

Colyford Interim Conservation Area Review

Purpose of the Review

There is a requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 of all local authorities to review their conservation areas and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Reviews must be carried out every five years as the character and appearance of a conservation area can change over even small periods of time. The purpose of this interim review is to identify the principal changes since the publication of the Conservation Area Appraisal and to outline potential changes to the conservation area boundary which will form part of a full consultation exercise when the draft Management Plan is produced.

Key recent changes in Colyford Conservation Area.

- Colyford Conservation Area has remained largely unchanged since the previous conservation area study in 1999. There are the normal development pressures for the open spaces, with applications for residential development on at least four sites.
- The village appears prosperous and well-maintained. The stone walls that are such a feature continue to be well-preserved and maintained. In addition to principal dwellings, out-buildings are generally cared for. The attached barn at Woodman's stoop has recently been re-thatched.



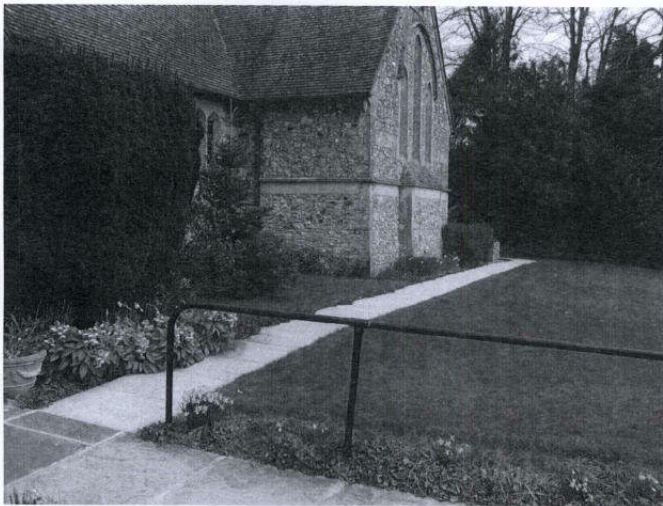
Recent re-thatching of a prominent barn in Colyford.



An increase in through traffic has the effect of dividing the southern and northern halves of the village.

- The views out from the village along the roads and at the various green spaces within the conservation area are splendid and have been well protected by planning constraints.
- The introduction of obtrusive road markings and traffic constraints such as centre bollards as seen in other conservation areas has not taken place. This helps preserve the appearance of the village. However this village is becoming increasingly blighted by fast through traffic. Road signage is increasing, is poorly designed and is being placed in a random manner.
- Provisions for car parking and traffic movement are very evident with front gardens converted to car parking, and some very wide visibility splays to side roads. Rose Bank has a forecourt and front garden entirely dedicated to car parking.

- Unfortunately PVCu windows have been installed in some key buildings through the conservation area. The cumulative impact of unsympathetic replacement windows has compromised the character and appearance of the village.
- The Chapel has had disabled access made by adding crude pipe railings to front path. These detract from the front entrance to the Chapel and from the gateway.
- There are listed buildings in the conservation area identified on the Buildings at Risk Register that are still in poor condition some years after the Listed Building survey reported this.



Utilitarian railings at St Michael's Chapel.

Potential review of conservation area boundary.

The existing conservation area boundary covers the linear historic area of the village. Development outside the boundary is mainly modern and does not meet criteria for inclusion. There are very few undeveloped areas within Built up Area Boundary which would benefit from Conservation area designation and therefore there appears to be no reason to extend the conservation area or to omit existing areas due to eroded character. This aspect of conservation area review will be fully considered during the consultation process.

Principle reasons for erosion or changes to conservation area character.

- Speed of traffic and traffic noise is blighting the village.
- Development pressure for new houses could result in the loss of the particular spacious character of this village and lose the significant gaps that provide views over Axe Vale. Loss of field patterns should be resisted.
- Significant mature trees are being lost. These contribute significantly to the character of the village. Where it is agreed that trees can be felled opportunities for replacement specimens should be properly considered.
- Over-enthusiastic renovation and installation of PVCu windows in key buildings is spoiling good buildings. New building work is using inappropriate materials, where use of local vernacular materials should be encouraged.

- Increase in signage at Coly Road junction is resulting in a mess of posts, bins, signs and seat on a prominent corner.
- Over-zealous health and safety compliance on new highways and developments have had a marked negative impact upon the conservation area. These include wide visibility splays,



Over-engineered new road junction on Elm Farm Lane.

