Conservation Management Plan for Wellingborough Town Centre

1 Purpose of Report

(a) The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the proposed Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area.

(b) To seek approval for the adoption of the CMP in order to form an integral part of the application for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) of £1.4 million. The aim of the CMP is to protect and preserve the heritage and character of Wellingborough town centre and the investment from HLF and the council for a minimum period of 10 years following the 5 year THI period.

(c) This proposal helps to achieve the following Council priorities;
   • Promoting High Quality Growth
   • Enhancing the Environment

2 Executive Summary

Wellingborough is in the final stage of its application to HLF, for funding to protect and enhance the heritage character of the town centre. An effective CMP is an essential requirement of the proposed Townscape Heritage Initiative funded by the HLF in order to protect the investment. In 2009 as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) a conservation management plan was initiated. This plan has been added to with the inclusion of an article 4 Direction, an Area of Special Control of Advertisements, a buildings at risk survey and an extensive grant scheme Subject to joint funding by HLF and BCW. A monitoring and reviewing process will keep the CMP up to date during its minimum 15 year lifespan.

3 Appendices

Appendix A The Conservation Management Plan.

4. Proposed Action:

4.1 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to adopt the Conservation Management Plan for the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area as attached to the Head of Planning and Local Developments report
5 **Background**

5.1 The process of creating the Conservation Management Plan began in 2009 when the Council adopted the Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area.

5.2 The proposed legislative controls comprise the making of an Article 4 Direction intended to protect dwelling-houses from undesirable development and the designation of an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA), designed to improve the appearance of town centre shops.

5.3 Certain unlisted buildings known as “Buildings of Townscape Merit” (BTM) were also formally identified in the Conservation area appraisal as providing an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and this was further reinforced by the undertaking of a Building at Risk (BAR) survey to identify those BTM where their survival was potentially threatened.

5.4 Once the Council has had confirmation that the HLF bid has been successful, it is the intention that, as from 2011/12 the Borough Council (BCW) will be able to offer owners of critical buildings and shop owners grants as part of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme. The grants will be for repairs and restoration of historic buildings and for shop front improvements.

5.5 This management plan is the first step to delivering real improvements to the conservation area. The proposal will be coordinated with other Council initiatives currently being undertaken to secure the wider regeneration of the town centre. These include the Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) which provides an overarching strategy and framework for the Heritage led Town Centre regeneration, as well as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs); the Conservation Area Appraisal, Public Realm Strategy and Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide adopted in 2009.

6 **Discussion**

6.1 The inclusion of a conservation management plan as part of the second round of the HLF bid process is an essential element. It is aimed at protecting the investment and importantly to secure the town’s architectural ‘heritage’. The committee is asked to approve these amendments to the plan that was first approved in 2009 Conservation Management Plan.

6.2 The Conservation Management Plan will be available to download from the Councils website and also be available on request in printed format from the Council offices.

7 **Legal Powers**

7.1 The Article 4 and ASCA are in the process of being consulted upon in line with legal requirements.
8 Financial and Value For Money Implications

8.1 The HLF bid will provide resources to implement the Conservation Management Plan. There will be an element of matched funding from BCW which will include support officer time and the use of the Councils assets. Members have also indicated that heritage is an important priority and have supported proposals in the town centre from capital resources. The approval and subsequent adoption of the CMP is essential in order to secure funding of £1.4 million from HLF.

9 Risk Analysis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Nature of risk</th>
<th>Consequences if realised</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
<th>Control measures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage properties lose their character by insensitive development</td>
<td>The character of Wellingborough would be further eroded</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>The CMP contains a range of measures that control and promote heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers cannot implement the necessary control measures</td>
<td>The character of Wellingborough would be eroded</td>
<td>Medium-Low</td>
<td>Officers have sufficient time resource to monitor and implement the CMP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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10 Implications for Resources

10.1 It is anticipated that there may be additional workload within the development management section of the council because of the additional restrictions imposed by the Article 4 directive.

11 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

11.1 There are no foreseen implications to health improvement, community cohesion, and community safety matters under the local area agreement.

