



Teignbridge District Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Coffinswell

The conservation area boundary as indicated here is for illustrative purposes only, and is not intended to be a true representation of the conservation area as formally adopted. The accurate and definitive conservation area maps can instead be inspected at the main reception area of Teignbridge District Council offices, during normal office hours.

Not all important features of this conservation area are necessarily highlighted here, therefore no omissions that may have been made as part of this appraisal are intended to imply that omitted features that are found to be of interest from future reviews of the document are not of significance in their own right.

Acknowledgements

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Archive information and historic maps were obtained from the Westcountry Studies Library and Devon Records Office in Exeter. The archaeological analysis was informed by the Sites and Monuments Register, maintained by Devon County Council.

Consultations

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1:0 INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Area Character Statement for Coffinswell was endorsed by the Planning Committee on 18 December 2000. Since that time it has been the subject of public consultation, with copies being distributed to the Parish Clerk and many individuals. It has also been available for download from the Teignbridge website - a facility that has proved very popular. The document was discussed at a public meeting in the village in March 2001.

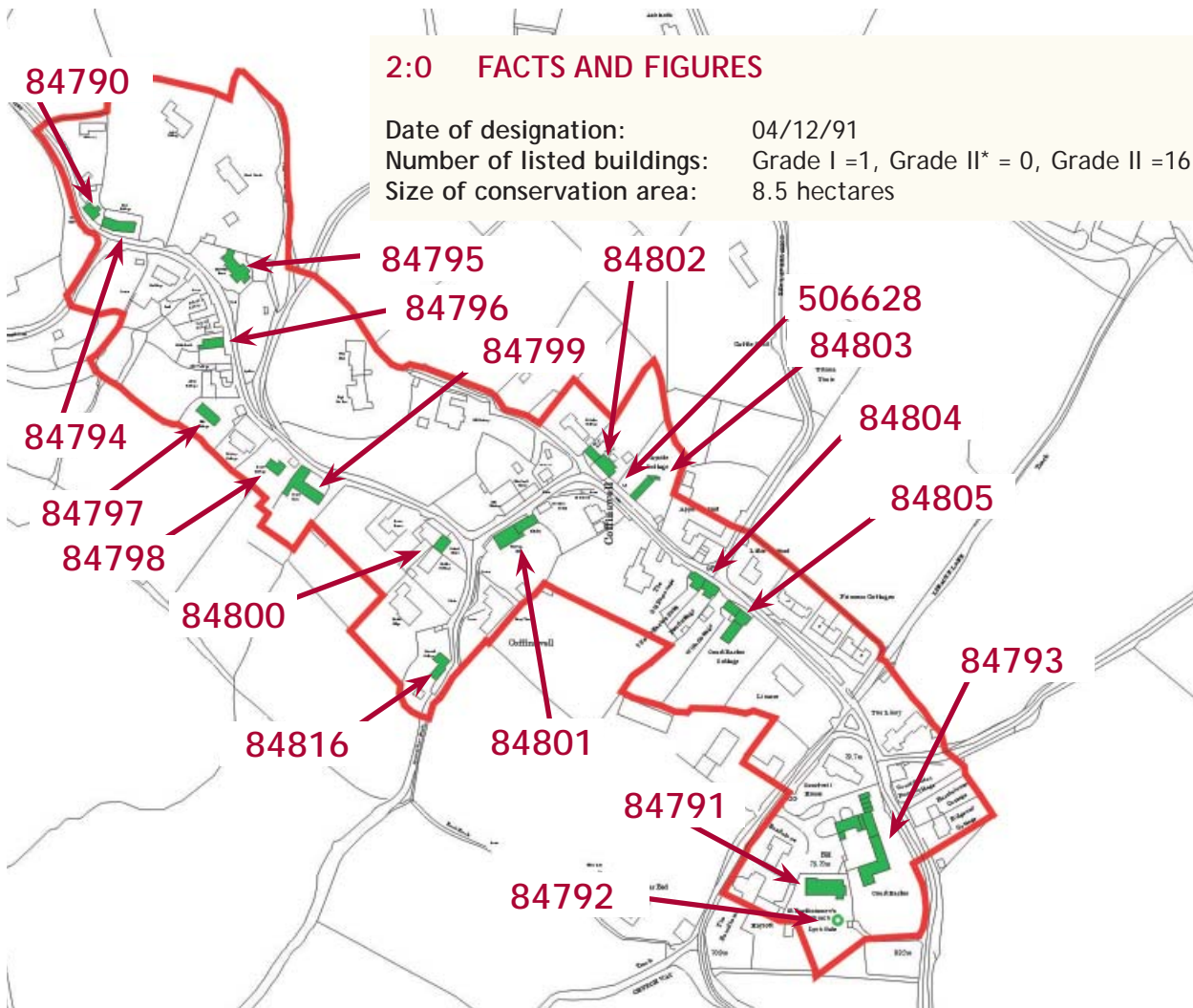
The feedback from the public and other interested bodies has been fully considered and a number of amendments have been made as a result. The new boundary will be confirmed during the next few years and the Parish Council will be informed when that happens.

