Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Report Series No 14

SELWORTHY CONSERVATION AREA: APPRAISAL DOCUMENT



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Summary of Significance

The special interest of Selworthy lies in the interrelationship between the historic settlement and its landscape setting. The village is tucked down within a narrow combe on the south slopes of Selworthy Beacon but is clearly visible across the valley from Dunkery Hill. The settlement is long established and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It comprises a relatively small number of buildings, a high proportion of these are of high historic interest, many with medieval origins. The village, as it exists today, owes much of its appearance to the remodelling of the houses on Selworthy Green by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, who acquired Selworthy along with the Holnicote estate in the early 19th century. Sir Thomas set about creating a model settlement for his estate workers centred on what is now known as Selworthy Green. New cottages were built and existing farms and cottages were homogenised, mixing the genuinely vernacular with the more fanciful interpretations of rustic cottages which were commonly utilised by the gentry in estate buildings of the time but seldom deployed with such aplomb.

The National Trust acquired Selworthy as part of the Holnicote estate in 1944 and has preserved this rare mix of the vernacular and estate architecture and its landscape setting resulting in one of the most visually pleasing villages in England. The Conservation Area encompasses the core of the historic village, including the vernacular buildings on Selworthy Green, which together form a group of high histrionic significance. Other buildings of high significance includes the Grade II* listed Tithe Barn, churchyard cross and the Grade I Parish Church, which is of exceptional interest both as an historic building and a local landmark visible from the high moorland to the south.

1. Introduction

1.1 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Selworthy was first designated as a Conservation Area by Exmoor National Park 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 represents the first Appraisal of the Conservation Area since 2004 and aims to identify:

- the influences that have given Selworthy 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. This Appraisal will assist in the formulation of appropriate design strategies for new development, which should be fully articulated within a Design and Access Statement accompanying any planning application. Specific guidance relating to Selworthy 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 is part of the programme to review the 16 Conservation Areas within Exmoor National Park. It was revised following consultation in 2015. It updates the appraisal carried out for Exmoor National Park by John Fisher in 2004 and draws on the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey (1994) and subsequent research undertaken by Isabel Richardson, which has greatly informed the understanding of the development of Selworthy.

When using this Appraisal, it is important to note that the document can never be 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.

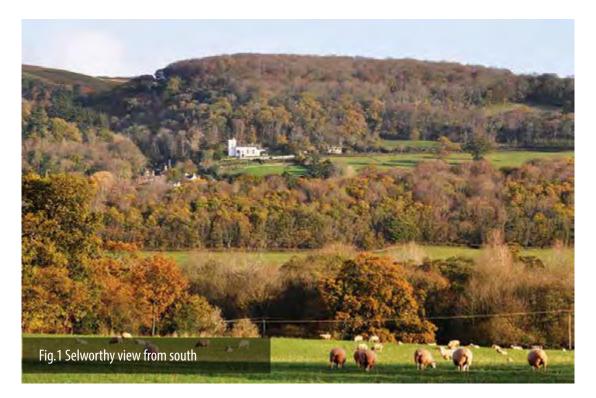
1.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public consultation was carried out between July and September 2015. A notice was placed in the parish newsletter and posters were put up around Selworthy publicising a local consultation event, which took place in the Village Hall at Allerford on 17 July and was attended by seven people. 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

Selworthy is a small settlement comprising just over 20 dwellings on the south facing hills between the Vale of Porlock and the Bristol Channel. It is 0.5km north of the A39, with Porlock 3.5km to the west and Minehead 7km to the east. Selworthy forms part of the National Trust's 5,000ha Holnicote Estate, which includes the neighbouring villages of Allerford, Bossington and Luccombe.



The village is tucked down within a combe on the wooded south slopes of Selworthy Beacon. The highest point within the Conservation Area, close to the church, is at 133m OD. From here the land to the north rises steeply through deciduous woodland to 308m OD at Selworthy Beacon. Close to the top of the Beacon, springs rise and feed the streams that run down the hill. The village follows the stream down the centre of the combe and is joined for part of its length by the lane up from the A39 that forms the spine of the village. As the lane leaves the village to the south, the landscape opens out to farmland, with the high moorland around Dunkery Beacon in the distance, and arrives at the A39 at a height of 52m OD.





Fig.2 The lane leading to the A39

Fig.3 Track upto Selworthy Beacon

2.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

2.2.1 MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

Selworthy is first recorded in the Domesday Book as Seleuurde but its origins go back further. The name derives from the Old English words sele and worth meaning 'enclosure by a copse of sallow-trees'. It seems possible that the enclosure refers to the Iron Age hillfort known as Bury Castle, which lies outside the Conservation Area on the crest of steep slopes immediately to the north.

