

TORQUAY HARBOUR  
VOLUME I: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL  
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TORBAY COUNCIL

# TORQUAY HARBOUR: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Torquay Harbour is a historic resort town, preserving a diverse range of historic architecture in a dramatic coastal setting. The conservation area designation recognises what is special about Torquay Harbour, and this document provides guidance on how residents, homeowners, business owners, developers and the local authority can ensure this special interest is preserved and enhanced.

## Purpose of this Guidance

This consultation draft of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to:

- Record and analyse the special interest of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area;
- Recognise the designated and non-designated heritage assets which comprise the conservation area;
- Identify issues relating to condition and detracting features, as well as opportunities for enhancement; and
- Provide guidance for the positive management, preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

A conservation area is defined as an ‘area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which is it desirable to preserve or enhance’. Approximately 2.2% of England is covered by conservation areas. It is a requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that all local planning authorities ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of conservation areas within their jurisdiction, and that these documents are periodically reviewed.

## How to use the Conservation Area Appraisal

**Section 1.0: Introduction** explains what is included within the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area and what makes it special. It sets out the purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal: to define and record the special interest of a conservation area, set out a plan of action for its on-going protection and enhancement, and update the boundary where necessary. This section also sets out the relevant planning policies and guidance pertinent to the conservation area.

**Section 2.0: Assessing Character and Special Interest** provides a summary history of the conservation area, analyses its architecture and built form, identifies key views and assesses the impact of the public realm, open spaces, geology and topography on the character of the conservation area.

**Section 3.0: Character Areas** illustrates the various areas throughout the conservation area which have their own distinct character.

**Section 4.0: Boundary Review** assesses the existing conservation area boundary and explains why no alterations are proposed.

**Section 5.0: Audit of Heritage Assets** explains the various categories used to understand the spread of both statutory (listed/scheduled) and non-statutory designations within the conservation area.

**Section 6.0: Issues** identifies the main issues within the conservation area and offers advice on how they might be mitigated/improved.

**Section 7.0: Opportunities** sets out opportunities to enhance the conservation area.

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## Section 8.0: Conservation Area Designation – Control Measures and Best Practice

**Guidance** sets out the implications for planning/development and best practice for the management of development within the conservation area. It includes advice on repair and replacement, maintenance, new development and sustainability.

*Please note, a glossary of technical terms used in this document can be found in Appendix C.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I need planning permission for demolition and new development with a conservation area?

Planning permission will usually be required to totally or substantially demolish buildings or structures within a conservation area (including walls, gate piers and chimneys). Applications for demolition will also need a heritage statement (sometimes called a heritage impact assessment) as part of the application.

Consult with Torbay Council to confirm whether planning permission will be required ahead of any new development.

### Are there any additional restrictions on permitted development rights?

Permitted development rights (i.e. changes that are allowed without requiring consent from the local authority) may be restricted. For example, replacement windows, changes to elevational finishes or the installation of satellite dishes may require planning permission. Always confirm your obligations with Torbay Council before carrying out any works to the exterior of a building within the conservation area. Contact details for the Heritage and Design Team are provided in Appendix C.

### What are the implications of conservation area designation for tree works?

Trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above the soil level are protected. Any works proposed to these trees require permission from the local authority by means of a planning application. This allows the authority to determine whether a tree preservation order (TPO) is necessary.

### Are there restrictions on advertising and commercial signage?

Advertisements and other commercial signage may be subject to additional controls and/or require planning permission. Contact [planning@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:planning@torbay.gov.uk) before installing any advertising infrastructure or commercial signage.

### How do I seek pre-application advice?

For pre-application advice on any developments, contact [planning@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:planning@torbay.gov.uk). A pre-planning application will provide guidance on what permission is required.

Please refer to **Section 8.0 – Control Measures and Best Practice**, for further information on development within conservation areas.

### Does the UNESCO Global Geopark status bring additional planning restrictions?

No, the UNESCO Global Geopark does not bring any additional planning restrictions over those which already exist in national and local planning legislation, as detailed in Section 1.6.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is derived from the following key factors:

- **Historical interest:** the conservation area evidences the growth of Torquay as a high-end resort town in the late 18th and 19th centuries, and its continued success thereafter. The town has an association with Agatha Christie, who was born in Torquay in the 1890s and spent much time here.
- **Topography and configuration:** the topography of the conservation area has resulted in distinctive layers of development which climb up the cliffs and valley slopes. There are many striking views of the harbour and wider town from various positions in the conservation area, and the terraces and villas built on the hillsides are highly visible from the main commercial streets at the lowest points in the town. There is an interesting contrast between the wide commercial streets and narrower proportions of residential areas, which are often interconnected by steep flights of steps.
- **Architecture:** Most architecture in the conservation area dates from the 19th and 20th centuries, illustrating the town's transition from a small fishing port into a prestigious resort. The rich mixture of architectural typologies demonstrates the evolution of architectural fashion from the late 18th to the 20th centuries and lends significant visual interest and historic character.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Summary of Heritage Assets within the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area

There are 75 listed buildings within the conservation area (some listings cover groups of buildings such as whole terraces); these are recognised and statutorily protected for their architectural or historic interest. Additionally, this Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the buildings, structures and features within the conservation area which make a positive contribution to its character. These are recognised as **positive contributors, local landmarks** and **key buildings of individual heritage interest**. A full audit of the heritage assets within the conservation area is available in Volume II of this report.

## Summary of Condition, Detracting Features and Opportunities for Enhancement

Common problems regarding condition include:

- Misguided repairs with non-breathable materials such as cement-based render and mortar, causing brick and stonework deterioration.
- Poor maintenance including blocked gutters and downpipes which encourage staining and vegetation growth throughout the conservation area.

Detracting features include:

- uPVC windows and rainwater goods.
- Insensitively designed modern shopfronts.
- Flat-roof extensions/infill.
- Television aerials, satellite dishes and external wires.
- Inappropriate modern boundary treatments.
- High visibility of commercial refuse bins.

Opportunities include:

- Upgrading lower-quality modern infill/extensions.
- Addressing minor detracting features.
- Improving the contribution of modern shopfronts by introducing traditional detailing.
- Encouraging regular maintenance.
- Sensitively designed new development.
- Heritage led regeneration.

# SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION



# SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Torquay Harbour Conservation Area

The Torquay Harbour Conservation Area was originally designated in 1975, extended in 1988 and last reviewed in 2004. The boundary was not revised at that time. The designation covers Torquay Harbour and the principal commercial streets around the waterfront. It also encompasses areas of 19th and early 20th-century residential development, reaching to Warren Road in the west, Vanehill Road in the east, and following the line of Braddons Hill Road East to the north.

The conservation area was surveyed between 9th and 10th of December 2024.

A consultation draft of this Conservation Area Appraisal was subject to a period of public review between 17th March and 7th April 2025. The comments received during this consultation period were reviewed by Torbay Council and the document updated accordingly.

*Adoption statement pending*



Aerial imagery illustrating the location of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area in its wider geographical context. High-resolution, zoomable maps are provided within Sections 2 to 5 of this document.

## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

### 1.2 Context and Vision for this Conservation Area Appraisal

Torbay Council envisages heritage at the heart of the cultural, creative and economic development of Torbay, making our home - the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - a better place in which to live, work, learn and visit.

Caring for our outstanding historic assets and sharing our stories will maximise the potential for heritage to bring social, cultural and economic benefits to all parts of the Bay. To do this, we will develop better understanding of the risks to historic places and of the diverse meanings of heritage to different people.

Torbay Council recognises that our built, natural and cultural heritage are essential to the future success of Torbay. This approach does not prevent development, but encourages a responsible approach, balancing heritage and local need for the benefit of all our communities, now and for future generations.



## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

### 1.3 Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is derived from the following key factors:

#### Historical Interest

Built development within the conservation area illustrates the evolution of Torquay as a successful resort town over the course of the later 18th and 19th centuries. The continued prosperity of the town is evidenced by the large number of ornate civic and commercial buildings constructed in the Edwardian period and large hotels built on the waterfront in the inter-war period. The conservation area also has associations with Agatha Christie, who was born in Torquay in the 1890s and spent much time here.

#### Topography and Configuration

Built development in Torquay has necessarily responded to the dramatic topography of this coastal location, resulting in layers of development climbing up the cliffs and valley slopes. The topography results in a number of striking views of the harbour and wider town from many positions in the conservation area, whilst the terraces and villas built on the hillsides are highly visible from the main commercial

streets at the lowest points in the town. The generous proportions of the principal commercial streets contrast with the narrow pedestrian routes which navigate the steep slopes of the hills where most residential development is concentrated.

#### Architecture

Most architecture in the conservation area dates from the 19th and 20th centuries, this being the period when the town expanded and developed from a small fishing port into a prestigious resort. There is a rich mixture of architectural typologies including historic terraces, grand villas, commercial structures, civic buildings, churches and chapels. The range of building types and styles demonstrates the evolution of architectural fashion from the late 18th to the 20th centuries and lends significant visual interest and historic character.

### 1.4 Definition of a Conservation Area

A conservation area is defined as an ‘area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’<sup>01</sup>

<sup>01</sup> Section 69 (1), *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

Conservation areas recognise the unique qualities of an area as a whole. This includes the contribution of individual buildings and monuments but also of other features, including topography, materials, spatial relationships, thoroughfares, street furniture, open spaces and landscaping. All these features contribute to the character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive sense of place.

The extent to which a building, or group of buildings, positively shape the character of a conservation area derives not just from their street-facing elevations but also from the integrity of their historic fabric, overall scale and massing, detailing and materials. Rear and side elevations can also be important.

### 1.5 Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal

It is a requirement under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for all local planning authorities to ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of conservation areas within their jurisdiction and for these documents to be periodically reviewed.<sup>02</sup>

<sup>02</sup> Section 71 (1), *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.

## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

The Torquay Harbour Conservation Area was last reviewed in 2004. It is important for local planning authorities to maintain an up-to-date strategy for the positive management of conservation areas so that they can be carefully adapted and continue to thrive. These public documents define and record the special interest of a conservation area and set out a plan of action for its on-going protection and enhancement.

Over time, conservation areas evolve and the integrity of characteristics which underpin their special interest may depreciate due to gradual alteration. It is therefore important to review and take stock of the character of a conservation area at intervals to ensure designation is still suitable and that the proper tools to manage change are in place.

Reviews often find that conservation area boundaries were previously drawn too tightly or include peripheral areas which do not contribute to an understanding of its character. Consequently, it is important to review the boundary and include/exclude buildings and spaces which do/not meet the requirements for conservation area designation.

This Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to:

- Record and analyse the special interest of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area;
- Recognise the designated and non-designated heritage assets which comprise the conservation area;
- Identify issues relating to condition and detracting features, as well as opportunities for enhancement; and
- Provide guidance for the positive management, preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

Although this document is intended to be comprehensive, the omission of any building, structure, feature or space does not imply that said element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the conservation area. The protocols and guidance provided in **Section 8 (Conservation Area Designation: Control Measures and Best Practice Guidance)** are applicable in every instance.

The assessments which provide the baseline information for this Conservation Area Appraisal have been carried out utilising publicly available resources and through on-site analysis from the public thoroughfares within the conservation area.

## 1.6 Planning Policy

### 1.6.1 National Planning Policy

Conservation areas were introduced in the United Kingdom under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. They are now governed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The National Planning Policy Framework (revised December 2024) sets out the overarching requirement for local planning authorities to identify and protect areas of special interest (paragraph 204).<sup>03</sup>

### 1.6.2 Local Planning Policy

#### 1.6.2.1 Torbay Local Plan

The Torbay Local Plan 2012-30 was adopted in December 2015 and a draft update will be published for consultation in spring 2025. The Local Plan details the local planning policies that will shape and guide development in Torbay to 2030. Of specific relevance to Torquay Harbour Conservation Area are policy HE1: Listed buildings and policy SS10: Conservation and the historic environment, which are reproduced on the following page.

<sup>03</sup> When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

### **Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030**

#### **Policy HE1: Listed buildings**

Development proposals should have special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building and its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Proposals for the alteration or extension of any listed building will not be permitted if the character of the building would be adversely affected. Suitable uses for listed buildings will be supported where this would help to conserve their historic fabric and character. In appropriate cases, planning policies may be applied in a flexible manner to accommodate such uses. Changes of use, demolition or development which damage the fabric or character of a listed building will not be permitted. New development should respect the significance, scale, form, orientation and architectural detailing of any listed building it affects.

#### **Policy SS10: Conservation and the historic environment**

Development will be required to sustain and enhance those monuments, buildings, areas, walls and other features which make an important contribution to Torbay's built and natural setting and heritage, for their own merits and their wider role in the character and setting of the Bay. This includes all

designated and undesignated heritage assets, including scheduled monuments, historic buildings (both nationally listed and of local importance), registered historic parks and gardens, conservation areas, and archaeological remains.

All heritage assets will be conserved, proportionate to their importance. In particular approval of a scheme causing substantial harm to, or loss of, a Grade II listed building, park or garden will be exceptional.

Substantial harm to or loss of designated assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, Grade I and II\* listed buildings and Grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens will be wholly exceptional.

Proposals that may affect heritage assets will be assessed on the following criteria:

- 01 The impact on listed and historic buildings, and their settings;
- 02 The need to encourage appropriate adaptations and new uses;
- 03 The need to conserve and enhance the distinctive character and appearance of Torbay's conservation areas, while allowing sympathetic development within them;
- 04 The importance of protecting and

promoting the assessment and evaluation of Torbay's ancient monuments and archaeological remains and their settings, including the interpretation and publication of archaeological investigations;

- 05 The safeguarding of the character and setting of Torbay's historic parks and gardens;
- 06 The impact on vistas and views of Torbay's historic features and areas which form part of the visual and tourist appeal of Torbay;
- 07 Whether the impact of development, alteration or loss is necessary in order to deliver demonstrable public benefits, taking into account the significance of the heritage asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval; and
- 08 Whether new development contributes to the local character and distinctiveness of the area, particularly through a high quality of design, use of appropriate materials, or removal of deleterious features.

Proposals that enhance heritage assets or their setting will be supported, subject to other Local Plan Policies.

## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

### 1.6.2.2 Torquay Neighbourhood Plan

The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by Torbay Council in 2019, and forms part of the Development Plan for Torbay.<sup>04</sup> Of specific relevance to the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area are policies TH8: Established architecture, TH10: Protection of the historic built environment, TJ3: Commercial street scenes and TT2: Change of use in conservation areas and listed buildings.

### 1.6.2.3 Torbay Heritage Strategy

The Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 was adopted in November 2020. The Strategy produced a suite of objectives for the Torbay Area.<sup>05</sup>

### Relevant Objectives from the Torbay Heritage Strategy

ID	Objective	Measure of Success
SEC04	Heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.	Updated Conservation Area Appraisals assess risks from climate change and all guidance for building owners includes reference to mitigation and/or carbon reduction measures.
SEC04	The special and distinctive characteristics of Torbay's Conservation Areas are, where appropriate, preserved and enhanced.	All Conservation Area Appraisals are reviewed, updated and adopted where necessary. Building owners and managers in Conservation Areas feel supported. Proposals that enhance heritage assets or their setting are supported, subject to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.
SEC06	Building owners, retailers and developers are encouraged and equipped to enhance the built environment in historic areas.	Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal the architectural heritage of their setting are supported. Shop front design guides for Torquay, Paignton and Brixham are published and promoted. Updated Urban Design Guide and Residential Design Guide.
SEC07	Public spaces in historic areas are easy to navigate and, if possible, enhanced by appropriate street furniture and signage	Unnecessary street furniture and signage is removed. Design of all new and replacement street furniture references and enhances the architectural heritage of its setting. Wayfinding in the public realm clearly and consistently aids navigation to key heritage sites and around the historic environment without unnecessary visual intrusion.

<sup>04</sup> Torquay Neighbourhood Plan Forum, Torquay Neighbourhood Plan, 2019. <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/torquay-np/>

<sup>05</sup> Torbay Council, Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026, <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/local-plan/torbay-heritage-strategy/>

## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

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ID	Objective	Measure of Success
RST02	Torquay Pavilion is conserved and where appropriate enhanced, with a viable and sustainable commercial use.	The building is safe to access, further decay has been halted and a programme of restoration is in place where financially possible. There is ongoing constructive engagement between all interested parties. Appropriate long-term management of the building in line with its cultural and historic value is agreed. Proposals which conserve and enhance the building and find appropriate new uses for it will be supported.
RST04	Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens are maintained and protected for the future.	The Gardens continue to be maintained to a high quality. The Gardens are removed from the Heritage At Risk Register. Historic parks and gardens are key assets in the new Torbay Green Infrastructure Plan.
RST05	The special characters of Roundham and Paignton Harbour and Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas area preserved and enhanced.	Traffic in the Conservation Areas is reduced. Further loss of historic features is discouraged. Walking and cycling in these areas is encouraged. Further loss of natural, local slate roofing is discouraged and its use is supported in new buildings and restoration works.

### 1.6.3 Guidance

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared in line with guidance published by Historic England, the government-appointed body for the management of the historic environment in England, particularly Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, (updated February 2019). Their guidance and publications are subject to periodic review and users are advised to check for the most up-to-date guidance.

## SECTION 1.0: INTRODUCTION

### 1.7 English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Torquay is included within the English Riviera Geopark, a designation awarded by UNESCO to recognise areas of exceptional geological significance, which are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.<sup>06</sup> Torbay was designated as a Geopark in 2007 on account of the international importance of 32 geo-sites spanning 400 million years. The designation recognises the contribution of Torbay to geological and archaeological sciences and the way that the local geology has shaped human history and endeavour across Torbay. From providing shelter to the earliest prehistoric people and animals in Kents Cavern near Torquay, to protecting Nelson's fleet from the prevailing winds and enabling the development of Brixham as a fishing port, the unique geology and landscape has influenced the history of the English Riviera.

The purpose of a Geopark is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between geological heritage and all other aspects of the area's natural, cultural and intangible heritage.

UNESCO Global Geopark status imposes no additional legislation from a planning perspective. However, the designated status of the Geopark is embedded within local planning policy. Torbay Council's working document, *English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark: Briefing Document for Planning* explains the process for planning applications within or near Sites of Special Interest (SSSIs), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and sites of potential geological interest (old quarries, cliff faces etc).

### English Riviera



**unesco**  
Global Geopark

<sup>06</sup> <https://unesco.org.uk/geoparks/>

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



Torquay Harbour viewed  
from the east, 1842

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 provide a brief overview of the history of Torquay, with a particular focus on the area within the conservation area boundary. A more detailed history, taken from the 2004 Conservation Area Appraisal, is provided in Appendix D.

### 2.1 Summary History

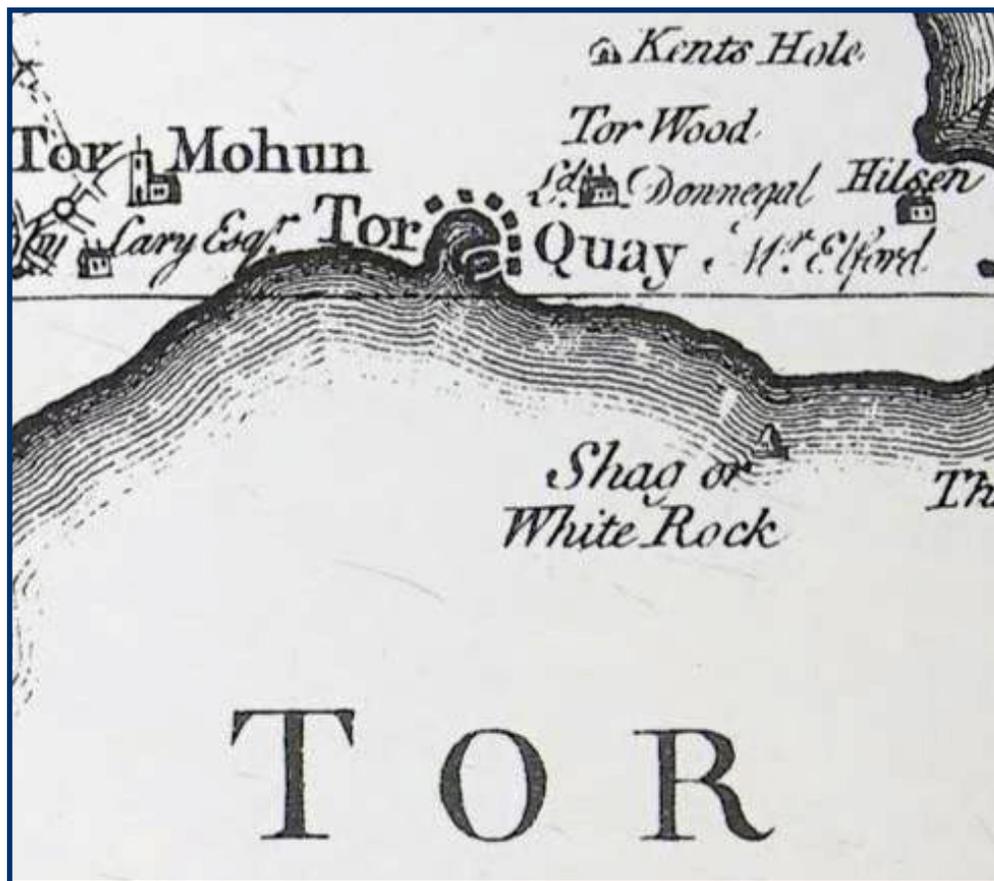
**Early History:** The historic settlement of Toremohun – north-west of Torquay Harbour – was located around the parish church of St Saviour/St Andrew, taking its name from Tor Hill to the east of the church. Torre Abbey, the wealthiest Premonstratensian abbey in England, exercised a strong influence on the area from its foundation in 1196 to its dissolution in 1539.

#### **The Historic Port and Fishing Village:**

The extent of the earliest settlement at Torquay is unclear. However, dwellings and a quay had been established on The Strand by the mid-16th century, demonstrating that a small port and fishing village were established by this time. A rivulet known as the Flete Brook ran along the approximate line of Fleet Street down to the sea until it was culverted in the 19th century.

