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1 Introduction

1.1 Conservation Areas are designated by Local Planning Authorities under the Planning Acts. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as :

‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

1.2 North Devon Council, as the local planning authority, has a duty to designate parts of the District it sees appropriate as Conservation Areas. There are currently 40 Conservation Areas in this District (excluding those within Exmoor National Park).

1.3 Carrying out a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is an important method for identifying the qualities and characteristics that such an area possesses and to provide a basic summary of the elements, which collectively contribute towards the special character and appearance of the conservation area. A clear and comprehensive appraisal of the Rumsam Conservation Area provides a sound basis for development control decision-making, and assists the Council in defending such decisions that are subject to appeal. Generally the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced through:

- Providing controls and regulating development through the planning system.
- Applying the extra controls that designation provides over demolition, minor development and the protection of trees.
- Environmental enhancement schemes and possibly providing financial assistance for the repair and restoration of specific buildings.
- Encouraging public bodies such as the local highways authority or utility companies to take opportunities to improve the street scene through the appropriate design and sensitive siting of street furniture (and retention of historic features of interest), or the removal of eyesores and street features that have a negative impact such as overhead wires.

1.4 The purpose of this character appraisal is to:

- Analyse the character of the designated area and identify the components and features of its special interest.
- Outline the planning policies and controls that apply to the Conservation Area.
- Identify opportunities for the future enhancement of the Conservation Area.

1.5 It should be noted that the omission of any particular building, structure, tree, wall or any other feature from being highlighted within this character appraisal does not imply that it is not of special interest, nor is there an implication in such an omission that it does not make a positive contribution, or conversely a negative contribution, to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Also the map is unable to identify accurately every tree of significance and value to the Conservation Area.

2 Facts & Figures

2.1 The conservation area covers an area of 9.9 hectares (24 acres) and is around half the size of the neighbouring Newport Conservation Area.

2.2 Of the buildings within the area there are 3 included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (listed buildings), all of which are listed at grade II.

2.3 There are no scheduled ancient monuments within the conservation area or its immediate surroundings.

2.4 Details of the Rumsam Conservation Area boundary and the listed buildings it contains, as adopted in December 2009, is given in appendix 4(II) and the listing descriptions for listed buildings given in Appendix 1.

3 Why is the Rumsam Conservation Area Special?

3.1 The conservation area represents a narrow ribbon of historic Georgian and pre-Georgian development separated by Victorian and early 20th century Arts-and-Crafts style infill development of high quality design and materials. The relatively large size of many of these buildings means they have escaped the sequential extensions and incremental additions which could easily have damaged their historic character. The pleasant, semi-rural and affluent nature of the area have also saved the buildings from neglect and sub-division into apartments, with the vast majority of houses remaining in use as family homes with relatively few alterations from their original form.

3.2 Areas to the east and west of the conservation area contain buildings from more modern periods, typified by streets such as Villa Close and Rumsam Gardens. These streets retain the relatively high quality detached villa theme found within the proposed conservation area. However, they form consistent areas of uniform building design and construction period at slightly higher and more consistent densities which is at odds with the more varied architectural character and age found within the conservation area.

3.3 To the north of the conservation area lies the neighbouring Newport Conservation Area, which has a distinctly different character to the Rumsam Conservation Area, being of a much higher development density and typified by terraces, not villas. A small part of the Newport Conservation Area covering three buildings - Merles Croft, Arosa and Aysgarth - shares the lower density Villa character of Rumsam and was transferred into the Rumsam Conservation Area and removed from the Newport designation upon the Rumsam Area's formal adoption in December 2009.

4 Historic Events and Development

4.1 In the past the majority of historical evidence was recorded by the Church, with members of the clergy being the only persons adequately literate and possessing of sufficient free time to make records of the day-to-day events of the parish. However, with Rumsam lacking its own church or chapel, the clergy had no presence in the settlement.

4.2 Other documents kept by the Church, particularly with reference to the collection of tithes, offer only limited insight into the population of an area and its relative wealth, sometimes also recording occupations of the local inhabitants.

4.3 No events of significance are recorded as occurring within Rumsam, and the more general history of an area normally recorded by the Church is also absent. This makes the task of piecing together the history of the settlement difficult. The most readily accessible records are maps, with the earliest accurate maps of the area having been produced by the Church to assess land for tithes in the 1840's. From the 1880's onwards the Ordnance Survey began production of detailed mapping with national coverage, with updated mapping being produced at regular intervals first in 1904-06 and again in the early 1930's. These maps allow us to put together accurate details of how Rumsam has grown and developed over the past 170 years. By combining the detail of all these maps we can produce a chronology showing the development of the settlement over time.

4.4 This map shows a picture of a very low density Georgian suburb, the extent of which has changed little until relatively recently. Instead of expanding outward the settlement has grown by increasing in density with new buildings developing in the fields and orchards between existing properties, a few remnants of which still remain. Only since the 1950's has development joined Rumsam Road with Landkey Road and Bishop's Tawton Road.

4.5 The early origins of the settlement prior to 1840 are unclear, although the lack of a church would suggest that Rumsam grew up as a semi-rural subservient settlement to Newport most probably being home to wealthy and successful farmers or merchants who chose to live away from Barnstaple itself. Despite this it must be noted that Newport, as its name suggests, was a new settlement encouraged by the Bishops of Exeter from their Bishop's Tawton palace to improve trade via a port to the South of the Coney Gut stream which, at the time, prevented easy land transport from Barnstaple to Bishop's Tawton. Newport did not exist prior to the 13th century; however, the name Rumsam suggests that this settlement may in fact be older than its larger neighbour.

4.6 Rumsam is first mentioned in written records in 1499 as *Romysham* with the name evolving into *Rumysham* in records from 1518-29 and *Rompsham* in 1586. It has been suggested that the 'Rum' element of the placename may be a reference to

a personal name of a former lord or landholder. The settlement is not mentioned in Domesday Book. Despite not entering into written record before 1499 Rumsam may date to the late 11th century, although no buildings from before the 18th century would appear to survive in Rumsam today.

4.7 The earliest buildings which do survive today are modest cottages, such as 2, 18 and 23 ('Honeywells') Rumsam Road along with Deer Park Cottage. Some of these buildings, most noticeably on the rear wall of 18 Rumsam Road, are constructed of rendered cob. The Thatched Cottage at the southern end of the conservation area is also likely to be amongst the earliest buildings within the area.

