

'SNAPSHOT' CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

WHAT AND WHY?

One of the most regular criticisms of new developments is that their designs have nothing to do with, even damage, the character of the town or village in which they take place.

This happens mainly because house-builders often propose standard off the shelf "products" and local authority planning officers do not have the time to undertake detailed assessments of every single town or village to produce the type of strong information that can stop 'anywhere design' in its tracks. Not just that but, even if they did have the time, it is **you** – the people who live in those towns and villages – who know the distinctive local character best and are best placed to analyse and describe it.

That is what this **Character Assessment Toolkit** is about – starting you on your way to producing the sort of detailed local information that can stop the worst and help to produce the best, ie. designs that are based on a proper understanding of what makes your place special and distinctive, and how that can be enhanced through new buildings. This is necessary in small villages where no significant development is anticipated (the RA3 villages) because small projects, infill and alterations will still happen and can have a damaging effect, perhaps more so on a very small settlement. It is also just as necessary where larger developments are likely because of the tendency for their designers to try to create a new character rather than complement what is there. So, whether you are in a RA 1, RA 2 or RA3 settlement, this is for you.

And we say 'starting (and use the title 'snapshot') because the nature of information that is required to go into the Placemaking Plan does not need to be in any way as detailed as what would go into a thorough assessment. **So, to 'start', please use this toolkit to feed back to the B&NES planning team your results from using this toolkit, at the time they need it, to help them to take forward the Placemaking Plan.**

But you need not stop there, and we would encourage you not to stop there. Many communities around the country have produced full assessments, often in the form of Village (or Town) Design Statements. These have been shown to have a considerable and positive influence on design standards so they would be extremely valuable to **support the Placemaking Plan's Development Management policies**. Several communities in the B&NES area have in fact already produced Village Design Statements. Some of these and some guidance to help you move on from what is in this 'snapshot' toolkit will soon be on the website – but not too soon because we want you to focus for now on this 'snapshot' material!

Now see below and over for a summary of the various stages, tasks and forms

HOW?

- There are 3 stages to completing a Character Assessment of your parish area.
- All the forms and notes mentioned follow later. Any necessary maps will be provided through or by B&NES.
- B&NES will also be producing a worksheet for communities on broader Green Infrastructure issues; an important complement to mainly visual character issues.

STAGE 1 – ‘Desk Work’

- This involves:
 - A. Looking through some **Background Material** about the parish, town, village as a whole.
 - B. Defining some possible (and very practical) **Settlement and Landscape Character Areas** for your town/village and its landscape .
 - C. Having a first stab (before going out) at filling in the **Settlement and Landscape Proformas** (or survey sheets) for Stage 2 below.
- The **Desk Work Guidance Sheet** (pages 3 and 4) describes all this more fully.

STAGE 2 – Field Work

- There is a **Settlement Proforma** (page 5 to 8) and a **Landscape Proforma** (pages 9 to 12) to use for the field work.
- Once what we anticipate to be a small group has finished the desk work for a particular Character Area and had a first stab at filling in a proforma or two, it is then essential to go out and about to check and elaborate, perhaps amend, what the group noted.
- Going out is crucial, even if people think they know the area well!
- You may not need them – the forms are largely self-explanatory – but there is a **Settlement Guidance Note** and a **Landscape Guidance Note** to help you. They are on pages 13 and 14. (They are deliberately very similar.)

STAGE 3 - Summary

- When you have completed all the surveys, reconvene the Working Group.
- Share round all of the material – background material, character area maps and surveys – and put together a **Snapshot Character Summary**.
- There is a **Summarising Guidance Note** to help you (see page 13) and a **Worked Example** (starting on page 16) showing roughly what a Summary might look like.

Once this is all completed, the only thing to send to B&NES is the Snapshot Character Summary, but keep all the basic results – this is your ‘evidence’.

DESK WORK GUIDANCE SHEET

- *Tasks A and B are for all of a 'Character Working Group' (we suggest 4-6 people) together in a room.*
- *Task C would be done by each separate Character Area survey group before they go out.*

A. Background Material

- Much of this parish-specific information will be available through Parish Online.
- There may also be other local sources that you are aware of: a history of the development of the village/town or any previous studies such as a Parish/Town plan, Design Statement, wildlife survey, footpath study etc.
- Information drawn from this material will inform your survey work and especially the final Snapshot Character Summary.
- Keep this review stage short; the aim is to provide the basis for you to capture pre-existing local level knowledge, understanding and values.
- Finish by drafting a short interim summary that captures in a few sentences the key points from each information source.

