



# DULVERTON

## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



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*High Street*

## 1 TOPOGRAPHIC & HISTORIC BACKGROUND

### (i) Location & Essential Characteristics

1.1 Dulverton is situated on the River Barle and is the main settlement in the southern portion of Exmoor National Park, and acts as a main “gateway” to the high moors. The Barle valley broadens considerably at this point from the narrow wooded valley clad in ancient oak woodland to the north, enabling much of the town to have a gently sloping south and west facing aspect. The A396 Exe Valley road is just over a mile to the east, which connects with the North Devon Link Road and the town of Tiverton about 12 miles to the south. As stated in the Local Plan, “Dulverton’s accessibility, location and attractive character have created a tourism industry which is of vital importance to the town’s economy.”

1.2 The inherent character of Dulverton is that of a long established small market town of at least medieval origins. Closely linked, and included within the conservation area, is the separate small linear settlement of Northmoor with mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages fronting a narrow through road. Dulverton retained its compact plan until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the main concentration of development in Fore Street, High Street and Back Street. Since that time development of housing estates to the south and east of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hollam House, both by the local authority and private developers, especially since 1945, have doubled the size of the built-up area. This bears very little resemblance to the historic core, although is visually separated by areas of undeveloped land either side of the Abbot’s Way, which forms a pleasant link between old and new.

### (ii) Historic Background

1.3 The locality is certainly rich in evidence of early defensive settlement, with the Iron Age hill Forts at Oldberry Castle and two miles upstream Mounsey and Brewer’s Castles. The earliest record of Dulverton is of “*dieglaford*” which derives from the Old English meaning “hidden ford.” Prior to the Norman Conquest, Dulverton belonged to Saxon aristocrats. Harold Godwin, Earl of Wessex, succeeded his father in 1053 and was made King in 1066 before being killed at the Battle of Hastings whence the Manor passed directly to King William. Dulverton is recorded as *Dolvertune* in the Domesday Book.

Thereafter came several ownerships, including the Turberville family until being granted to Taunton Priory in 1340.

1.4 In 1306 Edward I had granted a licence to the Lord of the Manor to hold a market each Thursday. From 1488 the Prior of Taunton was empowered to hold two fairs each year; on the 11<sup>th</sup> July and 6<sup>th</sup> November. After the dissolution, the Manor passed first to the Crown, then to William Babbington, a Privy Councillor. The influential Sydenham family acquired it in 1568. Henry Sydenham joined forces with John Byam, vicar of Dulverton to oppose Parliament in the Civil War. Although penalised, he did not entirely lose his Dulverton possessions. After the Restoration, the town became a focal point for Dissenters with several chapels built in the area under licence from the Bishop. The manor was dispersed after 1818, partly to estate tenants.

1.5 The woollen industry is thought to have started to flourish from late the medieval period. Several mills were established, initially to provide coarse woollen cloth. The largest business in the town was Warden & Company's Crepe mill, powered by a water wheel and with up to 70 employees. It had become a laundry by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and this business still continues. This mill was fed by a leat taking a separate course from the river from well to the north of the town. Also served were Higher and Lower Mills, the former with "twin breast" wheels, and both shown as corn grinding mills on early ordnance survey maps, but now private residences. There is also a record of a former paper mill in Lady Street, and of a tanyard in this part of the town, which closed in the 1840s.

1.6 In 1820 there was reputedly a Shambles in Fore Street, as well as a Market House and Butter Cross. It is not certain when they were removed. The Poor Law of 1834 established workhouses, but that at Dulverton (now Exmoor House) is relatively late, being completed in 1855. Lord Tennyson visited the town in 1891, and stayed at the Caernarvon Arms. The 1914 Kelly's directory refers to "The Dulverton Electric Lighting Company." George Bowbeer, a local resident born 1844, assisted its formation. He had worked on the US railroad system, before returning to Dulverton in 1876. Apparently, there were some attempts to exploit mineral reserves in the locality, including silver and lead, which was smelted in South Wales. None of these enterprises are thought to have flourished, but there is a record that Dr. G.F. Sydenham of Bartleton House had a candlestick made of local silver.

## 2 THE CONSERVATION AREA

### (i) Background & Setting

2.1 The present conservation area was designated in December 1994 and includes most of the town's 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier development, including the several surviving mills. Several routes converging at this bridging point have influenced the town's layout, and the town centre occupies a gentle south and west facing slope where



*Top: Approach to town centre along Jury Road Above: 16th century houses in Jury Road. Below: early entrance door, probably 17th century*



the deep valley setting to the north begins to level out. The centre is focussed on the pleasingly enclosed square of Fore Street and Bank Square, which reflects its long-standing function as a small but important market town serving a large rural hinterland. There is a wide range of historic buildings, mainly of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century, many of which are grade two listed, and built of local stone and sometimes lime-washed or rendered. Slate roofs predominate, although there are examples of thatch and clay pantiles. Dulverton has a pleasing landscape setting with Burr ridge Wood, Southwood and Mossypark Plantations providing a tree-clad hillside backdrop to the north and west across the river.

2.2 Within the conservation area are some 21 entries included in the statutory list All are grade II listed except the former Parish Church of All Saints and Wood Tenement in Jury Road which are grade II\* (see Section 7).

(ii) Purpose of the Character Appraisal

2.3 The statutory definition of a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for designated conservation areas. This requirement is expanded upon in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 section 4.

2.4 An English Heritage Conservation Area Practice Note published in June 1993 also states that “Local Authorities should..define that special architectural or historic character which warrants designation by means of a published detail character analysis”. Part of the purpose of such a document is to “incorporate policies in the statutory local plan...the most important (of which) will be a presumption against the loss of elements which have been identified as making a positive contribution to that special interest which warranted designation.”

2.5 The purpose of a character statement such as this is to define as clearly as possible the historic (and by implication archaeological), architectural, and natural components of the conservation area that are considered especially important and contribute most to its character. It is also intended to advise on the scope for repair or restoration where needed and to encourage improvement or removal of unsightly features. There is an emphasis upon the use of local traditional materials and methods of construction which seeks to challenge an increasing trend towards the use of standardised artificial substitutes.

