

Salcombe 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 Plan and 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 Salcombe Conservation Area special, what needs to be conserved and what needs to be improved.



Introduction

Salcombe is the southernmost town in the county of Devon, situated at the very end of the A381 spinal road, on the edge of the Salcombe/Kingsbridge Estuary. Otherwise, the only access to this isolated town is a network of narrow lanes, the long established ferry services to Kingsbridge and E. Portlemouth and the SW Coastal Path.

The Conservation Area was first designated in 1973 (later amended: 1985 and 1998) and comprises the waterfront town's historic core and close perimeter roads containing later Victorian villas. A large number of properties within this area are second homes and the local population of just over 2000 increases significantly in the summer months, in common with many attractive settlements in tourist areas.

Summary of Special Interest

Today Salcombe is still dominated by its beautiful estuary setting which throughout history has led not only to its physical layout and development but also to the character and appearance of its buildings.

The dramatic scenery within this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has influenced the origins, industries, illegal activities, as well as the present day economy. As a result, the natural and built environment have become irrevocably intertwined to create a strong and unique sense of place, drawing tourists and residents alike.

The approach, by water, along the spectacular coastline, with its rocky outcrops, sandy coves and wooded slopes, allows breathtaking views of the town. Each stage of its development is exposed for all to see, from its historic waterfront warehouses and quaysides, rows of humble fishermen's and coastguards' cottages, to its grand Victorian villas set high against the skyline. Mature pine trees act as focal points, while historic plantations add softness to the expanding modern development across the hillside.

The lack of dominating structures and the overall comfortable scale of the buildings with their traditional materials and chocolate box colours, result in a gentle charm and historic seaside appearance, reinforced by the many small inlets, slipways and wooden moorings posts along the shingle foreshore.

Within the town, the high boundary walls and narrow twisting streets maintain a sense of intimacy and enclosure, while the large number of listed buildings with their variety of architectural detailing and form add great character. Ancient alleyways and flights of steps reveal unexpected glimpses beyond the building line to the streets above, or rare gaps frame views of the estuary's blue water beyond.

In addition, the attractive microclimate has been a feature of the town's appeal for many centuries. Although most of the exotic waterfront gardens and promenades it once supported have since been lost, its sailing waters still boast of being some of the best in the UK and have drawn a new population of holiday makers. There is no denying that Salcombe today is a fashionable resort, a status that is reflected in house prices, boutiques in the Fore Street, the number of holiday homes and, to some extent, in the character of new developments as well as alterations to existing buildings. Although these attributes may not be popular with everyone,



Wider setting of Salcombe



Natural coastline



Approach to Salcombe from the water

there is certain continuity in this character, which dates back to the late 19th century is very much part of the town. Accordingly, the summer months bring an influx of visitors swelling the population by many fold.

Streets with their historic shopfronts are filled with hustle and bustle, while a multitude of leisure craft take to the water in a flurry of noisy and chaotic activity. In contrast, for the rest of the year the town is quiet, with only a skeleton population, the still water of the estuary broken only by the soft “put-putting” of the occasional fishing boat making its way up the narrow channel between the empty mudflats or the echoing calls of gulls.

All of these aspects help to define the Salcombe Conservation Area’s “specialness” and despite future development pressures, these qualities should be jealously guarded.



Humble seaside atmosphere

Salcombe Harbour



Ferry steps



Plan form

The physical layout of Salcombe has been determined by the landscape setting’s natural characteristics; the estuary and the steep topography rising from the narrow coastal margin. Laid out on a relatively level site, the settlement’s core is dense and organic in form, tightly confined within this limited area, resulting in several cul de sacs and alleyways.

Subsequent development growth extends to the prominent upper slopes, with a terrace-like linear plan form, following the natural contours of the land. Important routes down the hillside are created by a network of pedestrian alleyways and steps.



Setting & Context

The landscape surrounding Salcombe is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), comprising a high, windswept, coastal plateau dissected by trimmed hedgerows creating large-scale field patterns. Sparse, stunted trees, shaped by salt wind, emphasise the exposed nature of the area and its nearness to the sea and its dramatic cliffs, part of the South Devon Heritage Coast.

The steep-sided tidal creeks that divide the plateau offer protection to isolated settlements such as Salcombe. Their dark woodland bands reach down to the water's edge creating wild, dramatic backdrops and, in winter, a sense of enclosure. Many viewpoints from in and around the Conservation Area allow spectacular, far-reaching views over and along the estuary, (a designated SSSI) with its secluded sandy inlets, famous protective sandbar and stunning scenery.

To the west of the Conservation Area, Victorian plantations of Beech trees cover the estuary slopes and all around, either singly or in small groups, impressive conifers and evergreen oaks create focal points. At the quayside, the setting is constantly changing as the tides alternately reveal extensive mudflats and shingle foreshores or transform the natural harbour with beautiful blue/green water.



View north from the town



View from above Devon Road

Geology

Salcombe Estuary is a classic example of a dendritic ria - a river system later drowned by sea level rise. It lies within the Start Complex, a most remarkable area, separated from the Devonian rocks to the north by a major fault system. Here the rocks have a metamorphic origin resulting in mica and (Hornblende) greenschists. Innumerable folds and fault exposures at North Sands are of national importance.

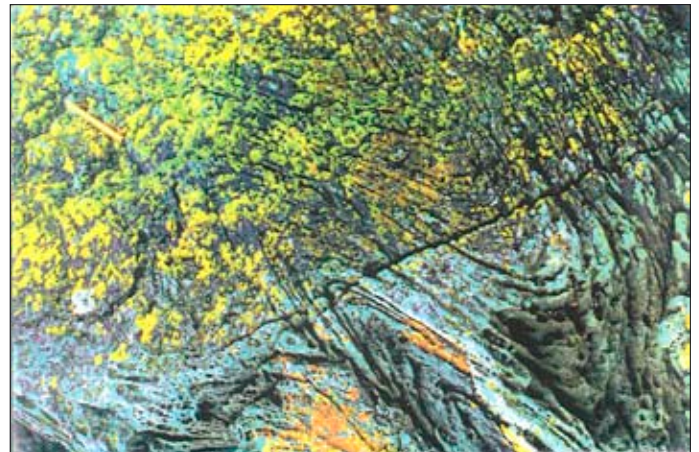


Photo of north sands outcrops

Town's Historic Evolution

Salcombe has always been inextricably linked to the sea, with even its name, assumed to be of Saxon origin, meaning "salt valley" (Salt Coombe), derived from its closeness to the coast. At Domesday, the area was part of the Manor of Batson (Badestana) and the first buildings probably consisted of "cellars" (boat and net storage sheds) for fishing farmers living further inland, away from seaward attacks.

