

Design statement for the parish of
Charlton Mackrell



the
CHARLTONS

Design statement for the parish of Charlton Mackrell

The parish includes
Charlton Adam, Charlton Mackrell, Lytes Cary and Cary Fitzpaine

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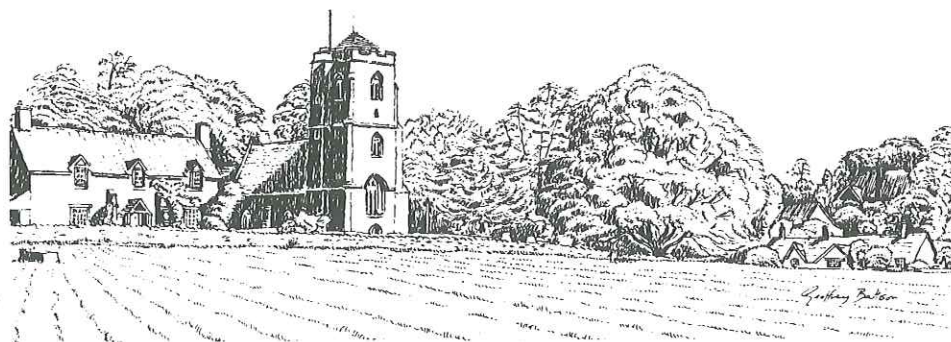
Introduction

This parish design statement sets out to describe the valued characteristics of Charlton Mackrell which includes Charlton Adam, Charlton Mackrell, Lytes Cary and Cary Fitzpaine. It has been prepared by the people of the village following a "Village Appraisal and Village Design" meeting on 14th May 1997, hosted by the South Somerset District Council (SSDC) in partnership with the Community Council for Somerset.

The Design Day team met on 7th July and organised and publicised the Design Day which took place on 11th October 1997. In attempting to define local character the Design Team has been able to collect residents' views to be used as guidelines not only for building developments, but also for alterations and extensions which maintain that character. On 12th August 1998 Area East of the South Somerset District Council accepted the draft text to be used as Supplementary Planning Guidance and as a material consideration when local planning applications are assessed. The Parish Council supports the design statement and will use it when considering proposals for the Parish.

Acknowledgements

| | |
|------------|--|
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*Abbey Cottage
and
Charlton Adam
church*

Geographical and Historical Setting

The Parish lies in a shallow saucer of hills watered by streams and the River Cary. It contains some distinct landscape differences. The clay soil Cary Valley, which can be seen from Green Down, is bordered by wooded hill slopes and the river descends through water meadows at Lytes Cary - an entirely different environment from the hard limestone escarpment of Green Down with its special flora and fauna. The flat land from Tout Quarry to Matford Farm and Cary Fitzpaine has long vistas of arable fields once dotted with elms, but nowadays with very few trees. The villages are tucked into slight folds in the land and have their own open spaces which create a fitting setting for the churches and houses.

The history of the parish can be traced back to the Romans, who built villas in the curves of the water, quarried the blue lias stone and defined its shape by building the Fosse Way. The five manors mentioned in the Domesday Book 1086, can still be traced - Charlton Mackrell (Rookery Farm), Charlton Adam (The Abbey), Cary Fitzpaine, Cooks Cary and Lytes Cary.

The blue lias stone has always been the village asset. It defined the character of its historic buildings and stone walls, and though expensive to quarry, is still used for small building work today.

The villages of Charlton Mackrell and Charlton Adam derive their name "Charlton" from the Saxons who found colonies of Romano British here. They allowed them to remain as "Ceorls" in a "Cerlaton".

Both churches and their surroundings have survived for centuries with remarkably few changes. Both West Charlton and Charlton Adam are designated as conservation areas in recognition of their historic importance. Similarly Lytes Cary Manor is renowned as being one of the finest examples of a medieval building in the country, having been accepted by the National Trust in 1948. Cary Fitzpaine was owned by Queen Elizabeth 1 and has been continuously farmed over the centuries. It forms a whole which should also be recognised. A building had probably been on the site of Charlton House since the 1300's.



*Charlton
Mackrell
church*

Economy

The long history of the manors illustrates how self-sufficient they were. When they declined it was the railway that brought new prosperity to the villages. The builders of the railway, which crossed the Parish, constructed nine bridges in 1905 and 1906 over the ancient lanes and a station. When the station was in use a good local trade existed in stone, lime, gloves, dog biscuits, (with an export trade), and farm produce.

Since its closure arable lands and the few meadows have continued to be farmed but from outside the villages which gradually have acquired more housing

for commuters to Yeovil, Yeovilton and Street.

However, the villages maintain an economic diversity and provide considerable local employment, demonstrated by the school, the two shops and public houses and a number of businesses including the quarries, the racehorse stables, garage, nursery and woodworking firm. This provides a daytime vitality not seen in other villages where residents merely commute to work. It is hoped that small businesses can continue to be accommodated within the parish where they can demonstrate no adverse impact on its rural character.

Settlement Pattern and Relationship Between Open Spaces

For ease of reference the following sections are descriptions of the five areas covered by the Design Day team and the values they placed upon them.

Charlton Adam from the Post Office to Steart Bridge (map section 1)



The Barton

The present Post Office can be dated back to 1762 and the houses to the corner of Broad Street and Combe Lane date back to the time when they were workshops and cottages in the manor centred on the Abbey House. British Telecom has a substation near the corner of Broad Street on land where there was once a smithy. The houses in Nevilles Close and Withy Hayes were built by the Council over a period of time. Some are now privately owned. Smalls Mead contains Housing Association properties intended for occupation by local families.

Broadway Road to the Fox and Hounds is an example of modern infilling and adaptation on an ancient road. The tall buildings halfway down either side of the road

were once a water mill and storage barn. The houses with slate roofs are probably over 200 years old; one was a school, another a butchers shop. There were orchards where there are now modern bungalows and there was a village pond opposite Virginia Cottage, where Parson Woodforde used to visit. Unity is created by the roadside natural stone walls and the grey colour of the buildings.

