

1. Discovering the Ridgeway - Winterbourne Abbas

08.03.18



Wherry Cottage and the terrace of Laburnum, Lilac and Jasmine Cottages drawn by John Wykes from www.dorsetforyou.com.

Key Features

The Nine Stones, which stands outside the village to the south of the watercourse. Known as the Nine Ladies, or colloquially as Lady Williams and her Dog, it is a sarsen stone circle of which all nine are standing: two large stones and seven small.

The settlement has a rich archaeological landscape setting, with particular concentrations of mature trees in the centre of the village, by the church and further west overhanging the main road, framing views and enhancing its setting. It was designated a Conservation Area in 1990.

There are green spaces on either side of the road – the churchyard to the south and the green space behind the bus shelter on Copyhold Lane, which could be a vestige of a village green where the residents maintain a right to graze sheep. (The meaning of copyhold is defined as a form of landholding “holding at the will of the lord according to the custom of the Manor”.)

Listed Buildings

There are 5 Grade II listed building entries plus the Grade I Parish Church of St Mary. The Grade II buildings are the War Memorial, (Old) Post Office Cottage, Wherry Cottage, the terrace of Laburnum, Lilac and Jasmine Cottages and the Lodge to Bridehead some distance removed to the west.

Nikolaus Pevsner states in his Buildings of England series - Dorset, that St Mary's Church has a Norman chancel with two original north windows constructed of bands of Cypris Freestones and flint which is the same underlying Upper Chalk band commonly seen in Cerne Abbas. The nave and tower are of various Purbeck limestones. The other remarkable feature of the church is the north gallery, dated 1701.

Settlement Pattern

The village is located in a gentle chalk landscape with valley slopes, the watercourse of South Winterbourne River, meadows and woodland, orientated east-west.

The plots are laid out in a linear plan form abutting the adjoining village of Steepleton to the east with the historic core concentrated around the Copyhold Lane and Manor Farm Lane intersection.

In 1750 the route along the stream was turnpiked establishing the main road through the village rather than the Roman road to the north.

The buildings were arranged in a single plot depth both sides of the road with many farms; Midway Down, West Hill, Manor, Little Glebe, The Grange and Butt Close Farms, a church, school and inn (Coach & Horses) together with several gentry houses and cottages.

Coherent groups of buildings in the central part of the village are linked by stone and flint walls and enhanced by mature trees.

Summary Of Other Quality Buildings

Starting from the gateway into the village on the south side of the A35:

The gable end and bell cote of the primary school are conspicuous on the approach from the east.

The White House on the south side was a former (inter-war) police house. Wherry Cottage is of C17 origin (formerly the Vicarage and Parish Rooms) and together with The Old Post Office Cottage, has been raised in height. The Church is enclosed within its churchyard of high cob/stone/flint walls surmounted by Bridgwater pantiles.

All except the former Baptist Chapel of 1872 are arranged eaves onto the road.

Development behind the Coach & Horses retains some older buildings related to the inn. The barn which fronts the stream is of stone and flint with a corrugated roof and the boundary wall between the inn and Butt Farm Close exhibits a similar detail to the churchyard.



Butt Farm Close walling. The Willows gable end projecting above boundary wall onto Copyhold Lane.

Crossing the road at the western edge of the Conservation Area to the north of the A35:

Grange Farm buildings represent a collection of former agricultural buildings, which have been converted into dwellings, and ancillary uses.

The large Victorian house Whitefriars (now subdivided) is dominant on the north side set back from the road behind a garden incorporating the Old Laundry and Apple Store opposite the former stables.



Whitefriars Stables, Myrtle and School Cottages were raised in height and the roof covering changed from thatch. Churchview was unusually built entirely of brick with blue headers in a diaper pattern with a mansard roof.

The Willows also features banded garden walls but these have various finishes with both cock and hen detailing, and more prevalent Bridgwater tiles. The Willows on Copyhold Lane has a much earlier mullioned gable window in its east elevation, salvaged from elsewhere perhaps.

The three-storey pair of houses in Manor Farm Lane is very distinctive with a pair of porches and a blocked window above the entrance. The mass of this building is reminiscent of a mill or workshop, which is atypical in Winterbourne Abbas.



