



## Piddletrenthide & Piddlehinton Conservation Area Appraisal

## **Distribution list**

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

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## Introduction & Executive Summary

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

West Dorset has 79 Conservation Areas and the council has agreed on a programme of character appraisals. Piddletrenthide and Piddlehinton Conservation Areas form part of this appraisal work, grouped together because of their geographical proximity. Both Conservation Areas were designated in November 1990.

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

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

The appraisal, including initial ideas on management needs and priorities, was the subject of an eight-week public consultation (August-September 2006) during which information events were held in the villages, 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), development, historic landscape, building conservation and archaeological policies. It will also take account of the Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004 – 2009. The main part of the report focuses on the assessment of special interest of the Conservation Areas and describing:

- **Location and Setting.** Underlining the linear nature of the settlements within the Piddle Valley and the relationship of buildings to the river and the meadows that line the watercourse and to the surrounding countryside.
- **Historical Development and Archaeology.** The area is rich in field archaeology, which survives in the relatively undeveloped grassland of the flanks of the valley. The layout of the villages is related to the historic land tenure systems known as tithings.



Fig 1. Piddletrenthide

- **Spatial Analysis.** The arrangement of roads, buildings and open spaces is described and shown on plans for each village. The relationship of these factors to each other and to the wider rural setting is critical to the quality of the conservation areas. There are several distinct character areas in Piddletrenthide while there is a more localised focus of interest in Piddlehinton.
- **Character analysis.** Each Conservation Area is analysed to identify the building types and land uses, the key buildings both listed and unlisted and the materials and details used in their construction. There is a rich and varied collection of walling stones and roofing materials, most with a local origin and built in a traditional way. The bed of the river Piddle, the crossings over it and the water meadows that lie on its bank make a positive contribution to the character and charm of both villages, while specimen trees and clumps of woodland provide interest and beauty in both villages. These are shown in graphic form. Detrimental features are also identified and described. These elements are brought together in a summary of overall special interest of both Conservation Areas, particularly the listed buildings, the landscape setting, the local materials and traditional detailing and the quality of the response of new development within this context.

The general condition of the building stock is good while the landscape setting is of a high quality within the boundaries of the Conservation Areas. The setting of the villages is marred in parts by post war buildings located in unsympathetic locations. In an overall **Summary of issues** the main points that need further attention are identified.

The report then concludes with recommendations for management action consisting of monitoring, practical advice for repair and improvement of property and suggestions for improvement works to the environment. All of these actions are then summarised into management proposals for the local authorities, land and property owners and the local community to consider.

## Planning Policy Context

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

- *Safeguarding Assets*, Policy SA1 seeks to protect the natural beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); development must be in keeping with the landscape character of the area (SA3); protection is given to areas of Land of Local Landscape Importance (SA6); Policy SA10 seeks to protect Sites of Nature Conservation Interest; SA18, 19 and 20 cover the demolition, alterations to, and the settings of Listed Buildings; SA21 seeks to protect the character or appearance of Conservation Areas; SA22 is concerned with demolition within a Conservation Area; and SA23 relates to the protection of sites of national archaeological significance.
- *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 and individual Inset Maps for each village may show sites for specific uses;
- *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 the Survey 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.

Piddle Valley Group Parish and the local community have produced the **Piddle Valley Village Design Statement**, which was adopted by the district council as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in 2004.

The West Dorset District Local Plan, West Dorset 2000 and Piddle Valley Village Design Statement 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](http://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](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)



Fig 2. Piddlehinton

## Piddletrenthide

### Assessment of Special Interest

#### Location and Setting

Piddletrenthide is located about 7 miles north of Dorchester in the valley of the River Piddle which is a shallow chalk stream never more than about three metres wide flowing southwards to the coast. A minor road B3143 without footways passes through the village serving the local settlements. The village lies at about 95 metres above sea level and the hills, which form parallel ridges at the edge of the valley rarely rise above 170 metres. The landscape here is shaped by chalk and produces a steeper slope to the east of the village than on the western side where gentle swales slope down from College Down towards the settlement. These dry valleys are broad on the west side and generally the topography becomes more open to the south. At the northern end of Piddletrenthide, the valley is incised with a great deal of tree cover that overshadows the village in winter and casts the setting into shade.

The conservation area is set within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is drawn around the village without straying too far into the landscape. Similarly development is mostly restricted to within the 110 metre contour line along the river valley while also paying respect to the river and its meadows so that for much of the length of the village there is a swathe of open space along the axis of the valley. The visitor passing through will find that much of the interest of the village is found by turning down one of the side roads which act as rungs in the ladder shape of Piddletrenthide.

#### Historical Development and Archaeology

The chalk grasslands on the hills have revealed several sites of interest dating from Celtic, Roman and Medieval times. There are 17 Ancient Monuments registered within the Parish although these are all located outside the conservation area on the downland and hillside edges above the valley.

Long before the Norman Conquest, the parish of Piddletrenthide was laid out as three land units (tithings) contained within the Parish boundary, and divided from each by continuous hedge lines running from roughly east to west. The units (see fig 4) are still known as Upper Tithing and Middle Tithing (Piddletrenthide) and Lower Tithing (White Lackington). Each tithing was divided into hides, in Saxon times about 120 acres, and by 1086, Domesday Book records the existence of Piddletrenthide as comprising 30 hides from which the village gets the *trenthide* part of its name. In the Upper Tithing is situated Piddletrenthide's parish church and manor house and in its Middle Tithing a further group of old properties. These two areas of settlement, three including White Lackington, at the centre of their tithings with their own field systems are, along with the tithing boundaries, identifiable today. As Piddletrenthide only has a conservation area, it is the Upper and Middle Tithings that are appraised in more detail.

Hyde Abbey (Winchester) owned Piddletrenthide until the Dissolution, when in 1543, Henry VIII granted Piddletrenthide to Winchester College who remained the principal owner of the village until its sale in the 1950s. Winchester College holds an important archive.

