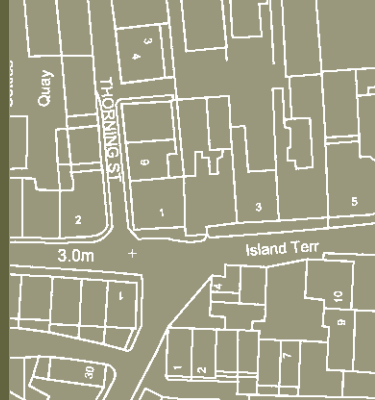


Salcombe Conservation Area Appraisal



Management Plan

Adopted February 2010



South Hams
District Council

SALCOMBE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

This Management Plan complements the draft *Salcombe Conservation Area Character Appraisal*. While the latter defines and evaluates the special interest of the conservation area, the Management Plan identifies the issues for its future development and enhancement, as well as issues such as special policies and enforcement. By doing so it sets out a framework to mitigate and, if possible, reverse any works which threaten the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area, while at the same time promoting its enhancement. The content has been informed partly by the questionnaires returned from the survey of December 2008; their results are summarised in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 sets out a programme for action.

2. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The overarching planning policies for the area are included in the adopted *South Hams Local Plan* (1996), the adopted *Local Development Framework Core Strategy* (2006) and the adopted *Devon Structure Plan* (2004). Generic advice for the conservation areas of the South Hams is provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance Note *New Work in Conservation Areas* (2001). In addition to this is central government policy for conservation contained in Planning Policy Guidance *PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment*. Salcombe conservation area also lies within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As well as the documents mentioned above, the Management Plan takes account of the wider global, national and regional picture.

In the Local Plan, two areas adjacent to the current conservation area are subject to special policies; Policy Area 1 falls within Island Street and Gould Road and reserves this area principally for employment uses. Policy Area 3 covers part of the area between Devon Road and Bennett Road and aims to preserve the prevailing character of low density development and large gardens.

There are several individual and group tree preservation orders concentrated in the southern (Devon Road) end of the conservation area.

3. RISKS TO THE SALCOMBE CONSERVATION AREA IDENTIFIED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

As part of the preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal and this Management Plan, a questionnaire (see appendix 1) was sent out to the residents of the town. The response was exceptionally good with more than 100 questionnaires returned. Appendix 1 shows the answers given in the returned questionnaires. Although many of the responses and comments received fall outside the scope of planning control, or of this document, the main planning and conservation issues raised are addressed below.

A - Development Issues

Overdevelopment

Several questionnaire respondents expressed concern about the amount of development taking place in the conservation area and the number of dwellings being built on limited development sites. This may take the form of extensions, conversion of houses to flats or new developments. As well as increased density of habitation, this can result in the loss of open space and the obstruction of views within the town.

In one form or another, it is likely there will be occasional opportunities for new development in the conservation area and, in making planning decisions, careful consideration will continue to be given to the existing density and how the proposal would affect the character of its surroundings, especially the height of the building or extension. The character areas in the appraisal identify the variety of buildings and spaces in the conservation area and this information will inform the decision making process.

Inappropriate Design and materials

Design quality in new development is under the spotlight nationally at the moment and this is especially relevant in conservation areas. In the South Hams, bolder and more controversial development proposals are often considered by the Design and Conservation Panel before applications are determined.

Nevertheless, several respondents to the questionnaire felt that some new development in the Salcombe conservation area has been excessively modern, flashy and lacking in any local distinctiveness. There is a perception that an excess of steel, concrete and glass has been harmful to the character of the conservation area.

While it is acknowledged that there has been a tendency in the Salcombe conservation area for some new development to depart from traditional styles and materials, this should in no way disqualify it as inappropriate and it would be a great mistake to prescribe a certain style of architecture for the Salcombe conservation area. Each potential development site has unique characteristics and there may be many different design approaches that would preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character of the conservation area in the hands of a good architect. Indeed, there are cases where a bold and modern design approach achieves this objective much more successfully than one which attempts to mimic the surroundings. It is also clear, however, that the proliferation and indiscriminate use of certain features in the conservation area could have the effect of eroding its special character and these are considered below.

Dormer Windows.

