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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 39 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 Putsborough 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 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

- This appraisal of the Putsborough Conservation Area was initiated in January 2009.
- The first designation of land within the present conservation area boundary was by North Devon Council in November 1975.

The existing boundary of the Putsborough Conservation Area, together with its listed buildings, is given in Appendix 4(II)

2.1 The conservation area's special interest is focused on its relatively unchanged appearance, with the hamlet appearing today much as it did almost two centuries ago. With the majority of the buildings being listed they have escaped unsympathetic alterations and there has been no new development within the hamlet to in any way impact upon its historic character.

2.2 The hamlet retains its traditional appearance and function as a farming settlement, however with changes in British farming and increasing diversification, tourism has placed some demands on the settlement. The changes required have been well mitigated, helping to keep historic farm outbuildings in active use and repair.

The view along the drive to Putsborough Court, lined with a formal avenue of trees, the curve of the approach and dense planting hides the house itself from view



3 Facts and Figures

3.1 The conservation area covers an area of 2.52 hectares (6.23 acres). Of the buildings within the conservation area 7 are included on the 'Listed of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Listed Buildings). This is a very high number given that there are only 8 properties (excluding agricultural outbuildings) in the hamlet.

A list of the Listed Buildings within the Putsborough Conservation Area is given in Appendix I

3.2 There are no scheduled ancient monuments within the boundaries of the conservation area, or in the immediate vicinity.

4 Historic Development

4.1 The earliest surviving documentary reference to Putsborough (Pottysburghe) was in 1313, the name of the hamlet probably refers to Putt's 'beorg', or settlement.

4.2 The modern hamlet of Putsborough is almost unchanged from the settlement shown in late 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping, with little besides modern agricultural buildings as additions. All the existing buildings appear to have been built since the early 18th century.

These historic maps are provided within Appendix 3 for comparison.

4.3 The surviving medieval field system surrounding the settlement seems to have been created with the hamlet at its centre, indicating that despite no existing buildings predating the early 18th century the settlement certainly has medieval origins.

4.4 The archaeological background set out below is based on information currently held in Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) to date. This knowledge is likely to evolve and be revised over time.

Pre- Medieval

4.5 There is no indication of a prehistoric presence in or near the settlement, although evidence does exist within the wider area. Neither are there any known Roman archaeological sites recorded within the Conservation Area, or in the immediate vicinity of Putsborough.

4.6 There is also no evidence of Saxon activity within Putsborough, potentially due to a lack of archaeological investigation within the settlement, and a Saxon origin cannot be ruled out at this time.

Medieval

4.7 Putsborough first appears in documents in 1313, although it is quite possible that a settlement was founded at an earlier date, potentially pre-conquest, though this has yet to be archaeologically demonstrated.

4.8 A footpath extends from the north-west corner of the hamlet, connecting with Ransom Lane to the north of Croyde, and probably providing access to Baggy Point. This path is of unknown date, but respects the field system to the north of the hamlet rather than being driven through it, and may therefore have medieval origins.

4.9 Vention Lane leads the short distance north to a beach at Putsborough Sands. The name of the lane 'Vention' may be taken from the linguistic term 'Ventive' which covers verbs that indicate 'going' or 'coming'. Indicating that there were strong and well used links between Putsborough and the beach at Putsborough Sands, potentially with fishing supplementing the local diet in the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

Post Medieval and Modern

4.10 Almost all the historic buildings in Putsborough, the majority of the structures in the hamlet, appear to have been built since the early 18th century, and include a manor house, farms and associated outbuildings and cottages. A plaster roundel in the manor house is dated 1712, and a plaque 1717, although the building appears more modern than these dates. This in itself probably represents later re-modeling of the building which retains rough hewn roof trusses and purlins which could well be 17th century in origin.

4.11 Sections of exposed timbers within some of the buildings, particularly Putsborough Court, appear to be recycled from older structures, or possibly ships wrecked along the coast. As a valuable commodity the historic re-use of timber was relatively common and any timber that could be re-used typically would be and any that was beyond use, or could not find a new use locally, served as firewood.

4.12 During World War Two, Putsborough was included in the sizeable North Devon US Assault Training Centre, which extended from Morte Point in the north to the estuary end of Braunton Sands, some distance to the south.

