

Silverton Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2013-2033

Design Statement

Referendum Version



Silverton Parish Council

November 2023

Version	
Reg 14 - Version 4 Submission to Silverton Parish Council	November 2022
Reg 16 - Version 5 Submission to Mid Devon District Council	December 2022
Referendum Version	November 2023

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Introduction

Silverton Parish Council has fully supported the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council appreciates that there is a need for growth but in a way that is controlled by the Community to prevent the parish, and Silverton Village in particular, losing its character. The Parish Council recognises that the Plan shows a way forward in shaping and directing future development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ sets out the Government’s planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a “*presumption in favour of sustainable development*”. It states that neighbourhood plans should “*promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects*”. It also gives: “*communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies*”. The NPPF includes reference to the design of development “*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.*”

The Purpose of a Design Statement

The aim is to provide guidelines that will protect and enhance what we value from the past and encourage good design in future new development.

Good design should endeavour to create places, buildings and spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well and will meet future needs.

This Design Statement forms part of the Silverton Parish Neighbourhood Plan. However, as a separate document it is intended to make the Design Statement a supplementary planning document (SPD) to which the Local Planning Authority, Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) must have regard to when considering applications for development in the Parish.

Who Has Produced It

It has been produced by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a sub-committee of Silverton Parish Council, set up in April 2014 to draft a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish.

Among the Aims and Objectives included in the draft NP drawn up following consultation are: -

To ensure any new development that takes place outside the built-up area is appropriate and un-intrusive	<i>4. Control the scale and type of development in the countryside</i>
To ensure all new development in the Parish contributes positively to its character, visual appearance and safe environment. <i>(NB Agricultural buildings may be exempt from planning control)</i>	<i>9. Establish appropriate design standards where they are required</i>

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, July 2021

How People Have Been Consulted

Over the 9th and 10th September 2016 a total of 278 persons attended our Site Allocation Consultation events at either the Lamb Inn Shed (on Friday the 9th) or the Community Hall (on Saturday the 10th).

It had been made clear on leaflets and posters advertising the events that the draft Design Statement would be available for comment.

We dedicated one table at the Consultation to the Design Statement on which we set out copies of the draft together with the Group's assessment of various Character Areas in the Village. A coloured consultation form was available on which to write comments and put in a box on the table. Members of the Steering Group were on hand to answer queries and explain and discuss all matters relating to the Neighbourhood Plan.

Consultation forms could be completed on the day or sent in after the events up until the 18th September 2016.

The consultation forms allowed people to either agree or disagree with the Design Statement. There was plenty of space on the form for additional comment.

Comments from September to November 2021 Reg 14 Consultation were also taken in to account and this document was amended accordingly.

Below are some of the comments made. Comments can be seen in full on the website at

<https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/silverton/neighbourhood-plan/>

- Avoid large scale housing developments
- Must adhere to existing building line.
- Must preserve existing boundary hedging and Devon banks to all new developments.
- Design needs to incorporate a traditional architectural design.
- Buildings must use local materials and use of natural materials such as straw, wood, wool, etc from sustainable sources would be encouraged.
- Roof slopes to be 45 degrees, not 35 degrees.
- Insulation must be up to a high standard with provision for Photovoltaic electric panels.
- All services underground thus avoiding telegraph poles, wires, etc.
- Good design to enhance the village is important; in keeping with village character is the most important!
- Disagree with any development unless the issue of the main access to the village via Upexe Lane is addressed.
- Car parking is dire throughout the village and should be sorted before any more building occurs
- Access roads to the villages should be sorted out before further development
- On a general aspect re: parking, whilst one parking space might be provided with each building most people these days have two cars so have to resort to parking on the road.
- Any major alterations to the access roads would completely change the nature of Silverton village.
- Need to be small developments and village cottage-like housing.
- Suitable alternative habitats, such as the provision of owl boxes, should be encouraged where possible, especially near barn conversions.
- Tree planting to be encouraged wherever possible.

After the consultation, the draft Design Statement was put up on the website so that people could make their comments online. The Design Guidelines set out at the end of this Statement attempt to reflect the comments made. Although largely applicable to the Village where most development is likely to take place, they also apply to the wider Parish.

The Parish Context

Silverton Parish lies to the east of the River Exe midway between Exeter and Tiverton. Extending about 5 miles from the hills in the North to the lowlands in the South and about 2 miles East to West, it covers an area of about 1914 ha (4730 acres) and supports a population of some 1924 (2011 census) of which 95% are based in the Village.

Silverton is a rural Parish, traditionally a farming community focused on the Village. The style of the older buildings reflects this rural character.

The Village has as its backdrop rolling hills and unspoilt views of farmland. It is characterised by mature trees and substantial hedges and banks which only give way gradually to the village settlement. These soft edges are an important part of its rural quality.

The overall impression is of low density building enhanced by numerous trees.

Viewed from the hills above, the buildings in the Village are predominantly two storeys with pitched tiled or slated roofs. Thatched properties are found mainly in the central area of the Village.

