Torquay Neighbourhood Plan:
Wellswood & Torwood

The area of Wellswood and Torwood covers two rocky headlands on the southeast perimeter of Torquay, bordered on one side by Sea. The ward covers an area of 414 hectares, of which almost 1/4 is green space. This important publically accessible space gives a distinctive character to the area and much is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value.

Over 40,000 years ago early man found shelter in the deep caves at Kent's Cavern in the Ilsham Valley. Today this forms the gateway to UNESCO's English Riviera Global Geopark. The area also has the highest density of internationally important geosites of any ward in Torbay; and most of its 4.75 mile of coastline is designated as being of national importance.

In the early 1800's, as Torquay began to develop as a holiday destination, prosperous families began to build detached villas on the wooded slopes overlooking the harbour. The design and layout of the Warberries and the adjoining Lincombes, essentially between 1840 and 1860, are cited as "the single most important stage of development in Torquay's rise as one of England's most fashionable resorts" (Torbay Council, 2006) . The scale of building in an extensive landscaped setting, and its confident execution over nearly 170 acres, became the hallmark for the mid-19th century vogue resort. Although some of these villas have been redeveloped into hotels or apartments, thanks to the designation of the Lincombes and Warberry Conservation Areas, the spacious, open nature has remained largely intact.

The accommodation provided by major hotels, including two with four stars, combined with this unique setting plays an important part in Torbay's holiday offer.

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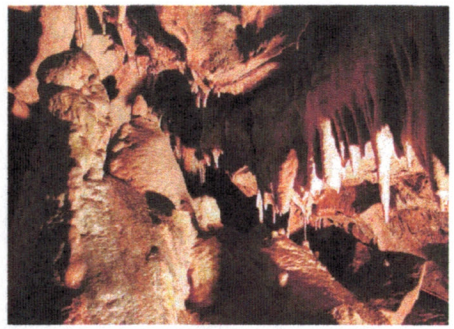

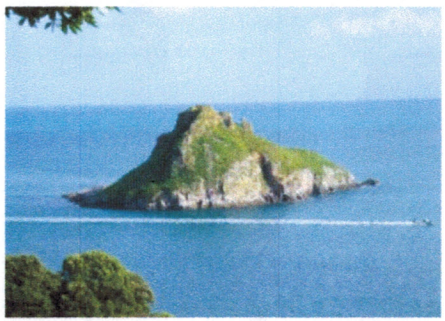
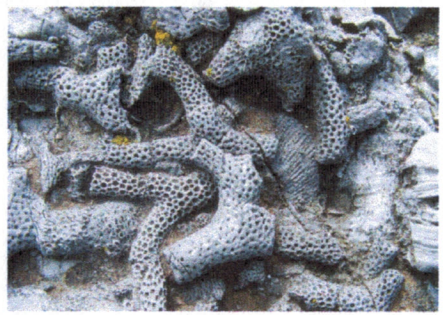

Images clockwise from above left: Meadfoot Beach, Kents Cavern, Monterey Pines, Torquay Museum on Torwood Street, Thatcher Rock, Fossilised coral on Meadfoot Beach, Ilsham Valley, Warberry Villa

At the heart lies Wellswood Green with its shops, primary school and church. The A379, descending towards the harbour, links Wellswood with Torwood. Home to Torquay Museum and a high density of restaurants, bars and food outlets this area includes a number of redevelopment opportunites. However the architecture combined with the open spaces, woodland, rocky coastline and riviera pines mark out the area as one of outstanding natural beauty.

OBJECTIVES

1. Retain all Public Green areas for the benefit of visitors and residents, improving waste mangement and toilet facilities.
2. Retain existing conservation areas and density of development
3. Encourage and promote redevelopment of Torwood Street area and Terrace Car Park whilst retaining sufficient parking for local businesses
4. Continue to allow small hotels and brownfield sites to be redeveloped for family housing, whilst preserving building density and character
5. Encourage continued maintenance and upgrading of South West Coast Path and associated areas e.g. Hope's Nose
6. Re-open Redgate Beach and Footpath to Walls Hill
7. Address traffic management through Wellswood (Ilsham Road), improving character and environment
8. Actively encourage diversity and prosperity of local businesses in Wellswood
9. Consider proposals for redevelopment of the Palace Hotel and grounds, retaining a hotel
10. Remove onstreet parking meters

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