

**SHERBORNE ST JOHN:  
CONSERVATION AREA  
REVIEW**

**Bob Edwards**  
BSc. (Hons.) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA

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**FORUM**  
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# SHERBORNE ST JOHN: CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sherborne St John Parish Council is currently updating and modifying its Neighbourhood Plan. Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to undertake a review of the conservation area and, in particular, make an assessment of the importance of the settings of the two parts of the conservation area which cover the main core area of Sherborne St John and the area of settlement at West End, and consider whether any additional buildings should be considered as non-designated heritage assets (buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and identified as Notable Buildings in the published conservation area appraisal).

1.2 This assessment has been undertaken by Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services following visits to the village in December 2022 and February 2023. The report provides:

- The policy and guidance background
- A brief background to the historic development of the settlements and descriptions of their character
- A review of the notable buildings within the conservation area
- A review of the important views and vistas identified in the conservation area appraisal
- An assessment of the importance of the setting of the conservation area.

## 2.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

2.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas. Section 72, relating to Conservation Areas requires that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

2.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy EM11 of the Basingstoke & Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 which is supported by a Heritage Supplementary Planning Document (2013).

2.3 Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) says when considering the impact of development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 195 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a

heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- 2.4 Historic England's *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be and provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTER**

- 3.1 The area of the present-day village of Sherborne St John consisted of two discrete areas of settlement. To the east, where the parish church was located, was the principal settlement of the parish bearing the name Sherborne St John whilst to the west, alongside the north – south road (A340) was West End (Figure 1). Place names incorporating 'End' are typically considered to be secondary settlements, possibly of medieval origin and there were further secondary settlements in the parish including the now lost Pollards End which was located to the north of the village. Both The Sherborne St John and West End areas of settlement were associated with springs feeding streams that flowed north/north-east.

- 3.2 In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century the manor of Sherborne St John was purchased by Thomas, Lord Sandys of The Vyne, so reuniting the two manors which had been separated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

- 3.3 The Tithe map of c. 1840 shows that the plan of the Sherborne St John area of the village was an irregular agglomeration, a plan which shows very little regularity in its layout of either the structural elements (roads and tracks) or in the position, size or shape of the individual property plots (Figure 1). The village was served by roads from the north-east (Vyne Road), north-west (Cranes Road/Church Path) and south-west (Elm Road), these routes converging at a point near the south-east corner of the churchyard. Dark Lane, linking Kiln Road with Vyne Road formed the eastern side of a triangular area now partly occupied by the village green. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the northern part of this central triangular area had been built upon and whether this area represented a village green is uncertain. Cranes Road formed a large loop, defining the western and southern edges of an irregular area, the main development within it being the school at the northern edge facing onto Church Path. The main focus of development within the village in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was the area to the south-east of the church around the junction of the various roads and lanes and along the south side of Kiln Road. The church and Manor Farm, the two high status buildings, were adjacent to each other forming a church – manor group and, of particular importance which stood slightly away from the main area of settlement with open countryside to the north and west. Within the village there is a variety of houses of mainly 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date including a number of cottages that were built by The Vyne estate. These cottages subtly convey the historic relationship between the village and The Vyne but without making the village overtly an 'estate village'. Detached from this

main core of the village, to the north-east was a farmstead at Kestrel Court and The Grange whilst in the valley was the Mill House, presumably on the site of one of three mills recorded in the Domesday Book.

- 3.4 West End lies alongside the A340 and may be considered as an irregular row form (intermittent development alongside one or both sides of the road) although there was a block of plots on the east side of the road that have a degree of regularity in their layout, sharing a continuous rear boundary although the boundaries between the plots were not straight and parallel as is typical of clearly planned regular rows. At the northern end of this area of settlement there were houses in narrow plots lying parallel to the road where it widened – a form of plot that is often associated with encroachment onto roadside waste. At the south end of this area of settlement is Cranes Farm, the farmhouse dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century at least.
- 3.5 The village did not begin to expand in any notable way until the later 20<sup>th</sup> century when housing estates that abut the south-west and south-eastern sides of the Sherborne St John part of the conservation area were built. The development at Cranesfield partly infills the area between the historic core of Sherborne St John and West End. There are also several smaller scale housing developments to the north-east of Sherborne St John along Vyne Road, infilling the gap between the village core and the formerly detached area of settlement at The Grange and Kestrel Court.
- 3.6 There has been relatively limited 20<sup>th</sup> century development on the fringes of West End apart from the recent housing development on the south side of Cranes Road opposite Cranes Farm and a small group of modern houses built to the rear of Weyhill Farm.
- 3.7 The Sherborne St John Conservation Area was designated as an area of special architectural or historic interest in 1983 with two separate areas covering the two historic settlement foci of Sherborne St John village (Figure 2) and West End (Figure 3). The Conservation Area was subject to a detailed assessment in 2003 resulting in the publication of an appraisal document and conservation area map which identifies Listed Buildings (orange), Notable Buildings (yellow), and important views and vistas.