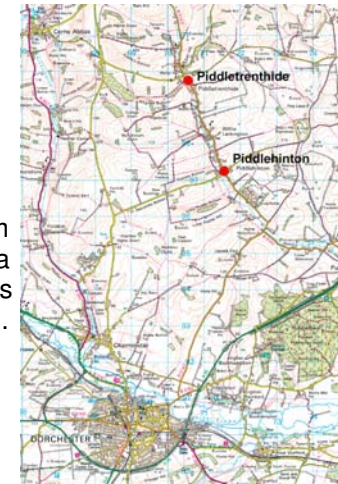


Fig 3. Location map  
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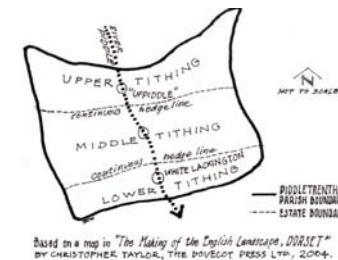


Fig 4. Tithings based on a map by Christopher Taylor (2004)

## Spatial and Character Analysis

The division of the Parish into tithings has left a distinct pattern of development in Piddletrenthide. It is possible to divide the village up into five separate areas.

- The Church
- The river and watermeadows
- The Manor
- The village street
- Smith's Lane

**The Church** is the dominant building in the picturesque group at the northern end of the village. Coming into this area from the B3143 the lane drops down past several two storey thatched cottages and then climbs gently to the All Saints Church on raised ground at the northwest corner of the village with only fields beyond. Buildings are arranged irregularly on a variety of levels which is in marked contrast to the rest of the village where floor levels are very consistent. The road is soft edged for the most part with gardens flanking the lane and grass banks, hedges and walls comprising about 80% of the boundaries especially around the bend between Mill Cottage and the Barn. There are several fine individual trees scattered among the dwellings, six of which have preservation orders on them. There is a particularly fine group of beech around the Old Rectory and another stand of three mature trees, ash, willow and sycamore lining the river behind Mill Cottage.

**The river** dominates the space visually not by its intrinsic appearance but by the fact that it has a small flood plain alongside it that is clear of buildings. Broad views into the space are more common from the west than from the east where the boundaries alongside the road give a harder edge and also impede a clear view of the valley normally allowing only glimpses with more open views becoming common further north from the B3143. On the eastern edge several large house and farms such as the C17 Southcombe Farm have been built at a later date than the foundation of the original tithing plots found at Smiths Lane and around the Church. Harder edges exist along the eastern side principally because of the route of the B3143 whereas this does not pertain along the western edge where a track runs north south for at least 900 metres. This track, which appears to be long standing with ancient hedges alongside it, is a public right of way and affords views into the water meadows and westwards into the open countryside. The vegetation along the river consists of a mixture of single mature trees and brush that help to define the route of the watercourse.

Some development has crept along this lane at its northern end and created a more open form with less enclosure than around the Church. This fragmented and loose form of open space allows the lane to become very broad at this point and it loses some visual interest as a result.

**The Manor House** was built in the late C18 and underwent extension and alteration in 1832. It is a set piece, exhibiting the characteristics of the small genteel country house with lodge, stables and ornamental water features set behind a high stone wall with imposing gated entrance. The House is orientated towards the east looking outwards towards the broad combe on the other side of the road. Set within this valley are other ancillary buildings designed for the country estate, such as a dovecote and belvedere. Views to and from the house are equally striking and clearly planned in the C18. Planting is quite formal around the Manor with a line of sycamore trees along the western boundary covered by a Tree Preservation Order.



Fig 5. View of the church from Church Lane



Fig 6. View of water meadows from the bridleway



Closer to the Manor House in a formal grouping are copper beech and limes. There is also an area order on a hedge line of mature beeches running west- east which could be the expression of a hedge line established to mark medieval boundaries between the tithings.

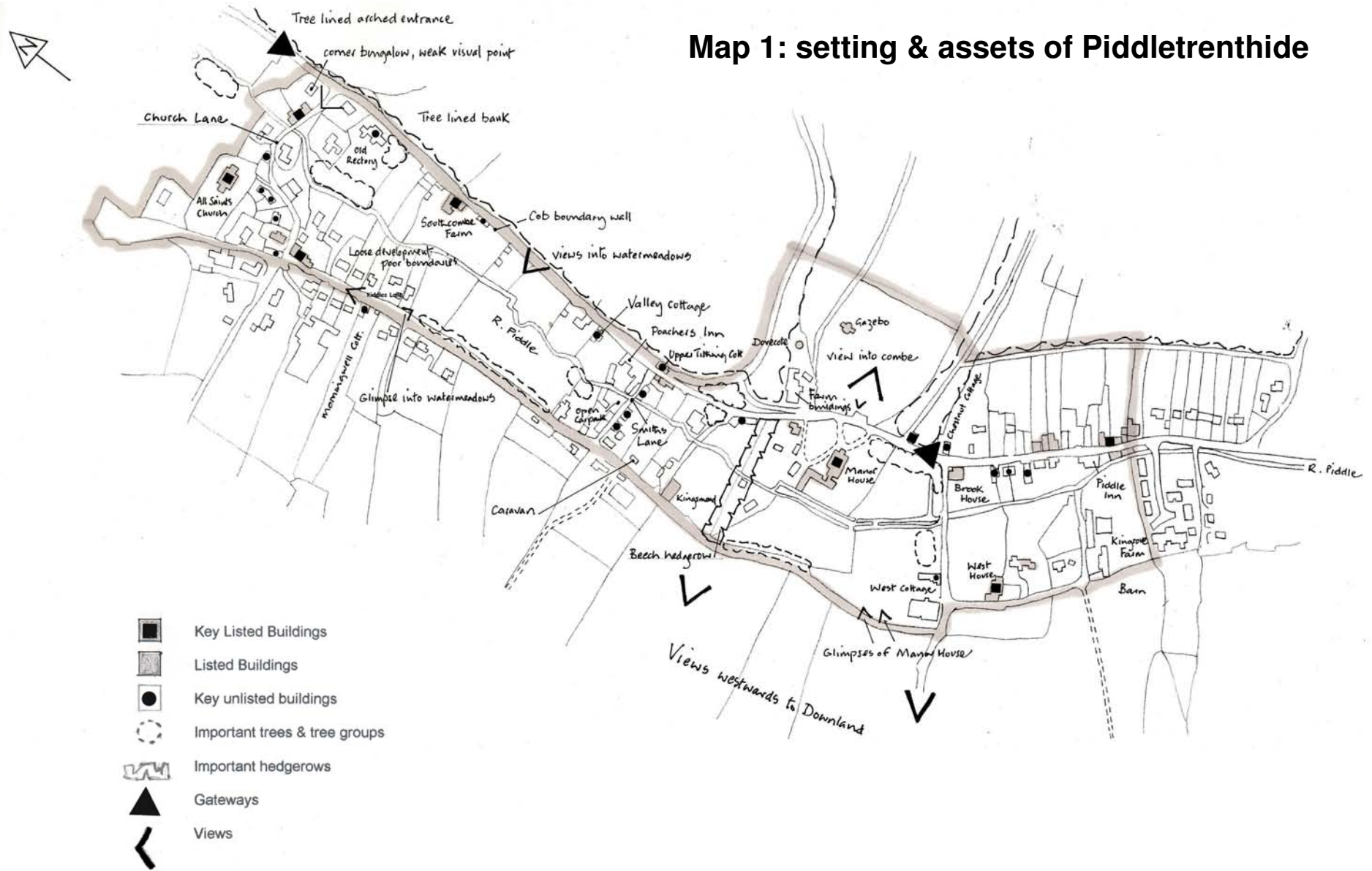
**The Village Street** is the functional centre of Piddletrenthide. It is the area with the shops and services set close up to the road and characterised by mostly two storey buildings. There are a variety of building styles and the majority of the houses are post C17. The earlier houses tend to have been built with their eaves running parallel to the road while the more modern C19 houses tend to be bigger, higher and present gables to the highway. Small spaces at the fronts of buildings provide some articulation to the street scene, but adjacent to Yew Tree House, where there is a vehicle waiting bay, the articulation is excessive. On the eastern side of the B3143, houses stand in long rectilinear individual plots rising slightly uphill to a lane that runs behind. This pattern tends to break down north of the garage and workshop and becomes more diffuse where the plot form changes and modern houses are set back further from the road.



