

Lydford



Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Dartmoor National Park Authority January 2011

Conservation Areas were introduced through the *Civic Amenities Act 1967*. Section 69 (1) (a) of the Act gives the definition of a Conservation Area as:

‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’

There are now over 9,000 Conservation Areas nation-wide. Local Planning Authorities are required to designate Conservation Areas, keep them under review, and if appropriate, designate further areas (Section 69 (2)). There are currently 23 Conservation Areas within Dartmoor National Park.

Designation brings certain duties to local planning authorities:

- ◆ to formulate and publish from time to time proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and submit them for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate (Section 71)
- ◆ in exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas (Section 72).

Conservation Area Character Appraisals aim to define and analyse the special interest which constitutes the character and appearance of a place. It is these qualities which warrant the designation of a Conservation Area.

An appraisal will provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for policies within the Local Development Framework and Development Management decisions. It can also form the groundwork for a subsequent **Conservation Area Management Plan**, which will contain defined issues, proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area. It is also intended that the document will be helpful to those involved in drawing up Enhancement Projects and Village Design Statements within the National Park area.

The main function of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal is to enable Dartmoor National Park Authority and the community to relate planning proposals to the Conservation Area.

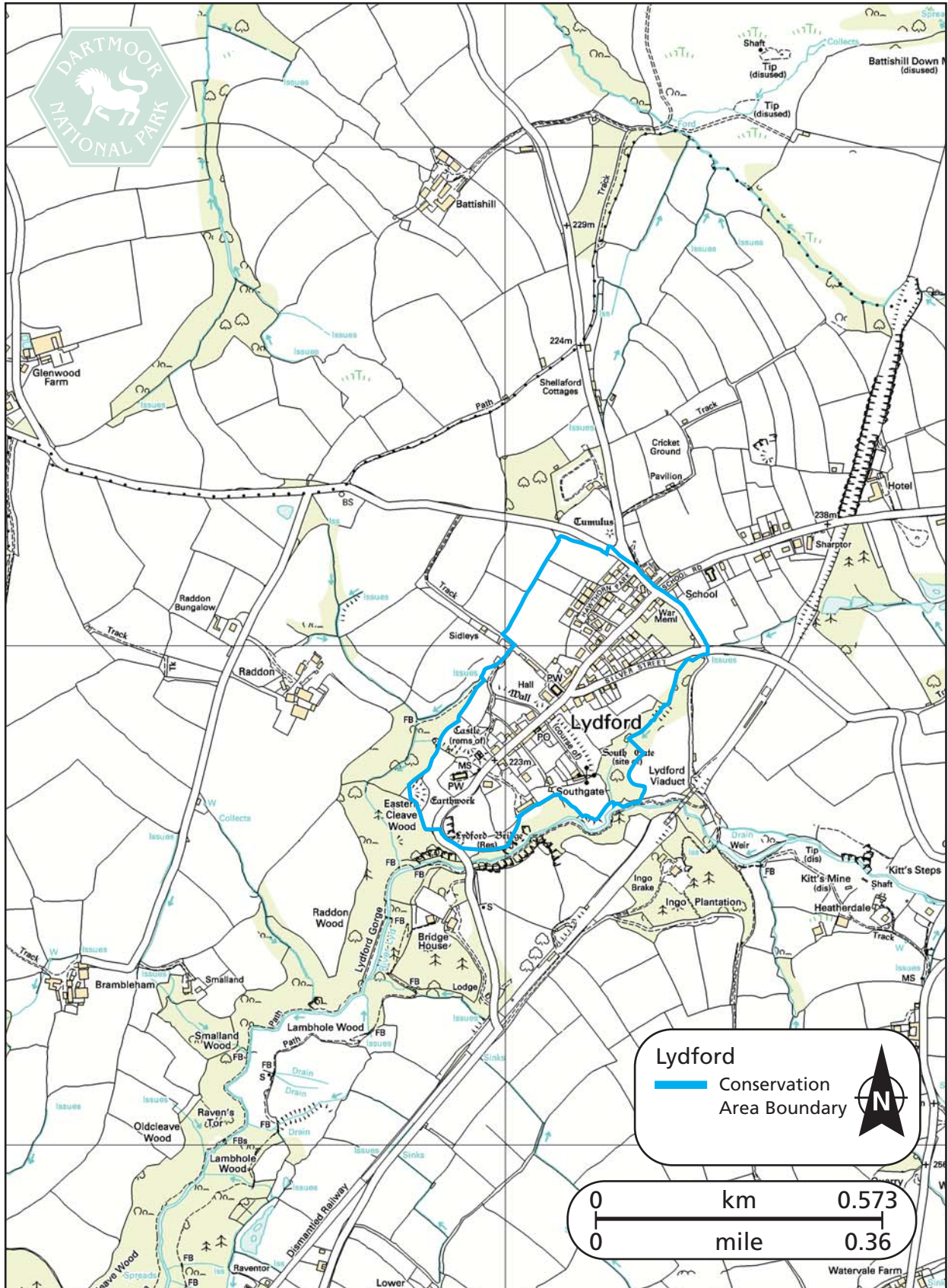
Defining the character of an area is not a straightforward exercise and it is not always possible to reach a truly objective view. The statement of character and appearance in this appraisal is based on various detailed methods of analysis recommended by English Heritage. A range of qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between buildings and open spaces. However, character appraisals are not intended to be fully comprehensive and any omission does not imply that something is of no interest.

This Character Appraisal has benefited from several public consultations which have taken place through the Parish Council.

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Map 1 Conservation Area Location



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Introduction

Lydford is a small village in West Devon District, next to the River Lyd where it rushes off the northwest edge of Dartmoor's high moorland mass. It lies about halfway between Okehampton (9 miles north) and Tavistock (7 miles south), near the main road (now the A386) that links them. In the company of such sizable and important historic towns, and in a setting that W G Hoskins described as bleak, Lydford's relative smallness appears entirely as might be expected. But in reality it belies the significance the settlement originally had, when its status far exceeded that of its now larger neighbours.

The Conservation Area was originally designated in the settlement in October 1971 and extended in August 1993 following a comprehensive review. Based on the findings of this Character Appraisal no further changes to its boundary were considered appropriate.

1. Village History

Although various pottery finds, and the dedication of the Church to a 6th century Welsh missionary, suggest the existence of an early post-Roman or Dark Age settlement at Lydford, it was its somewhat later, but still early, foundation as a royal Saxon burh that most influenced the settlement's early development – and why today the village represents such an outstanding archaeological resource.

Lydford is generally accepted as being the location of one of the four burhs (or defended settlements) established in Devon around the beginning of the 10th century. Named 'Hlidan' in a document compiled in about AD 919 called the *Burghal Hidage*, it ranked alongside Exeter, Barnstaple and Totnes in strategic importance; for the burhs were part of a network of about thirty sites throughout the Saxon kingdom of Wessex, whose primary purpose was to act as strongholds in defence against Viking raids. The Danish Vikings did in fact raid Lydford in 997, doubtless in the knowledge that a mint producing coins of locally mined silver began operating here in the reign of King Edgar (c. AD 973 – 975)

At the time of the Norman Conquest, Lydford, Exeter, Barnstaple and Totnes were still the chief settlements in Devon, being the only towns in the County to possess the status of borough. Twenty years on, however, the Domesday Book records an infant new town joining their ranks – not far distant from Lydford at Okehampton, where the influential Sheriff of Devon, Baldwin, had built a castle and made it his chief residence. Much the same happened at Launceston as well, with the Count of Montain building a castle and establishing a new settlement just opposite the old. A Royal mint was started here too in 1066, taking the place, it seems, of the one at Lydford, which closed during the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042 -1066), probably around 1050.

By all accounts it seems it was during the late Saxon and early Norman periods, from the 10th century through to the 12th, that Lydford's fortunes were at their peak, but from being possibly the third largest town in Devon to be recorded in Domesday (after Exeter and Totnes), within a century or so it had lost much of its influence, trade and status – most of it taken by its neighbouring rivals; Okehampton, Tavistock and

Launceston. Henry I authorised the monks of Tavistock to hold a market there in about 1105 (which was soon to flourish), followed by a fair in 1116, and with Okehampton's market developing too (as indeed was Launceston's), the recognition Lydford once had of being the commercial focus for the region between Dartmoor and the River Tamar quickly waned. Despite attempts to stem Lydford's failing fortunes: by the Crown, through the building of the Stannary Gaol in 1195, and in the same year granting an annual allowance to help regenerate its market, and by the burgesses, through the formation in 1180 of a protective merchant's guild (for which they were heavily fined), events elsewhere proved more decisive. One of the abbots of Tavistock was developing the hamlet at his gate into an urban community, with burgesses first appearing in 1185, just when the tin trade was rapidly expanding. Launceston's borough status was confirmed in 1201, while the manor of Lydford itself was given to the Earl of the County in 1239 (along with the Dartmoor Forest and the Castle) and so become part of the Duchy of Cornwall in 1337. Indeed, in 1390 the King's receivers in Devon ordered that the lead from the roof of Lydford's gaol should be used to repair Cornish castles. And as if to seal Lydford's steady decline, Okehampton's market was revived by the Crown in 1238.

In 1660 Lydford was described by Dean Milles as a 'town now dwindled into a mean and miserable village consisting of about 20 houses'. Although this number was more than in many of the villages that fringed the Moor, it nevertheless represented less than a third of the burgesses mentioned in the Domesday Book. Its appearance had worsened, it seems, by 1802, when an observer (Britton) described the settlement as 'a poor decayed village with a few ragged cottages', while in 1840 'the former noted township' was recorded by Rachel Evans as being a 'ruined village'.

