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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 41 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 North Molton Conservation Area provides a sound basis for development management 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 Background

2.1 This assessment of the North Molton Conservation Area was begun in May 2013 and included both an inspection of the existing conservation area and its surroundings and archive research into the history of the village.

2.2 There has been no previous review of the Conservation Area in North Molton since it was first designated, which was prior to 1974 (40+ years ago).

3 Facts & Figures

3.1 The North Molton Conservation Area was first designated prior to the formation of North Devon District Council in 1974. Although almost 40 years had passed since its initial designation there have been no previous reviews of the adopted boundary of this conservation area until the most recent boundary review which resulted in adopted changes being made in March 2014.

3.2 The conservation area covers an area of 8.4 hectares (20.8 acres) increased from 7.2 hectares (17.8 acres) prior to the 2014 boundary review. The area contains 38 listed buildings within its boundary. Of these 36 are Grade II with Court House being listed Grade II* and the Parish Church being listed Grade I.

A list of buildings on the List of Buildings of Special Historic and Architectural Interest (Listed Buildings) within the conservation area is given in Appendix 1;

A map showing the locations of those Listed Buildings is given in Appendix 2(III).

3.3 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area, nor any within 2 kilometres of the village centre. There are however a number of burial mounds and prehistoric earthworks, both scheduled as ancient monuments and un-designated, within 5 kilometres of the village to the north, east and south.

4 Historic Development

4.1 North Molton is the second largest parish in the county of Devon, covering an area of 6,070 hectares (15,000 acres).

4.2 Evidence has been found of North Molton being a settlement as far back as the Bronze Age (1900-750 BC), with the surrounding landscape featuring round barrows (funerary or burial monuments) from this time. There is also some potential evidence of mining and metal working within the parish dating back to that period. The area around North Molton would have been heavily wooded during the Bronze Age, with the majority of the woodland clearance occurring during the Saxon period.

All Saints Church is the oldest structure in the village, dating to the 14th century.



4.3 The manor of North Molton was held by King William I after the Norman Conquest (in 1066), having been held by Queen Edith (wife of Edward the Confessor) prior to the invasion and conquest of England (as recorded in Domesday Book - 1086). The manor was passed to the La Zouche family during the reign of King John (1199 - 1216).

4.4 Roger La Zouche obtained a borough charter for the village from King Henry III in 1270, which granted permission for a weekly market to be held in North Molton and for an annual fair on All Saints Day (1st November). This charter effectively recognised North Molton as a town; it was at this point that some of North Molton's layout such as the distinctive long narrow 'burgage' plots along East Street were laid out. The area of The Square was either cleared or realigned so as to provide a marketplace in which to hold the weekly markets. The close association

between church and marketplace is typical of the medieval pattern; larger deals were sometimes agreed inside a church porch so as to have the transaction witnessed in the sight of God.

4.5 During the 12th and 13th centuries North Molton became reasonably prosperous, mainly through successful agriculture assisted by the status of the village as a new market. Eventually, however, through woodland clearances elsewhere transport and agriculture boomed within the wider area, and North Molton was left behind.

4.6 The manor eventually passed to the Bampfylde family (via the St. Maur's). The Bampfylde family built Court Hall to the east of the church, although this house is no longer standing (replaced by a new house in the 18th century, which has been subsequently altered and partly demolished in the 20th century).

4.7 Court House, to the west of the church, was built by Edmond Parker in 1553. Parker was the bailiff of the manor from 1550. The house as it appears today was remodelled and given a new frontage in the late 17th century, with further minor additions being made in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The house retains internal fittings, including panelling and overmantles from the 17th century and a 15th century (Tudor period) arched doorframe, now internal but originally the rear door of the house.

4.8 During the early 16th century (c.1528) mining, which had been a small scale industry within the parish for several centuries, began on a larger scale with copper being the main product extracted from the land. Mining continued through to the end of the 17th century, with professional miners being brought across from Germany to supervise and plan the mining operations. Towards the end of the 17th century the known copper ore deposits had been largely worked out and the unprofitable mining operations closed.

4.9 A new source of copper was discovered in the 1840's and a new profitable mine was established by the Poltimore Gold and Copper Mining Company. The mine was sold off in 1850 after the company became embroiled in allegations of fraud. The mine was re-named the New Florence Mine by the new owners, although after just a few years the mine was closed.

Year	Population
1801	1,541
1841	2,121
1881	1,547
1901	1,080
1971	845
2001	1,018

4.10 The population of the area reached a peak during the mid 1800's, which coincided with a period of revived mining activity within the parish. This was short-lived and the population then began to fall as people moved from the area and household sizes fell through the second half of the 20th century. The population reached its lowest point during the 1970's, after which new housebuilding and inward migration associated with the attraction of the area on the edges of Exmoor led to a modest population rise back towards the 1901 level.

