

Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

## Historic characterisation for regeneration



# Saltash



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The Objective One Partnership  
for Cornwall and Scilly



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**South West of England**  
Regional Development Agency

Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey

**Historic characterisation for regeneration**

# **SALTASH**

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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SERVICE

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## **Cover illustration**

Saltash from the west, 2003 (CCC Historic Environment Service, ACS 6001)

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## **Abbreviations**

CCC	Cornwall County Council
CSUS	Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DTLR	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
HERS	Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme
IAP	Integrated Area Plan
LOTS	Living Over The Shop scheme
SMBR	Sites, Monuments and Buildings Record
South West RDA	South West of England Regional Development Agency
THI	Townscape Heritage Initiative
SWRA	Saltash Waterfront Residents Association

## Summary

### Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey

The Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey is a pioneering initiative aimed at harnessing the quality and distinctive character of the historic environment to successful and sustainable regeneration. The Survey is investigating 19 historic towns and creating for each an information base and character assessment which will contribute positively to regeneration planning. The project is based within Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Service and funded by English Heritage, Objective One and the South West RDA.

### Saltash

Situated on the west bank of the River Tamar opposite Plymouth, Saltash developed initially as a ferry crossing before the main body of the town was laid out as a planted borough. The town thrived under its joint economies, based on the market and the river, and became a popular place to live. Saltash's site gave it strategic importance during times of war – specifically the Civil War and World War II - as well as ensuring it was chosen for the rail and road crossings over the Tamar. The town is still an important local shopping centre and service provider for the surrounding agricultural hinterland. Its good communications have resulted in a large number of people choosing to live in Saltash, but to commute to Plymouth. The town has active local bodies involved in regeneration and the preservation of its historic fabric.

### Historical development

Saltash initially developed around the ferry crossing in the area now known as Tamar Street. The de Valletort family in the twelfth century laid out a borough of over a hundred plots, based around a market on the first piece of flat land above the river. The market thrived, due

to its excellent communications, and the settlement also held a fair. The river-based activities of fishing, the ferry and later boat building were also highly successful. The town, mainly a Royalist stronghold, sustained bombardment during the Civil War, but eventually recovered its fortunes. Despite competition from Plymouth, and the creation of a new ferry crossing to Torpoint, the town retained its identity and market. In the mid nineteenth century it was chosen as the site for the rail crossing and this brought increased wealth to the town. Many of its inhabitants began to commute to Plymouth and the town grew enormously to cater for the sharp rise in population. In the 1950s the town was again chosen as the site for the road bridge and the rise in population as a result of its good transport links continues.

### Historic settlement character

Saltash's history and geographical location have created a town with a strong, locally distinctive character. Major elements include:

- A striking natural setting including dramatic hill slopes and attractive river views.
- The railway and road bridges.
- The Waterside area.
- Surviving medieval street patterns and areas of good quality historic street surfacing.
- Elegant and carefully planned suburban streets.
- Areas of historic open space within the urban setting.

### Character-based principles for regeneration

These principles have been derived directly from the analysis of the character areas and should underpin all regeneration initiatives in Saltash.

- Respect for the fundamental importance of Saltash's natural setting and topography.
- Recognition of the superior quality and particular distinctiveness of Saltash's historic environment.
- Commitment to achieving comparable quality and character in new buildings and evolving townscapes.
- Promoting a continuing diversity of functions and activities in the town.
- Respect for the different Character Areas within the town and a commitment to acknowledging and reinforcing the urban hierarchy and diversity they represent.

### **Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Saltash**

Characterisation identified regeneration and conservation opportunities under the following broad themes.

- **Understanding and respecting the asset**

Saltash's distinctive character is based firmly on its setting and the quality and diversity of its historic components. To be fully successful, any regeneration scheme, whether or not dealing directly with the historic environment, should take full account of these elements.

- **Maintaining and promoting diversity**

Historically, and to the present day, the prosperity of Saltash has been based on a diverse social and economic base, the aggregation of numerous, often relatively small, industrial, commercial and social activities. In this context it is important to encourage comparable diversity in the present and the future.

- **Natural setting and topography**

Much of Saltash's character stems from its unique natural setting. It is crucial the important views are respected, particularly those in and out of the Character Areas.

- **Respecting character**

Understanding the specific qualities of the various Character Areas and respect for the urban hierarchy they represent is vital. Such understanding and respect should include appraising all proposals for change (large and small) in terms of their potential for maintaining and enhancing character and Saltash's distinctive sense of quality. It should include provision of design guidance, avoidance of pastiche and 'token' local distinctiveness and promotion of architectural excellence. It should also ensure that all new build is fully informed by the distinctive elements of the town's character. Use of local materials, construction techniques and skills should be encouraged.

- **Integrating conservation approaches to regeneration**

The overall quality of Saltash's built environment throws into sharp contrast a relatively small number of structures and sites currently underused or where character has been eroded by a past lack of care. Traditional approaches to repair, maintenance and enhancement of historic buildings could be an increasingly important component of regeneration in Saltash, helping to improve attractiveness, support property values and benefit the overall condition of the housing and general building stocks.

- **Enhancing townscape**

A proactive approach to public realm enhancement offers potential for some relatively easily achieved schemes that could have a decisive effect on the quality of the town. Within the core, public realm schemes could make radical

improvements to the quality of spaces and streetscape and the attractiveness of the town.

- **Strategic review of traffic issues**

Traffic related issues are a recurring theme in most conservation and regeneration initiatives in Saltash. Character and the historic environment can contribute to the design and effectiveness of traffic management schemes.

- **Improving connectivity**

At present Saltash in the main has good pedestrian access. There are, however, a number of barriers to pedestrian flow such as the junction between North Road and Fore Street which prevent easy access to the town centre from the northern side of the town. Utilising and improving historic links and connections could have significant regeneration benefits. Making places attractive can draw people in.

- **Presentation and promotion**

Saltash has already benefited from a number of schemes including the restoration of the Guildhall and the creation of a Heritage Centre. There are a number of other initiatives currently

under consideration. Regeneration initiatives building on the town's attractions may need to begin with a review of the facilities, transport options (bus-routes, parking and pedestrian access), quality of signage, street maps and promotion available.

- **Coordinating change**

The diversity of players within the regeneration process underlines the need for co-ordinating action and reducing uncertainty. There is a need for comprehensive conservation plans and management schemes for particular sites and areas of the town, to guide and inform future action.

### **Character Areas and regeneration opportunities**

This study identified four distinct Character Areas within the historic urban area. Its findings on these areas, together with an assessment of overall settlement character, offer a means of understanding the past and the present. In turn, that understanding provides the basis for a positive approach to planning future change which will maintain and reinforce the historic character and individuality of each area - *sustainable* local distinctiveness.



<p><b>1 Waterside</b></p> <p>This area includes the oldest part of the settlement and physically links the town with the river. The area is important for its historical significance as the site of the ferry crossing, the vibrant fishing community, boat building and Victorian industry. Today it is an important recreational resource and residential area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further develop the leisure and commercial potential of the ferry.</li> <li>• Better define the boundaries between the private and public space.</li> <li>• Expand the range of commercial enterprises.</li> <li>• Better maintain the public housing and community buildings.</li> <li>• Restore the old boat house on Ashtor Wharf.</li> <li>• Rebuild the public conveniences.</li> <li>• Redevelop or landscape Silver Street.</li> <li>• Provide interpretation at the Scheduled D Day Landing Craft Maintenance gridiron site and the historic industrial building sites.</li> <li>• Continue to develop Jubilee Green and Brunel Green as recreational areas.</li> <li>• Improve the link between Town Quay and Brunel Green.</li> <li>• Designate Town Quay as a listed building.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2 The Old Town</b></p> <p>The site of the original medieval planted town and still the busy commercial heart of Saltash. Despite a number of significant losses this area still holds the greatest diversity of architectural styles in the town and its most significant buildings, all sited within the original medieval street pattern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regenerate the shopping area by reinstating/restoring historic shopfronts and through good consistent design of modern shopfronts.</li> <li>• Encourage new local and specialist shops.</li> <li>• Reinvigorate the Fore Street environmental scheme.</li> <li>• Landscape the car parks to give a better first impression of the town centre.</li> <li>• Upgrade the alleyways and opes - to make them more attractive and promote their use in order to encourage people into different parts of the town.</li> <li>• Rationalise the signage - remove unnecessary clutter and improve the signage to the town's other areas of interest such as the Waterfront.</li> <li>• Target Lower Fore Street with grant scheme in order to encourage the restoration of the historic buildings and to find new sustainable uses.</li> <li>• Enhance the 'gateways' at either end of Fore Street to reinforce the quality of the area.</li> <li>• Regenerate the redundant buildings behind Fore Street.</li> <li>• Include the area within the conservation area – to recognise and preserve its special character.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3 Suburban Villas</b></p> <p>Apart from some intrusion of modern housing to the north and the heavy traffic on North Road, this area has retained much of its original character as an area of carefully planned genteel housing of good design and materials with views to the river. The villas have well cultivated gardens with mature trees which form an important 'green ring' around the densely developed town centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area should be included within the conservation area in recognition of its architectural and historic importance as a planned development and to preserve its character.</li> <li>• Further development within the gardens should be avoided as they provide an important area of green outside the densely developed town centre.</li> <li>• The walls and outbuildings should be protected against alteration and demolition by an Article 4 Direction.</li> <li>• The large villas should be considered for listing in recognition of their unique contribution to the character of the town.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 Circa 1900 Urban Expansion</b></p> <p>The villas and terraces that make up much of this character area are an important element in the overall character of the town. They reflect the town's expansion and growth in wealth following the arrival of the railway. Both streets and buildings survive relatively unaltered, and provide a strong reminder of the character of early twentieth century Saltash.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The treatment of North Road, and the streetscape should be reviewed in order to make the area more pedestrian-friendly.</li> <li>• The walls and outbuildings should be protected against alteration and demolition by an Article 4 Direction.</li> <li>• Include the area within the conservation area – to recognise its special character, and to prevent its erosion by unsympathetic alterations.</li> <li>• A new use should be found for the station to ensure its repair, continued maintenance and to give public access.</li> </ul>

# 1 Introduction

## Regeneration and the historic towns of Cornwall and Scilly

In July 1999 Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were designated as an Objective One area, bringing potential investment from European funds of more than £300m over the nine-year spending period. Economic regeneration schemes and development projects within the region's towns are likely to form a major element of the Objective One Programme.

Regeneration on this scale offers an unparalleled opportunity for contemporary contributions in urban design and architecture to the built environment of Cornwall and Scilly's towns. At the same time, the Objective One programme emphasises environmental sustainability (including the historic environment) and regional distinctiveness as key considerations in regeneration planning. The process of change launched by current regeneration initiatives could, if not carefully managed, have a negative impact on the historic environment and the unique character and sense of place of each of these settlements. The pressure to achieve rapid change could in itself result in severe erosion and dilution of their individuality and particular distinctiveness and, at worst, their transformation into 'anywhere' towns.

It is clear from recent research that a high-quality historic urban environment and the distinctiveness and sense of place integral to it are themselves primary assets in promoting regeneration. The effect may be direct, through heritage tourism, for example, but there is a more powerful and decisive impact in prompting a strong sense of identity and pride of place which in turn creates a

positive and confident climate for investment and growth.

This synergy between the historic environment and economic regeneration was recognised and strongly advocated in the *Power of Place* review of policies on the historic environment carried out by English Heritage in 2000, and its value clearly highlighted in the government's response, *The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future* (2001). The tool by which the two may be linked to create a framework for sustainable development in historic settlements is *characterisation*.

## Characterisation and regeneration

*'The government . . . wants to see more regeneration projects, large and small, going forward on the basis of a clear understanding of the existing historic environment, how this has developed over time and how it can be used creatively to meet contemporary needs.'*

(DCMS / DTLR 2001, *The Historic Environment: A Force for the Future*, 5.2)

'Characterisation' provides a means of understanding the diverse range of factors which combine to create 'distinctiveness' and 'sense of place'. It involves the creation of a comprehensive knowledge base on the historic environment. This includes what is known of a settlement's historic development and urban topography (that is, the basic components which have contributed to the physical shaping of the historic settlement, such as market places, church enclosures, turnpike roads, railways, etc.), together with an overview of the surviving historic fabric, distinctive architectural forms, materials and treatments and the significant elements of town and streetscapes. Characterisation may also provide the basis for assessing the potential for buried and standing archaeological remains and their likely significance,

reducing uncertainty for regeneration interests by providing an indication of potential constraints.

Characterisation is also a means whereby the historic environment can itself provide an inspirational matrix for regeneration. It emphasises the historic continuum which provides the context for current change and into which the regeneration measures of the present must fit if the distinctive and special qualities of each historic town are to be maintained and enhanced. It both highlights the ‘tears in the urban fabric’ wrought by a lack of care in the past and offers an indication of appropriate approaches to their repair.

Characterisation is not intended to encourage or to provide a basis for imitation or pastiche: rather, it offers a sound basis on which the 21<sup>st</sup> century can make its own distinct and high-quality contribution to places of abiding value.

## Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey

The Cornwall & Scilly Urban Survey (CSUS) was set up – funded by both English Heritage and the Objective One Partnership for Cornwall and Scilly (European Regional Development Fund) – as a key contributor to regeneration in the region. Additional funding has been provided by the South West of England Regional Development Agency. The project is investigating 19 historic towns and creating for each the information base and character assessment which will provide a framework for sustainable action within these historic settlements.

These towns have been identified, in consultation with planning, conservation and economic regeneration officers within the seven district, borough and unitary authorities in the region, as those which are likely to be the focus for regeneration. The project’s ‘target’ settlements are:

Penzance	Newlyn
St Ives	Hayle
Helston	Camborne
Redruth	Falmouth
Penryn	Truro
Newquay	St Austell
Bodmin	Camelford
Launceston	Liskeard
Saltash	Torpoint
Hugh Town	

CSUS is a pioneering initiative aimed directly at cutting across the boundary that traditionally divides conservation and economic development. Nationally, it is the first such project carrying out a characterisation-based assessment of the historic urban environment specifically to inform and support a regional economic regeneration programme. Future regeneration initiatives in other historic settlements, in Cornwall and Scilly and further afield, will benefit from the new approach developed by the project.

## Cornwall’s historic towns

Although best known for its coast, countryside and mining, Cornwall has an unusually high density of historic towns. All are small by English standards (the largest, St Austell, containing only c28,000 people in 2001), but all have a full range of urban components. These include commercial, administrative, community and ecclesiastical buildings, various public and private spaces, and varieties of residential areas, from dense terraces of workers housing to large detached town houses set in their own enclosed grounds.

While each has these components in common, each Cornish town also has its own particular history and its own form and character. Many developed from medieval market towns, evenly spaced about twelve miles apart and integrated

into ancient road patterns. These towns often retain key elements like market places, burgage plots and back lanes, but each has subsequently experienced different influences and so has developed its own identity. Other towns began as ports, resorts, fishing settlements, dock towns and centres of industry, and so contain specialised buildings, structures and spaces. Of course, each town also has its own response to local topography, makes special use of local building materials, is subject to local building traditions and national economic and social trends, and is influenced by varying degrees of control by local landowners.

It will therefore be important when planning and designing regeneration initiatives, and when maintaining the fabric of Cornish towns, to take care to recognise the essential elements of the town's own unique historic character. This should inform the design of all works and so ensure that each town retains this unique character.

All Cornish towns are also complex places, having developed either gradually or in surges, and so have patterns of zones or areas that vary according to such things as phase, form, condition, quality, activity, tranquillity, open-ness and uniformity. There is also variety in the responses people, whether as communities or as individuals, have to these areas and their components. So, as well as maintaining each town's distinctiveness in relation to other Cornish towns, regeneration and management should also ensure that this variety of historic character within the towns is also maintained and enhanced.

## CSUS reports

CSUS reports present the major findings and recommendations arising from the project's work on each town. They are complemented by computer-based digital mapping and data recorded using ArcView Geographical Information System (GIS) software, and together the two sources provide comprehensive information on historic development, urban topography, significant components of the historic environment, archaeological potential and historic character.

**Importantly, the reports also identify opportunities for heritage-led regeneration and positive management of the historic environment. However, they are not intended to be prescriptive design guides, but should rather be used by architects, town planners and regeneration officers to inform future development and planning strategies.**

The reports and associated digital resources are shared with the appropriate local authorities; economic regeneration, planning and conservation officers therefore have immediate access to the detailed information generated by the project. Additional information is held in the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record, maintained by the Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council.

Public access to the report and to the associated mapping is available via the project's website - [www.historic-cornwall.org.uk](http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk) - or by appointment at the offices of Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Service, Old County Hall, Truro.

