

# LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Surveyors(s): Aylet Anderson , Robert Davies, Penny Rogers, Niels Cross.....

Area name or number: PRISTON VILLAGE (immediate environs).....

View Point Numbers: ...      Date: 1 November.....      Weather: ...Cloudy, mild.....

- Look through all the questions before starting.
- For almost all the questions on Description and Views and Landmarks, just ring a word (or two) in each box that best fits what you know/see and, as necessary, add some notes about quality, condition etc. in the space below.
- The final Summary questions include their own instructions.
- Leave any questions that do not seem to apply.
- Take a form, clipboard, map, camera and a pen or two with you when you go out.
- Take any photos you think are useful (often more useful than some words) and add any photo names/numbers in the right hand boxes once you get back to 'base'.

## 1. DESCRIPTION

Character Element	Photo(s)
<p><b>A. Landform:</b> Flat      Gently undulating      <b>Strongly undulating</b>      Steep valley                      Valley side/floor      Plateau</p> <p>The village itself occupies the steepest and deepest part of the Priston Brook valley. Immediately around it is flatter, more undulating countryside, though there are some locally steep slopes.</p>	<p>PL4.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>B. Landcover:</b> Open farmland      Farmland with trees/woods      Woodland                      Parkland      Wetland</p> <p>The landcover is open farmland, and there are one or two small woods /brakes close to the village.</p>	<p>PL2.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>C. Landuse:</b> Arable farmland      Grassland      Grazing      Mixed      Forestry                      Industrial      Brownfield      Orchards</p> <p>The countryside immediately around the village and indeed in the rest of the parish is farmland (used for dairy farming, sheep and arable). There are also horse pastures – there are 3 livery stables on the outskirts of the village. Though there has been some planting of mixed woodland areas this could not be classed as forestry. The only industrial site is the set of units down at Priston Mill but they are half a mile from the village, and hidden away. Sadly only the remnants of the orchards for which Priston was once famous are left - ' a sea of pink and white' was how one old resident described it.</p>	<p>PL3.jpg 8.11.2013</p>

<p><b>D. Field Boundaries:</b> <i>Tall Clipped Intermittent Hedgerow</i>  <i>With/without trees Fences Walls</i></p> <p>The field boundaries are principally hedges, with occasional tall trees in them. The hedges may be clipped or allowed to grow tall. Some are clipped in the A-style, reputed to be the best shape for encouraging birdlife. There are few fences, and no walls per se – though there is evidence of old walls in the banks of the lanes.</p>	<p>PL4.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>E. Field Sizes and Patterns:</b> <i>Small Medium Large Regular Angular</i>  <i>Linear Irregular</i></p> <p>Field sizes are small to medium (there's probably only one over 15 acres) and are irregular.</p>	<p>PL5.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>F. Routeways:</b> <i>Few roads Dense road network Tracks</i>  <i>Straight/Winding /Narrow</i></p> <p>Narrow lanes lead away from the village in 5 directions, quirky, winding and often sunken so there are no views ahead. There is only one bridleway running out of the village (though there's an excellent network of bridleways close by) and a couple of footpaths.</p>	<p>PL6.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>G. Buildings and Structures:</b> <i>What manmade elements are in the landscape?</i>  <i>Village(s)/Town Isolated Farms Barns Groups of dwellings Pylons</i>  <i>Masts Wires. How do they 'sit' and what natural features influence that?</i></p> <p>Outside the village cluster there is only one (hardly visible) farm in close proximity and two isolated sets of farm buildings, those of Whidlecombe Farm and Pressbarrow Farm. There are no clusters of houses in the countryside surrounding the village, only a couple of barns on the outskirts. There are no pylons or masts. There's the usual quota of overhead electricity and telephone wire but they are not on the whole obtrusive</p>	<p>PL7.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>H. Water and Drainage:</b> <i>Stream River Reservoir Wet ditches Ponds</i>  <i>Lake</i></p> <p>An attractive feature outside the village is the Priston Brook, which rises 2 miles away to the west, and flows through Priston and down to join with its larger sister watercourse, the Conygre Brook, which supplies the water for Priston Mill in the next valley. Before the confluence an old mill leat was constructed that also fed water from Priston Brook to Priston Mill. The combined brooks, known from there as the Newton Brook, flows on to join the River Avon at Twerton in the western suburbs of Bath.</p> <p>There are several wet ditches, mainly to the west (higher ground) of the village, and two ponds, both man-made. One of these two is a duck flying pond, made by damming the Priston Brook half a mile upstream of the village. This has affected the</p>	<p>PL8.jpg 8.11.2013</p>