4.13 The hamlet was held by the manor until as recently as 1938 when Lord and Lady Robertson offered some of the properties for sale to their tenants. Further land and property was sold off by the manor in 1946 leaving the rural hamlet in mixed ownership as we see it today.

Historic Landscape

4.14 Much of the landscape around Putsborough has been categorised as the remains of medieval enclosures based on strip fields. The area directly to the north has larger fields, created during a period from the 15th to 18th centuries, in places retaining possible medieval elements.

Archaeological Potential

4.15 As the hamlet appears to have remained almost unchanged since the 19th-century, and possibly since its founding, the potential for the survival of medieval remains or deposits must be considered reasonably high throughout much of the modern settlement.

5 Landscape and Setting

5.1 Putsborough is a farming settlement and is set in a predictably farming landscape. The fields immediately surrounding Putsborough to the East, South and West were probably first enclosed with hedge-banks in the late medieval period and farmed as open strip fields. Further out to the west and north east the fields are larger and their boundaries probably date to a time between the late 15th and early 18th centuries.

The view into the surrounding countryside from the northern end of Sharpland Lane



5.2 Putsborough stands astride a small stream and is set within the seaward opening of a shallow valley between Ora Hill and another smaller hill to the southeast of the hamlet. The stream is fed by springs a short distance to the northeast and these springs may well have traditionally provided the hamlet with fresh water.

5.3 Within Putsborough and the surrounding area the bedrock, of local slates and shales, is never far below the surface and in places within the conservation area the bedrock is visible at the surface. As a result many of the local vernacular buildings are constructed from a mix of this local slate and cob.

5.4 Despite the presence of this ideal slate roofing material locally the majority of the buildings within Putsborough have thatched roofs and these help to give the settlement its rural and historic appearance.

6 Views and Vistas

Key Views within the Putsborough Conservation Area are given in Appendix 4(V)

6.1 Despite the proximity of Putsborough to the sea it is not possible to get a view out to sea from within the hamlet itself. Instead the majority of views into the wider landscape are possible to the south, with views into the fields and hill slopes to the southeast from Sharpland Lane being particularly good.

6.2 Views out to the west are limited to the relatively short length of road leading in that direction before it meets the junction with Stentaway Lane. Hedges, trees and walls shelter the hamlet and also block the majority of views both out of and into Putsborough.

6.3 Within the small settlement views are more rewarding, from just outside Putsborough to the east it is possible to look over the wall and across the orchard towards the barns and stables of Manor Farm.

6.4 Several buildings, Putsborough Court being an example, are only visible in glimpses being otherwise hidden by trees and stone walls. The view from the roadside into the courtyard of Putsborough Manor is another example where an attractive building can be seen only from a short stretch of the road before it disappears from view again.

6.5 The ford where the stream crosses the main road through Putsborough also forms parts of key views within the settlement. The gardens and ponds of Putsborough Court on the south side add to the natural charm of this stretch of road, as do the stone walls, pierced by a gateway and timber door, of Putsborough Manor to the north.

6.6 A key view is possible from just in front of Manor Farm Cottage looking north along the road, past the stone walls and slate roofs of the former threshing barn with the thatched roof of Manor Farm farmhouse just visible above the wall and trees opposite.

The glimpsed view into the courtyard of Putsborough Manor from the road outside



**The view from Manor Farm Cottage to the north past
the barns of Manor Farm**



7 Architecture

7.1 There are no examples of 'formal' architecture within Putsborough. That is to say that none of the buildings follow the rules laid down by the various architectural styles. Instead Putsborough is dominated by buildings of the local vernacular type. These buildings are constructed from local materials and by local craftsmen who constructed buildings to be functional and efficient within the limits of their locally available materials and technology.

7.2 This gives Putsborough a very strong sense of local character and identity. A Georgian townhouse or a Gothic school may very well (up to a point) look the same whatever part of the country they were built in, while traditional vernacular buildings vary widely between different regions of the country.

7.3 The natural slate bedrock in the area is widely used throughout the region from Ilfracombe around the coast to Braunton with the best material having been extracted from Morte Point, giving the local slate the name of 'Morte Slate'.

