

Budleigh Salterton Conservation Area Appraisal

Adopted November 2007

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View towards West Down



Cliff path near Cliff Terrace looking east

1. HISTORIC AND TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

1.1 Budleigh Salterton is an attractive and highly regarded small seaside town with a wide variety of architectural styles and features which particularly flourished between the early 19th and early 20th century. In a secluded and sheltered location, the older part of the town has its origins as a select watering-place. In 1809 Salterton was a hamlet of 25 houses but by 1830 was attracting visitors because of "the salubriousness of the air and the picturesque beauty of its scenery". The pebble beach ensured that the town would never become a magnet for family day-trippers, which has remained quietly residential and favoured for retirement. As Blacks Guide to Devonshire of 1898 engagingly puts it: "Budleigh Salterton is certainly a place to be seen, while those who know it best would perhaps prefer to have as little as possible said about it in a guide-book".

1.2 As an earlier settlement it was known as "Saltre" (1210) and "Salterne" (1405); the latter clearly derived from salterns or salt-pans established by the mouth of the River Otter perhaps as early as Roman times.

1.3 Visitors from afar were first attracted to Budleigh during the Napoleonic Wars when continental travel was restricted. James Lackington, a well-known London bookseller was an early notable arrival and erected a chapel in the main street in 1811, known as The Temple, which later became a Wesleyan chapel. Unfortunately this was replaced in 1905. After the peace of 1815 the town continued to grow rapidly.

1.4 Enjoying a particularly sheltered location, apparently with its own microclimate "where myrtles and hydrangeas bloom lustily"¹, many attractive houses of the late Georgian and Regency period remain. Sir John Millais, the Pre-Raphaelite artist lived for a time at the Octagon at the west end of the Parade. He painted "The Boyhood of Raleigh" here which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1870.

¹ *Black's Guide to Devonshire 1898*



Esplanade; looking west showing the entrance to town centre towards the right of the picture.



Budleigh Salterton like Sidmouth has a small fishing fleet, based on the shingle roughly south of Mackerel Square and in all probability this location has been in use since before the establishment of the resort.



Fore Street (north side); a typical late 19th century group with added shopfronts.



The Octagon, Fore Street; mid 19th century stucco, possibly built as a toll house, and a temporary residence of Sir John Everett Millias PRA, a leading pre-Raphaelite painter.



Marine Parade; view west showing the undulating setting of the town



Fore Street (north side); a typical late 19th century group with added shopfronts

2 SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 2.1 The conservation area covers part of Marine Parade, the town centre, and wedge between High Street and the coastline. In addition are several almost entirely residential areas associated with the early development of the resort, including Chapel Street, East and West Terraces and The Lawn immediately to the north of the town centre; and a further enclave at Westbourne Terrace and Little Knowle to the west.
- 2.2 The special character of Budleigh Salterton was recognised by the District Council in January 1983 when designation of the conservation area was formalised.
- 2.3 Within the existing conservation area are 37 listed buildings giving 29 list entries, with one additional individual buildings included on the non-statutory local list. The location of these is indicated on Map 1.
- 2.4 The alignment of Fore Street and High Street clearly marks the alignment of what would originally have been a straggling village street with a gently curving alignment, stopping just short of the coast with an attractive group of mainly 18th century cottages around the two seaward sides of Mackerel Square. This undoubtedly dates back to the time there was a modest fishing industry.
- 2.5 The old fishing hamlet of Salterton on the Rolle estates clearly underwent a transformation at the beginning of the 19th century when the beginnings of the present town were established, fashionable new homes were built, and persons of some notoriety decided to

settle here. For the next hundred years and more, substantial villas were built. These vary from the handsome brick built Georgian East Terrace with shallow bow-windows, decorative railings, plain but inventive fanlights, and panelled and pedimented doorways, to grand Regency stucco in higher parts of the town with entrances through imposing gateways.



Late eighteenth century brick terrace (grade II listed) in East Terrace.

At the end of period when the town attracted conspicuous wealth, some interesting houses inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, for example Grey Garth (built 1923) off Fore Street Hill, where use of natural materials is much in evidence; local stone, Cornish slate, and enclosed by randomly coursed rubblestone walls which may be earlier.

2.6 The main shopping centre focussed on

High Street has a good proportion of shopfronts with original fascia ornament, notably at a significant number of corner sites; for example Felix Lewis, Drusilla, Hardings, many also with restrained styles of lettering (e.g. Prior & Son).