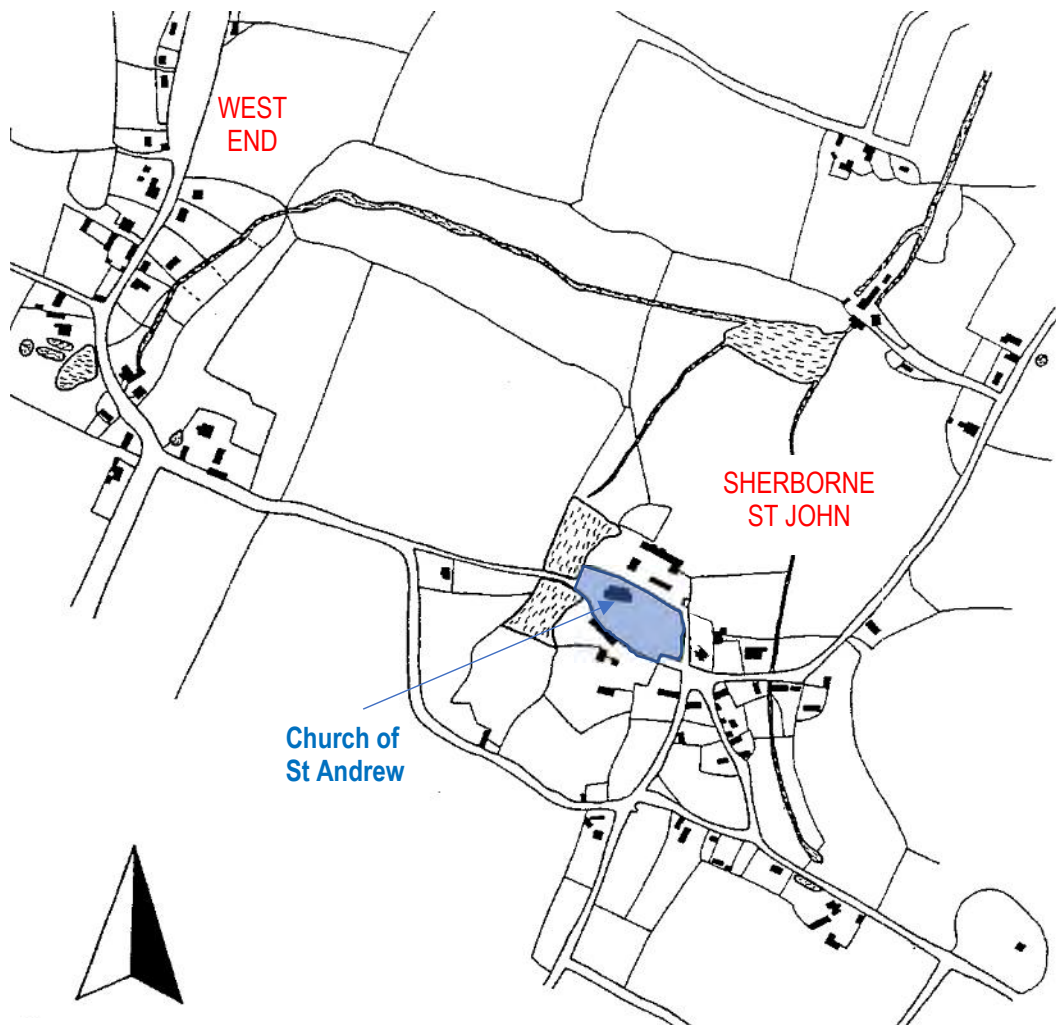


Figure 1 A copy of the Sherborne St John Tithe map, c.1840 with the Church of St Andrew, highlighted.

