

Wolborough Hill Conservation Area



Character Appraisal



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TEIGNBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wolborough Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Conservation Area Appraisal

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1.0 Introduction and Statement of Objectives

The purpose of the Conservation Area Character Statement is to provide a basic summary of the elements that together contribute to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is also intended to be supporting information for a Conservation Area extension.

It is hoped that local residents, the Parish Council, Devon County Council and others (such as utility companies) will also find the document useful.

The Conservation Area Appraisal has been compiled to analyse the Conservation Area. The Management Plan is to be read in conjunction with the Appraisal and puts forward proposals for its future and how the area will be managed.

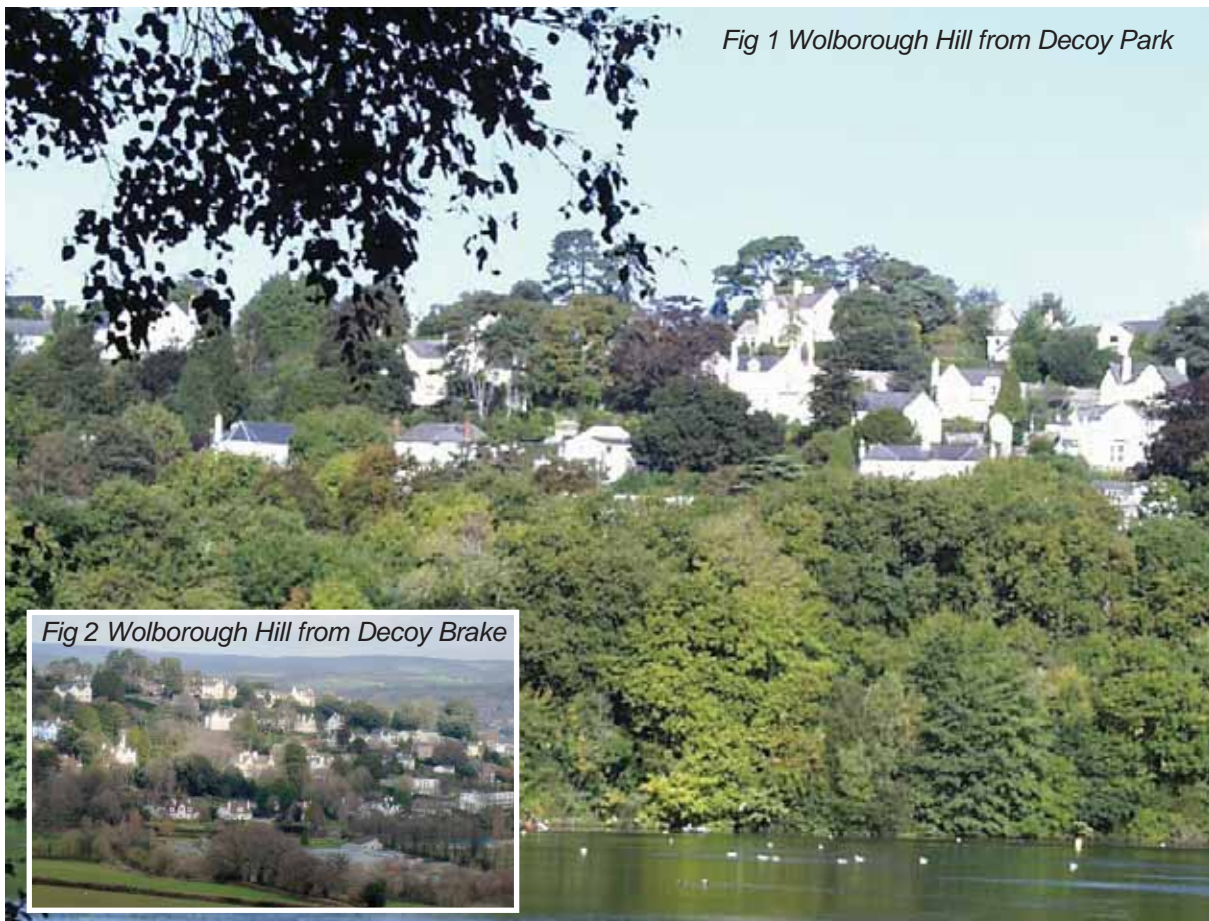
1.1 Community Involvement

Prior to commencing preparation of the draft document Newton Abbot Town Council,

Newton Abbot Town and G.W.R Museum and ward members were consulted.

The draft document was made available at the local library, and available to view at the local Council offices and consultation was available on line. The consultation was advertised through the local media and Council channels. Views were invited from Newton Abbot Town Council, Newton Abbot Town and G.W.R museum, Newton Abbot Civic Society, ward members, English Heritage and Devon County Council, site notices were posted locally. A public meeting was held at the Town Council Offices on 12 January 2010 and at Forde House, Teignbridge District Council Offices on 22 and 29 January 2010. A public exhibition was held at the Town Council Offices on 7 and 8 January 2010.

The Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted on 8 March 2010 and a second public consultation was undertaken to consider alternatives to the boundary that has arisen from the first consultation. The Conservation Area boundary extensions were adopted by Executive Committee on 6 September 2010.



2.0 Facts and Figures

Date of Designation:

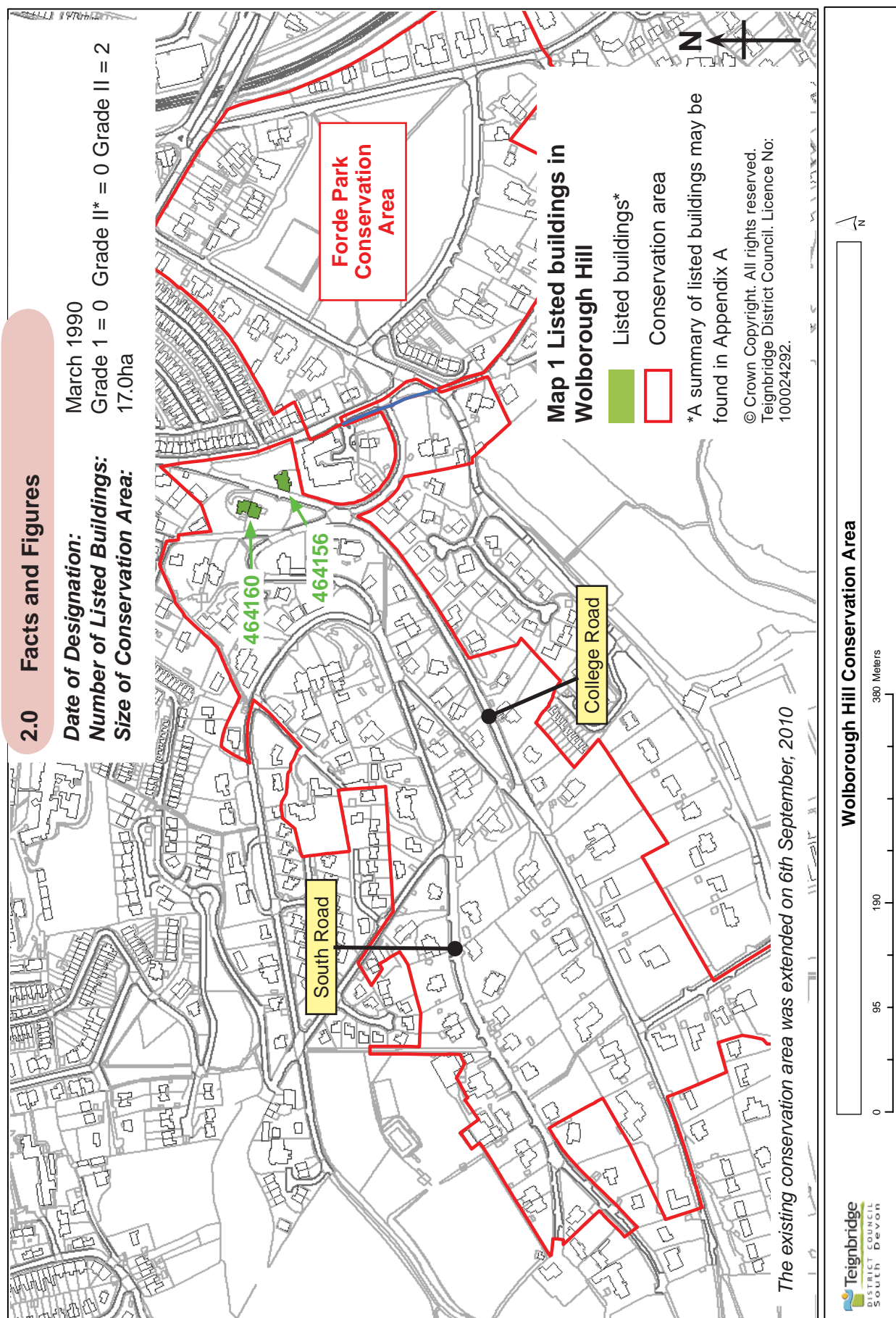
March 1990

Number of Listed Buildings:

Grade 1 = 0 Grade II* = 0 Grade II = 2

Size of Conservation Area:

17.0ha

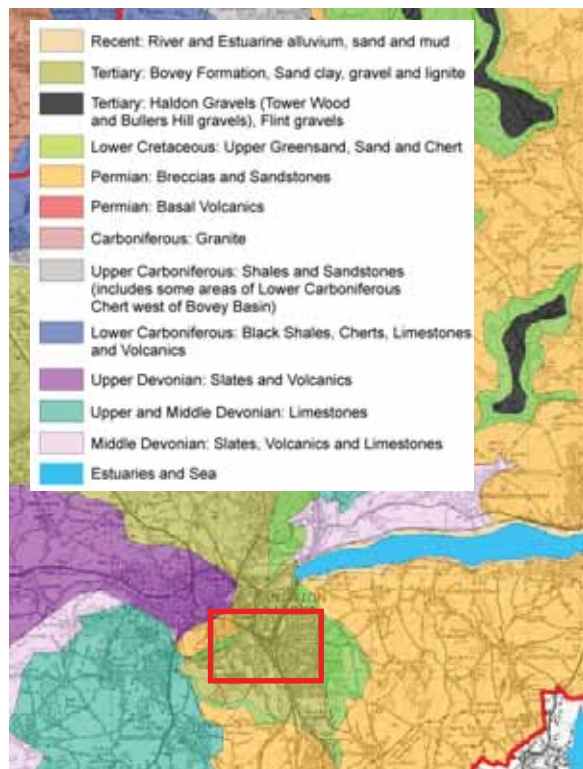


3.0 Location & Geology

The Wolborough Hill area of Newton Abbot is located a mile south west of the head of the Teign estuary to the south of the town centre. Wolborough Hill is bordered by Coach Road and Decoy Country Park to the south and the Edwardian terraces perpendicular to East Street to the north.

