

## Policy Group – 22 November 2017

### Piddle Valley Conservation Area review

#### 1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek recommendation that the draft appraisal and boundary proposals prepared for Piddle Valley Conservation Area 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 appraisal 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 to explain the draft proposals and take comments. The consultation was advertised through local media and Council newsletters. A further parish meeting was attended by officers on 13th September 2017 to explain changes made to the boundary proposal following the consultation. These were well received by the parish council. Comments and responses are summarised in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.5 Copies of the draft conservation area appraisal and the boundary proposals are contained in **Appendices 2-3**. 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 appraisal and boundary proposals prepared for the Piddle Valley Conservation Area 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 review of Piddle Valley Conservation Area is attached as Appendix 2. Written details are provided below together with statements of justification for the proposed changes.

5.2 Boundary changes have sought to exclude open agricultural land within the setting of the conservation area where no strong case can be made for these spaces forming an integrated component of the four interlinked settlements covered, or the water meadow landscape with which they are immediately intertwined. As a consequence some dwellings and meadowland east of Yearling's Drove are proposed for removal.

5.3 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:

- Land and buildings (Mill Pond Cottages, Chamberlayne's Farm and Nos. 13 and 14 on the Wool-Bere Regis road) to the east of Yearling's Drove.
- The watercress farm and fields to the west.
- Paddock adjacent to Moor Lane House.
- Fields to the south of property boundaries on the south side of Southover Road.

5.4 Elements proposed for addition are:

- A piece of the garden curtilage of North Barn otherwise severed by the previous boundary.

## **Appendices:**

**1 - Consultation feedback**

**2 - Proposals maps**

**3 - Draft Piddle Valley Conservation Area Appraisal**

Background papers:

There are none.

For further information contact:

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## Piddle Valley Conservation Area Review

### Public consultation: summary of comments and responses

Response number and point	Comments submitted	Response/Action
1	Very positive step. Allows the small communities to expand.	The review is not related to future development. Conservation area boundaries do not in themselves dictate where development may or may not occur. Subject also to other planning policies sensitive housing development can occur within conservation areas.
1.1	Two small paddocks to the west of Throop should be taken out. Ideal place for development.	The conservation area boundary does not define where development may or may not take place therefore this request is not relevant.
2	Change in the boundary will allow development.	Conservation areas do not prevent appropriate development. See other development policies in the Local Plan.
2.1	Consider extending the AONB to include Piddle Valley.	The AONB designation is not within the scope of the review or within the remit of PDC.
3	Present boundary was set up to incorporate the setting of the valley settlements. Planning restraints on gravel extraction, lakes and solar panels are appropriate.	The conservation area does not bring any specific restraints in regard to gravel extraction, lakes or solar parks. An Article 4 Direction does however currently exist in regard to gravel extraction and pond formation within the 'water meadows'. This Direction is distinct from the conservation area designation and therefore unaffected by the boundary proposals.

<p><b>3.1</b></p>	<p>Concern that several applications for development of agricultural buildings have been granted outside the CA close to Throop Clump.</p>	<p>This is not directly relevant to the review. Where the Council receives a planning application for development outside a conservation area however it will consider whether there is any impact on its setting.</p>
<p><b>3.2</b></p>	<p>Piddle Valley is environmentally important with rich biodiversity.</p>	<p>Biodiversity is acknowledged within the Appraisal but is not relevant to the designation or function of a conservation area.</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p>The large field at the end of Bladen Valley should not be excluded. Development might be possible.</p>	<p>Development of the field would be no more likely if it was excluded than retained and in any case would have a significant impact on the setting of the listed Bladen Valley development. A close visual and spatial relationship between the field and Bladen Valley is however acknowledged and this partly reflects the original intention to continue the development across the field. On this basis retention within the designation is now proposed.</p>
<p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p>Water meadows should be retained as the first of their kind.</p>	<p>The revised proposal retains most of the meadows, and the Appraisal acknowledges that meadows in Affpuddle may represent the, or one of the earliest sites where systems based on 'bedworks' were employed.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p>Mintern's Ferry should not be excluded. Note grounds also on the opposite side of the road, similar to the Dairy House.</p>	<p>This building is now retained though it is questionable whether or not it actually forms part of Turnerpuddle. Yearling's Drove to the east provides a strong edge to the revised designated area.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p>The Appraisal must identify the degree of protection provided by other planning tools to</p>	<p>Details of general development policies can be found in the Local Plan – the Appraisal is specifically concerned with assessing the character, appearance and special interest of the</p>

	prevent opportunistic development of agricultural land.	conservation area. Conservation area designation does not prevent appropriate development.
	Appraisal must take into account proposals to preserve the water meadows.	The Council is not aware of any 'plan' to preserve the meadows. The meadows are so degraded in parts that restoration rather than preservation might be more appropriate – this is now listed as a potential management/enhancement point in the Appraisal.
<b>6.1</b>	The Appraisal must be re-presented to residents.	Following the end of the public consultation officers met with the Parish Council and local residents again to present revised boundary proposals. The Appraisal can be viewed in Policy Group and Council papers.
<b>6.2</b>	Several conservation officers have been in post since 1987, none has questioned the designation.	The opportunity for assessment and revision of the current boundary has not arisen since the 1980s given that no review has been undertaken.
<b>6.3</b>	The river valley is integral to the settlement and was considered as such in 1987.	The water meadows are included within the revised boundary proposal but the valley as a whole cannot be included – see 6.5.
<b>6.4</b>	Open land north of the Piddle is integral to the valley and follows a bridleway between Tonerspiddle and Tolpiddle..	This is now included within the revised proposal.
<b>6.5</b>	Consideration should be given to expanding the designation to preserve the whole valley from ridge to ridge.	This would not be appropriate as it would require inclusion of large swathes of woodland and farmland forming the very broad setting of the settlements in question. Landscape protection is not the function of a conservation area.

7	Commissioning of a study of the water meadows and provision of notice boards explaining their history would be of value.	This is agreed, as informed conservation of the water meadows is impossible without a detailed understanding of their component parts. The Parish Council would be best placed to undertake and/or sponsor this action drawing upon local knowledge and resources. The appraisal can note this.
7.1	I take issue with the separation of development into categories and potential restriction on residents extending 'negative' properties.	See comment point 9.5.
8	Water meadows – the first created in England so require protection.	The revised proposal retains most of the meadows, and the Appraisal acknowledges that meadows in Affpuddle may represent the, or one of the earliest sites where systems based on 'bedworks' were employed.
8.1	The field at the end of Bladen Valley should be retained.	It is now proposed to retain this field – see point 4.
9	The water-meadows comprise architectural structures in their own right, retain unique and historic features as well as cementing the relationship of the settlement with the river Piddle and creating a strong sense of place.	The water meadows contain some fragmentary structures but are otherwise largely 'archaeological' features now. The revised proposal retains most of the meadows.
9.1	There are many "built" structures on the water-meadows such as masonry channels, arches and sluice gates, some of which are still in working order; collectively they contribute to the Parish's rich heritage and the character of the area.	As in 9 above.

<p><b>9.2</b></p>	<p>The first known active use of water-meadows is recorded in Affpuddle. Their continued connection to the settlement is still very relevant today given the socio-agricultural heritage that is a legacy of the Bladen Estate to the entire Parish.</p>	<p>This is not strictly true. The Appraisal acknowledges that meadows in Affpuddle may represent the, or one of the earliest sites where systems based on 'bedworks' were employed. Flooding of land to create water meadows is however of far more ancient origin.</p>
<p><b>9.3</b></p>	<p>A patch work of footpaths and bridleways that provide valued amenity access to local people and tourists. The water-meadows, together with their associated man-made structures make up a site of special historic interest.</p>	<p>The network of routes is noted in the revised Appraisal.</p>
<p><b>9.4</b></p>	<p>The proximity of the land to form an immediate setting to Bladen Valley, a very important area made up of listed buildings, central to the Bladen Estate, which remains an important site in terms of agricultural heritage.</p>	<p>It is now proposed to retain this field – see point 4.</p>
<p><b>9.5</b></p>	<p>Concern is expressed regarding the categorisation of buildings in the document as making a “Positive, Negative or Neutral” contribution to the Conservation Area. There appears to be no definition of each category, instead rather emotive language is used, which may have caused unintended and unnecessary offense to home owners. There appears to be no detail or firm idea about how the “negative” properties could be “improved” and as such consideration will be open to the widest possible subjective judgement.</p>	<p>Any offence is regrettable. These terms have however emerged through planning case law and are now enshrined in planning policy and guidance. Their use recognises the fact that within an ‘area’ designation the contribution that buildings make to the special historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area will always vary, and proportionality must therefore be exercised within the planning decision making process. Some buildings will unavoidably be included within a conservation area which lack any historic or architectural value – value is not conferred by simple presence of a building within a conservation area.</p>



		<p>Para. 138 of the NPPF makes a clear distinction between elements of a conservation which contribute to its significance (i.e. specifically its architectural and historic interest) and those which do not. It employs the term 'positive' in regard to the latter. This term cannot be applied lightly given that it triggers other potentially restrictive policy considerations whose use must be soundly justified.</p> <p>'Negative' is simply the opposite of positive, and National Planning Guidance (Para.025 Reference ID: 18a-025-20140306) states: <i>A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.</i> Historic England Guidance Note 1 covering Appraisal similarly states in para 19 that an Appraisal will contain: <i>analysis of what is positive and negative, and identify: opportunities for beneficial change.</i></p> <p>Para. 137 of the NPPF requires Local Authorities to look for opportunities for new development in conservation areas that could enhance or better reveal their significance. At a simplistic level these opportunities specifically exist in regard to elements of a conservation area that don't contribute to its significance (e.g. 'negative' elements).</p> <p>'Neutral' is a necessary centre ground recognised in case law.</p> <p>These distinctions are already made in assessment of planning applications in Piddle Valley Conservation Area. The grading within the Appraisal does not therefore represent anything new, but it does provide greater clarity than the ad hoc approach necessary in its absence.</p>
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<p><b>9.6</b></p>	<p>The Affpuddle and Turnerspuddle Parish Plan adopted by Parishioners contains its own Design Statement and concludes as follows;</p> <p>“The expressed desire of the community is that the design and materials used in new development, in whatever form it takes, should harmonise with the existing built environment. Whilst some future development will undoubtedly imitate the traditional cob and thatched cottages, the parish does not wish to stagnate in a mythical rural time warp and will always consider innovative design and use of materials where it is appropriate to do so.”</p> <p>The Council would like to see this approach adopted for the assessment and categorisation of existing properties reconsidered by Officers, and for the revision to take into account the Design Statement contained in the Parish Plan.</p>	<p>The assessment of development in the conservation area within the Appraisal must be carried out with reference to the statutory definition of a conservation area and related guidance as covered above. This will inevitably focus on the characteristics of the historic environment as its preservation and enhancement is the specific purpose of a conservation area – not the wholesale preservation of a settlement. Assessment of the design quality of development proposals is a separate stage in the planning process for which the Appraisal will provide evidence. In the event that new development occurs – and here comments otherwise express strong resistance to change – there is scope within a conservation area and within both local and national design policy generally for ‘appropriate innovation’ in design. In this regard it is not useful to draw a distinction between reflection of local distinctiveness in new design and innovation as the two are not mutually exclusive. This has been addressed in the Appraisal.</p>

<p><b>10</b></p>	<p>The Appraisal does not focus on parts of the conservation area its author does not like. No mention of development that took place in the second half of the C.20th.</p>	<p>The purpose of an Appraisal is to identify the special historic architectural interest, character and appearance of a conservation area. This forms the basis of the designation and thus the focus for preservation and enhancement in decision making and management. In any objective sense the post-war suburban housing within the conservation area holds no historic or architectural value. It exists and therefore must be acknowledged, however coverage is provided using no more detail than necessary.</p>
<p><b>10.1</b></p>	<p>The water meadow system was invented in Affpuddle. It is an integral element to Affpuddle and Briantspuddle and should be preserved.</p>	<p>See response to point 9.2.</p>
<p><b>10.2</b></p>	<p>Lack of any peer review.</p>	<p>The Appraisal document was extensively consulted on within PDC before its presentation to the Policy Group and full Council prior to public consultation.</p>
<p><b>10.3</b></p>	<p>The Appraisal is not clear or specific about what defines local distinctiveness and character – this needs to be holistic not just focused on specific design or style details, particularly bearing in mind large number of ‘negative’ buildings. Provides little guide for future development.</p>	<p>Building details, and in particular the qualities of the local vernacular, help to underpin distinctiveness – i.e. the special qualities which, with specific regard to the conservation area designation and locality, underpin its historic architectural interest. Modern suburban housing lacks distinctiveness and on the whole the designs used pay no regard to context. It is appropriate for the Appraisal to highlight these negative characteristics not to promote them.</p>
<p><b>10.4</b></p>	<p>No mention of C20th development after 1953.</p>	<p>Again, this is covered in the Appraisal though with detail proportionate to the limited contribution to the special historic and architectural character and appearance of the conservation area such development makes. It is important to note that simple presence of this development within the conservation area</p>

		boundary does not confer any architectural or historic interest upon it.
<b>10.5</b>	The term 'generally unsympathetic' in regard to post-war bungalows and pavements opposite the village hall is subjective. The form style and massing of these houses is in keeping with Debenham development. Criticism of pavements is discriminatory as the old people here need them.	Pavements here are inconsistent with character generally – it is not discriminatory to make this observation. In common with most post-war development the bungalows here are standard designs with no obvious link to context other than to imitate the layout of the Ring adjacent.
<b>10.6</b>	Saying that the vernacular is strongly represented by cob and thatch is misleading as the number of these buildings is low overall e.g. Balden Valley houses are constructed using concrete blocks.	The 'vernacular' as the term is used here, refers to building carried out according to local tradition employing immediately available local materials. This is normally differentiated from the formal designs produced by architects whose use of materials is not confined to the locality. Regardless of the proportion of cob and thatch buildings currently in existence it is true to say that they characterise the local vernacular. Bladen Valley is an architect-designed development. Whilst its formality means it cannot be considered truly vernacular it shares some characteristics with vernacular development in terms of the use of materials. Most building carried out post-war shares no characteristics with the local vernacular.
<b>10.7</b>	Timber cladding features on a number of buildings but is omitted from the Appraisal.	Timber cladding does not make a significant contribution to local character.
<b>10.8</b>	The statement that slate is infrequent, does not characterise development generally and is typically associated with nineteenth century buildings is misleading.	Slate does not characterise development generally in the conservation area, and given that its use locally largely relates to the arrival of the railways it is typically associated with nineteenth century buildings.

		See section 9.5 above for background on grading.
<b>10.9</b>	A large proportion of dwellings are classified as 'negative'. There should be more explanation of why/what this means.	See section 9.5 above for background on grading. The term used reflects National Planning Guidance (Para.025 Reference ID: 18a-025-20140306), albeit the latter references 'beneficial' as opposed to positive change. The two mean much the same. 'Focus for positive change' recognises that buildings which do not make a positive contribution to the special historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area hold the most potential for change. In line with the objective of 'enhancement', positive change could see negative aspects of character addressed through new development, and an improved contribution made to the conservation area as a result. This is also an objective of both national and local design policy which generally seeks sensitive/improved design where opportunities exist.
<b>10.10</b>	A more detailed description of what is meant by 'a focus for positive change' is required. This type of cryptic language is reminiscent of terms such as 're-education' of the non-conforming people in communist Vietnam.	See responses above.
<b>11</b>	Repeats the majority of points 10-10.10.	See responses above.
<b>11.1</b>	Land beside the river may be used for a fly fishing industry resulting in damage to the surrounding agricultural fields. Or a fear of gravel extraction in the surrounding fields. I wonder whether this appraisal could make comment on what protection can be put in place to reduce this risk to preserve the village.	The conservation area designation has no bearing on people using the river to fish. The Appraisal notes the existence of an Article 4 Direction covering the floodplain whose specific subjects are formation of lakes and extraction of aggregates.