## Extent of the study area

The history and historic development of each town are investigated and mapped for the whole of the area defined for the settlement by the current Local Plan. However, the detailed characterisation and analysis of urban topography, which together form the primary elements of

the study, are closely focused on the *historic* urban extent of the settlement. For the purposes of the project this area is defined as that which is recognisably ‘urban’ in character on the 4th edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, 1907 (Figs. 1 and 2).



*The Waterside – now mainly an area of leisure activity*



*Fore Street – the commercial heart of Saltash*

## 2 Saltash: the context

### The Regeneration Context

(Text provided by Cornwall Enterprise)

#### Current Situation

The historic town of Saltash is situated at the lowest bridging point on the Tamar River and acts as a gateway to Cornwall by road and rail. The A38 runs around the town and is the principal route connecting south-east Cornwall to Devon; the main London to Penzance railway crosses the river at Saltash via Brunel's iconic bridge.

In the 2001 census the total population was 14,964. With a large catchment area, Saltash is one of the biggest towns in Cornwall.

In line with the rest of Cornwall, Saltash's population has on average greater numbers of families with parents of a working age than retired people. Younger people tend to leave the area to seek training and employment. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 shows that levels of deprivation in Saltash are generally low compared to the UK average. The IMD breaks down Saltash into 11 Super Output Areas (SOAs) of which 7 of these are lower than national average. Relative to the rest of Cornwall, the Saltash area records some of the lowest deprivation levels in Cornwall with 6 of the 11 SOAs ranking within the 10% least deprived in the county. However, the IMD also reveals concentrated pockets of deprivation. SOAs within Saltash Pill and Saltash Essa wards record IMD scores that place them respectively at 36% & 37% of the national average (1% being the most deprived and 100% being the least deprived).

The local economy of south-east Cornwall is very much dependent on the traditional industries of tourism and

agriculture that are experiencing decline and/or structural change. This leads to problems such as high seasonal unemployment, low pay and an abundance of part time work. Whilst tourism is important to south-east Cornwall, Saltash does not currently present itself strongly as a visitor destination, although it has developed a number of initiatives including a town leaflet and Heritage Trail with easy to use guides. The main attractions within the town are presently Mary Newman's Cottage Museum and the Saltash Heritage Museum. Since 1988 a number of environmental improvement and traffic management measures have been implemented in Saltash. The Lower Fore Street area was designated back in 1994 as a Conservation Area in order to protect its character and its many fine buildings.

In 1961, when the Tamar Bridge was opened, increased opportunities arose for residents of Saltash to work in Plymouth, and for Plymothians to move and live in the quieter rural setting of Saltash. As a result, a large proportion of the working population now commutes daily. However, Plymouth faces long term economic problems of its own, in particular its reliance on the defence industry, which continues to have an uncertain future and to shed jobs year on year.

Notwithstanding the environmental impact of increased traffic flows, the capacity of the Tamar Road Bridge has recently been increased. The commuting relationship between Saltash and Plymouth is likely to continue to grow, although this may have negative effects such as demand for housing, competition for housing between local people and immigrants, and additional pressures on community facilities and the local countryside.

## Future Plans

The strategic planning approach as described in the Cornwall Structure Plan 2004 is that any development for the area should be sustainable and deal with the influence and effect of Plymouth particularly in relation to transport and employment issues. For the purposes of Regional Planning Guidance, Saltash (and Torpoint) are considered to be part of the Plymouth Urban Area. With so many people commuting to Plymouth from Saltash the crossings over the Tamar are near capacity and congestion within the town is an ongoing issue, although some relief can be expected as a result of both the increased capacity of the road bridge and the upgraded Torpoint ferry. Key elements of future transport development for Saltash as outlined in the South East Cornwall Environs Transportation Study (PSECETS) include a bus based park and ride. The Local Plan also identifies the safeguarding of land at the Carkeel/Broadmoor for a bus park and ride scheme of this nature. In 2004 a feasibility study was carried out to determine the level of need for a commuter ferry service initially running from Saltash to the Barbican, Plymouth but with the ability to develop further service to the rest of the Tamar. Discussions and actions are ongoing from the outcomes of this study.

The enhancement of local facilities and services is a priority with the aim to provide more jobs within the area strengthening the role of local centres and to reduce the dependency on Plymouth. If Saltash is to develop sustainably it is essential for the local economy to diversify and for south-east Cornwall to become less reliant on Plymouth for employment. In order to attract inward investment of this type, the Local Plan identifies that a significant area of employment land must be available. The land must be a high profile site which is easy to develop and

accessible to be suitable for a significant employment generating business development. Broadmoor Farm was previously the preferred site but this has been replaced by a new allocation of 11 ha west of Carkeel services.

The Cornwall Structure Plan also identifies the area as a target for residential development including 1,000 new houses in the period 2001-2016. The Local Plan allocated new housing at 5 locations within the town with the main concentration of 550 dwellings at Pillmere, east of the Callington Road and south of the Bypass.

The South East Cornwall Tourism Strategy 2001-2006 identifies the town of Saltash as a growth area in south-east Cornwall's tourism product. There are proposals to develop Saltash Railway Station as a restaurant/community/arts centre as well as potential other development opportunities along the waterfront. Further support for tourism development could also be provided through the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI). The proposed 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary south-west regional celebration of the life and work of Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 2006 offers a particular opportunity to Saltash to develop its heritage and cultural tourism.

The Local Plan outlines that large scale retail development within the town centre would be allowed. If this proves not to be possible it will allow development outside the town centre if it is well related to the town centre and ensures a proper balance of provision and attractiveness to maintain the level of trade in the town centre. Out of town development is permitted but only as a last resort and with a string of conditions to minimise impact on town centre trade. The Local Plan includes policies aimed at continuing sensitive improvements to protect the character, attractiveness and traditional retail activity of the town.



In order to conserve the rural setting of the town there are seven Open Areas of Local Significance identified in the Local Plan which are to be protected from development. These are: Trematon Forder, South of Lynher Drive, Latchbrook Valley, Oaklands Open Space – Tincombe, Coombe Valley, Pillmere Valley and the land north of the A38 bypass between Carkeel and Saltmill Creek. Other green spaces within the periphery of the town such as Saltmill Park and Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve provide informal recreational space for the local community.

In 1995 the Saltash Partnership was established to act as the Local Regeneration Forum. The Forum is made up of representatives from a wide range of community organisations and aims to promote the regeneration of Saltash by enhancing its attractiveness to residents and visitors and to work towards developing sustainable economic growth that reflects the town's unique character.

In 2000, Atlantic Consultants were commissioned to prepare a detailed Regeneration Study to draw together a wide range of socio-economic issues and opportunities. The study outlined key economic, community and environmental issues and conclusions. The study has helped guide and shape the regeneration of Saltash, particularly through the Market and Coastal Town Initiative (MCTI).

The MCTI is currently looking at a number of workable proposals and producing a Mission Statement / Vision. Their aim is to produce a Community Strategic Action Plan for Saltash in the next couple of months.

In 2002 the Saltash Waterfront Residents Association was founded to promote the enhancement, and economic and social development of the area, whilst protecting its unique character.

## Landscape and setting

Saltash lies on the west bank of the River Tamar, surrounded by extensive areas of high quality natural landscape. Its sandy foreshore is one of the few areas of beach along the Tamar which is otherwise flanked by mudflats. The land rises sharply from the river and forms a cliff to the north of the road bridge – a feature made more dramatic by historic quarrying. The majority of the historic town lies on steeply sloping land and its dramatic topography results in many striking vistas.



*Typical views of the rolling agricultural landscape that surrounds Saltash*

To the north of Saltash the Tamar is joined by the River Tavy and to the south by the Lynher River, which forms the natural southern boundary of the settlement. The area around Saltash has been identified by the Cornwall Historic Landscape Assessment as mainly Anciently Enclosed Land – a landscape of enclosed fields and dispersed farm settlements with its origins in the medieval period and earlier.

The town has expanded a great deal to the west, there is an industrial estate to the north and it has merged with St Stephens to the south. The land around the settlement, however, is still agricultural with a peppering of farms and small hamlets.

## **Historic environment designations**

The current historic environment designations in the pre-1905 historic urban core of Saltash are shown on Figures 5 and are listed below.

- 1 Scheduled Monument, a Second World War D Day

Landing Craft Maintenance Gridiron and adjacent small quay.

- There are 22 Listed Buildings in the study area.
- There is a Conservation Area which includes Lower Fore Street, most of Culver Road and the waterside area.

### 3 Historic and topographic development

(Figures 3 and 4 provide an overview of the historic development and historic topography of Saltash)

Saltash has been known variously as Esse (1201), Ayshe (1284), Asshe (1296) and Saltasche (1302). The suffix 'ash' refers to the tree and 'Salt' was probably added to distinguish it from other places with the same name. Salt could be a reference to the newly built tide mill known as Salt Mill, could refer to salting pans or be a reference to its position on a tidal river.

#### The Pre- Borough settlement

Although worked flints have been found in fields throughout Saltash there is at present no evidence of a later prehistoric or Romano-British settlement. However, the strategic nature of the site, lying at one of the narrowest crossing points of the river Tamar with a natural beach mirrored on the other side of the water, suggests some early development was probable. Not only would it have been far better suited for landing than the areas of mud further up stream, but its steep road leading down to the riverside would have been well drained and easily defensible.

It is possible that the first ferries across the Tamar date from the Romano-British period as there was a Roman earthwork a mile east of the crossing on the Devon side. It is quite likely that by the time of the Norman Conquest there would have been a group of cottages close to the crossing, possibly on the site of Tamar Street, lived in by the ferrymen and fishermen.

#### The Founding of the Borough

Following the quelling of the 1068 rebellion in the South West by King William a castle was built at nearby

Trematon which became the administrative centre for the area. Initially held by Brian of Brittany and then Robert, Count of Mortain the manor then passed into the hands of the de Valletort family for the next two hundred years. Initially attempts were made to develop a settlement around the castle, a market was established outside the castle gate by 1086 and a borough founded. However the new borough was unfavourably positioned for trade and so by the late twelfth century the de Valletorts established a new borough adjacent to the ancient ferry crossing at Esse. We know that the borough was already established by 1201 as the accounts of an Assize from that year mentions jurors coming from the Borough of Esse.

This planned settlement was sited on the hillside above the early waterside community. Culver Road (believed by local historians to be the original ferry access route) formed the southern boundary and two further roads, on the site of Albert Road and Fore Street, were created. The new borough was laid out with more than a hundred plots, and people were encouraged to settle by burgage rents lower than the manorial dues which were levied on the surrounding area. The new borough had a market place situated in part of the area now known as Alexandra Square. This site would have been chosen as it presented an area of relatively flat land amongst the surrounding steep gradients, and the level land around the foreshore was already developed. One of the de Valletorts, probably Ralph I, founded a large chapel adjoining the market square dedicated to St Nicholas. The chapel appears integral with the layout of the market place and Fore Street and as it contains Norman work there is good reason to expect a late twelfth century origin for the borough. The parish church remained at St Stephens, situated to the south west near the castle at Trematon, but St Nicholas acted as a

chapel of ease and during the week as a community hall for the new borough. Reginald III's charter of circa 1225 confirming the borough's privileges states that 'the fair of the town be held in the middle of the town, where it was wont to be held in the time of my ancestors'. This indicates that, in addition to the weekly markets, an annual fair took place in the central market area.

### **The Medieval Borough**

In 1270 Roger de Valletort III sold the manor at Trematon to Earl Richard. As a result it became part of the Duchy of Cornwall when the Black Prince became the first Duke of Cornwall in 1337. The creation of a new community had been entirely successful and by 1300 there were 118 burgesses living in the borough now known as Saltasche, and by 1377 there were 200 taxpayers. Such was the town's growing importance that it was chosen to hold the Assizes when the Black Death struck Launceston. Another measure of the town's prosperity was the size of its rents, which were amongst the highest in the Duchy. Despite having been eclipsed in size by Plymouth, Saltash lost none of its local significance. A 1439 Charter was granted to Plymouth agreeing to the fortification of the town on the condition it should not interfere with the Borough of Saltash or its rights over the Tamar.

The river, which had acted as the stimulus for the early development, continued to be a major factor in the fortunes of the borough. The rights of the ferry and most of the estuary system belonged to the Manor, but most of the water based activities such as operating the ferry, the fisheries, the oysterage, collecting dues for anchorage, buoyage, the barges etc were leased to the burgesses. The stretch of the Tamar bordering Saltash had the advantage of a relatively calm, safe deep-water anchorage for large ships at all states of tide. During the fourteenth and fifteenth

centuries the merchants of Saltash built up an impressive reputation for ship building - their vessels traded as far afield as north-east Norway, and during the Hundred Years War only Fowey produced more ships. The river also acted as a source of power for local industry and as early as the late thirteenth century a tidal mill was recorded at Salt Mill. During this period the area around the waterfront became increasingly developed.

It was not only the riverside trades that helped to stimulate the economy of Saltash, the market too continued to be an important source of revenue. The 'Caption of Seisin' produced in 1337 during the formation of the Duchy of Cornwall records 'Also there a market on Saturday' and 'Also there one fair in the Feast of St Faith with the Vigil' (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> October). Possibly by 1337, but definitely before 1435 the fair moved to a site on the outskirts of the town. Here the growing number of cattle could be accommodated better, rather than driving them through the streets to the central market area. A new chapel was erected at the fair site dedicated to St Faith, probably on the site of the modern Regal Court on Fore Street.

In accordance with the town's prosperity the fabric of the town continued to develop. As mentioned above, the waterside had a thriving community, and in addition both Albert Road and Fore Street were fringed with houses and workshops, and the northern side of Culver Road was lined with properties. The town had developed further to the north with the creation of the fair site and during the fourteenth and the fifteenth century.

St Nicholas Church was enlarged on its northern side by the addition of a chancel, aisle and porch.



*St Nicholas Chapel, later renamed the church of SS Nicholas and Faith*

### Tudor Saltash

The twin sources of wealth - the river and the market - continued to serve Saltash well during this period. Leland noted in the mid-sixteenth century 'Asche is a pretty quick market town and is set from the top of a rocky hill as by west to the root of the same and very shore of Tamar Haven by east. The townsmen use both merchandise and fisher[y]'. By 1590 John Norden referred to 'Salt-asche ..... a prettye market town', where 'The haven is capable of any burden.. the towne increaseth dailie in marchaundice and wealth'. Furthermore just over a decade later Richard Carew observed in his *Survey of Cornwall* of 1602 'The town is of late years well increased, and the townfolk addict themselves to the honest trade of merchandise, which endoweth them with a competent wealth'

Carew went on to describe Saltash - 'seated on the declining of a steep hill, consisteth of three streets which every shower washeth cleane, compriseth between eighty and one hundred households underlying the government of a Mayor and his ten brethren.' The Mayor and Corporation were undoubtedly an important force within the expanding borough. There is evidence they did not just keep their wealth and position for their own advancement, but ploughed money back into the town. By 1573 the Corporation had erected two market houses in the

area around the market place. The easternmost market house stood on a site to the north of St Nicholas', on the site of the present Guildhall. The site of the other building is unclear. On the northern side of the market square meat stalls (or shambles) were set up on market days.

During the seventeenth century the Corporation increasingly took control of St Nicholas' designating the church 'the Corporation Chapel' and appointing its chaplains. Although the role of the church building was lessened due to the construction of the two market houses it still played an important role in the secular life of the town. In the early sixteenth century a chantry chapel was established on the southern side of the church with a chantry priest, part of whose role was to teach the local children. After the chantry was dissolved in 1547 the south chapel was demolished and replaced with a separate school, erected partially on its site. A further educational establishment was founded in Saltash a few years later when Elizabeth I endowed the town's first grammar school.

In 1585 the Corporation's de facto role running the affairs of the ferry and waterside industries was officially recognised by Elizabeth I in a charter granting the Liberty of the Tamar and the Ferry to the Borough outright. The Borough was given 'Silver Oar' jurisdiction which allowed it to administer the Water Courts and to hold a separate official seal. This privilege was to last for only twenty five years however as in 1610 Duchy property was declared inalienable, the Liberty and ferry were repossessed, and the Corporation had to lease once again from the Duchy.

