Summary

This report is to inform the Committee of progress to date on the Oundle and Titchmarsh Conservation Area review work, and to seek the Committee's approval for designation.

Attachment(s)

Appendix A - Oundle Consultation Summary Report
Appendix B - Oundle Character Areas Map
Appendix C - Draft Oundle Townscape Analysis Map
Appendix D - Draft Oundle Conservation Area Appraisal
Appendix E - Draft Oundle Conservation Area Management Plan
Appendix F - Titchmarsh Conservation Area Consultation Report
Appendix G - Draft Titchmarsh Conservation Area Map
Appendix H - Draft Titchmarsh Conservation Area Appraisal
Appendix I - Draft Titchmarsh Conservation Area Management Plan

1.0 Background

1.1 In December 2007 the Policy and Resources Committee approved a prioritised programme of conservation area review for settlements across the District (minute 253 refers). It was further agreed that the settlements of Oundle (existing conservation area) and Titchmarsh (no conservation area at present), as well as two additional areas (Thrapston and Woodford) would be reviewed in the second year of the programme (2009-2010).

2.0 Progress to date

2.1 The progress in respect of the Titchmarsh and Oundle work can be summarised as follows:

- Research carried out by consultants culminating in the production of draft proposals for each area/settlement.
- Preliminary consultation carried out with respective town/parish councils to gauge initial views.
- Draft conservation area appraisal and management plan documents produced in respect of each area.
- Full public consultation undertaken, as agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting in November 2009 (minute 225 refers).

3.0 Feedback from public consultation - Titchmarsh

3.1 The main issues to arise from the consultation were that of the consultation itself and the scope of the proposed boundary.

3.2 The public consultation was undertaken following the same procedures that are applied to all the Council’s conservation area reviews. It included letters to all affected properties and documents circulated widely, with information and electronic feedback facility also on the Council’s website. Prior to the public consultation, as referred to in paragraph 2.1, officers attended a meeting in the village with the Parish Council where members of the public were present.

3.3 Upon receiving correspondence from the Parish Council stating that they had
concerns with the consultation and suggesting that wider consultation was necessary, contact was made with them in order to draw out exactly what they felt was necessary and desirable. Feedback was then received to confirm that members of the Parish Council were in favour of the proposals.

3.4 In terms of the scope of the boundary, many respondents felt that the whole of the village should be included within the proposed area. However, there are large parts of the village which comprise estates of relatively modern buildings which are not considered of any historic merit; these areas were excluded wherever possible.

3.5 Some correspondence was received about the land at Tofts Close, which was the subject of a proposal for affordable housing. Several people enquired as to why this land was not included within the boundary owing to the view enjoyed out over it. However, the area suggested was not considered of any merit in terms of conservation area designation due to the built environment in the locality.

4.0 Feedback from public consultation - Oundle

4.1 The responses received for the Oundle work were generally positive. Some general concerns were raised, and also concerns about the inclusion of specific sites; these have been addressed in the attached report.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 All representations received have been duly considered by both Officers and the Council’s consultants and no other changes to the original conservation area proposals are considered to be justified.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The Committee is recommended to:-

(a) designate the Titchmarsh Conservation Area in accordance with the attached documents; and

(b) approve the proposed extensions to the Oundle Conservation Area in accordance with the attached documents.

### Implications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy</th>
<th>☒ Good Quality of Life</th>
<th>☒ Good Reputation</th>
<th>☒ Good Value for Money</th>
<th>☒ High Quality Service Delivery</th>
<th>☐ Effective Partnership Working</th>
<th>☐ Strong Community Leadership</th>
<th>☐ Effective Management</th>
<th>☐ Knowledge of our Customers and Communities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours</td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval ☐

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>There are no financial implications at this stage</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There will be financial implications – see paragraph</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There is provision within existing budget</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date</td>
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<td>Decisions may have potential for income generation</td>
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<tr>
<th>Risk Management</th>
<th>An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks</th>
<th>☒</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference -</td>
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<td>inherent risk score -</td>
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<td></td>
<td>residual risk score -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>There are no additional staffing implications</td>
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<td>Additional staff will be required – see paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equalities and Human Rights</td>
<td>There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other considerations: PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Background Papers:** 2009-2010 Conservation Area Reviews, Policy and Resources Committee, 9 November 2009

**Person Originating Report:** Lloyd Mills, Senior Conservation Officer, lmills@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk, 01832 742133

**Date:** 23 March 2010

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 21)
## OUNDLE CONSERVATION AREA PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS REPORT
29 January 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Melanie Messanger, Chair of Governors on behalf of Oundle CE Primary School</td>
<td>(i) Concerned that the proposed inclusion of the school in the CA will mean stricter planning controls which may have a negative impact on any future developments.</td>
<td>The school already lies in an important town immediately adjacent to the existing CA boundary, so planning controls are already very tight. However, the inclusion within the CA will mean that any new development will have to ‘preserve or enhance’ the CA. This was considered but rejected as it is somewhat isolated from the built-up historic core of Oundle and separated from the medieval burgage plots between Milton Road and West Street by Spurlings, a small estate of modern buildings.</td>
<td>No further action (NFA)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Considers that the school cricket field at the western end of Milton Road should be included in the CA.</td>
<td></td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Would like to see Milton Street added to the list of streets in the Management Proposals (MPs) where traffic management and car parking measures might be considered.</td>
<td>Agree.</td>
<td>Add to MPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barbara Ding</td>
<td>(i) Supports proposed extensions to the CA. Considers the report describes the town accurately.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Notes that there are 2 ENDC interpretation panels in the town, and also a very good Town Trial, marked on walking route.</td>
<td>Agree.</td>
<td>Amend text accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) The old workhouse in Glapthorn Road remains behind the Old Persons’ Home.</td>
<td>Check.</td>
<td>Amend text accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Points out that a bit of traffic congestion does help to slow down traffic in the town centre so can be seen as a positive thing as well as negative.</td>
<td>Agree.</td>
<td>Amend text accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Asks about public consultation - will there be a public meeting?</td>
<td>This is a matter for ENDC to decide.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(vii) Asks if the local institutions which have been directly affected by the report have been sent copies.

3 Ruth Keens

(i) Supports the recommendations in the MPs. Mentions a small outbuilding behind her property in Herne Road and wants to see it preserved.

Only the Town Council has been directly approached during the drafting of the appraisal. This is not visible from the road and has not been identified as a 'positive' building as a result. However, it is hoped that once within the CA, any application to demolish will be resisted by ENDC.

4 Janet Browning-Smith

(i) Supports proposals to extend CA boundary to include the southern part of East Road properties. However, would also like to see the CA boundary extended to include Herne Lodge and the avenue of trees which leads up to it.

Discuss with Council.

5 Colin Brooks

(i) Supports proposals subject to Council Tax not rising.

(ii) Would like to see the rear garden of Lime House in East Road included in CA which retains a large copper beech tree.

Check to see extent of curtilage - if within buildings fronting East Street, add to CA boundary.

(iii) Would like to see further undergrounding of overhead wires in the new parts of the CA.

To be checked.

6 Sue and Colin Brown

(i) Would like to see the whole of the garden to Lime House within the CA

See 5(ii).

(ii) Would like to see a number of improvements to South Road, including undergrounding overhead wires, improve the appearance of the street lights, and provide more litter bins.

Agreed.

7 Ioan Foster Thomas, Oundle Museum Trust

(i) Welcomes the 'impressive document' but notes a number of small inaccuracies in the historical details which could be rectified by the museum and the Oundle Historical Society.

Noted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Justin Waring</td>
<td>Supports proposed extensions to the CA but asks why the allotments at the back of Bassett Place were not included. These are not visible from South Road or from the western end of Herne Road, so they were not included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Colin Moore on behalf of Messrs P A and I C Goldsmith, owners of Goldsmith’s Showrooms off South Road.</td>
<td>(i) Goldsmith’s Showrooms are modern buildings of no merit and asks if they can be removed from the proposed CA extension. The proposed CA boundary has been selectively drawn already to exclude some of the modern development in or near to South Road, where it is practical to do so. The showrooms lie within a larger area of backland, in parts characterised in the lines of the medieval burgage plots and a number of positive buildings as well as many stone walls. The large garden to Cobthorne, one of Oundle’s most important listed buildings, also lies very close by. It is considered therefore that there is sufficient ‘Architectural or historic interest’ to include this part of Oundle in the CA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ioan Foster, Alice Thomas, and Gill Johnston</td>
<td>(i) Asks if the Riverside Hotel could be included in the CA. Too removed from conservation area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Lists a number of minor inaccuracies, dates, and points of details Agree.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(iii) Provides a more detailed Bibliography which could be added to the appraisal. Agree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Provides some background about local involvement in the history and buildings of Oundle. Noted.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(v) Describes the former British School off Spurlings and asks if it could be in the CA. This building is not easily visible from West Street. Subject to its present appearance, it could be included in the CA. Amend text accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) A small number of minor changes needed to addresses and building details. Accept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(vii) Local List - considers that a number of the Oundle School Boarding Houses dating to between 1899 and 1907 could be added to the emerging Local List. This is a matter for ENDC to decide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(viii) Visitor interpretation - information about the Oundle Town Trail and the Oundle Society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11</th>
<th>Derek Watt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Objects to his building, No. 100 South Road (the former maltings) being included in the revised CA boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The maltings is a well detailed 'positive' historic building which makes an important contribution to views along South Road. Its long thin shape marries well with the medieval burgage plot boundaries which surround it, reflecting the historic grain of development. Its inclusion within the new CA boundary is both justifiable and desirable.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12</th>
<th>Richard Potter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Supports proposed extensions to the CA boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Objects to inclusion of Gallery Lane in the Management Proposals para 3.6 as it privately owned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Although in private ownership, improvements would be welcome. This will be clarified in the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13</th>
<th>Oundle Town Council</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Welcome proposal to extend the CA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Suggest that an area to the north west should also be included (cricket playing field and other Oundle school buildings and open space).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This was considered but rejected as it is somewhat isolated from the built-up historic core of Oundle and separated from the medieval burgage plots between Milton Road and West Street by Spurlings, a small estate of modern buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>School sanatorium on Glapthorn Road should be considered as a positive building and in time listed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iv)</td>
<td>Comments on the Drill Hall; a building owned by OTC which has been identified as 'positive' in the proposals. OTC have taken decision to demolish building due to ongoing cost of upkeep and repair required.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The building is deemed 'positive' as it makes positive contribution to the streetscape. It is noted to be of some architectural and social value.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14</th>
<th>Graham Rice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Comments that the townscape appraisal map showing no. 16 Benefield Road to be a listed building is wrong-it is not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This has been double-checked. No. 16 is statutorily listed. Mr Rice has been informed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Oundle Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Contents

1 Statement of the Special Interest of the Oundle Conservation Area

2 Introduction
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   2.2 Planning policy context
   2.3 Planning Policy Framework
   2.4 Purpose of the appraisal
   2.5 Community Involvement

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   3.2 Activities and uses

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   4.1 Geographic location
   4.2 Topography
   4.3 Geology
   4.4 Landscape setting

5 Historical Development
   5.1 Archaeology
   5.2 Historical development

6 Spatial Analysis
   6.1 Layout and spaces
   6.2 Relationship of buildings to spaces
   6.3 Landmarks and focal points
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8 The buildings of the conservation area
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   8.6 Building Materials
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   9.2 Character Area 1: West Street
   9.3 Character Area 2: The town centre - New Street, Market Place and St Peter’s Church
   9.4 Character Area 3: North Street
10 Issues
10.1 Conservation area boundary review
10.2 Public realm
10.3 Traffic management and car parking.
10.4 Listed buildings at Risk
10.5 The control of unlisted ‘positive’ buildings
10.6 Sites requiring enhancement
10.7 Local List
10.8 Control of new development
10.9 Visitor interpretation
10.10 Shopfronts

Appendices
Appendix 1 Townscape Appraisal Map
Character Area Map
Appendix 2 Bibliography
1 STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE OUNDLE CONSERVATION AREA

The key characteristics of the Oundle Conservation Area, which make it worthy of its status as a conservation area are:

- A long history, with development starting in the 6th century AD with the establishment of a Saxon settlement which took advantage of the location on rising land above the flood plain of the River Nene;
- A monastery was established in the early 8th century and Oundle developed under the patronage of Peterborough Abbey;
- At some stage, probably in the 13th century, the distinctive burgage plots were laid out along West Street and south of the Market Place;
- Today, Oundle is an attractive and vibrant historic town which lies within an attractive countryside setting;
- Of note are the surviving burgage plots with their distinctive long thin plots stretching back from the main streets (although some of these lie outside the current conservation area boundary);
- The principal open spaces are the Market Place (where frequent street markets are a popular attraction), the widened section of New Street, and St Peter’s Churchyard;
- Oundle School is a major driver of the local economy and occupies at least five notable historic buildings within the town centre as well as much of the land to the immediate north of the centre;
- The town centre also includes a number of varied shops, banks, public houses, cafes, restaurants and the town’s Tourist Information Office;
- High quality public realm with traditional stone paving in the Market Place and in St Peter’s Churchyard;
- A high concentration of listed buildings, which form almost continuous frontages along West Street, New Street, the Market Place and North Street;
- Four grade I listed buildings - St Peter’s Church, the Talbot Hotel, The Berrystead, and Cobthorne;
- Eight grade II* listed buildings including a number of notable town houses and two groups of almshouses;
- Many other grade II listed buildings of great merit, such as the former Town Hall in the centre of the Market Place;
- A large number of more vernacular listed houses, cottages, and outbuildings, dating to between the 17th and the 19th centuries;
- The almost universal use of Oolitic limestone (in the form of ashlar blocks or rubblestone), with some Collyweston stone slate roofs or Welsh slate, for most of these historic buildings;
- There has been some 20th century development, particularly on the south side of the town, which has adversely affected the historic layout of the town.
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been written by The Conservation Studio on behalf of East Northamptonshire Council.

