping; more elaborate ashlar, ramped up in curved quadrants; grand gate piers, topped with decorative balls and recessed quadrants from the road to the entrance. Whitcombe Road, Fleet Street and Hogshill Street display fine examples of walling (see details, page 22). Traditional pavements exist, in part, on Bridport Road and Prout Bridge and at the thresholds of house entrances. Outside Nos 60 - 70 East Street are traditional drainage channels.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

The Sub-area is greatly enhanced by an abundance of mature trees and hedging. Some tree planting was deliberately planned to provide ornamental specimens (The Manor) or a larger shelterbelt or landscape feature (the splendid belt west of Beaminster Lodge). The Manor has complementary 18th century garden features that justify its Grade II status on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Both of these examples create strong view-stoppers, down North Street from The Green and west along Hogshill Street respectively. Their importance is recognised by the designation of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) at The Manor, The Lodge, the junction of Tunnel Road and Hogshill Street, and around The Old Vicarage.

The importance of entry trees, framing and defining approaches to the area, has already been noted and the examples on Bridport and Whitcombe Roads, Clay Lane and North Street are particularly important. Bridport Road has an informal group of streamside trees on its west side, complementing the groups of houses on the east. The large trees of The Manor grounds back the eastern side of Fleet Street.

Individual mature trees can provide surprise and delight, typified by the copper beeches at the top, western

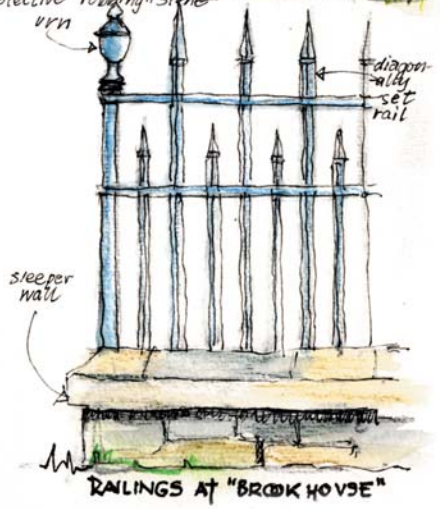
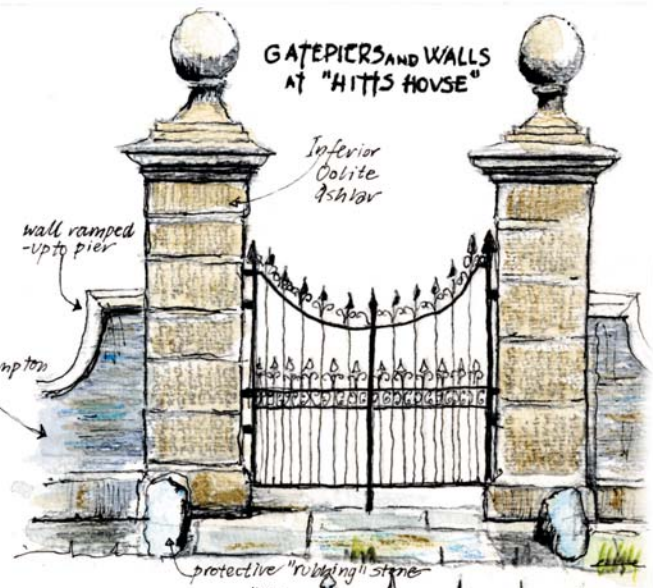
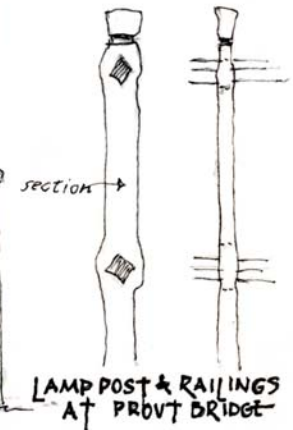
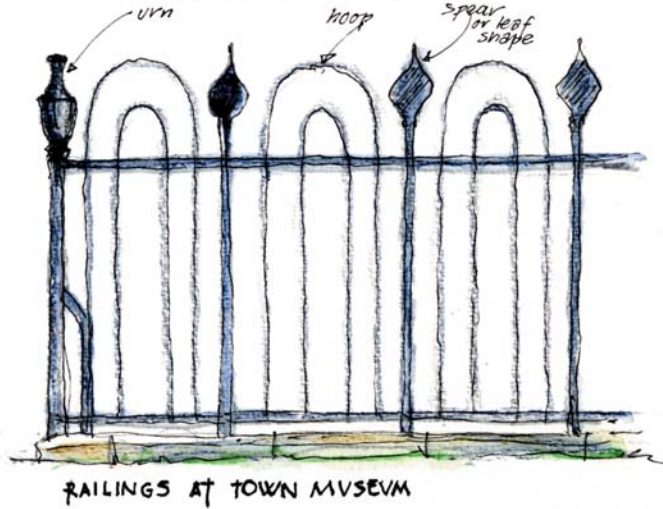
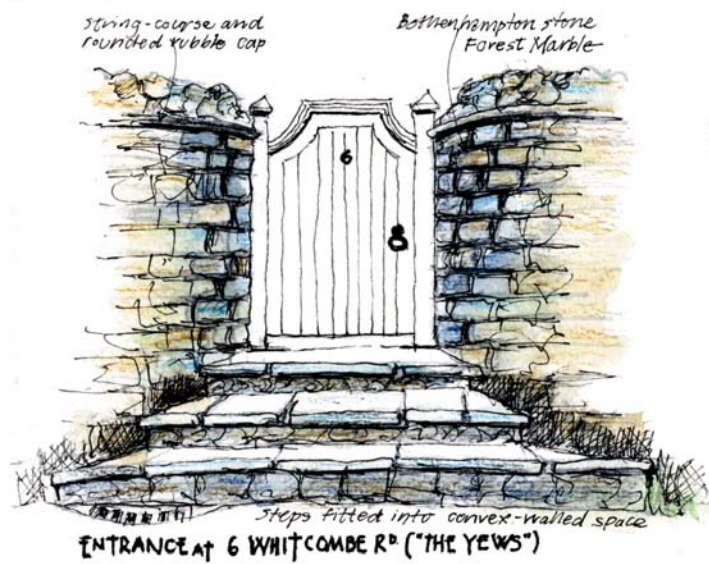