- 3.8 The Sherborne St John Conservation Area covers almost all of the area of the historic settlement as shown on the Tithe map and extends north to include the paddocks and fields north of Manor Farm to include the site of the former Sherborne Mill, and along the road to the north-east as far as a former farmstead at what is now Kestrel Court (formerly Bob's Farm). The village of Sherborne St John has grown extensively during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with large areas of housing being built, particularly to the south and west of the historic core, which largely surround the historic core as defined by the conservation area boundary, (and also to the north-east in the area of Vyne Meadow) so that the main settlement area of the village, including Manor Farm and the church, has been largely hemmed in by modern housing, leaving only relatively short sections of the boundary of the conservation area maintaining a relationship between the historic village and its surrounding landscape.
- 3.9 The conservation area does not have a consistent character across the whole of the area – the eastern, Sherborne St John part of the conservation area can be divided into five distinct character areas (shown on Figure 2):

- The Church and Manor Farm area.
- The village core
- The area bounded by Cranes Road and Church Walk
- The Grange and Kestrel Court
- the Mill House and landscape to the north.

#### Church and Manor Farm Area

- 3.10 The Church of St Andrew and Manor Farm form a high-status group, slightly detached from the main core of the historic village to the south-east. These buildings represent a distinct and important part of the character of the conservation area. The fact that the church and Manor Farm were peripheral to the village core and, thus, had a direct relationship to the open landscape to the west and north, also means that this relationship, which still survives within this part of the conservation area, although marked by a boundary including numerous tall trees, still makes an important contribution to the experience and understanding of this part of the village and the conservation area.

#### Village core

- 3.11 The main core of the village lies in the area to the south-east of the church within and around the triangular area formed by Kiln Road, Cranes Road and Dark Lane, and extending along Vyne Road to the east. This area is characterised by 1½ and two storey traditional buildings set in plots of irregular and varying size alongside the roads and narrow lanes, mainly with the front elevations facing the street, although there are some buildings such as April Cottage and Springfield House which are set gable end on to the street. Within this area the character of the small rural village is the strongest with the use of vernacular buildings materials include some timber-framing and thatch. Although there has been some modern development, particularly the houses on the east side of Dark Lane facing the green, traditional buildings are dominant. The area of the green provides an important open space within the village across which there are views to historic buildings, The Swan PH being a particularly important building in this area.

#### Area between Cranes Road and Church Walk

- 3.12 To the western part of the conservation area there is a large area defined by Cranes Road to the south and west and Church Walk to the north. Historically, this area was largely undeveloped apart from the school built opposite the church in the north-east corner, the Old Rectory to the north-west and Spring Cottage and Haye Cottage along the southern part of Cranes Road. The interior of this area contains many trees and is private land with no public access and there is little opportunity to gain views into the core of this area. The character of this area has been much altered through the modern development along the north side of Cranes Road and the cul-de-sac at Bourne Field such that the dominant character as seen from Cranes Road is one of modern domestic buildings. The historic character is strongest within the north-east part of the area where the 19<sup>th</sup> century school stands opposite the church, with The Haye to the east of the school.

### The Grange and Kestrel Court

- 3.13 The Grange and Kestrel Court lie to the north-east of the village core on an area of higher ground. This area was formerly detached from the main core but has now been linked to the historic core of the village through modern development along both sides of Vyne Road. This is an area of simple character with a large 19<sup>th</sup> century house, The Grange accompanied by its former gate lodge (No. 9 Vyne Road) and the former Bob's Farm group. The group of modern farm buildings opposite Kestrel Court lie outside the conservation area but occupy an important position in terms of the setting of this part of the area.

### Landscape to the north including Mill House

- 3.14 The northern part of the conservation area is predominantly open countryside within which there is the Mill House and ancillary buildings. This is a tranquil area of open, rural character.

### West End

- 3.15 The West End part of the conservation area may be considered as a single character area which is defined by its buildings being set along both sides of the road through the settlement. This area contains two historic farmsteads, detached cottages and some estate cottages, the buildings representing a wide date range and do not convey any sense of regularity or planning in their siting or plot sizes. The central part of the area has a strong historic character with a concentration of historic buildings that are either listed or are Notable Buildings. The northern part of the area, where houses face onto the old course of the road, is dominated by 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings with just two Notable Buildings.

