

# Newton St Cyres Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. They are special areas where the buildings and the space around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of quality and interest.

In Conservation Areas additional planning controls apply to protect the existing street scene and encourage enhancement where appropriate. These are outlined in Appendix 2.

A Conservation Area appraisal (or assessment) is essentially an analysis of what makes it special. Many Conservation Areas do not have Conservation Area appraisals, despite their recommendation by Government and English Heritage. It is becoming increasingly important to have appraisals that define each Conservation Area's qualities in order to:

- understand what it is that should be protected or enhanced;
- formulate effective policies;
- make sensible planning decisions;
- be able to justify the designation when making planning decisions and at appeal;
- help residents, traders, council members, potential investors and other interested parties to understand the background to designation; and
- help potential developers to formulate their applications.

In order to specifically identify and assess the characteristics of the Conservation Area, the appraisal covers location, special architectural interest, character and appearance while the management plan covers preservation & enhancement.

The Newton St Cyres conservation area was designated on 2nd October 1985. The conservation area and boundary were surveyed in the summer of 2014. Visits to Newton St Cyres involved the reviewing of the original conservation area boundary, collecting photographic evidence and surveying the built environment and associated spaces within and outside of the boundary. Proposed changes to the boundary were carefully considered, following English Heritage guidance on conservation areas as well as assessing the appropriateness and collective attributes of all buildings and features in and around the conservation area.

Following a consultation with the public in February and March 2015 ensured any proposed boundary changes reflected the local communities views and suggestions. In total, 6 representations were received. The conservation area boundary has been amended, and this appraisal and management plan document adopted by Mid Devon District Council.

## 2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Conservation Areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation) Act 1990, section 69(1), by Local Planning Authorities.

Conservation Area Appraisals are not normally adopted as part of the Local Plan but they are nevertheless an integral tool that guides development. They are expected to be the subject of community involvement through a public consultation.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the national guidance and policies for creating conservation areas in section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

*“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest”*

*NPPF (2012) Section 12; Paragraph 127*

Local policies for protecting and preserving heritage assets can be found on the Mid Devon website.

*“The historic environment is an asset of great cultural, social, economic and environmental value. It contributes significantly to our quality of life and of the character of the district, representing a non-renewable resource that once lost is gone forever”*