2.6 To summarise, the principal aims of this document are intended to define:

- what influences have given Dulverton its special character
- what chiefly reflects this character and is most worth conserving
- what has suffered damage or loss and may need reinstating
- what should be considered in guiding future changes
- what visual features particularly need safeguarding
- what existing or potential resources may be available to maintain character and assist in enhancement.
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Aspects of townscape within the conservation area. Top left: Barle Bridge has medieval origins, but was widened in 1819 and rebuilt after flood damage in 1866 and 1952. Top right: Higher Mill, a former grist mill. The present building is probably mid 19th century. Above left: Northmoor with the mill leat, originally supplying water to several mills providing an attractive water feature. Above right: The lower part of High Street is one of two well enclosed spaces of good townscape quality and containing most commercial premises. Below left: the upper part of High Street is mainly residential with mixed frontages of 17th to early 20th century date. Below centre: Dulverton retains several narrow side streets; once a typical feature of towns in Devon and Somerset. Below right: a further example



### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 and 16 have advised that archaeology has become a “material consideration” in the planning process. Planning authorities must now consider the balance between the need for development and the effects it has on the historic environment.

3.2 The County Sites and Monuments Record for Dulverton shows a considerable number of entries for the parish as a whole. In addition to the town centre, seven of these sites are within the conservation area. These include Higher Mill and Lower Mill, the former corn mills, the Barle Bridge, the former workhouse, a former paper mill, and All Saint’s Church. Wood Tenement is included as, a well-preserved example of a 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century house with some 16<sup>th</sup> century painted wall decorations.

3.3 The first edition Ordnance Survey Map 1889, shows the former “Crape Factory”, but by the second edition of 1903, this had become a laundry, and remains so to the present day. The first edition also shows a short “tramway” descending the hillside at Northmoor, but no record has been found describing its purpose, although it may have been associated with extraction of ore (cf. section 1.6).

### 4 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

#### (i) Architectural and Townscape Character

4.1 The sense of antiquity of Dulverton can be best appreciated on the approach along Jury Road. A group of tall stone stacks, projecting from the eaves of cottages of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century form a picturesque sequence. On entering the compact town centre, the intricacy of the street pattern is reflects the town’s medieval origins.

4.2 The layout provides a wide range of vistas within a small area, and a strong sense of enclosure is provided by several buildings set at right angles to the main frontages forming important visual stops. The intimate scale is reinforced by an irregular building line and by several narrow, short alleys sometimes linking the main streets, or defining the edge of the historic core. Within this close-knit pattern, several centuries of building are represented and there are several subtle variations reflecting both period style and detailing which can be broadly grouped into the following categories:

- (1) several larger buildings, often prominently placed in the street scene, or where more concealed, are within a well-defined setting. In the former category are the Market Hall and buildings fronting Bank Square, whilst in the latter are the Parish Church, The Greenway, Exmoor House and the several surviving mill buildings.
- (1) other commercial or domestic buildings, forming the major part of the largely continuous main street frontages, and mostly built between the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- (1) In Dulverton, as was the historic pattern in many towns in Somerset and Devon, there are several short terraces extending at right angles to the main frontages along narrow streets or courtyards.

#### (ii) Character Areas

4.4 In view of its size, the conservation area can be sub-divided into separate sub-areas each with a notably distinct character. These are indicated on Map 6 and are outlined as follows:

##### 1 The town centre

This includes the historic core of the town east of the leat and west of the Vicarage, as well as open land adjoining Abbots’ Walk.



2 Bridge Street and riverside

The riverside setting including Exmoor House, former mills and Barle Bridge.

3 Mill Leat and Lady Street

Includes the separate road and footpath approaches into the town centre from the north, and consists of a mix of mainly later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century development.

4 Parish Church environs, Town Marsh and Jury Road

The Parish Church and adjoining Church Walk are somewhat separated visually from the town centre and although a separate enclave are linked by paths to Town Marsh in its valley setting and to Jury Road where there are opening vistas towards the church tower.

5 Northmoor

Effectively a separate community of mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages extending well to the north of the town centre, with many buildings either overlooking the River Barle or the Mill Leat

Use of Materials - (i) BUILDINGS

4.5 Natural stone is a predominant building material. The local hard Devonian sandstones and shales are used as stone rubble most widely for cottages and boundary walls. In some larger buildings, for example the parish church of All Saints there is some dressed stone, imported from elsewhere, for example from the Ham Hill quarries near Yeovil. Many of the cottages have been rendered, or the stone colour-washed.

4.6 Much of the building stone would have been obtained from local quarries, which have long since closed, although several former sites in the vicinity can still be traced. Most abandoned quarries can be found on higher ground several miles to the north and west of the town. There is some evidence of timber-framing, for example a half-timbered frieze below the eaves at Sydenham House, and of a painted over box-frame on a wall flanking an alleyway, both in High Street. It is unlikely bricks would have been produced



*Dulverton retains a wide range of building styles and use of materials. Left: Town Marsh contains an informally arranged group of buildings of 18<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup> century origin, including a former chapel and smithy. Centre: a good example of a late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgian entrance in High Street. Right: built about a century later is an example of an Arts & Crafts style house, mainly using materials imported from elsewhere in Somerset or from South Wales.*



*There is a mix of building materials and methods throughout the conservation area. Left: local stone is either left exposed or rendered using smooth (background) or roughcast render (foreground). Right: roofs are mainly of Welsh slate or varieties of clay pantile (e.g. double-Roman tiles), some replacing earlier thatch. Slate has in turn sometimes been re-*

locally, and were probably transported in by rail. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century Arts & Crafts houses are constructed of both local and imported materials.

4.7 An equally important material is rendering which was traditionally lime-wash slobbered over stone, and there may be instances where some cob has also been used.. It is seen to best effect when in combination with thatch or Cornish slate and the characteristic lateral or gable-end chimney shafts, either of exposed stone or rendered on shouldered stacks. Traditionally lime-wash was combined with a black tar-banded plinth. Slate hung walls are another local feature, though less prevalent in Dulverton than elsewhere in Exmoor, as are surviving examples of Cornish slate. The rear wall of the Congregational Church is a significant example.

4.8 Originally, thatch would have been a more prevalent form of roofing material, but from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century slate was more commonly used. Welsh slate predominates, and a significant proportion has either been bitumenised or has been replaced by varieties of artificial slate. More recently, natural slate has started to be used again more widely, but most examples noted appeared to be of overseas origin. There was formerly a more local source of slate in heavier slabs, which originated mainly from the Brendon Hills, where a few slate quarries formerly flourished until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but no evidence of this roofing type was noted in Dulverton. The main alternative to slate is the red clay double-Roman tiles, most probably from the Bridgwater area. These have been used, either to replace thatch, or on buildings dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the industry was at its height. Plain tiles also began to be used on new buildings from this time, but are less commonplace in Dulverton.