<p><b>11.2</b></p>	<p>The timing of these proposed changes with the recent proposal of some affordable housing has not gone unnoticed.</p>	<p>There is no connection between housing proposals and the review. Conservation area status itself does not prevent housing proposals being put forward for consideration.</p>
<p><b>11.3</b></p>	<p>If 50% of Briantspuddle is not of architectural significance why is it included in the Conservation area? The buildings are not of a "consistent quality to enable definitive general statements to be made about the character of the conservation area". Briantspuddle should be removed and the Conservation area focused specifically on Bladen Valley.</p>	<p>As a conservation area is an 'area' designation is difficult to exclude all buildings lacking historic or architectural interest, and some will inevitably be included. The presence of large amounts of insensitive modern development will however weaken the quality of any conservation area. In Briantspuddle the quantity, consistency and distribution of historic development means that it makes the predominant contribution to character. Modern development falls in pockets, and appears clearly intrusive by contrast.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p>Inadequate attention is given to the setting of buildings which give a strong sense of place, as well as the historic implications of the setting. Downplaying of the importance of the River Piddle and its attendant water meadows.</p>	<p>These points are addressed in the revised Appraisal.</p>
<p><b>12.1</b></p>	<p>The setting of the present conservation area is a powerful and important part of this place, from the bank and ditch boundary that surrounds the northern and western boundary of Lee Wood (along which is an area planted with bulbs where Lady Debenham brought friends to admire the view of Bladen Valley and formerly known as "Lady Debenhams' Garden") to the stone pavements on either side of the Sares Wood to Bere Regis road along the ridge to the south of Briantspuddle</p>	<p>Agreed. The setting of the conservation area is considered in the Appraisal.</p>

<p><b>12.2</b></p>	<p>The village hall does not get much mention and in Appendix B – Listed Buildings, it is described as Bladen Social Club.</p>	<p>The village hall is mentioned in the Appraisal. Appendix B lists the formal descriptions provided by Historic England. Names will often change over time, sometimes there may be errors – each can be corrected through contact with Historic England following an online amendments procedure. This particular name has now been formally changed by Historic England and this is reflected in the revised Appraisal.</p>
<p><b>12.3</b></p>	<p>The 'track from Throop' is an unmetalled highway.</p>	<p>This point has been clarified in the Appraisal.</p>
<p><b>12.4</b></p>	<p>May I suggest that the author of this document holds an open afternoon at the aforementioned Village Hall to ask for information on the area of which the District Council may be unaware.</p>	<p>A key purpose of the extended consultation exercise was to gather feedback and additional material. Officers attended a Parish Council meeting in the village hall as part of the consultation. Some additional information has indeed been submitted by residents.</p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p>The field at the top of Bladen Valley is a significant feature in the overall look of the valley which is not only historic but is also enjoyed by residents and the visitors to this area. It should be retained.</p>	<p>The field is to be retained within the conservation area given it has a clear spatial relationship with the Bladen Valley development, and would have formed part of it had the scheme been completed.</p>
<p><b>13.1</b></p>	<p>The local Water Meadows have historic significance as they were the first water meadows created in the 1600s. Their uniqueness as the first and also their historic context would warrant maintaining their place in the conservation area.</p>	<p>See response to point 9.2.</p>

<b>14</b>	Repeats points 13-13.1.	See responses above.
<b>15</b>	The statement made alongside figure 2 is inaccurate. Woodbarn Lane is not a “quagmire”, and although heavily used by agricultural traffic, is easily traversed with footwear sensible for the time of year.	The reference in question has been changed to very muddy.
<b>15.1</b>	In figure 2 it mentions loss of enclosure. The farmyard area has never been enclosed in the knowledge of inhabitants going back to the 1930’s. The yard is known as “Rickpound” and used in the past for the hay and straw ricks. It is immediately adjacent to West Farm House which until recently was the principle house for West Farm. Any growth of hedge alongside the lane adjacent to the yard has been self seeded with protection from cutting afforded by redundant farm machinery.	The Appraisal has been amended and note made of the former rick yard.
<b>15.2</b>	Figure 29, roof of buildings at West Farm. The tiles are stamped “Broomhall, London”. As such they would not have been made on the estate.	Further research shows that the tiles in question are ‘Taylor’s Patent’ – designed in 1855 by Thomas Taylor Coniam of Chagford, Devon, and produced by Broomhall Tile & Brick Co, Bridgwater. The tiles can still be produced by special order. The Appraisal has been updated.  <a href="http://britishbricksoc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BBS_92_2003_Sep_.pdf">http://britishbricksoc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BBS_92_2003_Sep_.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Broomhall_Tile_and_Brick_Co">http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Broomhall_Tile_and_Brick_Co</a>



<p><b>15.3</b></p>	<p>Conservation Area Quality. The character of the conservation area seems to have been given the terminal date of the end of the Debenham Estate and almost without exception, any structures built later than this have been termed “negative”. I would suggest that the layout and design of later additions are sympathetic to the character of place and deserve greater recognition in the context of a conservation area. They reflect progression in the built environment rather than stagnation</p>	<p>In a historical context the Bladen Estate holds a level of social, economic, architectural and historic interest recognised in the exceptionally large number of now listed twentieth century buildings it produced. No development of comparable significance exists from the period after its break-up.</p> <p>All places change over time, and throughout the review of the District’s conservation areas it has been appreciated that local people often value the settlements in which they live as a whole, including all types and designs of development they contain. Modern housing does indeed form part of the ‘history’ of development, but this does not automatically give it historic or architectural value. For the purposes of conservation area designation and appraisal, and in terms of related decision making within the planning process, qualitative distinctions have to be made. See section 9.5.</p>
<p><b>15.4</b></p>	<p>The built environment is subject to individual taste and can be equally praised or criticised. I have major concerns that the Piddle Valley Conservation Area has become set in a mythical time warp, unable to adapt innovative design and modern materials.</p>	<p>As above, qualitative judgements have to be made within the context of the planning process – see also point 9.5 – and the designation is specifically concerned with the historic environment.</p> <p>Virtually no housing development has occurred in the conservation area over the past decade. The large number of post-war houses which make use of modern materials and designs lacking any reference to their historic context however contradicts the view that the Piddle Valley exists within an architectural ‘time warp’. There is also plenty of scope within current design policy to encourage ‘appropriate innovation’ in new development. In some ways Debenham era design embraced the same concept of modernity with regard to context long before the planning system existed.</p>

<b>16</b>	What is the nature of restriction placed on gravel extraction and can this be got around?	General planning controls and an Article 4 Direction place restrictions on activity that can be undertaken without planning permission. This can't be got around without breaching planning control.
<b>16.1</b>	Are landowners asking for the conservation area to shrink?	Landowners have not requested shrinkage. The boundary would not be set on this basis.
<b>16.2</b>	The review is unnecessary and a waste of money. Local Authorities have better things to like caring for old people and funding schools.	The review is carried out in fulfilment of a statutory duty. It is carried out by officers in house with relatively minor additional cost involved in public consultation. This is in fact the only 'optional' aspect of the process given public consultation is not required by law. The District Council is not responsible for funding schools and no money has been taken from social care provision to enable the review to take place.
<b>17</b>	No advantage or benefit. No clear rationale. There has been no change in definitions since the last review.	Various case law, guidance and planning policy has been produced in past 30 years. There is now requirement to ensure that designations are properly justified. The appropriateness of the Piddle Valley designation was questioned even at the time it was made.
<b>17.1</b>	Whole area is homogenous. Any shrinkage of the area would leave it vulnerable to change/damage.	The developed area is clearly not homogenous insofar as it falls within four reasonably distinct settlements and has detached portions in a separate parish, though the relationship between components is acknowledged by the boundary. The conservation area does not prevent change and does not prevent damage. This is for example illustrated in the continued deterioration of the water meadows since the 1980s. Agricultural activity is outside the scope of control.

<b>17.2</b>	The remains of the water meadow system are historically important, perhaps unique, also remains of strip farming system.	The meadows are largely included within the revised proposal.  It is unclear where the remains of the strip farming system referenced are located, though in common with other rural settlements, this did indeed once operate within the immediate context.
<b>17.3</b>	Important wildlife in valley which require preserved hedgerows, trees, ditches, grasses etc. Features could be eroded if designation changes.	The conservation area designation brings some protection to trees, but it does not provide any protection for hedges, ditches, wild flowers or wildlife.
<b>18</b>	The water meadows are a distinctive historic landscape, features of which are still evident in the fields. The meadows are also important in terms of dissipating floodwater. Loss of conservation area protection may lead to development or intensive agriculture on the floodplain harming its function, natural beauty and ecology.	The meadows are largely included within the revised proposal.  Conservation area designation does not provide ecological protection, provides no control over agriculture, and does not prevent appropriate development. Development in the floodplain is the subject of other planning policies and an Article 4 Direction, and ecological protection is the subject of other specific designations. It is worth noting that former water meadows have already been subject to intensification and 'improvement' are no longer of high ecological value.
<b>19</b>	Notwithstanding the hedgerows at the front of Nos. 21, 22 and 24, pasture at the head of Bladen Valley is a frame for the architecture and layout of the street at its western end, much as was the original intention of the architect.	It is now proposed to retain this field – see point 4.
<b>19.1</b>	The Bladen Estate, and what remains of it, meets the criteria of 'historical importance' that is a definition of a conservation area.	It is agreed that some historic social, economic, architectural and historic importance attaches to the Bladen Estate project. This is reflected in the statutory listing of many buildings built by

			the estate and included in the conservation area. The designation cannot however extend to cover the whole of the former estate.
<b>19.2</b>	The water meadows have been a feature since the early C17th, and were restored and improved by the Bladen Estate, described in their 1929 brochure. Parts are now being reused. Boundary should be retained insofar as it includes the meadows.		The meadows are largely included within the revised proposal.
<b>20</b>	Cars were unaffordable to most people until well after the Bladen Valley houses were completed in about 1929. It is therefore reasonable to expect garages, & access drives to be built after the auctioning of the estate in 1953.		It remains appropriate to assess and acknowledge the impact garages have on the original design and layout of the estate regardless of whether their provision is retrospectively viewed as reasonable. The impact of poorly designed, constructed and positioned garages is generally negative.
<b>20.1</b>	Recent houses are more sympathetic to Briantspuddle than the dominating pattern-book, double-fronted Victorian red brick house, formerly “Bestberry”, now demolished. It is noteworthy that thatch was specified for the replacement after official resistance to contemporary, i.e. not pastiche, roofing.		Most post-war house designs within the conservation area could be found anywhere in the country, and these designs pay little regard to context. Comparison with Bestberry doesn't seem particularly useful given the building no longer exists. In a general sense there is no reason to consider that use of thatch in development represents 'pastiche' any more than did its use on Bladen Estate properties during the 1920s. The issue appears more to do with its role within an overall design. As noted in section 64 above it is not useful to draw a distinction between reflection of local distinctiveness in new design and 'innovation' as the two are not mutually exclusive.

<p><b>20.2</b></p>	<p>Lawrence Weaver's 'The Country Life Book of Cottages', second edition 1919 shows photographs of palisade fencing forming private gardens in front of some houses e.g. pages 87, 89, 151. Also an early plan, page 262, now reproduced as a tea towel, shows a fence-line + verge + access gravel road, so the enclosed front gardens were part of the original plan.</p>	<p>As noted in para 71, some of the houses originally had an open frontage, and this doesn't seem to be disputed. The past presence of picket fences has been noted in the revised Appraisal.</p>
<p><b>20.3</b></p>	<p>Some, inappropriately planted, or even self-seeded forest trees, have grown unchecked. They shade, &amp; even threaten houses, eg number 16 Bladen Valley.</p>	<p>No action required.</p>
<p><b>20.4</b></p>	<p>One local thatching authority contends that both long-stem wheat, &amp; local water reed, was used from the earliest years. Recently very poor wheat straw, damaged by chemical fertilizers, turned owners against this material, so some thatchers now grow, or buy, traditional long stem varieties in fields above run-off levels, but it is not generally available. The softness or angularity of finish of thatched roofs is considered by some to be as much in the thatching technique as in the material.</p>	<p>Thatch is a contentious topic both locally and throughout the South West. Proponents of water reed thatch do indeed contend that it was in widespread use in the past. There is however a lack of local evidence for this, and few identified historic sources. Arable farming was however a widespread and prolific source of material as illustrated locally by the frequent presence of threshing barns, several of which occur within the conservation area. Historic management of the water meadows would itself have sought to exclude growth of reeds, and even in the absence of management reeds are not abundant.</p> <p>Thatching wheat remains available today though in more limited quantities than historically given agricultural change. The issue of fertiliser run off is one which more particularly affects water reed given its growth in wetland areas. Most water reed thatch is itself now imported.</p>

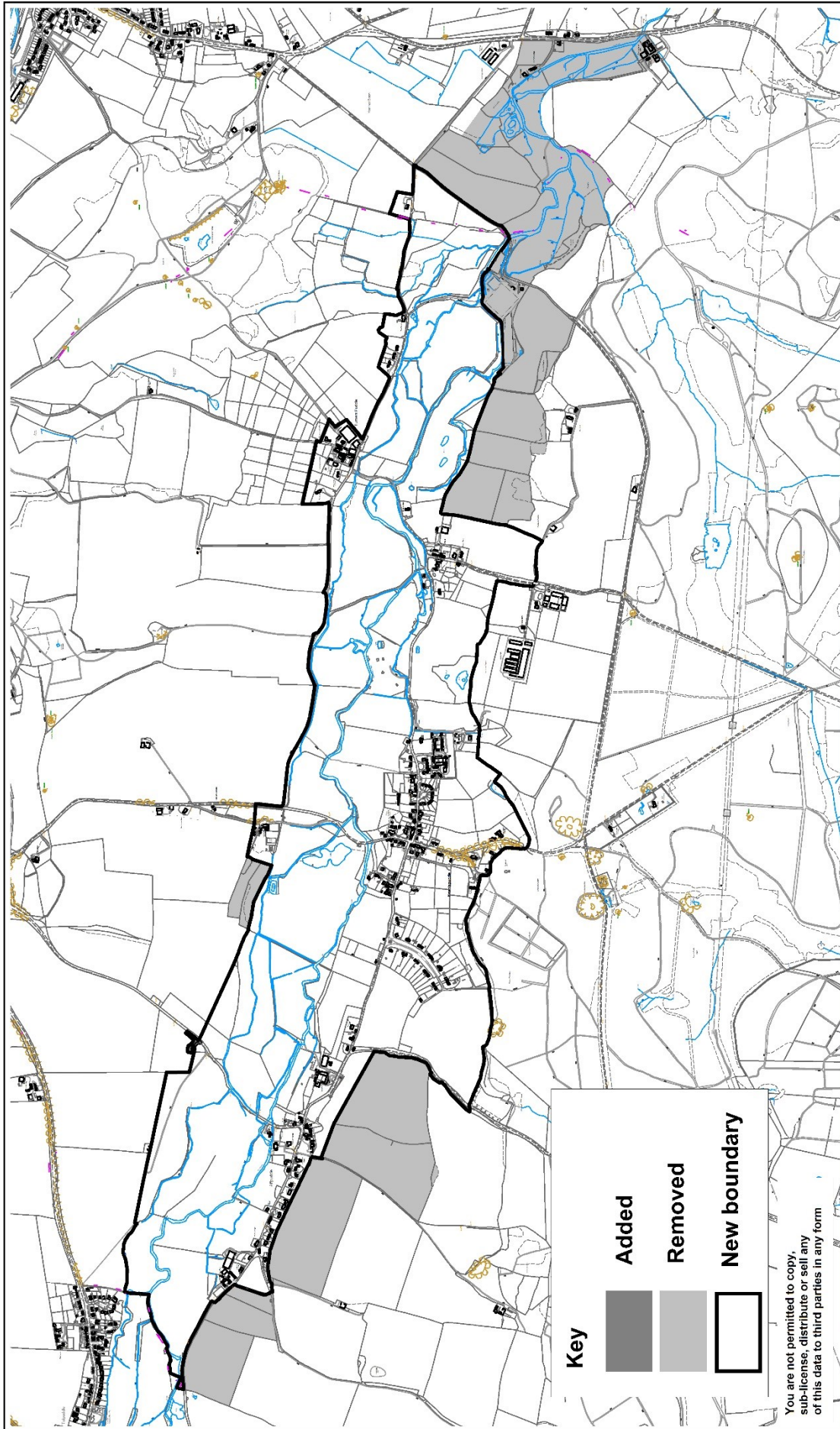
			Thatchers can indeed adjust style where required though this does not reflect character born of tradition.
<b>20.5</b>	Slate, is rare in the Piddle Valley Conservation Area, but a previous Conservation Officer strongly pressed for this roofing material in opposition to proposed clay tiles, so there is some inconsistency here over time		We are not in a position to comment on the past merits of a particular case, the specific details of which are unknown. Cases of the modern use of tiles below the recommended pitch are noted within the conservation area however.
<b>20.6</b>	We understand that the Throop to Turnerspuddle route is designated a Highway.		This has been clarified in the Appraisal.
<b>20.7</b>	Where are cars to be parked by residents of the middle house of a triple row of cottages? Hard-standing gravel is a temporary material		This point is not one on which the District Council has been invited to provide advice but does highlight a particular challenge that requires a degree of sensitivity not apparent in the existing arrangement.
<b>20.8</b>	The field south-west of Bladen Valley is part of the setting of this model crescent. A drawing exists, [The Country Life Book of Cottages, pp262], showing a possible continuation of Bladen Valley to the south, turning northwards along the B3390, then east along Meadow Vale to Briantspuddle. There is no evidence that it was intended to continue with this idea. If built on surface run-off would increase the considerable flash flow down Bladen Valley, one of the causes of the erosion, potholing & flooding of some houses on the western side. In any case such development now would be contrary to the separation of settlements, [Para 68]. These		The details referenced appear to have been publicised prior to the review which illustrates that proposals for development will arise whether or not land is contained within a conservation area. It is now proposed to retain this field – see point 4.

