

# Conservation Area Appraisal Rode

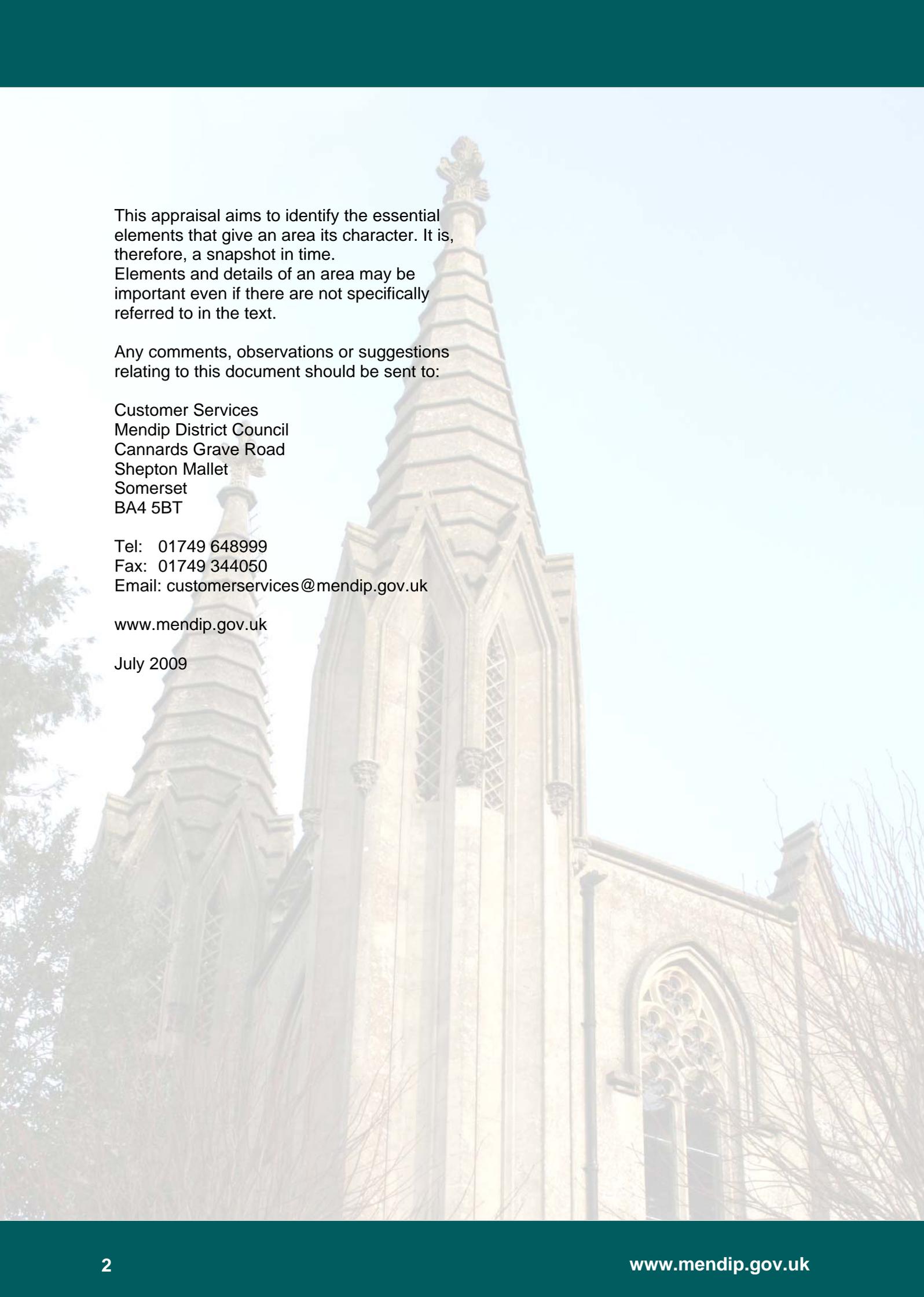
July 2009



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This appraisal aims to identify the essential elements that give an area its character. It is, therefore, a snapshot in time.

Elements and details of an area may be important even if there are not specifically referred to in the text.

Any comments, observations or suggestions relating to this document should be sent to:

Customer Services  
Mendip District Council  
Cannards Grave Road  
Shepton Mallet  
Somerset  
BA4 5BT

Tel: 01749 648999

Fax: 01749 344050

Email: [customerservices@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@mendip.gov.uk)

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July 2009

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# A: Rode Village Area

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## I. Introduction

1.1 The Rode Conservation Area was first designated in 1973 by Somerset County Council. The boundary was subsequently amended and extended in 1976 by Mendip District Council.

1.2 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to determine from time to time which parts of their area are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate these areas as conservation areas.

1.3 Planning authorities also have a duty to protect these areas from development which would harm their special historic or architectural character and this is reflected in the policies contained in Mendip District Council's Adopted Local Plan.

1.4 The purpose of this appraisal is to define the qualities of the area that make it worthy of conservation area status. A clear, comprehensive appraisal of the character of a conservation area provides a sound basis for development control decisions and for developing initiatives to improve the area. It will also enable the development of a robust policy framework for the future management of the area, on which applications can be considered.

1.5 This appraisal has been produced in accordance with the English Heritage publication: 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (August 2005).

1.6 This appraisal was endorsed by the council on 22 July 2009 as a material planning consideration and will be taken into account when assessing local planning applications.



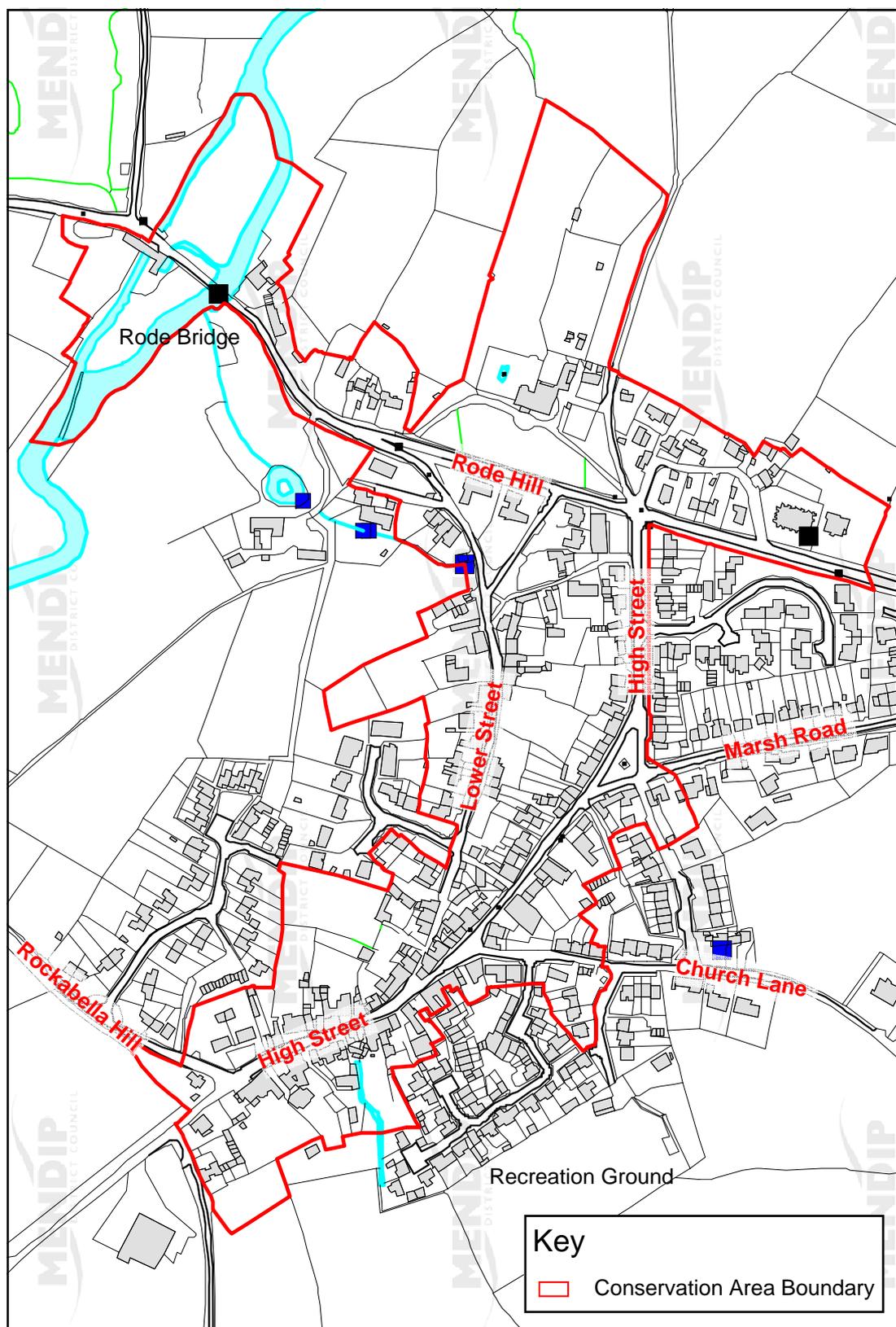
*Rode Baptist Church*



*Mill House stables and gazebo*

# A: Rode Village Area

## I. Introduction



Ordnance Survey Map showing Rode Village Conservation Area Boundary

# A: Rode Village Area

## 2. Location and Landscape Setting

2.1 Rode is situated on the Somerset-Wiltshire boundary 18km (12 miles) south of Bath and 8km (5 miles) north-north-east of Frome, situated north of the junction of the A36 (T) main route from Bath to Warminster and the A361 Frome to Trowbridge road. There are two distinct clusters of development, with the medieval church and several old houses situated on the A361 and the main part of the village offset to the north, between the two main roads. The core of the village is at about 60m above sea level, on a fairly level site, with a gentle rise north to Rode Hill and an 80m rounded knoll to the south-east of the village. The River Frome flows immediately to the west of the village, with a historically important crossing point at Rode Bridge. The smaller hamlet of Woolverton lies about 1km west of the bridge. The settlement is located within the oolitic limestone hills of East Somerset.

2.2 The village is surrounded by farmland on all sides with small fields bounded by hedges. To the west, the course of the river is a tree-fringed, meandering channel, bounded by meadows.

2.3 There are areas of modern development on the edges of the main part of the village, on both sides of Rode Hill, to the west of High and Lower Streets, to the east of High Street on Marsh Road and in the grounds of the former brewery. There are also smaller infill developments within the historic core.



*Landscape setting by Rode Bridge*

## A: Rode Village Area

### 3. History and Development



*Rode Hill turnpike route*

3.1 There is some evidence of early settlement with a possible Roman farmstead south of the village, ring ditches south of Rode Common and lynchets (difficult to date accurately) to the west. There are also the earthworks of a 'shrunken village' by the Church of St Lawrence, consisting of platforms, linear banks and ditches. This is of indeterminate date but there is a mention of a manor in the Domesday Book.

3.2 Medieval development, and a degree of prosperity, is shown by the provision of a substantial parish church and the growth of a woollen and cloth industry. There are portions of late medieval houses on High Street that seem to combine workshops and living accommodation and there were a number of water mills along the course of the River Frome, associated with the processing of cloth and dyeing. Important crossing points existed at Rode and Scutts Bridges and the village was situated on packhorse routes between Frome, Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge and Southampton. An important weekly market was marked by a cross in the southern part of High Street. An annual cheese fair was held on Rode Hill and a sheep fair was also notable.

3.3 The routes may have determined the basic layout of the village, at the junction of several of them, and they may have encouraged a migration of the village core away from the Church of St Lawrence and the main road to Trowbridge and Frome (Church Row), to drier ground on the site of the present village. A fire in 1800 may also have hastened the relative decline of the Church Row area. Turnpike improvements in the 17th and 18th centuries resulted in the building of Rode Bridge and the construction of a new link road across Rode Hill, the latter made possible by parliamentary enclosure of the former common in 1792.

3.4 The area was a focus for Nonconformity, visited regularly by John

# A: Rode Village Area

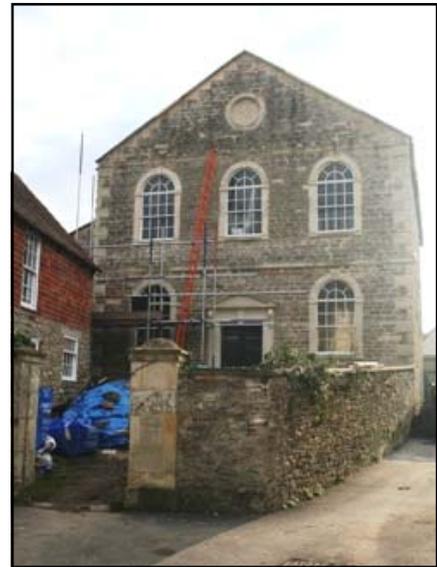
## 3. History and Development

Wesley, with the building of Baptist (1786) and Wesleyan Methodist (1809) chapels and a Wesleyan school (1861). In 1824, a large new church, Christ Church, endowed by Archdeacon Daubeney, was built on Rode Hill, which, with the area between High Street and Lower Street, was part of the Wiltshire parish of North Bradley.

3.5 Rode became a large, prosperous village into the early 19th century, with a large woollen mill at Rode Bridge, employing 50 people in 1840, a dyers at Shawford, and a cloth factory at Scutts Bridge (Rockabella). This was let to James Taylor and Son in the mid 19th century and made brown and blue livery cloths, tweeds and shirting flannels. It was closed in about 1904 due to transport difficulties and competition with larger and more modern operations in the north of England. Mayfield House, at the southern end of High Street, also had a three-storey mill attached.

