

# 10.5 SETTLEMENT INSETS - CROWCOMBE

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## Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB <sup>1</sup> (LC/2)
Landscape Character Area:	Doniford Stream and Quantock Fringe <sup>2</sup> (LC/3)

## Location and Character

10.5.1 Crowcombe is situated on the lower slopes of the Quantocks, within the designated AONB,<sup>3</sup> midway between Minehead and Taunton. It is a linear village and the road along which it lies joins up with the A358 at either end. The original structure of the village was of a dispersed nature with groups of buildings fronting the long village street, separated by open spaces. Over time much of its characteristic, open nature has been lost as a result of considerable pressure for development which has been accepted as infilling, nevertheless the village still has two distinct parts. Crowcombe is surrounded by average quality Grade 3 agricultural land on all sides except to the north, where there is poorer quality Grade 4 land.<sup>4</sup>

## Settlement Policy

10.5.2 Crowcombe is designated as a Village in Policy SP/1. Not only is it of sufficient size to merit village status but the range of services available indicates that there may be the potential for further residential development. However, particularly its location within the AONB,<sup>5</sup> but also the extent of recent development permissions and the limited overall dwelling requirement of the Plan leads the Local Planning Authority to the conclusion that new development should be restricted to infilling, conversion or redevelopment within a tightly drawn development limit boundary. Furthermore, it is very important that the open land in the middle of the settlement remains undeveloped in order to retain the village's distinct two-part character.

## Population and Housing

10.5.3 In 2001 the resident population of Crowcombe Parish was 477,<sup>6</sup> compared to 367 in 1981.<sup>7</sup> The Parish has a scattering of smaller settlements but strict policies control their development, therefore it can be assumed that Crowcombe has

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

<sup>2</sup> WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

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

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

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

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

<sup>7</sup> Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1981: Ward and Civil Parish Monitor: Somerset; HMSO; 1984. ISBN 0 903933 85 3

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## 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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accommodated the majority of recent residential development and will continue to do so, in a very limited way, for the period of the Plan. The design and siting of development will be carefully considered at an early stage in the planning process.

### Employment

10.5.4 Crowcombe originally functioned as an agricultural village but has since developed as a dormitory settlement and place of retirement. As a result there is little employment within the village itself. Crowcombe Court Residential Home employs a workforce of approximately 20 and the Quantock Wine Cellars operates from a converted outbuilding of Grime's Farm.

### Shops and Services

10.5.5 Facilities offered by Crowcombe include a post office/general stores, the Carew Arms Public House, Church of the Holy Ghost, the First School and playing field, village hall, recreation ground and cricket ground. The mobile library service calls at the village fortnightly. There is a free public car park in the southern part of the village, and the Taunton-Minehead bus stops on the A358 close by, some services making a daily detour through the village itself.

### Environment and Conservation

10.5.6 Crowcombe was once, as its medieval market cross shows,<sup>8</sup> a place of some importance at the junction of a hill crossing and a road leading from Taunton to the coast. The village contains properties of mixed type and age. Twenty-four buildings and structures are listed for their architectural and/or historic interest including Church of the Holy Ghost and Crowcombe Court, which are both Grade 1 Listed.<sup>9</sup> Opposite the Church, which is mainly fourteenth Century, between the road and a car park and a few yards from the old market place is the Church House, built in 1515. Crowcombe Court, a large brick mansion built in the early part of the eighteenth century, is also a good example of its period.<sup>10</sup> Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged.

10.5.7 Due to the 'historic buildings' piecemeal arrangement and recent infilling it is felt that no part of Crowcombe warrants conservation area status, however efforts to improve and enhance the appearance of the village will be encouraged.

10.5.8 Crowcombe has three sites of archaeological importance; the Village Cross, and Church House and Pound are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments<sup>11</sup> to which Policy AH/1 applies. The third area of archaeological importance is that

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<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Somerset County Council; Somerset Historic Environment Record: Record 34617 – Village Cross, East of Carew Arms, Crowcombe; Somerset County Council; 1983

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surrounding the Church and stretching northwards into woodland which is subject to the provisions of Policy AH/2.

- 10.5.9 The most important views include the view southwards from Grime's Farm, and those views of Crowcombe Court from the Village road and from the A358. These views should be preserved to retain the village's visual links with the open countryside and Quantock Hills.
- 10.5.10 There are several important tree groups within and surrounding the village. These enhance amenity and will be protected in accordance with Policy TW/1. Towards the eastern end of village the buildings back onto the A358 and the noise from this road is quite intrusive, but trees act as a buffer to this noise and may even reduce air pollution levels.