	comments would be immaterial, if the field/fields remained in suitable agricultural use, but the exhibition at Moreton VH showed possible building on this land.	
<b>20.9</b>	Undergrounding of electric wires would be welcomed, especially we imagine for number 2 Bladen, where high level three phase transformers blot the rear garden. Burying of a single phase cable from post to house at number 23 during other works some years ago worked well, but was very expensive. Who would pay for such work if extended throughout both sides of the valley?	The burial of cables would require private funding or action by the Parish Council.
<b>20.10</b>	Historic England reference 1120508. The Bladen Social Club is the single storey flat roofed late 1950's construction, then & now owned by the members. We surmise that the listing refers to the Village Hall, in the ownership of the Parish Council. Neither the village hall nor the granary was called the reading room.	The listing covers both the village hall and social club. The title of the listing of both the granary and village hall has now been amended by Historic England and this is reflected in the Appraisal.
<b>20.11</b>	Historic England reference 1171702. Since the Review was written in July 2016, we understand that Gill's War Memorial is now listed Grade II*.	Historic England's review of the listing is now reflected in the Appraisal.
<b>21</b>	The conservation area should be expanded to include the ridges to the north and south of the valley.	This would not be appropriate. See comment 6.5.

<p><b>22</b></p>	<p>There are many remnant “built” structures on the water meadows such as masonry channels, arches, reservoirs, cisterns and sluice gates, many of which are still in good working order, that collectively contribute to the Conservation Area Heritage. Quite a few of these are not on the PROW network and may therefore not be known to the casual observer or to District Council Officers but nonetheless they are there and they do make a positive contribution to both the setting and heritage of the conservation area. It is my view that these features should continue to be protected by inclusion within the conservation area designation such that their presence is recognised and they not allowed to further decay. Their connection to the settlement is still very relevant given the socio-agricultural heritage that is a legacy of the Bladen Estate.</p>	<p>The water meadows do contain various structures, many fragmentary. These are referenced in the revised Appraisal, as too the scope which exists for local research into and recording of what remains.</p>
<p><b>22.1</b></p>	<p>Para. 135 lacks evidence and whether a building has a negative or neutral effect on the character of the conservation area is apparently highly subjective and without any evidence base. As far as I am aware there has been no detailed surveys taken of these “Negative” properties and there are no firm ideas as to how each of them could be “improved” by way of the planning process to enhance the character of the conservation area. Further, the report lacks firm guidance as to what is a worthwhile improvement and does not</p>	<p>See comment on sections 9.5 and 75 which cover the same topics. The evidence base is the Appraisal itself given that its main function is to identify the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the conservation area. The extent to which buildings contribute to this is reflected in their grading. It is not the purpose of an Appraisal to outline schemes of redevelopment.</p>



	suggest a test of reason and/or cost for such improvements that might be suggested.	
<b>22.2</b>	The purpose of the Conservation Area Review is to conserve and enhance the character of the area, these “Negative” buildings are pre-existing and a case for such a draconian provision is neither proportional nor proven and the statement does seem contrary to the Parish Plan	The purpose of the review is to examine the appropriateness of the boundary and to assess the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the conservation area as a basis for its justification, and future management. Conservation area designation does not imply blanket preservation of everything within its boundary or confer historic or architectural interest on buildings which otherwise lack these qualities.
<b>22.3</b>	As written the statement in Para. 135 seems to impose a lower form of “listing” outside of statute for “Negative” properties, which is wholly inappropriate and this alone must leave the report open to challenge through judicial review unless amended	See section 9.5. The process followed is one which reflects national policy and guidance. This will not leave the Appraisal open to judicial review, but does make it a more robust and useful tool within the planning process.
<b>22.4</b>	This controversial grading assessment of existing properties should be dropped altogether in favour of a more general mission statement incorporating reasonability at its core.	This would not be in line with national guidance, allow for the proper application of planning policies, or assist the Council in exercising its statutory duties within the planning process.



**Key**

- Added
- Removed
- New boundary

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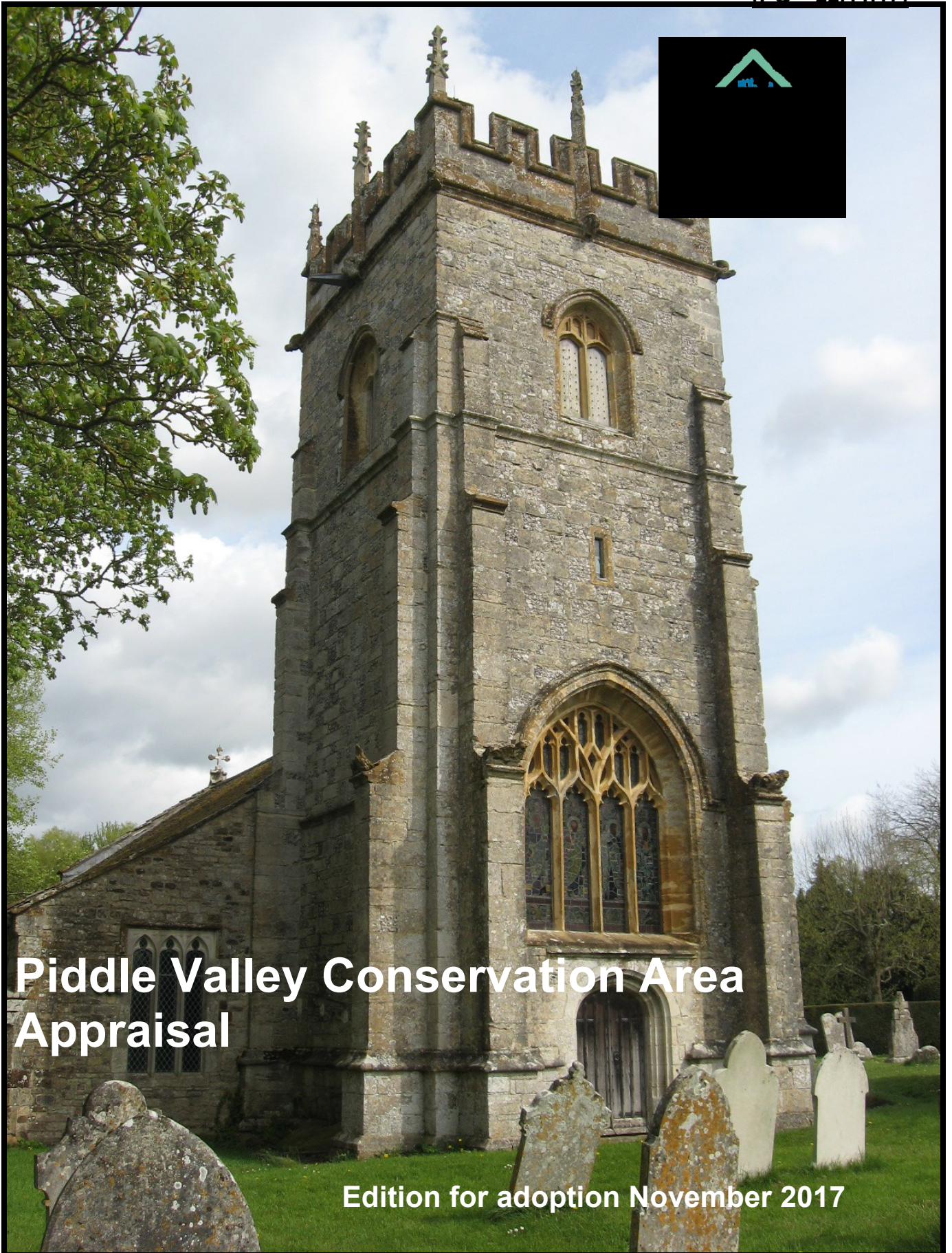
**Thriving communities in balance  
with the natural environment**

**Piddle Valley CA Boundary Proposal**

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# **Piddle Valley Conservation Area Appraisal**

**Edition for adoption November 2017**

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## What is a conservation area?

1. 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”.
2. Conservation areas are designated to cover the streets and places in towns and villages which hold enough architectural and historic interest to warrant special consideration as part of the planning process. Whilst this brings some added controls over ‘permitted development’ rights the purpose of designation is not to prevent change but rather to enable effective management of its quality.
3. Piddle Valley Conservation Area was first designated on 1st December 1987 through amalgamation and expansion of Briantspuddle Conservation Area (designated 30th March 1977) and Affpuddle Conservation Area (designated 25th March 1981). The boundary was modified in 2017 – see Map 1 and Appendix D.
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 are also relevant, and are supported by the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.
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 preserve 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.

## About this appraisal and how to use it

7. This appraisal has been prepared for Piddle Valley Conservation Area. It was researched and written by Benjamin Webb MRTI IHBC during 2015, and revised prior to and following public consultation during 2017 – see below.
8. This document was formally adopted by Purbeck District Council on \*\*
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 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 two Parish meetings. 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.
10. 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 assist the planning process, and to promote careful management and enhancement.
11. When you are reading or using this document it is important to note that its contents are not comprehensive, and that ample scope exists for new sources of information to enrich our understanding of the significance of the conservation area and its component parts. Whilst some aspects of the appraisal may be limited to areas that are visible from publically accessible land, visibility may itself vary seasonally, and the character of an area is not wholly dependent on public visibility. You must not therefore take failure to mention a particular element or detail within this document to mean that it is of no importance, and thus of no relevance in the Council's assessment of planning applications.



## Summary of special interest

12. The conservation area boundary is designated to include the four settlements of Affpuddle, Briantspuddle, Throop and Turnerspuddle together with the open spaces between. The boundary incorporates the historic water meadows associated with these settlements on account of their close physical and spatial relationship, and their historic design character and interest. Whilst the level of integration and the directness of relationship between the settlement and meadows varies at different points, their integrity as a continuous designed feature requires wholesale inclusion with identified ‘edges’ employed as form a boundary.
13. 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 architectural interest

14. The conservation area contains a large and distinctive collection of vernacular buildings, a remarkably large number of which find origin within, or are substantially dated to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This contrasts with the range of architect designed Arts and Crafts buildings of both domestic and agricultural type, which form an important legacy of the Bladen Estate. Many of these buildings are listed, providing the conservation area with an exceptionally high number of protected twentieth century buildings. Artistic interest is added by sculptural works by Laugham Pendred and Eric Gill (see FIG. 1 below).



**FIG. 1:** *War memorials. The conservation area contains two listed war memorials commissioned by Ernest Debenham. Left: Eric Gill's Bladen Valley Great War memorial. Right: The Second World War memorial in Affpuddle church yard designed by Laugham Pendred.*



## **Special historic interest**

15. Settlements within the conservation area have a rich and varied history which saw significant change and shifting importance within the context of the agricultural and traditional estate-run economy. Strong associations with the Moreton Estate (see Moreton Conservation Area particularly) remain evident. Having developed for an extended period within the context of a medieval system of land organisation, Sir Ernest Debenham's 1914 – 1952 Bladen Farms project was both revolutionary and nationally influential. This focused on experimental and innovative forms of agricultural production and improvement, whilst also having a strong social and artistic dimension. The legacy of buildings this has left provides significant historic interest from both a social and economic perspective. The conservation area otherwise contains a large number of listed buildings spanning a broad period.

## Context and setting of the conservation area

16. The conservation area is located between Bere Reis and Tolpuddle on an east-west alignment. It is primarily defined by the layout of constituent settlements alongside the floodplain of the River Piddle – Affpuddle, Briantspuddle and Throop on the south side, Turnerspudde on the north. Managed water meadows were established along the floodplain in the past, and though no longer maintained, man-made channels and associated structures continue to exist. The Piddle itself retains a modified form in proximity to Affpuddle Mill. Land rises gently to the north, but more abruptly to the south of Briantspuddle and east end of Affpuddle. Long views out of the conservation area are principally to the north with the open chalk ridge north of Affpuddle particularly prominent. The undeveloped character of this land plays an important role in the rural setting of the conservation area. The main route to Dorchester forms an intrusive feature in terms of background noise, though cannot be seen.



**FIG. 2:** *Wood Barn Lane in Affpuddle. Though very muddy in winter, this is a pleasant green lane in summertime leading to Wood Barn and woodland to the south. Note the former rick yard to the left.*

17. Whilst now commonly referred to as a ‘village’, Briantspuddle, the largest of the settlements in the conservation area, is more strictly a ‘hamlet’. Affpuddle was of greater historic size and importance but experienced a steep shrinkage between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Turnerspudde and Throop never appear to have been great centres of population, though the latter itself formed the heart of a parish for many centuries.
18. As a rural context, agriculture was of central importance to the economy of settlements contained within the conservation area for most of their history. The water meadows were a particularly valuable local resource, and mills were located at Affpuddle and Briantspuddle. Each depended on flowing water, and here the nineteenth century corruption of ‘piddle’ to ‘puddle’ seems ironic. Whilst local

agricultural production was boosted during the years of the years of the Bladen Farms project, it has seen a decline in presence and social importance since the middle of the twentieth century. The conservation area contains a number of former farmsteads, agricultural structures and building complexes which are either redundant or in alternative uses, though agricultural activity nonetheless remains a feature of the village scene in parts of Affpuddle (see FIG. 2 above), and in Turnerpuddle. More broadly, equine uses, both formal and of 'settlement edge' character, are in strong evidence.

