



TORBAY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY/TORBAY COUNCIL

# TORBAY BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

# 3409

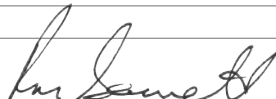
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TORBAY BUILDING HEIGHTS STUDY

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# 01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## 1.1 About this document

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**1.1.1** This building heights strategy has been commissioned by Torbay Development Agency and developed in partnership with Torbay Council and English Heritage. It was funded through New Growth Points Funding. It forms part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and may, at a later stage, also be used to inform a Supplementary Planning Document. It provides a strategy for the height of new development as well as identifying areas appropriate for tall buildings. It does this by identifying areas that are potentially appropriate for tall buildings, called areas of search, where there are sensitivities to the introduction of tall buildings, called areas with sensitivities, and also where you would not normally expect to find tall buildings, called neutral areas.

## 1.2 Understanding of Torbay

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**1.2.1** The guidance is tailored to Torbay's very particular circumstances and is based on an understanding of the character and aspirations of Torbay and its component parts of topography, urban structure, historic development, views, existing building heights, hierarchy of settlements, heritage and landscape assets and land uses. Torbay has a varied topography with a number of steep sided valleys and land that rises sharply upwards a short distance inland. Its street hierarchy generally reflects the topography with two primary routes, one running along the coast line and the other across the hilltops. Access to the three main towns is along the valley bottoms. The topography allows for panoramic views across the bay and prospect views from the sea, harbours and piers back inland. Views, along with the phases of development and how they relate to the topography are key to defining Torbay's special character. Torbay has a long history related to fishing, naval activity and tourism and contains three main towns, Torquay, Paignton and Brixham that have developed unique characters. The Borough is generally low rise, with scattered tall buildings. Historic tall buildings tend to be churches and more modern buildings tend to be apartment buildings, institutions and civic buildings. Analysis of this information allowed the identification of the following broad character areas:

- Coastal Zone;
- Town Centres;
- Villas;
- Terraces;
- Suburbia;
- Business and Retail Parks;
- Stations;
- Corridors; and
- Landscape Dominated.



## 1.3 Approach to building height in Torbay

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**1.3.1** Building height is only one element of urban form and cannot be considered in isolation from other urban design and policy considerations. We have therefore devised aims for the building heights strategy that illustrate how building height can support other established objectives. The aims for the Building Heights Strategy are as follows:

- To promote Torbay's image as a beautiful seafront destination through excellence in architecture and urban design;
- To strengthen the respective characters of the three settlements of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham;
- To provide a stimulus to inward investment and regeneration;
- To preserve and enhance strategic views;
- To preserve and enhance the outstanding landscape character of Torbay;
- To promote environmental excellence in design, construction and management;
- To promote sustainable patterns of development;
- To reinforce local distinctiveness; and
- To ensure residential amenity is not unduly affected.

**1.3.2** Given the special character of Torbay as a predominantly low rise place there is a presumption that new development will be constructed to the prevailing height (most commonly occurring height) in each particular character area, unless there are sound urban design or socio-economic reasons to deviate from it.

**1.3.3** These deviations may be minor, one or two storeys up or down from the recommended height, referred to as modifiers. Modifiers allow subtle variations in height to achieve urban design aims or reflect existing character.

**1.3.4** New tall buildings will contribute to the regeneration of Torbay and help strengthen its character, where they are appropriate in terms of their impact and where they provide wider urban design or socio-economic benefits. This guidance sets out the circumstances in which tall buildings could be considered and provides guidance on their location and design. Tall buildings should however, remain the exception in Torbay.



Spinnaker Tower, Portsmouth Seafront - An example of an Iconic tall building contributing to the seafront setting

**1.3.5** To provide greater clarity on where tall buildings are likely to be acceptable the Borough has been divided into 'Areas of search for tall buildings', 'Sensitive areas' and 'Neutral areas.'

**1.3.6** The 'Areas of Search' for tall buildings are the town centres, coastal zone and station character areas where they can support the vitality of these places and emphasise the importance of their role in the character and function of Torbay.

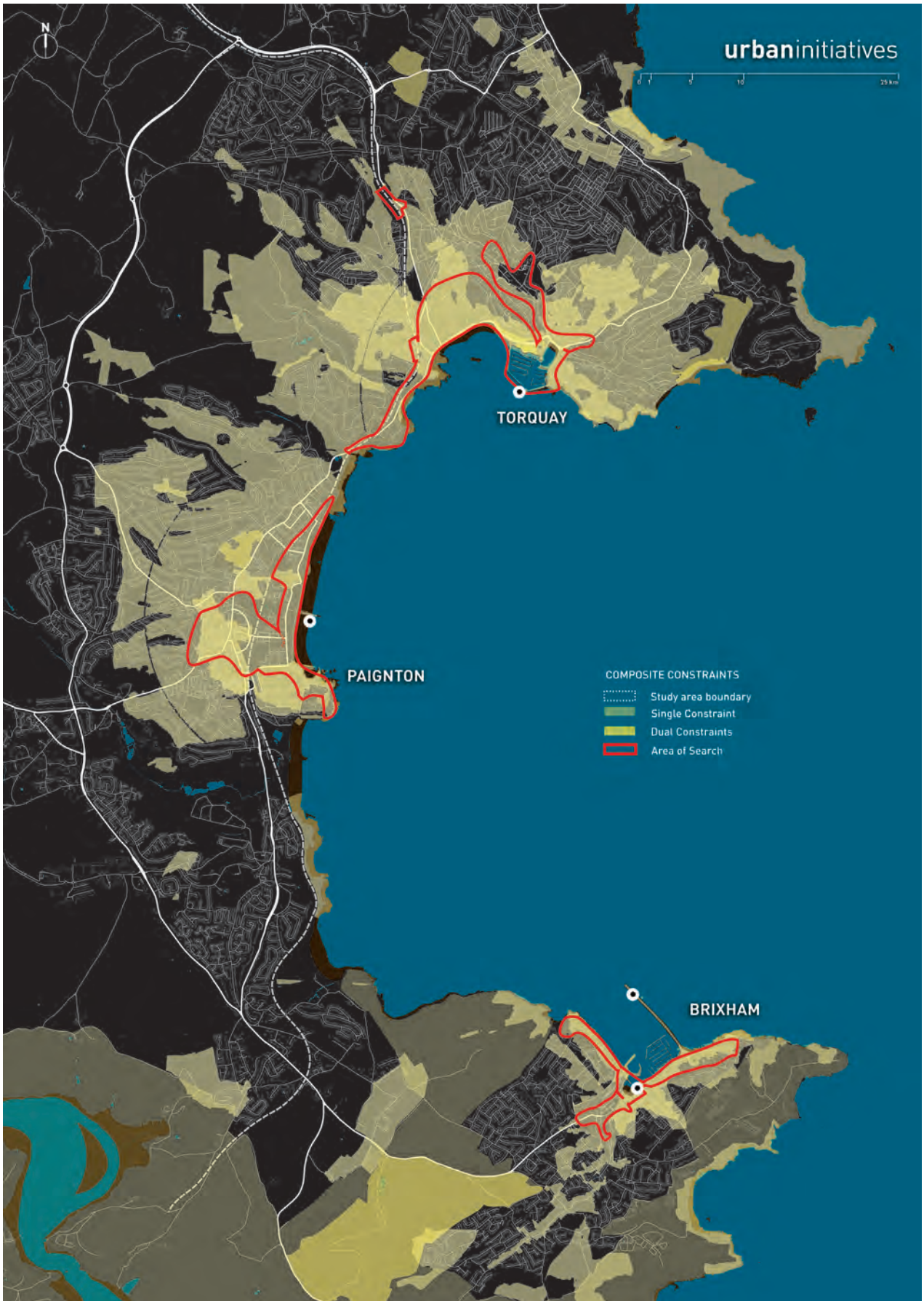
**1.3.7** Torbay has a number of sensitivities to tall buildings, including conservation areas, special landscape character and prospect views which are important in defining the character and image of Torbay. These sensitivities cover much of Torbay including the areas of search. Tall building proposals need to take this special character into account and will only be acceptable where they do. These areas can be distinguished further by identifying areas with a single constraint (e.g. within a conservation area) and those with dual constraints (e.g. within a conservation area and a prospect view).

**1.3.8** The remainder of the borough outside these areas of search are described as being 'neutral' to tall buildings. In these locations tall buildings are unlikely to be acceptable in order to maintain existing low rise residential character, residential amenity, landscape character and green, uninterrupted hilltops.

**1.3.9** The plan opposite illustrates the areas of search, areas of single and dual constraints and neutral areas. Pages 8 and 9 summarise the guidance on building height for each character area, but reference to the main document is required for full details and qualifications. The summary should therefore be used as a quick guide only, rather than a substitute for the full report.

**1.3.10** The table below gives a quick guide to the appropriateness of tall buildings in the different areas:

Area type	Appropriateness of tall buildings in principle
Areas of Search	✓
Sensitive Areas	?
Neutral Areas	✗



Composite plan of areas of search for tall buildings, sensitivities and neutral areas.

## 1.4 Summary of height guidance by character area

Character Area	Sub-area	Objectives	Recommended height	Modifiers	Tall buildings
Coastal Zone		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinforce the character of fine-grained 3 storey buildings along with pavilion buildings set in their own grounds.</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+ 1 storey -1 storey	Yes, in principle subject to responding to sensitivities and meeting criteria (see 7.2)
Town Centres	Torquay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinforce the character of fine-grained 3 storey buildings and varied roofscape.</li> <li>To promote vibrancy and vitality of the town centre through a flexible approach to building height.</li> <li>To reinforce Torquay's role as the primary centre in Torbay.</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	Yes, in principle subject to responding to sensitivities and meeting criteria (see 7.3)
	Paignton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinforce the character of the town centre and its distinctive pattern of height.</li> <li>To promote vibrancy and vitality of the town centre to continue to meet the needs of both local people and visitors.</li> </ul>	2 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	Yes, in principle subject to responding to sensitivities and meeting criteria (See 7.3)
	Brixham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinforce the character of fine-grained 3 storey buildings.</li> <li>To promote vibrancy and vitality of the town centre as a centre to serve both local and visitor needs.</li> <li>To create a more cohesive building height and enclosure along Fore Street.</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	Yes, in principle subject to responding to sensitivities and meeting criteria (see 7.3)
Villas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinforce the character of large, grand buildings set within spacious plots with consistency in building height but variety and liveliness in the roofline.</li> </ul>	Prevailing eaves height (usually equating to 2 or 3 storeys)	No	No
Terraces		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reinforce fine-grained rows of terraces as a defining feature of these character areas.</li> <li>To reinforce the uniform nature of height.</li> </ul>	2 storeys in Torquay and Paignton 3 storeys in Brixham	+1 storey -1 storey	No
Suburbia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect residential amenity</li> <li>To allow for incremental intensification of development</li> </ul>	2 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	No

Character Area	Sub-area	Objectives	Recommended height	Modifiers	Tall buildings
Business Parks		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To allow the construction of buildings that meet business needs, whilst minimising their impact on the environment and views.</li> </ul>	3 office storeys or 2 industrial storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	No
Corridors	Torquay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote legibility and enclosure of corridors with appropriate forms/type of development</li> <li>To promote public transport along primary routes</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	No
	Paignton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote legibility and enclosure of corridors with appropriate forms/type of development</li> <li>To promote public transport along primary routes</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	No
	Brixham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote legibility and enclosure of corridors with appropriate forms/type of development</li> <li>To promote public transport along primary routes</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	No
Stations	Torre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote appropriate development around the station.</li> <li>To create an attractive and distinctive gateway to Torquay.</li> <li>To enhance the setting of the listed station buildings.</li> </ul>	4 storeys	+1 storey -1 or 2 storeys	Yes, in principle subject to responding to sensitivities and meeting criteria [see7.9]
	Torquay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote appropriate development around the station.</li> <li>To create an attractive and distinctive gateway to Torquay.</li> <li>To enhance the setting of the listed station buildings.</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 or 2 storeys	No
	Paignton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote appropriate development around the station.</li> <li>To create an attractive and distinctive gateway to Paignton.</li> <li>To enhance the setting of the listed station buildings.</li> </ul>	3 storeys	+1 storey -1 storey	Yes, in principle subject to responding to sensitivities and meeting criteria [see 7.9]
Landscape Dominated		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To retain the character and landscaped setting of historic villages.</li> <li>To retain visual separation of the 3 towns by wooded valleys and tree-topped horizons in Prospect and Panoramic Views.</li> </ul>	2 storeys	No	No





Figure 1: Study Area Boundary  
TORBAY BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

## 02 Introduction

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### 2.1 Why is a strategy required?

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**2.1.1** Urban Initiatives has been commissioned by Torbay Development Agency and Torbay Council to prepare a Building Height Strategy that will provide guidance on building heights and higher buildings across the Borough.

**2.1.2** Torbay is going through a period of transition to become a 21st century seaside destination with a balanced and prosperous community. This change is being managed by the Mayor's Vision which will be translated into the Local Development Framework where it will be subject to formal public consultation and public inquiry.

**2.1.3** Building heights have an important influence on the character and image of a place and therefore need to be carefully managed, particularly where there are significant development pressures.

**2.1.4** Building heights in Torbay are predominantly low rise. The prevailing height in the post-war suburbs is 2 storeys, and slightly higher at 3 storeys in the historic centres and mature suburbs.

**2.1.5** Before the 1960's the only taller buildings were the church spires and the grandest hotels. Since the 1960's a scattering of taller buildings have been permitted, which don't always respect the relationship between building height, orientation and mass.

**2.1.6** Further proposals for tall buildings could erode and dilute character if they are not brought forward within a framework to encourage them in the right places.

**2.1.7** Taller buildings can have a positive impact on our towns by marking significant points of activity, such as town centres, creating fine landmarks, highlighting civic buildings and emphasising important transport connections. On the other hand they can overshadow, overlook and dominate their immediate surroundings and have a harmful impact on living conditions and the public realm. They can also have a negative impact on conservation areas, listed buildings and important views and skylines.

**2.1.8** This Study has been commissioned to ensure that building heights are appropriate to their context and that taller buildings are allowed when they make a positive contribution to regeneration and the legibility and image of the Bay.

### 2.2 What area does this strategy cover?

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**2.2.1** The Study covers the Torbay Council area, including the main settlements of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

### 2.3 The status of this strategy

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**2.3.1** The Building Heights Strategy forms part of the evidence underpinning preparation of the Council's Core Strategy.



Paignton Pier: a low rise landmark for Torbay



## 2.4 Who has been involved in its production?

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**2.4.1** The skyline is a shared resource, the views from the harbours, the beaches, the hilltops are all ingrained in our perception and understanding of Torbay. Any taller buildings proposed that will change these views will be of public interest. It is therefore important that the public have an opportunity to comment on this draft strategy.

**2.4.2** Key stakeholders from local planning and architecture practices, local and regional developers, local authority planning officers, the Council's design review panel and the Mayor's Vision Board were invited to a workshop to discuss and comment on a presentation of the draft strategy. The comments were instrumental in informing the approach to public consultation and development of the final strategy.

**2.4.3** Community consultation was held over three days in the last week of January 2010, with a day in each of the main settlements of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. 93 people came to the events and the consultation boards were made available on the Council's website.

**2.4.4** The key messages from the exhibition were:

- Overall, the exhibition was well received and the approach to building heights was supported;
- All Saint's Church Brixham and the tower of Vane Hill are considered the best tall buildings;
- Shirley towers, Kilmorie, Roebuck House and Union Street Car Park are seen as the worst examples of tall buildings;
- The analysis of existing building height as presented in this report is considered accurate;
- The approach to tall buildings is considered right, though some did not want to see any tall buildings in Torbay;
- People do not want to see tall buildings in prominent places and more emphasis should be given to the impact on the skyline;
- Most people were happy with modifiers being used in all settlements but there was some concern that too many slightly taller buildings could raise the overall height in the area;
- The analysis shows a good understanding of Torbay, but the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been missed out. This has subsequently been added to the Heritage and Landscape Assets Plan and the Sensitivities Plan.

## 2.5 What was the process for producing this strategy?

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**2.5.1** The methodology used for this study was designed to meet the requirements of PPS12: Local Spatial Planning, Planning Advisory Service Soundness Tool and CABE/EH Guidance on Tall Buildings 2007.

### **Stage 1: Understand the Theory**

The first stage of the process was to examine the theory behind building heights and explore the arguments for and against tall buildings. The approach to building heights taken by other places both historically and in the present day was also explored.

### **Stage 2: Understand the Place**

The second stage of the process was to understand Torbay including how it has developed over time, how its streets and spaces are structured, how land uses are clustered and how people arrive and move through Torbay.

### **Stage 3: Options for a Building Heights Strategy**

The impact of concentrating building height in different areas of the Bay was considered using 3D modelling.

### **Stage 4: Develop Building Heights Strategy**

Following the selection of the preferred option this draft guidance was produced to set out how development should be guided to deliver the agreed principles and strategy.

### **Stage 5: Informal consultation**

Consultation with stakeholders and the general public was carried out to seek endorsement of the approach and to check our understanding of Torbay.

### **Stage 6: Prepare Building Heights Study Report**

The strategy was developed into this guidance document which takes on board comments received from the consultation process and the project team.

### **Stage 7: Adoption**

The Council will adopt the Study as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

## 2.6 How this document is structured?

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**2.6.1** This guidance is structured principally around the process described above and is divided into the following chapters:

**03 Building heights, an introduction to the theory**

sets out how building height can be defined, a definition of a tall building and arguments for and against tall buildings.

**04 Understanding Torbay**

sets out the existing built and natural characteristics of Torbay, including building height.

**05 Building Heights Strategy**

sets out the aims of the Building Heights Strategy, structure of the guidance and approach to building heights and tall buildings.

**06 Tall buildings guidance in Torbay**

sets out guidance on the design and location of tall buildings.

**07 Guidance on building height by character area**

sets out the existing character of each character type, including building heights and sets out guidance for each.

**08 Developing the strategy into policy**

sets out how this guidance could be incorporated into planning policy



'S FUDGE & ICECREAM

THE JOKE SHOP  
JOKES N. JIGS TANGLED BREAD BAKERY ITEMS

SUNSPRINKLES

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

HOT 55  
BAGUETTES  
CROWN ROYAL WHISKY  
FRANCE

FROM THE BAR...  
KRONENBURG  
ROSTERS  
STELLA  
GUINNESS  
JOHN SMITHS  
HARTHEIS GOLD  
MAGNERS

OFFSHORE

# 03 BUILDING HEIGHTS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY

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## 3.1 Building height

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### Ways of describing building height

**3.1.1** Building heights can be expressed in terms of overall height, number of floors, height of eaves or ridge, height relative to particular landmarks or a ratio of building height to street or space width (By Design, 2000).

**3.1.2** Building heights significantly define the character of a place along with other factors such as grain, massing, topography, land use, architectural detail and materials. Whilst some places (cities, towns and neighbourhoods) are characterised by low-rise buildings, others are defined by their high-rise structures. Furthermore, places can have a uniform building height or present a diversity or range of building heights.

## 3.2 General height

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**3.2.1** The general height in an area contributes decisively to the character of an area. It determines the scale of buildings, along with grain, and the enclosure of the street space, and also directly has an impact on the density of development and the intensity of urban life. The analysis of general height within an area identifies:

- The **prevailing height**, which is the most commonly occurring height of buildings within an area;
- The **height range** which is the range of other typical heights recorded within an area.

**3.2.2** Establishing the prevailing height is easier in an area of uniform building height, but can be more difficult where there is great variety of building height within an area.

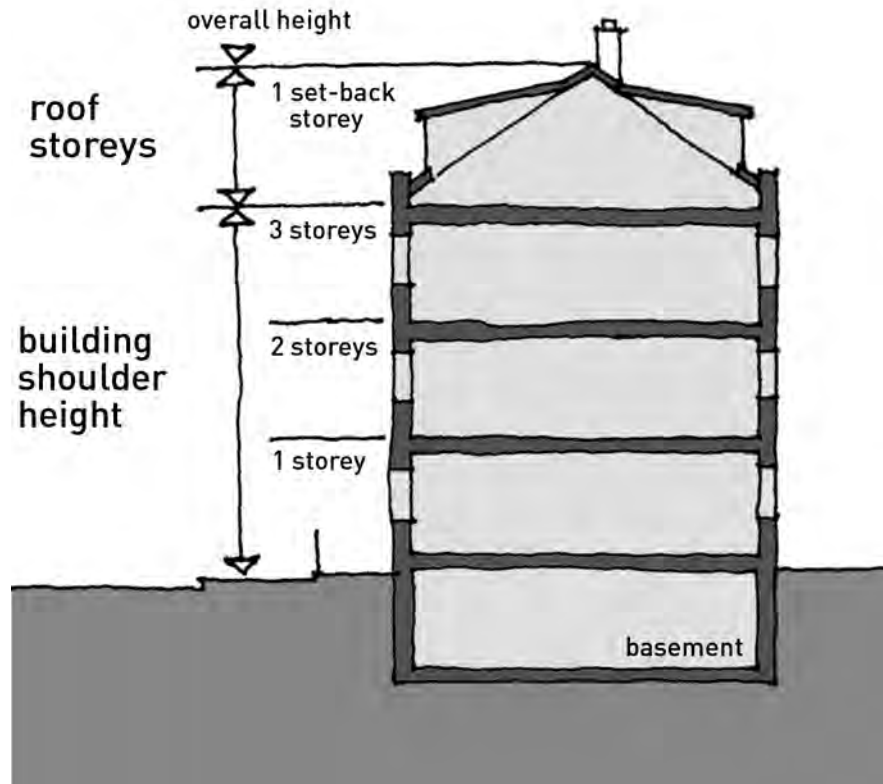
## 3.3 Shoulder height

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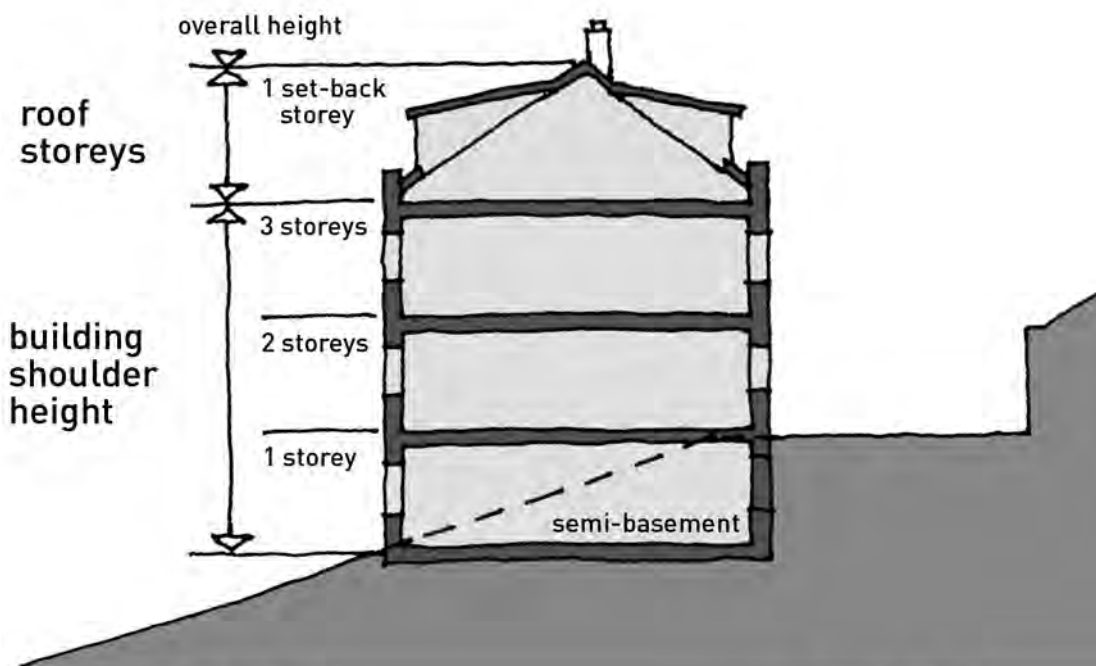
**3.3.1** The building shoulder height, is the sheer height of a building at the back of the footway up to the eaves or parapet height. It is recognised that many buildings have an additional storey above this height as set-back storeys or within inhabited roof spaces. This can contribute to a lively roofscape often without a significant impact on the perceived building height from the street. This is explained further in the diagram on page 16.



