



## Winterbourne Steepleton Conservation Area Appraisal

## Distribution List

As part of the public consultation, the document was distributed to the following:

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## Introduction

The Winterbourne Steepleton Conservation Area was designated in November 1990.

Conservation areas have special architectural or historic interest and it is desirable to preserve or enhance their character or appearance. West Dorset has 79 conservation areas, for which there is an ongoing programme of appraisal that includes Winterbourne Steepleton.

Planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the conservation area's character in order to effectively conserve the area's special interest. Conservation area appraisals are therefore essential tools for the planning process. They are also of prime importance for informing any enhancement works and may provide a longer-term basis for effective management of conservation areas.

This appraisal document is prepared following current advice from English Heritage. Included are summaries of the planning policy context, landscape setting, historic development and archaeology. There is also a more detailed description of the character of the village's buildings, groups, building materials and architectural details, green elements and detrimental features. All of these are brought together into a definition of the special interest of the conservation area. There are recommendations for management action and development. The boundary of the conservation area has been reviewed.

For local information, a helpful source is *In a Manor of History* by Francis J Edwards.

The appraisal was subject to public consultation (May-June 2012), 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 in December 2012, as a technical document supporting policies in the Local Plan, subject to further consultation on a conservation area extension. After further consultation, the council approved the boundary extension in December 2013.

## Executive Summary

The key characteristics of the conservation area are:

- A rural setting interrelated with a farming legacy and tradition active today
- The physical and visual connection with the countryside, abutting the historic limits of the village.
- An estate legacy represented for example by Steepleton Manor and its grounds, former workers cottages and Manor Farm.
- The Saxon structure and feature of the Parish Church.
- The corn milling legacy which includes a mill and mill house, the mill stream, several ponds and other water/milling features.
- The South Winterbourne River and its interrelationship with corn milling.



Fig 1 Carved Saxon angel in the Parish Church

- The actual and sense of spaciousness – properties within large gardens, properties interspersed with farmyards past and present, gardens, parkland, meadows, woodland and the parish Church set within its churchyard.
- In between properties and where properties are absent on the highway important linkages (river, mill stream and ponds, railings and bridge parapets, boundary walls and hedgerows) pull the village together.
- Trees (single, grouped and woodland) that benefit the conservation area, its setting and gateways.
- Eleven entries of unlisted buildings and structures which make a positive contribution to special interest and considered Important Local Buildings.
- A tradition of local materials.

## The Planning Policy Context

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

- **Safeguarding Assets:** Policy SA1 seeks to protect the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; development must be in keeping with the landscape character of the area (SA3); SA15 Groundwater Source Protection Zones; Policies 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; SA23 relates to the protection of sites of national archaeological significance; and SA24 to sites of regional or county archaeological significance;
- **Settlement Policy:** Policy SS1 relates to development inside Defined Development Boundaries (DDBs) and SS3 relates to development outside the DDBs;
- **Housing, Employment and Tourism and Transport and Infrastructure:** there are a number of general policies relating to these issues and associated land use;
- **Community Issues:** Policy C6 relates to the retention of local community facilities;
- **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.

A new Local Plan for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland was submitted to an independent Planning Inspector in July 2013 and if found sound could be adopted in early 2014. Guidance on what policy may be applicable at this stage and the weight to be accorded a policy is available at <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/newlocalplan/west/weymouth>

**National Planning Policy and Legislation** protects sites of international and national importance for nature conservation. The **National Planning Policy Framework (2012)** sets out planning policies and how these are to be applied and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government>

The Supplementary Planning Document **Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines** was 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.



Fig 2 Location Map

**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)

## Location and Setting

The Parish of Winterbourne Steepleton is situated in the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and stretches either side of the South Winterbourne River with the South Dorset Ridgeway to the south and the Bridport/Dorchester road (A35) to the north. The parish is situated on chalk with large areas of later gravel deposit and is a landscape area defined as the South Dorset Downs. With its dry valleys, the land slopes down from the Ridgeway to the river and rises again towards the A35. On the Ridgeway is Black Down with its Hardy Monument situated just inside the adjoining Parish of Portesham.

Situated five miles west of Dorchester, the village lies besides the South Winterbourne and the B3159 road that follows the river. SE of the village is Winterborne St Martin (Martinstown) and NW is Winterbourne Abbas. All these villages bear the name of the river.

## Historic Development and Archaeology

Prehistoric archaeology of the parish is represented by over 49 round barrows, a sub-rectangular enclosure, a long barrow, a linear dyke, a settlement (8 acres east of Loscombe Plantation, still visible on aerial photographs), stones and extensive field remains. Seventeen archaeological features are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Medieval archaeology is represented in the parish by contour strip lynchets that survive from the agricultural open fields system which operated until the C19. Field names called "parks" suggest there may once have been a medieval deer park.

Winterbourne Steepleton is the only continuous settlement in the parish. The Parish Church of St Michael provides one of the earlier dates for the village itself. Quoins at three corners of the nave and a stone carved angel (formerly part of the rood and reset in the south wall of the nave) date back to the first half of the C11, which means they are Saxon. A mill existed in 1332 but its location is uncertain because the current mill is of the C17 onwards. The earliest known date for other properties in the village is late C16 (Old Manor Cottage).

NW of Steepleton Farm, the RCHM (1952) found evidence of settlement plots that continued the line south of the valley road (B3159). In 1841, the Tithe Map Apportionment describes this area as meadow (now developed). SE of Steepleton Manor, there were five or more land plots (1780 Map of the Parish and Manor indicates properties in this area) and NE of the church, there were banked enclosures, again indicated on the 1780 map. In the medieval period, the village was greater in area and

the road system more involved as referred to below. Medieval (if not earlier) field boundaries survive in present property boundaries and outside the village, some boundaries align with prehistoric field boundaries and may well be survivals. There remains an important visual and physical connection between areas of medieval settlement (both surviving and former) and associated strip fields.

At the NW end of the village is a staggered crossroads, where the valley road (B3159) is joined by Coombe Rd, part of a medieval route (Abbot's Way) from Abbotsbury to Cerne Abbas. On the north side of the crossroads are ponds, bridged by the medieval route (originally there was a ford) that continues uphill to join the Dorchester/Bridport Rd (A35). From this trunk road (former turnpike) an extension to Mill Lane, provided access to the village centre, including the watermill and the Parish Church. This is evident on the 1811 OS Map and 1841 Tithe Map and represented today by the right of way S59/1. Another old road is represented by right of way S59/3 that leaves the valley road near Steepleton Farm and travels towards Black Down in the south of the parish. Whilst the village is mainly linear, following the valley road, other interconnecting roads, most of which are now rights of ways, allow travel to and from the village via the downland.

