# **Brixham Town Conservation Area – Boundary Changes**

## Consultation Summary Report

## A review of the feedback received to the Brixham Town Conservation Area consultation on proposed boundary changes

February 2025

Boats on the water next to a city

Description automatically generated

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## **Part 1**

## Executive Summary

From 12 December 2024 to 16 January 2025 Torbay Council held a consultation on proposed boundary changes to the Brixham Town Conservation Area, as part of the recently commissioned review and updating of the conservation area appraisal for the area in line with the objectives of the adopted Torbay Heritage Strategy (2021-2026).

The proposed boundary changes included:

**Inclusions:**

A. Furzeham Primary and Nursery School

B. Terraced properties at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road

**Exclusions**:

C. Development to the south of Bolton Street

D. Terraced properties on Garlic Rea, Rea House and south side of Elkins Hill

E. Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs.

The consultation was promoted with an online survey, paper surveys available at Brixham Town Council and Brixham Library, letters to people in the directly affected areas, social media, Torbay Council website, newsletter articles, press releases and individual emails to relevant stakeholders.

In total there were 479 responses to the consultation, and of these, 457 surveys were completed online and three were completed on paper. The remaining 19 responses were received via email to the Torbay Council conservation inbox.

The majority of respondents (474) were individuals/members of the public, 5 were from organisations which included:

* Natural England
* Prospect Brixham CIC
* Devon and Cornwall Police
* Historic England
* Brixham Town Council

Detailed comments on how the Heritage and Design Team have responded to the 19 individual comments received can be found in the ‘Individual Comments’ section of this report.

The first two proposals (A and B) received considerable support, with a majority either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposals (320 either agreeing or strongly agreeing with proposal one and 316 either agreeing or strongly agreeing with proposal two).

The third and fourth proposals (C and D) received much lower support, with more people saying they either disagreed or strongly disagreed, but also a significant number of ‘don’t knows’.

The response to the fifth proposal (E), which related to the proposed exclusion of Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, and Northern Quay from the conservation area, was fairly emphatic, with most people saying they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal.

Following assessment of the consultation responses and the technical recommendations from the commissioned heritage specialist, it is recommended that the following actions be taken:

1. Furzeham Primary and Nursery School – to be **included** within the boundary of the conservation area
2. Terraced properties at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road - to be **included** within the boundary of the conservation area
3. Development to the south of Bolton Street – to be **removed** from the boundary of the conservation area
4. Terraced properties on Garlic Rea, Rea House and south side of Elkins Hill – to be **removed** from the boundary of the conservation area
5. Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs – to **remain** within the boundary of the conservation area

Further comment on the above recommendations will be detailed within the Recommendation sections of this report.

The proposed boundary changes to the conservation area are proposed to inform an updated draft Brixham Town Conservation Area Appraisal which is currently under production and is due to be available for full public consultation in the Spring of 2025.

## Background to the Engagement

Torbay Council recently entered into a new 10-year partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with Torbay recognised as a ‘Heritage Place’, with the aim to support heritage within the Bay and to deliver the objectives of the Torbay Heritage Strategy which includes the updating of our existing conservation area appraisals, specifically those related to the Brixham Town, Paignton Old Town and Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas. Torbay Council have commissioned Purcell to undertake these reviews.

Under Sections 69 & 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local authorities have a duty to designate conservation areas and from time to time to review the boundaries.

In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England best practice guidance, the boundary of a conservation area should be periodically reviewed and suitably revised in accordance with findings made during this exercise.

The need to review the boundary can be in response to a number of factors: unmanaged incremental changes which have, over time, diluted the character of an area; the boundary may have been drawn too tightly originally; or the special interest of a feature may not have been evident to a previous assessor. Although it is principally the built structures that are recognised in amending the boundary, their accompanying plots often provide an important historical context which should be incorporated together with the building(s).

The boundary of the Brixham Town Conservation Area was last reviewed in 2016 in a draft Conservation Area Appraisal, which was not formally adopted by Torbay Council. The draft appraisal recommended the inclusion of the early houses on Bella Vista Road and Furzeham Gardens. It also recommended the exclusion of Battery Gardens, on the basis that the area has a very different character to most of the conservation area and has been protected by designation as a scheduled monument since 2002.

A number of amendments to the boundary were proposed, these included:

***A – Partial inclusion of Furzeham Primary and Nursery School***

It was proposed to extend the boundary to include the historic buildings at Furzeham Primary School and the adjacent historic railway bridge.

