



# Heritage Statement 1st Topsham Sea Scout Hut#

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*Document in support of Planning application Ref 16/0017/03*

We have endeavoured to produce a dynamic building that is contemporary, yet reflects the history of the place through its form and materials. The intent of this design is two-fold: to inspire present and future generations of sea scouts to take ownership of, and pride in a building that has its roots in the heritage of its site and to create a distinct identity for this site for the future.

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**Image 1** (and cover) Watercolour by William Wilson Circa 1850

Believed to be the view from the ferry towards the wharf and the park with 2&3 Ferry Road in the background. The wharf where Halyards now stands does not appear to have been constructed at this time; however, the small creek seen on the 1840 tithe map is in evidence where a small boat is moored. (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

## 1. Heritage Statement Considerations

### 1A General Guidance

In preparing this report we have followed the guidance below:

**(i) The Importance of Understanding**

*It is a well-established principle of good conservation practice that 'understanding' should inform the management of change in the historic environment. One of Historic England's Conservation Principles is that 'understanding the significance of places is vital... in order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric and how and why it has changed over time'.*



*This is common sense as well as good practice. Gaining understanding should not be seen as burdensome, but as a necessary part of the responsible management of change. It should help to avoid negative impacts and be aimed towards achieving creative and sensitive solutions.*

### **The need for a Heritage Statement**

*The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states at paragraph 128 that:*

*'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.*

*In order to meet this requirement, local authorities normally now require a Heritage Statement to be prepared to inform and accompany proposals affecting heritage assets.*

#### **(ii) What should a Heritage Statement contain?**

*What might be needed depends on the nature of the asset and the level of intervention proposed; as the NPPF states, the statement should be 'proportionate', and 'no more than is sufficient'.*

*A Heritage Statement should set out details of the **history and development** of the asset, using photographic, map, archival and fabric evidence. It should be accompanied by a **photographic record**, showing the site context, spaces and features which might be affected by the proposal, preferably cross-referenced to **survey drawings**.*

*It should include an assessment of the archaeological, architectural, historical or other **significance** of the asset. It will also normally be necessary to include an assessment of the **impact** of the proposed works on the significance of the asset, and a statement of **justification** for those works, together with details of any **mitigation** measures proposed.*



## 1B Characteristics of Topsham as defined by Topsham Conservation Plan

The characteristics of the Conservation Area may be summarised as:

- The estuary setting defines the area.
- There are strong historical links as a main port for Exeter after the City's canal and quay.
- Exceptional long-range views are available across the river.
- Detachment from Exeter maintains strong local identity and community.
- There is a variety of residential buildings dating from 17th Century to the present day.
- A large number of listed and locally listed buildings contribute to the historical Character of Topsham.
- Predominant walls in stone, cob, brick or render enclose private garden areas.
- Narrow lanes, courts and streets run at right angles to the main street.

Exceptional landscape settings creating much of the character of the development:

1. Long-range views across the river.
2. The tidal estuary, the waterfront and the activity in connection with boats are an integral part of the character of the conservation area.
3. Local ferries offering the ability to arrive and leave by boat, in addition to more usual methods of transport, are important to the character of the area.
4. A range of commercial properties including shops, hotels, pubs, restaurants and offices. Artisans such as boatyards, builders and sailmakers are essential to the character and community of Topsham.
5. A variety of residential buildings including small 17th to 19th Century cottages, substantial late 17th Century Dutch gabled merchants' houses, Georgian villas and town houses, Victorian, Edwardian and 1930's terraced houses, flats including purpose built blocks and conversions of industrial buildings.
6. Detachment from Exeter maintains strong local identity and community.
7. There are a number of public buildings including churches, a hall, museum, library and school.
8. A large number of listed and locally listed buildings contribute to the historical character of Topsham.
9. The main building materials are render and stucco, with areas of brick and stone, with roofs of natural slate or red clay tiles.
10. Most windows are wooden sliding sashes with a variety of glazing bar patterns. Doors are mainly timber with a range of patterns and surrounds. However some later 19th and 20th Century properties have replaced traditional timber windows and doors with badly proportioned timber UPVC or aluminium windows and doors.
11. Other predominant details are tall stone, cob, brick or rendered boundary walls enclosing private garden areas throughout. Some have gates or openings that allow a glimpse into pleasant green spaces or paved courtyards.
12. All buildings have an impact on the character and appearance of the area.
13. Narrow lanes, courts and streets run at right angles to the main street.
14. Pedestrian access ways pierce continuous frontages leading to rear courts. Numerous examples of cobbled and patterned pebble paths.
15. Kerbs and gullies are often natural stone, usually grey limestone or granite.
16. The station and level crossing, together with the sound of trains, contribute to Topsham's character.



## 2 The Scout Hut and its Environs: Historical Context

*Para 128 NPPF. "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary....."*

### 2A Pre C20: The Distinctive Characteristics of the Two Sides of Ferry Road

Ferry Road runs parallel to the river. The pattern of land use to both sides of the road has its own distinct characteristics, separate from that of the rest of Topsham, that are derived from its topography, its geography and its history.

The land round Topsham's quays is reclaimed from the river and its stability maintained through the use of wharfs and caissons which have been constructed to prevent the usual scour on the outside of a meander on the river. This allows the port and wharfs access to the deepest part of the river with a minimum of dredging necessary to keep the quays free of silt. To the north east of Ferry Road, the pattern of building is dictated by the topography of the land. A steep escarpment, likely to have been the undercut of the meander, restricts development inland and changes the nature of development to become parallel to the road.



**Image 2** Diagram of Deposit and Scour – Topsham (Reproduced Courtesy of Google Earth)



The scout hut is located on land to the south west of Ferry Road but north west of the main quays on the inside of a meander creating a beach formed from deposit materials. As Topsham was one of the 5 main ports for both trade and ship building in the South of England in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the commercial value of the land in this area would have been high. We believe that this, combined with the nature of ship building and the convenience of being able to moor in still water, has led to the current pattern of building which is predominantly in narrow strips at 90 degrees to the river side of Ferry Road. The remaining older buildings on the wharfs, for the most part, follow this pattern, although later buildings vary from it.

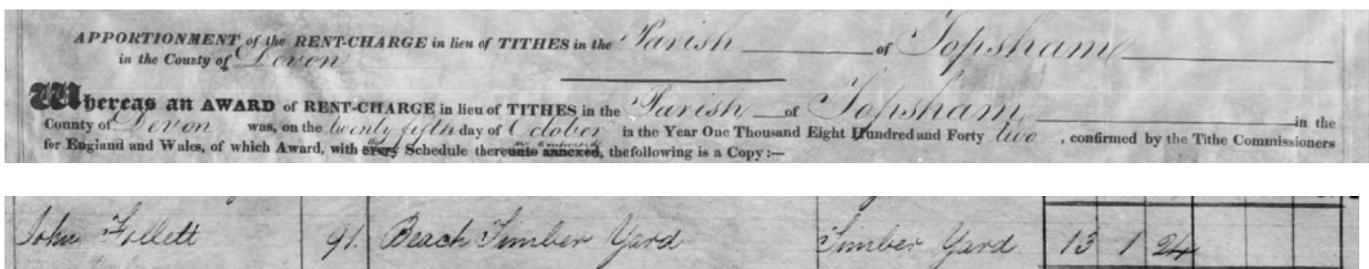


**Image 3** of Topsham showing pattern of development (Reproduced Courtesy of Google Earth)

It is evident that this land below the embankment formed the original industrial area of Topsham.

