

# Teignbridge District Conservation Area Character Appraisals

*Kenton*



The conservation area boundary as indicated here is for illustrative purposes only, and is not intended to be a true representation of the conservation area as formally adopted. The accurate and definitive conservation area maps can instead be inspected at the main reception area of Teignbridge District Council offices, during normal office hours.

Not all important features of this conservation area are necessarily highlighted here, therefore no omissions that may have been made as part of this appraisal are intended to imply that omitted features that are found to be of interest from future reviews of the document are not of significance in their own right.

## Acknowledgements

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Archive information and historic maps were obtained from the Westcountry Studies Library and Devon Records Office in Exeter. The archaeological analysis was informed by the Sites and Monuments Register, maintained by Devon County Council.

## Consultations

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## 1:0 INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Area Character Statement for Kenton was endorsed by the Planning Committee on 18 December 2000. Since that time it has been the subject of public consultation, with copies being distributed to the Parish Council and many individuals. It has also been available for download from the Teignbridge website - a facility that has proved very popular. The document was discussed at a public meeting in the village on 11th June 2001.

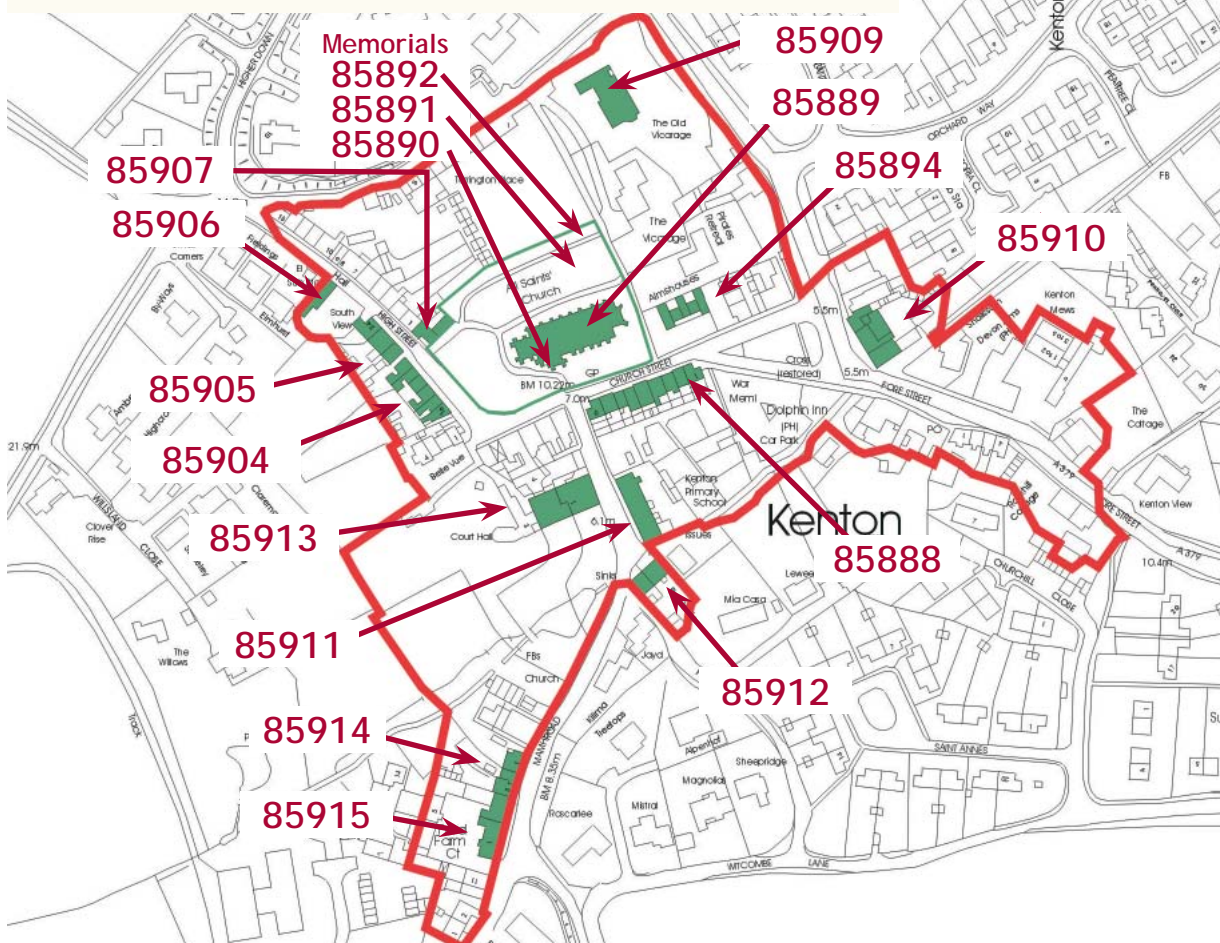
The feedback from the public and other interested bodies has been fully considered and a number of amendments have been made as a result.