Large, modern dormer windows have been very popular in Salcombe during the last 30 years or so, bringing attic spaces into use and affording views of the estuary. Unlike traditional dormers common in the 19th and early 20th centuries, modern dormers can often upset the proportions of a building, making it seem top-heavy, and distort views of the town's roofscape from the water. In the past, these windows did not always require planning permission while in recent years a stricter approach has been adopted towards them. In order to gain planning support, proposals for new dormer windows in the conservation area will need to be shown to be fully sympathetic to the building itself, its neighbours and the surrounding town and roofscape seen from all viewpoints, including the water and the far shore of the estuary. Every opportunity should be taken to improve the appearance of existing, unsympathetic dormers, whether this involves changing their form, materials or colour. Where planning permission is required for their replacement or alteration, their improvement will be required.

Rooflights

Although rooflights tend to be more subtle than dormer windows, their proliferation could have a detrimental effect on the roofscape, especially given the topography of the town. Not only can they confuse the clean lines of a roof and disrupt the proportions of a house, but they can also have a subtle effect after dark when internal lights are on. Where planning permission is required, applicants will need to demonstrate that proposals for rooflights would not harm the roofscape of the conservation area.

Balconies & Decking.

The creation of balconies and large areas of decking have also been common in recent years, in order for residents to take full advantage of Salcombe's dramatic scenery. In many cases, balconies can distort the character of buildings and townscape and cannot be supported. In other cases, where they are properly integrated into the architecture, they can be acceptable though great care should always be taken to avoid disruption of a building's proportions. Materials should also be in keeping with the surroundings; while glass balustrading can look fine in the right architectural context, in the wrong one it can look cheap. If its use is proposed, applicants will need to demonstrate that it is fully in harmony with the character of neighbouring buildings and of that part of the conservation area and that its use will not stand out as an anomaly. Certain forms of balcony such as roof windows with a fold-out railing and balconies inset into the roofs are especially alien to the Salcombe roofscape and, where at all visible, are not acceptable.

UPVC windows.

UPVC windows and doors tend to be incompatible with the historic environment, both because of the appearance of the material itself and the lack of finesse achievable in mouldings and details. Furthermore, it is neither a sustainable material nor a durable one when compared with good quality timber. Its use is therefore considered to be inappropriate in

conservation areas and will generally be refused where planning permission is required.

Satellite dishes & air conditioning

The character of the conservation area can be slowly eroded by the accumulation of ugly fixtures to buildings. For this reason, great care needs to be taken in finding a sympathetic, well-concealed location for satellite dishes, air conditioning units and other machinery. There may be cases where this is impossible and permission cannot be granted.

Commercial Streetscape

Traditional shopfront awnings are straight, retractable and tend to enhance the elegant proportions of traditional buildings and townscape. These are much preferred to modern 'Dutch blinds' of which the proliferation tends to give the place an air of anonymity. While good shop signage can make a positive contribution to the conservation area, where it is poor, it can detract from it. The District Council has produced guidance on signage and this should be referred to at all times, where there are new proposals.

Local Stone.

Two respondents mentioned the use of non-local stone and it is clear that this can end up affecting the sense of place and local distinctiveness of the conservation area. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to obtain stone that is truly local as most of the quarries where historically it was won have closed. Nonetheless, quantities of local stone do sometimes become available, for example, the spoil from excavation works for new developments, and where this is the case every effort should be made to salvage and make use of this material. Where this is not the case, it is usually possible to obtain stone with similar characteristics from other Devon quarries. Ultimately, the quality of masonry is at least as important as the provenance of the stone.

Sheet metal.

Natural slate is the most common roofing material in most of Salcombe conservation area; however, where a modern architectural approach is taken, the use of sheet materials such as zinc, coated steel or copper is often proposed. While these materials are not bad in themselves, a roof clad with them in a roofscape dominated by traditional slate roofs may be incongruous in some cases. Where sheet metal is proposed as a roofing material for a development, the applicant will need to demonstrate that it would not be to the detriment of the character and appearance of roofscape or the wider conservation area.

Ridgelines

As the roofscape of Salcombe is highly sensitive, it follows that changes in ridge height can have a dramatic effect. Where this is proposed, the applicants will have to demonstrate that it would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the town.