This completed Character Appraisal has been adopted via the Development Plan Steering Group as a document to support current and future development plans. Consequently its contents are now a material consideration for any planning application which affects the conservation area or its setting. It will be distributed to the utility companies, Devon County Council and other interested parties such as English Heritage. Printed copies will be available for public viewing at Forde House and it may be downloaded from www.teignbridge.gov.uk as well.

A full review of this Character Appraisal was undertaken in September 2009, when its effectiveness was considered and necessary amendments made. Minor changes may be made with the agreement of the Parish meeting and the Ward member. The most up to date version will always be available on the website. Fieldwork was undertaken in 14th September 2009. The revised Appraisal was approved on 22nd March 2010.

2:0 FACTS AND FIGURES

Date of designation:	04/12/91
Number of listed buildings:	Grade I =1, Grade II* = 0, Grade II =16.
Size of conservation area:	8.5 hectares



The green coloured areas of this map represent listed buildings that lie within the Coffinswell conservation area. A summary of these listings may be found in Appendix four.

3.0 LOCATION & GEOLOGY

Coffinswell has developed along the north side of Beers Brook, which feeds into the Aller Brook to the south of Newton Abbot. The village street slopes gently down to the west, the highest point being around the church, at the east end of the settlement. The valley side here varies in slope, being particularly steep in the vicinity of the Old Rectory.

The village is approached via narrow winding lanes with high Devon hedgebanks. Due to the steep slopes to the south, pastoral agriculture prevails here, but some fields to the north are arable. Several farms existed here in the past, but the decline in agriculture is marked by the number whose outbuildings have been converted to houses.

The underlying geology is Lower Permian breccia of the Teignmouth Series, with small deposits of Cretaceous greensand and Eocene gravel to the west. Further breccia deposits of the Watcombe Series lie to the south. No obvious quarries are now evident in the village, but further to the west, Zig-Zag quarry on the Newton Abbot-Torquay road is still producing aggregate from the Aller gravels.

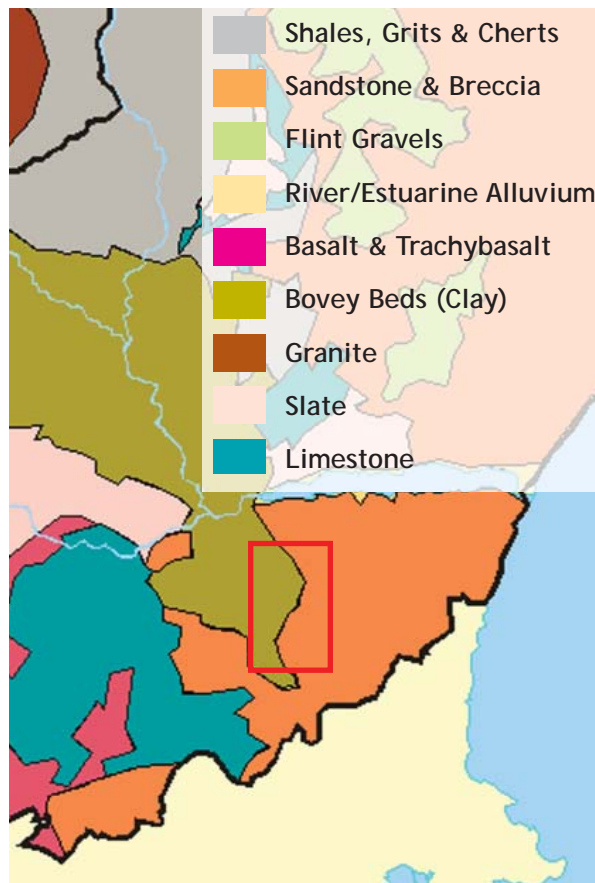


Breccia is the prevalent stone in Coffinswell



Location

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Geology

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4:0 VILLAGE MORPHOLOGY & ARCHAEOLOGY

The historic centre, around the church of St. Bartholomew, dates from before the Norman Conquest. The very simple church, with tower, nave, chancel and one north aisle, suggests that Coffinswell may have been a chapel of ease in a larger parish in the past. A Norman font suggests an earlier building on the site, the present one is 14th and 15th century.

The village plan exhibits a classic Devon layout of grouped medieval farmsteads, dispersed but linked by narrow lanes. The position of the manor in close proximity to the church, beside a water source, (the Beers Brook), is also typical in the County. The medieval field system in the Beer Brook valley, (outside the present conservation area to the south-west), makes a powerful landscape statement. Ancient agricultural terracing is rare in this part of Devon and should be protected where it survives. Traces of the fields survive at the east end of the existing system, but have been ploughed out since 1945. Similarly, traces also exist on the hillslope north-east on Greenaway Lane, to the north of the village. This terracing may date back to the 14th century or earlier, when prior to the crop-failures of the 1330s and the Black Death in the late 1340s, a large population created major pressure on land.