This completed Character Appraisal has been adopted via the Development Plan Steering Group as a document to support current and future development plans. Consequently its contents are now a material consideration for any planning application which affects the conservation area or its setting. It will be distributed to the utility companies, Devon County Council and other interested parties such as English Heritage. Printed copies will be available for public viewing at Forde House and it may be downloaded from [www.teignbridge.gov.uk](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk) as well.

A full review of this Character Appraisal was undertaken in September 2009, when its effectiveness will be considered and necessary amendments made. Minor changes may be made with the agreement of the Parish meeting and the Ward member. The most up to date version will always be available on the website. Fieldwork was undertaken on 16th September 2009. The revised Appraisal was approved on 22nd March 2010.

## 2:0 FACTS AND FIGURES

Date of designation: 11/09/93  
 Number of listed buildings: Grade I =1, Grade II\* = 0, Grade II =17.  
 Size of conservation area: 4.5 hectares



The green coloured areas of this map represent the listed buildings that lie within the Kenton conservation area. A summary of these listings may be found in Appendix four.

### 3.0 LOCATION & GEOLOGY

Kenton lies alongside the River Kenn on the flood plain of the River Exe. The site was probably developed because the higher ground to the east and south-east screened it from potential water-borne attackers. It also offered a sheltered creek off the estuary which in medieval times was tidal almost to the edge of the present village. It is possible that the earliest site was closer to Powderham Castle, beside the estuary and that it had a role in the defence of Exeter.

Despite being surrounded by quite fertile farmland, Kenton was founded more on shipbuilding and trade. Salt production was also an important and profitable activity sited close to the mouth of the River Kenn.

Geologically, Kenton is underlain by Lower Permian Sandstone, which can be seen in nearby road cuttings, and Permian Breccia, of which the church is primarily constructed.