4.8 Following from these buildings are the large Georgian Villas such as Rumsam House, Ashcroft, Rosebank, Rumsam Villa, Orchard Cottage, The Laurels, Seaforth, Taw View and Rosehill. Several of these large and grand villas also retain their associated outbuildings in the form of stables and coach houses, such as the grade II listed outbuildings at Rosehill and the Coach House now converted to a dwelling but formally ancillary to Rosebank. Further vernacular outbuildings survive at Orchard Cottage. The presence of these outbuildings, together with the size of the buildings themselves, demonstrate that the owners of these properties were sufficiently wealthy to own horses and carriages. It is also clear that the buildings stood in significant areas of land, sufficient for both gardens and horse paddocks and were probably the domestic centres of small estates. Early Ordnance Survey maps also show extensive orchards in the spaces between the Georgian buildings.

4.9 Interestingly Ashcroft is reputed to have gotten its name from a former crofter's dwelling and a large Ash tree which used to occupy the site. The outbuildings now fronting the road to the south-east of the main house may incorporate remains of what was previously the crofter's dwelling.

4.10 The second half of the Victorian Period saw further development within the area, with new Villas replacing some of the fields and orchards between the Georgian buildings, such as Muirneag which appears in the large open field between Laurel Cottage and Rumsam Villa. The infill during the Victorian period is remarkably limited within Rumsam, the only other example being the semi-detached pair of Kingston House and Porch House beside the railway bridge. Instead the majority of development took place in the early decades of the 20th century.

The Old Thatched Cottage is the only thatched building within the proposed conservation area.



4.11 The development of the triangular plot of land between Bishops Tawton Road, Rumsam Road and Fortescue Road also began during the Edwardian period with the 'Old Vicarage' built in 1904 and the grandiose terraced row of 1-4 Fortescue Road shown as half built on the 1906 second edition Ordnance Survey map.

The Old Vicarage carries its date of construction on a gable cartouche.



4.12 By the late 1930's most of the buildings fronting Rumsam Road today had been built, as had the development of the triangular plot along Fortescue Road mentioned previously, with the exception of the bungalows (Ruthven and Sterling Stent) on the north side of Fortescue Road.

4.13 The development of streets off Rumsam Road also began during the period from 1910-1930 with buildings appearing along Squires Close and Rumsam Close, opening the way for further development during the 1950's which saw the outward expansion of Rumsam towards Landkey Road along Villa Close and Hillcrest Road. This pattern of outward expansion has continued into recent times with the development of Rumsam Gardens (1988) and Chichester Close / Chichester Road (1986).

4.14 Some modern buildings have also continued to infill some of the larger gaps between the older buildings, such as Carillion and Pendle to the south of the railway bridge and 'The Courtyard' which occupies a space between 18 Rumsam Road and Deerpark Cottage.

4.15 The relationship of the historic villas with their extensive, mature gardens makes a significant positive contribution to the attractive local character of Rumsam. Although piecemeal infill development has taken place in the past the overall impact has been limited, with the infill buildings increasing the development density without departing from the established scales and architectural quality. As a result Rumsam still has a prevailing semi-rural quality. Some of the most recent buildings along Rumsam Road are of significantly different scale, height and style to that of the established character and this is a troubling sign of the damage that could so easily be done to the appearance and feel of the area.

5 Landscape and Setting

5.1 Rumsam is located to the south of Barnstaple, just to the north of the North Devon Link Road (A39) on an area of gently sloping land. To the north and west is lower land of the Taw Valley while to the south and east is the high ground sloping upwards towards Hill (1.3 kilometres west of Landkey) and the wider landscape.

5.2 From within Rumsam views of the undeveloped green landscape of the Taw valley can be seen, as well as the town of Barnstaple spread on the lower ground around the River Taw, although the river itself is hidden from view.

5.3 The geology of North Devon provides a wide range of different stones suitable for use in construction, Barnstaple and its surroundings being sited on the Pilton Beds, mainly a blue/grey shade of slates with intrusions of limestone and sandstone. Bricks did not become widely used in and around Barnstaple until the 18th Century, with the majority of older buildings constructed from stone quarried from land within, or immediately surrounding, the town.

5.4 The local clays and clay soils also provide an ideal material for construction in the form of cob, and examples of buildings of this material can be found in the more modest early cottages within Rumsam.

5.5 Rumsam Road itself is cut by the A39 North Devon Link Road (this section completed in 1988) which sits in a cutting and is largely hidden from view. The northern section of Rumsam Road and its southern continuation up Windy Ash Hill are now joined only by a pedestrian footbridge which spans the A39.

5.6 The northern end of Rumsam Road is also bisected by the route of a former railway line. This was a loop line linking the Devon & Somerset Railway, which had a station on Victoria Road (later part of the Great Western Railway), and the North Devon Railway (Tarka Line). The line was opened in 1887 and eventually closed on 5th March 1970. With the closure of the line to Taunton the old Victoria Road Station remained open to goods traffic only from 1966 until 1970 and was accessible only via the loop line from the North Devon Railway.

6 Views and Vistas

6.1 Views within Rumsam are often channelled by the walls and hedges which front Rumsam Road; although these visual barriers often limit views of the buildings themselves. However, as near continuous linear features they serve to draw the eye towards the distance in views along Rumsam Road. The walls themselves feature a large variety of design and materials, from local slate stone to polychrome mixes of red and Marland brick. It is worth noting that where the walls are of a mix of red brick and Marland brick this is also the construction style of the buildings they enclose. In some cases where buildings have subsequently been rendered it is their boundary walls which reveal their underlying materials.

6.2 At the junction of Rumsam Road with Hillcrest Road there are views available in four directions. The typical view along Rumsam Road of buildings in a range of styles fronted by a variety of walls and hedges extends north and south, while the view along Hillcrest Road extends out to green countryside on the sides of the Taw Valley beyond. This view is attractively framed by the rows of matching houses along either side of the road. In the opposite direction a secluded lane is bounded by an historic stone garden wall, in places 8 feet high and supported by buttresses of a later date. This wall, thanks to its age and scale, provides an attractive element to the view along this lane.

6.3 Views are also possible from the bridge over the former railway line along Rumsam Road. This view is limited due to the curve in the route of the line at this point and due to the mature trees which shelter the line's former route. This railway line is now a public footpath and a part of the national cycle network.

