

BROADHEMBURY

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with contributions from Town and Parish Councils and Amenity Societies in East Devon

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BROADHEMBURY



(above and below) General views in the village centre. The area of tarmacadam where streets converge is considered unnecessarily extensive.

1 HISTORIC AND TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1.1 An attractive estate owned village of thatched cottages which takes its name from Hembury Fort, the finest Iron Age fortress in Devon. This was first settled in Neolithic times (c.2,500 BC) but the great earthworks were built in about 150 BC during the Iron Age, and it is thought this strategic position remained occupied until about 75 AD.

1.2 A Saxon nobleman Brictric, Thane of Gloucester is the first recorded lord of the manor of Hanberia before the Norman Conquest. It is said that Matilda, later Duchess of Normandy and Queen of England, had been in love with Brictric but was rejected by him, and took revenge by confiscating all his lands which were given to Bishop Odo of Bayeux, one of the confederate barons who was the half-brother of King William I. After changing hands several times, from 1240 the village belonged to Dunkeswell Abbey until the Dissolution in 1539. In 1603 Edward Drewe, Sergeant-at-Law to Queen Elizabeth I, built a house at Grange, the former Abbey Farm. Grange remained the seat of the Drewe family for nearly 300 years. Drowes still own much of the village.

1.3 The present village largely developed as an estate village in the early 17th century, although the Drewe Arms, Church Gate, and several other houses are much older, possibly 15th century. Recent research has cast doubt on the whereabouts of the Priest's House which was known to date from medieval times.

1.4 The Reverend Augustus Toplady famous for the hymn "Rock of Ages" was vicar here from 1768 until his death in 1778 and is commemorated by a memorial tablet on the south chancel wall of the Parish Church of St. Andrew.



2 SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 The village is situated four miles north-west of Honiton in a hollow at the foot of the Blackdown Hills escarpment where a stream was forded and where now four lanes converge to form a large square at the village centre. It is lined on the north side by a curving terrace of plain cottages of cob, painted cream with mellow brown doors and window frames, and with close-cut thatched roofs that are characteristic of East Devon. The overall effect is unusually complete and timeless and its careful preservation is undoubtedly due to the continuing close links with the Drewe family which date from the beginning of the 17th century. Many of the houses were restored and thatched for Sir Cedric Drewe in the 1950's.

2.2 The special character of Broadhembury led to the designation of the Conservation Area by Devon County Council prior to 1974. Within its boundary are 36 individual listed buildings giving 29 separate list entries. The location of these are shown on Map 1.

3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Broadhembury developed as an estate village in the early 17th century, though the Parish Church, the Drewe Arms, Church Gate, and several other properties are considerably older. The centre of the village is exceptionally spacious even though the cottages front almost directly onto the carriageway with narrow plant beds between.

3.2 Between the cottages and on the lanes leading into the village are narrow grass verges and banks or boundary and retaining walls (mainly rubble stone) sometimes topped by square topped hedges. There is a pristine quality with no incongruity apart from some thatch which in places is patched and mossy and looks as if complete renewal may soon be required.

3.3 The layout is completely informal (cf Broadclyst) but with a compact grouping at the village centre where a narrowing of the carriageway at either end of the main street and curving alignment of frontages provides a strong sense of enclosure and an intricate and varying sequence of viewpoints. Elsewhere buildings are interspersed with gardens and paddocks in a much more scattered pattern of development woven into landscape features.

4 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

4.1 Broadhembury has a particularly rich landscape setting both within and beyond the village. Views out of the village to the north and east embrace a rich backdrop of trees to the skyline of the Blackdown Hills with foreground groups of pines and firs.

4.2 Within the village is a plentiful scattering of trees, both deciduous (with ash, oak, lime and horse chestnut predominating) and evergreen with yew, fir, pine and holly, particularly the latter in the eastern half of the conservation area. There is little evidence of formal planting with most trees within garden or field boundaries or bordering the lanes into the village



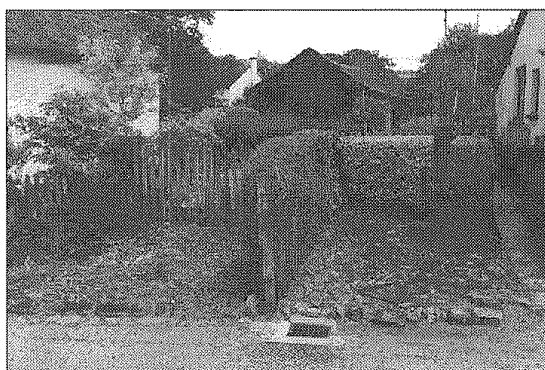
General view looking northwest from the churchyard showing the largely wooded landscape setting. Note recent thatch repair.

4.3 The conservation area boundary reflects the pastoral and well-wooded setting of the village which in a wider context consists of relatively small enclosed fields interspersed with copses where some hedgerows appear to have been lost this century but where the landscape is essentially stable and not apparently subject to development pressure.

5 HARD SURFACES

5.1 The character of the conservation area is somewhat compromised by the extensive tar and loose chippings surfaces, particularly at the centre of the village. The effect is slightly relieved by the narrow plant beds in front of the cottages and narrow grass verges backed by banks or retaining stone walls topped by square clipped hedges.

5.2 In the main street there is a good example of a hardstanding and adjoining driveway where chert blocks have been used to create a cobbled effect.



Roughly cobbled spaces between cottages with hand water-pump possibly moved from original site.



6 BUILDING MATERIALS AND ORNAMENT

6.1 Broadhembury is possibly one of the most perfectly complete villages in Devon in terms of the use of traditional materials which here consist of creamwashed rendered cob on stone footings with characteristic tar band. Roofs are thatched with a plain ridge and many are either hipped or half-hipped. These delightfully organic profiles are further emphasised by the many swept dormers. Most chimneys are exposed brickwork with oversailing upper courses; some have been rendered.

