



21st October 2023

Dear Karen

Re: Emerging Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan initial meeting on 20th October 2023

The South Hams Society interest

For the last 60 years, the South Hams Society has been stimulating public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the South Hams. We encourage high standards of planning and architecture that respect the character of the area. We aim to secure the protection and improvement of the landscape, features of historic interest and public amenity and to promote the conservation of the South Hams as a living, working environment. We take the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty very seriously and work hard to increase people's knowledge and appreciation of our precious environment. We support the right development - in the right places - and oppose inappropriate development in the wrong places.

Our thanks for inviting us to submit our initial thoughts about the Kingsbridge Conservation Area (CA). It goes without saying that maintaining the current features already within the CA should be a priority rather than just expanding the boundary of the CA with all the extra regulations that inevitably come with inclusion within a CA for landowners

Boundary changes and why

As we discussed at yesterday's meeting, the boundary of the current conservation area could be expanded to include historic buildings of note which are currently located outside the boundary. There are also key and important mature trees growing just outside the current boundary which would have greater protection were the boundary to be expanded. These include those along the Embankment as well as both the embankment wall itself and the adjoining quay steps and wharves.

Buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the conservation area (CA)

During yesterday's discussion and walk-about we identified several locations that really should be considered worthy of inclusion in the conservation area which at present are not linked. These are the buildings to be found in Higher and Lower Union Road either side of Cookworthy Road, namely The Old Workhouse and the Old Rectory in Higher Union Road. Both could in turn be linked by extending the boundary to include all the old stone buildings, including the former undertakers situated in an historic Neo-gothic building, along Lower Union Road.

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The stone walls along Western Backway mark the edge of the existing CA boundary. These walls are reputed to have been built by Napoleonic POW's and are in desperate need of repair. Eastern Backway, which is currently within the CA, has walls that are in danger of collapse despite several (non CA compliant) attempts at remedial work. The fact that both of these historic back ways encircle the town and are still regularly used by the local community, many of whom (myself included) can access their home by no other means, would suggest to me that these ancient walkways should be given far greater priority by the local authority than they currently receive. The routes are marked as The Heritage Trail and are marketed as such by the local TIC to the many visitors who enjoy walking them and upon whose custom the town relies, especially in the summer months. It is unrealistic to expect the many private landowners whose boundaries encroach on these ancient walkways to carry out remedial works given the expense and inaccessibility of these sites. If the current CA cannot be preserved using existing legislation then it really begs the question should it be expanded?

Buildings and features making a negative contribution to the CA

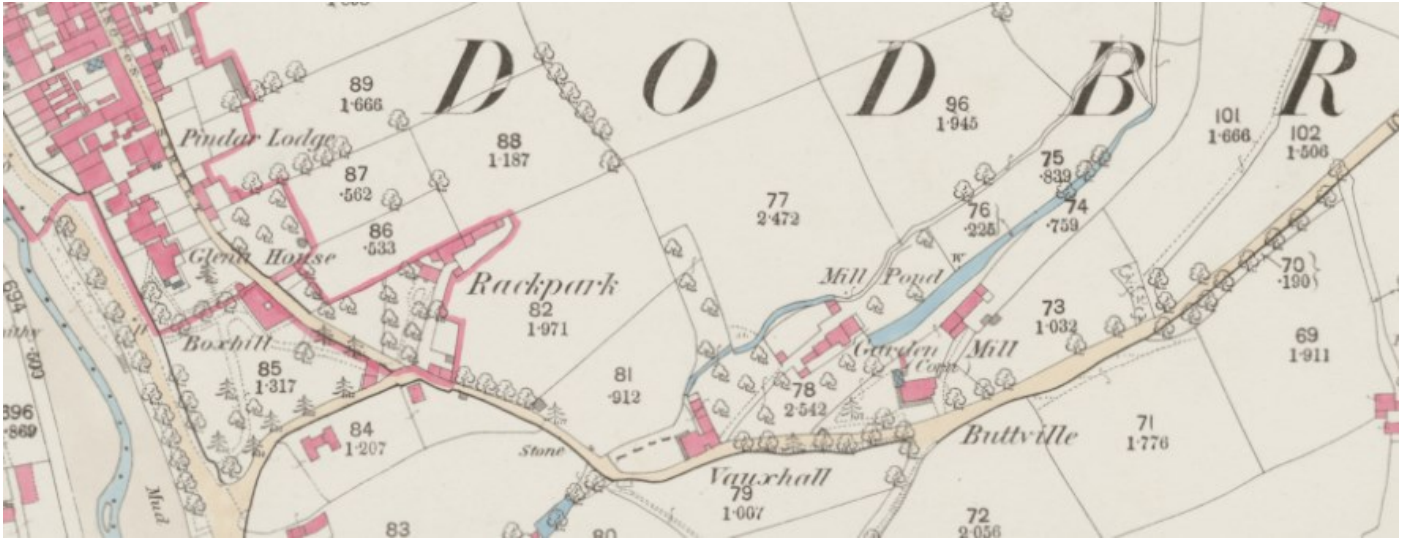
Without a doubt the appalling state of the walls which run along Western Backway detract hugely from the beauty of the leat which flows silently beside that route. The current mismatch of breeze block walls, chain link fencing and broken wooden fences are an eyesore. They impact directly upon the CA.

