

Conservation Area Appraisal



Bolam
March 2010

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Bolam

March 2010

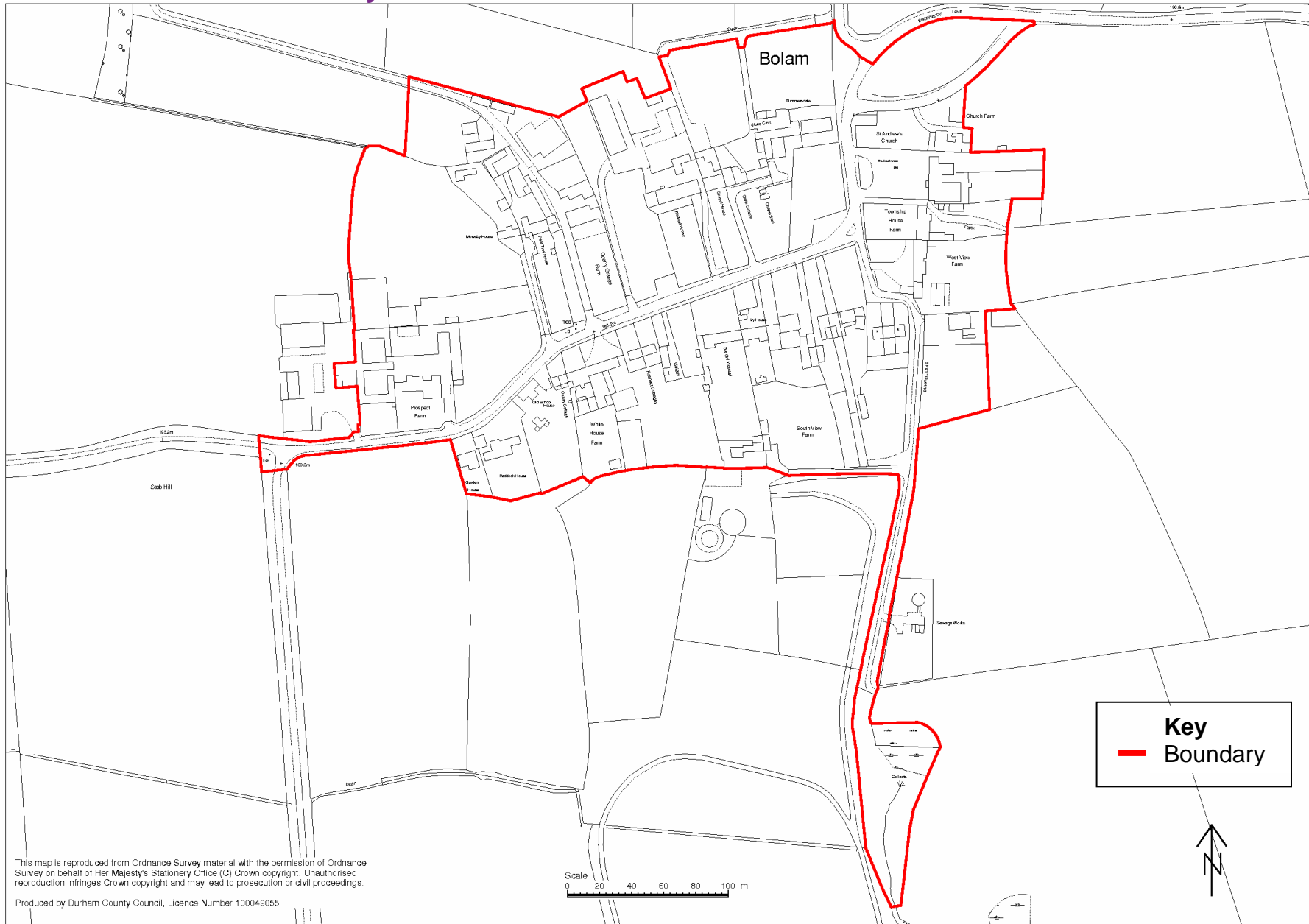


*Design and Historic Environment
Durham County Council*

Designated 10 March 2010
Appraisal 2010

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Conservation Area Boundary



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Introduction and Public Consultation

This appraisal was prepared by Durham County Council to allow an informed decision to be made about the designation of Bolam as a conservation area and to determine the boundary.

The request for conservation area status came from the community of Bolam and their comments and local knowledge have helped to inform this appraisal.

There were two consultation events; the first to introduce the concept of conservation areas and to learn by way of round table workshops what residents considered to be special about their village; the second to present the appraisal and proposed boundary for further comment. The draft appraisal document and a questionnaire were sent to all residents. Residents are thanked for their responses and contributions which have been incorporated into the final version of the appraisal.

Conservation Areas & Planning Legislation

Conservation areas are places that have a definable character or appearance which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities have a statutory duty to review historic areas from time to time in order to ascertain if further designations are deemed appropriate.

Designation brings with it a number of controls and duties

- In exercising its planning function, the local authority is required to pay attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- The local authority has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.
- In conservation areas permission must be sought from the local authority for making certain changes that would not require permission elsewhere. These include cladding, inserting dormer windows, and putting up satellite dishes that are visible from the street.
- Consent must be sought from the local authority to totally or substantially demolish any building within a conservation area.
- Notice must be given to the local authority before undertaking works to trees in conservation areas.
- Certain categories of 'deemed consent' advertisements which may have a significant visual impact are not permitted for display in a conservation area without the local authority's consent.
- The local authority has the powers (under Article 4 of the General Development Order) to control development that would normally not require permission.

These controls and duties are to enable the local authority to manage change in a sympathetic way that would protect or enhance the conservation area. They are not there to stop progress.

Planning Policy Context

The local planning policy can be found in the Teesdale Local Plan April 2009, Saved and Expired Policies.