The arrest of Lydford's decline, if not its actual revival, must be owed in no small part to the arrival of the railways; first from Plymouth and Tavistock in 1865, and then from Exeter and Okehampton in 1874. Their shared station was about a mile from the village at the south end of Lydford Gorge; the natural beauty spot that had now been made easily accessible to the Victorian traveller.

The coming of the railways did not, however, result in a lot of new building within the village, just a few middle-class houses beyond the War Memorial on the road to the Dartmoor Inn and close to the station. Rather, their coming helped stem the tide of Lydford's decline, aided perhaps by the mining activity in the area about the time of their arrival. e.g. at Kitts, Florence and Mary Emma mines.

Today, as in Victorian times, Lydford's mainstay is its attraction to visitors, who continue to be drawn not only to the Gorge, but also to the monuments, the church and the pub in the village itself.

2. Settlement Plan

Although Lydford's earliest beginnings as a settlement are somewhat uncertain, there is little doubt that its plan form today dates from the time it was established as a burh in the late 9th or early 10th century, and reflects the pattern of its early, extra-mural, expansion which the Domesday Book recorded as being well established – so much so that more people were living outside the borough in 1086 than were living within.

The Saxon burh was entirely enclosed by defensive ramparts, not only cutting off the triangular spur on which it stands, but also alongside the steep ravines that create the spur and are a natural barrier in themselves. The NE rampart across the neck of the spur was by far the most massive and remains a major feature in the village today. The ramparts around the rest of the circuit, however, were much less pronounced and as a result have largely disappeared or have become hedgebanks. Still visible beyond the NE rampart, however, and running more or less parallel to it (on a line that includes the boundary between Nicholls Hall and the chapel beside it) are the remnants of what is thought to have been an outer defensive bank.

Still characterising the village are the single, spinal road and the lanes at right angles to it that gave access to the defences and to buildings behind those on the main street frontage. Long narrow (burgage) plots are also known to have extended back from the main street, although most of their boundaries are no longer visible above ground, probably due to the lack of subsequent development which might otherwise have required their retention. It seems unlikely, however, that the spinal road was a through-route originally, as a gateway at the western tip of the spur would have seriously weakened defences. Tradition has it that an entrance existed near Southgate Cottages, and although it, too, is unlikely to have been an original feature, its existence, and indeed its possibly early creation, is supported by its convenience to a ford across the River Lyd (that was probably in use before the down-stream bridge was constructed) and a mill just a little way upstream, and by the excavated evidence of lanes existing in the vicinity of Southgate Cottages.

As well as recording twenty-eight burgesses within the enclosed part of the borough, the Domesday Book also mentions forty houses being 'laid waste' since 1066 to make way, it is thought, for the construction of the Norman ringwork. It could be speculated that some of the forty displaced are among the forty-one burgesses recorded as being outside the burgh at the time, but what this latter figure does confirm is Lydford's early expansion, in Norman times if not Saxon, probably along Silver Street as well as the main street, and possibly as far as the junction where the War Memorial stands today. Indeed, beyond this junction, in the direction of the Dartmoor Inn, there is a strong suggestion in the field patterns that this was an area of medieval strip fields. It seems likely therefore, that the medieval settlement at Lydford spread a considerable distance beyond its Saxon focus.

While there are no spaces within the settlement that create a focus for its plan (such as a market place or green), the dominating elements are undoubtedly the medieval sites and structures that occupy the burh's southwest quarter. Possibly pre-dating the burh's foundation by three

centuries or more is the site of St Petrock's Church, which may have been a focus for early Christian activity. Although most of the fabric of the church is 15th century, parts of it date from the 13th century when the list of Rectors was started (in 1237) and when the Bishop of Exeter twice dedicated the church, once in about 1250, but again in 1261, possibly following improvements. Much older than its structure, however, is the church's tub-shaped font, being one of only three of its type in Devon and thought to be pre-Norman.

The first Norman structure to be built within the borough was the castle or ringwork in the far west corner, shortly after the Conquest in the late 1060s. If its construction did involve the removal of the forty houses 'laid waste' by the time the Domesday Book was compiled, it would seem that, unlike in recent times, the buildings occupying the Saxon burgh were also clustered to the west of the site of the church and not only to the east. The ringwork itself was occupied only briefly, however, being abandoned in the following century, probably before the construction of the new castle on the other side of the church. The first structure here, built in 1195, was an immensely strong stonework tower. However, its purpose was not defensive; rather it was to serve as a courtroom and prison, which was essential to Lydford's jurisdiction over the Devon Stannaries. About a century later there was a significant second phase of building work, which involved demolishing part of the original tower; adding two more storeys; earthing up the sides of the original section to create the appearance of a mound (or motte), and finally, creating a yard (or bailey) to its north to complete the outward appearance of a typical, defensive, motte and bailey castle. Why this was sought is not clear, but certainly it would have reinforced the Court's grim reputation and the notoriety of 'Lydford Law'.

A small enclosure beside the castle bailey and behind the Castle Inn was nevertheless created to serve a practical purpose. Called the Pound, it was integral to the control of grazing across the Royal Forest, being part of a system known to have been operating in the mid-1300s that involved an annual search (or 'drift') for cattle whose grazing on the moor was unlawful. There were four other Pounds, one in each quarter of the Forest, but the one at Lydford served as the final holding place for beasts whose owners could not be found. Known as 'estrays', the animals were forfeited if not claimed. (The field to the north of the Pound may have also had an associated use, as it is called the 'Pound Plot' in the tithe apportionment.)

No other buildings in Lydford are as ancient as the castle, or indeed the church, and those of possibly late medieval age that survived till the 1840s have since disappeared (including the rectory that stood opposite the castle, whose description in an early 17th century inventory suggests was an open-hall house). Today, other than possibly the Castle Inn, all the standing buildings appear to have been built no earlier than the late 18th century, most, it would seem, on sites that were previously built on. This is probably true also of many of the buildings constructed in the second half of the 20th century, which have filled most of the gaps between the War Memorial and the church. Other than the cul-de-sac development at Hawthorn Park, however, the historic plan form of the settlement remains remarkably unchanged.

Map 2 Tithe Map 1846



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Note: (not reproduced to scale)

Historical Footnote:

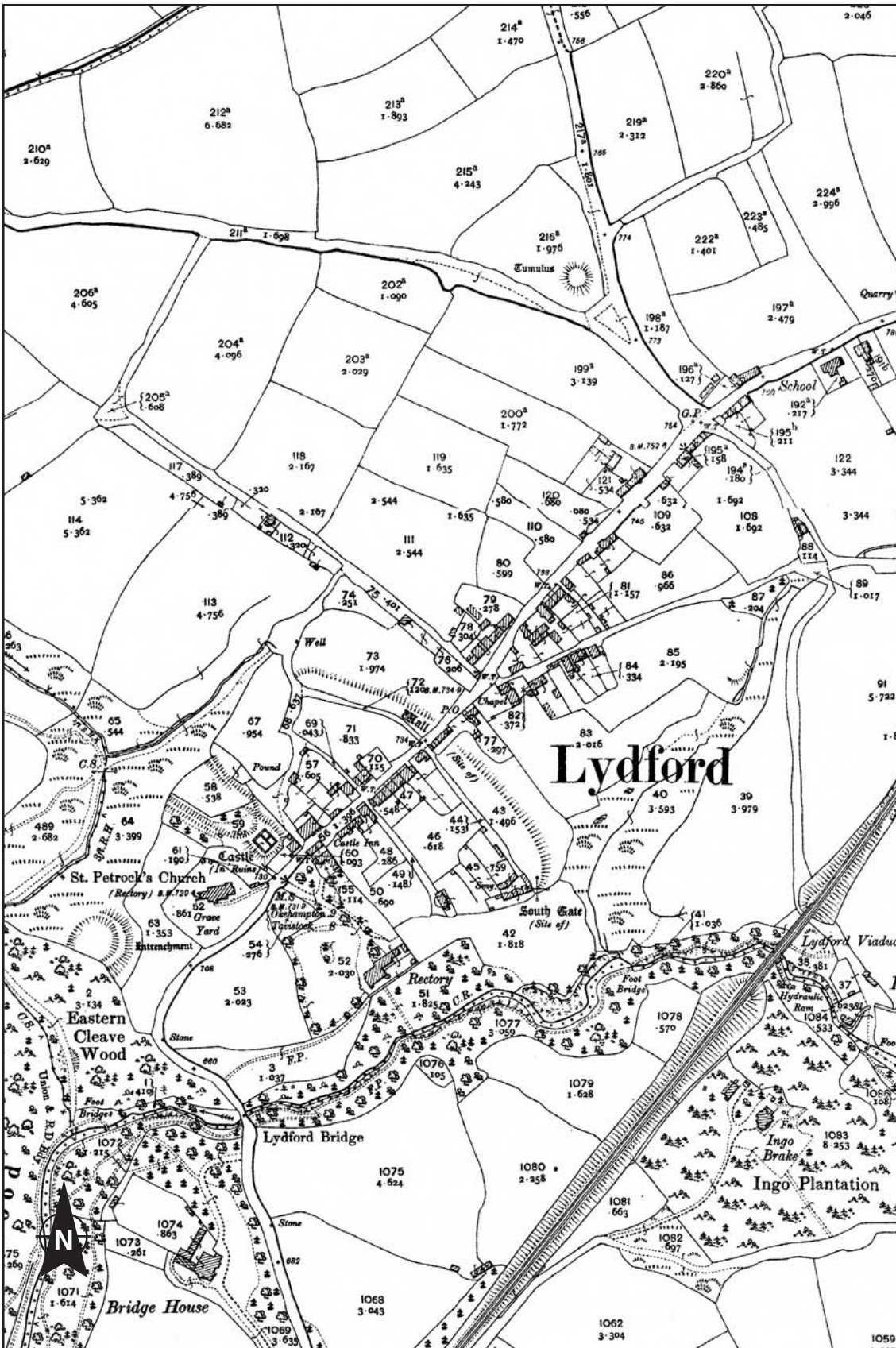
The tithe system provided the traditional means of supporting the clergy in England for many centuries. However, over time abuse of the system led to the *Tithe Commutation Act 1836* which empowered the newly formed Tithe Commission to commute tithes paid 'in kind' to an annual money payment. A Commutation Agreement required the creation of a large scale Map showing each plot of land in the tithe district and an accompanying Apportionment listing relevant details. The *Tithe Act 1936* provided for the gradual redemption of all tithes by the end of the century.

