

Community Engagement Brief for Regenerating the Port Royal and Ham area, Sidmouth Eastern Town. Spring 2012

1.0 Context & Executive Summary

- 1.01 In October 2009 The Executive of East Devon District Council (EDDC) established the Port Royal Steering Group (PRSG) and commissioned a Development Brief for the Port Royal area of Sidmouth. EDDC recognised that this part of the Eastern Town had been neglected for many years, and that no public resources were available to provide a development brief.
- 1.02 The document prepared in August 2010 has not yet been acknowledged by EDDC. At the request of several local organisations, the remaining members of the PRSG have therefore edited and updated it as an independent report.
- 1.03 This report proposes a comprehensive re-assessment of an area of approximately 2 hectares in Sidmouth's Eastern Town, and recommends that EDDC engage with the local community through the Sidmouth Town Council (STC) to consider regeneration options.
- 1.04 No specific project is preferred. A range of possible concepts is offered for more widespread consultation. These include:
- Urban Cliff of high rise luxury flats
 - Sustainability, Well-being and Community
 - Ham Lane Car Parks regeneration
 - Temporary Regeneration of Flood Plain area
- 1.05 In 2011 the Drill Hall was finally secured by EDDC, paving the way for action in this blighted area. It would be inappropriate to decide a use for this site in isolation from the broader context of the District Local Plan, a town plan and/or a neighbourhood plan. Plans for the Eastern Town should evolve in the context of challenges facing the town and valley, requiring strategic planning on such issues as:
- An employment strategy for town and valley
 - A housing strategy that meets local needs
 - A strategy for the brown-field sites and empty and under-used buildings
 - A strategy for appropriate retail, entertainment and cultural amenities, meeting the needs of visitors and residents
 - A town traffic management strategy
 - A strategy for long term energy resilience
 - A strategy for coastal, fluvial and pluvial flood control and preparedness
 - A strategy for appropriate adequate health care provision
 - A strategy for Sidmouth to play its part in reducing the effects of climate change
 - A strategy for long term food security
 - A design statement sensitive to Sidmouth's diverse social geography and heritage

1.0 Introduction & Site Location

- 1.1 Sidmouth is a town in the east of Devon 15 miles from the cathedral and University City of Exeter. It occupies a central position on the East Devon coast between Exmouth to the west and Seaton towards the east; inland are the market towns of Axminster and Honiton. There are mainline railway stations at Exeter and at Honiton (10 miles), with Exeter international airport 10 miles from the town. With its surrounding villages the urban district of Sidmouth is a prosperous community with a population of some 17,000. It is a well known holiday

destination in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is a gateway to the World Heritage Jurassic Coast with distinctive red cliffs from the Triassic era.

- 1.2 The Port Royal and Ham Redevelopment area (NGR 12828,87362) lies at the eastern end of Sidmouth's Esplanade and consists of an area of about 2 hectares including 1.25 hectares (3.1 acres) largely held by East Devon District Council comprising car parks, a swimming pool complex and other amenity buildings such as public toilets, sporting club facilities and a lifeboat station.
- 1.3 Within the site and adjoining the river Sid, lies another parcel of land held in trust by Sidmouth Town Council with covenants requiring it to be used for public open space whilst a county highway separates the site from the esplanade and beach.

2.0 Purpose and Scope of the Document

The PRSG presents the revised document as an independent public report with the following inter-related purposes:

- .1 To stimulate an informed **public debate** on the priorities and possibilities for this site.
- .2 To assemble in one place **objective information** about the site to assist potential developers, local authority officers and elected representatives to engage with the local community.
- .3 To offer **a range of options** produced from within the town on how the site might be developed to enhance the area for the good of the town's residents, businesses and visitors.
- .4 To **attract financial investment** and creative proposals from potential developers and social entrepreneurs.

3.0 Vision Statement

(consensus articulated following extensive debate within the community in 2009)

- .1 The site will retain and develop its public-use facility; it will include a substantial community component; any residential development will be limited.
- .2 The project will have at its core the principles of environmental sustainability; any new buildings will be of the highest quality in terms of design and materials.
- .3 The development of the site will result in a reasonable financial outcome for the District Council; and will promote the local economy.
- .4 The processes will involve maximum openness and consultation and will be conducted at all reasonable speed.

4.0 Role of the Regeneration Area

- 4.1 Environment Agency advice indicates the site would not normally be acceptable for **redevelopment** as it is in Flood Zone 3; but that a case can be made for the **regeneration** of this run-down site in order to enhance the general environment for residents and visitors.
- 4.2 Regeneration will result in a distinctive contribution to the life of the town, complementing the long-established tourist and hospitality businesses to the west and offering a marine-focussed attraction to residents and visitors.

4.3 Presumably, EDDC priorities for the site remain as in 2009:

- To yield capital from the sale of the land
- To enhance regular income for the public purse
- To enhance the appearance of the whole area
- To retain within the area current uses which residents and visitors value

5.0 Broad Themes and Conclusions from consultation and discussion

The following themes emerged in discussion and consultation (detailed in Appendix 1)

.1 Public acceptance and realistic viability

- .1.1 Despite evidence of widespread and sustained opposition to the building of luxury flats in the Port Royal area, a certain amount of residential development is very likely if the regeneration is to be economically viable.
- .1.2 The development should sustain and enhance the local economy.
- .1.3 Wider consultation should continue as any project(s) move towards delivery.
- .1.4 As projects progress, they should be seen as an opportunity to address wider issues in Sidmouth.

