

## **Policy Group – 21 June 2017**

### **Purbeck District Conservation Areas review**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to seek recommendation that the draft appraisals and boundary proposals prepared for the Morden and East Creech Conservation Areas be approved for formal adoption.

#### **2. Key issues**

- 2.1 The periodic review of Conservation Areas is a statutory duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Purbeck District has twenty five Conservation Areas, twenty-two of which have been appraised and reviewed since their designation, twenty-one of these since 2008.
- 2.2 Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the importance of ensuring that conservation area designations are justified. This is the key objective of the boundary review, and ensures fairness in the application of controls, and soundness in case of appeal against planning decisions.
- 2.3 The Council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of planning proposals upon conservation areas. This is reflected in paragraph 129 of the NPPF, which requires local planning authorities to assess the significance of heritage assets as part of the development management process. Assessment of significance is a key objective of conservation area character appraisals, and therefore provides the Council with an important part of the required evidence base in decision making.
- 2.4 A six week period of formal public consultation on the draft boundary proposals and appraisals for Morden and East Creech Conservation Areas ran between 7th November and 16th December 2016. Details were sent to the Parish Councils six weeks in advance, and the consultation was subsequently extended until 21st February 2017 to allow further time for comments. Consultation materials were made available online and at Westport House. A leaflet was posted to every property affected and officers attended a Parish meeting. The consultation was advertised through local media and Council newsletters. Comments and responses are summarised in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.5 Copies of the draft conservation area appraisals and the boundary proposals contained in them are contained in **Appendices 2-4**. Councillors may also view colour copies of the documents in the Members' Room at Westport House.

#### **3. Recommendation**

A report be submitted to Council recommending that the appraisals and boundary proposals prepared for the Morden and East Creech Conservation Areas be adopted.

#### **4. Policy issues**

##### **4.1 How will this affect the environment, social issues and the local economy?**

- 4.1.1 The historic environment plays an important role in providing local identity, character and interest to the District, and enhancing the experience and quality of life of people who live, work in or visit it.

4.1.2 The conservation area appraisals will be used to provide guidance on the design of new development, and works requiring planning permissions and consents. It will also be useful where such permissions and consents are not required. This will help to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced in line with the objectives of the NPPF, and policies in the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1, and that it continues to make a positive contribution to the character and quality of the District in general.

4.1.3 The conservation area appraisals will be a useful resource for bodies or individuals wishing to undertake improvement or enhancement works, or whose activities could be designed in such a way to achieve this.

## 4.2 Implications

### 4.2.1 Resources

Costs will be involved in placing advertisements detailing the variation of boundaries as required by statute. These costs can be met from within existing budgets.

### 4.2.2 Equalities

There are no equalities implications.

## 5. Main report

5.1 Plan based boundary proposals arising from the reviews of Morden and East Creech Conservation Areas are attached as **Appendix 2**. Written details are provided below together with statements of justification for the proposed changes.

### 5.1.1 Morden Conservation Area

Due to the dispersed historic development pattern and rural location the original boundary of the conservation area was widely drawn, including significant amounts of open agricultural land and woodland. As far as reasonably possible it is necessary and appropriate to draw a distinction between a settlement and its landscape setting in designating a conservation area. This is because conservation area controls are not applicable to agricultural and forestry operations. In Morden the inclusion of such land is often unavoidable. The spaces between dispersed component parts of the conservation area, together with woodland and historic connecting routes provide important, and to some extent defining aspects of character. Some open land originally included is nonetheless better viewed as forming the setting of the conservation area.

Changes are proposed to the conservation area boundary in order to ensure that the designation is focused on the dispersed area of historic settlement and historic routes, including the important spaces and woodland between.

Modifications will help to ensure that the designation is fit for purpose in line with its statutory definition, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. Elements proposed for removal are:

- open agricultural land north of West Morden, Morden and the road between them;

- forestry and open agricultural land bounded by Quarr Hill to the east, the green lane to Hector's Corner to the west, the A35 to the south, and east Morden Withy Bed to the north.
- woodland and open land north of Whitefield Wood and east of Cold Barrow;
- an irregular piece of land immediately southeast of Brickfield Farm; and,
- an irregular piece of land west of No. 149 Whitefield.

## 5.1.2 East Creech Conservation Area

As originally designated in 1990, the conservation area included not only the hamlet, but large tracts of open land, and some scrub covered wasteland in the surrounding landscape. The boundary itself was arbitrary in places and apparently unrelated to physical features on the ground. As far as reasonably possible it is necessary and appropriate to draw a distinction between a settlement and its landscape setting in designating a conservation area. This is because conservation area controls are not applicable to agricultural and forestry operations. As both East Creech and the whole of the surrounding landscape fall within the AONB – a planning designation specifically designed to conserve landscape character and quality – the setting is itself amply protected.

Changes are proposed to the conservation area boundary in order to more appropriately focus the designation on the built up area of the historic hamlet and well defined open spaces closely related to it. This will ensure that the designation is fit for purpose, in line with its statutory definition, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. The elements proposed for removal are:

- Creech Barrow Hill and land to the east;
- fields and scrub/wasteland to the north and northeast of East Creech Farm;
- East Creech Farm caravan site; and,
- open downland to the south Creech Wood, Chaldecot's Wood and Furlong's Coppice.

## Appendices:

**1 - Consultation feedback**

**2 - Proposals maps**

**3 - Draft Morden Conservation Area Appraisal**

**4 - Draft East Creech Conservation Area Appraisal**

Background papers:

There are none.

For further information contact:

Benjamin Webb, Design and Conservation Officer  
Richard Wilson, Environmental Design Manager

## Purbeck District Conservation Areas Review

### Public consultation: summary of comments and responses

<b>East Creech Conservation Area</b>		
<b>Response number and point</b>	<b>Comments submitted</b>	<b>Response/Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p>The proposed northern boundary of the conservation area should be moved further north to follow the edge of the scrub woodland (and then eastwards to the existing barns behind East Creech Farm). It is located in the heart of the settlement and a prime candidate for development. It is visible in the distance in Fig 2, Fig 6 and Fig 8 in the consultation document.</p>	<p>Conservation area designation does not prevent appropriate development.</p> <p>This proposal would entail drawing a boundary without reference to features on the ground. This is a weakness of the current boundary whose north east line is arbitrary, the space in question merging with open land to the north and poorly differentiated from the caravan site. Though part of the space abuts the main street and forms a gap in the frontage, rising ground levels and the hedge line here provide adequate distinction. The land is otherwise agricultural and can be comfortably viewed as 'setting'.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p>The statement on page 20, para 59 of the Appraisal that "In terms of area covered for all building types however, sheet roofing materials dominate". Is misleading as on its own this statement indicates the Hamlet is dominated by sheet roofing and diminishes the historic and</p>	<p>The section in question makes reference to 'area', and this will be clarified in the Appraisal. Sheet roofing is particularly noticeable in views from Creech Barrow Hill.</p>

	aesthetic “domestic” properties – of which none is adorned with sheet roofing.		
<b>2.1</b>	<p>Page 10, Para 27 states, “Many buildings underwent alteration and or extension of a considerable and sometimes unsympathetic nature during the second half of the 20th Century”.</p> <p>Rather than being perceived as a negative point, this should be a salutary lesson that diminishing the Conservation Area can only have a negative impact on the hamlet in its current context and location.</p>	<p>No dwellings are proposed for removal from the conservation area therefore any controls applicable to extensions will not be affected.</p>	
<b>2.2</b>	<p>Page 19, Para 55 – relates to the sources of brickwork within the Hamlet. Although this is of historical and aesthetic interest, I fail to see the value this adds to the discussion for the reduction of a Conservation Area that does not include buildings. Indeed, as there are no longer brickworks, or indeed a need within the Hamlet for such products, this paragraph is irrelevant to the argument being made.</p>	<p>There appears to have been a misunderstanding. The section referenced forms part of the discussion of materials which characterise development in the hamlet – an essential part of the Appraisal. This is not part of the justification for boundary change.</p>	
<b>2.3</b>	<p>PDC would be remiss to ignore the commercial, social and environmental benefits of retaining the current Conservation Area as it places East Creech in the context of its ancient surroundings, including Creech Barrow, other tumuli and the buried remains of a Roman Villa.</p>	<p>It is unclear what commercial, social or environmental benefits arise from the existing designation. These benefits are not stated by the respondent.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p>What make East Creech so special is the beauty of the buildings as they sit in the surrounding</p>	<p>The relationship between the settlement and its landscape setting is very important in East Creech. In this regard the open</p>	

	<p>countryside. So why end the conservation area at the bottom of the gardens of the cottages on the north of the hamlet and not at the bottom of the gardens of the cottages on the south of the hamlet. The contribution of the trees and green spaces to both the north and south of the hamlet makes East Creech special.</p>	<p>space in question (i.e. to north of Rockley) makes a far less significant contribution than either the hill or down. As discussed in point 1 this space is poorly defined, and is otherwise closely related to modern agricultural development and the caravan site at East Farm, and former quarry workings. Space to the south is less easy to separate from the settlement, is of more historic character, and is bounded by ancient woodland.</p>
<b>3.1</b>	<p>Creech Barrow sits above and is an integral part of the settlement. It in effect defines our settlement and is a reason why we have so many visitors to our hamlet. Creech Barrow is the site of King John's hunting lodge.</p>	<p>Most of the hamlet is located below the hill as opposed to on it. The hill has a strong visual and physical presence within the immediate setting of the hamlet however it is not part of it. At present only part of the hill is included in the designation which itself makes little sense.</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<p>The current southern boundary defines the natural and historic border and boundary to our settlement.</p>	<p>The southern boundary of the existing designation is not 'natural'. Part follows a fence line, part the margin of a quarry. The designation is itself not historic.</p>
<b>3.3</b>	<p>PDC Appraisal does not consider common 'core elements' listed in WDDC appraisals in full – especially historic development and archaeology and land scape setting.</p>	<p>The same elements listed by WDDC are considered in PDC's appraisals, though some of their titles may differ.</p>
<b>3.4</b>	<p>WDDC appraisals state that boundaries have not been changed unless there are obvious abnormalities or other compelling reasons. Why not the same for PDC?</p>	<p>PDC similarly amends or extends boundaries where there is a case for doing so, and has been consistent in this through previous reviews.</p>
<b>3.5</b>	<p>Has PDC consulted the same range of organisations listed in WDDC appraisals – particularly the Environment Agency and English Nature?</p>	<p>Many of the organisations WDDC list are not relevant to the locality in question. The Environment Agency and Natural England are also not directly relevant. There is perhaps</p>

		confusion here between conservation of the built environment and nature conservation.
<b>3.6</b>	It is unclear whether the importance of the diversity of plants and fauna in East Creech have been considered fully if at all.	A section of the appraisal considers this topic.
<b>4</b>	The new boundary removes the two tumuli on Creech Barrow and Stonehill Down. These are of historic interest. The Appraisal overlooks them.	The barrows hold archaeological interest, and reference will be made in the Appraisal. The barrows are scheduled monuments.
<b>4.1</b>	Could a café or viewing platform would be built on Creech Barrow if removed from the conservation area?	Development at the top of Creech Barrow Hill is extremely improbable regardless of the conservation area designation. It is important to note that the whole area remains in the AONB – a specific landscape designation.
<b>5</b>	The historic interest and character of the hamlet is directly connected to the presence of Creech Barrow and the adjacent “common” land including the site of the historic brick works. As these topographical features are so dominant, such a landmark and have such a visual impact on the hamlet they should be retained within the boundary of the conservation area. The hamlet of East Creech is intrinsically linked to this feature both historically and socially from medieval times, indeed it actually gets its name from this prominence.	As the NPPF glossary makes clear, the significance of a heritage asset - such as a conservation area - can be drawn partly from its setting: the surroundings in which it is experienced. Greater stress will be placed on the importance of features within the setting of the hamlet within the appraisal.
<b>5.1</b>	Well-defined open spaces must include the landmark Creech Barrow, its historical “common” and surrounds which define the locality of East	Creech Barrow Hill is a landmark but insofar as its original inclusion is concerned, the boundary is arbitrary. Only part of the hill is actually included.

	<p>Creech as a hamlet distinct from other areas within the parish of Church Knowle. Taking this holistic view of architecture, archaeology and topography rather than differentiating between the different Acts is sufficient justification.</p>	<p>Whilst the original area of the common can be traced on maps and to a lesser extent on the ground, its form and continuity have been entirely compromised by the tramway and tips created across its centre. The scrub woodland established on the tramway embankment and tips forms a clear boundary to the open space through which the road passes. The remainder of the former common lies beyond in the broader setting.</p>
<p><b>5.2</b></p>	<p>Retaining the existing boundary for the conservation area enables local authorities to exercise planning controls over a greater area than revised boundary. In particular this applies to the adjacent open spaces which if removed from the Conservation Area could be seen to have potential building opportunities and thereby actually destroy the notion of East Creech being a distinct hamlet.</p>	<p>Conservation area designation does not prevent appropriate development. Other planning policies are applicable to the location of new development. The whole area falls within the AONB which is a specific landscape designation.</p>
<p><b>5.3</b></p>	<p>To invite comments from local residents on their views on proposed boundary changes and at the same time show the boundary changes have already been implemented with the removal of key areas (shown on map) is undemocratic and contrary to both the spirit and the intent of the Localism Act of 2011.</p>	<p>This reflects an error in labelling the map – no changes had been made. The consultation was on proposed changes.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>No purpose to change the boundaries other than to allow development.</p>	<p>The review is not connected to finding new sites for development. In this regard the designation does not prevent appropriate development from occurring.</p>



<p><b>6.1</b></p>	<p>The boundary defines the hamlet.</p>	<p>The function of the conservation area boundary is to define an area within which certain controls over permitted development exist, and where statutory considerations in regard to development requiring planning permissions apply. It is not the role of the conservation area boundary to define the settlement.</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p>Ambience of the hamlet lies in the natural green environment.</p>	<p>As also noted in comments above, the landscape setting is important and this can be given greater emphasis in the Appraisal.</p>
<p><b>7.1</b></p>	<p>Likelihood of more development if the boundary changes, especially at East Creech Farm.</p>	<p>Development has occurred at East Creech Farm regardless of the conservation area boundary and this is underlined by the current conservation area boundary which bears no relation to the current layout of the site. The conservation area does not prevent appropriate development.</p>

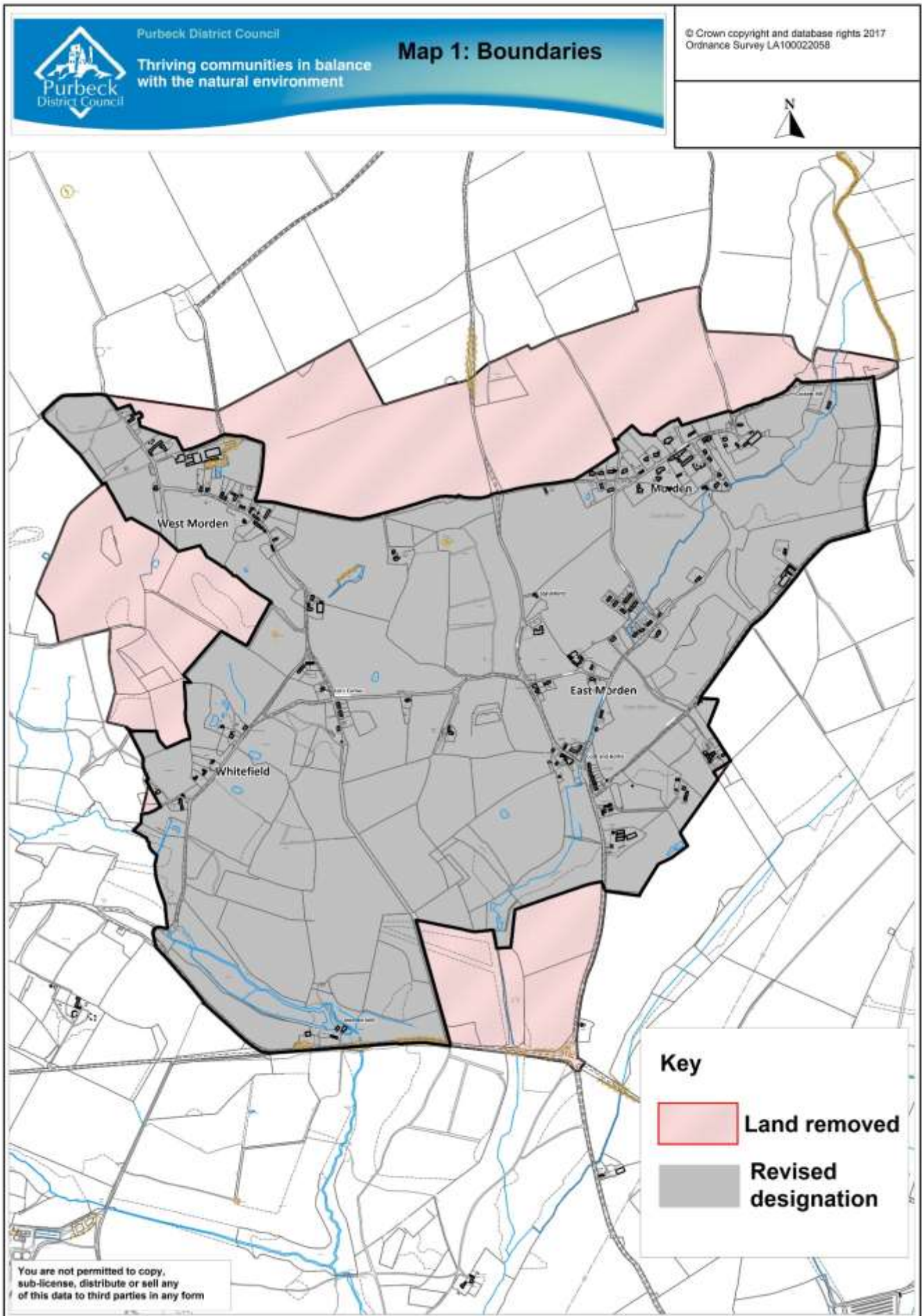
<b>Morden Conservation Area</b>		
<b>Response number and point</b>	<b>Comments submitted</b>	<b>Response/Action</b>
<b>1</b>	<p>The PC would have liked to have been engaged at an earlier stage when PDC were collating their ideas, to have been provided with more information online and distributed in hard copy for residents and councillors, more evidence that changes conform to the recommended criteria, better maps, and better feedback.</p>	<p>A pre-review phase of consultation was tried in a number of past reviews including the reviews of Swanage and Wareham conservation areas. The consultations drew so little feedback that the exercise was considered wasteful of resources and added little value to the process.</p> <p>All materials produced were publically available during the consultation. It would have been very costly to print and post a draft Appraisal document to every resident.</p> <p>The size of the conservation area is such that issues of scaling arise when producing a map to fit in a leaflet. High resolution maps were however available online.</p>
<b>1.1</b>	<p>MPC echoes parishioners' concerns that the new boundaries are in close proximity to private gardens</p>	<p>The revised boundary runs closer to some gardens than previously, albeit in these locations it is appropriate to and possible to make a distinction between settlement and its agricultural setting.</p>
<b>1.2</b>	<p>Morden Mill building should be excluded as separated from the rest of the settlement.</p>	<p>The character of settlement is dispersed, with a wide scatter of buildings lying between the group of settlements covered by the designation. This means that gaps between buildings (generally formed by agricultural land and woodland) are an aspect of character, and inclusion of such land is unavoidable in drawing a boundary. This is not the same as designating an area of open</p>