19. The long history of centralised ownership ceased with the break up and sale of the Bladen Estate in the early 1950s, albeit the principal farms retained significant land holdings. The majority of dwellings are now privately owned. There are limited employment opportunities within the conservation area. Services principally consist of the social club and post office in Briantspuddle and have recently seen some shrinkage with withdrawal of public call phone services from the BT kiosks in Briantspuddle and Affpuddle.

## Historic background and influence

### Medieval

20. The place names Affpuddle, Briantspuddle and Turnerspuddle are all formed through combination of the name of a past manorial owner with that of the River Piddle. Until the recent past the two elements were often split. The English Place Names Society provides the best source for explanation. Affpuddle appears to reference Aelffrid, named in a charter dated 987 in which he granted land to Cerne Abbey. Turnerspuddle and Briantspuddle are of later origin, referred to only as 'Pidele' in the Domesday Book of 1086. 'Turner' is a fairly recent corruption of the name 'Toner', the family recorded as owning the manor during the thirteenth century. The farmhouse here is still known by the old name. Various names are recorded for Briantspuddle during the medieval period, with 'Brianis Pedille' recorded in 1465. This unusually refers to the Christian name of one of its Turberville family owners. 'Puddle' seems to have emerged during the nineteenth century and become an accepted 'polite' version of piddle.
21. Throop is recorded from 1237, and is a more generic name meaning 'outlying farm' or 'secondary settlement'. This manor fell under monastic ownership during the period.
22. Until recently the parishes of Affpuddle and Turnerspuddle were separate entities, each holding a parish church. The Church of St. Laurence at Affpuddle (FIG. 3 below) contains fabric substantially dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, whilst the Church of Holy Trinity at Turnerspuddle (FIG. 3 below) is largely dated c.1500. Hutchins records the latter as originally a chapel of ease to the church at Bere Regis.



**FIG. 3:** Parish churches. Left: former Church of the Holy Trinity in Turnerspuddle. Right: Church of St. Lawrence in Affpuddle.

23. Cruck Cottage (see FIG. 4 below) is the oldest domestic property in the conservation area. This finds origin as a late fifteenth century hall house, to which a first floor was added in the sixteenth century. The building was subsequently extended in the seventeenth century and has been modified in various ways since.



**FIG. 4:** *Cruck Cottage, Briantspuddle. The oldest domestic property in the conservation area, elements of which date to the late fifteenth century.*

### **Sixteenth century**

24. The western range of Tonerspuddle Farmhouse is dated to the sixteenth century, and may be a remnant of a larger building of this date, altered during the seventeenth century.
25. Cerne Abbey was dissolved 1539, after which the manor of Affpuddle (together with other former possessions, including Creech Grange) passed to the Lawrence family in 1546. This family is of some historic note given an apparent role by marriage in the ancestry of George Washington.

### **Seventeenth century**

26. A considerable number of buildings in the conservation area have been identified as originating during the seventeenth century. Most have been subsequently altered and enlarged. Building of seventeenth century origin include: Piper's Cottage (FIG. 5 below), Nos 3 and 4 Throop, Glebe House, Dairy House, Old Barn Cottage (carries a 1660 date stone), No. 3 Affpuddle, River Cottage, No. 21 Affpuddle (FIG. 16), Glebe Cottage, the kitchen wing and barn of East Farm, Nos 2, 3, 12, 19, 20, 23, 25 and 26 Briantspuddle (see FIG. 5), Well House, the southern section of Chapel Cottage (see FIG. 16) and No. 5 The Hollow – which possibly originated as a 'long house'.
27. The greatest concentration of seventeenth century buildings occurs in Briantspuddle. Relative to Affpuddle the historic building stock here has remained relatively intact over time. The differing rate of survival can provide a false impression of the historic status of the two settlements, as Affpuddle was the larger and more important.

28. Buildings at the Hollow originally represented informal encroachments on common land (see FIG. 8). This is reflected in their location peripheral to the main body of the settlement, simple construction, small scale and irregular layout. Such encroachments were common during the period and examples occur in many places around the District.



**FIG. 5:** *Seventeenth century. Left: No. 26 Briantspuddle. The oldest section of the former farmhouse stands at 1.5 storeys. Note the deep thatch and exceptional height of the later section of the dwelling. Right: Piper's Cottage, Throop.*

29. Whilst managed flooding of meadowland was of ancient origin, documents from the records of Affpuddle Manor dated to 1605 have been interpreted as making the first known reference to a sophisticated form of management based on 'bedworks' – employing a system of channels and sluices. This subsequently became the principal form of water meadow management. This suggests that the meadows at Affpuddle – or at least part of the meadows – were amongst the first, if not the first to use it. Eighteenth century estate maps clearly demarcate both common and private meadows in the manor of Affpuddle (see FIG. 7 below) using boundaries which trace carrier channels at least partially still in existence, indicating their long establishment. This continuity is more difficult to demonstrate elsewhere in the conservation area where land fell within other manors and under other ownerships until acquisition of the whole by the Frampton family during the eighteenth century. Management continued in a holistic way into the Bladen Estate era, though this followed a general shift in the economic model based on 'sheep and corn' to dairy farming. Concrete structures within the meadows probably date to this period (see FIG. 34).
30. Mid-twentieth century aerial photographs provide good evidence of the historic organisation of the meadows, though even by this time use and management was in decline. Evidence has been plotted and can be viewed on the County Historic Environment Record (see FIG. 6 below). The survey would benefit from further

analysis to clearly identify and attempt to date systems historically in use, and are best viewed in conjunction with map bases showing extant and historic carrier channels as these fill the gaps in the data. With reference to RCHM typology layouts appear to differ between regular ‘right angled’ or ‘herringbone’ sequences of channels, and more irregular variations on the latter. According to Historic England, irregular layouts may be considered generally earlier in date to regular layouts. Survey evidence is however patchy in places, and unfortunately so in Affpuddle.



**FIG. 6:** Mapping of water meadows in the HER. The survey is shown overlaying the 2nd Edition OS map which fills some of the gaps. The segment shown is located immediately north of Briantspuddle.

## Eighteenth century

31. By the eighteenth century the Framptons of Moreton had, through a series of purchases, bought all four manors now falling within the conservation area. Estate maps dated 1764-1771 (see FIGs. 6 and 7 below) provide a useful early source.
32. The Affpuddle estate map (FIG. 7 below) shows that village was reasonably well developed by the 1760s, with buildings and adjoining gardens laid out along both sides of Southover Road. The almost continuously developed frontage shown on the plan is unrecognisable today, though the street edge position of the few historic cottages that survive recalls the historic layout (and reflects that which survives in the historic core of Briantspuddle). The modern pattern of development is clearly inconsistent with that which existed in the past. Traces of lost cottages and related enclosures remain in evidence along the north side of the street, evidenced by many undulations and depressions on the field surface.





**FIG. 7:** *Affpuddle as shown in an excerpt from the Moreton Estate Map. Note the heavily developed street frontage, common land and strip fields and water meadows. Courtesy of Dorset History Centre.*

33. Estate maps show that the medieval system of open strip field agriculture persisted within the surrounding landscape until relatively late, again contrasting with the largely undifferentiated landscape that exists today. Strip fields are clear in the Affpuddle map (FIG. 7 above) to the north and south of the village, whilst the water meadows form largely open common land. The picture was slightly different in Briantspuddle (see FIG. 8 below) where the meadows appear to have been more heavily subdivided. Altogether the maps provide the impression of a rich, varied and busy scene.



**FIG. 8:** *Briantspuddle as shown in an excerpt from the Moreton Estate Map. The map shows the original dog legged entry into the village from Affpuddle, and The Hollow perched on the edge of heathland. The survival of many of the buildings shown on the map clearly contrasts with the situation in Affpuddle. Courtesy of Dorset History Centre.*

34. A number of properties within the conservation area either originated within, or were improved during the eighteenth century. These include East Farm, Tonerspuddle Farm and the Old Vicarage at Affpuddle (see FIG. 31). These buildings were constructed or remodelled as part of a broader programme of improvement of the

Moreton estate under James Frampton. Each is of similar style to one another and contemporaneous dwellings on the former and extant estate.

35. Other buildings and structures dated to or originating during the period include: barns at Tonerspudde Farm, Nos. 2 and 3 Turnerspudde, No. 24 Affpudde, No. 5 Brintspudde (though mostly rebuilt subsequently), Nos. 14, 18, 21, 22, 24 and 35 Briantspudde, Nos 2 and 3 The Hollow, Throop House and the principal bridge over the Piddle at Briantspudde (see FIG. 9 below).



**FIG. 9:** *Bridges over the Piddle at Briantspudde.*

### **Nineteenth century**

36. Moreton Estate surveys dating to 1803 are a useful if cartographically sketchy resource. As in the 1764-1771 surveys these show many cottages on both sides of Southover Road in Affpudde, though by the time of the 1839 tithe there had been evident thinning of the frontage, with a number of cottages lost. This thinning appears to have continued through the course of the century with further losses evident by the early editions of the Ordnance Survey in the 1880s. The reason for the decline, which did not occur elsewhere in the conservation area, is unclear.
37. A number of buildings have been dated to the period, some of which replaced earlier structures on the same sites. These include: the three bridges over the Piddle in Affpudde dated 1848; the former barn and granary of Briantspudde Farm (No. 26), built in 1803 and 1814 respectively; the similarly dated barn and granary opposite the Vicarage at Affpudde; the old school in Briantspudde built 1870, the current mill and mill house in Affpudde (see FIG. 10 below); the north end of Chapel Cottage (the central part of which was converted for use as a Wesleyan chapel during the period – see FIG. 16); and Shop Farm. The main barn at East Farm was burned out and partially converted for chaff cutting late in the century, giving one end of the structure an interesting industrial character.

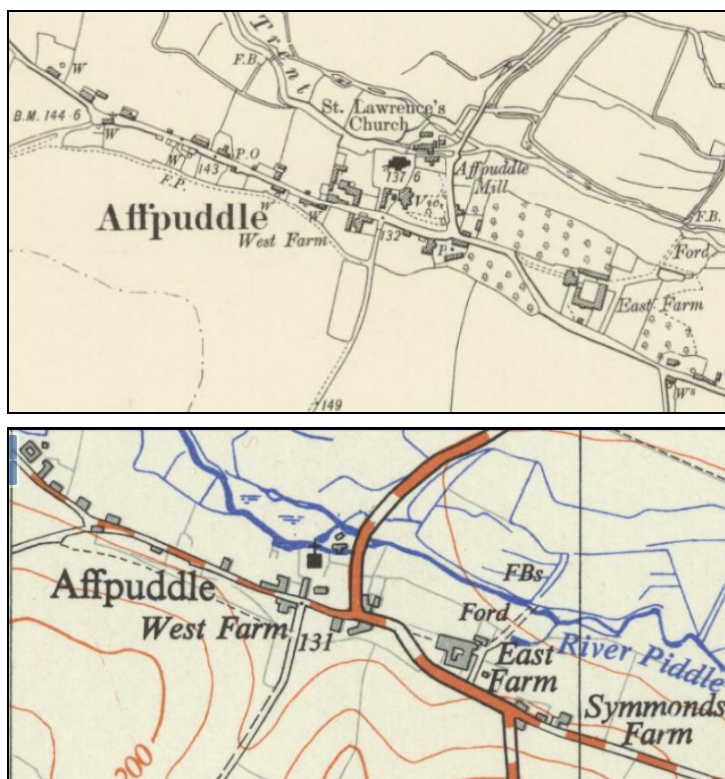


**FIG. 10:** *Affpuddle Mill. The mill and mill house were rebuilt during the nineteenth century, replacing earlier structures. The mill has been altered since, and originally straddled the mill race.*

38. As the century progressed 'piddle' place names began to be replaced with the more polite 'puddle' which lacked any real relevance to the place.

### Twentieth century

39. The 1902 Ordnance Survey (OS) map (see FIG. 11 below) records that a very loose street frontage then existed west of the church in Affpuddle, with cottages set in rows or standing individually. These included a post office on what now appears to be the site of Heron Mead, and a pound. The reason why the majority of these buildings – what appears to be around twelve or thirteen dwellings – had disappeared by the middle of the century is not immediately clear, though housebuilding in Briantspuddle was ongoing during the same period.



**FIG. 11:** *Decline of Affpuddle. Between 1902 (top) and 1956 (bottom) the village lost a number of the surviving cottages and buildings on the street front. Note the orchards adjacent to East Farm. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.*

40. The 1956 OS (see FIG. 11 above) records that the only buildings then standing between West Farm and No.4 were the semi-detached pair Nos. 7 and 8, whilst on the north side of the street one building survived between No. 16 and River Cottage. This building, itself no longer in existence, appears to have occupied the overgrown site opposite Camelot, the frontage of which retains fragmentary cob walls beneath a dense cover of ivy (see FIGs. 23 and 33). Interestingly whilst some sections of the wall have collapsed, the thick stemmed ivy retains the former shape.
41. In 1914 Ernest Debenham purchased the four manors making up the conservation area from the Moreton Estate, and established 'Bladen Farms' (named with apparent dialectic reference to 'Blackdown' Hill). This was a social and agricultural experiment the 1922 estate brochure explained aimed to explore ways in which self-sufficiency in domestic food production could be achieved.



**FIG. 12:** *Bladen Estate buildings. Two elements of the former farms business – left: the former engine house; right: the public face of the former dairy.*

42. The Bladen Farms project had a major impact upon the area, and was remarkable not only in terms of its social and agricultural dimensions, but its sponsorship of Arts and Crafts architectural style. This saw use of a blend of novel new building materials with these characterising vernacular development. A large proportion of these buildings have been subsequently listed. The impact of the scheme is evident in aerial photos dated to 1930 (see Britain from Above), in which the newness of both buildings and the surrounding landscaping is clearly apparent. Development was centred on and within the broader manor of Briantspuddle, with lesser contributions seen in Affpuddle, Turnerspuddle and Throop.
43. The 1953 sale brochure provides a useful inventory of the Bladen Estate, and a range of photos from which change can be documented. Key elements of the estate which remain important features within the conservation area included:

- Moor Lane House, the contemporary manor house built for Debenham which replaced an earlier building on the site. The building and its boundaries were originally thatched (see FIG. 17). The driveway represents the old course of the lane which was by-passed with a new road.
- Bladen Valley (see FIG. 15), a partially completed estate of detached, semi-detached and terraced cottages set within spacious plots to the west of the existing settlement, built during the 1920s. Bearing similarity to Milton Abbas, the scheme was originally intended to end in a recreation ground with cottages arranged around it, including a pavilion and almshouses. Eric Gill's Great War memorial was an addition (see FIG. 1).
- Briantspuddle Dairy (see FIG. 12 above), also known as The Ring, which included a laboratory and milk factory, ornate silage towers (see FIG. 18), facilities for horse breeding and piggeries.
- Various substantial cottages (aside from those in Bladen Valley) including Nos. 15 -16 and Nos. 33 - 34 Briantspuddle, and Throop Farm.
- The Bladen Social Club, which was a stylised conversion of the barn originally serving Briantspuddle Farm (henceforth No. 26), and which became the village hall post 1953 (see FIG. 22).
- Various agricultural buildings at pre-existing farms, including the dairy building at Tonerspudde Farm (FIG. 13 below).
- Blackdown House – (see FIG. 32) one of the most substantial dwellings built by the estate within a landscaped setting.
- The estate power and pump house, now converted to residential use and known as Bridge House.
- The engine house and transport depot (see FIG. 12 above), again now converted for residential use and made up of The Old Engine Shed, Queen Post and Stable Cottage (itself of earlier origin).
- The estate office – Bladentye, Briantspuddle.



**FIG. 13:** Dairy building at Tonerspudde Farm. Shown prior to conversion. Typical block and brick construction, unusually domestic in character.

