

An aerial photograph of the village of Stretton, nestled in a valley. The village is composed of numerous houses with red-tiled roofs and white walls, interspersed with green fields and trees. In the foreground, there are large green fields, a small pond, and a few buildings. The background features rolling hills with patches of green grass and areas of reddish-brown vegetation, possibly heath or moorland. The sky is not visible, as the hills fill the upper portion of the frame.

ALL STRETTON

Village Design Statement

All Stretton Village Society

April 2017

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Contents	<i>Page</i>
1. Introduction and Summary	2
2. Location - within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	3
3. Development of the Settlement	4
4. Special Features of the Village	7
5. The Natural Environment	10
6. All Stretton Today	11
7. Tourism	12
8. The Future	12
9. Community Involvement in the Design Statement	13
10. Recommendations	14
Appendix 1 Listed Buildings within All Stretton, April 2017	15
Appendix 2 Village of All Stretton Tithe Map c.1840	16
Appendix 3 Maps of All Stretton	17



1. Introduction and Summary

This Village Statement is a compendium of those features and attributes of their environment most valued by the residents of All Stretton.

It documents the characteristics of the Village that are seen as important, to ensure that these are considered in the planning and development process.

The legal responsibility for planning lies with Shropshire Council (SC), but it is hoped that this document will help planners to engage with the community to a greater extent.

This Village Statement, which includes all we consider worthy of preservation, can be used as a reference at every stage in the planning process. We hope this process will include householders, architects, developers, builders and public bodies when considering any future development.

The original design statement was published in 2003, and this revision has evolved from that document. It takes into account changes to the village and to the various local government structures that have subsequently occurred. It also incorporates the expressed views of the local community (*see page 13*).



The B5477 bisects the village and is shown here passing the Yew Tree Inn

2. Location - within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

All Stretton is situated in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The village lies in a picturesque valley and few places can have such a distinctive setting, between the Longmynd on the west with "Castle Hill" guarding the village to the north, and to the east Caer Caradoc with its distinctive rock formation and Iron Age hill camp.

There are valleys or 'batches' leading up to great stretches of bracken, heather and whinberry. The hills are a dominant feature of the landscape and have determined much of the history and development of the village.

The settlement is largely on Stretton shale and this rock often outcrops and has only a thin soil covering in gardens on the hill slope. Alluvial soil and boulder clay washed down from the Mynd, by contrast, provides fertile ground. The Batch valley is one of the longest of the former glacial meltwater channels which penetrate the Mynd. The shale has been used extensively in buildings and boundary walls - much of it no doubt from the now-disused quarry in the Batch. It is highly desirable that these uses of stone be protected for the future.

What flat ground there is consists of water meadows to the east, with development to the west limited by the hillside.



View across the water meadows to Caer Caradoc and The Lawley

3. Development of the Settlement



The village main street (B5477 formerly the B4370) runs on a shelf several feet above the valley bottom, no doubt in earlier years to provide a passable route avoiding the water meadows. The road in the 18th and 19th centuries was the turnpike between Ludlow and Shrewsbury - the old milestones still exist at both northern and southern ends of the village.



The earliest remaining evidence of human occupation is the earthworks on Castle Hill which was a small defended settlement of Iron Age date. (A Bronze Age dagger was found on the site in 1936.)

The Domesday Book of 1086 mentions that the manor (or estate) of Stretton, meaning 'the settlement by the Roman road', was divided into smaller units known as berewicks; these became the townships we know today. *"The one with the church became known, not surprisingly, as Church Stretton. The township to the north was at some point, probably in the early 12th century, in the holding of a man called Alwred, and so it acquired the name 'Alwred's Stretton'. Try saying 'Alwred's Stretton' again and again: it soon becomes clear how the name ended up as 'All Stretton'."* (All Stretton History & Houses, All Stretton History Group, 2006, p. 1)

There are several buildings in the village dating from the 16th century. Documentary evidence for the development of the settlement has been investigated by the Local History Group. This has resulted in the publication of "All Stretton History and Houses" a useful reference document which was distributed to each household in the village in 2006.

'1603'
Batch
Valley



The village has grown slowly over the centuries and this is reflected in the variety of its buildings. This slow growth has continued and even the newer houses are in varied styles and the village has not been overrun with inappropriate and unsympathetic additions. A benefit from this slow growth is that newcomers have been easily absorbed into village life.