		<p>landscape which contains no buildings, or the setting of a nucleated settlement. It is worth noting that some of the 'gaps', including that between Whitefield and Morden Mill, have been made wider as a result of the loss of buildings which historically stood within them (see Appraisal). It is acknowledged that the way in which the proposed boundary has been drawn creates an area which is largely enclosed by the designation at the same time as being excluded from it (marked in green on the plan), which in administrative terms could create difficulties. It may be more logical to include this area within the proposed boundary than to exclude the mill.</p>
<b>1.3</b>	Trees of distinction located East Morden and Cockett Hill.	<p>Any important trees within land proposed for removal, and indeed more generally, can be protected by TPO. The tree officer will review any areas proposed for removal when the final proposal is presented.</p>
<b>1.4</b>	Brimland Wood at the top of Hectors Lane is one of the ancient woods and is only partly in the area now.	<p>The only piece of formally designated 'ancient woodland' within the area proposed for removal is Lower Morden Withy Bed. Other ancient woodland are retained within the boundary.</p>
<b>1.5</b>	Green Bungalow at Park corner is not in the area though corrugated tin and timber boarded buildings are mentioned in the appraisal document as being a locally distinctive style.	<p>This property is not currently included within the current conservation area, therefore it has not been excluded. It otherwise falls beyond the area proposed for removal.</p>
<b>1.6</b>	The church roof and pointing inside have been dealt with in the last couple of years, so the comment in the Appraisal is inaccurate.	<p>This point will be clarified within the Appraisal.</p>

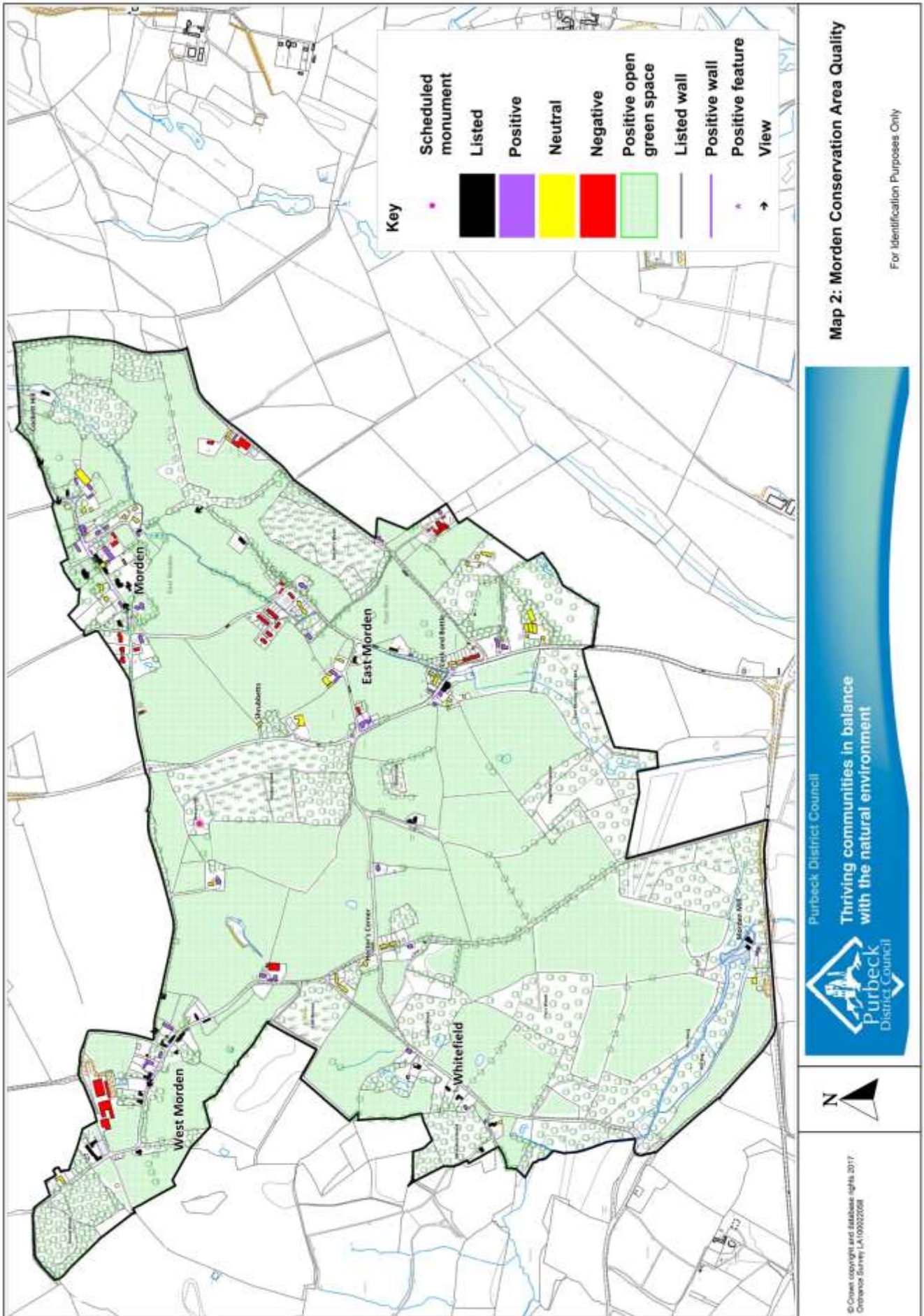
<p><b>1.7</b></p>	<p>The Parish Council regrets the reduction in size that is being proposed by the consultation but accepts the changes if they are compliant with the criteria from the national framework.</p>	<p>No action required.</p>
<p><b>1.8</b></p>	<p>Please provide a forward narrative on the long term effect of these changes and what the likely impact of these changes will have on the Parish.</p>	<p>As no buildings are removed from the conservation area there will be no change in terms of the control of permitted development rights applicable to them. Any trees removed can be protected by TPO. All open space remains subject to strict Green Belt controls. In the event of any proposed development within the immediate setting of the conservation area the NPPF makes clear that impact on setting can be considered. The Green Belt is however a far greater hurdle in this regard. In summary there should be no discernible change directly resulting from alteration of the conservation area boundary.</p>
<p><b>1.9</b></p>	<p>In this time of austerity with cuts in so many valued services, an exercise that does not benefit anyone shouldn't be a priority.</p>	<p>This point contradicts point 1 which implies that not enough time and money was spent on the consultation exercise. The review is part of a long running project required as both a statutory duty and in fulfilment of national planning policy. Ensuring the correct designation and proper operation of conservation areas within the planning system benefits all those with an interest in the land they contain. The review has been handled in house with minimal additional costs incurred in public consultation – the only 'optional' aspect given that public consultation isn't required by law.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>The contribution made by trees and green spaces will be eroded by boundary changes The field to the North East of Morden Park corner could be lost, also one field to the North West of Whitefields. This is the thin edge of the wedge</p>	<p>In the same way as trees and green spaces form part of the setting of the current conservation area, any trees or green spaces removed will do the same. If any particular tree warrants protection this can be provided by TPO. It is important to note that protection from development is provided over the whole</p>

	reducing the area so much. Though there are other protections in place for our countryside, this is the start of the degradation of that protection.	area by presence in the Green Belt, whose specific function is to preserve openness and safeguard the countryside from encroachment (see NPPF section 9).
<b>3</b>	No reason why the current area should be reduced as it enhances the buffer zone surrounding villages which contain buildings of great historical value and should be preserved for future Generations to enjoy. Proposed changes a slippery slope of relaxing controls.	The settlements have a 'setting', some of which will inevitably fall outside the conservation area boundary. The NPPF allows impact of any development on the setting of a heritage asset to be taken into account within the planning process. The whole area is however protected from development by the green belt.
<b>4</b>	What kind of development is proposed – commercial, industrial or housing? What changes to road widths will occur? A mix of housing is required, however the village has limited existing services.	The review is unrelated to development. Conservation areas do not prevent development, the green belt however does. The whole area remains within the green belt.
<b>5</b>	No reason for change if the existing works well. Greater threat of development.	There is no increased 'threat' of development. See point 4 above.

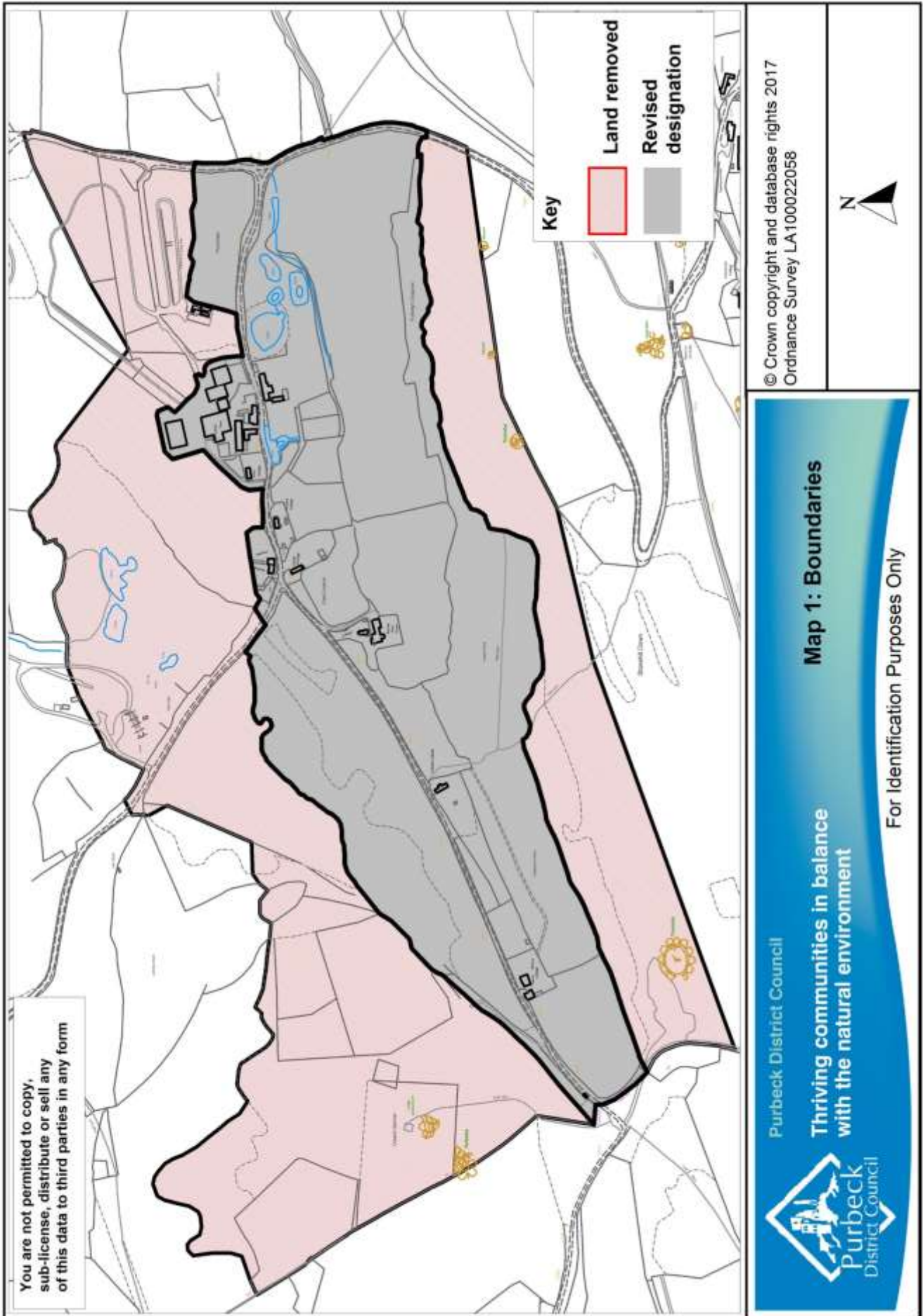
# Morden Conservation Area Boundaries



# Morden Conservation Area Quality

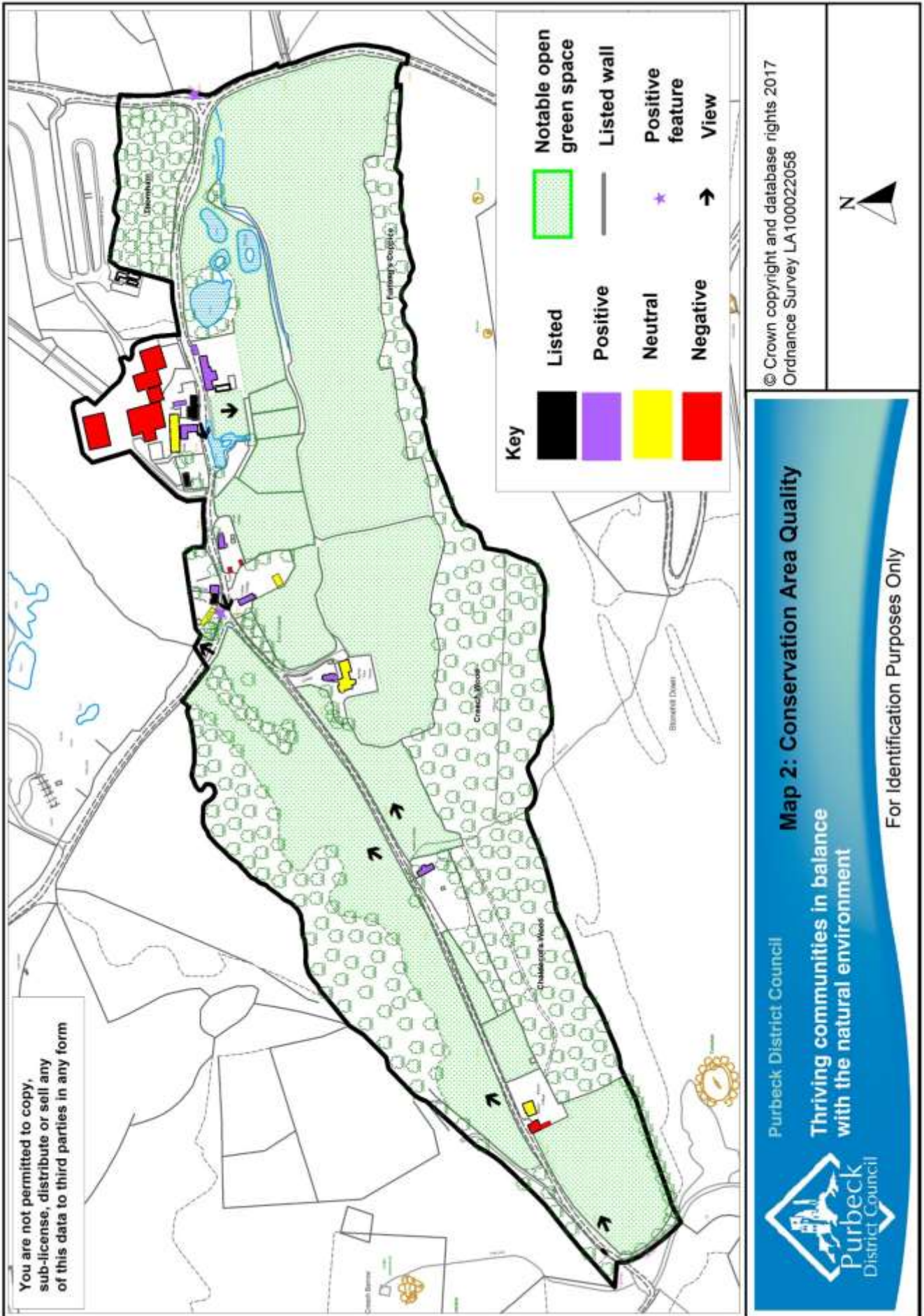


East Creech Conservation Area Boundaries (PG - 21.06.17)





# East Creech Conservation Area Quality



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# **Morden Conservation Area Appraisal document**



**Draft for adoption**

**June 2017**

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## Introduction

### Background

1. This appraisal has been prepared for Morden Conservation Area which was first designated on 19th December 1990.
2. Conservation areas are defined within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as:

*“areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.*
3. Conservation areas are designated to cover the streets and places in towns and villages which hold sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant special consideration and conservation as part of the planning process. While bringing some added controls the object of designation is not to prohibit change but rather to manage its quality. The purpose of this appraisal is to provide an in depth analysis of the architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the conservation area in order to both assist the planning process, and to promote careful management and enhancement.