4.9 There is a very good survival of historic window types in the conservation area. These are mainly of timber with many excellent examples of sash windows having a variety of glazing patterns. The main local type, probably dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, has a wide central and two narrower margin panes between vertical glazing bars. Earlier examples have a larger number of smaller panes with narrow bars. The other major type consists of timber or metal casement windows, usually on the smaller cottages. There was a flourishing of Arts & Crafts architecture in Dulverton early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a wide range of styles of doors and windows, some reflecting the stone mullions and transoms of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century. Also of this period are some examples of forged door and window furniture, and of leaded light glazing patterns. A late example (1951) is the Legion House, a bequest to the town from a military officer. Other features include round-headed iron framed windows, which tend to indicate former industrial use and of pointed-arch windows, for example at the former Primary School and the tall lancets on the otherwise plain frontage of the Congregational Chapel (section 7.6).

4.10 In addition to period windows, Dulverton also possesses some very fine period doors and pedimented door-cases. These are mainly reserved for the more important town-houses, of Georgian or early Victorian date, and are largely within the town centre. Elsewhere the traditional plank and ledged form predominates, some incorporating fixed lights, while some others are panelled and have overlights. There is little



*Other features also add to the quality of townscape. Left: one of several separate footpath routes within the conservation area, some of which date back several centuries. Centre: an example of the local type of dry stone walling. Right: historic metalwork, such as this wrought iron gate, are an important element of conservation area*

other obvious ornament, but a number of cottages have small front porches with gabled roofs and a variety of sometimes imaginative detail, mainly dating from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Use of Materials - (ii) BOUNDARY FEATURES

4.11 There are considerable stretches of boundary walling mainly built of the local shales. Some are partially rendered, although others use minimal amounts of mortar. There are a few examples, mainly on the fringes of the conservation area with the distinctive pattern of stonework, where the bedding plane is in a vertical or near horizontal position. This is known locally as “dyking,” and adds a pleasing contrast to the more widespread use of horizontally coursed stone rubble. This type of walling is most commonly used as a retaining feature to hedgerow banks, but can be prone to deterioration when not regularly maintained. Nevertheless, the local types of stone-walling make a valuable contribution to the character of the conservation area, as well as providing a strong sense of enclosure or privacy in several cases.

4.12 There are a few good examples of ironwork, most notably enclosing the churchyard. There are a few other instances of entrance gates, railing to entrance steps, short sections of railings enclosing spaces, and the listed former water pump and bollard at Northmoor.

#### Use of Materials - (iii) GROUND SURFACES

4.13 Dulverton has many instances of paved or cobbled surfaces using natural stone with a number of examples illustrated. Most noteworthy is Church Walk, which probably dates from the time the cottages were built. Nearby is a cobbled entrance and courtyard associated with the Arts & Crafts group which includes Wreaneaton, dating from c.1900. The passage between the library and information centre is paved with York stone and is bordered by rounded cobbles, whilst adjoining the car park to the rear are some imaginatively patterned cobbles created in 1997 under supervision by Dulverton school-children. There are also a number of examples of cobbled forecourts to houses. In some locations the cobbles are a marginal feature adjoining, and in one or two instances, largely superseded or covered by asphalt. There are other locations where surfaces consist of gravel or loose chippings, and where there is potential for a paved or cobbled surface to be added.

## **5 BUILDING FORM & ORNAMENT**

5.1 Much of character of the townscape of Dulverton derives from the range of frontage detail in a compact and often irregular sequence of houses and commercial premises, sometimes complementing each other



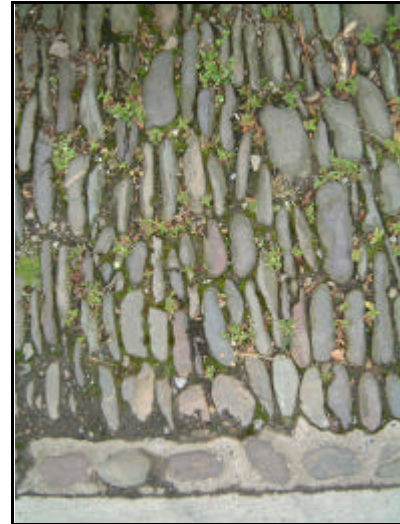
across the street. There are examples of the locally established vernacular style largely devoid of ornament or fine architectural detail, but built on a modest yet well-proportioned scale that gives the street scene a foundation of historic character. The quality of townscape is much enhanced by three other influences. Firstly, there are many examples of 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century detail with typical period features already referred to and amply illustrated. Secondly, is the considerable legacy of Victorian architectural detail introducing different materials including polychromatic brickwork, double-Roman tiles, and other products of the Industrial Revolution, and able to be transported in by rail. Thirdly is the handful of more consciously designed houses in the Arts & Crafts tradition, where the emphasis was again on locally sourced materials and use of traditional craft methods used in their construction.

5.2 The pattern of development, although small scale, and only in a few instances greater than two storeys in height, has a measure of sophistication that creates a strong sense of place. Most buildings are well-proportioned, and there are several enclosed urban vistas with well-placed buildings providing a strong visual stop. Although several periods are represented from the 16<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the generally uniform scale and use of local materials, with predominantly slate roofs results in a largely homogenous townscape. Dulverton's setting in a relatively narrow, steep-sided valley setting ensures there is often a backdrop of surrounding landscape.

## 6 CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

6.1 Dulverton appears to have had a modestly prosperous past, and most historic buildings, both listed and unlisted, are generally well maintained with an awareness of the importance of retaining and enhancing historic detail. There is evidence of the influence of the public sector, as well as the local community, in restoring and maintaining buildings for visitor use. Consequently, there are very few vacant or unoccupied buildings suffering from serious neglect or under Use. It is heartening to note that a large proportion of timber windows and entrance doors survive in their original form, and that where replacements have been made, these closely match the traditional form. Nevertheless, PVCu replacement windows and doors are starting to make inroads into the conservation area, and within the close-knit pattern of development can be especially noticeable. Such PVCu replacements, even where they closely match the traditional glazing and joinery patterns, introduce an artificial product that in a historic setting can all too easily destroy the visual integrity of even the most modest of traditional buildings.