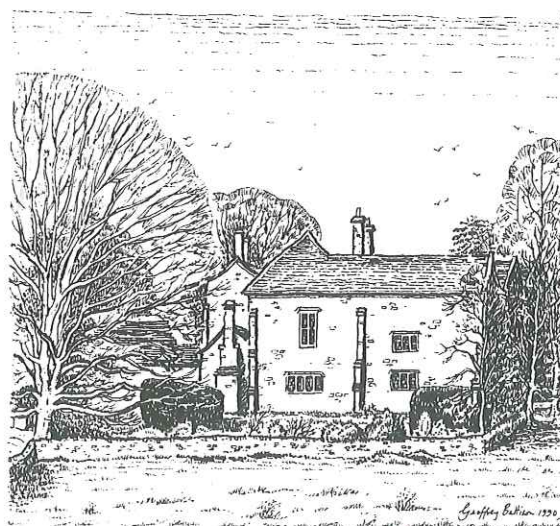
The Broadway cottages and The Barton cottages were stone masons' houses when the quarry behind Springfield House was in use. These have been enlarged and adapted for modern living, but still retain their charm and should be protected as they are. The Broadway cottages face open fields across which are lanes and footpaths which need to be kept open.



The Fox and Hounds public house opened as a cider house in the sixteenth century and was converted into an inn in 1866. It has parking for caravans affiliated to the Caravan Club.

Charlton Adam Village Centre (map section 2)

Charlton Adam has a very distinctive and well defined settlement pattern characterised by the area of open parkland at its core, around which the village has been formed on three sides with streets running off at all four corners of the square, and one at the centre of its southern side. The most important buildings, historically and architecturally, are the Church and the Abbey, situated at the northwest corner of this square, somewhat separated from the main body of the village. The majority of older buildings in the village are ranged along the south and east sides of this green area, although George Street, which extends out to the west, was evidently an important route into the village since it also contains a number of historic properties.



The Abbey

George Street

For its central section, George Street has a somewhat denser pattern of development than the other streets due to the fact that houses are built both along its frontage and at right angles to it and also set back from the street. However, the buildings soon peter out on the south side and the fact that the edge of the village is well defined by historic buildings strengthens the impression of this as one of the most unspoilt approaches into the village. It has not yet been diluted by modern development on its fringes and retains a strongly rural character. To the east of Church Hill the character of George Street changes due to it being built up only on the south side with buildings parallel to the road which have uninterrupted views across the churchyard and the area of parkland to the Church and the Abbey. It is particularly from George Street that the importance of this central open area, and the way in which it forms a backdrop to the Church and Abbey, is appreciated as a focal point for the village. Despite the fact that buildings are constructed in very close proximity to each other, their relationship with the open space to the north saves this part of the street from feeling very built up. However, at the very eastern end of the street a 'pinch point' is formed by a sharp corner with houses built right up to the road edge on either side denoting a change to a denser form of development in the village centre. From George Street a short narrow lane runs south bounded by stone walls to the "Old Vicarage" and the current Parsonage, which stands in their own grounds on the edge of the village, separate from other properties.

Chessels Lane

Running south from the junction of George Street and the High Street, this has experienced the most recent development of any of the streets in the central part of Charlton Adam and the effect of this on its character is heightened by the provision of limited pavements in contrast to the rest of the village which has none. However, the impact of the new houses has been mitigated by the retention of stone walls on either side and the magnificent old chestnut tree which forms a focal point at the junction with the High Street. Also, in common with George Street, the house which forms the last outpost of the village is an old one which is built at right-angles to the road and so partially screens the new houses on the approach to the village and gives it a well defined boundary.

High Street

Where George Street turns into the High Street, the pattern changes to having the older properties on the north side facing away from the parkland and onto modern houses which have been constructed on the south side of the street. Austen Cottage breaks the pattern of building facing onto the street by standing at right angles to it with its gable typically immediately adjacent to the road. Its garden forms an important

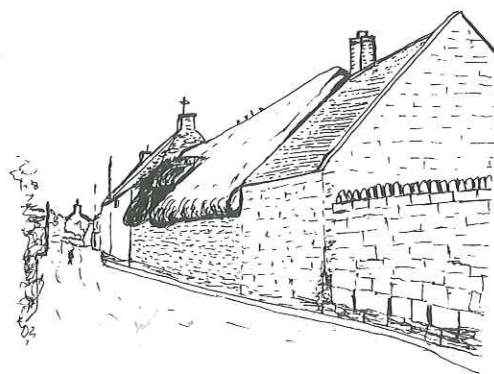


Austen Cottage

visual break between buildings on the corner of High Street and Broad Street. The character of the High Street becomes increasingly more rural towards its eastern end where traditional buildings supersede new houses and the leafy garden of Cedar Lodge and the trees framing the entrance to Ball's Lane form an important backdrop. This is characteristic of the way in which green open spaces impinge on the built form of the village thus demonstrating the inter-relationships between countryside and buildings, functionally as well as visually.

Broad Street

This feeling is continued in Broad Street which still retains a strong rural ambience despite recent development, due to the way in which the buildings on its east side are interspersed with small paddocks which bring the countryside right into the village. This, combined with the width and relative straightness of the street, gives it a feeling of spaciousness. Broad Street has one of the highest concentrations of historic buildings in the village. Recent developments have had a serious impact on the character of the southern half of the street due to their bulk which dominates existing buildings. Any more modern infilling would result in a serious erosion of the street's rural ambience.



Broad Street

Generally though its traditional character has been retained and the interesting configuration of buildings which create three successive gables set immediately end on to the road on its west side is particularly striking when travelling north up the street. The pattern of development becomes much more dense at the northern end of the street where there are complex relationships between the old buildings on the corner of Broad Street and Top Road. The feeling of spaciousness survives, however, on the east side due to the generous mature gardens of The Nook and The Old Cider House which retain the vestiges of their old orchards.

Top Road

On the corner of Broad Street is the old Methodist Chapel and School now converted into one dwelling. Beside it on Top Road and set back between well renovated old cottages is the Temperance Hall donated in 1899 to be administered by Trustees for the inhabitants of Charlton Adam. It now shows signs of its age but it still holds its charitable status as a Village Hall.

Top Road is largely rural in character and undeveloped apart from the clusters of buildings on the corners with Broad Street and Church Hill, and the Nursery whose

polytunnels are relatively well screened from the road. Its open aspect allows important glimpses of some of the older properties and the most important of these is the Abbey. Its status is displayed in the imposing gate piers which stand on Top Road and allow a view of the historic house in the setting of its spacious mature garden. Also, visually important are its curtilage walls and outbuildings which are seen across the small paddock flanking Top Road which was once an orchard.

