

Bath and North East Somerset  
Planning Services

# Combe Hay Conservation Area Appraisal



July 2014



# Contents

Introduction	3
Summary of Special Interest	3
Assessment of Special Interest	4
Character Analysis	8
Recommended Management Proposals	14
Community Involvement	15
Planning Policy Context	15
General Guidance and Policy	16
Further Reading	16
Glossary	16
Contact Details	16



# Introduction

Combe Hay was identified as being of special architectural and historic interest and was designated a Conservation Area on 4 November 1981. Its boundary encapsulates the main core of the village.

The Council has a duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas in exercising its planning powers, and to periodically reappraise the boundaries. This appraisal will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The appraisal identifies elements which contribute toward the character of the area and those that detract from it. This provides the basis upon which to develop proposals for preservation and enhancement.

It also enables local residents to participate in the identification of features which are important to the special character of the area in which they live. The preparation of this appraisal has been undertaken in close cooperation with Combe Hay Parish Council which included a walking inspection of the Conservation Area and further meetings to discuss the history of the village.

Great care has been taken to be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. However the nature of a document such as this will inevitably result in omissions. Such omissions should not be interpreted as being an assessment of value or significance.

Cottage garden prevalent in Combe Hay



Typical narrow lane with thick tree lined canopy

## Summary of Special Interest

- Exceptional landscape setting located within a small river valley surrounded by steep sloping fields and the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Feeling of rural intimacy and peaceful atmosphere provided by topography, woodland, significant ancient woodland, hedges and densely tree lined brook
- Not encroached by significant modern development, busy roads, modern kerbs, pavements and street lighting
- Prevalence of historic buildings built of local Oolitic Limestone including the Parish Church and Manor House
- Surviving agricultural buildings with characteristic oval Combe Hay “pitching eyes”
- Varying levels and steep inclines that the village is built upon creates visual interest and atmosphere
- Narrow lanes lined with hedgerows overhung by thick tree canopy affording varied and interesting light and dappled shade
- Picturesque cottage gardens and watercress beds provide attractive gaps between buildings
- Quintessential Cotswold stone village with historic cottages in the vernacular style providing a low rise scene
- Ancient and compact village pattern and grain that has undergone little change and witnessed only limited modern development
- Small to medium irregular field patterns with hedgerow boundaries dating from mediaeval period
- Outstanding intimate, short to medium range vistas through gaps between buildings and woodland
- Central position within Conservation Area of Parish Church and classical Manor House within landscaped parkland including ice house, ornamental lake and small historic packhorse bridge over the Cam Brook
- Tree lined avenue approach from the west with a thatched estate cottage orné at the top gives sense of arrival
- Industrial archaeology including remnants of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and GWR branch line
- Historic street furniture and attractive public realm features including an historic Sir Giles Gilbert Scott K6 telephone kiosk dating from 1935 and post box, natural pennant stone kerbing and ornate village spring
- Cock and hen dry stone boundary walls constructed of local Oolitic limestone rubble
- Abundance of deciduous native tree species with very few inappropriate species such as Leylandii