**Torquay in the 18th Century:** Torquay remained a small fishing port until the end of the 18th century. The Reverend John Swete explained that the village in the early 1780s had ‘but one decent house’. In 1792,

Swete noted that ‘a range of neat houses hath risen within a few years’, as efforts were made to transform the village into a resort for wealthy visitors.<sup>07</sup>



Benjamin Donn's map of Torbay, drawn up in 1765, shows 'Tor Quay' as a small settlement around the harbour, with the older settlement at 'Tor Mohun' depicted to the north-west.

<sup>07</sup> Torbay Council. 'Torquay Harbour Conservation Area Character Appraisal', 2004.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

**Early 19th Century:** The transformation from small coastal village to fashionable seaside resort was accelerated in the early 19th century. The two great landowners in Torquay – the Palk and Cary families – capitalised on the fashionable association between sea bathing and good health and the increasing demand for luxurious coastal retreats amongst the upper classes. Various terraces and hotels were constructed in the first two decades of the 19th century, and the first medicinal baths opened in 1817 (on the site of the Hotel Regina on Beacon Quay).



Torquay Harbour developed as a fashionable resort town in the late 18th and early 19th century, capitalising on the association between sea-bathing and good health.

**Mid-19th Century:** The arrival of the railway in Torquay in 1859 brought more visitors and more investment. The Torbay Hotel (still extant) and Imperial Hotel (now largely obscured from the public realm by later extensions) were constructed during the 1860s, as train services encouraged shorter stays. The Strand was widened in 1867 and a new slipway built alongside the north-west corner of the inner harbour. Haldon Pier was also built at this time, and Cary Green was laid out in the 1870s.

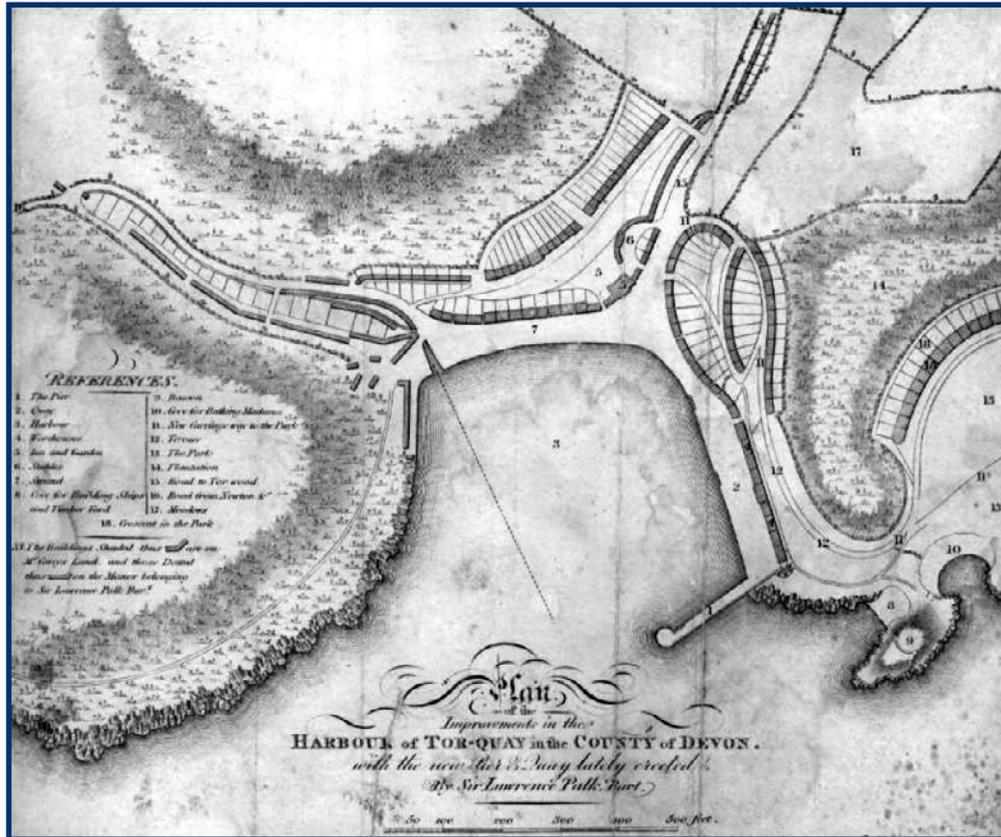
**Late 19th Century:** In 1890, works started on the promenade known as Princess Pier, on the western boundary of the conservation area – the foundation stone laid by Queen Victoria’s daughter. Princess Gardens was laid out on reclaimed land in front of the widened Torbay Road.

**Torquay in the Early 20th Century:** The distinctive clock tower on the Strand was built in 1902. The shopping arcade at 3-21 Torwood Street was constructed between 1909 and 1915, and the post office on Fleet Street in 1912. The 1930s saw the construction of several substantial buildings within the conservation area – including the former ‘omnibus depot’ west of Torwood Gardens and the Queen’s Hotel off Victoria Parade.

**Later 20th Century:** Torquay experienced much residential development in the later 20th century. Some of these structures (such as the 1960s Shirley Towers to the east of the harbour and Lytton House to the west), are highly visible from within the conservation area. In the 1980s, a large area west of Fleet Street was completely redeveloped and the Fleet Walk shopping complex was built. George Street, which had been first laid out in the late 18th century, was removed entirely at this time.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.2 Illustrated History



A map showing planned improvements to Torquay Harbour, 1808. *Torquay Museum*.

The growth of seaside resorts in Devon was facilitated by a range of factors, including the promotion of sea-bathing by the medical profession from the mid-18th century, improved coach travel from the 1780s, the promotion of resorts by travel writers in the late 18th century, and naval conflict with France and Spain during the later 18th and early 19th centuries. Conflict at sea also meant higher taxation and rising prices, which drew many wealthier families to the new resorts offering high-end accommodation at more affordable prices than established towns like London and Bath.<sup>08</sup>

The young resort at Torquay catered for wealthy families seeking permanent or seasonal residence, and for looking to convalesce in the Bay's temperate climate. In 1809, it was reported that Torquay was 'peculiarly favourable for nervous and consumptive complaints, the air being warm and dry'.<sup>09</sup>

A plan dated 1808, showing planned 'Improvements in the Harbour of Torquay', depicts the newly built pier and quay (south pier and Victoria Parade) and Palk's 'Higher Terrace' constructed in 1811. It also shows the town prior to the construction of the inner harbour, which was completed in 1815. Although the plan reflects Palk's intentions for Torquay at this time, rather than the reality of what was constructed, it helpfully demonstrates how the early town grew around the nucleus of the harbour.

<sup>08</sup> John F. Travis, *The Rise of the Devon Seaside Resorts*, 1993.

<sup>09</sup> *Ibid.*

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Most of England's south coast resorts grew more slowly after the 1830s than they had at the beginning of the 19th century. Torquay, however, continued to expand rapidly, capitalising on its sheltered climate which continued to attract visitors during the winter season.<sup>10</sup>

An engraving of 1832 shows Torquay Harbour as seen from the south pier. It depicts the inner harbour, enclosed to the west by Vaughan Parade and North Quay.

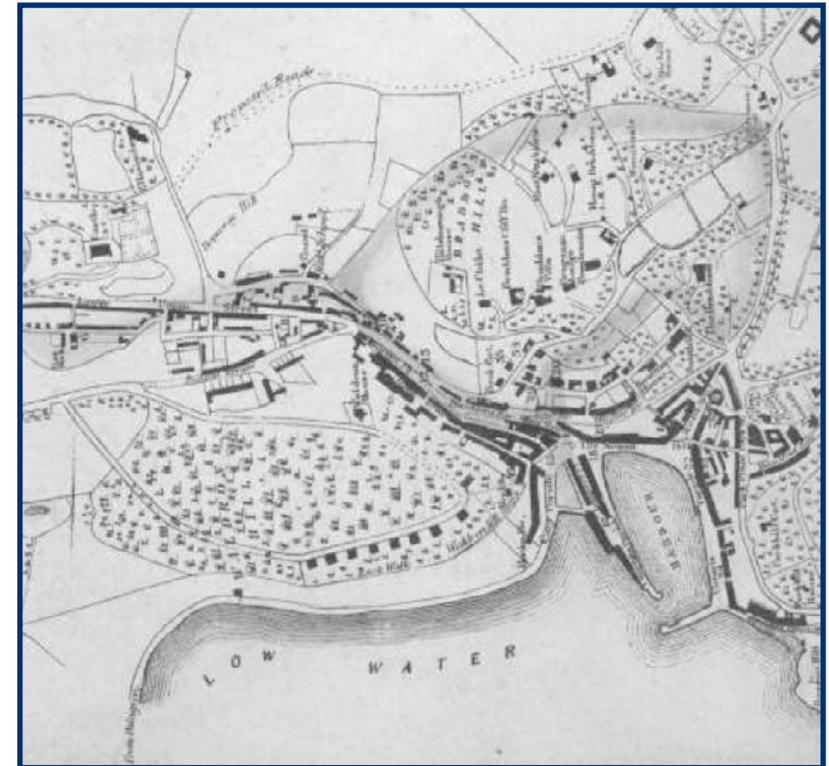


A wood engraving from 1832, showing Torquay Harbour from south pier.

The harbour is lined with terraces on all sides, whilst Palk's 'Higher Terrace' of 1811 forms a focal point on the slopes of Braddons Hill.

A map entitled 'Plan of Torquay & Environs', published by Turner & Co in 1842 shows development wrapping around the Harbour from

Peaked Tor Cove in the east, up Victoria Parade, along The Strand, down Vaughan Parade and along Cary Parade. Terraced properties are shown lining the southern end of Torwood Road, up to the junction with Parkhill Road and along The Terrace to the north of the harbour. Late-Georgian villas can also be seen adorning Braddons Hill, to the north of the harbour.



Torquay Harbour as shown in a map from 1842. (Torquay Museum.)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

In 1850, William White's *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire*, described the changes that had taken place in Torquay over the last decade;

*'Such has been the increasing influx of visitors to Torquay during the last ten years, that its number of dwellings has been doubled in that period, and many wealthy families have now handsome mansions here, in which they reside continuously, or during autumn and winter.'*<sup>11</sup>

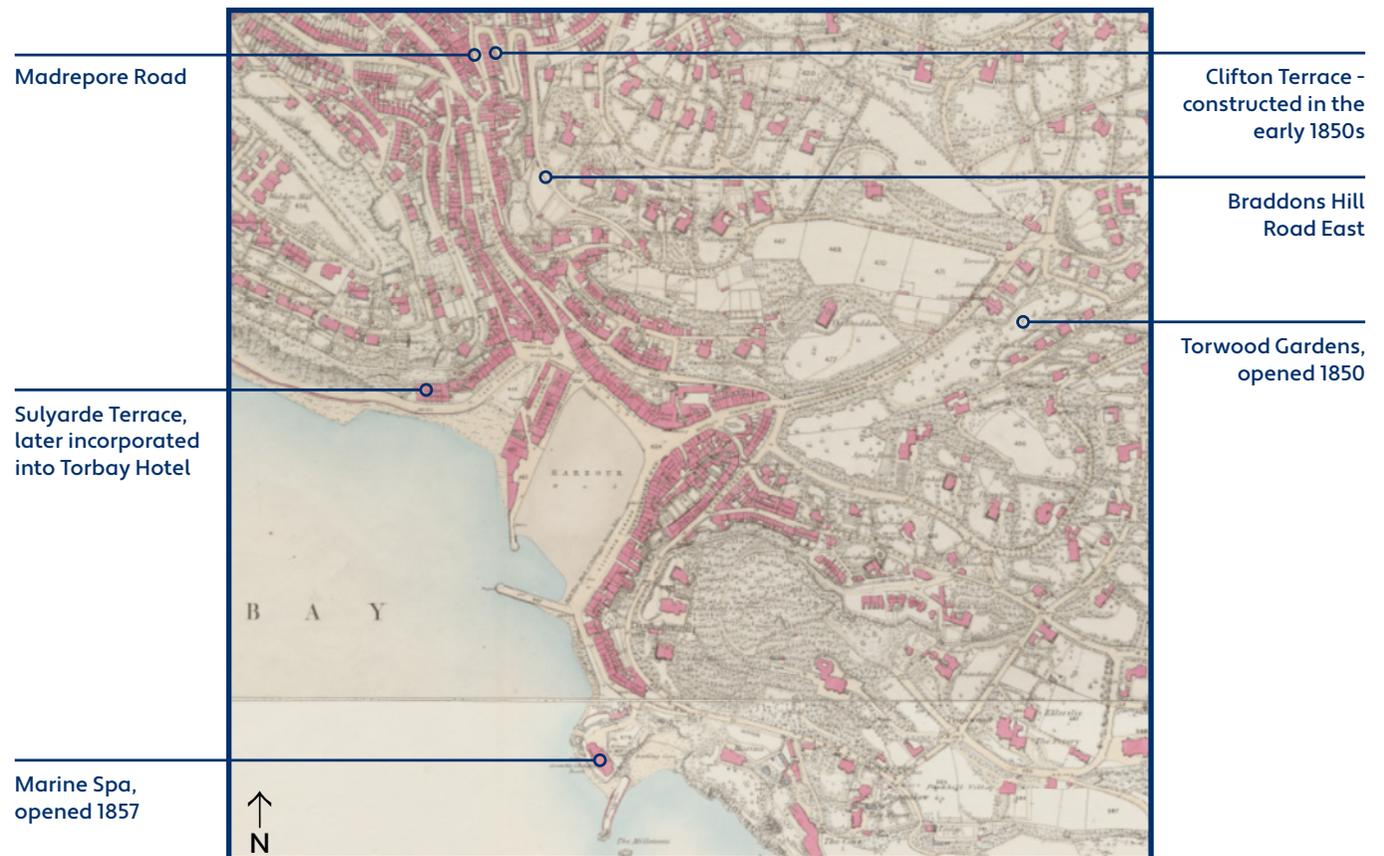
White described the harbour as the site of shops and houses for tradesmen, above which sat 'handsome terraces'. The 'upper tiers' of the village were crowned with 'ranges of neat houses and elegant villas'.<sup>12</sup>

The 1863 Ordnance Survey illustrates this layout well. It also shows how the town had grown since the early 1840s, with additional villas behind the late Georgian residences on Braddons Hill, a new road and terraced housing at Braddons Hill Road East and Madrepore Road, and development extending west down Torbay Road with the construction of Sulyarde Terrace (which was later incorporated into the Torbay Hotel). The

map shows Torwood Gardens, a purpose-built public park laid out by 1850 and the Marine Spa (opened 1857) at Beacon Cove.

The 1863 map shows Fleet Street as the main route between Torquay Harbour and

the older settlement of Tormohun to the north-east. The map identifies the whole area as 'Torquay', indicating the extent to which the historic distinction between the two former settlements of Tor Quay and Tormohun had been eroded.



Torquay Harbour as depicted in the 1863 Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1854-1863).

<sup>11</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire*, 1850.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

The 1906 Ordnance Survey depicts the significant changes undergone at Torquay Harbour from the 1860s onwards.

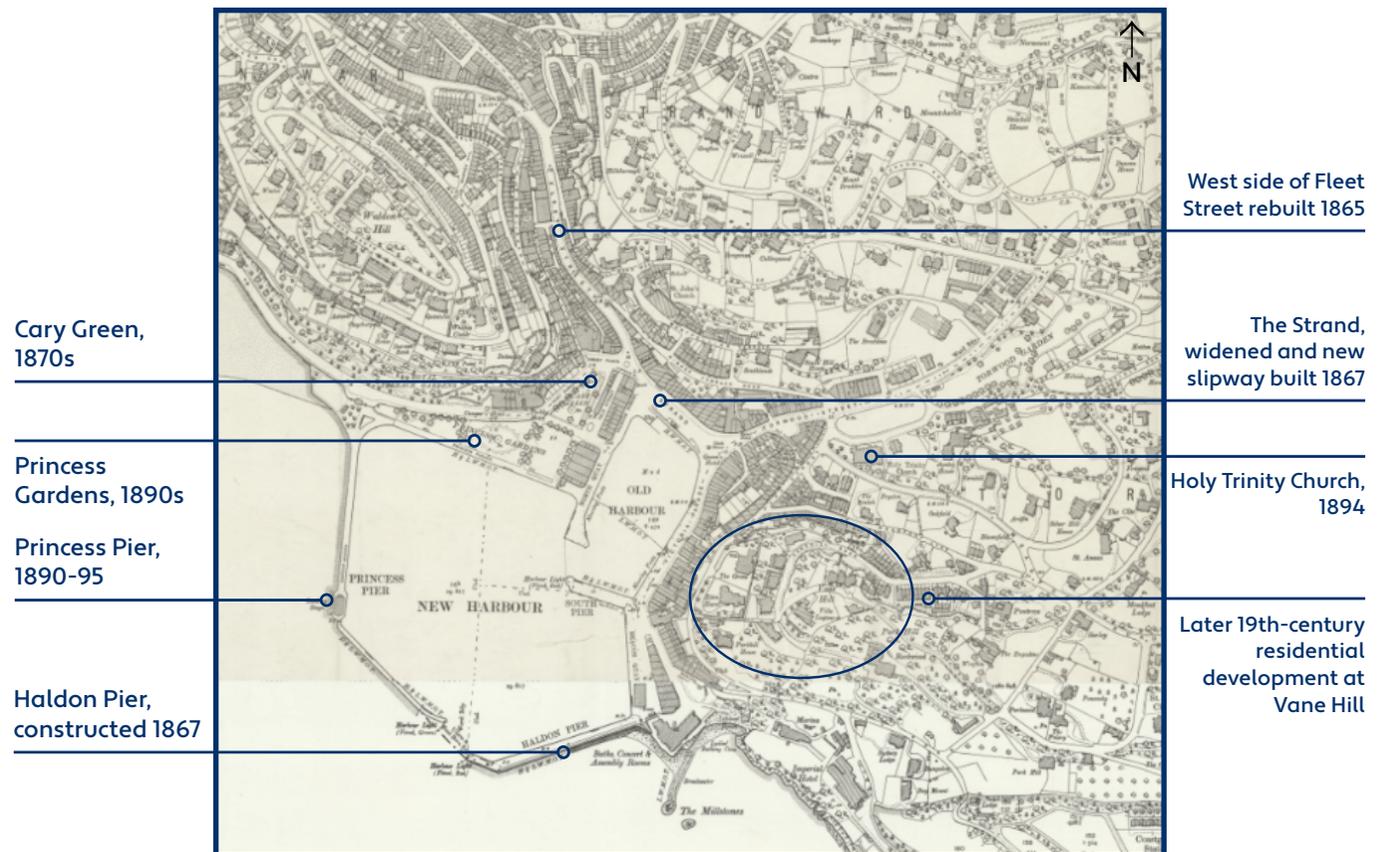
In 1865, the west side of Fleet Street between Union Street and the Strand was completely rebuilt and the street widened. The Strand was also widened in 1867, subsuming the existing slipway and requiring the construction of a new slipway in the north-west corner of the inner harbour. Haldon Pier, which forms the southern boundary of the conservation area, was also built at this time. This pier would originally have facilitated views of the Victorian marine spa, later the site of the 'Living Coasts' marine zoo. Cary Green was laid out in the 1870s.

Princess Pier, on the western boundary of the conservation area, was constructed between 1890 and 1895, and Princess Gardens was laid out just south of Torbay Road around the same time. It is presumed that North Quay was also widened in the 1890s.

The 1906 Ordnance Survey shows new villas and terraces in the Vane Hill area, several of which survive today. It depicts some additional terraced properties south of Torwood Gardens (1-4 Torwood Close)

and the former Holy Trinity Church off Montpellier Road (built 1894).

This map depicts Torquay as Agatha Christie, born here in 1890, would have known it in her youth.



