

Strete Conservation Area Appraisal



Conservation Areas are usually located in the older parts of our towns and villages. They are places whose surviving historic, architectural and locally distinctive features make them special. Conservation area designation highlights the need to preserve and reinforce these qualities.

The policies followed by the District Council when assessing proposals affecting conservation areas are set out in the South Hams Local Plan, while the Supplementary planning document '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 conservation area.

The purpose of this appraisal is to set out what makes the Strete Conservation Area special, what needs to be conserved and what needs to be improved.



Summary of Special Interest

Strete is situated on the A379 which passes through some of the most impressive coastal scenery in South Devon. Both approaches to the village reveal broad expanses of magnificent Devon coastline. The



Southern approach to Strete

village is small, but with some surprisingly substantial buildings in the village centre, some with robust architectural detail.

Strete was a rural village with three large farming units employing significant numbers of people. Strete still feels like a rural village and is fortunate to have fields that come right up to join the conservation area boundary, so that some residents feel that they live in the country.

The original houses and cottages were built with materials available locally - much has survived and is visible today. These buildings have great individuality with varied fenestration, roof lines and entrances, despite often being part of a row or terrace. A later phase of development gave the village a nucleus of polite rural architecture. The village has no pavements or yellow lines. As most houses are built front-on to the road, an intimate atmosphere has been created, broken occasionally by distant views visible down a driveway or at either end of the village.

Walls within Strete provide many pleasing garden boundaries which are in complete sympathy with buildings in the village. Local rubble has also been used extensively as a walling material in many areas adjoining the conservation area; these act as a most attractive link between the village and surrounding countryside.

Twenty first century Strete is adapting surprisingly well to some of the pressures created as the South Hams becomes more and more popular. The village still retains a rural atmosphere and the farming outbuildings that have been converted to residential use retain some of their integrity with the past.

Manor Farm barn conversion



Looking up Church Hill



Coastline view from Strete



© Blackawton with Strete History Group

North east approach to village

Location and Setting

Strete was designated a conservation area in October 1985. The village is 8 kms south west of Dartmouth (Ref: SX84104685). The population is 500. The village lies in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is almost entirely surrounded by a Coastal Preservation Area.

From an elevated position 120m above sea level, the village overlooks Start Bay and rolling Devon countryside. To the east and west the land falls away into river valleys and a south westerly incline towards the coast provides dramatic views of the coastline and sea.

The degree of tranquillity in the village is greatly affected by the A379 which winds through the centre and becomes extremely busy in the summer. However, during quiet periods, Strete immediately reverts to being a small rural village, well catered for by a good Post Office/shop and public house.

Some modern development has taken place to the north and west but this is not very obtrusive from the conservation area. Strete is fortunate in having fields near the centre of the village which have become a green centre for the village - these are much loved by the residents.



Modern map of Strete



Fields next to Conservation Area

Historic Development and Townscape

Linear development gradually took place either side of an ancient trackway linking Dartmouth to villages along the south coast. Strete also lies at the terminus of a long drove-road from Dartmoor to Strete and the junction of these two roads was one reason the village developed.

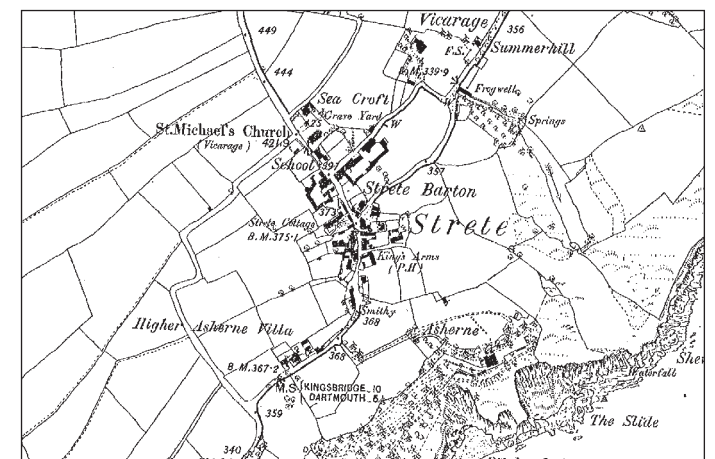
By the seventeenth century, several farms were established in Strete. It was unusual to have three large farmhouses all with extensive outbuildings, sited in the village. They had an enormous effect on employment, facilities that became available and the general progression of Strete. Further development took place in the C19 when a school, church and public house were built. Comparison with a modern map and the OS 1880s map shows that within the conservation area little has changed. However outside the village centre to the north and north-west, expansion has occurred.

