

# South Brent



## Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Dartmoor National Park Authority January 2011

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**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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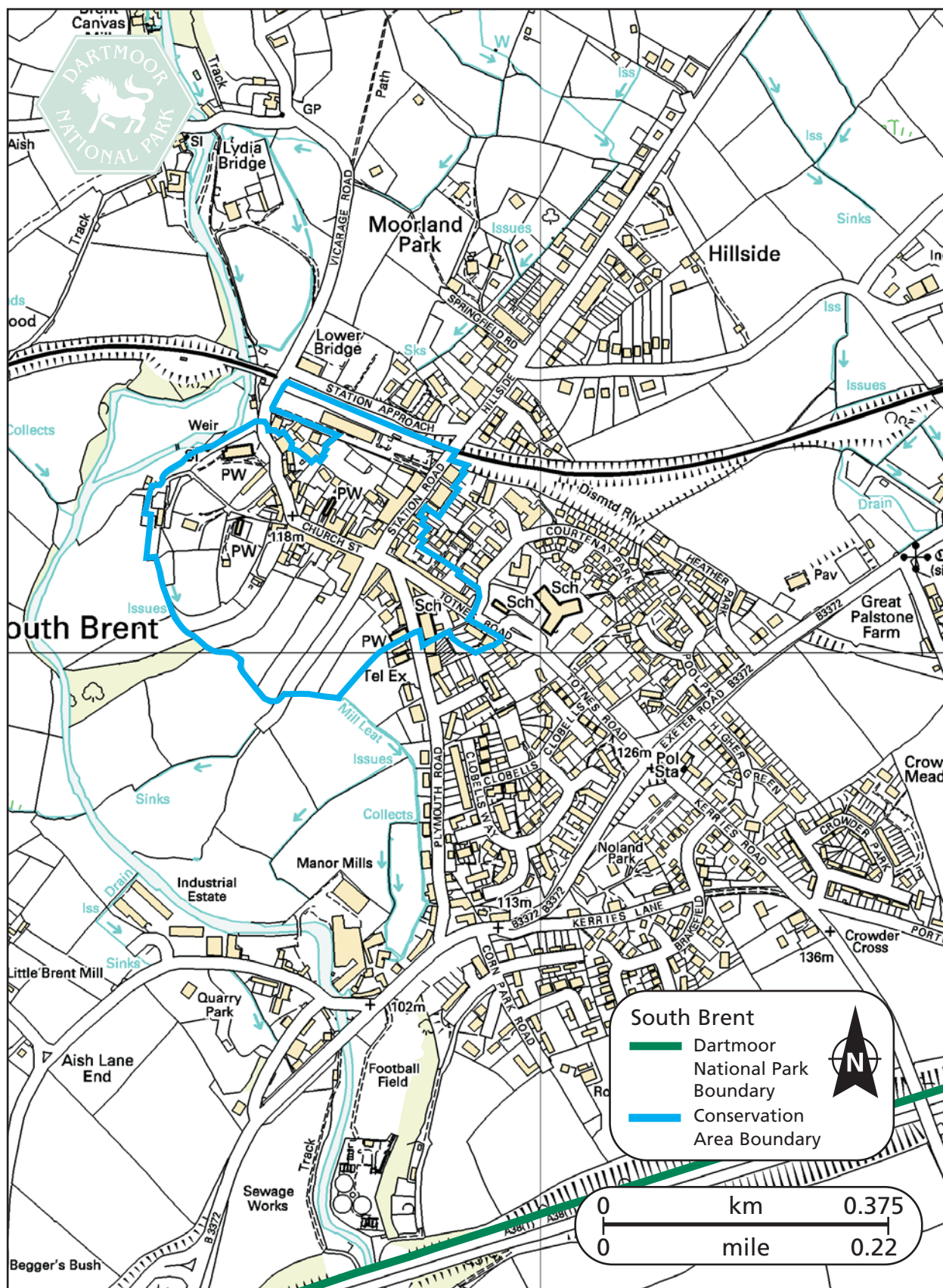
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## Map 1 Conservation Area Location



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## Introduction

South Brent is a large village just east of the southern-most part of Dartmoor where Ugborough and Western Beacons dominate the edge of the high moorland mass. It takes its name, however, from Brent Hill just to its north, whose conspicuous outline characterises the settlement's immediate setting. Having much less a visual presence is the River Avon as it passes by the village after leaving the confines of its steep-sided moorland valley. It flows to within a few yards of the Church at the settlement's north-west end, but it is hidden here in a ravine-like setting, and turns to sweep around the village away to its east.

Although widened since they were originally built, two packhorse bridges cross the river about half a mile north and south of the village centre; the first on the route that follows the valley of the Avon northwards into the moor, and the other on the old route between Exeter and Plymouth that skirts the southern part of the moor and passes through the village from the direction of Harbourneford.

A Conservation Area was first designated in South Brent in February 1976, and was extended in August 1990 and 1993 to include an area of strip fields sandwiched between the edge of the village and a mill leat to its south. Based on the findings of this Character Appraisal two additional areas were considered appropriate for inclusion in the Conservation Area and were formally designated in October 2010. These were on Totnes Road (focussing on Mons Terrace) and on the north side to include the station yard and its environs.

## 1. Village History

South Brent occupies an extensive, elongated parish that stretches well into Dartmoor, with open moorland covering about a third of its ten thousand or so acres. Here the remains of Bronze Age settlement are much in evidence, particularly on Brent Moor where hut circles abound in several clusters, while at Corringdon Ball there are stone rows and a megalithic tomb as well.

When the Domesday Book was compiled in 1086, the manor of 'Brenta' was recorded as belonging to the Abbot of Buckfast at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. It had, in fact, been endowed to the Abbey by King Canute shortly after the monastery's foundation in 1018 – and it continued to belong to the Abbey until its dissolution in 1539. That South Brent was indeed settled in Saxon times is evidenced in the fabric of the Church, as stonework of the period survives in the lowest part of the tower – which was otherwise reconstructed in Norman times as the central feature of a cruciform plan that had transepts on each of its sides. Exactly when the first Church was built is not known, but its dedication to the 6th century Celtic Saint called Petroc suggests this may have been in early, post Roman, times.

As a settlement, however, South Brent appears not to have grown with speed. In 1247, over a century and a half since Domesday, it was recorded

in a valuation carried out by Pope Nicholas as a village with a Church and seven houses. Despite its apparent smallness, it was nevertheless described as being at the heart of one of the richest manors in the area, suggesting, on the one hand, the manor was characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern, and on the other, its economy was flourishing under the influence of the Abbey – whose economy was based almost entirely on the husbandry of sheep and the processing of wool. It is probable too that the tin industry supplemented the local economy in medieval (and later) times, as there is evidence of tin streaming along the Bala Brook and other sites on Brent Moor, while south of Corringdon Ball a tin mill is recorded at a site beside the Glaze Brook.

In common with most Devon settlements, South Brent's main period of growth was during the 13th and 14th centuries. By 1350 it had grown sufficiently large, it seems, to hold the potential for developing into more of an urban settlement, as this is when a Royal Charter was granted to the Abbot of Buckfast to hold a three-day fair on the land between the village and Brent Hill. It would seem, however, that the settlement's growth in medieval times was not sustained, and it never achieved the status of borough – probably because, as a fledgling town, it was eclipsed by its larger and more prosperous neighbours, including Buckfastleigh and Ashburton, but especially Totnes just six miles to the east whose population was top-heavy with well-to-do merchants.

Nevertheless, it was not a failing or ailing settlement, and managed to sustain a healthy economy sufficient to support a larger-than-average village population. The concentration of mill sites located close by is quite remarkable, with no less than five lining the banks of the River Avon between the Crackhills Mill site north of Lydia Bridge and the Brent Mill site a little way out of the village to the south. The latter was probably the earliest of the mill sites to be occupied, since this is where the 13th century flour mill owned by the Lord of the Manor was built, to which all the corn grown in the manor had to be taken to be ground. Like most of the mills, however, its use changed during its lifetime, becoming a flock (paper) mill for a considerable period before its closure in the 1930's. Two of the other mill sites, at Millswood west of the church and beside the Lydia Bridge, are known to have been occupied by at least 1580; the former as a fulling (cloth-making) mill and the latter for grinding corn. Lydia Mill subsequently became a wheelwright's shop and forge, while the one at Millswood was a leather mill and then a flour mill before becoming an engineering factory early in the 20th century (where aeroplane parts were made during the Second World War). However, it was mostly destroyed by fire in 1948. Town Mill, whose ruins lie beside the railway bridges adjoining the Vicarage field, is first recorded as operating as a cloth mill in the 18th century, but later became a corn mill, which, according to the OS Map, was still operating in 1907. The Crackhills Mill, which was the home of William Crossing, began its life as a flour mill but later became one of the principal sail canvas mills that supplied the Devon shipbuilding industry until the advent of steam-driven vessels brought an end to demand.

Other small-scale industries also supported the village's economy, including the quarrying of granite and slate, and in the latter part of the 19th century there were works producing Naptha (peat oil) and China

Clay at nearby Shipley bridge. In the village itself a number of specialised annual fairs brought a good deal of custom, while a weekly pannier market became so successful it rivalled those being held in Totnes and other nearby towns.

