



This chapter explores in detail how the built environment contributes to the distinctive character of the landscape of the AONB the evolution of which has been described in the preceding chapter. It discusses how elements in the landscape can be classified and described, and explores in details how four aspects of the built environment - settlement, boundaries, roofs and walls - contribute to local distinctiveness at a number of levels. The aim is to assist in defining what it is that makes the Cotswolds AONB special at the regional level, while providing a starting point for its further exploration at the truly local (e.g. Village Design Statement) level.

4.01

Elements in the Landscape

Generally

The importance of the part played by the built environment in defining the character of the Cotswolds AONB cannot be stressed too highly. There is perhaps no other part of rural England where social and cultural factors - as manifest in built and constructed elements - are so central to the whole notion of local distinctiveness.

Understanding local distinctiveness at the level of a region such as the AONB requires a considerably different approach to its understating at the micro-level of (say) a village. Whereas the special qualities of the latter can often be reduced to a list of discrete - and often idiosyncratic - 'features' (e.g. a particular style of doorway or a unique architectural detail), it is rarely possible to adopt such a normative position when trying to encapsulate the characteristics of the wider landscape. A far more subtle line of enquiry is required if one is to grasp the general link between such (apparently) disparate landscapes as the Escarpment Outliers and the High Wold Valleys.

Crucial to the definition of local distinctiveness at a *regional* level is the interrelationship between the elements that make up the built environment and their landscape setting. The physical aspects of the landscape - geology, topography and climate - all play a part in shaping the built environment which in turn influences our perception of the landscape. Which is why the framework provided by Landscape Character Assessment is so important in understanding local distinctiveness - it is the first stage in deciding 'where' a specific built or constructed element belongs and 'why' it might not belong anywhere else.

Scope

It is essential to appreciate that, in the context of this study, the term 'the built environment' covers any object in the landscape that is a product of human activity or endeavour, regardless of scale. This means everything from a town or village, down to a gatepost or stepping stone. It is not just about buildings per se.

Also, it is important to be aware of the fact that the study only deals with those built and constructed elements that can be described as 'vernacular', and not those that can be termed 'polite' architecture. This means that, in general terms, it concerns those elements that:

- are designed by an amateur (e.g. the building owner) rather than a trained professional,
- guided by local tradition, as opposed to national or international fashion, style or convention,
- first and foremost, are concerned with function rather than visual impression,
- are of traditional (i.e. tried and tested) rather than innovative construction or appearance,
- use readily available local materials, not ones that have been sourced from afar.

These criteria set the threshold between those elements of the built environment that are 'unique' to a certain locality and those that are not. They also explain why this study is not concerned with buildings such as the great 'wool' churches of the 15th Century (e.g. Northleach or Chipping Campden), or mansions such as Dyrham or Seizincote. Despite the use of local materials and the 'traditional' nature of their construction, these high-status structures are the product of informed, professional designers working within the Europe-wide canons of Gothic and Classical architecture.

Themes

Research has revealed that local distinctiveness in the built environment of the Cotswolds AONB can be categorised in terms of:

- **Settlement:** the towns, village, hamlets, farmsteads and buildings that 'sit' within the landscape.
- **Boundaries:** those elements that sub-divide the landscape between or within settlements, creating the mosaic of gardens, fields, pasture and parkland.
- **Roofs and Walls:** the built elements that play the greatest part in defining the distinctive appearance of buildings within the AONB.

These themes - taken in combination - embrace those elements of the built environment that contribute to the regional identity (i.e. distinctiveness) of the AONB.

Attributes

Elements in the built environment - and the contribution they make to local distinctiveness - are best understood in terms of their attributes i.e. the physical traits and features by which they can be described. The following attributes are used to explore the themes identified above:

- **Typology:** the kinds of element that can be found within the built environment of the Cotswolds AONB i.e. what type of settlement (e.g. a town or a hamlet), what type of boundary (e.g. a wall or a hedge), and what type of roof or wall (e.g. stone tile or thatch, ashlar or brick).
- **Form:** the shape, size, massing, etc. of an element within the built environment (e.g. the shape of a village, the height or plan-form of a wall, or the pitch or a roof).
- **Location:** where specific elements of the built environment can be found (e.g. where in the landscape would one expect to find a compact hamlet or a hedge or a thatched roof).
- **Details:** those particulars that add richness to the built environment, but which only add distinctiveness at a local level i.e. features which contribute to the distinctiveness of (say) a village or a locality, but not to the AONB as a whole (e.g. a village 'object' such as a pond or a cross, a certain type of gate or stile, or the individual treatment of a window or a gable).

This hierarchical approach to the understanding of local distinctiveness links - via the key attribute of location - the generalities of typology and form to the particulars of detail, and thereby the 'macro' scale of Landscape Character Assessment to the 'micro' scale of the Village Design Statements, Conservation Area Appraisals and other forms of supplementary planning guidance.

4.02 Settlement

The form and location of the towns, villages, hamlets, farmsteads and individual buildings is the overarching link between the fabric and features of individual buildings, and the distinctive qualities of their landscape setting. Many built features that are often (and without question) considered to be quintessentially 'Cotswold', only contribute to local distinctiveness in the context of their setting. For example, mullioned windows with label



CLASSIC 'COTSWOLD' DETAILS (GABLES, MULLIONS ETC)



TRADITIONAL FORM OF SETTLEMENT

moulds set in tall gables can be found in many parts of England. It is only when they occur in a certain way in a particular place that they reinforce local distinctiveness, a point that is well illustrated by the recently 'suburbanised' edges of many settlements within the AONB - a new building might have the 'correct' features but still look sorely out of place due to the inappropriate form and location and of its setting.



CLASSIC 'COTSWOLD' DETAILS IN DERBYSHIRE



SUB-URBANISATION OF SETTLEMENT

Typology of Settlement

Settlements can be categorised according to their size and the facilities they contain.



Market Town

There are very few large market towns within the AONB. Those that there are tend to be local administrative centres with a good range of shopping, services and a large church. A small market town can be distinguished from a large village by the urban feel of its centre. It will usually have a range of shops and basic services.



Compact Village

A compact village will often have an urban feel, with buildings opening directly onto a central street. Otherwise, buildings will generally have front yards or gardens, interspersed with orchards or the churchyard. The settlement will have a church and possibly a public house. The circulation structure of a compact village, and the way in which buildings relate to each other is crucial in maintaining its distinctiveness.



Dispersed Village

A dispersed village has the same facilities and contents as a compact village, but with the settlement being spread-out. Buildings interweave with fields, commons or large greens, often with intermittent development along the roads into the village. There is rarely a defined centre. It is important to maintain the density of building in a dispersed village; the spaces between buildings are as important as the buildings themselves.



Compact Hamlet

A compact hamlet is a collection of properties or farms with no church, shops, public houses or other facilities. As in a compact village, understanding the circulation structure and way in which buildings relate to each other is the key to maintaining distinctiveness.



Dispersed Hamlet

A dispersed hamlet comprises a collection of loosely-associated properties connected by a series of tracks and roads. There is no centre. As in the case of a dispersed village, it is important to understand and maintain the density of building in a dispersed village, and not to allow its character to be eroded by an accretion of new infill.



Ribbon Development

Areas of ribbon development are characterised by housing that extends along the main roads leading to and from the larger towns and cities that border the AONB e.g. Cheltenham, Stroud and Bath.



Farmstead

A farmstead is a closely-knit groups of buildings dedicated to agricultural activity, and almost always including a house, barn and various shelters for animals and crops. The buildings will often be arranged around a yard, with a functional hierarchy that must be understood and respected if the distinctive character of such groupings is not to be lost.



Individual Building

Barns, lonely inns and one-off houses can contribute much to the distinctive character of the landscape. It is important that any new examples respect the density of building within a given area.

Form of Settlement

The distinctive form of a settlement can be a product of its topography or it can stem from the reason for its establishment or both. Settlements can be looked at in terms of both their 'internal' and 'external' form. Internal form concerns how the shape of a settlement relates to its inner pattern of circulation. External form is about how a settlement presents itself to the surrounding landscape. Internal form can be described as linear, radial, organic or planned:

- **Linear** settlements have naturally developed along a single main route with secondary short routes leading to farms or farmland to each side. The form of such settlements is often emphasised by the topography, with the settlement squeezed into a narrow valley or along a hill terrace.
- **Radial** settlements are those that have sprung up as the junction of two or more main routes that are linked by secondary routes. The shape of the settlement is often asymmetric, the result of one route dominating the others, or by topography restricting opportunities for development in one or more direction.
- **Organic** settlements are generally those that were historically self-sufficient and - not relying on passing trade - are often distant from main routes. Topography and local need are the drivers behind this form of settlement.
- **Planned settlements** - new and old - do not fit any of the above forms, being driven by plan-based design governed by the desire to build (for instance) avenues or cul-de-sacs. This form of settlement is generally alien to the rural origins of most of the AONB.

External form is the product of:

- Skyline, and
- Edges

Skyline is formed as much by topography as buildings, with settlements sitting either on a gentle slope, in a dip, stretched-out along a contour, rising up a slope, resting on a hill top, or by a combination of these. The tallest building in a settlement is usually (but not always) the church, followed by halls, manor houses or built-up urban centres with multiple floor levels. In smaller settlements, the church is often located on the edge, creating an asymmetric skyline that relates to and accentuates the topography of the site.

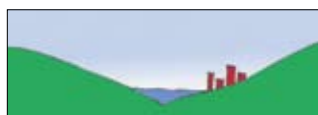
Edges of settlements can be made up of soft or hard elements (i.e. trees, gardens, orchards or fields as opposed to walls, roads or buildings):

- Soft edges often display contrasting boundary treatments, with refined garden walls set against rural field walls; garden trees may also help to differentiate the edge of settlement, perhaps by way of evergreens such as yew and holly that are rarely seen in the wider landscape.
- The character of hard edges depends on whether the settlement is inward or outward looking. Inward looking settlements will have the grander buildings sited with a good prospect across a green, stream or junction, which often means an edge of small ancillary buildings and rear gables. Outward looking settlements will have the grander buildings facing the wider landscape, and hence a stronger edge.

Isolated properties sit on the approaches to even the most compact villages and hamlets, increasing the apparent depth of the settlement. The balance between detached and terraced dwellings (e.g. farm workers cottages) is another important factor in edge character. It is essential that an assessment of the edges of settlements are included within the preparation of Village Design Statements.

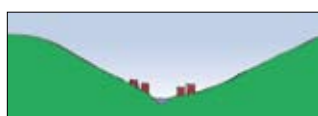
Location of Settlement

Generically, settlements are located in one of eight positions within the landscape of the AONB:



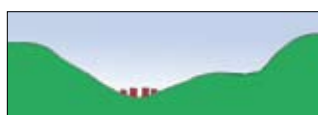
Valley Bottom: Riverside

These sit on the gently-sloping terraces at the lower elevations of the wider valleys, extending along the lines of rivers or stepping back at right angles, depending on the direction of the main route through.