It is also notable that many of the smaller and generally older dwellings have been extended to suit growing families who wished to stay in the settlement. The 'individuality' of housing types has resulted in the undoubted attraction of a mixed community.

The important drovers' route down Batch Valley from the Long Mynd has also influenced the development of the village.

The Census returns for 1841 show All Stretton as a busy, self-sufficient village. Many of the householders were agricultural labourers, their duties unspecified. There were also mole-catchers, sawyers, a gardener, a drover and a colt trainer. There were two shopkeepers, two shoemakers, three tailors, two blacksmiths, two wheelwrights, a cooper and a rope-maker. There were so many carpenters and joiners that the air must have been full of the sound of sawing, and the one bricklayer was very much in the minority. The more unusual occupations included two hawkers, a dealer in skins and a collier (probably employed at Leebotwood). Two maltsters lived and worked in the village and, for all these busy people, and for any wayfarer in need of refreshment, there were two inns and two alehouses.

A major development was the coming of the Shrewsbury and Hereford railway which opened in 1852 and the village had a station halt until 1958. The nearest station now is in Church Stretton some 1½ miles away.

Of historical interest, Sarah Smith (1832-1911) whose pen name was Hesba Stretton lived for some time in Farm Lane. She was the author of "Jessica's First Prayer", "The Children of Cloverley" and many other books and co-founder of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Writing about Stretton Dale in the 1860's she says...

"Through the length of the valley stretches an old highroad (the turnpike) once thronged with coaches and carriages but, since the coming of the railway, so quiet and deserted that children can be trusted to play along its length".

How times have changed!



St. Michael's and All Angels Church is an attractive building of 1902, built on the side of the hill above the B5477. "The Church in All Stretton" is now a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) church. The United Reformed Chapel on The Row was in need of extensive renovation in 1984 and the Church of England congregation of St. Michael's invited that congregation to use their building. The co-operation between the two churches grew and in 1994 a formal coming together as an LEP was initiated. As a result of this the United Reformed Church building was redundant and was subsequently converted into a private dwelling.



*Chapel End,
formerly the United Reformed Chapel*

During the years after the war, mains drainage was installed and the drinking supply water no longer trickled from the small reservoir in the Batch Valley, but is now connected to the extensive supply network of Severn Trent.

The Village Hall (*pictured at page 11*) was opened in its present location in 1953 and there was little further building development in the village until the late 1960's when The Grove House, an asylum caring for the sick and elderly, was demolished in 1969 and eight houses built within its grounds.



The Grove House

Since then there has been only gradual infill comprising a few houses but mostly bungalows with a mix of styles. More recent development has tended to be limited to extensions and modification of existing buildings to provide additional accommodation.

Significantly, since the publication of the original Design Statement in 2003, the village shop has closed and Stretton Hall Hotel has been extended and converted into a residential nursing home.



Former Village Shop, closed in 2008



Stretton Hall Nursing Home, originally a private residence and subsequently an hotel

The current development plan for the area recognises that the vista of open countryside between the two separate settlements of All Stretton and Church Stretton is greatly valued by the community (see SAMDev Adopted Plan, December 2015, para. 4.51).

Thus it is that All Stretton has grown up on the rising ground on the west side of the Stretton valley. It is a village with a vigorous community that has built homes according to need and materials available. There are timber-framed houses, stone and brick ones, old and new, large and small.



'Rock Cottage', Shrewsbury Road. Note the local stone construction. This property is built onto one of the many rocky outcrops to be found on the western side of the valley.



Ravens, Batch Valley, an example of sympathetic extensions of what was originally a small bungalow. Many of the newer houses in the village have rendered walls.



Barn Acre, Shrewsbury Road. A good example of conversion from a 'threshing barn', completed in 1979.



Bungalows on Shrewsbury Road, an example of mid-twentieth century development.

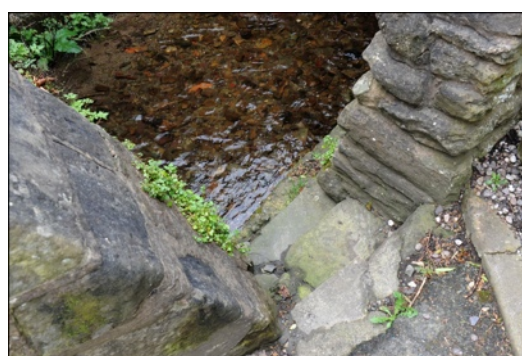
4. Special Features of the Village

The setting for the village is entirely rural and the surrounding land, both valley bottom and hillside, is devoted to grazing, especially sheep but also some cattle and a few horses. Although there is no working farm in the main part of the village there are farms on the periphery, and the surrounding fields are rented out for grazing.