In 1869/70, the old manor farm diagonally opposite the church was demolished, along with its yard and barns, in order to accommodate a new manor house (Steepleton Manor), stables, coach house and garden walls. A cottage attached to the SE side of Old Manor Cottage was also demolished. The new manor house represented the biggest change in the village of the C19. In the C20, it was housing development that marked the greatest change to the size and form of the village, slightly extending it to the SE and intensifying it between Steepleton Farm and Boxenhedge Farm to the NW.

The farming tradition, albeit once represented by a number of working farms and a corn mill, is a tradition continued by Manor Farm. This farm (once called Titherley Farm) took its title after the original manor farm was demolished for the construction of Steepleton Manor.

There is also an extensive watermill legacy. A study by Crumbleholme (2011) describes the C19 water engineering for the corn mill – at the NW staggered crossroads, the South Winterbourne flowed into storage ponds and then some distance along a mill stream with its regulatory weirs and hatches, to the mill. The mill stream is higher than the current course of the river that runs by the B3159 (the river was diverted alongside the road after 1841, which suggests that the mill stream was originally a controlled length of river). At the mill, the mill stream supplied water to a walled and deep pond which allowed the miller to select one of two water wheels and regulate it by adjusting a final hatch. When the mill was not in use an opened bypass hatch let the water flow directly into the tail race pond, named locally The Creek, and then under the road into the river. The water engineering is evident today but its condition varies considerably.

The village pound (some walling and a gate) is situated at Old Pound Cottage.

The archaeological issues are:

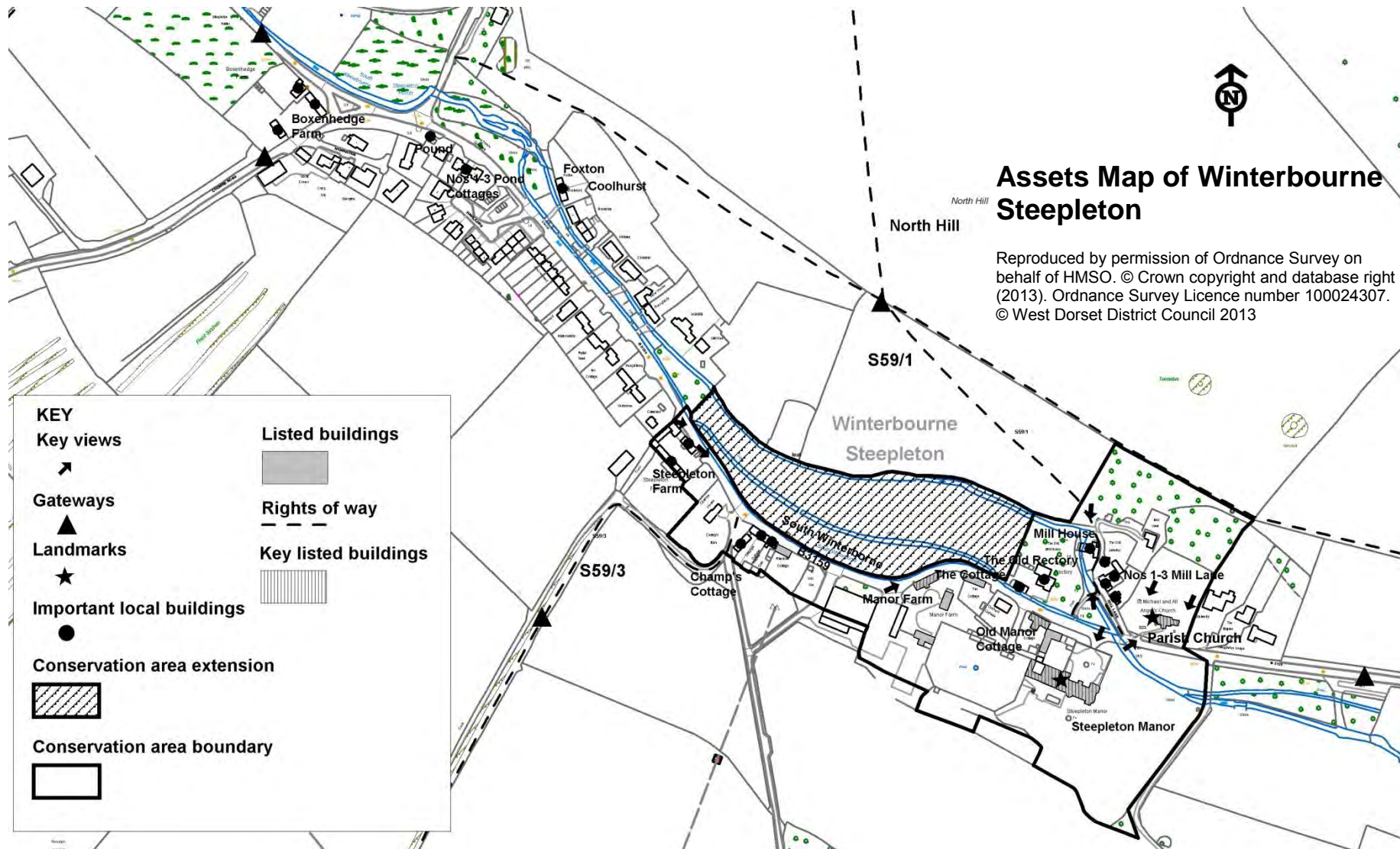
- Preservation of field and settlement plots and their boundaries
- Greater understanding of the early village, including its extent and road system
- Greater understanding and preservation of the water milling legacy, including the site/s of earlier mills
- Greater appreciation of the pound
- Investigation of a possible deer park



Fig 3 Mill Lane now right of way S59/1



Fig 4 Manor Farm





## Spatial and Character Analysis (also refer to Assets Map)

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

Winterbourne Steepleton follows the South Winterbourne valley road (B3159) and is linear in form, although there is a slight pull away from the valley floor at Mill Lane with its former corn mill and mill house.