Valley Bottom: Streamside

These are generally smaller and more organic, often with the gentle stream forming a central feature, filling ponds or skirting village greens.



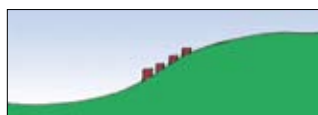
Valley Bottom: Dry

These occur in the hollows within the upper parts of valleys, adjacent to springs or wells. They usually fill the whole of the valley bottom, rising only where a main route extends the settlement upwards.



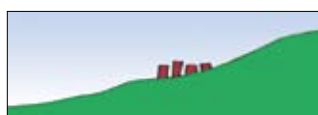
Hill Foot

These usually run along the base of a hill, with secondary routes rising up the hillside above. Many are long and linear with an enclosed, intimate feel, albeit that long rear gardens that may contain ancillary buildings.



Hillside

These can take two forms. Where gradients are steep they run along contours. Otherwise, they rise up along a main route with secondary routes running out along the hillside.



Hill Terrace

These sit on the gentler slopes of hillsides, generally taking advantage of a main route that traverses the slackened slope before turning straight upwards. Secondary growth tends to extend downwards off the terrace.



Hill Crest

These are a fairly recent phenomenon, with properties sited along contours to take advantage of the view.



Hill (Ridge) Top

These primarily extend along ridge lines and across plateaux, with secondary routes extending downward. They generally present an outward form to the landscape, though some look inward.

These generic locations can be specifically related to Landscape Character Types, giving a clear indication of what type and form of settlement can be expected in a certain location, and hence how the pattern of settlement contributes to distinctiveness across the AONB. Understanding the interaction between pattern of settlement and local distinctiveness means that it becomes possible to appreciate that maintaining the character of




the area is as much about ensuring that (for example) a valley bottom development does not stretch too far up the valley side, or that a hillside settlement should not be allowed to extend above or below certain elevations. This subtle interrelationship between Landscape Character, typology, form and location is tabulated over the following pages.

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

Incidence of settlement type		01 Escarpment Outliers								02 Escarpment							
Unique examples ■																	
Some examples ▲																	
Predominant types ●																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial												■				
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear				▲								■	■			
	Radial				■								▲		■	■	
	Organic				■										■		
	Planned																
Dispersed Village 	Linear		■	■									■	▲	■		
	Radial				▲	■								■	▲		■
	Organic						■										
	Planned													▲		■	
Compact Hamlet 	Linear				■	▲											
	Radial																
	Organic				■												
	Planned										▲	■		●	▲	▲	
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear				■	●	●	■	■					▲			
	Radial				■	■							■	▲		■	
	Organic					▲							■	▲			
	Planned													●		▲	
Ribbon Development												■	▲	●	■	▲	
Farmstead			■	■	■	●	▲	▲			▲		▲	●	▲	▲	
Individual Building			▲		▲	●	▲	▲	■								

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●






		03 Rolling Hills and Valleys								04 Enclosed Limestone Valley							
																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear									■							
	Radial						■										
	Organic																
	Planned						■										
Compact Village 	Linear									▲				■			
	Radial					▲								■			
	Organic													■			
	Planned																
Dispersed Village 	Linear	■								▲	▲			▲			
	Radial		■		■					▲						■	■
	Organic													▲			
	Planned																
Compact Hamlet 	Linear																
	Radial					■											
	Organic					■											
	Planned														■	■	
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear		●	■	■	●		▲		■	▲			●	■	▲	
	Radial													▲			
	Organic					▲		▲	▲					■			
	Planned																■
Ribbon Development						■					■						■
Farmstead					■	■	■	■		■	■	■		●		▲	
Individual Building			▲			▲		■	■	▲	▲			●		▲	

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

		05 Settled Valley								06 Ironstone Hills and Valleys							
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial																
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear					■				■							
	Radial					■					■						
	Organic															■	
	Planned																
Dispersed Village 	Linear					■		■									
	Radial		▲							■							
	Organic					▲		■		■							
	Planned																
Compact Hamlet 	Linear															■	■
	Radial		■								■						
	Organic																
	Planned					■											
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear		▲			●		▲					▲				■
	Radial		■			▲											
	Organic					▲											
	Planned																
Ribbon Development																	
Farmstead			■			■		■			■		▲			■	■
Individual Building			■			▲				■	■		●	■	▲	▲	

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

		07 High Wold								08 High Wold Valleys							
																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial								■								■
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear							■			▲						■
	Radial		▲					■	■					■			
	Organic							■									
	Planned								■								
Dispersed Village 	Linear		▲					▲	■		▲			■		▲	■
	Radial		■			▲		▲	▲		▲	■		▲		▲	■
	Organic		▲	▲					▲		■			■		■	■
	Planned								▲								
Compact Hamlet 	Linear							▲	▲		▲	■		●	■	■	▲
	Radial								■		▲			▲		■	
	Organic			▲												■	
	Planned			■					■								
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear		▲	▲		▲		▲	▲		▲	■		●	■	■	▲
	Radial		■	■		■			▲		▲			▲		■	
	Organic							▲	▲							■	
	Planned																
Ribbon Development						■		■	■		■			■			■
Farmstead			■	▲		▲		●	▲		▲	▲		●	■	▲	■
Individual Building			■	▲	■	▲		●	●		●	▲		●		▲	▲

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

		09 High Wold Dip-Slope								10 High Wold Dip-Slope Valleys							
																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial																
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear			■													
	Radial		■					▲									
	Organic																
	Planned								■								
Dispersed Village 	Linear		▲					▲									
	Radial			▲		■		▲	■		●						
	Organic					▲					■						
	Planned								▲								
Compact Hamlet 	Linear			■													
	Radial				■						■						
	Organic		■					■									
	Planned								■								
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear		▲	▲		▲			●		▲			▲			
	Radial		■	■		●		■	▲								
	Organic			■				▲									
	Planned							■									
Ribbon Development								▲			■						
Farmstead			■	▲		▲		▲	●							▲	
Individual Building			▲	▲		●		▲	●		▲			▲			

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

		11 Dip-Slope Lowland								12 Dip-Slope Lowland Valleys							
																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial		■														
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear			▲													
	Radial	■				▲		■									
	Organic		▲														
	Planned					■											
Dispersed Village 	Linear					■		■			▲						
	Radial	▲	▲	▲		●				■	▲			▲			
	Organic	■				▲				▲							
	Planned		■	■													
Compact Hamlet 	Linear																
	Radial																
	Organic			■		▲											
	Planned					■											
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear		■	▲		●											
	Radial	■	■			▲		▲	▲		▲						
	Organic		■			■					■						
	Planned		■			▲											
Ribbon Development						■											
Farmstead			▲	▲		●					■			■			
Individual Building			▲	■		●		▲			▲	▲		▲			

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

		13 Low Limestone Plateau								14 Cornbrash Lowlands							
																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial																
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear																
	Radial																
	Organic																
	Planned																
Dispersed Village 	Linear																
	Radial								■	■							
	Organic																
	Planned																■
Compact Hamlet 	Linear																
	Radial											■					▲
	Organic																
	Planned																
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear								▲	■							■
	Radial										■						
	Organic																
	Planned																
Ribbon Development										▲							
Farmstead								●		▲	■					■	■
Individual Building									▲	■	▲						●

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

Incidence of settlement type		15 Farmed Slopes								16 Broad Floodplain Valley							
Unique examples ■																	
Some examples ▲																	
Predominant types ●																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial					■				▲							
	Organic																
	Planned																
Compact Village 	Linear	■				■		■									
	Radial																
	Organic					■											
	Planned																
Dispersed Village 	Linear	■	■		■	▲					■				■		
	Radial		▲			▲			■	▲	■			▲			
	Organic		▲			▲				■	■						
	Planned					▲											
Compact Hamlet 	Linear		▲														
	Radial																
	Organic																
	Planned					▲											
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear		▲		■	▲				▲				●	■		
	Radial		■														
	Organic					■		■									
	Planned						▲	■									
Ribbon Development						■											
Farmstead		■	▲	▲	▲	●	▲			▲	■		■	▲			
Individual Building			▲	▲	▲	●	▲	■	▲	▲	▲	▲		●			

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●






		17 Pastoral Lowland Vale								18 Settled Unwooded Vale							
																	
		LOCATION								LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear																
	Radial		●														
	Organic																
	Planned		■														
Compact Village 	Linear																
	Radial												▲		▲		
	Organic												▲				
	Planned																
Dispersed Village 	Linear	■	▲		■								■				
	Radial		▲			■	■		▲				▲		■		
	Organic	■	▲		■												
	Planned								■								
Compact Hamlet 	Linear		▲								■			■			
	Radial																
	Organic													■			
	Planned																
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear	▲	▲			■			▲				▲	■	▲		
	Radial		▲		▲						▲						
	Organic		■														
	Planned						■										
Ribbon Development			▲												▲		
Farmstead			●	■	▲	■	■		▲		■		▲		▲		
Individual Building		▲	▲	■	●	▲	▲		▲		▲		▲		●		

Incidence of settlement type

Unique examples ■

Some examples ▲

Predominant types ●

		19 Unwooded Vale							
		LOCATION							
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Market Town 	Linear								
	Radial		■		■				
	Organic								
	Planned								
Compact Village 	Linear		▲		▲				
	Radial				▲		▲		
	Organic								
	Planned								
Dispersed Village 	Linear				▲		■		
	Radial		▲		▲		▲		
	Organic						■		
	Planned								
Compact Hamlet 	Linear		■		■				
	Radial								
	Organic								
	Planned		■				■		
Dispersed Hamlet 	Linear	■	▲		▲	■	●		
	Radial		▲				■		
	Organic	■			▲				
	Planned								
Ribbon Development					▲		■		
Farmstead			▲		■		●		
Individual Building		■	▲		▲		●		

Settlement Details

The 'details' which add the final layer of local distinctiveness to a settlement are many and varied. Village crosses, war memorials, mounting blocks, churn stands, ponds, sheep washes, bridges (pedestrian and vehicular), pumps, kerbstones, signposts, boundary stones and garden walls are just some of the features that can be found in and around settlements, and which create distinctiveness at a truly local level - the sort of details, along with less tangible features such as open spaces and views out, that must be covered by the Village Design Statements and Conservation Area Appraisals that it is hoped will pick-up the threads of this study.