### **Cemetery**

- 10.5.11 The existing churchyard of the Church of the Holy Ghost has capacity for only a few years. It is considered that additional land should be allocated for cemetery purposes. For convenience, land should adjoin the existing churchyard although any extension would impinge upon the parkland associated with Crowcombe Court. However, on balance, a marginal loss of that land for this important community use appears to be the only acceptable alternative.

### **POLICY CRO/1: Extension to Cemetery**

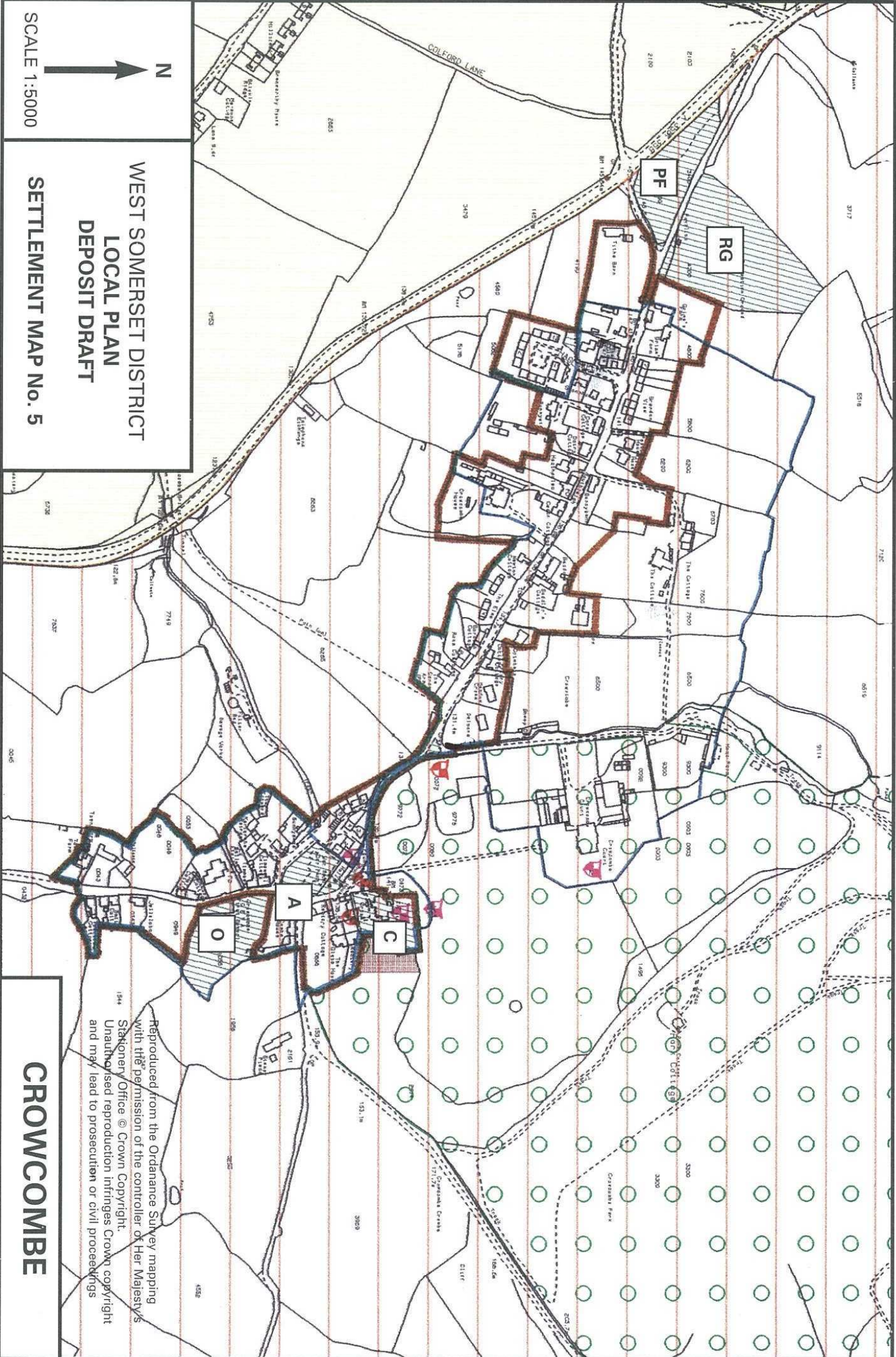
**Land adjoining the Church of the Holy Ghost, Crowcombe, as shown on the inset map, is allocated for Cemetery purposes.**

