

2024

# Tavistock Conservation Area

The Appraisal and Management Plan



West Devon  
Borough Council



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# Part One – The Appraisal





# 1. Summary of Special Interest

Tavistock retains a townscape of great interest due to the spacious streets, attractive town centre squares, and prestigious 19th century buildings, many of which are built out of the local grey-green Hurdwick stone.

The standing abbey remains make a key contribution to the townscape and the layout of the present-day town centre has been strongly influenced by the plan form of the former abbey.

Away from the centre, the medieval streets such as West Street, Market Street and Bannawell Street can also be enjoyed. Few industrial buildings or features remain other than a few former foundries, however the canal, its associated buildings and the Bedford car park ore dressing site are the most prominent. The buildings which do remain are incrementally being converted into residential accommodation or demolished. Tavistock town is the most extensively remodelled metal mining town in Britain.

The area boundary follows or is very close to the World Heritage Site (WHS) boundary, but there are significant differences. This is because the criteria of special architectural or historic interest that merit conservation area status are not the same as the considerations used to determine the WHS.

## The World Heritage Site (WHS)

Tavistock forms one of ten separate sites stretching from St. Just near the tip of Cornwall to Tavistock in West Devon. Together, they comprise the Cornwall and West Devon mining Landscape World Heritage Site, inscribed by UNESCO in 2006. During the period 1700 – 1914 these sites were transformed by an industrial economy based largely on hard rock mining which produced the highly distinctive landscapes that can still be recognised today.

The features which make Tavistock important as part of the WHS include:

- The town was largely redeveloped in the 19th century because of the income from the surrounding industrial activities.
- The survival of buildings and features within the town which relate to this industrial activity (such as the foundries, canal and mill leats).
- There were also mines (the Crowndale Mine particularly) and other underground workings in the southern suburbs of Tavistock such as Crelake that is beneath the industrial estate.

**Left: Tavistock Guildhall**

## 2. Introduction

This Conservation Area Appraisal (Part I) and its combined Management Plan (Part II), support West Devon Borough Council's Corporate Strategy.

This is an updated assessment and 3rd boundary review. It takes on board information from the previous version of the Conservation Area Appraisal adopted on 29 April 2014, which remains valuable due to its in-depth account of the history of the town and its surroundings. This honours some of the content from the previous version, but now brings it up to date.

The previous appraisal made recommendations for amendments to the Conservation Area boundary, which were made at the time of adoption.

History of the area's designation and subsequent boundary changes:

\* Note: They remain as supporting background information.

- Designations: by Devon County Council on 16th May 1969 as three separate areas. They were; the town centre and its historic streets, the Bedford Cottages at Fitzford and Westbridge.
- Amalgamation of the three Conservation Areas to form a single Conservation Area. Designated on 17th August 2010.
- Boundary review; first extension on 9th March 2010. This better reflects part of the World Heritage Site boundary.
- Second boundary review; 2013, no change.
- Assessment of Conservation Area; on July 2008.
- Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal first published July 2009
- 1st revision (of 2009) Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal November 2013.
- Second assessment of Conservation Area; November 2013
- 2nd revision (of 2009) Tavistock Conservation Area & Management Plan 29 April 2014.\*

Abbey Bridge



# 3. Planning Policy Context

## National and local policy framework

The provision for conservation areas and their management are set out in government planning policy;

- Conservation Area requirements under the; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas ) Act 1990, section 69 (2).
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 196 (D)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023, 19 December and Glossary. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that;

*“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that special interest”.*

- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Paragraph 025 Reference ID. 18a-025-20140306
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site Management Plan 2020-2025.
- World Heritage Site supplementary planning document (2017).

## Local Policy

- Joint Local Plan (JLP) – SPT11 Strategic approach to the historic environment
- JLP TTV16 & TTV17 – Specific design details for Tavistock.
- JLP Dev 21 – development affecting the historic environment.
- Policy DEV22 Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site Development proposals within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site or its setting will conserve or where appropriate enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.
- JLP SPD – New work in Conservation Areas.

## What a Conservation Area is, how and why it's designated

The statutory definition of a Conservation Area is;

*“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.*

Designation of an area seeks to manage change in ways that maintain or strengthen the area's special qualities. The appraisal sets out what makes the Tavistock Conservation Area special and makes recommendations for what needs to be conserved and what needs to be improved.

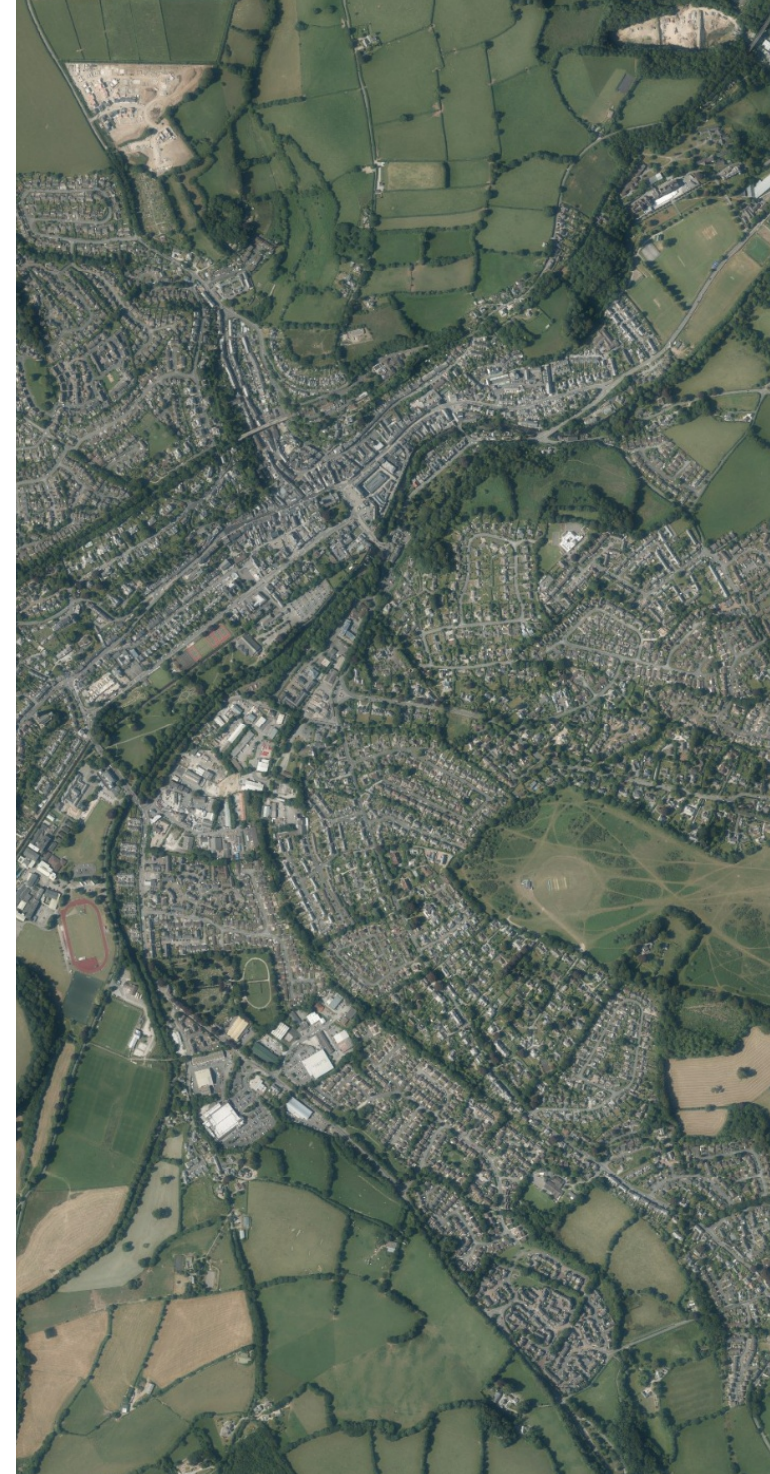
### Summary of implications through designation;

- The requirement in legislation and national planning policies to preserve and/or enhance (as discussed further on the NPPF and the NPPG).
- Local planning policies which pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

- Control over demolition of unlisted buildings, including associated structures, boundary walls etc.
- Control over works to trees.
- Limitations on the types of advertisements which can be displayed with deemed consent.
- Restriction on the types of development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission (permitted development rights).
- Support the use of article 4 directions to remove permitted development rights where avoidable damage is occurring.
- Clarification of archaeological interest, thereby assisting its protection.

It is important to note that in the absence of any particular reference to any building, feature, view or space, it should not be taken to imply that it is of no significance and therefore has no relevance to any planning consideration.

**Aerial view of the urban growth around the town centre**



## 4. General character, locations and uses

Tavistock lies in West Devon between the Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town lies predominately to the North site of the River Tavy, one of the fastest flowing rivers in England, and to either side the land rises, providing attractive views across the historic town centre as well as longer views towards the rocky outcrops and moorland of Dartmoor.

Tavistock forms part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, inscribed by UNESCO in 2006, and covering ten separate sites stretching from St. Just in Cornwall to Tavistock in West Devon. This area is identified as A10, “The Tamar Valley Mining District with Tavistock”.

The key characteristics of the Tavistock Conservation Area are:

- The location in West Devon between Dartmoor National Park and Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The beautiful setting in the valley of the River Tavy, which flows through the conservation area.
- The Meadows and adjoining Benson’s Meadow, attractive green spaces and many trees close to the centre of the town.
- The association with the former Benedictine abbey which lies beneath the town centre, with some above-ground remains.
- The industrial heritage of tin and copper mining, foundries, wool production and quarrying, with some buildings in the conservation area that relate to these.
- The impact of the patronage of Bedford Estate, which owned a high proportion of the buildings and land in the era between the Dissolution of Tavistock Abbey and 1911.
- The high quality townscape, much of which is the result of 19th century town planning when the Bedford Estate provided new roads and a succession of new or converted buildings.
- The “set price” of the Town Hall with its associated buildings, mostly built or converted by various Dukes of Bedford to give the town prestige and status.
- The Bedford Cottages, mostly listed, which were built to provide improved housing for miners and other workers in the 19th century.
- The use of Dartmoor granite and local Hurdwick stone for many of the buildings or pavements.
- A busy shopping centre, popular with tourists and residents alike.
- The role of Tavistock as the modern gateway to the World Heritage Site, with surviving features within the town and its surroundings relating to early industrial development.



## 5. Historic interest

**AD 974**

Tavistock's abbey was founded at the instigation of King Edgar (959–75) as part of his establishment of a network of Benedictine abbeys throughout the country, the main benefactor, and the man acknowledged as the founder, was Ordulf, King Edgar's brother-in-law, who granted the manor of Tavistock to the abbey.

**AD 981**

The initial abbey buildings are completed; foundation charter granted by King Ethelred (979–1016).

**1086**

The rebuilt abbey is cited in Domesday Survey; probably already the richest religious house in Devon, the abbey provides the impetus for the development of the town, which grew around it.

**1116**

Henry I grants the right to an annual three-day Goose Fair.

**Early 1200s**

A parish church was built on present site

**14th Century**

Prosperity is due to wool production and tin mining; in 1305 Tavistock becomes one of the four Devon stannary towns, responsible for tin-assaying and tin-marketing. Rebuilding of St. Eustachius Church in 1318 in close proximity to the abbey.