Its economy was also aided by its location on the packhorse route between Exeter and Plymouth, and when the road was turnpiked in the 18th century the village enjoyed a measure of importance as a staging post. With the coming of the railway in 1848, however, the village probably saw its first real expansion since medieval times; for it not only became a goods junction, it also became the mainline junction for the branch line to Kingsbridge in the 1890's. As well as bringing economic opportunities, it attracted visitors and new residents intent on enjoying the moorland scenery.

During the 20th century South Brent's significance as an industrial and commercial centre greatly reduced, while the importance of its position on the main rail and road networks disappeared. The market ceased to function in the early 1900's, the station closed in 1964 and the construction of the new A38 in the 1970's by-passed the settlement completely. Conversely, however, the improved access provided by the A38 enhanced the village's attraction as a convenient place to live and helped to sustain the settlement as a local centre with a mainly residential character.



## 2. Settlement Plan

The oldest and most significant sites in the village are probably those of St Petroc's Church and the former Manor House alongside it, together separated from the rest of the village by enclosing lanes. If the early dedication of the Church does indeed indicate an early post-Roman settlement, then these sites are likely to have been its focus. It is probably the case, also, that the village described in 1247 as comprising a church and seven houses was located here.

In medieval times, however, the village gained a second focus, which centred on Fore Street and included most of Church Street and the adjacent sections of the roads leading off. As the tithe map indicates, the short length of Fore Street used to be broader and more like a square, but encroachments on its south side have since narrowed its width – as indeed has happened in nearby Church Street where the market building (or Cheape House) once stood. This part of the village has much in common with other medieval settlements located on the principal routes that fringe the moor; not only villages, such as South Zeal, where attempts to establish an urban centre failed, but towns such as Buckfastleigh and Ashburton where these attempts were obviously successful. These places, too, focussed on a market place that was essentially a broadening of one or more of the principal highways. At South Brent this was on Fore Street and Church Street, and here (as in the other settlements) the classic medieval pattern of frontage houses with narrow burgage plots extending behind is clearly in evidence.

The 'failure' of South Zeal meant that there these plots were never developed to any significant extent, but at South Brent they were; being occupied by many ancillary buildings and sometimes cottages served by passages or alleyways off the main street, and sometimes by small courtyards providing light and air. These developments, and the boundaries of the burgage plots they occupy, are an integral part of the village's historic plan and contribute much towards the area's character and interest. So too do the medieval strip fields that survive to the south of Church Street and Fore Street, sandwiched between the rear boundaries of the burgage plots and the leat which brought water to the medieval manorial mills. There is no evidence these strip fields existed to the north of the settlement, but the tithe map suggests they probably existed to the east between the Totnes and Plymouth Roads, although they have since been eroded beneath a blanket of 20th development.

Although the medieval settlement had two centres focussing on the churchyard site and the market place at Fore Street, it is likely these joined together relatively quickly through the development of what is now the area occupied by Wellington Square. This is because expansion in all such proto-urban centres was restricted to within the boundaries of the settlement plan, putting pressure on every available space and inevitably making it cramped. What is unusual, however, is the presence of farms within the centre, most notably Town Farm next to the Pack Horse Inn. Its rural character in an urban context reflects the hybrid nature of South Brent's history and character, somewhere between a town and a village.

It appears that until the 19th century South Brent did indeed remain largely within the confines of its medieval form. Even by the 1880's only a few Victorian villas had been introduced outside the historic core; most



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noticeably near the 'new' railway station, where their siting behind front garden areas contrasts with the back-of-the-pavement tradition that characterises the medieval part of the settlement's plan. On the Totnes and Plymouth Roads as well, the extent of the medieval plan is more or less defined by the early 20th century additions, which are typically set back from the pavement behind front garden areas (e.g. at Mons and Clifton Terraces)

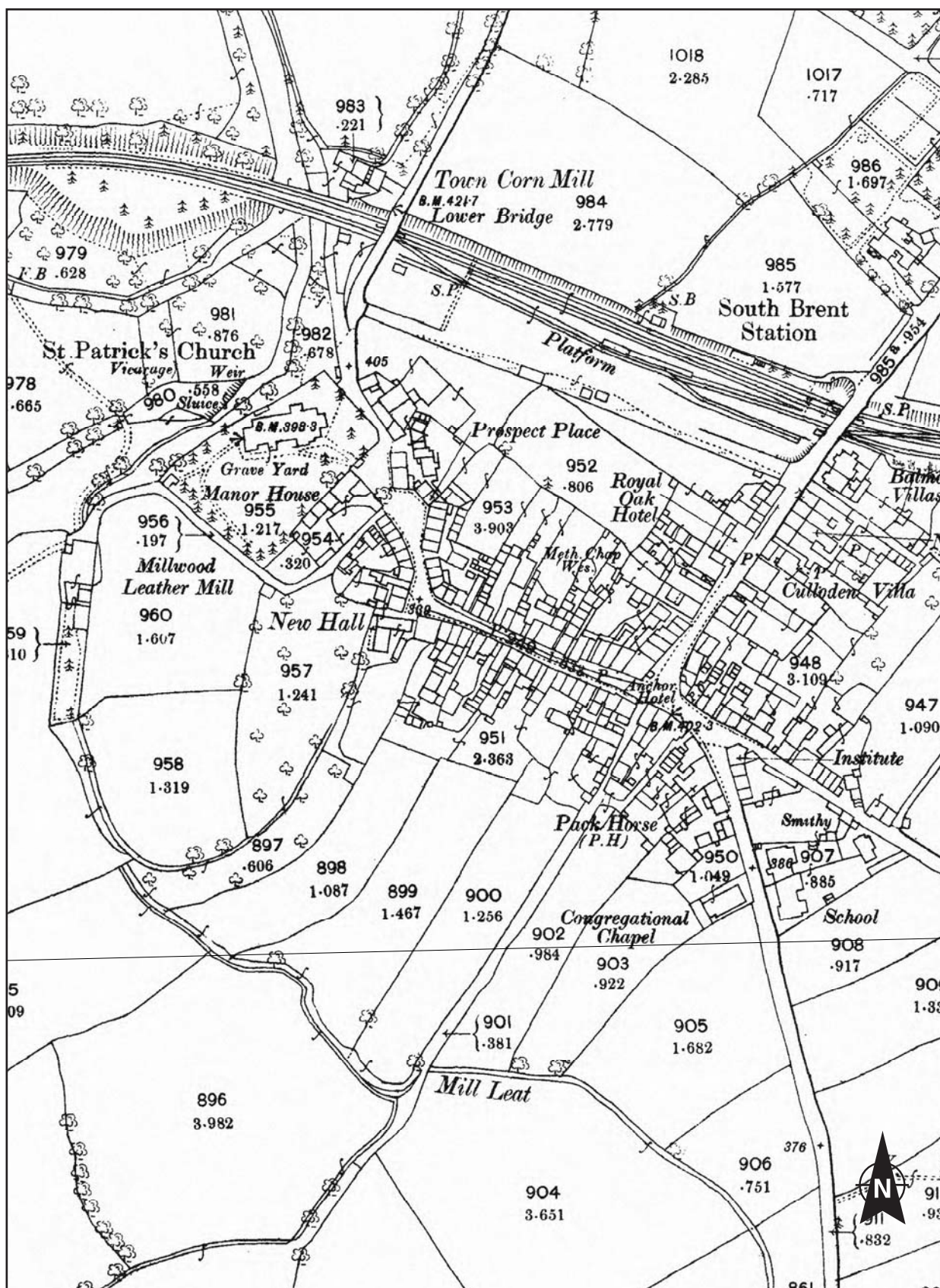
More recently, during the 20th century, the village has expanded considerably; to the northeast along the old packhorse road to Harbournford, but mainly in a swathe to the south and east, extending the settlement beyond the old turnpike road to within a short distance of the new A38.



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.