Map 3 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1884



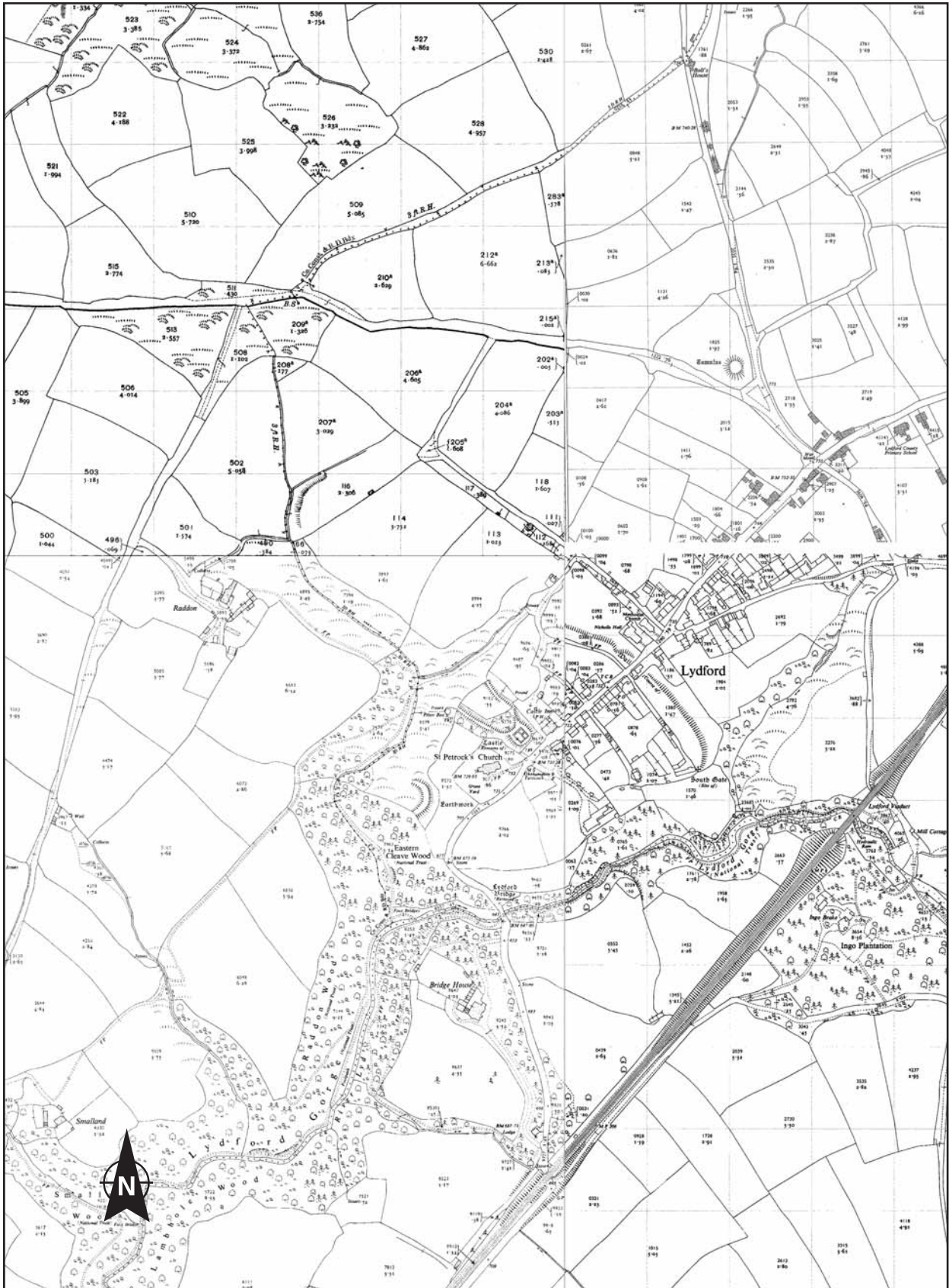
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Map 4 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1906



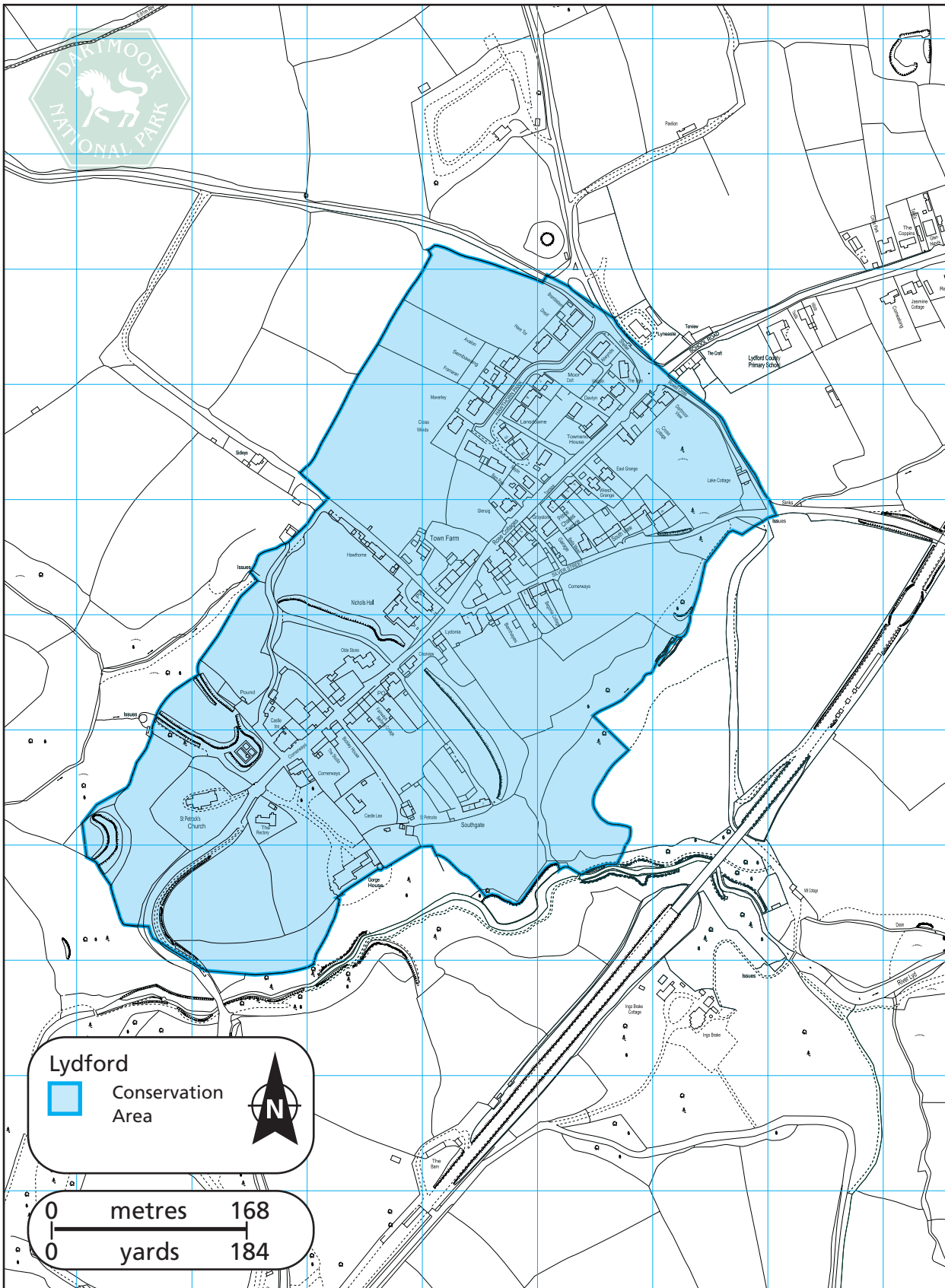
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Tree Survey: Lydford Conservation Area



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Map 5 Conservation Area: Lydford Settlement



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3. Building Types, Materials and Styles

Despite Lydford's outstanding significance as an historic settlement, the historic buildings within it are quite modest in terms of their size and architectural treatment. Excluding the church and the castle, the most substantial building in the settlement – the former vicarage built in 1870 – is actually well hidden in its landscaped grounds, and in visual terms contributes little towards the Conservation Area's character. The houses that do are mostly much smaller, with only three having fronts more than three windows wide (at first floor), including the Castle Inn, Town Farm and Townend House, which have long and low proportions typical of older Dartmoor farmhouses. The two- and three-window houses are otherwise dominant, being either detached or grouped in one of two terraces. That they are nearly all set back from the road behind fairly small front gardens is typical of their mainly 19th century age, and creates the appearance of an essentially domestic, rural village [Figure 1 below].



