

CHARDSTOCK

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

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CHARDSTOCK



Parish Church and Lychgate with dominant cedar tree in churchyard

1 HISTORIC AND TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1.1 The village was transferred from Dorset to Devon in 1896. The name is derived from the "stoc" or cattle farm of Chard, and is still in a largely pastoral setting. Chardstock is situated in a large rural parish of scattered hamlets (e.g. Small-ridge, almost 3 miles south; Tytherleigh, one mile southeast, and Holy City, one mile northwest).

1.2 Chardstock is situated on the west slope of a quite broad valley with its stream flowing south towards the River Axe. Within this valley are a considerable number of thatched farmhouses, some dating back to the 15th century.

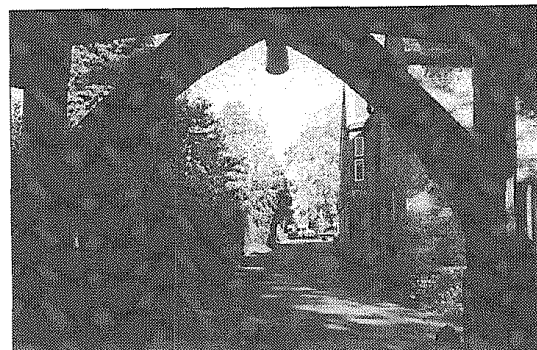
1.3 As well as earlier, mainly thatched buildings including the fine 15th century inn at the centre of the village, there is also much late 19th century work giving it an almost consciously planned appearance.

2 SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

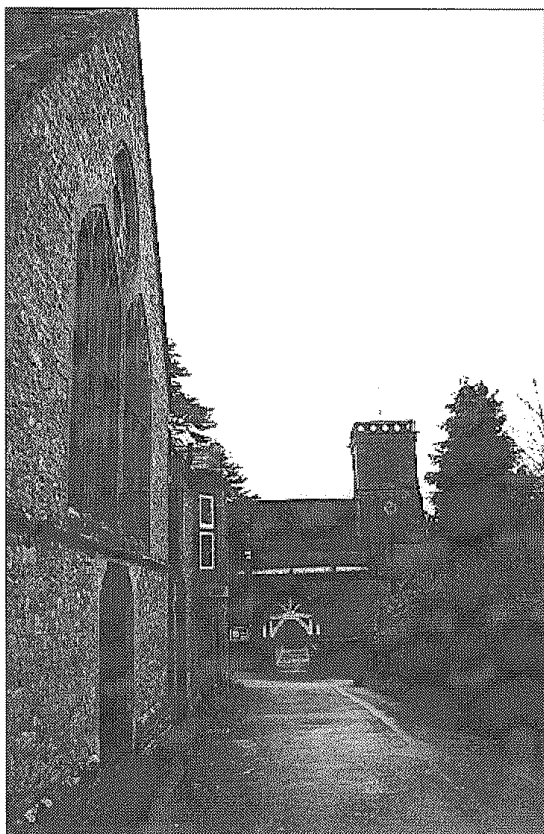
2.1 The conservation area comprises much of the earliest surviving part of the village. Excluded are the group of buildings including the former village water-mill in the valley

bottom some 200 metres further west. The mill building, although slightly dilapidated, still contains much of the original machinery although the wheel has gone and the mill race is no longer capable of use. Also excluded are a scattered group of cottages bordering or in close proximity to the southern limit of the village, some of which have been over-restored with some consequent loss of authenticity. They are nevertheless a quite significant group.

2.2 Most later 20th century development has occurred to the north and quite extensively to the east of the village centre where a sizeable estate has been added to in stages mainly by the respective local authorities.



View in opposite direction from church lychgate



View looking south from School

2.3 The village has a somewhat sombre atmosphere engendered by the solidly built, extensive and now somewhat under-used 19th century developments centred around the Parish Church and Primary School. Considerable numbers of evergreens, also beloved of Victorians and no doubt dating from the 19th century, are concentrated to the southwest of the village centre (see also 4.1).

2.4 The conservation area was first designated prior to formation of East Devon District in 1974, and within the boundary are some 23 individually listed buildings giving 18 separate list entries. There are also several listed churchyard monuments. Their location is shown on Map 1.

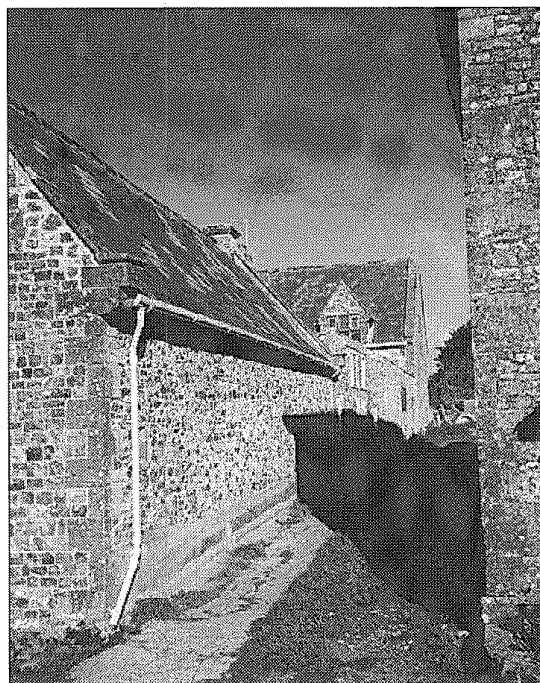
3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

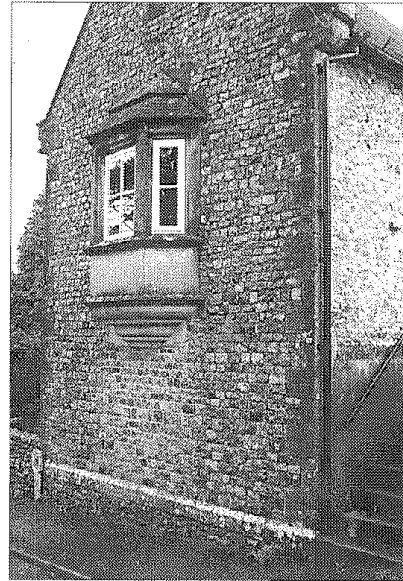
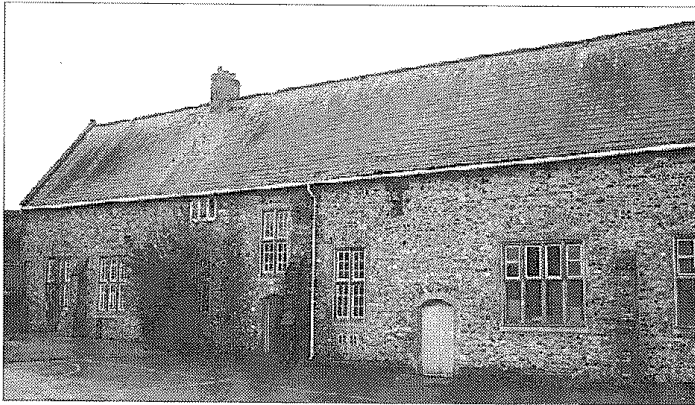
3.1 Chardstock is a village of average size, relatively remote and serving a large rural hinterland. It is closer to the Somerset town of Chard, some three miles to the north, than Axminster five miles to the south. There are three features of the built environment that link it more closely to the neighbouring county;