The Abbey Barns, now converted to houses, provide a strong definition to the village on its north east side and look out onto open countryside. Fortunately, access to the converted barns has been restricted to Top Road allowing Church Hill to retain a continuous frontage of old stone walls. The Church dominates this road but is complemented by Abbey Cottage which is also an ancient building that survives in a very unspoilt form. To the west of Church hill are open fields which are crucial in allowing views of the Church to be seen unimpeded from Charlton Mackrell and beyond and also allowing views out to the west to the barns of Manor Farm. The relationship of Church, Abbey and associated buildings and their separation from the rest of the village is of great historical importance and should not be compromised.

Charlton Mackrell to the North of the Railway Line (map section 3)



Carn house

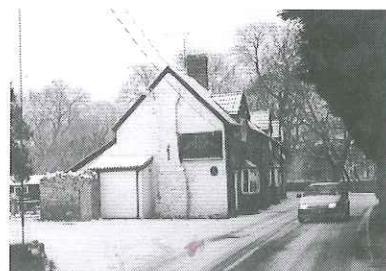
In Kingweston Road the majority of the dwellings are bungalows built on one side of the road allowing an open vista across to Somerton Lane. The properties use blue lias or grey reconstructed stone. Stower House, Sandpits and the Woods Corner area have been traced back to their historical roots and need special care. Sandpit Lane has seven properties, all houses except one. There is an assortment of building age and style with one barn conversion and a notable historic building, Carn House, the birthplace of the famous sculptor Charles Summers. This is commemorated with a plaque outside the house.

The short lane named Sandpits consists of one terrace

and a detached house built in blue lias stone with Roman roof tiles. Charlton House with its imposing façade rebuilt in 1726 and its historic pigeon loft forms the focal point from which the village roads radiate. The exit from Peddles Lane allows single traffic only. It had an old biscuit factory and now has an assortment of council housing and modern detached houses. The road ends in a lane onto reclaimed quarried fields.

Ilchester Road has retained its character of older times with the distinguishing feature of some of the modern properties running along the edge of the verge with gardens behind. Many have upstairs windows set in the roofline. On the bend in the road is the Greyhound Inn where many traditional features are still in evidence. It has welcomed travellers and villagers since 1812.

*The
Greyhound
Inn*



Station Road is bounded to the north by a well-established hedgerow through which is access to Barham Quarry. Opposite is a row of bungalows, but the generally rural nature is enhanced by one thatched property. The former Station site is marked by a group of mature Corsican Pines planted by the G.W.R. These now have Tree Preservation Orders placed on them.



Georgian Cottage

presumed home of Henry Adams, ancestor of two American Presidents

twice, with a mixture of old and new properties, some of which are on the edge of the road.

Mill Lane's properties in this section of road, (to the railway), are all modern. Although originally planned to be built in a cottage style most of them

have been altered and are now substantial dwellings with views over the fields to the west.

Horseleaze, which ends in a notable stone stile, has two appropriately modernised cottages as well as two modern houses with prominent roof lines. Sug Hill climbs very steeply over the railway cutting to magnificent views across the Cary Valley and Charlton Mackrell and eventually joins Somerton Lane at the crossroads. On the way it passes the entrance to the racehorse gallops and the footpath to Wellham on Green Down. Special care must be taken to retain the old powder house (a store for gunpowder when the railway was built, believed to be one of two remaining on the GWR line) and the wildlife conservation area.



The Powder House

Somerton Lane most likely dates back to the Romans. It is tarmaced for a few hundred yards after which it becomes a rough lane designated a RUPP (road used as a public path). There is an open vista from the footpath which crosses to Kingweston Road and a paddock and footpath that runs along the back of the Ilchester Road properties. As well as a few bungalows there are small houses with the most important house, Georgian Cottage, on the corner.

In Hillway the Reading Room, built in 1858, is still in use as a village hall. It forms a small square with the village store and the converted house and barn facing the Parish Green. Hillway continues on, curving



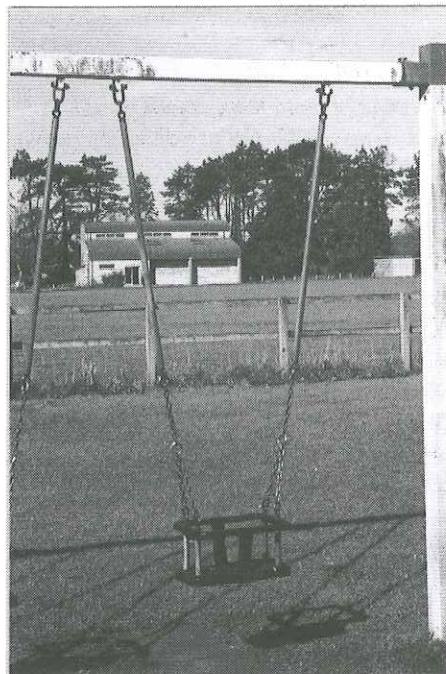
The Reading Room

The Charlton Memorial Playing Field and Community Centre (map section 5)

The Playing Field is an important open space between the villages of Mackrell and Adam. It is a war memorial opened after the Second World War providing a large, level field for sporting and village events. The Community Centre lies in the southwest corner of the field.

It was built in 1985 and whilst designed to have a large sports hall, meeting room, changing rooms and kitchen, its utilitarian appearance is unfortunate. The southeast corner of the field has a fenced children's play area and tennis court.

*Community Centre,
with playing field
and play area*



CARY FITZPAINE (map section 6)

The road leading to Cary Fitzpaine farm settlement is to the east of the A37 (Fosse Way). It runs through pasture and arable land on either side, between good hedges.