In 1066 the manor, along with East Luccombe, was held by Queen Edith and on her death in 1074 it was awarded to Ralph de Limesi. Thereafter it was held by the Luccombe family and over the next few centuries, through Luccombe marriages, ownership passed to the St John and Arundel families.



There appears to never have been a manor house at Selworthy. The earliest surviving building is the Parish Church of All Saints (Fig. 4), which thanks to its elevated position and limewash, is the most prominent building in the village. Its earliest recorded fabric dates from the 14th century and, given the early origins of the settlement, it is possible that there was an even earlier church here. In its current guise it mostly dates to the 15th-16th century with the south aisle of 1538 identified by the architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner as unsurpassed in the county. It is a compact low building of considerable interest in its own right but also has a high landscape value and is visible from the moorland to the south.

The churchyard contains the remains of a three-stage churchyard cross contemporaneous with the late medieval phase of the church. Zeals Farmhouse, which is curiously positioned behind and very close to the church, is also from the 15th-early 16th century but there is no evidence it was functionally connected. A church house is, however, believed to have stood south of the church (on the site of the new burial ground) although this seems to have disappeared by the time of the Tithe Map (c.1841).

West of the church, the rest of the historic village follows the line of the combe as it descends south-west. The topography dictates the narrow linear settlement form. The location of the extant buildings, at least six of which (Bow, Postman's Cottage, Rectory Cottages, The Old Rectory, Tithe Barn and Selworthy Farmhouse) are believed to have late medieval or early modern origins, suggests that this pattern originated in the medieval period. The village appears to have developed organically and there is no evidence of formal settlement planning in the medieval period. Of these early buildings, the Tithe Barn, converted in the mid 20th to two dwellings, is of great interest and would repay further investigation. Its presence would suggest that Selworthy had an administrative function and functioned as a central place in the late medieval period.

2.2.2 POST MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

Although the settlement pattern of Selworthy was established much earlier, in its current guise the village is essentially the early 19th century creation of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, who acquired the estate in 1802. Inspired by Blaise Hamlet near Bristol, which he is known to have visited, Sir Thomas created a model settlement for his estate workers. Unlike Blaise Hamlet, he utilised the existing farmhouses giving them a picturesque 'makeover', as well as building new estate workers' cottages in the same fashionable cottage ornee style. In the process, he also swept away the, what would have been considered, unsightly outbuildings and yards which must have been associated with these buildings and created 'Selworthy Green' as it is seen today.



The Holnicote estate remained with the Acland's until it was gifted to the National Trust in 1944. Later development has been very limited and restricted to the fringes of the village and outside of the historic core. The settlement pattern today is essentially the same as created by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland and depicted on the Tithe Map of c.1841 (Fig. 5).

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGY

Selworthy falls within the wider area of extensive prehistoric activity in the Vale of Porlock. The immediate environs of Selworthy have great archaeological interest and include the Scheduled Iron Age hillfort known as Bury Castle, 0.5km to the north-west of the Conservation Area, and a number of earlier prehistoric barrows on Selworthy Beacon.

Within the Conservation Area, archaeological potential can be identified around the earliest extant buildings, the church and Tithe Barn. The churchyard has the remains of a 15th century stone cross, which is listed at Grade II*. The Tithe Barn is believed to date to the same period and would have been the focus of medieval activity. The core of the historic settlement, in the vicinity of the Green, also has potential. The 19th century remodelling of this area has eradicated much of the evidence of its former configuration but Isabel Richardson has noted parchmarks in the grass in dry summers so it is very likely that traces of former buildings and other archaeological deposits survive below ground. Further investigation may inform the understanding of the pre-Acland layout of the village.

Within the buildings themselves, the National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey has recorded features of interest and identified medieval origins in the construction and materials of many of the ostensibly 19th century houses, such as smoke-blackened roof timbers providing evidence of former open hall houses. There remains the potential for future discoveries, especially when alterations to the buildings are undertaken.

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. While the estate, now in the care of the National Trust, still owns the majority of the historic houses in Selworthy, the occupants are no longer reliant on the land for their livelihood. Although the importance of agriculture as a means of employment declined through the later 20th century, the scenic qualities of the area and the availability of private transport has meant that the population of the parish (which includes Allerford and Bossington) has remained fairly constant and is currently around 500 - slightly higher than in the 19th century.



Villagers must look to Porlock, Minehead or further afield for employment, retail and leisure opportunities. In terms of facilities, the village caters mainly for visitors who are drawn directly to Selworthy 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 Holnicote esatate villages, Selworthy never had a public house and there are no public meeting rooms or school. The village does boast a National Trust shop (Clematis Cottage), tearoom (Periwinkle) and public toilets. As well as a place of worship, All Saints Church is an historic landmark building and a draw in its own right for tourists.

