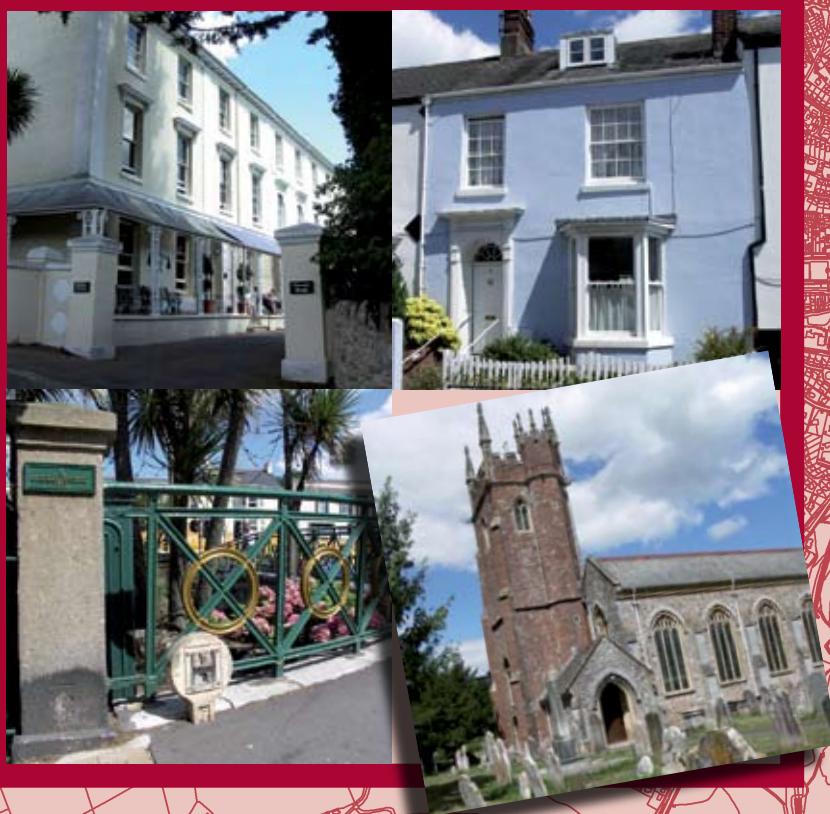


Dawlish Conservation Area

Management Plan



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TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Dawlish Management Plan

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction and Statement of Objectives**
- 2.0 The Conservation Area**
- 3.0 Conservation Value**
- 4.0 Review of Conservation Area Boundary**
- 5.0 Threats: Actual and potential**
- 6.0 Shopfronts and Signs**
- 7.0 Buildings or Sites requiring enhancement**
- 8.0 Grant Schemes**
- 9.0 Planning Policies and Guidance**
 - 9.1 National Policy and Guidance
 - 9.2 The Adopted Local Plan and Local Development Framework
 - 9.3 Principle of Sustainability
 - 9.4 Local Plan Policies
- 10.0 Other Planning Controls and Measures**
 - 10.1 Additional Conservation Area Controls
 - 10.2 Article 4(2) Directions
 - 10.3 Repairs Notice
 - 10.4 Supplementary Planning & Technical Guidance Documents
 - 10.5 Enforcement
 - 10.6 Trees
- 11.0 Building Regulations and Historic Buildings**
- 12.0 Enabling Development and Historic Buildings**
- List of illustrations**

1.0 Introduction and Statement of Objectives

The Conservation Area Management Plan builds on the descriptions and findings of the Conservation Area Appraisal. By adopting its proposals, utilizing the local plan policies and instigating the additional planning controls, the Council will seek to preserve, enhance and improve the Conservation Area's character and appearance. This document was adopted by Executive Council on 19th May 2008.

2.0 The Conservation Area

The Conservation Area at Dawlish is one of thirty-three in the District of Teignbridge as a whole and one of the largest. It was originally designated in February 1973 (by the former Devon County Council) to include the principal streets overlooking The Lawn, from the railway station in the east, to Alexander Road in the west. The current boundary was designated in June 1997, extending the area so that it covered the major part of the historic (pre-20th century) town, together with the initial phase of the model housing estate at Oakland Park. In all it covers 47.13 hectares/ 116.46 acres.

The principle of designating Conservation Areas was established in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act to enable the protection of whole areas of architectural or historic interest, rather than individual buildings.

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance [section 69 of the Planning (Listed



Fig 78: Brookdale Terrace

Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990]. The District Council is obliged to designate these areas and, by section 71 of the Act, to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas and this combined appraisal and management plan fulfils this statutory duty.

Government policy relating to conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.15 (PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment). This advises that local authorities should define a conservation area's 'special architectural or historic interest' as a basis for local plan policies and development control purposes, and again, this appraisal and management plan fulfils that duty. The format and content accords with the advice and guidance issued by English Heritage (and endorsed by Government) including 'Conservation Area Practice' (1995), 'Conservation Area Appraisals' (1997) and 'Conservation Area Management Plans' (2005/6).

