

Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

November 2024



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Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House, Tiverton EX16 6PP

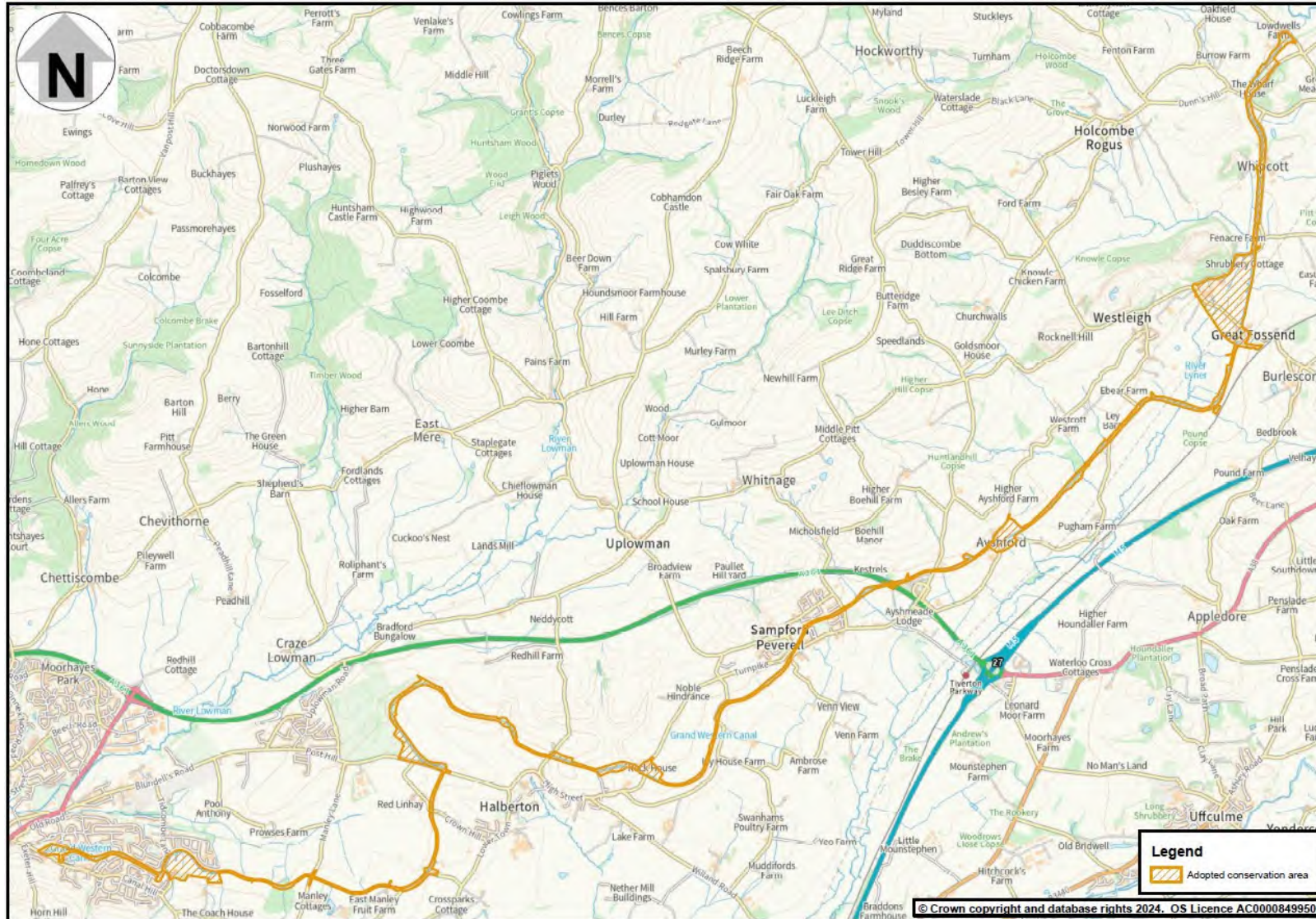
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1. Introduction

1.1 Summary of Special Interest

The historic and architectural special interest of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area is mainly derived from its historic importance as an early form of transportation within the industrial era. The canal has a notable body of historic buildings, this largely being that of the surviving bridges, as well as other buildings and structures associated to the canal along its length.

The Grand Western Canal first began as a scheme to connect the English and Bristol Channels in the late eighteenth-century. Construction of the canal was delayed until 1814, where the first phase of work began at the section close to Westleigh Quarry, as this allowed the transportation of material from the quarry to Tiverton. The layout of the canal and the historic buildings constructed along its length, constructed by the engineer John Rennie, has undergone little change over time. Much of the route of the canal passes through the rural landscape, it connects smaller settlements such as Sampford Peverell and Halberton to Tiverton and the canal would have not only physically influenced the development of these places but also socially, being a large employer. At its height, the canal connected Tiverton to Taunton.

There are buildings of a much earlier date within the Conservation Area, including a Scheduled Monument, these heritage assets are a significant contribution to the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area, its character and special historic interest. The Grand Western Canal and its industrial legacy is evidenced by the surviving examples of limekilns and its historic relationship to the settlements it passes and terminates within. Many of the historic buildings in these places are built from materials transported along its length and despite its closure to commercial traffic the canal continues to have an important relationship to this area of Mid Devon.

The Conservation Area has distinct zones and there are variations in the historic character of each one. This variation is a result of the differing phases of development of the canal and the different character of each area. The Conservation Area status of the Grand Western Canal is intended to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of these areas.

1.2 Purpose of the Appraisal

This document is to be used as a baseline to inform future change, development and design with regard to the sensitivities of the Conservation Area and its unique character. The appraisal recognises designated and non-designated heritage assets within the area which contribute to its special interest, along with their setting. It will consider how the area developed, and its building styles, forms, materials, scale, density, roads, footpaths, streetscapes, open spaces, views, landscape, landmarks, and topography. These qualities will be used to assess the key characteristics of the area, highlighting the potential impact future developments may have upon the significance of heritage assets and the character of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area. This assessment is based on information derived from documentary research and analysis of the individual character areas.

This appraisal will enhance the understanding of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area and its development, informing future design. Applications that demonstrate an understanding of the character of a conservation area are more likely to produce appropriate design and positive outcomes.

It is expected that applications for planning permission will also consult and follow the best practice guidance outlined in the bibliography.

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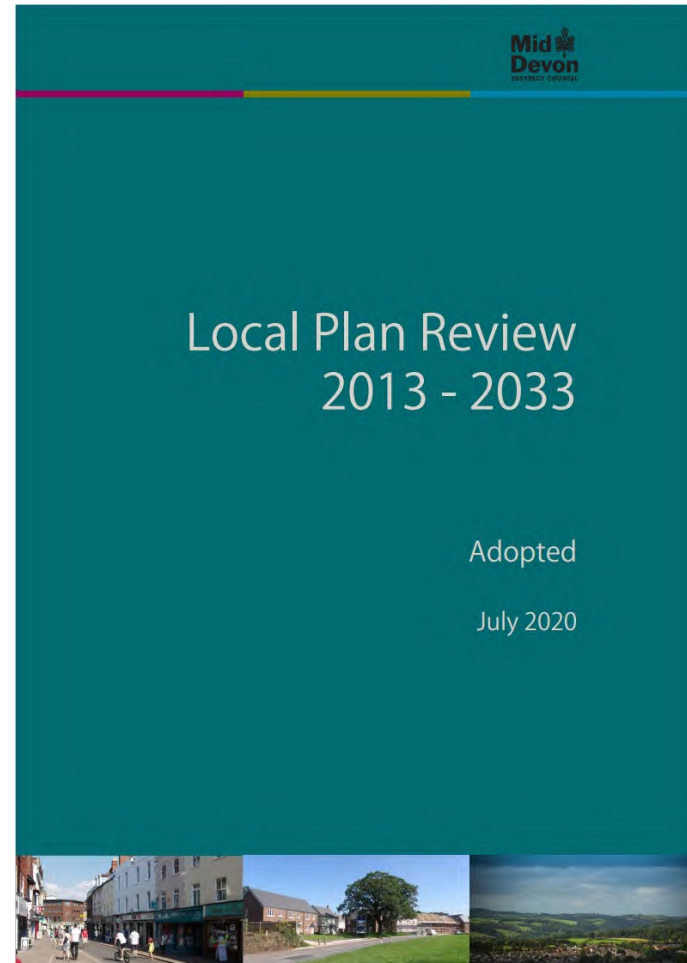
1.3 Location

The Grand Western Canal connected Taunton to Tiverton, other sections of the canal were approved however never built, as initial plans included linking the Bristol Channel to the English Channel. The only surviving section of the canal is located within Mid Devon, 17 miles north of Exeter, running between Tiverton and Lowdells, near Holcombe Rogus.

The geology of Mid Devon is largely that of red marl, sandstones and slates of the Carboniferous period, which make up the Devon Redlands. To the south of the District there are deposits of coarse breccias, also sands and clays are found to the easternmost boundary of Mid Devon.

The Canal runs from Tiverton and passes through the settlements of Halberton, Sampford Peverell and Burlescombe. Tiverton is a historic market town with a population of around 22,000 (*Census 2021*), agriculture has historically been a mainstay of the economy in the region, with the cattle market being located within Tiverton. The rural settlements of Halberton and Sampford Peverell are located along the canal and farming was also of great importance to their economy and development. The canal served these areas through the transportation of goods such as lime which was used upon the fields to control the acidity of the soil.

The Mid Devon District Council Local Plan¹



¹ Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033, adopted July 2020.

2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 Planning Policy and Guidance

National Policy

The national legislative framework for the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and listed buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HMSO 1990). Section 69 of this act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate areas which they consider to be of architectural and historic interest as conservation areas, and Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced. Section 71 requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

National Planning Policy in relation to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets is outlined in Chapter 16 of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, or NPPF (DLUHC 2023). The NPPF highlights good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, along with the appreciation of the immediate and larger character of the area in which new development is sited.

Local Policy

The Mid Devon Local Plan was adopted July 2020. Strategic policies identify areas of growth including Tiverton (Policy S10), Sampford Peverell (Policy SP1) and others. The Mid Devon Local Plan Review 2013-2033 sets out policies to guide future development.

With regard to Built Heritage the Mid Devon Local Plan includes the following policies:

DM1 High quality design

Designs of a new development must be of high quality, based upon and demonstrating the following principles:

- A) Clear understanding of the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area;
- B) Efficient and effective use of the site, having regard to criterion (a);
- C) Positive contribution to local character including any heritage or biodiversity assets and the setting of heritage assets;
- D) Creation of safe and accessible places that also encourage and enable sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling;
- E) Visually attractive places that are well integrated with surrounding buildings, streets and landscapes, and do not have an unacceptably adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of the proposed or neighbouring properties and uses, taking account of:
 - i) Architecture
 - ii) Siting, layout, scale and massing
 - iii) Orientation and fenestration
 - iv) Materials, landscaping and green infrastructure
- F) Appropriate drainage including sustainable drainage systems (SUDS), including arrangements for future maintenance, and connection of foul drainage to a mains sewer where available;
- G) Adequate levels of daylight, sunlight and privacy to private amenity spaces and principal windows;
- H) Suitable sized rooms and overall floorspace which allows for adequate storage and movement within the building together as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standard with External spaces for recycling, refuse and cycle storage; and
- I) On site of 10 houses or more the provision of 20% of dwellings built to Level 2 of Building Regulations Part M 'access to and use of dwellings'.

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DM11 Residential extensions and ancillary development

Extensions to existing dwellings and other ancillary development will be permitted provided they:

- a) Respect the character, scale, setting and design of existing dwellings;
- b) Will not result in over-development of the dwelling curtilage; and
- c) Will not have a significantly adverse impact on the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring properties.

DM16 Fronts of shops and business premises

Proposals for the alteration, replacement or construction of fronts for shops or business premises must be well proportioned and suited to the character of the building, adjacent buildings and the surrounding street scene. Where security measures such as grilles or shutters are proposed, these should be designed as an integral part of the buildings front, maintaining the visibility of the building's interior and minimising visual impact. Independent ground floor access to the upper floors must be retained.

DM25 Development affecting heritage assets

Heritage assets and their settings are an irreplaceable resource. Accordingly the Council will:

- a) Apply a presumption in favour of preserving or enhancing all designated heritage assets and their settings;
- b) Require development proposals likely to affect the significance of heritage assets, including new buildings, alterations, extensions, changes of use and demolitions, to consider their significance, character, setting (including views to or from), appearance, design,

layout and local distinctiveness, and the opportunities to enhance them;

- c) Only approve proposals that would lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss or the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework are met;
- d) Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use; and
- e) Require developers to make a proportionate but systematic assessment of any impact on the setting and thereby the significance of heritage asset(s).

The Mid Devon Local Plan can be accessed on the Council's website:

[Adopted Local Plan and Policies Maps - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/adopted-local-plan-and-policies-maps)

Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act 2011 has provided the opportunity for people to have more say in their local area through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans and the contained policies may also be of relevance to the Grand Western Canal, its Built Heritage and potential future development.

'Made' Neighbourhood Plans can be accessed on the Council's website. The Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan is of relevance to the Grand Western Canal, as part of the Conservation Area falls within this area. With regard to Built Heritage the Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan includes Policy:

- T1: Location and Scale and development in Tiverton
- T4: Character of Development

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- T6: Design of Development
- T8: Local Buildings and Structures of Merit and Heritage Assets at risk

The Tiverton Neighbourhood Plan can be accessed on the Council's website: [Neighbourhood planning - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/Neighbourhood-planning)

Other advice and guidance

Mid Devon District Council has published further guidance upon the historic environment, this includes:

- Design Guide to Windows and Doors- Mid Devon District Council
- Design Guide to Roofs and Chimneys – Mid Devon District Council

Both documents can be accessed on the Council's website: [Design Guidance - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/Design-Guidance)

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2.2 Designation of the Conservation Area

The Grand Western Canal was first designated in October 1994. The Conservation Area has not had a written appraisal or any revisions to its original boundary.

There has been a great deal of change since the Conservation Area was first designated. This document has reviewed the Conservation Area's boundary and special interest to account for the changes that have occurred, including policy, and provides an accurate account of the area as it is today.

The following sections describe the architectural and historic interest of the area which make it worthy of designation.

2.3 Article 4 Directions

The Conservation Area is not currently covered by an Article 4 Direction.

2.4 Revisions to the Boundary

This Appraisal has reviewed the Conservation Area boundary and this has been revised to reflect the changing methodologies of good practice and to provide a robust strategy towards the Conservation Area. This review is in line with the NPPF guidance on Conservation Areas (Paragraph 197).

Maps showing the proposed reductions and additions to the Conservation Area boundary can be viewed within the appendix (Section 7.6).

Proposed Reductions and Adjustments

Tiverton

The boundary shall be adjusted to remove much of the large woodland which is adjacent to the canal, also known as Snakes Wood, close to Manley Bridge. It is recognised that the woodland provides an attractive

setting however it is itself of little historic or architectural interest, or shares any close association to the canal.

Halberton

There is an area of agricultural land included within the Conservation Area to the north, a short distance from Rock House to the east. The existing boundary includes an area of a deep and steeply sided embankment and historic maps show that this area also included an orchard and small quarry. The boundary at this location shall be reduced, removing open areas of agricultural land which has little architectural or historic interest.

Sampford Peverell

The current boundary includes the modern buildings of 16 and 16a Turnpike, to the southwest of Sampford Peverell. The buildings are not of historic or architectural interest, therefore they are to be removed. The large garden with veteran trees forms an attractive setting.

To the northeast of Sampford Peverell is Holbrook Farm. The building is rendered with a slate roof, with UPVC windows and doors. To the rear of the farmhouse is a large industrial/storage building and the yard is utilised for parking or storage. The building is to be excluded from the Conservation Area as it does not have the necessary architectural and historic special interest worthy of conservation area designation.

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Holbrook Farm

Ayshford

Ayshford contains several buildings that make a significant contribution to the architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. To the north, the current conservation area boundary follows the canal with an area which projects southward, taking in agricultural land. Historic maps show that there is a sluice at this point however the existing boundary takes in a large area of land that is without historic or architectural interest, thus it is proposed to be reduced.

Burlescombe

Nos.1 and 2 Quarry View are twentieth century dwellings of modern materials including UPVC windows throughout. The buildings are excluded as they do not have the necessary architectural and historic special interest worthy of conservation area designation.

An area of woodland to the north of Whipcott Farm is to be reduced as the land lacks sufficient architectural or historic interest to be included.