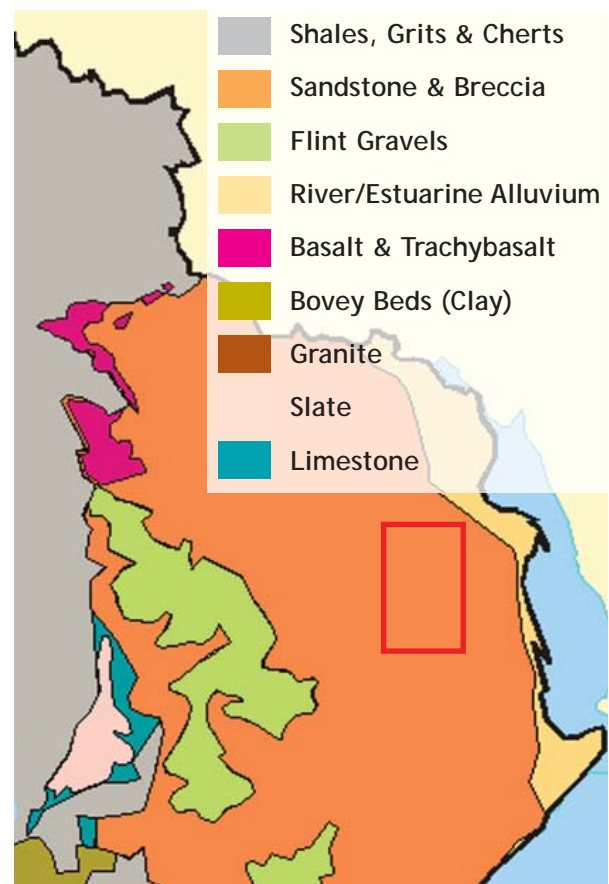


Red beccia is the most common material in Kenton



Location

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Geology

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## 4:0 VILLAGE MORPHOLOGY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Kenton is dominated by the presence of All Saints Church. Sited on higher ground than the houses in the village centre it is a focal point for the community. The scale and quality of the tower reflects the wealth of medieval Kenton. This is supported by the village's plan, a large sub-rectangular central area containing the church, with houses fronting regular rectangular plots around its southern and western edges, these plots may date from the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Kenton is rather unusual in having a large central rectangular area, ecclesiastically owned and containing the church. Other examples, such as Harberton and Bigbury in South Hams District, may be pre-Conquest minster sites. This means that a church could have stood here for more than 1000 years. Kenton Church is said to have been founded by St Petrock, in about AD580, although the earliest documentary reference to it is from the 1370s.

Two more medieval settlement expansion areas are evident at East Town, where large rectangular plots survive on both sides of the road and South Town, where the plots and the area covered are particularly extensive.



*Ancient Kenton is densely developed around the Church, with terraces close to the street frontage.*

The area now covered by Powderham Park to the east is largely reclaimed from the sea. The Exe estuary formerly came almost up to the village. In 1572 Kenton had 6 ships and trans-Atlantic trade was carried on with Newfoundland. In 1566 the Exeter Canal was opened to bypass the Courtenays' Countess Weir and this provided the City of Exeter with control over its own trade. The silting up of the creek during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries finally destroyed Kenton as a port.

Surrounding Kenton village, the old maps show many strip-like fields. These represent a fossilized medieval open field system, which operated here up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Such agricultural systems were not common in Devon, where earlier enclosure of irregularly shaped fields was the norm. At Kenton there were three large blocks of strip fields. This is a more typical pattern for the rest of England, being used in crop rotation regimes. The historic division of Kenton into three discrete named suburbs at South Town, West Town and East Town reflects this arrangement, making a highly unusual and individualistic approach to village planning.

Radiating out from the village centre are a number of lanes linking neighbouring farmsteads and settlements. The basic layout of Fore St, Church St, High St and Mamhead Rd seems little changed since the medieval period. The most significant change to the layout of the village centre followed



- Archaeological remains in Kenton are particularly important. An Area of Archaeological Potential has been identified, taking account of its origins and development. Adequate consideration should be made of the potential impact upon the historic environment of any new development proposals within the Area of Archaeological Potential that involve significant ground disturbance, or affect a historic building, to allow the appropriate mitigation to be implemented. This consideration may result in the need for a planning application to be supported by the results of a programme of archaeological investigation, and/or the application of a PPG16 paragraph 30 Condition on any consent granted that had an archaeological or historic building impact. However, this advice may also include recommendation for refusal if the impact on and loss of these resources was unacceptable.

[illegible]

The image shows an open historical ledger with two pages. The left page is headed "Credito" and the right page is headed "Debito". Both pages contain multiple columns of handwritten entries in ink, with some numbers written in red ink. The paper is aged and yellowed, and the binding is visible in the center.



*Kenton Manor, 1725*



## 5:0 ARCHITECTURE

All Saints Church is a fine building in the Perpendicular style. With its 120 ft high tower and its 170 ft long nave it is quite the most impressive church for miles around. Such is its presence within the village that it may be glimpsed from many locations.

The conservation area contains a number of pre 1800 vernacular buildings of which the old church house, (now the school), is a notable example. The northern end of High St has some humble vernacular cottages, some of which date, in part at least, to the 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. Although much altered and consequently unlisted, these simple homes have tremendous group value.

The most characteristic feature, which sets Kenton apart from other villages, is its 19th century architecture. There appears to have been some delay between the fire of 1856 and the subsequent re-building. Whether this was due to the economic situation, ownership issues or other factors is unclear. We do know, however, that the almshouses on Church St were built by the Courtenay family in 1888. The architect is unknown but it seems likely that all of the late 19th century gothic styled buildings were by the same hand, (possibly J.W. Rowell, surveyor for the Courtenays). These buildings manage to retain the intimacy of the village street while adding that touch of refinement and order which is so typically Victorian. Chimneys are an integral element of the roofscape. Their form, mass and materials are indicative of the buildings age and status, as such they are important features in Kenton.