3.0 Conservation Value

The special interest of Dawlish lies particularly in its originating as a small settlement that was transformed in the 19th century into a substantial seaside resort – comprising not only the houses, hotels and hostelrys built for the affluent society, but also the dwellings of the families who worked in the trades that essentially existed to serve them.

It adjoins some magnificent coastal scenery, characterised by red sandstone cliffs and headlands, beneath and through which the mainline railway (fig 79) passes in spectacular fashion. Probably unique in its sea-front



Fig 79: Marine Parade c1900

location, the railway crosses the mouth of the valley in which the resort-town of Dawlish is set; more or less at right-angles to the front. No doubt conscious of its physical and visual intrusion, Brunel carried the railway on a small, Egyptian-styled viaduct to allow access to the beach beneath, and placed his station to one side of the valley so as not to completely obstruct the view.

While the sea-front is dominated by the presence of the railway, the 'centre' of the resort itself has the distinction of being laid out in quite a distinguished and dignified manner – astride an extensive, formal green, reclaimed from former marshland along the valley floor. Making it all the more distinctive, however, is the stream flowing down one side, which passes over a series of weirs-come-water falls to create not only the serene sound of a pastoral 'babbling' brook, but also placid, pond-like waters that appear most suited to the parkland setting.



Fig 80: The Strand c1908

The Strand (Fig 80) along the north side was more or less built-up by 1809 and still has much of the period flavour that Jane Austen would have witnessed when visiting the town at the time. She knew and liked Dawlish very much, as indeed did Charles Dickens in later years, who placed the birthplace of Nicholas Nickleby here. As well as attracting such distinguished visitors, the town is distinguished by its architecture too, being recognised as retaining much excellent mid-Victorian villa architecture such as at Barton Terrace.

4.0 Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

As the existing boundary of the Conservation Area is considered comprehensive in its coverage of the parts of Dawlish that

characterise its village origins, its transformation into a large, residential seaside resort, and the most valuable elements of its 20th century development, no changes to it are proposed. Areas adjacent to the Conservation Area, which include historic buildings, were indeed considered as part of the review, but none were found to merit inclusion on account of the dominance of nondescript 20th century developments and an absence of cohesion with the existing area.

5.0 Threats: Actual and Potential

The Conservation Area at Dawlish includes a great many buildings and features that contribute positively towards creating the town's distinctive character; which is principally that of a small coastal village that was transformed into a substantial seaside resort. The architectural qualities it had gathered by the early 20th century meant it was undoubtedly amongst the most elegant and dignified settlements in Devon. By the end of the 20th century, however, these essential attributes had been seriously eroded, such that today its appearance no longer truly reflects the status it once had as one of the County's more fashionable resorts – where wealthy businessmen, eminent professionals and a Vice Admiral chose to live.

The impact of some of the buildings constructed during the post-war decades in terms of their design, materials and scale is generally negative, but in a more general sense it is the insensitive treatment of existing, historic buildings that has most eroded the area's distinctive architectural and historic qualities. These changes seriously threaten the value and integrity of the 'conservation resource' and if repeated will cause additional harm unless a more conservative approach is adopted. In accordance with its adopted policies and practices, therefore, the Council will seek to encourage such a conservative approach in relation to changes in the area (whether proposed or already carried out) with a view to:

- *halting any further loss of buildings or features which are of value in terms of their special interest and character and the positive contribution they make towards creating the area's local identity*
- *reversing or mitigating the harmful impact of changes already made through works of restoration or re-design*

- *resisting proposals that do not strengthen and reinforce the established character and identity of the area*

In the most fundamental terms, adopting the conservative approach means that features of value should be retained, not removed, and reinstated if already lost; that features which cause harm should be removed or improved, and that new developments should be carried out in a manner that maintains and respects existing characteristics. The following is a list of the major threats towards achieving conservation aims.

- *The loss of original architectural joinery, such as panelled timber doors but especially vertical-sliding, painted-timber sash windows. In many buildings these represent the principal source of historic and architectural character, so their loss is especially harmful. The harm is doubled, however, when openings are enlarged to create a horizontal emphasis in place of a vertical, and when the replacements are uPVC, aluminium or stained hardwood types which appear wholly incongruous on account of their method of opening (often top-hung or centrally pivoted), their lack of mouldings (profiles are usually flat and plain) and their glazing in single panes that sometimes have plastic strips inside the sealed units to create a poor imitation of original glazing bars.*
- *The loss and alteration of historic shopfronts and the insertion of new or replacement fronts in materials and designs that bear little or no relationship with the age, style and traditional qualities of the building and street they occupy.*
- *The proliferation of signs and other commercially motivated fittings (e.g. blinds, lamps, flags, canopies etc), particularly on the elevations of important and/or prominent historic buildings.*
- *The loss of distinctive architectural features such as string bands, drip moulds, quoins, door-cases and window surrounds, often occurring when 'repairs'*

are undertaken, and more conspicuous in terraces where a feature is often repeated. Equally damaging is the introduction of pseudo-historical features and finishes, such as doorcases where none existed before, or trowelled effects in render (other than ashlar lining).