Quarry View Cottages

Proposed Additions

Canonsleigh

The boundary as previously designated did not include the limekilns immediately adjacent to the boundary. The limekilns are Grade II listed, thus their architectural and historic significance is recognised by inclusion upon the National Heritage List for England (list entry number: 1106470). It is proposed to include the building within the Conservation Area.

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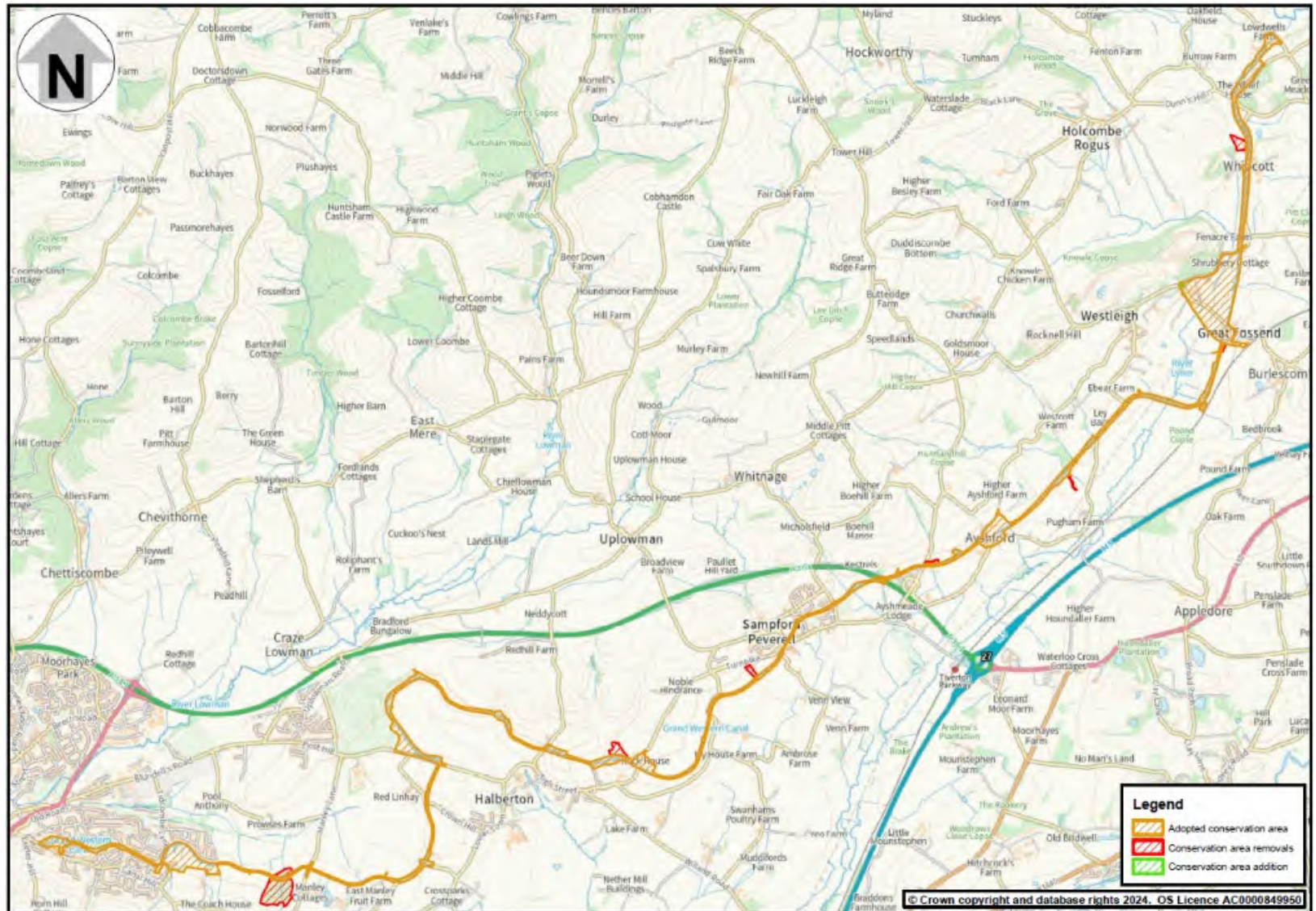


Grade II listed Limekilns

The interactive conservation area boundary map, showing all the proposed additions and removals can be viewed on the Council's website.

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Map of the Conservation Area boundary



2.5 Designated Heritage Assets

There are 34 designated heritage assets within the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area, this includes a Scheduled Monument.

There are three categories of listing, Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II. Grade I listed buildings only account for 2.5% of those included upon the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and Grade II* for 5.8%. Scheduling is the oldest form of heritage protection for nationally important archaeological sites.

Many of the list entries are of bridges which cross the canal and other structures associated to the Grand Western Canal such as lime kilns. These are as follows: Canal Basin Lime Kilns at NGR SS 9638 (list entry number: 1384779), Limekilns at ST 066 174 (list entry number: 1106470) and Waytown Limekilns (list entry number: 1140142). These lime kilns were built beside the Grand Western Canal which transported limestone and other materials, these are particularly important as the kilns demonstrate the growth of industry along the route, which it also regionally supported. Many of the bridges are also contemporary to the Canal, such as Greenway Bridge, Halberton. Some bridges such as Black Bridge which carried the Mineral Railway Line from Westleigh Quarry were constructed at a later stage.

These buildings and structures have been listed due to their special historic and architectural interest, under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Listed buildings are protected by legislation and there are policies in place to ensure that any alterations preserve or enhance their special interest. It is possible to extend, alter or demolish a listed building but this requires Listed Building Consent and sometimes planning permission.

A full list of all designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area is included on Appendix 7.3. Buildings that make a notable contribution or are prominent within the Conservation are described in more detail within each Character Area, Section 4.2.

2.6 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

All buildings, structures and planned landscapes located within a conservation area make a contribution to its special interest and significance. Many of these may make a positive contribution and some can be identified as making either a neutral or negative contribution.

Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF 'as a building, monument, site, place area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Mid Devon District Council has compiled a Local List of non-listed buildings which make an important contribution to the locality. This list is not exhaustive and as part of this appraisal for the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area, buildings or structures have been identified as making a positive contribution and should be considered for inclusion upon the Local List.

The list of heritage assets within this document is also not exhaustive and there is the potential for further identification through the decision-making process on planning applications and neighbourhood plan-making processes.

2.7 Archaeological Potential

Within Mid Devon and the Tiverton area there is longstanding evidence of human occupation, with the Iron Age hillfort site of Cranmore Castle to the southeast of Tiverton.

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The Grand Western Canal is an early nineteenth century feature and there is the low potential for the survival of medieval or earlier archaeological finds in close proximity to the canal due to the original excavations during its construction. However, the canal is of a significant length and there has been some archaeological fieldwork in the immediate environs of the Grand Western Canal. The Grand Western Canal also passes close to or through smaller settlements such as Halberton, which has some evidence of its Saxon origins, including features such as burgage plots. Sampford Peverell and its historic core centres around the church, with the potential for medieval or possibly earlier evidence of occupation.

Much of the Grand Western Canal is located within the rural landscape of Mid Devon and there is evidence of medieval occupation and agricultural activity, as shown by strip fields and visible field boundaries, outside of the Conservation Area. Earlier occupation is also visible from flint scatter however this is more limited.

Within the Conservation Area, the majority of the buildings and structures date from its construction in the nineteenth-century however there are earlier buildings present. The Conservation Area contains the medieval site of Canonsleigh Abbey, a Scheduled Monument (list entry number: 1003830) with the individually listed Gatehouse and ruins of Priory Mill. The site of Ayshford Court (list entry number: 1147581), a fifteenth-century manor house and Ayshford Chapel (list entry number: 1325900) are further evidence of medieval occupation, with possibly earlier origins.

In accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF where development includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest a desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation should be carried out.

2.8 Heritage at Risk

Historic England publishes a yearly list of Heritage at Risk. To be included on the list, buildings must be Grade II* listed or above, with the exception of Grade II listed places of worship and Grade II listed buildings in London.

Other designated heritage assets can also be included on Historic England's register, including conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Wreck Sites. Non-designated heritage assets are not considered by Historic England for inclusion on the Heritage at Risk Register.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area is not on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register and there are no Grade I or Grade II* at risk entries on within the Conservation Area. However, the Scheduled Monument of Canonsleigh Abbey is included upon the list. The local authority shall proactively engage with land owners to improve the condition of the asset with the aim to remove it from the register.

There are also many areas of the Conservation Area and buildings, including Grade II Listed buildings, which would highly benefit from enhancement, repair and maintenance which are identified in Section 5 of this document.

The interactive conservation area boundary map, showing all the designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area can be viewed on the Council's website.

3.0 Historical Development

The following section provides an overview of the history of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area and the surrounding area.

Prehistory (50,000BCE- 43AD)

There is evidence of longstanding human occupation within Devon since the Lower Palaeolithic, with hand tools found near Axminster and further evidence of activity from the Mesolithic. Later Neolithic sites include the notable settlement of Merrivale, upon Dartmoor. Other sites include long barrows and earth mounds associated with burials, examples of this near to the Grand Western Canal include the long barrow south west of Putson Cross (list entry number: 1019058) and the bowl barrow to the North West of Putson Cross (list entry number: 1017132). Later evidence of occupation includes the site of Cranmore Castle to the south of Tiverton, an Iron Age hillfort and a Scheduled Monument.

Large *univallate* hillforts date to the Iron Age period, most having been constructed between the fourth century BC and the first century AD. They are rare surviving features and most are located within southern England. Hillforts undoubtedly had a defensive purpose however they also acted as food stores, meeting places and perhaps religious centres. Cranmore Castle overlooks the confluence of the Rivers Lowman and Exe, a fertile area and an important crossing place.

Roman (43 – 410 AD)

Devon is a County that contains much evidence of Roman occupation and there are a number of finds of Roman date within the locality of Tiverton and the Canal, with large number of finds to the north of Tiverton, where a fort at Bolham was established. The location was strategically important

on route to the *Civitas* capital and legionary fortress at Exeter. A large jar of 3rd century Roman coins was unearthed at Little Gornhay. Pottery sherds and coinage have also been unearthed within the town of Tiverton.

The influence of the Romans is also legible through their road building and network which reached across Devon, connecting fortifications and sites of economic importance.

Medieval (410 – 1540AD)

The majority of Devon's towns have their origins in the later Saxon period, the first documentary reference to the town of Tiverton is within King Alfred's will dated 899, then known as *Twyfyrd* (two fords) and later within the Domesday Book as *Tovreton*. The Domesday Book records that there was a reasonably large population. The settlements of Halberton and Sampford Peverell record a high number of livestock, indicating the important role of agriculture for the local economy from an early period. It is a reasonable assumption that Tiverton, with its position between the Rivers Exe and Lowman served as a historic market and meeting place.

The remains of Canonsleigh Abbey, a scheduled monument, is situated beside the western bank of the Grand Western Canal. Canonsleigh Abbey was first founded as an Augustinian house by Walter de Claville in 1160. It was refounded by Maud, Countess of Devon as an abbey for Augustinian nuns in 1282.² Towards the Dissolution in 1539, there were eighteen nuns including the abbess. The surrender of the abbey to the Commissioners of the king took place on 16 February 1539.³

² *The Cartulary of Canonsleigh Abbey*, ed. Vera C.M. London, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, VOL.8 (Torquay, The Devonshire Press, 1965), p.12.

³ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J.Caley, H.Ellis, B.Bandinell et al (London:James Bohn, 1817-1830), Volume VI, p.334.

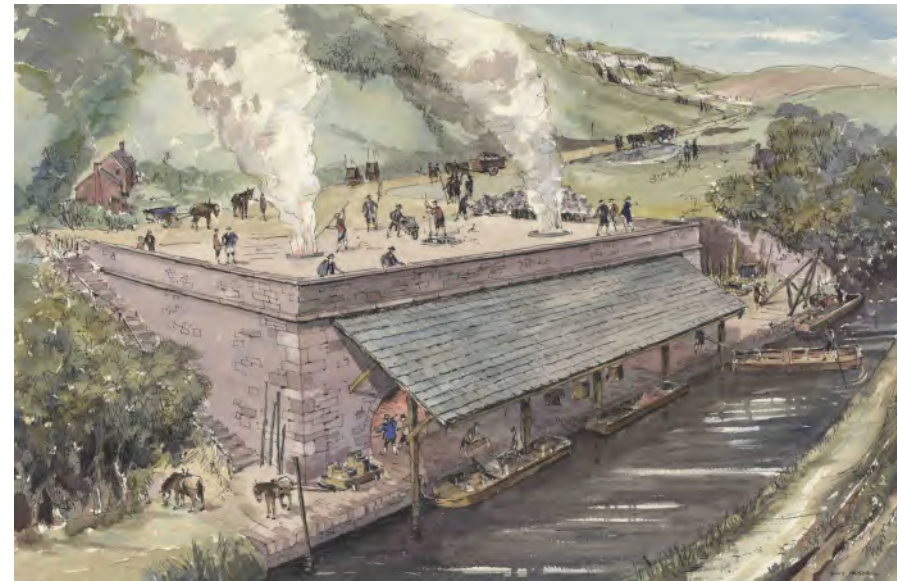
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Post-Medieval (1540 – 1901AD)

Throughout the early post-medieval period Devon remained an economy largely based on agriculture. However, the mining of tin and the quarrying of this resource was also exploited. Taking advantage of the rich pastures of the county, farmers reared sheep to provide wool. The Devon cloth industry grew from early on in this period and from the late fifteenth century onwards the wool trade was incredibly important with global demand for English wool. The chantries of the parish churches of Tiverton and Cullompton show the wealth this gave rise to. Many water powered mills were constructed to support both the agricultural industry and the production of wool (fulling mills) however few survive today.

One such mill was reputedly at Canonsleigh Priory (now demolished) and others such as High Mill in Halberton and Sampford Mill, in Sampford Peverell. Coldharbour Mill is one of the best preserved mills in the country, having been in continuous production since 1797.

From the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, lime was used by farmers across their lands to reduce the acidity of the soil. Many limekilns were constructed across the county to support the industry and there are some surviving examples on the banks of the Grand Western Canal.



Waytown Limekilns (@Tony Haskell & Devon County Council)

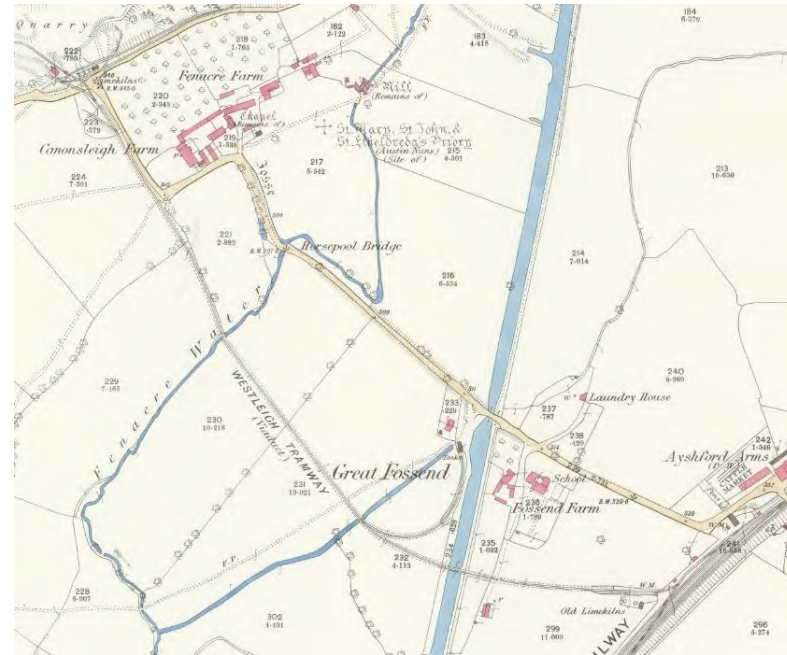
The Grand Western Canal emerged from the 1770s as a scheme to connect the Bristol and English Channels. The initial surveys by Robert Whitworth, under the supervision of James Brindley (Engineer) were not acted upon. The plans were later revived by 1792 and the Engineer William Jessop was engaged and the findings of his report were presented on the 29th November 1793. The report by Jessop included the potential trade the canal would carry, such as coal and limestone. The quarry site at Westleigh was an important source of lime and made an attractive source of income for the Grand Western Canal. In 1794 John Rennie, the engineer of the Kennet & Avon Canal was brought in and a revised route for the canal was approved by the committee. However, there was strong opposition from Exeter City Council and it was not until 1796 that on the 24th March, the act for the canal was passed by Parliament.