3.6 Another, more surprising activity, in the 18th century, was the exploitation of two chalybeate springs, complete with a pump room in Lower Street and Rode water was advertised in Bath. There is a first mention of a brewhouse, at the Cross Keys inn, in 1818 and, in 1857, the premises were conveyed to Henry Fussell, who created a substantial brewery. The 19th-century buildings were extended in 1935-7 but the company was taken over in 1962, bottling ceased in 1968 and the Bass distribution centre closed in 1992. The village also had a stone quarry at Scutts Bridge and a brickworks at the junction of the Rode Hill and Frome Roads.

3.7 The pattern of prosperity followed by decline is attested by population figures of 1217 in 1821, 864 in 1861, and a fall to 349 in 1931. The Victorian village, however, benefited from the philanthropic patronage of the main landowner, the Batten-Pools of Rode Manor, and the Reading Rooms were built and opened 1887, in addition to the Silcox Hall. A National School was founded



*Former Methodist Church*



*Former Fussell's Brewery*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 3. History and Development

earlier in 1834. There were at least five inns, a brick yard on Rode Common, two saw pits and a lime kiln, a variety of service providers, as well as a reducing number of agricultural workers.

3.8 In the 20th century, the spelling of the village's name was standardised (earlier spelt "Road"). In 1937 the country boundary was moved north from the village centre and Rode Hill was transferred from Wiltshire to Somerset. The population of the combined parish of Rode/Rode Hill had risen to 732 by 1981. There have been some notable conversions to residential use including Christ Church, which has become Christchurch House, the Baptists' School, Silcock's Hall, the old and new brewery buildings, the Methodists' Chapel and the factory adjoining Mayfield House.

3.9 The social and economic historical influences have created a rich variety of historic buildings, ranging from the largely medieval Church of St Lawrence, some

medieval house cores, a large number of 17th- and early 18th-century middling houses and cottages, several larger gentry houses, other places of worship, smaller cottages and significant remnants of industrial activity. Within the conservation area there are 58 entries in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, accounting for individual buildings or structures (some entries cover more than one building/structure). There are, in addition, 30 other entries outside the designated area, in places such as Shawford and the Frome Road/Church Row area around the Church of St Lawrence.

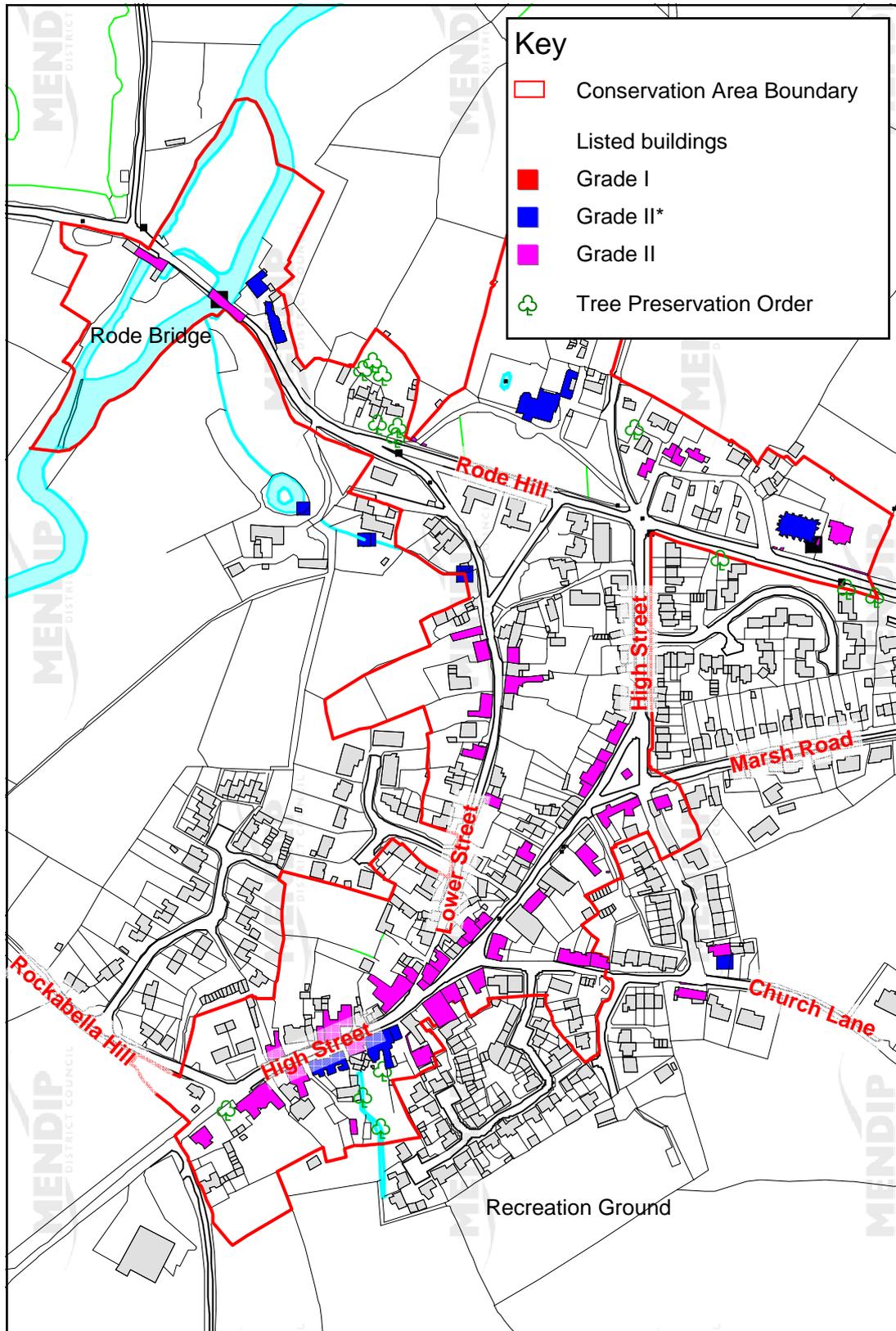
3.10 There are a number of trees within the conservation area that are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), at the south-west end of High Street and along both sides of Rode Hill.



*Reading Rooms*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 3. History and Development



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Ordnance Survey Map showing Statutorily Designated Sites and Features

# A: Rode Village Area

## 4. Character of Rode Village

4.1 The village has a number of physical components: around Rode Bridge and Rode Mill; along Rode Hill and Langham Place; a more coherent urban character along High and Lower Streets and the entry into Church Lane; and a separate cluster along Frome Road. The first three are contained within the original conservation area and the latter is within the newly designated area.

4.2 The High Street core has a large number of historic buildings, often in large groups, with a mixture of mainly 17th- and 18th-century houses, some early 19th-century and a few later 19th-century, with modern development in the form of small infills, backland closes and larger areas at the northern end of High Street and on the western side of Lower Street. These do not seriously compromise the overall

historic character (being reasonably sympathetic in overall form or being hidden from older areas) and, in some cases, they add to the interest and diversity of the village.

4.3 The Rode Mill group comprising Rode Mill, Rode Mill House (locally called the Miller's House) with outbuildings, and Rode Bridge, has a more rural character and, together with a fine landscape of river and water meadows, form a high quality entry to the conservation area. The remainder of the Rode Hill area to the east is a linear progression of large historic houses, an idiosyncratic former church and a more intimate close of houses off the main road.



*High Street*



*Rode Hill & Christchurch House*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 5. Spatial Analysis

5.1 Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside, and within conservation areas (usually the historic core) there are unique progressions of spaces with varying degrees of enclosure and exposure. These perceptions depend upon the height and density of buildings, their position relative to the highway, the character of boundaries, and the dominance or dearth of trees. Views out to countryside or into the village core are also important, as are the effects of topography, i.e. the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths.

5.2 These factors are all facets of **townscape**, a description of the mixture of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the village environment, using three elements:

- The sequence of views and events obtained in passing through an area;
- The feelings of relative exposure and enclosure;

- The important details such as colour, texture, scale, style, personality and the myriad of little details that make up the local distinctiveness of the area.

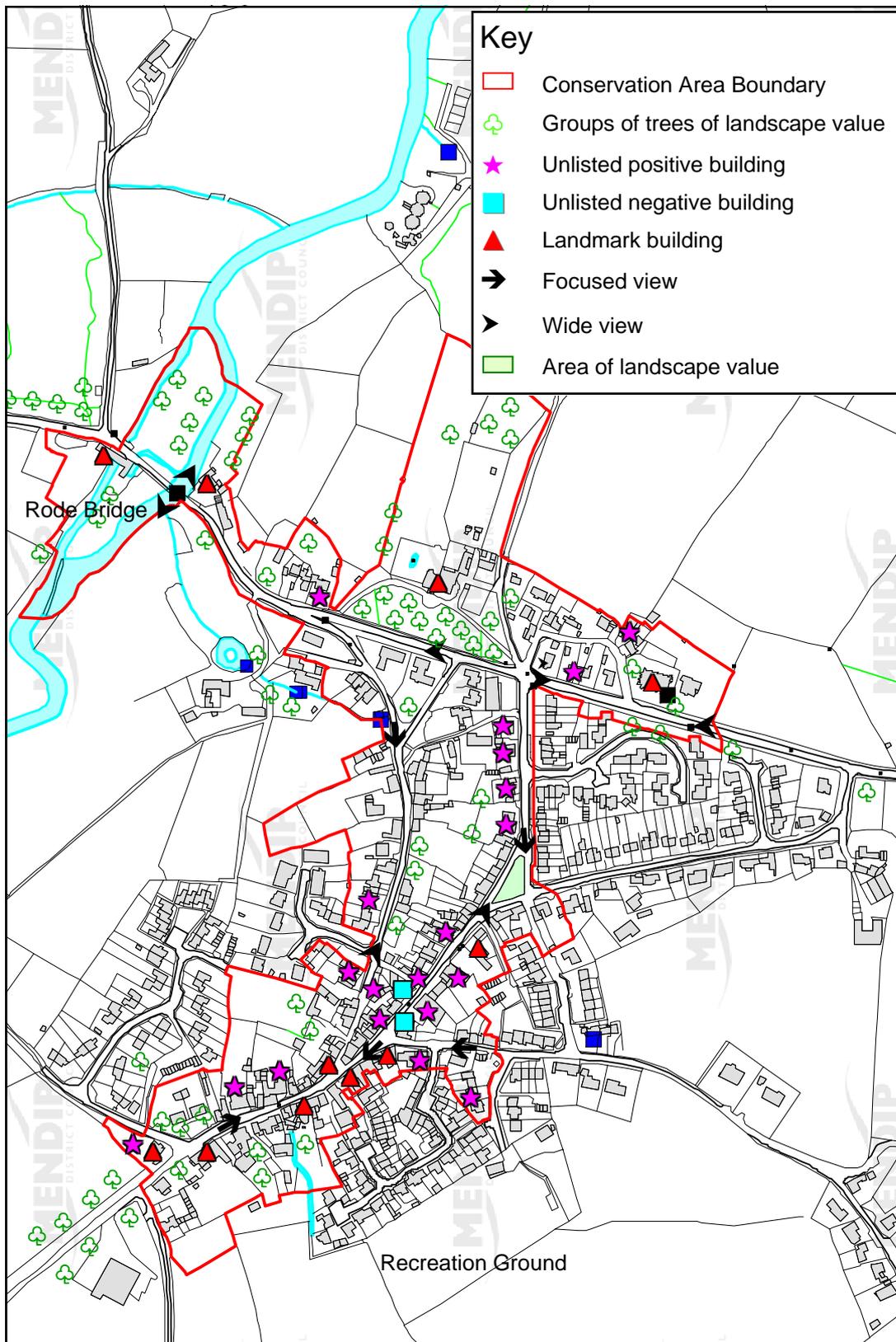
5.3 Rode has an interesting plan form with two separate clusters of development at Church Row (linear, along the Frome Road) and on High and Lower Streets. This area is also linear but there are focal points of buildings at the junctions with Marsh Road (where there is a triangular green and the War Memorial); a widening out of High Street at the junction with Church Lane; and a dense cluster of buildings where Lower Street runs into High Street at a very sharp angle. Here, Corner House marks the entry with its tall, three-storey façade. Thus, the main part of the village, in spite of its basic linearity, has a nucleated form, due to its being at the centre of a pattern of lanes and the density and variety of its buildings.



*Corner House, High & Lower Streets*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 5. Spatial Analysis



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Ordnance Survey Map showing Spatial Analysis

# A: Rode Village Area

## 5. Spatial Analysis

5.4 Rode Hill forms a lower-density east-west link between Rode Bridge and the Frome Road with a link to the top ends of Lower and High Streets. The overall plan form is dispersed with one nucleus and two lesser, linear areas.

5.5 It is possible to bring these characteristics and other townscape details to life by describing a route, or transect, through the village. Routes from any of the main entry points would be instructive but the chosen one is from the east, from Church Lane into High Street; south-west to the extremity of the conservation area at Merfield Lodge; a return up High Street to Rode Hill; west down to Rode Bridge, thence east along Langham Place to Christchurch House. The return to High Street is along Lower Street.