- extensive use of Ham Hill stone, especially in dressings
- raised gables with stone copings, sometimes stepped
- extensive use of Bridgwater pantiles, especially in 19th century cottages or where replacing former thatch

3.2 The Parish Church in its large churchyard with extravagant lychgate is the dominant feature, but almost opposite is the almost equally impressive group of school, school house and massive hall, the last having an 1856 datestone. Adjoining are pleasantly scaled rustic cottage groups with typical small gabled porches supported by ornamental brackets. Everywhere is evidence of stonemasonry skills and lavish roof treatment with ornamental bargeboards, decorative ridge tiles and finials.

3.3 Apart from the Victorian formality, the layout of much of the village is of scattered informal groups with no well-established building lines. Some dwellings have direct street frontage, others are set well back behind walls, and still others with their axis at right angles to the main carriageway; the best example being Victor Place, a particularly attractive terraced group of four cottages, mainly thatched.





(Left and above) Several views of the remarkable mid 19th century complex of buildings now partly occupied by the village school

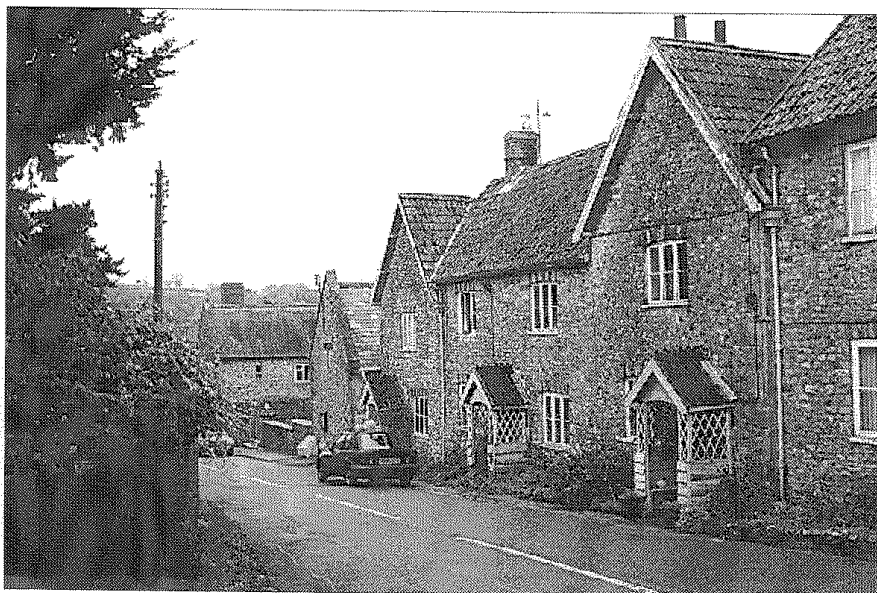
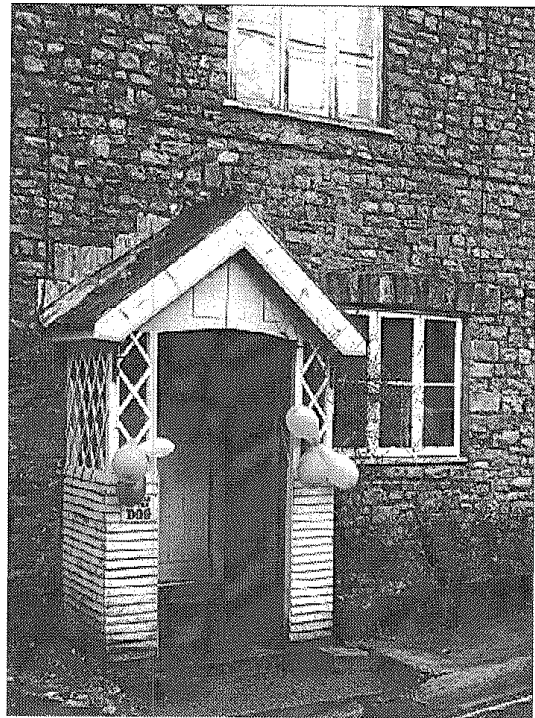
4 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

4.1 As already noted (2.3), the majority of mature trees are close to the village centre with a predominance of evergreen species. There are some exceptionally fine individual specimens, for example the massive cedar at the western end of the churchyard which is a particularly prominent and clearly visible feature when approaching the village from the west. Other good specimens are mostly elsewhere within the churchyard and the adjoining extensive grounds of Chardstock Court, both of which provide a large measure of tree cover, as well as shelter, immediately to the south and west of the village centre.

4.2 Elsewhere tree cover is much more scattered, and mainly confined to hedgerow boundaries or overgrown vacant sites where naturalised deciduous species predominate. Some dwellings have significant numbers of trees and shrubs, including ornamental species within their curtilage. Apart from the churchyard, there is no open space with public access within the conservation area.

5 HARD SURFACES

5.1 Within the time constraints of the survey there appeared to be a distinct lack of any natural floorscape within any part of the village, although the churchyard was not fully inspected. A small area of rounded cobbles at the entrance to the George Inn was the only incidence noted.



(top right and above) A well-preserved late 19th century cottage group with original porches and fenestration. Note the double-Roman clay tiles, typical of those manufactured at Bridgwater until the 1950's

6 BUILDING MATERIALS AND ORNAMENT

6.1 Chardstock is characterised by the extensive use of chert rubblestone, much of which is roughly squared (knapped) and neatly coursed, apparently more commonly seen here than elsewhere in Devon, although also used to equally good effect in the neighbouring town of Chard. This would suggest a number of locally based stonemasons with skills which appeared to particularly flourish in the mid to late 19th century. Hamstone from the Ham Hill Quarries (about ten miles to the northeast) which also flourished during the same period, is extensively used for dressings and some is carved or moulded, as for example detail to the spandrels of the neo-Tudor entrance to the Primary School (c.1850). The 19th century was also an era of importance for the Bridgwater tile industry and many roofs in Chardstock have the characteristic forms of pantiles (mostly double-Roman) from this source. It is of interest to note that transport by canal was once possible from Bridgwater to Chard, and some may have originally been carried for most of the journey by this route.