Fig 7. Village Street

**Smiths Lane** is a short cul de sac with a few cottages built tight to the road edge but arranged in a loose pattern with spaces in between suggesting large gardens. The buildings are mostly two storey with eaves running parallel to the lane. This pattern is disrupted by the presence of the Poachers Inn at the northeast corner of the lane. The Inn is a high building of considerable mass with a large expanse of roof covering and it also has several extensions and wings added at the rear. The car park is extensive and open and adversely affects the street's continuity and enclosure.

Map 1: setting & assets of Piddletrenthide



## Character Analysis

Map 1 (setting and assets) identifies main features that contribute to the conservation area, including listed and unlisted buildings, open spaces, views, watercourses, landscape features and trees.

### Land and Building Uses

Piddletrenthide is a rural settlement and the conservation area is characterised by houses set among gardens and small paddocks. Outside the settlement, on the valley slopes, there are large fields of mostly pasture.

The village has a small collection of shops, two public houses, a memorial hall and other small-scale services most of which are located in the village street. A new school is located at the southern end of the village. Farming is now carried out by a minority living in Piddletrenthide but much of the original housing stock in the village was originally occupied by farm labourers, mill workers and associated trades to facilitate the rural economy. This has resulted in a legacy of small single room depth houses that predominate the conservation area.

Two or three farms survive within the built up area but many farmhouses and their outbuildings have no agricultural connection and some of the barns have been converted to dwellings, for example, The Barn (Bruins) in Church Lane.

The river once provided water for the powering of mills within the valley. A building known as Mill House stands to the north of the Manor and was once a working mill with a leat (now obliterated). There is also Mill Cottage near the Church, which stands close to the old Upper Tithing Mill that operated as a grist mill until the 1930s.

### Building Types and Form

The Parish Church of All Saints is prominent at the northern end of the village. With parts dating back to the C12, the otherwise C15 church, underwent alteration in the 1880s. It is roofed in lead and slate and built of ashlar limestone from Marnhull and Ham Hill with some flint banding. It has a fine square tower, which is a focal point from Church Lane and Egypt.

The Manor House was built in the late C18, possibly on an earlier foundation. It has been built of stone with a render coating and ashlar dressings. It has a formal setting with a gated entrance, well-built stone boundary walls and subsidiary buildings. It is also aligned to take advantage of views into the landscape beyond.

Elsewhere the houses are simpler, smaller and for the most part made of locally sourced materials. Typically, these early pre C19 houses were one room deep and were built of flint and rubble with cob occasionally forming the upper half of the walling. Cob is a term for a mixture of straw and clay and possibly manure used in blocks to walling. It needs protection from the weather and is often associated with a broad eaves overhang provided by thatch. Similarly cob walls will often be concealed under render, roughcast and paint to give it some protection from rain and frost. Thatch is found on fifteen buildings in the conservation area while slates and plain clay tiles are found sporadically, with a small number of buildings roofed with double and triple Roman clay tiles. Thatch is a traditional Dorset material and is well represented in Piddletrenthide. The local style uses combed wheat reed that gives a rounded smooth profile when laid. This is in contrast to the harder lines and sharper edges of water reed.



Fig 8. A farm building in Church Lane



Fig 9. The Manor House

Throughout the conservation area, there are larger, polite (clearly designed) houses set in landscaped grounds, and although made of similar local materials, often show grander schemes of fenestration. Good examples are seen in Kingsmead, West House, The Granary and West Cottage.

The fragmented layout of Piddletrenthide is tied together and given some unity by the boundary walls that flank the roads and lanes running through the village. These are typically constructed of flint at the base and then topped with either cob or bricks and rubble stone with flint banding. Walls like these are found in the lane leading to Cerne Abbas and alongside the B3143 between Southcombe Farm and Apple Tree Cottage.