B - Use Issues

Creation of holiday units

Many respondents expressed concern about the number of holiday units being created in the conservation area with the consequence that many local residents are deprived of an affordable home. Although this tendency clearly has an effect on the conservation area – the contrast between the quiet streets of the winter months and the summer throng is self-evident – it is not necessarily harmful to its special historic and architectural character. It should not be forgotten that the existence of holiday homes is actually part of Salcombe's history and make an essential contribution to the local economy. The issue of affordable homes lies outside the scope of this management plan and is dealt with in the Local Development Framework.

Conversion of workshops

Most of the historic shipbuilding workshops along the main quay now already have new uses. Where workshops associated with boatbuilding and repairs survive in the town (in Island Street and Gould Road) their use is protected under Policy Area 1 in the Local Plan.

The Protection of open spaces.

A large number of public and private open spaces that make an important contribution to the conservation area are identified on the Main Map in the Conservation Area Appraisal. However this list is not definitive and the protection of open space in the town is generally seen as desirable. This is especially the case in those character areas generally typified by lack of building density.

C - Highways Issues

Conflict with pedestrians, lack of parking, poor signage, possible street enhancement etc.

Many respondents expressed concern about the above issues. Clearly, there is a problem in the town centre with excessive traffic in a narrow street dominated by pedestrians and a real, lasting improvement would be welcomed. Further traffic calming or other options, together with proposals to address parking problems and improve the public realm should be investigated in consultation with Devon County Council, the Town Council and other local interests.

Broken street signs

Where signs are broken in the conservation area, they will be replaced with replicas of the originals

Paving and Street Furniture

As existing paving, streetlights, benches, litter bins etc wear out and funding becomes available to replace them, there is an opportunity to improve their quality and to reinforce the character of the conservation area. It is therefore vital that when paving and street furniture are replaced, it is only done after full consultation with the District and Town Councils and is of a suitably high quality. Cumulatively, street furniture such as bollards and even small details such as cast iron drain covers can make a significant difference to the feel of a street and it is important that this is borne in mind when changes are made; otherwise, there is a danger that the character of the conservation area could be slowly eroded. Where historic street furniture and surfacing materials such as stable bricks survive, these should be preserved in situ at all times.

E - Areas with scope for Improvement

Whitestrاند Quay

This area is owned by the District Council. At present it is rather untidy, has some unattractive buildings and is dominated by cars. Yet, there is potential here for a central, waterside open space and there has been much discussion over the years about doing something with it. It is clear that improvement of the area would require considerable investment and would almost certainly involve the reduction or removal of car parking which would itself be contentious. Even if funding for this work became available, it would be necessary to carry out a thorough public consultation before committing to any scheme.

Jubilee Pier

Repair of this structure would be very costly owing to the requirement for deep piling. The optimum solution for this is currently under consideration.

The Area in front of the Roman Catholic Church in Devon Road

Clearly, there is a need for car parking around the church but the site (both inside and outside the boundary walls) could be improved by tree planting.

F – Litter and Rubbish Disposal

There was much strength of feeling amongst questionnaire respondents about bin collections and litter problems. Although these issues are contentious, they fall outside planning control.

G – Extensions to the Conservation Area Boundary

Area south of the current boundary along Cliff Road

Many questionnaire respondents felt that the conservation area boundary should be extended southwards as far as North Sands and even South Sands. There is no question that this area of coastline is exceptionally beautiful, especially when seen from the water. It is also true that many of the large houses in this area complement the natural landscape and it is clearly an area worthy of some type of conservation. Its value is recognised through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Coastal Preservation Area designations. When considering potential extensions to conservation areas, it is important not to lose sight of their definition – *areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* – and the fact that there needs to be a consistency in their designation throughout the district. Usually, conservation areas cover historic groups of buildings and structures - especially town and village centres - that are of exceptional historic or architectural interest. For all its attributes, the area described above cannot really be said to fall within this category. Moreover, if it were to be included, numerous other attractive areas along the Devon coast would also need to be designated as conservation areas for the sake of consistency and this, ultimately, could have the effect of increasing the area of the district with conservation area designation excessively. For these reasons its inclusion is not felt to be appropriate.