Suggested character areas

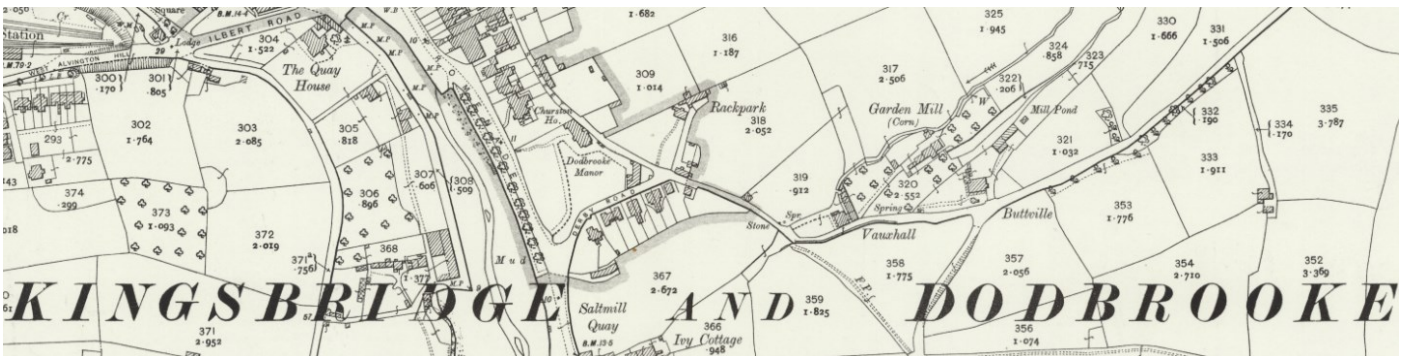
The Old Wash-House (now derelict) in Eastern Backway could be turned into a character area with appropriate signage to flag its former use when the leat was still in use. Perhaps a seating and planting area could also be installed?

We also believe that the area formerly called Boxhill should be included in the conservation area.

1888 SW England Map (National Library of Scotland)



OS 25 Inch 1892 – 1914 Map (National Library of Scotland)



Expanded, the old Dobrooke Boundary is shown which we believe could be the basis for a CA boundary extension in the location with minor adjustments.



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The suggested Dodbrooke, Boxhill extension would include Dodbrooke Manor, Dodbrooke Lodge, the Rack Park former farm buildings and the houses alongside Derby Road



Dodbrooke Lodge, the Derby Road houses, and Dodbrooke Manor in the distance down Ebrington Street



Boxhill - July 1955 illustrating Dodbrooke Manor, Rack Park buildings, Dodbrooke Lodge, the Derby Road buildings and Recreation Ground Cottages.



(Historic England)

The Society would like to see the Grade II listed building Quay House included in the conservation area due to its history and importance to the town as the former Twyford School, KUDC from the 1950's and former law court.



