

# ILMINSTER CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



**SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL  
2016**



**Approved by Area West Committee  
7<sup>th</sup> December 2016 & 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

### **Introduction**

Conservation areas are areas of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local authorities to identify appropriate parts of their areas, to designate them as conservation areas and to keep them under review. Historic areas are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to our cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for the conservation and enhancement of areas of architectural and historic interest is well established. By suggesting continuity and stability, such areas provide points of reference in a rapidly changing world: they represent the familiar and cherished local scene. Over 9000 have been designated nationally since they were introduced in 1967 and there are over 80 in South Somerset

The Ilminster Conservation Area was first designated in 1973. The District Council is required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to define the special interest and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Conservation area appraisals contribute to the fulfilment of this requirement.

In order that designation is effective in conserving the special interest, planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the Conservation Area's character. Appraisals are therefore essential tools for the planning process and to manage informed intervention. They will provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for the relevant

development plan policies and development control decisions and will form the framework for effective management of change. The appraisal will help provide the District Council and the local community with a clear idea of what features and details contribute to the special character of the conservation area. The more clearly the character or special interest of a conservation area is defined, the easier it is to manage without damaging that interest.

The appraisal document follows the recommendations in Historic England Advice Note 1 – Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and management dated February 2016

### **Summary of special interest - the area's key characteristics**

- Tight urban grain with well contained streets dominated by good quality listed buildings
- Sloping topography of the core town and views out to adjacent hills and open countryside
- Distinctive widespread use of local Moolham marlstone
- High quality ashlar stone houses and many historic shop fronts
- The Market a key focal point in the Market Place
- Minster Church of St Mary enclosed within its urban churchyard
- The church tower rising over the town and a feature visible from many points
- Widespread use of ironwork in railings and cresting to shopfronts
- Regency houses with round-arched central 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows
- Fine Ham stone door cases with broken pediments



*Cornhill*

### **Assessment of the special interest**

#### **Location and context**

Ilminster is situated along the southern side of a ridge close to the point at which the River Isle issues from the narrow valley formed between the Blackdown and Windwhistle foothills, about a mile east of the course of the Isle. The town is primarily a linear settlement aligned on an east-west axis, settled in the valley associated with the Shudrick Stream, with the core of the town concentrated upon the market place and church, which lie between the stream and the lower slopes of Beacon Hill. Nineteenth century maps indicate settlement growth around and adjacent this core, and along the main E-W through route (Station Road and Bay Hill). Recent residential growth has spread both north, south and southwest of the town centre, whilst a large employment area has developed to the west of the town, adjacent the confluence of the River Isle and Shudrick stream corridors, and convenient for access to the major road network.

#### **Historic development**

Ilminster sits along a ridge which drops down to the fertile Isle Valley. The town's growth pattern has been dominated by the topography, and its economy by the availability of both fast flowing streams and level meadowland. The area is geologically complex, with marl, limestones, sandstones and chalk strata available for quarrying.

There is some evidence of both prehistoric and Roman activity in the area, in the shape of isolated artefact finds.

Unfortunately, these are not well provenanced and it is difficult to be certain whether the site of Ilminster itself was occupied in these periods. As it lies astride a ridgeway and, in the Roman period, was only a few miles from the Fosse Way, occupation cannot be ruled out.

There is documentary evidence of a Saxon minster and settlement at Ilminster (Ile Mynister - the minster on the River Isle). The earliest certain reference to the site is King Ethelred's Confirmation of 995, which returned the estates to the Benedictine Muchelney Abbey after a time of disturbance. The wording of this document implies an earlier origin for Ilminster, and a charter of 693 may record the original estate grant. However, the 725 "Charter of King Ine" is now thought to be a later forgery, perhaps medieval, or perhaps 10th century and part of the dispute which led to the issue of Ethelred's Confirmation (Bond, c1990). The early estate centred on Ilminster was extensive: the parish of Ilminster was the most important in the Hundred of Abdick and Bulstone in the late Saxon period. The place names of the surrounding area - Ilton, Dillington, Whitelackington, Dinnington, for example - suggest that a network of estates and estate settlements existed: of these, Dillington was certainly part of the abbey's estates and allied to Ilminster.

After the Conquest, attempted rebellion brought serious consequences for some of Ilminster's neighbours, including Donyatt, Dowlish and Whitelackington. But the town itself, being a church possession, was largely spared. Domesday records an affluent estate, with a good deal of woodland (some of which may have been attached to Neroche Forest to the west), and the beginnings of a town in the shape of a market rated at twenty shillings a year. Muchelney remained in possession of the manorial rights, rents, the tithes and the church itself until the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and presided over the growth of the medieval town. In 1201, a deal struck between Muchelney and Wells inaugurated the 'golden age' of Ilminster (Street, 1904): the abbots of Muchelney gained status as prebends, Wells gained the rectory and much of the revenues, and both institutions protected and encouraged the town - though they never allowed a free borough to be established. Ilminster was extremely prosperous by the later medieval period, and the 15th century parish church and Grammar School bear witness to this. The town's prosperity was largely based on the textile industry, but it was also an important local market centre.



*St Mary's Church*

Between the late 15th and the late 17th centuries Ilminster suffered a series of setbacks. The first of these was a major fire in 1491, which seems to have damaged the town's economy. According to Collinson (1791), Ilminster was never completely rebuilt after this catastrophe. Only a few decades later, the Dissolution of the Monasteries disrupted the running of the town. The abbots' rights were split up into the Lordship of the Manor, the rectorial tithes and the advowson of the vicarage, and the 16th and 17th centuries saw a series of absentee Lords of the Manor. As well as the disruption of the Civil War, in 1661 there was another major fire, this one being followed by appeals read up and down the country. Despite all this, Ilminster was still the fourth largest town in Somerset in 1670 (as shown by the hearth tax returns). Prosperity continued into the 18th century and Collinson described two irregular streets with about 300 houses, many of which were "decent stone and brick".