This Appraisal, with the accompanying Management Proposals, will be used to guide future development and improvements in the town in conjunction with existing and forthcoming planning policies adopted by East Northamptonshire Council.

The linear conservation area boundary encompasses most of the historic town centre from Stoke Hill in the west, passing through the Market Place and St Peter’s Churchyard, and finishing at the junction of North Street with Blackpot Lane to the north east. It includes some of the principal buildings of Oundle School, but excludes other notable school buildings off Milton Road and Glapthorn Road. It also excludes the rear portions of many of the medieval burgage plots which face onto West Street and the Market Place. Recommendations for extensive changes to the existing conservation area boundary are included in the Management Proposals.

2.2 Planning policy context

Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act). Local Planning Authorities are required by the Act to identify the parts of their area that should be designated as conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals to preserve or enhance them. Local authorities must submit proposals for the protection and enhancement of conservation areas for consideration at a public meeting within the relevant area. They must also have regard to any views expressed by people attending the meeting.

Broadly, the effects of designation are:

- Conservation Area Consent must be obtained from the local planning authority or Secretary of State prior to the substantial or total demolition of any building or structure within a conservation area, with some exceptions;
- The local planning authority must consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area when assessing applications for change in conservation areas;
- Permitted development rights are slightly different in conservation areas;
- Permission is required from the planning authority to fell or lop a tree over a certain size.

2.3 Planning Policy Framework

Current planning policies for Oundle, including those governing development, are laid out in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), adopted in June 2008. In particular, CSS Policy 13 (Sustainable Development Principles) sets out criteria for raising standards of design and the protection of existing historic and landscape assets. CSS policies need to be considered in conjunction with the East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009), in particular Policy 27 (Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment).
The conservation area character appraisal and management proposals documents will sit alongside the conservation policies contained within the CSS and Regional Plan and be complementary to its aims of preserving and enhancing East Northamptonshire’s Conservation Areas.

The current relevant planning documents are:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- Central government policy, principally as set out in “Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment”;
- East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009)
- The Joint Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire (adopted June 2008).
- East Northamptonshire Council’s emerging site allocations development plan documents.

2.4 Purpose of the appraisal

This appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest for which the Oundle Conservation Area merits designation. It identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character and appearance. It will be used by the Council in considering proposals for demolition or alteration of buildings, as well as for new developments. It will also help property owners and developers to take account of the importance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the conservation area.

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal leads to Management Proposals, setting out policies and actions to conserve and enhance the conservation area’s special architectural and historic interest and to mitigate the effects of negative features. The Management Proposals will be included within a Supplementary Planning Document within the Local Development Framework and, as such, will be adopted as local planning policy.

Preparation of the appraisal involved an extensive survey of the conservation area undertaken in August 2009. The omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

2.5 Community involvement

The survey of the conservation area has included a process of public consultation to identify the following:

- The special characteristics of the Oundle Conservation Area;
- The key negative features and issues;
- A range of possible actions that would mitigate or offset these detractors.

The consultation began with a meeting with the Oundle Town Council on 3 September 2009 when the proposed conservation area boundary was discussed. The draft appraisal and management proposals were put out to full public consultation between 20 November 2009 and 9 January 2010 after which a Public Consultations Report was prepared and any necessary amendments made.
3 THE OUNDLE CONSERVATION AREA

3.1 Designation

The Oundle Conservation Area was first designated on 26 June 1970. Since then, the conservation area boundary has not been reviewed.

3.2 Activities and uses

Oundle is a small historic market town which throughout the 19th century was in very mixed uses with a range of commercial premises within or on the edges of the town centre. However, most of the population at this time would have been involved with agriculture. A certain amount of maritime activity also took place at Oundle Wharf, which connected to the River Nene Navigation. The presence of a large public school (Oundle School) within the town centre was, and still is, a major driver in the town’s economy.

Since the mid-20th century, industrial activity has moved to the east side of the town with a number of warehouses and factories on the edge of the conservation area providing local employment. One town centre brewery off Blackpot Lane has been demolished and another one, off South Road, converted into residential accommodation. Many other buildings, which were once in agricultural uses, have been similarly converted into houses. Dairy Farm off Stoke Hill retains some smaller unconverted stone barns but does not appear to be used for farming any more. Large new housing estates have also been built around Oundle, mainly to the north and east of the town, and many of the residents commute out of Oundle to Corby, Wellingborough or Northampton. However, there is also a fairly high percentage of retired residents in the town, which creates a demand for a variety of social and educational activities. The town is also a favoured destination for tourists, who appreciate the high quality townscape, particularly the long rows of mellow limestone houses, and the attractive setting next to the River Nene.

Oundle School makes a very important contribution to the prosperity of the area in terms of employment opportunities and also because visitors to the school use local facilities such as the many tea rooms, cafés, bed and breakfast establishments, and hotels. In term time, the constant presence of teachers, other staff, pupils and school suppliers within the town is a notable contributor to activity within Oundle. The many retired teachers who live in or around Oundle also make a major contribution to the various social and cultural activities in the area.

Although agriculture is no longer nearly as important as it used to be in the 19th century, there are still regular street markets in the Market Place. The commercial town centre focuses on this part of Oundle and here can be found a small Tesco’s Express Supermarket, with a much larger Co-Operative Supermarket, with car parking, off St Osyth’s Street. The town is also notable for its many small, locally-owned shops, many of which cater for visitors. Long stay car parking is provided off Benefield Road to the west and off East Street, closer to the town centre, to the east. However, many locals prefer to use the on-street short stay parking in Market Place or its immediate environs.
4 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

4.1 Geographic location

Oundle is a medium sized market town on the northern edges of East Northamptonshire, less than eight miles from Thrapston, which lies to the south. Oundle is connected to Thrapston and the A14 via the A605, which runs along the line of the former railway to the east of Oundle as far as Barnwell.

4.2 Topography and geology

Oundle is located on rising ground above the River Nene, most of the town being between eight to twelve metres above river level. The 30 metre contour roughly follows the line of Benefield Road, West Street, Market Place, and North Street, so these streets appear relatively flat. At certain points to the south of the town, the differences in levels are obvious, for instance, in Stoke Hill and Mill Road, both of which drop down quite steeply from the town centre towards the river. Similar changes are evident in St Osyth’s Lane. To the north, the ground rises more gradually towards a level plateau along Glapthorn Road. Of note is the way in which the historic form of development was constrained by the flood plain, so the old ‘back streets’ – South Road and East Road, run roughly parallel to the 30 metre contour and mark the edge of the developable land.

Close to Oundle the geology is defined by the Oolitic limestones, sometimes with iron deposits, which can be found in this part of north Northamptonshire. This stone is used for many of the buildings in the town and is one of the most notable features of the townscape. Collyweston stone ‘slate’ can be seen on many roofs in Oundle, brought over from limestone mines/quarries closer to Stamford.

Along the river meadows associated with the Nene, the soil is alluvial with deposits of gravel which have been commercially extracted in the past. These former quarries now form the site of Oundle Marina and the adjoining boat-building complex. In the past, the existence of many natural springs, some of them containing iron, was a great advantage and these were used for the tanning and brewing industries. The town also lies close to deposits of clay and a brick works is noted on the historic map for Oundle off Glapthorn Road.

4.3 Landscape setting

Oundle is situated on slightly rising ground to the north and west of the River Nene, which at this point flows through an area called St. Sythe’s meadow. This land is liable to flooding but the main part of the town is deliberatively raised above the flood plain. The line of the river has been altered over the centuries with evidence of several mill leats and navigational improvements. Past gravel extraction has resulted in the creation of the Oundle Marina, which lies off Barnwell Road to the south of Oundle. Close to the Marina, Barnwell Country Park is an important nature reserve and popular public facility with over 15 hectares of lakes, riverbanks and meadows. To the north and west of Oundle is flattish farming land, with large, Post-Enclosure fields mainly used for crops.
5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Archaeological interest

The River Nene valley provided good soils for farming and plenty of fresh water so it is not surprising that there is evidence for pre-historic settlement near Oundle, with occupation sites dating back to the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. A late Bronze Age or possibly early Iron Age ring fort has also recently been identified to the east of Thrapston, to the south of Oundle.

Oundle was the location of a defended Saxon settlement enclosure occupied between the 6th and the 10th century, which appears to have been an important regional centre and the probably the location of the provincial capital of Oundle referred to by Bede. Relating to this period in the town’s development, there is one Scheduled Monument in the Oundle Conservation Area, a large designation which covers the Vicarage garden and land between St Peter’s Church and Blackpot Lane (ref: NN200). The scheduled site includes open land which covers the line of the ditch (which may have denoted ownership rather than being defensive) and the interior of the enclosure, but excludes the churchyard and sites where buildings have probably destroyed any below-ground remains. The scheduled site is important as Saxon defended settlement sites are very rare, and only a handful survive in England.

5.2 Historical development

A Saxon settlement (see above) was located at Oundle for four hundred years until the 10th century. By 709 AD a monastery had been established in Oundle by St Wilfrid, and by 957 AD the manors of Oundle and Biggin were in the ownership of the Abbey of Peterborough. By this time Oundle was confirmed as a centre of government and was also important as having a market. The original Saxon church was possibly located close to this market, probably below the present St Peter’s Church.

In 972 AD King Edgar confirmed that the Abbey still owned the manors in Oundle and this continued despite an attack in 1065 by Earl Morcar. The Domesday Survey in 1086 records that Oundle was still under the control of the Abbey, and consisted of a mill, meadows, woodland and a market. In 1216 parts of Oundle and Biggin were destroyed by King John, leading to the demolition of the granges associated with the manors, although the church escaped. The setting out of the western end of the town, with a long straight principal street with burgage plots leading off it, may date to the period after this destruction, for by 1321 it was recorded that the town contained 24 burgages which lay to either side of the modern West Street. At this time, the common fields around Oundle were farmed communally, and names such as Inhamfield, Howefield and Holmfield were noted. During the 13th century St Peter’s Church was largely rebuilt, retaining small sections of Norman work, with possibly Saxon stonework underneath the floor. The spire is largely of 1634 or later.

After the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s, the Manors of Oundle and Biggin appear to have been granted as part of her dowry to firstly Katherine Howard then to Catherine Parr, the final wife of Henry VIII. After the death of Catherine Parr in 1548, Oundle and Biggin were granted (along with numerous other lands) to John Russell, Earl of Bedford, and Lord Privy Seal. At this time the King’s bailiff was Gilbert Pickering, who was later (1553) to acquire the Manor of Titchmarsh. In 1540 the traveller and commentator John Leland visited Oundle and confirmed the existence of a fine stone-built town with a central market.
The 16th century is also notable in the history of Oundle for the establishment of Oundle School by Sir William Laxton, who was born in Oundle and later acquired great wealth in London, becoming Master of the Grocers’ Company of London, an alderman and a mayor. He died in 1556 and left money for his widow to purchase the Guild House in the churchyard (built in about 1485) for use as a school and an almshouse. The Grocers’ Company are now the governors of the school. His school replaced or continued a more modest grammar school which dated back to the late 15th century and was still extant in the mid 16th century. A slightly later endowment was in 1611, when Latham’s Hospital and School were built on the east side of North Street. The former almshouses on the north side of West Street were part of Sir Walter Mildmay’s town house and in 1801 were endowed, shortly before his death, by John Paine, a trustee of the Independent Church.

From the early 17th century onwards, the history of the manors in Oundle becomes increasingly complex although the changes are fortunately well documented. In 1614 Edward, the Earl of Bedford, gave the manor house in Oundle to trustees who rented the manor house to John Okes for 99 years, although within twenty years the building was handed to Sir James Evington. By 1636 the Manor of Oundle was in the hands of Edward, son of the Earl of Worcester, passing at least in part to Gilbert Pickering (from Titchmarsh) in 1662, then on to William, Earl of Powis, and Henry, Earl of Norfolk, in 1676. By 1688 the Earl of Powis owned both of the manors of Oundle and Biggin, but he objected to the new monarchy and he was subsequently outlawed and his estates confiscated. These properties were eventually restored to his heir William, who sold them to James Joye in 1724. During the 18th century much of the land to the north and east of Oundle was therefore owned by the Joye family and by a Dr Walcot, and this, allied to the fact that some of the land was also Common Land, prevented the expansion of the town in these directions. Of note is the fact that the layout of these plots was still very much as described in the Austell Survey of 1565. The regular flooding of the land to the south of Oundle along the water meadows made expansion similarly impossible there.

Despite these constraints, Oundle continued to be a wealthy town, assisted by its rich agricultural lands and its location on the River Nene, which generated, for instance, an important tanning industry in the 16th century. Navigation of the river was greatly improved in 1737 by the completion of the Navigation of the River Nene, which canalised existing sections and provided new cuts to bypass meanders. In the late 18th century, the local roads were also much enhanced as a result of the actions of the Turnpike Trust. From the late 18th century, the availability of water due to the local springs, wells and the river itself, led to the development of a number of local industries including tanning, malting, and brewing.

The Oundle Enclosure Act of 1807 changed how the land in and around Oundle was managed, as the old medieval strip fields were enclosed and the back sections of some of the burgage plots were built over. In 1822 the trustees of Jane Joye sold the Manor of Oundle to Jesse Watts Russell, and in 1825 the Act of Town Improvement established a Board of Commissioners to govern the town. Commissioners included the Lord of the Manor (Jesse Watts Russell), the vicar, and the Master of Oundle School. As a result of their actions in the late 1820s, the Market Place was improved, removing the Shambles, Butter Cross and Butcher’s Row, and a new market house was built. Another loss was the demolition of Berrystead Manor House, also in the early 19th century.