**1539**

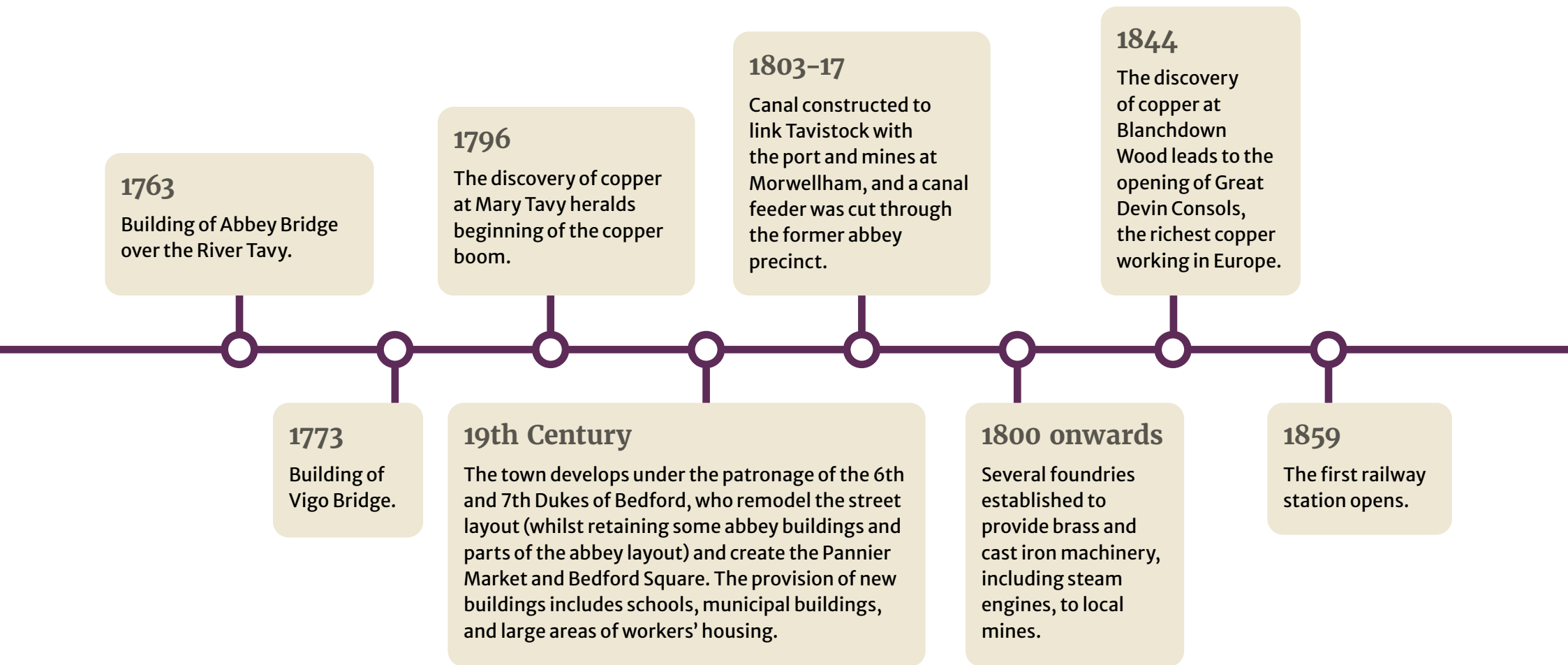
The abbey is formally dissolved and its property granted to John Russell, a close advisor of Henry VIII and Edward VI; Russell is elevated to the title of first Earl of Bedford in 1551; until the 20th century, the town thereafter is largely owned and controlled by the Russells, whose family seat is Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire.

**1540**

An Act is passed for the rebuilding of decayed houses at Tavistock, many former abbey properties dismantled to provide building materials.

**1725**

Jacob Saunders, merchant, builds Abbey House (now part of the Bedford Hotel) incorporating earlier buildings; other buildings are later cleared or converted as part of the paying out of Bedford Square, Bedford Place and Abbey Place.



**1862**

Pannier Market opened, followed by Town Hall in 1863.

**1870**

The copper industry collapses, and the town falls into decline.

**1890**

Opening of Tavistock North railway station, served by the newly built viaduct and Drake Road.

**1960's**

Closure of both railway stations.

**1865**

The church of St. Mary Magdalene is built to serve the western end of the town.

**1877**

Kelly College opened.

**1911**

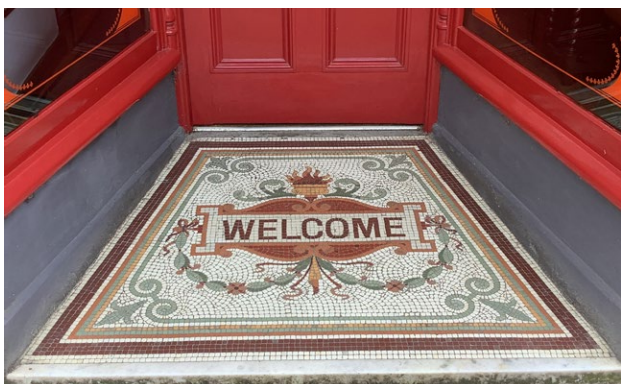
Duke of Bedford sells most of his land and properties in Tavistock, some to the Town Council.

## 6. Architectural interest and built form

Tavistock is notable for the buildings clustered around Bedford Square and Abbey Place, some of which retain medieval fabric.

The Tudor or Gothic style was later copied by the Bedford Estate and appears on the 19th century Bedford Hotel, the Bedford Estate Office, the Town Hall, Court Gate and its 19th century single storey extension, and the adjoining Library, Police Station and Guildhall.

Of special interest are the 300 Bedford model cottages, of which 164 are within the Conservation Area, located in separate groups just outside the town centre, which the Estate provided from the 1840s onwards for miners and their families.



St Mary Magdalene Church on the Callington Road was also provided by the Estate for the spiritual wellbeing for the poor.

They are all intrinsic to the development in the 19th century, largely due to the influence of the Bedford Estate.

These 300 or so model cottages were in Dolvin Road, Parkwood Road, and off the south of the town. Many are decorated with the Bedford crest (a crown) and the letter “B”.

The Dukes of Bedford commissioned the best architects of the period for their more prestigious buildings, as follows:

- **Sir Jeffry Wyattville** – Bedford Hotel, 1820s.
- **John Foulston (well known Plymouth architect)** – Police Station, Subscription Library, contribution to the Bedford Hotel and supervised the works & extensions to Court Gate, 1820s.
- **Charles Fowler** – designed the Corn Market 1835 (also Covent Garden Market, London, Bedford Estate).

**Traditional shop mosaic ingo**

- **Edward Blore** – designed Nos. 2–12 Plymouth Road, 1836. Tavistock Grammar School, Plymouth Road, 1837 and United Reformed Church, 1838.
- **Sir George Gilbert Scott** – designed the new Union Workhouse, opened 1838.
- **John Hayward** – the restoration of St. Eustachius Church, 1844–5 (he was nephew & pupil of Charles Barry, who designed the Houses of Parliament).
- **Theophilus Jones** – designed the Bedford model cottages and the Guildhall, 1848 (it follows the design of Foulston’s adjoining Police Station. Jones was one of the Bedford Estate’s own architect/surveyors).
- **Henry Clutton** – St. Mary Magdalene Church 1865–7 and Plymouth Road Cemetery buildings, 1881.
- **Arthur Southcombe Parker** – designed the Kingdon House printing Works, 1906 (a pupil of Sir Jeffry Wyattville).

Away from the centre, the principal historic streets: West Street, Market Street, Bannawell Street, and Old Exeter Road, provide terraces of two or three storey houses mainly dating to the late 18th and 19th centuries. These buildings have domestic scale and some have ground floor shops.

Tavistock's earliest secular buildings can be found in Market Street, which retains a number of possibly 16th and 17th century timber framed houses.

Duke Street, next to the Pannier Market, and the adjoining section of West Street, retain a number of purpose built 19th century shops, banks and other commercial building, such as the former Corn Market, and a group formed by the HSBC Bank, the Conservative Club and the Town Council Offices. These were built when Drake Road was constructed in the 1890s to provide access to the, then, new railway station. These buildings are more prestigious with well detailed frontages.

To the east, the buildings in Brood Street are also largely 18th and 19th century in date, but more modest in detail, with ground floor shops.

Industrial buildings - These include the Bedford Foundry in Lakeside, Hunt's Malthouse (later used as a part of a brewery) off Market Street, Old Town Mill in Brook Street, and the buildings associated with the former foundries and woollen mills in Parkwood Road. Remnants of various leats.

The former station at Kilworthy Park has now been converted into a private dwelling. However,



**Above: Dated 1895. Originally built as the Constitutional Club. Right: The Bedford Hotel**

the adjoining viaduct that spans the valley above Bannawell Street and provides Tavistock with one of its most dramatic features. It also offers dramatic views across the whole of the conservation area.

The principal churches are St. Eustachius in Bedford Square and St. Mary Magdalene, facing Callington Road (1867). Also of note are the non-Conformist churches and chapels: Abbey Chapel in Abbey Place, now as a Christian Brethren Chapel; the Congregational Church in Russell Street; and the Methodist Church in Chapel Street. A further chapel in Bannawell Street (the former Gospel Hall) has been converted into apartments.

Educational buildings include - the Church of England school of 1847 in Dolvin Road, former National School (1856), former Grammar School (1837) corner Plymouth Road and Russell Street,

the later Grammar School (1895) along Plymouth Road and 19th century Kelly College off Parkwood Road.

Health and social care buildings include - Former (18th century) workhouse, now cottages, Ford Street. Terraced cottages (1752) by the Ford Street Charity and a single house (1873) by the Maynards Charity. In addition are; Tavistock Cottage Hospital (late 19th century) with its adjoining almshouses (1914) and the former Union Workhouse and Infirmary (1838) at the northern end of Bannawell Street, now converted to flats.

Prestigious developments (1850s) in the Watts Road area are in the Italianate villa style and are set in spacious plots with views facing south over the town. Similar houses can be seen in Parkwood Road, Glanville Road and Whitchurch Road.





## 7. Locally important buildings

Assessment for these falls outside of any listed buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their curtilage listed structures. They can often be individual buildings or form a group value. These can and do make a positive contribution to the special architectural interest or character and appearance of the area. A number are identified as having distinctive features within the Conservation Area (see maps).

Most buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character. The extent of which its contribution is considered as positive depends not just on the context but architectural and historic interest. This includes traditional methods of construction and quality of craftsmanship, but materials that reflect the local vernacular.

These buildings are too numerous to mention individually. In general, there are fine examples of architectural style in the historic periods. These are also experienced in the street pattern.

This has been further illustrated in the detailed maps of Tavistock Conservation Area in Appendix 1 which identifies key building and groups of building which significantly add to the quality of the area.

**Commercial and residential mix, Market Road**

## 8. Spatial analysis

The spatial character and plan form has evolved due to the changing nature of the settlement and human interaction. This is the result of three major influences:

- The 10th century abbey by the side of the River Tavy.
- Industrial heritage
- The 19th century remodelling of the town by successive Dukes of Bedford.

The streets largely follow the contours of the land, parallel to the river. Meandering lanes also lead off the town centre, such as the Old Exeter Road and the road to Whitchurch, now subsumed in 20th century development. These once formed the historic route between Plymouth and Exeter.

Courtyard surrounding the Pannier Market



# Historic Heart

Includes these key streets;

- Bedford Square
- Abbey Place

This is comprised of the most prominent buildings, such as; the Town Hall, Court Gate, Subscription Library, Police Station, and Guildhall, with the adjoining Pannier Market, St Eustachius Church, Bedford Hotel, former Estate Office and Abbey Chapel. They form a protective cluster around wide pedestrian friendly spaces/town square, despite being cut through with busy traffic. They are at least 3 storey high, detached buildings, that offer glimpses through to other routes. The grand Abbey Bridge forms part of this level grouping.