5.6 Church Lane is a mixture of modern development and sporadic historic buildings, notably the former almshouses on the north side which tightly hug the road line and show many of the local vernacular architectural details. Opposite, the modern Old Brewery development is a pleasant enclave with a good view over the former brewery buildings, marked by prominent red-brick chimneys.

5.7 The lane curves slightly and falls down to the level of High Street. Two historic buildings either side of the junction frame a view of stone cottages and houses on the northern side of the street. The continuous row stops the view and helps define a triangular space, created by the splaying of the building lines on the southern, Church Lane side. Turning south-west (left), there is a dramatic change of scale and character on the left, south side, firstly with the major visual impact of the tall Tudor Revival Reading Rooms with their prominent gable and busy skyline; then the lower, two-storey Cross Keys public house, and then another major element, the tall chimney



*Church Lane, the former almshouses*



*High Street, looking south-west*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 5. Spatial Analysis



*Southfield House's porch, Old Cross House and distant view of Merfield House's Lodge*

and large main block of the former brewery. Being set back off the main building line, the chimney is seen first, followed by the other buildings through a gated yard entrance. A busy Victorian stone and brick building with blocked twin round arched windows adds to the visual richness. As a complete contrast in colour and style the former Methodist Chapel is hidden away off the street in a quiet precinct.

5.8 High Street then narrows and performs two shallow curves, as well as dropping down before rising again towards Mayfield House. Building lines on both sides follow the road and effects of partial closure are created by frontages on the outside of the shallow curves. On the north, Old George House is the exception to the general run of parallel rows, being set in an L-plan with a courtyard and garden to the road. On the south, a tall, three-storey house with a smooth Bath Stone ashlar façade demands attention. Southfield House's front curves subtly with the road line and its projecting semi-circular porch gives the perfect frame to an expanding view uphill, past the Victorian Gothic Primary School to the large mass of Mayfield House and the definite eye-catchers of the entrance gates and Lodge to Merfield House. One tall beech tree on the north side, south of No.1 High Street, is an important foil to the urbanity of the village core. There are long views down rural lanes beyond the conservation area boundary, with more significant trees northwards up Rockabella Hill.



*View back up High Street with a prominent brewery chimney*

5.9 The return up High Street first shows the pleasing effects of the rise, fall and curve of the road, with the tall brewery buildings showing up dramatically on the up-slope and the Reading Rooms seen in sharp perspective. There is another notable townscape feature in the form of the tall, thin return elevation of Corner House, marking the entry of Lower Lane into High Street. There are views of a wider High Street to the right and a narrow slot up Lower Street to the left. The triangular

# A: Rode Village Area

## 5. Spatial Analysis

space by the Church Lane junction is also very evident, with the splayed setting of Nos.22 and 24 and 26 defining the shorter sides of the triangle. There is a surprising narrow passage, Little Shard, on the north-west side, through to Lower Street.

5.10 Beyond the junction the visual tension and overall architectural quality slacken, with later 19th-century buildings and a more informal layout on the north-west side, with a wider lane, Big Shard, falling down to Lower Street and cottages set at right angles to the street line and gardens becoming more noticeable. The townscape then steps up several notches, with another strongly marked corner on the north-west (presaging a long row of buildings) and, opposite, the attractive group of the Baptist Church, elevated and set back in its burial ground, and the 1839 'Gothick' former school room.

5.11 There follows another major spatial contrast in the presence of a wide, grassed, triangular green at the junction with Marsh Road. The centre is the setting for the village War Memorial and the edges are firmly marked by historic properties to the west and south and by modern development to the north-east. There are distant views of the twin spires of Christchurch House to the north-east but first, there is a gentle rise to Rode Hill.

5.12 At the junction with High Street, there are good views both ways, west past the grand entry into Langham House and its cypress and beech hedge down towards the river; and uphill towards trees and the Christchurch House spires. Downhill, another, grander, gated entrance to Langham House is followed by a sharp curve and steep descent to Rode Bridge. Rode Mill House and its stables and gazebo show up well on the inside of the curve and then the long, narrow passage over the bridge reveals the river channel, trees and green meadows, with the tall bulk of the Rode Mill on the other bank.



*Triangular space at Church Lane junction*



*Village green at Marsh Road junction*



*Rode Mill House and Stables*

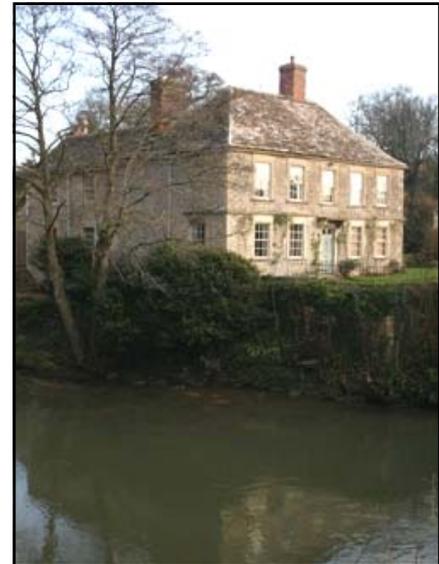
# A: Rode Village Area

## 5. Spatial Analysis

5.13 Returning east, Rode Mill House is seen attractively set above the river and the associated buildings rise above the sharp climb and curve of the road. Back at the junction with High Street there is a short diversion north to the side of Langham House (with views of ornamental trees, parkland and a long boundary wall), into the hidden precinct of Langham Place, which curves round back to the main road. There is a splendid sudden view of the spires of Christchurch House, enveloped by trees.

5.14 Another foray westwards on Rode Hill, past the High Street junction, leads into the narrow Halfpenny Row, with a descent into Lower Street, the junction being marked by a small green, trees and informal arrangements of cottages and modern houses. Suddenly, the character changes, with groups and rows of historic buildings on both sides. The street then becomes less urban, with gaps and mixtures of older properties and modern infill. One highlight is the urbane block of Chelsea Villa, set at right angles to the road line and with a handsome ramped wall and gate piers. There are then views of the backs of some of the High Street houses, raised up on the left (east), with a passage and then a narrower entry through to the higher level (Big and Little Shard). Looking back north, Langham House shows up well on the skyline. Finally the Red Lion and Corner House block swings boldly across the view to strongly define the entry back into High Street.

5.15 There are a number of landmark buildings, notably the Reading Rooms; the chimney and main block of the former Fussell's Brewery; Southfield and Mayfield Houses at the end of High Street and the nearby Merfield Lodge; Langham House from Lower Street; the Corner House; the Baptist Church and former school room; Christchurch House; Rode Mill House, stables and gazebo, and Rode Mill. It is significant that many of these are set at the entries into the village.



*Rode Mill House from Rode Bridge*



*Lower Street - Sheriff Hales (to left), Brooke House (to right)*



*Lower Street, looking into High Street*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 6. Character Analysis

6.1 Rode has three distinctive character areas, formed by differing historical factors and the effects of topography.

**6.2 High and Lower Streets and Church Lane:** this is a medieval and 17th-century focal point consisting of larger houses, smaller cottages and public buildings such as the two Nonconformist chapels, Reading Rooms, together with the village school, shops (with the Post Office remaining), a former brewery and a small number of other businesses. It seems to represent a deliberate relocation of the village core away from the earlier focus around the Church of St Lawrence on the main Frome Road. It has considerable architectural and historic character with some building details influenced by the 'Cotswold' vernacular style and others related to 'polite' architecture from Bath.

**6.3 Rode Bridge river crossing:** this is an informal grouping of several historic buildings, of differing types, in an attractive riverside setting. Rode Mill has been converted to a restaurant but Rode Mill House and its fine quality associated buildings are in residential use.

**6.4 Rode Hill:** an early 19th-century road improvement with a series of large gentry houses on the northern side: Langham House set within its own landscaped grounds; Christchurch House, a successful conversion of a large church, and Daubeney House, the former clergy house. Langham Place is an unexpected quiet close of early 19th-century houses, sheltered from the main road by a substantial Victorian-style short terrace and two detached houses all built in the 1930s for brewery workers. The terrace incorporates windows and other stonework from the ruined Rockabella House; hence the Victorian appearance. The southern side has sporadic modern development in the form of detached houses with the modern village hall and Fairfield housing development either side of the junction with High Street.



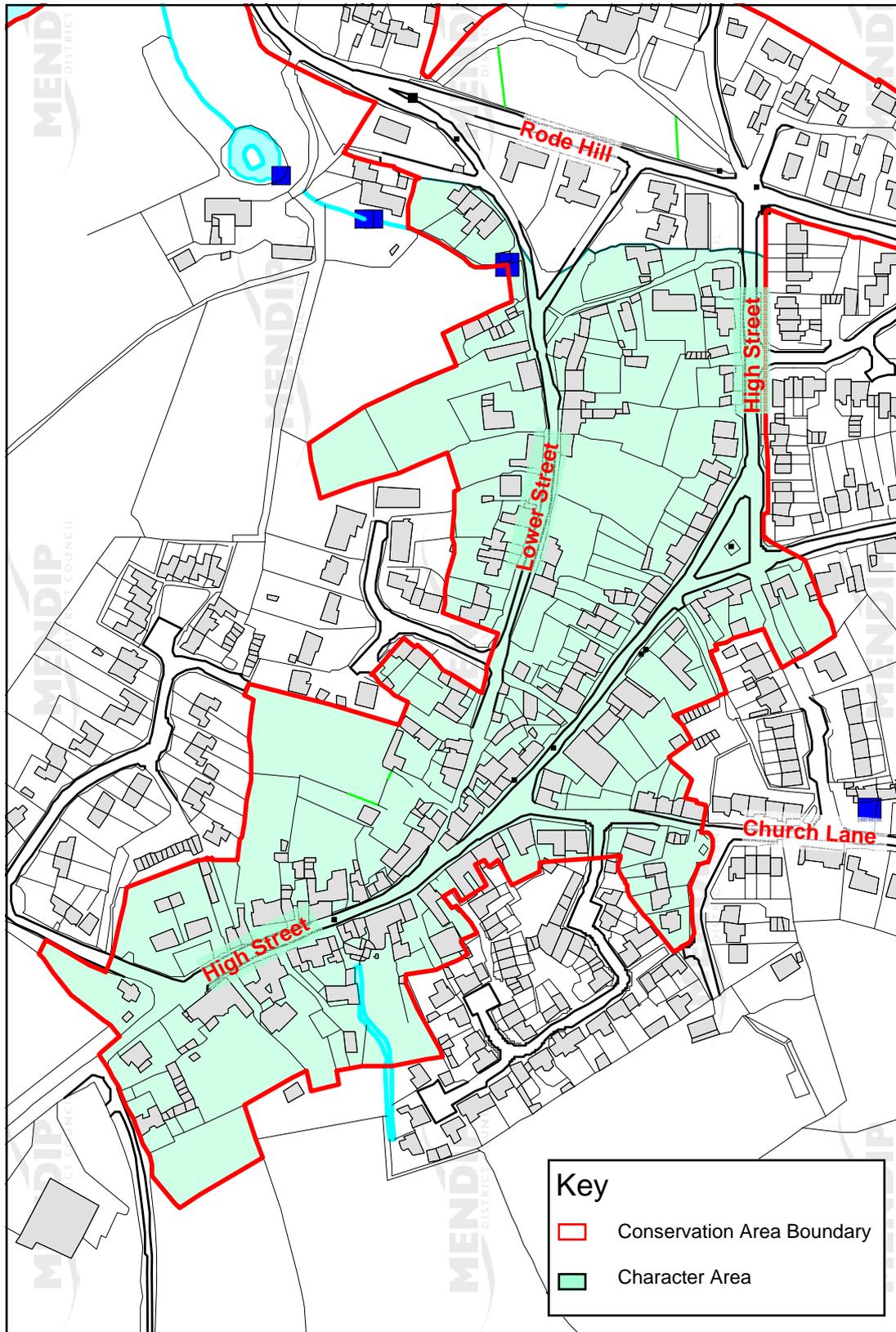
*High Street, varying architectural details*



*Langham Place*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 6. Character Analysis