COLYFORD

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with contributions from Town and Parish Councils and Amenity Societies in East Devon

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COLYFORD



Post Office and village shop; early 19th century stucco with attractive bow window frontage and traditional red 'K6' cast iron telephone kiosk.

1 HISTORIC AND TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1.1 Colyford is a linear settlement situated along a spur of slightly higher ground projecting into the flood plain of the River Axe, and undoubtedly has its origins as a convenient fording point until a bridge was built

1.2 The village was originally planned as a "new town" as early as the 13th century by Thomas Bassett, Lord of Colyton and even achieved borough status, a charter being granted to it before the reign of Edward I. The village retains the customs of the Ancient Borough. A Mayor is elected each year and the villagers 'beat the bounds' annually in October. A bridge is first recorded as having been built here in the mid 13th century. The village was the birthplace of Sir Thomas Gates, an early governor of Virginia between 1611 and 1614.

2 SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 The special character of the village led to designation of a conservation area in September 1990 within which are 20 individually listed buildings giving 15 separate list entries. Their location is shown on Map 1.

2.2 Colyford is an attractive and spacious village straddling the A 3052 Exeter to Lyme Regis road, and apart from a small dip at Stafford Brook, is on a gentle slope towards the River Coly crossed by a bridge at the eastern limit of the conservation area. It is close to the confluence of the River Axe, about a third of a mile to the east which is tidal as far as the Axe Bridge, also on the A 3052. The Axe valley is a broad flood plain north and east of the village, and tidal estuary for the final two miles to the mouth of the Axe at Seaton.

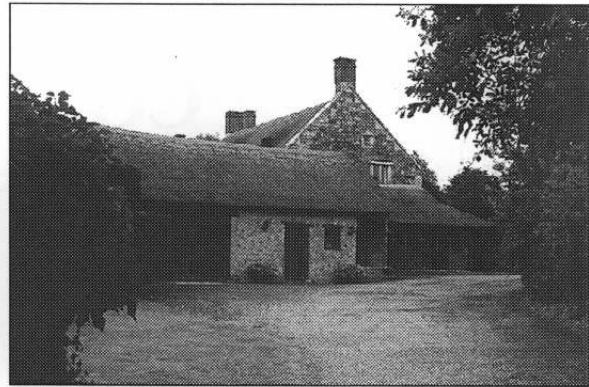
2.3 The south-east facing aspect of Colyford on slightly higher ground above the Axe vale, particularly in the eastern half of the village, provides extensive views with several significant gaps between buildings on the south side of Swan Hill Road.



19th century Chapel of Ease; stone-built with a plain tile roof.



A general view of Swan Hill Road - the main route through the village. The view shows the low density and informal grouping of earlier development interspersed with trees and grassed areas.



The Manor House; thatch, Beer stone dressings, and random stone rubble, mostly of chert.

3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Colyford lacks a coherent street pattern or continuous building frontages, yet there are several good small groups of cottages, often slightly angled to the carriageway, and able to be viewed against a backdrop of trees. The main road rises to a slight summit near to the diminutive Chapel of Ease and effectively separates the conservation area into two parts visually. In the western half in particular there is considerable survival of the ancient medieval Burgage Plots - narrow strips of land on either side of the main road, each having a road frontage.

3.2 A considerable amount of 20th century development has occurred within or immediately adjoining the conservation area, especially to the north of the A 3052; that at the east end of the village being very recent. To the south of the A 3052, there are very few instances of infilling. Included are a typical semi-detached pair of 1930's houses and a filling station with its 1950/60's character carefully preserved making it a rare survival. Otherwise the conservation area boundary defines a settlement pattern that has changed little since the 19th century and earlier with a remarkable and largely undisturbed survival of field patterns and apparently relatively ancient boundaries.

4 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

4.1 Tree cover within the conservation area is considerable and contributes significantly to its character. Coly House and land to the south of Manor House have a rich variety of mature deciduous and coniferous trees and shrubs, the latter of particular importance, as a prominent feature close to the heart of the village. There are also several good rows of trees, for example yews in Popes Lane and largely enclosing new housing at Kingsholme, which alleviates the impact of building materials not entirely compatible with the cottage groups nearby.