**Architectural details**

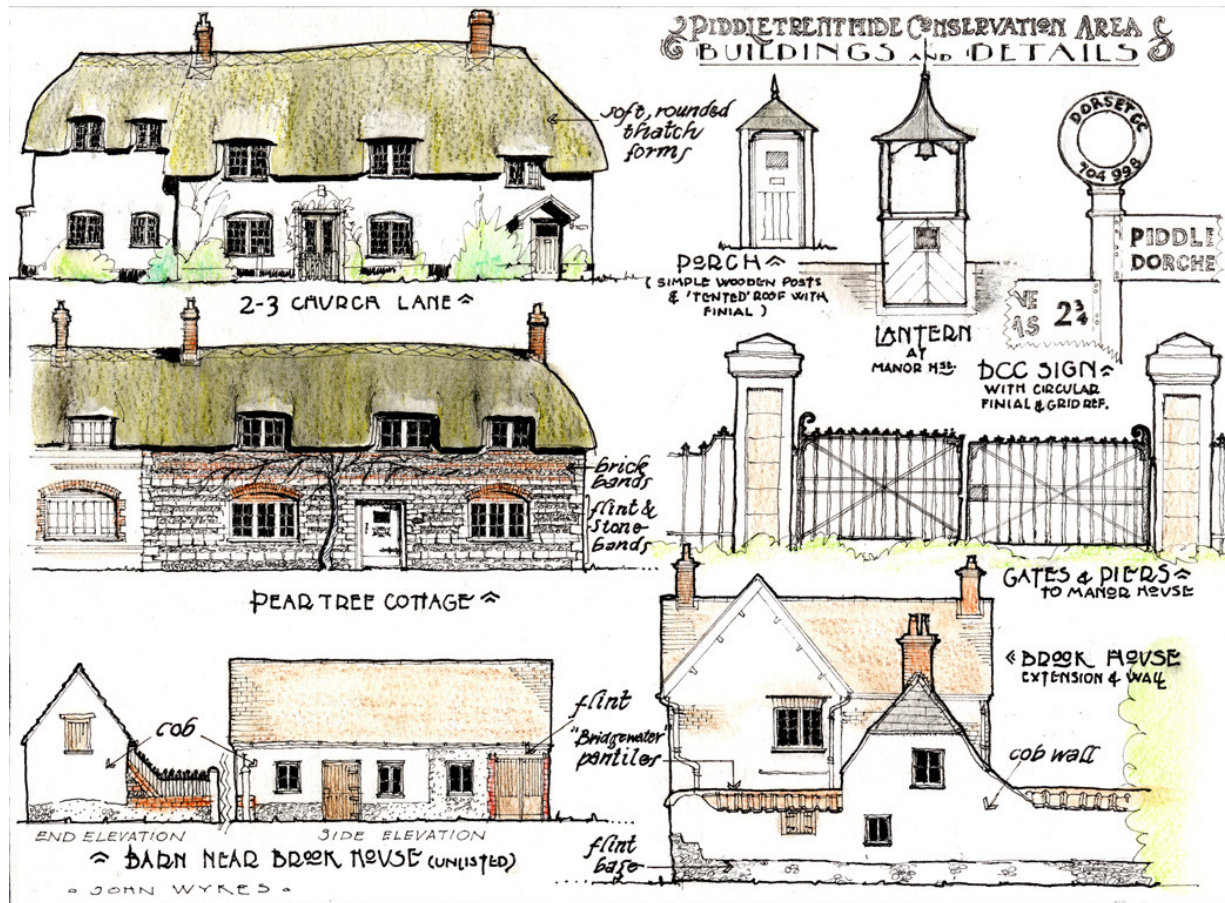


Fig 10. Architectural details

Thatch roofing is the traditional material used in the Piddle Valley and once covered most of the buildings in the village. Today the houses roofed with thatch, represent about 20% of the total number of buildings in the conservation area. Combed wheat reed is the most typical thatch and is characterised by its rounded profile when laid and the simple details of decoration that are applied to it. It is seen to best effect on part of Southcombe Farm, Aberford and Primrose Cottages and Kiddles House.

Thatch has given way to other traditional materials such as clay tiles and natural slates often after a fire. Plain tiles are laid on the roofs of West House and some C19 properties in the village street while the farm building by the Barn (Bruins) has triple Roman clay tiles. Slate has been used on several C19 buildings such the Old Rectory and Valley Cottage. Increasingly, unsympathetic materials, for example, concrete tiles and artificial slates have been used for new buildings and repair work.

The walls of the simplest houses are built of a mixture of flint and red bricks for the most part, with some residual cob as at the Linhay at the junction of Church Lane and the bridleway. The Manor House is built of dressed stone while the West House is constructed of a mellow brick in Flemish bond. Brook House is built entirely of brick and has a slate roof, a good example of an early C19 building of some stature. Where large blocks of grey limestone are used for walling, this is usually Lower Purbeck stone from Portesham and Charlbury near Weymouth.

Windows details comprise the simple timber casement with sashes on the grander houses. The stone surrounded mullion and transom window is largely confined to the Manor House. There has been some replacement of casements in plastic.

Doors are simple in most houses and cottages, usually of ledged and braced plank construction, while those in buildings of some pretension have raised and fielded panels.

Ironwork is limited to a few examples in the village because boundaries are very natural. The Manor House has ornate gates and piers and the churchyard has a set of railings.

### Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are thirty-one listed buildings in the village of which twenty are within the conservation area. The Church is Grade I. The Manor House, with its attendant buildings and boundary walls is also significant as a Grade II\* listed building. There is a small group of large C18 houses such as Kingsmead, West House and Granary. The bulk of the listed buildings are houses and cottages, dating for the most part from the late C17 and C18 that display traditional materials and remain largely unaltered.

- All Saints Church, dating from the C12, although largely C15 fabric, with slate roof, banded flint, ashlar and squared rubble walls and restored in C19;
- The Barn (Bruins), Church Street, C17 with cob upper walls over banded flint and rubble, thatched roof;
- West House, west range probably C17 with banded flint, rubble and brick, plain tile roof, sash windows and high quality interior;
- 3, Church Lane, late C18 cottage, rendered colour washed with thatch roof;
- Hodgecliff Cottage, early C18 cottage, banded flint and rubble below, render above, wheat reed roof;
- Kiddles House (formerly Kiddles Farm), C17 rendered and whitewashed house with thatch, irregular windows and original internal features;



Fig 11. All Saints Church



Fig 12. Hodgecliff Cottage

- Kingsmead, C18 house, banded flint and brick, plain tiled roof, sash windows with gauged brick heads;
- 2, Church Lane, cottage dated 1770 render with thatch roof, 2 light casements with glazing bars;
- Granary, late C18, brick walls with plain tile roof. Arcaded walls, now used as dwelling;
- 1, 2 and 3 Bakers Row, now two simple houses included for group value;
- East House, early C19 house, rendered with shallow pitch slate roof;
- Pear Tree Cottage, picturesque C16 house (possibly earlier), remodelled in C19, casement windows and stone fireplace, a good example of the use of local materials;
- Middle Thatch, banded brick and flint, thatch with brick stacks;
- Ivy House, early C19 house, rendered with hipped slate roof. Sashes with glazing bars;
- Crown House, mid C18 cottage, rendered with thatch roof, 2 light casements;
- Manor House, late C18 country house, render with ashlar details, hipped slate roof, sash windows, ornate stone steps and entrance gates;
- Stables and outbuildings to Manor, C17 in origin, remodelled in C19, brick and flint banding, brick dressings, hipped slate roof, wooden bellcote and lead tent roof;
- Manor Lodge, mid C19 lodge in same style as stables, Octagonal plan;
- Dovecote, early C18, lower courses in flint and brick, render above, lantern roof with lead;
- Gazebo, early C19 with rendered walls on brick podium; pitched slate roof, terrace on podium with railings;
- Higher Tithing Cottage, C18 cottage, rendered with thatched roof, casement windows;
- Southcombe Farm, house with C17 wing and mid C18 range, casements with some leaded lights, flint and rubble banded walls, brick dressings, part slate roof and rest thatched, good example of use of local materials.