6.4 From the southern end of Rumsam where steps lead up to the footbridge over the North Devon Link Road (A39) it is possible to look back over Rumsam and Newport to Barnstaple and beyond to the natural green landscape of the Taw Valley's slopes. Landmarks such as the Spire of St. Peter's Church and the tower of Holy Trinity Church stand out in this view which encompasses much of the urban development of Barnstaple and its surroundings.

From the A39 footbridge at the southern end of Rumsam Road views out across the Taw Valley are possible.



6.5 From the footbridge views along the link road are possible for a short distance in both directions. It is remarkable that this major element of the North Devon traffic network is almost unnoticeable from just a few hundred metres away.

6.6 Beyond the link road the footbridge opens out onto the sweeping bend of a road, from where the grade II* listed Rosehill can be glimpsed through trees on a hill directly ahead. The wide green verge and bank atop which Rosehill sits is a haven for wildlife, with rabbits and birds making the area their home. To the right the curve of the road leads the eye to the quaint 'The Thatched Cottage', which marks the southern limit of the proposed conservation area.

6.7 It is also worth noting that the variety of styles and decorative features can make buildings within Rumsam the focus of views themselves. Decorative verandas and timber porches, stained glass staircase windows, iron crown railings and decorative glazed date tiles all attract the eye on a casual stroll through Rumsam.

6.8 Parked cars are a visual issue, particularly at the northern end of the Conservation Area where Rumsam Road and Fortescue Road are used by residents of Orchard Terrace and South Street for parking their vehicles. This is a problem typical of historic residential areas built before the age of the car or mass car ownership and without parking provision, although these parked vehicles have a visual impact which is detrimental they are also transitory and not permanent features within the streetscape.

7 Architecture

7.1 Unlike neighbouring Newport which is characterised by its Georgian and Victorian terraced housing and shops, Rumsam is a development almost exclusively of Villa style buildings. Like its neighbouring conservation area the majority of the buildings in Rumsam date to the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods, although more recent development radiates out from this historic core of development and includes buildings from the 1940's and 50's right through to the present day.

7.2 There are also more modest buildings in Rumsam which pre-date the Georgian period. Although these are scattered and few in number they do indicate the antiquity of the settlement and establish the area as more than a mere Georgian suburb. Examples from this period include 18 and 23 ('Honeywells') Rumsam Road, both of which have the characteristic of presenting their gable ends to the road and running perpendicular to the direction of Rumsam Road.

7.3 A varied pallet of building materials can be seen throughout the conservation area. Red brick and Marland brick appear together, creating polychrome decoration on buildings, and separately. Render is common on Georgian Villas and the earlier modest cottages, while some use of exposed stone can also be seen, primarily in boundary walls. Other materials such as metalwork also survive, including a length of cast iron railings bearing the name of their local manufacturer (T Lake & Co. Barnstaple) at Chilbury.

This section of cast iron decorative railing has lost its upper sections (stumps painted gold) but retains the name of the foundry where they were produced.



7.4 The roofs throughout the area are predominantly of natural slate, although some artificial slate and concrete tiles are also found in the area, as are examples of clay pantiles, as seen at the outbuildings of the former Veterinary Surgery.

7.5 As well as the variety of materials within the conservation area there is also a wide variety of building styles. These range from the classically inspired Georgian buildings with their crisp white render and columned doorcases to the Victorian, and early 20th century, arts and crafts style buildings with their 'honesty of form' and inspiration from gothic and vernacular architecture.

7.6 In contrast to the variety of styles and materials there is a consistently high level of quality representative of Rumsam's position as an affluent suburb during the Georgian and Victorian periods. After the mid 17th century, with the construction of the causeway across the Coney Gut linking Newport and Barnstaple directly, Rumsam had easy connections with the trading centre of Barnstaple while being significantly separated from the town and having a much more rural setting and character.

7.7 For that reason many of the Georgian buildings possess stables and farm style outbuildings, some of which still survive, such as at the outbuildings to the former Veterinary Surgery at Ashcroft. It is likely that the early Georgian buildings represented the homes of wealthy landowners, while nearby modest cottages probably represented accommodation for workers on these reasonably sized farming estates.

7.8 The Georgian buildings along Rumsam Road can be readily identified by the symmetrical elevations and white rendered walls, with examples such as 'The Myrtles', Rumsam Villa and The Laurels being particularly fine. Many also have decorative features borrowed from ancient Greece and Rome, such as doorways flanked by columns supporting pedimented porches, and dentil moulding at eaves level. Other features such as timber window shutters are also retained, such as at Orchard Cottage. Shutters are just one traditional feature which has been incorporated into the design of more recent housing adjoining the conservation area, in this case at Rumsam Gardens, where buildings also feature porches with classical columns.

Several Georgian villas retain features such as external shutters which have usually been lost over the years.



7.9 These earliest Georgian buildings were widely spaced with extensive grounds, and in later periods Victorian and Edwardian buildings were erected in the gaps between them. The Victorian buildings saw a change from the white render of the Georgian buildings and a move towards the use of exposed brick, often in contrasting colours with decorative bands and highlighted features such as window and door openings, although some of these have subsequently been rendered over such as at 'The Old Vicarage'. The former decorative scheme of this particular building is betrayed by a section of its boundary wall where render has fallen off revealing the polychromatic brickwork beneath.

7.10 The influence of the Arts-and-Crafts style is extensive throughout the conservation area with the typical features of the style (such as stained glass, ocular and stair windows, multiple gables, and in its less pure forms mock timber framing) visible on many of the buildings. The style was born in the mid 19th Century and reached its height from 1880 - 1930. The style emphasised honesty of construction and the skill of the craftsman, based on the belief that mass produced products and buildings lacked the quality and beauty that bespoke products made by a skilled craftsman had.

7.11 Often the style incorporated elements of Gothic architecture. Throughout the medieval period vast construction works were undertaken by master masons and their teams, the quality of their work being such that it can still be seen and admired in the countless churches and cathedrals throughout the country. As such the medieval period, and its gothic style of architecture, was seen by protagonists of the Arts-and-Crafts style as being the golden age of the craftsman, and thus a style worth of replicating. The use of gothic features in an Arts-and-Crafts style building is perhaps best seen in the ground floor pointed windows of 'The Old Vicarage'.