A very early occupation as a defensive encampment is indicated by the local place name "The Berry" ("Bury") and a site overlooking the harbour was clearly utilised for its commanding landscape characteristics.

However, it is likely that the first settlement did not occur until around 1244, when "Salcombe" first appeared in writing. By 1401, a stone Chapel (of Ease) had been built, indicating a well established community existed probably at the eastern end of the town. Despite a raid by a force from France in 1403 this building survived until the 1800s.

A century later, Salcombe Castle (Fort Charles), attributed to Henry VIII was constructed as part of a chain of coastal defences and was later utilised by Charles I as a garrison fortification in an attempt to protect the town during the Civil War.

Fishing and boatbuilding developed through the 16th and 17th centuries and photographs of the thatched "Crowder Cottage" and house over the entrance to Robinson's Row, both estimated to be Tudor or earlier (demolished last century), along with the remaining Porch House, dated 1660, show the quality of the buildings from this time. A far cry from the early fishing sheds.

The only other building from the 17th century known to remain is Ferry Cottage, sited by the Bakers Well inlet first used by the rowing ferry to East Portlemouth. By 1777, the Courtenay Estate map shows the town to be disjointed, with the main core at the northern end of the estuary margin and isolated groupings dotted along the foreshore to the south. One of these was in the vicinity of Orestone and in all probability consisted of the Ferry Inn (Commercial Inn) and adjoining cottages. The public steps adjacent to what is now the Watchhouse serviced the ferry's new departure point.



Salcombe Harbour in the early 19th century



Salcombe Castle

The 1790s brought prosperity to the seafaring port and the town expanded along the narrow estuary margin; the growth in maritime trade required bigger yards often extending out onto the foreshore. The main nucleus of the town was formed by waterfront boathouses, shipyards and sail lofts. Numerous narrow alleyways led from Fore Street to courts of cottages or rows, such as "Robinsons Row", inhabited by mariners and coastguards. On the outskirts numerous orchards surrounded the town.

With the French Riviera out of bounds due to war with France, the sub tropical micro-climate and magnificent scenery of the Salcombe Estuary began to attract visitors and gentlemen's residences including Woodwell and The Grange were built at various viewpoints along Cliff Road.

However, it was the 1800s that brought the boom time for Salcombe with large scale shipbuilding and ownership; schools, chapels, a church, vicarage and market hall were built. Other facilities to support the thriving town and its visitors were created with a post office, bank, and yacht club. "Ringrone" was converted from a private residence to the first hotel. This was soon followed by the Marine and York (Salcombe) Hotel.

Growing maritime trade resulted in a customs house, more coastguard cottages in the new Church Street, the reclamation of land at The Island and the infilling at Whitestrand to create a larger quayside for boatyards. Villas also came into vogue with the wealthy ship-owners



Clifton Place in the early 19th century



Custom House Quay in the early 20th century



Thatched House in Gould Road

and masters, springing up along new perimeter roads rising above the town and flights of steps were created to link them to the town's original core.

With the growing prosperity, poor quality housing such as "The Channel" were demolished. The natural spring that had crossed the street was tapped and a reservoir constructed in Courtenay Park supplying Conduit Lake in Fore Street by pipe under the new Courtenay Street. As the population increased and visitors flocked to the resort, a new gas works and cemetery were constructed at Shadycombe. Also, exotic ornamental gardens and promenades were created at Cliff House and the Marine, adorning the harbour approaches.

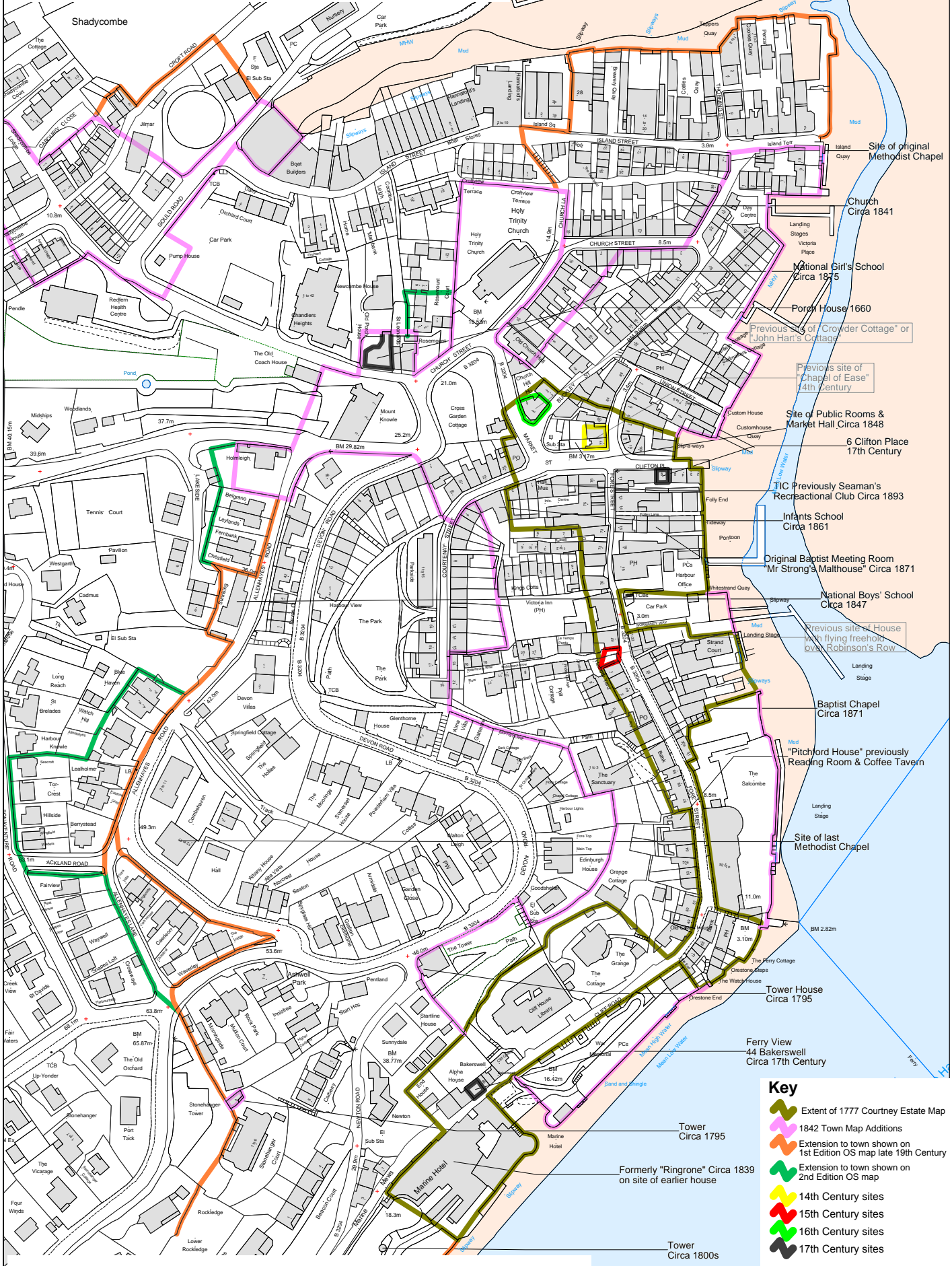
By 1875, the decline in sail power led Salcombe to revert back to small boatbuilding and fishing, but the arrival of the motor bus, and railway at Kingsbridge in the 20th century, brought the town a new lease of life as a tourist resort. The town dramatically expanded with building plots to the west of the centre sold off by the newly established South Devon Land Company.