4.03

Boundaries

The 'Cotswolds' have long been celebrated for their distinctive dry stone walls. However, as regards the AONB as a whole, this is only part of the story. There are many localities where dry stone walls are entirely absent from the landscape, and where hedges - and sometimes fences - are the dominant boundary feature. In fact, hedges are much more common within the AONB than is often perceived, even accounting for the loss of dry stone walls over the years. From the point of view of local distinctiveness, this is a very important point, since the popular image of the Cotswolds tends to over-emphasise the importance of dry stone walls in the landscape, a consequence of the dominance in terms of tourism and marketing of the 'Gloucestershire Cotswolds' (i.e. the large northern tracts of High Wold landscape and associated settlements such as Stow-on-the-Wold). This has sometimes lead to dry stone walls being

constructed in inappropriate locations (e.g. the countryside in the north of the AONB, where the Ironstone geology means that there is no dry stone walling outside of settlements), and a general neglect of the role played by hedges in defining local distinctiveness.

Typology of Boundaries

Boundaries within the AONB can be broadly categorised as:

- **Dry stone walls:** Walls built of stones laid without mortar or cement.
- **Hedges:** Trees and shrubs, carefully laid and intertwined to form 'living' walls.
- **Other:** Railings, wooden and metal fences, pales, earthworks, ha-has and other boundary types.



DRY STONE WALL



ENCLOSURE HEDGE



TIMBER FENCING



DECORATIVE IRON ESTATE FENCING



SIMPLE IRON ESTATE FENCING

Note: the designation of a boundary under the category 'other' does not in any way imply it contributes less to local distinctiveness than dry stone walls or hedges.

Form of Boundaries

When considering the various forms of boundary that occur within the Cotswolds AONB, it is important to distinguish between those boundaries that occur within settlements (i.e. bounding gardens and churchyards) and those that sub-divide the wider landscape. Account also needs to be taken of the peculiarities of the walls, fences and (sometimes) hedges that surround the gardens and parks of mansions and other high-status buildings, though - like the buildings themselves - the design of these boundaries can be within the realms of the 'polite' rather than the vernacular.

Boundaries within settlements tend to be higher and of a more formal design than simple field boundaries, reflecting the fact that they are as much about status as the practicalities of enclosure. Dry stone walls often give way to walls of coursed rubble or, in certain circumstances, walls built from squared and dressed blocks of stone. Hedges will tend to be single-species (e.g. laurel or yew), reflecting their relatively recent date, and of a far more manicured appearance than field hedges. Iron railings of various designs may also be found, along with various patterns of timber fencing.



HIGH, COPED GARDEN WALL



TIMBER PICKET FENCING



WELL MANICURED HEDGES

The form of farmland (field) boundaries greatly influences our perception of the landscape. Dry stone walls and hedges (and sometimes other types of boundary) are major contributors to landscape character, so much so that they are amongst the most important factors in determining the distinction between one type of landscape and another. Two factors need to be considered when assessing the role played by field boundaries in creating local distinctiveness: plan form and construction techniques.

How a field boundary appears in plan is very much related to age. Older boundaries - pre-eighteenth century back to prehistoric times - are generally of irregular plan, often following contours or other natural features; the resultant field pattern is small-scale and intimate. More recent 'enclosure' boundaries will be straight and true, running across the landscape with little regard for topography; fields are large and expansive. Despite the fact that relatively few field boundaries have been created since the nineteenth century, it is very important that the boundary pattern of a locality is understood and respected if local distinctiveness is to be maintained. Sub-division of fields and - more ominously - the merging of fields can erode the special qualities of almost any landscape.



SMALL-SCALE, IRREGULAR FIELDS



ENCLOSURE BOUNDARIES



MERGED FIELDS (I.E. BOUNDARIES LOST)

The way in which a dry stone wall, hedge or a fence is 'built' will characterise its appearance in the landscape, and hence its contribution to local distinctiveness.

Dry Stone Walls

The 'classic' Cotswold dry stone wall is constructed of fairly regular sheets of oolitic limestone, laid in relatively even courses. Stones will be laid 'double' (i.e. the wall is formed from two faces of stones with 'through' stones at regular intervals and small stones - 'hearting' - packed between) and tilted slightly outwards to help keep the wall dry. Less regular stones laid 'on edge' will be used as top stones (copings), creating an irregular profile that -

supposedly - will deter sheep from jumping over the wall. Variations occur across the whole of the AONB, and even in the High Wold there are departures in walling technique, the result of differences in the quality or size of the available stone, or the skills of a particular waller. Copings are particularly subject to variation, with walls in some areas simply capped in large, flat 'three-quarter throughs' or - more recently - a thick application of mortar formed to a 'hogsback'. Dressed copings are sometimes found in more formal situations (e.g. parkland walls). Walls in areas where little more than rough boulders are available (primarily in the north and the south of the AONB) are rarely laid to courses.



CLASSIC DRY STONE WALL



DRESSED, ROUNDED COPING



STONE SLATE COPING



A MODERN FIELD HEDGE



PICKET FENCING IN A VILLAGE

Hedges

Stylistic variation also exist in hedges, partly the result of laying and management techniques, but mainly as a result of age. Older hedges will tend to be thicker and species rich, whereas newer hedges will contain only a few species, if not a single species (e.g. the regular hawthorn hedge that typifies enclosure). In certain instances, a hedge may sit on top of an earthen bank.

Other

Fenced and railed field boundaries will also have their own particular style, the most notable example being the simple iron fences that typify the enclosure of some estates and commons.

Local distinctiveness in the landscape is as much about appreciating the innumerable subtleties of construction technique that exist in different parts of the AONB as it is about the 'correct' type of boundary.

Location of Boundaries

Generically, boundaries of all types are located in one of three positions within the landscape of the AONB: Settlement, parkland or farmland.

Settlement

The form (style) of all types of boundary within settlements are very localised, and hence it is essential that Village Design Statements explicitly deal with walls,

hedges, railings, fences and any other type of locally distinctive boundary treatment (e.g. the stone plank fences that can be found in the vicinity of the village of Filkins in West Oxfordshire,) - there are no 'rules' that can be simply applied across the whole of the AONB. All that can be said with certainty is that styles of walling and hedging that are associated with field boundaries are not generally appropriate for use within settlements, a common mistake in new developments.



STONE PLANK FENCING



ORNATE PARKLAND WALLING

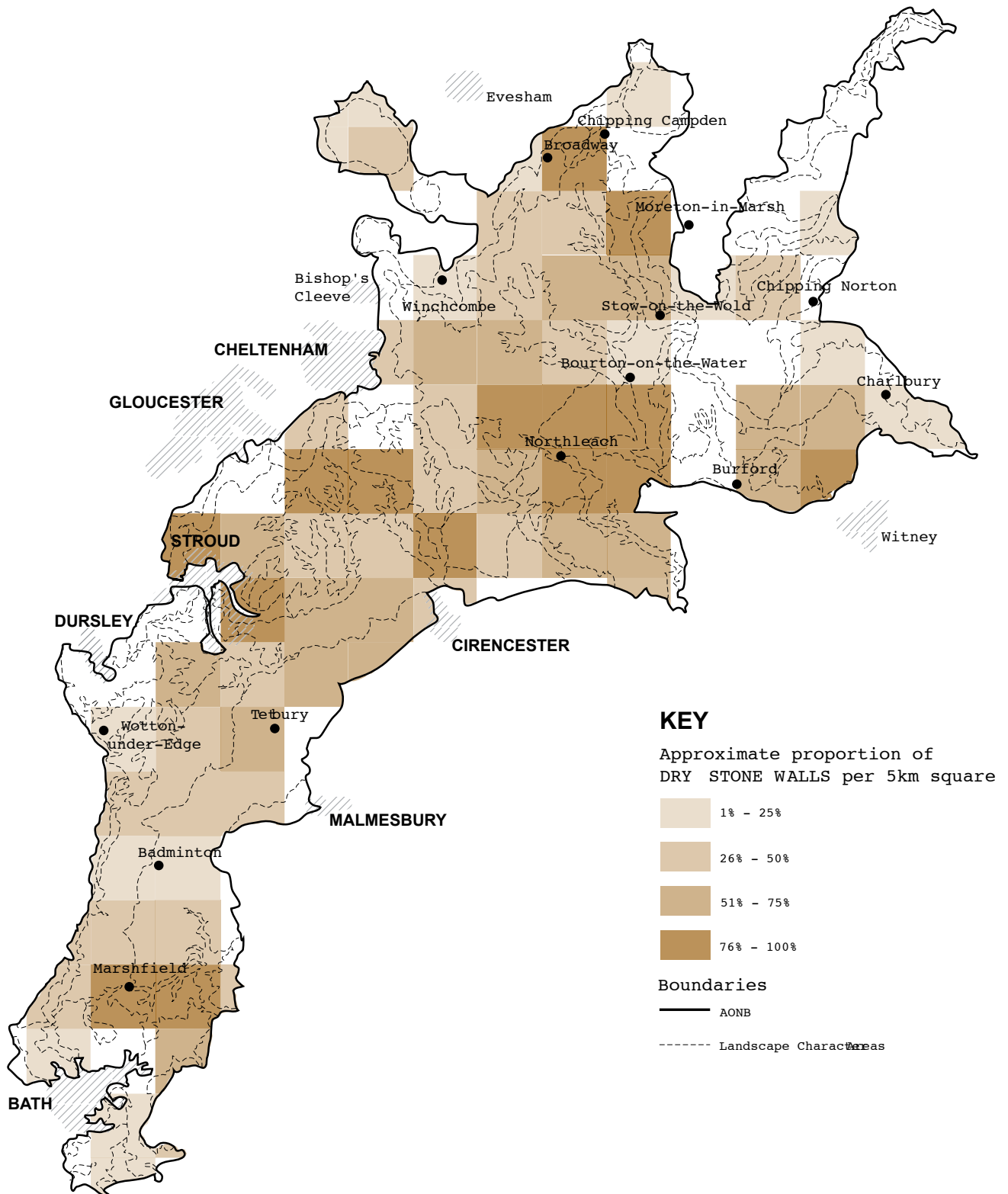
Parkland

Boundaries surrounding parkland (and commons) may also exhibit uniquely local characteristics, reflecting the practice (or whims) of an individual landowner. As in the case of towns, villages and hamlets, the peculiarities of each estate need to be understood, particularly as regards the extent to which park and field boundaries can be considered as synonymous (i.e. some parkland may well be bounded by simple field walls or hedges whereas, in other instances, fields may be enclosed within the formality of a park, perhaps by iron railings or a finely-constructed wall).

