

10.7 SETTLEMENT INSETS – HOLFORD

Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village .(SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB ¹ (LC/2)
Landscape Character Area:	The Quantock Vale ² (LC/3)

Location and Character

10.7.1 Holford is an attractive village set in an AONB at the foot of the Quantock Hills,³ approximately midway between Williton and Bridgwater. The compact northern part of the village straddles the A39 while development is more dispersed along the minor roads of Holford Glen to the south. Holford is surrounded by average quality Grade 3 agricultural land to the north and east, whilst to the south and west land is generally poor quality Grade 5 land or not in agricultural use.⁴

Settlement Policy

10.7.2 Holford offers a limited range of services and facilities to be classified as a Small Village and is defined as such in Policy SP/1, the potential and, more importantly, desirability for further development is limited and would be detrimental to its visual character. Consequently further development within Holford will be strictly limited to within the limits defined on the Inset Map. The development limits are drawn tight about the main built up area of the village, and exclude the dispersed development which extends south and west towards Hodders Combe. Any consolidation of development or coalescence into ribbon development will need to be resisted at all costs.

Population and Housing

10.7.3 The Parish of Holford is fairly large and includes the settlements of Holford and Dodington. Its population rose by almost 25% from 247 in 1981⁵ to 302 in 2001,⁶ and this increase appears to have been evenly distributed throughout the Parish. Recent development in Holford has taken the form of infilling within the northern part of the settlement but an open structure has been retained in Holford Glen.

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

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

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- 10.7.4 To the west of the A39 there has been development in the inter and post-war years, although there is little of recent origin. Southwards, through the village, there has been isolated infilling but the open structure of Holford has been maintained. It is to the east of the A39 that the most modern development has taken place in the form of a District Council housing scheme.
- 10.7.5 There are fairly considerable environmental constraints on further development and several recent proposals for residential development have been refused and/or dismissed on appeal generally on one or more of the following grounds:-
- (i) most of the village is within the AONB;⁷
 - (ii) the stream in the valley is an important habitat for rare plant species;
 - (iii) development along the A39 is potentially hazardous as it is a major highway;
 - (iv) peripheral development outside the designated village boundary would be divorced from the existing community.

Employment

- 10.7.6 Holford functions as an agricultural community, a dormitory for Bridgwater and also a retirement settlement.

Shops and Services

- 10.7.7 Facilities offered by Holford include St. Mary's Church, a recently rebuilt village hall and parking area, the Plough Inn public house, post office/general stores and tea room, repairs garage and filling station and a cricket field. The mobile library service visits the village every fortnight. Several Bed and Breakfast establishments operate within the village. A Youth Hostel and two large hotels, Combe House and Alfoxton Park, are located close by.

Environment and Conservation

- 10.7.8 Seven of the properties in Holford plus St. Mary's Church and the partially restored Pound are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest.⁸ Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. In addition, there are several groups of attractive cottages interspersed by distinctive open spaces along Holford Combe. The south and west of the village are bound tightly by the Quantock Hills SSSI⁹ and the historic village core is regarded as being of archaeological importance.

⁷ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

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, Strington and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

⁹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

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- 10.7.9 The Holford Conservation Area¹⁰ includes only part of the village since most is within the AONB¹¹ and a conservation area would only duplicate some of the legislative controls. Similarly an SSSI¹² offers more statutory protection to an area than conservation area designation. The principal reason for designating a conservation area is to control development within built-up areas and although it is entirely reasonable to include whole or parts of villages (and the open spaces within them) it is inappropriate to include tracts of open countryside and woodlands.
- 10.7.10 The Conservation Area¹³ extends from Winsors Farm north-east along Holford Combe. It forms part of the historic village core which is considered to be of archaeological interest. It incorporates St. Mary's Church and four other listed buildings,¹⁴ groups of attractive cottages and larger detached properties. Also included are important open spaces and mature trees between building groups which contribute to the special character of Holford (see Policies CA/1-CA/3).
- 10.7.11 The Bowling Green is a registered village green, the status of which protects it from development.
- 10.7.12 Included within the village limits are significant open areas to the north of the Church (an old orchard) and to the south of the Rectory. It is considered that any development in these areas would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the Conservation Area¹⁵ and the village in general (see Policy R/5).

¹⁰ West Somerset District Council; Holford Conservation Area Designation, 14th November 1990; West Somerset District Council; 1990.