3. Spatial Analysis

3.1 SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND BUILDING DENSITY

The pattern of settlement is very much dictated by the topography of the narrow combe within which it is situated. There are sequential groups of buildings rather than any strongly established building lines. Although the Conservation Area is small, for ease of reference it can be divided into the following four broad character zones.

3.1.1 CHURCH AREA

This is the highest point of the village. To the west of the church the steep lane up from the A39 continues as a track up through woodland towards Selworthy Beacon (Fig. 3), while the tarmac section turns 90 degrees east towards Dean's Cross, passing south of the Church, Zeals, Vale View/Church Cottage and the National Trust car park (outside of the Conservation Area). In common with the church, the buildings here are orientated east-west and their front elevations look south across Porlock Vale towards Dunkery Beacon.

3.1.2 SELWORTHY GREEN

This is the core of the village and is set to the west of the lane. The buildings here are informally spaced around a Green with a pleasing intimacy of scale enriched by changes of level, including flights of steps. Clematis/Postman's Cottage is oriented east-west (as the buildings around the church), but is spatially part of the Green and forms its northern focal point. The remaining three dwellings are orientated north-south in line with the hill. The green area between them must have formerly (pre-early 19th century remodelling) contained a trackway but this was probably never surfaced. The open space at the south end, now a picnic area and partially enclosed by a wooden fence, physically divides the open and more public space of the Green from the more enclosed private spaces of the cottages further south.



3.1.3 SOUTH OF SELWORTHY GREEN (West of Road)

Historically part of the same group of cottages as Selworthy Green, these buildings are now physically separated from the Green by a fence and the public toilets and accessed direct off the lane to their east, which they are all aligned with. They sit within well defined property plots, fairly regularly spaced, with front and rear gardens and are consequently more enclosed and private in character than those on the Green. At the south end, Selworthy Farm, the only working farm in the Conservation Area, is situated off the northern spur of a fork in the road, which becomes a green lane leading to Brandish Street. The farm is set apart and to the east of the associated buildings some of which are grouped around an attractive cobbled yard. The farm buildings to the south of the lane are outside of the Conservation Area and are predominately more recent in date but do still contain some elements of interest.



3.1.4 EAST OF THE ROAD

These houses are not owned by the National Trust. The Tithe Barn and Greenacres Cottage abut and are aligned to the road edge. The Old Rectory and associated buildings (Cross Acres and Glebe Cottage) are behind. They form a tight and slightly muddled group born of a sequence of mainly 20th century conversions, extensions and splits. Access to the Old Rectory and Glebe Cottage is via a track leading off the lane to open countryside to the south. The other dwellings are accessed from a more suburban looking communal tarmac driveway opposite the public toilets. To the south, The Garden House, Rectory and Barn Cottage are modern detached houses set in large grounds, well spaced and screened from the road by walls and hedges. Of these, only Barn Cottage is within the Conservation Area as currently designated.

3.2 PLAN, FORM, HEIGHT AND MASSING

Although there is some uniformity in the building elements, there is no standardised plan-form. The most common form of pre-18th century plan for houses of middling status, the cross passage with three bays, does exist in the village but in many cases these buildings have been subdivided at a later date. All the houses are 1½ or 2-storey. The pre-19th century houses are larger than the Acland estate cottages. The Old Rectory is, unsurprisingly, the largest in the village, its massing broken up the variety in the roof lines and the large windows consummate with its high status.

3.3 GREEN SPACE

3.3.1 CHURCH AREA

The churchyard and the new burial ground opposite are semi-public open spaces. Close to the car parks, the churchyard offers visitors their first experience of the village and its extensive views to the south. It is well kept but not over manicured. The new burial ground to the south is bounded by evergreen hedging and is a more formal, private and managed space. Immediately east is the church car park. The larger National Trust car park, behind Vale View/Church Cottage, is on the site of former buildings possibly associated with Zeals, and is outside of the Conservation Area.

3.3.2 SELWORTHY GREEN

This is the principal green space within the Conservation Area from which much of its character derives. Selworthy Green itself, as well as its setting, is consequently very sensitive to change. The northern part contains four listed buildings pleasingly, and seemingly deliberately, arranged around a grassed area crossed by meandering tarmac paths, belying that fact that the Green post-dates all but one of the houses. At the north end, where it is usually entered by visitors, it is more enclosed by vegetation and landscaped, giving the slight air of public gardens with timber benches arranged to give views down the combe. Periwinkle is set in the middle of The Green and has a private tea garden to the rear. The lower part of the Green is a discrete, grassed, roughly triangular-shaped piece of land, undeveloped and more open in character (Fig. 9). The Green is bounded to the west by a stream which runs under the lane close to the public toilets.



