



Ringmore – loss of the Undeveloped Coast in the foreground of this image.





PLANNING REF: 1683/21/FUL

DESCRIPTION: Change of use of agricultural field to garden for growing vegetables, and erection of poly tunnel and shed/stable.

ADDRESS: Land adjacent to The Old School House, The Sycamores, Tosca Ringmore TQ7 4HJ.

3rd August 2021

LETTER OF OBJECTION FROM THE SOUTH HAMS SOCIETY

The South Hams Society interest

For the last 60 years, the South Hams Society has been stimulating public interest and care for the beauty, history and character of the South Hams. We encourage high standards of planning and architecture that respect the character of the area. We aim to secure the protection and improvement of the landscape, features of historic interest and public amenity and to promote the conservation of the South Hams as a living, working environment. We take the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty very seriously and work hard to increase people's knowledge and appreciation of our precious environment. We support the right development - in the right places - and oppose inappropriate development.

Introduction

This application site is part of the Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast and in the highly protected landscape of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The South Hams Society had previously written to notify the council back in February 2021 that changes had been made to remove a hedgerow and domesticate an area of land that is in the undeveloped and heritage coast at Ringmore. Tree removal was witnessed along with the loss of a Devon hedgerow, the repositioning of boundaries and the domestication of agricultural land, all without the required planning consent.

Further progress of this transition occurred to the extent that the work is largely complete. We have come to expect a planning application will be submitted as a route to resolve planning breaches. We note that the planning application form has been incorrectly filled out with what must be known as a false statement. As a result, the planning application has been incorrectly advertised. This planning application is retrospective and it should have been advertised as retrospective.

It is disappointing that the LPA's enforcement team has not worked with the planning department in discussing the case, because it should have been abundantly clear to the LPA that the work had already started.

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The planning application form

Considering that there is another application submitted for The Sycamores 0497/21/HHO, we would expect the planning department to be working together.

Section 5 of the application form is wrongly filled out and we would suggest that the text is disingenuous.

The work had started because an enforcement request has been made to the district council, so the first false statement has been made.

<p>5. Description of the Proposal</p> <p>Please describe details of the proposed development or works including any change of use.</p> <p>If you are applying for Technical Details Consent on a site that has been granted Permission In Principle, please include the relevant details in the description below.</p> <p>We have each purchased a plot of Agricultural land (plots A, B, C) and wish to apply for 'change of use' to Garden land so that we can have semi raised beds for growing vegetables; plots A & C would additionally like a poly tunnel for growing more tender fruits and vegetables and growing plants from seeds etc. We would also like to include an agricultural shed, something similar to a stable /field shelter located part on the newly purchased land and partly on the previous stock fence. The reason for change of use is that we understand you cannot have these on agricultural land.</p> <p>The overall look of all plots will continue to look agricultural, as none of us want to have flower borders etc. on them. We will be leaving the land predominantly to grass and will be planting fruit trees, and wildflower meadows/habitats etc. to make them into magnets for birds, butterflies and bees etc.</p> <p>Has the work or change of use already started? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No</p>

We also witnessed activity that was far removed from the description given in this application.

Section 10 of the application form is also incorrectly filled out as there were trees and a hedgerow on the site that could influence the development that have been removed.

<p>10. Trees and Hedges</p> <p>Are there trees or hedges on the proposed development site? <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No</p> <p>And/or: Are there trees or hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No</p> <p>If Yes to either or both of the above, you may need to provide a full tree survey, at the discretion of your local planning authority. If a tree survey is required, this and the accompanying plan should be submitted alongside your application. Your local planning authority should make clear on its website what the survey should contain, in accordance with the current 'BS5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations'.</p>
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The planning policy boundaries

The hedgerow alongside the three combined properties has existed since at least 1841 with slight alignment changes occurring by 1885.

