



St Swithun's Church from Greenway

1. HISTORIC AND TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1.1 A large nucleated village on the edge of the extensive Woodbury Common and below the late Iron Age hill fort of Woodbury Castle over a mile to the east. It is an ancient settlement, probably founded in the late 7th century when east Devon was first colonised by the Saxons. By the 11th century it was a royal manor and had a parish guild, and in the 13th century had a market and regular fairs.

1.2 The village is informally grouped in a slight hollow on gently rising ground, and there is much housing provided by the Rolle

Estate, who are still substantial landowners in the area. The earliest dates from 1877 in the Broadway.

2. SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 The conservation area, like the village is irregular in shape. The pattern of development appears ancient, and is pleasingly informal on a gentle mainly south facing slope. Woodbury Common is a large area of heath and pines on a ridge some two miles to the east and the iron age earthwork of Woodbury Castle at one of the highest points overlooks the village.

2.2 The fine 15th century red sandstone tower of St Swithun's parish church is a dominant landmark both from within the village and from certain vantage points in the surrounding mainly pastoral countryside.



Cottage groups known as Cobblers and The Teeds have variable frontages with loss of original detail, although some improvements have been sensitively integrated.

2.3 In recognition of the special character of Woodbury, the conservation area was first designated in January 1986 and contains some 43 listed buildings covered by 26 list entries. Their location is shown on map 1.



Early nineteenth century grade II cottages in Flower Street.

formal in layout and centred on the Old Court House, whilst to the southeast there are several good building groups of various dates (mainly late 18th to early 20th century) and with several different alignments to the carriageway. This feature together with frontage walls, railings, hedges trees and gate-piers creates a particularly attractive streetscape.



The view southwest from the village centre. Overhead power lines are prominent. The profile of buildings in this view would have changed little over the past century although some later porches have been added.

3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

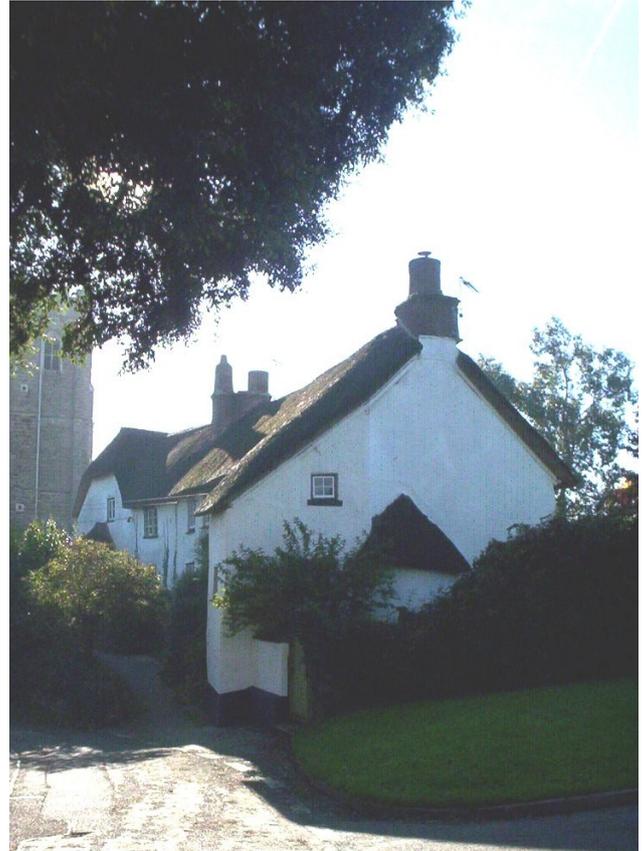
3.1 Development has formed along two axes. the main one runs southwest to northeast and has two separate focal points. The main one is the commercial centre of the village and fronts a wide square bordered by trees to the west. The second is further north with modest cottage groups around a triangular green, and the primary school and Christ Church close by.

3.2 The second axis runs northwest to southeast, and is now the main traffic route. This too has two main concentrations of early development; that to the northwest is

3.3 A further centre of interest is around the Parish Church, including the churchyard and the cottage groups which surround it and extending southeast as a sizeable village green with public access. This is a tranquil backwater with several good examples of vernacular building and a fairly large number both of mature and young trees. These are both individual specimens and in groups; the most important of which is some 50 to 100 metres northeast of the church and well complements the built environment.



