

Exmoor National Park
Historic Environment Report Series No 15

LUCCOMBE CONSERVATION AREA: APPRAISAL DOCUMENT



Adopted 2018

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Summary of Significance

The special interest of Luccombe lies in the interrelationship between the historic buildings and their landscape setting. Although it is located just under 2 km from the A39 Porlock-Minehead main road, the village retains a feeling of remoteness, memorably captured by the Mass Observation organisation in 1944 and published three years later as *Exmoor Village*. The village is broadly 'T-shaped' with the main group of cottages on Stoney Street following the stream flowing down from the high moorland to the south west. At the parish church, Stoney Street joins the Wootton Courtenay road and follows a further water course running alongside the high stone garden wall of the former rectory. This settlement layout has remained substantially unchanged since the late middle ages.

The Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the village that forms part of the Holnicote estate, made over to the National Trust in 1944. The village is notable for its collection of traditional Exmoor cottages in the local vernacular style, many of which have cream or yellow coloured limewash and thatched roofs. The National Trust Vernacular Buildings Survey carried out in the 1990s demonstrated that a good proportion of these originated in the late middle ages as farmhouses. Other notable buildings are the 13th century parish church, the manor house at Wychanger and the substantial former rectory behind high garden walls. There are also examples of late 19th century estate architecture dating from Sir Thomas Dyke Acland's ownership of the estate, at the former school (now village hall) and Glebe cottage/School House.

1. Introduction

1.1 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Luccombe was first designated as a Conservation Area by Exmoor National Park Authority in 1984. 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.'

The object of designation is not to prohibit change but to manage it in ways that maintain or strengthen the area's special qualities. 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. To comply with this duty, local authorities are encouraged to undertake appraisals every five years to evaluate and record the special interest of the area and provide a framework for development control and the creation of initiatives to improve the area.

This document was prepared as part the programme of reassessing all 16 of the Park Authority's Conservation Areas and represents the first appraisal of Luccombe Conservation Area since 2004. Its aims are to identify:

- the influences that have given Luccombe 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
- visual features that particularly need safeguarding

1.2 DEVELOPMENT IN A CONSERVATION AREA

Conservation Areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings and all the elements within the Area are recognised as contributing in some way to its character. Anyone considering undertaking works to a property, or developing land that lies within a Conservation Area, is advised to contact the Historic Buildings Officer or the Development Control Officer, at Exmoor National Park Authority for assistance at an early stage.

This Appraisal will assist in the formulation of appropriate design strategies for proposed new development, which should be fully articulated within a Design and Access Statement accompanying any planning application. Specific guidance relating to Luccombe is in Section 7. Appendix A contains a brief overview on planning within conservation areas.

1.3 PREPARATION AND SURVEY LIMITATIONS

This Conservation Area Appraisal was researched and written during November and December 2011, and revised following consultation in 2015. It updates the appraisal carried out for Exmoor National Park by John Fisher in 2004 and Section 4 draws on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey of the 1990s undertaken by Isabel Richardson.

It is important to note that this document cannot be regarded as fully comprehensive. Some aspects of the survey information are limited to those areas which can be reasonably recorded from the highway and other publicly accessible land. Failure to mention any particular building, feature or space, should not be taken to imply that it is of no significance and irrelevant in the consideration of a planning application.

1.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public consultation was carried out between July and September 2015. Posters were put up publicising a local consultation event, which took place in the Village Hall on 24 July. Throughout the consultation period the draft Appraisal document was available on the Exmoor National Park website. The parish council were kept informed.

2. Topographic and Historic Background

2.1 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

Luccombe is a small Exmoor village situated in a sheltered position at the foot of open moorland to the south, and at the edge of the vale framed by Bossington Hill and Selworthy Beacon to the north. Although Luccombe has a strong sense of isolation and is largely enclosed within a narrow valley, the village is less than 2 km from the A39 and Porlock is some 4 km to the north-west and Minehead about 7 km to the northeast. Luccombe forms part of the National Trust's 5,000ha Holnicote Estate, which includes the neighbouring villages of Allerford, Bossington and Selworthy.

The village is centred on the intersection of two roads just south of the church, which at 85 m OD is in a low lying part of the village. The roads follow water courses. The main connecting spine of the village follows the stream along the valley north towards East Luccombe Farm at which point the road splits, leaving the Conservation Area west towards Horner, north towards Brandish Street and east towards Tivington. The second stream, flowing down from Luccombe Hill in the west, is followed by Stoney Street. From the church, Stoney Street rises steeply above the village until the tarmac road gives way to a track where it enters Horner Wood. Immediately east but below is Wychanger, formerly a separate manor, and from here the main north-south road travels on towards Wootton Courtenay.

2.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

2.2.1 MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

The place name Luccombe probably derives from 'valley of a man called Lufa' (Old English personal name + cumb), but the *Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* also offers the more romantic alternative of 'love valley'. At the time of the Domesday Book Luccombe is recorded as Locumbe and the manor held by Ralph de Limesi, who is thought to have accompanied William in the Norman invasion, and was rewarded with six other lordships in Somerset. The manor subsequently passed through the de Luccombe and St. John families and, by the late 15th century, was held by the Arundells.

The former manor house, if one existed, is likely to have been the sited in the position of the Old Rectory, or closer to the church, which has 13th century origins. The age of the houses immediately around the church and along Stoney Street strongly suggest that the current linear settlement form was established during the medieval period. Wychanger, to the south of the village centre, was a discrete manor and is first mentioned in the 13th century. The Harrisons are recorded as owning Wychanger from 1547 (Fig1), followed by the Wroths until the mid 19th century.



Fig.1 Brass to William Harrison died 1615

2.2.2 POST MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

The antiquary John Collinson (1791) describes Luccombe (at that time known as East Luckham) as having 38 houses, which 'form a straggling street by the church'. This informal linear settlement pattern is shown on the Tithe Map of 1841 (Fig.2) and is still very much in evidence today. There has been limited subsequent development. The only buildings dating substantially to the 19th century are School House/Glebe Cottage, the former school (now village hall) and the Old Rectory/Manor House – which may have earlier origins. In terms of impact, the gardens south of the Old Rectory have taken the bulk of the late 20th century development with three new detached houses. Other 20th century additions comprise limited infill development on Stoney Street, the largest of which Staddons was built by the National Trust and a local Housing Association in 1991.