Insert historic maps of 1884 and 1927
The coming of the London and Midland Railway in 1845 provided a station for the town which was located to the north east of Oundle close to the River Nene. Close by, a cut was taken off the river and Oundle Wharf was developed, shown on the 19th and early 20th century maps as containing ‘malthouses’ – these have now been converted to housing. By the end of the 19th century, Mrs Watts Russell of Biggin Hall still owned the Manors of Oundle and Biggin, and Oundle School had expanded and had built a number of prestigious new buildings within the town, although it had, by 1876, separated from Laxton’s Grammar School. In 1895 Oundle Urban District Council was formed.

The map of 1927 confirms that the medieval burgage plots remained very clearly marked, with development still focused on the main streets, with the town’s boundaries still contained by South Road to the south. However, to the north, Oundle School had added a number of large buildings beyond Milton Road, and further along Glapthorn Road, the map shows a very large Poor Law Institution. Oundle Wharf appears to be still in use, with malthouses and a goods shed clearly marked. By contrast, the Anchor Brewery off South Road is marked as ‘disused’.

The most significant changes to Oundle have largely occurred since the 1960s. In 1963 the John Smith Brewery off Blackpot Lane was demolished, and throughout this period much new housing was added around and within Oundle, sometimes obscuring the line of the burgage plots. The railway was also closed and the old line redeveloped as part of the A605 to create a much-needed bypass to the town. Oundle School has continued to expand including the recent completion of a new Science Facility off Blackpot Lane.
6 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Layout and spaces

The plan form of historic Oundle provides a ‘text-book’ example of a medieval planned settlement, with its linear form of development focused on a market place and church. To either side of the principal roads (West Street/Market Place/North Street) are long, thin burgage plots which on the north side of West Street terminate in Milton Road, and on the south side terminate in South Road. A similar arrangement can be seen clearly on the east side of North Street, although the burgage plots are shorter, being constrained by the flood plain of the River Nene. The frequency of these plots is occasionally interrupted by the very large gardens of one of Oundle’s more prestigious town houses, notably Cobthorne in West Street, Bramston in the Market Place, and The Berrystead in North Street. The survival of these medieval boundaries, which still create a distinctive rhythm of narrow plots with an historic building fronting the main streets, is of the utmost importance.

This distinctive layout is not repeated on the west side of North Street, adjoining St Peter’s Church and the former Rectory, and the buildings along this stretch of the road have modest gardens which in the 19th century backed onto the now demolished John Smith Brewery. The 1884 Map shows a large garden to the old Rectory which is now part of the former Gardenways site, where a new house has recently been erected. It is possible that this part of Oundle, which was part of the Saxon enclosure, was already built over and simply did not part of the planned development of the town in the 13th century when the burgage plots were probably laid out by Peterborough Abbey.

Today the centre of Oundle is notable for the way in which the Market Place, the triangular space where New Street meets West Street, and St Peter’s Churchyard, all flow around a block of mostly historic buildings, including some relating to Oundle School. Whilst New Street and the Market Place are very busy and urban in character, with shops, offices and other commercial establishments, the churchyard is pleasantly tranquil and notable for its mature trees and pleasant pathways.

At the western end of West Street, where it junctions with Mill Road, Stoke Hill, and Benefield Road, a large late 19th century church (Jesus Church) sits in a modestly-sized churchyard and dominates views along each street. A few mature trees and some planting provides a ‘green’ space and provide a link to the much larger green spaces beyond the confines of the built-up area, particularly further down Stoke Hill.

Further green spaces can be appreciated all around the town centre once the constraints of the enclosed townscape along the main streets are left behind, although these lie mostly beyond the present conservation area boundary. This is particularly noticeable from South Road where there are stunning views over flattish open land, sometimes used as playing fields, towards the River Nene. A similar sense of openness is evident at the top end of North Street where it widens to form Station Road, with wide views eastwards over the water meadows towards the elevated line of the former railway. More open green spaces beyond Milton Road, almost entirely in use by Oundle School as playing fields or gardens, similarly contrast with the tight urban grain of the principal streets. This ‘cascading’ of scale and building form from the tightly built-up town centre towards the green open spaces around its edges is particularly noticeable, and creates a pleasing contrast.

The approaches to Oundle are also of note due to the effect of the River Nene on the road layout, as the only way into the town from the south is over the long, narrow medieval bridge (South Bridge) over the river. This requires the use of traffic lights and
creates a constraint on traffic flows. From the east, the only bridge over the river lies close to the former Oundle Station and has been rebuilt. However, it is similarly long, providing views over the former wharf, field and the A605 in the distance.

6.2 Relationship of buildings to spaces

The majority of the buildings within the conservation area along West Street, the Market Place, New Street, and North Street, face directly onto the back of the pavement without any front gardens or yards. This is a result of the historical form of development since the 13th century as each burgage plot would have had a building close to the main street. The only meaningful exceptions are three of the more prestigious town houses, namely No. 44 West Street, Cobthorne West Street, and The Berrystead in North Street, which are set back slightly from the pavement.

These properties sometimes face the street or lie at right angles to it, providing a variety of gables to the streetscene. The almost universal use of the local limestone, plus this continuous form of building, gives these central streets a cohesive street frontage although every building is different. This changes slightly in New Street, where there are three large buildings belonging to Oundle School. Two of these, closest to the town, are also slightly set back but Great Hall, a listed early 20th century of some stature, sits in isolation on a large plot with an in-and-out carriage entrance.

Narrow alleyways lead off West Street to both the north and south, historically providing access to the backs of the burgage plots although some are now private. Ship Lane and Gallery Lane are two examples on the south side and Drumming Well Lane can be found to the north, proving rear access to the Talbot Hotel, one of Oundle’s most important historic buildings. Many of the buildings have carriage entrances, sometimes marked by closed timber gates, which once provided access to the rear plots. These create a unique rhythm along the street, with glimpses of gardens beyond.

The current conservation area boundary does not include the ends of the burgage plots off West Street and has been tightly drawn around the buildings which face this street. However, to the east, the boundary includes the burgage plots as far as the medieval lane now called East Road. As a result of this, at least half of the gardens to the listed buildings are not within the conservation area, and over the years, some have been developed for new housing, such as developments in South Bridge and Danford Close, off South Road.

6.3 Landmarks and focal points

There are a number of landmark buildings in Oundle, mainly in religious, commercial or educational uses, and these contrast with the more modestly sized domestic buildings which line the principal streets. St Peter’s Church is undoubtedly the most important of these, and its elegant spire is a local landmark for many miles around. At the far western end of West Street, Jesus Church is particularly important because of its location on a road junction at the top of the hill which drops down Mill Road towards the River Nene. Laxton’s Grammar School, and the three buildings of Oundle School in New Street, are also significant. Other prominent buildings include The Berrystead in North Street, Cobthorne in West Street, The Courthouse in Mill Road (which contains the Town Council Offices and the Museum), and the two sets of almshouses in North Street and West Street.

The most important focal point in Oundle is the Market Place which adjoins the triangular space at the southern end of New Street, marked by a listed War Memorial. These part of Oundle is generally busy with traffic and pedestrians, and the regular
street markets and the proximity of several school buildings add further layers of vibrancy.

6.4 Views and vistas

The tightness of the current conservation area boundary constrains views out of the town centre, so views within the main streets are limited to long vistas towards either Jesus Church in the west, or towards the Market Place, New Street and St Peter's Church, in the east. Views along West Street and North Street take in the gently curving road and the very enclosed spaces, defined by the limestone clad houses of varying designs. Short views around St Peter's Church are also constrained by the tight urban form although there is some spaciousness in the very northern end of New Street where high stone walls and mature trees focus the eye on the school building beyond, in Glapthorn Road.

Beyond the present conservation area, there are many more views and these have also been marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map and are considered in greater detail in the Management Proposals.

6.5 Trees

The current conservation area boundary concentrates on the historic buildings in the town centre and does not include many of the back gardens to these buildings apart from the gardens which back onto East Road. As a result, few trees of any note lie within the current boundary apart from the ones detailed below or marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map. These are concentrated around St Peter’s Church and in gardens of the houses on the east side of North Street, particularly the garden to The Berrystead. The most significant of these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map, but the lack of a specific reference does not imply that a tree or tree group is not of value.

Local residents have confirmed that a number of individual trees of note lie (or were once noted) within the conservation area as follows:

- The evergreen holm oaks in the gardens of The Rectory and Cobthorne;
- The large ginkgo tree in a garden on the south side of West Street (all probably 18th century plantings);
- The Wellingtonias off Inkerman Way, which were planted in the 19th century;
- Elm trees at the south west corner of the playing field in Milton Road are mentioned in the 1565 survey.
7 STREETSCAPE

7.1 Public Realm

The ‘public realm’ covers a variety of features of the spaces between the buildings in the conservation area such as the pavements, pavements, street lighting, street furniture, and signage. Generally in Oundle these are of high quality, reflecting the considerable investment by the three Councils concerned – County, District and Town – over the past few years. There is evidence of a past enhancement scheme in the Market Place, notably the traditional stone paving with carefully selected features such as black bollards, black litter bins and ‘traditional’ timber and cast iron bench seats. Cast *faux* stone planters are also in evidence, at the time of survey planted with red geraniums.

The principal features of the public realm in Oundle are:

**Pavements**
There are two examples of the use of traditional stone paving in the town centre, provided by the Yorkstone paving in the Market Place and in St Peter’s Churchyard. This appears to be relatively modern although it has weathered convincingly. The Yorkstone paving in St Peter’s Churchyard is made up from slabs of stone laid length-wise across the path, which is bounded by a strip of rounded stone pebbles on either side. A very small section of stone setts in Jericho, off North Street, is one of the few examples of surviving historic paving, although there are small sections of old stone cobbles in various side alleys and in private gardens (e.g. No. 51 North Street), and an example of blue brick paving in the carriage entrance to the Talbot Hotel. Similar setts mark the gate to Dairy Farm in Stoke Hill. Red clay paviors are an unusual feature, and are used to pave the covered colonnade in front of No. 13 Market Place. Also in the Market Place, the gutter is defined by four rows of stone setts, which marry-in with the adjoining Yorkstone paving and wide (200 mm) granite kerbing.

Otherwise, the paving is a mixture of concrete paving slabs, small concrete paviors, and some modern black tarmacadam. The concrete paving slabs are generally laid in stretcher bond, replicating the approximate size and layout of traditional stone paving, with either a stone or a concrete kerb (e.g. West Street). In Stoke Hill, areas of tarmacadam have been advantageously softened by the use of rolled gravel, the colour complementing the adjoining stone buildings.

**Street name signs**
Street names plates are made from cast metal to a traditional design, and in the town centre these are fixed directly onto the buildings. Generally, they have black letters against a white background and fit in well with the historic environment. Away from the main streets, the Council has used the standard modern examples found elsewhere in East Northamptonshire. These are made from cast aluminium painted white with traditional lettering. They are usually fixed to plain timber boards which are in turn fixed to buildings, walls, or supporting posts painted black (e.g. Blackpot Lane and Jericho, off North Street). An old blue and white sign for ‘Duck Lane’ can be seen on the flank wall of No. 14 North Street.

**Litter bins**
The litter bins in the conservation area are generally the standard modern bins adopted by the Council throughout the District, which are black plastic drums, decorated with two gold rings.
Public seating
There is a variety of public seating throughout the conservation area, mainly the 'heritage' type of bench seat with cast iron ends and timber planks. A plainer version of this design can be seen at the eastern end of Blackpot Lane. A more elegant metal seat, again of a traditional design, can be seen in the churchyard.

Street lighting
Modern 'heritage' steel lamps, painted black, can be seen in the town centre, particularly in the Market Place. Street lighting is also fixed directly to the front elevations of some of the listed buildings. Traditional black-painted 'heritage' street lights in St Peter's Churchyard illuminate the various paths across the open area. In side alleys, such as Ship Lane, are modern steel 'hockey stick' street lights, probably of the 1960s or 1970s, which are painted blue.

Wirescape
Overhead wires within the core of the existing conservation area are not a problem as they have been concealed underground. Wires are noticeable however in Stoke Hill, St Osyth’s Lane, and East Road. They are supported on timber telegraph poles, which sometimes also support the street lights.

Other features
There are two East Northamptonshire Council interpretation panels in the town, and also an Oundle Town Council notice board, located next to the former Market Hall. Two further Town Council signs in the Co-Operative Supermarket Car Park and in the Drill Hall Car Park show similar information. A Town Trail is marked out along a route through the town and is popular with tourists.

7.2 Boundaries
The historic form of development within the conservation area means that boundaries do not feature along any of the main streets (West Street, Market Place, or North Street) in a meaningful way, but they are extremely important in the back gardens, where they are built, almost without exception, using limestone rubble with an informal rounded coping usually formed by lime mortar.

These walls follow medieval burgage plot boundaries in many places and run roughly parallel to each other, creating a strong pattern of stripes. They are between one metre and a half and three metres high and they often contain narrow alleys, of which the best examples survive to the south of West Street. Views across these walls add to their interest. Some of the walls are specifically listed where they are adjacent to listed buildings, such as the wall to the south of Bramston House, facing St Osyth’s Lane. Some of these stone walls were built for show as well as for functionality. An example is the low stone wall, with its tall stone gate piers with ball finials and iron gates, in front of Oundle School House in New Street, which is again specifically listed grade II.