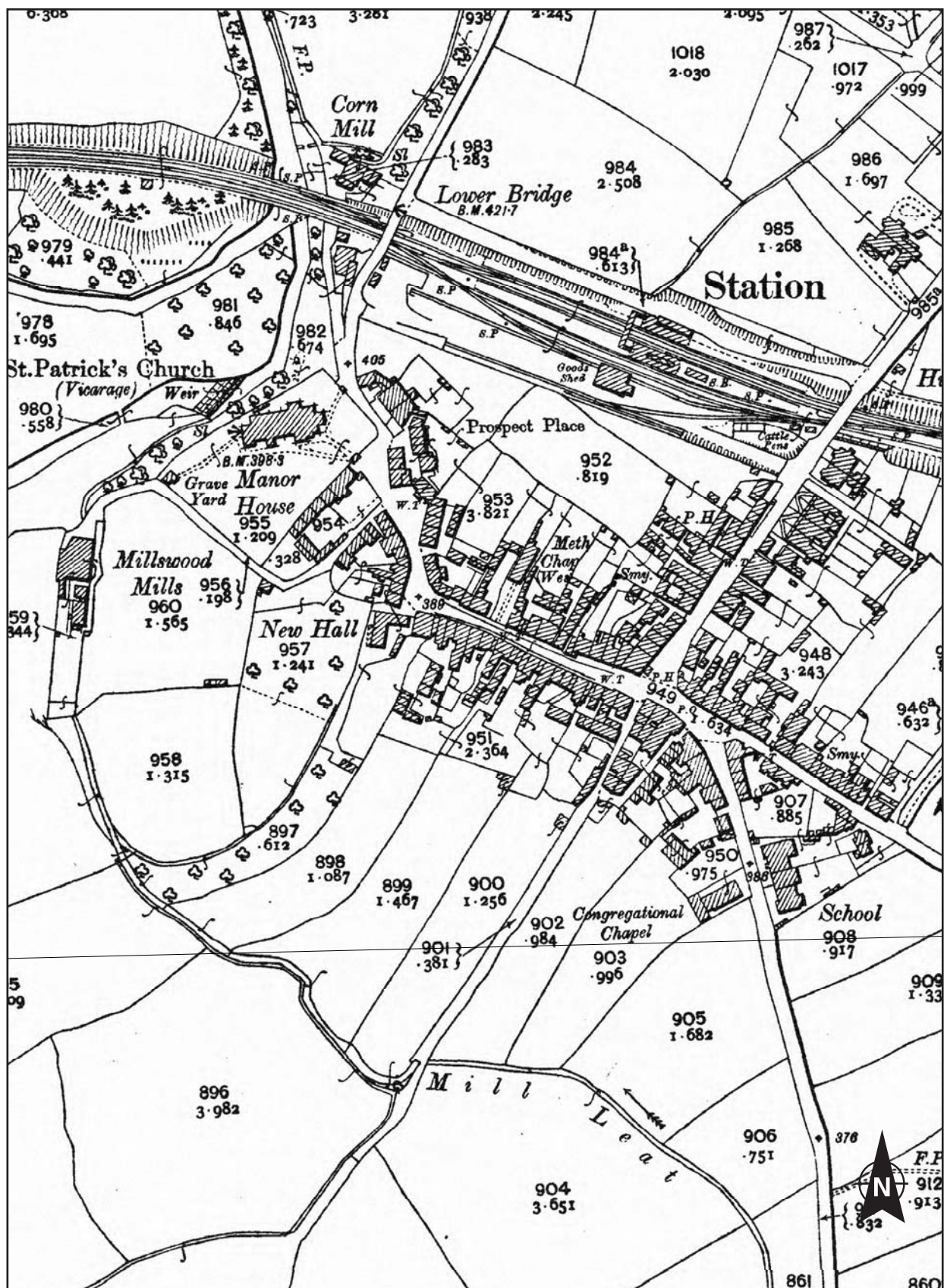
## Map 3 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1887



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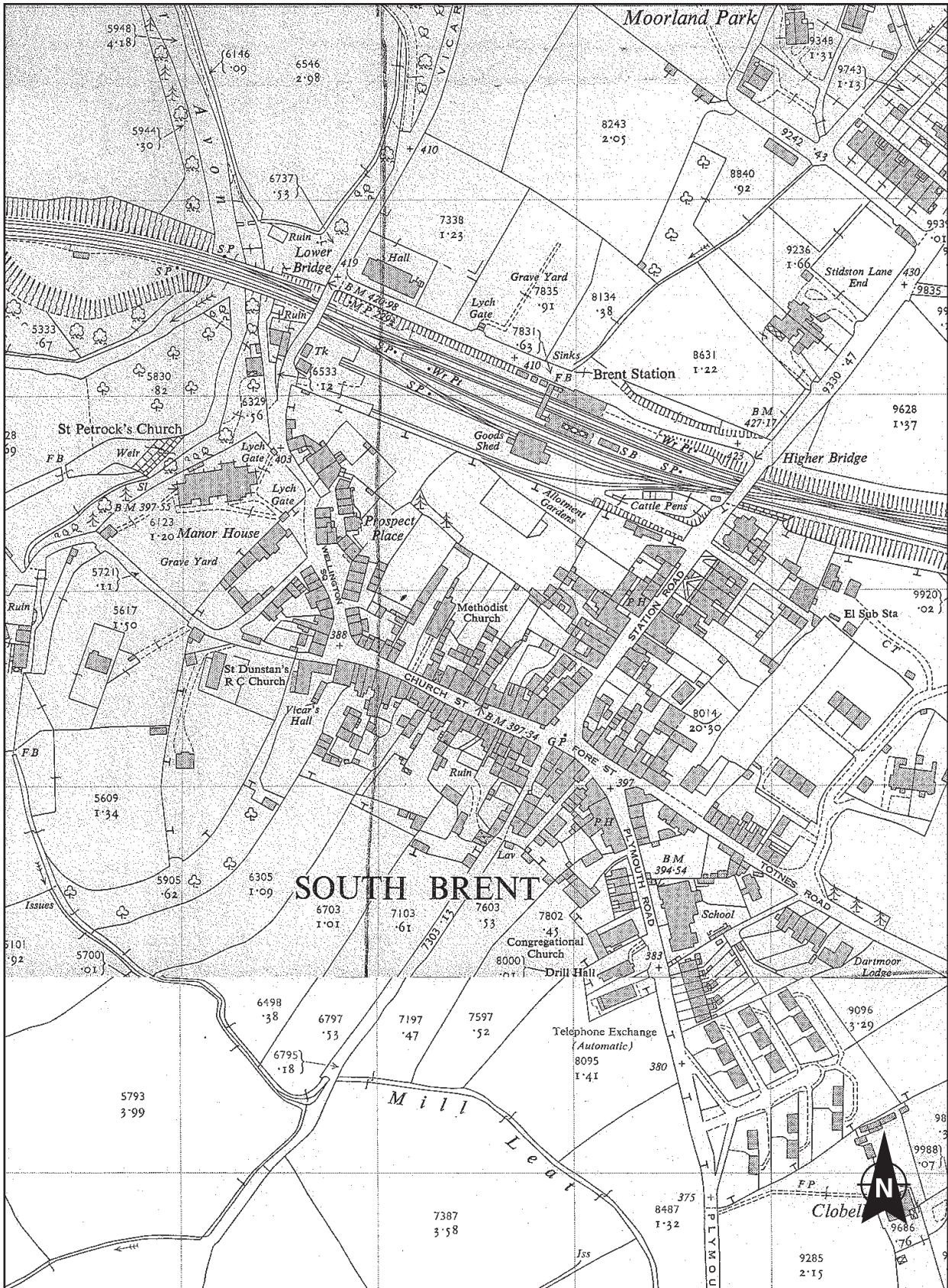
# Map 4 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1906



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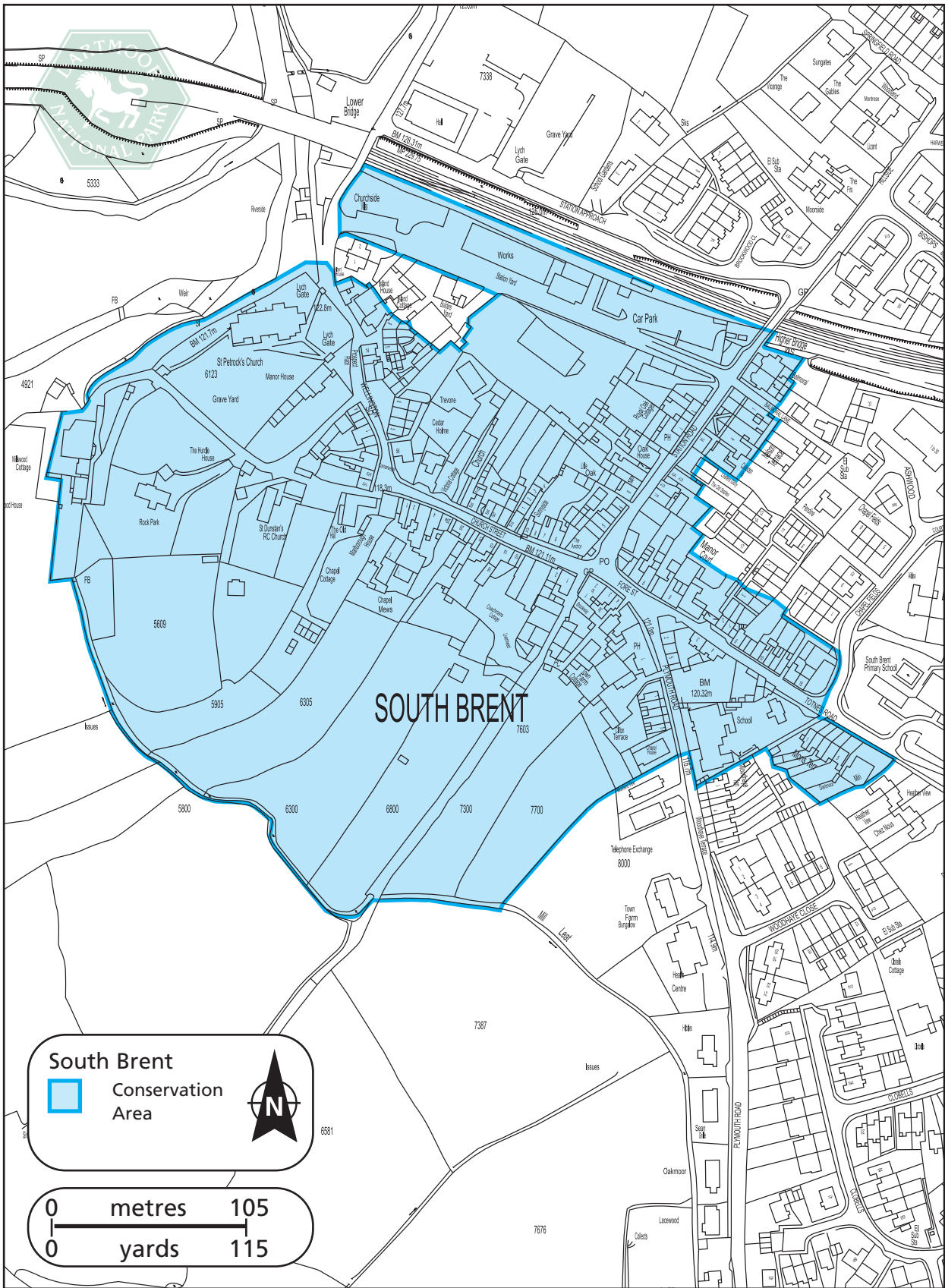