3.3.3 SOUTH OF SELWORTHY GREEN

The area between the public toilets and maintenance sheds and Selworthy Farm is made up of houses with front and rear private gardens characterised by small lawns and populated by specimen tress, garden plants, shrubs and vegetable patches. At the south end of the Conservation Area, Selworthy Farmhouse has an open area of lawn to the front. Beyond the farm buildings, to the south and east there is farmland giving this area a more open feel.

3.3.4 EAST OF THE ROAD

The road is enclosed by walls, hedges and large over hanging trees. The buildings are concentrated in a relatively small area opposite the Green and are tightly grouped. The formerly extensive grounds to the Old Rectory are now shared between four separate dwellings with their own private gardens. The track to the east of the Old Rectory leads to open countryside.

The settlement insert maps to the Local Plan (2005) show those areas identified as important where development that would harm the public amenity value or character of the settlement will not be permitted.

3.4 VIEWS

Views form an essential part of this Conservation Area's character and are one of its chief delights. Generally, the views to the north are internal, shorter, and often rely on the juxtaposition of the buildings for their attractiveness.



The views south can also be framed by buildings but are longer and more extensive: in particular, south across Porlock Vale towards Dunkery Beacon from the churchyard and the view from the porch framed by the doorway of the church note (Fig. 10).

The elevated site and white lime washed render of the parish church set against a dark wooded backdrop creates a recognisable landmark and focal point for views from within the village and from much of the surrounding countryside to the south (Fig. 1 and Fig.10).





Fig.11 View from the church porch

Fig. 12 Track leading south from Selworthy Farm

From the north end of the Green, the views south across to the moorland over and between the thatched roofs of the cottages are also memorable and make an immense contribution to the quality of the Conservation Area and its setting (front cover).

4. Architectural Quality and Built Form

4.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Much of the character of the village derives from the harmonious building materials and the informally arranged cottage groups with picturesque detailing. The cottages on the west side of the lane are typically 1½ or 2-storey, with yellow coloured lime-washed render and thatched roofs with plain ridges and swept eaves. There are often small thatched hips over gables, and rustic porches or recessed flatheaded doorways. The tall shouldered chimneys, with round or square section shafts and the different types of chimney pot or smoke vent are a special feature of the locality. Picturesque ornament is often taken a stage further, especially gothic arched entrance doors or ogee-headed window openings, which are defining architectural features of the Holnicote estate, along with the decorative glazing patterns using leaded lights.



Fig.13 Rustic porch detailing, Postman's Cottage



Fig.14 Round stack, lvy's Cottage

The uniformity of detailing on the cottages was long thought to indicate that they were all an early 19th century creation of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland. This view is still widely held and is also perpetuated by the National Trust's own information board in the church car park. Research undertaken by Isabel Richardson for the National Trust has in fact proved the cottages to be a mixture of 15th-18th century houses with an early 19th century veneer, and cottages built in the early 19th century in the prevailing cottage ornee style, but mimicking some of the more attractive vernacular features, such as the lateral stacks, seen on the earlier buildings.

What ostensibly appears to be a homogeneous group therefore conceals a more complex picture. This is encapsulated in the pair of semi-detached cottages shown on the OS Map as **Clematis and Postman's Cottage** (Fig. 15). The upper cottage (Postman's) contains the hall and parlour and part of the cross passage of a late medieval hall house. The service end of the house has been replaced by a single-storey cottage built on a different axis in the early 19th century, which now houses the National Trust Shop/Information Centre.



Further down the Green, **Periwinkle Cottage Tea Room**s (Fig. 16) is a 17th century farmhouse, of three bay cross-passage plan. The cross-passage doorway is sheltered by a two-storey picturesque porch was added in the early 19th century. The right outshot has a reset window with trefoil-headed lights, and decorative spandrels.



To the south, **Ivy's Cottage** (Fig.17) is pure early 19th century and, along with Clematis, is one of the two additions built when the Green was formed. Like Clematis, Ivy's Cottage is single-storey and of irregular plan. It has an almost circular porch on the south-west corner and the ogee-headed features that typify 19th century Acland detailing.



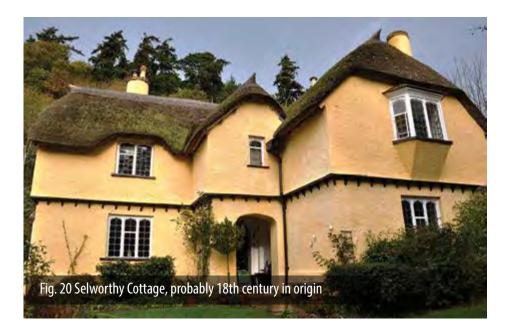
Bow Cottage (Fig. 18), opposite, has the same ogee headed design to the ground floor window next to the large front chimney stack. Like Perriwinkle and Postman's Cottage it originated as a three-bay hall house. The former hall, once open to the roof, was most likely ceiled and the front stack, and possibly the bread oven added before the end of the 16th century. The early 19th century picturesque additions include split oak trunks supporting a porch roof, and the usual embellishments of gothic and ogee- arched window frames, a bow window and leaded-light windows.