*The church was made a stronger focal point after the fire.*



*The Victorian re-building in Kenton is distinctly 'of its time', but is of such quality that it adds to the architectural character of Kenton*

- Any building which is allowed within, or affecting the setting of, the conservation area (including garages and other service buildings), must be of a demonstrably high design standard incorporating quality materials. Applicants must show how their proposal will contribute positively to the character of the area and the setting of nearby buildings.
- The results of an Architectural Character Survey are illustrated on the map, along with a brief summary of the criteria used, in Appendix two.



*The former Church House, now the primary school*



*Early cottages reflect the Devon vernacular style*

## 6:0 BUILDING MATERIALS

Older properties are constructed of rubble stone and/or cob with render and (originally) limewash. The Victorian development in Kenton is primarily constructed of polychromatic brick, red Exeter bricks being the main material. Pointing mortar is generally coloured to match the bricks and there is evidence of black tuck pointing.

Slate is the prevalent roofing material, mostly Welsh but some from Devon or Cornwall. Some thatched properties remain and there were evidently many more thatched roofs in the past. Clay tiles occur here and there, usually in a Double Roman pattern. The retention of these traditional roofing materials is essential if the quality of the townscape is to be preserved.

Window designs vary considerably but painted timber is the principal historic material. The corner shop opposite The Triangle has an elegant 19<sup>th</sup> century bowed cast iron shopfront which is an unusual survival in a village setting. The PO also has a good shopfront which contributes considerably to the character of the conservation area.

Where modern replacement windows have been inserted they have seriously undermined the character of the locality and the setting of adjacent buildings.

Cast iron rainwater goods also contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. Their retention or reinstatement should be strongly encouraged.

The most significant means of enclosure to the streets within the conservation area is provided by the buildings themselves. Most cottages front directly onto the street and this trend should be continued if any infill development is proposed.

Stone walls vary in size and composition depending on their age. Older walls are built of local breccia and some cob. More recent walls use imported limestone, probably from Torbay or Chudleigh.

Hedgerows feature adjacent to some roads but are more commonly associated with boundaries between landholdings.

- The characteristic architectural features and building materials of Kenton are summarized in Appendix one.



*This bowed cast iron shopfront is a rare feature.*



*A variety of materials and building forms contribute character to Kenton*



## 7:0 POSITIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

The special character of Kenton Conservation Area is not derived solely from the buildings. Some other features are summarized below:-

**7:1 WATER:** The sight and sound of running water is a strong positive feature of the centre of Kenton. The brook which runs along the southern edge of the village has affected the settlement's siting, with the medieval planned village on a terrace to the north.

**7:2 TREES AND PLANTING:** Trees are most significant around the fringes of the conservation area where they complement its setting. Scope exists for judicious planting to be undertaken to accentuate or frame focal points and to help screen or camouflage modern developments. Within the conservation area, trees mark the line of the brook which flows from south-west to north-east. These are particularly prominent adjacent to the car park and school. The trees within the grounds of Court Hall and the Old Vicarage also form striking features.

**7:3 ORCHARDS:** Historic maps illustrate how prevalent orchards were in and around Kenton. The 1889 Ordnance Survey shows this to its best advantage (Appendix three). The remnants that remain should be looked after. New orchard planting could be encouraged, perhaps on the fringes of the village.

**7:4 GARDENS:** The historic plan of Kenton includes gardens on the rectangular plots behind the street frontage. These make a positive contribution where they remain.

**7:5 OPEN SPACE:** Apart from the surrounding countryside and rear gardens, the most important open spaces are the Green and the churchyard. Both contribute positively to the setting of the historic buildings in the vicinity.



*Glimpses of gardens and countryside are very important where they remain.*



*The Green is a fine example of planned village open space.*

## 8:0 NEGATIVE CHARACTER FEATURES

**8:1 MOTOR VEHICLES:** The village generally is blighted by vehicles. The problem is especially bad on High Street and Church Street where a combination of parked cars and through traffic severely harms the amenity and character of the space. Apart from the visual intrusion, they also destroy the ambience of the village with noise pollution and fumes. Solutions should be sought in partnership with the Parish Council and the County Council through the community Travel Plan.