## BOX 1: EXPLAINING BUILDING HEIGHT TERMINOLOGY



Establishing building height on a level site



( front or back )

( front or back )

Establishing building height on hill slopes

### 3.4 Recommended height

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**3.4.1** Recommended height is the height to which new buildings should be built, unless there are circumstances in which a different height is more appropriate and can be justified.

### 3.5 Modifiers

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**3.5.1** Modifiers are permitted minimal deviations from the recommended height, normally not more than one storey up and one or two storeys down where they can be justified. Modifiers allow development to react to local circumstances, such as the potential to accommodate an additional storey to create better enclosure or legibility, or the need for development to step down to appropriately relate to neighbouring lower buildings. Modified heights stay within the height range of an area. They are not used to achieve tall buildings. Possible justifications for modifiers are given in Chapter 7, but their application will depend on the local circumstances and the existing pattern of building height. More specific guidance related to the character of Torbay is also given in Chapter 6.

### 3.6 Tall buildings

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**3.6.1** The term tall buildings covers both buildings that are only a few storeys above the general height of an area, and also buildings or structures that are significantly taller than their surroundings.

**3.6.2** Tall building is a relative term. A five-storey building might be a tall building in a predominantly two-storey suburban area, but of a common height in a town centre. Thus, tall buildings must be considered in relation to their local context. However, tall buildings have a greater impact than buildings of general height. They need a greater degree of testing and scrutiny, and this building height study devotes a separate section to tall buildings.

**3.6.3** For the purposes of this guidance 'Tall Buildings' in the Torbay context are defined as buildings that are significantly higher than the prevailing height and/or have a considerable impact on the skyline. This is in line with the CABE/EH definition set out in their Guidance on Tall Buildings.



This six storey building is tall in its context but does not appear tall relative to the backdrop of the cliff



Torbay has some areas of very varied building heights...



... but uniform height is more common

## 3.7 Measuring building height

**3.7.1** Building heights are normally expressed in two ways, either in absolute metres or as the number of storeys. In most circumstances a definition of height in storeys is sufficient. Storeys directly relate to the organisation and use of a building, and height in storeys is easier to measure than absolute metric height. It is a straightforward concept that allows the simple understanding, controlling and administering of building height.

**3.7.2** It should be noted however, that the actual floor-to-floor height may vary between different buildings and uses. In most cases the resulting height difference between equal storey buildings is minimal and does not adversely affect the scale, consistency or character of a street-scene. Often a slight variation in the eaves line brings liveliness to a street scene and emphasises the grain of development. However, there are special cases, where the storey height deviates strongly from the average, such as multi-storey car parks, museums, shopping malls, industrial units or where there are great internal variations of height, such as in cultural, sports, leisure or faith developments.

**3.7.3** Heights of most existing and proposed buildings are expressed in storey heights. Where known this is supplemented with an approximate shoulder height (height to eaves) given in metres. The heights have been taken from a 3D height and massing model of Torbay. The model calculates height by measuring the difference in height between ground level and the building height every 4 metres across a building footprint. It then calculates an average for all the points measured on a particular building. It therefore only calculates an approximate height.



Roebuck House is tall compared to its 2 storey neighbours

**3.7.4** The 3D model is a tool available to developers to assist them with planning applications on request from Torbay Council's Strategic Planning Department.

**3.7.5** Because certain buildings, such as churches and theatres, do not have regular storey heights their height is given in metres and calculated as above. The equivalent number of storeys is also given and it is assumed that each storey is 3 metres tall.

**3.7.6** Heights, whether expressed in metres or storeys are taken from the lowest part of the slope and are the height between the ground level and eaves of the building. Accommodation in the roof is not included.

### Taking into account topography

**3.7.7** In a place with a varied topography, such as Torbay, with its combination of steeply sided cliffs, valleys, plateaux and flat reclaimed plains, the effect of building height can be either exaggerated or understated.

**3.7.8** For example, the height of a building towards the top of a slope is exaggerated, whereas the height of a building situated at the base of a steep cliff has much less of an impact.

**3.7.9** All height recommendations refer to the height as measured from the lower part of the slope. This is explained further on page 16.



Because of the topography buildings are often a different height at the front and back



## 3.8 Why it is important to manage building height

### Building height and relationship with density

**3.8.1** Density is the amount of development on a given piece of land. Density defines the intensity of development and, together with the mix of uses, influences a place's viability and vitality. The density of a development can be expressed in terms of plot ratio, number of inhabitants, number of dwellings or number of habitable rooms.

**3.8.2** With increasing energy awareness and the need for sustainable development, density in urban areas should relate to the degree of accessibility by means of public transport. Thus, high density, mixed-use development should be promoted in and around town centres and near to major transport interchanges. Areas within walking distance of up to 400m (5 minute walk) from public transport nodes are highly accessible and can ideally be developed to higher densities.

**3.8.3** Building height, footprint, form, site coverage and compactness determine the density of an area. However, high density does not necessarily require high-rise buildings; tall buildings are only one possible model for high density. Compact and low-rise development forms such as terraces, urban blocks and apartments built around garden squares can achieve high enough densities to support public transport and local shops and services.

## Arguments for and against tall buildings

### Landmarks

**3.8.4** A landmark is a building or structure that marks out a special building in the urban environment often with a communal purpose. Besides height there are many ways to landmark a building to make it stand out from the background architecture, such as using contrasting materials, greater architectural detail and land use.

**3.8.5** Landmarks help us find our way around a place, we use them when we are giving directions or arranging a place to meet for example. They also help our understanding of the place, its history and culture as traditionally our landmark buildings are those that have a particular importance to the community. In Torbay, many of the landmark buildings are church spires, hotels and civic buildings and structures such as the clock tower or Golden Hind.

**3.8.6** If we start creating landmark buildings for other reasons and in places that have no particular relevance to the community, then the impact of existing landmarks becomes diluted.

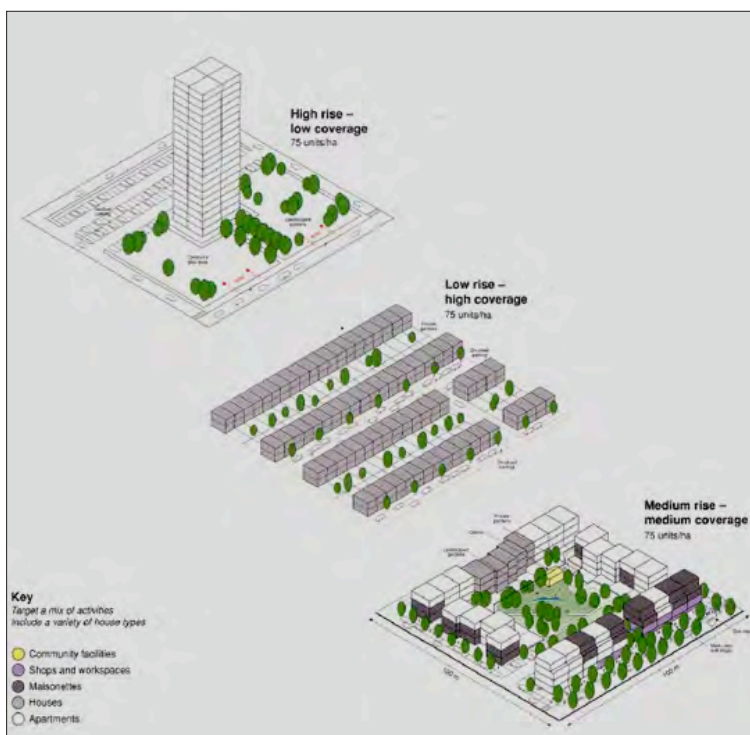


Illustration of how 75 units can be distributed differently across a 1 hectare site.

## **Sustainability/Accessibility**

**3.8.7** The need for sustainable development is another argument brought forward in support of tall buildings. This primarily relates to the promotion of high-density development in areas well served by (sufficient) social infrastructures and with a quality public transport provision, to minimise the need for travel and limit the use of the private car. High density, mixed-use development is generally promoted in town centres and around major transport interchanges. However, as pointed out earlier in this section, high density does not require the provision of tall buildings, and on its own, it is an insufficient argument for a tall building proposal, as high densities can equally be achieved through low-rise compact development forms.

**3.8.8** In addition buildings over a certain height have greater energy requirements during their construction and operational life, due to the need for lifts and providing other services to upper floors. Although there are examples of individual buildings with high environmental performance, they are very much the exception at the present time.

### **To secure the viability of a scheme**

**3.8.9** Frequently private developers push for additional storeys or a taller building on viability grounds to cover the costs of site acquisition, remediation, site preparation costs or other development contributions. Without regulation this would often result in over development and site cramming. Other, and arguably more credible, cases are where there is a need to provide essential services or facilities in a certain geographic location, due to proximity to other uses, its (public) transport accessibility, or a particular catchment area. These include hospitals, education facilities, and also employment uses.

## **Image**

**3.8.10** The image of a place is the product of a number of factors including its built and natural features, but also its cultural and historical associations. Tall buildings can form part of a place's image due to their visibility in important views and vistas and particularly if they are of outstanding and unique design or form a cluster.

**3.8.11** Taller buildings and/or structures can change skylines (for better and worse). On the one hand the skyline can be planned to project a particular image, on the other an unplanned skyline could damage the existing or future image of a place.

**3.8.12** Because of this influence on image, tall buildings can be used to signal the regeneration of a place. For example, Portsmouth's 170m Spinnaker Tower built to celebrate the millennium is the centrepiece of the regeneration of Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays, attracting over 600,000 visitors in the first year.

**3.8.13** The image of Torbay is vital to its success as a destination for tourism, to attract investment and a more balanced population. The English Riviera has an enduring brand, which has survived the fluctuations in popularity of the English seaside holiday. It is known for health and recuperation, recreation and pleasure, grandeur and the pleasant climate.

**3.8.14** The Mayor's Vision, elements of which are now embodied in the emerging Core Strategy, aims to reinvigorate and update the image of Torbay to ensure that it offers an experience that meets the needs of today's and tomorrow's tourists.

**3.8.15** Panoramic views around Torbay generally have a landscaped skyline, which is only broken by the odd church spire. It is the prospect views back to Torquay, Paignton and Brixham from harbour walls and piers that most inform the image of Torbay. These views are composed of the harbour and town centre in the foreground (in the case of Torquay and Brixham) with the settlement advancing up the hillsides to tree topped skylines. More detail on views is given in Section 4.8.

### **Impact on conservation areas**

**3.8.16** Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development clearly states that a high level of protection should be given to our most valued townscapes and landscapes (para. 17). This is expanded on in PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment. Therefore, new developments in conservation areas have to respond to the local character and preserve and enhance the built and natural heritage. Due to their massing and height, tall buildings are likely to have a greater impact on built and natural heritage than other building types. Tall buildings can affect the setting of listed buildings and views of a historic skyline even some distance away. They often appear out of place disrupting the urban pattern, character, scale, roofscape and building line of historic quarters. In some historic towns and areas, the need to protect the historic environment may be of such importance that no tall buildings will be appropriate.

### **Competition with existing landmarks**

**3.8.17** Landmarks are buildings that stand out from the background or ordinary architecture of a place. Through either height, special architecture, land use or a combination of these factors they help express the importance of certain activities and values of that place. There also tends to be a hierarchy of landmarks, the grandest buildings, such as the Grand Hotel and the Town Hall reflect the most important features of a place. Other more modest landmarks such as public houses, churches and libraries, reflect important buildings in the local community.

**3.8.18** New buildings that interfere with this hierarchy start to distort the image of a place and can lead to confusion if they do not mark important places in the urban structure.

### **Impact on views**

**3.8.19** Due to their massing and height, tall buildings can harm important views, prospects and panoramas. The qualities of some significant views may be such that they require strict protection, such as a geometrically defined view corridor with threshold heights above which developments are likely to have a negative impact on the view. The London View Management Framework uses such a tool.

**3.8.20** In Torbay views from the waterfronts, harbours and marinas are especially significant because the openness of water spaces allows for relatively long-distance views both across the bay and back onto the towns.

**3.8.21** It should be noted that whilst identified public views can be protected and managed, an individual's view from a private property is not a planning consideration and cannot be protected.

### **Microclimate**

**3.8.22** Tall buildings can overshadow and overlook their immediate surroundings. Furthermore, wind funnelling, shadow patterns and sunlight reflection can create negative impacts on the microclimate and on people using the surroundings streets and buildings. Reflected solar glare and night time light pollution also require consideration. Appropriate measures must be taken during the design to minimise these negative impacts. Architects can refine their proposals with the aid of technical modelling, such as computer simulations and wind tunnel tests.

### **Impact on residential amenity**

**3.8.23** Tall building design needs to pay particular attention, in residential environments, to protect privacy, and avoid overshadowing and overbearing effects. Inappropriately planned, designed and located tall buildings can detract from the quality of a residential environment. Tall buildings may overshadow, overlook and dominate their immediate surroundings and have harmful effects on living conditions, private gardens, patios and public spaces.

### **Poor relationship with the public realm**

**3.8.24** Tall buildings are autonomous building structures that need careful placing on their development plots to prevent a poor relationship to the street and to surrounding development patterns. Incorrectly positioned buildings can block links between neighbouring areas and reduce permeability and connectivity. Public spaces become weakly defined and lack enclosure, legibility and passive supervision. Ambiguous spaces make it difficult to orientate and personal safety fears deter non-residents from passing through estates of tall buildings. The ground floor of tall buildings often have a single entrance point and require some ground floor space to house services, lift mechanisms and bin stores, which creates long expanses of blank frontage. Residential tower blocks from the 1960's often exhibit these problems. However, more recently there are examples of where tall buildings have been incorporated into urban blocks and have an active street frontage.





COURAGE  
**HOLE  
IN THE  
WALL**

TORQUAY'S OLDEST INN  
CIRCA - 1540  
NATIONAL ALES  
SEAFOODS  
SPIRITS  
BAR MENU

LISTED COBBLED FLOORS

BEAMED  
CEILING



TORQUAY'S  
OLDEST INN

CIRCA 1540

HUNDREDS OF YEARS  
MEN OF THE SEA  
LOCALS VISITORS  
JOYED DRINKING  
THE  
**WALL**

Come & Enjoy our  
**70 SEATER  
RESTAURANT**

**HOLE IN THE WALL**  
Restaurant  
Specials...  
Delicious Briny  
Fish Oil  
See inside  
our special  
bar!

CHEF'S  
Specials  
LIVE MUSIC  
HERE  
TONIGHT  
Soup of Day

# 04 UNDERSTANDING TORBAY

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## 4.1 Introduction

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**4.1.1** The approach to building heights for new developments will need to be derived from an understanding of the character of Torbay which has developed incrementally over time. This chapter sets out the key elements of urban form that contribute to the existing structure and character of Torbay. Such elements include the historical development of the Bay, its main centres, the structure of its road and public transport network, the network of green spaces and its topography. These elements are then brought together in the Character Areas plan. Important views are identified and mapped and finally the policy context for this piece of work is set and the main opportunities for change identified.

## 4.2 History

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**4.2.1** The history of Torbay is well documented within local history books and more detail can be found within local libraries and through the local historical societies. A brief summary is given below, focusing on the elements of the area's history that most influenced the urban structure and built form of the towns.

### Torquay

**4.2.2** Before the early 19th century Torquay was a small fishing village, the original harbour being established by the monks of Torre Abbey. The only remnants of this part of Torquay's history are the few streets immediately to the east of the harbour around Park Lane.

Torbay was a popular location for fleets of naval ships to shelter from the southwesterly winds and ships often remained at anchor for long periods, using Torquay for supplies. Improvements to the harbour allowed naval families to settle in Torquay and it became recognised as a place for recuperation in the pleasant climate. It was during the early 1800's that many of the villas in the Warberries area were constructed taking their inspiration from Mediterranean resorts, to which travel was restricted during the Napoleonic wars. From these beginnings it grew into a fashionable resort for the upper classes, with its appeal growing further with the arrival of the railway to Torre Station in 1848. During the latter part of the 19th century the areas of villas in Chelston and Lincombes were built and the urban area of Torquay enveloped outlying villages like St Marychurch.

**4.2.3** Rows of modest terraces also began to appear from the mid-19th century in the area that is designated as the Tormohun conservation area and the area between the Warberries and St Marychurch and Cary Park conservation areas.

**4.2.4** Since this time low density suburban development has infilled gaps in the urban form and extended the town to the north and west. In addition a number of villas and their grounds have been redeveloped in the form of residential towers dating from the 1960's.

### Paignton

**4.2.5** The settlement of Paignton remained a primarily agricultural community up until the 19th Century, highlighted by some of features in the historic centre. Its role as a fishing village was also notable, although undermined in the hierarchy by the protected shelters of Torquay and Brixham. It was only in the latter half of the century, after the building of the new harbour in 1837 and the railway that significant growth was witnessed.

**4.2.6** The railway line was introduced to Paignton in 1859, 11 years after Torquay. However, the reliable links to Torquay and onto London, enabled Paignton to develop into a popular tourist destination. The construction of the railway and its embankment brought land reclamation and improved drainage, allowing for a large phase of development east of Winner Street, including a new town centre. The Victorian period simultaneously saw the construction of some of the town's recognisable buildings, such as Oldway Mansions and Paignton Pier. The seaside holiday destination took central focus, leading to the development of the Preston sea wall and Paignton Green.

**4.2.7** Although some of the villas existed before the mid-19th century, this period of tourism growth also witnessed major urban expansion of Victorian terraces to the north and west and intensification of villas to the south and at Roundham head. This growth continued through the 20th Century at lower densities, expanding over the fields, hills and valleys west of the original settlement.

## Brixham

**4.2.8** Brixham's sheltered location has meant its history is deeply associated with maritime traditions. Although a long time fishing port, Brixham has developed other maritime activities. From an arrival port for the likes of William of Orange, the town was also famed as a manufacturer of ships, sails and ropes, as well as an active naval port, used from the Napoleonic Wars up to World War II. The town's shipbuilding, associated works and fishing industries, a stronghold of the town's identity and employment, went into decline with a number of shipyards closing in the 20th century. Quarrying was also once a notable employment industry for the town.

**4.2.9** Many of the town's buildings expanded from the two separate settlements 'Cowntown' and 'Fishtown.' Fishtown was the fishing port (Lower Brixham), with its housing tightly wrapped along the steep cliffs, overlooking the harbour. This area was connected by a small lane to what was formerly known as Cowntown (Higher Brixham), the centre of a farming community around St. Mary's Church, dating back to Saxon times. Some of the streets around the port, St. Mary's Church and Bolton Street date from the historic settlement.

**4.2.10** Railway was only introduced in the late 19th Century, operating for just under a century before the line was closed. It was around this time in the 20th Century where the sprawl of low-density houses and bungalows spread out behind the cliff tops and the higher plains.

## 4.3 Topography

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**4.3.1** Torbay is essentially surrounded by a bowl of higher ground with the land sloping eastwards to the Bay, from the higher ground in the west and north.

**4.3.2** However, the local topography reflects the geology, which is much more complex. The highest point is in the Warberries area and the flatter hilltops of Torquay and Paignton are dissected by steep sided narrow valleys running perpendicular to the coast. There are steep headlands at Hope's Nose (Torquay), Sharkham Point and Berry Head (Brixham). At both Torquay and Brixham the land rises sharply from the harbours with the town centres occupying the valley bottoms that run inland. This makes for interesting views of the towns from their harbours where the layers of historic development can be distinguished.

**4.3.3** At Paignton before the land rises to the west there is a broad stretch of low lying land along the coast on which the oldest part of the town is situated.

**4.3.4** Topography has greatly influenced the urban structure of Torbay, it shapes the views and informs the character areas which are discussed below.

**4.3.5** Further detail on landscape and topography can be found in the Torbay Landscape Character Assessment Part 1, which forms part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF).



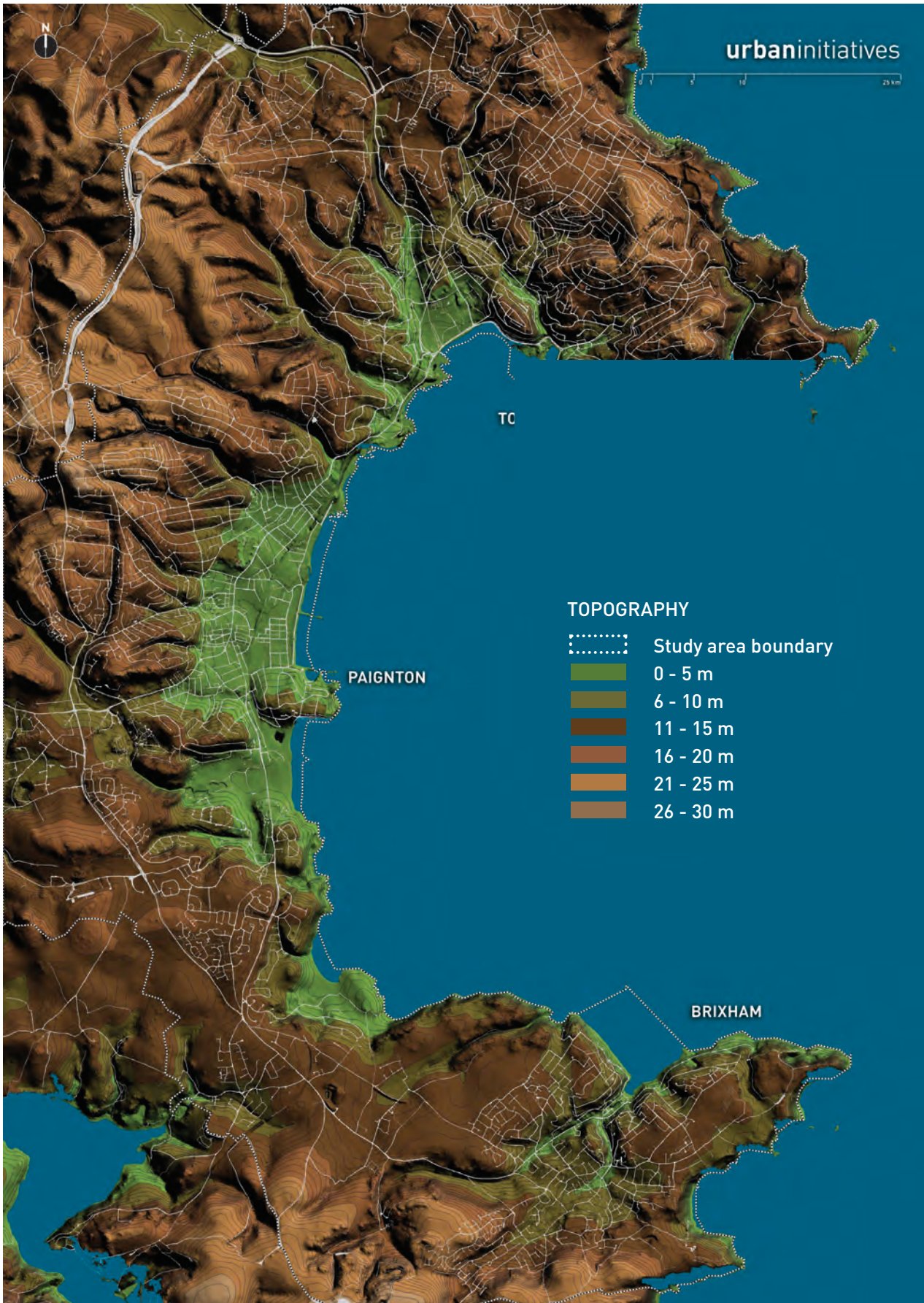


Figure 2: Topography Plan (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)



## 4.4 Urban structure

### Street hierarchy

**4.4.1** It is important to understand the street hierarchy of a place as building height can be used to emphasise the importance of key routes, which aids legibility. Using an appropriate building height for the width of the street creates a sense of enclosure to the street, contributing to a positive streetscape.