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During the late eighteenth century, the country was embroiled in war with France during the French Revolutionary Wars, so funds were diverted and the start on the canal was delayed. It was not until 1810 that work began at the Holcombe Rogus (Canonsleigh) area. The decision to start here was due to the ability to quickly trade the quarried lime and limestone to return a profit.

The Grand Western Canal and Westleigh Quarry were both linked to one another's development in the early nineteenth century. The high demand for lime for agricultural purposes drove the financial prospects of the quarry and therefore also the canal. The easternmost quarry at Westleigh was known as Barge Quarry showing the importance of the canal and the limekilns built in this area to the local economy. Other smaller quarries were also supported by the canal, such as that of Whipcott, to the north of Westleigh Quarry. Historic maps show the quarry with tramway, limekilns and a smithy beside the canal.

By 1810 it had been realised that the original route of the canal would run directly through the village of Halberton. A second Act of Parliament was passed in 1811 for the variation of the line to Tiverton, to pass around Halberton. The first barge to travel the length of the canal to Tiverton, laden with coal was in 1814, however by this point the total cost of the canal had far exceeded estimates.



OS 1st ED 1889 (©National Library of Scotland)

By 1829 it was acknowledged that the anticipated volume of trade between Tiverton and Westleigh was below the volume required to return a profit, therefore plans were rekindled for the connection to the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. Construction began in 1831 and this portion of the Grand Western Canal featured seven boat lifts, designed by James Green.

The canal lifts each consisted of a pair of caissons, suspended upon wheels. The advantage of lifts was the speed compared to locks however the lifts were not successful, being of complex machinery with high maintenance costs and James Green was dismissed in 1836.

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Tiverton Wharf c.1845 (©Michael Blackmore & Devon County Council)

The section of canal from Holcombe Rogus to Taunton was completed in 1838 and the canal was at last fully opened. The canal to Taunton allowed coal to be transported to the limekilns at Westleigh Quarry and Tiverton. Tiverton Basin was area of high activity with wharves and limekilns found along the route. However, the profitable years of the canal were short lived with the coming of the railways notably the Bristol and Exeter Railway by Isambard Kingdom Brunel which was completed in 1848. The branch line from Tiverton dealt a further blow and this spelt disaster for the commercial profitability of the Grand Western Canal. The Grand Western Canal conceded to the railway and was leased to the Bristol & Exeter Railway Board in 1854.

After some years trade drastically reduced upon the canal with only a small portion of lime and stone from the quarries near Holcombe Rogus

being transported. The eastern line with the lifts was deteriorating and by 1863 the terms of selling a length of the navigation to the Bristol & Exeter Railway was being negotiated. It was soon apparent that the Grand Western Canal was financially in an ever increasingly difficult position and by the 13th April 1865, the ownership of the Grand Western Canal Company was transferred to the Bristol & Exeter Railway Company.



Stone being loaded at Whipcott Wharf

The Railway Company soon acted to close the Lowdells-Taunton section in 1867, dismantling and removing machinery such as for the lifts. The Tiverton to Lowdells section was spared immediate closure as local limestone continued to be transported. By 1888, the annual tonnage of stone carried on the canal was only a quarter of the annual average for

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the years 1846-54⁴. Part of this was also driven by the creation of a three foot gauge tramway to Westleigh Quarry from the Bristol and Exeter Railway. The tramway was worked by two diminutive tank engines and a wooden viaduct was erected over the canal. The 1881 census describes a local lime merchant, Mr Taylor, who employed fifty-seven men and seven boys, indicating that the transportation of lime by rail was quickly established and a commercial success, delivering another blow to the prospects of the Grand Western Canal. However, lime continued to be conveyed to Tiverton by the Canal as described in the 1892 *Sales Particulars for Whipcott Farm, Limestone Rocks and Quarries* that about 10,620 Hogsheads of burnt lime was produced over three years and a large quantity sent by the canal.

Modern (1901 – Present)

As commercial traffic upon the canal declined, other ventures such as the harvesting of water-lilies from the early twentieth century until the 1960s was carried out by the Barrie family, who took a lease from the Railway Company (now the Great Western Railway). After 1925, stone traffic upon the canal had ceased and it primarily became that of a recreation area, with people enjoying walks along the towpath.

On the 1st January 1948, the canal passed in ownership to the British Transport Commission and it was fully established by 1962 that the canal as a commercial waterway was redundant and the canal was closed to navigation in 1964. After the formation of the Tiverton Canal Preservation Society and a successful campaign to secure its future, Devon County Council took ownership of the canal on the 24th June 1971 with a cheque for £38,750 to go towards its maintenance.

⁴ Helen Harris (1996), *The Grand Western Canal*. Devon Books, p.134.

SAVE THE CANAL TOW PATH WALK

Saturday, 18th October, 1969

The Lock Cottage, Greenham	-	-	10.30 a.m.
Burlescombe (Fossend) Canal Bridge	-	-	11 a.m.
Sampford Peverell Bridge	-	-	12.45 p.m.
Halberton Road Bridge	-	-	2 p.m.
West Manley Bridge	-	-	2.30 p.m.
Tidcombe Bridge	-	-	3 p.m.
Tiverton Basin	-	-	3.30 p.m.

3.30 p.m.

CIVIC WELCOME by the MAYOR OF TIVERTON

TIVERTON TOWN BAND SEA CADET DEMONSTRATION

Issued by the Grand Western Canal Preservation Committee

Melbank, Pilscom, The New Basin, Tiverton. 10/1969

March to save the canal poster

The Grand Western Canal is a Country Park managed by Devon County Council, for the enjoyment of those either walking or cycling along the

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

towpath and along its length by boat. The canal is also managed as a County Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve.

4.0 Assessment of Significance

4.1 Architectural and Historic Interest

The historic and architectural special interest of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area is derived from its development as an early form of transportation and the subsequent commercial use of the canal, which brought about economic growth and development to Devon.

The economy of the early settlement and this area of Devon was heavily dependent on agriculture, and this remains visible today. The extent of the early settlement is still clearly defined with a concentration of historic buildings within Tiverton, the surrounding rural area and landmarks such as the castle.

The Industrial Revolution had a profound effect, this notably being the construction of the Grand Western Canal, and the industrialisation of the countryside which brought large social and economic change to previously isolated rural areas. The canal was envisioned to fuel trade and growth however by the late nineteenth century with the coming of the railway this was short-lived. With the construction of the canal other features such as the limekilns constructed along its length shows the effect it brought when in use and the goods it carried. The trade of lime and stone from the Canonsleigh area took on an importance tied to the commercial viability of the canal, as other goods were later transported by rail. The canal found purpose briefly in the harvesting of water lilies after closure of the eastern length by the railway company and later for recreation which continues to the present day. The rural setting of the canal makes a highly beneficial contribution to the Conservation Area's special interest and allows for its historic significance to be appreciated.

There is historic and architectural quality to the Conservation Area's buildings and spaces, which contribute to a sense of place. There is clear evidence of important phases of development for the canal and its relationship to the surrounding landscape and settlements.

4.2 Character Areas

The Grand Western Canal is composed of distinct areas, which have variations due to phase of development, open spaces and character. As part of this appraisal, the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area has been divided into four main Character Areas, as follows:

- Character Area One: Tiverton Basin
- Character Area Two: Halberton
- Character Area Three: Sampford Peverell and Ayshford
- Character Area Four: Canonsleigh and Lowdwells

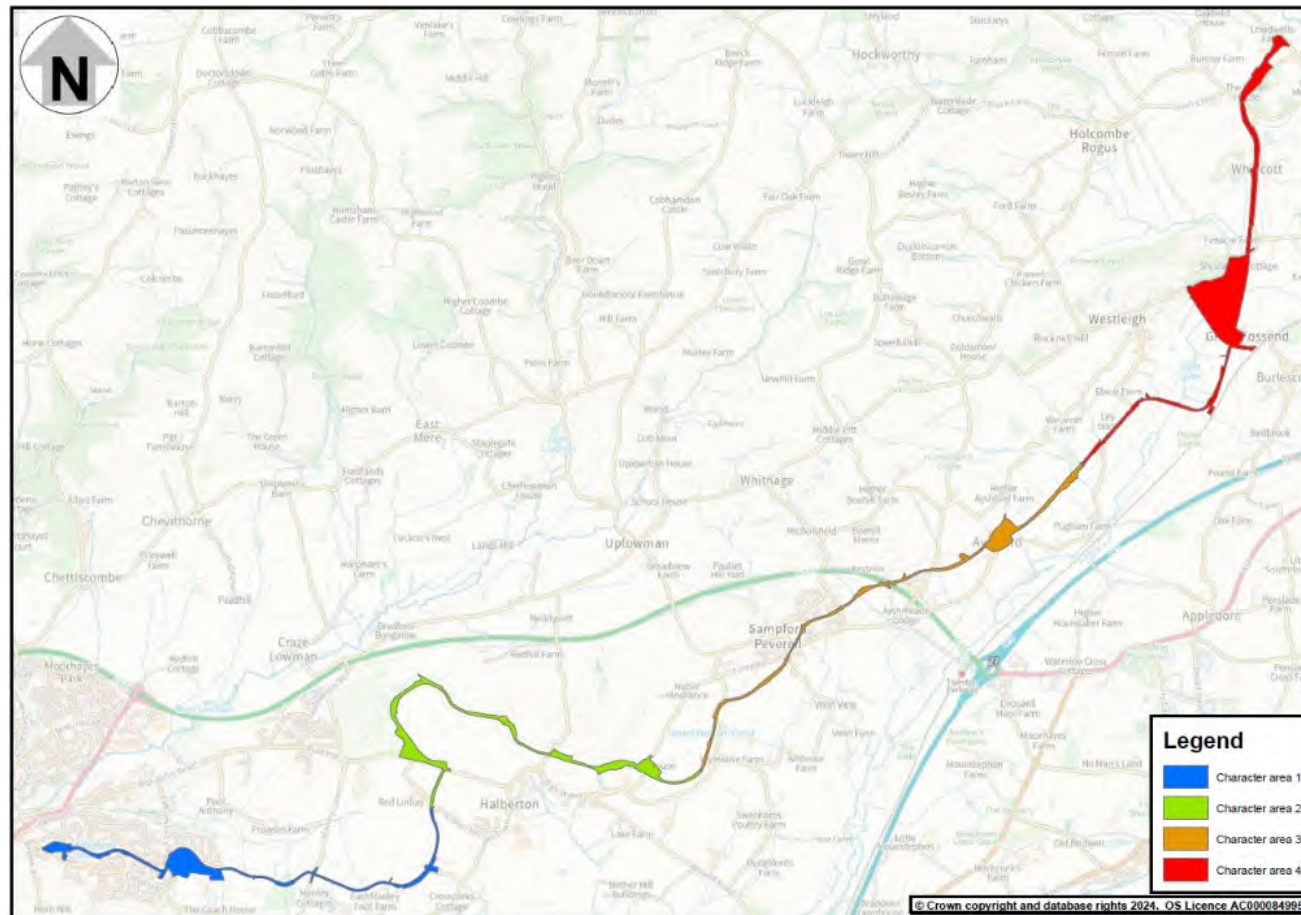
The areas have been determined by historical development, land use, appearance and building typology. Many of the defining characteristics of each character area are present and repeated in other sections of the Conservation Area. The following descriptions are not exhaustive, aiming instead to provide accessible accounts which allow for an informed understanding of the Conservation Area's special interest.

Prevailing building materials, architectural styles, spatial planning, landscaping and boundary treatments are detailed for each area to highlight the special architectural and historic value of the areas.

Designated buildings or structures which make a notable contribution to each character area are described, however the omission of any buildings from the description does not mean they make no contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area. Other notable buildings or features may be deemed non-designated heritage assets due to their contribution to these areas and are identified in the description for each.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Key views have been identified within each character area, and views from outside the Conservation Area are also highlighted, as these contribute to our appreciation of its special interest. There may be other views within or beyond the boundary of the Conservation Area which contribute to how its significance is appreciated and understood. Any proposals for development within the Conservation Area, or its environs should not only consider the keys identified within this document but others that may be relevant as part of a bespoke assessment.



Map of the four character areas of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

4.2.1 Character Area One

Description

Tiverton Basin

Character Area One represents the western portion of the Conservation Area within Tiverton and its immediate environs. The Tithe Map of 1842 shows that construction of the canal to Tiverton was complete, with several buildings and limekilns built. There is otherwise sparse development along the canal and views across the open countryside would have been appreciable, including towards prominent buildings such as Tidcombe Rectory, also known as Tidcombe Hall. Today the canal has seen significant development along its length within Tiverton.



Tiverton Basin

Layout and Land Usage

Character Area One is that of the terminus of the canal at Tiverton, and the approach to the town from Halberton. The terminus of the canal would have been an area of high activity as goods were unloaded and barges resupplied for their return journey.

The limekilns constructed beside the wharf are of a quantity which indicate the importance of the canal and the industry it supported. The layout has historic origins, linking to its industrial use and the open space afforded to the canal in this area also reflects this. Characteristically, the buildings that were built in this area were likely utilitarian and closely associated to the Canal and the operation of the limekilns. The Grand Western Canal also constructed dwellings along its length, likely to house workers and there are surviving examples within the Character Area.



OS 1st Ed c.1890 map of the Grand Western Canal in Tiverton

©National Library of Scotland

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

The small bend of the canal by Tidcombe Bridge is due to the then owner of Tidcombe Rectory, and also the adjacent agricultural land, not allowing a route through their land for the canal.

Landscaping and Open Spaces

Almost all of the public realm in the Conservation Area is located along the towpath, which is a public footpath. The towpath is not paved, being mostly of light gravel with wide embankments along the canal. The lack of hardstanding such as tarmac or similar for the footpath or markings upon the towpath is a positive characteristic. Mature trees along the towpath marking the boundary of the canal positively contribute to sense of place and rural character.

There is a clearly defined area of residential development around the canal, at its western end. The land rises around the canal to the south, with modern development visible, with many dwellings in an elevated position. There has been little development within the Conservation Area itself, with large twentieth century development to the north and south of its boundary. The limited development within the Conservation Area consists of the Canal Visitor Centre, the Sea Cadet building and other small ancillary buildings. There is also a small bridge crossing the canal, connecting the modern residential developments.

The historic buildings of Withy Cottage and Lime Kiln Cottage are orientated towards the canal, its open character provides views of Withy Cottage from the Canal. This contributes to our ability to further understand the architectural and historic interest of the area.

The canal as a historic route through the rural landscape provides opportunities for views across the landscape. Tidcombe Hall is a prominent building that has historically been appreciable from the canal and the views across the surrounding agricultural land provides a strong visual relationship.

There is limited street lighting within the Character Area, street furniture includes benches and bins along the towpath with a large picnic area at the western end of the canal. This area also includes a small play area for children at the entrance to the canal from Canal Hill and the open grassed area with veteran trees beside the limekilns positively contributes to the character of the area.



View of entrance to the canal within Tiverton with lime kilns to left hand side

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Key Buildings

Designated

The Grade II listed limekilns built into the north-facing retaining wall of the canal basin are a prominent feature. The limekilns were built approximately c.1810-14, an early phase of the canal's development, to produce lime from the transported limestone. One of the kilns is built forward and visible to the public, the others have only their working chambers visible, except where these are blocked.



Tiverton Limekilns

Withy Cottage is a small early nineteenth century house, built for the Grand Western Canal. Its slate roof and stone rubble walls show it is a

modest dwelling and it is reasonable to assume it was built to a budget dictated by the Grand Western Canal. Much alike is that of the Grade II listed Lime Kiln Cottage, with its thatched roof. The two contemporary dwellings form a pleasing historic group with the limekilns and are visible from along the towpath.



Lime Kiln Cottage

There are several Grade II listed bridges within Character Area One and these are contemporary to the canal and its construction. Some features

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

such as original ironwork and markings such as where the ropes from the horse drawn barges are visible which contribute to our appreciation of their historic interest.

The bridges are predominantly constructed of volcanic agglomerate ashlar, such as Tidcombe Bridge. Similar in appearance is that of Manley Bridge. There is signage by each bridge warning of the narrow footpath and to give priority to the horses pulling the barges that are now strictly for leisure. East Manley Bridge differs from the other bridges in its construction, it is of brick in English bond. The bridges are important surviving features which contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area.



Tidcombe Bridge

Non-designated

The section below provides a selection of the non-designated buildings in Character Area One that make a valuable contribution to its special interest. This not an exhaustive account, other important and positive buildings will be identified through the assessment of future planning applications.

