

Newton Ferrers Conservation Area: Summary of Special Interest

The conservation area of Newton Ferrers spreads out along the edge of Newton Creek and looks out to Noss Mayo on the opposite shore. At low tide Newton Voss links the two villages and provides pedestrian access across the creek. The views are stunning and the tidal creek provides a constantly changing outlook. Boats have always been an important part of the scene; they provided a means for fishing for centuries and are now one of the main leisure activities for local people and visitors.

The two churches at Newton and Noss are both located on high ground above the villages and face each other across the creek. Their bells create a haunting atmosphere when they strike out across the river - slightly out of synchronisation.

The conservation area is small and consists of the original small stone cottages that evolved from a cellar community established hundreds of years ago. Previous residents

would not have been so preoccupied with the views that twenty-first century people love. The cottages would have been cold, damp places with privies across the lane near the river. Now they are smart residences with well kept gardens next to the river, often with private quays.

However, there is no doubt that Newton Ferrers, whether viewed up close or from a distance, is a very attractive place: the original line of houses still dominates; but later development is typically on a much bigger scale with some very impressive homes. Further up the valley still, the houses are not so large and do not have as much surrounding ground.

The outlook from Newton Ferrers is exceptional. Noss Mayo is a wonderful place to look at and the views up and down the river must be some of the finest in England.

The seasonal transformation of the village is dramatic. In the summer, huge numbers of visitors arrive either by car or boat and the pressure on those who live in the village is enormous. However once the visitors have left, it is possible to enjoy Newton's river, its sounds and its tranquillity in their beautiful valley setting.



The Barings

Edward Charles Baring (1828-1897) bought nearby Membland Hall in 1877. He proceeded to lavish money on the property and developed many estate buildings throughout the 4000 acre estate.

The resulting architecture is distinctive in style and is mostly attributed to the office of George Devey, a prominent late Victorian architect. Traditional, local materials of slate and stone with lime mortar were used, but the buildings' design is eclectic with picturesque, pointed roof-lines, Elizabethan style chimneys, bracketed eaves and leaded windows. The buildings are often prominently situated as in Baring Kiln Quay at Newton Ferrers, and they make a unique contribution to the building stock in the area.

Edward Baring was created 1st Lord Revelstoke in 1885, he was senior partner in Baring Brothers, the merchant bankers. Baring had personal assets on a scale rarely imaginable today. His rise to fortune had been exceptional as was his dramatic financial decline in 1890, which led to the sale of Membland Estate.

Locals still refer, with respect, to the Barings and their achievements. They extended and completely changed the appearance of Membland Hall, built a new church for Noss Mayo, a post office, a school, lodges, model farms, stables and ancillary buildings, all in a short, thirteen year period of residence.



Location and Setting

The village was designated a conservation area on 23 September 1976. Newton Ferrers is 10 miles SE of Plymouth Ref: SX 548480. The population is 1100 but this increases greatly during in the summer.

The village rises steadily from the shore up the northern valley face of Newton Creek, a tributary of the River Yealm. The area forms part of the South Devon area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are no Tree Preservation Orders in the conservation area.

There have been three stages of development in the village, each progressively climbing further up the valley side: the original small rural cottages hugging the shore; early 20th century development consisting of substantial houses built on generous plots of land; and late 20th century houses higher up the slope but with less surrounding ground.

The river setting has always dominated the way the village evolved. The availability of good fishing was the original motive for early development and this was followed by related industries. A sheltered position provided boats with cover from foul weather and the same is true today, to the extent that some boat owners do not lay-up during the winter. Later development has seen a mixture of tourism, retirement homes and general residential development.

Newton Ferrers' magnetism for yachts and weekend visitors turns a quiet winter village into a place in the summer that struggles to accommodate so many cars. However, because of the overwhelming sense of tranquillity provided by the river, Newton Ferrers continues to attract increasing numbers of visitors.

Historic Development and Townscape

The first record of Newton Ferrers was the naming of the church of Newton in the Geld (tax) Roll of 984. The Domesday Book lists Newton as part of the holdings of the Valletorts of Trematon at Tamar, who for a knight's fee gave it to the Ferrers family, who had come over with William the Conqueror.