12 Author and Contact Officer

John Udall, Project Manager

13 Consultees

Amanda Johnson  Project Co-ordinator
Alex Stevenson  Design and Conservation Officer
Terry Wright  Director of Services
Steven Wood  Head of Planning and Local Development
14 Background Papers
Heritage Lottery Fund – Townscape Heritage Initiative criteria
WBC Stage 1 HLF application
Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area Conservation Management Plan 2011-2026
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<td>09</td>
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01 Introduction

The process of creating this Conservation Management Plan began in 2009 with the adoption (by the Council) of a Character Appraisal and Management Plan for the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area. This document set out the measures that are being extended and added in order to preserve, improve and enhance the character and appearance of Wellingborough’s conservation area. This management plan is intended to have a lifespan of 15 years. These ambitions will be achieved through grant awards, additional legislative measures, educational opportunities and appropriate publicity.

The proposed legislative controls comprise the making of an Article 4 Direction intended to protect dwelling-houses from undesirable development and the designation of an Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASC A) designed to improve the appearance of town centre shops.

Certain unlisted buildings known as “Buildings of Townscape Merit” (BTMs) were also formally identified in the Conservation area appraisal as providing an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and this was further reinforced by the undertaking of a Buildings at Risk (BAR) survey to identify those BTMs whose survival is threatened.

From 2011/12 The Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) will be offering grants as part of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme. The grants will be for repairs and restoration of historic buildings and for shop front improvements. These grants are funded by a grant of £1.4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), BCW funding and by owner/occupier contributions to a minimum total of £2.6m.

This management plan is the first step in seeking improvements to the conservation area. There is a degree of overlap with other Council initiatives currently being undertaken to secure the wider regeneration of the town centre. These include the Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) which provides an overarching strategy and framework for regeneration, as well as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs); the Conservation Area Appraisal, Public Realm Strategy and Shop Fronts and Advertisement Design Guide adopted in 2009.

Policy Background - Town Centre Area Action Plan

The spatial strategy and regeneration plans for the town centre are guided by the AAP (2009), which provides focus for future improvements, development and investment.

Objective 4 of the AAP, ‘to conserve and enhance the centre’s heritage, respecting historic buildings, links and views’, recognises that Wellingborough will undergo significant changes in the coming years and that future development will need to be accommodated sensitively within an existing historic context.

This Conservation management plan is prepared to support Policy WTC12 (Heritage) of the AAP, which specifically identifies the preparation of a characterisation study as part of a review of the Conservation Area and its setting and will form the basis of decisions for future development within the town centre and the enhancement of the public realm.
Policy WTC 12

HERITAGE

The architectural and historic fabric of the town centre will be protected and enhanced in relation to:

i. listed buildings and their settings;

ii. the opening up of new views of All Hallows Church identified on the Proposals Map as development of Site E2 will enable;

iii. buildings forming an integral part of the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area and its setting;

iv. preparation of a characterisation study as part of a conservation area appraisal review process in order to ensure that proposals are informed by a sound appreciation of the town centre’s distinct characteristics to be conserved and enhanced;

v. the retention and, where appropriate, re-use of buildings of local townscape merit outside Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area which contribute either individually and/or through their group value to the special character of the town centre;

vi. the historic street pattern and morphology (the grain, scale and compactness of the centre); and

vii. the investigation and analysis of archaeological remains.

Applicants will need to demonstrate an appreciation of the town’s distinct character and historic context and how this has influenced sensitive development proposals.

1 – Wellingborough Conservation Area Appraisal (2009)
http://wellingborough-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/caa?pointId=4520

2 – Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan (2009)
http://wellingborough-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/tcaap_adopted?pointId=750485
**02 Townscape Heritage Initiative Grant Schemes**

A range of grant schemes (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and BCW) are to be made available to property owners within the conservation area. They will be for the restoration and reinstatement of historic features and for essential repairs to the building. The grants will be for critical buildings, shop fronts and for small repairs. To be eligible any building will need to be at least locally listed as a BTM.

### 2.1 THI Critical Building Grant

Several properties have been individually identified which would benefit from investment either in reinstatement of missing or damaged historic features or basic building fabric repair, or both. The scheme will also cover re-use of vacant floor space generally. The “critical list” of properties is backed up by the schedule of BARs that in effect is the reserve list.