The 1842 tithe map shows most of the quays and wharfs in the ownership of the town. The scout hut site, together with the wharf where Halyards now stands and the land to the north west of the site was one of the exceptions, being registered in the name of Mr John Follett and used as Beach Timber Yard.

John Follett was both a Hemp and Timber merchant. There is some evidence to suggest he may also have been a shipbuilder.



**Image 4** - Extract of the Tithe Apportionment for Plot 91 in the name of John Follett. (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)



1. The Town of Topsham & Roads Rivers & Waste	43	2.			
	40.				

**Image 5** Extract of the Tithe Apportionment for Plot 1 (The Town Of Topsham) (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

Osley John	Thomas Mann	74	Field	Garden	3	8	6	6A	12 20 25	NN 75
	Thomas Bellamy	77	Field	Garden	1	3	3 1/2	1 1/2	10	18 24
	William Matthews	37 1/2	Field	Orchard	1	3 1/2	10	11		R8073

**Image 6** Extract of the Tithe Apportionment for Plot 77 Above 2&3 Ferry road (Garden) (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

Shepherd Sophia	George Prose	76	Field	Garden	1	3	10	1 1/2	6	NO 1
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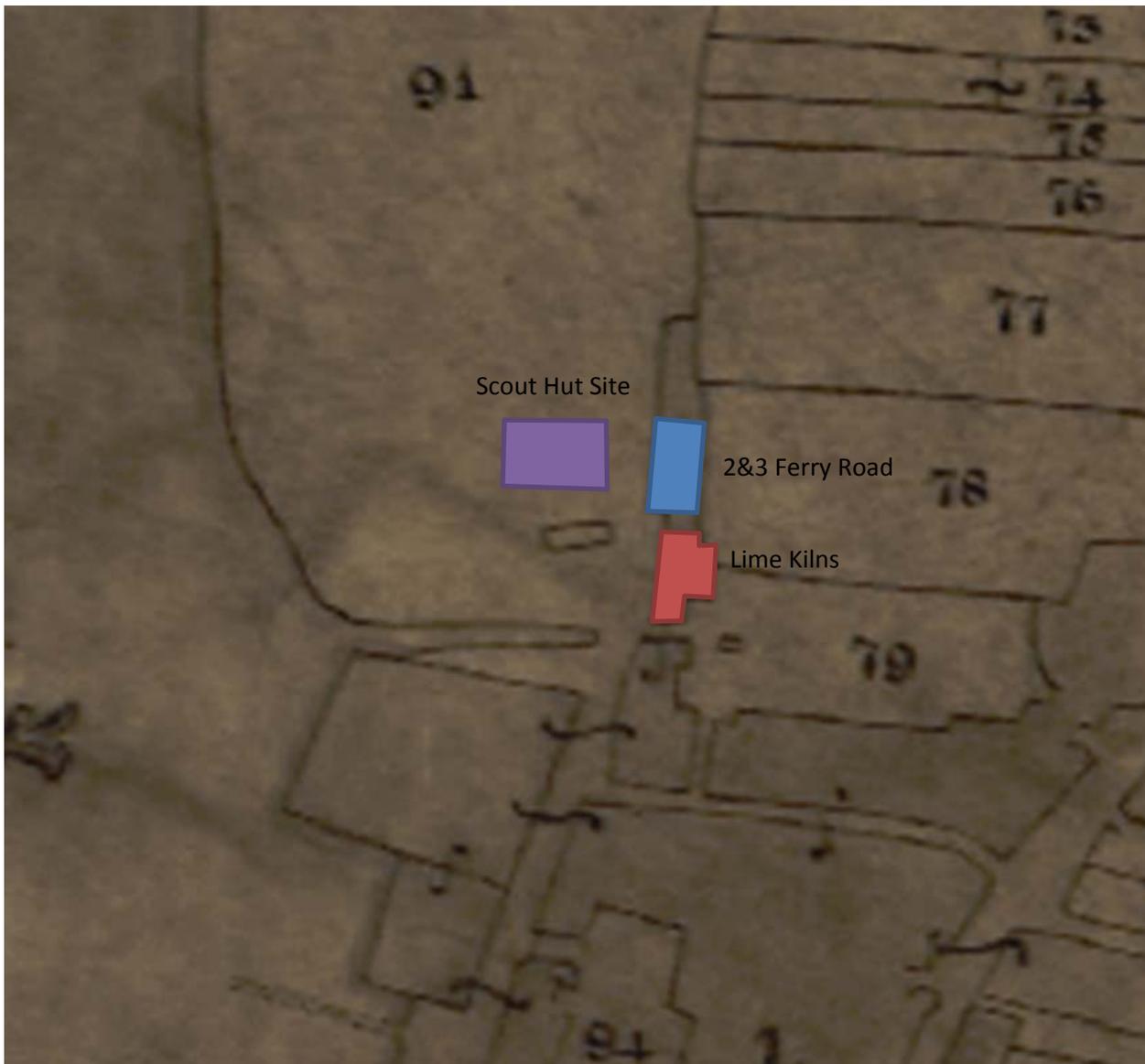
**Image 7** Extract of the Tithe Apportionment for Plot 78 (Garden above lime kilns) (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

Davey Daniel, Bishop and Bishop Davey	79	Timber Field			1	10				
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**Image 8** Extract of the Tithe Apportionment for Plot 1 (Daniel Bishop Davey - Timber Field) (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)