**4.4.2** Primary routes (shown red on the plan opposite): At the top of the hierarchy the structure is straightforward. There are two routes running parallel to the coast, the low lying coastal road (Torbay Road/Torquay Road/Dartmouth Road) and the 'ring road' higher up the hillside. Connecting these two routes are main routes into each of the main settlements (Torquay, Paignton and Brixham), which run along the valley bottoms.

**4.4.3** Secondary routes (shown orange on the plan opposite): The second level of the hierarchy are approach roads from other towns in the area, such as Teignmouth, Marldon and Dartmouth.

**4.4.4** Local connecting routes (shown yellow on the plan opposite): At the next level down are a number of local connecting roads that generally respond to the topography following the contours. However, partly due to the complexity of the topography the network of local routes is not easily navigable without a degree of local knowledge.

**4.4.5** Residential access roads (not highlighted on plan opposite): The lowest level in the hierarchy are the network of residential access roads. Generally speaking in the historic parts of the urban area they respond to the topography, but in the more modern suburbs there is less of a connection between the hillside and the street pattern.



Torbay Road is an example of a primary route



Old Mill Road is an example of a local connecting road



Peregrine Close is an example of a residential access road



Figure 3: Street hierarchy (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)



## Hierarchy of centres

**4.4.6** It is important to understand the hierarchy of centres within a place because building height can be used to emphasise this hierarchy, which has the effect of concentrating development in the most accessible places and contributing to legibility.

**4.4.7** The Torbay Local Plan 2004 defines the three layers in the hierarchy of centres in Torbay as Town Centres, District Centres and Local Centres. The town centres of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham are at the top and as such are the focus for shopping provision within the sub-region, complemented by other uses such as recreation, culture, civic and housing.

**4.4.8** The three district centres have very different characters. St Marychurch district centre is the historic village centre providing a range of specialist shops, boutiques and cafés. The Willows is an out-of-town shopping centre with a large supermarket with clothes shops, furniture stores and electrical retailers. The offer at Preston district centre is focused on meeting local convenience needs, providing local services and restaurants.

**4.4.9** Local centres are generally short parades of shops selling convenience goods to a local, residential catchment and are scattered throughout the built up area.



Chelston local centre



Figure 4: Hierarchy of centres (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)

## 4.5 Building height

**4.5.1** The height of buildings in Torbay derives from a number of factors including when they were built, what purpose they were built for and the character of the area they are located in. Generally the area is low rise (between 2 and 3 storeys) with a scattering of tall buildings.

**4.5.2** Building height is generally lowest (1-2 storeys) in 20th century suburban development and higher in the town centres and coastal zones (3 storeys). Tall buildings tend to be churches, the grandest hotels and civic buildings rising up to about 21 metres (the equivalent of 7 storeys), not including church spires.

**4.5.3** Building height is covered in more detail in Chapter 7: Guidance on building height by character type.



St Mary's Church, St Marychurch



Torbay Hospital is a tall, large building in a prominent location on a hilltop



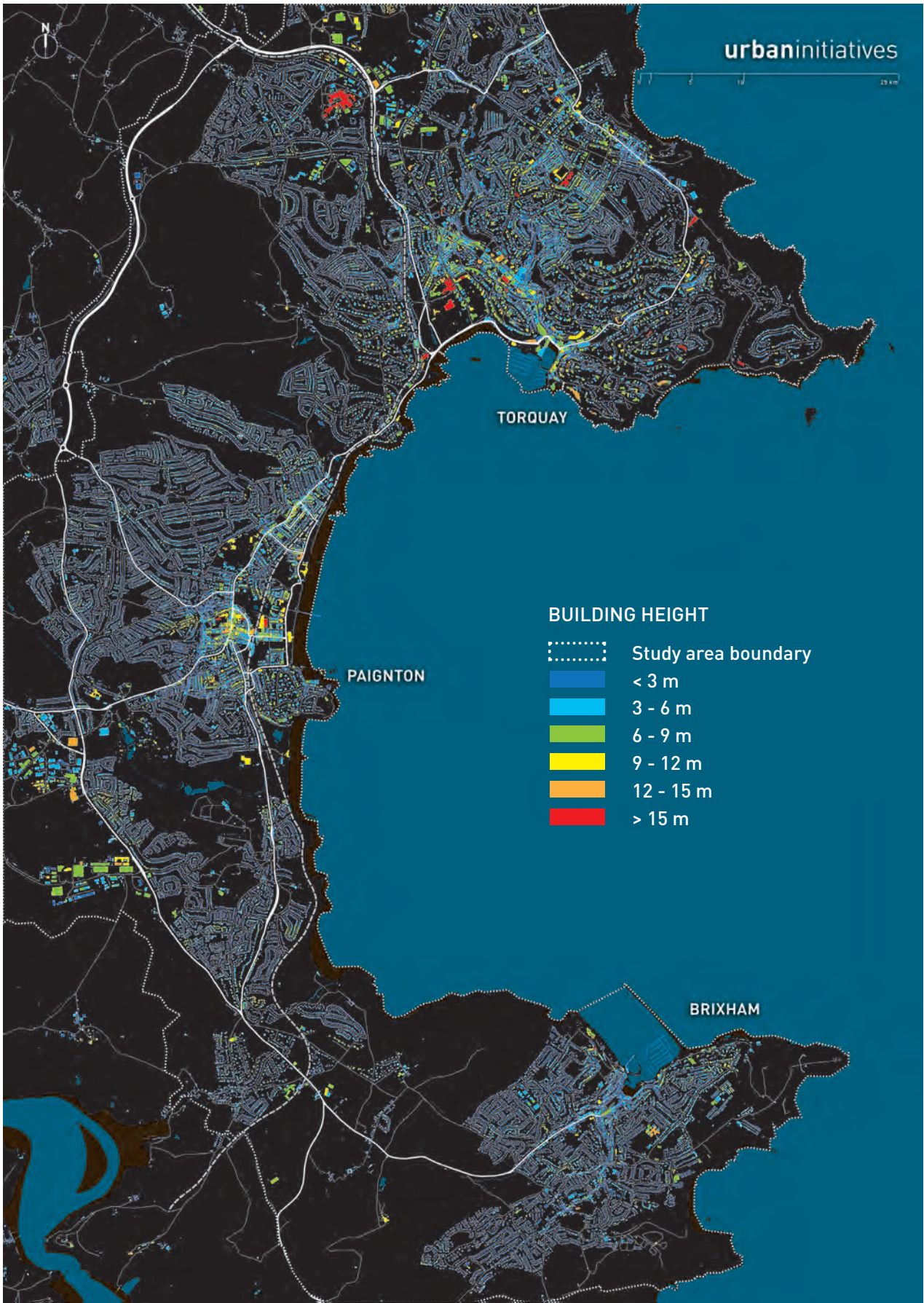


Figure 5: Building heights (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)

## 4.6 Heritage and landscape assets

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**4.6.1** A large part of Torbay derives its character and townscape from its heritage of 19th and early 20th century buildings. Torbay is fortunate to have many fine buildings many of which are listed, with particular concentrations existing in town centres, harbours, areas of Victorian villas or within what were once outlying villages. The Council has designated 24 Conservation Areas, in which the council has a duty to preserve or enhance their character and appearance. Conservation areas cover a significant proportion of the built up area of Torbay, particularly in Torquay where they cover approximately one third of the town.

**4.6.2** Torbay has high quality greenspaces, some of which are protected as Historic Parks and Gardens, and is surrounded by high quality landscape. This quality is recognised through designations such as Areas of Great Landscape Value, Coastal Preservation Areas, Countryside Zone and Brixham is surrounded by part of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

**4.6.3** The special quality of the coastal area as a habitat for coastal and marine wildlife is recognised through Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The English Riviera also received international recognition for its rich geological, historical and cultural heritage when it was designated a Geopark in 2007.



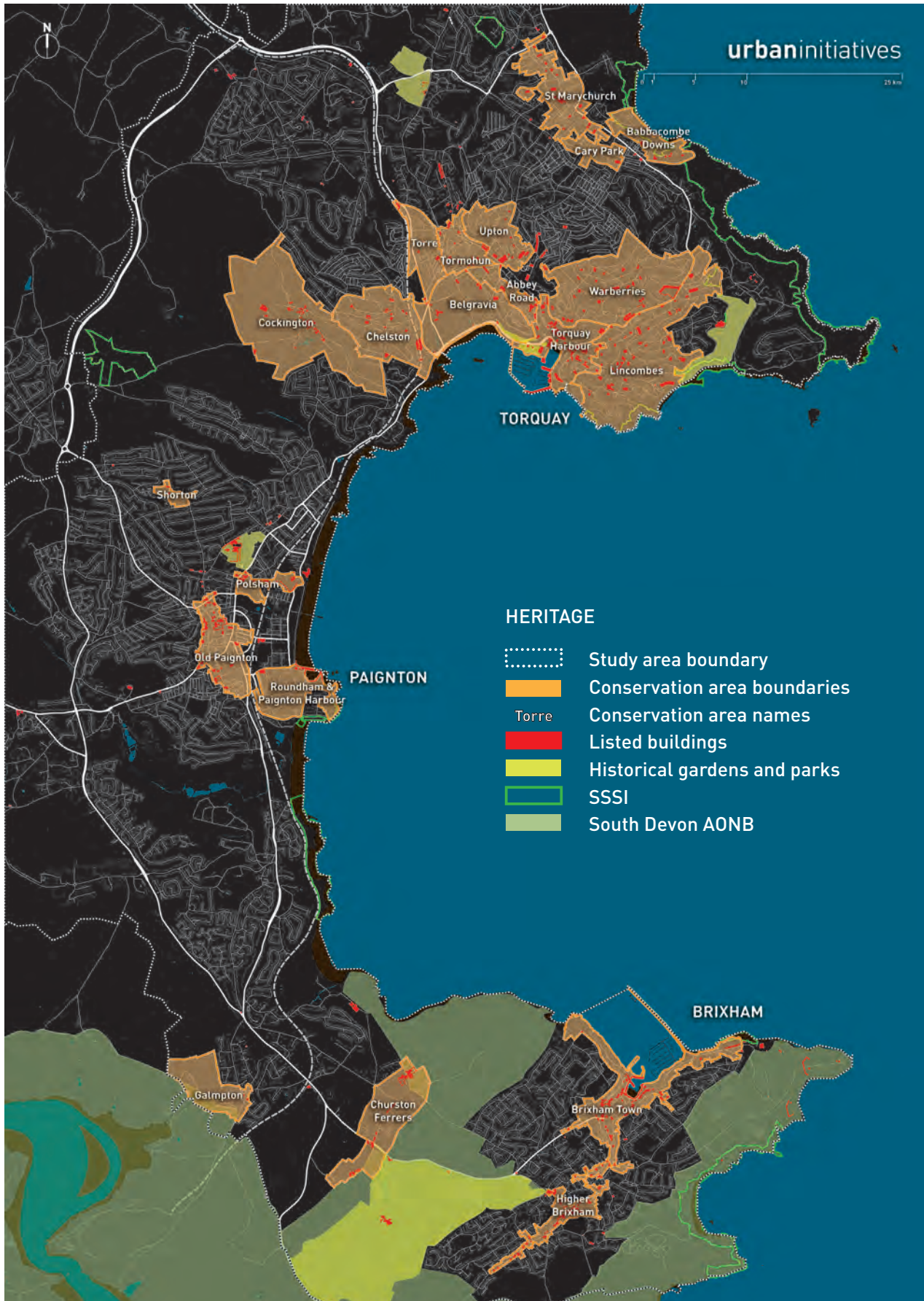


Figure 6: Heritage and landscape assets (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)

## 4.7 Character areas

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**4.7.1** A character area is an area with a defined character that derives from its historical development, urban structure, urban grain, building height, building typology, topography and land use. The identification of character areas has been informed by the Conservation Area Character Appraisals along with a high level townscape analysis based on oblique aerial photography, digital heights plan, site photographs and site survey. A summary table of this analysis, including prevailing heights and height ranges can be found in Appendix A.

**4.7.2** Torbay can be divided into nine broad character types, which are broken down further into discrete character areas. The nine character types are:

### Coastal Zone

**4.7.3** The coastal zones include the low-lying areas of harbours, marinas, pier, promenades and the areas immediately adjacent to them. They tend to be framed by groups of fine grain terraces or villas in the case of Paignton, with large scale pavilion buildings nearer the coast. They are mixed use areas with an emphasis on tourism, culture and leisure.

### Town Centres

**4.7.4** The town centres of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham are included within this category. Torquay and Brixham are linear in form following the valley bottom. The form of Paignton town centre is unique and reflects its change in role from rural service centre to tourism destination. They have varied urban grain and building height ranging from 2 to 5 storeys. The town centres are mixed use areas of high street shopping, with cafés, bars, restaurants and civic uses.

### Villas

**4.7.5** Areas of large, detached villas set within landscaped grounds. The villas are predominately 2 storeys in height with taller elements that punctuate the landscape.

### Terraces

**4.7.6** Terraced areas date from the Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They have a fine urban grain and consistent, uniform height of 2 storeys.

### Suburbia

**4.7.7** 20th century low-rise, low density suburban housing of predominantly semi-detached and detached houses and bungalows.

### Business Parks

**4.7.8** Large floorplate buildings arranged on a single spine road designed around vehicular access and surrounded by surface car parking. Land uses include industrial, commercial and retail.

### Stations

**4.7.9** Stations are defined as the area immediately surrounding a train station, including any land associated with the station, such as former goods yards, and car parks.

### Corridors

**4.7.10** Corridors are defined as linear areas consisting of one urban block either side of the primary routes into Torbay, or between settlements within Torbay. They are built up areas of mixed land use.

### Landscape dominated

**4.7.11** Areas of open countryside, including individual farms and outlying villages.



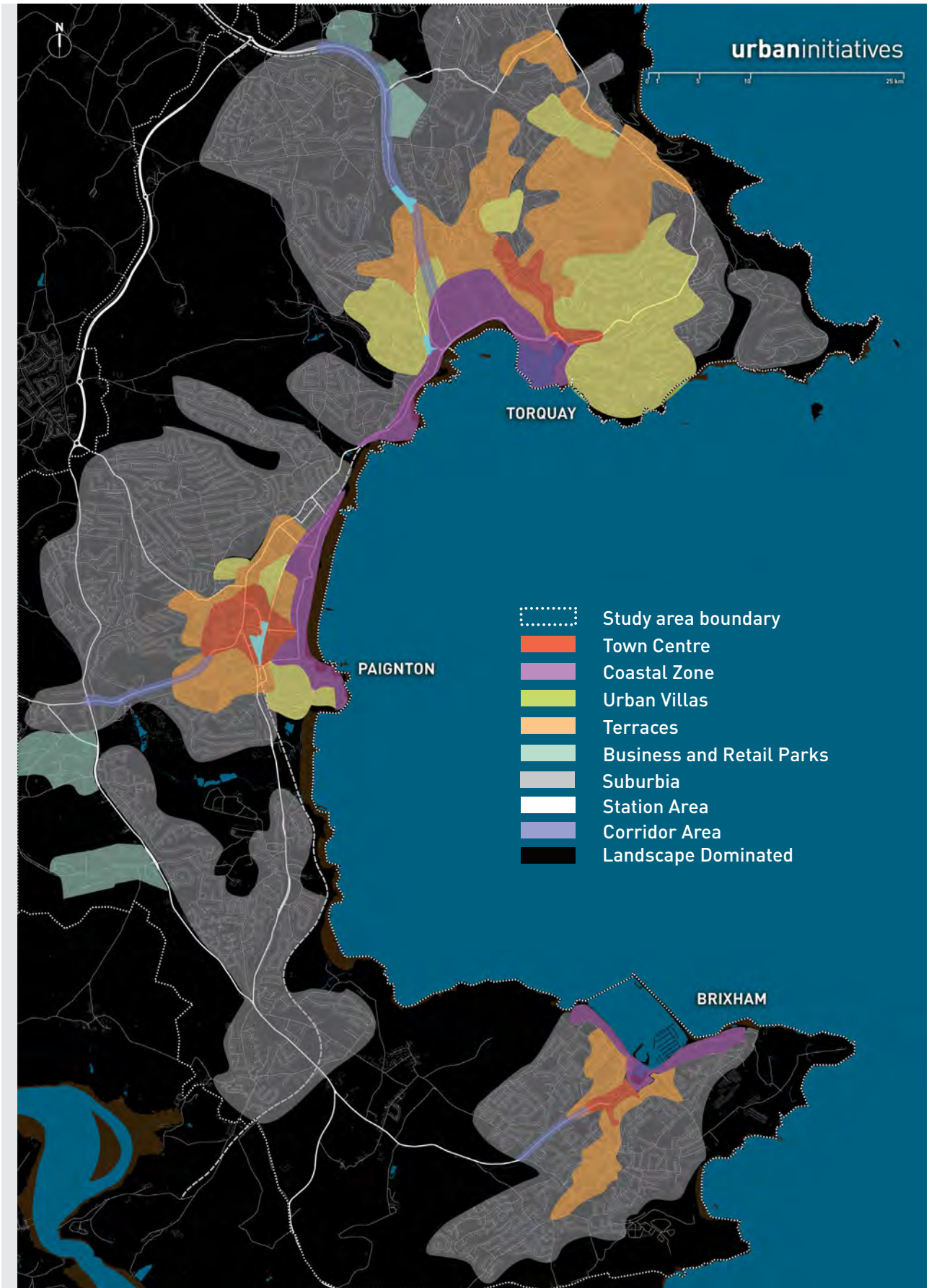


Figure 7: Character Areas (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)



## 4.8 Views

**4.8.1** We have identified four types of views in Torbay. These are:

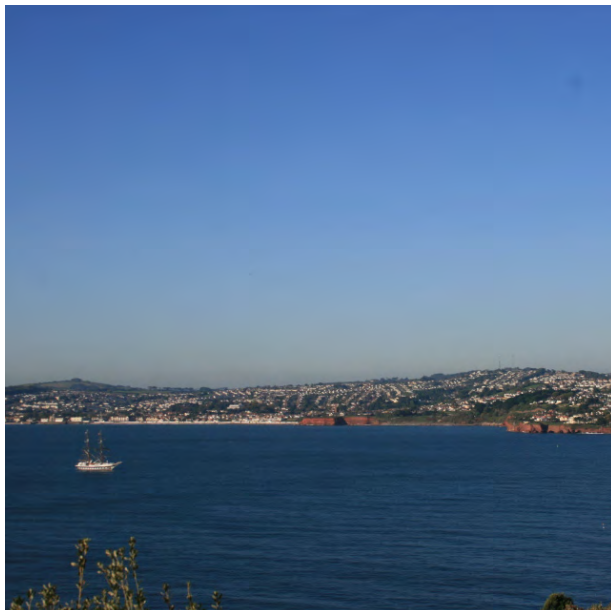
- High level panoramas;
- Sea level panoramas;
- Sea level prospects; and
- Linear views.

Each type of view can also be defined as either strategic or local. Strategic views are views that are widely recognised, seen by many people and play an important role in defining the image of a place. They may also be identified or known as viewing points.

Local views play a role in defining local character only, are seen by fewer people and may include a local landmark as the focus of the view.

### High Level Panoramas

**4.8.2** High level panoramas are long distance views over the bay from hilltops. Typically they include large expanses of sky, a ribbon of land and an expanse of sea. Due to many of the hilltops being in built up areas, these views are often partially obstructed by objects in the near ground, such as boundary walls, trees, buildings and rooftops.