Fig 81: Alexandra Road c1908



Fig 82: Alexandra Road 2007 - modern changes can lead to loss of character

- *The loss of curtilage features such as walls, railings and gate piers which form an integral part of a building's character and setting. The impact is doubly harmful (to both the building's setting and the street picture as a whole) when the garden area exposed is subsequently resurfaced to create a hardstanding for parked vehicles – thus destroying the sense of enclosure that formerly prevailed.*
- *The loss of historic paving materials, particularly cobbles in courtyards and along building frontages and stone kerbs along pavements.*
- *The conversion of roof spaces involving their enlargement through the addition of large-scale roof extensions (rather than small-scale dormer windows) which create the appearance of an additional storey*

with an incongruous-looking flat roof – or a mansard roof form which may be equally inappropriate. High-level roof gardens in conspicuous locations can have a particularly jarring impact on a traditional roofscape and should therefore be avoided.

- The construction of roof dormers (where these are acceptable in principle) which do not reflect the pattern of existing historic examples, and so fail to reinforce local identity.
- The insertion of rooflights that are not of a conservation type specifically designed to suit historic buildings and areas which fit flush with the roof slope.
- The loss of chimney stacks which characterise historic roofscapes and often provide clues to a building's age, development and status.
- The deteriorating condition of boundary walls and their repair using non-traditional techniques, alternative materials, unsuitable mortars and inappropriate methods of pointing (such as strap or snail pointing which actually hastens the erosion of the stone).
- The loss of natural roofing slate and its partial or complete replacement with artificial substitutes such as concrete tiles and cement-based slates that have none of the variations in size, colour and texture that make natural slates so attractive and characterful. Similarly, the loss of cast-iron rainwater goods has a negative impact, particularly when replaced with square-section plastic gutters which lack strength and integrity and appear out of place in an historic setting.
- The erection of garages whose doors face directly onto the highway, and the construction of sheds and other outbuildings in prominent garden plots (particularly those visible from the footpath alongside Dawlish Water).
- While disrepair and poor maintenance are not widespread problems, the 'run down' appearance of certain buildings and spaces (such as the outbuilding adjacent to the museum and surgery, and a rear-garden area on the main approach down Teignmouth Hill) has an adverse impact on visual amenities, and in a general sense may have a discouraging influence on the carrying out

of maintenance and improvement schemes nearby. Buildings that are vacant or have unoccupied upper floors are more likely to suffer deterioration through lack of proper maintenance and repair. Their re-use and occupation is essential to sustaining the economic vitality of the centre – which is critical to achieving conservation aims.

- Decoration of rendered walls, fenestration or shopfronts with colours that are inappropriate to the building, terrace or group



Fig 83: Town Tree Hill c1936



Fig 84 Town Tree Hill 2007 showing loss of character through loss of fenestration, street lighting and surfaces

6.0 Shopfronts and Signs

The way shopfronts are designed and treated has a considerable impact on the character and identity of a centre and on its attractiveness to potential customers and visitors who need to be encouraged to return. It is important, therefore, that shopfronts build on the inherent character of the centre, helping to set it apart from others and attract the everyday, and seasonal custom needed to sustain economic viability.

Ageing and discoloured paintwork that gives the impression of a less than caring attitude or even an air of decline; crude and makeshift fronts and signs that give a 'here today, gone tomorrow' warning; 'motorway-sized' signs in garish colours that shout in desperation at anyone passing by; all these things and more can work against the long term prosperity of any centre. In visual and design terms, as well as in every other sense, good manners and neighbourliness are attractive assets for any centre to possess, but particularly so one designated as part of a Conservation Area. Remembering that a shopfront is part of a building, and the building part of a street of buildings that combine with other streets to make up the centre, every shopfront contributes towards creating the overall impression.

The majority of buildings in Dawlish's centre are late Georgian or Victorian, and most of their upper floors still retain the dignified, classical character of their 19th century age. At ground floor level, however, the picture is quite different. Although a few shopfronts survive with their period character intact, and some others preserve parts of their original fabric, the majority are of late 20th date and their design, and their materials, more often than not have no regard to the rest of the building they occupy. This mismatch between the ground and upper floors has the effect of severely eroding the centre's genuine character. At ground floor level at least, the centre looks little different from thousands of others across the country. With a little care and thought, however, the centre can begin to recapture and strengthen its original identity. This will mean making sure that whenever new shopfronts are introduced or existing ones changed, their design and materials are made to respect the sense of place and sense of history that still survives.

The use of acrylic for fascias is especially harmful and should always be avoided, as well as their manufacture in sections which require

multiple fixings and have unsightly joins. Painted timber, or sometimes painted metal, are traditional materials for shopfronts, and only in exceptional circumstances should they not be used (including when existing signs are replaced or renewed – an action which can itself require consent). This is the case also for



Fig 85: The Strand

hanging or projecting signs which, whenever possible, should make use of existing historic brackets. The illumination of shopfronts is rarely essential, and if not done discretely can produce positively harmful results, particularly when a series of fittings is used which create a cluttered and distractive appearance. As a general rule, illumination should be confined to interiors to focus attention on window displays.