Conservation Area

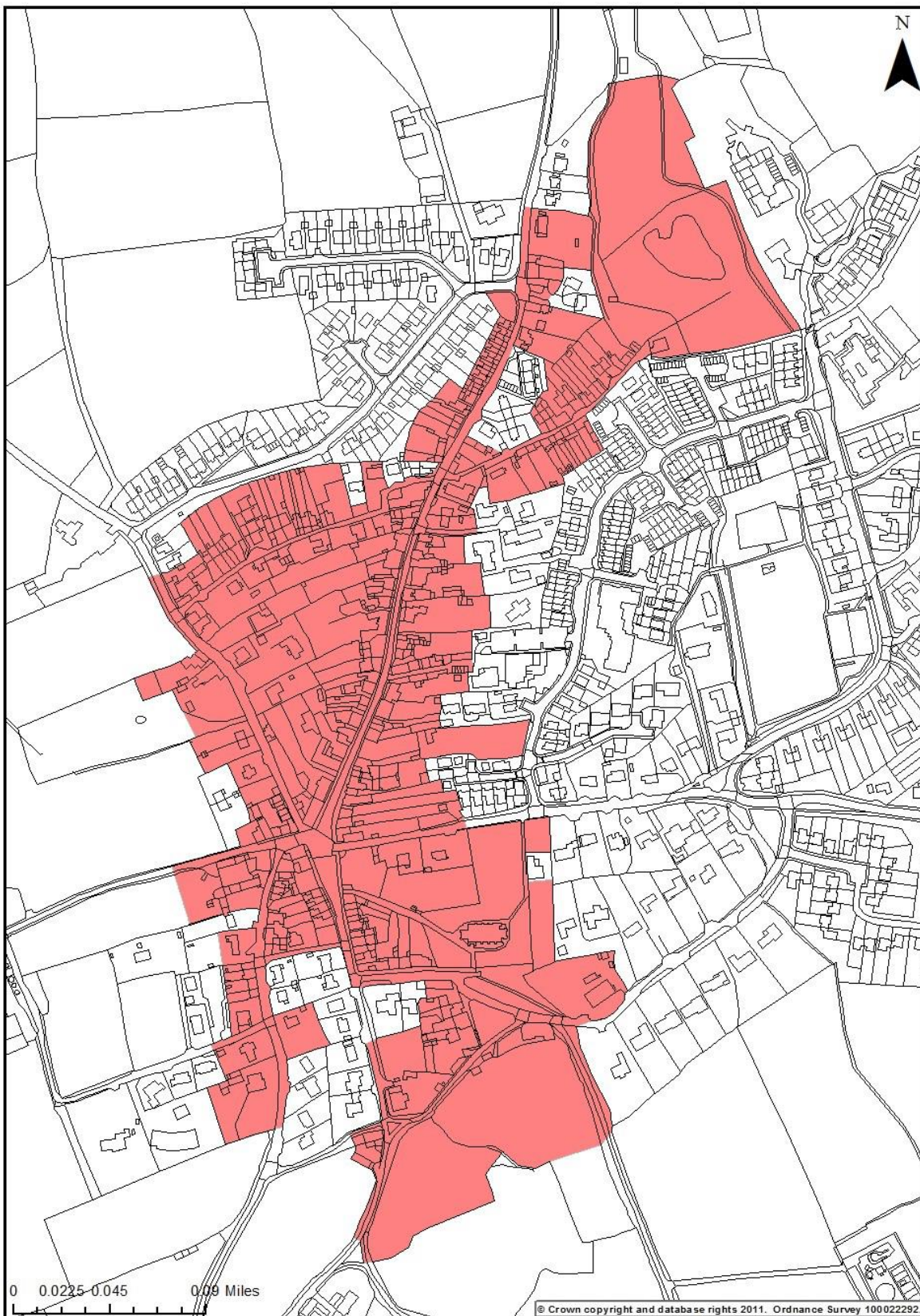
The centre of the Village, along with fields to the north east and to the south of it, is a Conservation Area which is fully described in the Conservation Area document published by Mid Devon District Council in February 1973 and subsequent reviews, the latest of which was in 2015. These can be accessed via:

www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/conservation/conservation-areas

There are 68 recognised Listed buildings within the Conservation Area (to be protected under the terms of all statutory obligations), which can be accessed via

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/media/343673/silverton-part-3.pdf>