4.2 Inevitably, large scale development has given rise to a measure of suburbanisation in some parts of the village, especially where visibility lines require bland footpaths and extensive grass verges, but several lanes, for example Elm Farm Lane retain a strong sense of enclosure with a pleasant mix of natural stone walls and associated vegetation.

5 BUILDING MATERIALS AND ORNAMENT

5.1 Chert stone, usually in exposed random rubble form is the dominant traditional building material. It is sometimes used with brick dressings or Beer stone in the more important buildings. It is also extensively used in boundary walls. Examples of rendered cob and stucco are also to be found.

5.2 There are several examples of brick and tile, normally found in late 19th and early 20th century houses. Elsewhere roofing material is almost exclusively thatch or slate with the former slightly predominant. There are one or two examples of corrugated iron roofs, not uncommon in settlements in this part of the District.

5.3 Ornament is mainly confined to 18th/19th century classical detail in porches, gate piers and iron gates; there being a particularly fine example at a former entrance to the Manor House, but now showing definite signs of deterioration. In cottages there is a generally good survival of windows with narrow glazing bars and doors using traditional joinery methods.



An original entrance to Coly House with gate piers of ashlar Beer stone, but now the entrance to a small wooded open space known as 'Hilary's Garden'.

6 STREET FURNITURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

6.1 There are virtually no items of street furniture, apart from a K6 red telephone kiosk which was listed in 1988. During the field survey, no surviving evidence of ground surfaces were noted where traditional materials have been used or preserved or have been covered over and could be restored.



A generally well executed conversion of a former group of agricultural buildings. Dark-stained timber is said to be more durable and maintenance free than the more traditional use of white paint, but often looks visually incongruous.

7 SYNOPSIS OF IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

7.1 **St. Michael's Church** was built 1888-89 by R.M. Fulford and was originally intended as a private chapel. The exterior is brick and flint, and the nave and chancel faced with buff and red brick. The reredos is dated 1891.

7.2 There are a number of attractive buildings in the village, mostly cottages dating from the 17th century or earlier. There are also a scattering of early 19th century stuccoed houses, including the **Post Office Stores** which has corner pilasters with a channelled key pattern. The most important group of secular buildings includes the **Old Manor House** which is probably early 16th century in origin with open hall and floor inserted and extended in the 17th century. There are two fine 17th century open-well staircases, and several good 17th century fireplaces with chimney pieces and overmantles.

7.3 **Stafford Farm** is a well-preserved example of a 17th century farmhouse in an isolated position at the western extremity of the conservation area. Built of rendered rubblestone with freestone dressings it has 3 to 4 light ovolo-moulded stone mullioned and transomed windows with moulded panes. The raised stringcourses, coping to raised gables with moulded kneelers are also archetypical of the period. The rendered brick stacks at both gable ends have been rebuilt. As well as the farmhouse, there is an important grouping of traditional farm buildings surrounding the house - one with a dovecote in its gable end.

7.4 Also worthy of mention is the **Colyford Filling Station** which was built in 1928 and retains in use a complete set of fuel pumps of the period under an original hipped canopy. It is one of the earliest preserved examples of a working filling station in England and as such attracts much fascination.

7.5 The **Railway Station**, just to the east of the conservation area and now part of the Seaton Tramway, is notable for its cast iron urinal.

7.6 **Hillside** was formerly a public house known as the Swan Inn. It still has the original slate roofed skittle alley alongside.



Stafford Farm is a well-preserved example of a 17th century farmhouse on the western approach to the village. It also has a good range of traditional outbuildings.

8 FEATURES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

8.1 The main features of Colyford conservation area which can be considered as most worthy of retention or enhancement in terms of their character are as follows:

- a general feeling of spaciousness engendered by the aspect of the village on a slight slope above the Axe valley
- the extensive use of chert in boundary walls, and sometimes attractive use of rubblestone, brick or render in buildings generally
- a sometimes sharp contrast, between built frontages and open countryside, especially in Pope's Lane.
- important frontage gaps giving good views across the Axe valley, more especially from the south side of Swan Hill Road
- gate piers and iron gates forming the entrance to the Manor House, and now within a site granted planning permission for residential development.
- fine specimen trees, particularly within the grounds of the Manor House.
- other important tree groups, and a small woodland area on higher ground to the north-east
- a scattering of cottages with modest vernacular features, not yet compromised by inappropriate replacements

- both the village shop and petrol filling station have discreet signage and restrained commercial frontages; the latter having retained a definite and rarely encountered character with a complete restored set of 1950's petrol pumps.*

[* This may be a reflection of the preserved tramway a few hundred yards to the east, which follows the line of the former Seaton Junction to Seaton branch railway line which was closed to trains in March 1966, but reopened as a tramway from Seaton in 1970 and extended to Colyton in 1980].