Fig.24 Trellis porch, Martock House, Clay Lane



Fig.25 Boundary walls off Whitcombe Road

Details



side of Prout Bridge; by St Mary's Cottage on Clay Lane; and at the western end of Hogshill Street, opposite Hanover Court. Several trees, ash, maple and yews, in Champions garden, project over Hogshill Street and form a dramatic feature. Champions garden is the main public space, linked to the wider Memorial Playing Field, although the link is an unworthy garage court and car park. Private gardens are a delightful prelude to the Church tower, when viewed from Hogshill Street, on the corner of Shadrack Street and from the glimpsed view by No.19. The high Yew hedge, on the frontage of Farris in Whitcombe Road, provides definition on the curving road line and the Laurel and Yew hedge along The Manor frontage adds greatly to North Street. On a humbler note is appropriate modern planting in the Yarn Barton car park and at the eastern side of The Greyhound block, both on southern Fleet Street.

The high number of Tree Preservation Orders underlines the importance of trees to the character and enjoyment of the Conservation Area.

Detrimental features

There are a number of apparent problems in the Sub-area:

- Traffic on Hogshill Street, Prout Bridge, Bridport Road and Fleet Street (the latter being particularly narrow in places); parked cars are very evident in Fleet Street, North and East Streets; there are poor quality barrier railings on the Hogshill Street/Clay lane junction;
- Poles and wires (wirescapes) on Bridport/Whitcombe Road junction, in Fleet and East Streets;
- A broken traditional finger post at the Fleet Street and Shortmoor junction;
- Unused or vacant historic buildings, potentially at risk on Whitcombe Road, Fleet Street and Hogshill Street;
- A poor quality alteration to a Listed property on a prominent corner of Whitcombe Road and East Street;
- Permitted development alterations to unlisted buildings in East Street and Hogshill Street, particularly the introduction of PVCu windows and doors and poor hard cement pointing of stonework;
- Empty former industrial premises on Fleet Street, Hogshill Street, Clay Lane and Tunnel Road (all with the benefit of planning permission for new uses or in the process of applying for such);
- The impact of Danisco Beaminster Ltd's storage tank on North Street, albeit painted in an appropriate colour, with a weak boundary wall and old garage;
- An eyesore on the corner of Bridport and Whitcombe Roads, in the form of the crudely designed sign to "Mr Motor Repair Co. Ltd.";
- The leaking away of definition on the southern side of the same junction, however the open forecourt is necessary to meet a local need;



Fig.26 Trees in Clay Lane



Fig.27 Copper beech off Prout Bridge



Fig.28 The Square with the Robinson Memorial



Fig.29 No 5 The Square with cast iron shop front

- The untidy route from Champions to the Memorial Playing Fields, past unkempt garages and a car park and the temporary pavilions of the playgroup;
- The harsh red brick rear extension to The Red Lion, on The Square, which can be seen in the ascent up Prout Bridge.

The eastern end of East Street, and the pathway to the east of Champions, both within the Conservation Area boundary, form **neutral areas**, capable of a degree of physical improvement of buildings and spaces.