High level panorama of Livermead and Paignton



High level panorama from Brixham looking out towards Torquay

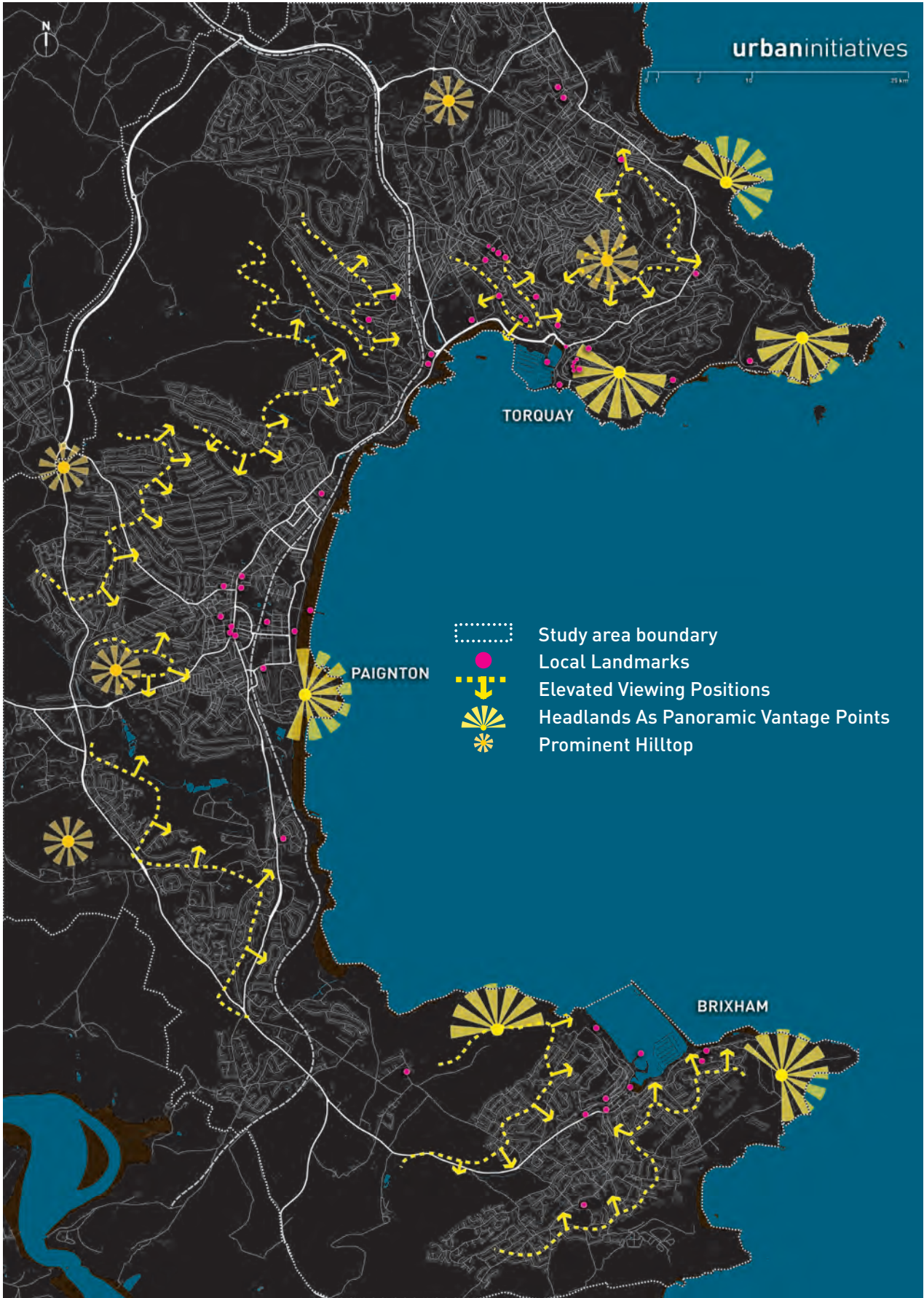


Figure 8: High level panoramas (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)

**Sea Level Panoramas**

**4.8.3** Sea level panoramas are long distance views over the bay viewed from the shoreline, coastal paths and harbours. Typically they include large expanses of sky, a ribbon of land and an expanse of sea. Given the distances involved there are only a small number of individual buildings that appear in the view. These tend to be church spires that break the skyline or white buildings of considerable mass, such as Hesketh Crescent. The general impression is of wooded hillsides.



Sea level panorama from Broadsands overlooking Torquay



Sea level panorama of Torquay from Brixham



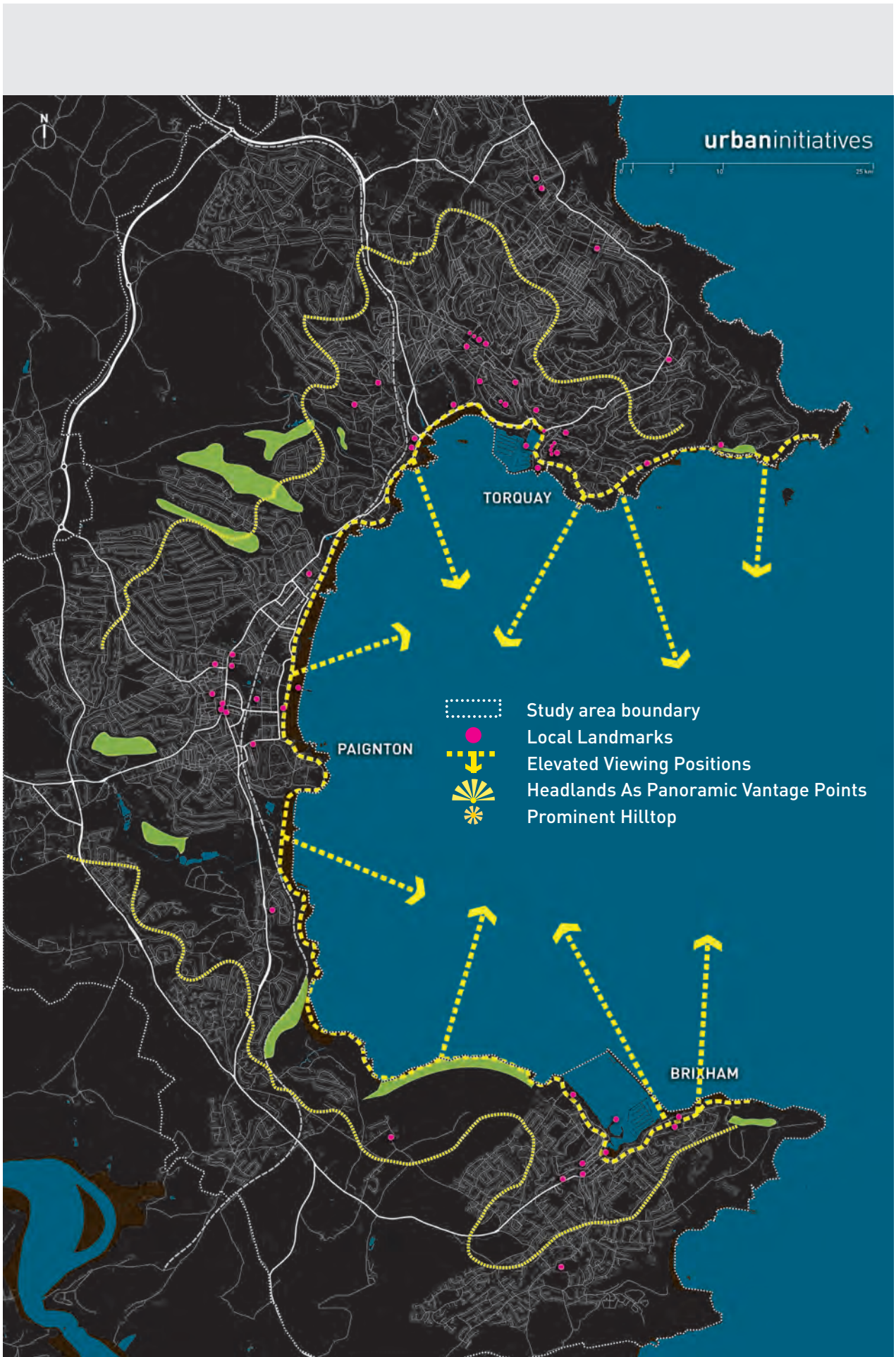


Figure 9: Sea level panoramas plan (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)

## Sea Level Prospects

**4.8.4** Sea level prospects are medium distance views of the towns as seen from recognised viewing points such as harbour walls and Paignton pier. In Brixham and Torquay these views typically include yachts and their masts in the foreground, with the town centre in the middle ground and the rest of the town rising up the hillsides behind to a generally landscaped skyline. There are however, instances where the skyline appears built up interspersed with green areas. Within the built element of the view the composition and interrelationship of individual buildings and groups of buildings is important. Often the different character areas can be picked out and appear as layers stepping up the hillside in these views.

**4.8.5** Harbours are important arrival points into Torbay and these prospect views inform both first and lasting impressions of the place. The sequence of views perceived as one progresses from open water into the harbour are an important part of the arrival experience. The harbours are also a popular destination for land based tourists who like to stroll along the harbour quays and pause to enjoy the view. Equally the seabridge at Paignton offers a seaside view of the town. Therefore these views are particularly important in defining the image of the three towns, and therefore Torbay.

## Analysis of Sea Level Prospects

**4.8.6** Given the importance of these views in defining the character of Torbay, a further level of analysis has been carried out to understand the composition and sensitivities of these views.

**4.8.7** Each prospect view has been analysed based on the following:

- View shed analysis (identifying the geographical area seen in the view);
- Identification of fore/middle ground (up to 1 mile from the viewing point) and background;
- Analysis of the characteristics of the view; and
- Assessment of distinctiveness and sensitivity to taller structures.



Prospect view of Brixham Harbour



Prospect view of Torquay Harbour



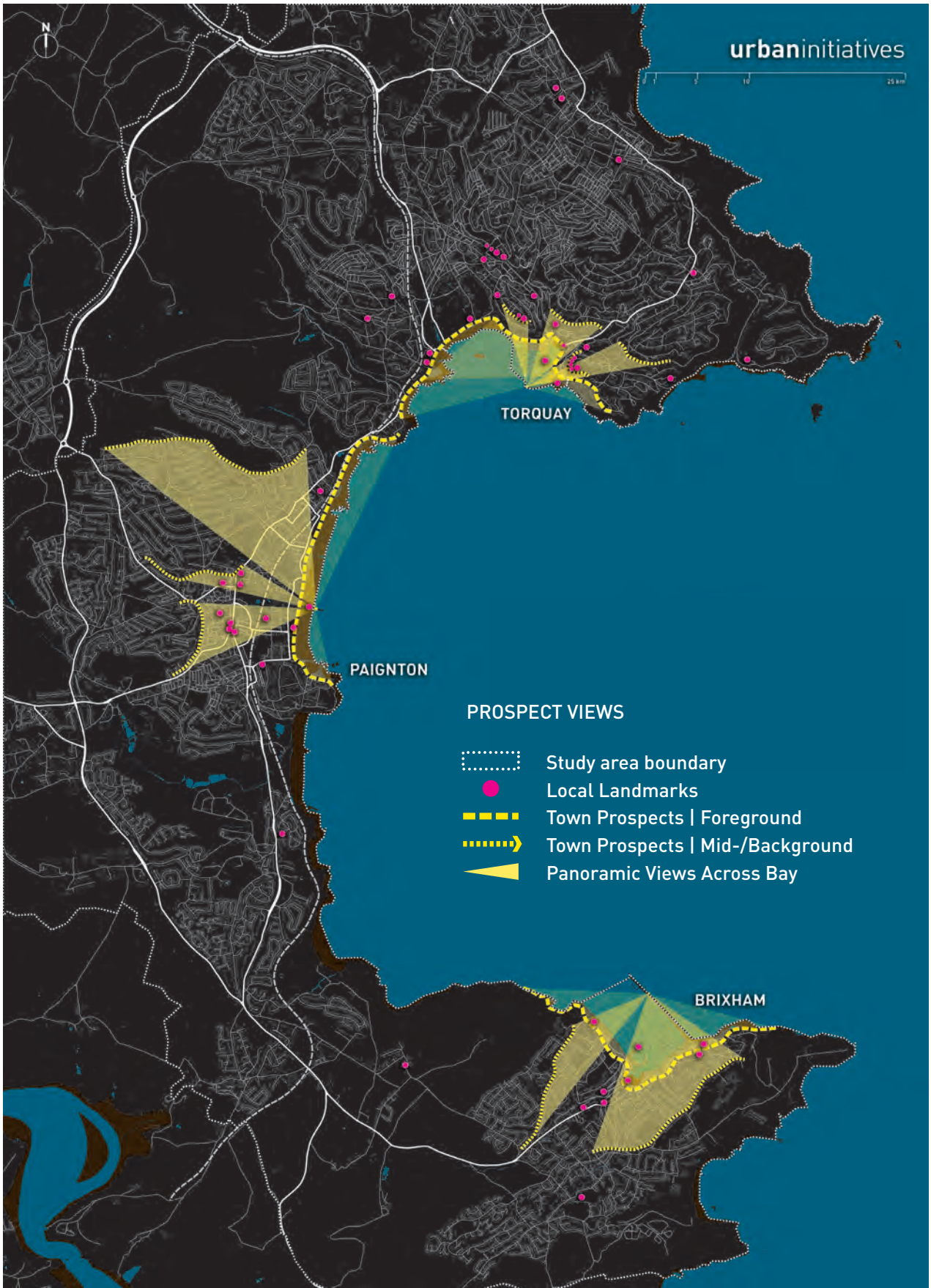


Figure 10: Sea level prospects (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)



## Torquay Harbour

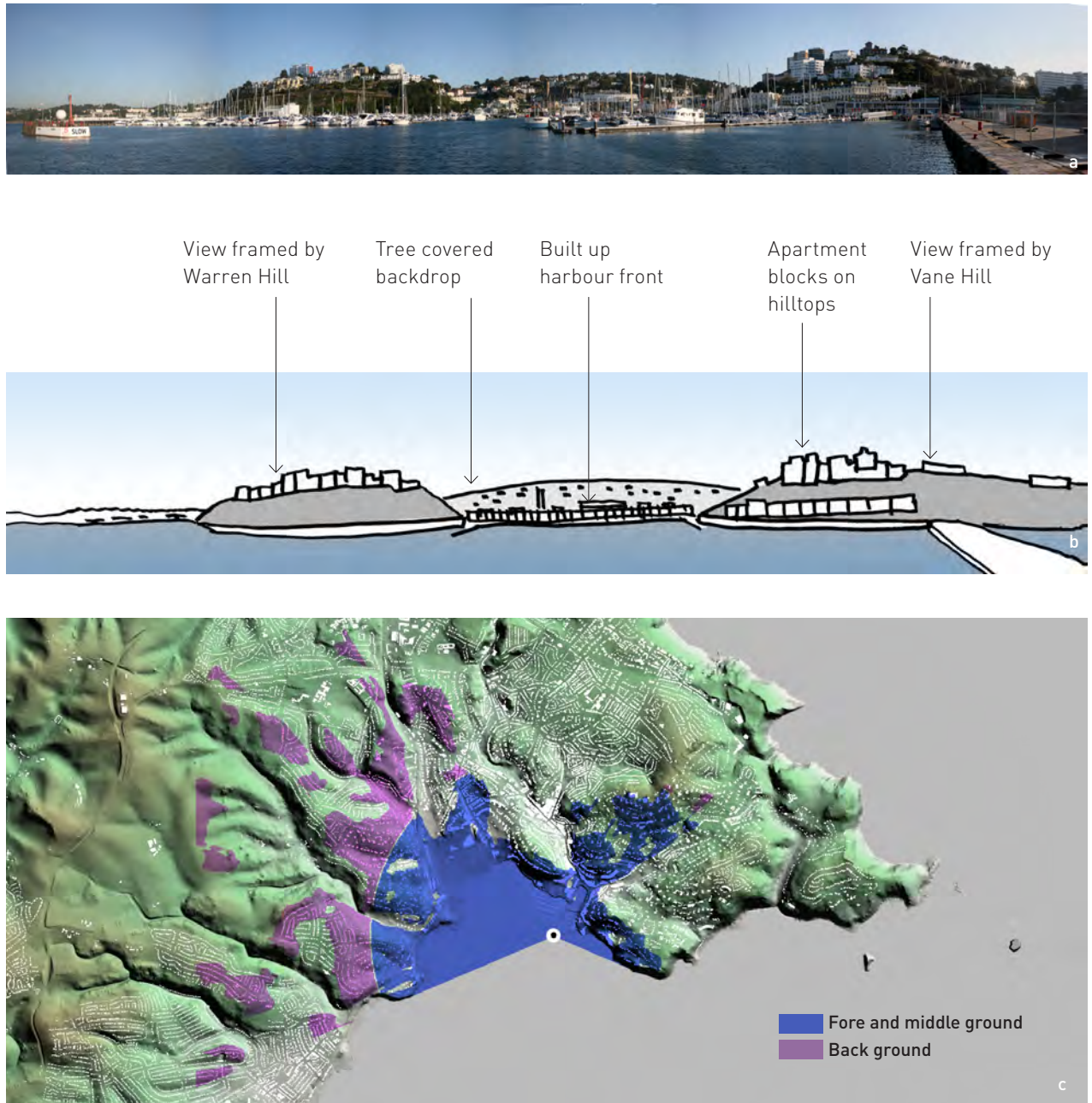


Figure 11: Torquay Harbour Prospect View (a), sketch of view (b) and view shed analysis (c)

## Characteristics of the View

**4.8.8** The chosen viewing point for this view is the tip of the eastern harbour wall, although a similar view is obtained from all along other harbour walls and marina walls. The tip was chosen as the viewing point as it is a natural place for people stop to take in the view. It is also a very similar view experienced by those arriving by boat as they enter the harbour.

**4.8.9** The view is framed by the two hills Warren Hill to the left and Vane Hill to the east. Large scale apartment blocks from the 1960's onwards occupy the hill tops and upper slopes

**4.8.10** The two hillsides frame and focus the view from the inner harbour and on to Torquay town centre. Prominent built features within the view include the St John the Apostle Church on Montpellier Road and the white Georgian terrace on The Terrace. The vertical masts of the sailing boats moored in the marina and the white boats themselves are also an important element of the view.

**4.8.11** The backdrop to the view is tree covered hill slopes loosely developed with medium scale development. The backdrop to the west of the view is low lying land with a tree covered horizon.

## Distinctiveness of the View

**4.8.12** The view is very distinct, with its strong and symmetric landform reinforced by similar development patterns that frame Torquay centre. The few outstanding elements (the Church and the Terrace) are confined to the centre and do not detract from the overall composition.

## Sensitivity to tall buildings

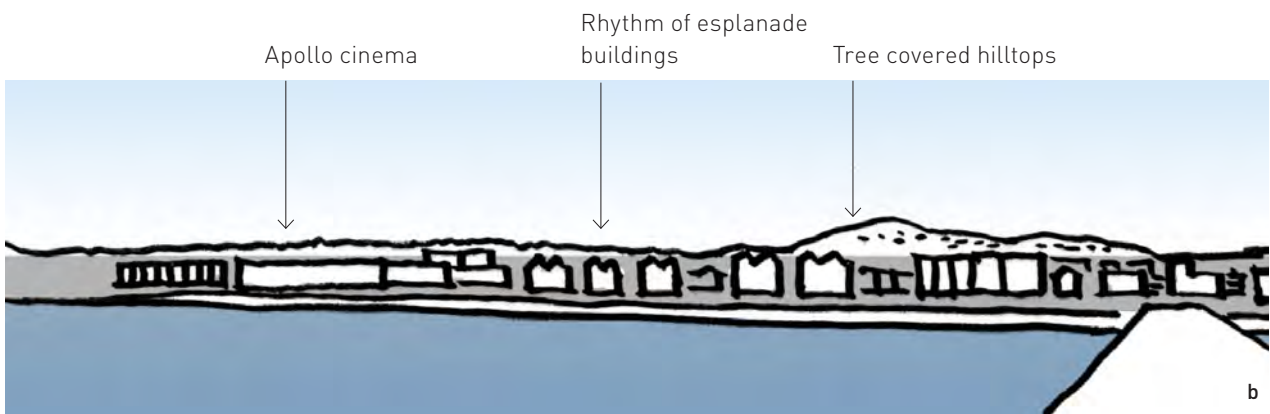
**4.8.13** The view is very sensitive to any accentuation by a taller structure as it could harm the balance of the view, particularly in the foreground, on hill tops or where it would break the skyline.

Paignton Pier South

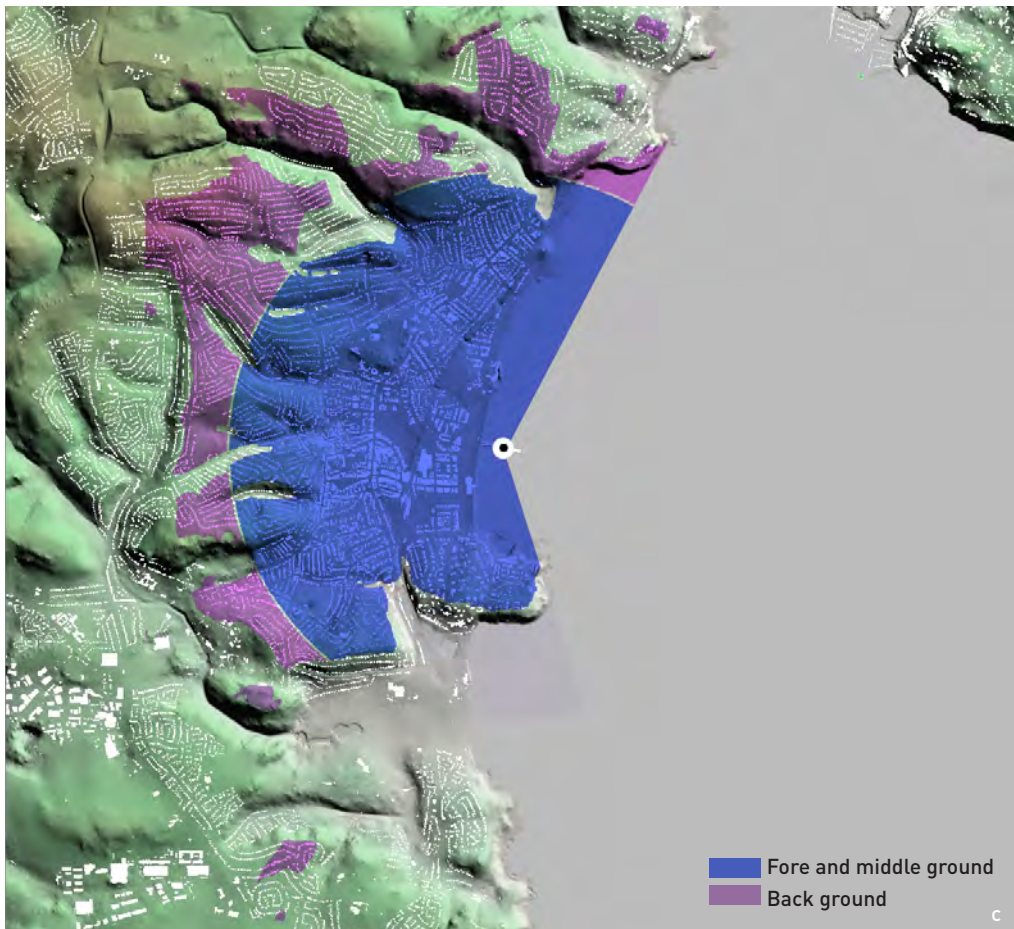


a

Extent of sketch in Figure 13b



b



c

Figure 12: Paignton Pier Prospect View south (a) sketch of view (b) and view shed analysis (c)



## Paignton Pier North

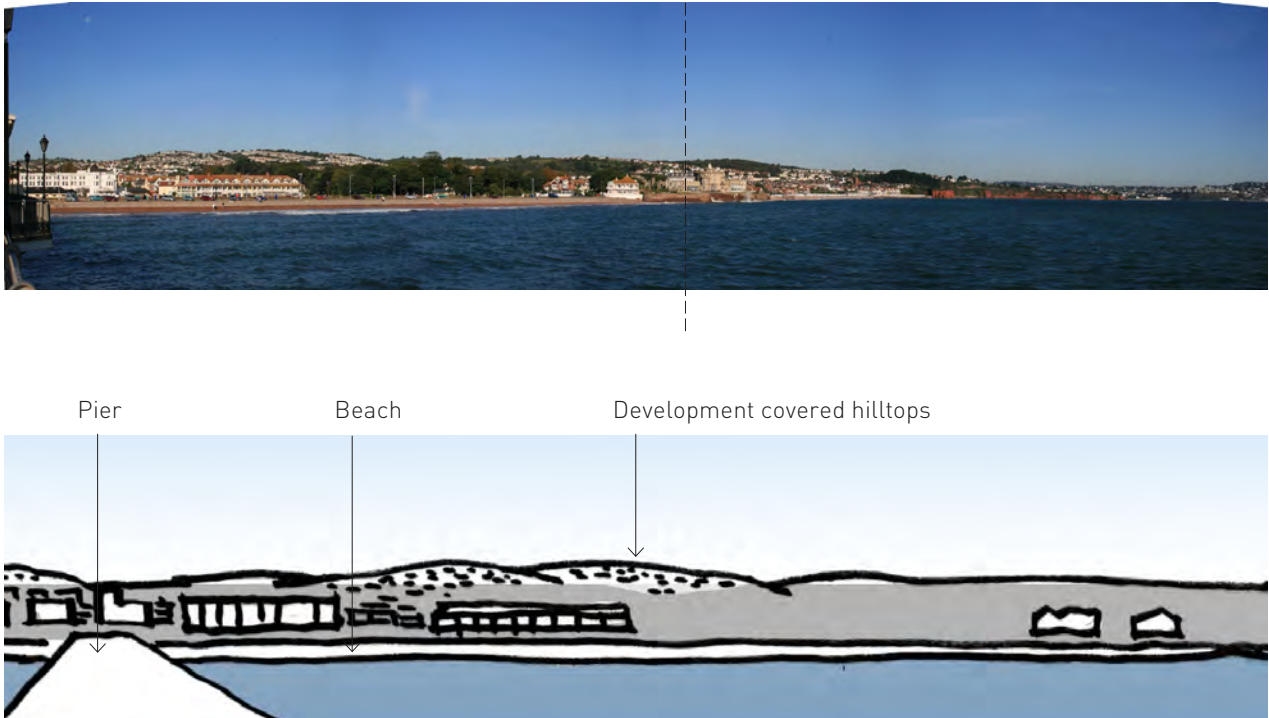


Figure 13: Paignton Pier Prospect View north (a) sketch of central section of view (b) and view shed analysis (see page 44)

### Characteristics of the View

**4.8.14** The chosen viewing point for this view is Paignton Pier. Because of the buildings on the pier the view inland is partially obstructed, hence the panorama is shown in two sections. Although a similar view is obtained from the shoreline along Paignton Beach it is the pier that is the natural place for people stop specifically to take in the view.