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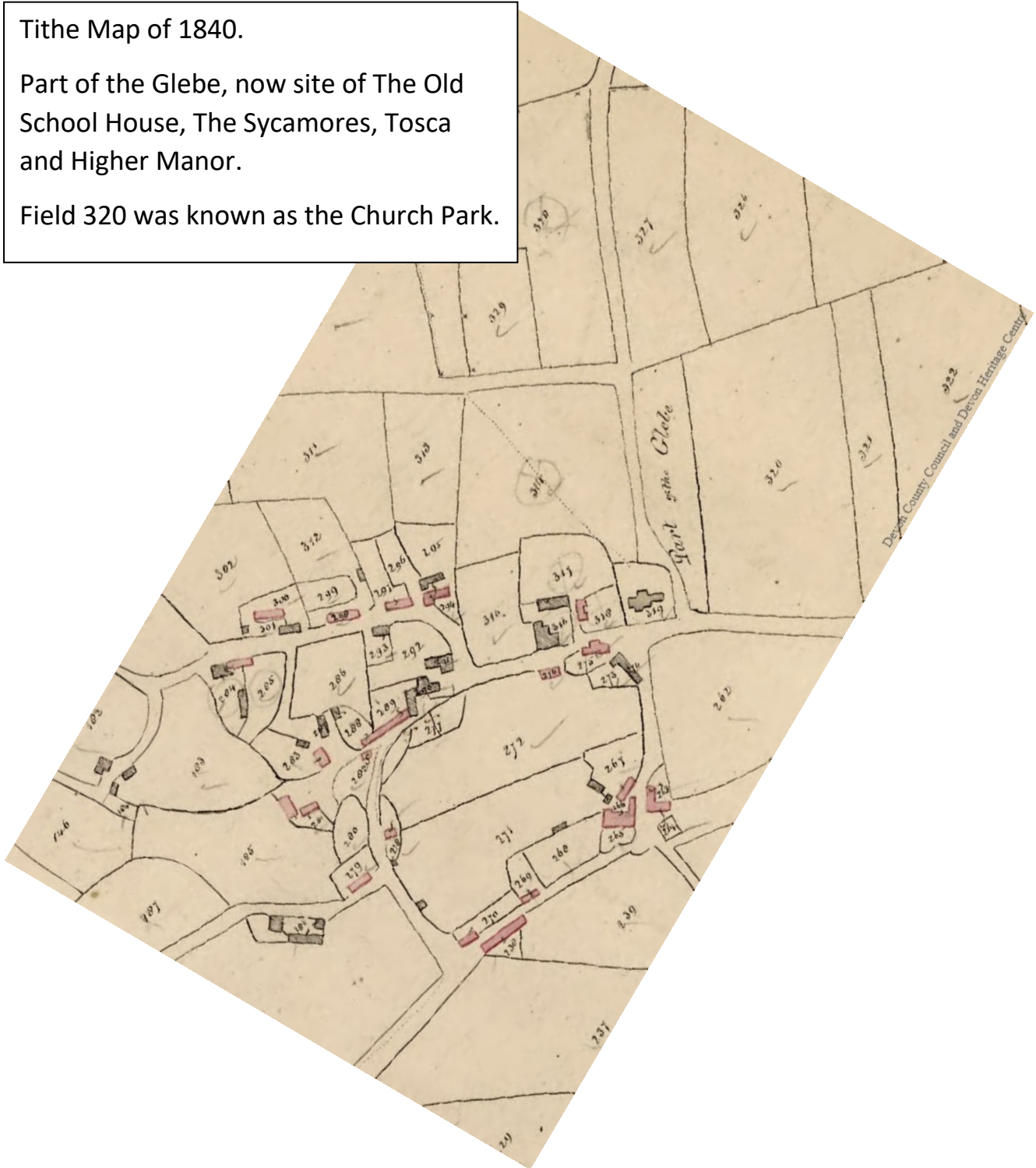
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Tithe Map of 1840.

Part of the Glebe, now site of The Old School House, The Sycamores, Tosca and Higher Manor.

Field 320 was known as the Church Park.