POLICY BENV4

Development within and/or adjoining conservation areas will only be permitted provided that:

- A) The proposed location, design, layout, materials and scale respect the quality and character of the area;
- B) Materials for buildings and hard landscaping must be appropriate to and sympathetic with the characteristics of the area;
- C) The proposal does not generate excessive traffic, parking, noise or other environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- D) The proposal does not destroy trees, hedgerows, landscape features, views and undeveloped areas which contribute to the character or the appearance to the area and its settings;
- E) Any services which lead to the new development should wherever possible be located under ground;
- F) Proposals should meet the requirements of other relevant policies of the local plan.

Proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a conservation area or the views into or out of the area will not be permitted.

Conservation Area Appraisals

An appraisal evaluates and records the significance of the area and the elements that contribute to its special character. It allows an informed assessment to be made of the suitability of the area for conservation area status and to establish a boundary.

Thereafter the appraisal can be used to provide a sound basis upon which to determine planning applications and to manage change in a positive way.

The appraisal considers,

- Historic Development
- Archaeological Importance
- Architectural Character
- Landscape, Views and Setting
- Activity and Character

Summary of Special Interest

From the character appraisal it is considered that the special character of Bolam lies principally in its historic compact form and its unspoilt simplicity. This special character is derived from:

- Houses and farms grouped in a well defined envelope the layout of which has changed little since the first O.S. map of 1856.
- The very high proportion of historic vernacular buildings.
- Consistent building materials and design features.
- The number of well defined garths (paddocks) with their low stone boundary walls.
- Strong agricultural influence with continuing agricultural uses within the settlement.
- The setting within a wide rural landscape, containing significant evidence of historic agricultural land use.

Conservation Area Potential

Government guidance states that it is the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas. In this respect Bolam is a well defined area with a strong character determined by its compact layout, the cohesive appearance of its buildings and the distinctive well preserved garths along the road frontage.

The condition of the buildings, features and spaces is good and there are no obvious areas in need of enhancement.

The neighbouring villages of Wackerfield and Hilton which are of similar character and appearance are designated as conservation areas.

The village was listed as a potential conservation area in the Teesdale Local Plan 2002 although the specific policy “expired” in the current Teesdale Local Plan April 2009. Saved and Expired Policies.

Boundary

The conservation area boundary reflects the key characteristics of the village identified in the appraisal. It follows a tight line around the edge of the built area to include all the houses, traditional farm buildings and stone walled garths which contribute to its distinctive appearance. It reflects the enclosed and compact nature of the village within the wider, rural landscape which has changed little since the first O.S. map was produced in 1856.

There is one extension to the south to include Dunwell Lane which leads to one of the original public wells, now an area of marshy ground. Dunwell Lane is an excellent survival of a small sunken lane that once provided access to the medieval field system.

The conservation area is surrounded by various features of the medieval field system including rig and furrow, hollow ways and a number of cultivation terraces. These features add to the historic understanding of the village and are significant to the setting of the conservation area.

Conservation Character Appraisal

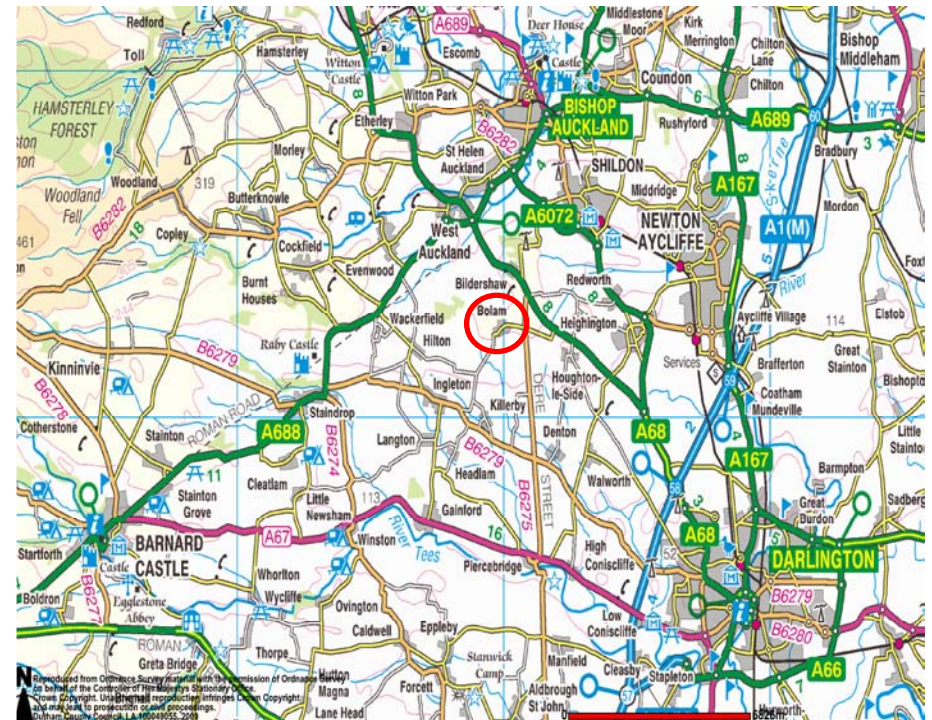
Location and Context

Bolam occupies a crest of high ground on the edge of the Tees basin with panoramic views down into the Tees Vale. It is 8 miles north west of Darlington, 5 miles north east of Staindrop and 4 miles north of Gainford.

It is a compact rural settlement with houses and farms occupying a roughly level area with land falling sharply away to the south and rising slightly to the north.

The only road through the village connects with neighbouring villages and eventually to larger towns like Gainford and Staindrop. Dere Street (B6275) is half a mile to the east.

Bolam is set in a broad landscape surrounded by countryside where the principal land use is agriculture.