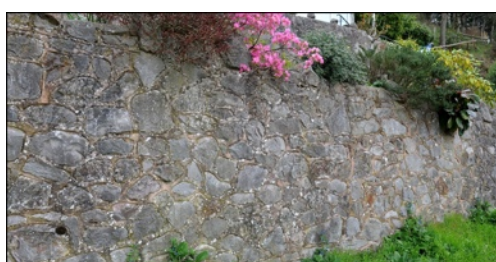
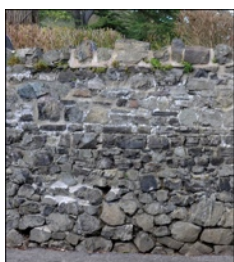
Development of the village has generally been along the line of the existing road structure, with tracks leading behind the road line to individual dwellings, often tucked out of sight. The variety and style of housing is considerable. Rock features in many of the older properties, particularly for boundary walls, this mostly coming from the "Buxton Quarry" in The Batch, a Geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). A few of the cottages are also entirely constructed from this rock.



Buxton Quarry in The Batch, from which much of the 'local stone' came for use in home construction and boundary walls.



The 'washing steps' in the centre of the village, another example of the use of local stone.



Stone boundary walls are a feature of many older properties.



'Grove Cottage'. Note the use of local stone in the original structure but also in the sympathetic extension on the left hand side of this picture.



The old store at the foot of Castle Hill, now an office, is an example of conversion. Note the use of local stone and brick.



Old Hall Farm



'The Steps', a former malt house, built of soft red local brick



'The Row' and dwellings below



Typical scene for the rural setting of the village



Steeply pitched dormer windows are to be found on many of the properties in the village, such as these on The Row.



A newer porch entrance to 3 The Row, sensitively reflects the style of the small dormer windows of nearby properties.



Differing styles of dormer windows at Cornihaugh, formerly the stables to Hillside House



A small bay window at Buxton House



Another example of a bay window - found at the Yew Tree Inn



Plain gable end of 'The Steps'



Barge boards and ridge tile finials on Caradoc Lodge



A recent barn conversion at Buckstone Farm House

The B5477, which runs through the village, now has a paved footpath leading to Church Stretton, the result of a Millennium Project. Elsewhere in the village, roadside footpaths exist only along sections of the main road. The other roads consist of single-track lanes bounded by high hedges and/or stone walls and no footpaths.



The B5477 to the south of the village showing the paved footpath and the preserved trees in the grounds of Rowley House



The Grove Field through which passes a well-used public footpath forming part of the Long Mynd circular walk



Footpath across Hall Meadow



Starr Lane

5. The Natural Environment

The village is surrounded by landscape which is of considerable natural beauty. Open moorland and rough ground on the Long Mynd create an extensive moorland plateau which rises to 1693ft (516m). This provides a natural habitat for a wide variety of species of plant and wildlife. This vast tract of common land, managed by the National Trust, is one of the largest Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the country and extends to the margins of the village. Views to the east from the village are dominated by the Caradoc range of hills. Also of note is Caer Caradoc (1506ft, 459m) with its mixture of ancient woodland, upland grasslands and rock outcrops. Despite the fact that much of the upland is of poor quality (Grade 4 & 5 land) it is in agricultural use, for the most part grazing sheep.

Two brooks pass through the village. One comes down the Batch, passes under the B5477 to meet up, by the children's playground, with the other brook which meanders along the valley north of Church Stretton to form the Cound Brook which ultimately flows into the Severn.

The area abounds with many well-used footpaths which form a major part of walkers' circular routes from Church Stretton.



Footbridge and ford, Batch Valley



Cound Brook



The small reservoir in The Batch, in the foreground, served All Stretton until 1977 when the piped supply from Shrewsbury reached the Strettons. It was owned by the All Stretton Parish Council Water Works Co. This photograph was taken in 1960.

6. All Stretton Today



The Village Hall

All Stretton is a thriving and vibrant community. The village hall, with its modern kitchen and facilities for people with disabilities, forms a focal point for community life. A number of active clubs and societies regularly meet there. There is a well-equipped children's play area in Farm Lane.

There is a fortnightly visit from the mobile library service, timed to coincide with a cafe in the Village Hall, regular daytime bus services to Shrewsbury and Ludlow, and postal collections from several post boxes.