Fewer trees exist nowadays due in part to the ongoing problem with Dutch Elm disease. However the vistas towards the farm from the approach road are pleasing, with the rooflines of the buildings having been kept to a uniform height. The farmhouse is already a listed building, with a fine verandah. Several barns are clustered near the house with additional farm buildings along the road,

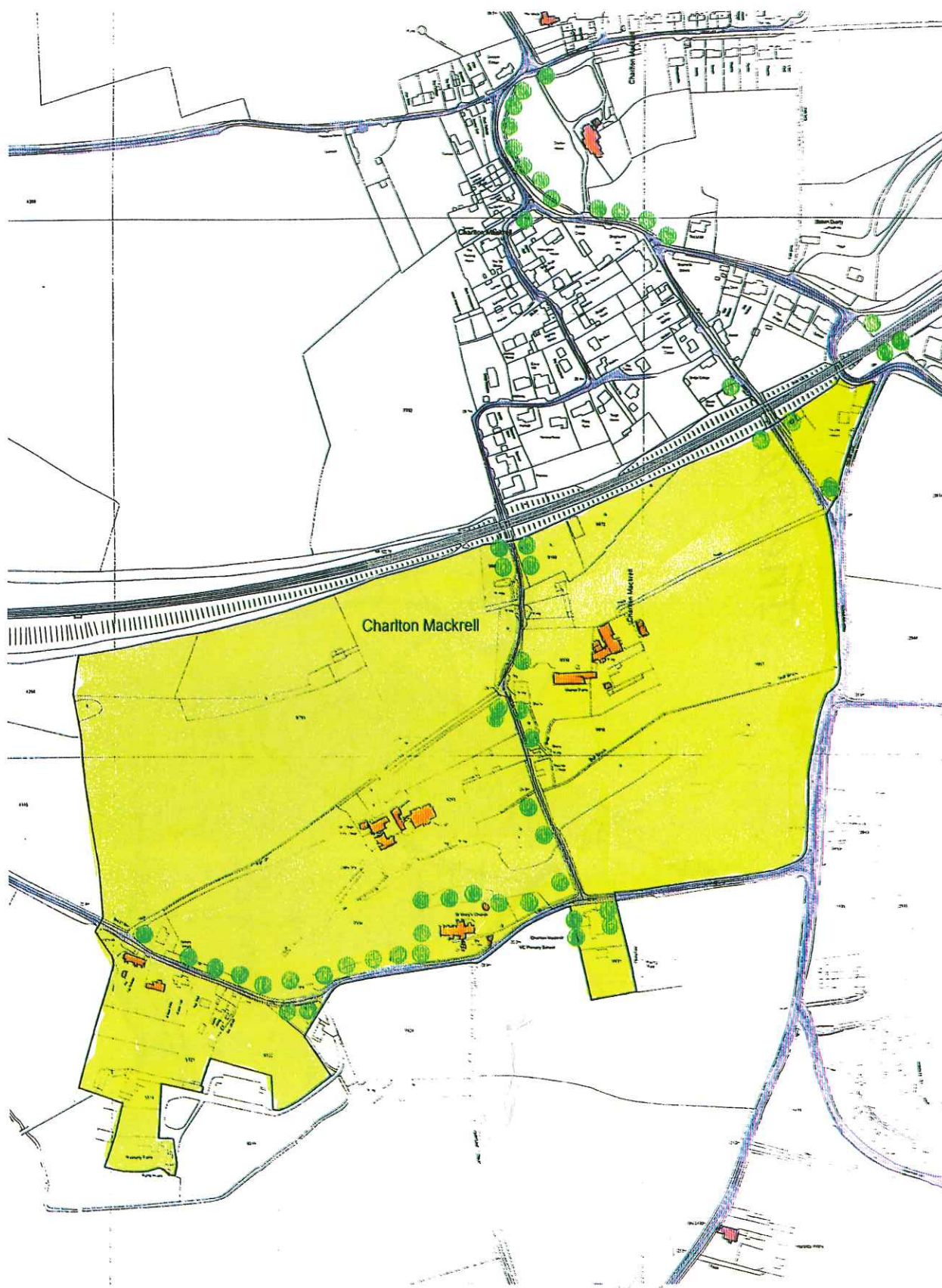
near the farm cottages. All these are repaired with traditional materials and are good examples of their type. The cottages have rendered exteriors, but are thought to be of local stone construction underneath.

Where silos and other necessities of modern farming have been built there has been thought used in making them as unobtrusive as possible.

The Chestnuts, a twentieth century house in Rag Lane, has been added to the farm. There is a newly constructed footbridge over the River Cary. Rag Lane and the river mark the parish boundary at this point.