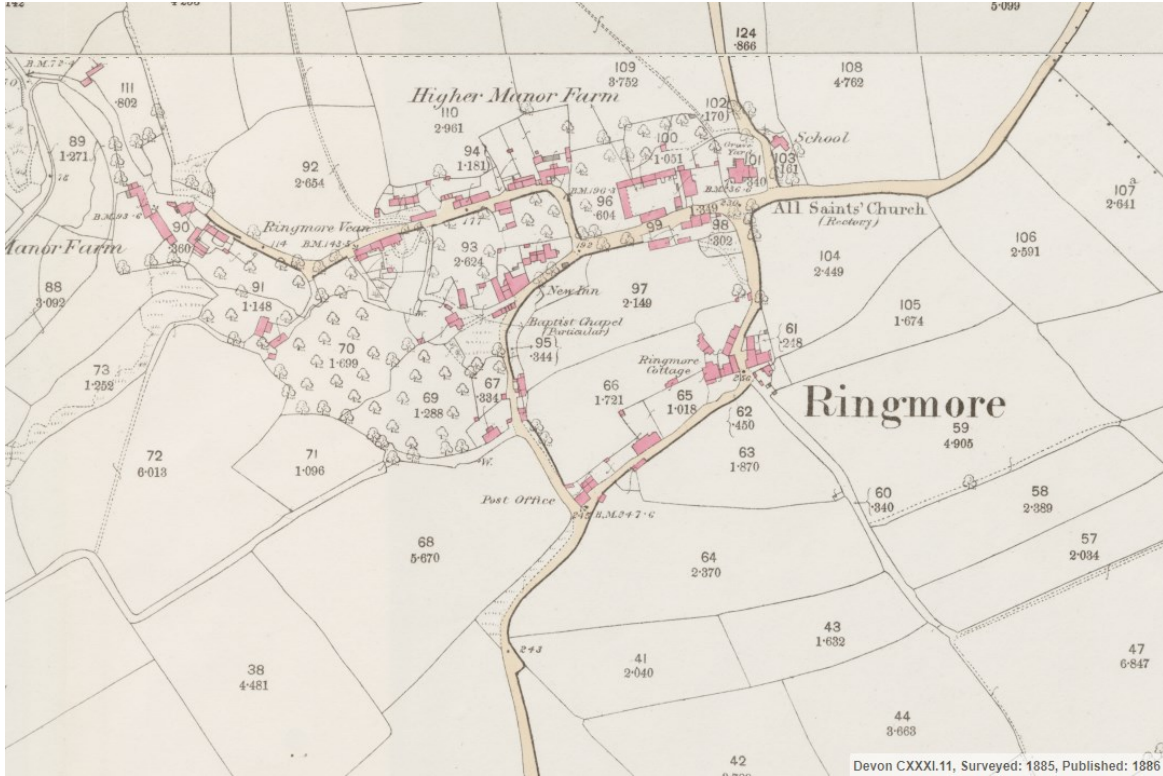


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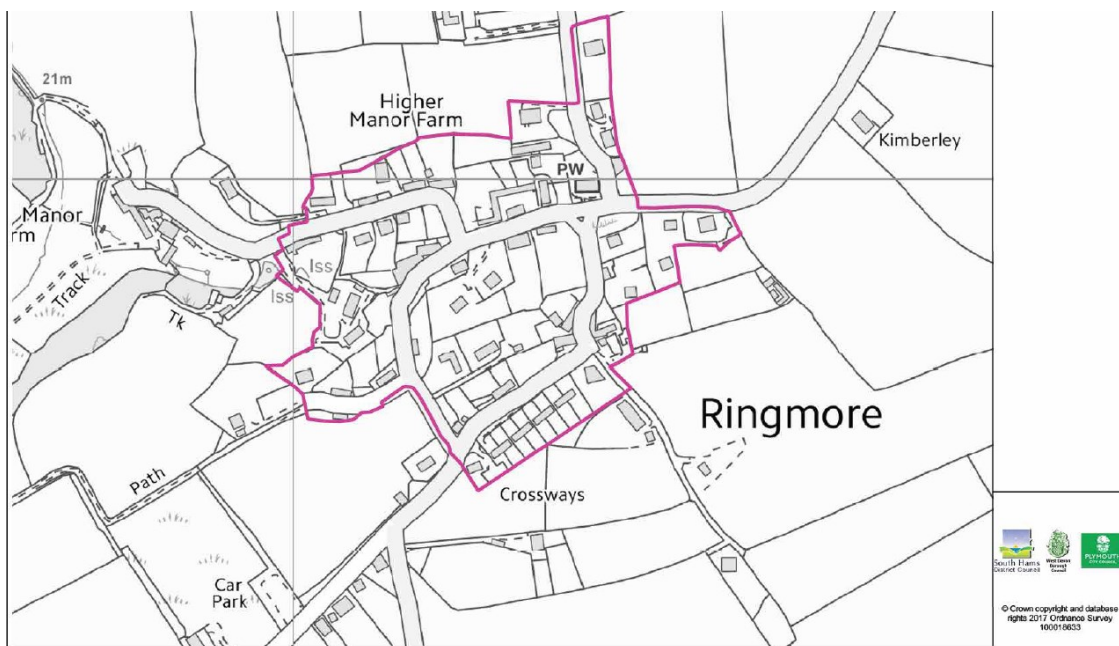
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Devon CXXXL11 – 1885. The Old School first appears on this map.