**4.8.15** The view is of the beach and esplanade on the flat, reclaimed lands. Detached villas and short terraces of similar height face the esplanade. A rhythmic ensemble of buildings form the defining element of the view. The white box Apollo Cinema in the foreground of prevailing height respects this character. The land rises in the background to shallow undulating hills. Suburban development covers the hillslopes, reaching the skyline in some locations, with the remaining skyline covered in trees.

**4.8.16** Paignton town centre is hardly visible in the view, hidden behind the seafront development.

### Distinctiveness of the View

**4.8.17** The view is distinctive and the absence of dominant topographic features are in strong contrast to Torquay and Brixham.

**4.8.18** The defining elements of the view are the rhythm of buildings of similar height at the seafront set in front of an unobtrusive and homogenous background. The pier itself is the primary foreground accent.

### Sensitivity to tall buildings

**4.8.19** A higher structure in the foreground or on the Esplanade would dominate the view and detract from the homogenous nature of the seafront development.

**4.8.20** A single, higher building in the background that remains within the context of the general height could provide a welcome skyline accent and enhance legibility by marking the town centre or station.

### Brixham Outer Harbour

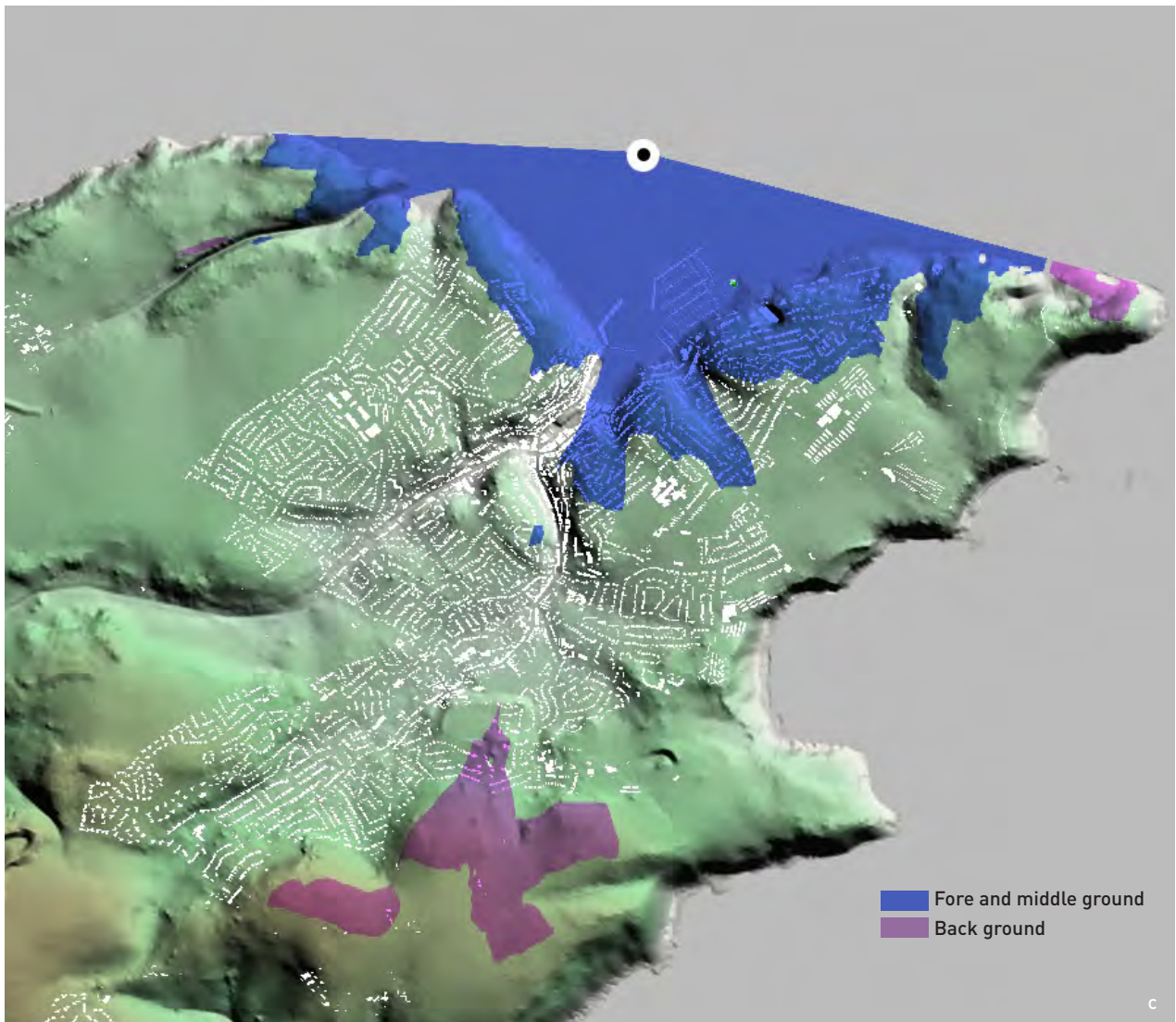
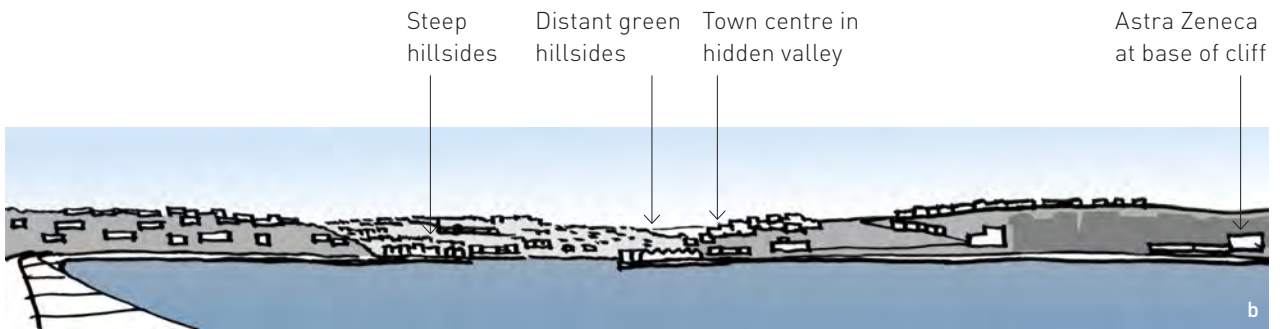


Figure 13: Brixham Outer Harbour Prospect View (a) and view shed analysis (b)

## Characteristics of the View

**4.8.21** The chosen viewing point for this long range view is the northern tip of the harbour wall, although a similar view is obtained from the harbour wall. The tip was chosen as the viewing point as it is a natural place for people stop to take in the view. It is also a very similar view experienced by those arriving by boat as they enter the harbour.

**4.8.22** A large part of the foreground is made of the water within the harbour and the moored fishing trawlers. The middleground is formed of the hillsides that rise quickly from the shore. As the valley opens out where it meets the sea, the hill slopes occupied by pastel coloured terraced houses become visible in the view. Steep hills and cliff edges face the outer bay and sea, with terraces and detached houses on the hill tops and shallower upper slopes. The scale of development in the view is relatively homogenous in its grain and height. Brixham town centre lies in a narrow valley running perpendicular to the coast and is partially hidden in this view. In the background in the centre of the view the distant green hillsides of Southdown can be seen.

**4.8.23** There are few notable built features, with the exception of the Astra Zeneca building at the base of the cliff and the multi-pitched roof of the fishmarket.

## Distinctiveness of the View

**4.8.24** Due to the land form and development pattern this is the least distinctive of the prospect views. The overall impression is of dense, fine grained, pastel coloured terraces hugging the hillsides and a gently undulating skyline, broken only by the masts of boats. There is a lack of skyline accents and therefore the view lacks a central focus.

## Sensitivity to tall buildings

**4.8.25** The view is sensitive to taller buildings on upper hill slopes or hilltops where they would interfere with the skyline. Buildings that would disrupt the skyline or be a discordant element in an otherwise fine-grained, low rise development pattern on hill slopes would upset the balance of the view. The land at sea level to the right of the view, adjacent to the Astra Zeneca building is the least sensitive area to tall buildings providing that the cliff remains partially visible and the buildings do not breach the cliff top. There may be scope for a single elegant local landmark at the entrance to Motor Fishing Vehicle Basin to provide a new accent and focus in this view.



# Brixham Inner Harbour

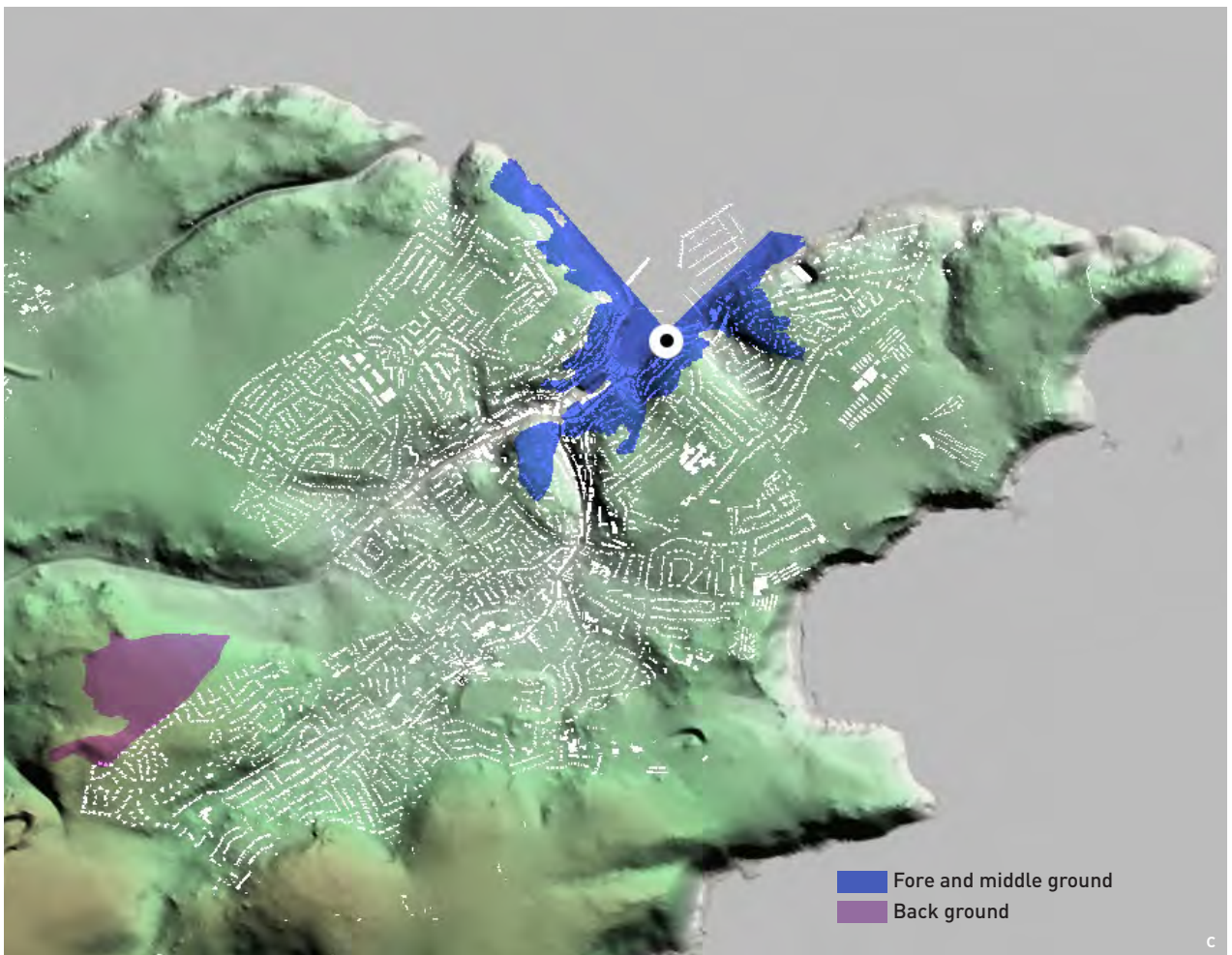
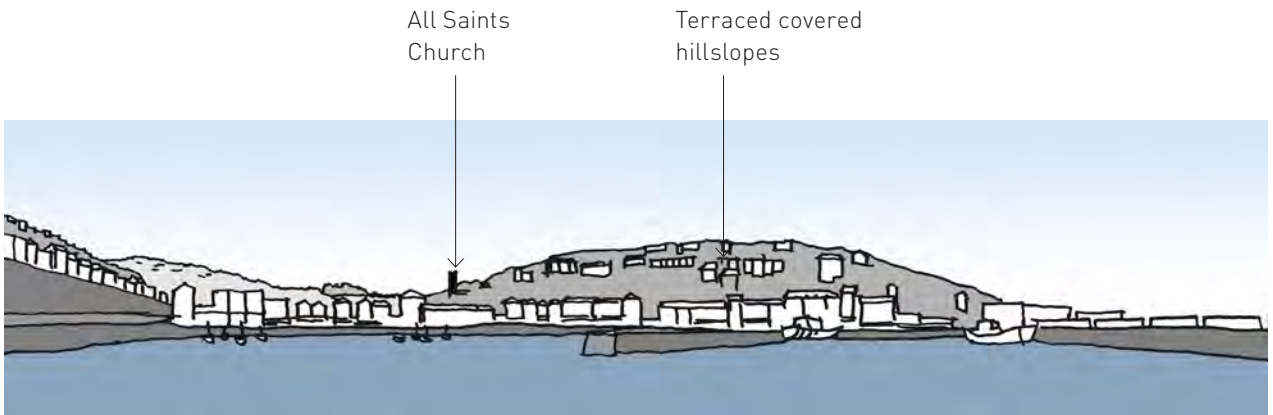


Figure 14: Brixham Inner Harbour Prospect View (a) sketch of view (b) and view shed analysis (c)

## Characteristics of the View

**4.8.26** The chosen viewing point for this view is Brixham inner harbour wall. It is a popular area for tourists to visit and is the launch point for the passenger ferry services. It is the iconic view of Brixham found on many picture postcards.

**4.8.27** The view looks down the valley in land and is framed by the steep sides of the valley on either side. The hill slopes in the middle ground are covered with densely packed, fine grained, multi-coloured terraces following the contours of the slopes. Water is present in the view, and there are a number of small fishing and pleasure boats, plus the Golden Hind replica in the foreground, but it is the built form that dominates. In the background, in the centre of the view, the tree covered higher ground to the west of the town can be seen.

**4.8.28** The church tower of All Saint's Church, provides a skyline accent and is the only landmark.

## Distinctiveness of the View

**4.8.29** The view is very distinctive, and instantly recognisable to many people within the region and beyond. The tightly packed, multi-coloured terraces around the inner harbour and climbing the hillslopes are the defining elements together with the prominent silhouette of All Saints Church set against the sky.

## Sensitivity to tall buildings

**4.8.30** The view towards the inner harbour is very sensitive to any accentuation by a taller structure as it could harm the balance of the view, particularly where it would compete with All Saint's Church as a landmark or introduce a vertical element into the view, otherwise dominated by the horizontal rows of terraces. The entrance to the harbour is however less sensitive and there may be potential for an additional landmark at the Motor Fishing Vehicle Basin.

## Linear Views

**4.8.31** Linear views are views along a street and terminated by an important building or feature. The topography limits the number of linear views and no strategic linear views have been identified in Torbay. Local linear views are too numerous and varied to be covered by the guidance in this document, but the Conservation Area Character Appraisals provide a good reference point for local views, but should not be seen as an exhaustive list.



Linear view of St Luke's Church along Croft Road





Figure 15: Sub-regional context

## 4.9 Policy context

### Sub-regional context

**4.9.1** According to the Regional Economic Strategy Torbay sits within the South-Central Functional Sub-Region of the South West Region. It is located between the significant cities of Exeter and Plymouth and is identified as the only other significant place in the sub-region. However it is recognised as having a declining and narrow-focused economy. The key industry of tourism is struggling to adapt to the changing market and there are high levels of long term and seasonal unemployment. Although the area has good strategic road and rail connections there are deficiencies in links to this Strategic Road Network particularly through Kingkerswell. This results in Torbay being perceived as relatively remote and adds weight to the case for a South Devon Link Road.

### Growth Agenda

**4.9.2** Torbay has been identified by the government as a 'Growth Point' and receives financial assistance to help deliver an increase in the level of new homes. One of its first projects was to fund the Mayor's Vision.

### Mayor's Vision

**4.9.3** The Mayor's Vision was prepared using New Growth Point funding to illustrate how Torbay could look if all four themes in the Community Strategy were achieved. The Mayor's Vision and Action Framework Plan were launched in February 2008 showcasing 19 opportunity sites and suggesting what could be achieved on these sites. Since then, a further 4 opportunity sites have been identified. A full list is given on the following page.

### Local Development Framework

**4.9.4** The Core Strategy is the part of the Local Development Framework that sets out the broad aims and objectives for sustainable development in Torbay over the next 15-20 years. It outlines how the Council will deliver strategic development needs including housing, employment, leisure and retail. The Core Strategy will provide a framework for meeting the priorities of the Community Plan and Mayor's Vision, where these involve the use of land. Sitting beneath the Core Strategy there will be a series of Neighbourhood Plans to comply with the Government's "Localism Agenda".

## 4.10 Development opportunities

### Development Opportunities

**4.10.1** The opportunity sites identified within the Mayor's Vision and Action Framework Plan, plus the additional four sites of The Riviera Conference Centre, Oldway Mansions, White Rock Incubation Units and Broadsands are the sites most likely to come forward for development within the lifetime of the Local Development Framework.

**4.10.2** However there will always be other 'windfall' sites that are also brought forward and need to be planned for.

**4.10.3** The Mayor's Vision sites are:

- 1 Torquay Central Station (Torre Station)
- 2 Brunswick Square
- 3 Castle Circus Regeneration (Civic Hub)
- 4 Union Street Retail
- 5 Torquay Harbourside (Terrace) Car Park & Royal Garage Site/Torwood Street
- 6 Princess & Royal Terrace Gardens
- 7 Victoria Parade
- 8 Crossways, Paignton
- 9 Station Lane, Paignton
- 10 Victoria Shopping Centre
- 11 Paignton Green
- 12 Paignton Harbour
- 13 Goodrington redevelopment
- 14 Clennon Valley
- 15 Brixham Town Centre
- 16 Brixham Fish Market
- 17 Freshwater & Oxen Cove
- 18 Northern Arm
- 19 Breakwater Hard Development
- 20 Riviera ICC
- 21 Oldway Mansions
- 22 Incubation Units, White Rock
- 23 Broadsands



Torre Station and the land behind it is an important gateway site



Car Park as part of Victoria Shopping Centre site



Brixham Harbour Opportunity Site



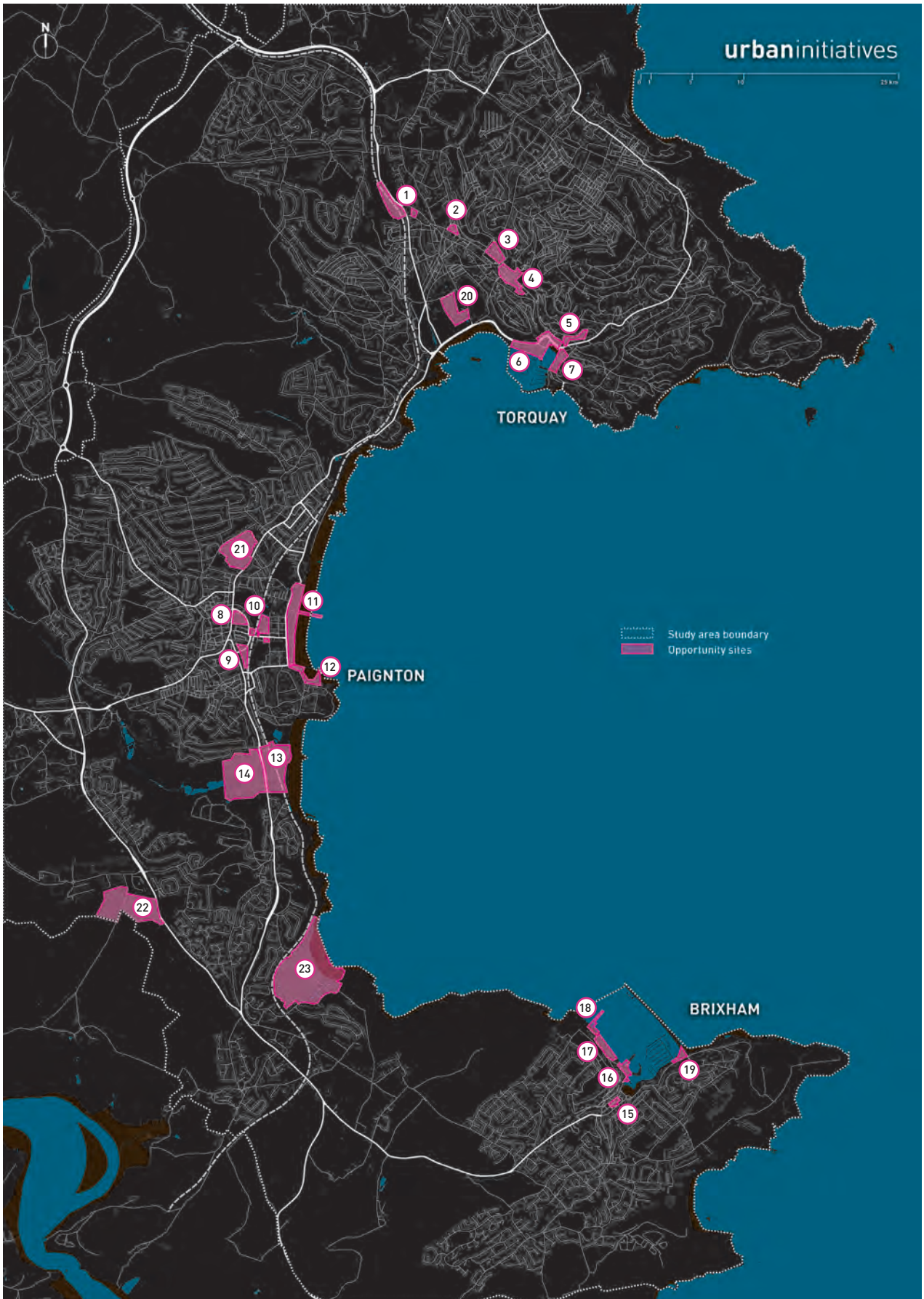


Figure 16: Mayor's Vision opportunity sites (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)





# 05 BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

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## 5.1 Structure of the building heights guidance

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- 5.1.1 There are three main sections to the guidance:
- Strategic approach to building height in Torbay. Sets building height aims for Torbay and the general approach to the pattern of building height, (Chapter 5)
  - Guidance on tall buildings. This identifies areas of search for tall buildings, areas sensitive to tall buildings and areas where one would not expect to find tall buildings (neutral areas), (Chapter 6).
  - Guidance on general building height and tall buildings by Character Area. This sets out a recommended height, where this height can be modified and the approach to tall buildings (Chapter 7).