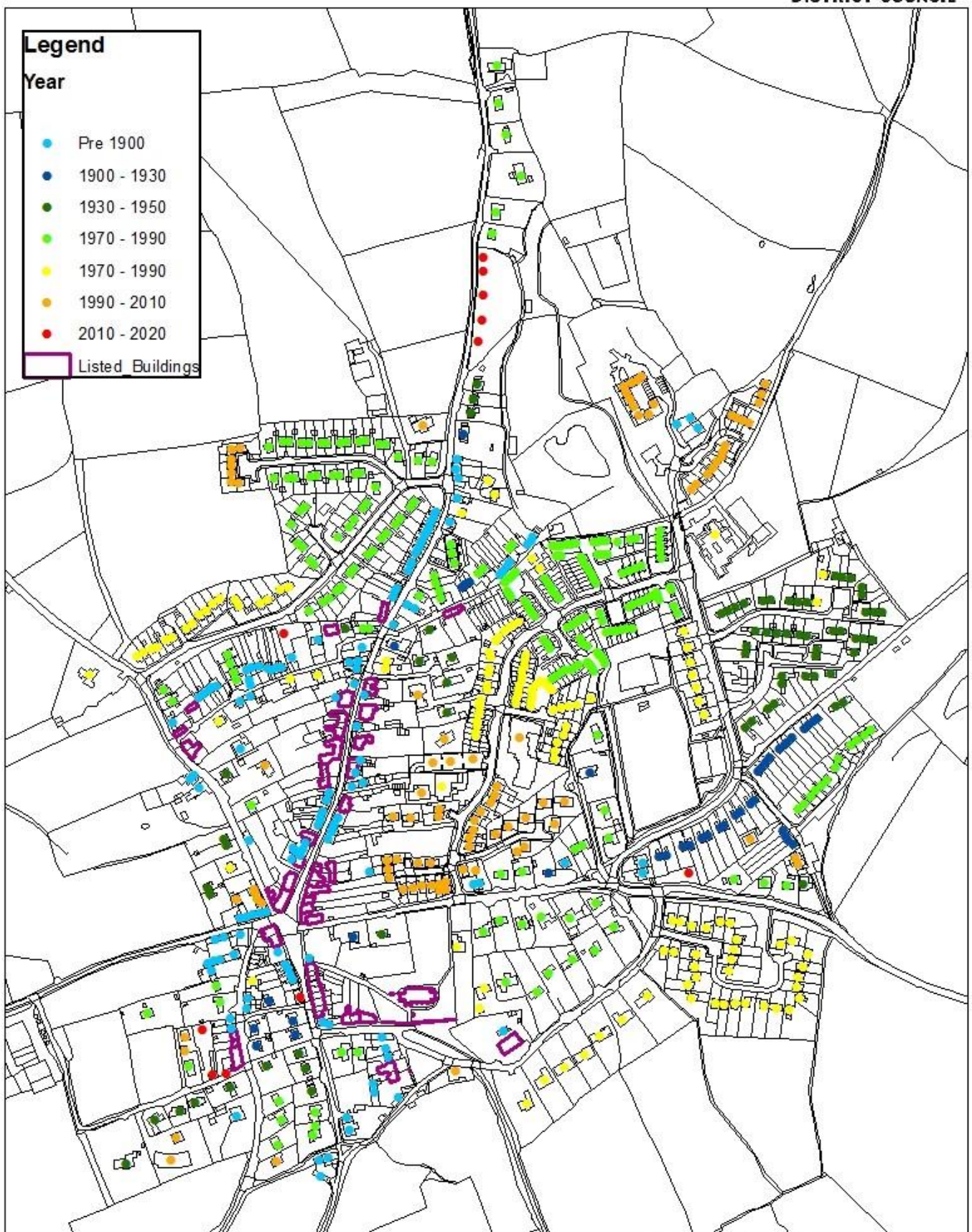
Map 1 – Conservation Area



How the Settlement Pattern Has Evolved over Time

Settlement in the Parish over time has been greatly influenced by topography. The hilly terrain covered in forest giving way to the marshy flood plains of the rivers Culm and Exe. There is evidence of a bronze age enclosure on the hill above the Village. Manors and Bartons were established in clearings, pre-Conquest, as evidenced by the scatter of listed farmsteads today. Silverton Village formed part of a Royal Manor, the property of Edward the Confessor passing to the Norman conqueror, William, in 1066. It was held by Kings of England for about 400 years. Its status was enhanced by its location at a crossroads on the turnpike and coaching route northwards from Exeter to Tiverton. The Village became a Borough in 1321 in the Silverton (later Hayridge) Hundred, holding a weekly market and two Fairs annually. The mid-19th C saw the coming of the railway in both the Exe and Culm valleys, Silverton having a station at Ellerhayes and another at Burn, both since closed. At about that time a new road bypassing the Village was driven up the Exe valley to cross the river at Bickleigh. At the turn of the 19th C the Village obtained a piped water supply in place of its wells, and electricity in place of its candles. A natural gas supply was to follow from 1980s onwards.

The need for housing after WWI prompted the local authority to build estates on level land between Park and Coach Roads. This was followed after WWII by further estates either side of Coach Road and with infill in the Village. Private estates were added on the north side of the Village and by extension of the new Wyndham Road southward over the Meads fields.

