



Viewed here from the raised churchyard, the polite architecture characterised in the classical styling of the Old Rectory is the exception not the rule. Its 'high-status' front isn't part of the street scene, however, which is a great pity since its door case is particularly fine and the weathered appearance of its original, unpainted render most attractive.



While the architectural quality of the Old Rectory isn't repeated, a few other houses in the Area illustrate the more formalised 'polite' designs of the 18th and 19th centuries. Whether original or 'planted' (onto an older fabric) the most pleasing and characterful are those like Maynards which retain their authentic painted timber windows and doors (above). The majority of houses and cottages, however, have a less formal, vernacular, style characterised mainly by 'irregularities' in the arrangement, size and style of their windows. Berries Farm (left) is an example. It examples too a plain, flush ridge to its thatched roof (not an ornamental, block-cut one) which respects local tradition.



Stone boundary walls protecting front garden areas are a common characteristic with so many buildings set back from the highway. Some have qualities that make them particularly special, like the remarkable height of one retaining the grounds of High Walls (right), and the splendid symmetry of the Old Rectory walls that curve to create a convenient refuge in front of the pedestrian gateway. As the photograph taken from the church tower reveals (left) the rounded head of the gateway reflects the design of the house door case.



South Hams District Council

Cornworthy Conservation Area Appraisal

South Hams District Council

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Conservation Areas are special places in the **South Hams** they cover the older parts of our towns and villages which actually look their age, and it's the survival of their **authentic architectural and historic qualities** that makes them so special.

A sense of history as well as identity prevails and by designating Conservation Areas the District Council is sharing its belief that these ought to be **preserved and reinforced**

The policies the District Council follows when assessing the suitability of proposals affecting Conservation Areas are set out in the South Hams Local Plan, while a guidance note called 'New Work in Conservation Areas' explains how to achieve compliance with them. This is essential because the Council has a statutory duty to approve proposals only if they "preserve or enhance the character or appearance" of the Area's features of "special architectural or historic interest".

The purpose of this Appraisal, therefore, is to describe the key features within the Conservation Area at Cornworthy that create its special interest and characterise its most distinctive appearance.



Setting the Scene

Cornworthy is a small rural village about 4 miles south-east of Totnes and approached for much of this distance along narrow lanes that form part of the network serving the west bank of the Dart. It occupies almost the entire lengths of two opposing valleys aligned alongside an east-west ridge to its south. These descend and meet 'head on' before turning north through 90 degrees into another short valley that descends to Bow Creek.



The main body of the village, where the Conservation Area is located, occupies the east of the opposing valleys, viewed here from the one descending from the west. It includes most of the village's historic buildings which cluster first beside the main street as it climbs the valley floor, and then around the church, occupying the more level ground where the valley reaches its watershed



Terraced earthworks and field boundaries suggest this part of the village east of the church, as far as Beers Barn and including the sites of the Church and Cornworthy Court, has great antiquity. Before leaving the village eastwards the main street turns abruptly to avoid the church, but its alignment could well be much more ancient in origin, turning instead to follow the boundary of a large enclosure that extended over the watershed. This mirrors the way Abbey Road skirts the former Priory precinct, and by remaining mostly undeveloped the significance of both open spaces is heightened. It could well be that the 'watershed' enclosure is the site of the once prestigious corn field that gave the village its name.



From the church tower the linear pattern of the village is clear. Within the Conservation Area it is probably based on a medieval planned layout which is best preserved where modern development hasn't encroached the valley sides where some burgage plots remain well defined.



From the ridge road passing above the village along its south side, most of the roofs and their ridges are aligned with the highway, first delineating the junction at Alexandra Place, then rising up the valley floor before turning through 90 degrees to establish the foreground of the church (above). With some justification, perhaps, the 'non-conforming' roofs are those of the chapel buildings, asserting their presence with gables to the street (below)....with the Inn, alongside a narrow lane, doing likewise.