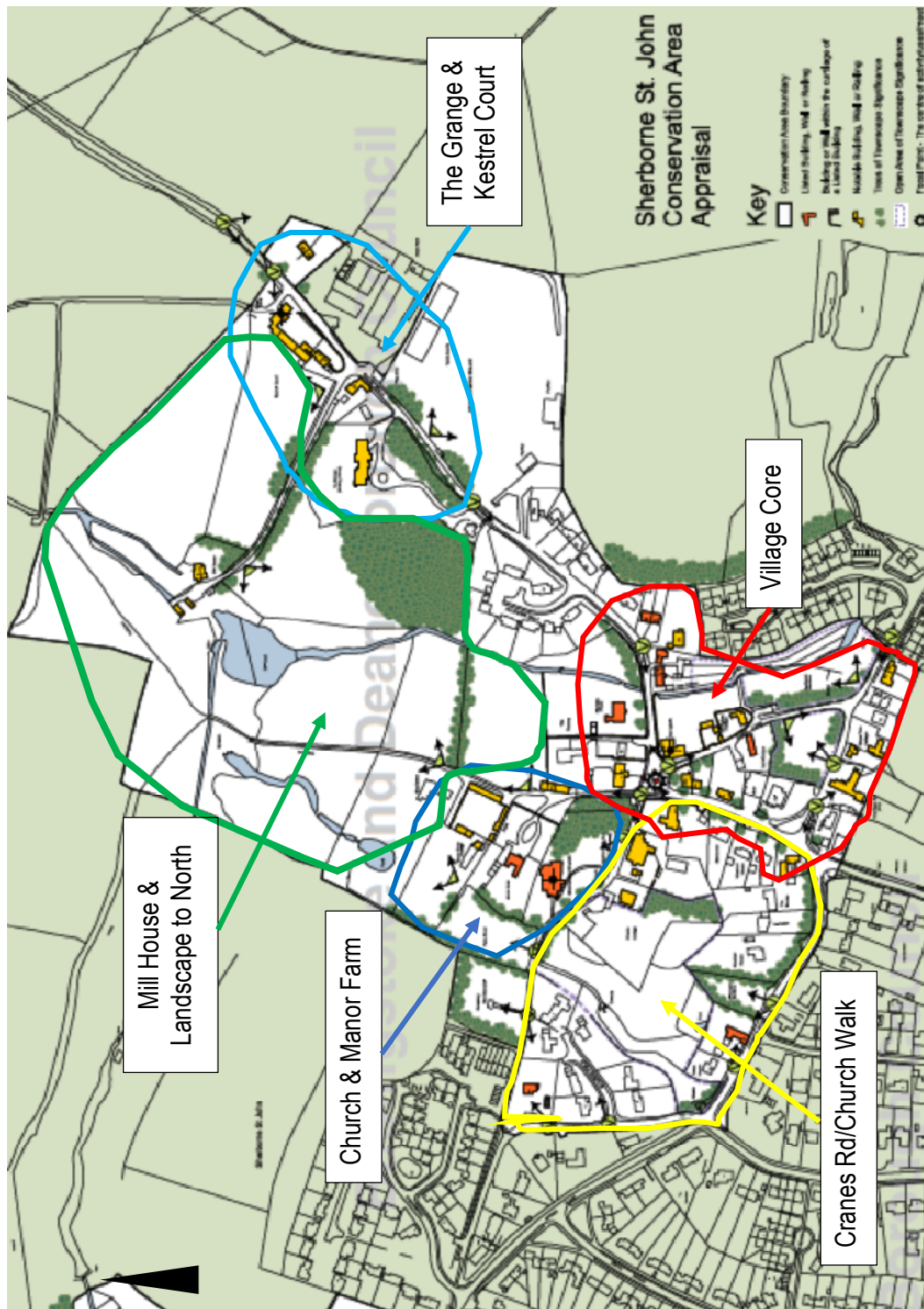


Figure 2 The Conservation Area Appraisal map showing the area of the historic core of Sherborne St John with its character areas. (North to left)



Figure 3  
The Conservation Area  
Appraisal map showing  
the area of West End,  
a single character  
area.  
(North to top)

## 4.0 REVIEW OF THE NOTABLE BUILDINGS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 The adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and map identify those buildings which are designated as listed buildings and those which are not listable but which are deemed to be of local interest (Notable Buildings) and which contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. These buildings may be considered to be non-designated heritage assets – buildings which may not fulfil the criteria to merit designation as listed buildings but which still have some heritage value that merits consideration in the planning process.

4.2 This assessment has reviewed the historic buildings of the village and considered whether any buildings in addition to those already identified as Notable Buildings should be also considered to be Notable Buildings or non-designated heritage assets. The assessment concludes that the following buildings could be considered as non-designated heritage assets for policy purposes:

### Sherborne St John

4.3 Nos. 24 and 26 Vyne Road.

A pair of mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century estate cottages. These cottages appear to be less altered and so retain a higher degree of their historic architectural quality than Nos. 13 and 15 Kiln Road which are of a simpler original design and have been negatively impacted by the changes to the fenestration. They therefore appear to warrant being regarded as buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.4 No. 9 Vyne Road

The former lodge to The Grange. Whilst this building has been considerably enlarged, the street elevation does retain the lodge character and, whilst large, the extensions reflect the 19<sup>th</sup> century character of the original building. Given the retention of historic character and its association with The Grange, this building is considered to make at least an equivalent contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area as Nos. 13 and 15 Kiln Road.