**Image 9** Extract of Tithe Map of Topsham (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)



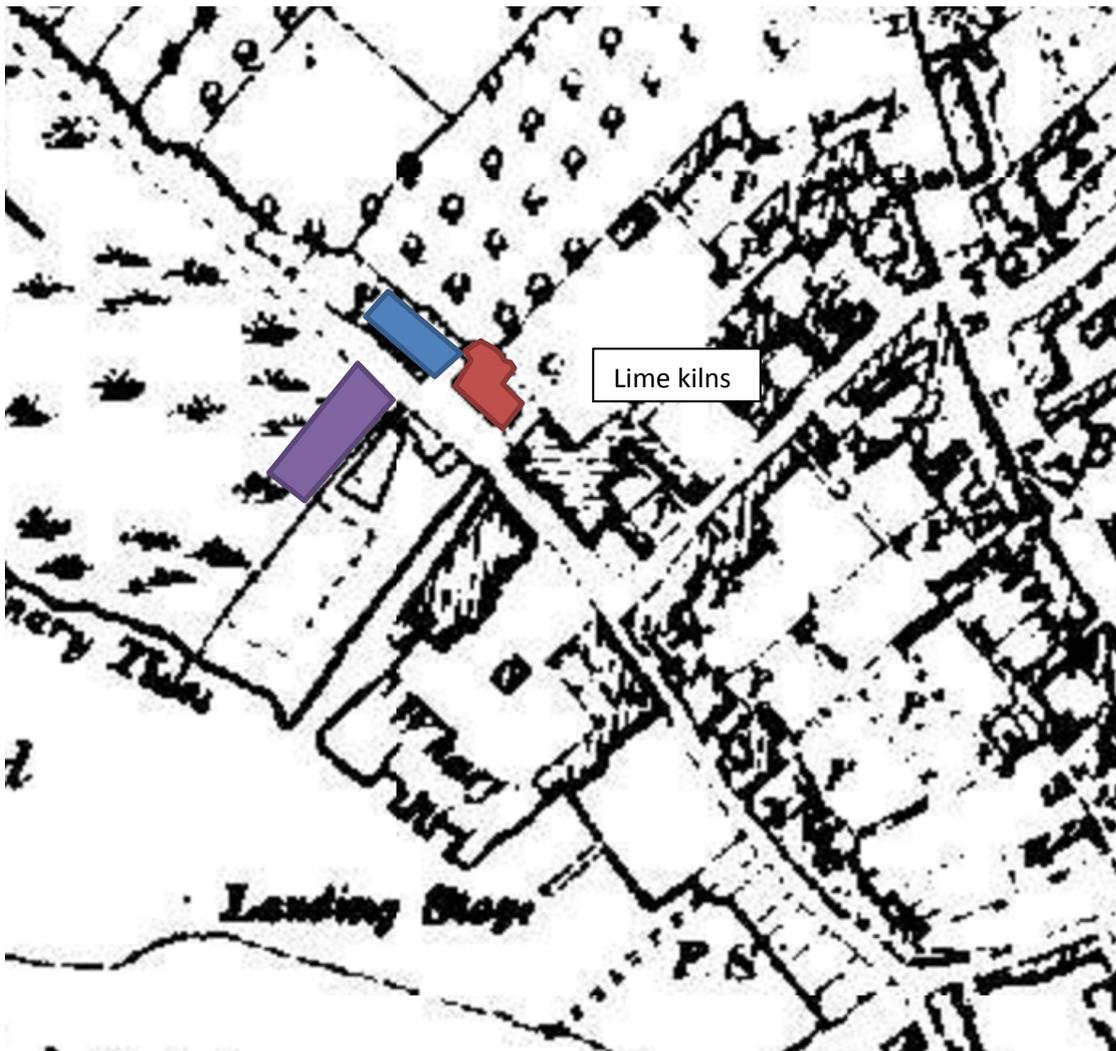
**Image 10** Extract of Tithe Map of Topsham (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

The scout hut location is upstream of the most north western quay in Topsham at the point where the river is in neutral mode between deposition and scour. It is probable that the quay was used to bring in materials for the lime kilns which were located next to 2 & 3 Ferry Road as well as timber for the two adjacent timber yards. The use as lime kilns appears to have continued into the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The kilns were still shown on the 1955 ordinance survey map.



**Image 11** 1862 to 1898 Ordnance Survey Map scout Hut site indicated (Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

The Halyards housing development is located on this quay and wharf with the Scout Hut, Pumping Station and Dorothy Holman Centre being built on reclaimed land adjacent to this. It is probable that the creek which was in evidence silted up as a result of the increase in the deposition following the construction of the quay creating the land on which the scout hut now stands.

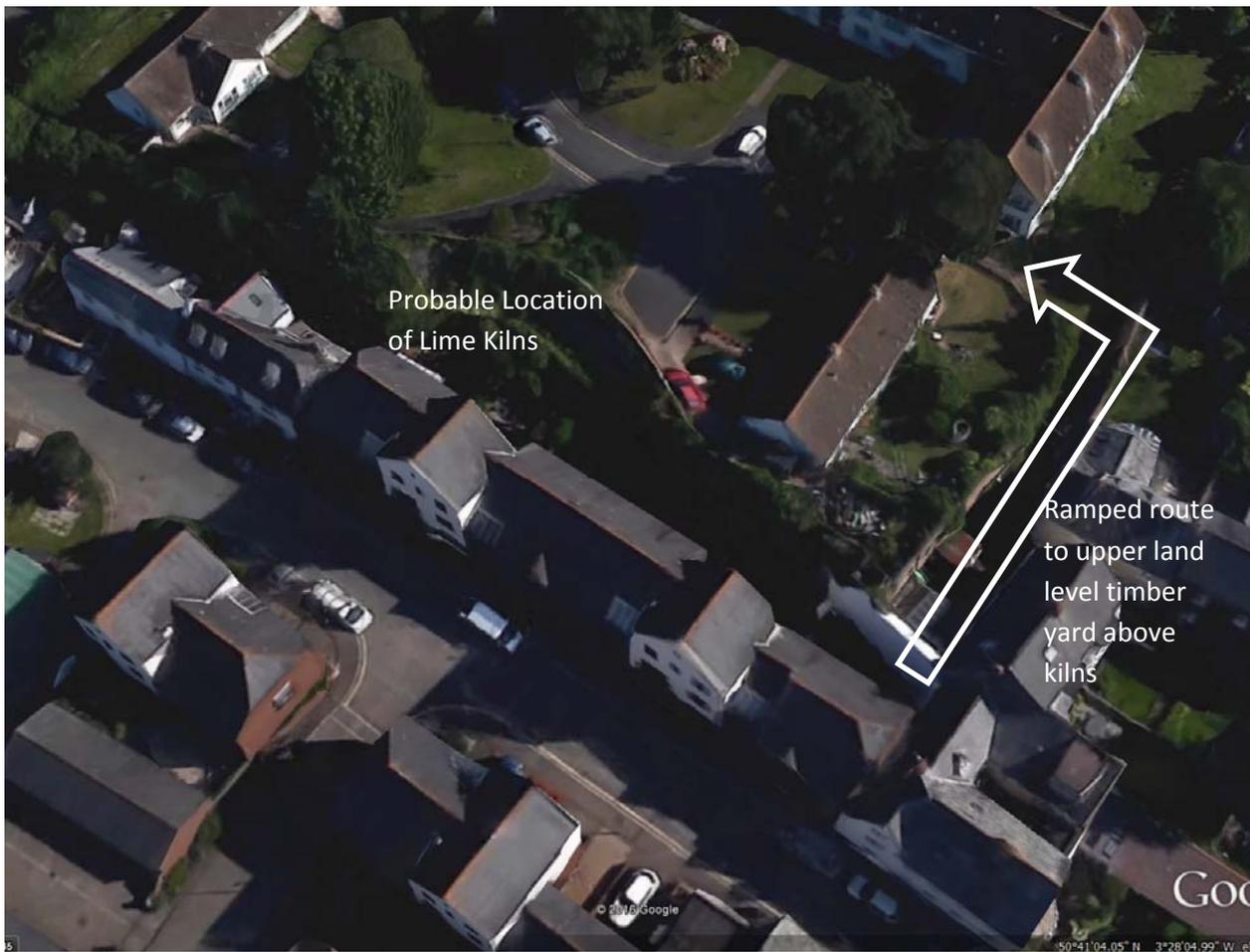


**Image 12** Segment of 1862 to 1898 Ordnance Survey Map  
(Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

-  Lime kilns
-  2&3 Ferry Road
-  Site location – Scout Hut

The site is located alongside a historic wharf which is shown on the 1889 to 1890 ordinance survey map.

It is likely that the wharf predominantly serviced the lime kilns located on the opposite side of Ferry Road and the timber yards adjacent to the site. Both the wharf and the kilns appear to have been in existence up until the mid-1960s.



