



Barton

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal



BARTON

CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Revised

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TORBAY COUNCIL

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. Location and Essential Characteristics	2
2. Historic Environment, Origins and Development	2
3. Character Areas	3
3.2 Manor Farm and the west end of Fore Street	
3.3 Church Road	
3.4 The east end of Fore Street, parts of Starpitten and Clennon Lanes	
4. Architectural and Historic Qualities	4
4.1 Listed & Other Key Buildings	
4.2 Building Form, Use of Materials & Ornament	
4.3 Condition of Buildings	
5. Green Landscape and Trees	6
6. The Setting and Features of Special Importance	6
7. Extent of Loss, Damage and Intrusion	7
8. Summary	8
9. Conservation Area Policies	8
Bibliography	10

PHOTOGRAPHS

EARLY EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY:

1: 2500 scale maps (not to scale)

- Ordnance Survey County Series First Edition surveyed 1862?
- Ordnance Survey County Series Second Edition surveyed 1904
- Ordnance Survey County Series Third Edition surveyed 1933

APPRAISAL MAPS

- Map One: Historic Buildings
- Map Two: Age of Buildings
- Map Three: Building Materials - Roofs
- Map Four: Building Materials - Walls
- Map Five: Important Features

1 LOCATION AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

- 1.1 Barton although of historic origin is one of the newer suburbs of Torquay; until the mid-20th century it was little more than a hamlet, situated some 4 km north-northwest of the town centre of Torquay. Nineteenth-century maps indicate that it was close to centres of quarrying and lime burning, as well as being surrounded by a network of small fields, probably pasture, and a considerable number of orchards.
- 1.2 The conservation area is divided into two parts: one nucleated and centred on Church Road which straddles the brow of a slight hill; the other linear which stretches from the western end of Fore Street along a narrow valley to a point 100m beyond its junction with Starpitten Lane West. The more recent development surrounding the conservation area does not wholly detract from the quiet rural feel of this part of Barton, which is enhanced by a combination of some surviving meadow in Church Street, the steep wooded slopes either side of Fore Street, and the closure of Fore Street's junction with Barton Hill Road.
- 1.3 The overall character of the conservation area is much enhanced by the combination of walls, banks and hedges, and extensive tree cover. This provides a sense of enclosure and relative isolation from the later surrounding development. Several informally arranged cottage groups and short off-street spurs give the feel of an intricate village street especially at the lower end of Fore Street – although the mid-20th century infill with quite different frontages are somewhat intrusive.
- 1.4 A recently completed housing development between Fore Street and Starpitten Lane set back against the wooded slope of Mincent Hill does not unduly impinge upon the historic street pattern, while the chosen materials: render and slate are in keeping. Overall, the undulating topography and significant green spaces add visual interest, and there are some good outward views to the southeast towards the Torquay Golf Course.

2 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. Barton is part of the large historic parish of St Marychurch, itself the mother church of the adjoining parishes of Kingskerswell and Coffinswell, which suggests that these three were once part of a very large Saxon estate which had been divided up before the Conquest. By Domesday the manorial estates were well defined with five combined within the parish of St Marychurch: St Marychurch proper, Combe Pafford, Edginswell, Shiphay Collaton and Ilsham. Barton has been assumed to lie within the Combe Pafford manor, Domesday's *æcciam S MARIÆ*, held by the Bishops of Exeter until 1800. It is certainly absent from the 1775 manorial survey of St Marychurch.
- 2.2 Barton is first recorded as *Bertone* in 1333; it is a common place name from the Old English *beretun* referring to a barley farm, or an outlying grange where corn is stored. St Marychurch parish combines a complex history with a scarcity of surviving documentary material. There is no mention of Barton in a 1661 survey of Combe Pafford manor,

- though churchwardens' accounts in 1746 show that the parish had then been divided up into 4 quarters: St Marychurch, Edginswell, Combe Pafford and Barton. Undoubtedly it remained a small farming community until the extractive industries arrived in the 19th century. Otherwise the most notable landscape feature are the orchards which are widespread, appearing on all 19th-century maps.
- 2.3 Barton was developed much later than St Marychurch, or even Babbacombe, Kelly's 1893 *Directory of Devonshire* still refers to it as 'hamlet and scattered village' the abode of 'a few farmers and their labourers', but the 1902 edition records that it was being laid out for building and 'had been thoroughly drained and furnished with a supply of water'. Producing lime for agricultural purposes preceded the extraction of stone for building. The first edition Ordnance Survey County Series map published 1890, but surveyed between 1862-87, records at least three lime kilns in the immediate vicinity at the foot of Mincent Hill, where the main quarrying activity also took place. Just one now remains close to the conservation area boundary off Fore Street and is grade II listed. The oldest known building is Manor Farm, 191-3 Fore Street, dating from the early 16th century, in its current form.
- 2.4 Barton Farm, clustered near the junctions of Isaacs Road, Church Road and Fore Street, shown on the OS maps published in 1890 and the second edition of 1906, was demolished by 1933 to make way for housing. Fore Street is a typical Devon hollow way, and still retains this character to a limited extent.
- 2.5 On the western side of Church Road there is a significant group of cottages set back from the carriageway. As part of a scheme to house workers engaged in the formation of his Watcombe Park estate – also a designated conservation area a little over a mile to the northeast – Isambard Kingdom Brunel purchased a 2-acre field 'Barn Close' in 1852. Here he planned to build ten semi-detached house in a semi-circle, following the crescentic shape of the land; in the event only 2 pairs were built, the eastern pair being larger type. The remaining six were never built, the northern plots are empty to this day. Other workers having to make do with the existing cottages, described by Edmund Gosse as 'decayed almost to extinction'. A school and chapel were also planned to be the hub around which the cottages were arranged. This was not realised until long after I. K. Brunel's death in 1859; the mission chapel is recorded in 1878 as newly erected and also used as a school. It appears on the Ordnance Survey 1890 County Series 1:2500 as St Augustine's Church; the 4 workers' houses as Barnfield Cottages.

3 CHARACTER AREAS

- 3.1 The conservation area contains three quite separate sections which are relatively self-contained and bear little visual relationship with each other; they are indicated on Appraisal Map One and are:
- 3.2 (1) *Manor Farm and the west end of Fore Street*

This includes the mid-late 19th century short terrace, 197-201 Fore Street; the 16th century Manor Farm, 191-3 Fore Street; and extends eastwards to 110 Fore Street, 100 metres to the southeast of Church Road. The area also containing a mixture of limestone walls and banks with hedges and some young elms.