## 5.2 Aims for building heights strategy

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5.2.1 Building height is only one element of urban form and it is difficult and unwise to consider it in isolation from other urban design and policy considerations. We have therefore devised aims for the building heights strategy that illustrate how building height can support other established objectives. The aims for the Building Heights Strategy are as follows:

### AIMS FOR BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

- › To promote Torbay's image as a beautiful seafront destination through excellence in architecture and urban design;
- › To complement the role of the three settlements of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham;
- › To provide a stimulus to inward investment and regeneration;
- › To preserve and enhance strategic views;
- › To preserve and enhance the outstanding landscape character of Torbay;
- › To promote environmental excellence in design, construction and management;
- › To promote sustainable patterns of development;
- › To reinforce local distinctiveness; and
- › To ensure residential amenity is not unduly affected.

## 5.3 Approach to building height in Torbay

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**5.3.1** Given Torbay's existing special character, the primary aim is to protect and enhance this character in accordance with the existing policy designations to protect the built environment.

**5.3.2** The character of Torbay is typified by low rise buildings with the occasional skyline accent marked by tall buildings or spires, generally contained below the horizon line when viewed from Tor Bay,

**5.3.3** Therefore, there is a presumption that development will be constructed to the recommended height which is usually prevailing height for the relevant character area, unless there are sound urban design or socio-economic reasons to deviate from it.

**5.3.4** The recommended height is given as a number of storeys to the shoulder height (height to eaves), which assumes that each storey measures 3 metres. In reality storey height varies considerably between modern suburban houses and villas and between residential and non-residential buildings. The spirit of the guidance is to reinforce the existing prevailing height, rather than the number of storeys, and prevailing height should be defined at a local level.

**5.3.5** Although in the main Torbay displays uniform building height in most of the character areas the prevailing height should not apply in every circumstance. Buildings that marginally deviate either up or down from prevailing height can provide richness and variety in the townscape. They indicate to the observer which buildings, places, junctions or corridors are more important and this helps our understanding of a place. This small variation in height is referred to in this document as modifiers.

**5.3.6** Tall buildings will be encouraged in those areas that are identified as being appropriate where it can be proven that they contribute to regeneration and good urban design principles by meeting the criteria set out in Chapter 6 of this guidance.



# 06 TALL BUILDINGS GUIDANCE IN TORBAY

## 6.1 Introduction

**6.1.1** Successful planning is about striking a balance between sometimes conflicting priorities. As a result there will be occasions when a tall building might be justified because of the benefits it brings to the community at large, notwithstanding reservations which might apply in relation to its aesthetic or environmental impact on a particular area or view. Examples might include where a tall building will be a talisman for inward investment and regeneration acting as a catalyst for revitalising and rejuvenating a place. A scheme which provides overall environmental benefits such as major improvement to public realm, restoration or provision of infrastructure important to a local community would also qualify. The use of a building might also bring advantages which override and counterbalance concerns about its appearance.

**6.1.2** Of course, it will always be the ambition to achieve schemes which satisfy the requirements of the Building Heights Strategy and provide the sort of benefits referred to. It has to be recognised, however, that sometimes difficult judgements of relative advantage and acceptability have to be made. If, however, it is recommended to the community that approval is given to schemes which raise some concern in relation to this strategy, but there are other matters that tip the decision in another direction, it will always be necessary to give clear explanation of why this has happened.

**6.1.3** Any tall building proposal will be required to demonstrate either urban design or socio-economic benefits. The second part of this section therefore sets out criteria by which tall buildings applications will be judged.

## 6.2 Defining where tall buildings are appropriate

**6.2.1** In the spirit of the English Heritage and CABA guidance on tall buildings, this section sets out areas where there is greatest opportunity for tall buildings to make a positive contribution to the character of Torbay, (Areas of Search), where there are sensitivities to tall buildings (Sensitive Areas) and areas where one would not expect to find a tall building (Neutral Areas).

**6.2.2** We have identified three Areas of Search. These are coastal zones, town centres and stations. These have been identified based on our understanding of the existing character of Torbay, the objectives for this building heights study, established urban design principles and building height theory.

**6.2.3** Based on the same criteria we have defined the remainder of the Borough as Neutral in that tall buildings are likely to be unacceptable. These areas are established residential areas or landscape dominated areas where making a case for a tall building would be challenging.

**6.2.4** Again using the same criteria we identified areas which are sensitive to tall buildings known as Sensitive Areas. Sensitive Areas are conservation areas, sensitive landscape areas such as AONB together with those areas falling within a prospect view. These areas were then overlaid onto the Areas of Search.

**6.2.5** What is clear from this analysis is that many Areas of Search where there is potential for tall buildings in principle also have sensitivities to tall buildings. The weight attached to each interest in any particular case will vary. However, in most cases further testing will be required to ensure that the character of Torbay is preserved in line with the aims of this strategy.

**6.2.6** Summary of appropriate locations for tall buildings:

Area type	Appropriateness of tall buildings in principle
Areas of Search	✓
Sensitive Areas	?
Neutral Areas	✗

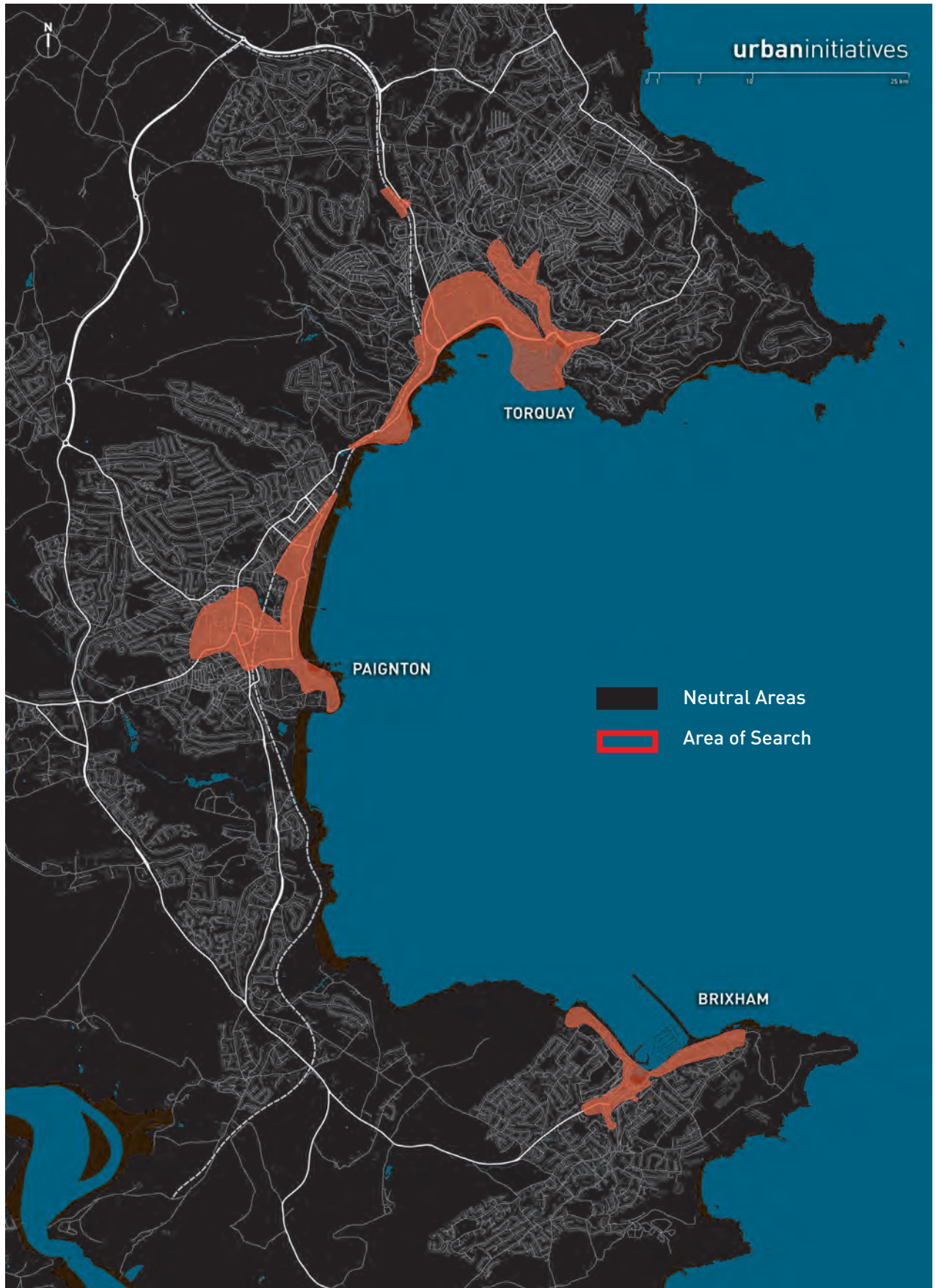


Figure 17: Areas of search for tall buildings [see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan]  
 TORBAY BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

## 6.3 Areas of search

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**6.3.1** The analysis of the baseline together with an understanding of how tall buildings are best used to enhance the character and function of a place (section 3.8) revealed that there are opportunities to locate tall buildings in Torbay to:

- Achieve regeneration - the desire to accommodate new homes and create job opportunities on underused sites throughout the Borough, particularly those identified in the Mayor's Vision;
- Concentrate development in accessible locations, such as the town centres, around the railway stations and along transport corridors; and
- Reinforce nodes of activity, such as around harbours and along seafronts.

**6.3.2** These areas have been defined spatially, as shown on the plans to the left. Areas where there could be potential for tall buildings are:

- The town centres of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham;
- The coastal zones; and
- The station areas.

**6.3.3** These areas are indicated on figure 17.

## 6.4 Neutral areas for tall buildings

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**6.4.1** The remainder of the Borough outside these 'areas of search' is considered to be 'neutral' to tall buildings, in that one would generally not expect to find tall buildings in these locations, for the following reasons. They are:

- Established residential areas - existing residential neighbourhoods, whether suburbs, villas or terraces are generally low and uniform in height and the introduction of tall buildings would be detrimental to the existing character. In addition, there would be the risk of harm to residential amenity from overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing of tall buildings. Whilst certain areas may benefit from intensification to make better use of land and support local services they remain relatively inaccessible by public transport and do not represent sustainable locations for intense development.
- Landscape dominated areas that are equally inappropriate for tall buildings because they would promote development in unsustainable locations, potentially breach the otherwise wooded skylines and be detrimental to the existing open, rural character.
- Business parks that tend to be located in elevated positions on the urban fringe where there is a risk that tall buildings could impact on long distance views, including views from the South Downs AONB and Tor Bay.

**6.4.2** These areas are also indicated on figure 17.



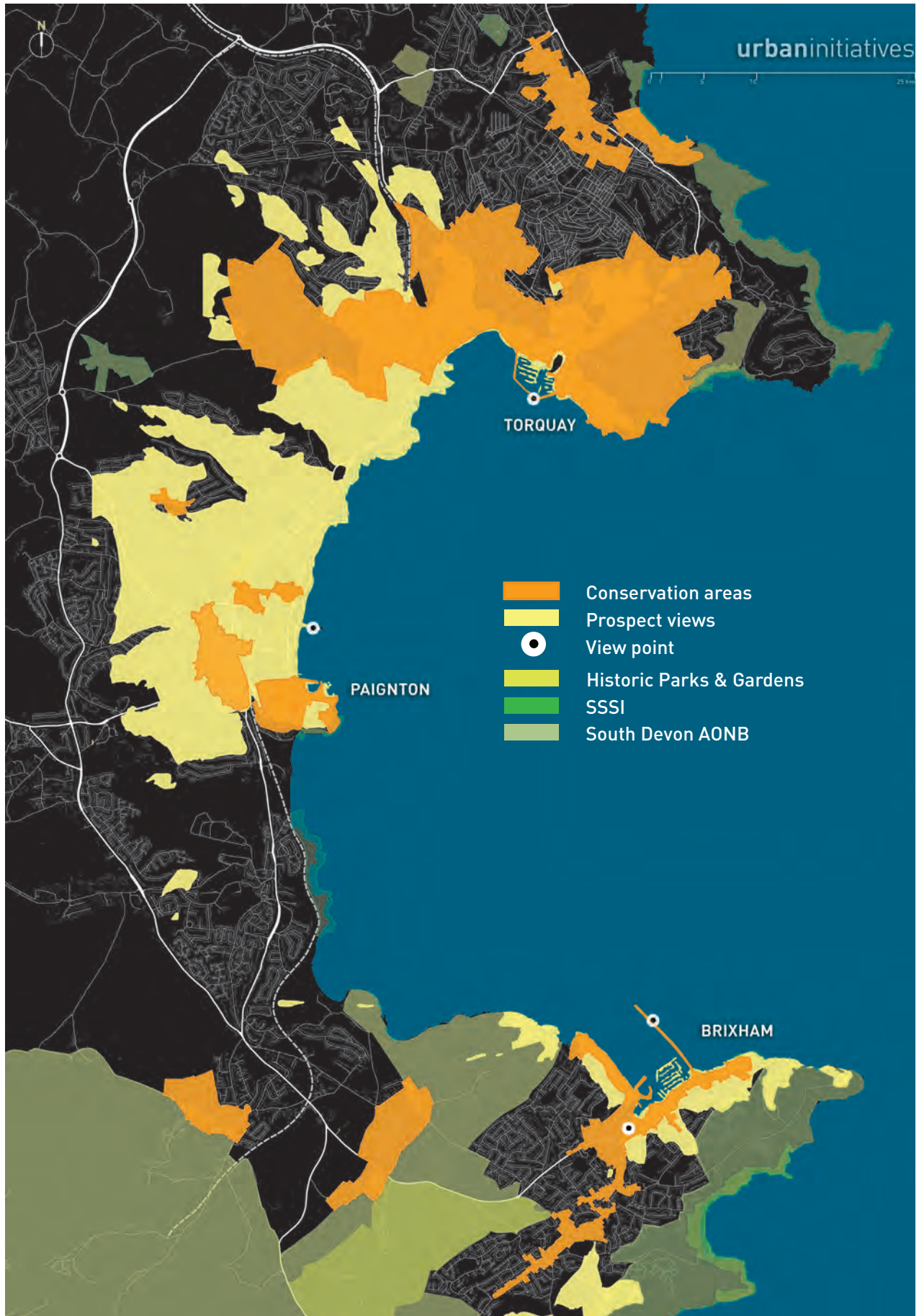


Figure 18: Areas of sensitivities to tall buildings (see Appendix B for A3 version of this plan)  
 TORBAY BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY

## 6.5 Areas sensitive to tall buildings

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**6.5.1** The areas that are sensitive to tall buildings and shaded on figure 18 are:

- Conservation areas - Torbay has many areas of distinctive character, which has been recognised through Conservation Area designations, which come with a duty to preserve and enhance that character and appearance. Outside the town centres this character is partly defined by the low rise, uniform nature of building height. Even in town centres where height is more varied, tall buildings remain an exception. The introduction of tall buildings into any of the Conservation Areas therefore has the potential to disrupt this character.
- Areas of special natural character - Torbay's coastline and landscape is of high quality and the green wedges that separate the settlements and the green horizon lines are important elements of Torbay's character. This quality is recognised through a number of designations including Historic Parks and Gardens, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Prospect views - the views from the harbours, marinas, piers and water looking back into the towns are vital to inform people's image of Torbay. Managing the image of Torbay is vital to its success as a tourist destination and beautiful seafront. The value of these views is in the inter-relationship between buildings and topography and their effect on composition and skyline within the view. Tall buildings therefore may create an intruding element into the view which may upset its balance. If this is the case it may be harmful to the view.

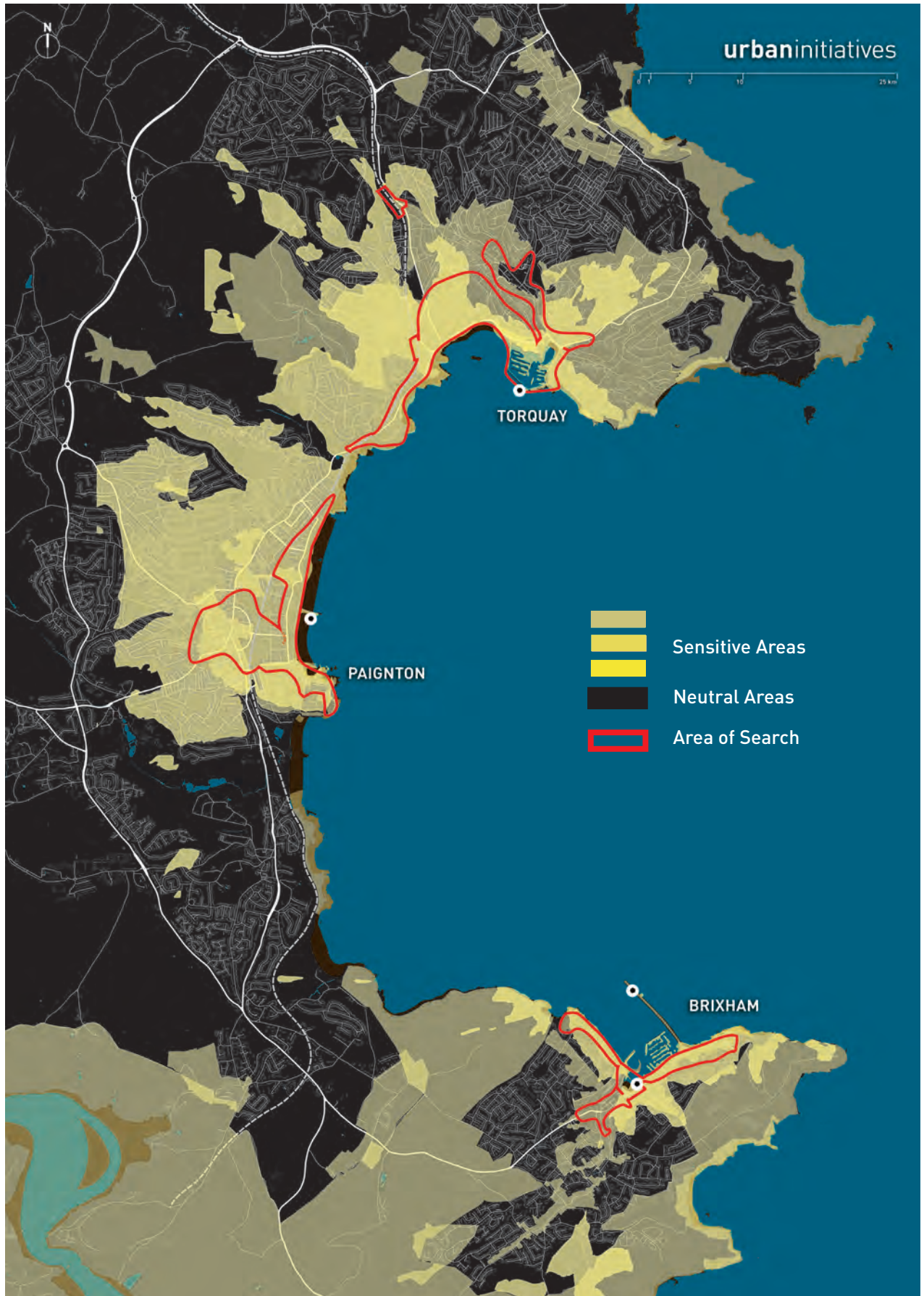


Figure 19: Composite plan of areas of search for tall buildings, sensitivities and neutral areas (see Appendix B for A3 version).  
 TORBAY BUILDING HEIGHTS STRATEGY



## 6.6 Locating tall buildings in Torbay

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**6.6.1** Figure 19 shows the effect of overlaying the 'Areas of Search' onto the 'Areas of Sensitivity.' This reveals that the areas most suitable for tall buildings in principle, are in many cases also those that are sensitive to the introduction of tall buildings. Careful testing of tall buildings proposals is therefore required in the majority of cases.

**6.6.2** There are two locations within Torquay with the greatest potential for tall buildings. These are Torre Station and the area around Union Street/ Union Square. These 'Areas of Search' are not included within sensitive areas. The extent of these sites are shown in figure 19. In addition, there may be potential for tall buildings within the other town centres of Paignton and Brixham subject to responding to their sensitivities as these areas are included in Sensitive Areas.

**6.6.3** This guidance should be taken as indicative only given the limitations of the 3D modelling used to produce the view sheds and the high level townscape analysis carried out to define the character areas. More detailed modelling will therefore be required to assess the impact of proposals on a particular site.

## 6.7 Developing a rationale for a tall building

**6.7.1** A tall building is defined as any building that is significantly taller than the prevailing height. Tall buildings are an exception in Torbay, providing skyline accents, rather than defining the skyline and their introduction needs careful management for the reasons set out in section 3.8. A well reasoned case needs to be developed to support an application for a tall building. The table below provides guidance in line with with CABE/EH Guidance on Tall Buildings and supplemented by the locally specific criteria.

