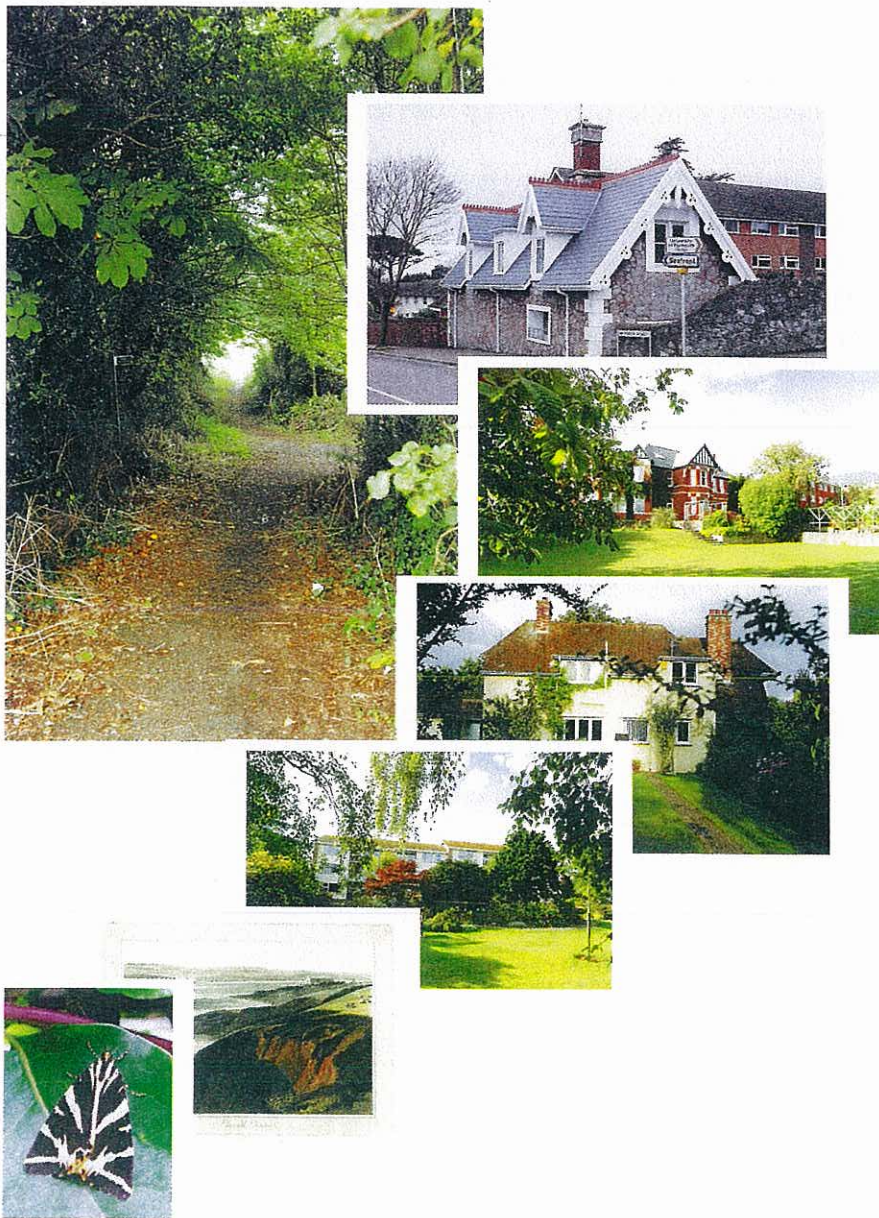


Design Statement The Avenues Exmouth

April 2005



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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The starting point for this statement is a description of The Avenues, Exmouth as they are today, highlighting the individual and collective features, which make it an area of special character. This area makes a significant contribution to the attractiveness of Exmouth, the gateway to a World Heritage Site, and reflects an important part of the town's history.

The Avenues is a distinct area. Its special character is the product of an unusual mixture of factors:

- layout of roads
- landscaping
- predominant building materials
- size of property sites and their varying elevations
- relationship of buildings to space

The aim for the future is not to prevent any change in The Avenues but to recognise the need for residential areas to evolve in response to the developing social and economic environment. This evolution should seek to preserve the best of the past and blend it with the new and the remodelled. We want to hand on to future generations an inheritance that is as good, if not better than, that which we enjoy. Ideally, The Avenues of the 21st Century should be even better than that envisaged almost two centuries ago.

This design statement

- has been developed, researched, written and edited by local people
- is representative of the views of residents from each part of The Avenues
- has involved a wide section of the residents in its production
- describes the street scene and the visual character of the area
- demonstrates how the special character can be retained and enhanced in new developments, after decades of neglect
- is compatible with the statutory planning system and the local planning context
- is in a format suitable for approval as part of Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of East Devon District Council's Design Policies
- is applicable to all forms and scale of development
- is about managing change in The Avenues, not preventing it.



Aims

The aim of this Design Statement is to secure its principles as Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of the Design Policies in the Revised Local Plan in order to retain the Special Character of The Avenues.

Objectives

The objectives of this design statement are to:

- describe the distinctive character of The Avenues in the context of Exmouth.
- show how the character can be identified in the layout of the area, in the balance between buildings and spaces, in the trees, walls, hedge banks and wildlife and in the design of the buildings.
- set out planning and design principles based on the distinctive local character.
- demonstrate the full and wide consultation process leading to its production.
- assist the local planning authority in the context of current local planning policy and to influence future policies.