### Planning policy framework

4. Conservation areas are designated by local authorities as a duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the same Act makes it a duty for local authorities to consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising planning functions. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides policy guidance related to exercising planning functions in relation to conservation areas, whilst at District level, policies within the Purbeck Local Plan are also relevant, and are supported by the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

### Development within a conservation area

5. Restrictions apply to the types of work you can carry out to properties within conservation areas, principal amongst which is the legal requirement to gain planning permission for carrying out ‘relevant’ demolition of unlisted buildings and structures. To find out more about restrictions see guidance on the Council’s website: [www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk). Where you are considering undertaking works within a conservation area that requires planning permission, the Council will be happy to provide you with pre-application advice. A charge is made for this service. See the Council’s website for details.

6. New development should conserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. You should use this character appraisal to assist you in formulating appropriate designs for new development, and in making sensitive alterations to existing properties.

## Preparation and survey limitations

7. This document was formally adopted by Purbeck District Council on \*\*\*\*\*
8. When you are reading or using this document it is important to note that its contents are not comprehensive. For instance, some aspects of the survey information are limited to areas which can be reasonably recorded from the public highway and other accessible land. You should not take failure to mention a particular element or detail to mean that it is of no importance, and thus of no relevance in the Council's assessment of planning applications.

## Community involvement

9. In line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement a six week period of formal public consultation on the draft boundary proposals and appraisal ran between 7th November and 16th December 2016. Details were sent to the Parish Council six weeks in advance, and the consultation was subsequently extended until 21st February 2017 to allow further time for comments. Consultation materials were made available online and at Westport House. A leaflet was posted to every property affected and officers attended a Parish meeting. The consultation was advertised through local media and in Council newsletters. Consultation responses were taken into account in preparation of the final version of this document.

## Summary of special interest and significance

10. The purpose of the following paragraphs is to provide a brief (non-exhaustive) summary of the special interest and significance of the conservation area, which forms the basis for its designation. A more detailed analysis of its historic and architectural character and appearance will follow in subsequent sections.

### Special historic interest

11. The historic layout of the conservation area is of particular interest, the network of lanes and tracks connecting the dispersed pattern of rural settlement is a distinctive feature not seen elsewhere in the District.

### Special architectural interest

12. The conservation area contains a reasonably large number of listed buildings of agricultural, industrial and domestic type. These display use of an interesting range of local materials and details which help to provide a distinctive character. Buildings include good examples of vernacular construction as well as more formal designs.



## Conservation area: site and situation

### Location and setting

13. The conservation area is located in the north of the District and covers an area of dispersed rural settlement centred on the village of Morden and hamlets of West Morden, Whitefield and East Morden. Further named localities exist, generally reflecting the historic presence of secondary clusters of development within the overall pattern. Many of these disappeared during the second half of the twentieth century.
14. The conservation area is located within a gently undulating landscape which allows some views both into and out of it. The broader context is characterised by the presence of agricultural land, forestry and some apparently unmanaged woodland. The whole is currently encompassed within the South Dorset Green Belt.

### Socio-economic profile

15. Land and properties within the conservation area were historically largely the property of the Morden Estate based at Charborough. Estate ownership is still an important factor and some properties remain tenanted, though others have been sold into private hands, some as second homes.
16. Aside from the parish church, the conservation area contains a well-used pub and the village hall. These provide some focus for community life, though the pub also draws business from further afield. The village school has been closed for many years, as too has the post office in Morden. A working men's club also previously existed in Morden, and a Methodist Chapel at Whitefield. The latter has been converted to residential use and the club replaced with a house in recent years.
17. The primary importance of agriculture in the historic economy of the area is reflected in the large number of historic farmhouses – most of which no longer function as such. Milling and brickmaking were also two important activities, though both ceased during the twentieth century. Today agriculture, forestry and shooting are the predominant economic activities within the general context, though the number of active farms has decreased.

## History of development

### Medieval

17. According to the English Place Name Society the name 'Morden', recorded as 'Mordune' in the 1086 Domesday survey, means 'hill in marshy ground'.
18. The lower part of the tower of St. Mary's Church has been dated to the thirteenth century (see FIG. 1 below). The top of the tower and remainder of the building were constructed in the 1870s.



**FIG. 1:** *St. Mary's Church, Higher Street. A picturesque and well positioned building, the church is of particular interest as for being almost entirely constructed from heathstone.*

17. The network of historic lanes within the conservation area is of particular interest and many of these are likely to be of ancient origin. Whilst some lanes evident in eighteenth century maps now exist only as footpaths (e.g. the lane formerly connecting Goodwin's Lane with Higher Street via Giles's Lane), others remain identifiable. Amongst these Collin's Lane (see FIG. 2 below) has the best claim of being a 'holloway' given that it is sunken along parts of its length. At least one building is shown part the way down the lane on the 1760 Estate map though this had disappeared by 1847. A cluster of seventeenth century buildings otherwise stood at and helped to define the entrance to the lane on Lower Street until the late twentieth century. No trace now remains.



**FIG. 2:** *Collins's Lane. The lane is a sunken track which remains a right of way. It connects Goodwin's Lane with Lower Street.*

### Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

18. References to Ridgeway Mill which formerly stood just south of Whitefield occur by 1550. A number of extant buildings within the conservation area have been identified as of sixteenth and seventeenth century origin. The rate of survival would have been higher had a wave of late 1960s-1970s demolition not claimed at least five others (see further discussion below). The earliest domestic buildings still in existence are thought to be Home Farm House in Higher Street (FIG. 3 below), West Morden Farm House and Paddock Cottage (see FIG. 22), which are each of late sixteenth century origin. Evidence for rebuilding of earlier heathstone houses in brick can be seen at Home Farmhouse, No. 60 Higher Street – a building of the seventeenth century (FIG. 3 below) – and Hill Farm Cottage, which is of unknown date.



**FIG. 3:** *Buildings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Left: 60 Higher Street, the heathstone end gable of which is seventeenth century. Right: Home Farm a building of sixteenth century origin likewise rebuilt in the eighteenth century.*

19. Other buildings of the seventeenth century, typically altered in the eighteenth century and later, include 43 West Morden, 79 Giles Lane, 76 Higher Street, the original portions of the Old Vicarage and associated stables (see FIG. 31), 48 West Morden, and Whitefield Farmhouse (see FIG. 11).

### Eighteenth century onwards

20. Key sources for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are 1770s Estate maps showing enclosed land in West and East Morden, the 1847 tithe map and early editions of the Ordnance Survey. The tithe map provides a more legible view and hence extracts are used in this report. Comparison of the Estate map with the tithe map shows that relatively little change occurred during the years between. Again the 1900 Ordnance Survey (OS) map showed limited change.
21. Sources for the twentieth century are chiefly OS maps and the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments (RCHM) survey of historic 'monuments' (buildings of historic and architectural interest), accurate to 1967 but published in 1970.
22. The local scene seems to have remained relatively stable until at least 1960 (OS of this date), though the 1970 RCHM survey provides a snapshot before dramatic change. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the Estate's demolition of numerous old cottages and other old buildings in need of repair was reported within both the national and local press; featured in a *Sun* article of 1967, and *Dorset County Magazine* article by Rodney Legg of 1972. In 1967 The Sun reported that Morden, "bearing the scars of 34 demolished or decaying cottages, is slowly dying", and includes the Area Planning Officer's poignant description of "the wholesale slaughter of old cottages". In 1972 Legg reported that the Sun article had done nothing to stop the destruction, describing and documenting several further losses. The devastating impact Estate policy at this time had upon local heritage is evident looking at the RCHM inset map of Morden. This identifies at least fifteen sites of historic and architectural interest dating between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that were subsequently destroyed within the compass of the conservation area alone. Most of these were dwellings, but the list included at least two barns.
23. Given that the settlement pattern within the conservation area is made up of a number of named places and other clusters of dwellings dispersed over a wide area, further discussion of their history below deals with each in turn.

### Morden

24. As referenced on old OS maps (see FIG. 4 below) 'Morden' is the principal part of the settlement centred on Higher Street.
25. As noted above, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw some earlier buildings rebuilt and altered. In the cases of 60 Higher Street and Home Farmhouse (FIG. 3 above) the work is evidenced in the contrasting materials used, whilst rebuilding of the parish church employed materials to match, and substantial extension of the Old Vicarage (see FIG. 31) masked the original building. No. 76 Higher Street (FIG. 30) was an addition of the eighteenth century, and Church Villa a stylistically notable contribution of the early nineteenth century.

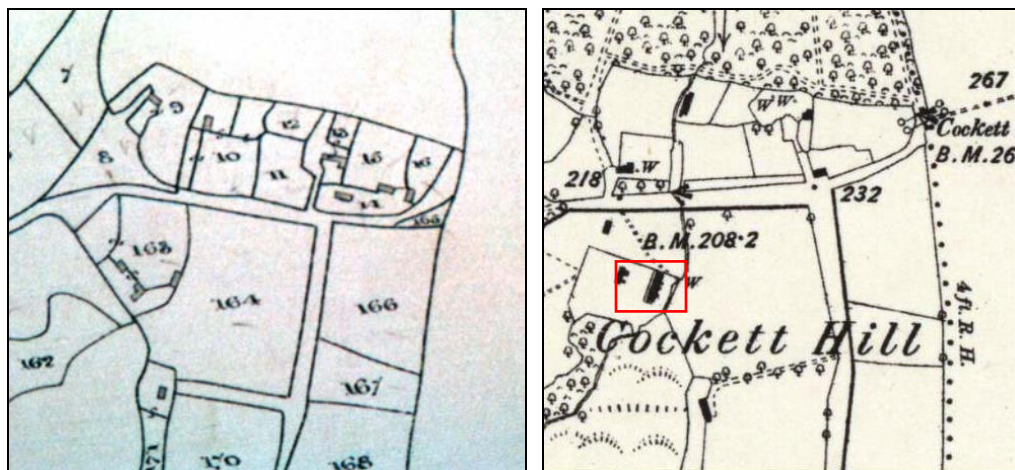


**FIG. 4:** Morden. Left: 1847 tithe map showing little change since the 1770s. Right: 1900 OS. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

26. In common with other parts of the conservation area, Morden saw some loss of historic buildings and addition of unremarkable modern housing during the twentieth century. The most notable loss was of a range of 3 seventeenth century cottages recorded in the 1970 RCHM survey which once stood on the site now occupied by No. 73 Higher Street, and a cottage opposite No. 60 Higher Street.

### Cockett Hill

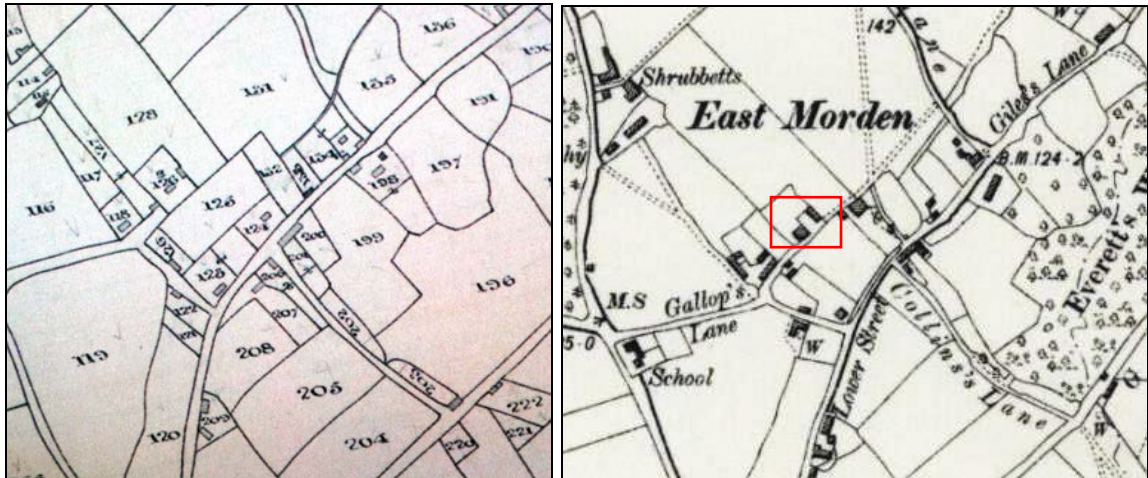
27. Cockett Hill, east of Morden village, historically contained a cluster of cottages (see FIG. 5 below), but today contains only a single dwelling of eighteenth century origin – Cherry Cottage, once a row of three (see FIG. 17). Though comparison of maps shows that the number of dwellings contracted slightly during the second half of the nineteenth century, and a further dwelling was lost during the 50 years following, several dwellings remained here post-war and are recorded on contemporary OS maps. All but Cherry Cottage were subsequently demolished. The sites of cottages on the north side of the lane are now covered by woodland.



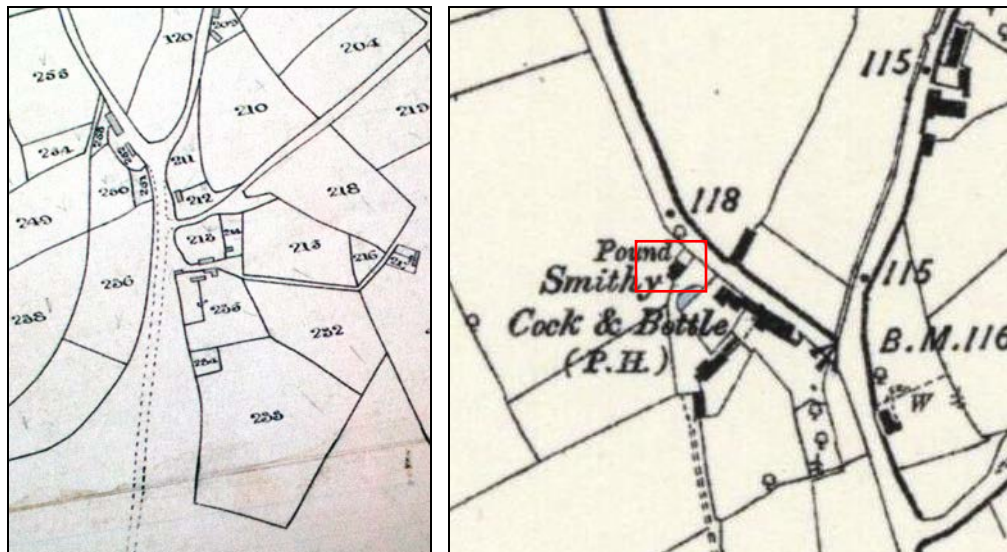
**FIG. 5:** Cockett Hill. Left: 1847 tithe map shows several cottages most of which remained in 1887 (right). Only Cherry Cottage (boxed) survives – see FIG. 17. Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

## East Morden

28. As referenced on old OS maps, 'East Morden' represents the area of dispersed settlement south west of Morden village (see FIG. 6 below).



**FIG. 6:** East Morden. Top and bottom left: 1847 tithe map excerpts showing little change since 1760s. Top and bottom right: 1900 OS excerpts. The scene top right changed considerably during the 1970s. The red box top right indicates the site of the buildings shown in FIG. 8, and that bottom right the building shown in FIG. 7. Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.



29. The layout of East Morden and its connection with Morden to the north east is of great historic interest. Formed by a network of named lanes and tracks this is most clearly appreciable in early editions of the OS (see FIG. 6). This network has survived for the most part through definition of some routes has been lost through removal of enclosing features (typically hedgerows), and general disuse. As elsewhere in the conservation area the pattern of development here otherwise remained reasonably stable from the 1760s until 1960, after which significant change occurred. Having been up until this point rich in vernacular buildings with a high frequency of thatch, the area became dominated by generic modern housing.

30. Amongst extant historic buildings, Sticklands Farmhouse (see FIG. 22) was an architecturally distinguished addition of the eighteenth century. The Cock and Bottle Inn (see FIG. 16) – labelled as such on the 1900 OS – and No. 90 also originated during this period. Notable nineteenth century additions included the school and school house (see FIG. 33), old fire station and smithy (FIG. 7 below), and Merraway (originally known as Morden Villa), which bears some architectural similarity with Church Villa (see FIG. 23).



**FIG. 7:** Features of interest in East Morden. Left: Cock and Bottle Inn sign. Whilst the sign itself is not particularly old, both the unusual name and image have a long history which adds interest. Right: Old smithy opposite Fire Station Cottage, now used as a store. A pound was formerly attached to the gable on which the parish notice board is now located – see FIG. 6 above for map location.