The town was both a market centre (noted for leather in the post-medieval period) and a centre of the cloth industry, ropemaking and gloving (though many of the actual sites of activity were in the outlying areas along the rivers). It was also surrounded by orchards. Ilminster benefited from the increasing traffic on the turnpiked London to Exeter route which passed through the town.

Ilminster's population was declining at the beginning of the 19th century, but it took off in the 1820s and 1830s. The town then

thrived throughout the 19th century, aided by the arrival of the Chard Canal (briefly) and then the Railway. Braggs Directory described a town "much improved by many new houses" by the 1840s, and Hunts 1848 Directory mentions improvements to the market. There were then two weekly markets and quarterly and annual livestock fairs, but the Directory says that the woollen trade was almost gone, and that the silk factory and maltings were the town's staple industry at the time. Population growth continued up to the 1870s. Though the failure of the canal adversely affected some of the ventures that had been set up around the town, notably at Dowlish Ford and Moolham, population remained steady, and a brewery and the artificial stone works took the place of failed industries. Ilminster remains a small market town. It now lies within commuting distance of larger towns such as Taunton and Yeovil and since the 1950s, its population has again been steadily increasing.

### **Archaeology**

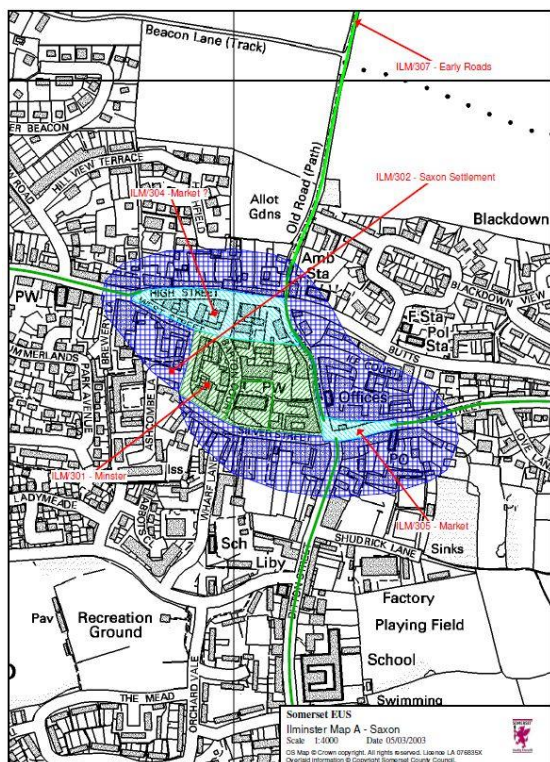
There is no evidence (as yet) for prehistoric or Roman settlement on the site of the town itself although there have been isolated finds of bronze age artefacts and Roman material nearby.

In later Saxon times, as one of the heartlands of the kings of Wessex, Somerset played an important part in the early re-urbanisation of the south, and there are a number of places which can claim to have been towns before the Norman Conquest. This list includes Ilminster where the probable or possible existence of a pre-Conquest market has been noted along with possible signs of pre-Conquest planning. Ilminster is also associated with a known or probable pre-Conquest minster.

The street pattern of the early town has been somewhat obscured by later developments.

However, the focus of routes at the market and what was presumably the minster gates appears to be early. One of the main fields of interest in Ilminster is the establishment of the early street lines. Very little is known about the minster. The topography and street plan suggest the southern, south-eastern and south-western limits, but the northern extent of the precinct is not clear. The Triangle may represent the vestigial remains of a very open area which was built up in the medieval and later periods. However, it is also possible that the minster precinct extended as far as High Street. This minster precinct boundary may be archaeologically detectable and its establishment is important to the understanding of the early development of the town. Within the minster precinct, there may be remains of the early church, burials and buildings associated with the abbey's administration of the town. The suggestion that the medieval church's cruciform plan reflects the original minster plan (Bond, c1990) may imply that the older church directly underlies the present building. The original extent of the churchyard is not known: it is possible that burials underlie areas later encroached upon and developed commercially. The character and extent of associated buildings is also unclear: they may, however, have included high status timber or stone buildings.

The precise location and extent of the Saxon settlement at Ilminster has not been established.



*The possible Saxon settlement*

It may be that the main focus of activity was around the present market area at the crossroads, but this remains to be archaeologically established. Any surviving archaeology of this period is likely to be ephemeral in character, consisting principally of the remains of timber buildings. Since the suggested settlement areas underlie the centre of the medieval and later town, much may already have been lost.

The market is probably of Saxon origin, though its original extent is unclear. By its nature, the early market would have been largely open. However, there are likely to have been small structures associated with commercial activity. Certainly, in the post-medieval period, the market was bisected by shambles stretching nearly 100m eastward up the centre. These are shown on the 18th century map and were still in existence when Collinson described the town in 1791. They were demolished in the 19th century, during refurbishment of the market place: the present market house also dates from the early 19th

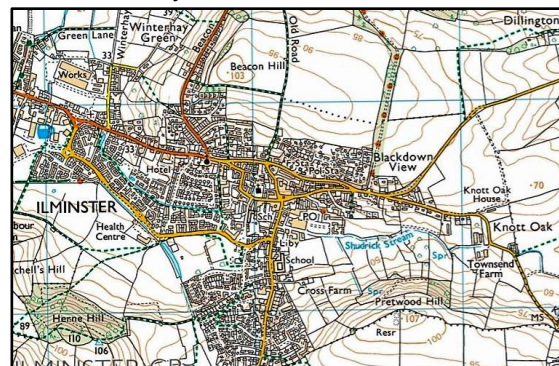
century, but probably incorporates an earlier structure.