44. With the break up and sale of the Bladen Estate following Ernest Debenham's death in 1952, development was subsequently less coordinated and sensitive in nature. This period is for the most part characterised by the addition of suburban style houses and bungalows. Principal clusters occur in in Affpuddle and Briantspuddle. In Briantspuddle construction of the dairy extended the village envelope east, and subsequent infilling is of clearly contrasting style pre and post-Bladen Estate. Suburban housing also forms a small but conspicuous cluster adjacent to the old school. In Affpuddle modern housing has come to dominate the main street, the elevated position occupied along the south side of Southover Road bearing no relation to the historic pattern at street level. Elevation was apparently a response to the possibility of flooding.
45. The second half of the century was characterised by a decline in the importance and presence of agriculture, with accompanying change in the management of the surrounding landscape. As if to illustrate the rapidly changing nature of the technologies and techniques that Bladen Farms sought to demonstrate, the majority of the buildings erected by Debenham fell into disuse within little more than fifty years. Following a period of dereliction, Briantspuddle Dairy was converted for residential use, along with the Estate's former power house, transport depot, garages, office and the dairy building at Tonerspudde Farm (see FIG. 30). Other historic buildings at Tonerspudde Farm have meanwhile been adapted for equestrian use, though many redundant agricultural buildings from a range of periods remain within the conservation area.

### **Archaeological Potential**

46. Archaeological potential may exist in Affpuddle along the north side of Southover Road on sites previously occupied by buildings.
47. Remnants of the water meadows can be considered archaeological features insofar as they consist of historic channels, earthworks and structures providing evidence of past land use and management which may be of particular historic significance in Affpuddle.

## Spatial character and built form

### Layout

48. The conservation area is largely characterised by a more or less linear sequence of development along a route tracking the course of the River Piddle that continues to Tolpuddle to the west. The eastern section of the route between Throop and Turnerspuddle – labelled ‘to Blandford’ on the 1839 tithe map – remains an unmetalled highway though has the character of an agricultural track.
49. As the conservation area comprises a number of small settlements, development tends to occur in localised concentrations along the above route, with some scattering between. A number of small ‘enclaves’ which have a distinct character and developmental history also exist, these including The Hollow and Bladen Valley discussed below.
50. The Piddle Valley is served by three historic parallel routes which find a common point of origin or termination at the Yearling’s Drove finger post east of Turnerspuddle. These run: 1. to Turnerspuddle, across the meadows to Throop, following the road to Briantspuddle, Affpuddle and then onwards; 2. to Turnerspuddle, then on the Tolpuddle always skirting the north edge of the meadows, first following the green lane to Moor Lane (FIG. 14 below) then onwards to North Barn and beyond following the footpath; and, 3. south along Yearling’s Drove and onwards west past Culpepper’s Dish, and on until the former road crosses into private woodland. Each route is linked by north-south roads, bridleways or footpaths. This network of parallel interlinked routes is likely to have evolved partly in response to the topography of the river corridor, and partly in response to flooding and changing conditions in the summer and winter – the routes providing alternative means of traversing the valley.



**FIG. 14:** *Green lane linking Moor Lane with Turnerspuddle. Skirting the northern edge of the water meadows the route ultimately continues to Tolpuddle, though loses definition beyond Moor Lane House.*

51. Prior to the twentieth century the western entry into Briantspuddle from Affpuddle took a deviating course, running north at the Old School along the current lane, then east to the bridge and south past Hanthorpe Cottage (see FIG. 8). Construction of a link road by-passing the loop, and adopting the pre-existing line of a footpath caused the old route to become defunct. This provided the origin of the detached group of housing around the Old School, whose cul-de-sac arrangement is not historic in character but a vestige of the historic route.
52. Bladen Valley forms another other notable 'cul-de-sac' in the conservation area, though the intended design was never completed. The close physical and visual relationship with the field beyond reflects the intended extension of the estate into the space. The development is a detached enclave, and clearly departs from the historic settlement structure, having a distinctive character and layout specific to itself.
53. Development at the Hollow forms one further distinct enclave whose origins as an informal encroachment on the heath to the south (see FIG. 8) explain the erratic arrangement of historic buildings and lack of any direct relationship with the historic road network.

## Density

54. Density varies on a localised basis across the conservation area, though generally speaking the majority development is arranged along road frontages, with the only real depth to the townscape provided by former and extant agricultural complexes.
55. The majority of cottages of the nineteenth century and earlier occupy street edge positions, often with shallow garden frontage or verge. Where clusters of such buildings occur, such as adjacent to the crossroads at Briantspuddle, in Throop and at the west end of Affpuddle, this provides an intimate and enclosed feel to the street. Cruck Cottage in Briantspuddle (see FIG. 4) is an obvious exemption to the pattern, the spacious plot within which it stands more typical of later housing and historic buildings of high status. Pavement edge development helps lend an impression of increased density in the historic core of Briantspuddle (see FIG. 30), where it is likely to provide a good impression of the historic character of Affpuddle.
56. As a planned development, the spacing of buildings in Bladen Valley is a particular and distinctive aspect of its design (see FIG. 15 below). This bears no direct relation to the pattern which exists elsewhere in the conservation area, though formal placement is also seen in the crescent of post-war bungalows in Briantspuddle. Most Bladen Estate dwellings stand within spacious plots (e.g. see FIG. 25).



57. The layout of Bladen Valley is best appreciated on aerial photos taken shortly after its development, and prior to tree planting (see FIG. 15 below). Large garden spaces were originally intended for use as allotments, though most no longer serve this purpose. The spaciousness of Bladen Valley remains clearly appreciable, though character has been eroded by the construction of an assortment of sheds, garages and outbuildings within the gaps between properties.



**FIG.15:** *Bladen Valley 1930. (Britain from Above: image EPW032353). The spacing of buildings and subdivision of plots is evident, as too the lack of trees (the plot having been agricultural land previously).*

## Height and massing

58. The conservation area contains dwellings which stand at a range of heights between 1 – 2.5 storeys. Functional and stylistic variation provides visual interest.
59. The majority of vernacular cottages stand at 1.5 storeys, with a varying quantity of the first floor volume accommodated within the roof space (see FIG. 16 below). Cottages equipped with half dormers between the eaves are generally of lesser height than those with windows tucked beneath the eaves. In properties such as Cruck Cottage, 1.5 storey height reflects the historic insertion of a first floor to a single storey building (see FIG. 4).
60. With the possible exception of substantial 2.5 storey elements of 26 Briantspuddle, the height of Bladen Estate cottages contrast sharply with that of vernacular dwellings. This is because each generally incorporates two storey elements, and feature greater floor to ceiling heights and deeper plan forms, all of which produce greater ridge heights. This is most true of fully two-storey designs such as Nos. 5-6 Bladen Valley (see FIG. 16). Designs such as that of Nos. 9-10 Bladen Valley (see FIG. 23) and No. 15-16 Briantspuddle however soften the perception of greater height and mass by incorporating 1.5 storey elements covered by sweeping thatched roofs. Recent examples of vernacular inspired design have also produced quite bulky forms (e.g. Blacksmith's Cottage and Bestberry), but unlike Bladen Estate designs these

lack any recognisable style or stylistic context, and are sometimes less at ease with their settings.

61. The most substantial dwellings in the conservation area stand at a full two storeys with attic rooms. Examples pre-dating the twentieth century are infrequent, and most form part of a group of formal high status dwellings (chiefly principal farmhouses) constructed or remodelled in the late eighteenth century, including East Farm (FIG. 16 below), Tonerspudde Farm, and The Old Vicarage in Affpuddle. No. 26 Briantspudde (FIG. 5), once the principal farmhouse in Briantspudde, similarly features two storeys with attics, and as such is exceptional amongst vernacular buildings in the conservation area.



**FIG. 16:** *Height and massing. Above left: East Farm, Affpuddle – one of a number of bulky two-storey eighteenth century dwellings of irregular plan form in the conservation area. Above right: Chapel Cottage. A linear amalgamation of modest vernacular forms which provides great visual interest. Below left, the modest 1.5 storeys of No.21 Affpuddle. Note the deep and well rounded thatch which is typical of historic thatched roofs. Below right: Nos. 5 and 6 Bladen Valley – a formal two storey design whose only vernacular parallel is No. 26 Briantspudde.*



62. Variation in height across the row of buildings forming Chapel Cottage and No. 26 Briantspuddle provides visual interest (shown in FIG. 16 above), and reflects a process of the historic addition of elements over time.
63. Modern bungalow designs don't generally exceed the height of earlier cottages, though their suburban character and appearance otherwise detracts from historic and architectural distinctiveness of the conservation area.

## **Building form and orientation**

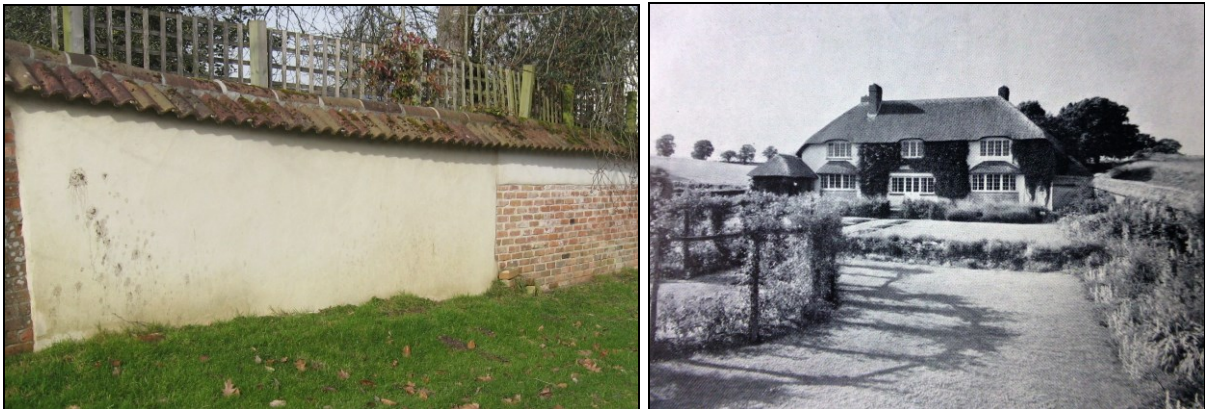
64. Vernacular cottage development is generally characterised by broad frontage narrow depth (single room deep) plan forms. This provides buildings that are typically rectangular in shape, quite simple in their original overall form, and often linear in character. Linear character has been created where rows have been formed by a process of addition, such as seen at Chapel Cottage (see FIG. 16 above) and Nos. 21-24 Briantspuddle, or where agricultural structures have been added alongside as seen at Piper's Cottage. Many cottages have otherwise undergone extension. The disproportionate size and uncomplimentary form of some modern extensions – including some Bladen Estate era additions to vernacular buildings – has been harmful.
65. Bladen Estate designs feature double pile (two room deep) internal layouts characteristic of those in general use during the early twentieth century. In common with the vernacular, plan forms are generally linear in character.
66. Post-war housing follows no particular pattern. Forms vary widely and are typical of the range of suburban housing generally found nationwide.
67. The vast majority of dwellings are orientated to face the street, though a small number including No. 26 Briantspuddle (see FIG. 5), are orientated sideways on. This is also a feature of the barns at West Farm and that housing the Village Hall, the variation produced lending some visual interest to the street scene (see FIG. 30). Large high status dwellings including The Old Vicarage, Tonerspuddle Farmhouse, East Farm, Moor Lane House and Blackdown House, follow no particular rule, each positioned with spacious grounds and generally detached from the street front.

## **Edges and enclosure**

68. As is generally true of most historic contexts, boundary enclosure plays an important role in defining and distinguishing public and private space within the conservation area. Where enclosure is not provided by buildings themselves – as more typical of

vernacular street edge development – this is achieved or supplemented through use of a combination of walls and hedges in various materials discussed further below. One important exception to the rule is Bladen Valley. Here the large central verge forms an important aspect of the design with a communal character apparently intended. Enclosure here seems to have developed incrementally and has caused some harm particularly at the top of the estate. An Article 4 Direction is in place which restricts erection of further boundary enclosure along Bladen Valley without planning permission.

69. In common with buildings, the vernacular tradition of solid boundary wall enclosure within the conservation area saw use of cob. A number of cob walls survive and lend distinctiveness where present (see FIG. 17 below, and 20). This type of wall requires an elaborate coping to shed water clear of the face, which was traditionally provided using thatch. Walls of this type survive in Shitterton, and are shown in several views contained within the 1953 Bladen Estate sale catalogue at Throop House (then briefly named Briantspuddle Farm), West Farm in Affpuddle, Tonerspudde Farm, and Moor Lane House where it had been adapted for picturesque use. No walls of this type now survive, as thatch has been entirely replaced by large format clay tiles at each.



**FIG. 17:** *Wall coping. Left: boundary wall of varied composition at Throop House with tiled coping. This replaced thatch shown in the 1953 Bladen Estate sale brochure. Right: photo from the brochure showing coping at Moor Lane House.*

70. A length of derelict cob boundary wall exists along the north side of the village street in Affpuddle opposite Diggory Venn, Yew Tree Cottage and Camelot (see FIG. 37). The wall is largely obscured by ivy which has no doubt contributed to its collapse. The wall appears to have in part provided a boundary for a dwelling which formerly stood on this side of the street, the site of which is now itself overgrown.

## Building style, materials and details

### Architectural style

71. The 'vernacular' is strongly represented by cob and thatch cottages (see FIG. 18 below and 4, 5, 16, and 30) occasionally refaced in brick and invariably modified since construction. Built according to local tradition these show typical inconsistencies in the organisation of details, whilst sharing a range of basic common forms and components. Vernacular character is best appreciated and shows a particular dominance where historic buildings form clusters, most particularly around the core of Briantspuddle, and on a more localised basis in Throop and the west end of Affpuddle (see FIG. 30).
72. The conservation area contains a few 'high status' designs of the late Georgian period – East Farm, The Old Vicarage, Tonerspuddle Farm, Throop House – whose quality and formality clearly, and typically contrasts with that of the contemporary vernacular.
73. Arts and Crafts style was favoured by the Bladen Estate, and as such has a strong presence within the conservation area generally, and a defining presence in Bladen Valley in particular. Designs can be attributed to Halsey Ricardo and Leslie MacDonald Gill, who was architect in residence on the Estate 1914-19. As discussed in the sections above, house designs vary in terms of the elaboration of form and degree of stylisation, contrasting with earlier vernacular buildings in terms of scale and formality whilst reflecting more general aspects of their character. Of particular note was the stylistic treatment of more functional buildings on the Bladen Estate (see for example FIG. 18 below, and 12, 13, 18, 21 and 24).



**FIG. 18:** *Architectural character. Left: turreted silos at Briantspuddle Dairy. Right: the local vernacular demonstrated by No. 2 Briantspuddle.*

74. Simple formal designs, sometimes of pattern book type, were used for a number of nineteenth century buildings, including the former village school, whose character is closer to that of higher status dwellings of earlier periods than the vernacular.
75. The majority of post-war development adopts generic suburban designs lacking any obvious affinity to the locality, which if anything undermines local distinctiveness. This is seen at its worst on the south side of the main street in Affpuddle, and in the west half of Briantspuddle. More recent use of the vernacular within 'contemporary' design appears to be less successful than achieved by the Bladen Estate.

