

# DRAFT Dartmouth Conservation Area Appraisal



**Conservation Areas are usually located in the older parts of our towns and villages. They are places whose surviving historic, architectural and locally distinctive features make them special. Conservation area designation highlights the need to preserve and reinforce these qualities.**

The policies followed by the District Council when assessing proposals affecting conservation areas are set out in the South Hams Local Development Framework, while the Supplementary Planning Document 'New Work in Conservation Areas' explains how to achieve compliance with them. This is essential because the Council has a statutory duty to approve proposals only if they "preserve or enhance the character or appearance" of the conservation area.

The purpose of this appraisal is to set out what makes the Dartmouth Conservation Area special, what needs to be conserved and what needs to be improved.

Three extensions to the conservation area are proposed and described

The contents are based on an earlier draft Conservation Area Appraisal prepared for the District Council in 1999.





## Dartmouth Conservation Area: Summary of Special Interest

The position of Dartmouth at the mouth of the river Dart is of such strategic military and commercial importance, and its sheltered natural harbour so perfect, that it developed into an important town from the Middle Ages on, despite being inaccessible to wheeled transport until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The advent of Victoria Road, Newcomen Road and later, College Way may have changed all that, but much of the character of the ancient, pedestrian town has survived. While it addresses the water, Dartmouth is a town of intimate spaces, unexpected flights of steps or pathways and steep, narrow streets with architectural jewels like St Saviours Church or the houses of the Butterwalk set amongst them. As the medieval town grew, development tended to follow the contours of the steep valley sides giving much of the town a terraced form and affording dramatic views of the estuary from the streets and the houses built along them.



Land reclamation gave the town a straight bank to the estuary and large, useful areas of flat land; yet, the contrast between these spaces and the original town is still clearly there. Of the reclaimed areas the embankment, Royal Avenue Gardens, Coronation Park and New Ground car park have all been retained as open spaces, while the plain orderliness of the area around Victoria Road or the series of streets between the Lower Ferry Slip and Spithead is quite different from the lively medieval streetscape above them.





The unity of the town is most apparent from the water and the relationship of the buildings to the slopes most clearly evident. The association between Dartmouth and the River Dart is fundamental not only in the physical landscape of the town, but also economically, socially and culturally. Although Dartmouth is now easily accessible by car, the various ferries are still one of the main ways of getting around. Noises and smells are also important; the rhythmic splash of a passing cruiser or ferry boat, the sounds of sea birds, the scent of salt spray or the sound of the Kingswear steam train from across the River.



## Landscape setting and surrounding countryside



The Dartmouth Conservation Area and the wider town nestle within the broader landscape setting of the lower Dart estuary. The Dart acts as the focus for the surrounding countryside and has many distinctive features including its bustling harbour at Dartmouth, distinctive ferry services, extensive moorings, Kingswear quayside, historic castle and estuary mouth. To the west and east, steeply sloping pasture land and deciduous woodland form a sheltering backdrop of managed countryside topped with the edge of the prominent coastal plateaux which is clearly visible at the skyline. The lower Dart estuary and its landscape features make a significant contribution to the nationally protected landscape of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Along the main steep slopes and combe valleys a patchwork of small variably sized fields has developed, typically grazed by cattle or sheep. Larger fields on the coastal plateau are used for silage and arable cropping. Mixed farming enterprises of this type providing beef, lamb



and cereals are typical of this part of the South Hams. The degree to which fields have been improved for agriculture relates directly to slope gradients and ease of machinery access. An extensive network of Devon hedges and sunken lanes has evolved, now synonymous with the South Devon landscape. A mixture of broad, mature hedgebanks with tall vegetation and frequent hedgerow trees are juxtaposed with tightly flailed vegetation on hedgebanks supporting few or no hedgerow trees. Remnant field boundaries can be seen within many of the larger grazed fields, giving an insight into the areas agricultural past.

## Location and Geology

Dartmouth is a natural deep water port located in a sheltered location on the South coast of Devon, near to the mouth of the River Dart. The town is physically confined on three sides by steep slopes and by the River Dart to the east and this has forced development to take place in a tiered formation, mainly below the 200m contour.

The landscape surrounding Dartmouth is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The village of Kingswear (which has a separate conservation area in its own right) lies directly opposite on the eastern bank of the River Dart. Historically, both these settlements were poorly accessible by land due to the steep valley sides leading to high ground though new roads built in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the advent of the railway to Kingswear in the 1860s improved this.

The underlying geology is complex, and includes bedrock from the Meadfoot Group slates with grit to the north, Staddon Grits, sandstones and shales in a band through the centre of the town, and Dartmouth Slates to the south. A small amount of alluvium deposits lie along the quay frontage.



## Town's Historic Evolution and Plan Form

Dartmouth has a rich history as a port and commercial centre, and whilst attempts have been made to document the development of the town, there is little referenced information available from which to draw an accurate picture of how this history influenced the physical growth of the town. From the information available, certain assumptions have been made to try to understand the town's development.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest settlement of what is now the town of Dartmouth was on the flatter land at the top of the hill at Townstal, about a mile west of the shore. It is thought that 'the Normans were the first to appreciate fully the fine natural harbour of Dartmouth, placed so conveniently opposite William's lands in the Channel Islands and Normandy, and it seems likely that they brought over Frenchmen to build houses and port facilities. The names of the tenants in the earliest deeds of the town were French, not English.'<sup>2</sup>

## Dartmouth in the Middle Ages

To either side of the Creek, at the foot of the two spurs dropping from Townstal Hill to the river, two small fishing hamlets grew. The two hamlets were physically separated by a large inlet (known as the Mill Pool) running along the line of North Ford Road and South Ford Road. The northern hamlet was known as Hardness and the southern one Clifton. The first houses were built along the steep slopes above the high tide line. Development was restricted by the lack of suitable land and the difficulty of access down the steep routes to the water's edge. At this time, water was the predominant mode of transport.

The history of the physical growth of the town is illustrated in the changes in the quay frontage (see diagrams, page 5). Changes began in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century with the damming of the inlet between Hardness and Clifton-Dartmouth, thus harnessing the tide to run a mill. Over subsequent centuries, especially the 19<sup>th</sup>, large quantities of land were reclaimed from the river to build a port that was accessible from the land. Land reclamation continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the quay gradually expanding and widening to meet the changing development requirements of the town and to prevent flooding.

<sup>1</sup> Historical Information has drawn largely from R Freeman, *Dartmouth and its Neighbours*, (London: Phillimore,) 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.16



Map taken from R. Freeman, *Dartmouth and its Neighbours*





## These diagrams illustrate the land reclamation that occurred in Dartmouth.



**Pre 1200.**  
*River bank was divided by a Creek*



**By 1400.**  
*A dam was built across the Creek in 1243 to drive mills using the power of the tide, causing silting of the Mill Pool to the west and main river to the east*



**By 1870.**  
*The Mill Pool was reclaimed the quay was extended for better access from the water*



**By 1950.**  
*The quay was further extended for building development and a promenade was constructed along the River*

*Map taken from R. Freeman, Dartmouth and its Neighbours*

Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Dartmouth was a commercial and military port, linked with Henry I's acquisition of the South West provinces of France and the wine trade. Due to its prominent position at the mouth of the River Dart, sea defences are a distinctive feature of the shore-line and are thought to date back to the late 15<sup>th</sup> Century. The Town has seen many periods of growth. The Newfoundland fishing trade and the renewed growth of the cloth trade fuelled expansion from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Buildings such as the Butterwalk and those along the Quay, date from this time (most now with later frontages). The port was naturally of great significance during

the Civil War. The Royalist forces considerably strengthened the defences, but nevertheless the port finally capitulated to the Parliamentarians in 1646. A long period of stagnation followed, until the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the coal bunkering trade grew and revived the town's fortunes.

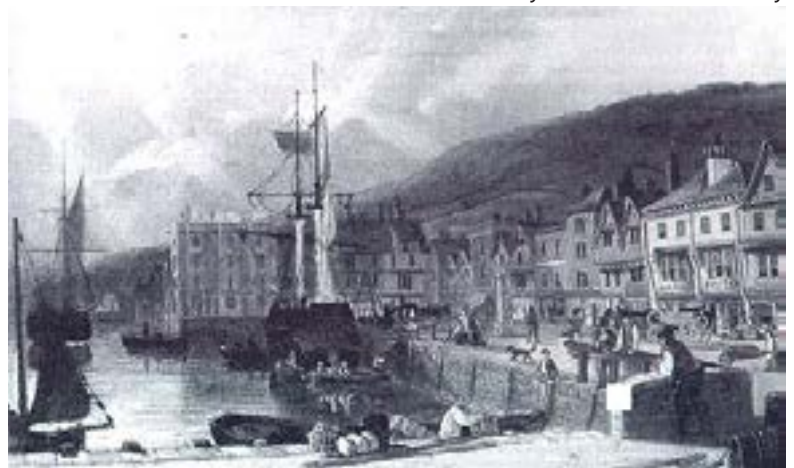


## Effect upon town growth

All these historical developments left an impression on the town. The former settlement of Hardness was associated with the ship building industry, and wealth generated by the town's merchants was often invested in buildings. Merchant houses survive today in several streets, including Duke Street, Anzac Street, and Fairfax Place. The Street layout and land reclamation projects were a product of the changing trading requirements of the port. Historically, access to the town was by sea, resulting in narrow streets, which were not designed for vehicles. Ease of access through the town relied upon the series of vertical paths that connect the layers of buildings vertically, in contrast to the horizontal streets that follow the contours. Freight from the hinterland was brought to the town by pack-horse, resulting in steeply stepped, narrow roads between houses that were tightly packed to use the small amount of building land available.

Paintings and photographic records show Dartmouth Quay to have been a busy place in the past. Today, the activity is still present in the form of tourists and boaters attracted by the sheltered location, the charm of the town and good sailing.

*Painting of the New Quay, Dartmouth, after R.H.Lancaster, c. 1836, illustrating the activity formerly associated with the Quay*



## Archaeological Potential

Dartmouth has an interesting history, and as such has a rich archaeology. Although there are many medieval and post-medieval buildings and other sites of urban archaeological potential in Dartmouth, there is also evidence of maritime and coastal-related archaeology, as well as military archaeology of many periods. Waterlogged and palaeoenvironmental archaeological deposits are also likely to be found in reclaimed areas as well as in riverine and intertidal environments.

*The archaeological background set out below is based on information currently held in Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) to date. This knowledge is likely to evolve and be revised over time.*

### Medieval/post-medieval urban archaeology

The focus of archaeological interest in Dartmouth is in the medieval and post-medieval archaeology associated with Clifton-Dartmouth (to the south) and Hardness to the north. These settlements and associated small-scale urban industry will have left behind below-ground archaeological evidence as well as standing buildings.

The parish church of St Saviour's was dedicated in the 14th century as a chapel of ease under the church of St Clement at Townstal. Archaeological deposits associated with the church and its environs will be present.

### Maritime/coastal archaeology

The importance of its harbour has been key to the growth and development of Dartmouth. Quays, slips, boatbuilding and other industries have all left their archaeological mark on the town and the reclaimed land, especially, is of high archaeological importance. An example of this was provided by the 1995 excavation behind Mayor's Avenue. Archaeological deposits relating to 16th century and later reclamation, quays, warehouses and shipyards, along with residual imported pottery dating from the 12th century onward were discovered. Such evidence of imports and maritime trade will be present in archaeological deposits throughout the town.

### Waterlogged and palaeoenvironmental archaeological deposits

The reclamation of lands at the Mill Pool (between North Ford Road and South Ford Road), New Ground and New Quay (and further north at Coombe Mud, now Coronation Park – outside the conservation area) all have the potential to contain waterlogged archaeological deposits. Furthermore, palaeoenvironmental evidence, which will show the wider historic landscape and past environments may also be present in this area and in other river, intertidal and reclaimed land.

### Military archaeology

The influence of the military on Dartmouth is considerable. From the 16th century artillery fort at Bayard's Cove Castle through to the Britannia Royal Naval College, the impact of the military can be seen in many places.

To the south of the town (and outside the conservation area), the 14th century Dartmouth Castle was later refortified by Henry VIII, whilst the Gallants Bower earthworks above this were constructed by Royalists in 1645 during the English Civil War. Evidence for military remains from these periods may also be found in the town.

As a harbour and embarkation point, as well as a defended settlement, the town has been used by the military for centuries. Dartmouth has been an important defended site and an important location for artillery. From the medieval period, through the Tudor, Civil War, Victorian and World War II periods, evidence of coastal artillery may still be found. The Embankments were built out with ramps during World War II, and together with the slipway at the Higher Ferry, enabled vehicles to board US landing ships prior to and during the D-Day campaign.

Opposite Dartmouth, Kingswear has medieval castles at Gommerock and Kingswear Castle, as well as more modern military fortifications such as the Torpedo battery built in 1940. There are many links across the river, and there are linked settings between these and the Dartmouth conservation area.

### Medieval/post-medieval landscape

The wider landscape around Dartmouth impacts on the conservation area. The fields to the south west are medieval enclosures based on strip fields. These distinctive curvilinear historic field boundaries are preserved in the boundaries to the south of South Ford Road. Elsewhere, any earlier medieval or post-medieval field boundaries have been degraded by later developments, and are no longer visible.