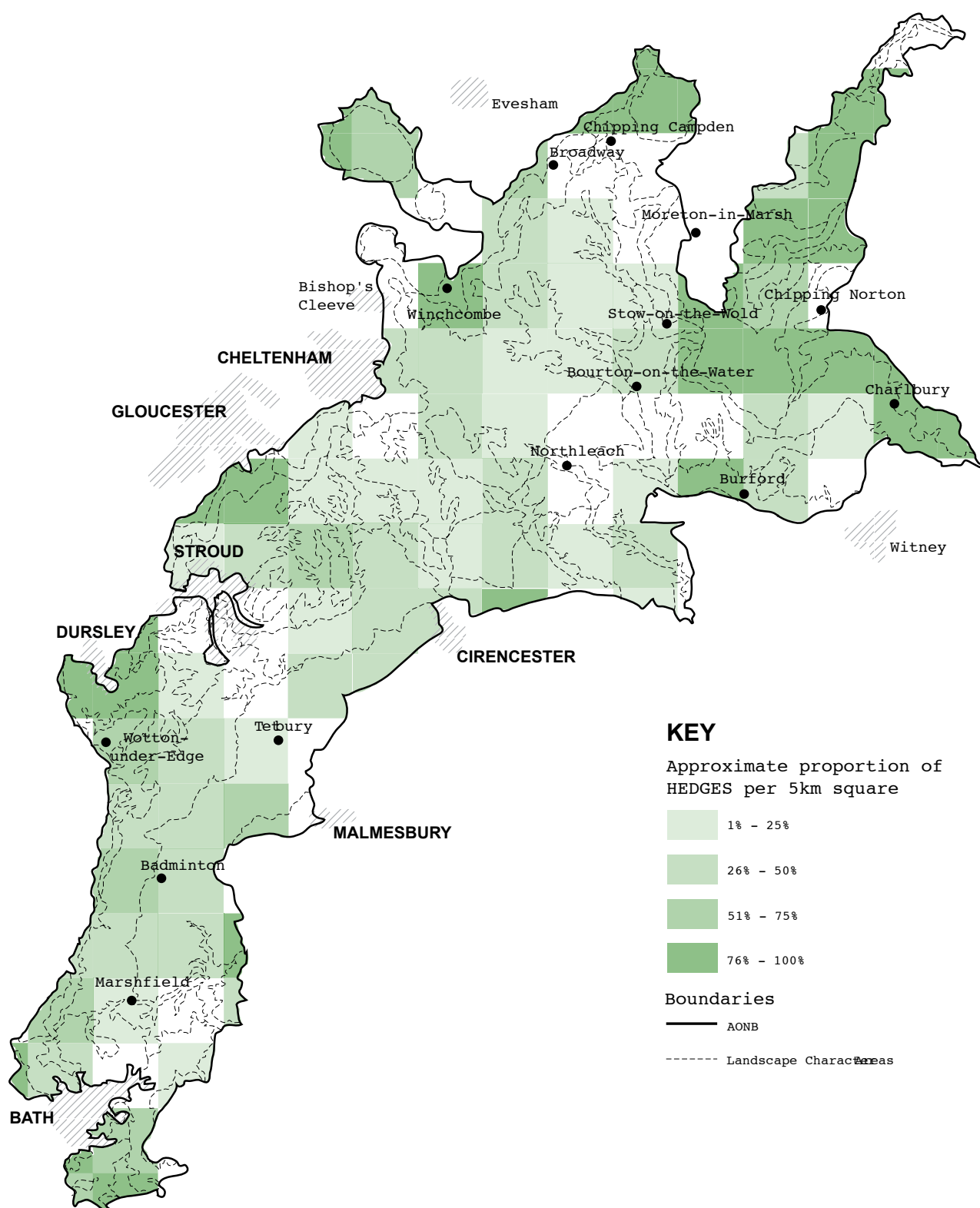
approximate distribution - in terms of 5km squares - of dry stone walls and hedges across the whole of the AONB, illustrating that the distinctiveness of the landscape often stems from a subtle balance between walling and hedging, not the dominance of one or the other (the maps do not account for walls or hedges that have been lost). Squares without walls or hedges are those where fences or estate railings predominate, or where the land is mainly unenclosed (e.g. Cleeve Common) or given over to settlement.

Farmland

Although some field boundaries are fenced (mainly with post and wire), where fencing does occur it tends to be of recent date and alien to the landscape; local distinctiveness is primarily the result of the presence of dry stone walls or hedges. Dry stone walls will invariably be found where stone was available on or close to the surface of the ground (i.e. where the soil is thin), there being little practical sense in moving heavy materials that are to be used for building a purely functional boundary more than a few hundred yards from source. Where a suitable supply of stone was not readily accessible, hedges prevail. The following maps (numbered 04 and 05) show the



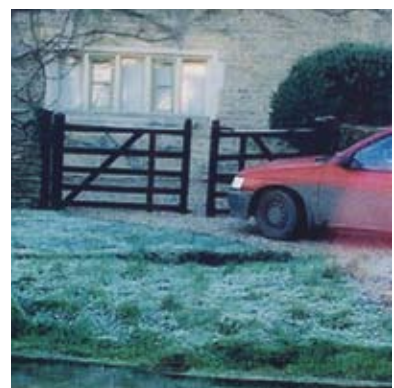
MAP 04: DISTRIBUTION OF DRY STONE WALLS IN THE LANDSCAPE (I.E. OUTSIDE OF SETTLEMENTS)



MAP 05: DISTRIBUTION OF HEDGES IN THE LANDSCAPE (I.E. OUTSIDE OF SETTLEMENTS)

Boundary Details

The 'details' that add the final layer of local distinctiveness to a wall or hedge concern not only the practicalities of construction or laying (an area where the distinction between form and detail is blurred), but also the crucial issue of 'gaps' i.e. the treatment of those places where people, animals or vehicles can cross a boundary. It is these details - primarily stiles and gates, but also idiosyncrasies such as boles (recesses within walls, sometimes to house bees) - that lend a wall, hedge or fence its specific character. It is therefore essential that they are accounted for in the preparation of Village Design Statements, Conservation Area Appraisals or Parish Maps.





4.04

Roofs and Walls

The external appearance of any vernacular building is principally determined by the nature of its roof and walls, a point that has not been missed by many commentators on what has often been referred to as the 'Cotswold Style' of building. However, one cannot generalise about gables, mullions, label moulds, finials, etc. since - as has already been noted - understanding the distinctiveness of a region like the AONB is not about assembling a simple lexicon of universally applicable 'features', however important such architectural details may be at the level of a town or village. There is much variety in the buildings of the AONB, a reflection of factors such as age of settlement and proximity to wealth or resources. Only in the materials used for roofing and walling can one discern a common thread across the whole of the area though, paradoxically, this is as much about an appreciation of the limits of what is typically 'Cotswold' as it is about regional identity.

Typology of roofs and walls

Roofs within the AONB can be categorised in terms of their covering material:

- **Stone Slates:** Thin pieces of stone dressed (cut) to random widths and fixed to cover roofs in diminishing courses (i.e. large slates are used at the eaves, with each succeeding course of slates smaller than the one below, and the smallest slates used at the head of the roof). Also known as stone tiles and tilestones. Stone slating is a highly localised form of roof covering, even within an area as restricted as the AONB. The generic description 'stone slate' covers a wider variety of types, some the product of identifiable quarries or mines (e.g. Stonesfield Slate), others that have simply been taken from the surface or dug from small, local delves.
- **Thatch:** Wheat straw fixed in bundles secured with hazel 'rods'. The traditional style of thatching across the AONB is 'long straw' (also known as 'crushed' straw), a by-product of the threshing process which is 'drawn' into bundles ('yealms') that are then bedded onto the roof (as opposed to being dressed with a tool) - the hazel rodding is visible along the eaves and gables. Visible lengths of straw are longer than in the case of other types of thatch and, overall, the roof has a rougher texture than the 'clipped' appearance of water reed or combed wheat 'reed'. As with stone slates, thatching is a highly localised - and personalised - form of roofing that requires the careful selection of materials if it is to be in harmony with the landscape of the AONB. The use of reed-thatching methods are rarely appropriate, despite the (erroneous) perception that long straw is less durable.



STONE SLATE ROOFING



LONG STRAW THATCH ROOFING

Metamorphic (e.g. Welsh) slate, clay tile, corrugated iron roof and other coverings that do not generally contribute to local distinctiveness and which have been 'imported' into the area can also be found within the bounds of the AONB.

Walls (to buildings) within the AONB can be categorised in terms of their material and facing:

- **Ashlar Stone:** Carefully sawn or dressed blocks of stone laid with worked arises that produce tight, thin joints. The face of the stone will generally be 'rubbed' plain, sometimes with a visible margin (draft).
- **Chiselled Stone:** Sawn or dressed blocks of stone that are less 'worked' than ashlar and have not been 'rubbed', the marks of the stonemasons chisel being distinctly visible.
- **Rubble Stone:** Blocks or lumps of stone that may or may not have been dressed or sawn square, and which are laid with thick mortar joints, sometimes brought to courses and sometimes random.
- **Walling ('Buttered') Stone:** Thin sheets of stone that would generally be used for dry stone walls laid in thick beds of mortar which is often 'battered' over the rounded arises.
- **Rendered:** An applied finish of mortar or plaster built-up in layers, and which hides entirely the backing material (generally poor quality stone).
- **Brick:** Regular units of fired clay, generally a shade of red.
- **Timber Frame:** Visible post and beam construction, with infill panels in a variety of materials.



ASHLAR STONE WALLING



CHISELLED STONE WALLING



RUBBLE STONE WALLING (SQUARED AND COURSED)



WALLING ('BUTTERED' STONE WALLING)



RENDERED WALLING



BRICK WALLING



TIMBER FRAMED WALLING

It should be noted that the use of stone for walls is, like stone slates or thatch, a highly localised material, and that within the generic descriptions given above will be many variations - some of them very subtle - in colour and quality. The ill-considered use of stone can be as harmful

to local distinctiveness as the inappropriate introduction of materials such as concrete or artificial stone (sometimes used if finances are lacking). As always, the micro-level of the Village Design Statement or Conservation Area Appraisal must be the ultimate guide.

Form of Roofs

There is little standardisation of roof form across the AONB, other than the fact that roofs are invariably pitched. However, roofs do reflect the limitations of timber as a structural material, the technical requirements of their covering, and - sometimes - the functional demands of the building.

Span

The distance between roof supports (e.g. walls or purlins) which, with the limitations of traditional carpentry, generally results in shallow buildings and hence limited areas of roof pitch being visible from afar (the technically advanced roofs of barns, halls, etc. are the exception). Modern construction techniques can produce roofs of far greater span, often resulting in large areas of visible roof that are entirely out of scale with their setting.



STEEP PITCHED (55°) ROOFS AND GABLES



COMMON PITCHED (47.5°) GABLE END



SHALLOW PITCHED (37°) ROOFS

Pitch

Until the advent of the modern carpenter's square in the eighteenth century, could only be practically set-out in terms of the *length* of the rafter relative to the span of the roof (not the rise of the ridge relative to the span, as today). This meant that simple arithmetic formulae had to be, with the rafters typically being five-eighths, three-quarters or seven-eighths the span between walls, resulting in *rafter* pitches of approximately 37°, 47.5° ('common' pitch) and 55° respectively; the pitch of the covering will be 2-3° lower. All of these pitches and others (of later date) can be found throughout the AONB.