5 Landscape and Geology

5.1 North Molton stands on an elevated ridge of land between the River Mole to the east and a lesser tributary of that river to the west. The highest point is actually a short distance to the north of the western end of the village near Cross Lane Cross.

5.2 To the east the land slopes down towards the banks of the River Mole with East Street having a significant gradient along sections of its length.

5.3 The parish sits at the edge of Exmoor National Park and is part of a landscape band which can be described as the foothills of Exmoor.

5.4 There are several springs within or very close to the village and several minor streams have their sources at springs nearby. This easy access to natural springs is probably the reason for a settlement having been founded at North Molton.

5.5 To the north and south of the village the river valley is wooded, as is the tributary valley to the west and it is likely that much of the area around the village was once thick woodland. To the south and the north-west of the village the field pattern is of small irregular shaped fields, most notably beside Thorne's Wood and Cross Lane Cross. These fields are probably of early medieval or even Saxon origin, their irregular shape emerging from sessions of woodland clearances. As such the landscape within which North Molton sits has been altered by human activity through woodland clearance but still retains evidence of early human landscape management.

5.6 North Molton lies in a geological area dominated by rocks from the Devonian geological period comprising of a mixture of shales, slates and volcanic intrusions. The bedrock in this area is reasonably close to the ground surface and can occasionally be seen above ground. The geological age of the local rock is in the range of 360-415 million years, spanning the range of the Devonian era.

5.7 The local geology includes metal ore deposits including copper and iron ore and traces of gold. The Bampfylde mine was reported to have several shafts at least one of which was over 1000 feet deep. The copper ore was particularly pure and thus of high value, however the quantity of gold is so low (as low as 100 parts per million) as to be economically un-viable to extract.

6 Key Views

The tower of the Parish Church is the most prominent feature of the village, visible silhouetted on the horizon from the west.



6.1 Views of North Molton from the surrounding landscape are often striking, with the Parish Church near the high point of the ridge particularly prominent in views from the west, south and east. One such view is from the west on Stoneybridge Hill; views from this angle allow the tower of the church and the rooftops of the village to stand out against the horizon on the southern slopes of a hillside. Views from the east towards Lambscombe and Millbrook allow the village to stand out in a similar way.

6.2 Views from the north are largely blocked by undeveloped higher ground, whilst views from the south are less rewarding as the village cannot be seen against the skyline, instead the backdrop is higher ground and buildings such as the Parish Church lack the visual prominence that they enjoy when viewed from east or west.

The view from the south across The Square shows its open nature with the Parish Church as a focal point beyond.



6.3 Within the village itself the open space of The Square provides the focus of most views as well as being located at the centre of the village. The space was almost certainly laid out, or cleared, shortly after the charter of 1270 which gave permission for the village to hold a market. The area is in the location typical for medieval market places, being immediately outside the lychgate entrance to the churchyard. The space is, however, a degree larger than might be expected for a medieval market place and was probably enlarged during the Georgian period in an effort to create a more formal square.

6.4 The roads that lead onto The Square (East Street, Back Lane, Fore Street and Cross Lane) all provide different yet striking views into The Square. Views from East Street also focus on Swan House and Swan Cottage, part of a cluster of houses built

out into The Square. The contrast between the rendered frontage of Swan Cottage and the exposed stone gable end of the attached Swan House create an interesting eyecatcher at the end of East Street.

6.5 Views along East Street towards the east highlight the roofscape in this part of the conservation area, with the road sloping downhill towards the River Mole. The buildings on either side with staggered rooflines add to the character of the conservation area. The linear street draws the eye into the distance where the gently rolling hillsides on the opposite side of the valley form the natural backdrop to the village.

The view from the southern end of Fore Street with the old Wesleyan Chapel in the foreground and the tower of the Parish Church beyond.



6.6 Opportunities for views north and south from East Street are limited, although opportunities do exist to the south beside the Methodist Church and across its car park, where the landscape is similar to that to the east, a gently sloping pasture landscape interspersed with hedges and occasional small groups of trees.

6.7 Views along Fore Street are similar to those along East Street with the slope of the road emphasising the roofscape on the south side of the road. Buildings on the north side are on higher ground

compared to the road and their roofs are not so prominent within the streetscene.

6.8 The Parish Church, particularly its tower, can be seen from several positions within the village, most notably within the open space of The Square. The most significant view is from the end of East Street where the tower can be seen framed between The Old School and Jarmans Cottage across the open space of The Square.

7 Architectural Character

7.1 The domestic buildings in North Molton span a long period of time from the early part of the 17th century right up to the recent past. The majority represent relatively high status buildings showing that North Molton must have been an affluent place from the 17th through to the early 19th centuries.