### Sites with Statutory Protection

There are many listed buildings amongst the houses, shops and other buildings of Dartmouth. However, the only Scheduled Monument within the Conservation area is Bayard's Cove Castle, the 16th century artillery fort, used for storage from the mid 17th century.

## Population and Land Use

- The population of Dartmouth is steady at around 5700, down by about a quarter on the 1921 figure.
- Historically, Dartmouth was known for its boat building industry and merchant trading, with yards at Hardness and others located along the River.
- Today light industry is centred on small commercial and pleasure craft industries and tourism.
- The commercial centre contains a large percentage of mixed-use buildings, with retail shops at ground floor level and residences above.
- Mixed use adds vitality to the central spaces, and increases the sense of community.





## Listed Buildings



The Dartmouth conservation area has around 225 entries in the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest; although most of these are for houses, they also include several lamp posts, telephone kiosks and conduits, the quay walls, churches, chapels, inns, a horse trough and the bandstand amongst them. Of these buildings, 12

are grade 1 or grade II\*, including those of the Butterwalk, St Saviours Church and 5 Higher Street, which was severely damaged by fire in the summer of 2010.

## Unlisted Townscape Buildings and Structures

Although these are too numerous to mention individually, many unlisted buildings make as significant a contribution to the overall townscape and conservation area as their listed neighbours. These are shown on the maps of the Character Areas.



## Prevalent Traditional Materials and Styles

### 1. Building materials and finishes

The difficulties of transporting large amounts of materials into Hardness and Clifton before the advent of the motor vehicle meant that until the new roads were built, the majority of building materials came from local sources or were brought by water. Stone rubble was quarried locally and displays colours from grey to brown.

Throughout the town, a variety of building materials are used, adding to the interest of the area. In some cases this might be the result of clearance or the gradual decline of certain properties, but it gives an impression of great diversity of building materials when actually the palette is fairly limited. The most common walling finish is flat, painted render, usually inscribed with an ashlar pattern. Exposed stone is generally reserved for public buildings, such as Churches or the Guildhall. Brick is an infrequently used material in the town, and is commonly painted. There are some good examples of slate-hanging, especially on the more ornamental Victorian buildings. One material common to nearly all the buildings is the slate roof.

Chimneys, as elsewhere are of stone, brick or rendered and are prominent together with roofs due to the layered form of the town. A surprisingly large number of hand-thrown, pre-20th century chimney pots survive in Dartmouth and these almost certainly were made at the town pottery. Generally, they have distinctive, white slip bands near the top and should always be preserved.







## Typical Building Form

One of the features of Dartmouth, that makes the town so interesting, is the great diversity in building styles. Older gable fronted buildings sit alongside neighbours with parapets or close eaves. The majority of domestic buildings fall into one of three categories.

### Type one:

Surviving, pre-18th century buildings have a very strong characteristic appearance due to the method of construction. These buildings are commonly terraced, sharing stone rubble party side walls and having timber-framed, often gabled fronts which are commonly plastered.



Type 1 buildings

There are often carved oak corbels beneath jettied upper floors or oriel windows. Other materials used included slate hanging, and stone rubble (frequently rendered or painted).

The few buildings from this period make a vital contribution to the character of the town. There are also several Victorian interpretations of this architecture which, while not being accurate replicas in scale or details, are interesting in their own right.

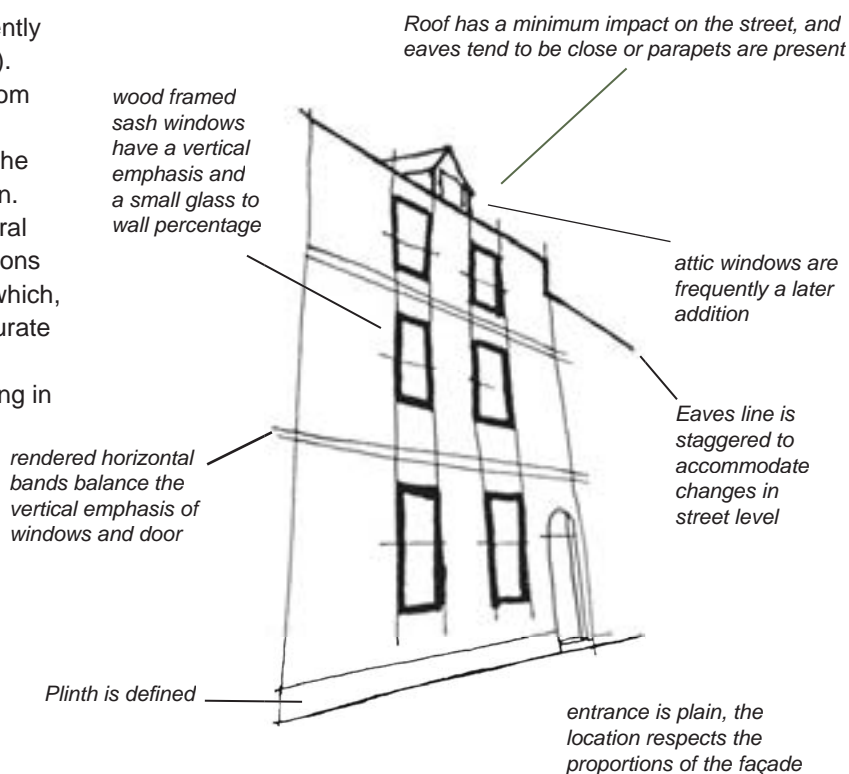
### Type two:

This type can be seen in the majority of streets, but is especially strong along Newcomen Road, Victoria Road, the southern edge of Clarence Hill and northern edge of Clarence Street. Dating from the Georgian and early Victorian periods, their ordered appearance and scale are urban in character. Characteristics include:

- Terraced, usually three-storey buildings sharing a common building line;
- Usually finished in smooth render, often inscribed with an ashlar pattern, giving a plain façade sometimes broken by horizontal rendered bands;
- Properties are taller than they are wide in proportions;



Type 2 buildings



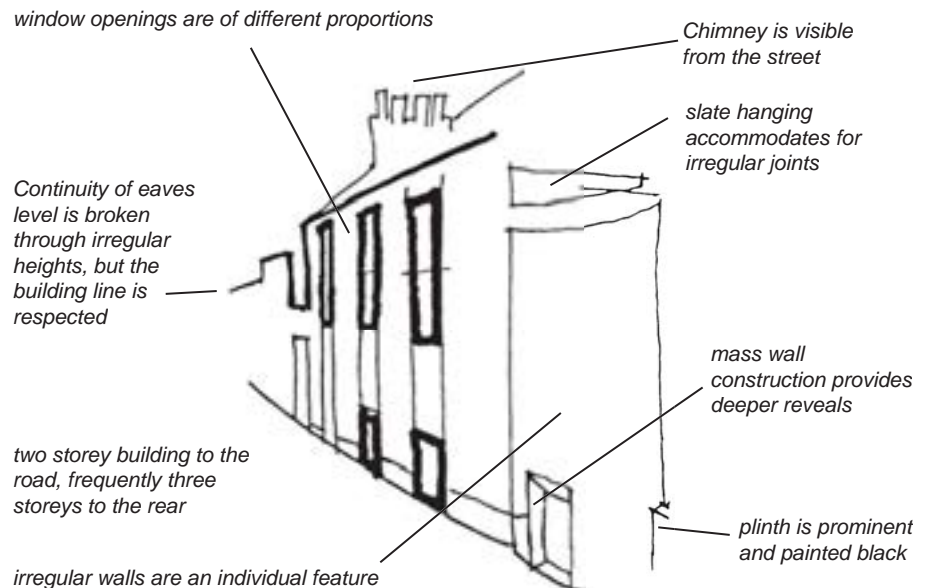
Sketch of 36 Clarence Street, illustrating some of the features identified as common in several of the streets of the town. A Type 2 Building





Type 2 buildings, Victoria Road

Property along the western edge of Clarence Hill, showing characteristics typical of this part of the town A type 3 building



- tall floor to ceiling heights determine the height of the building;
- slate roof is less visible from the street due to the height of the building, narrowness of the street and slackness of pitch, although this is obviously most pronounced on the higher side of the street;
- eaves are subtle, with little overhang, cornices with parapets behind them are common;
- Original, small dormers survive in some cases but larger, ill-proportioned dormers are a frequent later addition;
- walls are punctuated by windows in an ordered way, with a vertical emphasis;
- the proportion of glass is less than that of solid wall;
- sash windows;
- exposed brick, timber framing or stone rubble are rare.

### Type three:

Present in several streets, including the north and west end of Clarence Hill, and parts of Brown's Hill, Undercliff, Smith Street, and Crowther's Hill. Terraces and ordered proportions are still common, but the scale and external finish changes in buildings displaying the following features:

- thick stone rubble walls either roughly coated in render, painted or occasionally exposed externally;
- terraced buildings, with generally low floor to ceiling heights;
- maintaining the building line but exterior walls are often slightly irregular, sometimes curved in plan and section;
- ordered fenestration patterns with vertical proportioned windows predominates;
- small timber windows, (originally either casement or sash), deep recessed window frames caused by the mass of the wall construction;
- building scale is generally smaller, often two storeys to the street, three (or one) to the rear elevation.



Type 3 buildings, Crowther's Hill

## Green Spaces and Trees

Due, in part to historic development pressure and a lack of suitable land for this purpose, the older parts of Dartmouth are lacking in open spaces or good specimens of tree. Bayards Cove is an exception as is the churchyard of St Saviours. The tight density of development is, of course, compensated for by nearness of the estuary and the green hillsides above the town, which are nearly always visible.

The lack of open spaces was made up for when land was reclaimed between the 17th and 19th centuries; the Royal Avenue Gardens contributes to the sense of openness around the quay, as do the embankments. The Bowling Green forms a focal point in Victoria Road and the play area next to it contains some impressive Monterey Pines which form an important focal point.

Many Southtown houses still preserve their garden plots to the rear, while Manor Gardens below them is a small park area with Torbay Palms. Going South along Warfleet Road, the building density falls considerably with more impressive specimens of tree, especially those around Paradise Point.

Another public open space with an important group of mature trees is the Community Orchard on Ridge Hill. Its oaks, sweet chestnut and Monterey Pine are highly prominent on the skyline.



## Ecological Importance of the Estuary

Due to the large amount of fresh water discharged from the river Dart and the narrow entrance to the estuary, the water here is brackish. The estuary is a major nursery area for bass, while salmon and sea trout migrate to the inlet to spawn up river. On the shores, fucoid algae (such as gulfweed) are common, as are barnacles, limpets various bivalves (such as mussels) and polychaetes (for example, lugworms).

## Character Areas

In the appraisal, the conservation area has been divided into six character areas, each defined by its own townscape and contrasting with neighbouring quarters. Each of these is looked at in some detail and a map is provided showing salient features such as important views, open spaces, flights of steps and walls or important townscape buildings.

Following the six sections on character areas, three further areas, formerly outside the conservation area, are described which it is proposed to include.



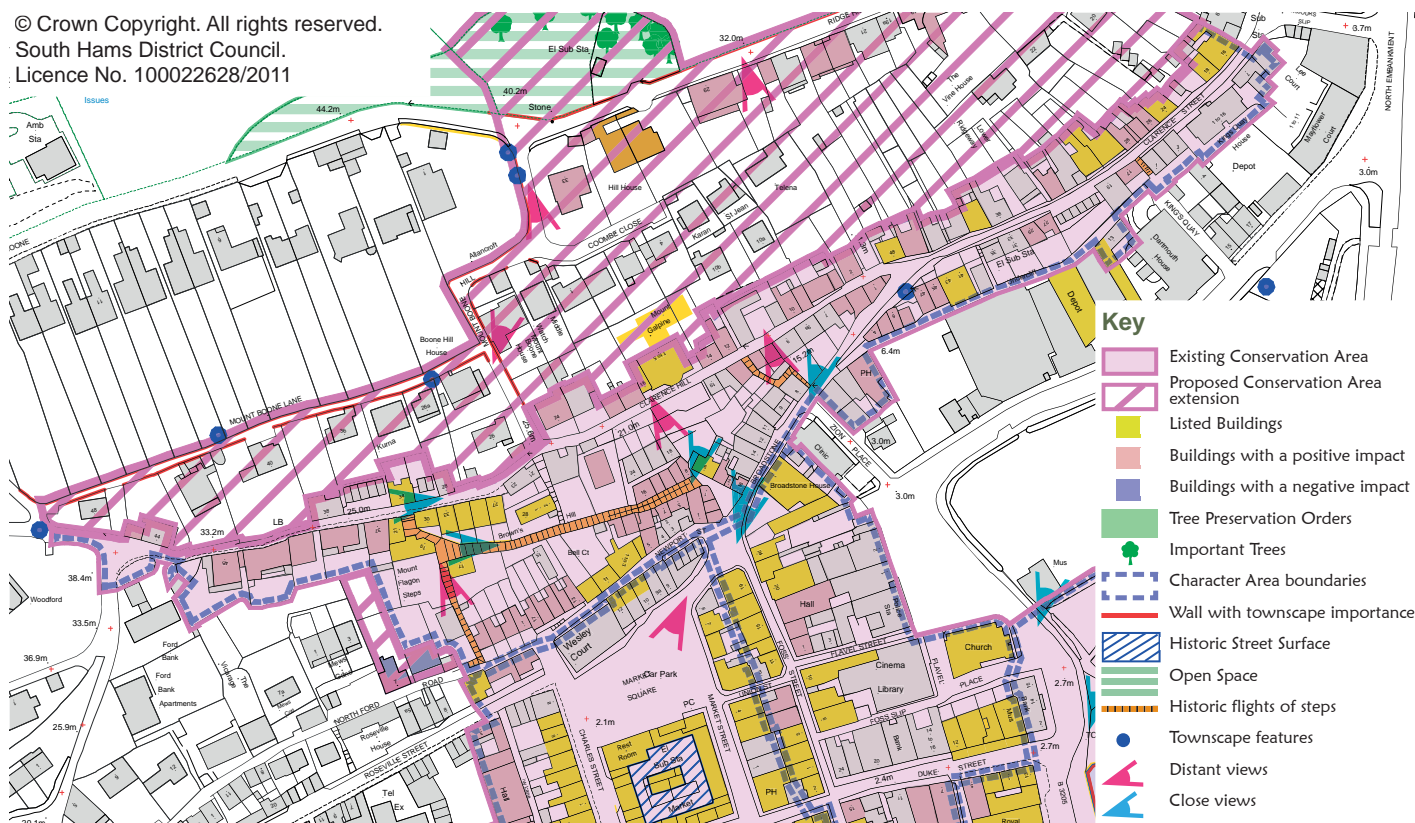
# Character Area One

## Clarence Hill; Clarence Street; Undercliff; Broadstone and Newport Street.

This area is significant for the pedestrian routes and ancient street layout associated with the former settlement of Hardness.