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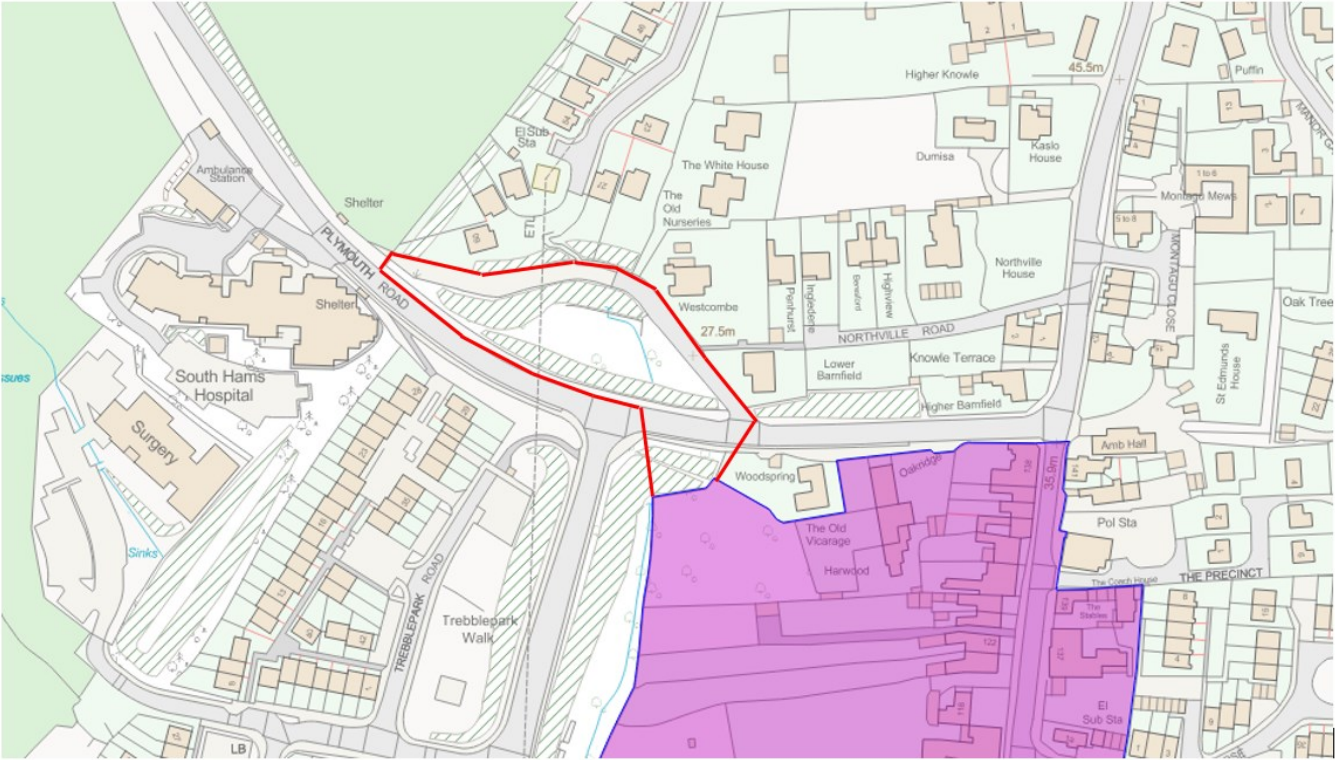
This is Quay House in 1992. A prominent listed building. Why Quay House was not captured in the original KCA remains a mystery.



Quay House in 2022



The Society would wish to see a small extension to the CA boundary to include the old Plymouth road and a largely intact railway road bridge. We believe that Woodspring could be included in the CA boundary.



The old Plymouth main road, now a quiet lane and footpath.



The old Kingsbridge South Brent Railway Plymouth Road Bridge should be recommended for inclusion into the Kingsbridge Conservation Area.



Lower and Higher Union Road

Kingsbridge Union Workhouse. First listed 13th December 1949

Historic England

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1249505?section=official-list-entry>

Description contained within listing:


*'Circa 1835, parallel ranges. Large 3 storey approximately formerly 25 windows, **with centre destroyed by enemy action**. Stone with brick window facings. Smaller range, south, 2 storey stone, with brick window facings, Symmetrical centre block in good condition. 2 storey, 11 windows including 3 window central projection, cambered heads to ground floor windows, 6-panel door with sunk upper panels. Link wall to lodge, east. Now all in commercial use'.*

Emphasis added.

The listing states that the centre section was *'destroyed by enemy action'* (of what was then, the centre building of three rows of buildings).

This is factually incorrect as the centre section was destroyed by a fire on the 1st January 1959.

'DEVON FIRE - Fire units from three areas in South Devon last night fought a blaze in buildings which were once the Kingsbridge Workhouse. The three storey buildings which were badly damaged, are now used for storing tractors and agricultural implements'.



SOUTH DEVON FIRE

... **SOUTH DEVON FIRE** units from three areas in **South Devon** last night fought a blaze in buildings which were once the Kingsbridge Workhouse. The three storey buildings, which -were badly damaged, are now used ...

Published: Friday 02 January 1959
Newspaper: Belfast Telegraph
County: Antrim, Northern Ireland
Type: Article | Words: 46 | Page: 11 | Tags: none

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<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/EPW033093>

This 1930 image shows the complete workhouse complex. Union Road was single road prior to the construction of the Cookworthy Road bypass which cut the road into two. The road only led to Retreat House, the Kingsbridge Union Workhouse and Redford Farm.



(Historic England)

Retreat House with the Kingsbridge Union Workhouse buildings in the background.



(Image – Kingsbridge Cookworthy Museum).

Retreat house is now known as Redford Court.

Redford Court, Gate Piers and Gates at Redford Court was also listed in 1949.

It is disappointing to see the lack of sympathetic development and landscaping that has occurred surrounding these two sites.

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In the image below is the former Kingsbridge Union Workshop site. The centre section destroyed by fire is clearly visible in this image.



Redford Court is at the bottom of this image. These two sites should be recorded in the conservation appraisal and consideration given to whether it is possible to link one or both of these sites to the Kingsbridge conservation area, via the Lower Union Road route.