There are a few exceptions to the use of stone, many of them in West Street. These include the decorative cast iron railings in front of the former Congregational Church in West Street, now the Rodolphe Stahl Theatre, dated 1864; some (modern) wrought iron railings outside the former Zion Chapel, also in West Street (now converted into residential use); further modern metal railings around Jesus Church in Stoke Hill (although the original wrought iron gate remains in situ); and further wrought iron railings outside No. 44 West Street.
8 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

8.1 Building types

Oundle has an impressive collection of historic buildings with over 200 listed building entries within the conservation area alone, many of these covering more than one building. They are remarkable also for their variety, with relatively modest cottages and small houses rubbing shoulders with prestigious town houses which were built for local gentry and were clearly designed to impress. Of these, The Berrystead in North Street, Cobthorne in West Street, No. 13 Market Place, and Bramston House (with its attached wings) in the Market Place are all outstanding and are listed at grade I or II* to reflect their significance.

In addition there are the buildings of Oundle School, mainly built in the 19th century and designed by well known Victorian architects such as Arthur Blomfield and John Sebastian Gwilt. Blomfield’s son, A C Blomfield, was also responsible for a number of school buildings in the 1920s, such as the Science Building in Glapthorn Road, currently outside the conservation area. These are mainly listed grade II.

There are three churches, the parish church of St Peter’s, listed grade I, in the centre of Oundle; the former Congregational Church in West Street, now a theatre and listed grade II; and Jesus Church, a Roman Catholic church in Stoke Hill. The former Zion Chapel has been converted into houses, and also listed grade II. A further former Methodist Chapel in West Street is now a shop (The Bazaar). Of note are the two groups of almshouses – Paine’s Almshouses in West Street, listed grade II*, and Latham’s Hospital in North Street, also listed grade II*.

Mixed up with these prestigious buildings are the more vernacular buildings which provide a link to the previous industries and agricultural uses within the town. These include the impressive maltings, now converted into housing, at the top end of North Street; the adjoining workers’ cottages which cascade down the line of the former burgage plot off North Street towards East Road; Dairy Farm, just off Stoke Hill, with its stone barns and stables marking the edge of the water meadows; and the former Anchor Brewery in South Road, currently just outside the conservation area.

Oundle also retains a large number of historic inns, the most important of which is the Talbot Hotel in New Street. This grade I listed 17th century building stretches back from the road towards Drumming Well Lane with long rows of stables and other functional buildings, now largely converted for hotel use. The White Lion Public House in North Street is another significant inn dating to the 17th century, now listed grade II*, although it was built as a house and is now in residential uses once again.

8.2 Building form

Whilst there is the variety of building type, the over-whelming impression within the town centre is of a jumble of gables and steeply pitched tiled roofs of different heights on the mainly residential buildings, stretching out along the main roads – West Street, Market Place and North Street – with the larger and more impressive houses being more concentrated in the vicinity of the Market Place. Most of these larger houses are pre-Georgian in date. Historic shopfronts and carriage entrances provide punctuation. The buildings range from single storey cottages, such as those facing Mill Road, to three or even four storey Georgian town houses, symmetrically designed around attractive front doors. The Market Place did acquire a mainly Georgian appearance following the removal of earlier buildings in the centre of the town at the time of George IV. Many of the more modest buildings clearly date to the 17th century with informal elevations.
retaining gables, low steeply pitched roofs, and small casement windows – good examples can be seen along the east side of North Street (Nos. 54 and 56). Some of the larger houses appear to date to the 18th or even the 19th century but retain much earlier cores which are not evident from the outside. Many of the roofs are covered in Collyweston stone slate or Welsh slate, but may have originally been thatched. Chunky chimney stacks, in both stone and brick, are a particularly dominant feature in parts of Oundle. The almost universal use of Oolitic limestone, both as ashlar blocks or the more vernacular stone rubble, gives a cohesive quality to the conservation area, and even where brick is used, it is often a light yellow which blends in unobtrusively with the yellow-brown limestone.

8.3 Listed buildings

There are about 210 listed building entries in the Oundle Conservation Area, some of the entries covering more than one building. The majority of the buildings are listed at grade II, but a relatively high number (12) are listed at grade I or II*. These are described briefly below, along with a summary of the most important listed school buildings, and a selection of other grade II listed buildings which demonstrate the range of listed buildings in the conservation area. It was also noted that the former Union Workhouse in Glapthorn Road, listed grade II, has been demolished since the statutory list was compiled to make way for a new Doctors’ Surgery.

*Grade I and grade II* buildings

St Peter’s Church (grade I)
St Peter’s Church retains some late Saxon features, similar to those in Irthlingborough and Raunds, and the cruciform shape, nave, chancel and transepts date from around 950 AD. It also retains some Norman features, probably reset. The church appears to have been subject to a major rebuilding in the 13th century, with alterations of the 15th century and later. The South Porch was built by Robert Wyatt and his wife in c1485, and the spire was rebuilt in 1634.

The Talbot Hotel, New Street (grade I)
The hotel was rebuilt in 1626 and it is believed that the high quality ashlar stone and the very fine 16th century staircase came from Fotheringhay Castle. The street frontage is particularly notable for its mullioned and transomed windows, large roof dormers which rise from the eaves line, a very large stone stack on the north end, and its central carriage entrance which leads to a range of former stables and barns at the back.

The Berrystead, No. 16 North Street (grade I)
The Berrystead and Cobthorne (see below) are the finest domestic buildings in Oundle, and both have extremely large gardens which stretch back to East Road and South Road respectively. The Berrystead was built in c1700 with a symmetrical façade facing the street, and is seven bays wide. The two central bays sit slightly forward and contain a main entrance topped by a stone pediment supported on consoles. Although the general character is very early Georgian, with heavy sash windows, there are mullioned and transomed windows in the basement.

Cobthorne, West Street (grade I)
Cobthorne is another highly prestigious house and was built in 1656 by William Butler, once of Cromwell’s major generals who administered the nearby counties from there. The symmetrical, double pile building sits back from the road, adding to its importance, and is five windows wide with a central front door defined by a pedimented doorcase which breaks through the string course at first floor level. The eaves are defined by a
very deep coving which also wraps around the side elevations of the house. The adjoining stables, barns and other outbuildings are also listed grade II*.

Nos. 10 and 12 North Street (grade II*)
This building dates to the early 17th century and is two storeys high with large dormers which, like the Talbot, rise from the eaves line. Mullioned and transomed windows add to the interest of the front elevation, which is built using high quality ashlar blocks. Separately listed, but once forming part of the same building, No. 12 North Street is dated 1641, which actually refers to the addition of the upper floor.

Latham’s Hospital, North Street (grade II*)
These almshouses were founded in 1611 and were partially rebuilt in 1830. The northern part was a Blue Coat school until the late 19th century. They consist of an E-shaped two storey building with gables facing the street to either side of elaborate gateways. The materials are coursed limestone rubble with stone slate roofs. Mullioned and transomed windows, two lights to the first floor and three lights to the ground floor, add interest.

Paine’s Almshouses, West Street (grade II*)
These early buildings may date as far back as the 15th century although much of what is visible today appears to be early 17th century and consists of two parallel ranges at right angles to the road, with two storey gables decorated with canted bay windows with casement windows. A few early leaded light windows remain elsewhere in the buildings.

No. 13 Market Place (grade II*)
No. 13 dates to the late 17th century and is notable for its symmetrically arranged two storey five bay façade supported on heavy stone columns. Above are six large sash windows and a heavily dentilled eaves cornice.

Bramston House, Market Place (grade II*)
This is made up of three sections: West Wing – No. 26; Central building – No. 28; and East Wing – No. 30. No. 26 is early 18th century and has a symmetrical Georgian façade, four windows wide, with pedimented dormers in the roof; No. 28 is a long, low late 17th century house with Georgian details; and No. 30 is the grandest house, three storeys high and five windows wide, with a balustraded parapet which conceals the roof.

Nos. 4 and 6 Market Place (grade II*)
Nos. 4 and 6 are classically-inspired Georgian houses which date to the early 18th century and have ground floor shopfronts to either side of a central passage entrance, of which the shopfront to No. 4 is a good example. The sash windows, with their heavy glazing bars, are largely original.

Oundle School Buildings

The Bursar’s Office, Laxton Grammar School, Church Street (grade II)
This symmetrically arranged two storey building dates to 1858 and is designed in the 17th century style with gables to either side of a central entrance.

Laxton Grammar School, No. 1 North Street (grade II)
Designed by John Sebastian Gwilt, this building was completed in 1881 in the Tudor style. A substantial 1930s extension lies to the east.
The Great Hall, New Street (grade II)
A very large and prestigious building which was designed by Arthur Blomfield in the Perpendicular style and is dated 1907. It is one of Oundle’s very few buildings which have any kind of ‘setting’, as it sits back from the road with an attractive lawn in front of it.

School House, New Street (grade II)
This also faces New Street but lies almost on the back of the pavement. The building was designed in an asymmetrical Tudor style by John Sebastian Gwilt and is shown on the 1886 map. Further additions were made in 1909 by A C Blomfield.

The Cloisters, New Street and Churchyard (grade II)
This building stretches between New Street and Churchyard, containing a large courtyard. The principal elevation, facing School House across New Street, was also designed by John Sebastian Gwilt and completed in 1880 in the Tudor style. Facing Churchyard are some late Georgian houses with a domestic scale, which The Cloisters links into.

Other grade II listed buildings of interest:

The former Town Hall, Market Place (now Norwich and Peterborough Building Society)
The Town Hall was built in 1826 in the Tudor style using limestone. The steeply pitched roofs are covered in Welsh slate. The ground floor was originally open and used as a market.

The Rectory, North Street.
This building retains some 17th century features but was largely rebuilt in 1845 by Donthorne. It is now used as part of Oundle School, and is called the Gascoigne Building.

Holy Name of Jesus Church, West Street
The church was designed by Arthur Blomfield and was built between 1879-9. Constructed from stone with a stone slate roof, the building follows the Byzantine plan form with a central tower and almost equally sized chancel, transepts and nave.

The Congregational Church, West Street.
The church is dated 1852 and replaced an earlier building. Its principal feature is the large gable end which faces the street with a huge south-facing window with delicate tracery.

War Memorial, New Street
The post-1914 War Memorial stands at the junction of West Street and New Street and is a simple stone obelisk with a squared plinth.

The Courthouse and adjoining Oundle Museum, Mill Road.
Dated 1877, this important corner building follows the 17th century style with gables and mullioned and transomed windows. The museum next door is of a similar date with Gothic details, and was converted from part of the Court Room.

8.4 Locally listed buildings

East Northamptonshire Council does not yet have a list of locally significant buildings (usually called the ‘Local List’). ‘Locally Listed’ buildings are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for their local historic associations, but are not considered to be of
national importance, so they are usually not eligible for statutory listing. Policies to control them can be included within site allocations documents.

8.5 Positive buildings

A small number of unlisted buildings within the existing conservation area have been identified as being buildings of townscape merit or ‘positive’ buildings. Further ‘positive’ buildings have been identified on the edges of the town centre, within the proposed new conservation area boundary.

Buildings identified as having ‘townscape merit’ will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

8.6 Building Materials

The most prevalent building material is the local Jurassic limestone, although in Oundle there are also some brick-built buildings, mainly dating to the mid 19th century, which may have used bricks from the brickworks in nearby Titchmarsh. The bricks are mainly yellow (to blend in with the limestone) and No. 35 West Street is fine example of the use of this material, with its well detailed mid 19th century façade. There are further examples in Stoke Hill (Nos. 11, 12 and13). Bricks are used, again mainly yellow in colour, for chimney stacks, as they provide better fire proofing.

The overall character of the conservation area is therefore defined by the use of limestone with its warm yellow/brown colour which darkens with age. This was once quarried nearby, and quarries are shown just off Glapthorn Road and to the north of Ashton on the 1927 Map. The limestone is used either as rubblestone, with ashlar blocks for dressings such as lintels and quoins, or as coursed ashlar blocks. There are no obvious examples of the use of decorative ironstone banding which are found elsewhere in East Northamptonshire. The higher the status of the building, the better quality of stone used, so The Berrystead and Cobthorne, for example, both use very fine grained smooth ashlar blocks in their construction. At the other end of the scale, most of the modest cottages, often only one and a half or just two storeys high, use limestone rubble, bedded in lime mortar. In the past, these would have been limewashed, building up a slightly rendered finish, but there are few examples of this left in Oundle as the old buildings have been repointed and the stonework stripped of its protective coating. Many of the buildings provide examples of several different types of stone, both rubble stone and ashlar, as they have been altered over the years. Examples include No. 45 North Street and Nos. 23 and 25 West Street, where bays have been added in smooth ashlar to a rubble building.

The roofs of Oundle are mainly covered in Collyweston stone slates or natural Welsh slate. Because most of the buildings are listed, these traditional materials have been protected so there is limited evidence of modern alternatives such as concrete tiles or artificial slate. Collyweston stone slates are made by splitting limestone – a process which historically was achieved using natural frost action. The use of this material started in the 17th century if not earlier – it is known that by 1633 there were both open pits and mines in the fields around the village of Collyweston near Stamford. However the ready availability of mass produced roofing materials and the import of slate from Wales via the new railways of the mid 19th century, meant that many of the Collyweston slate roofs have been replaced in the much flatter natural slate which does not provide...
the undulating, richly textured finish of the stone slate. The Collyweston Stone Slaters’ Trust (www.collywestonstoneslaterstrust.org.uk) aims to keep the traditions of stone slating alive and can provide details of craftsmen who are able to carry out this very specialised work.