7.4 The majority of the dwellings are constructed with stone wall bases and rendered cob as at The Old Cottage, Manor Farm Cottage and Putsborough Manor. These buildings, together with the farmhouse at Manor Farm have thatched roofs, although some sections of their roofs may be of slate, such as the curved link and entrance at The Old Cottage.

7.5 In contrast to these residential buildings many of the associated farm buildings are constructed entirely of stone and mostly have slate roofs, although there are examples with pantile roof coverings such as the cart sheds at Manor Farm. It seems strange that the agricultural buildings appear to have been constructed more sturdily than the dwellings with complete stone walls and slate roofs. One potential explanation for this may be in the properties of the various materials. Cob and Thatch, although perhaps not as durable as stone and slate, are much better insulators and it may well be that they were used in the dwellings so as to provide homes that were warmer and more comfortable for their occupiers.

The local slate and shale bedrock is never far below the surface and can often be seen above ground in outcrops such as this



The Old Cottage demonstrates the typical construction method of tall local stone bases and rendered cob for the upper portions of walls



7.6 The construction of the buildings with stone walls at the ground floor level and cob above is a common feature in cob buildings. In order to protect cob from damp it is rarely built straight from ground level, and the height of the stone plinth is often dependent on the extent of the eaves overhang of the roof. A larger overhang often results in a shorter plinth as less rainwater is likely to splash back and wet the cob. Although thatched roofs often have a greater overhang than slate or tile roofs the overhangs within Putsborough are not overly large, probably explaining why the stone walls often extend to ground floor ceiling level. In this way the stone walls also take the weight of the floor joists for the first floor.

7.7 If these assumptions are correct they point to a sophisticated local vernacular style that recognised the properties of the various materials locally and exploited materials for their inherent properties, for insulation and warmth, rather than just focusing on availability of materials and cost of maintenance.

7.8 Windows within the conservation area are mostly casement types, with only a handful of sashes found on an extension to Mannor Farmhouse which was previously used as stables. This is perhaps typical of small rural farming settlements, although it would often be expected that sashes would have been introduced to the higher status buildings (such as Putsborough Court and Putsborough Manor) during the 19th century but this does not appear to have happened at Putsborough.

7.9 The Anchorage introduces some modern materials which appear out of place in their rigidly traditional setting, such as interlocking concrete roof tiles and uPVC windows. As the remainder of the buildings in Putsborough are all listed (or protected as subservient curtilage structures to listed buildings) it is unlikely that such out of place materials will propagate further within the hamlet.

The Jacobethan door in the boundary wall to Putsborough Manor

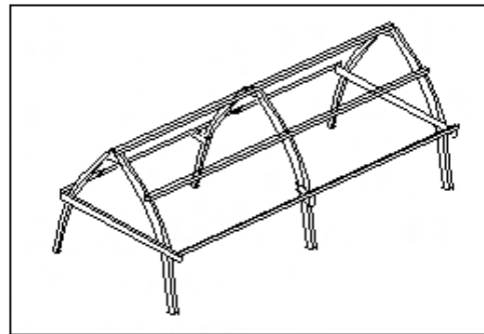


7.10 Putsborough Manor dates to the early 17th century and possesses features typical of this period, such as chimneys located on principal elevations of the building (albeit now enclosed by a later addition) as decorative features or demonstrations of wealth. The Manor itself is odd in that it is physically connected to barns and out-buildings, where as high status buildings most typically separated themselves from subservient agricultural buildings. The timber door through the boundary wall, near the ford on the southern property boundary, dates from the 'Jacobethan' period (1558-1625, covering the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I) and is probably contemporary with the building of the Manor House.

7.11 One of the barns attached to the Manor house features 'Cruck Frames' a type of structural timber construction where the roof trusses continue to ground level and bear the loading of the roof straight to the ground.

This utilises either two curved timbers jointed at the top in a 'wishbone' shape, or multiple timbers grafted and jointed together to achieve the same curved shape (often called composite crucks), leaving the walls to carry very little load. This form of construction is very old and may have been in use for centuries before the Norman Conquest, so it is possible that this barn pre-dates the Manor House itself. The barn at the west end also features primitive timber box guttering along its western side.