The area lies on the Bovey clay beds that extend over the Bovey Basin to the north of Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1890 (see Appendix three) shows the area south of Wolborough Hill as the Devon & Courtenay clay works, now the site of Decoy Country Park. The underlying geology of the area is mainly Permian overlain to the west side by Eocene Aller Gravels and Cretaceous Upper Greensand. However, it is the Devonian Limestone that remains prevalent in terms of building materials within the conservation area.

There are strata of the New Red Sandstone that is composed of sandstones, clays, breccias and conglomerates. Although this building material has considerable character and is used in other areas of Newton Abbot, it is visually absent on Wolborough Hill.



Map 2 Geology

Shales, Grits & Cherts Sandstone & Breccia
Flint Gravels River/Estuarine Alluvium Basalt
& Trachybasalt Bovey Beds (Clay) Granite
Slate Limestone



Map 3 Location

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Fig 3 Grey limestone used on boundary walls, random rubble bond

4.0 Historical Background and Development

4.1 Historical Background

The modern town of Newton Abbot is the result of the merging of two separate medieval boroughs, Newton Abbot and Newton Bushel. The prefix 'Newton' indicates that they were newly established towns, and would have had a borough court separate from the manorial court. The settlements were situated on either side of the River Lemon, by the ford, the lowest point at which the river could be crossed on foot until the 19th century.

In 1196 the manor of Wolborough was given by William Brewer to his foundation of Torre Abbey, and there are references to Villa Nova, a small settlement on the south bank of the River Lemon by around 1200. For some time this settlement was called Shireborne Newton, but before the end of the 13th century, it was established as Newton Abbot. The centre of the town in Wolborough was St Leonard's chapel (fig 4) and a wide market place, at the junction of East Street (formerly Keyberry Street) and Wolborough Street. The two towns were not joined politically until the later 19th century.

diversification and expansion was considerable indeed. It prompted a 'building boom' throughout the remainder of the century (and somewhat beyond), and a population explosion from just over 4,000 in 1851 to just under 11,000 in 1891.

It was around a decade earlier, however, with the creation of another 'transport corridor', that the process of re-shaping the town's major road network began, particularly to the east and south-east of the historic core. In 1836 an Act of Parliament sanctioned the construction of a more convenient route to and from Exeter via the outlying village of Kingsteignton (which was also set to grow). New bridges were built across the rivers Lemon and Teign, while in the heart of the town Courtenay Street was laid out, taking 4 acres of ground that belonged to the Old Globe Inn (as well as 6 other large gardens) to provide space for a host of new buildings along its length. Many had been built by the time the Street was opened in 1842, including a new Globe Hotel (fig 5) to replace the old one on the corner with Bank Street. It was built by the 10th Earl of Devon, and designed by the Devon architect, Charles Fowler; of whom Lord Devon had been a patron since the 1830's, and had already engaged to extend and remodel the outside of his own stately residence at Powderham.



Fig 4 St Leonard's Tower, grade II*

Although well-established as an important market town long before the railway arrived in 1846, the impetus this gave towards the town's



Fig 5 1 Courtenay Street, formerly The Globe Hotel, grade II

The 10th Earl of Devon was greatly involved in the development and expansion of Newton Abbot, especially so once the railway arrived. Indeed, he was much involved in the development of the railway itself, being a director of the South Devon Railway Company. He was a business colleague of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and only two years previously, in 1844, had gained

first hand experience of the railway's progress south-westwards as he allowed its route out of Exeter to pass through the grounds of his mansion house, Powderham Castle.

4.2 Humphrey Abberley and Joseph Rowell

The character and appearance of a large area of Newton Abbot is the result of developments undertaken in the second half of the 19th century, and the involvement of two men, Humphrey Abberley and Joseph William Rowell (fig 9). Abberley, and his successor Rowell, were architects and surveyors employed by the Courtenays, who owned large swathes of land in and around the town. The western end of Newton Abbot is particularly distinguished by the work of these two professionals.

It may have been Lord Devon's association with Charles Fowler (who worked for some time in London) that lead to his appointment of Humphrey Abberley (circa 1806-1855) as the Architect and Surveyor for his Devon estate. Born in Northfleet near Gravesend, Abberley had worked in and around London before moving to Newton Abbot in the mid 1840's to work for Lord Devon. He arrived around the time another major route was to be created in the town, forming a direct link from Courtenay Street to the newly-opened railway station in the east. According to a plan of the area drawn in 1856, it seems this highway was called Railway Street when originally laid out in 1846, but it was named Station Road when adopted as a public highway a few years later. The length



Fig 6 12 Courtenay Street, offices of Humphrey Abberley

alongside the station still bears this name but the remainder running west to the town centre was re-named Queen Street in honour of Queen Victoria.



Fig 7 82-4 Queen Street - first office of Joseph Rowell

Abberley's first task may well have been to finalize the alignment of this highway – but certainly, soon afterwards, his skills were fully employed in realising Lord Devon's ambitious plans to create a series of high quality, residential suburbs next to Queen Street and close to the railway station; initially at Devon Square and Courtenay Park and then at Forde Park and Wolborough Hill.



Fig 8 Joseph Rowell's former offices, 9 Devon Square

Abberley was instrumental in the design of many of the buildings erected on Lord Devon's estate from the mid 1840's to the time of his death in 1855 at the age of 49. The Town Hall in Courtenay Street (now demolished) appears to have been one of the first, as its design was accepted in 1846. A terrace of properties to its east quickly followed, and in the 1851 census Abberley is shown to be living in one of them with his wife and five daughters (while at least two others in the terrace were not yet ready for

occupation). Another short terrace built in 1849 in Queen Street (east of King Street) is thought to be his, and so too several of the substantial villas built on Devon Square and Courtenay Park in the early 1850's – these two particular areas being laid out in preparation for development in 1853 and 1854 respectively. The latter being planned so that its focus was the original station building that was sited to the south of where its replacement, built in 1926, stands today.

When Abberley died in 1855 Lord Devon appointed Joseph Rowell in his place; a local surveyor and architect born in West Teignmouth. This was indeed a busy time for the Courtenay Estate and one of the first tasks Rowell had to tackle was the preparation of a development plan that was principally for the Wolborough Hill area but also illustrated the pattern of highways and houses for the Forde Park area and the (by then) much completed areas of Devon Square and Courtenay Park.



Fig 9 Joseph Rowell - Architect

Joseph William Rowell was born in Teignmouth about 1828. He was a son of Joseph Rowell, a prosperous builder who was born at IIsington circa 1797. J. W. Rowell probably established his own business in the early 1850s, and by 1855 he had moved to Newton Abbot and in 1861 the census shows him living in Station Road on the Devon Square corner (now 80-84a Queen Street) (fig 7). He took on the business of Abberley and succeeded him in his appointment as Surveyor to the Devon Estate. As surveyor he is thought to have laid out the remainder of Courtenay Park, and undertaken the development of Devon Square. Devon Square was the centre of the development carried out for the Courtenays circa

1840-60 by Abberley and Rowell. They adopted a provincial version of the type of fashionable villa rustica advocated by Charles Parker in his *Villa Rustica* (1832) and John Claudius Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833). Loudon's book informed numerous builders for a number of years. Abberley and Rowell ingeniously adapted the fashionable villa style to meet the demands of the site.



Fig 10 Ellacombe Road, Torquay

Over his career Rowell was responsible for the design of a large number of buildings in Newton Abbot and Torquay, and the surrounding areas. In Torquay he was appointed architect to the Torwood Estate, in succession to John Tapley Harvey, and this resulted in the planned development of houses in the Ellacombe valley from 1859 for Sir Lawrence Palk (fig 10). These working men's dwellings, in crazy paving limestone, many with red brick dressings, find an immediate parallel with Rowell's development of The Avenue in Newton Abbot.

Rowell not only undertook domestic commissions, he was involved in much ecclesiastical work, from restoration and re-modelling to the erection of new buildings to his own design. In association with this work he designed rectories and a number of schools. In Newton Abbot, Rowell was responsible for St Paul's in Devon Square, built on land given by the Earl of Devon. The foundation stone was laid on 26 April 1859 with tiling supplied by Charles Minton. He built the Wesleyan Chapel on Courtenay Street 1869-70 (demolished) and designed a new chancel, vestry and organ chamber for St Leonard's 1875-6.

