



# **Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey**

## **Great Torrington**



**Historic Environment Projects**



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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Historic Environment Projects and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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## **Cover illustration**

High Street, Great Torrington (from south)

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12. HUCAs – Town centre
13. HUCAs – New Street
14. HUCAs – Mill Street and Taddiport
15. HUCAs – East of town centre

## **Abbreviations**

EH	English Heritage
EUS	Extensive Urban Survey
DCC	Devon County Council
HE	Historic Environment Projects, Cornwall Council
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
HUCA	Historic Urban Character Area
HUCT	Historic Urban Character Type
MDV	Monument Devon (prefix to Devon HER numbers)
OS	Ordnance Survey

## 1 Summary

Great Torrington (known locally as 'Torrington') was assessed during Summer/Autumn 2012 under the Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey (DHCTS). Part of a national programme of Extensive Urban Surveys initiated and supported by English Heritage, DHCTS is aimed at increasing understanding of 17 medieval towns within the county, prioritised because of their high historical significance and archaeological potential and the immediacy of development pressure. Torrington was a borough by 1200 and is the focus of proposals for infilling, edge expansion and Market Town enhancement.

DHCTS constitutes a deepening of Devon's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project, completed in 2004. Standard, easily available sources are used to identify Historic Urban Character Types (HUCTs), which divide a town up on the basis of land use. Incorporating time-depth allows a town's urban extent and uses to be mapped during the different periods of its history. The HUCTs are then grouped together to define distinct geographical areas - Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) - distinguishable by their specific origins, historical development, plan-form, buildings and degree of survival. HUCAs are the principle tool for describing the character of the historic towns included in the survey. The project results are held digitally in a GIS database (the main project output) as part of the Devon Historic Environment Record and presented in a report for each town (together with a project synthesis to be published at the end of the project).

Great Torrington is located at the junction of historic routeways, next to ancient common, on a 'cliff' above the River Torridge (Figures 1 and 2). Its dramatic setting and historical development (Figures 3, 5-11) - from Domesday manor, through medieval market town, post-medieval wool and glove making centre, 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial and inland 'resort' town and 20th century cream and glass-making base - has produced a distinctively varied urban character. An underlying medieval plan-form supports an eclectic mix of building types, materials and architectural styles and detail (a contrasting accumulation of all its past roles and functions) within 20 different HUCAs (Figures 4, 12-15).

HUCA no.	Historic Urban Character Area	Above ground heritage significance	Below ground heritage significance
1	Torrington eastern expansion	Low	Low
2	Great Torrington Common – South	High	Medium
3	Great Torrington Common – West	High	Medium
4	Torrington northern expansion	Medium	Medium
5	South Street and market place	High	High
6	Warren Lane	High	High
7	New Street – West	High	Low
8	New Street – East	Medium-High	Medium-High
9	Mill Street	High	Medium-High
10	Well Street – West	High	High
11	Barley Grove and Castle Hill	High	High
12	Castle Street	High	High
13	Well Street – East	Medium	Medium
14	Taddiport	High	High
15	Torrington Creamery site	High	High
16	Torrington Station	High	Medium
17	School Lane/New Street	High	High
18	Whites Lane	High	Medium
19	Calf Street	Medium	Medium
20	Castle View modern expansion	Low	Low

## **2 Town context**

The study area encompasses the present extent of Great Torrington, including the attached village of Taddiport and a large part of the surrounding Common historically associated with the town (Figure 1).

### **2.1 Location and setting**

*'No inland town in Devon can boast a more impressive situation.'*

(Alexander and Hooper 1948, 1)

Great Torrington is located amongst the rolling hills of north-west Devon, in one of the least crowded and most unspoilt parts of the County, and one of the quietest areas of southern England. This is a largely agricultural landscape of fields, scattered villages and hundreds of remote farms linked by a network of ancient lanes, with the very occasional small town, of which Great Torrington is an example.

The town lies upstream of the Torridge Estuary, approximately 12 kilometres inland of the nearest coast (at Bideford Bay), within Torridge local authority area. Most of it is within the parish of Great Torrington (the adjoining village of Taddiport is within Little Torrington Parish).

The branch railway line from Barnstaple having been long closed, the main access is by road. Key roads (Figure 1) run into the town from the north-east, from Barnstaple (Calvesford Road): east, from South Molton (Hatchmoor Road); west, from Bideford (New Bridge and Station Hill); south, from Exeter and Okehampton (New Road); and south-west, from Holsworthy and Launceston (Taddiport Bridge and Limer's Hill).

Routes of medieval (or in some cases earlier) origin are those from the north-east, east, south-west (which then entered the town up Mill Street) and the west (although this was a more local route from Frithelstock Priory, over Rothern Bridge), together with the old road from Bideford which enters the town from the north, as School Lane.

The town is perched high on a prominent hill, commanding spectacular views over the River Torridge, which snakes its way through the valley to the south and west, on its journey north-west to the river port of Bideford (Figures 1 and 2).

In addition to stunning rural views, it is possible to step straight from the historic town centre into *The Commons* – 365 acres of heath given to the townspeople 900 years ago, which remains an area of woods, pasture and pathways leading down to the river.

### **2.2 Geology and topography**

The underlying geology of Great Torrington are sedimentary rocks of the Bude Formation - sandstones, shale and siltstones of the Upper Carboniferous age (Westphalian), 310 million years old (Roche 2004; <http://www.devonrigs.org.uk/>).

The town is sited on a ridge of high ground bounded by water on three sides - on the south and west by the River Torridge, and on the north by a tributary stream known as Common Lake. The land slopes less severely down to the latter, becomes progressively steeper to the west and is steepest on the south, culminating in a sheer drop below the site of Great Torrington's medieval castle. This dramatic topography, often described as resembling an 'inland cliff', is one of the town's most commonly highlighted features. To the east, the ridge narrows before expanding out into a broader area of more gently sloping land (Figures 1 and 2).

Urban development has taken place along the roads running up to and along the east-west ridge of high ground overlooking the river (Figure 2). The older parts of the town are focused largely on the south-facing crest, spur and slope of the spine. Great Torrington Common defines the southern, western and north-western town limits, curtailing development on those sides, and more recent urban expansion has taken place to the north and east.

## 2.3 Previous archaeological work

Only limited archaeological recording has taken place within Great Torrington. There are a dozen archaeological 'events' in the Devon HER. A few, small-scale (evaluation and watching brief) excavations have taken place within the medieval town (on the castle/bowling green site, in South Street, at the east end of New Street, behind Potacre Street) and just beyond its edge – Calf Street (formerly medieval strip fields) and the 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery manufacturing site at the top of Mill Street. Large-scale investigation has included a replacement gas main along the entire length of New Street, Rolle Road Industrial Estate (former Torrington Creamery site) and a housing development on land north of Dartington Crystal. A single archaeological event is recorded in Taddiport.

## 3 Historical development

This section summarises the physical development of the town through time (Figures 5-11), highlighting the key components and influencing factors, as part of the process of identifying its historic urban character (it is not intended as a detailed historical narrative).

Historic Environment Record numbers (prefix MDV) have been included for cross reference with Devon County Council's database of archaeological sites and historic buildings (where site-specific descriptions and bibliographical references can be accessed).

Cross-reference is also made to the Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs).

### 3.1 Prehistoric and Roman context

Great Torrington's commanding position, on a high river spur, would have made it an ideal hillfort location (similar to Berry Castle two kilometres to the north), but as yet, no archaeological remains of an Iron Age or earlier prehistoric settlement have been uncovered. Recorded prehistoric finds within the town are restricted to a few artefacts - a polished Neolithic stone axe head, together with a couple of other axe fragments and a collection of worked flints (MDV452, MDV12391). There are no Roman finds from the town.

### 3.2 Toritone - early medieval farming estate

Evidence indicates that Great Torrington was a significant rural settlement during the early medieval period. The earliest reference is an indirect one, to the place name, Torrington, the first part of which is derived from a British word for a (rough flowing) river - *torri*. The first certain record of this word being used in reference to the River Torridge is in 937. The second part of the placename comes from the English word *tun* meaning 'farm' or 'estate'. Great Torrington appears to have been one of three farms on the bank of the *Toric*, each with the name *Torictun*, later softened to *Toritun*. The three Torringtons – Great (or Chepyng – 'Market'), Little and Black – are first mentioned by name (but without their distinctive prefixes) in the 1086 Domesday Survey, carried out to identify the amount of land and livestock each landholder held in order to determine the taxes liable (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 2-5).

According to Alexander and Hooper (1948, 8), the following entry is attributable to Great Torrington:

'Odo himself holds Toritone. Brictric (Beorhtric) held it in the time of King Edward and it paid for three hides and a half. There is land for forty ploughs. In demesne there are four ploughs, and seven serfs, and forty-five villeins, and ten bordars, with twenty-six ploughs. There are twenty acres of meadow, and three hundred acres of wood. Pasture two leugas in length, and one leuga in width. There are twenty-five swineherds rendering one hundred and ten swine. Formerly it was worth twenty-four pounds. Now it is worth twenty pounds.'

By the end of the early medieval period the seigneurial manor of Great Torrington was clearly a farming estate of considerable size. Though there is no direct archaeological evidence, it is possible that the seat of this estate was on the same site as the later

manor house (MDV12390; HUCA 17), and that the manor mills (MDV53331; HUCA15), although not specifically mentioned in the Survey, may have been already in use, with Mill Street and South Street a potential early medieval route connecting the two sites (Figure 5).

Many of the fields subsequently incorporated in the town may date back to this period. Interestingly, given the later importance of the wool industry to Great Torrington, 'swine' (pigs) were being kept, but no sheep are mentioned (despite there being 18 square miles of pasture land).

There is no hint in the Domesday Survey of a church, a fortified stronghold, or an urban or market centre, and, although that does not preclude any of these existing at the time, there is no reason to think they might have done so.

Taddiport is mentioned in the Survey, as the settlement of Torilanda (Torridge land), held by Roger or Ralf de Pomeray, and associated with a ford across the river.

### **3.3 Magna Toriton – from manor to medieval market town**

During the centuries after the Norman Conquest, the manor mentioned in Domesday passed down through Odo's descendants – the barons 'De Toriton' – and Great Torrington evolved into an urban settlement, the likely maximum extent of which is shown in Figure 6.

The key components/phases of development of the medieval town are as follows:

1. **Manor House (MDV12390; HUCA 17)** – initial settlement focus, probably of early medieval origin; located at the junction of three main historic routes (to Bideford, to Barnstaple / South Molton, and to Holsworthy / Launceston), now corner of School Lane/Calf Street.
2. **First Castle (MDV437; HUCA 11)** – built by early 12<sup>th</sup> century, to the south of the manor house, on a defensible spur now known as Barley Grove; an unnamed *castellum* (probably a timber motte and bailey) recorded in 1139 as having been captured and set on fire.
3. **Proto-urban settlement servicing the castle (HUCA 12)** - probably developed in an organic, accretive way, outside the castle precinct, along its approach road (now Castle Street), from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (or before, depending when the first castle was erected); earliest urban activity in Great Torrington, associated with supplying food and other provisions to soldiers garrisoned at the castle.
4. **Parish Church (MDV2627; HUCA 17)** – built by late 12<sup>th</sup> century (first record 1194), close to the Manor House (the patronage of the church in Torrington went with the manor); the area within and to east of the churchyard may have been an early focus for market activity – a place for selling agricultural produce from the surrounding farms.
5. **Great Torrington Common (HUCA 2 and 3)** – bequeathed for the benefit of the poor by the Lord of the Manor c1194; grants of this nature were often part of the sorting out of land holdings connected with the establishing of markets and towns; it defined the southern, western and north-western limits of future urban development.
6. **Borough** – probably developed as a market town during mid to late 12<sup>th</sup> century and granted formal borough status c1190; historical records of 1183-87 showing fines were levied against the *prepositus* of *Villata de Torinton* for selling corn 'contrary to regulation', indicating there was already a recognised head of the town (a bailiff or portreeve) and a market, or an attempt to carry on a market; a confirmatory grant may have been made in the reign of Richard I and King John; represented as a borough by its own jury at the eyre in 1238; named *Villata de Chepyng Toriton* ('Town of Market Toriton') in 1249 Assize Roll; 1295 two members from Torrington were chosen to serve in the Model Parliament,

reflecting the town's growing importance; taxed as a borough from 1306 (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 18; Beresford and Finberg 1973, 91).

7. **Markets and Fairs** – as part of achieving borough status Great Torrington was granted the right to hold a market every Saturday and two annual fairs, in honour of St Michael and St George; first recorded mention of a market 1238 and a fair 1221 (Letters et al 2005); 1554 Charter of Incorporation confirmed these existing privileges.
8. **Market Place (MDV18799; HUCA 5)** – area east of the church formalised into a rectangular market place, with streets feeding in; this may have broadly coincided with borough status being granted (c1190).
9. **Second Castle, with Chapel (MDV437; HUCA 11)** - castle rebuilt (in stone, on same site) during later 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century; evidence is a 1228 order to the sheriff of Devon to pull it down, owing to it having been built without royal licence; included a chapel to St James (MDV13834), which escaped demolition (appointment of a chaplain recorded in 1278, building converted to a schoolhouse by 1485).
10. **Barony in abeyance** – after William Fitzodo IV died without a male heir, the manor became divided between five female heirs and the barony went into abeyance in 1226 (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 11); without a sufficiently strong lord to grant privileges, nor large enough associated lands and estates to grant away, it is unlikely that the town would have been founded after this date.
11. **Taddiport Bridge (MDV15344; HUCA 14)** - built 13<sup>th</sup> century, on the presumed site of an earlier ford; it improved the town's connection to historic routes from Holsworthy/Launceston and Okehampton.
12. **Streets (early)** – South Street (HUCA 5), leading into the market place and the main artery of the town, owing to it being on the route to/from Taddiport Bridge; then New Street (HUCA 17), first recorded in 1382 (as *Nywestret* and therefore not an/the original street); probably not Castle Street, which had declined /been superseded in importance.
13. **Burgage plots (early)** – Laid out around the market place and along eastern and middle part of South Street (HUCA 5) and along the east end of New Street, opposite and west of the church (HUCA 17); by 1326 Torrington is recorded as having 43 burgages (Beresford 1967, 68).
14. **Fortified house** – 1340 Richard Merton, lord of part of the former Torrington estates, received a licence to crenelate for a house (Higham 1987, 97); uncertain if this (and the chamber, hall, kitchen, grange and cowshed recorded three years later) was sited within the earlier castle site (MDV437; HUCA 11), or elsewhere; could represent rebuilding of the original manor house (MDV12390; HUCA 17).
15. **Barony revived** - after 160 years in abeyance, the barony of Torrington was restored in 1386; over the next 100 years the Torrington lands remained in the hands of various families and individuals with royal associations, before finally being inherited by Henry VII and reverting to the Crown (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 14-16); this may have provided impetus for further development within the town.
16. **Rothern Bridge (MDV435; outside study area)** – built during 15<sup>th</sup> century, creating a new bridging point over River Torridge, leading to improved access to the town from the west, resulting in increased development along New Street.
17. **Streets (later medieval)** - Well Street (HUCA 10 and 13), part of a deliberate dog-leg diversion of the eastern town approach into the market place, in order to improve access (perhaps hindered by increased through traffic along the Calf Street/New Street east-west route, and/or infilling of the north part of the market place).

**18. Burgage/tenement plots (later medieval)** - extending out along (now three) main streets: further west along New Street (HUCA 8) and South Street (HUCA 5); out from the market place along the western part of Well Street (HUCA 10).

By 1538, when John Leland visited Great Torrington it was 'a great large toune', with '3 faire streets' (probably South, New and Well streets) and a 'paroch chirch...2 bridgges...a neglect chapelle' and the site of the (no longer standing) castle. There was a mayor and the town was 'priviligid with libertees' (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 25).

Leland also noted that most of its inhabitants made a living through making cloth, a reference to the fact that Torrington's economy was based largely on the manufacture of woollen cloth, for which Devon became famous from the later medieval period.

In addition to the development of the town, settlement also grew around the river crossing at Taddiport, particularly after the construction of the bridge. The focus on the south side of the river was a leper hospital and chapel (MDV71758; MDV98829; HUCA 14), first recorded in 1311 and dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. On the north bank were the manor mills (MDV53331; HUCA 15), which evolved to serve the borough, processing corn and wool from the surrounding countryside. The tenement plots at the bottom of Mill Street (HUCA 9) are possibly of medieval date or may have been laid out slightly later, during the post-medieval period.

### **3.4 Post-medieval wool centre and Civil War battle site**

During the post-medieval period Great Torrington continued to grow and thrive. In 1625 the town is described as 'a place of buying and selling and trade, and to that purpose it hath a weekly market much frequented and for abundance and good victuals few markets in the country or elsewhere better furnished', and Risdon's Survey of Devon (c1630) records it as being 'indifferently beautiful with buildings, very populous, and flourishing with merchants and men of trade' (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 168).

Although lacking the advantages of a port, Torrington was less than two miles from Weare Giffard, the navigable head of the River Torridge, as well as being at the convergence of key overland routes.

The woollen industry had become well established, producing fine baize cloth for export to Ireland and other places, employing local weavers and fullers and creating considerable wealth for merchants trading in the town's Yarn Hall (HUCA 5). The main manufacturing sites were at Staple Vale and Weare Giffard (outside the study area), together with a tucking mill at the Town Mills (the former manor mills site next to Taddiport Bridge MDV53331; HUCA 15) and an area for drying cloth on racks at the top of Mill Street (Rack Park, HUCA 6).

There was also a considerable glove making industry, by the late 1700s more important than woollen manufacture, which became confined to producing coarser cloths (*ibid*, 170). Although there were a number of places in the town where gloving was carried out – including the first Tapscott Glove Factory in New Street (MDV71129, HUCA 17) – much of it was by out-workers extending over a 30 mile radius.

Leather, as well as cloth, gloves were made, and tanning was another important industry, using oak bark from the coppiced woodlands in surrounding valleys. The sites of five (post-medieval and 19<sup>th</sup> century) leather tanneries have been identified within the town – on the east side of Stoneman's Lane (HUCA 8), one on the north side of Mill Street (HUCA 9), in South Street and off Church Lane (HUCA 5), and at Caddywell (HUCA 20) – together with a Leather Hall (HUCA 5) and Company of Cordwainers or leather workers (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 174). In addition, a leather manufacturing site is also named on the 1880 OS map, between Calf Street and Well Street West (HUCA 10).

These woollen cloth and leather industries would have grown out of Great Torrington's role as a thriving livestock market for the surrounding area – an aspect of its development reflected in the plan-form of both New Street (HUCA 8) and Well Street (HUCA 10 and 13), where an elliptically shaped widening of the street may represent

an area being created on each of these two major approaches for holding/trading animals during the weekly market.

Pottery manufacturing was another important aspect of Torrington's economy, part of a North Devon industry which experienced its greatest period of expansion in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Grant 1983, xv). Using clay from Fremington and Marland, a great variety of wares were produced for sale in the town and beyond – as well as being marketed across south-west England and Wales, North Devon wares were distributed as far afield as America and the West Indies. A sizeable pottery, run by the Deane family, was in operation at the top of Mill Street during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century (MDV55053-4, MDV 77888; HUCA 2 and 6), and, judging from the number of potters recorded, there were several other production sites within the town, including a possible one at Taddiport (HUCA 14; MDV19232; Grant 1983, 28).

Amongst the numerous other smaller-scale industries, crafts and trades carried out in Great Torrington during the post-medieval period was clock making (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 176).

The town was strategically important during the English Civil War - it was the location of two small-scale clashes, followed by the Battle of Torrington in 1646, which marked the end of Royalist resistance in the West Country. In December 1642 and July 1643 the town was occupied by Royalists aiming to use it as the base for attacking Bideford and Barnstaple. It was recaptured by Parliamentarian troops the first time, but not the second. The Battle of Torrington (MDV55705) took place on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1646, when Sir Thomas Fairfax's New Model Army defeated the 5,000 strong Royalist army of the West, under Lord Hopton, who retreated to Cornwall.

The Black Horse Inn (MDV23878; HUCA 5) was Lord Hopton's headquarters and the Royalists positioned foot troops on the old castle site (MDV437; HUCA 11). Barricades were built on the eastern side of the town, the main one at the east end of Well Street (HUCA 13), and the battle raged through the streets there. The church served as the Royalists' magazine and 200 of their troops died while being held captive there, when a gunpowder explosion destroyed a large part of the building, and were buried in a mass grave in the churchyard (MDV2627; HUCA 17). Those that escaped capture fled the town down Mill Street and over Taddiport Bridge.