## Map 5 Ordnance Survey Map c.1954



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# Map 6 Conservation Area: South Brent Settlement



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### 3. Building Types, Materials and Styles

The building type that dominates the Conservation Area is the modest, slate-roofed, two-storey house, and although outward appearances can sometimes belie earlier origins, they appear to be mostly of late 18th or early 19th century date. They are typically built in short terraces (with the eaves of their roofs, not their gables, facing the street), and have one or two windows on the first floor and on the ground floor, a plain, recessed doorway [Figs 1 below and 2 page 16]. Many of their doors and windows are original, the latter being vertical sliding, multi-paned, timber sashes which have a polite classical style that creates a rather more urban character than do casements. They also produce a vertical emphasis which, combined with the compact size of the houses and their almost continuous terraced form, tends to heighten the crowded appearance that characterises the area as a whole. These particular houses also reflect the nature of South Brent's historic development; as a settlement occupied more by the families of artisans than by wealthy merchants. Indeed, grand or substantial houses are few, and so too smaller ones that have any form of architectural embellishment. The doorcase to 52 Church Street is therefore unusual [Fig 3 page 16], and while ornamental features are generally more common on the houses built towards the end of the 19th century, they hardly ever amount to more than a horizontal string band or door hood [Fig 4 page 16].

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Fig 1 Typical one-window-wide House



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Fig 2 Typical two-window-wide house



© DNPA

Fig 3 52 Church Street



© DNPA

Fig 4 Typical late 19th century ornament

A few wider, three-window fronted houses are dotted around, most with a symmetrical appearance that lends a certain dignity to their classical styling, eg Wellington House [Fig 25 page 29]. The vast majority of houses have two storeys, but a small number have three, and as their location is where Church Street, Station Road and Fore Street meet, they heighten its significance as the former market place [Fig 5 page 17]. Here also, the projecting, two-storey porch of the former Anchor Inn creates a visually



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*Fig 5 Three-storey buildings at the former market place*

arresting focus and a sense of tradition and history as well – a sense that is likewise created by the many surviving chimneystacks which characterise the roofscape generally. Although typically of brick, there are some that are massive and built of stone (e.g. at Town Farm), suggesting a date of construction much earlier than the 19th century appearance the buildings otherwise possess. Indeed, at least one such stack in Church Street [Fig 6 below] has weatherings to suggest the house it serves (No. 24) not only has earlier than 19th century origins but may have been originally thatched.

© DNPA



*Fig 6 Chimney Stack at 24 Church Street*

Perhaps the most prestigious houses in the Conservation are the seven late 19th century villas grouped together on the east side of Station Road opposite the station entrance. Their rendered elevations and slate roofs respect the established pattern, as does their classical styling which is quite restrained. Their elevated positions set back from the road behind front garden areas are, however, suburban in character and although typical of their age, contrasts with the urban appearance that dominates the medieval core.

The smallest dwellings in the village are the tiny cottages occupying the burgrave plot alleys and courts behind the main street frontages (e.g. Sunnyside). These cottages are an integral part of South Brent's history and character – as indeed are the alleyways and arched entrances that pierce the street frontages to allow access to them [Fig 7 below]. It is in these courts too that most of the village's non-domestic buildings are located, since none actually front the main streets. According to the tithe apportionment compiled in 1841, there were numerous pigsties, stables and stores, and although several have been lost or converted (e.g. behind the Pack Horse Inn and Town Farm) a number still survive in non-domestic use [Fig 8 page 19].



© DNPA

Fig 7 Frontage Entrances to buildings at the rear

Other noteworthy non-domestic buildings in the village, in addition to the Church and school, include two non-conformist chapels and a Roman Catholic Church, each of them differing in materials and styles. The late 19th century Congregational Chapel in Plymouth Road has now been converted to a house, but its original stonework and gothic style have been retained so that it continues to blend well with its stone-built neighbours [Fig 9 page 19]. The similarly dated Methodist Chapel in Church Street has one of the most decorative fronts in the village, being rendered and designed in a classical, Italianate style [Fig 10 page 19]. The Roman Catholic Church is tucked away from the main streets, and although its design and form are simple, it is a rather undistinguished timber-panelled structure that does not reflect local building traditions.

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Fig 8 Non-domestic buildings at the rear

© DNPA



Fig 9 Former Congregational Chapel in Plymouth Road

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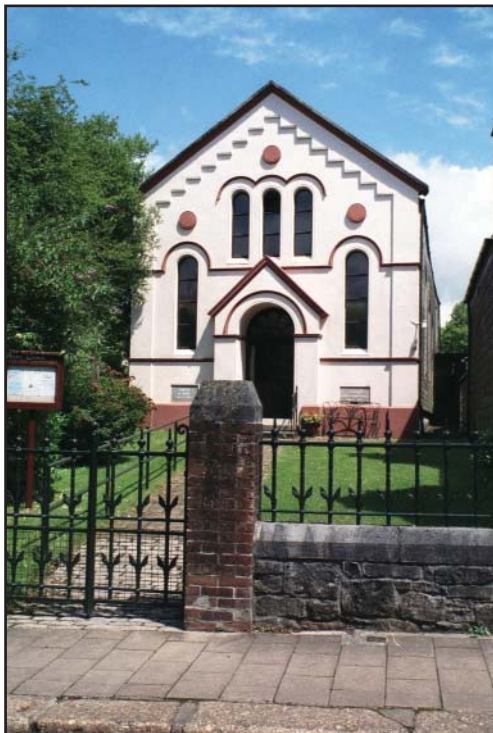


Fig 10 Methodist Chapel in Church Street

Shopfronts are a very significant element of South Brent's urban appearance, creating a commercial focus with characteristics not unlike those of a town. The fronts themselves are numerous; many of them dating from the 19th century and most of these designed as complete and permanent units in a traditional classical style incorporating projecting cornices above fascias, with supporting brackets or pilasters on either side





© DNPA

Fig 11 Traditional, classically-styled shopfront

[Fig 11 above]. Those lacking these features are mostly modern and tend to be negative in their impact on the area's historic and architectural qualities.

Although slate is the dominant roofing material throughout the Conservation Area, its use as a wall cladding is relatively uncommon. An old photograph taken in 1918 shows the Post Office was once clad in slate, but today it is rendered, and only one or two fronts remain slated,



© DNPA

Fig 12 Slate-hung Side Elevation



its use being mostly confined to the sides and rears of main street buildings or to outbuildings sited behind them [Fig 12 page 20]. This is similarly the case with stonework elevations, which other than those of the Church at one end of the village and the School at the other rarely form part of the street scene. One late example is at Clifton Terrace almost opposite the school, and another the former Congregational Church next to it [Fig 13 below], but perhaps the best-known example is the Toll House in Church Street whose stonework elevations seem to suitably enhance its prominence [Fig 14 page 22]. Brick is not common at all, being used mainly in the construction of chimneystacks or the reveals of windows and doors (e.g. at Clifton Terrace). The two pairs of houses in the Area built of brick in the early part of the 20th century (on Totnes Road) have actually been painted as if to minimise the material's incongruity.

© DNPA



Fig 13 Clifton Terrace

For the most part, however, street elevations are rendered and painted, although in the case of a few properties in Church Street, Station Road and in the Wellington Square area, the rendering simply comprises several layers of paint – which means the undulating surface of the stonework shows through to create a rather more rustic character [Fig 15 page 22]. Creating an almost opposite, polite and urban, character, however, are the rendered elevations incised with lines to imitate the appearance of high quality ashlar stonework [Fig 16 page 22]. In response to a short-lived, national, early 20th century fashion – that had little to do with reinforcing locally distinctive characteristics – a pebbledash finish was applied to some historic properties as well as new, but their numbers are fortunately few.