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Figure 1 Houses set back behind small front gardens

As the tithe map shows, there were nearly as many outbuildings as houses in the village around 1840, and although a few have since been demolished and the larger ones converted to homes, a great many of those too small to be converted have nevertheless survived with much of their original character intact. While of interest in itself that so many existed, their survival today makes a significant contribution towards Lydford's local distinctiveness as well as its historic and visual character [Figures 2 and 3 page 15].

The houses are generally of simple design with little in the way of architectural embellishment. Traditional painted timber windows predominate, with vertical-sliding sashes as common a type as casements, although often not much larger in size [Figure 4 page 16]. These are

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Figure 2 Small outbuilding S of main street behind Lydonia

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Figure 3 Small outbuilding N of main street behind Castle House

mostly multi-paned (with 2 over 2 and sometimes 8 over 8 patterns) and create a more polite appearance compared to the casements which tend to be more vernacular in style – with those that fit flush in their frames in the traditional manner contributing most towards the Area’s genuine historic character [as in 1 Rose Cottages, Figure 20 page 26].



Figure 4 Vertical sliding Sashes

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Figure 5 Open fronted porch

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Entrance porches are a feature of several houses, most of them built in a manner that is locally distinctive, with an open front and a gabled (or sometimes hipped) roof [Figure 5 above]. Most later examples still have hips or gables but incorporate entrances to the side, while some of the most recent have lean-to roofs, which appear somewhat out of keeping. Quite distinctive to the village, however, are the glazed-roof verandas to the fronts of Townend House, the Castle Inn and the former Post Office and Tea Room, probably added during the early part of the 20th century [Figures 16 and 17 on page 24 show the first two].

Although thatched roofs were probably much more prevalent in the village in former times, slate is now the dominant traditional roofing material (the last thatched cottage survived until around the middle of the 20th century when it was replaced by the four houses known as Prince Charles Terrace). The use of alternative, non-traditional materials (such as concrete tiles) is limited mainly to dwellings built in the village in the mid-to-late 20th century, although the clay tiles used on the former vicarage stable block, which is prominently sited next to the car park, were introduced in 1876. While not traditional in appearance, they nevertheless possess qualities which make them visually attractive [Figure 6 page 17].

In terms of their form, nearly every historic roof in the village is characterised particularly by its parallel alignment with the street in front. But for the few that have been altered in the 20th century, their eaves are unbroken and their slopes uncluttered by dormer windows or rooflights which, historically, are not characteristic of the village. Adding interest and variety to the skyline are sturdy, granite stacks that survive in large numbers, while of local interest are the several stacks that rise not through the ridge (as is normal) but through the roof slope facing the

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Figure 6 The former Vicarage stable block

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Figure 7 Nicholls Hall

front [see house at right in Figure 1 page 14]. Two prominent roofs that are not aligned with the street are those of Nicholls Hall (1929) [Figure 7 above] and the Methodist Chapel beside it (1908) [Figure 12 page 20], which both have gables facing front. Whether by chance or design, the gables assert their presence in the street as if to heighten their significance as public buildings. The other public building nearby, the former Bible Christian Chapel, was built much earlier in a more domestic,



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Figure 8 The former Bible Christian Chapel



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Figure 9 Distinctive pattern of stonework

quite elegant, style and included what was probably the first example in the village of a fully hipped roof [Figure 8 above].

Reflecting a slightly more diverse local geology than is generally found around the Moor, Lydford's buildings are constructed from a mix of both rounded and flat-bedded stones which when combined produce a most attractive and distinctive pattern. Invariably, however, granite blocks are

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Figure 10 Rendered Houses in the main street

used to form quoins, sills and lintels [Figure 9 page 18]. The stonework is mostly exposed (on house elevations as well as outbuildings) and makes a very considerable contribution towards the visual harmony that persists throughout much of the village – especially along the main street between the car park and the junction at Town Farm. Historic buildings with rendered elevations are in the minority, being either roughcast as at the Castle Inn, or with a smooth finish which, on at least one house, is scribed with ashlar-lining [the left of the two rendered houses shown in Figure 10 above].

Slate hung elevations are rare indeed, the only obvious example being just visible from the main street, on the wing to the rear of the Bible Christian Chapel [Figure 11 page 20]. The historic use of brick is equally rare, being used rather late in the construction chimneystacks and door and window openings (as at Lydonia and the Fairways and Barberry Cottage pair [centre of Figure 1 page 14] and in a number of buttress additions at the Methodist Chapel [Figure 12 page 20].



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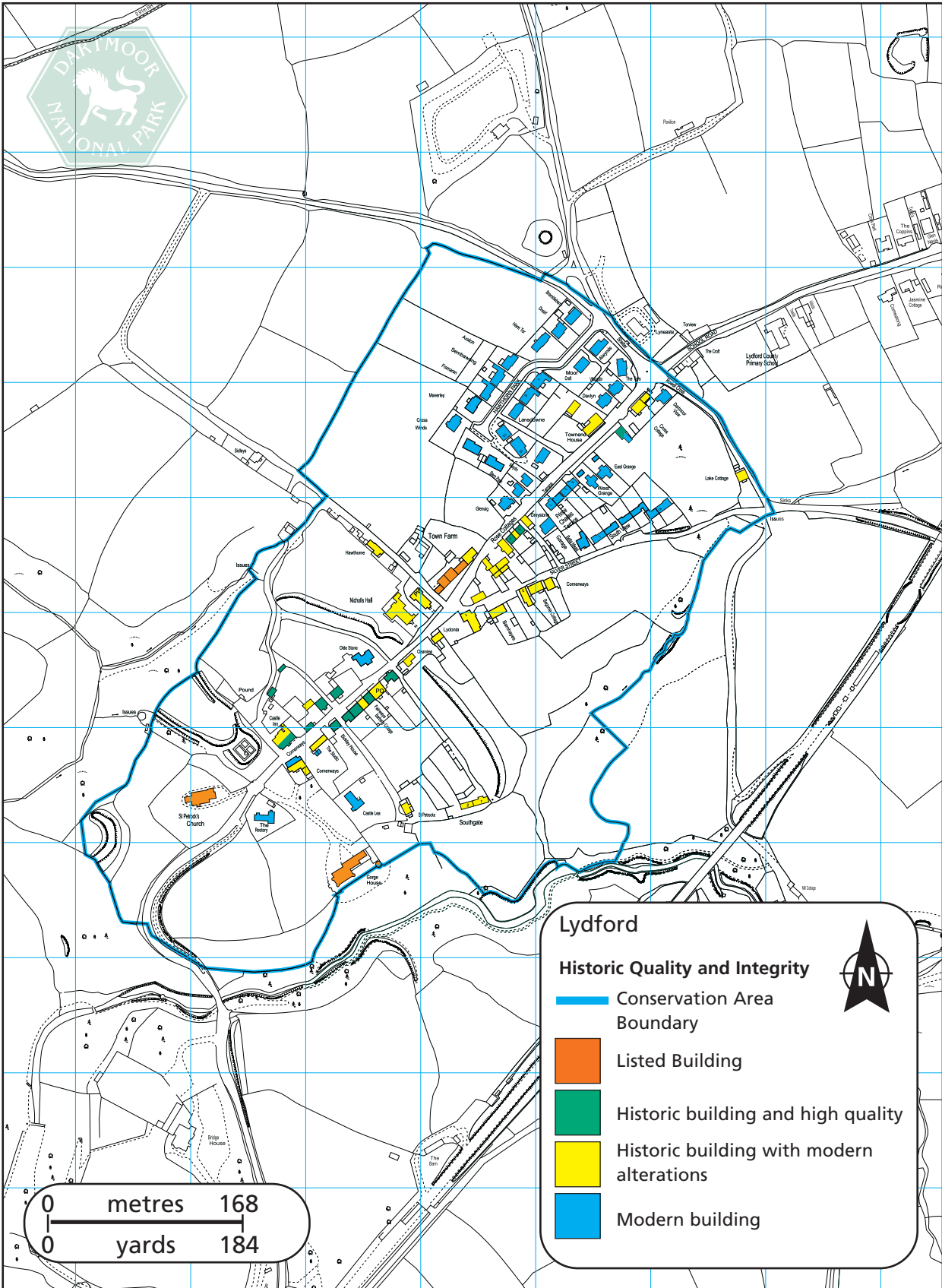
Figure 11 Rare example of slate-hanging



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Figure 12 The Methodist Chapel

Map 6 Conservation Area: Historic Quality and Integrity



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4. Key Buildings

Although the number of listed buildings in Lydford suggests a wealth of important buildings lining its streets, only three of the twenty-five located in the Conservation Area are actually buildings – the Church, the former Rectory and Town Farm (with Heathcot attached). A K6 telephone kiosk, and in the former rectory grounds, a gazebo (with terrace wall) and Archway, account for three others, while the remaining nineteen are all tombs and headstones located in the churchyard. In addition, the castle has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (along with most of the sites associated with the Saxon ramparts and the Norman ringwork).