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## Historical Influences

The street patterns of Clarence Hill and Clarence Street, Broadstone and Brown's Hill are thought to date back to the Middle Ages and, together, formed the hamlet of Hardness. Road access is significant as it provided the only inland route into Hardness and Clifton. The slope of the hill prevented wheeled vehicles from entering the town until the early 19th century – until then, inland transport was by foot or packhorse.

The diagrams illustrate this historic association. Development took place along the streets, following the contours. Amongst the houses are several late 18th or early 19th examples, some of which are believed to have been built for sea captains.

- Broadstone wall is historically associated with the old quay-side wall;
- Undercliff would have had an industrial character, with ship building and repair yards serving the boat industry;

- Clarence Hill and Clarence Street were named after the Duke of Clarence, following his visit in 1828;
- Brown's Hill is thought to have been the major pack horse path into the town accounting for its width.

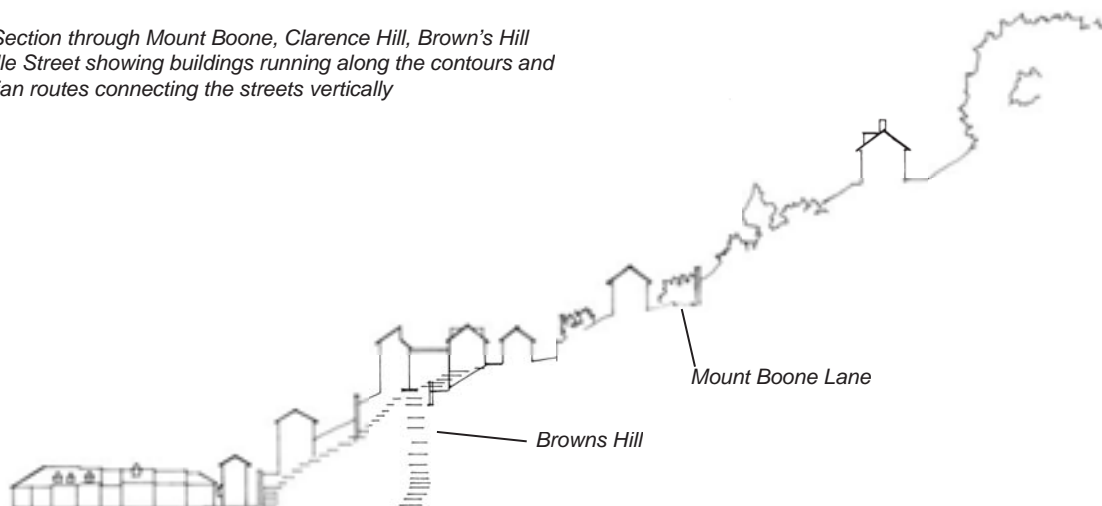


## Street Characteristics:

- predominantly narrow residential streets, making vehicular access difficult;
- many houses on the north side of Clarence Street still sit on their burgage plots.
- buildings of particular interest date from the early 18th and 19th centuries, and have an urban feel generated by a common building line, terraced form of three-storeys with a smooth rendered exterior finish and slate roof (type two characteristics);
- the best examples have timber framed windows, with a vertical emphasis, and a higher percentage of wall to glass;
- most attic dormers are recent additions; where they exist, narrow dormers with gable fronts and slate roof are generally the most sympathetic;
- type three characteristics are present in several streets, including the north and west end of Clarence Hill, parts of Brown's Hill and Undercliff;
- such buildings are characterised by rough render over stone rubble, exposed stone rubble or through a smaller scale and irregular form whilst still keeping regular fenestration patterns.



*Illustrative Section through Mount Boone, Clarence Hill, Brown's Hill and Roseville Street showing buildings running along the contours and the pedestrian routes connecting the streets vertically*





## Landscape Characteristics:

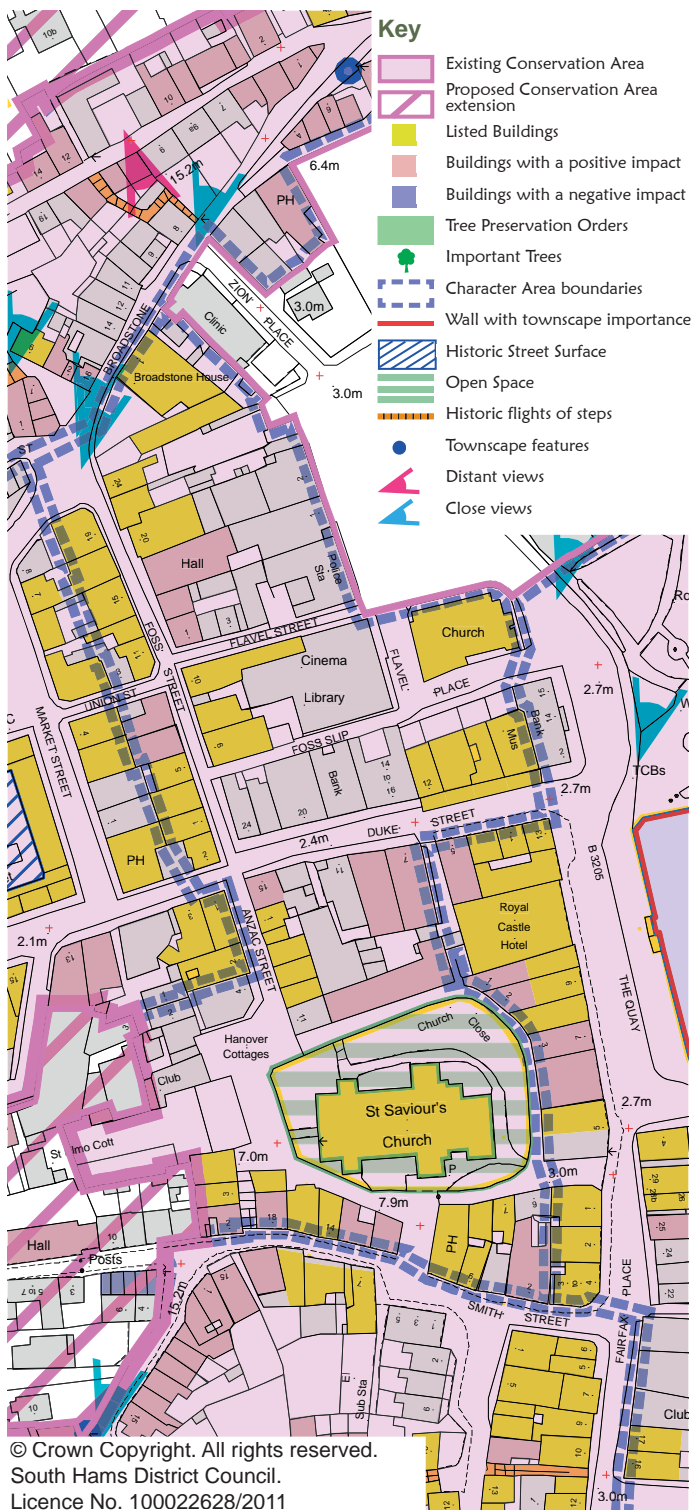
- Gaps in the building line on the south side of Clarence Hill afford good views of the roofscape of lower parts of the conservation area and of Kingswear beyond.
- buildings along the south-facing sides of the valley are characteristically two storeys to the north and three to the south (and views);
- hard landscaping reinforces the urban characteristics through narrow streets framed by buildings or rubble stone walls;
- pavements are characteristically slender, running along one side of the street, and rise and fall in steps;
- buildings follow the topography, stepping up to accommodate changes of level;
- pedestrian routes are a significant landscape feature. Crossing predominantly in a north/south direction, (against the east/west direction of the streets), they are part of the local domain;
- The rear of the buildings on the south side of the street are highly prominent from much of the conservation area. The rear of those on the north side are visible from Ridge Hill and Mount Boone above.



# Character Area Two

**Foss Street; Flavel Street; Union Street; Duke Street; Flavel Place; Anzac Street; Church Close and Foss Slip.**

The significance lies in the ancient street pattern established when the two previous settlements of Hardness and Clifton were joined.



## Historic Influences

In 1243 a dam was built across the creek that separated the two former settlements of Hardness and Clifton. The dam created a Mill Pool to operate a Tidal Mill. Foss Street is built upon the site of the old Dam, the name 'Foss' coming from a Roman word meaning 'ditch or bank'. The growth of Clifton and Hardness as a maritime port along the mouth of the river led to a desire for a church that was more central to the growing town. The church was in line with the Foss and received permission in 1286.

The diagrams on the following page show Foss Street as it would have appeared in the Middle Ages, and as it appears now. The black areas denote buildings that have grown along the ancient street pattern. The Mill Pool silted up and land was reclaimed, and the Quay was extended. Duke Street was built on this Quay; The famous Butterwalk was built between 1635-40 for a rich merchant who made his fortune in the Newfoundland trade.

- Foss Slip, St Saviour's Church wall and Duke Street had direct contact with the river before land reclamation.
- Historically, houses were built on the western side of the Foss, and wharves and warehouses on the east serving shipping demands.
- Several buildings are of medieval origin; the imprints of the ancient street layout are still evident.





## Townscape Characteristics

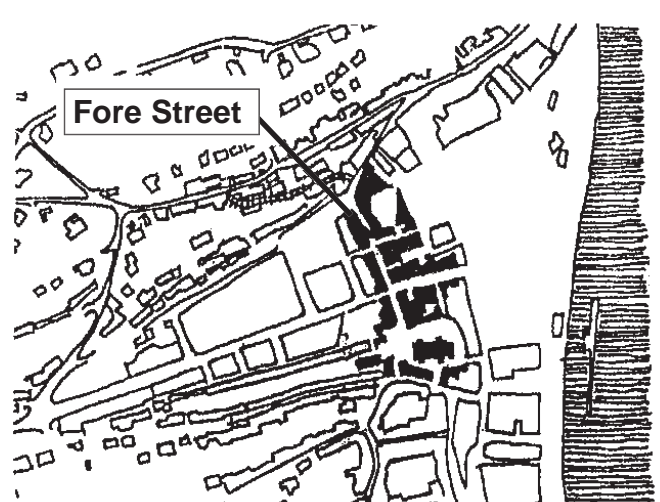
- buildings are predominantly 18th and 19th century in appearance but often have much earlier origins; scattered examples of 17th century houses;
- The Butterwalk consists of 17th century buildings with gable fronts decorated to show the wealth of the owner, the rear is more practical in character, designed to function as a warehouse from which cargo could be unloaded direct from the water;
- buildings consist principally of three-storey terraces sharing a common building line and plain rendered façades giving an urban feel;
- activity, in the form of physical movement and retail energy, is an important characteristic, the individual nature of shops adds interest and local distinctiveness;
- Most of the upper floors of the 20 properties along Foss Street still provide living accommodation above retail premises;
- mixed usage promotes a feeling of security and community, dual access to properties must be retained if this is to continue;
- while some adaptation can be accommodated within the urban blocks, changes which occur along the building line have a significant effect on the nature of the street;
- the gabled facades of house, facing St Saviour's Church are a significant characteristic of Church Close.