The firm of Rowell & Son (s), was established by 1878. There were three architect sons: Spencer,

William John, and Reginald. By 1883 the family had moved from 9 Devon Square (fig 8) to Elburn Lodge, College Road. Rowell retired from his position as Vice-Chairman of Newton Abbot Rural District Council in April 1899. The firm of Rowell, Sons & Locke was formed in 1902 when F.W. Locke was taken into partnership. He had been articled to J.W. Rowell in 1879 and by 1914 he was the sole surviving partner.

Although a number of villas built shortly after Abberley's death may have been to his original design, the vast majority from 1855 onwards were by Rowell. Amongst his other accomplished designs in Newton Abbot were St Paul's Church that forms a centrepiece in Devon Square (financed by Lord Devon for his tenants and opened by Bishop Spencer in 1867), the Congregational Church in Queen Street (1875) and the Mackrell's Almshouses on the south side of Wolborough Street (1873/4).

In the latter part of 1850's and throughout the following decade, roads continued to be laid out and developed in accordance with the 'master plan', with the highways being subsequently adopted by the newly created Local Board of Health. The new villas were apparently let as fast as they were erected, and a new reservoir was constructed on Wolborough Hill to supply them with water.

It is not without significance that Rowell was also appointed by Sir Lawrence Palk to prepare plans for the development of his estate in Torquay, intended for an upper-class clientele. Saying much about Rowell's skills as an urban designer, and of the significance of his work in Newton Abbot, W G Hoskins acknowledges this estate as being a "remarkably fine piece of planning, with wooded drives and terraces following the contours of the hill in sweeping



Fig 11 Ellacombe Road, Torquay

convolutions". In a more colloquial manner, Elihu Burrit, on his travels in 1868, observed "a kind of new town is growing up (in Newton Abbot) around a small park or common near the railway". This was undoubtedly Courtenay Park, but Forde Park could also be described in like manner. It was because this part of Newton Abbot was in single ownership and formed part of a much larger estate that a comprehensive and extremely low-density approach could be adopted for its planning (as opposed to the more traditional layout pattern, with houses arranged regularly along both sides of the street). Crucial to its success, however, was Lord Devon's own vision for creating 'a most desirable place to live' and his willingness and ability to appoint skilled designers.

4.3 Wolborough Hill

The description by Elihu Burrit of the estate's appearance and planning could apply equally to Wolborough Hill. The approaches to its north and east are convoluted indeed, with Powderham and Courtenay Roads hair-pinning their way up the steeply rising land contours – and this would have been the case on the western approach as well, had this part of the plan been implemented. The most likely reason why the latter did not materialise was probably due to its essentially northern aspect and the understandable preference of prospective tenants to live on the sunnier, south-facing slopes.



Fig 12 Hairpin bend at Courtenay Road and College Road

Between the approaches the roads stride along the length of the hillside on its WSW to ENE alignment, with the villas terraced into the contours; each one set in a very substantial garden plot and having its principal rooms on the downhill side to take advantage of the splendid views.



Fig 13 View of Wolborough Hill from Knowles Hill



Fig 14 Italianate style villa at Laureston Road



Fig 15 Highwood House

Prior to its development, Wolborough Hill was part of a farming landscape on the land south of the medieval property boundaries aligned to the south side of Wolborough Street. This character largely still exists not only around the Church (but with fewer hedge boundaries) at the western end of Wolborough Hill outside of the Conservation Area, but also on falling land levels north of Highwood House (fig 15), where the land is used for grazing and is visible from the town centre below. Being within the single ownership of Lord Devon meant the historic, former boundary pattern could be ignored – as indeed it was in the process of drawing up a comprehensive plan that avoided all the inconsistencies that a piecemeal, field-by-field, approach would have created. The lines of one of the old field boundaries appear to have been incorporated (such as in the alignment of Penshurst Road), but otherwise the only boundaries of significance to survive are those that flank the route of Coach Road following the SW to NE boundary edge of the hillside. This route maintains the character of a country road in many places and had probably been created early in the 15th century when the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin was built.

Its single ownership, combined with the fact it formed part of a much larger estate, also meant an extremely low-density, single aspect, approach could be adopted for the arrangement of the villas, instead of the more traditional pattern where they would face each other on either side of the road. Crucial to Wolborough Hill's success as a residential suburb, however, was Lord Devon's own vision for creating 'a most desirable place to live' and his willingness and ability to appoint skilled designers.

Most of the existing villas that formed part of the original plan had been built by 1890. While the remainder (at the west end of South Road and to the south of College Road) are not shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1906, the physical evidence of the buildings themselves suggests they were all completed by or around this time. Since then, and particularly during the second half of the 20th century, the very low density layout of the original plan for Wolborough Hill has been compromised by new housing developments, which in many instances have in-filled the important spaces between the villas that were formerly laid out as integral gardens. This is particularly noticeable towards the eastern end of the Conservation Area (College Road), but also in other parts too



Fig 16 Villa in South Road

such as adjoining the north side of the present boundary, where modern houses in closely associated groups dominate certain scenes – while formerly it was the trees and greenery of the gardens that did so.



Fig 17 Italianate style villa at College Road

5.0 Archaeology

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

The modern town of Newton Abbot is the result of the merging of two separate medieval boroughs - Newton Abbot and Newton Bushel. The prefix of 'Newton' indicates that they were newly established towns and most likely centred on a market and would have had a borough court separate from the manorial court. Newton Abbot itself was established in the manor of Wolborough its focus being St Leonard's chapel and the market area -along the line of Wolborough Street. The earliest reference to the town is as 'Nova Villa' in c. 1200, while the earliest reference to a market and fair is in 1269 but it is likely that they occurred earlier than this date.

5.1 Prehistoric

There are no known prehistoric sites within the area under consideration, although prehistoric activity in the surrounding countryside is demonstrated by the presence of Berry's Wood hillfort to the west, Milber Camp to the east as well as findspots of flint tools and funerary monuments.

5.2 Roman

While there are no known Roman sites within the area under consideration, settlement dating from this period has been demonstrated at Milber Camp to the east and it has been suggested that Haccombe Lane, leading northward from the camp, has a Roman origin.

5.3 Saxon

There are no known Saxon sites within the area of consideration.

5.4 Medieval

Although the survival of well-preserved below-ground archaeological remains associated with the medieval town have been demonstrated by archaeological excavations in the environs of Wolborough Street, there are no known archaeological sites within the designated area. The nearest archaeological remains from this period are found within the confines of the yard to the Parish Church of St Mary The Virgin, of

15th century origin located some 300 metres to the west of the designated area.



Fig 18 Wolborough Hill from Highweek

5.5 Post Medieval and modern

The post-medieval development of Newton Abbot was centred on both East Street and a westward expansion along Wolborough Street followed largely a pattern of narrow fronted but elongated plots. The tithe map of 1845 portrays by contrast a traditional field pattern to the south of the medieval property boundaries aligned on the southern side of Wolborough Street and traversing the ridge of land occupied by the Church of St Mary the Virgin as remaining undeveloped until the mid 19th century.

College Road is likely to have taken its name from the Newton College (the latter constructed in the latter half of the 19th century) and existed in the mid 19th century as a track leading from the east (where Torquay Road is currently found).

5.6 Sites with Statutory Protection

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the area under consideration.

5.7 Archaeological Potential and Planning Constraints

Wolborough Hill Conservation Area was located on the pastoral landscape to the south of Newton Abbot prior to its redevelopment for residential use in the latter half of the 19th century.