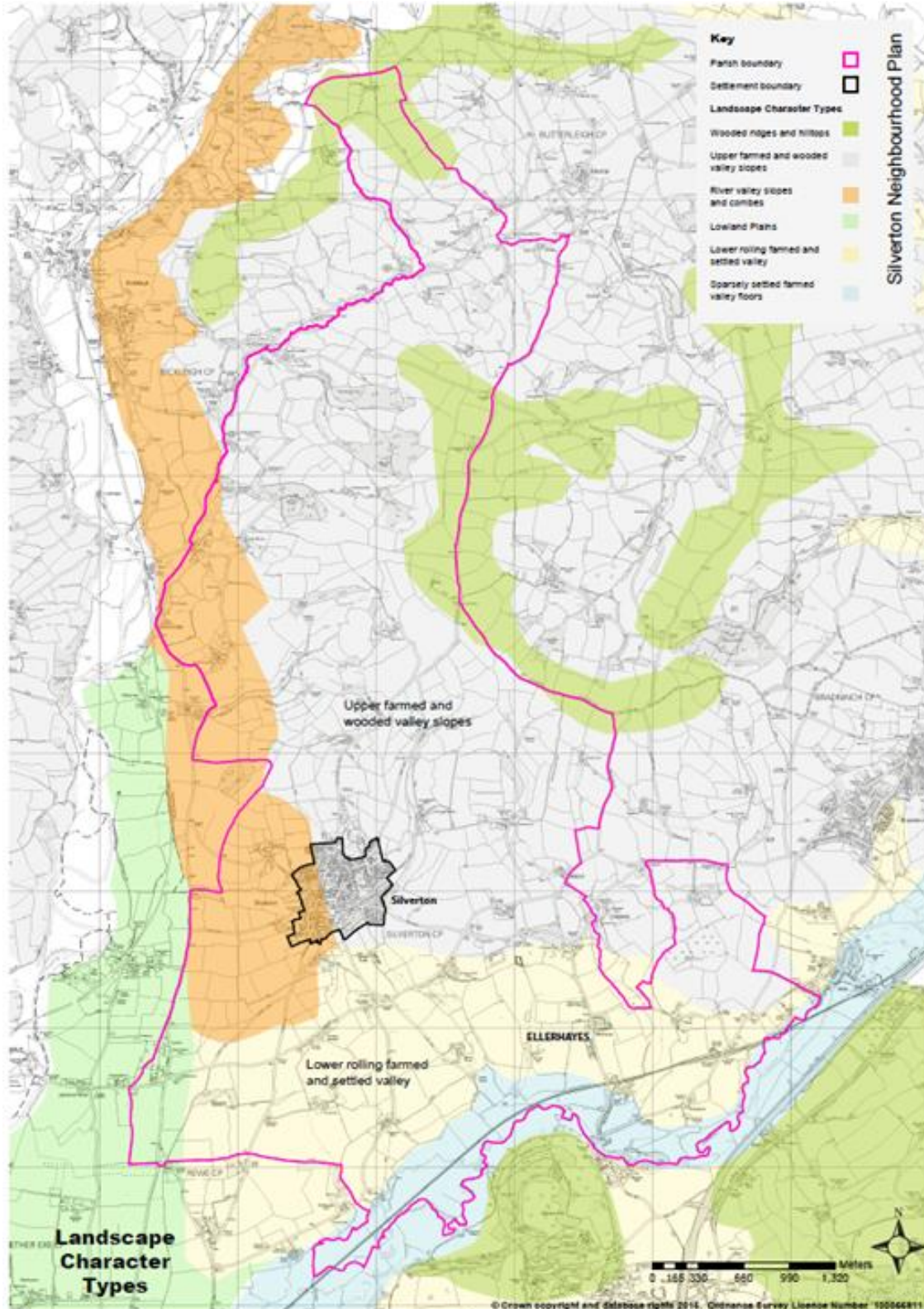


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The Character of the Landscape

The Parish comprises three main landscape areas (see Map 3) for which management guidelines have been set out by MDDC. The landscape of the Parish is governed by the underlying geology of this part of the County, the northern part lying on Upper Carboniferous formations and the southern part on Permian Basalt Bressicas, sandstones and mudstones. Volcanic outcrops occur to the west and south of the Parish providing a supply of building stone. The landscape character is therefore of rolling hills and valleys which are farmed. The small valleys are mostly wooded and there are plenty of natural broadleaved copses scattered throughout the Parish.

Map 3 - Landscape Character Types



Distinctive Features that May Be Affected by Development

Landscape Types and Landmarks

Parish

The ridge of hills, including Christ Cross, running towards Bradninch and the coombes from them.

The valleys of the Exe, Culm and Burn rivers.

The hillsides above the Village (mostly Aishe Farm)

Rolling pasture land to south and west of the Village.

Tower of St Mary's Church.

Important hedgerows and trees

Devon banks to main approach roads to the Village and throughout the Parish.

Village

The Silverton oak (in the Rec circa 1400)

The avenue of lime trees on The Berry.

The oak at junction of School and Coach Roads.