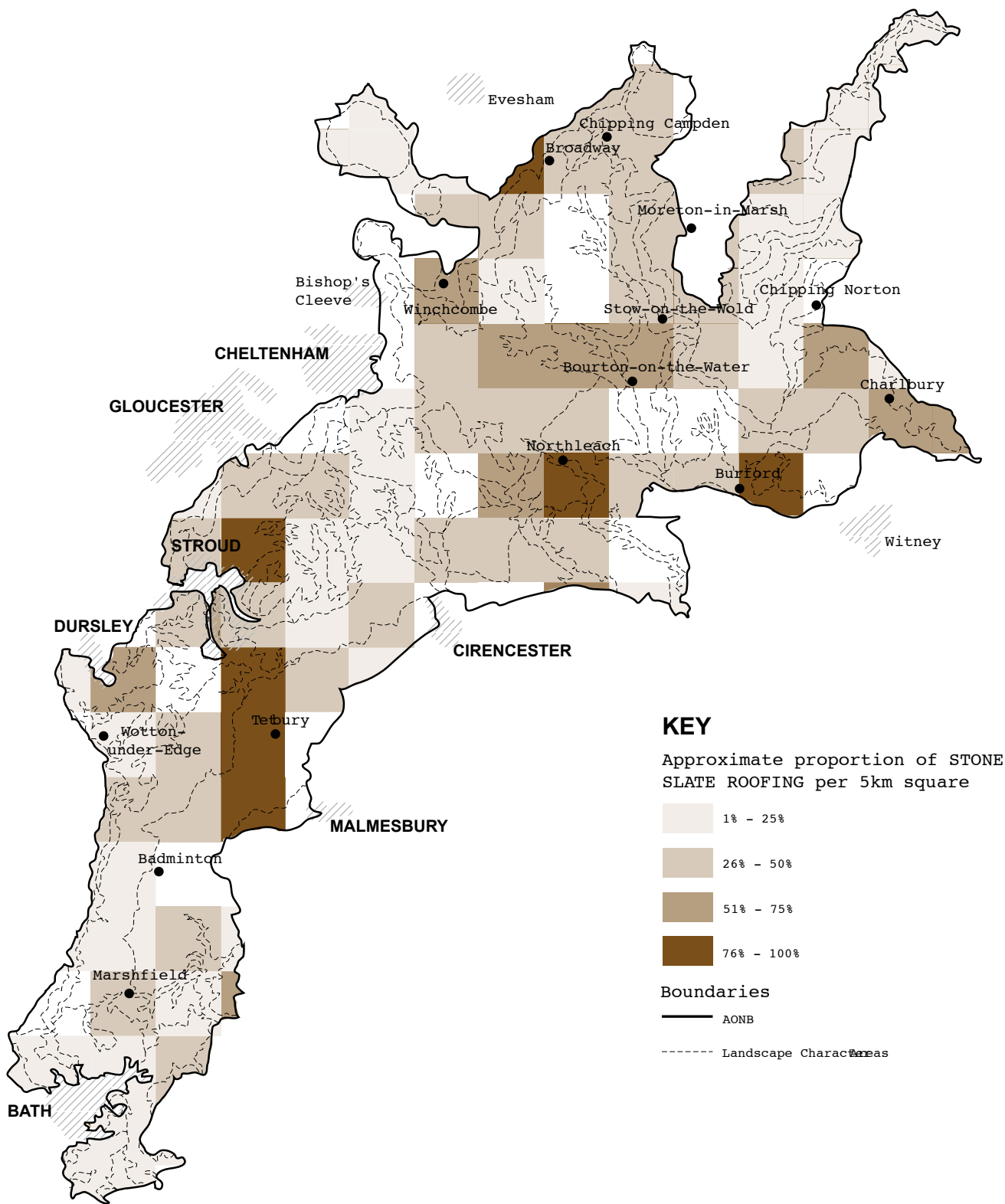
Roofs of the 'Cotswold' style are often cited as having pitches of in excess of 50° because of the technical demands of limestone slates. However, stone slates are often laid at lower pitches, including in areas that are considerably more exposed than the High Wold. Steep pitches within the AONB are more likely to be the result of:

1. A need for attic storeys that could be used by weavers (i.e. increased head height and improved lighting), though this only applies to areas where wool played a part in the local economy (hence the generally shallower pitches of roofs in the southern part of the AONB).
2. The influence (and legacy) of *thatching* practice. It is suspected that thatched roofs - which do benefit steeper pitches - have in the past been recovered in stone slates and that, traditionally, thatch and stone tiles were effectively interchangeable.

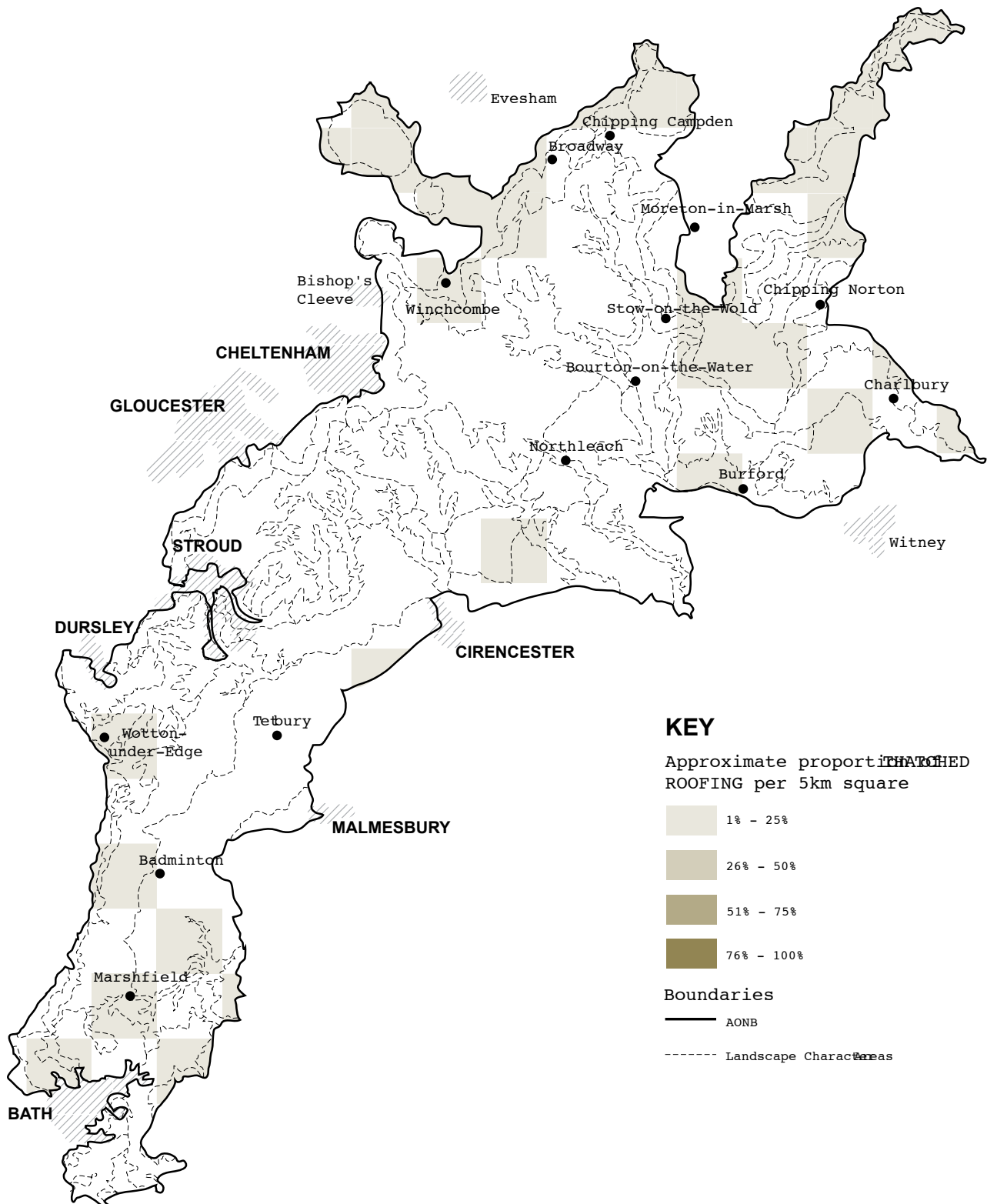
All roofs need to be understood within the context of the historic and topographic limitations of their immediate environment, if local distinctiveness is to be maintained.