For the more modest houses and cottages, thatch would once have been the material of choice and in Northamptonshire, this would have been local long straw which gives a thick, somewhat ‘shaggy’ appearance with simple ridges, not raised or cut in the West Country tradition which uses the more refined combed wheat reed. There are also a number of buildings covered with clay Roman pantiles which are usually seen on the more vernacular buildings such as the stables or barns in the back alleyways and lanes. A good example can be seen on some of the stone barns at Dairy Farm off Stoke Hill.

Because the conservation area contains a range of buildings from many different periods, there is also variety in windows and window details which also vary according to status. Throughout Oundle, there are also a large number of canted or square bays, often arranged symmetrically on either side of the front door. The windows themselves include 17th century mullioned and transomed windows, 18th and 19th century sash windows, sometimes with very thick glazing bars, and any number of side opening casement windows, sometimes framed in metal but usually timber. Many of the earlier buildings have leaded lights, providing a pleasantly varied surface in oblique views. Occasionally, the buildings provide a mix of two types, such as No. 51 North Street which retains one first floor leaded light casement window, but also has two shallow canted bays on either side with sash windows, presumably an early 19th century alteration. No. 1 New Street, which is dated 1626 (the same as the adjoining Talbot Hotel) has 17th century mullioned stone windows on the first floor with 19th century casements on the elevation facing New Street. Around the corner, the gabled elevation which faces West Street has leaded lights in the mullioned attic window with an early 19th century six-over-six sash window to the first floor. There are also a large number of traditional dormer windows, usually pleasingly proportioned and detailed, such as the leaded light casements in the pair of dormers in the front roof slope of No. 5 North Street. Because the buildings are mainly listed, there are hardly any uPVC windows in the conservation area, although some were noticed on No. 7 Stoke Hill (a listed building).

Front doors are similarly varied, with many examples of simple boarded timber doors on the cottages (e.g. No. 54 North Street), with four or six panelled doors on the more prestigious 18th or 19th century houses. Many of the higher status houses have attractive doorcases, often with decorative fanlights (e.g. No. 2 Market Place and No. 51 North Street) or pediments made from stone, such as The Berystead or Cobthorne. No. 36 West Street has a much more modest timber doorcase with reeded framing decorated by roundels on each corner. The enclosed fanlight, with its margin lights, provides a hint of ‘Chinoiserie’ and probably dates to around 1800.

8.7 Shopfronts

There are many well detailed historic shopfronts in the conservation area, mainly dating to the 19th century and mostly located in listed buildings. They are most concentrated in or close to the Market Place, but there are also examples elsewhere in West Street and North Street, where they have usually been converted into residential uses.

Examples include:

- No. 8 West Street (Seven Wells Family Butchers) – an early 20th century tiled shopfront with decorative panels;
• No. 14 West Street (East Northamptonshire Tourist Information Centre) – a double fronted shopfront with matching shallow bow windows complete with glazing bars, entablature fascia and fine dentilled cornice;
• No. 51 West Street (S G Dysons) – a perfectly preserved mid 19th century shopfront with attractive sign writing, painted an appropriate dark turquoise;
• No. 94 West Street (private house) – a nicely detailed late 19th century shopfront with giant corbels;
• No. 4 Market Place (Boots) has a good 19th century shopfront with central double doors and large half-round windows with glazing bars; next door, No. 6 (Tesco’s) has interesting cast iron columns supporting a probably late 19th or early 20th century shopfront;
• No. 36 Market Place (Stu-Pots) – an early 19th century shopfront with a modest moulded fascia supported on giant corbels;
• No. 10 New Street (Colemans) – a modest early 19th century shopfront made notable because of its three reeded Tuscan columns;
• No. 2 New Street (Barclays Bank) – not strictly speaking a shopfront, but an entire purpose-built composition of fine quality stone work with half round windows divided by columns of ashlar with foliated capitals.
9 CHARACTER AREAS

9.1 Introduction

Whilst the whole of the Oundle Conservation Area is remarkably cohesive, there are three distinctly different ‘Character Areas’, the differences being mainly down to usage, with the busy town centre (Character Area 2) being full of activity with the highest concentration of non-residential property. By contrast, both North Street and West Street, although quite busy with traffic, are mainly in residential uses with a more tranquil feel.

This Chapter contains a brief summary of each Character Area and identifies any negative features or detractors. These will be used to draw up recommendations for improvement in the Management Proposals.

9.2 West Street

West Street links the town centre to the main entrance to Oundle over the historic South Bridge, as well as to Benefield further to the west. The buildings are in mixed use, with more commercial buildings closer to the Market Place. There are two (well presented) charity shops. Some of the buildings are in a poor state of repair, including a few which are vacant and are seriously ‘At Risk’.

The most notable positive features are:

- Main road lined with almost continuous listed buildings dating to the 17th century or later (the only intrusion is a short 1960s terrace Nos. 51, 53 and 55 West Street);
- The survival on either side of large sections of medieval burgage plots, stretching back from the road to Milton Road in the north to South Road in the south;
- The frequent carriage entrances, back yards, and hidden gardens add interest to the street scene;
- Narrow alleyways lead off West Street, particularly on the south side, providing views across the back gardens with their long lines of parallel stone boundary walls;
- The churchyard around Jesus Church is the only green space, although from the bottom of Stoke Hill, where development stops on the edge of the conservation area, there are attractive views over the floodplain of the River Nene;
- The principal listed buildings are Cobthorne (grade I), Paine’s Almshouses (grade II*) and Holy Name of Jesus Church (grade II), which marks an important junction between West Street, Mill Road, Stoke Hill, and Benefield Road;
- Varied scale and dates to the listed buildings, which range from tiny 17th century cottages to prestigious Georgian town houses;
- The almost universal use of limestone for the walls, with an occasional yellow brick-built building) and Collyweston stone slate or Welsh slate for the roofs.

Key negative features include:

- Busy traffic along the main streets;
- Poor quality pavements, particularly in parts of West Street and in back alleys;
- Poor quality street lights;
- Overhead wires and telegraph poles, suggesting that further undergrounding would be welcome;
• A general lack of litter bins;
• An open area next to Jesus Church would benefit from enhancement;
• Some of the former burgage plot gardens have been converted into car parks for the commercial properties facing West Street, with access from South Road;
• Just outside the conservation area, modern development has obliterated the line of the burgage plots e.g. South Bridge Close and Danford Close;
• A number of Buildings-at-Risk, most notably Nos. 15 and 41 West Street;
• A number of unlisted but ‘positive’ historic buildings at the western end of West Street retain many original features and would benefit from the additional protection of an Article 4 Direction.

9.3 The town centre - New Street, Market Place and St Peter’s Church

This area contains the highest concentration of buildings associated with Oundle School and the greatest number of commercial buildings. The Market Place provides a natural meeting place and a variety of shops, cafes, restaurants and other facilities, as well as a regular and very popular street market. On-street car parking is well used.

The most notable positive features are:

• Attractive and vibrant town centre with pleasant open spaces created by the Market Place and the widened section of New Street;
• Frequent street markets are a popular facility;
• Traditional shopfronts are well preserved with a number of small local shops, like the two butchers;
• The churchyard provides a tranquil green space, with many mature trees, shielded from the adjoining busy roads;
• Some burgage plots can still be traced to the south of the Market Place, with narrow alleys leading from the Market Place or West Street through to them;
• St Osyth’s Lane drops gently down the hill and is notable for its very high listed stone wall which forms the garden boundary to the back garden of Bramston House;
• Location of tourism-related services including public houses, cafes, restaurants and (just outside this Character Area) the town’s Tourist Information Office;
• High quality public realm with traditional stone paving in the Market Place and in St Peter’s Churchyard;
• A high concentration of listed buildings, which form almost continuous frontages;
• The most important buildings are St Peter’s Church (grade I), the Talbot Hotel (grade I), Bramston (grade II*), Nos. 10 and 12 North Street (grade II*), No. 13 Market Place (Grade II*), and Nos. 4 and 6 Market Place (grade II*);
• This area also contains five large buildings associated with Oundle School, all listed grade II – Laxton Grammar School buildings in Church Street and North Street, The Great Hall in New Street, and School House and The Cloisters, both in New Street;
• Other grade II listed buildings of great merit, such as the former Town Hall in the centre of the Market Place;
• All of these more prestigious buildings contrast with the modest vernacular cottages in St Osyth’s Lane.

Key negative features include:

• Busy traffic and a certain amount of conflict between cars and pedestrians, although there is a zebra crossing in the Market Place (however, the traffic
congestion does have a positive impact in that it slows vehicles moving through the town);
- Some poor quality pavements, either due to vehicular over-run of the stone paving, or because of the use of modern paving materials, such as concrete paviors;
- The Town Council notice board is in need of replacement;
- Nos. 6 and 8 West Street – front elevations shows signs of structural problems;
- The Talbot Hotel, Oundle’s finest secular building, is in need of repair and refurbishment.

9.4 North Street

North Street continues the line of the main route through Oundle and once connected the town centre to Oundle Wharf and the station. As with West Street, Market Place and New Street, it contains almost continuous lines of listed buildings on both sides of the road, apart from a small section on the west side where three unlisted 19th century cottages (Nos. 19, 21 and 23, all dated 1894) are nevertheless considered to be ‘positive’. The road bends gently, providing a feeling of enclosure, and in places is so narrow that a one-way system is in force, controlled by traffic lights. Most of the buildings are modest cottages, often dating to the 17th century, although there are three particularly large buildings – the former Rectory (which cannot be seen from the street due to the tall trees which surround it), the Maltings, and The Berrystead.

The most notable positive features are:

- Continuous street frontages of mainly two storey listed buildings;
- A high stone wall to the former Rectory, backed by tall trees, is a dominant feature in the southern section of North Street;
- East Road marks the historic limit of the medieval burgage plots which lay on the east side of the road, and is notable for the stone walls which back onto it, including the wall and gazebo associated with The Berrystead;
- Some very large gardens on the east side, mainly to The Berrystead, Laundimer, and the Almshouses – these can be glimpsed from East Road;
- Varied scale with larger and more prestigious buildings closer to St Peter’s Church and the Market Place;
- The most important buildings are The Berrystead (grade I) and Latham’s Hospital (grade II*);
- Some reminders of Oundle’s industrial past – the former Maltings, now converted into housing, and the adjoining workers’ housing, Havelock Cottages;
- Some of the buildings facing North Street contain 19th century shopfronts although they are now in totally residential uses.

Key negative features include:

- Poor quality public realm in places, most notably the condition of the pavements;
- Very varied modern development along East Road, both within the conservation area (on the west) and outside the conservation area (on the east) – some of the buildings are in commercial uses and completely out of scale with the historic town centre;
- Overhead telephone wires in East Road;
- No public permeability between North Street and East Road;
- Successive road improvements have raised the ground level outside the listed buildings in North Street so that the pavement is now the same height as the front step;
• The heavily moulded surround to the door at No. 54 North Street, which is presumably 17th century, and the door itself, are in need of repair.
10  ISSUES

The following ‘Issues’ have been identified by the consultants who prepared this
document following extensive survey work. They all derive from the negative factors
noted in chapter 9. These issues provide the basis for the recommendations in the
accompanying Management Proposals. They will be subject to regular review by the
Council and new ones may be added in the future.

10.1 Conservation area boundary review

- The original conservation area boundary was drawn up in 1970 and has not
  been reviewed since. It was tightly drawn around the frontage buildings which
  face the principal streets, and did not include the medieval burgage plots which
  lie to either side of West Street or to the south of the Market Place. This has
  allowed incremental changes over the years which have not always been
  positive. Mainly this has been caused by the addition of small housing estates
  which have obliterated the historic boundaries and adversely affected the setting
  of adjoining listed buildings. Proposals for extensive changes to the existing
  conservation area boundary, to protect the medieval burgage plots particularly
  from further unsympathetic changes, are included in the Management
  Proposals.

10.2 Public realm

- Although the Market Place and St Peter’s Churchyard have been subject to
  environmental improvements, mainly relating to the provision of traditional
  paving, parts of the conservation area, most notably West Street, New Street
  and North Street, would benefit from better quality paving and street lighting.
  Some of the alleys leading off West Street would also benefit from a similar
  range of improvements. The undergrounding of overhead wires in these
  locations would also be welcome.

10.3 Traffic management and car parking.

- Traffic flows along West Street, the Market Place, New Street and North Street
  are particularly heavy, with many visitors coming into the town centre to park
  and shop. The controlled section of North Street does act as a deterrent to
  some drivers due to the delay. However, most visitors park on the street to
  access Tesco’s and the other shops in the Market Place, or use the car park to
  the Co-Operative Supermarket off St Osyth’s Lane. As a result, the long stay
  car parks are off Benefield Road and East Road are under-used apart from at
  peak times.

10.4 Listed buildings at Risk

- There are a number of listed buildings which may be ‘At Risk’, most notably No.
  15 West Street, which is presently boarded up, and No. 41 West Street.

10.5 The control of unlisted ‘positive’ buildings

- There are very few unlisted buildings in the conservation area, and most of
  these have been assessed as being ‘positive’. Where these buildings are in use
  as family dwellings (as opposed to flats or commercial uses), they could be
  subject to inappropriate alterations such as the insertion of uPVC windows due
to their permitted development rights. Given the high quality of the streetscape in the conservation area, where a very high proportion of the buildings are listed, the use of an Article 4 Direction, to bring such changes under planning control, could be considered.

10.6 Sites requiring enhancement

- Land next to Jesus Church, Stoke Hill – this site is very visible but currently is rather unattractive.

10.7 Local List

- Some of the buildings in Oundle may be eligible for Local Listing and four are suggested in the Management Proposals.