### West End

4.5 Weyhill Brook House, Aldermaston Road

Weyhill Brook House is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick house with a hipped slate roof and gable end stacks. This is a house with a clear historic character built in locally characteristic materials which contributes to the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 5.0 REVIEW OF IMPORTANT VIEWS & VISTAS

5.1 The Conservation Area map identifies a number of views that are considered to be 'important views or vistas'. The Historic England guidance on conservation area appraisals highlights the importance of views into and out of the designated area, particularly those to landmark buildings such as churches or other important buildings, it also recognises that there are designed or intentional views and views which are attractive, but which are 'fortuitous', for example, views along a village street with important groups of buildings.

This review has focused on identifying the views and vistas that are of particular significance that have been identified in the conservation area appraisal and also suggests some additional views that are considered to be worthy of being regarded as important views in terms of the future management of the conservation area.

### 5.2 Sherborne St John

View	Assessment	Value
Dark Lane, northern corner of the green looking south/south-west	This is an attractive view across the green with The Swan and Maple Cottage closing the south side of the green.	Moderate
Vyne Road looking west from opposite No. 10	The important view looking up towards the junction between Cranes Road/Dark Lane/Church Path is a moderately attractive but it is simply a view along the road which is not of particular significance.	Moderate
Vyne Road to the SW from entrance to the recreation ground car park	This view looks down Vyne Road towards No. 10 Vyne Road. Modern buildings and close boarded fences unfortunately dominate the fore and mid-ground.	Moderate
Vista north-west from Mill Lane junction with Vyne Road	This vista looks across the rolling open landscape to the north village, which is partly within the conservation area. This view allows an appreciation of the position of the relationship between this peripheral part of the settlement and the surrounding open agricultural landscape.	Moderate - High
Church Walk to the church tower	When approaching the school from the east the church tower first comes into view where the view is identified. This is the start of a progressive view along this section of Church Walk past the school rather than being a fixed view point as suggested in the appraisal. It does have some merit although it has little relevance to the management of conservation area.	Moderate

Church Walk looking north across the pond	This is an attractive view across the pond with a glimpse to the open landscape beyond.	High
Church Walk, view to the war memorial	At the entrance gate to the cemetery there is a view to the war memorial, which is set within an enclosure defined by yew trees and looking through the lychgate which is an attractive view but one which has little relevance to the management of the conservation area.	Moderate
Cranes Road, view into Bourne Field	This view is presumably because the spire and top part of the church tower can be glimpsed through the trees above the modern housing of this cul-de-sac (although the arrow does not point to the church). In summer the ability to see the church will be extremely limited due to the trees. This should be marked as being no more than a glimpsed view and noted that it is specifically to the church, rather than view along Bourne Fields which is not an important view.	Moderate
Manor Farm, views to north-east	From the footpath that runs past Manor Farm there is a view across the paddock to the east of the track looking out to the countryside running up to the edge of the historic settlement.	Moderate
View adjacent to Kingfishers	A vista is marked from the footpath that runs past Manor Farm looking out to the countryside to the north of the village. This is not a vista that is particular to this exact location but is part of a progressive view to the countryside possible from the footpath.	Moderate

Additional important views not identified in the conservation area appraisal:

View east along Vyne Road from the junction of Cranes Road/Vyne Road/Dark Lane	One of the better 'fortuitous' views in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area is from the area adjacent to the telephone box looking east with the late Victorian house at the corner the junction with Dark Lane and across to the thatched and tiled roofs of the cottages to the east with the rising ground and treeline behind allowing an appreciation of the rural setting of the conservation area. This is a street scene which could be impacted by development and is a view which the local authority should seek to manage.	Moderate
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Vista from the play area at Cranesfield looking east and north	From the play area within the Cranesfield development there are important views looking out across the arable landscape to the north-west and west of the conservation area looking to the north-east. The spire of the church can also be seen.	Moderate – High
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West End

<b>View</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Value</b>
Vista to the north on the main road near No. 22 West End	<p>This vista is located at the northern edge of development on the east side of the road and so there are views across the open landscape to the north-east.</p> <p>The views out to the landscape are important in terms of the ability to appreciate of the setting of the conservation area and also proving a gap to see into the settlement from the footpaths to the north-east.</p>	Moderate



## 6.0 CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the settings of listed buildings are preserved but Section 72, relating to conservation areas, does not refer to the setting of designated areas. However, para. 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 makes it clear that the importance of setting of all heritage assets is material to the management of the historic environment.