# Assessment of Special Interest

## Location and Setting

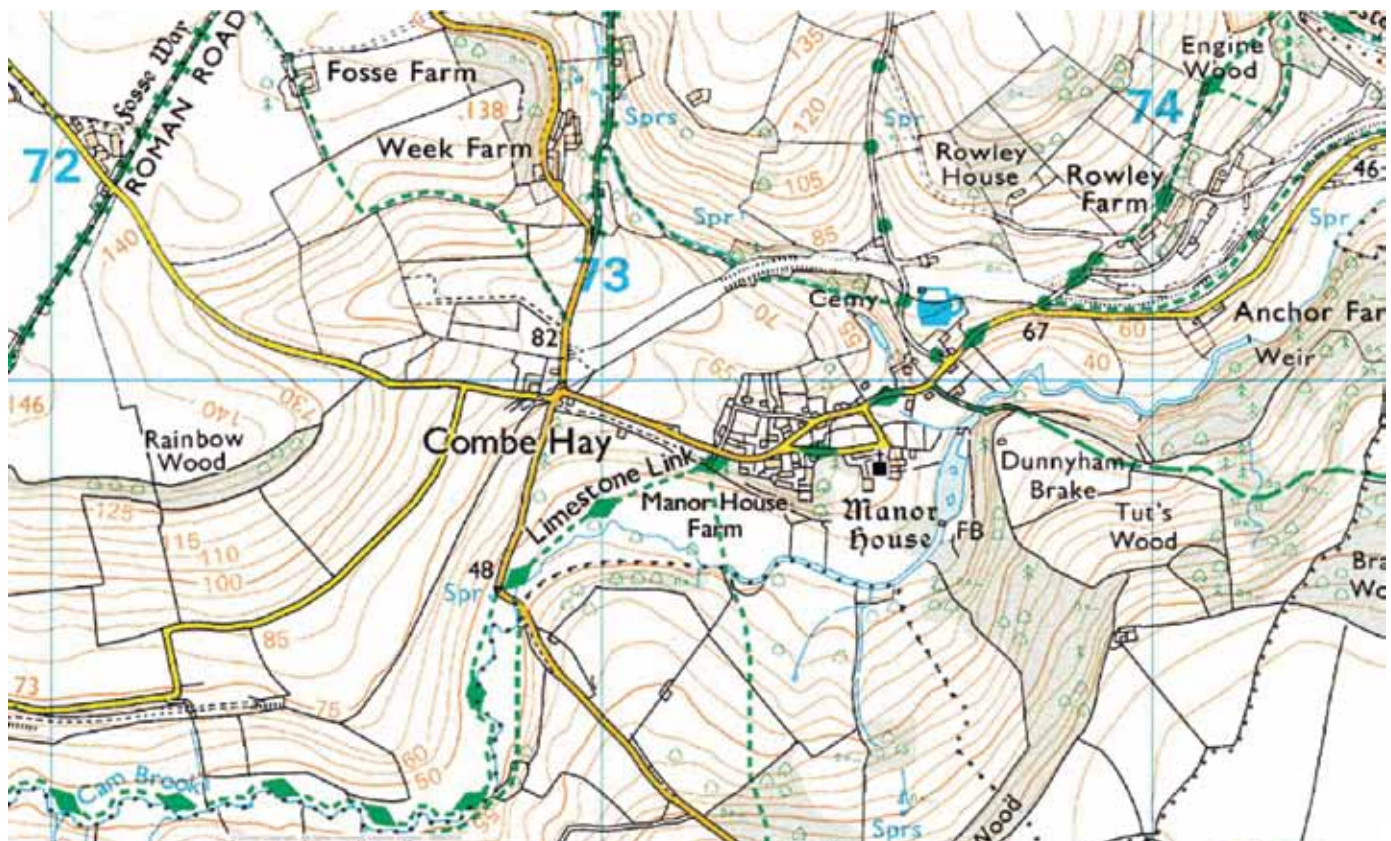
It is one of a few small settlements just to the south of Bath that has been able to maintain its historic character, rural tranquillity and atmosphere. This has been achieved despite its proximity to the busy urban centre of Bath a mere 3 miles to the north. This area south of Bath is characterised generally by small but steep sided river valleys with deeply set and steep sided brooks that freely meander across the floodplain. These small rivers are a key feature of the area making an important contribution to local natural heritage and biodiversity. The main brooks are the Wellow, Midford and Cam and it is the Cam that flows close to Combe Hay just to the south. The village and much of its parish are within the Bath and Bristol Green Belt and the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The steep river valleys provide a striking landform and this area has been described as a transitional area where the Cotswolds meet the Mendips. The landscape has typically been influenced by millennia of agricultural activity and there is a mixture of arable and pastoral land cover in roughly equal measure. The irregular field patterns tend to be small to medium in scale, with high hedgerow boundaries. The narrow lanes are often sunken, reminiscent of hollow ways and consequently have steep banks lined with thick hedgerows and overhung with tree canopy that contributes to the feeling of intimacy.

Backy Hill



Rose Cottages



Modern OS map of Combe Hay showing footpaths and Limestone Link



## General Character and Plan Form

Combe Hay is a small village of approximately 200 people as of 2011. It does not possess an obvious nucleus and therefore its form can be described as being fragmented. There are few terraced buildings the majority being detached often separated by trees, hedges and limestone rubble boundary walls and obscured by the undulating topography. This gives the impression of a village that is spread out over a wide area although in reality the village is relatively compact. The route through the village is steeply inclined, undulating and meandering between narrow sunken lanes overhung by trees and typical hedge species.

The open character and grain of the village is further emphasised by attractive gaps between buildings. These gaps often harbour beautiful, typical cottage gardens bounded by limestone rubble walls and constitute an intrinsic and important feature of the Conservation Area. This affords short to medium range

## Landscape Setting

The underlying geology originates principally from the Jurassic period and is dominated by Oolitic limestone typical of the Cotswold range with white lias to the south west towards Radstock and beyond. There is a famous outcrop of Fullers Earth clay to the north of the village.

The village is located within the river valley surrounded by the small but steep sided hills that are typical for this area. This gives the village an intimate and enclosed atmosphere as do the hedgerows and woodland that exists within the village itself. This atmosphere is also created by the surrounding landscape and topography which consists of small steep sided hills and a close grained and intimate patchwork of small irregular fields with narrow steep-

internal and external views of attractive green spaces and countryside.

Another important and positive aspect is the absence of pedestrian footways and pavements and an abundance of soft often sloping verges which again reaffirms the rural character of the village. Where there are footways and pavements they are lined with attractive natural stone kerbs, probably pennant sandstone. The absence of street lighting and modern signage is also evident and an important aspect of the Conservation Area. All of these factors create a positive and attractive rural village scene.

There are two main footpaths: one that leads to the parkland south of the Manor House into the Cam Brook valley from the avenue to the west and another to the east that also leads to the brook where the sound of the weir and cascade leading from the ornamental lake fills the air. Both of these footpaths offer excellent access to the surrounding landscape. The

sided lanes often overhung with foliage.