### Key

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Ridge Hill            | 6. Hawley's Hoe        |
| 2. Clarence St./Hill     | 7. Mill Gullet         |
| 3. Browns Hill           | 8. St Saviour's Church |
| 4. Foss St               | 9. Undercliff          |
| 5. Mill wheels/shipyards |                        |

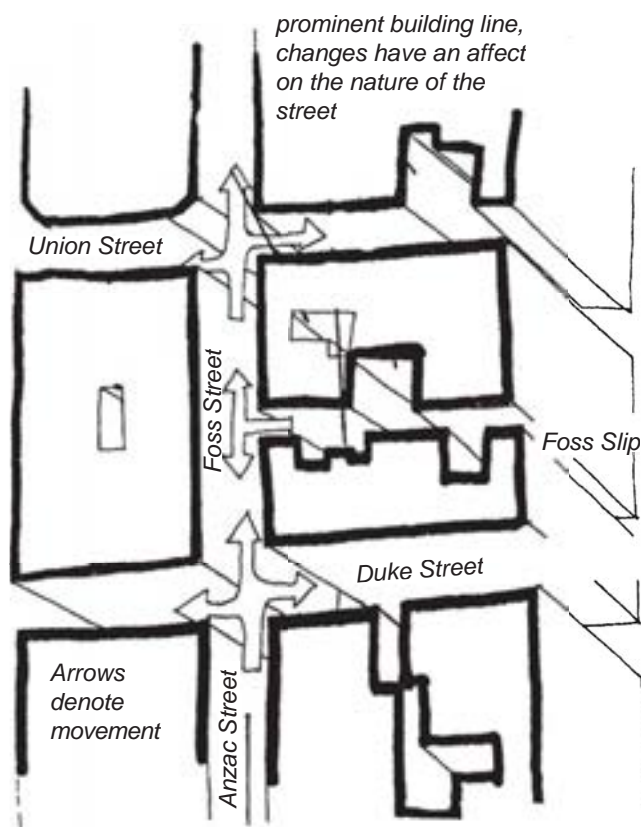
Map taken from R. Freeman, Dartmouth and its Neighbours



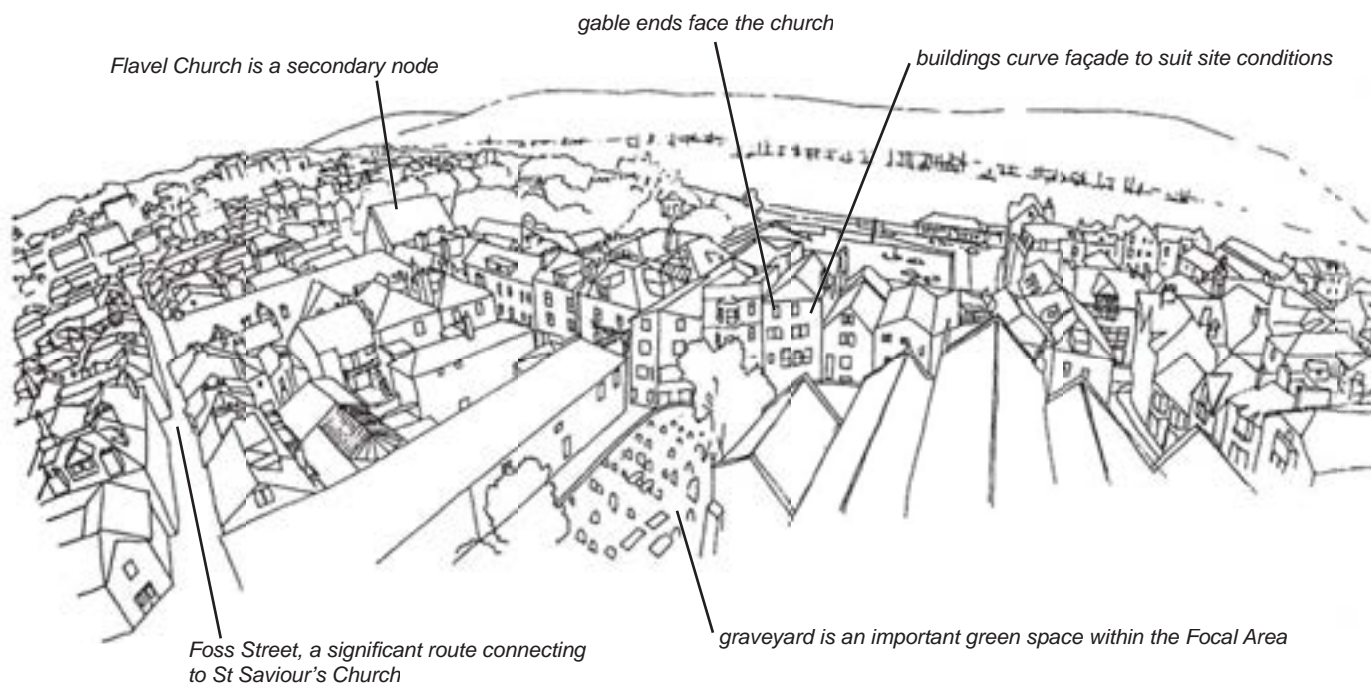
## Landscape Characteristics:

- Foss Street is the central axis, feeding into the neighbouring streets and providing a visual connection with St Saviour's Church;
- St Saviour's Church is a significant landmark building, it is important to retain its physical dominance of the roofscape;
- the churchyard provides the only greenery in this area;
- from the west of the church there is a substantial view along the town to the west and to the hills beyond;
- Owing to the flatness of the reclaimed land, buildings tend to be the same height, without the necessity of stepping up with the topography which occurs in other parts of Dartmouth; however, there are still small changes in eaves level to define individual buildings;
- The density of streets gives a feeling of shelter, creating small protected spaces which encourage a busy environment.

The sketch below illustrates the urban grain around Foss Street. The common scale and building line of the blocks adds to the intimacy of the streets that lie between them.



Sketch of the view looking east from St Saviour's Church tower illustrates the tight network of streets and common building scale in this Focal Area

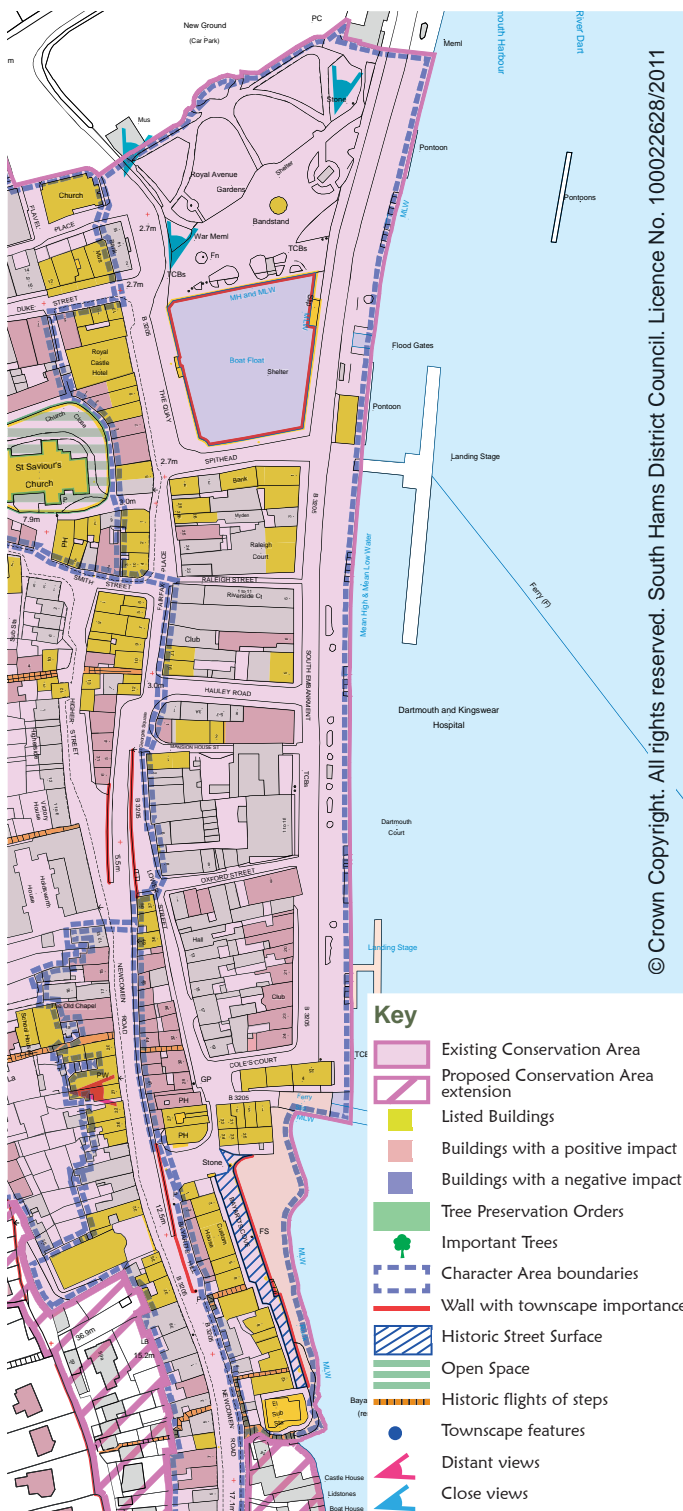




# Character Area Three

**South Embankment, The Quay, Spithead, Hauley Road, Mansion House Street, Oxford Street, Lower Street, Cole's Court and Bayard's Cove.**

The significance lies in its position – the past and present water's edge – the area acts as a buffer zone and promenade between the town and the river.



## Historical Influences

The reclamation of the Quay began in 1585 to provide extra housing land and expand the port facilities. The site of the Royal Avenue Gardens was first referred to in 1671, when it was known as the 'new town'. The drawing below shows this piece of land was once an island linked to the north corner of the Quay by a stone bridge. In Victorian times, this land was converted to formal gardens with a bandstand. The New Ground became part of the Quay in the general improvements that began in 1882. The majority of buildings along the South Embankment date from the 1890s.

Bayard's Cove Castle consists of an early 16th century artillery blockhouse situated on the prominent coastline overlooking Dartmouth Harbour. It was held by both sides during the English Civil War when it contained up to 5 great iron guns. From this date, it was used mainly for storage, although it saw active service during World War II when it was used as a machine gun post.

- Royal Avenue Gardens have always been an open public space.
- The Royal Castle Hotel was originally known as the New Inn when it was formed from two merchants' houses dating to 1639.
- The ferry to Kingswear dates back to the 1670s, and remains an important link with the community on the opposite bank.
- Bayard's Cove Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Lower Street has an historic association with the river, warehouses used to back onto the Quay.

*Print of the New Ground, 1866, showing high tide reaching the back of the Butterwalk (source R. Freeman)*



## Townscape

- The area is built upon flat land reclaimed from the river;
- South Embankment forms a promenade linking Coronation park to Bayard's Cove, the absence of buildings allows substantial views across the water and towards the sea;
- Bayard's Cove is defined by the 17th century buildings and location on the edge of the river bank;
- Bayard's Cove Castle: a significant outpost which has several façades depending upon whether it is viewed from the water, from inside the blockhouse, or in plan form as seen from Newcomen Road;
- direct contact with the water is important around the Boat Float, promenade and Bayard's Cove: the absence of railings contributes to the enjoyment of the water's edge;
- hard landscape is significant: cobbles and granite around Bayard's Cove; detailed block work along South Embankment; seating to enjoy the view;
- Royal Avenue Gardens is a valuable public amenity feature, exotic species and mature trees add to the richness;
- Visiting naval ships provide a strange scale to the streets, foreshortening the view;
- the Boat Float brings a part of the river into the heart of the town, the character dependant upon the state of the tide.
- Substantial 17th, 18th & 19th century buildings are terraced and share a common building line onto The Quay;





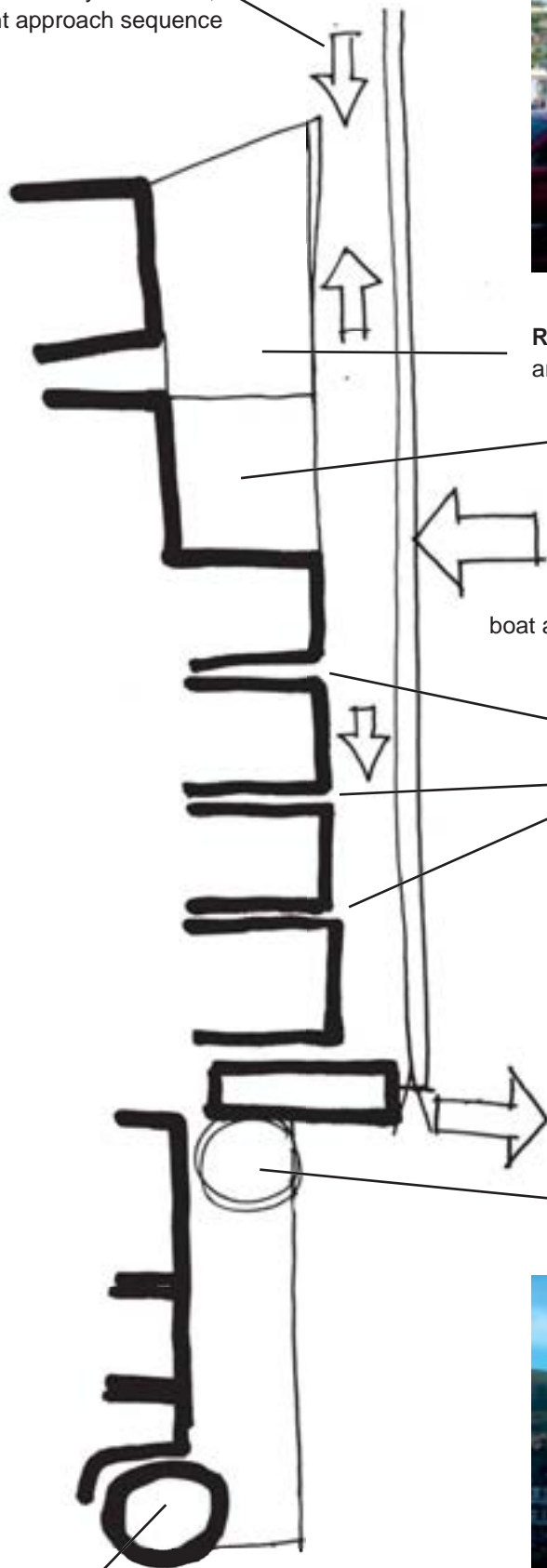


- York house dates from 1893, and is a fine example of a half-timbered building on a prominent corner position;
- Four storey buildings heighten the sense of enclosure around the Boat Float;
- gables alternate with parapets, giving a very varied roof-line and defining individual units;
- buildings are arranged in tight urban blocks, creating canon effects along the narrow linking streets of Oxford Street, Mansion House Street and alongside the Raleigh Hotel.
- the grid-iron street pattern of the reclaimed land contrasts with the more organic medieval landscape;
- Bayards Cove Castle features prominently within this Character Area. It is more than a tourist attraction; it is a landmark building. It closes the row of 17th century houses centred on the Customs House. The cobbled Quay, the commanding views over the water and the sheltered seating area encourages visitors to this part of the town. Framed by Sunderland Terrace cottages, the Ferry Slip activity provides visual interest and is a vital water link to Kingswear.