East Street

7.2 The eastern edge of the conservation area begins to the east along East Street with 2 & 3 Higher Locks Cottages and Winston Cottage, a short terrace of three thatched cottages on the north side of the road. The pattern of glazing is of two light casements, each made up of 6 individual panes of glass. The thatch is lifted above each of the upper floor windows to form characteristic 'eyebrows' and in the case of Winston Cottage the upper floor windows have been extended and enlarged through the additional of a triangular overlight which projects into the eyebrow. Each doorway is accessed via stone steps and each front door has a projecting hood.

Higher Locks and Winston Cottages stand at the eastern edge of the conservation area and are one of the few thatched properties in the village.



7.3 Although thatched roofs are far from typical within the village and its conservation area they do appear on several properties. These first cottages do, however, set the construction standard for the village, being of rendered rubble stone and cob as are the majority of the properties in North Molton.

Fern Cottage is a typical rendered cob cottage, its most striking features being the modest front garden area and the polychrome roof slates.



from the street and has a small front garden area enclosed by low stone walls topped by wrought iron railings. Whilst front gardens and railings do not feature on every building within the conservation area they do form a significant component of the character of the village, particularly within The Square where they feature on several properties.

7.5 To the west of Pullens is Fern Cottage, also in rendered cob and stone but on a slightly smaller scale, with a two storey extension to the east gable end. The polychrome decorated slate roof is perhaps the most striking feature of this property, with a stripe of darker grey slate through the central third of the roofslope which also features a band of fishscale slates. This structural decoration adds to the character of the building, while the extension to the left side is well designed and proportioned to respect the main house whilst also being legible as an extension.

7.6 The next property up the hill represents one of the most recent properties within the conservation area, 1-4 Meadows View. These buildings are single storey and constructed of exposed red brick with tile roofs, uPVC windows and red brick front enclosure walls. The buildings are, as such, different in every basic respect from their neighbours and represent a poor intrusion into the conservation area. Norwood, on the opposite side of East Street, is of a similar (although slightly more recent) date and is a little more respectful of the character of the street. The walls are finished in render, although the building presents its gable end to the street, which is not common in East Street and the use of tile hanging in the gable is not a feature found elsewhere.

7.7 This small grouping of properties, described above, at the east end of the Conservation Area immediately presents an indication of the local character of buildings whilst also giving some examples of some modern additions of lesser merit.

7.8 More generally along East Street there are a few examples of formally designed buildings, including the Methodist Church and church school, both in the Victorian Gothic Revival Style and built of a dark brown ironstone with lighter biscuit brown stone window dressings. Like Fern Cottage the church roof has bands of coloured slates to provide a scheme of polychrome decoration, the ridge having large decorative ridge tiles and breather vents.

The Methodist Church was opened in 1891 after the congregation outgrew the chapel built in Fore Street in 1836.



Thorne House is a good example of a former village centre farm, still retaining an access passage to a rear yard, now with folding garage doors.



the appearance of being partly eaten by worms) keystones to the shallow brick arches above.

7.9 Two other examples are the Arts and Crafts style Two Gables which has a pair of oriel bay windows at first floor beneath two forward facing decorative gables. The house would appear to have once been a semi-detached pair, now having a large central doorway but also having single doors at either side providing access to the rear. Next door is Rosendale, which is similar dark stone to the Methodist Church, but with red brick dressings around window and door openings and vermiculated (stones with carved recesses described as having

7.10 There are a number of former farmhouses along the street, including Thorne House where it would appear that the right hand side of the house was formerly a barn with either accommodation or hay lofts above. The large openings to the side of the building with large timber doors and timber bi-fold doors would have provided access to the barn and probably passage through to the rear via a second set of doors in the other side of the building. The bi-fold doors are probably a later addition with the opening created to serve as a garage or workshop.

7.11 North Molton had its origins as an agricultural settlement and as such it is not unusual to find a number of former farmhouses within the village. Within North Devon there are several large villages, including Braunton and Chulmleigh where farms continued to be centrally located within the village up until the mid 19th century or later.

7.12 Highfield Cottage, Highfield House and Archway Cottage to the west of the church are a very unusual arrangement. The buildings are of rendered cob, with Highfield House standing almost half a metre forward of its attached neighbours. Unusually the eaves line continues without stepping in, giving a significant overhang at the frontage of Highfield Cottage. Highfield Cottage retains casement windows, altered for inappropriate modern top hung units but styled after twin light side hung casements with 6 paned per light. Highfield House, on the other hand, has more elegant sash windows, 8 over 8 sashes on the upper floor and paired 6 over 6 sashes on the ground floor. It may be that Highfield House has been re-fronted during the 18th century in an attempt to update the property in line with fashions at the time. If the house was previously thatched the large overhang on Highfield Cottage would then make sense, however this appears a poor explanation as the visual difference between the two properties is not significant enough to warrant the cost of re-fronting.