The north side of the village square has a fine group of trees behind grey limestone walls. Overhead power lines are very prominent. The red telephone box should be retained, but seating could be reorganised and other incidental clutter, including power lines, removed as part of a wider enhancement scheme.



Church Stile Cottages close to St Swithun's Church.



Church Step Cottages; the glazed black pantiles are of a type more commonly encountered in East Anglia.

4 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

- 4.1 The important relationship between church, churchyard, and large village green described in the preceding paragraph ensures that there is a sizeable area of accessible open space at the very heart of the village. This makes for a very comfortable and strongly identifiable landscape crossed by several paths, and surrounding it, a largely unchanged pattern of development with few recent intrusions.
- 4.2 Apart from the much smaller green further north, attractive in its own right with significant changes in level, there are few other parts of the village with communal access.



Woodbury village green looking north towards the church.

5 HARD SURFACES

5.1 The extent of any original surfaces is very limited, and although a cursory survey was carried out, none of note were recorded, apart from a small section of cobbles fronting the restaurant in Gilbrook.

6 BUILDING MATERIALS AND ORNAMENT

6.1 As with so many of the villages in East Devon there is an unusually rich assortment of traditional building materials to be found. Painted render facing stone or cob on stone footings is most common finish although there are probably examples of stucco on brick. Brick is also commonplace, especially in buildings of the late 18th to late 19th century with some good examples, even in walls.



18th and late 19th century houses in Broadway with exceptionally lavish decoration.

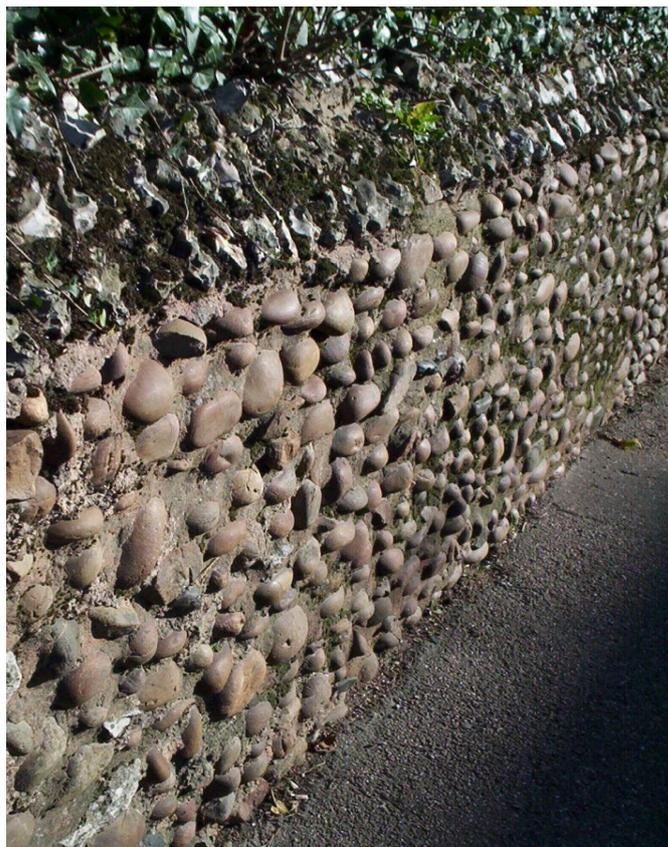


Gilbrook Cottages, an updated range of 17th century cottages close to the heart of the village.



A good example of a traditional shop front in the village centre.

6.2 Also more widely seen than elsewhere, in fact almost a curiosity peculiar to Woodbury are walls constructed of water-worn boulders, roughly coursed, mainly in boundary walls. There are even examples where quite small pebbles have been used to considerable decorative effect.



One of the many distinctive water-worn boulder (or 'Budleigh bun') walls which are a particular feature of the village often capped in flint.



In addition to many water-worn boulder walls this un-rendered cob wall enclosing the church yard is a good survival of a vernacular tradition.

6.3 Roof materials are mainly slate, but with some good ranges of thatch. Decorative ridge tiles sometimes occur and Bridgwater pantiles are more commonly seen than in many East Devon villages. There are one or two examples of black glazed pantiles. These may also have originated from Bridgwater, but are more characteristic of East Anglia. There are also examples of plain tiles.