The evacuation of Strete in 1943 had an unintentional long term social effect. Residents were given six weeks to pack up and find alternative accommodation for at least six months. Some residents never returned to the village as they came to prefer their new location. The result was that a large influx of new people, often from large towns, became new residents who brought different ways to an agricultural settlement.

Today Strete is a quiet South Hams village that still feels rural.



Centre of Strete



OS 1880's map

The Listed Buildings

There are seven grade II Listed Buildings in Strete.

The Church of St. Michael (1) (1836 by T. Lidstone) Built as a Chapel of Ease. Strete fell within Blackawton parish until 1882.

Manor Farm (The Longhouse) (2) was one of the three mixed farmsteads that existed in the village until they were converted to residential dwellings after World War Two. **Glen Cottage (3)** is a good example of the cob, stone and thatch houses that were originally built in the village.

The Kings Arms (4) forms an important part of the village centre and the listing includes adjoining Clifton House. Behind the Methodist Chapel, **Rose Cottage and Stores (5)**

add interest to the garden of the Kings Arms and the conservation area generally. The building is probably C17.

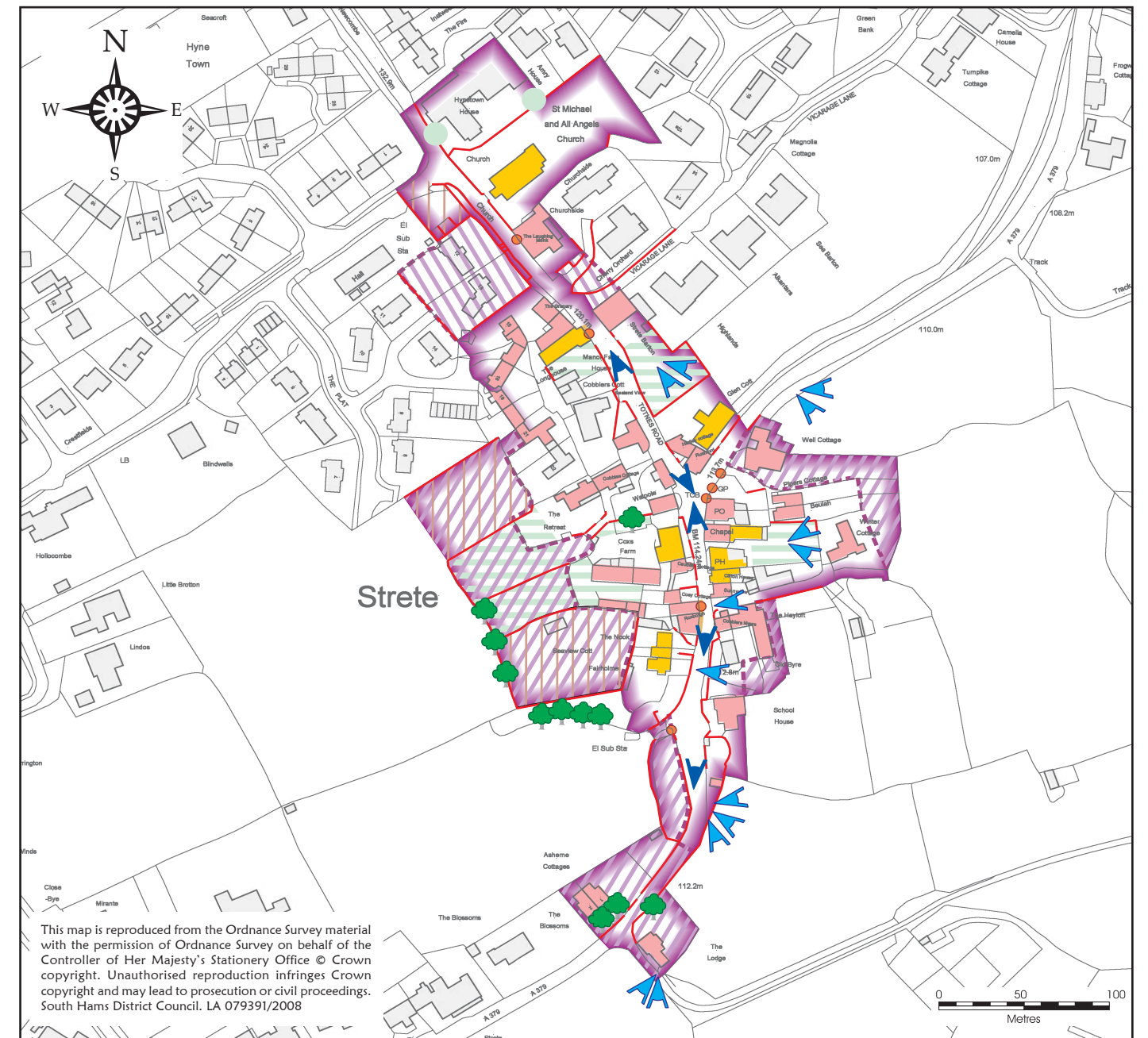
Sea View and The Nook (6) were originally one house built in the C16 to a three room and cross-passage plan. Fairholme was added late C17 but forms part of the