7.12 The Arts-and-Crafts style contained modest embellishments based upon the vernacular and historic architecture of Britain and northern Europe, not the classical style of Greece and Rome and as such incorporated features such as timber framing and stained glass while lacking the columns and porticos found in Georgian architecture. There was also the belief that the internal functionality of a building should never be compromised simply to achieve external symmetry, as was the case with Georgian and classical architecture. Instead the external appearance of the building evolved as a consequence of the internal arrangements, producing buildings of irregular shapes with projecting gables and irregular patterns of fenestration as windows were located where they were needed, for light and ventilation, and not to some design ideal.

The Arts-and-Crafts style incorporated design features such as timber framing and the extensive use of gables and dormers, tile hanging and open porches can also be seen here.



7.13 Buildings of this style span the period of dominance of the Arts-and-Crafts movement, with examples of Villas from the high Victorian period and 1930's detached houses along Hillcrest Road at its junction with Rumsam Road all showing features of the style. Buildings in Rumsam from this period also tend to have decorated chimney stacks, often with several courses of protruding rib moulding to add interest to the roofscape. Ornamental or decorative ridge tiles are often found in conjunction with these decorative chimneys.

7.14 Tile hanging in the form of hung red clay tiles can be seen within the conservation area, most notably alongside mock timber framing on Craig-y-Don. Slate hanging also features, for example at Bospowes in Rumsam Close. These buildings represent isolated examples of these features, and although both could be said to be features common of Arts-and-Crafts architecture, they are not common within Rumsam. Indeed more historic buildings have surviving external shutters than have hung slate or tile. As such these features add to the variety of materials and construction techniques found within Rumsam but it would be wrong to over-emphasise their importance in the design of new buildings in the area.

7.15 Some more modern buildings at the edges of the conservation area, such as those on the northern side of Honeywells, have some classical style features such as doorcases or classical columns supporting porch roofs. These features are a nod towards the Georgian architecture found within the area. The buildings are designed with at least a modest effort at sympathising with their surroundings, while the bungalows opposite (not within the conservation area) possess no traditional architectural features and utilise modern materials such as concrete roofing tiles and uPVC windows and as such represent discordant additions to the surrounding historic environment.

Although not extensive within the area slate hanging is dramatic where it does appear, such as here at Bospowes.



7.16 Several buildings have had additions and extensions over the years, the majority of which are in keeping with the buildings of which they form part. A recent example can be found at Lynwood House where a recent fire has been followed by the substantial re-building and enlargement of the property. Some elements of the building, particularly at the northern end of the property, have been retained and the new elements continue the design, scale and detailing of the historic portions of the property. As a result the largely re-built building makes a great effort in respecting its historic setting and the traditional materials of the surviving portions of the building. However, the unnecessary rendering of the bays and some other sections of the principal facade detract from this effort.

The rebuilding works following the fire at Lynwood House have replicated the style and material of the former building.



7.17 Unsympathetic additions and alterations are relatively few in number, and examples of inappropriate infill development are, for the most part, marked by their absence. Despite this there are some modern features which strike a discordant note. For example, a large garage at the front of Rosebank blocks views of the building from the north-west and is far closer to the road than other buildings on the east side of Rumsam Road. The harsh grey of the unfinished cement render is also an uneasy contrast to the whitewashed render on the main house.

7.18 An 'orangery' style extension to 'The Myrtles' is another anomaly within the conservation area. The extension is constructed of exposed ashlar reconstituted stone finished in the classical style. There is no precedent within the area for either the chosen design or materials selected, and certainly none to be found in the building to which the extension is attached. The modest dwelling with its clay tile roof and full height bays sits on the location of 'Myrtle Cottage' as shown on the 1890 OS map and is presumably the much altered remnants of that original building.

7.19 The new development at the end of Willow Tree Road is left out of the conservation area. The development of 4 homes replaces a pair of pre-Georgian cottages which previously stood on the site. Although the replacement buildings are of good quality and design the use of timber cladding on their facades makes them stand out within their context. Combined with their modernity and the large increase of the density of development on the site, has led to excluding these buildings within the conservation area.

8 Streetscape and Street Furniture

8.1 The streetscape within Rumsam has a lack of street furniture often associated with residential areas. There are no litter bins nor benches, nor telephone kiosks. Street lighting within the area is provided by modern standardised steel lighting units of no local distinctiveness. The only element of street furniture which is a divergence from standardised products are some of the street name signs.

A blue encaustic tile street sign can be found within the proposed conservation area at Fortescue Road.



The surviving street lamp base on the footpath to Rumsam Gardens.



8.2 Examples of street name signs made up of blue and white glazed ceramic tiles can be seen throughout the Barnstaple area, with examples from Pilton, Newport and Rumsam also surviving, for example at Fortescue Road, and a Rumsam Road sign which is within the adjoining Newport Conservation Area. Despite having a thriving local pottery industry which could have provided such signs they were instead manufactured by Craven, Dunhill and Co. in Shropshire, which was established in 1874 and began producing alphabet tiles in 1875. Records of the Barnstaple Council Finance Committee show that payments were made in 1913 and early 1914 for 'blue letter tiles - £1 18s 6d and £1 8s 4d'. It is regrettable that the practise has not continued to recent times, although attempts are now being made to re-instate the tradition as a locally distinctive design practice.

8.3 The only other survival of historic street furniture is an abandoned cast iron street lamp base located along the footpath which joins Rumsam Gardens to Rumsam Road in front of Orchard House. The lamp base does not appear to be bedded into the ground and may simply have been moved here after its removal from along Rumsam Road and then never taken away. This does serve to inform that prior to the modern standardised street lighting along Rumsam Road there were locally produced traditional street lamps installed.

8.4 Surface treatments are largely a standard tarmac finish with concrete curbstones, however an isolated fragment of cobbled surfaces does survive in the pavements outside of number 2 Rumsam Road and the adjacent Deerpark Cottage. The streetscape is further enhanced by natural and soft landscaping in the form of hedges and trees, particularly where these are well kept so as to still allow views of the buildings to which they often form part of a boundary feature.

Cobbled street surfaces survive at the southern end of the proposed conservation area outside of Deerpark Cottage.



9 Development Pressures

9.1 Much of the aesthetic appeal of Rumsam comes from the open spaces between its buildings and the landscaping that fills these spaces. The large supply of open space leads to pressure to increase the development density of the area through infill development in various forms.