The Moorings is a modest building, in the ownership of Devon County and used by the Canal Rangers. It is a nineteenth century building orientated towards the Canal and is a positive contributor to the Conservation Area's special interest and character.



Moorings

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Tidcombe Hall is a large house to the south of the Grand Western Canal, historic maps show it is on the site of St. Lawrence's Chapel. It is a prominent building and makes an important contribution to the architectural and historic special interest of the Conservation Area. The building is highly distinctive within the rural landscape.

This Character Area also includes the only surviving aqueduct within the Conservation Area. The aqueduct was built in 1847, serving the branch line of the Bristol and Exeter Railway to Tiverton, for Brunel's Great Western Railway. It is of brick and cast iron with two arches, however one line was only used. It was closed in 1962 and is now in the ownership of Devon County Council. It makes a positive contribution to the historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area.



Aqueduct

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Building Materials

Roofs

There is a variety of roof forms within the Character Area, in general roofs are orientated parallel with the canal. The Visitor Centre is of a flat roof beside the canal, otherwise roofs are predominantly pitched in form.

Thatch and natural slate is observable throughout the area, as is corrugated sheet metal for buildings of a more industrial or utilitarian character such as the Sea Cadet building. Decorative barge boards as seen upon Lime Kiln Cottage are present.



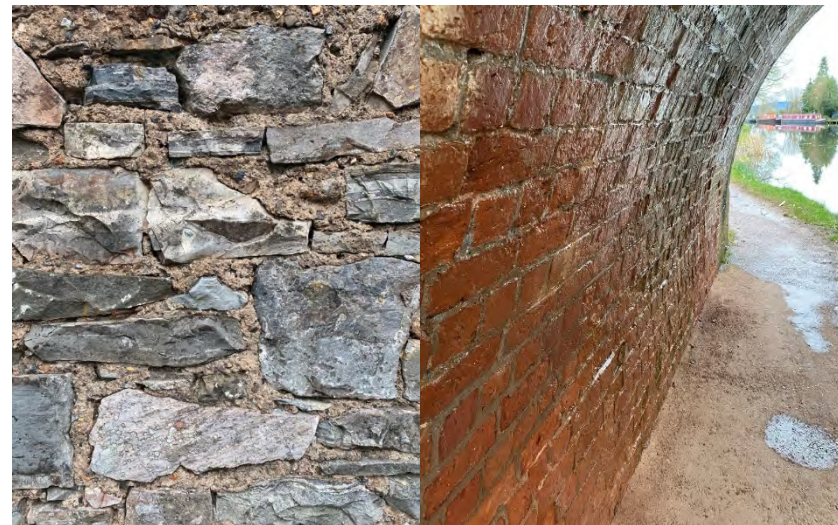
View of decorative barge boards upon Lime Kiln Cottage

Walls

Both brick, render or plaster finishes are common in Character Area One with render being used upon the stone rubble walls. Cob walling is also present and is a building material characteristically used throughout Devon. Stone rubble walls are often mixed with earthen mortar and cob walling. Stone walling is also observable as the predominant boundary treatment throughout the Character Area.

There is variation in the colour of painted rendered buildings with examples of white, cream, yellow and pink hues. Buildings are predominantly painted in light hues or pastel colours, the pinkish hues derived from the mixing of Devonshire red clays and limewash.

Exposed brickwork is present, as seen for East Manley Bridge and the aqueduct. The exposed brickwork and bond (English) enhances the historic character of the area and our understanding of part of the canal's development.



Left, stone walling, right English bond brickwork

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Windows and Doors

There are examples of surviving timber windows and doors within the Character Area. New examples are also generally of timber and of a casement pattern. Historic and traditional joinery makes an important contribution to historic places and the continued use of timber, rather than UPVC, aids in the preservation of the area's character. Moorings features timber sash windows and these are surviving examples of high-quality joinery.



Timber sash window upon Moorings

Boundary Treatments

Boundaries in the Character Area are of stone, as seen along Canal Hill and the area adjacent to the limekilns. There are also examples of timber fencing, particularly for residential boundaries to the north which are set back from the towpath. Where residential properties overlook the canal, these feature low brick walls in order to allow views through.

Tidcombe Hall includes a large boundary wall of brick with supporting buttresses. This wall can be appreciated from along the towpath. Much of the boundary to the towpath is that of mature trees and hedgerows which reinforces the rural character of the Conservation Area.

There is a large area of metal railings upon the boundary of the canal to Canal road, this is an area with the opportunity for enhancement. Other metal railings in the area are painted green in order to lessen their visual impact.



View of railings by Canal Hill

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Public Realm

The Grand Western Canal is a Country Park and an important public space, the towpath is a public footpath. There are private dwellings and spaces along its length and the existing boundaries define these areas.

Towards the western edge of the Canal Conservation Area and upon its embankment, benches and a picnic area has been provided amongst the trees. The area is well signposted with directions to the towpath and into Tiverton town centre. High-quality metal signposts of a consistent style and colour are visible and positively contribute to the area.



Signpost to the canal

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

4.2.2 Character Area Two

Description

Character Area Two encompasses the Halberton section of the Grand Western Canal and onwards from Halberton to Sampford Peverell.

Layout and Land Usage

Character Area Two is defined by the cutting of the canal through the countryside and its relationship to Halberton, which it closely passes by. As identified within Section 3, this section of the route was a late correction due to original plans placing the canal directly through Halberton. It was instead routed around the village to the north, it became one of the most expensive sections of the canal.

The area is primarily that of open fields adjacent to the canal and the towpath, with views across the rural landscape. The Character Area does include a small area of residential dwellings, some closely associated to the canal.

Landscaping and Open Spaces

Development is concentrated along the canal, which is to the north of the village of Halberton. A small cluster of buildings adjacent to Rock Bridge are included within this Character Area and make a positive contribution to both the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area.

The canal to the north of Halberton is upon a higher elevation, with views across the agrarian landscape to the village and there is a sense of tranquillity. The hedging along the towpath is somewhat overgrown in areas, yet this provides a pleasant natural quality.

Key Buildings

The sections below highlight some of the buildings in Character Area Two that make valuable contributions to its character and special interest. The

list below is not exhaustive and other significant or positive buildings may be identified through future planning applications.

Designated

At the entrance to the Character Area is the Grade II listed Crownhills Bridge. It is of a singular elliptical arch with string course and carries the road above it. To the east is a small grouping of bungalows, the surrounding field system and farmstead of Hartnoll Farm help to define the rural edge of Halberton.



Tiverton Road Bridge

A short distance from Crownhills Bridge is another listed bridge at Post Hill, where the canal makes a bend to the west. There is a Grade II listed Milestone also at this point, marking the miles to Tiverton where the canal terminates. Of the listed milestones by the canal, this milestone marks the completion of the Halberton section in 1814.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area



The Grade II listed Milestone

On the northern section of the canal two Grade II listed bridges, Sellick and Greenway, are present. Both were constructed by the Grand Western Canal and Greenway Bridge carries a road. Sellick Bridge connected a footpath to Sellake Farm, this likely being the derivation of its name.

To the north of the canal and the Grade II listed Rock Bridge is an attractive group of historic buildings, Rock Cottage was built circa 1814 by John Rennie, the engineer of the Grand Western Canal. It is of a symmetrical two window range with central door with fanlight. Rock Cottage and Rock House can both be prominently viewed from the

towpath of the canal. Rock House is an impressive large house, also built by John Rennie. It is of a symmetrical design with a central projecting bay, ashlar quoining and a large porch with four Doric columns.



Rock House

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

The Grade II listed Overock, also known as Turnpike Cottage, is a small cottage also built by Jon Rennie (circa 1814). It is of a symmetrical design with a three window range and rusticated quoins. It marks the entrance into the Conservation Area from the north and makes a valuable contribution to this grouping of historic buildings, which are closely associated to the canal.



Overock

Non-designated

Water Side is a large house, nineteenth-century in date with render and a slate roof. It is prominently viewed beside the canal and is at the location of the wharf to the canal. The surrounding buildings were built by the Grand Western Canal and it is likely Water Side was also built by the company and engineer John Rennie.



Water Side

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Building Materials

Roofs

Roofs in Character Area Two are predominantly tile covered (plain and pantile), and a mix of slate roofs. The slate roofs viewed within the area of found upon Rock House and the nearby historic buildings. Slate roofs are a common material throughout the district, pantiles are typically seen upon buildings of a more modest status or ancillary structures. For the few buildings adjacent to the canal, roofs are predominantly orientated parallel, Rock House and Rock Cottage both overlook the Canal. Water Side and its gable end is visible from the canal, it overlooks the short section of the canal which was a wharf.

Walls

Walls are largely that of coursed rubble sandstone and limestone for dwellings, it is reasonable to assume that much of the material came from the quarries near Burlescombe. For the many bridges within Character Area Two, ashlar and bricks are both observable. The brickwork upon Sellick Bridge is in English bond.

Rock House is a distinctive dwelling with detailing such as quoins, moulded stringcourse and a large porch with four Doric columns. There is also a large pediment above the arch for the carriage entry to its side elevation facing the road. The building makes an important contribution to the architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area.



Rock House carriage entry

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Windows and Doors

There is good survival of original timber sash windows and casements to the dwellings within the Character Area. The dwellings near to Rock House and Rock House itself feature fine examples of historic joinery including sash windows. Where original timber windows survive, they provide examples of high-quality workmanship which enhance the area.

There are examples of historic doors on the listed buildings. Where new windows have been installed these are of timber. UPVC as a material is not able to accurately replicate the detailing of historic or traditional joinery and its introduction within the area has a negative impact.

Boundary Treatments

The boundary for the canal is largely that of native hedgerows and planting with mature trees, which help to define its character. Where dwellings are adjacent to the canal, these also share mature hedgerows as boundaries. Low stone walls are also common in the area, in combination with hedging to enhance the privacy of dwellings.

There is a notable section of iron railings at Rock House which positively contributes to the area's character, due to the use of traditional and distinctive materials. Some close board fencing is prominent, which is an incongruous addition due to its modern appearance, comparative to the historic stone walling across the Conservation Area.



Left, railings at Rock House, Right, signage for the Grand Western Canal

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Public Realm

Character Area Two is defined by the route of the canal through the countryside, to the north of Halberton. There is a small public car park to the west of the canal at Post Hill road and beside Greenway Bridge. The grassed verges and mature trees along the canal enhance the sense of place. There is signage along the towpath where it joins other paths and these are generally of good quality, made of metal or timber. The public footpaths are well used and views across the landscape to Halberton reinforce the rural character of the area.

The area around Rock House has dwellings afforded large spacious plots with a good amount of mature planting. This verdant space benefits the Conservation Area and enhances the setting of the nearby listed buildings.



View of Rock House, Rock Cottage and Rock Bridge

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

4.2.3 Character Area Three

Description

The Character Area encompasses that of the Grand Western Canal from the periphery of Sampford Peverell through the village to Ayshford.

Layout and Land Usage

Character Area Three can be viewed as two parts, the canal set within the open countryside and the area within Sampford Peverell. The buildings at Ayshford are included as being within the countryside due to their setting.

The canal through Sampford Peverell is of a historic layout, being the route first planned and constructed under the Engineer John Rennie. There are widened areas of the canal to serve as passing places for the barges, there is a winding hole close the Church and wharfs adjacent to Sampford Peverell Bridge and Buckland Bridge. Historically, the canal passed through the small linear settlement of Sampford Peverell with the backs of dwellings orientated to the canal. Sampford Peverell has seen growth in recent years, notably to the east. There is dense residential development to the north and south of the canal in this location.

The Grand Western Canal as a Country Park is an area primarily for recreation, with a Public Footpath along the towpath. There are parts of this Character Area containing dwellings within their plots, the historic group of buildings at Ayshford are included in this area.



View of St John the Baptist from the towpath

Landscaping and Open Spaces

The Grand Western Canal to the west of Sampford Peverell is an area of valuable open space, the views across the rural landscape contributes to its character and sense of tranquillity. Areas of the hedgerow is overgrown however its presence and that of mature trees reinforces this rural character.

The Grand Western Canal within Sampford Peverell is experienced within an area with more urban characteristics, with dwellings in close proximity to the canal. However, the wide embankments and green verges with mature trees allow for its predominately rural character to still be appreciated. Views across the canal to the Parish Church of St John the Baptist and the planted boundaries of the canal within Sampford Peverell provides a pleasant enclave.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Key Buildings

The sections below highlight some of the buildings in Character Area Three that make valuable contributions to its character and special interest. The list below is not exhaustive and other significant or positive buildings may be identified through future planning applications.

Designated

Batten's Bridge marks the entrance into Character Area Three, it is of brick in English bond with stone coping. The bridge was built as part of the Grand Western Canal and parts have been subject to repair. Wide ranging views of the canal and the Devonshire countryside can be appreciated when stood upon the bridge.



Battens Bridge

Sampfords Peverell bridge is Grade II listed, built of brick in English bond with sandstone coping. It was built by the Grand Western Canal and carries the central road through the village, there are marks upon the side of the bridge from this use. A pedestrian footpath has been erected adjacent to the bridge with metal railings, there would be the opportunity for enhancement in this location.

The Grade II listed Buckland Bridge over the Grand Western Canal, built in c.1814, is of the same construction to Sampford Peverell Bridge. It is of brick in English bond, sandstone coping and at either end of the walls there are narrow projecting terminal piers. It marks the end of section of the canal within Sampford Peverell and leads to Holbrook Bridge, which is of the same construction and date.

Adjacent to Buckland Bridge is the former wharf cottage, evidence of the buildings past and the location of the wharf can be viewed by the wall next to the towpath with its arch. After the wharf fell into disuse it was used as a swimming pool and continued as such until the 1940s. The wharf was privately funded by John Richard Chave to facilitate his lime trade.

There are good views from the canal across to the Grade I listed Ayshford Chapel. The open verdant land with veteran trees greatly contributes to a sense of tranquillity and rural character. Ayshford Chapel is fifteenth century in date with late nineteenth century features, it is a private chapel of the Ayshford family and a prominent building that is part of the attractive group of historic buildings at Ayshford Court.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area



Ayshford Chapel and Ayshford Court

Ayshford Court is Grade II* listed, it is a late fifteenth century Manor House. The historic core has plastered walls, probably of cob on stone rubble footings, the early seventeenth-century wing is of Beerstone. The nineteenth-century extensions are of stone rubble and brick, forming an L-plan house. It features mullion windows with leaded panes of glass. Ayshford Court has a long history and the construction of the canal beside it would have been one of the greatest events in its history, with the change to how it is experienced and its position within the landscape.

To the rear of Ayshford Court, historic maps and Historic England identifies the location of a large barn, however the structure is no longer present. Also adjacent to Ayshford Court is the seventeenth century Stables which are Grade II listed, much altered in the nineteenth-century (list entry number: 1147593). Now only the walls remain of the original structure, a scheme to improve the condition of the listed building would enhance the area and the building. It forms part of an important and attractive group of buildings at Ayshford Court which make a valuable

contribution to the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area.



Ayshford Cottages and Ayshford House

To the south of the canal within Ayshford is the modest and attractive building, Aysford Court Cottages. The cottages are nineteenth-century in date, of stone walling and a slate roof. Despite the detrimental impact of UPVC the buildings make a positive contribution through their historic and architectural interest.

Ayshford House is a large nineteenth-century dwelling, with rendered walls and a slate roof. The historic core of the house features sash windows and is orientated to the south, facing away from the canal. Whilst also featuring UPVC, the building makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Building Materials

Roofs

Within Character Area Three roofs are predominantly of slate and in the form of dual pitched roofs with rendered or stone gables. The manor house of Ayshford Court diverges from this as it is hipped on the later addition to the rear. Roofs of dwellings in this area are typically orientated parallel to the canal, as there are often good views across to the canal and towpath. Outbuildings in this area are a mix of slate and pantile, with unsympathetic cement tiles observable upon the outbuildings to Ayshford House.

Walls

The walls within the Character Area for the bridges are a mix of sandstone ashlar and red brick in English bond. The bridges are well built and there are signs of markings upon the walls from both road and canal traffic. The markings within the arches are from the horse drawn barges and contribute to our understanding of the areas special historic interest.

The dwellings in this character area are predominantly of a stone wall construction and rendered. Ayshford Court is also partly of Beerstone which shows that it is a building of a higher status. Ayshford Chapel is mix of Beerstone detailing and local chert. Beerstone, named after the Devonshire village and quarry, is a chalk limestone and has been used for many prestigious buildings including Exeter Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Winchester Cathedral.