6.2 Throughout the village are examples of more traditional vernacular building methods with random rubblestone, also mainly chert, or with some evidence of cob on stone footings

although this combination is limited hereabouts in comparison to much of Devon. Thatch is quite widespread with at least ten examples within the conservation area. Cornish and Welsh slate is also widely used, especially on the larger buildings newly erected or modified during the 19th century, for example St. Andrew's House and The Old Vicarage. The Parish Church roof has plain tiles, some with "fishscale" ornament.

6.3 There has been a reasonable survival of traditional carpentry which primarily consists of casement windows and timber ledged and braced doors especially in the plainer cottages. There are several varieties of attractive rustic porches.

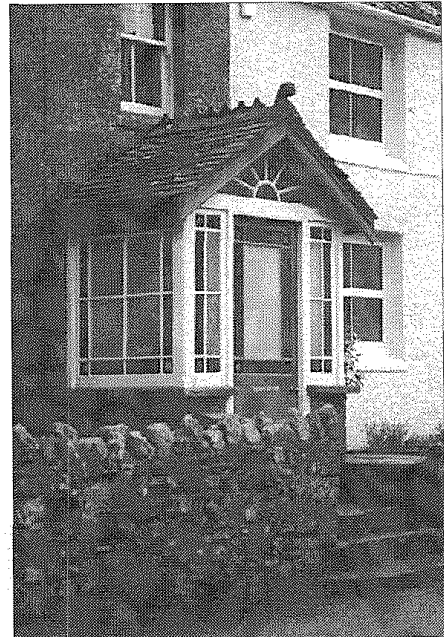
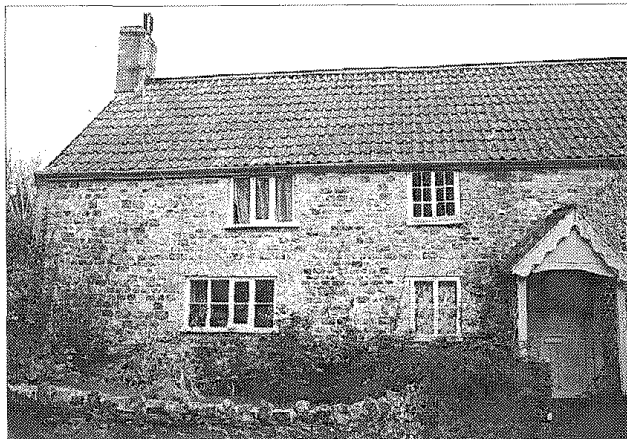
6.4 As seen elsewhere, there are instances of modern replacement with dark-stained doors and windows becoming more commonplace. Unless this can be controlled by legislation little can be done to prevent it, as strong arguments are advanced in favour of greater durability and lower maintenance costs. It can look tolerably acceptable if whole buildings are given similar treatment with a uniform pattern of fenestration that imitates the original form. Victoria Place has not suffered unduly in respect but if applied individually and too extensively to single dwellings in other short terraces that typify Chardstock, the altered appearance would look incongruous. Fortunately this has not so far occurred.



(above and overleaf) Farmhouse and cottage views; the thatch with decorated ridge, pantiles, raised stone coping to gables, and Ham Hill stone dressings are more typical of Somerset. Roughcast render, pebbledash and patterned glazing to porches are typical late 19th / early 20th century features



(above and previous page) Farmhouse and cottage views; the thatch with decorated ridge, pantiles, raised stone coping to gables, and Ham Hill stone dressings are more typical of Somerset. Roughcast render, pebbledash and patterned glazing to porches are typical late 19th / early 20th century features



6.5 There are instances where 19th century and earlier timber has been effectively restored, including what is apparently a former shopfront. This is important where there are important building groups. Once original doors and windows begin to be lost the symmetry and proportions of the group as a whole easily becomes distorted. The retention of original timber, mostly painted white, is of particular importance in those parts of the village where an atmosphere of Victorian formality remains.

6.6 It is noted that most chimneys have brick uppers but some have nicely finished square-section stone-dressed lower portions. The massive shouldered external lateral stack at the George Inn is an important feature at the heart of the village and the most obvious indicator that the village has buildings of considerable antiquity.



7 STREET FURNITURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

7.1 There are few noteworthy specific features. Nevertheless the church lychgate and school entrance with walled play area contribute much to the street scene. The gate piers and driveway overhung by trees leading to Chardstock Court add character, as do the many boundary and retaining walls in chert rubblestone with an impressive length bounding the north of the churchyard and extending considerably further west.

7.2 There is an important visual relationship in the juxtaposition of some lengths of wall to adjoining buildings. The many different alignments and proximity or otherwise of buildings to the carriageway, not to mention the often important relationship of trees and lesser landscape features makes an important contribution to the overall quality of built environment. As much here as elsewhere the alignment of most of the roads within the village are slightly curving, just sufficient to close views and add visual interest.



Various street views show the spacious and informal layout that typifies much of the historic part of the village. (above right and top right) show Chard Street; (above left and top left) show views towards and away from the village centre near Orchard Close

8 SYNOPSIS OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS

8.1 Chardstock has a good distribution of listed buildings scattered throughout the conservation area. There are eighteen entries totalling some 23 buildings in all. Most are pre 19th century cottages and farmhouses, but includes the important mid-nineteenth century group centred on the Primary School.

8.2 **St. Andrew's Church** was originally built in the 15th century with an embattled south aisle and faced with small squared-off stones. Like so many churches in East Devon it was largely rebuilt in the 19th century. This was carried out in 1863-64 and the architect was J.M.Allen. The large west tower has a pierced parapet and a conical topped polygonal turret. Internally, there are typical Victorian restoration features. The transept roof has patterned tiles, and the piers of alternating shape are of Hamstone, with some black marble shafts in the chancel.

8.3 Opposite the church is **St Andrew's School** (1850, enlarged 1885). This is a substantial and cohesive group consisting of large hall to the rear and including the former school house. There are attractive gables, and projecting wings, one with an oriel. West of the church is the **Old Vicarage** - a typical 19th century Tudor revival building with gables and stone mullioned windows.

8.4 **Chardstock Court**, which faces the church, was formerly known as Court House Farm. It was once a manor house of the Bishops of Salisbury. The early plan is L-shaped, and is mainly early 14th century, with the east-west range probably originally an open hall. The north-south range is two storey also with original features; newel stair, doorways, and a blocked cinquefoil oculus in the north gable. There is a trefoil-headed upper window and stud and panel partition on the upper floor. The medieval building was re-fashioned in the 16th century. Sadly a detached range with a 15th century open timber-framed roof was destroyed c.1930 and the present building is completely obscured by trees from the rest of the village.