The likely extent of Great Torrington by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is shown in Figure 7, the key physical changes that occurred during the post-medieval period being as follows:

- Infilling of the medieval market place, in two key phases; present plan-form probably established by 17<sup>th</sup> century (HUCA 5).
- Rebuilding of the frontages and development of back plots along the medieval streets (HUCA 5, 10 and 17; eastern part of HUCA 8).
- Expansion westwards along New Street as far as the entrance to Warren Lane (western part of HUCA 8).
- Expansion eastwards along Calf Street (HUCA 19), and along the eastern part of Well Street (HUCA 13).
- Development of secondary/outer, livestock market areas in New Street (HUCA 8) and Well Street (HUCA 10/13).
- Mill Street (HUCA 9) became developed, in a fragmented way, down from South Street and up from Taddiport Bridge.
- Bowling Green laid out on the medieval Castle site (Barley Grove, MDV18797; HUCA 11).

In addition, by the end of the period the historic core of Taddiport visible today was probably largely developed.

### **3.5 The Rolle years – 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial and resort town**

In 1801 Torrington was described as “rich, populous and spirited” (Alexander and Hooper, 177-9). Figures 8 and 9 show the town during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the key influencing factors and aspects of development were as follows:

- **Rolle Canal** – constructed 1822-27 (by Lord of the Manor, John Rolle) to extend the navigable route of the River Torridge in order to transport South Wales limestone up to Torrington; the canal passed along the bottom of Great Torrington Common (MDV445; HUCA 2 and 3); canal headquarters and wharf were at the bottom of Mill Street (MDV18802; HUCA 15); lime burning for fertiliser production (the lime was imported up the canal) became an important edge-of-town activity, on the canal wharf, at Staplevale (MDV16952) and south-east of the town (MDV 14286); wharf became a hive of import/export and local trading activity.
- **Road and bridge improvements** – 1820s Bideford to Torrington Turnpike Road (initially using medieval Rothern Bridge, New Bridge built 1842-3); Turnpike Road to Exeter - cut south-east of town c1840; 1843 new road to Plymouth and Rolle Bridge built (next to new Town Mills); 1871 canal infilled to create Rolle Road (MDV18798, HUCA 2, 3 and 15).
- **Social and civic provision** - Torrington Union Workhouse, built 1837 on western edge of town, on site of previous poorhouse (MDV55060; HUCA 7); Great Torrington Cemetery (MDV64814; HUCA 7) - created 1855 on western edge of town opposite workhouse, in response to the town’s increased population and the parish churchyard becoming full; 1871 Board School in Whites Lane (HUCA 18); new waterworks (1871) and a gasworks (HUCA 19).
- **Town centre/commercial re-development** – including 1842 Market House and 1861 Town Hall (MDV11796; MDV454; HUCA 5); plus purpose-built cattle market in School Lane, by 1904 (HUCA 17).
- **Torrington Railway Station (MDV434; HUCA 16)** – opened 1872 when railway extended from Bideford, stimulating industrial and residential development.
- **Larger scale industries and long-distance trade** – 1874 Torridge Vale Buttery Factory established, supplying London and cities further north (HUCA 15); 1884 new Vaughan Tapscott Glove Factory built in White’s Lane, specialising in silk, lace and taffeta, employed over 600 people (including factory and outworkers), producing up to 24,000 pairs of gloves a week, exported around the world (MDV72628; HUCA 18) (Strong 1889, 87-97).
- **Non-conformist chapels** – built on the edge/outside of the town centre, west end of South Street (MDV2630; HUCA 5), top of Mill Street (MDV23890; HUCA 6), New Street (MDV18831; HUCA 8), Castle Street (HUCA 12) and towards east end of Calf Street (MDV35020; HUCA 19).
- **Workers housing** – built in New Street East (HUCA 8), Calf Street (HUCA 19) and Well Street East (HUCA 13); in response to demand for housing for increased number of employees in glove manufacture and other local industries.
- **Villa development/residential suburbs** - Warren Lane and Villa Road (HUCA 6), Whites Lane (HUCA 18), New Street West (HUCA 7) and Castle Street (HUCA 12); to house wealthy industrialists and merchants, and others drawn by the town’s attractive setting and improved transport links.
- **Civic ornamentation/amenity** – Common-side walkways and viewpoints, and castellated walls created by Lord Rolle (HUCA 6 and 11).

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although the extent of the town had only significantly expanded on the west (along New Street out to the edge of the Common and down Warren Lane), there had been considerable infilling and rebuilding along many existing streets, with the town acquiring characteristics of an industrial settlement

(internationally famous for its gloves) and inland resort, in addition to its continuing role as an important market town (with livestock market).

### **3.6 Cream, glass and tourism - 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century Torrington**

During the last 100 years, Great Torrington has expanded significantly (Figures 3, 10 and 11), particularly since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with the building of housing estates and other large scale developments (schools, cottage hospital and medical centres, factories, industrial estates, water/sewage works). Modern road improvements have also had an impact – notably the widening and cutting through of New Road to join Calf Street (HUCAs 10, 13 and 19) and the upgrading of Limer's Hill from track to road (HUCA 3). The town's physical extent increased by a third, largely through expansion into farmland bordering its north, east and south-east sides, but also along the riverside west of Taddiport Bridge (HUCA 15).

The latter is the site of Torrington Creamery, which from the early 1900s provided a major boost to the town's economic fortunes. Similarly the establishment in 1967 of Dartington Crystal factory (HUCA 4) provided much needed employment which continues today. Glove making, for which the town was previously famous, is apparently still carried out on a small scale within the town, but the Vaughan Tapscott factory is now closed, as is the Creamery and the abattoir (Torrington Meat located to the north of the town). With the cattle market in School Lane converted to an indoor swimming pool, Torrington has lost its historic function as a livestock market.

Nevertheless, the town contains a range of services and community facilities that reflect its continuing role as an important service centre for the surrounding rural area (Torridge District Council 2011). It is also recognised as an important heritage centre for understanding 17th century history, with re-enactments and an interactive 'Torrington 1646' educational experience. Visitors are also drawn by the town's stunning setting and historic market town character, with the crystal factory's visitor centre and nearby RHS Rosemoor Gardens and Tarka Trail cycle path (along the old railway line) providing additional tourist attractions.

Torrington's modern extension on the east side of the town fans out either side of New Road and the converging v-shape of Calvesford and Hatchmoor roads, in between and up to former country lanes - Caddywell, Burwood, Watery, Hatchmoor Common (HUCA 1 and 20). To the north, 20th and early 21st century development extends back to Juries Lane in places (incorporating parts of Gas and Best's/Bastard's Lanes), and between School Lane and Stoneman's Lane it steps down almost to Common Lake (HUCA 4).

Attached to the town, though still retaining a sense of separateness, the village of Taddiport (HUCA 14) has also experienced dramatic physical expansion during the last century, its size having been doubled by the building of a housing estate to the east.

## **4 Historic Urban Character**

Modern Great Torrington reflects its 1000 year plus historical development, from rural farming estate to post-industrial town. Overall, its historic urban character is distinctive for its variety - part market town, part industrial settlement, part inland resort, part village.

The core of the town, with its infilled market place, irregular grid of narrow streets, inward looking views and strong sense of enclosure, largely retains the feel of a medieval market town, and continuous use and successive rebuilding has resulted in an eclectic mix of architectural styles, details and materials (perhaps to a greater degree than many other south-west towns).

In sharp contrast is the uniform, linear, roadside development beyond the centre – homogenous terraced housing with associated factory, school and chapels – more characteristic of a 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial settlement. This aspect of Torrington's character is re-emphasised by the dominant, semi-derelict Creamery buildings, and to a lesser extent by smaller-scale 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial sites (such as the Dartington Crystal factory).

Other areas outside the commercial core have a residential suburb character (e.g. Castle Street), and on its western and southern edges where villas are set in large gardens on the edge of the Common (with ornamented walls, rural walks and river views), the town has the feel of an inland resort.

The village-like aspect of Torrington results from the bottom of Mill Street having acquired a (post-industrial) semi-rural appearance, together with it having an umbilical-like physical link (via the bridge) to the actual village of Taddiport, on the other side of the Torridge.

In addition to these broad aspects, 20 individual Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) have been identified (Figures 4 and 12-15) and are described below, with general photographs of each area accompanying the descriptions.

Relevant Historic Environment Record numbers (prefix MDV) have been included in the HUCA descriptions, for cross reference with Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER).

### **4.1 Torrington eastern expansion (HUCA 1)**

#### **4.1.1 Historic character**

HUCA 1 is an area of modern urban expansion on the eastern side of the town (Figure 4). It spans Calvesford Road and Hatchmoor Road (the approaches from Barnstaple and South Molton), spills over Hatchmoor Common Lane at its eastern edge and part of Burwood Lane on its south, extending on the south-west down to meet Caddywell Lane (HUCA 20). The triangle of land between the two main roads is relatively level, rising gently from west to east; either side the ground slopes more steeply down from this plateau.

The area was undeveloped farmland – including fields and part of Hatch Moor – until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the 1840 Tithe map the only buildings shown in this area were a few wayside cottages – rows at the point where the two roads converge and at the east end of Calvesford Road (both since demolished), and Hatchmoor Cottages, still standing at the east end of Hatchmoor Road.

By the 1950s the area was still largely undeveloped, but a school and a small housing estate (Hatchmoor Estate) had been built near the road junction and piecemeal development had started along the roadsides, including a cattle breeding centre on Hatchmoor Road (opposite the entrance to Burwood Lane).

The later 20<sup>th</sup> century saw more wholesale development, increasing towards the end of the century and leading to HUCA 1 now being almost totally built over. The area now consists of numerous housing estates, a much expanded secondary school (with

sizeable playing fields), an electricity sub-station, a market garden/aquarium business, a football pitch and a large edge-of-town industrial estate.

The plan-form of this HUCA has been heavily altered by modern development. Although the main roads fossilise historic routes and some early lanes have survived (e.g. Burwood Lane, Watery Lane and a path leading north off Calvesford Road), numerous new roads wind through the area (particularly on the south side) and the layout of the 20<sup>th</sup> century development does not reflect the previous field pattern (apart from a few remnant lines around/across the two blocks of playing fields).

### Torrington eastern expansion (HUCA 1)



Viewed from east of town



Dartington Fields, off Calvesford Road

#### 4.1.2 Above ground heritage significance

**Low** - HUCA 1 is an area of modern development of limited local distinction. There is little cohesion in terms of layout, architectural style and materials, although the Hatchmoor Estate has some interest for its garden suburb character (having an appropriate village green feel) and the stripped back classicism of the secondary school's original block has some merit and presence in the street scene. This HUCA otherwise has low heritage significance.

#### 4.1.3 Below ground heritage significance

**Low** - HUCA 1 has low below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval and post-medieval field boundaries, paths and lanes.

## 4.2 Great Torrington Common – South (HUCA 2)

### 4.2.1 Historic character

HUCA 2 is the part of Great Torrington Common located to the south of the town (Figure 4). It is bordered by Mill Street on the west, by Castle Hill/Barley Grove and Castle View modern housing estate along its north, New Road to the east and the River Torridge along its south side.

Gifted to the townspeople by the Lord of the Manor in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and protected by an 1889 Act of Parliament, along with the rest of the Common (HUCA 3), this area occupies precipitously steep land, which drops almost vertically down to the river, and forms a south-easterly projecting spur (known as Castle Hill), the top of which is the site of Torrington's medieval castle (HUCA 11).

In 1818 a stone obelisk (MDV15129;101445) was erected half way down the spur to commemorate the 1815 Battle of Waterloo (perhaps using stone from the series of small quarries shown to the west on the c1880 First Edition OS Map), and during the 1820s Lord Rolle built part of his canal (MDV445) along the bottom of the Common. Its line ran close to and parallel with the river for most of its length, cutting inland of two water meadows at its west end, where a wooden swing bridge for pedestrians was built

over the canal, connecting with a path (still in use) leading down to Taddiport Bridge. From 1871 this stretch of canal was infilled to become part of the Rolle Road (MDV18798), a public toll road extending from Torrington Station (HUCA 16) to the new Town Mills (MDV14289).

In the north-west corner of HUCA 2, is part of a mid-17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century post-medieval pottery manufactory operated by the Deane family (MDV55053-4, MDV 77888) – a waste tip associated with a kiln found in the grounds of Caynton House to the north (see HUCA 6).

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Great Torrington Common became part of an inland-cliff resort, being the focus for a series of large detached and semi-detached villas built on bordering land around the southern edge of the town (HUCAs 6, 7 and 11) to take advantage of the dramatic rural views, healthy south-west air and heathland walks.

The Waterloo Memorial is still standing and the line of the road/canal survives (with remains of the former towpath) as a footpath. Most of the other paths criss-crossing the Common today date back to at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Early photographs show that there was less tree cover and more grass and low scrub than now, reflecting both the grazing that used to take place (up until 1980) and the maturing of the 80 trees planted on Castle Hill Common in 1899.

Now a key focus for recreational activity (mainly walking), HUCA 2 is enjoyed extensively by locals and visitors, with stunning views over the Common and direct access onto it available from the south side of the historic town (HUCAs 11).

### **Great Torrington Common – South (HUCA 2)**



Looking south-west towards Taddiport



View to Town Mills, from Barley Grove



Waterloo Memorial



Rolle Road, looking east

#### **4.2.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 2 is an area of Common which has been part of the town since the medieval period and has largely retained its original appearance. The limited subsequent development that took place here was itself historically important, and has preserved the area's historic character and amenity value. The 19<sup>th</sup> century war memorial, canal/toll road and quarries are significant heritage assets. HUCA 2 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.2.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUCA 2 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval and post-medieval pottery manufactory, field boundaries, paths and quarries.

### **4.3 Great Torrington Common – West (HUCA 3)**

#### **4.3.1 Historic character**

HUCA 3 is the part of Great Torrington Common which wraps around the western end of the town, from the back of the north side of Mill Street, to the west end of New Street (from where it extends down to Torrington Station site) and continuing around to Stoneman's Lane, on the town's north-west side (Figure 4).

It lies on steeply sloping land, forming a north-westerly projecting spur, more sheer on its south-west drop down to the River Torridge and slightly less so on the north-east slope to the tributary stream known as Common Lake. Station Road continues the line of New Street north-west across the Common, running along the south-west edge of the spur, just below its crest. The road known as Limer's Hill curves up from the bottom of Mill Street to form a T-junction with the west end of New Street.

Along with the rest of the Common (HUCA 2), this area was gifted to the townspeople by the Lord of the Manor in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and protected by an 1889 Act of Parliament. Historically the Common was mainly used for grazing animals (which continued until 1980) and this is reflected in early photographs which show that there was less tree cover and more grass and low scrub than now.

This part of the Common was also the route of Torrington's Limer's Road (MDV53222), along which lime for dressing fields was brought by packhorse or donkey from the kilns at Weare Giffard (to the north). Limer's Hill forms the south part of this route, which continues north across the Common from the junction with New Street as a hollowed trackway, running downhill towards Common Lake. Adjacent to the holloway is a natural spring forming a small pool, known locally as Coverney, Coverley or Covety Well (MDV448). In use during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is credited with healing properties and there is a local tradition of it being of more ancient origin.

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Great Torrington Common became part of an inland-cliff resort, being the focus for a series of large detached and semi-detached villas, built on bordering land around the southern edge of the town (HUCAs 6, 7 and 11) to take advantage of the dramatic rural views, healthy south-west air and heathland walks.

In the 1820s the road up Station Hill (now the A386) was upgraded as part of the new Turnpike Road to Bideford and Lord Rolle built part of his canal (MDV445) along the side of the River Torridge here. From 1871 this stretch of canal was infilled to become part of the Rolle Road (MDV18798), a public toll road extending from Torrington Station (HUCA 16) to the new Town Mills (MDV14289). The line of the road/canal survives (with remains of the former towpath) as a footpath, and a short stretch of disused, china clay railway (MDV20263) also passes through the Common on its way to Torrington Station.

Quarries (MDV55061-3), associated with canal and road building on the Common, and perhaps supplying material for projects elsewhere, are depicted on the 1880 OS Map, along with a (disused) rifle range (MDV73354). A golf course was opened in 1895 on the Common's edge adjacent to Torrington Cemetery, known as the Old Bowling Green (a clue to its former use). This site is now a playing field, location for 1646 re-

enactments, and the key public access point for the Common (the golf course having been moved to Furzebeam Hill, north of the study area in 1933). HUCA 3 continues to be a key focus for recreational use, by locals and visitors, both directly (mainly on foot) and through enjoyment of the stunning views over the Common from the town's edge.

### **Great Torrington Common – West (HUCA 3)**



View north-west, over Old Bowling Green



View over Common to Taddiport leper strips



Rolle Road/Canal, looking north-west



Common above Mill Street, from Taddiport

#### **4.3.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 3 is an area of Common which has been part of the town since the medieval period and has largely retained its original appearance. The limited subsequent development was itself historically important, and has added to the area's historic character and amenity value. The 19<sup>th</sup> century canal/toll road, Turnpike road, railway, quarries and rifle range are significant heritage assets. HUCA 3 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.3.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUCA 3 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval and post-medieval field boundaries, paths, trackways and quarries.

### **4.4 Torrington northern expansion (HUCA 4)**

#### **4.4.1 Historic character**

HUCA 4 is an area of modern urban expansion on the north side of the town, at the back of Calf Street and the east end of New Street (Figure 4). It extends from Stoneman's Lane in the west, across School Lane, Best's (previously Bastard's) Lane and Gas Lane, to Juries Lane in the East. Lying on land that slopes northwards down to

Common Lake, key views are over farmland to the north and up School Lane (the historic route into the town from Bideford) to Torrington's parish church (HUCA 17).

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century HUCA 4 was almost totally undeveloped – medieval farmland with only a thin scatter of rural cottages/farm buildings shown on the 1840 Tithe Map. A particularly pronounced pattern of east-west orientated strip fields (MDV71460) occupied the block of land between Stoneman's Lane and School Lane, bordering on the back of the burgage plots on New Street and stepping down the valley side as a series of well-defined lynchets (breaks of slope).

By the 1950s the uppermost of these strips had been developed into a plant nursery (now under tarmac and in light industrial use) and a housing estate, which also extended to the west side of Stoneman's Lane. The name of this estate – Town Park – suggests that the land previously served as a recreational facility for Torrington's inhabitants.

#### **Torrington northern expansion (HUCA 4)**



Town Park housing estate



Dartington Crystal



Dartington Crystal



Catholic Church, from south

The 1960s saw the building of the town's Catholic Church (opened in 1965 at the junction of Best's and Gas Lanes) and a major new industrial development north of Town Park. Dartington Glass (as it was originally called) was established in 1967, as a manufacturer of quality glassware. An enterprise set up by the Dartington Hall Trust (based near Totnes in South Devon) to counteract rural depopulation and lack of employment for young people in North Devon, its first Managing Director, Eskil Vilhemson, was recruited from a Swedish Glass manufacturer and brought a team of Scandinavian glass blowers to Torrington to teach their skills to local employees (many of the original glass blowers remained in Torrington, adding to the range of local

surnames). Now a leading name in English fine glass design and production, Dartington Crystal is still a busy factory, with a visitor centre and café.

During the late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century there has been additional housing development in HUCA 4, the two largest estates being constructed (to the north of the glass factory and at the back of Calf Street) over the last couple of years.

There are still some undeveloped fields within HUCA 4 and the lanes cutting through it have retained some of their original character, which, together with the rural views, means that it still makes some reference to the countryside out of which it has relatively (or very) recently been carved. However, the developed plots have a plan-form which bears little resemblance to the medieval strip fields which historically defined this area.

#### **4.4.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUCA 4 is an area of 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century expansion, with a largely modern plan-form, but some historical time depth and surviving remnants of its earlier rural use, and some 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial and housing development of socio-economic relevance. The early phase of housing (Town Park) is distinctive because of its more formal layout, with pairs and short terraces of simple rendered houses, forming a cohesive character and linear roadside alignment, which respects the underlying strip-field pattern (in contrast to the other 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estates in this area). HUCA 4 has medium heritage significance.

#### **4.4.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUCA 4 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval and post-medieval field boundaries, paths and lanes.

### **4.5 South Street and market place (HUCA 5)**

#### **4.5.1 Historic character**

HUCA 5 covers the (present and historic) commercial core of Torrington (Figure 12), which is located on relatively level ground, sloping gently from west to the east, and more steeply away in the south-west, where South Street merges into the top of Mill Street (HUCA 9).

This area became the heart of the medieval town with South Street, its sinuous main artery, leading into a medieval market place (MDV18799).

Although the open medieval market place was subsequently in-filled, its location is indicated, in part, by the sub-square area enclosed by South, High, Fore and Cornmarket streets. The variation in shape, size and orientation of the buildings within the centre block, and the fact that the block's alignment is skewed in relation to the surrounding street pattern, suggests a plan-form that evolved from temporary market structures being subsequently consolidated into more permanent buildings.

