

Discovering the Ridgeway - Askerswell



Grey Cottage, formerly Askerswell Mill and Court House and barn conversions with the parish church tower.

Key Features

Nikolaus Pevsner, in his publication, Buildings of England - Dorset, makes reference to the parish church and South Eggardon Farmhouse with datestone of 1642, but no specific reference to any other buildings in Askerswell.

The RCHM mentions that most buildings in the parish are of C17 in origin, constructed of rubble stone and with roofs of thatch or slate. Court (Farm) House next to the church, Medway Farm House (relocated), Hembury Farm House and South Eggardon Farmhouse, which is C16, extended in the C17 and C18.

Listed Buildings

The Grade II* listed parish church of St Michael and All Angels, with its late Norman font and impressive west C15 tower, was rebuilt by Talbot Bury in 1858. It stands on the south side of Askerswell and is the most visible high-status building in the settlement. The other Grade II* listing is South Eggardon Farmhouse.

There are 14 Grade II listed buildings and four table tombs in the churchyard, all of which are Grade II.

The other listed buildings comprise the Nallers Lane group: Askerswell House, Askerswell coach house and stable block, Court Farmhouse and barn, Church Farmhouse. The Hembury Road group: Hembury House, Hembury Mill, Hembury Mill Cottage, West Hembury Farmhouse. Stonebridge, Askers House, the Spyway Road pair: Spyway Cottage, Folly Cottage and North Eggardon Farmhouse.

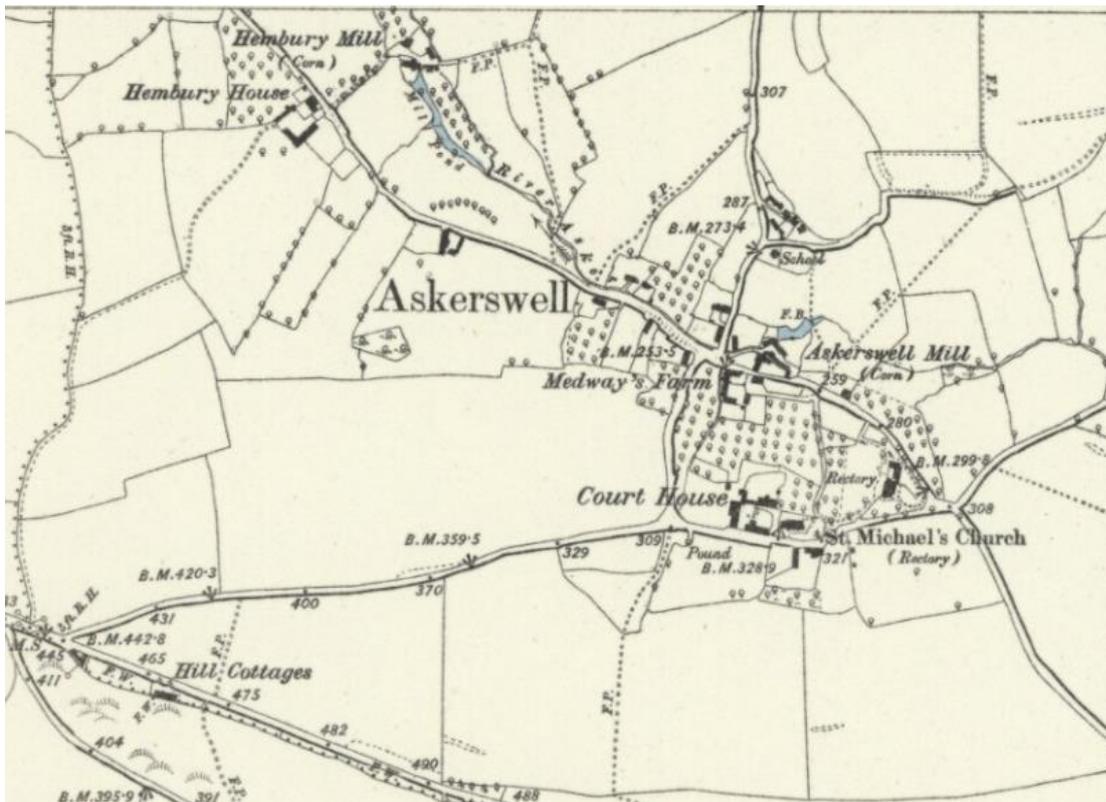
Settlement Pattern

The place name is derived from the name of the village stream, which arrives in Bridport as the river Asker. 'Asker' means 'newt'. Tavistock Abbey owned the manor of Askerswell, which included extensive arable land, open strip fields, some still with their lynchet terracing, remained largely unenclosed until 1846.

