

# Hythe Conservation Area



The village of Hythe lies on the shores of Southampton Water and is the local shopping centre for a large area of surrounding housing. Its character is due mainly to its intimate scale. The conservation area covers the historic core of the village from West Street to Murray's Hotel in Shore Road including the 19th century iron pier. Groups of attractive 18th and 19th century buildings are to be found in Pylewell Road, The Marsh and School Road. There are more than 20 listed buildings and although few are outstanding architecturally, their grouping and informal relationship with each other and the unlisted buildings and spaces contribute to an interesting and varied street scene. The proximity of the waterside is one of the most valuable assets to the character and appearance of Hythe.

Hythe probably developed as a ferry stage between the Saxon manor of Fawley and Hamwic (Southampton) and today the ferry remains an important feature and amenity. Early sources suggest that there was a small creek through the area now known as The Marsh and flooding occurred there regularly up to recent times. Two groups of cottages, one centred on High Street, Prospect Place and Jones Lane and the other on the junction between St John's Street and South Street are linked by St John's Street which was fronted by houses with gardens running down to the water's front. Boatbuilding and maintenance were important industries until the end of the Second World War. Small fast boats were built for the Navy and the RAF as well as luxury speed boats. During their heyday, commercial flying boats were based off Shore Road where nearly 900 people were employed until 1950. The last airworthy Sunderland flying boat flew into Southampton Water in the spring of 1989 and moored off Hythe Pier.

These are key features in the conservation area:

- The **pier** was officially opened on January 1st 1881. This, the last cast iron pier on Southampton Water still in use, is the longest pier on the south coast at 2,100 ft (646m). During 1909 tracks were laid along the north side and hand propelled trolleys carried goods and luggage. In the summer of 1922 a narrow gauge electric railway opened to take passengers the full length of the Pier. Today the ferry is still an important part of the local transport system to Southampton.
- **St John the Baptist's Church** was built in the 1870s to replace a previous smaller church building on an adjacent site. At that time the new church could hold the total population of Hythe!

- Important groups of **well established trees** are to be found around the area eg, to the rear of properties on the east side of St John's Street - various impressive pines - and in the churchyard - yews and limes.
- **The Drummond Arms** (Grade II) occupies a prominent site opposite the head of the Pier. It is built in a classical design of yellow brick in Flemish bond over a rusticated stone ground floor. On the south side of the building a later single-storeyed wing of former stables extends along the side of Pylewell Road.
- **Prospect Place** contains the most complete group of historic buildings in the conservation area. Part of its charm lies in the irregularity of style and form of these frontages. Yellow 19th century brick is followed by painted brick dated 1721 - 1729 and two more of 19th century brick, painted different colours, each house being stepped backwards or forwards of its neighbour. Finally, after the mathematical tiles of Nos 17 and 19, No 21 is 19th century stucco with 'Gothick' detailing and large paned bay windows.

These are some of the things that make Hythe special - they need to be looked after:

- **History**  
The Victorian pier.  
The relationship between the village centre and the water.
- **Buildings**  
Small 17th and 18th century, two-storey brick houses rendered and incised with false stone courses and painted.  
Mathematical tiles at 17 - 19 Prospect Place - not to be confused with brick!  
Victorian terraces in School Road and Shore Road unlisted, and unfortunately altered with some inappropriate window openings and styles, doors and front boundary treatments.  
The traditional shapes and mouldings of original windows, both casements and sashes, give a building much more character than upvc replacements and every effort should be made to retain them by keeping them in good repair.
- **Landscape/Townscape**  
Iron railings of different styles are prominent on many street frontages.  
Open space on reclaimed land at the waterside at Prospect Place.
- **Setting**  
Views over Southampton Water from Prospect Place and The Promenade.
- **Potential for enhancement**  
The area near the Pier Head could easily be improved to open up access to the waterfront.  
The Shore Road frontage around Murray's Hotel has plans for redevelopment with small-scale buildings in keeping with the area.  
A major phased programme of improvements for pedestrians is being sought in the Pylewell Precinct and at the High Street/St John's Street/The Marsh junction.  
Sites outside the conservation area can and sometimes (Marsh Parade, various car parks) do detract from its character. Chances to upgrade these peripheral areas should be taken.





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