During the Tudor period the waterside was a thriving and constantly developing area. Both boatbuilding and fishing continued to be major employers. The Saltash fishermen not only supplied the local people with fish and shellfish, but

frequently sent cargoes of pilchards to the Mediterranean. The town played its part in the Spanish Armada equipping the frigate *John Trelawney* and unloading the cargo from the Portuguese ship *San Felipe* brought to Saltash in 1587 by Sir Francis Drake. The ship had been carrying gold, spices, jewels and plate worth the equivalent of £12m today. Sadly the town's other connection with Francis Drake is apocryphal. One of the houses in Culver Road is described as the home of Drake's first wife, Mary Newman, before she married. In fact Mary lived in St Budeaux and the house in question probably dates from the sixteenth century. The legend of her association with the house however, based on a Victorian children's story, has preserved the cottage from demolition.



*The sixteenth century cottage known as Mary Newman's Cottage*

The industries on the waterfront all required their own buildings. Fish cellars, known as fish palaces were built close to the quay and we know a ship building yard was in existence by 1545. The 1585 charter mentions Saltash was 'used from time to time as a great and common landing place for ships, fleets and vessels of sail' and also notes 'the defect of the structure, enclosure and walling of ... the quay of the town.' As a consequence the town Quay was duly rebuilt c 1586. By the end of the sixteenth century there were houses on the beach side of Tamar Street and these same houses were still standing in 1951 when Sir Nikolaus Pevsner visited Saltash, describing them

in the Cornwall edition of *The Buildings of England*. By the early seventeenth century such was the demand for space along the waterside the area of mud to the north of Ashtor was reclaimed and Sand Quay created. This quay was used to unload barges carrying sea-sand to dress the arable land and later for ship and boat building.



*Part of the sixteenth century Town Quay*

### **Civil war and after**

Due to its strategic position Saltash played a major role during the Civil War. Basically a Royalist stronghold, the town was constantly under attack from its Parliamentary neighbour Plymouth. Defensive earthworks were built outside the town gate, which stood at the top of Fore Street, and batteries were constructed to the south of Waterside at Wearde Quay and at the southern end of Town Quay on the site of the Wheatsheaf Inn. The town sustained constant attack from Plymothian boats anxious to take the town. Whoever held Saltash could effectively control the whole of south-east Cornwall as all provisions and reinforcements relied on the ferry. The town changed hands eight times throughout the Civil War and the street fighting and maritime bombardments caused a great deal of damage to its fabric. It is believed Saltash sustained more damage than any other Cornish town during this period, and many of its buildings were destroyed.

Losses of course were not just material: in 1641 the population of Saltash and St



Stephens stood at 1,137, but by 1662 the figure had fallen to 900. Once peace was declared the rebuilding of the town began but, despite efforts to reinvigorate the local economy, it was during this period that Saltash emerged as the lesser town to Plymouth. In 1669 Count Magalotti wrote of Saltash in his *Travels of Cosmo the Third*

‘a small town on the right bank of the Tamar where formerly flourished the same commerce which is now transferred to Plymouth’.

Four years later the contemporary writer Blome described Saltash market as ‘late much decayed to what it was’. In the late seventeenth century Saltash had an opportunity to once again challenge its neighbour’s ascendancy when William III’s surveyors proposed it for the site of the Royal dockyards. The proposal was rejected by the town who were concerned about disturbing the lucrative oyster beds, and so the yards were built in Plymouth.

By 1673 the town had become well known for its brewing - a contemporary account referring to the profits made from ‘malt and good beer’.

### **Eighteenth century**

Despite its decision not to accommodate the Royal dockyards Saltash still benefited from the evolution of the Royal Naval Dockyard at Devonport. In 1757 and 1758 Devonport passed on to the Saltash ship yards two commissions for Royal Navy sloops the HMS Alderney and HMS Tamar. In 1774 the Corporation finally won back the privileges previously granted by Elizabeth I in a charter from King George III, which included the Liberty of the Tamar and the Ferry. The Duchy tried to repeat its challenge of a hundred and fifty years earlier, but this time was unsuccessful. The river continued to be a significant asset to the town and at the end of the eighteenth century was used to moor

prison ships, firstly with French and then American prisoners of war.

Daniel Defoe recorded in his *A Tour Through Great Britain; By a Gentleman* published in 1724

‘a little, poor shattered town...Saltash seems to be the ruins of a larger place; and we saw many houses, as it were, falling down...Yet this town is governed by a mayor and aldermen, has many privileges, sends members to Parliament, takes toll of all vessels that pass the river and has the sole oyster-fishing in the whole river, which is considerable.’ Defoe presents us with a town whose fabric was severely damaged and in part destroyed by the Civil War, but whose entrepreneurial spirit remained vigorous. Later in his text he refers to the town’s thriving market which also serves the people of Devonport ‘because provisions are bought much cheaper at Saltash than Plymouth’.

Markets by the end of the eighteenth century were held on a Saturday, and the Corporation leased the authority to collect market and fair dues to the highest bidder. The Corporation continued to play a major role in the fortunes of the town and ever sought to maintain its ascendancy. The Borough had been enfranchised since 1547, and eventually became a pocket borough, but there were many disputes as to who constituted the electorate, whether it was the burgesses or only the Corporation.

The Corporation were behind the reconstruction of the Market House, the building to the north of St Nicholas, in 1775. Its ground floor Fore Street elevation was an open colonnade of granite pillars and the space within used as a pannier market and for the sale of corn. The first floor was then used as an assembly room. Fore Street was now the major thoroughfare in the town and was described by Maton in 1794

‘Saltash is situated on the declivity of a very steep hill, which (though the

principal street) it is not easy to ascend on horseback?.



*The Market House – its first floor assembly room was officially designated the Guildhall by the Corporation in 1841*

Not only did the rebuilt Market House address this street, but it was also the site of the meat stalls displaced by the Guild Hall and a number of new town houses. Several of these were on the slopes adjoining the busy waterside and market areas. The most magnificent new house however, the Mansion House built in the mid eighteenth century, was further to the west set back on the north side of Fore Street.

In addition to the growing pre-eminence of Fore Street during the eighteenth century the town began to develop beyond the confines of its original medieval plan. In the late eighteenth century the first Baptist Chapel was built on land in Culver Road. By the eighteenth century there was a borough poorhouse on land to the west along Fore Street (it is possible a building existed on this site as early as the sixteenth century) and circa 1771 a detached house was built on Longstone Road, now No 2 Callington Road.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the 'little, poor shattered town' had managed to restore and develop its built fabric and consolidate its status as an important local market and centre for waterside industry. Unfortunately a serious blow to the town's finances occurred in 1791 with the arrival of the Torpoint ferry. This new ferry rivalled the ferry at Saltash as it was connected to Liskeard and beyond by a new turnpike road, which swiftly became the principal coaching route.

### **The Early Nineteenth Century**

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the continued steady growth of Saltash as it successfully strove to maintain its status despite the growing dominance of Plymouth and the improved transport links at Torpoint. In 1801 the population of the borough stood at 1,150, living in a hundred and sixty houses and by 1831 this figure had risen to 1,637. The town was described by Stockdale in 1824

'[Saltash] principally consists of one long street rising abruptly from the Tamar, to a considerable eminence, and the houses in general have an ancient appearance?.

Whilst neatly illustrating the dominance of Fore Street in the town's topography this description rather plays down the thriving nature of the contemporary town.

During this period however the town began to expand further westwards with a number of detached villas built by retired navy and army officers on the roads to Callington and St Stephens. The archway on Fore Street represented an increasing impediment to trade as heavily loaded wagons had to be unloaded to enable them to pass through. As a result the arch was demolished in 1859 encouraging further westward expansion of the town

Whilst the western end of the town gradually developed the character of a



salubrious residential area the commercial core around the Market Square remained lively and industrious. The 1830 Post Office directory lists in its entry for Saltash plumbers, ironmongers, butchers, bakers, drapers, shoemakers, tailors, grocers and a druggist working in the town in addition to numerous 'shopkeepers'. The part of Fore Street by the Guildhall was known as Market Street and the western end became the High Street. The whole length was dug up in 1850 in order to install concealed drainage. Road transport centred on the Green Dragon Inn on the southern side of Fore Street (on the site of the Co-op) which acted as the post house. The courtyard at the back of the inn was used to collect the mail, and by passengers wishing to join the stage coach which travelled from Callington to London.

The fair was still an important annual event and was by this time held on St James' Day until the following Saturday. The fair site, originally on the outskirts, was now incorporated within the developing town. Further development to the north occurred in the form of Essa Brewery and Wine and Spirit Company in Ellwell Lane.

Despite the earlier building of a Baptist church Non-conformity was initially discouraged in Saltash, with some of the early visiting preachers imprisoned. However the first Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in Lower Fore Street in 1808. The town continued to support two schools, an elementary school that became a National School in the 1840s adjacent to St Nicholas church, and a free grammar.

The commercial centre was of course not the only source of prosperity in Saltash at this time – the waterside continued to develop as an important hub of communication and industry, as well as a vibrant community in its own right. In an effort to regain some of the ferry passengers lost to Torpoint in 1832 Saltash purchased a new steam-powered

'floating bridge' ferry running along chains by the engineer James Meadows Rendel. Access to the ferry was improved in 1834 by the construction of a new turnpike road called New Road (now known as Old Ferry Road). In 1854 the Saltash Steamboat Company was set up carry both passengers and freight between Saltash, Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport. When Queen Victoria visited the town a steamer was chartered and she recorded in her diary

'as we proceeded the scenery became quite beautiful – richly wooded hills, the trees growing down into the water, and the river winding so much as to have the effect of a lake. The finest parts begin about Saltash, which is a small but prettily built town'.

Many of the local people continued to be employed within the fishing industry - the men worked on deep-sea boats whilst the women were involved in harvesting and selling shellfish. Quiller-Couch described the Saltash fishwives 'they worked shrimping. Cockling, digging for lug and long lining, bawling fish through the streets', and the 1856 Post Office Directory records 'Great quantities of cockles and mussels are daily carried to Devonport and Plymouth by the women of Saltash, who derive their chief means of support therefrom'. The same Directory, however, also records that the fishery was becoming contaminated by mine waste.

The area around Sand Quay continued to develop, spurred on by the new access road. In addition to the quay there was a ship yard, lime kilns and by 1840 the first cottages were built. The area around Town Quay was by this time packed with buildings. Westcott's shipyard stood on the site of the current boy's club; there were three large public houses The Wheatsheaf, The Union and The Passage House and over eleven more in the rest of the town. The Waterside in many respects had developed its own identity and this was reinforced by the founding

of the Saltash Regatta in 1835, which quickly became established as an important community event.

Saltash had managed to survive as a ferry crossing despite competition from Torpoint and its competitively priced market offered a real alternative to the markets in Plymouth. However, by the second half of the nineteenth century the fortunes of the town were to receive a significant boost as it was chosen as the site for the new railway bridge across the Tamar.

### **The Late Nineteenth Century and the Building of the Royal Albert Bridge**

The decision to site the new Great Western Railway bridge crossing the Tamar River at Saltash proved to be an enormous boost for the town's economy. In 1851 the population stood at 1,621 and by the end of the century this figure had more than doubled to 3,357. The preparations for a bow and chain bridge with two spans began in 1848 to the design of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. The bridge was only the width of a single track, but its supporting piers were necessarily massive. Nevertheless the construction of the bridge, railway track and station resulted in the loss of just five buildings – three buildings for the span (part of a brewery on Ashtor Rock, a house at the foot of Fore Street and a house in Silver Street) and two for the station (a house in Albert Road and a barn in Culver Road). By 1859 the work was complete and the bridge opened by Prince Albert, after whom it was named. Murray's Handbook produced in the same year described how 'The wonderful tubes of the Albert Bridge then span the river at a height of 170 feet above the surface and Saltash greets you. The view is extremely picturesque. The old crazy houses, with their balconies and balustrades, rise one above the other from a steep slope.'

The new bridge not only added enormously to the architectural merit of

the town it also played a major role in its late nineteenth century physical and economic development.



*The columns of Brunel's railway bridge rising above the Waterside area*

The station quickly became established as an important railhead for the export of market garden produce, an important local industry along the banks of the Tamar Valley, opening up new markets, especially for the Cornish flower growers. As late as the 1880s within the town there were still orchards on the sheltered slopes above and to the north of Sand Quay.

Whilst destroying very little existing fabric, the swathe cut by the new railway freed up areas of land for new development. Rows of cottages were built in the immediate vicinity of the line along Tamar Terrace. The improved communications helped to raise the profile of the town and the Post Office Directory of 1856 noted 'The town has greatly improved since 1852. Villas and buildings, of an extensive scale, are projected at Port View, one of the most beautiful localities in the West of England'. Port View was laid out as a gated community of villas set in their own grounds and attracted wealthy merchants, businessmen and retired military officers. In addition to the houses the mini estate included a cottage hospital, St Barnabas' built in 1889, and a Roman Catholic Franciscan Friary converted in the same year from an earlier house called Vinelands. Polsue commented in 1872 that 'many neat and

tasteful villas have been built on the most interesting and commanding sites'. In addition to Port View further villas were built overlooking the Hamoaze and on the slopes to the north west of Sand Quay. The striking views from Callington Road, called Longstone Road at this time, also encouraged the building of detached and semi-detached villas set in their own grounds.



*St Barnabas Hospital built on part of the Port View estate*



*Victoria Gardens – laid out to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee*

In 1869 Mill Lane was renamed North Road and shortly after a new Board School was built along the road. Before long housing followed, including Maristow Terrace where in 1893 the inhabitants included the curate and a navy officer. By the end of the century the northern side of the town was

developing rapidly with terraces of houses along the newly created Tavy Road, Homepark Road, Albert Terrace and Westbourne Terrace in addition to the houses beginning to line North Road.

The same pattern was repeated at the western end of the town with terraces along the new Victoria Road, Hamoaze Terrace and a mixed development of villas and terraces along St Stephen's Road. In addition to the new housing the public open space Victoria Gardens was laid out in 1897 to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Murray's Handbook of 1859 described 'a variety of colours, arising from a strange jumble of materials. One house is constructed of stone, another of brick, a third fronted with plaster, and a fourth with slate.' Whilst this mix was still very evident, especially in the heart of the town and the waterside, the rash of new villas and terraces lent a more uniform and polite character of stucco façades and restrained classical detailing to the newly developing suburbs.

The growth and development of the town was not confined to its extremities. Although the heart of the settlement was still based on its three medieval streets Fore Street, Middle Street (renamed Albert Road) and Back Lane (renamed Culver Road) the businesses and shops continued to develop. Twice weekly markets still provided an important service for the agricultural hinterland. From 1878 a commercial cattle market took place on the land behind the present day Co-op, off Culver Road. Markets ceased to take place, however, on the Alexandra Square site and the pannier market on the ground floor of Market House ceased operation. In 1890 the Market Hall became the Guild Hall and the old Guild Hall building which had been used as a gaol was eventually demolished in 1894. In addition to the market place there was a further important open area of land behind the Green Dragon in Fore Street where sales

were held once a month. In 1876 a coffee tavern and billiard Room opened on the corner of Culver Road and Fore Street, and in 1891 a police station was built on the corner of Albert Road and Station Road. By 1893 there was a new post office and branches of Bolitho Bank and the National Bank. In the same year the town received its first water supply, having previously relied on various wells.

In 1869 a major restoration of St Nicholas took place prompting Polsue to comment that 'the church has been handsomely repaired'. In 1881 the chapel finally became a parish church and was renamed the church of St Nicholas and St Faith, incorporating the designation of the fair chapel now demolished. The Nonconformists after their initial chilly reception went on to flourish in the town. In 1891 the Methodist Chapel on Lower Fore Street was sold to the Masons and a new Gothic chapel built on the site of the present Post Office. In 1865 the Baptist Chapel on Culver Road was rebuilt and described by Lake as 'a commodious Gothic Chapel of considerable architectural pretensions'.

In line with the town's overall development the community based around the Waterside continued to grow. Despite the growing importance of the railway the river still continued to act as an important thoroughfare. In 1857 the lower end of Fore Street was improved to facilitate access to the ferry and between 1858 and 1928 a fleet of steamers carried workers to Devonport Dockyard and provided a market produce service. From 1880 to 1914 the steamers became very popular for tourist excursions and many visitors came to the Waterside area to buy shellfish from the shops in Tamar Street which became known as Picklecockle Alley. Tea gardens were later set up in the markets gardens between North Road and New Road to cater for the growing number of visitors.

Despite its picturesque character, Waterside was still primarily a place of

industry. A quarry was excavated in the cliffs behind Sand Quay, the waterfront limekilns were still in operation, in 1862 a gas works was built on land to the south of Town Quay adjacent to a brass and iron foundry and in 1871 there were builders and coal merchants operating in the area. The industrial workers, ferrymen, and fishermen and women continued to live in the tightly packed streets of sixteenth century houses that curved along the contours of the hill behind Town Quay and by around 1880 further housing in the form of a long row of cottages, Brunel Terrace, was built behind Sand Quay. By the late nineteenth century the community even had its own mission church, built strategically between the Wheatsheaf and the Union Inn.