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Fig 14 The Toll House



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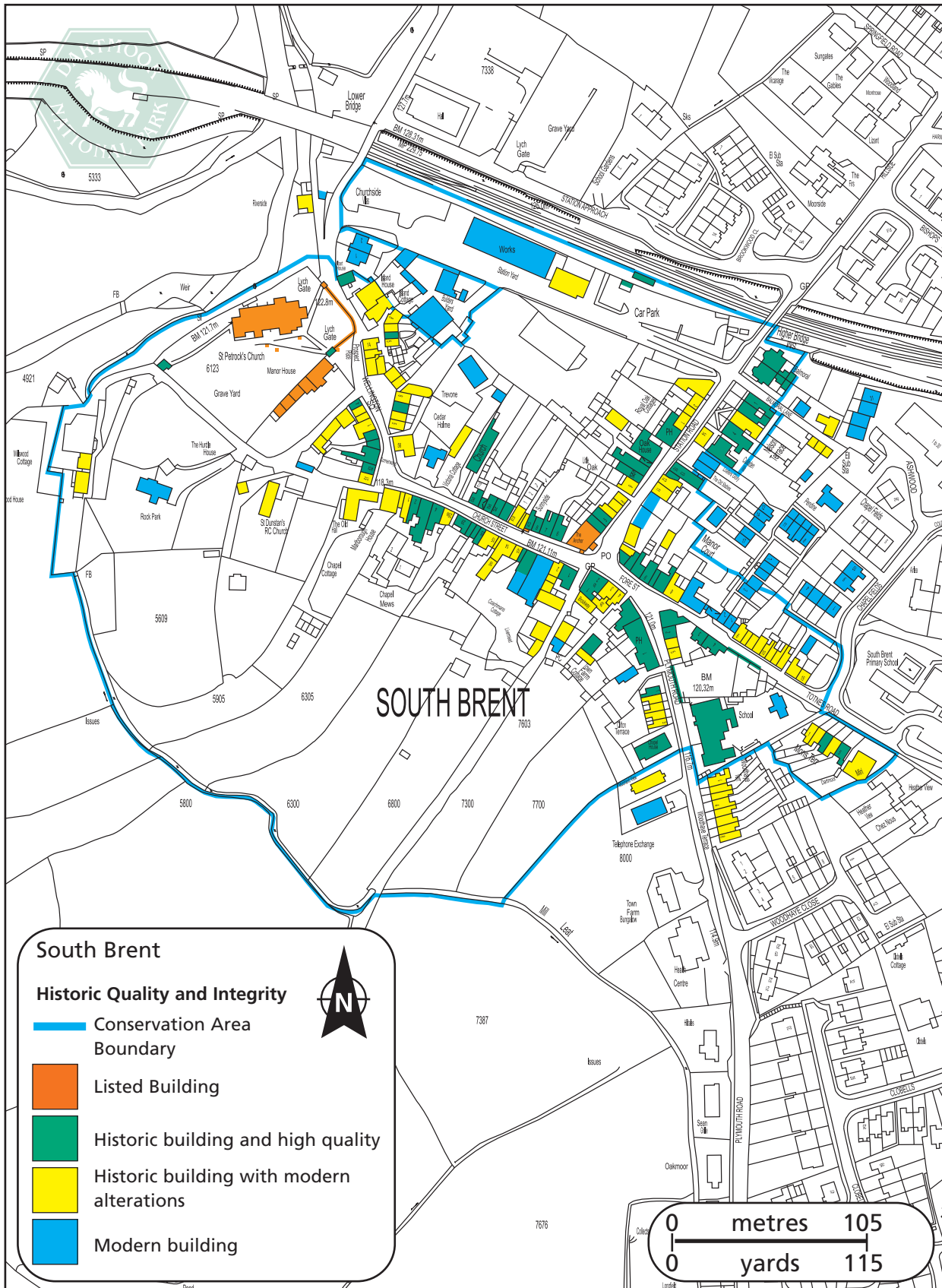
Fig 15 Painted rubblestone



© DNPA

Fig 16 Ashlar-Lining

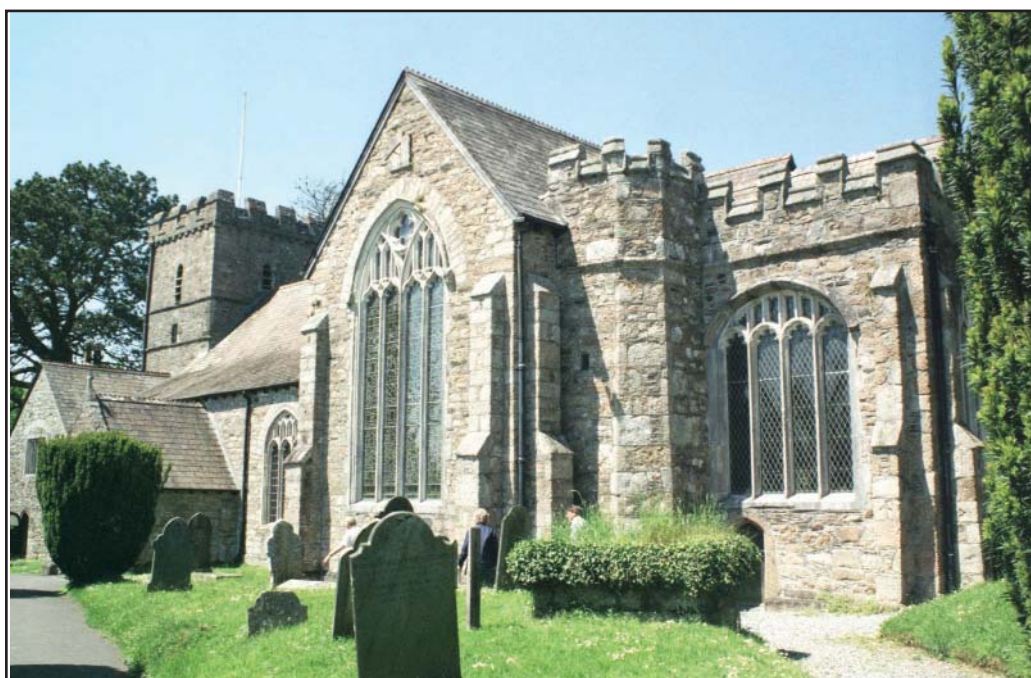
## Map 7 Conservation Area: Historic Quality and Integrity





## 4. Key Buildings

Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area number eleven in all; relatively few for a settlement of South Brent's size, but perhaps reflecting the late, 19th century, date of most of its historic buildings. On the other hand, South Brent was not included in the list resurveys carried out in the 1980's, so the list itself may not be truly representative of the village's listed building resource potential. Of the eleven buildings currently listed, seven are structures, including one of the lych gates, the K6 telephone kiosk, three chest tombs and a cross in the churchyard and the churchyard wall. The other four include the Church, the Manor House, the Toll House and the Anchor Inn. The Church is grade I and the remainder grade II, but whatever their grade they all contribute significantly towards the Area's special interest and character.



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Fig 17 St Petroc's Church

### St Petroc's Church: grade I

Set in a churchyard enclosure that occupies a somewhat detached location, and unrelated visually to the axis of the main village street, St Petroc's Church does not figure prominently in the village scene. Even from close-by it is well hidden by trees that easily reach above its massive but squat-looking tower. Although the tower survives from the 12th century and has Saxon fabric at its base, the rest of the Church dates from the 14th and 15th centuries and is perpendicular in style.

### 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.





*Fig 18 The Churchyard elevation of the Manor House*

### **The Manor House: grade II**

The former Manor House is the oldest domestic building surviving in the village and was originally built with an open hall around 1500. Its long and low form is typical of the larger farmhouses of the period, and with the outbuilding range now part of its accommodation, its appearance contributes towards the rather rural character of this part of the Conservation Area, adjacent to the churchyard and Church. Its main front, however, is somewhat concealed within the building's private grounds, so that its contribution towards the Area's character is unfortunately limited; particularly as it has a rather fine two-storey porch.

### **Town Farm**

This former farmhouse appears quite out of place in its essentially urban setting, facing the former market square on Fore Street with shops and inns close by. In this respect, its historic interest is considerable, while visually its rough-rendered elevation, sash windows and slated roof contribute positively towards the Area's character. It looks 19th century, but its use, and the evidence of a substantial stone stack, suggests its origins may be much earlier.



© DNPA

Fig 19 Town Farm



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Fig 20 The Anchor Inn

### The Anchor Inn: grade II

This former, early 19th century, coaching house occupies what is perhaps the most prominent corner site in the Conservation Area, facing the former market place next to where the old market building (the Cheape House) once stood. Its three-storey section heightens its visual presence, while its two-storey, hipped-roof porch, supported on monolithic granite piers, projects forward in a most eye-catching way to create an imposing visual focus. Its slated roofs, rendered elevations and multi-paned timber sashes are features that contribute positively towards its historic and architectural character.