7.13 There are also a number of more modest vernacular properties, mostly along the north side of East Street, including Rose and Mogfords Cottages, 1 & 2 Hodges Cottages, Hill Crest and Sladers, The Bakery, Keys Cottage and April Cottage.

7.14 The Bakery and Keys Cottage are a semi-detached pair remarkably unaltered externally with both retaining 2 over 2 sashes on the ground floor and 2 pane twin light casements on the upper floor. This difference in window styles between the two floors was typical amongst the houses of the skilled working class during the 18th century where fashionable sashes were installed in the parlour and hall on the ground floor but to save expense the upper floor made do with casements. As such the variety of windows is an illustration of the social aspirations of the wealthier members of the lower class of the 18th century.

7.15 Sladers Cottage and Hill Crest are another pair, although Sladers Cottage is slightly larger with a passageway to the rear and an inserted bay on the ground floor, probably used as a display window for a small village store. This pair also has sashes throughout on both floors demonstrating a slightly higher status of its original occupants.

7.16 1 and 2 Hodges Cottages have a number of wide yet shallow buttresses across its frontage. The hillside here is on a significant slope and as such the levels of ground floor window vary significantly across the frontage, both front doors being accessed by steps, with those at number 2 being significantly steeper. These properties also have areas of cobbled pavement outside adding to the character of their immediate setting.

7.17 The post office and village shop with its modern dutch awnings, red brick construction and expansive glass display windows, largely obscured by applied vinyl signage robbing them of their display function in any case, is another modern intrusion which has little regard to the buildings that form its setting and fails to make a positive addition to the character or appearance of the area.

The village shop is of atypical materials, being of red brick rarely seen in the village.



The Square

7.18 The Square forms the heart of the village, with the Parish Church on its north side and rows of houses along its east, west and south sides forming a large enclosed area between East Street, Fore Street, Back Lane and Cross Lane.

Red Lion Cottage, with woolmark on projecting bay, was built no later than the early 17th century.



7.19 The former Poltimore Inn sits at the junction of East Street and The Square and is one of the larger buildings within the conservation area. The building has been altered over time including installation of uPVC windows and concrete roof tiles. The dimensions of the window openings suggest the former fenestration style was of 3 light casements on the ground floor and 2 light casements on the first floor. The central porch is similar to that on Fern Cottage on East Street and is unusual in that the opening narrows at the base.

7.20 Next door are Red Lion Cottage and Davreen; this pair features an interesting carved stone 'woolmark' on the projecting bay at Red Lion Cottage. The wool mark was that of Thomas Parker, a local wool stapler. Staplers were part of a guild with a royal monopoly on export of wool to the continent, selling at a fixed price determined annually. The marks allowed customs

officials to trace which merchant had sold which wool. Besides this the house itself is rather bland for a wealthy wool merchant. There used to be evidence of additional timber mullioned windows and it is possible that the building once had a much grander appearance.

7.21 Within The Square at this point is a patch of early 18th century "Island Development" encroaching onto the former open space of the market place. Swan House and Swan Cottage face onto the Square and back along East Street respectively. Both date to the early 18th century and have highly symmetrical elevations typical of the emergent classicism of the Georgian period. Swan House has a 3 bay arrangement with central doorway and twin light casement windows (8 panes per light), and the doorway has a small projecting hood porch with a decorative bargeboard. Whilst Swan House is of exposed stone Swan Cottage is rendered. The replacement top hung uPVC casements do not respect any historic glazing pattern and actively detract from the character of the building, as does the highways signage attached to its main facade.

7.22 Facing into The Square most properties are formally designed, even if some of them are of modest status, and provide an attractive enclosure to the open space. Perhaps the least formal buildings on The Square are those at the west end; 1 & 2 Locks Cottages, Swallow Cottage and Corner Cottage. All are sheltered from The Square by a thin strip of planting.

The modest cottages enclosing The Square along its west side are a marked change from the larger properties along the other sides and were probably labourers' cottages.



7.23 1 & 2 Locks Cottages together with Swallow Cottage form a group of 3 terraced cottages on a very modest scale, probably originally 1 up 1 down. Each has a single window on each floor, of 6 or 8 pane 2 light casements. These were easily amongst the lowest status dwellings in the village when built (early to mid 18th Century) and it is odd that they form such a marked contrast with the relative formality of the rest of the houses facing The Square. The buildings are in conformity with typical local materials, stone or cob with a lime render and a slate roof.

7.24 Top Cottage is a little larger and has a more formal symmetrical layout, somewhat spoiled by the higher windows at its right side as a result of changing ground levels. Again the windows are a mix of twin light casements of either 6 or 8 panes. An

absence of sashes is a good pointer within the area of a property originally intended for lower status occupants, with the possible exception of Swan House where this does not appear to have been the case.