Dorset Life Magazine of December 2007 mentions how Askerswell House, the former rectory, was requisitioned by the military and was used by American forces bound for Omaha Beach on D-Day. Graffiti in the roof provides evidence of their occupation.



Extract from Askerswell Tithe Map 1846 and Apportionment, Dorset History Centre.
(The school does not feature at this date but the former Medway Farm and Rectory are included.)



Extract from 1888 Map showing the two corn mills and new Rectory, now Askerswell House.

The majority of buildings are aligned with their eaves parallel to the street; The Grey Cottage is an exception to this rule presenting a gable onto the street. New development is located in pockets around the village, accessed often on higher ground from long entrance drives, set back behind the established building line or in generously proportioned gardens and often raised above road level, bounded by walls or high hedges.

Summary Of Other Quality Buildings And Spaces

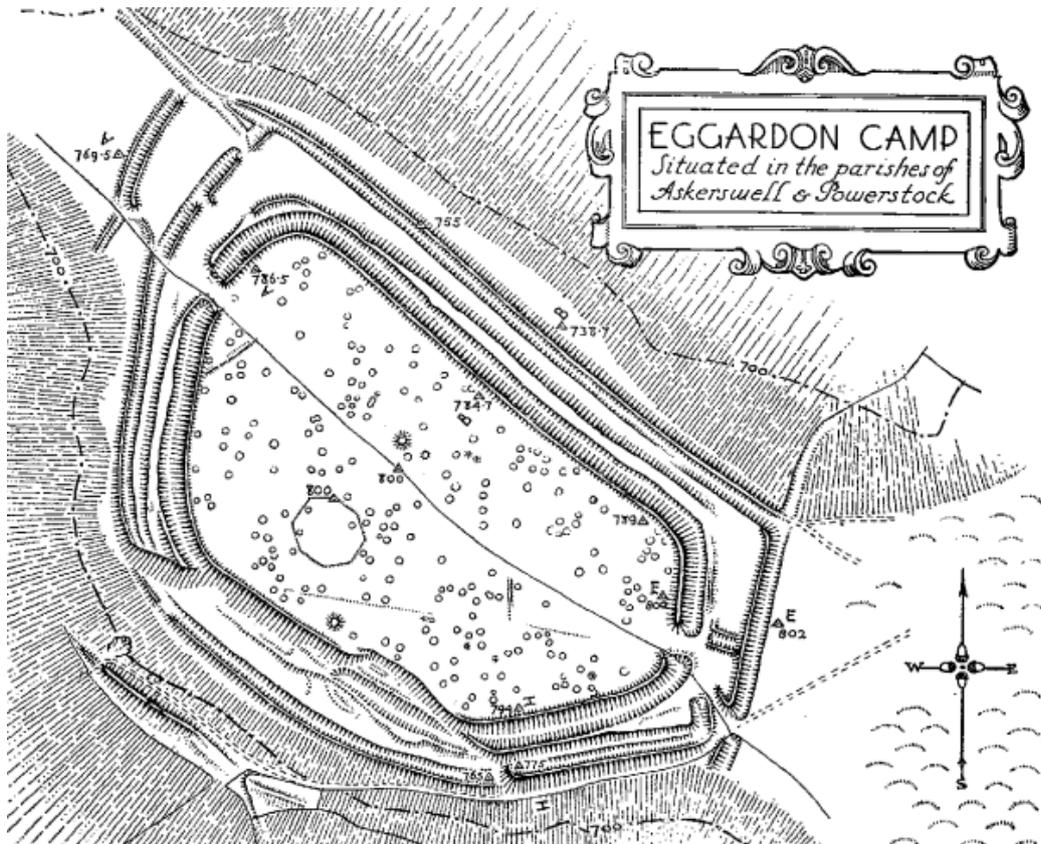
Green spaces include Washingpool Green, which was opened in July 2001 as a parish contribution to the millennium. The crossroads is a public space at the staggered crossroads and the position of the K6 telephone box still in use.



Fir Tree Cottage at the crossroads, late C19 view of Grey Cottage (Askerswell Mill), Granary, the Pound.

The public house, formerly the Three Horseshoes, is on the northern side of the village on the Eggardon foothills on the probable line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Exeter.

The Pound was a feature of most mediaeval villages, a high walled and secure structure served several purposes, the most common was to hold stray sheep, pigs and cattle until they were claimed by owners, usually for a fine or levy.