Crowder Cottage (demolished last century)

The Second World War however brought great change to the town; as a target of many hit and run bombings, it lost several buildings in Fore Street, including the Temperance Hotel and a row of cottages at Breakwater Bay. By 1943 the advance party of the US navy had arrived, which eventually reached almost 2000 in number. In preparation for the D Day assault, the present slipway at Whitestrand Quay was constructed, following the demolition of two rows of decaying back to back cottages, known as Harvey's Row. After the war, recovery was slow but the population continued to rise until the 1960s. Since then it has been falling, despite the building of a residential estate on the outskirts, as more and more properties in the town's core have become holiday homes. The makeup of the town has thus completely changed and the town has become an expensive boating resort, mainly in the summer. With this new role, have come the fashionable clothes shops and cafes of Fore Street, the character of the town has once again moved on.

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Salcombe Historic Development Map

- Key**
- Extent of 1777 Courtney Estate Map
 - 1842 Town Map Additions
 - Extension to town shown on 1st Edition OS map late 19th Century
 - Extension to town shown on 2nd Edition OS map
 - 14th Century sites
 - 15th Century sites
 - 16th Century sites
 - 17th Century sites

Note: All buildings contained within the dated map development areas are not the original.

Archaeology

There is a rich and varied historic environment within the estuary itself, attested by the discovery of artefacts, which includes terrestrial sites ranging from those of prehistory to modern day, along with maritime wreck sites. Archaeological remains may be sealed below marine clays and silts including along the foreshore and appropriate recording should always be instigated where disturbance is incurred. Only a proportion of this archaeology is so far legally protected, one site that is, is that of the submerged prehistoric forest at North Sands.

Prehistoric entrenchment/fortification also exists on land at "The Berry" (The Bury) but tilling over the generations has levelled the site and only the ground to west on top of the hill is not covered by housing estates. Other earthworks include a tumulus recorded by Ordnance in the grounds of Hipplefield House, a possible prehistoric barrow alleged to be Danish.

Other fortifications still existing include: Salcombe Castle (Fort Charles) a Scheduled Ancient Monument; 3 listed lookout towers located in the grounds of Stonehanger Court (1795), incorporated into the Tower House (1795) and in

Activities and prevailing uses

From historic journals and maps it is clear that fishing, boatbuilding and maritime trade have been the main industries of Salcombe through the centuries, their prosperity and importance to the town occurring in waves.

Despite early raids on this isolated harbour town and the huge influx of pirates in the 17th century the early fishing trade was profitable (as indicated in the 1645 Customs records) and required the skills of 4 shipwrights (Maritime Surveys of King Charles I).

By the 1700s, organised smuggling of spirits and tobacco took over from fishing and demanded the building of large boats fitted out for runs to the Channel Islands and France. This illegal business was eventually eradicated by coastguards and the maritime trade took off. By the late 18th century, there were 2 or 3 shipyards in the town; John Ball's on the site of "The Salcombe" is thought to have been the first.



Sailing barge moored at Custom House Quay

the grounds of the Marine Hotel (1800s) but the latter is described as a bath house; the listed Saluting platform at Woodwell, purported to have been built in Napoleonic times (1802) to convince the French that the harbour was well protected and from where a salute was fired at the news Mafeking had been relieved (17th May 1900).

In addition, a Battery was established in 1861 on hillside above the castle and cliff in order to gain increased range beyond the sandbar. This was manned by 10th Devon Artillery Volunteers with 2x 32 pound muzzle-loaded cannon and existed until 1900 and later replaced by Castle Point Hotel.

The town has relied on the local stone for the majority of its buildings and evidence of quarrying is to be seen throughout the area. One Slatestone quarry, the earliest documented, operated in reign of Henry VIII (Onslow Road).



The pier at Orestone

Early trade was in coastal salt to Newfoundland and later, local flour, malt, potatoes, slate and cider, possibly from the multitude of orchards that existed around Salcombe, in exchange for timber, coal, groceries and fruit. Boom time came with the fruit trade, which at its peak employed 1000 seamen, with nearly 100 large fast schooners racing between the Bahamas, the Mediterranean and the Azores, bringing back oranges and exotic fruits for the British Market. A mariner's life was often dangerous, leaving many widows in the town.

Altogether, nearly 300 sailing vessels and a handful of steamers were constructed in Salcombe during the 19th century, almost all for local owners. Bowsprits stretching across Fore Street were a common sight and the sail lofts of Orestone, Thorning Street and Custom House Quay, along with pump and blockmakers' workshops, and warehouses along the quaysides. For a small town, the amount of hustle and bustle must have been extraordinary.

With the coming of steam and steel, Salcombe reverted to fishing and with its mild climate, the waters provided scallop, lobsters, plaice and crabs. Salcombe's brown crabs were reckoned to be the biggest in the world and a fishpond was built by John Harnden in C19 at Island Quay for the storage of live shellfish (later converted to a private haven for boats). However, the change from "withies" made over winter, to plastic crabpots and electronic navigation meant local knowledge was no longer needed and stocks declined and with them the size of the famous crabs.

The warm microclimate also attracted visitors, many arriving by railway and steamer boats which landed at the new pier at Orestone, built in 1870. Shops thrived and a Sailing Club was founded in 1894 with the first sailing season following the next year. The first race occurred in March, with another in April, two in May, two in June and one in August.



Regatta

With its proximity to the sea and its maritime history the coastguards have always had an important role to play within the town. Plaques to the lifeboat crews remain, (Ferry Steps) including one commemorating the 1916 disaster (War Memorial) when 13 lives were lost while crossing the sandbar.

WWII brought a new frenzy of activity with the US navy locating its barracks in the town (Two Meads) and British spies taking night flights into France from an airstrip on the headland. On 4th June 1944 an armada sailed for



Schooner Argyra at anchor



Sailing yachts

Normandy beaches to take part in the assault on the enemy leaving Salcombe deserted and strangely quiet.

