

Rockbourne Conservation Area



This extremely attractive village has a strong linear form closely following the line of the winter bourne which flows through the valley. It is located within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The geology of this gravel valley through the chalk downs led to the development of a prosperous agricultural economy. As a result there are a variety of well made houses dating from the 16th century or earlier which have survived the later agricultural depressions. Many buildings are listed and most of the unlisted ones are also extremely interesting and worthy of care and protection. There is a great wealth of timber frames combined with a variety of other materials spanning the whole spectrum of society from the stone of Rockbourne Manor with its Grade I buildings to the humblest chalk cob cottages. Today Rockbourne is no longer a village of busy farms and smallholdings and the shops have all gone leaving a quiet picturesque residential community.

The surrounding area has evidence of settlement from the earliest prehistoric periods with many barrows and enclosures and just to the south of the village is the Roman villa. By the time of the Domesday survey there were probably about 31 families living in the area in the two manors of Rockbourne and Rockstead. These eventually merged and formed the village as we know it today. Boundaries have changed little since at least the 17th century and ownership of plots can be traced back through documentary evidence with considerable accuracy. The group of buildings around the Manor House and the Church are among the oldest in the village. The great barn with its raised crucks has recently been dated by dendrochronology to 1282-4. It was probably originally a hall house with several later bays added to the southern end. Close by are some cruck cottages which are the oldest surviving homes of the early village.

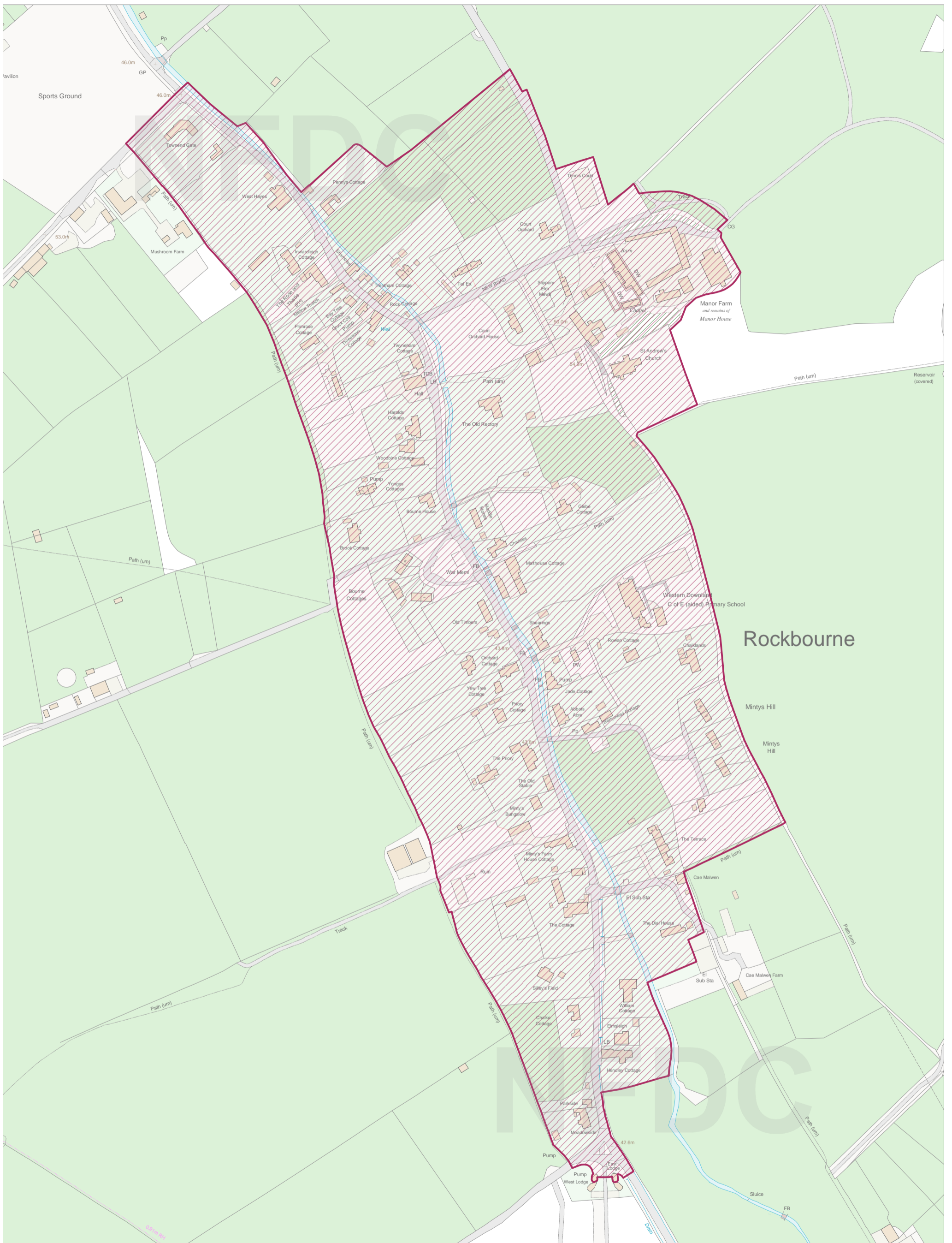
These are key features in the conservation area:

- The **Manor House** group contains buildings of several periods; part of the group is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The main range contains a small L-shaped 14th century house with a late 17th century wing as the front entrance today. To the rear a ruined house stands within the garden. Between the barn and the house is another stone building believed to have been a chapel. The farmyard includes two listed granaries as well as some very interesting unlisted 19th century buildings.

- The **Church of St Andrew** sits high above the village near to the Manor House. Its plan is an example of the cruciform style of the Saxon period with evidence of a door on the north side as well as the arch to the north transept. The churchyard includes groups of listed gravestones.
- The **Lodges to West Park** are a good example of the problems involved with redundant buildings. The east one would have been for sleeping and the west for living. With the social changes of the 20th century lodges have been particularly vulnerable, especially the smaller ones. Finding a use or purpose which retains visually important buildings such as these in sound condition is essential.
- The **plots along the village street** suggests a planned layout. On the west side they are set back a little behind low brick walls or picket fences. The old footpath on the east side of the stream has now been incorporated into front gardens. The system of paths running parallel to the village street behind the house plots link them with the holdings beyond and were probably used a great deal especially in winter when the village street would often have been flooded by the stream.
- **Malthouse Farm** is an important example of the local cob building style. It has recently undergone extensive repair. Regular maintenance and the use of sympathetic traditional materials in any necessary repair work are essential with this type of building. It is important to retain a correct moisture balance in the cob, providing protection from the elements whilst still allowing it to breathe.

These are some of the things that make Rockbourne special - they need to be looked after:

- **History**
Domestic plot and field boundaries have remained relatively unchanged for centuries and suggest some planning in the layout of the village.
- **Buildings**
The Grade I buildings of the Manor and Church group.
The timber frames - both cruck and post-and-truss. Where there are remaining wattle and daub infill panels great care should be taken to retain them.
Brick facades and infillings to frames, sometimes banded with several courses of flints.
The chalk cob cottages.
Small 2 and 3 light timber casement windows and eyebrow dormers. Metal windows such as those at Abbots Acre are also important.
The weatherboarded barns.
Simple thatch roofs with plain ridges, plain clay tiles and 19th century slate.
- **Archaeology**
The area occupied by dwellings both sides of the street has high archaeological potential owing to the long occupation of this area.
- **Landscape/Townscape**
The spacious plots are an important element of the character of the street scene.
Picket fences and hedges, and small bridges over the stream providing access to eastern plots.
- **Setting**
The views between the buildings provide important opportunities for glimpses of the valley.
The changing view of cottages along the curving street.



Title		Rockbourne Conservation Area
Date	Scale	
07/03/19	1:3000	