The grants would enable property owners to;

- retain and repair surviving historic fabric and period features such as windows, chimneys, doors or decorative features etc. in preference to their loss or replacement with modern alternatives;

- reinstate historically and architecturally accurate details and materials in buildings which have been degraded through damage or the loss of such elements, e.g. as a result of the installation of inappropriate replacement windows, roof tiles, the removal of chimneys or other important architectural elements.

- affect necessary repairs to prevent deterioration and reduce the threat of damage or loss of historic fabric.

- bring unused floor-space in historic buildings into use in order to increase the sustainability of the entire property.

### 2.2 THI Small Repairs Grant

As part of the grant scheme there is an opportunity to apply for financial assistance for small repairs to eligible properties. This will be a 50% grant for works up to a value of £2k. It is intended for projects such as repairs to a window or door or a small roof repair.

### 2.3 THI Shop Front Enhancement Grant

The Shop Front Grant Scheme is aimed at the reinstatement of lost or damaged details on high-quality shop fronts and the general repair or enhancement of existing period shop fronts.
03 Buildings at Risk Survey (BAR)

In order to suitably inform this Conservation Management Plan (CMP), the Council has completed a “Buildings at Risk” (BAR) (appendix I) register providing a baseline survey of the conservation area. The survey identifies any building within the conservation area which is either listed or a BTM and that is at risk. Poor maintenance and non-occupancy are the major risk factors.

A key function of the BAR survey is to produce a snapshot of the state of the general building fabric. Over time, as subsequent assessments are carried out, positive and negative changes in the condition of recorded buildings can be monitored, grading alterations recorded and deletions/additions to the register made. The results of the BAR survey can be used to make more informed decisions on enforcement action and grant eligibility.

In December 2010 BCW carried out a ground level visual survey. Buildings were classified by condition ranging from extreme decay to low decay and were then classified by occupation. Using these two parameters the risk to the building was calculated and the building was reclassified from at ‘extreme risk' to at ‘low risk'. The results are summarised in the table below.

### buildings at risk categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of properties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>12</td>
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</table>

#### 3.1 Discussion of Results

Buildings featured in the BAR survey, although random distributed around the town, there is a slight concentration in Silver Street/High Street/Church Street and in Cambridge Street. An issue to be addressed in the typical retail situation is a trader/lessee on the ground floor, which is dissociated from the problems such as roofing and guttering above, or where upper floors are simply disused.
Again, functional redundancy occurs at the two barns at Cambridge Street and Jacksons Lane, the Angel Hotel and the factories in Rock Street, Alma Street and Great Park Street. The factories in particular can become targets for vandalism and arson if left empty for too long. In this instance conversion or refurbishment schemes can and should be pursued through the planning process by proactive pre-application discussions with owners. The occupancy of a property is the key risk factor identified in this study. The vacancy factor is likely to be in part, related to the current economic climate.

There are 23 “at risk” properties featured on the BAR register out of 458 locally listed or BTMs in Wellingborough with 43% classed as low risk needing only routine maintenance. The only real structural problem relates to 31 Church Street and this is currently being remediated under the supervision of the Council’s Building Inspectors. Nevertheless, the prospect of under investment in routine repairs and maintenance on the part of private owners does not bode well for the short to medium term future of the affected historic fabric in the town centre.

In order to measure and record changes over time it will be necessary to repeat this exercise on a regular basis. 2 years is a reasonable time between surveys as it will allow improvement works to be done to improve buildings therefore showing meaningful differences. The rate of change of building decay or improvement will be an important indicator of the likely survivability of a building. A new survey will, therefore, will be due in December 2012.

The register now provides a target list of properties most in need of assistance and this can feed into the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grant expenditure programme.

The survey also informs decisions regarding use of the Council’s statutory powers in order to secure the preservation of the town’s historic fabric. These powers include Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Section 215 Notices (05).
04 Definitions

4.1 Listed Buildings
Listed buildings are protected by law and their demolition is only likely to be sanctioned in the most exceptional of circumstances requiring the strongest possible justification under PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment). This protection extends to a consent process whereby any works affecting a listed building’s architectural or historic character require the Council’s express permission, so allowing a high level of detailed aesthetic control over possible alterations.