### Landscape setting

The immediate landscape setting of the town is defined by three hills; Beacon Hill to the north, and Herne and Pretwood Hills to the southwest and southeast respectively, all of which rise to a little above 100 metres, and broadly contain the spread of the town and its immediate rural edge onto the valley of the Shudrick stream on the south side. To the west, the setting is less defined, with the town extending toward the open land of the River Isle valley while southwards urban development spreads up the saddle between the hills towards Dowlish Ford.

### The setting of the conservation area

The conservation area is broadly linear in form running E-W along the southern side of Beacon Hill and extending down to the west where Station Road drops towards the Isle valley and also southwards into



the Shudrick Valley centred on Ditton Street. The hills mentioned above define the extent of the setting to the south where it can be regarded as following the skyline of Pretwood, Listers and Herne Hills. To the north where the town is bounded by lands of the Dillington Estate and the high point of Beacon Hill the skyline forms the limit of setting. The strong visual containment of the urban area and the Shudrick valley, the frequent prospects of whose landscape is a special feature of the town, are provided by the hills north

and south. Containment does not extend to the west where the lower ground opens out. The setting of the Conservation Area is formed here by the urban fringe of the town and can be taken no further than the Canal Way junction with Station Road. Eastwards the narrowing of the Shudrick valley at Knott Oak provides a limit in this direction.

### Spatial analysis

#### General character and plan form

The conservation area is the core of the historic settlement and takes form from the topography on the southern slope of Beacon Hill and the historic road pattern, a crossing of N-S and E-W routes. The evolution of the street layout is not certain but it may be that although the routes intersected in the present Market Place, the location of the Minster precinct possibly resulted in the west road deviating up North St to High Street. The precinct possibly occupied an area still contained by the lines of Silver St, North and High Streets with the intricacies around Court Barton representing the interior of the minster precinct.

The principle streets have building lines consistently on the road frontage and streets thereby contained are of varying widths giving a tight-knit character to the urban area.

The wider triangular Market Place/ Cornhill, dominated by the covered Market house, leads off to the narrower principal streets radiating out. This pattern of main streets defines character and form; there are few secondary streets but narrow minor lanes leading off are a characteristic. A more spacious character evolves further out from the centre; towards the western end of the area along Station Road, larger houses are set back in generous gardens behind front boundary walls and to the east at Butts and Townsend a more rural character with many trees prevails.

### Key views and vistas

- Views southwards across the Shudrick valley from many locations in the eastern part of the town are a particularly distinctive feature of the Conservation Area.



*Views southwards across the Shudrick valley....*



- Southwards down North Street with view to open country beyond
- Vista up the Dillington Park driveway
- Particularly good townscape vistas looking west down East Street, east along Silver Street and north up Court Barton from Silver Street with church on right



*Views down East St*

### **Landmarks**

Church of St Mary and its tower is prominent from many locations.

Dillington Park Lodges

The Market

Former Methodist Church spire, West Street. 1887 by Alexander Lauder

The Meeting House, Former Unitarian Chapel East Street. 1719

134 listed buildings in the area

### **Materials and key colour characteristics**

Moolham marlstone, a local limestone of a rich orange/gold colour together with Ham Hill stone features as ashlar and rubble giving the town a particular colour character throughout.



### **Character analysis**

Conservation Areas are designated for their special character. Within an area there will be zones that express character variations but contribute to the whole. The definition and description of these 'sub areas' and the elements making up their character allows a more detailed, comprehensive appraisal which will provide a useful document in development control terms.



*Ham Hill stone at the Old Grammer School*



When using this document it should be noted that there will often be a transitional area between defined character areas where the character may contain characteristics of both adjacent areas.

Iminster's historic core, the conservation area, has a reasonably cohesive character based upon its network of streets and their mostly close-set built frontages, a distinct palette of materials and consistencies of scale.

The area can be subdivided into seven areas to aid description:-

1. **THE CENTRAL AREA - Court Barton, Silver Street, High Street and West Street**
2. **MARKET PLACE, Cornhill, East and North Streets**
3. **STATION ROAD**
4. **THE BUTTS, Bay Hill, Townsend and Knott Oak**
5. **DITTON STREET**
6. **NEW ROAD**
7. **LOVE LANE**

See map

### **1. CENTRAL AREA - COURT BARTON, SILVER STREET, HIGH STREET AND WEST STREET**

#### ***Form and character***

The ancient core of the town: at its centre, an intimate, intricate network of narrow streets, spaces and venerable buildings set around the imposing Church of St. Mary which sits in its tight urban churchyard, elevated above Silver Street and dominating the area. The tower is a reference point from many aspects both within this area and across the wider conservation area. Silver Street passing its south side, one of the best streets of historic buildings in the district, is narrow and enclosed at the Market Place end, opens out at the railing-fronted churchyard and continuous frontage again beyond by the Dolphin Inn, set back a little from the street, a high walled garden to 24 before turning north towards High Street. Court Barton runs north beside the churchyard to the Chantry and a small green; a quiet enclave, with an intricate form of a winding street and path connections, Church Walk,

around the church yard and Church Lane leading back to Market Place.

High Street is the east-west through route for vehicles avoiding the market place, it is a busy thoroughfare with raised pavement on the N side containing a long terrace of houses, many quite small and of mixed dates and styles, including C20. At the junction with West Street a wider space and then westwards, some larger buildings still to back of footways, dominated by the strong elevation and elegant spire of the former Methodist Church behind low railings.

#### ***Streetscape analysis, scale, height and building line***

**Silver Street** strong built frontage to back of pavements and emphatic listed 3 storey group both sides at Cornhill end introduces a urban composition of high quality. Scale reduces to 2 storey westwards with no.39 the exception. Scale however is variable from intimate vernacular (33, 35) to 37, a fine 1830s ashlar-fronted house with shop inserted (Bonners). The continuity of building frontage is broken by the elevated church yard wall and a few gaps as the street winds up to West Street at a lower scale. Good shopfronts at 1-3, Harriman's the bakery, 11 with iron cresting (Bilby's), 33 again with iron cresting and Dyers, 21. Upper end rebuilt with pleasant C20 cottages in brick or render with Minster Stone windows.



