

CONSERVATION AREAS IN EAST DORSET

WEST PARLEY



Foreword

This document is based upon work carried out in 1998 to define the special qualities of the Conservation Area that was subsequently published as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the East Dorset Local Plan (see paragraphs 6.118 to 6.131 and accompanying policies BUCON 1 to 4 of the East Dorset Local Plan adopted 11 January 2002).

The text and illustrations of the original publication have been revised and updated to reflect any significant changes that have taken place in that time since the original survey and appraisal of the area were undertaken.

The appraisal provides guidance to those elements and characteristics that should be taken into account when considering proposed developments and other works requiring consent. The information contained in the appraisal will be treated as a material consideration by the Local Planning Authority when considering planning applications.

The revision does not extend to reviewing the boundaries of the designated area. This work will be undertaken between 2006 and 2010 in parallel with the Local Development Framework process, as currently programmed.

The maps used in the document are based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping currently available to the Council.

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Introduction

The hamlet was founded near an important, ancient crossing point of the Stour on the southern edge of a large tract of heathland that extended northwards as far as Alderholt.

The name Parley derives from the Saxon 'Pirige-Leah' ('Perlai') or 'Pear Tree Fields'. Domesday Book suggests a substantially larger settlement than that which exists today.

The quiet character, bucolic setting and historical associations of this small part of West Parley form a significant contrast to the post-war developments at Parley Cross and Ferndown to the north-west and Bournemouth to the south and provides an insight into the character of the wider area prior to the rapid changes of the last 60 years.



Setting and Scope

To the north of the conservation area, on the west side of Church Lane, is a ribbon of mainly post war dwellings which ends just before Brambles Farm. Further to the west, behind these houses and bungalows, is farmland which provides a wedge of open land between Church Lane and the ribbon development along New Road. To the east of the Lane, flat farmland stretches to Parley Court and beyond.

West Parley village represents the smallest conservation area in the District, comprising a handful of buildings at the southern end of Church Lane, and one of the most recent to be designated, in 1991. The conservation area boundary includes the curtilages of All Saints Church, The Old Rectory and Mead Cottage to the north.

Immediately to the south and south-west of the hamlet are water-meadows extending to some

two and a half hectares (6 acres) in area before reaching the riverbank. The influence of the river on the settlement is perhaps less significant now than in earlier times. However, the meadows still form an important part of the setting and for this reason they have been included within the conservation area. Views from the settlement across the water meadows towards the river can be obtained from the end of the lane, between the Old Rectory and Appletree Cottage.

Approaches

The only vehicular access is Church Lane, a narrow lane that joins Christchurch Road 1.2km (three-quarters of a mile) to the north. The lane becomes progressively more rural with soft verges and hedges as it approaches the hamlet.



At its southern end the lane stops abruptly at the gateway to The Cottage, but an unmetalled track, which is also a public right of way (Footpath No.15), leads off in an easterly direction alongside the river. The pathway then continues to the boundary with Christchurch Borough, possibly coinciding with an historical route.



A track forming the south-east edge to the Old Rectory garden continues the line of the lane towards the river. This terminates at the course of the brook where the enclosure of village meets the open flat valley landscape.



Inside the Church are a 12th century font, a Jacobean two-decked pulpit and an 18th century sounding board.



Buildings

The Church, The Old Rectory and Church Farmhouse form an attractive group of buildings comprising the heart of the conservation area. All Saints Church stands at the closest point to the river at the south-eastern side of the conservation area.



It is thought that the present Church, which dates from the 12th century, replaced an earlier Saxon building on the same site. Its chancel is 14th century and north porch 15th century. The structure is built of heathstone rubble, partly rendered with ashlar dressings and roofed with clay tiles and stone slates. Above stands a distinctive white boarded bell-tower. The diminutive building is Listed, Grade II* and described in detail in the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments Dorset Volume 5.

Outside, set behind a grill in a niche within the east wall, is an urn, believed to be 14th century, which is said to have held the heart of the Lady of Lydlinch, a former lady of the manor who, upon her marriage, was compelled to leave the Parley area for Lydlinch, near Sherborne. When she died, her wish to have her heart buried in the grounds of the church was carried out. The urn was discovered in 1895 when the works to enlarge the chancel were commenced

In the Church grounds stands a sundial, the post of which formed part of the gibbet which stood at Gibbet Firs on Parley Common to the north. The churchyard also contains a small group of ornate and well-preserved early 18th century gravestones, near the south-west corner of the Church.



