



# Whitchurch Canonorum Conservation Area Appraisal

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## Introduction

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historical 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. Whitchurch Canonorum's conservation area forms part of this appraisal work. The conservation area was designated in November 1993 and extended in October 2010.

In order that designation is effective in conserving the special interest, planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the conservation area's character. An appraisal is therefore an essential tool for the planning process. It is also of prime importance for any enhancement works and may provide a longer-term basis for the effective management of the conservation area.

This document describes the planning policy context, concentrating on the relevant West Dorset District Local Plan historic landscape, building conservation and archaeological policies and the Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014. The main part of the report focuses on the **assessment of special interest** of the conservation area, describing:

- Location and setting;
- Historic development and archaeology;
- Spatial analysis, notably the sequences of spaces, views in and out and landmark buildings;
- Character analysis, building uses and types, the key listed buildings and the contribution made by important local buildings, building materials and details, and "green" elements.

The report then focuses on recommendations for management action, including landscape and tree monitoring and ways of improving essential repairs and maintenance, and suggestions for environmental enhancement. All of these are formalised into management proposals that the local authorities, land and property owners and the wider community should consider.

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

## **Executive summary**

The key characteristics of Whitchurch Canonorum are:

- A dramatic landscape setting, enclosed by rolling fields and hills;
- The intactness of the village plan formed by the road layout, land plots and retention of fields and open space between and around the parish church and buildings;
- A Grade I Listed Church in a country setting, having a rare example of a holy shrine;
- Mature trees contributing to the setting and visual appearance of the village, in particular the parish church;
- Central open space and fields underpinning the country setting of the church and contributing to rural character and appearance;
- A tradition of thatch and local materials generally;
- The retention of boundaries and the amenity and connectivity that they provide.

The overall condition of the building stock and public realm is good. The report does identify some detrimental features such as poles and overhead cables and loss of historic details.

## The planning policy context

Contained within the **West Dorset District Local Plan** (Adopted 2006) 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); Policy SA2 seeks to protect the character and natural beauty of the Heritage Coast; development must be in keeping with the landscape character of the area (Policy SA3); Policies SA18, SA19 and SA20 cover the demolition, alterations to and the settings of Listed Buildings; Policy SA21 seeks to protect the character or appearance of Conservation Areas; SA22 is concerned with demolition within a Conservation Area;
- *Settlement Policy*: there is no Defined Development Boundary (DDB) at Whitchurch Canonorum. Policy SS3 strictly controls development outside DDBs, having regard to the policies in the Local Plan for the protection of the countryside, the sustainable location of new development and the re-use of land and buildings.
- *Housing, Employment and Tourism, Community Issues, and Transport*: 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;
- *Sustainable Construction*: Policy SU1 relates to energy efficiency, renewable energy and other measures.

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

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

### **The Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014**

contains a number of relevant policies relating to the Historic Environment (historic buildings, archaeology, historic parks and gardens); the Built Environment (historic buildings, Conservation Areas and other developed areas); and Landscape.

The West Dorset District Local Plan, Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines and Landscape Character Assessment 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)

## Assessment of Special Interest

### Location and Setting

Although the village has a small population (160 in 2008), Whitchurch Canonorum is a large parish located about 5 miles west of Bridport and about 3 miles east of Charmouth on the coast. The village is connected by several winding, country lanes. The two main routes into the village, Ryall Rd and Tizard's Knap, are minor roads which join the A35. To the west, the River Char passes the village, entering the sea at Charmouth.



Fig.1 Location Map

Whitchurch Canonorum is situated in the Heritage Coast and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the edge of the Marshwood Vale Landscape Character Area, which is characterised by flat clay vales. To the west, the village is also situated on the edge of the Wootton Hills, and to the east, the Chideock Hills. Both these landscapes are formed from underlying greensand ridges and clay valleys. Consequently, the village is situated on differing topography, approximately 35-60 metres above ordnance datum (AOD).

As it leaves the greensand ridges, Ryall Rd travels downhill towards the village before flattening out on the adjacent, lower lying clay vales to the north. The eastern end of the village allows glimpses of the parish church tower below and further views of the surrounding landscape are provided by field gateways. From the surrounding Marshwood Vale, there are key views of the village, particularly the higher, eastern end and the elevated parish church.

## Historic Development and Archaeology

Whitchurch Canonorum is a small village, and whilst there is some modern development, the village's historic form and extent remain much the same as the Tithe Map of 1844 (figs. 3 & 4).

The parish church of St Candida (or St Wite) and Holy Cross is mentioned in King Alfred's will dated about 889. According to the Golden Cap Benefice, St Wandrille's Abbey in Normandy rebuilt the Saxon church in the C12 of which only a part remains. There was further building from C13 to C15 and again later. The church is almost unique amongst parish churches in that its C13 shrine, containing the possibly much older bones of St Candida, survived the C16 Reformation<sup>1</sup>. Prior to the Reformation, the shrine was an important place of pilgrimage.