Popes Lane is bounded by walls built of chert, typical of many in the village. The brick and tile houses on the left are early 20th century, attractively sited and with rear vehicular access.

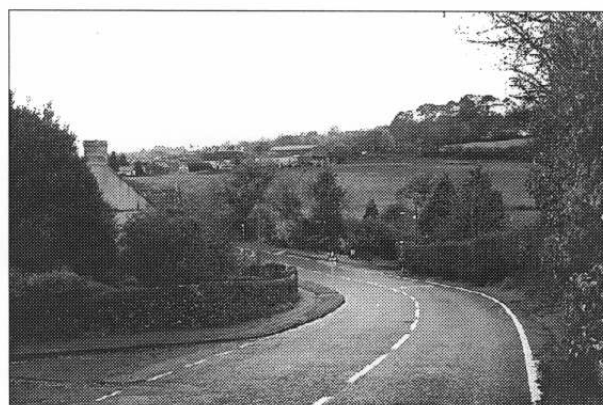


An unusual survival of a largely unaltered and carefully restored 1920's petrol filling station.

9 LOSS OF CHARACTER AND INTRUSION

The main elements within the conservation area which are tending to, or are likely to lead to a compromising of character are as follows:

- the proposed prominent development site within the curtilage of the Manor House and fronting the main street close to the centre where some of the finest specimen trees within the village are situated. It should be possible to ensure that the gate piers and iron gates are retained and restored from their present somewhat neglected state.
- extensive overhead power lines running along the main street
- a new housing estate in red brick and tile, which although well screened by existing trees, cannot be considered compatible with most traditional building materials within the village
- a small but prominent green space at the junction between Swan Hill Road and Fair View Lane which is nevertheless somewhat bare and featureless
- through traffic which, especially in busy periods, is disruptive. The spacious layout of the village is mostly able to absorb this since few buildings front directly onto the carriageway. The junction by the village shop appears to present the greatest traffic hazard.



A 19th century stuccoed house and gate piers (top) is possibly a former toll house. Although not listed, it is a dominant feature from the highway at the western edge of the village. Just beyond (above) are open views with the gable end of Stafford Farm on the left of the picture.