Public concerns about this part of Salcombe seem to be based on a concern about the loss of family sized accommodation, the amount of traffic generated by redevelopments and the proliferation of apartments which are purchased as second homes. The designation of this part of the conservation area would not, in itself, prevent these problems from arising; homes in family occupation could be divided into flats and each sold as a second home and conservation area status could not be used to prevent this. Consequently, whilst public concerns about the change to the social and economic fabric of Salcombe are understood, conservation areas were not designed to address these issues.

Area around Island Street and Shadycombe

After consideration and consultation, Island Street, part of Gould Road and Croft Road and the Shadycombe Cemetery are now included in the conservation area. The Island Street area is typified by boatbuilding activities that are of historic importance to the town (even though this area was reclaimed relatively recently). This is one of the main approaches to the town and is an important introduction to its character. The rest of the area is an attractive 18th and 19th century extension to the town in an attractive setting. Users and residents of this area were consulted on whether they wished to be included or not and no objections were registered.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Where there is a proposal for a new building in the conservation area, the design and quality of construction will always need to be of the very highest order in accordance with central Government guidance and the SHDC publication ***New Work in Conservation Areas***. This requirement should equally apply within the 50m buffer zone around the conservation area and to prominent sites where views into or out of the conservation area are affected. The appropriateness of new development will always need to be looked at in detail, taking into account the history of the site, the character of surrounding buildings and its contribution to the townscape. These issues are best explored as and when proposals for development arise rather than providing detailed information in this document.

5. ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTION

Normally, only a small additional range of works is brought under planning control within a conservation area compared with an undesignated area. In exceptional cases, where certain works are identified as causing a major threat to the historic and architectural character of a conservation area, an Article 4 Direction can be made, which enables the local planning authority to remove certain permitted development rights for dwelling houses. The appraisal process provides a good opportunity to identify areas that would benefit from this type of extra controls – they should be applied cautiously, otherwise the implications in terms of extra workload for the local planning authority could be excessive.

In the case of Salcombe, several areas have been identified where there is a clear risk that permitted development – specifically, the replacement of traditional windows and doors with inappropriate substitutes – could severely erode the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It is therefore proposed that an Article 4.2 Direction be made for these properties and a report will be taken to the Council later in the year with this purpose.

6. BUILDINGS AT RISK

Fortunately, there are no buildings that are obviously at risk within the Salcombe conservation area. This is partly a benefit of such high property and land values, which otherwise undermine affordability for local people.

7. ENFORCEMENT

Where works requiring consent have been carried out without planning permission, enforcement action will be taken where harm results.

8. TREES AND LANDSCAPE

The Council must be notified if it is proposed to carry out works to or fell a tree within the conservation area and will consider the need to serve Tree Preservation Orders where trees contribute to the character of the conservation area.

9. ARCHAEOLOGY

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Conservation area. However, it is potentially an area of archaeological interest. Therefore, any development within or adjacent to the historic core of Salcombe will be subject to either predetermination archaeological investigation or PPG16 planning condition. The level of archaeological mitigation will depend upon the nature, extent and location of the development as well as previous disturbance to the site.

10. 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. 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 followed by a well-attended public meeting. Following the meeting a Working Group was set up with representatives from the Town and District Councils and the substance and wording of the text has been agreed by them.

12. SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Sometimes there is perceived to be a conflict between historic and environmental conservation, for example the improvement of heat insulation in historic buildings; nearly always there is a solution, however, and the Council's Conservation team will always be happy to provide advice on how best to reconcile the two.

13. ISLAND STREET MANAGEMENT

The character and appearance of Island Street is very different from that of the rest of the conservation area. The land was reclaimed in the early 20th century and the oldest buildings date from this period. The most emblematic structures, however, are the 1940's boat builders' workshops built along the north side of the street. Here, the traditional boat building activities still thrive and these make a vital contribution to the sense of place of this principal pedestrian approach to the town centre.

The objective of including Island Street in the conservation area is to recognise its historic and architectural interest but it would be counterproductive if stricter controls were to stifle the activities that make it special. Any proposal to replace the single storey workshops on the north side of Island Street should respect the following characteristics:

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|----|--|----|---|
| A. | The existing ridge height | C. | Their long narrow form culminating in a slipway |
| B. | The full width glazed timber doors opening on to the street. | D. | The ridge running parallel with the street |
| | | E. | Corrugated sheeting roof. |