3.3 (2) *Church Road*

Here several cottage groups dating from the 18th century are located within an open setting with a good range of mature tree species. The view northwards along Church Road is pleasantly closed by a mid-19th century house in Moor Lane with a glazed veranda.

3.4 (3) *The East end of Fore Stree, parts of Starpitten and Clennon Lanes*

This part of the conservation area contains the largest concentration of houses and cottages, dating from the 18th century to the mid-20th century within a narrow enclosed valley with wooded slopes above.

4 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITIES

4.1 LISTED & OTHER KEY BUILDINGS

4.1.1 The conservation area has 6 buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic importance, all grade II, except where indicated, and here denoted here in bold. **Old Manor Farmhouse, 191-3 Fore Street** (grade II*) now a private house is of jointed cruck construction and is described in the listing, as 'a good example of an evolved house of late medieval origins'. It is built of plastered cob with a thatched roof and to the rear are remains of a linhay with circular stone rubble piers. The farmhouse was originally an early-16th century open-hall house, altered in the late-16th to early-17th century when a fireplace and stack, plank and muntin screen, and floors were added. Further alterations c.1730 added another fireplace, two-panel doors, and possibly the small rear wing to the northeast. The rear outshot to the northwest is probably late-18th century and may have been a dairy. The adjoining house to the south, **189 Fore Street** was formerly a farm building of 18th century or earlier origins built of stone and cob. The listing details allude to the interior having chamfered cross beams with exposed wall posts. On the north side in a curtilage adjoining **Manor Farmhouse** is a short terrace **197-201 Fore Street**, which is set at right angles to the main street frontage, it is built of limestone with brick dressings providing a pleasing contrast to the prevailing white painted render.

4.1.2 **Lavender Cottage, 42 Church Road**, formerly two cottages, is late-18th century and built of roughcast cob and thatch with original wide floorboards. The casement windows and an oriel are probably early-20th century. Within the conservation area there are several attractive 19th century or earlier houses and cottages in short terraces or separate groups, although some have lost original door and window detail. The best groups are in Church Road: Nos. 20-22, the former church; and Nos. 21-29 opposite, (21 & 23 directly fronting the road are semi-derelict and boarded-up); Orchard Lodge; Pear Tree House c.1860 with its sash windows and narrow glazing bars, and later glazed verandah; and

No. 38, all of which appear to date from the mid-19th century or earlier. Brunel's cottages Nos. 12-18 have been altered and extended.

4.1.3 **155 Fore Street** is an 18th-century house of plastered cob under thatch with a plain ridge hipped at its ends. The windows are two-light casements of uncertain date. Adjoining is **153 Fore Street** a house and shop of c.1850, also with mainly two-light casements, which has a natural slate roof and crested ridge tiles. The shop front, no longer in use, has a cornice across the door and an eight-pane window bounded by a pilaster strip to the right. To the rear of 127 & 129 Fore Street is a **Lime Kiln** probably dating from the early-19th century; it is the only survivor of a number which served the Mincent Hill quarries. It is flat-topped and built of local limestone with a brick segmental arch to a shallow side entrance.

4.1.4 Also worthy of note in Fore Street are No. 86 which has early-19th century features, while two short terrace groups: Nos 109-117, and Nos 141-147, set at right angles to the main street frontage, are probably of mid-19th century date.

4.1.5 At the southeastern limits of the conservation area 22 Clennon Lane is a pleasing mid-19th century cottage with a symmetrical frontage and possibly the original casement windows with their margin glazing bars; and 103 Fore Street is a late-19th century house of limestone with brick dressings, providing a pleasing contrast to the prevailing white painted render.

4.1.6 Regrettably in many cases original doors and windows have been replaced with inferior ones which has had a detrimental affect on the character of the conservation area.

4.2 BUILDING FORM, USE OF MATERIALS & ORNAMENT

4.2.1 Earlier buildings (pre-19th century) are of cob and or stone rubble with thatched roofs. The majority of buildings from the later period are smooth rendered and have natural or artificial slate roofs, with the latter predominating. There are a number of examples of the use of the local grey limestone, sometimes squared-off and brought to course, and usually combined with brick dressings. Casement windows tend to predominate, but there are also a few examples of sash windows with narrow glazing bars. Few original timber doors, traditionally either plank and ledged or four-panelled, remain. Boundary or retaining walls of local grey limestone rubble are a common feature throughout the conservation area. These normally look better in their natural state, than when painted or rendered.

4.2.2 Ornament is minimal, the prevailing style being a rustic vernacular. The former church of St. Augustine, part of Brunel's early-19th century development, has raised gables to the main roof and porch. The crested ridge tiles are probably later. The several adjoining cottages forming an arc around the church are much altered but retain their double-gabled frontages with deep eaves. Pear Tree House has a glazed veranda on three sides. There are several examples of metalwork using wrought- and cast-iron: gates, probably 19th century, in Fore Street; and an early-19th century handrail to steps adjoining 96 Fore

Street. The shop front of **153 Fore Street** retains some 1930s sans-serif lettering *M. & H. JONES*. Also in Fore Street is a good example of a cast-iron street lamp from a local foundry, and in Church Road, there is the fluted cast iron base of a former sewer vent pipe.

4.3 CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

- 4.3.1 Most buildings appear to be in good condition, although a high proportion have lost original doors and windows to widespread PVCu double-glazed replacements and non-traditional styles of door. However some good examples do survive: 22 Clennon Lane; and 109 Fore Street; 96 Fore Street retains an early-19th century six-panel door. The two empty cottages at 21-23 Church Road were boarded up at the time of survey in April 2005 but maybe in the early stages of renovation; the 19th-century 4-panel door of No. 23 is certainly worthy of retention.

5 GREEN LANDSCAPE AND TREES

- 5.1 There is a rich variety in the green landscape, although there is no longer evidence of the orchards that once surrounded the settlement. Some trees appear to have naturalised, including elms (*ulmus procera*) which are under threat from a resurgence of Dutch Elm Disease. Other species include lime (*tilia x europaea*), sycamore (*acer pseudoplatanus*) and horse chestnut (*aesculus hippocastanum*). There is a strong relationship between trees and buildings: along some sections of Fore Street and Church Road the vegetation tends to be more visually dominant than buildings, even where frontage detail is important. Evergreens are less obvious, although some species of cypress have been introduced, including an ornamental hedge off Church Road. There is always a danger that such species will become over-dominant if not kept in check.
- 5.2 There are several good specimen trees, for example a walnut (*Juglans regia*) and weeping ash (*fraxinus pendula*); the latter, although just outside the conservation area boundary is an integral part of it visually. More distant trees on the skyline are also a feature of the conservation area: on Great Hill, or the slopes of Mincent Hill.