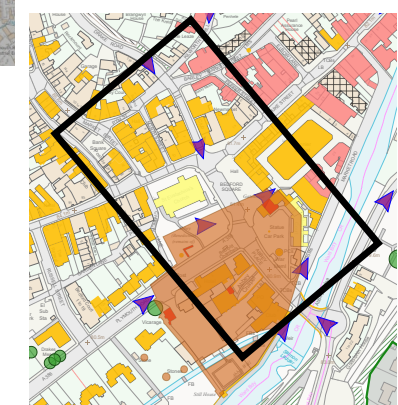
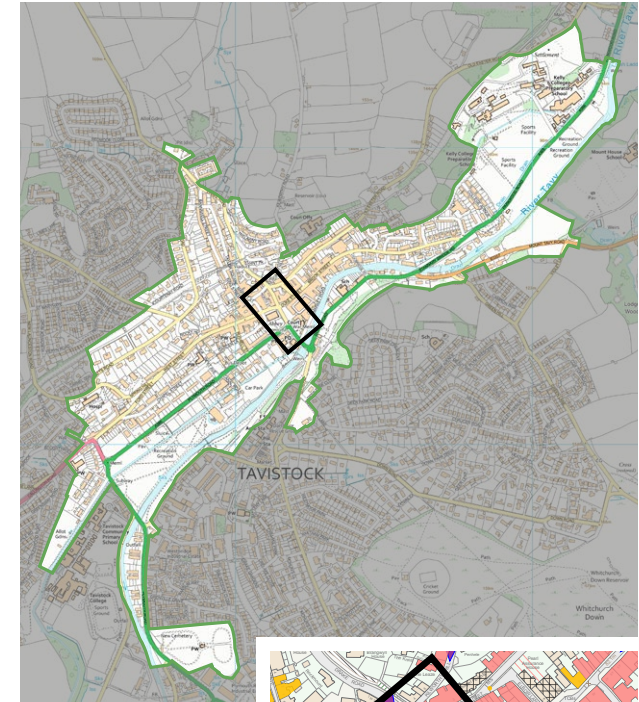
The proximity of the Pannier Market and other facilities means that it is well used with markets, street fairs and other activities. They make a positive contribution to the special character of the area.



**Guildhall, Bedford Square**



**Former Estate Office, Bedford Square**



See Appendix 1.



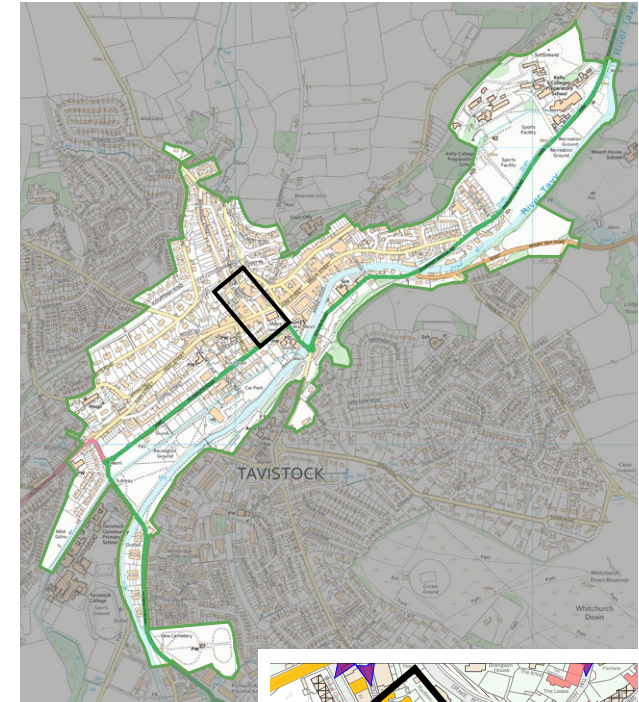
## Linking Shopping Streets

Includes these streets;

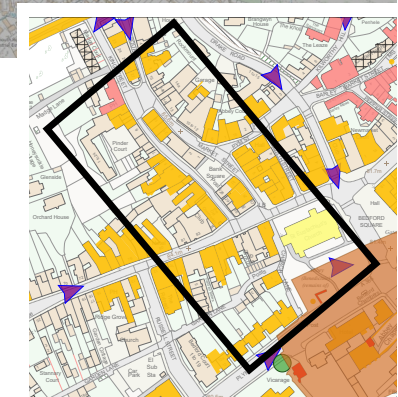
- Market Street
- King Street

They both run in the same direction and are linked by some of the buildings that sit within them. In some cases, providing rear accessibility at ground level for either commercial or domestic use. They are intimate terraced routes but burst open allowing for a small car park and a road junction. There may be scope for an enhanced pedestrian experience in these car dominated spaces.

Many timber framed 16th and 17th century buildings survive only in Market Street. They form a group between Bank Square and West Street. No.4 is perhaps the earliest, retaining its 16th century corbelled party walls, which are still visible. No.5 is a town house with a jettied timber front, now stuccoed over and classicised by a Venetian window in the dentilled gable. No.22 also has a jettied front. These buildings are good examples of Devonian town houses of the period. They are of intrinsic group value.



**Roofscape of  
Market Street  
and King Street**



See Appendix 1.

## Early links

Includes these streets;

- Bannawell Street
- Drake Road

These form busy routes through from the town centre and link into residential areas. In Bannawell Street there are some early looking houses which may date to the 18th century or even earlier, but it is notable that the many gabled (and therefore presumably 17th century or earlier) have been largely rebuilt. In general they are stone built, some also painted render.

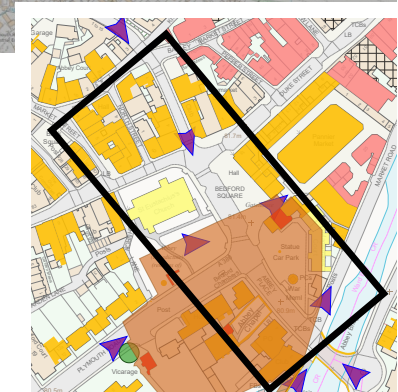
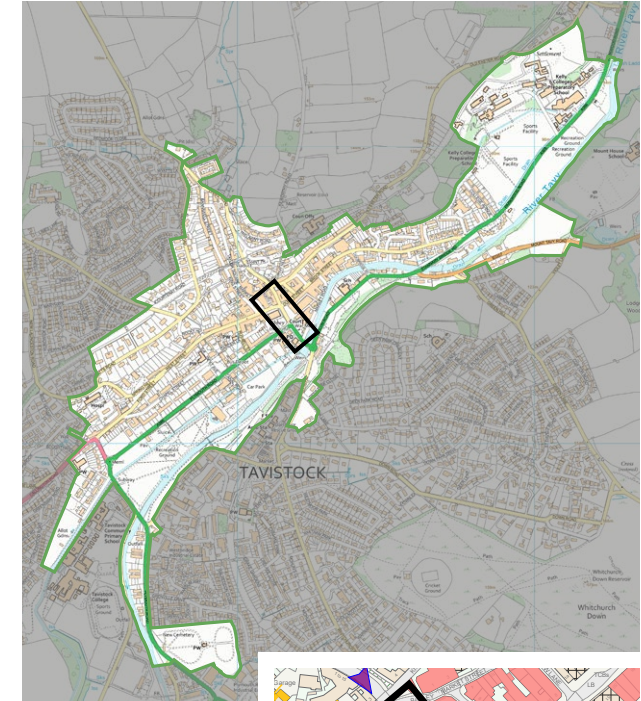
They remain modest terraced cottages that front onto footpaths each side of the street. They are both over shadowed by the tall viaduct that crosses above. They transition from the shopping centre to all residential.



View south down Bannawell Street



View east, Drake Road



See Appendix 1.

## Principle shopping and commercial mix

Includes these streets;

- West Street
- Ford Street

This is essentially one of principle routes that lead out from the town centre. The change into Ford street is noticeable by the more verdant setting that comes from the gardens and the spaces between the detached buildings.

They retain commercial use at ground level, with a mixture of national and local shops, that lead to other types of commercial land use in Ford Street, such as a car sales site.

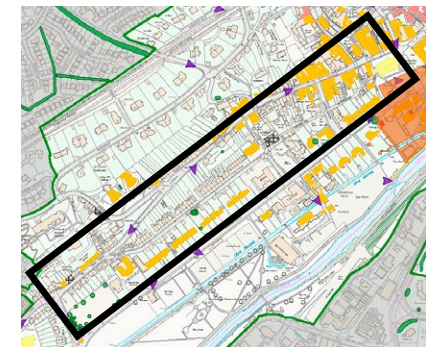
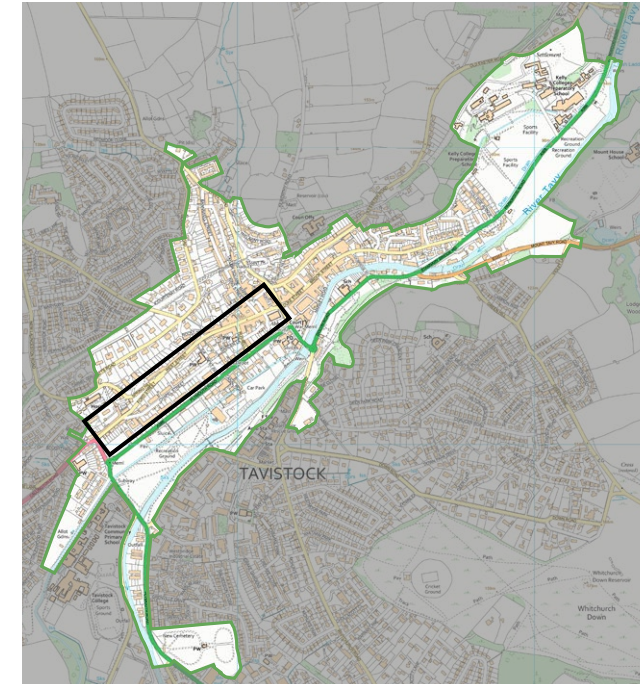
West Street – has higher status houses such as; No. 8 that is built from granite and No. 59 a small neo-classical house with a good interior.



West Street



Verdant courtyard breaks up the built form in West Street



See Appendix 1.

## Grand gardens and gateways

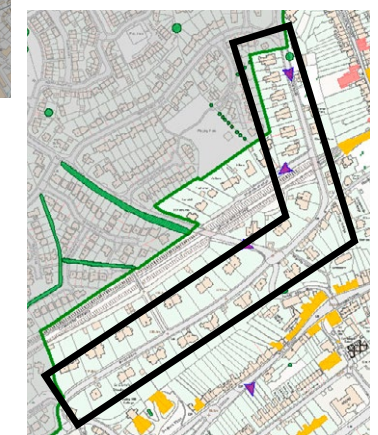
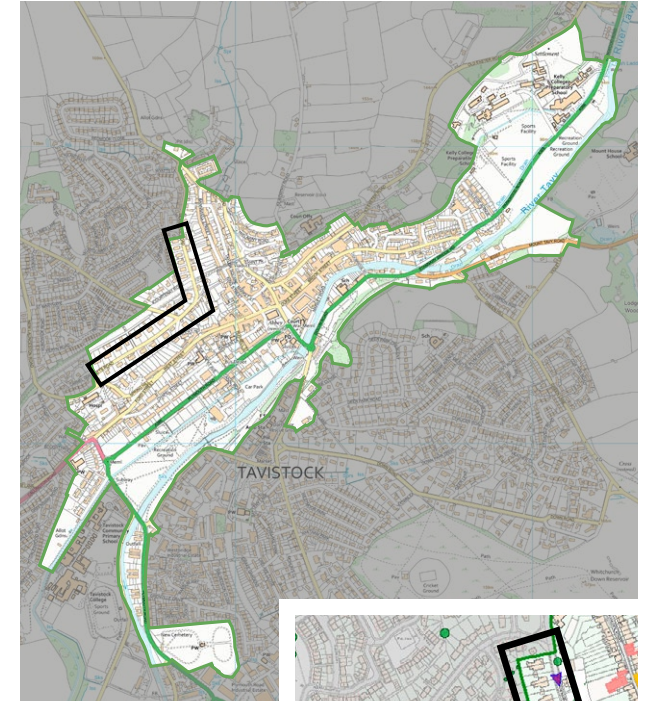
Includes these streets;

- Watts Road,
- Glanville Road
- Tavistock Hospital

These roads merge into each other and comprises of detached or semi-detached Italianate villas of the 1850s and 1860s. They are situated along the raised valley sides and at the same level of the top of the viaduct that seems to appear to join at this point. This elevated position enhances the architectural aesthetic.