A good number of the listed buildings date back to C16 or C17 with later alterations or rebuilding and several of the original properties in the village were farms, a practice still in use to a much lesser extent, but particularly important in terms of the origins of the settlement, as the clay vales provide fertile land for agriculture, especially dairy farming and at one time, flax and hemp growing. The strong influence of the rural setting and farming tradition is evident in the way the limits of the village respect field boundaries and water courses and the presence of fields within the village. The field, named Cothays Plot, adjoining Dydholme to the SE, is church land. Another significant influence on the plan of the village is the pattern of roads and public rights of way (some probably former roads) that converge on the church and reflect the time when pilgrims visited the shrine of St Candida. The village's older properties are predominantly on Ryall Rd, which in medieval times was part of an important route across the Marshwood Vale, linking Bridport with Axminster and also linking with medieval routes to Forde Abbey (Gassons Lane) and Charmouth (Berne Lane). So whilst the village has grown in size, its early form remains with the Church as the main focus.



Fig.2 St Candida & Holy Cross

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to the time when the English church separated from the authority of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church.



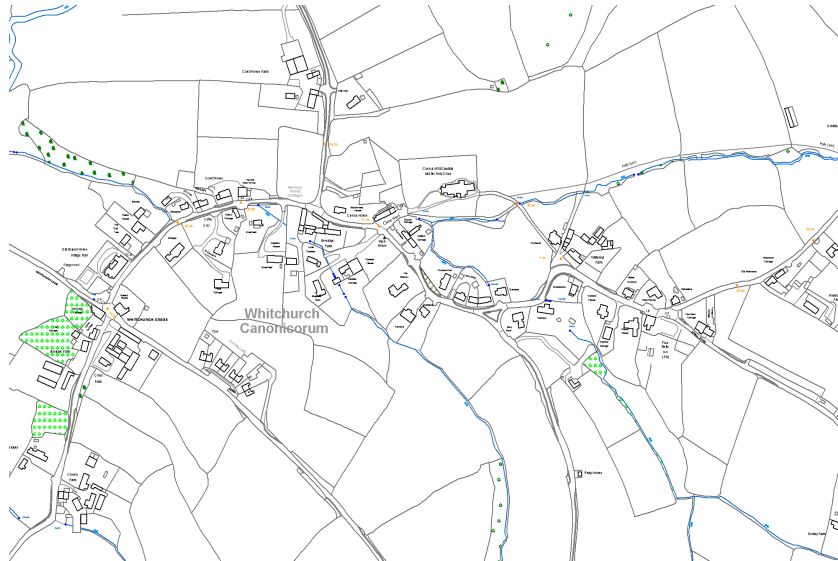


Fig.3 Current map of village



Fig.4 Tithe Map 1844

The village is recognised as having high archaeological potential. There are few archaeological findings relating to the historic core of the village, however, south east of the village on Hardown Hill is a barrow cemetery of five Bronze Age bowl barrows. Two miles north-west of the village is the Iron Age hill fort known as Coney's Castle.

#### The archaeological issues are:

- The extent of Saxon and medieval settlement in the area and the need to understand its influence on Whitchurch Canonicorum, including its overall form and land plots.
- The influence of the church and shrine of St Candida on the village, including form and land plots.
- There is potential for further excavation work and survey of Hardon Hill and Coney's Castle.
- There was flax and hemp growing locally. Further research would provide better understanding of the village's connection with the net and cordage industry.

## Spatial and Character Analysis

Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside. Within Conservation Areas (usually the historic core of the village), there are unique progressions of spaces, with varying degrees of enclosure and exposure. These sensations depend upon the density and height of buildings, their position relative to the highway, the character of boundaries and the dominance or dearth of trees, and views out to countryside or into the village core. Also important are the effects of topography – the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths. These are all elements of **townscape**, giving visual coherence and organisation to the mixture of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the village environment. Townscape enables places to be described, using three elements:

- The sequence of views obtained in passing through an area, depending upon road alignment, positions of buildings, views etc. The chain of events is usefully termed *serial vision*;
- The feelings of relative exposure and enclosure depending upon the size and shape of spaces and buildings;
- Content: colour, texture, scale, style, personality and the many little details of materials, street furniture, signs and other local distinctiveness characteristics.

### Spatial Analysis (see also the Review of the Conservation Area Boundary, page 20)

The original conservation area does not include the whole village, but starts just east of the Ryall Rd and Bluntshay Lane junction and follows Ryall Rd until approximately 160metres from Whitchurch Cross (crossroads of Lower St, Becklands Lane, Berne Lane and Goodens Hill).