**8:2 REPLACEMENT WINDOWS, DOORS etc:** There are some poor examples of modern windows and doors which do not even attempt to imitate those they replaced. The same applies to roofing materials, rainwater goods and other features vulnerable to insensitive alteration. Guidance will be made available to encourage a conservative approach to maintenance and repair. The possibility of Article 4(2) directives to control some or all of these changes will need to be considered in the future.

**8:3 FLOORSCAPE:** Both road and pavement surfaces are generally poor. Any re-surfacing must be carried out to an overall plan, which needs to be developed with Kenton Parish Council and Devon County Council.

**8:4 OVERHEAD CABLES:** Kenton's character is spoiled by overhead power cables. The village's character could be considerably enhanced by services being put underground.



*Cars and overhead cables detract from many views in Kenton*





## APPENDIX ONE

### CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF BUILDINGS IN KENTON

#### BASICS

- Steeply pitched thatch or slate roofs, both incorporating traditional ridge types.
- Attached or terraced cottages built tight to the highway.
- Pre 19th century buildings generally exhibit smaller, squarer casement windows with a dominance of solid over void.
- Development post 1800 mostly incorporates vertical sliding sash windows but even the casements tend to have a vertical emphasis.
- Rendered and painted /limewashed walls on older buildings. Polychromatic Victorian brickwork.
- Chimneys are a significant feature of the roofscape. They range from massive rendered stone flues on older buildings, to slighter brick stacks on Victorian buildings.
- Most buildings within the conservation area are conventional two storey structures. Dormers are generally absent, especially on prominent roof slopes.

#### PALETTE OF MATERIALS



**ROOFING:** Thatch and slate with traditional ridges.

**RAINWATER GOODS:** Half round or ogee gutters in cast iron.

**WALLS:** Render is common but the texture, finish and colour need to be chosen to suit the character of a particular building. Only local red breccia or volcanic trap should be used as facing stones - potential sources need to be identified for these. Red brick matching the local type in both colour and texture is appropriate

**WINDOWS AND DOORS:** Painted softwood is prevalent but an opaque stain may be acceptable on new-build.

**ENCLOSURE:** Local stone and rendered cob are used on street frontages. Red brick may find limited use in some locations. Blocks laid flat, capped and rendered to match old cob walls may also have a place. Boundaries with farmland are most commonly Devon banks and/or native species hedgerows. If space is tight between plots hazel hurdles are an option.

**SURFACING:** Cobbles, setts, patterned engineering bricks and limestone or granite kerbs are the most appropriate materials but they may be judiciously combined with blacktop or hoggin (compressed aggregate). Dark grey or red, (to match the building materials), brick pavements may be incorporated sparingly in new development.



*The Almshouses incorporate a variety of colours in the brickwork and on the roof.*

**MATERIALS TO BE AVOIDED**

**ROOFING:** Artificial slate, tiles (especially concrete), industrial corrugated sheeting, shingles and modern types of ridge cladding.

**RAINWATER GOODS:** Plastic, in particular box profile guttering in grey, white or brown.

**WALLS:** Re-constituted stone, weatherboarding, slate hanging and textured renders other than roughcast.

**WINDOWS AND DOORS:** PVCu, stained timber and powder coated metal frames are all incongruous.

**ENCLOSURE:** Larch-lap or close-boarded fences and evergreen hedges, especially conifers.

**SURFACING:** Large areas of blacktop, concrete or loose chippings ought to be avoided.



## APPENDIX TWO

### ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to identify which buildings within the conservation area contribute positively or negatively to townscape character. Three character bands are used (see map 1) and the criteria for each are summarised below.

In assessing individual buildings, it is their form, design and architectural potential which is most important. Ephemeral considerations like plastic windows or slight disrepair will not usually result in buildings being categorised lower. This does not imply that, for example, plastic windows in a building making a positive contribution to the area are in themselves a positive feature. They may, however, have prevented it from being classed as 'outstanding'. In addition, a quite modest but attractive building in a very prominent location may be rated as 'outstanding', even though it might only be judged as 'positive' if it were tucked away among other buildings.