9.2 Although it has been shown that Rumsam has developed over time through a process of subsequent infill development between the older Georgian buildings along Rumsam Road this has led to a frontage of development exclusively set back from the road and retaining a sense of low density development within which spaces are of equal visual significance as the buildings. Further inappropriate infill could easily alter the rhythm and form of the streetscape, reduce the open space and give the area a much more built up feel. The use of modern materials and finishings can also stand at contrast with the existing palette of traditional materials. Any new development would need to demonstrate that it would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the existing streetscape and that the architectural design would be in keeping with its immediate surroundings.

9.3 Perhaps the biggest development threat facing conservation areas nation-wide is that of alterations carried out to dwelling houses which do not need planning permission. Such alterations may have only a minor impact on the character of the wider conservation area when viewed in isolation, however they can have a cumulative effect which can lead to major degradation of the historic character of the conservation area. Traditionally the largest such threat has come from the removal of timber sashes and casements in favour of the installation of uPVC windows. Refreshingly few properties in Rumsam have suffered from such work.

9.4 As of 6th April 2008 the provision of some sources of renewable energy can be, under certain circumstances, a permitted development, which does not require planning permission or conservation area consent. The rules covering when the installation of, for example solar panels, is a permitted development depend on the location of the panels, their size and height, as well as the area they cover. As such, advice should be sought from the planning office, as not all installations will be considered to be permitted without planning permission. The problem caused by this is that there will be no immediate control over such alterations within conservation areas, and as such there is potential for unsympathetic alterations to damage the character of the area.

9.5 Some modest areas of vacant or undeveloped land within the area of the proposed designation are potential targets for future development. These include the open fields to the south of Willow Tree Road and north of the A39 and the large open fields behind The Laurels and Orchard Cottage. Many of these areas have issues regarding access, and issues such as design and development density would have to be carefully considered as part of any development proposal seeking to utilise these spaces.

10 The Future

10.1 The aim of this character assessment has been to identify what buildings, open spaces, and features from Rumsam's past and present survive to contribute towards its special character.

10.2 The character appraisal has also aimed to identify potential development pressures the area is likely to face in the near future and to identify areas within the designation which may be suitable for enhancement.

10.3 What this document does not aim to achieve is to propose the means and methods by which the identified character is to be safeguarded, or enhanced, for the future. This will be the subject of a subsequent management plan for the conservation area. The aim of such a document will be to propose the ways in which the characteristics identified within this character appraisal can be protected from unsympathetic alterations and future developments, or enhanced by positive and well planned schemes. This will also ensure that all future planning decisions that affect the conservation area and its setting are treated in a consistent manner.

1 Appendix 1 - Listed Buildings Within the Conservation Area

Rosehill

Grade II - Listed 18/03/1986*

House, one time Marist Convent, presently unoccupied (December 1984). c.1835. Stucco-faced with scantle slate roofs. Central courtyard plan with 2-storey bows to full height with conical roofs and deep eaves at each corner and additional projecting bow forming centre north side. Gable-end extension to left side. 2 storeys with basement to north range. 3 bay central range to west side of C19 2-light casements with margin glazing bars, 4 panes per light. The 2-storey bows with sashes on each floor 6 over 6 panes with original glass. Slated verandah roof across centre with crenellated wall plate supported on timber posts, the 2 central ones of square section, those at each end circular in section and with arched spandrels.

The verandah encloses a 2-light casement 6 panes per light with margin glazing bars to left and 1/2-glazed panelled door to right with margin glazing bars both set in wider reveals with slightly cambered arches and fluted keystones. Bows have plat-bands running out to quoins and wrought iron railings to ground floor sill height with spear shafts. Symmetrical north side has round ends (right-hand end is bow to front) and has central bow. 4 over 4 paned sash on each floor to central bow, and a single sash 6 over 6 panes to left and right side bows, other openings being blocked. 3 similar sashes to south side above 2 French windows with margin glazing bars. Garden boundary wall of stone rubble with brick capping extends south from front right side with pointed arched Gothick doorway with quatrefoil window to left.

Internal joinery and fittings virtually intact including marble chimney pieces, panelled doors and shutters, geometrical staircase with stick balusters and wreathed handrail. Moulded plasterwork ceiling roundels and enriched floriated plasterwork cornices to principal room. This is a remarkably complete Regency style house, certainly inspired by Nash's Cronkhill.

Stables and adjoining outbuilding approximately 5 metres east of Rosehill

Grade II - Listed 18/03/1986

Stables and adjoining coach house. c.1840. Stone rubble. Stables with corrugated asbestos roof, coach house with slate roof, both with gabled ends, the left-hand gable end of coach house has small brick stack. Rectangular on plan with stables to right and adjoining coach house on left. Stables to right. 2 storeys.

Symmetrical front with round arch central doorway flanked by lunettes either side. Loft doorway at centre of first floor with Gothick 2-centred arch. Coach house to left, single storey with lower roof, ground floor double doors with wide overlight above. Included for group value.

Orchard Cottage, Rumsam Road

Grade II - Listed 29/09/1999

House. c1840s. Cement-rendered; natural slate roof, gabled at ends with crested ridge tiles; stacks with rendered shafts and old pots. Single-depth main range, 2 rooms wide. 2 storeys. Eaves board and moulded cornice on paired brackets. Symmetrical 3-window range. Panelled front door, upper panels glazed; lean-to porch with slated roof. 2 ground- and 3 first-floor 12-pane hornless sashes with louvred sun shutters. Interior not inspected.

2 Appendix 2 - Glossary

Applied Polychromy: A building where materials of regular appearance in terms of colour have been utilised, either as a result of availability or economy, and then different colours have been applied by way of paints, dyes or washes is said to have 'Applied Polychromy'

Arts-and-Crafts: An architectural and social movement in the late 19th century which idealised the craft-guilds of the medieval period, often tied up with a degree of romanticism. The movement led to the revival of vernacular architecture, as opposed to the very formal architecture favoured in the Georgian period. The Arts-and-Crafts movement is sometimes considered to be an offshoot of the gothic revival.

Bow Window: A projecting bay window with a curved front on a curved plinth or base, as opposed to the segmental or angular forms of typical bay windows. Sometimes the glass itself is also curved to match.

Burgage-Plots: Long narrow plots running at right angles to streets, representative of towns the layout of which dates to medieval times. These plots were rented by freemen and traders for cash rents instead of feudal service as had previously been the case.