8.5 The impressive **George Inn** was probably the former Church House. It has long thatched elevations much of which has medieval origins with a smoke-blackened jointed cruck roof, early Tudor mullioned windows with four-arched lights each side of the entrance and a large lateral stack. In the room to the right of the passage is an internal jetty, with linenfold panelling on the other side. There is a massive fireplace with the lintel spanning the entire width of the house.

8.6 **Chardstock House** (now St. Andrew's House) has a long Georgian front, but is built on to a pre- Reformation core.



Important Buildings outside the Conservation Area

8.7 In a parish as ancient and extensive as Chardstock there are many important buildings scattered throughout the parish. **Tytherleigh Court** (former New Inn House) is another medieval house with a later projecting front wing. There is smoke blackening in the roof, and the principal truss is a true cruck with a double chamfer running over arched bracing. In the chamber over the hall is a prestigious Beer stone fireplace, decorated with three carved roundels; the centre one is carved with the date 1594, and another with the initials A.P.

8.8 Of farms in the parish, **Coaxdon, Tytherleigh, Woonton Ridge, Cotley and Hook**, appear in the records of the time of Henry II. **Woonton Farm** (north-west of the village) has a late 17th century front of rubblestone, seven bays, the lower windows with stone mullions and transoms, flat-headed arches of dressed stone and large keystones.

8.9 **Coaxdon Hall** was the birthplace of Sir Simonds D'Ewes (1612 -1650), the antiquary and author. Much of the original house still remains. **Lower Ridge** (one mile northwest of the village) is a former 17th century farmhouse, almost symmetrical, with walls in coursed square blocks of flint with Beer stone dressings. Windows are three and four light mullions with ovolo and hollow mouldings. Here too is a massive fireplace extending almost across the whole width of the house; a feature typical of this area. There are many good 17th century fittings with sgraffito plasterwork in two fireplaces and many broadly chamfered cross-beams.

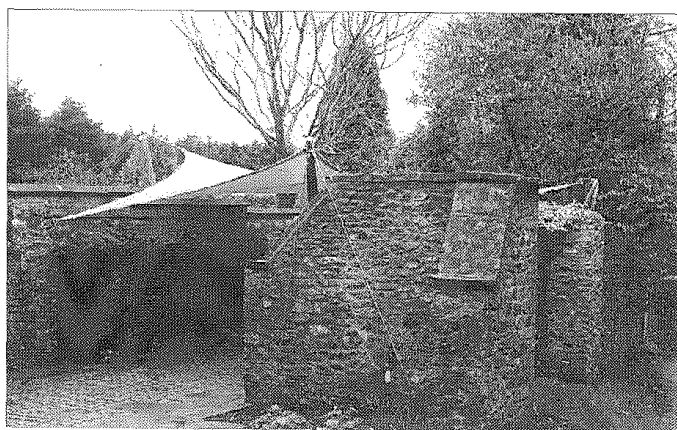
8.10 At **Holy City** there are **Old Orchard and Whitehouse**. At **Ridge** there is a T-shaped house with a great barn forming the shank of the T.

[Note : The above details are partly derived from extracts of *The Buildings of England : Devon*, (revised second edition 1989) by Bridget Cherry & Nikolaus Pevsner, published by Penguin Books, and from details supplied in the "green-back" documents published as part of the Department of National Heritage Statutory Lists].

9 FEATURES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

9.1 Among the main elements which contribute to the essential qualities of the conservation area are the following:

- a village of considerable individuality with an element of Victorian formality in the group of public buildings at the centre
- a wide representation of traditional building materials with particularly good examples of 19th century craftsmanship in stone
- a number of fine specimen trees, as well as the considerable tree cover surrounding Chardstock Court
- a considerable number of fine buildings of medieval origin not only within the conservation area but within the parish as a whole
- several good examples of well preserved original architectural detail especially 19th century porches and roof and gable-end detail
- extensive boundary walls almost all built of local chert rubblestone providing a cohesive quality to the built environment
- a widely varied alignment and juxtaposition of buildings and intervening spaces, in a scattered distribution along roads of varying width and alignment. This enlivens visual interest and provides many vistas within a street scene that almost invariably provides a pleasing sense of enclosure
- the village is in an elevated situation that also provides occasional glimpses or more extensive views of the surrounding pastoral landscape and distant wooded ridges



An innovative car port at the Old Vicarage combines contemporary and traditional materials effectively



The two cottages shown are just outside the southern part of the conservation area. An extension of the present boundary could be considered. Note the pastoral countryside with small woodlands and hedgerow trees which typifies the village setting.

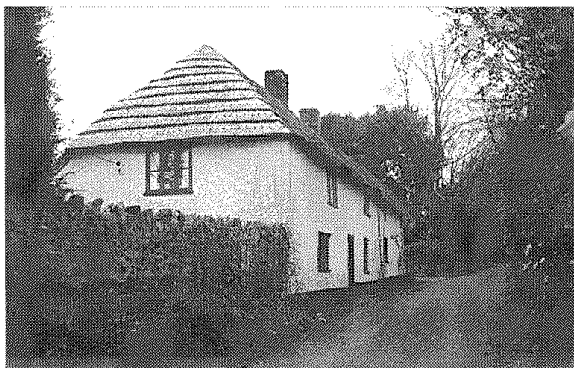
10 LOSS OF CHARACTER AND INTRUSION

10.1 The following factors are tending to cause intrusion or some loss of character within the conservation area:

- the presence of overhead power lines throughout the conservation area
- several undeveloped open spaces which have become overgrown. At present there appears to be no pressure for development. These would appear to offer scope for new development that reflects the requirement to protect or enhance the character of the conservation area.
- some loss of original door and window detail in prominent locations and a tendency for replacements to reflect convenience at the expense of visual integrity.
- under-use and some deterioration of building fabric, especially the extensive school buildings



Chard Street, The Old House dating from the 17th century. (left) the south gable with partially renewed thatch of unusual style; (above) north gable with vertical two-window range



11 SUMMARY

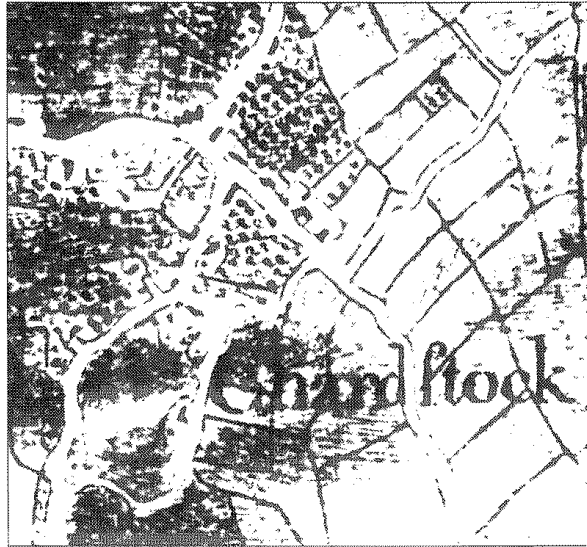
11.1 Chardstock is a typically rural village with a largely unchanging atmosphere and part of a parish covering an extensive hinterland that contains many more excellent examples of early vernacular building. The village development limit appears to be of sufficient size to ensure that pressure for development within the conservation area is fairly minimal. This is reflected in several vacant sites within the older part of the village where infilling has not yet occurred and helps to retain the sense of rural isolation which is part of its character.