B. Defining Character Areas

Settlement (village or town)

- Start with a good sized map of the village itself and make several copies (and have several pens) so that all the group members can do the same task on their own first.
- The task for each group member is to think about and sketch on a map the **different parts of the village and their different characters**, for example:
 - the character of some areas may be narrow and winding,
 - some areas may be open with straight roads,
 - some may have buildings of just two or three storeys, others may be mainly bungalows,
 - some may be older areas, some estates from the 1970s or 1990s,
 - some parts may be full of lots of different building types, some may be of all one basically similar type.
- Some villages are very small, perhaps with just 2 or 3 small and distinct character areas, but there can also be separate hamlets. Treat each hamlet as a separate character area.
- Try not to go into too much detail and have too many tiny areas; the aim of this exercise is to identify broad areas for undertaking the field work.
- Then share and compare what everybody has done and see if you can at least agree some basic areas.
- There is no right answer to this, so let everybody have a go on their own.
- Give a name to each area once you have agreed them and mark the areas and their names on a 'master copy' map.
- A **Settlement Proforma** will need to be completed for each of these specific areas.

Landscape

- Start with each person having a copy of the B&NES Landscape Character Assessment map (to be provided for you), a blank parish map and a pen.

- Each group member can then sketch, on either map, some **possible sub-areas of the landscape of your parish, each with a different character.**
- Is the landscape different to the north, south, east and west? For example:
 - Is there a winding valley to the south,
 - a river valley to the north,
 - rolling hills to the east,
 - a wooded area or open fields etc.
- As above, there is no right answer to this, so let everybody have a go on their own.
- Once done, compare everybody's versions and try to agree a common one.
- Mark the areas on a 'master copy' map and give each a name or number – this will help you to structure your survey work.
- A **Landscape Proforma** will need to be completed for each of these specific areas.

For Settlement and Landscape areas

- It does not matter if you can or cannot find or agree different areas. However, it can be very demanding for just one group to survey a whole village or a whole landscape so you can, if you wish, just divide it up into 'bite-sized' chunks solely to make it more practically manageable.
- And be aware that this work cannot be final; the results of the detailed survey work will probably suggest that you should revisit – and even change - what you decide at this stage!

C. First Stab Survey Completion

- Copy off one **Settlement Proforma** and map, and one **Landscape Proforma** and map for each of your areas as above. Note the relevant area name or number on the forms and maps.
- Identify the small groups who will work on surveying each area.
- Those small groups then work together to agree (and write in) initial answers to the questions on the forms, drawing if necessary from any of the background material.
- This is a just a first stab, so (a) there are likely to be some questions the group can't answer at all without going out to look and (b) don't put in too much detail because it is important to check or elaborate things on site and probably changing what was written at the 'desk'!
- People can also start to mark up the maps.
- Have a quick look through the Settlement and Landscape Guidance Notes if that helps.

That's the Desk Work done, now the surveys.

SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT PROFORMA

Surveyors(s): Carol Kambites. **Character Area:** ...Stonehouse East of High Street South.....

Date: 15/01/16 and 21/01/16...**Weather:** cold but sunny with some cloud.....

- Look through all the questions before starting.
- For almost all the questions on Pattern and Buildings just ring a word (or two) in each box that best fits what you know/see and, as necessary, add some notes about quality, condition etc. in the space below.
- The final Summary questions include their own instructions.
- Leave any questions that do not seem to apply.
- Take a form, clipboard, map, camera and a pen or two with you when you go out.
- Take any photos you think are useful (often more useful than some words) and add any photo names/numbers in the right hand boxes once you get back to 'base'.

1. PATTERN

Character Element	Photo(s)
<p>A. Topography: Flat Hilly Steep Shallow Plateau Valley Linear valley Several valleys</p> <p>Gentle rise away from the High Street to steep bank (quarry edge) behind Rosedale, leading up to Doverow Hill.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>ES11</p>
<p>B: Layout: Linear Grid-like Winding Regular Irregular Buildings close to the road Buildings well set back Front gardens Back gardens Long plots Thin plots Short plots Wide plots Clear centre No obvious centre</p> <p>Irregular mixture of straight and curving roads. Beyond railway, buildings are set back from the road but much closer on lower side of railway. Rosedale: open plan Verney: mixed mostly with front gardens, some up on bank Upper Queens: long narrow front gardens Queens Road: smallish front areas mainly used as parking St Cyril's Road: straight mixture of styles and also of plot sizes (generally quite large on railway side) Aldergate: straight – small front gardens/yards Burdett Road: as Aldergate Burdett Close: more open larger open plan fronts mainly to grass.LHS directly adjacent to railway (only 2 houses) Storrington: modern development: small open plan front areas mainly to gravel.</p>	<p>ES12 ES43 ES17 ES34 ES38 ES20 ES26 ES42 ES23</p>
<p>C: Spaces: Gaps between buildings Green spaces Hard space Places where local events take place Well used Not well used Buildings generally quite close together. No community space apart from meadow road playing field and some wide grass verges</p>	<p>ES24</p>