Today the town provides very little employment through the winter with empty streets, closed businesses and abandoned quaysides. Small-scale marine and fishing activities still continue but are hardly evident, relegated to the outskirts of the Conservation Area. The summer months attract many holidaymakers and the harbour is alive with yachts and dinghies, while the streets are packed with traffic and tourists perusing designer shops.

Spatial analysis

The approach roads are steep and twisting, funnelling traffic toward the waterfront. Pinch points along the main street cause bottlenecks for both pedestrians and cars with only the area at Whitestrand providing welcome relief from this constant tustle for right of way. With very limited public open space available within the town, this is a key location and its wide estuary frontage is also the main entrance point to the town from the water.

Within Salcombe's narrow weaving thoroughfares, a feeling of containment is evoked by the limited access to the waterfront and the densely packed building lines. Outward views to the estuary and beyond consist of brief glimpses between properties or framed views through rare gaps along the quayside.



View along Orestone

Rare glimpses inland along side lanes terminate at dead ends as the rising land behind the town restricts views. The tall villas of the upper roads overshadow the lower streets and public park, their sheer scale and close proximity emphasising the sense of enclosure and that of being overlooked.



Steps to cliff house and garden

The historic flights of steps and alleyways create intrigue and lead the eye along their twists and turns, deflecting views as they link the original town with the upper streets of the villa area. Here roads are wider and sweeping having a spacious openness, the gap plots and terraced construction allow clear views across the town's roofscape to the sea and countryside. The

steep contours of the surrounding landscape provide a dramatic backdrop to the town.

The solid stone tower of the parish church is a key landmark and can be seen from many vantage points within the town. Its familiar appearance reinforces the intimate nature of the town.

From the water and foreshore, the true tiered character of the town can be seen. The importance of the three dimensional quality of the buildings can also be appreciated with rear and side elevations often appearing prominent, within the overall estuariescape. Properties, unappreciated due to limited sight lines within the narrow streets, become focal points when viewed from the water.



View over old town and Batson Creek



View of church from Courtenay Street



View of Whitestrand and Victoria Inn.

The listed buildings

Salcombe has many listed buildings with the majority located within the town's core. The 18th century Grange with its distinctive triple bowed frontage, Holy Trinity Church and the Old Porch House dating from 1660 are all listed Grade II*. The remainder are Grade II and are listed below:



The Grange

- 34 Buckley Street- early C19
- 4-8 Buckley Court- c18 attractive grouping no 8 former PO
- Ringmore House, Market Street- c19 important position
- End House Bakers Well Cliff Road- ic18 mportant grouping with below
- Alpha House Bakers Well Cliff Road-c18
- Ferry View Bakers Well Cliff Road-c17
- 46 Bakers Well Cliff Road-c18
- Shipwrights Cottage Bakerswelc18l
- 48 Bakers Well Cliff Rdc18
- Cliff Cottagec19
- 1 Clifton Place- whitestrand quay waterfront buildings c18/c19
- 2-5 Clifton Place-c18 former warehouse with dwelling entrances from rear court
- 6 Clifton Place-c17 passage under to court-C17



Holy Trinity Church from public seating area by Cross Cottage

7-9 Clifton Place including 11 and 12 Fore Street
-c18 passage under to rear court

Custom House-early C19 with ornamental cast iron balcony 1820

Custom House Quay- messrs Cook and son now three cottages-sail loft? Stone building at quay edge tablet inscribed 1827.

Tower House Newton Road 1795

Folly End Folly Lane -whitestransd quay-c18/early c19 important group

Tideway Folly Lane-ditto

Quayside Fore Street-ditto

1 Fore Street-early C19 woodshop front

Kings Arms Hotel- C18 in important position

24-28 Fore Street-c18/c19 mainly with C19 shopfronts

29- 31 and 30A Fore St-c18

39-41 and Little End Fore St- said to be 1789 Little end with shaped gable 41 Sun fire insurance plate

Ferry Steps, Ferry View, 50,51 Fore St-early C19 no51 ornamental wood case

54 and 55 Fore St-c19

56 Fore St-probably public building-c19 reading room and coffee tavern

57-59 Fore St - a pair-c18/c19

Shipwright Arms Fore St- no62 -now PO c18

Victoria Inn Fore St-c18 pump of cast iron C19 in stone lined recess-previousy known as the Turks Head