*Local Plan Part 3 (2013) Policy DM27*

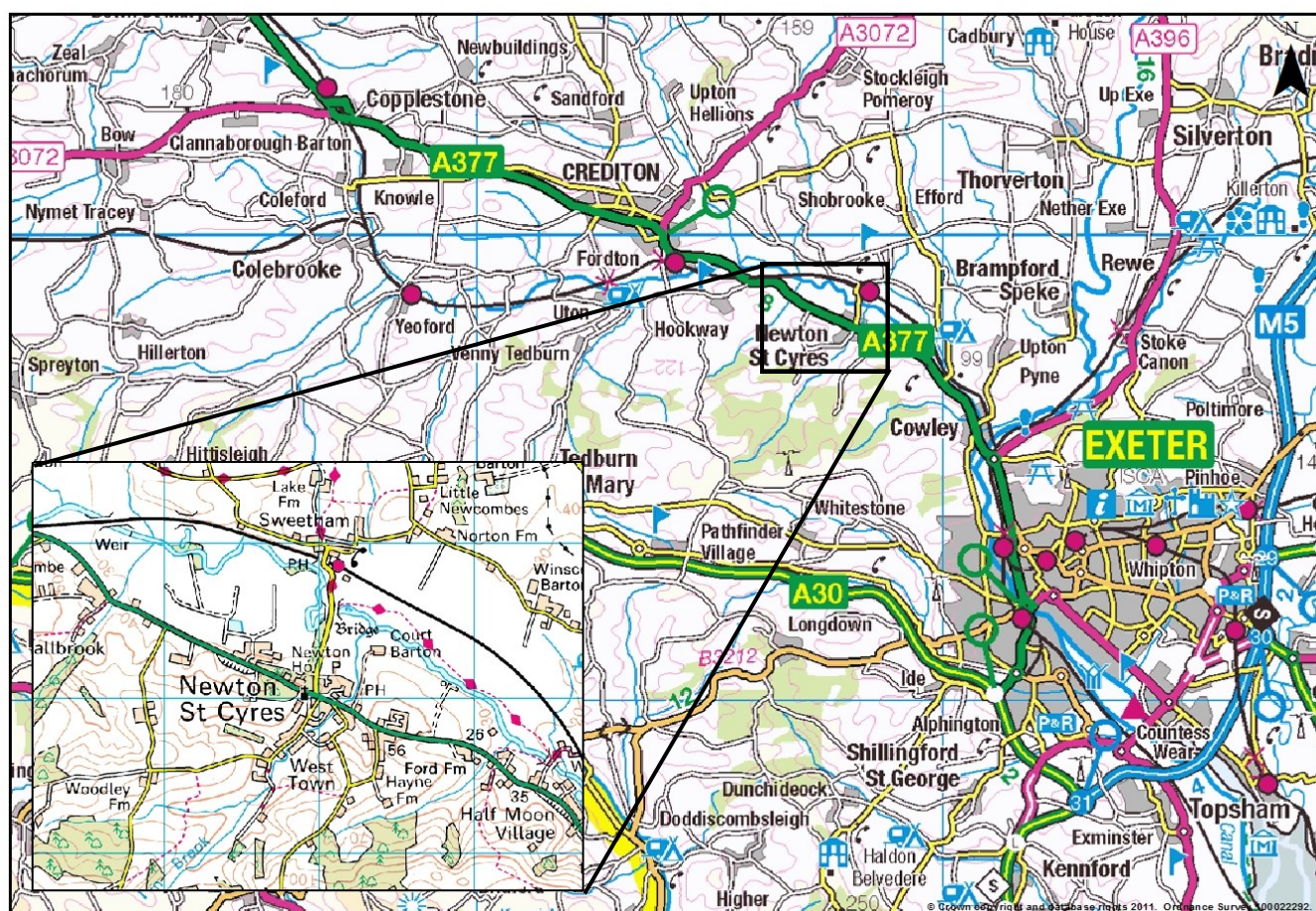
National and Local planning policies change over time so it is important to check the up to date policy framework when considering making a planning application. At the date of publication all policies quoted were correct.

### 3. LOCATION AND SETTING

Newton St Cyres is a picturesque village with a number of attractive cottages of coloured cob and thatch and a village green, the later being a modern creation. The village is situated on rising ground on the south western side of the valley of the River Creedy. It lies on the main road between Exeter and Crediton where it crosses the Shuttern Brook, a tributary to the Creedy. Newton St Cyres lies almost midway between Crediton and Exeter, being 4 miles north west of Exeter and 3 miles south east of Crediton (see Map 1).

The Shuttern Brook which flows through Newton St Cyres from the south west to the north east of the village creates a ford on Pump Street, then flows under the New Shuttern Bridge and the A377 to join the River Creedy in the north.