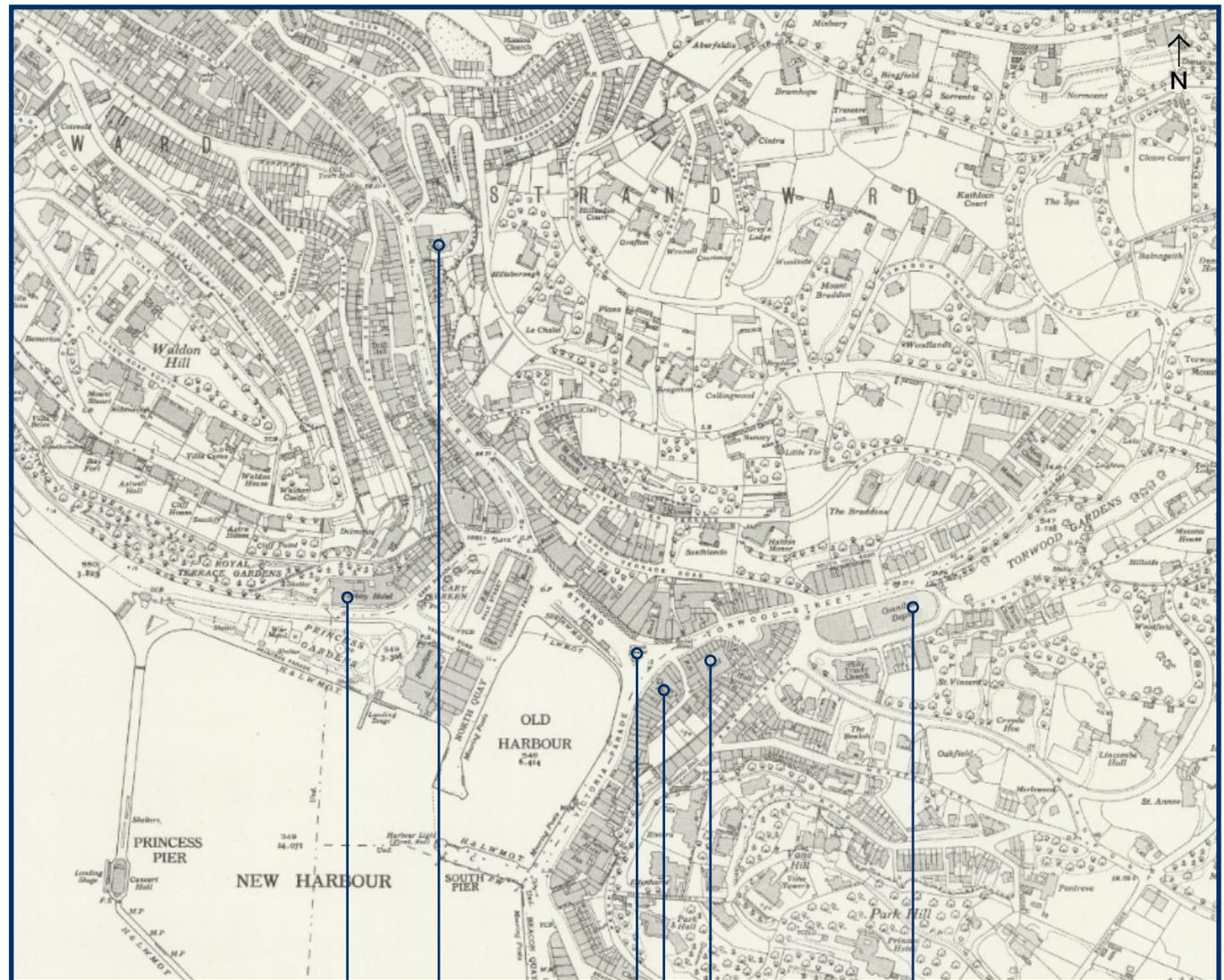
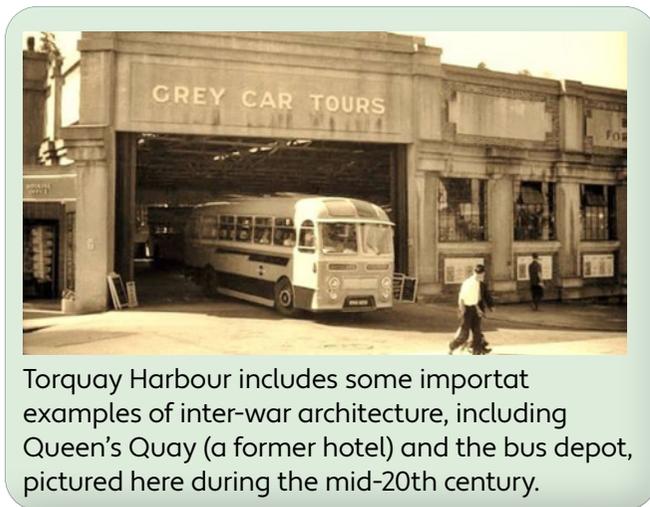
Torquay Harbour as depicted in the 1906 Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1904).

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

The 1935 Ordnance Survey depicts some important Edwardian developments, including the Pavilion adjacent to the inner harbour, the shopping arcade (originally designed as a theatre) off Victoria Parade and the post office on the eastern side of Fleet Street.

This map also shows the prominent interwar architecture within the conservation area - the former bus depot (now a bowling alley) and the Queen's Hotel off Victoria Parade.

During the Second World War, Torquay Harbour was developed with the addition of two reinforced concrete slipways off Beacon Quay. The slipways were used by American troops as embarkation points for the crossing to 'Utah' beach in Normandy for the D-Day landings.



Torquay Harbour as depicted in the 1935 Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1933-34).

Pavilion, 1911

Post office, 1912

Clock tower of 1902

Shopping arcade, 1909-15

Queen's Hotel

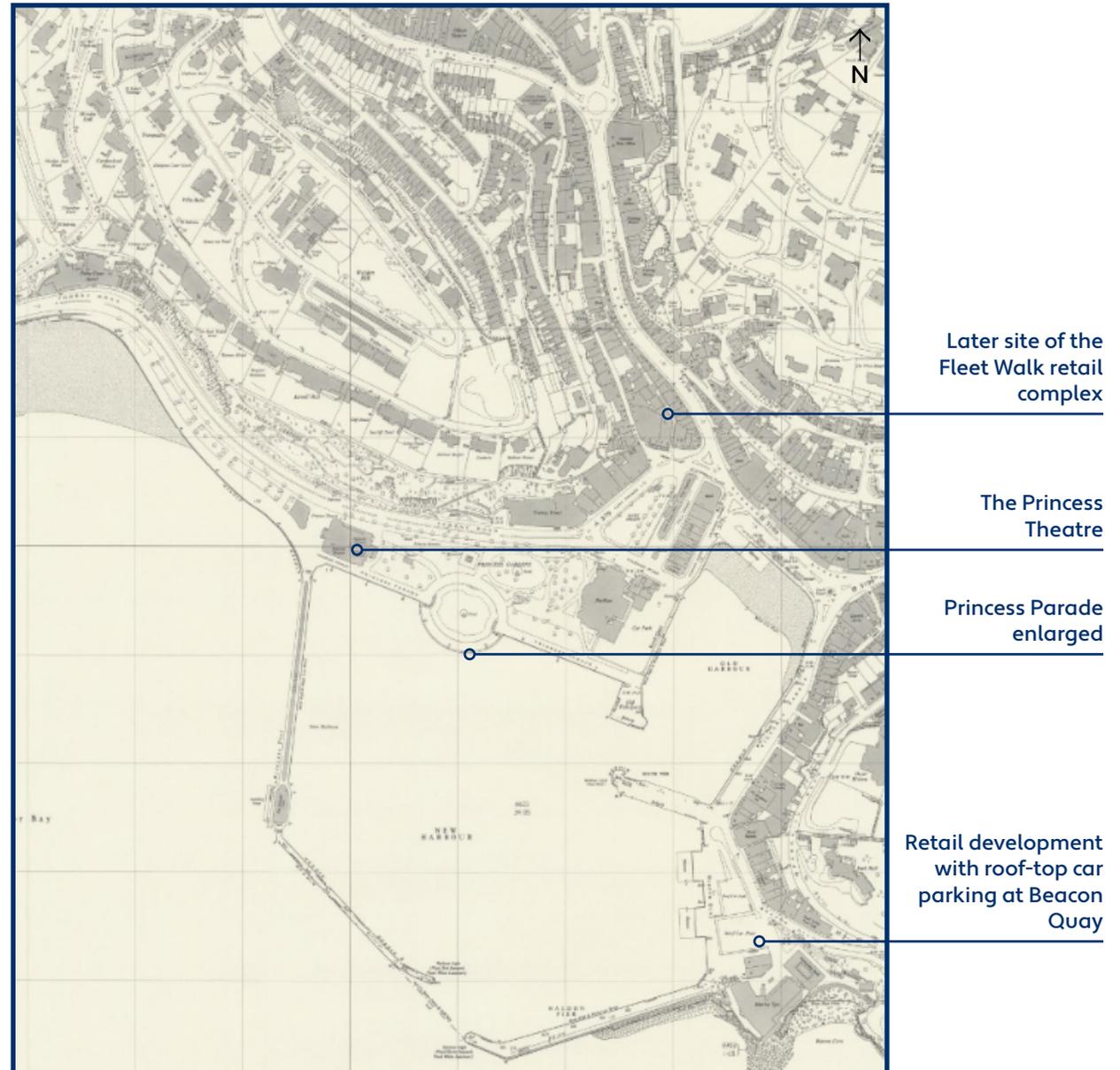
Bus depot

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Torquay Harbour underwent several key changes during the later 20th and early 21st centuries, some of which are depicted on the 1971 Ordnance Survey. These included:

- The construction of the Princess Theatre in the early 1960s.
- The enlargement of Princess Parade (by the 1971 Ordnance Survey).
- The redevelopment of Beacon Quay with retail units and roof-top car parking.
- The construction of the marina and multi-storey car park adjacent to the pavilion in the mid-1980s.
- The wholesale redevelopment of the large area west of Fleet Street in the 1980s when the Fleet Walk retail complex was constructed. This saw the removal of the 18th-century residential road known as George Street, which formerly ran between Swan Street and Fleet Street.
- The regeneration of the harbour in the early 2000s, including the construction of a new bridge linking the north and south piers and the redevelopment of Beacon Quay (introducing a coastal zoo on the site of the former Victorian marine spa).

In 2024-25, public realm improvements were carried out at the Strand, with traffic reduced to a single lane, pedestrian routes widened and the 20th-century clock tower north of the harbour brought back into the public realm.



Torquay Harbour as depicted in the 1971 Ordnance Survey.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.3 Architecture and Built Form

#### 2.3.1 Architectural Styles and Typologies

##### Commercial and Hospitality Structures

Torquay's long history as a resort town is reflected in the number of commercial buildings which line the primary streets. These include purpose-built hotels, public houses and retail structures, as well as the ground-floor retail units which occupy historic residential buildings along Fleet Street, Torwood Street, Vaughan Parade, Palk Street and Victoria Parade.

Hotels range from 19th-century Neoclassical structures (Torbay Hotel off Torbay Road and the Hotel Regina off Beacon Hill), to the 'Art Moderne' style of the 1930s Queens Quay off Victoria Parade, and the many later 20th and 21st-century hotels which capitalise on wide-ranging views across the waterfront.

Given the popularity of Torquay as a holiday destination during the 19th century, it is likely that ground-floor shopfronts have always been an important part of the streetscape around the harbour.

Aerial imagery from the 1920s and 1930s shows active commercial frontages along Victoria Parade, the Strand, Vaughan Parade and Fleet Street.<sup>13</sup> Although a large number of historic shopfronts have been altered or lost, many retain traditional features which enhance the historic commercial character of the harbour area.



A Grade II listed commercial structure off the Strand, built around 1900. The terracotta fascia above the shopfront reading 'UPHOLSTERERS, CABINET MAKERS' identifies the historic usage of the building.



Queens Quay, since converted into apartments but originally built as hotel in the fashionable 'Art Moderne' style of the 1930s, favouring horizontal lines, rounded corners and limited ornamentation.



The Torbay Hotel, constructed during the 1860s. In the early 20th century, the adjacent residential terrace known as Sulyarde Terrace was incorporated into the hotel.

<sup>13</sup> Historic aerial imagery of Torquay Harbour is available to view via <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/>

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### Civic Buildings

There are a large number of historic civic buildings which survive throughout the conservation area. Together, they reflect the prosperity of Torquay in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, add a sense of grandeur to surrounding streetscapes, and illustrate a range of architectural fashions popular during the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

Key civic buildings within the conservation area include the Edwardian Pavilion in Princess Gardens, Torquay Museum off Babbacombe Road, the former banks at 1 Vaughan Parade, 7-8 Fleet Street and 8 the Strand, the Post Office on Fleet Street and the clock tower at the intersection of Torwood Street, the Strand and Victoria Parade.

The historic shopping precinct at the bottom of Torwood Street was originally designed as a theatre. Although never utilised as such, its origins are reflected by the names of Irving and Garrick (presumably famous actors Henry Irving and David Garrick) featured over the projecting cornice to the Torwood Street façade.

The arcade beneath the site of the Living Coasts marine zoo denotes the former

location of the Victorian marine spa, once an important part of the town's civic infrastructure.

Departing from the revivalist styles of the Georgian, late Victorian and Edwardian period was the 1930s coach depot between



The former bank on the corner of Fleet Street and The Terrace, constructed in 1889.



Lloyds Bank on Vaughan Parade, built c.1900.

Torwood Street and Torwood Gardens Road, built for a local touring company. This Art-Deco building occupies a prominent position within the streetscape and illustrates the sustained influx of visitors to Torquay Harbour in the 1930s.



The Post Office on Fleet Street was opened in 1912.



The east elevation of the former interwar coach depot, between Torwood Street and Torwood Gardens Road.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### Historic Villas and Substantial Houses

The large houses and villas around Torquay Harbour illustrate the town's historic function as a highly fashionable resort, attracting wealthy residents and visitors looking to rent a house with grounds for the season.

The 1840s villa known as Delmonte on Rock Road is a notable landmark. Another is Villa Lugano off Vanehill Road. This 1870s villa, constructed in a bold Italianate style in exposed local limestone and articulated with bands of red and yellow brick, is highly visible from several points within the conservation area.

There are also an important group of Grade II listed, late-Georgian villas on the north side of Braddons Hill Road West – Sunnycliff, Braddons Hill House and Villa Belvedere.

The villas on Higher and Lower Woodfield Road in the Lincombes Conservation Area and on the northern side of Braddons Hill Road East in the Warberries Conservation Area are highly visible from within the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area and make an important contribution to its setting.

Together, these Georgian and Victorian residences recall the origins of Torquay as a high-status waterfront resort, enhancing the



Villa Lugano, now divided into three separate properties, was constructed in the 1870s and is highly visible throughout the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area.



Villa Belvedere, a Georgian villa on Braddons Hill Road West.

historic character of the town and adding significant architectural interest.



Braddons Hill House, a Georgian villa on Braddons Hill Road West.



A Grade II Georgian house on The Terrace.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### Terraced Houses

The terrace as a typology first appeared at the end of the 17th century, and is characterised by a uniform design, sharing common materials, boundary treatments and planforms. Whilst early-Georgian examples were generally high-status developments (such as those found in Bath, Bristol and London), more modest terraces with standard details became common in England during the later 18th century.<sup>14</sup>

The conservation area contains many terraces from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian eras. These buildings reflect the steady growth of Torquay over the 19th and early 20th centuries, and demonstrate the evolution of architectural fashion during this time.

Particularly significant within the conservation area is the Grade II listed 'Higher Terrace' of 1811, which sits above and fronts onto the harbour. This crescent-shaped Neoclassical terrace is typically Georgian and constitutes one of the earliest developments in the emerging resort town.

Another early survivor is the 1831 terrace at Nos.3-15 Vaughan Parade, constructed in a highly visible position facing the inner

harbour. The Grade II\* listed Beacon Terrace, built in 1833, was also carefully sited to be appreciable from the harbour, stepping up Beacon Hill and orientated towards the waterfront.

There are many examples of terrace groups on the slopes above the harbour. Many utilise the restrained Neoclassicism which



Early-mid 19th century terrace on Meadfood Lane. Each house is three bays wide and has a plain architectural treatment, which is typical of this time period.



A small terrace off Vanehill Road, using the street-fronting gables typical of high-Victorian domestic architecture.

was popular during the late Georgian and early Victorian periods. Those terraces constructed in the later 19th and early 20th centuries are generally identifiable through their use of bay windows and features inspired by vernacular architecture – such as mock timber framing. The terrace groups on the north side of Babbacombe Road are particularly striking examples of this style.



A plainly detailed mid-19th century terrace on Madrepore Road.



An Edwardian terrace on the north side of Babbacombe Road. Note the mock timber close-studding to the gables.

<sup>14</sup> Historic England, *Conserving Georgian and Victorian terraced housing, a guide to managing change*, 2020.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### Churches and Chapels

There are several churches and chapels throughout the conservation area, some still in use as places of worship and others now serving other functions. The most prominent is the former Church of the Holy Trinity off Torwood Gardens Road, constructed in the 1890s. The tall spire of this Gothic Revival church is highly visible throughout the conservation area. Also prominent is the Church of St John the Evangelist, built between 1861-73 with a west tower of 1884-85.

Non-conformist churches are also represented by the former Salem Chapel of 1839 on Fleet Street (becoming the Vivian Institute in 1887), the former Presbyterian chapel of 1862 on Torwood Gardens Road and the Wesleyan Methodist chapel of 1873 (now known as the Riviera Life Church) on Babbacombe Road. The latter also has a spire which makes an important contribution to views within the conservation area.

Of all the churches and chapels in the conservation area, only the early-Victorian Salem Chapel utilises a Neoclassical style. All others were constructed during the mid-late 19th century, when the Gothic Revival

was particularly popular. The expansion of Torquay during this era is therefore well represented by the ecclesiastical architecture within the conservation area.



The former Church of the Holy Trinity off Torwood Gardens Road, constructed in the 1890s.



The former Presbyterian chapel of 1862 on Torwood Gardens Road.



Church of St John the Evangelist, built between 1861-73 with a west tower of 1884-85, viewed from Fleet Street.



The former Salem Chapel of 1839 on Fleet Street.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.3.2 Distinctive Materials and Features of Interest

Common local materials used across the conservation area include:

**Pale render and stucco:** the dominant finish within the conservation area and the most common finish for domestic structures.

**Exposed limestone:** dressed limestone is the common materiality used for large-scale civic structures. The darker grey local limestone is more common for churches and chapels, often incorporating paler limestone dressings. Exposed limestone is used to great effect for some domestic structures, such as the terraces and villas around Vanehill Road. Local limestone is also found in boundary walls, steps and kerb stones throughout the conservation area.

**Brick:** the use of brick, often painted, is common in buildings from the second half of the 19th century, with several examples on Fleet Street. The decorative use of exposed red and yellow brick is unusual but is used to great effect at the former Freemason's Lodge on Park Hill Road and the substantial boundary wall to the Edwardian terraces on Torewood Street. Exposed red brick is also unusual and where it is seen (as on

the principal façade of the former Salem Chapel, the large commercial premises at 16 the Strand and the former Bank of Scotland at 8 the Strand) it makes a striking visual contribution to the streetscape.

**Slate:** slate is the most common roofing material throughout the conservation area. Although many buildings have shallow pitched roofs behind parapets which can make roof finishes difficult to discern from street level, roofing slates are readily appreciable from many positions throughout the town by virtue of the steep topography.

**Clay:** although less common than slate, there are also some examples of plain clay-tiled roofs within the conservation area. Small pockets of hard-fired clay pavers also survive throughout the conservation area. Historic clay chimney pots survive in large numbers.

**Cast iron:** there is a high survival rate for cast iron features throughout the conservation area, principally as boundary treatments (such as the listed railings to St John's Church or those separating Fleet Street from Braddons Hill Road West) gates (e.g. those to the Torquay Museum) and balustrades (e.g. to the Georgian terrace on Beacon Hill).

Such features make an important contribution to the historic and architectural interest of the conservation area.

Common decorative features include:

- Decorative ridge tiles
- Brackets, cornices and detailing to eaves and architraves across various architectural typologies
- Limestone dressings to windows and doors of domestic buildings
- Mock timber close-studding and barge boards to later 19th and early 20th-century terraced houses
- Sculptural relief to large-scale civic and commercial structures



Sculptural relief articulates the primary façade of the Edwardian Post Office on Fleet Street.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

**Windows:** there has been widespread replacement of traditional timber sash units with uPVC across the conservation area, although there are many instances where traditional timber units have survived. Where pastiche replacements have been made in uPVC, these are conspicuous by their disproportionately thick frames and false glazing bars.

**Doors:** are a mixture of panelled/glazed timber and modern glazed and uPVC replacements.

**Shopfronts:** there are several examples of shopfronts along the principal commercial streets which retain or incorporate traditional details. However, there are also many examples of unsympathetic modern shopfronts in all commercial areas.

Historic shopfronts tend to incorporate a stallriser (a platform below the shop window), glazing articulated by mullions and transoms (horizontal and vertical glazing bars) and a fascia which advertises the name of the business.

The fascia may be flanked by corbels at either end and may sit under a projecting moulded cornice. Traditional shopfronts follow the proportions established by the

host building; fascias in terraced buildings generally respect party wall divisions and are situated well below first-floor window cills so upper windows are not obscured.



A traditionally styled shopfront on Victoria Parade, which makes a positive contribution to the streetscape. Reducing the size of the large fascia at the top of the building could further improve its historic character.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.3.3 Urban Grain, Configuration and Direction of Movement

The principal vehicular thoroughfares in the conservation area are Torbay Road, the Strand, Torwood Street and Babbacombe Road, along which there is steady flow of traffic travelling in both directions. Traffic within the residential areas on the slopes around the harbour is significantly lighter. Fleet Street is semi-pedestrianised.

The urban grain in those parts of the towns closest to the harbour (the Strand, Fleet Street, Madrepore Road, the eastern end of Torbay Road, Victoria Parade, Beacon Hill, the bottom of Parkhill Road, the bottom of Meadfoot Lane, The Terrace and Montpelier Road) is dense. Buildings are tightly packed and generally front on to the highway or are set slightly back from the road behind low boundary walls or railings.

The effect of this density is mitigated in some areas by the width of the roads (the Strand and Fleet Street having been substantially widened during the 19th century), views across the harbour, the punctuation provided by areas of open space (e.g. Cary Green), and long-range views along Torwood Street towards the greenery at Torwood Gardens.

This fine grain contrasts with the sense of openness experienced at Princess Gardens, Torwood Gardens and the various piers around the harbour.

The generous proportions of the streets illustrate the planned development of Torquay during the late 18th and 19th centuries. The many narrow pedestrian routes and flights of steps interconnecting different parts of the conservation area provide a contrast to this and lend an intimate character.

There is a looser grain to the suburban areas further away from the harbour (Vanehill Road, Meadfoot Road and the top of Meadfoot Lane, Torwood Gardens Road, the top of Parkhill Road, Babbacombe Road, Museum Road, Braddons Hill Road East and West). This is created by larger gardens, designed gaps between buildings and a higher concentration of trees on the street and within private gardens.



Looking south along Babbacombe Road towards the harbour. Note the generous proportions of the road.



One of many important pedestrian routes within the conservation area, which lend an organic, intimate character where they survive.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.4 Setting and Key Views

Much of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is low-lying within the surrounding landscape. The harbour is the lowest point, but both Fleet Street and Torwood Street/Babbacombe Road lie at the bottom of valleys and represent the approximate line of former watercourses which have since been culverted. From these low-lying areas, the steep slopes of the surrounding hills and cliff-faces can be appreciated.

There are several types of views which contribute to and enhance the special interest of Torquay Harbour and situate the conservation area within its wider setting. An indicative selection of these key view types is provided to illustrate the views analysis, and can be cross-referenced with the accompanying plan on page 37. The selection of views shown here is not exhaustive but includes the most notable examples.