The Consultation Process

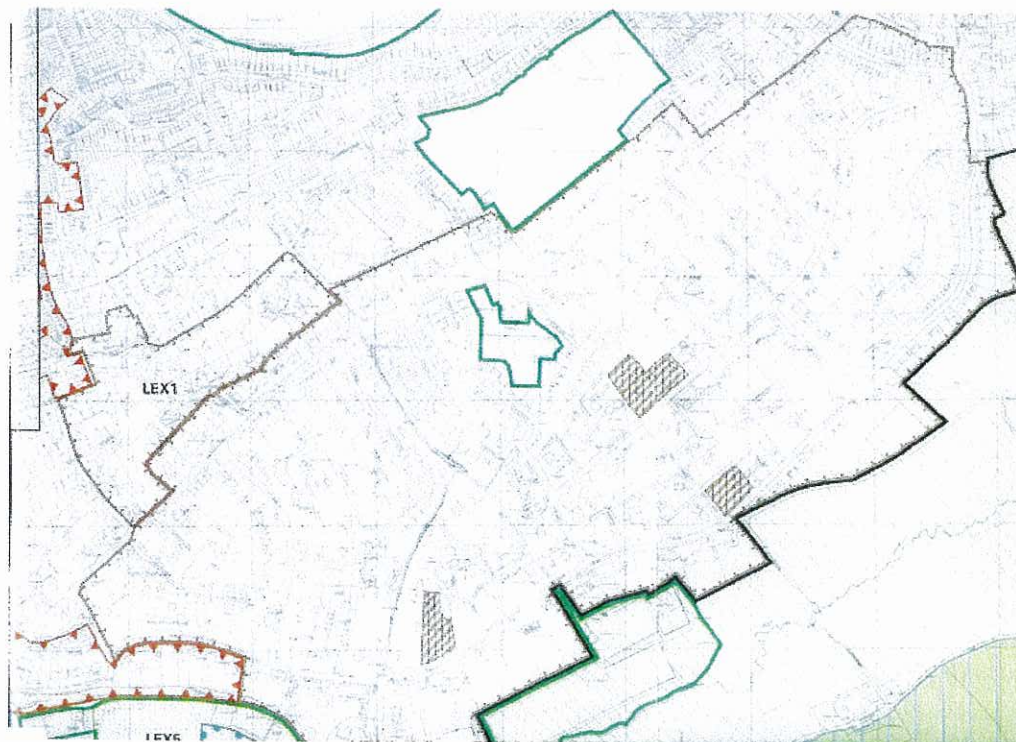
The consultation process extended over more than two years, including two public meetings, two presentations to the Annual General Meetings of the Save Avenues from Despoliation (SAD) association, a public exhibition and consideration by both East Devon District Council and Exmouth Town Council. This is detailed in Appendix A.



Geographical Location

Exmouth is located in East Devon approximately ten miles to the south of the city of Exeter. The town is bounded to the west by the estuary of the River Exe, to the south by Lyme Bay and the English Channel, to the north by Woodbury Common a Site of Special Scientific Interest and to the east by land designated not only as a Coastal Preservation Area and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but recognised internationally as a World Heritage Site extending from Exmouth to Dorset.

Lying along the south-east boundary of Exmouth, The Avenues is one of the main residential parts of the town. On the 1:5,500 scale town map, published with the emerging East Devon Local Plan 2002, The Avenues was designated as one of the EN19 Residential Areas of Special Character within Exmouth.

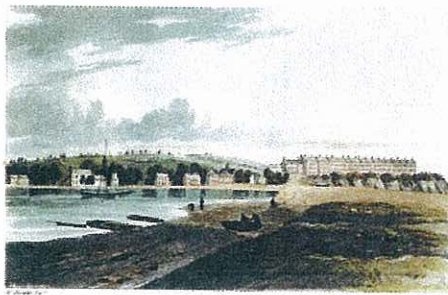
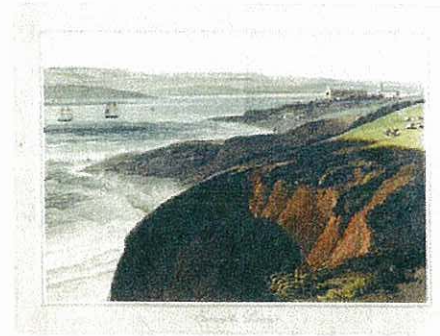


The Local Plan outlined the proposed residential area of special character to the east of Beacon Hill that was built from 1890-1930, together with the north-eastern end of Douglas Avenue, which is post 1950. Immediately to the south-east is a corridor of farmland lying either side of Littleham Brook, which runs from Littleham Village through Green Farm and Maer Farm to the sea at Maer Rocks. This farmland forms the Maer Valley, an area of natural beauty.

The residential area stretched eastwards from Rolle Road, along the Salterton Road to Barnfield Avenue, and southwards to the houses in Douglas Avenue. This was described as a 'residential area of special character'.

History of Exmouth and The Avenues

For centuries the oyster and mussel beds in the Exe Estuary and the creek behind Exmouth Point provided a livelihood for fishermen at a small village in the lee of Beacon Hill. The sand dunes and land to the north and east were owned by the Drakes and Raleighs and later the Rolle family. The parish church of St. Margaret and St. Andrew at Littleham included a small chapel of ease at Beacon Hill. The parish population including Exmouth was 650 in 1650. Pilots boarded merchant ships bound for Topsham and Exeter at the Bar off Orcombe Point in order to navigate the difficult river passage. A customs house was built for Officers to watch for unauthorised cargo landings at Exmouth Point.



VIEW OF THE BEACON AT EXMOUTH.

Exmouth was the first Devonshire settlement with sandy beaches when travelling westwards and was noted as early as 1715 by the then Lord Chief Justice who extolled “the natural beauty and excellence of the climate”. During the following century the Beacon area reflected the enthusiasm of the ‘age of enlightenment’ amongst gentry for the natural world. In 1750, to accommodate this privileged group, the Rolle family built houses for lease and to let on Beacon Hill. It was in 1794 that Trewman’s Flyer spoke of the Beacon area as “full of company” and “fills fast with the most fashionable and respectable families”, amongst them being Lady Byron and Lady Nelson. Napoleon Bonaparte inadvertently promoted this by discouraging travel to France and beyond.

The Exeter to Exmouth railway opened in 1861. It was then possible to travel in a train for 300 people from Exeter to Exmouth in 32 minutes. In response to this influx of visitors the town continued to develop, particularly between 1890-1930. It was at this time that the Rolle family developed the area now known as The Avenues, to the east of Beacon Hill and south of Salterton Road although fine houses had been built in the new area as early as 1816, after which the road layout was planned. For example ‘Miramar’, now known as Maer Bay Court, was built as a home for General Gordon for his retirement. This house still stands in Douglas Avenue. The Avenue itself is named after Gertrude Douglas who married Mark Rolle in 1860.



The new development became popular with families returning to England from government service overseas and other professional groups. They could afford large detached houses with servants' quarters, orchards, tennis courts, and gardens, which were built along The Avenues. Clinton Devon Estates sold these houses, on lease. The developer's aim was to provide maximum separation between buildings and considerable privacy and to this end each house was built on a half-acre plot.



The new houses reflected the confidence and optimism of upper middle class people who had experienced the Empire at the height of its power. In addition this new development provided domestic employment for artisan families in Exmouth. Amongst the houses were some of mansion proportions such as Hasledene House, Blair Atholl, Littleham House and Fairfield House.

The social and economic upheavals, which transformed Europe during the 20th Century through war and mechanisation, meant the end of the society for which these large houses had been built. Some villas were used as residences for boarding schools attended by children whose parents were administering the Empire.