- 2.7 Whilst there are recent uses and frontages that intrude, the overall effect is of unremarkable buildings overall, but whose main character often resides in ground floor, rather than upper floor frontages.



Ebenezer Baptist Chapel (1844), Knowle Road



Marine Parade with beach in foreground.

3 BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 The conservation area can be subdivided into separate areas which help to appreciate the different phases in the development of the town. These are briefly outlined as follows;

1. Arcadian Suburbs

- 3.2 Centred on Knowle Road is a discreet heavily landscaped part of the town in a secluded valley, in a very informal arrangement amongst many mature trees, often evergreen. There are similarities to Elysian Fields in Sidmouth although buildings tend to be less overshadowed by foliage. There are several good earlier 19th century houses built around an earlier hamlet. Good flint walls add to the character of this area.

2. South-facing Slopes

- 3.3 This area characterised by gleaming white stucco, slate and thatch, and with many rubble stone boundary or retaining walls forming a series of terraces above the town is of great visual quality.



Lion House, Fore Street Hill (grade II listed)

3. The Town Centre

3.4 The compact commercial heart of the town. There are few pre 20th century buildings and none are listed. However there is much character derived from the considerable retention of late 19th/early 20th century original shopfronts, several occupying corner sites. Apart from one unfortunate gap in the building line there are few visually interruptions, and the slightly curving alignment and gentle slope combine to form a pleasing sense of enclosure, which were it not for traffic congestion, would provide comfortable and sheltered surroundings.



Fore Street: the stream, footbridges and recently introduced railings create a pleasing foil to commercial frontages.

4. The Coastal Villas

3.5 Containing the remains of the former fishing settlement around Mackerel Square, several "cottages orne" adjoining, then the large partially terraced sea front villas, interspersed with modern flat developments. This is a very mixed area architecturally, its cohesiveness deriving from the mainly coastal frontage and backdrop of pine trees on higher ground.

5. Marine Parade and Lower Fore Street

3.6 There is a particularly attractive group of mainly early 19th century stucco dwellings set at right angles with a hint of the early fishing hamlet. The remainder of this area is an unashamedly seaside frontage of large villas, and flats but with low-key evidence of commercial use.



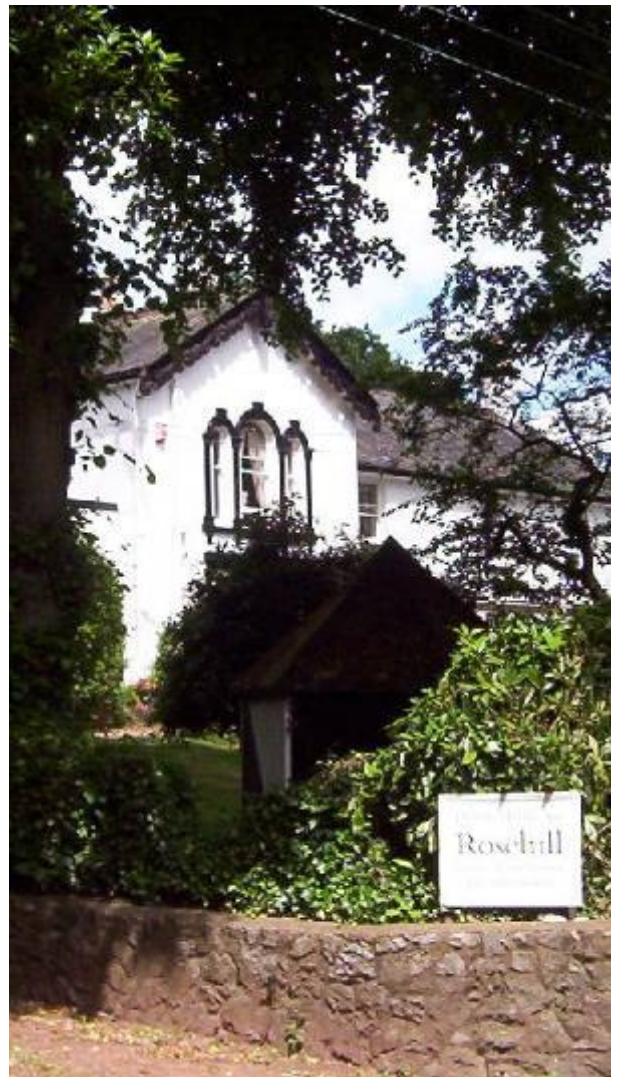
This is a self-contained residential area of substantial Edwardian and Victorian houses based on a lane configuration that is at least Victorian. The area includes four well-preserved pre-1890 buildings, most of the remainder being pre-1920. There are many specimen trees of good quality and a cohesive townscape of walled gardens, mature landscaping and well-set houses.