Traditional blinds which are retractable are best suited to an historic setting, while Dutch blinds or balloon canopies, in plastic, wet look or stretch fabrics, are not. Usually their purpose is simply to attract attention, but they generally damage the character of a street and mask the architectural features a shopfront may possess, so their use should nearly always be avoided.

The publication of a Supplementary Planning Document on the design and conservation of shopfronts would be a positive step towards achieving improvements, and should include advice on:

- *The traditional elements of shopfront design*
- *The retention of existing historic shopfronts*
- *The restoration of historic shopfronts which have lost some of their original details*
- *The replacement of modern, deep fascias*
- *The removal of plastic fascias and signs*
- *The careful design of external lighting*

avoiding the proliferation of fittings

- *The use of traditional hanging signs*
- *Signage and sign writing*

Once published and delivered to shop owners the Council could consider the taking of enforcement action where appropriate.

7.0 Buildings or Sites Requiring Enhancement

While the majority of buildings in the Conservation Area are capable of improvement either to restore their original character or to reduce the harmful impact of poorly executed alterations or additions (chiefly comprising incongruous shopfronts and signs or replacement windows and doors), a few require works of a more radical kind to deal effectively with their 'negative' impact, and in certain cases (where the impact of the building is entirely 'negative') demolition and rebuilding might represent the most appropriate solution (in the case of outbuildings and garden structures, replacement might also involve re-siting to a more acceptable, less harmful, location).

In a general sense, most public streets could benefit from a range of 'character-enhancing' improvements, such as the repair and restoration of historic pavings, the provision of new paving and lighting, the undergrounding of overhead wires and the adoption of a co-ordinated approach towards the provision of such things as safety railings, litter bins, bollards and seating. As far as resurfacings are concerned, the appearance of Albert Street (fig 86) and the steps down from Exeter Road to Beach Street exemplify best practice. In certain areas, such as around York Gardens,



Fig 86: Albert Street

the proliferation of road signage has a particularly damaging impact on visual amenities, while signs known to be redundant should always be removed (such as the School sign in School Lane, where the School itself is being developed for residential use).

In a general sense also, there is potential for improvements in and around the four major car parks in the area with a view to minimising their impact on their surroundings and/or to breaking down the scale of the areas of tarmac – particularly the expanse at the Barton Hill Car Park.

There is one site which has a particularly damaging impact on visual amenities, however, namely:

- the courtyard of the vacant, former garage at Richmond Place which is prominently situated at the end of Beach Street and opposite the railway station.

Although not necessarily in need of enhancement, it may well be opportune, in the



Fig 87: Richmond House

context of this report, to consider the significance of the green spaces that occupy the spine of the town alongside Dawlish Water, including the expanse of the car park at Barton Hill, and their potential for revitalising and regenerating the town's status as a popular tourist resort and acting as a catalyst for improvements of the buildings and streets that bound them. The initiation of a feasibility study could well be financed from national funds directed towards the regeneration of sea-side towns and give opportunity for public consultation and debate on the merits and proposals like the creation of a lido next to the breakwater available for use at all states of the tide, or the creation of an outdoor amphitheatre in one of the hillside locations.



Fig 88 Barton Hill car park

8.0 Grant Schemes

The operation of grant schemes is often of fundamental importance to achieving the proper repair, restoration and enhancement of historic buildings, particularly so in the case of works which are non-essential in a practical sense, such as the reinstatement of lost architectural features.

The possibilities for securing financial assistance from national funding bodies, including English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, would be investigated. Schemes that focus on commercial properties (to tackle shopfronts in particular) and area projects that will have a significant, regenerative impact (such as the potential improvements to the greens alongside Dawlish Water) would appear the most appropriate.

9.0 Planning Policies and Guidance

9.1 National Policy and Guidance

The way local planning authorities should discharge their responsibilities towards preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is described in the Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) published by Central Government entitled 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) and 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG16). These are comprehensive in their guidance, and the policies and practices adopted by the Council reflect the importance they attach to Conservation Areas and the need to ensure their preservation and enhancement for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

9.2 The Adopted Local Plan and Local Development Framework

Local planning policy is contained within the Teignbridge Local Plan, which was adopted in 1996 and the Devon Structure plan, adopted in 2004. These are statutory development plans for Teignbridge District (outside the Dartmoor National Park).

The Government, through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), has introduced a new planning system aimed at creating a more streamlined and flexible system whilst increasing community engagement in the planning process.

The Act requires the District Council to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF). This comprises a folder of documents to be produced by the Council over a period of time, including

- Development Plan Documents (DPD) - these are the main documents and establish policy towards use of land
- Supplementary Planning (SPD) - these provide additional guidance to policy contained within DPDs and could include Conservation Area Character appraisals
- Statement of Community involvement (SCI) - this sets out how the Council will consult on planning matters
- Local Development Scheme - This is the project plan for the LDF and shows what documents will be produced and when

The Teignbridge Local Development Framework is currently being prepared and as each DPD is adopted it will replace the relevant policies contained within the Teignbridge Local Plan.