31. The presence of brickworks in East Morden was recorded by the 1847 tithe. Two sites employing clay dug on site are shown on the 1887 OS: one on Goodwin's Lane and another off Quarr Hill (see FIG. 26). That on Goodwin's Lane closed by 1900, though that off Quarr Hill remained in use after this time (see FIG. 26). The sites are now largely scrub covered and the ground remains uneven and scarred.
32. Loss of two buildings midway along and at the Goodwin's Lane entry to Collin's Lane occurred during the nineteenth century. Decline in the use and status of the route may have occurred after this. Further losses of historic buildings only occurred in the late twentieth century, and included the majority of those identified as being of interest by the 1970 RCHM survey. These included a seventeenth century cottage on the present site of Kingman, Harvey and Foster Cottages (a development which bears a date stone of 1974), two eighteenth century cottages on Gallops Lane, another with thatched barn to the north east of the modern site of Sellar's Farm (see FIG. 8 below), a further row of cottages adjacent to the Lower Street entry to Collin's Lane, and another dwelling opposite Orchard Cottage. Most of the sites remain empty with no trace of previous development.

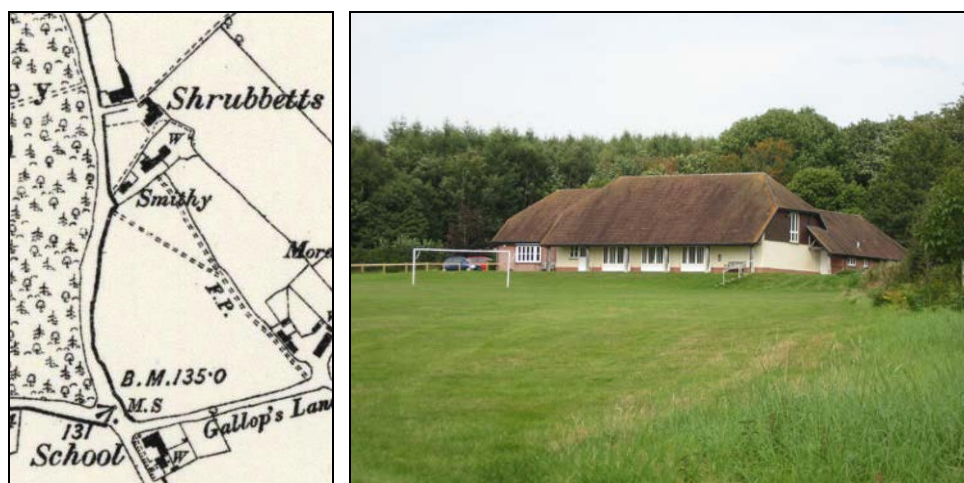


**FIG. 8:** Eighteenth century farmhouse and barn. Photo (right) taken from the 1970 RCHM survey – see FIG. 6 for position shown on a map. Note modern houses on New Road in the background. The thatched buildings were subsequently demolished though a few related buildings (left) remain in use by Sellar’s Farm.

33. Housing development since the 1960s has seen addition of clusters of generic modern houses and bungalows. Sellar’s Farmhouse is also a relatively modern addition showing greater resemblance to Sticklands than the thatched cottage which previously stood on the site (FIG. 8 above). Just off the maps shown in FIG. 6, the character and setting of Brooks Farm has been significantly gentrified.

### Shrubbetts

34. Until the 1970s a cluster of dwellings and structures marked ‘Shrubbetts’ on early OS maps existed roughly north of the current village hall (see FIG. 9 below). The 1900 OS shows a smithy, shown together with other buildings which the 1970 RCHM survey records as a seventeenth century cottage and barn, and eighteenth century cottage. None of these buildings now exists, the area now occupied by woodland and a semi-derelict tin shed.



**FIG. 9:** Shrubbetts. Left: As shown on the 1900 OS. (Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland). The site is now occupied by woodland and a tin shed. The village hall (above) stands just to the south.



## Hector's Corner and Frogmoor

35. Frogmore Farm, a building of eighteenth century date, today stands at the end of a short lane running south from Lousey Wood. Several dwellings historically stood on this lane which extended south to a pair of cottages labelled 'Frogmoor' on the 1900 OS (see FIG. 10 below). To the south of Frogmoor lay former common land, now a plantation of conifers. Two cottages located on the centre section of the lane disappeared during the second half of the nineteenth century, though the pair of eighteenth century cottages at Frogmoor, and another seventeenth century dwelling at the top of the lane survived long enough to be identified by the 1970 RCHM survey.



**FIG. 10:** *Frogmoor and Hector's Corner. Note, Hector's Corner is the junction marked with a star. Left: 1847 tithe map. Right: 1900 OS. Only three of the dwellings shown in 1847 survive. The lane running to Frogmore remains a right of way but lacks enclosure south of Frogmore Farm. Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.*

36. The cottages at Frogmoor and the top of the lane recorded in the 1970 survey were each subsequently demolished. The lane itself remains a right of way though is no longer fully enclosed south of Frogmore Farm. Most of the field boundaries shown in FIG. 10 no longer exist. The site of the two dwellings at Frogmore is currently a pheasant pen.
37. A cluster of three dwellings was shown at Hector's Corner in 1847 (see FIG. 10). Maps of 1760 show the cottages standing amidst common land, parts of which had only recently been enclosed at the time of the 1847 tithe. It is possible that the historic group at Hector's Corner may originally have been encroachments on the common (i.e. houses built on common land – a traditional form of squatting). Two of these cottages had vanished by 1900, but the third still survives. Other dwellings now present here are of post-war date. The green lane running south survives as

an enclosed route despite extensive loss of field boundaries elsewhere, and is a historic landscape feature of particular interest.

### **Whitefield**

38. The 1847 tithe map identifies the presence of a brick kiln at Whitefield, close to the site subsequently occupied by the old Methodist chapel.
39. Whitefield Farmhouse (FIG. 11 below) is of seventeenth century origin. Nos. 152, 153 (FIG. 11 below) and 154 were originally built as three identical cottages during the eighteenth century, and the group was noted by the 1970 RCHM survey. Subsequent alteration, which has radically transformed No. 152 in particular, has changed the character of the group.



**FIG. 11:** *Thatched buildings at Whitefield. No 153 and Whitefield Farmhouse. Note the contrast in ridge styles – a flush ridge is the local traditional finish.*

40. A number of nineteenth century additions include No. 155 and No. 49 which date between early and mid-century, and the Methodist Chapel (see FIG. 12 below). The latter was constructed in 1873 and is now a residential property.



**FIG. 12:** *The old Methodist chapel at Whitefield.*

### Ridgeway Mill and Morden Mill

41. As noted above, Ridgeway Mill was recorded as early as 1550 and stood amongst a cluster of cottages to the south of Whitefield. Post-war the scene was unchanged except for loss of the cottage east of the mill. The 1970 RCHM map recorded two surviving eighteenth cottages north and northwest of the mill, though the mill itself may have been lost by this time. Both cottages were also subsequently demolished. No trace exists of any of the buildings shown in FIG. 13, the sites having been engulfed by woodland.



**FIG. 13:** *Ridgeway Mill and Morden Mill. The maps above are excerpts from the 1887 OS map. Left: Ridgeway Mill and adjacent cottages. No trace remains of any of these buildings. Right: Morden Mill, adjacent cottages and buildings. Three of these buildings survive in a decaying state – the mill and mill house are pictured top. Note the attached timber framed and clad outbuilding – a common feature of Estate properties around the conservation area. Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.*

42. Morden Mill and the adjacent mill house (FIG. 13 above) are of eighteenth century date. The mill was originally water powered but was later adapted to be driven by machine. Much of the internal workings remain intact. Until relatively recently the mill and the adjacent mill house were occupied. Now disused and uninhabited the buildings and their historically well-ordered context have slipped into decay. Of the other structures shown on 1887 OS map (FIG. 13), only the stable range survives, now also derelict.

## West Morden

43. Buildings West Morden which originated during the eighteenth century include No. 36 ('Wayside' – FIG. 22), the large outbuilding at West Morden Farmhouse, No. 45, and King's Corner Farmhouse, though most of this building is nineteenth century date.
44. Comparing maps of the area between 1847 and 1900 (FIG. 14 below) there was some contraction in the number of dwellings, four cottages disappearing from the west side of the hamlet: one south of No. 43, one west of No. 36 and a couple north of West Morden Farm. Other notable changes included the development of farm buildings at King's Corner Farm and opposite West Morden Farm.
45. Absence of the cottage opposite No. 43 from the RCHM map of 1970 shows that it must have disappeared in the period after 1948, however aside from this there appears to have been little significant change until the late 1960s. Of the other buildings highlighted in the RCHM survey, a thatched seventeenth century cottage on the site of No. 44 may survive at least in part within the current structure, whilst eighteenth century cottages opposite Ernle Farmhouse and West Morden Farmhouse, and an eighteenth century barn between Paddock Cottage and No. 40 were demolished in the late 1960s-1970s. In addition to these losses, nineteenth century buildings attached to the main barn at King's Corner Farm were also demolished, as too a barn west of West Morden Farm.
46. Other change of note included replacement of nineteenth century buildings to the south of West Morden Farm with an extensive collection of modern agricultural structures, whilst remnants of old buildings stand amongst the new at Ernle Farm. Ernle farmhouse itself evidently underwent significant alteration at some point in the twentieth century, and whilst the front elevation presents a modern appearance older openings are evident in the gable. As was generally the case across the conservation area, significant loss of field boundaries also took place during the second half of the twentieth century.



**FIG. 14:** West Morden. Left: 1847 tithe map showing little change since 1760s. Right: 1900 OS. Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

### **Archaeological potential**

47. The conservation area contains a single scheduled ancient monument holding significant archaeological importance – the beacon mound on Beacon Hill. This is a mound composed of clay, marl and turf, reaching 18m in diameter and 1.5m in height, constructed to support a signal beacon. The beacon itself is recorded on Isaac Taylor's map of 1773.
  
48. Elsewhere the cleared sites of buildings demolished during the second half of the twentieth century are likely to hold at least some archaeological potential.

## Townscape analysis

### Settlement structure

49. As an area of dispersed or diffused rural settlement, the interconnection of the various components of the conservation area by lanes and tracks is an important aspect of character. The principal settlements at Morden, West Morden, Whitefield and East Morden remain directly and closely connected to one another, such that it is possible to take a more or less 'circular' route between them. A pattern of secondary connecting historic routes – footpaths and tracks – provides further linkages.
50. Within the network of lanes connecting components of the settlement, junctions are frequent features. Some of these, such as Hector's Corner and Firestation Corner, are specifically named. One such junction is shown in FIG. 15 below.
51. In contrast to other elements of the conservation area, Morden has a clearly identifiable 'village street', which is given a sense of focus by the parish church and war memorial. Like Morden, West Morden and Whitefield are each largely defined by the linear arrangement of development, though a loop in the road at West Morden creates some elaboration. Settlement in East Morden is far less cohesive in character and the historic pattern of lanes and connecting routes more complex (see history above). Two clusters of largely modern development occur amidst what is otherwise a general scatter.



**FIG. 15.** *Junction. Heading away from Whitefield the road splits left to West Morden, right to East Morden, the routes forming two sides of a triangular piece of former common land. Continuing right, Hector's Corner is located at the crossroad whose northern branch forms the third side of the triangle.*

## Building density

52. Building density varies on a localised basis within the overall pattern of widely dispersed settlement. The largest concentrations of buildings generally correspond with the main village and hamlet 'centres' at Morden and West Morden. Distinct building clusters and scatters of varying size characterise the pattern elsewhere, with various isolated dwellings (generally former or extant farmhouses) completing the pattern.
53. A continuous developed frontage of attached buildings occurs only opposite the parish church in Morden, and at the Cock and Bottle in East Morden (see FIG. 16 below). Further development of this type historically existed at the Lower Street entry to Collins's Lane (see FIG. 6). Elsewhere buildings are generally separated from their neighbours by appreciable spaces of various size and form.
54. The position of buildings within plots varies. Pavement edge development is generally infrequent, but aside from the specific localities noted above, is also a sporadic feature in West Morden. The majority of buildings stand within distinct enclosed plots of varying size, appearing most spacious in the historic context at Whitefield (see for example FIGs. 11 and 27).

**FIG. 16:** *East Morden building frontage. This is one of only two continuously developed frontages in the conservation area. Variation in building form, orientation and height here provides visual interest.*



## Building height

55. Buildings do not generally exceed two storeys, though overall height varies with floor to ceiling height, which is itself linked to style and historic status. The high imposing forms of Sticklands Farmhouse, West Morden Farmhouse and later elements of the Old Rectory lie at the upper end of the social and stylistic scale and contrast with the more modest proportions and unassuming appearance of the majority of contemporary workers' dwellings. Some older vernacular dwellings are better considered as being one and half storeys, the upper rooms being partly accommodated in the roof space.

56. Single storey bungalows are an intrusive twentieth century introduction, whose suburban character often appears at odds with the traditional rural context. Substantial single storey forms are otherwise typically associated with former agricultural use.

## Plan form and massing

57. Amongst historic buildings, simple linear plan and building forms are generally most common. These gain modest depth in those cases where rear catslide roofs are a feature of the design. Similarity in form is seen between roughly contemporary historic buildings though the finer details don't always match (see FIG. 17 below). This is likely to reflect similarity in the requirements the buildings fulfilled, their construction by the same landowner and the absence of direction by an architect.



**FIG. 17:** *Simple rows. Typical two storey rows of brick cottages; simple in form, appearance and detailing. Left: Nos. 46 and 47 West Morden. Right: Nos. 103-105 (Cherry Cottage) Cockett Hill.*

58. The orientation of buildings relative to the street again varies, adding visual interest and variety where differences occur in close proximity (for examples see FIGs. 16 and 22). Historic dwellings standing in isolation or scattered amongst the fields typically adopt an independent orientation, though it is noted that a south facing aspect is favoured by a number of such dwellings in the central part of the conservation area. Elsewhere, though it is most common for buildings to be positioned parallel to and facing the street, many exceptions occur. These include No. 48 West Morden and a number of buildings adjacent to the Cock and Bottle where a perpendicular orientation occurs, and King's Corner Farm where the house backs directly onto the road.
59. Single storey timber framed and clad structures, generally lean-to forms characterised by their use of vertical boarding and tiled roofs occur as historic additions to several properties in the conservation area (e.g. Morden Mill



Farmhouse, No. 47 West Morden etc). These visually subservient structures generally complement the linear building forms to which they have been added.

## Edges and enclosure

60. Brick boundary walls frequently provide street edge enclosure to plots in West Morden. These are also an important feature along Higher Street in Morden, where the heathstone churchyard wall adds variety. Elsewhere, and in areas of lesser density, enclosure is more often provided by hedging, the most sensitive of which makes use of native species.
61. Hedgerows play an important role in defining field boundaries along lane edges, and make a particularly notable contribution to character where narrow lanes are slightly sunken below the level of adjacent land. Along parts of New Lane and Gallop's Lane this provides a heavily enclosed feel to the road.
62. Within fields themselves a few notable hedges exist, such as that running between Shrubbetts and New Lane. Compared to the boundaries shown on old maps however the number of hedges appears to have been substantially reduced, and there are surprisingly few hedgerow trees. There is no evidence of traditional hedgerow management anywhere in the conservation area, and this has resulted in progressive thinning and generally poor condition particularly where also heavily flailed. Continuing to treat hedges this way may lead to their eventual loss.

**FIG. 18:** *Hedges. Below: fragments of a hedge at Whitefield. Some field boundaries are in a similar condition. Right: hedges contribute to the heavily enclosed feel of Gallop's Lane.*



63. Gates are typically used to close field accesses. The use of particular design of iron estate gate, numerous examples of which can be seen around the conservation area (see FIG. 19 below), is a distinctive local feature. The condition

of these gates varies, many remaining in use, others overgrown. Most would benefit from a protective coat of paint.



**FIG. 19:** *Gates. Left: the entrance gateway to the parish church. Note the lanterns either side. Right: a typical estate gate. Numerous examples of this design can be seen around the conservation area.*

## Visual qualities

64. The undulating nature of the ground within and around the conservation area provides frequent opportunities for long but often restricted views across the landscape. This allows many varied and differing perspectives of settlement to be gained moving through the conservation area.
65. The elevated site of the parish church lends it localised prominence in Morden. The church is the principal focus of views from the south and east (see view from Cockett Hill on the front cover) to a point at which the ground again rises abruptly to reach a similar level. In other directions a more immediate rise in ground level greatly reduces visibility, though a good view does exist from Morden Drove. The churchyard itself provides good views to the south.



**FIG. 20:** *The parish church viewed from the south. The church towers over buildings below which gradually rise up the slope.*

66. Whilst generally rising ground around much of the conservation area limits views within it to the confines of the boundary, views from this higher ground across the broader landscape setting itself are often expansive. This is the case along the upper parts of Goodwin's Lane and at the north end of Pound Wood where the landscape appears to fall away.