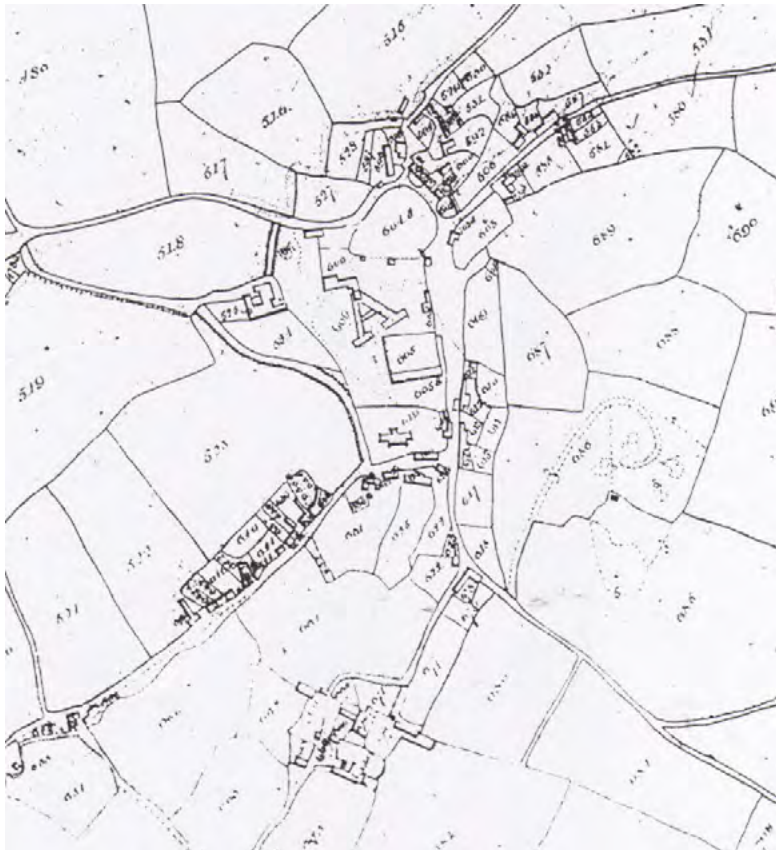


Fig. 2 Extract of Tithe Apportionment Map of c.1841.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGY

The environs of Luccombe have great archaeological interest. Just to the east of village is the former iron mine at Knowle Top. The site appears to have been worked in 1790s and again in 1830s and 40s when South Wales ironmasters were given permission by the Wroths of Wychanger to dig an adit at Knowle Top. This operation later became known as the Luccombe Iron Ore Company with the ore sent to South Wales for smelting, presumably travelling by road to Porlock Weir. It is depicted on the 1903 Ordnance Survey map as 'Wychanger Iron Mine' but by that time shown as disused.

Within the Conservation Area, there is potential for archaeological deposits, as would be expected in a long established settlement of pre-conquest origins. The area around the church, which is the earliest extant building, might repay investigation if the opportunity arose. The churchyard also has the remains of a 15th century cross (Fig.35). The area between the church and the Old Rectory, and indeed the former rectory building itself, could potentially reveal evidence of a medieval manorial house. Wychanger to the south is likely to have has similarly early origins. On current evidence, the standing buildings are perhaps the best source of archaeological potential. The National Trust's Vernacular Buildings Survey has revealed evidence of late medieval open-hall houses and two examples of former longhouses (see Section 4). Alterations to any of the historic houses could potentially reveal features of interest.

Further information and the most up to date records and advice for the archaeology of the area can be obtained from the Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record based in the Park's Headquarters at Dulverton and available online at <http://www.exmoorher.co.uk/>.

2.4 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROFILE

The economy of the village was, until comparatively recently, inextricably linked to the fortunes of the Holnicote estate, with the majority of the population directly employed by the estate or working on farms in the vicinity. Kelly's Directory of c.1880 gives an indication of later 19th century life, when the village was owned by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, who improved many of the cottages, and supported the provision of a Day and Sunday School assisted by the Rector and a local voluntary rate. The estate passed to the National Trust in 1944 and in the same year Luccombe became the focus of a detailed study by the Mass Observation organisation. The resultant publication, *Exmoor Village* (1947), offers a valuable insight into rural social history of the period and in particular how the community at Luccombe operated. In 1944 the village still relied on agriculture and appeared little affected by outside agencies.



Fig. 3 Leisure pursuits are one of the key activities of the area

Since 1944 the process of social change has accelerated. As a result, the school and shop have closed and villagers increasingly needed to look to Porlock, Minehead, or further afield for employment, retail and leisure opportunities. In terms of facilities, the village now has nothing to cater for visitors who may be drawn directly to Luccombe for its 'olde worlde' charm, or pass through while engaging in other leisure activities such as walking, cycling or horse riding. In common with other Acland estate villages, Luccombe never had a public house but it does now boast a village hall (in the former school), outside of which are parish notice board and a telephone kiosk. St Mary's Church continues as a place of worship and there are church rooms attached to Church Gate Cottage, although these appear to mainly be used for storage. In terms of parish population, this reached a peak of 580 in 1841. It is currently less than half this total, with a population of just over 200 but this is partly accounted for by the transfer of Doverhay to Porlock parish in 1930.

3. Spatial Analysis

3.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND BUILDING DENSITY

Luccombe village has a broadly T-shaped settlement pattern. The houses are set alongside two roads, which in turn follow streams. The eastern road runs north-east from Hill Gate Cottages, the highest point in the village, downhill along Stoney Street and joins the main valley road through the village at the church. This intersection forms the centre of the village and is known locally as the 'Square' (Fig4).



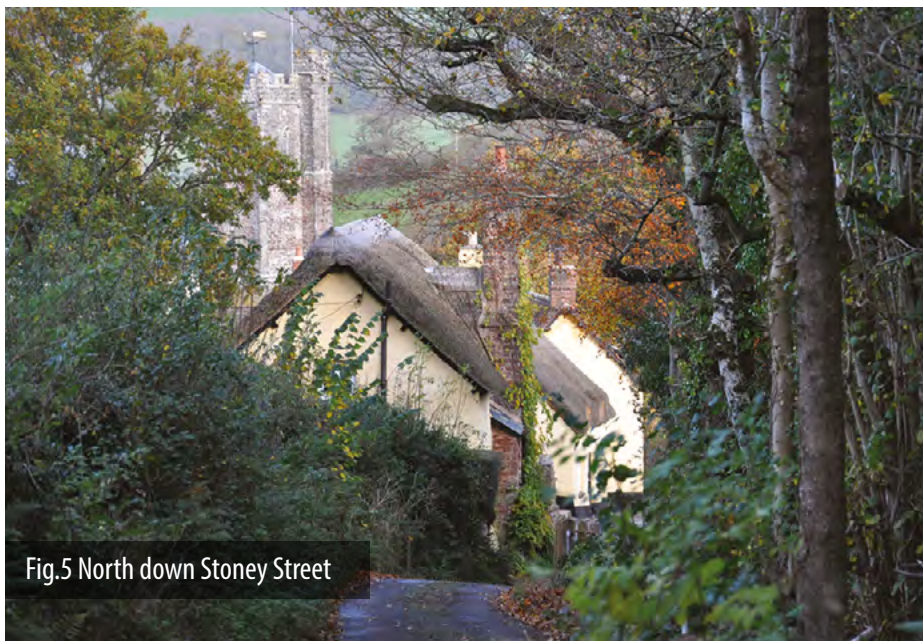
Fig. 4 East down Stoney Street looking towards the "Square"