Between the Parish Church and Steepleton Farm, the late C19 village layout is strongly evident with properties interspersed with or surrounded by spaces that can be farmyard, garden, parkland, woodland or meadow. NW from Steepleton Farm, the C19 layout, which extends beyond the conservation area, is much less evident due to C20 development. This sense of space around buildings, including the Parish Church is a key characteristic of the village.

Another key characteristic is the physical and visual connection with the farmed countryside, which abuts the historic limits of the village.

Corresponding with the C19 layout, there remains overall, generous and irregular property land plots, an exception being the mill and mill house with its land plot constrained by Mill Lane, the mill stream and ponds. C20 infill development has reduced the size of some plots and where housing has been built on meadow, a regular plot shape and size has been introduced.

Old cottages, farmhouses and buildings generally define the edge of the valley road and Mill Lane, particularly their front facades; an exception is Manor Farm that has its back to the road. The more prestigious old properties (Steepleton Manor and ancillary buildings, The Old Rectory) respond to the valley road but are set back. Other cottages face the road but are separated from it by the South Winterbourne and the mill stream (Faxton and Coolhurst). Most C20 properties face the valley road but keep away from it, and at Hamlands and Newhaven, untraditional cul-de-sacs rise above the level of the road.



Fig 5 View of Old Manor Cottage & Steepleton Manor stables (left) & garden boundary of The Old Rectory (right)



Fig 6 View of the former mill from the lower pond (The Creek) with Mill Lane on the right

In between properties and where properties are absent on the highway important linkages pull (visually and physically) the village together and these are the South Winterbourne River, the mill stream and ponds, railings and bridge parapets, boundary walls and hedgerows. These linkages are a key characteristic.

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

On a double bend at the entrance to Manor Farm, there are attractive views and glimpses of woodland, sloping farmland, garden and old farm buildings, whilst a wall runs round to the farmhouse with its strong outline of gables and chimneys. Opposite, is the South Winterbourne River with its interesting chalk bed and clear water constrained by a concrete revetment on the roadside and a hedge or wall on the other. Adjoining the river is meadow which is bordered by the tree and shrub lined mill stream from which then rises the north downland. Ahead woodland is visible, whereas the road suddenly disappears behind the farmhouse, whose horizontal banding, adds to a sense of movement and anticipation. At this point, a look backwards underpins the important definition of the valley road by the river, trees, hedge, the group of cottages (Riverside, Corner, Champ's) and Steepleton Farm. Turning the corner, which is defined by trees, hedge, boundary wall and then The Cottage, the important group of The Old Rectory, stables, boundary wall and the former Sunday School come into view. At this stage, there is also a glimpse of Old Manor Cottage with trees opposite as well as ahead. The river runs on towards another but more slight bend. Passing the Sunday School and continuing to follow the river, again with boundary wall on one side, a fuller view of the quietly impressive Rectory, set back in its treed garden can be enjoyed, as can the Old Manor Cottage opposite, whose entrance allows glimpses of woodland and downland to the south. The road then appears wider due to the stables of Steepleton Manor being set back behind grass verge, allowing a short drive up to the Manor's grand entrance. Verge and tall trees signify the other side of the entrance, which comprises arcaded wall abutting ornate piers with decorative iron gates. Some distance behind the gates stands the Manor with sky, downland and woodland forming a backdrop. Stopping at this point, the river is seen to disappear under the road only to emerge on the opposite side, whilst the road continues, this time without the river as company.

## Gateways

### *Eastern Gateway*

The eastern entrance or gateway is an impressive length of valley road lined by trees and hedgerow with farmland on either side. Near the entry into the conservation area, the landmark Parish Church becomes visible (varies according to the seasons), as does Old Manor Cottage. Further along on the left, the SE elevation of Steepleton Manor appears in an attractive view of trees, woodland, parkland and downland with the river running through, whilst on the right is the churchyard with a background of woodland.

### *NW Gateway*

From the direction of Winterbourne Abbas, the NW gateway runs alongside the river with fields and hedgerows on either side, giving way to a verge side sarcen stone, treed garden and stone boundary wall at Boxenhedge Farm. By the interesting farm group, the gateway opens out due to broad highway verges (with ditches) and the ponds through which the river flows. Above hedgerow and woodland are glimpses of downland. The farm, particularly its longer barn, trees and wide green verges, the river and the ponds, define the corners of the staggered junction with Coombe Rd and complements its rural



Fig 7 Steepleton Manor



Fig 8 Parish Church

character, much of which has been retained. The small triangular green is also an attractive feature in views. Moving on, the gateway has river and woodland on the left and on the right, the partial remains of the old pound, a cluster of garages and a line of dwellings, amongst which are the early C19 Nos 1-3 Pond Cottages with their unified appearance. In front of the dwellings, the highway verge is interrupted by access road, pull-ins and driveways. On the right, the river with its grassy, roadside bank (with a saracen stone) continues with a far bank of stone revetment, trees and shrubs that are interspersed with bridges, some of which are old. Dwellings set behind the river and the parallel mill stream include the originally older Faxton and Coolhurst cottages. The road is straight and ahead is a view of woodland and a tiny hint of a bend, at which point, the conservation area is entered with an opening out of views on the left towards meadow, lines of trees, woodland and downland and a closure on the right, by the closeness of Steepleton Farm. Straight ahead, Manor Farm is a focal point.

#### *Old Road (Right of Way S59/3) Gateway*

Descending the downland on the southerly side of the village, partly on and partly alongside the old road (S59/3), there is a significant panorama. On the right of this gateway into the conservation area is verge and overgrown sunken old road that adjoins a hedgerow and on the left, a wire fence and pasture with remnant boundary hedges. Ahead is the village, nestling amongst trees and woodland and above the village, to the north, are the trees and hedgerows of early field boundaries and above them, the horizon where the downland with its tumulus (prehistoric graves) meet sky. Continuing down to the rear of Steepleton Farm (farm buildings visible) and Champ's House, the old road turns sharp right and becomes defined by steep banks, hedgerows and mature trees, which establish an intimate space that contrasts the more open downland. The old road then enters the conservation area and meets the valley road after passing former farm buildings at Champ's Cottage.