The noticeably greater widths of Fore Street and, particularly, High Street, and the siting of a guildhall here in the post-medieval period (MDV454), together with the function of other historic buildings and yards within and around the square (meat, leather, corn, and yarn markets known as The Shambles, superseded by the surviving Victorian market house, MDV11796), confirms this as the historic trading centre of the town. The guildhall's replacement – the 1861 town hall (MDV454) – still proudly projects itself into the broadness of High Street, asserting this as the town's central place (complete with ornate drinking fountain, MDV23881). The May Fair festivities are still held in High Street.

At the east end of South Street, there is a distinct stepping out of the building fronts from the line of those to their west, suggesting encroachment (for commercial advantage) into what may originally have been a more squared-off south-east corner of the market square.

The rectangular block of buildings on the north side of Fore Street (which includes The Globe Hotel, MDV23869, and Plough Arts Centre) probably also represents infilling, possibly an earlier phase, of what was originally a larger rectangular market area fronted on the north and north-west by the medieval manor house and parish church (HUCA 17). This is suggested by the detached, freestanding appearance of this block on the 1840 Tithe map, which also shows the building in its south-east corner extending out into the opening to Potacre Street, then clearly not a main entrance point into the market place (South Street and Well Street forming the key ways in and out of the reduced size market square).

The depiction of Great Torrington on Benjamin Donn's map of Devon indicates that the market place had acquired its present plan-form by 1765, and the original dates of the earlier buildings within the two blocks suggests the infilling occurred during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The shape and layout of plots within HUCA 5 largely reflect the narrow rectangular strips of the burgage plots that extended at right angles back from the medieval street frontage. The most clearly distinguishable blocks of burgage plots are those extending back from the west side of High Street, east side of Cornmarket Street and Potacre Street, and from the south side of South Street, with an additional block on the north side of South Street, at its west end (which may be a later medieval expansion).

Post-medieval and later development has largely taken place within these plots – either by re-using the medieval frontage, or by building along the exposed side of a plot (for example, most of the buildings on the north side of South Street are built along the side of the corner plot of the burgage plots which fronted onto High Street).

The series of shorter plots along the south side of South Street, towards its west end (and curving around the corner into the top of Mill Street) have less of a burgage plot form. This may be because they represent tenements formed as late medieval or post-medieval expansion or redevelopment and/or because their length was truncated by the ground to the rear being preserved as a large open field, perhaps for use as the town's fair ground (see HUCA 11).

The streets in HUCA 5 are now mainly lined with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, with the odd earlier survivor, including the jettied timber-fronted Black Horse Hotel (1681; MDV23878) and the substantial, red-brick No 28 South Street (1701; MDV101467), with its hooded porch. To their rear, stone walls continue to delineate many of the burgage and tenement plot boundaries, and in many cases at least part of the back plot remains undeveloped. In instances where they have been subsequently built over, this development can, itself, have historical significance - for example, the leather tanyard in South Street and another (the Bull-ring Tannery) off Church Lane (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 174). The latter yard's name references the nearby site of a bull-baiting enclosure, identified as being in existence in 1646 (Dixon 1996).

The buildings are currently in a mixture of domestic and commercial (and some social and municipal) use – with more houses (including grander merchant housing) and a former Bible Christian Chapel (MDV2630) in the western part of South Street, with an increasing number of small shops towards its east end, and a concentration of larger establishments (the imposing town hall and market house, together with banks, post office, inns/hotels, art centre) in High Street and Fore Street, petering back into a mixture of small shops and houses through Cornmarket Street, into mainly houses again in Potacre Street.

This variety of uses is, not surprisingly, matched by an eclectic mix of architectural styles, details and materials, perhaps to a greater degree than many other south-west towns. However, there are discernible patterns. South Street is generally composed of flat-fronted, two-three storey, stuccoed, classical frontages, with good door cases and shop fronts. These are generally grander on the south side of the street, with occasional examples of high-status timber-framed and early brick buildings. In contrast the central market area has a riot of architectural styles and materials reflecting a greater range of dates and uses. Grand classical and Italianate 19<sup>th</sup> century market,

civic and financial buildings contrast in architectural style and scale with surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century inns and houses (which were themselves imposing in their time). The east side of the market area (Cornmarket Street) was largely rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in brick, in contrast to the typical stucco found elsewhere. The hand of local architect/mason W.B. Cock lies behind much of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> character of the area. The quality of the historic shop fronts throughout is another notable aspect of HUCA 5.

### **South Street and market place (HUCA 5)**



High Street, looking north



Fore Street, looking west



Cornmarket Street, from north



South Street (East end), from east



South Street (middle), from west



South Street (west part), from east

HUCA 5 has retained its historically enclosed and tightly packed feel, with inward-looking views, restricted to along its narrow constituent streets, and only occasional glimpses of the wider townscape. The exception is half way along South Street, where

the historic frontage on the south side of the street has been disrupted by demolition. Now occupied by public toilets and a landscaped car park entrance, this gap has opened up wide and long views – of the rear of South Street and over the car park (in front of Torridge District Council Offices/Tourist Information Centre – HUCA 11), to the countryside on the other side of the River Torridge.

#### **4.5.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - This area is located on an early medieval routeway and has been the commercial core of Torrington since the town's medieval foundation, with good survival of its medieval plan-form and relatively intact post-medieval and later historic fabric. Within the town, the standing structures in this area have generally the highest architectural interest and give the clearest expression of Torrington's civic and commercial wealth and commemorative pride.

#### **4.5.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 5 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are early medieval track way(s), field boundaries, artefacts; medieval market place, streets and paths, burgage plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material, industrial activity; post-medieval and later streets and paths, houses, shops and other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, bull ring, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.6 Warren Lane (HUCA 6)**

#### **4.6.1 Historic character**

HUCA 6 is formed by a band of land extending along the back (south) of New Street from the former workhouse site (in HUCA 7) to the top of Mill Street (Figure 13). It encompasses Warren Lane and its T-junction with Mill Street, and is bordered by Villa Lane on the north-east. It occupies part of the ridge which forms the highest part of the town and the south-west facing slopes below it. With land dropping relatively steeply down towards the River Torridge, this area commands dramatic and far reaching views – over Great Torrington Common (HUCAs 2 and 3) and Mill Street (HUCA 9), to the Torrington Creamery site (HUCA 15) and across the river to Taddiport (HUCA 14) and the surrounding farmland.

There are also some views within HUCA 6 – along Warren Lane, which narrows down between parallel stone walls at its New Street end and widens out where it meets and runs along the top of the Common; up some drives, sometimes with glimpses of the properties they lead to; and over and through the two housing estates.

The name Warren Lane (and the fact that the area to the north of it is named The Warren on the 1906 OS Map) suggests that rabbit farming may have taken place in the vicinity (MDV55064). The high stone walling which borders the lane may have enclosed an artificially constructed warren of stone-capped channels covered with 'pillow mounds'. A sub-triangular plot north of the Warren Lane/Mill Street junction, now a small public garden known as 'Rack Park', was apparently where cloth from the town's woollen manufactory was stretched out to dry.

Nearby, the opposite (south-eastern) side of Mill Street is the site of a post-medieval pottery manufactory, first revealed in 1989, when housing development north of Caynton House exposed a kiln and quantities of broken pottery, together with burnt slates and clay pipes (MDV55053). Subsequently, a large waste tip was discovered below the kiln site, on Castle Hill Common (MDV55054, MDV 77888; HUCA 2), and excavations in 2007 recovered 0.6 tonnes of ceramics, dating from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century (including coarse gravel-tempered wares, plain and sgraffito-decorated slipwares, white wares, ridge, oven and floor tiles, cloam ovens, clay pipes and kiln furniture). Fragments of floor tile initialised 'LD', 'ID' and 'DD' identify the site with members of the Deane family who were potters in Great Torrington.

**Warren Lane (HUCA 6)**



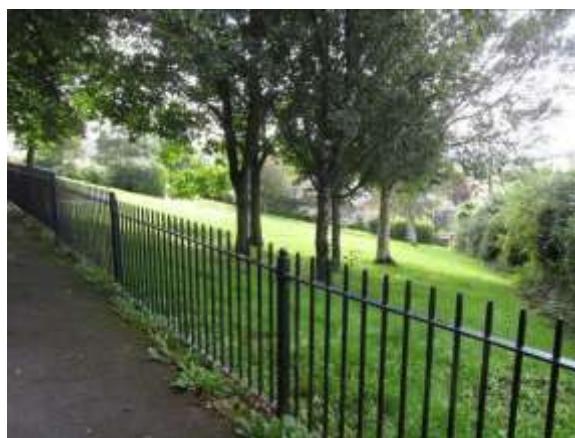
North end of Warren Lane, looking north



Warren Lane, looking east



Warren Lane villas



Rackfield Park



Warren Lane/Mill Street junction



Wesleyan Chapel, top of Mill Street

Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the plan-form of HUCA 6 consisted mainly of remnant bundles of medieval strip fields – the undeveloped backs of fields which had/were being built over on New Street and Mill Street. The 1840 Tithe Map shows the strip pattern still distinguishable west and south of Warren Lane; to the north most of the strips had already been amalgamated and reconfigured, to form sub-rectangular plots of varying sizes, with an opposite (east-west) alignment to the urban plots on New Street.

It may be that the land was being prepared for the residential development that had already started in this area. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a series of large detached and semi-detached villas, often in sizeable gardens, were built across HUCA 6 to take advantage of its rural views and healthy south-west air – The Warren, Torridge Villa, Blenheim Villa, Caynton House (MDV23885) and other large houses on Warren Lane/Mill Street junction and on the newly created Villa Lane (all built by 1880). A Wesleyan Chapel, with upswept parapet, was erected (1832) in a commanding position at the top of Mill Street (MDV 23890).

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, villa building extended east along Warren Lane, and to the west, in plots behind New Street (West). Piecemeal infilling of former fields has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, together with the development of two later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estates – Warren Close, on the ridge above Warren Lane, and Rack Park Close in the former strip fields beside the lower part of the lane.

Housing now extends over most of HUCA 6, although the generous garden plots, with hedges and some trees, give it a less-built-up, suburban feel. Its previous plan-form now takes some deciphering, particularly as the north-south oriented development plots laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century look superficially like the remains of the medieval strip fields.

Although this later infilling is of little consistency in style and date, it is the presence of the exposed, rubble-stone garden walls (many of them crenelated), surviving gateways, out buildings, mature planting, the way individual buildings are sited within this block (in great contrast to the tightly grained urban frontages along Mill Street, HUCA 9), which give this area its distinctive character. The surviving historic villas are generally fairly simple stuccoed boxes, with some individual architectural details of interest, but not forming a cohesive architectural ensemble.

#### **4.6.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 6 reflects the connection between industry and wealth and the segregation of rich and poor, which intensified in towns during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This healthier, windward, south-western part of Torrington, on previously undeveloped fields, bordering on the Common and overlooking the river, proved an ideal location for the wealthy to site their villas. Although gradual in-filling has occurred to the present day, most, if not all, of the original late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century villas survive and the area retains its edge of town, suburban character, and the use of crenelated walls and the exploitation of the dramatic setting link this area to Lord Rolle's picturesque enhancement of the Castle site (HUCA 11). In addition, the area contains remains of two of the town's key industries – woollen cloth production and pottery manufacture.

#### **4.6.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 6 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval and post-medieval track and paths, field boundaries, field barns/sheds, rabbit warren (channels, pillow mounds, enclosure wall), rack field and other clothing industry structures/artefacts, pottery manufactory. Those from the later post-medieval and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries include villas, other houses and buildings, boundary and garden walls, ornamental features and domestic occupation material

### **4.7 New Street – West (HUCA 7)**

#### **4.7.1 Historic character**

HUCA 7 forms the western extent of the town (Figure 13), which was pre-determined by the 12<sup>th</sup> century bequeathing of Great Torrington Common and was developed up to by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Comprising the west end of New Street (from Warren Lane to the present common's edge and Limer's Hill T-junction) it slopes gently and then more steeply over the western crest of the plateau.

Originally, the route was lined with medieval strip fields, whose curving parallel boundaries still strongly define the area's plan-form. By the time of the 1840 Tithe Map there were a few scattered buildings, mainly on the south side of the street,

culminating in the town's workhouse, on the western edge of the fields. Originally built in 1777, it was reconstructed in 1837, as Great Torrington Union Workhouse, with an infirmary and chapel added in the 1870s (MDV55060).

**New Street – West (HUCA 7)**



Clinton Terrace



Clinton Terrace plaque



Rolle Terrace



Looking north-west from Warren Lane



Torrige Vale (former workhouse)



Torrington Cemetery

In 1855, a similar end-stop to the north side of the street was created by the laying out, on land taken from the common, of the town's cemetery (MDV64814) – a large sub-rectangular plot enclosed within stone walls, with a splayed, pillared and railing-ornamented entrance, and Tudor Gothic-style lodge and twin (Non-conformist and Church of England) Mortuary Chapels.

To the east, detached and attached villas and large terraced houses were built from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in response to vastly improved transport links, focused on this side of town. New Street became part of the 1820s Turnpike Road from Bideford, which, after passing over the River Torridge (initially via Rothern Bridge and from 1843 over a New Bridge), ran up over the common to this western gateway into the town. The arrival of the railway and the building of Torrington Station at Staplevale in 1872, would have added to the impetus for development in what became a very attractive residential area.

With the names of their builder sometimes proudly inscribed (e.g. 'H. Labbert') and that of their patron preserved in the terrace names (Rolle Terrace, Clinton Terrace), the scale, layout and character of the villas in HUCA 7 creates a striking contrast with the industrial worker's housing further east (HUCA 8). There is a mixture of good-sized terraced houses, pairs and individual villas, in stone (detailed in Marland brick) or just in the brick itself, or (in the case of Rolle Terrace) in stucco. All have a wealth of detail, - for example, bay windows, mouldings, ornamented eaves, round-arched windows and strapwork ornament. Set back from the pavement, they have front gardens enclosed by low walls which, remarkably, in many cases retain their original railings. This survival is an extremely unusual feature, not just in Great Torrington, but also across Devon and England, given that virtually all railings were melted down for use during the Second World War.

The gentility of this area is further emphasised by its leafy greenness, with shrubs and hedges in front gardens, tall trees surrounding the cemetery (and, to a lesser extent, the workhouse site) and views from the sloping west end of the street over the common and countryside beyond. Within the cemetery, the peaceful charm of this 2.5 hectare Registered Garden can be appreciated, with glimpses through the perimeter trees to allotment gardens on the other side of Common Lake.

The site of the workhouse is now occupied by Woodland Vale accommodation for the elderly, with none of the original buildings still standing, though its enclosing wall appears largely intact. Elsewhere in HUCA 7, the historic fabric survives relatively intact.

#### **4.7.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - The look and feel of this area is unlike any other part of the town. Though underlined by medieval strip fields, its urban character is the result of its very particular place in a specific period of Torrington's later historical development (late 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century), when the town benefited from improved transport links, a greater social and civic conscience and increased wealth. With a legible plan-form and generally good survival of historic fabric (including remarkable preservation of garden railings, so rare elsewhere), HUCA 7 holds together well as a distinctive character area and is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.7.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Low** - HUCA 7 has low below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval tracks, paths and field boundaries, and later post-medieval and 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century workhouse, cemetery, houses and other buildings, boundary walls, and domestic occupation material.

### **4.8 New Street – East (HUCA 8)**

#### **4.8.1 Historic character**

HUCA 8 covers New Street, from the top of Whites Lane to the Warren Lane turn off, and incorporates the T-junction with Stoneman's Lane (Figure 13). The street is relatively level, curving gently along the contour, with higher ground to its south and steadily sloping down to the north. There is a strong sense of enclosure, with views restricted to along the street, except where Stoneman's Lane and a couple of other breaks in the street frontage, allow views over the countryside to the north.

The street becomes more recent from east to west, and could be divided into two sub-areas – the eastern is closer in character to HUCA 17 (next to the church); the western area is a poorer contemporary of the edge-of-town villa development of HUCA 7.

The eastern stretch, between Whites Lane and Stoneman's Lane, appears to have originated as late medieval or post-medieval tenement plots, extending back from both sides of the street. Those on the north side (MDV71128) may have been created through sub-division of medieval strip fields, and this eastern part of HUCA 8, as a whole, may represent later medieval urban expansion. The impetus for this is likely to have been the creation of a new bridging point across the Torridge to the west during the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Rothern Bridge, MDV435), making New Street part of an improved western route into the town.

#### **New Street - East (HUCA 8)**



West end, looking west



Looking west from Stoneman's Lane



Baptist Church and Royal Exchange inn



Torrington Arms inn

The accretive mix and relatively earlier date of the buildings in this part of New Street (compared with further west) confirms its longer urban roots. There are a variety of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and houses (some three-storey near Whites Lane), including some rather fine examples – like the red brick Porch House (c1700 with later alterations; MDV13841) and several early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses with ornate door cases. Some houses have passages under their first storey, giving access to their back plots, suggesting service/light industry was taking place behind the street frontage, and on the north side of the street there is also an inn. These buildings and the funnel shape of this part of the street are probably connected to it having functioned as a secondary market area during the post-medieval period. During the 19th century, one of the town's five leather tanneries was located to the east of Stoneman's Lane (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 174).

Generally, the buildings are fairly nondescript, rendered and two storeyed, but the streetscape has distinct highlights, like the upswept parapet and rusticated doorway of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist Chapel (MDV11831), the gothic detailed stone Rolle Almshouses (1843) and a variety of later 19<sup>th</sup> century inserts (with enriched detailing) built in the dark local stone or white Marland brick.

In the western part of HUCA 8, between Stoneman's Lane and Warren Lane, with the exception of few wayside cottages (such as the now demolished cob-walled cottage at No 172 New Street, MDV18632), development probably did not begin until the later post-medieval period. The plots on the north side of the road are clearly cut out of pre-existing strip fields, and a couple of undeveloped stretches of street front are visible on the 1840 Tithe Map (plots now occupied by a supermarket and garage).

The Tithe Map also depicts about fifty percent of the south side of the street without a frontage, though what appear to be newly created rectangular enclosures are shown and by the 1904 OS Map all of them had been developed, with the homogeneous industrial terraced housing (with narrow back gardens) that characterise this side of the street today (interrupted only by a tiny bit of modern re-development). This part of New Street appears to have been developed in response to a growing demand for workers housing, fuelled by Torrington's flourishing gloving (and other) industry, with the street having been upgrading in the 1820s as part of a Turnpike Road, and from 1872 benefiting from being on the route to the railway station.

The frontage is now largely composed of continuous two-storeyed ranges of 19th century terraced housing of stone and Marland brick and some earlier (rendered) buildings, particularly on the north side of the road (including the Torrington Arms and adjoining cottages), with a couple of late 19th/early 20th century terraces inserted into fields behind, and more recent houses down Stoneman's Lane.

#### **4.8.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 8 reflects two key phases of urban expansion, during the later medieval/early post-medieval and later post-medieval periods. Its plan-form is legible, with historic plots relatively well preserved, and its historic fabric is generally intact, with a range of building types, styles and different dates. HUCA 8 is of high heritage significance in its eastern part (with the western end being perhaps of only **medium** value).

#### **4.8.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 8 has high below ground heritage significance in its eastern part (where there is greater time depth), lessening to **medium** towards its later, western end. In general, the key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval tracks, streets and paths, tenement plot and field boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material and industrial activity/artefacts. Those from the post-medieval and later periods include streets and paths, houses, workshops and other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.9 Mill Street (HUCA 9)**

#### **4.9.1 Historic character**

HUCA 9 consists of Mill Street, from just below the T-junction made by Warren Lane to the bottom of the street, where it meets Limer's Road (Figure 14). The street winds diagonally across the contour (north-east to south-west), down the steep slope to the River Torridge. The frontage on the north side of the street is considerably higher than that on the south, and a raised pavement, with railings along its edge, accommodates this step down in levels. Both sides of the street back onto Great Torrington Common (HUCAs 2 and 3).

Mill Street is an historic route, connecting the Manor (HUCA 17), and later the medieval town, with the Manor Mills (HUCA 15) and the river crossing at Taddiport (HUCA 14), over which traffic to and from Holsworthy, Launceston and Okehampton would have passed.

**Mill Street (HUCA 9)**



Torridge Inn, bottom of Mill Street



Mill Street, lower part



Former Canal Tavern



Mill Street, upper part



Mill Street, from Taddiport leper strips



Back development, north side of Mill St

The eastern end of the street was originally lined with medieval strip fields (the curving boundaries of some of which still extend back from the street front); at the western end urban plots appear to have been laid out on unenclosed common. It is difficult to be sure from the present plan-form (and 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping) whether these date back to the medieval period or were laid out later. They have a burgage plot feel about them, though their present very narrow form suggests post-medieval tenements which have undergone subsequent sub-division.