<p>D: Green and Natural Features: <i>Trees Bushes Hedges Green backcloth to buildings Areas of intense greenery Areas without greenery Rosedale: Green in gardens and as backdrop on quarry face. Upper Queens/Verney: Green in gardens – some good mature trees Below railway: little greenery apart from back gardens in some places.</i></p>	<p>ES17 ES11 ES43</p>
<p>E: Wildlife and Ecology: <i>Area used/inhabited by wildlife Not used at all Area used for wildlife to pass through What wildlife? Important plants? Wildlife come down from Doverow into upper part of area: deer, fox, badger. Also buzzards overhead.</i></p>	
<p>F: Roads, Streets and other Movement Routes: <i>Pavements Kerbs Grass verges Drainage ditches Wide roads wide Narrow roads Straight roads Curving roads Cul-de-sacs Through roads On-plot parking On-street parking Parking courts Above railway: Reasonable width roads, narrowed by parking, leading to cul de sacs at top end. Below railway: roads narrower (especially St Cyrils, Aldergate and Burdett Road) with on road parking and many houses having nowhere to park off road.</i></p>	<p>ES11 ES20</p>
<p>G. Landmarks: <i>Are there key landmarks visible from a distance (church tower), community landmarks (pub) or special but smaller features (old milestone)? Doverow Hil on one side, with upright stone on top of quarry, and Wycliffe College Chapel spire on the other.</i></p>	<p>ES11 ES31 But need close-up of quarry with stone and better pic of chapel spire</p>
<p>H: Views Out: <i>Are there places (often, occasional) where one can see out to other areas or to the landscape? Views out towards Selsley Common, Cam Peak, Cam Longdown and hills beyond the River Severn seen from viewpoints throughout the area. The area above the railway has a particular open aspect but there are viewpoints even in areas with tightly packed housing.</i></p>	<p>ES3 ES5 ES18 ES23 ES30</p>

<p>I: Views In: Are there places around* where it is possible to get views into this area? (* You will need to go round and about to spot these.)</p> <p>Not yet investigated</p>	
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2. BUILDINGS AND DETAILS

<p>A: Predominant Building Shape and Heights: <i>Wide frontages</i> <i>Narrow frontages Terraced Semi-detached Detached 1 storey</i> <i>2 storeys 3 storeys Common shapes Varied shapes</i></p> <p>Rosedale: detached 3 or 4 bedroom houses and a few bungalows</p> <p>Verney: Mainly detached mixture of houses and bungalows.</p> <p>Upper Queens (and into bottom of Verney): brickbuilt Victorian terraced and semis.</p> <p>Queens Road: and into Upper Queens Road cul de sac: larger detached houses (mainly Victorian).</p> <p>St Cyril's Road: very mixed styles.</p> <p>Aldergate: mainly small redbrick Victorian houses.</p> <p>Burdett Road: as Aldergate but with some newer houses with veyring attempts to fit in with the Victorian houses. There is one older stone-built house at the bottom of the road.</p> <p>Storrington Mews: modern mixture of detached and terraced. Palmers Court: modern terrace on old style.</p> <p>Burdett Close: Very different to Burdett road – more modern housing – mainly semis and a sheltered housing complex - more open aspect.</p>	<p>ES7 ES3 ES19 ES17 ES16 ES35 ES36, 37, 38, 39, 40 ES20 ES 26, 27 ES41 ES42 ES33 ES23 ES25</p>
<p>B: Roofs: <i>Flat roofs Pitched roofs Steep pitch Shallow pitch</i> <i>Varied pitch Lean-tos Parapet fronts (hidden roofs)</i></p> <p>Pitched – mostly fairly steep. Slate on older houses, concrete tiles on newer houses. Dormer windows in some older terraces and in some newer ones to fit in.</p>	

