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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 Landkey Town 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 and Figures

2.1 The conservation area at Landkey Town was formally adopted in July 1987 and covers an area of 4.5 hectares or 11.1 acres (increased from 3.6 hectares or 8.9 acres) following boundary changes adopted in September 2012.

2.2 Within the existing boundary there are 9 Listed Buildings.

Listed Buildings in Landkey Town Conservation Area

Listing Grade	Number of Listed Buildings
I	1
II*	1
II	5

2.3 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area boundary, however there are two nearby, at Codden Beacon 1.2 kilometres to the Southwest and the deserted medieval village at Welcombe Farm 2 kilometres East - Northeast.

A map showing the existing Conservation Area boundary (Adopted 2012) and the locations of listed buildings is given in Appendix 3(II).

A list of all listed buildings within the boundary is given in Appendix 1.

2.4 The area, together with Landkey Newlands, is covered by a local design guide produced in 1999 by local residents, Campaign to Protect Rural England and The Beaford Centre. The guide was a reaction to the spread of modern housing which had little regard to the character of the established historic buildings within Landkey.

3 Landscape and Setting

3.1 Landkey occupies an area clustered around the Parish Church towards the bottom of a shallow valley and on the more gently sloping land to the North side of the river. Views of surrounding green hillsides are a distinctive feature of the setting of the conservation area.

3.2 Particularly prominent is the range of high hills to the South and Southeast, with Codden Hill visible to the South from most vantage points.

The view to the South from Landkey takes in the surrounding agricultural landscape rising towards the high hills of the culm measures.



3.3 Views to the North are typically more restricted as the church itself stands on a gentle rise which blocks views in this direction.

3.4 A short distance to the West there is a prominent hill near Hill Farm. The tree near the top of its Southern slopes stands out as an eye-catching natural landmark. Views in this direction are possible from the West side of the Churchyard and from the area around Brentwood Cottages near the start of the driveway to the Manor. The same view is also possible from the converted complex of outbuildings associated with the Manor.

3.5 The valley is also occupied by various river channels, primarily Landkey Brook to the South of the village and leats for the many water driven corn mills which were once within area. One such mill stands near the old Manor just to the East of the existing conservation area.

3.6 Landkey parish straddles a geological divide with the northern part being older Devonian geology and the southern part the Culm Measures of the Upper Carboniferous era. Within the Culm Measures are more resilient Codden Hill Cherts and these have created the ridges of high ground to the South of the parish including Codden Hill,

Hangman's Hill and Hearson Hill. The village itself stands on a narrow geological band at the transition of the two regions, made up of sandstone, limestone and various shale and slate of the Lower Carboniferous era.

3.7 The first series Ordnance Survey Maps (c. 1880) show several springs around the village and it is perhaps easy to imagine how this site would appear desirable to make a home and found a settlement, surrounded by gently sloping agricultural land, with the river and many springs to supply water, and later power. In order to fully exploit the surrounding land a number of farms eventually grew up along the road to the East of the village, eventually becoming a new settlement of Landkey Newlands, which has now been joined to the village around the Parish Church by continuous development undertaken in the 1960's.

3.8 From Landkey there are 3 main road routes, one leading back through Landkey Newlands and onwards towards Swimbridge and South Molton. The road to the North West enters the Newport area of Barnstaple as 'Landkey Road'. The third heads south to Bableigh Cross, from where the route West and South East lead to Bishops Tawton and Cobbaton respectively.

4 Key Views

4.1 Landkey offers some interesting views, although many of them are eroded by the encroachment of modern development.

4.2 The buildings along The Causeway are impressive and have their own setting by way of the sloping cobbled path and stone retaining wall, but a view along the row is lessened by the rear elevations of modern housing on the opposite side of the road. These houses do nothing to contribute to local distinctiveness and intrude upon views of which they form part.

4.3 Views along Vicarage Street are similarly eroded by the new development which runs along either side of the street, although the dominant mass of Glebe House at the end of the street is by far the main focus of the view and is the most eye-catching element of the streetscene.

4.4 The church, thanks to its elevated position and great height, is the most visible element within the settlement and from its churchyard views to the South and West are particularly impressive, of a sloping agricultural landscape of fields largely cleared of tree cover, rising to the summits of Codden and Hangman Hills. In the foreground the view takes in the modern development at the South of Landkey, although the elevated vantage points allows the view over their roofs without much interference.

4.5 Views out into the rural hinterland are also possible to the West from Manor Court, here focusing on the hill at Hill Farm with its distinctive and prominent tree near the top of its Southern slopes.