6.2 The tradition of lightly coating stonework with colour-wash is noted. In such cases, the use of lime-based mortars for repairing walls and lime-coated finishes should be sustained where possible. Fortunately it is becoming more widely recognised that in maintaining render added to stonework that



*Top: an example of the use of local stone cobbles in paving. Above: a typical Georgian frontage in Bridge Street. Below: damage to a slate-hung wall. Finding suitable replacement materials*





*Examples of listed buildings in Dulverton: Left: the parish church is grade II\* listed; the tower dating from the 15th century. The lych gate is grade II and dates from 1907. Centre: Exmoor House (grade II) is the former Union Workhouse and was built in 1855. Right: Market Hall; a former market House of 1866 was converted with the addition of stairs*

highly finished plasticised renders, although considered more maintenance free than historic lime mortar and lime-wash render, may pose long-term structural problems. Such problems arise by preventing some of the natural rhythms of permeability, which the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings refers to as “allowing the building to breathe.” As a general rule it is preferable to accept the status quo of the building externally, and neither strip off render to reveal stonework, or to render over where none previously existed.

## 7 HISTORIC BUILDINGS

7.1 There is an eclectic mix of entries to the statutory list. These include Barle Bridge, medieval in origin, the Parish Church with 15<sup>th</sup> century tower and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lychgate, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century chapel, former crepe factory and Union Workhouse, Market Hall, mid 19<sup>th</sup> century hotel, telephone kiosk, and hand pump.

### (i) Grade II\* Listed Buildings

7.2 The **Parish Church of All Saints** although originally dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, was largely rebuilt in 1853-5 when the tower was also extensively restored. The oak rood screen in traditional style dates from 1902. The stained glass is all 19<sup>th</sup> century and of varying quality; the west window is best. There are several 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century memorials; the earliest a brass to Humphrey Sydenham who died in 1710. There is a Royal coat of arms, painted on wood dating from 1714.

7.3 In Jury Road on the eastern approach to Dulverton is the striking **Wood Tenement**, a former farmhouse dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but extended in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has four tall stacks, two of which rise prominently from the roadside frontage. The listing details refer to much early timber and other interior features, including four pairs of jointed cruck trusses, peaked and round-headed doorframes, plank and muntin screen, timber-framed partitions with late 16<sup>th</sup>–early 17<sup>th</sup> century painted panels, and a 16<sup>th</sup> century grate.

### (ii) Grade II Listed Buildings

7.4 **Barle Bridge**, built of local stone rubble with ashlar string course and coping, spans the river in five arches with pointed cutwater buttresses between a four-centre central arch. It is medieval in origin, but was repaired in 1624, and widened in 1819 by John Stone. It had to be repaired after flood damage in 1866 and 1952.





Further examples of listed buildings, all grade II. Above left: the former Crepe Mill originally dates from the late 18th century and once had a workforce of 70. It has been in its present use since 1897. Above right: the Congregational Church, built in 1831 and altered in 1897, has early and late 19th century interior features. Right: Sydenham House, High Street, has 16th century origins, but was altered in the 17th, early 19th and mid 20th century. Below left: a telephone kiosk to a 1930s design is now listed. Below right: a cottage in Bridge Street probably originally dating from the 18th



Right: listed street furniture at Northmoor consists of a former water pump and a bollard with fluted column. Both may have been moved from elsewhere.

Far right: also in Bridge Street a 17th-18th century



7.5 Dulverton has a wide range of listed properties, mainly concentrated on street frontages within the town centre. An exception is **Exmoor House** set well back from Bridge Street and built as a Union Workhouse in 1855, but converted to council offices in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two storeys in height, it is built of local stone rubble with dressings around openings. The frontage contains a central block with central open pediment and flanking wings. There are ground floor 12-pane and first floor 9-pane sash windows. Above the deep eaves is a slate roof topped by a central wooden lantern with shallow pyramid roof and arched louvred openings on each face. There is a long range extending to the rear.

7.6 In Bridge Street, **The Boot** has a late 19<sup>th</sup> century tile hung and quarry tile frontage added to an earlier, possibly three-cell and cross-passage 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage, and still thatched. The casement windows with single horizontal glazing bar, probably date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century updating. Almost opposite, **Forge Cottage** also thatched is also possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century and was enlarged in the late 18<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is predominantly rendered over rubble with 19<sup>th</sup> century casement windows. The thatched porch reaches almost to the eaves. Nearby is a type “K6” cast iron red painted **telephone kiosk** to the 1935 design of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

7.6 At the corner of **Chapel Street** and High Street is **No 4** and **Holland House** both probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The former has a four-bay frontage with first floor 16-pane sash windows, and an original plank door under a porch set in the angle with an adjoining house. The latter has a double shop-front with 20<sup>th</sup> century half-glazed double door with 16-pane sash window above. Alongside is a semi-circular headed doorway, with four-panel door. Set back at the corner is **Dulverton Laundry**. Originally water driven, this was formerly a Crepe Mill, and is a good example of an early industrial building. Pevsner describes it as “a fine, rational early 19<sup>th</sup> century design.” It is three-storeys, built of local stone rubble with recessed bays and some wooden panels between windows. There are six-light windows and some multi-paned leaded-light casements on the second floor. Closing the view beyond the corner is the **Congregational Church and Hall**. The former dates from 1831 and has a rendered frontage, grooved as ashlar, with three pointed-arch windows having divided tracery, and has a slate-hung rear elevation. The interior with early-late 19<sup>th</sup> century fittings is very complete. There is a historic note in the listing details recording that Sir George Williams, founder of the YMCA, worshipped here as a boy.

7.7 The other major concentration of listed buildings extends between the lower part of High Street and the Parish Church. One of the most memorable is the former **Market Hall** now a hall over shops. Originally built in 1866 with a seven-bay stone front, it replaces one of 1760. It was converted to its present use in 1930 with the addition of the arched staircase with twin arms leading to a central upper porch with veranda by Sir A.E.Richardson, which has a lightness of touch, including the ironwork, that resembles the Regency style. Also prominent in the town centre is the **Lion Hotel**, with “a nice five-bay, three-storey front with a well detailed Ionic porch” (Pevsner). It dates from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with all 12-pane sash windows.