The painted rendered buildings within the character area are painted in light hues or pastel colours, Ayshford Court is of a pinkish hue.



Ayshford Court

Windows and Doors

Surviving historic timber joinery can be observed within the Character Area. Historic mullion windows upon Ayshford Court are present, which are an example of an early form of window most commonly used before the sixteenth century. Stone mullions were moulded on both the external and internal faces, timber window frames originally imitated this detail. Other observable window types include timber casement windows which are seen throughout the Conservation Area.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

UPVC is visible within the Character Area and this has a negative effect upon the architectural interest of the Conservation Area. There is the opportunity to further enhance the Conservation Area through the replacement of UPVC windows for traditionally detailed timber windows.

Boundary Treatments

Along the canal boundary treatments are predominantly that of mature hedgerows. Wide green verges and low brick walls are also observable and the lack of prominent boundaries better preserves the rural character of the Grand Western Canal.

Within Sampford Peverell there are sections of historic walling, notably the area adjacent to St John the Baptist contains a long length of stone walling that contributes to the character of the Conservation Area and views along it. Other notable examples of stone walling is present at Ayshford Court.

Public Realm

The towpath of the canal is the predominant form of open public space within the area. There are large areas of open agricultural land adjacent to the canal with views across the agrarian landscape which reinforces its rural character. The open space of Ayshford Chapel and its grounds beside the canal provides a sense of tranquillity.

The section of the canal through Sampford Peverell is an area of valuable open space for the village that provides a strong visual connection and link to the surrounding landscape, in an area that has a greater density of built form. There is no street lighting along the canal and few signposts, these being mostly of timber.

There are interpretation boards installed along its length and street furniture includes benches and bins. A number of telegraph poles and

overhead wires are present, with a concentration within Sampford Peverell.



Sampford Peverell Bridge and interpretation board

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

4.2.4 Character Area Four

Description

This section of the Conservation Area is characterised by its distinct rural setting, it was the first phase of development for the Grand Western Canal (c.1810). This includes the historic associations to Westleigh quarry and the importance of the quarry to the commercial viability of the canal. Some buildings in this area predate the canal and form a historic group, such as those adjacent to Canonsleigh Priory Gatehouse.

Layout and Land Usage

The layout of the Character Area has been subject to little change over time and the historic associations to places such as the quarries remains appreciable. In addition to Westleigh quarry, other smaller quarries such as Whipcott to the north and the buildings erected to support the local industry provide evidence of our past and to the development of the canal. Pondground Cottage and the land adjacent to the canal is also evidence of this, documentary evidence including the 1861 Census names the occupants as workers at the nearby quarry and wharf.

Surviving structures such as the Westleigh Mineral Railway Bridge, also known as Black Bridge (c.1873), which crosses the canal contributes to the historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area.

Character Area Four contains residential dwellings within Burlescombe and dwellings with associated land adjacent to Westleigh quarry. The dwellings within the Character Area are afforded large plots, preserving the rural characteristics of the area.

Landscaping and Open Spaces

The primary area of open space is the towpath to the canal, allowing travel along its length. It is a verdant area with views across the rural landscape, it is bounded by mature hedgerows and trees which reinforce the rural character.

This Character Area contains the largest area of open space, including the site of Canonsleigh Abbey which encompasses several agricultural fields. The topography of this area is flat and as shown above in Section 3, there are shared historic associations. The landscape contains evidence of past occupation and uses associated to the canal. The 1889 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map and 1904 2nd Edition OS map places a tramway from Westleigh quarry to the canal.



The Grand Western Canal looking towards Whipcott Bridge

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

There are heavily wooded areas beside Waytown Tunnel and trees line the canal at the northern end of this area. The canal cuts through the landscape at this most eastern section, resulting in steep embankments.

Key Buildings

Designated

The Grade II listed Ebear Bridge was constructed by the Grand Western Canal and this section opened in 1814. It is a single span bridge with an elliptical arch of large coursed block of sandstone ashlar.

The listed Milestone beside the canal is of limestone and marks the distance to Burlescombe, likely contemporary to the construction of this section of the canal. The Twin Culverts, which are brick-lined with large curved retaining walls of dressed stone are a fine example of this type of canal structure. The structure is in good condition and contributes to the special interest of the Conservation Area.



Grade II listed Twin Culverts for the Grand Western Canal

Fossend Bridge is built of coursed blocks of limestone with a parapet of red sandstone ashlar. It is of a single span and carries a road over the canal, there are shallow terminal piers at each end. This section of the canal was part of the first phase of works, opened in 1814.



Fossend Bridge

Canonsleigh Barton Farmhouse is Grade II listed, it is set back from the canal, part of a historic group of buildings including associated barns within its curtilage. The Farmhouse pre-dates the Grand Western Canal, it is of a local stone rubble with Beerstone windows. To the rear of the farmhouse is the Grade I listed Canonsleigh Priory Gatehouse. The former Priory Gatehouse is of local stone rubble with mostly Beerstone ashlar detail and some Hamstone. It is an impressive building of significant architectural and historic interest, contributing to our understanding of the monastic site of Canonsleigh Priory.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

The Scheduled Monument of Canonsleigh Abbey includes the reredorter and other structures forming part of the Augustinian religious house beside the western bank of the Grand Western Canal. The Abbey was first founded between 1161 and 1173 and was later re-founded in 1282 by Maud, Countess of Devon. It was suppressed as part of the Dissolution. Within the Scheduled Monument is the Grade II listed Canonsleigh Priory Mill, this includes the reredorter and a length of wall with the reveals of a tall window with pointed arch. The historic group of buildings contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

The Grade II listed limekilns south of Westleigh Quarry, built of local stone rubble and brick contribute to our understanding of the industrial activity associated to the quarries and the production of lime, which was closely associated to the construction and operation of the Grand Western Canal.

Fenacre Bridge is of similar design to Ebear Bridge, also being constructed as part of the first phase of works. It is of course limestone and carries a road over the canal to Westleigh Quarry, which supplied materials for the construction of the canal and the wider area. A quarry at Westleigh was named *Barge Quarry*, commemorating the importance of the canal and contributing to our understanding of its development⁵.



Grade II listed Limekilns at Canonsleigh

At the northern end of Character Area four is the Grade II listed Waytown Limekilns. The limekilns were built during the first phase of works of the canal (c.1810-1814), the limekilns would have produced lime by burning calcium carbonate found within the limestone quarried from Westleigh or Whipcott. As shown above in Section 3, lime was used both for construction and agricultural purposes. The limekilns contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area and our understanding of its industrial heritage.

⁵ R.W.D, Fenn and A.E.A, Cox (2007) *The history of Westleigh Quarry in the Country of Devon*. Bardon Hall, Leicestershire, p.92.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area



Waytown limekilns

Waytown Tunnel is Grade II listed, at either end is a low round-headed arch, it is constructed of ashlar limestone. Due to the low height of the arches and tunnel, presumably barges were pushed through by walking along the low roof.

Non-Designated

Westcott Bridge, an accommodation bridge over the Canal was built c.1810-1814 to allow the farmer's access to the land to the north. It is of ashlar limestone and stone rubble to the upper section of the wall beneath the stone capping. The bridge is of steel, having replaced the original timber deck.

Westleigh Mineral Railway Bridge, also known as Black Bridge, crosses the Canal connecting Westleigh Quarry to Burlescombe Station. The tramway was first opened in 1879 and later changed to a standard gauge in 1898 with a steel girder bridge which is present today. The bridge contributes to the historic interest of the Conservation Area, its industrial heritage and of our understanding of its relationship with the quarry. There are the remains of a platform close to where the line joined the Great Western Railway mainline and stone archways which carried the railway.



Surviving stone archway for the Westleigh Mineral Railway

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Fossend Farmhouse is a mid-eighteenth century dwelling, with date stone inscribed 1749. It is of whitewashed stone with clay pantile roof and large brick chimney stack. Whilst some detrimental changes include the installation of UPVC, overall, it is considered a positive contributor.



Fossend Farmhouse

Burlescombe Primary School is potentially early to mid-nineteenth century in date. It is of stone rubble with large stack upon the north-facing gable and central stack with bell attached. The building is a positive contributor to the significance of the Conservation Area.



Burlescombe Primary School

The nineteenth century building of Bridge Cottage, near Whipcott Bridge, is also considered to positively contribute to the historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area. The building is rendered with a slate roof and red brick chimney stacks.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area



The wharf at Fossend Bridge



Low stone wall within Canonsleigh

Building Materials

Roofs

Roofs within the area are of mix of slate and clay tile (plain and pantile), there are examples of concrete tiles installed but in general traditional roofing materials remain.

Walls

The majority of dwellings are built using local stone and red brick, with exposed brick and stone commonplace within the character area. Fossend Farm is a notable exception as it is whitewashed. Where buildings are rendered, these are typically of muted or pastel colours.

Windows and Doors

There is a high proportion of replacement UPVC windows and doors, which has a detrimental effect upon the Conservation Area. Where timber windows survive, these positively contribute to the architectural interest of the Conservation Area. The use of UPVC is one of the greatest threats to Conservation Areas, as it cannot replicate the details of traditional joinery. Where historic and traditionally detailed joinery survives, it positively contributes to the Conservation Area.

Boundary Treatments

Walling within the Character is typically that of stone, low in height and combined with planting to enhance the privacy of dwellings. The dwellings adjacent to Fossend Canal Bridge (Burlescombe) are set back from the canal and boundary treatments are a mixture of masonry and planting. There is some close-boarded fencing within the Character Area which is detrimental to the visual quality of the Conservation Area.

The embankments to the canal in this area increase in depth and also height as the surrounding topography rises in elevation. The area of Waytown Tunnel and the steep vegetated embankments result in a sense of tranquillity and isolation.

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Public Realm

The canal and the towpath is the significant open space within the character area, with a public footpath along the towpath. There is limited signage along the towpath to mark the public footpath and there are also interpretation boards which aid in our understanding of the areas historic interest.

There is a footpath adjacent to the canal close to Canonsleigh Abbey with views across the agricultural land. There is evidence of past human activity within the landscape showing the close relationship between the quarry and the Grand Western Canal. Views from footpaths outside of the Conservation Area across the agrarian landscape contributes to our experience of the area and its qualities.



View of the canal beside Whipcott Bridge

4.3 Positive, Neutral or Negative Elements

The following section outlines the broad descriptions of positive, neutral and negative attributes to buildings within the Conservation Area. Some buildings may have negative attributes however this does not mean that the building cannot be enhanced. Equally many buildings will be a positive contributor, this also does not mean that there is not the opportunity for enhancement. Often the opportunities for enhancement will be widespread across the Conservation Area, this is addressed further in the management plan. Other more bespoke issues may be identified within this section.

Positive buildings are those which contribute to the character or appearance of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area. There may be the opportunity for minor alterations to result in an enhancement to their architectural interest, improving their contribution to the Conservation Area.

Positive buildings with the opportunity for enhancement are those which make an overall positive contribution but would benefit from enhancement. Buildings within this category may be compromised due to unsympathetic alterations and additions, or through the loss of original features.

Potential enhancement to buildings within the Conservation Area includes the replacement of UPVC windows with timber units. The use of high-quality and traditional materials, including timber windows preserves the special architectural interest of the Conservation Area.

Neutral buildings make no beneficial or adverse contribution to the Conservation Area. Often neutral contributors are recently built dwellings, these should make reference to local character and distinctiveness however fall short of making a beneficial contribution to the special interest of the area.

Negative buildings are those which make an adverse or intrusive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Within the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area, the late twentieth century developments beside the Canal which feature an unsympathetic material palette are examples of negative buildings. They make no contribution to the special historic or architectural interest of the Conservation Area.

Within the Conservation Area, the Listed Buildings are positive contributors to the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area. The significance of these heritage assets is recognised by their inclusion upon the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). Nevertheless, there remains the opportunity for enhancement upon some of the listed buildings, in particular if the building is of a poor condition, it would benefit by sensitive repair. The many bridges within the Conservation Area which carry roads would benefit from a programme of maintenance and repair. The Listed Buildings, Canonsleigh Priory Mill and Stables north east of Ayshford Court, would also benefit from a programme of scheduled maintenance to improve its condition.

The interactive conservation area map, showing all positive, neutral, negative or positive with the opportunity for enhancement buildings within the Conservation Area can be viewed on the Council's website.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

4.4 Key Views

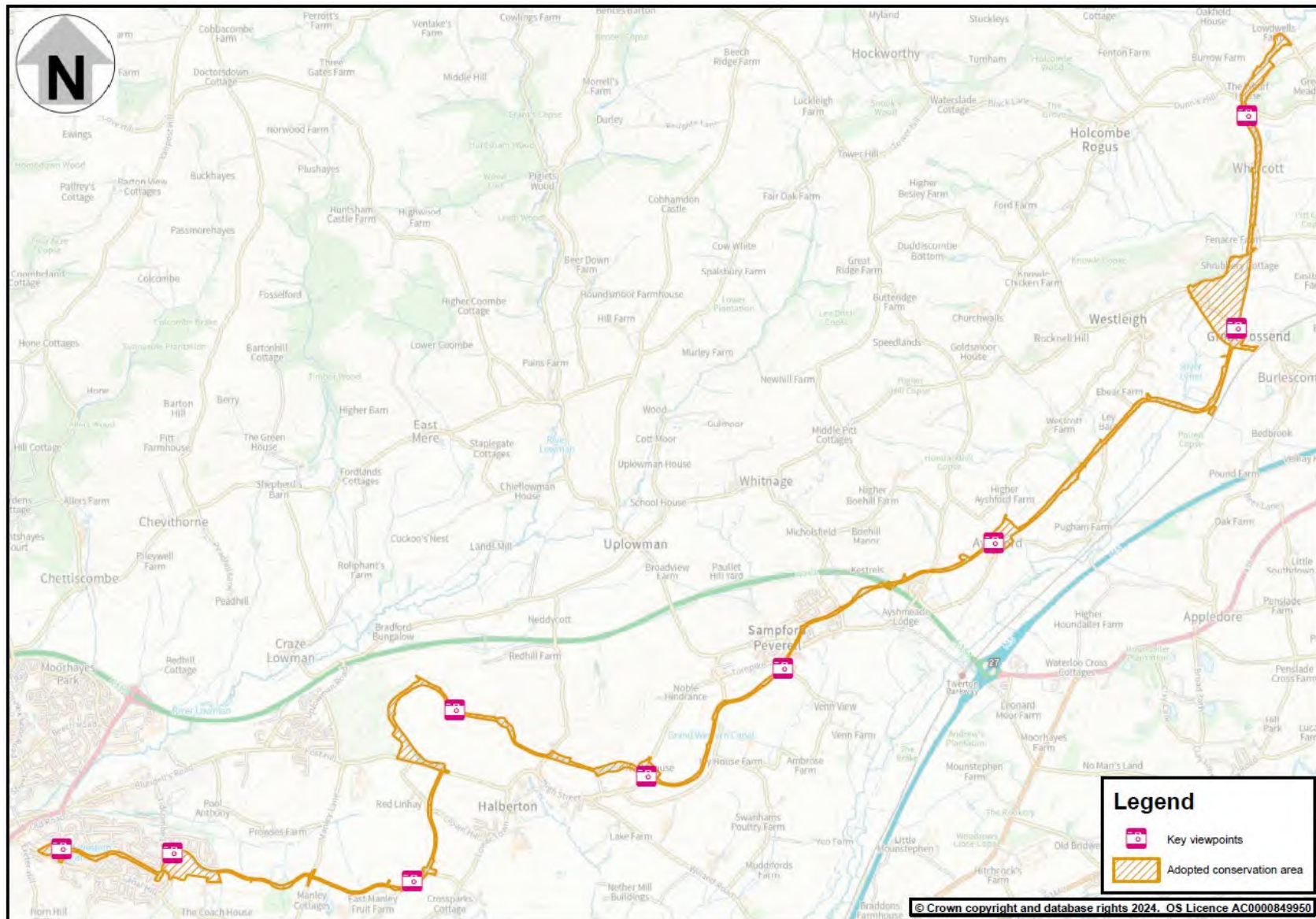
This section contains the important views in each of the Character Areas within the Conservation Area, each has been described below. Views can provide an important way to experience and appreciate the significance of an area. The Grand Western Canal is a prominent landmark and historic form of transportation connecting settlements. Views of the surrounding countryside and the settlements which it passes or terminates within are possible within the Conservation Area and from its boundary. The canal is without locks therefore it is of a relatively flat elevation, this often results in deep cuttings or being elevated to the surrounding landscape. Distant views of the canal from its surrounding countryside setting and the settlements of Burlescombe, Sampford Peverell, Halberton and Tiverton are also possible, which contribute to an understanding of its historic significance.