6 THE SETTING AND FEATURES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

- 6.1 The undulating topographical setting of the conservation area is an attractive feature with pleasing vistas both within and beyond the existing boundary, in spite of its largely suburban surroundings. Fore Street is the ancient route between St. Marychurch, Coffinswell and Kingkerswell and onto Newton Abbot. It shows up well as such on Benjamin Donn's 1765 map of Devonshire. Eastwards beyond the conservation area towards the St. Marychurch end of Fore Street, and almost adjoining the St Marychurch conservation area, are three listed buildings (all grade II) – No. 15 is a handsome 17th

century former farmhouse; Nos 19-21 are two 17th/18th-century or earlier cottages of cob, stone and thatch – these are all that remains of the former manor and settlement of Combe Pafford.

6.2 To the south, east and north the conservation area is surrounded by a large area of 1950s-1970s development. Until recent years, the edge of the built-up area was largely bounded by the west side of Barton Hill Road, but this area is now absorbing a large proportion of Torquay's new housing and associated development.

6.3 The elements which make the essential contribution to the character of Barton conservation area can be summarised as follows:

- ❖ the well balanced relationship between the mainly 19th-century development and the associated landscape features, for example the walls, banks and hedges in Church Road and Fore Street;
- ❖ the spacious surroundings of several pre-20th century building groups, especially in Church Road, that have managed to avoid unduly prominent infilling with later development;
- ❖ the survival of a good proportion of original detail to 19th-century and earlier buildings;
- ❖ the retention of most original boundary features, including gate piers and some surviving ironwork;
- ❖ the variety of mature trees, both as part of the street scene and beyond the conservation area boundary; and especially those which dominate the skyline from adjoining slopes, such as Mincent Hill and the slopes between Clennon Lane and Fore Street.

7 EXTENT OF LOSS, DAMAGE AND INTRUSION

7.1 Against those features of special importance, which make up Barton's essential character and setting, there has been both real damage to, and a number of potential threats which are endangering, the character of the conservation area:

- ◆ the extent and form of the later infill – highlighting the importance of protecting the few remaining undeveloped spaces;
- ◆ the threat to the character and setting of key buildings through the loss of original features, such as the replacement of original windows, doors, boundary walls and entrance features;

- ◆ the unsatisfactory methods of repair, not in sympathy with traditional techniques, and in some instances the use of quite inappropriate replacement materials and finishes – such as the use of non-porous and non-traditional materials for replacing rendering;
- ◆ the lack of available local stone and suitable natural slate for repairs and replacement, and the substitution of artificial materials for roofs;
- ◆ relatively heavy traffic flows along Fore Street, especially peak flows at certain times of day.

8 SUMMARY

- 8.1 Barton retains an essentially village atmosphere in spite of its being subsumed within extensive mid-late 20th century developments. It contains a grade II* listed former farmhouse and a number of well-preserved cottages, not all of which are listed. Existing frontage and backdrop landscape features are an essential part of the overall character of the conservation area and need careful safeguarding.
- 8.2 The historic integrity of the conservation area is delicately balanced and it will be necessary to prevent further erosion of original features by additional development control measures.

9 CONSERVATION AREA POLICIES

- 9.1 Conservation Area policies are addressed in the adopted local plan:

Policy BE5 - Development within or affecting a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of that area.

The Policy outlines the Council's strategy for Conservation Areas. It includes issues such as the control of demolition, alterations and extensions, boundary features and design aspects, as well as the control of development in adjacent areas which could impact significantly on the townscape and environmental qualities within Conservation Areas. (The Built Environment 14.9)

further it is recognised that:

Roof materials, chimneys, cornices and mouldings, original windows and shopfronts, railings and boundary walls can all make an important contribution to the character of a Conservation Area. The Council will introduce Article 4(2) Directions to bring such items under normal development control. (The Built Environment 14.56)

9.2 To frame specific policies within the Barton conservation area:

- (1) All unlisted buildings identified as key buildings or groups of buildings that contribute to the historic built environment (see Map One) should be included within Article 4(2) Directions to control inappropriate changes to the principal elevations.
- (2) Protect from detrimental loss all the significant features, identified in section 6 as contributing to the local character and special importance, which need to be safeguarded or enhanced, and where in future, Conservation Area or Article 4 consent may be required.
- (3) Give due consideration to other key local factors which make up the features of special importance, such as the building groups of merit just outside the periphery of the conservation area and the extension of the existing boundary, where appropriate.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

The Setting

- 1 Open land northwest of Church Road is indicative of Barton's rural origins before quarrying and limeburning became established in the 19th century. When Torquay's expanding outskirts reached here in the 1920s the housing developments were located within the existing, mostly medieval field boundaries. Thus almost all houses within the triangle formed by Fore Street, Jack's Lane/Moor Lane and Mincent Hill sit within curtilages determined by medieval fields.
- 2 Fore Street with its high banks and walls preserves in some degree the feel of a typical Devon holloway.
- 3 At the southern end of the conservation area Fore Street widens to an attractive green fronted by 19th century cottages at its junction with Clennon Lane.

Buildings

- 4 Old Manor Farm, 191-93 Fore Street, dates from the 16th century but its site is doubtless medieval. It is thought originally to have been an open hall house of jointed-cruck truss construction; this is supported by the presence of smoke-blackening on the roof trusses, which also suggests an earlier date. Alterations are known from the late 16th/early 17th centuries and from around 1730.



1.



3.



2.



4.

- 5 The adjoining house to the south, 189 Fore Street was formerly a farm building belonging to the Old Manor Farm complex. It is of 18th century or earlier origins, and built of stone and cob. The listing details allude to the interior having chamfered cross beams with exposed wall posts.
- 6 Near the Fore Street/ Barton Hill Road junction are three 19th century cottages built in one of the Old Manor Farm closes; they are constructed of randomly coursed limestone with brick dressings, most original doors and windows have been replaced.
- 7 Church Road also retains the character of a Devon holloway with houses either side from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.
- 8 The 18th century Lavender Cottage, 42 Church Road, was formerly two cottages; it is built of roughcast cob and thatch, and maintains its original wide floorboards. The casement windows and an oriel are probably early-20th century.



5.



