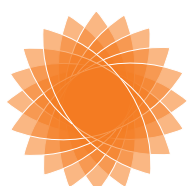


Sleaford Conservation Area Management Plan Adopted April 2016



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1. Introduction

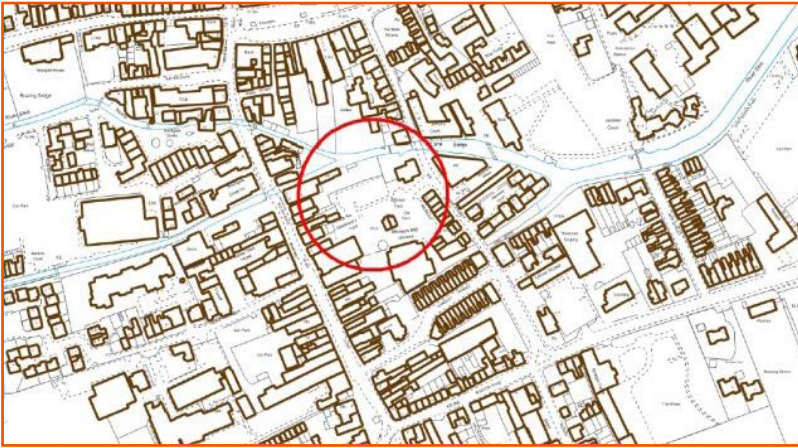
The main objectives of this management plan are to ensure the protection of what makes Sleaford Conservation Area special and to guide future development in a way that preserves and enhances the characteristics which makes it worthy of protection. It will set out policies designed to proactively manage change within the conservation areas and the tools available through Development Management and Planning Enforcement procedures.

2. Sleaford Conservation Area SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Architectural quality of buildings	Many shopfronts not in keeping with character and appearance of rest of buildings	Improve condition and appearance of shopfronts through grant scheme	Small-scale incremental change, lack of specific design guidance for shopfronts
Overall quality of historic environment	Condition of shopfronts detracting from quality of town centre environment and historic character	As above	As above
Well-used public open space	Lack of links between spaces	Improve links from waterside footpaths to town centre	Funding cuts leading to lack of maintenance
Historic street layout has largely survived	Traffic-led alterations to street layout and Handley Monument, Watergate etc	Lower traffic levels through more out-of-centre parking offers opportunity to reinstate/improve layout	Reliance on other schemes being implemented
High levels of pedestrian traffic in town centre	Poor pedestrian connectivity in places due to traffic levels/lack of legible pedestrian routes	Create new pedestrian routes and improve signage for existing routes	Lack of funding within existing budgets
Very high quality buildings around Market Place	Traffic levels along Eastgate cut off south side of the square from the rest	Possibility of shared space/ resurfacing scheme with external funding to reduce traffic levels and reconnect spaces	Difficulty of obtaining funding
High quality, quirky public realm features around Cogglesford area and bespoke bollards	Poor quality public realm, particularly materials, use of standard street furniture	Possible resources to prepare streetscape design guide to inform future works	Competing demands on existing staff resources
High quality palette of building materials including local stone, red and buff brick, slate and pantiles	Poor quality modern new and replacement materials eroding historic character	Seek good quality materials in new development and resist loss of existing materials	

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Moneys Yard



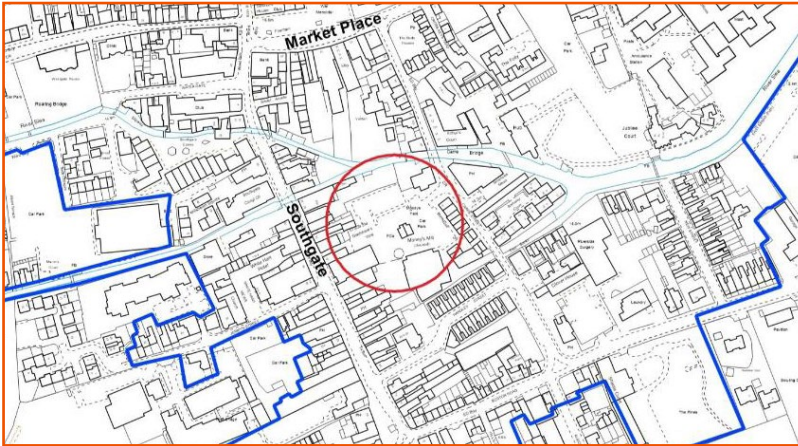
Above: Money's Yard is dominated by parked cars

Money's Yard is an area of open space around the Grade II listed Money's Mill currently given over to parking. It has been identified in the Sleaford Masterplan as key to a number of wider regeneration proposals centred around improving the vitality of the space and its pedestrian links to the rest of the town centre.