The conservation area was just a small part of the manor and before 1200 it is unlikely that a village existed along the shoreline. During the 13th century this changed. Fishing became a sideline of farmers who established cellar communities on the shore. These structures were not for living in, but comprised storage units for boats and fishing tackle. Gradually this changed and cellars became more substantial structures built of stone or cob with thatched roofs. By the 15th or 16th centuries cottages had been built on the inland side of the access lane and it is possible that this was part of a manorial development.

The village hardly changed for centuries. In 1660 some visiting surveyor or artist produced a part plan of Newton Village. Apart from the lack of scale and widths of roads, the picture is remarkably similar to that of the Tithe Map of 1840 showing the two riverside lanes with their front gardens across the road, the village cross and the houses up Newton Hill.



Newton Ferrers 1910 showing all of the conservation area

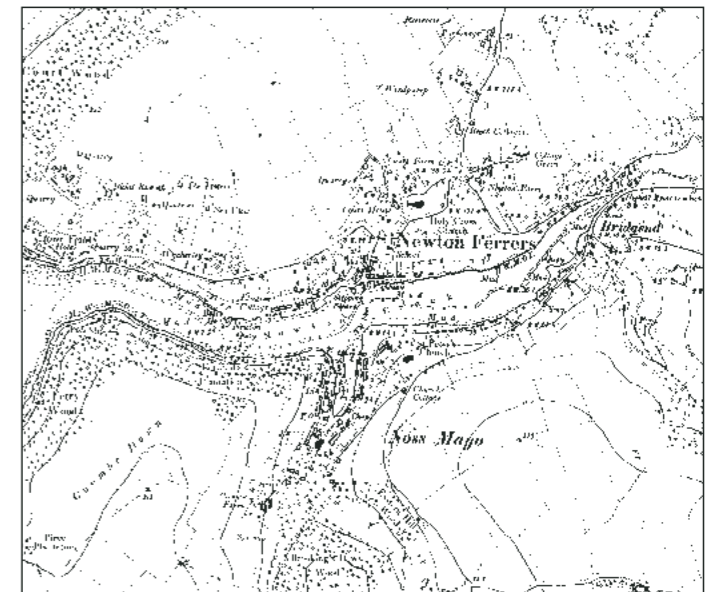


Barings Kiln Quay and views from Noss Mayo church tower

Significant development took place after 1915 following the Baring crash when large plots of land were sold off and substantial houses were built. Many of these houses have large south-facing front gardens which, when seen from a distance, give Newton an open appearance compared with the more densely built up space of Noss Mayo.