7.25 1 & 2 Claire Cottages and Blakesville sit along the southern side of The Square. Claire Cottages are arranged so as to appear as a single unit, with the exception of the second entrance door at the right side, and the property has a classic 2 bay arrangement with central door. There are some minor differences between the two halves of the property, not least that number 1 has rubbed brick arches over its door and windows while number 2 has a stone arch over its window. The consistent colour scheme and survival of a full set of 6 over 6 sash windows help to give the appearance of a single, more impressive dwelling.

Blakesville is a good example of one of the higher status properties enclosing The Square, its symmetrical Georgian facade highlighted by projecting bays connected by a covered open porch.



7.26 Next door Blakesville has more decorative architectural features, the ground floor dominated by a pair of projecting bay windows, linked by a porch canopy supported on substantial carved timber posts. The building wraps around the corner into Back Lane where the pattern of fenestration is less regular and a large carriage opening on the ground floor gives access to a courtyard range at the rear that almost certainly originally contained stables. The windows throughout have been replaced with top hung uPVC casements; although the probable glazing pattern of 8 over 8 sashes remains identifiable, the central stair window (now a fixed unit) was probably a 6 over 9 sash. The impact of the modern windows on the character of the property is most notable when the top hung units are open, particularly on the ground floor bays where the opening lights kick out at a variety of angles. The house has a small enclosed frontage with a cobbled ground surface enclosed by hoop topped modern railings, which fit with the general pattern found within The Square although there is no suggestion that they replace historic railings.

The Old Vicarage is a good example of a Georgian property fronting The Square, with a later porch added.



7.27 Opposite these properties, and the mouth of Back Lane, The Square is enclosed by the wall of Court House. The wall is of random coursed dressed stone and around 1.5 metres high. Gaps in the stonework are left at occasional intervals to allow for drainage as the land within the grounds of Court House is at a higher level than The Square. From this point it is possible to see over the wall to the tower of the Parish Church, with the roof, chimneys and bell cupola of Court House also visible.

7.28 The Old Vicarage stands on the north side of The Square just east of Court House. The Old Vicarage, together

with its neighbour Old Vicarage Cottage, is another classical Georgian fronted house, altered during the Victorian period. The symmetrical 3 bay arrangement sees tri-partite sashes at either end of the building, which consist of two narrow 1 over 1 sashes on either side of a central, wider, 2 over 2 sash. The central bay has a single 2 over 2 sash above the front door and porch, an enclosed timber framed structure with ogee headed windows and decorative wind braces in the gable, together with an elaborate carved barge board. The building is extended at the left end, in a similar style to Fern Cottage on East Street. The extension is slightly lower and set back, although the extension has Georgian 8 over 8 hornless sashes and was probably built shortly after or even at the same time as the main house.

7.29 The Old Vicarage Cottage is more modest with a slightly asymmetrical window arrangement. It is set back at the same level as The Old Vicarage and its frontage is enclosed by the same exposed stone boundary wall with sturdy gate piers. This house may well have been provided for a verger, but was almost certainly built by the Church together with the Vicarage itself.

7.30 1 & 2 Hillside View complete the north side of The Square. This pair of cottages are more modest, featuring a mix of casement and sash windows and of rendered cob construction. Behind these sits Jarmans Cottage, again a modest cottage with pairs of 6 pane casement windows. The wall treatment on this cottage show its construction, heavily limewashed stone on the ground floor, with rendered cob above. Continuing the plinth wall of a cob cottage up to the level of the first floor beams allowed for the stone plinth to take the weight of the first floor, with the cob making up the upper floor walls only taking the loading from the roof. This approach provided strength and durability whilst keeping building costs low.

7.31 Opposite Jarmans Cottage is The Old School, a Victorian gothic revival style former school built around 1850. The building is of imported sandstone, and the dressed stone around the windows and doors is painted to provide a contrasting colour. The building works well on the approach to the church and sits half outside and half within the churchyard boundary wall.

7.32 Buildings along the east side of The Square all have slightly larger front gardens enclosed by low stone walls, or low walls topped with iron railings. The frontages also tend to be large enough to accommodate planting not seen in most of the other small frontages around the village. As a result some of the buildings are partly hidden behind trees and hedges which do help to break up the built environment enclosing The Square.

7.33 The Old Estate House, West Lea and West View are the top three houses along the east side of The Square. All have 2 over 2 sash windows throughout, while West Lea and West View are a near matching pair (West View lacks a central 1st floor window) with central open fronted gabled porches. The Old Estate House has significant frontage planting which forms its character and setting, whilst West Lea has its frontage enclosed by hedges, possibly engulfing railings now buried within and West View has decorative white painted iron railings. As this side of The Square runs near perpendicular to the contours of the hillside the ridgeline steps down the slope adding interest to the roofscape here.