#### MAP 1: LOCATION OF NEWTON ST CYRES



## 4. BOUNDARY OF CONSERVATION AREA, 1985 AND 2015



Figure 1 (above): Church of St Cyr and St Julitta



Figure 2 (above): Footbridge over ford, Pump Street



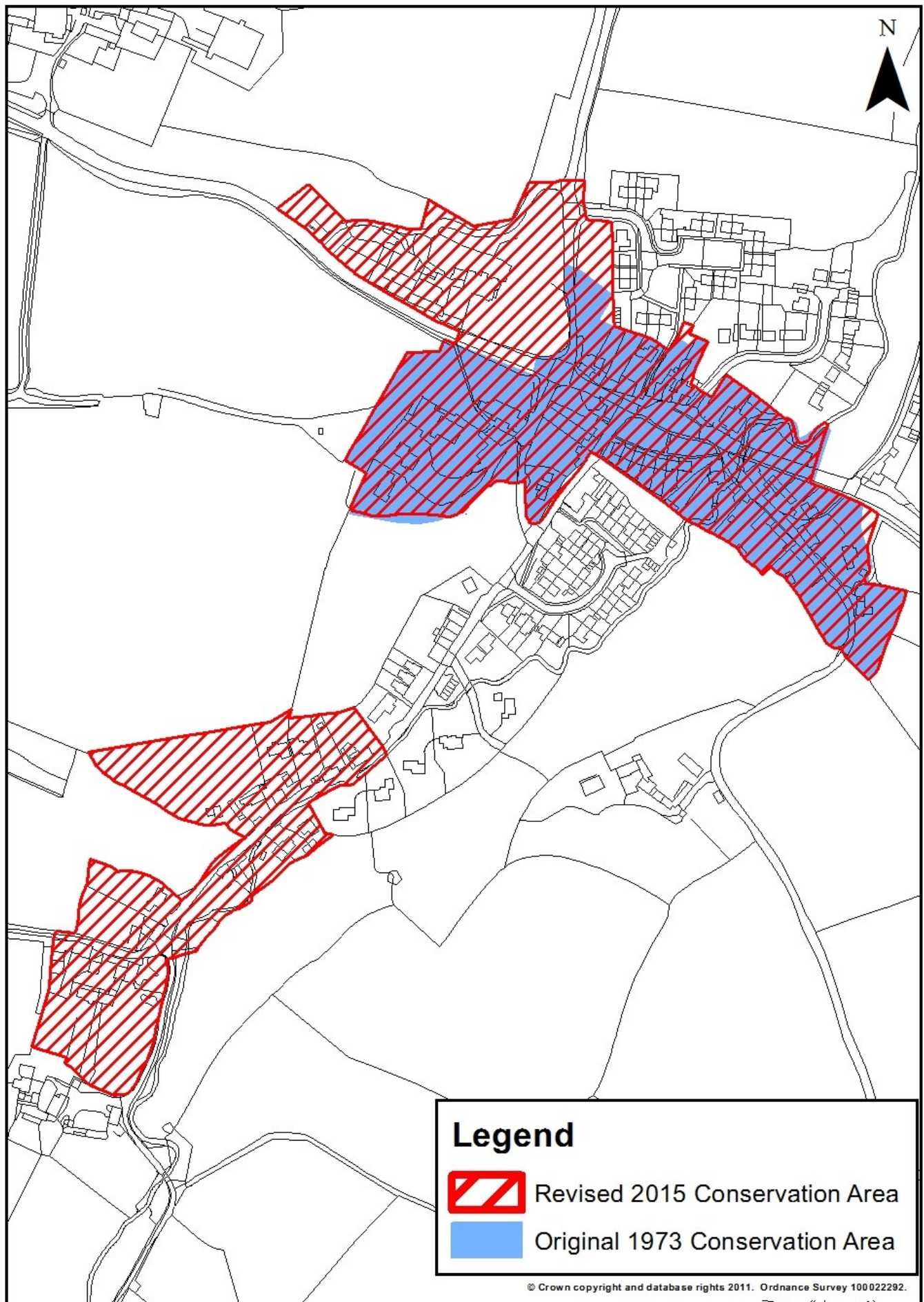
Figure 3 (above): Newton House

The boundary of the conservation area was designated in 1985 and amended in 2015. The original 1985 conservation area encompasses the historic core of the village with the parish church and former rectory at its north western end. The church is Grade I Listed and has an unusual dedication to St Cyr and St Julitta (see Figure 1). The original conservation area boundary also contains more than a dozen Grade II Listed buildings dating from the 15th to early 19th centuries. The New Shuttern Bridge, which is Grade II Listed, is an early 19th century brick and stone construction but close by, in Pump Street, is the Old Shuttern Bridge, also Grade II Listed, which is an 18th century stone-build footbridge adjacent to a ford (see Figure 2).