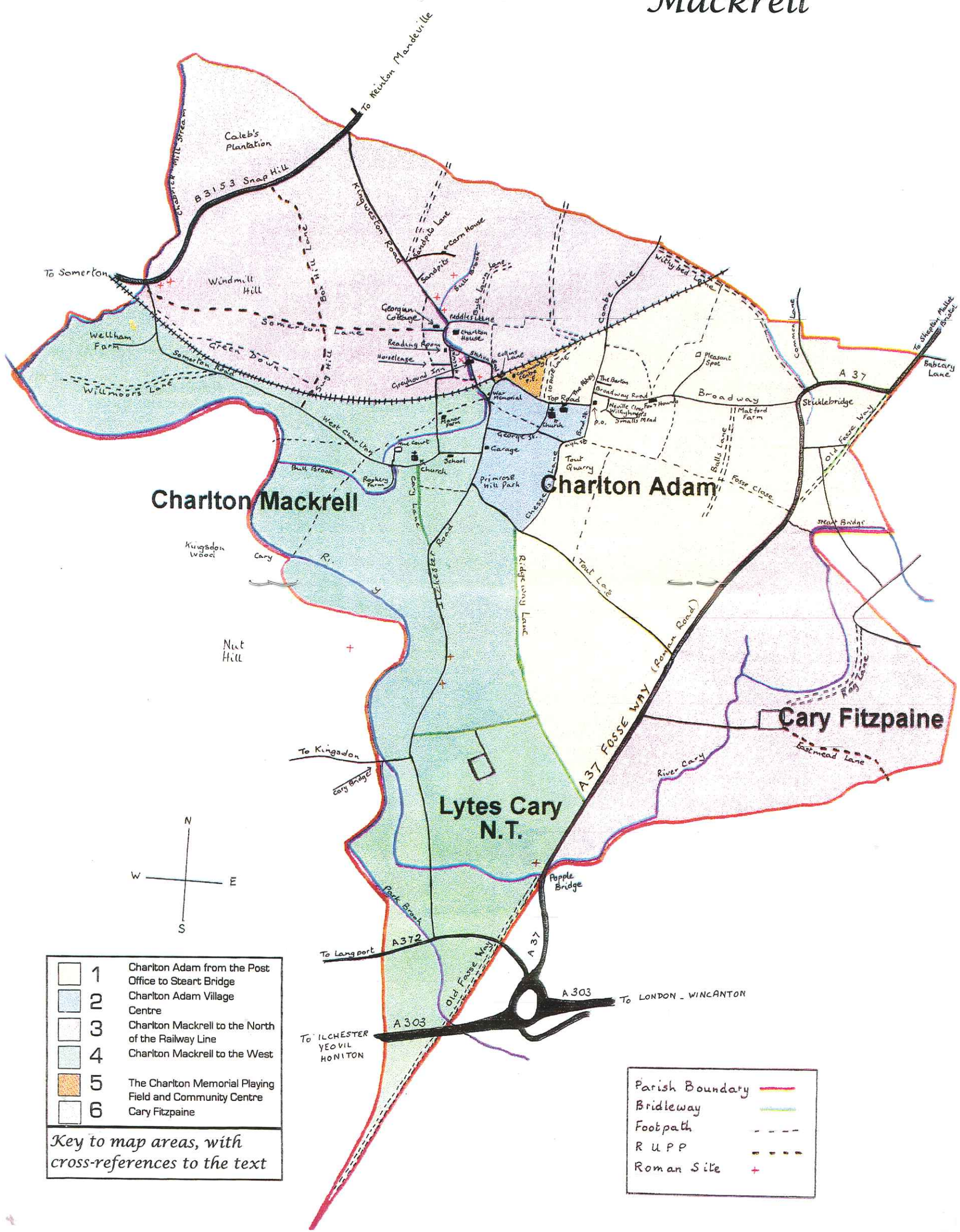


Cary Fitzpaine farm



Sketch map of Charlton Mackrell showing the Conservation Area (in yellow), the listed buildings (red) and the indicative locations of a selection of visually important trees (green), including those subject to Tree Preservation Orders and others.

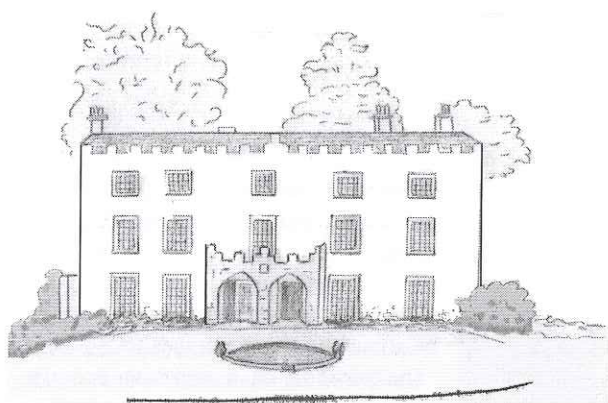
The Parish of Charlton Mackrell



Sketch map of Charlton Adam showing the Conservation Area (in yellow), the listed buildings (red) and the indicative locations of a selection of visually important trees (green), including those subject to Tree Preservation Orders and others.

Charlton Mackrell to the West (map section 4)

Collins Lane is hedged on either side and has only one detached house. The War Memorial, on the corner of Ilchester Road, is an important landmark built of local stone. Listed gate posts mark the way across the fields to Manor Farm, which was for 500 years the Manor House of Charlton Adam. It still retains its status as a listed building, surrounded by the traditional layout of walled gardens and long low red-tiled barns, which can be seen from many vantage points. This is the last remaining unconverted farmstead within the two villages. Bull Brook still runs in the direction of Peck Mill. It was fed by diverted streams and ponds in the grounds of the Manor.



Charlton Court

The recently restored village pond is in Mill Lane opposite the main gates of Manor Farm. Other features of this lane are the magnificent stone walls of Charlton Court, an unusual flagstone path and many fine trees.

Charlton Court is the original church deanery for Charlton Mackrell. The large, square stone building with slate roof denoting its importance is listed, as are the gates. The deer park has many fine trees and replanting has already been done to replace those lost. There is a complex of barns and two tied cottages.

West Charlton, in its own Conservation Area, is a hamlet of eight cottages along the south side of Somerton Road. Set back from and parallel to the road they all have delightful cottage gardens, but Hemphays is built directly onto the roadside.



*Cottage
at
West Charlton*

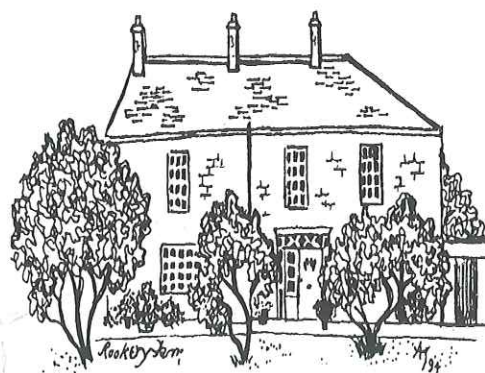
Many of the cottages are thatched with additions sympathetically built. The Old Cottage is the oldest cottage in the parish, having been built in the mid-fifteenth century. Originally a chantry house, it is a grade two starred building with a stone tiled roof.

South of Hemphays and The Old Cottage is a recently constructed racehorse gallop. The views to the south across the Cary Valley, Kingsdon Wood and Nut Hill are an important feature. To the north of the lane are high stone walls and large trees surrounding Charlton Court, a distinctive feature of the area.

No new domestic development has taken place in West Charlton allowing it to retain an unspoilt rural atmosphere.

Rookery Farm is another of the original manors of the parish. Set away from the road surrounded by fields it has a slate roof. Its large collection of barns have been converted for light industrial use as an alternative to housing. It too enjoys the valuable asset of views to Kingsdon Wood and Nut Hill.

The parish field at the end of Somerton Road just south of the Welham Railway Bridge is still administered by the Parish Council as an asset, for the benefit of the parish residents.



