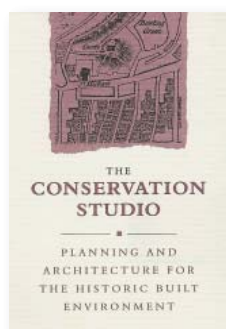


NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

August 2008





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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the Management Proposals

While there has been a conservation area covering Newcastle Town Centre for over thirty years, the effectiveness of this designation depends upon the way in which the conservation area has been managed in the past. This is not simply a matter of planning controls being exercised correctly by the Borough Council, as significant contributions can also be made by local businesses, residents and community groups. The purpose of the Management Proposals, therefore, is to provide a framework for future actions which although primarily the responsibility of the Borough Council, will also depend on the co-operation and enthusiasm of local people and local organisations.

Government policy¹ has made it clear that conservation areas are not necessarily 'preservation' areas. Change is an inevitable facet of modern life and the challenge is to manage change in a manner that does not lose sight of the special historic qualities of a place.

Local authorities are required by law to periodically review their conservation areas and the preparation of Character Appraisals and Management Proposals forms part of this obligation. Indeed, keeping Character Appraisals up to date is a Key Performance Indicator in the Best Value assessment of local authorities, although after July 2007 this no longer included Management Proposals.

The involvement and approval of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and will hopefully mean that the various actions identified in the Management Proposals will have greater impact and longevity. For the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area, the early consultation with the principal stakeholders, a stakeholders' meeting, and a full period of public consultation on the draft documents, has provided opportunities for contributions from the local community at the formative stages.

The proactive management of conservation areas gives clarity and robustness to decision making, which means that issues may be more defensible in, for instance, planning appeals. Both documents will therefore be

of use to the Borough Council when determining applications for change within or on the edges of the conservation area, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for refurbishment, alteration or new development.

This document should be read in association with the Newcastle Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document, currently (October 2007) being finalised before going out to public consultation. This contains a number of policies and recommendations for action which are particularly relevant in terms of the management of the historic environment and these Management Proposals have therefore been written to compliment, not repeat, the various recommendations of the SPD. The preparation of an Action Plan, based on these Management Proposals, but incorporating the recommendations of the SPD, is recommended in Chapter 8.

1.2 The Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal

A Character Appraisal, which is published separately, has identified the principal positive and negative features of the conservation area, and provided an outline of the main issues.

Summary of positive features:

- The conservation area encompasses the core of the historic market town, with some 51 listed buildings including the medieval church of St Giles' (listed grade II*);
- Associated with, but not part of, Stoke City and Arnold's Bennett's five pottery towns;
- Hilly topography on south-west facing slope dropping down to the valley of the Lyme Brook;
- Some glimpses of tree-lined slopes beyond the brook;
- Wide variety of shops and other commercial premises provide vitality;
- Largely traffic-free Town Centre;
- High Street retains its wide open market place 'The Stones' which is still in almost daily use as a street market; another wide space with a variety of historic buildings;

- Medieval burgage plots can be plotted in the surviving boundaries to either side of the High Street and Ironmarket, with narrow alleys cutting through to the back lanes;
- The Guildhall, a 1861 remodelling of an early 18th century building, dominates views along High Street;
- No. 36 High Street retains an unusual timber-framed façade and dates to the late 16th century;
- Other buildings from the 17th to the 19th centuries, some of them listed, can be seen along the sides of the principal streets;
- Holy Trinity RC Church, built in 1834 from blue vitrified brick;
- Other good examples of 19th and 20th century educational, municipal and military buildings;
- Lancaster Buildings, an interesting building of the late 1930s containing shops with offices above, is located on the junction of High Street and Ironmarket;
- Some surviving historic shopfronts;
- Use of red brick with faience and terracotta details;
- Occasional red sandstone (St Giles' Church) and a few timber-framed buildings;
- Queen's Gardens, with its statue of Queen Victoria, is a well used and generally well cared for public park;
- A degree of uniformity in the public realm, such as street lighting, signage, and paving, has already been achieved;
- Impressive hanging baskets and other floral displays throughout the conservation area.



Iron Market



High Street



Bulky 1960s development lies between the High Street and the Ring Road

Summary of the principal issues:

Newcastle and its setting

- The protection of views across the Lyme Valley;
- New development on the edges of the conservation area should be appropriately scaled and detailed.

New development

- 1960s development has already had a severely adverse effect on the historic Town Centre;
- Pressure for new development, particularly housing and offices on backland sites;
- The protection of the existing historic plots and

historic boundaries from new development;

- New development should seek the reinstatement and enhancement of this distinctive historic character;
- Scale and form of development needs to reflect historic precedent.

Town Centre

- The protection of the town's economic vitality and the encouragement of appropriate new businesses;
- Improvements to shopfronts and advertisements, and the protection of existing historic shopfronts;
- Instigate a Tree Management Programme;
- Consider closing off Hassell Street to through traffic;
- Continue the protection of the high quality townscape, and insist on new development which fits into the historic context;
- Detailed shopfront guidance required.



Lancaster Building is in urgent need of repair

Public realm:

- Public realm improvements, including changes to paving and planters;
- Removal of street clutter and out of date signage;
- Protection of existing historic street surfaces;
- Improved pedestrian access into the Town Centre.

Buildings

- Consider a Local List to provide additional protection to unlisted 'positive' buildings;
- The control of unlisted positive buildings;
- Article 4 Directions – these might be appropriate in residential streets such as Well Street and Garden Street;
- Use planning enforcement powers to address derelict and potentially dangerous buildings in the Town Centre.

Site specific

- Ensure that the Guildhall and Lancaster Buildings are properly repaired and bought back into full beneficial use;
- Ensure the future of the former C of E School facing Queen's Gardens;
- Assist with the restoration of the Queen Victoria's statue in Queen's Gardens;
- Consider a grant scheme, such as the HLF Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) in the Church Street/Bridge Street area;
- Encourage the demolition and suitable redevelopment of any of the buildings marked as 'negative' on the Townscape Appraisal map.

Design Guidance:

- Introduce design guidance for shopfronts;
- Update design guidance for security shutters.