#### 2.4.1 Views Across the Harbour from Surrounding Quays and Piers (views 01-08)

Views across Torquay Harbour from Beacon Quay allow the Strand to be appreciated in its entirety. Although the earliest buildings

on the Strand were swept away during development in the 19th and 20th centuries, the historic relationship between the Strand and the waterfront has been preserved. Behind the Strand, Palk's white-rendered terrace of 1811 is highly visible, with the mature trees higher up the slope serving as a reminder of the formerly rural character of Braddons Hill.

Looking north-west, the late-Georgian terraces on Vaughan Parade lend a visual uniformity which contrasts with the varying height and scale of the buildings on the Strand. Views westwards incorporate the Edwardian Pavilion, which is set against a backdrop of villas and hotels in the Belgravia Conservation Area, and the rugged slopes of Waldon Hill.

Looking east across the harbour, views from Old Fish Quay and Princess Pier take in the many layers of development which stretch along Victoria Parade and step up the slopes of the hill behind. Despite the prominence of the post-war apartment blocks, the tower of the Victorian Villa Lugano remains the highest building on Vane Hill.

The additional distance afforded in views looking towards the town from South Pier brings the proportions of the early 19th-century Inner Harbour into perspective, enclosed to the south by South Pier and to the west by Old Fish Quay.

Similarly, looking back towards the town from Haldon Pier and Princess Pier shows the harbour in its wider landscape setting, surrounded by steep hills to the north, east and west. Higher Terrace, situated centrally in relation to the Inner Harbour, remains highly prominent in these longer-range views. St John's Church is also clearly visible, and the spires of the former Church of the Holy Trinity (Torwood Gardens Road) and the Riviera Life Church (Babbacombe Road) can be glimpsed in the distance.

All these views allow appreciation of the harbour's evolution since the early 19th century, from the Georgian development at The Terrace, Vaughan Parade and Beacon Terrace, to Victorian, Edwardian, post-war and modern development. All views are foregrounded by the marina, which serves as a reminder of Torquay's close relationship with the water and lends a recreational character.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

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### 2.4.2 Views Out to Sea from Quays, Piers and Beacon Cove (views 09-13)

Views out to sea enhance the coastal setting of the conservation area. Those from Haldon Pier and Princess Pier, looking beyond the harbour, create a striking contrast with the busy marina. The coastline at Paignton and Brixham is readily visible in views southwards away from the town, situating the conservation area in its wider geographical context as part of Torbay.

Views from Beacon Cove take in the rugged cliff face, giving a sense of how Torquay would have appeared prior to the widespread development of the resort town in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

### 2.4.3 Views South-Eastwards Down Babbacombe Road/Torwood Street (Views 14 and 15)

The generous proportions of this long street provide sweeping views on the approach to Torquay Harbour from the north-east. From Babbacombe Road, the former Church of the Holy Trinity forms the focal point and indicates that the heart of the conservation area lies further downhill. The view is terminated by the distant coastline around Brixham, just visible above the 1930s bus depot.

Rounding the bend in the road at Torwood Street, the clock tower comes into view, set against the backdrop of the Inner Harbour and denoting the nucleus of the conservation area.

### 2.4.4 Views Towards the Clock Tower (views 16, 17 and 18)

The Gothic style Edwardian clock tower at the intersection of Torwood Street, Victoria Parade and the Strand is a highly prominent feature within the townscape. The clock tower is triangular on plan and has three faces, directly addressing each of the three streets. The survival of the designed views towards the clock tower enhances the historic and architectural interest of the conservation area.

### 2.4.5 Views of the Harbour from Higher Ground (views 19, 20, 21 and 22)

The steep topography facilitates views down to the harbour from many points within the conservation area. These views provide the opportunity to appreciate the shape of the harbour and observe the historic piers in context.

The configuration of development within Torquay means the varied roofscape of the town features prominently in many of

these elevated views; demonstrating the prominence of slate roof tiles across the conservation area.

Set against the wider coastal backdrop of Torbay, these views situate the conservation area within its wider geographical context.

### 2.4.6 Views of the Townscape from Higher Ground (Views 23, 24 and 25)

View of the townscape from elevated positions within the conservation area highlight the eclecticism of ages and styles which characterise this part of Torquay. The evolution of the town over the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries is clearly appreciable, with Georgian and Edwardian terraces visible alongside post-war architecture and modern commercial buildings.

These views provide an opportunity to regard roof details and materials, which are not always visible from street level. The mature trees punctuating built development, both in the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area and those adjacent, serve as a reminder of the historic rural character of the hills on which Torquay was developed.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

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### 2.4.7 Streetscape Views – Suburban Residences (Views 26, 27, 28 and 29)

The conservation area is characterised by the historic terrace groups constructed during the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian eras. The high rate of survival of such groups provides self-contained streetscape views throughout the conservation area, adding significant visual interest and illustrating the development pattern of the town.

Stylistically, the terraces range from the restrained Neoclassical style of the Georgian development closest to the harbour, to the Victorian dwellings around Vane Hill with their exposed masonry and prominent street-fronting gables, to the ornate Edwardian development along Babbacombe Road and Torwood Gardens Road. Some are configured in gentle crescent shapes (Higher Terrace, Parkhill Road), others purposefully stepping up the hillside (Beacon Terrace, 1-8 Madrepore Road) and others in a simple linear pattern (44-52 Warren Road). This variety in architectural style and planform creates significant visual interest.

All rely for their architectural effect on the sense of uniformity – with shared proportions, materials, finishes and boundary treatments. The historic integrity of the terraces varies widely throughout the conservation area, with additions such as later box dormers and uPVC windows detracting from the overall effect in places.

### 2.4.8 Streetscape Views – Commercial Core (Views 30 and 31)

Streetscape views within the primary commercial areas capture the diversity of styles, scales and architectural typologies which exist in this part of Torquay. Beacon Quay, the Strand and Fleet Street are architecturally eclectic, featuring commercial structures, civic buildings, shopfronts and historic dwellings from a range of time periods.

### 2.4.9 Views Incorporating the Former Church of the Holy Trinity, the Riviera Life Church and St John’s Church – (Views 32, 33, 34 and 35)

The spires of the former Church of the Holy Trinity, the Riviera Life Church and the tower of St John’s Church make an important contribution to the historic interest and character of the conservation area. Breaking

above the skyline, the spires and tower enhance the varied roofscape. St John’s is set highest out of the three and is the most appreciable when viewed from the piers and quays along the harbour.

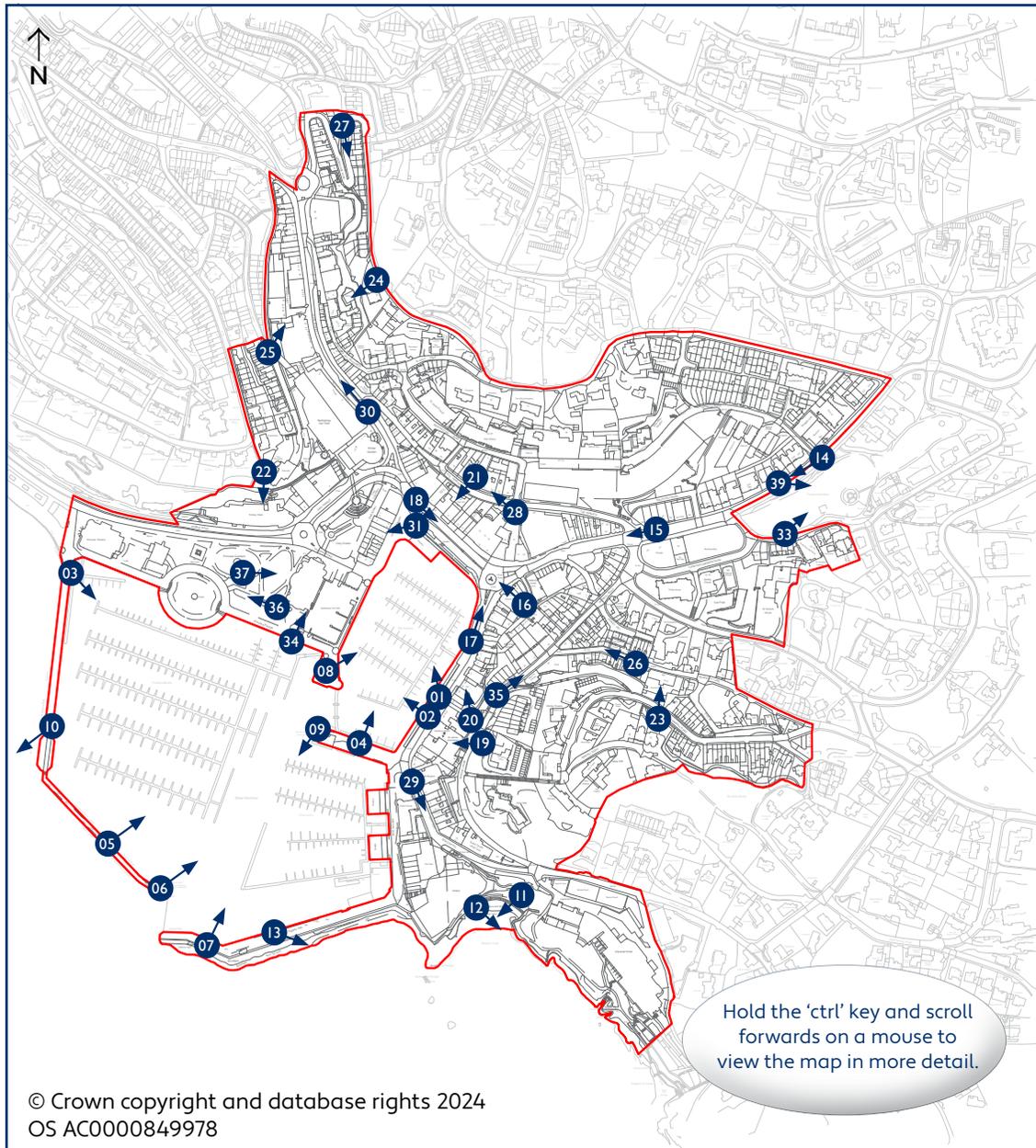
### 2.4.10 Views Across Princess Gardens (Views 36 and 37)

The Grade II Registered Princess Gardens provide formal, landscaped green space on the western edge of the conservation area. The gardens are an important part of the setting for the Grade II listed fountain of c.1894, Pavilion of 1909 and war memorial of 1920, providing open space in which all can be appreciated. Views across and from within the gardens create a break in the dense urban grain of the adjacent commercial core.

### 2.4.11 Views Across Torwood Gardens (View 38, see also View 33)

Torwood Gardens lies within the Lincombes Conservation Area, but is partially bounded by the Torquay Conservation Area. The gardens have an informal parkland character, and views across them from within the conservation area lend a verdant character and soften the surrounding streetscapes.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 01:** Looking north-west from Beacon Quay towards the Strand.



**View 02:** Looking west from Beacon Quay towards Old Fish Quay and the Pavilion.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 03:** Looking east from the bottom of Princess Pier across the harbour towards Beacon Quay.



**View 04:** Looking north-east towards the Strand from South Pier.



**View 05:** Looking north-east from Princess Pier towards the Inner Harbour.



**View 06:** Looking east from the end of Princess Pier towards Beacon Quay.



**View 07:** Looking north-east from Princess Pier towards the Inner Harbour.



**View 08:** Looking north-east from Old Fish Quay towards the Strand.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 09:** Looking south-west from the end of South Pier towards the harbour mouth between Haldon and Princess Piers.



**View 10:** Looking south from Princess Pier towards the coastline at Brixham.



**View 11:** Looking south-west from Beacon Cove towards the coastline at Paignton.



**View 12:** Looking south-east from Beacon Cove.



**View 13:** Looking east towards the headland at Saddle Rock from Haldon Pier.



**View 14:** Looking south-west down Babbacombe Road towards the former Church of the Holy Trinity.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 15:** Looking south down Torwood Road towards the clock tower.



**View 16:** Looking west towards the clock tower from the top of Victoria Parade.



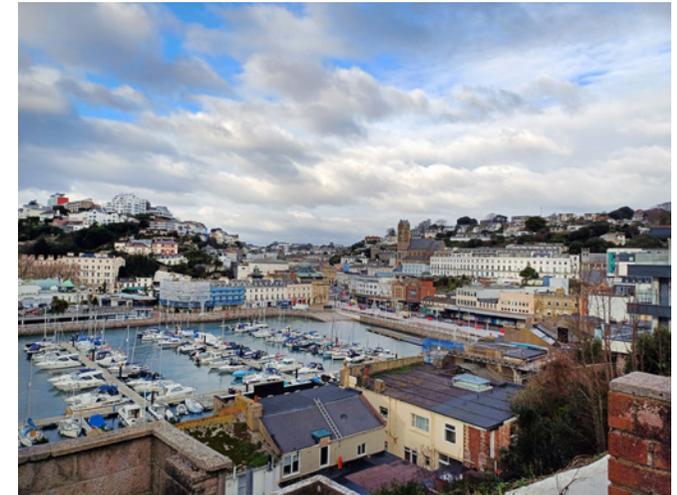
**View 17:** Looking north along Beacon Quay towards the clock tower.



**View 18:** Looking east along the Strand towards the Edwardian clock tower.



**View 19:** Looking west towards the harbour from Parkhill Road.



**View 20:** Looking north-west over the harbour from Parkhill Road.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 21:** Looking south over the harbour from The Terrace.



**View 22:** Looking south over the harbour from the flight of steps connecting Rock Walk and Warren Road.



**View 23:** Looking down into the town from Vanehill Road.



**View 24:** Looking across the town from Braddons Hill Road East.



**View 25:** Looking east across the valley from Rock Road.



**View 26:** Early-mid 19th century terraces on the south side of Meadfoot Lane.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 27:** Mid 19th-century terraces on Montpellier Road.



**View 28:** The Terrace of 1811, viewed from the eastern end.



**View 29:** Looking up Beacon Hill towards the Georgian terrace.



**View 30:** Looking north-west along Fleet Street.



**View 31:** Looking along the Georgian terrace at Vaughan Parade.



**View 32:** Looking south-west down Torwood Gardens Road.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



**View 33:** Looking north across Torwood Gardens.



**View 34:** Looking north-east from Princess Parade towards St John's Church.



**View 35:** Looking north-east along Parkhill Road. This view point captures the spires of the former Church of the Holy Trinity as well as that of the Riviera Life Church on Babbacombe Road.



**View 36:** Looking west across Princess Gardens towards the Princess Theatre.



**View 37:** Looking east across Princess Gardens towards the Pavilion.



**View 38:** Looking east across Torwood Gardens from Babbacombe Road.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.5 Public Realm

The public realm encompasses all the spaces and features which are accessible to the public and help bring together a sense of place as a whole.

Streetlighting generally comprises utilitarian modern streetlamps. Street furniture is limited – there are large contemporary benches lining Beacon Quay and smaller, more traditional benches situated at various points throughout the conservation area – for instance within Torwood Gardens and within a small wedge-shaped piece of open space at the junction of Beacon Hill and Parkhill Road.

Public waste bins around the harbour are generally traditionally styled and blend with the streetscape. However there are many large plastic waste bins elsewhere in the conservation area, some presumably servicing commercial premises, which detract from the historic character and aesthetic interest of the area.

Most surfaces throughout the conservation area have been replaced with tarmac or modern pavers, however pockets of historic finishes remain. For instance, some original cream-coloured clay pavers survive to the front steps of the Edwardian properties on Babbacombe Road, and can also be found

in small sections along historic pedestrian routes.

Local limestone and slate survive as surface finishes in many areas – predominantly as kerb stones or within the long flights of steps found at intervals throughout the town. Small areas of cobbles and historic sets also survive in places (the decorative



Historic sets to the slipway at the Inner Harbour.



Historic flagstones to a small alley off Parkhill Lane.

cobbled finish outside Nos. 1 & 2 Montpellier Road being a particularly notable example). Where these historic finishes are visible, they contribute to the historic and aesthetic interest of the conservation area.



Local limestone and slate can be found in kerbstones across the conservation area.



Hard-fired, cream coloured clay pavers surviving to the front steps of a property on Babbacombe Road. The pavers survive in other smaller, localised areas throughout the conservation area – suggesting they were much far more common.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Street name plates are generally discreet and are a mixture of modern and traditional in style. Traditional name plates are in keeping with the character of the conservation area.

Boundary treatments are variable. A high proportion of the buildings in the historic core, and many domestic terraces further out, front directly onto the public highway. This negates the need for boundary treatments in these areas. Conversely, many of the 19th and 20th-century terraces across the conservation area are set back from the street – most behind low, rendered boundary walls, some of which are topped with traditionally styled cast iron railings.

Gate piers are a common feature both in terraces and historically higher status villas. Where they exist, traditionally styled cast-iron railings complement the historic character of the town.

An important feature of the conservation area is boundary walls built with local limestone, which can reach considerable heights in some areas. Many of these are retaining walls, which illustrate how local topography has shaped development across the town.

There are several public monuments and installations which create focal points within the public realm. These include the 'Vanishing Point' public art installation on Beacon Quay, the clock tower, the bust of

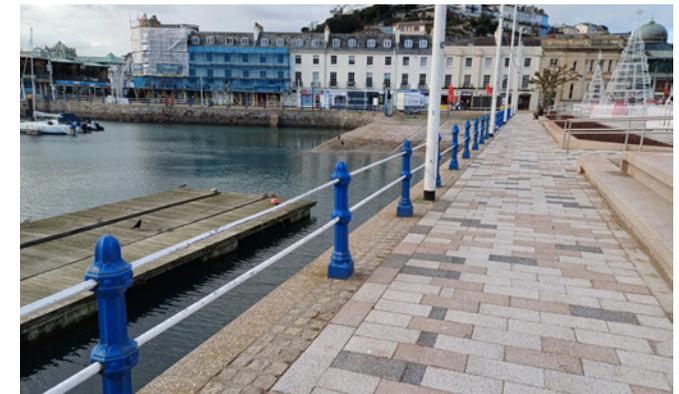


A traditionally styled nameplate. The use of small, dark blue ceramic tiles is found in many places throughout the conservation area and must once have been far more prevalent.



A local limestone wall along Madrepore Road.

Agatha Christie and the concrete sculpture commemorating the 'Year of the Pedestrian' in Cary Green, and the fountain and war memorial within Princess Gardens.



Traditionally styled cast-iron railings on Victoria Parade, which extend along the Strand, Vaughan Parade and Old Fish Quay.



An element of the 'Vanishing Point' installation known as 'The Ring', on Beacon Quay. This piece of public art explores the involvement of Torquay in the D-Day landings.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.6 Open Spaces and Trees

There are several important open spaces within the conservation area. Princess Gardens, to the west, is a Grade II Registered landscape. The gardens were first opened in 1894 as part of a public realm improvement scheme which included the series of terraced walks along the face of Waldon Cliff above Torbay Road (within the Belgravia Conservation Area).

The ornamental fountain was an early feature of the gardens, which continued to be enhanced during the early 20th century with the addition of the Pavilion in 1909 and the war memorial in 1920. The gardens were extended west of Princess Parade during the 1930s.<sup>15</sup>

Princess Gardens reflect the continued development of Torquay in the late 19th century and offers a break in the dense development to the north, east and west.

The gardens form part of the setting for four listed buildings (the fountain, war memorial, Pavilion and mid-19th century Toll House just beyond the boundary), and for Princess Pier, which was built in tandem

with the gardens. The gardens also provide important views across the harbour.

The gardens remain publicly accessible, giving them an important communal value.



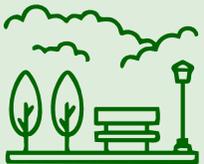
A postcard from the early 1900s, looking across Princess Gardens towards the Pavilion. *Historic England Archive*

<sup>15</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001507?section=official-list-entry>

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Torwood Gardens lies within the Lincombes Conservation Area, but is partially bounded by the Torquay Conservation Area and is an important part of its setting. Laid out by 1850, this small public park provides a break in the urban grain and facilitates views of the surrounding historic streetscapes, with their mixture of historic villas, terraces, churches and civic buildings.

Despite the formal flower beds south of the park's central point (shown as the site of a pond in postcards from the early 1900s), the space generally has an informal parkland quality. This is enhanced by the abundance of mature trees around the perimeter and within the north-eastern end of the park.



Where open space exists within the conservation area, it provides a contrast with the dense development of the town and offers important amenity value.



A postcard from the early 1900s, looking north across Torwood Gardens to the former pond, with Torquay Museum in the background. *Historic England Archive.*

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

Another area of open green space is provided by Cary Green, which was first created in the 1870s when Vaughan Road was created connecting Vaughan Parade with Cary Parade. The green has been heavily re-landscaped in modern times and today has a semi-formal character, derived from the prominent water feature, public art and tiered walkway which connects to the Fleet Walk complex via a bridge over Cary Parade. Cary Green is a public open space with communal value, and forms part of

the setting for surrounding heritage assets including the Pavilion, Cary Estate Office, former bank and Georgian terraces on Vaughan Parade (all Grade II listed).

South Pier, Haldon Pier and Princess Pier provide important areas of public open space, facilitating sweeping views of the harbour, the coastline at Paignton and Torquay, and points from which to appreciate the dramatic topography of the conservation area.

The small beach accessed via a winding footpath down the cliff-face at Beacon Cove provides a rugged and intimate character. Located away from the core of the town and enclosed to the north, east and west by the cliff-face, the cove offers a tranquil position from which to appreciate the coastal setting of the conservation area.

The hard-landscaped, wedge-shaped open space at the corner of Parkhill Road and Beacon Hill provides striking views across the bay towards Brixham.