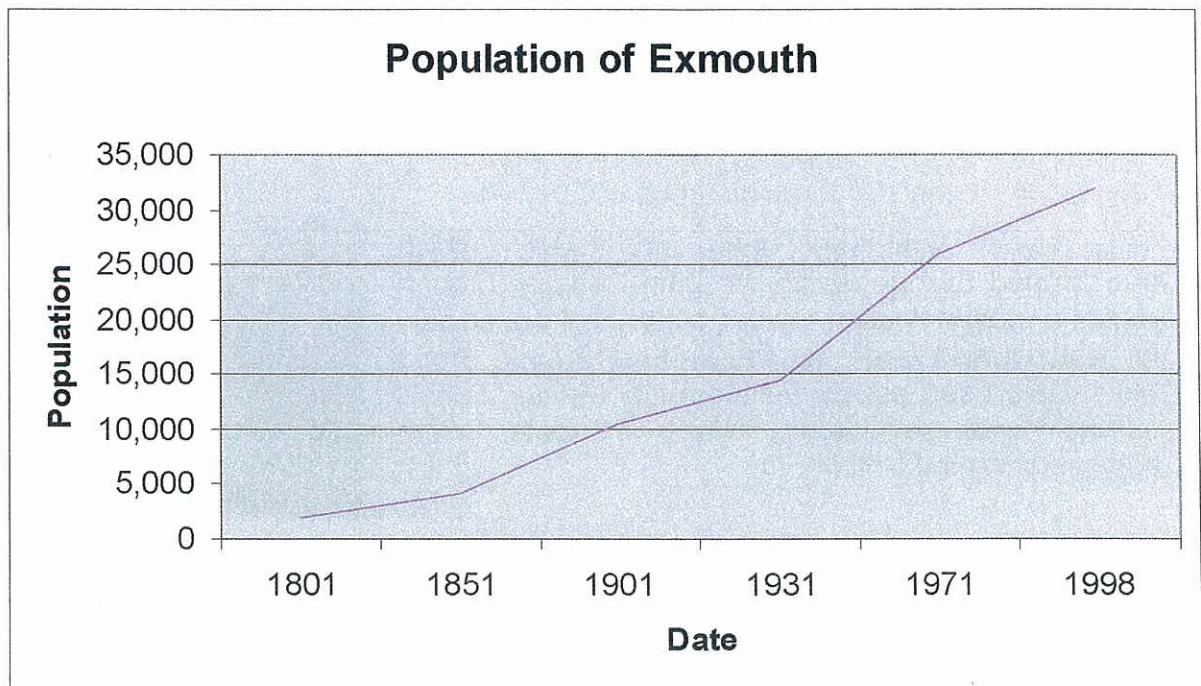


In 1948 Fairfield House and Brockenhurst were acquired for Exmouth's teacher training college. Over the following thirty years, the training college, which became Rolle College, continued to expand and during this time thirteen large houses were bought for student accommodation. These homes were thereby preserved which reduced the damage to the character of the area resulting from the demolition of other houses to make room for large apartment blocks.

In recent years houses occupying large sites have been targeted by developers and demolished to provide large blocks of flats. The new buildings crowd the sites. The street scene is spoiled as, too often, developments have retained the large gardens behind the building and overshadowed the road. The designs cramp trees and hedgerows. The previous green and harmonious appearance of The Avenues has been altered and is under serious threat.



Exmouth has grown substantially in the past two centuries. In 1801 the population of Exmouth with Littleham was 1,909. It had doubled to 4,150 in 1851. Exmouth Urban District was formed in 1895 and the population grew steadily.



During the past 50 years the urban area has spread rapidly across farmland to the north-east. Large housing estates have been built with very few community and recreation facilities. Exmouth is now the largest town in East Devon

Present Situation

The Built Environment

The Avenues is a mainly residential area consisting of large houses with extensive gardens planted with mature trees and hedges. Many houses enjoy a rural outlook, as well as sea views.

Early Period (Mid - Late Victorian)

From the western end of Cranford Avenue along Douglas Avenue, including Maer Road, Portland Avenue, Cyprus Road, and off the Salterton Road as far as Delderfield Gardens.



Salterton Road forms the northern boundary and carries the main road traffic between Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton. The area is crossed by Long Lane, an ancient footpath linking Exmouth with Littleham Church, and is joined by Lime Kiln Lane providing access in past times to the Lime Kiln on the Maer and used in former times by smugglers landing unauthorised goods from ships entering the estuary.

Portland Avenue and Cyprus Road link Salterton Road with Douglas Avenue and form the oldest, late 19th century, part of the area. The large houses have a characteristic sturdy appearance, built with decorative red and cream brickwork and bay windows on two and three floors under grey slate pitched roofs. The houses are set well back from the road on a large site with red brick retaining walls at the front. Many of the gardens contain large and mature trees, which match the houses in stature and grandeur.



Situated in Douglas Avenue are several large blocks of flats on four floors and the Devoncourt Hotel. Some large blocks of flats and other large houses extend eastwards along Douglas Avenue as far as the ancient Meetways footpath, which links Long Lane with the ford across Littleham Brook to The Meetings at Maer Farm. This corner of the former EN19 area contains a number of large buildings, and lies immediately adjacent to the surrounding residential neighbourhood. The close proximity of substantial large Edwardian villas has enabled several private properties to be acquired over the years and converted internally for student accommodation.



A dozen or so large apartment blocks have been built in recent years in Cranford and Douglas Avenues. Most of these conform to the established building theme and in those instances care has been taken to landscape the grounds, providing adequate screening to the neighbouring properties.

However, no such attempt has been made on some properties and these should not be cited as a precedent for disharmonious future development.



There are examples of excellent remodelling of older properties in the past year or two, which has enhanced the environment through complementary design. It is also encouraging that some plans include underground parking. Any reduction in the amount of street parking is welcomed for both aesthetic and safety reasons. Some of the larger properties in the roads bordering the south side of Salterton Road have been subdivided but still reflect the essential character of the area by keeping the same boundaries and landscaping, as do the earlier conversions into residential care homes and hotels.

Middle Period (Edwardian and between wars)

A triangular area formed between the eastern boundaries of Salterton Road at Cranford View to Littleham Cross down Cranford Avenue to the western end of Cranford Avenue, including all roads off. The oval area enclosed by the section of Douglas Avenue between Merrion Avenue and Mayfield Drive and the western corner of Cranford Avenue back to Merrion Avenue.



To the east of Long Lane, Elwyn, Sarltdown, Stevenstone, Elvis and Barnfield Roads link with Cranford Avenue. This area of The Avenues is Edwardian to 1930's in style. The two storey houses are constructed in either red brick or rendered in pebbledash under sloping tiled roofs. A few houses have been built from cut stone. The houses are set back from the road with substantial front or rear gardens and are separated by hedgerows.