2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.1 The implications of conservation area designation

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and enhancement” of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a general duty to review designations ‘from time to time’ and to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. There is a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as conservation area appraisals or grant schemes) to that end;
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area;
- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting conservation areas. This is usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper;
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any unlisted building in a conservation area and the local authority or the Secretary of State may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained;
- Written notice must be given to the Borough Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area;
- The display of advertisements may be more restricted than elsewhere;
- The Borough Council or the Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices;
- The energy conservation expectations of the Building Regulations (Part L) do not necessarily apply to buildings within a conservation area;
- Powers exist for local authorities, English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to assist with the upkeep of buildings in conservation areas, although these are usually targeted to areas of economic deprivation.

2.2 The control of development and change

The requirements for planning permission

Certain works to family houses within a conservation area, which are formally considered to be “permitted development”, will now require planning approval from the Borough Council. The overall effect of these additional controls is that the amount of building works which can be carried out to a family house or within its grounds without a planning application is substantially smaller in a conservation area than elsewhere.

These are:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to family houses in conservation areas where they add more than 10% or 50 cubic metres in volume to the property (whichever is greater). This is a slightly smaller amount than the usual requirement for planning permission which is limited to 15% or 70 cubic metres, except for terraced houses which are also limited to 10% or 50 cubic metres, wherever they are located;
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to family houses in conservation areas, using stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles;
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a family house resulting in a material alteration to its shape, most notably the addition of dormer windows;
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a family house whose cubic capacity exceeds 10 cubic metres. This is especially important for sheds, garages, and other outbuildings in gardens within conservation areas.

Where a building is statutorily listed, different legislation applies, as all internal and external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building require Listed Building Consent. Furthermore, commercial properties (such as shops and public houses), and houses which are in multiple occupation (flats) have far fewer permitted development rights and therefore planning permission is already required for many alterations to these buildings.

Satellite dishes

The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas and are set out in OPDM Circular 10/2005. This states that for all unlisted buildings in a conservation area, in whatever use and of whatever size, planning permission is required for all 'antennas' (which includes satellite dishes and any other equipment used to deliver electronic communications) which are located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which both face onto, and are visible, from a road. In such cases, planning permission will usually be refused. The rules governing other locations on the building are extremely complex so it is always best to ask the local planning authority if planning permission is required before carrying out the work.

For listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is practically always required for the installation of 'antennas' and if the Borough Council considers that the installation will have an adverse effect on the special architectural or historic interest of the building, Consent will usually be refused.

Conventional TV aerials and their mountings and poles are not considered to be 'development' and therefore planning permission is not required.

(See also the OPDM pamphlet, *A Householders' Planning Guide to the Installation of Antennas* available on the OPDM website).

Article 4 directions

Permitted development rights may be withdrawn if the Borough Council imposes an Article 4 direction. This does not mean that development, such as changes to windows or the erection of satellite aerials, will necessarily be impossible. It does, however, mean that planning permission has to be sought and this allows for the merits of a proposal to be considered against the conservation interests. This document includes a recommendation for an Article 4 Direction in part of the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area, which is discussed in greater detail in section 7.7.

Telecommunications masts

The law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in conservation areas without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand. Further information can be found in the second edition of PPG8 *Telecommunications*.

Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending lopping or felling a tree greater than 75 mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Borough Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Borough Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are no longer exempt, although slightly different constraints occur where the tree forms part of a managed forest or is in another agricultural use.

2.3 National policy and guidance

Central government policy on conservation areas is contained in PPG15.² This covers the designation of areas and the responsibilities that stem from designation, including the appraisal of the special interest of conservation areas and the control of development affecting them. It also makes the general point that '*conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives and should not generally be seen as in opposition to one another*'.

PPG15 sets the expectations by urging local authorities '*to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment*'. The expectations are further developed in English Heritage guidance on the appraisal and management of conservation areas.³

2.4 The Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework

The context for the local plan is provided by:

- The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy;
- The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 (adopted March 2001);
- The Minerals Local Plan (adopted December 1999);
- The Local Waste Plan (adopted February 2002);
- The Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 (adopted October 2003).

The last four documents will shortly be replaced by the new *Local Development Framework* (LDF). This new planning system was established by the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*, which abolishes Structure and Local Plans and replaces them with *Local Development Documents*. Policies in the Structure Plan and the Local Plan remained in force until September 2007, although some might be 'saved' into the new LDF. More information about this important change to the planning system can be found on the Borough Council's website: www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk.

For the moment, In the Local Plan, most of the Town Centre Conservation Area is covered by the 'Newcastle Town Centre Insert' map. This confirms that for Local Plan policies, the boundary of the Town Centre is defined by the Inner Ring Road. The map confirms that the most relevant policies are:

- Policies B9-18, and 20 apply to the whole Town Centre.

A summary of these policies is included at Appendix I. Another relevant document, *Security shutters for shops and business premises in conservation areas*, was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in December 1992 and is in the process of being updated to reflect changes in legislation.

A substantial amount of work has been carried out in the Town Centre area over the past few years and a number of reports completed. The most relevant are:

- North Staffordshire Integrated Economic Development Strategy;
- Newcastle Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document Spring 2007;
- RENEW North Staffordshire (the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder) Assessment of Historical Significance;
- Newcastle Town Centre Public Realm Strategy (Taylor Young) 2004;
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre: Eastern Approaches Urban Design Study (Latham Architects) June 2005;
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre: Western Edge Urban Design Contextual Study (Latham Architects/ARUP) January 2006.

A summary of the relevant planning policies is provided at Appendix I.

3 ACTIONS BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

3.1 The Development Control process

Local authorities already have controls available through their planning powers, but much depends upon how they are interpreted and implemented. For instance, any material changes to the appearance of properties that are not single dwellings require planning permission, but the interpretation of what is 'material' is for the Borough Council to decide. A new shopfront is generally regarded as a material change, but there is less certainty about the renewal of windows on upper storeys or a change in roof materials.

As detailed in Section 2 above, single dwellings have considerable permitted development rights that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission. These works include, for example, changes to doors, windows, roof materials or rainwater goods and the construction of minor extensions. Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a cumulative effect that is damaging to historic areas. Where this is a problem, an Article 4 Direction should be considered and such a Direction is recommended in part of the conservation area in section 6.4.

Commercial buildings and flats have fewer permitted development rights, but an Article 4 Direction can be useful for controlling, for instance, the painting of walls. The Council needs to be consistent and proactive in its interpretation of what it considers to be a 'material' alteration to such buildings – for instance, many Councils insist on planning applications being made for the insertion of uPVC windows or for new roof materials above shops or in offices.