Rookery Farm

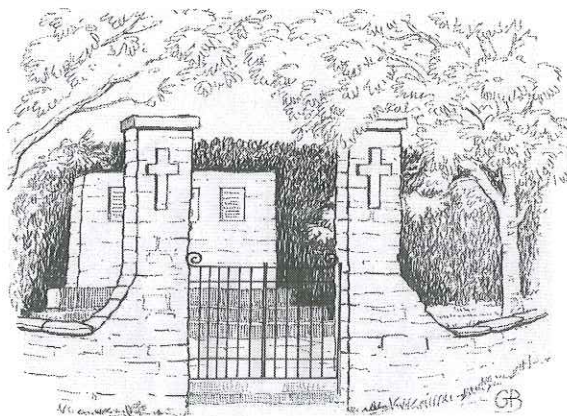
Opposite the entrance to Rookery Farm the stone walls of Charlton Court continue up the hill where they join those surrounding Charlton Mackrell Church. Set in the churchyard is a rare Edward VIII letter box. The Church has twelfth century origins and is set on a hill making it a focal point locally. It has a stone tiled roof.

Charlton Mackrell School, built in the 1850s is opposite the church. Features of this charming Victorian building include unusual patterned tiles, but a timber and glass porch and Portakabins are unsympathetic additions.

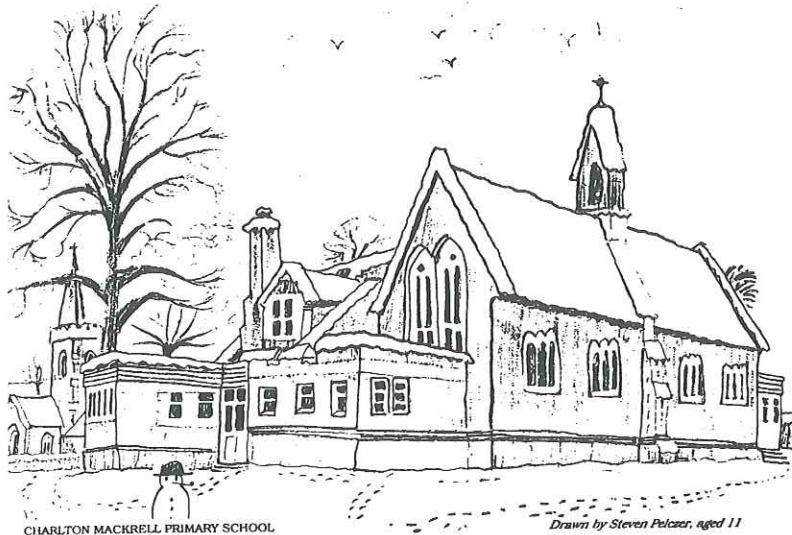
Cary Lane, leading from the church towards Lytes Cary has hedges on either side and a stream at the bottom making it a delightful green lane. Lytes Cary (N.T.) is another of the original manors set into a fine historical park.

Cooks Cary Farm presents an untidy entrance to the village from the south. Barns have been converted for housing, but traditional stone walls have been allowed to fall into disrepair. There is a small industrial unit for agricultural machinery. Ilchester Road from Lytes Cary to the villages maintains character with low hedges and open views to Charlton Mackrell Church and Manor Farm.

The old water works and pumping station have been converted for housing and the reservoir restored. At Southfield the old radio station has also become a dwelling. Harpits Withy Farm is the only other property along this road. Built in 1825 it has been well restored and the barns are being presently re-built.



War Memorial



Charlton Mackrell School

Primrose Hill leaves Ilchester Road and climbs up towards the main A37. It remains largely rural except for the large Primrose Hill Mobile Home Park, which is well-maintained and effectively screened from the road by mature hedges.

Set back from the road further along is Tucker's Batch. Here a terrace of three thatched cottages stand back from the road. The addition of a concrete and tile extension to number one and diamond paned UPVC windows at number two somewhat compromises their charm. From this spot there are panoramic views to the south towards Lytes Cary. Ridgway Lane is an important bridleway leading from Primrose Hill to Lytes Cary and from here the views are to Charlton Mackrell Church and the surrounding countryside.

Continuing along Ilchester Road towards the railway line is a terrace of three post-war council houses with rendered exteriors. Charlton Garage has petrol pumps, a shop and a large forecourt with second-hand cars for sale. As well as a house above the workshops there are also two small industrial units.

A delightful view of Charlton Adam Church can be seen along Ilchester Road towards the War Memorial. This is across open fields to the right. These open spaces within and between the villages are an important feature.

Building Type and Form in the Charltons

A mixture of cottages and medium sized houses predominate in the village. Most of the larger houses probably originated as farmhouses. Within Charlton Adam there are still a few individual outbuildings scattered around its centre which form an interesting contrast in scale and form to the houses and add variety to the streetscape.

Prominent ones are those associated with Vine Cottage, which probably originated as a coach house, and the thatched outbuilding adjacent to Cedar Lodge.



Characteristic cottage in Charlton Adam

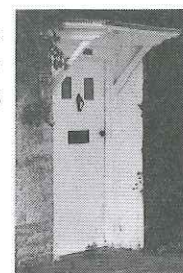
The great majority of traditional buildings are built immediately onto the road frontage, either facing it or at right angles to it. A few are set back slightly behind low walls with railings or behind a higher stone wall with garden in between. Roofs are largely gabled with relatively low eaves and the first floor windows tucked right beneath them.



In some cases they are partially contained within dormers which are of modest proportions, either with swept roofs or surmounted by small gables rising directly from the eaves as at Abbey Cottage.



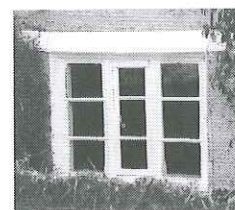
Stone mullioned windows are only preserved on a few old buildings, notably the Abbey. Although different styles of windows are often found on the same house they are still harmonised by their traditional form and materials. Some of the more substantial houses have larger sash windows dating from the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century and the post office has an attractive traditional timber shopfront which probably dates from the early twentieth century. Many of the old buildings are unlisted and a cumulative erosion of traditional character is now taking place with the influx of UPVC windows. Not many houses have substantial stone porches but there are a variety of modest, generally open-sided, timber and tile porches, with flat hoods or classical columned porches on the more formal houses which are still of a somewhat provincial form.