The cobbled surface of The Causeway survives in excellent condition and contributes to the setting of the buildings here.



5 History and Development

5.1 Landkey lies to the South West of the the old main road from Barnstaple (approximately 4.8 kilometres, 3 miles, away) towards South Molton, Taunton and London.

The Parish Church dominates views from the West where the green space enhances the setting of the tower.



5.2 Landkey is mentioned in Domesday Book as '*Londekey*' although only as a subdivision of the holding of Bishops Tawton which held an enormous quantity of land (12 Hides). There may not have been a Manor building in Landkey at the time of the Domesday Survey, instead the land could have been administered centrally from the Bishop's Palace at Tawstock. Clearly at some point a separate Manor was constructed, which may have been before the 15th Century but it is likely that any structure predating the existing Manor House was built on the same site and demolished to make way for its replacement.

5.3 The oldest structure in the village is the Parish Church, dating mostly from enlargement and re-building works of the later 15th Century. However, a small portion of older material from the late 12th

Century can be seen in the North Chancel wall around a small lancet window. The traditional notion that the village of Landkey was founded by Sir Frances Drake in 1586 is clearly fallacy given that the church is over 300 years older than this date.

5.4 The Manor House (The Old Manor House) stands just to the Northwest of the Church and dates from the 15th Century. At this time the building would have been a 'hall house', basically a single space open to the rafters, possibly with a single partition to separate a bedroom for the Lord of the Manor. Sometime in the early 17th Century the building was altered, a first floor added and the central open hearth replaced by an axial chimney stack.

5.5 The only local employment besides in agriculture appears to have been the local water powered corn mills, small scale mining, lime burning and tanning. In 1800 there were 7 water mills operating in the area of which one is found standing a little to the East of the conservation area along Manor Road. Most of the mills were corn mills, fed by the produce of local farms. Local agriculture must have been booming in order to keep such a number of mills supplied with enough grain to make them viable, so clearly the lifeblood of the community was its farms.

5.6 The house along Manor Road now known as The Manor House is nothing of the sort. The 1880's 1st Series Ordnance Survey Map clearly shows the building and labels it as Landkey Town Corn Mills. The nearby Mill Building to the south dates to the early to mid 19th Century, while the Mill House dates to the mid 17th Century. It is possible that the Mill and its workings are a replacement for an earlier mill which had reached the end of its functional life. Alternatively the Mill House would have had another use prior to the construction of the Mill. The high quality internal plasterwork would suggest a high status function, and being located along Manor Road it is tempting to reach a conclusion. With The Old Manor so close by and dating to the late 15th Century there is little chance that The Manor House ever was a manor house.

5.7 A small lead mining industry operated within the local area near Hannaford and a scattering of small quarries exploited a seam of sandstone which runs through the parish. This same seam was until recently exploited on a vastly more industrial scale at Venn Quarries.

5.8 By the early 19th Century at least one of the local corn mills, that in the area which is now Shaplands Yard, had become a saw mill, providing timber for a variety of purposes including a growing building and construction trade within Landkey.

5.9 Although the area around the Parish Church and the Landkey Newlands area are now joined by continuous development this is a relatively recent phenomenon and even as little as 50 years ago there was a clear separation between the two areas. Estate development since the Second World War has now occupied this space and as such there is now no break in development between the two areas.

5.10 As part of the millennium celebrations an area of ground was set aside as a 'Millennium Green' which was then part planted with a number of Mazzard cherry trees in 4 local varieties; Greenstem Black, Black Bottler, Dun Small Black and Hannaford. These particular varieties of the wild cherry were once common in North Devon but had almost died out prior to this local project to reintroduce them.

6 Architectural Character

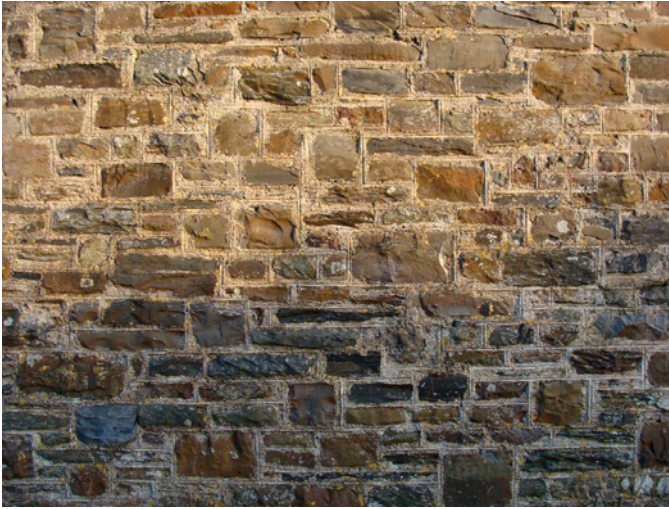
6.1 The Landkey Town Conservation Area is a small conservation area dominated by the Parish Church which stands at its centre.