#### Category 1 : Outstanding

These buildings may be of any age, but are most likely to be either ancient and unspoiled vernacular buildings or distinctive examples of a particular architectural style.

Buildings identified as outstanding are the highlights of any conservation area. Planning applications and other proposals which may effect their character, or that of their setting, should only be considered if they offer an enhancement. Harmful proposals must be rejected and demolition is very unlikely to be accepted under any circumstances.

#### Category 2 : Positive

Buildings in this category are the backbone of every conservation area. They will usually be unpretentious but attractive buildings of their type that do not necessarily demand individual attention, but possess considerable group value. Some may have been altered or extended in uncomplimentary ways, but the true character of these buildings could be restored.

The majority of structures in most conservation areas are likely to fall into this category. Alterations should only be made to positive items if they result in an enhancement of the building and the contribution it makes to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Demolition must only be considered in exceptional circumstances where significant aesthetic enhancement and/or community benefits would be realised.

- **Proposals which would detract from the special character of these buildings will be resisted.**

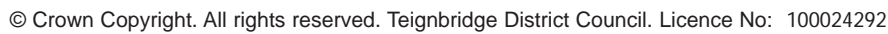
#### Category 3 : Neutral or Negative

Most conservation areas have buildings that are neither positive nor negative in their contribution to overall character. These will often be twentieth century buildings which may be inoffensive in scale and location, but which lack quality in terms of detailing, materials and design. It must also be accepted that there are usually some buildings in conservation areas which cause actual harm to the character and appearance of that area. These will most commonly be twentieth century buildings which, by a combination of scale, form, location, materials or design, are harmful to the character of the area.

Judgements on these matters will always be open to criticism that they are subjective. Consequently the 'neutral' and 'negative' categories, (which featured in the draft Character Statement), have been combined in this Character Appraisal.

Planning applications for alteration, extension or replacement of buildings in this category will be expected to offer a significant enhancement of the conservation area. Where a building is clearly detrimental due to design, scale or location, its replacement will be encouraged. The use of planting, or other landscaping, to reduce the visual impact of less attractive buildings, may achieve considerable aesthetic benefits at relatively little cost.

- **Proposals to enhance the conservation area by either re-modelling buildings, or re-developing sites in this category will be welcomed. Re-development will be expected to demonstrate a very high standard of contextual design and a thorough understanding of prevailing character.**