.2 Environmental sustainability

- 1 The development should reflect ambitions to combat climate change. In addition to the reduction of pollution and congestion in the Local Transport Plan and any Town Traffic Management Scheme, energy efficiency and renewable energy are high priorities to take into consideration in retrofitting existing buildings and in specifications for new buildings. Obvious components for incorporation are:
 - efficient insulation
 - carbon sequestration in building materials,
 - sourcing energy from heat pumps, photovoltaic cells, tidal energy, off shore wind farms etc.
 - flexibility in building design, anticipating changes of use over time
 - providing overnight charging points for electric vehicles in all parking areas
 - other appropriate actions to reduce the level of anthropogenic climate change as a model for replication in other towns and cities nationally and globally
- 2 The development should also prepare the infrastructure to mitigate the catastrophic effects of abrupt climate change in case this is not averted by actions such as those outlined in 5.2.1 above by:
 - improving Sidmouth's resilience in the event of fluvial and/or coastal flooding, for example by developing the Ham Lane car parks as a flood emergency sink area
 - recognising the importance of the existing flood defence system

- consulting widely to identify other appropriate actions to prepare for major climatic disruption

.3 An attractive and efficient area

.3.1 Better relationship with the river

- Open up a link from the Byes to the development area by improved signage and design enhancements

.3.2 Upgrade the standard of existing facilities

- More efficient use of space particularly around Ham Lane car parks and Wearfield
- Support the trend to reduce the number and size of vehicles coming into the town centre and seafront, rather than drawing in additional vehicles

.3.3 A greener environment with less concrete, brick and paving stones and more trees

- Maintain and enhance the Ham open space, particularly the Wearfield area
- Transform the Ham Lane car parks into an attractive “town square” with more trees and flexible uses, for example as an occasional market place or entertainment venue

.3.4 Respect the quality of buildings in Sidmouth ensuring good design in any retrofit or new build.

.3.5 Infill available pockets of land around the site with a few terraced cottages reinforcing the local vernacular style.

.4 An accessible area

.4.1 Matrix of traffic management with safer and welcoming routes into town

- Improve safety for pedestrians

.4.2 User-friendly environment e.g. in scale of buildings and permeability of access to the seafront

.4.3 Indoor entertainment areas such as a children’s play area, health spa, fitness centre, sea-view restaurant, sea-view cafe

.4.4 Improved access to sea and river

- Slipways
- Boardwalk along the western bank of the river towards Alma Bridge
- Investigate a jetty or reef but not a full-blown marina (*see Appendix 1.2*)
- Pedestrian priority on esplanade east of Ham Lane

6.0 Policy and Planning Context

It is intended that an agreed Regeneration Brief will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Current East Devon Local Plan (expiring 2012) or its successor.

6.1 National Planning Policies

National planning policy guidance sets out the key roles of the planning system in England. This advocates that development meet identified needs in a way that is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The key themes of this role are to:

- Use already developed areas in the most efficient way
- Conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources
- Minimise the need to travel

6.2 Devon Structure Plan

The Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 was adopted in 2004 and sets out the strategic development policies for the County, the most relevant of which are:

- ST1 (Sustainable Development)
- ST3 (Self Sufficiency of Devon's Communities)
- ST4 (Infrastructure Provision)
- ST5 (Development Priority 2001 to 2016)
- ST15 (Area Centres)
- ST18 (Affordable Housing)
- CO6 (Quality of New Development)
- CO7 (Historic Settlements and Buildings)
- CO8 (Archaeology)
- CO10 (Protection of Nature Conservation Sites and Species)
- CO11 (Conserving Energy Resources)
- CO13 (Protecting Water Resources and Flood Defence)
- CO16 (Noise Pollution)
- TR5 (Hierarchy of Modes)
- TR7 (Walking and Cycling)
- TR9 (Public Transport)
- TR10 (Strategic Road Network)
- SH1 (Shopping Facilities - Sequential Approach)
- SH2 (Shopping Facilities and Settlement Hierarchy)

Planning Policy Statements:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3 – Housing
- PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment (Conservation areas)
- PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS22 – Renewable Energy
- PPS23 – Planning and Pollution Control
- PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk

6.3 East Devon Local Plan

The East Devon Local Plan 1995-2011 was adopted on 19 July 2006 and runs to the end of 2012.

Relevant policies:

- S2 (Built-up Area Boundaries for Area Centres and Local Centres)
- S4 (Development Within Built-up Area Boundaries)
- S7 (Infrastructure Related to New Development)
- D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness)
- D2 (Sustainable Construction)
- D3 (Access for the Disabled)
- D4 (Landscape Requirements)
- D5 (Trees on Development Sites)
- D6 (Public Art)
- EN8 (Proposals Affecting Sites Which May be of Archaeological Importance)

EN9 (Extension, Alteration or Change of use of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest)
 EN11 (Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas)
 EN12 (Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in Conservation Areas)
 EN15 (Control of Pollution)
 H3 (Range and Mix of New Housing Development)
 H4 (Affordable Housing)
 SH3 (Large Stores and Retail Related Uses in Area Centres)
 RE3 (Open Space Provision in New Housing Developments)
 C2 (Local Community Facilities)
 TA1 (Accessibility of New Development)
 TA3 (Transport Assessments /Travel Plans)
 TA7 (Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access)
 TA9 (Parking Provision in New Development)
 LSI 1 (Esplanade and Sea Front)

6.4 Devon County Council Local Transport Plan

LTP2 covers the period 2011 – 2026. Within this broad plan, fine grained traffic management proposals need to be clarified for Sidmouth.

Proposals for the Sidmouth town centre traffic management plan achieved general consensus at round table discussions in February 2009 as follows:

- .1 P&R including a transport hub and modern recycling facility
- .2 Traffic management plan to include pedestrian only areas, restriction of traffic within the High Street and Fore Street, and improvements to the one-way system
- .3 Investigation into the parking allocated areas to ensure charges are correct and that the signage available provides clear information and directions
- .4 Impact assessment will ensure emergency services are not restricted, including additional parking outside the main town streets when the pedestrian-only areas are established.
- .5 Better use to be made of bus services to encourage the use of the Manor Road car park and any future Park and Ride facility
- .6 Any improvements should ensure the sustainability of the town and encourage the use of the commerce and hospitality offered.