The Jubilee copper beech at junction of Exeter and Newcourt Roads

The copper beech in the garden at Wayside

The ancient yew tree in the churchyard circa 500

Watercourses

The leat through High St and Fore St.

The (unnamed) stream from Aishe Farm through the village passing the Rec. (a flood risk per EA)

The Heal-eye stream through Lily Lake.

Protected Habitats

There are no sites which are protected though it is hoped that the Exe Valley will be designated an Area of Natural Beauty (AONB).

Ancient Woodland (AW)

- Land west of Southcombe

County Wildlife Sites (CWS)

- Land north of Land Farm

- Land south west of Watery Lane

- Land west of Ellerhayes bridge

(See Conservation Area plans)

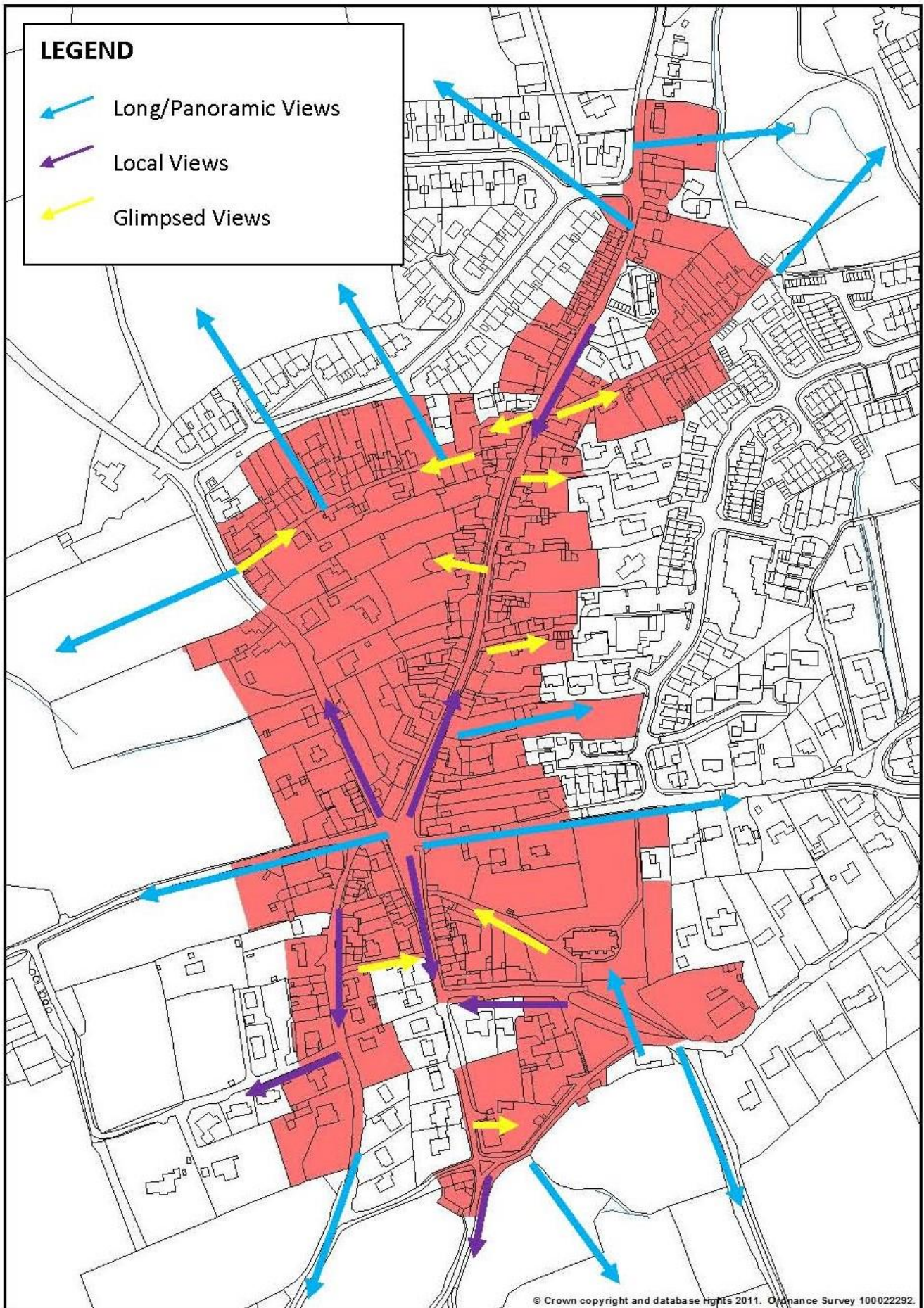
Important Views

Panoramic views from Christ Cross include those to the north-east towards Butterleigh over the Culm valley, west over the Exe valley and to the south towards Dawlish and the sea.