The village developed down the northwards slope of the hill towards the Aller Valley. Most of the settlement took place on the lower side of the road, comprising a number of farm groups, centred on rectangular houses of three room and cross-passage plan. The survival of many of these is an important feature of Coffinswell. A number of lanes led across the valley to the medieval field systems on the other side.

Slight earthworks between the village and the Beers Brook suggest further field boundaries and settlement remains. Reference to the tithe map of 1842 (Appendix 3) shows that several buildings and a road in this area have disappeared since the 19th century.

Doda Well at the west end of the village could be an early medieval holy well. The name is Anglo-Saxon in origin: a personal name.

Until the 1960s, when new houses began to be built and farms were abandoned, the village was a very small community, substantially unchanged since the 19th century. Despite modern infill, much of it retains a distinctively rural character, with tree-lined hedgebanks and old stone walls abounding.

Modern infill has changed the settlement to some extent, especially the area around the church, where barn conversions, modern houses and a sea of gravel have created a rather suburban character.

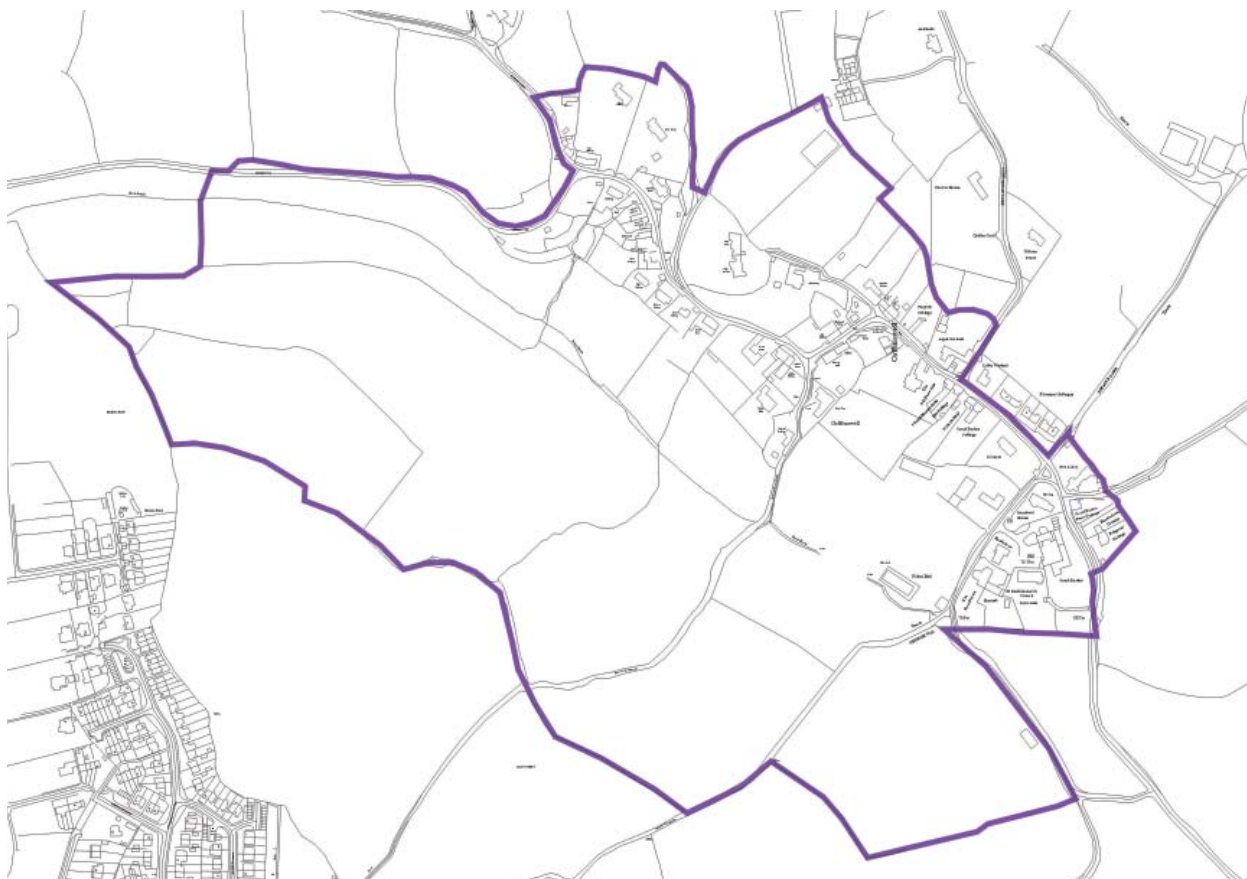


A linear settlement characterised by a loose string of vernacular buildings located close to the village lanes. The proximity of agricultural fields incorporating medieval terracing, is an important character feature

The linear character of Coffinswell within an area of landscape quality offers attractive views within and out of the conservation area. The historic plan is an important part of the villages' character and further infill and surrounding development must be strongly resisted.