Location Plan - Bolam

Historic Development

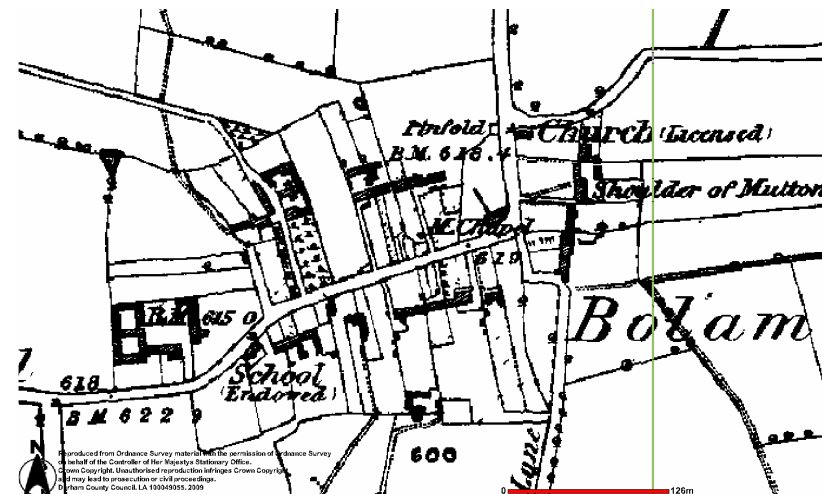
The first written record of Bolam then recorded as Bolum is found in Assize Rolls for County Durham in 1235. The name is however widely considered to be Anglo-Saxon in origin meaning either the place at the round hills, or the place at the boles or tree trunks. The settlement is likely to be 9th century in origin and has always been a farming settlement. It remains a very small rural village based on its historic core.

Pre 1786 – Sometime around 1200, like many Durham villages Bolam was re-planned on a more regular layout, with a central green running through the middle with two parallel rows of houses and farms facing it on either side. Thin linear tofts extended north and south from the central green. It was surrounded by three open fields farmed in strips. These fields were North Field, West Field and Dunwell Field. Evidence of ridge and furrow ploughing and other features of farming at this time can still be found in the fields outside the village.

Inclosure 1786 – At Inclosure, the open fields were subdivided into large regular enclosures and allocated to landowners. Morton Road as it approached the village across the former West Field was straightened and provided with a practical width, now seen as generous grass verges. Staindrop Road (known today as Stob Hill Lane) was modified and although improved, it remained winding. Dunwell Lane leading to the well was retained and survives today as a distinctive sunken lane leading to an area of marshy ground. Unfortunately no inclosure map was produced, so there is no map based record of how the village appeared at this time.

Tithe Award 1839 – The Tithe Award map is the earliest definitive map of the village available. It shows a layout very similar to that of today. The village green had been enclosed in 1813 with its distinctive garths and by this time a pond is shown at the junction with Dunwell Lane as is the new church built in 1835.

First Edition O.S. map surveyed 1856 - produced only 17 years after the Tithe Award Map, it shows the village school which opened in 1854 and the pub then called “The Shoulder of Mutton”.



1st Edition O.S. map 1856 showing the village very much as it is today

Post 1856 The most significant change since 1856 has been the grassing over of the pond in 1967 and its designation as “The Green”. A few new houses and some modern barns have been added to the basic framework. The school was closed in 1965 but essentially the village has changed little over the last 150 years.

Population

The population for the Parish has been around 100. The peak was in 1901 when there were 141 people and the lowest was in 1951 when there were 81 people.

In 2001 there was a change in the presentation of the census information and figures for the actual village became available. In 2001 the number of residents was recorded at 63 (31 males and 32 females).

Landscape Character

The County Durham Landscape Character Assessment (2003) places Bolam in the Dales Fringe character area. This is a generally broad landscape with panoramic views from higher ground across the Tees Vale. It is an essentially rural landscape with little urban or industrial development.

The village itself is within an Area of High Landscape Value centred on Barnard Castle. However, the land immediately outside the built area to the south and east is not included. (Appendix 4)

The landscape has a long history of settlement and a nucleated pattern of small green villages of Saxon and late medieval origin. Buildings are local sandstone with roofs of stone flag, welsh slate or clay pantile. Villages are connected by a network of narrow hedged lanes. Bolam fits well into this broad landscape description.

Bolam is situated on higher ground just below the 650' crest of the drift covered gritstone rim of the Tees basin. The village

commands wide views southwards down the gently rolling slopes to the river Tees and beyond.



Bolam is located in a broad landscape with panoramic views

The land is predominantly pastoral although with some arable farming. Fields are divided by hedges with few hedgerow trees.

Quarrying has taken place to the north of the village where a band of whinstone (dolerite/basalt), a hard volcanic rock has been quarried for use in the road building industry. The quarry is closed and has no impact on the character or appearance of the village.

Despite its elevated position Bolam is not highly visible in the wider landscape due to its small size and compact form and the local folds of land which enclose it.

Form and Layout

Bolam is a nucleated settlement with houses and farms grouped within a small well defined envelope. A significant feature of the village is its well preserved compact form.

The layout of the village core was originally based on a village green which was linear in shape with parallel rows of houses on either side. In 1813 the green was subdivided into small plots and allocated to properties on either side.

The new plots became known as garths.

The garths are a special feature of the village. They are linear in shape and extend from the buildings to the road over what was originally the village green. They are bounded by stone walls to create strong enclosures. Several are still used for the grazing of animals including sheep, goats, horses and chickens. Other garths now used as gardens are still easily distinguished.

The existence of the former village green also accounts for the wide distance between facing properties in the middle of the village.