The surrounding fields, enclosed by hedgerow boundaries, have changed little since the mediaeval and post mediaeval periods having escaped the rationalising endeavours of the Enclosure Acts of the 18th and 19th centuries. Just below the settlement there is evidence of mediaeval, possibly earlier, enclosure of water meadows described as *'rich, wet grassland'*.<sup>1</sup> There are also areas of mixed deciduous woodland consisting typically of native species including ash and oak with willow and alder lining the river banks. There is a large area of ancient woodland called Underdown Wood to the south and south east which forms an important part of the Conservation Area's setting.<sup>2</sup>

Limestone Link national trail passes directly through the Conservation Area.

There is an abundance of green spaces including fields, woodland and outstanding formal and well-tended gardens. Particularly important are the formal designed landscape and parkland of the Manor House and the formal gardens of the Old Rectory.

Remnants of estate fencing in grounds of Manor House



To the south the village is dominated by the Manor House and its formal gardens and parkland. Although some of the features have been lost, such as the grotto and the orangery, the ice house still survives as does the form of the parkland.

Combe Hay is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and represents its south westernmost edge. Its inclusion is in recognition of the outstanding and special qualities of the landscape. It is also located within the Bristol-Bath Green Belt which provides a crucial control for development that could be potentially harmful to such a sensitive area in terms of both its built and natural heritage.

1 Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation (1995)

2 Ancient woodlands in Britain are those which have been continuously wooded since 1600 (although not necessarily with the same type of tree cover). They may also have historical and archaeological significance

## Historic Development

Odo of Bayeux was offered the manor following the Norman Conquest. The manor was then passed to the de Haweie family and Combe Hay was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and entered as 'Cuma', and later *Cumbehawya* as it was known in the 13th century. The name derives from the manorial family at the time and their name of de Haweie (Anglicised to Haweys or Hays) and combe meaning wooded valley. The manor was then passed to Sir Peter Stradling through marriage during the reign of Edward I.

The original manor house has been lost and the present manor was built between c1728 and c.1730 and partly remodelled between 1770 and 1775. The village, like many villages in England, developed and grew under the control of the manor based entirely on an agrarian economy and in particular, importantly for a Cotswold village, the production of wool: the single most important economic resource of the mediaeval and early post mediaeval period.

Like many of the villages in this area agricultural activity within the village itself has all but ceased and towards the latter part of the 20th century it became a place of residence and retirement. This has resulted in many of the agricultural buildings in the village being converted for residential use.

Despite the fact that the Somersetshire Coal Canal and the GWR branch line pass very close to the village neither has had a significant impact or influence on the economy and subsequent development nor have they stimulated industrial activity.

## Archaeological Significance

The archaeological record and landscape evidence in and around Combe Hay suggests occupation from the late Bronze Age through to Roman, Saxon, mediaeval and post mediaeval periods. Evidence for this comes from excavations at a Roman site where potsherds were found some dating from the late Bronze Age. Evidence for a Roman villa was found in an excavation just within the Parish boundary below Sulis Manor to the north and artefacts dating from the early to the late Roman period were found.

The Fosse Way passes close by on the high ground to the west and the ancient and extensive earthwork, Wansdyke, is just to the north constituting a physical separation between the Parish and Bath.

The enclosed field patterns and boundaries provide strong evidence for mediaeval agricultural activity dating from the Saxon period onwards. Indeed there is evidence for a Saxon church although this was later replaced by a Norman church which was itself replaced by the present Parish Church.

There is documentary evidence for an early village settlement, possibly Saxon in origin, called Evesty to the south west on the opposite bank of the Cam Brook. There does not appear to have been any archaeological investigation carried out and it has not been included on the Historic Environment Record although there is a reference in the Anglo-Saxon Charters. The existence of the village therefore remains an intriguing enigma although further investigation in this area may yield positive results.

As mentioned previously there are the remains of an ice house, a common feature of 18th century country estates and designed landscapes, within the grounds of the Manor House, situated near the opposite bank of the Cam.

Significant later industrial archaeology exists to the north of the village dating from the late 18th century and early 19th century in the form of the remains of the disused Somersetshire Coal Canal and later Somerset and Dorset Railway line that superseded it and indeed was largely constructed along the route of the canal.



OS first edition map of 1885

View looking north with Combe Hay lying beneath the early morning canopy of mist



### Key Views and Vistas

There are many outstanding views within the Conservation Area although, because of the abundance of trees and other foliage, views are typified by intriguing glimpses particularly in the summer months. However, the dappled light created by the many trees that is so evident in Combe Hay constitutes an important, but intangible, aspect of the character of the Conservation Area.

To the west of the village views from the tree lined avenue afford outstanding but intimate short range vistas into the Cam Brook valley, to the designed parkland landscape of the Manor House, still used for pasture, and to the small steep hills on the opposite side. This affords a quintessential and attractive bucolic rural scene that is fitting for a manor house from the 18th century. This view is made more dramatic by the contrast between the shade of the dense tree canopy of the avenue and the light afforded by the large

open field in the valley below. The best vantage point for this view is from the footpath that leads across the parkland.