Building Materials in Charlton Adam and Charlton Mackrell

Whilst there is considerable variety of size, shape, period and type of traditional buildings in the villages they are unified by the use of the locally quarried blue lias in the construction of their walls. The way in which this stone was used from the fifteenth century right up until the beginning of the twentieth century was very consistent - it is coursed in roughly dressed regular rectangular blocks of fairly consistent bed depth without the use of "jumpers". Quoins are consistently constructed of blue lias rather than dressed hamstone blocks. Great skill was used by the craftsmen of old in the regularity of the stone size and coursing and the very narrow joints which could be achieved with this versatile building stone. Sadly, this is not often seen in modern construction.

An example of this can be found in the way in which voussoir arches were formed, in the absence of dressed stone window surrounds, out of carefully cut lias stones skilfully fitted together to form a shallow arch and take the weight of the wall above. This is rarely employed in modern building but is a detail worth copying. Alternatively timber lintels were used on the less pretentious cottages and this practice is easily incorporated into modern construction and should be employed rather than using concrete lintels or omitting external lintels altogether.



Timber lintel set in Blue Lias Stonework

Until probably the earlier twentieth century all buildings would have been constructed using lime mortars and this can still be seen on some of the older properties which have not been restored. The thatched barn adjoining Cedar Lodge illustrates the attractive effect given by lime mortar and the variation in colour and appearance which can be achieved by the use of different aggregates - the pink colour indicating a high clay content. In contrast the cement mortar which is almost ubiquitous in modern construction has much less texture and is generally a bland grey in colour. The inflexible and impermeable nature of cement mortar makes it particularly damaging to blue lias stone which is relatively soft and prone to movement.

Many of the more recent houses are built of reconstructed stone, which because it tones in with the grey lias stone does not appear as incongruous as it might but is still not as pleasing as the natural material. Where it is laid to the same coursing pattern, as is traditionally used with the stone, the effect is more convincing.

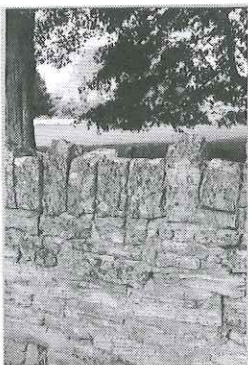
The use of render is not common although it appears on one of the listed buildings, Austen Cottage, and is not inappropriate on this house of early nineteenth century appearance which had some pretensions above the typical village vernacular.

Roofs

Roofs in the village are generally of clay tiles, which were probably introduced into the area in the nineteenth century when manufacturing sprang up around Bridgwater. Pantiles and Roman tiles are found and a few roofs have plain tiles although these are generally restricted to the larger old houses in the village such as East Farmhouse and the Abbey. Prior to the introduction of clay tiles buildings were probably roofed with either thatch on the more modest structures or stone tiles on the more important ones. The churches still retain their stone slate roofs and their vestiges are seen on the Abbey in the form of an eaves course. Several thatched buildings survive in The Charltons with the typical long, low roof-line associated with that material. There are a few slate roofed buildings in the villages which typically appear to date from the late eighteenth century onwards, when Welsh slates were being imported and they could be afforded on some of the more important buildings such as the village shop, a very substantial property, and Vine Cottage, also a house of some status. Some of the more important older houses in Charlton Mackrell, such as Charlton House and Manor Farm, also displayed their status in this way. The use of brick is generally confined to chimneys.

Boundary Walls

Both villages are characterised by the use of boundary walls constructed of blue lias. Although this material is common to all the old walls there is considerable variety in their height, type of coping and style of gate pier, where they exist. Some walls such as that to Charlton Adam churchyard have shallow flat copings and may be of early origin. The majority have the traditional "cock and hen" coping which often required considerable skill employing as it did very fine joints and stones of consistent size and shape -



detailing not often found in modern attempts at this type of construction. Occasionally what appear to be Bath or hamstone dressings appear on garden walls as with the capping to the one bounding Vine Cottage and the gate piers to The Nook. The classical gate piers to Manor Farm on Ilchester Road and The Abbey on Top Road also use finer quality ashlar stone for their cappings. A few examples of traditional iron railings also survive, generally surmounting low walls, which are of pleasing but simple design and enclose narrow forecourts in front of houses. It is to be hoped these will be retained and not removed in order to improve parking facilities.

Highways, Footpaths and Traffic

Lanes

It is regretted that Balls Lane and Withybed Lane, Willmoors Lane, and Bull Down Lane, are now blocked as they run into the countryside. Steart Bridge is to the east of the Old Fosse Way. Its footpaths and bridleway are apt to be waterlogged and generally difficult to use. Ridgeway Lane, the Old Fosse Way, Fosse Close and Withybed Lane, all exit onto the busy A37 making them dangerous to use because of the speeding traffic. The Parish Council is to be encouraged in its wish to re-route these lanes into circles which would allow pedestrians and horses to avoid the road.

Footpaths

The Parish Council is taking part in the Parish Paths Partnership. As a result footpaths in the area are well delineated and signposted, but landowners need to be constantly reminded that they must be kept open or legally diverted and stiles should be kept in good repair. Each year residents try to walk all the paths and the parish boundary on Rogation Sunday - a practice which is to be commended to everyone.

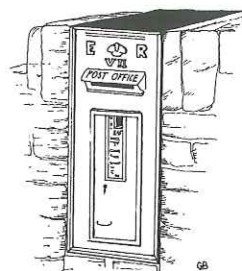
Highways

Past residents are to be congratulated on their work in gaining the weight restrictions on lanes. Kingweston Road and Ilchester Road have become a through route for an increasing volume of traffic. A total of 16,435 vehicles came through the village in one week in early 1998. Walking has become exceedingly dangerous, especially in peak hours and for children going to school and safe routes are needed. The Highways Department should note that any changes or developments outside the parish can affect the flow of traffic within the Charltons. Motorists should be warned of the likelihood of encountering horses at any time and anywhere on the village roads. Everything that can restore the pleasure it used to be to walk or ride safely in our villages and in the countryside needs to be encouraged, but care must be taken to ensure that

the rural character of the area is not destroyed with intrusive traffic calming measures, traffic signs or suburban-style street lighting and footways. Existing cast-iron signposts should be retained and maintained as should grass verges.