Numerous glimpses of the surrounding open fields provide reminders of Whitchurch Canonicorum's remoteness. In contrast, the village is fairly sheltered being well defined and enclosed by water courses, field boundaries, hedgerows and properties. Properties are dispersed along the predominant and winding Ryall Rd, beyond which, there is little development. There is a gentle transition between the built form and landscape setting, aided by natural boundaries, fields within the village and buildings set within spacious plots, which as a whole, make the village's rural nature a key characteristic.

Although slightly set back from Ryall Rd, the church retains a central position, adjoining as it does pilgrim routes (now rights of way) from all points of the compass. Outside Church House, the increasing width of the old route that connects the church with Ryall Rd basically forms a space suggestive of a small village square (fig 14). According to Creed, a fair and market were granted to the village in the C13.

Where the footpath and bridleway meet with Ryall Rd just south of Orchards, there is a space defined by field and property boundaries. How this space was used in the past is unclear, but its existence surely allowed travellers from the north to connect with Ryall Rd and continue their journey, or as with those journeying from the east, take a direct route to the parish church.

Buildings are situated on plots of varying shape (irregularity suggesting very early origins) and size, some of which are large, (some were once orchard or garden and orchard combined). These plots generally adjoin either an existing or former road and have properties that face the road but set back from it. There are exceptions, such as Church House, Cherry Cottage



Fig.5 View of parish church from Ryall Rd near Five Bells



Fig.6 View of parish church from field entrance in Ryall Rd

and various farm buildings which adjoin the road. Some of the old plots have been subdivided or lost to modern development.

**The character and interrelationship of spaces** within the conservation area can be appreciated by describing a short walk through the village.

From the east side of the conservation area, Ryall Rd travels downhill providing clear views of the church or glimpses of it through the occasional interruption in a boundary. As the road bends to the south, it widens and a gateway into a field provides even greater views of the church. The contribution of this field is significant, as it helps underpin the church's prominence and country setting (a local name for the church is *Cathedral of the Vale*), establishes a sense of openness and allows a visual connection to the wider countryside. The road then follows the field's southern boundary and heads towards the western approach of the church, whereas along the field's northern boundary runs a footpath, providing access to the church from the east.

As Ryall Rd continues with banks, boundary walls, trees and hedgerows on either side, it narrows, passes at a road junction an interesting triangular green with a single tree and continues its attractive run towards the centre of the conservation area.

At the centre, joining Ryall Rd is the old route that leads towards the church. Further along, pillars and iron gates mark the route's division, either into the treed churchyard or alongside the impressive southern boundary of the churchyard. Back at the Ryall Rd end, the route is defined by a garage and stone boundary walls on one side and Church House on the other with the War Memorial in the middle, creating a small open space. Here, there is a sense of social and historic importance and the space invites people to appreciate the War Memorial and approach the church, which on its rise is visible in the background.

### Gateways

Because of the rural setting and nature of the village, there are a number of attractive entrances or gateways into Whitchurch Canonorum, along lanes and roads and public rights of way (former roads), which means that roadside boundaries are as significant as buildings. Examples of gateways are as follows:

- The eastern gateway on Ryall Rd starts when the church tower appears at the end of a view with hills in the background, framed by sunken hedgerows.
- On Bluntshay Lane, the thatched Hinkhams Cottage with the high hedged and treed lane beyond, signify the village gateway.
- The gateway on Goose Knap commences when Goose Knap Cottage and the adjacent triangular green appear at the end of a tunnel of overhanging hedgerow.
- Whitchurch Cross forms a SW gateway with New Cross House and Old Cross Cottage acting as focal points.



Fig.7 Hinkhams Cottage



Fig.8 Whitchurch Cross

## Key views

Examples of key views from within and from without the conservation area are mentioned. These views highlight the significance of the village's setting and rural character:

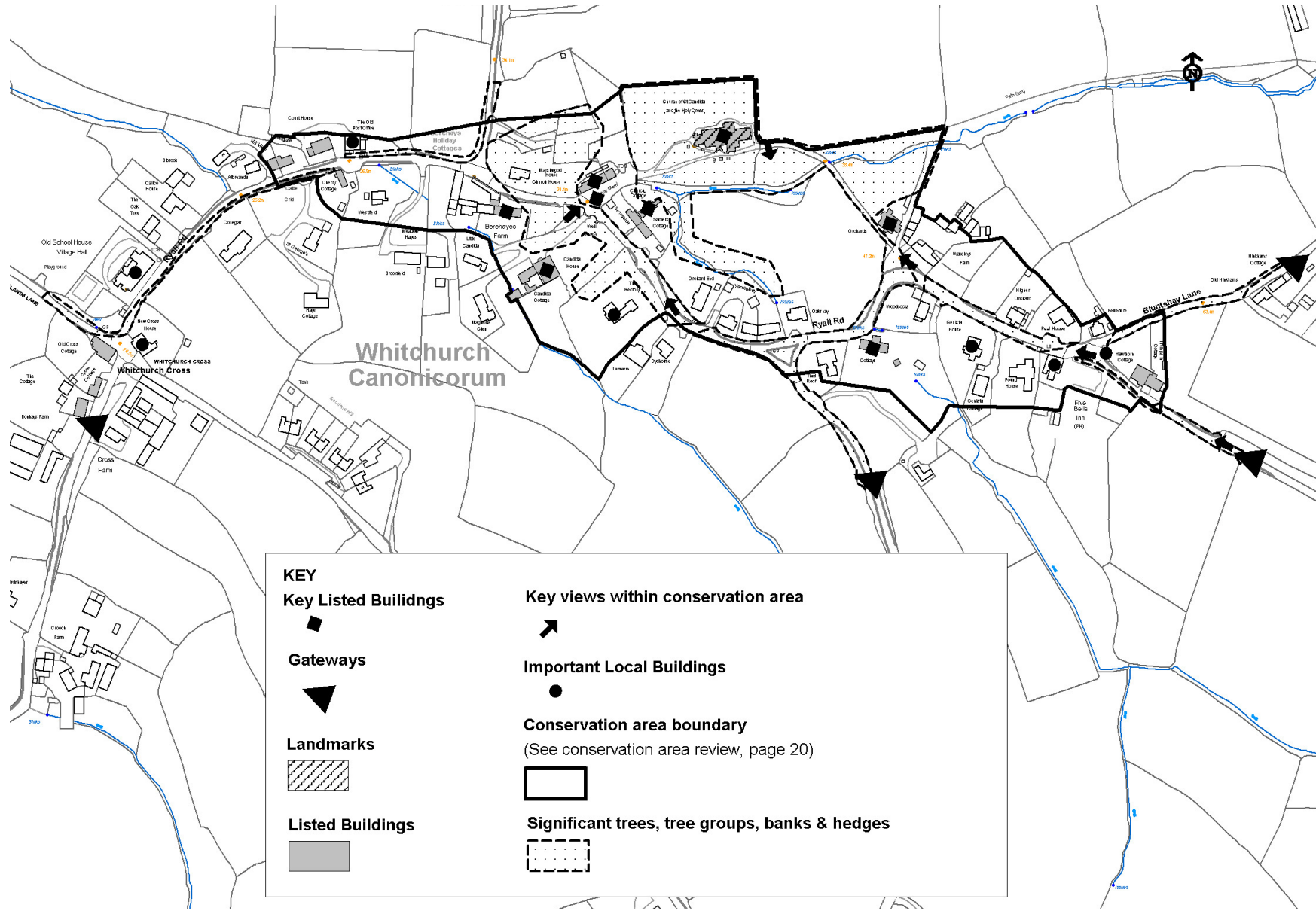
- Starting from the eastern side on Ryall Rd, there is a succession of key views of the church tower emerging from trees at the centre of the village. The roadside boundaries play a significant role in these views.
- Orchards on the right and the public footpath and church tower ahead constitute another view.
- Further west along Ryall Rd is a view of Church House, framed by the adjacent hedge and boundary treatment.
- Near the east churchyard entrance on the footpath are attractive views southwards across fields towards neighbouring hills.
- The same countryside context, including the church and churchyard, is observable from the public rights of way in the field, NW of the churchyard.
- Key views of the church and village can also be seen on approach to the village from the Marshwood Vale to the north, with the church tower and ascending row of properties up Ryall Rd visible.

There are however numerous glimpses of the church and village setting throughout the conservation area which also contribute to the feel of the village, and these may be found in gaps between buildings, boundaries and trees.

The church is a **landmark** and notable in the landscape from some distance away.



Fig.9 View of parish church from footpaths to the NE



**Assets Map of Whitchurch Canonorum**

## Character Analysis

### Building Uses

The predominant building use is residential with many old detached cottages and the occasional farm. Berehays Farm has holiday cottages and there is an approved scheme for some holiday accommodation at Wakeleys Farm. The village Post Office is now a dwelling and the National School, built in 1840, became the Village Hall.

Historically the village had two pubs, the Five Bells Inn (rebuilt after a fire in 1904), which still trades today, and the original New Inn (now Old Cross Cottage), which was superseded by the New Inn (today New Cross House) around 1902. Until the 1920s, just west of the Five Bells Inn was the village pound, and further along, at the Ryall Rd/Bluntshay Lane junction, the blacksmith's shop. The former vicarage (Candida House) was superseded by The Rectory (St Wite House), which was built on the adjacent orchard. In the 1840s, Cross Cottage was a boot maker's shop.

### Building Types

The parish church of St. Candida and the Holy Cross is likely to be oldest building in the village with part of the aisle's south wall and the three south arches to the nave dating back to the C12. The church was significantly altered in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the nave, north and south transept and the south wall of the chancel added. Its prominent tower and its porch were added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and further alterations have been carried out since, to form the vestry, chancel and north aisle. Architectural details such as the gargoyles around the porch and on the church tower further contribute to the church's grand character.