The character of the village derives in part from the sequence of cottages, closely spaced and sometimes facing each other across the street. This is densest around the Square and the lower part of Stoney Street. Away from here the houses are more scattered with several significant gaps between buildings providing direct views across open countryside. There has been some 20th century infilling, which manages to be largely visually unobtrusive, although there are one or two less satisfactory

examples. Buildings are grouped informally mainly directly abutting the road and without front garden plots, with a few, generally later, dwellings set back from or at right angles to the highway. The pleasing intimacy of scale is enriched by changes of level, including flights of steps, a slightly curving street alignment, and the features including small-scale over-bridges along the stream that flows alongside the main through road.

3.11 STONEY STREET

Once passed the church, the houses along Stoney Street are on the north side of the narrow lane. These are closely spaced detached and semi-detached cottages set on a strongly established building line facing on to and abutting the road with some small open plots between. Hill Gate Cottages are set apart, further up the hill. Of the 20th century dwellings, East View appears to be pre-war local authority housing and may have occupied a former cottage plot although it is set further back from the lane. The two detached dwellings opposite Oak Apple are also set back and appear to occupy a formerly empty plot. Opposite the cottages on Stoney Lane there is a steep gully formed by the stream. As Stoney Street approaches the Square the presence of the churchyard dictates that the houses to switch to the south side of the road. Only Church Gate Cottage occupies the north side, which is perhaps evidence of an earlier formal association with the church. This area has the highest building density and includes the small 1990s housing association development known as Staddons.



3.1.2 VALLEY ROAD

The road passing through the village is aligned north-south. Away from the concentration of buildings around the Square the buildings are informally set and more widely spaced. After the village school there are no buildings on the east side of the road until the junction at East Luccombe Farm, where there are two former farmhouses on the eastern spur aligned gable-end on to the road. The houses on the west side of the valley road, north of the church, are modern detached dwellings well-spaced and set in their own grounds behind the tall garden wall enclosing the former gardens of the rectory. The former rectory is now split into two dwellings (The Old Rectory and The Manor House) and despite the development along its eastern wall, still retains its feeling of privacy within extensive grounds. At the opposite end of the Conservation Area, Wychanger has also been split into two, still substantial, dwellings (Wychanger Barton and Wychanger) and is similarly set apart from the village.



3.2 PLAN, FORM, HEIGHT AND MASSING

Although there is some uniformity in the building elements, there is no standardised plan-form. In *Exmoor Village*, the Isotype Institute provides plans of a typical Luccombe Cottage – two-bay with cross passage. In reality, many of these cottages represent sub-divisions of earlier farm houses. They are all 1½ or 2-storey and modestly proportioned. The exception is Staddons, which is single storey but in terms of proportions and scale quite in-keeping. Other late 20th-century houses are larger and do not closely follow the prevailing vernacular tradition in terms of scale, plan-form and position in the plot, although one or two incorporate local design elements (Fig.7). The largest houses are, unsurprisingly, those with formerly the highest status which are the former rectory and Wychanger.



Fig.7 Late 20th century house incorporating vernacular design elements.

3.3 GREEN SPACE

There are important green spaces north of Wychanger and south of the former rectory, although the formal gardens of the latter have been part built upon up to the churchyard, which offers a semi-public space. The area north of the village hall (Fig.8), including the former school garden, outside of the 1984 Conservation Area, is very important. This narrow strip appears to have functioned partly as a village green and is the only public green in the village. At its north end it also offers informal car parking.



Fig.8 North of the village hall.

Elsewhere, the areas between the houses, usually private gardens, contribute greatly to the character of the Conservation Area and offer occasional glimpses the countryside surrounding the village.

3.4 VIEWS

Luccombe is a picturesque village surrounded by attractive farm and moor land, Views in and out of the Conservation Area form an essential part of its character and are one of its chief delights. The high ground at Knowle Top (outside of the Conservation Area) offers excellent views west into the village and to the sea to the north (Fig.9) and similar long views can be obtained from the high ground south of Wychanger.



Within the Conservation Area there are also key views along Stony Street, from both high and low ends, and through gaps between the houses north across towards Selworthy. On the main road there are again views from both ends along the stream and former rectory wall, and into the village from the churchyard and footpath to the south (Fig.10).



4. Architectural Quality and Built Form

4.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Luccombe has had an unbroken succession of belonging to an estate held by landed gentry until passing to the National Trust in 1944. Although no individual feature is especially lavish in style or detail, the overall pattern is of thatch, clay tile or natural slate combined with local red sandstone and cream or honey coloured lime-wash over render or cob. The Trust's survey of buildings in the village has revealed some very early detail, notably smoke-blackened roof timbers providing evidence of several former open hall houses, dating from the 15th century or earlier.



Fig.11 Hill Cottage (lower), probably early 18th century

The majority of cottage groups displaying characteristic local vernacular features appear to date from the 17th and 18th centuries. Typical examples are **Hill Gate Cottages**. The lower of the two (Fig.11) is probably early 18th century with two-cell plan with cross-passage and rear outshot added in the early 19th century. It is built of an attractive combination of exposed stone rubble, render, thatch, with a tiled pentice porch, slated semi-circular projecting bread oven and shouldered lateral stack with round section shaft. The listing details refer to the 'picturesque and mystifying' recessed central bay. The adjoining cottage (Fig.39) is probably two-cell with entrance from the gabled end, with likely 18th century origins and enlarged in the mid 20th century. Both cottages have 19th century casement windows, some of metal with leaded lights.



Fig.12 The Cottage, a medieval open-hall house.

Further down Stoney Street is **The Cottage** (Fig.12), built of red sandstone rubble and part colour-washed with a thatched roof. The National Trust survey has demonstrated that it originated as a former longhouse. Inside it has a smoke-blackened roof, internal jetty in the hall and remnants of 15th-16th century paint on the upper hall partition. The next of the Stony Street group is **Rose Cottage** (Fig.13) which dates to the 17th century with early 19th century alterations, including leaded iron casement windows rising from below the eaves. The thatched roof, combination of roughcast and colour washed random rubble, with large external shouldered stack is of typical local vernacular style. The interior of this cottage is shown in *Exmoor Village*.



Fig.13 Rose Cottage,
17th century with later
alterations.