11.2 The considerable variation in types of historic building within the conservation area reflect the various changes that have characterised the development of such villages over several centuries. Any adaptation needs to be looked at in terms of the *use of materials, their source, current availability, and scope for imitating their method of construction* should this be considered necessary.

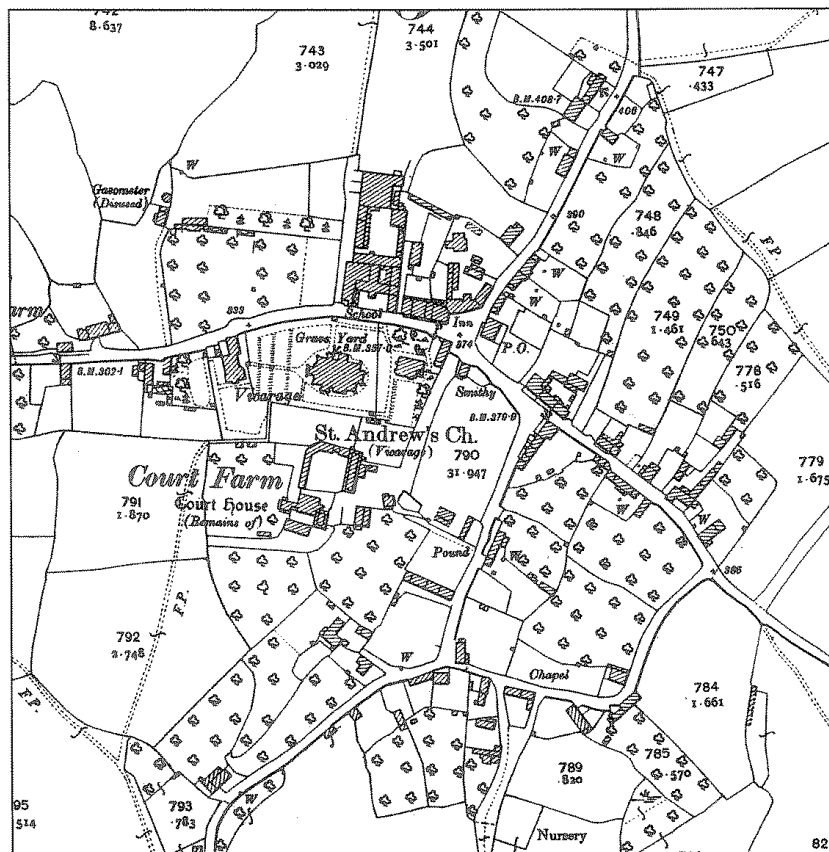
11.3 Chardstock contains typical examples of the building techniques of each of the past four to five centuries, and there is clearly scope for some research into past building methods as a means of discovering the most appropriate procedure for conserving surviving features. One example is reed ceilings that are known to survive in this area, but when renovation of the whole building occurs the original ceiling is all too easily lost because of a lack of knowledge by professionals and contractors alike as to the best means of restoration. Likewise, similar problems can occur where the question of retention of traditional carpentry, and repair, cleaning, refacing or re-pointing of stonework arises. This raises the question of whether historic buildings grants should be made available to secure individual *components of a building as the need arises rather than for complete renovation.*

11.4 The landscape setting and wider historic context are also important considerations and some further parts of the village, most notably the mill and cottage groups south of the present boundary of the conservation area, can with some justification be considered for inclusion within the conservation area at a later stage.