A common complaint is that planning decisions are inconsistent. While each has to be determined on its own merits, much can be achieved by having a clear interpretation of statutes, detailed policy and guidance, and training to help elected Councillors to work within these constraints.

It is important also that Council Members and officers should be aware that development proposals can have an affect on a conservation area even when they are some distance outside it. In such cases, the duty to pay special attention to the character and appearance of the conservation area still applies.

Action 1: *The Borough Council will adopt a consistent and liberal interpretation of what it considers to be a material change.*

Action 2: *The Borough Council will use Article 4 Directions where there is evidence that permitted development is having a negative affect on the character of a conservation area.*

Action 3: *The Borough Council will promote consistent decision making by providing training opportunities for the decision makers.*

3.2 An Enforcement Strategy

Most local authorities subscribe to the Cabinet Office *Enforcement Concordat*, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement, such as openness, consistency, proportionality and responding to complaints. The Borough Council should take these forward into an enforcement strategy in order to:

- Explain the scope of planning enforcement;
- Openly define priorities;
- Set measurable standards for service delivery;
- Explain how investigations are carried out;
- Explain enforcement procedures and enforcement actions.

While public safety will come first, enforcement in relation to the historic environment should have a high priority because so much of it is irreplaceable. The strategy should also explain the circumstances when the Borough Council would make use of Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Amenity (Section 215) Notices.

Action 4: *The Council will develop an Enforcement Strategy to explain the circumstances in which various forms of action are taken and the priority that is given to the historic environment.*

3.3 The role of Historic Environment Champions

English Heritage is keen to see Historic Environment Champions to promote conservation issues in each local authority. These are preferably elected

councillors, but can be senior officers whose role, as defined by English Heritage, is to:

- Help unlock the untapped potential of the local historic environment;
- Provide leadership for heritage issues within the authority;
- Join up policy between departments across the local authority and ensure the historic environment is taken into account in the development of all the authority's policies and forward strategies;
- Develop a close working relationship with the Design Champion, ensuring that the authority has a seamless and coherent approach to the built and historic environment;
- Identify opportunities for the authority to use the historic environment in the pursuit of its wider corporate objectives.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) is equally keen for local authorities to have Design Champions and it is common for the two roles to be taken up by the same person.

The Borough Council has had a Heritage and Design Champion since April 2005 and one of their roles is to raise awareness of conservation issues and to encourage other elected councillors to make full use of the training opportunities offered by English Heritage through its HELM⁴ initiative.

Action 5: *The Borough Council will reinforce and support the role of the Heritage and Design Champion for the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme.*

3.4 Promotion and awareness

It is important that local people should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. There is a clear need to publish information on the history of each conservation area and its special qualities. This could be an effective outcome of the character appraisal process. There is also a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere.

Community involvement is an integral part of the Local Development Framework process. Involvement already happens through town and parish councils, but there is sometimes scepticism as to how well the local voice is heard at the Borough Council level. To help address this problem, the Borough Council has already established a Conservation Advisory Working Party, which considers all relevant applications and acts as an important interface between local understanding and council decision making.

Some degree of change is inevitable in conservation areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and residents can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

Action 6: *The Borough Council has placed information on its website on listed buildings and on the conservation areas in the Borough and this information should be updated and expanded as necessary.*

Action 7: *The Borough Council will ensure that information is available to enable communities to understand the significance of their conservation areas and the consequences of living and working within them. In addition to the information on the website, this could be achieved by the production of written guidance, public meetings, and public exhibition.*

Action 8: *The Borough Council will take steps to explain its planning decisions in greater detail where they are contrary to the advice of the Conservation Advisory Working Party or the parish councils.*

Action 9: *The Council will continue supporting the Conservation Advisory Working Party and will ensure that the Committee is given the opportunity of commenting on all applications affecting the historic environment in the Borough.*

3.5 The production of further guidance or leaflets

Further guidance is needed from the Borough Council to help applicants for planning permission and listed building consent and the local community. Topics include:

- Shopfronts – Design approaches for different types of building;
- Security shutters;
- Advertisement signs in a conservation area;
- Historic buildings;
- Living in a conservation area.

Action 10: *The Council will extend and update its range of published guidance to include guidance on specific topics, particularly those specified above.*

4 THE CONTROL OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction

There is an increasing emphasis in planning policy on issues relating to the historic environment, and this is particularly important in the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, with its 20 conservation areas and 365 listed building entries. The Borough includes a variety of historic settlements including the principal town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, which has three separate conservation areas already designated - Town Centre, Brampton and Stubbs Walk. This reflects the variety and quality of Newcastle's historic features, including its medieval street layout and its many historic buildings, a large proportion of which are statutorily listed. Other conservation areas cover smaller villages, such as Betley, Keele and Mucklestone or historic parks and gardens, such as Keele Hall. In addition, there are ten Scheduled Monuments in the Borough, including several which relate to the various industrial processes which once were the main form of economic activity.

It is important that this historic environment continues to be recognised and that local policies are included in the emerging Local Development Framework or accompanying documents for their future protection. Most particularly, this could include the preparation of a Local List of significant buildings (see 7.4) for the whole Borough, and the incremental preparation of Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Proposals for all of Newcastle's conservation areas in due course.

Action 11: *The Borough Council will continue to promote the historic environment and will ensure that adequate policies are included in the emerging LDF and accompanying documents.*

4.2 The control of historic buildings

Listed Buildings

Listed building Consent is required for the demolition, alteration or extension of statutorily listed buildings. The policy context for this is set by central government in PPG15. National policy is also given a local perspective in the Local Plan and in the emerging LDF. There is current guidance for owners of listed buildings within the Borough on the Borough Council's website but this needs to be up-dated and expanded, as necessary.

Action 12: *The Borough Council will continue to assess applications for Listed Building Consent in line with Borough Council policy and guidance provided in PPG15 including the preparation, where appropriate, of an archaeological evaluation.*

Locally listed buildings

There are also buildings of local significance which, although not statutorily listed, are nonetheless important to the history, appearance, character, and cultural value of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. At present, the Council has no means for giving formal recognition to the contribution made by such buildings. However, there is an increasing interest in local listing nationally. Most recently, this was expressed as positive encouragement in the government's heritage White Paper.⁵

It is recommended that the Borough Council should develop a local list in order to give better recognition and, where necessary control, of the historic environment. The first step is to agree criteria for the selection of buildings and structures for the local list. Proposed criteria are set out in Appendix 2. Buildings can be added to the list as circumstances allow, for instance through the conservation area appraisal process, or by a systematic survey of the whole district. Community involvement in the selection process will add weight to the list as a planning tool. It will also be necessary to acknowledge the local list in planning policy and state the circumstances in which it will affect planning decisions.