However, owners of listed buildings are not legally obliged to maintain them and so can be vulnerable to neglect. These statutory powers are, therefore available to the Council to intervene and rescue severely dilapidated or dangerous listed buildings.

4.2 Buildings of Townscape Merit
Unlisted but significant Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTMs) have been identified as making a positive contribution to the townscape of Wellingborough, often displaying qualities of age, style, materials and architectural interest. These buildings, together with the listed buildings, form the backbone of the conservation area and constitute a townscape with much character.

Any proposals for the demolition of BTMs will be assessed against the same broad criteria as listed buildings (PPS5; Policy HE9), the general presumption being in favour of retention. In exceptional cases, where proposed development would bring about substantial benefits to the community, this would be weighed against the arguments in respect of preservation (PPS 5; Policy HE8). However, unlike listed buildings, it is recognised that retaining BTMs may sometimes come into conflict with the regeneration proposals coming forward through the AAP, and therefore their preservation will need to be weighed against other relevant considerations.

3 – Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment
http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5

HE8: Additional Policy principle guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to heritage assets that are not covered by Policy HE9.

HE9: Additional Policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets.
05 Statutory Powers

Owners of listed buildings (and unlisted BTMs) are under no statutory obligation to maintain their properties in good repair. However, the Council has the following statutory powers which it will not hesitate to use in cases where a historic building has been neglected to the extent that its actual preservation is at risk, or alternatively when it has simply been allowed to deteriorate visually and is causing serious significant injury to amenity:

5.1 Urgent Works Notices
This can be served on the unoccupied parts of both listed and unlisted buildings in conservation areas. They are used in circumstances where the historic building is not wind-and-watertight and allow the Council, if necessary, to itself carry out appropriate works and bill the owner accordingly.

5.2 Repairs Notices
Used for serving on statutory listed buildings only. This form of notice is used where the building’s fundamental preservation and very survival is called into question and is usually a prelude to Compulsory Purchase.

5.3 Section 215 Notices
This notice is appropriate where a building is in a conservation area and deemed to be injurious to visual amenity as a result of neglect, typically manifested in unsightly boarded-up windows and doors, organic growth and lack of attention to carpentry, masonry, rendering, etc.
06 Article 4 Direction

The incremental loss of historic fabric in the form of inappropriate replacement windows, removal of chimneys and replacement of traditional roofing materials with modern alternatives, was identified in the Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal as having had a degrading effect on the character, appearance and quality of the town centre.

Whilst the Planning Acts already control such material alterations in the case of typical commercial buildings such as shops, offices, clubs, leisure facilities and flats, the fabric and form of dwelling-houses can be changed in many ways at present without the need for planning permission.

Accordingly, the Council intends to bring dwelling-houses under the same level of control as other types of building in the conservation area by modifying the planning regulations locally. This technical process is known as an Article 4 Direction and once agreed and in place would mean that home-owners within the designated area would no longer be free to change architectural features and materials without applying for and receiving planning permission. The proposed Direction would also bring under control extensions, alterations to create hard-standings and alter walling, fencing, etc. on property frontages, the painting or rendering of buildings and the erection of satellite dishes.

It should be emphasized that the Council is not seeking to compromise owners’ freedom to duly modify and extend their properties, but rather wishes to apply qualitative standards through the planning process to ensure that any changes are sympathetic and serve to reinforce the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Council feels strongly that the promotion of the Wellingborough’s historic importance and the conservation of its architectural character in this way will be for the benefit of residents, visitors and future generations alike.

A period of 6 weeks consultation will be in affect from 2nd August 2011

Map of Article 4 Direction designation - appendix II
An additional issue raised in the Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal was the poor quality of the signage on a number of the shop fronts.