© DNPA



### The Old Toll House: grade II

This small two-storey building has a quite unusual appearance, being a lean-to projection off the front elevation of 12 Church Street, and having a bellcote added to its raised-up, half-gabled end. The bell it houses originally belonged to the Cheape House, and was set here following its demolition in the 19th century. The Toll House itself was built in the late 18th or early 19th century to collect tolls for the market when it was held at the end of Church Street and in Wellington Square. Although an old photograph of 1913 shows that at least the gable end was once rendered, its now exposed rubblestone walls serve to enhance the building's prominence in the street and draw attention to its former significance.

Fig 21 The Old Toll House

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Fig 22 The Pack Horse Hotel

### The Pack Horse Hotel

With one of the longest street elevations in the settlement, the 19th century façade of this reputedly 17th century coaching inn is made all the more impressive by the rusticated quoins and long string course which tend to emphasise its length. A large stable block associated with its use in the coaching era was unfortunately destroyed in 1975.





© DNPA

Fig 23 Bowling House



© DNPA

Fig 24 52 Church Street

### Bowling House

Although apparently refashioned in the 1920's or 30's when the raised quoin, string course, door hood and raised window reveals were introduced to contrast with a rendering of pebbledash, this is nevertheless one of the smartest, essentially 19th century, houses in the Conservation Area, occupying a very prominent location in the angle of Totnes and Plymouth Roads. Its six-panelled door, timber sash windows and dentilled eaves cornice are particular features that enhance both the building's and the Area's architectural quality.

### 52 Church Street

This house is typical of the type of dwelling that dominates the Conservation Area, although it is one of a diminishing number that still retains its original, multi-paned, painted-timber, vertical-sliding sash windows (The crown glass panes and the absence of horns from its upper sashes are of particular significance in evidencing their originality). Although most of the smaller houses have plain, recessed doorways, No 52 is one of the very few with a doorcase surround that has a genuinely vernacular character.

### Wellington House

This is one of only a few larger, early 19th century houses that have three-window fronts, which are, typically, not quite symmetrical. Its rendered elevations and slated roof are also typical, but the decorative treatment of the entrance door and ground floor windows is quite unusual. The windows themselves, however, are 20th century replacements of what originally would have been multi-paned, vertical sliding sashes.

© DNPA



Fig 25 Wellington House

© DNPA



Fig 26 3 and 4 Totnes Road

### 3 and 4 Totnes Road

These two three-window fronted houses date from the late 19th century and show care being taken to achieve total symmetry of their elevations – while the taller proportions of their windows add a certain elegance to their overall design. Both rendered and slated, their materials follow local tradition, while the string bands and bracketed door hoods add a touch more decoration than was normal in former times.



*Fig 27 Balmoral Villas, Station Road*

### **Balmoral Villas, Station Road**

This pair of semi-detached villas, together with Culloden Villa and Nelson Terrace nearby, was built after coming of the railway in the late 19th century. In an architectural sense, the group probably comprises the most elegantly designed houses in the village; suitably restrained in terms of their ornamentation and therefore blending well with the pattern of simplicity that generally prevails. Their rendered walls, slated roofs and multi-paned sashes are particularly important features.

### **The signal box**

The signal box was built sometime around the time of the amalgamation of the South Devon and Great Western Railways in 1876. It stands at the eastern end of the former station. It is a Saxby and Farmer type 4 signal box, constructed of brick, with weatherboarded gables, a slate roof and elongated iron spearhead finials at each end of the ridge. It is an important reminder of South Brent's railway period.



## 5. Local Details and Street Furniture

As so many of South Brent's buildings front directly onto the pavement, and because most of the houses amongst them are quite modest in scale, there are few examples of walls along front garden boundaries, or of ironwork railings protecting narrow thresholds along house fronts. Walls of note are near the edge of the Conservation Area on each of the radiating streets. Those enclosing the former barracks between Totnes and Plymouth roads are the most imposing, particularly the length on the Plymouth Road side which stands more than four metres high at its corner [Fig 28 below]. Adding to its visual impact is the retaining wall that extends the length of the old school site next door, which has an impressively long run of ironwork railings along its top. A more suburban appearance is associated with a series of walls in Station Road since they front the gardens of the late 19th century villas located there and have hedges growing above them [Fig 27 page 30]. This is to be expected on the edge of the medieval core, but not so at the corner where Church Street turns towards Wellington Square, where the suburban character of the walls and gardens there tend to look out of place in an essentially urban setting [Fig 29 page 32].

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Fig 28 The former Barracks Wall on Plymouth Road

Perhaps the most significant wall in the area is the one that runs the length of the churchyard between its two lych gates. Included as a listed building for its group value, it dates from c1800 and has dressed granite coping stones which the list description suggests probably came from the church [Fig 30 page 32]. Of the two lych gates, the one to the north is listed on account of its apparently earlier age (probably 18th century, although its pyramidal roof was restored in the 20th century) [Fig 31 page 33], but the materials of both (granite and slate), as well as their traditional appearance, contribute positively towards the character and interest of this part of the Conservation Area.



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Fig 29 Suburban-looking garden walls in Church Street



© DNPA

Fig 30 Part of the Churchyard Wall

Other granite structures are rare, the only monument-like example being the inscribed stone in Wellington Square that has a sundial on top made from an early street lantern (which in combination commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond and Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilees) [Fig 32 page 33]. Away from the street, and quite architectural in form, are a number of tomb chests in the churchyard, of which three dating from the late 17th or 18th century are listed [Fig 33 page 33].



© DNPA



Fig 31 The listed lych gate

© DNPA



Fig 32 The Commemorative Stone in Wellington Square

© DNPA



Fig 33 One of the churchyard Chest Tombs

Although old photographs show that most were formerly cobbled, pavements are now generally tarmac or concrete slabs, though small areas of decorative brick pavers survive beneath the Anchor Inn porch and in front of Malborough House in church Street [Fig 34 page 34]. Granite kerbstones do, however, edge most of them, while the granite setts used to surface the pedestrianised area in Wellington Square appear wholly appropriate next to the restored cobbles within the area of the original





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Fig 34 Decorative brick paving outside Malborough House



© DNPA

Fig 35 Cobbled pavement restored

pavements and in the pavement opposite the Lych gate in Prospect Place [Fig 35 above]. Off the public highway, historic surfaces are also to be found in the rear courts and along the passages that serve them, including one in Church Street where granite slabs were laid in 'tram-lines' to facilitate easier access by carts



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Fig 36 K6 Telephone Kiosk (Listed)



© DNPA

Fig 37 GR Post Box

© DNPA



*Fig 38 Railings at the Methodist Church*

Other items of interest which complement the Conservation Area's character include the K6 telephone kiosk against the Church Street elevation of the Anchor Inn [Fig 36 page 34], and the cast-iron post box set into the Station Road wall of the Post Office [Fig 37 page 34]. An early lamp post also survives outside Malborough House in Church Street [Fig 34 page 34], while good examples of ironwork railings survive along the frontage of the Methodist Church [Fig 38 left] and on Station Road where its original level was raised to cross over the railway bridge [Fig 39 below].

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*Fig 39 Railings in Station Road on the bridge approach*



## 6 Spaces and Views

Large open spaces and panoramic views are not part of South Brent's character. It is a compact village whose qualities are mainly urban and intimate. Its main streets are mostly lined with terraces without gardens, while a host of passages, alleyways and lanes penetrate through and between them – and are themselves enclosed by buildings.

### Spaces

Four spaces in the Conservation Area contribute towards the settlement's historic interest and visual character, three of which flow one into the other:

- 1 the former area of the village market place, including Fore Street and the broader sections of Station Road and of Church Street where the Cheape House once stood [Fig 40 below].
- 2 the churchyard of St Petroc's [Fig 41 page 37]
- 3 the space in the foreground of the main churchyard entrance [Fig 42 page 37]
- 4 the enlarged highway, now mostly pedestrianised, known as Wellington Square [Fig 43 page 38]

### Views

South Brent's enclosed streets and courtyards are a source of many delightful views and glimpses that epitomise its tight-knit, compact form. Although limited in extent, there are nevertheless a number of views that include the significant elements of its landscape setting.

- 1 characterising South Brent's landscape setting close to the foothills of Dartmoor's fringe, is the view NW along Church Street towards Aish Ridge [Fig 44 page 39]
- 2 characterising South Brent's extensive burgage plot developments is this representative passageway glimpse off Church Street [Fig 45 page 39]
- 3 characterising South Brent's landscape setting adjacent to the meadowland on the banks of the Avon (after the river has left the confines of its moorland valley), is this view S from the lane beside St Dunstan's RC Church (This is where the pattern of the medieval strip fields still survives) [Fig 46 page 39].