Policy: The council will seek to actively engage with public and private sector bodies to secure a viable scheme for the regeneration of this area.

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Corn Exchange



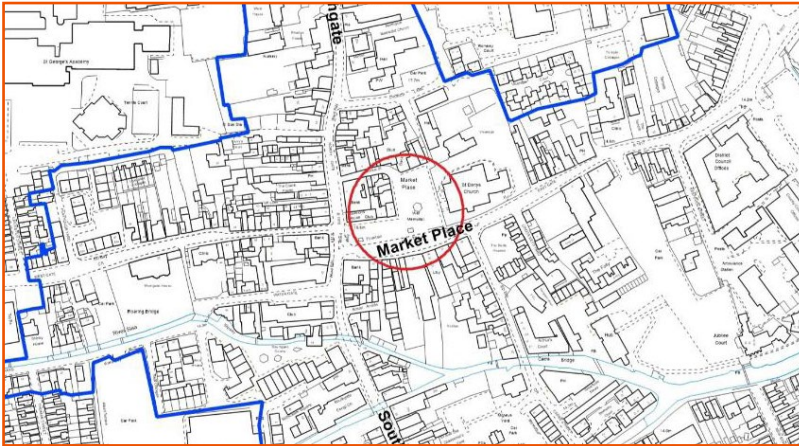
Above: Sleaford Corn Exchange c.late 19th Century and present. The Corn Exchange building was destroyed by fire and the present building dates from the 1960s.

The Corn Exchange comprises a range of buildings, some of which are Grade II listed or curtilage listed, stretching back from Market Place to the river. It is likely to come forward in the short to medium term as a joint publicly and privately funded mixed-use development including improved pedestrian links and a bridge to Moneys Yard.

Policy: The council will continue to work with interested parties to bring forward an attractive and viable scheme for the regeneration of this area.

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Market Place



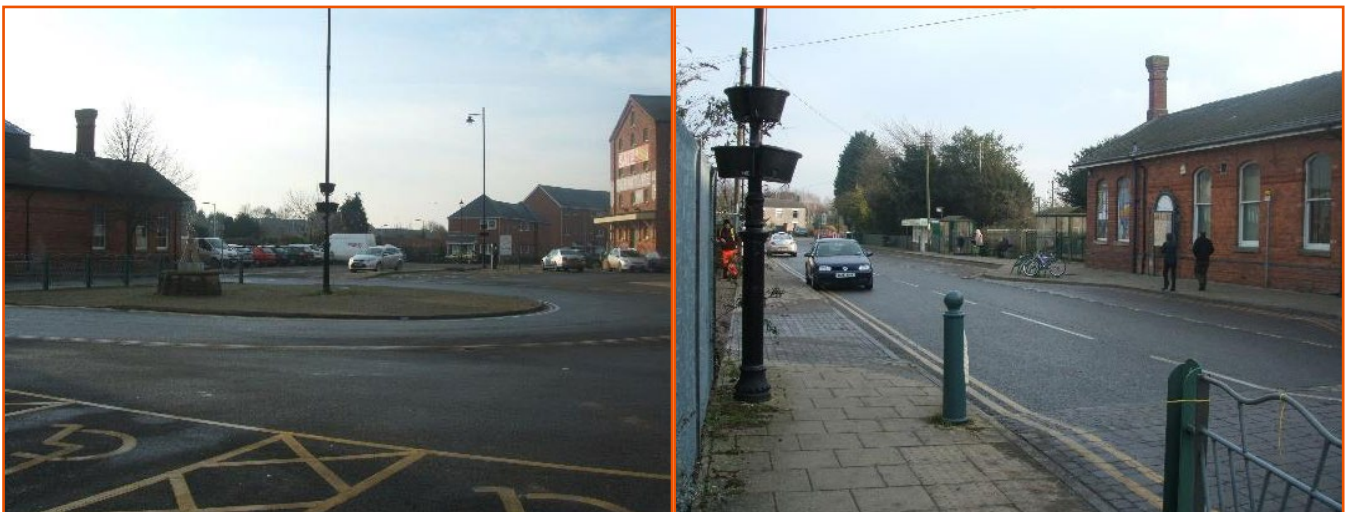
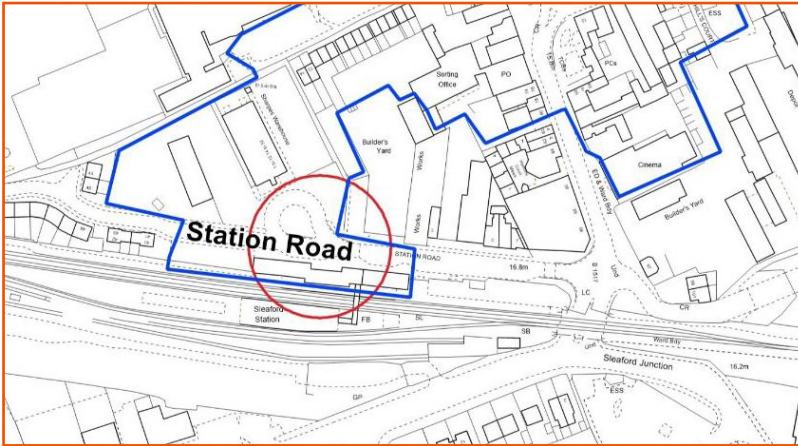
Above: Market Place in the late 19th Century and present. The dominance of traffic and parking acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement and appreciation of the fine architecture.