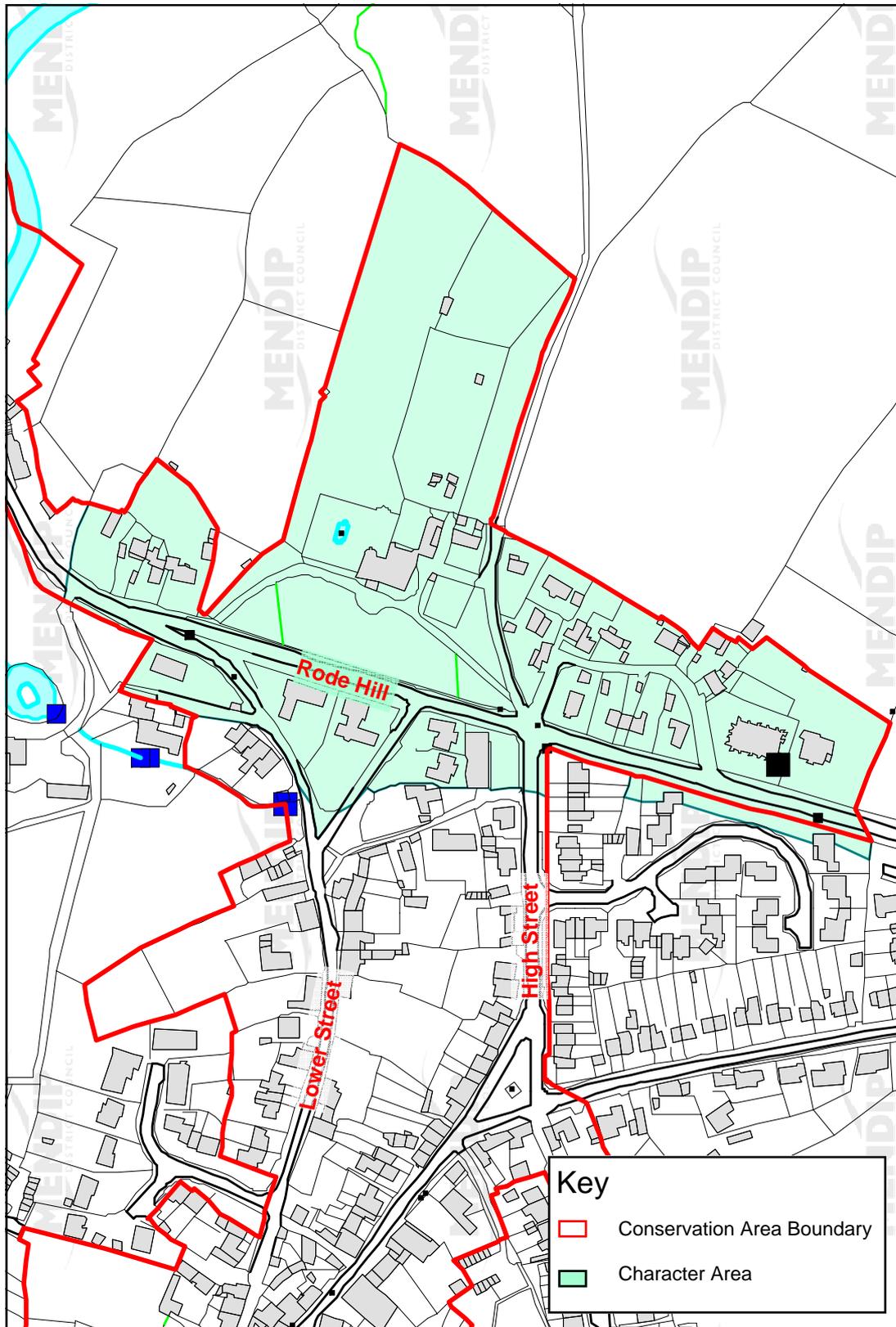


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OS Map: High Street, Lower Street and Church Lane character area

# A: Rode Village Area

## 6. Character Analysis

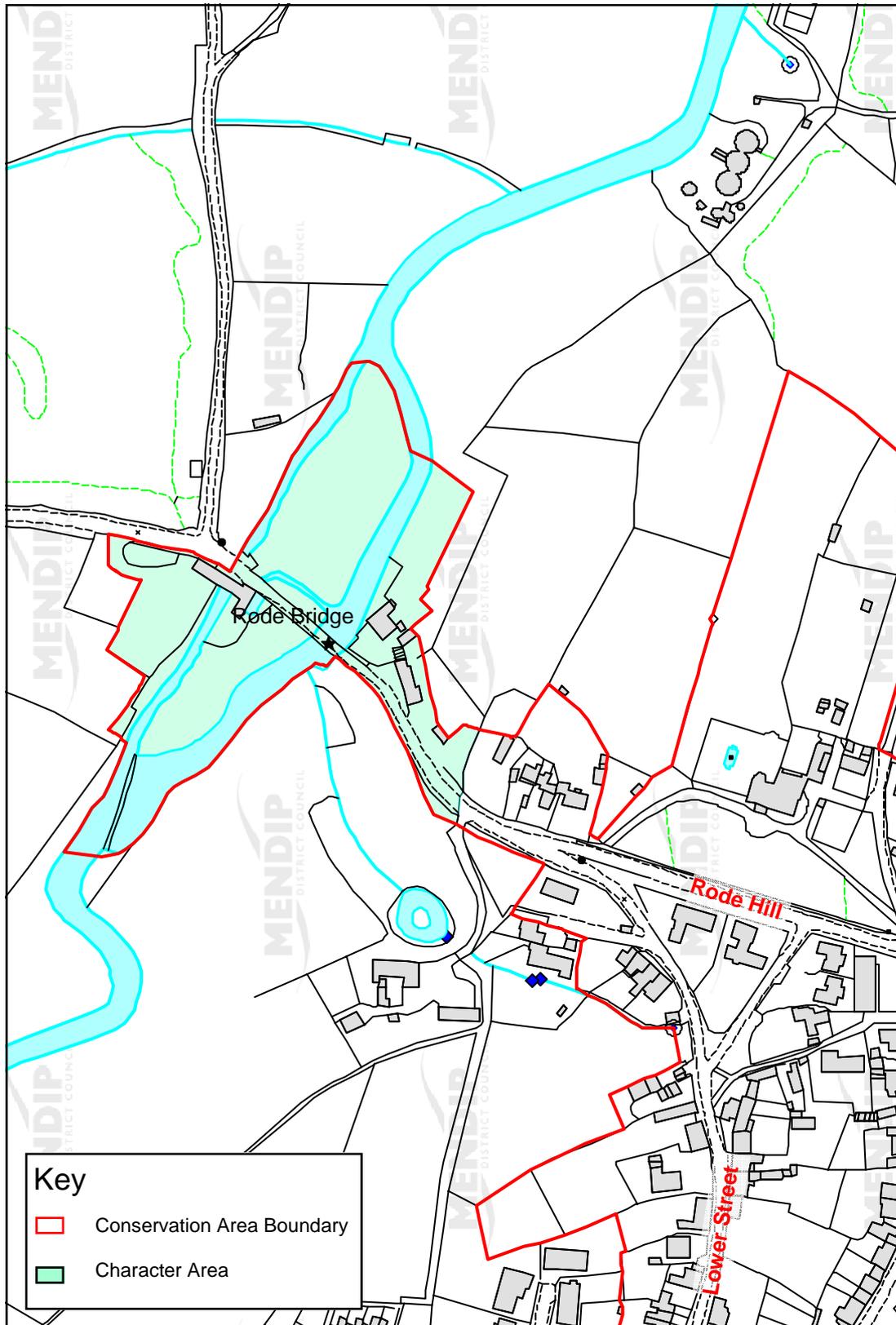


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OS Map: Rode Hill character area

# A: Rode Village Area

## 6. Character Analysis



OS Map: Rode Bridge character area

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## A: Rode Village Area

### 7. Local Building Patterns

(There are drawings of groups of buildings and details included as an appendix to this document).

7.1 There is a variety of building types, styles and details in the conservation area, ranging from late medieval and 16th-century merchants' houses (notably Nos.23 and 25 High Street, in origin an early 15th-century row of four or five units, each with a small open hall and first floor chamber, now considerably altered); a larger number of 17th-century stone houses of some quality (many refronted and altered subsequently); a small but significant number of detached gentry houses of late 18th-century and early 19th-century date; and smaller early 19th-century individual or semi-detached houses with Classical detailing and symmetrical layouts and architectural features. There were (or are) specialised public buildings, such as two Nonconformist chapels; Christ Church of 1824; a Reading Rooms; Victorian Primary School; and earlier (1755) almshouses in Church Lane.

7.2 The village also has interesting survivals from its 19th-century industrial and commercial activities: Rode Mill and an attached mill block at Mayfield House; the fascinating Fussell's Brewery site on High Street (an early 18th-century brew house and major later rebuilding and expansion); and evidence for a substantial number of inns and shops.

7.3 There are a number of vernacular 17th-century and early 18th-century buildings displaying typical (for the locality and the wider East Mendip and Cotswold areas) details such as stone gable ends facing the street and the use of attics lit by gable windows. Stone-mullioned windows seem to have survived surprisingly late towards the end of the 18th century, with a dated 1777 example on Frome Road. Vernacular houses seem to have incorporated some of the characteristics of contemporary polite architecture from the latter half of the 17th century onwards, namely a regular



*Nos.34-38 High Street, vernacular details*



*Southfield House's urbane classicism*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns



*Contrasts in plot size and shape: High Street*

disposition of window openings and, in some cases, symmetry around a central doorway. Plans were typically two or three rooms in a row with annexes in the form of side or rear outshuts.

7.4 Polite, Classical architecture appeared at the end of the 18th century, undoubtedly influenced by nearby Bath. Facades became more regular, with sash windows, central doorcases with a flat or segmental, bracketed canopy, and features such as parapets and moulded cornices or string courses. Plans are more frequently double pile and central hallway types. Into the 19th century Classical details became more refined and delicate with characteristic blank segmental arches around windows, moulded architraves, pedimented or fan-lighted doors and columned porches and porticos. Greek Revival detail is seen at Merfield House, Georgian 'Gothick' at the Baptist Church and an individual, wild, early Gothic Revival at Christchurch House. The later 19th century saw more academically correct Gothic details on the Primary School and Tudor Revival on the Reading Rooms.

7.5 Most of the historic development is in the form of long, organic (i.e. informally planned) rows strung along High and Lower Streets, set directly on the back edge of the highway. Front spaces exist only where a building or group is set back slightly or at an angle to the general road line (seen at the southern end of High Street); where a specialised function requires them, for example at the two existing and former Nonconformist chapels and Christchurch House; or where the larger gentry houses are set within a garden. Plots seem to be rectangular in shape with no apparent regularity or evidence of planning. Pavements exist throughout much of the village.

7.6 Modern infill development has tended to be set back behind small front gardens or set in more suburban layouts behind or



*Contrasts in plot size and shape: Daubeney House*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns

separate from the old core. The Old Brewery on the south side of High Street and Church Lane is a more sympathetic development in that its overall density and layout relates more successfully to adjacent historic buildings, although its materials and details do not emulate local patterns.

**7.7 Walls.** A local Forest Marble, a shelly limestone, is the prevalent building material, of a grey or light buff colour and a fairly course texture, possibly from the quarry at Scutts Bridge. It appears in dressed form on features like corner quoins and door and window surrounds. A browner rubble may be Cornbrash, also present in the locality. Bath Stone ashlar, of a marked buttery or pale brown colour, is also very evident on most of the larger gentry houses, such as Merfield, Langham and Daubeney Houses; smaller early 19th-century villas such as No.12 Lower Street (Chelsea Villa) and public buildings such as the former Christ Church. Most vernacular buildings are constructed of local stone, in coursed and squared rubble, or, more frequently, in thin slats of random rubble.

**7.8 Smooth render** is seen at No.4 High Street (Mayfield House) and at No.16 (Southfield House) with scribed lines to represent ashlar jointing, and roughcast render at No.23 High Street. Brick is used rarely; a rich red (semi-engineering?) type on the gable ends of the Cross Keys and the former Fussell's Brewery; on the southern annex of No.17 High Street; at No.15 Langham Place and painted at No.5. The former brewery's entrance has a pedimented structure with brick details and yellow brick is used on the gate piers. The other former brewery building higher up High Street, now 'Chocolate on Chocolate', has a combination of stone rubble with brick dressings

**7.9 Windows & Doors.** Styles and details vary according to the age and status of buildings. There are many houses with ogee- or hollow-moulded, stone-mullioned



*Local limestone, coursed and roughly dressed rubble*



*Bath Stone ashlar and render with ashlar dressings*



*Former brewery, brick details*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns



*Cross Keys, mullioned windows with labels over*



*Mullions, casements and sashes, High Street*



*Sashes in moulded architraves and round-headed window with keystone and imposts, No.26 High Street*

windows, in combinations of two or three lights. These usually have a drip mould with labels over or a continuous mould or weathered string course running across several groups of openings (e.g. No.33 High Street). The lights may be glazed by leaded lights, metal or wooden opening casements or narrow sashes (inserted later). With the influence of Classicism, a drip mould in the form of a cornice may be evident (e.g. Nos.1-5 Church Lane). The Reading Rooms have a Tudor Revival, large mullion and transom window and the Primary School has a row of cusped Gothic Revival lights. There are several manifestations of a small oval or round window, usually with a stone surround and appearing in gables, a detail seen in South and East Somerset. The return elevation of Corner House has a circular window at its highest level.

7.10 Side-hung casements are evident with varying numbers and patterns of glazing bars and with 15 pane types at the Mayfield House mill (removed at the time of writing, as the building was under major repair). A more common window type is the vertically-hung sash with varying numbers of glazing bars (and hence panes) above and below the horizontal meeting rail. There are 12- and 16-pane examples and early Victorian types with marginal glazing (additional bars near the edges). The Baptist Church has 'Gothick' intersecting bars and the former Methodist Chapel has round-headed sashes. No.26 High Street has a round-headed window with an expressed keystone and impost blocks and there are blocked twin round-headed windows by the former brewery entrance. A finely detailed three-part Venetian window is to be found on the Rode Mill House gazebo. Projections, in the form of square or canted bay windows, are rare, although there is a semi-circular bow at Langham House.

7.11 Window surrounds are in the form of plain, flat, dressed stones, sometimes with chamfered, bolection- or bead-moulded

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns

edges to the main wall face, or moulded architraves. No.16 Lower Street has projecting cornices supported by consoles or brackets. There are a small number of wooden lintels, for example at No.59 High Street.

7.12 A variety of window types may be seen together on one façade: mullions, casements and sashes at No.65 High Street and Forge Cottage; sashes and mullions at Nos.13 and 15 High Street; sashes with mullioned basement windows at The Frith; and sashes and casements, sharing overall details at Nos.11 and 39 High Street.