***B- Inclusion of terraces at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Queens Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road***

It was proposed to extend the boundary to include several late 19th and early 20th-century suburban terraces to the north of the town centre – on North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Queens Road, Alma Road, and Holborn Road.

The proposed extension would also include the large L-shaped historic building off Higher Furzeham Road, which is depicted on the 1840 tithe map adjacent to a historic quarry.

***C - Exclusion of development to the south of Bolton Street***

It was proposed to remove this area of mostly modern development, which detracts from the historic interest and character of the conservation area and have no historic relationship to it.

***D - Exclusion of interwar terraces on Garlic Rea, Rea House and modern development on the south side of Elkins Hill***

It was proposed to exclude the inter-war terraces on Garlic Rea, Rea House (off Great Rea Road) and the modern residential development at the top of Elkins Hill.

***E - Exclusion of Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs***

It was proposed to revise the boundary to exclude Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and its environs. Battery Gardens was added to the conservation area in 1999. The site has since been designated as a scheduled monument by Historic England and is therefore protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

## Engagement Methodology

The consultation ran from 12 December 2024 to 16 January 2025 and was promoted with an online survey, paper surveys available at Brixham Town Council and Brixham Library, letters to people in the directly affected areas, social media, Torbay Council website, newsletter articles and press releases.

The online survey used our Civica Involve online survey system.

Paper copies of the survey were also printed and made available, with a postbox, at Brixham Library and Brixham Town Council offices. On the postbox and also on the front of the paper surveys there was also a QR code giving people the option to scan the QR code with their phone to take the online survey.

The online survey was also promoted via our website including our Consultations and News pages, the local press, our social media channels (Facebook, NextDoor, Instagram and LinkedIn) and newsletters including our One Torbay newsletter that goes out to 11858 subscribers.

As part of the promotion we shared the survey five times between 12 December and 15 January, generating in total a reach of 9984, 16 likes, 73 link clicks to the survey, 17859 views of the Facebook post, 11 shares of the post, and 23 interactions.

The survey was also featured in two of the Council’s One Torbay residents newsletters, on 13 December and then again on 10 January.

One Torbay has 11858 subscribers and across the two bulletins there were 11770 unique opens of the newsletters.

The survey was also sent out via the Members Briefing to all councillors in Torbay on 12 December and there were 18 unique opens.

Throughout these three Govdelivery newsletters, they generated 149 unique visits to the survey link in total.

In addition to this, individual emails including an explanation of the consultation, an attached copy of the boundary review document and a link to the online survey were sent out on 13/12/2024 to the following consultees:

* Relevant ward members and other elected members of Torbay Council
* Harbour Master
* Statutory Consultees
* Relevant heritage organisations
* SwisCo
* Devon and Cornwall Police
* Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust
* Brixham Town Council
* Brixham Community Partnership

### Summary of responses received

In total there were 460 responses to the survey, and of these, 457 surveys were completed online and three were completed on paper, although not everyone answered every question.

The first two proposals received considerable support (inclusions of A and B), with a majority either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposals (320 either agreeing or strongly agreeing with proposal one and 316 either agreeing or strongly agreeing with proposal two.

The third and fourth proposals (exclusions of C and D) received much lower support, with more people saying they either disagreed or strongly disagreed, but also a significant number of ‘don’t knows’.

The response to the fifth proposal (exclusion of E), which related to the proposed exclusion of Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, and Northern Quay from the new conservation area, was fairly emphatic, with most people saying they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal.

### Summary of responses from survey:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| Do you agree with the proposed inclusion of Furzeham Primary and Nursery School (Area A) within the boundary of the conservation area?  (458 responses to this question) | 141 | 179 | 83 | 15 | 42 |
| Do you agree with the proposed inclusion of terraces at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Queens Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road (Area B) within the boundary of the conservation area?  (453 responses to this question) | 139 | 177 | 73 | 20 | 46 |
| Do you agree with the exclusion of development to the south of Bolton Street (Area C) from the boundary of the conservation area?  (443 responses to this question) | 26 | 70 | 146 | 75 | 127 |
| Do you agree with the exclusion of interwar terraces on Garlic Rea, Rea House and modern development on the south side of Elkins Hill (Area D) from the boundary of the conservation area?  (446 responses to this question) | 21 | 55 | 143 | 100 | 128 |
| Do you agree with the exclusion of Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs (Area E) from the boundary of the conservation area?  (451 responses to this question) | 14 | 22 | 12 | 34 | 370 |

### Summary of free text responses

In addition to answers to all the questions in the survey, we gave the opportunity for respondents to put more comments in a free text box. In total we received 260 free text comments, with the largest number of free text responses on one subject (121) opposing the question asked about removing Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs from the proposed new Conservation Area.