Below, the Ringmore settlement boundary proposed by the joint councils. The unauthorised development protrudes outside the settlement boundary and the developing neighbourhood plan includes the same boundary.



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The Undeveloped Coast.



The Ringmore Conservation boundary.



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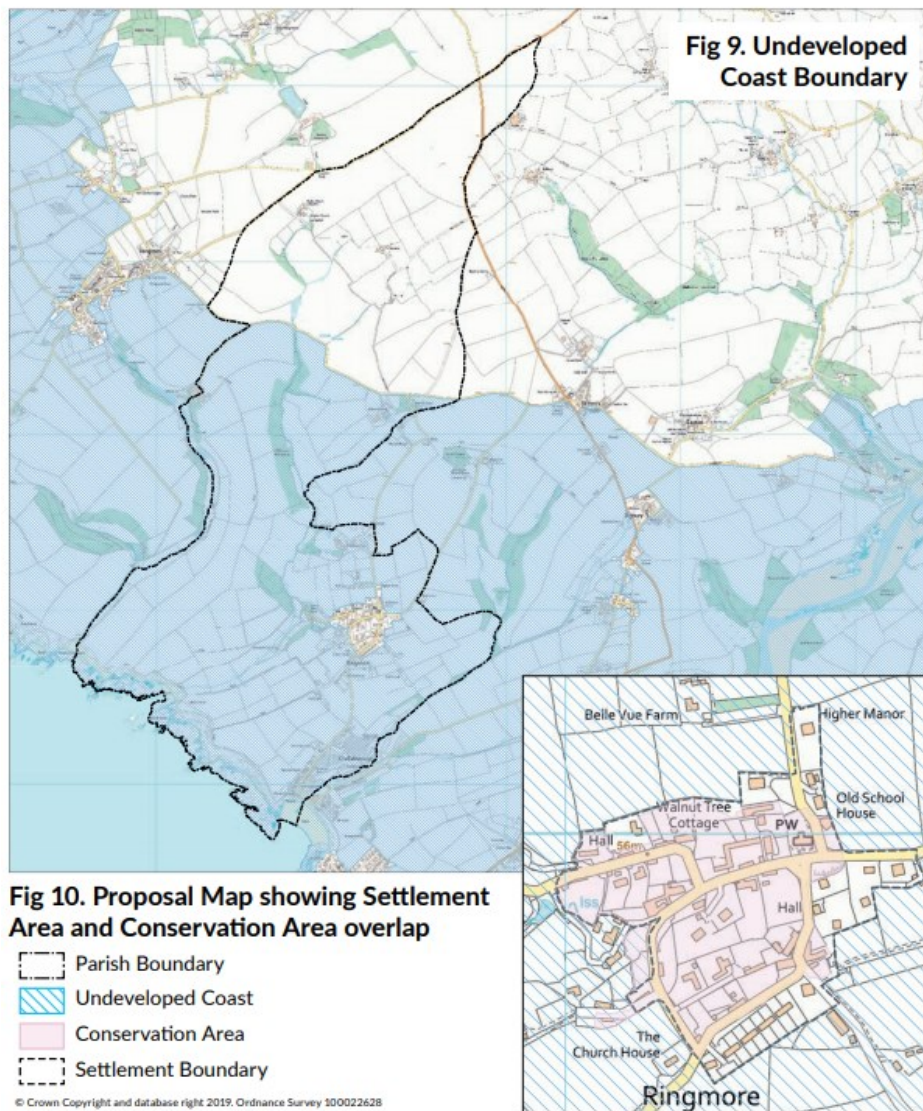
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Ringmore doesn't have an adopted neighbourhood plan (NP) yet, but it is worth noting the proposed settlement boundary.