Marine Parade: seafront housing, mainly early to late 20th century. The pale shades of slate (above) are probably Cornish in origin.

6. West Hill Lane

West Hill Lane is the largest recent extension to the conservation area and includes large houses, old walled lanes and wooded grounds along West Hill Lane. Properties such as Rosehill (listed Grade II), Lindenwood and Mayfield are considered as being of special interest.



Rosehill, West Hill; grade II listed mid nineteenth century villa.

4 LANDSCAPE AND TREES

4.1 The sheltered south-facing setting has given rise to a landscape that has an almost Mediterranean quality with many pines and exotic shrubs normally associated with more southerly latitudes. Because the topography is almost bowl-shaped and steepens towards much of the northern boundary of the conservation area, a dramatic skyline of lofty pines and cypresses often forms a backdrop and fine setting to many of the Regency buildings whose smooth white stucco is in blazing contrast to the sombre greens.



Prominent pines and cypresses forming the backdrop to the conservation area.

4.2 The almost separate part of the conservation area centred on Little Knowle and Westbourne Terrace, effectively forms the slopes of a sheltered valley, and here trees and other vegetation are particularly lush with some buildings, particularly in summer,

almost hidden from view. Here away from direct exposure to the sea, deciduous species such as sycamore, beech (including copper beech) and willow are found, and the landscape has a more balanced, natural feel.

4.3 There are no large areas of open space within the conservation area and such as there are, are limited to small corners with some floral arrangement or seating. There are however many delightful footpaths. One crosses the conservation area following the shoreline and ascending the distinctive red sandstone cliffs to the west. Others provide extensive views towards the sea, while still others are secluded among walls and trees with an almost rural quality in spite of being well within the urban area.



Dramatic coastal views from the cliff path.

Some footpaths provide useful links to larger open spaces beyond the conservation area for example Jubilee Park and The Green. Apart from some town centre traffic congestion, Budleigh Salterton, more than any other East Devon settlement appears to provide a peaceful and pleasurable environment for pedestrians and providing many vantage points not seen by motorists.



View from cliff path looking east towards Otterton Ledge.

5 HARD SURFACES

- 5.1 There are very few instances of natural materials used for road or footpath surfaces. Some footpaths have unmade surfaces.

6 BUILDING MATERIALS AND ORNAMENT

- 6.1 The earliest surviving buildings are mostly of cob and thatch, and a few of these have been modified to incorporate the early to mid 19th century embellishments such as geometrically ornate glazing bars, round-headed windows, recesses and archways and widespread use of stucco which evolved from the "cottage orne" style to tall and robust villas with fretted bargeboards under steeply gabled roofs.



Local sandstone walls enclosing gardens in Cliff Terrace.

- 6.2 There is fairly widespread use of brick, especially in late 19th and early 20th century buildings in the town centre. An early example is East Terrace built in about 1800. There is a particularly fine example of late 19th century carved brickwork, fashionable at the time. This was done by Italian craftsmen brought in specially for the purpose. Some brickwork is embellished with Bath stone as at Lloyds Bank where there is also an excellent example of tuck pointing.



Fairlynch; Gothic window details and thatch, typical of the "cottage orne" tradition.

6.3 Flint and brick are used extensively in boundary walls, as are several types of stone, including the local conglomerate sandstone and also rounded beach boulders.

6.4 Budleigh Salterton is rich in ornamental detail which flourished from about 1800 to early to mid 1900's. Earlier ornament includes classical detail, highly decorative glazing bars, corniced gables, stacks, ridge tiles, bargeboards. There are several good examples of colour patterned glass and mainly late 19th to mid 20th century shopfronts with traditional features.



Weathered sandstone and brick wall on the corner of Parks Lane and the cliff path.



Decorative bargeboards, common on nineteenth century properties.