A garth or paddock surrounded by stone walls

There is no longer such a significant public open space within the village. However, the small triangle of land with a seat at the junction of Dunwell Lane and the land beside the church are valued today for their amenity value and contribution to setting. The small triangle of land was originally the village pond but it was grassed over and registered as “The Green” in 1967.

The only road through the village connects with neighbouring villages and eventually to larger towns like Gainford and Staindrop. It retains its grass verges throughout and there is little through traffic.

Archaeology

The Durham County Council Historic Environment Record holds several entries for Bolam and surroundings. Reference is made to evidence suggesting that in the later medieval period (1066-1540), the village was larger than it is today. Evidence for 'shrinkage' of the settlement can be seen in the earthworks of probable house platforms on the north-east side of Prospect Farm and within the boundary of the conservation area.

The earliest identified archaeological remains in the area lie just over half a mile south of Bolam at Sandforth Moor, where a Roman marching Camp of the late 1st century has been identified. The major Roman Road of Dere Street lies half a mile to the east of the village where at its junction with Bolam Road, there is the base and surviving upright section of a sandstone cross, Leggs Cross a scheduled ancient monument and a listed building, grade II*.

Although outside the Conservation Area boundary, the Cross is a rare surviving monument of the early medieval period providing further richness to the historic development of Bolam. More detailed information can be found at Appendix 3.

The Medieval Field System

Providing additional significance to the conservation area is the excellent survival of earthwork and landscape features exemplifying the medieval and later agricultural landscape surrounding Bolam and with which the history and economy of the village is inextricably linked.

Various features of the surviving medieval agricultural field system have been identified including rig and furrow of various widths and alignments, a number of cultivation terraces developed over several hundred years to allow ox pulled ploughs to cultivate the south facing slopes of the Tees valley, headlands at the end of former plough strips, hollow ways and lanes. The best surviving historic field system features of a variety of periods are found in a 'halo' around the village conservation area and are shown in diagrammatic form at Appendix 6.



Holloway and rig and furrow to the north east of the Conservation Area

Architectural Character

Bolam is medieval in origin. The oldest surviving building is probably The Old Vicarage which dates from the early seventeenth century. Most other buildings are shown on the tithe map of 1841 and are built in a traditional way with local materials.

Buildings are modest with simple detailing. Many have had minor changes like new windows, small extensions or new roofs that have removed some of the original character. It is therefore more the layout and cohesive character of the built form that creates the character in Bolam rather than the appearance of individual buildings.

Key features of traditional buildings:

- Simple rectangular shape with smaller additions to side and back.
- Two storey height.
- Chimneys and stone gable copings on end gables.
- Well ordered elevations with windows and doors above each other.
- Vertically proportioned window openings.
- Local materials, stone, render/limewash, clay pantiles, slate.

The use of these features creates a continuity of shape, scale and architectural detailing so that buildings sit well together and are distinctive to the village.

There are few modern buildings.

Barns and farm buildings are as important as residential buildings. They are simple in shape and form and in design reflect the agricultural uses to which they were put. They play an important role in defining the character of the village as rural.



Simple shape and form of agricultural buildings



West View – a typical group of buildings displaying well ordered elevations

Important Buildings

There are two listed buildings which are recognised as being of national interest for their special architectural or historic interest. They are

- St Andrew's Church, grade II
- The Old Vicarage grade II

Most other buildings can be described as being of local interest. Lists of all these special buildings can be found at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Building Materials

There is a very limited palette of materials giving the village a strong built identity. Typically seen are clay pantiles or slate for the roofs and sandstone for the main construction.

Brick and other manufactured materials are not local and do not feature significantly within the village.

Historically stone and clay would have been available from the land. The first edition O.S. map shows small sandstone quarries to the south of the village. Later with better communications, slate became available and some stone buildings were rendered or limewashed for greater weather protection.

Materials have been used in different combinations giving some variety to the appearance of buildings but within the very limited range.

Boundaries/Mean of Enclosure

Stone boundary walls are a significant feature of the village. About 1m high, they form all the main boundaries on the road frontage and define most of the garths. They are well maintained.

Outside the village stone walls are replaced by hedges as boundary features. This contrast contributes significantly to defining the limits of the village in the countryside.



Stone boundary walls surrounding the garths are a significant feature of the village

Setting and Views

Bolam is set in a wide landscape with open views into the countryside of the Tees Vale. It is particularly significant that despite the extent of the view there is no urban or industrial development in sight to disrupt the pastoral scene. The special rural character of the village is thus very much a product of its setting.

Also of significance is the contrast between the open setting of Bolam and the enclosed nature of the village itself. Inside the village there are few views to the open countryside as the houses turn inwards to face each other.

Views within the village are mainly channelled along the road with its stone walls on either side. Buildings provide end stops at the bends. Of particular importance in this respect are the stone and pantile barns at Prospect Farm at the west end of the village and Township House at the east end.

Public rights of way and the roads out of the village to the north, south and east open out into the countryside behind the village and the views can be appreciated.

A map of important views is at Appendix 5.



Looking towards Township House: views through the village are stopped by the bends in the road providing a sense of enclosure

Open Spaces and Trees

The original layout of Bolam was around a village green but that open space has been enclosed by the garths. The only public open space remaining is the small triangle of land that was once the pond at the junction with Dunwell Lane. It has little visual significance but it does provide a community seating space.

Although enclosed by stone walls the garths remain important as open spaces. They allow animals to be grazed at the heart of the village.

Trees are not significant in the landscape with only a few dotted in the hedgerows. There are more trees within the village but only a few are mature. Many were planted in 1994. Overall whilst adding to the attractive appearance of the village, they do not make a significant contribution to its character. There are no tree preservation orders.

Activity

Bolam is a small compact village with limited facilities comprising only the church and The Countryman Public House. As the last two remaining services they are cherished by the community.