In Cranford Avenue and several linking roads, a low grey stonewall and a hedge at the front are features that add cohesion to the area. Tall mature trees in front or rear gardens and the hedgerows between sites add harmony and balance to give a pleasing appearance to the neighbourhood.



Recent development of housing adjoining Cranford View and Delderfield Gardens, which borders the sport and recreation area of the Cranford Club, is in harmony with the surrounding properties, although it is not sufficiently enhanced by the planting of trees to scale.

Late Period (post 1950)

The post-war development at the eastern end of Douglas Avenue towards Littleham and ending at Merrion Avenue.



A post-war development was the extension of Douglas Avenue from Merrion Avenue eastwards to join Littleham Road. The predominantly detached houses occupy smaller sites and are placed nearer the road. They are individual in style and mainly on two floors under pitched roofs.

The Avenues has an established, delicate balance between people, space and green areas. The age of the population is mixed. Whilst the majority of residents are senior, there are many family groups who, together with the students, balance the age-profile. These elements of the community are well-integrated, mainly as a result of the existing nature of the housing and student accommodation. These special characteristics have been recognised by Planning Inspectors, as can be seen from Appendix D.



Highways and Traffic



Roads through The Avenues are well-proportioned, designed to be tree-lined and they convey a pleasant sense of space and greenery. Grey stone or limestone walls, colonised by many colourful plants along with mature trees and shrubs in most gardens, enrich the character of the area.

Long Lane, which runs from Salterton Road to Douglas Avenue, provides a haven for wildlife. It is a very peaceful, leafy and much-used walkway across the middle of The Avenues. The connecting Lime Kiln Lane provides valuable pedestrian access to the seafront and the start of the World Heritage Site coastal path. Bordering Long Lane is an historic Devon Bank, which adds to the interest of the area.

The beauty of some of these lanes is spoiled by inappropriate fencing and building materials used to form or strengthen boundaries. This is made worse where hedgerows are neither planted nor sustained. Two of these pathways, Long Lane and Lime Kiln Lane, are included in the Sites and Monuments Register of Devon County Council. Their historic character is impaired where conifers are planted, killing the deciduous trees and bushes growing on the banks and causing erosion of the Devon Banks themselves.



The Avenues is the area within a perimeter formed by roads, which have become significant through routes for traffic, namely Salterton Road (B3178), Rolle Road/Douglas Avenue/Cranford Avenue. These perimeter roads are linked by a network of residential avenues, mainly tree-lined and of good proportions with adequate carriageways and footways.

The B3178 is a busy through route from Exmouth to Budleigh Salterton and also connects a large area of Exmouth with the town centre. It is used by buses on four routes and traffic flows are interrupted by traffic signals at two points: the junction with Claremont Grove and the major junction at Bradham Lane/Littleham Road, which is the main access route to the Sandy Bay holiday complex. The B3178 is also used by the majority of heavy traffic servicing the Tesco supermarket, Dinan Way Industrial Estate and the Liverton Business Park. The latter two sites continue to expand.

Traffic signals and increasing traffic volumes have caused an increase in vehicles seeking an alternative route and these are using Douglas Avenue. The amount of increase needs to be carefully monitored, as does the speed of traffic in order that effective measures can be introduced to restore a calm and safe environment. In addition to the impact of car ownership generally, the particular factors in The Avenues which cause exceptional increase in traffic problems are, the growing population as a result of new apartment blocks, rising student car ownership, conference traffic and waterfront developments.

There is also an increasing problem from parked vehicles particularly in the south-western end of the area. The roads affected are Portland Avenue, Cyprus Road and Douglas Avenue along the parts where there are no restrictions, as well as those parts of the main B3178 where waiting restrictions do not apply. There is sufficient room in the Maer Car Park to justify more double yellow lines on adjoining roads. Measures should be taken by the University and the Council to ensure that students park without detriment to the environment. The impact of this parking on road safety is a cause of serious concern.



Indiscriminate and unrestricted parking of vehicles creates problems of access for larger vehicles, including local buses, in the affected roads. The roads become just a single traffic lane creating dangerously poor sight-lines for residents leaving their own off-street parking. Major improvements would be the introduction of an effective car-parking scheme by the University of Plymouth and the effective promotion and management of a "green" travel policy. As long as the Maer car park is available, Maer Road should have all year parking restrictions.

Practical solutions to these problems need to be developed.

Landscape and Wildlife

A stroll through The Avenues reveals the tranquil beauty and air of maturity; an impression strengthened by the sense of character and history that pervades the atmosphere here. They do indeed form an area of outstanding natural beauty in all but official terminology.



There is abundant wildlife in The Avenues, although some has already disappeared due to loss of habitat through development. There are hedgerows forming leafy wildlife corridors bordering Lime Kiln and Long Lanes. Private gardens are the main areas where we see and find wildlife and a recent Devon Wildlife survey (available in the Biodiversity Records Centre's Database at Devon Wildlife HQ in Exeter) has revealed an interesting list of varied species.

There are garden ponds, which support various water creatures such as water boatmen, pond skaters, whirligigs, frogs, newts and toads. There are reports of the emergence of three types of dragonfly, the Southern Hawker, Broad Bodied Chaser and Common Darter. Damselflies such as the Azure, Blue Tailed and Large Red can also be seen. Badger and fox are around, usually at night, as are numerous bats and the Tawny Owl which is usually only heard. In the spacious gardens of The Avenues 47 species of bird have been recorded including Blackcap, Bullfinch, Chiffchaff, Heron, Grey Wagtail, Little Egret, Missel Thrush, Green and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, Nuthatch, Tree Creeper and Swallow, as well as flocks of Long Tailed Tits and Goldfinches.

The network of generous gardens attracts many butterflies such as the Brimstone, Brown Argus, Comma, Clouded Yellow, Gatekeeper, Small Copper and the Green Veined. Regularly seen are the Jersey Tiger Moth and also the exotic Humming Bird Hawk Moth. There are plenty of Wood Mice, Bank Voles, and even Dormice. Insects include Lesser Stag Beetle, Cockchafer and many different species of bees and hover flies - the list is extensive.





There is also an abundance of wildflowers including the comparatively rare Autumn Lady's Tresses, a species of orchid found in gardens in Douglas, Barnfield and Cranford Avenues. Also evident are a rich variety of fungi, some very attractive. The Velvet Shank has been reported, and the once rare pink coloured *Rhodotus palmatus* is growing on dead elms.