© DNPA



Fig 40 The former Market Place

© DNPA

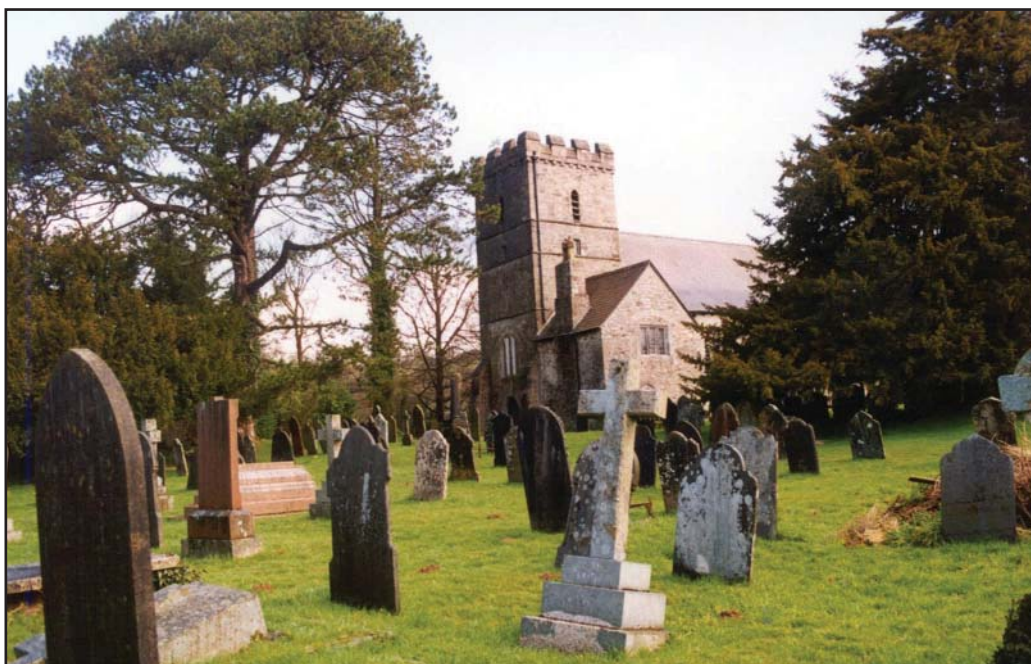


Fig 41 The Churchyard



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Fig 42 The space outside the churchyard entrance



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Fig 43 Wellington Square



© DNPA



Fig 44 View towards Aish Ridge

© DNPA



Fig 45 Glimpse down Passageway

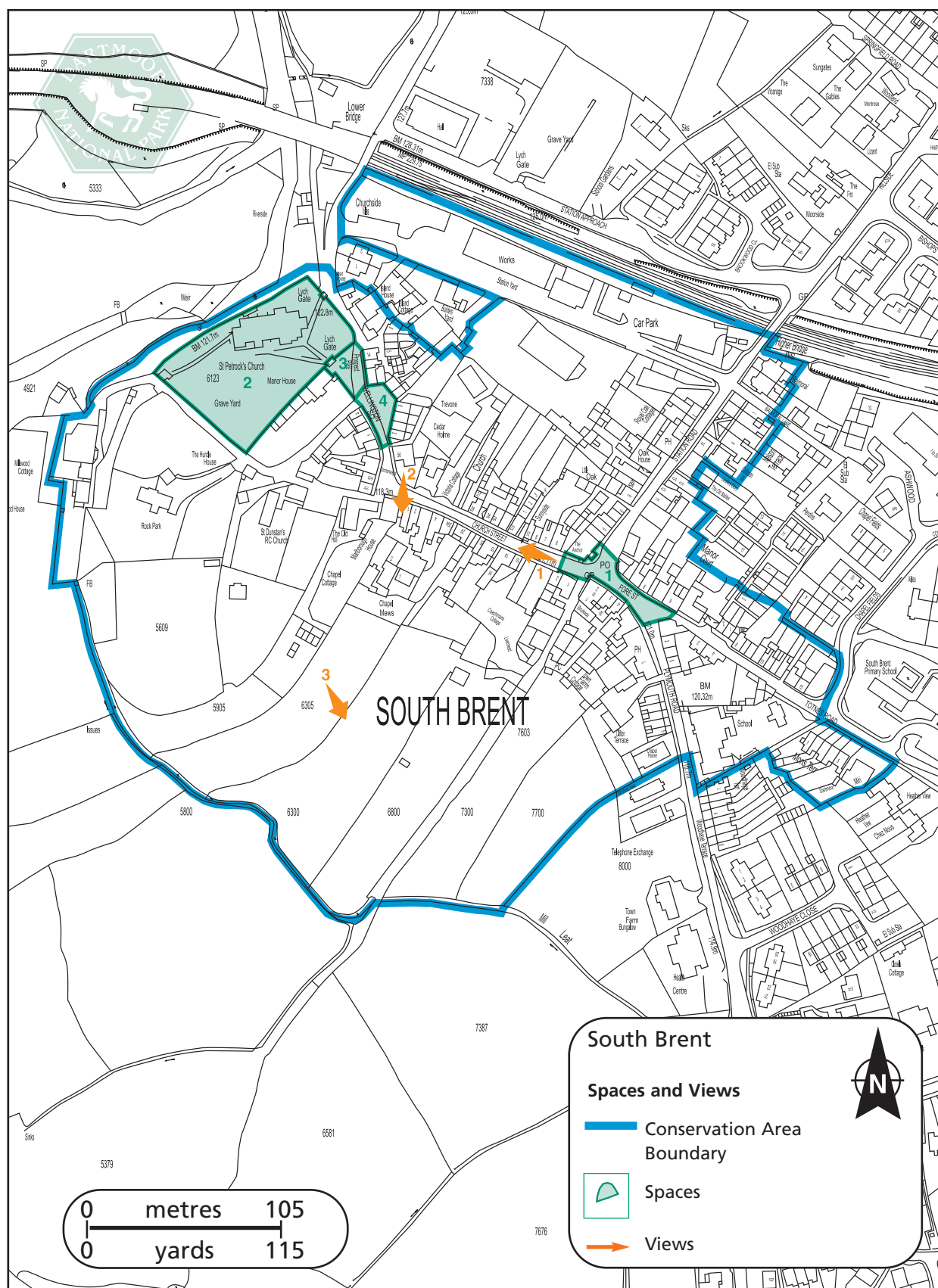
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Fig 46 View towards Strip Fields



## Map 8 Spaces and Views



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## 7. Modern Development

Modern, late 20th century, development has occurred in just a few locations within the Conservation Area along three of the principal streets (Church Street, Station Road and Totnes Road) and in a few isolated pockets behind the frontage properties in Church Street. To the east of the Area, however, behind the properties in Station Road and Totnes Road, the fields have been extensively developed and blur the extent of the village's medieval form.

The new buildings behind the frontage properties in Church Street are largely hidden from public view, but even where visible their location appears in character with the established tradition of burgage plot development (e.g. Chapel Mews when glimpsed from the lane near St Dunstan's RC Church)

Of the buildings constructed along the principal streets, perhaps the most successfully integrated are the houses associated with the Manor Court development, being of appropriate scale, located at the back of the pavement and with access to the rear through an arched opening [Fig 47 below]. Much less successful, however, are the pair of houses built opposite the Royal Oak in Station Road, where their three-storey height, prominent garage doors and wide-open forecourt appear incongruous in their immediate setting. On the other hand, while the more recent house built nearby is located at the back of the pavement, its design in the style of a non-domestic building is somewhat misplaced, since buildings of this character are not to be found along the village's principal streets. Much more negative in their impact on the Area's historic and architectural character, however, are the few modern shopfronts whose scale, materials and detailing do not reflect the classical traditions of earlier examples which otherwise prevail.

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Perhaps the most damaging of all developments in modern times (in terms of eroding the Area's interest and character) has been the removal of original timber doors and windows and their replacement with PVCu and aluminium types. Rather than making them less damaging in their impact, those made to mimic older styles through the insertion of plastic strips between their sealed double glazing, tend to denigrate the style and craftsmanship of the original examples that still survive.

Fig 47 Manor Court Frontage on Totnes Road

## 8. Archaeological Potential

South Brent is a parish rich in prehistoric monuments and although no prehistoric features or artifacts have been located within the conservation area, the possibility for this to occur cannot be overlooked. A fine flint flake was found SE of Lydia Bridge and a scatter of flint artifacts is believed to have been found just north of the railway line at Hillside.

The parish church is dedicated to the 6th century Welsh missionary, St Petroc which suggests early medieval activity in the area. The parish church was certainly in existence by the 12th century (list description), although the parish history (G. Wall: The Book of South Brent) suggests there is Saxon manor somewhere in the vicinity as South Brent is recorded as being in the ownership of Buckfast Abbey at the time of the Conquest, 1066. The seven houses which, together with the church, seem to have made up the village in 1247 were probably located in this area. The churchyard and its immediate environs therefore have significant archaeological potential.

Although never attaining the status of a medieval borough, South Brent does exhibit characteristics of medieval town planning in the form of narrow burgage plots extending back from the main Fore Street/Church Street frontage. These are likely to have developed in the late 13th - mid 14th century, when a fair was established at South Brent. The boundaries of the burgage plots are therefore of archaeological interest, but it was common in medieval and later times to use the rear of the plots for industrial or even domestic use. Indeed a ropewalk is recorded in such a location north of Church Street in the mid 19th century. Archaeological trial trenching at the rear of the Co-op at the junction of Church Street and the lane opposite Station Road produced pottery of a medieval date.