Sub-area B: The Square and Fore Place

Building Uses

The Square is the commercial core of the town, with a mixture of food shops, speciality stores, offices and three public houses or restaurants. Some of the shops have 18th and 19th century shopfronts and were evidently built as residences over or behind commercial frontages. There is a bank, one former Victorian bank and one new residential infill.

The centre of The Square is cut by the A3066 on its northern side and service roads run along the southern and western frontages, to the south of the main road. Inside the circuit of roads is the Robinson Memorial, in the form of a market cross. This is surrounded by a short-stay car park, which dominates The Square visually.

Building Types and Layouts

Most of the buildings are 18th and 19th century (rebuilt after various fires), but with substantial earlier remains on the north side, behind No.9, Midland Bank, The Greyhound and 12, on the corner of North Street. All are two storeyed with or without attics, with the exception of the three storey former bank, in the SW corner. Many were built as town houses, the later ones having a symmetrical plan, with a central doorway and stacks on the gable ends. Several were built as public houses, with rear extensions and yards. The existence of a number of old shopfronts suggests commercial use over a long period.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 14 Listed Buildings in the Sub-area, one of which is Grade II*. The latter is No.9, Midland Bank, an important 17th century survivor with an 18th century frontage. Pickwicks Inn is a characterful building with pre-1781 fire details, which turns the corner well into Hogshill Street. No. 12 has similar characteristics, with a shopfront turning the corner into North Street. No.23 has canted and rounded bay shopfronts, again on a key corner position into Church Street. The 1872 former Lloyds Bank dominates the other side of the Church Street

entrance and has interesting stone carving and Italianate details. The Robinson Memorial forms a suitable centrepiece for the space (see The Square drawings, page 27).

Other Important Listed Buildings include (West side) Nos. 2&3, with refined 18th century details, shopfronts, doors etc.; (North side) Nos. 5-7 including the fine Victorian iron-framed shopfront, with original decorative spandrels, and the 17th century elements of No.8; (South side) Nos. 21 and 22, with shopfront details.

Key Unlisted Buildings are The Red Lion, which has an strong Victorian commercial character, with the remains of some decorative stonework; 15/16 and the new detached house opposite, No. 18 and 19-20 (all of group value).

The whole Square (see The Square drawings, page 27) forms a **coherent group**, including the characterful Red Lion at its eastern, Prout Hill extremity.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

The Square displays many of the same mixtures of materials described in Sub-area A, above: Inferior Oolite rubble and ashlar; Ham Stone ashlar (Robinson Memorial); some Forest Marble rubble walling; smooth render and colour-washed stone. Roofs are slate or plain tile, with stone tiles on the Robinson Memorial.

Details include stone mullioned windows, vertical sashes and horizontal casements, canted bay windows, one and two storeyed, door surrounds with pilasters and simple cornices or triglyph friezes over and many-paned bowed shopfronts (see shopfront details, page 27) and bayed fronts with vertical columns or mullions. There are eroded stone name panels on The Red Lion and Bank in a Victorian typeface on No.1. The Square has some good examples of sign writing.

There is no contribution from greenery, apart from hanging baskets and the planting at the side of The Greyhound. There are distant views of trees down Church Street and over Prout Bridge.

Detrimental Features

These include:

- The use of the central space and the southern and western pavement edges to the parked vehicle, diluting the effect of the buildings and the Robinson Memorial;
- Traffic along the busy main road and turning movements into Fleet and North Streets and the parking area;