7.8 In **High Street, nos. 1 and 2** are part of a row and of late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Built of local stone rubble with slate roof, no. 2 was rebuilt in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with brick surrounds to window openings. Both have fluted pilaster doorcases with leaded fanlights and half-glazed and panelled doors re-



*Market House with added stairs and entrance veranda*



*Parish Church with Church*

spectively. No. 2 is fronted by a short flight of stone steps with wrought iron handrail. Almost opposite, **Sydenham House** is probably a former farmhouse dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier with later buildings abutting. There are jointed-cruck truss roof timbers and chamfered beams with step and runout stops, both indicative of the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century. It was refenestrated in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, altered internally c.1820, and altered again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The listing details mention “an interesting house whose evolution is unclear.” On the north west side, **nos. 3 and 5 High Street** were a former single house, probably 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier and three room with cross-passage. The listing details suggest an original hall to which a rear lateral stack was added, probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The original house was remodelled extended and divided in the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century with two surviving 12-pane sash windows and later 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century casements with horizontal glazing bars.

7.9 Near the top end of High Street, **nos. 1-5 Church Street**, a terrace of five houses are mainly of early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, although nos. 4-5 are earlier with rear lateral stacks. The painted stone rubble frontages are complemented by the entirely cobbled surface of the street contained by an opposite stone wall and with the parish church closing the view. The roofs are a mixture of slate (some asbestos) and pantiles. Each cottage has a straight hood porch on brackets over the entrance door, which is panelled and has a rectangular overlight. No.1 has late 19<sup>th</sup> century bay windows on the ground floor. The approach to the church from the south is through the **Lychgate** built in 1907 of stained timber, stone rubble with Bath stone dressings. The Gothic style gabled structure with decorative clay-tile roof and ornate pierced bargeboards, reflects the then prevalent Arts & Crafts tradition.

7.9 The remaining listings refer to properties further away from the town centre. **The Greenway** is approached by a drive from High Street and is a late 18<sup>th</sup>–early 19<sup>th</sup> century fronting of an earlier house. It is rendered over rubble and has what the listing details describe as a “hipped West Somerset slate roof.” The L-shaped plan has a main south-facing two-storey 5 bay range in Regency style with ground floor 15-pane sashes reaching to ground level and similar first floor windows of 12-panes. There is a central semi-circular headed entrance with panelled reveals and above the door a fanlight with radiating bars. The interior is thought to retain significant period detail, for example, panelled shutters to windows, a stick baluster stair, and segmental-headed doorway also containing a fanlight.

7.10 Off **Rosemary Lane, Chypleighs**, is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage, roughcast over rubble and possibly adapted from an earlier two-cell and cross-passage plan dwelling with stone stacks at either end. There are pointed arch openings; the windows are casements with divided tracery heads, and the door of vertical plank construction. In **Jury Road**, adjoining Wood Tenement, is **Woodlands**, a former three-cell and cross-passage farmhouse, probably 16<sup>th</sup> century, but extensively altered in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and again in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two tall stacks rising from the eaves of the outshot complement those of the adjoining grade II\* listed house. The later additions and substitution of concrete tiles for thatch is described in the listing details as “unfortunate” and merits inclusion primarily because of the “picturesque grouping.” Finally, in **Lady Street** towards Northmoor is a **bollard and hand pump** dating from the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both may have been re-sited; the former a truncated circular vent pipe with fluted columns and capital; the latter with curved handle fluted head, cap and nozzle and a circular shaft divided into sections by moulded bands. They are recorded as having been listed because of their historic interest.

(iii) Other Key Buildings

7.11 Dulverton is distinguished by having a considerable number of unlisted character buildings. Many are included, not so much for their historic qualities, but rather the extent to which they have retained original features of character without any excess of later intervention. The majority of such buildings line the main town centre frontages and many have modest but well-preserved late 18<sup>th</sup> to late 19<sup>th</sup> century detail and as already noted there are also some good examples of c.1895-1910 employing with considerable originality the then ubiquitous Arts & Crafts style.

7.12 **Town Mills** is one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century grist mills, probably with earlier origins. It is of three-storeys, with transverse wing across the leat. Predominantly built of local sandstone rubble there is some timber panel infill and segmental arched openings with six-light casement windows. The **Guildhall Centre** was pre-





*Dulverton has many buildings of character that are unlisted Left: house in Chapel Street with cobbled forecourt, probably dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Centre: mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage, including an original shopfront in Fore Street. The plaque in the blind window indicates this was part of the site of the historic White Horse Inn.*

viously two-storey workshops grouped around a central courtyard, with a wrap around frontage of painted stone with plank doors and mostly paired timber casement windows. Parts of the building date from the 18<sup>th</sup> –early 19<sup>th</sup> century with later additions. Opposite, fronting a path is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century three-cottage row built of stone rubble with polychromatic brick dressings, and with all original sash windows surviving. Further to the rear, and recently restored by the Exmoor National Park Authority, are brick-built early 20<sup>th</sup> century workshops/stables with top hinged casement windows and vertical plank doors with strap hinges.

7.13 In **Bridge Street, Bridge Inn and Bridge Cottage** are both early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the date of 1845 marked out in pavement cobbles. Built of stone rubble, the former occupies a prominent corner site with render added. Both have pedimented door-cases on the Bridge Street frontage, one with round-headed, the other elliptical arch, and both having fanlights with radial bars. Opposite is **Farthings** a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century fronted house with possible earlier origins. The three-bay frontage with ground floor canted bays, has sash windows with vertical bars, and a panelled entrance door with plain fanlight above. **Rothwell and Dunworth's bookshop** has a good late 19<sup>th</sup> century shop-front with carved console brackets, moulded mullions and lozenge panels to the stall riser. There is a brick built rear wing, alongside the leat with four round-headed metal frame windows, which suggests some former commercial or industrial use. In **Chapel Street** the former **Lower Mill** is now a private house, whilst the adjoining **Riverside House** has a rustic porch and three-pane sash windows. The **Manse** to the Congregational Chapel was added in 1877 and is rendered under a slate roof. **The Old Bakehouse** with large casement windows is probably early 19<sup>th</sup> century and occupies a recessed position, with leat and sluices to the fore, and visually forms part of the former Crepe Mill complex. Where the street curves sharply left is **Hampshire House**, apparently early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a painted stone rubble frontage and cobbled forecourt. The six-panel entrance door has two fixed lights and the timber casement windows each have a single horizontal glazing bar.