Thorn Cottages, formerly thatched, now with black glazed pantiles.



There are many good examples of double-hung sash windows with glazing bars.

6.4 A noteworthy feature of Woodbury is the generally good survival rate of traditional carpentry with both double-hung sash windows with glazing bars, usually in the larger

classical buildings, and of plain casement windows in many of the cottages. The doors also are either traditionally ledged and braced vertical planks in the plainer cottages or of considerable refinement - panelled with fixed square and oblong lights, or with fanlights over - in the larger houses. Sometimes there is a pleasing combination .

6.5 Ornament consists mainly of decorative bargeboards, metal gates and railings, hoods and canopies, and some polychromatic brickwork, particularly of mid-late Victorian date. There is a good example of early 20th century Arts and Crafts at Fairfield where the style is almost a revival of medieval vernacular.

7 STREET FURNITURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

7.1 Woodbury is not rich in early features, though many walls are in a rich variety of materials of different shape and texture with grey limestone, or as already noted, boulders predominating. The retaining wall enclosing the churchyard and fine brick wall at Oakhayes are further good examples.

7.2 A fine set of metal railings embossed "Crook, Woodbury" encloses the village green, and a metal bollard near Church Steps Cottages may also have been forged locally. In the village centre a K6 cast-iron telephone kiosk survives, standing out well against a rich backdrop of trees. Just

beyond is a metal seat with an attractively embossed cast-iron plate announcing "anyone found damaging these seats will be prosecuted". The bus shelter is a simple stone structure built out from the grey limestone wall that together with the trees behind it frames this side of the village square, and works effectively.



A good survival of an early twentieth century shop front in the centre of the village.

7.3 On the opposite side is a good original shopfront with a plain but appropriate fascia. Above, the fading letters announcing "The Princess Separator" is of obvious historic interest if only to encourage speculation as to what is being referred to.

8 SYNOPSIS OF LISTED BUILDINGS

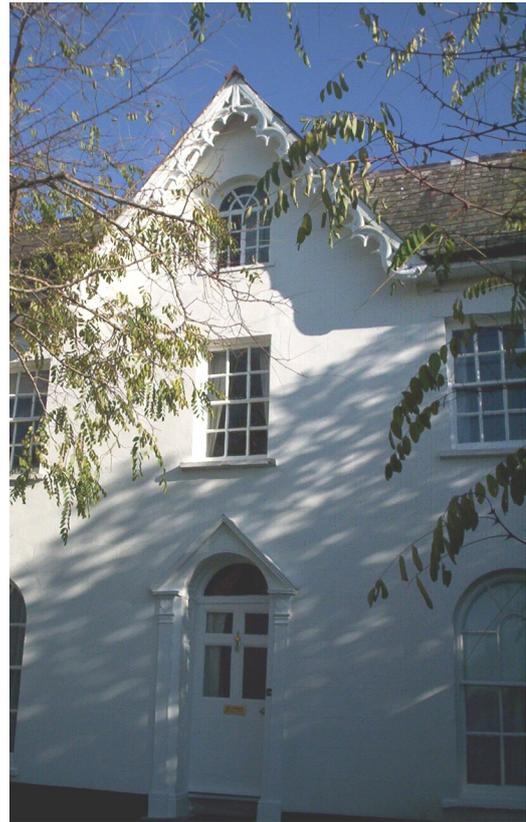
8.1 St.Swithin's Church was rebuilt in 1409 with the aisles completed c.1530. There are wagon roofs in the chancel and south porch. A long serving vicar from 1846 to 1898 the Rev.J.Loveband Fulford who started to extensively restore the church from about 1852, "ruinously" in Hoskins' view affecting the medieval screen, choir stalls and stained glass and removing the box pews, west gallery. He was later assisted by his architect son R.M.Fulford in the early 1890's, when the box pews and west gallery were removed and the east window replaced with glass from the Kempe studios. The younger Fulford also restored other churches in the area.



St Swithin's Church elevated over much of the surrounding village. This is therefore the most prominent landmark building.

8.2 Christ Church was established in the village as early as 1851 in protest against the high church practices of the vicar. The architect was William Phillips and it opened in 1861.