10.8 Control of new development

- A certain amount of poor quality new development, mainly housing, has taken place in the last fifty years in or around the conservation area which has eroded the special architectural and historic interest Oundle. Further sites, particularly to the south and east of the conservation area, may be threatened by future new development.

10.9 Visitor interpretation

- Although there is a Tourist Information Office in the town centre, which provides some very useful information including the Town Trail, there is little information about the history and buildings of Oundle apart from the Oundle Town Council notice board in the Market Place, which urgently requires upgrading.

10.10 Shopfronts

- There is a large number of historic shopfronts in the conservation area which make a major contribution to the street scene. These need to be protected and enhanced.
Appendices

Appendix 1  Townscape Appraisal Map
             Character Areas Map

Appendix 2  Bibliography

Moss, J  Religious dissent in Oundle (2008)
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Oundle Conservation Area Management Proposals

Draft no. 2
28.5.10
Oundle Conservation Area Management Proposals

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Format and Derivation

This management proposal document sets out a mid- to long-term strategy in the form of a series of recommendations and guidelines for the Oundle Conservation Area. It has been informed by the Oundle Conservation Area Appraisal, which identified the area’s special character and concluded by outlining some of the issues that it faces.

Proposals are split into generic and specific actions. The generic actions in Section 2 are tied in with general management principles, which could be applied across all of East Northamptonshire Council’s conservation areas. The specific actions in Section 3 are informed by the findings of the character appraisal.

1.2 Purpose and Legislative Context

These management proposals set out guidelines by which the special character of Oundle Conservation Area can be preserved and enhanced. They will provide a basis for preparing new policies to achieve this.

The Council has statutory obligations under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare management proposals for its conservation areas.

The Audit Commission monitors the management of historic assets by local authorities as part of the overarching Best Value scheme. Best Value performance indicator BVPI 219c was a measure of how many up-to-date (less than five years old) management proposals local authorities have for their conservation areas. This indicator is a driver for best practice in conservation area management and states: ‘Public support for conservation areas as places that give identity to people and places is well-established. This indicator will monitor how local authorities are managing their development.’ Although this indicator has now been deleted, the Council considers that up to date management proposals are an important planning tool and remains committed to their production.

1.3 Planning Policy Framework

Current planning policies for Oundle, including those governing development, are laid out in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), adopted in June 2008. In particular, CSS Policy 13 (Sustainable Development Principles) sets out criteria for raising standards of design and the protection of existing historic and landscape assets. CSS policies need to be considered in conjunction with the East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009), in particular Policy 27 (Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment).

The conservation area character appraisal and management proposals documents will sit alongside the conservation policies contained within the CSS and Regional Plan and be complementary to its aims of preserving and enhancing East Northamptonshire’s Conservation Areas.

The current relevant planning documents are:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- Central government policy, principally as set out in “Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment”.

The Conservation Studio 2010
• East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009)
• The Joint Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire (adopted June 2008).
• East Northamptonshire Council’s emerging site allocations development plan documents.

1.4 Sustainability

The preparation of most of the above documents adheres to the principles of sustainability as it underpins the new planning system. The thorough survey of the conservation area, the subsequent identification and in-depth analysis of special character, and the partnership with the local community in the preparation of the documents, all contribute to reaching the targets set for sustainability.

1.5 Consultation

In line with the increased emphasis on community engagement in the LDF, the proposals contained in this document underwent full public and stakeholder consultation between 20 November 2009 and 9 January 2010. East Northamptonshire Council subscribes to the view expressed in the English Heritage document ‘Guidance on the management of conservation areas’ (August 2005) that: ‘involving the local community in their development is essential if the proposals are to succeed.’

1.6 Monitoring

East Northamptonshire Council will seek to review these documents every five years; taking into account Government policy and the emerging LDF.

As recommended by English Heritage, a review may include the following:

• A survey of the conservation area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
• An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in any conservation area management proposals have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
• The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
• The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
• Publication of an updated edition of management proposals.

It is possible that the local community, under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the Council, could carry out this review. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement. The review will monitor the changes that have occurred through the continuous processes of development and through individual changes of use. The purpose is to re-evaluate the special character of a conservation area to reach decisions about whether the area still warrants designation.
2 GENERIC ACTIONS

2.1 Policy

It is the Council’s duty to preserve and enhance its conservation areas.

2.2 Other guidance

East Northamptonshire Council has Design Guidance entitled ‘Design in Context’. English Heritage and other organisations can provide other guidance, such as specialist information regarding listed buildings, traditional construction methods and materials.

**ACTION: The Council will consider preparing and issuing additional design guidance and leaflets as and when appropriate. This may be in response to the continued review of conservation areas in East Northamptonshire or other indicators.**

2.3 Development Control Process

The system of considering planning applications for their suitability and conformity with national and local policies is long established and is based on more stringent criteria in conservation areas.

While there are additional policies concerning conservation areas and other parts of the historic environment, it is essential that these policies be applied consistently in the development control process.

Applications concerning land or properties within or close to a conservation area are referred to the Conservation Officer of East Northamptonshire Council. Within the usual period of time for consideration of an application, a conservation specialist will advise the planning officer assigned to the application whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The specialist will, therefore, advise on whether the application should be supported or refused on conservation grounds.

As an important figure in this process, the conservation specialist will be trained in the field of historic building conservation and/or planning, either through formal qualifications, long-term experience in the field, or both. The Skills Base Best Value Performance Indicator BVPI205 measures the suitability of persons for this and other specialist roles and East Northamptonshire Council is committed to meeting these criteria for such specialist roles.

Consistency of approach to determining planning applications is at the centre of a fair system of controlling change, especially in conservation areas. Consistent decisions also lead to an improved public perception that the system is fair and, in turn, there is a greater public engagement with the process.

Design and development briefs should be promoted and encouraged as a matter of course on any substantial application in the conservation areas. Due to the significant lack of spare land available for development purposes, any new development is likely to have an impact on the appearance and character of the conservation area. Therefore, there is a clear case for a coherent written argument in favour of the benefits of the proposal at the time of application. This could take the form of a letter, but ideally would be a more thorough development brief and include mock-up photographs that give an impression of how the proposal would look.
**ACTION:** The Council will consult a conservation specialist on all development control proposals affecting the character of conservation areas.

### 2.4 Enforcement Strategy

In some cases the development control process is not fully adhered to and planning permission is not always sought or implemented correctly. In these cases it is important that enforcement action is swift and effective. This will reinforce the message that the development control process is fair and that it must be followed in all cases. Usually, enforcement action does not result in legal action, but is resolved through effective communication between the Council representatives and the relevant party.

### 2.5 Street Management

While there is a presumption in favour of traditional materials in conservation areas, it is recognised that it is not always practical or financially viable to use traditional materials in large-scale projects. However, it should always be required that consideration is given to the effect that any new introductions to the public realm will have on the character of a conservation area and reasonable efforts be made to preserve that character with minor modifications to design. Also, consideration should be given to the scale of new features, particularly street lights, and ‘conservation’ alternatives should be requested and considered when embarking on any large scale scheme of public realm replacement.

It is important that the conservation section is consulted early on regarding any proposals to affect material changes to conservation areas. It is often the case that they can bring previous experience, as well a through understanding of the needs of an area, to the process.

**ACTION:** On all street management schemes affecting the character of conservation areas the Council will consult a conservation specialist and will liaise with the Town or Parish Council and relevant County Council departments, especially Highways.

### 2.6 Promotion and Awareness

While it is often the conservation section that deals first hand with planning applications and other schemes in conservation areas, almost every department in the Council will deal with matters affecting them in some way. It is the responsibility of every employee to give regard to the special character of conservation areas and promote awareness of them to residents. An active Historic Environment Champion (see below) can be an effective way of encouraging understanding across Council departments.

### 2.7 Historic Environment Champions/Town or Parish Councils

An Historic Environment Champion is a senior member of the Council, usually an elected member, who is nominated to promote historic environment issues at the highest level of the organisation. The Champion can, therefore, play an important role in raising the profile of conservation in general and ensuring that key strategic decisions are taken with a full consideration of their potential effect on the historic environment. This role will be optimised if the champion has a thorough knowledge of the state of East Northamptonshire Council’s historic environment and regular liaison with the conservation section. East Northamptonshire District Council already has an Historic Environment Champion (currently Councillor John Richardson), and intends retaining the role in the future.
Town or Parish Councils and other local bodies are also useful contributors to the process and are consulted for their opinion of planning applications in their localities. The wealth of knowledge contained within Town and Parish Councils is a valuable resource when identifying local character and strong ties with the conservation section are encouraged.

### 2.8 Education/community involvement

An active engagement with the local community should be sustained after the consultation over the appraisal and management proposal documents. The documents should be promoted in the community as useful aides in identifying and retaining what is important in their area. This, in turn, should promote a sense of ownership that will foster an improved level of understanding of the importance of preserving and enhancing special character.

It should be noted that various community groups already exist in Oundle which are involved with the historic built environment. In the early 1980s a two year study course was established in Oundle which led to the formation of the Oundle Buildings Group. Records of the 90 or so studies of individual buildings undertaken by this group are held in Oundle Museum (contact: Gill Johnston, Church Farm House, Glapthorn).

**ACTION:** The Council will seek stronger ties with local bodies and interest groups and promote the continued involvement of the local community in managing and enhancing the character of its conservation areas –in line with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
3 SPECIFIC ACTIONS - OUNDLE CONSERVATION AREA

3.1 Conservation area boundary review

The Council is required by the legislation to regularly review the boundaries of its conservation areas to ensure that they continue to encompass areas of 'special architectural or historic interest'. In Oundle, the existing conservation area boundary is very tightly drawn around the listed buildings which front the main streets, omitting many of their back gardens. This is particularly noticeable to either side of West Street, where many of the medieval burgage plots can still be plotted. In addition, the boundary fails to include a number of listed buildings, and also buildings which are unlisted but which have been assessed as ‘positive’.

A thorough survey of the Oundle Conservation Area boundary has been undertaken (September 2009) and a number of proposals to extend this boundary are included below. These are as follows (from west to east):

(i) Add properties along Benefield Road.

Benefield Road is an historic route which connects Oundle to the neighbouring settlements of Benefield and Biggin. It leads into West Street and from there into the town centre. This extension would encompass a number of 18th and 19th century listed buildings (Nos. 8-20 even and 9-27 odd), as well as four unlisted cottages (Nos. 1-5 odd) which are considered to be ‘positive’. It would also include the former Drill Hall and the adjoining car park.

(ii) Add the former British School accessed from Spurlings

The British School was built in 1843 as a school for the children of Non-Conformists. The school became the Council School in 1904 and later moved to the purpose-built school (now Goldsmith’s Sale Rooms) off South Road. The original building has now been converted into residential use.

(iii) Add properties facing Milton Road and Glapthorn Road.

Milton Road is the ‘back lane’ to the burgage plots which lie to the north of West Street. Glapthorn Road is another historic route which forms the continuation of New Street, which leads northwards from the Market Place on the same orientation as the adjoining burgage plots. The proposed extension would also include Drumming Well Lane, a further historic route which connects into the back of the Talbot Hotel and, via a narrow passage, into West Street.

Despite some modern development, the plan form of the old burgages is still very distinct in this part of Oundle, with very long thin plots stretching southwards from Milton Road. Unlisted buildings of note include St Anthony (with an interesting early 18th century listed gazebo which fronts Milton Road), the existing mid 19th century Primary School, and a cream painted 19th century cottage with an adjoining stone barn.

On the north side of Milton Road there are three prestigious school buildings, set in attractive landscaped gardens and all designed by A C Blomfield. The most important of these, and very visible from Milton Road, is the Oundle School Memorial Chapel, completed in 1922 in the Perpendicular style. It retains some stained glass designed by John Piper in 1955. Close by, but facing Glapthorn Road, is the Science Building (1914) and Yarrow House (1918), now used mainly for visiting art exhibitions. These buildings are all listed grade II.
Also facing Milton Road are four unusual Arts and Crafts red brick and white rendered houses, constructed in pairs, which were presumably built as masters’ accommodation for the school (Nos. 2, 2a, 4 and 6). Stylistically they date to the early 20th century. Immediately adjoining, Nos. 8 and 10 are probably slightly earlier (they are shown on the 1901 map) and are much taller with a vertical emphasis. These are built from red brick with stone dressings. These are all unlisted but have been assessed as making a ‘positive’ contribution.

(iv) Blackpot Lane - add the plot once called Gardenways and the adjoining car park.

This additional designation encompasses the Scheduled Monument which partly lies over the former Saxon enclosure. Gardenways was a 20th century house which has now been demolished. A new house has been built on the site and is currently (October 2009) nearing completion. The extensive garden was once the garden to the Rectory, and the high stone boundary wall facing Blackpot Lane which defines the end of the garden is listed grade II. On the east side, there is a plot of open land used for car parking, part of which once formed the site of the John Smith Brewery, demolished in the 1950s. A large number of mature trees, most of which are protected by individual Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s), make a special contribution to views into both sites.

(v) The former Anchor Brewery, South Road.

This site lies on the east of Mill Road which leads southwards out of the town over the bridge over the River Nene. It also lies just beyond South Road, which forms the southern boundary to the burgages on the south side of West Street. The Anchor Brewery is an unlisted complex of buildings which turns the corner between Mill Road and South Road and appears to date to the mid 19th century. Facing Mill Road is the former brewery manager’s house, two storeys high and built from yellow brick with a shallow hipped slated roof. This butts up to a much taller, three storey brewery building, which retains its original ‘industrial’ openings. It is built from red brick with a hipped slated roof. Next to this, and stretching along South Road, is a long terrace of modest stone cottages, probably also mid 19th century. All of these buildings are considered to be ‘positive’.