Both Berehays Farm and Cothays date back to the C16 and have been modified over the years. Cothays Farmhouse presents white painted rubble walls, with a thatched roof and an L shaped plan. Berehays farmhouse on the other hand has stone walls, a thatched roof and an off centre oak door entrance - its plan form and simple proportions reflecting a medieval origin.

There are numerous other properties which date back to the C18, including Orchards, Hillview and Anvil Cottage (formerly Whitegates), which have red brick frontages, and Church Cottage, Hawthorne Cottage and Trumps In Cottage, which have rendered stone walls. Most of these properties have thatched roofs.

As such there is a variety of architectural styles ranging from different periods. Most properties are of fairly simple proportions, often with a front porch (Old Post Office) or off centre entrance (Berehays Farm). Notwithstanding, many of the properties reflect a degree of symmetry, such as Orchards, Higher Orchard and the Five Bells Inn. Properties tend to be two storey in height with mainly double piled plans and often have a width of three bays.

Exceptions to the local vernacular are Church House and the former vicarage, Candida House. Both properties display polite architecture (deliberate architectural design for achieving a visual effect) with two and a half or three storeys, rendered walls, slate roofs and a certain classical symmetry. Church House was the Poor House and is likely to be the building referred to in



Fig.10 Berehays Farm



Fig.11 Church House

the Parish Vestry accounts of the late C18. It was remodelled, probably after the 1836 Bridport Union workhouse<sup>2</sup> was built, and is now two dwellings.

### Key Listed Buildings and Structures

There are 21 Listed Buildings and structures within the Whitchurch Canonorum conservation area. The most significant listed building is the splendid parish church of St Candida and Holy Cross (Grade I) with parts dating back to the C12. The church is referred to as 'The Cathedral of the Vale' due to its size and position, and contains the bones of St Candida (St Wite), one of only two surviving parish shrines.

Other key Listed Buildings and structures are as follows:

- War Memorial (Grade II) of those who died in the First World War (fig 14);
- Orchards (Grade II), detached building dating back to the C18, constructed of red brick with a thatched roof and central thatched porch with a C20 extension. This property can be viewed from a number of positions, contributing to the character of the conservation area.
- Cothays Farmhouse (Grade II), dating back to the C16 and although modified, retains its original fireplace with moulded jambs and detailed spandels and exposed beams.
- Candida House (Grade II), former vicarage and large, C18 gentry house with white rendered lias stone walls and slate roof. Cellars beneath, attached cottage (former service range) and a coach house to the rear. Approached via two grand listed gate piers at the end of a listed chert boundary wall.
- Berehays Farmhouse and attached rubble wall (Grade II) with the farmhouse dating back to the C16 but largely rebuilt in the C19, possibly after fire damage. Dwelling has rubble walls with Lias stone quoins, thatched roof, wooden window lintels, wide planked front door and C16 open fireplace.
- Church House (Grade II), former Poor House with rendered walls and sash windows, particularly important due to its central position and its historic interest;
- Church Cottage, (Grade II), with washed stone rubble walls, thatched roof and original fireplace (fig 14). Significant due to its position and architecture.
- Village Well House, C19, situated opposite near the War Memorial with stone arch entrance and a wooden plank door and interesting details in the stonework (fig 14).



Fig.12 Orchards



Fig.13 Candida House

<sup>2</sup> Whitchurch Canonorum became part of the Bridport Union, which meant the poor in the community went to live in the Bridport workhouse.



Fig.14 Buildings & details



### Important Local Buildings

An important local building is one that makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, such as:

- When entering the village along Bluntshay Lane, the Five Bells Inn (fig 14) acts as a focal point and demonstrates an interesting use of materials with fine architectural details and simple classical proportions. Following a fire, the inn was rebuilt in 1905 and has a rendered front elevation with Hamstone window dressings, brick quoins, local rubble and chert gable walls and hanging slate. Timber windows appear original and above the entrance is a large stone plaque.
- The Old Post Office (fig 14) dated 1884, important due to its historical value as a former post office and of interest because of its quality of construction and architectural details. With slate roof and local rubble and chert walls, the dwelling has attractive brick flat arches, quoins, dressings and chimneys, original sash timber windows, a slate roofed glazed wooden porch with a decorative bargeboard, a gable date stone and front name plaque.
- Genista, dated 1905 (same as the Five Bells), built in place of Woodcote Farm which burnt down. Almost hidden behind a front boundary, this large dwelling of an Edwardian style uncommon in the village has interesting intact features.
- St Wite House, a large contemporary stone walled and slate roofed rectory of restrained appearance.
- Former Blacksmiths (fig 14) on the prominent Ryall Rd and Bluntshay Lane corner built of chert with brick dressings, timber windows and clay interlocking tiles. An important example of a local workshop.