72 Fore St (Dormons) - boatyard c18

80 and 81 Fore St-c18

1,2,3,4,5 Island St-some previously shops c19

1,2,3, Knowle House-early C19

The Ferry Inn Orestone-C18

Orestone Steps and FerrynCottage-said to be 1739

Old Watch House-C18 said to have been former coastguards house

Friday Cottage Robinsons Row- c19

Poll Cottage-c19

8-11 Robinsons Row-c19

12 and 15 Robinson-c19

16-18 Robinson-c19

20 and 21 Robinson-c19

The Fortescue Inn Union St-c19

Boatyard Building Thorning St-C18 or earlier at river end

Unity Buildings union St-c19

Offshore seachest union St-c19

3-9 Victoria Place- prob c1840 important quayside position



The Porch House



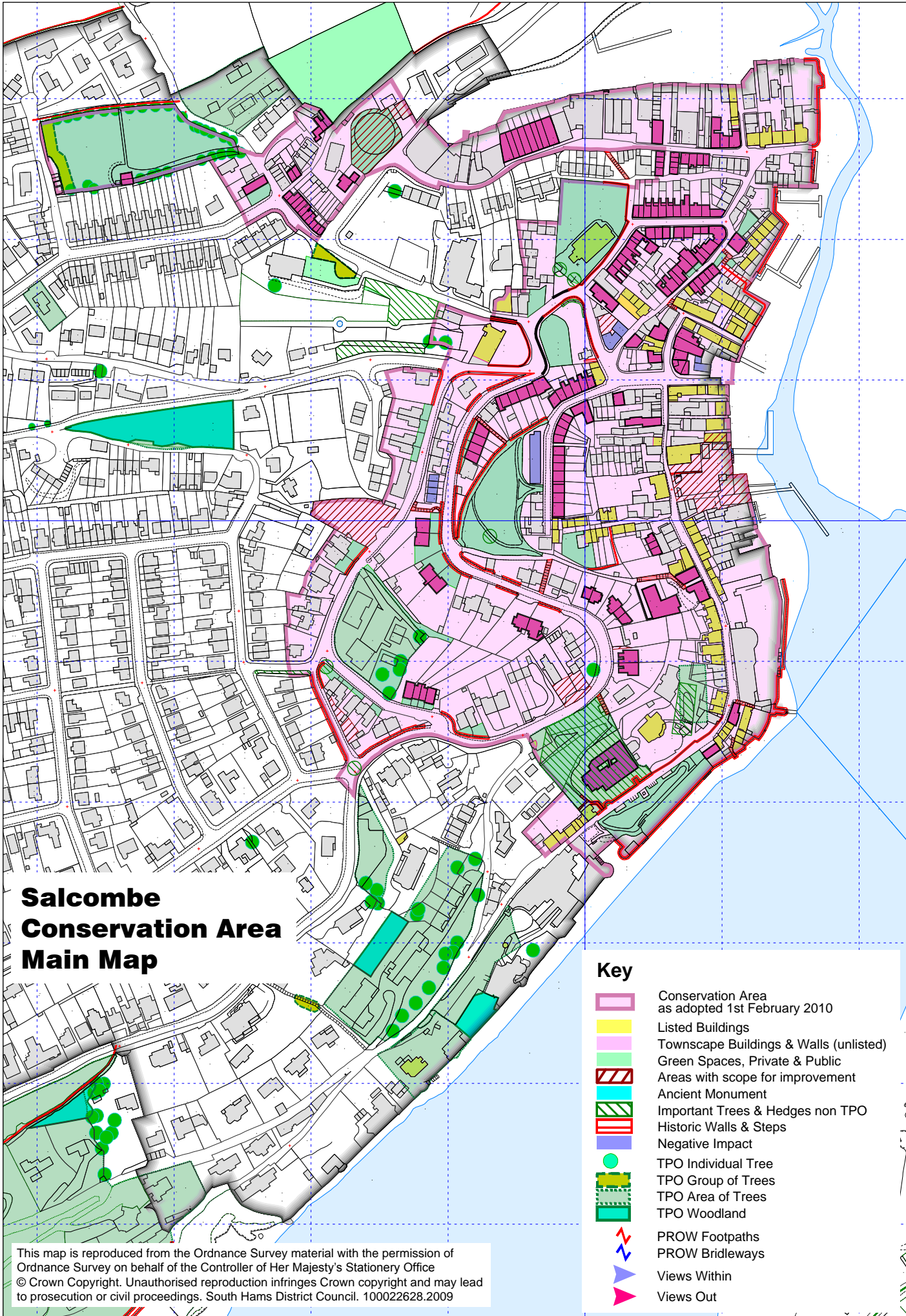
Bakers Well cottages and inlet



Victoria Terrace



Island House and Terrace



Unlisted townscape buildings and structures

In addition to the listed buildings, there are many others that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These are often located in prominent positions within the town such as in the case of the Baptist Church and Cliff House. Others combine to form impressive groupings or individually are of noticeable historic merit. (see main map)

Structures too, add to the overall identity of Salcombe. In response to the steep gradient, a network of historic steps are irretrievably interwoven within the town's layout. There are also many impressive stone walls, often towering above pedestrians along roadside boundaries as they act as retaining structures to the plots of land above.

Along the quayside, the historic walls of the waterfront are also key features of the town, clearly defining the settlement from the natural environment of the estuary. The curving entrance towers of Bakers Well inlet are some of the most impressive.

Structures of Special Interest.

Given its setting and history, it is hardly surprising that several unique, historic and locally distinctive features and structures survive in the Salcombe Conservation Area. The list below is indicative but not comprehensive.

K6 phone boxes at Baptist Lane

Water fountain to Fore St adjacent to Victoria Inn

US navy D Day memorial plaque – Normandy Way
Whitestrاند and monument on quayside

Plaque to bombings on butchers in Fore Street

Metal bollards in Devon Road and on the corner of
Market Street

Curving metal handrails to steep streets at Market Street,
Acland Road

Metal handrails to flights of steps

Granite kerbstones to bottom of Market street and Fore Street

Attractive stone steps to Coastguards cottages from over
60's centre

Old lamps- bottom of steps from Victoria Quay to
Buckley Street

Shell casing in Courtenay Park

Plaque to Courtenay park entrance

War memorial on Cliff Road

Plaque to the lifeboat lost crew on War memorial and also
other plaques to crews at Ferry steps passenger shelter

Old street name signs- Church street, Clifton Place,
Island Street

Inlets – Bakers Well

Rainwater hopper on Custom House

Flood boards and sandbags- custom house, Clifton place,
Folly Lane.



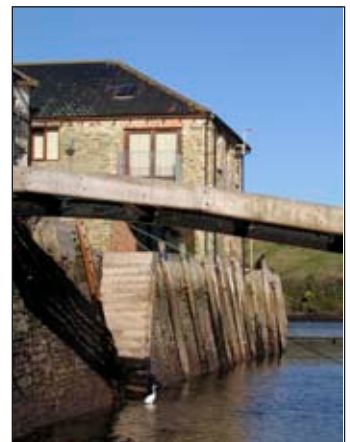
Cliff House



View of Baptist Chapel



*Steep steps to Cross Cottage
possible site of Crowder Hill*



*View along foreshore of mooring
posts and wall*



Bakers Well inlet

Prevalent traditional materials and styles

Stone is the dominant building material in the town, utilised for maritime warehouses, dwellings and boundary walls. The local geology is clearly evident around the area with such natural rocky outcrops as that found in Market Street's roadside wall and, throughout history, it has provided a valuable source of building material. In keeping with the humble origins of the town, walls were most typically built of random or coursed rubble.

It is believed that far more of these rubble walls were originally exposed than is the case today, resulting in the town having had a very different appearance than the late Victorian or 20th century render gives now. This render is generally smooth, though sometimes ashlar lined, and is typically decorated in the pastel colours of a seaside town.

Slate-hanging too was previously much more prevalent than today. It is now very rare, with only 80 and 81 Fore Street still retaining painted slates to the first floor front elevation and Clifton Place to the rear. Timber weatherboarding is also a material found along the waterfront, both painted, as on the rear elevation of 29-31 Fore Street or in its natural state on the adjacent warehouse style conversions sited on the old Dormon's boatyard.

In contrast, the prevalence of slate as a roofing material is clearly visible throughout Salcombe, although localised use of clay roof tiles is evident among the villas of the outer perimeter roads and some of the harbour buildings.

Historic cobbled street and textured pavement surfaces have almost totally been lost, although some may still remain beneath the tarmac of Robinson's Row. Interest is now limited to detailing such as buff stable and dark grey block cut bricks found on the treads of the many flights of steps throughout the conservation area, along with the natural granite kerbstones still remaining along sections of Market Street and Fore Street. It is vital that no more of these are removed.



Weatherboarding



Pastel-coloured render



Natural rocky outcrop to high retaining wall



Coursed Rubble

Green spaces and trees

Salcombe has few clearly visible green spaces within its core; more often, foliage and vegetation are only glimpsed over high boundary walls or through gateways. The almost total lack of front gardens means that those that do exist should be jealously guarded for the dash of colour and texture they contribute to their urban surroundings.