6.2 The church and its churchyard occupy an area of elevated ground which allows for views to the South towards the tops of Codden Hill and Hangman Hill. The churchyard is enclosed behind a stone wall which varies in height dependent on the lie of the ground. In some places to the West the wall is just 0.5 metres high, rising to over 1.6 metres in some areas to the South where it acts as a retaining wall as well as a boundary feature. The wall is of the same blue / grey local stone as the church itself.

6.3 The church is imposing, thanks to its position, height and some elements of its late medieval period remodelling. Both the tower and the transepts have castellated parapet walls adding a defensive appearance to the building. The majority of the visible walls and windows date to the later medieval period and are in the 'Perpendicular' gothic style. This particular style of construction featured continued vertical lines in window tracery and wide shallow window arches, the result being a vertical emphasis to the appearance of the building.

6.4 To the South of the Church is an area of more recent development which is not reflective of the historic or architectural character of Landkey, The housing around Church Meadow makes no effort to blend in with its surroundings by way of design and its appearance is of standard housing that could belong to a 1970's estate anywhere. On the opposite side of Bableigh Road, Appleby House avoids being standard and the materials used do at least better reflect the local architectural character, however the overall design with multiple eyebrow gables and covered veranda on a plan with cutaway chamfered corners is not in any way in keeping with local forms and styles. Next door the red brick mass of The Grange again fails to blend in by using incongruous materials not typical of the local area, massive dormer windows and concrete roof tiles further harm the appearance of the building.

Local natural stone used by an expert mason at Manor Court.



is largely hidden from view behind the tall boundary walls which enclose the Manor grounds. Again these walls are of local stone, in places capped with clay pantile copings.

6.6 To the West of The Old Manor House lies Manor Court, a series of converted outbuildings, barns and stables associated with the Old Manor House and now in residential use. The conversions have been generally well executed and the buildings, helped by their double semi-enclosed courtyard layout, retain much of their agricultural character. These buildings date to the second half of the 19th Century, with one example bearing an inscribed stone with the date 1878 and the initials 'M.R.'. The quality of construction is superb with the local stone being well dressed and roughly squared, the mortar is finished with a 'penny-struck' technique which involved incising a fine straight line into the mortar when it has partly cured, which helps make the stone blocks appear more square when viewed from a distance. The construction is of the local stone with red brick quoining and windows reveals, and the windows are also topped with rubbed brick segmental arches. The majority of the complex is single storey, however the Eastern block is two storey with a slate hung upper floor.

6.7 Plyms Farmhouse stands a little further to the West and dates from the Georgian Period. The building has a 3 bay arrangement with a near central front door with 8 over 8 sash above, to either side are 2 pairs of vertically aligned 8 over 8 sashes. The two flanking pairs of windows are not quite equally spaced, giving the principal facade a minor degree of asymmetry. The right hand set of windows also have arched window heads while the other windows and the doorway have straight lintels, indicating that the facade has probably been remodelled and the window spacing altered at some point in the past.

6.5 To the North of the Church stands The Old Manor, a thatched property with squat proportions, dating in part to the 15th Century but mainly to the mid 17th Century. Given its position adjacent to the Church this is probably the site of the original Manor and the centre of secular authority within Landkey. The building features a variety of casement windows including a large 4 light (8 panes per light) casement arrangement at the Western end of the principal facade. 3 light casements are more typical on the upper floors, while the ground floor

6.8 To the East of the church is a row of 6 properties including the local Public House "The Ring of Bells". In front of these properties is a sloping roadway leading to the churchyard, 'The Causeway' is a cobbled path that represents the last surviving cobbled area within Landkey. The cobbles themselves are well laid and in good order.

6.9 The row typically has 2 light casement windows, some retaining an older glazing pattern of 8 panes per light, while others have 3, 2 or even single pane lights. The pub's ground floor windows have been replaced with a top hung system of windows attempting to mimic 3 light, 3 pane per light windows, where the upper pane is the top hung casement. The effect is not visually convincing, particularly not when any of the windows are open. Most doors are modern replacements with their upper halves glazed. Forward eyebrow gables exhibit slate hanging and the right hand property (number 6) displays a fire insurance plaque in a central blank window reveal. The plaque is largely illegible, however it appears similar to one in Chulmleigh which features a figure of King Alfred as the mascot of the West of England Fire Assurance Company, based in Exeter. The company was eventually brought out until it became part of the Royal Sun Alliance Insurance Company.