8.3 There are several elegant houses in late Georgian style, for example Claremont Cottages (1839) and Rosemary Cottage (1833) with an elaborate porch of re-used materials, possibly of marine origin. In Globe Hill, the Old Court House 1860-61 in red brick with a 5 window front, was built as a magistrates court and police station. In Greenway, is the impressive brick Woodbury House (1781) with tripartite windows, built for Philip Lempriere, former Attorney General for Jersey. Oakhayes, a stuccoed Regency house with a 3-bay front and Tuscan porch in landscaped small grounds, was built c.1830 for the Rev. Francis Filmer.



Bixley Haven, Broadway: early nineteenth century, again with grand decorative refinement.



Rosemary Cottage with two wooden dolphins (possibly seventeenth century) adorning the unusual porch.



Gilbrook House. An 1800 re-modelling of an earlier cob building.

The Primary School (1870) was by R.M.Fulford on a site given by the Rolle Estate.



Woodbury Primary School: a good example of Victorian school architecture. The roof tiles have been replaced recently faithfully replicating decorative effects.

8.4 On the northern outskirts of the village and beyond the boundary of the conservation area is the former Vicarage of 1849 (architect, John Hayward). It has an irregular frontage of stone, partly re-used from a barn, and believed to have belonged to the Vicar's Choral. Some re-used medieval windows at the rear are probably from the former Priest's House.

9 FEATURES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

9.1 There are aspects of the Woodbury conservation area which are particularly worthy of retention, and among these are the following:

-a pleasing informality and spaciousness of layout with good open space breaks and several mature tree groups closing vistas.

-a wide variety of building types of varying sizes and periods and reflecting different social functions providing great historic and visual interest.

-several separate building groups of great quality from 17th century vernacular to late 18th/late 19th century classic and Gothic revival; some with idiosyncratic detailing.



A nineteenth century brick boundary wall at the Priory, Greenway; an example of innovative detailing.

-an especially rich variety of building materials and use of ornament; the use of water-worn boulders in walls and buildings is a particular feature of the village.

-some buildings and walls of good quality in brick and stucco including boundary and retaining walls, including gate piers and decorative ironwork.

-an overall retention of period detail including original doors, windows and some shopfronts.



Good surviving early nineteenth century casements with decorative glazing bar details.

-some examples of well integrated recent development having regard to the maintenance of a sense of enclosure and respecting the context of or appropriately adapting traditional buildings.

-a good set of iron railings (probably 19th century) made in a local forge.

-a K6 type red telephone kiosk.



Drinking fountain dated 1867 and constructed from local grey limestone.



Recent residential development having regard to the density and scale of traditional building groups in Woodbury.

10 LOSS OF CHARACTER AND INTRUSION AND 11 PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The main elements within the conservation area which are considered to compromise its existing character are:

-overhead power lines throughout the conservation area, but especially prominent at the Square

-intrusive through traffic along the B3179 especially on the approach to the village centre from the northwest

-a somewhat ill-defined centre with separate focal points leading to a lack of cohesion with later infill bearing little relation to the overall historic or architectural context

-some boundary walls in poor condition and in need of appropriate conservation



Overly prominent and incongruous overhead power cables.

There is a small part of the existing conservation area that has been developed quite significantly since the designation of the conservation area in 1986. This development of the land associated with Church View House involved 5 large detached houses which were designed in a manner that is not consistent with the urban grain and character of the conservation area. It is considered that this area no longer meets the criteria by which conservation areas are designated and should be removed from the existing conservation area boundary. The trees on this site would still be offered statutory protection under the designation of a tree preservation order. This omission is indicated on Map 1.

12 SUMMARY

12.1 Whilst Woodbury does not have immediate impact as a settlement of character, there are several parts of the village where a bygone quality survives, for example in traditional shops and small workshops.

12.2 Much character also resides in the Parish Church and its surroundings; in the village school and dissenters' Christ Church, the plain groups of cottages that adjoin them; in the lavish or solid detail of many buildings; and in the larger dwellings often in a landscape setting, some beyond the conservation area, such as the former rectory.

12.3 These are features that add substance to a village that was an important settlement by the 13th century with the 1805 map showing a large built up area almost as extensive as at present. This importance is reflected in the grandeur of the church tower a dominant landmark throughout the village and visually its most unifying feature.

12.4 Future enhancement and development control measures within the conservation area should have particular regard to the importance of the historic layout the apparent rich history of the village and widespread survival of both artisan features as well as examples of sophisticated craftsmanship in wood and stone.