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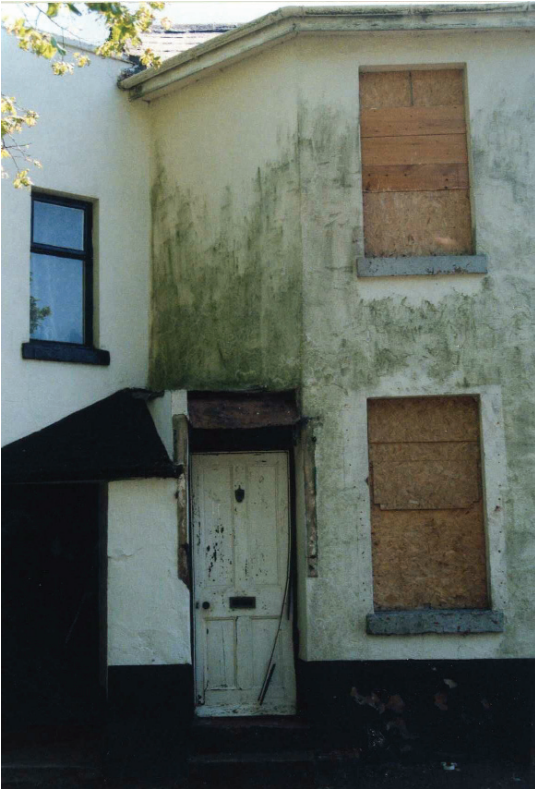


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8.

- 9-10 On the east side of Church Road are Tor Hill Cottages, an 18th/19th century group, now 21-29 Church Road. Nos. 21 & 23 are in the process of renovation; here a 19th century door remains (9). Set back from the road by its stone-paved forecourt 27 Church Road retains its white-painted casement windows (10).
- 11 Beyond Church Road at the junction with Moor Lane, Pear Tree House is situated at the north end of the conservation area; dating from about 1860 its original sash windows have narrow glazing bars, typical of the period. The glazed verandah is a later addition.
- 12-13 When Isambard Kingdom Brunel bought Watcombe Manor he lodged his workers in Barton. A small estate was planned but only 2 pairs of semi-detached terraces were actually built; these have been heavily modified with little detail remaining (12). An attractive grassed path (13) still provides rear access to the cottages.



9.



10.



11.



12.



13.

- 14-15 Brunel Cottage is one of two cottages, 20-22 Church Road, which were formerly the Church of St Augustine; planned by Brunel, it is not actually clear if it was built before his death in 1859, or to his plan later (14). Certainly the limestone coursing and pointed arch on the porch match the chapel he did build at Watcombe Park (now Watcombe Cottage) 1km to the east. The two cottages are set behind grey limestone walls to Church Road (15).
- 16 Something of the historic character of Barton still survives in the lower part of Fore Street in the vicinity of Wesley Close and Clennon Lane - a good deal of 20th century infill lies between the two areas of historic settlement in the street. 94 Fore Street is at least early 19th century, with a six-panelled door that appears to be of similar date, as does an iron handrail to steps to the side.
- 17-18 153 Fore Street dates from c.1850; the former shop-front preserves its over-light cornice, and some raised sans-serif lettering of the 1930s.



15.



14.



16.



18.



17.

- 19 155 is of plastered cob with a thatched roof, and is probably 18th century. Both Nos 153 and 155 have scattered fenestration of one to three-light casement windows.
- 20-21 At the junction of Fore Street and Clennon Lane a green has been preserved from the former field frontage with the roads (3). On the left is the mid-19th century 109 Fore Street with its original sash windows and narrow glazing bars, and rendered boundary walls (20). To the right 103 Fore Street is late-19th century house of local coursed limestone and brick dressings, with its boundary wall also in limestone rubble (21). Mature trees are well in evidence.
- 22 On the northwest side of 109 Fore Street a short alley gives access to a group of cottages behind, to Starpitten Lane West, and to a former footpath along the side of the Mincent Hill quarries and kilns, now tree-covered. Together the buildings and their grouping maintains the solid context of the historic settlement.
- 23 111 Fore Street is the cottage in the centre of this group; the mid-19th century or earlier historic character of vernacular simplicity can easily be vitiated by modern alterations to the frontage.



19.



20.



21.



22.



23.

- 24 On the other side of the green 22 Clennon Lane is a mid-19th century cottage with good original frontage detail.

Details

- 25 Late-19th century wrought-iron gates to the right side of (east) 153 Fore Street (19) giving access to a cottage to the rear of the main street frontage.
- 26 The base of a former vent pipe is an attractive feature in Church Road.
- 27 A listed limekiln adjoining the curtilage of 127 Fore Street; it is the only one surviving from a number which flanked the lower slopes of Mincent Hill during the 19th century.



24.