Fig 13. 2 Church Lane

### Key Unlisted Buildings and Structures

There are several buildings and walls that make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

In the Church Lane area, there are a group of cottages that flank the raised ground on which the Church stands. These are

- Mill Cottage, small C18 cottage with slate roof over flint and rendered cob;
- Morning Well Cottage, C18 in Egypt;
- Farm building adjacent to The Barn (Bruins) that has a triple roman clay roof over cob and flint plinth.

On the main road stands The Old Vicarage, which is a C19 Gothic rendered house with slate roof and ashlar dressings set in grounds with mature trees. Further south beyond Southcombe Farm stands the thatched Southcombe Cottage with an attached cob wall, which defines the boundary to the road.

Unlisted buildings line Smith's Lane appear to have been altered to some extent, none more so than the converted former Malthouse, which has several inserted roof windows. Lining the south side of the lane are three cottages, all of which may once have been thatched judging by the steep roof pitch, but two of the cottages have plain tile or slate roofs. They are all rendered and retain timber windows in their original positions. None of these properties warrant listing because of their alterations, but they do possess a group value, and the removal of any would have a detrimental effect on the conservation area.

The Village Street has seen a lot of development in the early C20 with much alteration to commercial buildings. The village memorial hall is of interest and is built of brick with ornate ashlar dressings and a slate roof. Alongside it is a pair of bungalows called Winchester Cottage and Waterfall Knook built in a similar but simpler style to the hall. Beyond the bungalows is a simple rustic barn that is made of cob and flint with brick dressings and a plain tile roof. This building is in some disrepair but does make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The thatched Chestnut Cottage stands at the northern end of the village street and makes a positive contribution as the view opens out.

In Cerne Hill, West Cottage is an early C19 small country house with a plain tile roof, rendered walls and timber French windows in bays. Ornate grounds are enclosed within a high boundary wall. Opposite this house stands a fine cob wall that is about eight feet high, forming part of the boundary to West House that is listed Grade II.

### Key Views and Vistas

Nowhere are the surrounding hills high enough to obtain a panorama of the entire village, instead views are compartmentalised in discrete locations. The view into Church Lane is important, with the parish church as the focal point, while this building is also seen occasionally in long views along the track that borders the western side of the village. This route also allows glimpses into the water meadows and outwards onto the downland. It is also possible to look into the back of the Manor House from this track, while the front of the Manor House is also a focal point for both the prospect and aspect into the combe leading to the east.

Smiths Lane and Cerne Hill are very different in character, one being fragmented by buildings with the latter lined by hard boundary walls. They both invite views along their length as they have important “stops” to the view at their eastern end.

### Parks Gardens and Trees

Piddletrenthide is overlooked by trees, particularly on the eastern slopes, and also has significant groups of trees within the village. The finest specimens are found around the Manor House where there are groups of beeches and specimen parkland trees, many of them protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The tree canopies frame the views along the B3143, where in the summer months, they create an arch across the road. Mature beech is also found throughout the village and there are attractive groups running east-west across the village near Cerne Hill and to the north of Mill House. A natural cover of trees and scrub, characteristic of a streambed and an extremely valuable habitat, mark the course of the river.

The land that lies next to the river is part rough pasture and part large extensive gardens. In either case, it contributes to the open nature of the valley and gives it considerable visual interest and quality.



Fig 14. Cerne Hill



Fig 15. Parkland trees east of the Manor House

### **Detrimental Features**

Are as follows:

- Wirescape, particularly in Church Lane;
- Poachers Inn car park;
- Barn at Kingrove Farm, originally a large cruciform flint and cob building which has been repaired in concrete blocks and now appears rundown, but could be repaired;
- Lack of appreciation of the river and ford by the Piddle Inn;
- Loss of traditional details due to windows replacement and change of thatch in unlisted buildings;
- Weak townscape between Garage and Hodgecliff Cottage;
- Lack of enclosure and solid boundaries at north end of lane between Brookside and Kiddles House;
- Little cob barn on B3143 next to Waterfall Knook that may be falling into disrepair;
- Derelict caravan at west end of Smiths Lane.

### **Definition of Special Interest of the Conservation Area**

From the analysis carried out above, it is possible to specify the important characteristics that define the conservation area:

- The landscape setting of the village within the river valley and the slopes leading down from the downland to the east and west.
- The strong gateway into the conservation area from the north which is marked by mature trees along the roadside, within the grounds of houses and the steep bank forming the eastern boundary.
- The importance of the river valley flowing the whole length of the conservation area and determining the land use at the core of the village.
- The collection of fine specimen trees, predominantly beech throughout the conservation area, which are important in framing views in the village.
- The survival of the medieval tithing land tenure system, which is reflected in the location of development.
- There are twenty listed buildings in the conservation area in small groups throughout the village, with the Church and the Manor of major significance. There are a number of large houses with fine details and one early farmstead that illustrates an excellent use of local materials and high levels of craftsmanship.
- The quality of properties and condition of the stock is fairly high with several buildings that are positive assets to the conservation area and may be considered for listing.
- There are good examples of the use of local and traditional materials such as limestone used as rubble and ashlar, brick, flint and cob, with thatch also being used for roofing on vernacular cottages.
- The boundaries to properties are frequently made of cob and these define several important spaces such as the route along the B3143 at the northern end of the village and in Cerne Hill.
- Kiddles Lane, the public right of way running along the western side of the village, turning east at Kingrove Farm (local name Kiddles Farm) and then continuing alongside the River Piddle is an asset to the conservation area, allowing movement and visual experiences throughout the village



## Piddlehinton

### Assessment of Special Interest

#### Location and Setting

Piddlehinton is about a mile south of Piddletrenthide, part of a string of small settlements located in the Piddle valley. The valley has become slightly broader at this point, but is an asymmetric shape with the eastern slope being steeper than the gentler western side. The upper parts of the downland are largely treeless, while the valley has considerable stands of mature trees on the lower slopes and along the route of the river. The valley becomes more open and broad towards the south and the valley sides become less pronounced.

The B3143 runs through the village on a north-south axis and is set slightly on a bench above the river valley. The bulk of development is located to the west of the road at or below the 100 metre contour line.