*Silver Street*

**Court Barton** a mixture of intimate cottages and larger ancient buildings form a peaceful enclave. Building line set back generally along Court Barton with small walled front gardens facing the green and public realm along with some high-walled enclosures. Berryman's Lane leads up to High St with similar closed, intimate character of stone cottages and enclosing walls north of the imposing gable of Abbots Court.

**High Street** continuous built frontage hard on back of footway, largely 2 storey but c.1.5m high raised footway to north side increases sense of the scale of the relatively small terrace houses here.

**West Street** (to New Road junction) consistent building lines in a street of good quality buildings also with a low raised footway continuing from High St. Scale generally 2 storey but 3 storeys at corner of Brewery Lane (33 & 35, early C19 ashlar with good surviving details) and larger scale at the Methodist Church beyond.

**Brewery Lane** a lane off West St narrowing to a footpath leading south.



*St Mary's church*

**Significant listed buildings and groups**

The Church of St Mary, dominant and richly designed C14 composition with tall

crossing tower. Its churchyard and around it The Chantry, Cross House, the former Grammar School and Old Vicarage form a fine group.

Group around the green, 5-8 Court Barton. Buildings in whole length of Silver Street between Market Place and the turn to the north where all but 3 are listed; a good continuous range and including examples of excellent historic shopfronts.

Former Methodist Church and Church Rooms, West St. 1887 by Alexander Lauder; a bold composition on the street and the spire a major skyline feature.

8, West Street - good Regency front in fine Ham ashlar, pilasters, margin-paned windows and good railings.

6, West St. at a key location on junction with High Street with good shopfront.

Good group around New Road junction with good corner shopfront.

Bell Inn, High St.



*Old Grammar School, Court Barton*

**Key unlisted buildings**

Massive walls of brick and stone on frontage around corner of High Street and into North Street.

Crown Inn - 12 West Street. distinctive C20 1<sup>st</sup> floor, timbered with render panels. Warehouse Theatre - industrial character, formerly part of Paull's Brewery.

Ashcombe Court -stucco Regency villa with distinctive railings in Brewery Lane.

The Rookery - C18 altered with large bays to ground floor with front garden to street

with good boundary walling, railings and gate piers.



*Court Barton*

### ***Trees and green spaces***

Of significance are:-

The minster churchyard, with dark yew trees on N and W sides punctuating the space and setting off the rich stonework. Walled private gardens of The Old Vicarage with significant trees over Church Lane.

Small green square in Court Barton.

Enclosed by walls, trees appearing above, the garden at St Mary's Hall North Street.

Long gardens, reaching southwards behind the frontage of Silver St. and East St. form a significant pattern of former burgage plots and provide a green area important to the setting of the buildings close to the centre.

Green gaps in the Silver St. frontage, punctuating street at the garden of 17A and the entrance to school between 25 and 29.

Prominent group of pines behind Rutters Lane.

Large holm oak in Brewery Lane.

### ***Local features***

Ornate historic shopfronts

Some curved 1<sup>st</sup> floor bay windows

Strong walled boundaries in West St, High St, Berryman's Lane, Court Barton, Silver St. etc

Decorative wall with iron railing at entrance to Greenflyte School, Silver Street.

### ***Typical details and materials***

Ham Hill stone ashlar and Moolham stone ashlar, rubble or coursed and dressed, red

brick, painted render in light colours, stone and brick with cream brick dressings in West St. Exceptional is painted stone (West St)

Stone parapets

Mixture of slate and tile roofs with dormer windows atypical

Brick chimney stacks

### **Key colour characteristics**

Colours of Ham Hill and particularly local Moodham stone

Brick is typically warm red (Bridgwater) and cream. Light whites, creams and occasional pastel colours of painted surfaces. Joinery white in windows.

## **2. MARKET PLACE, CORNHILL, EAST AND NORTH STREETS**

### **Form and character**

Market Place and Cornhill is at the core of this character area. As a space it is a widened crossroads roughly triangular, widest on the west side where North Street arrives and tapering away up into East Street. On a gradient, the space is strongly enclosed by surrounding buildings and made distinctive by the open colonnaded Market which rises above the trafficked street on its south side. Good modern Yorkstone repaving around the Market and on the footways. A busy and often congested area of people and vehicles which have to funnel out around the Market and through the narrow portals of Silver Street (west) and Ditton Street (south).

Excellent buildings on all sides, finest on west side; The George Hotel range, Retreat Brasserie and Lloyds Bank, all three storey in Ham stone ashlar with stone shaft of a drinking fountain in front. North Street climbs and curves out of the Market Place northwards. It has a quieter character and buildings are lower.

East Street, east of the Market, tapers gradually from a wide, busy space closed by the trees of the Meeting House Arts Centre, into a narrow, more intimate character of smaller houses and cottages further up.



*The Market*

The form of the area is made by these main streets; there are few secondary streets, partly because of the steep topography: Church Lane, a path between walls linking Cornhill to the churchyard; on the south side of East Street are Love Lane and Frog Lane and its extension alleyway connecting back to East St. are the only examples in this area.

**Streetscape analysis, scale, height and building line**

The streets have well-defined building lines with largely continuous frontages with few gaps. **Market Square and Cornhill** and its exits at Ditton and Silver Streets are contained by mostly 3 storey buildings tight to the footways; a fine urban space.



*Cornhill*

In **East St** this scale reduces progressively although the building lines remain tight to footways with 2 storey houses of modest scale containing the street, some terraced, mostly stone near Cornhill, light-coloured render further up and stone again nearer Bay Hill. Some houses with elevated front gardens facing the street with a retaining wall (33,35). The Meeting House Arts Centre creates a

wider space, its wall still maintaining a strong street frontage.