**Image 13** of Ferry Road indicating location of lime kilns and the 5m wide ramp up to the top of the escarpment. (Reproduced Courtesy of Google Earth)

The land on which the scout hut stands was reclaimed from marshlands between 1905 and 1936 and started its use as recreation land by 1955. The site was part of the bequest to the town from the Dorothy Holman Trust with its strong family ties to the wharf and the shipbuilding industry in Topsham.



**Image 14** 1938 map of site – Indicating the extent of land reclamation.  
(Reproduced Courtesy of South West Heritage Trust)

## 2B The Conservation Area and Appraisals, the Listed Property and its Setting

The site falls within **Zone 1** of Topsham Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan published June 2009.



**Image 15** - Topsham Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009

(Reproduced Courtesy of Exeter City Council extract from Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009)

The description of this area states “This area lies between the west side of High Street and the River Exe. It is dominated by modern development including blocks of modern flats, an estate of bungalows, a library, a new school and a large public open space.”



**Image 16** Street view towards the site from Halyards

#### **i) Conservation Area Appraisal**

Specifically referring to the playing field adjacent to the site as “... a roughly triangular recreation ground. Within this area there are some attractive trees and the eye is drawn to the exceptional distant views across the river. The space has an undeveloped sense that is a welcome counterpoint to the busy narrow streets surrounding it.” This is one of the spaces identified as having a positive impact.

The scout hut and adjacent site are also mentioned with the Dorothy Holman Centre attracting the comment that.... ‘The buildings lack the scale, massing and architectural quality required in this context, although the scout hut retains some charm through its materials and simple form.’

Unfortunately it is these materials that have led to the deterioration of the building beyond economic re-use.

The Dorothy Holman centre is described as an area of poor townscape and as a building not making a positive contribution.

2&3 Ferry Road opposite the scout hut site is a grade 2 listed building and in the 2009 report is listed as having a positive contribution.



**Image 17** Current front Elevation - 2&3 Ferry Road

## ii) Listed Properties

*English Heritage in Conservation Principles (2008). Conservation Principles identifies four types of heritage value that an asset may hold:*

- i. aesthetic,*
- ii. communal,*
- iii. historic*
- iv. evidential value*

The only listed property in Zone 1 is the dwelling known as 2&3 Ferry Road. It is opposite the existing scout hut.

2&3 Ferry Road appears to have been in existence prior to 1840 (see Image 1). Despite extensive research we have been unable to establish the building's history prior to this. There have been some suggestions that these buildings were constructed as fishermen's cottages in the planning application of May 2011.

The proportion and window style of the building indicated that the construction would have been similar to that of number 4 Ferry Road and the buildings on Follett Road which are believed to have been constructed early to mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century.

This building is of a style not normally associated with fishermen's cottages. Based on the ownership of the land in the 1840's tithe maps and the occupation registers and population



records of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, it is probable that the house is associated with the timber yard owned by the Follett family. The records from this period show the Follett's as Freeholders, Maltsters and Merchants in the town. The location of the houses on the foreshore, with timber yard to the front, lime kilns to the side and extensive shipbuilding and maritime activity would suggest this building was associated with one of these uses.



**Image 18** Extract of image 1 believed to be 2&3 Ferry Road. Whilst the building appears significantly taller than that in the photograph above this is probably in part accurate as the land level now is significantly higher due to land reclamation but also appear to be a reflection of the building on the water.

The listing, Reference 1333374 dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 1974, describes the building thus: *“Probably early C18. Plastered with rusticated quoins. Two storeys, sash windows with glazing bars. Combined porches with gable, modern doors. One modern dormer. Sheet asbestos roof.”*

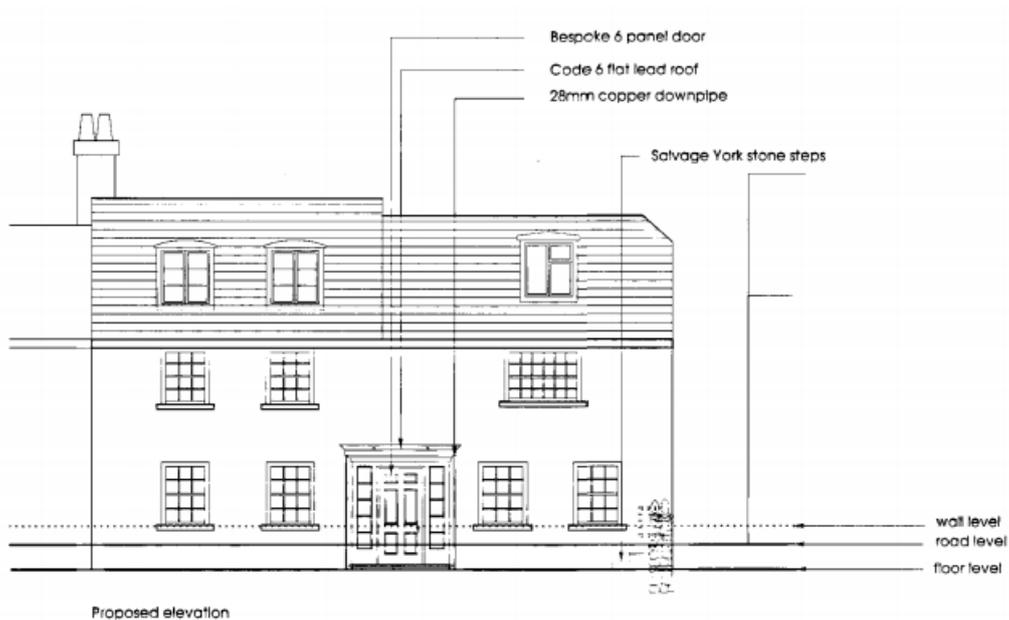
Since the original listing the property has been significantly altered.

Between 1974 and 2002, two more dormers have been added and the roof changed from sheet asbestos to slate.

In 2002, an application was approved to remove the two front doors and replace these with a porch and a single door.



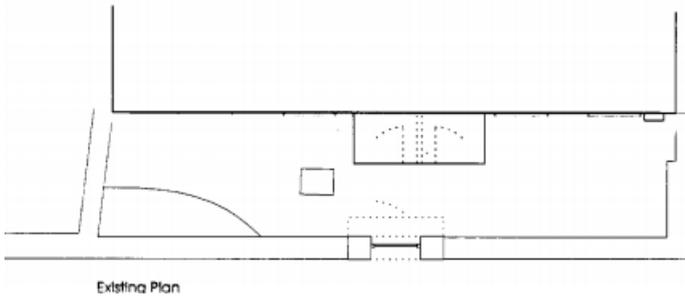
**Image 19** As Existing Elevation application 2002 - Note ground level additional dormer windows and two front doors (Exeter City Council)



**Image 20** Approved drawing showing alterations to the building circa 2002 (Exeter City Council)

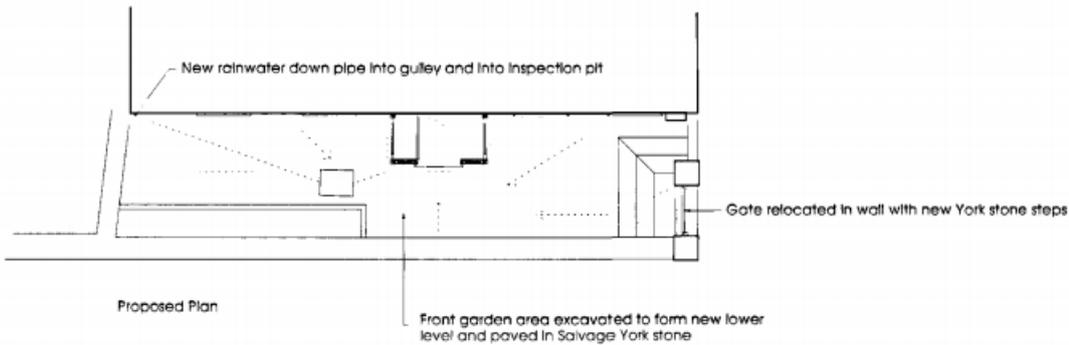
The additional roof gables are in existence at this time.