6.2 Windows are mostly metal framed casements with top vents, and are leaded, mostly 2x2 or 2x3 light upper and 2x3 or 3x3 light lower sections although there are other variations. Doors are plain vertical planks, ledged and braced at the rear, with dark red-brown paintwork for the estate cottages. The overall effect is one of remarkable overall uniformity but with delightful variety in specific detail.

6.3 Towards the western end of the conservation area one or two frontages have been rather disturbed by modern fenestration, although at Western Cottages a medieval 4 light window with trefoil heads is effectively concealed behind a sheet of clear glass which works effectively. The adjacent modern bungalow is incongruous and out of keeping with the overall character of the village.



Cottage detail with plain window and door detail and ageing thatch (top). Note decorative detail (above) including monogram of the Drewe family and the post office door with diamond and marginal glazing bars.

7 STREET FURNITURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

7.1 There are several specific features of note, typical of those normally encountered within a village setting such as the War Memorial, churchyard gateways; a fine church porch with richly carved four-centred arched doorway; thatched or slated porches to cottages; a hand water pump (in working order before World War II), and bridge and ford.

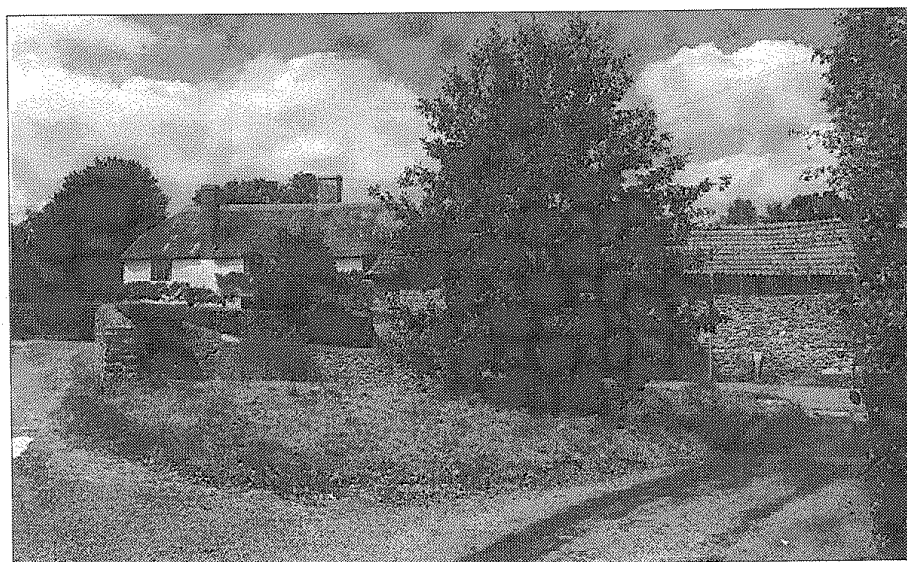
8 SYNOPSIS OF LISTED BUILDINGS

8.1 Almost all the cottages within the village are listed and many date from the late 16th or 17th century. Some are even earlier and can be demonstrated to have originated as a medieval open hall since, for example, smoke blackened medieval timbers survive in *Virginia Cottage*. A number have interiors rich in carpentry, the main features being chamfered, step-stopped cross-beams and plank and muntin screens with some chamfered and stopped muntins. There are also jointed-cruck trusses. The listing details refers to the fact that there are "eight closely-spaced surviving medieval houses in a village context."

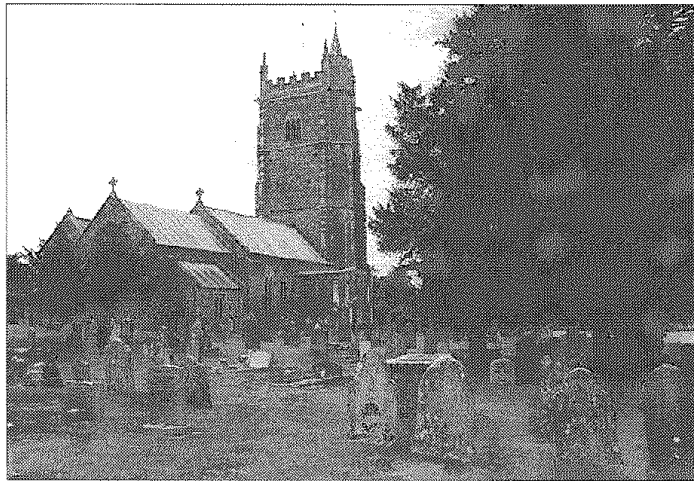
8.2 *St. Andrew's Church* stands on an eminence overlooking the village and is late 14th to 15th century with a fine west tower, almost 100 feet in height, good window tracery, and pleasant arcades. The south chancel aisle was the chapel of the Drewes of Grange with two good early 17th century monuments in the chancel. The medieval rood screen was accidentally destroyed during a restoration of 1851. The elaborate north porch dates from 1520 and is finely vaulted. The nave has a wagon roof with 15th century vine paintings on the beams.



16th century ornamental carved stone in the church porch.



A bridge and adjoining ford closes the view at the west end of the main village street.



The Parish Church is a dominant feature its limestone tower contrasting well with whitewashed cob cottages.

8.3 The church has been built using several types of mostly local stone; Beer stone (the arcades), flint and greensand from the Blackdown Hills, volcanic trap from Thorverton, oolitic limestone from Bath and red sandstone.