*East Street*

**North St** is also well-contained but by trees and walls as well as buildings but has a lower scale beyond The George which gives a more open character to the upper street, due in part to the open view southwards.

**Significant listed buildings and groups**

- The Market, Cornhill - Late C18.
- The George Hotel and the whole high quality townscape of the group around the central Market; a consistently listed frontage of 2 and 3 storey scale.



*The George Hotel*

- Further up a group of Natwest Bank (once Stuckey's Bank c. 1875), eclectic, 3 storey ashlar with Barlays next door, symmetrical stucco front with fine railings and

opposite, 11 and 13 in smooth Ham ashlar also with railings.

- The Meeting House Arts Centre, East St - former large Unitarian chapel with walled burial ground.
- Good early C19 houses in East St some elevated above street level 32-34 and 33-35.
- 57 East St - Brick Dutch gable to front



*East Street to Cornhill*

- Good historic shopfronts at 28, 33 and especially 8, East Street.
- North Street House and the attached range to the north with thatched no.19
- Former North Street School, walls and railings.



*Shopfront in East St*

### Key unlisted buildings

The majority of Cornhill and East Street is listed with no unlisted examples of

standout character. Significant in the central streetscene are the Co-op supermarket and Old Bank Building, more for siting than quality of architecture.

4, North St – recon stone Town Council offices (former fire station) and stone terrace adjacent.

12 -14 North St - gables and bays in cream brick with stone and red brick details with carved bargeboards.

63 East St – early C20, stone with prominent gables timbered with white panels.

### Trees and green spaces

Trees in garden of North Street House – strong architectural presence, and closing a view north and in the garden of The Rookery 22 North St on corner of Ile Court.

A tree group feature at the junction North and High Streets.

Pollards in the former burial ground to the East Street Meeting House adds to its importance as a space even though used for car parking.

### Local features

While much of the frontage of these streets is well defined by buildings, substantial stone boundary and retaining walls are also a significant feature eg The Meeting House in East Street and along upper North Street.

Curved corner buildings in Market Place and Cornhill.

The Dutch gable and its derivative, the double curved wing, is a feature in the town, here seen in its full form at 57 East St.

Good historic shopfronts, some with iron fascia cresting.

Some cast iron street nameplates.

Good iron gates and overthrow between Old Bank and No 11.

### Typical details and materials

Moolham stone, Ham Hill stone, brick, painted render in light colours, Exceptional and atypical are stone with brick dressings (in High Street), artificial stone, half-timber effect with brick (earlier C20th at 6, East St) and dormer windows.

Stone parapets

Slate roofs typical but tile roofs more common away from centre.

Brick chimney stacks.

Disused C19 pump in wall recess 59 East St.

### Key colour characteristics

Colour of Ham Hill and particularly local Moodham stone.

Brick is typically either warm red (Bridgwater) or a red-purple. Light whites and creams of painted surfaces. Joinery - white in windows.

### Views

Southwards down North Street to open landscape beyond the town.

As noted views extend south from gaps in the S side street frontage eg at Frog Lane and Love Lane over the Shudrick Valley. Excellent urban vista from down East Street towards the Market.



View down North Street

## 3. STATION ROAD

### Form and character

Station Road character area runs westwards from the junction with New Road from where the closely enclosed terraced frontage character steadily changes to that of larger Georgian, Regency and Victorian houses set back in more generous plots running down the hill westwards towards the valley of the River Isle. Low walled front gardens, high walled boundaries, railings and hedges all feature along with some prominent trees and some high quality buildings. Larger houses, long fronted; some examples of gables to fronts – The Shrubbery, 13 & 15 and bays at 31.



### Scale height and building line

Two storey buildings some with attics generally set back from the street behind front gardens of varying depth, enclosed by walls/railings. Topography results in some buildings elevated well above the street on the north side and consequent sense of greater scale.

### Significant listed buildings and groups

- Summerods, 7 Station Rd.



Summerods

- A series of fine larger houses on the south side –
- No.25, The Ridge, with low front wall, ornate railings and double-curved side bays
- No 29, The Hermitage, C17 mullions on west gable wall and C18 front
- Nos 31, 33, 37 all grade 2.



25 Station Road

### Key unlisted buildings

Shrubbery Hotel - rebuilt for the Shepherds of Dowlish Ford Mills, c. 1900. Three pairs of late C19 semi-detached villas on north side 10 -20 even numbers, two brick, one stone, upstanding above the street; a well detailed group

### Trees and green spaces

Green spaces are private garden areas, some extensive with substantial trees, typically behind the southern side houses. Significant trees that contribute to the street at corner of Summerlands Park Drive, Shrubbery Hotel, The Hermitage 29, larger trees between 31 and 33, and around Hazelwell House,36; prominent dark cypressus to side of 37

### Local features

Dutch type gabled side wings to front elevations of Regency house at 25. Railings along road frontage. Brick chimneys.

### Typical details and Materials

Painted render (white/light colour) with stone window surrounds and details, Ham stone ashlar and near ashlar walling, window and door surrounds. Moolham and Ham rubble walling, red brick villas, slate and clay tile roofs, without dormers, white painted windows; metal railings.

### Key colour characteristics

Orange/browns of stone, light painted surfaces and red brick.

### Views

The elevated land provides a series of views out to the southwest towards Herne Hill from gaps between the buildings and from the rear garden areas on the south side, rear of Shrubbery Hotel and from Summerlands Park Drive.

Spire of former Methodist Church features looking east from upper end of street.

### 4. BUTTS, BAY HILL and TOWNSEND Form and character

At the eastern part of the Conservation Area. The Butts was enlarged to function as the principle route between Bay Hill and High Street for the route of the Exeter Road avoiding the Market Square in the mid C20 and much building to the north and south has taken place since.