## Landscape: trees and green spaces

67. The conservation area contains a significant amount of woodland comprising a mixture of broadleaved trees and coniferous plantations. The latter has sometimes replaced the former, though within the broader context coniferous plantations have also been established on historically open land.
68. Partly due to the undulating nature of topography, and partly due to the relatively large amount of woodland within the local area, trees frequently play an important role in providing a backdrop to views across open land within the conservation area. Strong contributions are made by Everett's Wood, Lousely Wood and Pound Wood, whilst trees otherwise form an almost continuous backdrop along the west side of the conservation area. In this way trees and topography combine to contribute to a localised sense of seclusion and compartmentalisation within the broader landscape.
69. The conservation area contains a significant amount of ancient woodland. This includes Chapel Wood, Fry's Wood, Whitefield Wood, East Morden Withy Bed and Frogmoor Coppice which have been in existence since at least 1600. Whilst also classified as ancient woodland, Everett's Wood has been replanted with conifers. The wood names themselves reflect variety in past woodland management.
70. Earth banks which appear to have provided the historic boundary of Everett's Wood are visible from Collins's Lane. The wood itself, having been largely replanted, now spreads outside this former boundary.
71. A prominent clump of trees stands on Duke's Hill.

## Public realm

### Groundscape

72. Consistent with its historic rural character, the conservation area generally lacks formal public pavements. A noted exception is around the small cluster of 'Council houses' on New Lane where the pavement is one aspect of the unsympathetic character of the development.

### Street furniture

73. The conservation area contains three red K6 telephone kiosks at Whitefield, Firestation Corner, and Higher Street. All three are 'jubilee' models identified by

use of the Tudor crown, which were typically installed 1935-52. None of these kiosks are listed or likely to be eligible for listing, leaving them vulnerable to future removal. Unusually the kiosk at Whitefield is under CCTV surveillance. The kiosks at Firestation Corner and Higher Street are associated with posting boxes.

74. Rectangular wall mounted posting boxes occur at a number of locations. Three periods are represented: the cipher of Queen Victoria on the box at West Morden in the wall of a building associated with King's Corner Farm, of George VI in a free standing brick pillar at Firestation Corner, and of Elizabeth II in a freestanding brick pillar on Higher Street. As the building at West Morden is listed this protection also extends to the post box.



**FIG. 21:** Street furniture. Left: Pillar box in West Morden. The Victorian box is fitted into the wall of an agricultural building at King's Corner Farm. Note the chequered Flemish bond brickwork using red stretchers and blue headers. Right: Finger post at the Cock and Bottle. The post has clearly been refurbished and retains a distinctive roundel which records the location. The appearance of the post is spoiled by the speed sign attached below. Surprisingly the speed limit here is 60 mph.

75. Three finger posts are located in the conservation area. That adjacent to the Cock and Bottle (FIG. 21 above) is in good condition and retains its distinctive roundel. That adjacent to the old school (see FIG. 37) is in poor condition and has lost its roundel, though retains its historic cast lettering. Old maps record presence of a milestone on the site, though this appears to have been removed. A third finger post at the junction of the B3075 with the roads to East Morden and West Morden is in reasonable condition though lacks a roundel and appears to have lost some of its pointers.

### **Lighting and wiring**

76. Overhead power and telephone cables are a persistent and unattractive feature around the conservation area. This is more so given the dispersed nature of development. Cables often interfere with views – see for example that of the parish church from Cockett Hill pictured on the front cover.
77. The conservation area does not contain street lighting. In this context an old street lantern installed as a garden ornament at the Old Post Office on Higher Street appears somewhat incongruous. The absence of street lighting helps to reinforce the rural character of the conservation area.

### **Public space**

78. The principal ‘public’ space within the conservation area is that associated with the village hall, and within which a small play area is located. This space is however largely undifferentiated from other fields within the general context. The grassed area on which the war memorial is located on Higher Street has more the character if not status of a village green, whilst the churchyard otherwise forms a formal publically accessible space.

## Building style, materials and details

### Architectural style

79. The simplest and oldest vernacular architecture – that executed with the cheapest immediately available materials according to informal local tradition – is generally represented by use of cob, thatch and varying amounts of brickwork. Good groups exist in West Morden and Whitefield, though as mentioned elsewhere, frequency was much reduced across the conservation area by demolitions during the 1960s and 1970s. Historic variation in status may be suggested by the survival of substantial heathstone remnants of early buildings at No. 60 Higher Street (FIG. 2) and Home Farm, though in both cases later rebuilding has obscured the evidence. Paddock Cottage (FIG. 22 below) otherwise represents an interesting case mixing both vernacular and more formal architectural details.
80. Solid roofed brick cottages of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries appear more orderly in composition but generally ‘plain’ in appearance. Detailing is simple, and typified by segmented arches over openings, but is not consistent between buildings, indicating continued absence of formal design. Such buildings represent a later phase of the vernacular. A sense of formal ‘style’ is infrequent, the best examples being Stickland’s Farmhouse (FIG. 22 below), a building of clearly high status, and remodelled elements of the Old Vicarage (FIG. 31). Nos. 149 (see FIG. 27) and 155 Whitefield also provide interesting examples of simple styling applied at a more modest scale.



**FIG. 22:** *Architectural variation. Left: Stickland’s Farmhouse, the original part of which features a bold symmetrical frontage with high quality brickwork and detailing. Right: Paddock Cottage and No. 36 West Morden (‘Wayside’), two vernacular structures showing possible variation in historic status.*

81. The conservation area contains two interesting examples of Regency design represented by Church Villa and Merraway, the latter originally named Morden

Villa (see FIG. 23 below). Church Villa has a particularly distinctive appearance given its unusual chimney stack design, whilst both buildings feature a range of stylised components.



**FIG. 23:** *Church Villa. This early nineteenth century building has an ornate Regency design. The chimney stacks are a particularly notable feature.*

82. Standard bungalow and house designs of the late twentieth century form a number of clusters within the conservation area, most noticeably in East Morden and between Whitefield and West Morden. The designs are generic, relating poorly to their contexts and making no obvious contribution to local distinctiveness. These clusters disrupt the continuity of historic character across the conservation area.

## Walls

83. The geological character of the conservation area and the immediate vicinity is mixed, incorporating chalk, and overlying clays and sands. Old Ordnance Survey maps show that a range of raw materials were quarried on a small scale. Sand, gravel, stone, chalk and clay pits are shown. These materials contribute in varying degrees to the character of historic local construction.

## Heathstone

84. Heathstone, also known locally as ‘Lytchett Matravers Sandstone’, is an iron-cemented sandstone of distinctive orange colour. Geologically speaking, the material derives from the Reading and London Beds, each of which is exposed in the area, or exists as a redeposited component within later sands and clays. Heathstone is the principal material used in construction of the parish church where it lends the building a striking appearance. Use here is clearly a product of purposeful quarrying as opposed to opportunistic use which is more characteristic of earlier periods. Heathstone does not otherwise feature as a principal building material around the conservation area, however it was clearly a component of early buildings for which evidence exists at the later remodelled 60 Higher Street (FIG. 2). Here original elements are constructed from heathstone, however it is hard to judge to what extent the remainder of the original structure utilised heathstone as opposed to some other material.



**FIG. 24:** *Heathstone. Blocks of heathstone seen at the parish church. This detail shows failure of poor quality pointing, the raised and smeared appearance of which has greatly disfigured the appearance of the building and may have accelerated decay of the stonework.*

### Cob

85. The local availability of clay rich soils and chalk provided favourable conditions for construction in cob (earth). As such cob forms an important component of the historic vernacular, and as is common in the broader context, it is used in conjunction with thatch. The frequency of cob buildings within the conservation area was much reduced by demolitions of the 1960s and 70s. Cob buildings retaining their original rendered appearance are now scarce within the conservation area, though include No. 76 Higher Street (see FIG. 30) and Nos. 153 and 154 Whitefield (see FIG. 11). Brick patching, and sometimes encasement of cob was common historically. Several of the buildings recorded in the RCHM survey subsequently demolished were described as patched. Cob with brick is still seen at Nos. 36 and 48 West Morden.

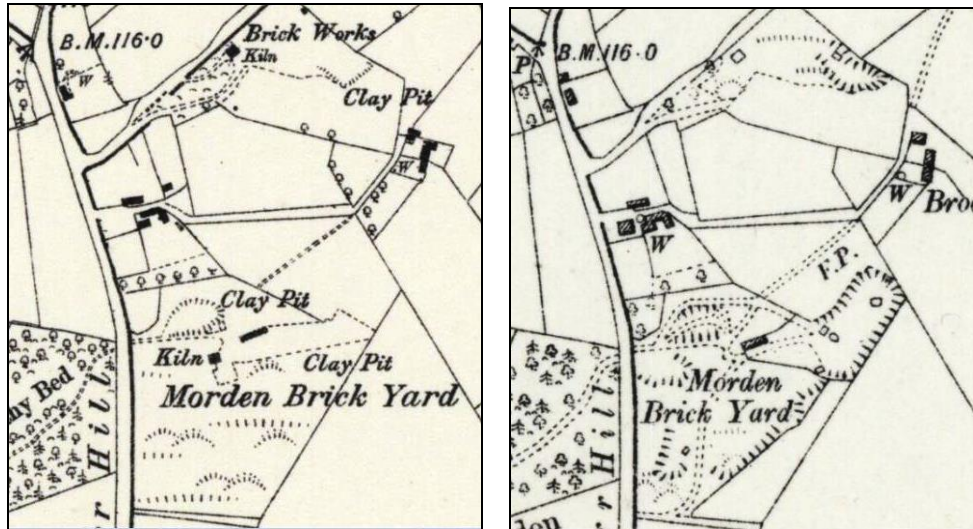
**FIG. 25:** *No. 48 West Morden. Over time brick patching or facing was often added to cob structures, as seen in the example. The thatch on this property has been renewed, the relatively thin coat accentuating the dormers. With successive recoating roofs like this traditionally gained a flush appearance.*



### Brick

86. Historically the extraction of clay and manufacture of brick may have been conducted on a project specific basis. At a later stage larger scale production commenced. Records show that clay was extracted for brickmaking on site in both East Morden and at Whitefield, the former specifically identified on maps. Whilst activity had ceased in Whitefield around the middle of the nineteenth century, in East Morden two kilns with related clay pits are shown on late nineteenth and turn of the century maps (see FIG. 26 below). The industry continues to be recalled in the name 'Brickfield Farm'.





**FIG. 26:** Brick making. Two brick works are shown in East Morden on the 1887 OS (left), with kilns and clay pits. By 1900 (right) the site on Goodwin's Lane had ceased operation. Maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

87. Clay extracted at East Morden and Whitefield was of two types – Reading Clay at Whitefield and London Clay at East Morden. Old bricks within the area are typically shades of orange, except where burned for decorative effect (discussed below).
88. Brick finds use in all types of historic building within the conservation area, and currently makes the strongest visual contribution to character. Some increase in relative frequency is however the product of demolition of many cob buildings during the 1960s and 70s.
89. Header bond used at Stickland's Farmhouse is a rarity and creates a distinctive appearance (see FIG. 28). Use here is a sign of the historic status of the building which otherwise adopts a formal architectural style. The design of No.149 Whitefield is again formal in character though the use of white brick is wholly exceptional (see FIG. 27 below).



**FIG. 27:** No. 149 Whitefield. Use of white brick in this small house of formal design is entirely exceptional, though in terms of general design the frontage is similar to that No. 155 Whitefield.

90. Elsewhere old brickwork frequently employs decorative use of 'flared' headers within Flemish, Flemish garden and English wall bonds (see FIG. 28 below). This generally involves use of blueish brick alongside red stretchers to provide colour contrast. The result is a chequered pattern in Flemish bonds, and stripes in English. In the case of the old chapel at Whitefield, more elaborate and consciously stylistic patterns (termed 'diaperwork') are formed. Examples of basic patterning are seen in both domestic and agricultural buildings around the conservation area, suggesting that this was characteristic of local construction over a reasonably long time period. This lends interest and distinctiveness absent from modern brickwork.



**FIG. 28:** *Brickwork. Top left: English bond at King's Corner Farmhouse with striped effect created by use of flared headers. Note segmented arch Top right: header bond at Stckland's Farmhouse. Note gauged brick arch with keystone. Bottom: 49 West Morden, with chequer pattern created through use of flared headers (see also FIG. 21).*

## Render

91. As noted above, render provides the typical finish for cob. Render is otherwise provides a formal and stylistic finish to several other buildings – Church Villa, Merraway and the Old Vicarage (see FIG. 31).

## Timber boarding

92. Vertical timber board is frequently seen used as a cladding material for attached timber framed outbuildings or sheds (see FIG. 29 below). The board is typically black in finish, reflecting the traditional use of pitch as timber preservative. In recent years some of these outbuildings have been replaced by more permanent extensions which have been clad in the same manner (see for example No. 43 West Morden). Both the use of the board and context of its use clearly reflect past practice on the estate, and make a small but significant contribution to local distinctiveness.
93. Horizontal timber boarding is not a frequent feature in the historic context, though it is used to clad one timber framed elevation of the agricultural building adjacent to West Morden Farmhouse, and was similarly a feature of the eighteenth century barn that once stood on the site adjacent to Paddock Cottage. Rodney Legg's 1970 Dorset Magazine article features a photograph of this building prior to its demolition. Timber framed structures of this type are generally unusual in the local context. Boarding on the end gable of the Cock and Bottle is a questionable recent addition, as too that on the reconstructed outbuilding adjacent to Stickland's Farmhouse.



**FIG. 29:** *Timber boarding and corrugated iron. Left: this shed at 47 West Morden demonstrates the locally distinctive use of vertical timber boarding with cover strips over the joints. Corrugated iron covers the roof. This material is frequently seen around the conservation area as a partial or full cladding as in the semi-derelict structure located at Shrubets (right).*

## Corrugated iron

94. Corrugated iron sheds and corrugated iron roofed timber structures are a frequent feature around the conservation area, both in an agricultural and domestic context. The material was particularly popular from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth centuries, though the age of the sheds in question is unclear. Though these are often in a poor, sometimes derelict condition (see FIG. 29 above), corrugated iron nonetheless makes a noticeable contribution to the rural scene.

## Roofs

95. Roof forms show some interesting variation (for examples see FIG. 30) which is sometimes, though not exclusively, related to the materials used as covering. This lends significant visual character to the street scene. Buildings with asymmetrical pitched roofs are unusually frequent, these commonly equipped with a rear catslide roof. The latter can be seen on the original part of the Old Vicarage in Morden (see FIG. 31), at Brickfield Farm, Church Cottage and No. 165 (see FIG. 30).
96. Amongst historic solid roofed buildings cast iron rainwater goods are frequently mounted on rise and fall brackets.
97. No single roofing material is currently predominant within the conservation area, though not all make an equal contribution to local distinctiveness. The variety of coverings is discussed further below.



**FIG. 30:** Varied roof forms. Top right: Pitched roof with rear catslide at No. 165. Top right: 'M' shaped roof at No. 69 Higher Street. Bottom: half hipped thatch roof of No. 76 Higher Street. The slate roof of No. 74 adjacent appears to have replaced a roof similar to that at No. 76.



## Thatch

98. Thatch forms a key component of the historic local vernacular, and it is typically seen used in conjunction with cob (including where the latter has been brick-

faced). Once common, the frequency of thatched buildings was drastically reduced by the wave of demolitions which occurred during the 1960s and 1970. As recorded in the 1970 RCHM survey, thatched buildings previously included those in both domestic and agricultural use, one of the latter pictured in FIG. 8. At least some extant solid roofed buildings may originally have carried thatch. This seems likely to be the case at No. 74 Higher Street where the roof form has been modified (see FIG. 30 above). Good groups of thatched buildings continue to survive in Whitefield and West Morden, though elsewhere thatch is now more sporadic.

99. With only one exception all thatched buildings in the conservation area carry flush ridges. This is typical of the local traditional style, whereas the ornamental block ridge seen at Whitefield Farmhouse is a more modern introduction in the local context (see FIG. 11). Use of block ridges undermines local distinctiveness.

### Slate

100. Slate is most typically a feature of nineteenth century buildings within the conservation area, reflecting in part the period in which distribution from North Wales was facilitated by growth of the railways. The best examples of slate roofed buildings are the parish church (FIG. 1) and old school (FIG. 33). In some cases slate may have replaced earlier roof coverings or superseded them when modifications were undertaken. This was the case for example at Home Farm in Higher Street, and is likely to have also been the case at the Old Vicarage and No. 74 Higher Street. The Old Vicarage has recently had its covering renewed with heather blue Penryhn slate (see FIG. 31 below), which makes a strong visual contribution to this part of the conservation area.



**FIG. 31:** *The Old Vicarage, Higher Street. The roof of this building has recently been re-covered with Welsh slate. The original part of the property is to the rear and can be identified by the steeply pitched roof with catslide – similar to others within the conservation area. Clay tiles are more likely to have covered the original part of the building, though slate would have suited the lower pitches used when remodelled during the nineteenth century.*

### Plain clay tiles

101. Plain clay tiles are a feature of some late eighteenth and early nineteenth century solid roofed buildings. Plain clay tiles used in combination with a Purbeck stone tile

eaves course can be at West Morden Farmhouse, Stickland's Farmhouse and Morden Mill Farmhouse. This finish appears to have been popular in many parts of the District during the late eighteenth century and is most typically found on larger houses constructed at this time. The function of the stone tiles appears to have been to help shed water from the eaves.