The steep small lane that runs north past the Wheatsheaf public house, Old Bath Road, affords very fine views into the outstanding formal gardens and designed ornamental landscape of The Old Rectory. This is arguably best viewed from the small outlying cemetery that is located towards the top of the lane.

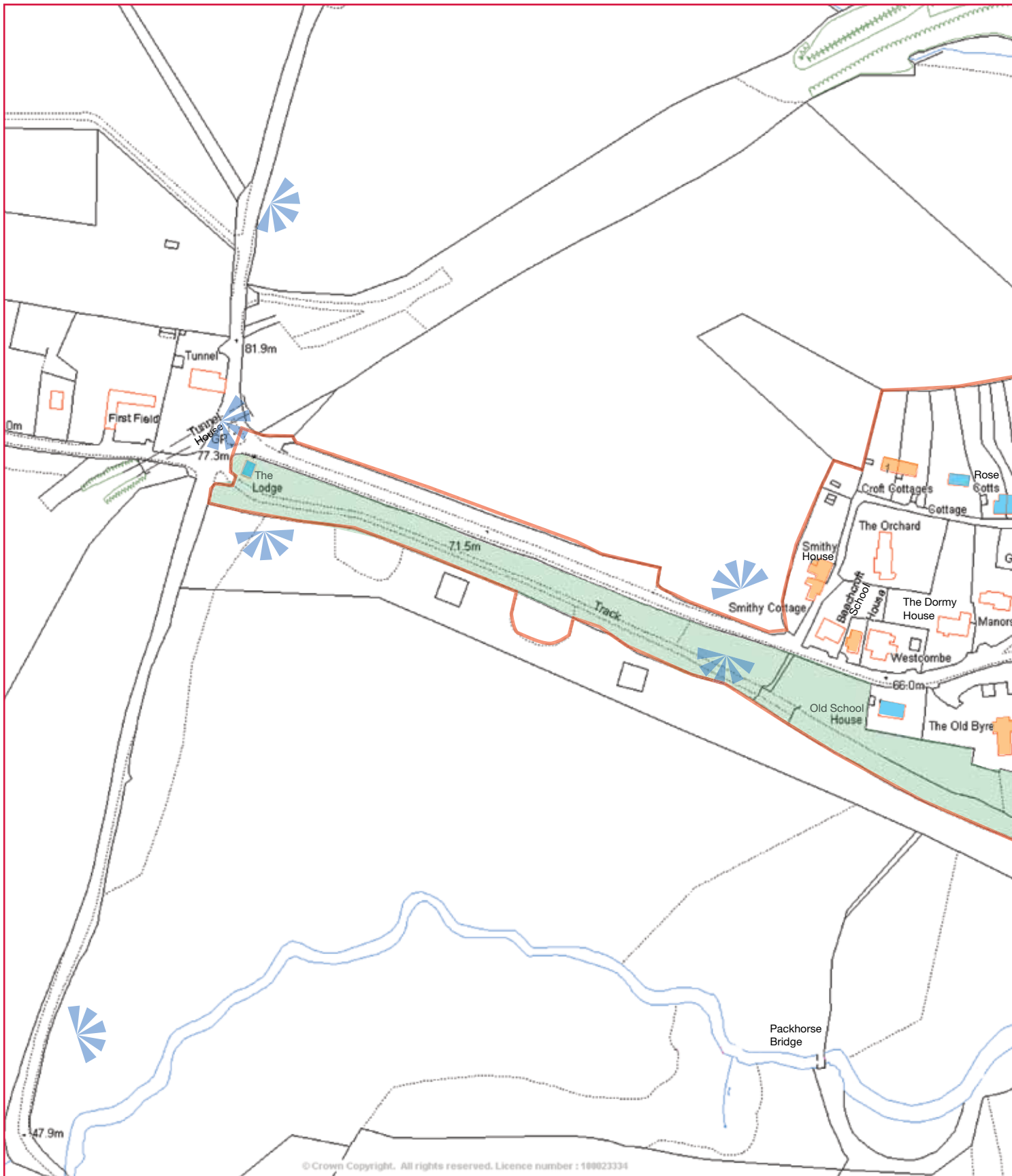
Combe Hay Lane, from the north and south, affords dramatic views that place the Conservation Area in its landscape context. The view from the south, at the top of Combe Hay Lane, also provides the context for the Conservation Area in terms of its proximity to Bath and the fragility of its setting. From this vantage point looking north provides one of the only locations to view the Manor House within its parkland setting.