## **Walls**

### **Stone**

76. Use of stone as a principal construction material does not characterise historic development generally, reflecting the fact that there are no ready or substantial sources of stone available in the immediate locality. Limestone has however been employed to face several modern houses in Affpuddle, and also appears in some modern boundary walls where its use undermines local character and distinctiveness.
77. Amongst historic buildings construction in stone is reserved for the parish churches in Affpuddle and Turnerspuddle, and is an exceptional feature in both the original and remodelled sections of East Farm in Affpuddle. This generally reflects the historic status and importance of these buildings (see FIG. 3). The quality of materials used for construction of the churches appears to differ between the two, being higher for the Church of St. Laurence. Ornamental use of knapped flint is a feature of particular interest at all three buildings, employed in chequered panels and as banding within limestone masonry (see FIG. 19 below). Similar decorative effects are employed at the parish church in Bere Regis. Flint is otherwise seen in the much later churchyard wall in Affpuddle (see FIG. 18) and the boundary walls at Briantspuddle Dairy (see FIG. 25) where its use forms an element of the distinctive though not wholly contextual design of the site.
78. Heathstone is present sporadically often as a component of plinths forming the base of cob walls. Substantial quantities of heathstone rubble are present in the construction of the former parish church in Turnerspuddle, and a panel of heathstone is visible in the gable wall of Throop House where it may represent the remnants of a previous building on the site. It is possible that the mixed limestone/heathstone rubble of the boundary of Barbaru is derived from a demolished building, given historic boundaries of this type are otherwise atypical (see FIG. 19 below).



**FIG. 19:** Stone. Left: Panels of knapped flint used to create a chequered pattern with blocks of limestone at the parish church in Affpuddle. Right: heathstone and limestone rubble in the wall now forming a boundary of Barbaru, Briantspuddle.

### Cob

79. Cob represents the material favoured in vernacular construction of both buildings and boundary walls, and as such is typical of pre-nineteenth century cottage development. Cob structures surviving in the conservation area are generally rendered, though decay of this protective coating has exposed the underlying cob in a number of locations (see FIG. 20 below). Cob construction persisted through the nineteenth century into the Bladen Estate era, though was generally displaced by brick during the former and concrete blocks during the latter.



**FIG. 20:** Section of cob boundary wall, Briantspuddle. The protective coat of render appears to have fallen off or been removed. Note the pantile coping and brick plinth.

### Blockwork

80. Though the Bladen Estate operated established brickworks, a Swedish block making machine provided the bulk of new material for construction of walls, dwellings, outbuildings and agricultural structures. This machine produced novel air spaced

blocks using cement and gravel siftings. The blocks produced have a distinctive size and appearance not directly comparable to modern concrete blocks, whose characteristics and composition differs. The contrast is clearly seen where modern blockwork has been used to fill a former entrance within the boundary wall of Symmond's Barn.

81. Photos in the 1953 estate sale catalogue show some dwellings constructed from blockwork were originally left without any finish. A few dwellings still retain exposed blockwork, though most are rendered or painted. These finishes help to harmonise development with the earlier cob vernacular. Blockwork otherwise remains exposed within many boundary walls and outbuildings, where, though sometimes appearing crude (see FIG. 21 below), it lends functional depth and interest to the historic landscape of the former Bladen Estate.



**FIG. 21:** *Bladen Estate blockwork. Estate manufactured block was used in the construction of boundary walls and buildings. Left: boundary wall at Symmond's Barn – note the tiled coping which echoes the weathering provided for cob walls. Modern blockwork is conspicuous where used to fill the former entrance further along. Right: buildings in Affpuddle which again combine block and brick.*

## **Brick**

82. Though the use of brick appears sporadic through the conservation area, it was used for a number of significant late eighteenth century buildings, and for most others subsequently constructed or altered between 1800 and 1914. As such construction in brick represents an important phase in the developmental history of the conservation area, though one somewhat obscured by subsequent sponsorship of 'vernacular' Arts and Crafts styling by the Bladen Estate (employing concrete block typically rendered or painted). Though use of brick does not therefore characterise development generally, or indeed represent the true 'vernacular', the contribution it makes to local character should not be downplayed (see FIG. 22 below, and FIGs. 9, 10, 16, 17, 24 and 30).





**FIG. 22:** *Brick. The important contribution made by brickwork to the historic character of the conservation area is easily overlooked. Top left: granary, Briantspuddle. Top left: barns at Tonerspuddle Farm. Bottom left: No. 3 Affpuddle. Bottom right: Throop House. Note the range of roof coverings.*

83. As noted above, brickworks were operated in the broader locality by both the Moreton and the later Bladen Estates, providing an important source of building materials. Manufacturing sites included a kiln at Oker's Wood which was in existence during the eighteenth century, another near Briantspuddle which principally functioned during the second half of the nineteenth century, and a third near Blackhill which the 1929 Bladen Estate brochure describes made a 'mottled purple' brick.
84. At least initially the use of brick appears associated with status. At a time when cob was in widespread use, the late eighteenth century saw brick used in elements of East Farm, the Old Vicarage at Affpuddle, Tonerspuddle Farm and the adjacent barns. In Briantspuddle meanwhile, the former granary built in 1814 (see FIG. 22 above), would have appeared exceptional in its context, representing a bold

statement of both agricultural prosperity and the functional and economic importance of granaries. The general pattern reflects that seen in the broader Moreton Estate, and contrasted and continues to contrast with vernacular materials typical of contemporary cottage construction – albeit many cob structures feature additions or ‘repairs’ in brick.

85. During the nineteenth century, and up until 1914, brick saw increasing use, and appears to have been favoured over other materials for all types of construction. Notable brick structures include Hanthorpe Cottage, West Farm, Shop Farm, the old school (until recently complemented by a brick built school house) and the old mill in Affpuddle (see FIG. 10). Throop House (see FIG. 22 above), altered during the mid-nineteenth century, has a prominent brick frontage. Brick also features in a number of nineteenth century agricultural structures including a poorly preserved granary in Affpuddle (see FIG. 30), and bridges over the River Piddle (see FIG. 9).
86. Within the conservation area the use of brick tends to be characterised by pattern book or more formal detailing and designs than are seen in the earlier vernacular.

## Roofs

87. Roof forms are varied and include hipped, half hipped and pitched configurations, the latter sometimes with a cropped gable. Form does not generally appear related to use of material. Bladen Estate designs feature some stylistic elaboration of standard forms (see FIG. 23), whilst the conical arrangements seen at the former Briantspuddle Dairy are unusual.

## Thatch

88. Thatch represents the local vernacular roofing material within the locality. A relatively large proportion of buildings within the conservation area are thatched, but loss and localised reduction in frequency has been a factor particularly since the post-war period. This has resulted from building demolition and simple replacement with solid coverings, sometimes following fire.
89. Amongst buildings that were formerly thatched include Moor Lane House and the barn at West Farm in Affpuddle (FIG. 30). Thatch was replaced with solid roofing on West Farm (house) post-war, but more recently reinstated. A number of properties in Bladen Valley have also lost their thatched roofs.
90. There is a possibility – which remains to be demonstrated – that heather may have seen some use for thatching in the past given the historic proximity of heathland south of The Hollow. Cereal straw derived from local agriculture otherwise saw principal use in thatching historically, and here seven surviving threshing barns within

the conservation area reflect the past importance of cereal production within the pre-twentieth century 'sheep and corn' economy. Multi-layered wheat straw thatch survives on many roofs, albeit sometimes with an overcoat of water reed. In some other cases water reed has displaced wheat straw where roofs have been replaced. This brings subtle changes in character that would be avoided if wheat straw was used, and reduces authenticity. The angular forms water reed typically produces departs from the well rounded, flowing forms which characterise both the historic vernacular and the Arts and Crafts designs used by the Bladen Estate. Given intensive historic management of the meadows and watercourses, water reed would never have been abundant enough locally in the past to provide a source of thatching material, and even now it remains sparse.

91. Much is owed to the Bladen Estate, whose use of thatch for many, though by no means all of the buildings constructed 1914-1952, both complemented and reinforced local distinctiveness. Thatch can be seen to have had a transformative effect on buildings otherwise built using modern materials (compare solid roofed with thatched Bladen Estate buildings), and was a key component of the Arts and Crafts styling generally employed.



**FIG. 23:** Picturesque roof forms. Left: Nos. 9 -10 Bladen Valley. An identical pair (Nos. 15 and 16) stands in Briantspuddle. Right: Nos. 3 - 4 Bladen Valley.

92. The majority of thatched buildings have flush ridges (e.g. see FIG. 23). This is traditional, local form of finish. Ornamental block ridges, fashionable post-war, are seen less frequently. These detract from the simple form and appearance of the roofs on which they are used and the locally distinctive character of the street scene.

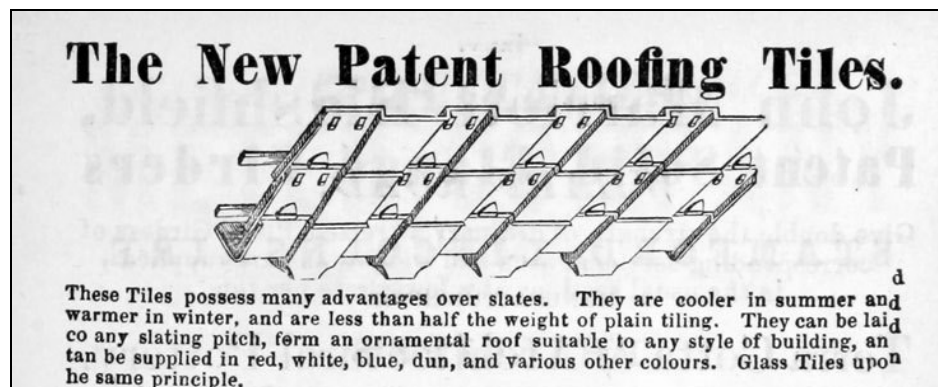
## **Tile**

93. Tile production began at the Briantspuddle brickworks in 1851, and plain tiles produced here were used on estate buildings including at East Farm Affpuddle.

94. The conservation area features a number of different types of large format clay and concrete tile, the former typically produced in Bridgwater, Somerset during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pantiles, whose use is atypical within the District generally, are used as a coping on some boundary walls, where, as noted above, they are often likely to have replaced thatch. A particularly interesting form of two part interlocking tile features on agricultural buildings at West Farm and East Farm in Affpuddle (see FIG. 24 below), and an unusual corrugated tile features on the roof of a lean-to attached to No.24 Briantspuddle. Double Roman tiles can also be seen at East Farm in typical use on outbuildings.
95. Several buildings of similar date carry tiled roofs with a stone tile eaves course. This feature appears to have been popular around the District and County at large during the late eighteenth century, and may have assisted tiled roofs to shed water. In a domestic context stone eaves courses can be seen at East Farm (dated 1765 – FIG. 16), Tonerspuddle Farm and the Old Vicarage at Affpuddle (both dated 1792). A stone eaves course is also a more unusual feature of the former granary adjacent to the village hall (dated 1814 – see FIG. 22). Here its use reflects the general quality of construction of what, as discussed above, was an economically important building.



**FIG. 24: Broomhall tiles.** This complex interlocking tile is a 'Taylor's Patent' designed in 1855 by Thomas Taylor Coniam, produced by Broomhall Tile & Brick Co, in Bridgwater. An advert from Laxton's Builder's Price Book 1868 is shown below. The tiles can still be produced by special order.



## Slate

96. Use of slate is infrequent and not generally characteristic of development within the conservation area. Where found slate is typically associated with nineteenth century development.

## **Chimneys**

97. Chimney stacks are generally built of brick. Substantial chimney stacks incorporating decorative details often form important elements of Bladen Estate designs. Here their large size is proportionate to the bulk of the buildings they serve, and often adds significant stature (see FIG. 15 particularly).

## **Windows and doors**

98. Plastic windows commonly harm the character and appearance of conservation areas where inserted within unlisted buildings. The large proportion of listed historic buildings within the conservation area has helped to constrain the impact, mostly limiting this to post-war buildings of generally unsympathetic suburban design. Plastic windows are nonetheless conspicuous where inserted at older properties such as Nos. 7 and 8 Affpuddle.
99. Half dormers (those positioned at some point between the eaves) are frequent features of vernacular cottage design. In some cases these represent additions, such as at Cruck Cottage (FIG. 4), where the first floor is a later insertion. Half dormers are typically accommodated beneath raised rafters which are expressed as soft bulges in thatch coverings that gradually disappear with thicker coatings.
100. Full dormer windows are not generally a traditional feature of thatched roofs locally. Presence of an inset 'dormer' at No. 26 (see FIG. 16) is unusual and this may not represent an original feature. Thatched dormers are otherwise used in a distinctive and picturesque way within many Bladen Estate cottage designs, of which Nos. 15-16 Briantspuddle and Nos. 3-4 Bladen Valley are typical. Some such dormers further differ from vernacular forms through elaborate detailing of the thatch, including the addition of 'points' (finials) to the ridges.
101. In contrast to the more traditional use of timber, metal framed windows, sometimes with leaded lights, form an element of the Arts and Crafts/inter-war detailing of some Bladen Estate house designs.

## Public realm

### Surfaces

102. Pavements are not a historic feature within the conservation area and occur only within the post-war bungalow development opposite Briantspuddle village hall.
103. Adopted road surfaces are generally tarmac, though the conservation area also contains a number of unadopted lanes. That serving Bladen Valley has a topping of aggregate subject to pot holes. Earth topped green lanes (routes enclosed by hedgerows) otherwise connect Throop with Turnerspudde, Turnerspudde with Briantspuddle, and Affpuddle with Wood Barn. The condition of these routes is subject to seasonal variation (see FIG. 2). Green lanes play a particularly important role in conserving historic connections between the settlements and the broader landscape. Their identity can however be easily harmed through the removal or fragmentation of enclosing hedgerows, as has occurred within the broader setting of the conservation area.
104. The former Briantspuddle Dairy (see FIG. 12) features large expanses of stone paving to the surface the access roads (see FIG. 25 below). This is an important aspect of the historic design character of the dairy and adds distinctiveness to the site. Stone paving is not otherwise a frequent feature within the conservation area.



**FIG. 25:** *Paving at the entrance to Briantspuddle Dairy. Note the bulky form and spacious position of contemporary semi-detached pair, Nos. 33 and 34.*

### Street Furniture

105. The conservation area contains four finger posts, generally installed during the 1920-30s. A modified finger post which has lost its roundel but retains its black and white stripes stands opposite No. 21 Affpuddle. A refurbished post with original roundel but modern printed finger (others appear to be missing) stands opposite No.

24 Affpuddle. A third post, again modified and lacking its roundel stands at the cross road in Briantspuddle, whilst a fourth stands on Yearling's Drove pointing the way to Turnerspuddle. This post again lacks its roundel and is in the worst condition.

106. Other items of traditional street furniture include two red K6 telephone kiosks, one of which stands opposite the church in Affpuddle, the other adjacent to the crossroad in Briantspuddle (see also comments below in buildings of interest), and an unusual Edward VII post box mounted on a telegraph pole in Throop (see FIG. 26 below). Three more modern post boxes of mounted type can be seen in Affpuddle, Bladen Valley and Briantspuddle.



**FIG: 26:** *Street furniture. Left: Edward VII letter box, Throop. Right: finger post, junction of B3390 with Briantspuddle road. The finger is a modern replacement – other fingers are missing.*

107. The conservation area contains few other items of street furniture, though litter bin of municipal character and an interesting staddle stone inspired stone bench stand outside the post office in Briantspuddle (see FIG. 22).

## Lighting and wiring

108. The conservation area contains no street lighting, consistent with the rural character of the settlements included.

109. Overhead cables are particularly noticeable in Throop, but less intrusive elsewhere.

## Public space

110. The two churchyards provide the only substantial formal public spaces, and notably include the green on the east side of the parish church in Affpuddle. This is overlooked by the Second World War memorial by Lougham Pendred pictured in FIG. 1. Aside from this a very small green is located in Briantspuddle (see FIG. 20), and is now home to relocated 'dead woman's stone' and Affpuddle millennium stone, and another is located in front of the post office (see FIG. 22).