The Ringmore NP proposes to use the settlement boundary that was submitted for the JLP consultation. This proposal is outside the proposed settlement boundary and in the Undeveloped Coast.

Fig 10 below shows that the original JLP consultation Settlement Area and Conservation Area overlap within the village of Ringmore. It is proposed that new developments are confined to the "Settlement Area" with any development proposal complying with JLP Dev 25 for Nationally protected landscapes and NP requirements.





Whilst the South Hams Society recognise the NP is not at the stage to be given material planning weight, it does conform to National Planning policy and the Joint Local Plan policy with regards to the protection afforded the Heritage / Undeveloped Coast and the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the settlement boundary is consistent with the settlement boundary the district council presented at the JLP examination process.

The South Hams Society is surprised to find that the Parish Council appears willing to ignore these protections that it is espousing in the NP process and disregard the national and local plan protections in force.

The Society believe that the key policy which is at odds with the proposal is DEV24 of the JLP.

DEV24 - Undeveloped Coast and Heritage Coast

Development which would have a detrimental effect on the undeveloped and unspoilt character, appearance or tranquility of the Undeveloped Coast, estuaries, and the Heritage Coast will not be permitted except under exceptional circumstances.

Development will only be permitted in the Undeveloped Coast where the development:

1. Can demonstrate that it requires a coastal location.
2. It cannot reasonably be located outside the Undeveloped Coast.
3. **Protects, maintains and enhances the unique landscape and seascape character and special qualities of the area.**
4. is consistent with policy statements for the local policy unit in the current Shoreline Management Plan.
5. is consistent with the relevant Heritage Coast objectives, as contained within the relevant AONB Management Plan.

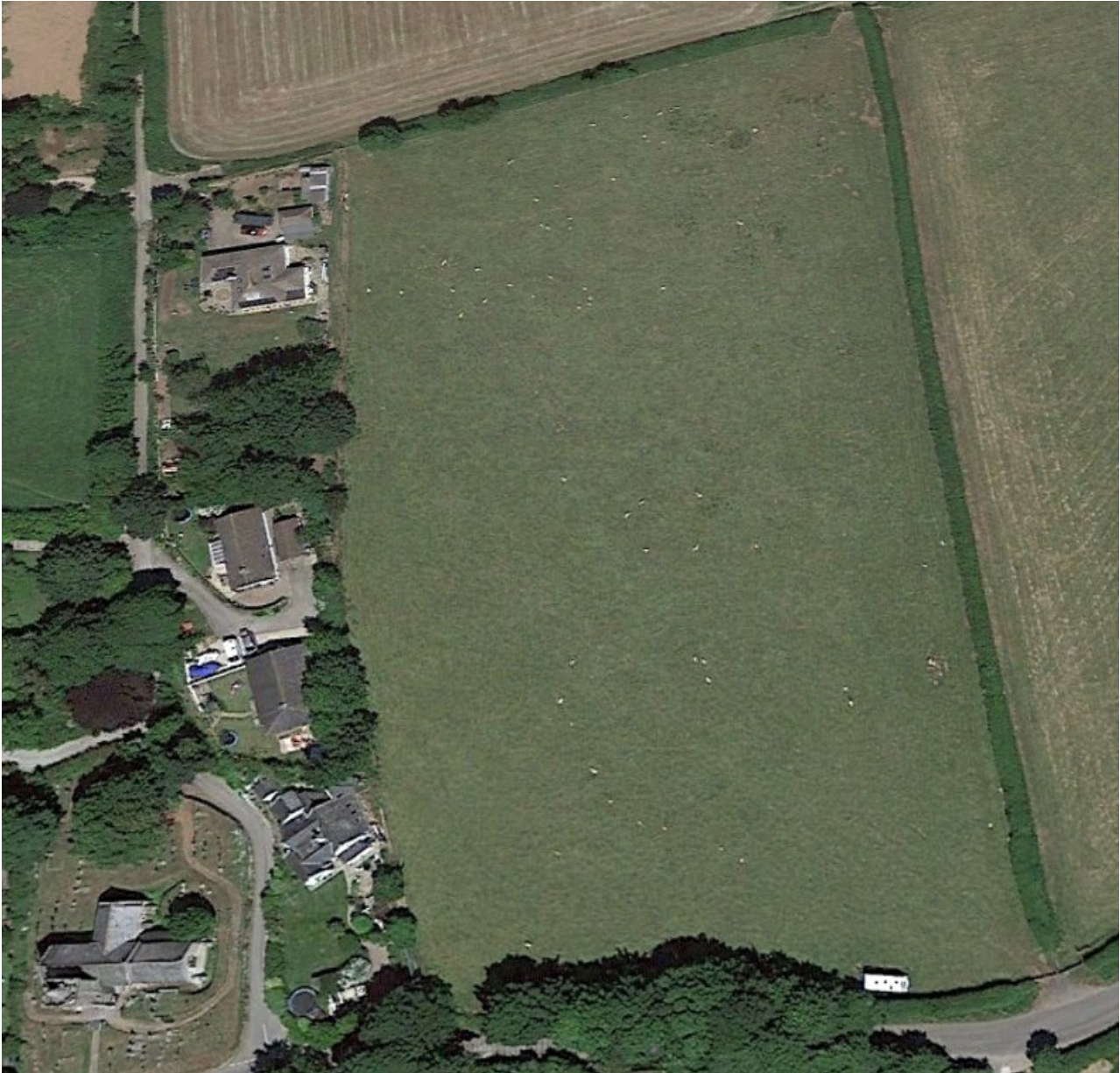
Permitting this application to change the undeveloped coast to domestic gardens is completely at odds with policy DEV24 and sets a precedent that undermines the LPAs planning policy for the undeveloped coast. If approval was permitted, any resident in Ringmore could obtain undeveloped coast farmland and transform it into part of a domestic garden and the LPA would struggle, if not be powerless, to stop that transition. That would probably also be true elsewhere in the protected coastal region. **Exceptional circumstances have not been demonstrated.**