Early settlement is likely to have been focused towards the river, near the mills and river crossing (HUCAs 14 and 15), with the 13<sup>th</sup> century Taddiport Bridge probably the

main impetus for development. This area would initially have been separated from the main part of the town by fields and common.

Subsequently, settlement extended up Mill Street towards the town, and down from South Street (HCUA 5), including the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century villas which form part of HCUA 6. Prior to the villa construction, the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery manufactory discovered in the grounds and on the common to the south of Caynton House (HCUA 6; MDV55053-4, MDV 77888) may have also occupied the upper part of HCUA 9.

Both sides of Mill Street developed in a fragmented way, the north side becoming more built up slightly before the south side of the street. The 1840 Tithe Map shows almost continuous frontage on the north side of the street, with only a small length of street below the Warren Lane junction still undeveloped. On the south side, development is more fragmented, with open fields still fronting the street in several places, particularly along its middle section, but also at its south-west end.

This remained the case until the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, when most of the gaps were plugged with individual houses, short terraces and a housing estate (Sandfords Gardens), extending back to the common's edge. Owing to the fact that these new houses are largely set back from the street, the frontage on this south side still retains a more open, less tightly packed appearance. Some modern development has also occurred on the north side of Mill Street. Apart from some slight rebuilding, the historic frontage is almost totally intact, but a couple of gaps have been plugged (for example by the short terrace below the Warren Lane junction) and a line of new houses (partly converted out buildings, partly new build) now fronting onto the Common at the back of the street's west end.

The majority of the historic buildings on Mill Street are 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and houses, including the former Canal Tavern on the north side (now converted to dwellings). These are almost all two-storeyed and rendered, set right up to the back of the pavement, forming a continuous line of roofs stepping down the long hill. This contributes a distinct and unusual aspect to the character of the town as a whole.

Superficially there is little to date the buildings, although the proportions of window and door openings and the shape of chimney stacks give clues to the presence of odd earlier survivors. There is a marked cluster of these at the bottom of the street – the early 18<sup>th</sup> century thatched Torridge Inn (MDV20304) and adjacent Rose Cottage (MDV23891), plus several 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century cottages slightly further up on the opposite side (MDV23887-9) – giving support to this being an early settlement focus. At this point there is raised pavement (wider with trees) on both sides of the street, giving it the appearance of a holloway.

A large detached early 19<sup>th</sup> century house behind high stone walling, with a hint of the castellation favoured by Lord Rolle, sits just above the Torridge Inn. Around the corner from the latter, fronting onto the bottom of Limer's Hill, is a three-story stone rubble warehouse (MDV18803), with a lower wing (now cottages), which originally formed part of the Rolle Canal wharf (MDV18802; HCUA 15). As well as its association with the industrial activities that took place in HCUA 15, Mill Street was itself the site of a tan yard, shown behind 86 Mill Street on the 1880 OS Map – part of the town's important leather manufactory. The street is also reputed to have had several wells, and a line of large slates extending down the terrace on the north of the street may form the top of a stone-lined leat or drain.

In terms of its character today, Mill Street is formed of two merging parts. Its upper part feels more urban, an extension of the town above, while its bottom half (particularly below Sandfords Close) feels more rural. The key view right from the top is that down the street to the wooded countryside on the other side of the river, and despite the disused dairy coming into sight, the line of small trees planted along the top of the terrace in the lower part of the street, terminating in the quaintly thatched Torridge Inn, gives it a village feel.

#### **4.9.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - Forming part of an early route connecting the Manor House and town with their mills and key river crossing, Mill Street represents one of Torrington's most historically important arteries. The lower part of the street appears to have been a focus for settlement since the medieval period, with its upper formed by expansion into what were originally medieval strip fields. With this story still legible in its complex plan-form and good survival of its 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings and overall historic character, HUCA 9 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.9.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium – High** - Below ground heritage significance within HUCA 9 is medium (upper part of Mill Street) to high (lower part of the street where earlier settlement activity is likely to have been focused). The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are early medieval trackway(s), field boundaries, buildings, occupation material, artefacts, medieval lanes and paths, field boundaries, burgage or tenement plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material and industrial activity/artefacts. Those from the post-medieval and later periods include paths, houses, other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, tannery, pottery manufactory, other industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.10 Well Street – West (HUCA 10)**

#### **4.10.1 Historic character**

HUCA 10 consists of the western third of Well Street (Figure 12), from its T-junction with Cornmarket and Potacre streets (HUCA 5) to where the busy, major traffic route of New Road cuts it off from the eastern two thirds of the same street (HUCA 13). It runs roughly WSW to ENE, along relatively flat land, and (together with its now detached eastern part) was historically one of the main routes into the centre of the town - part of what appears to be a deliberate dog-leg diversion of the eastern town approach into the market place, in order to improve access.

Redevelopment of this street throughout its history (with much sub-division, insertion into and building over of plots) has made its earlier plan-form more difficult to decipher, but medieval burgage plots seem originally to have been laid out at right angles on both sides. On the south side of the street (where the plan-form is most legible), the plots appear to have backed onto the north side of the block on the east side of Castle Street or onto open fields. On the north side, longer plots extended back to Calf Street, or (towards the west end of the street) to where they met those fronting Potacre Street (HUCA 5), the junction and chronology between the two blocks having become confused.

Subsequent development led to the creation by the 19<sup>th</sup> century of a continuous frontage along both sides of Well Street, as well as a partial frontage on Calf Street (at the back of the longest burgage plots) and some in-filling in between, including a leather manufactory (named on the 1880 OS map).

There is a distinct elliptic-shaped widening in Well Street, which spans the point where New Road originally made a T-junction with the south side of the street. It may have been an area in which livestock brought into the town from the south and east could be temporarily penned before being driven into the market square for sale.

The surviving buildings on Well Street (west) are of mainly 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date (with a few of 17<sup>th</sup> century origin). A concentration of historic shop fronts at the west end (some still in commercial use) is associated with a fair amount of 19<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding and use of Marland brick. This gives way to mainly two-storey rendered houses, interspersed with a couple of former inns (with wider frontages), the still-open Cavalier (formerly Hunter's) Inn and some more modern small-scale retail outlets at the New Road end of the street (again, with increased use of brick). The inns were originally built to service market goers, and noticeable in this street are covered

alleys/undercrofts giving access to backyards, suggesting stabling and workshop activities connected with supporting the weekly market.

Modern housing development has taken place to the rear of the south side of the street, with 1980s building work to the rear of 19 Well Street revealing a cobbled path and quantities of domestic refuse dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to late 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (MDV60348).

The buildings in HUCA 10 that front onto Calf Street consist of 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century houses, some retail/light industrial re-use of the leather factory site, and a modern residential development within the high-walled (burgage) plot behind the substantial Corner House (MDV 23908) on Potacre Street. The less cohesive feel of this frontage reflects the back plot nature of its development.

Not unexpectedly, the defining views within HUCA 10 are along Well Street. When looking west towards the market place, they are largely uncompromised, but viewed the other way, the wide junction with New Street detracts from the historic character of this area.

#### **Well Street - West (HUCA 10)**



Looking west towards Cornmarket Street



Viewed across New Road, from HUCA 13

#### **4.10.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - As part of one of the main medieval (and later) routes into the town, and the focus of ancillary activity connected with its market, Well Street (west) is an important element of the historic town. There is some medieval plot survival, often with boundary walls (particularly on the south side of the street), and the post-medieval and later historic fabric remains largely intact. However, on the eastern edge of this area historic character has been compromised by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century widening and extension of New Road, which has divided Well Street into two disconnected parts (HUCAs 10 and 13). Nevertheless, HUCA 10 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.10.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 10 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval street and paths, burgage plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material, industrial activity/artefacts, and post-medieval and later street and paths, houses, shops, workshops and other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.11 Barley Grove and Castle Hill (HUCA 11)**

#### **4.11.1 Historic character**

A strip of land sandwiched between the town's historic core (HUCA 5) and the southern part of Great Torrington Common (HUCA 2), HUCA 11 extends along a relatively level

plateau above the steep drop to the River Torridge (Figure 12). At its west end, it slopes gently down towards Mill Street; at its east, it culminates in the prominent spur known as Castle Hill.

### **Barley Grove and Castle Hill (HUCa 11)**



Castle Hill/Barley Grove, from south



Bowling green (castle site), from west



Barley Grove car park (castle site)



Community Centre (former school, chapel site)



Rolle walls (from Barley Grove)



Castle Hill – car park and council office

This location name, and that of adjacent Barley Grove (probably a corruption of 'bailey'), derives from the crest of the spur having been the site of both of Torrington's successive medieval castles (MDV437), together with an associated chapel, MDV13834 (used later as a school house), and the town pound (MDV18346), presumably associated with grazing animals on the Common. The area is now occupied by a

bowling green, MDV18797 (reputedly dating back to 1645; present pavilion and walls 18<sup>th</sup> century and later), a community/fitness centre, in the rebuilt (early 19<sup>th</sup> century) school building, sheltered seating (within the former pound) and a public car park.

An oval, grassy mound between the bowling green and car park, together with the raised ground and bank around the latter two areas and the sunken walled yard on the south-west side of the community centre, may represent castle remnants. Remains of the castle rampart and building walls, together with medieval pottery, have been uncovered during rebuilding/extension of the bowling green pavilion and relaying of paths (Higham and Goddard 1987; Watts 1997).

The castle may also have extended northwards, into what, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, became the grounds of Castle House, MDV23864 (a large stuccoed villa, now a care home). In the road to the west of the house a stone in the pavement (with explanatory plaque above) marks the historic boundary between the castle precinct and the medieval borough (MDV438).

Understanding of the castle's form and layout has been made difficult by the amount of demolition and subsequent landscaping. The latter includes levelling for the bowling green (of which the grassy mound may instead be the result) and the mock battlements (faux castellated walling with arrow slits) erected in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Lord Rolle, around the bowling green and west along the path skirting the top of the Common to what is now Castle Hill car park. This stretch forms the south wall of the garden of Castle Hill House (MDV23816) and incorporates a projecting tower.

Until the 1800s the land immediately west of the castle site consisted of the undeveloped backs of medieval burgage plots fronting onto South Street (HUC 5). With the building of Castle Hill House and a couple of later houses and garages, these plots became partially in-filled, but they still have a relatively open feel and their stone boundary walls remain largely intact.

Further to the west, the area now occupied by Castle Hill car park and a substantial square garden plot beyond is shown on the 1840 Tithe Map as one large rectangular plot of open ground, apparently accessed from the top of Mill Street. The size and undeveloped nature of this plot makes it a candidate for the town's medieval fair ground, or perhaps a 'tilt yard' (i.e. jousting practice area) for the castle. It borders, to the west, the site of a 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery manufactory (MDV 55053; HUC 6), remains of which may extend under the garden and car park.

Castle Hill car park continues to be a venue for community events and an information panel on its southern edge refers to the Taddiport leper hospital strip fields, which it overlooks. Castle Hill House now houses Torridge District Council Offices, the Tourist Information Centre and the 'Torrington 1646' Civil War visitor experience.

Overall, current uses in HUC 11 have a strong amenity/recreational focus, which, together with the shared access to and through the Common bordering its southern side, knit together its different parts.

Though high stone walls are a distinctive feature of this area (particularly in its eastern part) the plots they enclose are generally large and mainly undeveloped. There are interesting individual buildings – be they large stuccoed villas or small outbuildings or pavilions – but no defining overarching architectural character, except perhaps the connecting theme of the picturesque enhancements undertaken by Lord Rolle. The area overall has an open and spacious feel, commanding stunning views over the Common, the River Torridge, Taddiport and the countryside beyond.

#### **4.11.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - Encompassing the site of Torrington's medieval castle, and perhaps also its fair ground, HUC 11 reflects key aspects of the town's military and early commercial history. There is good survival of the historic plan-form and relatively intact post-medieval and later historic fabric. Since the post-medieval period it has served as a recreational and amenity focal point within the town and it continues to offer

opportunities for presenting and promoting its history and historic character. HUCA 11 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.11.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 11 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval castle remains and military artefacts, fairground (temporary structures and artefacts), streets and paths, burgage plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material, industrial activity and post-medieval and later streets and paths, houses and other buildings, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, pottery manufactory, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts, ornamental walling and garden features.

### **4.12 Castle Street (HUCA 12)**

#### **4.12.1 Historic character**

HUCA 12 is formed by Castle Street (Figure 12), which connects the site of the town's medieval market (HUCA 5) with that of its medieval castle (HUCA 11). There is a noticeable slope down into the street as it curves away from its junction with South and Cornmarket streets, and, as it straightens to run north-south towards Barley Grove, it starts rising up again, increasingly more steeply. Passing along this street feels like traversing a shallow valley, which is actually what one is doing.

This natural topography and the narrow entrances into both ends of the street, makes it feel a separate and self-contained area, with restricted views, even internally, and only a few glimpses of the town and countryside beyond.

Yet this was one of Torrington's key historic routes, and is likely to have been the location of proto-urban development associated with servicing the castle garrison. Pre-dating the later medieval town (focused around the market place – HUCA 5), this probably dates back to at least the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, when a castle at Great Torrington is first recorded (MDV437).

The urban plan-form suggests that the junction with South and Cornmarket streets (and Castle Street as a whole) may have been wider, before it became constricted by post-medieval encroachment into the market square (HUCA 5) and by the way street itself developed.

The shorter plots extending back from the west side of the street appear to represent post-medieval development along/out from the side of the most easterly burgage plot(s) on South Street. The north end of the east side of the street continues the line of the post-medieval frontage on Cornmarket Street. Further south, the east side has a plan-form superficially similar to medieval burgage plots, yet the 1802 OS survey drawings show this area as undeveloped. It may be that, Castle Street, having been marginalised by later medieval urban development around the market square, went into decline, until redeveloped during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A lane shown branching off to the east, running parallel with Well Street (HUCA 10), was probably a back alley for the burgage plots on that street (shown on the 1802 drawings, depicted as being still in use on the 1840 Tithe Map, it had by 1880 become blocked off by redevelopment of the Castle Street frontage and its route is difficult to detect today).

The existing buildings in Castle Street consist of a group of reasonably substantial 17<sup>th</sup> century, rendered, two-storeyed properties (including a former inn) at the north end, curving in from the market place, with the frontage on the west side giving way to three and two-storeyed 19<sup>th</sup> century houses, the early ones stuccoed the later ones brick; these are continuous, at the back of the pavement and very urban in character. In contrast, on the east side of the street are later 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century detached and semi-detached villas (largely of Marland brick) and the impressive, gabled front of a former non-conformist chapel, Howe Church, MDV60347 (on the site of an earlier one and now home to Torrington Silver Band). This rebuilding led to a straighter frontage, which further emphasised the street's change in direction at its market square end. Some of the larger houses have names, like 'Cromwell's House' and 'Hopton House',

which reference the military origin of Castle Street and Torrington's role in the Civil War.

At its south end, Castle Street has been narrowed by encroachment on its eastern side by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Castle House (HUCA 11), opposite which a stone in the pavement (with explanatory plaque above) marks the historic boundary between Torrington's castle and borough (MDV438). The street end on this western side is now occupied by a modern bungalow.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Castle Street appears to have been redeveloped into a residential area, adjacent to, yet quietly separate from the nearby commercial bustle, reflecting the changing function of the former castle site to the south, now occupied by a school and bowling green (HUCA 11).

It retains its understated gentility, edge-of-historic-town, residential character, enhanced by the planting of a few small trees along part of its east side. The only exception to the current residential use of this HUCA is an undertakers business, operating out of two adjoining cottages, towards the north end of the street.

### **Castle Street (HUCA 12)**



North entrance into Castle Street



Castle Street, looking north

#### **4.12.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - As the street that connects Torrington's medieval castle site with its medieval market and commercial core, and the probable location of earlier proto-urban development, HUCA 12 is a key element of the town's historical development. It both references the town's military history and, through the detectable changes in its street and plot layout, adds to understanding of changes to the town's form brought about by its subsequent commercial growth. The post-medieval and later historic fabric remains largely intact, providing evidence for this area evolving into a relatively quiet and genteel residential area, which is its continuing character and use. HUCA 12 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.12.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 12 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are early medieval trackway(s), field boundaries, and artefacts; medieval proto-urban development, streets and paths, burgage plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material and military and industrial activity/artefacts; post-medieval and later street and paths, houses, non-conformist chapel (pre-dating existing one), other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material, military and other non-domestic artefacts.

## **4.13 Well Street – East (HUCA 13)**

### **4.13.1 Historic character**

HUCA 13 is the eastern continuation of Well Street (Figure 15), which runs WSW to ENE along generally level ground.

The eastern end of Well Street is reputed to be the site of the main Royalist barricade during the Civil War Battle of Torrington (MDV55705), when fighting raged through the streets on this side of town.

Although the present physical divide between the western part of the street (HUCA 10) and this area was created by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century widening and extension of what is now known as New Road, there was some distinction between the two parts prior to that. While HUCA 10 seems to have originated during the medieval development of the town, the plan-form of HUCA 13 suggests it may have become urban as a result of post-medieval expansion. The key pieces of evidence for this are the shape of the plots and the date and function of the buildings currently lining the street.

The plots on the south side of the street are characterised by a reverse S-shape, which tends to indicate conversion of medieval strip fields into urban tenements. In addition, although the narrow, rectangular plan-form of the plots depicted north of the street on the modern mapping suggests they were originally laid out as burgage plots, most of these are not shown on the 1840 Tithe Map, indicating that they are in fact the result of relatively recent sub-division. Being on the edge of the town, with less pressure on space, these plots remained relatively wide until the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The buildings which now line this part of Well Street are of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date, and without apparent exception, they are all houses (with very few examples of the covered passageways to rear yards found in adjoining HUCA 10). The earlier properties are simple two-storeyed rendered cottage rows, hard against the back of the pavement with later, taller, stone and brick terraces of industrial housing interspersed throughout the length of the street. This is presently, and appears to have largely been previously, a residential street, with the backs of plots generally retained as gardens, with little infill development. Dickshill Lane, running along the back of the plots on the south side of the street (giving access to some garages and a couple of dwellings), still has a leafy, semi-rural feel.

The unbroken frontages and relatively uniform historic fabric within Well Street (East) creates a continuous enclosed feel, with views restricted to along the street, until one reaches either end. At the west end, New Road has less of a visual impact than on the western part of Well Street, since the street frontage continues unbroken right up to the junction. At the east end, where Well Street meets East Street, there are glimpses of more modern development within previous fields, retaining some of their green hedges and trees, including the terrace of early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses across the road, which forms an end stop for this character area.

### **Well Street - East (HUCA 13)**



Looking East down Well Street (East)



East Street, from south

#### **4.13.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - As part of one of the main medieval (and later) routes into the market and the site of Civil War defences Well Street (east) is an important element of the historic town. There is some surviving medieval plan-form, fossilised by later boundary walls (particularly on the south side of the street), and the post-medieval and later historic fabric remains largely intact including terraced housing reflecting Torrington's industrial past. However, on the western edge of this area historic character has been compromised by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century widening and extension of New Road, which has divided Well Street into two disconnected parts (HUCAs 10 and 13). HUCA 13 is of medium heritage significance.

#### **4.13.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUCA 13 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval paths and field boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material, agricultural and industrial activity/artefacts; post-medieval and later streets and paths, houses, workshops and other buildings, tenements and boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, domestic occupation material, Civil War barricade(s) and other remains.

### **4.14 Taddiport (HUCA 14)**

#### **4.14.1 Historic character**

HUCA 14 comprises Taddiport village and bridge (Figure 14). The village is located on the south bank of the River Torridge, on the lower slopes of the valley, either side of a tributary stream.

The settlement of Taddiport is recorded as 'Torilandia' (Torridge land) in the Domesday Survey of 1086, when it was held by Roger or Ralf de Pomeray (MDV18905), and 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century pottery found near the bridge and eroding out of the river bank west of the village testify to its medieval occupation (MDV35021; MDV52990).

Historic routes from Holsworthy/Launceston and Okehampton (and nearby Little Torrington) converge here, where access across the Torridge to Great Torrington was provided originally by a ford and/or ferry crossing, and later by Taddiport Bridge (MDV15344). Also known as Town Bridge, the latter is depicted on Saxton's 1579 map of Devon and probably dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, having been rebuilt/repaired many times since – the present (probably 17<sup>th</sup> century) structure has three arches with cutwaters and was widened on its west side in 1879 when its parapet was replaced.