(vi) Add South Road, part of St Osyth’s Lane and part of East Road.

This proposed extension encompasses the back garden and burgages to the south of West Street and the Market Place, from The Drying House (an industrial ‘positive’ historic building which has been converted into residential accommodation) as far as St Osyth’s Lane. Of interest is the change in name from the 1880s, when South Road was called ‘South Back Way’ and stretched around the ends of the burgage plots towards the ford over the River Nene which was accessed via Bassett Ford Road.

This part of Oundle is notable for the long, thin alleys which connects West Street to South Road, including Ship Lane and Gallery Lane, and for the large garden to the south of Cobthorne, again defined by a high stone wall and mature trees. The many stone walls which run parallel to each other down the slight hill are also of special significance. A number of small modern buildings have been added facing South Road, usually replicating the modest domestic or semi-agricultural character of the surviving cottages and barns and continuing the historic ‘grain’ of development. Of note are the extensive and very attractive views from many points along South Road over the River Nene and its surrounding water meadows.
The extension also includes a large area of land between the Market Place and South Road which once formed a formal and possibly a less formal garden to Bramston House. This appears to have stretched as far as the River Nene in the 19th century, where a boat house is shown on the 1886 map. This area now contains Bramston Close, a discrete residential development (probably of the early 1960s), which is concealed by the many mature trees which surround the site. A later residential development, possibly of the 1980s, of seven detached or semi-detached houses, has also been built within the former garden to the south, leaving a large garden which is almost completely concealed by the high stone walls and large trees which surround it. Despite the modern buildings in this part of Oundle, it is considered that the survival of the medieval street layout, the boundary walls, and the attractive landscape features, all justify inclusion within the Oundle Conservation Area.

On the south side of South Road, Nos. 41 and 43 are ‘positive’ historic buildings built from limestone which are shown on the 1886 map. No. 43 retains a name plaque dated 1842. No 41 is of a similar date and a number of barns and stables divide it from the road, two of them roofed in distinctive clay pantiles.

Further east, there are a number of mid 19th to early 20th century cottages and houses which are considered to be ‘positive’. Nos. 9, 11 and 15, on the north side of Herne Road, are shown on the 1886 map. On the south side, Nos. 2, 2a and 4 (an unusually well detailed bungalow) are built from red brick and date to the early 1920s. The modest vernacular cottages in Bassett Place are stone built, but the slightly larger houses facing the northwards section of South Road (Nos. 23-29 odd) are built from yellow brick, with slate roofs and two over two sash windows. No. 31 South Road is a red brick former barn, now converted into a house. Further northwards along South Road, Nos. 15 and 17 are also shown on the 1886 map and are a long, low row of stone cottages. Chapel Hill House, with its large garden is next door, and appears to be late 19th century in date, as it No. 2 East Road, a single storey late 19th century house with sash windows and a shallow hipped slated roof.

Turning into East Road, St Osyth’s House (No. 4) is listed grade II and dates to the late 18th century. Of note are the part pantiled roof and the original sash windows, although parts of the building appear to have been altered somewhat. Adjoining it is No. 6 East Road, a simple late Georgian house with sash windows and an elaborate door hood. Unusually, the roof is concealed by a parapet. A large garden behind these buildings is also proposed for inclusion in the conservation area. Another grade II listed building, No. 21 St Osyth’s Lane, lies opposite. ‘Positive’ historic buildings in East Road, as far as the existing conservation area boundary, are Nos. 9-15 odd and Nos. 21-27 odd, on the west side of the road. On the east side of the road, Nos. 26-36 even are a terrace of matching red brick houses with yellow brick string courses and shallow pitched slate roofs. Nos. 38-42 even lie immediately adjacent, and provide an unusual (for Oundle) example of a late 19th century red brick terrace with canted ground floor bays. These are defined by a slate roof which is supported on large wooden brackets and stretches over the front entrance to create an open porch.

Although this part of East Road has been compromised to a degree by the Co-Operative Supermarket, its car park, and some modern infill buildings, it is considered that designation as part of the Oundle Conservation Area is justified due to the high number of listed and ‘positive’ historic buildings, and the survival of the historic layout of the street, which forms the ‘back lane’ to the burgage plots which face the east side of North Street.

**ACTION:** The Council will designate the areas described above as extensions to the Oundle Conservation Area.
3.2 Public realm

A number of improvements to the public realm are required, as set out below. All of these will be subject to funding from the County Council, District Council, or Town Council, so some may have to remain ‘aspirational’ for the time being. The principal elements of the public realm which may need investment in the future are the paving, street lighting, wirescape and the Town Council’s notice board in the Market Place.

Paving:
Traditional stone paving has been noted in the Market Place and in St Peter’s Churchyard, with a few examples of historic setted or cobbled surfaces in back streets or on private land. Granite kerbs and setted gutters also survive in a few places. Otherwise, the paving is a mixture of concrete paving slabs, small concrete paviors, and some modern black tarmacadam.

The continuation of the high quality traditional stone paving which has already been installed in the Market Place into North Street, New Street, and West Street would be welcome. Some of the back alleys would benefit from new paving, perhaps using Staffordshire blue brick paviors.

If funding does not allow the use of stone, a more cost effective alternative would be the use of resin bonded tarmacadam, with a brown stone aggregate, which would blend with the limestone buildings (as has been used in Stoke Hill). Pavements which have already been adversely affected by trench-digging or are in poor condition should be tackled first.

Street Lighting:
Modern ‘heritage’ steel lamps, painted black, can be seen in the town centre, particularly in the Market Place. Street lighting is also fixed directly to the front elevations of some of the listed buildings. Traditional black-painted ‘heritage’ street lights in St Peter’s Churchyard illuminate the various paths across the open area. In side alleys, such as Ship Lane, lighting is provided by modern steel ‘hockey stick’ street lights, probably of the 1960s or 1970s, which are painted blue.

The continuation of the use of more appropriate street lighting throughout the whole conservation area, including the areas recommended for inclusion in this document, is recommended, perhaps in association with an overall scheme for enhancement of the alleyways and back streets in general.

Wirescape:
Although the telephone wires have already been undergrounded in the town centre and along the principal historic streets, trailing wires and dominant timber telegraph poles are detrimental to the character of the more peripheral areas, such as South Road and East Road, which may shortly be included within the conservation area. Improvements would include undergrounding these wires and removing the telegraph poles.

Other features
An Oundle Town Council notice board, located next to the former Market Hall, provides some information for tourists. This is in urgent need of replacement.

ACTION: In association with its partners, the Council will seek to review the condition of paving and street lighting to ensure that these are well maintained and fit for purpose. The Council will aim to co-ordinate new paving or other public realm improvements in line with the principles set out in English Heritage’s latest ‘Streets For All’ publication;
**3.3 Traffic management and car parking.**

Busy traffic along West Street, New Street, the Market Place, North Street and Milton Road is a detrimental feature, and can cause issues with pedestrian movement across the town centre. Low key improvements to reduce traffic speeds and make pedestrian crossings more frequent and safer would be welcome, but they must take the very sensitive historic environment into consideration.

The provision of traffic calming measures, or other street improvements, can only be carried forward with the full support of the local community, including the Town Council. Any improvements will also be subject to the necessary funding being made available.

**ACTION:** The Council in partnership with the Town Council and County Council, will consider improvements to the management of traffic and pedestrian movement within the Oundle Conservation Area as and when funds permit.

**3.4 Listed buildings at Risk**

There are a number of listed buildings ‘At Risk’ within the Oundle Conservation Area and the Council is already taking action to ensure that urgent repairs are carried out to at least one (No. 15 West Street). A detailed survey of the conservation area would be helpful in identifying any further buildings which are, or potentially could be, at risk, and would enable the Council to prepare a strategy to deal with them as and when staff resources and funding permits.

**ACTION:** The Council will continue to monitor the condition of listed buildings in the Oundle Conservation Area and will ensure that the appropriate actions are taken to ensure that they are properly repaired and brought back into use.

**3.5 The control of unlisted ‘positive’ buildings**

Most of the unlisted ‘positive’ buildings in Oundle lie outside the current conservation area but will, subject to public consultation, shortly be within the boundary. Some of these have already been affected by modern alterations such as uPVC windows or front doors, modern roofing materials, the removal of chimney stacks, or the addition of front porches or roof lights. However, many, such as Nos. 23-29 South Road, remain remarkably original and free of such changes.

The Council is able, through the imposition of an Article 4 Direction, to make restrictions on the permitted development rights of owners of unlisted single-family dwelling houses in a conservation area. An Article 4 Direction is therefore useful in strengthening controls over the unsympathetic alteration of unlisted buildings, which would cumulatively have an adverse affect on the character of a conservation area.

The setting of these unlisted buildings, often close to listed buildings, adds to the need for additional controls. An Article 4 (2) can be served by the local planning authority...
without the approval of the Secretary of State and would affect all unlisted family dwellings within the conservation area.

Strict controls already exist over listed buildings, and unlisted buildings in a variety of other uses (such as flats or shops), where Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission is required by statute for a variety of minor alterations.

**ACTIONS:** The Council will consider designating an Article 4(2) Direction in order to protect unlisted dwelling houses in the Oundle Conservation from unsympathetic changes.

### 3.6 Sites requiring enhancement

The following sites are considered to be in need of improvement:

(i) An area of grass to the east of Jesus Church, Stoke Hill. This area is currently blighted by street signs, and poorly maintained grass verges, although a modern seat and reproduction Victorian street lights indicate that some enhancements have been carried out in the past. Improvements could include the installation of traditional stone paving, a rationalisation or reduction of the street signs, and the replacement of the current very utilitarian bench.

(ii) Alleyways off West Street, most notably Ship Lane and Gallery Lane. Subject to confirmation of their legal status, these historic routes would benefit from the use of improved paving, possibly using Staffordshire blue brick paviors, and traditional street lights.

**ACTIONS:** The Council in partnership with the County Council and Town Council, will consider the enhancements detailed above, although any improvements will be subject to funding.

### 3.7 Local List

Whilst a very large proportion of Oundle’s historic buildings are included on the statutory list (‘listed buildings’), some others do not meet the strict criteria for listing but are nevertheless important in the local area. Buildings in the Oundle Conservation Area which might be considered for the Local List are:

- **Oundle Primary School, Milton Road** – a mid 19th century Victorian school, built from stone with modern additions;

- **Nos. 2, 2a, 4 and 6 Milton Road** – a matching group of Arts and Crafts houses of around 1890, built from red brick with white roughcast and huge windows to the first floor; Nos. 8 and 10 Milton Street are built from red brick with yellow brick dressings. All of these buildings are relatively unaltered;

- **Nos. 23-29 odd South Road** – a terrace of yellow brick two storey houses of c1880, well preserved;

- **Nos. 41 and 43 South Road** – these date to 1842 and were once a farm group No. 41 arranged around a three sided courtyard which was presumably once a farmyard. The buildings are built from stone and retain some original casement windows. The barns are covered in clay pantiles, and are particularly important in views along the street;
- The former Anchor Brewery, South Road – this important complex of buildings includes the former brewery manager’s house of c1860, built from yellow brick, and a taller red brick brewery building, three storeys high;

- The Victoria Hall, West Street – a large stone late 19th century building with a commanding presence onto the street.

**ACTION:** Buildings in the proposed Oundle Conservation Area, as detailed above, could be considered for inclusion in the Council’s emerging ‘Local List’:

Other buildings outside the conservation area which might be suitable for Local Listing include the Oundle School boarding houses – Fisher, Crosby, Sidney and Grafton. All date to between 1899 and 1907, when school policy changed and the houses were managed by salaried housemasters, rather than by individuals who managed for profit.

### 3.8 Control of new development

There are very few opportunities for new development in the existing Oundle Conservation Area, due to existing planning policies, the high number of listed buildings, and the constraints imposed by conservation area designation. However, until the conservation area boundary is extended, many of the rear gardens to the listed buildings which front the principle streets could be extremely vulnerable to change and some buildings may at some stage be threatened with demolition and, or, redevelopment. A certain amount of infilling has already taken place, such as the houses in various developments on the north side of South Road, or the more scattered development, much of it in association with Oundle School, on the south side of Milton Road.

Where new development does occur, it should adhere to policies within the Development Plan, and national guidance, most particularly PPS5. In addition:

- 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 usually not increase the volume of development on the site;

- ‘Positive’ unlisted buildings particularly will be protected from demolition or unsympathetic change; any application for demolition must be accompanied by a justification statement, setting out why the building cannot be reused or repaired; also, the applicant must prove that the site or building has been offered for sale on the open market;

- New development should be sympathetic to the surrounding historic buildings in terms of materials and details;

- The roofs and chimneys in the Oundle 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.

**ACTION:** The Council will continue to ensure that new development in the Oundle Conservation Area is of the highest possible quality and that it does not have an adverse impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the area.

### 3.9 Visitor interpretation

There is little visitor interpretation in Oundle apart from the Town Council notice board in the Market Place which is in urgent need of replacement or upgrading. The Town Council could consider the provision of plaques which could be placed on the more important historic buildings, which could include the date of construction and any particularly important people who had lived there. A popular but quite detailed Town Trail has already been produced by the Town Council and is available from the Tourist Information Centre, but the addition of markers on the ground, to enable easy recognition of features and routes, would be helpful. The formation of an active Oundle Society, in addition to a similarly named organisation which was established by the school a few years ago, might help to focus the local community.

**ACTION:** The Council and the Town Council, in association with local community groups, could discuss ways of improving visitor interpretation in Oundle, subject to funding.

### 3.10 Shopfronts

There are many historic shopfronts, too numerous to record individually in the character appraisal, which are worthy of retention. Whilst most of these are in listed buildings, so they are already highly protected, it would be advantageous to record all of the individual shopfronts on a map and provide some architectural assessment of them. These could form part of the initiative suggested above at 3.9 Visitor interpretation.