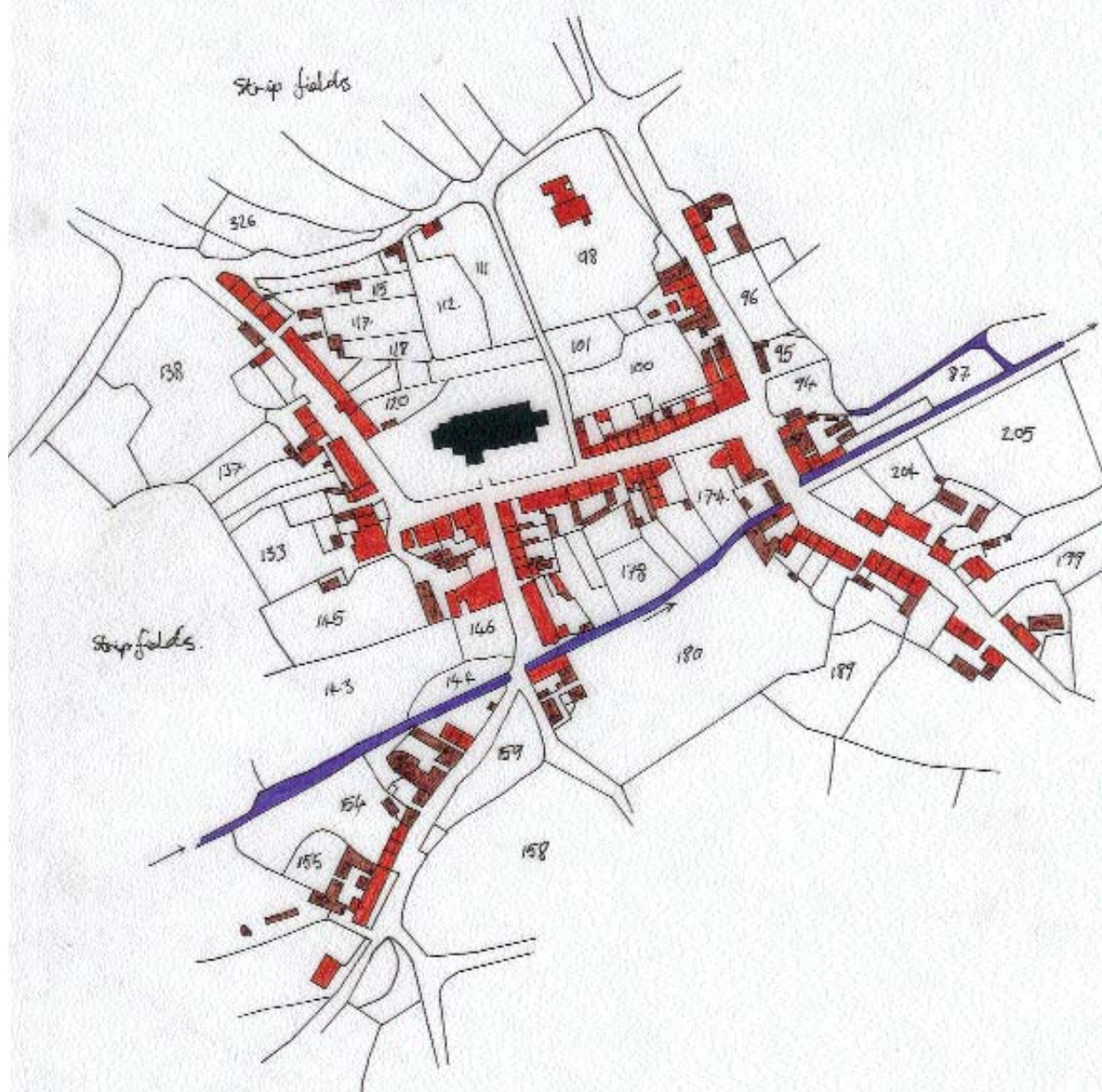


- Category 1: Outstanding
- Category 2: Positive
- Category 3: Neutral/Negative

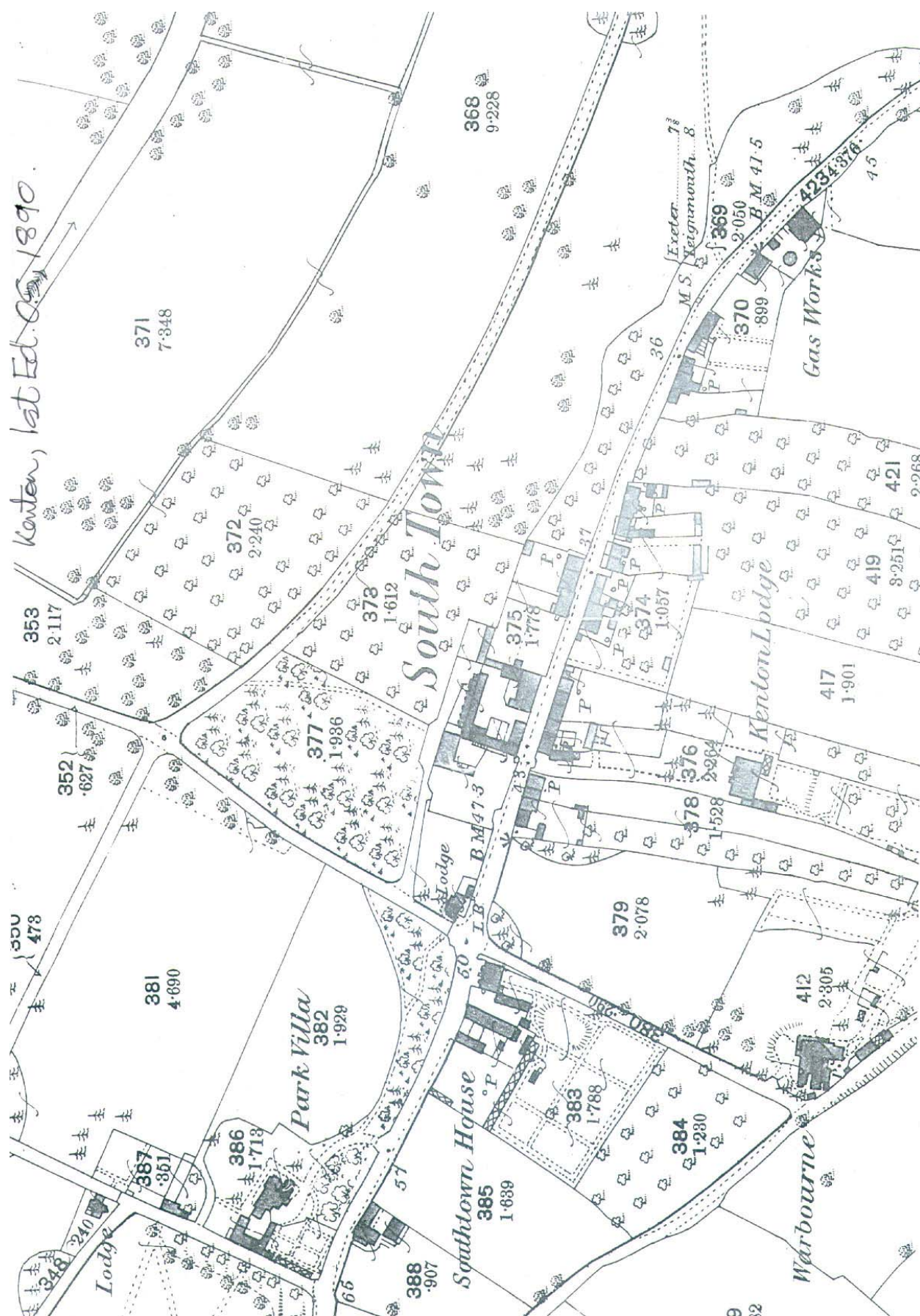




## Kenton 1840











## PARISH SUMMARY LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORICAL INTEREST FOR:

## KENTON CONSERVATION AREA

Ref. No.	Grade	Date of Listing	Item
85888	II	1988	Nos. 1-9 inclusive, Church St
85889	I	1961	Church of All Saints
85890	II	1988	Chest tomb 8m south east of porch of the Church
85891	II	1988	Furse chest tomb 18m north of the vestry of the Church
85892	II	1988	Studd chest tomb in north east corner of the churchyard of the Church
85893	II	1988	Churchyard walls & gate piers to the Church
85894	II	1988	The Almshouses including garden wall and gate piers in front, Church St
85904	II	1988	Nos. 16-21 inclusive, High St
85905	II	1988	Seasons, Cambridge House, Welcome Cottage and one un-named, High St
83906	II	1988	Elmhurst, High St
85907	II	1988	House in west corner of Churchyard
85909	II	1988	The Old Vicarage
85910	II	1988	Trinity Cottage, the corner shop and house adjoining Trinity Cottage at north west, High St
85911	II	1952	Kenton School, Mamhead Road
85912	II	1977	Brookside and Brookside Cottage, Mamhead Road
85913	II	1988	Middle Court and Court Hall, Mamhead Road
85914	II	1988	Three Cottages immediately north of Ford Farmhouse
85915	II	1988	Ford Farmhouse, Mamhead Road



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Alluvium:** Sand and soil deposited by a river or stream.

**Almshouses:** Homes built by charitable donations for occupation by the poor.

**Breccia:** A red stone with fragments of limestone and other rocks of varied size in a sandy matrix.

**Burgage Plots:** Early (usually medieval) form of settlement planning whereby land is divided up and sold or leased for development. Plots are mostly long and thin, with a narrow frontage to a principal street.

**Cob:** Cob is made up of a mixture of mud, straw, dung, and sometimes horse hair.

**Hoggin:** Compressed aggregate of varied size and composition used as a surfacing material.

**Lime:** Protective/decorative surface coating made using lime putty.

**Nave:** The main body of a church.

**Ogee:** Traditional decorative moulding profile, commonly used for guttering.

**Permian:** Geological period approximately 250 million years before present.

**Perpendicular:** Architectural style of the later medieval period, characterised by strong vertical forms.

**Vernacular:** The traditional architecture of a locality which is functional and uses locally available materials.



Teignbridge District Conservation Area Character Appraisal