The characteristic pattern of rooflines means street elevations are mostly wide with long straight eaves, although their dominance isn't always obvious due to the wide variation between building lines. More obvious, however, is the rarity of roof dormers which would otherwise interrupt 'the flow'.



The wide variation in building lines means the sides of buildings are often significant in the street scene (than would be the case if the building lines were continuous). Indeed, narrower gabled or hipped ends sometimes gain considerable prominence and emphasise features which aren't necessarily common. The slate cladding on Roslyn is one example. Delightful as it undoubtedly is, especially so with its mammoth-sized slates, its real significance lies not in its prominence but in the relative rarity of its use.



The variation in building lines plays an important role too in creating the visual and spatial characteristics of the street. While mostly narrow or very narrow, the sense of enclosure along its length is articulated through a series of levels depending on how forward one building line is of its neighbour. Tight enclosure (above left) is only ever a transient experience, although the feeling of confinement is ever present with stone boundary walls lining most of the highway not fronted immediately by buildings (above and left).

The Conservation Area

The Conservation Area in Cornworthy was designated by the District Council on the 3rd October 1985. The Map identifies the boundary adopted by the District Council on the 19th of June 2002 based on the up-dated versions of the Ordnance Survey Plans and taking account of the findings of this Appraisal.

The Listed Buildings

Of the 30 Listed Buildings in Cornworthy Parish, which include the Priory Gatehouse to the west of the village and a pair of lime kilns north on Bow Creek, 18 are in the village and of these 13 are within the Conservation Area. The 5 outside are just to the west and include Court Prior Farmhouse (C17 or earlier), its Garden Wall (early to mid C19), Broadgate and Fuschia Cottages (circa 1800) and Park Farmhouse with its Garden Wall and Railings (circa 1700 but extended and remodelled 1830-40). The Church is Grade I and the others Grade II, and while all of them special in their own right, those in the Conservation Area contribute immensely towards its interest and character. The Map identifies each of the list items which, in a few cases, include more than one building or structure.

Other Buildings and Structures of Special Interest

In addition to the historic buildings and structures that are listed, several others are considered to contribute positively towards creating the special interest and character of the Conservation Area. The Map identifies the buildings that have this impact, although some amongst them could have their positive contributions enhanced by the replacement of incongruous features (like aluminium or plastic windows and doors) the reinstatement of lost features and finishes (like chimney stacks, original stone or rendered surfaces and natural slate roofs) or the repair of characterful features before they fail (like historic windows and doors).



Slate is the dominant roofing material, which is locally grey or grey-blue, not dark.



Thatch is a minority cladding for roofs, although the ill-fitting eaves of these 'older than they look' cottages at Alexandra Place suggest the material was formerly much more in evidence.

The structures with a positive impact are so numerous, however, it is practical only to describe what the more significant of them are, including stone boundary and retaining walls, gates, gate piers and entrance steps, cobbled thresholds and a K6 Telephone Kiosk.



These noteworthy gate piers provide tangible reason to believe that the name on the gate does indeed record the former use of the building behind.



The mounting block alongside the church wall



The buttress-like projections on this wall actually frame a rather fine arched gateway, similar to the one at the Old Rectory nearby, and probably associated with it at some time in the past.

- 1 Church of St Peter** Mostly C15 with early C17 porch. Notable for its late C18 and circa 1835 refittings, with other work dating from the late C19. Font is C12 and is all that remains of earlier church building



Although certainly a major landmark, from within the Conservation Area the Church tower largely goes unseen

- 2 Churchyard Walls, Mounting Block, Gates and Gate Posts** W and SW of Church. Gateway (circa mid C19) inserted into wall (C18). Lantern overthrow probably late C19 or C20

- 3 The Old Rectory (including Dinnacombe Lodge)** 1784 by Joseph Rowe of Exeter. Probably built for Rev. Charles Barter who was vicar here for 71 years (1775-1846), the longest tenure of any Devonshire living that is known. Includes large mid C19 service range at rear (now separate house)