7.34 Castle House sits at the south east corner of The Square and is set at an angle as it begins to turn the corner into East Street. The house has 6 over 6 sashes throughout and a pair of carriage openings to the north end that give access through to the rear. The only symmetrical element of the building is the bay on either side of the door, and this section is not centrally located within the property. Castle House is the only property along this side of The Square not to have an enclosed frontage; it is likely that it once did, although this has been lost so as to provide parking immediately outside of the house.

Fore Street

Homedale is an imposing arts and crafts style home standing on high ground to the north side of Fore Street.



square bays on the ground floor also having decorative turned timber spindles and rails on their roofs to provide small balconies accessed via the first floor. The building features a plaque giving the construction date of 1894 and the initials of the Architect "F W W". The elevated grounds of the house are enclosed by a stone retaining wall topped with decorative cast iron railings.

7.37 Beside Homedale is a lane leading up to The Square, providing a view to the church tower. The lane is partly cobbled, a smooth tarmac path provided along one side, and enclosed by pleasant stone walls and railings.

7.38 To the other side of Homedale is a pair of cottages. The roof is stepped between the two cottages and each has an enclosed front porch. Both have had replacement windows, of different styles although both variants fail to respect the traditional form.

Cross Lane

7.39 Cross Lane features four listed buildings - the range of 1 & 2 The Huxtables and Top Cottage, and Court House.

7.40 1 & 2 The Huxtables were previously a bakery, and before that a shop and cottage, whilst what is now Top Cottage was a barn or store associate with The Huxtables which has now been converted into a separate dwelling. The Huxtables were previously rendered along the roadside and exposed stone to the rear, although render has recently been removed exposing the stone work again. The buildings serve to turn the corner from The Square into Cross Lane.

7.41 Court House is a grand manorial style house (Grade II* Listed) dating to 1553 although extensively remodelled at the end of the 17th century and enlarged during the 18th and 19th centuries at the rear. The building is of high quality ashlar stonework in sandstone, with more accurately dressed work around windows and doors. The plan is still discernable from the 16th century with a hall and through passage. The house is enclosed by walls and is difficult to appreciate from any public vantage point. Ranges of barns and stables and other agricultural buildings extend outwards to the west.

8 Boundary Changes Adopted March 2014

8.1 The assessment of the Conservation Area also gave an opportunity to re-examine the boundary and to see if it was still relevant today, or whether there were changes which it would be appropriate to make to the boundary of the area.

8.2 Following an assessment a number of changes to the pre-1974 adopted boundary were recommended, and duly adopted in March 2014:

Boundary Reductions

8.3 Around the conservation area there are several places where the boundary cuts across plots of land, and in one case through the middle of a building.

8.4 In order to 'tidy-up' the boundary so that it follows real world features, such as the edges of roads and plot or field boundaries, a number of minor reductions have been made so that these 'partial inclusions' are amended such that plots and buildings are either all in, or all out, of the conservation area.

The map given at Appendix 2(III) shows the boundary changes adopted in March 2014, with extensions shaded in green and reductions shaded in red.

Boundary Extensions

8.5 A minor extension has been adopted on the northern side of the churchyard where a narrow strip near the edge of the churchyard was previously excluded from the conservation area, probably as a result of a plotting error from the original designation plans.

8.6 A larger and more significant extension was also made along Fore Street as far as Lower Poole Farm. The extension is mostly focused along the south side of Fore Street, with the north side being dominated by a number of late 20th century buildings including South Bank, Holly House and The White House.

8.7 Ivy House is at the east end of Fore Street and is of similar construction to Homedale, almost opposite, being of well dressed stone with red brick quoins and window dressings. Windows are elegant marginal light sashes. The building lacks the visual interest of Homedale as it has a very 'flat' facade, without the projecting bays and gables but still presents an interesting facade which adds to the character of the streetscene.

8.8 The Places stands next door and illustrates the same pattern of scattered older buildings as is found along East Street. This property, as opposed to its late Victorian neighbour, appears to have mid 17th century origins. The steeply pitched slate roof was almost certainly thatched originally whilst the mix of 2 and 3 light casement windows (despite unfortunately detailed 'stormproof' uPVC replacements) is typical of older properties elsewhere within the village. It is possible from the pattern of fenestration that there was once an axial chimney stack attached to the roadside frontage, and given the narrow width of the road this may have been removed as recently as the early 20th century.

8.9 At the rear of The Places is a series of residential conversions from former agricultural outbuildings and stables. The lower parts of the walls on these properties are of stone with red brick dressings, whilst the upper floor is a pebble-dash render, the upper floor probably having been added later. This rear courtyard of buildings suggests that The Places was another farm located within the core of the village.