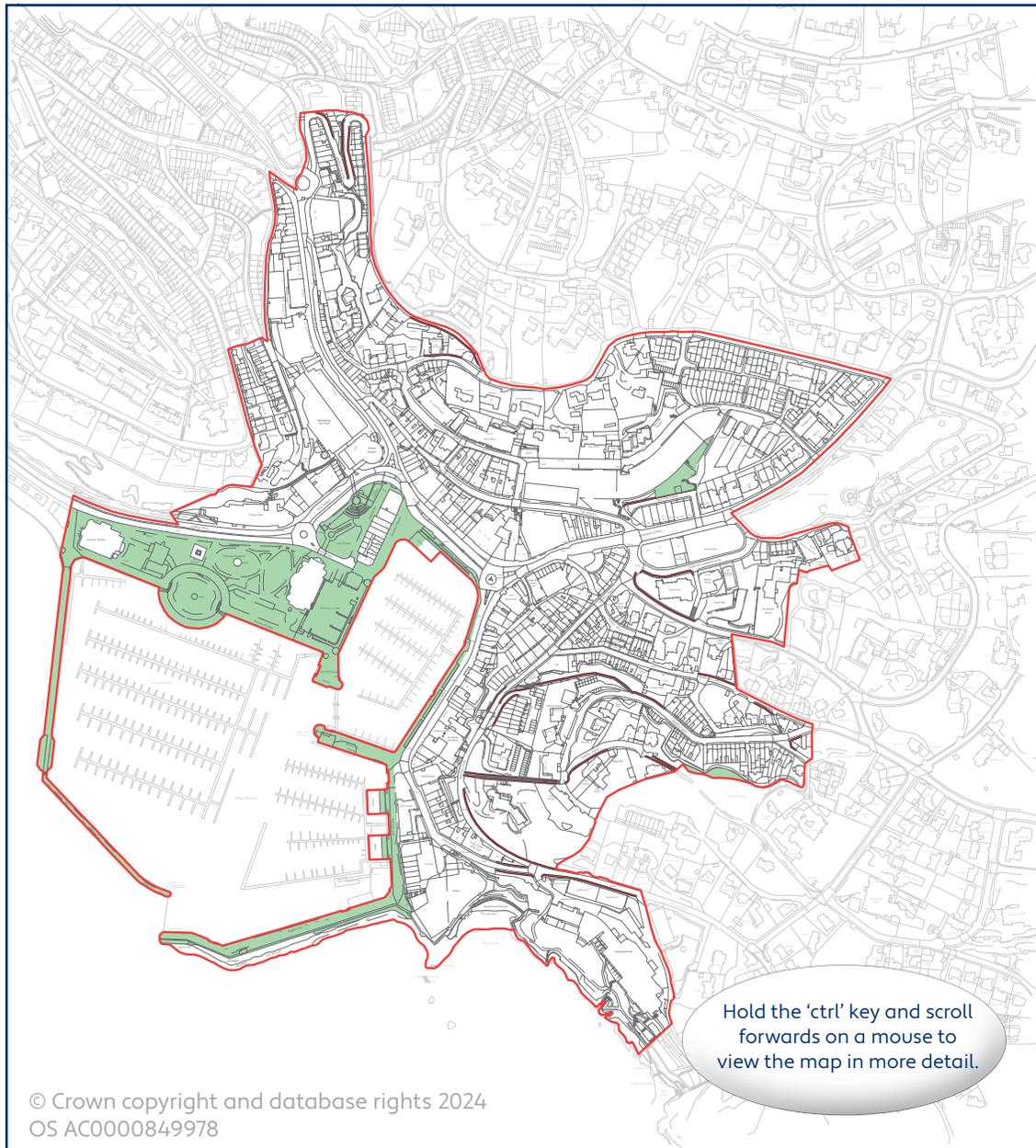


Looking down the late 19th-century Princess Pier.



A small area of open space at the junction of Parkhill Road and Beacon Hill, bounded with traditional iron railings.

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST



### OPEN SPACES AND IMPORTANT WALLS

- Open Spaces
- Prominent Walls
- 2025 Conservation Area Boundary

*This plan is not to scale*

## SECTION 2.0: ASSESSING CHARACTER AND SPECIAL INTEREST

### 2.7 Geology and Topography

The bedrock geology of Torquay Harbour is predominantly formed of limestone and mudstone, with a bedrock of mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone below Princess Gardens and to the north of Torwood Street/Babbacobe Road. Superficial deposits comprise clay, silt, sand and gravel.<sup>16</sup> Local limestone is prevalent in the built environment across the conservation area.

Much of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is low-lying within the surrounding landscape. The harbour is the lowest point, but both Fleet Street and Torwood Street/Babbacombe Road are at the bottom of valleys and represent the approximate line of former watercourses which have since been culverted. From these low-lying areas, the steep slopes of the surrounding hills and cliff-faces can be appreciated. The harbour is bounded to the west by Waldon Hill, to the north by Braddons Hill and to the east by Park Hill. The dramatic topography is highly characteristic of the conservation area and provides many elevated views throughout.

<sup>16</sup> British Geological Survey Data

### 2.8 Archaeological Potential

There is little evidence for prehistoric activity within the conservation area, however stratified evidence for human habitation stretching back to the Palaeolithic period (350,000 – 10,000 BC) was discovered one mile north-east of the harbour at Kent's Cavern.<sup>17</sup> Evidence for Roman activity is similarly scarce, although five Roman coins were recovered from Cary Parade in the 1930s.<sup>18</sup>

It is possible that a fishing quay was present in the vicinity of Torquay harbour prior to the founding of Torre Abbey in 1196, but the location and extent of this is unknown.<sup>19</sup> The settlement appears to have grown up around an eastern quay which was established in the 16th century.

<sup>17</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010745>

<sup>18</sup> Devon & Dartmoor HER, HER No. MDV124233

<sup>19</sup> Avalon Planning & Heritage, *12-14 The Strand, Torquay, Devon, Written Scheme of Investigation for a Staged Programme of Archaeological Works*, March 2023.

The land immediately around the harbour may preserve evidence relating to medieval activity in Torquay, and the development of the early settlement during the early-modern period. Most of the conservation area was undeveloped until the 19th century, and therefore has less archaeological potential to reveal information about the early settlement.

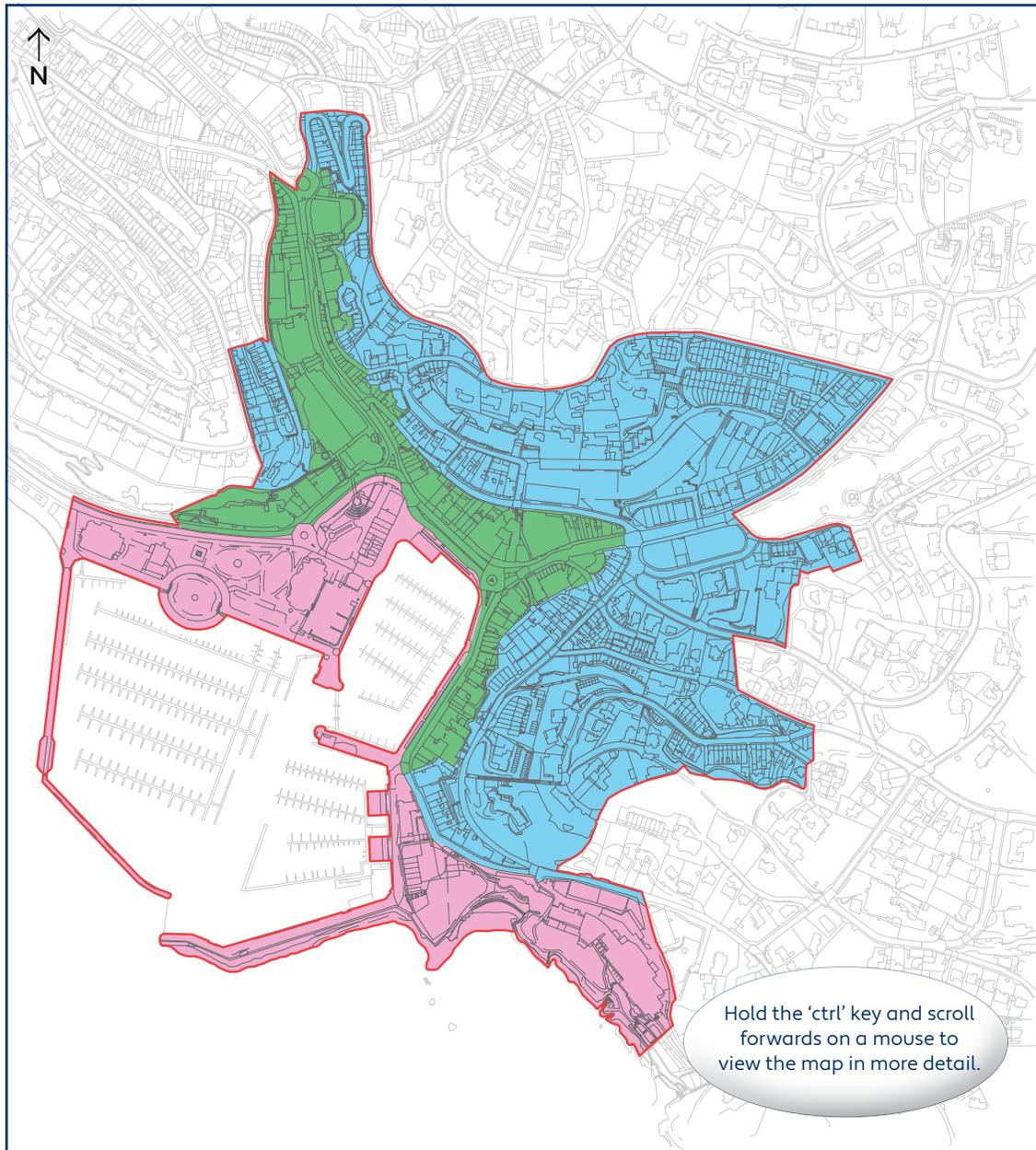
Kent's Cavern, approximately one mile north-east of Torquay Harbour, is a pre-historic cave system. Within this site were discovered the most important known early Stone Age cave deposits in Britain, including artifacts and fossilized human remains radiocarbon dated to 31,000 years ago.



## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS



## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS



There are several spaces/groups of buildings throughout the conservation area which share common features and sub-characters. These are not geographically adjacent in every case. This section of the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies each character area's defining features.

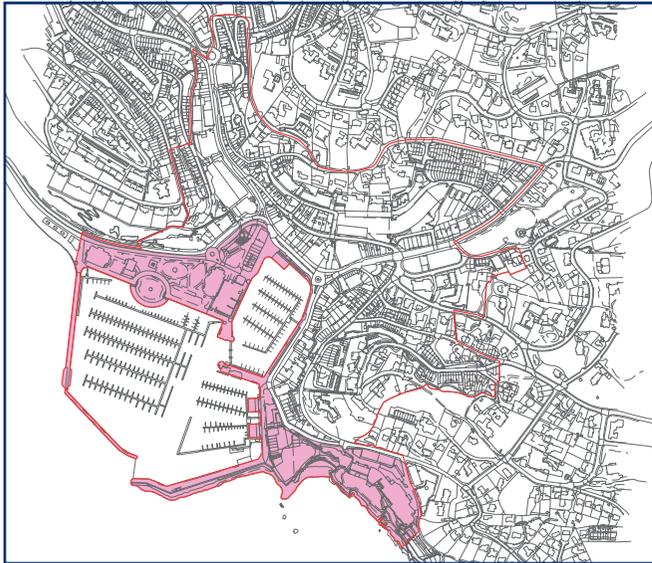
### CHARACTER AREAS

- The Harbour
- Commercial, Civic and Industrial Core
- Historic Residential Areas
- 2025 Conservation Area Boundary

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## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS: HARBOUR

### 3.1 Harbour



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#### Characteristic features:

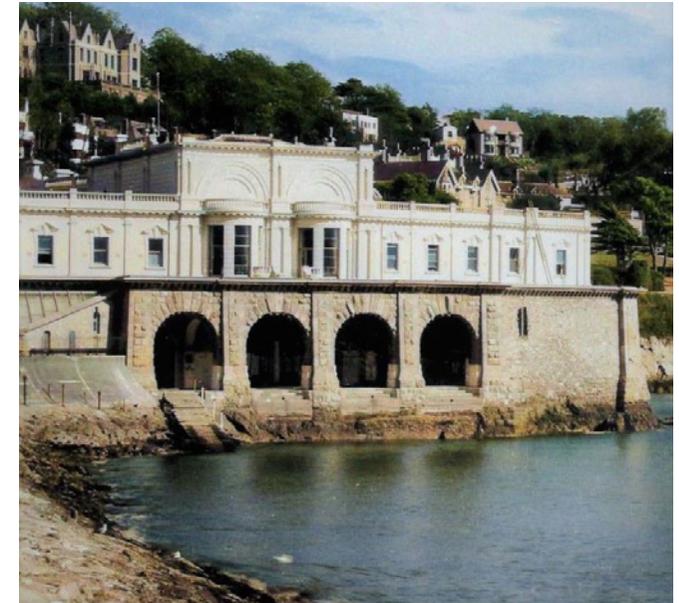
- Recreational character
- Large areas of open space
- Long range views across the harbour and back towards the town

The harbour character area includes the quays and piers around Torquay Harbour, Princess Gardens, Cary Green, the built development on Beacon Quay, the site of the Victorian marine spa, Beacon Cove and the Imperial Hotel. It largely comprises open space, but contains several substantial structures, the largest of which (the Imperial Hotel) reaching seven storeys.



Agatha Christie photographed roller skating along the eastern arm of Princess Pier in the early 20th century.

This part of the conservation area has a historic recreational character, enhanced by the presence of the marina, public gardens, promenades, entertainment venues (the Pavilion and the 1950s Princess Theatre) and the generous provision of public seating along Beacon Quay. Princess Pier, which retains much of its original timber floor finish and long rows of ornate public benches, makes a particularly important contribution to the historic character of the harbour and provides significant visual interest.



The Victorian marine spa at the bottom of Beacon Quay, pictured in the 1930s. The archways visible from Haldon Pier today once provided access from a swimming pool to the sea.

## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS: HARBOUR

This character area is characterised by important views across the harbour. Views from the quays and piers back towards the town illustrate the town's dramatic topography and provide a point from which to regard key landmarks breaking the skyline, including St George's Church, Higher Terrace and the 19th-century villas set high on the surrounding hills.

Views out to sea also make an important contribution to the character of this area; visually connecting the harbour to its coastal setting and illustrating its spatial relationship to the rest of Torbay.

The Edwardian Pavilion in Princess Gardens is a highly prominent building within the character area.



Looking out across the Marina from Beacon Quay.

## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS: COMMERCIAL AND CIVIC CORE

### 3.2 Commercial and Civic Core



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#### Characteristic features:

- Commercial character
- Variety in height, scale, style, materiality and architectural typology
- Tight urban grain

The commercial and civic core comprises the built development on the north side of Torbay Road/Cary Parade, Fleet Street, the Strand, the south-western extent of Torwood Street/Babbacombe Road and Victoria Parade. The buildings appear to date from the mid-19th century onwards. The area contains a range of historic typologies including purpose-built commercial structures, ground-floor shopfronts, civic buildings and hotels. Modern structures are also prevalent, the most notable being the 1980s retail complex at Fleet Walk.

The area is characterised by significant variety in height and scale, with buildings ranging from simple two storey houses on the Strand to the five-storey building known as 'Harbour Point' on Victoria Parade, originally built as a hotel in the 1920s. Plot boundaries and façade widths are similarly varied.

An eclectic mixture of architectural styles and typologies enhances the lively character of the streetscape within this character area. The upper storeys of historic buildings largely utilise symmetrical, Neoclassical conventions, but this ranges from the restrained façades of the mid-19th century buildings to the elaborate sculpture adorning Edwardian civic structures.

Queens Quay and the former bus depot lend further diversity as striking examples of interwar architecture. The 1920s Harbour Point is more traditionally styled but uses the metal-framed windows typical of this period.

Pale render is the most prevalent finish, but the commercial core also contains examples of painted brick, pale limestone and exposed red brick. A particularly striking contrast is created with the exposed red sandstone utilised to construct the mid-19th century Cary Estate Office off Palk Street.

The urban grain is notably tight, with buildings generally fronting directly onto the public highway.

## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS: COMMERCIAL AND CIVIC CORE



Victoria Parade, viewed from South Pier. Note the diverse range in the scale and style of the buildings.



Historic signage above a bakery on Fleet Street enhances the commercial character of the streetscape.

## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL AREAS

### 3.3 Historic Residential Areas



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#### Characteristic features:

- Residential character derived from both historic and modern development
- Historic terrace groups from the Georgian to Edwardian eras
- Substantial Georgian and Victorian villas
- Elevation provides sense of distance from town centre and long-range views across the town
- Visibility of rear and side elevations in many places due to steep topography

This is the largest character area within the conservation area and reaches from Beacon Hill in the east to Warren Road in the west. The area contains several Georgian terraces constructed near the harbour during the early development of the resort town; Higher Terrace (1811), Beacon Terrace (1833) and 3-15 Park Hill Road (1820s or 1830s).

It encompasses several rendered Victorian terraces (e.g. 2-8 Madrepore Road) as well as the striking rubble-stone terraces around Vane Hill, built in the 1860s and '70s. The late 19th and early 20th centuries are also well represented, with terraces on Torwood Gardens Road and Babbacombe Road showcasing typical stylistic features from this era such as projecting bay windows and street-fronting gables.



A late 19th or early 20th-century terrace on Braddons Hill Road East, known today as Cumberland.



Edwardian terraces on Torwood Gardens Road.

The terrace groups are generally two or three storeys high, some extended with modern dormers. Some front directly onto the highway, with those further away from the historic core more likely to be set slightly back behind low walls or railings.

## SECTION 3.0: CHARACTER AREAS: HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Alongside the range of historic terraces found throughout this area, there are several substantial houses and villas from the Georgian and Victorian periods. The 1820s villa known as Delmonte on Rock Road and the 1870s Villa Lugano on Vane Hill are the most visually prominent, but other examples include the villas along Braddons Hill Road West and the Georgian houses on Montpellier Road.

The modern development within this character area is largely residential. There are several substantial detached dwellings on Braddons Hill which, whilst contemporary in appearance, follow the historic development pattern in this area. The modern terraces on Braddons Hill Road East echo the architectural uniformity seen in the adjacent historic terraces.

Much development within this character area is located on higher ground above the harbour, and as such is characterised by a distinct sense of separation from the harbour and commercial core.

There are many striking views across the town and into adjoining conservation areas. The layered nature of development stepping up from the harbour means that the side and rear elevations of the buildings within this character area are often highly visible.



Georgian houses on the corner of Montpellier Road and Braddons Hill Road West.



Modern terraced development at the top of Braddons Hill Road East.

## SECTION 4.0: BOUNDARY REVIEW



## SECTION 4.0: BOUNDARY REVIEW

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In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England best practice guidance, the boundary of a conservation area should be periodically reviewed and suitably revised in accordance with findings made during this exercise.

The need to review the boundary can be in response to a number of factors: unmanaged incremental changes which have, over time, diluted the character of an area; the boundary may have been drawn too tightly originally; or the special interest of a feature may not have been evident to a previous assessor. Although it is principally the built structures that are recognised in amending the boundary, their accompanying plots often provide an important historical context which should be incorporated together with the building(s).

The boundary of the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area was last reviewed in 2004. No boundary changes were proposed at that time.

The Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is bounded to the north-east by Warberries Conservation Area, to the north-west by Abbey Road Conservation Area, to the east by Lincombes Conservation Area and to the west by Belgravia Conservation Area.

Although each conservation area has its own characteristics, there is inevitably a degree of overlap across the boundaries. Changes within the boundary of one conservation area have the potential to impact the setting of any adjacent designations.

In a limited number of cases, buildings or areas may sit more comfortably within another boundary. The primary examples are:

- Royal Terrace Gardens (Belgravia Conservation Area). This area was laid out in the 1890s as part of public realm improvements around the harbour including the establishment of Princess Gardens and Princess Pier. The Royal Terrace Gardens have a stronger historic relationship with the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area than the Belgravia Conservation Area.

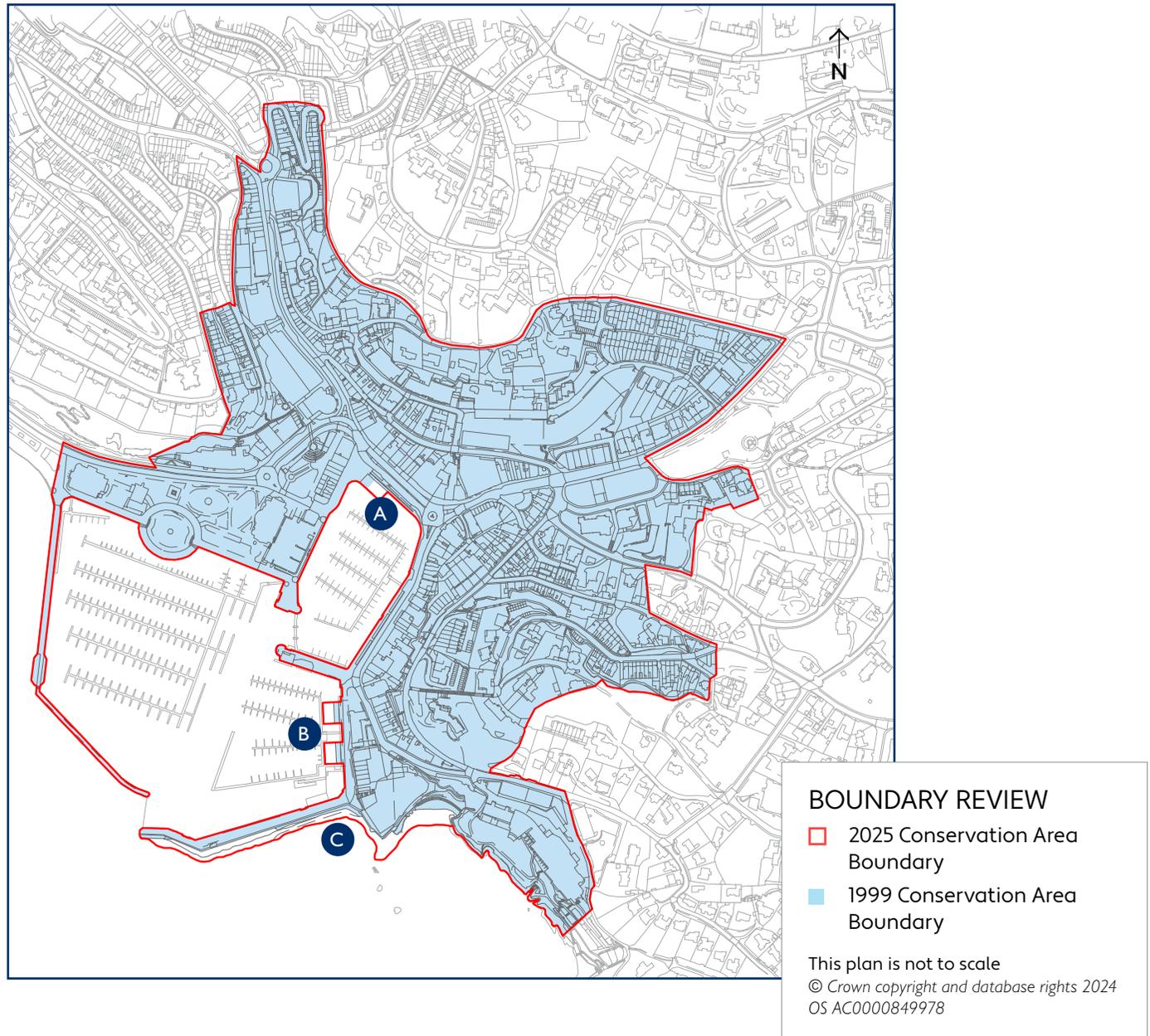
- Built development on Warren Hill (Torquay Harbour Conservation Area). The eastern side of Warren Hill features 19th-century terraces which are orientated away from the harbour and at quite a distance from it, reached by the long Rock Walk steps. This development sits comfortably within the wider streetscape of Warren Hill, which is largely part of the Belgravia Conservation Area, and has a stronger relationship with this designation.