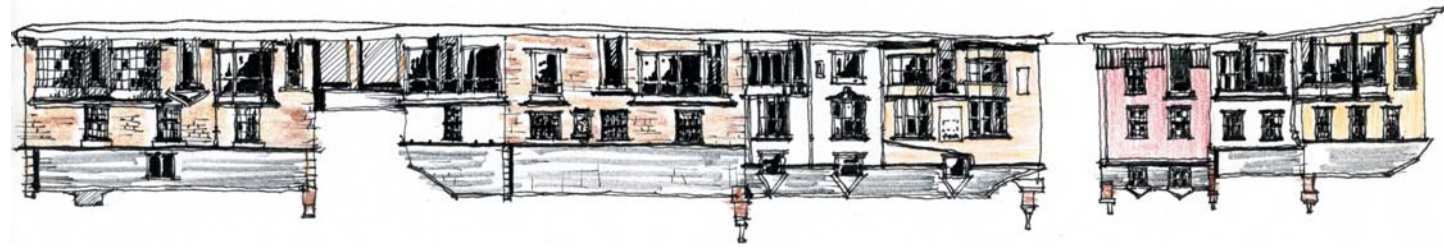
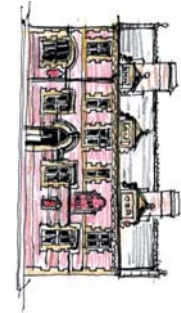
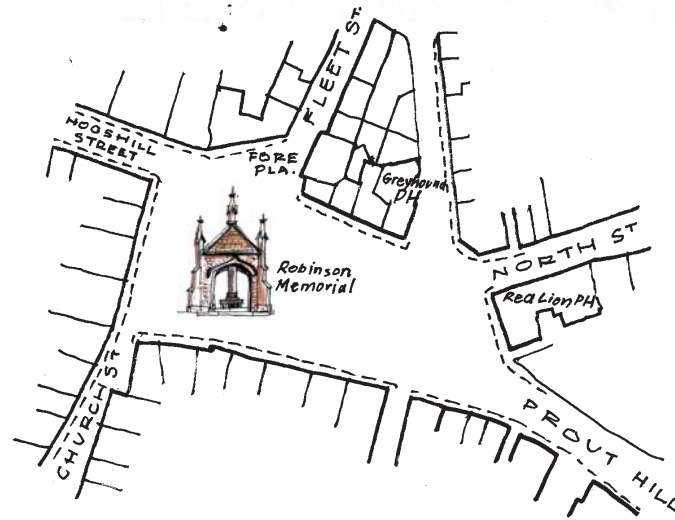
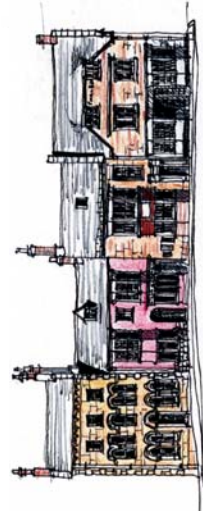


Fig.30 Corner shopfront of 12 The Square



Fig.31 Former Lloyds Bank in The Square

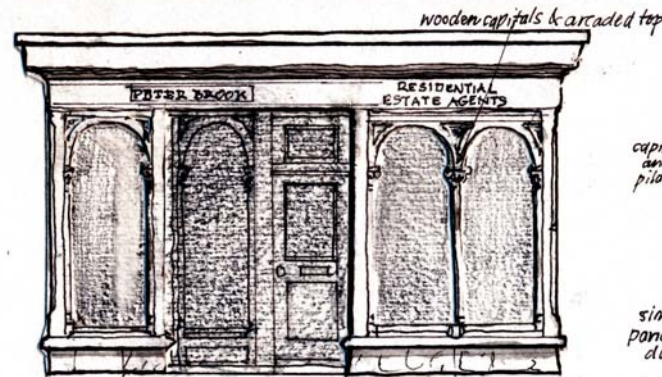
The Square, Beaminster



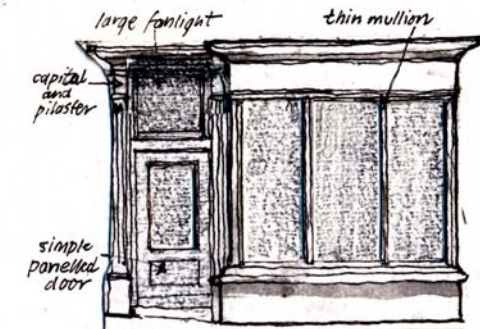
Shopfront details



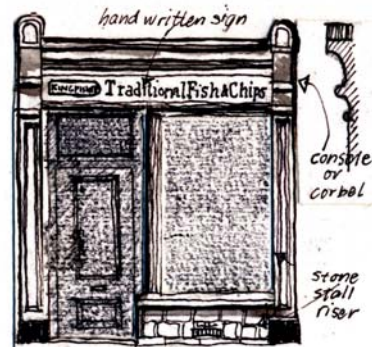
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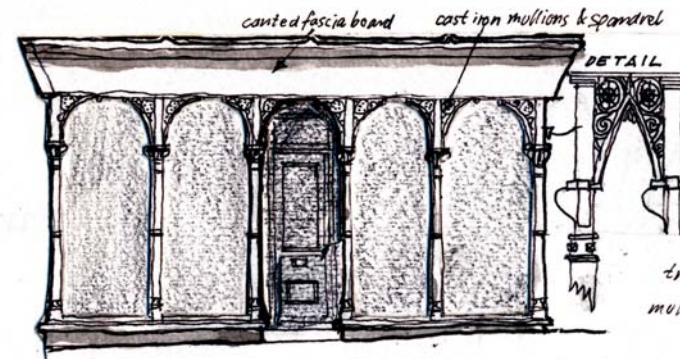
"London House", Hogshill Street



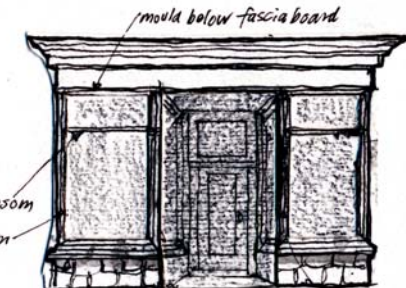
The Square



North Street



5-7 The Square



The Square

Beaminsters shopfronts

The town has a number of fine historic shopfronts, made of timber, with one elaborate cast iron example. They range from simple display windows, windows with recessed side entrances; and more elaborate central doorway and flanking window types.