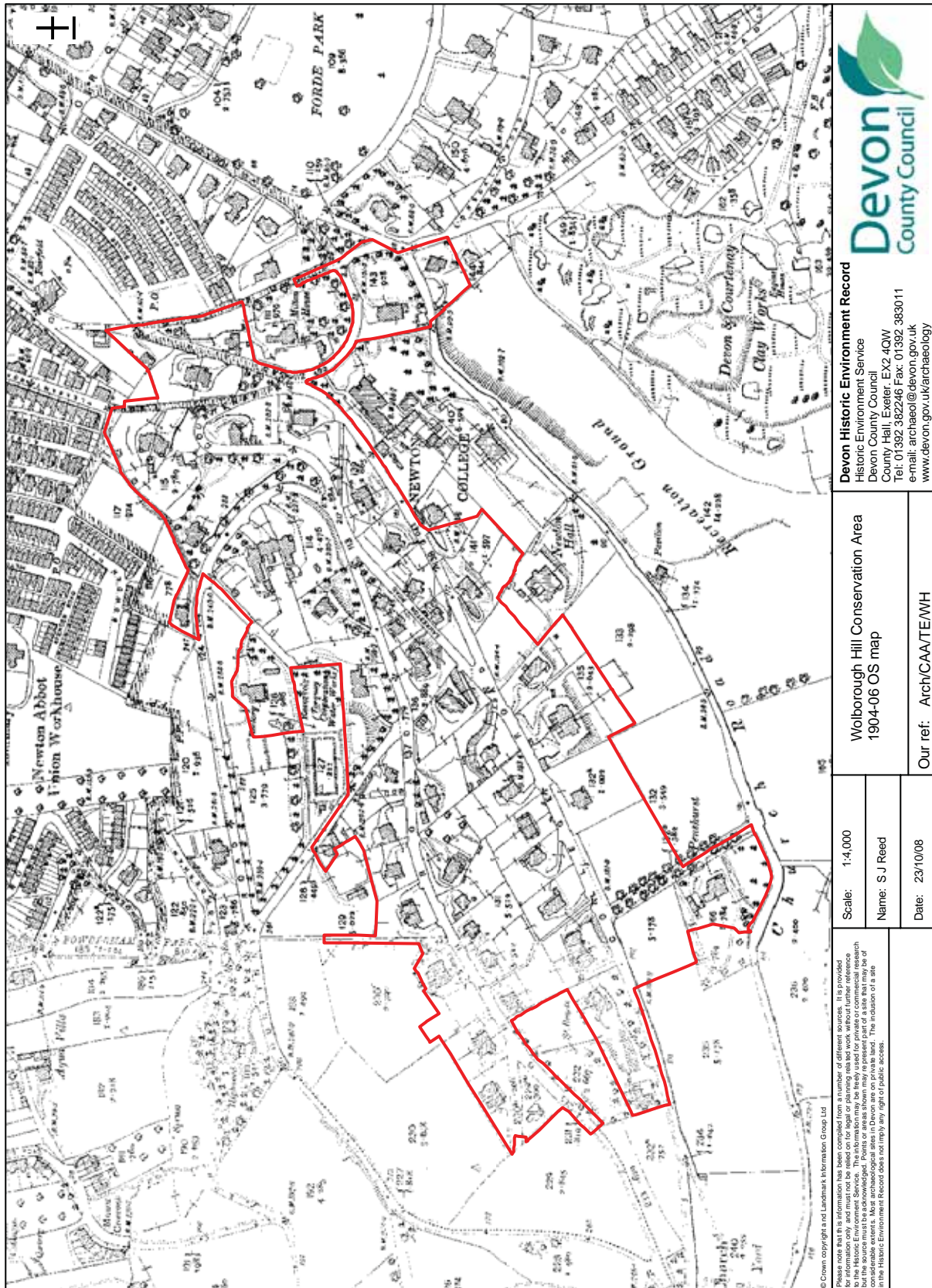
It is considered there is little potential within the designated area for the exposure of previously unrecorded archaeological sites or artefacts associated with the Saxon landscape, and the medieval and later settlement.



| | | |
|----------|-----------------|--|
| Scale: | 1:4,781 | Title: Newton Abbot. Possible medieval core shown on the 1890-90 OS map. |
| Name: | Helen Rance | |
| Date: | 9 November 2009 | |
| Our ref: | | N/A |

Please note that this information has been compiled from a number of different sources. It is provided for information only and must not be relied on for legal or planning related work without further reference to the Historic Environment Service. The information may be freely used for private or commercial research purposes, but it is not to be used for any other purpose without the prior written consent of the Historic Environment Service. Most archaeological sites in Devon are on private land. The inclusion of a site in the Historic Environment Record does not imply any right of public access.

Map 5 OS 1880-90



Map 6 OS 1904-06

6.0 Activities and Uses

The high quality environment created at Wolborough Hill has helped considerably towards sustaining the domestic use of the villas and their occupation as single family residences – albeit, in some cases, in a subdivided or semi-detached form. Their large size, however, has tended to attract an alternative, more intensive form of residential use, namely retirement or nursing homes. While, in principle, these may appear appropriate, in practice their impact is clearly undesirable when sizeable extensions are needed to accommodate them and these have a tendency to erode the areas of garden and create buildings that appear over-sized.



Fig 19 28 Mount Pleasant Road

The area remains a most desirable place for family living (an essential factor to effectively secure the future conservation of the area). Commercial interest understandably generates demand for the construction of additional houses within the Conservation Area, and so places Wolborough Hill under increased pressure. It is clearly evident, however, that the impact these developments have on the area is harmful indeed, causing degradation of the special interest of the planned environment as well as the landscape qualities that create and preserve its authentic character.



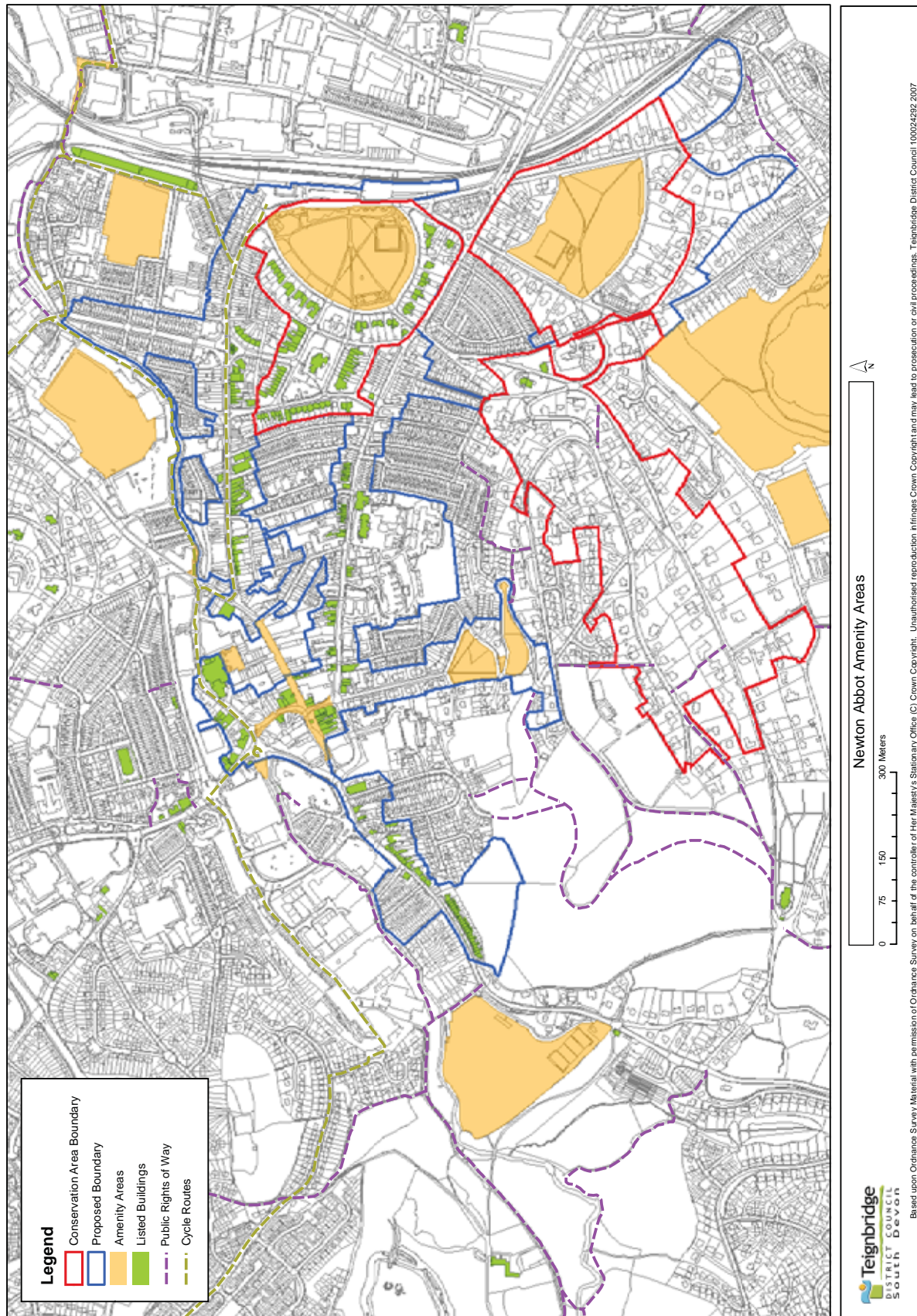
Fig 20 Italianate Villa in South Road

The loss of any additional areas of garden (or areas planted with trees and shrubs) or the introduction of incongruous, tightly-grouped houses or houses in terraces located on street frontages, will serve to further degrade the area's qualities and special interest. In these circumstances it is of paramount importance that any further proposals for infill housing should be firmly resisted.



Fig 21 Lake View, 4 South Road

The same can be said of conversions to flats or bed sits, where gardens may be transformed into parking lots and the building's exteriors suffer the impact of supplying multiple residencies with services (with the introduction of all manner of unsightly flues, vents, pipes and wiring).



Map 7 Amenity Area

The proposed boundaries are under review



A landscape of hills enclose the central area of the town forming an important part of its setting. The hills provide a backdrop to views from the streets at the lower levels and afford townwide panoramas from vantage points in the higher areas.

Map 8 Topography around Newton Abbot

7.0 Landscape and Streetscape

7.1 The Landscape Setting – Distinctive Hills, the Lemon Valley and Setting of Newton Abbot

The setting of Newton Abbot and the Lemon Valley is formed by a series of distinctive, gently rounded hills and the River Lemon and its confluence with the River Teign where it widens to marshes and flood plain at the head of the estuary. Wolborough Hill (fig 24), Knowles Hill (fig 22) and Highweek Hill (fig 23) encircle the historic town at the market cross and crossing of the River Lemon. Emblett Hill, Broadlands and Milber Down also contribute to the setting though with less impact. These hills are important features that provide the backdrop to the centre of the town through their land mass and through being heavily stocked with trees. They form the setting of many important views from main streets within the town, central areas and town wide panoramas.