- Archaeological remains in Coffinswell are particularly important. An Area of Archaeological Potential has been identified, taking account of its origins and development. New development proposals involving significant ground disturbance within the Area of Archaeological Potential should be adequately considered and the appropriate mitigation implemented. This advice may result in the application of a PPG16 paragraph 30 Condition on any consent granted that had an archaeological or historic building impact. However, this advice may also include recommendation for refusal if the impact on and loss of these resources was unacceptable.

Area of Archaeological Potential



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5:0 ARCHITECTURE

Despite considerable modern alterations, traditional vernacular forms are common in Coffinswell. Archetypal Devon cottages and farmhouses are the prevailing character.

Court Barton represents the remains of the medieval manor house: an outer court has a reset 16th century granite arch and two granite framed windows of a similar date exist in the house.

The Old Rectory was constructed in brick and Bath stone in the Victorian Gothic style of the late 19th century.



Limewashed stone/cob and thatch in the Devon tradition is the main character for buildings in Coffinswell

- Any building which is allowed within, or affecting the setting of, the conservation area (including garages and other service buildings), must be of a demonstrably high design standard incorporating quality materials. Applicants must show how their proposal will contribute positively to the character of the area and the setting of nearby buildings.
- The results of an Architectural Character Survey are illustrated on the map, along with a brief summary of the criteria used, in Appendix two.



The manor house of Court Barton

6:0 BUILDING MATERIALS

Where stone is used, the local soft Permian breccia is preferred, although some Devonian limestone is also found, notably in chimneys and occasionally in boundary walls. A small lych-gate of 1921 south-east of the church is built of limestone rubble.

Cob is probably quite common, but most buildings are lime rendered, so it is not obvious. An 18th-19th century roadside linhay at Manor House is of cob, with a corrugated iron roof.



Cob and lime plaster

Throughout the greater part of its history, Coffinswell's primary roofing material was thatch. Only in the late 19th century was slate imported for high status buildings such as the church, parsonage and large farm buildings. The close proximity of the railway would have encouraged use of Welsh slates.

Where a building was originally thatched and there are real townscape benefits to be gained from re-instatement, this should be encouraged. Hillside/Brook Cottage and Willa/Court Barton Cottages could fall into this category. This would help them to fit in with the dominant historic character of Coffinswell and reinforce visual harmony.

Outside the settlement area and to some extent within it, Devon banks and mixed deciduous hedgerows enclose the landscape. This gives the impression that the settlement does not affect the countryside, reinforcing the dominance of the latter over any evidence of urbanity. Where stone walls are found, these often hug the roadsides, being constructed of local coursed breccia rubble, closely laid in lime mortar.

New hedges and walls must follow these traditions. Alien stone, brick or render would harm the existing character. Single-species hedgerows would be uncharacteristic, especially non-native trees, such as evergreens or conifers.

- The characteristic architectural features and building materials of Coffinswell are summarized in Appendix one.



The countryside flows right into the village



Stone, render, timber and thatch are the usual materials in Coffinswell

7:0 POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

The special character of Coffinswell Conservation Area is not derived solely from the buildings. Some other features are summarized below:-

7:1 SURFACING: A few areas of traditional cobbling/paving exist on former farmyards, especially at Manor Farm. This was probably quarried from gravel-pits such as that at Zig-Zag to the west of Coffinswell, or collected from fields or stream beds in the vicinity. It is probable that parts of the village streets, such as the steep section between Thorn Cottage and Manor Farm, also had cobbling to prevent erosion, especially on the edges, adjacent to cottages. It would be beneficial if traditional surfacing could be revived.



Old cobbles reflect the local geology

7:2 TREES: Mature trees give ecological and landscape value to several parts of the village. The hillslope and roadside bank below High Meadow and The Old Rectory contains a number of mature trees and provides a shady area in summer, while specimen trees planted in various gardens, especially in the valley bottom at the west end of the village give a certain ambience to their localities.

Hedgerows provide visual and ecological links between settlement areas. Where they are becoming overgrown, active management is needed to preserve their character.



Trees around the Old Rectory

7:3 ORCHARDS: The old maps show the extent of orchards in the past. Their relevance to the cultural history of the village cannot be overstated, nor can their vulnerability to modern decline. Remaining fragments of orchard should be retained and new ones should be planted. This could be achieved as part of a community project with the support of local landowners.

7:4 WATER: Two small tributary streams of the Beers Brook run through the village. One springs from a well immediately south of Thorne Cottage and passes down the lane beside Osmond Cottage. The other comes down Greenaway Lane and feeds a small 19th century brick well-house beside the lane, (known as Doda Well), before running into a pond in the garden of Dodwell Cottage. The sight and sound of running water at certain times of the year is most attractive. The streams should not be culverted: their natural appearance and historic utility are important features of the historic village scene.



Well house at Doda Well

7:5 VIEWS: The panoramic views out of Coffinswell Conservation Area, especially to the south and west, are a strong positive feature. The impact of developments such as new housing or farm sheds/workshops must be considered, even if the site is quite a distance from the village. Glimpsed views between buildings also illustrate the juxtaposition of enclosed lanes and farmyards with open agricultural land beyond.

7:6 DARKNESS: The absence of street lighting is a positive feature which allows good views of the night sky. Residents should exercise discretion when installing garden or security lighting.