6.5 Shoreline Management Plan

SMP2 was adopted in 2011. The main stakeholders are Dorset & South Devon Coastal Action Group (DSDCAG), Southwest Water (SWW), National Trust, Natural England, Jurassic Coast World Heritage. The Policy for the development site is “Hold the Line” and for the shore east of the river Sid “Managed Realignment” for a few hundred metres and “No Action” further east.

7.0 Planning History

There is no significant planning history that would influence the regeneration of the area.

8.0 Land Use & Ownership

In October 2009 EDDC Executive did not precisely define the area to be considered, but PRSG agreed that it should include the following:

- The foreshore to the east of Trinity Court and west of the River Sid
- The Esplanade and the road and turning circle behind it, east of Trinity Court.
- The East and West Ham Lane car parks
- The Swimming Pool
- The Ham, including the Wearfield 'Boat Park' beside Riverside, the Play park opposite Glenisla Terrace, the riverside walkway and the Ham Green and sewage works.
- Ham Lane. East Street and York Street (south) connecting Ham Lane to Fore Street
- The buildings between Ham Lane and the turning circle, including
 - the Lifeboat Station,
 - the Port Royal Club,
 - the Drill Hall,
 - the public toilets
 - the SWW electricity sub-station and
 - Bagwells wet fish shop

In all, the site extends to two hectares and is administered by three public bodies, subject to a number of leases, and covenants.

The site is bordered to the east by the River Sid, to the north by residential areas, almost all of which are 19th century terraced cottages, to the south by the sea, and to the west by the commercial buildings of Fore Street, and the mix of hotels and private residences, mostly flats, that front the Esplanade.

The site is currently all in public ownership, administered by three landowners:

- East Devon District Council
- Sidmouth Town Council
- Devon County Council (highways)



8.1 East Devon District Council controls a large proportion of the potential development site:

- The Ham Lane West and Ham Lane East Car Parks (1 & 2) which provide 266 spaces within easy reach of the seafront and town centre. The car park was acquired by way of several small transactions and the legal title refers to the loss of original documents. It is believed that some transfers contained restrictive covenants; however it is unlikely any could be enforced.
- The Swimming Pool (3) is a well used facility managed by Leisure East Devon (LED) that is also home to the STC’s local tourist information centre.
- The Lifeboat Station (4) provides 82 square metres of internal space, held by trustees of Sidmouth Lifeboat Station on a lease with 13 years remaining. The lifeboat station provides a valuable service and the trustees have indicated they can envisage no alternative sites from which they could operate. Any development is therefore likely to include provision for a lifeboat station.
- The Clubhouse and Dinghy Park (5) consists of a 721 square metre site and clubhouse providing 437 square metres of internal space for the Sidmouth Sailing and Sea Angling Club who hold a lease with 14 years remaining. Any development should provide boat storage and improved facilities for use by the club.
- Public Conveniences (6) occupy a 107 square metre building managed by EDDC.
- Foreshore, piers and rock groynes
- The Drill Hall (9) for which EDDC recently concluded lengthy negotiations for a land and building swap to acquire the site from TAVRA in 2011.

8.2 Sidmouth Town Council (STC) are trustees for the Ham recreation ground (gifted to the town in 1896 and held by the Radford Trust). *Documents attached as Appendix 4.*

This recreational open space currently comprises:

- Commercial Fishing Units (7) held on annual licences by local fishermen. These provide 141 square metres of internal space.

- Children's Play Area and Playing Fields (8) provide 1.35 acres of open space and are subject to restrictive covenants allowing the site to be used only for community benefit.
- Wearfield, north of area (8), previously a paddling pool and boat storage area, now largely disused and partially occupied by an abandoned SWW macerating station housed in a stone shed. It is increasingly used as an unauthorised but not illegal parking space for several vehicles.

8.3 **Devon County Council** (DCC) administers the public highways and public footpaths –

- the Esplanade, Ham Lane, York Street, East Street

9.0 Site Analysis

Photographs: Appendix 3

.1 The components of the site are as follows:

.1 The Foreshore

A shingle beach which has become denuded in recent years, and is at historically low levels. Within the site, the principal features of the foreshore are

- a rock groyne, built in the early 1990s to protect the Esplanade and encourage the trapping of shingle; this groyne extends from Dunnings Pier which was built around 1865
- a smaller pier close to the river mouth, housing the sewer outfall
- a slipway opposite the Sailing Club, sloping to the east from the landward end of Dunnings Pier
- a bigger slipway with winch facilities immediately to the west of the river mouth. The piers are used for fishing, but are not suitable for any form of boat access.

The slipways provide access directly to the water only at high tide. The beach slopes quite steeply, which makes the launching of boats difficult.

.2 The Esplanade

The Esplanade was built c.1835 and is over six hundred metres in length. East of the junction with Ham Lane, and therefore within the site, the road is 100 metres in length, leading to a wide turning circle. On the seaward side of the road is a broad pedestrian promenade, which is very well used, and which links to Alma Bridge, the Coastal Path, and a network of paths and roads connecting northwards to the Byes.

9.1.3 The Car Parks

The Ham Lane car parks (often referred to as the "Ham Car Park") are in three sections: the largest is Ham Lane West has capacity for 190 cars. It is bounded by red-brick walls retaining planted areas. On the south boundary of the car park is an electricity substation with access and reserved parking for Western Power. *Boots* has a rear access directly to the car park, offering pedestrian access to the shop and a reserved area for delivery vehicles. The spaces are well used during shopping hours but virtually empty the rest of the time.

The Ham Lane East car park is split into two by the Swimming Pool. The south section comprises 43 spaces, and is bounded by a high wall to the east decorated with mural paintings by Sidmouth College students, and the Port Royal Club and Inshore Rescue buildings to the south. It also houses recycling skips and receptacles. The north section has 34 spaces, and is bounded to the north by residential property.