<p>C. Predominant Materials: <i>Some common Nothing common</i> <i>Walls (brick, stone, render, hung tile)? Roofs (tile, slate, other)?</i> <i>Boundaries (walls, hedges, fences)? Ground (tarmac, concrete, setts, paving stones)?</i></p> <p>Mainly brick – mixture of old Stonehouse brick and modern bricks in various colours but generally paler.</p> <p>Roads tarmac.</p>	
<p>D: Details: <i>What details contribute to character: porches, window shapes, roof decorations, chimneys, benches, letter boxes, signs, flags?</i></p> <p>Dormer windows (of different styles) in Victorian terraces and semis reflected in some modern houses</p>	<p>ES20 ES17 ES27</p>

3. SUMMARY

<p>A: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for your group the key <u>positive</u> features about this area? What makes it special?</p> <p>Views of landmarks (both local and further away) that open up in various places as you walk round.</p> <p>The open nature above the railway.</p> <p>Victorian houses in Stonehouse brick.</p> <p>The mixture of housing styles has its own charm and interest.</p>
<p>B: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for your group the key <u>negative</u> features about this area? What detracts from it?</p> <p>Could do with smartening up in some areas</p> <p>Some unsympathetic alterations to older houses</p>

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT PROFORMA

Surveyors(s): Area name or number:

View Point Numbers: Date: Weather:

- Look through all the questions before starting.
- For almost all the questions on Description and Views and Landmarks, just ring a word (or two) in each box that best fits what you know/see and, as necessary, add some notes about quality, condition etc. in the space below.

- The final Summary questions include their own instructions.
- Leave any questions that do not seem to apply.
- Take a form, clipboard, map, camera and a pen or two with you when you go out.
- Take any photos you think are useful (often more useful than some words) and add any photo names/numbers in the right hand boxes once you get back to 'base'.

1. DESCRIPTION

Character Element	Photo(s)
<p>A. Landform: Flat Gently undulating Strongly undulating Steep valley Valley side/floor Plateau</p>	
<p>B. Landcover: Open farmland Farmland with trees/woods Woodland Parkland Wetland</p>	
<p>C. Landuse: Arable farmland Grassland Grazing Mixed Forestry Industrial Brownfield Orchards</p>	
<p>D. Field Boundaries: Tall Clipped Intermittent Hedgerow With/without trees Fences Walls</p>	
<p>E. Field Sizes and Patterns: Small Medium Large Regular Angular Linear Irregular</p>	

<p>F. Routeways: Few roads Dense road network Tracks Straight/Winding /Narrow</p>	
<p>G. Buildings and Structures: <i>What manmade elements are in the landscape?</i> Village(s)/Town Isolated Farms Barns Groups of dwellings Pylons Masts Wires. <i>How do they 'sit' and what natural features influence that?</i></p>	
<p>H. Water and Drainage: Stream River Reservoir Wet ditches Ponds Lake</p>	
<p>I. Enclosure and Scale: Tight Enclosed Open Exposed/Intimate Small Large Vast</p>	

2. VIEWS AND LANDMARKS (mark on the map)

<p>A. Views: Sweeping Channeled Long Short Glimpsed Across/to a place or landmark.</p>	
<p>B. Landmarks: Buildings Structures Natural features History Archaeology</p>	

3. SUMMARY

A. Scenic Quality: *Think about sounds, smells and colours, how it makes you feel, does it feel tranquil? Think about balance (harmonious - chaotic) and diversity (uniform – complex) Seasonal features can also be important.*

B. Activities and Associations: *What do people do in this landscape? Work and/or leisure? Do people paint or photograph it? Are there local poems or stories? What makes you identify with it or value it?*

C: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for you the key positive features about this area? What makes it special?

D: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for you the key negative features about this area? What detracts from it?