7.13 Doors and doorcases show equal variety with vertically planked doors (some with cover strips or expressed rivet heads) on High Street and Church Lane. Former industrial buildings, such as the Mayfield House mill, and buildings such as coach houses, have double planked doors set within stone segmental arches. Diagonal planking is an attractive feature at the Mayfield House mill, the Reading Rooms and Primary School. Other doors are in the form of four, six or nine panels, sunk, raised or fielded, often with the top lights glazed. Rectangular transom lights or semi-circular fanlights may also be evident on early 19th-century buildings.

7.14 Door surrounds are often, like window openings, plain, but the Red Lion has bead moulding and an expressed keystone. No.35 High Street has a moulded wooden surround. The former Methodist Chapel has a stone pediment on brackets over its entrance. The village has many examples of flat stone slab canopies supported on shaped stone brackets; Nos.19 and 21 High Street have segmental hoods; No.5 Langham Place has a wooden canopy on wooden brackets, while the nearby No.11 has wrought iron supports.

7.15 Porches are fairly uncommon, but there are some interesting variations, with



*Classical door surround & planked door, Red*



*Typical plain window surrounds & stone canopy*



*Italianate porch to Merfield Lodge*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns



*Pantiles, High Street*



*Gothic dormers to Rode Primary School*



*Tapered, rectangular chimney pots*

round arches at Mayfield House; a semi-circular stone type with Tuscan columns at Southfield House; a four-columned Tuscan portico at Langham House; 'Gothick' details at Daubeney House; and Greek Revival at Merfield House. Humbler examples include wooden columns at No.12 Church Lane; a late 19th-century gabled porch with glass roof, and cast iron panelled sides at No.39 High Street; a pantiled pent roof at No.38 High Street; and a decorative wrought iron porch to No.15 Langham Place.

**7.16 Roofs.** Most roofs are of compass type, with the ridges running parallel to the street, with coped verges. There are a small number of 16th- and 17th-century large front gables, also coped. These are seen at Nos.34-38 High Street and No.21 High Street, and The Corner House has a chimney stack rising up through the centre of a gable. There is a pleasing variety of materials in the village, ranging from stone tiles, possibly from Forest Marble strata or from Bath Stone quarries (e.g. Nos.1 and 3 High Street and Rode Mill House); clay plain tiles, with fish-scale band decoration at the Primary School and the Reading Rooms; and slate on many of the higher status and 19th-century buildings (Langham House, Mayfield House and The Old Rectory). The predominant roofing material is the clay pantile, with Double and Triple Roman varieties. The reddish-brown pantiles probably originated from Glastonbury or Bridgwater.

**7.17 Chimney stacks** are important skyline features, with ashlar stone or brick stacks usually positioned at the ends of a roof. The ashlar stacks are often embellished by moulded caps and bases, whilst brick types are usually plain, with a few oversailing courses at the top. Pots are circular thrown clay with a few grander types, such as the square, fluted, tapering and corniced examples at The Old Cross, on High Street.

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns

7.18 Dormer windows are fairly uncommon but hipped casements and sashes are seen on High Street and the Primary School has four gabled dormers enriched by Gothic detailing with Y tracery. Verges and eaves may be stone-coped or there may be iron rain water goods attached to a soffit board. At Nos.10-14 High Street, the iron guttering is supported by eight lion-head brackets and the head of the down pipe is decorated.

7.19 **Boundaries.** Boundary walls form an important feature of the conservation area, usually in coursed and squared or random rubble construction, with flat stone, weathered or moulded caps. They vary in height between low courtyard walls at the two Nonconformist chapels and higher walls, up to three metres, at Merfield House. The latter's entrance from the end of High Street has a pair of bold, rusticated piers with a coved and moulded top and ball piers, complimented by ramped-up walls and an Italianate lodge. Other gate piers are usually of ashlar or dressed stone, with moulded caps and urns at Langham House; urns adjacent to No.67 High Street; simpler pyramidal caps at the Baptist Church; and Gothic cross-gabled caps and pinnacles at Christchurch and Daubeney Houses. The entrance to the former brewery has stone balls on its gate piers.

7.20 **Other Details.** The conservation area has a number of small but important assets that greatly add to its interest. There are several former shopfronts of quality, mainly dating from the mid to late 19th century: twin twelve-pane windows with a central door at No.1 Lower Street; a twenty-pane window at No.21 High Street (The Corner House); two sixteen-pane windows with flanking pilasters, a fascia board, cornice and central door at No.18 (The Chimes); two twelve-pane windows with a central panelled door with transom light and a pent hood on brackets overall on No.63 High Street; other examples at No.25 Lower Street (Brooke House), No.23 High Street



*Gate piers: Classical at Chelsea Villa*



*Gate piers: Gothic at Daubeney House*



*No.23 High Street, former shopfront*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns



*Ironwork: traditional finger post*



*Ironwork: gates to Langham House*



*Important trees on tennis court site, High Street*

and No.25. The latter is unusual, with a shopfront in the form of a canted bay with a central door and a sashed window either side.

7.21 There is a variety of wrought and cast ironwork, with elaborate scrolled gates at Langham House's main entry; gates with poppy-head finials and a lamp overthrow at Christchurch House; a weathervane at the Reading Rooms; wrought iron sign brackets at No.19 Lower Street (the Red Lion) and No.17 Lower Street; two lead and cast iron pumps at the northern end of Lower Street; several Somerset County Council finger posts with pyramidal finials, and a cast iron milestone on Rode Hill. There is 19th-century scrolled ironwork cresting on the low boundary wall at the former tennis courts at the western end of High Street, now a new housing site. Other details include a 'Gothick' conservatory at Daubeney House; several date stones and inscriptions on buildings; a wall post box set between two sashes at No.33 High Street; the clock on the Reading Rooms; a painted 'trompe l'oeil' window on No.18 High Street; the remains of a trade sign ('wine') on the Cross Keys, and the red county boundary stones adjacent to the Corner House and in the refuge on Rode Bridge.

**7.22 Trees and Green Spaces.** The High Street area is characterised by long runs of houses on the highway edge and there are individual trees or groups only at the western end; behind Southfield House (protected by a Tree Preservation Order) around the former tennis court; and along the rural lanes out of the village, Straight Lane and Rockabella Hill, where trees associated with Merfield House are visible. The large green space at the junction of High Street and Marsh Road is a visual foil to the urbanity of the village centre and small front gardens begin to make a contribution north of the Church Lane junction up to Rode Hill and on both sides of Lower Street. The latter's junctions with

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns

Farthing and Halfpenny Rows take on the character of a small green space.

7.23 Rode Hill and the river corridor are more obviously embellished by trees, with lush riverside planting; a TPO group around Nos.5-9 Rode Hill; other small TPOs on the southern side opposite Christchurch and Daubeney Houses; mature trees in front of Roseland House and specimen trees around Langham House.

7.24 **Surfaces.** There are a number of historic stone-sett and paved-slab surfaces on High Street, notably by the side of the Reading Rooms, in front of the neighbouring No.22, and by No.16B High Street (Poppy Cottage). These are probably of Forest Marble. There are also stone kerb edges in several places on High Street. Most other surfaces are of tarmac or concrete slabs and the Old Brewery development has coloured tegula paviments, which are a definite contrast to traditional materials.

7.25 **Contribution of unlisted buildings.** Despite the high density of Listed Buildings, there are a number of unlisted buildings that are either of visual quality or have group value, or both. These include:

- Nos.1-3 Orneage Close, a stone mid-19th-century row with rubble, dressed stone details, slate and pantile roofs, sashes (some replaced with uPVC);
- Orneage House, on the corner of Church Lane and High Street, a handsome early -mid-19th-century house, with a symmetrical frontage, rubble with dressed details, slate roof, the central doorway has a stone slab hood with shaped brackets;
- The Lodge to Merfield House, a heady 19th-century brew of Victorian Italianate, coursed and squared Bath Stone and ashlar dressings, round-headed windows, expressed quoins and



*Important trees at Rode Hill*



*Traditional paving materials, High Street*



*Orneage House*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns



*Merfield Lodge*



*Nos. 27 & 29 High Street*



*Rode Post Office*

keystones, a bold end chimney and a porch on square piers, together with a pair of splendid rusticated and ball-finished gate piers and a sturdy wall at either side, ramped up to the piers (there is a modern extension to the rear);

- No.17 High Street, 19th-century render and pantile, with a Flemish Bond brick annex, twin sash units, group value;
- Nos.7 and 9 High Street, rubble and pantiles; No.9 has a mullioned window with drip mould and labels and has an attractive side elevation up a narrow entry; No.7 is a partial rebuild but some old stonework; group value;
- Nos.27 and 29 High Street (Holly Cottage), a pair of mid-19th-century houses, rubble and dressed stone details, pantiles, marginally-glazed sashes and central round-headed pair, segmental hoods over paired doorways; group value;
- 'Chocolate on Chocolate', adjacent to No.28 High Street, a former brewery workshop and storage, late Victorian rubble with brick trim, 'industrial' style, with details like gablets with loading doors, cambered brick arches to openings and big iron ventilators on the roof ridge; handsome and an interesting building type;
- No.30A High Street and the Post Office (former bakery), rubble and sashes, large (modern?) buttress, ground floor mullioned window with labelled drip mould;
- K6 telephone box to north, near the Baptist Chapel;
- Japonica House opposite, rubble, dressed stone details, mid-Victorian, gabled Gothic Revival porch with fish-scale tiles, rendered part to High Street; also the adjacent Laburnum and

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns

Magnolia Cottages, with rubble and dressed stone details, pantiles and sashes; all of group value;

- The former Baptist Church school room, dated 1839, a single storey 'Gothick' building with arched central door and two pointed windows with Y-tracery glazing bars; intrinsic merit and group value (see drawings);
- A group of early-mid-19th-century houses on the north-west side: Nos.43, (Prospect Cottage) big casements with moulded architraves, pantiles, No.45, mansard pantiled roof, and Nos.49-55, with an important corner elevation and a long street elevation, all of group value;
- Several individual houses at the top end of High Street: No.67, (Irondale), twin canted bays, Victorian, rendered annex; a pair of urned piers adjacent; No.69, two-storey canted bays, late-Victorian, with an interesting single-storey Bath Stone ashlar coach house (possibly older); No.71A, (Dover Cottage), render and one canted bay with elaborate capitals to the window pilasters and sashes; and No.73, (Fairview);
- No.7 Rode Hill and Roseland House: No.7 has a coped gable to the road with kneelers and casements and Roseland House is late-19th-century stone and pantiles, with long casements and a central doorway with a modern canopy over;
- The Stables, Langham Place, Victorian rubble and pantiles, camber-headed windows;
- Nos.15-19 Rode Hill, an Italianate "Victorian" designed row (c.1930), with symmetry and round-headed windows; of architectural merit;



*Nos.49-55 High Street*



*Coach house to No.69 High Street*



*No.67 High Street*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 7. Local Building Patterns



*The Stables, Langham Place*



*No.2 Lower Street (former Silcox Hall)*



*The Mill car park*

- No.11 Lower Street, rubble and dressed stone, pantiles, late-19th-century sashes;
- Nos.7 and 9 Lower Street, rubble, dressed stone and pantiles, group value;
- No.2 Lower Street, the former Silcox Hall, a recently refurbished house, with a symmetrical block with sashes and a door hood on shaped brackets and a Victorian Gothic wing at right angles with paired lancets, rudimentary plate tracery and a pointed arch to the door.

### 7.27 Extent of intrusion or damage.

The conservation area has an overall consistent quality and modern infill has tended to be neutral or, in many cases, sympathetic to the general character. The Fairfield development comes into the first category, being a reasonable accompaniment to neighbouring historic buildings; and conversions like the former Fussell's brewery scheme are assets to the historic core, combining careful conservation with some bold new elements.

7.28 Rode Hill has some modern infill, with two rather out-of-place 1930s' detached houses on the north side and well screened larger houses on the south side. The Mill car park, when full, is visible from the Bridge and has an impact on the landscape.

7.29 There are, however, a number of problems related to individual buildings or the public realm. There are poles and wires and obtrusive lampposts in Church Lane and poles and wires at the west end of High Street. The yard south of 'Chocolate on Chocolate' is rather bare and has no boundary to the road. There is a stark concrete garage adjacent to No.35 High Street that also breaks the continuity of buildings.

7.30 Several unlisted buildings of character and value have been compromised by poorly detailed replacement windows in timber and uPVC.

# A: Rode Village Area

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## 7. Local Building Patterns

**7.31 Existence of Neutral Areas.** The only areas that might be seen to be neither assets or detriments are the surrounds to the Village Hall and the large green around the War Memorial. The latter might benefit from some additional tree-planting to give it more focus, as well as enhancing general amenity.

**7.32 Condition of Built Fabric.** The conservation area's buildings seem to be, on the whole, in good condition, with evidence of careful repair and refurbishment. Two important buildings, the former Methodist Chapel and Mayfield House and its attached former mill, are currently undergoing comprehensive refurbishment and alteration, protected by their Listed Building status and careful negotiation and supervision by professional advisors.

**7.33** The parapet of Rode Bridge, on the large cutwater, is cause for concern, with loose coping stones and a young sycamore growing out of damaged stone and render.