	Criteria for tall buildings
<b>Location</b>	<p>The location of a tall building must be justified on urban design grounds in that it must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance legibility on a local scale, by marking an important point in the urban fabric;</li> <li>• Not compete with existing landmarks;</li> <li>• Be in areas of high public transport accessibility</li> <li>• Not harm or detract from conservation areas or protected structures.</li> </ul> <p>The existence of a tall building in a particular location will not of itself justify its replacement with a new building on the same site or in the same area.</p>
<b>Conservation</b>	Tall buildings should preserve and/or enhance the character and/or appearance of conservation areas noting that tall buildings may effect a conservation area, even if the site itself is not located within it.
<b>Views</b>	Tall buildings should enhance identified views to assist the proactive management of Torbay’s image.
<b>Topography</b>	Tall buildings should seek to avoid breaking the skyline of prospect or panoramic views to preserve the landscaped character of the horizon.
<b>Design</b>	Tall buildings must be of outstanding architectural design and with sufficient slenderness to form an attractive element in the skyline from all angles. How the building meets the ground, its middle section and roofscape should all be considered.
<b>Public realm</b>	Tall buildings must create active street frontages and improve public realm, the network of streets and spaces and the quality of the physical environment around the site.
<b>Streetscape</b>	<p>Tall buildings must preserve and/or enhance local character and improve the wider context in terms of proportion and composition.</p> <p>Consideration must be given to the composition of groups of buildings within the streetscape, buildings should step up to a tall building to mediate between prevailing height and the tall building. Consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of a number of tall buildings on the streetscape and the overall character of the area.</p>
<b>Microclimate</b>	Tall buildings should not have an unduly harmful effect on the microclimate to protect the amenity of occupiers of adjacent buildings and users of the streets at the base of the building.
<b>Amenity</b>	Tall buildings should respect surrounding residential amenities and not have an adverse impact on living conditions in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing.
<b>Land use</b>	To reinforce what is important to the economy, image and cultural values of Torbay new tall buildings should provide a wider public benefit. For example, regeneration, providing important infrastructure (such as hospitals or education). Tall buildings in residential or commercial use should contribute to regeneration and a mix of uses to create vibrant centres.
<b>Sustainability</b>	All tall buildings should demonstrate sustainable construction and management methods to minimise their environmental impact.

## 6.8 Guidance on submitting an application for a tall building

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**6.8.1** To justify a tall building the local authority will wish to see sufficient evidence in relation to the impact on Torbay's image, the benefits to the public, contribution to regeneration, sustainability, transport and service infrastructure, and sufficient public consultation.

**6.8.2** In addition to the normal requirements planning applications for a tall building should therefore contain as part of the design and access statement:

**6.8.3** A design statement to include:

**(a)** an urban design study that shows the benefits and impact on the local and wider urban context for a local landmark on the proposed site, including justifications, the impact on character, the benefits to the public, its contribution to regeneration, sustainability and transport; and

**(b)** an architectural design statement that addresses development context, development objectives, urban design principles, scale and massing, density, materials, details, lighting (day and night time), existing and proposed land and building uses, ground floor uses, treatment of roof top/crown, ground floor treatment, public realm strategy.

**6.8.4** An impact assessment study to illustrate the impact on the context, especially on conservation areas and significant views. This should be done through accurate visual modelling of proposals – photomontages or three-dimensional computer models (buildings fully rendered) – from relevant assessment points defined by the council. Proposals should be shown in daylight and night-light conditions. The micro-climate impact of the development on the surrounding environment (streets, public spaces and existing development) should be tested in regards to wind funnelling, overshadowing and sun-reflection. This should be done through the testing of accurate physical and three-dimensional computer models, conducting wind tunnel studies, sun-path studies, as well as using other suitable impact simulation methods. Impacts on privacy and overlooking of existing properties should be tested with the help of section analysis and three-dimensional computer models.

**6.8.5** A movement statement (traffic impact assessment including car parking, pedestrian movement and public transport needs).

**6.8.6** A building services strategy including building systems and enclosure, energy consumption and efficiency, lighting (day and night time), and telecommunications.

**6.8.7** In addition the Council has prepared a 3D height and massing model for the whole of Torbay, which is available in Google Sketchup to developers from the Torbay Council Strategic Planning Department. As a minimum applicants should prepare a height and massing Sketchup model of their proposal and submit it to the Council during pre-application discussions to allow an appraisal of the scheme on views.





# 07 GUIDANCE ON BUILDING HEIGHT BY CHARACTER TYPE

## 7.1 Introduction

**7.1.1** This chapter provides guidance on building height by character area. For each character area the following information/guidance is given:

### Description of character area

**7.1.2** A general description of the area, including the pattern of height and building height related to land use and/or building type.

### Prevailing height

**7.1.3** The existing prevailing height established through high level townscape analysis.

### Frequency of prevailing height

**7.1.4** Expressed as percentage, this gives an indication as to whether the area is very uniform in terms of height, or is more varied. The more uniform an area, the less likely it is for modifiers or tall buildings to be introduced without changing the character of the area.

### General height range

**7.1.5** The range of typical heights recorded within an area, excluding tall buildings

### Building height aims

**7.1.6** Specific aims setting out how building height can reinforce the character of the area

### Recommended height

**7.1.7** The height to which new buildings should be built, unless there are circumstances in which a different height is more appropriate and can be justified (see modifiers and tall buildings).

### Modifiers

**7.1.8** Permitted minimal deviations from the recommended height, normally not more than one storey up and one or two storeys down where they can be justified in the local circumstances and reinforce the building height aims. Potential justifications for both upward and downward modifiers are provided in Box 2 and Box 3 opposite but modifiers up or down from the recommended height will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

### Tall Buildings

**7.1.9** Indicates the general approach to tall buildings in the character area, cross referencing Chapter 6.

## BOX 2: JUSTIFICATIONS FOR UPWARD MODIFIERS

Creating urban design benefits, such as:

- Enclosing a public space to create natural surveillance and enclosure of the space;
- Enhancing enclosure of a main street or marking a crossroads to improve enclosure and legibility;
- Framing a linear view;
- Reflecting the scale and massing of adjoining buildings;
- Reinforcing the hierarchy of existing landmarks;
- Reinforcing the variation in height at logical junctures in the street scene where this is an established aspect of character

Marking civic, social or cultural importance, such as:

- Providing new facilities or enhancing existing facilities; and
- Providing local retail or social infrastructure.

Exceptional topography, such as:

- In a dip or hollow, or against a cliffside, where the greater height would have little or no additional impact on its surroundings.

## BOX 3: JUSTIFICATIONS FOR DOWNWARD MODIFIERS

Protecting amenity, conservation areas, views or the setting of a protected building or structure, by

- Preventing overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing;
- Respecting the context of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas;
- Respecting the composition of identified views.

## 7.2 Coastal Zone

**7.2.1** The Coastal Zone comprises groups of fine grain terraces that frame the harbours, but also a number of larger scale pavilion buildings such as the The Pavilion, Princess Theatre, Grand Hotel, Apollo cinema, Redcliffe and Astra Zeneca laboratories that predominantly date from the 20th century. These buildings are an important feature of the coastal zone and are indicative of how the Bay has evolved over time to meet modern tourism and business needs.

**7.2.2** The prevailing height in the coastal zone is governed by the rows of terraces and villas fronting the coast line and is generally 3 storeys (9m). Accommodation within roof spaces, is also a feature often in the form of small dormer windows.

**7.2.3** The pavilion buildings depart from the prevailing height, but remain within its context. They are generally between 12 and 17 metres in height (the equivalent of 4-6 storeys).

**7.2.4** Shirley Towers (the three sisters) at 23 metres are tall buildings and examples from the past of buildings that disrupt and unbalance the composition of the prospect view from Torquay Harbour due to their height, bulk and orientation. The Riviera Conference Centre at 21 metres is also a tall building.

**7.2.5** The topography of the coastal zone is flat, being sea level, however in both Torquay and Brixham the land rises sharply immediately beyond the coastal zone providing a backdrop to these character areas and is an important element of prospect views from Torquay Harbour and Brixham Harbour and Marina.

**7.2.6** The coastal zone is a mixed use area with emphasis on tourism, culture and leisure in the form of hotels, shops, restaurants, cinemas, visitor attractions, marinas and public spaces.

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 3 storeys

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 50-75%

**General height range:** 1-4 storeys

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To reinforce the character of fine-grained 3 storey buildings along with pavilion buildings set in their own grounds.

**Recommended height:** 3 storeys

**Modifiers:** + 1 storey to reflect the existing variety of building height and to create new buildings that reflect the scale of existing ones.

- 1 storey only where required to mediate between existing single storey buildings.

**Tall buildings:** will be permitted where they meet the criteria set out in Chapter 6.

The coastal zone is generally sensitive to tall buildings given its location within the Prospect Views and conservation areas.

Tall buildings in the coastal zone should be pavilion buildings of a similar scale to existing buildings



The Coastal Zone is typified by 3 storey buildings, often with roofspace accommodation



Pavilion buildings, such as the Pavilion Shopping Arcade are a feature of the Coastal Zone



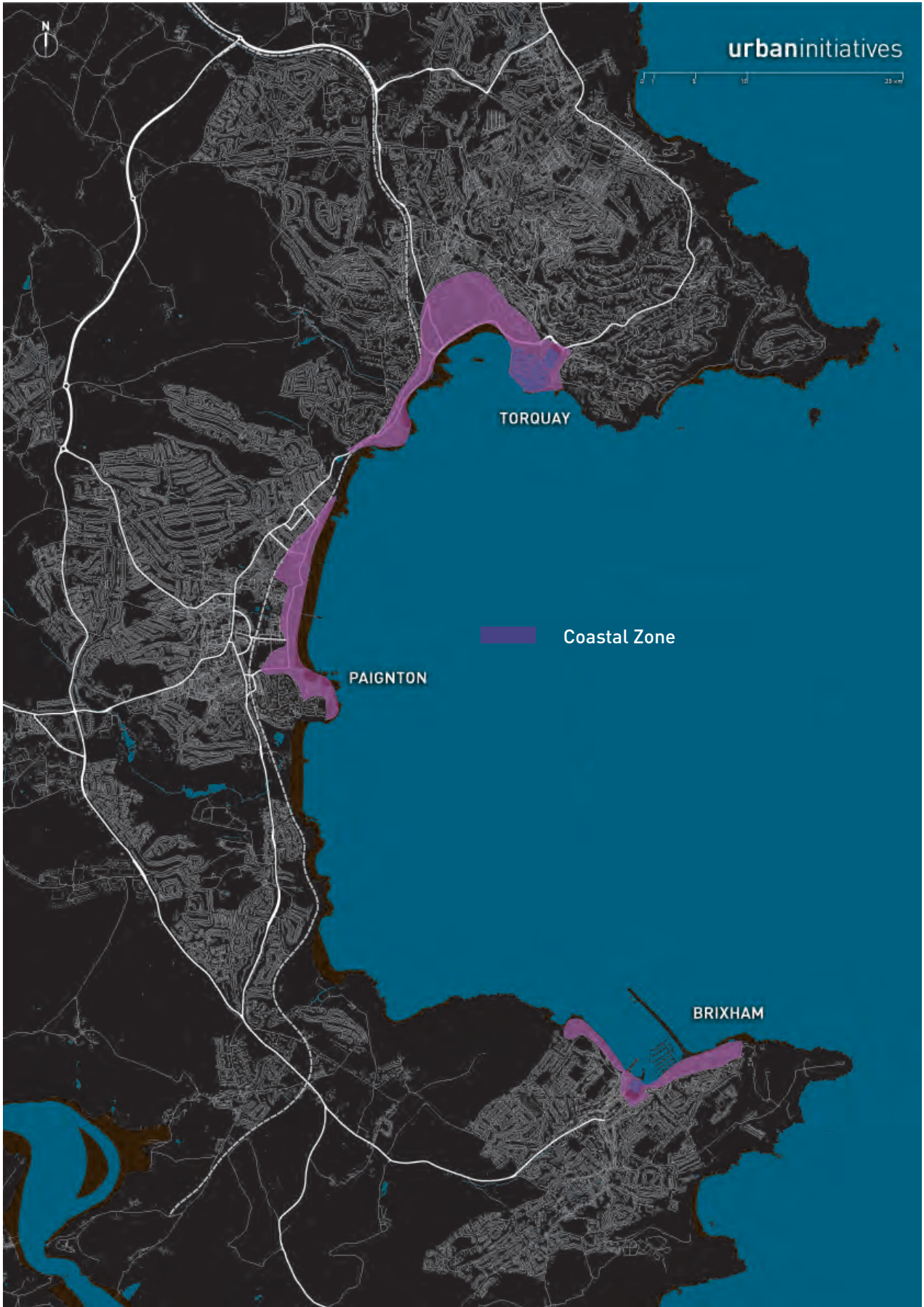


Figure 20: Coastal Zones

## 7.3 Town Centres

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**7.3.1** Town centres are defined as the central shopping areas of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham and broadly follow the Torbay Local Plan designations.

**7.3.2** The town centres have the greatest variety of building height, with buildings being between 2 and 6 storeys in height in Torquay and 2-4 storeys in Paignton and Brixham. Despite this variety, it is still possible to identify a prevailing height of 3 storeys (9 metres). Many of the buildings in the town centres have accommodation in roof spaces and small dormer windows on the front of buildings. These are a characteristic feature and provide additional height.



Figure 21: Town Centres



## Torquay

**7.3.3** Torquay town centre is linear in form, following the valley bottom inland and connecting the harbour with the Town Hall on Union Street. The grain of buildings varies and includes sections of fine grain Victorian terraces with historic and modern buildings with larger footprints. The prevailing height is 3 storeys (9m approx) though there are numerous deviations from this. The pattern of height tends to be stretches of 3 storey terraces interspersed with 4 or 5 storey buildings. Street corners are sometimes accentuated by an additional storey, such as the junction with Union Street and St Marychurch Road and the junction between Fleet Street, Abbey Road and Union Street. There is a cluster of buildings at the junction of Tor Hill Road and Union Street that are notably taller, but still remain within context. These are the Town Hall (15m), St Mary Magdalene's Church (18m) and United Reform Church (13m). However, elements of these buildings are much taller, the top of St Mary Magdalene's Church spire being 44m and the highest point of the Town Hall being 34m which serve to emphasise the important civic status of this node. A couple of more modern insertions also break the prevailing height. Lower Union Lane Car Park is 18m in height but the visual impact of the car park on surrounding streets is reduced as it is sited within an excavated quarry. Roebuck House is taller at 22m and its height is exacerbated due to its location on the south side of the street which is of greater elevation than the north side.

**7.3.4** The predominant land use is high street shopping, indeed it provides the highest order shopping in Torbay. Shops are interspersed with cafés, bars and restaurants, with the aforementioned cluster of civic uses on Union Street.

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 3 storeys

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 25-50%

**General height range:** 2-6 storeys

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To reinforce the character of fine-grained 3 storey buildings and varied roofscape.
- To promote vibrancy and vitality of the town centre through a flexible approach to building height.
- To reinforce Torquay's role as the primary centre in Torbay.

**Recommended height:** 3 storeys

**Modifiers:** + 1 storey to reflect the existing character of 3 storeys with variety in the eaves line. Modifiers should be used to enhance the existing pattern of building height.

- 1 storey only where required to mediate between existing single storey buildings.

**Tall buildings:** will be permitted where they meet the criteria set out in Chapter 6.

The town centre character area is generally sensitive to tall buildings given its location within the Torquay Harbour and Abbey Road conservation areas or the Torquay Harbour Prospect View.

There is an area of search without conservation or view sensitivities which has greater potential for a tall building in the northern part of the town centre.



Prevailing height in Torquay town centre is 3 storeys



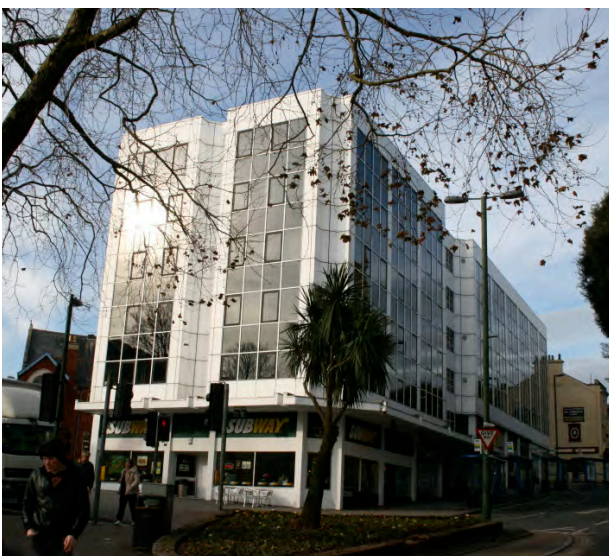
Clear prevailing height of 3 storeys on Fleet Street



Roebuck House is considered a tall building



Union Street Car Park is an important opportunity site



Tor Hill House forms part of the Civic Cluster



Torquay Civic Cluster emphasised by taller elements to buildings

## Paignton

**7.3.5** Paignton town centre has a central shopping area with a high street leading from it to the seafront, which has come about as a result of the way the town has developed over time from an agricultural centre to a seaside resort. The historic centre was around Winner Street, which now performs a specialist shopping role with restaurants tailored more towards the local and discerning tourism market. The crossroads between Victoria Street and Totnes Road/Torquay road marks an important node in the urban structure of the town centre and marks the transition between the two halves of the town centre. Torbay Road developed a town centre function in the Victorian period when mass seaside based tourism came to the town and it connects Victoria Street with the seafront. Its market niche is more 'bucket and spade' tourism, but also contains some convenience shopping.

**7.3.6** The Torbay Road/Victoria Road and Totnes Road/Torquay Road create a cross shape of buildings with a consistent height of 3 storeys, with the remaining buildings in the town centre being 2 storey. St John the Baptist Church at 20 metres with a 42 metre spire is the tallest building in Paignton. Other tall buildings include the multi-storey car park (22m) and the BT exchange building (23m), much more modern insertions that do not reflect the otherwise fine grain of their surroundings.

## Paignton Station

**7.3.7** See Stations section in Section 7.9.

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 2 storeys with 3 storeys on Torbay Road/Victoria Road and Totnes Road/Torquay Road

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 50-75%

**General height range:** 2-4 storeys

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To reinforce the character of the town centre and its distinctive pattern of height.
- To promote vibrancy and vitality of the town centre to continue to meet the needs of both local people and visitors.

**Recommended height:** 2 storeys

**Modifiers:** + 1 storey particularly on Torbay Road/Victoria Road and Totnes Road/Torquay Road.

- 1 storey in special circumstances to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**Tall buildings:** the whole of the town centre character area falls is sensitive to tall buildings given its location within the Old Paignton conservation area and/or the Paignton Pier Prospect View. Paignton station could potentially accommodate a tall building (see stations section for details).

Any tall building proposal will need to meet the criteria set out in Chapter 6.





Uniform prevailing height of 3 storeys on Victoria Street



2 storey prevailing height on the edge of the town centre



Torbay Road shops cater for the tourism and leisure market



Winner Street is a local shopping street



Paignton's tall buildings are modern insertions that do not reflect the overall character



Distinctive character in Old Paignton Conservation Area

## Brixham

**7.3.8** Brixham town centre is linear in form and follows the valley bottom inland from the harbour to the junction of Fore Street and New Street. The town centre is tightly defined as the flat land between Middle Street and Fore Street beyond which the land rises steeply. Fore Street is the main shopping street, with a cluster of civic uses, including library and museum, at its western end. Sitting between the buildings on the north side of Fore Street and Middle Street is a large vacant site, currently in use as a car park which is in stark contrast to the otherwise intensely developed fine grain nature of the town centre and terraces beyond. The prevailing building height is 3 storeys, though there is variation in height along many streets, such as Fore Street showing the full height range of 2 to 4 storeys.

**7.3.9** The only tall buildings are All Saint's Church and Parkham Wood on New Road, which is concealed behind a bank of trees and high wall on New Road, but is very visible from Fore Street.

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 3 storeys

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 75-100%

**General height range:** 2-4 storeys

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To reinforce the character of fine-grained 3 storey buildings.
- To promote vibrancy and vitality of the town centre as a centre to serve both local and visitor needs.
- To create a more cohesive building height and enclosure along Fore Street.

**Recommended height:** 3 storeys

**Modifiers:** +1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims above and those set out on page 67

**Tall buildings:** The town centre character area is sensitive to tall buildings given its location within the Brixham Town conservation area and/or the Brixham Harbour Prospect View. Any tall building proposal will need to meet the criteria set out in Chapter 6. Specifically any tall building proposal must not compete with the existing landmark of All Saint's Church.





3 storey prevailing height at the eastern end of Fore Street



3 storey prevailing height along Fore Street



All Saint's Church is Brixham's dominant landmark



Taller than its neighbours this building highlights the corner



Parkham Wood is very visible from the top of Fore Street



Sympathetic town centre infill development



## 7.4 Villas

**7.4.1** Villas are large detached light coloured properties within spacious, landscaped gardens generally dating from the 19th century. Although they are generally 2 storeys in height many have generous floor to ceiling heights which, combined with a variety of taller elements within the roofscape, such as turrets and cupolas make them grand in stature. However, there is a general consistency in the eaves height, and to enhance existing character, it is this height which should be the benchmark for new buildings, rather than stipulating a specific number of storeys. This will require analysis on a site-by-site basis to establish the appropriate eaves height and how many storeys can be accommodated within it.

**7.4.2** They are often set into the hillside making them appear taller from the bottom of the slope. They are most numerous in Torquay on the hillside to the east of the town centre in the Lincombes and Warberries conservation area where they date from the 1830's. Chelston is also predominantly villas, but dating from later in the 19th century. There are also smaller pockets of historic villas in Upton, Cary Park, Polsham and Roundham.

**7.4.3** Few buildings depart from the prevailing height. However, fine examples are the Nicholas Palk designed Hesketh Crescent and the Kilmorie apartment block, which can be seen in the long distance views across the Bay. Less attractive examples are the 1960's (or 1950's) apartments on Higher Lincombe Road, Ridgeway Road and Torwood Mount.

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 2 storeys

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 75-100%

**General height range:** 2-3 storeys in some areas and 2-4 storeys in others.

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To reinforce the character and retain the scale of large, grand buildings set within spacious plots with consistency in building height but variety and liveliness in the roofline.

**Recommended height:** prevailing eaves height established by analysis of the local context, usually equating to 2 or 3 storeys.

**Modifiers:** will not normally be permitted, but accommodation in the roof storey in form of cupolas or turrets is encouraged.

**Tall buildings:** will not normally be permitted.



Examples of villas in Chelston, displaying high floor to ceiling heights and roof ornamentation



Figure 22: Villas



## 7.6 Terraces

**7.6.1** The terraced areas are predominantly Victorian and early 20th century terraced homes immediately surrounding the town centres. Between the individual character areas the grain and materials vary, but the height is consistently two storeys. The terraces respond to the topography in two ways. Either they follow the contours and hug the hillside, as in Brixham, and parts of Torquay, where they create consistent, uninterrupted stretches of roofline, or they run up the hillside with either continuous or stepped rooflines. In Torquay and Paignton the terraces are predominately white rendered with slate roofs, whereas in Brixham a variety of pastel coloured renders are used, which creates their distinctive character on the hillsides so prominent in the prospect views.