SETTLEMENT GUIDANCE NOTE

- The Proforma is structured to enable you to record the key elements and features that contribute to the character of one of your selected character areas.
- The intention is not to record everything, but to record where things **recur and are part of the pattern** of the settlement and/or where they are **distinctive or unusual**.
- There are no nationally agreed lists of aspects to consider in assessing settlements but what follows is drawn from well-proven practice for Village Design Statements.
- The basic division is into broader aspects of an area as a whole - **Pattern**, and more specific aspects – **Buildings and Features**.
- In each box on the form we have included some prompts to help explain what sort of things to look for and comment on. If one or more of these given words seems to fit, just ring it.
- Filling in the form really is easy; just write in each box some notes to describe the character element that form is asking you to look at.
- In each case note a description but also comment on quality and condition (if relevant).
- As you think about things you will probably 'jump around' between our topics. No problem but, whatever you do, make sure that your comments are noted somewhere (they can always be separated later).
- Be sure to take a map or two with you because some things – for example a view out – are best recorded on a map. Use some simple notations (see below).
- Be sure to take a digital camera or two when you go out and take photos, 1 or 2 for every box/topic - enough to show key points. It can be best to check your photos after any on-site survey, at which point you can put photo numbers in the right hand column on the proforma.
- For the field work, take a quick walk around the area as a whole before you start noting down any comments.
- We would suggest that 1 person fills in the form, another takes photos, 1 marks the map and a 4th person reads out the guidance as necessary.
- The Summary is exactly what it says – just a few words or a couple of sentences to pick up the **key points**. It is best to do this after a site survey.



Landmark



View



Edge
(Physical/Visual boundary defining an area e.g. railway or water)



Steep Gradient



Ridgeline



Historic and/or interesting frontages

LANDSCAPE GUIDANCE NOTE

- The Proforma is structured to enable you to record the key elements and features that contribute to the character of the landscape in one of your selected areas.
- The intention is not to record everything, but to record where things **recur and are part of the pattern** of the landscape, or where they are **distinctive or unusual**.
- The aspects covered on the form are drawn from those used quite commonly in larger scale landscape assessment to ensure that what you do can link into the district-wide work.
- The basic division is into broader aspects of an area as a whole - **Description**, and the more specific aspects of **Views and Landmarks**, together with the more subjective section of **Sense of Place**.
- In each box we have offered some often-used words for each aspect (again to tie into district-wide work). If one or more of these given words seems to fit, just ring it.
- If you want to use other, different words, add those in the space below, along with any comments on quality, condition, value to you etc.
- Be sure to take a map or two with you because some things – for example a view out – are best recorded on a map. Use some simple notations (see below).
- Be sure to take a digital camera or two when you go out and take photos, not necessarily 1 or 2 for every box/topic but enough to show key points. It can be best to check your photos after any on-site survey, at which point you can put photo numbers in the right hand column on the proforma.
- You may want to plan a walk that takes in the landscape and includes some good viewpoints.
- The Summary is exactly what it says – just a few words or a couple of sentences to pick up the **key points**. It is best to do this **only** after a site survey.



Landmark



View



Edge

(Physical/Visual boundary defining an area e.g. railway or water)



Steep Gradient



Ridgeline



Historic and/or interesting frontages

SUMMARISING GUIDANCE NOTE

- Once the desk work is done and all surveys finished for both the landscape and the settlement, you can now summarise this information, pulling together all material to draft out an overview, or 'snapshot' of the character of your parish.
- Remember this is a record of the predominant or key characteristics your parish wishes to convey about your place and the things you value.
- Though only a summary, it sits on top of the methodology you have followed with this toolkit, your survey and desktop information.
- Bring together the different surveys and work through them to agree what summary information needs to be captured in the Placemaking Plan.
- This is the key time to use some of the maps you have annotated and the photographs that have been taken.
- If anything, keep the words as **few** as possible and include **more** photos and maps that state clearly what aspect of character they are illustrating.
- The Glossary may also be of use when drafting.
- Remember that all the detailed information, survey forms, photos and maps should always be kept both for the Placemaking Plan stage and in case you wish to move on to produce a full Design Statement.

Your Overall 'Snapshot Character Summary'

Please note: This is not a one-to-one summary of every single item, aspect or question in the desk work or surveys! It is a separate piece of overall, descriptive writing (with photos and maps) that draws from the detailed work.

Include information under headings such as these, using text, maps and photos:

- **Character Summary:** Bullet points listing the key characteristics of the whole Parish.
- **Landscape Description:** Brief description covering the main elements of the landscape, including the relationship between the settlement(s) and the surrounding countryside.
- **Key Views and Landmarks:** List together with photos.
- **Settlement Pattern:** A note on the broad layout, spaces, patterns of the settlement.
- **Buildings and Details:** An overview of the predominant elements noted.
- **Sense of Place:** Some text highlighting the key qualities of the area.
- **Positive Features and Special Qualities:** A note of what is valued at the local level; a view, a wooded setting or the use of particular materials.
- **Negative Features and Detracting Elements:** A note on these aspects/issues.
- **Character Areas:** A map with notes.

And finally, a rather different element:

- **Looking ahead: Conserve, Enhance, Create:** Overall, what are your aspirations in relation to character? Note any particular features that need to be conserved or enhanced. Is there anything that could be added or created to improve the character?

