



■ Massive chimney stacks are indeed a characteristic of the Area, adorning the roofs and gables of large and small dwellings alike. As well as creating visual interest on the skyline they contribute historical interest too, not least in evidencing that many of the 19th century-looking cottages like this one were probably built around two centuries before. The tall terracotta pots on the left stack are a particularly attractive feature.

■ But for one or two modern examples like the ones shown below left, dormer windows are conspicuous by their absence from the street scene and generally not a common characteristic of the Area. 'Half dormers' like those below are uncommon too, and in this case were probably created only a few decades ago following changes inside to original floor-to-ceiling heights. Whether in 'full' or 'half' form, however, dormers tend to have a disruptive impact on the unbroken lines and surfaces that characterise most historic roofs.



■ Although not a dominant characteristic, several cottages have projecting canopies that shelter their entrance doors. The design of this one (left) is unusually attractive with carefully mitred slates forming the hips. Its repeat elsewhere tends to suggest 'estately' influence and ownership



■ While its coursed stonework, continuous pentice-come-porch roof and the proportions and regularity of its window and door openings mean this 1908 terrace of almshouses isn't exactly in keeping with local traditions, it is nevertheless a very well preserved example of social housing provision and design. Therefore, although not listed, it contributes much towards the historic interest and character of the scene.

Yealmpton Conservation Area Appraisal



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Conservation Areas are special places

In the **South Hams** they cover the older parts of our towns and villages which actually look their age, and it's the survival of their **authentic architectural and historic qualities** that makes them so special.

A sense of history as well as identity prevails and by designating Conservation Areas the District Council is sharing its belief that these ought to be **preserved and reinforced**

The policies the District Council follows when assessing the suitability of proposals affecting Conservation Areas are set out in the South Hams Local Plan, while a guidance note called 'New Work in Conservation Areas' explains how to achieve compliance with them. This is essential because the Council has a statutory duty to approve proposals only if they "preserve or enhance the character or appearance" of the Area's features of "special architectural or historic interest".

The purpose of this Appraisal, therefore, is to describe the key features within the Conservation Area at Yealmpton that create its special interest and characterise its most distinctive appearance.



Setting the Scene

Yealmpton is a large village about 3 miles east of Plymouth's boundary at Elburton on the old road linking the heads of the Yealm, Erme, Avon and Kingsbridge estuaries. Just off the coastal plateau which the estuaries dissect, the village is but 3 miles from the sea and within a mile of the Yealm's tidal reaches. At Yealmpton the river Yealm meanders east-west in its valley; the line also taken by the old road and the historic part of the village which extends in linear fashion along it. The road itself runs shelf-like along the contours, with the land rising to higher ground along its north side but falling away on its south to the banks of the Yealm. The older parts of the village, therefore, not only enjoy a southerly aspect but a fine rural outlook too across the river plain to the slopes of the coastal plateau on the other side a fact that didn't go unnoticed by the 'villa-builders' of the 19th century.



When viewed from the coastal plateau to the south, Yealmpton still displays its east-west linear form



Towards the end of the 19th century, elevations of exposed stonework were probably fewer in number than today. The Manor is amongst a number of houses that appear to have had their render removed leaving only 'tell-tale' remnants around windows or along the eaves.



West of the church, on the south side of Fore Street, a small group of 18th and 19th century 'newcomers' (above) turned their backs on the main street so that their principle rooms could enjoy the view south across the Yealm valley (Seen here from the church tower, their 'historic' dormers are the exception not the rule). A number of dwellings on the south side of Church Hill do the same, including the one in the photo (below).



Quarried locally, grey limestone with bluses of pink or brown is the dominant material for wall construction, although more often than not it has been purposefully hidden beneath render to create a more 'polite', less rustic, appearance, particularly on principle elevations (above).



Probably the most picturesque building in the Conservation Area, 'Old Mother Hubbards' is one of the few to display a genuine vernacular style and character with its irregular form and appearance. The painting of some of its stonework is unusual in the Area, while its thatched roof is one of only three that survive to impart an 'ancient settlement' feel to the village scene. Its simple flush ridge is entirely in keeping with local traditions.



The quality and appearance of the local limestone was such that brick was rarely favoured except for the construction of slim-line chimney stacks and the reveals of windows and doors. In this 'one-off' example, however, the quoins (at the corners) were also built of brick, using a buff variety instead of the usual terracotta red



One of several cottages in the Area dating from the 16th or 17th centuries that have had their 'vernacular cottage' style transformed to 'polite house' when refronted with sashes and ashlar-lined render in the 19th century – which are here admirably preserved. Along with its terraced neighbours, the house occupies one of a series of plots probably laid out in medieval times as part of a planned settlement – which at this end had a broad market place that included the land now occupied by the Post Office and Health Centre blocks. While none in the terrace are listed, it nevertheless makes a valuable contribution towards the interest and character of the Area.