We also received a number of free text comments (18) complaining about the timing of the consultation (12 December to 16 January) which incorporated the Christmas period.

### Summary of partners/stakeholders responses

Of the stakeholders who were contacted individually as part of the consultation, formal responses were received from:

* Devon and Cornwall Police
* Natural England
* Historic England
* Brixham Town Council

These responses demonstrated general support for the proposed changes to the boundary, with the exception of Brixham Town Council who supported the areas for inclusion but raised concern with the proposed exclusions, with specific comments provided on the proposed removal of Area E. Brixham Town Council also suggested the inclusion of Stoney Park Allotments on Higher Furzeham Road within the boundary of the conservation area.

Recommendations

Following assessment of the consultation responses and the technical recommendations from the commissioned heritage specialist, it is recommended that the following actions be taken:

A *- Furzeham Primary and Nursery School*

This area includes historic buildings at Furzeham Primary School and the adjacent historic railway bridge. The school complex contains several attractive Victorian buildings which demonstrate the growth of Brixham during the 19th century. The school is also prominent in views from the higher ground to the south of the town.

Public consultation strongly supported the inclusion of this area within the boundary of the conservation area.

It is therefore recommended that this area be **included** within the Brixham Town Conservation Area.

B - *Terraced properties at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road*

This area includes several late 19th and early 20th-century suburban terraces to the north of the town centre. These terraces are highly characteristic of the wider conservation area, the late Victorian/ Edwardian terrace being the dominant architectural typology within the existing boundary. Together these historic terraces illustrate the expansion of Brixham during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The area would also include the large L-shaped historic building off Higher Furzeham Road, which is depicted on the 1840 tithe map adjacent to a historic quarry.

Public consultation strongly supported the inclusion of this area within the boundary of the conservation area.

It is therefore recommended that this area be **included** within the Brixham Town Conservation Area.

C - *Development to the south of Bolton Street*

This area includes mostly modern development, which detracts from the historic interest and character of the conservation area and have no historic relationship to it. The small terrace of four houses, which dates from the late 19th or early 20th century, is of limited architectural interest and makes a negligible contribution to the historic character of the streetscape.

The conclusions of the specialist heritage assessment were that the area does not have sufficient special architectural or historic interest to warrant inclusion within the Brixham Town Conservation Area. So as not to devalue the concept of conservation through the designation of areas that lack special interest in line with the requirements of Paragraph 204 of the NPPF (2024), the area was proposed to be removed from the conservation area and the boundary amended accordingly.

Public consultation on the proposal was less definitive than other responses with approximately 52% of respondents either supporting its removal or being unsure, and 44% disagreeing with the proposals. Brixham Town Council disagreed with its removal, however, other statutory consultees provided general support.

It is therefore recommended, on balance, and taking into consideration the expert professional advice coupled with the consultation responses received that the area be **removed** from the Brixham Town Conservation Area due to its lack of special architectural or historic interest.

D - *Terraced properties on Garlic Rea, Rea House and south side of Elkins Hill*

This area includes inter-war terraces on Garlic Rea, Rea House (off Great Rea Road) and the modern residential development at the top of Elkins Hill. The inter-war terraces are of limited architectural interest and have been heavily modified with the addition of large box dormers. As later structures they do not accord with the character of the wider conservation area – which is largely dominated by buildings from the late 18th to the early 20th century.

The incline up Great Rea Road away from Garlic Rea and Elkins Hill instates both a geographical and topographical separation between this building and the rest of the conservation area. The architectural interest of the building has been depreciated through the recent addition of a large box dormer.

The properties proposed to be excluded on the south side of Elkins Hill are modern buildings of a generally low architectural quality. They detract from the special interest of the conservation area and have no historic relationship with it.

The conclusions of the specialist heritage assessment were that the area does not have sufficient special architectural or historic interest to warrant inclusion within the Brixham Town Conservation Area. So as not to devalue the concept of conservation through the designation of areas that lack special interest in line with the requirements of Paragraph 204 of the NPPF (2024), the area was proposed to be removed from the conservation area and the boundary amended accordingly.