Design principles

- Relates to parent building in terms of scale, materials and details;
- Moderate-sized fascia board with moulded top cornice and simpler moulding below, hand-written signs;
- Side pilasters or obvious framing; glazing divided by mullions (and, occasionally, transoms);
- Plain stone or rendered stallriser



Fig.32 Shorts Lane

- Clutter on the eastern edge of The Square, with a poorly maintained finger post and litter bin;
- The decayed stone detailing to The Red Lion and the rather run-down condition generally of the pub;
- The decayed state of the original stone inscription of No. 12 The Square.

Sub-area C: The southern area adjacent to the Parish Church

Building Uses

This large area from the Church Street and Shadrack Street entries off The Square and Hogshill Street respectively, with the long western arm of Shorts and Barnes Lanes, contains the medieval Parish Church, a community hall (the Strode Room), several shops, gentry houses and a large number of cottages. There is contemporary housing on Barnes Lane.

Building Types and Layouts

The medieval Parish Church of St Mary is a large town church, growing and rebuilding from, at least, the 13th century to the early 16th century. Associated with it, originally as a priest's house and then almshouses, is the Strode Room (a public hall).

The Sub-area consists of a mixture of gentry houses and cottages, many of which are part of informal terraced groups. The grander houses show formal planning in the form of central doors and symmetrical layout, compared to the relative informality of the humbler properties. The great majority of houses are set firmly on the road line, with no front spaces (Knowle Cottage, Shorts Lane, is an exception, with a grand boundary wall and gate piers). Most properties are two storeys, with or without attics. Two exceptions are the three storey plus cellars of 1 Church Street, which has a former storehouse attached, originally the business of chemist, Richard Hine; and the one and a half storey former smithy attached to 2 Shorts Lane.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 29 Grade II and one Grade I Listed Building in the Sub-area.

The key monument is St Mary's Parish Church, with its superlative early 16th century west tower. Its presence does much to enhance the Conservation Area and its wider setting. Its graveyard (with a group of 18th century table tombs), churchyard walls, gate piers and gates and setted approach ramp, and the adjacent Strode Room, contribute to the quality of this Sub-area. No. 6 Shorts Lane, Minster View is a fine example of a mid-18th century gentry house.



Fig.33 Wall and gate piers of Knowle Cottage

Other important Listed Buildings are 1 Church Street (warehouse elements); No.5, the former Eight Bells Inn, with 17th century elements; 5 St Mary's Well Street (attractive 17th century entrance); 2 Shorts Lane with a roof of a jointed-cruck construction; and Knowle Cottage, Shorts Lane, notable for its stone garden walls and gate piers, set-off by curving quadrant walling.

The whole of the Sub-area forms a **coherent group** of buildings, incorporating the two narrow roads off The Square and Hogshill Street, the curving lines of cottages from St Mary Well Street into the western part of Church Street to the final reverse curve of Shorts Lane, St Mary's and the raised churchyard with its trees and the garden of Knowle Cottage.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

There is a familiar mixture of Inferior Oolite ashlar and rubble, together with Ham Hill stone on St Mary's; smooth render and colour-washed stone; and some excellent brickwork (8 and 11 Church Street, 4 Shadrack Street and Minster View). The churchyard wall and Victorian Gothic gate piers and wrought iron gates are a handsome ensemble. The churchyard approach ramp is constructed of Blue Lias setts and possibly Forest Marble, which is evident in a number of boundary walls.

The roof covering of St Mary's is lead, whereas elsewhere, roofs are mainly slate and occasionally of Roman tile, pantile, plain tile and stone tile. Windows may have a dropped keystone detail on stone houses or rubbed and gauged work on brick. Windows vary from stone mullions, vertical sashes and wooden casements, with iron opening units. There are a number of attractive corniced or flat door canopies, supported by wooden or iron decorative brackets. No 4 Shadrack Street has a fanlight with intersecting, curved bars, in a semi-circular opening and Minster View has an elaborate pattern in a rectangular opening. The cast iron lamp standard in Shorts Lane is of similar design to that at Prout Bridge.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

The Sub-area is very urban in character, in that there are long runs of development along street frontages, but trees and gardens play an important role in providing contrast and interest:

- There are views of green hillsides and trees beyond the Conservation Area, south of the Church down Shadrack Street and down Church Street, from The Square;
- The waterside trees at the south end of St Mary Well Street at Hams Plot provide a strong foil to development;
- The informal gardens to houses on the west side of Shadrack Street and the more formal Yew hedge and wall to Knowle Cottage are noticeable;
- In Southgate is situated one of the entrances to the Grade II* registered park and garden of Parnham House;



Fig.34 Former Eight Bells, 5 Church Street



Fig.35 Minster View, Shorts Lane



Fig.36 St Mary Well Street looking southward



Fig.37 New garden and lift tower by the Strode Room

- The trees and shrubs on the south side of Shorts Lane and the raised churchyard and trees all provide shelter and variety;
- Strode Room's new garden (adjacent to the fine new lift tower) and the arrangement of steps up from Church Street form a pleasant little precinct; the progression up the steps and to the side of the Room provides a spectacular view of the Church tower and then a sitting-out space overlooking the newly-paved churchyard.

Detrimental Features

The Sub-area has several negative features:

- The presence of parked cars along the whole length of St Mary Well and Shadrack Streets;
- There are overhead wires and poles in Shorts Lane;
- The southern end of St Mary Well Street is somewhat untidy, with a concrete parking area, sheds, run of garage doors and the pole barrier to the watercourse;
- There are some examples of poor repair and improvements to unlisted buildings, notably the use of cement mortar in repointing and PVCu replacement doors and windows.

The south end of St Mary Well Street, at Hams Plot, is a **neutral area**, capable of improvement.

Definition of the special interest of the conservation area

From the Assessment of Special Interest (pages 6 - 30), it is possible to draw together the detailed information from the three Sub-areas to provide a short overview of the particularly important characteristics of the Conservation Area. With reference to Map 4 (page 33), the characteristics of special interest are:

- The landscape quality of the setting of the town, the backdrop of hills and woodland, particularly when viewed from the higher ground to the north and NE and from within the Conservation Area, over Church Street to the southern Powerstock Hills;
- The strong entry points or gateways into the Conservation Area, marked by roadside trees, hedge banks and walls on Bridport Road and Whitcombe Road; and on North Street, where the ramped-up stone walls and ornamental trees of the parkland around The Manor create an attractive entry, despite more modern development on the south side of the road;
- The dominance of the Church tower in a number of distant views and from within the developed area;
- The Manor's historic garden and park, Grade II on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest;
- Groups of trees and individual specimens within the Conservation Area providing a termination to views, a dramatic element in townscape progressions and a foil and contrast to groups of buildings;
- The importance of stone walls in defining road lines and providing a sense of enclosure and an occasional termination to a view; walls are often ramped to accommodate changing levels and have distinctive rounded copings and they may be combined with quadrant curved sections to panelled or finialed gate piers;
- The varying topography of the Conservation Area gives sudden raised views over parts of it and glimpses of the landmarks, notably the Church tower; the sense of expectation in ascending Prout Bridge or Church Street to The Square is rewarded by entry into a proper town market place;
- The medieval and post-medieval town plan has survived virtually complete, despite many fires, and there is a clear relationship between water courses, radial approach routes, central market place and an attached suburb related to the Church;
- The Conservation Area has over 140 Listed Buildings, in remarkably unbroken groups or ribbons: the historic building blocks survive, complete with many of their boundaries and sub-divisions and modern redevelopment has not disrupted this pattern in an overtly damaging way;
- The quality of the building stock is high, exemplified by a Grade I Parish Church with a regionally important west tower, the shell of a 17th century almshouse, a significant number of 18th and early 19th century gentry houses, public buildings including two 17th-19th century chapels and an early 20th century Institute, over one hundred cottages of a strong vernacular character and a number of fine quality Victorian buildings;
- There is a reasonably well-documented industrial archaeology, relating, in particular, to the flax, cloth and sailcloth industries and several remnants of associated structures;



Fig.38 View of Beaminster from the north



Fig.39 The Danisco Beaminster Ltd chimney is a landmark feature



Fig.40 Entrance to Hitts House, 14 Whitcombe Road

- The social and economic history of the town, notably its function as a market and a focus for business and social resort, has produced a wide range of building types and layouts;
- The local geology has bequeathed a richness and variety of building materials: two excellent Oolitic limestones, clays for plain tiles and pantiles and fine brickwork. With also smooth render, colour-washed brick and richer Victorian machine-made materials, Beaminster is a town of rich colours, golden yellows and oranges, cooler blues and greys, reds and browns and paler whites, creams and beiges;
- Local building traditions have given a notable quantity and quality of details: canted bay windows; sashes and casements; grander doorcases with columns and pilasters and humbler bracketed canopies; a wealth of 18th and early 19th century shopfronts, together with some bold Victorian examples; excellent ironwork, in the form of railings, fences, brackets, verandahs, balconies and boot-scrappers; sign writing; ramped and coped boundary walls and gate piers and setted pavings;
- There are some examples of sensitive and intelligent redevelopment and infill schemes, which reflect local traditions;
- The town has some vestige of its traditional character as a focus for the local agricultural community and for professional people, with some traditional shops and a range of specialised outlets.