Fig 22 Looking from Wolborough Hill towards Broadlands



Fig 23 All Saints Church, Highweek



Fig 24 View from Highweek Hill to Wolborough Hill and Milber to the left

7.2 Wolborough Hill

From the south Wolborough Hill has a strong rural setting, a large part of which is formed by Decoy Country Park. The park was once part of the estate of Forde House and its name may have come from the use of an earlier lake for decoying and catching ducks. It was both quarried and mined for ball clay from 1850 until 1966. The park includes the lake, adjoining grasslands and recreational areas, Wolborough Fen and the woodlands on rising ground to the south. To the west of Decoy lie fields of mixed pasture and arable with hedgerows and lanes. Within this setting St Mary's Church and Wolborough Barton form part of the historic hamlet of Wolborough and the fields continue up onto the west side of Wolborough Hill forming a link with the rural landscape.



Fig 25 Wolborough Hill from Decoy

Views out of the Area are a distinguishing feature in character terms, with those to the north and east towards Bradley Manor and Dartmoor, Highweek Church and Knowles Hill connecting Wolborough Hill with other parts of Newton Abbot and the wider landscape. Views across the rural landscape to the south east in the direction of Torbay reinforce the wider rural backdrop of the Conservation Area (fig 25).



Map 9 Historic Structure Planting



Fig 26 Views towards south east



Fig 27 View from East Street to Powderham Park and Wolborough Hill

The north facing slope of Wolborough Hill is important to the setting of the Almshouses. The south slope of the open fields affects the setting of the Church of St Mary the Virgin and may be viewed together with the Conservation Area from points around Stonemasons Hill. Detached dwellings to the south of Wolborough Hill Conservation Area follow the same pattern of spacious development as their Victorian neighbours. They represent an interesting phase of later development to Wolborough and



Fig 28 Wolborough Hill from Decoy Park

are likely to have been built in the 1920's-30's.

Wolborough Hill provides an important visual backdrop to the town when viewed from the east, both from the town and the valley of the Teign beyond. Particularly notable is the view from the town centre (former Market Cross) up Powderham Road to Powderham Park with the villas and Black Pines along the ridge behind (fig 27). The hill is also a prominent landmark in views from the south, rising above Decoy Country Park and the surrounding rural landscape (fig 28). These hills are important features that provide the backdrop to the existing and proposed Conservation Area of the Town Centre through their land mass and through being heavily stocked with trees. They form the setting of many important views from main streets within the town, central areas and town wide panoramas. Black pines planted within the Victorian era are a particular feature.



Fig 29 View to Wolborough Hill from the Avenue



Fig 30 View to Wolborough Hill from Highweek Hill

They are especially distinctive along the ridge line of Wolborough Hill and are of considerable amenity value as they frame and soften the skyline. They line the walks laid out on the north side of the hill which have spectacular views to All Saints Church at Highweek, Knowles Hill, Bradley Manor and Dartmoor.

Action Point: *Wherever possible ridge line trees on Wolborough Hill should be protected and supplemented with other trees of the same species.*

The north facing slope of Wolborough Hill is Boundary important to the setting of the Almshouses. The south slope of open fields affects the setting of the Church of St Mary the Virgin and may be viewed together with the Conservation Area from points around Stonemasons Hill.



Fig 31 Steps from Mount Pleasant to Courtenay Road



Fig 32 Public steps from Courtenay Road down to Southernhay



Fig 34 Public south steps from South Road down to College Road



Fig 35 Blakes path looking north to Courtenay Road

Although not exactly open spaces, the stepped pathways that link vertically between the principal roads are of value as they serve as important arterial pedestrian routes between the residential streets that traverse Wolborough Hill. When climbed, these pathways emphasise the steepness of the hillside (which is otherwise far from obvious from street level, particularly as the land contours are softened to a certain extent by both the high degree of tree cover and the ever present limestone walls). However their locations and alignments may possess historical interest by defining routes or rights of way that existed long before the hillside was developed. The pathways are defined by often high random rubble stone walls with varied coping and seem to offer consciously conceived vistas both southwards and northwards towards landscape features out of the Conservation Area (Highweek Church, Knowles Hill, rural land southwards as well as more distant views towards Dartmoor) (see figs 34)

By far the most significant open spaces in the Area, however, are the private gardens and grounds of each of the villa properties. These are characteristically landscaped with trees and shrubs, often the evergreen varieties and are a major, positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Major



Fig 33 View down King Street to Queen Street and on to Knowles Hill



Fig 36 View up Laureston Road

tree groups are also indicated on the Map 15 Architectural Character Survey.

The spaces between the buildings are as important as the buildings themselves in preserving the Area's original and informal character, as one planned as a high-status, suburban residential development. These gaps between the villas permit, with the aid of the topography, important and pleasing views.

The effect therefore of filling any of these gaps and gardens with new buildings (including extensions) is likely to erode this fundamentally important characteristic – as does the replacement of the existing buildings in much larger forms.

A distinctly informal atmosphere to the streets at Wolborough Hill is formed by a series of characteristics. A primary element of this is the irregularity to the orientation of the houses, which frequently have either their gable ends facing the road but also principle elevations where they face towards the street have their eaves line punctuated by gables, often richly decorated. The irregularity continues with the often random coursing of the mainly limestone rubble walls, combined with the varied capping method used and the frequent overhanging tree canopies of many trees that creates a rural, almost village character. A particularly good example of this is at the east end of South Road, where the mature trees overhang both sides the road to form an impressive crown.



Fig 37 18-20 College Road

7.4 Paving, surfaces and street furniture

Historic surfaces (such as cobbles and setts) are largely absent or hidden from view beneath modern surfaces. However significant lengths

of limestone kerbing survive that enhance the quality and character of many street scenes (fig 40). Also of particular interest, is a feature of most streets in Wolborough Hill) being the remains of channels or gutters that were lined with locally-sourced, yellow bricks (fig 38 & 39).



Fig 38 Buff brick gutter lining



Fig 39 Buff brick edging detail



Fig 40 Limestone Kerb

Especially attractive road, however, are the grassy verges that exist along the short lengths of highway in St Mary's Road and at the west end of South Road, and more obviously along the south-west entry to the hillside at Penshurst Road. These add to the informality of the street atmosphere. The highway in St Mary's Road is itself a most attractive feature. Its particular appeal relates to the properties on its north side being not only bounded by stone walls but the grass verges fronting these which are also raised up and retained by stone kerbs of bold proportions, lending an air of 19th century authenticity that is now rare indeed in Newton Abbot.

Other wide grass verges exist on the sides of

Penshurst Road which are interspersed with mature trees that include limes set into the pavement edges, which particularly enhance elevated views into the Conservation Area from this south direction.

Other artefacts that contribute towards the interest and character of the Conservation Area include a series of four, wall-mounted post boxes (one embossed 'VR' Victoria Regina before 1901, one 'ER VII' (Edward Rex) 1901-1910 and two 'GR' (George Rex) 1910-1936). Also early road-name signs are survive on South



Fig 41 GR post box

Road one of embossed iron at the west end and another of visually distinctive ceramic blue tiles at the east. Two of the pathways also retain embossed iron name plates, with wall mounted direction plates found at the top of the pathway entrance at South Road ('To College Road' fig 43) and the other at the top of College Road (To Courtenay Road fig 42). These sign plates add significantly to the appeal of the streetscape.



Fig 42 Sign Plate



Fig 43 Sign Plate

There are two historic iron lamp standards known to exist at Wolborough Hill, both on College Road. The first at its far west end currently falls outside the present Conservation Area boundary. The other however is within the designated area and is found on the south side of the road outside nos. 5 and 5A.

7.5 Walls, railings and gates

Making a far greater and much wider impact, however, are the very considerable lengths of irregularly coursed limestone rubble walling that either define boundaries or retain the ground exposed by terracing. The visual harmony these bring to the street and the very intact degree of frontage boundary enclosure is immense; their character is more rural than urban, particularly when supplemented with hedges, trees and shrubs. Railings are in general infrequently found, though ironwork examples remain for driveway gates, which are also found with carved timber (where sometimes chamfered, a typical late 19th Century timber detail). The gates themselves usually have a design that is reminiscent of field gates, reinforcing the rural theme of the boundary treatment in the Conservation Area.



Fig 44 Limestone wall and piers at 5 Laureston Road

Noteworthy also is the special interest created by the many pairs of original gate piers that regularly punctuate the boundary walls along street frontages. Unlike those in the other Courtenay developments in the town (which, for the most part, have cappings that take a simple, pyramidal form), the gate piers at Wolborough display considerable variation in their appearance and character – from the more elegant examples that are capped with ball finials to those with a much less formal, quite rustic character, that are made up of pieces of uncut stone.



Fig 45 Villa gates

7.6 Trees (to include first impact idea views and major entry points)

Wolborough Hill forms an important feature in views of and from the town and this leafy Victorian suburb retains its characteristic villas with large gardens and numerous trees. Typical Victorian planting of evergreen shrubs and exotic trees such as Black and Monterey Pines are characteristic. Black Pines are a particular feature here and line the walks laid out to the north side of the hill (and that also appear on late 19th Century OS maps). These walks offer spectacular views over the town to Highweek Church, Knowles Hill, Bradley Manor and Dartmoor.

The view towards the town is important and particularly notable is the view from the town centre (former Market Cross) up Powderham Road to Powderham Park with the villas and Black Pines (fig 27) defining the ridge of Wolborough Hill behind. Pines and street Limes provide planting links along the suburban roads on Wolborough Hill and church. Copper Beech and Western Red Cedar also feature strongly. The hill, with its villas and trees is a prominent landmark in views of the town from the north east (A380 & Kingsteignton), east (Milber) and south (A380 Torquay Road) approaches.