### Taddiport (HUCA 14)



Taddiport from Castle Hill



Taddiport Bridge, from east



Former Buckingham Hotel, from bridge



Chapel of St Mary Magdalen, from south



Taddiport, south of Bridge



View of Creamery site, from Taddiport

The erection of the bridge was accompanied/followed by the establishing of a Lazar Hospital (MDV71758). First mentioned in 1311, this was dedicated to St Mary Magdalene and included a hospital, chapel (MDV98829) with a minister (settlement of clergy maintaining the office of daily prayer), graveyard and cultivation strips (MDV20306) for sufferers of leprosy. The chapel still stands on the roadside south-west of the bridge, with the walled plot to its east identified (by a plaque) as the graveyard. The site of the hospital is identified on the opposite side of the road on early OS maps, with the 'leper strips' to the west of the village. Relatively common in the medieval period (when leprosy was rife), such communities relied on the gift of alms (charity)

and so were often located on routes into towns. After leprosy died out, the hospital was given to the town in 1665. The village presumably grew from around that time.

In 1643 a potter named Luke Deane leased a property at Taddiport (MDV19232; Grant 1983, 28); this may be the site of a pottery additional to the Deane pottery at the top of Mill Street (HUCAs 11), or a potter's residence.

Taddiport must have benefited from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century canal wharf on the other side of the river (HUCAs 15) and improvements that Lord Rolle made to the roads during the 1840s. By the end of the century it consisted of a number of roadside houses and cottage rows, with a school (now the village hall), a smithy (MDV35021) and the Buckinghamshire Arms inn (both now dwellings). There was no significant expansion until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, when infilling and the construction of a housing estate (in medieval fields) on the western side of the village doubled its size.

Today there is a striking contrast between the historic core of the village – where 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century rendered and stone buildings line roads that narrow and converge as they make their winding descent down to the bridge – and the more level, regular, open plan and aspect of the modern housing estate. The architectural highlights are the chapel, the bridge, and the former inn and its outbuildings; these are the focus of views into and across the streetscape and the valley. Taddiport's location means that there are many sweeping views down over it from the south side of the town, while it looks back at the Common, Mill Street and the former creamery site (HUCAs 2-3, 9 and 15).

#### **4.14.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - Adjacent to a medieval river crossing (with surviving bridge) and originally the site of a leper hospital site (with its 13<sup>th</sup> century chapel still in use), Taddiport is an important part of Torrington's early history. Although its modern extension feels a separate entity, the core of the village retains its historic fabric, topography and character. HUCAs 14 is of high heritage importance.

#### **4.14.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCAs 14 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are early medieval and medieval bridge, medieval trackways and roads, chapel, graveyard, hospital, field boundaries and occupation material, and post-medieval and later roads and paths, houses and other buildings, boundary walls, wells, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.15 Torrington Creamery site (HUCAs 15)**

#### **4.15.1 Historic character**

HUCAs 15 is located along the north-east side of the River Torridge, extending north-west from the foot of Mill Street (Figure 4). It occupies land that slopes relatively steeply down off Great Torrington Common (HUCAs 3), and then levels out to form part of the valley bottom.

Of all Torrington's HUCAs, this makes the most dramatic visual impact – composed of the eye-opening combination of large-scale industrial architecture within a beautiful, verdantly rural, riverside setting. There are stunning views over and into this area from most directions (down from different parts of the town and Common, across the river from Taddiport), with the disused Creamery assuming iconic prominence.

Viewed from within, its contrasting aspects are reaffirmed – stark views through the towering derelict buildings, giving way to lesser-scaled modern industrial structures, and tree-lined fields and paths.

HUCAs 15 has had an industrial focus for perhaps as long as 1,000 years, although the scale and type of the activity that took place in this area has changed through time. Yet it has also retained (to a decreasing degree) an agricultural aspect, and in more recently, has become part of the recreational use of the Commons.

### Torrington Creamery site (HUCA 15)



Creamery site, from Warren Lane



Creamery site, from Taddiport Bridge



Torrington Vale Dairy (TVD) building



Dairy and creamery buildings, from west



Haulage depot, from east



Rolle Road, former canal, from east

It started life as the site of the Manor Mills (MDV53331) – separate water-driven mills for grinding corn and for *fulling* woollen cloth (Dixon 1996). As their name suggests, they were originally associated with the Manor of Torrington (HUCA 17) and may have existed since the early medieval period. With the establishment of the medieval borough, they evolved into serving the town.

The mill buildings stood just to the west of the bridge, with the tail race depicted running west to the river from there on the 1840 Tithe Map, through an area of water meadows and medieval strip fields, which partly survive today. Badly damaged by fire in 1747, but recorded in 1793 as including four grist mills, one malt mill and a shelling

mill (for removing the husk), the old Manor Mills were replaced in 1825 by the new Town Mills (MDV14289) constructed to the south-east of Torrington (outside of the town study area).

The milling functions of the area were superseded by it being on the route of the Rolle Canal (MDV445), built 1822-27 by John Rolle, Lord of the Manor, and becoming the site of its main wharf (MDV18802), the mill buildings being demolished to make way for the latter.

As the canal's headquarters, it consisted of a double canal basin (MDV14285) and various wharves, with offices, warehouses, limekilns (for burning ore for fertiliser), malt kilns, coal cellars, and yards for storing other transported materials (such as brick, timber and slate). There was also a carpentry shop, blacksmiths, boat building yard (for making and repairing the canal tub boats) and stables (MDV20305) for the canal horses and the donkeys used around the site. Industry and trade thrived, aided by proximity of the site to both the town and a busy road, under which the canal passed before continuing its route eastwards (Scrutton 2006).

By 1872, disputes and financial problems associated with the canal company, together with the extension of the railway from Bideford to Staplevale (HUCA 16), led to the closure of the canal, though the section from the railway station to the Town Mills was in-filled to create a public road, known as Rolle Road (MDV18798), with a toll house (MDV11798) midway, next to Taddiport Bridge (*ibid*).

Following the canal's closure, its wharf became the site for a new enterprise – Torridge Vale Butter Factory, opened in 1874 by Sanford and Son. Re-using the canal buildings, including converting the offices into the manager's house, this pioneering operation used a steam-driven separating machine to produce large quantities of butter and Devonshire cream, for same-day sale in London and further north. It developed into a depot (Torridge Vale Dairy) for surrounding farms, with poultry and eggs being added to the list of products, and market gardening (the Sanford's established business) was also carried out around the factory, with flowers, fruits and vegetables grown, presumably in the nearby fields, for the local markets. (Alexander and Hooper 1948, 177-9)

Buildings and machinery were enlarged in 1922 in order to meet increased demand (encouraged by post-war Government policy favouring home-grown food and export trade), and in 1932, with Cow and Gate Ltd becoming involved, there was major redevelopment of the site. A large, specially designed factory was equipped with powerful engines and the most modern dairy machinery. The largest milk drying machines in the world were subsequently added, together with a water purification system and the first reinforced chimney in the country. From the 1940s, the site continued to expand, culminating in a highly mechanised Milk Marketing Board, Dairy Crest plant of monumental proportions (*ibid*).

The plant closed in 1993, but its derelict (metal, concrete and Marland brick) structure is still standing, as is the complex of red brick buildings dating back to 1932, including a tower with TVD (the initials of the site's previous name) in concreted relief. This is a prominent, interesting, nicely-detailed 'industrial-modern' building, which can be appreciated from the roadside.

There are also visible remnants of the earlier industrial use of HUCA 15 – part of the Rolle Canal/Road (in use as a trackway), its stables and two-storeyed, picturesque and architecturally refined toll house (both buildings stone and render and now dwellings), and the converted warehouse at the bottom of Limer's Hill (in HUCA 9), together with other walls and building fragments.

Today part of the site is used as an office and milk tanker cleaning facility, with a lorry transport depot just beyond and the town sewage works in former fields further west.

#### **4.15.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 15 has been a focus since the medieval period for industrial processes key to the town's development and this is strongly reflected in the area's present character

and built fabric. Although successive redevelopment has led to demolition or alteration of earlier elements, its history is still decipherable, and its surviving buildings dominate (both the immediate area and long distance views to and from the southern part of the town). HUCA 15 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.15.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 15 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are early medieval/medieval trackways and paths, field boundaries, mill buildings and infrastructure, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material and industrial activity/artefacts and post-medieval and later canal wharf and toll road (canal, road, buildings, other infrastructure, artefacts), and market garden structures/artefacts.

### **4.16 Torrington Station (HUCA 16)**

#### **4.16.1 Historic character**

HUCA 16 encompasses the site of Torrington's former railway station (MDV434). North-west of the town, at the foot of the Common, it is located beside the River Torridge (Figure 4).

Three types of communication infrastructure vital to Torrington's historical development overlap in this vicinity – road transport (previously passing over the medieval Rothern Bridge and, from 1842, over New Bridge), the Rolle Canal (1827, converted in part in 1871 to the Rolle Road) and Torrington Station.

In 1865 the London and South Western Railway (LSWR) obtained an Act of Parliament to extend their Barnstaple-Bideford line to Torrington (MDV18633). The station opened on the 27 July 1872, and had two platforms, a goods shed, engine shed and 50 foot turntable (MDV65504).

Operated by the LSWR until 1923, and then by Southern Railway (and finally, by British Railways Western Region), the station dispatched trains to Bideford and Barnstaple, as well as to Exeter St David's (the journey time for Torrington to Waterloo was around 5 hours). The road leading up across the Common to Torrington became known as Station Road, and the proximity of the railway encouraged the development of large houses and villas on the western edge of the town (HUCA 7).

Local industries were also supported by the railway. Traffic of lime (from Staplevale kiln just to the west, via its own private siding) was handled from 1884 to 1956. From the 1940s, two milk trains a day also ran, filled by road tankers from the Torridge Vale Dairy (HUCA 15) and bound for London (superseding the previous, long-established traffic of milk in churns). Without this service the dairy would not have been able to expand in the way it did.

Torrington Station remained a terminus until 1925, when North Devon and Cornwall Junction Light Railway built a line from here to Halwill Junction for the transportation of china clay (MDV20263). From 1881 there had been a siding at Torrington for the transhipping of china clay from Marland and Meeth (along the Torrington and Marland Light Railway); after 1925 it became a through station for clay trains.

### Torrington Station (HUCA 16)



Station House, from south



Platform, line and goods shed, from west

General goods and regular passenger services ended in 1965 (as part of the Beeching axing of branch lines). The milk trains continued until 1978 and from 1975-80 freight trains carried fertiliser to an ICI Depot on the site of the original goods shed; the china clay traffic went over to road transport in 1982; and the station finally closed in 1983.

Both platforms survive, together with the gabled two-storeyed station house (with one-storeyed waiting rooms and office and cast-iron platform canopy), now converted to a public house and café, and the large 1970s fertiliser shed, which now houses a bike hire business linked to the railway line now being a cycle path (part of the Tarka Trail). A railway preservation society (Tarka Valley Railway) was formed in 2008 to create a heritage railway, and there are a couple of carriages and wagons on the short stretch of track between the platforms. This survival/re-instatement of original features, coupled with the wooded, edge of Common location, means that HUCA 16 still has the appearance of a rural railway station.

#### 4.16.2 Above ground heritage significance

**High** - As one of the key elements of Torrington's later transport infrastructure, which had a significant influence on its economic and social development, and with good survival of its historic fabric and character, and appropriate adaptive re-use, HUCA 16 is of high heritage significance.

#### 4.16.3 Below ground heritage significance

**Medium** - HUCA 16 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century railway station buildings and infrastructure.

### 4.17 School Lane/New Street (HUCA 17)

#### 4.17.1 Historic character

HUCA 17 is focused on St Michael's and All Saints Parish Church (MDV2627) and the site of the early medieval manor of Toritone (MDV12390). The area spans the junction between School Lane (until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the main road to Bideford) and New Street/Calf Street, with the church occupying the highest point on land that levels out on New Street and then slopes steadily down to the north, down School Lane, to the modern expansion of HUCA 4 and the countryside beyond (Figure 12).

Now on the edge/outside of the close-knit commercial core of the town (HUCA 5), although the church and manor house would historically have fronted a potentially larger early market square, this area has a more open townscape character. It has a less enclosed, edge-of-town feel, with long views into, through and beyond, and a partially verdant appearance, owing to some grassed areas and a significant number of trees. There is some variation in the present character of this area, from east to west, which belies an underlying coherency in terms of its history and earlier development.

Today, the area to the north-east of the road junction is in mixed residential/recreational/commercial use, being occupied by a vicarage, plant nursery, children's playground, indoor swimming pool, football pitch, tennis courts, carpet salesroom and detached 20<sup>th</sup> century houses.

The south-west corner of this block of land was the site of the moated manor house (MDV12390) given as a parsonage for Torrington's parish priest in 1491 by Henry VII's mother (Margaret Beaufort). This may be the house for which, in 1340, Richard Merton, the then lord of part of the Torrington lands, received a licence to crenelate. Rebuilt into the present vicarage (MDV76316) in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the grounds of the latter are presumed to reflect the extent of those associated with the earlier house (and perhaps also the farmstead for the early medieval manor mentioned in the Domesday Survey).

On the 1840 Tithe Map they appear as a large, roughly rectangular area, encompassing what are now the plant nursery, playground, vicarage and garden, and the southern edges of the football pitch and swimming pool site. A lane shown on the map, running along the outside of the east and north boundary walls may have been fossilising the line of the moat.

The land to the north and east may also have been associated, for example as part of the manor farm. It remained as fields until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when a cattle market was built (where the swimming pool is today), followed by the laying out of the football pitch (by the middle of the century) and then the other developments. The large, cream-painted, rendered vicarage, with its pillared gateway and iron-railed boundary walls, still makes a strong impact on Calf Street and the relatively undeveloped nature of the land around and behind it provides a continuing reference to its early history.

#### **School Lane / New Street (HUCA 17)**



Church of St Michael's and All Saints



East end of New Street



The Vicarage, site of medieval manor



Football pitch with parish church and vicarage (manor site) beyond, from north



Looking west along Calf/New Street



Top of School Lane, from north

On the south side of the road junction, the 12<sup>th</sup> century parish church occupies an even more prominent position in its raised, rectangular, stone-walled churchyard. Partially rebuilt, in the same perpendicular style, after a Civil War explosion in the south transept, and repaired and restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it dominates views along New Street and crowns the approach to the town up School Lane. In addition, its elevated position within the townscape as a whole (just off the hilltop which lies to the west) and its tall, distinctive steeple, make it a recognisable landmark in many long distance views.

Yet once within the churchyard, away from the traffic of New Street, there is a sense of quiet enclosure. The churchyard is surrounded on three sides by high boundary walls and buildings (including the Old Sexton's Cottage, MDV23874), though not on the same three sides as earlier in its history, when it would have been open on the east to the then larger market place, and more enclosed on the north, where a row of almshouses stood (MDV17120).

The churchyard is also surprisingly wooded, with three of its trees growing on top of a long mound, reputed to be a mass grave connected with the Civil War explosion. From the church door, cobbled paths lead to a narrow passage connecting the south-east corner of the churchyard to Fore Street (HUC 5), less than ten metres away; to Church Lane, which dog-legs out to Whites Lane (HUC 18); and to New Street.

The latter is mentioned in a document of 1382 when a tenement in 'Nywestret' was conveyed by Roger Crofte to John de Cary (MDV71127), and on either side of New Street, to the west of the church, medieval burgage plots can be detected in the present plan-form.

The lengths of those on the south side of the street have been truncated by the creation of the large square back plot which now houses the disused Bluecoat Infant School (HUCA 18). They are fronted by early 19<sup>th</sup> century and later houses (two-three storeyed, mainly rendered, some Marland brick), the grander ones nearer to the churchyard. A contemporary stone-lined well was uncovered behind the frontage in 2001 (during the construction of an extension to the school), together with a wooden casket and a buried medieval soil containing occupation material dating from c1200 to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century (MDV63114-6).

The block of burgage plots on the north side of the street (MDV71128) are more intact, still mainly extending back for their full length, their slightly curving boundaries suggest they originated as medieval plough strips. They are now fronted by early 18<sup>th</sup> century and later cottages and houses (two-storeyed, rendered), with the eastern end occupied by Palmer House (MDV444). Built in 1752, by attorney and mayor, John Palmer (brother-in-law to the artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds, who visited, along with Dr Johnson), this impressive red-brick house, together with its service buildings (now converted to dwellings), adorns the western side of the School Lane/New Street junction. Together with the vicarage and church, and a few other large houses in HUCA 17, its presence confirms the desirability of this as a genteel, edge-of-town residential area during the post-medieval period. Large houses, extensive grounds, bordering on open countryside, and roads not yet fully urban, ensured this area still had a semi-rural feel during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the area developed some industrial functions – including being the first site of the Tapscott Glove Factory, MDV71129 (behind 10 and 12 New Street), and other back plots perhaps being used for activities associated with the town's weekly market – pre-empting the 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial development to the north (HUCA 4) and the more busy, mixed feel of HUCA 17 today.

#### **4.17.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - Encompassing the site of the early medieval manor and the 12<sup>th</sup> century parish church, together with medieval burgage plots and one of the town's most impressive earlier residences (Palmer House), HUCA 17 is one of the most important focal points for understanding the early history of Torrington, as well as for appreciating its historic character. HUCA 17 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.17.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**High** - HUCA 17 has high below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are early medieval trackway(s), field boundaries, farmstead, occupation material and artefacts; medieval manor house (including moat, boundary walls and other structures), earlier phases of church/churchyard development, graves, tracks, streets and paths, burgage plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material and industrial activity/artefacts; post-medieval and later streets and paths, houses, workshops and other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

## **4.18     Whites Lane (HUCA 18)**

### **4.18.1    Historic character**

#### **White's Lane (HUCA 18)**



Vaughan Tapscott glove factory



Vaughan Tapscott glove factory



Former Board School



Church Lane – industrial buildings



Halsdon Terrace, from south-west



Northern entrance into White's Lane

HUCA 18 comprises Whites Lane (with Villa and Church lanes leading off), which runs north to south in a straight line (from New Street to South Street) over a slight rise in the natural topography (Figure 12). Apart from where the side lanes lead off, views are restricted to along the street, and end abruptly at the frontages of New and South streets.

Whites Lane was originally in two halves. The 1840 Tithe map shows a broader southern part forming a lane (with what is now Church Lane) along the side and backs of burgage plots, from South Street to the Churchyard. What is now the northern part of Whites Lane was then only a narrow alley between plots, running up to New Street.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the whole of Whites Lane had been widened into a street, and became lined with large, two-three storey houses and villas, together with a new, twin-gabled stone-built Board School (1871) and, facing it across the street, the Vaughan Tapscott Glove Factory, MDV72628 (relocated from New Street in 1884). The gothic, chapel-like, Marland (and red) brick factory (ornamented with stone-carved hands, gloves and glove press) dominates Whites Lane. Despite, or perhaps because of the presence of this quirky imposing industrial building, it had become an affluent part of the town, with the imposing stuccoed Halsdon Terrace (perhaps linked to the factory), and the newly created Villa Lane associated with villa development to the west (HUC 6).

Church Lane, by contrast, had become more of a side alley, lined with small-scale industry (e.g. smithy, tannery). It is characterised today by its narrowness, outbuildings stone walls and remnants of cobbling, hinting at the existence of earlier structures and uses, and making it feel part of the oldest part of the town.

The point where Whites Lane meets South Street is known as Windy Cross, and on the western corner the junction is occupied by an unusual architectural landmark – a former 19<sup>th</sup> century former pump-house (possibly over an early well), surmounted by a modern cross, the shaft and circular base of which are reputed to be ancient (MDV442-3).

Despite some more recent housing development within Whites Lane, its historic fabric and character is largely intact, and it is the best place in Great Torrington to see a cohesive 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape. Both the factory and school are now disused, however, and this lends a disconsolate air to HUC 18.

#### **4.18.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**High** - Representing a key phase in the town's socio-economic development, when it was internationally renowned for its gloving industry, and with this history very legible in its existing plan-form and standing buildings, HUC 18 is of high heritage significance.

#### **4.18.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUC 18 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval lanes and paths, field boundaries, burgage plot boundaries, dwellings and other buildings, occupation material and industrial activity/artefacts; post-medieval and later street and paths, houses, glove factory, school, other buildings, cellars, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.19 Calf Street (HUC 19)**

#### **4.19.1 Historic character**

HUC 19 is formed by Calf Street, from Gas Lane to Juries Lane, with New Road and East Street forming T-junctions on its south side (Figure 15). The street runs WSW to ENE on a relatively level plateau, sloping down very gently towards its eastern end. Its middle portion is enclosed continuous residential frontage, but at both ends the HUC has a more open and fragmented feel owing to larger-scale commercial and civic development – two garages and a fire station on the New Road junction, a Devon County Council highways depot on Gas Lane and a community hospital at the east end of Calf Street.