The north side of the street is characterised by steeply rising ground, high stone retaining walls and trees significantly placed high on the edge of the area. The only building group is Butts Castle which forms a part square of 2 and 3 storey terrace houses set back high above road level behind retaining walls and gardens. On the south side an almost continuous frontage of C18, C19 and C20 houses. The gaps between them reveal far-reaching views to Pretwood Hill.

The eastern end of Butts into Bay Hill represents a continuation of the walled north side with very prominent large trees elevated above the broad Dillington Park estate entrance and matching pair of lodges. The straight drive leads north between tall stone gate piers and is enclosed by strong tree belts each side. The southern side of Bay Hill has a more open character with spread out, larger detached houses which have, along with the many spaces between them, extensive views out to the south across the Shudrick valley contributing to character here. At the junction with Townsend more enclosure formed by White Horse and the houses on the north side hard on the street and dark mass of prominent trees. Townsend itself, dipping downwards, is overshadowed by these and the buildings, spread out, crouch beneath. Blank walls of

extensive range of converted farm buildings (Fortnum Place) and former Dillington estate office enclose the space.



*Dillington Park east entrance lodge*

### Scale height and building line

**The Butts** - Strong enclosure of street by high stone retaining walls and 2 storey groups of houses to consistent building line on back of footway.

**Bay Hill** – Substantial 2 storey houses set back behind walls or railings except at east end where building line is against the street.

**Townsend** – One and two storey built form and boundary walls against road edge.



*Trees at Townsend*

### Significant listed buildings and groups

Dillington Lodges, grade 2 star (with associated gates and walls, grade 2) – a set piece of matching Regency Gothick lodges with gates, piers etc between them.  
Bay House, grade 2 - early C19 - ornate window glazing.  
Former White Horse Inn, grade 2.

12, Bay Hill, grade 2 - Former Toll House on A30 from the Ilminster Turnpike Trust.



*Former White Horse Inn*

### Key unlisted buildings and features

Butts Castle - 2 and 3 storey attached houses round a square garden area

On the driveway to Dillington, WW2 'dragons teeth', a pill box and other remains of a defensive Stop Line.

Former ranges of farm buildings at Fortnum Place

Group of 14 Townsend – former estate managers house of C19 dressed Ham stone mullioned windows with gables to street and, in similar style, 15 Townsend, former estate office - single storey, stone with gables to street.



*Former estate office Townsend*

### Trees and green spaces

Tall pines and grand holm oaks around Dillington lodges and driveway.

Holm oaks etc extend east from Townsend junction – a strong feature over shadowing the street

Garden areas at rear of houses extend southwards into Shudrick valley

Larger trees behind 14 and 15 Townsend



Gardens to 12 & 13 bay Hill and 17 & 18 Townsend (Proposed extension area)



*Significant treescape*

### Local features

Tall rubble stone boundary and retaining walls.  
Railings with walls and hedges along Bay Hill.

### Typical details and materials

Rubble Moolham stone, Ham ashlar, some red brick dressings, pale coloured renders, clay tile roofs.

### Key colour characteristics

Orange/brown of stone, light painted surfaces, red brick

### Views

From many of the buildings and from the streets between buildings on south side, extensive views across Shudrick valley to Pretwood Hill.

Defined view southwards to Shudrick valley from the Dillington Park drive between lodges.



*Pretwood Hill from Dillington gateway*

## 5. DITTON STREET

### Form and character

Immediately south of Market Place, Ditton Street forms a tight linear space with 3 storey buildings each side before scale reduces with smaller houses and the range of a former textile mill on the west side. South of Ditton Lea at the junction with Shudrick Lane the urban character changes to a smaller scale and less intensely urban street scene.



*Former shirt factory*

The detached portion of the conservation area consists of a mixed range of terraced cottages on the east side followed by a more open character of larger houses, gardens, the library, and old school in an open lawn area and an attractive short uniform terrace on the west side.



*Good terrace houses 34-39 Ditton St*

### Buildings – Scale, height and building line

Ditton St. northern section is a tight space strongly enclosed by buildings arranged hard to the footways, variously 1, 2 and 3 storey with higher buildings nearer Cornhill. The southern section is 2 storey

scale with well-defined front boundaries following the line of the street, with short gardens to the buildings on the west side and the larger houses set well back on the other.

### Significant listed buildings and groups

Vine Flats - 3 storey 5 bay Georgian painted brick with broken pediment doorcase

1 Ditton Street (now 1 Swan Precinct) Grade 2, C17 and C18 prominent at a narrow point of the street



*Ditton Lea*

Ditton Lea grade 2 – imposing late Georgian with double curve wings, walled front garden with railings

In the detached part of the conservation area a distinct group of good quality buildings including;

Olcote - Grade 2 early C19, stucco, with front gardens enclosed by wall and railings

Ditton House – Regency, grade 2, stone behind deep front garden with laurels, walls, railings, gates and gate piers.

These together with the Library, School and school house with open walled lawn area and uniform terrace of houses on west side form a significant varied group.



*Olcote*



*Ditton House*

### Key unlisted buildings

Frampton House, red brick and stone, former 3 storey collar works and single storey factory adjacent with saw-tooth roof of 1930s.

Library - former Reading Room of 1889, by *James Hine* of Plymouth. Given by Shepherds of Dowlish Ford Mills.

Victorian Board School and School House - Ham stone, tiled roof with chimneys, gables and half-hips. Grassed surround to enclosing wall and railing – a nice set piece.

43 Ditton St – Ham ashlar, quoins and architraved windows. Railings to front garden area.

34-39 Ditton St - C19 terrace of good architectural unity in stone with red brick, pent roof bays, ornate gables, front walls with railings.

### Trees and green spaces

Gardens to Ditton Lea and, set back on east side and the lawned surrounds of old school.