The traditional layout of The Avenues produces a mosaic of gardens, which together give The Avenues its distinctive character, contributing to a range of varied habitats for a considerable amount of wildlife.

The trees are of particular importance, many having Tree Preservation Orders. Hasledene has one magnificent specimen of *Pinus radiata*, which stands high above all the surrounding buildings and other trees. Other species on this site include mature specimens of Blue Atlas Cedar, Cedar of Lebanon, Monterey Cypress, Horse Chestnut, Yew, Holly, Ash, Copper Beech, Turkey Oak, *Trachycarpus Palm*, Silver Birch, *Ginkgo biloba* and Liquidamber.

They would have been planted in the ample gardens of The Avenues as a result of the wonderful legacy and plethora of plants made available by the great Victorian plant collectors, although there are other gardens still in existence in The Avenues with a similar richness of trees. In 1998 a survey was conducted of trees brought to the attention of EDDC by Exmouth residents as of special amenity value. This led to many trees in The Avenues being granted Tree Preservation Orders.



These sites need to be managed with care and it is recognised by local residents, other visitors, the planning authorities and the planning inspectorate that these settings make an important and integral contribution to the character of The Avenues. The quality and amenity value of trees in The Avenues suggest that serious consideration should be given to its designation as a conservation area. (EDDC Arboricultural Officers can be contacted in the Countryside Department at Sidmouth on telephone number 01395 516551 and will respond to the concerns of residents.)

Looking to the Future

The Special Character of The Avenues is a natural product of many years of careful planning and development. The challenge for the future is to allow development without destroying the qualities which have been evolved over many years. The concepts of the original planners need to be regained and developed to suit modern circumstances without stifling the opportunity of enhancement through innovative, high quality modern design.

The question is often asked: what is the special character? A public meeting of the local residents association (SAD) agreed the following description of The Avenues:

“The special character arises from the late 19th/early 20th Century road layout, with large, detached, two-floor family houses surrounded by extensive gardens, bordered by substantial walls or separated by mature hedge-banks and hedgerows which provide corridors for small mammals and birds. The original houses have pitched roofs covered in grey slate. There is generally balanced and well-designed in-filling with apartment blocks where appropriate, all with sufficient onsite parking.

The roads are wide and tree-lined with discreet lighting. Rural lanes criss-cross the area with ancient hedges and Devon Banks, which provide natural wildlife habitats and corridors.

Views from many of the homes include fields, woodland, farmland, sea and estuary vistas. The area is generally green and leafy with substantial, mature trees, shrubs and gardens. There is a distinct balance between buildings, greenery and open spaces.”

While it is recognised that there are areas within The Avenues which have developed in slightly different ways with regard to landscaping, tree planting and styles of architecture, there are essential and well-defined characteristics that should be recognised when any new planning developments are considered. These are defined in order to preserve the Special Character of the Avenues as described above and to maintain the established balance between people, buildings, greenery and open spaces. The aim of the recommendations in this Design Statement is to enable developers to plan and design new properties appropriately.



Conclusions

This Design Statement has described the distinctive character of The Avenues in the context of Exmouth and shown how that character can be identified in the layout of the area, in the balance between buildings and spaces, in the trees, walls, hedge banks and wildlife and in the design of the buildings. The Recommendations and Appendices set out planning and design principles based on this distinctive local character and illustrate many examples of good and poor practice to assist the local planning authority in the context of current local planning policy and to influence future policies.

The Design Statement has been put out to wide public consultation to enable its principles to be used as Supplementary Planning Guidance in support of the Design Policies in the Revised Local Plan in order to retain the Special Character of The Avenues.

Exmouth is an historic and distinctive town in a location of outstanding beauty and the Avenues is an area of special character at the start of the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site.

After half a century of inconsistent planning policy, there is now the opportunity to ensure that the development of The Avenues produces an enhanced inheritance.

Let us work together to secure it for ourselves and for future generations!



Recommendations

To retain, and enhance the previously defined Special Character of The Avenues, the following design principles, which are in line with Government planning policy guidance, should be addressed when planning future developments. Any subsequent planning conditions should be rigorously enforced.

Design Principles

- **B**uildings and their setting, should conform to the Character Assessment set out in Appendix E of this document. They should be of high quality and seek to develop the existing richness of the built environment.
- **A**pplicants seeking permission to develop should submit a comprehensive Design Statement containing all relevant information before their application is considered, so that there is absolute and detailed clarity about the content of the proposal.
- **H**edge banks, walls, hedges, gates and fences should be maintained or replaced in keeping with those previously existing and any hard surfaces should be of materials in keeping with the local character.
- **I**n order to avoid spoiling the street scene, where parking on streets has traditionally been minimal, there should be provision of on-site parking for residents and visitors well away from the road. Careful consideration should be given to parking and garages on large developments, and in appropriate circumstances some underground parking may be appropriate
- **S**treet lighting should be designed and maintained in order to enhance the safety, security and visual acuity of pedestrians and vehicle users. Light pollution, light spill and light trespass should be minimised through the careful specification of appropriate lanterns, lamp types, lamp wattage, orientation of luminaires and means of operation and control. This should apply to both highways and private householders.
- **O**utstanding examples of modern architecture that do not conform to the Design Principles should be considered on their merit so as not to stifle an evolving environment.
- **T**he substantial family homes of the 19th century, well proportioned within their grounds, are pivotal in defining the character of The Avenues. Every attempt should be made to retain these buildings to enhance future developments. These villas should be assessed for local listing purposes before demolition can be considered.

- Development should not produce buildings that are above the roofline of the surrounding dwellings to a degree that would be out of keeping with neighbouring buildings and should produce a roofline that follows the contours of the land. In the case of a replacement dwelling it should not be higher than the existing building.
- Any new development should not include the provision of buildings that are out of scale with their setting or give rise to repetitive forms such as bland blocks of flats.
- The scale of future developments should seek to retain the balance between buildings and greenery, which is so much a part of the character of the area. Development should not cover more than 25% of the plot in order to retain the spaciousness of the site. This should include garages and parking areas.
- In order to accord with the established and mature local street scene, new buildings should have a pitched roof with limited accommodation in the roof space. The development should conform to the general building line of a road thereby ensuring that a reasonable distance is maintained between a building and site boundary as this is a key characteristic of the area.
- To ensure that the information submitted at the planning stage is translated into a high quality development there should be conformity with the existing developments particularly in respect of proportion of windows and openings, roof forms, ridge and eaves details, lintel and sill details, brick bonds, mortar and joints and entrances.
- At every stage of the design process sustainable design principles should be used even at Outline Planning stage, particularly in regard to the placing and orientation of buildings and spaces, as access to good quality daylight and sunlight can help to reduce energy demand through artificial lighting. Careful planning and sun studies can ascertain whether excessive overshadowing will occur.
- Previous developments in The Avenues, inconsistent with this Design Statement, should not be used as a precedent.
- Planning conditions should ensure that landscaping is appropriate and in scale with the size and mass of new developments. Substantial trees of species appropriate to the particular area of The Avenues need to be stipulated and mature trees and shrubs on the site retained, particularly to the road frontage of new developments.