One of the many timber sash windows introduced in the 19th century which contribute so very much towards Yealmpton's authentic historic character

In their time the opening of Laira Bridge in 1825 and the Railway in 1895 doubtless enhanced Yealmpton's popularity as a place to set up residence. Even before then, however, a significant number of large villas had been built during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, which now complement the village scene. Yealmpton Manor (left) is one of them that still retains its original, rather elegant, stuccoed finish



Although 'politely' re-fronted in the 19th century, the casement windows on the first floor of this dwelling (above) preserve something of its former cottage-like appearance. The painted strips along the eaves and at the corner suggest the stonework front, as well as the side, was rendered over as part of the refronting.

The Conservation Area

A Conservation Area was first designated in Yealmpton by the District Council on the 3rd October 1985. It was later extended on the 24th February 1994 to include the former Primary School buildings on Torr Hill. The Map identifies the boundary adopted by the District Council on the 5th of February 2003 based on the up-dated versions of the Ordnance Survey Plans and taking into account the findings of this Appraisal. It supersedes all previous boundary designations.

The Listed Buildings

Of the 75 Listed Buildings in Yealmpton Parish, which include the two Grade I country houses at Lyneham and Kitley, 42 are in the village or very close by and of these 10 are within the Conservation Area. The Church and the 'Goreus Stone' beside it are both Grade II* and the other 8 Grade II, and while all of them special in their own right, their architectural and historic qualities contribute immensely towards the Area's interest and character. The Map identifies each of the List items situated within the Conservation Area.

- The Manor** Listed as Gloyns Manor Hotel. Late C18 house. Five bay front with multi-paned sashes and a central door case with pilasters and an open pediment. Originally stucco rendered
- Yealmpton Manor** Listed as the Old Vicarage. Early C19 house, formerly the vicarage. Three bay front, the centre one bowed with a semi-conical roof and tripartite sash windows. Side doorway with a Tuscan porch
- The Lodge** Late C18 house with back to road. Three bays with multi-paned sashes with side lights. Hipped dormers added early C20
- Church of St Bartholomew** Rebuilt 1850 by William Butterfield in the Decorated Gothic style. Tower dates from 1915. John Betjeman described it as "the most amazing" Victorian church in Devon, with its interior walls decorated with marble banding, friezes and diaper patterning



The dominant roofing material in the Area is natural slate. On the majority of historic buildings this is light grey-blue in colour, blending particularly well with the limestone walls



While common on roofs, slate is rarely used to clad walls although its use to protect the verges of gable ends is most attractive and was probably a more prevalent characteristic than it has become today. In this noteworthy example at Paradise House the slates have been scalloped

Other Buildings and Structures of Special Interest

In addition to the historic buildings and structures that are listed, several others are considered to contribute positively towards creating the special interest and character of the Conservation Area. The Map identifies the buildings that have this impact, although some amongst them could have their positive contributions enhanced by the replacement of incongruous features (like aluminium or plastic windows and doors), the reinstatement of lost features and finishes (like rendered surfaces and natural slate roofs) or the repair of characterful features before they fail (like historic windows and doors).

The structures with a positive impact are so numerous, however, it is practical only to describe what the more significant of them are, including stone boundary and retaining walls, ironwork railings and gates, gate piers and entrance steps, and a Victorian wall-mounted letter box.



The Victorian letter-box near Yealmpton Manor



The corbels supporting the porch on this 19th century looking cottage (left) probably date from the late 17th century and suggest the cottage actually has much earlier origins than its appearance would have us believe.



The Church and the Steps leading up to its porch are listed, but the Lychgate that's listed is the other one, shown on the front cover.



With noteworthy exceptions at each end of the village street, continuous terraces are not a common form, so that side or end walls figure prominently in most views along it. The majority are gabled, but few views don't include at least one that's hipped. This one, at Church Cottage (above right), shows hips in their most attractive form, with their original 'mitred-slate' finish still preserved



The scale and 'isolation' of the church make it a visual focus in the village, but it isn't always an obvious and dominant one. This is mainly because it is set well below the main street and largely hidden by the buildings along its length. There's an element of surprise, therefore, when the open frontage to the churchyard permits an unusual prospect, downward to its roofs and only slightly upward to the eye-catching pinnacles of its tower.

- Goreus Stone** C3 tomb or memorial stone in churchyard. Granite monolith with 'Goreus' inscribed on the E face. Thought to be a memorial to an early British Chieftain.



The Goreus Stone, now adjacent to the church tower

- Flight of Steps immediately South of Church** Along path to south porch. Circa mid C19, possibly contemporary with church rebuilding. Stone balustrading on either side has 'saddle back' coping.