Action 13: *The Borough Council will ensure that resources are allocated to the preparation of a Local List including:*

- Adopting appropriate criteria;
- Including provision for local listing in planning policy;
- Involving communities in the selection of buildings and structures.

Positive buildings

Conservation area character appraisals identify buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. In general, all listed and locally listed buildings in a conservation area will be regarded as 'positive'. However, there are often many more that, together, underpin the special interest of a place.

Government policy (as set out in PPG15) is for a presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings and any proposals for their demolition must be considered against criteria similar to those for the demolition of listed buildings. It is important that owners and occupiers of property in conservation areas should be aware of whether their buildings are regarded as positive and also how applications for change or demolition will be judged.

Action 14: *The Council will ensure that local publicity for conservation areas will make clear the consequences of designation including the presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings;*

Action 15: *Applications for the demolition of any 'positive' building in a conservation area will be assessed in a similar way to applications to demolish a listed building, and the applicant will be expected to demonstrate why the building is beyond economic repair, and to prove that it has been offered on the open market as an alternative to demolition.*

4.3 The control of conservation areas

It has already been described how current legislation affects conservation areas including the need to designate, appraise and manage effectively. Apart from guidance contained in PPG 15, local policies also set out how the Borough Council will continue to monitor change and provide a rigorous planning regime.

Action 16: *The Borough Council will continue to carefully control all conservation areas within the Borough including reviewing their boundaries, providing Character Appraisals with Management Proposals on a five year cycle, and considering new areas for designation.*

4.4 The control of Scheduled Monuments and other archaeological features

Scheduled Monument Consent is currently required from English Heritage for all works which affect a Scheduled Monument. The requirements for Consent are rigorous and even quite minor changes require Consent. Owners of Scheduled Monuments must therefore contact English Heritage before commencing any work. Advice can also be provided

by the archaeological team at Staffordshire County Council.

Most of the Borough's conservation areas are intrinsically of archaeological potential and developers may be required to provide an Archaeological Evaluation before applications for development are determined by the Borough Council. Additionally, developers may be required by planning conditions to pay for an archaeological watching brief throughout the development in case archaeological features are revealed. These constraints may also apply to other sites outside conservation areas.

Action 17: *The Borough Council will continue to monitor applications for development which affect Scheduled Monuments or sites of archaeological potential extremely carefully, and such applications may be refused if it appears that the archaeological site is under threat in any way.*

5 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW

5.1 Proposed changes

Local authorities are required by law to regularly review the boundaries of their existing conservation areas, to ensure that they encompass ‘*areas of special architectural or historic interest*’. The original boundary to the conservation area was drawn up in 1973 and the boundary was subsequently amended when The Midway, Barracks Road, Well Street and parts of Merrial Street, Garden Street and London Road were added.

As part of the appraisal process in August 2007, the whole conservation area was inspected and the robustness of the present boundary assessed.

It is recommended that only one minor alteration is made to the conservation area boundary, which otherwise is considered to accurately reflect the area of ‘special architectural or historic interest’:

Addition:

- Add the whole roundabout at the junction of London Road and High Street (Grosvenor Roundabout).

This 1960s subway has been the subject of a comprehensive planting and landscaping scheme which has provided a pleasant space where local people often sit and enjoy the flowers and other plants. The conservation area boundary currently cuts straight through it and it seems logical to have the whole space within the conservation area.

5.2 The identification of buffer zones

In their guidance on Character Appraisals, English Heritage recommend the identification of ‘buffer zones’ on the edges of conservation areas where new development might have a particularly noticeable effect on the existing conservation area. In the case of Newcastle Town Centre, the main buffer zones are as shown on the Management Proposals map, and include sites which are currently in use as well as sites where new development is already being discussed with the Borough Council. These are:

Buffer Zone 1 – a large area of modern buildings in a variety of commercial uses;

Buffer Zone 2 – a largely empty site but includes a grade II listed Building at Risk (the former public house no. 65 Lower Street);

Buffer Zone 3 – the Sainsbury’s site and multi-story car park;

Buffer Zone 4 – this site includes some new buildings in commercial uses as well as empty sites awaiting redevelopment;

Buffer zone 5 – a mixture of commercial and other buildings currently in use.

Policies to control these areas are included in the specific policies set out in the next chapter.



Add the whole of the roundabout to the conservation area



No.65 Lower Street

6 POLICIES TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 The protection of the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area and its setting

The character of a conservation area can be vulnerable to actions taken outside its boundaries as much as to those taken within the area. It is important, therefore, that the duty to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas is exercised in relation to the use of planning powers particularly where sites come up for development just outside the boundary of a conservation area, or where significant views into or out of the area may be affected. It has also been upheld on appeal that Council's can refuse applications for development in these circumstances on the grounds that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the setting of the conservation area.

In practice, many conservation areas have a context of landscape designations that provide strong protection. The connection has to be made that policies for the protection of both landscapes and conservation areas must work together for the mutual benefit of the historic and natural environments.

Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area is largely encompassed by the Ring Road and beyond this lies a largely urban hinterland, parts of which are included in the Brampton Conservation Area or in the Stubbs Walk Conservation Area. Other sections of the conservation area boundary abut areas of modern development or sites currently awaiting redevelopment, such as next to Lower Street, Ryecroft, Brunswick Street, Barracks Road, and Garden Street. Whilst these sites lie outside the designated area, they form part of the setting to the conservation area, and this is particularly noticeable to the south-east where Morrisons Supermarket has had a noticeably negative impact on views into the historic town from the approach road into Newcastle from the south.

Policy Newcastle TC CA No. 1:

The Borough Council will carefully monitor applications on the outskirts or edges of the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area, particularly in Buffer Zones 1-5, and will refuse those which could adversely affect the

conservation area due to the proposed development's use, height, bulk, detailing, loss of open space, or the loss or the negative effect on important views into or out of the conservation area.