*Brunel Terrace – a late nineteenth century row of workers' housing behind Sand Quay*

The Liberty of the Tamar was finally terminated in 1886 when the Corporation was replaced by Saltash Borough Council, but the collection of dues was permitted for a further fifteen years. A small community developed off-shore on the industrial training ship Mount Edgumbe, which was moored close to the bridge between 1877 and 1920 and provided charitable help for orphaned boys and minor offenders who wished to pursue naval careers.

### **Early Twentieth Century**

This period established the railway as the major transportation link in Saltash. By 1904 there was a regular train service for



commuters who worked in Plymouth and Devonport Dockyard. Saltash became the busiest station in Cornwall and the viaducts had to be rebuilt to take the increased loads -the stone from the original structures was used to re-front the Wesleyan Chapel. The town continued to spread to accommodate the new commuters in addition to the local people employed in the commercial sector and the remaining local industries. In 1924 the first public housing estate was built at Salt Mill and by 1930 terraces lined the eastern end of a new road, Glebe Avenue, which linked North Road to the new recreation ground, laid out at Longstone in the 1920s. The area between St Stephens Road and Higher Port View was further developed around a new road, Essa Road, which was lined with a combination of terraces and semi-detached villas. The picturesque views and mild climate ensured Saltash was still a popular choice for the retired and the wealthy. Thus the continued spread of development along St Stephens Road and Longstone Road mainly took the form of detached villas with sizeable gardens. Coombe Road with its views over the Tamar was developed with detached houses on its south-eastern side in 1900 and an elegant terrace on the north-western side in 1904. By 1934 the borough boundary was extended to reflect the growth in housing and the town became amalgamated with St Stephens. Such was the development westwards of the town that in 1927 the new County School was opened at Cross Park some distance away from the historic core.

The character of the Waterside underwent a degree of change mainly due to the decline of the industry and fishing. The quarry and foundry were now closed and the limekilns demolished. In the 1920s there was a small boat building revival that lasted for around fifteen years and other small industries came to the waterside including a motor company and Daw's creamery and haulage depot.

The ferry of course continued to operate, but the busy hub of activity was now to be found up the hill at the station. Now the Waterside was no longer teaming with industry its picturesque qualities were more evident and its popularity as a tourist destination continued. In 1906 the Rustic Tea Gardens were built near Sand Quay and an area for bathing established to the north of New Wharf.

The heart of the town began to evolve into a modern centre of commerce and services. In 1908 the arches on the ground floor of the Guildhall were infilled, and one of the few remaining associations with the early market life of the town came to an end. New developments in Fore Street included a working men's club opened 1919, a Fire Station in 1927 and in 1935 the Green Dragon Hotel was demolished and replaced by the Co-op. In Culver Road the Imperial Picture House opened in 1924. In 1927 Church House, to the north of Alexandra Square, became the Council Offices and in 1923 the Church finally took ownership and control of SS Nicholas and Faith church from the Borough.



*The Co-op building which replaced the Green Dragon Hotel – the old pub sign is incorporated into the façade*

Services for the town continued to improve and in 1926 a water tower was erected above Longstone Park. In 1924 the old brewery in Elwell Road was replaced by an electricity generator and by 1928 underwater cables brought power from Plymouth.

### The Second World War

German bombers aiming for the Royal Albert Bridge and consequently flying east to west to maximize their chances of a direct hit missed their target in April 1941 causing much devastation to the town. The bombs fell mainly in Fore Street with over twenty buildings destroyed. Significant losses in the town centre included the Imperial Picture House, the Wesleyan Chapel, a GWR goods station, Fore Street's last surviving Tudor building, and North Road school was damaged. Other streets in the town centre to be hit included Belle Vue Road, Glebe Terrace and Port View.

Just as in previous conflicts Saltash played a significant role in the Second World War due to its strategic position. From 1943-45 the shore just north of the Royal Albert Bridge was deployed as a sub-base of the United States Naval Advanced Amphibious Base (USNAAB) at Plymouth. One of its most significant roles was to service the landing craft in the run-up to the D-Day landings.

### The Road Bridge and Modern Saltash

In the immediate aftermath of the War the development of Saltash was arrested. Gradually, however, the town began to recover starting with the replacement of some of its key buildings. In 1952 a new Wesleyan Church was built on Glebe Avenue (this building was subsequently demolished and rebuilt in 1988 at the corner of the avenue) and the bombed cinema was replaced in 1951 by the Regal cinema situated on Fore Street above Belle Vue Road (this was demolished in 1964). The most major redevelopment, however, was to take place around the Waterside. In 1957 the area was declared a slum and the decision was made to demolish the majority of the buildings, some of which dated from the sixteenth century. The project to redevelop the area lasted until 1966 during which time all the old industrial buildings were lost

(the gasworks had already closed in 1947) and all the buildings associated with the fishing and boatbuilding industries. The only historic buildings to survive were the three pubs (part of the Passage House Inn – subsequently renamed The Boatman, was demolished), Town Quay and 'Mary Newman's' cottage. The area was redeveloped as a public housing estate and the medieval street, Silver Street, downgraded into an access road without housing.

In the post war period the Saltash ferry carried only ten per cent of the road traffic between Devon and Cornwall, compared to twenty-five per cent that travelled through Torpoint. The majority of Saltash people used the railway to reach Plymouth and at this date thirty-six trains travelled per day between the two towns. However all this was to change following the decision in the late 1950s to build a road bridge between Saltash and Plymouth. The work began in 1959 and in contrast to the building of the railway bridge a large number of buildings were lost including fifty houses, ten shops and the Masonic Hall. The last ferry crossed the Tamar in 1961 and in 1962 the bridge was officially opened.



*The road bridge, built in 1961, and officially opened the following year*

The road bridge significantly altered the character of the town, both by its physical impact, and by joining the smaller community to the conurbation of Plymouth. Saltash was now a commuter suburb of its larger neighbour. As a consequence the town developed

enormously during this period with new housing estates on the remaining open spaces to the east of North Road, on the fields between Saltash and St Stephens and along the major roads into the town. The civic centre of the town shifted from the historic core to the west of the town when sites in Longstone were chosen for the primary school in 1957, the library in 1963, the police station in 1971 and subsequently the football ground, swimming pool and leisure centre.

However, despite the cattle market closing in 1968 and the town losing its borough status in 1974 the old medieval market area remained at the commercial heart of the settlement. The former Wesley Chapel site in Fore Street became the post office in 1962, and in 1991 the whole of Fore Street was re-landscaped. The Waterside area was reinvented as a predominantly residential and leisure area. The Saltash Waterside Boys Club was set up in 1945 in the disused Mission Church and subsequently replaced in 1965 by the present club building – it is now known as the Livewire Youth

Project. The old gas works site was redeveloped as a sailing club in the 1960s – the present day building dates from 1973 following the infilling of an area of the foreshore. The Ashtorre Rock Community Centre opened in 1991.

The final major upheaval in the fabric of the town occurred in 1986 when a tunnel was dug between North Road and Fore Street to provide a link to the new Saltash by-pass. The necessary engineering works resulted in a number of buildings behind Fore Street being lost including the eighteenth century Mansion House.



*The engineered road leading from the road bridge into the Saltash Tunnel*

## 4 Archaeological potential

Archaeology is potentially a rich asset for Saltash. There is much about the town's history which is obscure and archaeology is the only way in which certain key aspects of its historic development and character can be better understood. Archaeology can also make a significant contribution in cultural and economic terms: remains of the past have important potential for education, tourism and leisure, as well as in terms of local pride and sense of place.

It should be emphasised that 'archaeology' does not refer solely to buried remains. Information on the historical sequences embodied in standing buildings and other 'above ground' features could be extremely valuable and a building survey of the town would be likely to yield significant new information.

Opportunities for investigation and recording should be sought when buildings are refurbished or undergo substantial alteration. Figure 5 indicates the survival of historic fabric which may offer potential for archaeological investigation. In the particular context of Saltash, there is also significant archaeological potential in foreshore and intertidal structures and palaeo-environmental deposits.

Further documentary research is likely to yield valuable data. This area of study, together with participation in building surveys, could provide a challenging and worthwhile avenue for involvement by local people wishing to investigate aspects of their heritage.

Archaeological remains are an important and non-renewable resource and as such are protected by national and local planning legislation. One component of future investigation of both buried archaeological remains and standing

buildings may be through targeted implementation of PPG 15 and PPG 16 legislation as part of the development control process.

### Indicators of archaeological potential

Figure 6 indicates the potential extent of certain aspects of Saltash's buried archaeological remains, although it must be emphasised that this depiction of potential is indicative, not definitive, and future archaeological investigation and research will test and refine its value.



*The northern end of Alexandra Square was the site of the former market, and is an area of great archaeological potential*

An understanding of potential is broadly derived from the historic extent of the settlement itself. In simple terms, any location within the area developed up to the early 20th century (as represented on the 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1907; Fig. 2) is regarded as having potential for standing or buried archaeological features. The historic core of the settlement (essentially Character Areas 1 and 2; see below) is of particular archaeological interest and sensitivity in that deposits are likely to provide valuable information on its early form and development. Urban archaeological remains are likely to be more complex in these areas.

**NB.** Overviews of the archaeological potential of the various Character Areas



within the town are also presented in Section 8

There have been very few archaeological interventions within the town to date and none has produced evidence for medieval features and layers. The following work has been carried out :-

- A small scale evaluation to the rear of the Brunel Inn, 83 Fore Street in 1999 by Exeter Archaeology recorded natural ground at a depth of 0.4m and no features or stratified material, perhaps due to subsequent disturbance or levelling of the site.
- In observations to the rear of 18 Fore Street in 1997 bedrock was exposed directly under modern surfaces, probably due to nineteenth century truncation.
- Walling and an infilled cellar recorded in 1997 by CgMs Archaeology and Environmental Consultants in advance of works to the Tamar Bridge in Fore Street were thought to be the remains of a demolition phase associated with the building of the bridge.

## 5 Statement of significance, Saltash

Saltash has a long and varied history – one of the oldest boroughs in Cornwall, a planned medieval settlement and market, a site of strategic importance during the Civil War and a Second World War target. It is was one of the largest towns in Cornwall, stands on one of the major routes into the county and provides services for the surrounding agricultural hinterland.

Despite a number of losses the town still retains its medieval street pattern, has a number of key historic buildings and pleasant historic residential streets. Its riverside location provides commercial and leisure opportunities and stunning views throughout the town. However, to an extent the physical integrity of the settlement has been compromised by the dominance of the tunnel and the traffic flow from the road bridge.

Saltash is currently a popular place to live. However, the high quality of its historic environment and location would enable the town to develop further its potential as a tourist destination and shopping centre.



*Well designed housing and residential streetscapes are part of the quality of Saltash*

## 6 Present settlement character

### Topography and settlement form

‘Cornwall possesses little of the highest aesthetic quality though much that is lovable and much that is moving. Nearly always, however, in analysing one’s emotions, one will find that what is remembered is more the setting of architecture than architecture itself.’ This quote from Pevsner in the Cornwall edition of the Buildings of England series in 1951 can perhaps be applied to Saltash above all other Cornish towns. Having suffered years of attrition - historically as a strategic settlement during times of warfare and latterly at the hands of brutalist architects and planners - the historic building stock of Saltash is severely depleted. Nonetheless the dramatic topography of the town makes it a thrilling place to visit or to travel through.

Topography has played a key role in the development and subsequent form of the town –

- The sandy beach at one of the narrowest points of the Tamar estuary made it a natural crossing point. The *raison d’être* for the original settlement.
- The precipitous hill beyond the foreshore resulted in the early development being confined to the Waterfront area, and the first road built on an oblique course up the incline. The steep terrain to the north of the waterfront delayed development in this direction until the seventeenth century when land on the foreshore could be reclaimed.
- The medieval market place was established on the nearest piece of relatively flat ground to the early waterside settlement. By this stage the

steep incline no longer deterred development and ensured the two new parallel roads were well drained, and their burgage plots followed the contours of the hill.

- The riverside site attracted industry from early tide mills and fishing to boat building, lime kilns and a Victorian foundry.
- The sloping, sheltered fields to the north of the original fishing and ferry settlement were ideal sites for market gardens and orchards and as a result remained undeveloped until the late nineteenth century.
- The sloping terrain, as mentioned before, gives dramatic river views and this encouraged much middle-class development in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.



*One of many attractive river views that encouraged development*

- The narrow crossing point which originally brought the ferry was later chosen as the rail and road bridge sites.
- The flat land to the west of the early settlement has provided attractive land for development since the nineteenth century, causing the town to spread mainly in that direction.

### Standing historic fabric

Despite its status as one of the oldest boroughs in Cornwall and its fascinating

history, driving through the centre of Saltash one has the impression of a recent commuter town developed to house the overspill from Plymouth. This impression is reinforced by –

- the modern shops on the northern side of Fore Street, which are set back so far as to disassociate them from the older buildings on the southern side.
- Modern, often poor quality, shopfronts on the surviving older buildings
- the lack of original public, civic or religious buildings on the main street.

Other areas of modern redevelopment such as the clearing of the medieval waterside buildings, the demolition of the original chapel buildings and schools and the infilling of the north-eastern side of the town with modern estates all help to disguise the town's ancient origins.

This said, however, there is still much in Saltash of historic import to celebrate and exploit.

Apart from the church, which is Norman remodelled in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there are no other significant medieval survivals. However, parts of earlier buildings do survive in remnant form –

- sixteenth century south-west granite archway at Kingsleigh House
- sixteenth century granite doorway at 43 Lower Fore Street
- granite doorway dated 1584 on the modern building 10, Tamar Street
- the core of the Boatman Inn (previously the Passage House Inn).

The only other significant early survival is Mary Newman's Cottage, a simple vernacular rubblestone building with a granite doorway which probably dates from the sixteenth century.

Eighteenth century survivals include the Guildhall, two houses on Lower Fore Street Nos 24 and 34, both of which have been somewhat altered, and No 2 Callington Road.



*Eighteenth century town houses on Lower Fore Street*

There are a number of large town houses from the early nineteenth century including the classically proportioned 38 Albert Road, Culver House and Duncan House and the slate hung No 4 Callington Road and Kingsleigh House.

Undoubtedly the largest stock of historic buildings in Saltash, however, dates from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. There are a large number of detached villas built to take full advantage of the river views in a variety of styles ranging from simple classical detailing to full-blown Italianate, Arts and Crafts and Gothic. The most prolific building type is, however, the terrace which can be found throughout the town. These range from simple cottage rows, to three storey rendered structures with bay windows. There is a wealth of individual detailing



including decorative ridge tiles, finials, balconies, carved bargeboards and plaster panels.



*Terraced houses with decorative ironwork balconies on Home Park Road*

Although many of the town's original shops were lost in the Second World War, and subsequently to road schemes, there are still a good number of historic survivals, particularly in Lower Fore Street. Fore Street has an interesting mix of styles including some 1950s shops on the southern side which blend in with the original buildings and a few striking Art Deco designs.

There are still a large number of original pubs and inns, many of which still retain their original sign boards, doorcases and fascias.

The main buildings of note in the town are –

- St Nicholas and St Faith's Church
- The Guildhall
- Mary Newman's Cottage
- The Railway Bridge
- The Road Bridge

Historic walls survive throughout the town even where the original buildings have been lost. The garden wall to the now demolished Mansion House still stands behind Fore Street, as do some of the garden walls in Silver Street and the informal rubble agricultural building walls in the north eastern part of Saltash. At the western end of the town there is a

complex series of walls between Callington Road and St Stephen's Road defining the back plots and creating service roads.



*Original high quality 1950s shopfront on Fore Street*



*The gateway to the Mansion House which still survives despite the demolition of the house*

Traditionally there was a great mix of building materials used throughout the town, as one would expect given its superior transportation links. However over the years the mix of rubblestone, granite and slatehanging has been somewhat over powered by render and stucco. The railway added to the mix by bringing bricks which can be found in historic buildings throughout the town. The majority of historic buildings have slate roofs, many of which survive in their original form. There are still a good number of original windows throughout the town, but these are beginning to be replaced, particularly in heavy traffic areas.

## Streetscapes and views

Despite the construction of a bypass and tunnel in the 1980s, designed to take traffic from east Cornwall over the Tamar road bridge without entering the town centre, Fore Street is still a very busy route. The flow of traffic is constant but not congested and the width of the main shopping street lessens its impact. Although Fore Street is a medieval route there is very little evidence of the historic streetscape – the original building line has been altered and there is modern paving and street furniture.