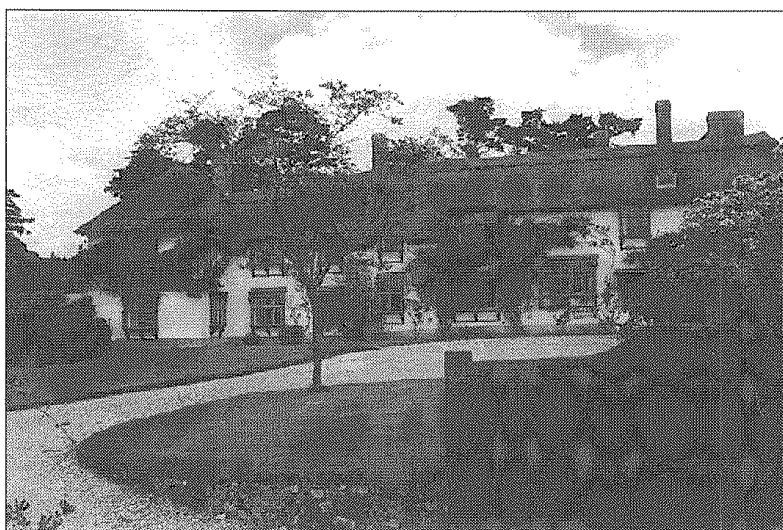
8.4 The Drewe Arms is a good early Tudor house, and was probably originally the Church House. It consists of two adjoining ranges, the entrance being in the lower one. In the two-storey south part is a good late Perpendicular stone window of five arched lights and carved spandrels.

8.5 At the time of the survey no individual buildings within the conservation area appeared to be at risk. Nevertheless the thatched roofs, one of the most attractive features of the village, are in places very mossy and have been patched quite widely. This is known to be a problem to the landlord in terms of overall repair and maintenance costs of buildings of the estate, and it is said that annual local authority grant-aid has not increased in actual amount over many years in spite of considerable inflation.

Important Buildings Outside the Conservation Area

8.6 Grange (1 mile SW) was formerly a monastic property belonging to Dunkeswell Abbey, but bought in 1603 by Edward Drewe. The present house, enlarged by his son Sir Thomas, is substantially early 17th century, but was much altered in the 18th and early 19th centuries. It is noted for its fine plaster, including several large overmantels, and carved woodwork.

8.7 Kerswell Priory (2 miles NW) was a cell of Cluniac monks associated with Montacute in Somerset and is now a farmhouse. A small Norman archway remains.



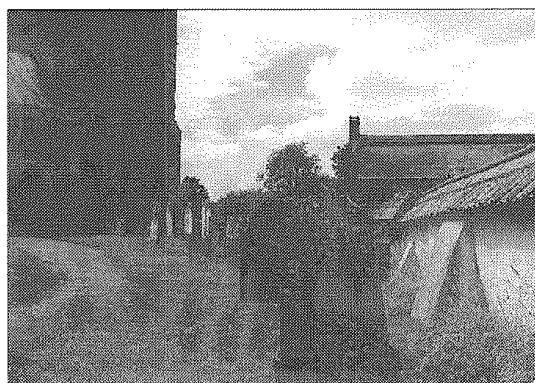
Broadhembury House. Probably of 17th century origin, with large Edwardian extensions for the Drewe family, owners of the Broadhembury Estate.

Churchyard with cob and tile-capped wall. To the right of the tower (below) is Church Gate; probably a 16th century church house and listed Grade II.

9 FEATURES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

9.1 The Broadhembury conservation area has the following elements which contribute to its particular character:

- a particularly cohesive quality in terms of the scale of the buildings, and use of building materials; especially thatch with swept eaves, and plastered cob on rubble stone footings with traditional tar band.
- an unusual spaciousness, yet the varying alignment of the streets also ensures well enclosed vistas from many different points within the village.
- a very fine Parish Church and churchyard (as at Broadclyst, with which Broadhembury has close historic links as the Drewe family moved from the former village in the 17th century)
- modest but extensive vernacular detailing, very well handled and integrated, (e.g. swept thatch as dormers and eaves; most having been retained and carefully maintained).
- important views beyond the village to surrounding countryside, especially the wooded spurs of the Blackdown Hills, such as North Hill (283m)
- several good boundary walls, the most notable is the tile-capped example forming the northwest boundary of the churchyard
- the small bridge and adjoining ford over a stream, providing a strong visual feature at the western end of the village
- an extensive backdrop of trees on the escarpment to the east when viewed from the village centre, complemented by large pines and firs in the foreground a "K6" Gilbert-Scott telephone kiosk



10 LOSS OF CHARACTER AND INTRUSION

10.1 In the Broadhembury conservation area there are no elements causing significant loss of character apart from the modern bungalow at the western end which is totally incongruous. There are some fairly prominent overhead power lines north of the stream in the vicinity of Western and Weston Town Cottages, and the frontages of the latter are virtually alone in having new replacement windows which it could be argued have to some extent compromised their character.

10.2 Although the village does not suffer a large quantity of traffic, it is understood that in spite of road signs to discourage heavy through traffic, long articulated vehicles and heavy trucks and tankers, including some with trailers regularly pass through the village.

10.2 The village centre has a particularly large square which is a convenient turning space for vehicles, but the extent of the unrelieved tarmac surface has caused it to become a rather bland and featureless space.

11 SUMMARY

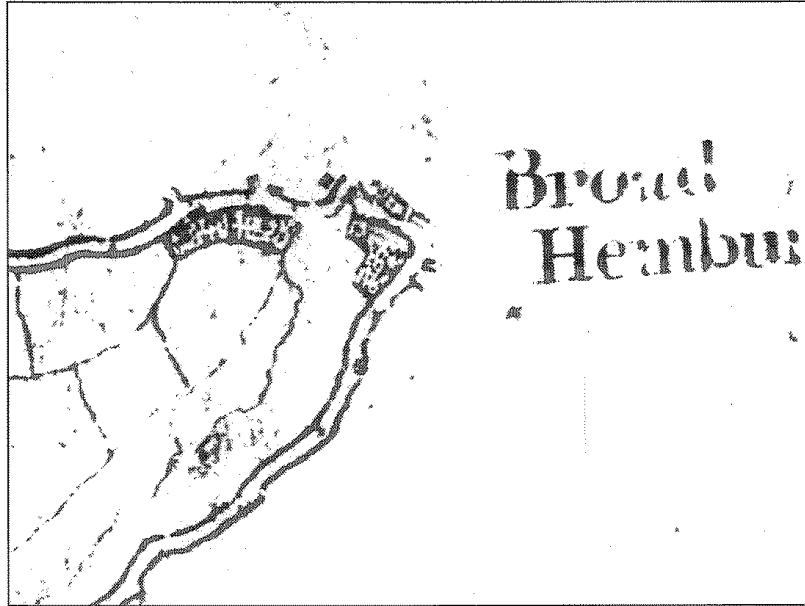
11.1 The statutory list refers to Broadhembury as "an outstanding unspoiled estate village of thatched houses". There is little doubt that it has few equals within East Devon, indeed, within the county as a whole. Its character may be under threat should its attractions to tourists be too widely publicised.