10 SUMMARY

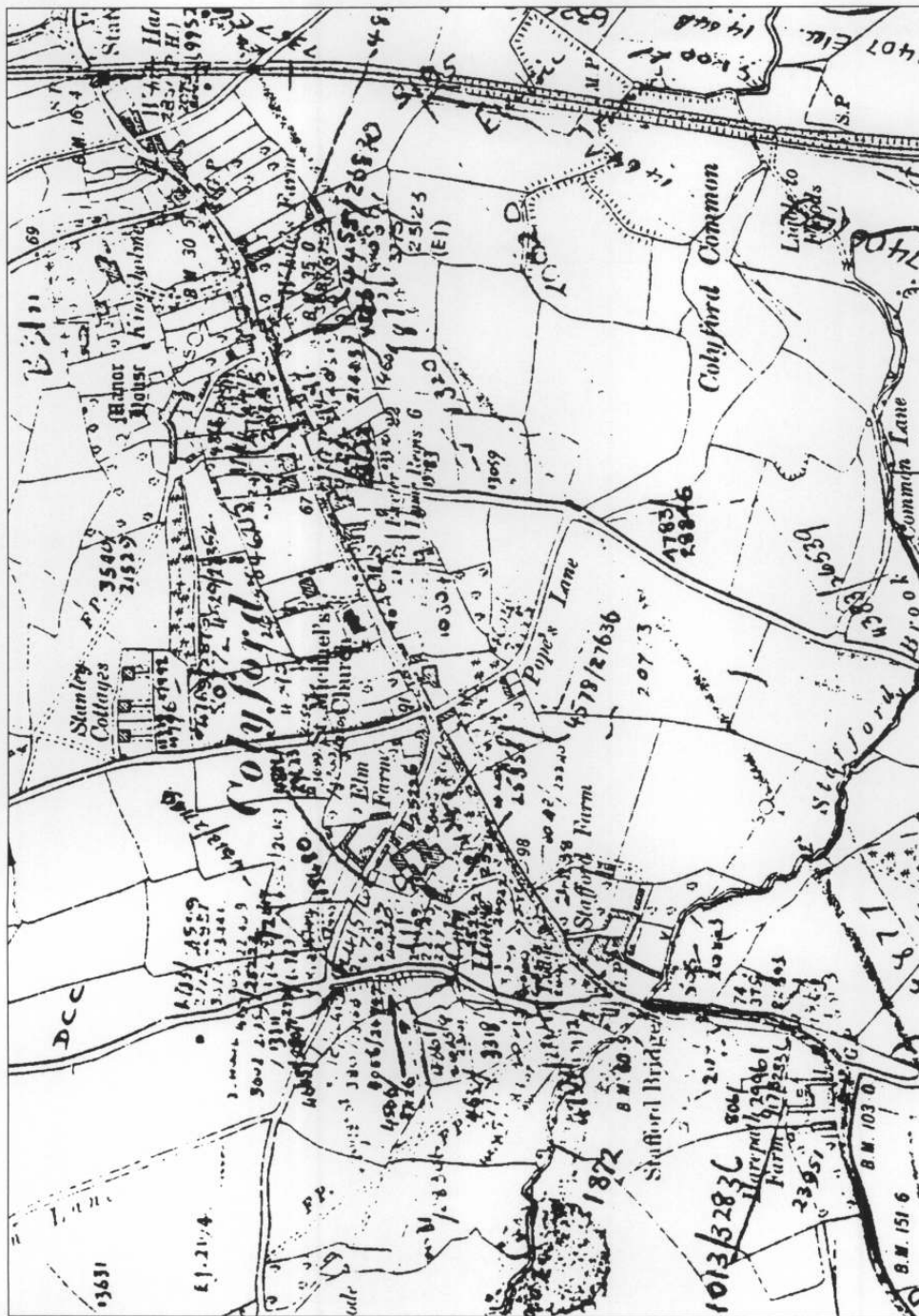
10.1 Although a somewhat unco-ordinated village with no strong focal point there are many individual attractive features. In view of the recent somewhat incongruous new housing at Kingsholme and further development pressure evidenced by a prime site allocated for future housing at the village centre, there is clearly a strong case for a better appreciation of the existing character of the village.

10.2 Awareness of the locally available materials that have been used and respect for vernacular detail and other components that contribute to the overall character of the conservation area, especially the surviving chert boundary walls, could ensure that future housing developments are more compatible with the quality of surviving traditional buildings and respect their integrity.