Telephone Boxes/Public Utilities

There are telephone boxes in each village, sadly the one outside Charlton Adam Post office is a modern replacement, but outside the Reading Room in Charlton Mackrell is an old red box which residents succeeded in keeping after special representations.



The pleasant village streets are marred by excessive overhead cables - for example the corner of Broad Street and Top Road.

Trees

The Parish is distinguished by a large number of mature trees of many diverse species growing around and between the buildings and roads. Screen plantings separate groups of houses. The hedgerows extend from the countryside right into the settlements, adding to the well balanced mixture of buildings and greenery.

The village has a resident who acts as tree warden. Many local trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, (TPOs), and a list of these can be referred to at the appropriate SSDC office. The tree warden and/or the District Council should be consulted before work on any of the larger trees or screen planting. Permission is required for work to trees within the Conservation Areas. Other trees may also be subject to restrictions arising from planning conditions.

SUMMARY OF GUIDANCE

General Principles

1. The open spaces that contribute to the setting of the villages and the old buildings within them are equally important to the character of the villages as the buildings themselves.

2. The layout or form of a new building or development should reflect or enhance the built form of the surrounding area in building material, bulk, height, density, design and orientation. It should not be detrimental to what is already there and if the existing or surrounding buildings are not in keeping with the overall character of the villages they should not be used as a precedent to repeat the same mistakes.

3. Applications for development of infill sites or in locations which have a close proximity to existing buildings should always be accompanied by elevations accurately showing the relationship of the new building or extension in terms of its height and bulk to adjoining properties and/or the streetscape.

4. Ancillary buildings such as garages should be in scale with and of a sympathetic design to the principal building on the site.

5. In many locations, due to the complex relationships between buildings, roads and rights of way the treatment of rear or side elevations is equally important as the view of the front of a building or extension.

6. Floor levels should be kept as close as possible to natural ground levels to avoid new buildings appearing over-dominant in relation to their neighbours, using agreed local bench marks.

7. Conversions of traditional buildings should be in accordance with the District Council's adopted Guidelines on this subject

8. Schemes for new development should allow for services to be brought in underground and meter boxes to be concealed from view.

9. Extensions to existing buildings should:

- be of a design which protects or enhances the character of the host building and adjoining properties
- generally be subservient in scale or appearance to the existing building with a lower roofline and walls set back from the original
- should not cause a loss of light or outlook or appear overbearing to adjoining occupants or within the streetscene.

Roofs

10. The height of eaves and ridges for new buildings should be kept in scale with the surrounding buildings which are predominantly of 1½ to 2 storeys. Roof pitches should reflect those of surrounding traditional buildings in the village which are generally between 35 - 50 degrees. Simple eaves and verge details should be used avoiding deep barge boards and timber fascias.

11. Dormer windows should be smaller than the windows beneath them, in proportion to the size of the property and of traditional form harmonising with the materials of the roof.

Walls & Materials

12. Where new structures will be seen in the context of older properties the proportion of walls to openings should be significantly greater to give them a solid appearance in harmony with the traditional buildings.

13. Within the conservation areas, in sites affecting the setting of listed buildings and in other sensitive locations natural materials appropriate to the local area should be used in new development. These may be either new or reclaimed but it is important that they are detailed in an appropriate way to harmonise with surrounding older properties, for example in the way that the stone is laid, joints are treated, lintels are formed etc. Features to be avoided are:

- "Jumpers" in stone coursing.
- Concrete lintels/absence of a visible lintel.
- Very narrow courses of stone which give the visual effect of brickwork.

14. If reconstituted stone is to be used it should match as closely as possible the local stone, not just in colour but also in the coursing, if it is not to detract unacceptably from the character of the villages.

15. The design and materials of doors and windows should follow the pattern of traditional buildings in the village and have a finish appropriate to the style of the building and in harmony with neighbouring properties.

Landscaping & Boundaries

16. Boundary treatments should be of a traditional form i.e. local stone walls, railings in keeping with the style of property or hedging of indigenous species. Where fencing is unavoidable it should be of simple rustic rather than suburban form.

17. There should be a presumption in favour of retaining existing native trees and hedges (specimens or groups of particular visual importance are identified on the map in the centrefold). Schemes for new development with an impact on the countryside or open spaces, or where there is a requirement for screening should incorporate tree planting with indigenous species.

Highways

18. Every encouragement should be made to ensure a) safe routes to schools and safe stopping places for the school bus and b) the safety of pedestrians, horses and cyclists on the roads, lanes and rights of way without destroying the rural nature of the villages with intrusive traffic calming measures, out-of-keeping road signs or suburban style street lighting.

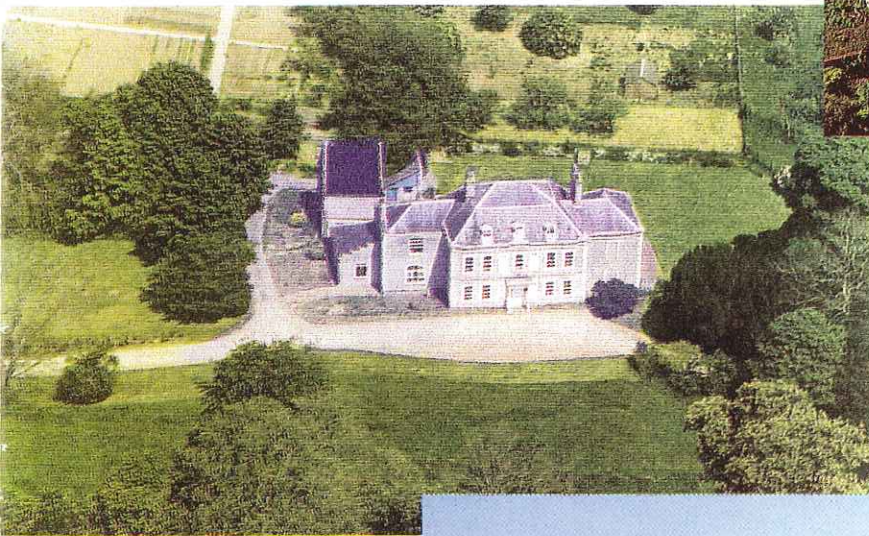
*George Street,
Charlton Adam*



*Manor Farm,
Charlton Mackrell*



*Charlton House,
Charlton Mackrell*



Lytes Cary