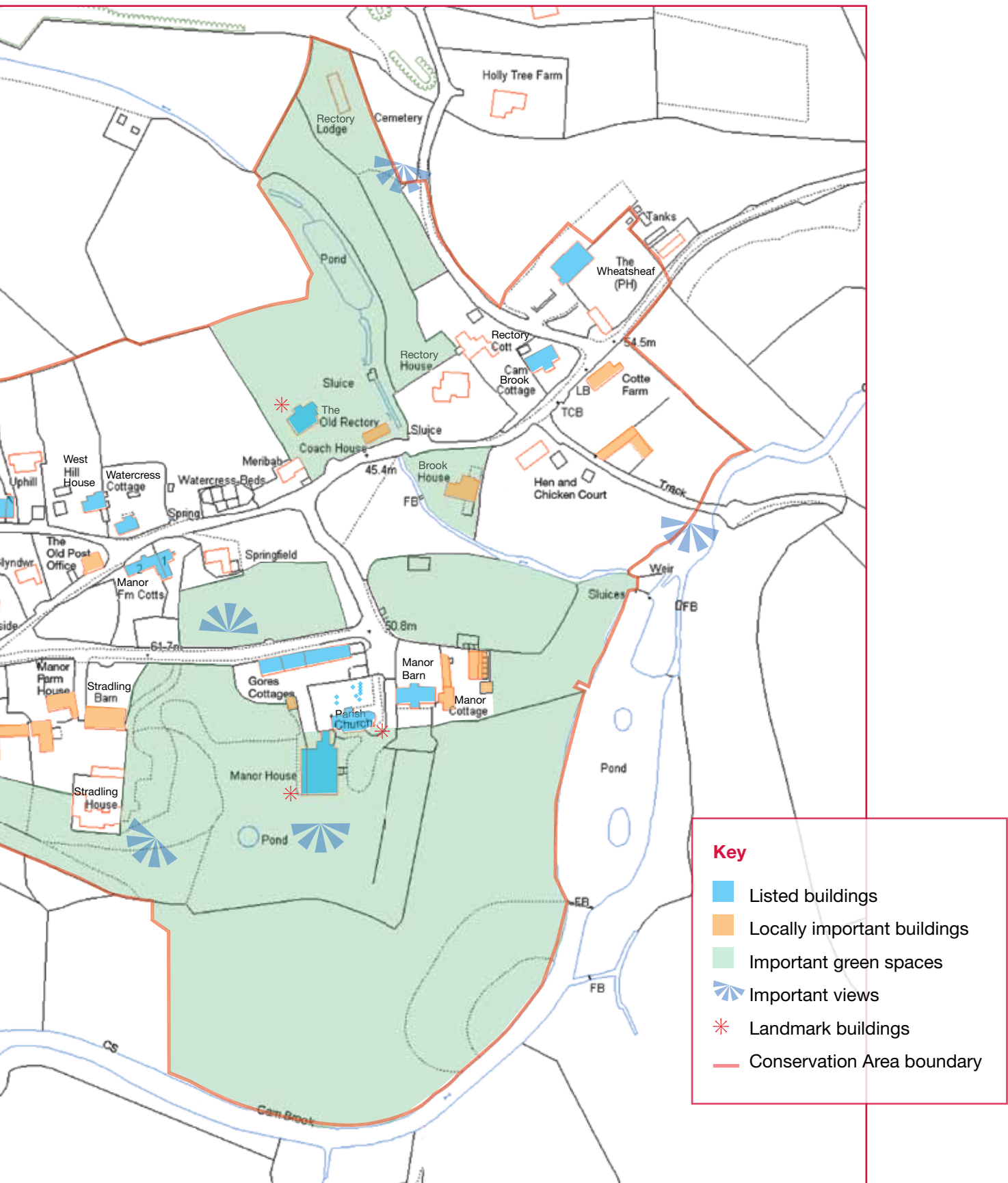
Looking east from The Lodge along the avenue



# Combe Hay Conservation Area







# Character Analysis

## Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings

The predominant architectural style is that of the Cotswold vernacular with more-classical detailing for houses of higher status. The earliest surviving domestic buildings appear to date from as early as the 16th century and are typically constructed of local limestone rubble. Watercress Cottage listed Grade II\* is a good example. It dates from 1624 and has some interesting multiple intersecting relieving arches over the limestone mullion windows with ashlar quoins and an original plank and ribbed timber door. Most of the traditional historic cottages are exposed rubble stone although they are likely to have originally been lime washed or lime rendered.

There are very few historic buildings with traditional forest marble limestone tile roofs that would have been at one time ubiquitous in Combe Hay and throughout the region. However, the Old Rectory and Straddling Barn are notable exceptions where the use of local vernacular materials is welcome. Apart from the Gothick Lodge there is no thatch in the village although it may be the case that this was the original and earliest roofing material. Clay tiles, and in particular pantiles, have largely replaced the earlier roofing materials to become a vernacular material in their own right. Welsh slate, made available by the railway age, been used on the roofs to the church, Gores Cottage and stables, and other buildings in the Conservation Area.

There are also some set piece classical buildings of note including The Old Rectory dating from the mid-to-late 18th century and the Grade I listed Manor House from the 1730s both constructed in local limestone ashlar. The Old School House has an interesting history having been reduced to just a single storey by a former owner of the Manor House. Despite the fact that it occupies a prominent position it is interesting to note that the Manor House cannot be easily seen from within the village itself and remains somewhat hidden. This appears to be a deliberate positioning in order to take advantage of the outstanding vistas to the south and the river valley.