<p>flow of water through the village; ironically, since one of the principal complaints about Priston is its liability to flooding, the brook can dry up in summer. This means that the sewage works at the bottom end of the village are discharging onto an almost dry stream bed.</p> <p>All roads into the village are liable to flooding.</p>	
<p><b>I. Enclosure and Scale:</b> <i>Tight</i>    <i>Enclosed</i>    <i>Open</i>    <i>Exposed/Intimate</i>  <i>Small</i>    <i>Large</i>    <i>Vast</i></p> <p>A bit of everything. The land around the village to the north and east is quite enclosed whereas to the south and west it is more open. The one thing the landscape is NOT is 'vast'.</p>	<p>PL9.jpg 8.11.2013</p>

<p><b>2. VIEWS AND LANDMARKS</b> (mark on the map)</p>	
<p><b>A. Views:</b> <i>Sweeping</i>    <i>Channeled</i>    <i>Long</i>    <i>Short</i>    <i>Glimpsed</i>  <i>Across/to a place or landmark.</i></p> <p>From certain viewpoints just outside the village there are some sweeping views. On the outskirts, at the top of Evan's Orchard, at Wood Lodge or Rockhill House, there are beautiful views of several miles to, for example, Beckford's Monument up on Lansdown near the racecourse; and from Pressbarrow Farm Cottage and Holt House far reaching views to the west and north.</p>	<p>PL10.jpg 8.11.2013</p>
<p><b>B. Landmarks:</b> <i>Buildings</i>    <i>Structures</i>    <i>Natural features</i>    <i>History</i>    <i>Archaeology</i></p> <p>As above, there are views to Beckford's Monument and, from the very top of Priston Hill just before joining the B3115 you can see the Westbury White Horse, at least 12 miles away. Also from Priston Hill you can see across to Marksbury Church and, less attractively, the neon lighting on the Marksbury dual carriageway. The main natural feature to be seen is the south-facing bluff of The Sleight at Timsbury. Closer at hand is the Priston Brook, which curves its way down through the village, parallel to the village street and then down through the wooded brake of Village Farm. 'One-tree' hill is a well-known local landmark to the south west, while the complex of buildings at Priston Mill, including the Grade II listed farmhouse, is visible to the north.</p> <p>With regard to recent archaeology, there are several more domestic signs of the past, like the old ha-ha which once encircled most of Priston Place, and the lime kilns set into the cliff-wall of the 'sewage farm footpath'. Ancient archaeological artefacts abound particularly in the form of pottery sherds and worked flints. Significant remains have been reported. For example, just outside the southern perimeter of the village the existence of two Round Barrows was reported by the Rev John Skinner in 1821, though these have subsequently been destroyed. There is strong evidence of occupation during Roman times. A Roman coffin was unearthed in Great Croft Close in 1917 and in the 1953 Bill Wedlake excavated 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century AD pottery and bronze items (as well as some iron-age pottery). On the western edge of the current village lies the site of a possibly independent settlement which later came to be known as Westend Town.</p> <p>In terms of historical record, we note that Priston' name is a mixture of Brythonic</p>	<p>PL11.jpg 8.11.2013</p> <p>PL1.jpg 8.11.2013</p>

<p>'Prisc' and Anglo-Saxon 'tun', indicating early settlement. The Anglo-Saxon Charter of 934 granted much of the land to Bath Abbey and the Domesday Book lists 20 tenements. There was a Norman Church (listed Grade I) as well as a parish cross and priest's house (neither of which still exist). Post-Dissolution, Priston was owned by absentee landlords but in the 1750's it was sold to William Jenkins who swept away the old tenements and allocated blocks of land to individual farms where the farmhouses and outbuildings were all rebuilt. The estate was broken up in 1919.</p>	
---	--

**3. SUMMARY**

**A. Scenic Quality:** *Think about sounds, smells and colours, how it makes you feel, does it feel tranquil? Think about balance (harmonious - chaotic) and diversity (uniform – complex) Seasonal features can also be important.*

The village, seen from the main viewpoint on Priston Hill, gives the impression of slumbering. It is very 'easy on the eye', nestled along the valley bottom, surrounded by sloping gardens and the open hilly farmland beyond, with a wonderful diversity of trees and shrubs to catch your attention all year long. The views and landscape elements change rapidly as one moves around. The smells – perhaps not quite so good. The sewage farm can smell, as does the slurry, and the oil seed rape. On the other hand, you can smell the earth as it is ploughed, and the hay and silage as they are harvested, plus the scents from gardens within the village.

**B. Activities and Associations:** *What do people do in this landscape? Work and/or leisure? Do people paint or photograph it? Are there local poems or stories? What makes you identify with it or value it?*

In the landscape as envisaged by this form – that is the land immediately surrounding the village – one would say "not a lot". It is farmland, and farming today does not have hosts of visible workers to run the show. Except at harvest time it is often an empty (in human terms) landscape, with the occasional tractor working in a distant field, or someone perhaps working with their horses at the livery yards.

**C: In a few words or a sentence or two, what are for you the key positive features about this area? What makes it special?**



PL1.jpg



PL2.jpg



PL3.jpg



PL4.jpg



PL5.jpg



PL6.jpg



PL7.jpg



PL8.jpg



PL9.jpg



PL10.jpg



PL11.jpg