SCALE 1:5000



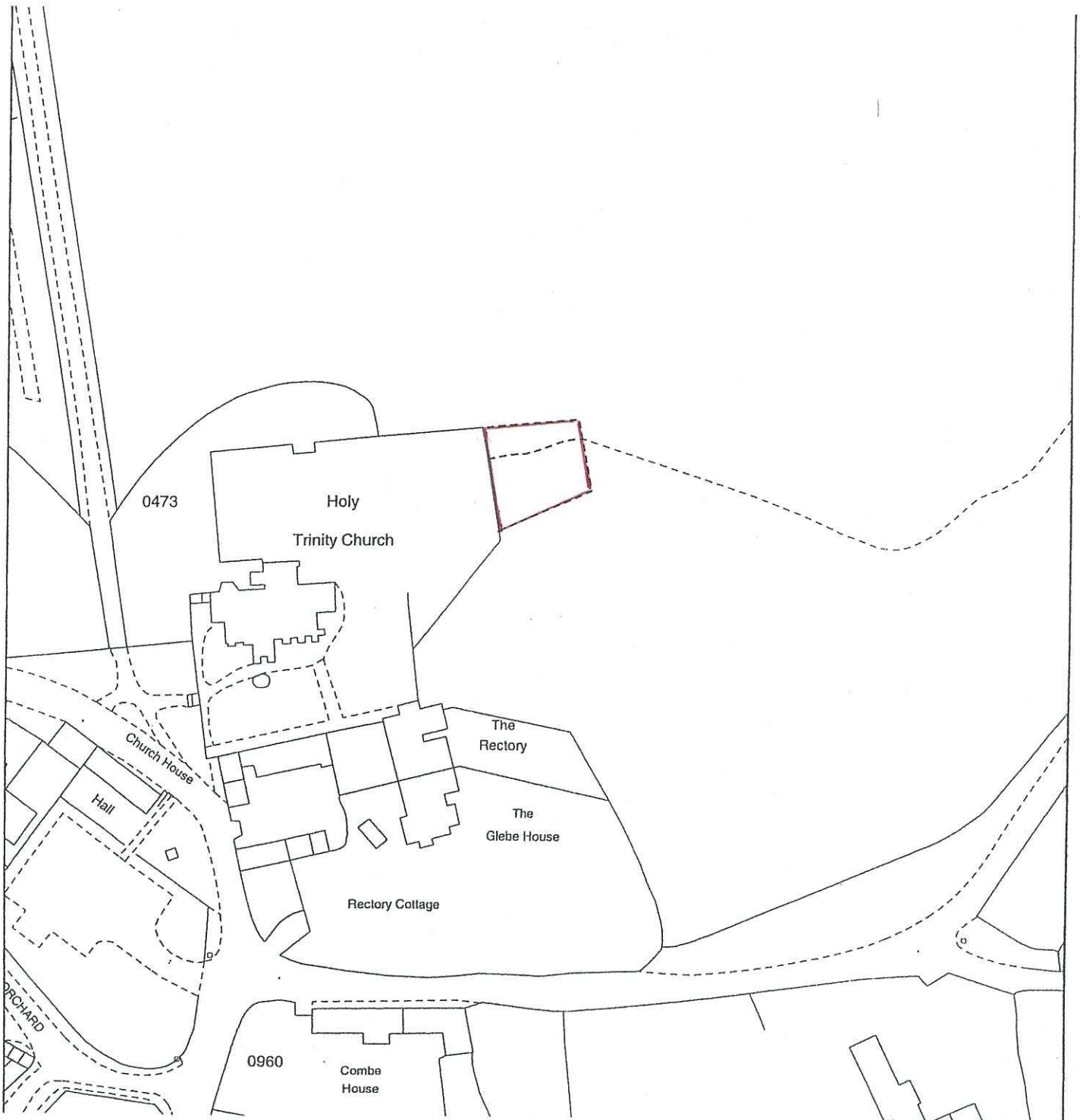
**WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT  
LOCAL PLAN  
DEPOSIT DRAFT**

**SETTLEMENT MAP No. 5**



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**CROWCOMBE**



0473

Holy  
Trinity Church

Church House

Hall

The  
Rectory

The  
Glebe House

Rectory Cottage

0960

Combe  
House

ORCHARD