However, given that above sites are already protected through their inclusion within a conservation area, and that development proposals must consider impacts on the setting of adjacent designations under planning policy (see Section 1.6), it is not critical to amend the boundary of either the Belgravia or the Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas in these locations.

## SECTION 4.0: BOUNDARY REVIEW

This Conservation Area Appraisal identifies three minor amendments to the existing boundary:

- a minor extension to encompass the entire historic slipway off the Strand, which was constructed in 1867;
- b minor extension to encompass the entirety of the slipways off Beacon Quay, constructed ahead of D-Day in 1943;
- c minor extension to include the full extent of Beacon Cove and the boulders/shingle south and east of Haldon Pier. The marine spa, constructed adjacent to Beacon Cove in 1857, contained a swimming pool with arches open to the sea (the western arches are still visible from Haldon Pier). The arches on the eastern side of the structure provided access to a women-only bathing cove (Beacon Cove). The ballroom and reading rooms above the pool overlooked the surrounding coastline. These parts of the conservation area are therefore closely connected to the site of the marine spa, which was a landmark building within the resort town during the Victorian era until its demolition in the 1970s.



## SECTION 5.0: AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS



## SECTION 5.0: AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

The Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is a heritage asset in its own right and contains numerous individual heritage assets. These include both listed and unlisted buildings and structures. This section of the document outlines the heritage assets within the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area, identifying both individual assets and groups of structures and articulating why they are important. A full list of heritage assets is included in Volume II of this report.

The audit has been carried out by means of visual examination from public thoroughfares. The intention is to identify heritage assets, rather than to provide a fully comprehensive and detailed assessment of each individually. It should not be assumed that the omission of any information is intended as an indication that a building or feature is not important. A detailed assessment of heritage significance, specific to a building or site within the conservation area, should always be carried out prior to proposing any change.

### 5.1 Positive Contributors, Key Buildings And Local Landmarks

The buildings within the conservation area have been assessed against the following criteria:

#### Positive Contributors

A positive contributor is a building, structure or feature which beneficially adds to the overall character of its local area. This is likely to be true of most buildings within a conservation area. The extent to which a building will positively contribute will largely depend on the integrity of its historic form and is not restricted to its principal elevation. For example, roofscapes and side/rear elevations can all make a positive contribution. Modern buildings can also make a positive contribution here provided they have been sensitively designed to suit their setting.

Buildings which meet one or more of the following criteria have been identified as positive contributors, provided their historic form and value have not been substantially eroded:

- Does the structure reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
- Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
- Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic associations with features such as the historic road layout or a landscape feature?
- Does it reflect the functional character or former uses in the area?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Criteria adapted from Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition): 2019.

## SECTION 5.0: AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

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### Local Landmarks

Local landmarks are buildings, structures or features which are visually prominent and recognisable within the local streetscape, and which make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area.

### Key Buildings of Individual Heritage Interest

Key buildings of individual heritage interest are buildings, structures or features which have a degree of heritage significance drawn from their own heritage interest. The ability to appreciate this heritage interest does not rely on the relationship with surrounding structures (although these may form an important part of its setting).

Key buildings of individual heritage interest are frequently unlisted but can be afforded protection against harmful development by recognition as a non-designated heritage asset by the local planning authority, who may choose to formally recognise their special interest through the adoption of a local list. The identification of positive contributors and/or the adoption of a local list provides no additional planning controls; however, the protection of their status as heritage assets is a requirement of the

National Planning Policy Framework and will therefore be a material consideration for local planning authorities in determining planning applications.

### 5.2 Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and are designated for their architectural or historic interest. All listed buildings in England are designated at the recommendation of Historic England and details are recorded on the National Heritage List for England. Listings are ranked from Grade I (the highest level), Grade II\* (in the middle) and Grade II (the lowest and most common level).

Statutory listing does not equate to a preservation order intended to prevent change. However, alterations to listed buildings will require listed building consent, which allows the local authority to make decisions that have been informed by an understanding of the building or site's heritage significance. Importantly, national and local planning policies also recognise that changes to un-listed buildings or sites in the setting of a designated heritage asset can affect its special interest.

### 5.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

The contribution made by many buildings to the character of the conservation area could be improved through small alterations as and when the opportunity arises, such as replacing windows with more traditional units and general maintenance to improve outward condition. Due to the high concentration of such buildings throughout the conservation area, they are not individually identified on the accompanying plan.

Many shopfronts throughout the conservation area could benefit from the incorporation of traditional details.

The accompanying plan identifies several areas which have the potential to be sensitively re-developed to complement the established character of the conservation area. These include:

- The Pavilion/Marina car park;
- The former Aviary off Beacon Quay;
- The Golden Palms complex off Cary Parade;

## SECTION 5.0: AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

- The site of the 1930s bus depot off Torwood Street, presently occupied by a bowling alley and various commercial units; and
- Nos.12 and 13 The Strand, constructed in the 1960s.<sup>21</sup>

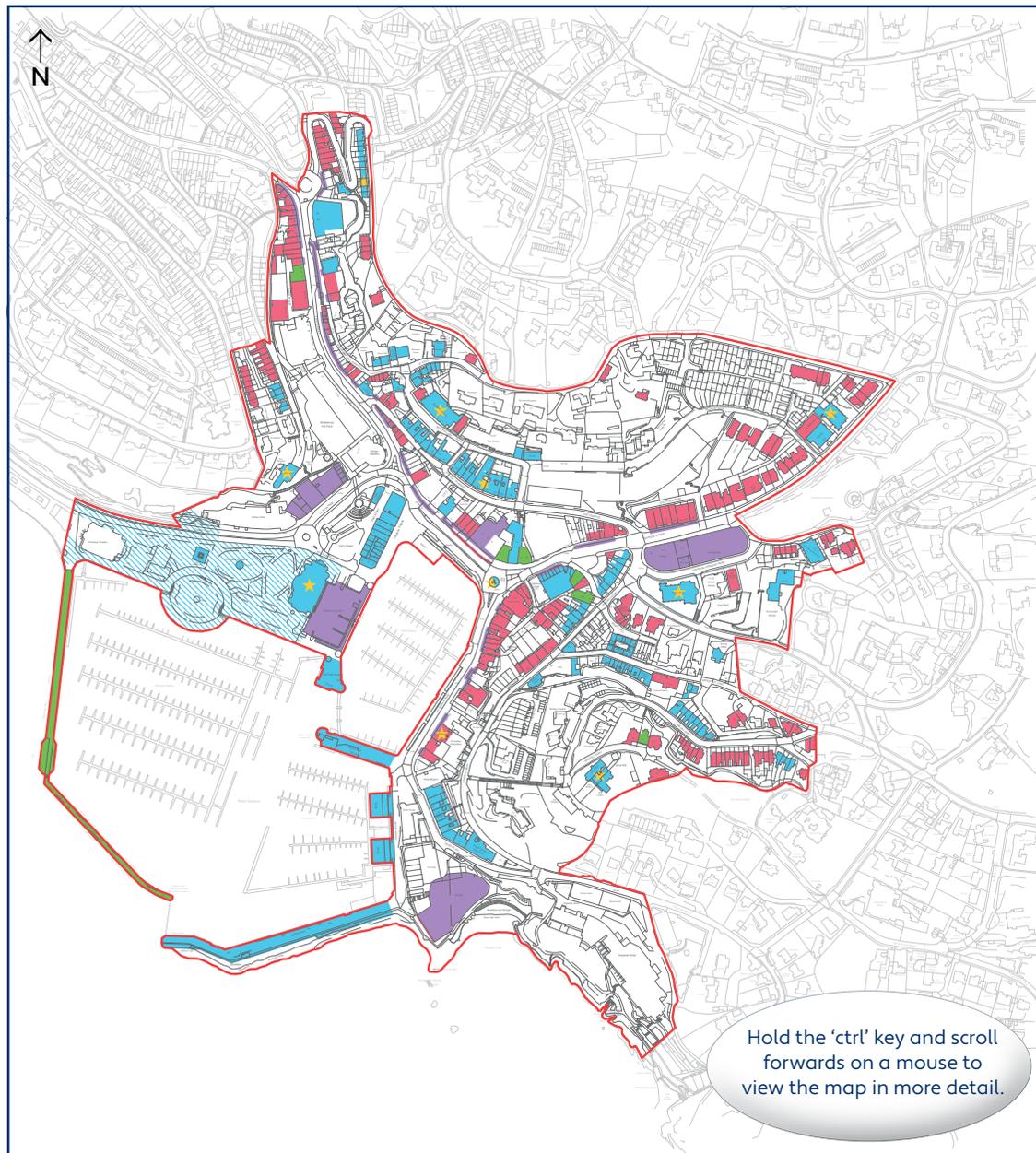
The Pavilion/Marina Car Park was designated as a 'committed development site' in the Local Plan 2012-2030.

### HERITAGE ASSETS

- Positive Contributor
- Key Building of Individual Heritage Interest
- Listed Building
- ▨ Registered Park and Garden
- ★ Local Landmark
- Opportunity for Enhancement - Shopfronts
- Opportunity for Enhancement - Other
- Detracting Feature/s
- 2025 Conservation Area Boundary

*This plan is not to scale*

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<sup>21</sup> In January 2023, planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the former Debenhams store at 12-14 the Strand for mixed-use commercial and residential development (reference P/2022/0806).

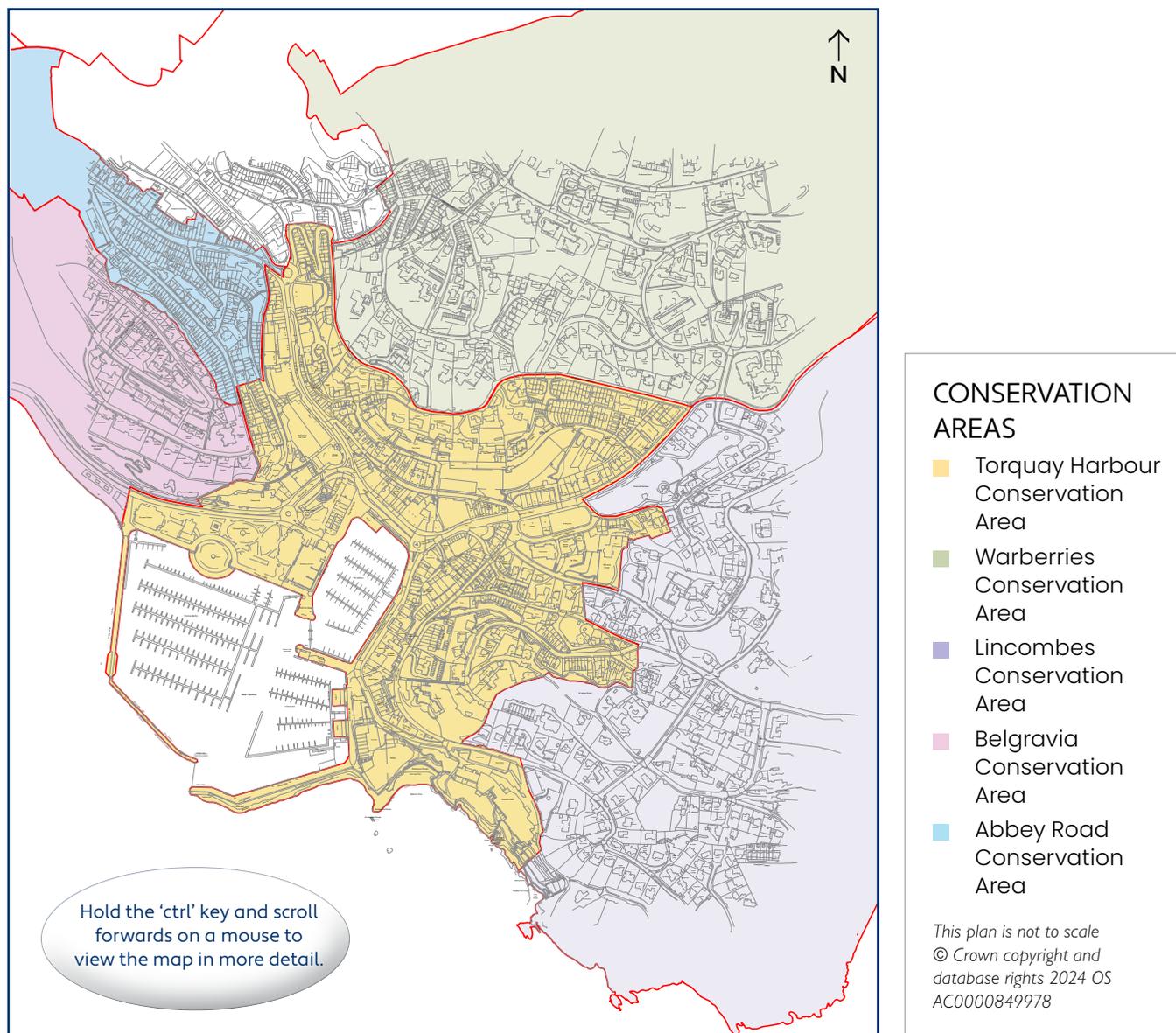
## SECTION 5.0: AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

### 5.4 Heritage At Risk

Princess Gardens is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden and is currently included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The most recent report records the condition of the park as 'generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems.'<sup>22</sup>

### 5.5 Adjoining Conservation Areas

Torquay Harbour Conservation Area is bounded to the north-east by Warberries Conservation Area, to the north-west by Abbey Road Conservation Area, to the east by Lincombes Conservation Area and to the west by Belgravia Conservation Area.



22 Heritage at Risk Register, Princess Gardens, <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/25858>

## SECTION 6.0: ISSUES



## SECTION 6.0: ISSUES

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### 6.1 Condition

Overall, the conservation area is generally in fair condition. The roads and pavements have been well maintained. Many buildings are well looked after, however there are examples of structures of all typologies which are deteriorating. Many common problems could be easily addressed through regular maintenance or the appropriate repair.

A prominent issue within the conservation area is ineffective rainwater management. There are many examples of blocked gutters and downpipes, which can contribute to external staining as well as more serious issues with damp. Regular clearance of/improvements to rainwater goods can easily rectify these issues.

The use of inappropriate materials to repair historic buildings can often stimulate or hasten the deterioration of built fabric. This is because traditional buildings (generally those built before 1919) utilised 'breathable' materials which facilitate the free passage of moisture through a structure.

Although older buildings absorb more moisture than modern structures, this moisture should be able to evaporate in dry conditions. Modern cement-based renders and mortars are not breathable and prevent the evaporation of moisture from a traditional building, thereby causing issues with damp and deterioration. Non-breathable paint applied over walls which were originally intended to be exposed can have a similar impact.

There are several instances throughout the conservation area where boundary walls are suffering from a lack of maintenance which manifests in staining, vegetation growth and missing joints. This could be remedied through the careful removal of vegetation and cementitious mortar and the localised replacement of masonry/brick, bedded in and pointed with lime mortar.

Where timber window units and shopfronts survive, these make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and should be regularly maintained.

There are several examples of rotting joinery to historic window units and shopfronts, and this should be addressed through the replacement of damaged timbers which cannot be salvaged with new timber, and regular re-painting with breathable paint. Effective management of water run-off will also help to prevent timber decay.

Where buildings within the conservation area are vacant, problems with condition tend to be exacerbated as they go unnoticed for longer periods.

Due to the topography of the town, lack of maintenance to the rear of buildings can have a marked effect on the public realm. For instance, the setting of the Grade II listed Higher Terrace and the many other listed buildings along The Terrace is currently much depreciated by views of poorly-maintained rear elevations to structures on the Strand. Overgrown vegetation and refuse around buildings visible from higher points in the town also has a detrimental effect.

## SECTION 6.0: ISSUES



A deteriorating historic boundary wall on Vanehill Road.



Rotting joinery to a historic shopfront on Fleet Street.



The bottom section of this downpipe is missing to a residential property on Braddons Hill Road West, which has resulted in substantial staining to the wall below.



Poor maintenance, including staining, graffiti and overgrown vegetation, depreciates the setting of the many listed buildings along The Terrace.



Refuse accruing behind single-storey shops on Fleet Street, at the junction with The Terrace. On the left is a badly deteriorating downpipe.



Lack of maintenance to the Grade II listed railings opposite St John's Church on Montpellier Road puts this important asset at risk.

## SECTION 6.0: ISSUES

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### 6.2 Detracting Features

The replacement of traditional timber-framed windows with uPVC alternatives is common across the conservation area; there are numerous instances where this has taken place on buildings of all types. The materials, style and position within the window reveal (i.e. flush with the elevation, rather than set back) of the uPVC replacements are detrimental to the character of the historic elevations and collectively detract from the special interest of the conservation area. Although they are often perceived to offer environmental benefits, the lifespan of uPVC windows is also considerably shorter than that of well-maintained timber windows and the units cannot be easily recycled. Similarly, the replacement of traditional timber doors with modern designs in uPVC result in features which are discordant with the character of the conservation area.

Many shopfronts retain or incorporate traditional features. However, the majority have been altered with inappropriate additions such as box fascias and expansive float-glass frontages which are overly prominent and do not respect the proportions of the host building. Incorporating traditional features such as a stallriser (a platform below the shop window), glazing articulated by mullions and transoms (horizontal and vertical glazing bars) and a fascia which respects the proportions of the host building can greatly improve the character of modern retail units in conservation areas.

The impact of surface-mounted plant equipment on rear and side elevations is particularly prominent within the conservation area due to the steep topography, which enables buildings to be seen from multiple angles within the public realm. For the same reason, flat-roof extensions to rear and side elevations depreciate the historic character of the conservation area in many cases.

Where they exist, unsympathetic modern boundary treatments detract from the character of the conservation area. These are prevalent in residential parts of the town and to the rear of buildings along the main commercial streets, and range from modern boarded fencing to concrete walls, utilitarian metal railings and bollards.

The impact of refuse bins is also notably detracting in several parts of the conservation area. A key example is the row of bins in the centre of Fleet Street, just south of Braddons Hill Road West.

Other minor detracting features include:

- Roof or chimney-mounted television aerials, satellite dishes and trailing wires.
- uPVC rainwater goods.
- Unsympathetic, municipal style street lighting.

## SECTION 6.0: ISSUES



The replacement of the original timber framed windows in this Victorian house on Vanehill Road with uPVC units depreciates the architectural interest of the façade and the wider streetscape.



Two contrasting shopfronts on Fleet Street. The shopfront to the right retains some traditional features including a stallriser and recessed entrance door. Historic tiles denote the entrance to the shopfront from street level. The shopfront on the left has an oversized fascia, detracting window stickers and an expansive modern glass frontage.



Highly visible plant equipment to structures on the site of the former bus depot detracts significantly from the historic and architectural interest of the conservation area.



A range of detracting modern boundary treatments to an area of hard standing opposite Higher Terrace, on The Terrace.



Municipal metal fencing on Princess Pier detracts from the historic and architectural interest of this important heritage asset.



Large refuse bins lining the east side of Fleet Street.

## SECTION 6.0: ISSUES

### 6.3 Inappropriate Modern Development

There are many examples of modern development which depreciate the special interest of the conservation area through inappropriate massing and detailing. Flat roofed extensions or infill are also at odds with the varied rooflines throughout the conservation area.

When successfully delivered, development within a conservation area responds to the proportions of historic buildings plots and frontages, existing architectural detailing, and materiality. New development need not replicate the established massing of the historic environment, but should not detract from it. This also applies to developments within the setting of a conservation area.



An unsympathetic extension to a listed building on the corner of Parkhill Road and Torwood Street.



This modern infill structure on the east side of Fleet Street detracts from the historic character of the streetscape.

# SECTION 7.0: OPPORTUNITIES



## SECTION 7.0: OPPORTUNITIES

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There is scope to enhance the conservation area through addressing the minor but altogether detracting elements such as external accretions, management of rainwater goods and the appropriate repair of failing elements. Incrementally addressing these issues will have a positive impact and enhance the conservation area.

Although many of the uPVC windows and doors which have already been installed are unlikely to require replacement in the near future, there is scope for any further replacement windows and doors to be carried out using styles, materials and methods that are better suited to enhancing the special interest of the conservation area. It would be especially beneficial for first-generation uPVC double-glazing, which is generally coming to the end of its life cycle, to be replaced with more suitable alternatives, rather than the more visually intrusive standard option.