Within the Village, views from the School over the stew pond, from Silverdale westwards to Dartmoor and from the Berry southwards over farmland towards Killerton Clump. (See Map 4)

Existing important views into and out of the village should be conserved (see map below)

Map 4 - Village Views



The Character of the Built Environment

The Village

Silverton's central pattern of medieval streets was extended in the 20th century with housing developments to the north-west, the east and the south-east of the village. There was also building on orchard and pasture plots within the Village. These houses, together with some new 21st century ones, reflect the times in which they were built rather than the vernacular styles of the older buildings. In the village as a whole, therefore, there is a considerable mix of building styles. In Ellerhayes, the only other settlement of any size in the Parish, the oldest houses were built in 1900, with additions later in the 20th century.

The Conservation Area of Silverton covers the ancient streets and buildings that give the village its historic character, and we are indebted to Mid Devon District Council for their designations and descriptions of the different parts of the Area, Map 1.

Fore Street and High Street run north from the **Square** following the old route from Exeter to Tiverton. These are narrow streets, barely passable by two vehicles, with an ancient leat running down the west side. In them can be found houses dating from medieval times, built of stone and rendered cob, with thatched roofs. A superb example is Church House (Grade II) at the southern end of Fore Street. Other cob cottages have slate roofs to replace thatch damaged by fire. There are also 19thC brick-built cottages, the brick-built Methodist Church opened 1916, some larger houses, and a number of 20th century infill buildings of various types.

King Street and Parsonage Lane, both branching off High Street and narrower still, have a similar mix of houses. King Street is characterised by old cob and thatched cottages with garden frontages next to 20th century houses, with a row of Council-built bungalows at right-angles to the lane. Housing in Parsonage Lane is mainly in terraces, of rendered cob or brick-built, with two Grade II listed houses, again mixed together with houses and cottages built from the 1930s onward.

Tiverton Road and Exeter Road on the western edge of the village are more open in character with some large houses and views over farmland. Boundary walls and hedges are characteristic. Exeter Road has a terrace of old cob and thatch cottages ending at the former Three Tuns public house, while in Tiverton Road there is a group of cob cottages next to a pair of three-storey 1960s houses.

The Square is at the NS/EW cross-roads of the village. It has the village shop in a terrace of Edwardian brick-built, slate-roofed houses, the war-memorial, and the former Richards Endowed School for Boys, founded in 1724, built of local red sandstone, characteristic of many walls and buildings in the area.

Newcourt Road runs south from the Square past a terrace of rendered 19th century cottages on the east side down to Newcourt Farmhouse, 1863, built of local red sandstone.

On the west side of the road, not in the Conservation area, is a mix of houses and bungalows built between 1930 and 2015.

Church Road turns off Newcourt Road with a high pavement fronting a terrace of Georgian and early-Victorian houses, cream rendered. On the south side and not in the Conservation area, are two 20th century bungalows. Church Road leads on to the red sandstone wall of the churchyard and the Berry.

The Berry is probably the oldest part of the village settlement, its open grass mound perhaps once fortified as the origin of its name 'burgh' suggests. Above it stands the **Church** (Grade I) mainly 15th century, but dating back to the 13th century.

On the west side of the Berry is a terrace of low cob-cottages, fronted by gardens, with a red sandstone barn on the lane below (converted to residential). South of the Berry is a single-storey modern barn conversion with a rendered outside wall. To the east of the Berry is Nettleworth House (Grade II), an imposing early 19th century house of rendered cob and stone, once a private girls' school.

Other Areas of the Village

Silverdale, Applemead and Exe View lie on the north-west side of the village. Silverdale was built in the late 1960s and consists of 49 brick-built bungalows with tiled roofs, nine of which are detached and the rest semi-detached. All the bungalows have good-sized gardens and are well-spaced on a wide road. Applemead, a continuation of Silverdale, was built in the 1970s with twelve semi-detached bungalows and twelve semi-detached houses of brick with wood fascia, all placed so as not to obscure views from Silverdale.

Exe View, a development of six affordable homes, built in 2010, is the most recent addition to this part of the village.

Butterleigh Road to the north had 6 very modern, two storey gated houses built in 2015.

School Road, Coach Road and Wyndham Road, to the east of the village, have a mixture of houses, many built from the 1930s onward, although there are two semi-detached Victorian cottages in School Road, and the old Victorian school now divided into two houses at the entrance to Coach Road. The lower section of School Road is characterised by modern bungalows set back from the road. Coach Road has local authority houses built in the 1930s with gardens and off-road parking and detached brick-built bungalows with tiled roofs. Above these is a block of local authority built flats, tile hung and partially rendered, with a row of terraced houses beyond of the same construction. Opposite is the village Primary School, built in 1975. Prispfen House is a modern development on the Old Rectory site with some 32 apartments in gated, communal grounds, and a converted stable block. Just above Prispfen House is a development of block-built, rendered houses from the the early 2000s.

Wyndham Road, linking Coach Road and School Road, has a mix of local authority built semi-detached, terraced houses and bungalows with some blocks of garages. Nearer School Road there are private detached and semi-detached houses with garages, and a block of brick-built retirement flats, all built from the 1970s to the 1990s. St Anne's Close, a development of large, brick-built modern houses situated opposite St Mary's View, a group of rendered houses, both built in the early 2000s.