.4 The Swimming Pool and Tourist Information Centre (TIC)

A relatively low-level brick building constructed in the early 1980s.

9.1.5 The Ham

This area is mainly a level grass park, used for general recreation. The western side forms a heavily used pedestrian and cycle path. Various more formal activities take place on the Ham from time to time, in particular the annual Folk Festival and the annual Fun Fair. Within the general recreation area is a large children's play area, which is very well used and was upgraded to provide facilities for older children in 2011.



Beneath the Ham, at the south end, is a large storage tank and pumping station serving Sidmouth's sewerage system, and operated by South West Water. There is a small building associated with this use to the east and a dedicated electricity sub-station to the west.

The south western corner of the Ham is occupied by *Bagwells* - a collection of wooden fishing sheds and net storage areas, and wet fish shop. The Town Council tidied up the western edge of the Ham in 2007/8 introducing some low maintenance shrubs and a notice-board and re-rendering the fishing units wall, which was decorated with a mural by local children in 2011.

Extending the full length of the eastern edge of the Ham is a substantial Environment Agency flood defence wall with a secondary flood defence wall and steps three metres above high tide level. Adjoining the river is a pedestrian walkway which serves as an overflow capacity on the occasions when a combination of fluvial and coastal flooding breaches the western bank of the river Sid. It is

unattractively designed and not obviously accessible though it affords an attractive view of the river estuary and hanger cliffs to the east.

The northern part of the Ham, Wearfield, is paved with red-brick walls retaining shrubs. It was previously used as a paddling pool and boat store, but is now very rarely used or visited except for (unauthorised) car parking. Its entrance is dominated by Southwest Water's featureless stone building, illuminated by ugly lamps. Previously a sewage macerating station this has been used for many years solely as a storage shed since its original function was replaced by new pumps under the southern end of the Ham.

9.1.6 East Street and York Street (south), west of Ham Lane

These two route-ways run parallel to the Esplanade and link Ham Lane with Fore Street and the rest of the town centre. The western end of East Street is restricted to pedestrians and cyclists, and is a busy link between the car parks and the shops. The eastern end of East Street is a narrow vehicular route serving the parking area for Trumps Court and the rear of three shop premises. It is little used by vehicles. York Street, west of Ham Lane, is a narrow roadway that serves the rear of houses, flats and the Royal York Hotel on the Esplanade. It is also an important pedestrian route to the town centre shops from the car parks.

9.1.7 The buildings fronting the Esplanade east of Ham Lane are as follows:

- The Lifeboat Station - a well maintained and extended two storey building
- The Port Royal Club - an unattractive 1960s building, three storeys high with boat storage areas to the side and rear, and concrete storage areas and garages underneath. It houses the clubhouse of the Sailing and Sea Angling Clubs. The Gig Club is also using this building.
- The Drill Hall – the building was previously used by the Devon Army Cadet Force but is now semi-derelict and subject to an enforcement order. EDDC has indicated an intention to demolish the building.
- Single storey public toilets and an east-facing shelter.

9.2 Site Levels

The PRSG has benefited from the kind assistance of Alick Russell of Blackdown Surveys, who has provided a topographical (site) survey free of charge: Appendix 4.1

- .1 The lowest lying area within the site is the Ham Lane car park West; discussions with the Environment Agency indicate that this area should not be residentially developed as it is an essential flooding reception area. See section 13.0 below.
- .2 The Ham Lane East car parks are somewhat higher.
- .3 The buildings fronting the Esplanade may be replaced or enhanced with residential and other development but current EA requirements will mean that any new buildings will have to be constructed at agreed floor levels, higher than, for example, Trinity Court immediately to the west of the southern edge of the development site.

.3 Beneath Ground Level

- .3.1 No soil tests have been carried out. In the past, much of the site was used as a gasworks, so there is likely to be considerable contamination. See section 12.0 below.

- .3.2 Sub-ground conditions are unlikely to be favourable, as the buildings fronting the Esplanade are thought to be built on what was a shingle spit.
- .3.3 No archaeological survey has been conducted. See section 14.0 below.

9.4 Routes through the Site

9.4.1 Vehicular traffic

Some traffic 'tours' the Esplanade, using the turning circle to travel to and fro, but the majority of vehicles travelling along the Esplanade turn into Ham Lane either to use the car parks, to visit the residential areas of Eastern Town, or to exit the town via the ford and Salcombe Road, or via Mill Street and the town centre. The route of Ham Lane/York Street(north)/Mill Street/the Ford/Millford Road is well used and is a significant route in and out of the town with car-parks and on street parking. The roads are generally narrow, with narrow pavements, and some congestion. By contrast Riverside, East Street and York Street (south) are very little used by cars, though Riverside, which has no pavements, is used at full capacity for free on-street parking day and night.

9.4.2 Pedestrian traffic

There is considerable pedestrian traffic through the site, with many people using the Byes footpath to link to the Esplanade and town centre. Pedestrians cross the site via the riverbank, via the Ham footpath, and along Ham Lane. East Street is a busy pedestrian route, as is York Street (south), albeit less so.

Generally the site lacks coherence from a pedestrian perspective and is dangerous in some places with poor signage and limited or non-existent pavement space on Mill street and Riverside. The site is the junction of the Byes footpath, the Esplanade promenade, and the coastal path/Alma Bridge, in close proximity to the town centre, and juxtaposed with the main shoppers' car park.

9.4.3 Bicycle traffic

National Cycle Path 2 runs through the site down Riverside, along the west of the Ham and onto the Esplanade. No cycle racks are provided on this route through the town.

9.5 General Impressions

The whole area has been developed in a piecemeal way resulting in wasted space, a poor layout, inefficiencies and often ugly and inappropriate buildings from the later 20th century.

Many visitors to Sidmouth make the Ham Lane car parks their first, and often only, stop.