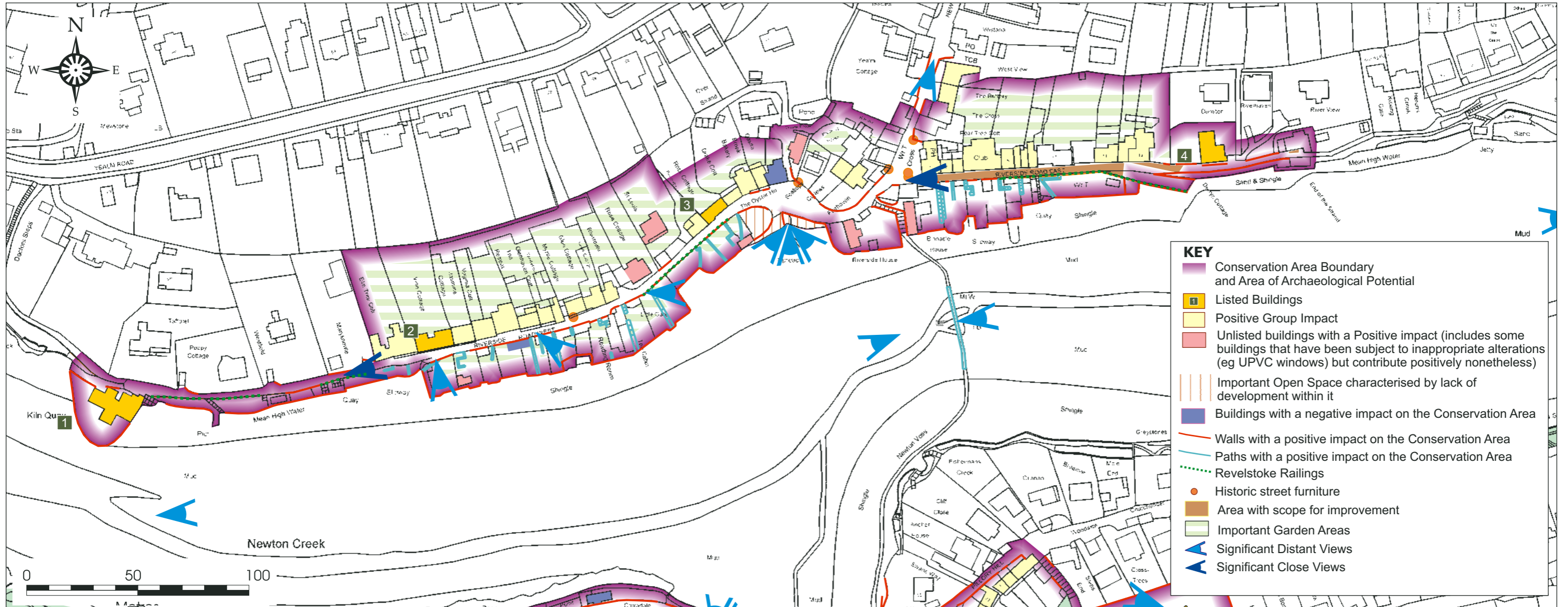
After World War Two, the pattern of life altered: shops closed, holiday houses were built and yachts proliferated. The conservation area became expensive, appealing to weekend visitors who flooded in during the summer.

Development continues to this day, although not in the conservation area where infill has left little space.



1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the village (circa 1860)

Newton Ferrers Components Map



This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Hams District Council. LA 079391/2007

Cautionary Note The formal designation of Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders and Scheduled Ancient Monuments is a continuous process so if you need to be certain that the designations shown on the Map are still correct, please check with Planning and Building Control at the District Council.



The Listed Buildings

The four listed buildings in Newton Ferrers conservation area are all located along Riverside Road. Starting at the west end, Barings Kiln Quay (1) was built in the late 19th century as a boathouse on its own quay for the Baring family and, typically of Revelstoke houses, makes a prominent statement near the end of the village. As is the case with most Revelstoke buildings, it is believed to have been designed by George Devey and displays many of

the architectural quirks associated with these buildings. The 18th century Vine Cottage (2) sits within a terrace in Riverside Road West. Although it is generously proportioned and has a certain formality with its sash windows, it retains its thatched roof. Rock



Cottage (3) retains 17th century hoodmoulds and massive front chimney stack. Derry's Cottage (4) is at the other end of the conservation area and was a large 18th century barn which was converted to two houses in the mid 1990's.



Areas with Archaeological Potential

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

The Conservation Area boundary is compact and the boundary for archaeological potential for Newton Ferrers has been drawn around a much greater area. This is not unusual with archaeology: such untapped areas, once investigated, can provide pointers in a particular direction. This is the case at Newton Ferrers and when resources allow, further investigative work will take place.

Prehistoric and Roman Newton Ferrers

There is a very small amount of evidence of prehistoric activity in the Newton Ferrers area.

This amounts to a few worked flint flakes found approximately two to three km. to the north-east of the village centre. One Roman coin "of Nero" was mentioned in 1892 as being found "in the Parish" of Newton Ferrers.

As the area is closely linked to the Yealm Estuary, there may be potential for remains of maritime craft and other archaeological remains of any date, as well as palaeoenvironmental potential.

Medieval Newton Ferrers

Within the Conservation Area, medieval monuments include a socket stone of a cross situated in the centre of the village, as well as a bee bole (a recess in a wall in which a bee skep or beehive was placed) at Myrtle Cottage on Riverside Road West.