The Parish Church is also constructed of local limestone and dates from the 15th century occupying a prominent and central position. It is one of only three churches in the country not to have a dedicated saint. There are ten listed churchyard monuments many of which are constructed in local limestone. They are generally in very good condition apart from one which is on the B&NES Council's Buildings at Risk Register.

Located at the western-most edge of the village at the original entrance of the Manor House is The Lodge. It is a Grade II *cottage orné* in the Gothick style typical of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It provides an attractive introduction and sense of arrival into the village from the west.



The Wheatsheaf public house



Churchyard monuments



Watercress Cottage



Combe Hay Manor





The Lodge an outstanding example of the cottage orné style



The Old Rectory



The Parish Church

There are also some traditional stone-built barns one of which has been converted to residential use in recent times. However to the east of the Parish Church there is the substantial listed Manor Barn dating from the late 17th century which is in good original condition. This is an outstanding traditional building and an important surviving remnant of Combe Hay's agricultural past, its rural economy and cultural identity.

Other listed buildings of note are West Hill House which has two attractive recent extensions that represent a welcome and thoughtful approach to design. Using high quality materials, they have resulted in an enhancement of both the building and the Conservation Area. The Wheatsheaf public house, a former farm house dating from the 16th century, and Gores Cottage and stables, are also extremely attractive historic buildings and good examples of the local vernacular building style.

### Locally Important Buildings

There are several buildings in the village which, although not listed, make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. They include:

- School House, a Victorian house constructed in local limestone in brought-to-course range work.
- Straddling Barn, The Granary and The Old Byre were formerly part of the manor farm complex of agricultural buildings and, despite having been converted, remain an attractive and interesting group of buildings
- Manor House Farm
- Manor Cottage

- Combe Hay Manor Gas House
- The Old Post Office,
- Cotte Farm
- Brook House
- Hen Chicken Court
- Croft Cottages
- The Coach House
- Fairseat
- Smithy Cottage and Smithy House

It is clear that the architectural and historic interest in some of these buildings may warrant them being listed as designated heritage assets. They may, therefore, be worthy of further investigation as part of the recommended Management Proposals.

## Activity and Former Uses

The village was originally founded on an agrarian economy and indeed the evidence for this remains with the existence of many of the surviving original buildings. These include substantial barns, a forge or smithy that would have provided horse shoes and agricultural equipment, the manor farm and agricultural labourer's cottages. The Manor Farm would have been the centre of agricultural activity and indeed there are archive photographs showing the movement of Dorset Horn sheep.

The village is surrounded by farmland which appears to be both arable and livestock. There is no evidence of industrial activity despite the fact the Somersetshire Coal Canal and the later GWR branch line passed in close proximity to the north. The Fullers Earth workings just above the village to the north, which must have used the nearby canal and railway for transport, also appear not to have impacted on the village or influenced its development despite their close proximity.

Fullers Earth has been mined in the area since Roman times and was used in the processing of wool. The absence of evidence for fulling or tucking mills along the river at Combe Hay is a mystery, although the substantial and significant milling industry at Midford may account for this.

The watercress beds at Watercress Cottage, which have been recently restored, provided an income for its owners and propagators well into the 20th century. In the middle of the village is a substantial area, now largely infilled by modern development, known as The Orchard. This area would have been used for the commercial growing of apples, and the regular lines of trees can be seen on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey.

In addition to the Wheatsheaf, a public house since the 18th century, there would have originally been other public houses in the village such as the one at Tunnel Farm shown on the 1839 tithe map. The Old Anchor was built on the site of the Somersetshire Coal Canal and operated as a pub until 1924.

There is a recently resurrected cricket club in the village which has a long history and provides an important focus for community involvement. The pitch is located in a small meadow just to the south of the Manor House near the Cam Brook with the cooperation of its present owner.

There is no purpose built community centre in the village although, as would have historically been the case, the church is used for this purpose and indeed recent work has been carried out to facilitate this.

Within the boundary of Combe Hay Manor there is an interesting building known as the Gas House, which was purpose built in the 1850s in order to provide gas for lighting with a storage capacity of 2000 cubic feet of gas.



Combe Hay Manor Gas House



Linhay style building



The Old Post Office



School House





Important green spaces and attractive gap sites that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

### Trees and Important Green Spaces

An anonymous poet from nearby Frome on visiting Combe Hay in the 18th century was inspired to write the following verse:

*Yet bounteous nature here, with  
lavish hand,  
Has poured her artless charms o'er  
hill and dale:  
Pindaric Hills, Arcadia all the vale*

The description of Combe Hay and its setting as being an 'Arcadia' is not only typical of the writings of the period but is also an accurate description and provides a useful sense of continuity. Combe Hay still retains its character of being both well-endowed with trees and greenery and possessing a sense of intimacy within a rural setting of lush wooded, green hills described in 1910 by an anonymous rail passenger as 'sylvan scenery'.

The trees and green spaces within the village are an important aspect of its character. Trees and foliage could be said to dominate the village and create a dappled shade that creates a particular character to the light within the Conservation Area. Gaps between the buildings also form an important aspect of the character and many of the gardens are well tended and highly attractive, often planted with typical cottage garden flower varieties and vegetables. The newly restored watercress beds are a charming and positive feature as are the vegetable

gardens of Smithy Cottages and Smithy House. These gardens are enclosed by beautiful limestone rubble walls, sometimes dry stone, and usually with cock and hen capping typical of the region.