Example of 2 storey prevailing height on a residential terrace



Terraces in Torquay stepping up the slope

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 2 storeys in Torquay and Paignton. 3 storeys in Brixham.

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 75-100%

**General height range:** 2-3 storeys in Torquay, 2-4 storeys in Paignton and Brixham.

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To reinforce fine-grained rows of terraces as a defining feature of these character areas.
- To reinforce the uniform nature of height.

**Recommended height:** 2 storeys Torquay and Paignton and 3 storeys in Brixham.

**Modifiers:** + 1 storey only where the land falls away permitting an additional storey without interrupting the roofline.

- 1 storey only where the land rises to prevent interruption to the roofline.

**Tall buildings:** will not normally be permitted.



Terraces in Brixham follow the contours and hug the hillside



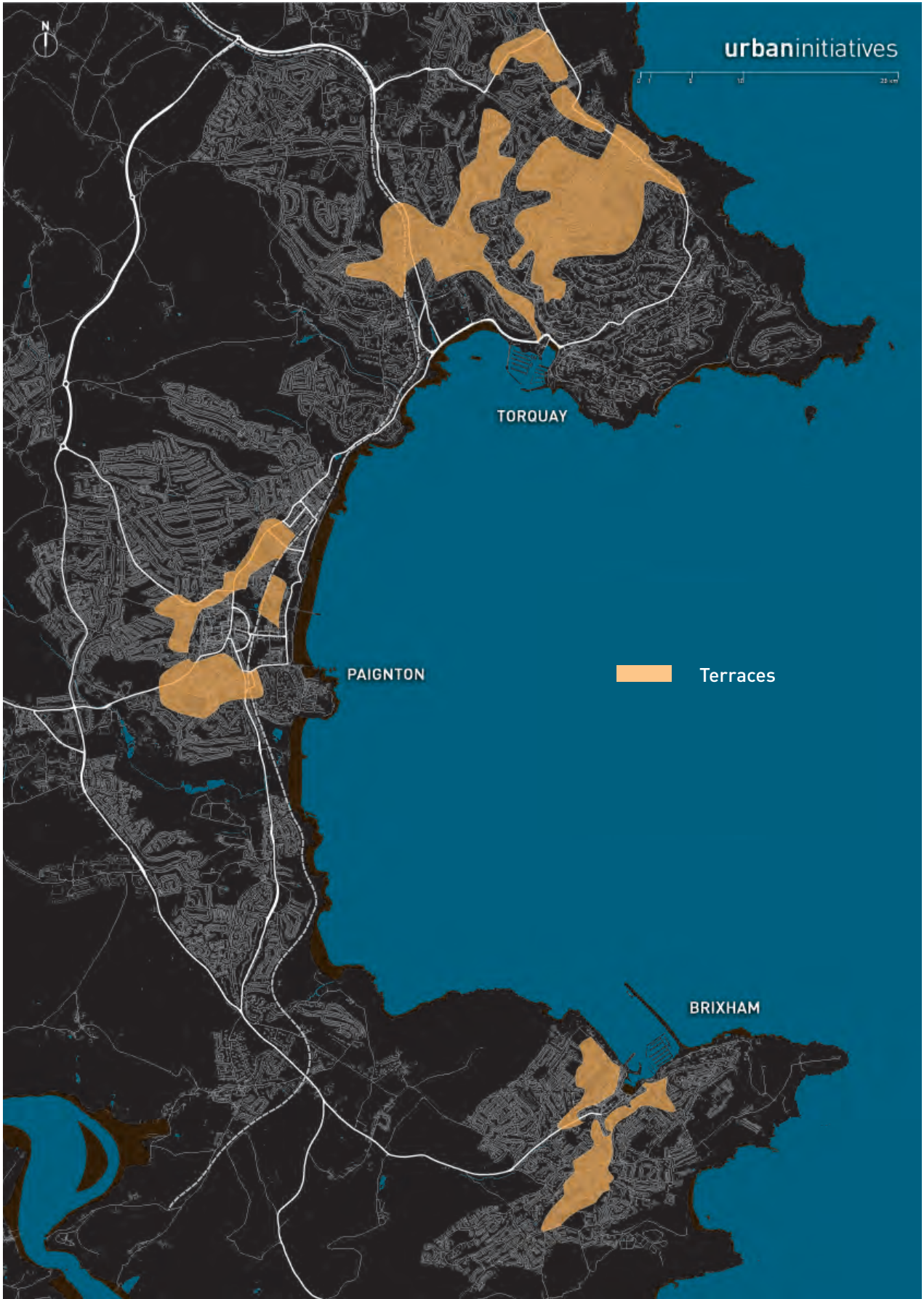


Figure 23: Terraces

## 7.5 Suburbia

**7.5.1** Suburbia makes up most of the remainder of the built up area, along with business parks. It is comprised of 20th century low-rise, low-density suburban housing, with a mixture of single storey and two storey semi-detached and detached properties. A variety of architectural styles can be found some reflecting the local vernacular more than others. Very few buildings rise above the prevailing height, examples including the Torquay hospital, schools and Clennon Valley leisure centre and Quay West.



Suburban street reflecting the local character



New homes in Goodrington

<b>Existing height characteristics</b>
<b>Prevailing height:</b> 2 storeys
<b>Frequency of prevailing height:</b> 75-100%
<b>General height range:</b> 1-3 storeys (1-4 storeys in Ilsham)
<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Building height aims:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect residential amenity</li> <li>To allow for incremental intensification of development</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended height:</b> 2 storeys
<b>Modifiers:</b> +1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims above and those set out on page 67.
<b>Tall buildings:</b> will not normally be permitted



Residential estate on the edge of Torquay





Figure 24: Suburbia



## 7.7 Business Parks

**7.7.1** There are a number of business and retail parks located on the edges of the urban area in both Paignton and Torquay. They are characterised by their large floorplate buildings of 6 – 9 metres (the equivalent of 2 – 3 storeys), with some buildings rising to 12 –15 metres (4 – 5 storeys) arranged on a single spine road, designed around vehicular borne access and surrounded by surface car parking. Although the overall impression is generally of low rise buildings there is variation in the roofscape given that floor to ceiling heights vary depending on the use of the building (retail, industrial, commercial etc.)

**7.7.2** Given the need to provide appropriate employment space to support the economy it is important that there is a flexible approach to building height in these areas to meet operational needs. However several of these sites, particularly those in Paignton, are situated on the urban fringe and in elevated positions where there is a risk that additional height could impact on long distance views, including views from the South Downs AONB and Tor Bay. Any potential visual impact would therefore need to be carefully assessed.

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 1 or 2 storeys, often of industrial scale.

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 75-100%

**General height range:** 1-3 storeys (1-2 storeys in Yalberton Road/Tor Park Road)

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To allow the construction of buildings that meet business needs, whilst minimising their impact on the environment and views.

**Recommended height:** 3 office storeys or 2 industrial storeys subject to visual impact assessment.

**Modifiers:** +1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims above and those set out on page 67.

**Tall buildings:** will not normally be permitted.



Riviera Way Retail Park, Torquay



The Willows Business Park in Torquay



Figure 25: Business Parks

## 7.8 Corridors

**7.8.1** Corridors are defined as linear areas consisting of one urban block either side of the primary historic routes into the settlements of Torbay from its rural hinterland. They tend to run along the valley floors and now have a built up character of mixed land use.



The approach to Torquay town centre along Newton Road



The approach to Brixham town centre along New Road

### Existing height characteristics

**Prevailing height:** 2 storeys

**Frequency of prevailing height:** 75-100% (50-75% in Brixham)

**General height range:** 1-4 storeys (1-3 storeys in Paignton)

### Recommendations

#### Building height aims:

- To promote legibility and enclosure of corridors with appropriate forms/types of development.
- To promote intensity of development to support public transport along primary routes.

#### Torquay Newton Road Corridor

**Recommended height:** 3 storeys

**Modifiers:** +1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims above set out on page 67.

**Tall buildings:** will not normally be permitted

#### Paignton Totnes Road Corridor

**Recommended height:** 3 storeys

**Modifiers:** +1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims above set out on page 67.

**Tall buildings:** will not normally be permitted

#### Brixham New Road Corridor

**Recommended height:** 3 storeys

**Modifiers:** +1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims above set out on page 67.

**Tall buildings:** will not normally be permitted





Figure 26: Corridors

## 7.9 Stations

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**7.9.1** Stations are defined as the area immediately surrounding a mainline train station, including any land associated with the station, such as former goods yards, car parks. This includes Torre, Torquay and Paignton Stations.



Mayor's opportunity site at Torre Station



Single storey building at Torquay Station





Figure 27: Stations



## Torre Station

<b>Existing height characteristics</b>
<b>Prevailing height:</b> 1 storey
<b>Frequency of prevailing height:</b> 75-100%
<b>General height range:</b> 1 storey
<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Building height aims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote appropriate development around the station.</li><li>• To create an attractive and distinctive gateway to Torquay.</li><li>• To enhance the setting of the listed station buildings</li></ul>
<b>Recommended height:</b> 4 storeys
<b>Modifiers:</b> + 1 storey to achieve the aims set out on page 67. -1 or 2 storeys may be required to preserve the setting of the listed building.
<b>Tall buildings:</b> may be acceptable subject to meeting the criteria in Chapter 6.

## Torquay Station

<b>Existing height characteristics</b>
<b>Prevailing height:</b> 1 storey
<b>Frequency of prevailing height:</b> 75-100%
<b>General height range:</b> 1 storey
<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Building height aims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote appropriate development around the station.</li><li>• To create an attractive and distinctive gateway to Torquay.</li><li>• To enhance the setting of the listed station buildings</li></ul>
<b>Recommended height:</b> 3 storeys
<b>Modifiers:</b> + 1 storey to achieve the aims set out above and on page 67. -1 or 2 storeys may be required to preserve the setting of the listed building.
<b>Tall buildings:</b> will not normally be permitted

## Paignton Station

<b>Existing height characteristics</b>
<b>Prevailing height:</b> 1 storey
<b>Frequency of prevailing height:</b> 75-100%
<b>General height range:</b> 1 storey
<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Building height aims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To promote appropriate development around the station.</li><li>• To create an attractive and distinctive gateway to Paignton.</li><li>• To enhance the setting of the listed station buildings.</li></ul>
<b>Recommended height:</b> 3 storeys
<b>Modifiers:</b> + 1 storey and -1 storey to achieve the aims set out above and on page 67.
<b>Tall buildings:</b> may be acceptable subject to impact on views and conservation areas and subject to meeting the criteria in Chapter 6.

## 7.10 Landscape Dominated

**7.10.1** Landscaped dominated areas make up the remainder of the borough and include villages such as Cockington and Churston Ferrers. The prevailing height in the villages is 2 storeys. Detailed description of the landscape can be found in Torbay Landscape Character Assessment Part 1.

<b>Existing height characteristics</b>
<b>Prevailing height:</b> 2 storeys
<b>Frequency of prevailing height:</b> 75-100%
<b>General height range:</b> 1-3 storeys
<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Building height aims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To retain the character and landscaped setting of historic villages.</li><li>• To retain visual separation of the 3 towns by wooded valleys and tree-topped horizons in Prospect and Panoramic Views.</li></ul>
<b>Recommended height:</b> 2 storeys
<b>Modifiers:</b> will not normally be permitted.
<b>Tall buildings:</b> will not normally be permitted.



Typical traditional thatched cottage in an outlying village

# 08 Developing the strategy into policy

## 8.1 Core Strategy

**8.1.1** It is intended that this strategy is used as the evidence base for a tall buildings policy in the Core Strategy. Below is shown a draft tall buildings policy appropriate for incorporation into the Core Strategy that has been drawn from this study.

- **Tall buildings will be encouraged in those areas identified as ‘Areas of Search’ for tall buildings where they meet defined criteria set out in Chapter 6 of this guidance.**
- **Tall buildings, outside of the ‘Areas of Search’ are unlikely to be appropriate. All such proposals will be considered on their merits against policies in the LDF.**

## 8.2 Supplementary Planning Document

**8.2.1** However, there is unlikely to be scope within the Core Strategy to consider this important and complex issue in the detail covered in this report. It is therefore recommended by CABE and Urban Initiatives that this Core Strategy Policy is supplemented by a Building Heights Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that uses this strategy as its basis.

**8.2.2** This document has already been consulted upon during its preparation and therefore the Council would be required only to carry out a consultation on the draft SPD in accordance with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which requires a consultation period of 6 weeks.

**8.2.3** The Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 no longer require a sustainability appraisal (SA) for SPD’s providing that there are no additional impacts than those covered in the sustainability appraisal of the parent Development Plan Document (DPD). Therefore, it is unlikely that an SA will be required to turn this strategy into an SPD.

**8.2.4** The above policy will provide a suitable ‘hook’ from which an SPD on Building Height can be developed.

## 8.3 Development Management Tool

**8.3.1** It is intended that the guidance provided in Chapters 6 and 7 of this document is used as a development management tool, along with the guidance provided in CABE/EH Guidance on Tall Buildings. This guidance can be incorporated into the General Development Control Policies section of the Core Strategy. It can also be used to inform more specific development management policies within the Site Specific Policies and Proposals DPD and the Torbay Harbour AAP.





**Accessibility (By Design)**

The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

**Amenity (PAS Plan Making Manual)**

The pleasantness of places derived from a variety of factors such as the appearance of buildings, open spaces and functioning of an area.

**Areas of search**

Areas that could, in principle, accommodate tall buildings.

**Character assessment (By Design)**

An area appraisal identifying distinguishing physical features and emphasising historical and cultural associations.

**Context (By Design)**

The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

**Density (By Design)**

The floorspace of a building or buildings or some other unit measure in relation to a given area of land. Built density can be expressed in terms of plot ratio (for commercial development); number of units or habitable rooms per hectare (for residential development); site coverage plus the number of floors or a maximum building height; or a combination of these.

**Form (By Design)**

The layout (structure and urban grain), density, scale (height and massing), appearance (materials and details) and landscape of development.

**General height range**

The range of typical heights recorded within an area, excluding tall buildings

**Height (By Design)**

The height of a building can be expressed in terms of a maximum number of floors; a maximum height of parapet or ridge; a maximum overall height; any of these maximum heights in combination with a maximum number of floors; a ratio of building height to street or space width; height relative to particular landmarks or background buildings; or strategic views.

**Heritage asset (PPS5)**

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in PPS5) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).

**Landmark (By Design)**

A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

**Massing (By Design)**

The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

**Modifier**

Permitted minimal deviations from the recommended height, normally not more than one storey up or two storeys down, where they can be justified. Modifiers allow development to react to local circumstances, and stay within the typical height range of an area.

**Neutral area**

Areas generally considered unfit for tall buildings due to their character and prevailing landuse pattern.

**Prevailing height**

The most commonly occurring height of buildings within a specified area.

**Recommended Height**

The height to which new buildings should be built, unless special circumstances apply.

**Roofscape**

The visual appearance of roofs (the area of a building above the eaves), including the way the components of the roofs combine together across an area.

**Scale (By Design)**

The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is used simply as a synonym for 'size'.

**Sensitive areas**

Areas with recognised sensitivities to tall buildings such as conservation, views and landscape character.

**Shoulder height**

The height of a building measured from the floor to the eaves.

**Significance** (PPS5)

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.

**Tall building** (CABE/EH, 2007)

A building that is significantly taller than the prevailing height and falls out of context. It may also impact on the skyline. Significantly taller is defined in Torbay as being 2x prevailing height in areas of varied height and 1.5x prevailing height in areas of uniform height.

**Topography** (By Design)

A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

**Townscape** (Dictionary of Urbanism)

The visual appearance of streets, including the way the components of a street combine in a particular locality.

**Urban grain** (By Design)

The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

**Vernacular** (Dictionary of Urbanism)

The way in which ordinary buildings were (or are) built in a particular place before local styles, techniques and materials were superceded by imports.

**Walk band** (By Design)

A line on a map or plan showing the furthest distance that can be walked from a particular point at an average pace in a certain time (usually five or ten minutes).



Below is a list of reference documents that have been used to inform this study and/or will be useful to developers in preparing an application for tall buildings. It should not be seen as an exhaustive list.

**NATIONAL**

DETR (2000) 'By Design: Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice. A companion document to PPS1'

CABE/English Heritage (2007) 'Guidance on Tall Buildings'

English Heritage (2008) 'Seeing the history in the view: A method for assessing heritage significance within views'

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**LOCAL**

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# APPENDIX A:

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## STRATEGIC TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT

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	PREVAILING HEIGHT	HEIGHT RANGE	FREQUENCY OF PREVAILING HEIGHT	NOTE ON HEIGHTS	NOTE ON ROOF SHAPE	EXCEPTIONAL HEIGHT	NOTE ON EXCEPTIONAL HEIGHT
<b>TOWN CENTRES</b>							
Town Centre Torquay	3	2-6	25-50%	Very heterogeneous area in terms of height. It keeps a fairly consistent height of 3-4 storeys along the main streets, but exceptional storey height and special town centre uses have resulted in an overall very mixed roofscape.	Mix of pitched and flat roofs, two church spires and the town hall tower	7 33m 39m 44m	7storey car park on Temperance Street St Mary Magdalene's of 44m, Higher Union Street St John's Church of 39m, The Terrace Town Hall of 33m
Town Centre Paignton	2	2-4	50-75%	Main street buildings are mostly 3 storeys. An additional storey is often added on the garden side if the garden slopes down hill.	Mostly pitched, mostly inhabited	5 eq. 6	5: Garfield Road eq. 6: church
Town Centre Brixham	3	2-4	75-100%	Consistent shoulder height of mostly 3 storey-buildings along the main streets	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	None	
<b>COASTAL ZONES</b>							
Coastal zone Torquay ( except area around Clif Road: 2)	3	1-4	50-75%	Very heterogeneous area in terms of height and typology. The mix of residential, hotel and leisure use has resulted in a wide variety in height.	Mostly pitched, mostly inhabited	5-8	Many 5-8 apartment blocks and hotels along the coast
Coastal zone Paignton	3	1-4	50-75%	Residential, hotel and leisure uses results in a wide variety of heights.	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	None	
Coastal zone Brixham	3	2-4	75-100%	Predominantly fine grain terraces with lower building for marine uses closest to the harbour	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited		The tall Astra Zeneca building is exceptional, but is set against the background of the hill
<b>URBAN VILLAS</b>							
Chelston	2	2-3	75-100%	Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	4 15m	4 storey building on Seaway Lane St Matthew's Church of 15m
Cary Park	2	2-3	75-100%	Buildings of 3 storeys are usually apartment blocks	Pitched, mix of un/inhabited	None	
Warberries and Lincombes	2	2-4	75-100%	Few buildings on hill slopes have 3-4 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill Three 4 storey apartment facing the bay	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	5-10	Three 9 storey apartment blocks (Shirley Towers) Hotels/apartments on Parkhill Road Three 5-8 storey apartment block on Lower Warberry Road
Paignton	3	2-4	50-75%	2-3 storey villas and 3-4 storey villa-like apartment blocks	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	6	7 storey hotel/apartments on Alta Vista Road draped on the slope towards the bay, but only 2 storeys facing the road.

TERRACES							
Upton Park	2	2-3	75-100%	Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	4	4 storey apartment blocks on Chatto Road
St Marychurch	2	2-3	75-100%	Fairly homogenous height along Teignmouth Road and Hartop Road with rare 3 storey buildings to overbridge topographical differences	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	None	
Cary Park	2	2-3	75-100%	Fairly homogenous height along Fore Street, very few 3 storey buildings	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	45m	Church of Our Lady is 45m
Ellacombe	2	2-3	75-100%	Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill Few apartment blocks of 3 storeys	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	eq. 6	Ellecombe Church of eq. 6 storeys
North Paignton	2	2-4	75-100%	2 storey residential terraces with the occasional 3-4 storey apartment block or school	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	None	
South Paignton	2	2-4	75-100%	2 storey residential terraces with the occasional 3-4 storey apartment block	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	20m	Christchurch of 20m, Torquay Road
North Brixham	3	2-4	75-100%	Fine grain residential buildings Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	eq. 6	All Saint's Church on Higher Street is very prominent in many view
South Brixham	3	2-4	75-100%	Fine grain residential buildings Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	5 26m	5 storey apartment building Parkham Wood St Mary's Church of 26m
SUBURBIA							
Manscombe	2	1-3	75-100%	Few buildings are 1 storey Few buildings are 3 storeys facing down hill	Pitched, mostly inhabited	None	
Shiphay	2	1-3	75-100%	This area is less homogenous containing more apartment blocks have the other and some industrial areas	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	4-7	4-7 storeys Torbay District General Hospital
Lincombes	2	1-3	75-100%	Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	5-7	The 5-6 storey Crescent at Hesketh Crescent Two 7 storeys apartment blocks at Asheldon Road 7 storey Palace Hotel at Babbacombe Road
Ilsham	2	1-4	75-100%	3-4 storeys face down hill, 2 storeys facing the hill	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	9	9 storey Kilmorie apartment block on Ilsham Marine Drive
Goodrington Galmpton	2 (except the areas of Brunel	1-3		2 storey residential buildings with the occasional 1 or 3 storey building	Pitched, mix of un/inhabited	None	



TERRACES							
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Cary Park	2	2-3	75-100%	Fairly homogenous height along Fore Street, very few 3 storey buildings	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	45m	Church of Our Lady is 45m
Ellacombe	2	2-3	75-100%	Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill Few apartment blocks of 3 storeys	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	eq. 6	Ellecombe Church of eq. 6 storeys
North Paignton	2	2-4	75-100%	2 storey residential terraces with the occasional 3-4 storey apartment block or school	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	None	
South Paignton	2	2-4	75-100%	2 storey residential terraces with the occasional 3-4 storey apartment block	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	20m	Christchurch of 20m, Torquay Road
North Brixham	3	2-4	75-100%	Fine grain residential buildings Many buildings on hill slopes have 3 storeys facing down hill and 2 storeys facing the hill	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	eq. 6	All Saint's Church on Higher Street is very prominent in many view
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Ilsham	2	1-4	75-100%	3-4 storeys face down hill, 2 storeys facing the hill	Pitched, mostly uninhabited	9	9 storey Kilmorie apartment block on Ilsham Marine Drive
Goodrington Galmpton	2 (except the areas of Brunel	1-3		2 storey residential buildings with the occasional 1 or 3 storey building	Pitched, mix of un/inhabited	None	

CORRIDORS							
Torquay	2	1-4	75-100%	Mostly 1-3 storey fine grain residential buildings and occasional 3-4 storey apartment buildings and 1-2 retail buildings	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	None	
Paignton	2	1-3	75-100%	Mostly fairly small grain residential buildings interspaced with green space and car parks Occasional apartment blocks and school	Mostly pitched, mostly uninhabited	None	
Brixham	2	1-4	50-75%	Mostly fairly small grain residential buildings with several 2-4 apartment buildings and a 1 storey gas station	Mostly pitched, mix of un/inhabited	None	





# APPENDIX B:

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SELECTED PLANS IN A3 FORMAT

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