Location of Roofs

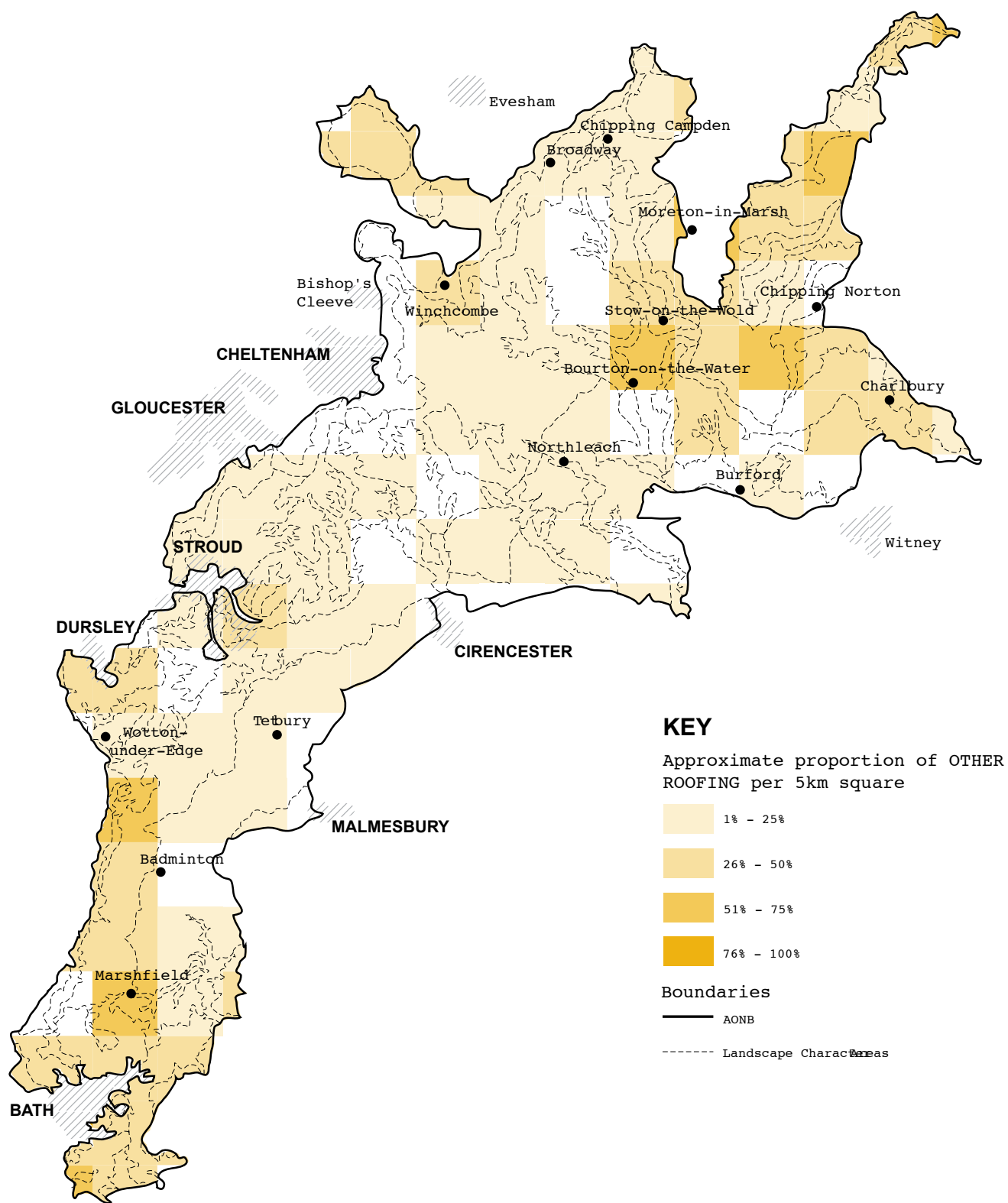
The following maps (numbered 06, 07 and 08) show the distribution - in terms of 5km squares - of roof coverings within towns, villages and hamlets across the whole of the AONB (individual farms and buildings have not been counted). Squares where no roof coverings are shown are those in which there is no settlement of any size, and where individual assessment is required. These illustrate the massive encroachment of non-local roofing materials and the loss of both stone slates and - less obviously - thatch, especially in areas where canals and railways encouraged the introduction of materials such as clay tiles and metamorphic (Welsh) slates.



MAP 06: DISTRIBUTION OF **STONE SLATE ROOFING** IN THE LANDSCAPE



MAP 07: DISTRIBUTION OF THATCHED ROOFING IN THE LANDSCAPE



MAP 08: DISTRIBUTION OF OTHER ROOFING (I.E. SLATE, TILES, CORRUGATED IRON, ETC) IN THE LANDSCAPE

Form of Walls

Houses and cottages within the AONB are generally of one or two stories, sometimes with the walls rising to form prominent gables or gabled-dormers. Otherwise, walls tend to be straightforward in form with little articulation in plan or section, and with groups of buildings and terraces

following contour or street lines. Variety is achieved through subtle variations in the colour and treatment of materials, and the diverse range of inventive details that can be found in all parts of the AONB.



SMOOTH 'CLASSICAL' WALLING



COURSED RUBBLE STONE WALLING



CONTRASTING STONEWORK

Location of Walls

The following maps (numbered 09 to 15) show the distribution - in terms of 5km squares - of walling materials and their facings within towns, villages and hamlets across the whole of the AONB (individual farms and buildings have not been counted). Squares where no walls are shown are those in where there is no settlement of any size and where individual assessment is required.

These illustrate that, while stone is the dominant walling material throughout the area, there is much variety in the way its surface is treated, even within the same 5km square. Render, brick and timber framing are of conspicuous importance in a number of areas, especially those on the fringes of the AONB (e.g. Bredon Hill and the valleys around Stroud).



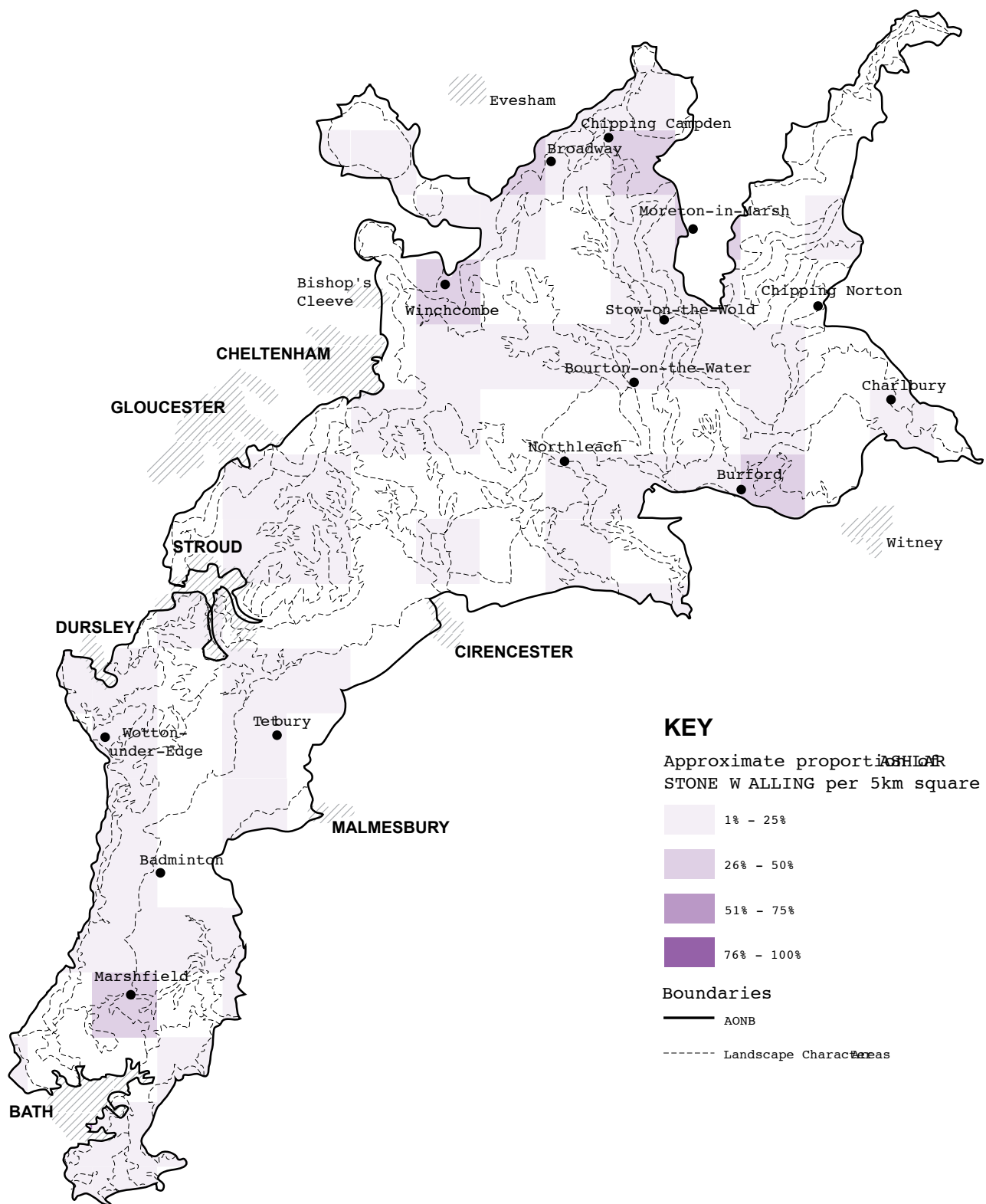
TIMBER FRAMED COTTAGE



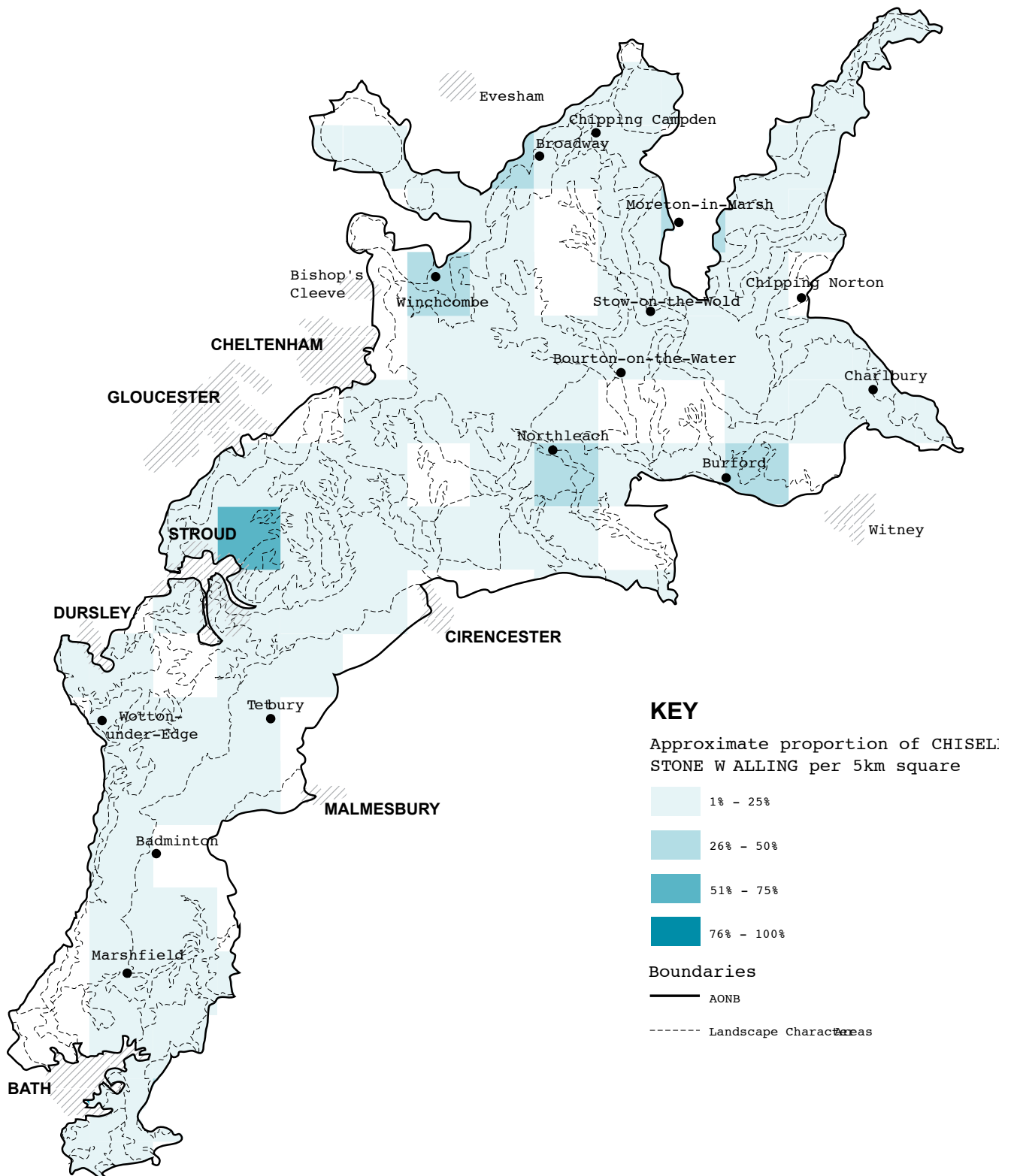
BRICK AND STONE VILLAGE HOUSING

It must also be appreciated that - at the truly local level - there is a clear hierarchy in the way walling materials and finishes are used, with the finer quality finishes being used for the more important buildings, and the poorest quality finishes for the sheds, privies and other low-status