Agricultural activity is still important with three operational farms. Prospect Farm, Wellfield Farm and Quarry Grange Farm based within the village core. Animals can be seen within the garths bringing farming right into the heart of the village and retaining the pastoral character.

The remainder of the village is residential.



Farming activity takes place in the village

General Condition of Bolam

The condition of buildings and open spaces within the village is good and residents obviously care about their village. There are no obvious areas in need of enhancement. This is a good basis for managing the future of any conservation area.

Future Challenges

Bolam is a well preserved rural village with no major unsympathetic visual intrusions. However, there is still potential to protect and enhance its special character and appearance and meet future challenges in a sympathetic way.

Alterations to Buildings

Changes to windows, roofs, the removal of chimneys and the addition of extensions can have harmful effects and lead to loss of character. Traditional features should be repaired or replaced on a like for like basis using traditional materials.

New Buildings

Care must always be taken to ensure that new buildings are well located within the village framework and built to reflect local character, scale and detail.

Change

Change in Bolam has been slow with very little new development since the first ordnance survey in 1856. The twenty-first century may bring new demands which must be carefully considered with regard to impact on the character and appearance of the village. This appraisal should be a starting point for the consideration of change.

Management Proposals

- Protect the open nature of the garths.
- Repair the county road sign at the west end of the village.
- Consider an Article 4 Direction to provide control over changes to historic and architectural features particularly changes to roofs.
- Undertake further research into the origins of buildings as many are likely to have some seventeenth and eighteenth century fabric.
- Undertake further research and survey of the historic multi-period field systems surrounding the village.
- Improve the lay-by, interpretation and setting of Leggs Cross.
- Underground overhead wires.



Traditional County road sign in need of repair

Appendix 1 Listed Buildings

A listed building is one recognised by the Government as being of special architectural or historic interest as specified by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listing is made at three levels of importance Grade I the most important, Grade II* and Grade II. The protection afforded by this legislation applies to the whole of the listed building and any structure attached to it and land within its curtilage. Listed building consent is required for any demolition, extension or alteration proposed which might affect its character.

St Andrew's Church

Grade II

Date Listed: 04/07/1985

NGR: NZ1989522621



Parish church. 1835. Dressed sandstone, ashlar window and door surrounds; moderately-pitched Welsh slate roof. Nave and continuous chancel. Early English style with single lancets in hollow-chamfered reveals. 3 bays. Chamfered plinth. 3 lancets in south wall; windowless north wall. West end: central door under moulded, pointed arch of 2 orders, small lancet above; gabled bellcote has single opening and projects slightly from wall on a row of 3 corbels. 3 stepped lancets at east end. Low, coped gable parapets with kneelers. Plain, partly-plastered interior.

The Old Vicarage

Grade II

Date Listed: 04/07/1985

NGR: NZ1980422484



House. Probably early C17 with extensive C19 alterations. Sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings, roughcast at front and rendered at rear; moderately-pitched Welsh slate roofs and two corniced gable stacks. Long and low front with attached 2-storey, single-bay section to left and gabled, single-bay wing to rear. 2-storey, 4-bay front has C17 doorway with chamfered jambs, Tudor-arched head and monolithic lintel under hoodmould, in second bay from left; C19 4-pane sashes and tripartite ground floor window to right. Right return has external gable stack with bread oven projection to rear. Rear has mainly renewed 12-pane sashes in raised surrounds. Roof has coped gables with shaped kneelers.

Interior: early C17 fireplace has wide segmental arch of sandstone ashlar, chamfered jambs and rebuilt, brick-lined bread oven; late C17 dogleg staircase with moulded string and handrail and two barley-sugar balusters per tread; several early C18 2-panel doors and a ground-floor room with early C18 raised-and-fielded panelling.

Appendix 2 Locally Interesting Buildings

These are buildings which while not possessing sufficient interest to be listed as of national importance, still make a considerable contribution to the local scene and are considered important enough to warrant identification. Such buildings add to the general architectural richness of the area and it will be important that careful consideration is given to any development proposals that are likely to affect such buildings.

The list includes all the buildings that were evident on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map 1856.

Building	Interest
Church Farm	The first house on ancient east side of village
Countryman Inn	Homestead, Garth & public house
Township House	Homestead & Garth
West View	Formerly West House Farm
Yatima	House & Garden
South View	Originally South Farm
Ashley Cottage	House
Ivy House	On land formerly belonged to Vicarage
Killriggs	Homestead & Garth
Prospect Cottages	Occupied in 1824 by one of two blacksmiths
White House Farm	Homestead & Garth
Quarry Cottage	Originally two cottages
The Old School	1854
Prospect House	Farmhouse
Prospect Farm	Vernacular farm buildings, highly visible
Moresby House	House & Garth over former village green
Pear Tree House	House & Garth over former village green
Quarry Grange	House & Garth over former village green
Wellfield House	House & Garth over former village green
Chapel House	House & Garth over former village green
Garth Cottage	House & Garth over former village green

Building	Interest
Chapel Cottage	House & Garth over former village green
Chapel Barn	Residential conversion of former barn
Boundary Walls	Stone walls throughout
Stone Gate Posts	Stone gate posts throughout

Of these the Old School House would be singled out as being of particular interest to the village for its social interest and prominent position alongside the road.



Building
The Old School House

Importance
Social Interest in prominent location

Appendix 3 Scheduled Ancient Monument

Leggs Cross

Although outside the Conservation Area boundary the cross is a significant feature providing further richness to the historical development of Bolam.

The cross is a rare and significant surviving monument of the Early Medieval period. Unlike the majority of Anglo-Saxon crosses its function is not ecclesiastical but as a boundary marker. Its location immediately adjacent to Dere Street, which remained both an important route and land boundary after the end of Roman Britain and during the formation of England in the 6th to 10th centuries, is significant. The cross probably marked the subdivision of a major Anglo-Saxon estate centred on Gainford, but Dere Street itself is mentioned in several Anglo-Saxon charters as a land boundary and so the cross may have additional significance for private land holdings and the extent of the holdings of the Community of St. Cuthbert.