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(Lower) Union Road 1st July 1930



(Historic England)

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(Lower) Union Road 22nd July 1959



(Historic England)

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Assessing the changes - June 2022, Lower Union Road

The buildings on the left are original to varying degrees. Some in between buildings have been removed. Moysey's on the right is a new development.

A small building in between the two on the near left buildings is missing (see inset showing gap).

(All images Google Street View)



Moving south, Moyseys on the left is very similar to 1959 but different to 1930. The building on the right is The Moorland, previously a depot for Moorland Minerals. Apart from the fact that the stream that used to run alongside the building has been diverted, The Moorland appears to be unchanged back to 1930.



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The single cottage and units are largely original, as are the buildings on the other side of the road.

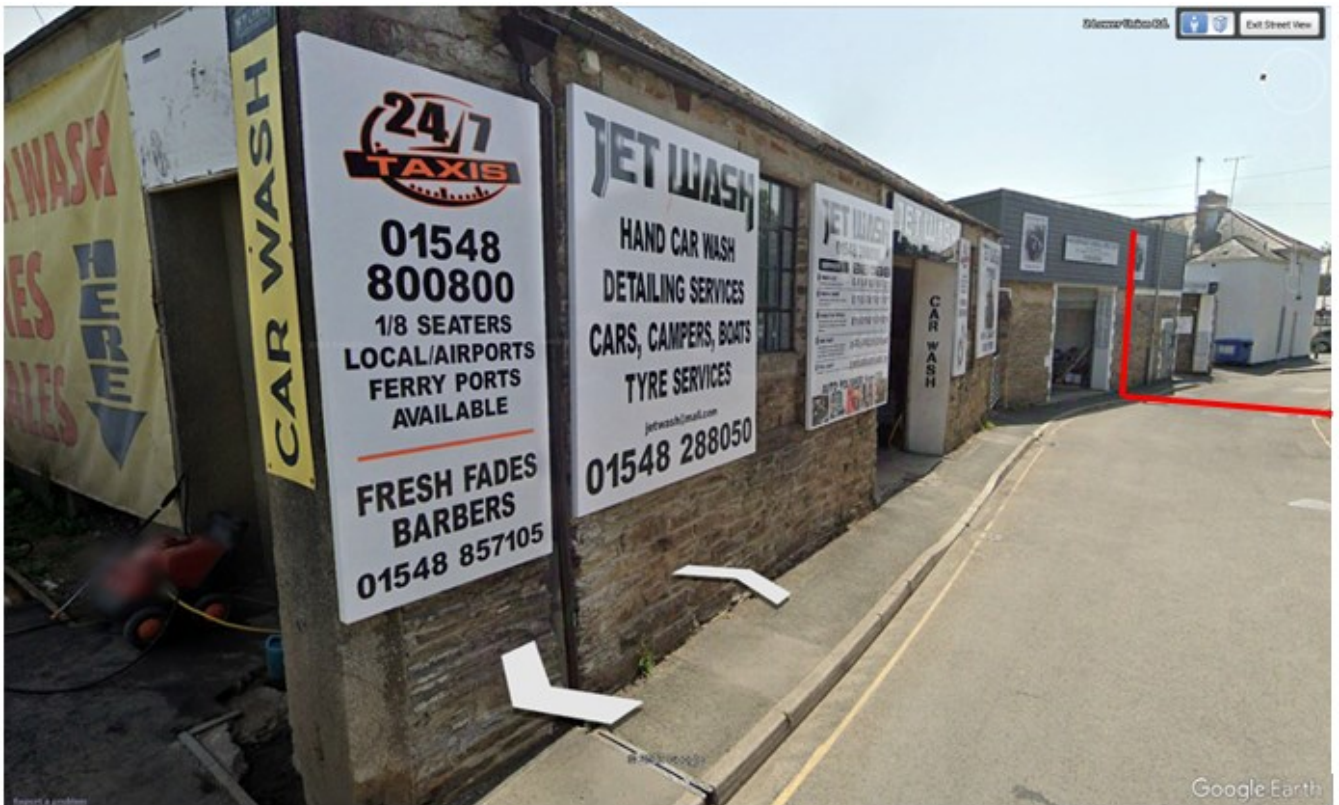


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On the left is where the old gas tanks were located. Here buildings have been removed and altered.



The last two buildings before entering the conservation area boundary (red line).



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On the other side is Dudley's / Fusion / Coast, now on the market. The 4 units to the right are relative new.



There are a number of buildings along Lower Union Road that could be included in a conservation area / conservation area appraisal.

In closing these are just a few initial thoughts and are intended to be the basis for discussion going forward. They do not represent the views of the Society's membership, who in turn will be consulted in due course.

The Society urges the local planning authority to give due consideration to the historic environment as your local plan states you will do.

It was a pleasure to meet you Karen. We look forward to hearing from you as the appraisal develops.

For and on behalf of the South Hams Society,

Cathy Koo
Trustee