- Landscaping plans should be submitted as part of the Planning Application and should be approved before any development can start. When assessing landscaping plans, preservation of mature trees and shrubs should be a priority alongside the planting of new trees, shrubs and plant types which reinforce the character of the area and support wildlife habitats
- Where properties currently lack landscaping, encouragement should be given by EDDC to bring about improvements.
- A comprehensive TPO assessment of the trees should be carried out by EDDC with a view to protecting the irreplaceable mature trees and associated with the planting of new trees in species zones.
- Devon County Council (Highways) should sustain a higher level of maintenance of existing trees.
- Patches and strips of land for tree planting should be designated, designed and maintained by developers and, where possible by EDDC and used to continue the adventurous traditions of landscaping inherited from the great Victorian plant collectors.
- Visual street clutter should be reduced through the careful co-ordination of street furniture and signage. Liaison is required between DCC and EDDC who should consider developing a co-ordinated suite, or 'family,' of high quality street furniture that is in keeping with The Avenues.
- Where residents wish to make additions, modifications and alterations to houses, conservatories, garages, extensions, dormers, loft conversions, sheds, satellite dishes etc. they should do so in accordance with this Design Statement.

APPENDIX A - The Consultation Process

To ensure that this Design Statement is truly representative of the views of local people, there has been wide consultation within and beyond The Avenues and copies have been sent to several other bodies representing local interests.

- **22nd January 2002** - Public Meeting relating to the Local Plan was held with planning officers from EDDC attending as guest speakers. An open discussion at a Public Meeting arrived at a statement of the special character of The Avenues.
- **16th September 2002** - A Public Meeting following the AGM sanctioned preparation of a draft for The Avenues Design Statement, which was to be submitted as Supplementary Guidance with the Local Plan.
- **22nd October 2002** - Written accounts by various members of the SAD committee on differing aspects were compiled into the first draft and distributed to Committee members with requests for changes and additions.
- **November 2002**. A meeting was held with EDDC planning officers to discuss progress and their suggestions were incorporated into a Fourth Draft. This was subsequently distributed to all residents of The Avenues for comment. A slip for return by members was appended. Numerous responses and comments received were subsequently incorporated into the next draft. Invitations were distributed to all residents of The Avenues to attend a Public Meeting in December.
- **16th December 2002** - A Public Meeting was held, devoted to the Design Statement –‘An Area of Special Character’. Councillors were invited to, and attended, the Public Meetings and received copies of the Draft Design Statement and a request for comment.
- **7th April 2003** – The SAD Committee discussed whether the University of Plymouth campus should be removed from the Avenues designated planning area.
- **10th November 2003** – The SAD Committee considered changes to the Design Statement in light of further comments from the EDDC planning department. It was agreed that a precise definition of the area covered by The Avenues would be devised.
- **8th December 2003** - Broad approval of the Design Statement was received from the EDDC planning department together with suggestions. The removal of the University of Plymouth campus from The Avenues area was agreed by the planning department.
- **26th July 2004** – The SAD Committee agreed to the final text update by a working group.
- **6th Sept 2004** – The final approval of the SAD committee was given to the Design Statement with agreement that it should be available in draft form at Exmouth library and Exmouth Town Hall.
- **17/18th October 2004** - A public exhibition was held at the University of Plymouth, Rolle Campus, Exmouth advertised in the local press. Questionnaires were circulated at the exhibition. There were 217 responses. 211 were positive in their support, four were blank, one was negative and one expressed reservations. Amendments were made to the design statement as a result of the public exhibition. There was a full discussion with EDDC planning officers in November 2004 leading to further additions and amendments.

APPENDIX B - The Planning Context

Exmouth is defined in the East Devon Local Plan as an Area Centre where existing housing commitments fulfil their role in meeting development needs:

The town provides a range of services and facilities to surrounding areas but these are more limited than might be expected in a town of its size. Therefore any future development within the established Built-up Area Boundary will need to be reinforced by the development of improved community and economic facilities.

Exmouth has experienced a significant amount of growth in recent years. Further residential development will be restricted to development of existing sites within the Built-up Area Boundary, and in respect of sites in or close to the town centre, residential use may form part of a mixed-use development. (ED Local Plan Rev. Deposit Sept. 03)

The planning system is currently undergoing the transition from the Local Plan to a Local Development Framework (LDF). The current Local Plan, following its adoption in 2006 will continue to be used to make planning decisions until it, or parts of it, are superseded by new planning documents. The LDF sets targets for housing numbers, employment land, areas of development constraint and other relevant items.

Within the existing Local Plan there is a firm and recognised place for approved Village and Town Design Statements, which are adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Within the Local Development Framework, Design Statements will continue to be an important tool in decision-making but will be known as Supplementary Planning Documents.

All of this comes within a Central Government framework, which governs how development should take place and provides a national overview. Local government authorities at every level are required to conform to Planning Policy.

At the lowest level, EDDC consults Town and Parish Councils to varying degrees. They have no power to refuse planning applications but are an important first step since their recommendations are carefully considered before determination.

Many factors are taken into account and influence the acceptability of development proposals. They include: Conservation Areas; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Rights of Way; Land of Local Amenity Importance; Tree Preservation Orders; Design; Sustainability, and similar matters. These are listed and explained in more detail in the following Glossary of Terms and Designations.

APPENDIX C - Glossary Of Terms & Designations

Central Government Guidance

Central Government provides the framework which governs how development should take place and provides a national strategic overview. Local planning authorities are required by statute to enact Government guidance, in particular Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) or more recently, Planning Policy Statements (PPS). PPG/PPS cover many subjects including housing, transport and nature conservation, and are regularly revised and updated.

The Devon Structure Plan

Devon County Council is responsible for producing a master plan, which applies Regional Planning Guidance and sets out broad policies for development across the County. The current Devon Structure Plan is produced by The Structure Plan Authorities (DCC, Torbay, Plymouth and Dartmoor National Park) and is being rolled forward to cover the period 2001-2016. The Plan provides EDDC with targets over the plan period for the numbers of houses that need to be built, areas of employment land and areas of development constraint.