HISTORIC MAPS



1805 Devon County Survey:

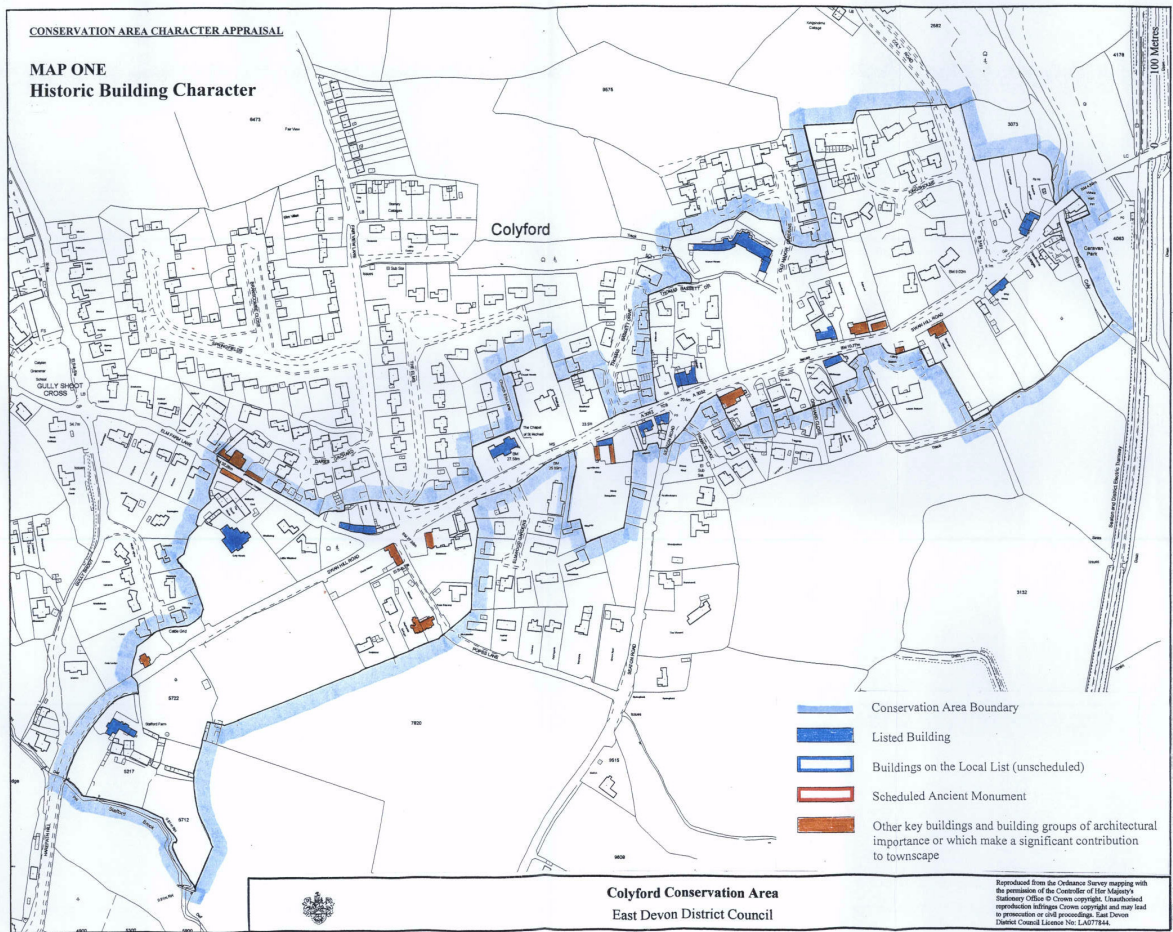


Ordnance Survey Second Edition or Provisional Edition. Scale originally 6 inches to the mile (scale may be altered for the purpose of fitting the report)



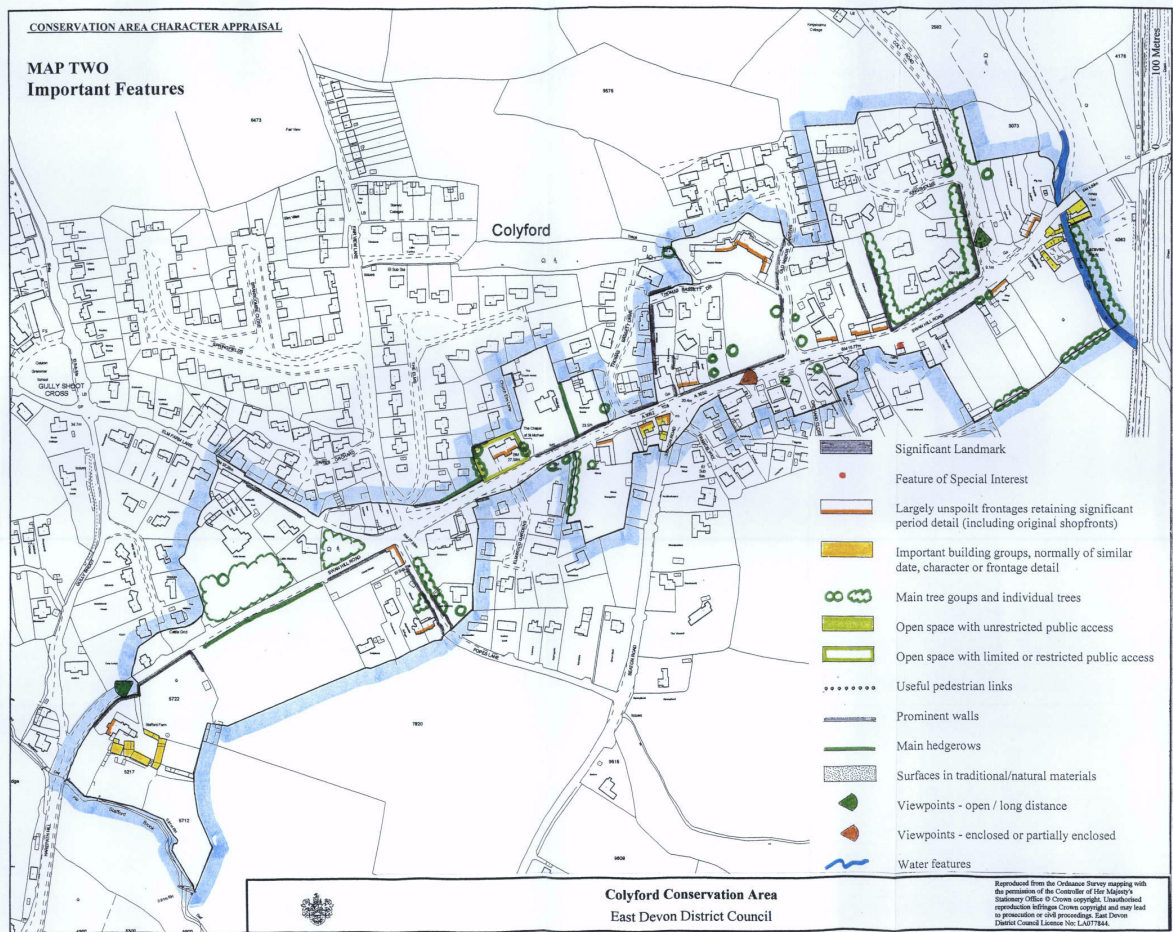
CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP ONE
Historic Building Character



CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP TWO
Important Features

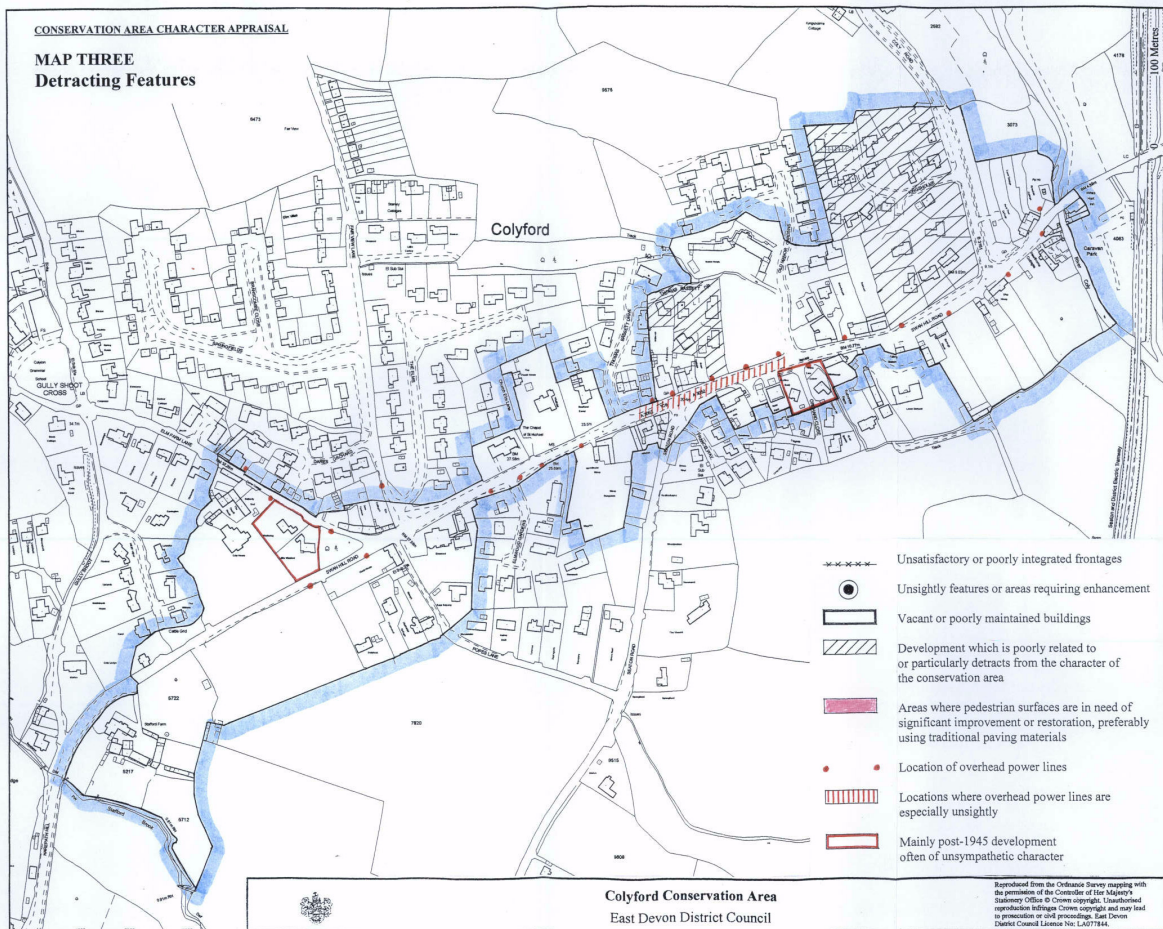


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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP THREE
Detracting Features