#### *Mill Lane and Right of Way S59/1 Gateway*

Descending the downland on right of way S59/1 (passing through Open Access Land), which was formerly a continuation of the old road, Mill Lane, there is, on the left, steeply sloping pasture and scrub with an immediate horizon of sky; ahead the old road leading towards mature trees that mark its boundary; and to the right, a succession of impressive panoramas and views over the village and beyond. In these views and panoramas, the foreground is pasture and meadow divided by the line of trees and shrubs that border the mill stream. The village and valley road, complemented by the close proximity of parkland, trees, woodland and hedgerow, form the middle ground with Steepleton Manor, Manor Farm and outbuildings, Riverside Cottage, Corner Cottage, Champ's Cottage and The Cottage figuring more prominently. In winter, such properties would be more prominent again and others, including the Parish Church and former rectory, more visible. Thatched roofs add to the visual softness and the diaper patterned tiled roof of the Manor is a point of additional interest. Behind the village, mature trees dot the downland, which then sweeps up to the horizon, only to be interrupted by areas of woodland. Pylons on the horizon are a distraction. Arrival at the entry into the conservation area is marked by the veteran sycamore tree on the old road's boundary and by nearby woodland. At this point too, the mill stream joins the higher mill pond.



Fig 9 View over village to north downland from right of way S59/3



Fig 10 View over mill stream & Manor Farm to south downland from right of way S59/1

## Key Views and Panoramas

Examples of views (see also *Character and Interrelationship of Spaces and Gateways*) that highlight the significance of the village's rural character and countryside setting are as follows:

- The full and partial views of Steepleton Manor from and near its main entrance with river, trees and downland complementing the scene;
- View from right of way S59/31 standing on the foot bridge over The Creek and looking towards the former mill;
- The view of the Parish Church against a backdrop of woodland from the churchyard wall and entrance gate;
- Southwards from the churchyard with views comprising downland, woodland, trees, parkland and Steepleton Manor;
- Northwards from the valley road (Steepleton Farm to Orchard Cottage stretch), views of the river alongside the road and beyond, over the hedged or walled boundary, across meadow to the mill stream, woodland and downland;
- From outside Steepleton Farm the view towards Champ's Cottage and former farm buildings, Corner Cottage and Riverside Cottage;
- The view southwards from right of way S59/1 over the upper pond and the former mill towards the roof top of Steepleton Manor and the woodland and downland beyond.

## Landmarks

The landmarks are the Parish Church and Steepleton Manor.

## Character Analysis

### Building Uses

The most predominant use today is residential. Other uses are community (Parish Church), residential care home (Steepleton Manor), B&B (The Old Rectory) and farming (Manor Farm).

Judging by references on OS maps, the mill may have continued into the early C20. Both the mill and the mill house were part of the 1962 sale of the Steepleton Manor Estate and today are a private residence. Again with reference to OS maps, it appears that the former Sunday School in front of The Old Rectory closed sometime between 1888 and 1903. On later maps, the building is identified as a club.

In 1869/70, Steepleton Manor Farm was demolished to make room for the construction of Steepleton Manor, the new manor house. The manor house changed ownership in 1962 and thereafter, becoming a private residential care home in 1996.



Fig 11 View southwards from the churchyard



Fig 12 Sunday School

## Building Types

### *Religious*

The RCHM considers the Parish Church of St Michael important for the retention of three Saxon quoins and the carved Saxon angel that was once part of the rood (a crucifix commonly placed above a church doorway) and now reset in the nave's south wall. The nave was rebuilt in the C12 and the west tower and south porch added in the C14. The chancel was rebuilt in the C15 and the C18 Lambert vault built on the site of a C15 N chapel. The church was restored in 1902.

### *Industrial*

The mill house is C17 but was partly rebuilt and had a wing added in the C18. The adjoining water mill was rebuilt in the late C18. In the C20, other changes took place, for example, conversion of the mill to residential and a kitchen extension.

### *Educational*

The late C18 – early C19 Sunday School may well have been initiated by the Reverend Jackson who was the rector at the time and had been master of the free school at Christchurch.

### *Vernacular cottages (reflect local design)*

Examples inside and outside the conservation area are as follows:

- Old Manor Cottage was built in the late C16 of 1½ storeys and was increased to two storeys in the C17. The original plan comprised a main range of three rooms and a back wing accessed from a through passage. An entrance doorway, hall and staircase were inserted later, thereby reducing the size of the east, ground floor room.
- The Cottage is two storeys dating from the late C17 with an attached 1½ storey outhouse that is possibly later. The off centre entrance doorway on the roadside was blocked in the late C20 and a window inserted. Was this doorway originally to a cross passage with rooms either side?
- Nos 1-3 Mill Lane are early - mid C19, two storeys cottages that were originally 1½ storeys and have features that date back to the late C16 or early C17.
- Riverside Cottage was built in the C17 as 1½ storeys that was heightened to two storeys. The plan comprises two rooms and a central passageway later replaced by a stairway.
- Corner Cottage (called Champ's Cottage by the RCHM) is two storeys of the early C18, originally with two rooms - the larger with the gable end fireplace and entrance, separated from the smaller by a muntin and plank partition.
- Faxton and Coolhurst are semi-detached cottages that have undergone mid C20 alterations and possibly an increase in height to two storeys. It is likely that the cottages were originally earlier (C18?).

### *Vernacular farmhouses*

Manor Farm is two storeys plus attics and was built in the early C17, although then, the NE end was only one storey high. The original ground floor plan comprised three rooms with a service room at the NE end. The middle of the house now has a study or office arrangement and the staircase is C19. The house has its back to the road, so the front entrance is signified by a two storey porch on the garden side.

Steepleton Farm and Boxenhedge Farm are two storey farmhouses that are likely to be earlier than their mainly C19 appearance suggests.



Fig 13 No 3 Mill Lane



Fig 14 The Cottage

*Polite houses (fashionable architectural style rather than local vernacular)*

Steepleton Manor was designed by the architect T H Wyatt and completed in 1870. The main part of the house is 2½ storeys and E shape on plan, whereas adjoining service rooms are single storey and grouped around a covered courtyard.

The Old Rectory was built in 1850/51 to the design of the architect R C Hussey. A two storey, double pile house (a row of rooms front and back) with a two storey end wing to the SE, two adjoining rear wings of two storeys and a single storey back hall to the NW.

*Polite cottages*

Nos 1-3 Pond Cottages are late C19 estate workers cottages of two storeys with an H shape plan plus a central wing at the rear.