Oak on street corner next to Library



*Former board School and School House*

### Local features

Commemorative Flagpole War memorial in school grounds Grade 2  
Boundary walls with railings are a feature of Library, terrace at 34-39, Olcote and Ditton House

### Typical details and materials

Stone with red brick dressings, red brick with cream brick dressings, red brick, painted brick, pale coloured renders. Slate and tile roofs. Slate hung gables. Continuous pent roof over ground floor bay windows in terrace.  
Southern section - stone, white windows, pale stucco, stone with red brick, slate roofs, white painted windows, red brick chimney stacks. Dormers absent.

### Key colour characteristics

Orange/ browns of Ham and Moolham stone, red brick, pale renders

### Views

No significant views.

## 6. NEW ROAD

### Form and character

New Road appears to have been constructed as an alternative route north that avoided the steep gradient of the Old Road northwards from North Street. It was turnpiked (and possibly constructed) in 1759 around the western flank of Beacon Hill as part of the Curry Rivel to Chard road. This part of the Conservation Area takes in the late C19 terraces running up each side of the road and along Hill View Terrace together with several larger semi-detached villas of similar age, Uplands House, a Victorian house in well wooded grounds and the range of cottages at the top of the incline. Included also is the former (converted) stables of Hazelwell House and coachman's house adjacent, accessed from Speke Close, Station Road.

### Scale height and building line

Significantly uniform 2 storey terracing with short walled front gardens and a uniform building line following the lines of both New Road and Hill View Terrace.

### Significant buildings and groups

The Victorian terraces at New Road and Hill View Terrace are fine examples with much original detail surviving forming a significant and satisfying group enhanced by the way they step up the hill and, in Hill View, also curve around the slope of the hillside.



*Fine terraced houses in New Road*

### Key unlisted buildings

Uplands and its outbuildings  
Three terraces behind short walled gardens in New Rd and Hill View Terrace – uniform ranges of late C19 or early C20; New Road west side are rubble stone with cream or painted brick dressings, small timbered effect gables pent roofed bays and Hill View similar but without gables and, on defensive east side, simpler, white roughcast above pent roofed brick bays, small plain gables.  
7 New Road - c.1900 villa, rubble stone with Bath dressings. Tall decorated barge board to street  
12 & 14 New Road – pair of late C19 semi-detached villas, brick, slate roofs, gable and bays to front. Front railings to long front garden.  
40 New Rd – early C20 roughcast villa elevated above street behind architectural hedging above high stone walls.

Speke Court – C19 well detailed Ham stone 'U' plan coach house range, now converted and Coachmans – Late C19 house Ham stone, tiled gables, formerly associated with the coach house.

### **Trees and green spaces**

Substantial tree cover is a feature at the top of New Road and in the grounds of Uplands forming a skyline feature and contributing the setting of the house and wider area below defensive.

### **Local features**

PO Box set into stone wall adjacent to gate piers of Uplands

### **Typical details and Materials**

Moolham stone, red brick, cream brick as dressings, white render, clay tile and slate roofs brick chimney stacks Ornate crested ridge tiles, gables with carved detail or timbering effect

### **Key colour characteristics**

Orange/brown of stone, creams, white and brick red

### **Views**

Glimpses southwards to countryside and southern hills and views NW from The Beacon across the Isle valley. Vistas up stepping terraces of New Road and distinctive curving terrace of Hill View.



*Hill View Terrace*

## **7. LOVE LANE**

### **Form and character**

Love Lane runs southwards from East Street down into the Shudrick valley originally leading to a small cluster of houses at its end that once formed an almost separate hamlet. Infilling has occurred back towards east Street. A distinctive narrow 'ginnel' or path leads back north to Bay Hill at its junction with East Street. It is a close-knit space with buildings on north side elevated above the lane behind large stone retaining walls. No consistent building line but the lane space is well-enclosed.

### **Scale height and building line**

Buildings generally 2 storeys and of small scale linked or in short terraces. The elevated location of 11 and 19-21 overlook and dominate the lower lane.



*11 Love Lane*

### **Significant buildings and groups**

22-24 Love lane – a short terrace in brick and stone.

Group at 11 and 19-21 Love Lane elevated above lane.

### **Key unlisted buildings**

11 Love lane - early C19 well-proportioned house.

18 Love Lane – C18 thatched cottage attached to listed No.17

7, Love Lane C19 well-proportioned house.

8 & 9, Love Lane - colonial style bungalow pair of 1920s with distinctive front verandah.



### **Trees and green spaces**

Significant tree presence in the garden areas behind 25 and 26 feature above the buildings. Some in other garden spaces.

### **Local features**

High boundary and retaining walls in local rubble stone.

### **Typical details and Materials**

Moolham stone rubble walling, C19 local pressed red brick, clay tiles (plain, double roman)

### **Views**

There are views out over the open land of the Shudrick valley, the rising ground and strong skyline of Pretwood Hill from many points in this sub-area.