Signage on shops and other business premises is subject to a process known as “Deemed Consent”. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 enables certain “specified classes” of advertisement to be displayed without application to the Planning Authority provided the installation is within certain parameters. However, where a higher level of control is deemed appropriate in a sensitive environment such as the present conservation area, Councils may designate an “Area of Special Control of Advertisements” (ASCA) which imposes stricter or more limited parameters for the display of deemed consent advertisements.

Designation of an ASCA covering the town’s main shopping streets would allow greater control over the size of signs, the height of advertisements on facades, illumination, the proportion of a shop frontage given over to advertisements, poster hoardings around construction sites and advertisements on telephone kiosks and captive balloons. It is felt that this additional tool would contribute significantly to the Council’s ability to achieve the primary objective of regenerating the town centre through the upgrading and reinforcing of its character and appearance.

Accordingly, the Council proposes the introduction of an ASCA. A parallel consultation process to that of the Article 4 Direction proposal above will be carried out, covering appropriate notification of interested parties and subsequent Committee referral for decision.

**It is proposed that the ASCA designation will cover the following streets, representing the town’s main shopping core:**

- Broad Green
- Cambridge Street
- Cannon Street (part)
- Church Street
- High Street
- Market Street
- Midland Road (west end)
- Orient Way
- Oxford Street (east end)
- Park Road (part)
- Pebble Lane
- Sheep Street
- Silver Street

This is based on the THI area, but with the addition of parts of Midland Road, Park Road, Cannon Street, Market Street and Oxford Street, as shown on the accompanying plan.
08 Education, Information and Partnership

Conservation education is considered to be a key factor in achieving the long-term sustainability of the CMP. As part of the funding programme, the Council intends to offer a variety of educational opportunities to school-children, including creative project packages, assistance in visiting the museum and involvement in design competitions. These initiatives are intended to establish ownership of the town’s heritage from an early age. Additionally, partnerships will be supported between relevant bodies such as schools, the museum and local groups in order to promote the aims of the CMP.

Building owners will be offered seminars on practical property maintenance skills in subjects such as lime mortar, masonry, carpentry and metal-working. These seminars would be given by local heritage qualified craftsmen.

Students in craft skills will be offered opportunities to be involved with the restoration of Wellingborough projects through partnerships with local colleges and heritage contractors.

All of the information created by this CMP and associated projects including the THI will be consistently updated and available on the BCW web pages. Documents will be downloadable and printed versions can be made available on request.

The THI and CMP will be promoted within the town using BCW publications and press articles.

In the interests of broad-based decision-making in the allocation of grant funding and other matters, a THI Steering Group, consisting of Councillors, officers, shop owners and representatives of the museum and the civic society has been formed to offer guidance to the THI delivery team.
09 Monitoring and Review

9.1 Photographic Baseline
In order to help monitor changes resulting from the implementation of approved schemes as well as unauthorized alterations, the Council will create a current photographic record of the conservation area. On the basis of an annual or biannual update, the images of individual buildings will provide an important baseline for recording changes, monitoring the physical condition of buildings and providing a tool for use in enforcement proceedings needed in respect of any unauthorized works.

Specifically, the following monitoring processes are intended to be carried out in relation to the various elements of the CMP:

9.2 Monitoring

Listed Buildings.
- Log of numbers of neglected listed buildings which required statutory intervention in order to protect the fabric and secure their future use;
- Log of actual loss (demolition or part-demolition) of any listed buildings.

Buildings of Townscape Merit.
- Log of repairs/improvements, etc. to BTMs;
- Record of any statutory notices served, including progress reports;
- Log of any actual loss/demolition.

Buildings at Risk Survey.
- Note of any changes in numbers of BARs as well as their condition profile/risk classification. Changes from year-to-year would be illustrated graphically. A new BAR survey is scheduled for December 2012.

THI Grant Schemes.
- In relation to specific buildings, log levels of completion of restoration/repairs/reinstatement projects, together with instances of re-use of vacant floor-space (expressed in square metres).

Article 4 Direction.
- Specifically for dwelling-houses, log instances of successful negotiation of reinstatement of missing/lost features, as well as retention of existing authentic features.

Area of Special Control of Advertisements.
- Note examples of the beneficial effect of the control.