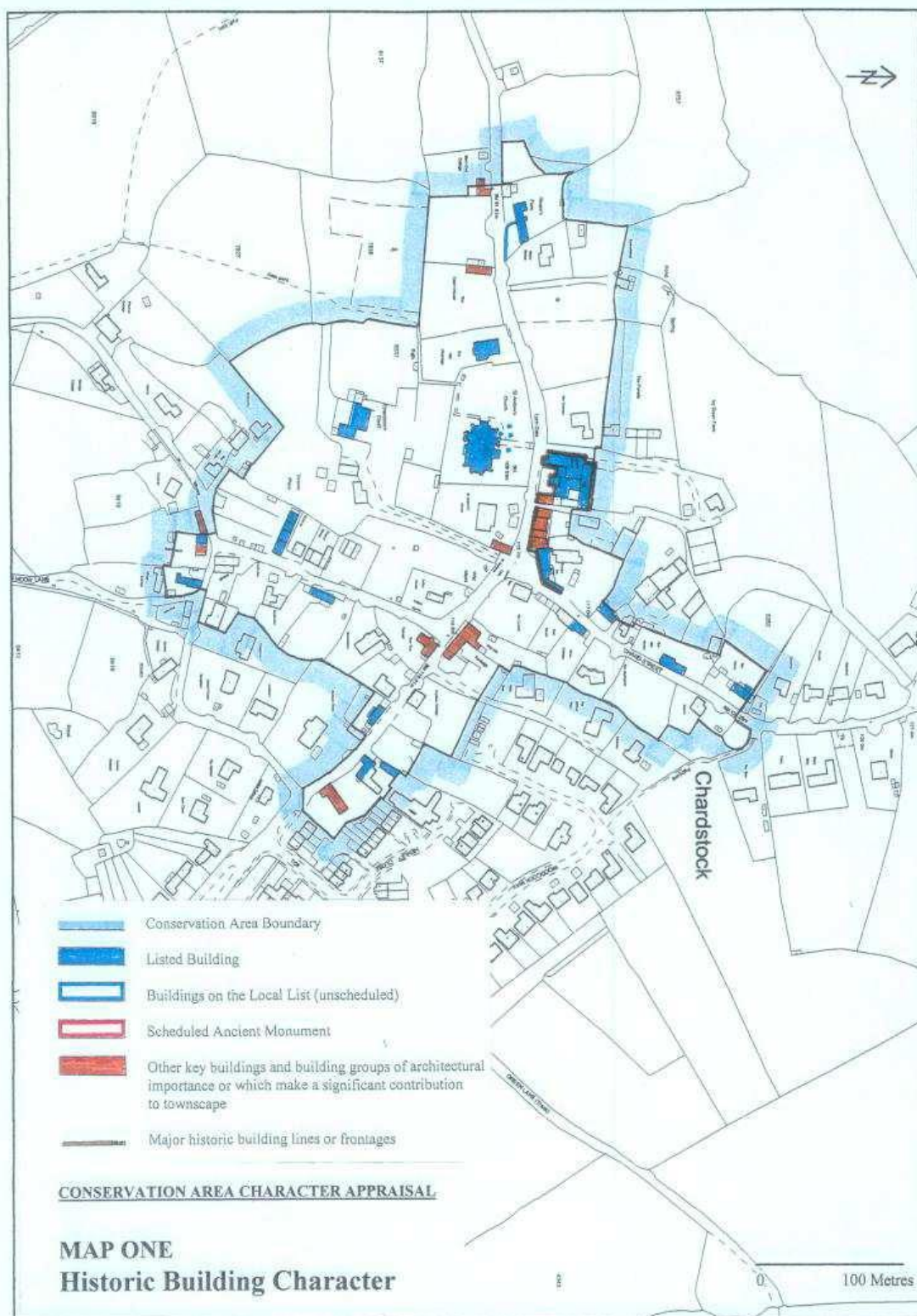
HISTORIC MAPS



1805 Devon County Survey:
Scale: originally 3 inches to
the mile (scale may be
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report)