6.2 The NPPF 2021 (Annexe 2 Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as:

*'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.'*

6.3 The Historic England Guidance *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, December 2017) states that:

*'Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance' (p.4)*

This guidance provides a methodology for assessing the importance of setting and this has informed the approach to the assessment undertaken and presented in this report.

Sherborne St John village (Figure 4)

6.4 The Sherborne St John Conservation Area covers almost all of the area of the historic village of Sherborne St John as shown on the Tithe map (Figure 1) and extends north to include the paddocks and fields north of Manor Farm as far as the site of the former Sherborne Mill and along the road to the north-east as far as a former farmstead at what is now Kestrel Court (formerly Bob's Farm). The village of Sherborne St John has grown extensively during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with large areas of housing being built, particularly to the south-west and south-east of the historic core, as well as to the north-east in the area of Vyne Meadow. These developments mean that much of the historic core of settlement has been hemmed in by modern housing leaving only relatively short sections of the boundary of the conservation area maintaining a relationship between the historic village and its surrounding landscape. As a once relatively small, rural settlement, it is considered that the remaining areas where the conservation area retains a relationship with the open countryside are potentially of importance in terms of the setting of the heritage asset and the ability to experience the designated area. The following assessment provides guidance as to the level of importance of the setting of the two parts of the conservation area, as shown by red dashed (high importance) and blue dots (moderate importance).

The physical extent of the setting is not defined, in line with usual assessment practice. The extent of setting can change and may be different for different forms of development and the extent and impact will need to be considered on an individual basis should any applications come forward in the future.

- 6.5 The Church of St Andrew and Manor Farm form an important high-status group slightly detached from the main core of the historic village to the south-east. They form a distinct and important part of the character the conservation area. The fact that the church and Manor Farm were peripheral to the village core and, thus, had a direct relationship to the open landscape to the west and north, a relationship which still survives within this part of the conservation area although marked by a boundary including numerous tall trees, still makes an important contribution to the experience and understanding of this part of the village and the conservation area. The importance of the grouping of the church and Manor Farm and their peripheral position also contributes to the special interest of these listed buildings. The views across the landscape possible from the public footpath to the north of Cranesfield allow an appreciation of this relationship and this area of farmland is of particularly high importance in terms of forming part of the setting of the conservation area, maintaining a direct relationship between the historic settlement and its agricultural lands. The area of farmland between the development of Cranesfield and Manor Farm is also experienced from Church Path across the pond, an important feature of the conservation area, and also from the cemetery where the tranquillity of the cemetery, an important publicly accessible space, is partly derived from its relationship to the farmland to the north.
- 6.6 The northern part of the conservation is largely open countryside as the designated area extends out to include the historic mill site and the once detached farmstead on the higher ground along Vyne Road at Kestrel Court and the adjacent former large house, The Grange. This area of farmland within the conservation area may be considered to form part of the setting of the village core and Manor Farm in particular, with the adjacent open landscapes forming a continuation of this setting and is of importance to the setting of the heritage asset. This area also forms part of an important gap between the village and the Vyne Estate to the north.
- 6.7 The modern farm building group opposite Kestrel Court was excluded from the conservation area when the boundary was drawn. Given the prominence of the site at the entrance to the conservation area as approaching from the north, it is an important site in terms of the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.8 The view east from the junction of Cranes Road and Vyne Road near the church looks across the roofs of the cottages in the dip along Vyne Road to a treed ridgeline providing one of the few places where the rural context of the village can be appreciated from within the settlement and therefore this part of the setting contributes to the significance of the designated area as well as the listed buildings within this group. This area, and the area

extending northwards also forms the rural edge to the recreation ground area within the northern part of the conservation area.