listing. Overall construction is mixed, but basically stone, cob and thatch were used.

Cox's Farm (7) circa early C19 was the main house for one of the three farms that had such an impact on the formation and development of the village.

Key Conservation Components Map - Strete



KEY			
	Conservation Area Boundary and Area of Archaeological Potential		TPO - Tree Preservation Order(s) (general location)
	Extension to Conservation Area Boundary		Other Important individual or groups of trees (diagrammatic)
	Deletion to Conservation Area Boundary		Important garden areas
	Listed Buildings		Distant Views
	Walls with a positive impact on the conservation area		Close Views
	Important Open Space characterised by lack of development within it		
	Historic street furniture		
	Historic street surface		

Community Involvement

This appraisal has been produced with the involvement of the community from the earliest stages. Views were sought from the households of the village and the local children who attend the Primary School at Stoke Fleming. Once the draft appraisal was complete, residents were invited to comment at a public exhibition. Many of the findings are shown in the Management Plan that accompanies this appraisal.

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.

Areas with Archaeological Potential

The archaeological background set out below is based on information currently held in Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record to date. This knowledge is likely to evolve and be revised over time.

Prehistoric and Roman Strete

There is no recorded evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity within or in the vicinity of the Strete Conservation Area. The nearest archaeological evidence from this period is a prehistoric double-ditched rectilinear enclosure located approximately 2km to the north of the village.

Medieval Strete

The name Street, changed to Strete in 1870, is recorded in 1244. This may be as the village is located on a main road or an ancient trackway. This might be a trackway that ran parallel to the coast from Start Point to Dartmouth, called Green Street or Green Straight (the placename of Greenstraight still exists on Modern OS maps south of Beesands). Strete also lies at the terminus of a long drove-road from Dar Moor to Strete.

Post Medieval and Modern Strete

As well as 17th, 18th and 19th century houses of historic interest, there are a number of structures associated with 20th century defences from the Second World War. These include a Home Defence Unit listening post, a Light

Anti-Aircraft Battery located near the coast and a Royal Observer Corps Post located to the west of the village. These are also archaeologically important sites.

Sites with Statutory Protection

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Conservation area, or even within the parish of Strete.

