

Appendix VIII: Heritage assets in Bridestowe and Sourton.

Heritage

The past has had a huge influence upon the appearance and layout of our villages, the hamlets, the landscape of fields, farms, woods and roads and lanes that surround them.

Driving through our rural lanes little thought is given to the fact that the network of roads that bind together the villages and hamlets are Anglo-Saxon in origin. The shape of fields can often be traced back to medieval times when each peasant, serf or landlord apportioned or was apportioned land. Roads twisted and turned around these boundaries. Woodlands were often planted in areas thought to be the least productive for agriculture. The houses that we live in often have a long history and are part of ancient street patterns/ settlements.

Part of the public value of heritage assets and the historic environment is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. They are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation delivers wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.

The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-taking to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development.

NPPF Definition of a Heritage Asset

'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'

Examples in Bridestowe and Sourton would include the ancient cross on Sourton Green and a Grade II* Listed building such as Fernworthy.

NPPF Definition of the Historic Environment

'All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.'

An obvious example of this would be the avenue of beech trees on the roadside in Station Road leading to the Fox and hounds junction; another the moorland so distinctive of Dartmoor where layers of history are visible side by side.

The National Planning Policy Framework (Section 126) gives further guidance saying that all local plans should make the most of ‘heritage assets’ (archaeological sites, historic building, landscapes by setting out (amongst other things)... a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

Where it is relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the Local Plan into action at a neighbourhood scale.

Where relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions.

[\(http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/plan-making-historic-environment/ \)](http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/plan-making-historic-environment/)

Bridestowe and Sourton, like many Devon parishes, have a rich and diverse history dating from the prehistoric period through to modern times. There are 225 heritage assets currently recorded on the Devon Historic Environment database for Bridestowe, and 224 in Sourton.

The range of Assets include prehistoric barrows on Burley Down and north of Leawood Plantation, two Bronze Age findspots of a palstave and an axe, prehistoric field systems near Sourton Down, Cairns, A Roman road, two deserted medieval settlements at Ebsworthy Town Farm and Sourton Down. Remains of silver, lead and copper mines, disused lime kilns, a World War 11 Military Camp. An ancient route referred to as “Moreway” is documented in 1474 and is situated on the line of the Okehampton bypass.

There are nationally important designated heritage assets including 70 listed buildings. The Scheduled monuments date from the Bronze Age onward and include a number of cairns situated at Lake Down, the Sourton Down Cross thought to be 6th century in date; an iron Age hillfort and Motte and Baileys at Burley Wood and the possible Neolithic long barrow north of Leawood Plantation and Bidlake Mill and Leat which dates to the 16th century.

Such is the wealth of assets spread through the two parishes that it is not practicable to draw up a strategy for each and every one of the 449 assets. A rather more pragmatic approach would be to refer any development where there is concern, to the Historic Environment Team at County Hall or whoever holds and is responsible for the (local) Heritage Environment Records.