Open views to the west over farmland add to the quality of the setting of Coffinswell



Remains of medieval terracing



Glimpses of countryside framed by attractive buildings deserve protection from unsympathetic alterations or developments

8:0 NEGATIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

8:1 REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS: Many properties in the village have had unsuitable windows fitted in a variety of materials and designs. These have caused significant harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

8:2 ARCHITECTURAL EPHEMERA: A recurrent feature of Coffinswell is the use of unsuitable attachments to houses, eg: plastic/metal security lighting, modern railings, suburban-style mailboxes, etc. Such features ignore the simple architectural traditions of a village such as Coffinswell and should be avoided. Where items are genuinely needed they must be thoughtfully sourced or, ideally, made to order by local craftsmen.

APPENDIX ONE

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF BUILDINGS IN COFFINSWELL

BASICS

- Many buildings are situated tight to the street frontages. Historically, there was a strip of cobbling between the base of the wall and the road. These verges were often planted with traditional cottage climbers.
- Steeply pitched thatch or slate roofs. Corrugated iron, painted in subdued colours (eg: matt green or black) is traditional for sheds, stables etc., depending on location and design.
- Thatch roofs: flush or straight block-cut ridges. Slate roofs: clay tile ridges, subdued orange-brown or glazed black with mitred hips.
- Limewashed walls in coursed breccia and limestone rubble and/or cob. Latter construction is often tapered from base to eaves, with corners rounded off.
- Massive chimneys with limestone or rough slate drips.
- Small windows often set in deep reveals with a dominance of solid over void.
- Traditional side-hung casements and vertical sliding sashes, with and without horns, in painted timber.



PALETTE OF MATERIALS

ROOFING: Thatch, natural slate and matt black or dark green painted corrugated iron.

RAINWATER GOODS: Half round or ogee gutters in painted cast iron.

WALLS: Render (often roughcast, occasionally smooth) and natural stone, either of which may be limewashed. Natural or black/grey stained timber weatherboarding are of limited application only.

WINDOWS AND DOORS: Painted softwood, (opaque stains are suitable for hard-wood and on new-build). Natural timber may be suitable for doors and occasionally windows in certain instances, but only if it is of English hardwood.

ENCLOSURE: Natural breccia or limestone, Devon banks and/or hedgerows. Hazel hurdles can provide quick solutions for temporary or short-term enclosure.

SURFACING: Natural cobbles, often used on street-verges. Limestone paving could be used where material is waterworn or slabbed. Hoggin and rustic concrete setts may be acceptable in non-prominent locations, with blacktop only suitable if used judiciously.



MATERIALS TO BE AVOIDED

ROOFING: Artificial slate, tiles (especially concrete) and man-made ridge/hip tiles. Industrial type corrugated sheeting.

RAINWATER GOODS: Plastic, in particular box-profile guttering in any colour.

WALLS: Brick, reconstituted stone, and textured renders (apart from roughcast). Stained timber or plastic weatherboarding.

WINDOWS AND DOORS: PVCu, stained timber and powder-coated metal frames are all incongruous.

ENCLOSURE: Brick or block walls, even if rendered are unacceptable. Larch-lap or close-boarded fencing and evergreen hedges, especially conifers. Railings are usually too formal and urban in character for a village like Coffinswell.

SURFACING: Large areas of blacktop, concrete or chippings should be avoided. Brick pavements or concrete slabs have no place in a conservation area with the character and traditions of Coffinswell.

APPENDIX TWO

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to identify which buildings within the conservation area contribute positively or negatively to townscape character. Three character bands are used (see map 1) and the criteria for each are summarised below.

In assessing individual buildings, it is their form, design and architectural potential which is most important. Ephemeral considerations like plastic windows or slight disrepair will not usually result in buildings being categorised lower. This does not imply that, for example, plastic windows in a building making a positive contribution to the area are in themselves a positive feature. They may, however, have prevented it from being classed as 'outstanding'. In addition, a quite modest but attractive building in a very prominent location may be rated as 'outstanding', even though it might only be judged as 'positive' if it were tucked away among other buildings.

Category 1 : Outstanding

These buildings may be of any age, but are most likely to be either ancient and unspoiled vernacular buildings or distinctive examples of a particular architectural style.

Buildings identified as outstanding are the highlights of any conservation area. Planning applications and other proposals which may effect their character, or that of their setting, should only be considered if they offer an enhancement. Harmful proposals must be rejected and demolition is very unlikely to be accepted under any circumstances.

Category 2 : Positive

Buildings in this category are the backbone of every conservation area. They will usually be unpretentious but attractive buildings of their type that do not necessarily demand individual attention, but possess considerable group value. Some may have been altered or extended in uncomplimentary ways, but the true character of these buildings could be restored.

The majority of structures in most conservation areas are likely to fall into this category. Alterations should only be made to positive items if they result in an enhancement of the building and the contribution it makes to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Demolition must only be considered in exceptional circumstances where significant aesthetic enhancement and/or community benefits would be realised.