In addition the garden to the front of the property has been reduced in level and the access from the road moved to the side



Existing Plan

**Image 20** Plan of front of building circa 2002 Prior to alteration (Exeter City Council)



Proposed Plan

Front garden area excavated to form new lower level and paved in Salvage York stone

**Image 21** Plan of front of building circa 2002 post alteration (Exeter City Council)

In 2011 a further application was approved to alter the front elevation of the building to include an arched window to the stairwell and significant alterations to internal layout of the Building.



PROPOSED SOUTHERN ELEVATION

**Image 22** Proposed front elevation application 2011 (Exeter City Council)





Image 23 Front Elevation 2016

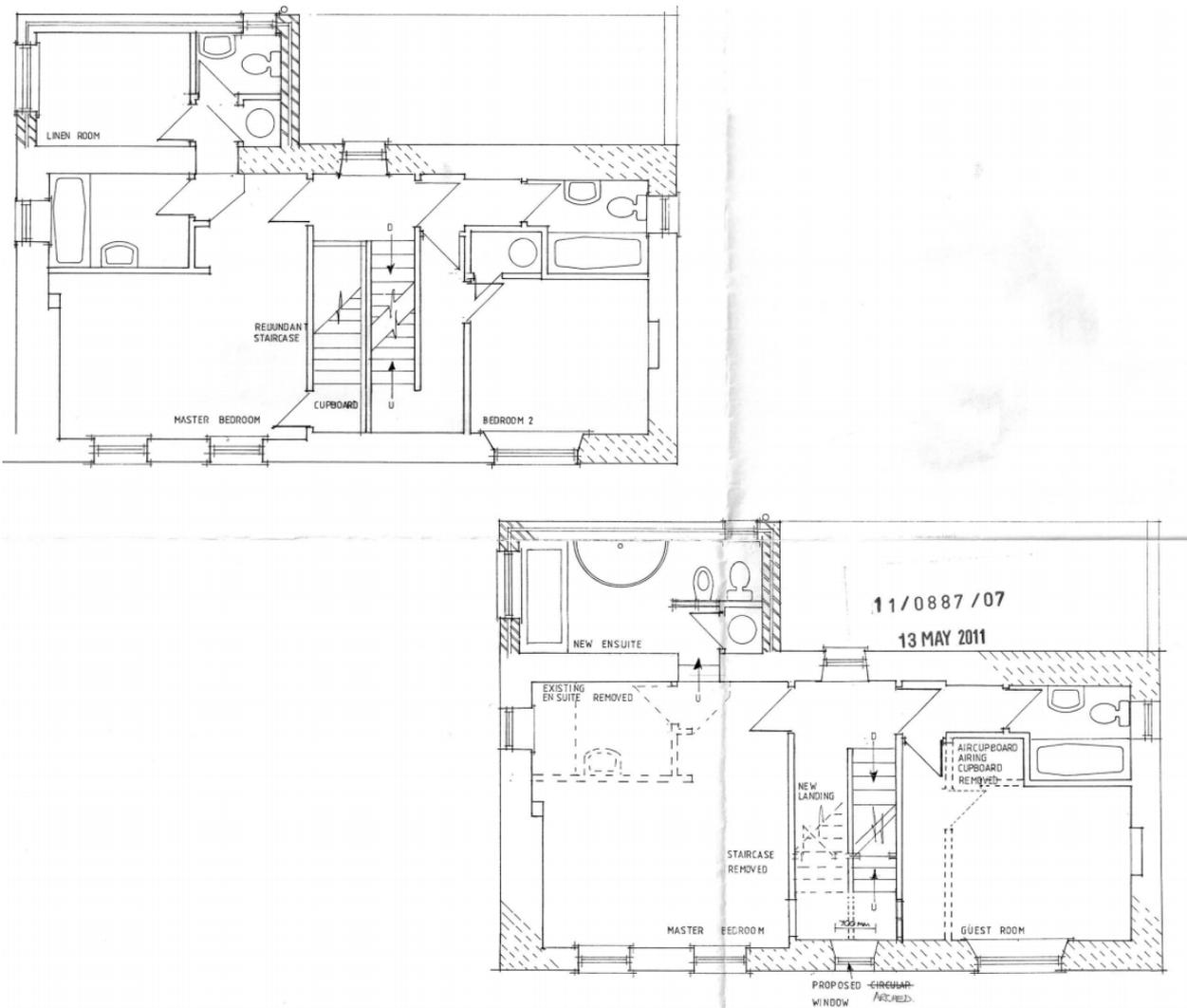


Image 24 Floor Plans 2011 - Application Existing Above Proposed Below App No 11/0887/07



2 & 3 Ferry Road has been significantly altered since its listing. The addition of period style windows and porch and other alterations to the entrance and setting have gentrified what appear to have been simple dwellings.

When constructed, the houses would have been in the industrial heartland of Topsham, with a timber yard on the foreshore in front of the building, ship building and wharfs on the current Halyards site and Lime Kilns next door. Image 1 shows the open space in front of the building and we believe the doors to the houses would have led straight out onto a beech and timber yard.

The setting of the building has changed considerably over the intervening years. An additional wharf was constructed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The land to the front of the building has been reclaimed, with the ground levels increased in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century close to that which is in evidence now.

The current scout hut was erected on the land opposite the listed building in the summer of 1962 and the pumping station constructed in the late 1970s. The construction of these buildings and the fish packing buildings on the wharf blocked the view of the river from the listed building.

English Heritage identifies four types of heritage value that an asset may hold: aesthetic; communal; historic; evidential. In terms of these conservation principles, the emphasis for identifying the heritage value of 2 & 3 Ferry Road must lie with its evidential value, since it's mass, form and location within the topography evidence the significant changes in its setting and in the land in its immediate vicinity. Whilst the original form and mass of the building is retained, the extensive alterations to the principle elevation, albeit in the style of the original houses, significantly changes the visual perception of the building from that of two, relatively modest, cottages to that of a higher status single dwelling.

### iii) [The Setting for the Listed Building](#)

The past 30 years have seen further significant changes to the setting of this listed building with the construction of the Halyards development, the Dorothy Holman Centre, the flats to the northern side of the park and, perhaps most controversially, the conversion of the toilet block to a dwelling.

It has been acknowledged that the developments along the north side of Ferry Road, with the exception of the garage block to the flats, have had a positive impact on the streetscape, (see Image 25). The primary reason for this is that they follow the historic street pattern and texture of this area of Topsham, having been constrained by the topography of the land behind. Whilst these buildings are significantly taller than those in surrounding streets, again the topography allows them not to dominate.