The conservation area has been extended (see Review of the Conservation Area Boundary, page 20) and includes the following important local buildings:

- The K6 telephone kiosk by the village hall.
- The National School was built in 1840 of slate and chert with brick quoins and dressings, stone ridge tiles and tabling, a stone bellcote, stone apex cross and stone name plaque. Although the windows have been replaced, the two attractive, protruding front entrances with their slate roofs, decorative barge boards and finials, studded doors and ornate glazing are retained. The school, with its attached, former school house at the rear, is now the village hall and is of visual and historic interest.
- New Cross House was formerly the new New Inn which was built in early C20. The original inn of that name had been Old Cross Cottage opposite. Well built of brick and slate, New Cross House is on a prominent corner and its symmetrical main façade and adjoining lean to retain their attractive features.

### Building Groups

The parish church, Church House, Church Cottage, 1 Sunnyside, 2 Sadlers Cottage, the Well House and the War Memorial form a particularly distinct group.

Another distinct group is the Old Post Office, Court House, Anvil Cottage and Hill View and the new dwellings of Goose Knapp Cottage, Mead Cottage and Yarrow Haye along with the green and its tree at the junction opposite.

Outside the conservation area at entrances or gateways into the village are the two groups of Hinkhams Cottage and Old Hinkhams in Bluntshays Lane and Bonhays Farm, Cross Cottage, New Cross House at Whitchurch Cross.



Fig.15 Former National School



Fig.16 New Cross House

### Building Materials and Architectural Details

Many of the older buildings are constructed of chert from the Upper Greensand formation and quarried at Hardown Hill. Chert tends to be combined with local limestone rubble in walls and used either in a building's entirety or its gable ends. Chert was also used for boundary walls and more recently for a new build, reflecting the character and use of local materials. Many of the properties, such as Cothays, have been painted white but it is likely that the use of chert and local rubble was used in their construction. Over the centuries, the parish church was constructed using available stone, for example, Upper Greensand chert and grit, Inferior Oolite (Chideock quarry), Forest Marble (Bothehampton) and Blue Lias with Hamstone from Somerset for dressings.

Local red brick is commonly used in the village, often on the front elevation of old properties, probably to improve the appearance and status of the property when viewed from the street. Red brick is used for chimney stacks and in detailing, such as around doors and windows and at the quoins or corners of buildings. The Orchards uses a darker brick to create a careful patterned effect. According to Thomas (2008) bricks were made from the late C17 to C19 at the Mutton Street brickworks in the Marshwood Vale.

Some properties are rendered of which The Five Bells Inn is particularly interesting having a rendered front but chert and local rubble gable ends.

Thatch is the predominant roofing material on older buildings and has been used successfully on some new dwellings. Otherwise, roofs are slate, or in a few instances, clay tile.

Windows are mainly wooden two or three light casement windows with either a single horizontal glazing bar (Berehayes Farm, Cothayes) or multi-paned (Cross Cottage, Hill View). Late C18 and C19 century polite houses have wooden multi-paned sash windows set into the render with no elaborate surrounds (Church House, Candida House). The Old Post Office has narrow lights defined by glazing bars at the edge of timber sashes windows, whilst the Five Bells Inn has just single paned sashes. Church House has a locally uncommon example of Yorkshire, horizontal sliding windows and the early C20 New Cross House mullion windows.

Wooden doors on older (Cherry Cottage) and former farms (Berehayes Farm) tend to have vertical planked doors, whereas C18 and C19 doors are usually four or six panels with either a rectangular or semi-circular fan light over. The village hall, the former mid C18 National School, has two separate, studded, double entrance doors.

Porches tend to be simple and thatched, for example, supported on timber posts (Bonhays Farm), supported off brackets (Old Cross Cottage), semi enclosed with boarding (Cherry Cottage). Some are more elaborate, such as the glazed, enclosed porch of The Old Post Office, the scissors truss porch of New Cross House and Candida House has a wooden porch with pediment over and Tuscan pilasters.

Boundary walls and retaining walls are generally constructed of local rubble and chert and are common throughout the village, as are capping stones. To the rear of Candida House is an 18<sup>th</sup> century crinkle-crankle wall constructed of brick on a



Fig.17 Court House



Fig.18 Old Cross Cottage

rubble stone sleeper wall, a particularly rare find. Equally rare is the south, churchyard retaining wall which incorporates worked stone (from another building?) and a row of plaques with biblical inscriptions.

The west churchyard entrance and adjacent footpath entrance (fig 14) and the east churchyard entrance have impressive pillars and intricate wrought iron gates. Some of the larger houses have stone pillars (Candida) or attractive wrought iron gates (Genista). Hawthorne Cottage has iron railings and posts with urn finials, all set into a stone plinth.

Alongside the boundary wall adjacent to Berehays Farm is a small pavement constructed of local greensand. This is a feature that adds to local distinctiveness and the character of the street scene. South of the churchyard, adjacent to the footpath, there is also a small watercourse, fed by a spring, which has been lined with stone which may possibly be a sheep wash.