Survey work of Newton St Cyres was undertaken in June 2014 to determine whether the boundary should be amended to include areas of historic and/or architecturally valuable assets and associated green space. A proposed new boundary was taken out for consultation in early 2015 and a public exhibition held. From the consultation, an updated boundary was created to include Newton House, to the west of the original boundary and a new area to the south on West Town Road to include a number of historic buildings. The updated 2015 conservation area boundary incorporates all of the original 1985 boundary with a number of additions (see Map 2).

The southern addition to the original conservation area follows part of West Town Road. This area is known locally as 'West Town'. It is a tranquil part of the village, with attractive dwellings set in a leafy and slightly enclosed lane. To the west of the original conservation area is Newton House, included for its historic association with the village (see Figure 3).

## MAP 2: ORIGINAL AND REVISED BOUNDARY OF NEWTON ST CYRES



## 5. LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

The local geology of Newton St Cyres comprises of Permian basal breccias, sandstones and mudstones.

The surrounding countryside contains rolling hills, while Newton St Cyres is located in a narrow valley of the Shuttern Brook.

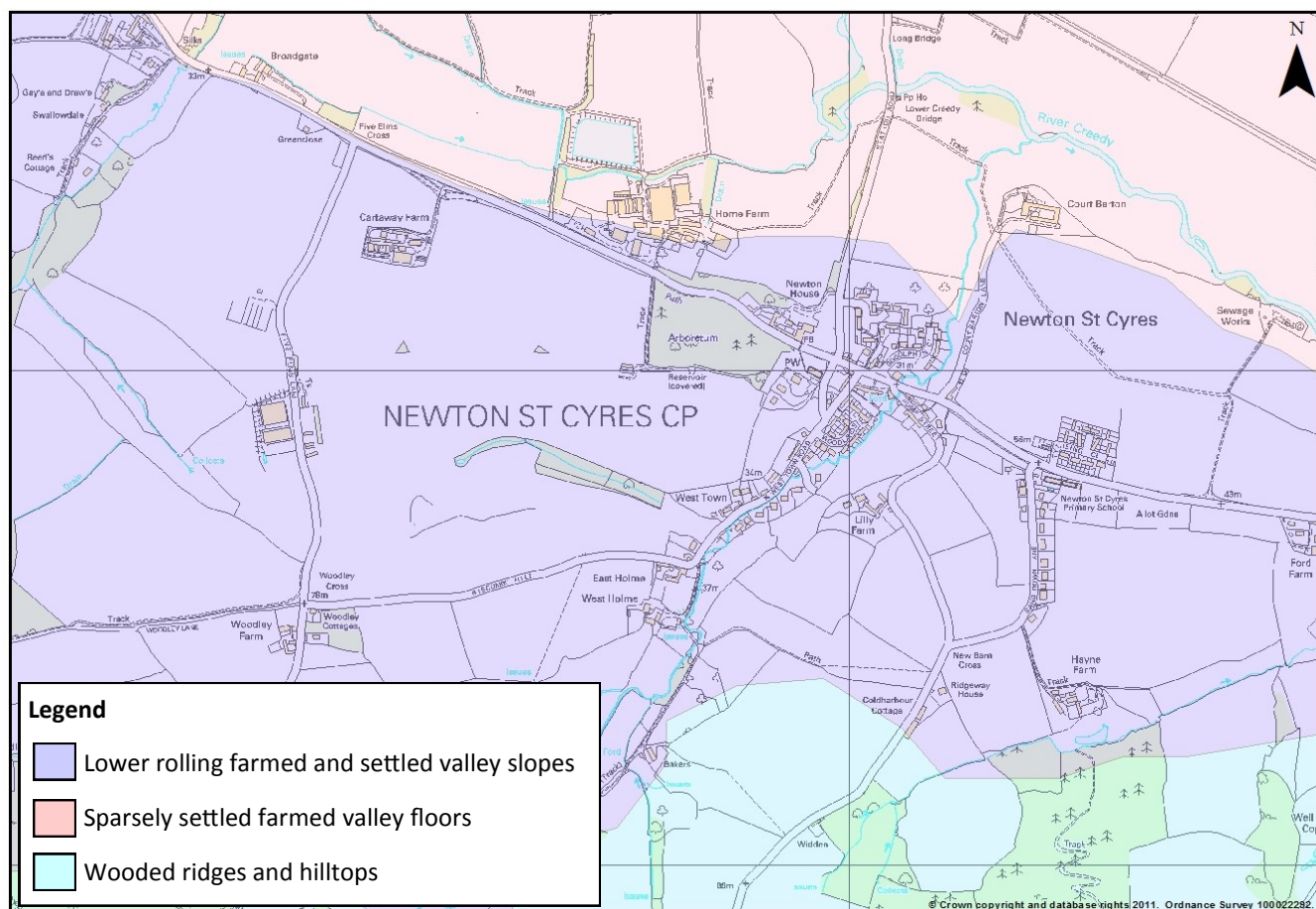
The Landscape Character Assessment (2011) provides an in-depth assessment of Mid Devon and the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the district (see Map 3).