Immediately south is **Porch Cottage** (Fig.14) again 17th century and built of rendered cob and stone with Bridgwater pantiles. The pent-roofed lowered 'Somerset' dormers suggest that the roof was formerly thatched. The three-light casement windows and plank doors are probably early 19th century. The National Trust's vernacular building survey has shown **Goulds and Myrtle** (Fig.15), to have originated as a single 14th-15th century longhouse. In the early 17th century it was converted to a cross-passage configuration and the front stack and oven added. **Combe and Post Cottages** (Fig.16) are 17th century, with a surviving stair-turret window in the north east gable. The latter retains visible indications of a post office letterbox on its front. Apart from an older mullioned window, most windows are plain casements, probably dating from the 19th century.



Fig.14 Porch Cottage, 17th century.



Towards the lower end of Stoney Street are **Oakapple Cottage** and **Hayes Cottage** (Fig.17), which were formerly one late 16th - early 17th century three-bay and cross passage house with full-height projection to the right of the lateral stack and a rear wing. The construction is roughcast render over stone rubble with double Roman tiled roofs. There are 19th century casement windows, both timber and metal. The plank door in a chamfered peak-headed doorframe indicates a possible 16th century date (Fig.43).



Fig.17 Oakapple Cottage and Hayes Cottage, late 16th century cross passage house.

Also worthy of mention is **Staddons** (Fig.18) a joint venture between the National Trust and a local Housing Association built in 1991 and incorporating some local vernacular features, such as recessed doors, a shouldered external stack. The building, and the wider Conservation Area, is, however, let down by the replacement PVCu windows.



Fig.18 Staddons – late 20th century housing association development

Opposite Staddons is **Church Gate Cottage** (Fig.19). This dates to the 17th century with the school extension (now church rooms) added in the late 18th–early 19th century. The position of this building, on the edge of the churchyard, suggests a formal connection with the church. Both parts of the building have good examples of leaded iron casement windows, with the former schoolroom incorporating tall windows and wrought iron window box supports.



Fig.19 Church Gate Cottage – abuts the churchyard.

At the junction of Stoney Street and the main road, **Ketnor** (Fig.20) formerly served as the village Post Office and also features in *Exmoor Village*. It is a partly medieval building containing evidence of smoke-blackened thatch and blackened roof timbers from an open hearth fire. The chimney and first floor were added in the late 16th century. Externally it retains its fascia board and Victorian letterbox and also boasts a mounting block.



Fig.20 Ketnor – former post office in medieval building.



Fig.21 Glebe Cottage and School Cottage

Opposite the junction on the main street are **Glebe Cottage** and **School Cottage** (Fig.21). These are late 19th century estate cottages which despite being built of local red sandstone rubble, are of a scale and design outside of the vernacular tradition for this area. The tile-hung gable and plain clay tile roof are similarly not found on earlier buildings, they do, however, retain their original ogee-headed windows that are a feature of the Acland estate buildings. The projecting bread oven at the neighbouring Church View is believed to be the vestige of a cottage that was demolished when these cottages were built, although it could equally been a removed bay from the existing building. **Church View** (Fig.22) is built of rendered stone rubble with double Roman tiled roof. The date plaque of 1680 above the vertical plank entrance door, may well relate to when the chimney and first floor were added to this probably 16th century building.





Wychanger Cottage (Fig.23), further south along the road towards Wootton Courtenay, shares a similar developmental history. Here the 15th century former open-hall house is evidenced by a smoke-blackened truss: the stack and ceiling were added in the 17th century. There is an early 19th century enlargement of full-height bay adjoining the stack and a single bay addition to the left.



Fig.24 Knapp Cottages medieval hall house with 17th century addition.

At the northern edge of the village, **1 Knapp Cottages** (Fig.24) has also been shown to be part of a late medieval former open-hall house with a surviving smoke-blackened roof truss. Thought to be a former farmhouse, the present cottages are set laterally into the slope. **2 Knapp Cottages** is a 17th century addition with surviving door-frame and fireplace. The plank doors and casement windows are probably early-mid 19th century, several with decorative leaded glazing. The double-Roman tiled roof, replacing thatch, and a combination of exposed red sandstone, and limewashed render echoes many of the other Holnicote estate cottages.



On the same side of the lane, **Luccombe Knapp** (Fig.25) is a 17th century former farmhouse. Its walled garden and stables are opposite (Fig. 26) and just to the north. Owned by the Wroth family of Wychanger until the 1880s, it contains examples of the ornate leaded glazing patterns that typify several cottages altered in the 19th century.

At the north-west end of the Conservation Area is **Culver Cottage** (Fig.27), early 20th century and stone-built with 10-light casement windows, set within segmental arched openings. It has a plain tiled roof with brick stacks, and is an important visual stop at this end of the village.



East Luccombe Farm (Fig.28) comprises a significant group of outbuildings, built of sandstone rubble with thatched and double Roman tiled roofs, around three sides of a cobbled yard. They are thought to date from the 18th century, were altered in the mid 19th century, and consist of a threshing barn, loft over a stable with shelter sheds opposite. To the south is a detached linhay (Fig.29), probably of late 17th century date and separately listed. It is built of sandstone rubble and cob, with circular stone piers and weatherboarded infill. The farmhouse is of historic interest but is just outside the Conservation Area.



Fig.28 East Luccombe Farm.



Somewhat set apart on the east side of the main street is the former School, now the **Village Hall** (Fig.30) built by the 11th Baronet Acland in the late 19th century. It is single-storey, built of squared-off local sandstone with brick dressings and 'fishscale' plain tiled roof. It has some school child graffiti incised in the bricks, which add to its interest. The flat roofed extension is, however, a negative feature.



As would be expected, the high status buildings are set apart, both spatially and in terms of scale and design. **Wychanger** and **Wychanger Barton** (Fig.31) are now semi-detached portions of the former manor house with some parts, such as jointed cruck trusses and curved struts, dating from the late 16th–early 17th century. In the former, which is part thatched, there is a 16th century studded entrance door and other 17th century doors, but in the early-mid 19th century it was altered to a Gothick style with casement windows, including French windows with divided tracery. An interesting sundial is incised in stone on the south chimney. Wychanger Barton was largely rebuilt in the late 19th century after a major fire. East of Wychanger is the **former stable and coach house** (Fig. 32) dating from the late 17th– early 18th century and built of stone rubble with segmental arched ground floor openings.

When converted to residential, probably in the latter half of the 19th century, casement windows, some with ornate leaded glazing patterns were added, typical of examples seen elsewhere in the village. It is now holiday lets.





Fig.33 Former Rectory, now two dwellings.