The Yew Tree Inn and Stretton Hall Nursing Home, are sources of local employment, as are a number of home-based businesses including website mail ordering, information technology, graphic design, natural therapies, a specialist travel company, several Bed and Breakfast establishments, and holiday accommodation.

Local services are generally catered for in Church Stretton, just 1¼ miles away. Recent improvements to the B5477 and provision of a continuous and safe footpath have much improved access to our bigger neighbour.

There are no open spaces in the village apart from the children's playground. Therefore it is very important to retain those on the edges of the settlement.

There are in the region of 200 dwellings in the parish. The age profile of its residents, typical of many rural communities, is wide - from children of pre-school and school age to a higher than average proportion of retired people. There are many working families as well, travelling to Church Stretton, Shrewsbury and beyond for their employment. Nearby farms, shops, rest homes, building firms, the drinking water bottling plant, schools, the caring profession and service industries all offer employment. Employment based from home is an increasing feature, with broadband and mobile phone services now becoming generally available.

7. Tourism

All Stretton has long been a favoured place for visitors to the Strettons and especially for walkers who wish to climb the Long Mynd or Caer Caradoc, with B & B's providing tourist accommodation. From the centre of the village, Batch Valley splits with Long Batch heading up to the north-west, and the other to the north-east up to Plush Hill. In the easterly direction from the village centre, Farm Lane leads to the A49 and across to a footpath which heads for the Cardington Old Road and from which one can climb Caer Caradoc, Hope Bowdler Hill, or Helmeth. There are a number of other footpaths and bridleways from the village, well worth exploring. The village is on the route of the 'Long Mynd and Stiperstones Shuttle bus' with scheduled stops at Jinlye and within the village itself.

The footway opened in 2003 between All Stretton and Church Stretton provides a safe route between the two communities and gives excellent views across the valley to the Caradoc hills. The footway is gently graded and especially suited to wheelchairs and less active walkers.

An ancient 'hollow way' leads up from the Batch past Synalds Farm. This track no doubt was deep cut by a combination of water erosion and use by animals and humans.

The views of the valleys and hills are much prized by local people and visitors alike. The village is clearly visible both from the valley bottom and the Caradoc and Mynd hills. The presence of many trees and old hedges softens the visual impact and it is important that any development takes into account not just the local visual impact but also the views from a distance.

8. The Future

The previous South Shropshire Development Plan has been subsumed within Shropshire Council's current range of planning policies. Those planning policies now relate to The National Planning Policy Framework (2012), which include safeguards for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The 2003 Village Design Statement came about as a result of a village survey, which identified unanimous support for preventing major new development. Throughout its history, development in the village has been spasmodic and on a small scale. Because the village is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty there is little suitable infill land available. It is distinct and different from the town of Church Stretton and, as such, needs to be treated on its own merits and protected by separate planning criteria.

Any development in the village therefore needs to be considered with due regard to the following:

- that much of the built environment is already a designated conservation area;
- it could increase building density to an unacceptable level;
- it could risk extending the built environment into surrounding open countryside within the AONB which would then have a detrimental impact on tourism - a major part of the local economy - and degrade valuable differentiation between All Stretton and Church Stretton;
- it could destroy the tranquillity and character of a unique village, which are features valued by both residents and visitors alike.

For some time now the village has been designated as situated within "open countryside" with new housing development prohibited unless it meets strict criteria. This Design Statement is intended to inform the application of current national and local planning policies relevant to the village and its surrounding open countryside.



All Stretton from Caer Caradoc showing the open countryside on all sides of the village

9. Community Involvement in the Design Statement

As part of the original consultation process in 2003, a draft of the first Village Design Statement was circulated to every household in the village and comments invited to illustrate the range of views held by residents in our community. These comments, largely still applicable today, included:

"...one of the main characteristics of the village is unseen, its sense of community. This could be destroyed by inappropriate development."

"...any new development should reflect the existing 'hotch-potch' of buildings both in age and style."

"...Estate developments are completely out of keeping in our village."

"...Existing boundary stone walls and hedging should be retained."

"...Every dwelling or pair of houses is of a different style and design. This feature of the village should be retained."

"...Villagers place great importance on maintaining the outstanding beauty and tranquillity of the locality - not just for themselves but also for visitors ... who comment on the friendly, unsophisticated, everyday nature of the village."