Market Place is the most significant public open space in Sleaford with buildings of the highest architectural quality. However it has suffered considerably from poor quality public realm materials and design, traffic management measures which have cut it off from the rest of the town centre and as a result it lacks character and vitality.

Policy: The council will seek funding for a detailed feasibility study to address the issues identified and bring forward a viable scheme for the regeneration and revitalisation of this space.

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Station Entrance



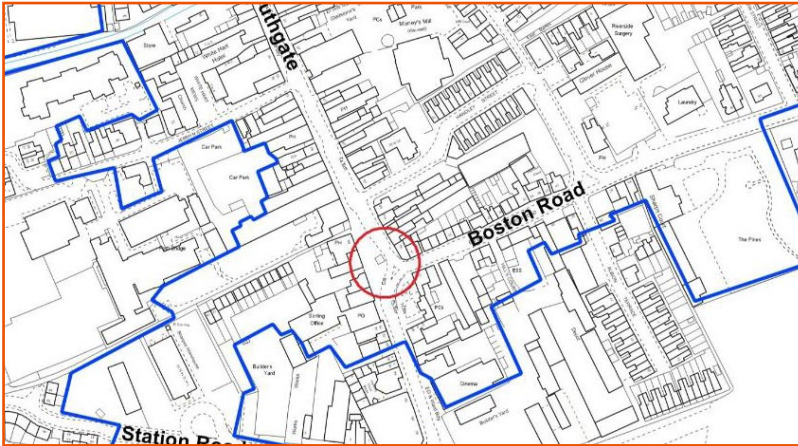
Above: Sleaford Railway Station and surrounds

Sleaford Railway Station buildings are Grade II listed and form an important entry to the town centre. At present poor quality public realm and a lack of legible pedestrian links to the rest of the town centre do not present an attractive or welcoming entry to Sleaford.

Policy: The council will explore potential improvements to the public realm and pedestrian links to this area with the relevant public bodies.