These buildings tend to be stuccoed, with classical details such as sash windows and panelled front doors. The buildings are set within large verdant gardens, bounded by stone walls and ornamental ironwork. There are many entrances for driveways, however on the whole they retain features such as traditional gateposts.

Watts Road



See Appendix 1.

## End to end statues

Includes these streets;

- Plymouth Road
- Canal Road

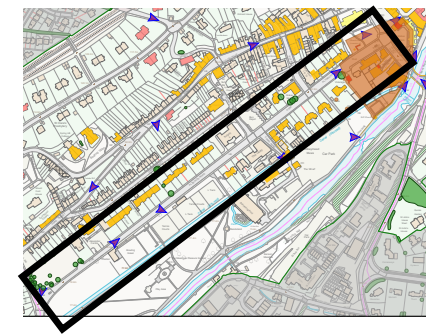
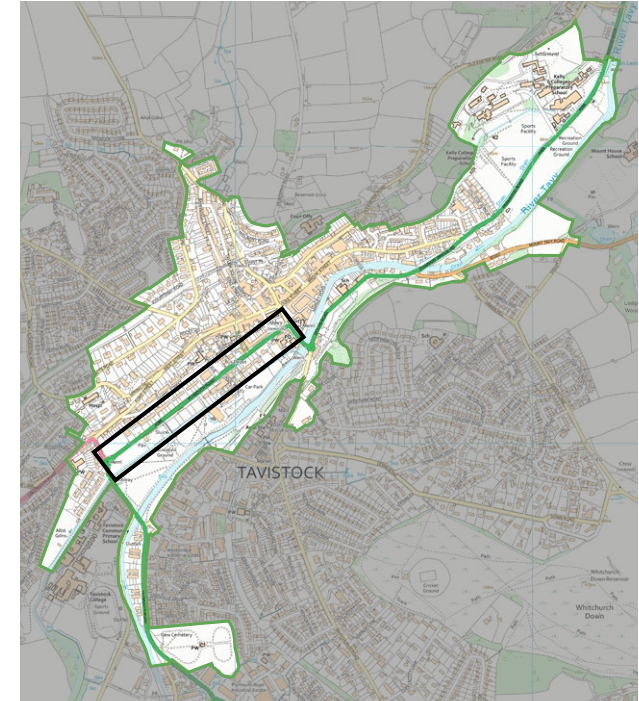
It could easily be defined by the very busy A386, but this wide straight road is framed by high status villas and semi-detached houses dating to the 1840s onwards, with Gothic details such as casement windows protected by drip moulds, and gables facing the street. It is further enhanced by traditional stone boundary walls and mature trees. They provide a clear definition between public and private spaces.

There are many prominent historic buildings, that form a mixture of residential and commercial. There are some modern developments that have crept in. Some are unsympathetic in style and material to the historic context in which they sit.

It has special interest by virtue of the two statues at each end. At the Western end is the memorial to Sir Frances Drake to the East is The statue of the 7th Earl of Bedford.



Sir Francis Drake Statue and Fitzford Gatehouse



See Appendix 1.

# Green Heart

Includes these streets;

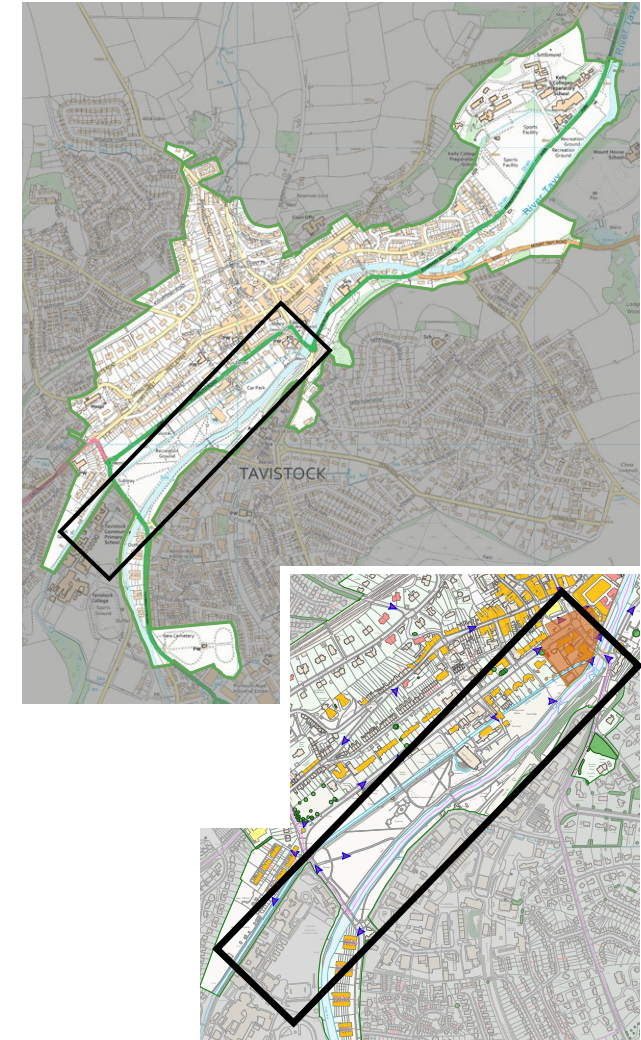
- The Meadows Public Park
- River Tavy
- Benson's Meadow

This is a wide green public space full of mature trees that sits alongside the principal roads. It is located along the valley floor, providing a level space for the public to enjoy. It is within easy access from the main shopping zones and bounded by several public car parks.

It follows the linear route of the River Tavy and the Canal and is a pedestrian route that is away from the edge of the busy roads.



The Meadows Public Park from Plymouth Road



See Appendix 1.

## Ecclesiastical mix

Includes these streets;

- St Mary Magdalene Church
- Bedford Cottages
- Plymouth Road Cemetery

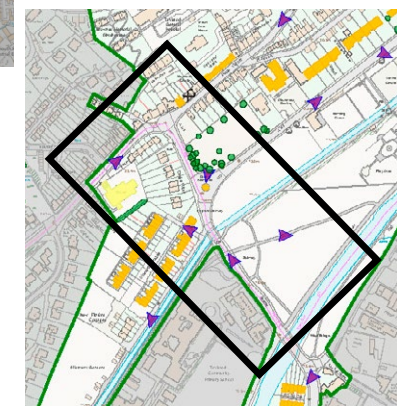
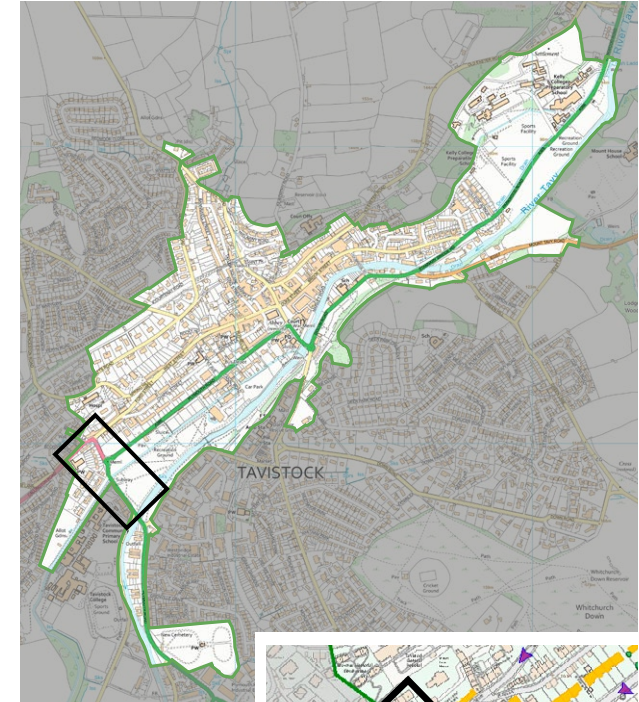
This is a more intimate area that provides a strong contrast between the dominating church and the huddle of terraced Bedford Cottages situated alongside it. It is constrained by roads on most sides and the canal to the south. The spaces between continue the green corridor of this valley. Boundary walls are present but are not as defined as other areas.



Route south over canal and River Tavy



Bedford Cottages lower left in aerial view



See Appendix 1.

# Shopping clusters

Includes these streets;

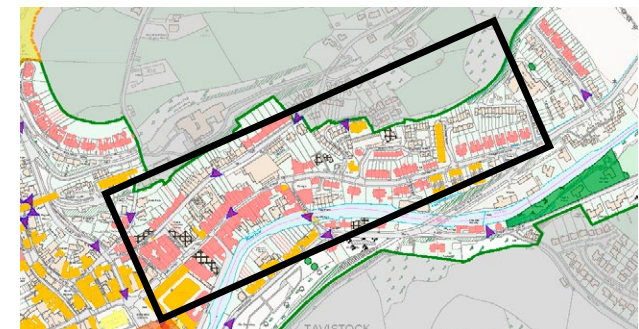
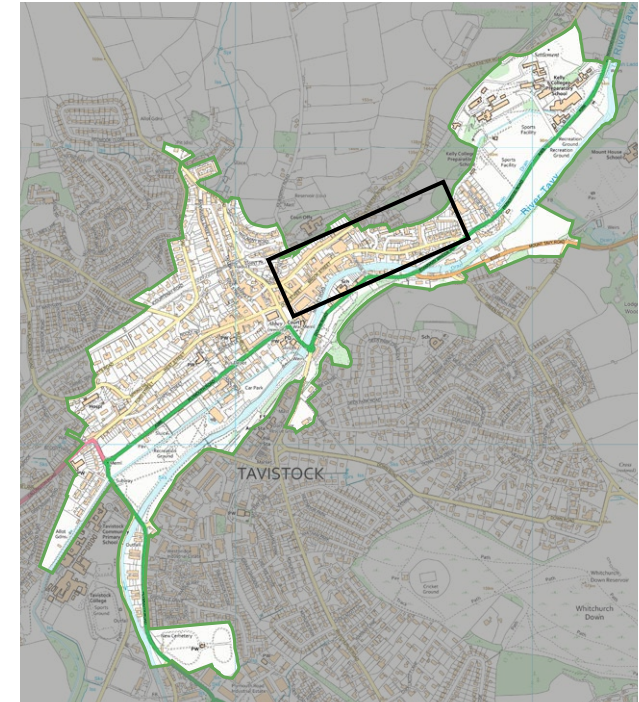
- Duke Street
- Brook Street
- Parkwood Road
- Old Exeter Road

This is the Eastern half of the principal shopping streets, that retain the traditional, well detailed

shopfronts. They are mainly late 19th century. They link together, some have passageways that reveal courtyards of smaller specialist shops. They follow a linear pattern on the side of valley, which restricts viewpoints. The roads are sufficiently wide enough to allow these tall buildings to be appreciated in context.



Dated 1860. Bedford estate purpose built row of shops, Duke Street



See Appendix 1.