The Castle: Scheduled Ancient Monument

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Although consolidated as a ruin, the castle remains a landmark in the landscape, and probably continues to suggest to the casual observer that it was built to serve a defensive or military purpose. Its contribution towards Lydford's character is great, particularly in terms of the quite exceptional sense of history it creates – and the impact this has on the settlement's perception as an ancient and extraordinary place. While grand in scale, the proximity of the castle to other village buildings – and the fact they are also built mostly of stone – means it does not appear divorced from the settlement but is rather an integral part of the village scene.

Figure 13 The stone keep of Lydford Castle

Listed Buildings Footnote:

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is required to compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest for the guidance of local planning authorities. Conservation policies are often based on these lists. The re-survey of all Dartmoor parishes was carried out during 1985-88.

A listed building is 'a building of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are about 500,000 listed buildings in England. Nationally, 2% are grade I listed, 4% II* listed and the balance of 94% are grade II listed. Within Dartmoor National Park there are 2,563 listed buildings.

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Figure 14 St Petrock's Church

St Petrock's Church: grade II

As the tithe map illustrates, the site of the church has gradually been distanced from the body of the village through the loss of buildings nearby. It now has no real prominence in the village scene, being somewhat isolated in its churchyard enclosure. In an architectural sense, however, it is the most significant building in the settlement, with its decorative elements in a perpendicular style contrasting with the relatively plain and simple appearance of most other buildings.

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Figure 15 The range of buildings at Town Farm

Town Farm, Heathcot and their adjoining outbuildings: grade II

Probably the most significant range in the village in terms of the positive contribution it makes towards creating Lydford's distinctive character. Exemplary in their preservation are its uncluttered, natural slate roof, chimney stacks, cast-iron rainwater goods, painted timber sash windows, open-fronted porches, stonework elevations, the agricultural character of both its converted and unconverted outbuildings, and not least, the stone walls and railings that define its curtilage.

Other Notable Buildings



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Figure 16 The Castle Inn



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Figure 17 Townend House

The Castle Inn and Townend House

With their long, low forms and informally arranged casement windows, these are perhaps the most rural-looking houses in the village, having a vernacular style that is essentially farmhouse in character. Their sturdy stacks, uncluttered slate roofs, the porches on the former and the veranda on the latter, are their more distinctive features.

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Figure 18 Oaten Hills on the north side of the main street

Oaten Hills

This house is typical of the few, smaller, 3-window fronted houses built in Lydford in the 19th century, having rendered elevations (which were probably not painted at first), grey-blue slated roofs and multi-paned timber sashes. While having a door to enclose it, the gabled porch is nevertheless a well-proportioned example of the local form.

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Figure 19 Castle House on the north side of the main street

Castle House

One of a number of 2-window fronted houses that are the mainstay of Lydford's essentially domestic, rural village character. Its polite, dignified appearance is common to all, while the qualities that contribute most to the character of the village are its grey-blue slated roof, stonework walls with granite quoins, open-fronted porch, multi-paned timber windows, and the walls, railings, gate piers and gate that front directly onto the road.

1 Rose Cottages

© DNPA



Figure 20 1 Rose Cottages

One of the few one-window fronted houses in the village whose modest appearance is essential to reflecting the varied social structure of the village in former times. Its massive stacks, slated roof, plank door and flush-framed casement windows contribute greatly towards Lydford's architectural and historic character, as does the rustic stone wall protecting its garden.

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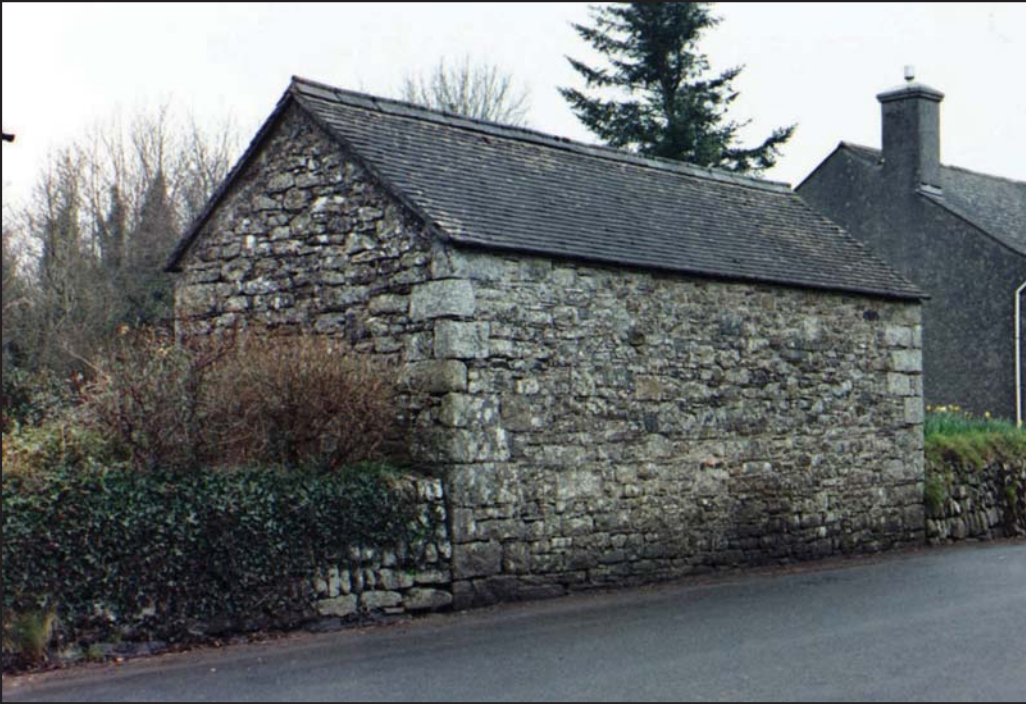


Figure 21 Outbuilding adjacent to Castle House

Outbuilding adjacent to Castle House

One of the more prominent examples of the smaller outbuildings that characterise the village. Its plain and simple appearance helps focus attention on its large granite quoin stones and the neat finishing to the eaves and verges of its natural slate roof – which, appropriately, is not fitted with guttering or down pipes.

5. Local Details and Street Furniture

As so many of Lydford's houses are set back from the highway with small garden areas in front, the waist-high stone walls built to protect them are numerous indeed. They extend across the frontages of the castle and Nicholls Hall as well, and altogether create one of the settlement's more distinctive characteristics. The almost total absence of pavements seems to accentuate their prominence and the important contribution their stonework makes towards creating visual cohesion in the street scene. The range of cappings adds visual interest too, tending to reflect the status and character of the properties they front. The former vicarage, for example, has purpose-made dressed granite blocks, while in front of the castle where a cottage once stood, the capping is formed from small rubblestone pieces [both shown in Figure 22 below]. The most rustic looking have stone pieces set in a rise-and-fall pattern, e.g. in front of 1 Rose Cottages [Figure 20 page 26]. Gate piers are also a characteristic feature of most of the walls and, like the cappings, tend to vary in quality from almost freestone as at 3 Rose Cottages [Figure 23 page 29] to precisely worked monolithic posts [see pair in front of the porch in Figure 5 page 16] or either capped or uncapped rubblestone piers.



Figure 22 The wall of the castle (foreground) and former vicarage

As well as freestanding mortared walls, a number of banks also exist that are retained or faced in stone, but rather than being laid on their natural bed, the stone pieces are aligned vertically to create a distinctive and most attractive pattern [Figure 24 page 29]. Much more rural in character, however, are the hedgebanks that front one or two main street properties, such as Olde Stone and the rampart field on its north side [see Figure 35 page 36], line most of the lanes to the north and south, and enclose Silver Street where it abuts the open field to its south.

The churchyard is remarkable for the collection of granite or slate headstones (and tombs) it possesses which date from the 18th century or

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Figure 23 Gate posts at 1 Rose Cottage

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Figure 24 Stone-faced bank adjacent to Castle House

very early in the 19th century. A family group of headstones has corresponding footstones as well. All made of granite, the headstones have initials inscribed, while the footstones are dated – from between 1704 and 1740 (one other stone forms part of the group, but is the odd one for being both initialled and dated – 1742) [see Figure 25 page 30, which also includes several of the other listed headstones in the foreground]. Another granite item at rest in the churchyard is the circular stone slab near the entrance – which belonged to a local wheelwright, not a miller or cider-maker [Figure 26 page 30].



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Figure 25 Listed headstones and footstones in the churchyard



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Figure 26 Wheelwright's stone in churchyard



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Figure 27 Former water tap provided by D Radford

Other granite structures or artefacts add interest and character to the Conservation Area, including two (of the three) posts erected by Daniel Radford early in the 1880s that had water taps fitted. One, looking like an ordinary gate post, is situated adjacent to the Silver Street road sign near the former Bible Christian Chapel [Figure 8 page 18], while the other is a much more ornamental affair, now set against the wall of the former butcher's shop next to the lane leading south to Castle Lea and St Petrock's (house not church) [Figure 27 above]. Similar in nature is the ancient well that issues alongside the northern back-lane, although it appears to be much overgrown.

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Figure 28 Commemorative post and plaque

Erected on the roadside verge opposite the church on the entry to the village from Lydford Bridge, is a granite post and plaque commemorating the Viking raid upon the Saxon burh in 997AD – being placed there in 1990 to mark the 70th year of Lydford’s Women’s Institute [Figure 28 above]. At the opposite end of the village, however, is a quite monumental structure – the War Memorial Cross – erected in 1921 and constructed of granite from Merrivale Quarry on Dartmoor. Its base was originally set directly on the highway, but a raised and kerbed apron of setts was added in the late 20th century to enhance its appearance and the focal importance it has on the main route into the village [Figure 29 below].