South of the Green, the cottages fronting the lane on the west side did not escape Acland's attention. At **Rectory Cottages** (Fig. 19) the Trust's survey discovered smoke-blackened thatch, indicative of a medieval open hall house. From the 17th century was a three-room house with a cross-passage. There is exposed cob on the rear elevation, and a heart and fleur-de-lys motif pargetted into the rendered front (Fig. 29) A projecting slate-roofed bay with a three-light wooden casement is probably an early-mid 20th century former shop front.



Selworthy Cottage (Fig. 20) probably dates from the 18th century, but again was much modified in the early-mid 19th century with ogee-headed and lancet lights, a two-light oriel above the porch, and an ogee headed ribbed inner door added. Contrary to the list description's 17th and 18th century attribution, the Trust's vernacular building survey of Lower Cottage and Greenbanks (Fig. 21) suggests they are a planned pair of two-storey cottages built 1855-57, which places them slightly later than Sir Thomas' first phase of building. The large front stack is a particularly convincing archaic feature.

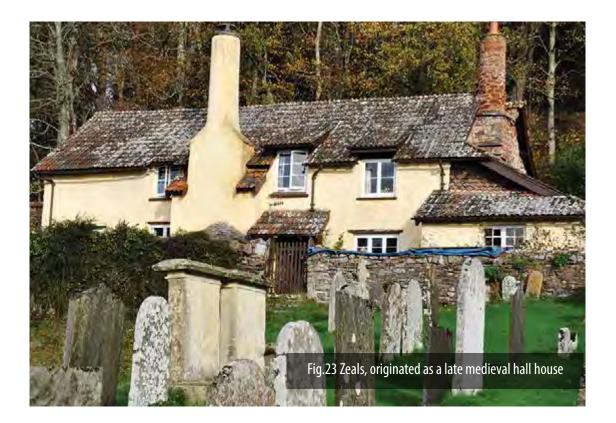




Selworthy Farm (Fig. 22) which marks the south west corner of the Conservation Area, is substantially of 1883-4 and does not possess the picturesque features of the houses to the north. It does, however, incorporate an earlier farmhouse dating from the 16th century with jointed crucks and large stone jambs and quoins in a fireplace suggesting an early chimney, possibly one of the first in the area. The associated historic farm buildings to the west forming a rectangular plan around a cobbled yard are also of interest. The thatched barn, including a south-facing lean-to frontage with round section stone pillars, probably dates from the 18th century and the east range, a former cowshed and stable, is early 19th century. The remainder of the range is late 19th century.



The former farmhouse known as **Zeals** (Fig. 23), to the north of the church, also escaped the early 19th century picturesque treatment, its plain casement windows and Roman tiled roof suggesting a more prosaic later 19th century makeover of an earlier house. Internally, it reveals itself to be a late 15th-early 16th century farmhouse ceiled in the late 16th century. The original plan survives largely intact and it retains its timber plank and muntin screen and a rear stair turret.



Further east, **Vale View** and **Church Cottage** (Fig. 24) are a pair of semi-detached estate cottages entirely different in appearance to those on the Green, with unrendered stone walls and slate roofs. They are still very much in the estate workers gothic idiom – with a particular fine gothic-arched porch – but are slightly later in date than the reworking of the Green. It would appear that these cottages were not given the picturesque treatment as they lay outside of the Green.



The buildings to the east of the lane are also largely devoid of the distinctive Acland picturesque flourishes. The Tithe Barn (Fig. 25) is believed to be one of the earliest buildings in the parish and its long unrendered stone north elevation parallel with the stream alongside the road, makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Externally it is a mixture of agricultural and ecclesiastical. Built into the south wall at the west end of the Tithe Barn is a central moulded arch framing a blocked opening with carvings depicting a pig, a sheep and a sheaf of corn (Fig. 26). This is identified in the list description as a dole window, although it is set quite high in the wall. The west gable end has a 2-light cinquefoil headed window was moved from the church when the squire's pew was installed above the church porch in 1826. The south elevation has a more domestic character with 'Somerset' dormers at first floor level.





Fig.26 Tithe Barn 'dole window'

To the west of the Tithe Barn, Greenacres Cottage (Fig. 27) appears to be another conversion of a former agricultural building. The canted slate hung oriel window is ogee headed, which ties this building in with those on the Green, may be reused from elsewhere. On the south elevation the first floor shares the dormer design with the Tithe Barn.