- 4 Front Garden Walls and Gateway E of The Old Rectory** Enclosing and retaining walls around large front garden. Curved at front with central arched gateway

- 5 Dymonds** Late C17 remodelled and extended circa 1800. Its neighbour (not listed) was possibly part of an original 3-room farmhouse plan, but turned into a separate house late C19

- 6 Newlands** Late C17 with C20 rear extension. Mid to Late C20 windows, door and porch at front added prior to listing

- 7 Maynards** Early to Mid C19 with 16-pane sashes like at Dymonds

- 8 Berries Farmhouse including Outbuilding adjoining W** Probably C16 or C17 remodelled in late C17 or C18.

- 9 Jaspers including Outbuilding adjoining N and Front Garden Wall to S.** C17 or earlier, extended circa 1700 and remodelled in early C19. First floor sashes are C20 but appear to preserve early C19 16-pane pattern. Wall probably C19 (below)



- 10 Beers Barn** Thatched House circa late C17 or C18 with later additions (below)



Other Features of Special Interest

While buildings and other man-made structures are dominant in creating the special interest and character of the Conservation Area, other features are important too, not least the undeveloped spaces and the trees that comprise and share their setting. On the Map the more significant spaces are identified in such a way as to explain their particular importance.

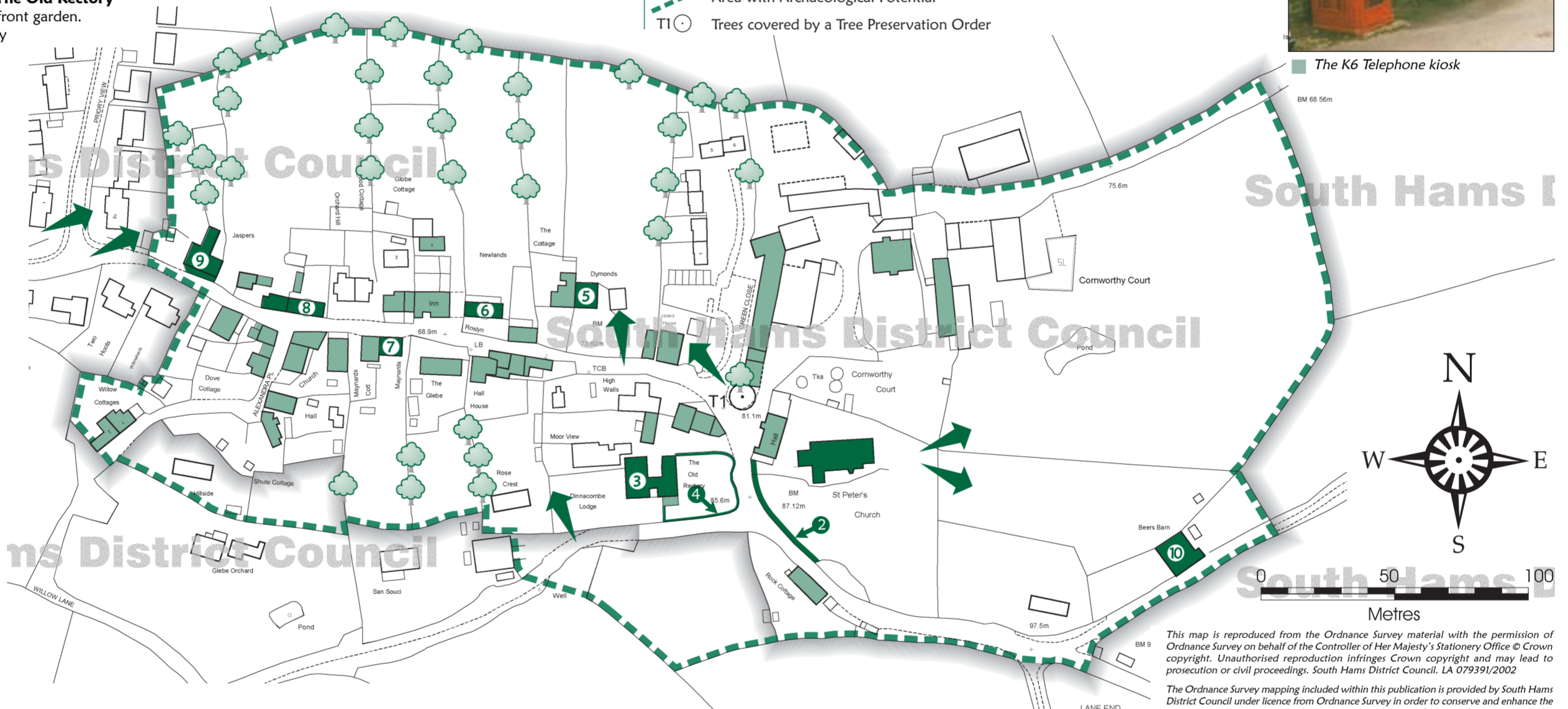


The pattern of the surviving 'burgage plot', fields on the north side of the village probably date from the late 12th or 13th Century.



While the wall bounding the churchyard tends to divorce Beers Barn from the village, along with the open ground between (above), the relationship they have with the settlement's origins and historic development appears special indeed. Surprisingly, when viewed from Abbey Road, Beers Barn looks very much part of the village scene, appearing to be sited beneath the church tower (see first photo).

- Key**
- Conservation Area Boundary
 - or Listed Buildings
 - Other buildings with a Positive impact
 - views in which the undeveloped spaces characterise an important aspect of Cornworthy's historic development pattern and its relationship with its landscape setting
 - Important individual or groups of trees (diagrammatic)
 - Area with Archaeological Potential
 - T1 Trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order