The former rectory, now split into **The Old Rectory** and **The Manor House** (Fig.33), was built between 1839 and 1856 for the then rector Thomas Fisher, and is reputed to have replaced a much earlier building on this site. It is in a sprawling neo-Elizabethan style, stone built with slate roof, mullioned windows, raised gables corbelled out, and diagonally opposed brick stacks on stone shafts. Adjoining, and also stone-built, are the **former stables** (Fig.34) with a half-hipped Bridgwater tiled roof, and six-light timber casement windows with brick architraves.



Fig.34 Stables to former Rectory.



Fig.35 Parish Church of St. Mary.



Fig.36 Medieval churchyard cross.

The **Parish Church of St. Mary** (Fig.35) is mainly executed in Perpendicular style and has a chancel dating from c.1300, a nave and tower of c.1450, and an aisle added c.1350. There were restorations in 1840, when a gallery of 1752 was removed, and in 1895 by Edmund Buckle, when the present seating was added. The three-stage crenellated tower and stair turret built of squared red sandstone and with trefoil-headed windows is fairly typical of others in West Somerset. Some fragments of early 16th century English and Flemish glass survive and were reset in the east window of the aisle in 1935. Important furnishings and monuments include a Jacobean pulpit, an early 16th century table tomb, a fine brass to William Harrison (Fig.1), and several 17th and 18th century tablets, mainly in Classical styles. In the churchyard is a red sandstone **churchyard cross** (Fig.36) dating from the 15th century. The lower part of the octagonal shaft survives set on a three-stage plinth.

4.2 MATERIALS

4.2.1 WALLS

The use of stone for building is widespread. Most cottages and farm buildings are of stone rubble. Generally worked stone was reserved for higher status such as the parish church. There are two main stone types; the soft-textured and orange to reddish-purple New Red Sandstone, and the much harder dark red-purple or grey-green Devonian sandstone. The softer stone types tend to predominate.

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. There are one or two outbuildings, mainly of the late 19th century, that are stone-built with brick dressings. Bricks are also commonly used for chimney stacks but are unlikely to have been produced in the immediate vicinity and were probably transported in from Porlock Weir.



Fig.37 Rendered wall alongside Ketnor.



Fig.38 Brick Chimney stacks – probably 19th century.

In current and former farm/outbuildings the stone is usually left exposed. The houses are generally rendered, at least on their front elevation, and finished with limewash with a black tar-banded plinth. It is likely that some of this render conceals cob construction.

4.2.2 ROOFS

Up until the later 19th-century thatch would have been the only available roofing material for all but the highest status buildings. Traditionally, thatch was combed wheat reed. In recent years, this tradition has been under threat from the non-indigenous water reed, much of which is now imported from Eastern Europe. In recent years The National Trust has been carrying out trials on the Holnicote Estate, and now produces enough straw from this source to carry out patching and re-thatching on its own cottages.



Fig.39 Tile replacement of former thatch roof, Hillgate Cottages.

The high cost of transportation meant that imported slate only became readily affordable from the mid 19th century. Cheaper transportation also brought costs down for Bridgwater tiles, double and single Romans and similar variants and meant they could be utilised on cottages and these newly obtainable materials replaced the existing thatch on many cottages over the next century (Fig.39). Tiles were also utilised on new buildings of the period, for example the Village Hall where the 'fish-scale' variety is evident.

4.2.3 WINDOWS AND DOORS

Historic windows in the Conservation Area are mainly a mixture of timber and metal casement with few sash windows evident. Some cottage windows have forged iron casements, and there is a range of leaded light glazing patterns. Frames are typically plain rectangular but more decorative examples may be seen, for example at Knapp Cottages and Glebe and School Cottages.



Fig.40 Casement windows with ogee head.



Fig.41 Rectangular iron casem

Most doors are constructed in a traditional plank and ledged form (some with non-traditional fixed lights), and a few have examples of what may be termed rustic Arts & Crafts detail, for example use of diagonal boarding, and others with ribs or studs (Fig.42). The earliest openings have massive oak frames, and are jointed with pegs or chamfered with stops, and are possibly of late medieval origin (Fig.43).



Fig.42 Stable door with rustic detailing.



Fig.43 Modern door in C17 or earlier frame.

5. Street Scene

5.1 BOUNDARIES

There are considerable stretches of high boundary walling built of local sandstone rubble, notably along the lane east of East Luccombe Farm (Fig.44) and from the Old Rectory/Manor House to the church. These contribute considerably to the character of the Conservation Area. There is limited walling of the locally distinctive dry-stone pattern known as 'dyking'. This adds a pleasing contrast to the more widespread use of roughly coursed stone rubble. Some stretches of walling, form a retaining feature to hedge row banks and can be prone to deterioration when not regularly maintained. Nevertheless, all 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.



Fig.44 Traditional stone walling, east of East Luccombe Farm.

Post and metal tubing has been used to fence off much of the route of the stream through the village. Although plain unobtrusive detail suits the setting, there is perhaps scope for improvement. Recent remedial work by the National Trust tends to use timber only, for example footpath access from Stoney Street south of the church, and post and rail fencing bordering part of the village green.

5.2 GROUNDSCAPE

Within the Conservation Area, paving or cobbles in natural stone are largely limited to several flights of steps, mainly in Stoney Street. It is not known if some natural surfaces are concealed under the later asphalt surfaces. A few vestiges of earlier stone cobbles or flags can still be seen adjoining some cottages, for example Kentor and there is a good cobbled yard, although part overgrown, at East Luccombe Farm (Fig.29).

5.3 STREET FURNITURE

The earliest piece of street furniture identified is the Victorian letterbox set in the wall of Ketnor. There are two mid 20th century cast iron Somerset County Council guideposts, at the north end of the Conservation Area (Fig.45) and a K6 telephone kiosk just north of the village hall. Other items of interest include a hand painted timber National Trust 'no parking' sign (Fig.46) and the Luccombe Millennium lamp, fixed to the village hall.



Fig.45 Cast iron finger post.



Fig.46 Early National Trust sign

5.4 BRIDGES

The streams flowing through the village contribute greatly to its character and appearance. The stream alongside Stony Street has cut a deep gully but once it reaches the more level ground near the Square it is narrow and easily crossed. The bridges and conduits appear to be relatively recent responses to modern traffic demands and are either flat or are shallow single-arched stone bridges.



Fig.47 Bridge south of East Luccombe Farm.

5.5 TREES AND HEDGES

Trees and hedgerows make strong contribution to the character and appearance of the village and its wider landscape setting. Generally, this is informal but there is a notable avenue of mature deciduous trees between the wall of the former rectory and the stream running along the main street (Fig.48). Despite modern dwellings occupying space on the opposite side of the wall, including one house within the former walled garden, part of the former rectory's formal garden planting survives. Here, and at Wychanger, are some of the finest specimen trees within the Conservation Area, for example, oak, beech, copper beech, lime, sweet chestnut, pine, yew, ilex and holly.



Fig.48 Trees lining main road through village.