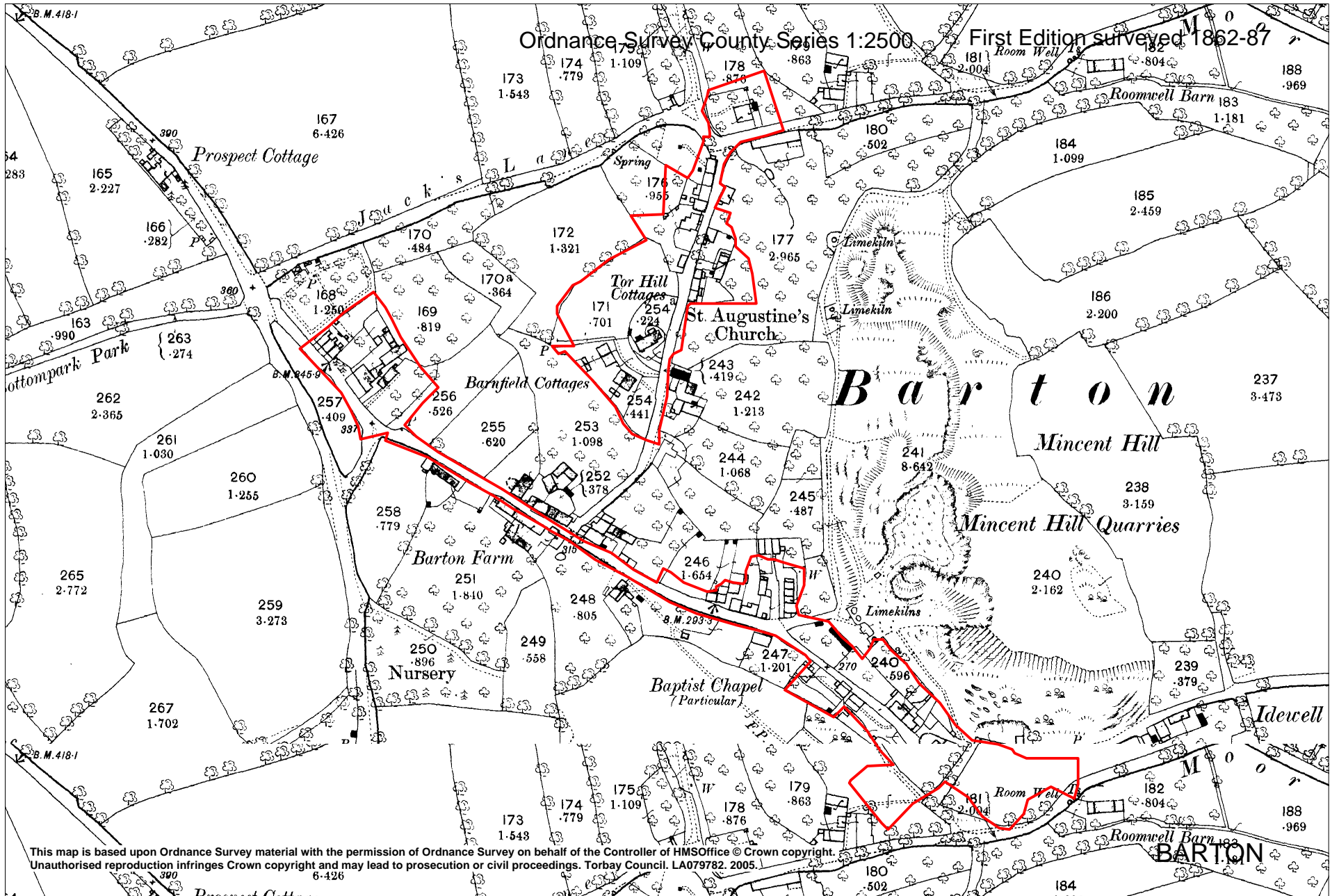
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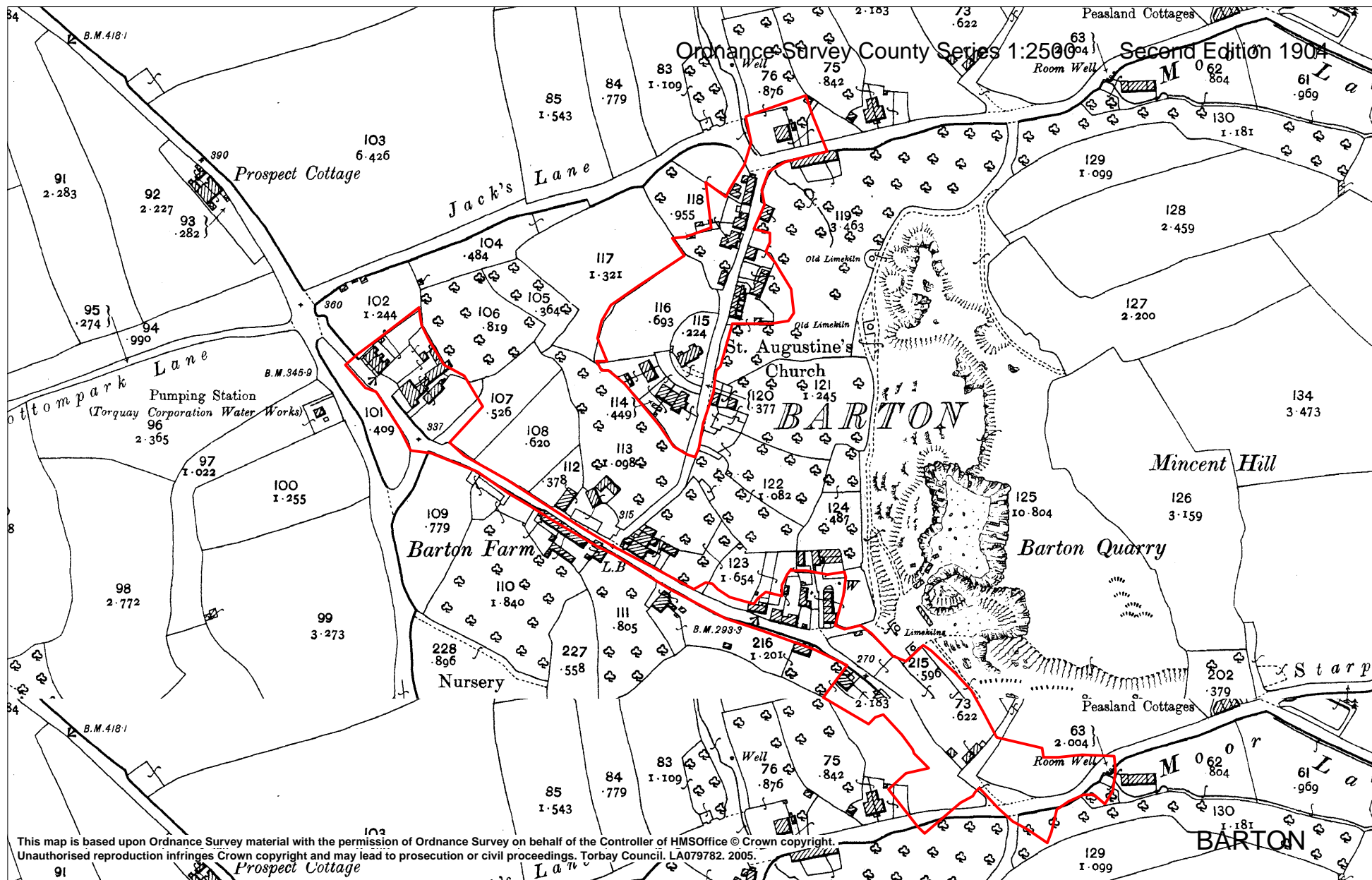
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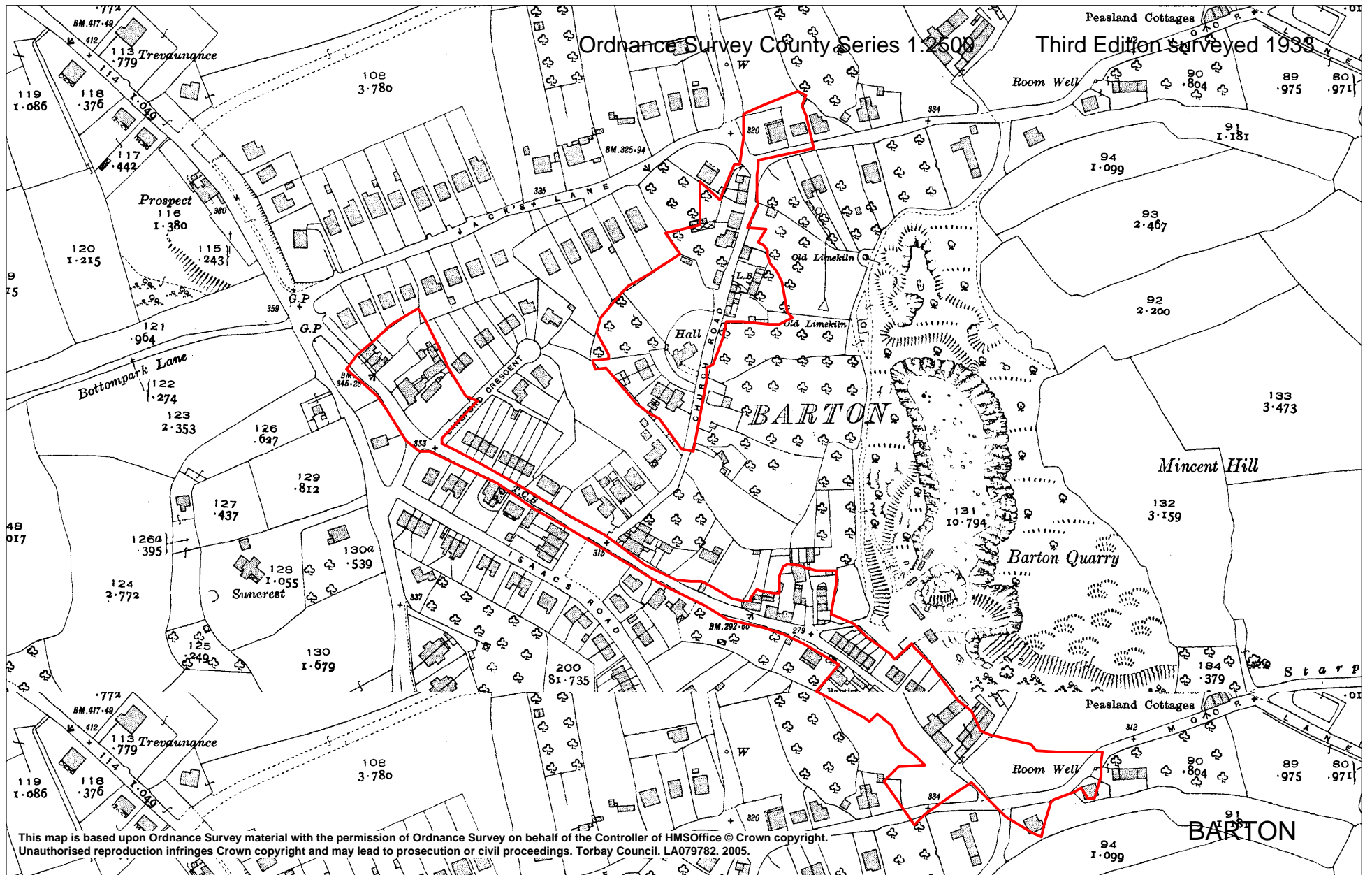
Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500 Second Edition 1904