11.2 Some cottages exhibit thatch of considerable age and in varying states of deterioration with obvious signs of patching, and in some instances are in fairly urgent need of complete renewal. It is understood that the estate owner finds this aspect of otherwise successful management, costly and difficult and is willing to discuss access to any potential sources of funding which would assist with this major aspect of maintenance.

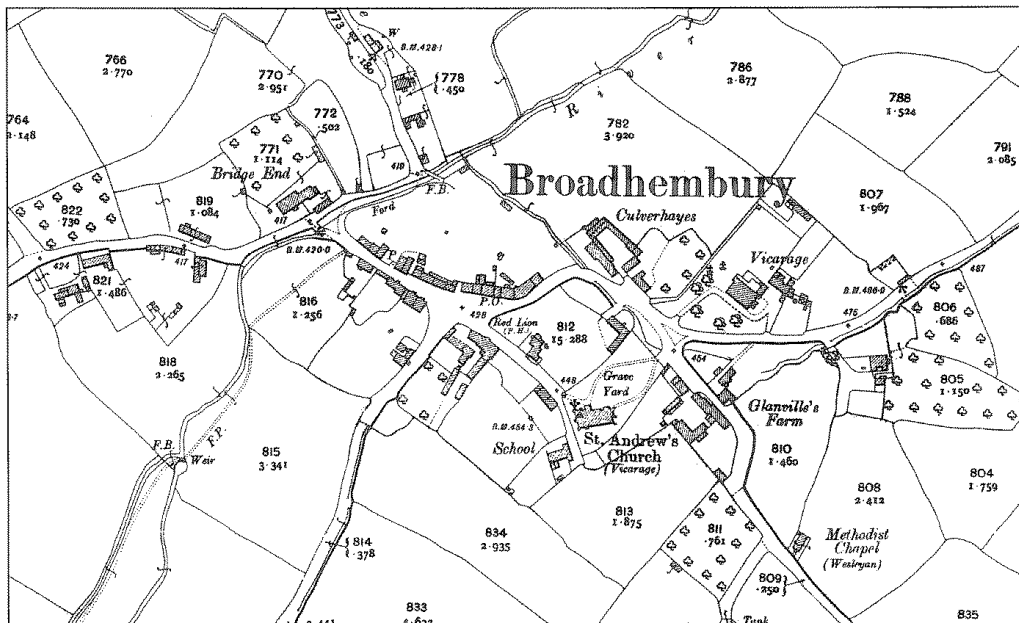


North of the stream there are still predominantly thatched cottages but the character is considerably more open with much green space between buildings and a mixture of hedgerows and walls.

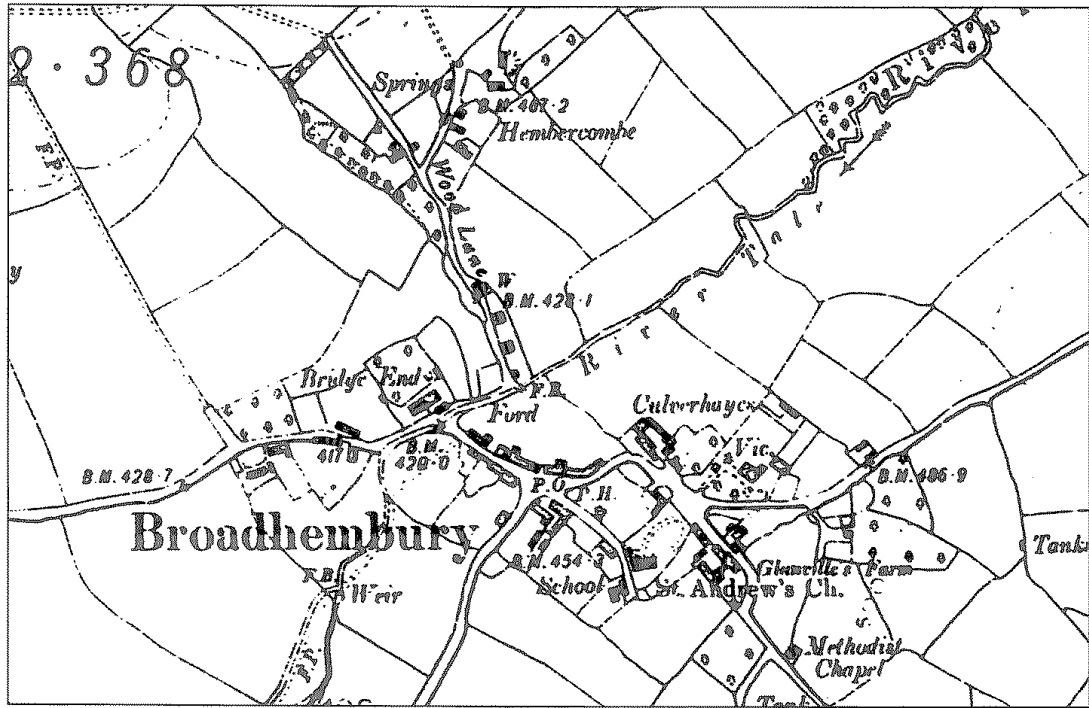
HISTORIC MAPS



1805 Devon County Survey. Scale: originally 3 inches to the mile (scale may be altered for the purpose of the report)








c.1905 Ordnance Survey Second Edition. Scale originally 25 inches to the mile (scale may be altered for the purpose of fitting the report)