7 STREET FURNITURE AND SPECIAL FEATURES

7.1 In addition to the features highlighted in 6.4, there are several good examples of ironwork, for example the extensive iron railings and handrails at East Terrace, and the much more recent railings bordering the stream in Fore Street. A few cast-iron street nameplates survive. Streetlighting is quite unobtrusive and although modern of discreet proportions is of traditional style.



Cast iron railings in Fore Street.

7.2 Budleigh Salterton is particularly rich in seating provided for public use. Much has been presented to the town in memory of former residents. The inscriptions are an indication of the esteem in which the town is held by its past and present residents.

8 SYNOPSIS OF LISTED AND OTHER IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

8.1 St. Peter's Church was built in 1893 by G.Fellowes-Prynne, a gift of Mark Rolle, in place of a chapel of ease of 1811. Large and cruciform with Early English style lancets and only the lower stage of a northwest tower and spire completed. It is built of grey limestone with Doulton stone trim. The interior is enriched with arcade piers of Doulton stone and marble, a Screen of Beer stone and marble and a pulpit of sandstone.



St Peter's Church to the north of High Street

8.2 There are few other public buildings of note. The Town Hall (1925) is by a local architect in a modest style with stucco and red brick trim, circular windows and dormers in a grey slate roof. Ebenezer Chapel (now the Baptist Church) (1844, altered 1887) has "a dignified pedimented front with black channelled corner pilasters and two emphatic

rusticated doorways"² . There is also a good iron gateway with attractive overthrow and lamp.

- 8.3 Much of the special character of Budleigh Salterton derives from its rich and varied domestic architecture. There are few grand architectural gestures apart from East Terrace, situated on the steepening slope above the town centre. Consisting of five red brick houses c.1800 of two storeys and a basement, there are gently curving bow-windows and pedimented doorways, panelled doorcases and plain but varied fanlights. The iron railings to the front are almost complete.



East Terrace with Regency bow sash windows

- 8.4 Elsewhere the best houses of the town centre are in Mackerel Square; on the south side Admiral's Head and Old Clink are both 19th century stucco. Almost opposite is the polygonal-ended house where Millais stayed; the nearby wall is reputedly included in his painting

"Boyhood of Raleigh". On the slope behind is a fine example of an early 19th century "cottage orne" - Fairlynch, now a museum. Its neat symmetrical front is with arched Gothick windows including a pointed oval above the thatched porch has a flambuoyance typical of this period of seaside architecture. On Fore Street Hill, Umbrella Cottage and The Cottage are similar examples but converted c.1805 from an earlier group. Nos 25-27 Chapel Street is another good example with particularly elaborate glazing; the central one a lozenge. There is also a fine lattice iron balcony.



No. 25-27 Chapel Street.

- 8.5 There are many examples of Regency and later stucco villas. The only example in High Street is the front of The Feathers, and Regency Revival Post Office (c.1925). In Cliff Terrace are further early 19th century villas, mostly three-bay with incised end pilasters, and long private gardens to the cliff edge. No 6 has a thatched circular Gazebo. In Cliff Road is another villa of c.1830; The Cliff, a mixture of styles was once occupied by the local historian Dr.T.N.Brushfield and has a former library with elaborate Gothic

² *The Buildings of England Devon (2nd Edition 1989) by Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner; page 237.*

fenestration and extensive late 19th century colour-patterned glass. 8.6



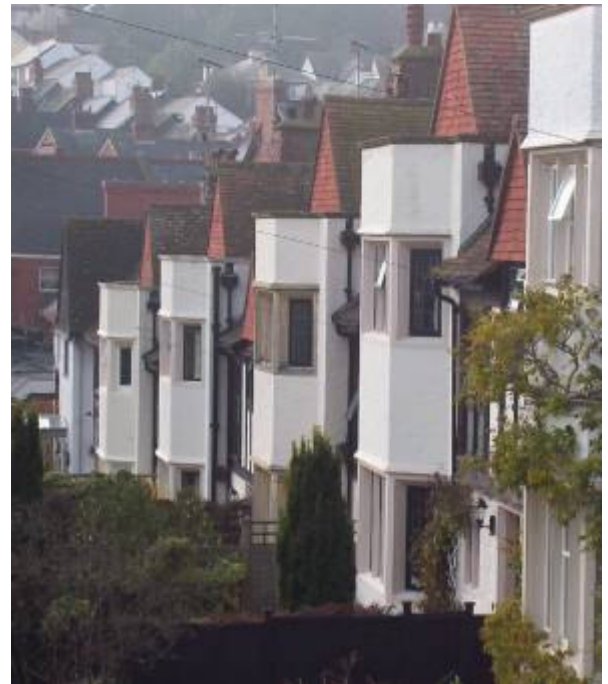
Cliff House, Cliff Road; detail of the neo-Gothic library extension added 1882. Colour-patterned glazing is typical of larger villas of this period.