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Figure 29 The War Memorial



© DNPA

Figure 30 The ornamental railings at Townend House

Ironwork railings (and gates) are incorporated into a number of the waist-high walls, the main group being near the main street junction with Silver Street, at the Methodist Chapel, Town Farm (with Heathcot) and the converted barn opposite (Luxmoor). Their relatively simple and functional design quite matches the character of the properties they protect, the same being true of the example in front of Castle House. At the opposite end of the main street, however, the railings in front of Townend House are much more ornamental and reflect the character of the veranda constructed behind them [Figure 30 above]. Other ironwork structures are few, but include a commemorative arch over the churchyard gates that create a feature of the entrance [Figure 31 page 33]. One other structure that contributes towards the Conservation Area's character is the K6 telephone kiosk situated alongside the entrance to Nicholls Hall – although the freestanding post box next to it adds additional interest [Figure 32 page 33].

With the main roads through the village surfaced in tarmac, and the lanes leading off them surviving as unmetalled tracks, historic surfaces are rare. Perhaps the most significant and characterful example, which is private but easily seen from the street, is the cobbled yard serving Lulborough House and the converted outbuildings adjacent (Barn End) [Figure 33 page 33]. The general absence of pavements means kerbing is largely absent as well, but where kerbs do exist in the main street (e.g. outside Prince Charles Terrace and Cross Cottage) they are suitably made from granite.

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Figure 31 The arched entrance gateway to the churchyard

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Figure 32 K6 telephone kiosk and post box

© DNPA



Figure 33 Cobbled surface in foreground of Lulborough House

6. Spaces and Views

Spaces

The significant spaces in Lydford are not in the nature of a square or green around which buildings might be arranged but, rather, they are spaces that are integral to the setting of its major monuments and as such have had a fundamental impact on the form the settlement has taken as it developed over the centuries. Mostly contiguous, they are shown on the Map as three spaces comprising the following sites and their settings:

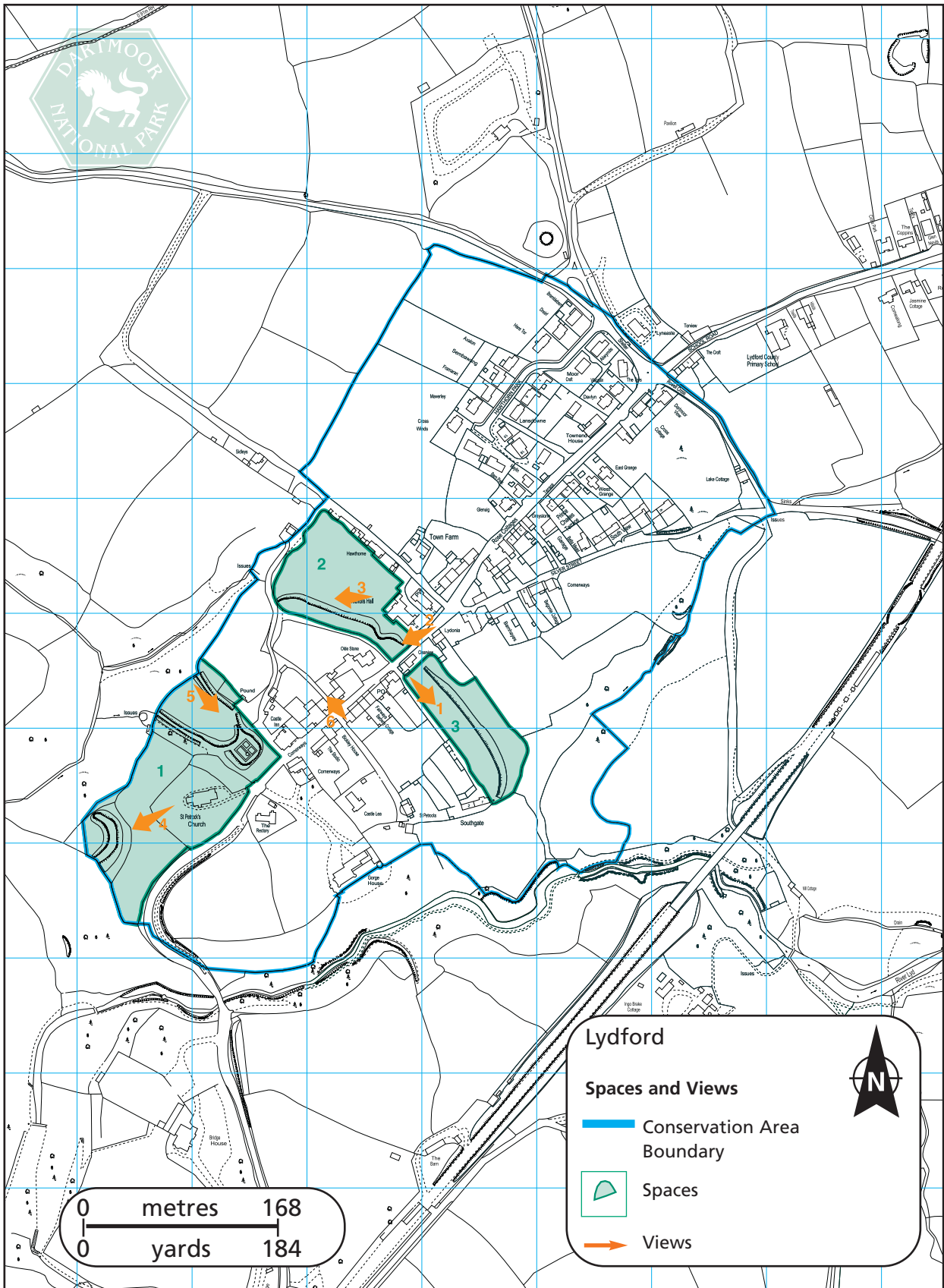
- 1 the Norman ringwork, the Church of St Petrock's and the castle
- 2 the major ramparts and earthworks of the Saxon burh
- 3 the major ramparts and earthworks of the Saxon burh

Views

Lydford's defensive location on elevated ground means that views from the settlement are generally towards distant horizons that are generally un-related to its immediate setting. Around the village itself, however, the most significant views are those of the features that are of fundamental importance to its character in that they illustrate the nature of its foundation and early development:

- 1 from the field gate just off the main street, looking SE towards the southern part of the principal rampart [Figure 34 page 36]
- 2 from the main street, looking W to where the northern part of the principal rampart starts [Figure 35 page 36]
- 3 from behind Nicholls Hall looking W along the length of the northern part of the principal rampart [Figure 36 page 37]
- 4 from the churchyard, looking SW towards the 11th century, Norman ringwork [Figure 37 page 37]
- 5 from the castle bailey looking towards the Castle keep [Figure 38 page 38]
- 6 from the main street, looking down one of the lanes that formed part of the settlement's Saxon plan [Figure 39 page 38] (Views along the other surviving lanes and the back lane to the north are similarly significant)

Map 7 Spaces and Views



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Figure 34 View looking SE from the field gate behind Clearview



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Figure 35 View looking W across the main street in front of Lydonia

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Figure 36 View looking W from behind Nicholls Hall

© DNPA



Figure 37 View looking SW from churchyard boundary



© DNPA

Figure 38 View looking SE from the castle bailey (with the location of the pond to the left)



© DNPA

Figure 39 Glimpse looking NW from the main street down the lane beside Castle House

7. Modern Development

Although the Conservation Area includes a large number of modern buildings within its boundary, particularly in the northeast third, it is the sites they occupy rather than the buildings themselves that are recognised as being of special interest. Indeed, the sites both north and south of the main street, between Hawthorn Park and South View, are the likely locations of early (pre-Conquest), extra-mural settlement and, as such, have great archaeological sensitivity.

Whether in terms of their form, siting, materials or architectural design, the houses and bungalows introduced into the village during the late 20th century have little to associate them with Lydford's distinctive and traditional appearance. Though some are not unattractive and have features that reflect local traditions, such as uncluttered, natural slate roofs or detached garages that continue the established pattern of outbuildings [Figure 40 below], the majority are arranged and styled in a ubiquitous, national fashion, which neither acknowledges nor reinforces the settlement's unique identity.



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Figure 40 Garage outbuildings

Of the outbuildings converted in modern times, good examples include Barnhayes on Silver Street and the one attached to Heathcot (alongside Town Farm) [Figure 41 page 40]. In particular, and unlike in earlier conversions, new openings in roofs and walls have been kept to a minimum, doors and windows that appear obviously domestic in character have not been introduced, while original features such as ventilation slits have been retained.

© DNPA



Figure 41 Outbuilding attached to Heathcot

Although several of the historic houses in the village have been altered or extended in modern times, the vast majority of them preserve their original character. Only a few, for example, have had their windows and doors replaced with upvc or stained-hardwood types which can be very damaging in their impact – not only on the architectural and historic character of the building itself but on the street scene as a whole. Extensions to properties are normally out-of-sight at the rear, although the open areas and side lanes that characterise Lydford mean these are sometimes open to view, and where of poor appearance these are particularly harmful to the overall scene (such as those constructed of materials that differ in character to the main building e.g. rendered extensions to stone properties, or upvc windows instead of timber).

8 Archaeological Potential

The importance of Lydford's beginnings and its failure to capitalise on those make it a highly important and sensitive archaeological area. A number of excavations have taken place in Lydford, most notably at the castle, the ringwork; across the ramparts, in the car park, across the road from the church and by Southgate Cottages. The area south west of the ramparts (behind Nicholls Hall), was surveyed by English Heritage in 1996 and 2000.