### Calf Street (HUCA 19)



New Road/Calf Street junction, from east



Calf Street, looking west

This area was originally medieval strip fields and may have remained largely undeveloped until the later post-medieval period. A House of Correction was established in Calf Street in 1737, but its precise location is unknown (MDV18832). On the 1840 Tithe Map, the street still has an edge of town appearance, but was in the process of becoming more built up. The south side of the street is divided into rectangular plots, backing onto those on Well Street (HUCA 13), over half of which are already built on. On the north side the strip fields are still largely intact and development more piecemeal – terraces and detached/semi-detached properties with rear yards and outbuildings. An early 1900s Mission Church (MDV35020), now demolished, stood near the East Street junction. By the time of the 1904 OS Map most of the street frontage on both sides had been in-filled with industrial terraced housing (rendered, with stone exposed Marland brick and stone, on a raised pavement in places) and, on what is now the highways depot, a gas works was established (giving its name to the lane). By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the cottage hospital had been built, and during the later 1900s demolition and re-development at the opposite (western) end of the street resulted from the cutting through of New Road.

#### **4.19.2 Above ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - Late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century urban expansion into medieval strip fields, prompted by the need for workers housing, this area has a fair amount of historic fabric surviving, but in places has undergone modern redevelopment that has significantly altered its plan-form and character. HUCA 19 is of medium heritage significance.

#### **4.19.3 Below ground heritage significance**

**Medium** - HUCA 19 has medium below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval tracks, paths and field boundaries, and post-medieval and later streets and paths, houses, workshops, prison, chapel and other buildings, boundary walls, wells, leats and drains, industrial structures and debris, domestic occupation material and non-domestic artefacts.

### **4.20 Castle View modern expansion (HUCA 20)**

#### **4.20.1 Historic character**

HUCA 20 is an area of modern urban expansion on land sloping down from the backs of Castle Street and Well Street, which spans New Road, extending east to Caddywell Lane. It is bounded by Dickshill Lane on the north, borders on the Common on the south-west, and, on the south-east, a high-hedged lane separates it from fields beyond (Figure 4).

### Castle View modern expansion (HUCA 20)



Castle View, from north-west (Castle House top right)



Caddywell tannery remains

The whole area was undeveloped fields until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (there is one left within HUCA 20). The only buildings in existence before then were on the bend of Caddywell Lane – a house/pair of cottages depicted on the 1840 Tithe Map and a Tan Yard established by 1880 (one of five leather processing yards within/near the town during the 19<sup>th</sup> century). A stone building associated with the latter is now a dwelling and the extended yard a property maintenance depot.

In general, the layout of the modern development – housing estates, a GP surgery and health centre and a large primary school with a playing field – cuts across the pre-existing field pattern, creating a largely new plan-form for this part of the town. Only the lines of New Road and Caddywell Lane are preserved. Widening of New Road has stripped it of its historic character. The same is true of the southern half of Caddywell Lane, but its northern extent (from Borough Road to where it joins East/Well Street) has been downgraded to a path and, as a result, survives as an isolated, still tree-lined relic of a once edge-of-town area.

#### 4.20.2 Above ground heritage significance

**Low** - HUCA 20 is an area of almost totally modern (late 20<sup>th</sup> century) development with little distinctive local character and has low heritage significance.

#### 4.20.3 Below ground heritage significance

**Low** - HUCA 20 has low below ground heritage significance. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during ground works are medieval field boundaries, paths and lanes and the post-medieval tan yard.

## 5 Suggestions for future research

- Identifying the extents and dates of different land ownership within the town.
- Research into the use of individual plots and buildings – using Tithe map and Apportionment, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century OS and other town maps – including the phasing of burgage plots, the distinction between these and plots laid out in the post-medieval period, the function of larger plots within the town (e.g. Castle Hill car park, the former fields above Warren Lane, the area later occupied by Castle House).
- Detailed study of the buildings within the historic core of the town – using large scale historic maps, documentary sources and field work.
- Inventory and photographic record of architectural styles, details and materials.

- Detailed recording of other elements of the historic fabric – e.g. boundary walls, pavements, lamp posts, wells, leats, drains, fountains, crosses, railings.
- Detailed site inspection of key archaeological sites where above ground remains may survive – e.g. the castle and manor house.
- Geophysical survey and trial trenching to evaluate the potential for buried remains at such sites.
- Investigation of the potential for an Iron Age hillfort / enclosed settlement within the town – e.g. on/near the manor or castle sites, or on the highest point in the town (end of Villa Road).
- A study of the style and socio-economic context of the different 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estates within the town.

## **6 Bibliography**

Sources directly consulted during the study are listed below. In addition, there are numerous bibliographical references contained within the site entries relating to Great Torrington in the Devon HER.

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(Note. Two important primary map sources were inaccessible during the study, owing to being restored or in storage – large scale surveys of Great Torrington commissioned in 1843 and 1867 by the Borough Council, held by Great Torrington Museum and Devon Record Office)

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### **6.3 Information leaflets**

*Discover Great Torrington, North Devon. "The English Jerusalem"* (designed and illustrated by Sheila Scoular, 1988)

*Great Torrington Civil War Trail* (designed and illustrated by Philip Dixon, using information from 'The Forgotten Battle, Torrington 1646' by John Wardman)

*Map of Torrington Common*

*Parish Church of St Michael, Great Torrington* (history of the church)

*Torrington Parish Church* (Civil War explosion story)

### **6.4 Websites** (accessed July-November 2012)

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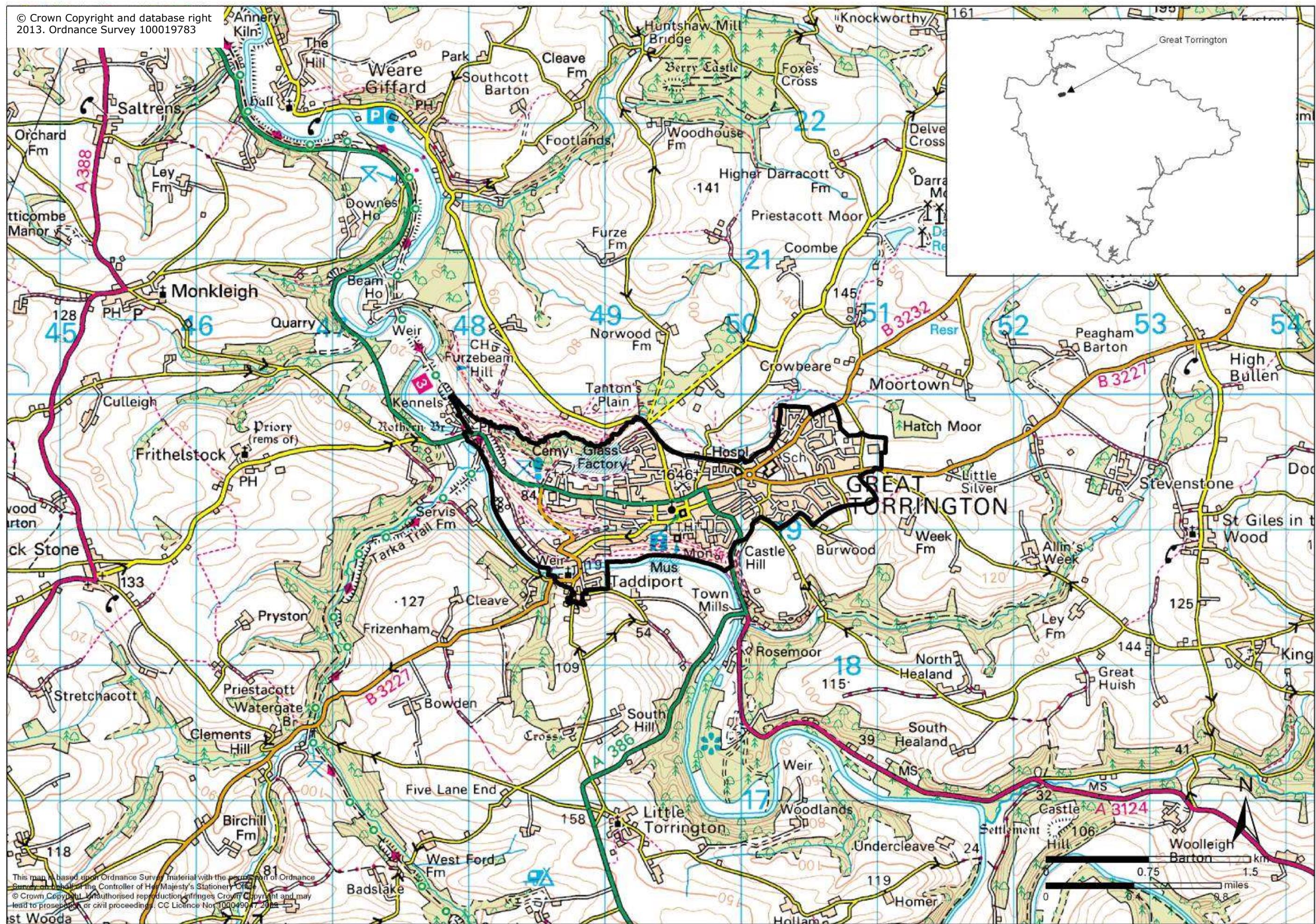
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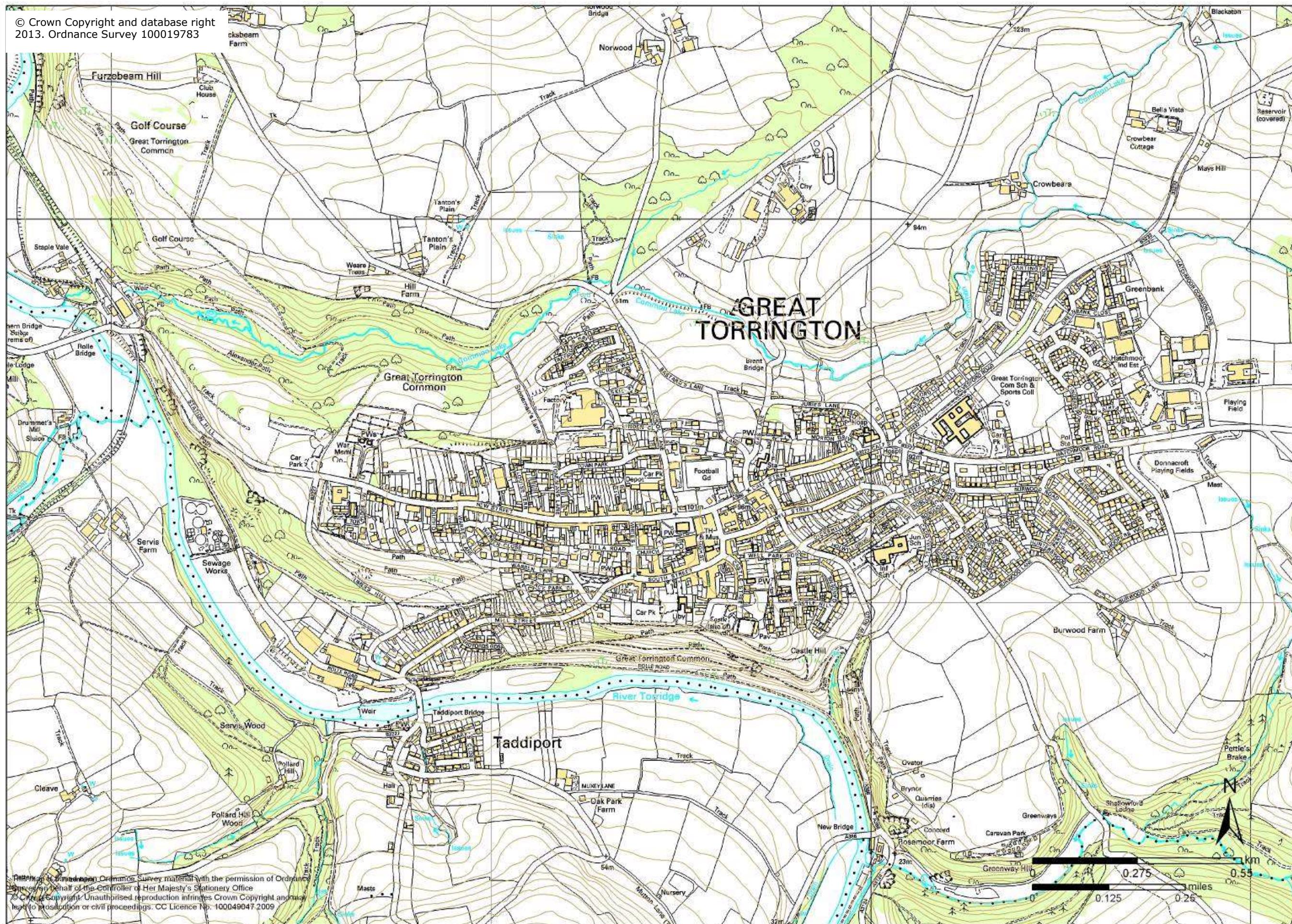


Fig 2 Roads and streets

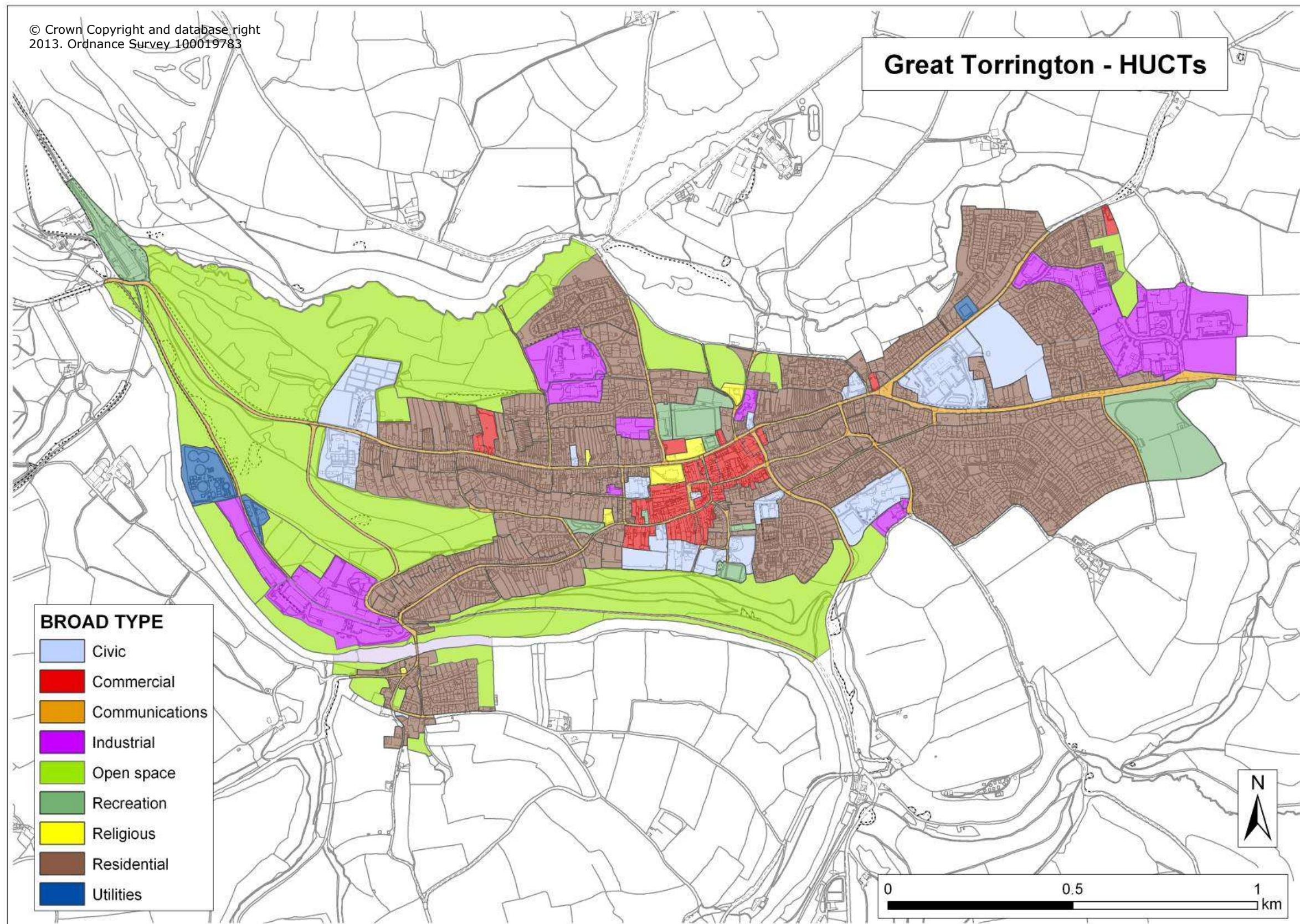


Fig 3 Historic Urban Character Types (HUCTs) 2012

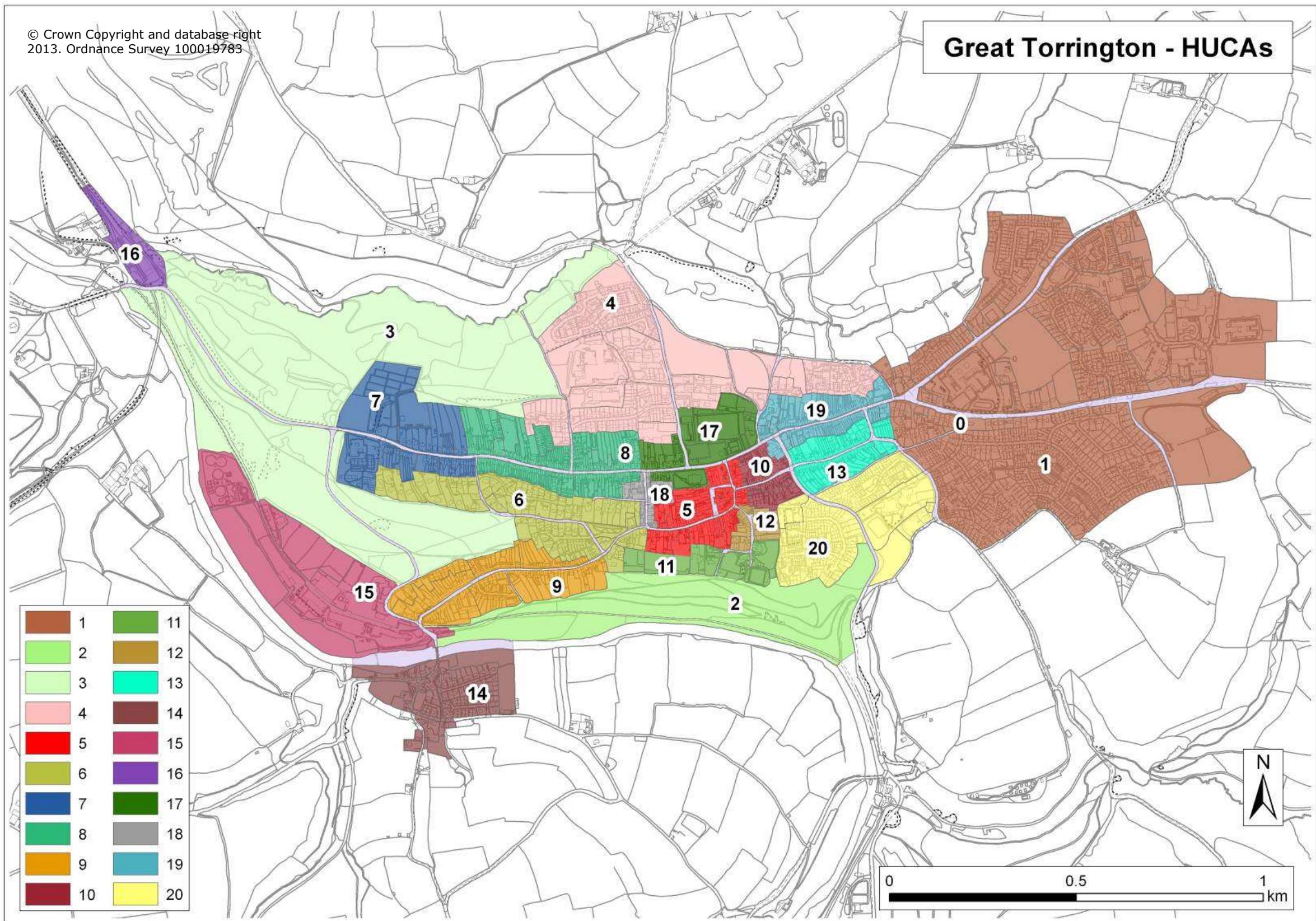


Fig 4 Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs)