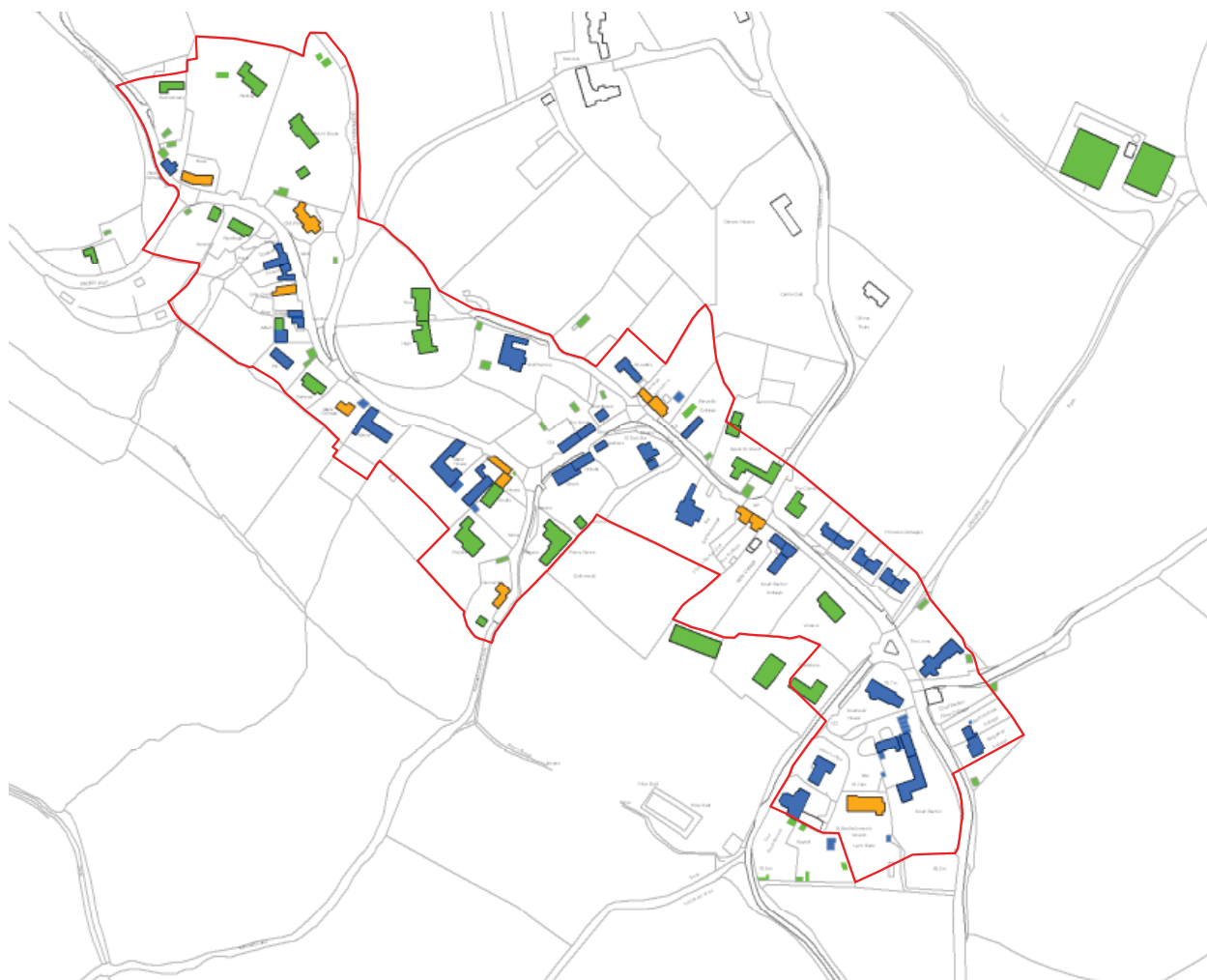
- Proposals which would detract from the special character of these buildings will be resisted.

Category 3 : Neutral or Negative

Most conservation areas have buildings that are neither positive nor negative in their contribution to overall character. These will often be twentieth century buildings which may be inoffensive in scale and location, but which lack quality in terms of detailing, materials and design. It must also be accepted that there are usually some buildings in conservation areas which cause actual harm to the character and appearance of that area. These will most commonly be twentieth century buildings which, by a combination of scale, form, location, materials or design, are harmful to the character of the area. Judgements on these matters will always be open to criticism that they are subjective. Consequently the 'neutral' and 'negative' categories, (which featured in the draft Character Statement), have been combined in this Character Appraisal.

Planning applications for alteration, extension or replacement of buildings in this category will be expected to offer a significant enhancement of the conservation area. Where a building is clearly detrimental due to design, scale or location, its replacement will be encouraged. The use of planting, or other landscaping, to reduce the visual impact of less attractive buildings, may achieve considerable aesthetic benefits at relatively little cost.