Action Point: *Supplementary tree cover from suitable species along Wolborough Hill should be encouraged.*

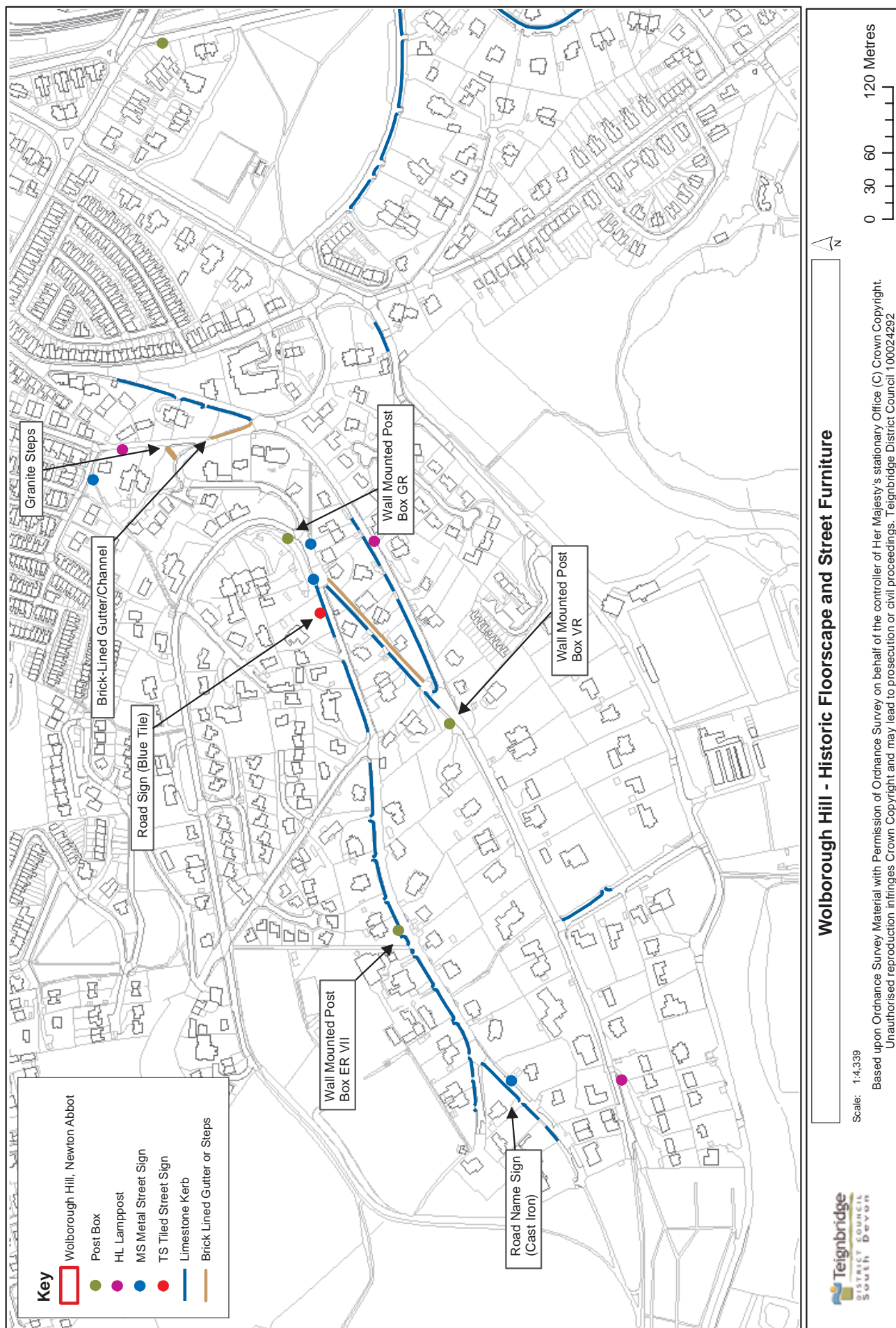
Historic handrails should be maintained and replacement handrails considered where modern inappropriate handrails have been used.



Fig 46 Black Pine Avenue at Wolborough Gardens bordering Courtenay Gardens



Fig 47 Ridgeline black pines along Wolborough Hill at its western end



Map 10 Historic Floorscape and Street Furniture

8.0 Architecture

8.1 The Villas

Nikolaus Pevsner described Newton Abbot (in his Buildings of England series) as adopting an “Italianate gabled villa fashion” in its mid 19th century suburbs, but while this is certainly true at Forde Park and mostly so at Courtenay Park and Devon Square, at Wolborough Hill the style is far less dominant with just over half the villas being designed purely in this style. The substantial remainder are mostly designed in a Tudor-Gothic style, which was also popular around this time, while a good number of the later villas have a style that is a combination of the two.



Fig 48 Villa at College Road, Italianate style



Fig 49 Villa at College Road, Italianate style



Fig 50 Villa at Courtenay Road, Gothic Tudor style

The Italianate style was particularly favoured by Brunel for his railway structures, including the dwellings built to house the industry’s considerable workforce. The original station buildings at Newton Abbot (1846, since demolished) and the slightly later pumping station with its ornate tower, were so designed. However, as Pevsner points out, the adoption of this style throughout the suburbs of Victorian England had much to do with the influential writings of John Loudon, who published his ‘Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture’ in 1833. This work was unprecedented as it was aimed at a middle-class readership, rather than an aristocratic one, addressing their particular needs and aspirations.

The features and details that characterise the Italianate villa style are several and serve to visually emphasise and animate almost every element of a building in a bold, confident and essentially extravagant manner (Fig 51 4 & 6 Courtenay Road, the only listed buildings in the Conservation Area).



Fig 51 4 and 6 Courtenay Road, grade II, Tudor Gothic

Roofs are traditionally of natural slate, often with hipped gable ends where built in the Italianate style, with hip roof slope joints of subdued colours, often with a mortar infill found at the meeting of the roof slopes. Some hip joints have been latterly altered with terracotta ridge tile capping, though this is not a traditional method that prevails here. Ridge tiles used have traditionally been black glazed/dark coloured clay mainly with a square cross-section, though later villas of a more mixed style such as example at 34 South Road has red clay ridge tiles with a fretted profile. Mainly having a gable fronted form, the eaves and verges are deeply overhung and

have a series of brackets beneath to add both visual strength and support. Parapets, on the other hand, are entirely uncharacteristic of the style – other than on ‘minor’ features like bay windows and porches. A notable example of this is the castellated parapet over the porch used on the middle property to the terrace of 2 to 3A Laureston Road.

External angles to wall corners of elevations (quoins) are most often emphasised with raised panels that create the appearance of geometric stonework blocks with deeply recessed joints. These are usually banded on the ground floor with each block forming part of a regular column but on the first floor they are applied in a rusticated fashion. As an alternative, pilasters are sometimes applied to angles with capitals and bases incorporated at the tops and bottoms.

Facades have projecting bands running horizontally across them, which can be just beneath the eaves and verges (here usually quite broad); in line with the first floor window sills, or at the level of the first floor itself. In addition, a protruding plinth usually rises from the ground to the level of the ground floor.

Chimney stacks may also have decorative banding but almost always have an ornamental cornice around the top of the shaft.

Window openings are invariably emphasised by projecting mouldings, sometimes in the form of a cornice above and often with brackets beneath the sills to give visual support. Openings with semi-circular heads are a fairly common, and quite characterising feature, since its roots are in the ‘Venetian’ window form (in which a tall, semi-circular headed window is flanked by a pair of lower, narrower, flat-headed windows). Indeed, there are several examples of round-headed windows being grouped in threes to clearly interpret the Venetian form. Tripartite sashes are also found with both flat headed and elliptical arched heads, which have sashes divided vertically by either wide section timber mullions as part of the outer window frame or alternatively structural mullions which are integral to the elevation wall.

Substantial bay windows are common, with sides that are either canted (angled) or rectangular in plan, while entrances are frequently emphasised



Fig 52 Tripartite window, Italianate style

through the provision of an imposing, single-storey, rectangular porch. An excellent example of these is the outstanding pair at nos 2 and 4 St Mary's Road where the bay windows are partly concealed behind horizontally sliding timber louvred panels at first floor level. Bow windows, however, are not characteristic.

For the most part, windows are traditional, vertically-sliding timber sashes that quite distinctively have a single, horizontal, glazing bar in each of the sashes (Italianate style), with side hung casements used for properties constructed in a Tudor Gothic and later An almost iconic symbol of the Italianate style is the belvedere (look-out) or campanile (bell) tower. It was probably their cost that prohibited their widespread construction, and notably only one authentic example exists on Wolborough Hill – at Highwood House; the most westerly villa to be built on Courtenay Road that lies beyond the Conservation Area to the north west. OS maps of the late 19th Century show this fine house to be set in extensive grounds built against the northern slopes falling away towards Wolborough Street. This has since become somewhat annexed from the present Conservation Area by the school grounds, allotments and other modern development unrepresentative of the character and appearance of Wolborough Hill. Within the Area, however, a 20th century interpretation does exist, being an addition to one of the later villas on South Road that was probably erected when the building was put to use as a school.



Fig 53 Highwood House

The Tudor-Gothic style of architecture while sharing the distinctive gabled fronted form contrasts with the Italianate in a number of significant ways. Roofs are more steeply pitched and hips are non-existent, while gables are decorated with elaborately-fretted bargeboards



Fig 54 finely carved barge board at Laureston Road

Window openings are relatively plain, with only label (or drip) hood mouldings applied around their heads in raised relief. The occasional window might have a pointed head rather than a semi-circular one, while the windows themselves are casements not sashes, and set in mullioned and transomed frames. Facades are distinctly different, being treated quite simply, without horizontal banding or emphasis of the quoins, while porches are more likely to be glazed and airy rather than solid and imposing affairs used in the Italianate style.