*Farmyard buildings*

Inside and outside the conservation area is a broad range that reflects the village's farming tradition, such as barns (late C18 – early C19 at Manor Farm; C18 with C20 conversion to cottage at Manor Farm; mainly C19 at Boxenhedge Farm; C18-C19 at Steepleton Farm); stables, hay lofts, cart sheds and stores (late C19 at Manor Farm; C18 (?) at Boxenhedge Farm) and sheds (early – mid C19 at Champ's Cottage; late C19 at Steepleton Farm).

*Ancillary buildings to polite houses*

There are separate stables (1870 at Steepleton Manor; 1850/51 at The Old Rectory) and coach houses (1870 at Steepleton Manor) to serve the household.

Key Listed Buildings

Within the conservation area, there are 14 listed building entries, and of those, the key listed buildings are:

- Parish Church of St Michael (Grade I) – early C11 stone angel (reset in nave wall) and quoins at three corners of the nave which was rebuilt in the C12; west tower and south porch added in the C14; chancel rebuilt in the C15; church restored in 1902.
- Steepleton Manor with intact stables, courtyard walls and gates (Grade II) – 1870 to the design of architect T H Wyatt for W C Lambert; E plan of two storeys and attics with single storey service range off the NW end.
- Old Manor Cottage (Grade II) – late C16 with C17 heightening; former farmhouse.
- Manor Farmhouse (Grade II\*) – early C17 with later heightening at the north end.
- The Cottage (Grade II) – late C17 with outhouse at east end.

Important Local Buildings

There are unlisted buildings and structures (inside and outside the conservation area), which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area and its gateways and therefore considered Important Local Buildings:

- Faxton and Coolhurst, much altered semi-detached cottages of stone and clay pantiles, representing the much earlier terraced cottages that stood behind the mill stream.



Fig 15 The Old Rectory



Fig 16 Steepleton Manor stables (left)

- Mill House and former mill, Mill Lane, together with the upper and lower ponds and stone revetments/walls – the former mill house and corn mill are shown in their present location on the 1780 Map of the Manor and Parish. The RCHM (1970) described the mill house as C17 and two storeys with stone rubble walls and a slate roof that was partly rebuilt in brick and had a wing added in C18. The description also states that the original mill house comprised a room with a chimney at one end and a small room off it at the other end now divided for a staircase. In 1889, the miller, William Elford was also a baker suggesting an oven on the premises. The RCHM considers the corn mill to be a late C18 rebuild. Other changes took place in C20, for example, conversion of the mill to residential, a kitchen extension and dormer windows. In 1987, a SPAB visit to the mill found two separate overshot waterwheels made by H G Martin of Dorchester, set abreast with a 2.4 metres diameter. The wheel 1.8 metres wide drove the machinery (little remains) for grinding the corn, whilst the wheel 0.45 metre wide drove 2 ram pumps to supply the village with water using a large header tank. The survey also found a section of millstone set in the riverbank, west of the small footbridge adjacent to the Old Rectory. Today, there is a mill stone and two iron wheels lying against the property's fence in Mill Lane. The mill, mill house and ponds are of historic interest and form an important group that is of group value with Nos 1-3, The Old Laundry & Garden Cottage.
- Nos 1-3, The Old Laundry & Garden Cottage, Mill Lane – cottages in Mill Lane are shown on the Map of the Manor 1780, although detached (The Old Laundry) and attached buildings (Garden Cottage) appear in the C19. The RCHM describes Nos 1-3 as early to mid C19 but including some banded flint and rubble walling of the late C16 or early C17. This corresponds with old photographs that show these cottages as 1½ storey and thatched with banded walling to the semi-detached Nos 2 & 3. Nos 1-3 have therefore undergone change, for example, external stonework heightened to two storeys and consequently new roofs slated, relocation of the front door and brick side extension to No 1, whereas the more intact No 3 only has retained multi paned, timber casement windows, some with arched heads, along with its half glazed timber boarded door. Garden Cottage and The Old Laundry appear to be C20 residential conversions, although the latter is shown on the 1857 village print by John Pouncy (Edwards, 2006). The single storey Garden Cottage (attached to No 3) is built of slate and stone with some flint and brick. Brick dressings surround timber windows. The Old Laundry is two storeys and constructed of stone and slate with brick dressings around timber windows and a timber front door that has a double pitched canopy.

Forming an historic group, that defines the easterly edge of Mill Lane, these properties also have group value with the former mill, mill house and mill ponds.

- The mill stream, weirs and hatches and all other water engineering historically associated with the corn mill and its ponds.
- The old bridges (Boxenhedge Farm to Steepleton Manor) either over the ponds, the mill stream or the river, for example, leading to The Old Rectory and nearby, the entry to right of way S59/31 from the valley road to Mill Lane.



Fig 17 The former mill



Fig 18 The Old Laundry (left) & Garden Cottage (right)

- The Old Rectory, Sunday School, outbuildings and boundary walls – the rectory was first rebuilt (1795-96) for the Reverend Jackson who was master of the free school at Christchurch. During the residence of Reverend Green, the rectory was rebuilt again in 1850/51 to the design of the architect R C Hussey (1835 he went into partnership with Thomas Rickman who was of great importance in the history of the Gothic Revival) by the Dorchester builder John Wellspring. According to Edwards (2006), stone was used from the demolished rectory with additional stone from local quarries. The rectory is a two storey, double pile house (a row of rooms front and back) with a two storey end wing to the SE that protrudes beyond the front row of rooms or main elevation and runs back to join the rear row of rooms or back elevation that is slightly longer in length. The back elevation has two adjoining wings of two storeys and to the NW is a single storey, attached back entrance hall (?). The double pitched roofs are slate, whilst the walls are constructed of coursed and squared stone rubble with stone dressings. Although restrained, the architectural detailing provides the rectory with both status and visual balance. For instance, chimneys are used to great visual effect, such as the broad chimney that projects from the gable wall of the end wing, rises well above the stone parapet and finishes with a corniced, Hamstone (?) stack. The NW gables (M shaped) to the front and back of the rectory have a projecting chimney sandwiched between them. This chimney has four (originally there were only two) corniced Hamstone (?) stacks rising above the apex of the gable parapets and at a lower level, an arched recess allows rain water to discharge off the main roofs into a downpipe and hopper head. This interesting ensemble is clearly visible from the road. Other vertical elements that emphasize status are at least six gables on the main building and the tall, stone mullioned and transomed windows with their timber sashes, which at first floor level have coped lucarnes. Such emphasis is however balanced by the rhythm of the windows, the cast iron downpipes and the horizontal drip course that wraps around just above first floor level. Situated in an internal corner is the recessed, arched entrance doorway with a timber panelled door.