A set of stone horse mounting steps can be seen bottom left of this image, together with K6 telephone kiosk, Victorian post box and the A-Z of Parishes plaque.



Glebe House occupies an elevated position along Vicarage Road and dominates a view along this road from the junction with Manor Road.



Manor's stables - late 19th Century. The elevated position should give the property an imposing aspect, however dense planting behind its stone retaining / boundary walls makes the ground floor difficult to see, especially during the summer.

6.12 There is little architectural cohesion within Landkey and as such there is no overarching character. Clearly the Church and The Manor will always be exceptional cases not typical of the rest of their settlement, but there is not sufficient other material within Landkey to establish a distinct local theme. The use of local stone, in walls and buildings is notable and makes up a significant proportion of the visible streetscape within Landkey and represents perhaps the one theme that can be routinely encountered throughout this conservation area.

6.10 Other interesting features of this row include the K6 telephone kiosk outside of number 5 and the stone steps of a mounting block outside of the East end of The Ring of Bells beside a wall mounted Victorian post box. Above the post box at first floor level is the ceramic plaque from the 1994 Alphabet of Parishes Project for the letter 'M' for the Mazzard fruit for which Landkey is famed.

6.11 At the North end of Vicarage Lane stands Glebe House, a large and imposing local stone villa with brick dressings and window reveals, most likely of a similar age to The Old

7 Boundary Changes Adopted September 2012

7.1 One of the most historically significant features within Landkey, besides the Manor and the Parish Church, is the surviving mill building just to the East of the original conservation area. Mills are an important element in the history of Landkey, with as many as seven corn mills operating within the parish at one point and providing a significant degree of local employment.

7.2 The conservation area has been extended to the East to include this Mill building. Of those mills that survive within the parish this is the least altered and retains its wheel and much of its internal workings intact. The Mill is already protected as a listed building and this is an indication of the value which the building and its surviving mill working possess. The Mill is included within the conservation area given the importance that milling had within the village and the parish.

7.3 This extension also includes The Manor House, which is associated with the Mill in that it used to be the Mill House, and also the old village school. The school is not a listed building but it does make use of the same local stone that makes up the walls of the church and the building is in the typically gothic inspired style of Victorian schools. As a result the school, and the attached 'The School House' which was almost certainly the headmaster's house, make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

7.4 The Manor House on the opposite side of Manor Road is a 17th Century thatched listed building with a series of 19th Century extensions and alterations for its function as the Mill House during the 19th century. The building is Grade II listed and again makes a positive contribution to the character of the area whilst also being a landmark along the approach to the village via Manor Road.

7.5 In other directions modern housing or empty fields border the conservation area, neither of which are suitable for inclusion within an extended conservation area.

7.6 Minor reductions in the boundary were also made on its western edge, where the previous boundary included one small field and a small triangular section of another seemingly at random. There are no features within either field, either now or on old maps, as such these spaces were not considered to have architectural or historic merit worthy of inclusion within a conservation area and were duly removed from the designation.

8 Development Pressures

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 Flooding has the potential to become a more significant issue for Landkey in the future thanks to its valley location. For Landkey Town this is a lesser issue, the majority of the houses occupy elevated ground above the river, however some properties such as the old corn mill and the adjacent 17th century Manor House are at lower levels and potentially vulnerable.

8.4 The settlement has come to serve as a commuter village for Barnstaple, with a significant number of residents in the village being employed in Barnstaple, and as such there is demand for housing in the wider area, creating a significant level of pressure for growth, as evidenced by the modern housing at the margins of the conservation area.

8.5 The local design guide produced in 1999 was produced as a reaction to housing developments which had failed to take into account the local character of the built environment. Local perception was, and to a large extent remains, that these modern developments were inferior in terms of their design to the more historic buildings within the village and failed to reflect the special character of the area. The Design Guide identifies several features of the village which contribute to its distinctive local identity. It is important to ensure that future development in and around the village and its conservation area learns from past developments and has proper regard to the traditional character of the village. The existing modern developments must not be seen as an excuse not to try harder in future to achieve exemplary levels of design.

9 The Future

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

9.2 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.