Some of the low-quality 20th-century architecture within the conservation area could be beneficially re-developed should the opportunity arise. Likewise, the replacement or alteration of unsympathetic shopfronts would greatly enhance the special interest of the conservation area. Considered place-making, such as landscaping, also has the potential to improve the relationship of new design with the conservation area.

Locations for future development within the conservation area, including The Pavilion/ Marina car park and the former aviary off Beacon Quay, also provide opportunities to enhance the character of the conservation area through heritage-led regeneration and the introduction of high-quality architecture and vibrancy to the street scene.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Historic England, Heritage and its Role in Development and Place, 2023. <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-economy/place-development/>

# SECTION 8.0: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION – CONTROL MEASURES AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE



## SECTION 8.0: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION – CONTROL MEASURES AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### 8.1 Control Measures

In order to protect and enhance the conservation area, any changes that take place must conserve its character and special interest. Statutory control measures are intended to prevent development that may have an individually or cumulatively negative effect. Control measures within include:

- Planning permission will usually be required to totally or substantially demolish buildings or structure (including walls, gate piers and chimneys). This will also need a heritage statement (sometimes called a heritage impact assessment) as part of the application.
- The extent to which permitted development (i.e. changes that are allowed without requiring consent from the local authority) may be restricted. For example, replacement windows, different elevational finishes or the installation of satellite dishes may require planning permission.

- Trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater, measured as 1.5m above the soil level are protected. Any work proposed to these trees require permission from the local authority by means of a planning application. This allows the authority to determine whether a tree preservation order (TPO) is necessary.
- Advertisements and other commercial signage may be subject to additional controls and/or require planning permission.

### 8.2 Conservation Aims and Best Practice

There is no generally accepted detailed definition of ‘best practice’ in conservation: it is a term used to describe the management of change (including repair) so that the integrity and character of a historic site is not eroded or compromised. It is not the intention of conservation best practice to prevent change from happening: alterations can still be carried out but should be subject to additional scrutiny to ensure that the special interest of the conservation area is protected.

It is the purpose of this Appraisal to provide guidance that will help achieve these aims. Overall, any change in the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area should seek to:

- Preserve its historical features;
- Enhance, where possible, its special interest;
- Positively contribute to its established character; and
- Be high quality.

### 8.3 ‘Like-for-Like’

A term that is frequently used in conservation is ‘like-for-like’ replacement or repair. This is frequently – and mistakenly – taken to mean that a modern alternative that generally echoes the style of the element removed is acceptable. However, this is not accurate or acceptable. Like-for-like should always be interpreted as an alternative that matches the historic element removed in terms of its material, dimensions, method of construction, finish, means of installation and any other feature specific to the original element, such that the modern replacement is hardly discernible from the original (accepting that its condition will be greatly improved where the original has failed beyond repair).

## SECTION 8.0: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION – CONTROL MEASURES AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

For example, modern uPVC windows in imitation of Georgian or Victorian-style sash windows but with false glazing bars and a top-hung casement opening mechanism do not constitute a like-for-like replacement for traditional timber-framed Victorian sliding sash windows, although they may appear stylistically similar.

### 8.4 Repairs and Replacement

Repairs and replacement are inevitable with any building or site, regardless of age; however, within a conservation area, it is especially important that this is carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of its buildings and respect the character of the wider area. Key points to remember when looking to carry out repair work or install replacement features are:

- A method of repair that was suitable for one building may not be suitable for another. Repair and replacement should always be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Repairs using appropriate materials and techniques are always preferable over wholesale replacement.
- Where a historic feature has degraded beyond repair, replacement should be carried out on a like-for-like basis.
- Where seeking to improve failing modern features, a traditionally-designed alternative using appropriate materials is preferable. For example, the replacement of uPVC gutters and downpipes with lead, cast iron or coated aluminium alternatives that better reflect the traditional character of the conservation area.
- Cement-based mortars and/or ribbon pointing are harmful to historic brickwork and masonry. Repairs to any pointing should be carried out in a lime mortar after any cementitious mortar has been raked out. This will ensure the longevity of the historic built fabric.
- Due consideration should be given to the sustainability of the repair or replacement, i.e. what is its lifespan? What maintenance will be required to prolong this?
- Reversibility is an important consideration as better alternative may become available in the future.
- Historic external detailing should be retained or, where damaged beyond repair, replaced on a like-for-like basis. This includes (but is not limited to): the texture and colour of render; size and colour of bricks used, and the bond in which they are laid; stone dressings; and chimneystacks.
- The reinstatement of historic features that have been lost is favourable. For example, re-exposing brickwork that has been rendered or painted over.
- The repair and replacement of windows can have a notable effect on the character and special interest of the conservation area, both positively and negatively. The aim should always be to retain historic windows wherever they survive, carrying out refurbishment work where needed to make sure they remain usable. Timber frames are preferable over uPVC for a number of reasons, mainly their comparative slimness and breathable quality which has a positive knock-on effect on the overall condition of the historic building.

## SECTION 8.0: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION – CONTROL MEASURES AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### 8.5 Maintenance

Maintenance differs from repair in that it is a pre-planned, regular activity intended to reduce instances where remedial or unforeseen work is needed. The higher the levels of maintenance, the less need to carry out repairs. Regular maintenance activity should include annual gutter clearing, seasonal vegetation control and repainting external joinery with an oil-based paint. This is not an exhaustive list and each historic building will have its own specific needs. Larger historic buildings and those which are listed may benefit from occasional condition surveys (usually around every five years) to highlight their individual maintenance and repair needs.

The maintenance requirement of a building will depend on its age, materials and susceptibility to wear. Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and other heritage bodies publish specialist guidance on the suitable maintenance and repair methods for different historic buildings.

### 8.6 Trees

Trees are afforded extra protection within the conservation area and there are several tree preservation orders in place. Any tree surgery work should be carried out only once the relevant permission has been sought. The management of the planted elements within the conservation area is beneficial to its overall appearance and potentially also to the condition of the buildings where root damage may pose a threat.

### 8.7 Public Realm

Public realm features, including bins, bollards, seating and planters, etc. often become outdated in their appearance. This can be due to heavy wear, antisocial behaviour or as a result of poor design and short-lived trends. Successful public realm schemes are contextual, using high-quality materials that echo the character of the wider area. Any additions or amendments to the public realm will also need to take account of highways and other relevant regulations.

### 8.8 Modern and New Development

It is not the intention of conservation area designation to prevent new development or entirely exclude existing modern development where this is woven into a surrounding historic space. Instead, it puts in place a process whereby any proposals are more thoroughly studied to ensure that the special interest of the conservation area is protected and opportunities to improve its character are identified.

New development can range from entire new buildings to the introduction of new features, however small, on existing buildings. It is acknowledged that there are pressures on housing numbers within the conservation area and that associated planning applications are likely to be submitted in the future.

New development within the setting of the conservation area should also be carefully managed as it has the potential to detract from its character and special interest. Any proposals will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and take account of:

- The significance of any existing building affected;

## SECTION 8.0: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION – CONTROL MEASURES AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

- The impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings, key buildings of individual heritage interest and/or positive contributors;
- How local features and materials can be incorporated into the new design;
- Whether or not any historical plot boundaries survive or could be recoverable;
- The impact of the overall scale, massing and design on the wider streetscape;
- The loss of any important rear/side elevations or views of these;
- Characteristic boundary treatments and planting;
- The potential for below-ground or built archaeology; and
- Any other heritage or conservation constraints identified.

The addition of new features on existing buildings can be detrimental to the individual buildings as well as the overall character of their wider setting if unmanaged.

Specifically:

- Television aerials and satellite dishes should not be fixed to principal or highly visible elevations, or chimneystacks.
- Features such as external lighting and security cameras should be as discreet as possible.
- Solar panels should be restricted to rear or secondary elevations, especially where a building forms one of a group.
- Internal alterations can have an external impact; for example, staircases cutting across windows or the removal of chimneybreasts necessitating the removal of the associated chimneystack.

### 8.9 Sustainability

Maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable. However, there are growing pressures to improve the energy efficiency of the country's historic building stock in order to reduce carbon emissions, particularly from heating which uses fossil fuel sources. Pressures to increase sustainability performance can be accommodated within the conservation area but will require a bespoke approach

to ensure that the measures needed can be viably implemented without harm to its special interest.

Straight-forward measures to improve building performance include:

- Refurbishing historic windows and doors to prevent drafts.
- Re-pointing external walls to prevent damp and air leaks.
- Maintaining rainwater goods.
- Improving and/or expanding green spaces.
- Inserting breathable insulation in loft spaces and suspended floor voids.
- Installing thick curtains or internal shutters.

Double-glazing is now available in slimline, timber frame units which are considerably more sympathetic within historic contexts than earlier versions. It will be necessary to obtain the relevant permissions to install double-glazing. Best practice will always be to retain historic windows wherever possible, with the installation of secondary units being an alternative to full replacement.

## SECTION 8.0: CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION – CONTROL MEASURES AND BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

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The installation of solar panels and other infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and heat pumps in a conservation area is generally acceptable, however they must not be installed in a location that is visible from any public highway and their physical and aesthetic impact will need to be carefully considered and mitigated. For more information contact [planning@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:planning@torbay.gov.uk).

Historic England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Royal Institute of British Architects and other bodies publish extensive guidance on the sensitive adaptation of buildings in response to climate change and sustainability challenges.

# APPENDICES



Aerial photograph of  
Torquay Harbour in 1934

## APPENDIX A: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX B: USEFUL CONTACTS

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### **Torbay Council Heritage and Design Team**

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Planning and Building Control Webpages

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/>

## APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

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Terminology	Definition
Art Deco	An architectural style common in the 1920s and 1930s, characterised by bold geometric shapes and sleek lines.
Art Moderne	An architectural style common in the 1920s and 1930s, similar to Art Deco, favouring horizontal lines, rounded corners and limited ornamentation.
Barge boards	An ornamental board fixed to the gable end of a roof structure.
Baroque	A highly decorative and theatrical style of architecture popular in England during the 17th century. It experienced a revival in the early 20th century.
Classical	Architecture inspired by the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome - characterised by the use of columns and pediments.
Close studding	Setting vertical timbers close together to create a decorative effect.
Corbel	Stone, wood or metal bracket, often structural but sometimes decorative.
Cornice	A horizontal decorative moulding.
Dressings	Decorative masonry or brick detailing around windows and doors.

Terminology	Definition
Eaves	The part of the roof that meets or overhangs the walls of a building.
Edwardian	Associated with the reign of King Edward VII (1901-10) this is used to describe architecture from around the first decade of the 20th century.
Façade	The exterior wall or face of a building.
Fanlight	A small semicircular or rectangular light above a doorway.
Fascia	A horizontal band beneath the eaves of a building or over a shopfront.
Fenestration	Architectural terminology for windows and doors.
Finial	Vertical decorative element found on roofs, towers, spires and gables.
Georgian	Refers to architecture constructed from around 1714 to 1830.
Italianate	A 19th-century 'revival' style using Classical principles but with key characteristics such as deep eaves, round-headed arches and square towers.
Key stone	A wedge-shaped stone found at the apex of a masonry arch.

## APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

Terminology	Definition
Massing	Refers to the shape, form and size of a building.
Mullion	A vertical glazing bar on a window or window opening.
Non-conformist	A member of a Protestant Church which dissents from the established Church of England.
Patina	Visible signs of historic use.
Planform	The configuration of a group of buildings, or the arrangement of spaces within a structure.
Polite building	A building designed with regard for architectural fashion, often by an architect.
Portico	A projecting porch supported by columns.
Quoins	Masonry blocks to the corner of a wall - can be structural or aesthetic.
Revivalist	Architecture which looks back to past styles.
Rubble stone	Unfinished stone.
Stallriser	A platform below a shop window.
Tracery	Division of openings with stone bars or moulded ribs.
Transom	A horizontal glazing bar on a window or window opening.

Terminology	Definition
Urban grain	The pattern of building plots in an urban environment.
Vernacular building	A building constructed using local materials with limited or no regard for architectural fashion.
Victorian	Refers to architecture constructed from around 1714 to 1837-1900.

## APPENDIX D: DETAILED HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

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The following text has been extracted from Hal Bishop, 'Torquay Harbour Conservation Area Character Appraisal', 2004.

### Historic Environment, Origins and Development

- 2.1 One of the most important and extensive pre-historic sites in northwest Europe is to be found only a mile northeast of the harbourside and  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile beyond the boundary of the conservation area at Kent's Cavern. Here in a solution cave stratified deposits of human and animal habitation stretching back to the Palaeolithic (350,000 – 10,000BC) have been found. The limestone formation, which underlies most of Torquay lends itself to such occupation, as other observations of cave systems in Torbay now lost attest.
- 2.2 Torquay, of course, derives initially from Torre, Old English Torr, a rocky hill. However the historic settlement of Torre was located around the parish church of St Saviour/St Andrew (Tormohun Conservation Area), the rocky hill being Tor Hill east of the church. The pre-Conquest manor of this name is first recorded in 1086 in Domesday Book as one of the 11 Devonshire manors bestowed upon William the Usher as its tenant-in-chief – as he was of the neighbouring manor of Ilsham. Domesday totals the adult male population to be 32, from which one might estimate a total population of perhaps 100-120, but there is no evidence from this period of any settlement at the harbour. Outside the manorial and parish centre a mill had been established on the Flete (in the vicinity of 15-17 Union Street) by the end of the 13th century, with the mill pool around Pimlico.
- 2.3 The dominant historic and topographic influence on the area from 1196 until 1539 was Torre Abbey (Belgravia conservation area); this house of Premonstratensian canons had their own quay in the vicinity of Livermead. The Abbey acquired the manor of Torre from the Mohun family in 1370 and with it any fish cellars or other maritime buildings on the strand which may have been present. The precise extent of early settlement within the conservation area is unlikely to be known in the absence of archaeological evidence. Documents are scarce and the place-name evidence of the medieval period is difficult to locate within the modern ground plan.
- 2.4 In 1539 Henry VIII's Antiquary, John Leland, described the Flete as a pretty brook which goeth into the the sea at Torrebay, Torrebay village and priory a mile off. This suggests that there was still no significant settlement. However by the middle of that century, dwellings on the Strand had been established and there was a rudimentary quay: a will of 1556 refers to cellars at Flyett; the form Torrekay is found in 1591; and from the 17th century there are more property details recorded in leases, releases and indentures for the Strand/Fleet Street area. Eighteenth-century drawings and paintings show a small harbour enclosed by two stone built quays which extend outwards from the Strand and the Victoria Parade side.
- 2.5 Away from the harbour in the Torwood Valley, the Ridgeway family had acquired an outlying grange of Torre Abbey's in 1540 and the rest of the secular manor of Torre in 1553. Incorporating some of the surviving Grange buildings, they built Torwood

## APPENDIX D: DETAILED HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Manor on Torwood Mount (Warberries Conservation Area) in 1579. Their holdings then comprised almost all former monastic and manorial lands east of the Flete Brook. In 1598 they acquired Torre Abbey itself and remaining domain, but in 1649 the Ridgeways sold this portion – the old Abbey estate – to John Stowell of Bovey Tracey. Stowell in turn sold the monastic demesne and the manorial land west of the river to the Cary family, late of Cockington, in 1662 (the Carys had held the manor of St Marychurch since 1595). The Palk family in turn acquired the Torre/Torwood estate from the Ridgeway heirs in 1768; until after 1790/1800, this area east of the Fleet, with the exception of the manor buildings higher up the Torwood valley, had no other buildings outside the harbour area. Benjamin Donn's 1765 map of Devonshire shows Tor Quay as a scatter of cottages around the harbour inlet with Tor Mohun as a quite separate village to the west – no road is shown linking either with [St] Mary Church.

2.6 By 1770, the area around the harbour, with its five inns, was known variously as Tor Kay, Torquay or Flete; this village and the ancient settlement of Torre, and the households at Torre Abbey and Torwood together had an estimated population of no more than 500. A late 18th century dilettante traveller the Rev. John Swete travelled through Torbay in the 1780s and 90s leaving valuable written accounts illustrated by his own sketches and paintings. His description of the Flete Mill, by then a dilapidated medieval relict, is a lyric to the sublime. But his observations regarding the nascent development are more down to earth and extremely informative; writing in 1792 Swete describes the harbour village thus:

*On the western side a craggy promontory extended itself into the bay, forming a fine shelter to the cove in which the Quay was situated from the westerly winds – under this as far as the beach will permit a range of neat houses hath risen within a few years – and these are on the demesne of Mr Cary, which is separated from that of Sir Robert Palk to whom all the Eastern side and the old village and quays belong ..*

The following year, during which the first of the long French wars (1793-1802, 1803-1815) broke out Swete again visited Torquay and set down in greater detail his impressions I shall particularise the picturesque beauty of the spot and its environs:

*Torquay about 12 years ago [1781], was a very different place from what I now found it to be. It had then but one decent house ... [belonging to] Robert Palk. Where the quay was lay to the East, the rivulet [the Flete brook] separating the possessions of Sir Robert from those of Mr Cary. The scenery at that period was far more romantic then it at present is. The narrow valley lying between two mountainous hills, now blocked up by a range of houses, had a very picturesque appearance ... These two distinct ranges of buildings have been raised on Mr Cary's premises ... are chiefly the property of Mr Searle, a joiner and architect, who, on the presumption that the spot will become a fashionable watering place, carries on his enterprise with spirit, removing the very cliff itself to gain space for his houses, and forming them on a terrace, which is protected from the sea by a low parapet wall.*

## APPENDIX D: DETAILED HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

*On the grounds of Sir Robert nothing yet hath been done. On them however, there is full scope for designs of great magnitude; and if a wet dock was formed, and a terrace raised in front of the cove, a noble row of buildings might be erected on it ...*

Swete's only inaccuracy was that most of Braddon Hill, east of the river was actually a Cary possession.

- 2.7 Searle's terrace was first called the New Quay; another contemporary visitor in 1794 was equally and pleasantly surprised on seeing it:

*Instead of the poor uncomfortable village we had imagined we saw a pretty range of neat new buildings fitted out for summer visitors, who very certainly enjoy convenient bathing, retirement and a most romantic situation. Matson's Observations on the West of England 1794-6.*

*A similar description in 1803 in Trewman's Guide to the Watering Places on the S. E. Coast of Devon refers to neat cottages with small gardens and several modern built lodging houses, nearly as pleasant as those on the beach. Swete had however opined that if only the two landowners had combined their 'improvements' then one*

*uniform plan of development would have 'redounded to their mutual advantage':*

*Instead of being frittered away by an insignificant row of houses [George Street], that skirts the brook side and blocks it up to the sea, might then have been converted into one regular, handsome street which would have opened to the water and formed an approach to it of unrivalled beauty.*

- 2.8 Disputes between the Carys and the Palks had begun as early as 1778; in the absence of co-operation the land between Searle's terrace and the Flete was badly laid out. As Swete had observed, the buildings were irregular, they stretched up the valley floor along two narrow roads Swan and George Streets, with a lateral blocking at the harbour end rather than in one wide dramatic avenue along Fleet Street. This narrow street pattern persisted until the monumental Fleet Walk complex removed both away two centuries later. The Flete was culverted over in 1803 at the harbour, New Quay becoming Cary Parade. A hand-drawn map of 1808 entitled The manor of Torabbey in the Parish

of Tormoham, Devon, The Property of Geo Cary Esq prepared for land exchanges with the Palk estate clearly shows Cary Parade, Swan, George and Fleet Streets (the latter High Street until 1823), Pimlico, The Terrace, and Braddons Hill Road, and Montpellier Road (then Montpellier Terrace). House plots line the last three, although it is doubtful if all were built as some are the sites of the earliest villas. In the first national census of 1801, a population of 838 were recorded in 143 houses, this being Torre Abbey, Torre (Tormoham), Torwood, Torquay and Upton.

- 2.9 No systematic development of any of the Palk lands took place before 1803 when an act of parliament was secured for a new harbour. The French wars saw the continuation of the eighteenth-century strategy of Torbay being a major assembly and sheltered haven for the British Channel Fleet. Brixham's King's Quay and the fleet watering place there had been established in 1781 during the earlier conflict with France during the American Revolutionary wars. The importance of Torbay as a refuge from the southwesterly gales cannot be

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overemphasised; ships on Blockade outside Brest would run there in preference to Plymouth. The larger 3-decker ships-of-the-line in particular were securer in Torbay, Some ships would remain at anchor for quite long periods with supplies being drawn from the hinterland. In 1800 Admiral St Vincent ordered that no officer could go further than Brixham, Paignton, or 3 miles from the shore, effectively putting Totnes, Dartmouth and Teignmouth out of bounds. Eighteenth-century drawings and paintings show a small harbour enclosed by two stone built quays which extend outwards from the Strand and Harbour Steps (Victoria Parade) side – quite inadequate for extensive fleet use. The present Inner Harbour was originally designed by John Rennie; the South Pier was first built by 1806, but required extensive re-construction after a collapse within 5 years. The Rennie plan was revised under the superintendence of Dr Henry Beeke, the south pier lengthened and the area of enclosure doubled. The Cary estate map of 1808 shows only a short thin south pier; the North (Fish) Quay being constructed and the harbour completed only after 1815.

2.10 The original south pier however had improved landing facilities to some degree and enabled some officers to relocate their wives and families in Torquay. By 1811 the census recorded a population of 1,350 in 253 houses, an increase of over 61%. During the wars some of the great sea captains, including Admirals Howe, St.Vincent, Nelson and Cornwallis were entertained by the Cary family at Torre Abbey – the Palks residing at Haldon House some distance away from the bay. While the newcomers were becoming established through naval associations, it was noted that some remarkable recoveries from ill-health occurred – a naval hospital had been established at Goodrington in 1800 following the withdrawal of HMS Medusa the navy's hospital ship, which had been on station throughout 1796-9. This led the medical profession to realise the climatic advantages, and an embryonic resort could quickly grow to become a haven for invalids. The harbour had been the first stage in the development of the Palk lands. With the close of hostilities first in 1814, and definitively after the 100 days of 1815, the growth of Torquay into

the resort town began, with the Palk developments initially under the aegis of Henry Beeke.