Public consultation on the proposal had a mixed response with approximately 49% of respondents either supporting its removal or being unsure, and 51% disagreeing with the proposals. Brixham Town Council disagreed with its removal, however, other statutory consultees provided general support.

It is therefore recommended, on balance, and taking into consideration the expert professional advice coupled with the consultation responses received that the area be **removed** from the Brixham Town Conservation Area due to its lack of special architectural or historic interest.

E. Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs – to remain within the boundary of the conservation area

This area includes the Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and its environs. Battery Gardens was added to the conservation area in 1999. The site has since been designated as a scheduled monument by Historic England and is therefore protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Battery Gardens has a very different character to the rest of the conservation area.

The age and scale of most development around Oxen Cove and Northern Quay is out of keeping with the character of the wider conservation area and does not enhance its special interest.

The special interest and significance of the Battery Gardens is fully recognised through its designation as a Scheduled Monument. It was proposed to remove this area from the conservation area in order to rationalise its boundary and in recognition of its scheduled monument designation post its inclusion within the Brixham Town Conservation Area.

The contribution of Oxen Cove and its environs to the industrial heritage of Brixham and its close relationship with the historic harbour is also recognised.

Public consultation on the proposals had a clear and strong response with 89% of respondents disagreeing with the proposals, along with Brixham Town Council. In addition to this, the vast majority of free text comments and individual emails received highlighted concern with the removal of this area and raised objections.

It is therefore recommended that this area be **retained** within the Brixham Town Conservation Area.

The proposed boundary changes to the conservation area are proposed to inform an updated draft Brixham Town Conservation Area Appraisal which is currently under production and is due to be available for full public consultation in the Spring of 2025.

**Part 2**

## Consultation responses

The vast majority of the survey responses were completed online (457) with three paper survey responses (so 460 in total). Not everyone who responded to the survey answered every question, with numbers answering responding varying from 443 to 458, depending on the question.

There were mixed responses to the proposals outlined in the consultation, with support for some of the proposals but strong opposition to other proposals.

For the first proposal, 320 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed inclusion of Furzeham Primary and Nursery School (Area A) within the boundary of the conservation area. Only 57 respondents said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this proposal, with 83 saying they neither agreed or disagreed.

Similarly, on the second question, relating to the proposed inclusion of terraces at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Queens Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road (Area B) within the boundary of the conservation area, 316 respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, with just 66 saying they disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 73 responding that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

There was less support for third question, relating to the exclusion of development to the south of Bolton Street (Area C) from the boundary of the conservation area. For this, only 96 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, compared to 202 who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. There was also a large number (146) who responded that they neither agreed nor disagreed, so the response was less definitive than some of the other responses.

There was also opposition in relation to the fourth question about the exclusion of interwar terraces on Garlic Rea, Rea House and modern development on the south side of Elkins Hill (Area D) from the boundary of the conservation area. Only 76 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal, with 228 answering that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Again there was also a significant number (143) who said neither agreed not disagreed.

There was an overwhelmingly clear response to the final proposal, with most people responding opposing the proposal. In total 404 respondents said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal the exclusion of Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs (Area E) from the boundary of the conservation area. Only 36 people said they agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, with 12 saying they neither agreed nor disagreed.

The full table of results is on the next page.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Question | Strongly agree | % | Agree | % | Don’t Know | % | Disagree | % | Strongly disagree | % |
| 1 | Do you agree with the proposed inclusion of Furzeham Primary and Nursery School (Area A) within the boundary of the conservation area?  (458 responses to this question) | 141 | 30% | 179 | 39% | 83 | 18.2% | 15 | 3.6% | 42 | 9.3% |
| 2 | Do you agree with the proposed inclusion of terraces at North Furzeham Road, Higher Furzeham Road, Bella Vista Road, Queens Road, Alma Road and Holborn Road (Area B) within the boundary of the conservation area?  (453 responses to this question) | 139 | 30.3% | 177 | 39.1% | 73 | 16.5% | 20 | 4.1% | 46 | 10.7% |
| 3 | Do you agree with the exclusion of development to the south of Bolton Street (Area C) from the boundary of the conservation area?  (443 responses to this question) | 26 | 5.3% | 70 | 15.3% | 146 | 32.4% | 75 | 16.4% | 127 | 28% |
| No. | Question | Strongly agree | % | Agree | % | Don’t Know | % | Disagree | % | Strongly disagree | % |
| 4 | Do you agree with the exclusion of interwar terraces on Garlic Rea, Rea House and modern development on the south side of Elkins Hill (Area D) from the boundary of the conservation area?  (446 responses to this question) | 21 | 4.1% | 55 | 12.7% | 143 | 32.1% | 100 | 22.9% | 128 | 28.1% |
| 5 | Do you agree with the exclusion of Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs (Area E) from the boundary of the conservation area?  (451 responses to this question) | 14 | 3.4% | 22 | 4.3% | 12 | 2.2% | 34 | 7.2% | 370 | 82.1% |