An example sketch of cruck framed construction showing the wishbone shape of the pairs of cruck 'blades'



Street Furniture

7.12 The only notable piece of street furniture within Putsborough is the Victorian post box set in the wall almost opposite Manor Farm Cottage. The world's first organised public postal service was created in Britain during the reign of Queen Victoria and as such this item represents one of the earliest pieces of postal infrastructure for a national postal system. Although post boxes are now common, original boxes from the Victorian period are relatively rare as they were often upgraded or replaced in later periods.

8 Boundary Changes May 2010

8.1 Two boundary alterations were made to the conservation area boundary in May 2010.

8.2 The first was an extension to the east of the existing conservation area to cover a field now restored to use as an orchard. It makes a positive contribution to the eastward setting of the agricultural buildings behind The Anchorage and to the east of Manor Farm, as well as restoring a historic land use as shown on the early ordnance survey maps in appendix 3.

The area of land to the east of the conservation area is shown as an orchard on early OS maps and has been recently restored to this use again



8.3 A second extension to the south brings an area of woodland associated with Putsborough Court into the conservation area. These trees form part of the setting of Putsborough Court itself as well as being a major natural asset in terms of their value to biodiversity and local wildlife.

8.4 There were other alterations, these were minor re-routing of the boundary, where it previously ran through a barn to the east of Manor Farm at the northern boundary, this building now falls entirely within the boundary line.

Changes to the conservation area boundary, adopted in May 2010, are shown in Appendix 4(III)

9 Development Pressures

9.1 Through the past two centuries there has been little pressure for change within Putsborough, and as a result the hamlet has retained its historic character and overall appearance. The fact that the majority of the buildings are protected by listing has helped this.

9.2 As a predominantly farming settlement the hamlet is affected by changes in modern farming. Redundancy or near-redundancy of outbuildings is a particular issue and for these buildings to justify expenditure for their maintenance creative new uses need to be found for them. In many cases this may require a degree of change to be accommodated. An approach which secures a viable, and sustainable, future use for otherwise redundant buildings with the minimum need for change to the fabric of that building will be looked upon positively. Examples of this sort of adaption and re-use of existing buildings can be seen in the laundry and personal ablutions facilities provided for use of campers in the north range of the Manor Farm stable courtyard.

The north range of the Manor Farm barns demonstrates the adaption of a farm building so as to give it a sustainable future use and ensure its maintenance



9.3 There are no foreseeable major developments in or around Putsborough, nor is there any significant growth anticipated here.

9.4 The listed status of the majority of the buildings also protects from inappropriate minor changes which could otherwise be carried out under permitted development rights.

10 The Future

10.1 The aim of this character appraisal has been to identify which buildings, open spaces, and features from Putsborough'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 benefit from redevelopment or enhancement schemes.

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 the management plan for the conservation area. The aim of such a document is 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 designed 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

Address	Listing Grade
Manor Farmhouse and Outbuilding adjoining	II
Putsborough Manor House and attached barn to rear including garden walls on 3 sides to front	II
Cottage adjoining to east side of Putsborough Manor House	II
Outbuildings comprising wash-house, cart shed and stables with well-covering attached forming part of courtyard to rear of Putsborough Manor House	II
The Old Cottage	II
Manor Farm Cottage and the Thatched Cottage	II
Water Meadow nee. Putsborough Court, (formerly listed as Tuckers Farmhouse)	II