7.14 Although there are no listed buildings, the lower end of **High Street**, especially its south facing elevation (illustrated on page 4), has a well-proportioned sequence of late 18<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup> century two-storey frontages with a number of traditional shop-fronts, and first floor sash windows with narrow glazing bars. Opposite frontages are more varied in height and quality, but **The Wardrobe** occupies a 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage with shop having panelled reveals and lozenge pattern in flanking pilasters. The three-bay first floor elevation has tri-partite sash windows with a blind centre bay. Set well back to the rear of this frontage is a two-storey house, probably 17<sup>th</sup> –18<sup>th</sup> century in plain vernacular style, built of stone rubble with timber lintels and casement windows. Closing the view in this part of High Street is **Dulverton Pharmacy**. This appears to be a re-fronting of an earlier building in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Arts & Crafts style with leaded-light windows and an impressive frontage of dressed Ham Hill stone, including a first floor roundel window with opposed keystones.

7.15 **Fore Street** is the most impressive enclosed space within the town centre and also has some



Further examples of unlisted buildings in the conservation area. Top left: early-mid 19th century frontage detail in Bridge Street Top right: Fore Street with 19th century shop front. Above left: double-fronted house, possibly originally early 19th century, but refronted with porch added in the late 19th-early 20th century. Above right: early 20th century workshop/stables of brick and tile, recently restored to original condition. Right: former chapel with hall adjoining dating from 1902, restored as private dwellings. Below left: detail of Arts & Crafts house in High Street c.1900 Below right: another example of Arts & Crafts detail probably early





good frontage detail in the mainly two-storey buildings. The wide former shop frontage of the **Library** is probably early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is complemented by several other original late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> century shop-fronts. There is a good example at **Eastern Importers** occupying a corner site with the entrance on the splay. Ornate pilasters and consoles flank the display windows and fascia. Also on this frontage **nos. 8-12** is described on a plaque as “The historic White Horse” probably of 18<sup>th</sup> century origin or earlier, but with a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage including a shop-front with central recessed entrance door and cornice supported by curved console brackets flanking the fascia. Adjoining is a six-panel door (the upper four glazed) within a heavy door-case with fluted pediments and flat hood with cornice above. There are at least two further traditional shop fronts towards the northern end of High Street with recessed doorways and moulded glazing bars. North of the cross-roads, and including **Bank Square** is a sequence of unspoilt frontages. The Tithe Map indicates that most are of pre 1840 date. **Woods Dining Room**, incorporates another traditional shop-front with recessed entrance at the side, and has a frontage of roughly coursed local stone with sash windows including one tri-partite. The 5-bay house closing the view was a bank in the 19<sup>th</sup> century until transferred to the building on the right c.1900. It probably dates from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and is stuccoed with an imposing Classical entrance, including panelled door and four-light patterned glazing above. There are plain sash windows, probably modified from the originals, and the first floor has flat pilasters between bays rising from a plat band. On the west side is a sequence of 19<sup>th</sup> century frontages, mainly rendered and all with sash windows, six-panel doors; one with a stained glass overlight. **No. 7** has a stone rubble frontage with recent double-glazed timber sash windows, and a plank door with three-pane overlight.

7.16 In the upper part of High Street is another significant unlisted group. **White Hart House** has a sign written board that declares it to be a former 17<sup>th</sup> century coaching inn described in *Lorna Doone*. Its two-storey frontage to High Street has a large gable containing an attic storey. The ground floor has a deep semicircular arched entrance porch and adjoining round-headed windows with radial glazing bars. To the left are large timber mullion windows on both storeys, which tend to confirm the 17<sup>th</sup> century date. Opposite, the **Barle Gallery** has a rebuilt early 20<sup>th</sup> century frontage of snecked local stone with Ham Hill stone mullions and part leaded light windows. Close to the junction with Rosemary Lane is **Greenslades** and an adjoining cottage, probably 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. The irregular three-storey frontage of painted stone rubble has small three-light casement windows with timber lintels. At **Vicarage Hill** is a short terrace including commercial premises, in a distinctive Arts & Crafts style dating from c.1900. Built of red brick, probably from the Wellington brickworks, and with Ham Hill dressings, it has deep gables with half-timber detail. There is ingenious corner detail in a baronial style with an ogee headed window and canopy with niche above. There are dressed stone entrances and mullioned windows, some with leaded light glazing and ogee moulding.

7.17 Most remaining character buildings are more peripheral. In Jury Road, **Rock House Inn** has original 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage detail with panelled entrance door with plain overlight. The sash windows have vertical glazing bars and narrower margin panes; a common Dulverton pattern. Opposite is **Woodcote**, late 19<sup>th</sup> century with canted bay windows and extended in the early 20<sup>th</sup> with some Arts & Crafts features including an ornate studded door fronting the road with chevron panels and original metal door furniture. At **Town Marsh** where the lane curves sharply is a small group of mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, which include a former Plymouth Brethren Chapel built in 1884 by the Mildmay family, now a private house. Adjoining is a sin-



*Left: Arts & Crafts entrance door in Jury Road of c.1900. Centre: frontage detail at Northmoor, probably dating from the late 19th century. Right: this three-storey building at the northern end of Lady Street is recorded by various*

gle storey building with timber shutters, which appears to be that shown as a Smithy on early Ordnance Survey maps, and has the remains of a water-wheel (illustration on page 24). Set on the hillside above the Parish Church is the Old School House and Headmaster’s Cottage. As the name suggests, this is the site of the former Primary School, built in typically late 19<sup>th</sup> century style of stone rubble with steeply pitched slate roof and imported dressed stone for openings, some with pointed arches.

7.18 In **Lady Street**, the **Legion House** is an interesting late example of an Arts & Crafts style stone-built frontage (date of 1954 on stone plaque), including a massive porch and oak plank stable door with forged strap hinges, all rather incongruously attached to the brick built rear. Towards Northmoor is the imposing **former Bible Christian Chapel** of 1902 built of red and cream brick. An adjoining semi-detached pair are similarly built and **Burridge View** retains original sash windows. In this part of Dulverton are several other short terraces or semi-detached pairs of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date, mainly brick built with Bridgwater tile or slate roofs. They retain many original features, for example segmental arched openings, six-panel doors and overlights, and three-light sash windows with narrower margin panes.

7.19 At **Northmoor** where the leat diverges from the road, is a three-storey building of painted stone rubble with timber lintels and small casement windows. It probably dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the Sites and Monuments Record indicates several sources record a paper mill at this site. Elsewhere at Northmoor are a number of good cottage groups, for example **nos. 1-3 Pump Cottages** of painted stone and render with small sash windows and attractive trellis porches. Further north and with fine views across the River Barle are **nos. 6-11 Northmoor**. This terrace is probably late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is rendered, and with three-pane double casement windows, timber doors and one entrance having a distinctive porch supported on wood-turned pillars. Beyond is a detached late 19<sup>th</sup> century house, recently restored to original condition, with plain sash windows and a 6-panel door with two upper lights and ornate brass furniture.