At the west end of the conservation area is the site of Millswood, which appears to have been a woollen mill in the 17th century (G.Wall), but which also served as a paper mill, grist mill and flock mill (Historic Environment Record). It is likely that the land surrounding this may have been the site of ancillary buildings and structures.



## 9. Trees

The Conservation Area is dominated by the tightly packed urban plan. Consequently green areas and areas of mature trees are few and found only at the margins of the Conservation Area.

There are two important green areas within the Conservation Area. The first is in and around the immediate vicinity of the churchyard. Here there is good mature tree coverage varying from the formality of the mature yews, cedars and pines within the churchyard to the more natural mixed woodland on the banks of the Avon on the north-west. The second area is that of the strip fields. The lack of public access along this area and their limited visibility from within the Conservation Area reduce their public amenity value but none the less it is a physical link between the built environment and the rural. The hedge banks enclosing the strip fields are important in respect to their age and habitat value.

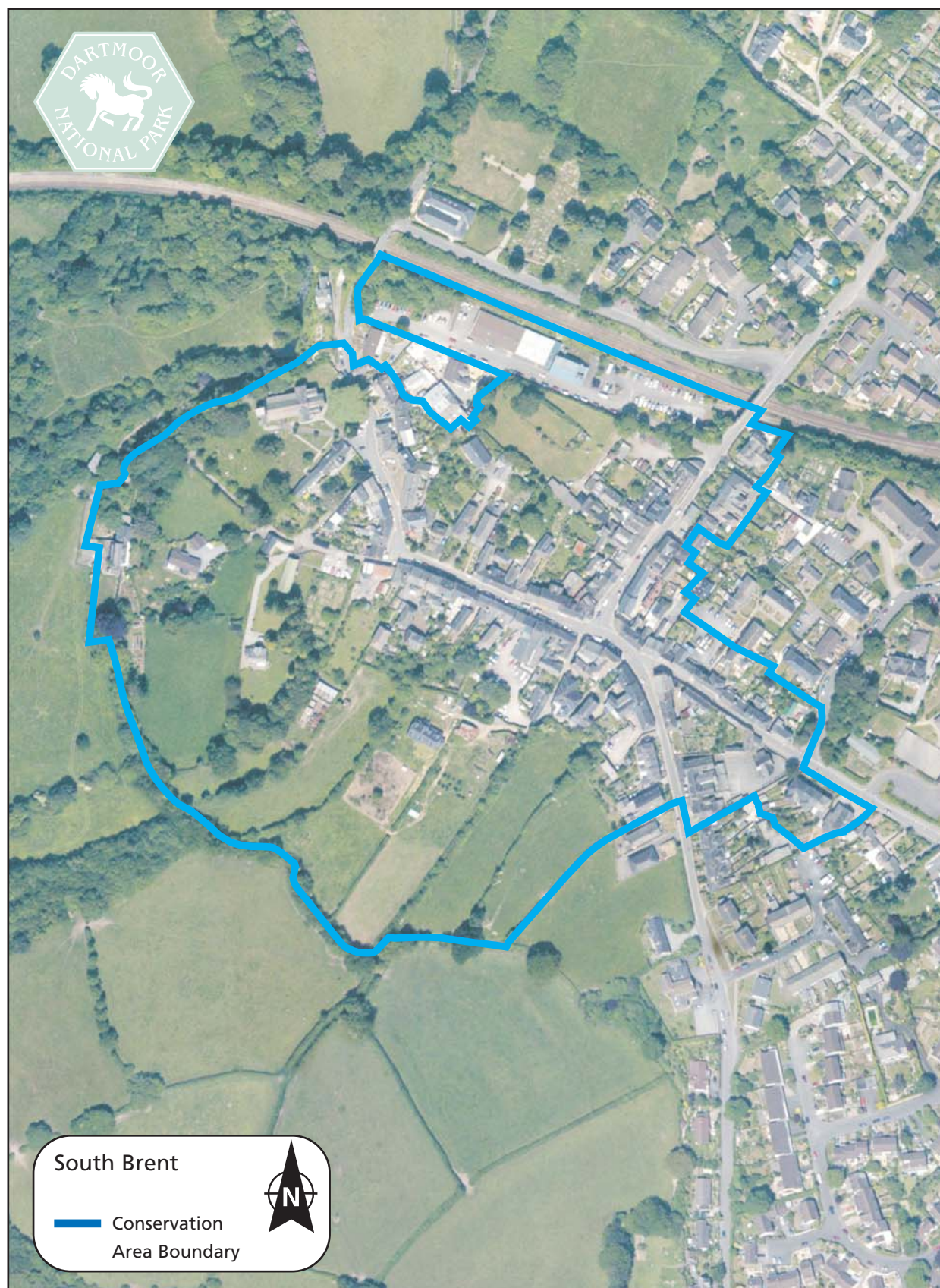
Other specimen trees of note are the mature yew at the Totnes Road entrance to the Old School and a group of mature pines on the opposite side of the road.

Outside the Conservation Area the trees growing around Brent Island and along the railway line contribute to 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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Cartographic Engineering 2006



[illegible]

## Tree Survey: South Brent Conservation Area

(see Tree Survey map page 46)

Number	Species	Age Class	Number	Species	Age Class
1.	Cedar	Mature	50.	Linear group of broadleaves	Semi-mature
2.	Yew	Mature	51.	Linear group of broadleaves	Semi-mature
3.	Broadleaved woodland	Mature	52.	Group of ash	Semi-mature
4.	Yew	Semi-mature	53.	Oak	Mature
5.	Yew	Semi-mature	54.	Ash	Mature
6.	Yew	Semi-mature	55.	Horse chestnut	Semi-mature
7.	Yew	Semi-mature	56.	Apple	Semi-mature
8.	Yew	Semi-mature	57.	Apple	Semi-mature
9.	Rowan	Semi-mature	58.	Apple	Semi-mature
10.	Yew	Mature	59.	Cypress	Young
11.	Oak	Mature	60.	Cypress	Young
12.	Oak	Semi-mature	61.	Sweet chestnut	Young
13.	Yew	Semi-mature	62.	Yew	Mature
14.	Pine	Mature	63.	Pine	Mature
15.	Sycamore	Semi-mature	64.	Pine	Mature
16.	Pine	Mature	65.	Pine	Mature
17.	Sweet chestnut	Young	66.	Hornbeam	Semi-mature
18.	Beech	Young	67.	Hornbeam	Young
19.	Cherry	Semi-mature	68.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature
20.	Cypress	Semi-mature	69.	Birch	Young
21.	Yew	Mature	70.	Birch	Young
22.	Pine	Mature	71.	Ash	Young
23.	Group of conifers and broadleaves	Semi-mature and mature	72.	Cypress	Semi-mature
24.	Eucalyptus	Mature	73.	Pittosporum	Semi-mature
25.	Ash	Semi-mature	74.	Group of conifers	Mature
26.	Group of cherry and ash	Semi-mature	75.	Horse chestnut	Semi-mature
27.	Oak	Mature	76.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature
28.	Hawthorn	Semi-mature	77.	Cypress	Young
29.	Hawthorn	Semi-mature	78.	Hawthorn	Young
30.	Holly	Semi-mature	79.	Willow	Semi-mature
31.	Holly	Semi-mature	80.	Cherry	Semi-mature
32.	Linear group of ash	Semi-mature	81.	Apple orchard	Semi-mature
33.	Group of conifers and broadleaves	Semi-mature and mature	82.	Cedar	Young
34.	Group of conifers and broadleaves	Semi-mature and mature	83.	Cypress	Young
35.	Eucalyptus	Mature	84.	Cherry	Young
37.	Group of conifers and broadleaves	Semi-mature	85.	Amalancier	Young
38.	Cherry	Semi-mature	86.	Cherry	Young
39.	Holly	Semi-mature	87.	Cherry	Young
40.	Group of conifers	Semi-mature and mature	88.	Hornbeam	Semi-mature
41.	Group of conifers and broadleaves	Semi-mature and mature	89.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Young to semi-mature
42.	Hawthorn	Semi-mature	90.	Horse chestnut	Mature
43.	Ash	Semi-mature	91.	Horse chestnut	Mature
44.	Whitebeam	Young	92.	Rowan	Semi-mature
45.	Pear	Semi-mature	93.	Fig	Semi-mature
46.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature	94.	Horse chestnut	Mature
47.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature	95.	Ash	Mature
48.	Group of conifers and broadleaves	Mature	96.	Elm	Mature
49.	Group of mixed broadleaves	Semi-mature	97.	Linear group of cherry	Young
			98.	Hawthorn	Young
			99.	Cherry	Young
			100.	Ash	Semi-mature
			101.	Ash	Semi-mature
			102.	Group of willow and ash	Semi-mature



Number	Species	Age Class
103.	Spruce . . . . .	Young
104.	Hawthorn. . . . .	Young
105.	Ash . . . . .	Young
106.	Group of mixed . . . . . broadleaves	Semi-mature
107.	Sycamore . . . . .	Young
108.	Cherry. . . . .	Semi-mature
109.	Cherry. . . . .	Semi-mature
110.	Cherry. . . . .	Semi-mature

The survey was carried out from publicly accessible land.