The discovery of a sherd of pottery dating to the immediate post-Roman period, together with the dedication of the church to the 6th century Welsh missionary, St Petrock, suggests that there is potential for very early occupation of some sort to be discovered, perhaps within and around the church and castle grounds.

Lydford is generally believed to be the location of the Saxon burh of Hlidan referred to in the late 9th to early 10th century document, the Burghal Hidage; although a case has been made for another smaller defended site at Lifton. Whichever theory is correct, there was most certainly a defended settlement at Lydford by the mid 10th century. Associated with the burh are the ramparts across the neck of the promontory and potentially a lesser bank around the promontory itself; the English Heritage survey also identified a possible outer bank some 30-50 metres beyond (NE) of the main ramparts. The internal plan of the settlement is attributed to the Saxon period.

There is thus potential anywhere within (SW of) the ramparts for archaeological deposits from the Saxon right through to the modern period. The fact that Lydford attained early importance, but then declined in status suggests that it was more densely occupied in the past than it is now and that therefore presently undeveloped areas could contain significant archaeological features. This is certainly indicated by the excavations which have already taken place.

A mint is known to have operated in Lydford since the reign of Edgar (c AD 973 - 975), but so far no physical trace of it has been discovered. The presence of Silver Lane may be significant in this context, although outside the Saxon defended area.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in 997 Viking raiders coming from the Tamar Valley 'went up till they came to Liddyford', which suggests perhaps that the settlement repelled any further advance. Again no physical evidence for any military activity has been discovered; this should perhaps be expected on the outside (NE) of the Saxon ramparts.

The reference in the Domesday Book (1086), to Lydford having a population of 28 burgesses within the borough and 41 outside, may indicate pre-Norman expansion of the settlement beyond the extent of the Saxon burh and the pattern of medieval strip fields extending NW of the Saxon ramparts could support this. There is thus potential for archaeological features from at least the late Saxon period through to the modern period to be located as far as the war memorial and behind the street frontages (including Silver Street). The construction of Nicholls Hall in 1929 uncovered some earlier remains (including stairs) of a granite structure.

9 Trees

The distribution of trees within the Conservation Area and their significance are outlined in the following pages of the Tree Survey.

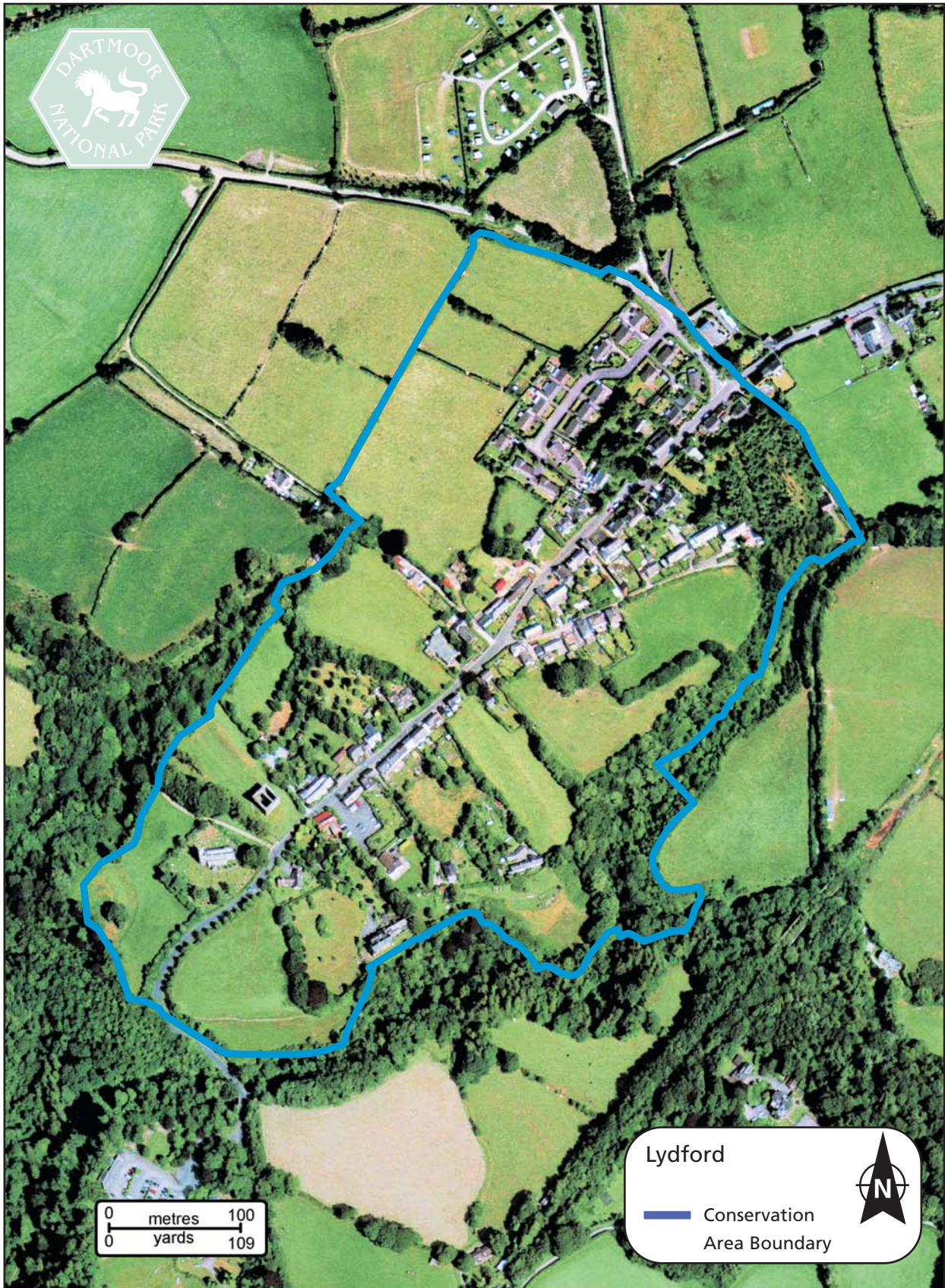
There is a diverse mix of species with a range of age classes within the Conservation Area. The mature broadleaved trees in the churchyard and around the castle are the most visually important trees, but other linear groups of trees growing on the old banks add to the character of the village. New planting has been carried out in the gardens of larger properties in the conservation area and there are numerous sites which would be appropriate for further tree planting.

Outside the Conservation Area the broadleaved woodland extending along the river valleys, to the south and west of Lydford, contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Trees in Conservation Areas Footnote:

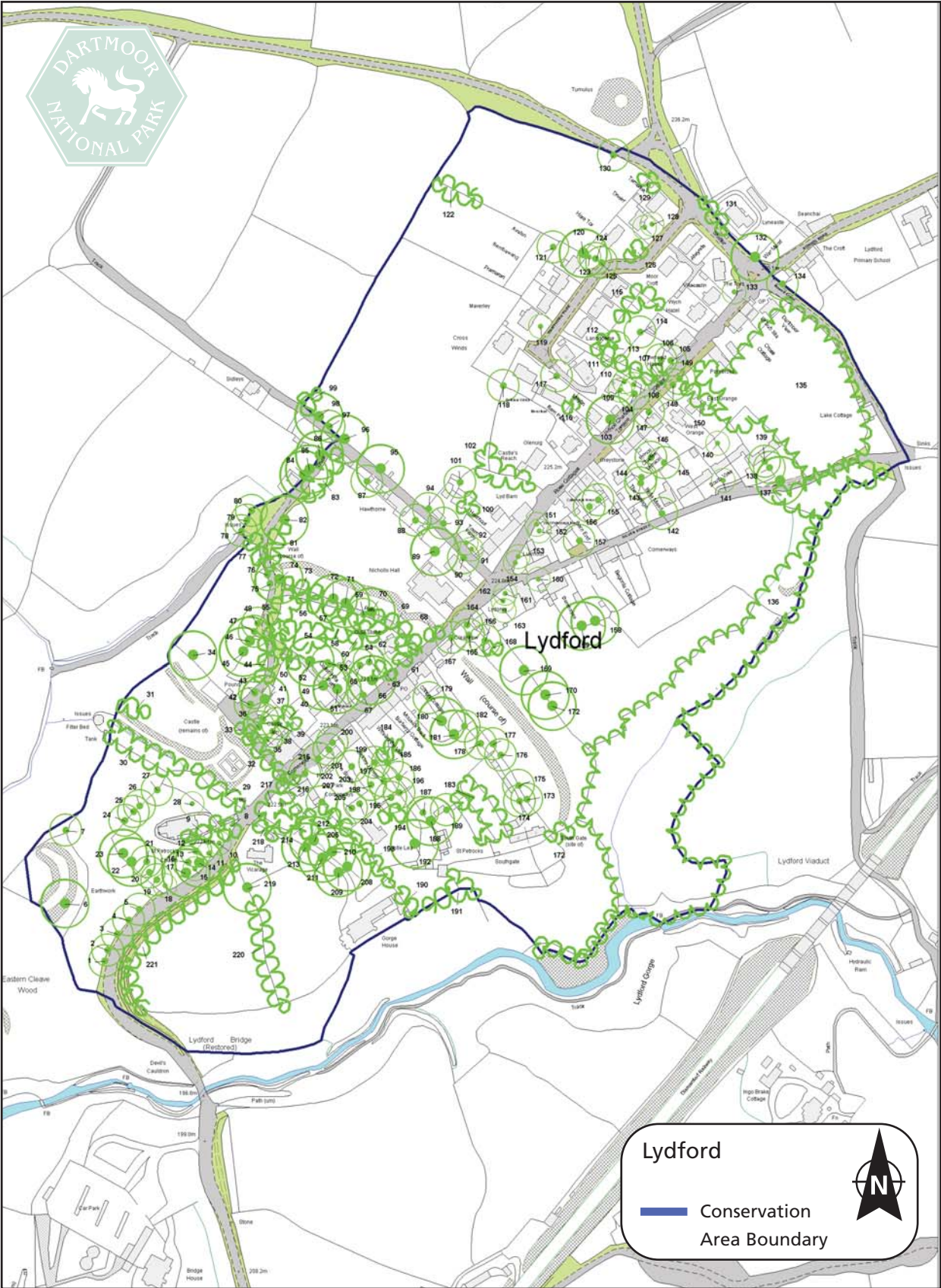
The *Town and Country Planning Act*: Section 211 makes special provision for trees in Conservation Areas not subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Anyone who wishes to cut down or carry out works to a tree in a Conservation Area must give the Local Planning Authority 6 weeks prior notice. The purpose of a Section 211 Notice is to give the Local Planning Authority the opportunity to protect the tree with a TPO. A tree is not defined in the Act, but a Section 211 Notice is only required for a tree with a diameter exceeding 75 mm in diameter. Trees in a Conservation Area already protected by a TPO are subject to the normal TPO controls. A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by the Local Planning Authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principle effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of a tree without the Local Planning Authority's consent.