Immediately west of the former rectory, the other sides of a courtyard are defined by stone and slate ancillary buildings, garages (former stables?), high boundary wall and a former Sunday School. The late C18 – early C19 Sunday School abuts the river and differs in material and detail, implying a different construction date to that of the rectory. Rectangular in form and 1½ storey, the roughcast and clay pantile school has two, rear dormer windows and three roof lights (recent) at the front and small gable windows lighting an attic. Lighting the ground floor are three mullioned windows with Hamstone surrounds and hood moulds. The front windows have three lights with leaded metal frames and the NW gable window is the same but of two lights. The stone stepped front entrance comprises an arched, timber boarded door with cover strips forming a pattern, surrounded by chamfered Hamstone. At the foot of the gable walls, there are knee stones. The school also defines one side of the main entrance, whilst on the other side is a high garden wall that runs alongside the river before turning in a northerly direction.

The former rectory, the courtyard buildings, boundary walls and Sunday School are of special interest, enhance views and glimpses from the valley road and form an important group. This group is also of group value with the Old Manor Cottage and the stables of Steepleton Manor.

- Corner Cottage, Champ's Cottage and associated buildings – the land plot to the properties was described in 1841 as “dwelling house, barn, stable and yard”. The RCHM (1952) describes the early C18 Champ's Cottage as two storeys, built of squared rubble and thatch, on plan comprising two rooms; the larger with a fireplace and entrance in the gable end and separated from a smaller room by a moulded muntin and plank partition. In general, this description actually fits today's semi-detached Corner Cottage and not necessarily its immediate neighbour Champ's



Fig 19 NW gables of The Old Rectory



Fig 20 Farm building at Champ's Cottage



Cottage. (A pair called Champ's Cottage's were for sale in 1962). At ground floor level, stonework runs across the front of both Corner and Champ's Cottage but at first floor level, Champ's Cottage has render with stone dressings, along with a higher eaves and window heights, representing raised ceilings. The cottage has a clay tiled roof, whereas Corner Cottage retains a thatched roof. Behind or attached to the cottages are buildings very possibly associated with the farm that in the late C18 was leased to a Mr Champ, for example, the mainly stone/flint stable/shed on the rear boundary. Immediately behind Corner Cottage are two semi-detached, single storey, coursed rubble stone buildings. One is covered by a hipped corrugated sheet roof from which protrudes a small brick chimney and the other by a single pitched corrugated sheet roof. There are two timber boarded doors and the semi glazed one is set in a particularly wide doorway. On its NW side, Champ's Cottage has an attached, single storey, open ended, stone and timber boarded building with a metal sheeted roof. At the rear of this on the boundary is a long, single storey farm building of stone rubble with a roof of interlocking clay tiles and metal sheeting. The NW elevation has one full height, open entrance and three lower openings with timber double doors, whereas the SW gable has a multi paned, glazed, timber window with a timber lintel. The timber roof structure and internal timber boarded partitions are evident. As part of the farming legacy, the cottages and associated buildings are of special interest, forming an important group that is seen from the valley road, the former old road, right of way S59/3 and the old road to the north (right of way S59/1) and has group value with the adjacent, listed Riverside Cottage.

- Steepleton Farm and associated buildings – in 1841, this was described as “dwelling house, stable, barn and plot”, which refers to those buildings fronting the road; an arrangement evident on the 1780 Map of the Manor. By the late C19, there was a long, parallel shed in the rear plot. Attached to the substantial, two storeys house that is built of rubble stone and slate is a range of three roadside barns varying in height. The roof finish is corrugated iron sheet, whilst walls seem to comprise stone, cob, brick, corrugated sheet and possibly timber boarding. At the rear is a newly repaired and impressive stone and timber framed, single storey shed (cow stalls?) with a hipped, interlocking Roman tile roof (recently repaired). The shed is generally enclosed using corrugated sheeting. The farm, barns and long shed are part of the farming legacy and as a group are important in views from the valley road and right of way S59/3, a former road.
- Nos 1-3 Pond Cottages – two storeys terrace of purpose built, estate workers cottages that are probably early Victorian and evident on the 1888 OS map, having an H shaped plan with an additional wing at the rear for the central cottage. The cottages are built of squared stone rubble with brick quoins and concrete interlocking tiles. The arched windows have rock-faced stone dressings on the first floor and finished dressings on the ground floor. The elevations with eaves have lucarne (rectangular, stone headed) windows at first floor. No 3 has timber multi-paned casement and top hung windows of one, two or three lights. Both front and back doors have porches of exposed timber framing supporting a double pitched plain clay tile roof. The terrace with its symmetry, steep roofs and three chimneys is a focal point along the NW gateway and an important example of late C19 cottages for village workers.
- Boxenhedge Farm and associated buildings – situated on the corner where Coombe Rd meets the valley road, the farm is shown on the 1780 Map of the Manor and was described as a “dwelling house and premises” in 1841. Today, the farm comprises a farmhouse, barn, stable/store (?), small roadside ruin and boundary and garden walls. On the valley road side, with its SE end wall defining the corner with Coombe Rd, is the long barn. The mainly C19 barn has at least two periods of construction – walls with lower courses of stone with some flint (C18?) and upper courses mainly of stone/flint with brick quoins and some brick banding under a hipped, asbestos (?) slate roof. The NW end of the barn accommodates a garage, whilst at its centre, giving access onto the valley road, are strap hinged, tall, boarded double doors (hidden by ivy), opposite which, in the back wall, is a similar sized doorway but with metal