The car parks are not attractive, with 1960s lighting, almost no trees, and untidy planted areas. The electricity substation is visually unattractive and its dedicated parking area and independent access are a waste of valuable space. The low brick walls that enclose the car park have planted central sections which are often colourful, but the walls make for a harsh appearance, not helped by yellow-painted street furniture, rusting telegraph poles, etc. The cottages in East Street are attractive, as is the frontage of Trumps Court, but the link to Roxburgh to the north is plain and featureless.



The backs of the Fore Street shops are not pleasing with the *Boots* building particularly unsightly. The Esplanade buildings are four to five storeys high: although clearly rear facades, they are not unattractive, apart from the alienating and poorly maintained 22-year old Trinity Court. They shade the southern part of the Car Park and York Street from the sun throughout the year.

The Swimming Pool is a utilitarian modern building. The west and north elevations are especially plain and featureless. The layout of the car park north and west of the pool is particularly wasteful of space.

The Port Royal Club 'complex' is generally regarded as of poor quality with underused space at the rear.

Despite a gallant effort with colourful murals on the eastern and western sides, the wall by the fishing units blocks potentially attractive views and presents an unnecessarily intimidating appearance.

The Drill Hall is dilapidated and currently a condemned building. The public toilets are not the best first impression of Sidmouth as you cross Alma Bridge or walk down the riverside path to the Ham. The popular approach on foot or by bicycle from the north along the Ham affords a pleasant view towards the mouth of the river, through the Alma Bridge to the seascape beyond, spoilt only by the ugly toilets and shelters to the right of the lower Ham and the forbidding dead space at Wearfield to the north of the Ham.

Overall, the site is a jumble of poorly related buildings, mostly of poor quality and design, surrounding a featureless, bleak and windswept car park. Heading north from Ham Lane's junction

with the Esplanade, there are six junctions within less than 150 yards, adding to the messy impression.

10.0 Services

A full list of utility plans can be found attached as appendix 5.

11.0 Constraints & Opportunities



11.1 Constraints on potential development/regeneration

- It is low-lying with a ridge of shingle as foundation on its southern edge
- The Environment Agency classes it as Flood Zone 3 inappropriate for development without exceptional arguments for regeneration and sequential testing for any proposed new development.
- It has been the site of previous occupation by gas works and garages, which could cause pollution/contamination.
- The site is partly contained within the Sidmouth Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area and there are several listed buildings within close proximity to the site (fronting the Esplanade). The character appraisal document for the conservation area identifies the Ham Lane car park as an unsightly feature.
- It is on the Jurassic Coast (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Any development at the south end of the site will have some impact on the setting of the World Heritage site. This is significant. If English Heritage objects to a scheme which the council is minded to approve,

the application will need to be referred to the government office for the SW and they may call it in for their own determination.

- It is designated as an area of 'Hold the Line' by the Shoreline Management Plan 2. Initial indications from the DEFRA Coastal Change Pathfinder Project for Dorset and East Devon are that at an indeterminate point this century, climate change will require a sea wall at the Esplanade with little or no beach even at low tide.
- There is an un-quantified risk of fluvial and marine flooding as the cliffs to the east crumble
- There is a covenant restricting use of the Ham playing fields to recreational use
- Lines of sight, rights to light and "building lines" have to be respected at various locations on the site. Neighbouring properties can assert rights to light and privacy.

11.2 Opportunities

- The regeneration site is a prime site, undoubtedly one of the finest on the south coast
- Sidmouth is a very well regarded high quality tourist resort with a wide range of premium hotels, guest houses, National Cyclepath, Long Distance Footpath, Language Schools, Folk Festival, Donkey Sanctuary and a nationally accredited museum
- Sidmouth offers a wide range of distinctive and individual shops with independent retailers and caterers
- It is surrounded by an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is a gateway town for the Jurassic Coast
- Sidmouth has a rich and diverse heritage dating back to prehistoric and medieval settlements. Agriculture and fisheries were the main activities from time immemorial, and Sidmouth's brand as a "Regency Town" relates to more than two centuries as a health resort and a centre for high quality architecture. There is a long tradition of civic participation including the oldest civic society in the country. Recent emphasis has been placed on maritime activities, flood control and a civic arboretum.
- This site offers local employment opportunities for developing skills and as a visitor attraction. Making a virtue of necessity, a regeneration project might create a model of zero carbon energy efficiency to combat climate change and to prepare for its impact.

12.0 Contamination

The EDDC Environmental Health Officer advises:

"It will be necessary for any proposed development to be the subject of a full contaminated land assessment. Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development, other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of remediation, must not commence until the site has been surveyed for potential risk. If risk is identified a remediation scheme will need to be approved and implemented. If unexpected contamination is found after development has begun, a new survey and assessment will be needed; and a new remediation scheme may need to be approved and implemented before development can proceed."

13.0 Flooding issues

See Appendix 4.2

The Environment Agency Sequential Test will be applied to any development

14.0 Archaeological Issues

The Steering Group has benefited from the advice of Stephen Reed, the DCC Archaeologist in the Historic Environment Service, ref ARCH/DC/ED/16678a

14.1 The Archaeological Potential of the site

- The eastern and northern part of the site lies in the flood plain and was until the latter part of the 19th century undeveloped. There is the potential for the survival of waterlogged artefact and deposits groundwork to be exposed by deep ground works in this area. In addition, evidence may also be exposed associated with the medieval harbour that is thought to be located in the vicinity of The Ham and Eastern Town.
- The site of the former gas works is occupied by the swimming pool and I would regard this part of the site as being archaeologically sterile having been disturbed by both these developments.
- The car park on the west of the site is shown on the mid-19th century Tithe Map to be developed with housing present across it. Development of this part of the site may expose archaeological remains associated with these buildings and any earlier settlement here.
- Development in the southern and the eastern part of the site may expose archaeological and artefactual remains associated with the documented salt workings in the estuary.
- Prehistoric flint tools have been recovered from the foreshore at the foot of Salcombe Hill Cliff and any works on the foreshore may expose further artefacts.