The ornamental gardens of both the Manor House and The Old Rectory are significant designed landscape features, albeit largely hidden from view. Both have the ubiquitous large, mature cedar trees reminiscent of many English designed parkland landscapes. The Manor House also has an attractive walled garden just to the east that is part of the Manor Farm.

On a smaller scale Brook House has an interesting ornamental garden that can be regarded as making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The churchyard also offers an interesting green space where there is a stone seat built into the wall from which one can view the church and many historic limestone churchyard monuments.

In the middle of the village is a formal ornamental garden that appears presently to be under construction with painted timber obelisks and pergolas and offers a very attractive feature. There are also many trees in this area where much of the modern development has taken place and the trees mask this very effectively.

The tree-lined avenue to the west, recently planted with considerable community involvement, is an impressive feature that gives a sense of arrival into the village from this direction.

### General Condition

Generally the village and its Conservation Area are in very good condition and it largely retains its rural charm and character notwithstanding inappropriate modern development. Any new development within the village should reference the local styles, scale, materials and positioning of traditional buildings and boundary treatments.

There is only one listed building entry on the Council's Buildings At Risk (BAR) register, a churchyard monument. However for the most part the village can be regarded as being very well cared for and well maintained.

The excellent condition of the Conservation Area is due in large part to an active and enthusiastic community and indeed the attractive avenue to the west with its trees and traditional railings is testimony to this.

### Negative Areas and Issues

Some of the limestone rubble boundary walls have lost their cock and hen capping replaced with a concrete segmental capping. Modern boundary walls have, in many cases, been constructed using mortar, as opposed to the dry stone method typical for the region and the Cotswolds.

Many of the historic buildings and some of the walls in the village have been re-pointed using hard cementitious mortar and in many cases this has had a detrimental impact on the character of the buildings. This also causes technical problems and can accelerate decay. In traditional solid wall construction of most historic buildings it can also cause damp and compromise the ability of masonry walls to 'breathe'.

Much of the new development within the village and Conservation Area deviates significantly from the vernacular and classical styles of the historic buildings by their orientation, design and use of materials. This has had a negative impact on the village and tends towards an anonymous 'anywhere' suburban character. It has impacted negatively on the simple Cotswold vernacular, the rustic charm that many of the historic buildings possess and the general character of the Conservation Area.



Inappropriate cement pointing to traditional historic boundary wall

One modern building has a gated iron railing boundary treatment that is discordant and at odds with the character of much of the village.

The surface treatments of the modern development and their often large open driveways, including concrete block pavements and tarmac, have a negative impact on the village and again create a suburban character that is discordant and incongruous with the essential rural character of the village.

Some of the undesignated historic buildings have had their original windows replaced with plastic windows which significantly detract from their character, the setting of listed buildings and the Conservation Area. However, fortunately the use of plastic windows is not widespread.

Other modern fixtures include the proliferation of security cameras and inappropriate lighting, some of which have been attached to listed buildings. These should be discouraged and indeed may require listed building consent.

There are a number of electric and telephone poles and resultant above ground cabling which adversely affects the setting of the Conservation Area.



Inappropriate boundary treatment that is discordant with the character of the Conservation Area

Uphill is regarded as being an interesting and attractive modern building of a thoughtful design. However there are elements that are discordant with the character of the Conservation Area. For instance detailing such as hung slates and the treatment to the front is not consistent with local tradition and appears suburban in character in terms of its design, the use of materials and the substantial garage that fronts hard onto the lane. Indeed this has had the effect of obscuring what is, for the most part, an interesting building that has the potential to make a positive contribution to Conservation Area.

### Recommended Management Proposals

Change is inevitable in most conservation areas. The challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and reinforce an area's special qualities. Inappropriate development and increases in traffic on narrow country lanes, for instance, can have a negative impact that needs to be avoided if the character of rural conservation areas is to be maintained.

- The setting of the village and its Conservation Area is an intrinsic and highly important element of its context and character and the visual envelope that it is contained within should be preserved
- Because the village is on the whole well cared for there are few significant issues or management recommendations. The main issue is that modern development has not managed to reference and respond to local vernacular building styles and materials and as a result has failed to enhance the Conservation Area
- There are hard standings and modern garages, many of which are prominently positioned hard onto the lanes. Again, this is a suburban treatment that is discordant with the rural character of the village



- Modern fixtures to protected and locally important historic buildings should be discouraged and advice sought from the Historic Environment Team at B&NES Council as to best conservation practice and appropriate solutions
- Further screening of the existing modern development should be considered to mitigate its impact and any future new development should appropriately reference and have regard for local vernacular building styles and materials
- The churchyard of the Parish Church has a chest tomb that is included on the Bath and North East Somerset Council's Building at Risk Register (BAR) and would benefit from some careful and sensitive conservation work
- There are several locally important buildings that should be investigated and considered for listing
- Article 4 Directions could be implemented to safeguard the traditional style of the doors and fenestration of the unlisted buildings
- The use of modern materials such as cement should be discouraged in the repair of historic buildings and boundary walls. Owners of historic buildings in the village should be encouraged to use traditional materials when carrying out any work to their buildings and in particular the use of lime mortar when re-pointing
- Any future boundary treatments should consider the local Cotswold vernacular style of dry stone walling with cock and hen capping
- The possibility of removing unsightly electric and telephone poles and relocating the cabling underground should be discussed with the energy providers and utilities companies

### Conservation Area boundary

The Conservation Area boundary as it currently exists is regarded as being fit for purpose and has successfully contribute. It is

considered to include the most important aspects of the village's special architectural and historic interest.