The below section is not an exhaustive list, as there are many areas where the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area can be appreciated, of a kinetic nature as one travels along it. The following views are those which highlight the qualities of the Conservation Area and its special interest. All planning applications for development within the Conservation Area, or its setting, should consider if there are any contributing views which will be affected and seek to mitigate any adverse impacts.

The interactive conservation area map, showing the location of Key Views within the Conservation Area can be viewed on the Council's website.

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Views Map



The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Character Area One Views

Views of the Canal are often appreciable in both directions from along its length when stood upon the towpath, within Tiverton Basin the canal is framed by the density of development upon its boundary. The area where the canal terminates within Tiverton allows an appreciation of its historic layout and historic buildings including Moorings and Withy Cottage make a contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area (View 1).



View 1

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Adjacent to Tidcombe Bridge and Tidcombe Hall, views in an easterly direction across the rural landscape are appreciable. Tidcombe Hall is a prominent building set within the rural landscape and views are appreciable across the undeveloped setting of the Conservation Area, providing the travelling observer with an experience of the changing historic character (View 2).



View 2

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

The kinetic views whilst travelling along the towpath provide an experience of the areas historic character and an appreciation of its rural setting, contributing to a sense of tranquillity. At the far edge of the Character Area, where the canal begins to bend northwards, the scene opens with views across the adjacent agricultural land, with mature trees (View 3).



View 3

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Character Area Two Views

Important views in Character Area Two include the views of the canal to and from Halberton, where the historic significance of the canal its position and important role to the development of the area can be appreciated due to the elevated position (View 4).

Looking north from the towpath and from upon Rock Bridge, there are views of the historic buildings within Character Area Two, along with the dominant presence of Rock House (View 5).



View 4



View 5

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Character Area Three Views

Character Area Three includes the section of the canal through Sampford Peverell, with a higher density of dwellings in proximity to the Grand Western Canal. The approach to Sampford Peverell allows long distance views of the wider landscape setting and of the settlement, allowing an appreciation of the historic significance of the Canal and its relationship to the village (View 6).

There are important views of Ayshford Chapel and Ayshford Court from the towpath and views towards the Canal from the historic buildings. The significance of the historic buildings, their position and close relationship to the canal can be appreciated (View 7).



View 6



View 7

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

Character Area Four Views

Character Area Four contains the ancient hamlet of Canonsleigh and the lowest density of buildings within the Conservation Area. The canal has close functional and historic associations to the landscape and quarries in this area. The view of the steel railway bridge and the wharf adjacent to Fossend Canal Bridge allows an appreciation of the Conservation Area's character and in particular, the industrial and historic significance of the canal and its position including views of Black Bridge which carried the railway for the quarry. (View 8).



View 8

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

There are important views of the Waytown Limekilns along the canal, the rise in topography results in the canal being located within a deep cutting contributing to a sense of isolation. Waytown Tunnel is also visible and together with the Limekilns, greatly contributes to the architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area (View 9).



View 9

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area

4.5 Setting of the Grand Western Canal

The setting of the Conservation Area is a contributor to its significance, allowing for the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area to be understood and appreciated. Setting is defined within the NPPF as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.⁶

Elements of setting which can contribute to the overall significance of a Conservation Area are:

- Views of and proximity to other heritage assets, landmarks or settlements.
- Position in relation to surrounding buildings, communities and transport networks such as rail that have influenced the development.
- Open spaces and position in relation to topography and watercourses which illustrate the area's development.
- Spaces and spatial qualities as well as lighting, trees, or the treatment of boundaries or street surfaces.

The Grand Western Canal and its construction began at the start of the nineteenth century, it cuts through the agrarian landscape to Tiverton. The building of the canal was during the height of the Industrial Revolution in England, within the sudden boom of canal-building between the 1790s-1810s. As shown above in Section 3, the original intention of the canal was to link the Bristol and English Channels. Its route was

carefully planned to link with the site of Westleigh Quarry which supplied building materials, in particular limestone which was also used for agricultural purposes. Its planned route through the rural landscape has played a vital part in its evolution, economic function and the development of the communities along it. Since the early twentieth century it has been an area of recreation and the use of the surrounding rural landscape therefore makes an important contribution to the historic setting and significance of the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area.

To the southeast of the canal from Tiverton, views across the agrarian landscape can be appreciated and this includes views of Tidcombe Hall and the neighbouring fields, a prominent building historically located in an isolated position. The pastoral character of the setting of the Conservation Area can also be appreciated from Warnicombe Lane to the south, which is of an elevated position. To the north of Tidcombe Hall and to the west, the area has altered from a rural undeveloped landscape to residential, thus the open landscape character to the east and south remains an important link to the rural setting of the Conservation Area.

Much of the Conservation Area is experienced within the rural landscape, positioned between settlements. The historically open and agricultural land positively contributes to the pastoral character of the Conservation Area's historic setting, as shown in View 3. There are noteworthy buildings in the setting of the Conservation Area, often within views from the canal across the agrarian landscape to settlements such as The Parish Church of St Andrew, Halberton. Historic farmsteads such as Tidcombe Farm and Battens Farm set within the rural landscape are positive elements within the Conservation Areas setting.

⁶ 'Annex 2: Glossary', *The National Planning Framework*, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, December 2023

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Where urban development has expanded into the countryside, this has a detrimental effect. There are further areas where the setting has been urbanised including the significant change to Sampford Peverell in recent decades, with extensive and prominent residential development adjacent to the canal. Much of the rural character of the setting of the Conservation Area has been lost here. There is little architectural quality to much of the development which can be prominently viewed from within the Conservation Area, such as by Buckland Bridge.

Also within the Conservation Area's setting to the east of Sampford Peverell, the historically undeveloped area of land has been negatively impacted by the A361 and prominent development upon its boundary including large industrial storehouses at Holbrook Farm, and the area of caravan parking adjacent to the canal.

The small settlement of Ayshford with its historic buildings provides a clear pastoral character to the Conservation Area and its historic setting is better preserved. Whilst some development has occurred within Lower Ayshford Farm and a large storage building to the north, the area has retained its pastoral character. The development of a solar farm nearby within the setting of the Conservation Area has had a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area, due to factors including visual prominence and change to the landscape character.

Character Area 4 of the Conservation Area and its setting has undergone little change over time, comparative to other Character Areas, kinetic views across the fields towards the Conservation Area such as from the Public Right of Ways west of the canal and to the east adjacent to Eastbrook Farm contributes to our appreciation and understanding of the rural character of the Conservation Area.

There has been infill development within Burlescombe adjacent to the Conservation Area, the development has had a detrimental impact due to

its prominence and the unsympathetic palette of materials. A notable historic building within the setting of the Conservation Area includes the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Burlescombe. The tower of the Church is visible in long distant views from within the Conservation Area, its architectural value and position as a visual way marker allows an appreciation of the Conservation Areas historic significance.

To the north, at the termination of the canal at Lowdwells Lock, the rural character of the Conservation Area and its setting remains appreciable. On the approach to the Conservation Area, small rural lanes are the primary route of travel. The undeveloped countryside and few dwellings along the country lanes attest to the rural character and setting of the Conservation Area.

5.0 Opportunities for Enhancement

5.1 Overview

The following key issues have been identified and are summarised below in brief. The list is in no way exhaustive and neither are the issues identified unique to the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area, with many being shared with other conservation areas within the district.

5.2 Heritage at Risk

The Grand Western Canal is not on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register. Canonsleigh Abbey, a Scheduled Monument, is on the register, the condition is noted as '*generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems*'. The local authority and Historic England will proactively engage with the owner to improve the condition of the asset and seek its removal from the register.

There is no statutory obligation upon the owner of a listed building to maintain their property or keep it in a good state of repair, although it is in their interest to do so. If left unchecked, buildings can deteriorate quickly resulting in ever increasing costs for complicated restoration and repairs. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework states that 'where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision (Paragraph 202). The fabric of a heritage asset always retains its significance whatever the condition and the poor state of an asset would not automatically justify demolition.

5.3 Access and Integration

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area covers an extensive area through Mid Devon, being approximately 11.3 miles in length. The Conservation Area and the towpath itself is a public footpath and there are multiple points where the Canal can be accessed. The Grand Western

Canal is well signposted, including the location of parking areas, as it is a Country Park and managed by Devon Country Council. Interpretation boards are placed at many of the main points of access.

5.4 Car Parking and Traffic

The Grand Western Canal due to its length and the multiple points of access attracts many visitors to the Conservation Area. The canal is for pedestrian or cyclist access only along the towpath, the volume of traffic within the Conservation Area is typically confined to the roads which cross the canal and this varies throughout the day. Car parking areas for the canal are provided along its length which help to reduce the presence of cars parked on verges beside roads along its length. While the volume of traffic varies, routes through the Conservation Area are also used by large vehicles, such as the traffic to Westleigh Quarry. The negative impacts of heavy vehicle use includes traffic congestion, reducing road safety, and overall, there is an adverse impact to appreciate the Conservation Area. Often traffic crosses narrow bridges, which also may be listed buildings.

Consultation between the Local Planning Authority and the Highways Authority should consider ways to alleviate the impacts of traffic and to protect the historic environment. This could be through a heavy vehicle restriction strategy.

5.5 Inappropriate and Unsympathetic Alterations

Where there are instances of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to buildings or structures within the Conservation Area, this results in a cumulative negative impact. The prevalent use of UPVC is an issue common to conservation areas throughout the district, including the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area. In addition, the installation of roof lights, TV aerials, extraction flues, box dormers and unsympathetic

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fixings to the historic façade of buildings harms the character and special qualities of the area.

For the residential buildings located within the Conservation Area, the agglomeration of structures built on gardens which infill and reduce views to and from the canal can have a detrimental impact to our appreciation of the Conservation Area. The properties in close proximity to the canal typically are set back and feature well-proportioned gardens which affords the dwelling privacy. The gardens enhance the settings of the properties and the character of the area.

There are examples of unsympathetic or piecemeal boundary treatments and this has harmed the special qualities of the area and the setting of historic buildings. The loss of traditional boundary treatments such as low stone walling or iron railings for close board fencing or concrete walling has a harmful impact on the character and special interest of the Conservation Area. Historic boundaries will require repair and their repair or replacement using traditional materials is the only appropriate response.

5.6 Materials

The introduction of materials and a colour palette of a low-quality or unsympathetic form is of a concern within the Conservation Area. In particular, the loss of traditional or historic joinery for UPVC replacements is a concern, furthermore modern materials such as cementitious render, concrete or synthetic roof tiles diminishes the architectural quality of the area. The use of modern materials which are out of keeping with the area can have visually domineering impact to the streetscape and views within the Conservation Area.

Signage within the Conservation Area is typically that of timber signposts or are of metal. Within Tiverton Basin, Character Area One, there is a small amount of signage for commercial premises such as for the Tiverton

horse-drawn barge. Signage and good quality signage is important to the street scape of the Conservation Area, it should seek to emulate traditional designs, proportions and materials.



Tiverton Canal Company beside the canal

Typical materials have been identified within each Character Area, these descriptions should be referenced when new development or alterations are planned to ensure any development makes appropriate reference to the special interest of the Conservation Area and its character.

5.7 Maintenance

Routine maintenance is required to prevent further deterioration of historic boundary walls and buildings throughout the Conservation Area. Historic England defines maintenance within Conservation Principles as “routine work necessary to keep the fabric of a place in good order”. The importance of regular and preventative maintenance cannot be over-emphasised, as this can avoid the loss of historic fabric or costly repairs.

The replacement of a traditional element that has been allowed to deteriorate, such as a timber sash window, with a modern UPVC unit would have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area. There is scope for better engagement with landowners to improve the appearance of the Conservation Area and properties. Examples of elements which detract from the Conservation Area and result from lack of maintenance include:

- Poorly maintained grounds and gardens.
- Failed paintwork on walls, windows and doors.
- Broken fascia boards, eaves and guttering.
- Use of front gardens with vehicles or other domestic paraphernalia.

The condition of the Scheduled Monument, Canonsleigh Abbey, which is also individually Grade II listed is also of concern. The asset is on the Heritage at Risk register.

5.8 Public Realm

Street Furniture (Benches, signage, bins, bike stands, bollards etc.)

Street furniture throughout the Conservation Area is generally of an acceptable quality, albeit generic in appearance. There is a general lack of streetlights, with the exception of built up areas such as Tiverton.

Benches are seen regularly along the length of the canal, often of a

standard type being of timber. The bins within the Conservation Area are generic in appearance, bright red in colour. The Conservation Area would be enhanced through their replacement with traditional and less vibrant bins.

Hard Landscaping

Pavements and road surfacing is generally of a good quality, the towpath is predominantly of gravel with a small area of pavement such as within the Tiverton Area. The painting of road surfaces, in particular upon the road carrying listed bridges, has the potential to result in a harmful impact on the Conservation Area and the buildings.

The removal of garden areas and in particular front gardens for parking will generally have a detrimental impact.

Open Spaces

The open and verdant spaces in the Conservation Area make a positive contribution and are integral to its character. The towpath itself is the predominant area of open and public space which allows for an appreciation of the special interest of the Conservation Area. Other important open spaces include areas where views are afforded across the rural landscape which contributes to our experience of the asset.

Smaller areas of open space, in particular where built form encroaches or abuts the boundary of the Conservation Area offer important areas of breathing space.

Trees and Planting

Areas of the Conservation Area are heavily wooded and the presence of mature hedgerows and veteran trees make a positive contribution. Invasive foreign species should be resisted and an appropriate level of maintenance should ensure that the footpath is not obstructed.

6.0 Management Proposals

This section seeks to identify and recommend management proposals, both short and long-term. The proposals are divided into themes in the sections below.

6.1 Development Management Tools

Enforcement

Where the necessary permission has not been sought for alterations, which are not contained within the General Permitted Development Order (2015), the Local Planning Authorities powers of enforcement should be considered. Enforcement could assist in reinstating any lost architectural features that may have a detrimental impact upon the Conservation Area. This can also help to avoid precedence being set for similar, uncharacteristic works.

Article 4 Directions

Article 4 Directions may be introduced as an additional planning control by the Local Planning Authority, removing specified permitted development rights. Article 4 Directions allow for change to be managed within the Conservation Area, ensuring any alterations or addition are sympathetic. Further details on Article 4 Directions within Mid Devon District Council can be found on the Council's website.

Heritage Statements, Heritage Impact Assessments and Archaeological Assessments

In accordance with Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2023), applicants must describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

All applications within the Conservation Area and immediate setting requires an appropriately detailed Heritage Statement. Applications which fail to assess any impact on setting and significance should not be validated.

The key views included within this document are in no way exhaustive. Any future development with the potential to affect the setting and significance of the heritage assets must provide a bespoke assessment of the potential impacts. This should be in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2019).

Local Heritage List

A Local List identifies building and structures of local architectural and/or historic interest, and these are considered 'non-designated heritage assets' under the NPPF. Local Lists can be beneficial in ensuring the maintenance of historic buildings and the character of a settlement or conservation Area. The Local List can allow for greater understanding of the area and to improve public engagement.

Mid Devon has produced a limited Local List of buildings of historic and/or architectural interest. The list should be periodically reviewed and updated, as an expanded Local List would aid in the preservation of the District's built heritage. Inclusion of a building or structure should be based on sound evidence, Historic England's guidance provides the criteria for assessments.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag301-local-heritage-listing/>

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Character Appraisal and Management Plans

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed from time to time, to monitor change and to inform management proposals.

Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area boundary should be reviewed as part of future management plans, to ensure it adequately protects the significance of the area.

6.2 Managing Future Change

New Development

New development within the Grand Western Canal Conservation Area and its setting should make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, or at least, preserve its special interest. To be successful, future development should consider the character of the Conservation Area and the special qualities of the area.

Successful new development will:

- Use materials and building methods which are high in quality of those used in existing buildings;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Respect key/important views; and
- Reflect the pattern of existing development (historic layout).

Mid Devon District Council should guide development by:

- Engaging with developers at an early stage through the Pre-Application process.
- Ensuring that medium to large scale development is designed as a bespoke response to the established character of the area. The choice of materials and the detailed design of the building are

important features in ensuring that a response is sensitive to the Conservation Area.

- Seeking opportunities for developers to make a positive contribution to the historic environment through Section 106 Agreements.