## Trees, green spaces and ecology

111. The four settlements contained within the conservation area remain distinct given the continued existence of gaps containing little or no development between. These provide an important aspect of the character of the conservation area, which could be harmed or lost if development was allowed to extend into them. Most sensitive to change is the gap between the outlying parts of Affpuddle and Briantspuddle which is relatively small in area. A more strongly defined and appreciable gap exists between Throop and Briantspuddle, whilst the water meadows provide a reasonably strong break between Throop and Turnerspuddle.
112. The former water meadows laid out across the Piddle floodplain provide a largely open landscape setting for the settlements within the conservation area. Whilst the specific character and significance of the contribution made by the meadows varies at different points, the meadows as a whole form components of a physically 'continuous' historic designed agricultural landscape which extends along the Piddle Valley river corridor to both east and west. The strong relationship between the meadows and settlement is a product of the fact that both the settlement layout and meadows follow the course of the river; there is immediate proximity and similarity in terms of ground level between the two; a close historic relationship exists between individual properties and adjacent meadows they managed (e.g. East Farm at Affpuddle); and the meadows play a role in providing important gaps between settlement components – see particularly Throop and Turnerspuddle which lie on opposite sides.
113. Whilst the former meadows at Affpuddle may hold greatest historic significance, the meadows north of Briantspuddle and Throop, and lying south of the green lane between Turnerspuddle and Moor Lane, feel most integrated within the settlement layout. These are also perhaps the most accessible to and accessed by the public given the footpaths and bridleways which run across them, and fact that it is possible to walk a circuit.
114. The meadows are no longer managed in a traditional way, the management of water meadows having been widely discontinued across the country during the twentieth century. Water meadows themselves were subject to government-sponsored destruction during the post-war period. The principal aesthetic value of the meadows now lies in their character as open green space which naturally floods on a seasonal basis. Concern over the construction of fishing lakes within, and extraction of gravel from the Piddle Valley originally gave rise to inclusion of the meadows within an enlarged conservation area in 1989. An Article 4 Direction prohibiting both forms of development without planning permission was made the same year.



115. Here as elsewhere agricultural intensification has greatly diminished the ecological richness of the meadows, though it remains possible to find isolated wild flowers. Degradation (in particular the creation of swampy patches of scrub woodland) has however perhaps also created new habitats.
116. The River Piddle itself holds significance as a 'chalk stream', a relatively rare habitat of particularly high biodiversity value. Whilst no longer in traditional management, meadowland and fields nonetheless provide some value as foraging places for birds and small mammals. The river itself is an attractive feature and is crossed by a ford at Turnerspiddle (see FIG. 27 below).



**FIG. 27:** *The River Piddle at Turnerspiddle. Here the unmetalled road from Throop passes through a ford. A pedestrian footbridge has been added for walkers.*

117. An area of ground opposite Camelot in Affpuddle which was the former site of a cottage, today appears used as an informal dump for garden refuse. Open to view from the road, this harms the appearance and general amenity of the streetscene. Further dumping of material was noted in the green space east of West Farm. This was once the farm's rick yard, still known locally as 'Rickpound'. The space plays an important role in the setting of historic threshing barn and granary located on its east side (see FIG. 33) given a historic functional relationship.
118. During the spring masses of snowdrops in the old churchyard at Turnerspiddle are a particularly attractive feature. Smaller groups of snowdrops also occur at the north end of the churchyard at Affpuddle.
119. A small central green plays an important role in the design of Briantspuddle Dairy, and is a feature emulated in the adjacent bungalow development. Open green space however holds greatest importance in the design of Bladen Valley. Houses here are generously spaced and face onto a broad verge flanking the access road (see FIGS. 16 and 23). Many of the properties here originally had a direct frontage onto the verge, or featured picket fences enclosing a modest strip immediately in front of the dwellings. This remains the case in a couple of places. Other boundary treatments

have been introduced since, dense or closed forms of which (e.g. hedging and panel fencing) impinge on the openness of the development. At the top of the estate the verges have been entirely enclosed by hedges planted during the 1980s. This has caused greatest harm to the design character of the estate and setting of buildings within it. In 1987 an Article 4 Direction prohibiting further erection of fences and other means of enclosure without planning permission was made as a means of protecting open space. Further harm has been caused by the formation of hardstanding within the verge, whilst the assortment of outbuildings and garages erected between properties often detracts from the appearance and simple spacing of dwellings (see FIG. 35).

120. Whilst reference to FIG. 15 shows that, with the exception of pre-existing specimens, trees were not an original component of the design of Bladen Valley, trees today play an important landscape role (see FIG. 28 below). This is particularly true of large trees standing within or adjacent to the verge, the quality of which is recognised in their specific protection by preservation orders. In some places however vigorous growth of leylandii hedging detracts from the general setting and character of the estate.



**FIG. 28:** *The broad access to Bladen Valley. Note broad verges and large trees. Enclosure of the verge with hedges has compromised the character of the estate further up.*

121. Old maps show that a number of orchards once existed within the locality (see FIG. 11). The largest of these was arranged on both sides of the road and surrounding East Farm in Affpuddle, with smaller orchards at Tonerspudde Farm and in Briantspudde. These orchards no longer exist. Other significant changes included the loss of elm trees, which the 1953 Bladen Estate sale particulars record then made up a significant proportion of timber trees, especially in Affpuddle – 32 of the 62 trees belonging to East Farm, and 35 of the 60 trees attached to West Farm.
122. Coniferous plantations to the south of the conservation area occupy land that was historically heathland. The setting to the south would therefore have been far more open in the past. As in other heathland areas of the Moreton Estate, establishment of

plantations began during the eighteenth century. Woodland immediately abutting the conservation area is however of twentieth century origin. This woodland, which sees pines give way to broadleaf trees closer to the village, lends character to The Hollow and the entry into Briantspuddle (see FIG. 29 below). Here a number of individual trees reach to a considerable height.



**FIG. 29:** *The Hollow. Trees tower above the sunken road providing considerable character.*

123. The conservation area contains a small area of woodland defined as ‘ancient’ – meaning it has been continuously wooded since at least 1600. This is attached to Landshare Coppice, much of which has otherwise been replanted. Ancient woodland provides a particularly scarce and important ecological resource which typically supports a rich variety of plant and animal life.
124. Buildings, garden spaces and verges all provide nesting, roosting and feeding opportunities for birds, bats and small mammals. Both redundant and extant agricultural buildings within the conservation provide particularly important habitats for swallows, other birds which nest in buildings, and bats. Future conversion works should aim to fully retain the value of these habitats.
125. Roadside hedges are generally in a reasonable condition, though many field boundaries within the immediate context are in a degraded fragmentary state, reducing their functional and environmental value. See for example the boundary alongside the green lane between Moor Lane and Turnerspuddle in FIG. 14.

## Visual qualities

126. Historic visual character is richest where historic buildings form clustered groups, including adjacent to the cross roads in Briantspuddle, at the west end of Affpuddle, and in Throop. At these locations buildings play a particularly important role in framing space, terminating views, and turning corners (see FIG. 30 below). Here occasional variations in form and position adds visual interest



**FIG. 30:** *Framing of space. Left: west end of Affpuddle. Right: Briantspuddle, looking towards the crossroad. In both cases buildings informally frame space, and their arrangement provides further interest where views are closed or deflected.*

127. Designed architectural compositions such as Bladen Valley and Briantspuddle Dairy have a strongly picturesque character. Other important compositions include the parish church and old vicarage in Affpuddle, views of which are enhanced by the surrounding trees (see FIG. 31 below).



**FIG. 31:** *Visual interest. The grouping of the parish church and old vicarage in Affpuddle, combined with tall and spreading trees and an attractive backdrop provide particular visual quality in Affpuddle. The view wasn't so open historically given structures formerly in the foreground have been removed.*

## Important unlisted buildings and features of interest

128. Unlisted buildings, structures and spaces 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 interest are detailed on Map 2. Given their significance (further understanding of which may be enriched by future work) these buildings can be considered to be 'non-designated heritage assets' as defined within the NPPF. Alongside listed buildings, positive buildings should form a focus for conservation. Key examples (the list is not exhaustive) are provided below:

- *Unlisted Bladen Estate buildings:* Whilst many buildings constructed by the Debeneham Estate have been listed, many others (see History section) have not. Amongst the most notable unlisted domestic buildings is Blackdown House (FIG. 32 below), which is a good examples of the Arts and Crafts design style otherwise exemplified at a more modest scale by Bladen Valley.



**FIG. 32:**  
*Blackdown House. The grandest Bladen Estate Arts and Crafts design within the conservation area. The house standing within an attractive landscaped setting.*

- *West Farm (house), barns, cart shed and granary, Affpuddle:* Two notable groups of agricultural buildings stand opposite and adjacent to the parish church (see FIG. 33 below). These include a much patched cob barn and brick granary at West Farm identified in the 1970 RCHM survey (Dorset Vol II South East Part I) as monument 38. The building footprint is illustrated on page 1xvi of the same volume. For some reason the buildings were not subsequently added to the statutory list. The RCHM indicates that the barn is one of a group of four locally whose main dimensions are almost identical. These include North Barn (Affpuddle) and the village hall in Briantspuddle each of which are listed Grade II, and Wood Barn which is reached by following green lane adjacent to West Farm and is similarly unlisted. The similarities in design are accounted for by all

having been built at roughly the same time during a period of broader modernisation on the Moreton Estate. The barn roof was originally thatched and hipped until apparent replacement during the 1960s. The granary stands on brick arches and is similar in design to that now occupied by the post office in Briantspuddle. Huge potential exists to enhance these buildings which would benefit from sensitive repair and reinstatement of lost features including the thatched roofs. The thatch roof of the farmhouse has previously been reinstated.



**FIG. 33:** *Buildings of interest. Top left: early nineteenth century granary and barn Affpuddle – the barn was once thatched and is dated 1802 by the RCHM – see old photo below. Top right: Stable Barn, Affpuddle, viewed from the churchyard.*



- *The water meadows:* As discussed elsewhere in this document, the water meadows, and in particular those at Affpuddle, hold historic, social and economic significance in terms of their place in the history of agricultural improvement and land management. According to Historic England water meadows are more generally an under-recorded, under-designated type of heritage asset. The meadows contain a range of often fragmentary structures related to past management (see examples in FIG. 34 below).



**FIG. 34:** Structures related to past water management. Above left: fragmentary concrete structure which once held a sluice gate, south west of North Barn, Affpuddle. Above right: structure adjacent to the track between Throop and Turnerspuddle. Below left: remnants of another sluice north of the mill in Affpuddle. Below right: interesting concrete bridge north of Throop.



- *K6 telephone kiosks:* The conservation area has two red telephone kiosks, one in Briantspuddle the other in Affpuddle. The latter is unusual in lacking crowns, though the slots into which they would normally be placed are present. That in Briantspuddle is a 'jubilee' model (1935-1952). The Parish Council has recently offered to adopt the kiosks following withdrawal of the service.
- *Finger posts:* as noted above, the conservation area contains four finger posts, whilst more lie within the immediate setting. These are important pieces of traditional street furniture which make a contribution to local distinctiveness, most strong where their place specific roundels are intact. Condition currently varies, though posts renovated in the recent past have not retained their original lettering. All four posts would benefit from restoration.

## Issues and opportunities

### Negative factors

129. Incursions onto the verge in Bladen Valley have caused problems historically. This has been principally as a result of enclosure, though the construction of hardstanding for vehicle parking is equally damaging to the character and appearance of open green space (see FIG. 35 below).



**FIG. 35:** *Problem areas. Left: hardstanding and parking in Bladen Valley. These incursions on the verge harm the character and appearance of the estate. Right: fly tipping along the road edge in Affpuddle. The group of trees is the site of a former dwelling, the steps and part of the boundary wall to which survive.*

130. Dumping of soil and garden waste appears to be an issue along the roadside in Affpuddle. The former site of cottage on the north side of the street is a focus for this activity (see FIG. 35 above).

### Evaluation of condition

131. Insofar as it is possible to observe, domestic buildings generally appear to be good condition. The conservation area otherwise contains a large number of disused agricultural structures (see for example FIG. 33), amongst which the condition of the barn at West Farm is of particular concern. A derelict cob boundary wall also runs along the main street in the same village (see FIG. 37).
132. The finger posts in Affpuddle, Briantspuddle and on Yearling's Drove east of Turnerspuddle are in poor condition and no longer maintained by the County Council.
133. Given the fact that the water meadows have, for the most part, not been subject to traditional management for several decades or more, some parts are now in very



poor condition – see for example FIG. 36 below. Historic carrier channels are still shown on maps, but in some places they have almost lost their identity, running dry, broken or swamped by vegetation. In many places the ground has been heavily churned up by cattle and machinery, and features shown in the HER (see FIG. 6) are now hard to identify. Elsewhere along the river corridor swampy scrub woodland has invaded. Most historic structures are derelict or decaying (see FIG. 34).



**FIG. 36:** *Deterioration of the water meadows. Two scenes in the meadows on the north side of Affpuddle showing the poor condition of former carrier channels which have become filled, broken, churned up and swampy.*

## **Buildings at risk**

134. Listed buildings or structures are considered to be ‘at risk’ where their condition is of concern. The granary at East Farm has undergone collapse (see FIG. 37 below), whilst the cob boundary wall at North Barn requires render repairs. Listed buildings otherwise generally appear to be in a reasonable state of repair.



**FIG. 37:** *Derelict buildings and structures. Left: the listed granary at East Farm, Affpuddle. Right: ivy covered remnants of a cob boundary wall, Affpuddle.*

## Threats, pressures, challenges

135. Until the proposal was withdrawn there was the prospect of wind farm development to the northwest of Affpuddle across the District boundary. This could have harmed the setting of the conservation area and other heritage assets.
136. The recent and ongoing sale of various parcels of land, including large parts of the former water meadows, may lead to further fragmentation of their ownership. This raises a particular conservation challenge given any coordination of management across parcels forming elements of the broader landscape design is ultimately both harder to achieve, and less likely to be achieved. Emerging proposals to flood parts of the meadows to assist in the capture of nitrates is one immediate outcome, though the details, precise impact and levels of support for the scheme remain unclear, as too the extent to which the conservation area designation has informed the strategy.
137. Gaps in the continuity of development between the four settlements within the conservation area is a crucially important aspect of the settlement layout along the Piddle Valley. Pressure to develop within these gaps represents a particular threat to character. In the event that it arises, any future development would most appropriately be located within sites corresponding to the established distribution of development.

## Enhancement opportunities

138. 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. This may include but is not limited to, sensitive redevelopment. 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.
139. 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**

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

### **Reinstatement of open space in Bladen Valley**

141. An attempt was made during the 1980s to persuade property owners to remove boundaries erected to enclose the verge. This was only partially successful, and hedged boundaries in particular have since become more prominent. Their removal would help to reinstate the overall design character and unity of the estate.

### **Renovation of finger posts**

142. The finger posts in Affpuddle, Briantspuddle and to the east of Turnerspuddle on Yearling's Drove are in poor condition. All lack roundels. The renovation of these posts and reinstatement of roundels would enhance the conservation area and distinctiveness of the locality. Use of original cast lettering rather than modern printed fingers produces the best results. Some very good restoration projects have recently been undertaken around the District.

### **Public awareness**

143. 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.

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

144. 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.

### **Reinstatement of the granary at East Farm**

145. Sensitive reconstruction of this partially collapsed and visually prominent listed building would be clearly beneficial to the conservation area.

### **Repair and sensitive reuse of redundant historic agricultural buildings**

146. The group of notable agricultural structures at West Farm and adjacent to the church in Affpuddle would benefit from sensitive repair, the removal of crude modern attachments, and the reinstatement of lost features such as the hipped thatched roof.

### **Locally distinctive design**

147. An important and distinctive feature of the conservation area is its combination of vernacular buildings, alongside buildings whose design sought to reimagine the

vernacular through the medium of Arts and Crafts style. Well-handled traditional design can make a legitimate ongoing contribution, however creative new design which seeks to use traditional details or materials in architecturally interesting ways can help to reinforce local distinctiveness whilst also adding vitality. This should be encouraged, meeting the desire of the local community to see 'contemporary' design whilst respecting the qualities which make the locality special, and which help justify its designation as a conservation area. In order to achieve this the input of sufficiently skilled architects will be required.