In 2015/16 the Village Society decided to update the 2003 plan. Outdated references in the document have been revised and modifications, in accordance with the expressed attitudes and aspirations of the community, incorporated in the text.

At a well-attended AGM of the All Stretton Village Society on the 11th May 2016 the village reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the original Design Statement and to the revisions incorporated in the current document to bring up to date.

10. Recommendations

These arise from all that precedes:

1. There are many mature trees and hedges, which are important to our landscape. These should be preserved.
2. The views from the valley floor and its steeply rising sides are unique. They give the village much of its character and should be respected.
3. Planning applications should contain specific detail relating to: materials, construction, architectural features, quality and finish that are consistent with properties in the vicinity.
4. Any new buildings should as far as possible be set within proportionate grounds with boundaries of hedges (preferably native species) or walls to reflect existing patterns of development.
5. Extensions to buildings should be compatible with the style of the existing structure and not disproportionate in size. The All Stretton community needs a variety of house sizes that adapt to meet evolving housing needs.
6. New buildings should not destroy existing sight lines and views, which are characteristic features of the Village.
7. The village's main street (B5477) is characterised by variable widths, blind bends and either narrow or non-existent footways whilst almost all other roads in the village are single track. Therefore, any proposals for future development should give careful consideration to road safety matters and have minimal impact on the volume and speed of vehicular traffic.
8. Due regard should be given to lighting levels to ensure that they are in keeping with the rural setting of the village which fortunately suffers little light pollution.

In summary, successful development of All Stretton should not be brought about by any significant increase in the number of dwellings, but preferably by controlled in-filling and careful improvement within the existing "envelope" of the village.

It is important for those involved in any kind of development decisions in All Stretton to visit the site and be sympathetic to its environment. Developers and Planning Officers must be aware of the visual impact of any new development not just within the built environment but also upon the sensitive and protected landscape in which the village is situated.

And Finally

The Village Society wishes to re-iterate and emphasise the importance of retaining the open countryside which surrounds the settlement on all sides. The residents of All Stretton value highly the fact that their village is located within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and that it has its own Conservation Area Boundary (*see map at Appendix 3*). Not least, All Stretton's residents value and appreciate the distinguishable gap between the village and Church Stretton; on their behalf, the Village Society would argue that any further erosion of this gap by development would irrevocably damage the present landscape's character and distinctiveness and adversely affect the visual and ecological values of this location. In other words, and more generally, the protection of the remaining open countryside around the village is paramount, an objective entirely consistent with the county's existing planning policies (*see Shropshire Council's Adopted Core Strategy, March 2011, Policy CS17 and SAMDev Adopted Plan, December 2015, Policy MD12*).

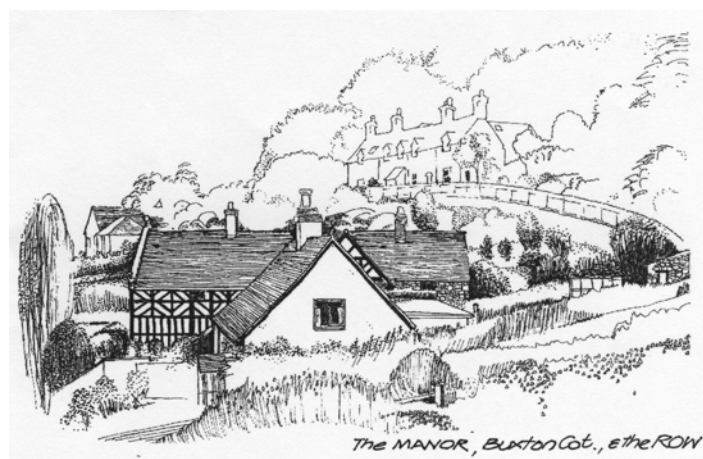
Appendix 1 Listed Buildings within All Stretton, April 2017

Listed Buildings within the Village

Place	Heritage Category Listing	Reference
Cottage Batch Valley dated 1603	Grade II	1383221
Cloverley, Farm Lane	Grade II	1383224
Milestone at NGR 4655 9642 on B5447	Grade II	1383227
Old Hall Farmhouse, Starr Lane	Grade II	1383230
The Manor House, Shrewsbury Road	Grade II	1383231
Barn approx. 20 metres south east of Manor House	Grade II	1383232
Yew Tree Public House	Grade II	1383233
All Stretton War Memorial	Grade II	1427795