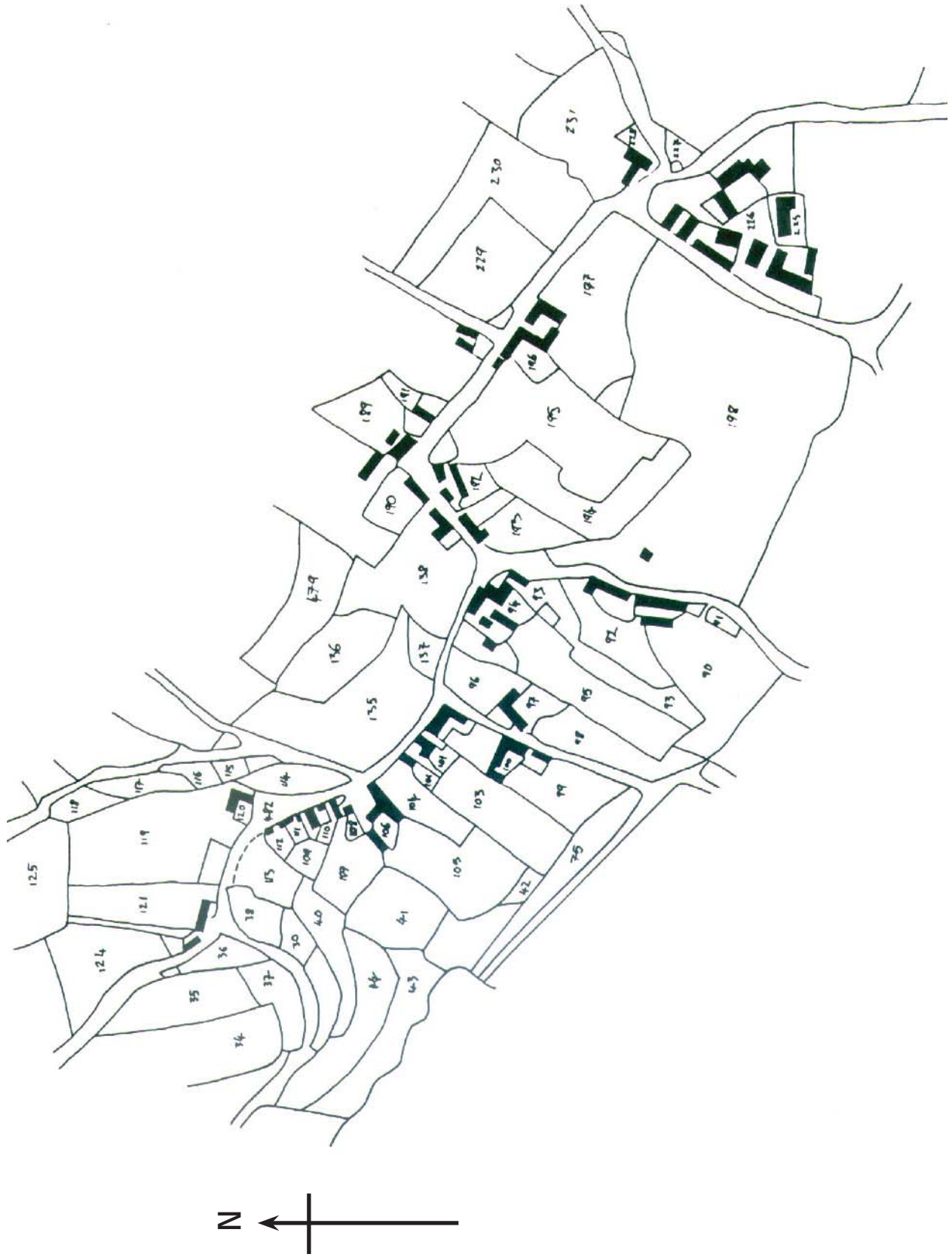
- Proposals to enhance the conservation area by either re-modelling buildings, or re-developing sites in this category will be welcomed. Re-development will be expected to demonstrate a very high standard of contextual design and a thorough understanding of prevailing character.