Facade: The principal elevation of a building, often being its grandest and most lavishly decorated. Sometimes a facade can be remodelled to give the impression of a more modern, or grander, building than that which really lies behind it.

Gothic: An Architectural style associated with the mediaeval period, incorporating windows with pointed heads and in some cases decorated tracery.

Paleochannels: Deposits of unconsolidated sedimentary rocks which are illustrative of the route of an inactive, or dried up, river system.

Revival Architecture: The Victorian era saw architects seeking inspiration from past architectural styles and developing techniques by which to replicate their grandeur to varying degrees of success, Classical, Gothic, and Egyptian architecture enjoyed revivals during this period.

Roofscape: The levels, pitches and variety of coverings and decorative elements, such as chimney stacks and barge-boards, which combine to create a view across a 'landscape' of building roofs.

Slate-Hanging: The practice of applying slates to a vertical surface, either directly or hung from applied timber batons, primarily to elevations facing prevailing winds but sometimes to several elevations, in order to provide additional weather protection to the wall of a building. Sometimes the slates used are shaped so as to produce a pattern when applied.

Street Clutter: Street Furniture which has a negative impact on the street scene, either through the generic nature of its appearance, its inappropriate positioning, the excessive use of similar items (such as excessive numbers of road signs) or its poor condition or initial design quality.

Street Furniture: Any object within the streetscape that is not a building, for example street-lamps, signs, benches, litter bins. The term is usually used in the manner that it excludes features which could be better described as 'Street Clutter'.

Streetscape: The layout, pattern of development, scale of buildings, degree of enclosure, views and a series of other features and factors which combine to create a street of unique interest and character.

Structural Polychromy: A building where materials of differing colours or shades have been utilised so as to produce patterns, or to highlight features such as arches above doors and windows, has 'Structural Polychromy'

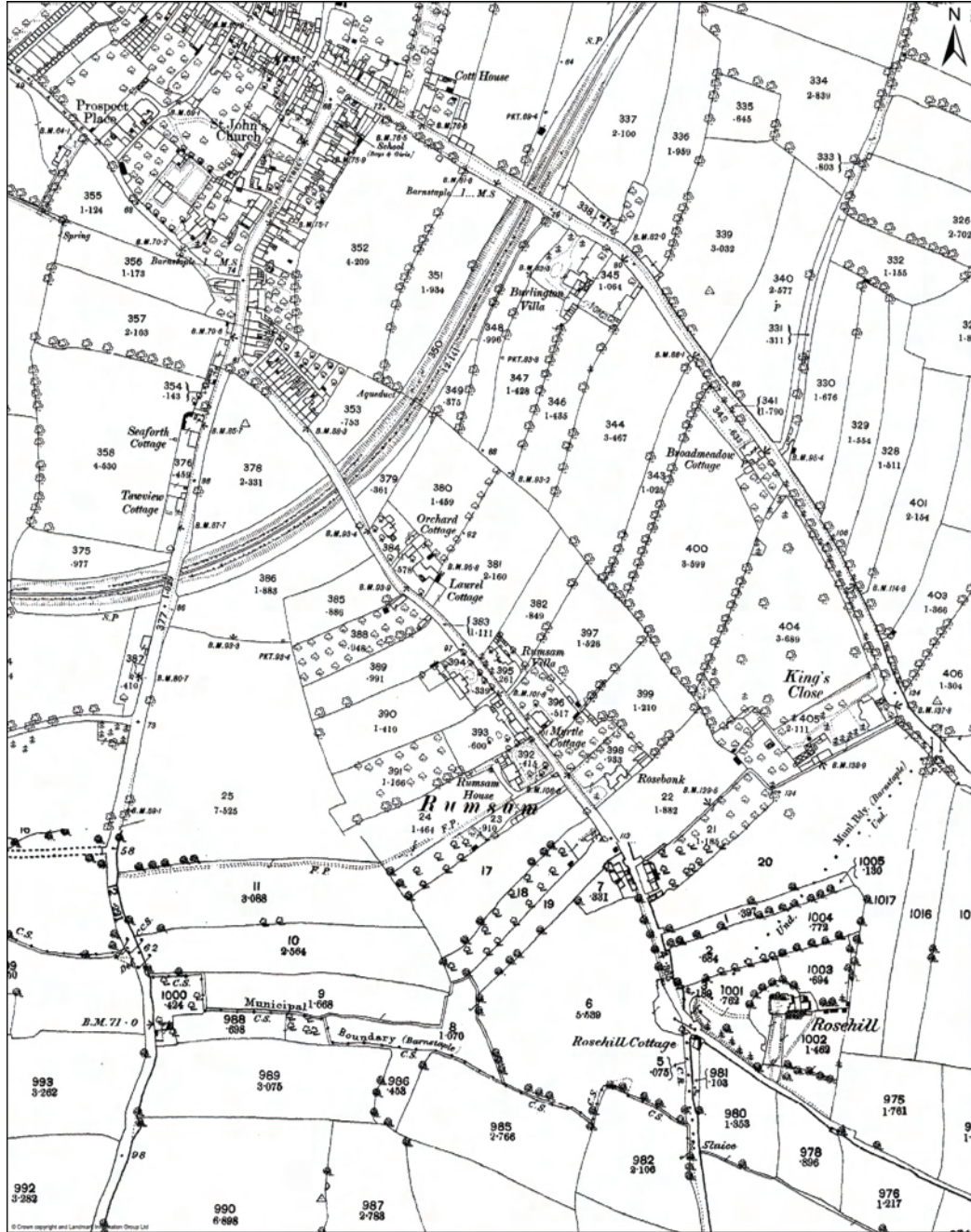
Surface Treatment: The material and/or finish used to form the surface of a road, pavement, footpath, driveways or any other ground surface.