Where the two styles are mixed in the latterly built villas, a Tudor-Gothic appearance with

steeply pitched roofs tends to prevail, but instead of fretted bargeboards these are either solid and panelled or relatively plain, and the windows are vertical-sliding sashes (with a vertical glazing bar) instead of casements in mullioned and transomed frames.



Fig 55 4/6 Courtenay Road, grade II, Tudor Gothic style



Fig 56 Chimney stacks Tudor Gothic style in South Road

String courses may also be incorporated in the design, as well as substantial bay windows (sometimes with a crenellated parapet), half-timbering in the gables and rusticated quoins around openings and on corners. One particular pair of semi-detached villas with a mostly Tudor-Gothic appearance is found at the west end of South Road, nos. 14- 16. At the west gable end of no.16 this property actually incorporates a tower-like, 3-storied porch in each of their picturesque hybrid designs.

The villas in the designated area are nearly all two-storeys, and while a few have rooms in the attic (and windows in the gabled end) dormers are not a characteristic feature. Indeed, where

they have been inserted they tend to look somewhat misplaced within the large expanse of roof slopes of dwellings that are 'already' large and commodious. On the other hand, gablets (decorative gables) above first floor windows are quite common, creating breaks in the eaves line and adding interest to the roofscape of some of villas designed in the Tudor-Gothic style.



Fig 57 Villa at South Road

The majority of the villas were originally built as detached residences set in substantial grounds and as such, the gaps and spaces between and around them are as important a feature as the buildings themselves in preserving (and creating) the Area's authentic character.

The Church of St Mary the Virgin built in the 15th century has played an important part in the town of Newton Abbot and the Wolborough Hill Area. It includes a monument to Sir Richard Reynell of Forde House

8.2 Urban Design

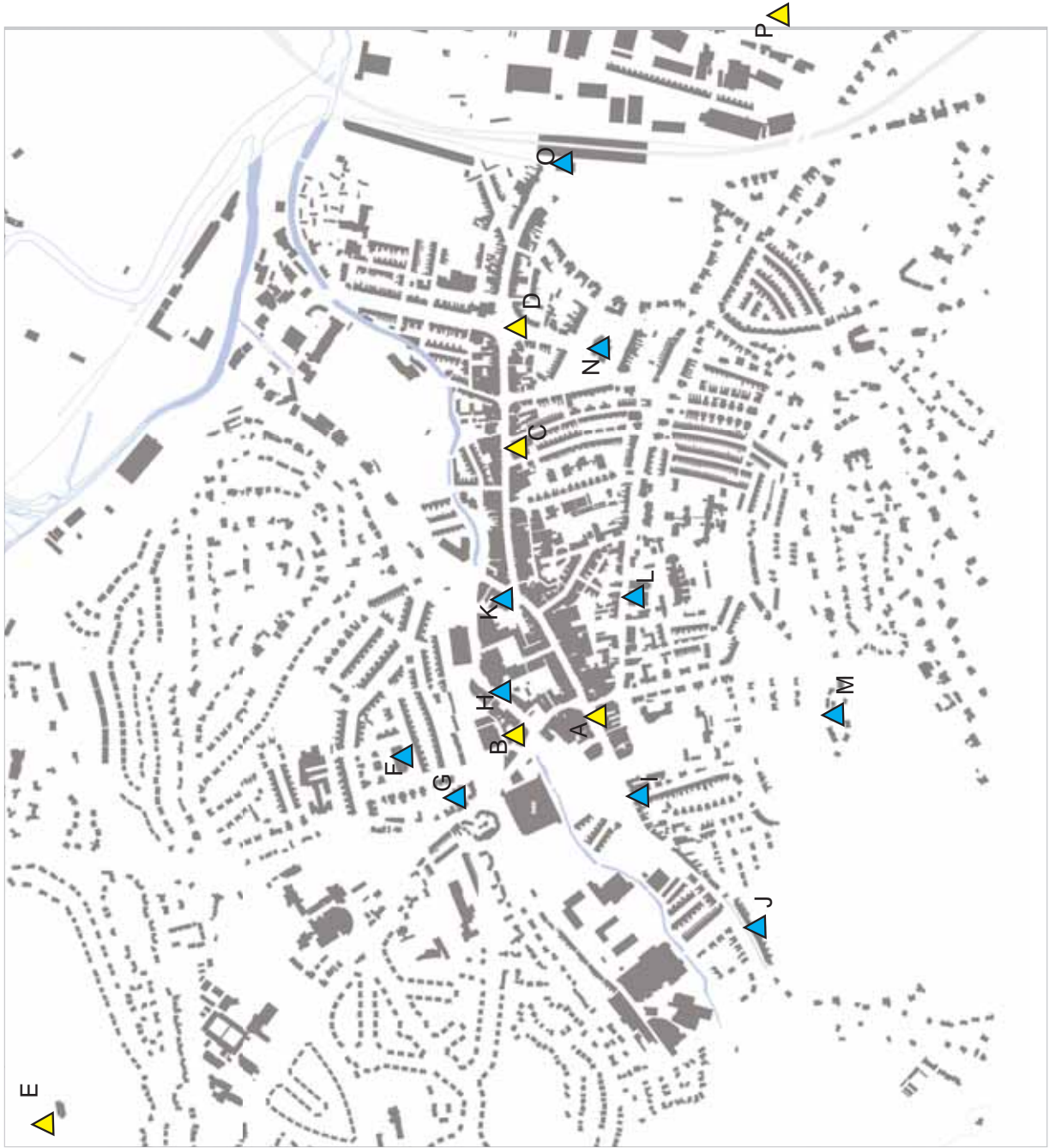
The layout and importance of the Victorian Planning has been fully described in the Conservation Area Appraisal for Newton Abbot Town Centre, Courtenay Park and Devon Square. Wolborough Hill is important in views throughout of the town but has less importance as a gateway. The following maps have been included to indicate its connection with the town centre.

Map 11 Primary Landmarks

- ▲ Primary Landmarks
- ▲ Secondary Landmarks

Primary Landmarks: Important for their townwide contribution to image, identity, and wayfinding.

Secondary Landmarks: Important for their more local contribution to image, identity, and wayfinding.



Map 13 Key Views and Landmarks

- Principal Views
- Secondary Views
- Incidental Views
- Panoramic Views
- Views to landscape Features
- Primary Landmarks
- Secondary Landmarks



Map 14 Routes



Primary Routes: make the most significant contribution to the towns character and image.

Secondary Routes: make a significant contribution to the towns character and image.



Map 14 Neighbourhoods

 Neighbourhood Areas

- 1. Bradley Lane
- 2. Abbotsbury
- 3. Wolborough Street
- 4. Knowles Hill
- 5. Town Centre
- 6. East Street
- 7. Wolborough Hill
- 8. Cricket Field
- 9. Osborne Park
- 10. Courtenay and Forde Parks



9.0 Building Materials

The vast majority of the villas on Wolborough Hill were constructed of the same materials, creating a strong sense of visual unity across the principal architectural styles. Roofs were clad in blue-grey Welsh slate with similarly coloured clay tiles on the ridges and hips (some may have had lead roofs). Walls were of local limestone rubble that was coated in a smooth-textured render and then limewashed, and windows, doors, bargeboards and fascias were all of painted timber – as were the glazed porches and conservatories that adorn several of the later villas.



Fig 58 Typical rendered walls with slate roof



Fig 59 Limestone rubble walls with slate roof

were built with their limestone walling exposed, but they were few indeed and number only four – and in each case had stacks and window surrounds built of red brick. Two of these also had red roofing tiles, making their appearance and character quite out of keeping. One other variation that was late in its introduction (but never on villas with an Italianate style) was the use of red-coloured, ornamental ridge tiles – in place of the simple V-shaped type that was blue-black in colour and blended most agreeably with the colour of the slate (an important consideration on roofs with a multitude of hips and ridges).

Examples of slate-hanging are evident in the area, but they are extremely infrequent and occur only in the gables of minor buildings (fig 60).



Fig 60 Slate hanging at South Road

Rainwater goods were manufactured in cast iron and painted. Downpipes appear to have been universally round, while guttering had either a half-round or ogee profile.

The only major variation occurred late in the hillside's development when a few of the villas

10.0 Architectural Character Survey

The purpose of this survey is to identify which buildings within the conservation area contribute positively or negatively to townscape character. Four characters bands are used and the criteria for each are summarized 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 do 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.

10.1 Category 1: Outstanding

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

Buildings identified as outstanding are the backbone of every conservation area. Any proposal which may affect their character, or that of their setting, should only be considered if it will offer an enhancement. Harmful proposals must be rejected.