Church Farmhouse stands between the Church and the Old Rectory, overlooking a tiny triangular green. The late 18th century five-bay two-storey house has attics lit by small dormers. It is built of similar warm orange/red brickwork as the Rectory boundary wall, under a tiled roof. The south-west front is symmetrical with segmental headed casement windows and central entrance porch. The farmhouse is enclosed on the south and west sides by similar old brick walling.



The Old Rectory is an elegant two-storey late Georgian house. The substantial building has stuccoed walls and a hipped, low pitched, slate roof. The well-proportioned east front has symmetrical sash windows with fine glazing bars. The main entrance is marked by a plain classical porch. The building stands in extensive mature grounds and is Listed, Grade II.

To the north-east of the farmhouse stands a group of mostly traditional brick and slate barns enclosing a concrete yard. These have been converted to holiday accommodation. Beyond this group, excluded from the conservation area, is an assortment of modern farm structures.



They are enclosed along the Church Lane frontage by a long brick wall of mellow orange/red. The garden is entered via a formal entrance in front of the house, flanked by coursed rendered pillars. At the time of survey the timber gate was missing from its hinges.

To the north of the hamlet, marking the northernmost edge of the conservation area is Mead Cottage and an adjoining paddock. The 19th century traditional two-storey house has been whitewashed, altered and extended but has retained its slate roof. The building is well screened from the lane by an established boundary hedge.



Between Mead Cottage and the Old Rectory facing Church Lane is a small fenced compound containing a pumping station. The original brick and tile-roofed building has been supplemented with a large, green-painted metal container set on a concrete plinth. It is fortunate that the container is largely screened by planting, albeit deciduous species.



Facing opposite Church Farmhouse stand two 1960's detached houses set within gardens. Neither Appletree Cottage or The Cottage has the character or charm of the older buildings, but their modest size and relaxed character, augmented by planting, reinforce the sense of place.



Boundary walls

Old brick walling in front of the Old Rectory and Church Farmhouse is a defining feature of the conservation area. They mark the centre of the hamlet, giving the lane a refined character that complements the principal buildings. The brick wall in front of Appletree Cottage, contemporary with the house, helps to unify the building group.



The Church farm complex of buildings is screened by a conspicuous and unsightly wooden panel fence on top of a grass bank adjacent to the lane. Adjacent is a high concrete block wall, which is also out of keeping with the quality of other walls in the hamlet.



Trees and hedges

The Old Rectory Garden contains many outstanding trees. Those located near Church Lane make a very significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. These include a massive Monterey Pine together with an evergreen oak, yews, limes and beech. In addition, big under-storey yews and laurel add depth.



Roadside hedges extend into the conservation area, creating a soft, green environment as well as a strong sense of enclosure. Some are deciduous, others are evergreen and many are also supplemented by garden plantings, which help to screen the buildings from the lane.

Cherry trees have recently been planted on the tiny village green, adding to the leafy character of the space.