Historically, Luccombe was formerly almost surrounded by orchard paddocks. Several of these survive in some measure, and are categorised in the Exmoor National Park Local Plan as 'orchard(s) of landscape importance.' Some, for example at the Old Rectory, consist mainly of old trees, whilst others extend across and beyond the Conservation Area boundary.

The considerable extent of planted woodland to the south of the village is classified in the Local Plan as 'Category 3 Woodland' as defined by Section 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act of 1985. It has a natural beauty '(that) is, in the opinion of the NPA, particularly important to conserve,' It also forms an important backdrop to the Conservation Area, and its broader landscape setting.

6. Condition Assessment

6.1 CURRENT CONDITION

As might be expected in settlements of exceptional quality largely managed by the National Trust, there are minimal factors detracting from the Conservation Area's historic character or visual appearance.

Most historic buildings, both listed and unlisted, are well maintained, and appear sound in terms of their maintenance and structural condition. There is a large proportion of timber or metal windows, mainly casements, and of entrance doors, most of which are ledged and braced. These either survive in their original form, or where replacements have been made, are generally close to a traditional form. For the most part, PVCu replacement windows have made no significant inroads into the Conservation Area although it is noted that the 2004 appraisal records Staddons as having timber framed casements. PVCu windows and doors should be strongly discouraged as they invariably destroy both the historic and visual integrity of even the most modest of traditional buildings. Some localised deterioration of stonework is noted, especially the condition and structural integrity of some boundary walls. The concrete post and metal tube fencing is in poor condition in places.



Fig.49 Railings and sign fixing in poor condition.

Most 20th century infill, even where quite successfully screened, has had a somewhat detrimental affect upon the predominant strongly vernacular character of the Conservation Area, and there are one or two insensitive examples, mainly dating from the 1960s. On the other hand, Staddons, a local housing association scheme completed in the early 1990s, is a notable example of what can be achieved in a prominent location where the design and proportions have respected the local vernacular tradition.

The table on the following page contains a more detailed condition assessment. The headings are based on English Heritage's Conservation Areas Condition Survey (2008).

CONDITION ASSESSMENT					
1. Designated Conservation Area name:	Luccombe				
2. Locality:	National Trust Holnicote Estate				
3. Is the Conservation Area:	Predominantly urban	Predominantly suburban	Predominantly rural	Other (Please specify)	
4. Is the Conservation Area:	Predominantly residential	Predominantly industrial	Predominantly commercial	Wide mix of uses	Other (Please specify)
5. How large is the Conservation Area:	Less than 2 ha (approx 140m x 140m)	2.1 - 50 ha	More than 50 ha (½ sq km)	Dont know	
6. Approximately how many buildings are in the Conservation Area:	None	Up to 50	51 to 250	251+	Dont know
7. Approximately how many listed buildings are in the Conservation Area:	None	Up to 10	11 to 50	51+	Dont know
8. Approximately how many locally listed buildings are in the Conservation Area:	None				
9. Does the Conservation Area include one or more scheduled monuments?	Yes	No	Dont know		
10. Is all or part of the Conservation Area covered by another heritage designation?	None	Registered Park and Garden	World heritage Site	Registered Battlefield	Other
11. Has an Article 4 Direction been implemented?	Yes	No			

12. Are you aware of any unauthorised works that have been carried out in the last 3 years which have harmed the special interest, significance and / or character	Yes	No			
13. Has the Local Authority taken any enforcement action against such works in the past 3 years?	Yes	No	Dont know		
14. Does the Local Authority have a Conservation Area Advisory Panel/Committee specific to this Conservation Area?	Yes	No			
15. Does the Conservation Area have any listed buildings or any other historic assets on either the English Heritage or a local <i>Heritage At Risk</i> Register	No	Yes			
Please give your impression of whether the following issues affect the special interest, significance and/or character of the Conservation Area:					
16. Loss of historic detail or inappropriate change:	1. Not a problem at all	2. A minor problem	3. A noticeable problem	4. A significant problem	
• Doors and windows		x			
• Front elevation (eg painting, porches, rendering)	x				
• Decorative features/materials (eg stonework, rainwater goods)	x				
• Shopfronts	N/A				
• Signs and advertisements	x				
• Roof coverings and chimneys (including rooflights)	x				
• Boundary walls/fences	x				
• Hardstandings	x				
• Satellite dishes (including CCTV and antennae)	x				
• Renewable energy devices	x				
• New extensions/alterations	x				
• Development/redevelopment (eg subdivision, infill)	x				
• Other	x				

Neglect					
17. Vacanices within buildings:	1. Not a problem at all	2. A minor problem	3. A noticeable problem	4. A significant problem	
18. Severe dereliction of buildings:	1. Not a problem at all	2. A minor problem	3. A noticeable problem	4. A significant problem	
19. Signs of a lack of maintenance such as poorly maintained gutters or joinery.	1. Not a problem at all	2. A minor problem Some thatch in poor condition	3. A noticeable problem	4. A significant problem	
20. The condition of the public realm:	1. Not a problem at all	2. A minor problem	3. A noticeable problem	4. A significant problem	
21. Are there any other factors that are threatening the historic character of the Conservation Area?					
<p>Based on your answers, the score would suggest the condition of the conservation area is:</p> <p>Very bad (1 or more questions answered "A significant problem")</p> <p>Very bad (3 or more questions answered "A noticeable problem")</p> <p>Poor (1 or more questions answered "A noticeable problem")</p> <p>Fair (2 or more questions answered "A minor problem")</p> <p>Optimal (1 question answered "A minor problem", or no problem selected)</p>					

6.2 VULNERABILITY

Luccombe is a well kept and much loved village. Its character is derived from its setting, the quality of its historic buildings and their position within the landscape. Its unchanged appearance is one of its chief attractions but while it is undoubtedly a tourist draw, visitor pressure is not to a degree that places the village under threat. The incremental erosion of character through minor alterations, poor repairs and inappropriate additions to cottages seen in many villages is largely absent, almost certainly thanks to the National Trust's stewardship.