## 8 LANDSCAPE & TREES

8.1 There is a strong link between the built and the natural environment, and the main landscape elements of significance to the character of the conservation area are as follows:

- (i) the setting of Dulverton as the principal town in the Barle Valley. The steep wooded combs that so typify lowland Exmoor, form a backdrop to many buildings and extend for several miles to the north and west.
- (ii) the Marsh Water valley that extends north-west from the edge of the town with an ancient track (indicated as a road used as a public path) climbing the ridge between this and the larger Barle valley.



*Left: At Exmoor Lawns is this example of public art – a sculpture of Lorna Doone by professor George Stephenson commissioned and donated by D. Whitman Pearson. Centre: The Barle valley is especially prominent from the North-*

(iii) important tree groups and individual trees. As well as indigenous species such as ash, oak, sycamore, beech and yew, there are a few less common species, for example some mature Copper Beech (*Fagus purpurea*) in the grounds of The Greenway, and a Wellingtonia (*sequoia gigantea*) at Exmoor Lawns

(iv) the riverside setting which defines much of the western edge of the conservation area and is a special feature at Northmoor with good outward views.

(v) the several pathways providing relief from through traffic including some paved or cobbled short streets, courtyards, and often bounded by walls or railings, or following part of the course of the mill race.

8.2 The high landscape quality is reflected in the range of categories of protection presented in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan (First Review), which include important features or buildings, open spaces, and much of the woodland bordering parts of the conservation area.

## 9 DETRACTIONS AND VULNERABILITY

9.1 As already implied, the local topography funnels traffic towards and through the town, and there is no evident means of avoiding this. The present disposition of the town centre is remarkably little altered from the 1840 Tithe Map, which makes traffic access, especially for larger vehicles, very limited. On-street parking, although convenient, tends to heighten the sense of congestion. Narrow streets and pavements, especially in the upper part of High Street, and parts of Bridge Street, including the Barle Bridge tend to agitate pedestrian vulnerability. Overhead lines are prominent throughout parts of the town centre, and especially several of its approaches.

9.2 Although there is an excellent museum and information centre, it is considered that a town with such a long history would benefit from better interpretation, including a town trail, possibly supported by plaques or a written pocket guide. Some quieter parts of the conservation area appear little frequented by visitors, yet offer pleasant walks, for example alongside the mill leat, or bordering the churchyard.

## 10 KEY LOCAL FACTORS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

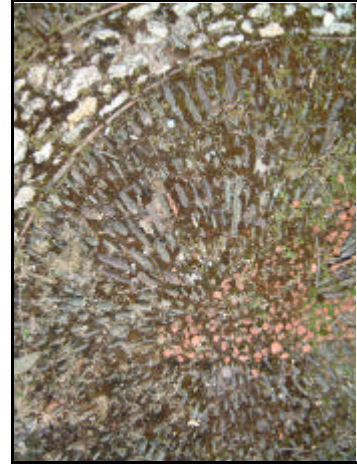
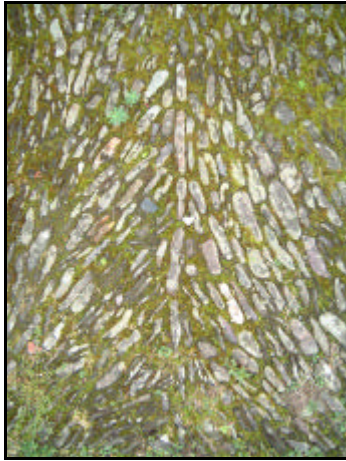
10.1 Sections 3.1 to 3.4 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan Draft Deposit (published October 2001) contain important principles concerning the conservation of buildings and settlements. Proposals for new development, restoration of existing buildings or features, and enhancement projects, should include consideration of these principles, which are expanded upon in the following sections.



*Top and above: there are few notable detractions to the character of the conservation area, but overhead power lines, and poor quality surfaces could be dealt with as part of an enhancement programme. Below: frontage detail, such as this timber trellis porch add*







*As with the example on the previous page, decorative or architectural detail adds much to the maintenance or enhancement of the character of the conservation area.*

*Above left: cobbled surface off Church Terrace*

*Above centre: a more recent example of the use of granite setts.*

*Above right: an imaginative example of a cobbled surface of recent date as part of an educational project. (See 4.13)*

*Right: a date (1845) set in cobbles in Bridge Street probably relates to the date of the adjoining building.*

*Lower right: typical frontage detail, probably late 19th century, of four-panel door and three-light casement windows with horizontal glazing bars.*

*Bottom left and centre: two examples of early-mid 19th century entrances in Fore Street with fine classical detail*

*Bottom right: equally valid in making an important architectural contribution is this further example of rustic detail, typified by panelled entrance door and trellis porch.*





*Left: frontage detail in Church Terrace; all the buildings shown are grade II listed. Right: new housing within the conservation area reflects the local scale, although the dark-stained timber is not traditional, and little opportunity is pro-*

(i) Buildings in the Conservation Area

10.2 Most 19th century and earlier buildings in the conservation area have retained their original features. Many reflect the period in which they were built. A good example is windows. There are Georgian sashes with narrow glazing bars, early 19<sup>th</sup> century pointed arch casements, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century vernacular revival or Arts & Crafts where stone mullions are in evidence. Elsewhere are numerous examples of the plainer local vernacular style, but even here porches, doors and window types can offer much variety. Although the finest buildings are grade II or II\* listed, there is a larger proportion of non-listed character buildings. These are in no particular concentration, although many front the main streets, with others scattered across the conservation area in less prominent locations. Most of these more modest cottages, built of the local stones and shales, with many rendered, date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier and appear on the 1840 Tithe Map. Most are well cared for and maintained but lately, there has been a tendency to replace worn out windows with sometimes ill proportioned pVCU frames that fail to respect the local timber joinery tradition. There is a need to reintroduce this traditional building skill, along with the use of lime-wash, and other craft skills, such as stonemasonry, in maintaining these plain but important traditional cottages and outbuildings. Such policies are set out below.