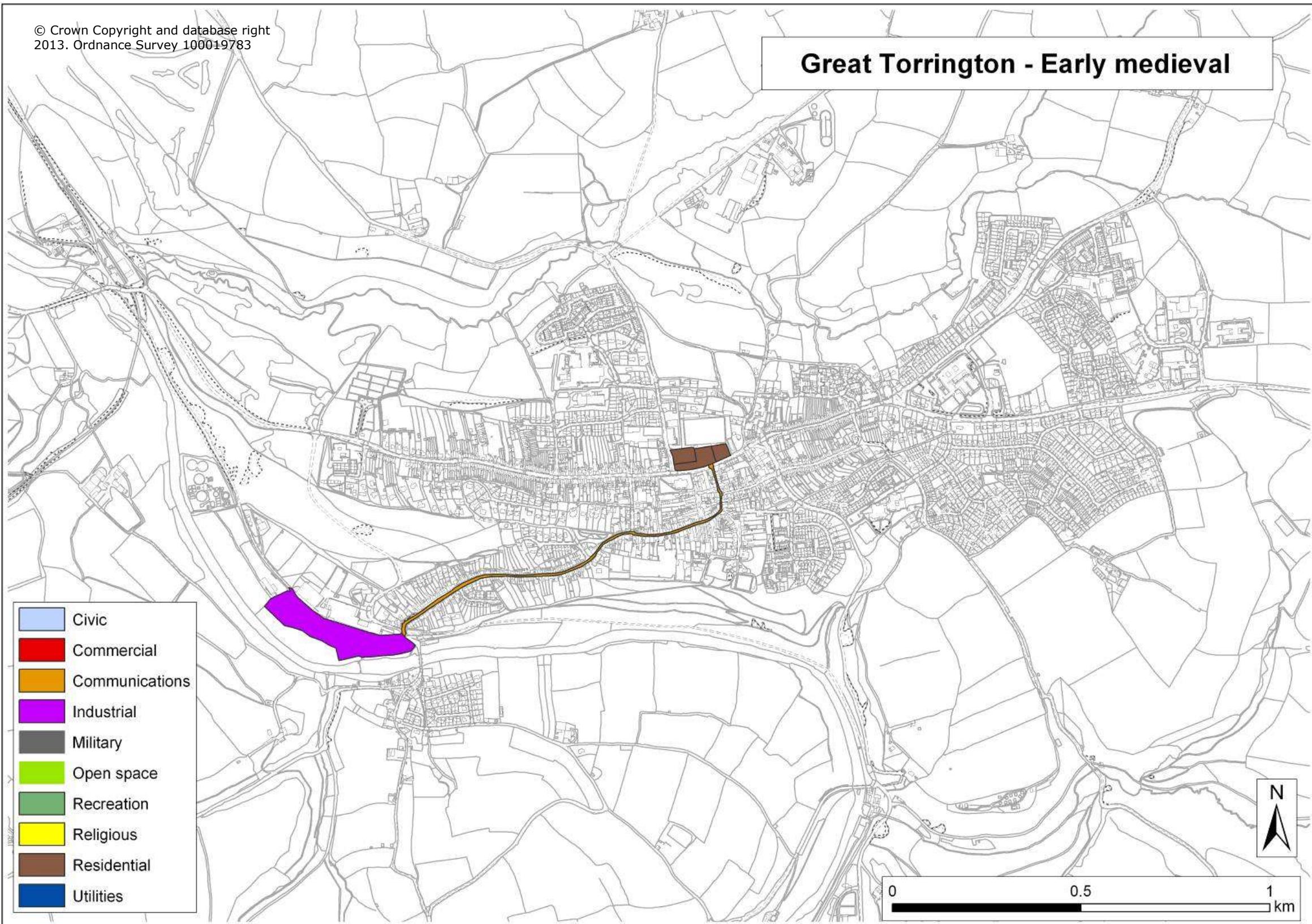


Fig 5 Historical development (Early medieval)

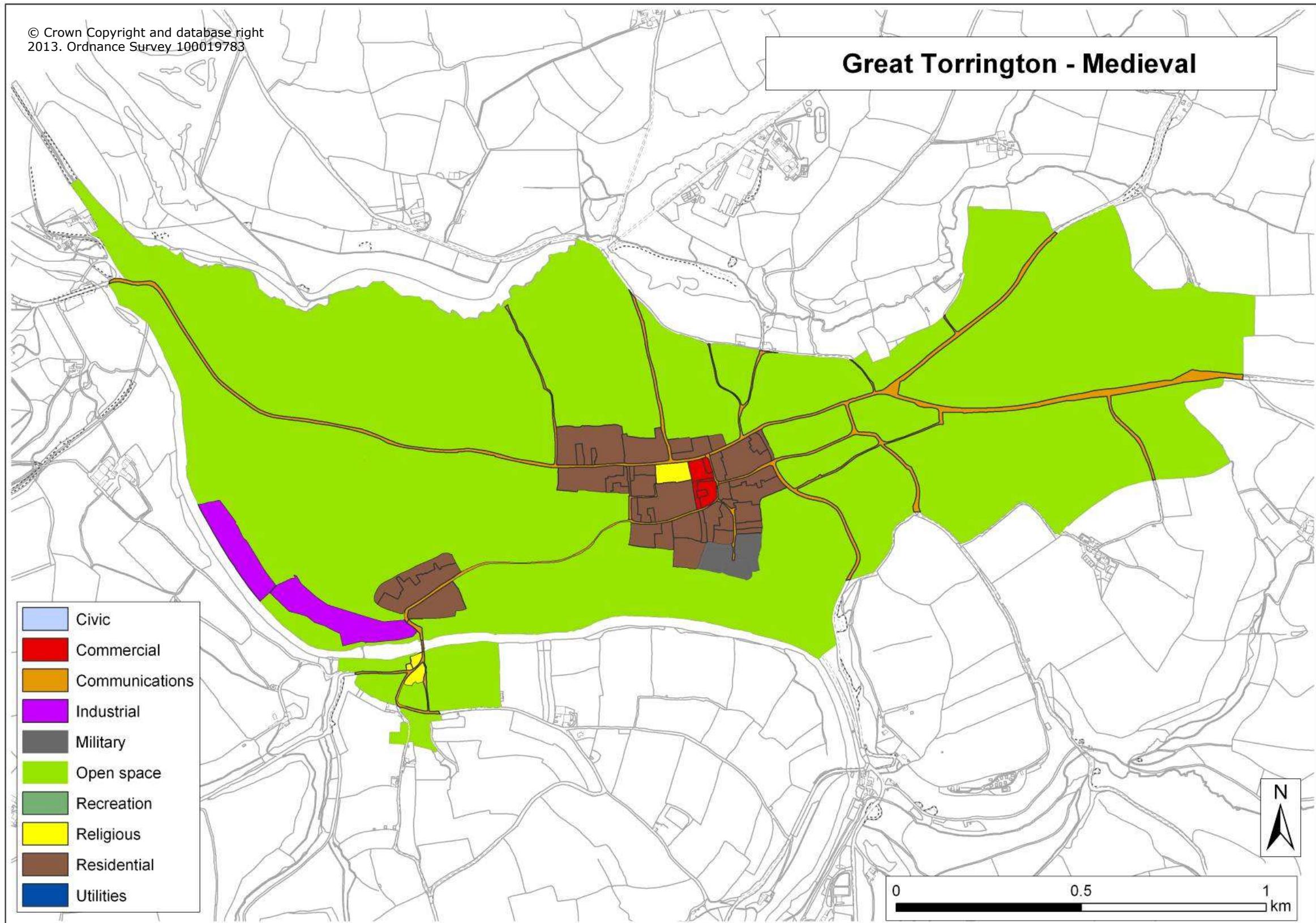


Fig 6 Historical development (Medieval)

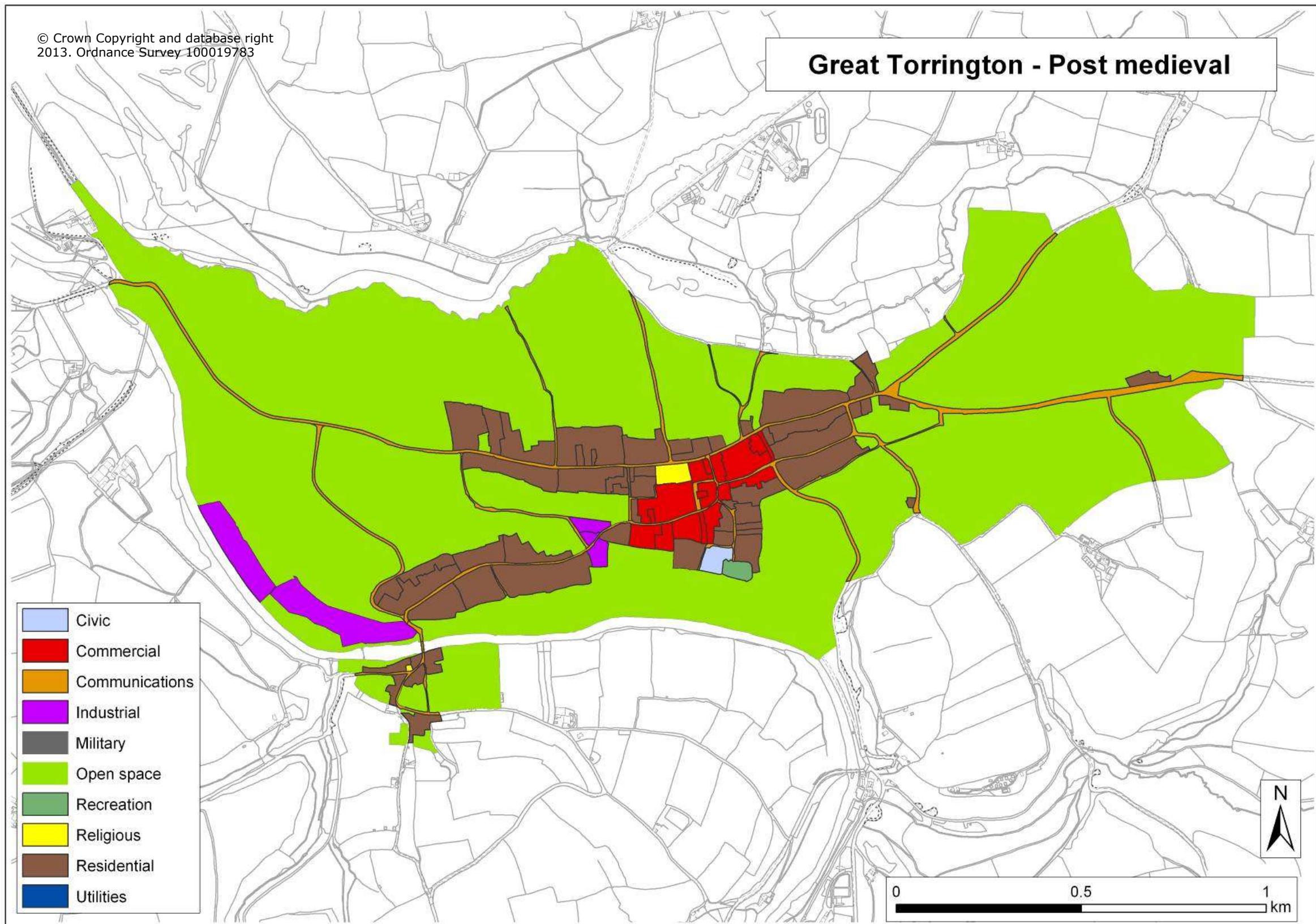


Fig 7 Historical development (Post-medieval)

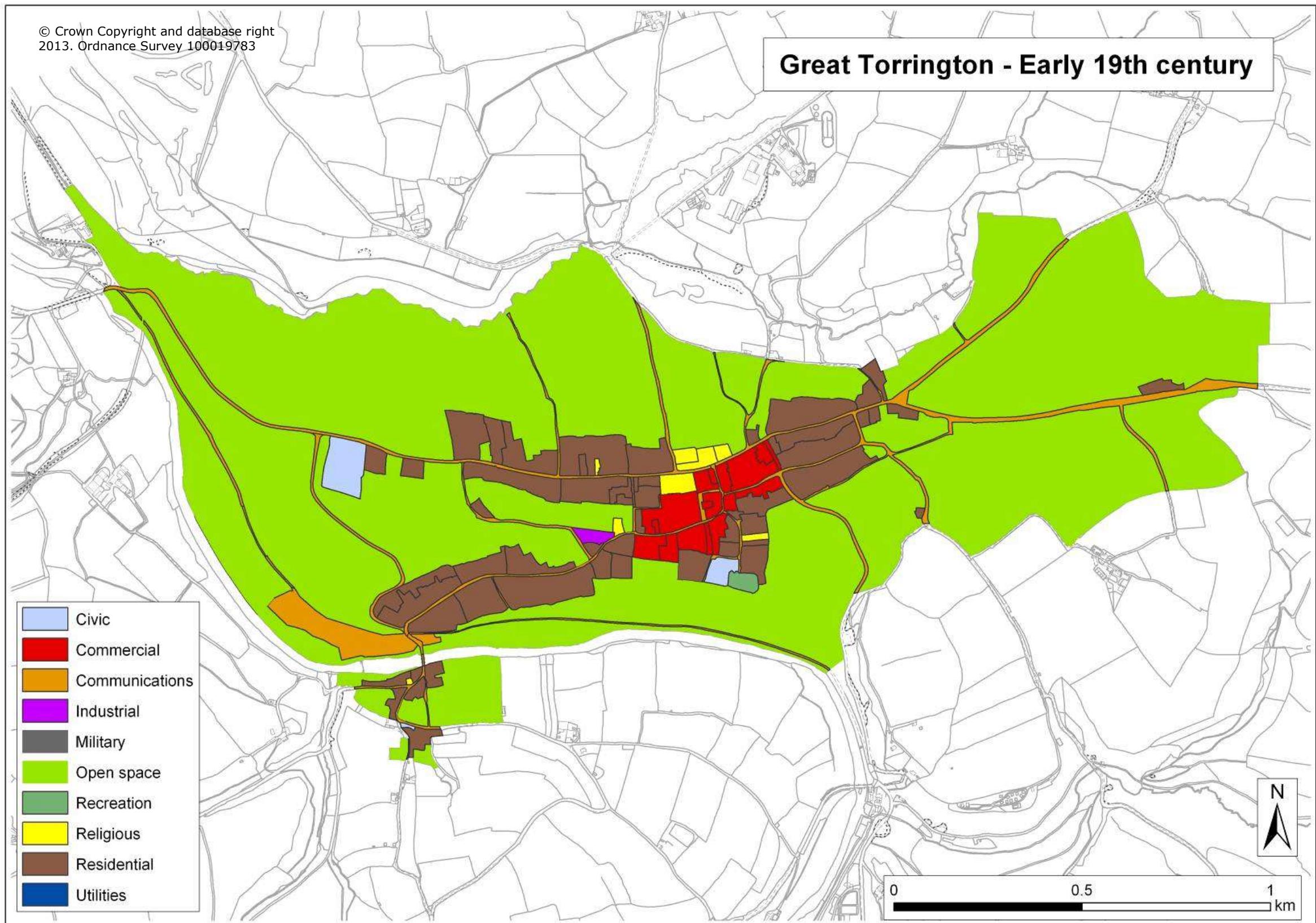


Fig 8 Historical development (Early 19<sup>th</sup> century)

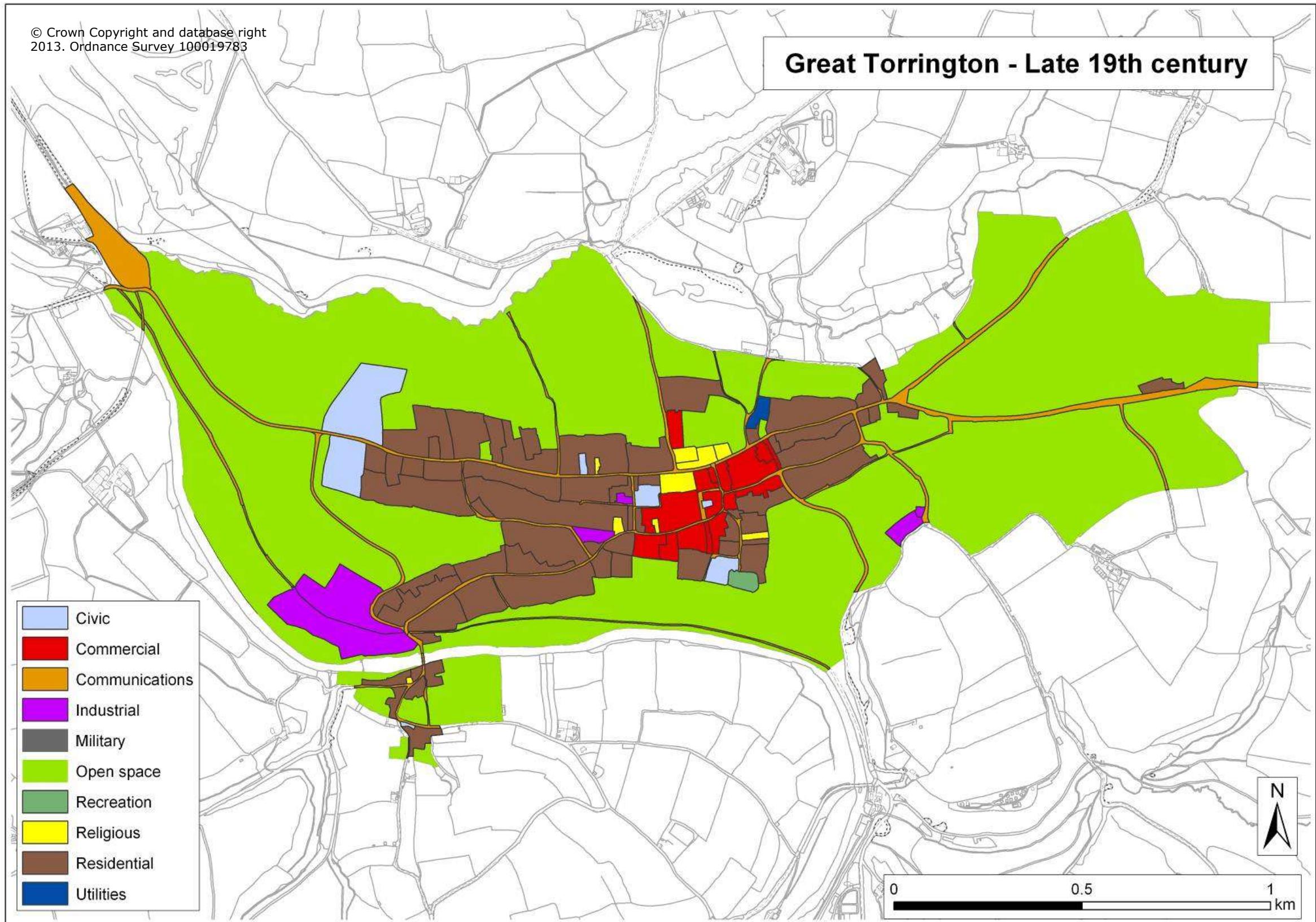


Fig 9 Historical development (Late 19<sup>th</sup> century)

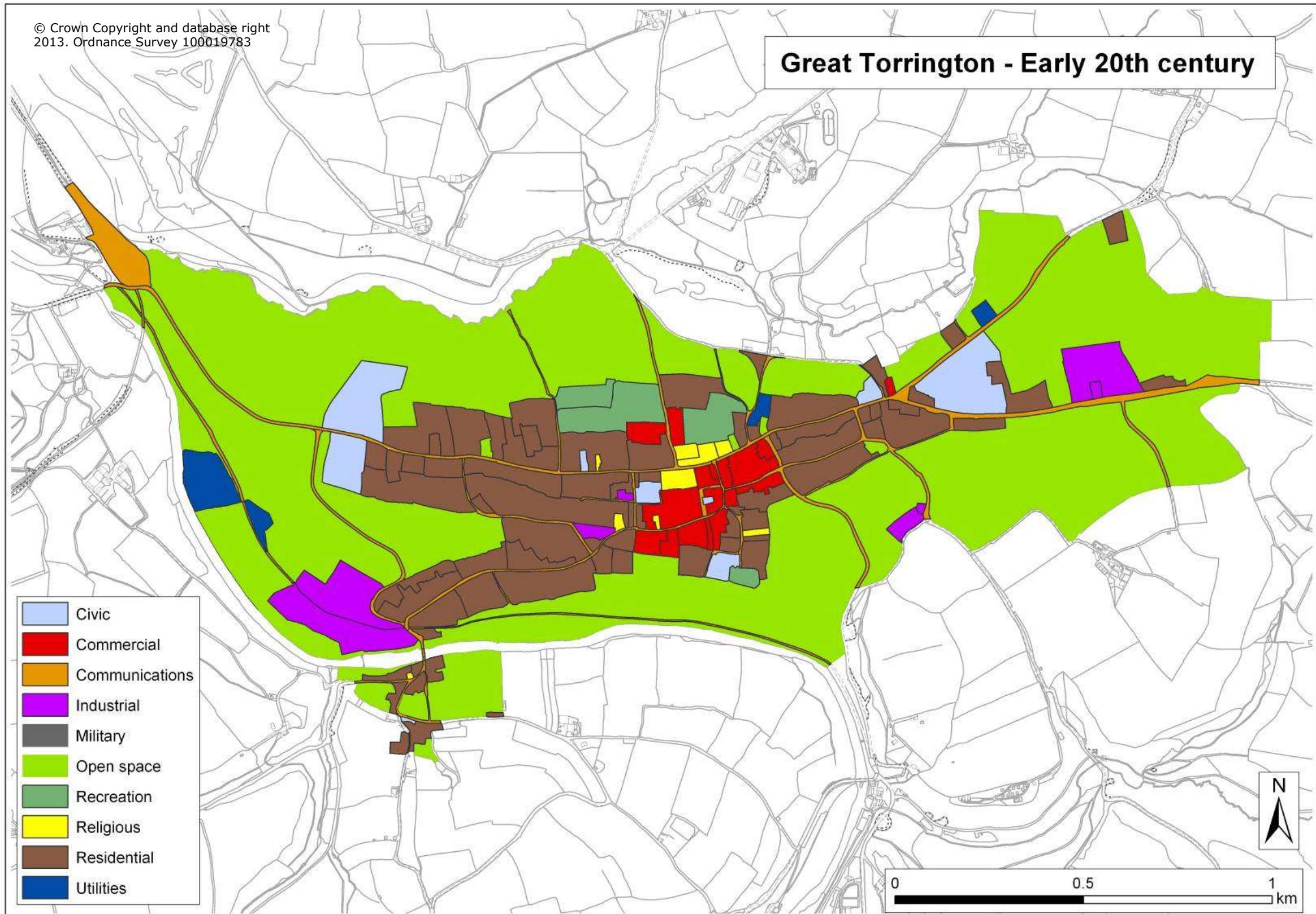


Fig 10 Historical development (Early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