***A mock-up of a Summary is appended.
It is purely illustrative so please make yours look as you wish.***

WORKED EXAMPLE

Not to just be copied:

Please do it your way for your parish/place!

Snapshot Character Summary: High Chew Combe Parish

Landscape Type: Area 14: Avon Valley

Designations: SSSI, Conservation Area

Character Summary

High Chew Combe Parish sits in a landscape comprised of a wide open valley with gently sloping sides which affords expansive views towards the gently meandering River Avon. It is halfway between Bristol and Bath. Originally a farming community, the main village has grown significantly over the last 40 years, but retains a distinctive historic core. It is next to the AONB. There is a church, a post office and a pub. There are a small number of hamlets found in the wider parish area.



PHOTO 1: Road entering the village with expansive views towards the River Avon over low stone wall.

- High Chew Combe sits to the edge of a wide open valley with steep sloping valley sides to the west.
- There is a distinctive pattern of winding rural roads and irregular field boundaries.
- Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences such as the sound of the nearby railway and powerlines.
- The settlement is mostly linear in form.
- A variety of building types and styles exist within the settlement, however the conservation area and the vernacular architecture identify the historic heart of the village.
- Church Lane is the key route through the village core. This narrow route is defined by low stones walls and is gently sloping.

Landscape Description

The landscape has a generally open character with views across the wide valley floor to the valley sides and the hills and plateaux beyond.

There are few trees, so they can be an important element in a view, however there is a small wood – High Chew Combe Wood – which is on a locally popular right of way. Fields are bounded by low clipped hedges are mostly angular in shape and are generally medium sized.

The course of the river edged by trees is a particularly important feature throughout the



PHOTO 2: Expansive views across fields with low clipped hedges and few trees

area. Seasonal flooding (which has become widespread in recent years) has a real change on the character across the flood plain which is visible from the main route into the village.

The whole of the Parish is connected by a network of winding minor roads and lanes and an intermittent network of public rights of way.

There are a few buildings in the landscape, and the main settlement of High Chew Combe sits on a gently sloping valley side which rises above the village.

Key Views and Landmarks (all photographs on a separate disk)

1. Views from the village on the valley slope edge out over the plateaux.
2. Views taking in the village and the wider valley from a public footpath above the village.
3. Views from Public paths back towards the village and the church spire.
4. Glimpsed views between buildings.
5. High Chew Combe Church.
6. High Chew Combe Wood.

Settlement Pattern Character - Towards the centre houses are often joined together. The village is linear and winding, following the road. A loose pattern of development with indistinct edges give rural informality and intrigue to the settlement. Towards the edge of the villages houses are set further apart within generous grounds, such as on Old Down Hill, but most buildings are generally set either right up against the road or slightly set back behind a predominant local feature, the low stone wall. The more recent development uses local material but has a distinctly different layout. *There are three distinct character areas – see later map.*

Buildings and Details – The Parish is enriched by its legacy of fine older buildings of architectural interest with vernacular details which contribute greatly to the character of the area. More recent buildings have continued to reinforce the sense of place with use of materials. Key elements are:

- Central green space outside the church contained by the low stone walls so characteristic to the settlement.
- Informal grass verges and low irregularly capped boundary walls help maintain openness.
- No buildings extend above three storeys, with the majority being two storeys in height.
- Stone porches are a common feature.
- Historic listed buildings.



PHOTO 9: Stone Walls and Porches are key features

Sense of Place – The Parish enjoys a close connection with rural landscape, with expansive views over the landscape from within the village and from footpaths that head up the slope behind the village. The changing seasons are an integral part of the character with season variations in the trees within the village and the wider floodplain. The village green forms a 'heart' to the village and the church is much visited for its fine architecture.

Positive Features and Special Qualities –

- The uniformity of building materials and form contributing a feeling of harmony.
- Low stone walls

- Central village green
- Expansive views across the landscape
- A 'rural' feel.

Negative Features and Detracting Elements – The wider landscape is spoiled by overhead power lines and by a large number of untidy and underused agricultural buildings. The centre of the village is far too cluttered with road signs and inappropriate, urban street lighting.

Looking ahead – Conserve, Enhance, Create – Conserve the sense of openness on the plateau and the wooded nature of the valley. There is a need to enhance the rather scruffy edges to the village as it sits in the landscape and to remove much of the street sign clutter. There is a need to create a second public open space within or on the edge of the village.

Character Area Map – *(Not included here)*