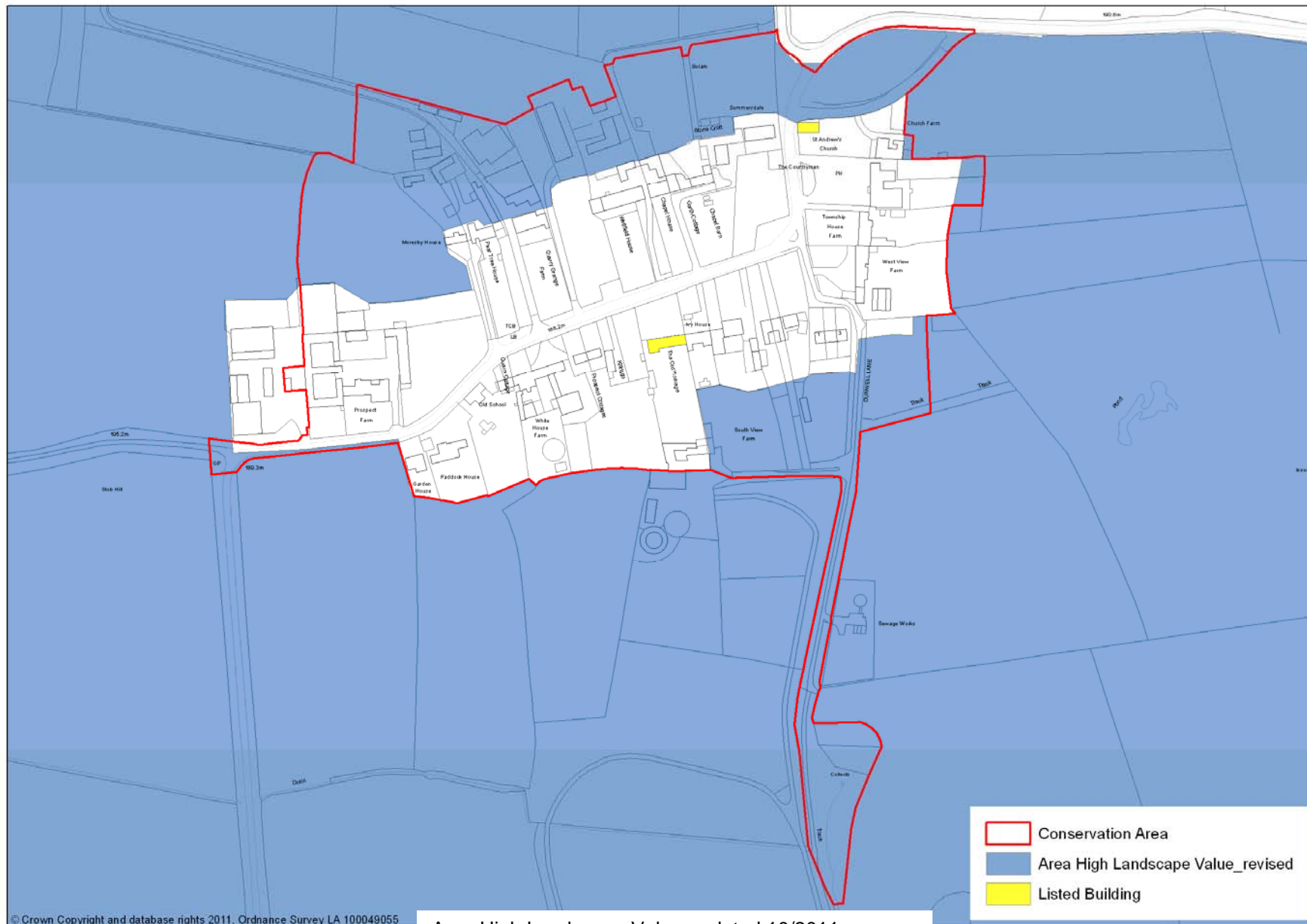
Due to a modern hedgerow the cross is largely hidden from the road at present, but its location on high and up on the edge of a terrace would historically have made it very visible to travellers moving north and south on Dere Street. Unlike other similar monuments of the period the cross does not appear to have been moved and stands between Dere Street and an earth bank, the 'headland' of a medieval field system which connects the cross and Bolam village both physically and intellectually providing a greater depth of understanding for both monument and conservation area. The headland can also be traced north of Bolam Road, where it still survives as a

long curving hedgerow. This boundary is of considerable antiquity and most likely marks the boundary of the medieval village field system founded as early as the 9th century. It is perhaps the oldest extant feature of a well preserved and complex multi-period field system surrounding Bolam.