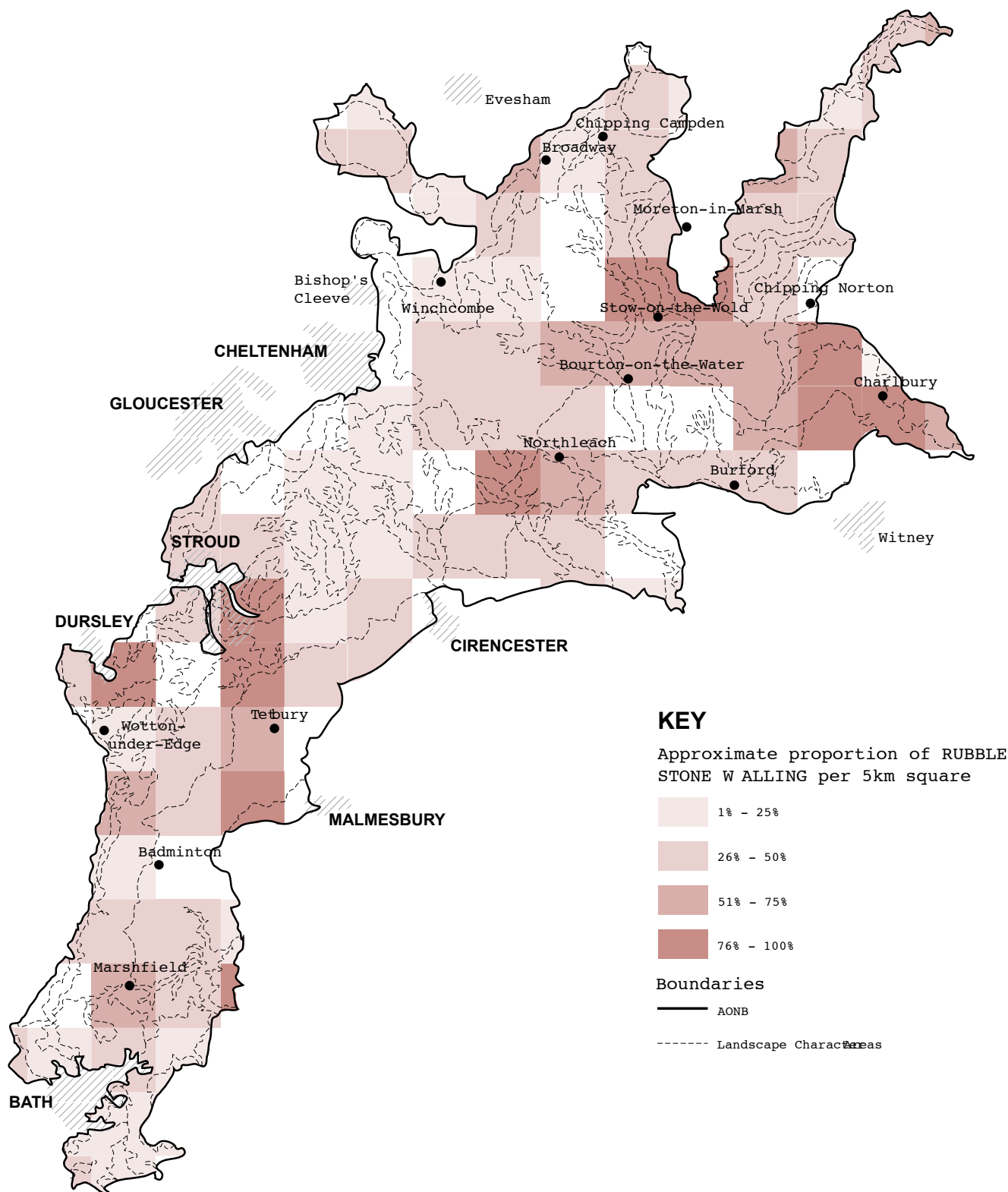
buildings. Quality of walling is also related to age, the more recent a building the more likely it is to use 'quality' materials. These subtleties must be considered if local distinctiveness is to be preserved.