The policy was introduced to protect the finite resource that is the Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast which has already has seen considerable development damage since the creation of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1960. Nearby Challaborough is an example of this heritage coastal development damage (as can be seen in the front page image). The local plan has been through a rigorous consultation process, as is the case for Ringmore's Neighbourhood Plan.



The landscape changes already completed

Satellite image dated 22nd June 2018



We have recent images of one of the three properties from its sale, to assist in our understanding of the changes that are occurring to this and neighbouring sites.

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The 2014 sale images. This image looks east towards the field in 2014



The field boundary 2014.



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The South Hams Society visited the location back in February. The field boundary had been removed alongside The Sycamores and the agricultural land in the undeveloped coast was observed to be being used for domestic recreational purposes.

February 2021



Trampolines, football equipment and vehicle parking was witnessed plus what appears to be a permanent camper van parking bay in the field which can be seen on the next image.

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April 2021 - The last remaining tree seen in this image was on the hedgerow of the old field boundary, now removed.



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The position of the old field bank & tree boundary. This image taken on the 27th April 2021. Planning application form dated 5th May 2021.



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The most significant changes alongside the Old School and The Sycamores.



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The South Hams Society firmly believes that the local planning authority must protect the Heritage Coast / Undeveloped Coast from these domestic incursions in accordance with its JLP strategic policy:

Policy SPT12

Strategic approach to the natural environment The distinctive characteristics, special qualities and important features of the natural environment of the Plan Area will be protected, conserved and enhanced.

This will be through a strategic approach which protects the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, commensurate with their status, and takes account of the natural infrastructure functions of different sites, habitats and features. Key principles include:

4. Conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the South Devon and the Tamar Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the adjacent Dartmoor National Park.

5. Protecting and enhancing the distinctive landscapes of the Undeveloped Coast, particularly within the South Devon Heritage Coast, with support for improvements to public access to and enjoyment of the coast.

Therefore we respectfully request that this application to transform land recorded as part of the Undeveloped Coast into domestic gardens, over which the LPA will have no planning control, must be refused.

For and on behalf of the South Hams Society.

Richard Howell,

Chairman.

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