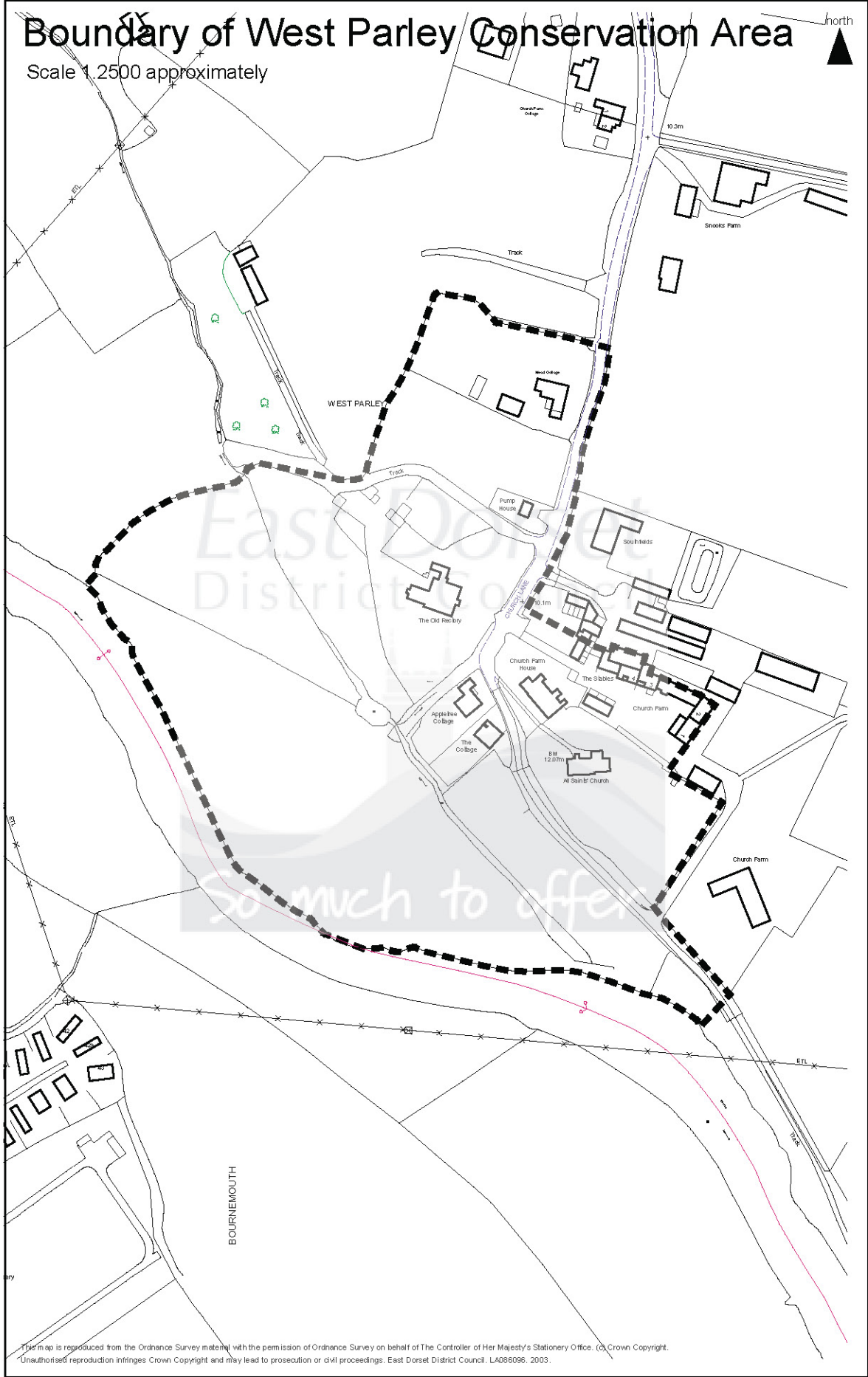


In the churchyard are a number of Irish and English yew, beech and horse chestnut. An avenue of clipped yews makes a formal entrance to the Church.



Boundary of West Parley Conservation Area

Scale 1:2500 approximately



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Planning Policy in Conservation Areas

East Dorset has many attractive villages of special architectural or historic interest.

In order to protect their character and appearance, the best of these, including the historic centre of Wimborne Minster, have been designated as Conservation Areas by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Under this legislation additional planning controls are exercised by the Council within designated Conservation Areas in order to preserve and enhance those aspects of character and appearance that define an area's special character.

These include controls over the demolition of most unlisted buildings. An application for Conservation Area Consent is needed for the demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area.

The Council encourage the retention of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Any proposals which involve demolition of existing buildings will be carefully assessed for their impact upon the character of the area. The local planning authority will also need full details about what is proposed for the site after demolition.

Certain types of development, which elsewhere are normally classified as permitted development (such as the insertion of dormer windows in roof slopes, the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway) will require planning permission.

Guidance and application forms can be obtained from the Planning and Building Control Division.

Trees

Trees are an invaluable visual asset to the character and setting of many Conservation Areas.

Trees in Conservation Areas may already be protected by a Tree Preservation Order and the Courts can impose heavy fines for unauthorised felling or lopping.

In addition to these controls, and in recognition of the contribution that trees can make to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area special provisions apply to the lopping or felling of other trees which are not otherwise protected. Anyone wishing to fell or lop such trees needs to notify the Council in writing six weeks before carrying out any work.