.2 The Archaeological Impact of any development in this area

- This will depend upon the nature and extent of any such development, the depth of foundations, landscaping, service runs, flood defence works etc.
- Should more details become available on the types of development that are being considered I would advise early consultation with this office in order that we can provide appropriate advice as early as possible in the design process. This will allow the impact - if any - of the development on the heritage asset to be understood and any mitigation required to be determined.
- However, if this area was to be considered for major redevelopment, involving building on the car park and across the eastern side of the site, I would advise that any designs were informed by a programme of archaeological work to assess the significance of the heritage asset of the site. This would initially comprise a desk-based assessment of the site followed by the excavation of a series of evaluative trenches.

15.0 Conservation & wildlife

A wildlife survey would be expected with any planning application for major works (eg bat roost in the drill hall) and may need to consider the potential impact on the adjacent Sidmouth to Beer coast SSSI and the Sidmouth to West Bay SAC.

16.0 Existing functions

- The Ham Lane car Parks generate over £350,000 per annum for EDDC, who would like to see that this income be retained or improved upon.
- The Swimming Pool is managed by LED (Leisure East Devon) who have suggested its relocation to a dedicated sports centre 2 km north near Sidmouth College. We understand the current preference of the EDDC is to retain the pool in its current location.
- The lifeboat station provides a valuable inshore rescue service and tourist attraction. The trustees have indicated they can envisage no alternative sites from which they could operate.
 - The management team of the Port Royal Sailing and Sea Angling Club has indicated that they would welcome a refurbishment of their facilities and would accept a practical

relocation of the dinghy storage area. The clubhouse requires a view over the bay and cannot be relocated though use of the clubhouse could be extended to include other waterborne activities.

- The Drill Hall was, before it was condemned as unsafe, a youth facility. It is now vacant.
- The public highways could have their use redefined to some extent:
 - the Esplanade is used for
 - car parking,
 - access to the hotels, flats and Port Royal club
 - lifeboat access to the western launching point,
 - access to the Ham Lane car-parks,
 - and for motorised touring visits to the sea views on the “Turning Circle”.
 - the “Turning Circle” is also used for essential access by South West Water and other service and emergency vehicles.
 - Ham Lane is used for vehicular access to the car parks and also as part of a circular route around the centre of the town
 - York Street (south) offers vehicular access to the service areas at the rear of the flats and hotels
 - East Street offers vehicular access to the car parking spaces allocated to Trumps Court sheltered housing and the rear of some Fore Street buildings.
- Public Conveniences are required in this general area but are likely to be relocated.
- The Ham Field, subject to restrictive covenants allowing the site to be used only for community recreation, has suffered some encroachment over the years:
 - The Sewage Plant operated by SWW, under the southern Ham and with associated buildings, hard standing for cranes and other vehicles, is a major investment asset
 - The Flood Defence system along the west bank of the river and owned by the Environment Agency is a major investment asset
 - The Commercial Fishing Units provide a picturesque “heritage” appeal but limited employment on a substantial footprint; they do not necessarily need to be retained within any regeneration project but could be relocated in a more efficient and accessible space. Their “heritage” appeal might be enhanced in proximity to a fish restaurant.
 - The grass area at the south of the Ham is vulnerable due to the lack of topsoil over the sewage works.
- The Ham playing fields are “the village green” in frequent use for informal ball games, and dog walking and also as an essential location for the annual Folk Festival and for the annual fun fair.
- The Children’s Play Area is extremely popular and must be retained but could be further enhanced or marginally relocated
- The northern part of the Ham play area (“Wearfield”) was previously a boating pond and is now concreted over with a few shrubs and is all but unused. Any development is constrained by its proximity to residential areas.

17.0 Design principles

New build or refurbishment, whether in a contemporary or more traditional style, should display a sense of place and be locally distinctive.

18.0A range of Concept Statements

See Appendix 6 for “Concept Statements”

The examples below arose from brainstorming with various groups of residents, planning officers and elected representatives. This is not an exhaustive list of scenarios.

18.018.1 Example: “Urban Cliff”

- Four or five storey buildings continuing from Trinity Court to the mouth of the Sid, echoing the red cliffs east of the river
- Iconic building by Alma Bridge
- Relocate Swimming Pool to the college or Exeter Cross in a full united sports facility
- Second storey of luxury flats above the eastern car-parking area
- Income from the sale of new luxury flats and extended public car-parking

.2 Example : **“Sustainability, Wellbeing and Community”**

- a place to spend quality leisure time and recuperate, passing the time of day in a green environment, meeting people, taking it easy, relaxing, with plenty to do and see and no pressure to get in and out of an expensive car park as quickly as possible but encouraging visits to the rest of the town’s facilities and retail outlets
- small retailers, cafes and rest points, small spaces for people to meet and chat
- pedestrian-friendly Esplanade and town centre green park accessed normally by public transport, on foot, or by bicycle
- income from installations which incorporate energy regeneration and from improved turnover for existing local businesses
- minimal cost but loss of opportunity for sale of EDDC land on the seafront and transfer of car-parking income to non-central locations

.3 Example : **“Ham Lane Car Parks regeneration”**

- Plant trees and remove space-wasting planters,
- Re- surface with porous grasscrete to act as a flooding “sink”
- Maximise parking space by using York Street and Ham Lane as the entrance and exit routes to a large South Ham Lane car park closing the northerly exits and closing the Turning Circle to all but emergency vehicles
- Install light canopy for covered open air market and incubator for new small businesses on stilts above the car park among the treetops.
- Longer term phasing depends on local and national developments in transport: build a second storey car-park or replace car park with public open space
- Provide a small north Ham Lane car park accessed from Roxburgh car park and East Street.
- Install recharging points for electric cars and buggies in the car park
- Loading/delivery bays to the rear of Fore Street shops to assist Fore Street pedestrianisation plans
- Extend terraced cottages from Glenisla Terrace to York Street, north of the swimming pool
- “Back to the future” intensive mixed use (*See 1890 map, Appendix 4.3*)