RISK ASSESSMENT

22. Does the Conservation Area have a current, adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisal?	Yes	No
23. Does the Conservation Area have a current Management Plan (usually part of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal) or other formally adopted proposals to preserve or enhance its character?	Yes	No
24. Does the Local Authority have an adopted Local Development Framework Document that contains objectives and policies which would safeguard the historic character and appearance of Conservation Areas and their settings?	Yes	No or in part
25. Is there evidence of community support in the area, for example a residents' association or civic society?	Yes	No
26. Relative to the size of this Conservation Area, are there any major development proposals imminent which could threaten the historic interest of the area?	No	Yes
Based on the answers to question 4, 5 and 28-32, the score would suggest that the vulnerability of the Conservation Area is considered: >=5: High 3-4: Medium 0-2: Low		
INITIAL RISK ASSESSMENT Based on the answers you have provided considering the condition and vulnerability of the Conservation Area, the initial risk to the Conservation Area is assessed as: Not at risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Condition optimal and any vulnerability ● Condition fair and any vulnerability ● Condition poor and vulnerability medium or low At risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Condition very bad and any vulnerability ● Condition poor and vulnerability high 		

TRAJECTORY/TREND

27. Over the past 3 years what would you say has happened to the appearance and vitality of the Conservation Area?	Improved significantly	Seen some improvement	Not changed significantly	Seen some deterioration	Deteriorated significantly	Dont know
28. What do you think is happening to the appearance and vitality of the Conservation Area now, and what do you expect to happen over the next 3 years?	Improving significantly	Seeing some improvement	No significant change	Seeing some deterioration	Deteriorating significantly	Dont know

FINAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The final level of risk is assessed by combining your assessment of the Conservation Area's condition and vulnerability, and its expected trajectory/trend over the next three years. The final risk assessment for different combinations of condition, vulnerability and trajectory/trend is shown in bold on the right.

Initial Risk Assessment	Trajectory/Trend	Final Risk Assessment
At Risk	deteriorating or deteriorating significantly	At Risk
At Risk	no significant change	At Risk
At Risk	improving	Not at Risk unless condition is very bad, then At Risk
At Risk	improving significantly	Not at Risk unless condition is very bad, then At Risk
Not at Risk	deteriorating significantly	At Risk
Not at Risk (medium)	seeing some deterioration	At Risk
Not at Risk	no significant change	Not at Risk
Not at Risk	improving or improving significantly	Not at Risk
Not at Risk (low)	seeing some deterioration	Not at Risk (medium)

7. Recommendations

7.1 PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

Proposed amendments to the boundary are depicted on Map 1 (Appendix E). The two proposed changes are:

7.1.1 INCLUSION

Former school garden, now part of village hall. This is an important element in the social history of Luccombe and is closely associated with the village school. It is mentioned in Exmoor Village and should be included in the Conservation Area.

7.1.2 EXCLUSION

Field south of Luccombe Knapp. This is above the road level and is largely not visible from other parts of the Conservation Area, in terms of impact its removal is therefore essentially neutral.

7.2 MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Almost all the 19th century and earlier buildings in the Conservation Area have retained original features and strongly represent the local vernacular style. Many are grade II listed, but non-listed buildings often have considerable historic and architectural quality, notably Porch, Goulds, Myrtle, Post and Coombe Cottages on Stoney Street, which may well be candidates for listing.

Luccombe is identified as a 'village' in terms of Policy S1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan. Chapter 3 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan (2005) contains important principles concerning the conservation of buildings and settlements. Proposals for any 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.

7.2.1 BUILDINGS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

- In considering proposals for any new development or redevelopment involving existing buildings or structures, it should be borne in mind that stricter safeguards against any form of demolition in Conservation Areas exist. Historic signage should be maintained, as far as possible, in its original state. Any new or reinstated signs should respect the original forms, including use of cast-iron lettering or traditional sign-writing.
- Existing features of quality that typify the historic built environment should be retained. Any new development within the Conservation Area is likely to be extremely limited but where it does occur, it should echo the existing in terms of scale, height, proportion and use of traditional methods of construction, including openings and any boundary features.
- 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.

7.2.2 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 19th century decorative estate features, and any examples of early-20th century Arts and Crafts tradition, for example, decorative window glazing and forged metal window and door catches.

- Although unlikely to become a problem in a village largely managed by the National Trust, 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 control the potential installation of UPVC windows and doors, inappropriate roof materials, external cladding, and use of exposed block-work.

7.2.3 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 enclosing topographical features, for example, Knowle Top, the wooded lower slopes of Dunkery Beacon and the knoll to the north. Attention is drawn to the Local Plan Objectives for Woodland, one of which is 'to gain a deeper understanding of Exmoor's trees and woodlands through a comprehensive programme of research and survey work derived from the Exmoor Woodland Research Strategy.'

7.2.4 USE OF TRADITIONAL MATERIALS

- Encourage re-pointing of stonework using suitable lime mortar mixes. Cement-rich mortars and raised or 'ribbon pointing' should be avoided. This is especially the case for some of the softer types of sandstone.
- Where appropriate, steps should be taken to re-discover supplies 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. The initiative of the National Trust in producing wheat reed thatch from historic varieties grown locally is acknowledged.

Appendices

APPENDIX A - CONSERVATION AREAS: GENERAL GUIDANCE

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

A Conservation Area is defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as: 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Exmoor National Park has 16 Conservation Areas designated to cover the most historically and architecturally important and interesting parts of the Park's towns and villages.

Various factors contribute to the special character of a Conservation Area. These include: the quality of buildings, the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries, boundary treatments and patterns of enclosure, characteristic building and paving materials, uses and associations, the quality of the public realm and contribution made by trees and green spaces. A strong 'sense of place' is often associated with Conservation Areas. It is the function of Conservation Area Appraisals to assess and evaluate 'character' as a means of assisting the planning process.

OWNING AND DEVELOPING LAND AND PROPERTY

WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA

In order to assist in the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas various additional planning controls exist within them. These are subject to change so it is advisable to check with Exmoor National Park before carrying out any works.

Where demolition is being considered early consultation with local Planning and Conservation Officers should be sought. It is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised works.

Further restrictions may be applied by the Local Authority or Secretary of State through discretionary use of 'Article 4' designations where a good case can be made (e.g. covering aspects such as change of windows).

High standards of design and materials are expected for new development within Conservation Areas. Sensitive proposals which pay special regard to prevailing patterns of height, massing, articulation, use of materials and enclosure will be encouraged. Early consultation with local Development Control and Conservation Officers is recommended.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Various types of advertisement, including those illuminated, will require Advertisement Consent. Advertisements must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

TREES

Trees in Conservation Areas which are already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) are subject to the normal TPO controls but the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 also makes special provision for trees in Conservation Areas which are not the subject of a TPO.

Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a Conservation Area within Exmoor National Park is required to give Exmoor National Park Authority six weeks prior notice. The purpose of this requirement is to give the LPA an opportunity to consider whether a TPO should be made in respect of the tree. Exceptions apply so if you are planning to carry out tree works contact the National Park's Tree Officer.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE 1990 ACT

The 1990 Act makes it a duty for Local Authorities to:

- In exercising their planning powers, pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.
- Formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area.
- Review designations from time to time.

APPENDIX B - LISTED BUILDINGS

Below is a table of the Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area. For further details see the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Exmoor National Park website, or the online English Heritage National Heritage List for England.