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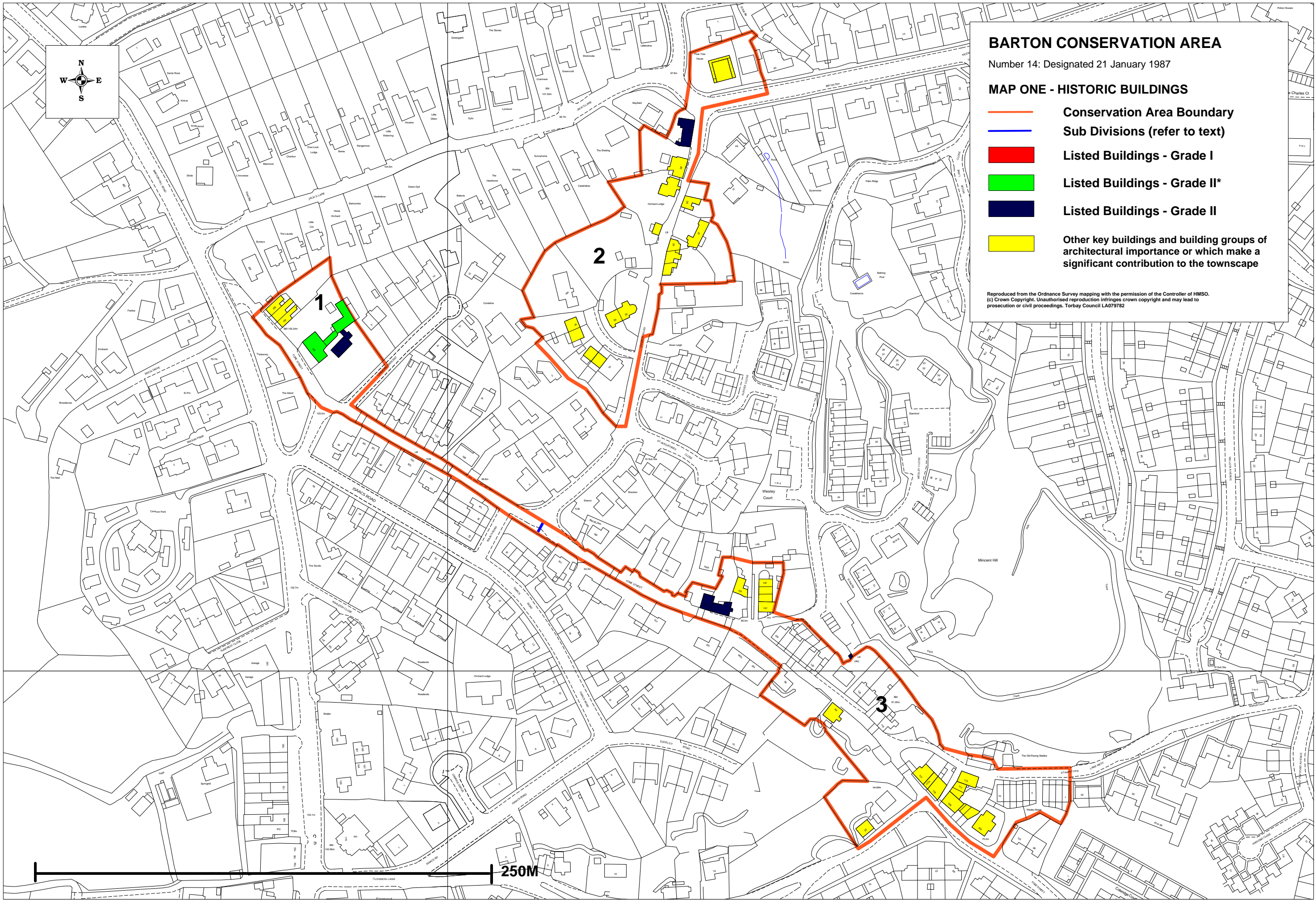
91 Prospect Cottage L a 74 129 1-099