.4 Example : **“Temporary Regeneration of Flood Plain area”**

- Tidy up the Ham Lane car parks
- Facelift Port Royal club

- Restore Drill Hall to comply with safety requirements for community use
- Facelift the public toilets
- Introduce a retail outlet between the Lifeboat station and the sailing club
- Unify the horizontal frontage from Lifeboat station to public toilets with a sea-view balcony
- Limited residential accommodation above and behind this frontage
- Open up the northern section of the Ham playing fields to facilitate ease of access from the Byes to the seafront along the riverbank
- Remove shrubs and planters in the Ham and plant specimen trees as part of Sidmouth arboretum
- Install indoor children's play facility to complement Ham playing field by wrapping the swimming pool building and possibly introducing an open-air swimming pool
- Funds from charitable and regeneration bodies and possible sale of some residential properties
- Income from car parking and retail outlets
- Minimal investment in anticipation of non-sustainability of long term occupation

*By investigating the practical implications of implementing these very different visions for the future of the town the PRSG was able to develop a range of specific options for the regeneration in the Eastern Town. **These are detailed in sections 19 and 20 below, to stimulate further engagement with all stakeholders and possible investors.***

19.0 Delivery

- The regeneration area is sub-divided into units that could be delivered within a phased delivery programme under separate planning applications.
- Phased development will give the whole scheme a sense of momentum with income generation arising in phases. We anticipate that less expensive enhancements will be in place earlier than major developments
- The regeneration plan should enable independent delivery within a comprehensive scheme
- Problems of delivery may be averted and creative wisdom may be freely accessed by on-going wide engagement with stakeholders, including local residents, a socially inclusive range of Sidmouth citizens and elected representatives from STC and EDDC.

20.0 Potential Options for regeneration of each section (see Map on page 19)

20.1 Car Parks & Riverside Road

20.1.1 Riverside Road (Black)

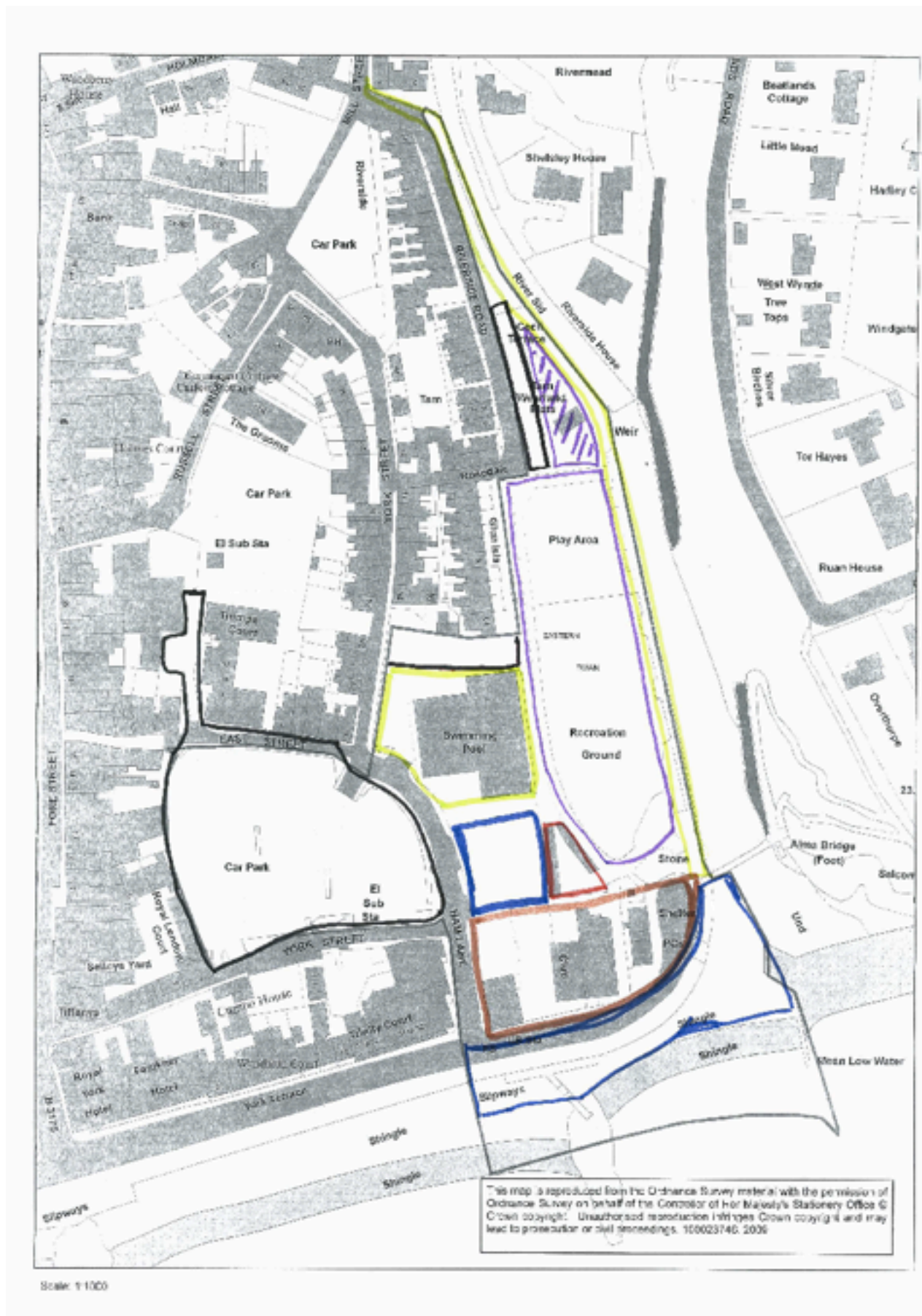
Option 1 Improve layout to increase parking spaces