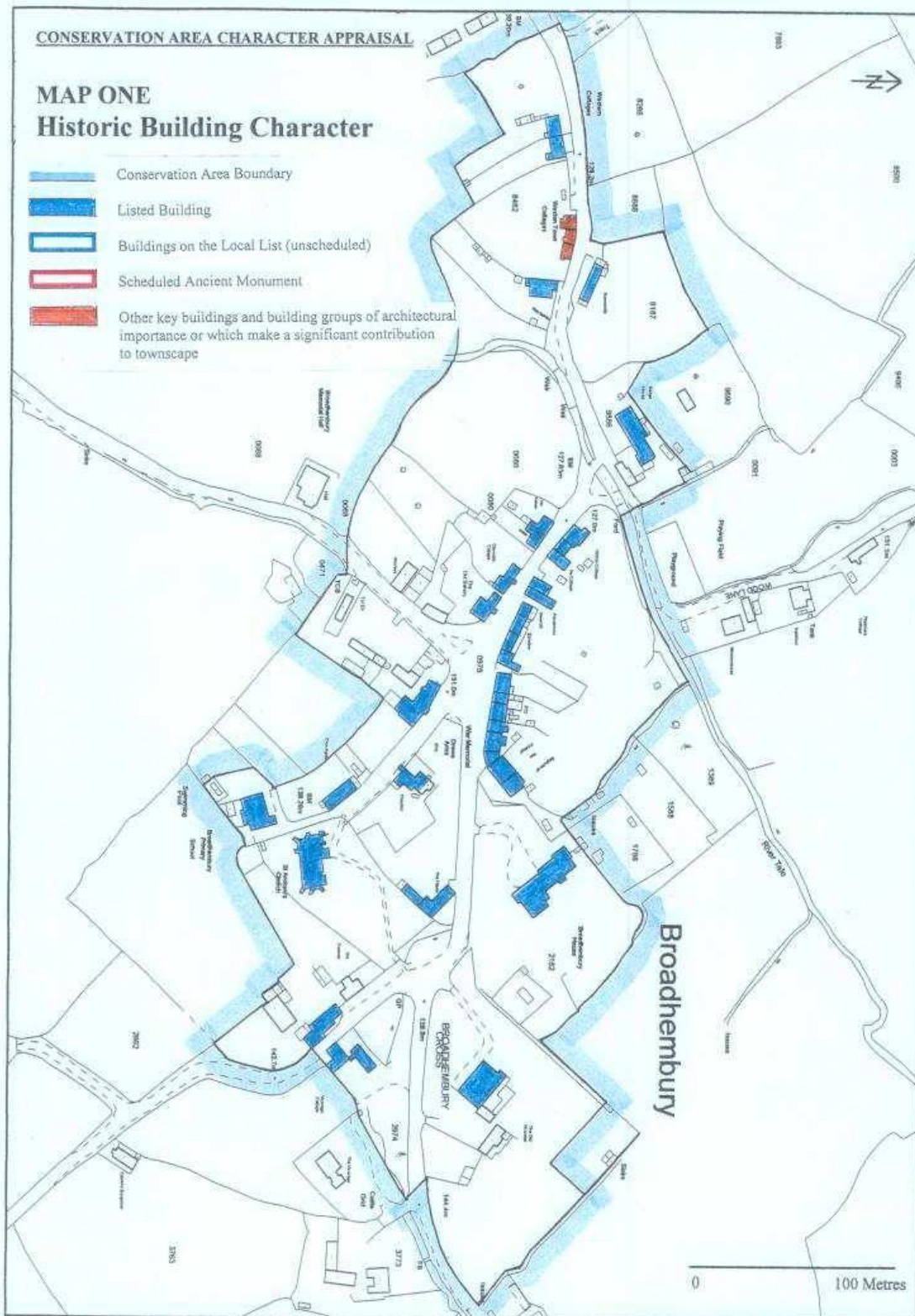


Early 20th Century Ordnance Survey Second Edition or Provisional Edition.
 Scale originally 6 inches to the mile (scale may be altered for the purpose of fitting the report)

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP ONE Historic Building Character

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Buildings on the Local List (unscheduled)
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Other key buildings and building groups of architectural importance or which make a significant contribution to townscape