Ordnance Survey County Series 1:2500

Third Edition surveyed 1933



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BARTON CONSERVATION AREA
 Number 14: Designated 21 January 1987

MAP ONE - HISTORIC BUILDINGS

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Sub Divisions (refer to text)
- Listed Buildings - Grade I
- Listed Buildings - Grade II*
- Listed Buildings - Grade II
- Other key buildings and building groups of architectural importance or which make a significant contribution to the townscape








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BARTON CONSERVATION AREA

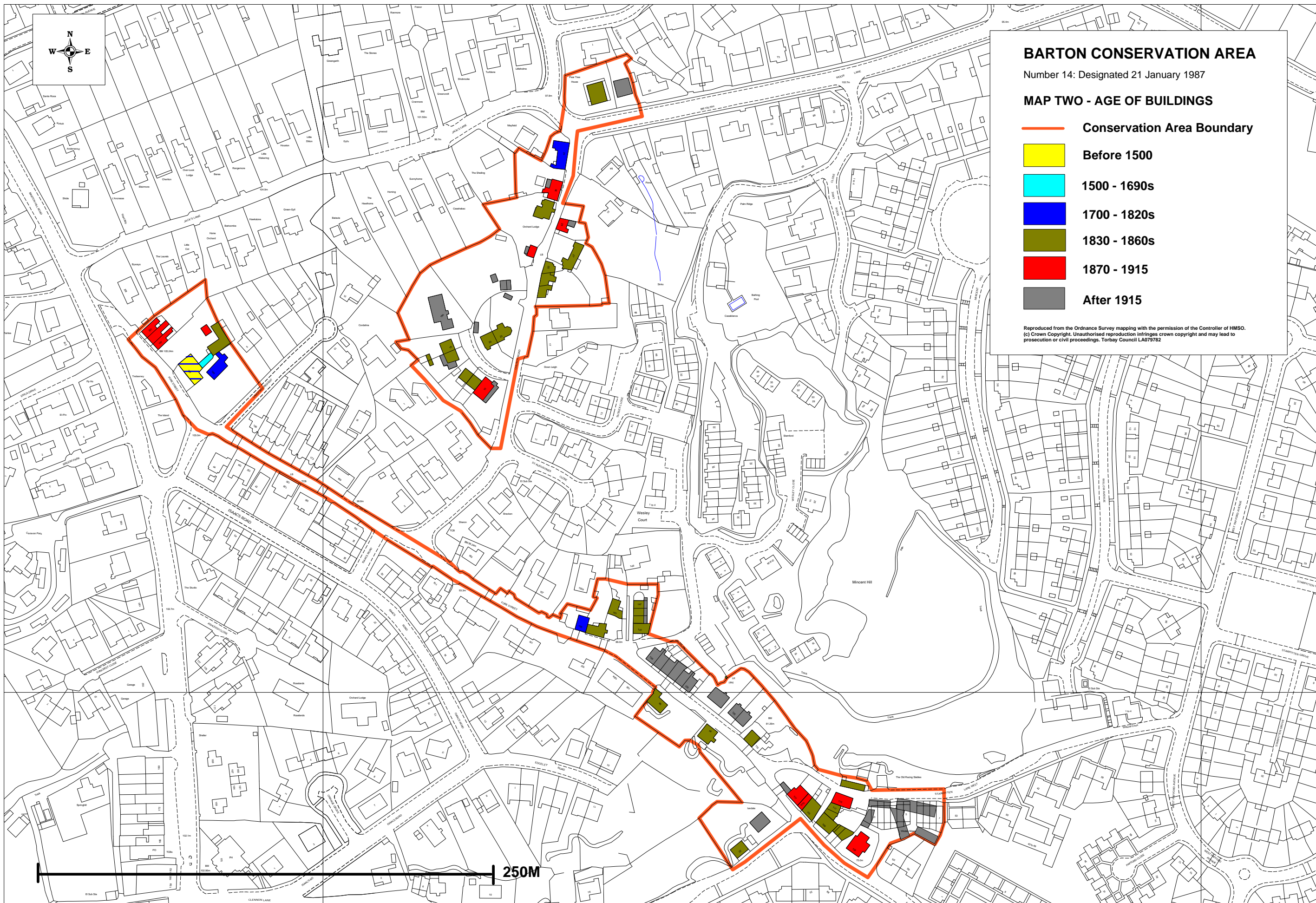
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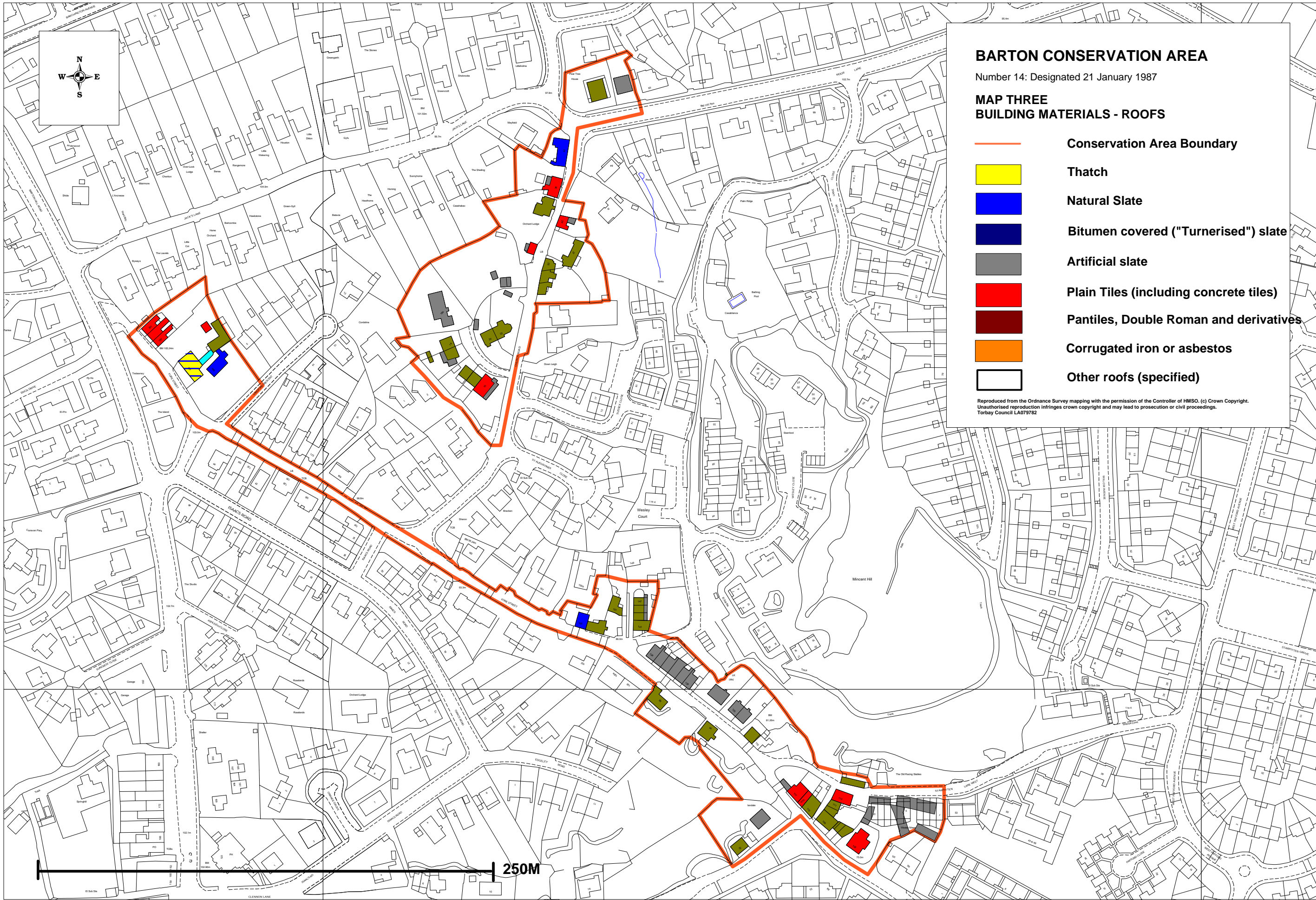
MAP TWO - AGE OF BUILDINGS

