

10.20 SETTLEMENT INSETS – WEST QUANTOXHEAD

Policy Profile

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| Settlement Classification: | Small Village (SP/1) |
| Landscape Conservation: | Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2) Coastal Zone (CO/1) |
| Landscape Character Area: | Central Quantocks ² (LC/3) |

Location and Character

10.20.1 West Quantoxhead, generally known as St. Audries, is situated south of the A39 along the mid-slopes of the Quantock Hills. From West Quantoxhead this range of hills runs approximately 13 miles south-east to Thurloxton. Watchet and Williton are located 3 miles to the north-west and south-west respectively. The village is wholly within the Quantock Hills AONB³ and derives its character more from the setting than from its physical form. It has very few traditional style buildings, and is largely comprised of twentieth Century developments that follow the triangular road pattern and extend further out into the open countryside. West Quantoxhead is bounded to the south by high quality Grade 1 agricultural land and by Grade 3 land to the west and north.⁴ The land to its east is densely wooded and not in agricultural use.

Settlement Policy

10.20.2 As a result of rapid ribbon development and infilling, West Quantoxhead has grown from a collection of farms and houses built about the point at which The Avenue becomes Weacombe Road into a sprawling settlement. For the purposes of the Plan it is defined as a Small Village in Policy SP/1.

10.20.3 While recent developments have been screened from within the village, they are highly intrusive from the lower-lying areas to the west. Furthermore the Local Planning Authority recognises the primacy of the conservation objective of AONB status.⁵ Consequently the Local Planning Authority proposes to restrict further development by the adoption of a development limit line drawn tight to the existing built-up area of the village.

¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

² WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

³ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

⁴ Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

⁵ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN – APRIL 2006

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals for development will be assessed against all the relevant policies

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Population and Housing

- 10.20.4 By 1981 the Parish population had fallen to 291,⁶ but in 2001 it had recovered to a total of 390.⁷ The modern residential developments vary in quality; some are comprised of mixed dwelling types and consideration has been given to hard and soft landscaping, while others are built in styles and materials which are incongruous with their setting.
- 10.20.5 The Local Planning Authority proposes to reinforce its current policy of no new peripheral housing within this area, and any locally generated demand will be met within the village development limits. Affordable housing is a separate issue and may be permitted on an exception site (see Policy H/5).

Employment

- 10.20.6 West Quantoxhead's function is as a retirement settlement and, to a lesser extent, as a dormitory settlement for Minehead, Watchet and Williton. Employment within the settlement includes that provided by the Windmill Inn Public House, the garage and agricultural holdings. Staple Farm is a working farm within the village while just outside a nursery, Cotswolds Hardy Plants Ltd., operates from Wibble Farm.

Shops and Services

- 10.20.7 The services in the village have largely arisen from its arterial position on the A39. These include a garage and the Windmill Inn. The post office/general stores has closed and its business has been transferred to the garage shop. The mobile library service visits the village each fortnight. The Windmill Inn is advertised as having a children's play area but its use is restricted to customers only.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.20.8 There are very few buildings of historic importance within the village. Those that have warranted protection are mainly in the grounds of St. Audries School and include a Victorian Tudor-style mansion and a Church dating back to the same period.⁸ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings are judged. The landscaped grounds themselves are also recognised as being of historic interest and feature on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England⁹ (see Policy LB/3).

⁶ Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

⁷ Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

⁸ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

⁹ English Heritage; Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England (as amended); English Heritage; 2004