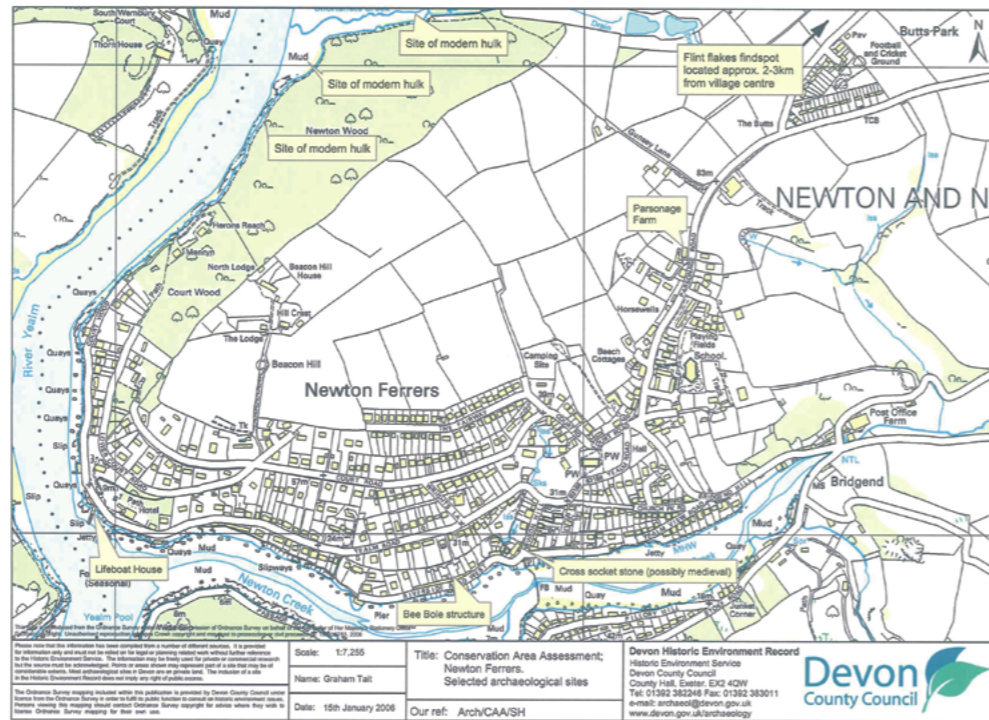
Post Medieval and Modern Newton Ferrers

Many of the 17th, 18th and 19th century houses of historic interest in the village have been covered elsewhere.

Three modern hulks almost fully submerged in mud are noted on the Historic Environment Record on the bank of the River Yealm. There is potential for submerged archaeology to exist in these tidal and intertidal zones.

Sites with Statutory Protection

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Conservation Area. Newton Ferrers church (Holy Cross) is a Grade 1 Listed Building, with 19th century tombe chests, churchyard gateway and lych gate also listed.



Historic Landscape

The historic landscape characterisation shows the historic core of Newton Ferrers as an area similar to the conservation area, with modern settlement occurring uphill to the north of this area.

To the north of the village, the historic landscape character is dominated by "barton fields". These are relatively large, regular enclosures that appear to have been laid out between 15th and 18th centuries. Some curving boundaries may follow earlier divisions in the pre-existing medieval fields.

To the west there are more enclosures of post-medieval date, fields that were laid out in the 18th and 19th centuries, commonly defined by having many surveyed dead-straight field boundaries.

Planning Implications

Any development within or adjacent to the historic core of Newton Ferrers will be subject to either predetermination archaeological investigation or PPG16 planning condition. The level of archaeological mitigation will depend upon the nature, extent and location of the development as well as previous disturbance to the site

Community Involvement in the Preparation of this Appraisal and Management Plan

This appraisal has been produced with the involvement of the community from the earliest stages; views were sought from the children of the Primary School and the households of the village. Once the Draft Appraisal was complete, residents were invited to comment at a public exhibition. Many of the findings are shown in the Management Plan which accompanies this appraisal.