The mixture of different LCTs locally create an interesting, varied and dramatic landscape that the village is situated in.

The landscape characterisation around Newton St Cyres are identified as:

- Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes: A gently rolling and strongly undulating landscape
- Sparsely settled farmed valley floors: Villages and hamlets are characteristically found alongside the rivers. Landscape consists of rivers or streams and related flat or gently sloping valley bottoms found within the low-lying areas of the District.
- Wooded ridges and hilltops: Area of elevated strongly undulating small hills and ridges.

### MAP 3: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AROUND NEWTON ST CYRES



## 6. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The earliest documentary reference to Newton St Cyres is as *niwan tune* in 1050-73; the name meaning 'new farm'. It is recorded as *Niwetone* in the Domesday Book, 1086, but there seems to have been confusion over ownership at this time for it is recorded twice, firstly under the holdings of the Bishop of Exeter and secondly under the holdings of Dunn who also held it prior to the conquest.

The suffix St Cyres appears to have been gained by the 14th century and is documented as *Seynt Serys Newton* in 1525. John Leland, writing in the mid 16th century, described it as a townlet with a good bridge over the river. In the later 16th century the manor was owned by Walter Northcote, a wealthy woollen merchant from Crediton. Thomas Quicke purchased a half share in the manor in 1572 and the family have farmed in the parish ever since, buying the other half share in the late 18th century. They built Newton House, a Palladian style mansion, just to the north-west of the village in the 19th century which was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1906.

The wider parish is home to a number of historic farmsteads including Bidwell Barton, Langford, Lake, Smallbrook and Winscott which are all documented in the medieval period and Norton which is recorded even earlier, in the late Anglo Saxon period.

The archaeological background set out below is based on information currently held in Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is constantly being updated and revised.

Figure 4 (right) Church of St Cyr and St Juliette



### Prehistoric and Roman

No prehistoric or Roman finds or features have been recorded within the conservation area itself or within the proposed new areas but this is probably due to a lack of archaeological investigation rather than a lack of evidence. There is much evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in the wider area (see Appendix 1). Prehistoric flints including several arrowheads have been found in the vicinity of Lake Farm. Several potential Bronze Age barrows have been recorded as crop marks in the north-east corner of the parish near Shute Cross, Nettetacott Cross and Winscott Cross and flints have also been found near these. In addition numerous enclosures of probable prehistoric or Roman date have also been recorded as crop marks across the parish, particularly in the vicinity of Lake Farm but also to the north-west and south-east of Newton St Cyres. The A377 is suggested to be on the line of a Roman road between Exeter and Crediton.

### Saxon

Newton St Cyres dates back to at least the Saxon period. It is first mentioned in a document of 1050-73 and is also recorded in Domesday Book which was compiled in 1086.

### Medieval

The parish church is dedicated to St Cyr and St Julitta, his mother, one of only a handful of churches with this dedication in England (see Figure 1). It has earlier medieval origins but was extensively rebuilt in the early 15th century. In the Lady Chapel is a piscina dating to about 1400. The base and shaft of a medieval cross stand in the churchyard. It's Maltese style cross is modern, restored by the Quicke family to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897.