Leggs Cross

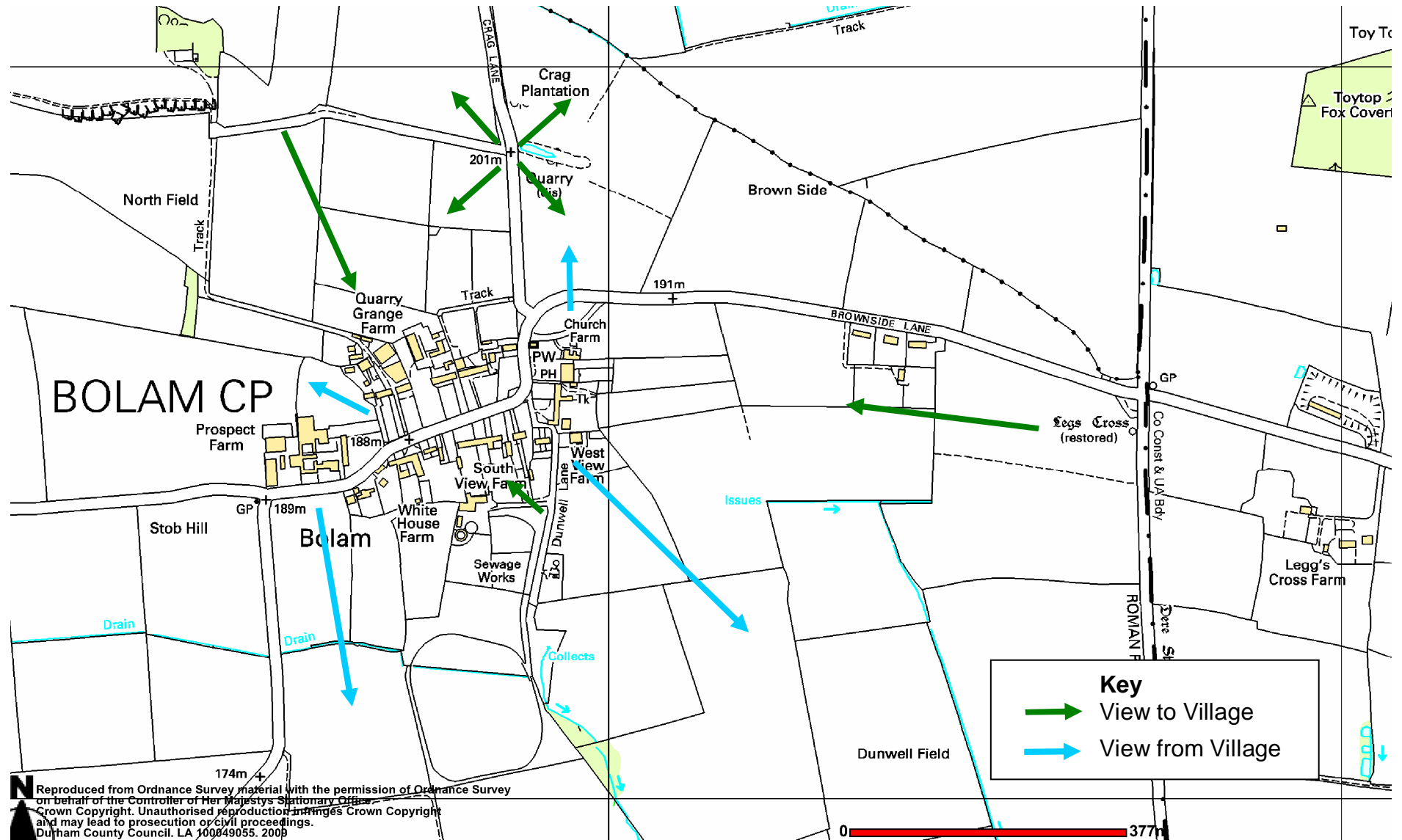
Appendix 4 Local Plan Designations



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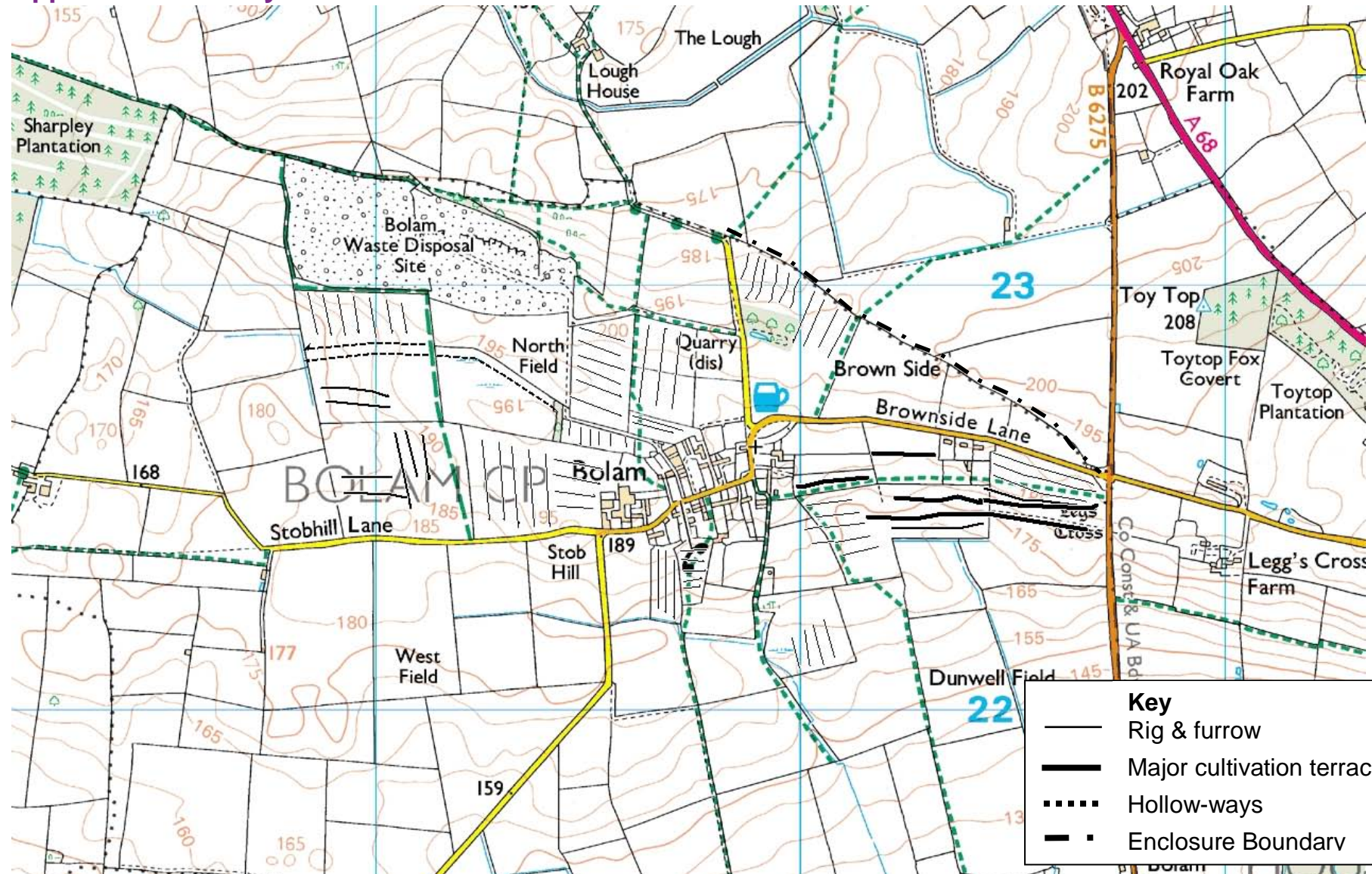
Area High Landscape Value updated 10/2011