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As far as trees are concerned, these play an exceptional role in enhancing the landscape setting of the Conservation Area by occupying the higher valley slopes to emphasise their 'enclosing' form. To the north the trees have grown up to characterise the ancient burgage plot layout, while on the south side, planting is much more generous, occupying the large gardens that characterise the slope as well as the more ancient hedgerows. By contrast, the east and west ends of the village comprise open farmland associated with the farmsteads located there.



Along the village streets trees tend to contribute generally towards visual amenities, enhancing particular views and spaces by providing an occasional backdrop (above) or soft edge to the built scene. On account of their siting at significant locations, however, certain trees make a particularly valuable contribution towards the Area's character and appearance, including the english oak outside the entrance to Cornworthy Court and the weeping birch (Tirstis) within the front garden area of Dymonds. The Map shows where the more significant trees or tree groups mentioned here are located.

Cautionary Note

The formal designation of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders and Scheduled Ancient Monuments is a continuous process so if you need to be certain that the designations shown on the Map are still correct, please check with the Environment and Development Services Group at the District Council.



Only a handful of historic buildings reveal the use of brick, mainly as a window, door or corner dressing (above right). Slate as a wall cladding is rare too, although the prominence of the elevations so treated create a different impression (above left)



While thin-bedded stone is the dominant walling material, bringing much harmony to the street scene (above), a great many houses and cottages in the Area are colour washed, either directly onto the stone to preserve its undulating, rustic charm, or over a render coat to present what many an 18th or 19th century owner thought a more dignified and 'proper' appearance (see Jaspers, far left).

Areas with Archaeological Potential

The antiquity and continuity of Cornworthy's occupation as a settlement is an aspect of its special interest. This is partially represented in its standing buildings, partly through the dateable features they possess, but more so, perhaps, through their alignment and arrangement and the pattern of the sites they occupy. The Map identifies the parts of the village where these features are particularly noteworthy and where also the below-ground archaeology has the greatest potential for recording the earlier phases of Cornworthy's development