## River valley route

Includes these streets;

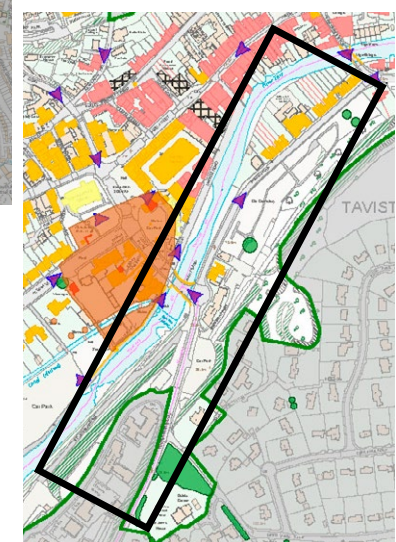
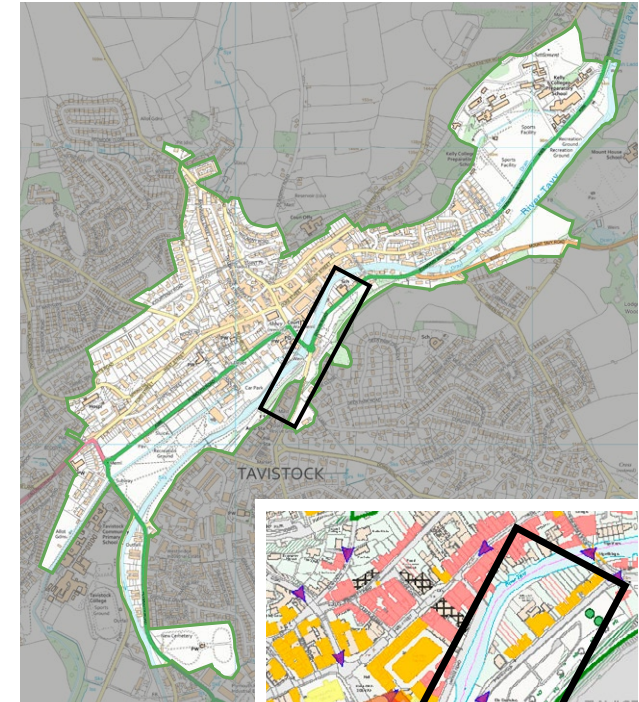
- Dolvin Road
- The cemetery
- Whitchurch Road

Another principal route dominated by the main road. It follows the river through the valley. There is a mix of building types, however some reflect the local vernacular by the materials used. Brick was used sparingly because it mostly

had to be imported and because stone was readily available from quarries owned by the Bedford estate. There is some use of the locally made buff coloured brick, more often used for dressings such as lintels or quoins. However, only about 20 buildings made completely from brick remain, including the Bedford Cottages in Dolvin Road. The Dolvin Road cottages and Bedford chimneys are most likely from Rumleigh brick works on the Tamar.



Bedford Cottages,  
Dolvin Road



See Appendix 1.

# Solitary presence

Includes these streets;

- Kelly College

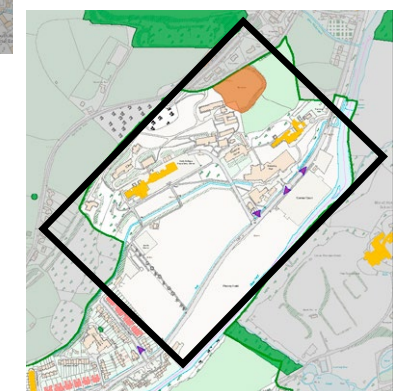
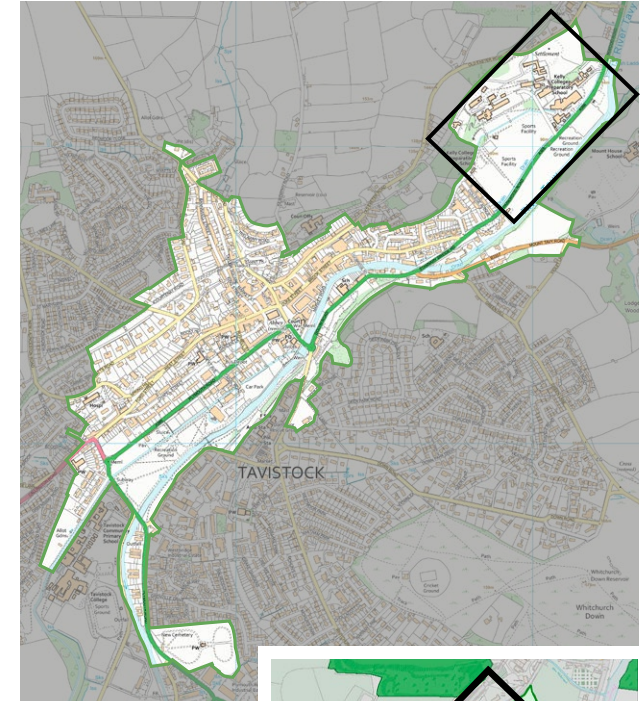
This is significant by virtue of its architectural interest that is enhanced by its setting. This building was purpose built as a school in the Gothic Revival style. It was built of Hurdwick stone with buff limestone bands, with gabled slate roofs. Its elongated plan form sits on an elevated side of the valley that adds to the drama of this imposing grouping of buildings. It acts as a guardian between the eastern side of the town and the edge of Dartmoor National Park.



Main entrance from A386



View West along A386 towards town centre



See Appendix 1.

## Model cottages

Includes these streets;

- Bedford Cottages

See Appendix 1.

They are worthy of special recognition for their special interest. The model cottages of the 1840 to 1860s – modest but well thought out cottages which demonstrated the Estate's commitment to improving the housing of its

workers. Initially built in brick then built in rubble stone, sometimes rendered and painted white. Granite details, such as the characteristic porches with their splayed corners, provide a cohesive and recognisable form. Multi-paned casement windows and boarded doors with strip moulds were the original details but many have unfortunately been changed. Later Bedford Cottages in Trelawny Road are rendered with brick details. These cottages also had other notable features such as wash houses, piggeries and small yards.



Bedford Cottages, Parkwood Road

## Soundscape

The noisy traffic masks the sound of the rushing river in many areas, as do the large buildings. However, it can be enjoyed most as a pedestrian in the greener spaces that also encourage the chirping birds that hide amongst the rustling branches of the trees overhead. The life within the shops can be caught through open doorways and paths.



Fast flowing River Tavy

## 9. Streets and open spaces, parks, gardens and trees

Tavistock is defined by the attractive town squares at its centre (Bedford Square and Abbey Place) and by the broad “set piece” of Plymouth Road which leads off these squares. The construction of Plymouth Road has meant that the 18th century ground floor level of the Bedford Hotel is now in the basement. The survival of much of the 19th century granite paving is of great importance to the street scene. The adjoining green space and trees of the churchyard, and the historic church, add to the spacious character.

The south, Abbey Bridge leads over the River Tavy and the rushing water, mature trees, and riverside walks are pleasant features. The river flows through the town and from this point a riverside walk on either side of the setting. These lead down to Benson’s meadow on the south side of the river, and to the Meadows on the northside.

The Meadows – is a large public park containing a number of tennis courts, bowling greens, a playground, a Leisure Centre and an advantageously concealed large car park which serves the whole town. The Tavistock Canal flows through the park too. Overall, it provides Tavistock with its most notable open verdant space.

The wharf side area at the southern end of Canal Road is another open space which still retains an industrial character due to the nearby canal and the survival of buildings associated with the canal trade.

Bank Square, in the former market area between King Street and Market Street. This quite small, informal space is contained by both modern and historic buildings and is dominated by car parking. It is now in urgent need if improvements, such as new paving, planning and street furniture.

Front gardens, such as those found in Plymouth Road, Watts Road, and at Fitzford Cottages and Westbridge Cottages, These private front gardens make an important contribution to the character of the adjoining streets. The ornamental iron railings and gates remain in many places but is vulnerable to cumulative loss.

In the principal shopping streets there are well designed street furniture and way signage made from traditional methods and materials such as iron casting. They are modern additions that make a positive contribution to the character of the area.



Public car park, Canal Road

## Trees

Trees, both young and more mature, hedges and shrubbery all make a very important contribution to the conservation area in many locations.

The most significant tree groups in and around the conservation area are:

- In St. Eustachius Churchyard and around Abbey Place and next to the river
- Along Dolvin Road, where they provide a backdrop to the cemetery.
- Either side of the River Tavy, where they shade some of the riverside walks and bring a rural quality to the town centre
- In the Meadows, especially when viewed from Plymouth Road
- In private gardens, such as in Watts Road.

On the edges of the conservation area, such as behind Trelawny Road, where the town meets the countryside.

**Plymouth Road**





## 10. Setting and views

Heritage assets can gain significance from their associations with their setting, whilst views within or outside the Conservation Area can form an important way in which its significance is experienced and appreciated. It is worth noting that setting may not be limited by specific measured distances or natural barriers, such as hedges.



Above: View south down Russell Street. Left: View west from former railway viaduct

### Setting

The topography of the town and the way it nestles within a valley constrain certain views, mostly out of the town. The distinctive local stone ties it to its setting of Dartmoor.

Other focal points of significance are:

- Abbey Bridge and Vigo Bridge, both important in terms of appreciating the River Tavy.
- The statue of Sir Francis Drake at the western end of Plymouth Road, defining the start of the Bedford “new town”.
- The Reeve, a part of West Street which is a significant location in Tavistock’s history – this widened and then narrows, and is surrounded by mainly historic buildings.
- Kelly College and its immediate setting.
- The railway viaduct over Drake Road.

## Views and vistas

The most important views across the conservation area can be seen from northern parts of the conservation area looking east towards Dartmoor or southwards over the town to the wooded hillside opposite. There are also longer views in a south westerly direction following the line of the River Tavy. The best vantage point is undoubtedly the railway viaduct above Bannawell Street, although there are also good views from the south sides of West Street and from Old Exeter Road where, in both cases, there are no buildings due to the steep drop in ground level.

These views, over the rooftops of Tavistock, must be preserved and existing roofs and their traditional materials protected.

Views along the River Tavy from each of the four bridges – Stannary, Vigo, Abbey and West Bridge – are also important, providing Tavistock with one of its defining characteristics. Shorter views at various locations along the canal are also of note, particularly fronting Fitzford Cottages.



**Top left: Abbey walk west by River Tavy. Bottom left: View east to Dartmoor National Park A386. Right: View from bridge into Bedford Square.**

There are other shorter views along streets towards focal buildings, perhaps more correctly referred to as “vistas” as they are closed by building. In the case of the Bedford Square area, they are clearly contrived.

# 11. Boundary Review

## Proposed extension area

Some of the streets may have been laid out by the ecclesiastical authorities in an orderly way to provide houses with burgage plots behind, however because of the steep topography it limited the availability of agricultural plots or domestic for home use. The historic allotments that sit above the Northern edge of the town continue to fulfil the need for local residents to have sufficient space to grow home produce. It is bounded by an old quarry site and together are intrinsic to the historic interest of the town and the way people live.

It retains the mature green edge to the town and defines the edge of the historic settlement boundary. This proposal seeks to retain the cultural significance of this area, the value of it as a green space and the importance of its community use.



**Above: proposed green area seen from Butcher Park Hill.  
Left: proposed green area at top of building line.**



# Part Two – The Management Plan



# 1. Introduction to The Management Plan

The management plan sets out to review the condition by surveying of the conservation area and identifying threats and opportunities that can be developed into a management plan that is specific to the area's needs.

In turn, this can channel development to conserve the conservations area's special qualities. The proposals can benefit both economic challenges and pressures from development to promote positive change.

Proposals will take the form of mid to long term strategies. Aspects of control will be addressed from monitoring change to formulating strategies, buildings at risk, Article 4 directions, trees, biodiversity, the public realm, energy efficiency in historic buildings including retrofitting, mitigating the effects of climate change in the historic environment, renewable energy generation, traditional shop design, use of colour.



Public realm features, Market Street

## 2. SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

Location. Architectural styles.  
Good condition of buildings.  
Views. Blue plaques and trail.  
Building at Risk Register.  
Local materials. Landscape.