Diagrammatic representation of South Embankment illustrating movement and activity

pedestrian link from North Embankment to Bayard's Cove, a significant approach sequence



**Royal Avenue** gardens provide shelter and are an important public amenity

**Boat Float** brings the river into the very centre of the town

boat and ferry access

Narrow vistas between blocks of buildings provide links with the river from the town

working dock for fishing boats

prominent seating area with views of ferry

Bayards Cove Castle

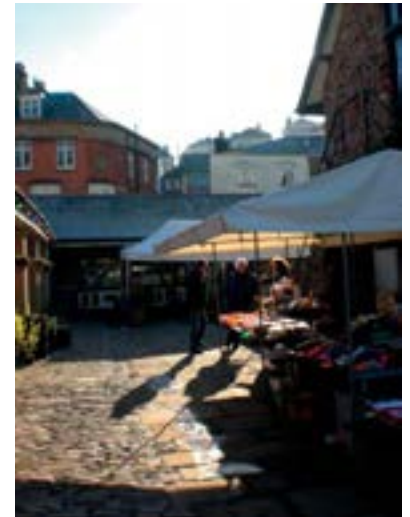




# Character Area Four

**Market Square, Market Street, Charles Street, Ivy Lane, Lake Street, Victoria Place and Victoria Road.**

The significance lies in its position and usage, being located in the heart of the flat basin of land in the centre of the town.



## Historical Influences

This part of the town is built upon land reclaimed from the river which began in 1815. The site of the present market would have been under water as part of the old Mill Pool. Dartmouth has had a weekly market since 1231. This venue would have been a thriving attraction in a port where seamen would bring foreign luxuries and news of foreign affairs. This tradition is retained by the existing market which was built in 1828 and restored in the late 20th and early 21st century. The photograph on the right was taken in the 1960's and shows the Market Square. Cars are evident in the photo, but parking has become more of an issue over the last decade, causing congestion in this prominent public square.

The advent of Victoria Road, (designed by James Rendell and completed in 1825), was very significant for the town as it enabled transport to enter from inland.

- Victoria Road improved inland access.
- Historical association with use as a market.
- Land reclamation produced a flat basin of land in the centre of the town that physically linked the former settlements of Hardness and Clifton into one settlement.

*photograph of the Market Square, taken from the 1973 Conservation Area Study, no date*



## Townscape:

- the majority of buildings were constructed during the 1830s, their common building date is evident in the consistency of scale, proportions and building line;
- shops have been inserted on the ground floor in the late 19th / early 20th centuries, with living accommodation above;
- mixed usage of buildings surrounding the market ensures 24 hour use of space, and adds to the sense of community;
- scale is predominantly three storeys, falling to two along Charles Street where properties are purely residential; their scale reflects their former use as artisan dwellings;
- the market building is a distinctive single-storey quadrangular form, considerably lower than the buildings which surround it.



*45-51 Victoria Road, a cohesive group of buildings that contributes positively to the townscape character*

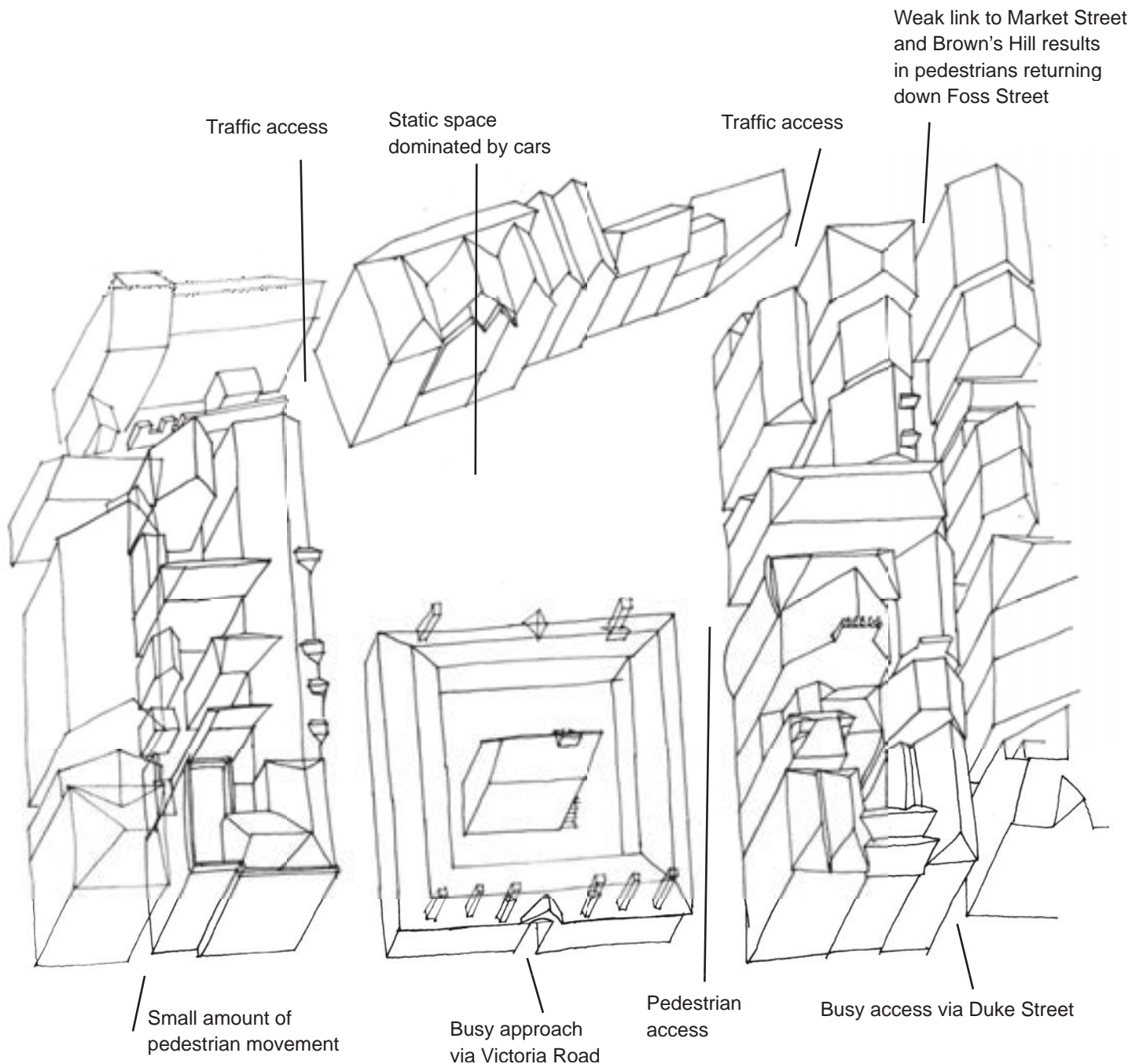




## Landscape Characteristics:

- 19th century development on a flat basin of reclaimed land, surrounded to the north and south by the developed slopes of the valley sides;
- square to the north of the market is a valuable public amenity which is currently under-used;
- links between Foss Street and Union Street are currently underused;
- appearance of the rear of Victoria Street properties is cluttered and in need of some attention.

Lake Street is bordered to the south by a row of housing built at the turn of the century and believed to have housed seamen. The substantial brick building, number 13, on the corner, and the factory unit which spans from number 13 to the houses are all part of the same development. The manager's house was built slightly behind, known as Elmo Cottage. This group of buildings provides a complete record of the relationship between work, management and workers, and forms a significant cohesive boundary that should be retained.

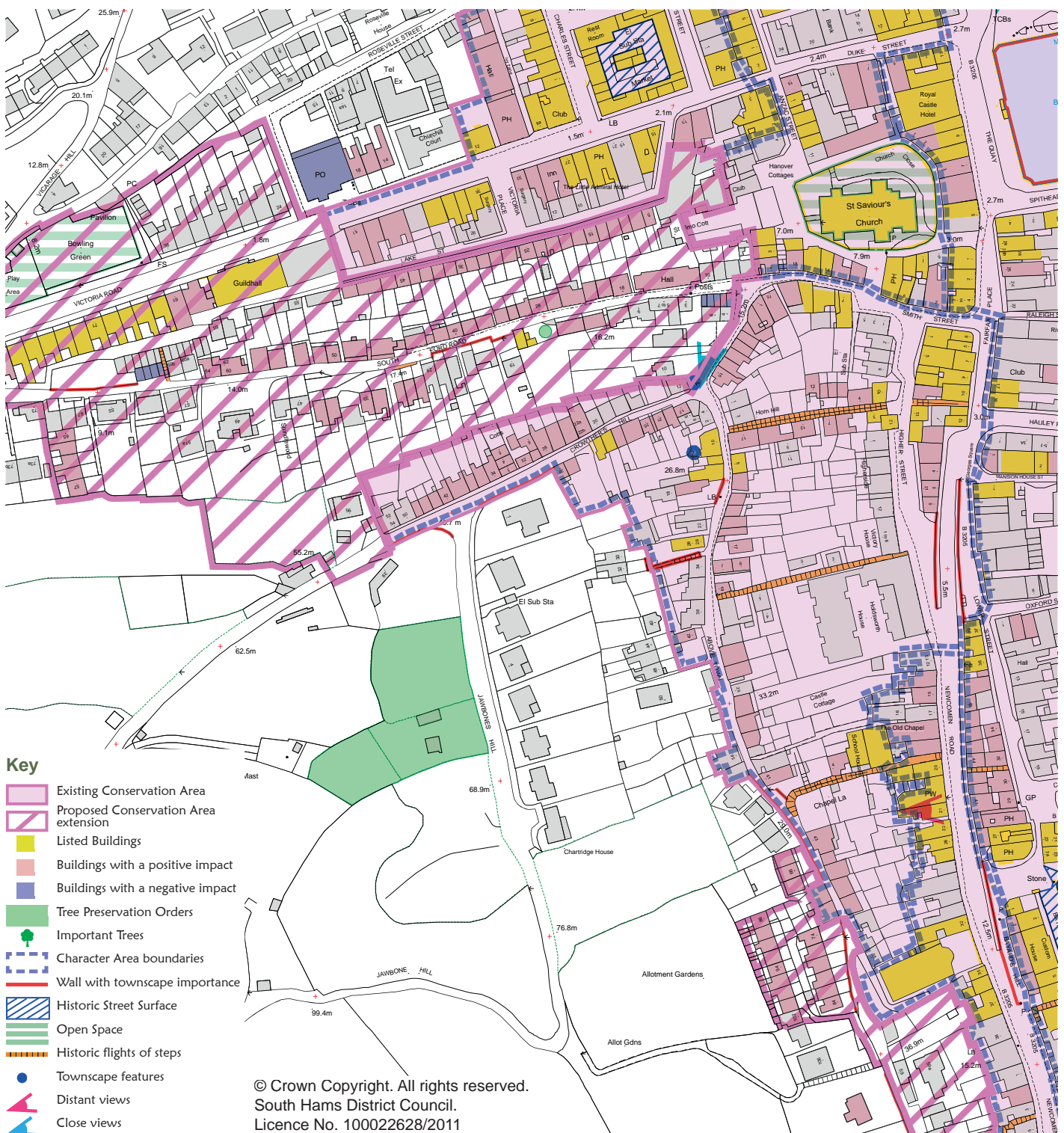


Sketch demonstrating the spatial characteristics of the Market Square, and illustrate the flow of people and cars around the space. The Market has the potential to connect with Foss Street via Union Street, and at the junction with Newport Street, routes that are currently underused.