9.3 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 Listed Buildings Within the Landkey Conservation Area

Building Address	Listing Grade
Church of St Paul	I
Town Mills (Now 'Manor House'), Manor Road	II
Town Mills Mill	II
The Causeway and Ring O Bells Inn, 1-3	II
The Old Manor	II*
Store Sheds approximately 5 Metres South-east of The Old Manor	II

2 Historic Mapping

3 Conservation Area Mapping

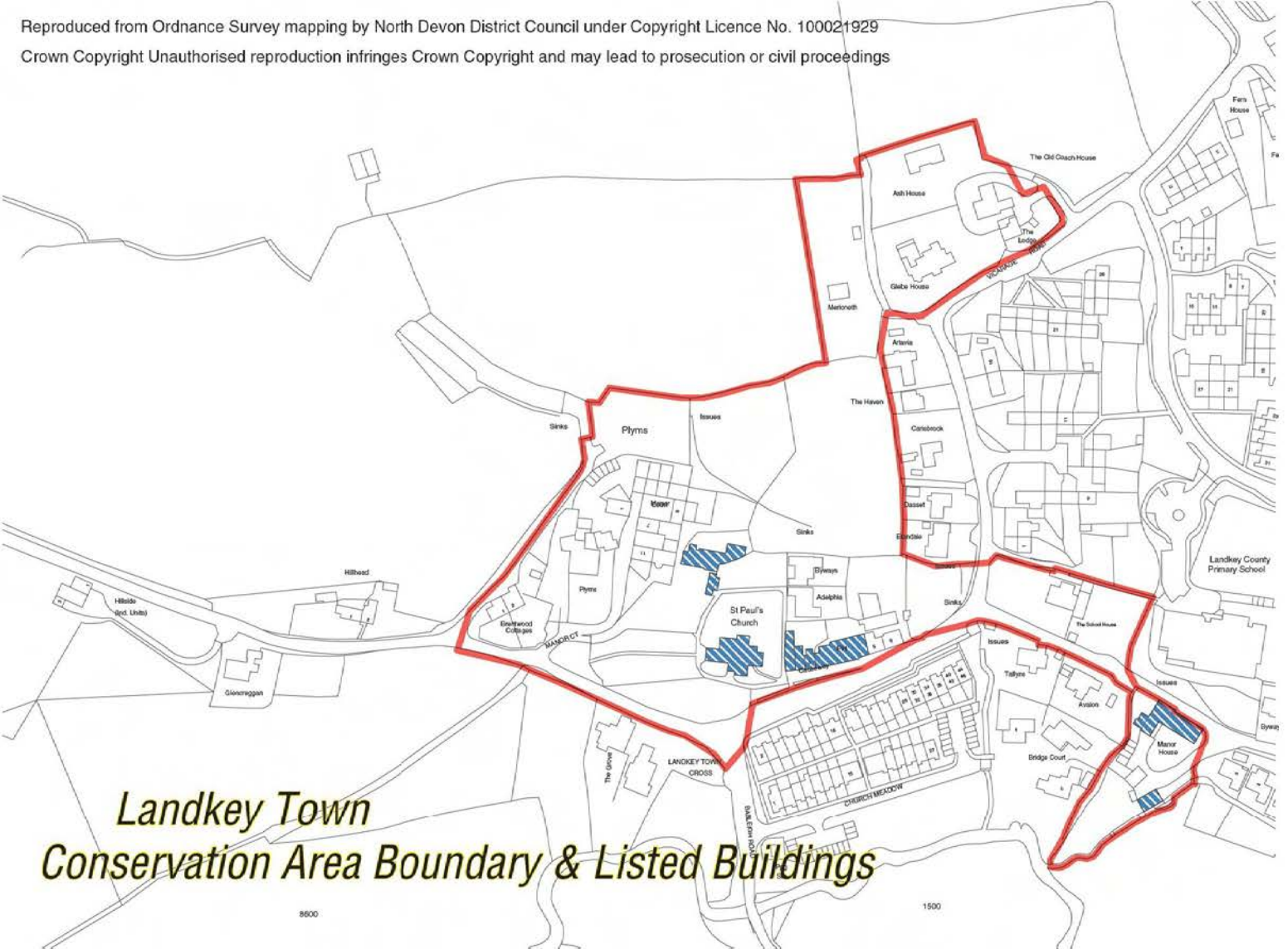
I - Key

II - Existing Boundary and Listed Buildings

III - Key Views and Landmarks

IV - Proposed Boundary Changes

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*Landkey Town
Conservation Area Boundary & Listed Buildings*

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