### Double Roman tiles

102. Large format clay double Roman tiles are a frequent feature around the conservation area, and most particularly its eastern half around Morden and East Morden. The tiles appear to have found common use on the estate generally during the past, and frequency of use is indeed greater than seen elsewhere in the District. As such the tiles make an important contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The same is not true of concrete interlocking tiles seen in some late twentieth century development.
103. Double Roman tiles were historically manufactured at Bridgewater in Somerset and distributed around the broader region by rail during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As with slate, the context of use in the conservation area is therefore in relation to buildings constructed or re-roofed during the same period.



**FIG. 32:** Double Roman tiles. As seen on the roofs of Nos. 64-67 Higher Street (left), a building at Hill Farm (top right) and the Old Post Office Higher Street (bottom right).

104. Around the District generally double Roman tiles are typically found on agricultural and other functional structures, and use in this context is also seen in the conservation area. Notable examples include the old forge (see FIG. 7) and fire station in East Morden, each of which carries specially shaped ridge tiles. Single storey former agricultural structures on Higher Street are also of note for the clear glazed tiles they incorporate to admit light, and larger agricultural structures including those at Sellar's Farm, (FIG. 8), West Morden Farm, Hill Farm and to the rear of No. 60 Higher Street also carry double Roman tiles.
105. More unusually double Roman tiles find historic use in a domestic context around the conservation area. This is most notably seen along Higher Street where Nos. 64-67 and the Old Post Office (FIG. 32 above) are fully roofed by the tiles. At the latter an ornamental crested ridge tile is also used. Past domestic use elsewhere is more restrained including use to roof the rear wing of No. 90 Gallop's Lane and a side extension of Orchard Cottage.

### Chimneys

106. Chimneys are an important feature of traditional domestic architecture around the conservation area. The large external heathstone stack of No. 60 Higher Street (see FIG. 2) is a relic of an earlier building. Also of considerable size is the stack of Home Farmhouse (see FIG. 2). Visually elaborate stack designs can be seen as stylistic features of Church Villa, Merraway and at the old school house (see FIGs. 23 and 33). The chimney stack of the old school itself is distinctive given the incorporation of hanging for a bell at its centre. The bell itself is unfortunately missing. Both individually and collectively these chimneys provide considerable visual and architectural interest.
107. More generally speaking, chimney stacks are brick built with simple corbelled tops. Pots are often absent, though where present are often simple cylindrical designs. Where building elevations are rendered it is common for the finish to be also applied to the stacks.

### Windows and doors

108. Timber windows and doors are important features of the traditional streetscape. Amongst historic buildings sash windows and flush faced casements are features of cottages and buildings of higher status alike. Whilst vertically hung sash windows are common, Yorkshire, or horizontally sliding sash windows were previously present in larger numbers than currently exist at West Morden Dairy, and are still present at No. 45 West Morden and Cherry Cottage.
109. UPVC timber window and door replacements are always harmful to the character of traditional buildings, as too the traditional appearance of historic streetscapes. Whilst plastic doors and windows now feature in many twentieth century buildings they are currently absent from the majority of earlier buildings. This to some extent reflects listing, however unlisted buildings of interest remain vulnerable.

110. Window designs featuring margin lights are important stylistic elements in the designs of Church Villa and Merraway (see FIG. 23). At Merraway these are also used in the porch, whilst the frontage additionally features an oculus.
111. Brick arches are typically formed over openings in brick buildings within the conservation area. The type of arch varies with architectural style, and to a lesser extent also the status of the building. Fine flat arches in gauged brick typical of formal Georgian design are seen at Stickland's Farmhouse, at Nos. 149 and 155 Whitefield, and more unusually at Paddock Cottage (see FIG. 27 and 28). Curved segmented arches of one or two brick thickness are however most common, giving a plainer, more functional appearance to domestic and agricultural buildings alike (see examples in FIGs. 17, 28, 32, 30, 33, 36).

### Important unlisted buildings and structures

112. Unlisted buildings and structures which make a 'positive' contribution to the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area by virtue of their historic and or architectural qualities are detailed on Map 2. Given their significance these buildings can be considered 'non-designated heritage assets'. Alongside listed buildings positive buildings should form a focus for conservation, and where applicable, may provide inspiration for new development. Key examples are provided below.



**FIG. 33:** *The old school and school house. Note the chimney stacks which in the case of the school itself were designed to also hang the school bell.*

- *The old school and school house.* (FIG. 33 above) These are prominent roadside buildings, particularly viewed entering East Morden from the north. The school itself has not undergone conversion, though is in use for general storage, and remains a good example of its type.



- *The Old Post Office, Higher Street.* (see FIG. 32) An attractive and well positioned building which occupies a prominent position travelling along Higher Street.
- *Hill Farm Cottage.* This small cottage incorporates domestic and functional ends. Showing clear signs of reconstruction out of an earlier building it seems likely that a structure has stood on the site for many years. The porch is a particularly quirky design.
- *K6 phone boxes at Fire Station Corner, Higher Street and Whitefield.* (see FIG. 34 below). Classic townscape features. As noted above, all are 'jubilee' models typically installed 1935-52.
- *Merraway.* Originally known as Morden Villa, the exact date of construction is not known. The building however features interesting Regency styling complementing that seen at Church Villa.



**FIG. 34.** *War memorial in Higher Street, and telephone kiosk at Whitefield.*

- *War memorial, Higher Street.* (see FIG. 34 above). The war memorial is a modest structure of great local importance. Not currently listed, it is likely to qualify for designation under the current Historic England programme.
- *Gravestones in the parish churchyard.* The churchyard contains an interesting collection of gravestones some of which are inevitably older than the church itself. A few good carved designs are present, though the inscriptions are often difficult to read. Ivy growth is affecting some monuments (see for example FIG. 36) and is causing damage.

## Ecology and biodiversity

113. Whilst environmental conservation is not the purpose of a conservation area designation, the contribution made by wildlife and plants to the character and appearance of a conservation area should not be overlooked. Buildings, garden spaces and verges all provide nesting, roosting and feeding opportunities for birds, bats and small mammals.
114. Ancient woodland including Fry's Wood, Whitefield Wood, Chapel Wood, East Morden Withy Bed and Frogmoor Coppice provides an important and nationally scarce ecological asset within the conservation area. Such ancient woodland is typically rich in plant and animal life. Replanting with conifers, as has occurred at Everett's Wood, causes significant reduction of biodiversity value, though even here bluebells and other wildflowers survive at the less dense margins.
115. Verges are an important resource for wild flowers, and during spring bluebells and primroses are seen along many of the lanes in the conservation area (see FIG. 35 below).
116. Sherford River and the associated Mill Bog provide important riverside and wetland habitat.
117. The conservation area contains a range of agricultural structures suited to use by swallows. Many of these birds can be seen together with house martins in late summer. Future conversion works should aim to fully retain the value of these habitats.



**FIG. 35:** *The importance of verges. Here spring flowers including primroses and bluebells are seen in a verge along Goodwin's Lane.*

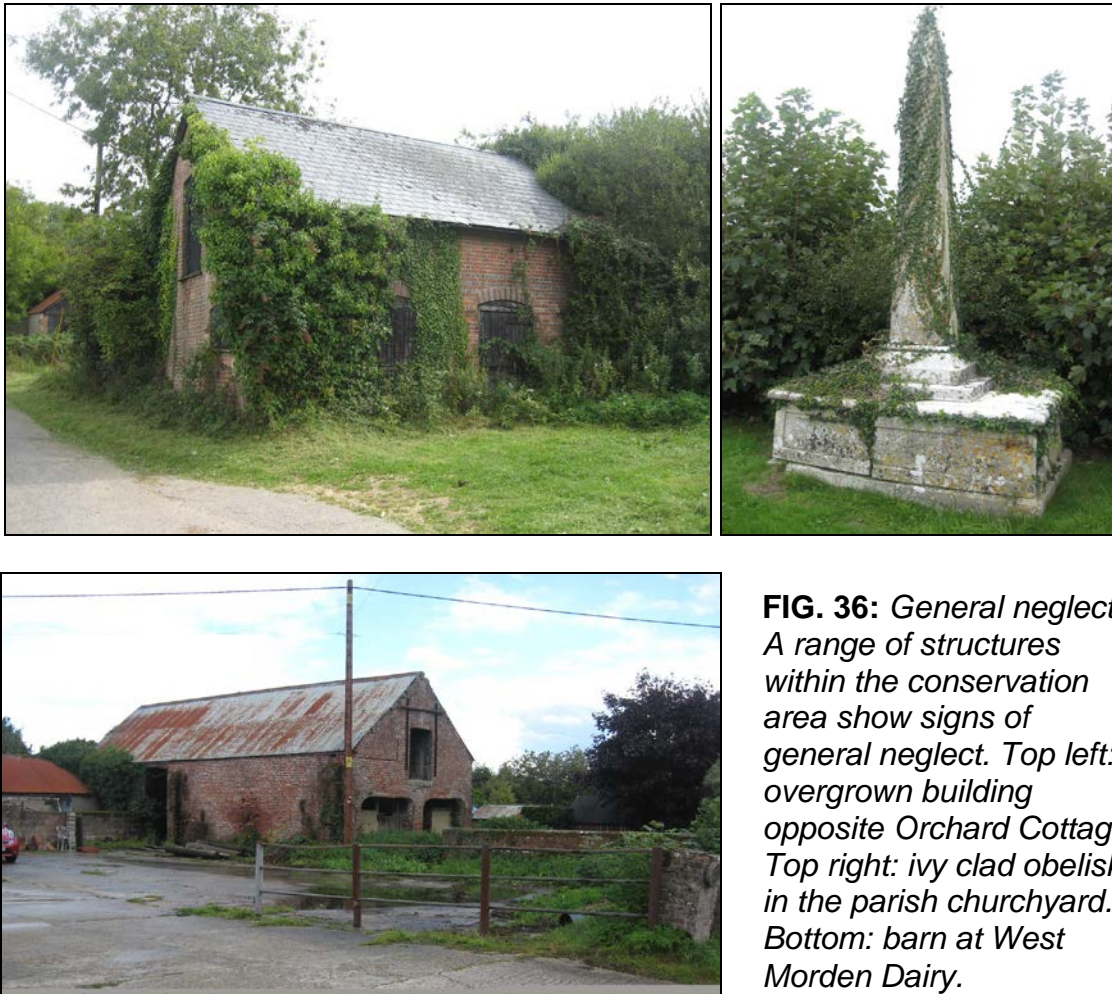
## Issues and opportunities

### Problem areas

118. Surveyed in late summer 2015 a number of public footpaths were impassable due to being overgrown.

### Evaluation of condition

119. A range of unlisted structures within the conservation area are observed to be in poor condition. This appears to be principally a result of neglect, often arising from disuse. Some of these structures, such as the derelict tin sheds north of the village hall, are of limited interest, whilst others such make a contribution to local character and interest that could be enhanced by their renovation. Examples are provided in FIG. 36 below.



**FIG. 36:** *General neglect. A range of structures within the conservation area show signs of general neglect. Top left: overgrown building opposite Orchard Cottage. Top right: ivy clad obelisk in the parish churchyard. Bottom: barn at West Morden Dairy.*

## Buildings at risk

120. Listed buildings and structures are termed 'at risk' where aspects of their condition, use or context threaten those features which provide special historic or architectural interest.
121. Morden Mill, Morden Mill Farmhouse and the adjacent stables are clearly at risk due to their disuse, poor condition and continuing deterioration (see FIG. 13). Whilst measures have been taken to secure the buildings these have caused harm in themselves. Given visibility from the A35 the buildings are regularly invaded by rough sleepers and urban explorers who post photos of their exploits on the internet.
122. Former agricultural buildings at West Morden Dairy (see FIG. 36) are in poor condition though a scheme for their conversion has been approved in the recent past.
123. Observed in late 2015 the parish church was in need of repairs to its roof given slipped and missing slates. The exterior has suffered from inappropriate repointing that has caused localised degradation of stonework, whilst some internal walls are damp and suffering growth of algae.

## Threats, pressures, challenges

124. The principal challenge locally appears to be addressing the poor condition of many buildings and structures within the conservation area. In some cases this may be related to finding new uses and implementing schemes for those already approved, and in other cases simply carrying out maintenance.
125. The consultation draft of this appraisal noted that none of the historic telephone kiosks within the conservation area was listed and that they were therefore vulnerable to removal. BT did indeed propose their removal in late 2016. Fortunately the Parish Council opted to adopt them, though they will no longer provide a payphone service.

## Recommendations

### Boundary redefinition

126. Due to the dispersed historic development pattern and rural location the original boundary of the conservation area was widely drawn, including significant amounts of open agricultural land and woodland. As far as reasonably possible it is necessary and appropriate to draw a distinction between a settlement and its landscape setting in designating a conservation area. This is because conservation area controls are not applicable to agricultural and forestry operations. In Morden the inclusion of such land is often unavoidable. The spaces between dispersed component parts of the conservation area, together with woodland and historic connecting routes provide important, and to some extent defining aspects of character. Some open land originally included is nonetheless better viewed as forming the setting of the conservation area.
127. Changes are proposed to the conservation area boundary in order to ensure that the designation is focused on the dispersed area of historic settlement and historic routes, including the important spaces and woodland between.
128. Modifications will help to ensure that the designation is fit for purpose in line with its statutory definition, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. A description of elements removed is provided below:
- *Open agricultural land north of West Morden, Morden and the road between them.*
  - *Forestry and open agricultural land bounded by Quarr Hill to the east, the green lane to Hector's Corner to the west, the A35 to the south, and east Morden Withy Bed to the north.*
  - *Woodland and open land north of Whitefield Wood and east of Cold Barrow.*
  - *An irregular piece of land immediately southeast of Brickfield Farm.*
  - *An irregular piece of land west of No. 149 Whitefield.*

### Management and enhancement

129. The character and appearance of the conservation area can be preserved and enhanced by the efforts of all who have an interest in the land and property within it. Maintaining those buildings, structures and aspects of which make a 'positive' contribution to the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the conservation area (see Map 2) should be a key priority. On the other hand, buildings, structures and aspects which have marked 'negative' impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area provide a focus for positive change. Buildings marked 'neutral' on Map 2 are a diverse and harmless group which lack importance. Whilst improvements or change here may deliver benefits, these are unlikely to be as significant as for those marked negative. Use of this

appraisal to inform the design and assessment of planning proposals helps to ensure that conservation objectives are achieved through the planning process.

130. The list below provides a summary of potential areas for action, implementation of which will depend upon opportunity, priorities and funding, and may involve or be achieved by a range of different stakeholders.

### Maintenance of footpaths

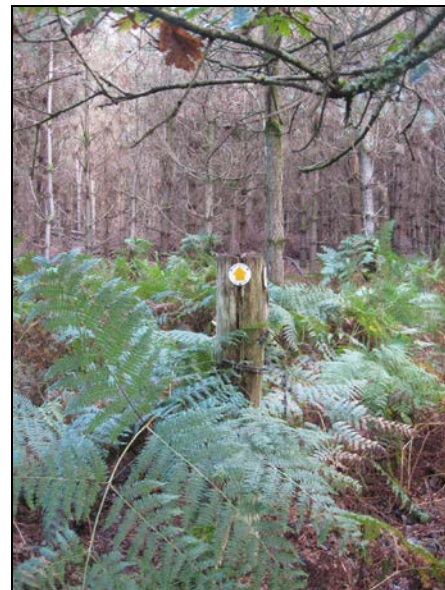
131. Better maintenance of public rights of way would be beneficial. Viewed in September of 2015 a number of paths were choked by vegetation. Within the broader area the path running south from Frogmore eventually becomes lost in a plantation.

### Undergrounding of overhead cables

132. The conservation area could be made more attractive by concealing cables underground.

### Restoration of the finger post adjacent to the old school

133. The finger post adjacent to the old school is a piece of historic street furniture currently in very poor condition minus its roundel. Renovation of the post and reinstatement of the roundel would be beneficial.



**FIG. 37:** Areas for possible improvement. Left: finger post in poor condition adjacent to the old school. Right: the footpaths with which this sign in the plantation south of Frogmore is associated seem to have disappeared.

### Public awareness

134. It is important to raise awareness amongst the public of both the existence of the Conservation Area, and the crucial role they play as property owners in conserving and enhancing its character and appearance. Here parish plans, other locally

produced documents and parish websites can play an important role. Parish plans in particular play an important role in identifying actions that can be taken locally to better preserve and enhance conservation areas.

# Appendix

## Appendix A – Further information and advice

### Legislation, guidance and policy

- *Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*
- *National Planning Policy Framework.* DCLG, 2012.
- *Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.* Purbeck District Council, 2012.
- *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management,* Historic England 2016.

### Design

- *District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.* Purbeck District Council, 2013.

### Historical development, archaeology and architecture

- *County of Dorset, Volume Two, South East, Part 1;* RCHM, 1970.
- *Dorset (Pevsner Buildings of England).* Newman and Pevsner, 1972.
- *How a village was left to die;* Rogers. A, In *The Sun*, 11 March 1967.
- *National Heritage List.* [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk).
- *Place Names of Dorset, Part II;* (Ed. Hill), English Place Names Society, 1980.
- *The Drax Cottage Scandal;* Legg, R in *Dorset County Magazine*, Winter 1972 p. 19-25.

### General

- *A Stitch in Time: Maintaining your Property Makes Good Sense.* SPAB and IHBC.