Historic Landscape

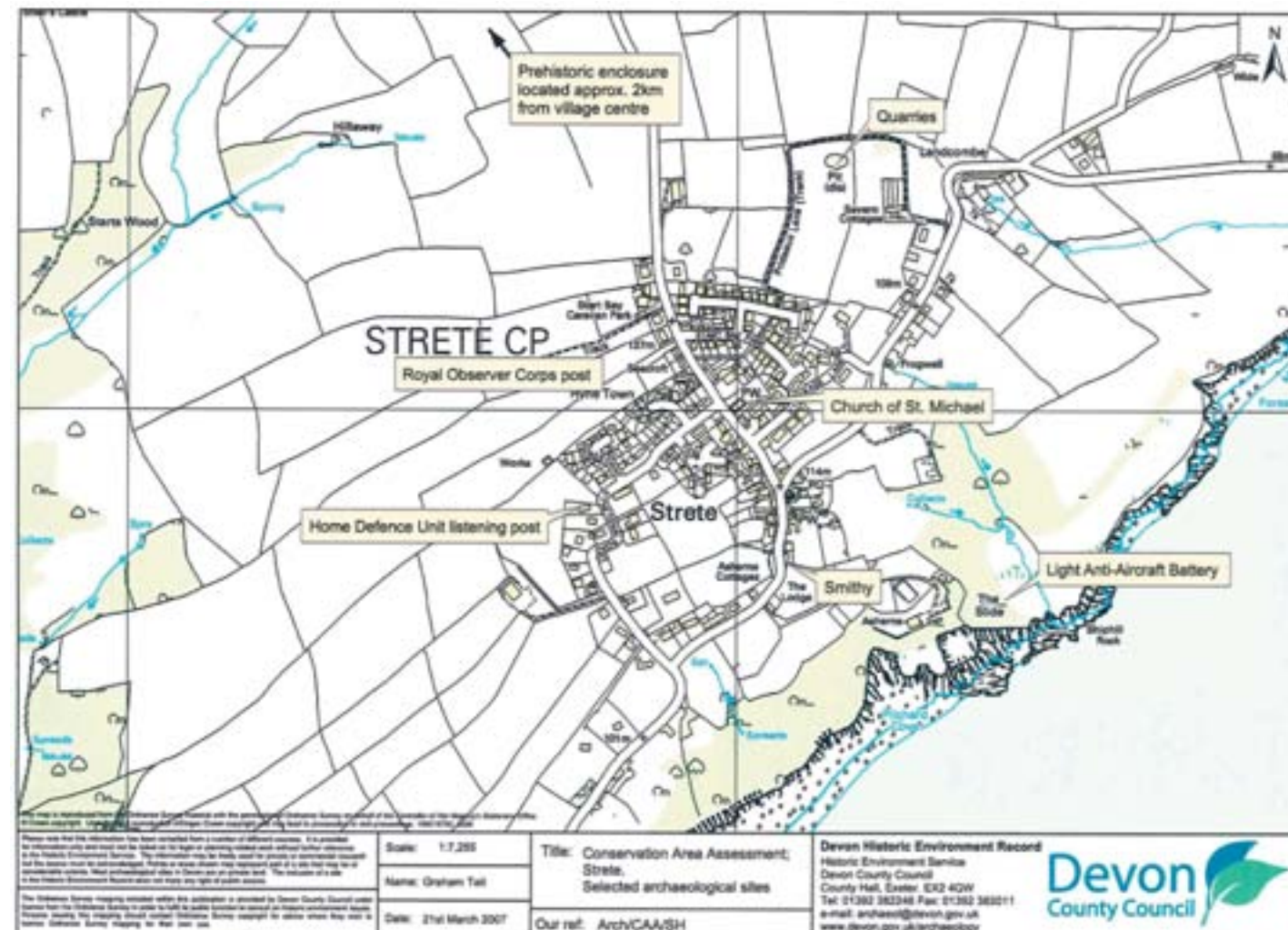
Most of the area around Strete, especially to the west and north (away from the sea) are 'Barton Fields'; large, regular enclosures likely to have been laid out between the 15th century and the 18th century. Some curving field boundaries may be following earlier divisions in the pre-existing medieval fields, especially to the west of the village. Towards the coast, evidence of medieval and post-medieval enclosure exists.

Planning Implications

Any development within or adjacent to the historic core of Strete will be subject to either predetermination archaeological investigation, or PPG16 planning condition. The level of archaeological mitigation will depend upon the nature, extent and location of the development as well as previous disturbance to the site.

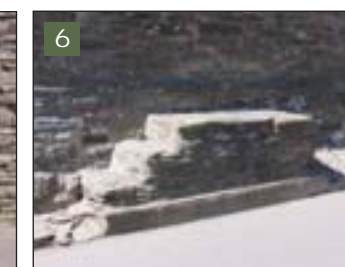
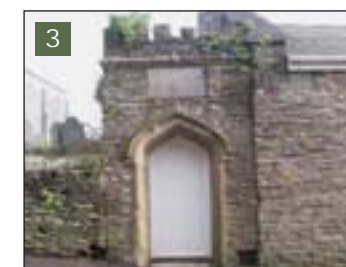
The above represents an appraisal of the current Historic Environment Records as of the date below and does not include a definite consideration of the listed buildings within this area.

Historic Environment Service, Devon County Council, 21 March 2007.



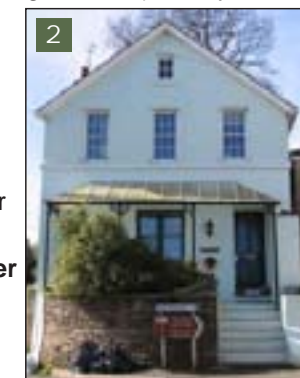
Other Buildings and Structures of Special Interest

There are several buildings and structures that are unlisted but which make a contribution to the character of the conservation area.