- **Location** – the proximity to outstanding countryside including the Tamar valley AONB and the Dartmoor National Park.
- **Architecture** – there are distinct architectural styles. Each retain characterful features, that are reflected in the quality of their sympathetic materials and craftsmanship. They also have a positive impact on their setting.
- **Building condition** – in general a high level of building maintenance and repair throughout this setting. This not only adds value to the properties but contribute to their energy performance.
- **Views** – as experienced from within the town or along the river valley. They vary from far reaching distant views to intimately framed. There is an iconic high level viewpoint from the viaduct of the historic roofscape.
- **Tavistock's Blue Plaques & Trails** – The Blue Plaques are accompanied by an informative guide. These include monastic sites, public buildings, former industrial buildings, local pubs and open spaces.
- **Buildings at Risk Register** – provides information on neglected listed buildings in the district and actively seeks to secure the building's future.
- **Local materials** – such as granite that is also used extensively for lintels, quoins and other details.
- **Verdant setting** and mature trees and the natural landscape overall.
- **Street furniture** – well-designed street furniture made from traditional materials.

Traditional materials, local stone, different finishes



## Weaknesses

Car parks. Modern surfaces. Loss of traditional shopfronts. Lack of weed control on pavements. Signage clutter. Vacant building sites.

- **Car Parks** – the pressure of vehicles in a town with historic paths established over centuries, remains at odds in this historic context.
- The cumulative impact of modern surface treatments against the vernacular materials, adds to loss of character.
- **Shopfronts** – loss of traditional features, unsympathetic materials and signage create a negative impact on the character of the area.
- **Weeds** – regular maintenance of public and private areas to suppress weed growth is good practice and more cost effective. It also slows deterioration and encourages civic pride.
- **Signage** – greater consideration should be for the immediate and greater context when displaying any signs. It can soon become too cluttered.
- **Vacant building sites** – development sites that do not complete approved schemes within a reasonable timeframe, leaving sites vulnerable.



## Opportunities

Art installations/artefacts in the public realm. Traffic through town. Cooling buildings. Bedford Cottages. Visitor experience.

- **Public Art** – an ordered approach would add a positive effect on the public realm experience.
- **Town Traffic** – changes to road/pavement designs to slow traffic through the town & offer pedestrian priority in more areas in addition to existing designs already in use.
- **Trees** – further work is needed to plot and record the trees that are significant to the conservation area.
- **Overheating & cooling of buildings** – economic and quick fix solutions for shading overheating buildings e.g. tinted or reflective films, traditional awnings to shops, considered planting, lighter colour external walls.
- **Bedford Cottages** – devise a proactive strategy to support the homeowners and for the long-term preservation of the cottages.
- **Visitor experience** – the implementation of improved interpretation and visitor orientation for the town and the WHS.

**Gradual loss of traditional shopfront features**

## Threats

Incremental loss. External finishes. Archaeology. Environmental climate change. Green spaces between buildings. Painted buildings. Vulnerable buildings. Empty shops. Building maintenance. Loss of vernacular/traditional materials. Loss of features e.g. metal railings, gateways, steps. Unsympathetic materials e.g. Upvc & tarmac. Loss of trees. Unsympathetic architectural features. Bedford Cottages. Traffic & Parking. Human resources.



- **Incremental loss** – heritage features and traditional materials are often irreplaceable. This creates a negative cumulative impact on the character of the historic built environment. Re-using materials are good practice.
- **External finishes** – the use of unsympathetic materials over traditional construction such as cement render, man-made boarding, and other non-breathable materials.
- **Archaeology** – the potential for permanent loss of any buried archaeology. Consideration for any impact and methodology for investigations should be set at the very beginning of any project.

**Lack of maintenance can cause incremental harm to buildings**

- **Environmental Climate Change** – mitigating the effects of flooding, lightning strikes, overheating, through practical measures to improve building performance, such as flood gates to doors & vents, non-return valves, using traditional materials e.g. hydraulic lime mortars.
- **Green Spaces between buildings** – greater value to be placed for the retention of all green spaces either public or private to all the pressures of development. This would also include traditional boundaries, gateways, surfaces, and other historic features.
- **Masonry Colours** – despite the vast range of building colours, consideration should be given against the use of overly bold, stronger colours, as they are more likely to distract within key views and all the more difficult to decorate over.
- **Vulnerable Buildings** – a proactive and joint working approach, where possible, to the repair and maintenance of identified failing buildings. Any retrofit measures would also be a well-timed approach.
- **Empty Shops** – where shops are empty for any period, a creative, but temporary display would contribute to an active street scene. This could be incorporated into promoting the town's broader offerings and working with local schools.

- **Annual Building Maintenance** – no building is maintenance free. Building condition and its energy performance are inter-related. Basic tasks such as clearing gutters and downpipes can have huge benefits, however failure to do these regular tasks causes damage leading to costly and unnecessary repairs.
- **Trees** – the retention of mature trees and the succession planting of new trees, is crucial to retaining the character of the area. Regular inspection of the trees and permanent protection of the root growth area is paramount.
- **Unsympathetic architectural features** – such as balconies, particularly where they are on principle elevations and seen in important views.
- **Bedford Cottages** – many have suffered from poor quality and often unauthorised alterations and need to be brought into more positive management.
- **Traffic management & parking** – the levels of vehicle emissions, pedestrian safety and the pressures for sufficient parking throughout the year and during main events.
- **Human resources** – loss of staff and heritage skills.

**Elevations with unsympathetic architectural modern features**



## Managing Change Recommendations

Conservation Areas are not immune from change but it is important that change preserves and enhances them.

The following management actions set out the required considerations for planning in the Conservation Area. This should also be the approach that all custodians should take.

### Materials

In the first instance the original, historic fabric should be retained or at least securely stored for re-use. Natural construction materials such as stone, slate, timber and lime mortars are actively encouraged, where man made alternatives such as Upvc and man-made external finishes, are considered to be unsympathetic. Traditional ironwork can be found throughout e.g. the iron railings and gates.

Where there is a requirement for natural stone, it is recommended that where possible, it is sourced from local quarries or from reclamation. It should match the local coursing.

Note: Upvc windows. Their aesthetic character and operational differences make them unsuitable for historic buildings. The weaker components in their frames tend to make them thicker than timber frames. This along with

the strips of plastic used for glazing bars that imitate those on traditional windows, can have a significant negative impact on the appearance and character of not only the buildings, but the area too. They are difficult to repair and recycle.

### Public Realm

Any changes or additional features should consider the historic context, the vernacular materials and quality of craftsmanship. Any replacement should not be with modern alternatives. Re-use of materials, including approved lime mortars, would be a best practice solution. This is relevant but not exclusive to; street furniture, surfaces (e.g. granite) and way finding. Exemplar features of excellence are those created by the famous sculptor Peter Randall-Page.

### Changes of use

The impacts of changes of use have significant external impacts, new uses should retain the integrity of the building and its appearance. Waste and recycling should be discreetly located as should parking (if appropriate). Windows and other fenestration treatments to be appropriate in the size, style and design.

### External lighting

Careful consideration of the impact of lighting designs on the natural environment. Fixing

through mortar joints is advised rather than causing permanent damage by fixing holes to historic built fabric.

### Alterations and extensions to buildings

Need to be well designed and retain the historic interests of the building and its setting. It should be sympathetic and subservient in design in order to minimise the impact.

The choice of materials will be critically important and make a positive contribution to not only the host building but also its setting. Such changes should seek to remove or improve previous additions such as the replacement unsympathetic Upvc windows and porches. The impact of the wider conservation area and the street scape must be considered.

Some of the character area may be more susceptible to change than others. Where there are front gardens or historic boundary treatments, their loss for parking spaces would be discouraged.

Principle elevations and roofs should be retained without modern additions such as roof lanterns, balconies, decks and any other external fixings such as satellite dishes, utility/charging boxes, etc.

## Shop fronts

Changes to shop front must retain the traditional layout and fenestration. Signage should retain any historic panels, with any illumination fixed externally. Care should be taken to hide any cabling. This could be colour matched to the elevation. It is important to consider the continual occupation and use of upper floors too.

## Enforcement

The impact of poorly considered changes to properties and their settings that happen without planning or listed building consent, can be significant.

A proactive and proportionate approach is required through joint working with heritage and compliance officers in order to establish key actions to be investigated.

## Vulnerable Buildings

**(for list refer to Appendix 3)**

These are buildings that are found to be either failing through long term lack of maintenance or could be long term renovation projects that have stalled. There are many reasons why, but the concern is for the building itself and its potential for harm to the public realm.

# Technology and Innovation

## Electric Vehicle Charge Points.

- **Car parks** – where charging points are introduced, they should be sensitive sited, designed to preserve or enhance the area, be well and appropriately designed and discrete.
- **On street parking** – they should be located in less sensitive areas and away from key features, area and thoroughfares. To be discrete, be sensitively sited and designed to preserve or enhance the area.
- **Residential properties** – they should be located away from front and prominent elevations, concealed from view, be sensitively sited and not fixed to any historic fabric. To be designed to preserve the Conservation Area and appropriately designed.

Note: hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles can offer alternative zero emission transport solutions.

## Solar Panels

Panels may well not be appropriate in many part of the area due to their impact on the wider character area. Where they are proposed, they should be sympathetic to its setting and limited in scale away from key vantage points. Opportunities should be explored for these on secondary building and ground mounted to reduce their impact. Panel design will be important to reduce their impact and stop glare. An exemplar of integrated PV on an unlisted historic building is Abbey surgery.

## Air source heat pumps

These should be discreetly located away from principle and key elevations and spaces which are viewed from wider vantage points.

## Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

Users can specify their desired location, pick-up and drop-off times through the use of online platforms. It could provide alternative, viable solutions to fixed route bus services, by extending service coverage and connectivity.



### 3. Management Plan Strategy

Recommendation	Task	Resources	Timescale - Short / Medium / Long	Notes	Monitoring
<b>Conservation Area</b>	Undertake full review of Conservation Area	WD	Long	Alternate every 5 years	Updated Appraisal & Management Plan
	Undertake interim review of Conservation Area	WD	Long	Every 5 years	Survey & interim report.
	Develop process for communities to help deliver reviews, including training & monitoring.	WD	Long		Training events. Monitoring reports.
	Produce Shopfront guidance	WD	Short/Medium	Also as supporting document for any new JLP or including in Local Design Code.	Completed guidance document.
<b>Vulnerable Buildings</b> (See Appendix 3)	Monitor failing buildings & seek to bring back to full use.	WD. Stakeholder proactive working group	Short/Medium	Case officer as main point of contact.	Case monitoring Report with sensitive data security.
<b>Buildings at Risk Register</b>	Review list and include key ones identified through appraisal	WD	Medium	Annual review	Updated list on council website
<b>Retrofit</b>	Produce guidance notes & signpost to Historic England	WD	Short/Medium	Opportunities for training/sharing knowledge. Exemplars	Publish on Council website











Recommendation	Task	Resources	Timescale - Short / Medium / Long	Notes	Monitoring
<b>Climate Change</b>	Produce guidance notes & signpost to Historic England	WD	Short/Medium	Opportunities for training/sharing knowledge. Exemplars	Publish on Council website
<b>Renewable Energy Historic Buildings</b>	Produce guidance notes & signpost to Historic England	WD	Short/Medium	Opportunities for training/sharing knowledge. Exemplars.	Publish on Council website
<b>Trees</b>	Regular health check review of all mature trees & shrubs.  Recommendations to add more TPOs	WD	Medium	Opportunities for training/sharing knowledge, internally or with external groups.	Publish on Council website
<b>Article 4 Directions</b>	Assess scope of protection to principle roofs and elevations.	WD	Medium	Recommendations to limit renewable energy equipment and boundary removal.	Monitor and review reports. Make guidance available for homeowners.
<b>Enforcement</b>	Strategy & process	WD various teams	Medium	A proactive and proportionate approach is required through joint working with heritage and compliance officers in order to establish key actions to be investigated.	Publish on Council website, subject to date security. Make available to Hub.