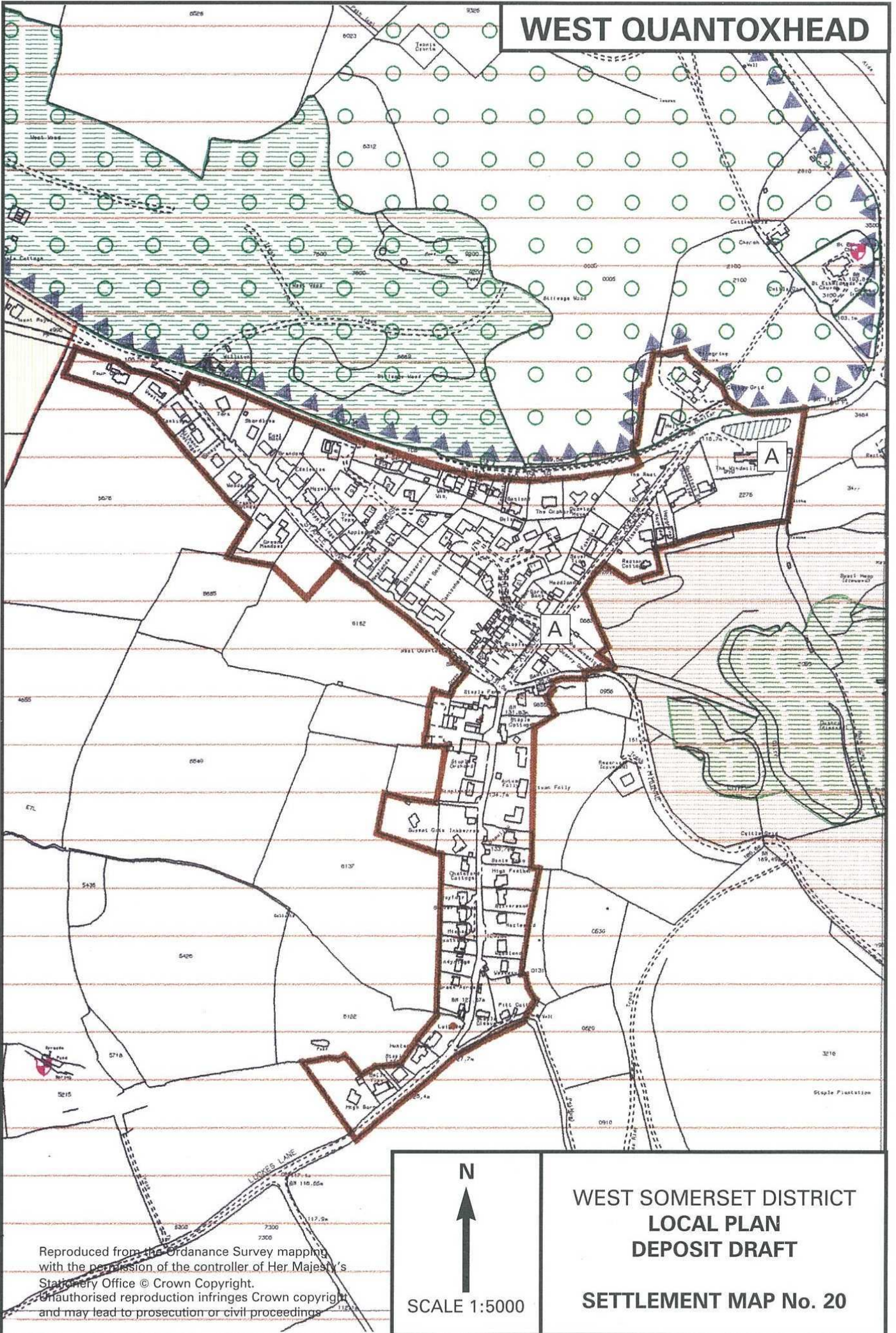
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- 10.20.9 It is important to protect views looking out of the settlement. Views into the area have been marred by modern development, although the higher slopes are heavily wooded and provide a pleasant backcloth. The Local Planning Authority believes it to be imperative to prevent any further development to the south and southwest of the village along the exposed slopes of the Quantocks.
- 10.20.10 There are several tree groups within the village, particularly along Staple Lane and Weacombe Road, which offer some screening of the village from the outside and these will be protected in accordance with Policy TW/1.

WEST QUANTOXHEAD



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WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT
LOCAL PLAN
DEPOSIT DRAFT

SETTLEMENT MAP No. 20