6.2 The control of new development

Opportunities for new development within the existing conservation area are very limited due to the closely built-up buildings, small or non-existent back gardens, and lack of open space. However there are a large number of modern buildings, with little or no architectural merit, whose demolition and replacement would be positively welcomed. These are marked as 'negative' on the Townscape Appraisal map, and of particular note is the group between Lower Street and High Street on the south-west corner of the conservation area. In this area, a sensitive rebuild which reflects the location immediately adjacent to the historic Town Centre could help to repair some of the damage caused by 1960s development and provide links through to Queen Elizabeth Park and the Lyme Brook (an aspiration of the Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document). Occasionally, these 'negative' buildings still retain some details of interest so selection may be necessary. Market Lane is another area where sensitive redevelopment, perhaps retaining some of the existing buildings, might be appropriate.

Policy Newcastle TC CA No. 2:

New development should follow the following guidelines:

- Any new development must adhere to policies within the Local Plan, the emerging LDF, and national guidance, most particularly PPG15 and PPG16;*
- The scale and general form of new development should follow established historic precedents;*
- New development should blend with the existing historic environment and should not interrupt the skyline;*
- New development involving the replacement of an existing building should not increase the volume of development on the site;*

- New development should be sympathetic to the surrounding historic buildings in terms of materials and details;
- The roofs and chimneys in the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area are an important part of its special character and new development should reflect the traditional roof forms, pitches, materials and details, of existing historic properties;
- New development within the conservation area should be carefully designed to reduce its impact on existing views, both within and into, the conservation area. New development which might adversely affect views out of the conservation area (where different planning constraints apply) will be carefully monitored.

6.3 The enhancement of historic character

Although many of the historic buildings in the conservation area are listed, where strict controls have applied for many years, a number, identified in the Character Appraisal, have been spoilt by inappropriate materials and details. Additionally, the Character Appraisal has identified an even greater number of buildings which are considered to make a 'positive' contribution to the conservation area, some of which might be considered for Local Listing. Overall the Borough Council needs to ensure that all alterations to these buildings are carried out using the correct materials and details, and that where possible modern accretions are removed. This particularly affects windows (where traditionally detailed timber not plastic or aluminium should be specified) and roof materials (where slate or clay tile should be used, rather than concrete or artificial slate).

Policy Newcastle TC CA No. 3:

The Borough Council will insist that all applications for change to historic buildings (listed, locally listed and 'positive') use the correct materials and details.

Apart from the buildings, the historic spaces and plots layouts in the conservation area are also very important. Modern development has tended to amalgamate sites, removing historic boundaries and

losing the small scale character of the medieval lanes and alleys. Future development in, or on the edges of the conservation area, should aim to restore this more intimate, domestic scale and provide a more appropriate setting to the many historic buildings.

Policy Newcastle TC CA No. 4:

When considering applications for change in, and on the edges of the conservation area, the Borough Council will insist on schemes which reflect the historical form of development and layout with particular reference to building lines, plot sizes, plot ratios, and vehicular and pedestrian access.

6.4 The management of the public realm

Streets and open spaces, collectively known as the public realm, are a major factor in the character of conservation areas, yet the management of the public realm takes place largely outside the planning system. Conservation areas can, therefore, be vulnerable to the loss of traditional paving materials and street furniture, and the imposition of unsympathetic signage without reference to their special interest.

It is important that the Borough Council should establish protocols with the Highways Authority and other stakeholders for the treatment of the public realm in its conservation areas. English Heritage has provided a general manual for streetscapes in the Midlands Region in its *Streets for All* initiative. This urges local authorities to establish more detailed strategies for the care and enhancement of streetscapes, and some of the advice contained within the document will have direct relevance to Newcastle.

However, many of the issues in the conservation area have already been identified in great detail by Taylor Young in their Public Realm Strategy, dated March 2004, and also in the Newcastle Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document Plan Spring 2007. Their report notes the detrimental effect of the Ring Road and the poor quality pedestrian links. Unfortunately, due to a shortage of funds, the full range of their recommendations is not currently able to proceed. However, their principal recommendation, for works to the market area in High Street, is in the planning stage.

Another recommendation is for the creation of improved pedestrian access into the Town Centre, particularly via the subways. Some of the funding for these improvements will be provided from contributions made by developers of sites in or near to the Town Centre. Clearly the Borough Council needs to address the funding issue and plan a programme



Subway below the Ring Road



Improvements are needed to the public realm (Queen's Gardens)

of improvements which will help to provide a more attractive environment to shoppers, businesses and residents, to help ensure the economic vitality of the Town Centre.

In terms of design and materials, there is a long history of the use of locally made blue brick paviors in Newcastle, as can be seen in Hanover Street, and old photographs also confirm the use of sandstone flags in the principal streets. For new paving schemes in the Town Centre, the use of such materials would help to reinforce the sense of local distinctiveness. Existing granite setts, which were historically used to create gutters and crossovers, and granite kerbs, must be considered for retention in any new paving scheme. Appropriate street furniture, based on historic precedent, which adds to the sense of local distinctiveness, will also help to provide the Town Centre with a more attractive appearance. Many of the planters are also in need of replacement or removal, and some of the street trees have now grown so large that they require appropriate management.

Policy Newcastle TC CA No. 5:

Schemes for the improvement of the public realm must:

- Use traditional, high quality materials such as natural stone or locally made Staffordshire blue brick paviors;*
- Be sympathetic to the historic street layout and preserve historic features;*
- For seating, bollards, and lighting use high quality design and materials;*
- For planters, use timber or brick, not concrete;*
- Avoid street clutter and over-designed, 'fussy' details such as heavily patterned paving;*
- Adhere to a tree management and replacement strategy;*
- Provide a consistent colour palette for street furniture and other features.*

Policy Newcastle TC CA No. 6:

Improvements to subways and roundabouts:

The Borough Council will consider a comprehensive scheme to improve the various roundabouts around the Town Centre and the subways under the Inner Ring Road, including the provision of new surface pedestrian crossings.

7 SITE OR BUILDING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Opportunities for enhancement

Opportunities for enhancement include the following:

- Remove the advertising hoarding on the corner of Hassell Street and Barracks Road;
- Provide a phased programme of improvements to the High Street including the replacement of planters and management of trees; the replacement of clay and concrete paviors with Staffordshire blue paviors and natural stone flags;
- Improvements to provide more pedestrian friendly routes into the Town Centre (particularly the many subways) including the provision of street crossings controlled by traffic lights;
- Improve the backs of the properties facing Stubbs Street.

7.2 Public open spaces

It has already been noted that there are only three areas of open landscaped space and trees of any significance in the conservation area:

St Giles' Churchyard;
St George's Churchyard;
Queen's Gardens.