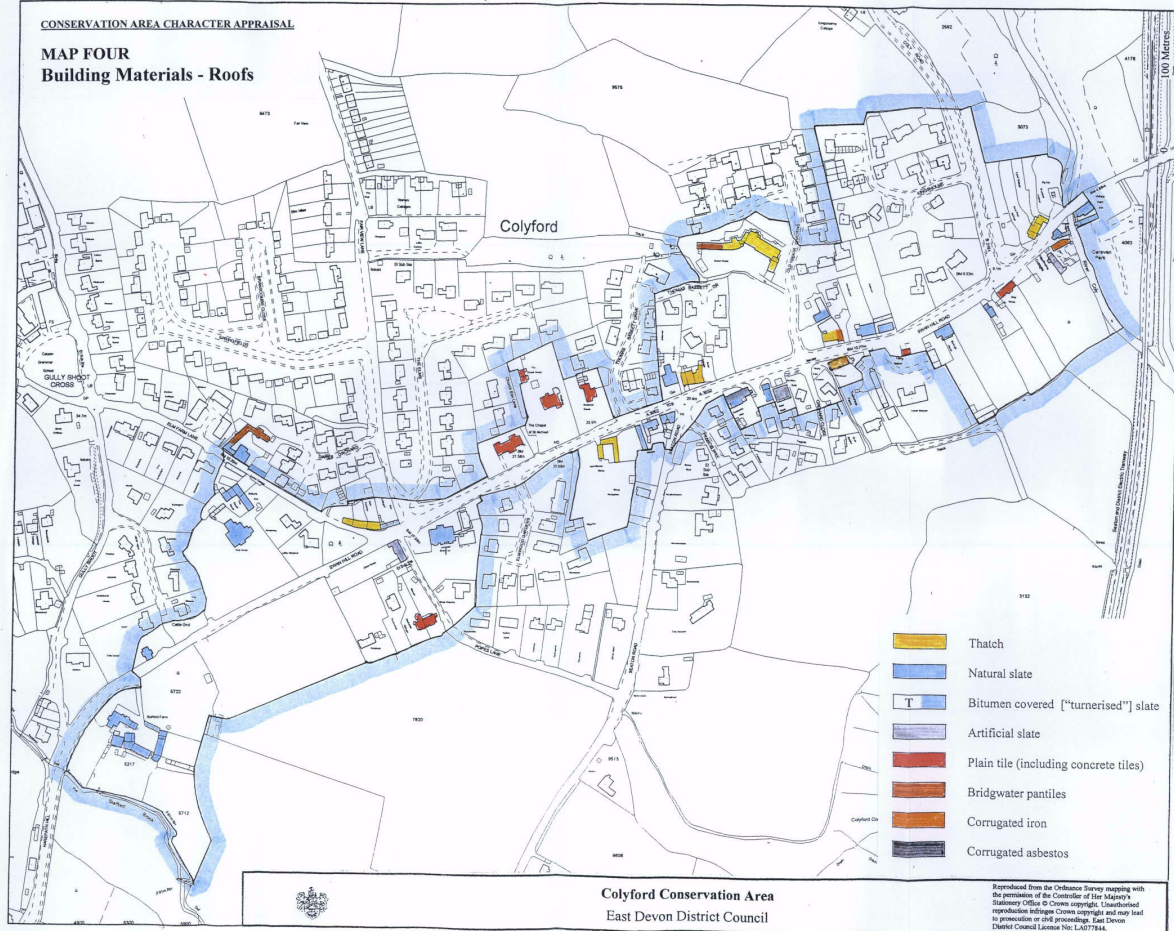


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MAP FOUR

Building Materials - Roofs



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CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

MAP FIVE
Building Materials - Walls