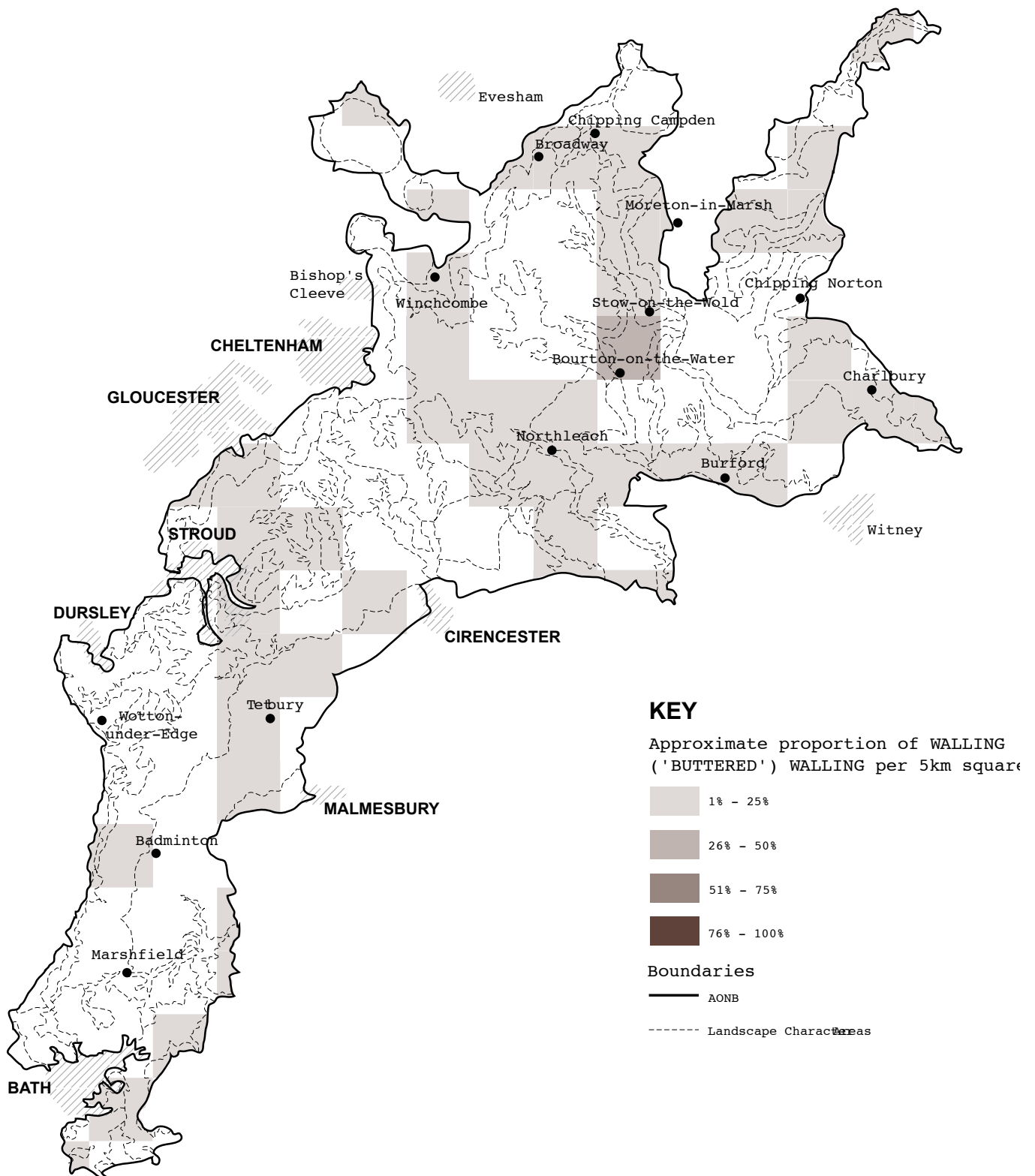
MAP 09: DISTRIBUTION OF ASHLAR STONE WALLING IN THE LANDSCAPE



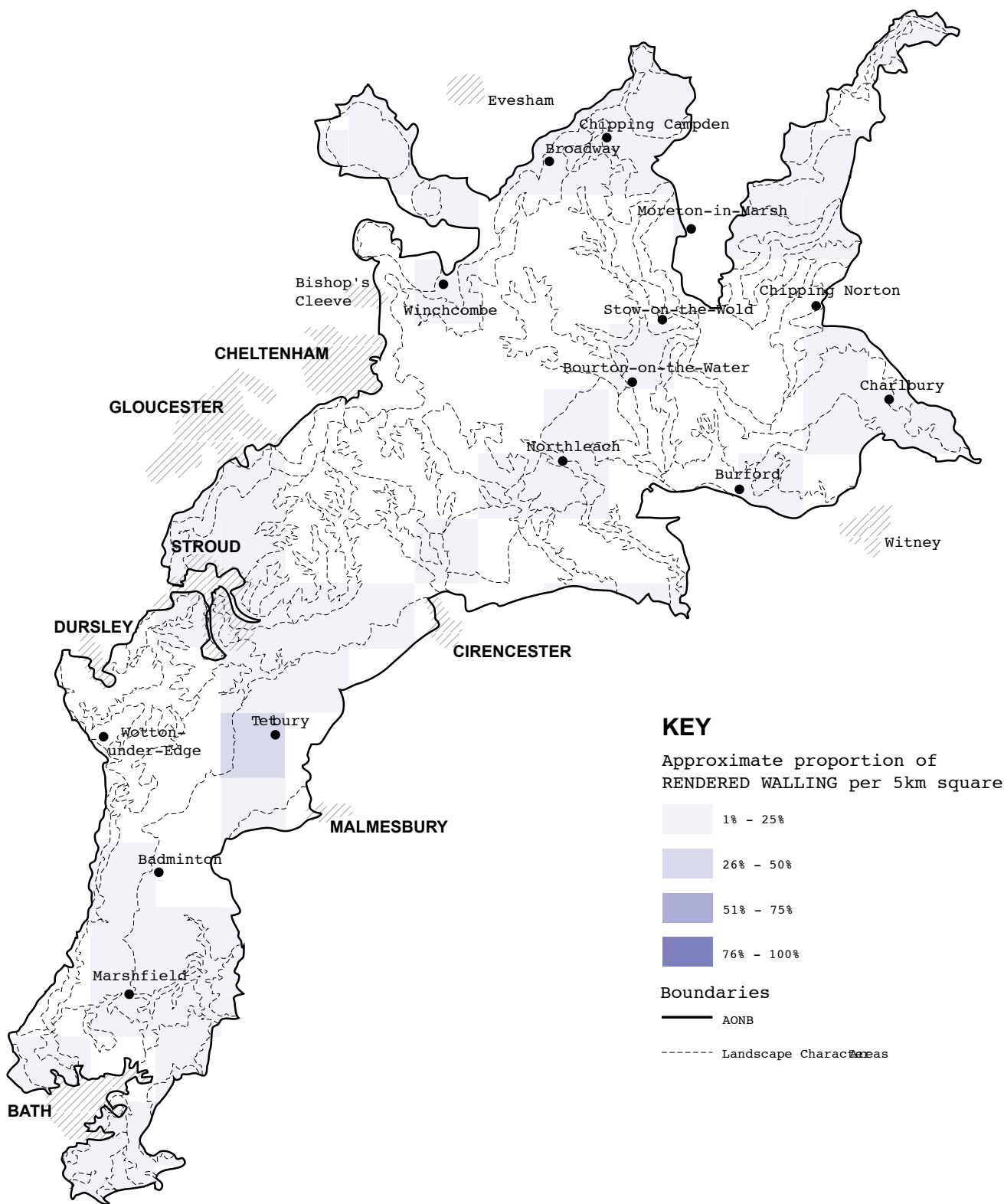
MAP 10: DISTRIBUTION OF CHISELLED STONE WALLING IN THE LANDSCAPE



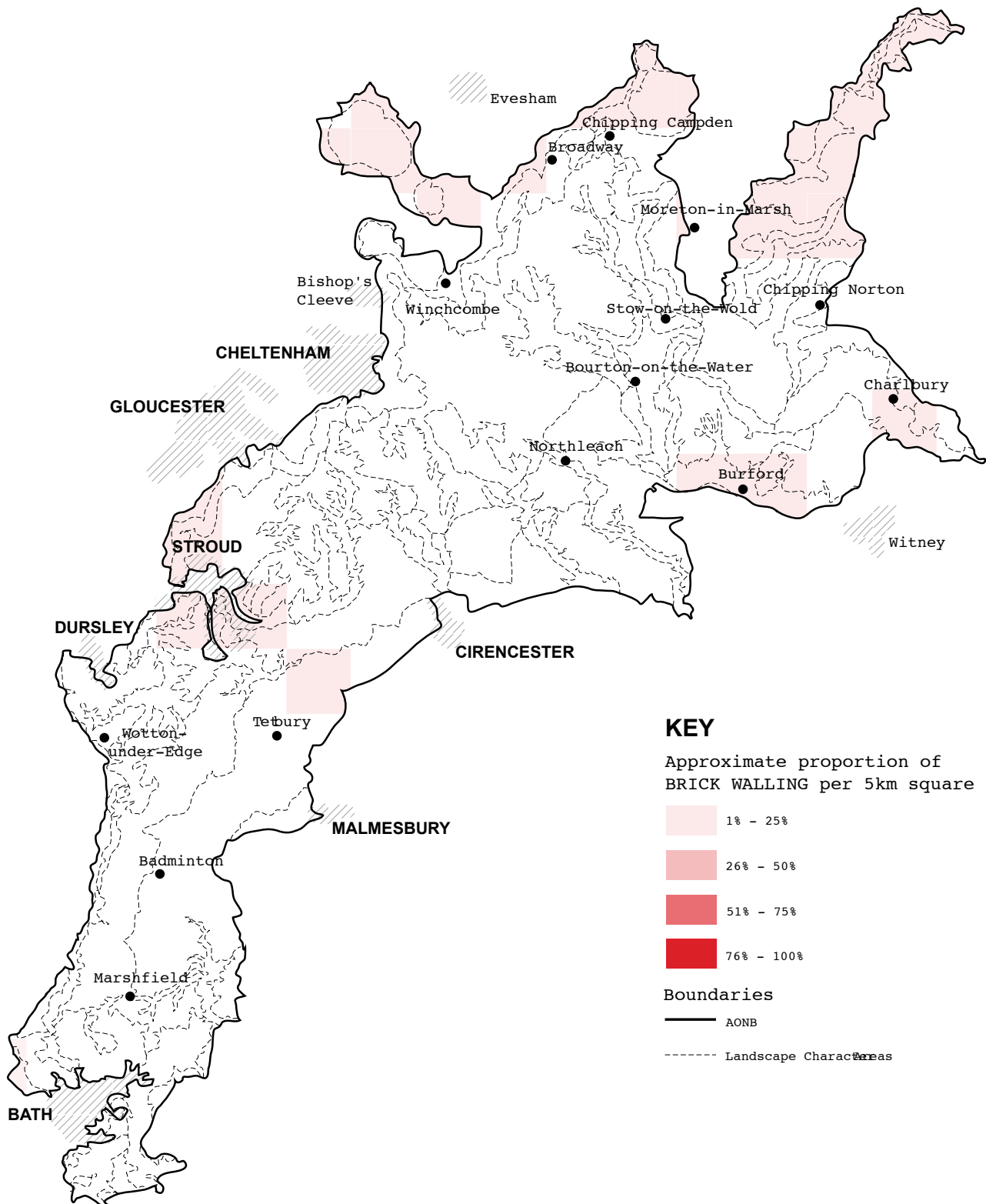
MAP 11: DISTRIBUTION OF RUBBLE STONE WALLING IN THE LANDSCAPE



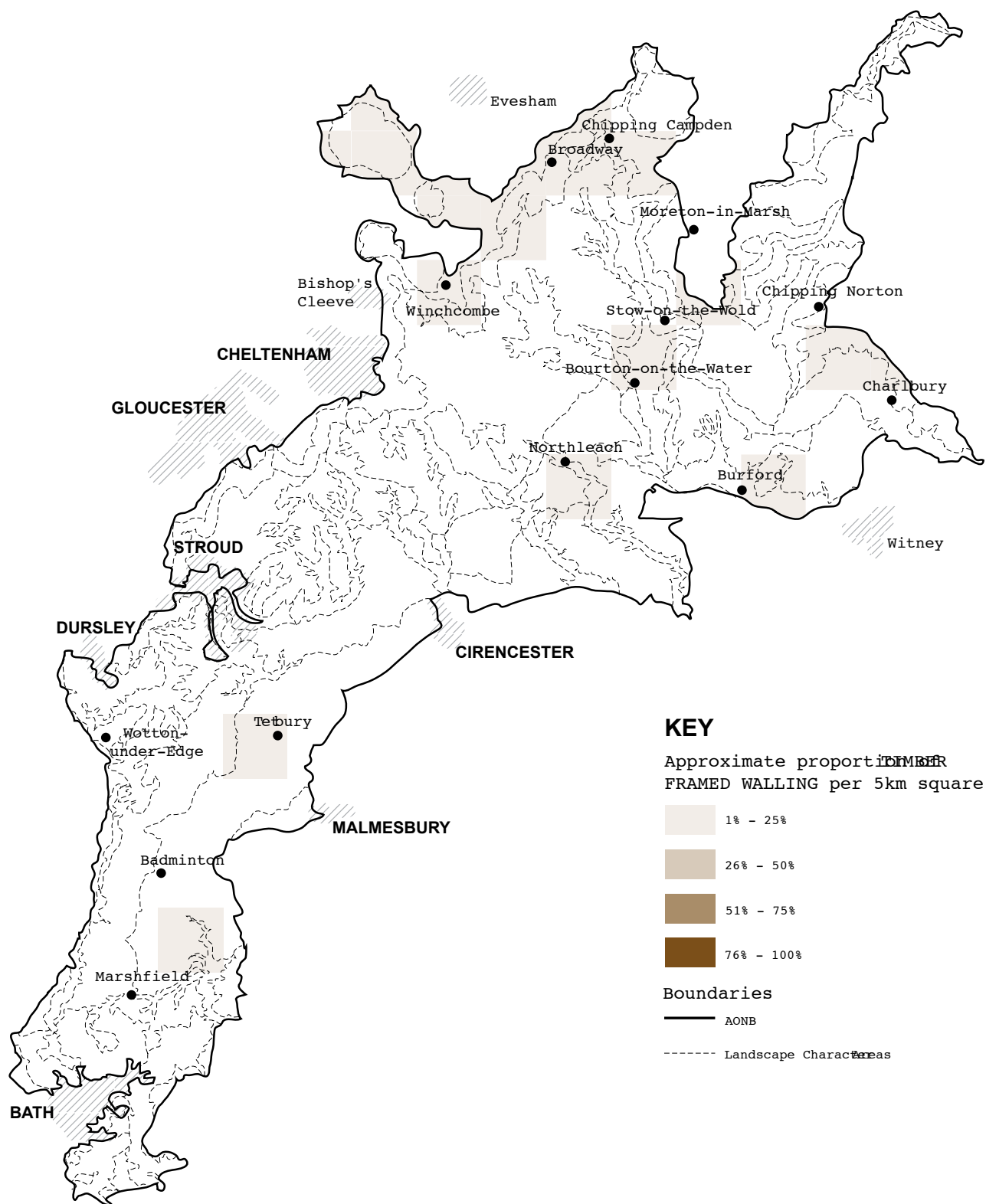
MAP 12: DISTRIBUTION OF WALLING ('BUTTERED') STONE IN THE LANDSCAPE



MAP 13: DISTRIBUTION OF RENDERED WALLING IN THE LANDSCAPE



MAP 14: DISTRIBUTION OF BRICK WALLING (MAINLY RED) IN THE LANDSCAPE



MAP 15: DISTRIBUTION OF TIMBERED FRAME WALLING IN THE LANDSCAPE

Wall and Roof Details

The 'details' that add the final layer of local distinctiveness to a roof or wall concern the articulation of the whole myriad of junctions (eaves, verges, corners, etc.) and openings - doors, windows, vents, flues - that are essential to the 'workings' of vernacular architecture. Chimney stacks, copings, dormers, quoined corners, string courses and mouldings, mullions, door hoods, fanlights, date stones are amongst the many details that add finesse to any roof or wall, thereby creating a real sense of place. Hence the need for their inclusion in Village Design Statements, Conservation Area Appraisals, or similar guidance.