- 6.9 At the south-eastern part of the conservation area the boundary runs along the rear boundary of the plots on the south side Kiln Road and abuts open countryside apart from the large car park to the rear of The Swan. Views into and across this area are limited from Elm Road but from Sherborne Road some breaks in the hedgerow allow views to the thatched roof of Maple Cottage on Kiln Road. The majority of the other buildings visible are modern but this area does provide a rural context for the village and conservation area and so has moderate importance in terms of contributing to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

#### West End (Figure 5)

- 6.10 Apart from some small areas of modern development adjacent to Cranes Road at the southern end of the conservation area, Cranesfield on the east side of the area and a small development to the rear of Weybrook Farm on the west side of the conservation area, the boundary of the area abuts open countryside. However, for much of the length of the boundary, the importance of this relationship in terms of experiencing the conservation area or appreciating its significance is limited as, for example, the majority of the buildings on the west side of West End at the northern end of the area do not have special architectural or historic interest.
- 6.11 The area where the relationship is particularly important in terms of the experience of the conservation area is the open agricultural landscape to the east of the main road to the north of No. 22 West End where the rural context of the village is seen from the main road. The area of setting of high importance extends southwards to the rear of Cranes Farm where the part of the historic relationship of the farmstead to its landscape has been retained – this is important to the setting of the listed farmhouse and the conservation area.
- 6.12 The section of boundary to the rear of the properties on the west side of the main road at the southern end of the conservation area and bounding the modern and 20<sup>th</sup> century houses Nos. 11-17 West End marks the historic edge of the settlement. However, due to the boundary abutting modern buildings or the adjacent land being largely screened from view from the main road, this area of the setting of the conservation area is considered to be of moderate importance to the significance of the conservation area at best.
- 6.13 The area to the south-west part of the West End conservation area is open countryside which has moderate importance in terms of the setting of the conservation area.

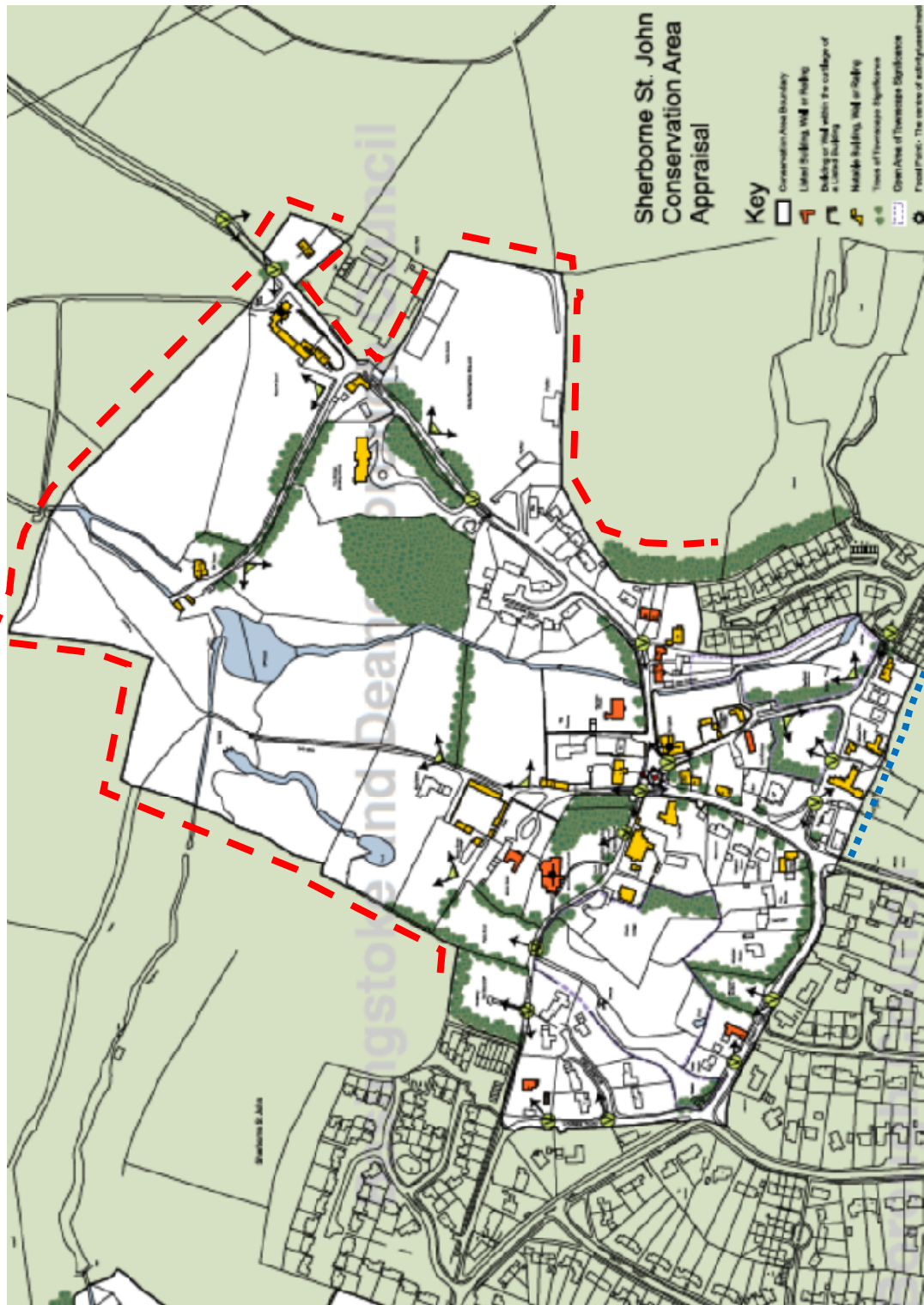


Figure 4 The importance of the setting of the Sherborne St John part of the conservation area.