To the east of the Tithe Barn, **The Old Rectory** (Fig. 28) is a substantial 19th century former rectory with 16th century origins and now split into two dwellings. It is largely screened from the road by a tall stone wall but its gabled slate roofs and rendered chimneys can be clearly seen when travelling down the hill, its roofs making a positive contribution to the streetscape. The windows are of various dates but include ogee headed examples under Tudor-style dripmoulds and of a different design to those on the lower status estate buildings.



Within the former rectory gardens, The Garden House is a 20th century dwelling and further south is another dwelling of a similar date known as the Rectory – both houses are outside of the Conservation Area. At the southern end of the Conservation Area Barn Cottage (Fig. 46) is also 20th century in date and belongs more to the tail end of the Arts and Crafts tradition. And despite the thatched roof shares little in design terms with the vernacular cottages in the village.

4.2 MATERIALS

4.2.1 WALLS

The majority of the buildings are constructed of stone rubble, sometimes combined with cob, and subsequently rendered. 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. In Selworthy, where the stone is exposed, there is a fairly even distribution of the two different types.

Much of the building stone would have been obtained from small-scale local quarries, which are long closed. Several former quarry sites in the vicinity can still be traced, for example, close to East Lynch, just over 1 km east of Selworthy.

In current and former farm buildings the stone is usually left exposed. The houses on the west side of the road and Zeals are rendered and finished with the estate yellow coloured limewash with a black tar-banded plinth. At Rectory Cottages there is a rare survival of pargetting decoration (Fig. 29).



4.2.2 ROOFS

Thatched roofs, using combed wheat reed with plain flush wrap-over ridges, are one of the chief delights of Selworthy. Their survival is a legacy of Acland as he tied the existing and new buildings very much into the thatch roofed cottage ornee tradition. At Rectory Cottages evidence of smoke blackening was discovered indicating that the base coat of thatch has Medieval origins.

Up until the 19th century thatch would have been the only available roofing material for all but the highest status buildings. Imported slate became available from the early 19th century but the initial high cost restricted it to higher status buildings, such as the Old Rectory. Towards the middle of the century cheaper transportation brought costs down and meant that estate cottages such as Vale View could utilise slate. By the later 19th century Bridgwater tiles, double and single Romans and similar variants, became available and some former thatched buildings, such as Zeals, were re-roofed using these.



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 present. Some cottage windows have forged iron casements, and there is a range of leaded light glazing patterns. Frames are either plain rectangular or the characteristic ogee or gothic headed style. Oriel windows are another feature of the village and are found on at least three of the buildings, in this case they belong to the picturesque rather than vernacular tradition



Fig.31 Ogee-headed windows, lvy's Cottage

Most doors are constructed in a traditional plank and ledged form (some with nontraditional 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. Few openings of late medieval origin survive; their replacement is probably due to the early 19th century 'picturesque' alterations.



Fig.32 and Fig.33 19th century doors at Clematis (left) and lvy's (right) Cottages.

4.3 OTHER FEATURES OF INTEREST

The churchyard contains the remains of churchyard cross dating to the 15th century and listed at Grade II*. It is similar in design to the churchyard cross at Wootton Courtenay. The churchyard contains a number of fine 18th and 19th century monuments; in particular the chest tombs of the Trill and Coffin families which are both listed at Grade II.

West of the churchyard at the top of the Green, the village war memorial comprises a simple stone cross on a plinth with metal plaques commemorating the dead from both World Wars.



5. Street Scene

5.1 BOUNDARIES

The exposed local sandstone rubble walls, usually roughly coursed and infilled with mortar, are a notable feature in Selworthy. There is a particularly good stretch on the east side of the road past the Old Rectory. The low wall at the north end of the Green has an unusual cobbled coping (Fig. 36) and is probably relatively recent. An alternative to the stone wall is the use of unmortared stone facing for an earth bank (Fig. 35). Both methods contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There are also examples of native hedges. The Green is open in character but its boundary is defined by relatively recent timber post and rail fencing which currently looks slightly to 'fresh' but which will weather-down over the years.

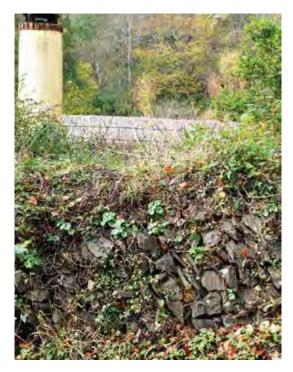


Fig.35 Dry stone banks



Fig.36 Mortared walling on the Green

5.2 GROUNDSCAPE

Selworthy is a much visited village and the roads, and the paths within the Green, are tarmac. The changing path levels are achieved through stone steps. Away from the public thoroughfares unmade or roughly surfaced paths and tracks lead into the surrounding countryside.