### **Open space management**

148. The former meadows are highly prized locally but now in a much deteriorated and deteriorating state. The removal of scrub, maintenance of the principal ditches and repair of the few surviving structures would help to conserve at least some of the remaining historic character of the landscape.

### **Improved waste management**

149. Insofar as it is possible, discouragement of fly tipping in Affpuddle would benefit the quality of the street scene.

### **Detailed study of the water meadows**

150. Understanding of the significance of the water meadows would be greatly enhanced by detailed study. This would be an ideal project for residents and land owners to undertake locally given the knowledge which resides within the community. Information generated in this way can be used to further inform an understanding of character and value as acknowledged elsewhere in this document.

## 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

- *Affpuddle in the County of Dorset; Brocklebank, 1968.*
- *County of Dorset, Volume Two, South East, Part 1; RCHM, 1970.*
- *Dorset (Pevsner Buildings of England).* Newman and Pevsner, 1972.
- *Historic aerial photography: <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk>*
- *Introduction to Heritage Assets: Water Meadows; Historic England, 2013.*
- *Hutchins, 1773: The History and antiquities of the county of Dorset*
- *National Heritage List. [www.historic-england.org.uk](http://www.historic-england.org.uk).*
- *Place Names of Dorset Part II; Mills (Ed.), English Place Names Society, 1980.*
- *The Development of Water Meadows in Dorset during the Seventeenth Century; J. H. Bettey, in The Agricultural History Review, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1977), pp. 37-43*
- *The Old Roads of Dorset; Good, 1960.*
- *The Origins of Water Meadows in England; H. Cook, K. Stearne and T. Williamson, in The Agricultural History Review, Vol. 51, No. 2 (2003), pp. 155-162.*
- *The Story of Briantspuddle, Dorset's 20th Century Model Village; De Burgh and Snoxell.*

#### 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. Email: [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

## 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.historic-england.org.uk](http://www.historic-england.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.
Dairy farm buildings at rear (south) of former dairy, Briantspuddle.	II	1120337
Stables and mares' foaling boxes to east of dairy farm buildings at rear of former dairy, Briantspuddle.	II	1120338
Silage towers south east corner of dairy farm buildings at rear of former dairy, Briantspuddle.	II	1323419
Dairy Bungalows, Briantspuddle.	II	1171979
26, Briantspuddle.	II	1171871
Boundary wall to east of No 26 Briantspuddle.	II	1120507
Briantspuddle Village Hall	II	1120508
Granary east of Briantspuddle Village Hall.	II	1323302
Cruck Cottage, Briantspuddle.	II	1120509
4, Briantspuddle.	II	1120510
14, Briantspuddle.	II	1120511
Boundary wall to west of No 14 Briantspuddle.	II	1323304
15 and 16, Briantspuddle.	II	1120512
Gate piers to No 24 Briantspuddle.	II	1120514
September Cottage, 21, Briantspuddle.	II	1120513
33 and 34, Briantspuddle.	II	1120515
Chapel Cottage, The Hollow.	II	1120516

5, The Hollow.	II	1305329
12, The Hollow.	II	1172008
Cob Cottage, 2 and 3, The Hollow.	II	1323307
First World War Memorial, Bladen Valley.	II*	1171702
2, Bladen Valley.	II	1120541
3 and 4, Bladen Valley.	II	1305429
9 and 10, Bladen Valley.	II	1120542
17 and 18, Bladen Valley.	II	1120543
1, Bladen Valley.	II	1120544
7 and 8, Bladen Valley.	II	1120545
5 and 6, Bladen Valley.	II	1171774
12 and 13, Bladen Valley.	II	1171778
19, 20 and 21, Bladen Valley.	II	1171788
22, 23 and 24, Bladen Valley.	II	1171818
14, 15 and 16, Bladen Valley.	II	1120546
Stable Cottage.	II	1120547
18, Briantspuddle.	II	1120548
25, Briantspuddle.	II	1120549
3, Briantspuddle.	II	1171845
20, Briantspuddle.	II	1323283
Boundary wall to east and west of No 20 Briantspuddle.	II	1171861
24, Briantspuddle.	II	1305352
22, Briantspuddle.	II	1171975
2, Briantspuddle.	II	1305403
5, Briantspuddle.	II	1305412
Pheasant Cottage, 35, Briantspuddle.	II	1323303
Grebe Cottage, 19, Briantspuddle.	II	1323305
23, Briantspuddle.	II	1323306
Bridge over River Piddle, Briantspuddle.	II	1323321
Well House, Throop.	II	1120517
Outbuilding south of Well House, Throop.	II	1323309
Throop House.	II	1172062
Throop Cottage, 3 and 4, Throop.	II	1120426



Boundary wall north of No 3, Throop.	II	1120427
Glebe House, Throop.	II	1152297
Piper's Cottage, Throop.	II	1323343
3, Affpuddle.	II	1120534
Glebe Cottage, Affpuddle.	II	1171661
River Cottage, Affpuddle.	II	1120535
East Farm House, Affpuddle.	II	1323320
Barn and granary at East Farm 30 metres south east and 50 metres south east of the house respectively.	II	1305497
Old Barn Cottage, Affpuddle.	II	1323316
21, Affpuddle.	II	1120537
Parish Church of St Laurence, Affpuddle.	I	1323317
Twin headstone 22 metres south of east wall of nave of the parish church, Affpuddle.	II	1120538
Headstone 1 metre south of chancel of the parish church, Affpuddle.	II	1120539
Headstone to George Perkins 3 metres south of the porch of the parish church, Affpuddle.	II	1171669
Headstone just over 1 metre south of east wall of nave of the parish church, Affpuddle.	II	1171683
Headstone to Ann wife of Francis Sheppard 11 metres south of south wall of the parish church, Affpuddle.	II	1323319
Second World War Memorial	II	1429845
Boundary wall to parish churchyard, Affpuddle.	II	1120536
The Old Vicarage, Affpuddle.	II	1323318
24, Affpuddle.	II	1120540
Tonerspuddle Farm House.	II	1152307
Barns south-east of Tonerspuddle Farm House.	II	1120428
Dairy House.	II	1152323
Boundary wall to road south of Dairy House.	II	1120429

2 and 3, Turnerspudde.	II	1304837
4 and 5, Turnerspudde.	II	1323345
Former Church of Holy Trinity.	II	1323344

## **Appendix C – Boundary change 2017**

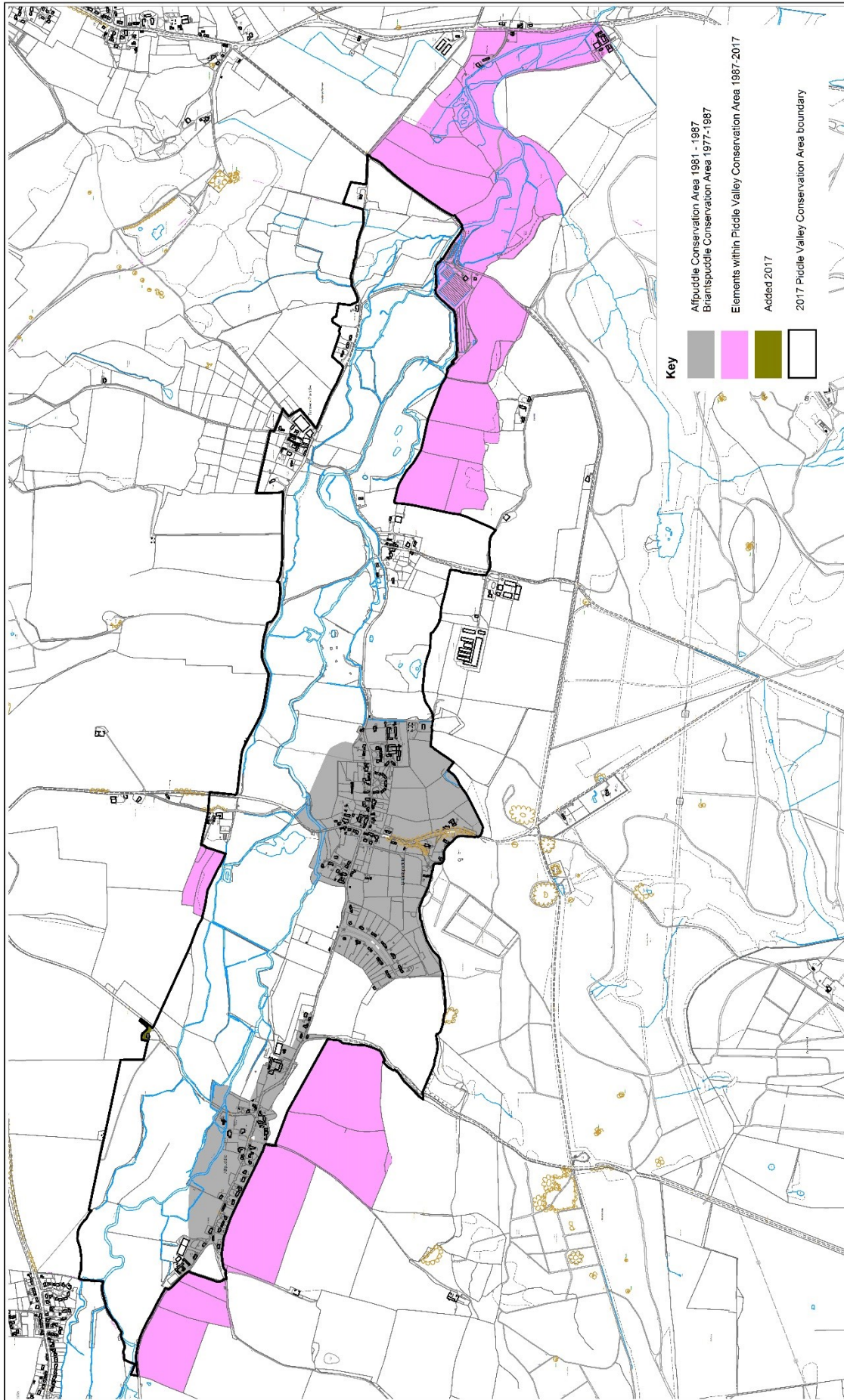
Boundary changes excluded open agricultural land within the setting of the conservation area where no strong case could be made for these spaces forming an integrated component of the four interlinked settlements covered, or the water meadow landscape with which they are immediately intertwined.

Components excluded:

- Land and buildings (Mill Pond Cottages, Chamberlayne's Farm and Nos. 13 and 14 on the Wool-Bere Regis road) to the east of Yearling's Drove. The latter forms a strong eastern edge to the conservation area. Land here does not form part of the settlements otherwise incorporated within the conservation area.
- The watercress farm and fields to the west. The watercress farm is a modern development and the agricultural fields do not form part of the meadows.
- Paddock adjacent to Moor Lane House. This is not an obvious part of the garden of the house, and does not form part of the meadows.
- Fields to the south of property boundaries on the south side of Southover Road. These are components of the broader arable landscape forming the immediate southern setting of Affpuddle.

Components added:

- A piece of the garden curtilage of North Barn otherwise severed by the previous boundary.



**Key**

- Alfpiddle Conservation Area 1981 - 1987
- Briantspuddle Conservation Area 1977-1987
- Elements within Piddle Valley Conservation Area 1987-2017 Added 2017
- 2017 Piddle Valley Conservation Area boundary

Purbeck District Council

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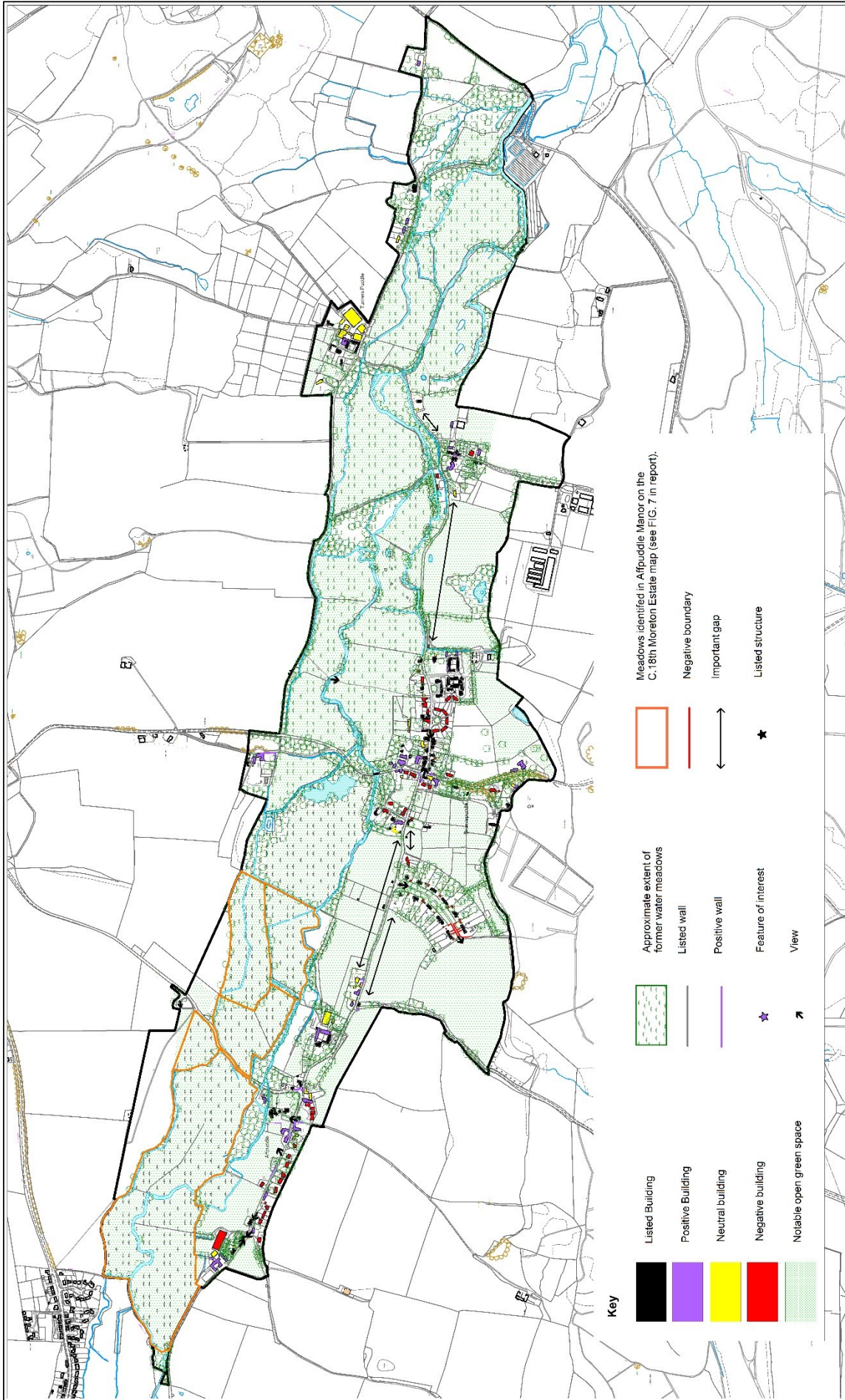
Purbeck  
District Council



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**Map 1: Boundaries**

For Identification Purposes Only



**Key**

	Listed Building		Approximate extent of former water meadows		Meadows identified in Affpuddle Manor on the C.18th Moreton Estate map (see F.G. 7 in report).
	Positive Building		Listed wall		Negative boundary
	Neutral building		Positive wall		Important gap
	Negative building		Feature of interest		Listed structure
	Notable open green space		View		

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**Map 2: Conservation Area Quality**

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