The Local Plan

East Devon District Council has *“to translate the county-wide strategy to the district-wide scale, therefore the key themes in the Structure Plan, in particular, will shape and inform Local Plan policy”* - (East Devon Local Plan Revised Deposit - Sept. 2003). In addition, the content of the Plan is influenced by the views of parishes, organisations and the public. The East Devon Local Plan (EDLP) covers the same period as the Structure Plan 1995-2011, a revised version having been published in September 2003. The Plan supports the publication of Village/Town Statements, stating that a *“Supplementary Planning Guidance may be taken into account as a material consideration in making planning decisions”* and *“will complement policy in the determination of planning applications”*.

The Town Council

Exmouth Town Council is consulted by Devon County Council, and East Devon District Council, on planning matters that are pertinent to the parish. It is an important first step, however the Town Council can only make observations and recommendations on planning applications and it has no powers to refuse as this is solely within the statutory powers of EDDC.

Policy D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)

In order to ensure that new development is of a high quality design and locally distinctive, a design statement setting out the design principles to be adopted must accompany proposals for new development. Proposals will only be permitted where they:

Reinforce the key characteristics and special qualities of the area in which the development is proposed

Ensure that the scale, massing, height, fenestration and materials of buildings relate well to their context

Maintain good levels of daylight and sunlight into and between buildings to minimise the need for powered lighting.

Do not affect adversely:

- the distinctive historic or architectural character of the area
- the urban form, in terms of significant street patterns, groups of buildings and open spaces in and between these buildings
- important landscape characteristics and prominent topographical features
- trees worthy of retention
- the amenity of occupiers of adjoining residential properties.

Have due regard for important aspects of detail and quality and should incorporate:

- secure and attractive layouts with safe and convenient access for the whole community, including disabled users
- measures to create a safe environment for the community and reduce the potential for crime
- use of appropriate building materials and techniques contributing to low embodied energy and CO2 reduction as well as respecting local tradition and vernacular styles
- necessary and appropriate street lighting and furniture and, subject to negotiation with developers, public art integral to the design
- appropriate 'greening' measures relating to landscaping and planting, open space provision and permeability of hard surfaces.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

EDDC has powers to make TPOs to protect trees and woodland that have significant amenity interest. This generally applies to older specimen trees or rarities. A booklet "Trees and Development" is to be published and adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Trees in Built Conservation Areas have similar protection conferred on them.

Buildings of Local Importance

EDDC maintains a register of buildings of local architectural and/or, historic importance which are afforded protection through EDLP Policy EN 15

Design Guidance

EDDC is in the process of publishing an East Devon Design Guide as Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Council is also establishing a forum for developers and architects who are active in the District in an attempt to raise design standards. A planning application now has to be accompanied by an illustrated design statement setting out the design principles adopted in the proposed development. Design policy within the EDLP has been strengthened and a new emphasis on sustainable construction techniques has been made in Policy D1B. Developers are encouraged to make better provision for sustainable building techniques and recycling, with greater energy and water efficiency.

APPENDIX D - The Views of the Planning Inspectorate

In recent years the local planning authority and the Planning Inspectorate have made decisions that acknowledge and help to maintain the distinctive character of The Avenues.

Cranford Avenue Appeal - APP/U1105/A/02/1090320 November 2002

Appeal dismissed.

"... much of the modern development respects the established massing and grain of earlier development and a unifying theme of spaciousness has been retained," and this proposal would lead to a cramped appearance for this residential setting that would not be characteristic of the surrounding area." The new building "...would thus disturb the harmony of the site and appear as an incongruous addition to the established development in this area." It was concluded that the proposed dwelling would not be in keeping with the layout and rhythm of the existing pattern of development, to the detriment of the open character and appearance of the surrounding residential area."

Stevenstone Road Appeal - APP/U1105/A/02/1086704 19th September 2002

Appeal dismissed.

"...the character, particularly in Stevenstone Road, is reflected in the spacious layout of large two storey buildings (some having additional accommodation in the roof space) set within generous and well-landscaped plots giving a sylvan environ. ...the retention of screening vegetation has maintained the apparent generous separation and openness between the principal buildings."

"... the massing of the proposed building, due to its width rather than its height, would seriously harm the openness and spacious character of the area and the rhythm of buildings in the street."

"... the proposed car parking would have to be provided in front of the proposed building, rather than to the side or rear.... resulting in the loss of a significant number of trees and shrubs. Therefore the relatively meagre planted strip would do little to provide an attractive and secluded setting in keeping with the character of the area... the proposed building would be too wide to sit comfortably on the appeal site. The proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to policies D1 and EN19 of the emerging Local Plan and the advice on design in PPG1, PPG3 and By Design."

The Red Lodge, 11 Elwyn Road Appeal - APP/U1105/A/02/1100719 February 2004

Appeal dismissed.

"The Avenues has a very distinctive and pleasant ambience. The Avenues, and more particularly, Elwyn Road, have a character that is worthy of the protection afforded by Policy EN 19"

63 Salterton Road Appeal - APP/U1105/A/03/1133640 10th August 2004

Appeal dismissed.

"... the prevalent pattern of development along Salterton Road as being large Victorian dwellings... set well back from the road with spacious gardens and roadside planting. The buildings on the northern side of Salterton Road, for a considerable distance on either side of the appeal site, also followed a similar building line with the established garden planting filtering views of the built form beyond. These buildings ... have a harmonious relationship to one another. ...these distinctive townscape features are important qualities that afford this part of Salterton Road a pleasant character and appearance." the proposal would "...need careful consideration to ensure that important townscape qualities were not harmed."

"Space around the building would be limited. ...the proposal would have a significant impact upon the character and appearance of the area, when seen from both Salterton Road and Claremont Lane. ...the disposition of the proposed building to this road would unacceptably disrupt the rhythm of buildings along this part of the B3178. In setting the building apart from its neighbours in this way the proposal would considerably weaken the important and harmonious contribution that these existing properties make to the street scene of Salterton Road."

"... the existing filtered views of the built form beyond, the proposed building would appear as a visually dominant addition to the street scene of Salterton Road. It would erode important townscape qualities and harm the character and appearance of the area."

Ferniehurst Douglas Avenue Appeal - APP/U1105/A/01/1072377 13th December 2001

Appeal allowed subject to conditions.

"....tree planting inside the boundary wall would assist in blending the extension and indeed the existing building into its setting.together with intervening hedging and trees the enlarged nursing home would not materially intrude..."

Blair Atholl, Douglas Avenue Appeal - APP/U1105/A/02/1085046 3rd December 2002

Appeal allowed, subject to conditions.