Strete Barton (1) is a C16 farmhouse that was a working farm until World War Two. The outbuildings along Vicarage Lane were demolished in the 1970s and no photographic record has been found. **Walpole House (2)** is prominent at the Dartmouth-Totnes junction and apart from UPVC windows on the first floor, has retained its original proportions and a fine ornate metal and glass porch. **The Village School (3)** was built in 1838 and closed in 1965 - several former pupils still live in the village. Roxburgh House (formally called Normanhurst) was the Post Office in the latter part of C19; **The Chapel (4)** is prominent in the village centre and has still a religious use today.

The village also has many other interesting features such as original iron gates, **boot-scraper (5)**, and a **mounting block (6)**, which are often enhanced by being in, or near a stone wall.



Trees

There are only two Tree Preservation Orders in the Conservation Area and both are in the garden of Hynetown House. One unlisted tree (*Quercus cerris*) is very prominent from many angles in the village. This Turkey Oak has been marked on the main component map and is near Cox's Farm Barn. Conservation Area status affords some protection to trees and additional forms of protection are discussed in the the Management Plan.



Left: Prominent tree at Strete



Former Activities and Current Uses

Fishing was an important source of sustenance for Strete. Cellar settlements are recorded nearby and history refers to a "huer's" rallying call for villagers to man the seine boats at Strete Sands and catch fish that had been sighted. Fishing carried on for hundreds of years and a boat was still in use in the 1950's.

Farming was the main occupation in the village. Three big farms required large numbers of people to fill labour intensive jobs. Most workers lived locally and supported the facilities that existed in the village. Before the second world war, in addition to a butcher and two bakers, there were

Converted barns at Manor Farm



also two other shops, a cobbler and several carpenters. Today there is a Post Office/shop and public house.

Strete has residents who commute to nearby large towns. There are also many retired residents and some second home owners. There is little employment but the local public house and restaurant do attract visitors and the village still feels rural.

Building Qualities and Material

The building stock is divided into two groups: polite rural and rural vernacular. Most buildings in both groups are constructed with the local slate-stone which was available and so distinctive. Its brown-grey colour and coarse texture reflect the geology and agricultural character of the surrounding area.

Although many of the cottages and houses within the rural vernacular group are often part of a row or terrace, they show great individuality. Fenestration is varied with entrances either onto the road, or slightly set back with steps up to a main door. Painted rubble is common, as are small framed wooden casement windows, although many have been replaced with UPVC glazing. Roofs are mostly of slate with turnerisation occurring on some properties. Most unusually for Devon, water reed for thatching was available at nearby Slapton Ley; there are still some thatched properties in the village (1), with evidence of more in the past. Cob was used throughout the village but mostly is combined with stone at lower levels.

Some buildings in the polite architectural core of the village have rendered walls with a string course at floor



Areas with Potential for Improvement

Many properties have replaced traditional wooden windows with unsuitable UPVC fenestration. The cumulative effect detracts from the character of the conservation area and further erosion should be discouraged. Some repairs and maintenance have also been carried out in an unsympathetic way showing no respect for the building vernacular. Residents have criticised the introduction of recent utilitarian street furniture at bus stops, and generally within the village. The introduction of an Article 4.2 direction could stop some unsuitable alterations and this is discussed in the Management Plan which accompanies this appraisal.

Many South Hams villages have introduced double yellow lines in an attempt to stop thoughtless parking, but these have been resisted at Strete. Car parking provision is inadequate at Strete and any additional facility will have to be carefully considered.

The Parish Council has contributed towards retaining the rural character that still exists at Strete and they continue to monitor many aspects that have a direct bearing on the character of the conservation area.

levels and some rustication on the ground floor. Although this section of the village is small, the buildings are substantial and therefore have considerable impact (2).

Local pebbles were also used to create a sloping plinth in an attractive and effective way to shed excess water from the base of buildings (3). This adds interest to the conservation area generally, although cumulative highway resurfacing has halved the width of this feature in several places.



Distinctive local slate hanging



© Blackawton with Strete History Group

Cutting water reed at Slapton Ley



Polite rural architecture



UPVC windows



Bus Shelter



Recent stone wall



Bus stop at Pump



Inclusion in the Conservation Area will be considered