- 2.11 Two developments arose as a consequence of the Napoleonic wars which contributed to the popularity of Torquay. First restrictions on travel to the Continent led to the aristocracy building villas at home, and second many of the middle class naval and army officers who had been quartered in such villas on various mediterranean rivieras wished to continue with what had become a fashionable activity, especially when considered beneficial for their health. Torquay's prominence thus followed later than that of seaside towns further east and north such as Sidmouth, and Teignmouth where the fashion for sea bathing began in 1762, but it was promoted by the naval connection.
- 2.12 The Palk estate architect, Joseph Beard of Bath, designed and Jacob Harvey had already built Higher Terrace (now The Terrace) linking Fleet Street to Torwood Street above the Strand in 1811; Park Place (35-45 and the site of 47 Parkhill Road) was laid out in 1814

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and the terrace completed by 1828 – Henry Beeke taking one of the earliest houses. Leases on plots on Braddon Hill had been offered by the Carys 1809-11 with Montpellier Terrace on Montpellier Road built 1811-1823 also by the Harveys. The first medicinal baths were opened opposite the south quay in 1817 in response to fashionable demand, on the site of what is now the Hotel Regina. Hotel and lodging house accommodation increased; the old Royal Hotel was considerably expanded (then 15-18 Strand) to include a ballroom ‘as fine as anything in the West of England’; opposite was Marchetti’s Family Hotel on Market Street (now Gibbon’s Hotel at 1 Torwood Street). The market had been built in the form of a colonnaded rotunda in 1820, this structure lasted until 1853 when the new market in its present position was opened. In 1864 the rotunda was part truncated with the widening of Torwood Street – an arc of the rotunda survives facing the street as the Sirius Pizzeria, but its columns are late 20th century pastiche. In 1821 the census recorded a population of 1,925 in 308 houses, an increase of 43%. The year before George IV visited Torquay in his

yacht – never one to go anywhere out of fashion, or undemonstratively – the young resort had arrived.

2.13 The third decade of the century began a period of 40 years of unparalleled growth with major changes to ecclesiastical and administrative structures, and a transport infrastructure which would carry through until the following century. A new church, the Endowed Chapel of Torquay, later the site of St John the Evangelist was built in 1823 on Cary land bought by the Mallocks of Cockington, in Montpellier Road, to become the first Anglican Church built in the parish since medieval times. The Torquay Turnpike Trust was established by Act of Parliament in 1821; amongst its essential improvements were the turnpiking of the old Babbacombe Road linking Strand to St Marychurch; the creation of Newton Road from Kingskerswell to Brunswick Square; the creation of Teignmouth Road from Maidencombe to Brunswick Square. The road hub here would aid the earliest development of the old village of Torre. Union Street was constructed in 1827-8: Upper Union

Street linked Brunswick Square with what is now Castle Circus; Lower Union Street continued over a now culverted Flete extending to the top of Fleet Street below the site of the medieval mill to a toll gate. All new roads were built on Palk, not Cary, estate land; the clerk of the turnpike trust being Robert Abraham, the Palk’s Steward. Abraham was aided by his solicitor cousin William Kitson from 1823; in 1833 Kitson took sole charge of the Palk Estates and maintained that position until 1874.

2.14 Kitson’s importance in the development of Torquay cannot be overestimated: as a solicitor he administered the Palk estate land and its parcelling into plots, and he then determined the leasehold terms; as an independent banker with Edward Vivian he would lend to new lessees; and from 1844 as manager and trustee of the Palk settlement he prevented the bankruptcy of the family, while rigidly controlling its patrimony. Absolute control was only relaxed with the accession of the fourth baronet Lawrence Palk III in 1860.

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- 2.15 The north pier of the inner harbour had Vaughan Parade erected on it in 1828 with the terrace houses put up by Jacob Harvey in 1831; similarly Harvey also formed Beacon Terrace in 1828 with the first houses following in 1832. That year a national school opened in Madrepore Place – just outside the conservation area – its 228 registered pupils almost six times the 40 instructed by Schoolmaster Edwards in Swan Street in 1800. An illustration in this year shows the inner harbour laid out around three sides of a square, several terraces, such as Higher Terrace and Park Place are clearly recognisable, while a few villas are visible on Braddon's Hill. Fashionable dress is also clearly in evidence on the bystanders portrayed. The 1831 census recorded a population of 3,582 an increase of over 86% in 10 years. However, local administration lagged behind the growth in population; for the first third of the century it still devolved either onto the Select Vestry committee based on the parish, still medieval in form and function; the manorial courts which regulated tenure; and the magistracy which administered criminal justice. Powers to direct town planning, sanitary matters or employ public officials paid from property rates were absent. In 1834 Tormohum parish adopted the Lighting and Watching Act which would transfer and enhance the powers of civil administration, and confer others, out of the hotch-potch of medieval practices, into the hands of 18 elected 'improvement' commissioners.
- 2.16 A Plan of Torquay and Environs 1841 published by the surveyor John Wood of Exeter well shows the expansion that Torquay had undergone during the previous decade. While the map spans the distance between the slopes of Chapel Hill above what would soon be Torre Station in the west to Daddyhole Plain in the east, the concentration of development is clearly seen on Fleet Street up as far as modern Market Street; the southern slopes Braddons Hill above the Harbour; and the slopes of Park Hill and along Meadfoot Lane as far as the beginning of the Higher and Lower Woodfield Roads (Lincombes conservation area). The harbour is built up on all sides from Cary Parade round to Beacon Terrace. On the surrounding hills above harbour level Warren Road has been newly laid out on Waldon Hill (Abbey Road conservation area); Rock House (now Delmonte) is prominent, perched between Warren Road and Waldron Hill Steps (sic), now Rock Walk. On Braddon Hill Lower and Higher Terrace rise above the Strand, Montpellier Road above again, and the Braddon Hill Roads: West and East which extend from Fleet Street to Babbacombe Road at a higher level still with the beginnings of Upper Braddons Hill Road rising to its apex. On the east side above Victoria Parade are located Park Crescent, Park Street, and Park Place all terraces erected along Park Hill Road. Meadfoot Lane (the Row) runs back to the Lincombes; on the upper slopes of what will become Vane Hill are located a number of cottage ornées: Parkhill, Rose and Woodbine Cottages (Lincombes) surrounded by woodland.
- 2.17 With good road connections linking Torquay with its hinterland and beyond to Newton Abbot and Teignmouth, only a coastal road linking the harbour area with Paignton was lacking; the route closest to the shore was the pedestrian only Rock Walk. In the late

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1830s the Turnpike Trustees wished to construct a carriage road from the harbour to Brixham. This would require the excavation of the cliff face below Waldon Hill and continuing the road across Torre Abbey meadows. The proposal was vigorously resisted by H G Cary but he was outvoted by the other trustees who obtained an Act of Parliament in 1840 to undertake the work. The road is shown on the 1841 plan although it was not opened until the following year.

2.18 The 1841 plan in fact portrays an arresting snapshot of Torquay with the basis of its modern road work in place in the decade before the railway arrives; its population had reached 5,982 in that year, an increase of 67% over the previous 10 years; of these 4,085 were residing in the Torquay chapelry, i.e., outside the old village of Torre. Two other aspects stand in contrast to the pattern of later development: the overwhelming form of development is the terrace building; and the vast majority of it is on Palk and not Cary land. With the exception of the leases granted by his predecessor in the 1820s for villa plots

on Braddons Hill, Braddons Hill Road East having been laid out in 1822 – 12 such sites can be seen on the map, and they all lie within the Warberries conservation area – H G Cary (1828-40) almost ignored urban development; although a few modest plots were laid out on Warren Hill. The Palk estate development initiated by Beeke and Beard and later guided by Kitson, with the Harveys undertaking the building was almost all in terraces, with some cottages ornées, both harking back to Regency fashions. Of the very few villas on Palk land two lay closer than any to the front: Southland House and South Hill were located between The Terrace and Montpellier Road. The latter was designed as Lawrence Vaughan Palk's residence in Torquay, though most of the rest of his life (d.1860) from this period was spent abroad, out of the range of his creditors. Neither villa has survived, both lie beneath the footprint of the gigantic multi-storey Terrace car park and its ancillary works, as does The Braddons, the original villa on the hill (Warberries). Mains gas had been introduced to the town in 1834, the gas works being established on a site north of Torwood Gardens, now occupied by

Shirley Court; not shown but present at this time was public gas lighting surrounding the harbour.

2.19 The growth of Torquay after the 1840s is largely the story of its expansion outside the harbour area, with the exception of those properties on the slopes of Park and Vane Hills east of Parkhill Road and north and south of Meadfoot Lane. The most obvious example of this being the demolition in 1840 of the 1579 manorial house of Torwood Grange. The site (just beyond the conservation area boundary in the neighbouring Warberries) was acquired by J T Harvey and W Harvey, the sons of Jacob Harvey, the Palk's builder; here they erected four new villas by the middle of the decade. The brothers continued to be the principal builders in the town responsible for much of the major mid-19th century building work. Up until the mid-century the lead in development continued to be on Palk land, spearheaded by William Kitson their agent, rather than on that of the Carys. The twelve years of H G Cary's tenure of that estate were followed by the nine-year minority of his heir L S S Cary; on attaining his majority in 1849

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LSS Cary began the development of his lands. On both estates extensive villa developments were undertaken in the areas north and east of the harbour; most were built in a distinctly Italianate style, an influence that lasted until the late 19th century. Many were not owner-occupied but built to let for the season; it had become the habit from 1840 to hire a villa with extensive grounds. The terrace pattern which had characterised the first third of the century and had its origin in the Regency period was becoming old fashioned.

2.20 In 1848 the South Devon Railway was opened from Kingskerswell to Torre with plans to extend it to the harbour; after vigorous opposition this scheme was averted and Torre remained the terminus for over 10 years. In 1850 the town commissioners adopted the Public Health Act to constitute themselves as a Local Board of Health, in order to again advance local administration. In doing so the town's name was formally changed to Torquay from Tor (or Tormoham), as recognition that the developments centred on the harbourside had long

since overtaken the medieval village as the urban centre. The census of 1851 recorded a population across Torquay of 11,474; this was an increase of 91% over the decade and the most rapid growth ever achieved. William White's History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire published in 1850 describes the changes of the last 10 years:

*Such has been the increasing influx of visitors to Torquay during the last ten years, that its number of dwellings has been doubled in that period, and many wealthy families have now handsome mansions here, in which they reside continuously, or during autumn and winter. ... The lower part of the town, built round three sides of the harbour, with the quay and piers in front, is occupied chiefly by the shops and house of the tradesmen. the next tier, which is approached by a winding road at each end, and by steps in other places, comprises handsome terraces, as also do the upper tiers, and the detached hills on either side; where the ranges of neat houses and elegant villas, towering one above another, on their rocky platforms, gracefully exhibit their ... pretty gardens, carriage roads, and the intervening slopes.*

2.21 While there was a marked shift to villa development away from Terraces some continued to be built: Clifton Terrace in the 1850s, and Rock Road in the 1860s and 1860s). These were architecturally less significant than earlier examples but were often, as is Clifton, dramatically sited. Both are linked more generally with the building of cottage terraces in the Ellacombe and Market Street areas from 1853 for the artisans required to service Torquay's new clientele.

2.22 A marine spa was established by on the summit of Beacon Hill in 1857. This consisted of a saloon and promenade above the main swimming baths which connected to the sea, with ancillary medical baths. The spa was never a commercial success even after a large assembly room was added. Its location on the harbour side was distant from the coming fashion – sea front hotels. At the extreme west end of the conservation area the precursor of the present Torbay Hotel, Crumper's Hotel was built 1851-59, beyond Cary Parade, by quarrying or blasting away more of Waldon Cliff behind Torbay Road. By 1860 such hotels had become

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fashionable for shorter stays, promoted by the provision of mains water after 1856, and improved train services. In 1859 the railway was extended from Torre through Torquay at the front and onto Paignton. Disputes over whose land the line should run over: Cary or Mallock, Torre Abbey or Cockington; were decided in favour of the Cary's arguments. The route ran through the Cockington estates, but actually facilitated the development of (Cary) Belgravia. By 1860, both the Torbay and Belgrave Hotels were already established; the Imperial, at the other end of the conservation area would follow in 1863. Here the early century cottages ornées: Bagatelle, Marina and Cove House would be swept away; a pattern replicated elsewhere, including Woodbine Cottage, the most famous of them all built by John Foulston in the 1820s, which was demolished 1857, its site lies beneath the footprint of Rockwood Villa, currently the Princes Hotel. This lies in the Lincombes though the long path linking Parkhill and Vanehill Roads adjacent to the masonic temple, and a survival of Woodbine Cottage's extensive grounds is in the harbour conservation area.

Rose Cottages at 55-57 Vanehill Road seem to both subsume and sub-divide the original 1830s Rose Cottage. The long flight of steps which rises between Edenhurst Court and Park House which are attributed by Pevsner from the cottage period are postdemolition. The population in 1861 was 16,419, an increase of only 43% over the last census, still high but a drop in the rate of increase.

2.23 These early demolitions are indicative of the profound changes that were taking place from about 1860. Most of the present layout of the conservation area, including the main commercial streets, residential sites and harbour frontages, was in place at this period. The area now categorised as the Harbour conservation area having been the focus of the initial development of the resort, would continue be enclosed by the more systematic development of the surrounding conservation areas: Belgravia, Abbey Road, Warberries, and Lincombes which followed on. The First Edition Ordnance Survey County Series surveyed 1860-61, though not published until 1866 shows Torquay in the midst

of these changes, with neither the Inner Harbour nor Fleet Street yet in their new form. With the exception of the plots between Braddons Hill Road East and Babbicombe Road, Lower Torwood west of the Gardens, and the upper slopes of Vane and Park Hills, the area of the present harbour conservation area had been developed.

2.24 Fleet Street was entirely reconstructed in 1865 between its junction with Lower Union Street and Pimlico, where a turnpike gate still existed, and Strand. Fleet Street was still only 23 feet wide; parliamentary powers were obtained to compulsorily purchase 96 properties (78 were Cary freeholds) in order to remove George Street. While Fleet Street was doubled in size opposition prevented the realisation of the full scheme for a wide boulevard, and George Street survived for more than another century. However the Flete brook continued to issue into a creek between the debateable land of Cary Parade and Palk Street until filled by building rubble and the construction of the 'great sewer' in 1876-8 diverted the stream. Cary Green was created with Vaughan Street closing the triangle of the old creek.

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2.25 A Pier and Harbour Act of 1861 permitted Sir Lawrence Palk III to make and maintain additional piers and wharves to those of the earlier harbour. In 1867 the Strand was widened, which subsumed the existing slipway, and a new slipway was built alongside the new northwest corner of the inner harbour. The Inner Harbour which had only enclosed 6 acres was actually reduced in size with the extension of the Strand by 60 feet. Plans for a grand harbour extending from near Livermead to Land's End beyond Peaked Tor Cove were approved by the Board of Trade but never initiated. A further Harbour Order was obtained in 1866 under which the present outer harbour was built. Work on Haldon Pier commenced in 1867; Beacon Hill, which already had been part-quarried away to build the Baths and Assembly Rooms, was reduced to sea level to provide stone for the new pier, which would eventually enclose 10 acres of water. The 300 yard long Haldon Pier was completed in August 1870. Both the Spa and Harbour were acquired by Torquay Local Board from the Palk estates in 1883 on the death of Sir Lawrence Palk (ennobled as Lord Haldon in 1880).

2.26 One of the town's most ambitious projects to provide a fashionable winter attraction was the building of the Winter Gardens in 1878-81 on the south side of Museum Road. Here on a 4-acre site a glass and iron cruciform building (170' x 87') was erected; the grounds included the early 1830s villa and gardens of The Braddons. This was converted to provide restaurant, library, billiard rooms and office facilities. The venture was a financial flop from the beginning, the building lay empty for most of the next 20 years after its 1881 opening. It was dismantled in 1903 and sold to Great Yarmouth, but only after 4 houses, 547-553 Babbacombe Road, had been constructed on the insistence of the Cary freeholders. The Winter Gardens site is occupied by the 5 tall houses which extend from Westlands to Dalegarth.

2.27 After the harbour had been bought from the disintegrating Palk estates in 1883 the local board began to revive the plan to provide a western pier to complement Haldon Pier, for only a second stone pier would make the outer basin a satisfactory mooring. Additionally it would not only provide

shelter to the most exposed portion of Cary Parade and Torbay Road but would also be a major attraction for holiday makers in the newly fashionable Belgravia and Waldon Hill areas. Work began on Princess Pier, so named for the Queen's daughter who laid the foundation stone, in 1890. To further improve the harbour Beacon Quay was extended to its present width and the South Pier widened in 1893. Princess Pier at a length of 550 yards, was completed in four years, as was the sea wall linking it with the old inner harbour's North Quay; the four acres of reclaimed land thus enclosed in front of a widened Torbay Road were created the first public garden the new municipality – Torbay had achieved Borough status in 1892. Below the ancient Rock Walk were created the Royal Terrace Gardens, a series of steep terraces adorned with sub-tropical gardens and linked by walkways.

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- 2.28 William Kitson had severed his connection with the Palk estates in 1874, from this time the formerly orderly pattern of development began to fragment. After the death of Lord Haldon in 1883 the finances were found to be in disarray necessitating the first of the great auction sales of Palk leaseholds in 1885; the estate was wound up in 1894 when the remaining freeholds and manorial rights were sold.
- 2.29 Since the failure of the Winter Gardens Torquay had lacked a large public hall; that at the Marine Spa on the far side of the harbour was remote, and with the installation of the adjacent electric works in 1898 – the proximity to direct seaborne coal supplies being the decisive factor in an otherwise disastrous choice of siting – blighted by coal dust, smoke and steam. The provision of a pavilion divided both the town councillors and the ratepayers who were split on whether it or the new town hall should be built first. Eventually the foundation stones of each were laid on the same day, 26 July 1911; while the town hall was built by competition, the pavilion was home
- grown by the Borough Engineer and Surveyor H A Garrett.
- 2.30 Following a resurvey in 1904, the Ordnance Survey published their second edition county series map in 1906; this shows the area covered by the Torquay Harbour conservation area now entirely built up. The Rock Road terraces have been completed, while the late villas south of Braddons Hill Road East, and those in Lower Torwood and either side of Vanehill Road are now all present; as are the Museum and three churches located either side of Babbicombe Road/Torwood Gardens built to serve the new community.
- 2.31 During the 19th century the conservation area underwent a number of phases of development and redevelopment. Between the 1790s and 1830s Torquay was transformed from a fishing village, remote from either manorial site, to a fashionable resort linked by new roads to the main trans-Devon route at Newton Abbot. The early development is characterised by Terraces, pursued at the end of the 18th century on the Cary side of the harbour and during the late Regency on the
- slopes above it on Palk land. Earlier settlement sites in the Park Lane area have been subsumed into later fabric although the narrow alleys and lane are indicative of a pre-existing organic lay out. Whilst the late 18th century development by the Carys – Cary Parade – has been demolished, most of that built from c.1810 by the Harveys for the Palk Estate has survived. The bold scale and sophisticated detailing was clearly intended from the outset to establish the town's credentials as a fashionable resort.
- 2.32 From the 1830s there was a marked shift to villa development, which can be seen on those hill sides with outward views across the harbour and coast: Delmonte, Braddon and Vane Hills. Elsewhere away from the front some terraces continued to be built – Clifton Terrace in the 1850s; Rock Road in the 1860s. Some of the later terraces are less impressive architecturally but often spectacularly sited such as those between Pimlico and Braddons Hill Road West. The re-organising of Fleet Street in 1865 and the harbour improvements of the late 1860s followed by Princess Pier and the

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associated land reclamation in the late 19th and early 20th century resulted in the creation what could rightfully claim to be a premier European harbour destination; its dramatic natural setting enhanced by some outstanding examples of historic townscape.

- 2.33 The electric works remained at their Beacon site until 1924 blighting the Marine Spa. Its removal came during a period of change in the resort's character. Many smaller houses and terraces began to turn themselves into guest houses catering more and more to the holiday maker who came for the week, or even the weekend. This being economically more viable for them than for the large hotels with their winter clientele.
- 2.34 During the war many of the hotels were requisitioned by the armed services for various training functions. The Slipways which are such a prominent feature between South Quay and Haldon Pier were built by the Royal Engineers in 1943 in preparation for American use on D-day and the following month. Less well known, because less iconic, was the use throughout the war of Haldon

Pier as the base for a flotilla of RAF High Speed Rescue launches.

- 2.35 Most of the villas, which had reached their greatest extent by the 1890s, have been demolished since the war, especially those on Vane and Braddon Hills. Some demolitions began as early as 1930 spurred on by the shift away from villas as homes, holidays or otherwise, and exacerbated first by death duties and, since the last war, the increase in land values. This last peaked in the 1960s with villas being removed and replaced by tower blocks over the same or smaller footprints. It would be idle to pretend that the replacements of the demolished villas have been anything other than inconsistent and of poor architectural quality. Of the original twenty or more, only seven are still of a quality to be listed, and all of these have been altered or subdivided serving as flats or hotels.
- 2.36 The Marine Spa was finally demolished and its site redeveloped in 1967 as the Coral Island Amusement and Leisure Centre. This bleak but typical example of concrete brutalism in

form, and unthinking commercialism which did nothing for Torquay aesthetically, financially or socially was soon discredited and all vestiges were removed in 2001. In its place an imaginative Marine Aviary by Derek Elliot and partners was designed to both exploit the site and bring Beacon Cove back into public use. At the same time the Inner Harbour was given a tidal gate and a new bridge built to link South Quay with Fish Quay. These projects were opened in 2003.

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A team of experienced consultants from Purcell jointly contributed to the completion of this Conservation Area Appraisal.

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