8.10 Further to the west are Penswell Cottages, a semi-detached pair of cottages, probably built as housing for farm workers at The Places during the early 18th century. The pair is of rendered cob or local stone construction with a pair of centrally located doors (number 1 has an enclosed porch added). The window arrangements do not match and it would appear that both have been altered to some extent, with new window openings created, or existing openings enlarged, over time. Number 1 also has an odd arrangement at its gable end where the roof oversails the gable wall considerably and the lower half of the wall then projects outwards level with the overhang.

Higher Poole Farm is one of few thatched properties which remain within the village.



8.11 Jury Cottage is the next property along the street and is set back with its gable facing the road. The lane beside this house leads to Higher Poole Farm which sits in behind the main frontage of properties, and is visible in the gap between Jury Cottage and Penswell Cottages. The farmhouse has just been extensively renovated and at present does not show its 17th century origins. The external stonework has been cleaned and re-pointed, the roof re-thatched and fresh render applied to the upper floor. It will be many years before the building weathers in again.

8.12 Next to Jury Cottage is a line of modest cottages (1 and 2 Bradfords Cottages and Apple Dumpling Cottage) running back from the road along the lane to Higher Poole Farm. The cottages are all rendered with the main frontages facing south where they are mostly sheltered from public gaze. The sides facing the lane are blank save for a single door in each property and a ground floor window in 2 Bradfords Cottage. The hipped slate roof hints that the cottages may have, at one time, had a thatched roof.

8.13 New Oaks is a barn conversion, the building much altered with new enlarged windows and half dormers inserted into the roofline along the street side elevation. The dormers are part clad in oak and the window openings have oak lintels above. Domestic style and scale windows together with an unusual and prominent arrangement of rainwater goods harm the character and appearance of the property and detract from its character as a former agricultural building.

8.14 Jasmine Cottage and New House stand at the southern end of Fore Street. Although built of matching local stone, New House has red brick detailing while Jasmine Cottage utilises stone for its window heads. Other than that difference the two houses fit well together and there is little obvious to suggest that they were not built together as a pair. Both have porches, although that at Jasmine Cottage is wider and has an elaborate decorative barge board. Jasmine Cottage also has replacement sliding sash uPVC windows.

Lower Poole Farm is similar in style to many of the Georgian properties on The Square.



8.15 Southside is a large, modern, detached house out of keeping with its setting in terms of its proportions and relationship to the street. Large single storey elements present expanses of blank concrete tiled roofs towards the road. Render and the use of casement windows are the only nods towards the typical local building materials and forms. This particular property would add little to the character of the conservation area.

and the beginning of the Georgian period. The building is rendered local stone, with a dressed stone gable end chimney stack. Windows are a mix of 2 (majority) and 3 light

8.16 Lower Poole Farm then stands at what is proposed to be the southern edge of this extension. The building probably dates to the early 18th century

casements with 6 (majority) or 8 panes per light. The building also has a series of extensions, including a lightweight outhouse built out of white painted corrugated iron sheets.

8.17 The surrounding agricultural outbuildings are in generally poor condition, several with large sections of their roofs missing and these are soon to be demolished as part of a housing scheme.

8.18 On the opposite side of Fore Street stands a former Wesleyan Chapel, now converted to residential use. The stone built chapel has a small ocular window high in its southern gable wall, with simple Gothic style pointed window openings in its side walls (windows now replaced with domestic style mock leaded units). The church

and its churchyard sit on a corner plot at the southern end of Fore Street and make an impressive feature of open space overlooking the junction.

8.19 To the rear of the chapel are a series of single storey workshops, marked as 'Works' on the Ordnance Survey maps. Several of these buildings now appear to be in use as garages together with an engineering company. Some of these buildings are stone built with slate roofs, whilst others are of brick with low profile asbestos sheet roofs.

8.20 Beyond the chapel and the former works is Homelea. This property stands perpendicular to the road with its hipped gable facing the street. The half of the property nearer the road is older, of rendered cob and stone with a thatched roof, whilst the section further from the road, of approximately the same size, is of exposed stone with a natural slate roof and red brick dressings to the ground floor windows.

8.21 These properties have much in common with the East Street section of the current conservation area, including a number of examples of very early houses from the 17th century. There are 2 listed buildings contained within this adopted boundary extension.

8.22 The majority of the northern side of Fore Street is composed of modern buildings at a significantly higher elevation built back from the road behind retaining walls and as such this side of the road was largely excluded from the boundary extension, except for at its southern end.

The old Wesleyan Chapel has been converted to residential use, with the Methodists having relocated to East Street in 1891.



9 Development Pressures

9.1 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.