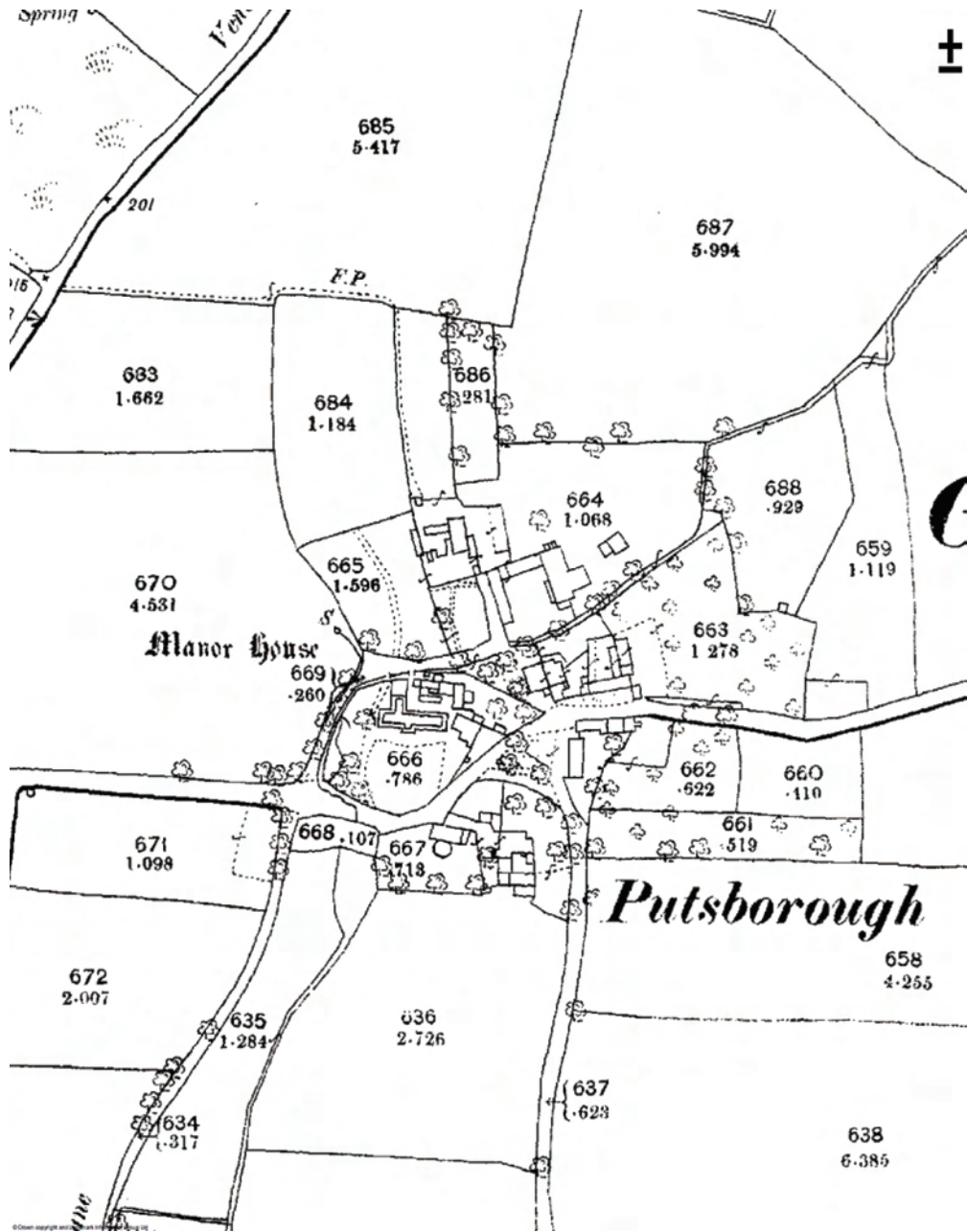
2 Appendix 2 - Glossary

3 Appendix 3 - Historic Mapping

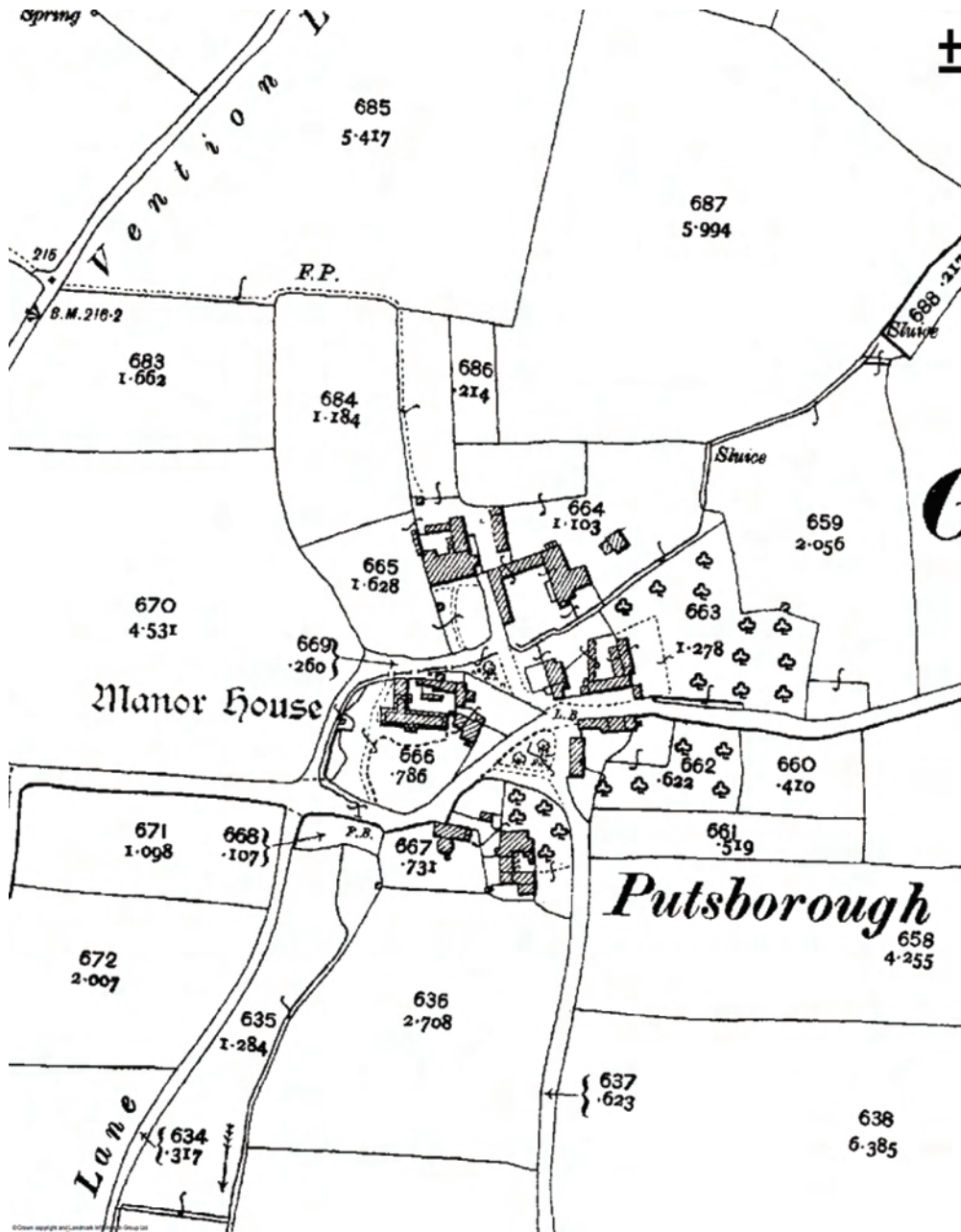
I - 1st Series Ordnance Survey Map (c. 1880)

II - Ordnance Survey Map (c.1904)

I - 1st Series Ordnance Survey Map c. 1880



II - Ordnance Survey Map c. 1904



4 Appendix 4 - Conservation Area Mapping

I - Key

II - Existing Conservation Area Boundary & Listed Buildings

III - Boundary Changes Adopted May 2010

IV - Building Heights

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		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 With uPVC Windows		Prominent Bay Window
	Building With Timber Windows		Negative / Positive Public Seating
	Building With A Mix Of Windows		Positive / Negative Bollard
	Building With Rendered Walls		Decorated Barge Boards
	Building With Bare or Limewashed / Painted Walls		Negative / Positive Street Lighting
	Building With Slate Window Sills		Memorial - ie. War Memorial
	Public Green Space		Scheduled Ancient Monument
	Building In Poor Condition		Mosaic Feature
	Area For Potential Redevelopment		Important Tree / Tree With Tree Preservation Order
	Character Zone 1		Miscellaneous Feature (Labled)
	Character Zone 2		Miscellaneous Linear Feature (Labled)
	Character Zone 3		Railings As A Positive Streetscape Feature
	Character Zone 4		Railings As A Negative Streetscape Feature
	Character Zone 5		River / Aquatic Feature
			Focal Streetscape Feature
			Negative / Positive Signage Feature