9.3 Principle of Sustainability

The policies and proposals included in the Local Plan were formulated on the principle that "development decisions must encompass a full appreciation of the value of the natural and built environments in terms of the direct and indirect contributions that environments make to people's well-being". Fundamentally, therefore, any development must be sustainable and not prejudice the quality of the environment for the benefit of future generations.

“The challenge of sustainable development is making growth and development compatible with environmental quality, which is itself a vital feature of economic development”.

9.4 Local Plan Policies

Policies relating specifically to the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings and areas are included in the Conservation and Environmental Management Section of the Local Plan. These are described on the following pages, but potentially of relevance also are policies included elsewhere in the Plan, including:

POLICY HD1: Support for the Tourist Industry and Maintaining the Character of the District as one suitable for Family Holiday enjoyment

POLICY HD2: Encouragement of Measures to lengthen the Tourist Season

POLICY HD6: Creation of New Holiday Accommodation in Large Houses and other Suitable Buildings

POLICY HD7: Protection of Existing Holiday Accommodation

POLICY HD8: Support for the Creation and Up-grading of Tourist Facilities, particularly in the main resorts

Tourism is recognised as a major generator of income and seasonal employment in the District and therefore of considerable importance to its economy. This group of policies confirms the significance the Council places on safeguarding existing levels of holiday accommodation, on improving its quality and enabling its adaptation to meet changing demands, and on creating new holiday accommodation and tourist facilities in new or existing buildings, particularly where these would help extend the tourist season. Of over-riding concern is that the holiday character and atmosphere that exists in resorts like Dawlish should not be harmed or undermined.

Like many other coastal resorts, Dawlish has increasingly become a centre for day visitors. The Council believes, therefore, that an attractive environment for residential, commercial and holiday activities is essential

to its future prosperity. At the same time it is now recognised that heritage assets and the character and quality of places are an increasingly important element of the tourism industry.

PROPOSAL S1: Identification of Primary Shopping Areas (PSAs)

POLICY S2: Safeguarding the Retail Floorspace of PSAs

POLICY S3: The Unsuitability of PSAs (and other locations) for the siting of hot food takeaways

POLICY S10: The Unsuitability of PSAs (and other locations including Conservation Areas) for the siting of Amusement Arcades

Dawlish is identified as an Area Shopping Centre serving its own inhabitants, a small hinterland and an important seasonal tourist trade. The Council strongly supports the need to protect the vitality and viability of the centre and in this regard will seek to maintain existing retail floorspace levels in the Primary Shopping Area by resisting proposals that involve replacement by non-retail uses – particularly those whose introduction would have a detrimental impact on the external appearance of buildings such that their ‘shop-front’ character would be harmed.

POLICY H10: Redevelopment within Established Residential Areas, and

POLICY H11: Design in New Housing

Although accepting that the redevelopment of a site (through demolition and rebuilding) can contribute to the housing stock, this policy identifies cases where the presumption would be in favour of safeguarding buildings against such proposals, namely where these are considered to contribute significantly to the character of the area they are in (particularly Conservation Areas). In this regard, buildings identified as ‘outstanding’ or ‘positive’ on the Architectural Character Survey Map in the Appraisal section of this document are considered to make a significant contribution towards the Conservation Area’s character.

Furthermore, any redevelopment proposals affecting buildings identified as Neutral/

Negative on the Survey Map will be required to 'preserve or enhance' the existing characteristics of the Conservation Area in terms of the form, scale and use of the building affected by the proposals and the buildings within its vicinity. This requirement accords with Policy H11 relating to design, which requires that all new housing development will be expected, in particular, to:

- *be sympathetic in scale, design and layout to the character of the site and its surroundings*
- *incorporate the use of external materials appropriate to the local environment, and*
- *retain and protect existing features of landscape, historical or nature conservation importance within the site.*

POLICY H14: Extensions to Residential Properties

While accepting that extensions are a popular and satisfactory means of improving the quality of the housing stock, and in many cases can be constructed without the need for planning permission, this policy recognises that their visual impact on the surroundings is a matter of considerable concern. In this particular regard, therefore, the policy requires extensions:

- *to be designed to blend satisfactorily with the style and appearance of the existing house*
- *to have pitched roofs to match the existing property unless a flat or mono-pitched roof would assist in reducing its impact on an adjoining property and would have no impact on the street scene*
- *to be of a scale appropriate to the property and would not over-develop the site by resulting in an undue loss of private amenity space*
- *not to have the effect of creating the appearance of 'terracing' in the street scene or of being unduly dominant (where 2-storeys in height and added to the side)*
- *not to result in the loss of any trees, hedgerows or other features (eg stone boundary walls) which contribute to the character and amenities of the area or*

materially affect the wildlife interest of hedgerows

- *in the case of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and/or within Conservation Areas, that the extensions also accord with Policies C27 – C43 (see below).*

Satellite Dishes are directional in their operation, they can have a harmful impact on the appearance and character of the buildings they are attached to and the area in which they are situated. Such dishes should be located, sized, designed and coloured in a way that will minimise their impact - especially so in the case of Listed Buildings and Buildings in Conservation Areas when the preservation of architectural and historic character is of paramount importance.