*The village green*

# A: Rode Village Area

## 8. Synthesis of Appraisal

8.1 The Rode Village Area of the Conservation Area has an overall coherence and quality created by local building traditions and the availability of a limited range of local building materials. There is an interplay between post-medieval 'Cotswold' vernacular and polite Classical architecture, with one or two 19th-century stylistic revivals added. Buildings, boundaries, details and trees combine to create a rich and complex townscape, with several distinctive sub areas influenced by differing historical factors and building uses.

8.2 There is a strong visual contrast between the dense corridor of development along much of High Street and parts of Lower Street and the relatively low-density development along Rode Hill and the River Frome crossing to the west. In this area are several large historic buildings set in semi-natural landscape or large gardens and trees are an important asset. There are wider views along the river corridor or to open countryside, whereas the density of the village core restricts views out.

8.3 The historic core has few major problems apart from the visual clutter created by poles and wires; one or two buildings 'in transition' undergoing alterations or awaiting development; some loss of historic detail on unlisted buildings of character and group value; and a number of spaces in the public realm that might benefit from improved boundary definition or planting.

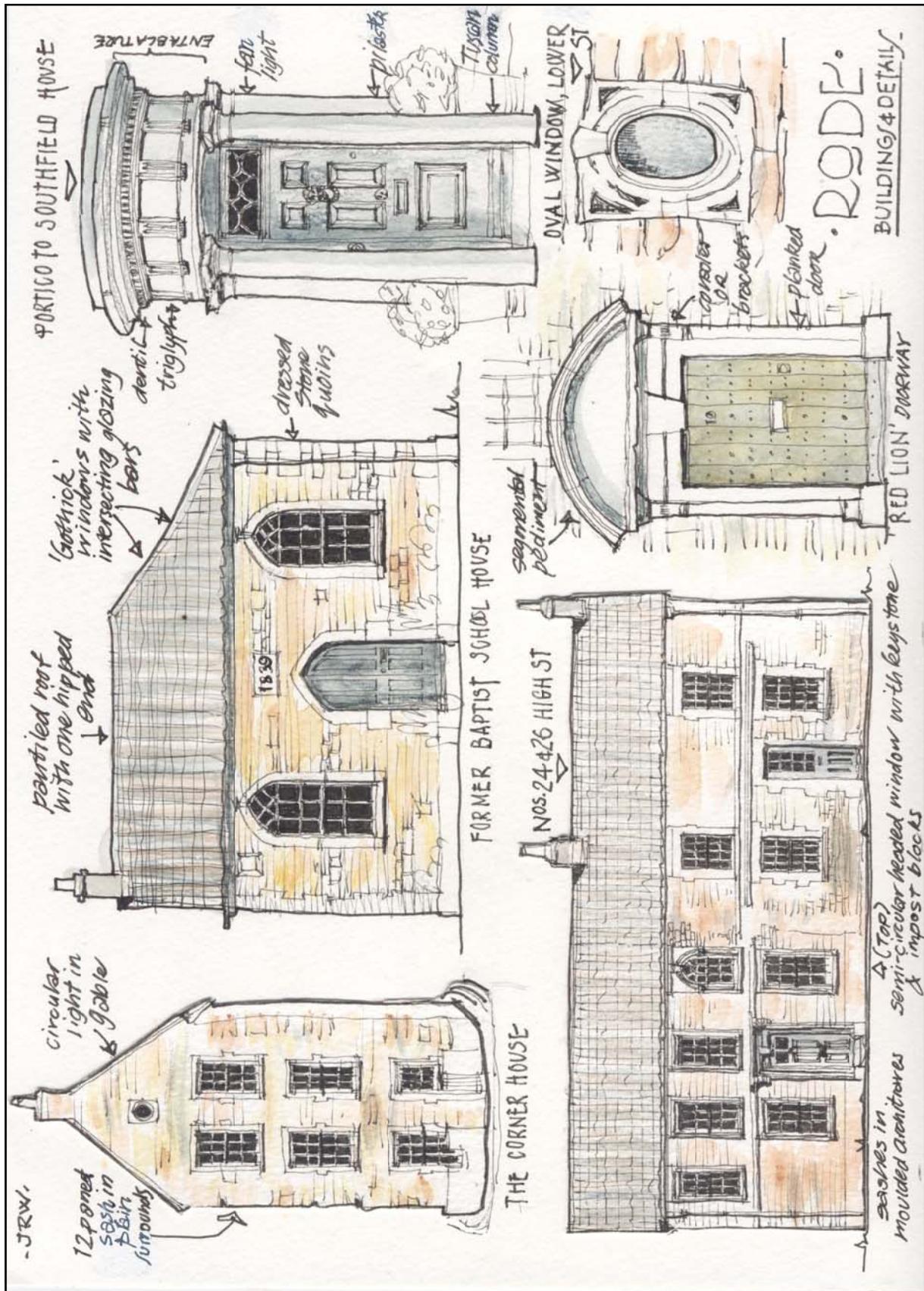
8.4 This Conservation Area Appraisal is to be read in conjunction with local planning policies and the proposed Conservation Area Management Plan.



*Lower end of Church Lane*

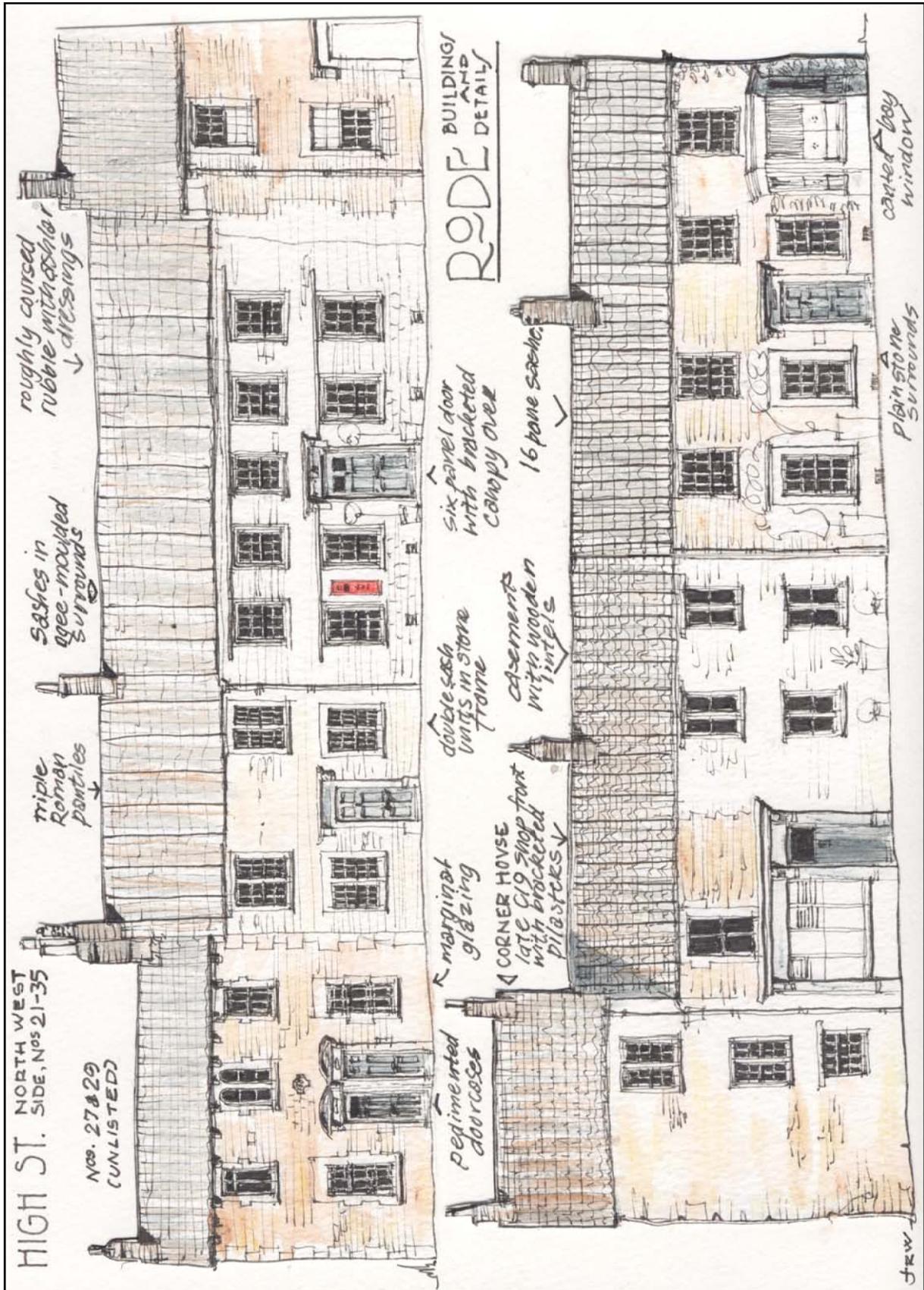
# A: Rode Village Area

## Appendix: Drawings



# A: Rode Village Area

## Appendix: Drawings



## A: Rode Village Area

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### Summary of Key Characteristics

- The Rode Hill ridge gives good views out to the attractive landscape setting, including the Frome Valley.
- Evidence of medieval building plans and structural remains, possibly associated with the cloth trade; and later industrial archaeology associated with cloth manufactories and other activities such as brewing.
- Nearly 60 Listed Building entries, including six Grade II\* buildings.
- Large coherent groups of unspoilt historic buildings, particularly along the south-west and central part of High Street, with a mixture of vernacular and polite architecture and some significant Victorian contributions, employing a local Forest Marble building stone and Bath Stone ashlar, stone tiles, slate and clay plain tiles and pantiles.
- About 30 unlisted buildings and structures of individual architectural merit and/or group value.
- A rich architectural vocabulary, with varying window and door details, former shopfronts, boundary walls and gate piers and many attractive details, such as wrought and cast ironwork, date and inscription stones, sign posts and stone paving.
- Mixtures of stone-mullioned windows, casements and vertically hung timber sashes.
- Timber plank doors and six- or eight-panelled doors, with features like flat stone canopies on shaped brackets, fanlights or glazed lights in the door.
- Individual and groups of trees at gateways to the village, particularly at either end of Rode Hill, on the river corridor and at the west end of High Street.
- Areas of green space at the High Street/Marsh Road junction, at the northern end of Lower Street and at Rode Bridge.

# B: Frome Road Area

## I. Introduction

1.1 The main village of Rode has a conservation area that was designated in 1973. The separate small cluster of historic buildings on Frome Road, to the east, along the A361, has a number of listed buildings and an unscheduled archaeological site, and has been added as a detached part of the Rode Conservation Area.

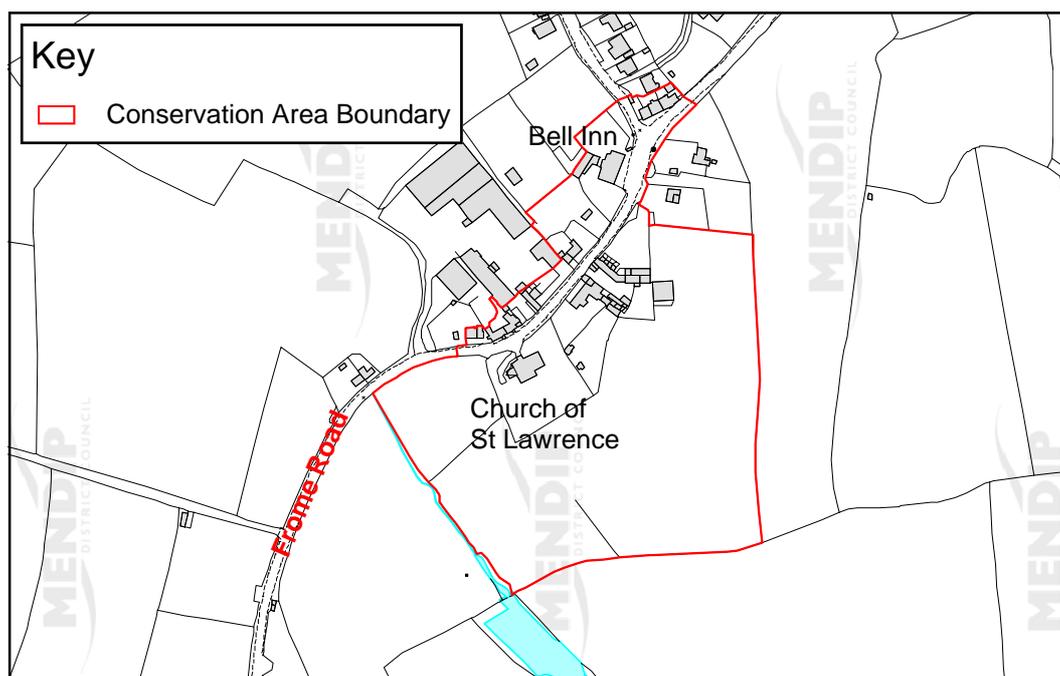
1.2 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to determine from time to time which parts of their area are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate these areas as conservation areas.

1.3 Planning authorities also have a duty to protect these areas from development which would harm their special historic or architectural character and this is reflected in the policies contained in Mendip District Council's Adopted Local Plan.

1.4 The purpose of this appraisal is to define the qualities of the area that may make it worthy of conservation area status. A clear, comprehensive appraisal of character provides a sound basis for development control decisions and for developing initiatives to improve the area. It will also enable the development of a robust policy framework for the future management of the area, on which applications can be considered.

1.5 This appraisal has been produced in accordance with guidance contained in English Heritage's 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (August 2005).

1.6 This appraisal was endorsed by the council on 22 July 2009 as a material planning consideration, and will be taken into account when assessing local planning applications.