Livingshayes Lane, Park Close, Oak Close and Hillcrest all turn off Coach Road. Livingshayes Lane has a terrace of red-brick houses c.1930s at its entrance and leads to a large Georgian farmhouse with several barn conversions. Oak Close and Hillcrest are estates of houses and bungalows built by the Local Authority in the 1950s

Church Road, in its lower section, linking the Berry with Park Road, is an area of large detached houses and bungalows, built since the 1950s, set back from the road with extensive gardens.

Hederman Close, off Church Road, is a Wimpey development of rendered detached houses built in the 1970s, with a pleasant central green space.

Park Road runs out of the Village towards Ellerhayes and has, on its north side, four large detached bungalows, plus a smaller infill one built (2021)

Ellerhayes owes its existence to the paper mill, now demolished. All the houses built before 1980 were for the employees of the mill. Those built from the 1900s, Lower Ellerhayes, are terraced houses of red brick with timber gables and large gardens. Most of the houses in Upper Ellerhayes, on the north side of the through road, were completed in 1947. In the late 1980s a private housing development was built facing the original houses.

Rest of the Parish

The remaining parts of the Parish are rural with agriculture dominating.

The pattern of settlement is demonstrated by the scatter of listed farmhouses throughout the Parish. In the Burn valley – Great Dorweeke and Little Dorweeke with Burn Mill, and Leigh Barton above them.

In the hills above the Village – Great Pitt, Aishe, and Greenslinch farms.

On the lower farmed areas to the south – Yarde farm, Park Farm, Hayne House and Dunsmore.

Important Buildings

Protection of these buildings and how development should relate to them is referred to in policy DM25 in the Mid Devon Local Plan and policies BE1 & BE2 in the Neighbourhood Plan.

All these buildings can be identified in the map below, but as an example:

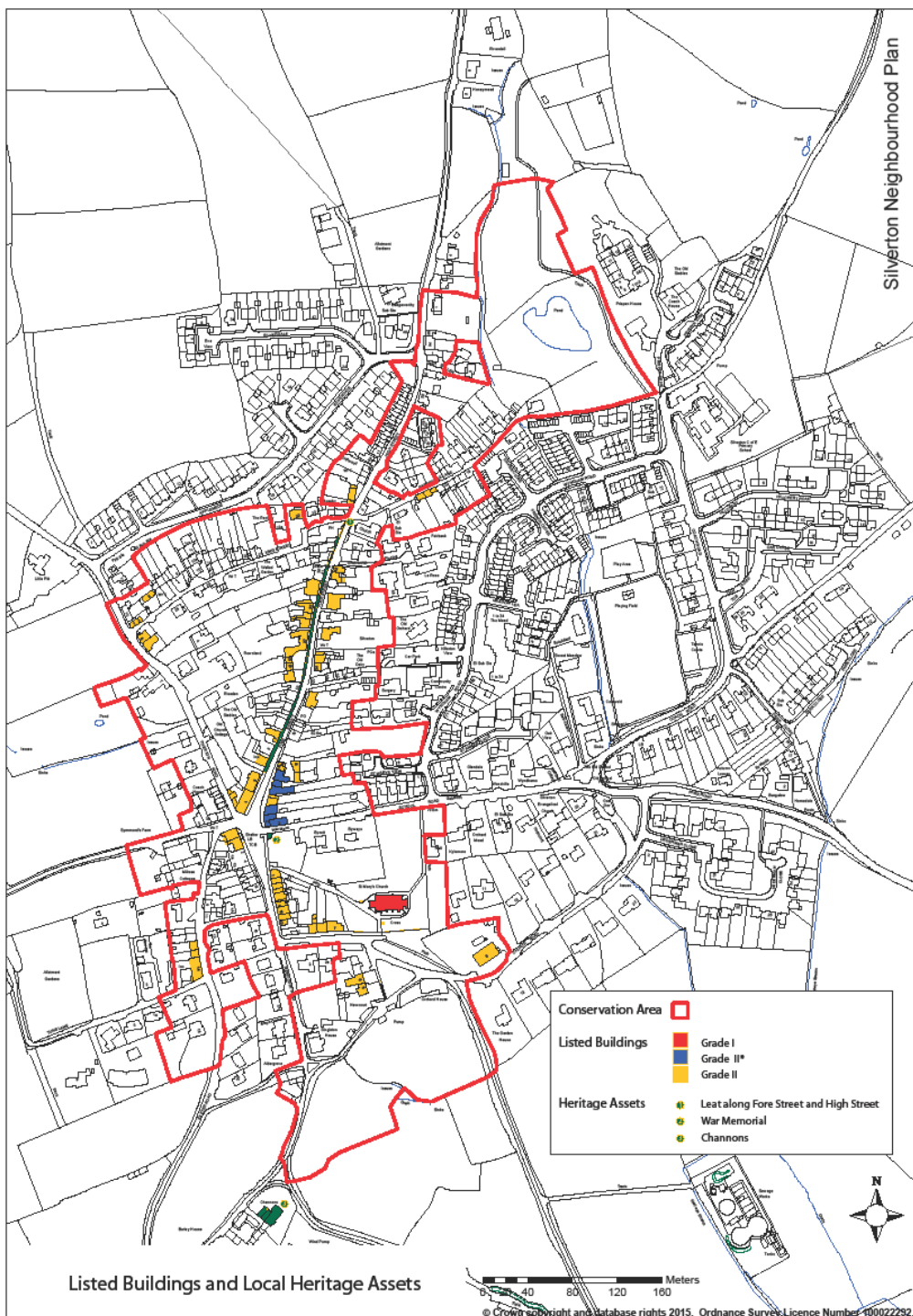
St Marys Church (listed Grade I)