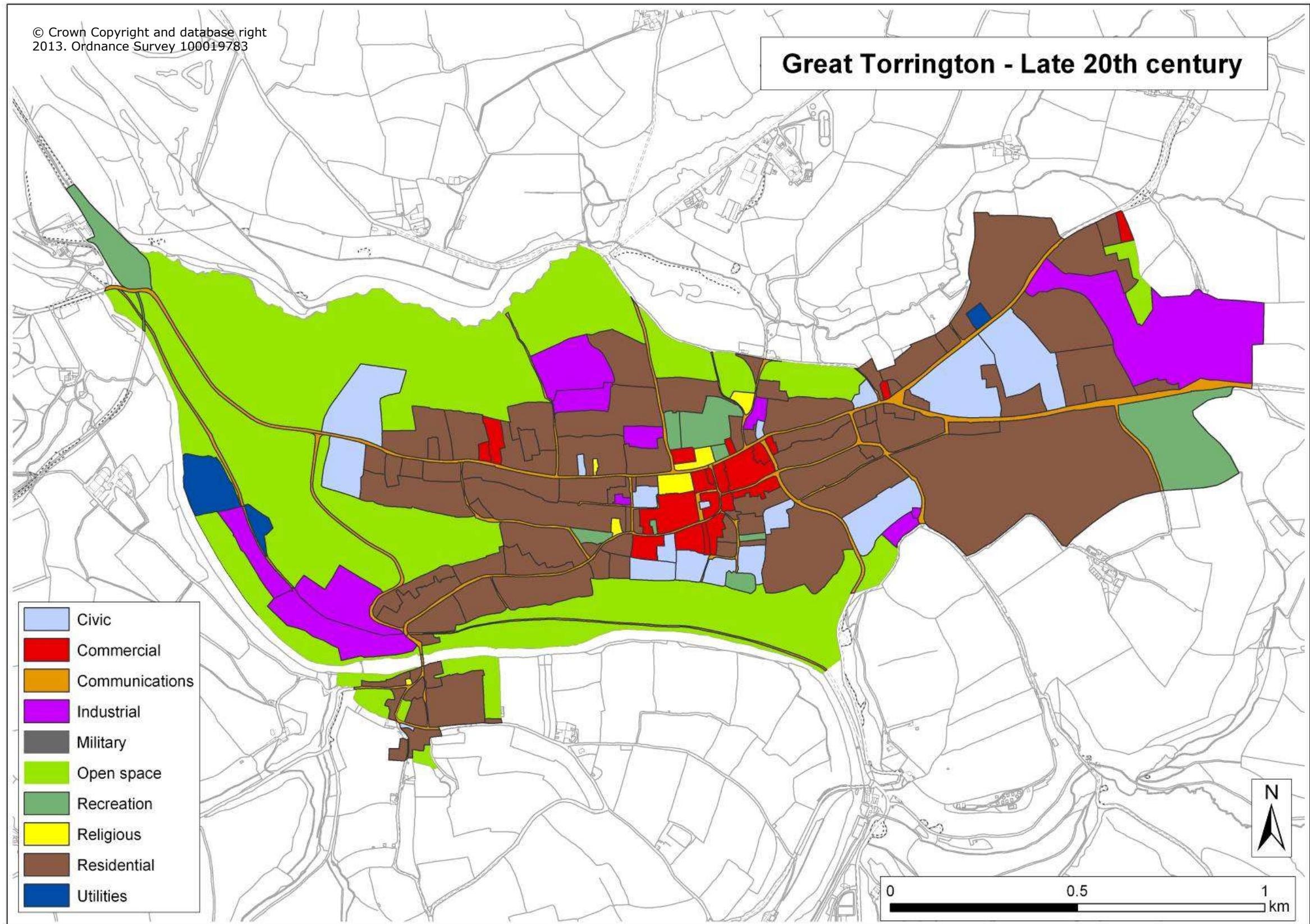


Fig 11 Historical development (Late 20<sup>th</sup> century)

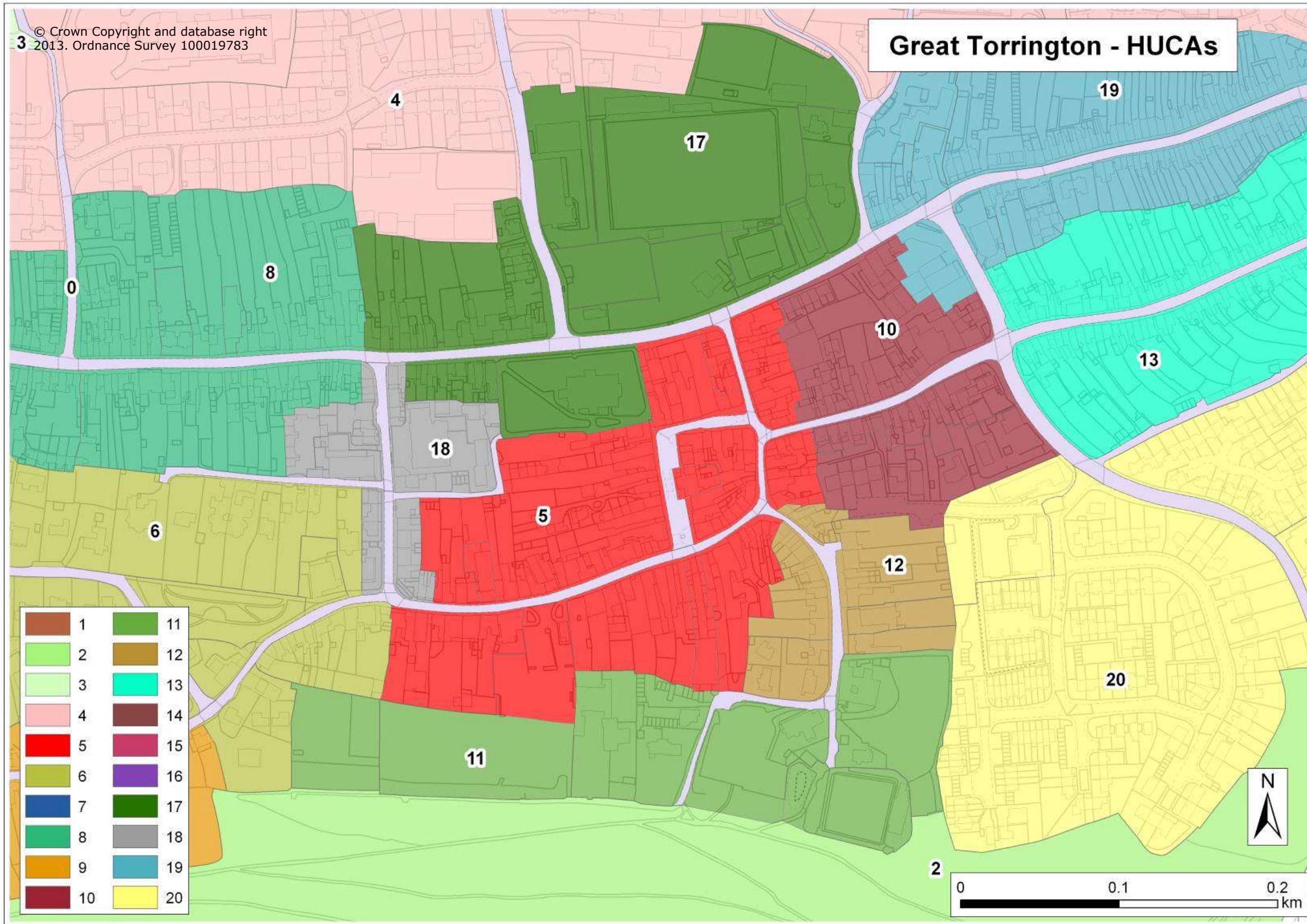


Fig 12 HUCAs – Town centre

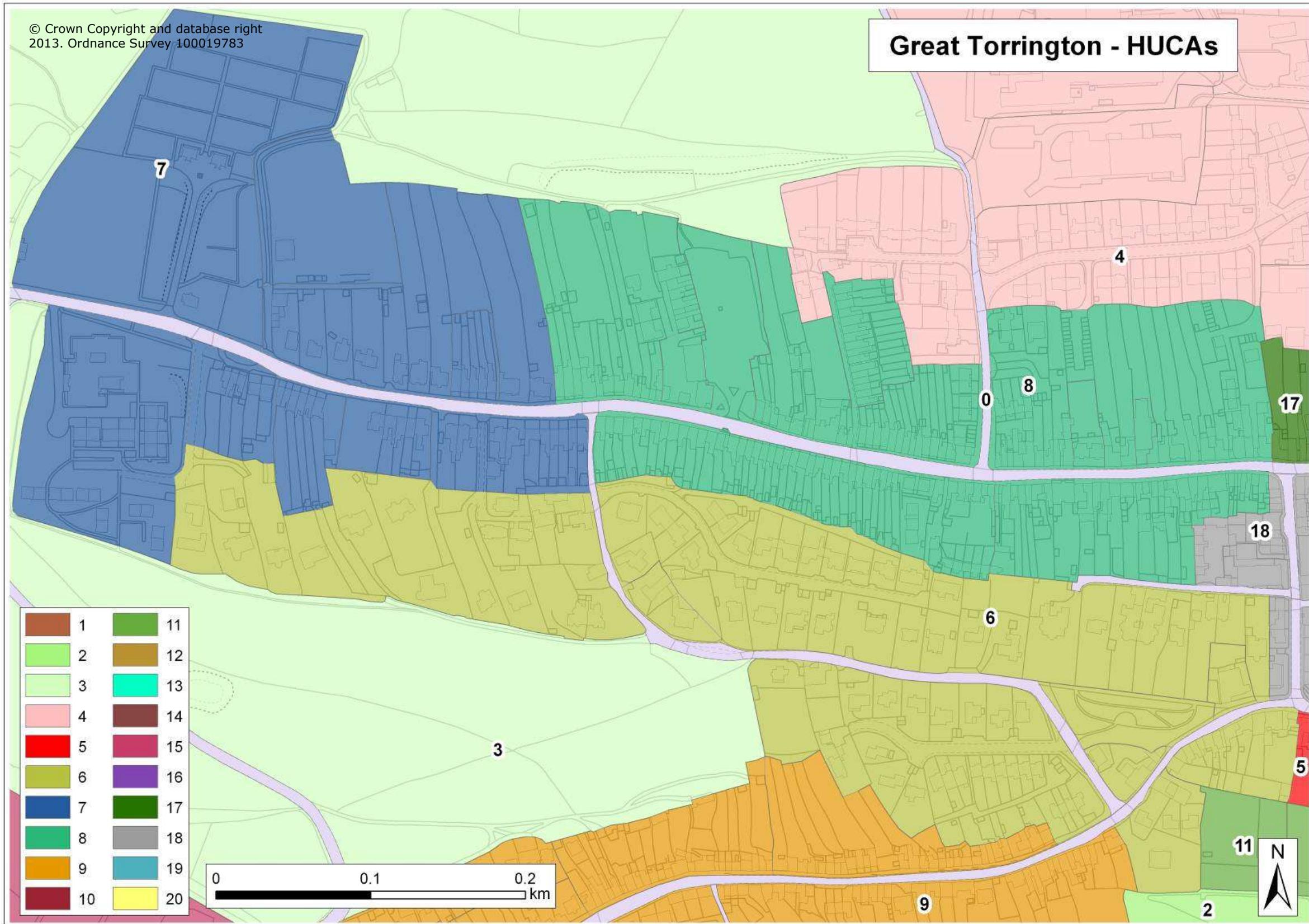


Fig 13 HUCAs – New Street

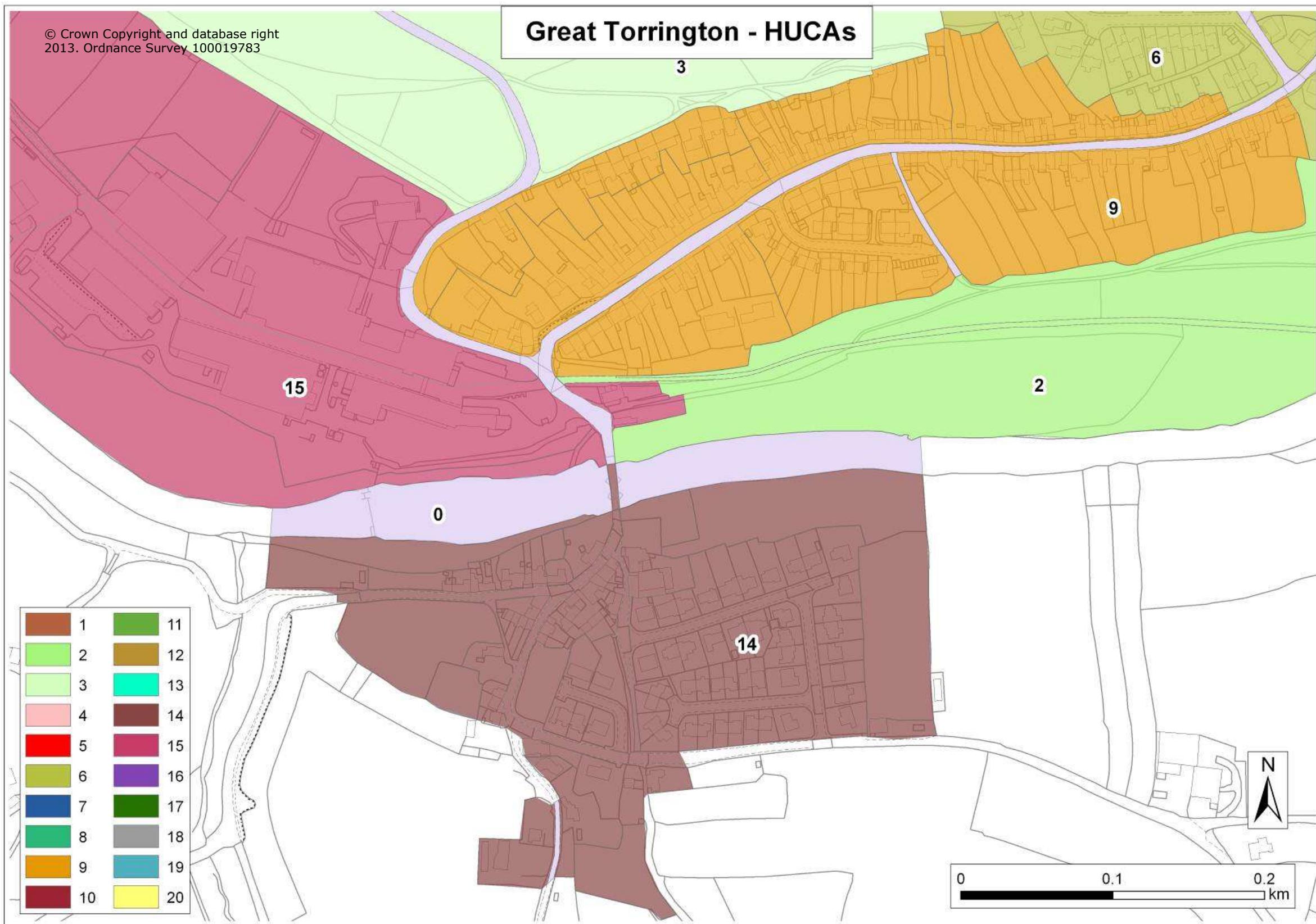


Fig 14 HUCAs – Mill Street and Taddiport

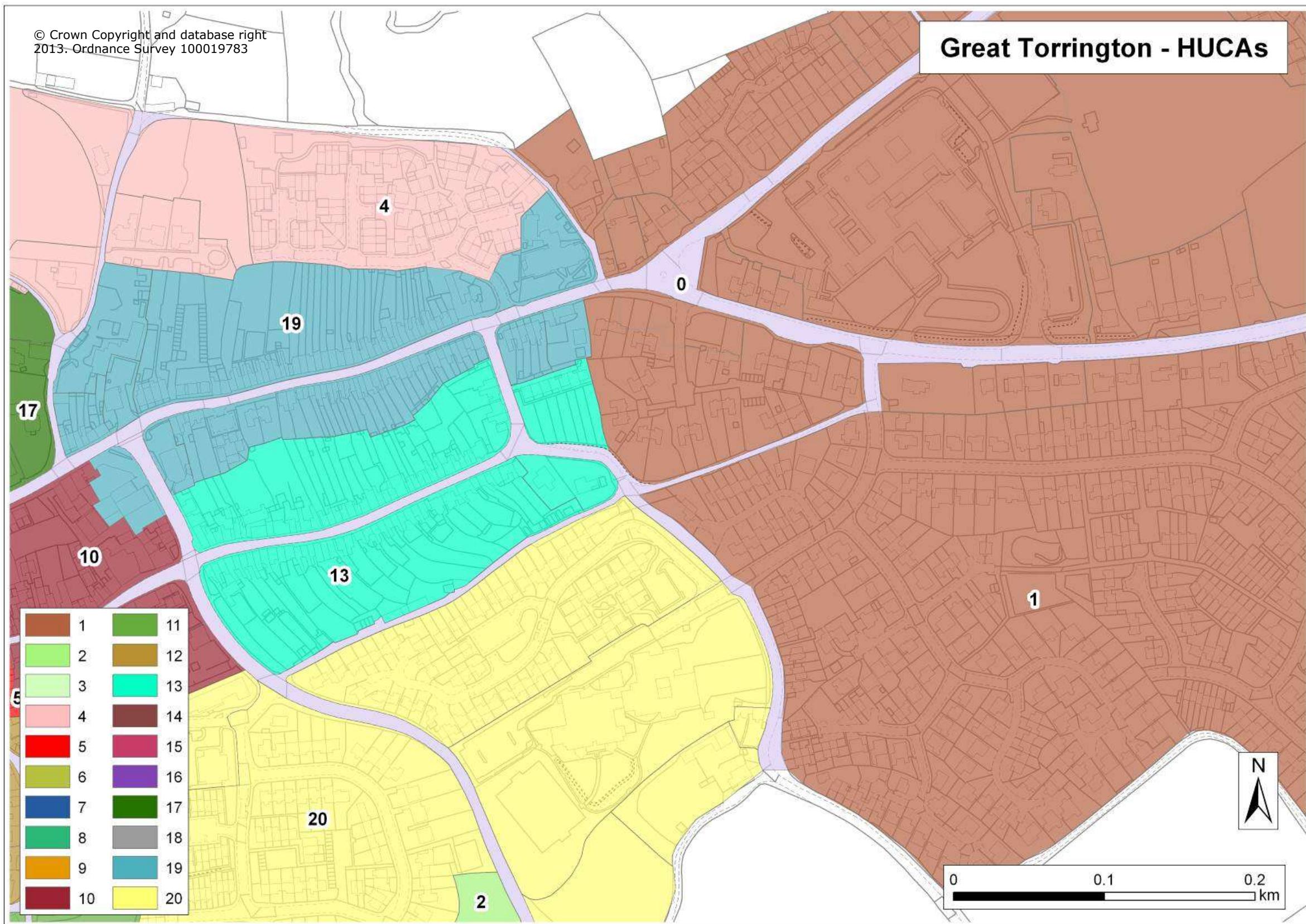


Fig 15 HUCAs – East of town centre