Ordnance Survey Map showing Rode Village Conservation Area Boundary

## B: Frome Road Area

### 2. Location and Landscape Setting

2.1 Rode village is situated about five miles (eight kilometres) north-east of Frome, between the A36(T) to Bath and the A361 to Trowbridge. The main village is developed around a pattern of minor roads between the two main roads, including Rode Hill, which crosses the River Frome. The Frome Road adjunct is physically separated (at a distance of about 500m) from the larger settlement by open countryside, although sporadic, linear development extends along Church Lane and Bradford Road from the village core to the A361.

2.2 Frome Road runs in a series of curving alignments in a generally north-east/south-west direction from Rode Common to the junction with the A36(T). It

crosses undulating countryside, with a more level area, at about 70m AOD around the Church Lane junction, down to a shallow valley south of the church. The parish church (Church of St Lawrence) thus stands up on a small ridge, when viewed from the south-west. The wider landscape consists of small fields bounded by gappy hedges and wire fences, with larger areas of trees to the east, behind the churchyard.

2.3 Development is markedly linear, along the course of the main road, with a sequence of small cottages, the buildings of Church Farm and a public house on the north side and the parish church and graveyard, Church Row Farm and modern individual housing plots on the south side.



*Landscape setting*

## B: Frome Road Area

### 3. History and Development

3.1 There is a long barrow to the east of the church, known as the Devil's Bed and Bolster, originally about 4 feet high and 85 feet long. Flint scatters have been found in the surrounding area and, to the south, a possible pond barrow has been suggested. To the west of Frome Road, near Crooked Lane, Romano-British building material, pottery and a coin have been found in field walking.

3.2 The manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book and was owned by a series of local noble families in the medieval period. The parish church appears to be mainly 14th- and 15th-century in date but there is part of a Norman arch incorporated in the vestry.

3.3 To the south and south-west of the church is a large area of "village crofts", extensive indeterminate earthworks of platforms and linear banks and ditches, suggesting a former area of (Saxon or early-Medieval?) settlement. This putative shrunken village may be the result of either a planned decision to relocate the

main village to the west, along the present High and Lower Streets or of economic or social circumstance. There is another possible settlement area to the north-west of the medieval Seymour's Court, about 500m south of the parish church. An archaeological evaluation at Church Row Farm produced Medieval and post-Medieval pottery.

3.4 Apart from the church, the present structures are 17th- to early-19th-century in date, the oldest being Church Row Farm House; several cottages are 18th-century (No.17 dated 1777); and the Bell Inn is of the early 19th century.

3.5 The possible settlement earthworks adjoining the church and the Bronze Age and Romano-British finds in the wider area all suggest that the area has considerable **archeological potential**.

3.8 There are 16 entries in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, including the Grade I parish church and 11 chest tombs in the churchyard. The Devil's Bed and Bolster is a Scheduled Monument, situated in Beckington Parish.



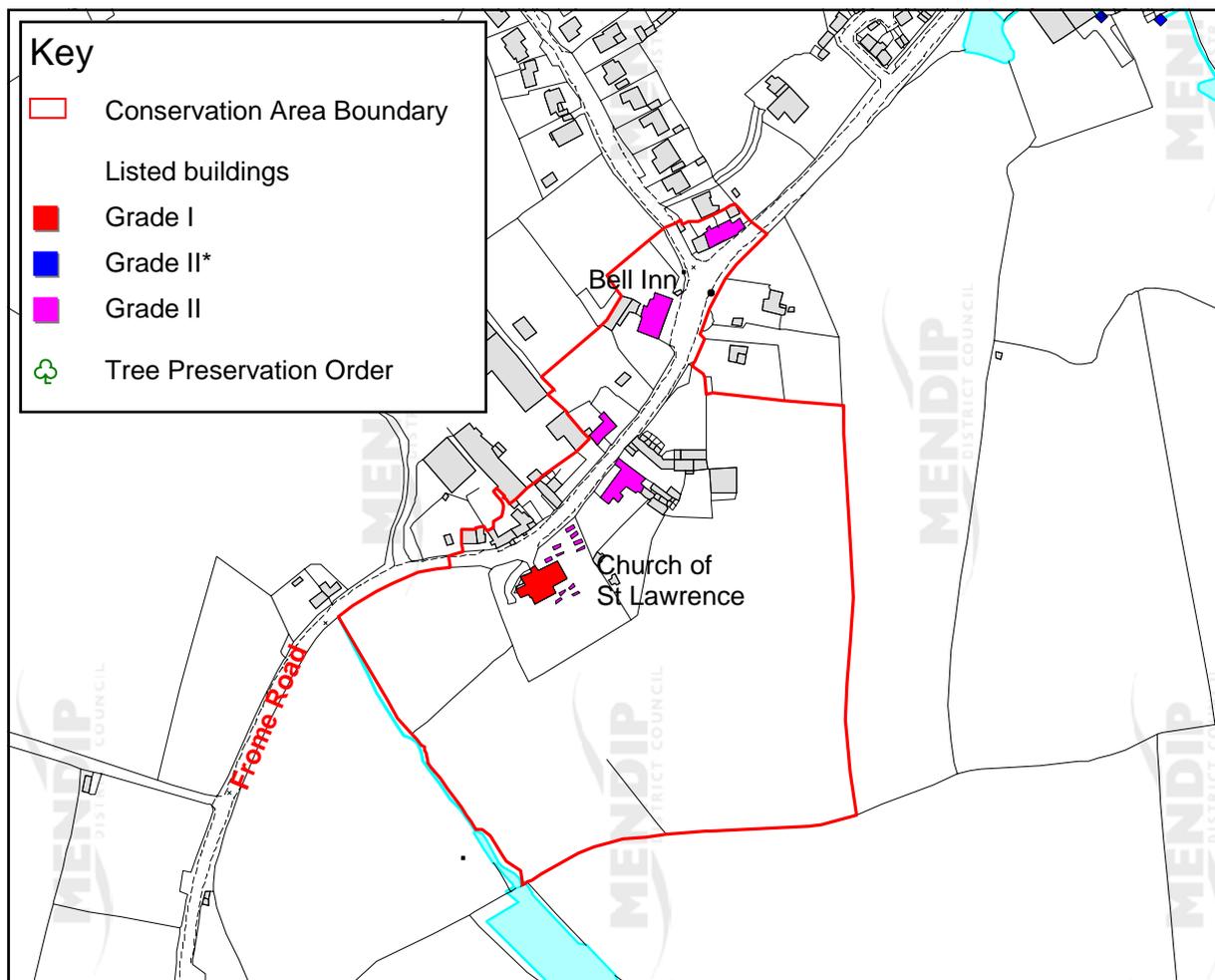
*Former settlement site adjacent to the parish church*

## B: Frome Road Area

### 4. Character of the Frome Road Area

4.1 Frome Road is a linear group of older buildings, dominated by the parish church, and set on both sides of the busy main road. The church has a well-defined churchyard, mainly to the south and east of the building, defined by stone boundary walls. Other buildings are positioned on or just behind the highway edges, their plans running in parallel with the road, with the exception of the right-angled gable ends of barns adjoining Church Row Farm House.

4.2 There are areas of green space between buildings, mainly on the north side of the road and on the southern side between Church Row Farm and modern individual houses to the north. There is also a large meadow behind the Bell Inn, running on the western side of Church Lane. Churchyard trees and individual specimens behind the Church Farm frontage frame buildings and views along the main road.



Ordnance Survey Map showing Statutorily Designated Sites and Features

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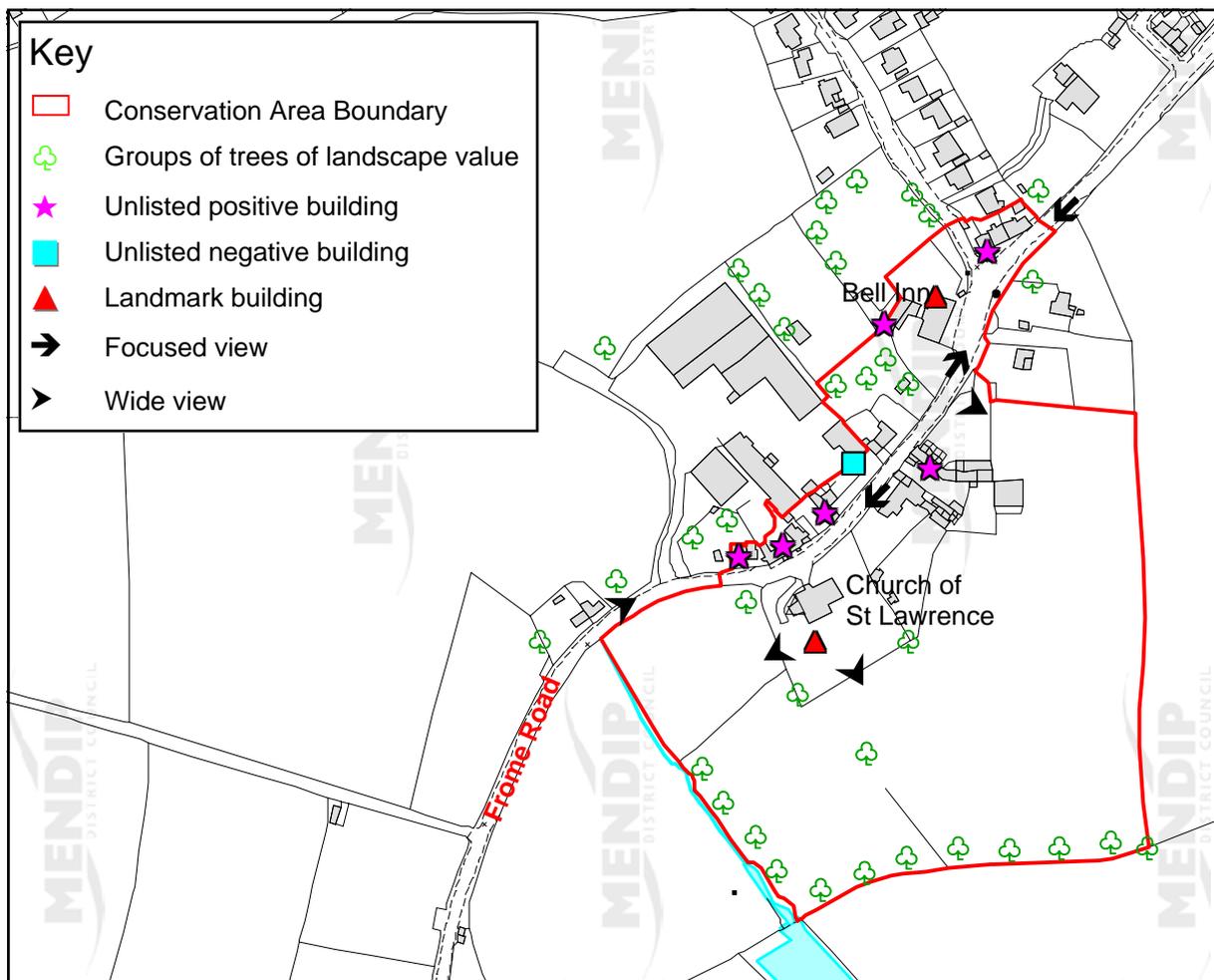
## B: Frome Road Area

### 5. Spatial Analysis

5.1 Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside and within conservation areas (usually the historic core of a village), there are unique progressions of spaces, with varying degrees of enclosure or exposure, depending on the density and height of buildings, their position relative to the highway, the character of boundaries and the dominance or dearth of trees and views out to countryside or into the village core. The effects of topography – the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths – are also important determinants of spatial character. These factors are all facets of **townscape**, a method of describing the mixture of buildings, streets

and spaces that make up the village environment. Townscape analysis and vocabulary enable places to be described using three elements:

- The sequence of views obtained in passing through an area, a chain of events termed as *serial vision*;
- The feelings of relative exposure and enclosure depending upon the size and shape of adjacent buildings, boundaries and spaces;
- The important content of an historic area: colour, texture, scale, style, personality and the many little details (materials, street furniture and other visual and cultural assets) that underlie the local distinctiveness of the area.



Ordnance Survey Map showing Spatial Analysis

## B: Frome Road Area

### 5. Spatial Analysis

5.2 Approaching from the south, the parish church tower stands up well on a pronounced ridge, enhanced by churchyard trees and hedges and hedgerow trees to the east. The main road curves and climbs towards the church, with small, individual cottages on the west side.

5.3 Two cottages, Nos.5 and 7, stand hard on the inside edge of the bend, opposite the church, and their projecting porches are a firm punctuation mark. The slope levels out and there is a perspective view of the churchyard boundary wall, overhanging trees, and the gable end of Church Row Farmhouse.

5.4 There are good views of open countryside from the west and south parts of the churchyard, with shallow valleys, hedges and tree groups.

5.5 Opposite the church, the buildings of Church Farm are set back from the road, with one single-storey gable end projecting and other stone, timber and corrugated metal buildings less visible behind an unmanaged hedge. The small front garden to Church Row Farm is sheltered to the north by a single-storey shed whose gable end extends to the road edge. It is echoed by another shed at the far side of the yard entrance.

5.6 Back on the western side Nos.9 and 11 are set back behind small front spaces, with No.11 protected by a stone boundary wall. Looking back to the south-west, the churchyard trees, church tower and the porches of Nos.5 and 7 frame a view of distant countryside beyond the site of the 'shrunk village'.