Cliff path with circular gazebo on the garden of a villa. Note the deterioration of the base of the sandstone wall.

More villa development is to be found along West Hill (the continuation of High Street). On the north side Arch Brook and The Bays are late Georgian stucco, and near the turning to Little Knowle, The Cottage another typical early 19th century villa with Gothic glazing bars in straight-headed windows and a rustic thatched porch. Westbourne Terrace rising towards the cliff edge has tall semi-detached Victorian houses with decorative bargeboard gables and Tudor hood-moulds. Further similar examples are to be found on West Hill.

8.7 Budleigh Salterton is perhaps unusual in the exceptional quality of much early 20th century housing, not all of which is within the conservation area, nor yet considered to merit listed building status. Much shows an Arts and Crafts influence or as in the case Lawn Terrace (1935) opposite the Parish Church, mock medieval which is attractively stepped down the hill.



The Lawn; early 20th century houses in mock medieval style reflecting the Arts and Crafts influence

Elsewhere within the conservation area **9** is Grey Garth (off Fore Street Hill) with a 1923 date-stone. It is constructed with a roughcast finish with stone dressings and set into the side of the hill. It is further described as having "an informal, carefully detailed back elevation with stone mullioned windows, a corbelled-out bay, and well composed slate roof with a big chimney breaking through"³. In West Hill is Westbourne Cottage (1927) in the Voysey tradition, roughcast with corner buttresses.

Important Buildings outside the Conservation Area

8.8 Further good examples of early 20th century houses, strongly reflecting the Arts and Crafts influence will be found elsewhere in Budleigh beyond the conservation area. Several can be seen in Links Road and North View Road, built between about 1900 and 1925. There are other large houses along the Exmouth Road e.g. Dowerry House, a late example (1929) of a butterfly plan (cf. The Barn, Exmouth). Most noteworthy of all is Coxen (north of the viaduct) one of the few houses built by Ernest Gimson, one of the better known Arts and Crafts practitioners. It was built in 1910 for his blacksmith, Basil Young, and is a seemingly unique example at that time of a revival of cob construction. Frewins in Bedlands Lane is a close of artisan cottages, (1912) roughcast and of patterned brick alternating with pantiled roofs. These also tend to reflect the Arts and Crafts tradition; the Letchworth architect having clearly been influenced by Parker and Unwin's work in the Garden City at that time.

FEATURES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE

9.1 Within the conservation area there are a number of features of special character that are of particular note and worthy of retention. These are as follows:

- the richness and variety of detail within the built environment, particularly dating from the first half of the 19th century, with a number of fine examples of the "cottage orne" style of architecture. There are also good examples of Regency stucco with prominent rusticated quoins.

- several unusual examples of early 20th century "Arts and Crafts" houses, including an entire terrace at The Lawn, most of which retains its original detail.



Fore Street; the fine brickwork carved by Italian craftsmen

³ibid. Cherry and Pevsner p.235

-localised areas of special character; the most important of which are considered to be:

(i) around Mackerel Square which still retains a hint of the character of the original fishing community which formed the earliest part of the settlement;

(ii) an area of early 19th century development around Little Knowle including the finely restored Ebenezer (Baptist) Chapel dated 1844;



(above and above right) High Street from Cliff Road, showing corner shop site, typical of several still retaining original shopfronts



(iii) the large early 19th century and later villas on a series of raised terraces above the town centre (e.g. East Terrace and Fore Street Hill area);

(iv) the vista of the Temple Methodist Church set back from Fore Street is strong in impact. This building, although unlisted, has considerable character and makes an important contribution to the town centre.

-the generally modestly proportioned buildings in High Street and Fore Street, with several fine original shopfronts, especially on corner sites.

-the varied juxtaposition of the built environment to the coastline which from east to west, first fronts the sea across Marine Parade, then has a rear aspect

directly fronting the sea at the rear of Fore Street and Mackerel Square, is then set well back with long garden frontages (Cliff Terrace), and finally on rising ground at right angles to the coastline with views eastward, as at Rosemullion Flats and The Cliff.