To the south of Ferry Road, the majority of the buildings had or have a commercial function relating to the river and the pattern of building is predominantly as described in image 3 above. Because the constraints are driven by the river and the contingencies of business, the topography of the buildings is less cohesive. In the case of the Halyards building to the South East of Ferry Road, its random layout and the removal of the visual link between road and river have both contributed to the diminished quality of the landscape in this area.

“South of the scout hut and Dorothy Holman Centre is part of Halyards, a development of modern flats. The design and materials may not be typical of Topsham but consideration has been given, particularly for the properties facing onto Ferry Road, to a scale and grain of development which is consistent with the historic neighbours.”



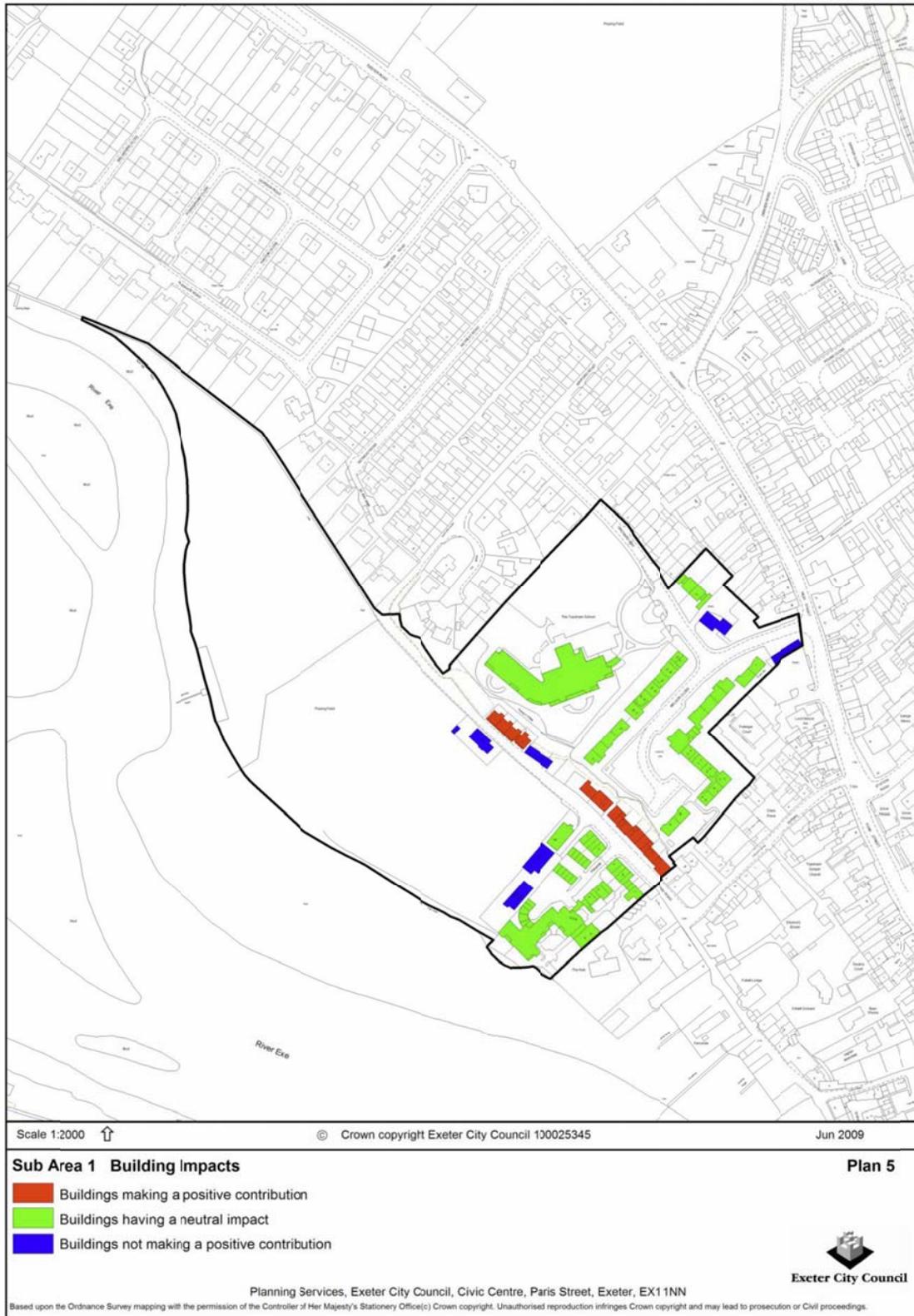
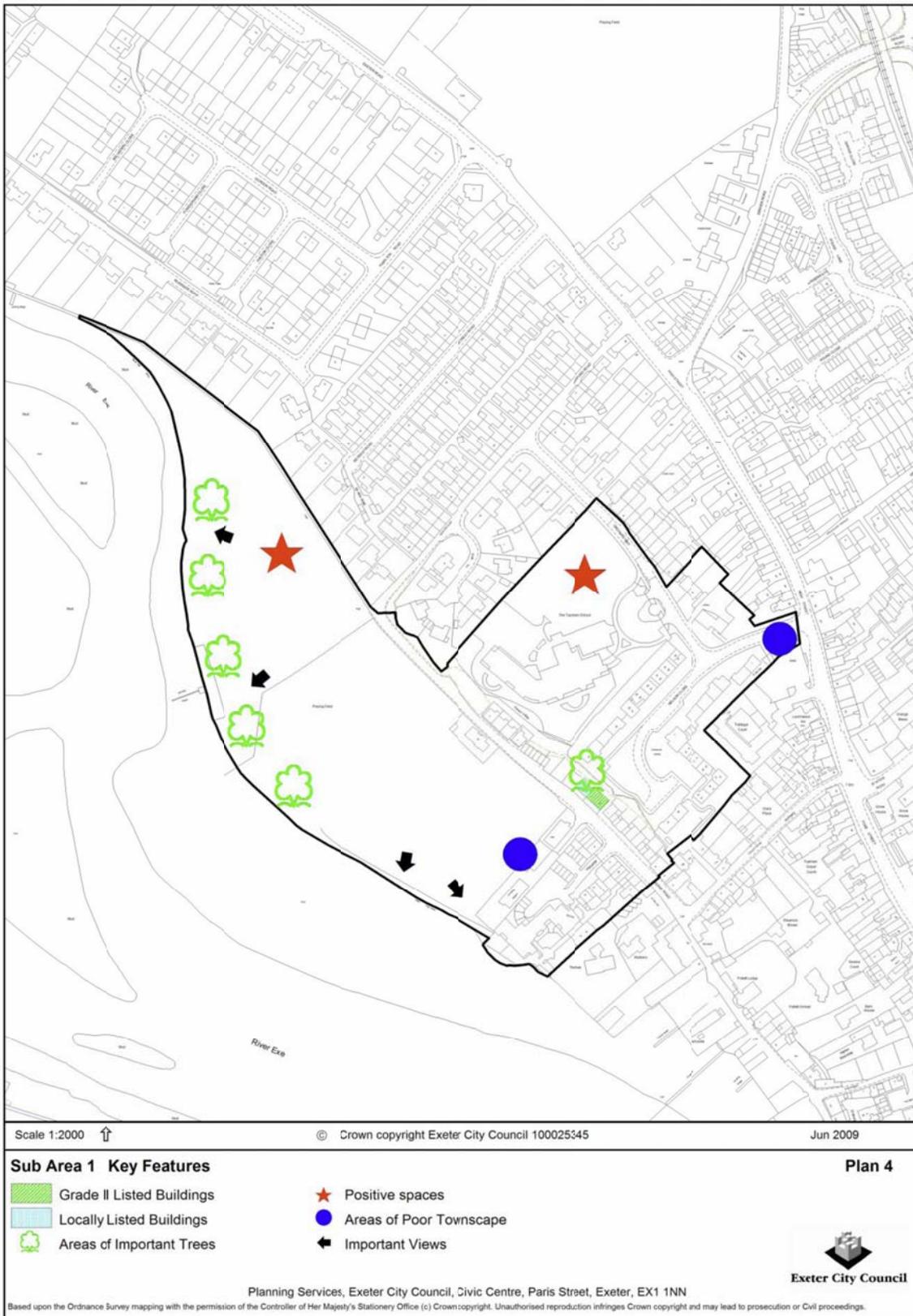