### Further enquires

Enquiries regarding this appraisal should be addressed to:

Design and Conservation Officer  
Purbeck District Council, Worgret Road  
Wareham BH20 4PP  
Tel: 01923 557388  
[conservation@purbeck-dc.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@purbeck-dc.gov.uk)

Enquiries regarding archaeology and the County Historic Environment Record should be addressed to:

Environmental Services Directorate  
Dorset County Council, Colliton Park  
Dorchester DT1 1XJ  
Tel: 01305 224921  
[www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk)



## Appendix B – Listed Buildings

Listed Buildings within the conservation area are shown in the table below. For further information on these buildings see the National Heritage List (searchable online at [www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)).

Please note: The table does not include ancillary structures or those within the curtilage of named buildings which are also likely to be covered by the listing where pre-dating 1948. Names of properties given below are those recorded at the time of listing and thus under which they are officially listed. It is possible that some names may have changed. This does not affect the listing itself.

Address	Grade	Historic England Reference No.
49, Whitefield	II	1171826
Whitefield Farm House	II	1305437
153, Whitefield	II	1120529
155, Whitefield	II	1171839
Greenwood Cottage, 154, Whitefield	II	1323313
Cherry Cottage, 103-105, Cockett Hill	II	1120557
90, East Morden	II	1120558
parish church of Saint Mary, including boundary wall, Higher Street	II	1120559
76, Higher Street	II	1120560
77, Higher Street	II	1120561
The Old Vicarage, Higher Street	II	1120562
Stables and coach house to the Old Vicarage, immediately south of the house	II	1171746
Morden Mill	II	1120564
Morden Mill Farmhouse	II	1171768
West Morden Farm House	II	1120565
Outbuilding 50 metres south west of West Morden Farmhouse	II	1305452
Wayside, 36, West Morden	II	1120566
Paddock Cottage, including boundary wall to road	II	1323292
43, West Morden	II	1120567
46 And 47, West Morden	II	1120568
King's Corner Farm House	II	1323293
Farm building immediately east of King's Corner Farm House	II	1120569
Sticklands Farm House, including front boundary wall	II	1171699
Church Villa, Higher Street	II	1171724
60, Higher Street	II	1171727
Home Farm House, Higher Street	II*	1171734

40 and 41, West Morden	II	1171792
45, West Morden	II	1171797
Karingal, 48, West Morden	II	1171800
The Cock and Bottle Inn	II	1305496
Frogmore Farm House	II	1323290
79, Giles Lane	II	1323291
Phylcott, West Morden	II	1323312

## Appendix C – Scheduled Ancient Monuments

A Scheduled Ancient Monument is defined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the National Heritage Act 1983 as a protected archaeological site or historic building of national importance. The scheduling of a monument means that permission is required for works affecting that monument. The Secretary of State, in consultation with Historic England, assesses each case individually to ensure that damage to protected sites is kept to a minimum.

Description	Historic England Reference No.
Beacon mound on Beacon Hill	1016280



# **East Creech Conservation Area**

## **Appraisal document**



**Draft for adoption**

**June 2017**

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## Introduction

### Background

1. This appraisal has been prepared for East Creech Conservation Area which was designated on 10th July 1990.
2. Conservation areas are defined within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as:

*“areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.*
3. Conservation areas are designated to cover the streets and places in towns and villages which hold sufficient architectural and historic interest to warrant special consideration and conservation as part of the planning process. While bringing some added controls the object of designation is not to prohibit change but rather to manage its quality. The purpose of this appraisal is to provide an in depth analysis of the architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the conservation area in order to both assist the planning process, and to promote careful management and enhancement.

### Planning policy framework

4. Conservation areas are designated by local authorities as a duty under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of the same Act makes it a duty for local authorities to consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas in exercising planning controls. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides policy guidance on the latter. At District level, policies within the Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 are also relevant, and are supported by the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

### Development within a conservation area

5. Restrictions apply to the types of work you can carry out to properties within conservation areas, principal amongst which is the legal requirement to gain planning permission for carrying out ‘relevant’ demolition of unlisted buildings and structures. To find out more about restrictions see guidance on the Council’s website: [www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk). Where you are considering undertaking works within a conservation area that requires planning permission, the Council will be happy to provide you with pre-application advice. A charge is made for this service. See the Council’s website for details.

6. New development should conserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. You should use this character appraisal to assist you in formulating appropriate designs for new development, and in making sensitive alterations to existing properties.

## Preparation and survey limitations

7. This document was formally adopted by Purbeck District Council on \*\*\*\*\*
8. When you are reading or using this document it is important to note that its contents are not comprehensive. For instance, some aspects of the survey information are limited to areas which can be reasonably recorded from the public highway and other accessible land. You should not take failure to mention a particular element or detail to mean that it is of no importance, and thus of no relevance in the Council's assessment of planning applications.

## Community involvement

9. In line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement a six week period of consultation was arranged. A formal public consultation on the draft boundary proposals and appraisal ran between 7th November and 16th December 2016. Details were sent to the Parish Council six weeks in advance, and the consultation was subsequently extended at the Parish Council's request until 21st February 2017 to allow further time for comments. Consultation materials were made available online and at Westport House. A leaflet was posted to every property affected and officers attended a Parish meeting. The consultation was advertised through local media and in Council newsletters. Consultation responses were taken into account in preparation of the final version of this document.



## Summary of special interest and significance

10. The purpose of the following paragraphs is to provide a brief (non-exhaustive) summary of the special interest and significance of the conservation area, which forms the basis for its designation. A more detailed analysis of its historic and architectural character and appearance will follow in subsequent sections.

### Special historic interest

11. In terms of residential buildings at least, the hamlet of East Creech is notable for not having grown substantially since the eighteenth century. Though many buildings and their settings have undergone substantial modification, the density and distribution of development therefore retains a strong historic character lost from many other settlements.

### Special architectural interest

12. The conservation area contains a number of listed buildings and structures, including, most notably, the distinctive and unusual house now known as East Creech Farm.

## Conservation area: site and situation

### Location and setting

13. The landscape setting of the conservation area is extremely important, and aspects of this setting are perceived at all points moving through the hamlet given changing ground levels both within and beyond. The hamlet itself occupies a pocket of open grassland on falling ground just to the north of the Purbeck chalk ridge. Travelling east-west the setting is physically and visually dominated by both the ridge and the towering presence of Creech Barrow Hill, each of which are crowned by barrows. Descending the hill expansive views north across heathland and marsh extend across a broad flat plain towards Poole Harbour. To the east and north east scrubby woodland covers former mine workings, whilst to the south woodland provides a strong edge to the conservation area.



**FIG. 1:** *View to the east. As the land rises, Poole harbour dominates the view. The scene is compromised by modern structures at East Creech Farm and Creech Barrow Cottage. Sheet roofing materials are conspicuous.*

### Socio-economic profile

14. Agriculture remains important, though the large camping and caravan site attached to East Creech Farm now has a strong seasonal presence. Clay extraction and brick making were important historically, and though mineral extraction continues in the broader area, this is now at a greater distance from the hamlet than historically.

## History of development

### Medieval

15. The name 'Creech' is of Celtic origin, meaning 'hill', and clearly references the adjacent hill which is a prominent feature in views for many miles. This demonstrates a long history of settlement in the vicinity, and the importance of the hill as a landmark, the latter further emphasised by positioning of burial mounds on top.
16. During the medieval period a hunting lodge was constructed at the top of the hill. This allowed surveillance over the Royal hunting reserve of Purbeck Forest, about which little information survives.

### Seventeenth centuries

17. Rockley Cottage (FIG. 2 below) and the western range of East Creech Farmhouse (see cover) have been dated to the seventeenth century. A further cottage of seventeenth century origin (described by the 1970 RCHM survey) stood to the front of Wren Cottage as late as the 1960s, though had been demolished by the 1980s.



**FIG. 2:** *Rockley Cottage. This is one of the oldest cottages in the hamlet and retains a thatched roof. Dramatic changes in the appearance of the roof have however arisen from replacement of the historic covering as seen by comparing a modern view with one included in the RCHM survey of 1970. The block ridge is a modern feature not typical of the local tradition.*

### Eighteenth century

18. The manor was briefly owned by the Thistlewaite family during the mid-eighteenth century. The survey of the property they commissioned in 1768 provides a useful source of information. It shows that most of the houses currently present were in existence in some form at this date, though almost all were subsequently enlarged and/or remodelled.

19. Most interesting on the 1768 plan is the depiction of East Creech Farm, which at that time could have been considered the 'manor house'. It is indeed labelled 'manshun' (sic) on the plan. This is shown as a large building arranged around a central courtyard, enclosed within a large walled garden/orchard, with a further walled orchard opposite. Fragments of the orchard wall survive on the road frontage opposite the house, and the boundary of that which enclosed the house still appears distinct on post-war maps, though they appear to have been subsequently erased by modern agricultural buildings and access tracks. The house underwent significant remodelling at some point during the eighteenth century, as is clearly seen comparing the east and west ranges (see cover and FIG. 10), however it is unclear whether this was before or after 1768. Either way, reference to the 1768 map indicates that the current property occupies a different footprint and that three of the four ranges of buildings enclosing the central courtyard shown at that time were subsequently demolished.



**FIG. 3:** Excerpt from John Sparrow's 1768 Map. Note the plan form and enclosed gardens of East Creech Farm. Other buildings shown include Rockley and Keeper's Cottage. The 'brick kiln' is labelled in the top left hand corner on the edge of Creech Common. Courtesy of Dorset History Centre (Photocopy 16).

20. The 1768 map (see FIG. 3 above) provides evidence of early industrialisation with a brick kiln shown to the north of Keepers Cottage at the edge of what was then common land. FIG. 10 shows the brickworks as it existed in 1888.
21. The route across the common between Rockley and Keeper's Cottage is shown as no more than a track on old maps. The current road indeed only appears to have been formalised during the early twentieth century, helping to explain its lack of enclosure with hedging and the 'open' character of the setting (see FIG. 8). A second, now apparently disused route ran across the common via the brickworks. An enclosed remnant of this route survives opposite Creech Barrow Cottage. This may have fallen out of use with closure of the brickworks, though the 1926 Ordnance Survey map (see FIG. 4) seems to suggest it was also partially blocked

by tipped mine waste. The route along the east side of the common running to Cotness continues in use.

22. At least two properties shown on the 1768 map had disappeared by 1888. These were a house to the west of Rockley, and another at Thornham (on the north side of the road east of East Creech Farm).
23. The manor was bought by the Bond family of Grange in 1773, and became absorbed into the larger estate. This would have entailed a reduction in status for the 'manor house', to that of a principal farm, and might explain its subsequent reduction in size and loss of the enclosed gardens.

### Nineteenth – early twentieth centuries

24. The immediate context of the hamlet saw extensive industrialisation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Whilst the brickworks remained in operation until the early 1900s, clay mining radically altered the landscape. Whilst 'clay pits' are recorded at Thornhams in 1843, by 1926 pits had been opened immediately to the north and north west of the hamlet, and a tramway had been run across the common (see FIG. 4 below). The latter was part of an extensive network of narrow gauge railway lines serving the mines and here seems to have been used to tip excavated material. The line appears to have been short lived as it is not shown on the 1936 Ordnance Survey map. The route of the former line is today occupied by scrubby woodland.



**FIG. 4:** 1926 Ordnance Survey map. The map shows the tramway running across the common and industrialised setting at this time. The brickworks had ceased operation some time after 1900. Contrast with FIG. 10 showing the scene in 1888. A number of the footpaths shown on this map are no longer in use. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

25. The nineteenth century appears to have seen remodelling of a number of the buildings in the hamlet. This typically entailed raising the roof to add a further floor

to single and one and a half storey cottages (see FIG. 5), and or encasing earlier cob construction in brick. Construction by this time indeed appears to have favoured brick, employing materials produced by the adjacent brickworks.

### **Late twentieth – twenty-first centuries**

26. As resources were exhausted, clay extraction in the immediate vicinity began to cease, though large tracts of wasteland were left. Much of this wasteland was colonised by scrubby woodland which now forms part of both the immediate and broader landscape setting of the conservation area.
  
27. Many buildings underwent alteration and or extension of a considerable and sometimes unsympathetic nature during the second half of the twentieth century. The identities of Squires Farmhouse and Creech Barrow Cottage in particular are greatly obscured by modern alterations. The principal focus of change up to the present has however been at East Creech Farm. Whilst traditional agricultural buildings have become redundant and some have undergone conversion, large modern structures have been constructed to the rear and an extensive caravan site laid out. These now have a dominating presence within the hamlet particularly evident in views from Creech Barrow Hill.

## Townscape analysis

### Village structure

28. The principal historic route through the hamlet is that running from Cotness east, and along which the core of the hamlet is arranged. This route forms a junction with another running up towards Creech Barrow Hill, along which a few further dwellings are loosely placed. Most are orientated to face front, though exceptions seen at Keepers Cottage and Small Cottage might represent a response to prevailing weather conditions, or fact that these buildings were constructed prior to formalisation of the current road.

### Building density

29. The hamlet contains few dwellings scattered over a relatively wide area. This sparse character is accentuated by large gaps along the road frontage at the centre of the hamlet where land remains in agricultural use. The greatest concentration of buildings occurs at East Creech Farm, where some former agricultural structures have been remodelled to serve residential use, and several large new agricultural structures have been added.
30. Dwellings are generally set within an enclosed garden plot, though their position relative to the road, and therefore the depth of frontage varies. The minimal set back of East Creech Farmhouse combined with its exceptional height lends the building visual prominence.

### Building height

31. The eastern range of East Creech Farmhouse consists of two full storeys with attic rooms, and is, relative to other domestic buildings in the conservation area, exceptional in terms of its height (see FIG. 10). This chiefly reflects the historic status of the building, which though slightly archaic in style, has the considerable floor to ceiling heights typical of higher class houses of the eighteenth century.
32. Several buildings show clear external signs of having been raised in height historically (see FIG. 5). These include the west side of East Creech Farmhouse, Keeper's Cottage, Jubilee Cottage, the older western half of Fuchsia Cottage and perhaps also the barn opposite East Creech Farm (which was otherwise heavily altered during the twentieth century). Buildings which appear to remain at their original height include the diminutive Little Cottage, whose low one and a half storey form remains discernible despite being encircled by modern extensions, and the core of Wren Cottage (see FIG. 13 and 15).



**FIG. 5:** *Increases in height. Both Keeper's Cottage (left) and the west side of East Creech Farm (right) show signs of a historic increase in height. At Keeper's Cottage the band of brickwork at first floor level is a different colour to that below, whilst brick has similarly been added above stone at the farmhouse. Each carries a slate roof though given the age of the buildings the original coverings would have been different. Keeper's Cottage may have originally been a single storey thatched dwelling.*

33. With changing ground levels the position of buildings relative to one another also changes passing through the conservation area. This adds interest to views though also causes buildings of lesser merit to appear more exposed than might otherwise be the case.

## Plan form and massing

34. Traditional domestic buildings within the conservation area generally have a broad frontage and relatively narrow depth, typically being one room deep.
35. Cottages of one and a half or two storeys make up the majority of dwellings in the conservation area, these generally modest in terms of mass. This contrasts with East Creech Farmhouse which is of exceptional size, and the cluster of large agricultural buildings, both traditional but mainly modern, that are arranged around it. Structures to the rear of the farm house reach the greatest size given the large area they cover, and these are clearly visible over a long distance.



## Edges and enclosure

36. The pattern and nature of historic enclosure within the conservation area varies. The boundaries of individual dwellings are commonly enclosed by hedges, low walls or fencing. Hedging extends along some adjacent field boundaries, but post and wire fencing is the most frequent means by which agricultural land is enclosed. To the south of East Creech Farm use of post and wire fencing reflects removal of hedgerows – see 1768 map (FIG. 2) – though more broadly use reflects the lack of formal historic enclosure (see FIG. 8 for example).
37. The presence of roadside ‘verges’/open green areas in front of properties is a feature characteristic of many rural settlements around the District. This reflects the lack of formal road demarcation in the past, and typically provides an attractive green edge to the street, and a spacious and informal character to the street scene. Though roadside spaces of varying width occur in East Creech, many are used as rough pulling off spaces or have been enclosed by low walls and fencing.
38. Split post and rail fencing is popular, though its use in the west half of the settlement appears to be more a modern ornamental than traditional feature. Where this has been introduced forward of, or on top of a pre-existing boundary treatment this introduces an element of clutter to the view.



**FIG. 6:** Means of enclosure. Split post and rail fencing is a feature of the west half of the hamlet. Where used in conjunction with other boundary treatments it can sometimes create clutter. The view above shows the stone retaining wall and verge at the front of Fuchsia Cottage.

## Visual qualities

39. Views out of the conservation area towards Poole Harbour and Creech Barrow Hill are notable, particularly on a clear day (see FIG. 1 and 7).

40. Views into the conservation area from higher ground to the north west, west and south west are however not wholly positive (see FIG. 1). These are dominated by the bulky modern agricultural buildings to the rear of East Creech Farm and flat roofed structures at Creech barrow Cottage. These compromise rather than lend interest to the broader landscape panorama.
41. The duck pond (see FIG. 16) has a picturesque quality, though views around it are currently compromised by derelict structures, signage and poor quality surfaces.



**FIG. 7:** Creech Barrow Hill. The hill is a prominent feature travelling east through the hamlet, and takes centre view at a number of points.