On the periphery of the Conservation Area, green areas are much more prevalent. The large historic land plots of Devon Road and Allenhayes allow room for lush planting fronting the roadside and landscaped and cultivated gardens to the rear, which also contribute to the townscape due to the steep terrain.

Public green spaces are also important, from the isolated green area of verge with park bench in Devon Road with its spectacular views over the estuary or larger public green spaces such as Courtenay Park, Cross Cottage Garden, the Churchyard and Cliff House gardens and terraces that provide small natural oases within this waterfront town.

Certain boundary hedges and trees provide structural features that contribute to the aesthetic value of the area; the mature hedges on the corners of Acland Road, the monkey puzzle on Allenhayes Road and the tree at the junction of Allenhayes Lane and Devon Road.



Garden plots with view up to unfinished development site



Gardens below Cliff House

Other Tree Preservation Orders exist within the area: Devon Road adjacent to Methodist Hall; Walton Leigh corner; Rear of Knowle House; Cliff House and The Grange Cottage area.

On the outskirts, Victorian beech plantations still exist along the estuary cliffs and impressive conifers and oaks provide focal points from within the conservation area.



Church yew trees at entrance



Cross Cottage Garden



Monkeypuzzle Allenhayes Road

Ecological importance of Estuary

Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1987 the estuary has a high diversity of marine habitat. Important eelgrass beds lie at the lower fringes of the foreshore occasionally exposed at low spring tides. Fauna below the Salcombe pier is particularly colourful and rare Fan mussels are found on the foreshore. In addition, seahorses and a type of sea slug thought to be unique to this estuary are also to be found. As a result, the area is used for educational visits and scientific research.

In order to conserve the spectacular natural environment, the amount of access to the foreshore should not be increased and waterfront owners should be encouraged to take a responsible role in conservation especially where this concerns the digging in of blocks and moorings etc.



Character areas

The Historic Core

Market Street with its sharply twisting curves, leads steeply downhill into the town's core, terminating in a spectacular view of the estuary beyond. To the right, an exceptionally high stone wall forms a continuous building line with the adjoining properties, broken only by a steep flight of worn steps and a street entrance. The properties are tightly packed and generally modest and two-storey, their subservient appearance emphasised further where they are set along a section of sunken pavement. The roofscape is free from the intrusion of rooflights and ridge lines tend to be parallel to the road with the noticeable exception of the "Council Hall" (Tourist Information Centre), which with its stone gable façade makes a strong statement within the townscape. Render and sash windows are the norm, although with few properties afforded the protection of listing, UPVC windows and modern doors are beginning to encroach into the area.

On the opposite side, entrances to parking areas disrupt the building line and properties are more varied in height and form, ranging from the historic, single storey forge, with its bulky flat dormer, to the modern three storey property on the corner of Buckley Street. .

At the foot of the hillside, Fore Street is the centre of the town with its mixed-use character of shops and residential properties. There is a strong feeling of containment within the narrow confines of the winding street, with its continuous building line, restricted sight lines and pinch points along its route (Salcombe Coffee House, Kings Arms, Post Office). Whitestrand is a rare open space within the street; its water frontage offers a breathing space within the compact town centre; nevertheless, at present it suffers from a lack of identity and is overwhelmed by modern-day clutter. In contrast, branching side lanes and alleyways offer tantalising glimpses of historic areas beyond the building line.

The 18th and 19th century properties range from two to four storeys, resulting in a lack of uniformity of ridge height, although most run parallel to the street. Plot widths vary due to the majority of buildings being built individually; pairs and terraces are rare. The vertical emphasis of its buildings is reinforced by the rectangular form of its sash windows which, act as a unifying feature throughout the street. Such details as depth of rebate and number of glazing bars provide variety amongst these windows.

Frontages are generally rendered, ranging from plain faced to those exhibiting one or more of an eclectic mix of architectural detailing; bracketed eaves, cornices (no57), string courses, pilasters and verandahs (no56). The exposed stone facades of nos. 29-31 are in the minority. Many traditional timber shop fronts also remain although several shops have inappropriate modern frontages.

Rows, Courts and Alleyways

The ancient Orestone defines the end of Cliff Road and the beginning of Fore Street. Traversing the flight of steps



View down Market St



Fore Street



View through to Fore Street



Sash windows in Fore Street



Traditional shopfront



View from Baptist Lane

to the ferry pier, this hidden enclave of C18 stone and rendered cottages adjoining the Ferry Inn, set along a tiny footway, is revealed. A variety of detailing consisting of flat door hoods supported on wrought iron brackets, worn stone front steps, metal handrails, carved timber pilasters to entranceways, sliding sash and casement windows all contribute in maintaining the quirky character of this truly historic backwater.

Robinson's Row is little altered from its C19 construction, remaining a steep footway lined with humble cottages, most now listed. Foliage escapes from the limited gardens and combined with the small flowerbeds which line the narrow path, adds colour and softness. With its upper end blocked by a terraced row, a grassy Right of Way weaving its way down the hillside from Baptist Lane is the only other access to this row.

Kings Cottages, a residential grouping on the site of the old King's Street is fleetingly glimpsed beneath an arch from the main thoroughfare. Originally the site of a stable yard, it has since lost its historic atmosphere and identity, unlike Russell Court which, with its alley-like form and multitude of colourful hanging signs, maintains its traditional feel.

Opposite, Folly Lane is little more than a narrow passage; dark, austere and overshadowed by tall waterfront warehouses, it terminates at the foreshore, its entrance protected by flood boards.

Clifton Place and Union Street are both narrow side lanes leading to the estuary and the low, two storey ranges of warehouses, now shops and flats, emphasise their straight linear forms. Union Street in particular, has a strong feeling of enclosure, being contained on both sides by 19th century, two-storey rubble stone buildings and Buckley Street looming above. At the waterfront, there is a sense of lost grandeur and prosperous historical past as the buildings increase in height to three storeys standing side by side with the elegant, listed Custom House. In contrast, 18th century Clifton Place ends at a natural shingle inlet with metal mooring rings and rough slipway.

Curving around the Fortescue Arms, a flight of old steps leads into the narrow Buckley Street. Once again the feeling of containment is apparent, with no footways and the dense building line abutting the roadside. There are few gaps and sightlines beyond the street. Buildings once again range in height from the humble two-storey cottages to three-storey townhouses; here, plot widths vary with properties built in pairs as well as independently. Ridgelines tend to be parallel to the street and rendered facades and sash windows are once again the unifying features (although UPVC frames are beginning to intrude among the historic cottages). At the eastern end of the street, several substantial properties built of painted brick with soldier arch detailing, arched window heads and gable roofs contribute positively to the street scene and are clearly visible from the water. Due to the height and location of the buildings, little of the roofscape can be seen from within the street but much is visible from the water, including the excess of bulky dormers and balconies.