St Giles' Churchyard is currently mowed regularly and the graves appear well tended. The mature trees at the northern boundary of the churchyard may require some pruning or lopping in the future.

Recommendation 1: *Draw up a Management Plan for the churchyard to identify areas of concern and provide a schedule of necessary maintenance and possible improvements.*

St George's Churchyard is in a poor state with poor quality public spaces, neglected seating, and many older mature trees where works may be required.

Recommendation 2: *The preparation of a detailed and costed Management Plan is urgently needed to raise funds and provide an impetus to action. The preservation of the present eco-system is vitality important.*

Queen's Gardens are currently well tended by the Borough Council and the planting well maintained.

Funds are currently being raised to repair the listed statue of Queen Victoria which forms the centre piece of the garden.

Recommendation 3: *The Borough Council will continue to maintain Queen's Gardens including supporting efforts to raise funding for the repairs to Queen Victoria's statue.*

7.3 Shops and shopfronts

There are a large number of well detailed historic shopfronts in Newcastle Town Centre, marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. Some of these are in listed buildings, so they are protected to a high degree already, but others are in late 19th or even early 20th century buildings which up to now have not been recognised as being of special merit although most of these examples have been judged to make a 'positive'



Improvements are needed to these buildings which back onto Stubbs Street



St George's Churchyard

contribution and are marked as such on the Townscape Appraisal map. Detailed guidance is required to help owners and their agents preserve and enhance these shopfronts, and also to provide design guidance on the provision of completely new shopfronts. The existing guidance on Security Shutters should also be updated.

Recommendation 4: *The Borough Council will prepare a Shopfronts Design Guide, and update the existing guidance on Security Shutters.*

The Town Centre is a major area of economic activity in the Borough and provides a variety of shops, both locally owned and 'nationals'. Most of these shops have shopfronts with name plates and logos, and many other commercial premises also have hanging signs of some sort. The Planning Acts allow the Borough Council as local planning authority to declare 'Areas of Special Control of Advertisements' within all or part of any conservation area, in order to preserve or enhance its special architectural or historic interest. Unfortunately, many of the existing shop signs or shopfronts in the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area are poorly designed and declaring an 'Area of Special Control' will incrementally (as shopfronts are replaced or updated) improve the character and appearance of the area.

Recommendation 5: *Following a detailed survey of the signs within the Town Centre, the Borough Council will consider applying to the Secretary of State to define an 'Area of Special Control' within the Newcastle Town centre Conservation Area.*

7.4 Local listing

There is currently no Local List for the buildings of the Borough but this document includes a recommendation that such as list is incrementally set up, starting with the Newcastle Town Centre and Betley Conservation Areas, where conservation area character appraisals are currently being prepared. The purpose of a Local List is to draw attention to those more modest but locally significant buildings which are just outside the usual criteria for statutory listing, which usually cuts off at 1840. Locally listed buildings are important for their contribution to the local street scene or as examples of unusually detailed historic buildings, perhaps using local materials in an



Suggestions for a new Local List for Newcastle



Suggestions for a new Local List for Newcastle

interesting way.

The buildings which are proposed for the Local List for the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area are included at Appendix I, along with the proposed Local List Criteria. They include a number of late 19th century purpose built shops or public houses; good examples of mid-19th century commercial buildings; an Art Deco shop; and municipal buildings (the Police Station and the public toilets) in Merrial Street. Also included are some local details: the blue brick paving in the alley between nos. 18 and 20 High Street, and the white and black street nameplate in Liverpool Road.

Recommendation 6: *After consulting the local community, the Borough Council will draw up a Local List for the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area.*

7.5 Buildings at Risk and the potential for grant aid

It was noted that some of the commercial buildings in the conservation area are neglected, vacant and in need of repair. The signs of economic downturn are particularly prevalent in Church Street and Bridge Street. Other specific Buildings at Risk are:

- Lancaster Buildings (grade II listed);
- The Guildhall (grade II listed)
- Former St Giles and St George's Primary School.

A large number of the shops in the commercial core of the town also appear to have vacant upper floors, and various surveys have been undertaken to identify these buildings as part of other initiatives. It may be possible to apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant scheme for the eastern end of High Street, through to Bridge Street, to help repair buildings and achieve some environmental improvements. The use of Section 215 Notices, to ensure that buildings and sites are not allowed to decay and left neglected, should be actively pursued by the Council in appropriate cases.

Recommendation 7: *Following more detailed survey work, and an assessment of vacancy levels and necessary repairs, the Borough Council could consider applying for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grant scheme to the HLF, to provide a three year grant programme.*

7.6 Article 4 Directions

Article 4 (2) Directions are made under the General Permitted Development Order 1995, and can be served by a local planning authority to remove permitted development rights where there is a real threat to a particular residential building or area due to unsuitable alterations or additions. An Article 4(2) Direction is accompanied by a Schedule that specifies the various changes to family dwellings, which will now require planning permission. Usually, such Directions are used in conservation areas to protect unlisted houses in use as a family unit, rather than flats or bedsits where permitted development rights are already much fewer.

Under an Article 4 (2) Direction, planning permission would be required for the following:

- (i) All extensions of whatever size including porches on the front* of the building;
- (ii) Changing roof materials and the insertion of rooflights on the front-facing* roofslope;
- (iii) Replacing windows or doors on the front* elevation;

(*Front means facing a public highway, private road or waterway.)

In greater detail, this means the following constraints:

HOUSE EXTENSIONS

Planning permission will be required for the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house including entrance porches, any part of which fronts a highway, private road or open space. Permission will not be required for the painting of a dwelling house.

ROOFS

A planning application will be required for alterations to a roof slope which fronts a highway, private road or open space, including a change in the roof materials and the insertion of roof lights. Dormer windows already require planning permission under separate legislation. The traditional materials in Newcastle are natural slate or clay tiles, which should be used in

preference to reconstituted alternatives. Rooflights of traditional appearance, designed specifically for conservation areas, are preferred, where they will not be easily visible.

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS

The replacement of existing windows and doors which front a highway, private road or open space will require planning consent. Original windows and doors should be renovated and retained where at all possible. New windows and doors should be of traditional construction, design and materials, matching those originally used and sympathetic to the building as a whole. The use of uPVC and aluminium is generally out of character and will not be considered acceptable.