-many quiet roads or footpath routes, frequently bounded by high walls of brick, cob, local conglomerate sandstone, grey limestone, even flint. Several are overhung with trees and shrubs, and the town as a whole is within a setting of lush vegetation, with a wide variety of trees, especially evergreens, and including some exotic varieties able to flourish in the unusually equable microclimate.



Madeira Walk offering panoramic sea views over the roof tops of villas in Marine Parade.



Fore Street shopfronts; there is a good survival of traditional shopfronts with good plain lettering.

10 LOSS OF CHARACTER AND INTRUSION

10.1 The main elements within the conservation area which are considered to be resulting in a compromising of character are as follows:

- prominent overhead power lines in several important locations close to the town centre

- large blocks of flats, some of which are very poorly integrated or are unduly prominent within the overall setting of the town

- loss of original fenestration, especially in many buildings directly fronting the sea

- loss of original detail from commercial frontages, and some infilling out of scale or proportion, and unsympathetic to the prevailing style



Bleak spaces with use of poor quality materials and lack of landscaping.



There are examples of weak or out of scale frontages.



Queen Street; some parts of the fringe of the town centre need enhancement.



Fore Street; updated frontages or new infill has tended to undermine the historic environment, although in time such development may come to be seen as representing a period style.

-traffic congestion in Fore Street, which can at times become severe with increased summer visitors, and when shops are being serviced by delivery vehicles.

-a seafront which in places is somewhat bare and featureless and lacking appropriate landscape treatment.

-boundary walls in poorly maintained condition or not appropriately repaired.

-some unsightly and run-down areas to the rear of the south side of Fore Street.

11 Conservation Area Extensions

11.1 Further to the requirement of Best Value Indicator to designate and update conservation areas every five years the boundary of Budleigh Salterton's conservation area has been reviewed following consultation with the Town Council, elected Members and the public. Following recommendations to Committee the following areas received support for inclusion within the conservation area:

- Links Pinewood, Victoria Place.
- West Hill Lane.
- Former Masonic Hall, West Hill.
- Oak Lodge, Station Road.
- Fernie Knowe, Fore Street Hill.

11.2 The public consultation exercise involved an exhibition in the local library and Public Hall and direct consultation with residents living within the proposed area for extension. Feedback was gained through questionnaires and general comments at the exhibition. Of the forty completed questionnaires the responses are summarised as follows:

- 90% thought conservation area designation was worthwhile.
- 84% were in support of the proposed extensions to the conservation area.
- 83% thought that the conservation area appraisal would influence decisions concerning alterations and maintenance of their property.
- 79% would support Article 4 directions with respect to replacement windows and doors, 89% with respect to replacing roof coverings and 77% with respect to removing render from principal building elevations.
- Only 49% thought that alterations to shop fronts and signage are controlled effectively.
- 97% thought that landscaping, road signage and parking areas could be more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

11.3 Other comments included requests to incorporate the coastguards cottages at the eastern end of the Esplanade within the conservation area. While these brick cottages are of historic merit and are prominently located they are rather more isolated with more recent development between the existing conservation area boundary. It would not be appropriate to include these modern apartment buildings within a conservation area extension and therefore it is considered that the coastguard cottages should not be included within the conservation area.



Stained glass detailing in the former Masonic Hall, West Hill.



Typical late 19th century housing with shutters characteristic of the area. The foreground wall is listed since it is thought to be that included in the painting "The Boyhood of Raleigh" painted by Millias when staying nearby at the Octagon

12 SUMMARY

- 12.1 Budleigh Salterton, like Sidmouth has a character peculiarly its own with a complete absence of usual seaside commercialism which so often detracts from the underlying architectural quality and historic context. The town's setting within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty further enhances its position and popularity among residents and visitors alike who find it an ideal location for quiet relaxation or retirement.
- 12.2 This appreciation is nothing new, these qualities having been recognised at the outset (1.1) and reflected in fine period architectural detail from 1800 onwards that is both similar to but on a more intimate scale than its larger neighbours. The extraordinarily sheltered location has given rise to a peculiarly lush landscape which is fully exploited in the unusually rich relationship between cultivated landscape and buildings with almost no corner overlooked.
- 11.3 This apparent incidence of little change, reflected for example in the survival of original shopfronts tends to disguise the underlying pressures that are leading to traffic congestion in the town centre and incidences where large blocks of flats or retirement homes along the seafront are sometimes incongruous or overwhelming in scale. The delicate balance that manages to preserve historic character whilst allowing a measure of new development within the conservation area is one that needs most careful scrutiny. In Budleigh where much development is on rising ground with slopes up to the cliff edge or facing across a valley, the setting of buildings and their dominance within the wider landscape is also a particularly important consideration.