Broadhembury Conservation Area
East Devon District Council

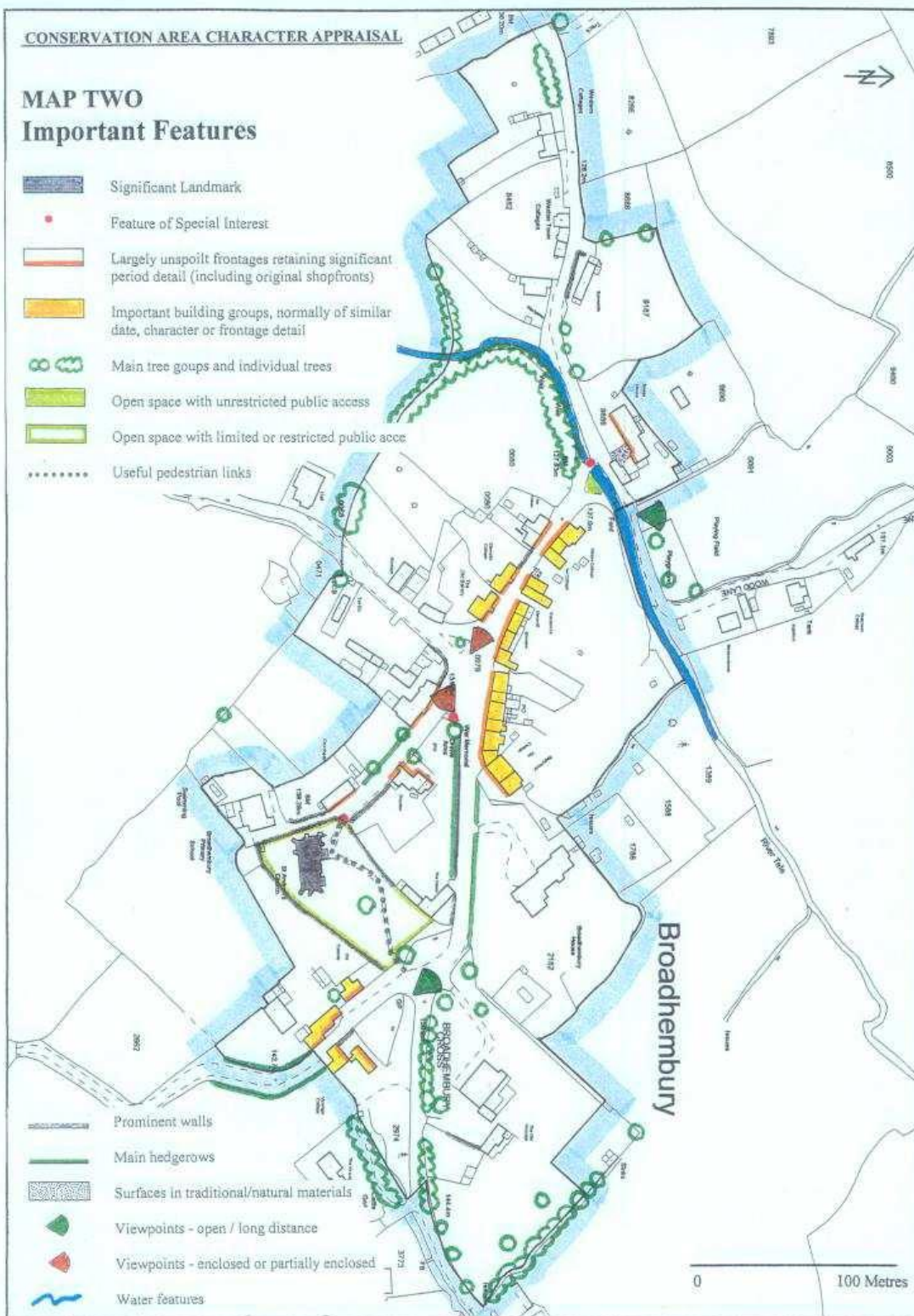
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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP TWO Important Features

-  Significant Landmark
-  Feature of Special Interest
-  Largely unspoilt frontages retaining significant period detail (including original shopfronts)
-  Important building groups, normally of similar date, character or frontage detail
-  Main tree groups and individual trees
-  Open space with unrestricted public access
-  Open space with limited or restricted public access
-  Useful pedestrian links

-  Prominent walls
-  Main hedgerows
-  Surfaces in traditional/natural materials
-  Viewpoints - open / long distance
-  Viewpoints - enclosed or partially enclosed
-  Water features











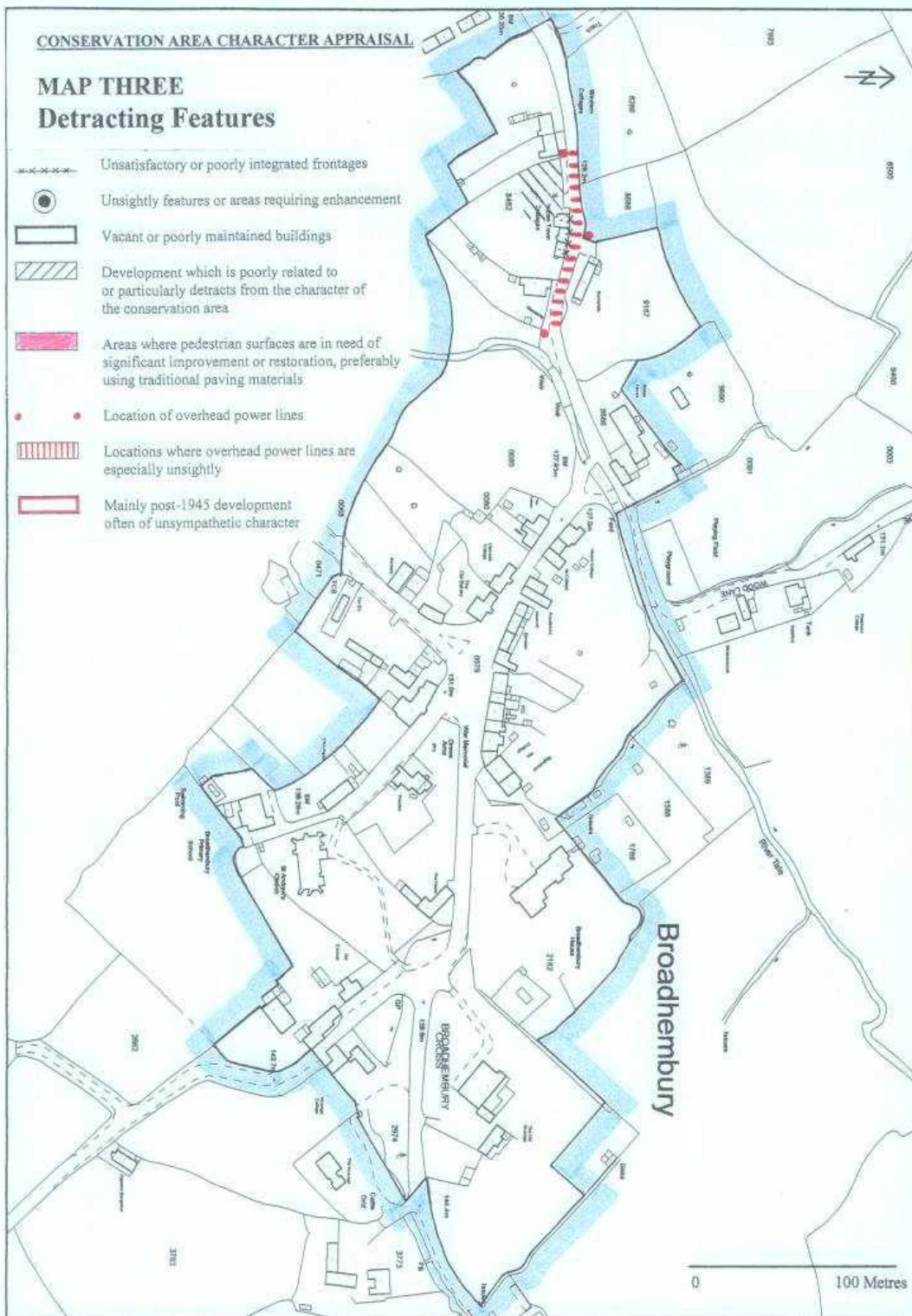
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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP THREE Detracting Features