The conservation area lies in the centre of village extending westwards from the crossroads of the B3143 and the lane to Charlton Down. It was designated on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1990. The village lies within the Dorset Area of Outstanding natural Beauty (AONB).

#### Historical Development and Archaeology

Like Piddletrenthide the village developed along the river valley and had several small mills that relied on waterpower. It is long established, being mentioned in the Domesday book, and was a gift to Eton College in 1440 by King Henry VI. By 1620, the population of the village was 216 and there were 32 farms, whereas by 1841 following the Enclosure Act of 1835 the census only records six farms but with a population of 394. The farms were consolidated and villagers were no longer able to exercise their commoner's rights and became labourers or left the countryside for urban employment.

To the south of Piddlehinton lies the site of the deserted village of Little Puddle, which was largely abandoned by 1539. There is also recent evidence of medieval field systems but most have been ploughed out now, while there are nine round barrows near the village but none within the conservation area.

The village grew up along the road and drove routes that crossed it in an east-west direction. Originally most of the buildings were thatched but several were lost in two significant fires of 1925 and 1933. However, the linear pattern of development has survived intact although now augmented by post-war housing development at Paynes Close and London Close, which are both on prominent higher land on the hillsides.



Fig 16. Location map  
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## Spatial and Character Analysis

The conservation area is largely drawn around the main crossroads of the village and an extension westwards along Rectory Road. There is also a small area around the Coach House and No 10 High Street, which are two large buildings made of brick and flint with slate roofs and enclosed within high stone walls.

### High Street

The road through the village is lined tightly on its western side by buildings and walls. There is no garden land between the houses and the road and the buildings are orientated with eaves parallel to the highway. The wall surrounding the parish church gives way to the solid flank of the village hall, while on the eastern side of the road, a terrace of four unlisted cottages make a hard visual boundary to the view from the south. Going north beyond the crossroads, there is solid boundary on the west side but the eastern edge is more diffuse, defined by scrub and coppice on a high bank.

Turning right at the crossroads into London Row, the space is defined by high hedges on both sides making it difficult to see the group of listed cottages.

### Rectory Road

The most visually interesting area is Rectory Road, which descends from the B3143 and creates two spaces linked by the bridge across the River Piddle. The road then rises after 200 yards and starts to rise again to climb onto the downland. This space is less rigidly defined than the High Street and has soft margins of grass banks and garden stretching onto the edge of the highway. In between the two storey buildings, that often have eaves parallel to the road and line the road, are gaps formed by garage spaces, back yards and courtyards.

The eastern space is bounded by eight properties, including the village hall, and is overshadowed by the parish church, which is glimpsed over houses and through the spaces between them. The highway is quite broad at the east end and narrows at the bridge, which creates a physical and visual pinch point. Beyond the bridge, the eye is drawn along the straight road and up onto the down where it disappears over the horizon into open countryside. The space is contained on the north side by a fragmented terrace of buildings, but on the south, the view is contained by a series of high walls and the occasional building.

Looking east along Rectory Road, the views are contained by two separate buildings. The first is Denches Cottages, built on the riverbank, and forming an interesting vista near the bridge, and beyond them, the thatched and rendered Church Cottage that closes the view at the crossroads.

Close to the crossroads stands the War Memorial on a grassed island, together with a water pump and a commemorative tree. The area is protected by timber bollards and lined with highway markings. This part of the village is congested with cars parking outside the village hall, but the accumulation of highway paraphernalia produces a cluttered appearance at an important location in the conservation area.