# Character Area Five

**Crowther's Hill, Smith Street, Higher Street, Fairfax Place, and Above Town.**

Significant for the surviving 17th and 18th century buildings, and its prominent position on the slopes of the historic town centre





## Historical Influences

The eastern side of Higher Street contains several examples of 17th century buildings; the sites of the properties may well date back to medieval times. Perhaps the best example of this period was number 5 Higher Street, though this was severely damaged by fire in the summer of 2010. It contains many of the features of a property from this date: a typical Dartmouth gable front to the street; rubble stone rear and side walls; a timber framed front; ornamental front with jettied mullion windows, iron casements and diamond panes of leaded glass.

Fairfax Place dates from the 1880s and is a good example of Victorian architecture. Numbers 1-3 Fairfax Place were commissioned by Robert Cranford (owner of the Dartmouth Chronicle) with splendid decorative frontages 'in a flamboyant imitation of the old Dartmouth Style', as illustrated in the photograph bottom middle of Number 2 Fairfax Place.

- Parts of the existing street pattern and building fabric may date back to medieval times.
- Newcomen Road and sewerage scheme of 1864-7 necessitated the widening of Lower Street to improve access from the Lower Ferry, involving the demolition of many of the earlier buildings.



A large percentage of this Character Area is made up of private gardens. Open space is limited in Dartmouth, private gardens contribute vegetation, habitats for wild-life and soften the hard-landscape

## Townscape

- Intimate spaces with narrow streets and terraced buildings;
- Predominantly two and three-storey terraced houses step up the valley sides, sharing a common building line;
- Variety is important: buildings are individually defined either by materials of exterior finish, colour, window detail, or small changes in the eaves height;
- Narrow streets restrict vehicular access and limit car parking;
- Adaptations to accommodate garages disrupt the rhythm of the fenestration, and should be avoided where possible;
- The rear façades of Crowther's Hill are highly prominent on the hillside; changes which occur here have a significant visual effect on views into the area;
- buildings follow the topography, stepping in section to allow two or three storeys facing the river, views and the sun;
- Fairfax Place and Higher Street are built on level land at the mouth of these streets;
- substantial rubble stone retaining walls are important features: some houses are embedded into the retaining wall;
- flights of steps are a significant landscape characteristic, running at 90° to the streets they are an important feature of the local domain;
- Buildings follow the curves of streets;
- narrow stepped pavements run along one side of the street, with dressed grey limestone kerbs and buff stable brick paving.
- The views of the Dart and far shore over the rooftops of the town are very attractive.





# Character Area Six

## Newcomen Road and Southtown.

It demonstrates the historic spread and growth of the town along the linear route and occupies a significant position on the periphery of the town



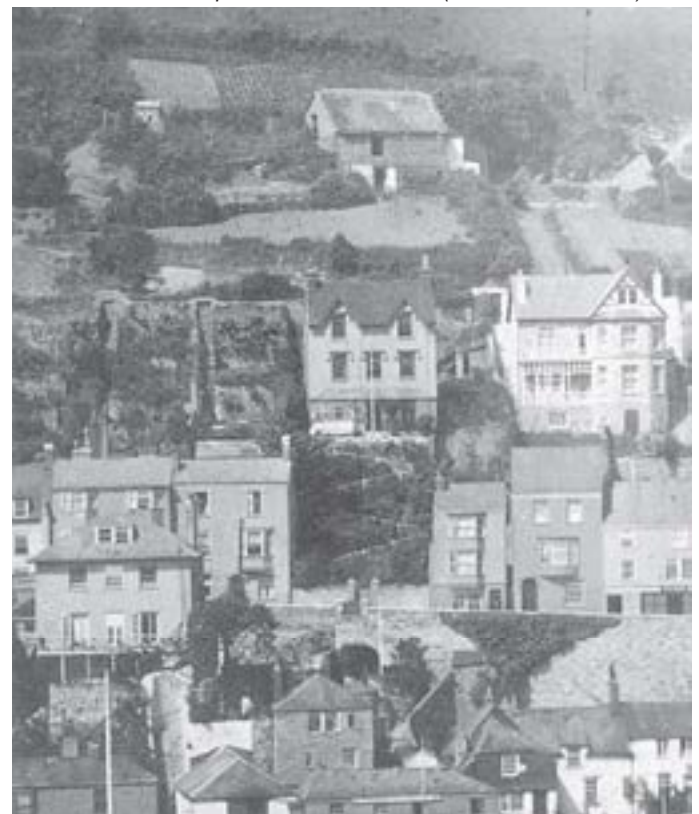
## Historical Influences

Newcomen Road is the product of the 1864-7 road widening and sewerage scheme, proposed by William Bell. The scheme involved the demolition of over 50 houses between Higher and Lower Street, including the old Guild Hall and the house of Thomas Newcomen (inventor of the atmospheric steam engine), after whom the road was named.

Originally, Lower Street would have contained some fine merchant houses with warehouses backing onto the river from which their ships could unload their cargoes. The picture below shows Southtown before the road widening scheme. The slope behind was once pasture and gardens, and whilst some of this land has been built upon, it remains a dominant landscape feature.

- Scattered examples of 17th and 18th century merchant houses survive along the linear route.

*Photograph of Southtown before the road widening scheme, showing arable land on the slopes behind the houses. (Source R. Freeman)*



## Townscape

- urban character sustained by terraced 18th and 19th century buildings sharing a common scale and building line, with slightly varying roof lines to accommodate small changes in ground level;
- roof line is very significant, especially along the river edge where changes in road level provides substantial views over the roof tops;
- The former St Barnabas's Church locates the dividing line between residential to the south (promoting the quieter residential nature of Southtown), and largely commercial or bed-and-breakfast accommodation to the north (enhancing the urban nature of Newcomen Road);
- buildings accommodate level changes through dual access at both levels, a characteristic of 15th century buildings in Dartmouth when access to the houses were from ground floor on Lower Street, and from first floor from Higher Street.



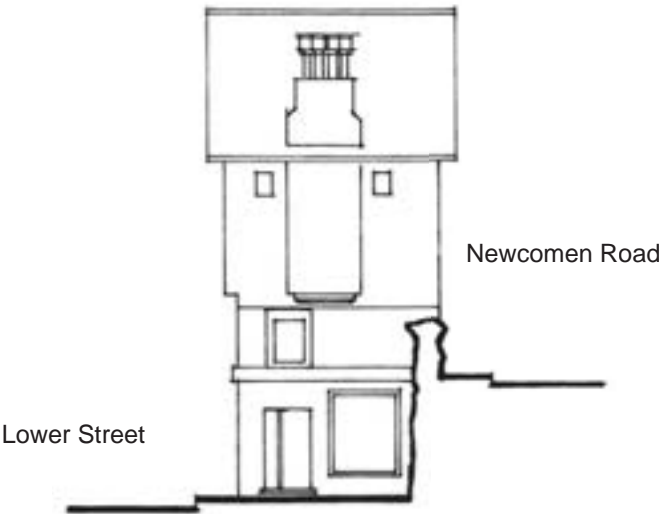
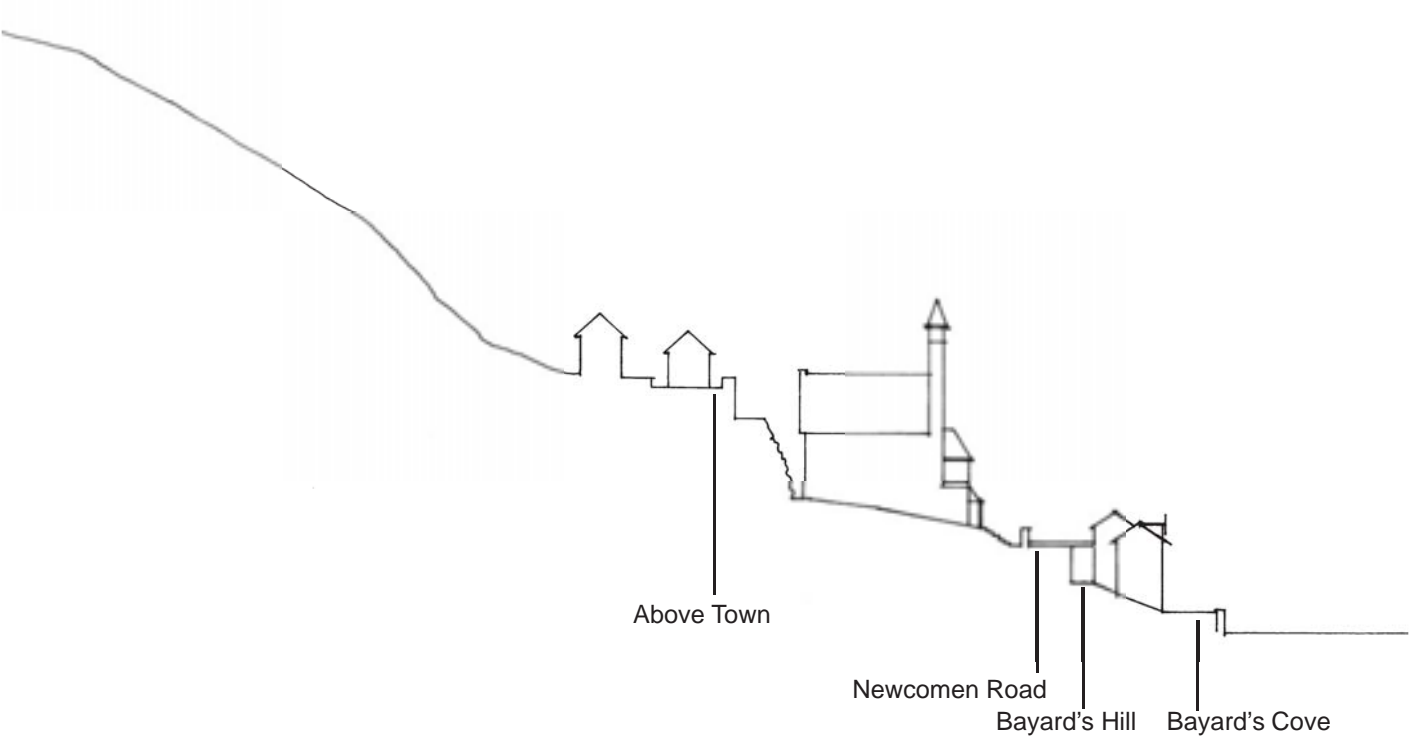
## Landscape Characteristics:

- Newcomen Road is of special historic interest as a feat of early engineering; constructed as a series of arches of local stone like a bridge;
- wooded and grassy slopes which mass behind the buildings are an important landscape feature;
- in Southtown the views widen giving a greater sense of space;
- the small area of gardens off Southtown (surrounding the public toilets) are an important public open space with good views over the River;
- the former Church of St Barnabas is a significant landmark building, the twin towers add interest to the sky-line.
- Breaks in the buildings on the east side of Southtown provide windows for views across the river to Kingswear. A frequent pedestrian route to the castle, Southtown provides a strong sense of the river viewed from the land and, viewed from the river, a strong sense of the terraced character of the town's buildings
- St. Barnabas Church has recently been restored and converted to a training centre, restaurant and affordable housing.





Illustrative Section through Jawbones Hill, Above Town, Newcomen Road, Bayard's Hill and Bayard's Cove. It illustrates the prominent position of St Barnabas's Church and how the land slopes steeply to the west presenting a barrier to development. It also shows the prominence of the roofs below Newcomen Road



Section through Newcomen Road and Lower Street illustrating how the buildings accommodate changes in level

## Proposed Extensions to the Conservation Area.

Three areas that currently lie outside the conservation area are proposed for inclusion. The criterion for this is whether they are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. For this reason, the conservation area does not include rural areas that may be an attractive part of the setting but, of itself, is not of historic or architectural interest.