*A wall on Culver Road illustrating the mix of building materials that can still be found throughout the town*

Similarly North Road is fairly heavily used as it forms part of the B3271 which carries traffic from the road bridge to the northern side of the town. Although North Road is an historic residential street, at present the road is treated in such a way as to place traffic needs above those of the residents and pedestrians. The junction between North Road and Fore Street crosses the complicated slip roads and tunnel road joining the road bridge which effectively creates a divide between the two historic areas.



*Essa Road – typical of Saltash's quiet residential streets*

Elsewhere throughout the town the streets are fairly quiet with low levels of pedestrian and traffic movement. There is good connectivity between the surviving medieval streets with alleyways and lanes bisecting the original parallel street pattern.

The majority of residential streets have retained their original garden walls and front gardens adding to the overall quality of the area. This is particularly true in the Port View estate where the original local stone walls with Plymouth limestone gate piers, intermediate piers and plinth tops are complemented by mature planting. The essence of the original planned development still remains and even the gate piers from the original entrance gates still survive.

Lower Fore Street is a very important area as the sense of enclosure given by the tall closely packed buildings and narrow road give an intimation of how the historic centre of Saltash appeared before the Second World War. In this area survive some of the best examples of traditional paving including cobbles by the church and granite kerbs.

The area around Victoria Gardens, apart from the busy traffic on Callington Road, still retains much of its Victorian character with its memorial. The tall parasol shaped pines form a strong focal point to the vistas looking from the eastern end of the town.





*Original walls on the Port View estate*

The streetscape around Waterside has lost much of its vitality and informality. At present the rather bland stretches of parking and lawn give little impression of the former vibrant historic community.

Two of the town's important historic open spaces still survive – the former market square and cattle market. The site of the former market, the northern end of Alexandra Square consists of a poorly landscaped green space and parking for the local shops and flats, whilst the cattle market is a rather utilitarian car park for the Co-op.



*View of the railway bridge from Albert Road*

The views and vistas from Saltash are amongst the most dramatic in Cornwall combining as they do the great natural beauty of the River Tamar with fine examples of Victorian and modern engineering. The most spectacular views incorporate the road and rail bridge – both as focal point to a vista and in close proximity. However, there are some charming river views looking north towards the River Tavy and south to the River Lynher. Such was the charm of the

riverscape, as mentioned above; it informed a great deal of the housing development within the town.



*View of the two bridges from Ashtor Wharf*

The steepness of the terrain lends many views within the town itself (which would otherwise appear quite mundane) a sense of drama.

## Identifying Character Areas

### Understanding character

The CSUS investigation, in addition to identifying the broad elements of settlement character that define Saltash as a whole, identified four distinct Character Areas within the town's historic (pre-1914) urban extent (see Section 8, below; Fig 7 and Character Area summary sheets 1-6).

1. Waterside
2. The Old Town
3. Suburban Villas
4. Circa 1900 Expansion

These Character Areas are differentiated from each other by their varied historic origins, functions and resultant urban topography, by the processes of change which have affected each subsequently (indicated, for example, by the relative completeness of historic fabric or significant changes in use and status), and the extent to which these elements and processes are evident in the current townscape. In simple terms, each Character Area may be said to have its

own individual 'biography' which has determined its present character.

Taken with the assessment of overall settlement character, the four Character Areas offer a means of understanding the past and the present. In turn, that understanding provides the basis for a positive approach to planning future change which will maintain and reinforce the historic character and individuality of each area and the town as a whole - *sustainable* local distinctiveness.



## 7 Regeneration and management

Characterisation of the historic environment of Saltash has revealed the essential dynamic factors underpinning the town's character. Regeneration planning which is informed and inspired by these elements can take a sure-footed and proactive approach to creating beneficial change, reinforcing and enhancing existing character and ensuring that new developments are closely integrated into the existing urban framework, more focused on enhancing Saltash's distinctiveness and strong 'sense of place', and ultimately more successful.

The characterisation process has also produced a valuable dataset on the historic fabric, archaeological potential and townscape character of the historic town. This information can be used as a conventional conservation and planning tool to define constraints, as a yardstick against which to measure new development and policy proposals, and as the basis of well founded conservation management, restoration and enhancement schemes and policies.

### Character-based principles for regeneration

The principles outlined below, derived directly from the analysis of key character elements for the town and the assessments of the individual Character Areas, and should underpin all regeneration initiatives in Saltash.

- Respect for the fundamental importance of Saltash's natural setting and topography.
- Recognition of the quality and particular distinctiveness of Saltash's historic environment.

- Commitment to achieving comparable quality and character in new buildings and evolving townscapes.
- Promoting a continuing diversity of functions and activities in the town.
- Respect for the different Character Areas within the town and a commitment to acknowledging and reinforcing the urban hierarchy and diversity they represent.

### Regeneration and the historic environment: key themes for Saltash

Characterisation has highlighted regeneration and conservation opportunities for the historic area of Saltash as a whole and for specific areas and sites. These opportunities may be grouped under the following broad themes.

#### Understanding the asset

Saltash's distinctive character is based firmly on its setting and the quality and diversity of its historic components. To be fully successful, any regeneration scheme, whether or not dealing directly with the historic environment, should take full account of these elements and ensure that appropriate designations and management policies are in place at an early stage.

This will benefit regeneration by giving certainty to the planning and development process. It also offers links to the priorities of funding programmes, especially Objective One's requirements for enhancing local distinctiveness and respecting the cultural and historic resource.

Re-evaluating designations and the information base as part of this process might include:

- a review of the statutory list of historic buildings;
- creating a supplementary list of locally significant structures (the 'other historic buildings' identified on Figure 5 and CSUS digital mapping offer an initial baseline);
- comprehensive buildings at risk and/or condition surveys;
- considering extending the Conservation Area (see Figure 5 and recommendations in Chapter 8) and preparation of a Conservation Area Appraisal.

### Maintaining and promoting diversity

Historically, and to the present, the prosperity of Saltash has been based on a diverse social and economic base, the aggregation of numerous, often relatively small, industrial, commercial and social activities. Formerly the waterfront industries and market shaped the form of the town, and latterly the railway, road and the demand for commuter housing and services.

In this context it is important to encourage comparable diversity in the present and the future. Concentration on 'big-hit' solutions to regeneration may divert attention from smaller, more easily achievable and more appropriate schemes which, because of their scale and variety, are likely to better integrate with the town's historic character. In aggregate a number of smaller schemes are likely to produce as much, if not more, new employment, vitality and regeneration, and there will also be less conflict with the quality and diversity that is fundamental to Saltash, and less overall impact on the historic built environment. Such schemes are likely to be most successful if carried out in the context of an overall vision for the future of the town.

### Natural setting and topography

Much of Saltash's character stems from its unique natural setting of great scenic charm.

It is crucial that important views are respected (and proposed developments assessed within that context), particularly those into and out of the various character areas, into and out of the town and over the town from the bridges. Additionally, the potential value of sensitively exploiting the scenic setting of the town in new development is very high.



*A large scale development of flats has interrupted the view from Longstone Park*

### Respecting character

Understanding of the specific qualities of the various Character Areas and respect for the urban hierarchy they represent is vital. Such understanding and respect has immediate practical applications, including:



*These poorly designed shops in Fore Street do not reflect the quality found elsewhere in the town*

- Appraising all proposals for change in terms of their potential for

maintaining and enhancing character and Saltash's distinctive sense of quality. This applies equally to minor changes to historic buildings and streetscapes and to larger scale developments. For these such appraisal is particularly important if the mistakes of the past are to be avoided (for instance the redevelopment of Fore Street with poorly designed new shops which do not relate to the surviving historic buildings and the wholesale demolition of historic buildings in the waterside area.).

- Provision of site-specific design guidance, avoidance of pastiche and 'token' local distinctiveness, promotion of architectural excellence and ensuring that all new build is fully informed by the distinctive elements of the town's character.
- Encouraging use of local materials, construction techniques and skills. This will benefit smaller, specialised, locally based businesses, and dovetails with regeneration strategies to increase training and skills.

### **Integrating conservation approaches to regeneration**

The overall quality of the built environment in Saltash throws into sharp contrast a relatively small number of structures and sites currently underused or where character has been eroded by a past lack of care.

Traditional approaches to repair, maintenance and enhancement of historic buildings could be an increasingly important component of regeneration in Saltash, helping to improve attractiveness, support property values and benefit the overall condition of the housing and general building stocks. 'Heritage' oriented public funds such as HERS and THI could beneficially be used in conjunction with broader initiatives like LOTS and building condition and vacancy surveys.

As well as reinstating distinctive architectural features on historic buildings and in the public realm, this could free up an available stock of buildings and sites for development and reuse and act as a significant catalyst to wider investment in the town. The result would be a sustainable source of brownfield development sites, increased occupation, and help in meeting demand for (affordable) housing, thus securing the vitality of the town centre where historic buildings are concentrated.

There is potential for the local authority, RDA or other agencies to acquire, re-use, enhance and promote such sites as a stimulus and contribution to regeneration investment.

### **Enhancing townscape**

A proactive approach to public realm enhancement offers potential for some relatively easily achieved schemes that could have a decisive effect on the quality of the town - such as the landscaping of the roundabout below Victoria Gardens and the rejuvenation of the Fore Street environmental scheme.

Within the core, public realm schemes could make radical improvements in the quality of spaces and streetscape and the attractiveness of the town. In Saltash there still survive areas of good quality historic street surfacing and furniture, particularly the granite paving on Lower Fore Street. Properly recorded and understood, these could form the basis of truly locally distinctive design for enhancements to the public realm.

Some key views and historic routes are obscured by signs, street furniture and traffic-management features. Such street 'clutter' could be reviewed, with potential for increasing the effectiveness of necessary signage and reducing unnecessary obstructions.

### **Strategic review of traffic issues**

Traffic related issues are a recurring theme in most conservation and

regeneration initiatives in Saltash. Poorly designed solutions could well degrade and blight otherwise attractive areas and historic townscapes critical to the future success of the town.

Character and the historic environment can contribute to the design and effectiveness of traffic management schemes.

- Enhance 'gateways' on the main roads into the town to emphasise the transition to an urban environment, with lower vehicle speeds, and thus reduce excessive and repetitive signage throughout the rest of the town.



*The roundabout below Victoria Gardens could be better landscaped to create a welcoming gateway into the town centre*

- Design highways within the historic townscape as streets in which *people* move, live and work, rather than simply as roads for vehicle traffic (manifested, for example, in the scale of lighting and form of signs and surface treatments).
- Place streetscape improvements at the heart of future traffic management schemes, thus playing a key role in the enhancement of the public realm. No traffic management scheme is likely to be accepted or successful unless accompanied by sensitive, appropriate and imaginatively designed enhancement works.

To enable the historic environment to work most effectively in regeneration, a major issue is reduction of traffic. Relevant issues here are:

- encouraging greater use of the bypass;
- introduction of a park and ride facility;
- further increasing the pedestrian priority within the core area;
- reducing the speed of traffic on the B3271.

### Improving connectivity

At present Saltash is fairly accessible to pedestrians, but the junction between North Road and Fore Street where it meets the road bridge creates a significant barrier to pedestrian flow between the historic core and the northern side of the town.

Utilising and improving historic links and connections could have significant regeneration benefits. Making places attractive can draw people in. For instance there is good access to the station and waterside areas but from Fore Street at present one is only drawn towards the road bridge. Amending this is as much to do with improving townscape and signposting (both literally and figuratively) footpaths and small roads as it is about solving traffic problems. It could, indeed, obviate the need for intrusive or heavy-handed management solutions. Similarly, the better linking of residential areas with public buildings and activities and with the commercial heart of the town should be an important underlying theme of regeneration.

Improved pedestrian links and activity also depends in part on greater security. This could be achieved by restrictive, controlling measures, but is much more effectively done by increasing use and thereby increasing passive surveillance levels - in other words drawing on the

historic patterns of use in the town centre to increase activity and a sense of ownership and responsibility. Stimulating the connections between places, making the centre more attractive at all times, and increasing uses and viability in 'back street' areas such as Alexandra Square are all valid regeneration objectives, and can all benefit from reference to historic fabric, uses, connections and patterns of movement. Increased occupation of underused commercial buildings through LOTS-type schemes could improve the connections between the core streets and the surrounding areas through the opening up and effective surveillance of alleys and paths that are currently blocked or underused.

### **Presentation and promotion**

A number of projects and ideas have already been proposed and in some cases implemented in Saltash. There are a number of active groups and individuals involved in seeking to regenerate the town. These include the Saltash Partnership, the Tamar Protection Society, the Waterfront Residents Association and the Gateway to Cornwall which is currently working on the MCTI.



*Elliott's shop on Lower Fore Street has been recently restored*

Projects already carried out include Elliott's Shop – a 'time capsule' grocery museum set up by the Tamar Protection.

Society with the support of the Town Council and Caradon DC. The restoration of the Guildhall led by the Town Council with funding from HLF, Caradon DC and others. The Saltash Heritage Trail led by Saltash Partnership with the support of Caradon DC and the Saltash Heritage Museum.

Regeneration initiatives building on the town's attractions in these parts may need to begin with a review of the facilities, transport options (bus-routes, parking and pedestrian access), quality of signage, street maps and promotion available.

### **Coordinating change**

The diversity of players within the regeneration process underlines the need for co-ordinating action and reducing uncertainty. There is a particular need for comprehensive conservation plans and management schemes for particular sites and areas of the town, to guide and inform future action.

Saltash's high quality and diverse historic environment forms a crucial element in the town's character and sense of place. It also creates major opportunities, to an extent that would justify allocation of significant resources to project development and obtaining funding. The aggregate benefit in increased economic activity, employment, and quality of life could far outweigh that derived from major infrastructure-based projects, with significantly less potential harm to the historic and natural environment.

## 8 Character areas

### 1. The Waterside

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheets 1)

This area represents the town's waterside frontage. Although linked by an industrial past, the area can be divided into two distinct parts –

1a Waterside South - the earliest part of the area to be developed.

1b Waterside North – a largely Victorian development.

#### 1a Waterside South

##### Establishing the area's character

##### *Historical background and key components*

- The first settlement, possibly as early as Romano-British but probably pre-Norman, is likely to have been on the natural beach at one of the narrowest points of the Tamar, which constituted an attractive crossing point. The first settlement would have taken the form of a group of cottages, possibly on the site of the present day Tamar Street.
- During the medieval period the area developed around the ferry and homes would have been built for the ferrymen, fishermen and those working the oyster beds.
- By the fourteenth century there was a ship yard in the Town Quay vicinity, the pre-cursor of the present day Town Quay and the domestic buildings would have been joined by fish cellars.
- During the Tudor Period, Town Quay, the oldest quay in the area, was rebuilt and the area had developed further with houses on the beach side of Tamar Street.
- It seems likely the area suffered damage during the Civil War due to its strategic position and proximity to the Battery located to the south of Town Quay.
- By the eighteenth century the boat yard had expanded to meet overflow from Devonport.
- During the early nineteenth century the ferry area was developed in order to compete with the new ferry at Torpoint, and the industrial character of the area developed alongside its traditional river-based one. Fishing and boat building still revolved around Town Quay, but to the south were a gasworks, brass and iron foundry and a builder's and coal merchants. The streets which followed the contours of the slopes were lined with two-and three storey houses, many with shops on the ground floor selling the local shellfish.
- During the mid-nineteenth century the area was dominated by the building of the railway bridge.
- By the early twentieth century industry was in decline, the foundry and boat yard had closed and a mission church stood on the foreshore strategically placed between the Union Inn and the Wheatsheaf. In addition the ferry had lost much of its trade to the railway as commuter services were developed into Plymouth.
- The mid-twentieth century solution to the decline of the area



was drastic - the majority of historic buildings were demolished and the area redeveloped as a public housing estate. The pubs survived the demolition as did the Town Quay.

- The area is now mainly residential with a leisure element provided by the pubs and the sailing facilities which were developed in the 1980s.

### **Architecture and materials**

Due to the sweeping redevelopment in the 1950s there are few historic buildings remaining in the area. The three public houses, however, still survive –

- The Boatman Inn - a grade II listed building, originally called the Passage House Inn. Parts of the core date from the sixteenth century, but the façade is mid-nineteenth century. A former archway crossing Tamar Street was demolished as part of the slum clearance scheme. Although the building is now greatly altered its rendered walls and slate roof contrast pleasingly with the adjacent massive granite railway pier.