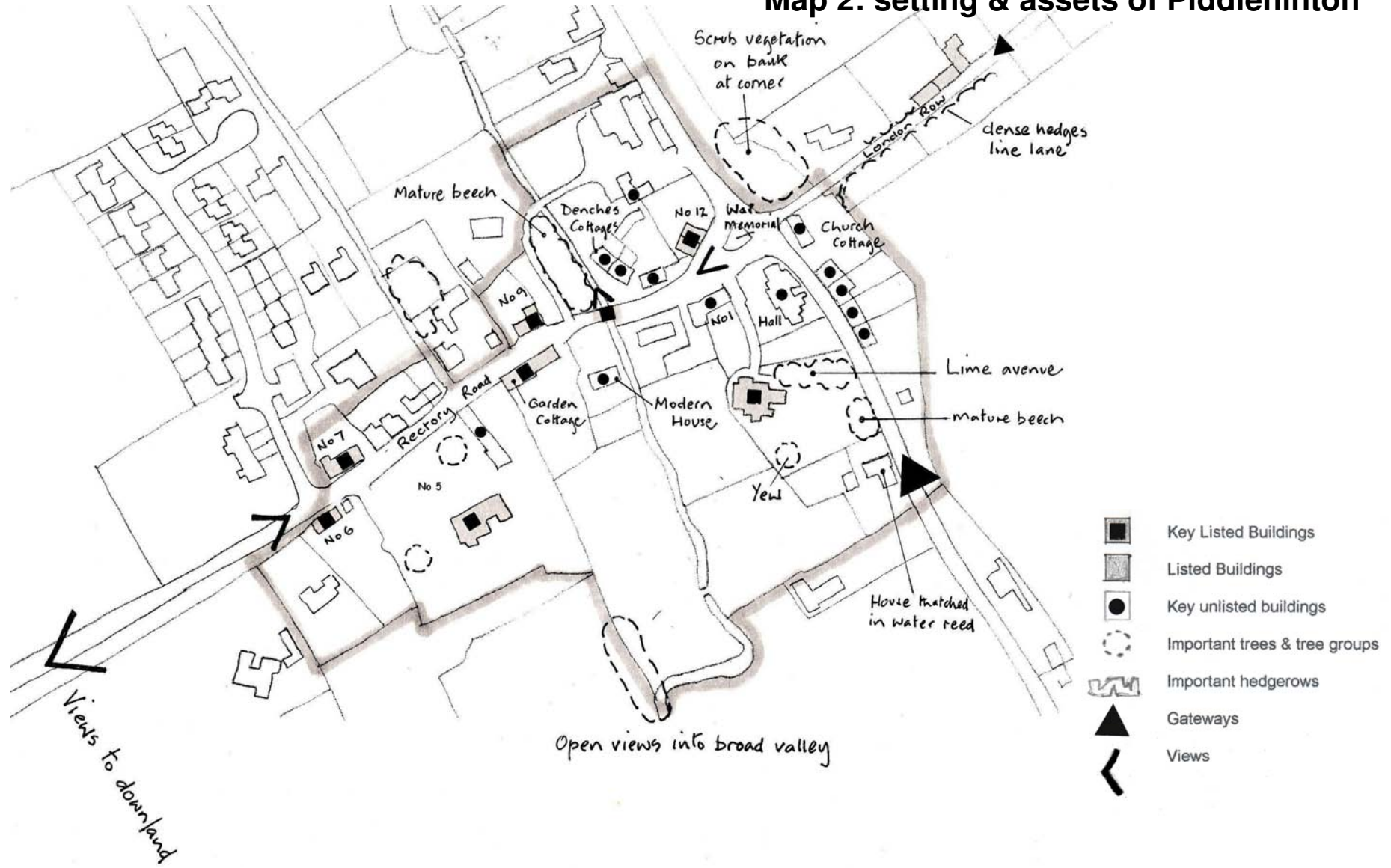


Fig 17. London Row



Fig 18. View down Rectory Road towards the village crossroads

### Map 2: setting & assets of Piddlehinton



## Character Analysis

The character is analysed and summarised in Map 2 (setting and assets) and shows important buildings, both listed and unlisted and the contribution made by trees, open spaces and views. Local materials and traditional details are described while a note is made of elements that detract from the character and visual quality of the conservation area.

### Land and Building Uses

Piddlehinton is a small village with an open structure of houses and cottages set in garden spaces and with visual and physical accessibility to the countryside. Apart from the parish church and the neighbouring village hall, all the other premises in the conservation area are dwellings. Virtually all the open space is contained within private gardens, except for some water meadow that follows the river southwards, out of the village.

### Building Types and Forms

The large formal Old Rectory (No 5 Rectory Road), built in 1753, stands in grounds at the southern end of the village, looking out over the water meadows. There are two other smaller formal houses: No 10 High Street, contained within high stone walls, and Garden Cottage, Rectory Road. Elsewhere, the two storey, one room deep houses and cottages are small and of humble origin.

While milling was once a thriving activity in the village, there are no remnants of the industry within the conservation area.

### Architectural Details

Piddlehinton demonstrates the same characteristics as Piddletrenthide. The simple cottage built of a mixture of local materials such as brick, flint and cob. Occasionally, chalk block is found in conjunction with flint as in Garden Cottage. External render is used on Church Cottage and No 6 Rectory Road and the new Denches Cottages.

The parish church is an exception to the general use of local materials and is built with fine limestone from Ham Hill and Purbeck. The church has finely detailed decoration and is set within a bold boundary wall and among a collection of historic monuments and tombstones. The Old Rectory (No 5 Rectory Road) also uses Ham Hill and Purbeck stone to great effect.

Within the conservation area, there is a significant retention of thatch, which is found on seven houses. The thatching material is mostly combed wheat reed, which is distinguished by its smooth contours and soft appearance. Water reed is used on Glebe Cottage and is not traditional to this part of Dorset. Elsewhere, slate and plain clay tile are common.

The Old Rectory (No 5) and No 6 Rectory Road have cob boundary walls and a tiled capping is a characteristic.