3 Appendix 3 - Historic Mapping

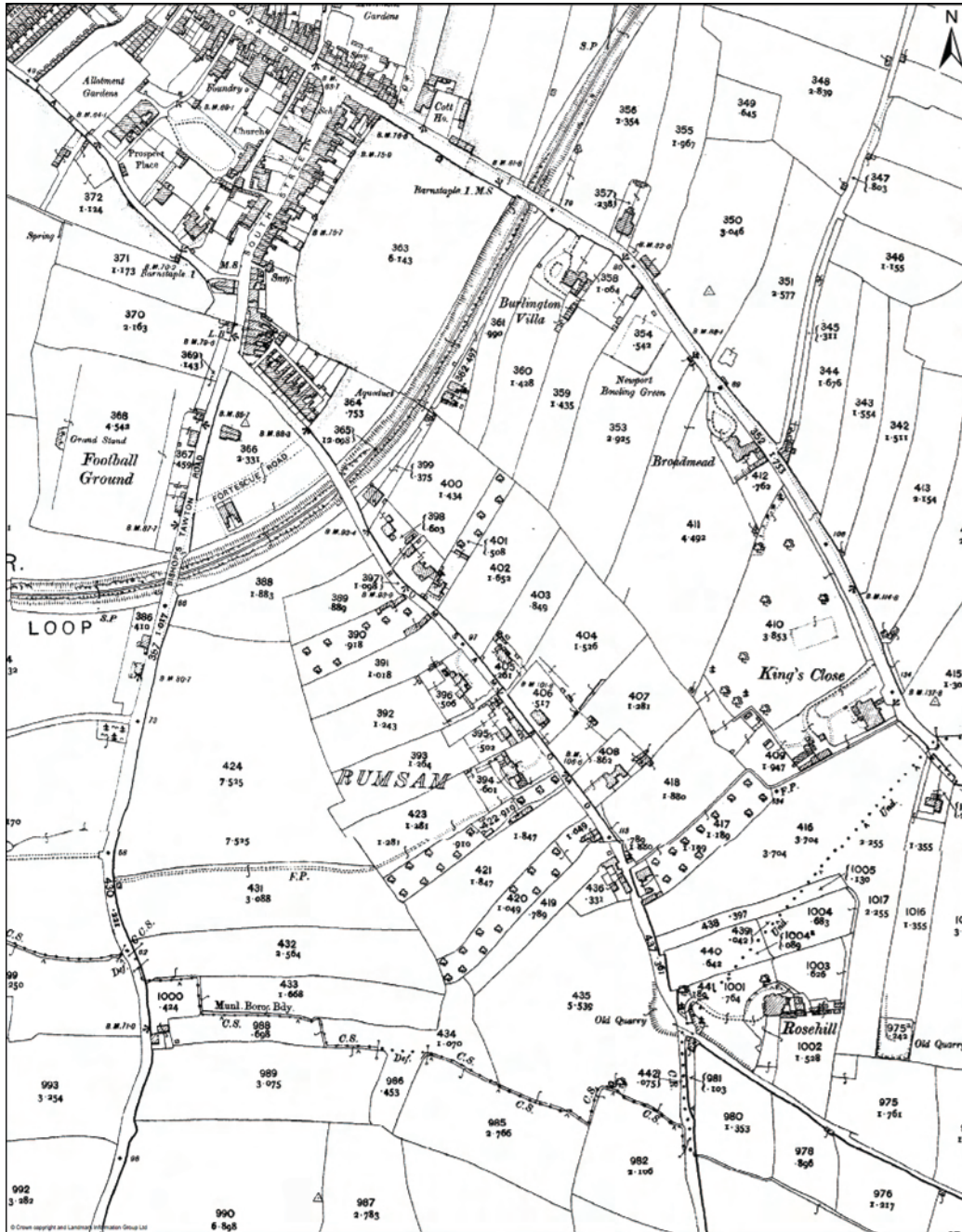
I - 1st Series Ordnance Survey Map c.1889