5.7 On the north side of the main road, a green space heralds the long, white perspective view of the Bell Inn, which has a car park in front of it. The road begins to curve again, to the right, making visible the old cottage group at the junction with Church Lane (Nos.15-19). A conifer marks the end of the row.



*Churchyard and projecting porches*



*Church Row Farm*



*Bell Inn and Church Lane junction*

## B: Frome Road Area

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### 5. Spatial Analysis

5.8 On the south-east side of the road, a hooped iron railing allows views of large fields and distant trees. To the north, 20th-century bungalows provide a contrast and create firm boundaries to the road.

5.9 Frome Road has a definite linear **plan form**, defined by the curving alignment of the main road. There are two focal points, in the church and pub, with the two groups of farm buildings creating minor incidents and a slight thickening of the general plan, in their accesses off the main road and groups of buildings around yards.

5.10 There are two **landmark** buildings: the parish church and the Bell Inn.

## B: Frome Road Area

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### 6. Character Analysis

6.1 Frome Road has one, single distinctive character area, from the parish church to the Church Lane junction.

6.2 The overall character is that of a low-density, sporadic corridor of vernacular buildings set close to the road line, interspersed with areas of green space and open countryside and with obvious focal points in the parish church and pub. The use of local stone in buildings and boundary walls provides visual unity.

## B: Frome Rode Area

### 7. Local Building Patterns

7.1 The parish church is a 14th- and 15th-century assemblage of west tower, four-bay nave and aisles, two-bay chancel, north chapel (vestry) and south porch.

7.2 Domestic buildings are of two or three bays, two-storeys, with rear or side appendages, either as a gabled wing at Church Row Farm or single-storey lean-tos on side walls. There are several houses with attics, shown by dormer windows.

7.3 Plans are central-entry with varying degrees of regularity and symmetry. There are three short (two- or three-unit) rows of cottages and three detached buildings, in the two farm houses and the Bell Inn (which has six bays in line). Church Row Farm consists of a house on the road front, of some architectural status, an attached barn at right angles and an adjacent yard of one- and two-storey barns and sheds. Church Farm

has, or had, road-frontage-attached cottages and a rectangular working yard that has been subsequently enlarged.

7.4 **Walls.** The predominant building stone is local Cornbrash, a mid-Jurassic limestone of a tawny-to-grey colour, fossil-rich and not a quality building stone. There may be some greyer Forest Marble, which is harder, in the church exterior, mixed with Cornbrash. The church's mid-Victorian restoration saw some Doultling limestone used for dressings. Most walling is composed of rubble, squared and brought to courses, with dressed stone quoins, string courses and door and window surrounds. Boundary walls are more typically random rubble, with cock-and-hen coping or chamfered, dressed stone on the churchyard boundary wall to the main road.

7.5 Rubble may be rendered, with rough-cast at the Bell Inn and Nos.5 and 7.



*Church of St Lawrence*

## B: Frome Rode Area

### 7. Local Building Patterns

**7.6 Windows and Doors.** Church Row Farmhouse and Nos.9 and 11 and Nos.17 and 19, and the unlisted No.3 have stone-mullioned lights, in groups of two or three, ogee-moulded and with stopped labels at Church Row Farmhouse; hollow-moulded at Nos.9 and 11; and plain-chamfered at Nos.3, 17 and 19. Set within the stone frames are a variety of casement and sash windows, with mid-19th-century marginal glazing at Church Row Farmhouse. The stone-mullioned window seems to have survived as a basic form from the 17th to the late 18th century (No.17 is dated 1777).



*Local details, Nos.9 & 11*

**7.7** The Bell Inn has 16-pane vertical sashes with one ground floor canted bay window. There are box casement dormers at Church Row Farmhouse and hipped sash dormers at No.17. Surrounds are of flat, un moulded stone, with large, monolithic lintels.



*Nos. 17 & 19, coursed rubble, pantiles,*

**7.8** Doors are either simple vertical planks or panelled types with the upper parts glazed. There are several examples of flat or slightly pedimented stone door canopies supported by shaped stone brackets or modern columns (Church Row Farmhouse). No.11 has an attractive 19th-century gabled latticework porch and Nos.5 and 7 have rendered, gabled porches.

**7.9 Roofs.** In such a small group of buildings is a variety of roof materials, with graded stone tiles at the parish church, slate at the Bell Inn and Double Roman clay tiles on most of the cottages and farm buildings. Gables are usually coped, with brick or rendered end chimney stacks.

**7.10 Boundaries.** Boundary walls are an important asset in defining spaces and linking buildings, as well as providing defence against the heavy through traffic. Built of local stone, usually in roughly coursed rubble form, walls vary from one to two metres high, with cock-and-hen or



*Churchyard boundary wall*

## B: Frome Rode Area

### 7. Local Building Patterns



*Finger post on main road*



*Churchyard chest tombs*



*Nos.5 & 7*

flat coping, the front churchyard wall having a chamfered finish.

**7.11 Other Details.** The churchyard has an impressive collection of 18th- to early-19th-century chest tombs, with classical detailing. Church Row Farmhouse has a (19th-century?) front gate with wrought iron palmette straps and scrolls. There is a small Somerset County Council finger post at the junction with Church Lane.

**7.12 Trees and Green Spaces.** Trees are a welcome foil to the main road traffic, with no large specimens (probably due to local geology and climatic exposure), but with middle-sized yews and planes fronting the churchyard and running along its northern boundary. There are other groups of trees further to the south-east, in open countryside. Other groups are by the main Church farm entrance off the main road and behind Nos.9 and 11 and between them and the Bell Inn.

**7.13** The churchyard is the main green space, but the surrounds to the pub are also of amenity and visual value. The gap in development north of Church Row Farm also introduces open fields to the road corridor. The small front gardens to Church Row Farmhouse and No.11 also add to the overall interest of the area.

**7.14 Contribution of unlisted buildings.** There are several buildings of individual and/or group value:

- Nos.3, 5 and 7 Frome Road, No.3 of rubble and with a tiled roof, with plain mullioned windows and coped gables, modern windows and a lean-to porch; Nos.5 and 7 are early- to mid-19th-century roughcast and pantiles, of differing heights and random openings on No.5 and symmetry around a central door at No.7; both have gabled, tiled porches; delisted in 1995 but of group and townscape value;

## B: Frome Rode Area

### 7. Local Building Patterns

- A single-storey rubble shed, with a Double Roman tile roof, behind the Bell Inn, conceivably listed by being within the curtilage of a listed building, but not mentioned in the list description and worthy of a separate note;
- No.15 is a symmetrical mid-19th-century house in a prominent position on the corner of Church Lane, of rubble, pantiles and with dressed stone details, including a flat pedimented door canopy and plain architraves to modern door and windows; of group and townscape value;
- Two single-storey sheds or barns at Church Farm and Church Row Farm, of brick at the former and rubble at the latter, both at right angles to the road and of group value.

**7.15 Extent of intrusion or damage.** The volume and speed of through traffic are a constant danger and a source of noise and pollution, exacerbated by narrow or absent footways. Parked cars and a utilitarian bus shelter detract from the front of the Bell Inn and the entry into Church Lane. Poles and wires are evident.

**7.16** The Church Farm buildings are of varied materials and quality, with one rusty metal gable end being particularly prominent, adjacent to the listed No.9. The latter's loss of its front boundary to provide car parking results in a loss of visual definition.

**7.17 Existence of Neutral Areas.** The front area of the Bell Inn and the Church Lane junction is a small but telling space of rather bleak character.

**7.18 Condition of Built Fabric.** The listed buildings appear to be in reasonable condition, with the exception of a number of the chest tombs. The unlisted No.5 seems to be in poor condition and has extensive ivy growth. No.15 is an example of a decent unlisted building whose details have been changed by permitted development alterations. There is some repointing in hard, raised cement on No.19.



*No.15 Frome Road*



*Church Row Farm shed*

## B: Frome Rode Area

### 8. Synthesis of Appraisal

8.1 Frome Road is an interesting adjunct to Rode Village, probably representing the original early-Medieval core, with the parish church and one or more areas of earthworks as possiblecroft sites. There are a number of post-medieval and early 19th-century vernacular houses and cottages, characterised by the use of local building materials and details. These are combined with stone boundary walls and trees to create an overall coherence and quality.

8.2 Development is linear in character, the general proximity to the through route line and roof ridges running parallel to the road create a 'corridor' effect. The urban characteristics are contrasted with views of open countryside around the parish church and north of Church Row Farm.

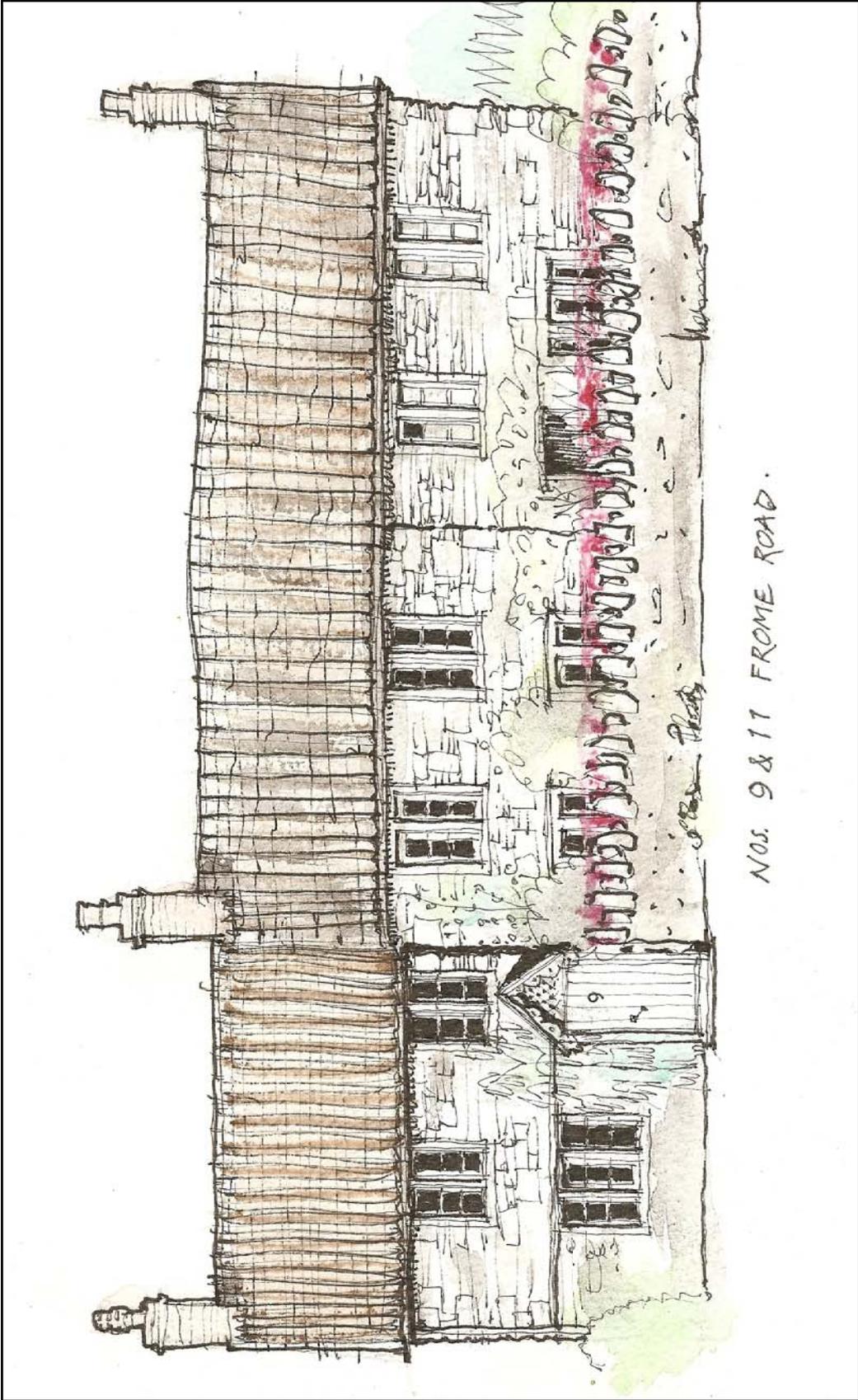
8.2 There are a number of detrimental features associated with through traffic, visual clutter and the condition of unlisted buildings.



*Meadows to south of Church of St Lawrence*

B: Frome Road Area

Appendix: Drawings



## B: Frome Road Area

### Summary of Key Characteristics

- A linear corridor of development with buildings set on the back edge of the highway/pavement with roof ridges running parallel to the road.
- An interesting archaeological context, with prehistoric and Romano-British sites and finds and traces of a shrunken or displaced early medieval settlement.
- 16 listed building entries, with a Grade I parish church and 17th- to early-19th-century houses, cottages and an inn.
- Other early-19th-century unlisted cottages and farm buildings of group value.
- A variety of door and window details, including stone-mullioned casements and sashes, vertically hung sashes, simple stone door canopies and planked and panelled doors.
- Attractive materials, notably local limestones.
- Attractive undulating countryside to the south and east of the parish church.
- Clay tile roofs.
- Stone boundary walls defining spaces and linking buildings.
- Churchyard trees and other groups on the north side of the main road and in the open countryside east of the church.
- Areas of green space in the churchyard, east and south of the church and adjacent to the Bell Inn.

# Conservation Area Appraisal

# Rode