*The Boatman Inn – originally known as The Passage House Inn*

- The Union Inn – a nineteenth century building with a strong three bay façade, and original sash windows. Its proportions are

at present somewhat obscured by the mural of the Union flag which covers the main façade.

- The Waterside – formerly known as the Wheatsheaf – this nineteenth century rendered building with a handsome slate hipped roof forms a visual counterbalance to the bulk of the Union Inn.



*The Waterside, viewed from Town Quay*

- Mary Newman's Cottage – despite its inaccurate attribution as the birth place of Sir Francis Drake's wife this sixteenth century, grade II listed cottage, built in the vernacular style with rubblestone walls and a granite central doorway, is still of great historic and architectural interest, and could contain medieval elements.
- One of the oldest structures in the area is Town Quay. The main part of this stone block construction dates from the Elizabethan period.

The major structure in this area is Brunel's railway bridge. The massive Plymouth limestone piers appear slim due to their great height and in contrast to the chunky cast iron tubular suspension. Although the columns dominate their immediate landscape the structure does not appear oppressive or overwhelming.



Due in part to the railway piers and the prominent retaining walls, the dominant material in the area is Plymouth limestone, but there are also a number of walls and steps of granite. Early photographs show a mix of materials including rubblestone and slate hanging, with the majority of buildings painted or rendered. The modern council housing is rendered and partly slatehung. In places the original render is quite badly stained, but several houses have recently been painted, breaking up the rather monochrome aspect.

### **Survival of standing historic fabric**

In deciding to demolish the buildings along Tamar Street, Silver Street and at the foot of Fore Street the town lost its greatest concentration of historic buildings. The streets comprised a mixture of cottages and town houses some as early as the sixteenth century, in a variety of styles and materials. There were humble rubblestone cottages adjacent to tall three-story buildings with classical detailing, slatehung facades above Victorian shopfronts and carved granite doorways. The only remnant remaining from this wealth of historic fabric is a sixteenth century granite hoodmould incorporated into the doorway of one of the modern flats.

The majority of buildings associated with the fishing and boatbuilding industry have been demolished apart from the warehouse at the old Ashtor Wharf in between the railway bridge and the road bridge. The gasworks and foundry buildings have all gone, apart from some stone sheds behind the sailing club, the mission church was replaced by the boys club and all the other light industrial buildings have been demolished.

### **Topography, streetscape and views**

The topography of this area is extremely striking – the land rises dramatically behind the waterfront forming a steep cliff. The early solution to this dramatic

gradient was to build along the sides of the hill and echo its contours. The earliest street to climb the slope, Culver Road, does so at an oblique angle in an effort to lessen its impact. Similarly as the houses were built they curved along the side of the hillside echoing the arc of the waterfront below. In contrast the medieval Fore Street rises straight up the slope and the drama of this steep street was further emphasised by the rows of houses that lined either side.



*The public housing still follows the basic curve of historic Tamar Street*

The subsequent redevelopment of the waterside area has somewhat lessened the impact of the early streets but their basic form still remains. Houses still curve around Tamar Street on its western side, but its southern side is now an open space. Similarly the built up shore line is now an area of grass and car parking. Silver Street remains undeveloped and is simply an access road with areas of mown lawn and uncultivated greenery. Fore Street still rises steeply but its sense of enclosure has been lost due to the demolition of a large number of buildings.

The streetscape now has a somewhat uneasy character with the surviving pubs and blocks of new housing sitting uncomfortably - not relating to each other - in a series of open, unresolved spaces. This contrasts enormously with the picturesque jumble of historic buildings once crammed into the area.

Although the striking juxtaposition of medieval fabric and Victorian

engineering praised by Pevsner no longer exists there are still a number of arresting vistas and views. Looking south from Town Quay across the River Lynher through a forest of masts the tree lined slopes below Antony House rise to the horizon. In contrast to this pastoral scene looking north-west the river is glimpsed through the powerful stone and steel verticals of the railway and road bridge piers. Looking east to the Devon waterfront presents a surprisingly rural scene with the village-like aspect of the riverside at St Budeaux giving little hint of the conurbation beyond. However if one looks south east the horizon is punctuated by the cranes of Devonport Dockyard and the high-rise buildings in the city beyond.

Despite so much wholesale demolition a number of historic walls and steps still survive in the area. These rubblestone and granite structures lend a sense of history and continuity.

### **Archaeological potential**

This is a highly sensitive area as it represents the earliest phase of the settlement. There is likely to be buried archaeological potential here of the greatest significance. There could be below ground evidence of the early domestic and fishing buildings in addition to the later industrial buildings. Evidence may survive of the early quays and wharfs

Full appraisal and mitigation works should be undertaken in this part of Saltash whenever damaging development takes place.

### **Statement of significance**

**This is the oldest part of the settlement and physically links the town with the river - the reason for its first development. The area is important for its historical significance as the site of the ferry crossing, the vibrant fishing community, boat building and**

**Victorian industry. Today it is an important recreational resource for the town providing sailing and river-based activities in addition to the small children's play area and pubs.**

### **Regeneration and management**

#### **Issues**

Following its major redevelopment during the 1960s Waterside has emerged as a residential area and centre for leisure activities. There are currently many positive aspects to the area including the river views, the leisure and commercial opportunities presented by the river, the community-based activities that centre on the boys' club and the Ashtorre Centre, and the active residents association. Whilst the increased use of power boats and jet skis could have a detrimental effect on the character of the area, more could be done to promote the river as a centre for sailing and rowing, and to improve local and visitor enjoyment.

There are a number of issues that should be addressed –

- The ferry is badly advertised both at its point of departure and in the town itself. The full potential of this marvellous leisure resource is not fully exploited.



*The area of grass between Tamar Street and the river could be enclosed by a low wall to give a sense of enclosure and thus encourage people to linger*

- There is very little definition of the different spaces both public and private. The current environmental

treatment of grass (made un-useable by the bird-droppings) and parking appears too open which can discourage local people or tourists from lingering.

- The area already supports three large pubs, a chandlery and a café within the Ashtor Community Centre, but would benefit from a more varied commercial role. This would appeal to a broader spectrum of people, and bring trade and visitors to the area during the daytime in addition to the evening.



*The Boy's Club appears tired and in need of maintenance*

- Some of the public housing and the boys' club are beginning to look tired and in need of a general overhaul.



*From the road this building on Ashtor Wharf appears to be modern*

- Beneath the road bridge on Ashtor Wharf is an historic building (possibly a boat house) which is at present badly maintained and insensitively restored.

- At present there are inadequate facilities for tourists and those using the river to leisure purposes. The present public toilet block is insensitively designed and poorly maintained.
- Silver Street appears neglected and the untended verges contrast with the beautifully maintained private gardens.
- Town Quay which dates from the sixteenth century is at present unlisted.

### **Recommendations**

- The sign for the ferry should be clearer at the ferry point, and it should be well advertised in the town centre. A shuttle service could link Waterside with the rest of the town and attractions such as the church of St Nicholas and St Faith, Elliott's shop, the Heritage Centre and Mary Newman's Cottage. The Edwardian pleasure cruises could be reinvented taking visitors up river to Calstock and the National Trust house at Cotehele, or down river to Antony House. Further visitor numbers would encourage the maintenance of the area improving the environment for its residents.
- The land attached to the housing should be more clearly defined. The children's play area with its Brunel themed equipment already encourages visitor use, and this area could be further enhanced if the grass were enclosed, possibly by a low wall, planted with trees and provided with benches. As the road is not a major route its surface could be softened in order to encourage the perception of the whole area as an open amenity space. Parking should continue to be provided in its current form, but the surface here should be equally informal and pedestrian friendly. These measures would



improve the environment for both visitors and residents.



*The road surface on Tamar Street could be softened*

- By expanding the commercial activities in this area to include retail (possibly surf wear shops or an art gallery), restaurants and additional cafes the area could attract people who would not necessarily wish to visit a pub. A greater mix of amenities would encourage people to visit the area during the day and this would improve the general security when the residents are at work.
- The public housing and community buildings should be well maintained in order to preserve the quality of the area, to improve the environment for local people and to present a welcoming aspect to encourage visitors. Following a campaign by SWRA the public sector housing in Tamar Street has been painted and planning permission has recently been granted to the Livewire Youth Project to refurbish their premises. Further initiatives such as these should be encouraged.
- Restoring the old boat house would encourage a reuse that could give public access to one of the few surviving historic buildings relating to the old riverside industries.



*The building on Ashtor Wharf is in fact of historic interest and should be restored and reused*

- The public toilet block should be replaced by a well designed building with shower and toilet facilities for the rowers and canoeists. This would add to the local and visitor enjoyment of the area.



*Silver Street represents a possible site for regeneration*

- Silver Street, subsequent to the clearing of the historic housing remains an unresolved space. If it is to remain an area of open space it should be properly landscaped and maintained. Alternatively it could be a site for redevelopment (taking into account its archaeological sensitivity). A public park, amenity or attraction could present an opportunity to link the town centre to the Waterside area.
- Town Quay should be listed in recognition of its historic importance, and to ensure its preservation.

## 1b. Waterside North

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 2)

### Establishing the area's character

#### **Historical background and key components**

- Late thirteenth century records show a tide mill to the north at Salt Mill Creek, but no early development occurred here as the site consisted of an area of mud at the foot of a steep cliff.
- The first development occurred in the early seventeenth century when the muddy foreshore was reclaimed. A new quay, Sand Quay was sited here to alleviate some of the pressure from the busy Town Quay. Initially the quay was mainly used to unload barges carrying sea-sand to dress the arable land.
- During the eighteenth century the quay area developed to include a boat building yard. The area was accessed by a road from the southern waterside area and a track that led to Salt Mill Creek in the north.
- In the 1830s access to the area was greatly improved by the building of a Turnpike Road which led northwards and was initially known as New Road and later as Old Ferry Road. There were limekilns at the water's edge and by 1840 the first cottages in the area were built on the eastern side of the new road adjacent to the river. To the western side of the road a quarry had been excavated into the Cliffside.
- In common with Waterside South the area was dominated in the mid-nineteenth century by the building of the railway bridge.
- By the late nineteenth century the area had developed enormously with a long row of cottages stretching from the by now redundant quarry in the south to beyond Sand Quay in the north. There were three wharves – New Wharf, Commercial Wharf and Ashtor Wharf and a pontoon.



*Brunel Terrace, developed in the late nineteenth century on land behind Sand Quay*

- By the 1930s the industry by the waterside was in decline and the area had begun to redevelop as a leisure area. A bathing place was formed to the north of New Wharf and the Rustic Tea Gardens had been built on the site of the old quarry in 1906. The gardens closed in the 1920s and were replaced by Daw's Creamery in 1932.
- During World War Two Saltash played an important part in the D Day preparations. A Landing Craft Maintenance Gridiron was built on the foreshore near Ashtor Wharf.
- Work began on the road bridge in 1959 and led to the demolition of a number of buildings to the south of the quarry site.
- The area is now residential with all the old cottages on the western side of the road still standing and a new

complex of flats built on the site of the creamery. The Quay is now a leisure area used by yachtsmen and for water sports. Behind it there is an open area of lawns, known as Jubilee Green.

### **Survival of standing historic fabric**

None of the early industrial and boatbuilding structures survive in this area. The land around New Wharf is a flat area of grass, bordered by a low wall and bollards. Around Commercial Wharf (the original Sand Quay) there is a low row of modern storage sheds and a slipway, but otherwise this area too is largely an expanse of lawn.

Remnants of the former quarry workings can be glimpsed behind the new flats, and on the slopes to the south there are still areas of walling used by the Victorian engineers to shore up the cliff.



*Walls used by the Victorian engineers to sheer up the cliff adjacent to the quarry*

### **Architecture and materials**

The only surviving historic buildings in this area are the row of cottages along Old Ferry Road known as Brunel Terrace. Two small cottages at the southern end were lost when Sand Quay Lane was rerouted to make way for the new flats. The remaining cottages have a mixture of rendered and slate hung facades with slate roofs, low front garden walls and later porches. At the northern end is a double fronted house with a small pedimented doorcase. This house used to be a pair but its neighbour was

demolished and replaced with a modern detached house.

Adjacent to the cottage row, to the north, stand five Edwardian rendered terraced houses with longer front gardens.



*Edwardian terraced housing adjacent to Brunel Terrace*

### **Topography, streetscape and views**

The topography of this area initially prevented any development, and what we see today is essentially a man made landscape - the green area adjacent to the shore is on reclaimed land and the flats are built in a hollow created by the quarry.

In the past Old Ferry Road would have appeared more enclosed, but the demolition of all the buildings on its eastern side has created an open aspect directly on to the river. This contrasts with the intensive development of housing on the western side.

From Sand Quay due to the lack of buildings there are wide panoramas up and down the Tamar. Looking north the views are very picturesque with undulating hills covered in fields bordered by hedges on either side of the river, and views up the River Tavy as it meanders under the Tavy Bridge. Looking south from Sand Quay lies the dramatic prospect of the road bridge which juts out from the cliff above, with the railway bridge behind. Here the view is of steel against stone, giving an altogether more modern impression than the view from Town Quay.



### Archaeological potential

On the foreshore is a concrete 'gridiron' on which the landing craft were beached for inspection. It and an adjacent small quay are now designated as a Scheduled Monument. Any work or repairs in this area would require scheduled monument consent.



*The Second World War grid iron*

Below ground evidence may still survive of the old limekilns, ship yard and Quay cottages.

### Statement of significance

In conjunction with Waterside South this area forms part of the town's historic waterfront which included industry and fishing. The nineteenth century character of Waterside North is still appreciable in Brunel Terrace, but the rest of the area retains little of its former incarnation and is perceived as a modern recreational area.

### Regeneration and management

#### Issues

- The area around Jubilee Green and Brunel Green has recently been landscaped. Whilst these areas represent pleasant green open spaces they still have an ad hoc unfinished character, and make no reference to their historic industrial past.



*Further work is required in the Jubilee Green and Brunel Green area*

- The area is very quiet during the day. A number of people drive to the car park to eat their lunch, but there are no facilities.
- The nature of the road between Town Quay and Brunel Green does not encourage pedestrians to move from one area to the other.
- The Second World War Landing Craft Gridiron is designated a scheduled monument, but at present lacks any interpretation

### Recommendations

- Jubilee Green is an important area of open space for the town, but it could be further landscaped and enhanced. The large number of bollards could be reduced and joined by railings in order to tie the scheme in better visually, and the quality of the pontoon could be improved. The area's importance as an historic industrial site could be celebrated through interpretation panels. This would add to the visitor enjoyment of the area and assist local people in their understanding of the town's history. SWRA is proposing an older children's play area on Brunel Green and this should be encouraged as it would serve the local community and add to the visitor attractions.
- New boat houses could incorporate a commercial element such as a café or

ice-cream parlour to cater for those visiting the area.

- The road surface between Town Quay and Brunel Green could be softened to encourage pedestrian access and help visually link the two areas. This could be further reinforced by an avenue of trees. Linking the two areas would add to visitor enjoyment which could be further enhanced by a riverside walk, which could follow the shoreline, but also encourage digressions into the town. This amenity could be enjoyed by both local people and tourists.
- The Second World War Gridiron should be interpreted in recognition of its important role during the preparations for D Day.

## 2. The Old Town

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 3)

### Establishing the area's character

This area includes the commercial core of the settlement based on the market.

It can be divided into four distinct areas –

2a The Market Core

2b Medieval Residential Area

2c Remnant historic streetscape

2d Early urban development.

These separate identities are partly due to their historic development, but in the case of 2c the distinct area is formed by its twentieth century treatment.

### Historical background and key components

- The first development in this area occurred when the de Valletort family created a borough in the late twelfth century. The planned settlement consisted of three streets incorporating the already existing Culver Road (known as Back Street) and two further parallel roads to the north - Middle Street and Fore Street. There were over a hundred plots, a market place on the site of the present Alexandra Square and a chapel of ease dedicated to St Nicholas.
- In the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century a fair site was created to the west of the settlement on the site of Fore Street (which was originally wider than its present form). Adjacent to it stood a chapel dedicated to St Faith on the site of the present Regal Court. Plots were developed either side of Fore Street as far west as the present HSBC bank, on either side of Middle Street and on the northern side of Back Street with a few plots on its southern side.
- The town continued to develop and during the Tudor period supported two market houses.
- Loss of fabric occurred during the Civil War.
- In the eighteenth century the prosperous Corporation paid for the rebuilding of the Market House and a number of large villas were built off Fore Street. Development further west along Fore Street included the poor house and the turnpike keepers house.
- At the start of the nineteenth century the town continued to develop to the west with a number of detached villas. This western expansion was encouraged by the demolition of the arch in 1859.
- In 1869 Mill Lane was renamed North Road and a Board School was built on its western side just behind Fore Street. The ancient open spaces still survived at this date - the market place, the fair site and the yard behind the Green Dragon - which had been used for the post coaches and was later used as a site for monthly sales. The Methodist Chapel was moved from its Lower Fore Street premises (which was sold to the Masons) to a new building on Fore Street (now the post office site). Fore Street was by now lined by shops servicing the flourishing population.
- By the early twentieth century the southern extremity of the fair site had been developed for housing, further terraces and detached houses had been built at the western end of Fore Street and more detached houses along

Longstone Road. Further housing developed along the southern side of Middle Street, now called Albert Road and a cinema was built on Culver Road. During the 1930s the Green Dragon was demolished and replaced by the Co-op, but the open space behind was preserved as a cattle market and then car park.