Appendix 5 Key Views



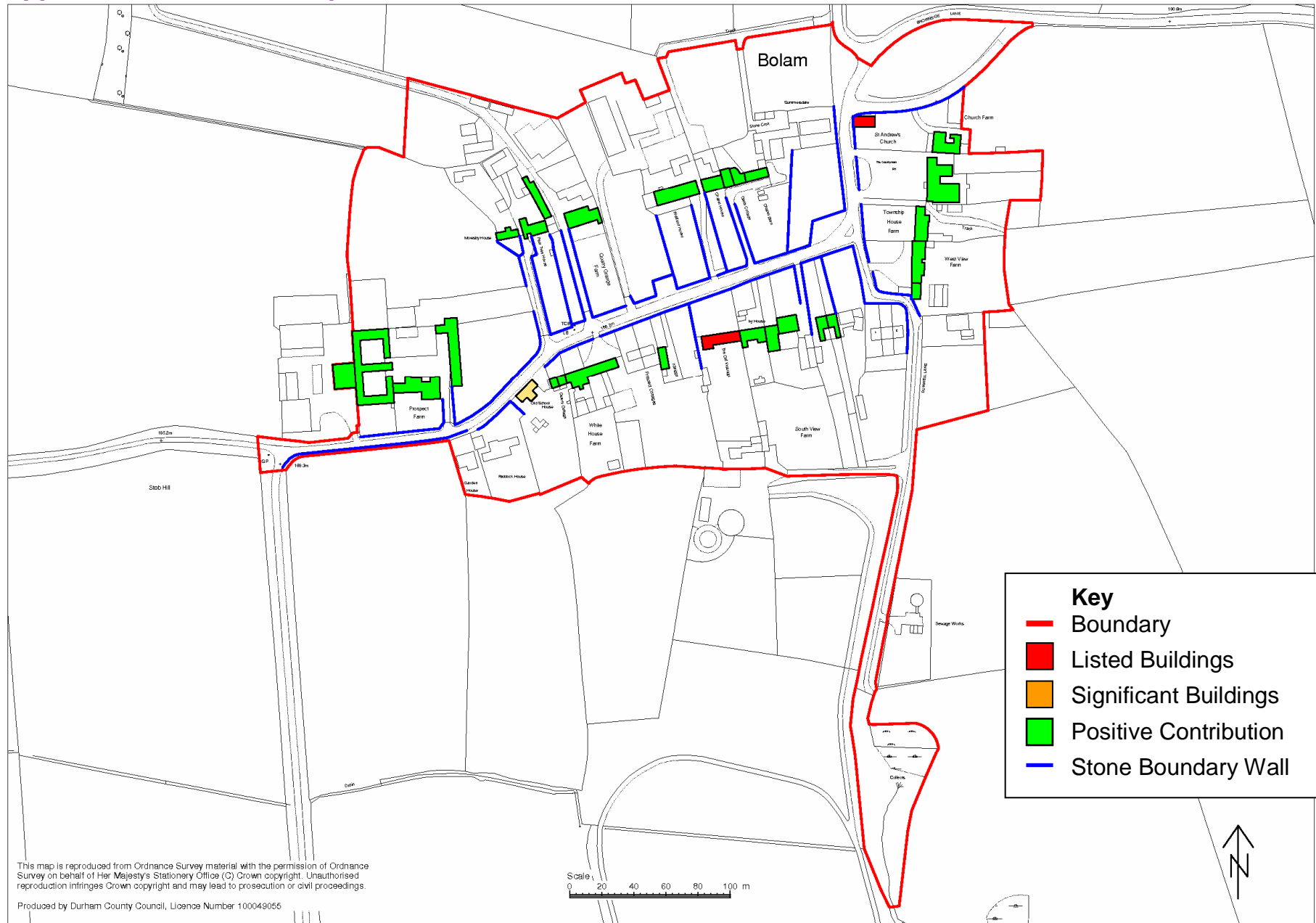
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Appendix 6 Field System



Indicative map of the multi-period historic field system surrounding the village, based on an initial brief survey by Archaeo-Environment

Appendix 7 Character Map



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Acknowledgements

Residents of Bolam for attending the meetings and responding to the questionnaire.

The Bolam Parish Meeting for providing information, commissioning reports and organising the public meetings, in particular Trish Pemberton and Kathy Pagella.

Niall Hammond of Archaeoenvironment for walking the fields and contributing information particularly on the evidence of medieval and later farming practices.

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বাংলা (Bengali) हिन्दी (Hindi) Deutsch (German)
Français (French) Türkçe (Turkish) Melayu (Malay)



Braille



Audio

AAA

**Large
Print**