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Before 1500
-  1500 - 1690s
-  1700 - 1820s
-  1830 - 1860s
-  1870 - 1915
-  After 1915

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BARTON CONSERVATION AREA

Number 14: Designated 21 January 1987

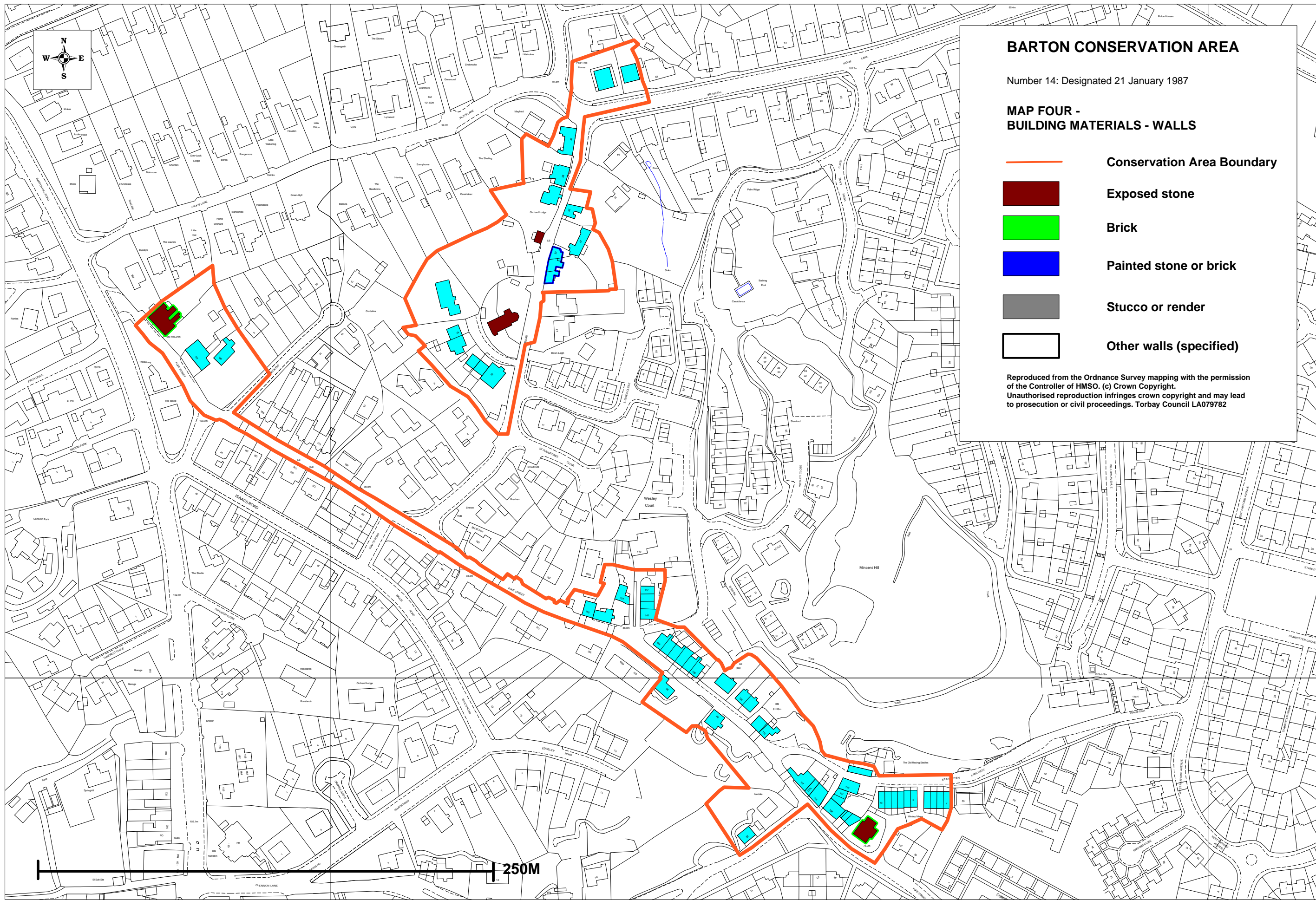
**MAP THREE
BUILDING MATERIALS - ROOFS**

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Thatch
- Natural Slate
- Bitumen covered ("Turnerised") slate
- Artificial slate
- Plain Tiles (including concrete tiles)
- Pantiles, Double Roman and derivatives
- Corrugated iron or asbestos
- Other roofs (specified)

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BARTON CONSERVATION AREA

Number 14: Designated 21 January 1987

**MAP FOUR -
BUILDING MATERIALS - WALLS**

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Exposed stone
-  Brick
-  Painted stone or brick
-  Stucco or render
-  Other walls (specified)

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