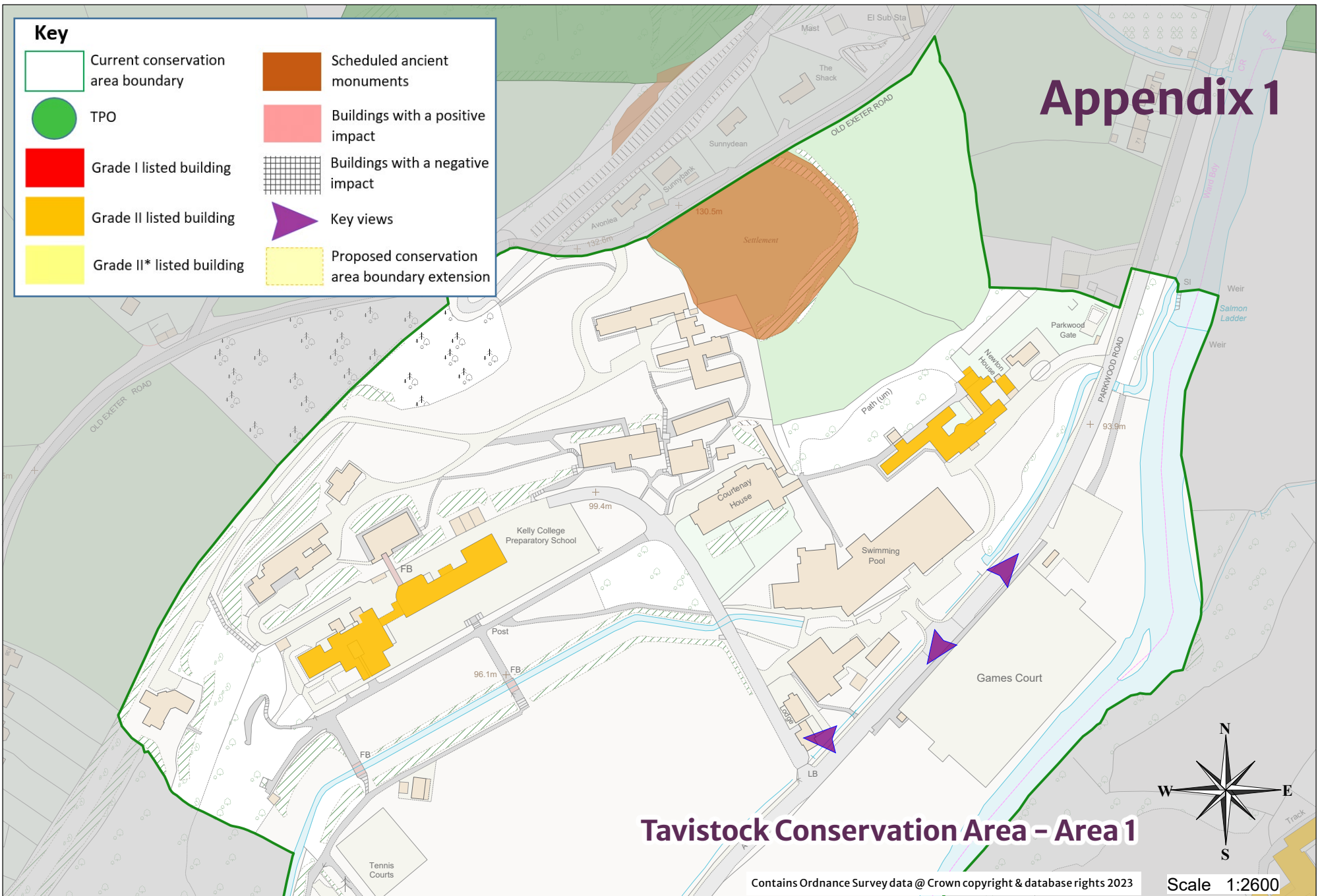
## External Partners

Recommendation	Task	Resources	Timescale - Short / Medium / Long	Notes	Monitoring
<b>Bedford Cottages</b>	Proactive heritage based solutions & enforcement strategy.	WD	Short/Medium	Opportunities for positive close partnership working with homeowners and officers.	Monitor and review reports. Legislative interventions. Track progress.
<b>Conservation Area</b>	Maintenance of buildings	Local. Group. Chamber of commerce.	Short	Annual – Set specific week & community engagement	Photographic record & report.
	Maintenance of public realm	Town/parish councils	Short	Annual – Log and audit of assets	Maintenance log book.
	Refresh Heritage trails & plaques	Town/parish councils	Long	Every 5 years & condition survey	Maintenance record.
<b>Ecclesiastical</b>	Liaison with all exemption faiths	WD, Diocese of Exeter, Methodist, others.	Medium/Long	Positive & proactive continual liaison.	Feedback through team meetings.
<b>Utility Companies</b>	Liaison with utilities. Recommendations for buried cables as opposed to overhead installations & elec generation.	WD various teams. Devon County Highways. County Archaeology.	Short/Medium	Seek support from all and to create a standard best practice.	Report to councillors. Publish on council website. County wide comms.
<b>Communications Companies</b>	Liaison for recommendations for siting of comms equipment.	WD various teams. Devon County Highways. County Archaeology.	Short/Medium	Seek support from all and to create a standard best practice.	Report to councillors. Publish on council website. County wide comms.

# Appendix 1

**Key**

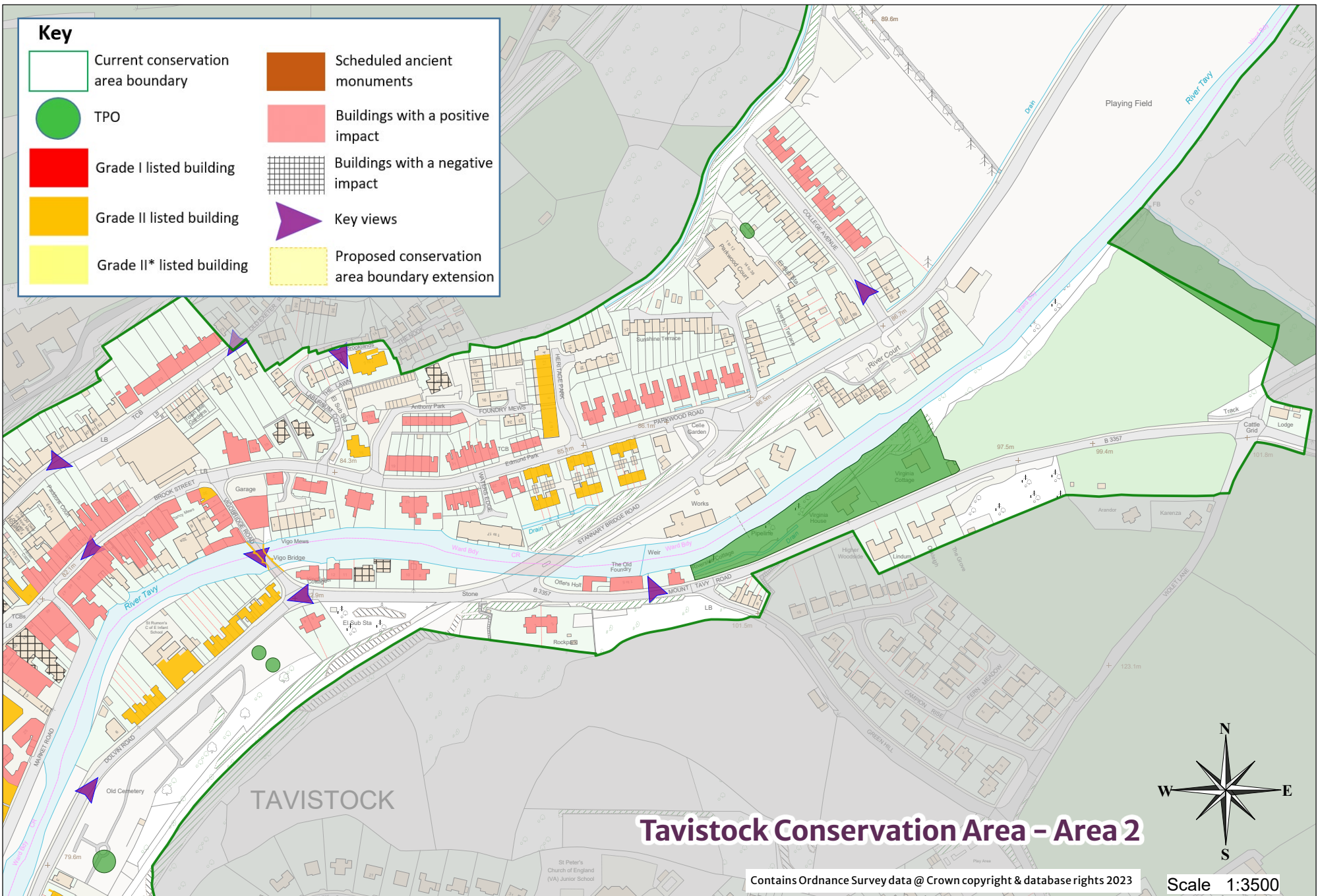
	Current conservation area boundary		Scheduled ancient monuments
	TPO		Buildings with a positive impact
	Grade I listed building		Buildings with a negative impact
	Grade II listed building		Key views
	Grade II* listed building		Proposed conservation area boundary extension



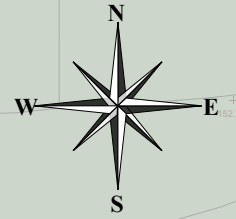
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Scale 1:2600