Nettleworth House (Grade II)

Church House, Fore St (Grade II*)

2-14 Fore St – mediaeval hall houses with external chimneys (Grade II)

Map 5 - Listed Buildings



Landscaping and Street Trees

The Neighbourhood Plan policy EN03 refers to the need to protect and enhance these, for instance:

- The Berry together with the Churchyard, garden plots and the Little Rec form an important open area in the heart of the Village as a setting for the Church itself.
- The Berry contains an ancient avenue of lime trees, which needs to be maintained and managed
- The Rec in Coach Road is an important space in the modern Village, topped by the historic Silverton Oak.
- Tree group in Hederman Close.
- Oak at junction of School and Coach Roads.

Design Elements

- Designs which incorporate the maximum number of features to obtain Net Zero status will be encouraged.
- Layout - how buildings relate to one another, their scale, and size in relation to those around them.
- Detailing - the importance of smaller elements of buildings, windows and doors etc.
- Materials - the type of materials used for walls, roofs, surface claddings and treatments (to be sourced from sustainable natural materials wherever possible).

The following is designed to protect and enhance the Village's positive features and ensure that future development respects its distinctiveness.

Size and Scale

All new development (including extensions) should reflect the design, height, materials and detail of existing buildings, as well as the alignment of the street frontage. New buildings should be of a massing appropriate to the size of the plot and neighbouring buildings which they should not overshadow or dominate.

New housing development on any one site should introduce different styles and designs to avoid a standardised appearance.

New development should not be prominent in scale, visually dominate or significantly change the character of the Village.

Gated communities would be discouraged as inappropriate to the character of the Parish.

Conversion or extension of farm buildings should be undertaken sensitively to preserve the vernacular style of local buildings.

Roofs

Roofs should be of a medium pitch 35-45 degrees of slate or tile.

Garden Development

Silverton and Ellerhayes have a number of houses with large mature gardens. This means that there is sometimes pressure for the development of back gardens.

Previous back garden developments have met with resistance from the local community because of their detrimental impact on the character of the area. They may cause a loss of amenities to existing properties, including loss of privacy, natural light, visual intrusion, noise disturbance, reduced space, loss of car parking and mature vegetation.

Consequently, all applications for back garden development should be handled sensitively and dealt with on their merits. Setting out criteria to enable Councils to come to a fair conclusion, may be helpful in determining the viability of an application and whether or not a proposed development would unduly upset the streetscape.

Where back garden developments are proposed special regard must be paid to:

- 1) The size and height of the proposal.
- 2) The privacy and outlook of existing dwellings and their gardens.

3) Access arrangements. If significant nuisance is likely to be caused to the amenity of neighbouring property, it should not be permitted.

4) The layout, scale and form of the development visible from the street should be compatible with the rest of the streetscape.

Services

All services should be placed underground where possible.

All new building should be to the highest environmental standard with regard to sustainability, insulation, carbon emission, flood prevention (SUDS) Air or ground source heat pumps should be used and photo voltaic cell electricity generation provided by use of suitable roof slopes. Charging points for EVs should be included.

Car parking

All new development should make provision for off road car parking. Two car spaces per dwelling, to include electric charging would be encouraged to enable all cars parked at the property to be charged overnight. A development of 5 houses or more should also have dedicated visitor parking spaces. Conversion of existing garages will be resisted.

Boundary Hedging and Fencing

Existing hedges, banks and ditches should be conserved, especially along the lanes. New entrances to houses should avoid damage to existing hedges, banks and ditches. New boundaries between properties should, where possible, be created by hedges planted with local species such as hawthorn, beech, holly and yew, not coniferous species. Panelled or close boarded fencing should be avoided.

Village Views

Existing important views in to and out of the Village, see Conservation Area Map 4 above, should be conserved.

Recommendations

- Settlements in the Parish should be contained within existing development envelopes to prevent sprawl out into the countryside. This should also apply to hamlets and farmsteads.
- Isolated rural buildings should not be the nucleus for further expansion.
- Buildings required for agricultural purposes and/or activities should be sensitively sited with due regard for their impact on the rural environment. Removal should be considered when redundant.