Figure 5 (above): Old Beams, Pump Street

The only surviving house of medieval date within the present conservation area is Old Beams (see Figure 5) which is thought to date back to the 15th century with 16th and 17th century improvements. It has a typical three room and cross passage plan. Evidence of smoke-blackening in the roof indicates that these rooms were originally open to the roof and heated by open hearths. Structural elements of this period, however, may also be preserved in later buildings, possibly masked by more recent alterations. Medieval features are also likely to survive as buried deposits within the historic core.

At West Town, East Holme (see Figure 6) is first recorded in the early 15th century as one of the two holdings as Westhome. Like Old Beams, the former farmhouse is probably 15th century in origin with a three room and cross passage plan; the service end is now part of separate cottage. The roofs are smoke-blackened from original open hearth fires. Halses is also a former farmhouse with early 16th century origins.

#### **Post Medieval**

Many of the extant buildings in Newton St Cyres date from the later 17th to early 19th centuries and features associated with post-medieval domestic and industrial activity are also likely to survive as buried deposits within the historic core.



Figure 6 (above): East Holme, West Town Road

The parish church contains a number of good 17th-19th century monuments including several to members of the Quicke family and there is also a large marble monument to Sir John Northcote, died 1632, who lived at Hayne Barton. Other post-medieval features within the church include the painted arms of James II, dated 1685, near the door. The pulpit is 18th century as are the altar rails. In the churchyard is the tomb of John Godfrey of Crediton, died 1779.

Manganese was mined in the vicinity of Tin Pit Hill from the late 18th century and by the turn of the 19th century Newton St Cyres had become the centre of the Devon industry. The focus of the industry subsequently shifted to the Teign Valley but production nevertheless continued in Newton St Cyres until the late 19th century. Down on the River Creedy two paper mills were in operation in the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries.

#### **Modern**

The 1840s Tithe Map shows the conservation area to be well-occupied by buildings at this time with the settlement at West Town also well-established. Several smith's shops are recorded on the Tithe Map as well as workshops, a shop and a timber yards and three inns. This is reflected in the different professions listed in White's Directory of 1850 which includes butchers, tailors and a baker.

The Exeter to Crediton section of the North Devon Railway opened in the mid 19th century. It by-passes the village to the north, on the other side of the River Creedy; Newton St Cyres station is thus some 870m to the north of the village at the end of the now aptly named Station Road.

Adjacent to the churchyard in the western section of the conservation area is Glebe House, the former rectory which was built in the early to mid 19th century. It is recorded as a vicarage on the Tithe Map and apportionment with gardens and a shrubbery. It is similarly marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (see Map 5). To the north west Newton House is shown prior to the fire within landscaped grounds with a large Arboretum on the other side of the road; this is marked as a Pleasure Ground on the Tithe Map and apportionment. Newton House was formerly the home of the Quicke family. It was rebuilt in 1909 after a fire and is now a number of dwellings.

A number of buildings are depicted on the 1880s Ordnance Survey map which are no longer extant. In particular, as a result of a fire and road widening circa 1965, the centre of the village has undergone radical alteration. The row of houses shown on the south side of the A377 on historic mapping has been demolished and a new row of properties.

Shuttern Close, has been built further south with a new village green in front of them (see Figure 7). Several properties on the north side, between the post office and the pub have also gone; instead Goldolphin Close leads to a modern housing development just outside the conservation area. Other modern development has taken place at Woodlands on the south west side of the conservation area.

### Archaeological Potential

Archaeological evidence indicating prehistoric settlement and Roman activity and occupation is recorded in the wider landscape.

Documentary and place name evidence indicates that Newton St Cyres has Saxon or earlier origins. Buried evidence of former buildings or structures may well be present in the conservation area and these may be affected by any development within the historic core.

The settings of nationally important designated heritage assets located within the conservation area and its surrounding environs may also be adversely affected upon by any development in this area. This should be considered at an early stage in the design and layout of any new development within the conservation area.

Figure 7 (below) Shuttern Close and Village Green



## MAP 4: DONN'S 1765 MAP OF DEVON