In terms of historic groundscape, Selworthy does not generally possess stone paved or cobbled surfaces as part of the street scene but there are localised examples. Though set apart from the most visited areas, Selworthy Farm has a large cobbled yard surrounded by a historic group of farm buildings, probably laid down in its present form during the early-mid 19th century (Fig.37).



Fig.38 Tarmac path leading to the Green

5.3 STREET FURNITURE

There is a relative absence of historic street furniture in the village. The only item of interest identified during the survey is the Victorian letterbox set into the wall near Rectory Cottages. Signage is modern and the majority was put up by the National Trust. Although it could be argued there is an excess of National Trust signs, it is probably consummate with a much visited tourist area and for their benefit there is also an information board in the church car park. Outside the Tithe Barn there is a plain metal plaque set in the ground in 1989 to the puppeteer Walter Wilkinson who resided there at the end of his life.



Fig.39 A mixture of National Trust and private signage

5.4 BRIDGES

Springs and streams flowing south down the combe are a particular feature of the Conservation Area and its environs. These are narrow and easily crossed and the bridges appear to be relatively recent responses to modern traffic and visitor demands. On the east side of the main road the stream is channelled beneath the access-way by small single arched stone bridges (Fig. 40). West of the Green, the National Trust have constructed timber footbridges (Fig. 41) that lead in to the woods and countryside beyond.



Fig.40 Access bridge off main road

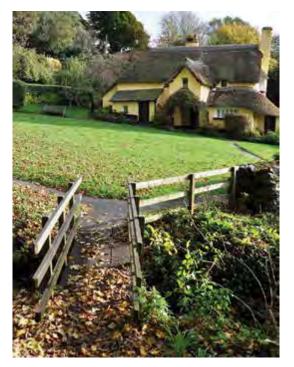
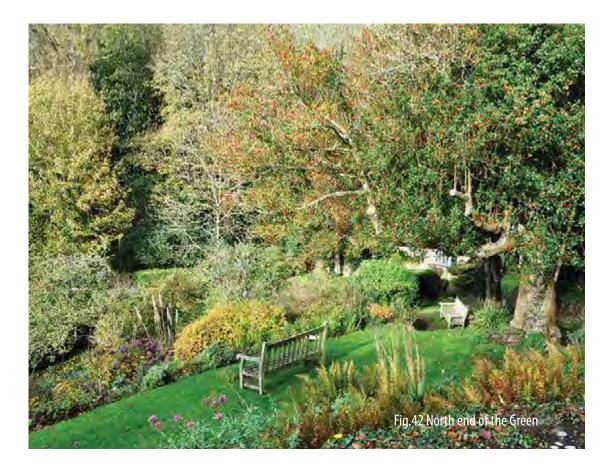


Fig.41 National Trust footbridge

5.5 TREES AND HEDGES

Mature trees and planting contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting. The churchyard, at the northern end of the Conservation Area, contains yew trees planted by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland in 1860. The new burial ground to the south is bounded by low clipped ever-green hedging. The planting on Selworthy Green, especially at the northern end, has something of the character of public gardens. Lower down the open grass area contains some small scattered deciduous trees. It is possible this is one of the former orchard paddocks known to have existed in the village and some informally planted orchard trees would arguably benefit this space.

Outside of the Green, the road through the village is enclosed by walls, hedges and large over hanging trees and the houses have private gardens characterised by small lawns and populated by specimen trees, garden plants, shrubs and vegetable patches.



Outside and to the north and west of the Conservation Area there are considerable planted woodlands on the slopes of Selworthy Beacon which form an important natural backdrop to the settlement. These were planted by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland who from 1814 applied for a lease of Exmoor Forest and acted as forester on behalf of the Crown and was accountable to the Commissioner of Woods for any profits made. These woodlands, a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, are indicated in the Local Plan as 'Category 3 Woodland' classified in Section 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act of 1985.

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 their historic character or visual appearance. With very little private ownership of land or buildings, the Trust is able to maintain almost complete control of land use and any proposals for development are likely to remain extremely limited. There is, in common with other places popular with tourists, the risk of visitor pressure becoming an issue, especially to the Green and area around the church which are most visited. There is, however, no sign that this is posing any special problems at present.

Virtually all buildings are well cared for and maintained. The table below contains a more detailed condition assessment. The headings are based on English Heritage's Conservation Areas Condition Survey (2008).