The C19 thatched Nos 1 & 2 Manor Farm Cottages form an unspoilt group of buildings of merit with Manor Farm House of 1890. There is a hitherto unmentioned walled garden and this shares the same detail as the churchyard and Butt Close Farm walls.

Manor Farm yard addresses the road with barns, stables and outbuildings, now redundant.



Key Views

Views from the two barrows to the north of the village are focused on Hardy's Monument, strip lynchets and the valley below. The approaches to and from the east and west gateways into the village are lined with trees. From the east, the half-timbered gable of Whitefriars comes into view along Copyhold Lane and from the west; the church tower is glimpsed behind mature trees in a subtle curve in the road.



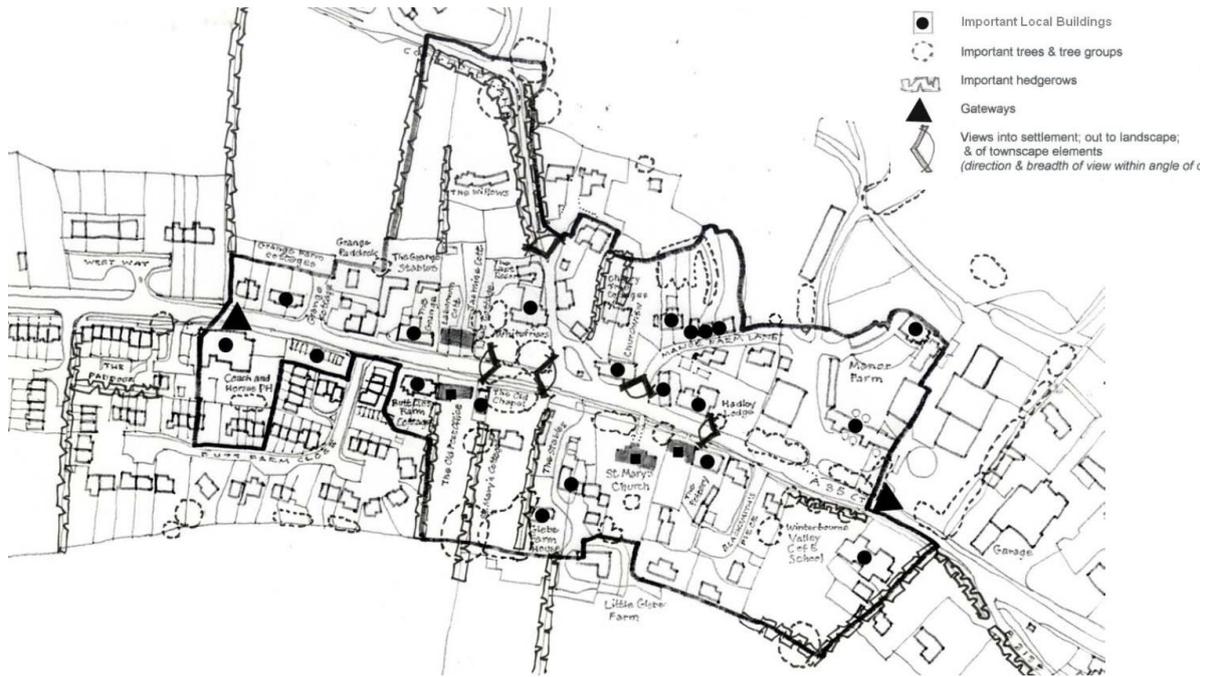
Palette Of Materials

A distinctive range of materials is evident including chalk, flint, cob, brick, Portland and Purbeck stone, in banded courses or as dressings, under thatch, tile and slate roofs. Hamstone makes an appearance as quoins and mullions to openings, while the use of roughcast at Cherry Tree Cottages is limited to estate cottages and to the first-floor projecting bay on Grange Farm. The only rendered building is the Old Chapel, now a dwelling.



Potential Projects

There is an absence of interpretative material about the Nine Stones and the village in general. The discovery of the walled garden at Manor Farm and the need to maintain historic walls and boundary treatment may present an opportunity to train building owners and volunteers in traditional craft skills and conservation work. A copy of the 1900 cast iron boundary plaque would also be worthy of public display.



Extract from Conservation Area Appraisal <http://www.dorsetforyou.com>