Fig 21 Long shed at Steepleton Farm



Fig 22 Nos 1-3 Pond Cottages

doors. The SE end of the barn has a window opening (covered with metal sheet), whilst the ESE corner (third stone above ground) has a cut bench mark dating from 1840-60. The farmhouse is adjacent to the long barn and end on to the valley road. It is built of coursed, squared rubble stone and clay, interlocking Roman tile, although rear lean-tos are stone (earlier blocked window on roadside) and brick with modern tiles. The farmhouse appears to have undergone modern refurbishment. There is a flush bracket bench mark on the NE face of the farmhouse behind a flower bed. Across the farmyard, opposite the long barn, is a stable/store (?) that is end on to Coombe Rd. In 1780, a farm building was in this position. There has been change, alteration and repair, for example as implied in the varied walling material – coursed, dressed stone, coursed and random rubble stone, brick, and flintwork; all under a corrugated iron roof that suggests thatch originally. Facing the yard is a central doorway with stone reveals and a stone buttress on one side. Walling, roofing and wall plate removal has resulted in a gap above the doorway's lintel. To the left of the buttress is a window with a timber lintel, frame and vertical louvres and to the right of the doorway, a window with a timber lintel and multi paned timber casement in a blocked opening. Further along again is a patched, boarded door with a timber frame and lintel, accessed by two stone steps. The roadside gable has an apex of boarded timber framing and a ground floor window opening with a timber frame. At the rear, there appears to be areas of fallen wall. Inside the stable, there is possibly a stone floor, timber stalls and a loft above. In the yard, adjoining the long barn and constituting the roadside boundary, is the ruin of a stone and flint farm building (mapped in 1780) with an enclosed outdoor area. The boundary and garden walls are stone and flint and where capped, flint and mortar have been used.

The farm is an important group that reflects the farming tradition of Winterbourne Steepleton and is a focal point that enhances the NW gateway into the conservation area. The farm's special interest is complemented by the often interconnecting boundary and garden walls.

- The Old Pound – 2¼ sides of a former rectangle (as shown on the 1888 OS map) of low stone wall with stone gate posts and a Dorset style, timber, crossed braced gate with metal bars.
- There are at least three sarcen stones either in the conservation area or the NW gateway – outside Boxenhedge Farm in the valley road verge, on the bank side of the river near Alder House and adjoining the boundary wall near Champ's Cottage.

### Important Building Groups

Important building groups are as follows: Boxenhedge Farm and associated buildings; the former mill, mill house and pond (The Creek) together with Nos 1-3, The Old Laundry & Garden Cottage, Mill Lane; Corner Cottage, Champ's Cottage and associated buildings; Steepleton Farm and associated buildings; The Old Rectory, Sunday School, outbuildings and boundary walls together with Old Manor Cottage and the stables of Steepleton Manor; Steepleton Manor, its coach house and stables and Old Manor Cottage; and Manor Farm and associated buildings.

### Traditional Building Materials and Architectural Details

#### *Building wall*

The nearest sources of Purbeck and Portland stone were the Ridgeway quarries between Portesham and Poxwell. The quarry at Upwey is believed to be one source.



Fig 23 Old stables at Boxenhedge Farm



Fig 24 Low wall & gate of the Pound

Ridgeway Purbeck is the predominant stone in the village, although larger houses (Steepleton Manor, The Old Rectory) and the Parish Church make use of Portland stone, which in the case of the manor has a rock faced finish. A local material was flint and this is sometimes used in walling, especially farm buildings (Boxenhedge Farm, Steepleton Farm, Manor Farm) but is also seen as banding (No 3 Mill Lane, Manor Farm, The Cottage) in stone walls. Cob is not easily evident but is used in the end barn of Steepleton Farm. Hamstone, from Somerset, is used (Manor Farm, Steepleton Manor, Parish Church) occasionally for dressings, as is brick (Pond Cottages, former mill), which is also banded in the long barn of Boxenhedge Farm. External render is uncommon but an example is the roughcast on the Sunday School.

### *Roofs*

There was a strong thatching tradition that is still reflected in an important number of thatched buildings (Old Manor Cottage, The Cottage, barn and cottage at Manor Farm, Riverside Cottage, Corner Cottage). Otherwise slate is often used, as for example on the Parish Church, former mill and mill house, Nos 1-3 Mill Lane and The Old Rectory. There are also different types of clay tile – pantiles (Sunday School), interlocking (Pond Cottages, farm building at Champ's Cottage), plain tiles (Manor Farm, Steepleton Manor and stables/coach house), plain tiles in diaper pattern (Steepleton Manor) and interlocking Roman (long shed at Steepleton Farm, house at Boxenhedge Farm). Several farm buildings have corrugated iron sheeting that can indicate a former thatched roof covering.

### *Windows*

Earlier stone cottages and farmhouses mainly have stone mullioned windows with iron casements (Manor Farmhouse, Old Manor Cottage) with and without hood moulds. Manor Farmhouse has an unusual C18 mullion window with a round arched window over, lighting a staircase.

Multi-paned, timber fixed and casement windows are evident in C19 cottages, whereas C19 houses have stone mullioned and transomed windows with timber sashes (Steepleton Manor, The Old Rectory). These houses also introduced new features such as lucarnes (Steepleton Manor, The Old Rectory, Nos 1-3 Pond Cottages) and oriel and bays windows (Steepleton Manor). The late C18 - early C19 Sunday School has stone mullioned windows with metal frames. There is modest use of dormer windows (some C20), which tend to be on roof slopes facing away from the road and even fewer roof lights (mostly C21).

### *Doors and porches*

Old Manor Cottage has an original late C16 doorway (on the right) with stone, moulded jambs, a recessed head and a C20 boarded door, whereas on the left, a later doorway comprises moulded jambs, a C20 timber boarded door and a hood mould above. Manor Farmhouse has a stone tower porch entrance with chamfered stone jambs and segmental head with a C20 plank and muntin door. Most other doors are modern, although the semi-glazed, boarded door of No 3 Mill Lane is an indication of the traditional cottage door, as is the similar door in the stone building at the rear of Corner Cottage and the boarded doors of the cottage at Manor Farm.

The grand two storey stone porch at Steepleton Manor has an entrance with a pointed arch in a square head with deep moulded jambs, decorative spandrels, a hood mould and double doors with recessed timber panels. The Old Rectory has a



Fig 25 Old Manor Cottage



Fig 26 Sunday School entrance

more modest entrance of moulded stone jambs, recessed pointed head and a timber panelled door. The Sunday School is different, whereby cover strips over the joints of the arched, timber boarded door have established a strong vertical pattern.

Apart from the stone porches mentioned above, porches are limited in number, appearing in the late C19 as exposed timber frame supporting a double pitched tile roof (Pond Cottages) and in the C20 as timber boarded, semi enclosed with a plain tile, double pitched roof (semi-detached Faxton and Coolhurst) and stone with pentice (lean to) tile roof and boarded door (The Cottage).