Fig 19. Old Rectory (No 5 Rectory Road) seen from the south



Fig 20. Hayloft & tiled capped cob walls of No 5 Rectory Road

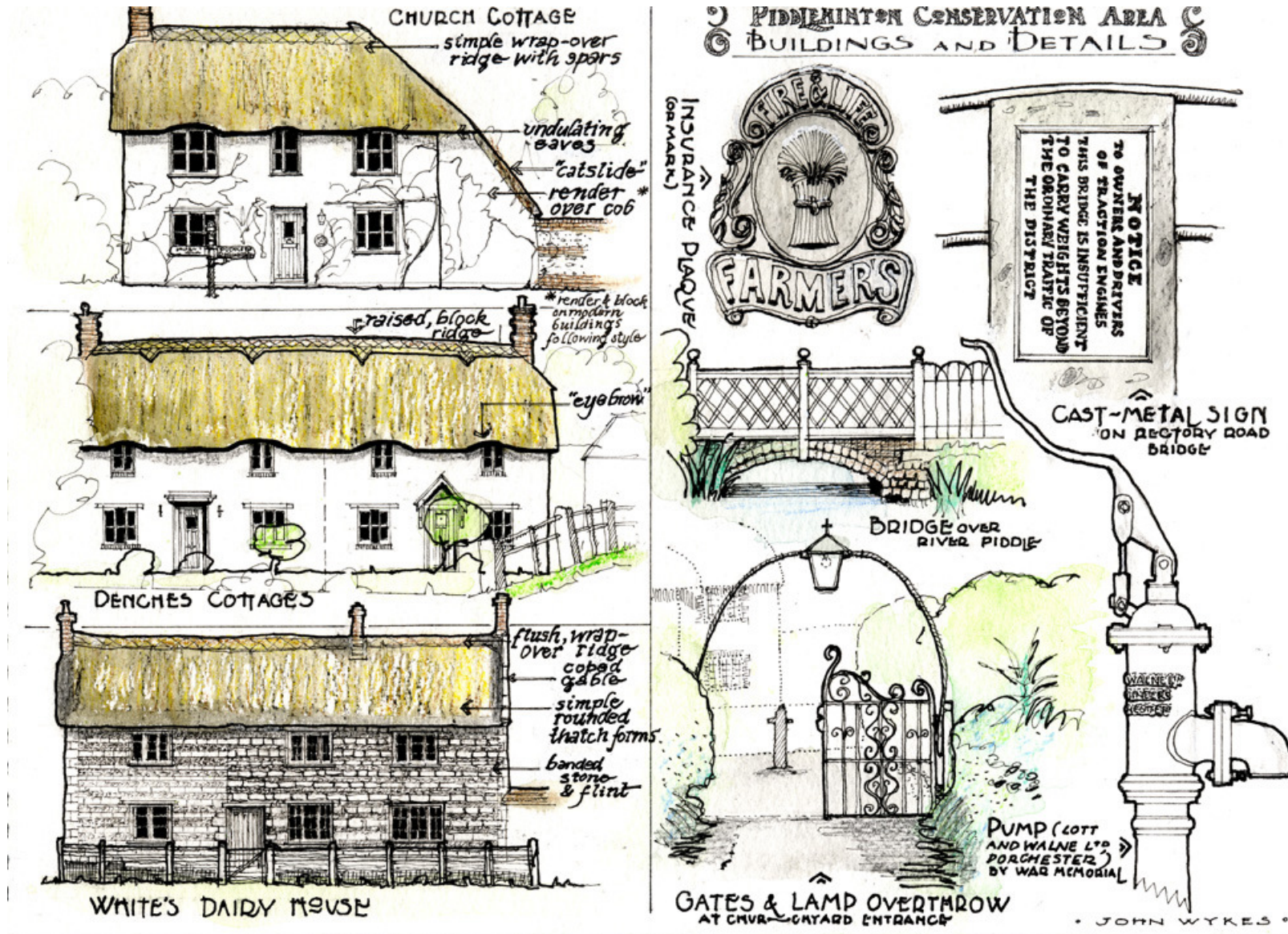


Fig 21. Architectural details

### Key Listed Buildings and Structures

The conservation area is small and contains 10 listed buildings. The parish church, listed Grade I, is the dominant building in Piddlehinton and dates from the C15. Several other houses are listed and make a significant contribution to the conservation area. The Old Rectory (No 5 Rectory Road) is Grade II as are No 6 (Glebe Cottage), and its attached outbuilding, No 7 (Inglenook Cottage) and No 9 that are thatched cottages with considerable visual interest. Garden Cottage is also a listed building but has a slate roof that is possibly a replacement of earlier thatch in a C19 remodelling of an original C16 cottage. Finally, lining an outside bend at the crossroads are Nos 11 & 12 Rectory Road; a pair of flint and rubble, thatched cottages, listed Grade II.

### Key Unlisted Buildings and Structures

The village hall is the most visually significant unlisted building within the conservation area. A mid C19 school made of brick and flint with a plain tile roof that dominates the southeast corner of the crossroads. Opposite the hall and church is a terrace of early C19 cottages (1 – 5 Church Hill) built of flint and rubble with brick quoins and slate roofs. Church Cottage is an important visual component with its asymmetrical thatched roof, as are the two newly built thatched and rendered Denches Cottages. No 10 stands next to this pair and is a small former agricultural building of stone and flint with brick upper walls. The long cob and flint wall, forming the roadside boundary to Old Rectory (No 5 Rectory Road), and the simple rendered outbuildings, including a functioning hayloft, are all important elements within the conservation area. Finally, a modern house, set back to left of Garden Cottage, is of good design, with brick and flint walling and a slate roof.

### Key Views and Vistas

The parish church dominates the view within the village where it is framed by the beech and lime trees growing in the churchyard. It also forms a major landmark in the entrance into the conservation area from the south. Within the village, the street pattern determines the extent of views particularly along Rectory Road, both westwards and eastwards. Looking west, the eye is drawn up and onto the horizon of the down, whilst eastwards the view is stopped at the B3143 by Church Cottage and partially at the bridge by Denches Cottages. There is a tantalising view into London Row and the terrace of cottages along a dense hedge lined lane. The views into open countryside are limited to pedestrian height by the boundary walls on the south side of Rectory Road. Looking north, along the river from the bridge is an intimate view of a small wooden footbridge, which makes an interesting contribution to the conservation area.

### Parks Gardens and Trees

The most important natural element within the conservation area is the mature beech and lime avenue in the churchyard. To the south of Paddock House is a group of copper beech, ash and horse chestnut that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order while a mature lime and copper beech stand in the landscaped grounds of the Old Rectory (No 5 Rectory Road). Elsewhere, gardens and their boundary hedges, and vegetation growing over boundary walls make a contribution to the green component of the village.



Fig 22. St Mary's Church



Fig 23. View of River Piddle & footbridge from Rectory Road

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### **Detrimental Features**

Are as follows:

- Wirescape, especially crossing Rectory Road near the bridge;
- Highway lining and signage near the war memorial;
- Modern developments on the flanks of the downland are visible from the conservation area and bear no relationship to village character.

### **Definition of Special Interest of the Conservation Area**

From the assessment of the special interest, the particularly important characteristics of the conservation area which are:

- The landscape quality of the setting of the village within the valley of the River Piddle with the flanks of the downland forming a soft boundary on the west and eastern side;
- The strong gateways into the village from the south past the churchyard and from the west coming down Rectory Road from the down;
- The groups of mature trees between buildings and as a backdrop to wider views across the conservation area;
- The rural nature of routes through the conservation area bounded by soft verges, informal garden space and cob walls;
- The survival of the early plan layout of the village with modern development confined for the most part to the edges of the conservation area;
- The presence of eight listed buildings many of which are built of local traditional materials including thatch;
- The quality of the building stock with several unlisted buildings making a positive contribution to the quality of the conservation area;
- The use of a variety of local materials such as limestone in various forms, cob, flint, brick and thatch giving a palette of subtle colours that blend in well with the countryside;
- The survival of many examples of good craftsmanship and architectural detail ranging from carefully worked natural stone to the cast iron water pump near the war memorial.

## Community Involvement

The local community, Group Parish Council, district councillors 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.

## General Condition

The villages are characterised by a stock of buildings that are in generally good condition. There is a very small number of properties in poor condition and there has been some unsympathetic and non-traditional alterations carried out to unlisted buildings within both conservation areas.

## Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

CONSERVATION AREA ISSUE	PROPOSED ACTION/S	LEAD PARTNER	OTHER PARTNERS
Standards & methods of repair and maintenance of historic buildings and structures	Upon request provide advice	WDDC	
Sourcing local materials & continuation of building traditions	Upon request provide advice on known sources & building traditions	WDDC	
Areas that have a negative impact on the conservation areas, especially in regard to parking	Identify opportunities to enhance & support joint community projects through availability of Countryside & Conservation Grant	WDDC	Group Parish & community groups
Overhead cables that impact on important views	Identify opportunities to place cables underground	WDDC	
Impact of road markings and signage on Piddlehinton's War Memorial	Traffic management	DCC (Highway Authority)	Group Parish, WDDC



Weak boundary definition alongside the river as it passes the Piddle Inn	Identify opportunities to enhance	WDDC	
Advertisements & signs that have a negative impact on the conservation areas	Identify opportunities to enhance	WDDC	
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	Group Parish, 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
Dorset County Council Rural Roads Protocol	As requested WDDC to comment on the protocol	DCC	WDDC, Group Parish

## 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;
- 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

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.

## Contact Details

Contacts: West Dorset District Council, Design and Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or email [planning@westdorset-dc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@westdorset-dc.gov.uk)

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## Maps

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**West Dorset District Council**  
Stratton House, 58/60 High West Street  
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UZ

Tel: 01305 251010 Fax: 01305 251481  
Website: [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)  
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