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Handley Monument



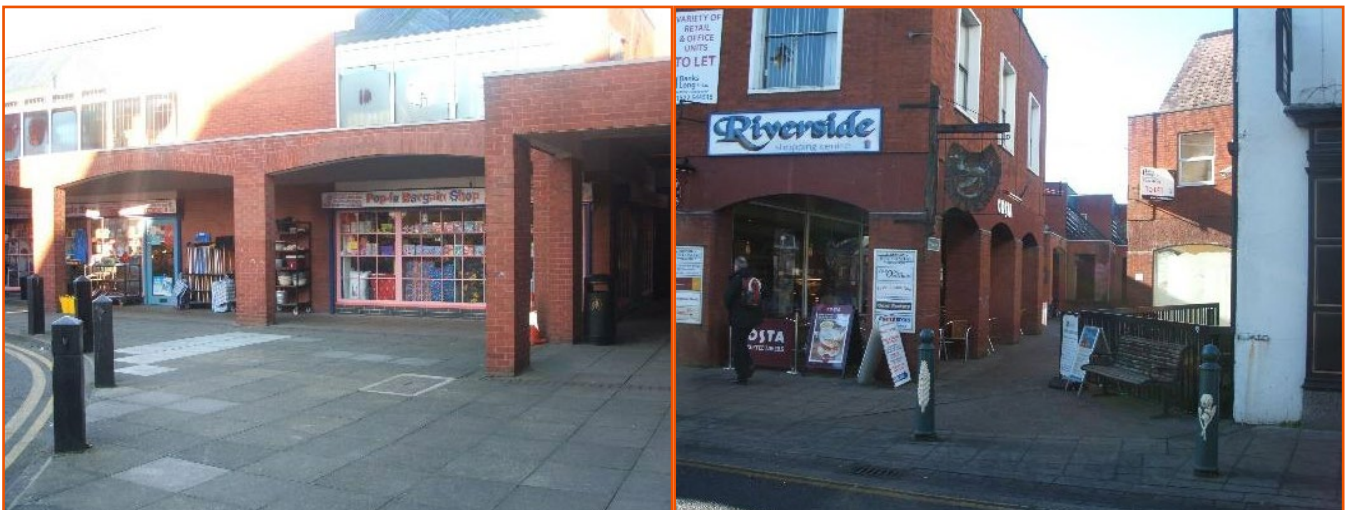
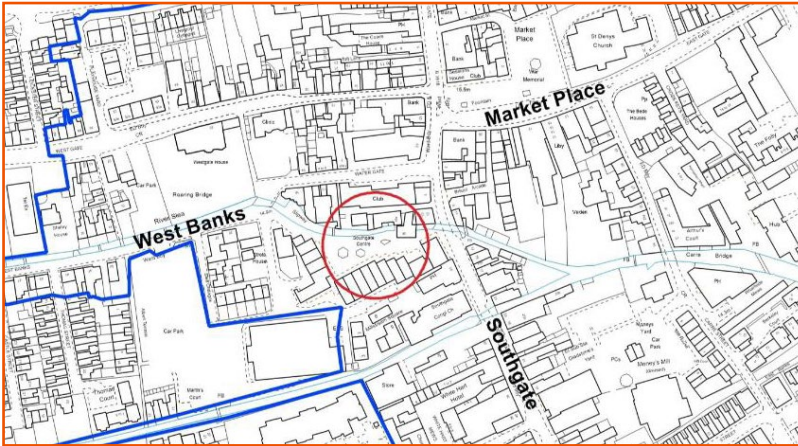
Above: Southgate in the late 19th/early 20th century showing buildings to the south which have now been demolished and in 2015 illustrating the dominance of traffic and unappealing public open space.

The public space surrounding the Handley Monument is not in keeping with the special architectural quality of this Grade II listed structure which is also a significant landmark within the town centre and conservation area. Traffic-led alterations and demolition have resulted in a space which is dominated by traffic and unattractive to pedestrians.

Policy: Whilst it is recognised that the redevelopment of this area may represent a longer-term aspiration the council will seek to set in motion an appraisal of the options for large-scale improvements. In the shorter term, potential improvements to the public realm to improve the setting of this heritage asset will be explored.

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Southgate Centre



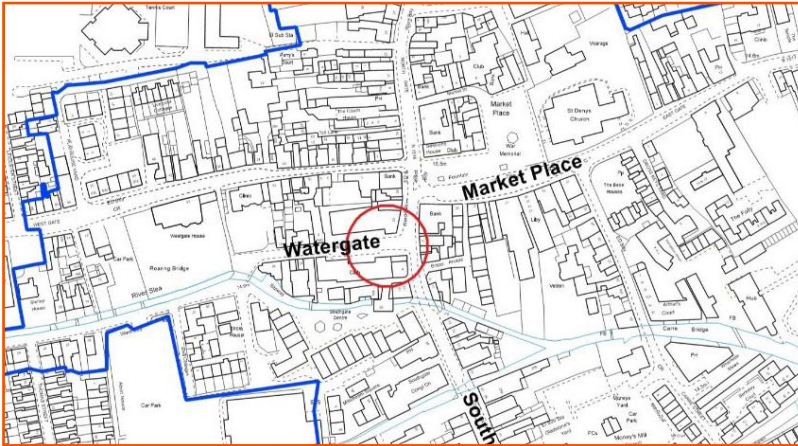
Above: Lack of pedestrian legibility and poor quality and condition of the public realm within and around the Southgate Centre have a negative impact on the conservation area.

The Southgate Centre is a development very much of its time. The design, materials and layout are out of keeping with the surrounding development and the high vacancy rate within shop units adds to the down-at-heel appearance.

Policy: The council will seek to work with the landlord and tenants to secure improvements to the Southgate Centre through the development management process.