## Trees, green and open spaces

42. The 1768 map of the manor (see FIG. 3) shows a large orchard opposite East Creech Farmhouse and further orchards in the walled gardens enclosing it. These orchards do not appear to have survived the nineteenth century, though the semi-domestic character of the open space opposite the farmhouse may reflect its former presence. More recently a small orchard has been established adjacent to Rockley.
43. Woodland today plays an important role in providing a southern backdrop to the settlement. Chaldecot's Wood, Creech Wood and Furlong's Coppice have been present since at least 1600, and are classified as 'ancient'. The 1768 estate map (see FIG. 2) shows the boundaries of these woods have remained reasonably consistent up to the present day. Most of the woodland is now a nature reserve.
44. In contrast to the ancient woodland to the south of the hamlet, much of the scrubby woodland to the north and east represents natural regeneration over former industrial sites that historically had little tree cover. Whilst much of this woodland sits within the broader landscape setting of the hamlet, that covering the former

track bed of the tramway over Creech Common plays an important role in shaping the space through which the road across the common now runs (see below).

45. Agricultural land around the hamlet provides the principal open space, whose openness is further accentuated by transparent boundary treatments (e.g. post and wire fencing). This is most noticeable travelling towards the hamlet from Creech Barrow Hill across the old common given that the road stands at the same level and appears to merge with the fields on either side (see FIG. 8 below).



**FIG. 8:** *The old common. A sense of openness remains despite the fencing. The road here was only formalised during the twentieth century, and was previously a track which meandered across the common. Woodland helps to define and shape the space either side of this view.*

## Public realm

### Groundscape

46. Consistent with the rural character of the hamlet it contains no formal pavements, the tarmac road serving both pedestrians and traffic.

### Street furniture

47. The conservation area contains a red K6 telephone kiosk adjacent to which is positioned a square topped Royal Mail post box (FIG. 9 below). The telephone kiosk is a 'jubilee' model (date range 1935-52), identified by use of the Tudor crown. It appears little used, the interior filled with cobwebs. Externally the paintwork is in poor condition. The post box is post-1952 date.
48. A traditional finger post stands at the Furzebrook Road junction at the east end of the hamlet. This retains its distinctive roundel. The finger post has clearly been refurbished, and whilst in good condition, has lost its original cast lettering.



**FIG. 9:** *Street furniture. The telephone kiosk would benefit from repainting.*

### Lighting and wiring

49. The conservation area contains no formal street lighting. This contributes to the rural character of the settlement. The antique street lantern positioned on the verge to the front of Fuchsia Cottage appears incongruous in this context.
50. Overhead cabling is strung along the main road, crossing it at various intervals. This is very noticeable moving through the hamlet, and generally detracts from views.

### Public space

51. The conservation area contains no public open space aside from the highway. Public use of private open space is however a defining characteristic of the caravan park located at East Creech Farm. Free public access is allowed to some of the open spaces and woodland in the immediate landscape setting of the conservation area.

## Building style, materials and details

### Architectural style

52. The conservation area contains a number of cottages which demonstrate traditional, pre-industrial local vernacular style (see FIG. 2, 13 and 15). These vary in the extent to which they have been subsequently altered or embellished, but are typically characterised by their use of basic and immediately available building materials (cob and thatch), employing details but within formats lacking any standardisation in composition. Later cottages and contemporary remodelling of earlier buildings show greater formality in composition though again lack consistent or discernible style. A lack of formal style is again evident at East Creech Farm which is surprising for a building of its status and age. The eccentric arrangement of the eighteenth century wing in particular recalls seventeenth century and earlier designs found elsewhere in the District (see FIG. 10 below and cover photo).



**FIG. 10:** *East Creech Farmhouse. The west half of the building (also see cover photo) is dated to the seventeenth century and has clearly been increased in height, whilst the east range appears to have been more substantially remodelled at some point during the eighteenth century. The two storey porch is an interesting feature. An imposing building generally, the house has a mixed style*

### Walls

#### Stone

53. Though in East Creech stone was not a principal construction material in past, mixed heathstone and limestone rubble stonework does prominently occur in a number of historic buildings and boundary walls. In buildings it typically forms a component of construction alongside other materials. The use of limestone rubble

at heavily altered and extended Creech Barrow Cottage is atypical of development generally.



**FIG. 11: Stonework.** *The barn opposite East Creech Farm features a mixture of limestone and heathstone rubble. The walls have been raised in brick. The building was heavily altered during the twentieth century and is compromised by the sheet roof and poorly formed entrance.*

### Cob and Brick

54. Some of the cottages within the conservation area were originally constructed using cob. Use shows a clear differentiation in the status of construction relative to the contemporary western range of East Creech Farm, which was constructed in stone (see cover photo). The clay content of the surrounding soils combined with the ready availability of chalk is particularly favourable for cob construction. Rendered cob remains visible at Wren Cottage (see FIG. 13), where use apparently post-dates the brickworks, though at Rockley (see FIG. 2) the walls have been faced in brick.
55. A range of different clays suitable for brick making (and indeed historically used for this purpose in the broader region) are available within the immediate vicinity of the hamlet. Creech Brickworks (see FIG. 12 below) operated adjacent to the common from at least the mid-eighteenth century into the early twentieth, using clay dug on-site. This was from a localised source known as the Creech Brick Clay Member, a deposit which occurs within the Branksome Sand Formation. It is reasonable to assume that at least some of the brick within the hamlet dated to the period was produced at the works, though the variation seen would suggest that at least some came from outside. The colour of brick around the hamlet ranges between buff and pale red, with some darker reds and decorative use of 'flared' (burned) or glazed brick seen. Far greater and not always complimentary variation is shown in the colour of modern brickwork.



**FIG. 12:** Creech Brickworks. As shown on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

56. English bond is used decoratively at Wild Rose Cottage, with courses of red stretchers alternating with courses of flared headers. Flared headers are also used decoratively in the Flemish garden wall bond of historic buff/pale red brickwork at Fuschia Cottage. In both cases brickwork in modern extensions has failed to match the colour and pattern of the old. A further decorative scheme in Flemish bond is seen at Keeper's Cottage (FIG. 5), where flared headers produce a chequered pattern within red brickwork.

### Render

57. Render represents the traditional finish for cob and continues to serve this function at Wren Cottage. Prior to the nineteenth century it was also common for buildings constructed in stone to be rendered, as this lent protection to the walls. It seems likely that the western range of East Creech Farmhouse was originally fully rendered (this currently covers the first storey, partly concealing later brickwork), and remains a conspicuous and attractive finish on the eighteenth century wing.

### Roofs

58. The majority of historic buildings carry pitched roofs, though these roof forms do not necessarily reflect those originally present (i.e. given many buildings were increased in height and finished in slate during the nineteenth century). The thatched roofs of Wren Cottage and Rockley each feature hips (see Fig. 2 and 13). Considerable spans are covered by the roofs of modern agricultural buildings to the rear of East Creech Farm, and these are visible across some distance.
59. Residential buildings within the conservation area feature a mixture of roofing materials, with no one material in a clear majority. Large areas of sheet roofing covering agricultural buildings are however conspicuous in views from the north.

## Roofing

60. Use of thatch is characteristic of vernacular construction, and survives on a number of cottages. It is likely that the frequency of thatched buildings was greater historically, but that this was replaced as buildings were enlarged during the nineteenth century, typically by slate. Rockley and Wren Cottage carry ornamental block ridges on their roofs (see Fig. 2 and 13). Raised ridges are not typical of traditional thatching style in Dorset, and undermine local distinctiveness. Fortunately they can simply be eliminated during the regular cycle of maintenance. Little Cottage retains a traditional flush ridge (see FIG. 15).



**FIG. 13:** *Wren Cottage. The original part of the structure stands at the centre. The elaborate block ridge is not a traditional feature.*

61. East Creech Farm sees combination of plain clay tiles with an easing course of stone tiles at the eaves (see FIG. 10 and cover). This style of roofing appears to have been a popular around the District during the late eighteenth century, most typically for larger houses. The use of stone tiles at the eaves helped to shed rainwater clear of the eaves in the absence of gutters. Prior to its unsympathetic conversion, a more unusual combination of Welsh slate with stone tiles was a feature of the small agricultural building east of the barn (see FIG. 14 below). As this building is shown in the map of 1768 it seems probable that slate itself was not the original covering.



**FIG. 14:** *Stone eaves course. This photo captures a detail recently lost in the poorly handled conversion of an agricultural building opposite East Creech Farm. The detail can still be viewed in combination with clay tiles on the farmhouse itself.*



62. Welsh slate appears to have become the locally preferred roofing type during the nineteenth century, and use reflected growth of distribution by rail. Heather blue Penrhyn slate on the roof of Wild Rose Cottage is particularly attractive. The foreign roofing slate used on the café conversion opposite East Creech Farm is conspicuous in its appearance given the colour and texture differs from that of native material.
63. Importation of double Roman tiles from Bridgwater also commenced during the nineteenth century and the tiles generally found sparse local use for outbuildings. These feature on a couple of buildings adjacent to East Creech Farm, though some of the material appears to be new or reclaimed.
64. The corrugated asbestos cement roof of the large barn opposite East Creech Farm (see FIG. 11) is a modern replacement, installed when the building was altered post-war. Other functional sheet roof coverings are a feature of modern agricultural buildings constructed to the rear of East Creech Farm, and various outbuildings elsewhere in the conservation area.

### Chimneys

65. Chimney stacks are an important traditional feature of dwellings within the conservation area. Where original, these are typically constructed from brick, though Wren Cottage has a historic chimney in ashlar (fine cut stone).

### Windows and doors

66. Timber windows and doors are typical features of historic buildings within the hamlet and make an important contribution to the traditional character and appearance of the conservation area. Plastic and metal framed windows have however been introduced in places with consequent loss of character. These are most conspicuous in the recently converted former agricultural structure opposite East Creech Farm.
67. The windows of cottages within the conservation area are typically side hung casements. The large sash windows of the eighteenth century wing of East Creech Farm are a measure of the style and status of the building, whilst the remnants of stone mullioned windows of the older western wing are an earlier statement of the same.

### Important unlisted buildings and structures

68. Unlisted buildings and structures which make a 'positive' contribution to the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area by virtue of their historic and or architectural qualities are detailed on Map 2. Given their significance these buildings can be considered 'non-designated heritage assets'. Alongside listed buildings positive buildings should form a focus for conservation,

and where applicable, may provide inspiration for new development. Key examples are provided below.

- *K6 telephone kiosk*: (FIG. 9) a ‘jubilee’ model K6 telephone kiosk (installed 1935-1952).
- *East Creech finger post*: a distinctive piece of street furniture, particularly given retention of its unique roundel. It is a shame that the original cast lettering on the fingers has been lost in refurbishment.
- *Little Cottage*: (FIG. 15) despite being almost encircled by extensions the external form and character of this diminutive historic vernacular cottage remains appreciable.



**FIG. 15:** *Little Cottage. The cottage is viewed with Squire’s farmhouse in the background. The form remains distinct though much extended. Squire’s farmhouse has clearly undergone extensive modification.*

## Ecology and biodiversity

69. Whilst environmental conservation is not the purpose of a conservation area designation, the contribution made by wildlife and plants to the character and appearance of a conservation area should not be overlooked. Buildings, garden spaces and verges all provide nesting, roosting and feeding opportunities for birds, bats and small mammals.
70. The ancient woodland contained within Chaldecot's Wood, Creech Wood and Furlong's Coppice is a scarce resource which holds high ecological value. Ancient woodland is typically rich in plant and animal species, and this has been recognised in designation of a nature reserve. Areas of scrubby regenerated woodland provide much lesser ecological value, but are still valuable resources within the conservation area.
71. The watercourse and ponds within the hamlet add to this diversity as well as contributing to the attractiveness and interest of the street scene (FIG. 16 below).
72. The conservation area contains a number of agricultural buildings commonly used by birds and bats. Future conversion works should aim to fully retain the value of these habitats.



**FIG. 16:** *Duck Pond and stream. The pond (left) forms an attractive roadside feature passing through the hamlet, though its position makes it vulnerable to pollution from vehicles. The watercourse (right) is visible adjacent to Jubilee Cottage.*

## Issues and opportunities

### Problem areas

73. Alterations undertaken to traditional buildings within the conservation area has caused harm to their character. In such a small conservation area the impact this has is proportionately increased.

### Evaluation of condition

74. From external view the majority of buildings within the conservation area appear to be generally well maintained, with the exception of the barn opposite East Creech Farmhouse which is in poor repair.

### Buildings at risk

75. Listed buildings and structures are termed 'at risk' where aspects of their condition, use or context threaten those features which provide special historic or architectural interest. The only listed structure of current concern is the garden wall and gate piers opposite East Creech Farmhouse (FIG. 17 below).



**FIG. 17:** Garden wall opposite East Creech Farm. The brickwork is in poor condition, being damaged by ivy and leaning in places.

### Threats, pressures, challenges

76. The telephone kiosk remains under threat of removal, and this was last proposed by BT towards the end of 2016. A scheme exists for parish councils to purchase the shells (minus the equipment). In the absence of greater use, or local support for its retention, the kiosk is likely to be removed at some point in the near future.

## Recommendations

### Boundary redefinition

77. As originally designated in 1990, the conservation area included not only the hamlet, but large tracts of open land, and some scrub covered wasteland in the surrounding landscape. The boundary itself was arbitrary in places and apparently unrelated to physical features on the ground. As far as reasonably possible it is necessary and appropriate to draw a distinction between a settlement and its landscape setting in designating a conservation area. This is because conservation area controls are not applicable to agricultural and forestry operations. As both East Creech and the whole of the surrounding landscape fall within the AONB – a planning designation specifically designed to conserve landscape character and quality – the setting is itself amply protected.
78. Changes are proposed to the conservation area boundary in order to more appropriately focus the designation on the built up area of the historic hamlet and well defined open spaces closely related to it. This will ensure that the designation is fit for purpose, in line with its statutory definition, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. A description of elements proposed for removal is given below:

*Creech Barrow Hill and land to the east; fields and scrub/wasteland to the north and northeast of East Creech Farm; East Creech Farm caravan site; open downland to the south Creech Wood, Chaldecot's Wood and Furlong's Coppice.*

### Management and enhancement

79. The character and appearance of the conservation area can be preserved and enhanced by the efforts of all who have an interest in the land and property within it. Maintaining those buildings, structures and aspects of which make a 'positive' contribution to the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the conservation area (see Map 2) should be a key priority. On the other hand, buildings, structures and aspects which have marked 'negative' impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area provide a focus for positive change. Buildings marked 'neutral' on Map 2 are a diverse and harmless group which lack importance. Whilst improvements or change here may deliver benefits, these are unlikely to be as significant as for those marked negative. Use of this appraisal to inform the design and assessment of planning proposals helps to ensure that conservation objectives are achieved through the planning process.
80. The list below provides a summary of potential areas for action, implementation of which will depend upon opportunity, priorities and funding, and may involve or be achieved by a range of different stakeholders.

### **Undergrounding of overhead wires**

81. Visual clutter caused by wiring could be removed by placing telephone and other cables underground.

### **Phasing out of block ridges**

82. The elimination of ornamental block ridges can be achieved through the regular cycle of ridge maintenance. Reinstatement of flush ridges would help to reinforce local distinctiveness and character.

### **Maintenance of the telephone kiosk**

83. The telephone kiosk would benefit from repainting.

### **Public awareness**

84. It is important to raise awareness amongst the public of both the existence of the Conservation Area, and the crucial role they play as property owners in conserving and enhancing its character and appearance. Here parish plans, other locally produced documents and parish websites can play an important role. Parish plans in particular play an important role in identifying actions that can be taken locally to better preserve and enhance conservation areas.

# Appendix

## Appendix A – Further information and advice

### Legislation, guidance and policy

- *Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*
- *National Planning Policy Framework.* DCLG, 2012.
- *Purbeck Local Plan Part 1.* Purbeck District Council, 2012.
- *Conservation area designation appraisal and management.* Historic England, 2016.

### Design

- *District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.* Purbeck District Council, 2013.

### Historical development, archaeology and architecture

- *County of Dorset, Volume Two, South East, Part 1;* RCHM, 1970.
- *Dorset (Pevsner Buildings of England).* Newman and Pevsner, 1972.
- *National Heritage List.* [www.historic-england.org.uk](http://www.historic-england.org.uk).

### General

- *A Stitch in Time: Maintaining your Property Makes Good Sense.* SPAB and IHBC.

### Further enquires

Enquiries regarding this appraisal should be addressed to:

Design and Conservation Officer  
Purbeck District Council, Worgret Road  
Wareham BH20 4PP  
Tel: 01923 557388  
[conservation@purbeck-dc.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@purbeck-dc.gov.uk)

Enquiries regarding archaeology and the County Historic Environment Record should be addressed to:

Environmental Services Directorate  
Dorset County Council, Colliton Park  
Dorchester DT1 1XJ  
Tel: 01305 224921  
[www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk)

## Appendix B – Listed buildings

Listed Buildings within the conservation area are shown in the table below. For further information on these buildings see the National Heritage List (searchable online at [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)).

Please note: The table does not include ancillary structures or those within the curtilage of named buildings which are also likely to be covered by the listing where pre-dating 1948. Names of properties given below are those recorded at the time of listing and thus under which they are officially listed. It is possible that some names may have changed. This does not affect the listing itself.

Address	Grade	English Heritage Reference No.
Wren Cottage	II	1120318
East Creech Farm House	II	1120319
Garden wall and gate piers to East Creech Farm, opposite the house	II	1323411
Rockley	II	1323410