The Local Plan fully recognises the importance of the district's heritage resource and the need to conserve the best of the area's historic and architectural character as identified through the listed building and conservation area designation processes. Policies relating to listed buildings include:

POLICY C27: Proposals affecting Listed Buildings

POLICY C30: Conditions attached to Demolition Approvals (for non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas as well as Listed Buildings)

POLICY C31: Preserving the Setting of Listed Buildings

In summary, this group of policies is intended to ensure the protection of listed or listable buildings and their settings from unsympathetic developments, while at the same time enabling flexibility in applying planning standards if this will help to bring about an acceptable scheme for their conservation. In determining applications for listed building consent the Council will have regard to the advice set out in the Government's Planning Policy Guidance on Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15), including the presumption of retaining all such buildings and the features of special interest they, and their settings, possess. Only in exceptional circumstances, therefore, would demolition be permitted (Policy C27), normally in accordance with conditions that would have

to be complied with beforehand (Policy C30).

New uses for old buildings may sometimes hold the key to their successful preservation, and in accordance with Government guidance (PPG15) the Council may consider relaxing planning standards over such matters as land use and car parking where this would enable an historic building or group to be given a new lease of life.

As far as preserving the setting of listed buildings is concerned, measures taken by the Council may include traffic management and tree protection in addition to normal development controls covering the design and use of adjoining land.

It is recognised that the repair and restoration of historic buildings may sometimes cost more than comparable works to modern properties and require skills and knowledge that is not always readily available.

The Council will give advice to owners, not only on appropriate repair techniques, but also on works of restoration and on changes proposed in applications for listed building consent.

POLICY C34: Proposals affecting Conservation Areas

POLICY C35: New Buildings in Conservation Areas

POLICY C37: Developments outside, but close to, Conservation Areas

In summary, this group of policies is intended to ensure that developments affecting Conservation Areas, including those outside the areas that will have an impact on them, are permitted only if they preserve or enhance the aspects of the environment which contribute towards their character or appearance. In particular, the scale and form of any new development (including extensions to existing buildings), and the materials used in its construction, will need to be appropriate to the particular Conservation Area and be in harmony with surrounding properties. In this regard, the Council will promote the use of traditional materials such as thatch, natural slate, clay ridge tiles and timber windows.

Applications will need to be sufficiently detailed to show clearly how the development being

proposed will preserve or enhance existing characteristics and, as a matter of course, the Council will promote tree planting and other environmental improvements in order to achieve an acceptable scheme.

There are other policies in the Local Plan which have a district-wide relevance and cover particular types of development, particular localities or particular measures the Council might take in pursuing environmental objectives:

POLICY C38: Preserving the Character of Residential Areas

This policy recognises the special characteristics of older residential areas in the District, particularly those that include larger houses that are well-built and attractive in themselves and sometimes set in substantial grounds. Its purpose, therefore, is to encourage the retention of these buildings and to ensure new development does not damage the essential characteristics of their settings.

POLICY C39: Development of Infill Sites

This policy aims to ensure that in areas of commercial activity, infill sites are developed in a way that respects the overall character of the street scene, particularly in terms of the scale and form the buildings possess.

POLICY C40: Fences and Walls on the Street Frontage

While accepting that fences and walls are mostly erected with security and privacy in mind, this can often be at the expense of visual appearances. This policy sets out to safeguard the character and visual amenities streets and spaces so that normally only walls and fences that will create an attractive feature will be considered acceptable. This will normally mean the use of materials and designs that follow existing patterns in order to reinforce the Area's locally distinctive identity.

The Council will encourage opportunities to improve the visual qualities of the District's built environment. Such enhancement can include the removal of eye-sores, improved treatment of floorscapes and facades.

POLICY C43: Use of Traditional Materials

This policy relates to new developments and

is concerned with the respect that should be afforded to local building traditions, not only in terms of design, massing and scale but also in the use of traditional materials and finishes. While innovative design is not discouraged, the new building should integrate into the established scene, reinforce its local identity and not appear alien or visually obtrusive.

POLICY C44: The Treatment of Shopfronts

The materials, form and design of shopfronts is recognised as contributing significantly towards the character and quality of an area. In Dawlish the older, traditional, shopfronts help strengthen the classical style of architecture that is dominant, and possess historical interest in themselves. This policy details the criteria the Council will use to consider proposals relating to their treatment, including the retention of traditional (classical) features such as columns, pilasters, cornices and stallrisers.

POLICY C46: Controls within Areas of Special Advertisement Control

POLICY C47: Control of Advertisements in Conservation Areas

POLICY C48: Control of Advertisement Hoardings

POLICY C49: Siting of Advertisements on Buildings

POLICY C50: Action relating to Advertisement Clutter

In recognition of the major impact advertisements can have on the quality of the environment – which if poorly designed or sited can be adverse indeed – the Council has adopted a range of policies to ensure and enable their strict control. Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are covered by a particular policy which seeks to ensure their character and appearance is preserved or enhanced (Policy C47).