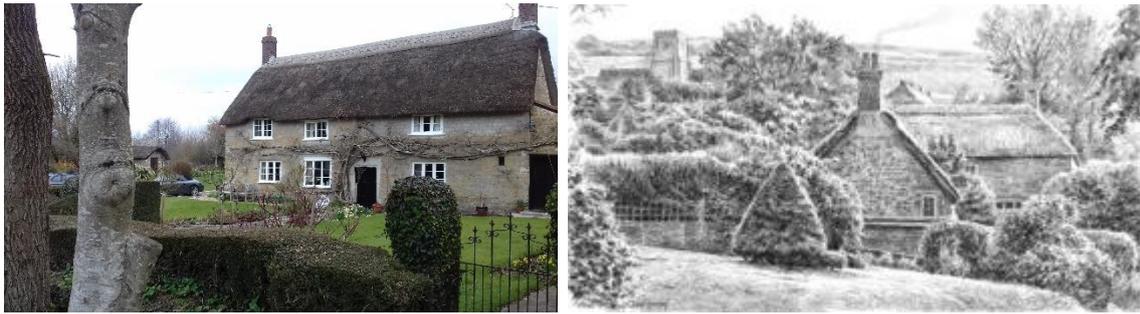


Extract from the RCHM of Eggardon Camp, which occupies the summit of a hill 800ft high, 1½miles NE of the church.

There are several important local (unlisted) buildings in Askerswell:

Around the Square, Fir Tree Cottage and K6 telephone box on a small green. This thatched cottage is constructed of rubble coursed stone and timber, white painted multi-pane casements with a matching thatched porch roof. Grey Cottage, formerly Askerswell corn mill, Medway House and Knapp Cottage.

Buildings on Parsons Lane, The Granary to the south, The Grey Cottage and Little Grey Cottage grouping (including Millstream behind incorporating elements of an earlier building) to the north, including a three-storey former mill building and a 1.5 storey outbuilding between the stream and the lane. Sherwood Cottage set back behind a front garden on Hembury Road adjacent to listed thatched Stonebridge (with its matching privy), with stone porch. Both houses accessed via a footbridge across the stream.



Stonebridge on Hembury Road looking northwest and south towards the parish church. The group along School Lane, The Old School House, Rose Cottage set high up on a bank behind a front garden and Candida, one of only two rendered houses.

Askerswell School opened in 1857 as a local initiative and became an elementary school in 1871. It was enlarged in 1901 to cater for 70 children. It celebrated its centenary, although it closed in 1965 and is now a dwelling.



Sherwood and Rose Cottage.

All of these buildings make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of Askerswell.



Early images of Knapp Cottages 1900 and Askers House 1950, courtesy of Askerswell Millennium Project.

Key Views

The hill fort at Eggardon is very conspicuous in views into and out of the village. The most iconic view is of the tower of the parish church of St Michael and All Angels from public footpaths, with Chilcombe Hill beyond on higher ground either side of the valley, also from the A35, and the approaches from Eggardon and beyond, seen here in the centre of the frame.



View of the church tower from the car park adjacent to the Village Hall looking south towards the A35.

Palette Of Materials

Jo Draper in her 2008 book Dorset Stone refers to the western area of chalk downland as close enough to Loders to have been built from mainly Inferior Oolite but Church Farm is of chalk block onto Nallers Lane.

The Old Wheelwright's Shop is built of chalk block.

The west gable end of Court House Barn has been acknowledged as an access point for owls; it features a square stone with a round opening large enough (70 x 70mm) for a barn owl to fly into and roost in the roof space.



The Old Wheelwright's Shop and Church Farm.



Medway House (former farm without its original chimney stacks) and Knapp Cottage, both under thatch roofs fronting the staggered crossroads.

There is a consistent use of local limestone, coursed and rubble work, with some Hamstone dressings, more commonly brick quoins and gauged arch brick heads to

windows and doors under thatch, slate and clay tile roofs with stone gable copings evident on gentry houses. Porches are either of thatch (in the Dorset style) or simple timber structures with slate. Chimneys are conspicuously of red brick with terracotta pots.

Boundary Treatment

There are good examples of stone walls, with copings or with cock and hen detailing, as seen above at Rose Cottage, or a rounded stone capping, as seen at Askers House, and laid hazel hedgerows at several properties which all contribute strongly to the character of the area. Later buildings have more utilitarian boundaries and some are accessed across the watercourse.



Rose Cottage, Askers House and Washingpool Green boundary treatments.