Red dashed line – high importance

Blue dotted line – moderate importance

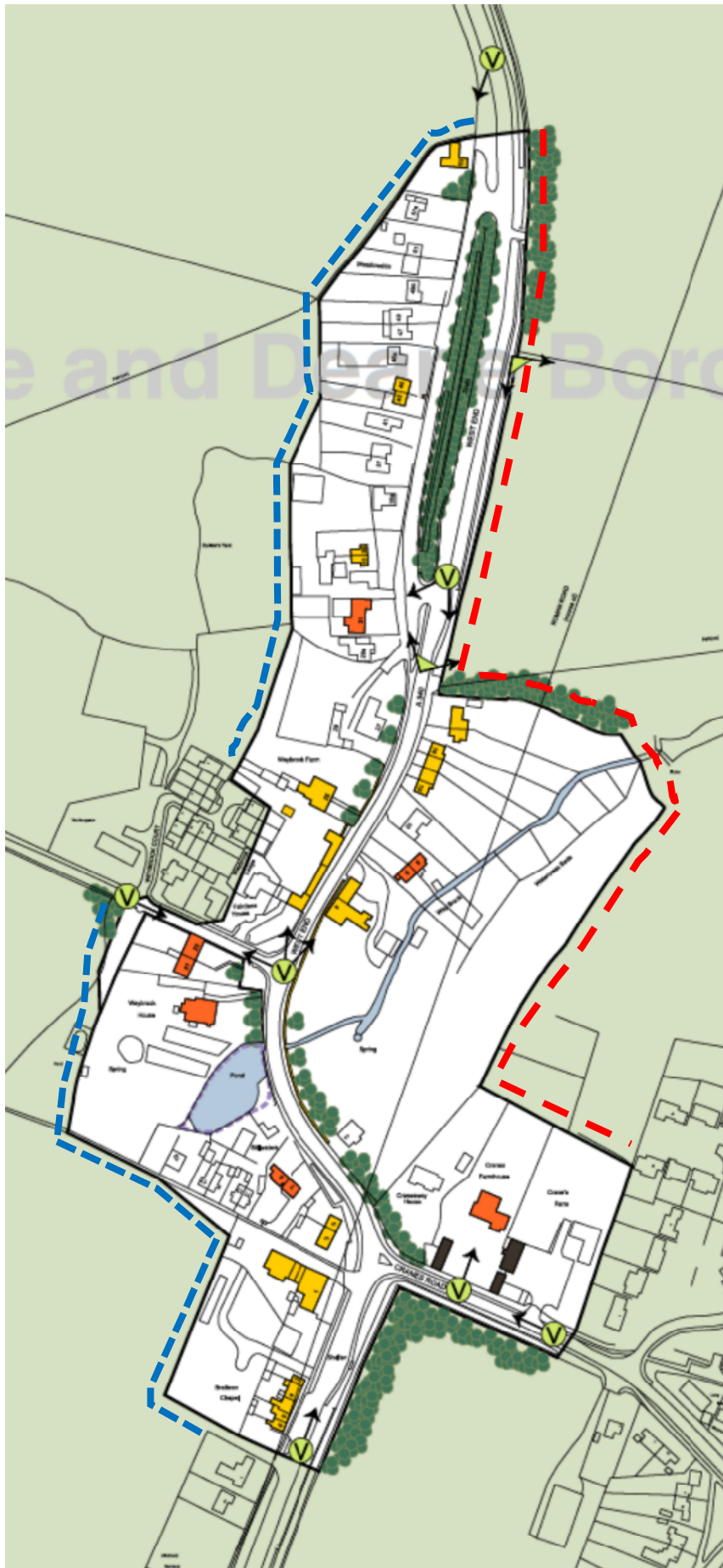


Figure 5  
The importance  
of the setting of  
the West End  
part of the  
conservation  
area.

Red dash:  
High  
importance

Blue dotted:  
Moderate  
importance