Education.
- Log successful initiatives, with individual progress reports.
9.3 Reporting

It is proposed that an annual “State of the Conservation Area” report would be made to the Development Control Committee covering all of the above elements.

9.4 Reviewing and Updating

Conservation appraisals are required to be kept up to date and reviewed regularly. English Heritage recommends that a review should ideally be undertaken every five years. It is therefore proposed to review the Conservation Area Character Appraisal together with this Management Plan again in 2015. This would be particularly appropriate in light of anticipated changes associated with the proposed regeneration of the town centre through the AAP.
10 Appendices

Appendix I
Buildings At Risk Survey and Report

Appendix II
Map - Article 4 Direction Designation
BUILDINGS AT RISK SURVEY

Introduction

English Heritage undertakes an annual Heritage at Risk survey of Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings in order to record and publicise problems with the higher-graded examples. However this survey does not include Grade II listed buildings or unlisted buildings.

The Wellingborough Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal identified some examples of poor maintenance affecting both listed buildings and unlisted buildings of townscape merit (BTMs). Empty buildings were noted as particularly vulnerable, although some occupied premises also suffered from a lack of essential maintenance. However, the appraisal was not in itself a building condition survey. The recommendation from the Conservation area appraisal was that the council should undertake its own survey of buildings at risk (BARs).

Storage space – roof, masonry, fascia and window problems along with organic growth

A key function of the BAR survey is to produce a snapshot of the state of the general building fabric. Over time as subsequent assessments are carried out, positive and negative changes in the condition of recorded buildings can be monitored, as well as recording grading alterations, deletions from the list and new additions to the BAR register.

The results of the BAR survey can be used to make more informed decisions on enforcement action or on grant eligibility.

To bring forward the Conservation Management Plan the council has surveyed the condition of its historic buildings and compiled a BAR Buildings at risk register comprising of buildings which are either listed or are BTMs.
Method

The survey was carried out in December 2010 on the basis of an inspection as seen at ground-level from the public highway. It was noted whether the building was occupied, the type of owner and the properties market status. A comment on the apparent defects was added. The buildings were allocated one of the following categories.

### Building condition Categories

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>EXTREME DECAY</td>
<td>Building is in a dangerous condition. Immediate risk of further deterioration or loss of fabric is apparent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>SUBSTANTIAL DECAY</td>
<td>Building is in poor condition. Short-to-medium-term risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric is expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>MEDIUM DECAY</td>
<td>Slow decay of the building fabric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>LOW DECAY</td>
<td>Building is in an average/poor condition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to calculate the risk category for each property a value 1 to 4 was assigned to each of the building conditions, the worst A being 4. For state of occupancy a figure 1 to 3 was also assigned with vacant buildings rated a 3. The two figures were added to calculate the risk scores which were then grouped to form categories.

- **Condition category:** A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1
- **Occupancy:** Vacant=3, Part Occ=2 Occupied=1
- **Risk category:** A=6-7, B=5, C=4, D=3-2

### Building at risk Categories

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>EXTREME RISK.</td>
<td>Building is unused and in a dangerous condition. Immediate risk of further deterioration or loss of fabric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>SUBSTANTIAL RISK.</td>
<td>Building is in poor condition with no economic present use. Short-to-medium-term risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>MEDIUM RISK</td>
<td>Slow decay. Under-used for operational purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>LOW RISK.</td>
<td>Building in average/poor condition but well-used for operational purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

See appendix A table of raw data.

Table 1. The number and occupancy of properties in each condition category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition category</th>
<th>Occupied</th>
<th>Partially occupied</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The number and occupancy of properties in each risk category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk categories</th>
<th>Occupied</th>
<th>Partially occupied</th>
<th>Vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 above shows the spread of occupancy for each of the four condition categories that were identified. Table 2 shows the spread of occupancy for each of the four risk categories. It can be seen that by combining the condition with the occupancy, vacant properties become more at risk and that occupied properties become less at risk.

There are currently a number of properties that are not considered at risk but are unoccupied. These properties are in good condition and are likely to become occupied in the short term.