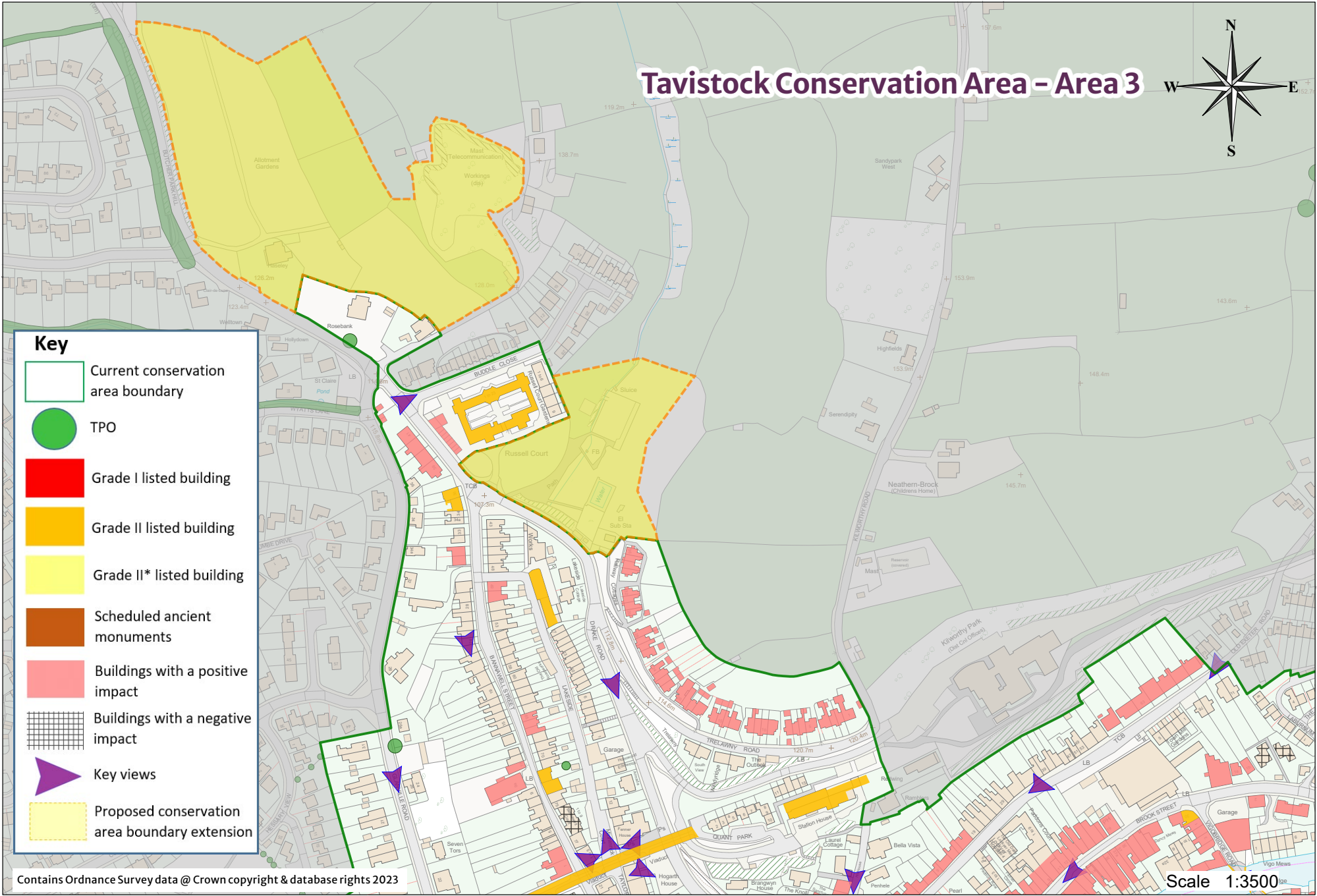


# Tavistock Conservation Area - Area 3



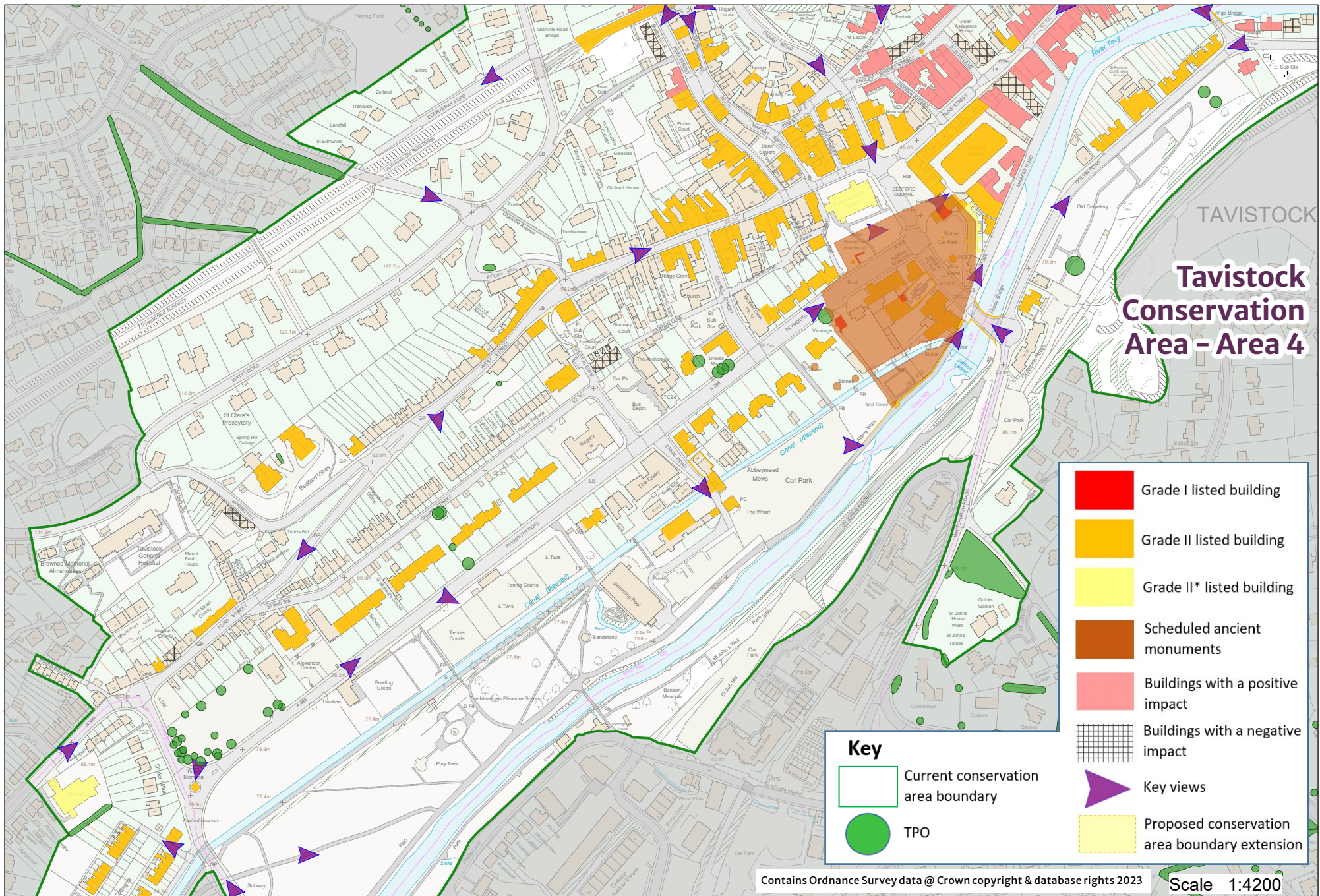
**Key**

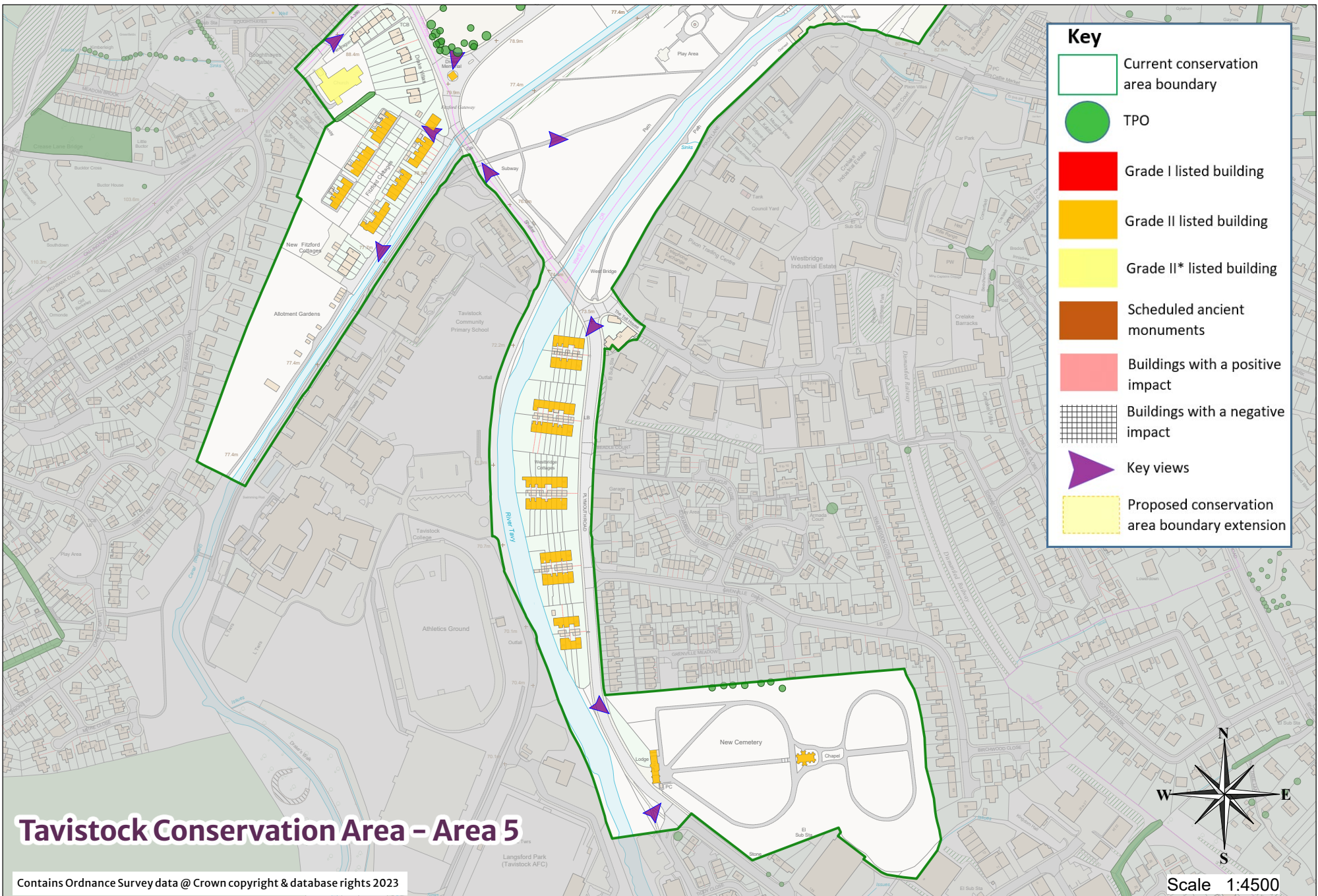
- Current conservation area boundary
- TPO
- Grade I listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Grade II\* listed building
- Scheduled ancient monuments
- Buildings with a positive impact
- Buildings with a negative impact
- Key views
- Proposed conservation area boundary extension



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Scale 1:3500







## Appendix 2

### Locally Important historic buildings

Non designated historic buildings within the Conservation Area are buildings or structures which fall below the designation of national context, however are nevertheless of local interest by virtue of their date, architectural design, traditional materials, historical association.

It is not a statutory designation and applies no additional protection, however it highlights the importance of these special buildings. In this particular instance the assessment and recommendations can be viewed via the emerging Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan.

## Appendix 3

### Vulnerable Buildings

- **Bedford Cottages** – enforcement/design guidance.
- Future of **Police Station and Guildhall**.
- **Still House, Betsy Grimbal's Tower**.
- Archaeology in all areas.

## Appendix 4

### References

- Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- WD JLP Climate change/energy efficiency
- WD Guidance docs– Design & Barn Conversions
- West Devon Corporate Strategy Local Delivery Plan
- Colours guidance
- Retro fit
- Devon Historic Environment Record
- Historic England Advice Notes and Guidance documents.
- Second revision (of 2009) Tavistock Conservation Area & Management Plan 29 April 2014
- Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan Group, draft document. Not made.
- HMSO Revised Schedule of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Secretary of State for the Environment
- Tamara Partnership Scheme Area
- Tavistock Heritage Trust
- Tavistock Visitor Information Centre
- Tavistock Museum
- Tavistock and District Local History Society
- Tavistock Subscription Library and the Public Library

# Appendix 5

## Tavistock Town Council Historic acquisition of assets

### Background

Tavistock Town Council acquired large amounts of land and buildings in 1911 when the then Duke of Bedford disposed of much of his property in Tavistock.

Overall the Council manages some 32 properties, most let at commercial rents.

The most important buildings in their ownership are:

- Tavistock Town Hall
- Court Gate and Librarian's Cottage
- The War Memorial
- The Pannier Market, the Auction Rooms, and nos. 9-18 Duke Street
- Abbey Chapel Porch
- The Still House
- Betsy Grimbal's Tower
- St John's Well in Benson's Meadow

- The statue of the 7th Duke of Bedford in Guildhall Square
- The statue of Sir Francis Drake in Plymouth Road
- The Meadows public park
- Dolvin Road and Plymouth Road cemeteries
- The Cattle Market in Whitchurch Road
- Other smaller pockets of land in the town (including Guildhall Square and all of Market Road), and land outside Tavistock
- Tavistock Wharf was leased to West Devon Borough Council in 1987. It is the location of the Wharf Arts Centre and Meadowlands Swimming Pool complex with associated car and coach parks. The Town Council also provides Tavistock Museum with its premises in Court Gate.
- Bedford Square is owned by Devon County Council and managed on its behalf by the Town Council.

# Appendix 6

## Consultation

Information to be captured after formal public consultation.



West Devon  
Borough Council

[www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)