9.2 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 is dependent 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 instead of less damaging siting and designs being agreed.

9.3 The desirable location of North Molton at the edge of Exmoor makes it an attractive place to live, whilst the close proximity of local employment at South Molton, together with access via the North Devon Link Road, means that North Molton is a sought after location on the fringe of Exmoor.

9.4 The demand for homes in the village drives a demand to provide new houses which has, in the past, led to incidences of 'infill' development, where new buildings are constructed in gaps or gardens between older properties, or where a single large property is demolished to make way for multiple smaller new buildings. In some cases modern infill development already existing in the village stands out as being of inappropriate and comparatively poor architectural standard.

9.5 Parking is an issue within the village along some of the narrow streets such as Fore Street and Cross Lane. The Square provides a degree of parking for those properties arranged around it, although the visual aesthetic of the open space is eroded by its use as a permanent parking area.

10 The Future

10.1 The aim of this character assessment has been to identify which buildings, open spaces, and features from North Molton'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 North Molton Conservation Area

Back Lane

Address	Listing Grade
Harris House, and Railings to frontage	II

East Street

Address	Listing Grade
No. 1 (Keys Cottage) and No. 2 (The Cottage)	II
Slader's and Hillcrest	II
Nos. 1 & 2 Hodges Cottage	II
Winston Cottage & Nos. 2 & 3 Lock's Cottage	II
North Molton Methodist Church & Adjoining Church Hall	II
Thorne House	II
Workshop ranges (including Smithy) adjoining Thorne House to south	II

Fore Street

Address	Listing Grade
Middle Poole	II
Higher Poole Farmhouse	II

The Square

Address	Listing Grade
Court House and garden wall adjoining to northeast	II*

Address	Listing Grade
Garden walls, gates and gatepiers adjoining Court House to the south	II
Court Hall	II
North Molton County Primary School	II
Jarman's Cottage	II
Hillside View	II
The Old Vicarage and garden walls to south	II
The Old Vicarage and garden walls adjoining to south	II
The Huxtables	II
Bakery Cottage	II
Clare Cottage	II
Swan House	II
Red Lion Cottage and Davreen	II
Castle Hill	II
The Old Estate House	II

Churchyard

Address	Listing Grade
Church of All Saints	I
Dee Chest Tomb, 6 metres north of north aisle - Church of All Saints	II
Chest tomb 7 metres south of south aisle - Church of All Saints	II
Smyth memorial 9 metres south of west tower - Church of All Saints	II
Chest Tomb 14 metres south of chancel - Church of All Saints	II
Group of 5 chest tombs and headstones 21 metres south of south aisle of Church of All Saints	II

Address	Listing Grade
Two Avery memorials 23 metres to northeast of chancel - Church of All Saints	II
Thorne memorial 26 metres south of chancel - Church of All Saints	II
Group of 3 memorials 32 metres south of south aisle - Church of All Saints	II
Chest Tomb 40 metres to south of west tower of Church of All Saints	II
Lychgate and flanking churchyard railings, including gate 50 metres south of Church of All Saints	II

2 Appendix 2 - Conservation Area Mapping

I - Key

II - Existing Conservation Area Boundary & Listed Buildings

III - Boundary Changes

IV - Building Heights

V - Key Views, Viewpoints & Landmarks

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		Wall With Slate Hanging
	2 Storey Building		External Views
	3 Storey Building		Internal Views
	4+ Storey Building		Morte Slate Boundary Wall
	Area To Be Added To Conservation area		Morte Slate & White Spar Boundary Wall
	Area To Be Removed From Conservation Area		Focal Point Of Views
	Building Making a Neutral Contribution to Local Character		Key Viewpoint
	Building Making a Positive Contribution to Local Character		Prominent Bay Window
	Building Making an Outstanding Contribution to Local Character		Prominent Bow Window
	Building With Rendered Walls		Negative / Positive Public Seating
	Building With Bare or Limewashed / Painted Walls		Positive / Negative Bollard
	Building With Slate Window Sills		Decorated Barge Boards
	Public Green Space		Negative / Positive Street Lighting
	Building In Poor Condition		Memorial - ie. War Memorial
	Area For Potential Enhancement		Mosaic Feature
	Building With Decorated Eaves		Important Tree / Tree With Tree Preservation Order
	Various Separate Character Zones		Miscellaneous Feature (Labled)
			Miscellaneous Linear Feature (Labled)
			Railings As A Positive Streetscape Feature
			Railings As A Negative Streetscape Feature
			River / Aquatic Feature
	Scheduled Ancient Monument		Public Right of Way
	Historic Door		Focal Streetscape Feature
	Historic Bridge		Negative / Positive Signage Feature
	Intrusive Overhead Lines		Historic Telephone Kiosk
	Historic Post Box		Position of Historic Town Gate