The table does not include ancillary structures or those within the curtilage of named buildings: these may also be covered by the listing and confirmation as to their status should be sought from Exmoor National Park Authority. Names of properties given below are those recorded at the time of listing under which they are officially listed and it is possible that some names may have since changed: this does not affect the listed status.

Name	Grade	Date Listed	EH Ref
Church of St Mary	I	22/05/1969	1057328
Remains of Churchyard Cross, in Churchyard about 18m E of Chancel, Church of St Mary	II*	05/06/1985	1057329
Churchview	II	05/06/1985	1057330
Linhay at NGR 9109 4473, East Luccombe Farm	II	18/08/1977	1057331
Range of farmbuildings to N of Linhay, East Luccombe Farm	II	18/08/1977	1174734
Glebe Cottage/ School Cottage	II	05/06/1985	1057332
Wychanger	II	22/05/1969	1057333
Wychanger Barton	II	05/06/1985	1295607
Wychanger Cottage	II	05/06/1985	1057334
Churchgate Cottage, Stoney Street	II	22/05/1969	1057335
Hill Gate Cottage (western most of two), Stoney Street	II	05/06/1985	1057336
Hill Gate Cottage, Stoney Street	II	22/05/1969	1174831
Oak Apple Cottage, Stoney Street	II	05/06/1985	1057337
Luccombe Post Office, mounting block and wall box	II	22/05/1969	1174766
The Cottage, Stoney Street	II	05/06/1985	1174814
Knap Cottage	II	05/06/1985	1345720
Rose Cottage, Stoney Street	II	05/06/1985	1345722

APPENDIX C- LOCALLY IMPORTANT UNLISTED BUILDINGS

Almost all the buildings within the Conservation Area make a positive contribution to its character and appearance. Below is a table of heritage assets within the Conservation Area that do not have formal individual protection through listing or scheduling. These are buildings or structures which, whilst perhaps not of national importance, are nevertheless of local significance by virtue of their age, rarity, design and historic or architectural interest and may be considered for inclusion as candidates in an Exmoor National Park local list.

Name	Notes
Old Rectory / Manor House	Mid C19 former Rectory in neo-Tudor style
Culver Cottage	Early C20 stone built Cottage
Luccombe Knapp	C17 Farmhouse with later stables (now converted) on opposite side of lane
Village Hall	Late C19 former School
Porch Cottage, Stoney Street	C17 House
Goulds and Myrtle (formerly Kamamac), Stoney Street	C14/C15 Longhouse with C17 alterations
Combe and Post Cottages, Stoney Street	C17 House

APPENDIX D - BIBLIOGRAPHY

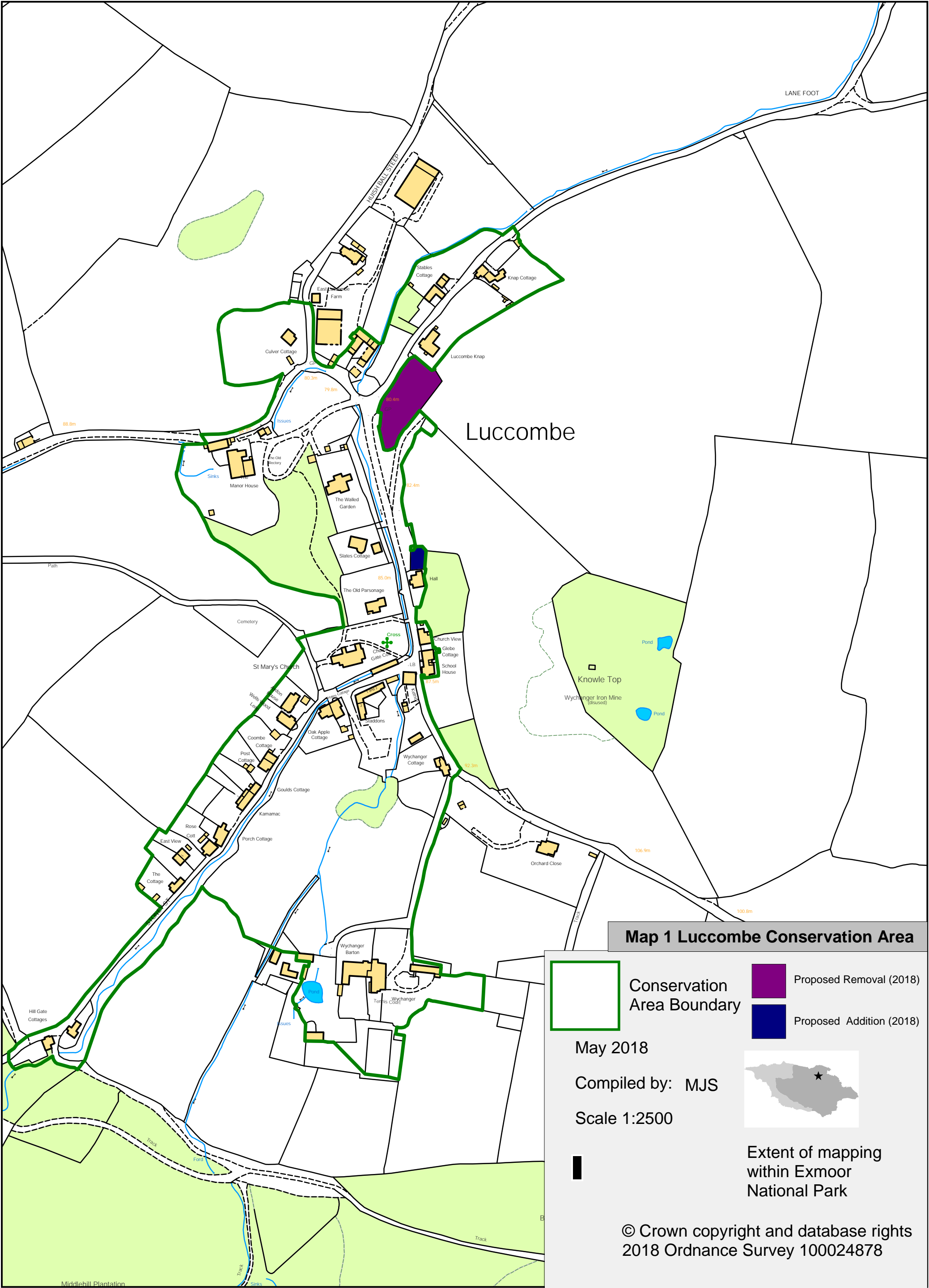
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Map 1 - Revised Conservation Area Boundary



Map 1 Luccombe Conservation Area

Conservation Area Boundary

Proposed Removal (2018)

Proposed Addition (2018)

May 2018

Compiled by: MJS

Scale 1:2500

Extent of mapping within Exmoor National Park

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Map 2 - Luccombe Character Appraisal