The Setting of the Grand Western Canal

Some buildings or spaces fall outside of the Conservation Area, as they do not directly contribute to its special historic or architectural interest, but still may make an important contribution to its setting (as described above in Section 4.5). The Key Views identified in Section 4.4 include important parts of its setting and the buildings within it, however this is not an exhaustive account.

Any future development or alteration to these buildings or spaces outside the Conservation Area's boundary must carefully consider any potential impacts on the Conservation Area's character or local distinctiveness. Developments must be of a bespoke response to have no resultant harm.

The impact of any alteration, addition or removal of buildings, structures and trees on key views should be considered in decision making. This includes development outside of the Conservation Area. Where appropriate, views must be considered within Heritage Statements, in accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017).

Sustainability

Mid Devon District Council recognises the benefits of renewable energy and the diverse effects of climate change and the growing considerations around change in the built environment. Some forms of renewable energy are less compatible with conservation areas or listed buildings. Solar panels, air source heat pumps and conditioning units installed in

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prominent locations would be intrusive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The fitting of external cladding, external insulation and triple glazing is also likely to harm the appearance of the Conservation Area. Historic England has produced guidance upon the role historic buildings can play in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- Historic England Advice Note 14: Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes (2020)
- Historic England, Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency (2018)
- Historic England, Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading (2017).

Neutral Elements

Many buildings within the Conservation Area make a neutral contribution to the area. There is scope to enhance these sites and buildings through a considered design approach, through the continued use of high-quality materials and design. The Local Authority should not allow the quality of design to be 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment.

6.3 Public Realm and Highways

Access and Integration

The continued maintenance of areas of public space, this predominantly being the towpath along the canal, can preserve and promote good design within the public realm. There should be collaboration between the Local Authority, landowners and the Highways Department to ensure that the maintenance and replacement of street furniture and hard surfacing reflects local character and distinctiveness. Excessive street

signage and road markings should be avoided, as this can have a negative impact upon the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Car Parking

The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area is well served by public car parks along its length. A car parking survey should establish the need for additional car parking and if necessary, a strategy should be created between Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council.

Tree Management

As directed within the Town and Country Planning Act, all trees in Conservation Areas are afforded the same protection as a Tree Preservation Order. Trees which have a trunk diameter of more than 75mm, at a height of 1.5m from the ground, may not be felled or lopped unless six weeks written notice has been given to the Council. Six weeks' notice has to be given to the council under S211 of the Act.

6.4 Public Resources

The preservation of the historic environment and its enhancement can be improved through the publishing of resources aimed to inform property owners and the public. A summary of the Conservation Area Appraisal in the form of a leaflet can be an effective method to communicate the significance of the area and the implications of owning a property within a conservation area. In addition, the publication of a Design Guide on standard alterations such as windows, doors, rainwater goods, extensions and boundary treatments will ensure appropriate development.

The publication of a maintenance guide would also assist property owners in caring for their property in an appropriate manner. This should detail and provide guidance on the use of traditional materials and detailing of historic buildings. Poor maintenance leads to the deterioration of the building environment and may also result in the loss of architectural details.

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6.5 Funding Opportunities

There are three main funding opportunities which would assist in the execution of these plans:

National Heritage Lottery Fund

The National Heritage Lottery Fund is the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage and therefore is the most obvious potential source of funding. Funding is provided in specific circumstances and is often targeted at schemes which preserve, enhance and better reveal the special interest of the area whilst also improving public awareness and understanding.

Section 106 Agreements

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, can be used by the local authority to ensure any future development has a positive impact upon the Conservation Area. These agreements could be used to fund public realm or site-specific improvements.

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (Historic England)

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas is a programme run by Historic England to target funding for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. The schemes are based on a partnership with the local authority. The scheme makes funds available to individuals to enable them to carry out repairs or improvement works to their property to enhance the area.

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Bibliography

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7.2 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation/Policy/Guidance	Document	Policy/Section
Primary Legislation	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Section 66: General duty as respects listed buildings in exercise of planning functions Section 72: General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)	Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment Annex 2: Glossary
National Guidance	National Planning Practice Guidance. DLUHC 2014	ID:18a
National Guidance	Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management. Historic England Advice Note 1. 2 nd Ed. Historic England: Swindon, 2019	
National Guidance	Historic England, The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3. Historic England: Swindon, 2017.	
Local Plan, Policies and Supplementary Planning Documents	Local Plan Review 2013-2033, Adopted 2020	DM1,DM11, DM16 and DM25.

7.3 List of all Designated Heritage Assets within the Conservation Area

List Entry Number	Address	Grade	Date first listed
1384779	Canal Basin Lime Kilns at HGR SS 9638 1241, Canal Hill	II	01-Mar-1993
1384780	Lime Kiln Cottage, Canal Hill	II	14-Dec-1972
1384781	Withy Cottage	II	12-Feb-1952
1384969	Tidcombe Bridge, Tidcombe Lane	II	12-Feb-1952
1384856	Manley Bridge, Manley Lane	II	12-Feb-1952
1105876	Bridge at SS994121	II	11-Jun-1986
1105883	Crownhills Bridge	II	11-Jun-1986
1326158	Bridge at SS998132	II	11-Jun-1986
1326162	Milestone at SS9981333	II	11-Jun-1986
1105890	Sellick Bridge	II	11-Jun-1986
1106641	Greenway Bridge	II	11-Jun-1986
1106646	Rock Bridge, Rock Bridge	II	11-Jun-1986
1106647	Cottage 100 metres east of Rock House	II	10-Jun-1986
1306712	Rock House and Adjacent Range of Outbuildings to rear	II*	04-Apr-1966
1106648	Overock	II	10-Jun-1986
1105877	Battens Bridge (024136)	II	11-Jun-1986
1106398	Sampford Peverell Bridge, Turnpike	II	17-Mar-1988
1307072	Buckland Bridge, Whitnage Road	II	17-Mar-1988
1106462	Holbrook Bridge	II	17-Mar-1988
1325900	Ayshford Chapel	I	04-Apr-1966
1147581	Ayshford Court	II*	04-Apr-1966
1147593	Stables approximately 25 metres north east of Ayshford Court	II	17-Mar-1988
1325897	Ebear Bridge	II	17-Mar-1988
1236821	Milestone IX at ST 0647 1635	II	01-Mar-1993
1140104	Twin Culverts at ST 0643 1643	II	01-Mar-1993

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1325865	Fossend Canal Bridge	II	17-Mar-1988
1106456	Canonsleigh Barton Farmhouse	II	04-Apr-1966
1106457	Canonsleigh Priory Gatehouse	I	23-Oct-1951
1003830	Canonsleigh Abbey	Scheduled Monument	01-Apr-1953
1106458	Canonsleigh Priory Mill	II	23-Oct-1951
1106470	Limekilns at ST 066 174	II	17-Mar-1988
1236822	Fenacre Bridge	II	01-Mar-1993
1140142	Waytown Limekilns	II	01-Mar-1993
1325913	Waytown Tunnel	II	17-Mar-1988

7.4 Frequently Asked Questions

What is a conservation area?

Conservation Areas are designated by the Local Planning Authority, due to their special architectural and historic interest. Conservation Areas differ in size and character, as each place has its own special character and appearance. The types of conservation areas range from historic town centres, small villages and to large country houses. Conservation Area designated introduces additional planning controls and consideration within the planning process. These controls exist to protect an area's special interest.

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 specifies the general duty of Local Authorities to Conservation Areas in the exercise of planning functions (Section 72). The Act directs that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The National Planning Policy Framework regards conservation areas as 'designated heritage assets'.

How are conservation areas designated?

The designation process by the Local Authority includes an analysis of the proposed conservation area to understand its special architectural and historic interest. The Conservation Area is supported by an appraisal and management plan, this should set out its character and various positive proposals to manage, enhance and protect the Conservation Area.

A review process should be periodically undertaken and the Conservation Area assessed to safeguard that it retains its special architectural or historic interest.

How can I find out if I live in a conservation area?

Boundary maps of all conservation areas within Mid Devon can be found on the Council's website and within each appraisal.

What is an Article 4 Direction?

Article 4 Directions are written specifically to control works within conservation areas which have the potential to harm their character and special interest, by removing certain types of permitted development. An example of this would be the removal of permitted development rights for the replacement of windows and doors. The loss of features which positively contribute to the special interest of the Conservation area would be considered harmful.

Mid Devon Council has published any existing Article 4 directions upon their Conservation Areas [page](#).

Will I need to apply for permission for a new outbuilding, fence or boundary wall?

Any demolition, development or construction within a conservation area will generally require planning permission. A replacement boundary, outbuilding or structure such as garage will need to be designed with the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area in

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mind. Mid Devon District Council will provide advice on how to proceed with an application including the offer of Pre-Application Advice.

Can I demolish a building in a conservation area?

Demolition, or substantial removal of part of a building within a conservation area, will normally require planning permission as defined under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Advice on permissions should be sought from Mid Devon District Council and further guidance can be found upon the [Planning Portal](#).

Can I remove a tree within a conservation area?

The local planning authority must be notified six weeks in advance if you are planning to cut down or carry out pruning work. This allows the local authority to assess the contribution of the tree to the character of the Conservation Area and whether, if necessary, a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) should be created to protect it.

The legislation relating to trees within conservation areas is included within Part VIII of the Town and Planning Act 1990. This is supplemented by the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) Regulations 2012. Historic England has produced further guidance available [here](#).

How do I find more information about conservation areas?

Historic England has published guidance on conservation areas and their designation, including an advice note called *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* which sets out advice on how to analyse special interest and manage change in conservation areas.

Historic England's website contains additional information and advice on conservation areas, available here: [What Is a Conservation Area? | Historic England](#).

What is setting?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines the setting of a heritage asset as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral (Annex 2: Glossary).

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of their form and whether they are designated or not. The extent and contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset should be in the form of a thorough assessment to allow for an informed understanding, of the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

The extent of setting is often expressed by visual considerations, including views to and from the asset. Although views will play an important role in how we experience an asset within its setting, it is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, movement and activity. Also the historic relationship between places further contributes to our understanding and experience of a heritage asset.

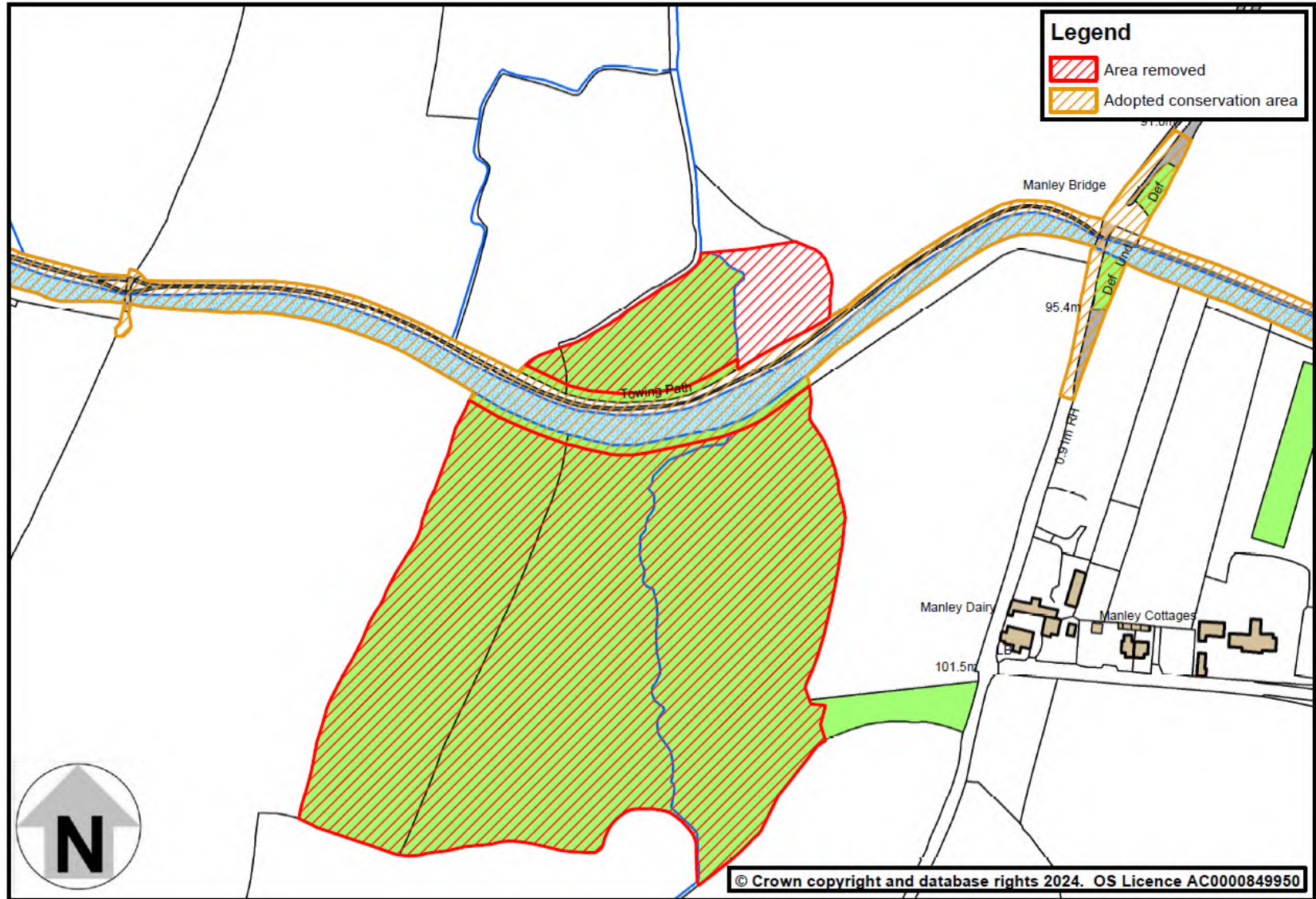
The extent and contribution that setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. Local planning authorities may also need to consider the implications of cumulative change (PPG, paragraph: 13, REF ID: 18a-013-20140306).

7.5 Glossary

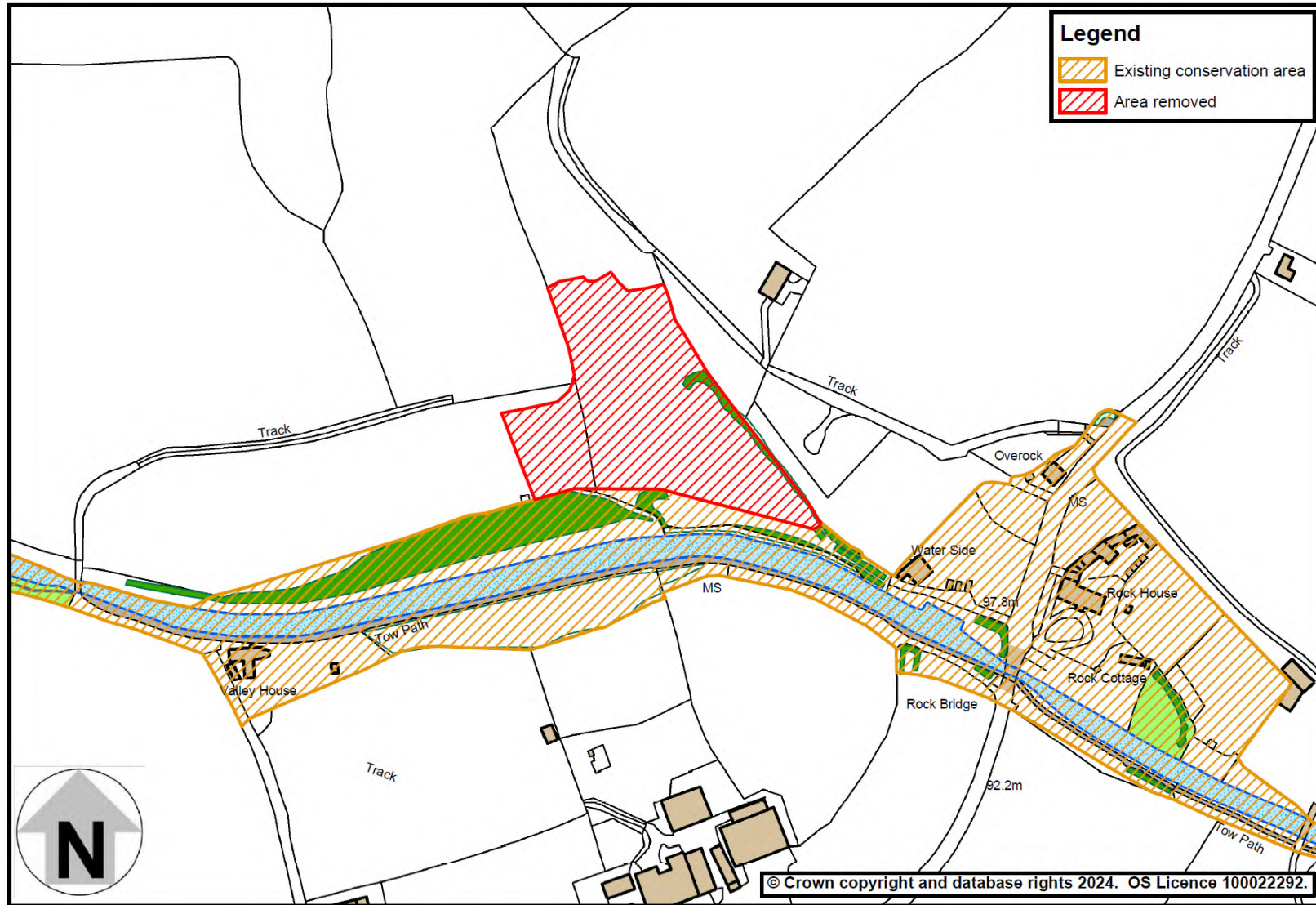
Term	Description
Archaeological interest	There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
Conservation (for heritage policy)	The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.
Designated heritage asset	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
Historic environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Historic environment record	Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