#### *Boundaries*

Boundaries walls are a characteristic feature. Steepleton Manor's roadside boundary is the most prestigious being a low wall of rock faced Portland stone with Hamstone arcading above, together with ornate Hamstone stone piers and ornamental iron gates. Otherwise, boundary walls can be flint, a mixture of flint and stone to varying degrees or all stone with a stone, flint and mortar or just mortar capping. At Manor Farm Cottage, the gate piers are flint with stone quoins and capping. In contrast, near the main entrance to Steepleton Manor, there is patent (early C20?) cast iron post and wire fencing and either side of the road bridge and in front of Old Manor Cottage iron railings with iron and stone posts.

#### Gardens, Hedgerows, Trees and Open Spaces

The South Winterbourne, together with its ponds (includes woodland), green banks, trees, shrubs, hedges, boundary walls and roadside revetment, form a distinctive feature from one end of the village to the other. At the NW end near a property called Faxton, the river divides - the mill stream runs directly in front of dwellings (accessed via bridges) and then through farmland to the former mill, whereas below it, the bridged river follows alongside the road until Mill Lane. This division establishes an ever widening, long island of treed gardens (photographs circa 1900 show tree planting by water before thatched cottages), woodland and meadow (a ditch runs across the meadow) ending in treed and walled garden and woodland either belonging to or adjoining (demarcated by a footpath S59/31) The Old Rectory. The island itself is not only attractive but represents continuity with the historic layout and farming legacy of the village, as well as visual continuity with the downland. In Mill Lane, the mill stream runs into ponds, one behind the former mill, and one in front (The Creek), where it rejoins the roadside river and together, continues under the road and on through the grounds, woodland and parkland of Steepleton Manor. At this point are important southerly views.

The churchyard with its trees is a significant space and interrelates with a less obvious but still significant area at and adjoining the junction of Mill Lane with the valley road. Historically, the important group of buildings (Parish Church, Steepleton Manor [formerly the site of the manor farm], former rectory, former Sunday School, former mill and mill house) in this area would have generated much village activity with the two roads providing public access and would have constituted the heart of the village.

Trees and their importance have already been highlighted, for example regarding key views, gateways, open spaces and gardens. Underlined by the number of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), trees substantially benefit the conservation area and its setting. Other examples of such trees and hedgerows that provide visual and historic interest and act as traditional linkages are as follows:



Fig 27 Railings of road bridge near Steepleton Manor entrance



Fig 28 View towards the Sunday School (left) & the entrance of Steepleton Manor

- SE of Steepleton Manor in its parkland, some ancient pollards that relate to a time when the land was tree pasture belonging to the old manor farm.
- On the southerly side of the village behind Steepleton Manor up to Champ's Cottage are remnants of boundaries that once enclosed the six parallel meadows shown on the 1841 Tithe Map. Today, the boundaries are indicated by trees, (many with TPOs) at varying density that are in line with each other and by the treed edge of later woodland (TPO).
- Starting behind Faxton and continuing SE to just beyond Lamorna, the hedgerows and trees that follow the boundaries of a meadow called Whittles Plot, an adjoining meadow, and adjoining that, a former Glebe meadow (Tithe Map 1841).
- North of the former mill and just outside the conservation area, there is the veteran Sycamore that marks the line (now right of way S59/1) that Mill Lane took over the north downland.
- Behind Champ's House and Steepleton Farm, the hedgerows and small area of woodland that border the old road (right of way S59/3).
- The tree that overhangs the road, situated in the front garden of The Old Rectory.
- The hedgerow alongside the river from The Old Rectory to opposite Steepleton Farm.
- The tall trees on the east side of the main entrance to Steepleton Manor which form a focal point when viewed from the road and the churchyard.

### Detriments

These are the intrusion on The Creek by garaging; the loss of historic details and materials; and poor maintenance of some boundaries and old farmyard buildings.

### General Condition

The buildings and structures in the Conservation Area are generally in good condition, although water milling features, some boundary walls and old farmyard buildings are in need of repair/maintenance.

## **Community Involvement**

The appraisal was subject to public consultation (May-June 2012) during which an information event, manned by district council officers, was held in the village. Comments received helped finalise the appraisal, which was subject to further consultation on a proposed extension to the conservation area.

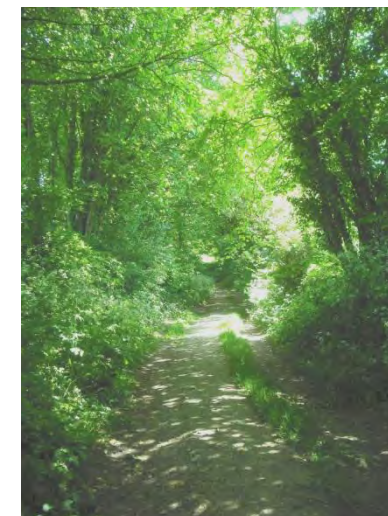


Fig 29 The old road, right of way S59/3

## Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

The existing conservation area boundary encompasses the Parish Church, Steepleton Manor, listed buildings and generally follows the historic limits of the village. The conservation area has been extended to include the pasture land that stretches from the B3159 to the mill stream (see Assets Map on page 8). This boundary extension incorporates the mill stream, the trees (some of which have Tree Preservation Orders) along it and other hydrological features associated with milling in the village. The extension recognises the pasture land's contribution to the conservation area and its setting.

## Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Partners
Standards and methods or 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
A number of unlisted buildings have historic and/or architectural interest	Consider additions to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest	WDDC English Heritage
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
Review conservation area boundary	Consider possible amendments	WDDC Parish Council
The contribution of trees and hedgerows to the character and appearance and setting of the conservation area	Maintain and enhance where possible and support suitable schemes through countryside and conservation grants	WDDC Parish Council
Exchange of archaeological information	Consider how to assist the Dorset Historic Environment Record	WDDC DCC English Heritage SPAB

## Developing Management Proposals

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

- The significant contribution of the landscape setting and trees to the conservation area to be maintained however possible
- Consider additional buildings for listing
- Consider amendments to the conservation area boundary
- Provide the Dorset Historic Environment Record with relevant information as available

## 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.

**Contacts:** West Dorset Design & Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or e-mail [planning@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:planning@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk)

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## Maps

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