- During World War II a large number of bombs fell on this area principally on the southern side of Fore Street. The cinema and Wesleyan Chapel were also destroyed.
- For many years after the War there were temporary shops and undeveloped sites in Fore Street. These sites were eventually replaced with shops, a new cinema and a chapel. (The chapel and cinema were both subsequently demolished, but the chapel was rebuilt on a new site in Glebe Avenue.)
- From the 1950s the civic centre of the town moved from the area around the market place to a site along Longstone Road. Buildings were demolished in Fore Street at this time to make way for the new road bridge, and further buildings including one of the eighteenth century villas, were lost to enable the building of the tunnel in 1986.
- The area of the old market square is now a block of buildings including the Church House flats, parking for the buildings and a grassed area, but the Guild Hall and the church still provide links to its original function. There are still shops either side of Fore Street and Lower Fore Street, the oldest being found in the latter.
- During the 1990s Fore Street was landscaped and a traffic calming

system introduced to make it more attractive for pedestrians.

### **Architecture and materials**

In this area can be found the widest variety of architectural styles and building materials. The predominant building type is the late Edwardian terraced house with rendered façade and slate roof. Along Fore Street this building type is modified to include a shopfront on the ground floor. Rendered facades are enlivened by applied pilasters, plat bands, doorway pediments and keystones.



*Slate hung villas on Callington Road*



*The red brick façade of Lloyds Bank on Fore Street*

No 43 Lower Fore Street has a sixteenth century granite doorway with a segmental head. This and the adjoining building were originally a town house subsequently altered in the second half of the nineteenth century. The earliest

surviving domestic buildings are eighteenth century town houses including Nos 24 and 34 Lower Fore Street - both rendered buildings with decorative doorcases. Examples of early nineteenth century villas can be found along Callington Road to the west of Fore Street. Nos 2 and 4 both have slate hung facades with parapets. Similar in style is Kingsleigh House, Culver Road which also dates from this period. The house has an earlier, probably sixteenth century, south western granite archway added to the property from an earlier building in Saltash.

In addition to the render, rubblestone, slate hung and ashlar facades there are a number of brick buildings. These include Lloyds Bank on Fore Street whose red brick façade is articulated by painted stone detailing. Brick is also used on stone and rendered buildings to form window arches and shopfront pillars.

Overall classical motifs are the predominant style feature, but there are a number of Gothic designs including pointed arch windows and doorways. There are also examples of the Art Deco style including the stepped façade of the chemist Underhill's and the clean lines of the ashlar fronted Co-op.



*Shopfronts on Lower Fore Street*

Although many shopfronts have been lost some still survive beneath modern alterations. There are a number of good survivals on Lower Fore Street – these include traditional wooden shopfronts with central doorways, stallrisers, fascia and consols, and more unusual designs

which feature brick piers, plaster capitals, roundels and dentil enriched cornices.

Buildings of note in the area include:-

- The Brunel Inn – originally the New Inn, then the Commercial Hotel. This Victorian building has retained its original façade with classical details such as the wide cornice and pediments above the doorways.



*The Brunel Inn, Fore Street – the façade still retains many Victorian details*

- The Railway Hotel – originally the Rodney. A Victorian former hotel with giant order pilasters, an original fascia board and piers articulating the ground floor.
- The Guildhall - a grade II listed building, built in 1775. Essentially a building of two parts - the Doric columns of the ground floor reflecting its former life as a market building, whilst the lofty first floor with pilasters beneath wide modillion eaves intimates its later civic function.
- St Nicholas and St Faith Church – originally a Norman church remodelled in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Built from rubblestone with slate roofs mainly in the perpendicular style. Surviving Norman features can be found in the tower and the blocked south door.
- Duncan House, Fore Street – listed grade II. An early nineteenth century town house with a portico porch on its western side, and main elevation



addressing its southern garden front. The house presents its back to Fore Street in the form of irregularly placed windows.



*The western porch of Duncan House*

The northern side of Fore Street is predominantly formed from modern purpose built shops. These buildings address the street and are stepped down the slope in a similar arrangement to the older shops on the southern side. Although in some cases the buildings have traditional elements, such as slate hung first floors and slate pitched roofs, the shopfronts are recessed behind pillars and some have modern flat roofs.

### ***Survival of standing historic fabric***

This area suffered particularly badly during the Second World War air raids with the destruction of houses and shops on Fore Street, the cinema on Culver Road and the Fore Street Wesley Chapel.

Further losses were incurred by the building of the road bridge including the substantial town house Rosecliffe, the early nineteenth century Masonic Hall and many smaller houses and cottages on Lower Fore Street.

Excavation for the tunnel and bypass in the mid 1980s required the demolition of the North Road School, which had already been badly damaged by fire, and the eighteenth century house The Mansion, set back to the north of Fore Street.

Other losses in the area include the Regal Cinema, the third build of the Wesleyan

Chapel in Glebe Avenue, an early nineteenth century villa on the site of the present Wesley Chapel on Callington Road and part of a terrace of houses along Belle Vue Road

### ***Topography, streetscape and views***

The early development of this area embraced the challenging topography - the three original streets following the course of the slopes. The survival of these roads which are still fringed with buildings, stepped down the slopes gives a strong impression of its past character even though the church is the only building to survive from this period.

The areas of open space behind the Co-op and the northern end of Alexandra Square are important surviving elements of the medieval town plan. There are few areas of open space within the town centre and these sites are particularly important for their historic integrity and the impact they have on the surrounding streetscape.

Dramatic views and vistas are afforded by the more precipitous slopes. Looking east from Fore Street opposite the junction with Culver Road the different roof lines and projections of the shops march down the hill in a series of steps and gables culminating in the strong block of the Guildhall. Beyond this jumble of materials and shapes rises the smooth geometric curve of the railway bridge and on the horizon lies the spread of Plymouth. Looking in the opposite direction, due to the steepness of the slope the view is quickly terminated by the umbrella shapes of the conifers in Victoria Gardens.

Looking east down Lower Fore Street from the Guildhall the row of historic shops dramatically ends and the road appears to continue somewhat incongruously into the modern road bridge, as the slope of the old road is such that it disappears from view. Looking west from the same position the tall buildings either side give a great sense



of enclosure and an impression of how tightly developed Fore Street once was.



*Looking east along Lower Fore Street towards the road bridge.*



*Looking west up Lower Fore Street.*

The villas along Longstone Road (now Callington Road), although on level ground, have far reaching views out over the river to the north east. This was no doubt one of the reasons this site was originally chosen.

Views in this part of Saltash are not all about swooping gradients and far reaching vistas. More human scale and intimate views can be enjoyed in Alexandra Square and the Culver Road area. Looking east from the Two Bridges Inn in Albert Road glimpses of the waterside buildings can be seen beneath the railway bridge that spans the road.

Most of Fore Street is now wider than its original medieval form. During the 1960s redevelopment the new shops on the northern side were built further back to create a far wider road. The landscaping and traffic calming measures which took place in the 1990s included widening the pavements, planting trees and installing bollards, planters and benches. These works were designed to lessen the impact of the road and improve the environment for local shoppers.



*Glimpses of the Waterside from Albert Road*



*Cobbled paving behind the Guildhall adjacent to the church*

The only major disruption to the de Valletort planned street pattern is the junction between Fore Street and the slip road leading to the road bridge. The size of the junction now constitutes a real tear in the fabric of the town centre.

Areas of traditional paving still survive, such as the cobbles behind the Guildhall. In some areas traditional granite kerbs and gutters are retained alongside modern tarmac pavements.

There are a number of surviving historic walls in the area including those outside the church and along the eastern side of Alexandra Square, and the walls outside Kingsleigh House. One of the most interesting survivals is the walls and granite gateway to Mansion House which still survive in the Working Men's Club car park to the north of Fore Street.



*Original walls outside Kingsleigh House*

### **Archaeological potential**

As the site of the early borough, there is likely to be archaeological potential of the greatest significance here, both buried and in remains incorporated into later structures. Individual plots may reveal complex sequences of buildings with potential for remains of boundaries, rubbish pits and ancillary buildings behind.

Particularly sensitive areas are the old market area around Alexandra Square and the old fair site where below ground evidence may exist of old market buildings, the extent of the market and the chapel of St Faith.

Evidence may survive for the overall extent of the 'planted' medieval settlement and the former existence of burghage plots.

Full appraisal and mitigation works should be undertaken in this part of Saltash whenever damaging development takes place.

### **Statement of significance**

**This area is of great importance both as the busy commercial heart of Saltash, and also for its historic significance. This modern shopping centre overlies a medieval planned town, evidence of which still survives in the street pattern, boundaries and plot layouts, and the church. Despite a number of significant losses this area still holds the greatest diversity of architectural styles in the town and its most significant buildings.**

### **Regeneration and management**

#### **Issues**

The creation of the by-pass and the 1990s streetscape enhancement scheme undoubtedly improved the environment in the centre of Saltash, but the area still has a number of issues that need to be addressed.



*Poor quality shopfronts on Fore Street overlying historical detailing*

- The shopfronts on many historic and modern buildings are badly designed and of poor quality materials.
- The environmental scheme is beginning to look tired and dated.





*The environmental scheme on Fore Street needs to be reinvigorated*

- There are a number of unused or underused shop buildings.



*Some of the shops on Fore Street are presently empty*

- The car parks, whilst well situated are poorly landscaped.



*The alleyways need to appear more inviting*

- The area has a number of alleyways and opes giving good connectivity, but they are currently poorly presented and uninviting.

- The signage is in places cluttered and elsewhere does not encourage the visitor into other parts of the town.
- The historic area of Lower Fore Street is currently underused with a number of empty shops and buildings.



*The shop next to the recently restored Heritage centre needs to be restored and reused*

- The entrances into the area at the foot of Fore Street and below Victoria Gardens are at present poorly treated and do not act as inviting 'gateways'.
- There are a number of unused buildings to the east of the Co-op car park.



*Redundant buildings behind the Co-op*

- The current conservation area does not include large parts of the historic borough.

**Recommendations**

- There are a number of historic shopfronts still extant behind modern inappropriate replacements.

These should be restored and reinstated where necessary. The Heritage Centre has a vast collection of historic photographs which could inform their design. Modern shopfronts should be consistent, well designed and of good materials. The columns of the modern shops on the northern side of Fore Street will shortly need replacing. This represents an opportunity to use quality materials and reintroduce a consistent design to the area. Good quality shopfronts will enhance the experience of local people and encourage further shoppers to the area.

- A shopfront scheme would improve the current building stock and new businesses would be attracted to Fore Street. If the area were to attract small businesses selling local produce or specialist items Fore Street could widen its appeal. Traditionally the scale of shops on Fore Street is small, and this should be respected. These plots however are ideally suited to small businesses. A number of modern shops at the eastern end of Fore Street have remained empty for some time. These modern, poorly designed buildings represent an opportunity for redevelopment. Any new buildings, however, should respect the scale, proportion, site and detailing of the existing shops. These sites do not represent opportunities for large scale redevelopment.
- The environmental scheme on Fore Street has been a success in so far as it provides important on-street parking, it provides places to sit and it distances shoppers to an extent from the traffic. However, after more than a decade the street furniture is beginning to look tired and dated. The basic layout could remain, but with increased planting – both trees and raised beds, and new bollards, benches and litter bins. These could

perhaps be designed by local artists, reflecting local distinctiveness and thus avoiding mediocre standard catalogue products. By removing the clutter and generally upgrading and greening Fore Street this could further enhance the shoppers' experience of the street and increase trade.

- At present the area is well provided with car parks – with sites in Alexandra Square, behind the Co-op, either side of Belle Vue Road and behind the post office. For many these sites are the first experience of Saltash and at present they are not areas of quality and do not welcome the visitor into the town. The car parks should all be landscaped and the ticket machines, notice boards and other street furniture should be well designed. The car park behind the post office is also the site of a number of offices. This is no longer a backplot area and the rear elevations of the buildings should be better designed to reflect their new status. The lawned area to the north of Alexandra Square could be properly landscaped and the whole area upgraded to reflect its important historical role as the market centre.



*If properly landscaped the car parks would provide a better first impression of the town*

- The alleyways and opes should be upgraded with quality paving and wall treatments to encourage their use. At present they appear dark and potentially menacing and yet should

provide good access from Fore Street to the areas beyond.

- Signage in this area should be rationalised. All effort should be made to keep signs to a minimum, to avoid clutter and to make sure they are appropriately sited in relation to the historic environment. In addition good quality, clear, well placed signs could direct people from the town centre to other under-used parts of the town such as the Waterfont and Alexandra Square.
- With its wealth of historic buildings, original paving and medieval street layout Lower Fore Street should present an area of outstanding quality in Saltash. However, despite some highly commendable building restoration work in recent years, including the restoration of the Guildhall, Elliott's Store and the Heritage Centre, the area is still underused and a number of the buildings remain unoccupied. This should be a priority target area with schemes such as THIs, HERS or LOTS to ensure the restoration of these lovely buildings. Buildings in a good state of repair will encourage new businesses which could serve the tourists visiting the museums and Waterfront as well as local people. The present road layout on Fore Street encourages drivers to turn left onto the road bridge, but this should be addressed to encourage access to this part of the town.
- The roundabout below Victoria Gardens and the area at the foot of Fore Street could be better designed to provide high quality 'gateways' into the town centre. At present the lighting, signage clutter and poor quality street furniture do not create a welcoming environment. Attempts have been made to green the space at the foot of Fore Street, but this area is so busy with traffic, the site might

be more successful if it were built on. This would in turn lessen the impact of the busy traffic junction.

- The buildings to the east of the Co-op car park represent an opportunity for regeneration close to the town centre. However this is a historically sensitive site as the current buildings, although some of them are relatively modern, have been built to respect the historic open space and the lines of the former burgage plots. Re-use of the older buildings should be encouraged and any new development should be of a sympathetic scale and maintain the historic boundaries.



*Conservation area status could help to ensure the design of modern buildings is better suited to the surrounding historic environment*



- The conservation area should be extended to include the historic borough area. This area is of great importance both for its archaeology, street pattern and surviving historic structures. This sensitive area should be included within an extended conservation area in order to control

future design and development, and to preserve the historic spaces and views. The importance of including areas of unsuccessful modern development 'loss intrusion or damage' within the conservation area is recognised by English Heritage in their notes regarding conservation area appraisals, as these negative elements can 'offer a welcome opportunity for change'.



### 3. Suburban Villas

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 4)

#### Establishing the area's character

This area can be characterised as a suburban development of semi- and detached villas, mainly built to take advantage of Saltash's superior river views. However, unlike the earlier planned medieval borough the development of the suburbs was less homogenous leading to four distinct sub-character areas –

3a Planned development

3b Opportunistic garden infill

3c Informal development in former orchards and market gardens

3d Early twentieth century villas

#### Historical background and key components

- The word 'Longstone' possibly meaning menhir appears on the OS map of 1880 perhaps indicating an ancient site.
- The first recorded development in the area did not occur until the late eighteenth century when a Baptist chapel was built on Culver Road. This was followed in 1805 by the building of a large private house and garden, Culver House on Coombe Road, whose façade was remodelled in 1824.
- The first major development in the area began in the mid nineteenth century following the building of the railway bridge. Port View was a planned development of villas built on the slopes above Coombe Creek to take advantage of the southerly prospect and river views. Two roads were laid out with gates at either end, but to begin with only the lower

road, Lower Port View was developed. During the same period the large detached villa, Dunheved House was built along St Stephens Road, with similar far reaching views.