10.3 The following guidelines are recommended when considering any alterations, repair or restoration to buildings within the conservation area:



*Left: the painted wall of an alleyway off High Street displays some evidence of timber-framing. Centre: historic signs, in this case of enamel, add visual interest regardless of content. Right: cobbled surfaces using natural materials add pat-*



- Existing stone boundary and retaining walls, and existing banks, and footpath only access should be safeguarded, where possible, especially those that identify the historic street and plot layout pattern of the earlier settlement.
- Existing historic street furniture should be retained. As part of an overall enhancement scheme, use of natural stone paving, reintroduction of cast iron street name plates where necessary, and replacement street lighting that is more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area should be encouraged.



*Ironwork here consists of the remains of a waterwheel at Town Marsh formerly fed by a small*

(iii) Features

- The conservation, and where necessary, the repair of walls and/or historic railings, and timber fencing is considered important. Where appropriate consider using additional timber or ironwork that reflects the local craft traditions.
- Ensure the retention and enhancement of any historic street furniture
- Encourage retention of the character of existing entrances, including gate piers, and associated period timber or metal gates.
- Ensure necessary protection of all natural stone paving, cobbles, kerbs and gulleys, both as part of the highway and where in private ownership. Consider where such materials might be employed in any resurfacing or enhancement schemes. Materials from local sources should be used whenever possible.
- Seek to retain or reinstate all existing period windows, doors, and cast iron rainwater goods. This includes the typical 19<sup>th</sup> century decorative features, for example sash windows and panelled doors, and any examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts tradition, for example, decorative window glazing and forged metal window and door catches.
- It should be noted that the National Park Authority can consider introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction where boundary features, for example, stone or brick walls, and openings are under threat. This also has the potential to effect control over the potential installation of UPVC windows and doors, inappropriate roof materials, external cladding, and use of exposed block-work.

(iv) Historic Setting and Landscape

- Before any change of use or alteration takes place, ensure that consideration is given to the historic importance of any existing building, including outbuildings and non-residential uses. This also includes the previous history and present significance of any small outbuildings located to the rear of the main street frontages.
- Although existing trees within the conservation area appear to be healthy, older specimens would benefit from periodic health checks. Where limited further life is detected, measures may need to be taken to plant young trees of a similar or suitable alternative species. These could be gradually introduced to replace older specimens. Some fast growing garden conifers, such as Lawson's Cypress, can strike a discordant note in a historic setting and should be avoided in an environmentally sensitive location.
- There is an important relationship between the setting of buildings in the conservation area and the surrounding topographical and landscape features, all of which are worthy of special protection. These can be identified as follows:



Further examples of surface textures and signage. *Left:* a cobbled surface at the top of Fore Street near the Lych gate. The restoration of such historic surfaces, including the possible uncovering of similar cobbled areas subsequently covered in asphalt could form part of a wider enhancement project. *Centre:* a cast iron street nameplate. There are a number of signs of this type in Dulverton worthy of retention. *Right:* not all buildings have been adequately researched to determine their date and original function. This wall of the Guildhall Centre containing a blocked arch and round-headed

- (iii) **important boundary walls, for example in Church Walk, bordering the churchyard and adjoining Abbots' Walk**
- (iv) **several fine tree groups, especially at Exmoor Lawn, bordering the leat and within the grounds of The Greenway.**
- (v) **wide outward views, especially from the higher parts of the conservation area.**
- (v) **Use of Traditional Materials**
  - **Encourage the use of lime-wash and lime mortar for rendering. Cement rich mortars for render mixes and the use of raised or "ribbon" pointing for wall repairs should be avoided. The use of minimal mortar infill is appropriate where local shales are used in wall construction, especially where not load-bearing.**
  - **Where appropriate, steps should be taken to re-discover supplies of natural materials, preferably from their historic source or equivalent, and to encourage the development of skills in their use.**
  - **More fully research the development of the early settlement, the sources of natural materials used in building construction, and whether former sources of stone or slate might become re-established.**

## 11 IMPORTANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 Dulverton has long been established as a key settlement and gateway to Exmoor and houses the headquarters of the National Park Authority. Its character is closely linked with the deep valley of the River Barle where the main focus of settlement extends in a gradual rise from this ancient bridging point just where valley broadens. The Exmoor National Park Local Plan Draft Deposit (published October 2001) recognises that tourism is vital to the local economy, although the Plan also records that following consultation with the local community, only "a small majority of people would like more tourism development in the town." This is set against a vast majority who consider the speed and size of vehicles are a problem, indicating a need for traffic calming measures and the prospect of more pedestrian only areas. As and when implemented, such improvements should also provide opportunities to create

11.2 As regards the historic built environment, the centre of Dulverton has townscape of exceptional quality, with many examples of enclosed vistas, totally uninfluenced by any intrusive later development. The traditional emphasis of lime-washed rendered or natural stone walls with natural slate roofs should be maintained or enhanced. The abundance of period windows, doors, shop-fronts, porches, stone walls, gateways and iron railings are a vital element of historic character, and following consultation, should ideally be afforded maximum protection by means of an Article 4 Direction. Since the setting of the conservation area on its western side is closely associated with the bridging point and buildings fronting the west bank of the river or set into the hillside, there is a substantive argument for extending the conservation area somewhat to include this important visual enclave.

11.3 The area of undeveloped land adjoining Abbots' Way footpath forms a vital bridge between the historic core and much of the undistinguished development added since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It also enables the historic limits of the earlier settlement to be respected. Exmoor Lawns and their riverside setting are likewise an important feature. It is considered that additional seating/picnic tables and boundary features or planting offering greater traffic safety could make them a more relaxing and enjoyable space for visitors, especially those with young families.



*Top left: window detail at Market Hall. Such buildings could be highlighted as part of a town trail. Top centre: a cottage row to the west of the River Barle which has a strong visual link to the present conservation area and could be included in any future extension. Top right: another example, in this case in Chapel Street of a section of cobbled pavement that could be restored. Above left: the high quality of townscape in Dulverton derives from the visual interest created by an intricate scale, alignment and juxtaposition of buildings of a rich variety often seen against a wooded backdrop. Removal of overhead lines would be a further advantage. Above right: some parts of the village are only accessible on foot, but provide a quiet setting away from traffic.*



11.4 Other potential for enhancement includes:

- (i) removal of unsightly overhead power lines, especially from parts of the town centre where this has not already been done.
- (ii) where feasible, the restoration of some historic water features.
- (iii) a survey of all ground surfaces where natural materials have been used (cobble, paving and kerbs with recommendations for repair and additional surfacing.
- (iv) better interpretation of the town including a possible town trail.

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