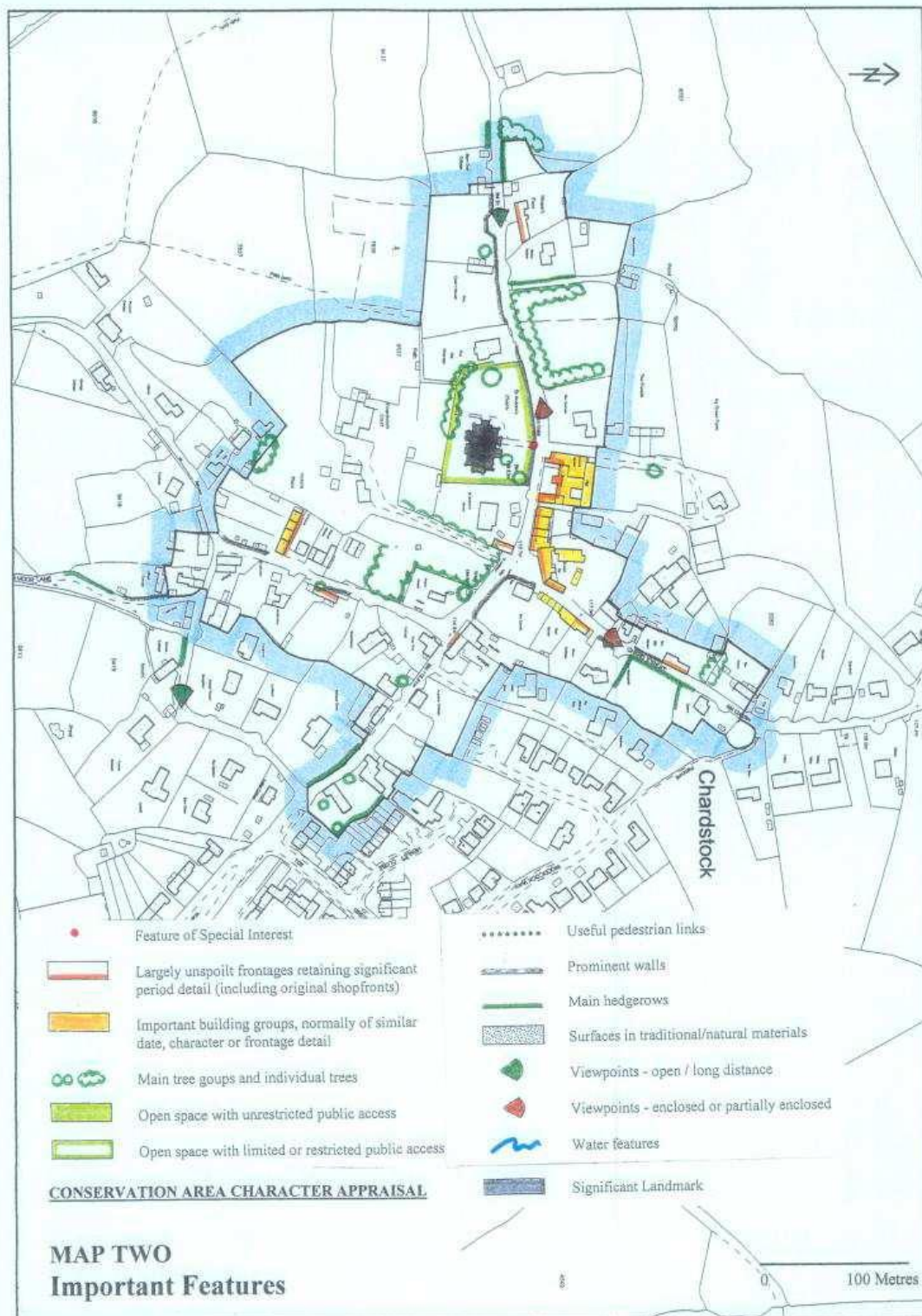


c.1905 Ordnance Survey Second Edition. Scale originally 25 inches to the mile (scale may be altered for the purpose of
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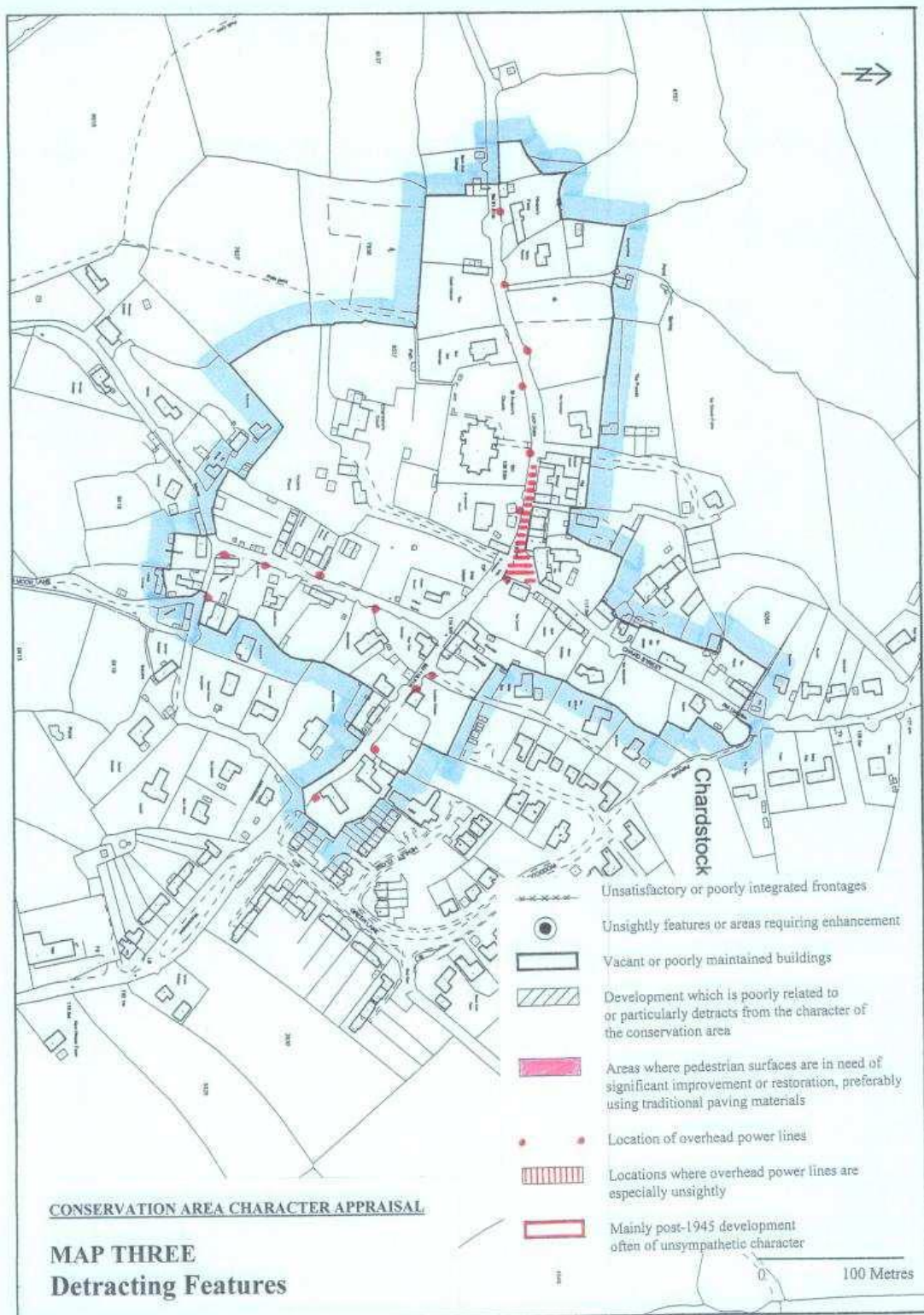
Chardstock Conservation Area
East Devon District Council