### Gardens, Hedgerows, Trees and Open Spaces

Within the village, the central field between Ryall Rd and the churchyard and the small field adjoining the east side of the churchyard are particularly important in terms of the rural character of the conservation area and its connection with the countryside. The front garden to Berehays Farm, which also extends to the side of the property and is situated on slightly higher ground, also contributes to the open feel of the village.

The churchyard is almost entirely enclosed by treed boundaries and countryside; a fitting setting to the splendid church. Within the churchyard yew trees predominate, upholding a sense of solemnity.

Hedgerows, banks and hedge banks provide considerable visual amenity and connect the interspersed groups of properties giving the village cohesiveness and also link with the village's country setting and character.

The trees around the parish church, Church House and Orchards are significant, both when viewed around the church, as well as from a distance, where for instance, the church tower can be seen emerging from the trees. Other significant tree groups are around Berehays Farm and Candida House and behind Orchard End and Yarrow Haye. Many of the trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Another particularly important open space surrounds the World War Memorial, providing a central area where the church, Memorial, Well House and a number of important historical buildings can be appreciated.

South of Orchards, there is a meeting of footpath and bridleway with Ryall Rd, constituting an area of public space. Although understated, this space very likely has historic relevancy, providing an important choice of routes to travellers.



Fig.19 Footpath alongside churchyard wall with stone plaques



Fig.20 Hedge banks in Ryall Lane NE of Trumps In Cottage

### Detrimental Features

There are a number of features which are considered to have a detrimental impact on the special character of the conservation area. These are as follows:

- Telegraph poles and wires extend across the road and particularly disrupt views towards the Church down Ryall Rd.
- Loss of historic details such as the original single glazed sash windows on unlisted properties.
- Some of the more modern buildings within the village do not reflect local character and materials. Reconstituted stone has been used for a number of properties.
- The road surface around the base of the Memorial Cross has potential for improvement.

### General Condition

The village has generally been well looked after but there has been a loss of historic detail on unlisted buildings.

## **Community Involvement**

The appraisal was subject to public consultation (May-June 2010), during which an information event, manned by district council officers, was held in the village. Comments received helped finalise the appraisal.

## **Review of the Conservation Area Boundary**

### **Boundary amendments**

The conservation area boundary includes the village's key properties of historic and architectural merit, which contribute to the character of the conservation area. However, the boundary tends to cut through some of the still recognisable old land plots associated with dwellings (the Tithe Map (fig 4) is a useful reference). Consequently, on the east side, the boundary is adjusted to include further land plot (fig 21) in the area of Belvedere, Wakeleys Farm, Five Bells Inn, Pound House, Genista Cottage, Genista House, Cothays and Red Roof. On the west side, the boundary is adjusted to include further land plot (fig 21) in the area of Albreanda, Hill View, Anvil Cottage, Court House, Westfield, The Old Post Office, Marshwood House, Church House East and Church House West. These adjustments allow the conservation area to recognise better historic land tenure, which is significant in terms of the village's character.

### **Whitchurch Cross boundary extension (refer also to *important local buildings*, page 17)**

Whitchurch Cross, the crossroads SW of the parish church, is shown on the 1844 Tithe Map (fig 4) and with its group of listed buildings (Old Cross Cottage, Cross Cottage and Bonhays Farm) and unlisted former public house (New Cross House) remains part of the village. North of the crossroads and also on the Tithe Map is the former National School, built 1840, and an earlier dwelling on a plot of land which now has the modern dwelling called Conegar. Because this area is an integral part of the character and form of the village, the conservation area is extended to include it (fig 21).