Early 20th century coastal villa and adjacent landscaped garden (part of Rosemullion).

Historic Photographs



Cottages at the eastern end of Fore Street, now grade II listed.

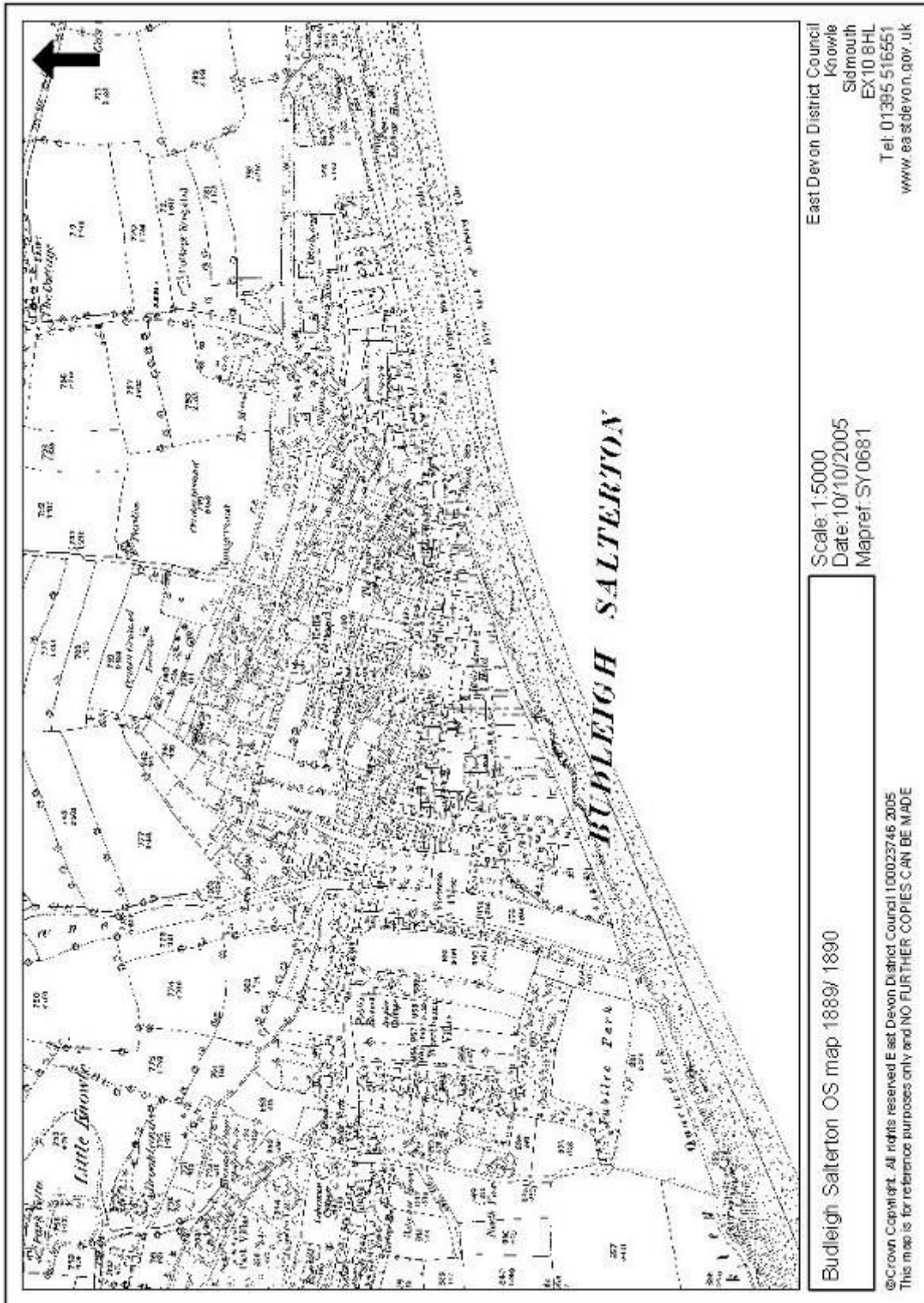


Marine Parade from Cliff Path

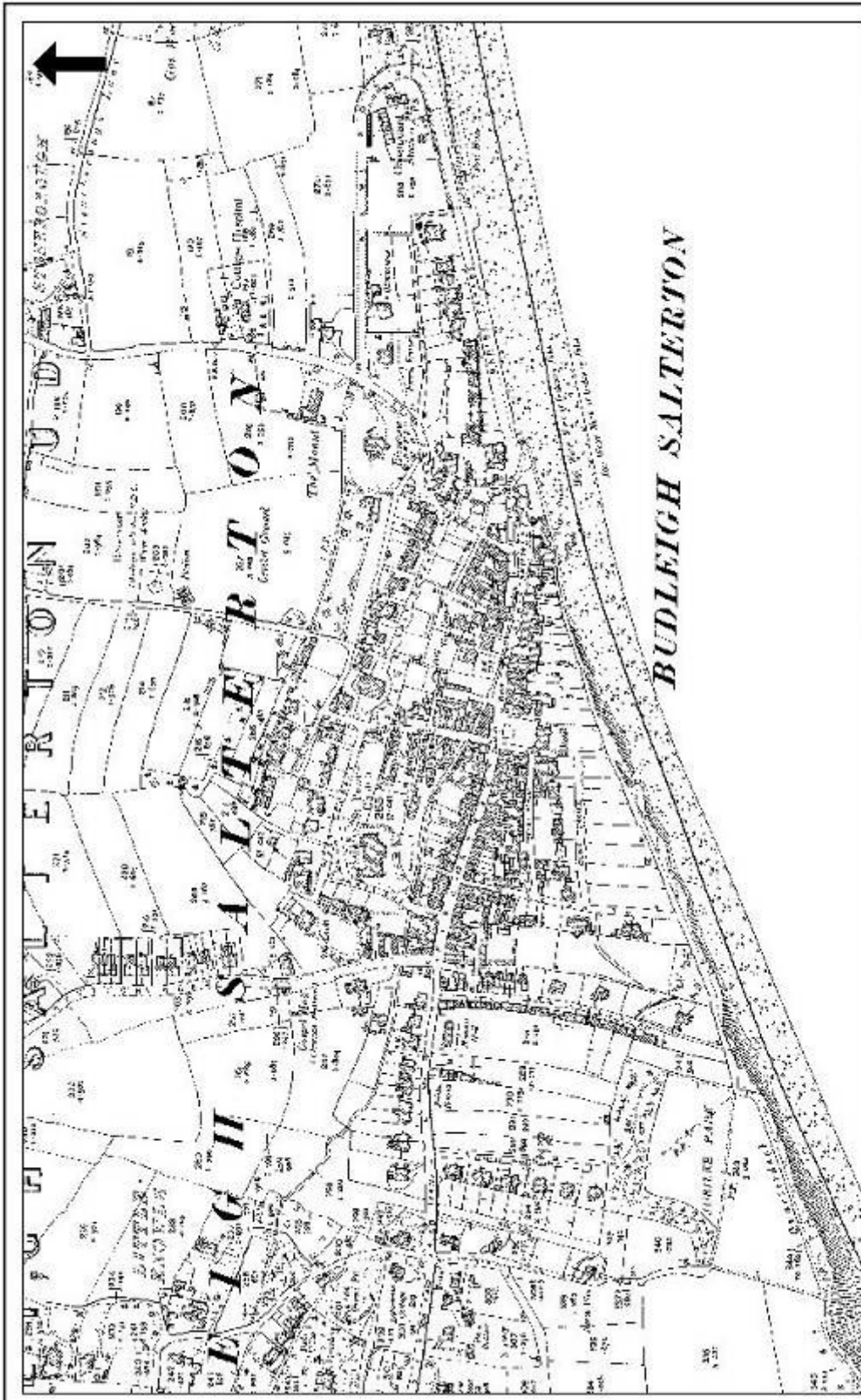


Budleigh Salterton beach and Marine Parade with former nineteenth century villas below Jubilee Park.

Historic Maps



(scale may be altered for the purpose of fitting the report)



Budleigh Salterton OS map 1905

Scale: 1:5000
Date: 10/10/2005
Mapref: SY 0681

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