3. Action Areas and Opportunities for Enhancement

Watergate/Southgate Junction



Above: The junction between Watergate and Southgate

Provision for traffic dominates this junction and has resulted in largely blank elevations to buildings facing onto Watergate. This gives a forbidding and unwelcoming appearance to this area.

Policy: Shorter term measures such as improving the quality of the public realm will be explored whilst working towards a more comprehensive scheme to address the issues outlined above.

4. Management Policies

Shopfronts

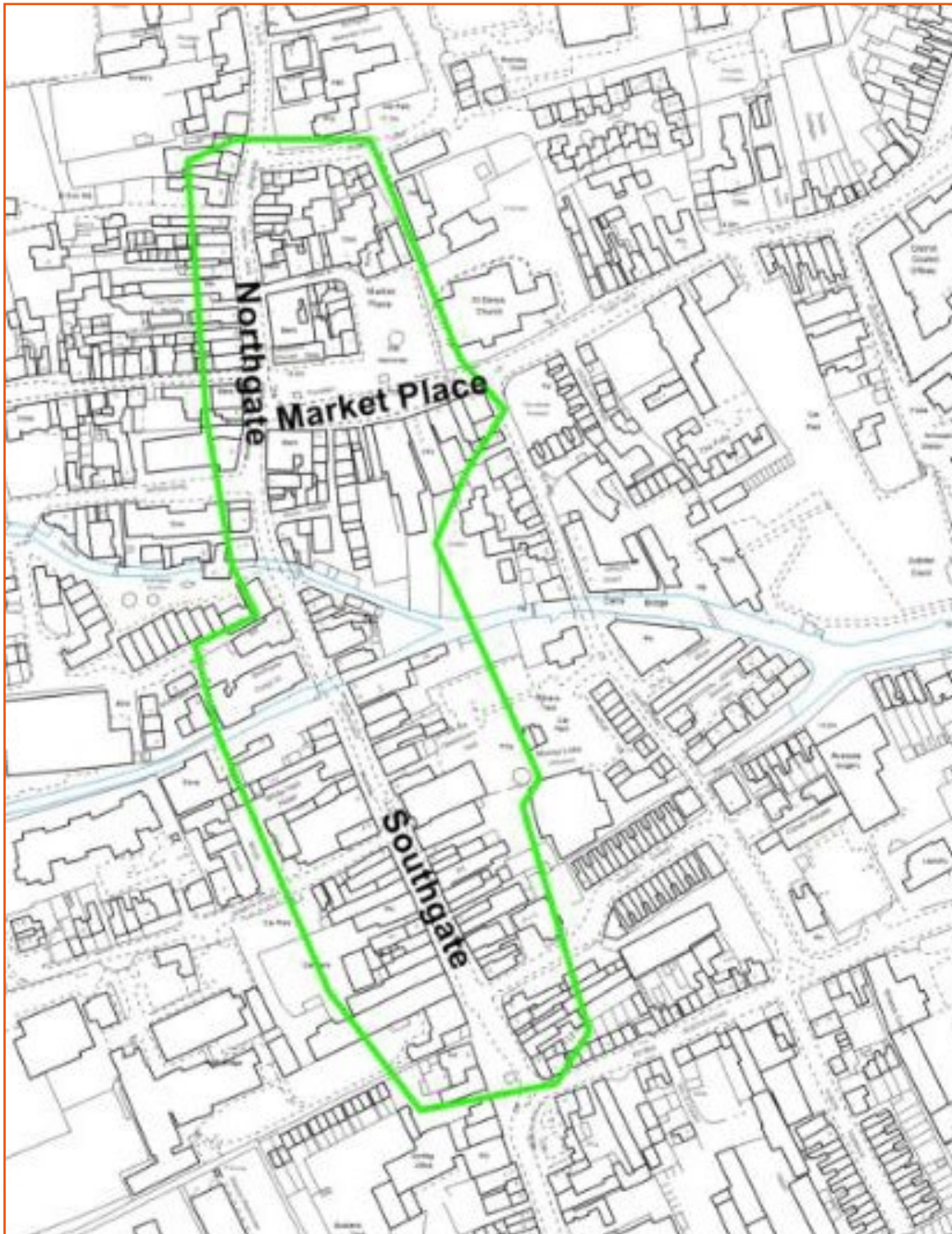


Above: The quality of many shopfronts is not in keeping with the rest of the building and is having a significantly harmful impact on the conservation area.