Map 9 Conservation Area: Trees and Boundary



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Appendix A: Tree Survey: Lydford Conservation Area



Tree Survey: Lydford Conservation Area

(see Tree Survey map page 48)

Number	Species	Age Class	Number	Species	Age Class
1.	Oak	Semi-mature	54.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature
2.	Holly	Semi-mature	55.	Linear group of ash and sycamore	Semi-mature
3.	Sycamore	Semi-mature	56.	Mixed group of trees	Semi-mature to mature
4.	Beech	Semi-mature	57.	Linear group of beech and ash	Semi-mature
5.	Sycamore	Semi-mature	58.	Group of mixed trees	Young to semi-mature
6.	Oak	Mature	59.	Ash	Semi-mature
7.	Ash	Semi-mature	60.	Group of mixed trees	Young to semi-mature
8.	Group of beech	Mature	61.	Group of cypress	Semi-mature
9.	Linear group of yew	Semi-mature	62.	Oak	Young
10.	Pine	Young	63.	Group of cypress	Semi-mature
11.	Pine	Young	64.	Spruce	Semi-mature
12.	Yew	Semi-mature	65.	Spruce	Semi-mature
13.	Yew	Semi-mature	66.	Pine	Mature
14.	Pine	Mature	67.	Birch	Semi-mature
15.	Pine	Young	68.	Group of ash	Young
16.	Yew	Semi-mature	69.	Linear group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature
17.	Pine	Mature	70.	Beech	Mature
18.	Horse chestnut	Young	71.	Ash	Mature
19.	Pine	Semi-mature	72.	Ash	Mature
20.	Pine	Semi-mature	73.	Linear group of ash and sycamore	Semi-mature to mature
21.	Yew	Semi-mature	74.	Beech	Mature
22.	Pine	Mature	75.	Ash	Semi-mature
23.	Pine	Mature	76.	Ash	Semi-mature
24.	Maple	Semi-mature	77.	Group of ash and sycamore	Semi-mature
25.	Sycamore	Semi-mature	78.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
26.	Lime	Semi-mature	79.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
27.	Maple	Semi-mature	80.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
28.	Beech	Young	81.	Linear group of sycamore	Mature
29.	Group of larch	Mature	82.	Sycamore	Mature
30.	Broadleaved woodland	Mature	83.	Linear group of sycamore	Semi-mature
31.	Linear group of larch	Mature	84.	Beech	Mature
32.	Linear group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature	85.	Beech	Mature
33.	Group of horse chestnut	Semi-mature	86.	Beech	Mature
34.	Ash	Mature	87.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
35.	Beech	Semi-mature	88.	Eucalyptus	Semi-mature
36.	Beech	Semi-mature	89.	Ash	Mature
37.	Beech	Semi-mature	90.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
38.	Laburnum	Semi-mature	91.	Willow	Young
39.	Oak	Semi-mature	92.	Willow	Young
40.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature	93.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
41.	Larch	Mature	94.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
42.	Cedar	Semi-mature	95.	Beech	Mature
43.	Ash	Semi-mature	96.	Beech	Mature
44.	Linear group of ash	Semi-mature	97.	Ash	Semi-mature
45.	Beech	Mature	98.	Sycamore	Mature
46.	Beech	Mature	99.	Group of sycamore	Semi-mature
47.	Sycamore	Semi-mature			
48.	Ash	Semi-mature			
49.	Sycamore	Mature			
50.	Linear group of sycamore	Mature			
51.	Fir	Mature			
52.	Sycamore	Mature			
53.	Ash	Semi-mature			

Number	Species	Age Class	Number	Species	Age Class
100.	Group of ash	Young	157.	Eucalyptus	Semi-mature
101.	Beech	Semi-mature	158.	Beech	Mature
102.	Group of mixed	Mature	159.	Beech	Mature
	broadleaves		160.	Cypress	Young
103.	Ash	Mature	161.	Cypress	Young
104.	Ash	Semi-mature	162.	Cypress	Young
105.	Birch	Semi-mature	163.	Cypress	Young
106.	Beech	Semi-mature	164.	Beech	Semi-mature
107.	Group of cypress	Mature	165.	Beech	Semi-mature
108.	Eucalyptus	Young	166.	Beech	Semi-mature
109.	Mimosa	Young	167.	Cypress	Semi-mature
110.	Maple	Young	168.	Group of cypress	Semi-mature
111.	Linear group of ash	Semi-mature	169.	Yew	Mature
	and sycamore	to mature	170.	Sycamore	Mature
112.	Group of cypress	Semi-mature	171.	Sycamore	Mature
113.	Ash	Semi-mature	172.	Group of sycamore	Mature
114.	Ash	Semi-mature	173.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
115.	Linear group of mixed	Semi-mature	174.	Ash	Semi-mature
	broadleaves		175.	Oak	Semi-mature
116.	Group of cypress	Semi-mature	176.	Ash	Semi-mature
117.	Sycamore	Semi-mature	177.	Ash	Semi-mature
118.	Oak	Semi-mature	178.	Ash	Semi-mature
119.	Cherry	Young	179.	Willow	Semi-mature
120.	Beech	Mature	180.	Ash	Mature
121.	Beech	Semi-mature	181.	Ash	Mature
122.	Group of beech	Mature	182.	Spruce	Semi-mature
123.	Ash	Young	183.	Group of mixed	Semi-mature
124.	Birch	Semi-mature		broadleaves	
125.	Birch	Semi-mature	184.	Group of ash	Semi-mature
126.	Group of rowan	Young		and willow	
127.	Cypress	Young	185.	Beech	Semi-mature
128.	Cypress	Young	186.	Willow	Semi-mature
129.	Group of beech	Semi-mature	187.	Ash	Semi-mature
130.	Oak	Semi-mature	188.	Ash	Mature
131.	Linear group of mixed	Semi-mature	189.	Willow	Semi-mature
	broadleaves		190.	Group of ash	Semi-mature
132.	Ash	Mature	191.	Group of mixed	Semi-mature
133.	Ash	Young		broadleaves	
134.	Beech	Semi-mature	192.	Cypress	Mature
135.	Mixed woodland	Semi-mature	193.	Linear group of ash	Mature
		to mature	194.	Linear group of cypress	Semi-mature
136.	Mixed woodland	Mature	195.	Douglas fir	Semi-mature
137.	Eucalyptus	Mature	196.	Sycamore	Semi-mature
138.	Beech	Semi-mature	197.	Laburnum	Semi-mature
139.	Cherry	Semi-mature	198.	Birch	Semi-mature
140.	Spruce	Young	199.	Ash	Semi-mature
141.	Spruce	Young	200.	Thorn	Semi-mature
142.	Oak	Semi-mature	201.	Rowan	Semi-mature
143.	Spruce	Semi-mature	202.	Birch	Semi-mature
144.	Beech	Semi-mature	203.	Birch	Semi-mature
145.	Eucalyptus	Semi-mature	204.	Apple	Semi-mature
146.	Cherry	Semi-mature	205.	Apple	Semi-mature
147.	Maple	Semi-mature	206.	Linear group of ash	Semi-mature
148.	Thorn	Semi-mature		and sycamore	
149.	Ash	Semi-mature	207.	Cypress	Semi-mature
150.	Linear group of	Semi-mature	208.	Cypress	Mature
	mixed trees		209.	Cypress	Mature
151.	Apple	Young	210.	Yew	Mature
152.	Apple	Young	211.	Yew	Mature
153.	Cypress	Young	212.	Yew	Mature
154.	Cypress	Young	213.	Yew	Mature
155.	Ash	Semi-mature	214.	Group of mixed trees	Semi-mature
156.	Willow	Semi-mature		to mature	

Number	Species	Age Class
215.	Rowan	Semi-mature
216.	Group of cherry	Semi-mature
217.	Group of mixed trees . . .	Semi-mature to mature
218.	Linear group of mixed trees	Semi-mature
219.	Sycamore	Mature
220.	Linear group of broadleaves	Mature
221.	Linear group of beech . .	Mature

The survey was carried out from publicly accessible land.