22 properties in total were identified as being “at risk”, with defects including faulty render, rotting carpentry/paintwork, displaced roof-covering, decaying masonry/pointing, organic growth on parapets and in gutters, faulty rainwater-goods and broken windows. Almost 50% were classified as low risk with 17% being at substantial or extreme risk.

The majority of the buildings inspected (61%) were fully or partially vacant at the time of survey, with 39% being occupied. Of the vacant properties most 64% were privately owned. Most of the 22 buildings (78%) that were identified as “at risk”, were in private ownership, 22% of the 22 were “for sale”.

Vacant “at risk” buildings with various problems including failed render and structural cracking
Discussion of Results

The distribution of BARs in the central area is fairly random, with perhaps a slight concentration in Silver Street/High Street/Church Street and in Cambridge Street. The main types of property affected (incidence in brackets) are:

- Shops & other commercial (9)
- Residential (4)
- Factory/warehouse (3)
- Hotel (2)
- Barn/storage (2).

In regeneration terms, therefore, there would be a clear benefit in particularly targeting the Cambridge Street shops in an endeavour to achieve concentrated visible improvements. An issue to be addressed, though, in the typical retail situation is a trader/lessee on the ground floor dissociated from the problems with roofing/guttering above, or where upper floors are in any case simply disused.

Vacant Factory – broken windows, organic growth and rotting window frames

Again, functional redundancy in-toto occurs at the two barns at Cambridge Street and Jacksons Lane, the Angel Hotel and the factories in Rock Street, Alma Street and Great Park Street. As the factories in particular can become targets for vandalism and arson if left empty for too long, conversion/refurbishment schemes can and should be pursued through the planning process by proactive pre-application discussions with owners. This is already taking place in the Great Park Street factory case where a residential conversion scheme is under active consideration.

The occupancy of a property is the key risk factor identified in this study. If there is any deterioration noted in the next survey they would become category C. The vacancy factor is likely to be at least partly related to the current economic climate.
At present, at 23 out of 458, the proportion of the historic buildings within the Conservation Area that are “at-risk” is relatively low, which is of course to be welcomed. Additionally, it will be seen from the detailed “condition comments” on the BAR schedule that in the majority of cases the items noted would come under the head of “routine maintenance” and that the category entries are mainly at the lower levels of risk. The only real structural problem relates to 31 Church Street and this is currently being remediated under the supervision of the Building Inspectors.

Nevertheless, the prospect of under-investment in routine repairs and maintenance on the part of private owners does not bode well for the short-to-medium term future of the affected historic fabric in the town centre.

In order to measure and record changes over time it will be necessary to repeat this exercise on a regular basis. 2 years is a reasonable time between surveys as it will allow works to be done to improve buildings therefore showing meaningful differences. The rate of change of building decay or improvement will be an important indicator of the likely survivability of a building.

Conclusions

A new survey will be due in December 2012.

The register provides a basis for Townscape Heritage Initiative grant expenditure and will form the basis of a target list of properties most in need of assistance.