The conservation area appraisal has identified the design and condition of many of the shopfronts within the conservation area as causing significant harm to the quality and appearance of the historic environment. At first floor level and above, the survival of historic features and overall quality of the historic environment is excellent. However the introduction of shopfronts which do not relate to the rest of the building, inappropriate use of modern materials, unsympathetic signage and overall poor quality shopfronts is not in keeping with the character or appearance of the conservation area. The council recognise that this is a serious issue and one which will require intervention and encouragement beyond the realm of the development management and planning enforcement teams.

Policy: The council will produce a shopfront design guide to assist developers and retailers in the design of shop fronts and advertisements. It will also include guidance on features such as security measures and lighting. The council will seek to achieve improvements through the development management and planning enforcement teams. Joint funding from the council, Historic England and Sleaford Town Council has been secured for a Conservation Area Partnership Grant Scheme which will focus on improvements to shopfronts. The map below illustrates the area in which the scheme will initially operate.

Grant Scheme Area



Above: Map of Sleaford Partnership in Conservation Areas grant scheme area

Public Realm



Above: There is considerable potential for improvement of the public realm

Although there are bespoke public realm elements in parts of the conservation area such as bollards and seats overall the quality of the public realm is not in keeping with that of the rest of the built environment. This is a particular problem with paving materials and areas of public open space, notably Market Place, Southgate and the area around the Handley Monument. Through the public consultation process the condition of the footway between Westgate and the Roaring Bridge and Watergate was highlighted as a concern. A concern was also expressed regarding a number of areas where it is perceived that nobody is taking responsibility for their upkeep such as the slipway at the old fire station.

Policy: The council will produce a streetscape design guide to identify the street hierarchy within the conservation area and appropriate suites of materials including paving materials and street furniture. This will inform future works and enable a consistent palette of materials to be achieved allowing for phasing of works as and when funds become available. It will explore the possibility of securing partnership funding to secure improvements to the public realm focussed on the Action Areas outlined above, particularly Market Place, Money's Yards and Handley Monument.

Bridges and railings, West Banks



Above: Bridges and railings along West Banks c.late19th/early 20th Century and present.

As shown in the photographs below there has been considerable deterioration in the quality and appearance of the bridges and railings along the river, which has had a harmful impact on the overall character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. There is an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the area by working with the relevant public bodies and private owners in order to secure more appropriately designed bridges and railings.

Policy: The council will explore the possibility of securing external funding to assist in the reinstatement of more sensitively designed railings and bridges. It will also seek to achieve improvements through the development management process where appropriate. The desirability of imposing an Article 4 Direction to assist with this policy will be assessed as part

Roofscape



Above: The conservation area has a distinctive and historic roofscape.

Features such as chimneys, ridges and rainwater goods and original materials such as natural slate and clay pantiles contribute to the distinctive roofscape of the conservation area. There is a good survival rate of these features and materials and it is vital that this significant part of its character and appearance is preserved and enhanced.

Policy: There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of existing features such as chimneys, ridges and rainwater goods. Where appropriate new development will be expected to contribute positively to the roofscape of the conservation area both through design and use of traditional materials. The council will explore the possibility of further protection of existing features through the use of an Article 4 Direction through a separate consultation process.

Small-Scale, Incremental Changes

Article 4 Directions, are used to bring under planning control a range of works authorised under article 3 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). They remove all, or in most cases selective, normal permitted development rights of householders to make changes to specific items considered to be contributing to the erosion of the character of many conservation areas.

The loss of traditional timber windows and roof coverings such as slate and clay pantiles along with the painting or rendering of original external walls is having a harmful impact on the conservation area. The installation of roof-mounted solar panels also has the potential to harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Policy: In order to address this issue it is proposed that a separate report will be produced and a public consultation exercise carried out to determine whether the introduction of selective Article 4 Directions would be an appropriate course of action. The purpose of the Article 4 Direction is to prevent further harm to the conservation areas and provide a means to reverse the harm which has already occurred.

Boundary Treatments

Within the central core of the conservation area the majority of buildings front directly onto the street and therefore have no front boundary treatment. However to the rear and elsewhere in the conservation area there is an interesting variety of boundary treatments which generally make use of traditional materials such as stone, brick and metal railings. This adds interest and variety to the streetscape and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Policy: The additional restrictions to permitted development rights relating to boundary walls and fences within conservation areas will continue to be applied and enforced through existing development management and planning enforcement processes. The desirability of extending these restrictions through the use of an Article 4 Direction will be explored as part of a separate consultation process.