Image 25 Building Impacts Sub Area 1 (Reproduced Courtesy of Exeter City Council extract from Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009)





**Image 26** Key Features - Sub Area 1

(Reproduced Courtesy of Exeter City Council extract from Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2009)





**Image 27** View of Halyards from the south west

The part of the development to the north of Ferry Road is defined as having a positive contribution to the streetscape with the development to the south being neutral.

The scout hut has been in this location since the 1960's. The building was acquired second hand and its use as a Sea Scout hut has continued to the present day.



**Image 28** - The Existing Scout Hut from Ferry Road.

### 3 The Proposal for the New Scout Hut

#### 3A The Policy Basis for the Design

##### b) National Policy

###### i. NPPF

1. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
2. Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
3. 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.
4. 137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

##### b) Local Policy

C1: DEVELOPMENT WITHIN OR AFFECTING A CONSERVATION AREA (INCLUDING CHANGES OF USE, ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS) MUST PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA.

C2: DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING CHANGES OF USE, ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS) WHICH AFFECTS A LISTED BUILDING MUST HAVE SPECIAL REGARD TO THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING THE BUILDING OR ITS SETTING, OR ANY FEATURES OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST WHICH IT POSSESSES.

C3: DEVELOPMENT (INCLUDING CHANGES OF USE, ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS) WHICH AFFECTS A BUILDING OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE, AS IDENTIFIED IN SCHEDULE 5, WILL NOT BE PERMITTED WHERE IT HARMS THE ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC VALUE OF THE BUILDING.

###### 2012 Core Strategy

###### Objectives

6. Meet local needs for community, cultural, social, retail, health, education, religious, and recreational facilities, particularly within the urban extensions, regeneration areas and in areas of deprivation, in order to improve quality of life and reduce social exclusion and the perception of crime.

9. Create and reinforce local distinctiveness and raise the quality of urban living through excellence in design.

##### c) Heritage England

1. The cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change. Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development to the asset itself or its setting, consideration still needs to be given to



whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset in order to accord with NPPF policies. Negative change could include severing the last link to part of the history of an asset or between the asset and its original setting. Conversely, positive change could include the restoration of a building's plan form or an original designed landscape.

### 3B Design Considerations for the New Scout Hut

#### a) Historic Legacy of the Area

In considering the design we were keen to reflect the historic, maritime nature of the site, its links to the river and the industry on the river. The Sea Scouts were also keen to have a building that reflects their function and activities as sea scouts. We drew inspiration for the design from the boats on the river, reflecting the movement of the river and the form of the boats in the shape of the roof. We also drew on the presence of the old boats and wrecks on both sides of the river to inspire the shape, form and finishes of the building.



**Image 29** - Image of the Vigilant

The design of the building has been influenced by the same constraints and opportunities that developed Topsham. The location of the building close to the river and near an access point for boats is essential for the use of the Sea Scouts. This continues a historic use by small boats being launched from this beach area.

The external frame is reminiscent of masts.

Canted cladding and building colours are drawn from the boats when resting on the estuary bed, giving the building a sense of place and history in its environment.



By taking the iconography of the river and industrial Topsham, we have reinterpreted these to produce a building with a dynamic form that not only speaks of place in its historical context, but also the nature of the Sea Scouts.

## B2 Location and Impact on the Existing Streetscape

In developing the design for the Scout Building we have carefully considered the site, its constraints and its context. The building is located in a conservation area opposite a listed building. It is flanked on two sides by buildings that have been identified in the conservation area assessment as buildings having a negative impact on the environment and contributing to a poor quality landscape. The existing Sea Scout building, which this is proposed to replace, is identified as having a neutral impact.

The site is located within a flood plain and the ground is reclaimed from the river as is evidenced by the history. It is worth noting that the current park is at a higher level than the ground floor of the current scout hut building. A scout leader who was present at the time the building was erected in 1962 has confirmed that the building was at the same level as the park and that the park land levels have increased within this period.

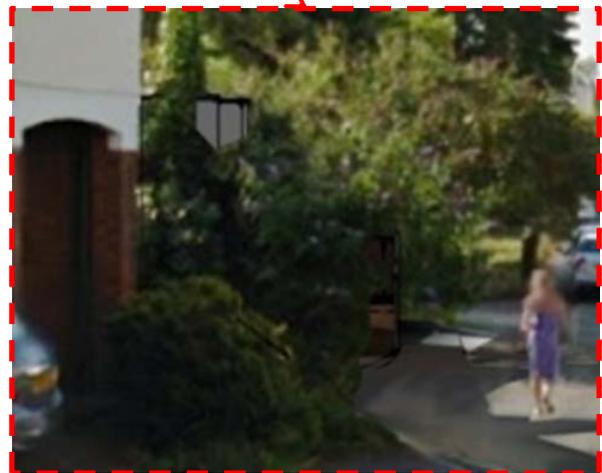


**Image 32** - Proposed Building - View towards Halyards from outside garages on Ferry Road

The site follows the historic pattern of land use with the building running at 90 degrees to the road. The proposed building also follows the typical massing of buildings close to the river, by having a stepped roof line that breaks up the profile of the building.