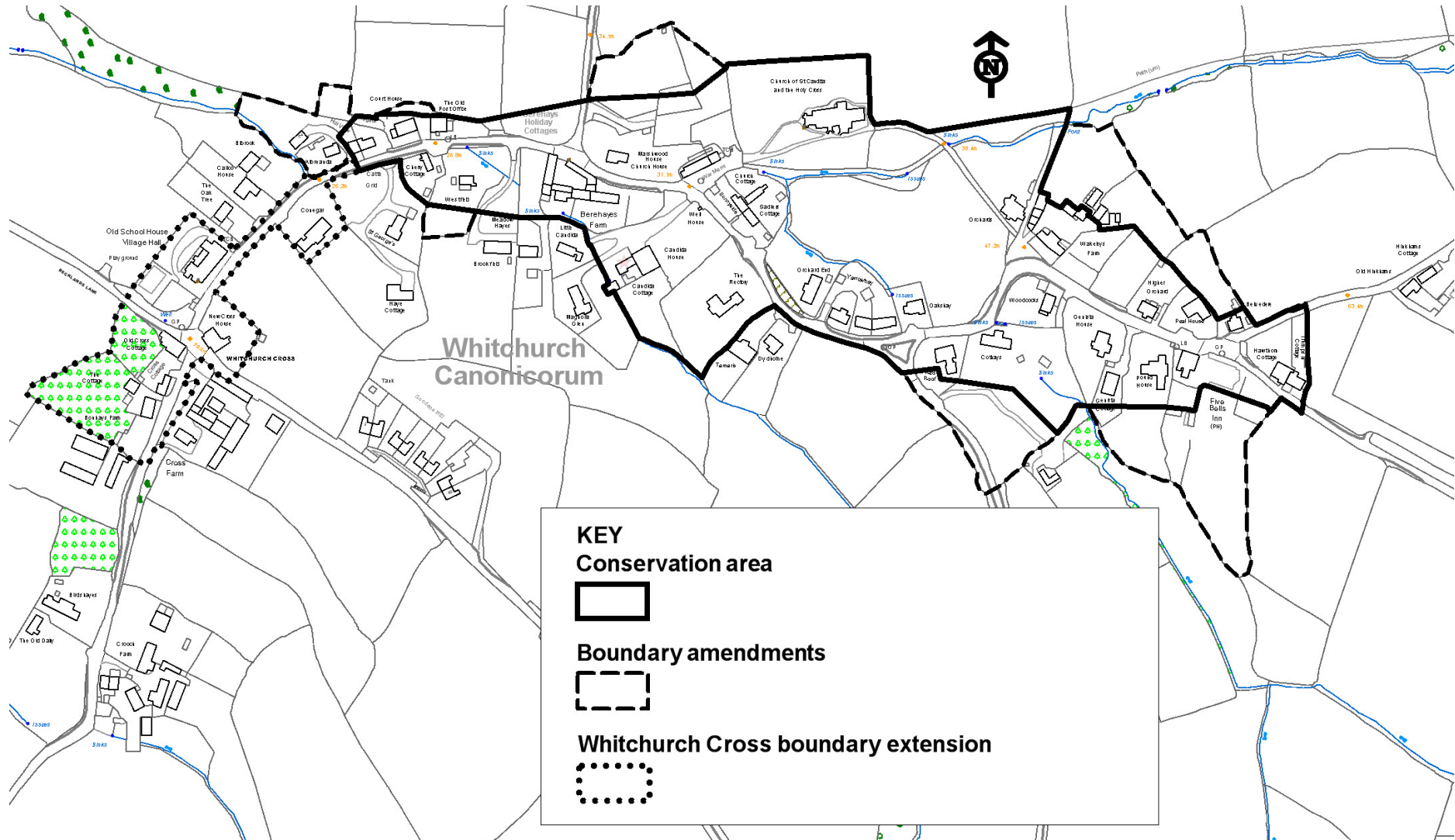


Fig. 21 Conservation area boundary amendments and extension

## Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Actions	Partners
Standards and methods of repair and maintenance of historic buildings and structures	Provide advice on request	WDDC
Sourcing local materials and continuation of building traditions	Provide advice on known sources and building traditions on request	WDDC
Alterations to unlisted buildings	Encourage high standards as opportunity arises	WDDC
A number of unlisted buildings have architectural and historic interest	Consider additions to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest	WDDC
The contribution of trees and hedgerows to the character and appearance of the conservation area	Contribution to be maintained and enhanced as far as possible and support suitable schemes through countryside and conservation grants	WDDC Parish Council
Review conservation area boundary	Consider additions and adjustments to boundary	WDDC Parish Council
Design standards in the public realm (overhead cables, traffic signs, road space with amenity value and use)	Identify opportunities to enhance and consider traffic management	DCC (Highway Authority) WDDC Utility Companies
Exchange of archaeological information	Consider how to assist Dorset Historic Environmental Record and local heritage projects	WDDC DCC English Heritage
Article 4 Direction	To protect small but important original details such as windows, doors and front gardens	WDDC English Heritage

## Developing Management Proposals

The following objectives might be set out as the basis of a long-term management plan:

- The contribution of the landscape setting and trees to the conservation area to be perpetuated using all means;
- Consider additional buildings for listing;
- Consider amendments to the conservation area boundary;
- Provide the Dorset Historic Buildings record with relevant information as available;
- Small-scale improvements could qualify for the Council's Countryside and Conservation Grant Scheme.

## Advice

The District Council can advise on the need for Listed Building Consent or any developments that might require planning permission. Advice will also be given on matters such as methods of maintenance and repair, alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings and suitable materials.

## Information and Contact Details

### Criteria used for assessing the contribution made by important local buildings:

In line with English Heritage guidance, an “important local building” is one that makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, and where this is the case, the building will be included in a local list within the conservation area appraisal. Two basic criteria were used; the actual design characteristics, such as mass, skyline, interesting details, materials and existing or former use; and position relative to the wider setting, individual or groups of Listed Buildings.

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## Maps

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