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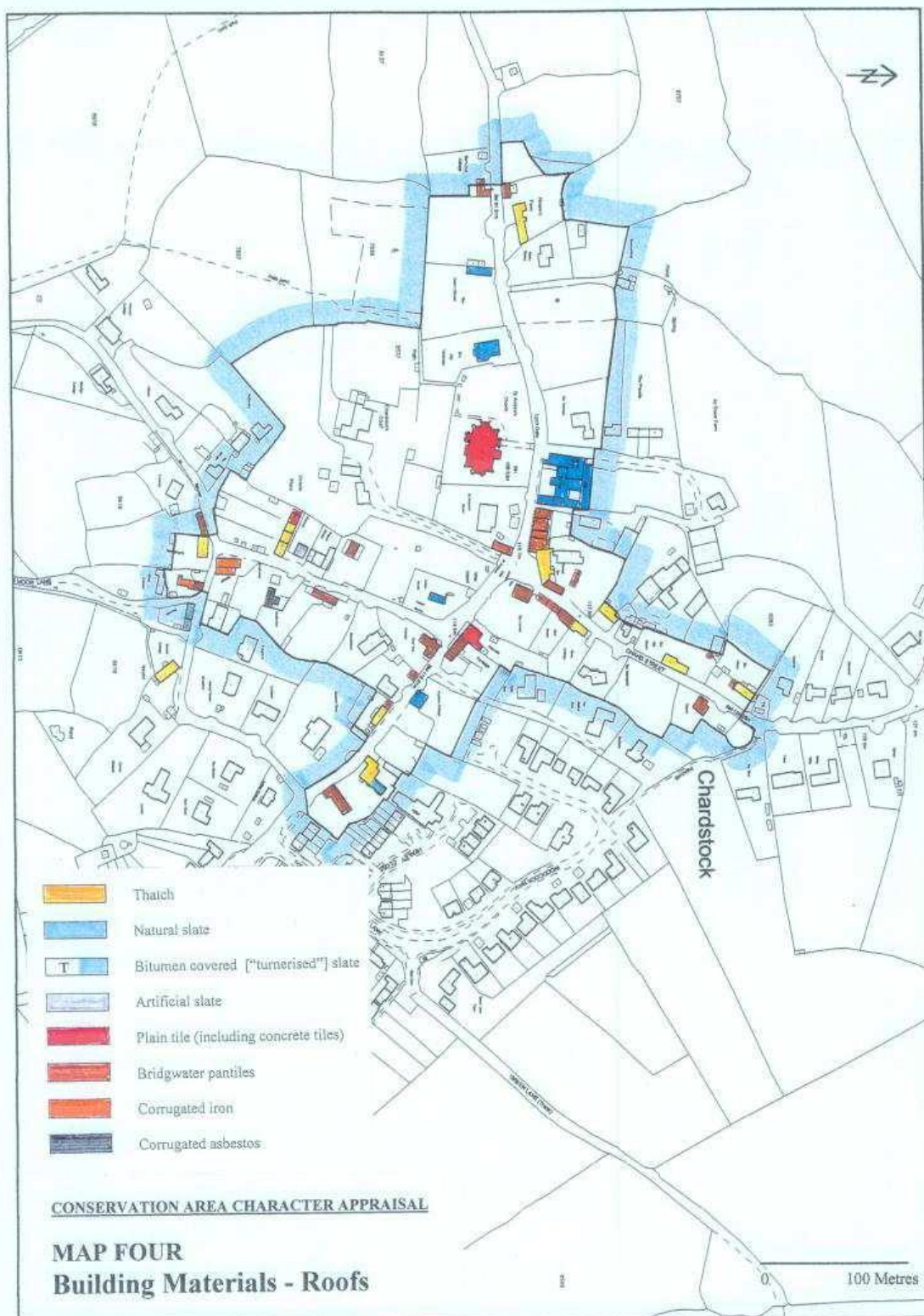
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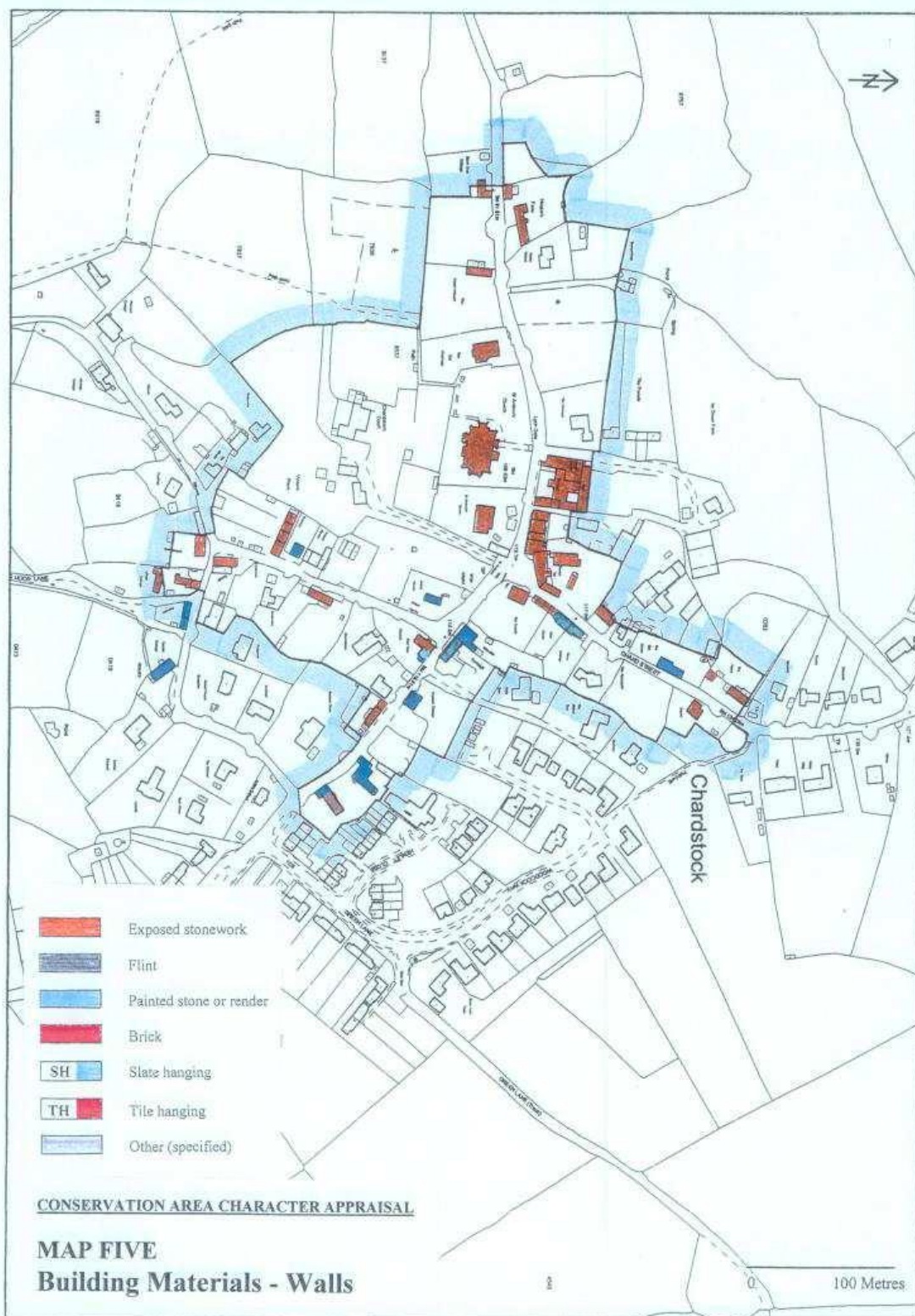
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Purpose of the Review

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 Chardstock Conservation Area.

- The gable wall of St Andrew's School has suffered minor structural problems recently. The top section of the chert gable had to be taken down and reconstructed. The repairs have been finished to a high standard using lime-based binding mortar and re-using the existing stone. Although the mortar joints appear a little stark at present these will weather down over time. The school has recently been closed following the building of a new school to the east of the village centre. The original school has been bought by a local developer and plans have yet to be made for its future.



Recent repairs to St Andrew's School.



The lych gate is in a poor state of repair and needs attention and decoration.

- The lych gate which is in a prominent road site position in the centre of the village requires redecoration as the paint on the supporting roof structure is peeling. If water penetrates the timber the structural frame could suffer from wet rot.
- On the western approach to the village a flint and chert retaining wall is beginning to collapse. As well as a safety issue the loss of this wall would be regrettable. Conservation Area Consent may be required to take down the wall and rebuild it.
- Addition of a new dwelling adjacent Ivydene Cottage. This appears to sit quite comfortably within the conservation area and has been constructed using traditional materials and finishes.

- The Old House in Chard Street has now been re-thatched in the traditional manner with a wrap-over ridge. The previous thatch had been layered in distinct bands which gave an unconventional appearance.

Potential review of conservation area boundary.

The existing conservation area boundary covers the entire historic core of the settlement. Development outside the boundary is on the whole modern and does not meet the criteria for inclusion within the conservation area. However the cluster of buildings centred around the river crossing including the former corn mill (now Mill House) and Mill Cottage provide an important and very attractive gateway into Chardstock and could be considered for inclusion in the conservation area. This aspect of conservation area review will be fully considered during the consultation process.



Mill House and Mill Cottage are unlisted buildings but form an important building group by the river crossing.

Principle reasons for erosion or changes to conservation area character.

- Chardstock remains one of the most unaltered historic villages in East Devon. On the whole recent development has been very limited with only one new dwelling and some extensions to properties. There are sites within the conservation area and built-up area boundary that may be proposed for development in the future but the significance of these open areas and their contribution to the character of the conservation area would need to be considered before accepting the principle of development.
- Minor incremental changes can have a significant impact upon the conservation area where the character is very distinctive. Lack of maintenance of chert walls and indeed inappropriate repairs with excessive cement mortar can have a damaging impact.
- While there is no statutory control over replacement windows in many unlisted buildings the pressure to replace traditional timber windows with PVCu alternatives remains. The removal of traditional windows is the single most apparent change to the conservation area in recent years. There is greater awareness of the environmental impact of PVCu production and waste and while it is hoped that timber replacement windows are seen as the more sustainable option the marketing drives of the major PVCu window companies continue. In the light of this it is anticipated that a proposal to serve an Article 4 Direction to control