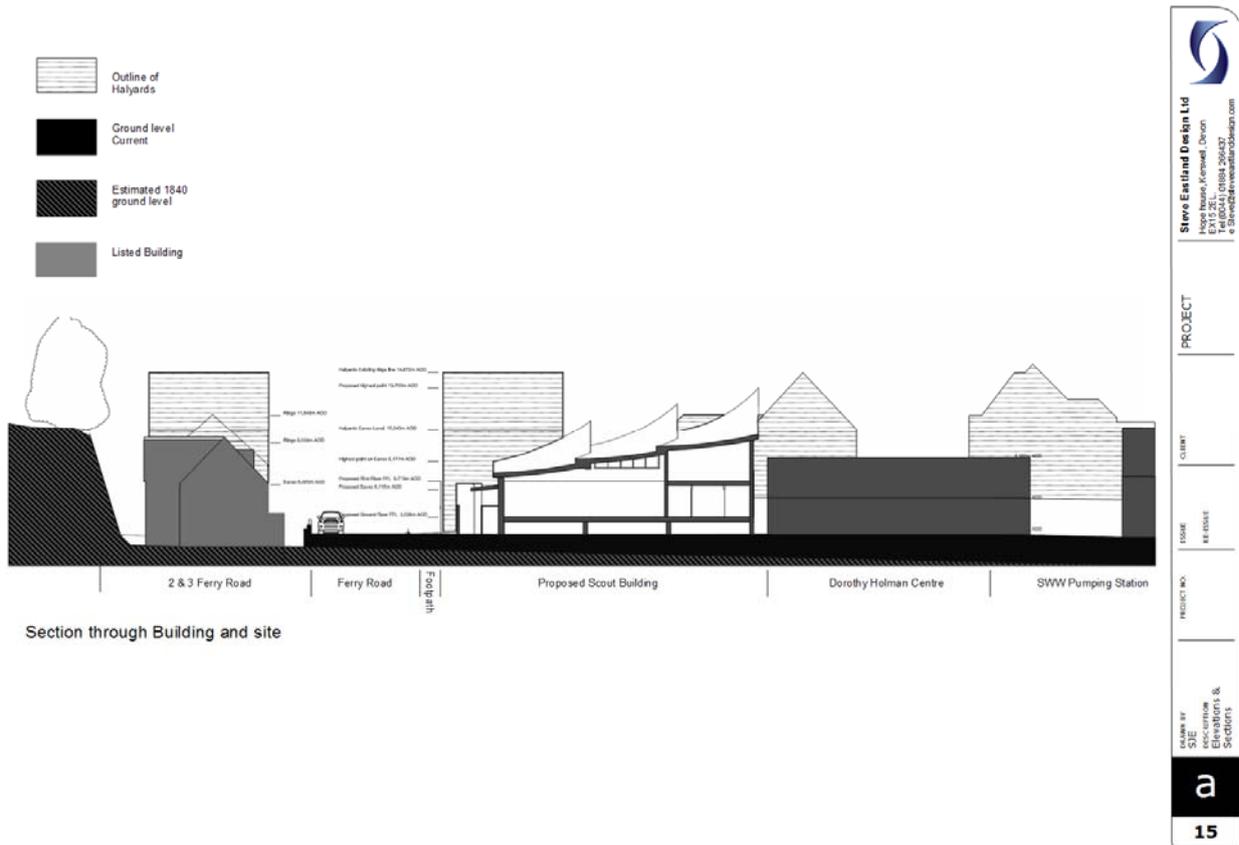
When viewed along Ferry Road towards the park, the proposed building is hidden behind the planting to the front of No 7 Halyards and by the telegraph pole. This is mainly due to the front elevation of the proposed building following the bend in the road.



**Image 33** – View of Proposed Building from South East along Ferry Road

Conversely, when viewed from the north west along Ferry Road, (image 27) more of the street elevation is in evidence. However, the bulk of the building is hidden from view by the trees in the park. This leaves visible the front lower section of the building, which we believe forms a counterpoint to the listed building and reduces the visible mass of the flank wall of number 7 Halyards. The oxidised steel cladding also seeks to reduce this visual mass by breaking the form of the proposed building with a material of a similar texture and colour to the brick used in the remainder of the street. (See Image 27)

Raising the ground floor of the building increases the height and therefore its visual mass. Mindful of the domestic size and scale of the listed 2&3 Ferry Road building opposite, we have designed the proposed building to respect this by stepping its roof to reduce the visual mass and have included a single storey canopy. The street elevation has similar levels to that of the building opposite.



**Image 34** – Section through Listed building and proposed scout hut with outline of Halyards hatched in the background

The stepping of the roof also allowed the building, in its position on the edge of the park, to address the junction between the park and the street, with the curve of the front of the building following the line of the access into the park.

The building profile breaks up the visual mass of both the building itself and the flank wall of the Halyards development. The curved roof and materials used should be seen in the context of reflecting the historic and maritime nature of the place and the intended use of the building as a facility for sea scouts.

By not running parallel to the northern side of Ferry Road and the elevation of the listed building, (see image 27) the proposed scout hut building softens the transition from the open space of the park and the narrower street pattern that is typical of the rest of Topsham. The curved walls containing the scout emblem are specifically designed for this purpose. This, combined with the curved ramp to the front of the site, again softens the entrance to the park when walking from the town, allowing the vista beyond the trees to open up.

Sited on a corner, the building addresses the Park by having its front entrance facing towards the open space. This serves two purposes: it enables a sufficient length of ramp to raise the floor above the flood level and it reinforces its identity as a community building.



Being on the edge of the open space, we were keen to ensure the building does not impact on the “Exceptional long-range views offered across the river.”

### 3C Form and Materials

As the river at this point is on the inside of a meander, it forms a beach which, in the past, has been used to draw up boats. The images below of the two wrecks on the opposite side of the river to the main quay informed, in part, the design of the building. The angled cladding in the natural colour of oxidised steel forms a contrast with the white panel above the cladding, whilst the rendered panel to the front of the building reflects its use in the listed building opposite.



**Image 35** – Derelict Boats on opposite bank of the river to Topsham

The roof of the building took inspiration from the natural curves and shapes of the boats, sails and the waves on the water and complements the curved roof on the building to the south of Ferry Road opposite Follett Road.



Image 36 – roof opposite lower end of Follett Road

The materials selected for the building are intended both to reflect the use of the building by the Sea Scouts and to reflect the history of the site itself as well as the industrial nature of the land in the areas around the wharfs and quays.



Image 37 Image proposed building with foliage removed.

The external steel frame, finished in galvanised steel, helps divide the elevation into bays typical of the narrow frontages on both the waterfront and the town, whilst also evoking images of masts and ships.





**Image 38** Cor ten steel panel

The external frame is reminiscent of masts.

Canted cladding and building colours are drawn from the boats when resting on the estuary bed, giving the building a sense of place and history in its environment.

By taking the iconography of the river and industrial Topsham, we have reinterpreted these to produce a building with a dynamic form that not only speaks of place in its historical context, but also the nature of the Sea Scouts.



**Image 39** - Boat in estuary taken from slipway in the Park 2015

#### 4 Conclusion

Topsham has a distinct identity that is borne out of its location and history. It is shaped by its location at the highest point navigable on the Exe River without using the canal and so forms the natural location for a port.

Historically, the town has two distinct elements, that of the centre which was predominantly residential and commercial and that area below the escarpment being the port and industrial area.

The Sea Scout Building is located in this lower area on land reclaimed from the river and is on the site of a 19<sup>th</sup> century timber yard owned by the Follett's.

On the opposite side of the road from the site is the only listed building in the area, and which is believed to date from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. This building has been significantly altered over the years but retains its original form and mass. The remaining buildings surrounding the site are modern and whilst some of these enhance the streetscape, the majority of the buildings are deemed neutral, with a small number close to and adjacent to the site having a negative impact on the landscape.

We have endeavoured to produce a dynamic building that is contemporary, yet reflects the history of the place through its form and materials. The intent of this design is two-fold: to inspire present and future generations of sea scouts to take ownership of, and pride in a building that has its roots in the heritage of its site *and* to create a distinct identity for this site for the future.