View along Orestone



View down Union Street to estuary from Buckley Street steps



Clifton Place



Buckley Street - painted brick detailing



View up Church Street to east end of the church

The adjoining residential Church Street, dominated at its head by the Church itself and its east window, is far more uniform in appearance. Located on a hill, similar width two-storey, terraced cottages process in regimented fashion downwards toward the estuary. The Coastguard cottages to the left, with their pitched roof attic dormers, were originally stone faced but all but two are now rendered. Parallel ridges, sash windows, fanlights and front steps are common features, and some of the original basement windows and pavement grilles also remain. On the opposite side of the street, building design is more varied owing to wartime bomb damage and rebuilding, but it includes an attractive pair of houses with quoins, arched window heads and frieze detailing to the façade. Despite the unfortunate introduction of a dormer window to one of the pair, which has resulted in an imbalance in its elegant symmetry, they are a notable attribute to the street.



Coastguard cottages - Church Street

Sweeping downhill, the road flattens on reaching Island Street and the view is terminated by an elegant terrace of listed, two-storey rendered properties. While number 1 still has its traditional timber shopfront, the others have vibrant front gardens bounded by low walls and ornate railings. The terrace leads toward the waterfront and its ancient stone quayside steps.



Church Street - grille to pavement for basement light

Along Island Street, small, plain-faced cottages abut the pavements. Both traditional attic dormers and modern flat-roofed replacements are in evidence on the roofs; the ridges of the latter parallel to the street. Sash windows and deeply recessed doors are common features, although the sash windows vary in appearance due to the introduction of chunky double glazed units, UPVC and inattention to rebating. Doorway flood boards are also prevalent emphasising the working waterside character of this location. A pair of stone-faced, terraced cottages, end-on to the street, form the edge of the Conservation Area. With their gravel central path and roadside boundary railings they create an attractive unspoilt grouping and make an important contribution to the townscape. A narrow side lane, Thorning Street, leads to the listed waterfront warehouses of Shadycombe Creek while other, large-scale stone and timber maritime buildings border this residential sector of the road and mark the boundary of the designated area at its northern end.



Island Terrace

From Island Street an alley leads into Breakwater Bay, much used by visitors walking from the car parks of the town's outskirts. The once bomb-damaged inlet now houses an over 60's centre and provides a rare open space with views over the estuary. From there a narrow, historic, quayside pathway winds around the waterfront past the listed 19th century terraced cottages of Victoria Place to Victoria and Custom House Quay. With their lush front gardens, ornate cast iron railings and identical frontages they remain much as they were originally. All this, combined with old timber mooring posts, stone walls and the open quayside creates a particularly picturesque enclave.

End-on rows, Island Street



At the other side of the town, the narrow Courtenay Street is squeezed between Fore Street and the rising hillside behind it. Its continuous building line, dead end and domination by the Devon Road villas create a claustrophobic atmosphere within the street and

emphasises the scale of the low two storey cottages. Built as a terrace the properties to the left of the street are of similar plot width with ridges parallel to the street resulting in a uniform roofline. No dormers or rooflights exist and materials range from exposed stone with red brick soldier detailing around apertures to pretty pastel render. On the opposite side of the street, an attractive terraced group is worthy of townscape merit, its rendered facades adorned with arched doorheads, pilasters, quoins, fanlights, roll edged front steps, four panel doors and ornate bootscapes. It is unfortunate that the ugly large scale modern dormers have been allowed to impact on its façade.

In addition, located at the top of the street is the remainder of a group of rendered properties, their steep pitched roofs and gable fronts have strong vertical emphasis, two are detached while the others form an attractive terrace of three. Arched upper floor windows are again a feature along with a rare bay window to the central property. Below, a modern block of flats now exists, poorly screened by a row of mature palms along the roadside, its grey block and rendered frontage, modern windows and scale are out of keeping with the street.

Victorian Suburbs and Outer Environs

On the outskirts of the town's core, tall Victorian villas dominate the skyline clearly visible from within the main streets and from the water. The majority have been built in pairs but groups of three and longer terraces exist in Allenhayes and Devon Road respectively. The decorative facades of these large three storey gabled properties create a sense of grandeur and elegance along with a strong vertical emphasis. Varying in style the properties incorporate porches, ornate barge boards and other joinery, stucco mouldings to windows and doors, patterned bootscrapers, cast iron boundary railings and gates. Repetition of such elements creates rhythm as with the Devon Villas facades and should be protected. Numbers 8-12 also display bay windows and stepped gables. Set within spacious garden plots the lush planting softens the streetscene, however creation of parking bays, garages and decked areas are resulting a steady erosion of this key characteristic of this area. Views overlooking the green open space of the Park and the estuary also contribute to the pleasant airy atmosphere of these perimeter roads.



View out from Over 60's centre



Footway along Victoria Quay



Devon Road with Allenhayes villas above



View down Thorning Street



Devon Road - cast iron gates and railings to front gardens

Cliff Road

On leaving Fore Street, the building line ceases and the narrow Cliff Road is channelled between two stone roadside walls. The land rises steeply to the right with grand individual properties of various dates set back on large open plots with spectacular views across the estuary. To the other the low wall allows a sense of space and with the planting of the Memorial Gardens, there is a relationship with the scenery beyond. Once again this sensation is brief as the lane is again channelled between buildings, this time the row of listed rendered Bakers Well cottages. Despite being generally three storeys, most of these cottages appear small and dominated by the nearby two storey Marine Hotel. With ridges parallel to the street, fenestration is a mixture of casement and sliding sash styles. 18th century Alpha House appears grander with its increased height, slate hung gable, ornate doorhead and moulding although it is the 17th century Ferry View that is the most historic.



Bakers Well Cottages



Ornate detailing in Devon Road



Cliff Road

Boundary Changes

As part of the Conservation Area Appraisal process, the existing boundaries have been reviewed. The definition of a Conservation Area: an 'Area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and the boundary changes have been made with this in mind – even though much of the wider area around Salcombe is attractive, or set in dramatic scenery (as is the case along Cliff Road towards South Sands), this is not a valid reason of itself to include it.

There is one area, however – around Island Street and Croft Lane – which it has been decided to include after a public consultation where local residents and users were asked their views,

The older, eastern part of Island Street already lies in the Conservation Area and this contains several historic houses and warehouses associated with boatbuilding. The extension includes the modern buildings at Island Square and Hannaford's Landing, as well as the post-war marine workshops on the north side of the street extending to

the shore of Shadycombe Creek. The revised boundary follows the south edge of this narrow, winding street, crossing Gould Road to include the former gasworks, Croft Road, the northeast side of Shadycombe Lane (also including Shadycombe House) as far as Cabourg Close, and the Victorian Shadycombe Cemetery.