There are very few residential properties in the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area which come into this category apart from the terraced housing in Well Street and Garden Street, and some properties in London Road. In Garden Street a number of unsympathetic alterations have already taken place such as the insertion of uPVC windows and doors.

Recommendation 8: *An Article 4 (2) Direction is served to encompass nos. 1-27 Well Street (which are also recommended for Local Listing due to the high survival of original details), nos. 54-82 Garden Street and some of the residential properties in London Road.*

7.7 Railings Replacement Grant Scheme

There is potential to reinstate some railings to the front of historic properties within the conservation area, which would help to enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the buildings and the conservation area in general. This would be a longer-term project which would require financial input from both the Borough Council and the buildings' owners, working in partnership together.

Recommendation 9: *The Borough Council will consider establishing a Railings Replacement Grant Scheme, subject to the funds being made available.*

8 DELIVERING ACTION

8.1 The strategy

It is important that the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area should be as self-sustaining as possible, both socially and economically, if it is to remain in anything like its present state. Achieving this requires constant management to control any necessary changes so that its special character and appearance is not adversely affected.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified the challenges facing the Town Centre and these are summarised at 1.2 above. These issues can be addressed by the actions recommended in Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 above.

Clearly, the actions include some that can start immediately, while others may only be aspirations at present pending the development of resources. Resources, however, are not the issue for immediate actions. Spending decisions are constantly being made and the challenge is to ensure that those investments are made in ways that benefit the special character of the conservation area.

The Management Priorities Proposals can only be effective, however, if they are actually implemented. A draft Programme at 8.3 sets out the tasks in immediate, medium and long-term timescales over the next few years. A more detailed Action Plan could be developed by the Borough Council once the Newcastle Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document is completed and approved. In any Action Plan, it is important that responsibility for the actions is accepted by the various stakeholders and that the Action Plan assigns tasks to specific teams or individuals so that they can be included in their workplans.

Success will require commitment by all Borough Council departments and their partners to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, such as planning permissions, building control, fire regulations and highways standards, in the best interests of the Town Centre and, likewise, the sensitive deployment of such resources as are available. Success depends also on the part played by other stakeholders: property owners, residents, businesses, and amenity groups. It is also vital that the Borough Council allocate adequate resources for these Recommendations to be successfully implemented.

8.2 Expectations

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

The designation and review of conservation areas are legal requirements. In support of these statutory duties, the Borough Council can be expected to commit adequate resources by ensuring it has access to the necessary skills and that it adopts appropriate policies. It should also ensure that communities are sufficiently informed about the implications of designation so that they too can play their part.

Although the administration of conservation areas is largely a planning function, there are many other actions that can impact on character and appearance, for instance the maintenance of public buildings, such as the Council-owned Guildhall. It is important, therefore, that conservation aims are coordinated across all local authority departments, and it is significant that much has already been achieved by the establishment of a Conservation Advisory Working Party and by the appointment of a Heritage and Design Champion. However, standards designed for modern environments should not be applied unthinkingly to areas and buildings that have stood the test of time. The Borough Council can therefore be expected to be sensitive to the special interest of the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area and its listed buildings in exercising, for instance, building control. Similarly, the Fire Officer, who administers the requirements of the fire regulations, and the Highways Authority, who have responsibility for highways matters, should also be aware of the sensitivity of the historic environment.

Owners and residents

Those who live and work in the conservation area are expected to recognise the collective benefits they enjoy. For this, they must understand the need to take a contextual view of any proposals, rather than acting in isolation.

Some degree of change is inevitable in conservation areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken.

Owners and residents can minimise the effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

Community involvement

It is important that communities are well-informed about the qualities of their conservation areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. While the Borough Council is a useful source of advice, there is a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere. Indeed, this document has been drawn up with the help and co-operation of local stakeholders including community representatives.

The Civic Society and the Chamber of Trade, working with the Conservation Advisory Working Party, can provide a vital interface between the community and the local authority. It can also provide local knowledge and local responses to policy initiatives and development proposals.

8.3 Programme

It should be noted that the delivery of all of the recommendations in this document depend upon the success of other initiatives already in hand, such as the Public Realm strategy and the Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document. At the time of writing, the outcomes from both of these documents remain unclear. The purpose of these Management Proposals is to concentrate on the matters which most affect the historic environment and to put forward specific recommendations which hopefully the Borough Council will be able to adopt and action in due course. Priorities in this document will of course also be constrained by possible changes to staffing and resources.

Immediate tasks are generally those that can be adopted without reference to other programmes including resource planning. They will be capable of being completed within the next year:

- Formal adoption of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as an informative document for the Local Development Framework;
- Formal adoption of the Management Proposals as a Supplementary Planning Document;
- Designate amendments to the conservation area boundary as proposed in the boundary review;
- Publish guidance on the following:
 - Shopfronts;
 - Security shutters;
 - Advertisement signs;
- Living in the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area;
- The control of historic buildings (Listed, locally listed and positive buildings);
- Strengthen the role of the Heritage and Design Champion;
- Ensure that the historic environment is adequately represented in the policy content and priorities of the Local Development Framework;
- Ensure links with other policy areas to protect the land around the conservation area, particularly the 'buffer' zones;
- Ensure that development control practice:
 - Makes best use of 'materiality' to address changes in the conservation area;
 - Accepts the principles for new development, including garages, in and on the edges of the conservation area;
- Consider providing training on conservation issues for elected councillors and non-specialist staff;
- Investigate potential breaches of development control, such as satellite aerials, with a view to seeking changes or enforcement.

Continuous tasks require regular iteration:

- Co-ordination of council departments and other agencies, such as planning, building control, highways and the fire service, through an Historic Environment Forum;
- Monitoring of change including updating of the photographic baseline, which should never be more than five years old;
- Review of the conservation area appraisal on a five-year basis;
- Annual review of these Management Proposals.

Medium-term goals are those that require preparation but could be implemented within the next 1-3 years:

- Establish a policy and criteria for Local Listing;
- Use community involvement to select buildings and structures for the Local List;
- Use the recommendations of conservation area management proposals as a starting point for Local Listing;
 - Establish an Article 4(2) Direction for buildings in Well Street, Garden Street and London Road, and provide detailed guidance for the residents;
 - Establish a baseline photographic survey, covering all front elevations, of evidential quality to support the Article 4(2) Direction;
 - Establish an Enforcement Strategy;
 - Complete a Building-at-Risk survey.