Consent will not normally be granted for signs that are distant to the premises they relate to, while hoardings are considered to be a totally inappropriate form of advertising, even in urban areas. Signs above shop fascia level will normally be resisted as well, while the Council will take action to ensure non-

essential advertising is kept to a minimum in historic settings.

POLICY C51: Preservation of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

POLICY C52: Development affecting Archaeological Sites

The Council accepts a presumption against development that would adversely affect the site or setting of an Ancient Monument, whether or not it is scheduled as being of national importance. Only if the need for the development outweighs the historic importance of the archaeological remains will planning permission be granted.

Where development will affect a site that possesses archaeological potential (such as at the heart of a settlement where underground remains might evidence its early development) an archaeological evaluation (including trial trenches) may be required before an application is determined. Where the development is considered acceptable in its original or modified form, approval may be the subject of conditions to ensure the recording, preservation and storage of the remains and publication of the investigations carried out.

Finally, under the Landscape and Natural Environment headings of the Conservation and Environmental Management Section of the Local Plan, the following Policy is of particular significance.

POLICY C1: Tree Preservation Orders

While trees are afforded a degree of protection under the Conservation Area legislation, in that their felling, topping or lopping cannot be carried out without first notifying the Council of these intentions, this needs to be backed by a commitment of the Council to secure the protection of trees through the service of Tree Preservation Orders. This policy does that by confirming it will make such Orders to preserve groups or individual trees where these are under threat and the loss of which would have a significant impact on visual amenities. Further, in the exceptional circumstances of consent being given to fell, the Council will normally require the planting of replacement trees of an appropriate size and species.

10.0 Other Planning Controls and Measures

10.1 Additional Conservation Area Controls

The designation of Conservation Areas introduces a number of additional controls which mean the Council's permission is required for certain works which would normally be 'permitted development'. These include:

- *the total or substantial demolition of a building or structure, including a boundary wall, and including also any monument or memorial to a deceased person which was erected before 1925 (such as headstones and tombstones in a churchyard).*

- *the felling, topping or lopping of trees*

and if the building is a single-family house

- *extensions which are over 10% of the original volume of the house, or over 50 cubic metres – whichever is the greater*
- *erecting a garden structure, such as a shed, which is larger than 10 cubic metres*
- *adding roof dormers*
- *adding external cladding to the walls of the house*
- *fixing a satellite dish to a chimney, wall or roof facing the public highway or to a building that is over 15 metres high, and*
- *installing radio masts, antennae, or radio equipment housing with a volume of 2 or more cubic metres*

The fact that the developments above are controlled in Conservation Areas reflects the harmful impact that can result if these are carried out in a manner which is not 'conservation friendly'. While most have been addressed in sections 4.0 and 7.0 in terms of the suitability of proposals being made (including extensions, demolitions and roof dormers) the Council further advises that:

- *satellite dishes appear alien in an historic setting and should not be attached to prominent elevations or chimney stacks, but be located in positions that are not visually obtrusive. In the case of flats, shared arrangements should be made to minimise their impact.*

- *garden sheds and other similar structures rarely, if ever, contribute positively towards the character of an historic scene and should be hidden from public view or sited so that their visual impact on the street scene is kept to an absolute minimum.*

- *the materials a building is constructed of is an essential aspect of its authentic character. Cladding elevations with alternative materials is therefore normally undesirable, particularly if these are not characteristic of the type and age of the building affected or of buildings in the area it is situated.*

10.2 Article 4 (2) Directions

Other developments that are normally 'permitted development' can also be brought under planning control by the Council by introducing an Article 4 (2) Direction under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning [General Permitted Development] Order (GDPO). The developments that can be included in such a Direction are those which threaten to harm key features in a Conservation Area that contribute significantly towards its character. These would certainly include the removal of historic windows and doors, even though many, regrettably, have already been lost. There are others that also continue to threaten the character of the area, and the Council believes it would serve conservation interests to bring the following developments under planning control:

- *the alteration or replacement of windows and doors*
- *the alteration of roof slopes, including the insertion of dormers and roof-lights on those that are prominent*
- *changing the roofing material from natural slate*
- *the erection or alteration of gates, fences, railings, walls or other means of enclosure*
- *the removal of architectural details such as moulded cornices, string bands, quoins etc*

10.3 Repairs Notices

If a Listed Building is not being properly maintained and is falling into a state of disrepair such that it is a danger of being lost, the Council has the power to serve a Repairs Notice requiring an owner to carry out works to make the building safe, sound and weather-tight.

If not complied with the Council can initiate compulsory purchase, or in the case of an unoccupied building (which, in a Conservation Area need not be listed) can, after due warning, carry out basic repairs itself and recover the costs from the owner. These are considered 'last resort' measures, however, so while the Council will indeed consider taking them, its preference is to resolve issues of neglect through persuasion and the offer of practical advice.

One listed building in the area that appears to be at risk, on account of its failing condition and lack of use, is the Signal Box situated on the platform of Dawlish Station (which is also listed). Its unusual design – with an oversailing first floor to allow passengers to pass along the narrow platform – is perhaps unique on this scale. Its loss, therefore, cannot be contemplated, and every effort needs to be made to ensure and enable its proper preservation.