Community involvement

The local community, Town Council, district councillors, Beaminster Society, Beaminster Museum and statutory authorities were consulted on the appraisal during August and September 2006. Comments received helped finalize the appraisal which was adopted by the district council in January 2007.

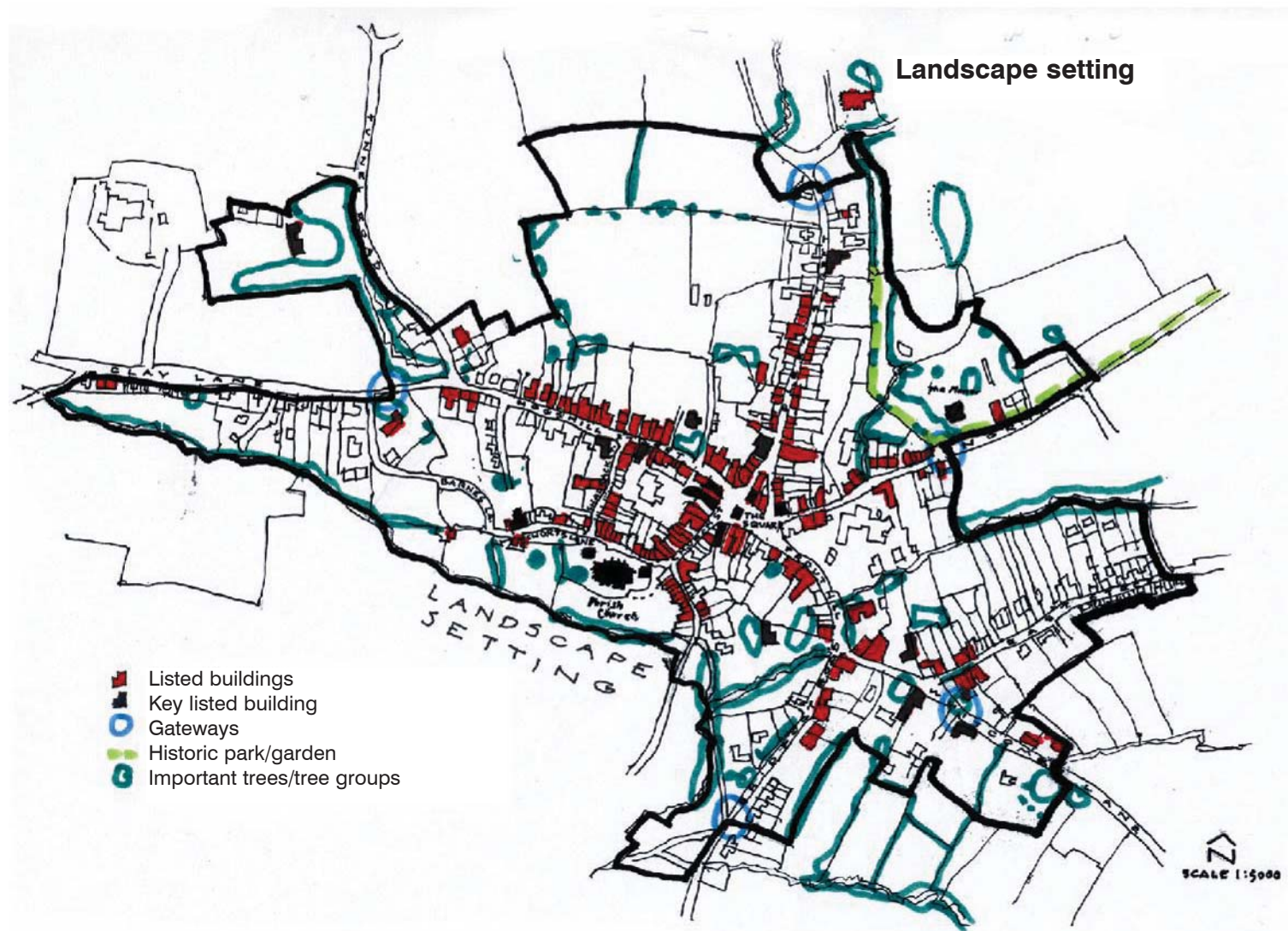
Review of the Conservation Area boundary

The existing boundary embraces the historic core and some of its immediate landscape setting. The whole area is included in the Dorset AONB and there are strong existing policies to ensure the safeguarding of landscape character. This should be sufficient to protect the features that are essential components of the Conservation Area. Other adjuncts, such as the Abbot Brown site on Fleet Street, should be improved as a result of the planning process.