Householders are also encouraged to seek advice from the Department on the management of their trees. By taking the correct action now mature trees can be made safer and their lives extended.

New Development

When contemplating alterations to existing buildings or the construction of new buildings within a Conservation Area it is advisable to obtain the views of your local Planning Officer at an early stage. The Department is glad to help and the advice is totally impartial and free of charge.

When considering applications for new development, the Council as Local Planning Authority takes particular care to ensure that it fits in satisfactorily with the established character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Positioning, massing, design and choice of materials are of particular importance, as well as the visual impact of 'building over' an area of hitherto open land.

The special character of these areas stem not only from the age, disposition and architectural interest of the buildings, but also from the treatment of the spaces in between.

The presence of gardens, paddocks, soft verges, hedges and old boundary walls contribute greatly to the individual sense of place.

Applications for new development must demonstrate that the proposal will harmonise with the Conservation Area i.e. that it will preserve or enhance its character. Potential applicants are strongly advised to seek proper professional advice.

Therefore when considering such applications the local planning authority will pay particular attention to the following elements of the design:

1. the positioning of the building and its relationship with adjoining buildings, existing trees or other features;

2. the proposed building materials, particularly the walls and roof, and their suitability to the area and in relation to neighbouring buildings;
3. the proportions, mass and scale of the proposal and their relationship with the area in general and adjoining buildings in particular.
4. whether the proposed development might adversely affect existing trees, hedges or other natural features of the site.

In some cases it may be necessary to reproduce an historic style of architecture in order to match existing buildings. Generally, however, the Council encourages new construction to be designed in a modern idiom provided the criteria listed above are applied. Poor copies or imitations of architectural styles detract from the genuine older buildings and are normally discouraged.

Full details of any proposed development must be submitted, showing existing site conditions with the proposals clearly marked. Details of the elevational treatment, including windows and doors, will normally be required. In many instances the planning authority will expect details of hard and soft landscaping including a specification of all the proposed materials.

Conservation Area analysis

The District Council has carried out and published detailed studies of the Conservation Areas to identify those elements which contribute towards the unique character of each area. Any proposal which has an adverse effect on these features will not be permitted. Proposals that can be seen to enhance the Conservation Area will be encouraged.

Grants

Grants may be available from the District Council towards the alleviation of eyesores, or measures that improve the street scene, such as tree-planting, hedging or other boundary treatments. Grants or loans may also be available towards the repair of Listed Buildings, particularly where such repairs make an impact on the Conservation Area.

Design and Conservation Services in East Dorset

Conserving the best features of our environment, our historic towns, villages and countryside, is one of the most important of our planning functions.

Historic Buildings

Our buildings are a record of our architectural and social history. As a society, we hold them in trust for future generations to cherish and enjoy. Investment in our architectural heritage assists local and regional social and economic development

The supply of buildings of the eighteenth century and earlier is finite; once demolished they are lost forever. Others suffer almost the same fate from alterations made without regard to their original design and character.

Historic buildings require special care if their character, which relies upon traditional building materials and practices peculiar to each region, is not to be spoilt by insensitive alterations or inappropriate methods of repair.

Owners of Listed Buildings contemplating altering or extending their building are advised to obtain Guidance Notes obtainable free from the Department.

An important function of the Design and Conservation Section is to advise owners of historic buildings and assist in achieving solutions which preserves their intrinsic interest.

The Section can help seek out the right materials for the job and advise on the correct method of repair.

It can also provide advice on both the law relating to listed buildings and sources of financial assistance.

Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are groups of buildings, villages or areas of towns having special architectural and townscape interest, the character of which should be preserved and enhanced.

East Dorset has 17 Conservation Areas, which range in size and nature from small villages such as Almer to the historic town centre of Wimborne Minster.

The siting, design and materials of new development, or alterations to existing buildings, are scrutinised by the Department to ensure that the character of such areas are protected.

Since 1980 the Council has invested in a programme of environmental improvements within the centre of Wimborne Minster. The effect of these measures has been to create an attractive place for residents and visitors to shop and to enjoy.

Designated Conservation Areas in East Dorset



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Advice

For advice on any aspect of the Council's building conservation work, the availability of financial assistance or to discuss your individual building, please contact our Design and Conservation Leader Ray Bird, or his assistant Alan Turner on 01202 886201 or e-mail: planning@eastdorset.gov.uk.