Although the old workshops in Island Street date from the post-war era, their single-storey form with plain, metal roofs and large timber doors opening directly on to the narrow street is very distinctive. Furthermore, the continuity of boatbuilding activity in this area is historically important and gives the street a unique, bustling character which much of the rest of the town has lost. As this area forms one of the main approaches to the town from the car park, it initiates the visitor's experience of the town as a working, maritime settlement, providing a counterpart to the boutiques of Fore Street. The character is reinforced by the landscape setting, with glimpses of the creek and views of the surrounding hillsides. Some modernisation has already taken place at Island Square and Hannaford's Landing, but these buildings also tend to reinforce the utilitarian character of the street. By including this area in

the conservation area, it is not the intention to preserve it in aspic. Unusually, in this case, the activity is arguably more important than the buildings and the upgrading or replacement of the latter in order to safeguard the former is likely to be acceptable within certain design parameters. As such, it is subject to special guidance in the Management Plan setting out a framework for conservation in this area.

The Croft Lane area is an attractive grouping visible from Island and Gould Street with a mixture of historic properties on a site shown to be settled as early as the 1700s. An historic row of workers cottages borders Shadycombe Lane as it weaves uphill to the cemetery, a truly special place surrounded by mature yews and filled with sculptural tombstones and exotic yucca trees.

In addition to the area described above, it is proposed to include a small area at the crossing of Herbert Road/ Allenhayes Lane in order that the bank, tree and bench on the northeast corner of the Old Orchard are included. This point works as an attractive closure to the view southwest along Devon Road.

Neutral Areas, Areas For Potential Improvement & Pressures

Although the boundary is drawn tightly around the historic core and the later Victorian phase, there are several more recent developments within the Conservation Area that neither enhance nor detract from it. These include Walton Leigh, Rosemont Court, Island Quay, Kings Cottage Court, and Breakwater Bay Pensioners' centre.

Other elements have a more clearly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and range from the physical, such as locations and buildings that would benefit from improved maintenance, to some of the pressures that the area is subjected to.

The open area of Whitestrand Car Park falls into the first category; its clutter of modern signage, plastic rubbish bins and cash machines gives little clue of its historic past. In creating an identity for this bland space, its position as the gateway to the town from the water should be explored, along with its rarity as an open space within the town as well as its historical importance.

The conflicting needs of vehicular traffic and pedestrians during summer months needs to be addressed and schemes for the pedestrianisation of Whitestrand, in conjunction with the main street should be further pursued, along with further perimeter car parks and minibus shuttles.

Within the town, converted maritime warehouses have suffered from over-domestication; patios and terraces along their waterfront elevations often ignore boundary treatments and added to the associated railings, screening and patio doors tend to mar the views from the water and detracts from the historic character of these important buildings.

Balconies too are having a major impact on the townscape and in particular when viewed from the water. The worst example of this is the rear of number 19 Fore Street.



Island Street - timber Marine workshops



Shadycombe Lane - row of cottages

Shadycombe Cemetery



Croft Road and Hempy's Field

Similarly, bulky flat-roofed dormers can be seen to have been unsympathetically inserted into the front elevations of period properties, or perched inappropriately on the rear roof slopes of Victorian terraces such as in Courtenay Street and Devon Road, utterly ignoring good design principles. These are out of scale and have no respect for buildings' historic detailing or the public views from the estuary. The resulting hotch-potch of styles, shapes and materials is out of character with the historic setting and, in the clamour for a view, these alterations are starting to erode the essence of Salcombe.

Satellite dishes and air conditioning units, often to the rear of buildings may be clearly visible from the water. Similarly, an influx of UPVC windows, doors and rainwater goods, sometimes on prominent listed buildings (for example, the Victoria Inn) are detrimental to the character of the area.

It is clear that an imbalance now exists between residential and commercial properties, as most central warehouses and potential workshops have been converted to homes. Businesses have been forced to the outskirts in localised pockets and the amount of appropriate space available in the conservation area is extremely limited and cannot attract businesses that can operate from this type of isolated location (IT, skilled craftsmen etc). Addressing this would help to provide Salcombe with future employment for locals and an alternative economy to tourism, which is only seasonal.

A number of locations within the town's core do not enhance the area. These include the parking area to the rear of the flats at Church Hill House, the rear elevation and boundary fence to Parkside flats where it borders Courtenay Park, and the modern flats on Devon Road.

Ubiquitous modern features such as traffic and parking signage, double yellow lines along narrow streets and Dutch blinds to shopfronts have begun to have an impact upon the streetscape. Broken, cast iron street name signs are unsightly and make a sad announcement of historic streets. These should be repaired or replaced with replicas in the same material.

Outside of the core, the impact of abandoned development sites is not only affecting the appearance of the local vicinity but also the overall panorama of the town when viewed from the water. Other areas which impact negatively on the designated area are the rear parking areas and modern garages of Allenhayes Lane and the expanse of tarmac around the Catholic Church.

Loss of boundaries due to the creation of roadside parking bays and new garages and their access is eroding the garden settings of the perimeter villas. Where front gardens have been retained, expanses of raised decking and associated patio doors, installed to cash in the briefest estuary glimpses, often impact on the villa facades. Inappropriate up-and-over, modern, garage doors, balustrading and non-local stonework all help to dilute the historic character.



Cluttered street furniture at Whitestrand Quay



Conflict between traffic and pedestrians in Fore Street



Chaotic road signage



Balconies, railings and patio doors on converted warehouses



Balcony and awning to waterfront

Within the estuary, consideration needs to be given to the shape, materials and appearance and design of new pontoons and their location. The development of landing jetties by waterfront owners can cause damage to the character of the foreshore setting. The need to provide coastal defences to protect against future flooding could also be a threat to the historic appearance of the town's waterfront and the design of these will need to be carefully considered.

Finally, the loss of the Victorian Salcombe pier should be rectified as soon as possible.

The Salcombe Conservation Area Management Plan that accompanies this appraisal sets out more detailed general proposals for the Conservation Area.



Courtenay Street. View of dormers to front elevations



Historic street name sign - broken



Ugly air con, patio doors to waterfront inlet

Community involvement in preparation of appraisal and management plan

In accordance with English Heritage Guidance on the preparation of conservation area appraisals and management plans, the local community of Salcombe has been involved in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management process from an early stage in their preparation. As mentioned above, a questionnaire was circulated to all residents in the town in December 2008 to which there was a healthy response. Officials from the District Council attended a series of meetings of Salcombe Town Council during the drafting process and, once the draft documents were complete, a public exhibition was held in Salcombe Library which culminated in a well-attended public meeting. Following the meeting a Working Group was set up with representatives from the Town and District Councils to agree the substance and wording of the final text.



South Hams
District Council

'Historic photos kindly provided by the Salcombe Maritime and Local History Museum'

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