10.4 Supplementary Planning and Technical Guidance Documents

Although the Council prepares design and planning briefs to guide the development of significant sites and buildings in the district, and offers advice and guidance on design and conservation matters to those who seek it, such information has not been made generally available through published documents in the form of Supplementary Planning Guidance intended to support and explain in more detail the policies included in the Local Plan.

The Council believes that the publication of SPD and technical guidance documents would be extremely beneficial, not only in helping owners decide how best to conserve their properties but also in increasing the efficiency of the planning service. It will therefore consider producing SPD and technical guidance documents on the following subjects:

- *New Development in Conservation Areas, covering aspects of design, materials, scale, siting etc*
- *Shopfront Design and Conservation*
- *Extensions, including porches, conservatories etc*
- *The Repair and Restoration of Historic Doors and Windows*

10.5 Enforcement

The council has statutory powers to enforce against breaches of planning and advertisement controls. Although in many cases breaches occur through a misunderstanding of the controls themselves, there are nevertheless others that represent deliberate flouting. In the first instance resolution of the breach is normally sought through the submission of a retrospective application – although in the case of Listed Buildings this will not absolve an owner from the criminal offence committed by altering such a building without prior consent.

It is important that breaches involving works that harm the character of the Conservation Area are enforced to secure their reversal or their suitable modification. As resources permit, the Council will from time to time review Conservation Areas to identify breaches and take whatever action is deemed appropriate. On the other hand, it will welcome the receipt of information from the public on the occurrence of potential breaches which have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

10.6 Trees

All trees over a certain size within the conservation area are protected though some may also be protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Six weeks notice must be given to the District Council, in writing before work is carried out prior to lopping and felling. The District Council will consider during this time whether to make a Tree Preservation Order that could prevent the work before it is carried out.

If trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order a formal application must be made for consent prior to works being carried out.



Fig 89 Monterey Pine, approx 200yrs old

11.0 Building Regulations and Historic Buildings

Part L of the Building Regulations 2000 relates to energy conservation and applies to existing buildings when replacements or major alterations are being made. Strict and uninformed compliance with the Regulations, however, has the potential for causing significant harm to the character of historic buildings, and indeed can increase the risk of damage throughout their traditionally-constructed structure.

Although it is clearly stated in Part L that the special characteristics of historic buildings must be recognised when considering their suitability for measures intended to improve their energy efficiency, English Heritage has prepared detailed guidance on how best to balance the need for energy conservation with the statutory requirement to preserve the special interest and character that most listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas possess.

The guidance is necessarily detailed, and comprises an examination of the individual elements of buildings where energy efficiency issues may arise, including windows, doors, roofs, walls, floors and building services.

It is English Heritage's intention to issue additional guidance that will include valuable sections on

- **the use of traditional materials in repairing historic buildings**
- **best practice examples that achieve upgradings in a suitably benign, conservation-friendly manner, and**
- **case studies illustrating schemes implemented since Part L came into force in April 2002**

The implementation of Part L regulations in respect of historic buildings that are listed or situated in conservation areas within the Teignbridge District will be in accordance with English Heritage guidance, including that already published in its note entitled "Building Regulations and Historic Buildings : Balancing the needs for energy conservation with those of building conservation: an Interim Guidance Note on the application of Part L".

12.0 Enabling Development and Historic Buildings

The purpose of 'enabling development' is to produce the income necessary to secure the preservation and maintenance of an important historic building. It is development which is contrary to planning policy but its approval is sought on the basis of the public benefit that would be gained from securing the long term future of the building.

As a result of concerns that enabling developments were being permitted which destroyed more than they saved (in terms of the special interest and character of the buildings concerned, including their settings) English Heritage issued a policy statement in June 2001 that provided practical guidance on the assessment of such developments.

The Council will use the criteria included in the guide in its determination of applications involving enabling development and will be minded to approve such proposals providing:

- they are the minimum necessary to achieve their intended purpose and represent the least damaging way to achieve their objective in terms of their effect upon the special interest and character of the building in its setting; and
- the relative importance of the building is such that its preservation and future maintenance is, and will remain, a desirable objective in the context of the impact of the proposals and the extent to which they may depart from other local plan policies; and
- no reasonable alternative exists for the provision of income to secure the preservation and future maintenance of the building; and
- the achievement of the preservation and future maintenance of the building is securely and enforceably linked to the implementation of the proposals; and
- the building is repaired to an agreed standard, or funds made available to do so, in accordance with a timetable agreed prior to the commencement of the enabling development.

List of photographs

Fig 78 Brookdale Terrace

Fig 79 Marine Parade c1900

Fig 80 The Strand c1908

Fig 81 Alexandra Road c1908

Fig 82 Alexandra Road 2007 - modern changes can lead to loss of character

Fig 83 Town Tree Hill c1936

Fig 84 Town Tree Hill 1993-94 showing loss of character through loss of fenestration, street lighting and surfaces

Fig 85 The Strand

Fig 86 Albert Street

Fig 87 Richmond House

Fig 88 Barton Hill car park

Fig 89 Monterey Pine at the Manor, approx 200yrs old