10.2 Category 2: Positive

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

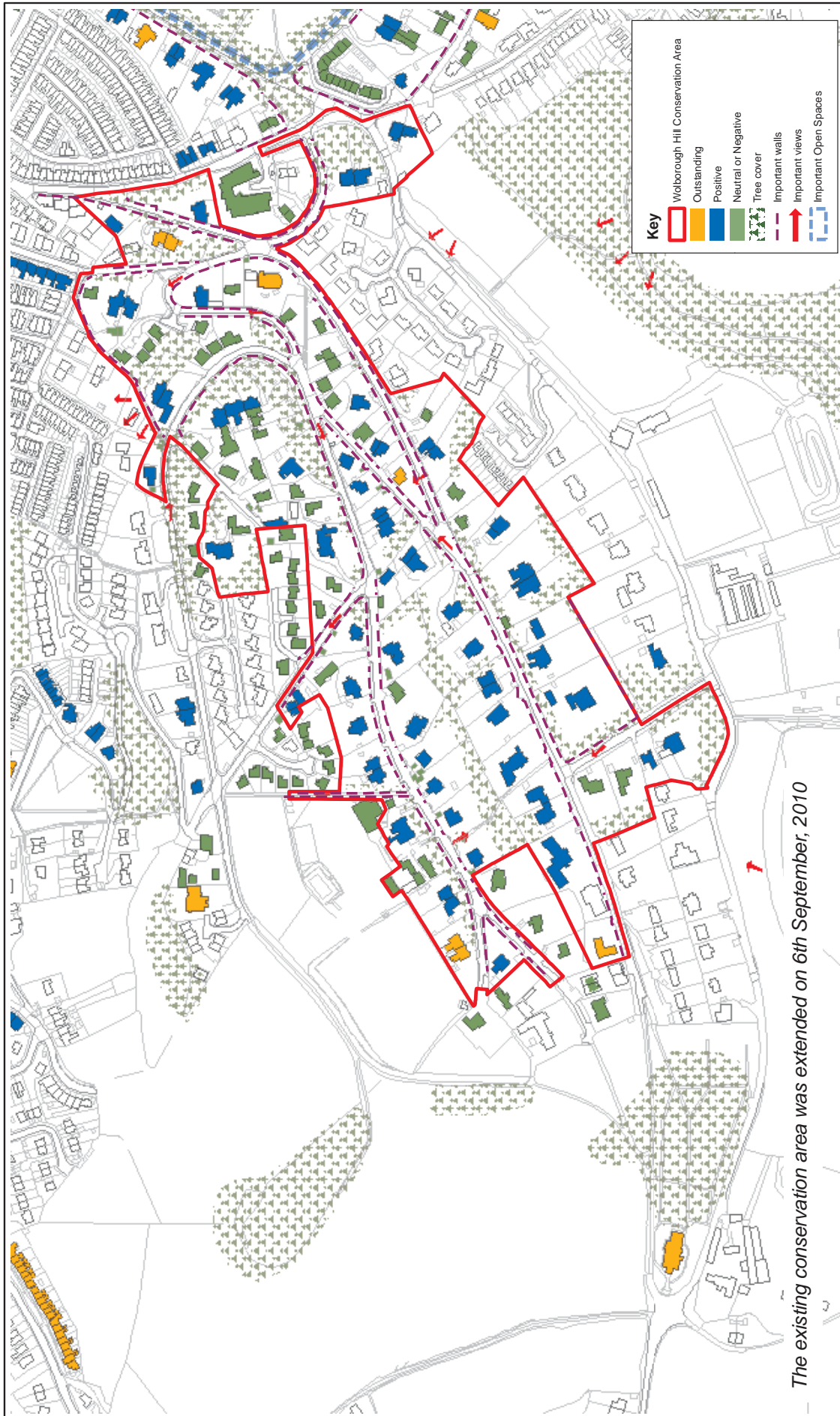
The majority of structures in most conservation areas are likely to fall into this category. Alterations should only be made to positive items if they result in an enhancement of the building and the contribution it makes to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Demolition must only be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

exceptional circumstances where significant aesthetic enhancement and/or community benefits would be realised.

10.3 Category 3: Neutral/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.

Planning applications for alteration, extension or replacement of these buildings will be expected to offer a significant enhancement of the conservation area.



Wolborough Hill Architectural Character Survey

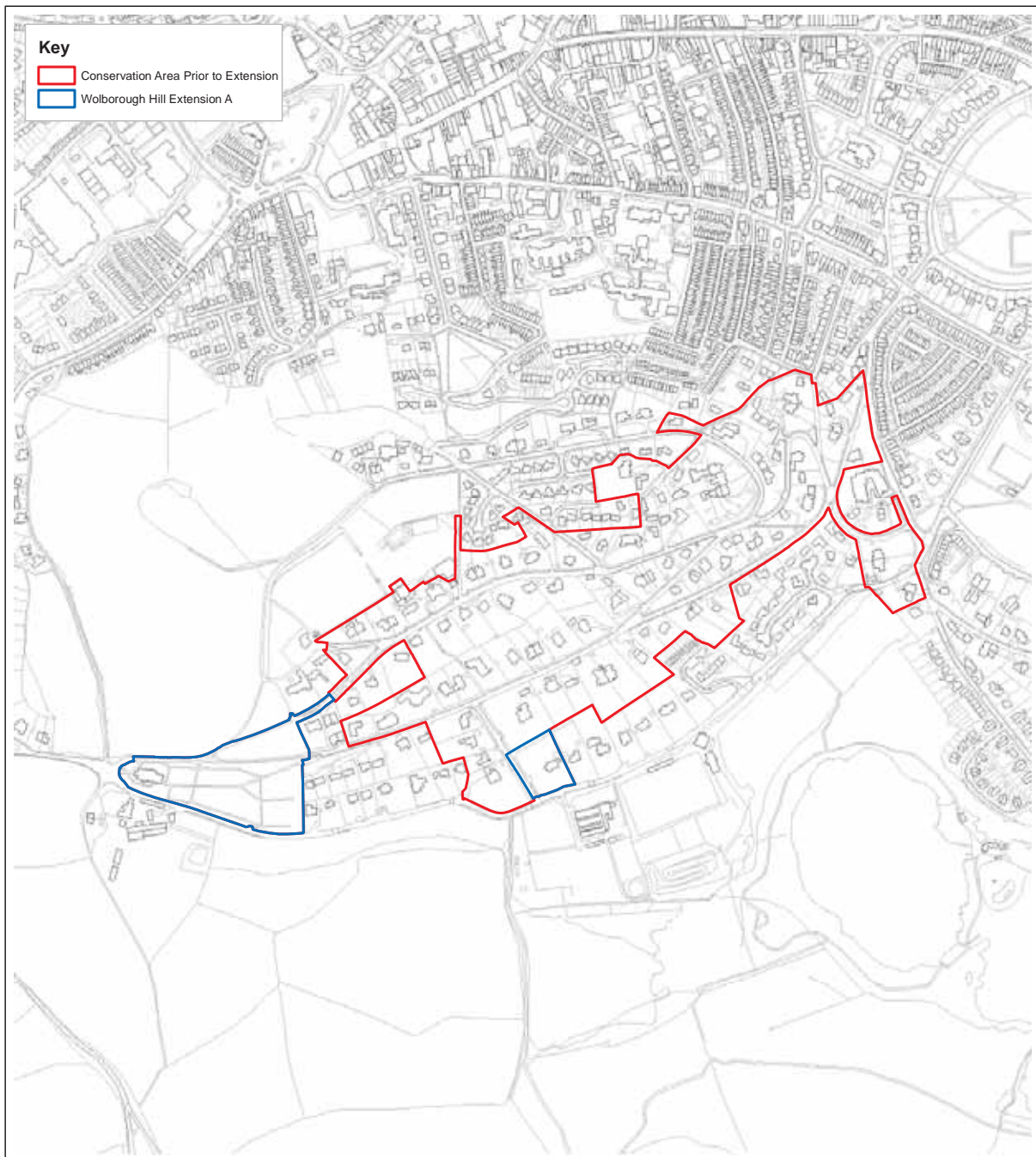
Map 15 Wolborough Hill Character Survey

11.0 Proposed Amendments to the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area was extended on 6 September 2010.

12.0 Recommendations for Listing

There are no recommendations for statutory listing, however, it is recommended that a local list be prepared to identify important buildings that do not quite meet formal listing criteria.



Appendix A - Summary of Buildings Listed as being of Special Architectural or Historic Interest in The Wolborough Hill Conservation Area

| Ref No. | Grade | Date Listed | ID (IOE) No. | Item |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------|--------------|--|
| Courtenay Road | | | | |
| 04 | II | 26/03/75 | 464156 | No.1 Longmead & attached walls & gate 1 piers. |
| 06 | II | 22/03/83 | 464160 | Nos.4 (Clinton) & 6 (Belmont) Courtenay Road |

Appendix B Glossary of Terms

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Breccia: | A red stone with fragments of limestone and other rocks of varied size in a sandy matrix. |
| Burgage Plots: | A medieval land term usually referring to a house with narrow street frontage and a long narrow strip of land behind. |
| Cobb: | Walls built of mud, straw and sometimes dung and animal hair. |
| Crinoid: | Marine fossil indicative of warm shallow seas. |
| Cruck: | Often medieval but up to 19th century roof structure which rises from a basal point within the wall. May be a single piece of timber or two pieces or more jointed together. |
| Devonian: | Geological period around 400 hundred million years ago. |
| Hoggin: | Compressed aggregate of varied size and composition used as a surfacing material. |
| Lime: | Binding agent in traditional mortars. |
| Limewash: | Protective/decorative surface coating made using lime putty. |
| Mitred hips: | Traditional roofing detail. Slate is cut so that two roof slopes meet almost seamlessly. |
| Permian: | geological era approximately 250 million years before present. |
| Plank and Muntin: | Timber partition screen made of posts with thinner planks set into grooves. |
| Stucco: | Smooth render finish. |
| Spilitic lavas: | Extrusive igneous rock similar to basalt. |
| Vernacular: | The traditional architecture of a locality which is functional and uses locally available materials |

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