*The early nineteenth century Culver House on Coombe Road*

- By the 1880s a number of houses and large cottages were built amongst the orchards on land to the east of North Road. These properties had large gardens and were also built to take advantage of views across the river. During the same period Saltash began to spread further west along Longstone Road with a row of three cottages built side-on to the road.
- By 1904 there was a regular rail commuting service to Plymouth and the town needed to expand to accommodate its ever growing population. The development of Longstone Road continued with two villas built to take advantage of the far-reaching river views. The Port View development continued to grow with a number of detached and semi-detached villas built on Higher Port View. Added to the development was a hospital, St Barnabas, a vicarage, tennis courts and one of the original houses, Vinelands, was converted into a Roman Catholic Franciscan Friary. Coombe Road was also developed further at this time with a number of villas set in the grounds and a field to the south of Culver Park. Below the villas were sloping gardens which

abutted the water's edge where several had boat houses.

- By 1930 there were detached and semi-detached villas fringing Longstone Road. The houses on the northern side addressed the road but had long gardens with views across the river and the new recreation ground, tennis courts, bowling green and allotments that had all been built in the area. Several more plots at the western end of Higher Port View were developed. The area to the east of Mill Lane (which was by now known as North Road) had altered little apart from the replacement of the orchards by glasshouses, indicating that market gardening was still taking place around the villas.



*Villas along Callington Road (originally Longstone Road)*

- The building of the road bridge in 1961 further swelled the population of the town and the area to the east of North Road developed enormously. New housing estates based on new drives such as Pound Park were built on the former fields and market gardens. The remaining sites in Port View were developed, including the former tennis courts and the friary was converted into private accommodation. Two further villas were built in the former garden of Culver House.

### **Architecture and materials**

The majority of houses built in this area in the early part of the nineteenth

century display the same uniformity of design and materials that are found in the Urban Expansion Character Area (4) which will be examined below - namely solid structures with gable ended slate roofs, rendered facades, bay windows, and decorative features such as crested ridge tiles, carved barge-boards and terracotta finials.



*Villas on the Port View Estate*

The early twentieth century houses along Coombe Road accord to this style, but are unusual in that they do not address the street. At road level there are a series of cream brick gate piers and later 1920s garages, with drives that lead down the slope to the detached villas. These are built facing the river with long gardens which reach down to the foreshore where several have boathouses.



*Italianate villa on Lower Port View Road*

The villas along Callington Road (originally Longstone Road) are also mainly of this type, but interspersed with an Arts and Crafts design in stone with a characteristic sloping roof, a vernacular slate hung house and a bungalow of the same period.



*Arts and Crafts style villa on the Port View Road*

The original mid-nineteenth century houses in Lower Port View were built on a grand scale in a variety of styles. These include Italianate - with campanile-style towers, Venetian windows and classical detailing. There are a number of later typical early twentieth century rendered villas and several Arts and Crafts designs.

The houses to the east of North Road (formerly Mill Lane) are in a variety of styles and materials reflecting their piecemeal, unplanned development. They include simple stone built houses with slate roofs, some with slate hanging, a pair of villas with Gothic detailing and a greatly extended stone Arts and Crafts style villa (possibly by the same architect who designed the villa on the Callington Road).

Buildings of note include :-

- Culver House – dating from 1805 this grade II listed villas has a three bay façade with a large central round headed stair window, added in 1824. Like the other houses along Coombe Road it presents its rear elevation to the road and is built to take advantage of the river views.
- St Barnabas Hospital – built in 1889 this building is an interesting combination of large domestic Arts and Crafts architecture – gables, half timbering, terracotta tiles – and a Gothic chapel with an apsidal east end.



*Rear elevation of St Barnabas' Hospital*

### **Survival of standing historic fabric**

In the main there is a very good survival of historic fabric in this area. The pair of cottages at the south eastern corner of the recreational ground has been demolished, but otherwise there are no significant losses. The friary has reverted back to private accommodation and the tennis courts in Higher Port View are now built over. The main loss in the area has been the gardens of the earlier villas which in some cases have been developed for housing. In the Port View area, however, although the development was gradual, the ground was from the start allocated for building purposes.

The unplanned development to the east of North Road was most vulnerable to development due to the large areas of uncultivated land, and yet despite the building of large quantities of modern housing all the original buildings still remain.

### **Topography, streetscape and views**

Most of the buildings, the majority of which are domestic, in this character area were built to take advantage of the views across the Tamar River. The varying topography of the different sub-sections however lends them their own distinct character.

The houses along Callington Road are built on level ground, but the land falls away to the north and east. This originally afforded uninterrupted river views, but for some of the houses the river is now obscured by overscale



buildings to the north of Fore Street. The houses all address the busy street, which forms one of the main routes into the town centre.



*River views from Lower Port View*



*A wide carefully planned street on the Port View Road*

The development along Port View was laid out on southern facing slopes which look directly onto the junction between the River Tamar and the Lynher. The roads were built to follow the contours of the land with the houses on relatively flat land and the gardens sloping away to the front and the rear. The streets are wide with a boulevard character, which is accentuated by the planting in the gardens and the large number of mature trees. The development is lent homogeneity by the garden walls built of rubblestone with Plymouth limestone gate piers.

The cottages and villas built to the east of North Road all address the views over the Tamar where it is joined by the Tavy. Even the houses adjacent to North Road present their rear elevation to the street. The historic character of the streets in this area has been somewhat

overwhelmed by the modern housing and drives, but the survival of stone stables and outbuildings still reflect its relatively recent rural past.

The first house to be built along Coombe Road, Culver Park was built with its back to the street and the subsequent development of villas along the southern side of the road continues this pattern. The houses are built further down the slope and as a result the southern side of Coombe Road appears relatively open, as the building is so far below the street line. The villas have similar views to those of Port View further up the hill.

### **Archaeological potential**

The relatively late development of much of this character area on greenfield land results in little predictable potential for buried archaeology. There could, however, be potential for buried archaeology in the south western corner of the recreation ground where a 'Long Stone' was marked on the early OS maps.

### **Statement of significance**

**In the main this area has retained much of its original character – an area of genteel housing with sizeable gardens and river views. This character has been somewhat eroded to the east of North Road where the modern housing developments make the original landscape of cottages and market gardens difficult to read, and along Callington Road due to the increased weight of traffic.**

**The well cultivated gardens with mature trees form an important 'green ring' around the densely developed town centre.**

### **Regeneration and management**

#### **Issues**

At present this area has retained much of its historic integrity and value, but further measures should be taken to preserve its character for the future.

- The area currently lies outside the conservation area.
- With the increasing pressure for more homes, the surviving large gardens are at risk from subdivision and development.



*The large gardens on the Port View estate are vulnerable to development*



*Garden walls could be lost if left unprotected*

- One of the principal features of the area – the excellent garden and boundary walls, and historic outbuildings – are at present unprotected.
- Despite the high standard of architecture and design in this area Culver House is the only listed building.

### **Recommendations**

- Conservation area status would recognise the special architectural and historic importance of this unusual planned development and promote policies and schemes for its preservation and enhancement.

- At present the large villa gardens provide a ring of green around the densely built medieval core. This green area is an important feature of views into the town and greatly enhances the streetscape. Thus development within these plots should be avoided as it would have a detrimental effect on not only the immediate surroundings, but on the character of the town as a whole.
- The majority of historic garden walls, outbuildings and walls defining the service lanes still survive. An Article 4 Direction is recommended to prevent any incremental alterations and demolition. This would prevent small losses which in aggregate could seriously undermine the historic value of the area.



*One of the fine buildings on Lower Port View that could be considered for listing*

- There are a number of sizeable villas in this area dating from the mid-nineteenth century which should be considered for listing. At present these buildings are unprotected, and area at risk from inappropriate alteration and demolition. Their loss would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and the town as a whole. Maintaining the overall quality of the area in terms of its streetscape, green areas and historic buildings adds to the overall attractiveness of the town as a place to live and invest in.



#### 4. Circa 1900 Urban Expansion

(Fig 7 & Character Area summary sheet 5)

##### **Establishing the area's character**

This area represents the major development of the town during the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century following the establishment of the railway.

It can be divided into three distinct parts :-

4a Terrace development on land released by the railway development.

4b Mixed development of terraces and villas.

4c Speculative terrace development.

##### **Historical background and key components**

- There was no early development in this area although the road between the ancient boroughs of Esse and Trematon would have followed the route of St Stephen's Road. This road was certainly in existence by 1700.
- In common with the development of Character Area 3 the first buildings in this area were early nineteenth century houses set in their own land – Dunheved House in 4b and Tamar House in 4c.
- The building of the railway in 1859 and the subsequent growth in the population resulted in a widespread building programme. To begin with the area most affected was directly adjacent to the railway. This area was previously fairly undeveloped (only two buildings were destroyed when the railway was built), but by 1880 there were three sizeable villas to the east of the station. The new railway line had created pockets of land whose convenient site close to the

new station made them attractive for development.

- By the late nineteenth century development began on the land formerly used for orchards and market gardens for development. By 1905 Mill Lane, now known as North Road, was flanked by terraces, including Maristow Terrace, and further new roads of terraced housing were created to the east including Homepark Road, Tavy Road, Albert Terrace and Westbourne Terrace. Houses were built along the old Elwell Road and the new development included a drill hall. Although most of the newly built houses were terraced they ranged from simple two storey buildings, to villa-style houses with verandas and three story town houses.



*Terraced housing on Home Park Road*

- By 1905 the land around the railway was further developed with a terrace of villa-style housing on the western side of Coombe Road with views across the river and cottage-type housing along Tamar Terrace built to the east of the station.
- The pressure for new housing encouraged the development of the town to the west on the site of former fields and an old quarry. Here the development took the form of large semi and detached town houses along St Stephen's Road and smaller regular terraces on the newly created

Hamoaze Terrace, Victoria Road and King Edward Road. The leafy suburban atmosphere of the area was enhanced by the creation of Victoria Gardens in 1897.



*Terraced house on Home Park Road with crenellations and balcony*



*Tamar Terrace – a row of simple cottages enhanced by a central pediment*

- By 1930 all the land around the station was developed with railway buildings to the north of the line and housing to the south. Development continued in the 4b Area with the development of land to the west of King Edward Road with further quite tightly packed terraced housing and the creation of a new road Dunheved Road in the grounds of Dunheved House. A new road was built, Glebe Avenue, linking North Road to

Callington Road with terraces built at its eastern end. The first council housing estate was built to the north of Westbourne Terrace.

- Today the fields between Westbourne Terrace and Homepark Road are covered by a modern housing estate and late 1930s terraced housing lines the west side of North Road. The empty plots off Dunheved Road have been sporadically developed with detached houses, as has the rest of Coombe Road.

### **Architecture and materials**

With the exception of the brick-built drill hall, and a few former shops along North Road, almost every other building in this area is a house. A further homogenising factor is the style of architecture. The vast majority of buildings share the typical late Victorian/early twentieth century pattern book style of pitched slate roof, regular façade, small front garden, long back garden and discreet decorative features such as crested ridge tiles or terracotta finials.



*The Drill Hall*

This said there is a definite hierarchy of architectural style within the area. The detached houses on St Stephens Road are set in large gardens and their architecture includes flourishes such as classical detailing and crenulations. The house at the foot of Westbourne Terrace has an elegant veranda, as do the houses along Coombe Road and Essa Road, and the houses along Homepark Road have

canted bay windows and small cast-iron balconies.

The vast majority of the houses are rendered, but the terrace along Symons Road is red brick.

In common with Area 3 there are carefully planned elements to this character area which include well laid out service lanes enclosed by stone walls, which still survive largely unaltered.

### ***Survival of standing historic fabric***

A few sporadic bombs fell in the area, but in the main the historic survival here is very good. A certain number of original roofs and windows have been replaced with modern materials, and this is particularly a problem in North Road where the weight of traffic has encouraged the use of replacement windows. The railway goods shed and ancillary buildings to the west of the railway line have been replaced by modern housing. The Baptist Chapel was replaced by a modern building following a fire.



*Cleared graveyard to the Baptist chapel on Culver Road.*

### ***Topography, streetscape and views***

Although this area is characterised by the dense nature of its development, using previously undeveloped sites, there was still scope to take advantage of the topography in order to enjoy the river views. The houses along Westbourne Terrace all faced south east looking down the river, and the houses on Homepark Road were built on three storeys with bay

windows to take full advantage of the views. The topography of Coombe Road meant the front gardens were too steep to sit in, so the houses were built with verandas.



*River views from Westbourne Terrace*

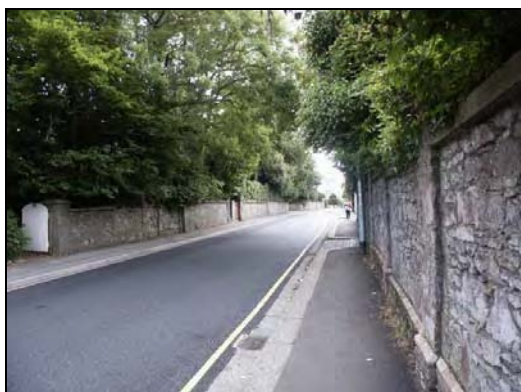


*Houses with verandas along Coombe Road*

The area around Victoria Road and King Edward Road was so densely developed many of the views are only of other interconnecting terraces of housing and cul de sacs. The area is very quiet and has a strongly residential character. St Stephen's Road, although busier, still retains a strongly domestic character due in part to its long leafy front gardens.

The roads to the east of North Road are similarly domestic and quiet. The majority have tarmac or concrete pavement, but Westbourne Terrace still retains its historic granite kerbs and gutters.





*The leafy character of St Stephen's Road is still preserved*

The domestic character of North Road has, however, been diminished by the status of the road. It is a major feeder into the town centre and onto the road bridge and as a result is constantly busy with traffic. The wide road has urban freeway-style street furniture and the two sides of the street have become divorced from one another.

### **Archaeological potential**

The relatively late development of much of this character area results in little predictable potential for buried archaeology. St Stephen's Road and Mill Lane were however historic routes into the town.



*Surviving railway building – there could be below ground evidence of further goods sheds in the area*

Evidence of the quarry west of Essa Road could still survive underground as could evidence of the former goods shed and railway buildings.

### **Statement of significance**

The villas and terraces that make up much of this character area are an important element in the overall character of the town. They reflect the town's expansion and growth in wealth following the arrival of the railway. Both streets and buildings survive relatively unaltered, and provide a strong reminder of the character of early twentieth century Saltash.

### **Regeneration and management**

#### **Issues**

In the main this area presents streets of carefully planned terraces which provide an attractive environment to live in for the people of Saltash. They are generally well preserved and maintained, but there are a few matters of concern.



*North Road is currently laid out to favour the motorist rather than the pedestrian or resident*

- The treatment of North Road currently favours the driver rather than the residents.
- There are a number of walls and outbuildings at risk from demolition.
- The survival rate of original features is fairly high, but the character of some of the terraces is gradually being eroded by incremental alterations.
- The station is currently in a poor state of repair, which could compromise its structural integrity if

repair works are not carried out in the near future.



*The station would make an excellent regeneration project*



*These charming walls that contribute so much to the streetscape are currently unprotected*

### **Recommendations**

- North Road should be treated as an historic streetscape rather than part of the B3271. Traffic speeds have been lowered to 30 miles an hour, but in addition to this measure there should be tree planting and the on-street parking extended to make this environment more people friendly. The street furniture should be on a more human scale and suitable for an historic area, rather than an urban freeway. Similarly the junction with the road bridge should be more pedestrian friendly to encourage better links between the town centre and the northern side of the town, thus improving the connectivity of the town.

- The majority of historic garden walls, outbuildings and walls defining the service lanes still survive. An Article 4 Direction is recommended to prevent any incremental alterations and demolition. This would prevent small losses which in aggregate could seriously undermine the historic value of the area.
- It is recommended this area be included within the conservation area to recognise its special architectural and historic importance to Saltash, to promote policies for its preservation and to prevent the erosion of its character by unsympathetic alterations. Maintaining the overall quality of the area in terms of its streetscape and historic buildings adds to the overall attractiveness of the town as a place to live and invest in.



*Conservation status could help protect against the loss of character through inappropriate alterations and demolition*

- There are currently plans to restore and reuse the station. These plans are to be welcomed as they would ensure the buildings good repair and increase public access. There is the potential here to provide an amenity for both local people and visitors to Saltash.



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### **Historic maps**

Gascoyne 1700

Martyn 1748

Plan of Saltash by W Smith with schedule of owners and occupiers, circa 1800

Tithe Map (1840)

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edn 1:2500 (surveyed 1858)

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### **Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Record**

Sites, Monuments and Buildings Record

Aerial photographs (obliques 1988 – 2003, black-and-white prints, and colour slides)

1994 Historic Landscape Characterisation