- Remove privet hedge
- Lateral parking spaces designated
- Consider controlled parking with resident permits

Option 2 Pedestrian and cycle priority route

- Vehicle access for access and loading only
- Pedestrian-friendly connection from the Ham to the Byes

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20.1.2 Ham Lane West Car Park (Black)

Option 1 Aesthetic improvements and economic efficiency

- Redesign Entrance
- Remove hard red brick edges
- Planting of Shrubs and Trees as part of Sidmouth Civic Arboretum
- Enhanced Street Furniture and lighting
- Transfer Trumps Court Parking and Fore Street delivery arrangements
- Pedestrianisation of East Street
- Improved pedestrian route to Russell Street (Roxburgh) car park
- Residential housing on Trump Street parking
- Reconfigure electric substation and shrub areas adjoining York street
- Investigate dual uses (canopy, occasional market)
- Semi-porous surfaces and re-levelling to enable significant flood water sink or trap

Option 2 Redevelopment, retaining Parking Spaces

- Ground Floor Parking with improvements proposed in Option 1
- Commercial uses above the car park

Option 3 Multi-Storey Parking

- Requires allocation of space for ramps to upper storey
- Ham Lane tunnel under upper storey in both East and West car-parks

Option 4 Major change of use and regeneration

- Commercial/Community mixed development
- No uses that are vulnerable to flooding
- Pedestrian access only
- Requires major reorganisation
- Provide shuttle bus from outside the centre of town, e.g. Knowle and Manor Road car parks
- Investigate multi-storey car park at Manor Road, making use of existing levels

.3 Ham Lane East Car Park - North (Black)

Option 1 Retain with enhanced efficiency

- New entrance off York Street
- Improved efficiency of car-parking space layout

Option 2 Development

- Terraced houses between Glenisla Terrace and York Street
- Indoor play area wrapped around swimming pool

.4 Ham Lane East Car Park - South (Blue)**Option 1 Retain and Improve**

- Redesign parking layout
- Consider upper storey connected to West Car Park option 2
- Improve aesthetics

Option 2 Redevelopment for Commercial and Community Use

- Mixed uses might include some or all of:
 - o Retail
 - o Museum/ Library
 - o Winter garden
 - o Public Toilets
 - o Indoor Play Centre
 - o Residential Upper Floors
- Recycling skips to be relocated in West car park flood sink

.2 Ham Recreation Ground (Purple)**Option 1 Aesthetic improvements**

- Enhanced outdoor leisure facilities
- Landscaping
- Improved play equipment (as delivered for older children in 2011)
- Measures to reduce encroachment of vehicle access onto the southern and northern parts of the Trust's recreational space

Option 2 Improved foot/cycle access from the seafront to The Byes (shaded green route)

- Pedestrian and cycle opening from northern end of Riverside
- Pedestrian-friendly route along Riverside or through Wearfield
- Enhanced pavement along Mill Street and Milford Road
- Improved signage between Byes and Seafront
- Boardwalk above flood defences on the western bank of the Sid

Option 3 Reclaim Wearfield as public space (shaded purple)

- Negotiate return of SWW stone storage shed to the Radford Trust
 - o Demolish or
 - o Open up for community use (e.g. bikeshed, art gallery)
- Replace red-brick planting areas and concreted hard standing with trees and soft artificial or natural surfaces
- Play area for smaller children with geodesic dome for wet weather play

- Riverside seating and walking route
- Water feature or sculpture park

.3 Swimming Pool and TIC (Green)

Option 1 As Existing

Option 2 Aesthetic and functional Improvements

- Wrap in shell for enhanced community use such as Indoor Play Centre
- Relocate TIC to seafront
- Relocate public toilets to this area

Option 3 Relocate swimming pool up the valley with major redevelopment of site

.4 Eastern Foreshore (Blue)

Option 1 No change

Option 2 Improve access for pedestrians and for marine activities

- Close the turning circle and eastern esplanade to vehicles except for emergency, service, and "permit" vehicles
- Pedestrian only piazza
- Improved Water Access Slipway
- High standard launching facilities for inshore rescue, sailing and gig club

Option 3 Significant enhancement of Sidmouth's economic relationship to the sea

- Install a jetty as dock for Lyme Bay water bus and other shallow draft vessels
- Invest in renewable energy from tidal and/or wave power

.5 Lifeboat, Sailing Club, Drill Hall, Toilets (Brown)

Option 1 Retain and Improve

- Community uses retained
- Toilets repainted
- Tree-planting along the esplanade
- Drill Hall restoration project
 - o Make aesthetic improvements
 - o Improved maintenance

Option 2 Partial Regeneration

- Current maritime uses kept
- Demolish Drill Hall

- Residential element

Option 3 Major Regeneration

- Current maritime activities enhanced by incorporation into new build
- Relocation of TIC on seafront
- Relocation of public toilets into Swimming pool/ Ham Lane East area
- Significant residential component
 - o NB this is unlikely to include affordable housing:
 - o the priority is to fulfil community aspirations for enhanced public facilities
 - o the cost constraints for the development of the site are likely to render the addition of affordable housing undeliverable.
- Four or five storey development to complement building levels on the sea front to the west
- Height Stepped down northwards along Ham Lane
- There is likely to be a limited commercial component of Restaurants, Cafes, etc. taking advantage of this newly pedestrianised area
- In association with marine sports clubs, further community uses may be developed
- Consideration to be given to a landmark building at the easternmost point on the seafront
- Rooftop facility could enhance public access to the sea view

Port Royal Steering Group

November 2009 – August 2010

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