Local List	Local listing is a concept that is designed to ensure that the historic and architectural interest of buildings that are of local importance but do not meet the criteria for being nationally listed is taken account of during the planning process. Local lists can be used to identify significant local heritage assets to support the development of Local Plans.
Non-Designated heritage asset	Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. Only a minority of buildings have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets.
Setting of a heritage asset	The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

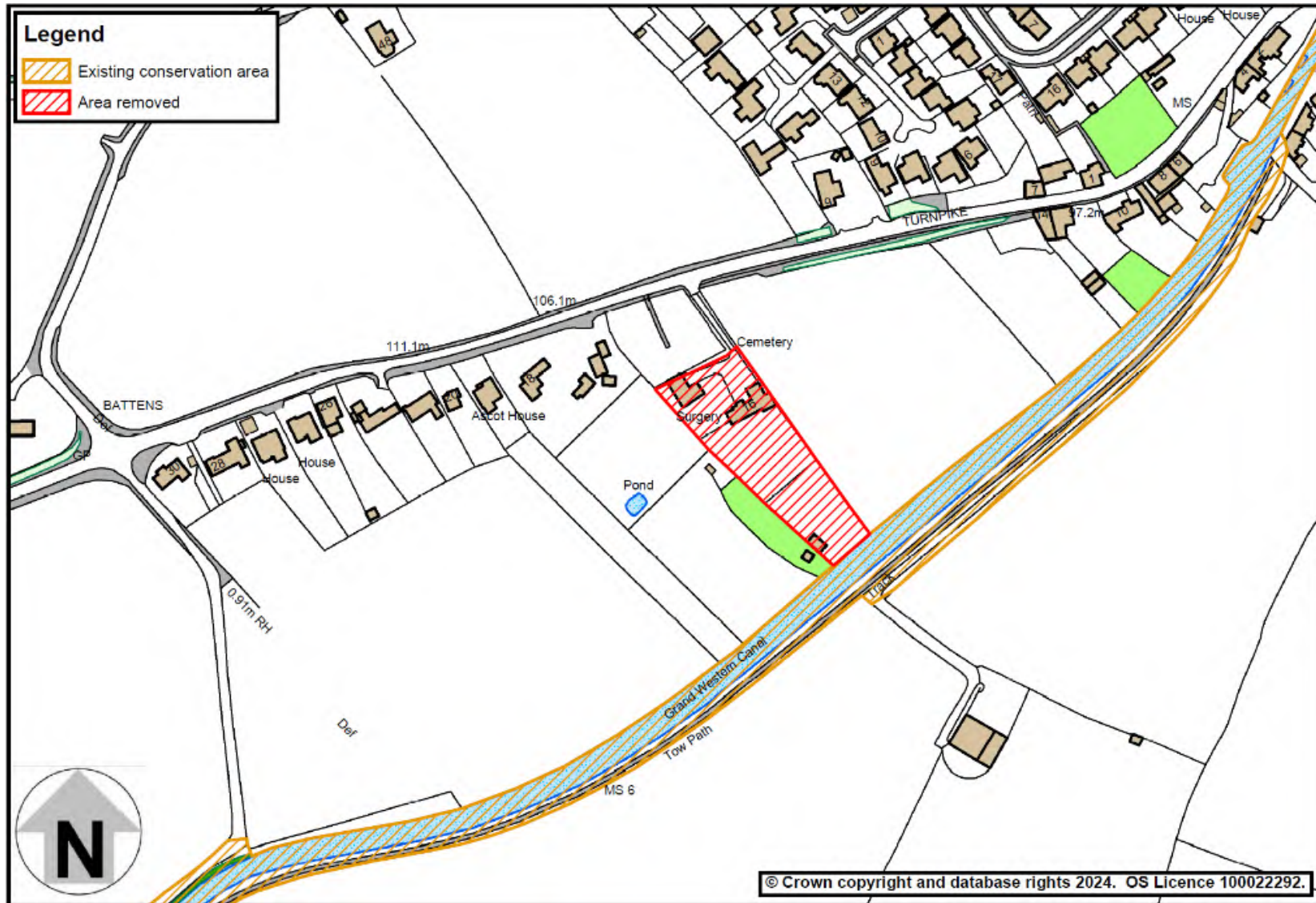
7.6 Maps



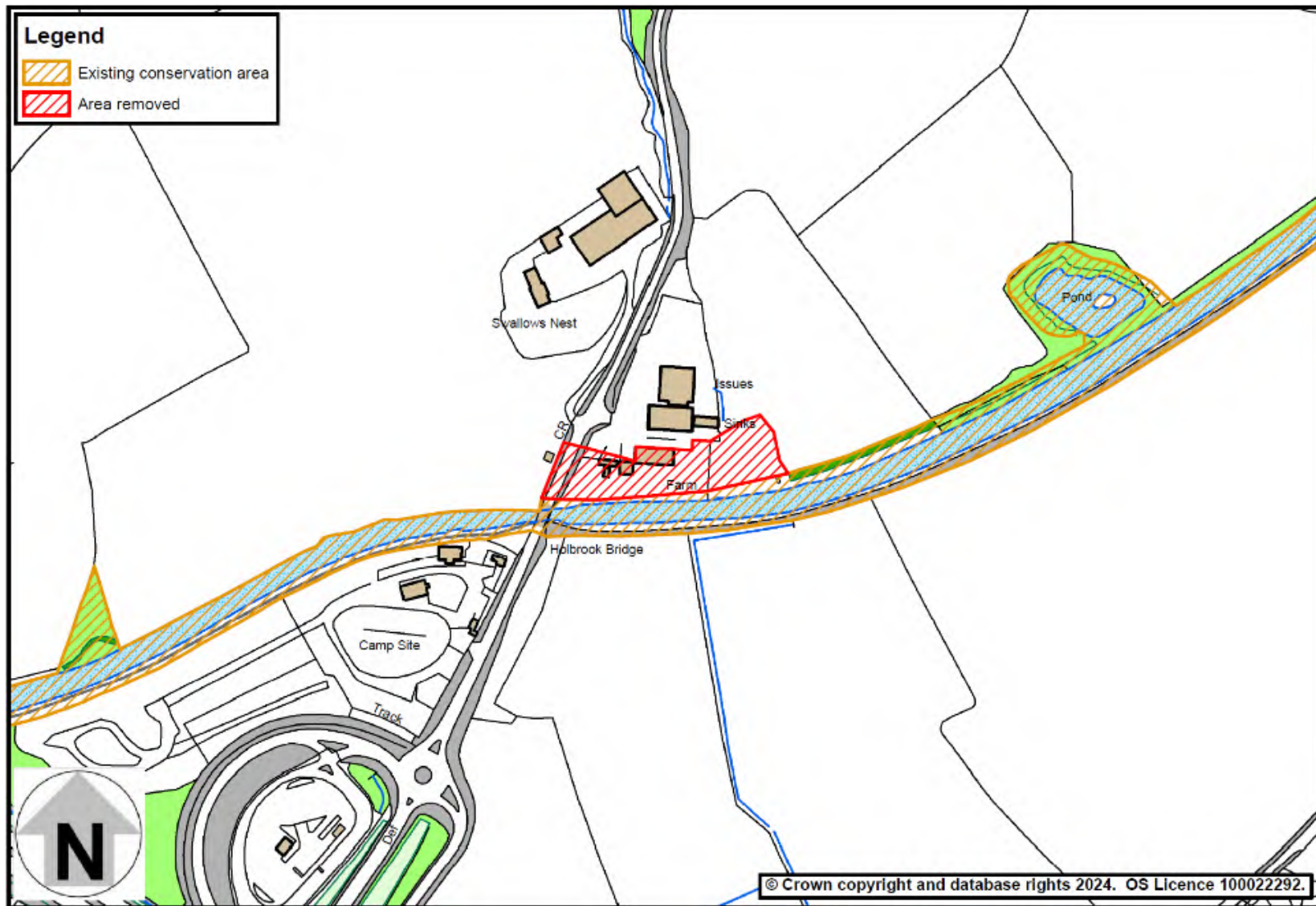
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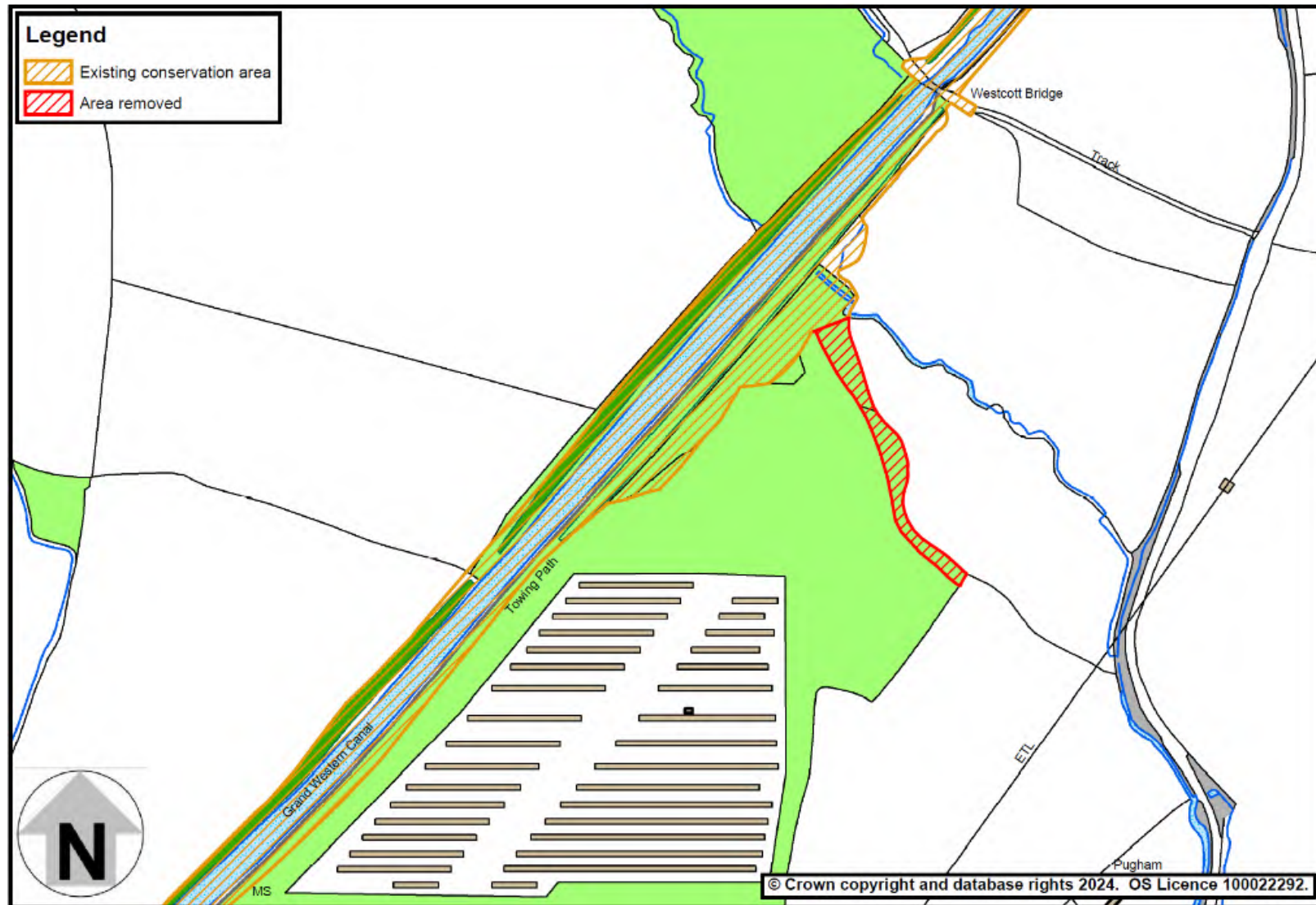
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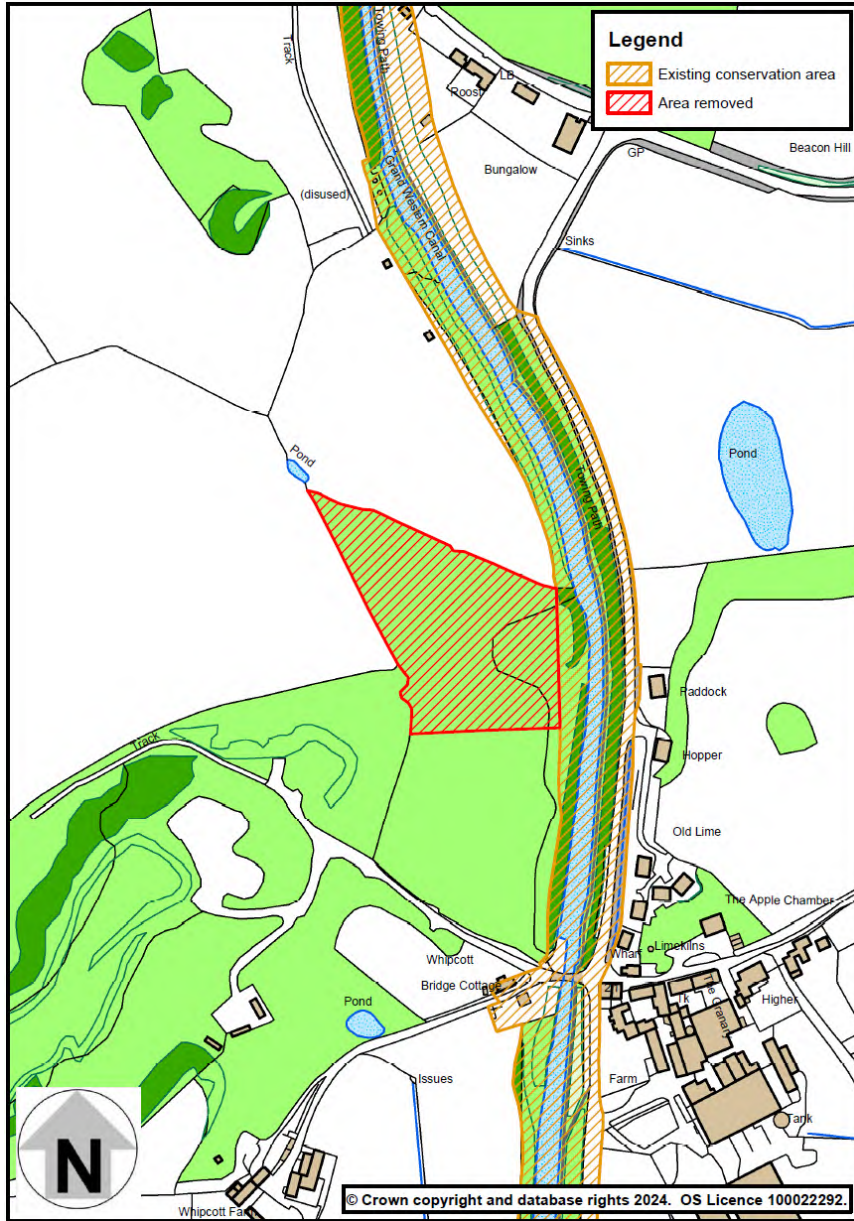
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