-  Unsatisfactory or poorly integrated frontages
-  Unsightly features or areas requiring enhancement
-  Vacant or poorly maintained buildings
-  Development which is poorly related to or particularly detracts from the character of the conservation area
-  Areas where pedestrian surfaces are in need of significant improvement or restoration, preferably using traditional paving materials
-  Location of overhead power lines
-  Locations where overhead power lines are especially unsightly
-  Mainly post-1945 development often of unsympathetic character



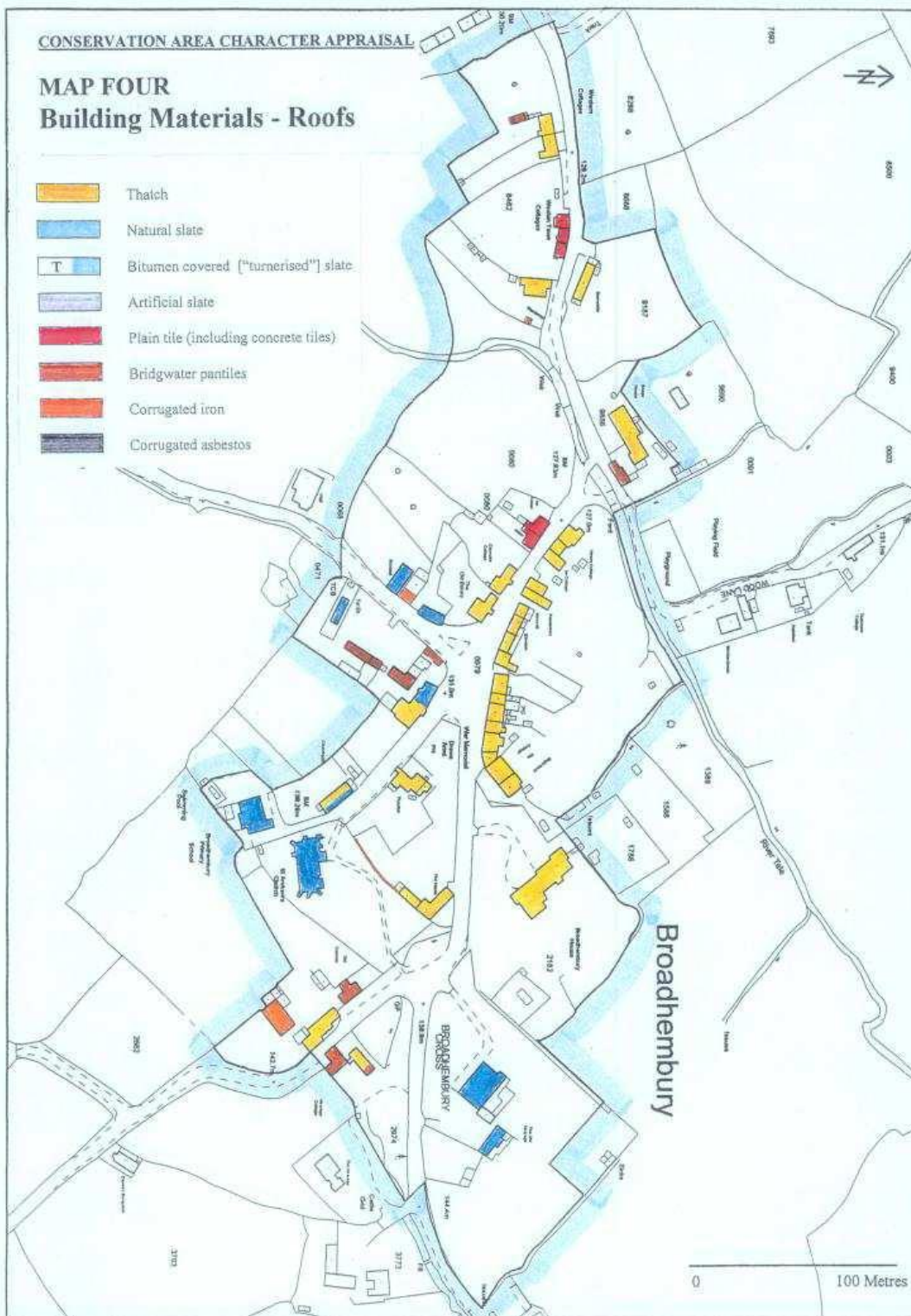
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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP FOUR
Building Materials - Roofs

-  Thatch
-  Natural slate
-  Bitumen covered ("turnerised") slate
-  Artificial slate
-  Plain tile (including concrete tiles)
-  Bridgwater pantiles
-  Corrugated iron
-  Corrugated asbestos