There appears to be no obvious need to extend or amend the existing boundary.

The buildings and structures of the Conservation Area are, in general terms, in good to reasonable condition.

Map four: overall assets



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General condition



Fig.41 Corner of Bridport and Whitcombe Roads

There are a very few Listed Buildings that display obvious signs of neglect or structural problems, and where these exist (for example fronting Bugler's yard on Hogshill Street), there is a valid planning consent for re-use and refurbishment. No 3 East Street has been affected by the replacement of its bay and other sash windows with PVCu types. A number of unlisted buildings, which contribute to the character of the area, appear to be at risk: the former toll house in Whitcombe Road; 54-6 Fleet Street (again, included in a mixed refurbishment and new-build scheme) and The Red Lion.

There is a problem with small, piecemeal alterations to many unlisted older cottages, under Permitted Development provisions, within the Conservation Area, particularly on East Street and Clay Lane. The replacement of windows and doors by PVCu products, poor repointing and the loss of some front boundaries for car parking all erode the character of the Conservation Area.

The public realm is in reasonable condition, with the exception of the corner of Bridport and Whitcombe Roads, where a collection of poles, a poorly screened car park and petrol filling station all intrude. The poles and wires of Fleet and East Streets are detrimental.

Summary of issues and proposed actions

CONSERVATION AREA ISSUE	PROPOSED ACTION/S	LEAD PARTNER	OTHER PARTNERS
Impact of on street parking and volume & speed of through traffic on the conservation area, particularly The Square.	Traffic management & review of Parking Strategy	DCC (Highway Authority)	Town Council, WDDC (own & manage car parks in the town), Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP)
Areas and services that have a negative impact on the conservation area	Identify opportunities to enhance & support joint community projects through availability of Countryside & Conservation Grant	Utilities, WDDC	DCC, Town Council & community groups Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP)
Any unauthorized alterations to Listed Buildings	Consideration given to enforcement	WDDC	Town Council & local community to notify WDDC as necessary
Alterations to unlisted buildings	Encourage high standards as opportunity arises	WDDC	
The contribution of trees & the landscape setting to the character & appearance of the conservation area	Contribution to be perpetuated as far as possible & support suitable schemes through availability of Countryside & Conservation Grant	WDDC	Town Council, DCC
A number of unlisted buildings have architectural & historic interest	Additions to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest should be considered	WDDC	
Exchange of archaeological information	Consider how to assist the Dorset Historic Environment Record & benefit from the Dorset Historic Towns Project (Extensive Urban Study)	WDDC, DCC	English Heritage

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:

- a. The contribution of the landscape setting and trees to the conservation area to be perpetuated using all means possible;
- b. Undertake any enforcement action required;
- c. Consider additional buildings for listing: 45 Hogshill Street; The Flax Mill, 7 Whitcombe Road; 54-6 Fleet Street; Former Church School, East Street; and the chimney of Danisco Beaminster Ltd;
- d. Provide the Dorset Historic Environment Record with relevant information as available;
- e. Agree a method for the receipt of information from the Dorset Historic Towns Project (Extensive Urban Study);
- f. Small-scale improvements 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.

Advice & Guidance

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, shopfronts, alterations and extensions to listed buildings and suitable materials. Contact details are provided towards the end of the document.

Information

Criteria used for assessing the contribution made by unlisted buildings

Two basic criteria were used: the actual design characteristics, such as mass, skyline, interesting details, materials and existing or former use; and its position relative to the wider setting, individual or groups of Listed Buildings.

Contacts: WDDC, Design & Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or e-mail planning@westdorset-dc.gov.uk

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Maps

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Glossary

Apron - a panel, often with decoration, situated between a window head and window cill

Ashlar - square blocks of stone with sharp edges and a good standard of finish

Canted bay window - polygonal shape on plan having corners at an angle instead of square

Cornice (eaves) - moulding immediately under an eaves

Drip-mould - moulding acting as rainwater drip over the top of a window

Eaves - where the lowest edge of a pitched roof projects over a wall

Flemish bond - each brick course has alternate headers and stretchers

Label - drip-mould situated over a window and also extending partly down the side

Ledged and braced door - inner side with horizontal and diagonal structural timbers

Lozenge - diamond shape

Mullion - a vertical post that subdivides a window

Outshut - lean-to extension

Palladian window - a style associated with the C16 architect Palladio

Pediment (door) - a triangular feature over a main entrance

Pentice roof - a lean-to roof across a main façade

Pilaster - a non-structural pier that projects slightly from a surface

Quoin - a corner

Reveal - side of an opening in a wall

Rubbed and gauged - soft bricks rubbed into shape forming finely jointed (gauged) features

Triglyph - vertically channelled tablets found in a frieze of a Classical (Doric) style



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