Listed Buildings within the Parish

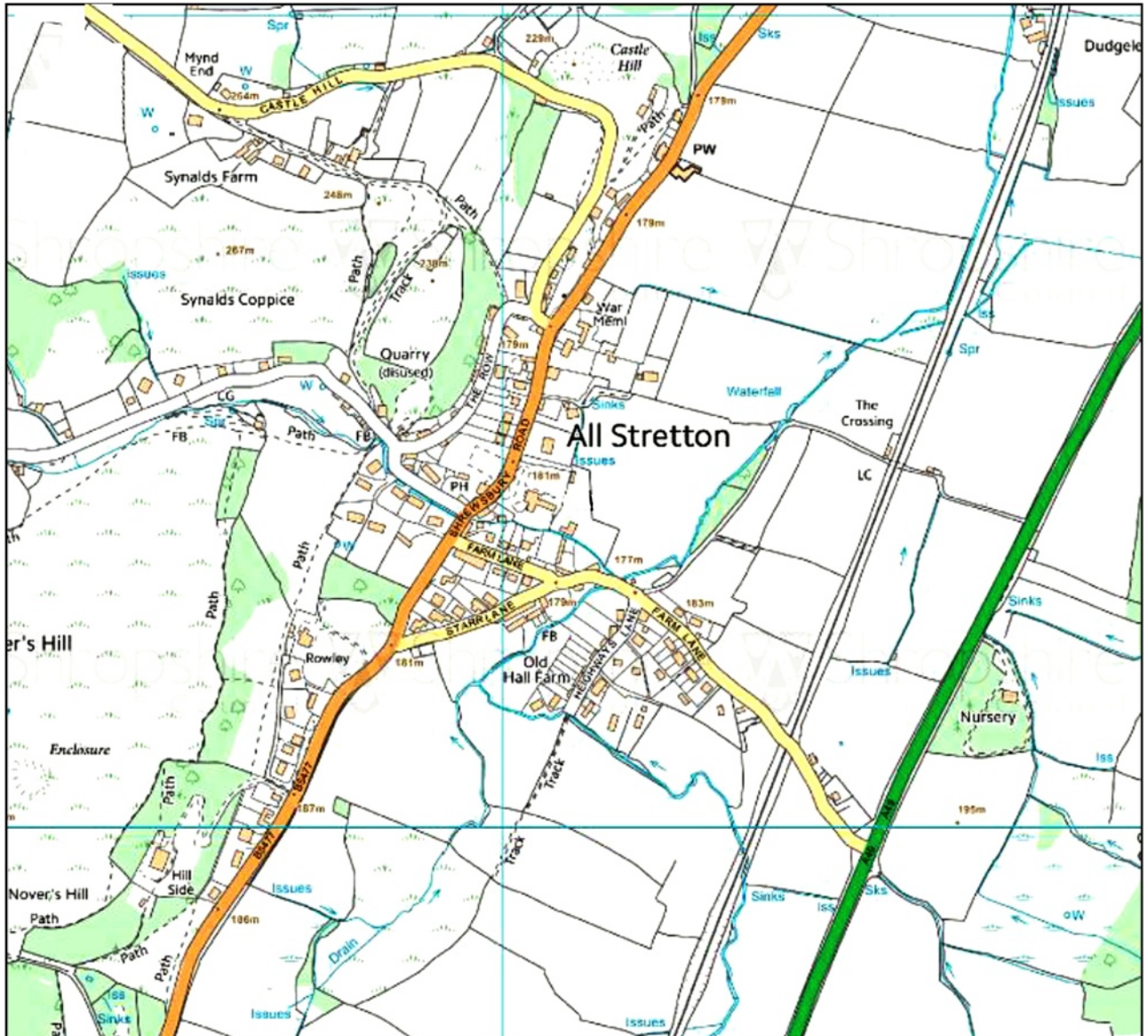
Place	Heritage Category Listing	Reference
Brook House, Lower Wood	Grade II	1055646
Milestone 90 metres NE of Dudgeley House	Grade II	1366681
Botvyle Farmhouse	Grade II	1383222
Farm buildings immediately north of Botvyle Farmhouse	Grade II	1383223
Dudgeley Mill	Grade II	1383225
Lower Botvyle	Grade II	1383226
New House Farm	Grade II	1383228
Barn to the west of New House Farmhouse	Grade II	1383229



Appendix 2 Village of All Stretton Tithe Map c.1840



Appendix 3 Maps of All Stretton



All Stretton Conservation Area

Maps based on Shropshire Council website with their permission.

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