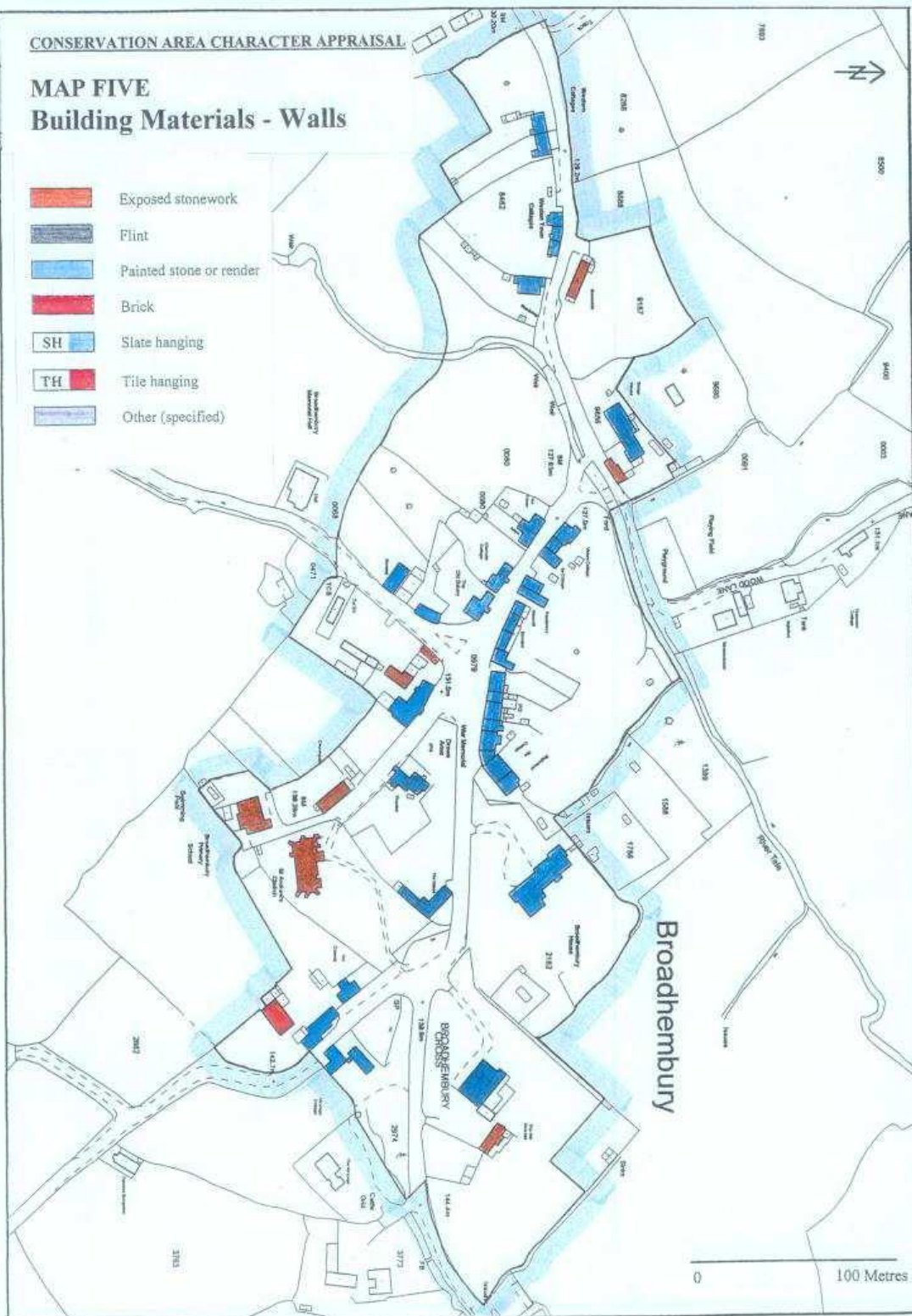
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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP FIVE
Building Materials - Walls

-  Exposed stonework
-  Flint
-  Painted stone or render
-  Brick
-  Slate hanging
-  Tile hanging
-  Other (specified)



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Broadhembury Interim Conservation Area Review

Purpose of the Review

There is a requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 of all local authorities to review their conservation areas and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Reviews must be carried out every five years as the character and appearance of a conservation area can change over even small periods of time. The purpose of this interim review is to identify the principal changes since the publication of the Conservation Area Appraisal and to outline potential changes to the conservation area boundary which will form part of a full consultation exercise when the draft Management Plan is produced.



Key recent changes in Broadhembury Conservation Area.

- There have been very few changes in the Broadhembury conservation area since the previous appraisal; the village seems to be cherished and prosperous and, were parked cars and tarmac removed, would look much as it perhaps did several centuries ago.
- Unfortunately one key row of cottages has been fitted with replacement uPVC windows.



While some PVCu windows attempt to follow a more traditional pattern they can never replicate the character and quality of authentic timber units.



Newly planted privet hedges.

- The topiaried hedgerows in very prominent locations on two sides of the road at Broadhembury House and Theydon cottages have recently been replaced on both frontages. The opportunity to plant native species such as yew or holly, which would probably have been more appropriate for this traditional village, has been missed and privet hedges have been planted on top of dry stone retaining walls.
- Most of the road painting, eg stop lines and other traffic information, has been erased by time. For example the words 'No through road' painted several times in different positions outside the church and school, have now almost worn away.
- Some of the thatched roofs are in poor condition and some have been temporarily repaired.
- A new thatched house has been built with a tiled porch and bay window at the front. The newly planted front hedge is a non-native Lawson-type cypress hedge.



A recent new dwelling has succeeded in replicating the proportions and massing of traditional vernacular cottages in the village.

Potential review of Conservation Area boundary

The existing conservation area boundary covers the historic area of the village. The small new development immediately outside the western boundary is modern and does not meet the criteria for inclusion. This is the only part of the built up area boundary that is outside the conservation area and it is already fully developed.

The conservation area in this village covers considerably more area than the built up area boundary, therefore there appears to be no reason to extend the conservation area and there is certainly no reason to omit existing areas due to eroded character.

This aspect of the conservation area review will be fully considered during the consultation process.

Principal reasons for erosion or changes to Conservation Area character

- Planting of non-native hedges may alter the authentic historic appearance of the village. The use of replacement uPVC windows in the key building, Weston Town Cottages.
- The half-acre of tarmac in the centre of the village is now breaking down and it is difficult to know what would be a good replacement surface to use when the time comes to resurface the area.