## Conservation Area Extension One

## Ridge Hill and Mount Boone Lane

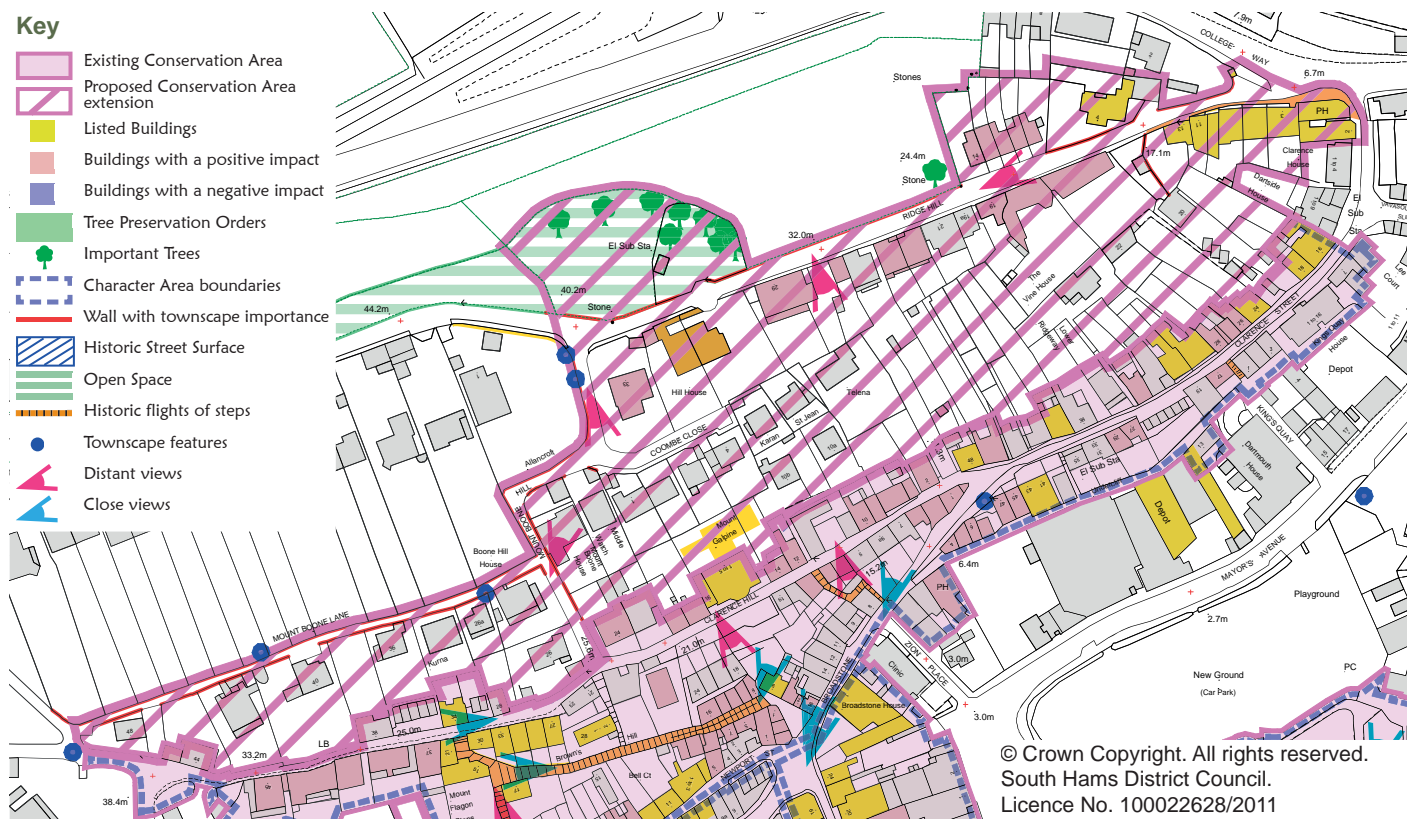
## Historical Influences

Ridge Hill is the lower part of the medieval main road from the mud flats and moorings of Hardness and Coombe Mud on the river Dart, going up the ridge and over Mount Boone and Church Road to St Clement's Church at the top of the hill, then on to Totnes. The Ridge Hill shown on the earliest maps is as it is now and the late medieval boundary stone still at the east end of the street shows it to have been the municipal boundary where the town met the rural Coombe and Norton estates.

- Until Victoria Road was built in 1823, Ridge Hill was the main road out of Dartmouth and was still a pack horse route in the late 19th century.
- The houses and orchards on the south side seem always to have been owned by townspeople and occupancy has

reflected the town's  
activities and fortunes.

- At the bottom, around the present Ship in Dock Inn, it was settled by fishermen and shipbuilders based on Coombe Mud and Hardness.
- Further up, more substantial houses were built in the early 19th century by merchants and ship owners earning their living from the cod and port trade who were also aldermen and town mayors (e.g. Coombe and Ridgeway).
- In the mid 19th century, town houses on the street served as cadet hospitals for the Naval College training ships.







## Townscape:

Ridge Hill is an ancient road, still as narrow and steep as it was in medieval times. When viewed from parts of the Dartmouth town centre, the backs of Ridge Hill houses dominate the skyline and form a visual boundary of the oldest part of the town. Mount Boone Hill and Mount Boone Lane lead to Clarence Hill below.

- In the early 19th century, Ridge Hill houses had their main entrances at the bottom of their gardens in Clarence Street.
- The street contains 9 entries in the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest.
- The terraced houses at the bottom of the street conform to type 3 buildings with thick stone rubble walls and low floor to ceiling heights.
- The rear of the Ridge Hill properties are especially vulnerable to inappropriate dormers, balconies and other insensitive additions due to their singular prominence.
- There are also several examples of type 2 buildings.
- Combecote, originally Belmont, is a grander villa with an illustrious history dating back to the 18th century.
- Newcomen Cottage was built by Thomas Lidstone in 1866 and is prominently located on its own on the north side of Ridge Hill. It is a Victorian interpretation of 17th century architecture and incorporates features

from Thomas Newcomen's house and a neighbouring building dating from that period in Lower Street. They were demolished at this time to make way for Newcomen Road.

- Apart from Newcomen Cottage and a group of pretty, Edwardian terraced houses, the north side of the street remains undeveloped and is dominated by stone rubble walls behind much of which lies the Community Orchard.
- Mount Boone Hill and Mount Boone Lane are characterised by the high, stone rubble walls which accentuate their narrowness.
- The oaks, sweet chestnut and Monterey Pine of the Community Orchard form a backdrop to the skyline.
- There are extensive views from the Orchard towards the Britannia Royal Naval College and the wooded east banks of the Dart with the Dartmouth and Paignton Steam Railway and Higher Ferry.

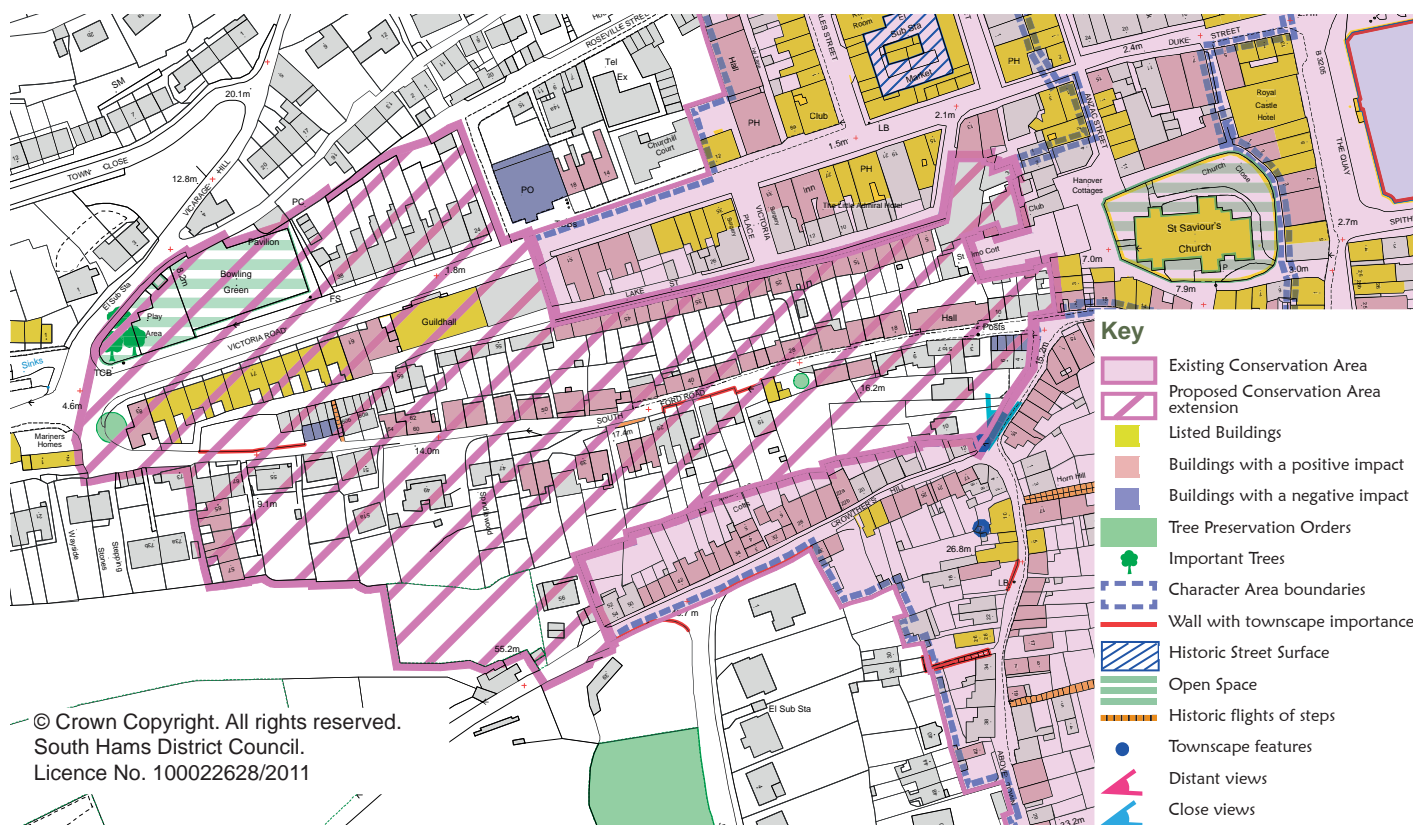
This is a natural extension of the adjacent conservation area given the similar architecture, appearance and age of its buildings to those of the rest of the town centre, its prominence and the links of their occupancy with the town's historical activities.





# Conservation Area Extension Two

## Victoria Road, Southford Road.

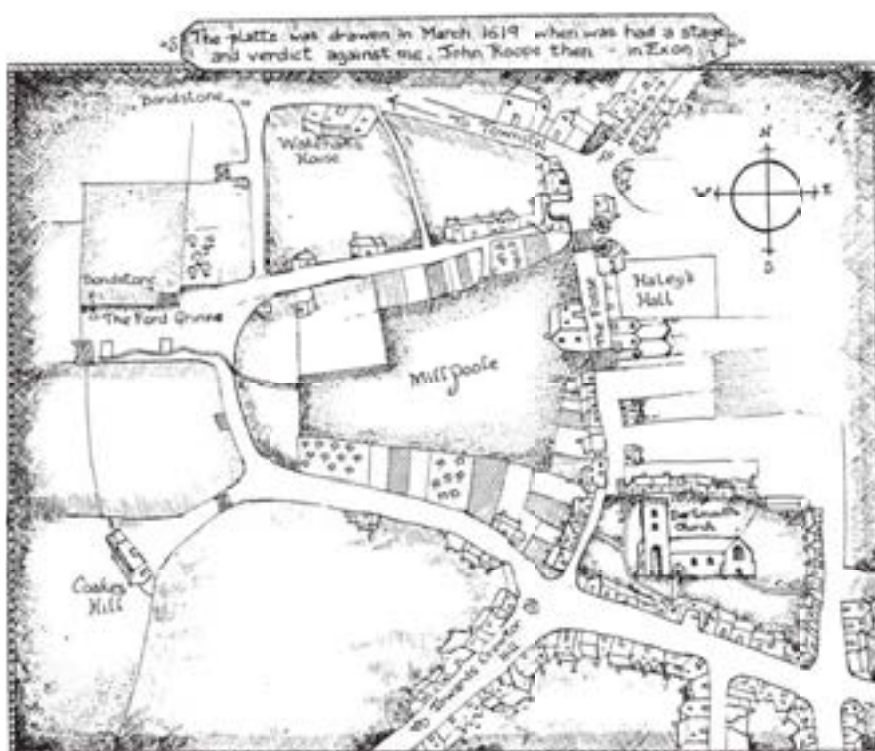


## Historical Influences

In 1815, an Improvement Act was obtained from Parliament enabling the construction of the market and various improvements to thoroughfares. Victoria Road was the most significant result of this. It was completed in 1825 and ran along the edge of the old Mill Pool which was filled in around this time. The relatively shallow gradient of the road meant that, for the first time, wheeled vehicles could enter the town. The construction of New Road, as it was then known, was therefore one of the great landmarks in the history of the town.

Southford Road leads up from Ford, at the head of the old Mill Pool, to a junction with Smith Street, Above Town and Crowthers Hill and was historically the main access to Clifton from the mainland. John Roope's map of 1619 clearly shows it, though only with a few houses at the east end. During the 17th century, Dartmouth expanded and a water conduit in a Southford retaining wall dated 1674 bears testimony to the further development of the street at this time.

Both these streets form an integral part of the historic part of the town in terms both of their history and townscape.



Map taken from R. Freeman, Dartmouth and its Neighbours





## Townscape: Victoria Road

The townscape around the lower part of Victoria Road is in complete contrast to the older quarters. Where the earlier parts of the town are built on the hillside, this area is flat. Where streets

elsewhere are narrow and sinuous, Victoria Road is wide and straight and where houses in most of Dartmouth present a cheerful variety of styles and materials, those of Victoria Road are sombre and regular. However, far from being boring, this part of the town forms a counterpoint to the rest and, rather than continuing into the distance, it becomes narrower and starts to wind up the hill from Ford onwards giving the lower part a comfortable sense of enclosure.