"The attractive area surrounding the appeal site was originally characterised by large villa style dwellings set in spacious grounds. The area now displays a varied mixture of traditional and contemporary architecture... much of the modern development respects the established massing and grain of earlier development and a feeling of uniformity has thus been retained."

(Blair Atholl's) *"... loss would not significantly detract from the character and appearance of the area. This would be partly due to the general level of original residences, materials and roadside planting still retained in the vicinity.... and partly due to the specific retention of both Kelton Cottage and the adjacent roadside wall. These are constructed with the distinctive brickwork that is characteristic of the older buildings of the area and they provide prominent reminders of the origins of the residential road."*

"... the partial screening and softening effects from the retained brick structures and the articulated form of the front elevation would allow the proposal to assimilate well into the Douglas Avenue street scene. Condition 6 shall ensure the retention of the existing boundary wall along the Douglas Avenue frontage given the important contribution this makes to the Character of the area."

Appendix E – Character Assessment

Early Period – Victorian

Architecture

The large, ornate villas have a characteristic sturdy appearance with bay windows on two and three floors under pitched roofs. Occasional dormer windows are in scale with the roof and generally add to the multi-faceted roofline. A degree of 'in-filling' has occurred with mainly detached dwellings of an individual, complementary character being built in the large gardens of the villas.



Early Period – Victorian

Materials

The villas are constructed from Victorian decorative red brickwork with fine detailing picked out in complementary cream brick. Roofs are steeply pitched and constructed from grey slate with the gable ends often containing detail features and elaborate wooden bargeboards. Many 'in-fill', and more modern buildings, utilise brick and pitched slate or tiled roofs to continue the theme set by the villas.



Early Period – Victorian

Orientation & Landscape

The houses are set well back from the road on sites that are proportional to the architecture of the building. Many of the gardens that front the houses contain large and mature trees, which match the buildings in stature and grandeur. Lower level planting of small trees and shrubs provides screening that ensures the buildings do not dominate the street scene.



Early Period – Victorian

Street Scene

The streets of this area are predominantly wide and tree-lined. Tall, red brick retaining walls give a coherent theme and instil much character due to their age and weathering. Retention of these walls is essential to preserve this character. The roofline tends to follow the contours of the land, which enhances the skyline. There is minimal street furniture, which adds to the spacious feel of the roads. The provision of on-site parking means that most properties have little impact on street congestion.



Early Period – Victorian

Inappropriate Development

Many villas have been demolished and replaced with large blocks of flats of varying quality and styles. Mansard and flat roofs are prevalent to maximise the accommodation within a given footprint with no attempt to preserve the overall themes of this area. Landscaping is often neglected offering no relief for the poor architecture and siting of the buildings. This continuing practice is endangering the original character of the area and such buildings should not be allowed to set a precedent for poor architecture and landscaping.



Middle Period – Edwardian to Late Thirties

Architecture

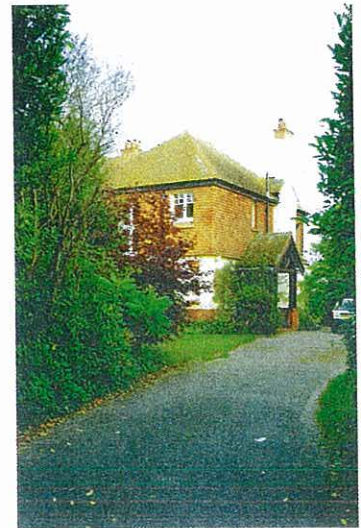
The houses are predominantly large, two storey in construction and extremely individual in design. As in the Victorian area, the buildings are ornate and any dormer windows tend to be small in comparison with the roof. Due to the smaller plot sizes, in-filling has been less prevalent but again retains the proportion of buildings to space.



Middle Period – Edwardian to Late Thirties

Materials

The original buildings are finished in either red brick or rendered in pebbledash. The steeply sloping roofs are generally clay or concrete tiled. Gable ends often have fine detailing and ornate wooden bargeboards. Prominent chimneys in brick or render are a feature of these buildings. A few houses have been built from cut stone and promote the theme of individuality.



Middle Period – Edwardian to Late Thirties

Orientation & Landscape

The houses are set back from the road with substantial front or rear gardens and are separated by hedgerows. Tall, mature trees in front or rear gardens and the hedgerows between sites, add harmony and balance to give a pleasing appearance to the neighbourhood. Some of the larger recent developments are well-landscaped and lessen the impact of their otherwise inferior architecture.



Middle Period – Edwardian to Late Thirties

Street Scene

The streets of this area are predominantly wide and tree-lined. In Cranford Avenue and several linking roads, a low grey stonewall and a hedge at the front are features that add cohesion to the area. Retention of these walls is essential to preserve this feeling. The roofline tends to follow the contours of the land, which enhances the skyline. The provision of on-site parking means that there is little 'on street' parking. There is a distinct lack of intrusive road signage.



Middle Period – Edwardian to Late Thirties

Inappropriate Development

In the late 20th Century, large blocks of flats of varying quality and styles were built. Mansard and flat roofs are prevalent in these developments with no attempt to preserve the overall themes of this area. This continuing practice, often with a lack of sufficient landscaping, is endangering the original character and these buildings should not be allowed to set a precedent for poor architecture.



Late Period – Post War

Architecture

The houses are mainly detached and range from large two storey family houses to smaller houses and chalet bungalows. The common theme is again the individual nature of the properties with little repetition. The scale of the buildings is consistent with their plot sizes. There has been little in-filling due to the smaller plot sizes so there is a common theme of sloping roofs.



Design Statement for The Avenues, Exmouth

Late Period – Post War

Materials

The buildings have a variety of finishes including brick, painted render, cut stone, hanging tiles and wood. This variety adds to the attractive nature of the area. The chalet bungalows have steeply sloping roofs utilising mainly concrete tiles whilst those on the houses are at a lower pitch. Flat and Mansard roofs are not featured.



Late Period – Post War

Orientation & Landscape

The houses are set back from the road adding to the spacious feel. The larger properties have significant landscaping, which screens them from the road. The smaller properties are often used as retirement homes and the gardens, planted accordingly, are neat and well-maintained.



Late Period – Post War

Street Scene

The streets of this area are relatively wide but have not benefited from the planting of roadside trees. Properties tend to be bounded by low brick walls adjoining the pavements. Many of these walls are topped by hedges and shrubbery giving the area a green feel. The provision of 'on site' parking means that there is little 'on street' parking. There is a distinct lack of intrusive road signage.



Inappropriate Development

Due to the relatively small plot sizes in the majority of this area there has been little scope for any development that is out of scale with its surroundings.