### **Key colour characteristics**

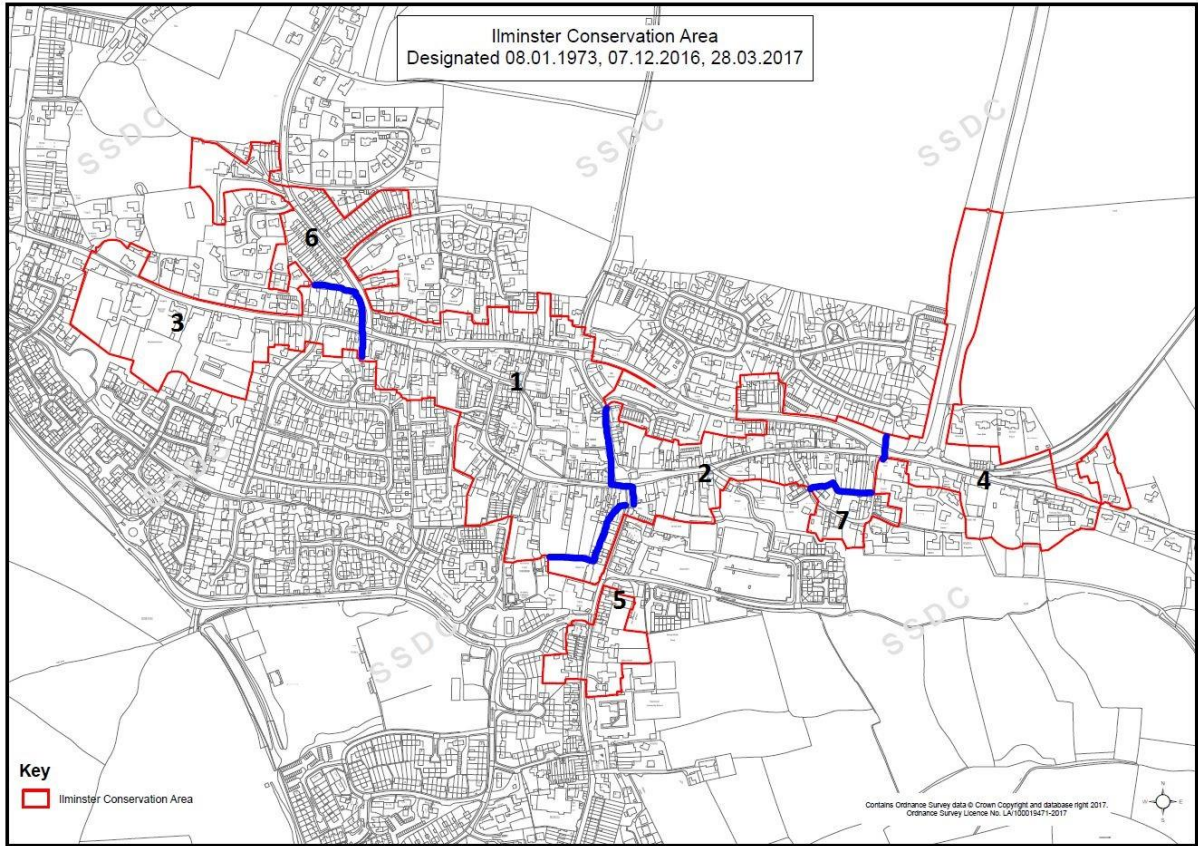
Orange/brown of stone, cream /white paint, and brick red. White joinery.

### **References**

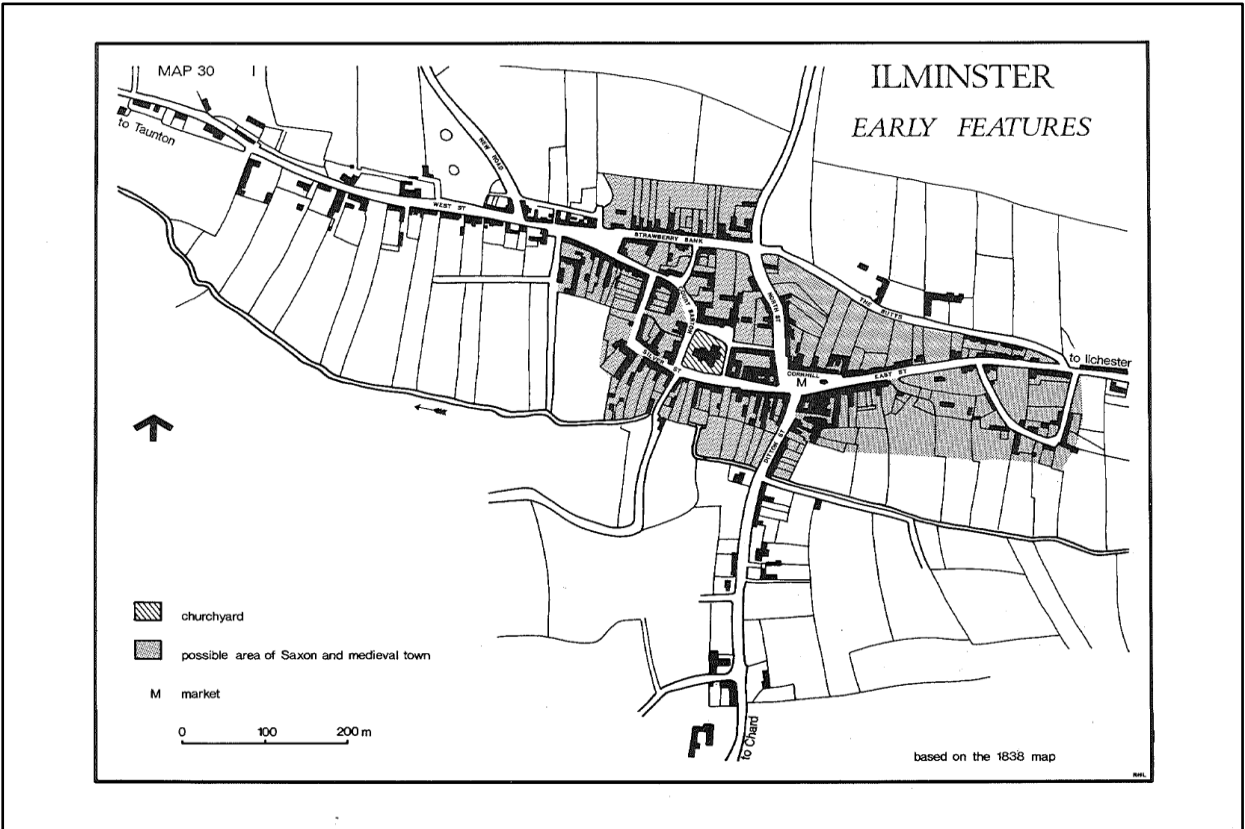
Victoria County History  
Somerset Historic Environment Record  
Extensive Urban Survey  
Historic Towns in Somerset *Ashton & Leech 1977*

## MAPS

### Conservation area and sub areas referred to in text



### Early Features



Tithe map 1839



Ilmminster in mid C20th