### Community Involvement

Public support and involvement is essential to the successful management of conservation areas. Accordingly, this appraisal has been prepared with the kind assistance of individual members of the Parish Council who have provided invaluable assistance and advice. In addition, the first draft of the document was sent to Combe Hay Parish Council for consideration and comment.

### Planning Policy Context

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest.

*'...an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.*

The quality and interest of the area as a whole, rather than individual buildings, is the main consideration when designating such areas.

Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of most buildings, and tree felling/surgery. The scale of extensions that may be added to existing dwellings as "permitted development" is also limited.

While there may be resource implications from higher expectations for the maintenance of existing buildings and the quality of new works, for most owners these are outweighed by the cachet of designation.

Designation also provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all aspects of character or appearance that define an area's

special interest.

Section 71 of the Act requires the local planning authority to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and an appraisal provides the means for this.

Section 72 requires that, in considering applications for development in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of that area.

Conservation Area appraisals are considered by English Heritage to be vital to the conservation of these special areas. The content of this statement is based on the suggested approach set out by English Heritage.

Combe Hay is situated within the Cotswolds AONB and is such there are significant controls and policy designations of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan that also apply to planning control in the Conservation Area.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for sustainable development, which includes the conservation of the historic environment. When developments are proposed, the Framework requires the significance of heritage assets – archaeology, listed buildings and conservation areas – to be defined and it stresses that 'as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.'

The NPPF is further explained in the National Planning Practice Guidance. Chapter 18 provides answers to a series of questions about the way in which heritage assets should be addressed through the planning system.

The Council's policy for planning, including the historic environment, is currently under review. Until the

Core Strategy and subsequent local planning policies are adopted, the current policies, saved from the *Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan*, remain part of the Development Plan.

Further information on the current Development Plan for Bath & North East Somerset can be viewed on the Council's website by following the link to the Planning Policy homepage or by contacting the Planning Policy Team on 01225 477548.

### General Guidance and Policy

- *The National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG 2012*
- *The National Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG 2014*
- *Saved policies from the Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan 2007*
- *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, English Heritage (2011)*
- *Conservation Principles: Policies & Guidance, English Heritage 2008*
- *Bath & North East Somerset, Living in a Conservation Area, 2003*
- *Bath & North East Somerset Streetscape Manual, (Adopted April 2005)*
- *Archaeology in Bath and North East Somerset: Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004*
- *Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset: A Landscape Character Assessment, Adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003*
- *Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation Methodology, Chapman, 1997*
- *Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2008-2013)*

- *"Analysis of Conservation Potential" – the original Wansdyke Council map defining the existing Conservation Area as designated in 1982*
- *The 1984 revision to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*
- *Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan 2007 as revised*
- *Bath World Heritage Site Setting Study: Information Paper 2009*
- *Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation (1995)*

### Further Reading

- *The Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol, Pevsner, N. (1958)*
- *Combe Hay 2000 AD (unpublished village history)*
- *Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset: A Landscape Character Assessment, Supplementary Planning Guidance, April 2003*
- *The Archaeology of Avon: A Review from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, ed Michael Aston and Rob Iles, Avon County Council*

### Glossary

**Listed Buildings:** Buildings on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**Conservation Area:** Defined by the 1990 Act as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'

**Article 4 Direction:** A direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 – as amended. Article 4 Directions remove specified permitted development rights and can be

made to cover parts of a Conservation Area where there is a clear and immediate threat to the amenity of the area

### Historic Environment Record

**(HER):** This is a database of heritage assets and archaeology maintained and administered by B&NES Council. The information is primarily used as a planning tool for desk top assessments for the historical and archaeological significance of sites

**Tree Preservation Order (TPO):** An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees or woodlands to prohibit works to trees without consent (part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999)

### Contact Details

Bath & North East Somerset Council  
Planning & Transport Development  
PO Box 5006  
Bath  
BA1 1JG

Telephone: (01225) 477000

Further contact details can be found on B&NES Council's website: [www.bathnes.gov.uk](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk)

Contact for advice regarding:

- Listed Buildings and Listed Building Consent
- Archaeology
- Conservation Areas
- Works to trees within Conservation Areas
- Planning Permission
- Planning Policy
- Urban Design

All the above teams are located in Planning & Transport Development based in Bath.

This document about the Combe Hay Conservation Area can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from Planning Services on 01225 394100