- Historic planned townscape associated with filling in of the former Mill Pool in the 1830s.
- The flat, wide length of Victoria Road culminates with the Bowling Green, enclosed by a neat bay hedge over a low wall, some good mature Monterey Pines and a K6 telephone box.
- The street is lined with terraces of plain, classical houses along the south side. The houses of the north side are less elegant and generally later.
- The lower part of Victoria Road is wide, straight and flat in contrast to most other streets in Dartmouth.
- The Guildhall has been in use for this purpose for more than a century, though it was originally intended to be temporary. With its stone rubble construction, cast iron balcony, gable front and post-medieval detailing, it forms a stylistic anomaly in this street.
- There are several buildings which detract from the character of the street, including the Post Office.

Some of the houses on the north side have lost their front gardens to parking spaces.

- While it feels spacious, Victoria Road is bounded on all four sides by hills, (Jawbones, Ridgeway and Townstal Hill and Hoodown Hill in the east on the far shore of the Dart) making for a satisfying townscape.

## Southford Road

Southford Road is quite different in character to Victoria Road, reflecting its much greater antiquity. While there is a gentle gradient to the street itself, the land to the south rises steeply and the houses of this side of the road are set up and back slightly at a higher level with raised ground floors and tall retaining walls in front of and below them rising from road level. This is in contrast to streets with similar topography (for example, Newcomen Road, South Town, Clarence Street or Higher streets where buildings on the higher side are cut into the hillside, with the ground floor at street level. Buildings on the north side of Southford Road are typically 2 storeys high. The result of this arrangement and the narrowness of the street is a strong sense of enclosure occasionally relieved with vistas between buildings of Clarence Hill and Mount Boone to the north. There are only two listed structures in Southford Road (the 17th century water conduit mentioned above) but this belies its historic and townscape interest.

- The street is narrow, gently winding and strongly enclosed
- The ground floors of the south side houses are high above street level with steps leading up to them.
- Character changes at the top of the Road with a narrow pavement along the north side and Type 3 houses.
- Proceeding east, the tower of St Saviours Church is revealed over the rooftops below.
- Occasional glimpses through gaps in buildings on north towards Ridge Hill and Mount Boone.



# Conservation Area Extension Three

## The southern part of Southtown and Above Town; Warfleet Road

At present, the southern end of the conservation area is a narrow finger drawn tightly around the early 19th century, terraced houses of South Town. It does not include the gardens of these properties, Above Town, or the shore area below. Yet the historic and townscape importance of this area is immense, together forming the dramatically ranged horizontal development of the western shore made up of houses, gardens, streets and retaining walls.

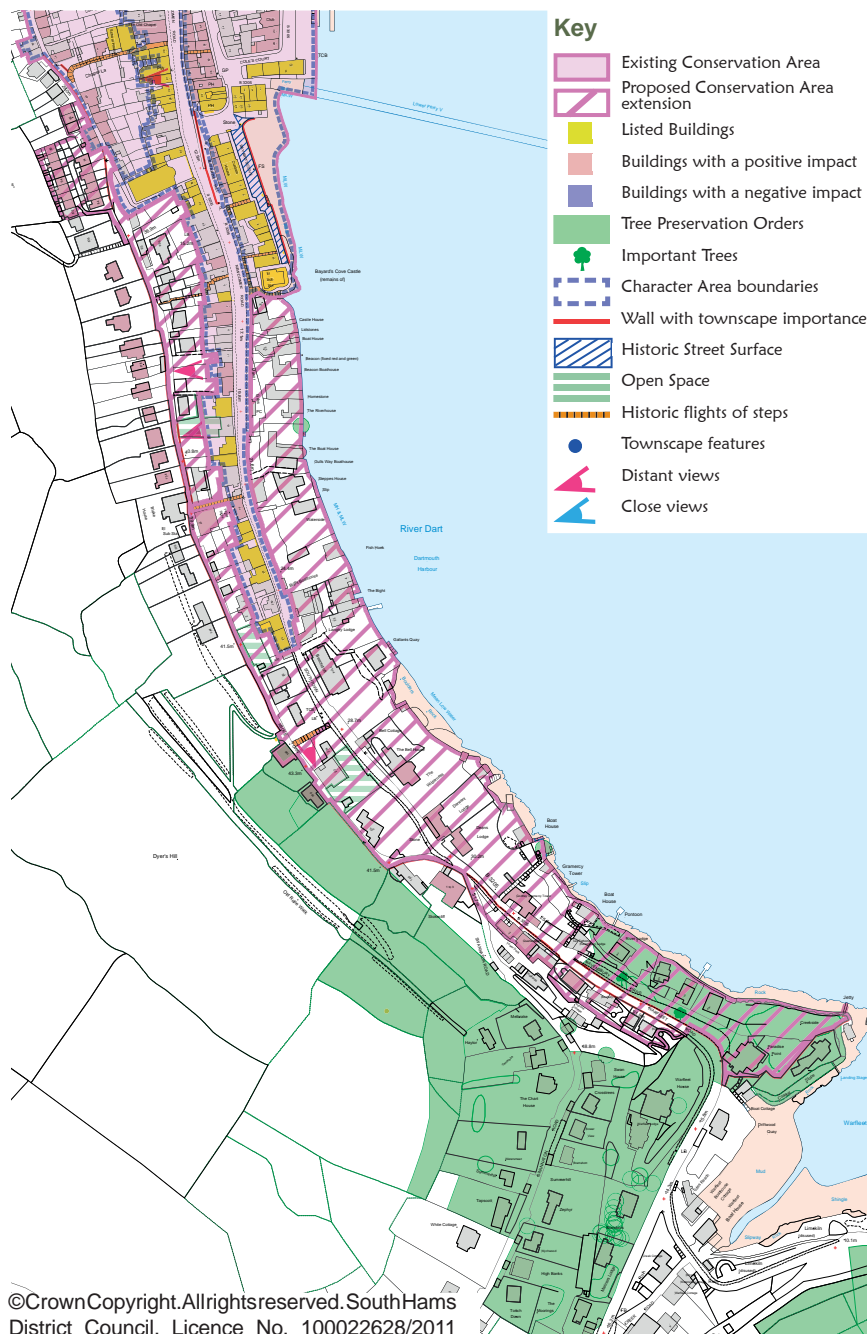


### Historical Influences

- The southern part of Above Town is typified by Victorian, Edwardian and 1920's villas representing the period of change that started in the mid 19th century - including the arrival of the railway.
- Development immediately south of Bayards Cove Castle grew up around small boat builders, workshops and warehouses. The plot boundaries (and indeed some of the building elements) still reflect this original usage.
- There are several important houses along Warfleet Road, some of which have significant history. The best known is Paradise Point, formerly Ravensbury, built in 1855 and home of engineer and child prodigy George Parker Bidder. Others include the Wilderness, Derwent Lodge (home of Francis Simpson in 19C), Lidstones Boathouse (well-known boat builder and architect).
- The Southtown road turns into Warfleet at Paradise Point and Weeke Hill; this was the least steep access to and from the town and was used by packhorses and there was a horse-drawn coach service to Kingsbridge via Torcross and Stoke Fleming until 1917.

### Townscape

- The appearance of the river frontage from Bayards Cove to Paradise Point is an important feature of the AONB and Heritage Coast, and must be preserved or enhanced wherever possible with special attention given to new developments.







## Above Town

- Beyond the former St Barnabas Church, the character of Above Town changes; there is a series of pinch points after which the street narrows and follows the contour being defined by a retaining wall on the west and a medium height wall on the downhill side.
- Nelson Steps, St Petrox Steps and a third flight all lead down to Southtown.
- Another flight of steps leads up to Jawbones, Waterpool Lane, and Townstal and parts of the old packhorse way leading via Clifton to Modbury & Totnes.
- West of Above Town lies Dyers Wood with its ropewalks
- There are long-reaching views of Above Town from the road approach from Hillhead via Kingswear to the Lower Ferry
- Breathtaking views from Above Town over rooftops to the Dart should be protected from unsympathetic building.
- Closer views of the rear of Southtown houses and their gardens are also important.
- Above Town essentially retains its form as shown on the 1749 map drawn to settle a dispute between Henry Southcote and The Corporation.
- The walls along both sides of Above Town, parts of which are likely to be ancient, give the street a strong sense of enclosure, despite being interrupted regularly by insensitive garages and carports.



## The Shore

- The shore below Southtown is somewhat chaotic with a combination of modern houses and converted industrial buildings.
- The properties and size of plots along the shore are a reminder of the original merchant houses, workshops and warehouses that stood there.
- Further south on the river bank are more affluent villas built in a time of growing prosperity for the town at the turn of the century where prosperous local business men, holiday makers and those enjoying the growing popularity of the river for visiting yachtsmen.
- The robust retaining walls above the shore are prominent

## Southtown and Warfleet Road

- The west side of the street has a distinctive raised pavement with granite kerbs.
- Stone rubble is prominent as a building material
- Houses are most commonly detached and high status; most notably, Paradise Point (originally Ravensbury), which was built in 1855 on the site of Paradise Fort dating from 1402.
- Houses to the west are set well back from the street
- East side gardens run down to the shore in some cases
- There are a number of inappropriate garages
- There are several good mature trees
- The area is genteel in character
- The road curves and widens at Paradise Point revealing Warfleet.
- The view back to the north is surmounted by the Britannia Royal Naval College

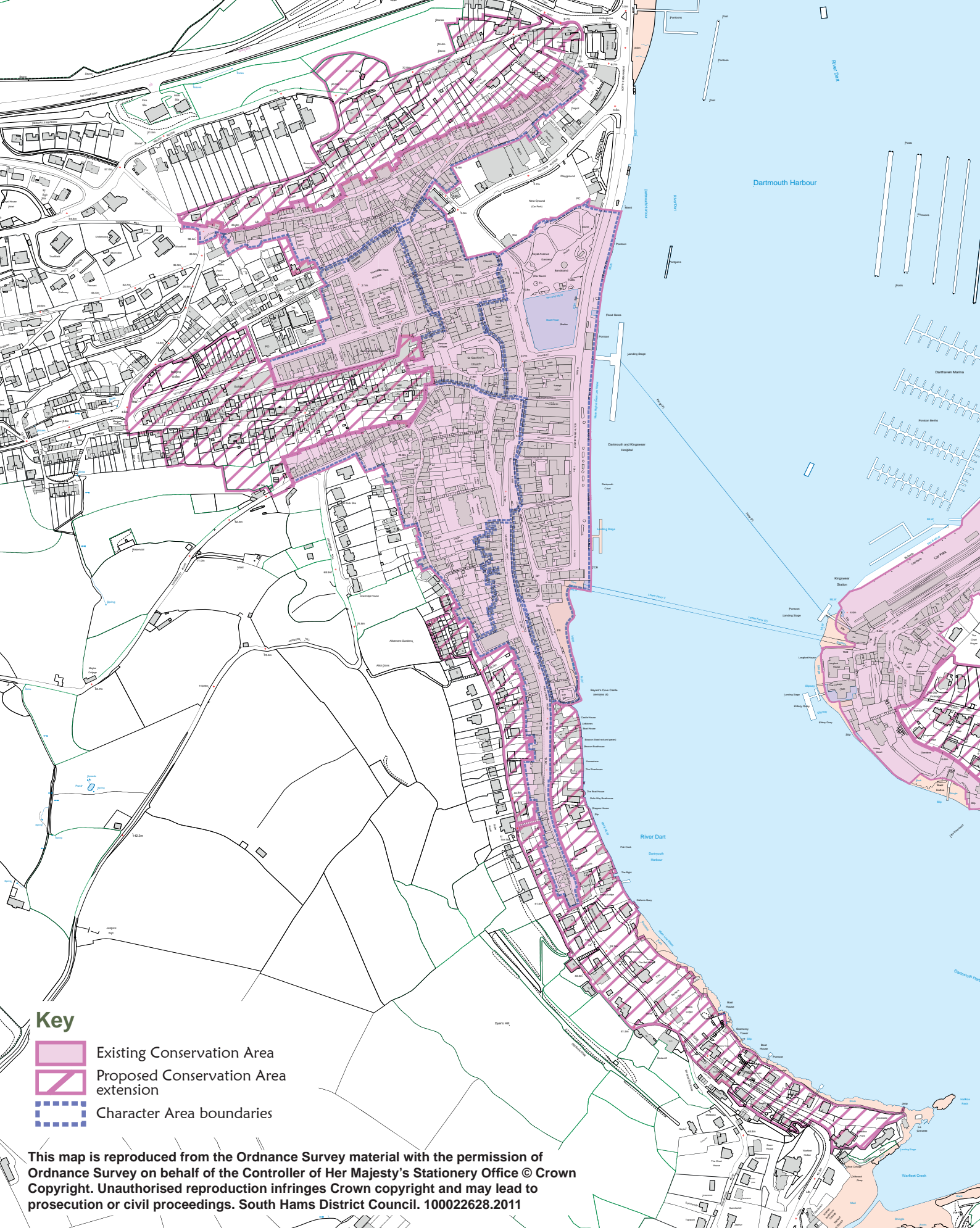
## Bibliography

Map reproduced from Dartmouth and its Neighbours by Ray Freeman. Used with kind permission of Richard Webb, Publisher, Dartmouth. Copyright Ray Freeman 2011.

W G Hoskins, Devon, (Newton Abbot: David and Charles), 1954, 1972 edition.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Debbie Pope for producing much of the text and sketches, Ray Freeman for her help at that time and members of the Dartmouth and Kingswear Society and Jens Barbour for their assistance in updating the work.



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