II - 2nd Series Ordnance Survey Map c.1904

1st Series OS map c.1889



OS map c.1904



4 Appendix 4 - Conservation Area Mapping

I - Key

II - Conservation Area Boundary & Listed Buildings

III - Building Heights

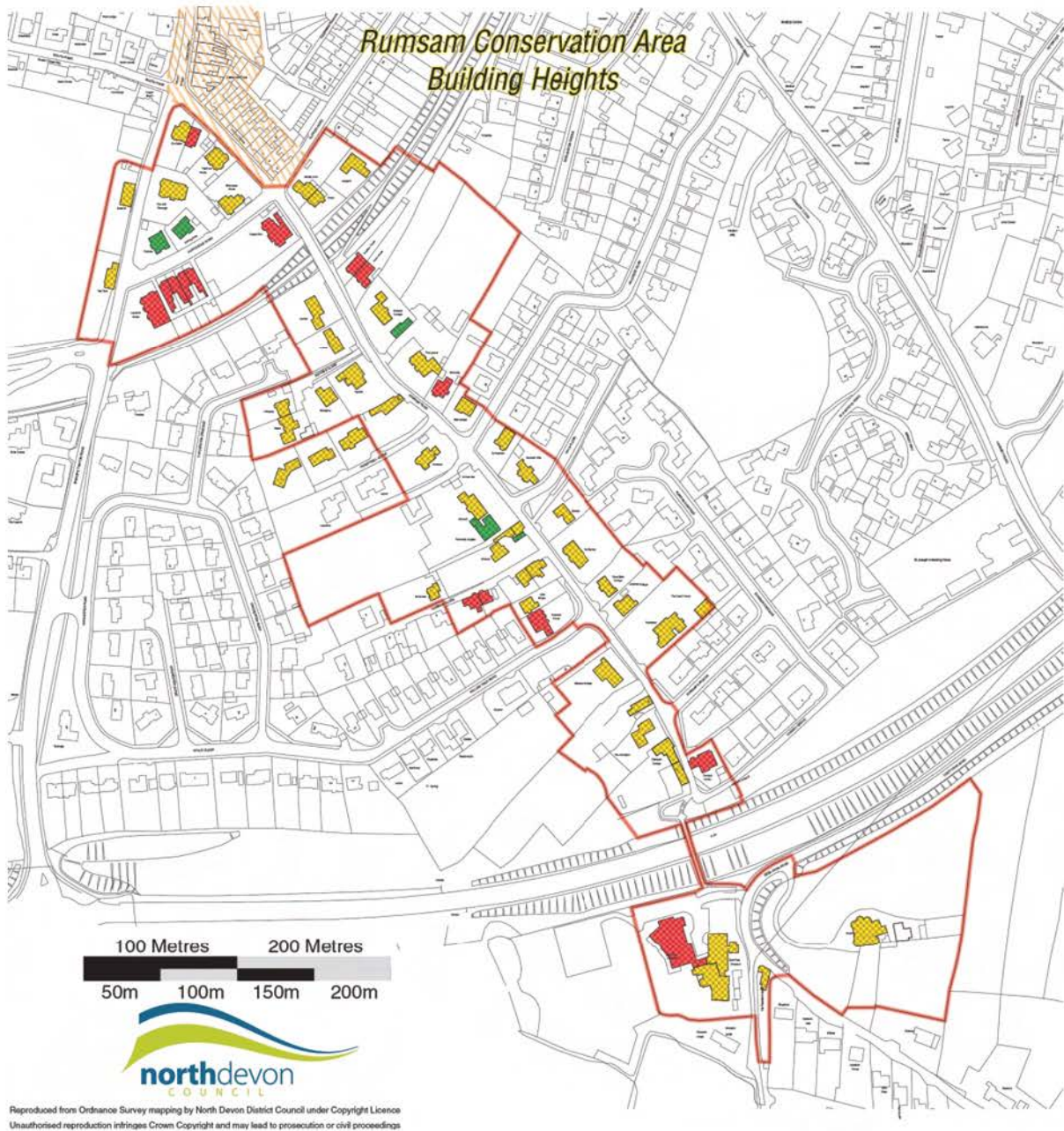
IV - Building Chronology

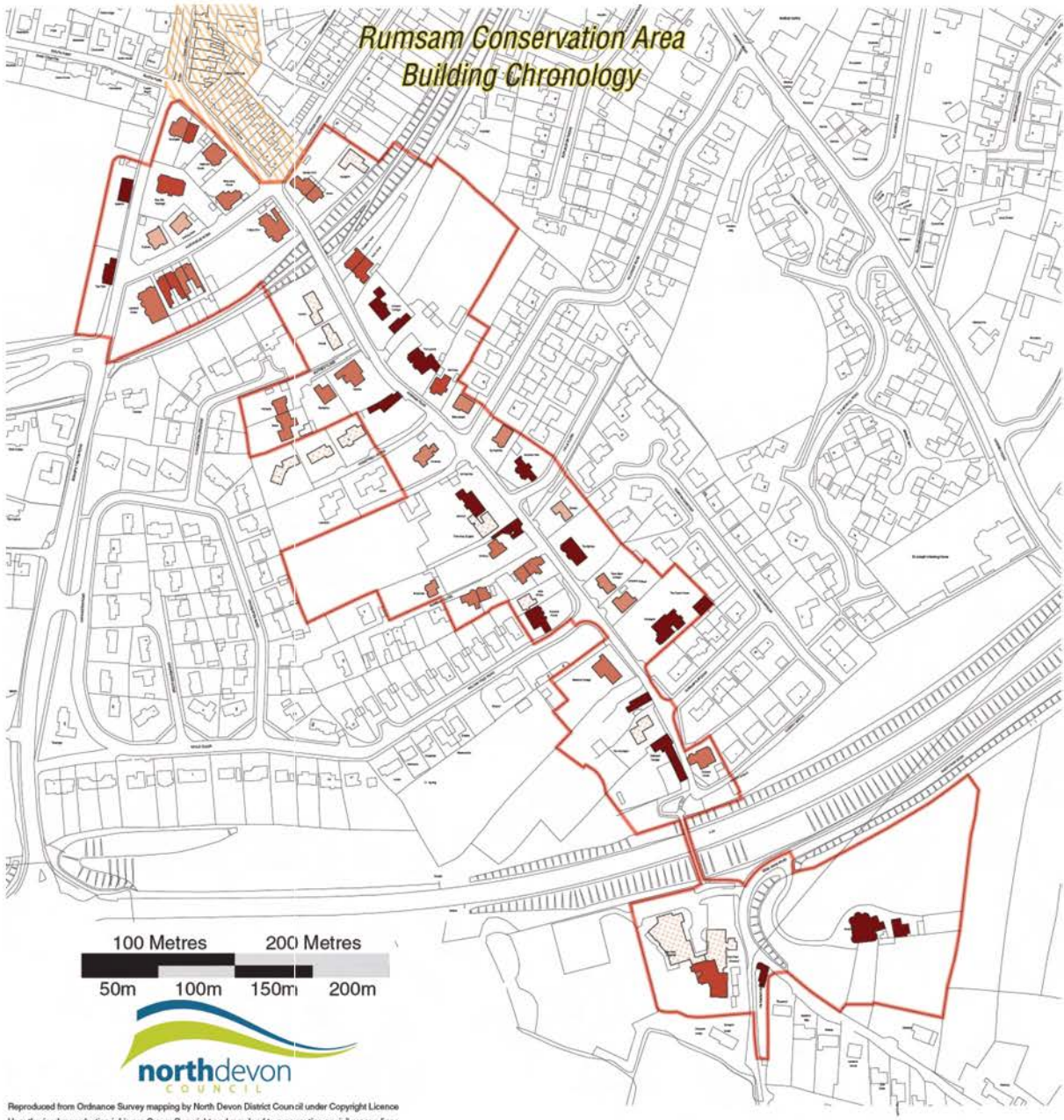
V - Key Views

Key To Mapping

	Grade I Listed Building		Road & Building Plot Outline
	Grade II* Listed Building		Building Outline
	Grade II Listed Building		Existing Conservation Area Boundary
	Single Storey Building		Existing Conservation Area Boundary
	2 Storey Building		External Views
	3 Storey Building		Internal Views
	4+ Storey Building		Focal Point Of Views
	Area To Be Added To Conservation area		Key Viewpoint
	Area To Be Removed From Conservation Area		Prominent Bay Window
	Built Pre - 1890		Prominent Bow Window
	Built 1890 - 1905		Negative / Positive Public Seating
	Built 1905 - 1933		Positive / Negative Bollard
	Built 1933 - 1975		Negative / Positive Street Lighting
	Built Post - 1975		Memorial - ie. War Memorial
	Area For Potential Enhancement		Mosaic Feature
	Building Set Back & Below Street Level		Trees With Tree Preservation Order
	Scheduled Ancient Monument		Miscellaneous Feature (Labled)
	Intrusive Overhead Lines		Miscellaneous Linear Feature (Labled)
	Historic Post Box		Railings As A Positive Streetscape Feature
	Focal Streetscape Feature		Railings As A Negative Streetscape Feature
	Negative / Positive Signage Feature		River / Aquatic Feature
	Historic Telephone Kiosk		Public Right of Way







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