¹¹ National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ West Somerset District Council; Holford Conservation Area Designation, 14th November 1990; op. cit.

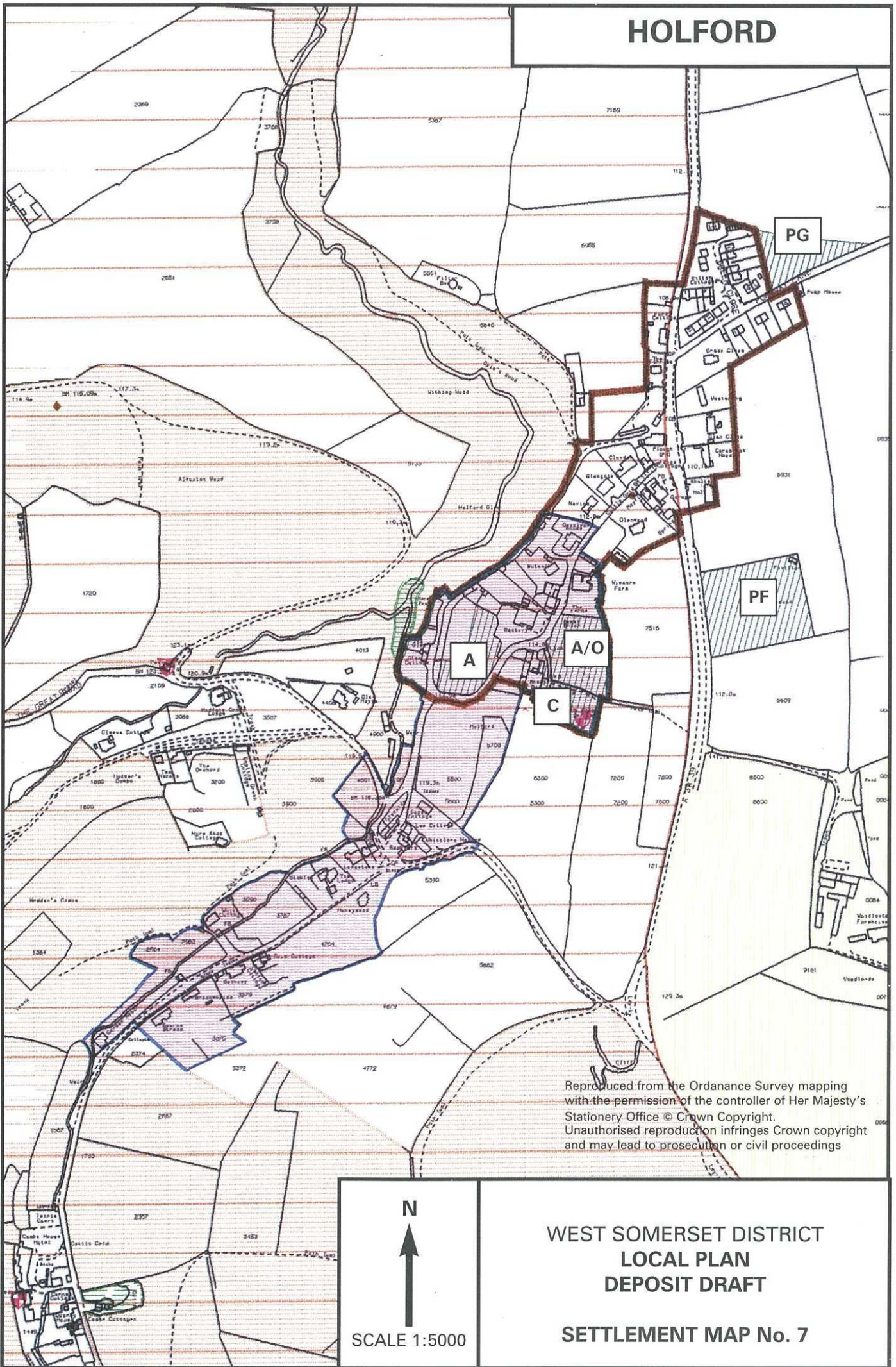
¹⁴ Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Stringston and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); op. cit.

¹⁵ West Somerset District Council; Holford Conservation Area Designation, 14th November 1990; op. cit.

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HOLFORD



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WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT
LOCAL PLAN
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SETTLEMENT MAP No. 7