The survey can also be used to inform decisions regarding potential use of the Council’s statutory powers in order to secure the preservation of the town’s historic fabric. These powers would include Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Section 215 Notices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspection date</th>
<th>Building number/name</th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Inspect or</th>
<th>Current use</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Condition comment</th>
<th>Occupancy</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Market Status</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010</td>
<td>Hind Hotel</td>
<td>Sheep Street</td>
<td>AS Hotel</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>GUTTERS BLOCKED AND BROKEN IN PLACES. PORCH NOT WEATHER TIGHT. TIMBER ROTTEN, POORLY REPAIRED ROOF.</td>
<td>vOccupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for Sale</td>
<td>Grade II C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010</td>
<td>Adjacent to 13</td>
<td>Great Park Street</td>
<td>AS Former Factory</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>MASONRY, CARPENTRY PROBLEMS. ORGANIC GROWTH. S215 NOTICE SERVED.</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>BTM A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010</td>
<td>Church Street</td>
<td>AS Former Indian restaurant</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>FRONT WALL NOT TIED IN TO MAIN STRUCTURE</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010</td>
<td>Silver Street</td>
<td>AS Former Angel Hotel</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Partially occupied</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>All windows blocked up on GF and 1st F apart from middle shop front. S215 notice to be served.</td>
<td>Partially occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010</td>
<td>2/3 Broad Green</td>
<td>AS Residential</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>WINDOWS AND DOORS REQUIRE PROTECTION FROM WEATHER, LIKELY TO DECAY RAPIDLY IN PRESENT STATE. STRUCTURAL CRACKING. PAINTWORK DECAY. RENDER FAILURE. GARDEN OVERGROWN. nb: IN DISCUSSIONS WITH PROSPECTIVE PURCHASER</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>Grade II B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010</td>
<td>Oxford Street</td>
<td>AS Residential</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>Grade II B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010</td>
<td>1A High Street</td>
<td>AS British Legion Club</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>ROTTEN SOFFITS AND FASCIAS AT UPPER LEVEL</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>BTM C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010</td>
<td>Cambridge Street</td>
<td>AS Shop</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>STRUCTURE AND PAINTWORK TO DORMER. CHIMNEY BRICKWORK NEEDS ATTENTION-UNSTABLE.</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010</td>
<td>Rock Street</td>
<td>AS Disused warehouse</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>APPARENTLY DISUSED FACTORY. SOME WINDOWS SMASHED</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>BTM C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection date</td>
<td>Building number/name</td>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Inspect or current use</td>
<td>condition rating</td>
<td>condition comment</td>
<td>occupancy</td>
<td>ownership</td>
<td>market status</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Risk Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 8b</td>
<td>Cambridge Street AS</td>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>UPPER FLOORS: CHIMNEY FLASHING, PAINTWORK, RENDER CRACKS</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>To let</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010 9/10/11</td>
<td>Oxford Street AS</td>
<td>Newsagent</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SLATE MOVEMENT</td>
<td>vacant</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010 48</td>
<td>Broad Green AS</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>FEW ROOF TILES MISSING/DISPLACED, WINDOWS NEED ATTENTION</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010 4</td>
<td>Broad Green AS</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3RD STOREY TOP WINDOW ROTTEN, PROBLEM WITH RENDER TO RETURN</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>Grade II</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/12/2010 24</td>
<td>Jacksons Lane AS</td>
<td>Barn</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>TEMPORARY ROOF, POINTING AND CARPENTRY DECAY, ORGANIC GROWTH</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 37</td>
<td>Cambridge Street AS</td>
<td>Shop and flat</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ROOF SLATES MISSING, ORGANIC GROWTH IN GUTTERS, RENDER FINISH CRACKING - S215 NOTICE?</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 Rear of 5</td>
<td>Cambridge Street AS</td>
<td>Storage behind shop</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ROOF, MASONRY, FACIAS AND WINDOW PROBLEMS, ORGANIC GROWTH</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>Grade II</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 12</td>
<td>Park Road AS</td>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>CARPENTRY ROTTEN TO FIRST FLOOR BAYS</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 12/13</td>
<td>Cambridge Street AS</td>
<td>Shop and flats</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>STONEWORK SPALLING, POINTING, PAINTWORK.</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection date</td>
<td>Building number/name</td>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Inspect or</td>
<td>current use</td>
<td>condition rating</td>
<td>condition comment</td>
<td>occupancy</td>
<td>ownership</td>
<td>market status</td>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 72</td>
<td>Cannon Street</td>
<td>AS Wall</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WALL BETWEEN PUB AND NO 72 CANNON ST; PARTIAL STRUCTURAL FAILURE. DECAY TO LOWER HALF</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 48</td>
<td>Oxford Street</td>
<td>AS Care Home Annex</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GUTTERS MISSING; RE POINTING REQUIRED</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>Grade II D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 31</td>
<td>Alma Street</td>
<td>AS Former factory</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SMASHED WINDOWS</td>
<td>Partially occupied</td>
<td>company</td>
<td>Not for sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/12/2010 Swan PH</td>
<td>Silver Street</td>
<td>AS Temp office</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PROBLEMS WITH GUTTERS, BROKEN GLASS AND DPC</td>
<td>Partially occupied</td>
<td>company</td>
<td>For sale</td>
<td>BTM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>