- Lychgate to SE of Church** Lychgate entrance to churchyard. Circa 1850 by William Butterfield

- Elmtree House** Early C19 house with multi-paned sashes. On the ground floor the windows have cornices on console brackets at their heads (below)



- Stag Cottage** Listed as 37 Market Street. C18 Cottage with C19 and C20 windows and porch

- Old Mother Hubbards Cottage** Circa early C16 hall house, once divided into two cottages and in use as a restaurant when listed. When staying at Kitley House nearby, Sarah Martin is supposed to have based her Mother Hubbard Rhymes on the old housekeeper there, who it is said lived in this cottage

The Scheduled Ancient Monument

The Goreus Stone Identified on the Map with reference to its Listing, the memorial stone to Goreus which stands in the churchyard has also been Scheduled as an Ancient Monument in recognition of its national importance

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 the Environment and Development Services Group at the District Council.



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It is perhaps unfortunate that The Lodge in Fore Street (above) isn't visually more prominent in the village scene as it displays a very fine combination of the 'polite' classical detailing that characterised the Georgian age. The 'dentilled' cornice running the length of the eaves, the small-paned 'tripartite' sash windows, and the 'pilastered' doorcase with its open pediment as well as the panelled door with its fanlight above are a joy to behold.



- Key**
- Conservation Area Boundary
 - Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area
 - Other buildings with a Positive impact
 - An **open space** whose special interest is characterised by the general absence of development within it, namely the former glebelands of the Church at Stray Park
 - An **area** whose special interest is characterised particularly by the low density of development within it, namely the gardens and grounds (mainly at front) of The Manor and Yealmpton Manor.
 - views in which the **undeveloped spaces** characterise an important aspect of Yealmpton's historic development pattern and its relationship with its landscape setting
 - views in which the **undeveloped spaces** permit the prospect of a particularly significant building or building group
 - TPO or TPO: Individual or group Tree Preservation Orders
 - Other Important individual or groups of trees (diagrammatic)
 - Area with Archaeological Potential

Other Features of Special Interest

While buildings and other man-made structures are dominant in creating the special interest and character of the Conservation Area, other features are important too, not least the undeveloped spaces and the trees that comprise and share their setting. On the Map the more significant spaces are identified in such a way as to explain their particular importance.



The very pastoral views of the church from beside the Yealm and its bridge crossing have mostly gone now, being lost to the encroachments of 20th century development. All the more important, therefore, is this view across the open ground alongside the Yealm at Stray Park

As far as **trees** are concerned, these play a most important role in enhancing the landscape setting of the Conservation Area by occupying the not-too-distant slopes of the coastal plateau that rise and form a backdrop to most views south. They define the south side of the Yealm valley, while closer to hand the mature trees along its banks help relate the onlooker to the course of the river itself. Within the Conservation Area old photographs show that one or two individual 'forest' trees grew to such a size they dominated the scene, particularly the so-called 'town tree' that stood in front of Elm Tree House. Its canopy spread right across the highway. Today, however, trees play a more general role in contributing towards visual amenities, by providing an occasional backdrop or soft edge to the built scene. Noteworthy, however, are those in the gardens and grounds of The Manor and Yealmpton Manor that help to supply a setting that is appropriate to their age and 'stature'. The Map shows where the more significant groupings are in and near the Conservation Area.

Areas with Archaeological Potential

The antiquity and continuity of Yealmpton's occupation as a place of settlement is an aspect of its special interest. This is partially represented in its standing buildings and structures, partly through the dateable features they possess, but more so, perhaps, through their alignment and arrangement and the pattern of the sites they occupy. The Map identifies the parts of the village where these features are particularly noteworthy and where also the below-ground archaeology has the greatest potential for recording the earliest phases of Yealmpton's development. Although almost entirely surrounded by 20th century development, the linear form of 'historic' Yealmpton can still be discerned due to the survival of garden areas in its immediate vicinity (below). Less discernible, though, is the site of an Iron Age enclosure or fort that was established here probably between 800 and 300 BC. The alignment of Yealmbury Hill and property boundaries at the high end of Bowden Hill suggest its location here, directly above the former ford crossing point of the river Yealm. This could well have been the focus of the settlement for several centuries, but subsequently this appears to have shifted to around the church, with Fore Street and Market Street planned out in medieval times to include a broad market place at the east end.



Around fifty years ago the main village street, particularly near the Torr Hill-Yealmbury Hill cross roads, was more tightly defined by buildings along both its sides. The characteristic 'urban' enclosure this created has largely been lost through demolitions, so that prospects along the street now tend to be quite open. Here, however, just east of the splayed entrance to Stray Park, (above) the close-knit pattern of former times still manages to survive.

The planted front garden areas that characterise many of the buildings along the 'sunny' north side of Fore Street and Market Street create the appearance of a small, rural village - which up until the late 20th century Yealmpton indeed was (left).