Other Buildings and Structures of Special Interest

Although there are only four listed buildings in the conservation area, there are several other structures that warrant a mention.

Two of these have been built or altered fairly recently: Willow Brook was built in 1977 and won The Arnold Sayers Award from Devon Conservation Forum. It has been cleverly designed on a difficult site and utilises local material; Riverside House has been significantly altered in the last ten years and contributes to the conservation area having been re-designed with traditional windows and superior slate roof.

Several of the cottages at Newton Ferrers are important because of their group value. Both Riverside Road West and East have groups marked yellow on the main map. Some cottages in this category have unfortunate replacement UPVC windows and doors, but have been included as, from a distance, they still make a positive contribution to the group - usually because the original roofline is unaltered.

Rose Cottage dates from the early 19th century and has simply planted borders lining a path sloping down to the creek. Surrounding gardens have become more contemporary, introducing hard landscaping and smart garden buildings. Their aesthetic appeal to tourists helps make this a busy road in the summer.



Re-designed house



Award winning house



Rose Cottage with riverside garden



Group value



Contemporary hard landscaping

Activities and prevailing uses

The river has always governed life at Newton. At first it provided fish but as a result of the good fishing, other related employment such as net making, boat repairs, fish preparation and fish transportation developed.

Life would have been isolated and hard and the narrow strips of ground at the back and front of the original cottages were vital for survival. Photos of the village are evocative of poverty that was common at that time; even photos of the 50's convey a basic standard of living, but families are apparent and children very visible.

Fishing was exceptionally good until World War Two, but catches gradually waned and visitor numbers increased. Throughout the 60's and 70's more houses were built, mobility and affluence increased and Newton Ferrers became more accessible and popular.

As a result, local people who have lived in the village all their lives find themselves owning a very valuable home. They feel concerned for the village, fearing that the trends toward increasing affluence and a retired population will continue.



Riverside Road West



Riverside Road West

Building Qualities & Materials

Building materials were available locally and the original cottages are built from stone rubble quarried nearby; they had slate or thatch roofs. The local slate was of inferior quality and the original roofs have been replaced with various forms of slate, or imitations thereof. Most of the stone has been roughcast and painted and the two surviving thatched buildings are listed.

Unfortunately over a quarter of the windows in the conservation area are of UPVC. Some are early examples of this material and are very obviously inappropriate for the building and the area. Preference for traditional fenestration is returning, however advice is given by the District Council, whose Supplementary Planning Document 'New Work in Conservation Areas' provides guidance on appropriate window types.

Most of the spaces between the original cottages have been infilled. This has occurred especially around The Oyster House and this adds variation to the area.

The walls at Newton Ferrers are usually low but often have the plain, square sectioned, single bar, Revelstoke Railings on top. This a good way of providing a barrier without creating a wall which would block off the view to

the river and create corridor type lanes. Another legacy from the Barings era are the Candy tiles and iron gates which can be seen throughout the conservation area, and generally within the old Revelstoke Estate.



■ Revelstoke Railings

Standards of maintenance are mixed. Some holiday houses look neglected during the winter months being so obviously empty with drawn curt ains and months of post visibly piling up inside glazed areas.



■ UPVC door and windows



■ A mixture of building materials and styles does not detract from the area

Areas with Potential for Improvement

The conservation area is small and has been drawn around the earliest houses that hugged the shore. Unfortunately, several of these are holiday homes and are not always well maintained or have been down-graded in conservation terms, with the addition of UPVC windows and doors.

Some double yellow lines have been introduced in the Newton Ferrers conservation area. These are very prominent and alternatives should be studied.

The gardens in Riverside Road West have been significantly up-graded, as has much of the streetscape. This is not the case in Riverside Road East where ugly street lighting should be replaced and Revelstoke railings painted. The double yellow lines are especially noticeable here and perhaps these could be removed if residents parking was introduced in the road and visitor's cars were stopped at the Dolphin Inn.



■ More suitable lamps



■ Poor lamps



■ Riverside Road East



■ Riverside Road East gardens