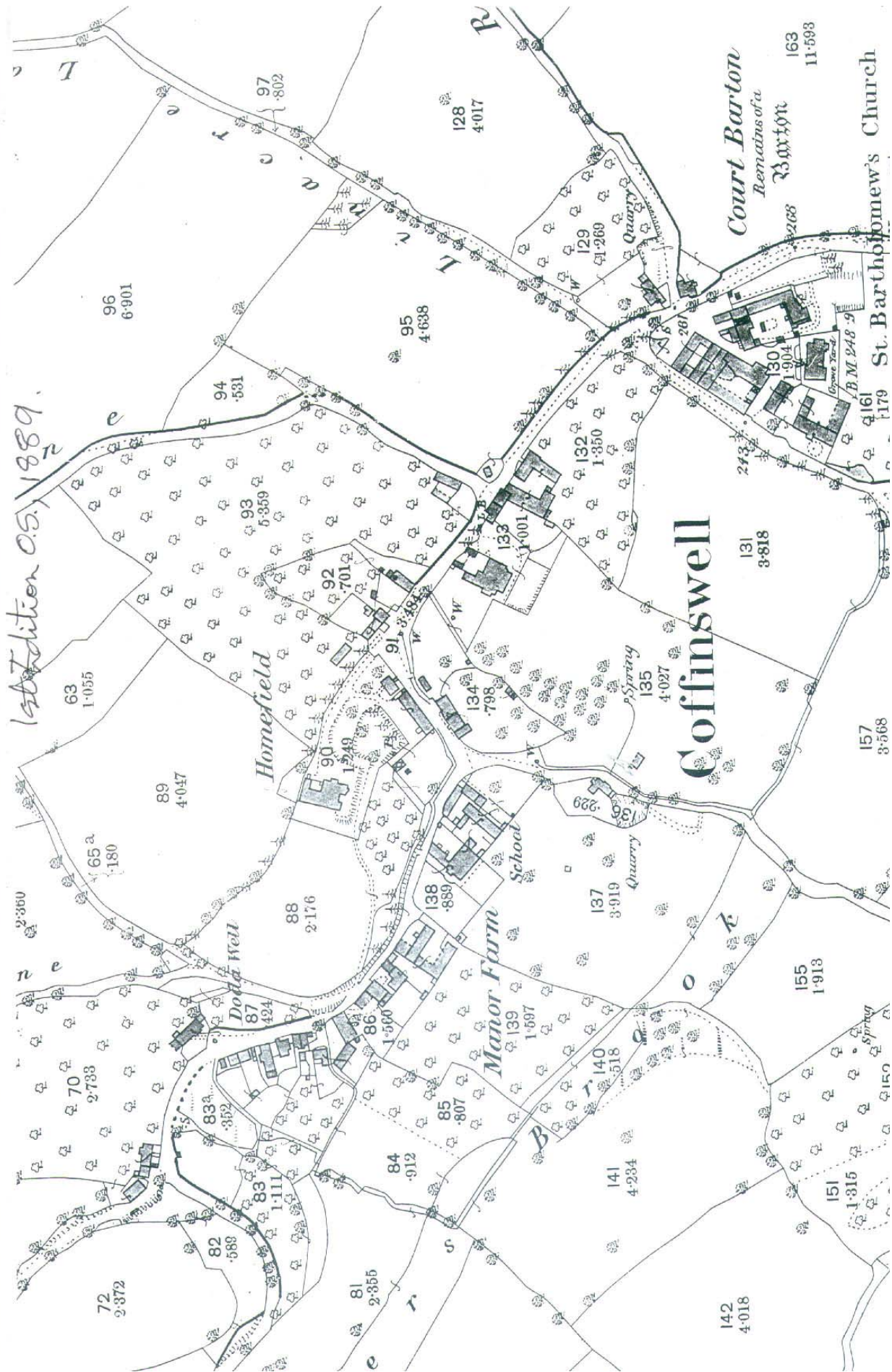


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Key to Character Survey Map

- Category 1: Outstanding
- Category 2: Positive
- Category 3: Neutral/Negative





PARISH SUMMARY LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORICAL INTEREST FOR:

COFFINSWELL CONSERVATION AREA

Ref. No.	Grade	Date of Listing	Item
84790	II	1987	Rock Cottage, Blackenway Lane
84791	I	1955	Church of St Bartholomew
84792	II	1987	Churchyard cross 11m south of Church
84793	II	1955	Court Barton inc. farm buildings to north and courtyard wall to west-north-west
84794	II	1987	Rose Cottage
84795	II	1982	Old Well House
84796	II	1987	Littlecroft Cottage
84797	II	1987	Pitt Cottage
84798	II	1987	Manor Cottage
84799	II	1987	Barn 60m east-north-east of manor House with attached Engine House
84800	II	1987	School House including garden boundary wall to east and Linhay to north west
84801	II	1987	Hillside and Cherang Tuli
84802	II	1987	Thorn Cottage and Appledore Cottage
84803	II	1984	Wayside Cottage
84804	II	1987	Orchard Way and 2 Court Barton Cottage
84805	II	1955	Willa Cottage and Court Barton Cottage
84816	II	1955	Osmond Cottage
506628	II	2009	K6 Telephone Box

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Alluvium: Sand and soil deposited by a river or stream.

Breccia: A red stone with fragments of limestone and other rocks of varied size in a sandy matrix.

Chancel: Part of a church where the altar is located - usually at the eastern end.

Cretaceous: Geological period about 100 million years ago.

Cob: Cob is made up of a mixture of mud, straw, dung, and sometimes horse hair.

Devonian: Geological period around 400 million years before present.

Eocene: Geological era about 40 million years ago.

Greensand: Grey/green sandstone deposited in shallow seas during the Cretaceous.

Hoggin: Compressed aggregate of varied size and composition used as a surfacing material.

Lime: Binding agent in traditional mortars.

Limewash: Protective/decorative surface coating made using lime putty.

Nave: The main body of a church.

Ogee: Traditional decorative moulding profile, commonly used for guttering.

Permian: Geological era approximately 250 million years before present.

Vernacular: The traditional architecture of a locality which is functional and uses locally available materials.



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