### Response to free text questions and boxes

In addition to the qualitative survey responses, we included a freetext box for people to add any additional comments to the survey. We received 260 freetext comments, with the largest number of comments (121) opposing the question asked about removing Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs from the proposed new Conservation Area. This is not surprising as in total 228 respondents said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal. These included:

Oxen cove and battery gardens need to be conserved and protected for future generations and maintained. These areas are much loved and used by those of us who live here as well as those who visit including the little heritage museum.

These areas are of historic interest to the town and should be protected. Battery Gardens in particular has huge links to the second World War and should be protected for generations to come and also out of respect for all those who fought for our freedom.

Battery Gardens and Oxen Cove must continue to be protected by the Conservation Area. There is no doubt they are of great importance and removing them from the conservation area does nothing but open up the opportunity for development of an area that needs to stay as it is for the benefit of residents and tourists.

Any changes to the area of Battery gardens that place the area at risk of development should be avoided.

Battery Gardens, Oxen Cove, Northern Quay and environs need to be in the conversation area, Oxen Cove should not be further developed.

Battery gardens should remain protected from greedy developers.

Leave our heritage alone.

Battery gardens and oxen cove and surrounding areas should definitely be a conservation site and protected by the council

Areas like battery gardens should be preserved for the future generations, as they display a large amount of the history within Brixham and Torbay. I would therefore be extremely unhappy and disappointed should any of these areas be excluded from conservation in the future.

The other main theme that came out of the free text comments was the timing of the consultation, with people unhappy that the survey was done during the Christmas period (it ran from 12 December to 16 January). Unfortunately this timing, whilst we recognise it is not ideal, was necessary as there are other consultations required in Torbay before a full consultation will be held on the proposed revised consultations across Torbay in the Spring. There were 18 free text comments in relation to the timing of the consultation. Examples of these comments include:

Would like more time outside of Christmas holiday period to understand proposals.

Object to all over Xmas period consultation. Should be held at a time more conducive to full public engagement.

Awful time of year to run a consultation.

Very poor practice launching a consultation over Christmas and new year.

Too little information given and, in addition, bad practice to launch a consultation over the Christmas period.

### Individual responses

During the consultation period, 19 individual responses were received via email. Of these individual responses, 11 objected to the exclusion of the Battery Gardens and Oxen Cove, 4 were from statutory consultees, one requested further detail on the proposals, one objected to the inclusion of Bella Vista Road, one objected to the exclusion of Garlic Rea and the final response was a general comment on the value of the historic environment within the area.

These responses were fully considered within the overall assessment of all responses received during the consultation. The resultant actions from these responses are described within Section 1 of this report.

## Demographics of who took part

### Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity? Tick one only

There were 443 responses to this question.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Female | Male | In another way | Prefer not to say |
| 249 | 145 | 1 | 48 |

### Which of the following age groups applies to you? Tick one only

There were 442 responses to this question.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0-15 | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65-74 | 75 plus |
| 0 | 4 | 9 | 47 | 79 | 149 | 115 | 40 |

### Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? Tick one only

There were 425 responses to this question.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| White | Mixed ethnicity | Asian or Asian British | Black or British | Chinese | Other ethnic group |
| 402 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 |

### Employment Status - Tick one only

439 responses to this question.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Working full-time in Torbay | Working full-time elsewhere in Devon | Working part-time elsewhere in Devon | Self-employed – full - or part-time | Student | Looking after Family/Home |
| 85 | 30 | 50 | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Temporary Sick | Long-Term Sick | Retired | Unemployed | Other |  |
| 2 | 8 | 168 | 1 | 29 |  |

### Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way? Tick one only

There were 425 responses to this question.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Yes | No |
| 75 | 351 |

### If you answered "Yes", please tell us how it affects you. Tick as many as apply

There were 77 answers to this question.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| It affects my mobility | It affects my vision | It affects my hearing | It affects me in another way |
| 52 | 8 | 13 | 27 |