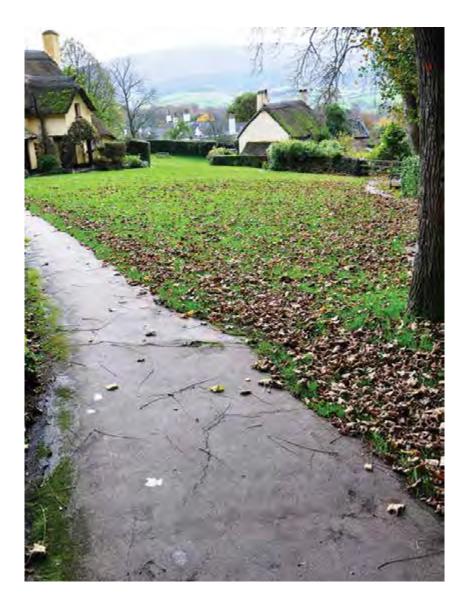


Fig.44 Tree root damage to path on the Green

	CONDITION ASSESSMENT				
1. Designated Conservation Area name:	Selworthy				
2. Locality:	National Trust H	Iolnicote 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 inlcude 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 specila 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 whe Conservation Area:	ether the following	g issues affect th	ie special interest, sig	nificance and/or ch	aracter of the
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 elavation (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) 	×				
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 Limited damage to tarmac paths by tree roots	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?					
Based on your answers, the score v Very bad (1 or more ques Very bad (3 or more que Poor (1 or more question Fair (2 or more question Optimal (1 question answ	stions answered "A stions answered "A is answered "A not ns answered "A n	a significant proble A noticeable proble ciceable problem") hinor problem")	m") em")		

6.2 VULNERABILITY

Selworthy 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 valley. Its unchanged appearance is one of its chief attractions. A downside of this and its picture postcard qualities is that some of its former rural character and vitality is in danger of being hidden. This is a delicate balance, as this process began when Sir Thomas Acland 'tidied up' the village and created his model settlement and this aspect of Selworthy's development defines much of its character. Introducing further elements, principally to accommodate the needs and safety of visitors, such as the National Trust's, signs, fences and bridges, needs to be delicately handled. That said, Selworthy has avoided many of the pitfalls of other tourist destination villages, which is largely thanks to the National Trust's control. While the village is sensitive to change it should not, however, be stifled but any changes, particularly those aimed at improving the visitor experience must be senstively handled.

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 considered: >=5: High 3-4: Medium 0-2: Low	the Conserva	tion Area is

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:

- Condition optimal and any vulnerability
- Condition fair and any vulnerability
- Condition poor and vulnerability medium or low

At risk:

- 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

Following public consultation, no changes to Conservation Area boundary are proposed.

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. Most are grade II listed, and even non-listed buildings often have historic and architectural quality. A good example is Selworthy Farm, where there are remains of a late medieval farmhouse, and a large group of farm outbuildings surrounding a cobbled yard.

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. Since Selworthy is not a "Defined Settlement" in terms of Policy S1 of the Exmoor National Park Local Plan, the village and its setting are therefore defined as "Open Countryside" where strict planning regulations apply.

The following are guidelines that the Exmoor National Park Plan endorses when considering any alterations, repair or restoration to buildings within the Conservation Area. The National Trust promotes traditional building skills, especially the use of lime-wash, and uses other craft skills in maintaining its buildings. In the case of Selworthy, where the care and maintenance of the historic built and natural environment is to a high standard, not all the following will necessarily apply.

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 associated topographic and landscape features, for example the 19th century plantations of Sir Thomas Dyke Acland on the slopes of Bossington Hill and Selworthy Beacon. 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

To assist in the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas certain restrictions to permitted development 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.

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 whichare 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

Following 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
Greenbanks & Lower Cottage	11	22/05/1969	1057988
1 & 2 Rectory Cottage	Ш	22/05/1969	1057989
Tithe Barn & Tithe Barn Cottage	Ш	22/05/1969	1057990
Cottage - National Trust Estate 68	Ш	22/05/1969	1058025
Periwinkle Cottage Tea Rooms	II	22/05/1969	1058026
Westbourne Cottage	Ш	22/05/1969	1058027
Remains of churchyard cross about 4m east of south aisle,	*	02/01/1986	1058028
Church of All Saints			
Trill family chest tomb in churchyard, about 1.5m east of	П	02/01/1986	1058029
chancel, Church of All Saints			
Coffin family chest tomb, in churchyard 1m east of chancel,	II	02/01/1986	1295974
Church of All Saints			
Lorna Doone National Trust Shop and Information Centre	11	22/05/1969	1295998
Church of All Saints	11	22/05/1969	1296005
Crossacres & The Old Rectory	II	22/05/1969	1345422
Selworthy Cottage & wall abutting on south front	11	22/05/1969	1345423
Zeals		22/05/1969	1345424

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
Vale View/ Church Cottage	Pair of mid/late C19 estate workers' cottages
Greenacres Cottage	Conversion of former agricultural building in key position
Selworthy Farm	C19 farm with earlier origins and a good collection of farm buildings
	around cobbled yard

APPENDIX D - BIBLIOGRAPHY

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