- Periodic reviews of the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change;
- Updating of the baseline photographic survey on a five-yearly basis;
- Review the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal on a five-year basis;
- Annual review and updating of the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area Management Proposals;
- Prepare an Action Plan for the Town Centre, based on these Management Proposals and the emerging Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document.

Longer-term projects will require consensus-building or fund raising. The aim is that they should be completed within five years. Some of the items above may slip into this category, depending of staff resources and funding.

8.4 Commitment and adoption

It is important that the Borough Council and its partners should commit themselves corporately to the delivery of an Action Plan based on these Management Proposals and the emerging Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document so that individual tasks are built in to the work programmes of teams and individuals.

It is also important that the Management Proposals should be formally adopted by the Borough Council as a Supplementary Planning Document so that it informs the Local Development Framework and that its intentions carry due weight in the consideration of planning proposals.

8.5 Monitoring and review

The efficient delivery of a conservation service requires regular monitoring of change and the agents of change. The Borough Council is expected to undertake:

APPENDICES:

Appendix I

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

Appendix I Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre Conservation Area - Relevant Local Plan policies as defined by the Proposals Map

Policies B9 -18, and 20 apply to the whole Town Centre.

The most important conservation area policies are Policies B9 and B10

Policy B9: Prevention of harm to conservation areas

The Council will resist applications that would harm the special architectural or historic character or appearance of the Conservation Areas.

Policy B10: The requirement to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area

Permission will only be granted to construct, alter the external appearance or change the use of any buildings only if its proposed appearance or use will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. This will be achieved by the following criteria being met:

- (i) The form, scale, bulk, height, materials, colour, vertical or horizontal emphasis and detailing respect the characteristics of the buildings in the area.
- (ii) The plot coverage characteristics respect those of the area.
- (iii) Historically significant boundaries contributing to the established pattern of development in the area are retained.
- (iv) Open spaces important to the character or historic value of the area are protected.
- (vi) Trees and other landscape features contributing to the character or appearance of the area are protected.

Other relevant policies relating to the historic environment are:

Policy B11
Policy B12
Policy B13
Policy B14
Policy B15
Policy B16
Policy B17
Policy B18
Policy B20

Appendix 2

CRITERIA FOR LOCAL LISTING

1 Purpose of a Local List

Buildings that are listed nationally are protected by law. They tend to be buildings of higher quality and generally date from before 1840. The purpose of a Local List is to identify locally significant buildings and other features which may not be considered eligible for statutory listing.

2 The effect of local listing

The protection of buildings or other features which are Locally Listed can be achieved through policies in the Local Plan, or in Supplementary Planning Document. The identification of these special buildings or features is also best achieved through consultation with local communities, giving them ‘ownership’ of the Local List and helping to inform and enlighten local knowledge.

Although there is no statutory protection for such buildings, local listing can be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining planning applications.

3 Principles of selection

Locally listed buildings or structures are those which make a special contribution to the history, appearance, character, and cultural value of the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. They include the following:

- Buildings which have qualities of age, style, materials and detailing;
- Well detailed historic shopfronts;
- Historic structures such as walls or railings;
- Historic street furniture including paving, post boxes, bollards, or street lighting;
- Former industrial sites (where scheduling as an ‘Ancient Monument’ is not appropriate), which have particular local significance;
- Other features which have historical or cultural significance, perhaps by association with a famous person or event.

They should all survive in a clearly recognisable form, with their historic features and layouts still present. Some selection of the better examples of these buildings or structures will be necessary, so in some cases the most authentic and interesting of a group of buildings may be Locally Listed, rather than the whole group. It is likely that most of the entries will date from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, but recent buildings of outstanding quality could be considered.

4 Categories

In summary, the Local List for the Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme could include the following categories:

(i) BUILDINGS

These may include:

- Buildings designed by a particular architect or designer of regional or local note;
- Good examples of well designed domestic buildings which retain their original details and materials;
- Good examples of educational, religious or community buildings which retain their original details and materials;
- Landmark buildings or structures of notable design;
- Buildings or structures of which contribute to our understanding of the development of the area.

(ii) STRUCTURES

These may include:

- Notable walls or railings;
- Street lighting ;
- Bollards;
- Street surfaces;
- Post boxes.

(iii) HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

These must be well documented and may include:

- Any building or structure which has a close association with famous people or events;
- Any building or structure which has a close association with an important local feature including statutorily protected sites or buildings.

Appendix 3

PROPOSED LOCAL LIST FOR THE NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Commercial buildings:

High Street: No. 12; Nos. 40 and 42; No. 44

Ironmarket: Nos. 1-3 and nos. 35, 37, 39 and 41 High Street (Part Royal Bank of Scotland)
George and Dragon Public House, no. 22; The Sentinel Offices, no. 23;
No. 32; No. 37 Former Post Office (now Weatherspoons);

Hassell Street: Bulls Vaults Nos. 1-5

Liverpool Road: The Half Moon Public House

London Road: No. 21 (Statutory list?)

Merrial Street; No 2; Nos. 42, 44 and 46

Residential buildings:

Nos. 1- 27 Well Street

Educational:

Hassell County Primary School, Barracks Road
Former St Giles and St George's Primary school, off Barracks Road

Shopfronts:

Nos. 1-3 High Street and no. 2 Hickman Street
No. 17 High Street and no. 56 Merrial Street

Municipal:

Police Station, Merrial Street
Public toilets, Merrial Street

Streetscape features:

Paving between nos. 18 and 20 High Street
Liverpool Road sign on no. 3 Liverpool Road

Appendix 4

CONTACT DETAILS

For information on planning matters generally in Newcastle, please contact:

Louise Wallace,
Design and Conservation Officer,
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire ST5 2AG

Tel: 01782 742408

Email: Louise.Wallace@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

For information on scheduled monuments and the County-wide Historic Environment Record (HER), please contact:

Suzy Blake
Historic Environment Records Officer
Staffordshire County Council
Development Services Directorate
Riverway
Stafford ST16 3TJ
Tel: 01785 277281
Email: suzy.blake@staffordshire.gov.uk

(Footnotes)

¹ Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) – *Planning and the Historic Environment* - 1994

² PPG15 - *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the historic environment* - 1994

³ English Heritage – *Guidance on Conservation Area appraisals* – 2005

English Heritage – *Guidance on Management Proposals for Conservation Areas* – 2005

⁴ Historic Environment Local Management (HELM)

⁵ Department for Culture, Media and Sport – *Heritage protection for the 21st century* – March 2007