**ACTION:** The Council, Town Council and the Oundle Society, could discuss ways of recording historic shopfronts in the town, and the production of information about them, possibly in connection with new Shopfront Guidance.

Planning and listed building consent applications are also frequently received by the Council for alterations to these shopfronts. The production of up-dated Shopfront Guidance would be advantageous to the Oundle Conservation Areas, as well as other parts of the District.

**ACTION:** The Council will consider the production of Shopfront Guidance for the Oundle Conservation Area.
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John Greig</td>
<td>(i) Concerned about the level of public consultation for the proposed new CA</td>
<td>The Council has undertaken public consultation (PC) by putting the documents on their website, consulting with the Parish Council, and an article in the Nene Valley News, which is delivered to every house in the village. This goes further than required in the 1990 (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Does the Council have a conservation specialist?</td>
<td>Yes - Lloyd Mills is the Council's Conservation Officer.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Improvements to Manor Farm Court open land - who will pay?</td>
<td>This will have to be paid for by the owner.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Street lighting - who will pay for any improvements? Notes that the Parish Council currently own and maintain the lights.</td>
<td>The improvement works suggested are long term aspirations.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Does not agree with suggestion of using resin-bonded gravel for the pavements - these are the responsibility of Northants County Council.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) Views - concerned about new trees outside proposed CA boundary might have an adverse impact on views out of the CA</td>
<td>Noted but the Council cannot intervene in this matter.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(vii) Trees - what is the definition of a tree? Can controls be enforced on private land. Some trees marked on Townscape Appraisal Map are of no significance.

A 'tree' is defined elsewhere in the document. Controls can be exercised by the Council on privately owned trees. 'Trees' marked on the T A Map may include areas of less significant shrubs and smaller trees as well as mature trees. The Council can only 'encourage' owners to look after their trees.

(viii) Asks if land to the east of No. 58 High Street and the paddock between No. 55 High Street and Turners House should be designated as Important Open Space.

It is not considered that these spaces are of sufficient visual impact within the village to justify this designation.

(ix) Concerned about the continuing lack of progress at Manor Court Farm.

There is little the Council can do in the present circumstances apart from encouraging the owner to carry out improvements.

(x) Visitor interpretation - who will pay for additional plaques?

This would be the responsibility of the local community, principally the Parish Council.

2 Initial response from the Parish Council

Further consultation and discussion to take place in January 2010 after a public meeting.

Noted NFA until after meeting

3 Mr and Mrs M Greasley

Fully supports CA designation.

Noted NFA
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mary Cheney</td>
<td>Concerned that her building (No. 38 Islington) has been included within the new CA boundary. Whilst altered, this 18th century house retains some interesting architectural features and is also important for its proximity to the listed almshouses on the opposite side of the road - inclusion within the proposed CA boundary is therefore justified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>John Franklin and Sharon Cole</td>
<td>(i) Asks why areas including Tofts Close and St Andrews Lane are not within the proposed CA boundary. These areas were inspected but were not considered to be of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit CA designation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(ii) Worried about the control of satellite dishes and other antennae.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ian Teague</td>
<td>(i) Objects to the designation of the new CA - concerned that designation will bring unwanted additional controls. CA designation actually brings very few additional controls and most residents within existing conservation areas do not consider that they are being adversely affected by designation, which is generally seen as a positive move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(ii) Asks why the view from Tofts Close is not on the TA Map.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Worried about the control of satellite dishes and other antennae.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kate and Mike Ramsey</td>
<td>(i) Supports CA designation but would like whole village included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Asks why the views from Tofts Close were not marked on the TA Map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Steven Mansfield</td>
<td>(i) Supports CA designation but would like whole village included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Worried about the control of satellite dishes and other antennae.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Worried about the control of satellite dishes and other antennae.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(ii) Asks specifically why properties in St Andrews Lane are included but not matching properties next door? These are included as they relate to the historic main street and their gardens make a contribution to the character of the main street.

(iii) Wants the view from the corner of Tofts Close included. Tofts Close is not within the CA boundary so marking the views are not relevant.

(iv) Why were letters not sent to all of the residents about designation. This was a matter of cost.

(v) Asks about PC and why more was not done. See 1(i)

(vi) Asks about timing of the designation report. Titchmarsh forms part of the Council's long term commitment to regularly reviewing its towns and villages to see if further CA designation is required.

9 Donna Stables

(i) Supports CA designation but wants more views added to the T A Map. The principal views have been marked on the T A Map.

10 Stephen Barber and Jackie Rowe

(i) Objects to CA designation - wants the village to continue to evolve without any additional controls - particularly worried over controls over trees. Noted.

(ii) Consider that the proposed CA boundary is not correct - should include more historic buildings and more views. See 5(i)

(iii) Disagreed with proposal to Locally List the Village Shop. Local Listing brings no additional controls but merely identifies a buildings of being of local significance.
(iv) Asks if the CA boundary can be amended to delete the garages at the bottom of their garden (No. 47 High Street).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sir Ewan Harper</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Objects to the designation of the new CA - existing controls including the listed buildings are sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Add views along Back Lane to the TA Map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>Asks if Titchmarsh House and the three modern houses facing Chapel Street could be left out of the CA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agreed. Amend map accordingly.

It is not considered that these views are of particular merit. Titchmarsh House has been identified as a 'positive' building which should be retained. Its inclusion is therefore justified. Other parts of the proposed CA retain modern buildings, so the inclusion of the three houses is not inconsistent, and they also help to contain the historic street.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mrs Elizabeth Townsend</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Wants the whole village to be in the CA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Wants the view from Tofts Close to be marked on the TA Map.</td>
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See 5(i)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mr Routley</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Likes the mixture of old and new in the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>Wants St Andrew's Lane and views from Tofts Close in the CA.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

See 5(i) and 7(ii)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jonathan Hope</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i)</td>
<td>Likes the buildings, views and open spaces in the village. Thinks The church and the rectory and the outstanding buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>If improvements carried out, such as undergrounding overhead wires, this should be the whole village not just the CA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Noted.
15 Emma Morehen, on behalf of Titchmarsh Parish Council - letter dated 22.1.10 (i) Supports CA designation but considers that not enough public consultation has been undertaken by the Council. Noted - these have been considered in this PC Report. Add to PC Report
(ii) Encloses comments of draft Appraisal and further letter received from local residents etc. Comments noted - mainly matters of fact

16 (i) Neil Robinson (i) Wants Greystones and Ashfields added into the CA. (i) These buildings were carefully assessed and were considered not to be of sufficient interest to merit inclusion in the CA. NFA
(ii) Concerned about views to the north of the village - not marked on map. The marked views are indicative only, and only include views from the CA. NFA
(iii) Comments about the amount of wildlife in the village. Noted. Amend text to add in the various animals and birds mentioned.

17 Henry H Bletsoe and Son on behalf of the former Methodist Capel, Chapel Street. (i) Considers that the former chapel has been too heavily altered to merit inclusion on the Local List. This is a matter for the Council to decide.

18 Nathan Dove (i) The Poplars has wooden not uPVC windows. Accepted. Amend text accordingly.
(ii) Concerned that view to Clopton was not included. See 7 (ii). NFA
(iii) Supports CA designation but thinks the boundary and views need to be amended. Noted - discuss with Council. NFA

19 John Gaskin (i) Concerned about the exclusion of Tofts Close and the views from it. See 7(ii) and Lloyd Mills' email 11.1.10 NFA
<p>| | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Miles Routley</td>
<td>(i) Considers the proposed CA boundary needs to be amended, along with some of the views (mainly from Tofts Close) - also add cottages in London End and St Andrew's Lane.</td>
<td>See 5(i) and 7(ii)</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>J Stokes</td>
<td>(i) Wants views from Tofts Close included</td>
<td>See 7(ii).</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) wants St Andrew's Lane and St Andrew's Close in the CA.</td>
<td>See 5(i).</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sylvia Prestwich</td>
<td>(i) Considers that the whole village should be in the proposed CA. This would include areas of no special architectural or historic interest.</td>
<td></td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Add properties in Tofts Close</td>
<td>See 8(ii)</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Add view from Tofts Close.</td>
<td>See 7 (ii).</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Add view from Back Lane to the north.</td>
<td>Agreed.</td>
<td>Amend T A Map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Does not think resin-bonded pavements or the removal of telegraph poles will enhance the village.</td>
<td>noted.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(vi) Overall, does not support CA designation.</td>
<td>Noted.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Paul Milner</td>
<td>(i) Add more views to T A Map - map provided. Most of these suggested views are outside the CA boundary so will be mentioned in the text but not annotated on the map. One view will be added - looking eastwards across the open field to the church from Islington.</td>
<td>Amend map and text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Add the playing fields as important open space. Whilst this space may have an important social function it is not considered to have any positive impact on the historic core of the village.</td>
<td>NFA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Add further trees. Agreed.</td>
<td>Amend T A Map.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Tim Baile</td>
<td>(i) Lives at Turners House, 44 High Street - T A map shows it as proposed for Local Listing. Incorrect - the map shows it as a positive unlisted building.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Says there are more views southwards from Titchmarsh which should be marked (but does not specify where). Noted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Phil Hope MP</td>
<td>(i) Supports wider consultation for the new CA. Noted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) The detailed design of the proposed new Affordable Housing scheme may be affected by its proximity to the new CA although not yet designated. Noted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Titchmarsh Parish Council (16.4.10)</td>
<td>Members support the conservation area designation and look forward to hearing about it in future. Noted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Titchmarsh Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Draft No. 4
28.5.10

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Cirencester,
Glos GL7 1RL

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E: info@theconservationstudio.co.uk
www.theconservationstudio.co.uk
Titchmarsh Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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10.3 Sites requiring enhancement
10.4 Public realm
10.5 Local List
10.6 Satellite dishes
10.7 Protection of views
10.8 Protection of trees and open spaces
10.9 Control of new development
10.10 Visitor interpretation

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1 STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE TITCHMARSH CONSERVATION AREA

The key characteristics of the Titchmarsh Conservation Area, which make it worthy of its status as a conservation area are:

- Interesting history with Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement nearby;
- Location close to the River Nene, which provided rich soils for agriculture;
- Dispersed linear layout along part of a former Roman road, which crosses a small stream at the eastern edge of the village;
- Undulating topography with much of the village on a ridge of higher land with long views out over the Nene Valley and the surrounding fields;
- Titchmarsh was held by Peterborough Abbey in 973 AD as part of Knolles Manor and later Lovell’s Manor;
- St Mary’s Church, listed grade I, forms the centrepiece of the village with its churchyard and adjoining field;
- The church has some Norman fabric, but dates mainly to the 12th century and later;
- No large houses in the village apart from the modestly sized mainly late 16th century Manor House in Chapel Street, and the much larger and more imposing mid-19th century Old Rectory which looks out over the church field;
- Manor Farm buildings have been sensitively converted into housing, although Village Farm in North Street, with its mixture of modern and historic farm buildings, is still in agricultural use, adding to the rural ambiance of the village;
- A number of houses, cottages, and outbuildings, dating to between the 17th and the 19th centuries, some of them with steeply pitched roofs;
- Use of limestone (ashlar blocks and rubblestone), with some Collyweston stone slate roofs or thatch, for many of the historic buildings;
- Simple vernacular forms, often relating to former agricultural uses such as farmhouses, barns, and stables, all within the core of the village;
- Titchmarsh is also notable for the use of yellow and red brick, mainly for the 19th century cottages;
- There has been some 20th century development, but not enough to adversely affect the special architectural or historic interest of the village.
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been written by The Conservation Studio on behalf of East Northamptonshire Council. It was prepared in October 2009, along with the Management Proposals, and both were subject to a process of full public consultation after which any necessary amendments were made and the final documents produced.

This Appraisal, with the accompanying Management Proposals, will be used to guide future development and improvements in the village in conjunction with existing and forthcoming planning policies adopted by East Northamptonshire Council.

The conservation area boundary encompasses most of the village but excludes modern development in Dryden’s Close, St Andrew’s Lane and Polopit. The boundary approximately shows the extent of development as illustrated on the 1901 historic map, apart from Polopit, where a number of historic buildings have been demolished.

2.2 Planning policy context

Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act). Local Planning Authorities are required by the Act to identify the parts of their area that should be designated as conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals to preserve or enhance them. Local authorities must submit proposals for the protection and enhancement of conservation areas for consideration at a public meeting within the relevant area. They must also have regard to any views expressed by people attending the meeting.

Broadly, the effects of designation are:

- Conservation Area Consent must be obtained from the local planning authority or Secretary of State prior to the substantial or total demolition of any building or structure within a conservation area, with some exceptions;
- The local planning authority must consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area when assessing applications for change in conservation areas;
- Permitted development rights are slightly different in conservation areas;
- Permission is required from the planning authority to fell or lop a tree over a certain size.

2.3 Planning Policy Framework

Current planning policies for Titchmarsh, including those governing development and the management of change in conservation areas are laid out in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), adopted in June 2008. In particular, CSS Policy 13 (Sustainable Development Principles) sets out criteria for raising standards of design and the protection of existing historic and landscape assets. CSS policies need to be considered in conjunction with the East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009), in particular Policy 27 (Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment).
The conservation area character appraisal and management proposals documents will sit alongside the conservation policies contained within the CSS and Regional Plan and be complementary to its aims of preserving and enhancing East Northamptonshire’s conservation areas.

The current relevant planning documents are:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- Central government guidance, principally as set out in “Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment”;
- East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009)
- The Joint Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire (adopted June 2008).
- East Northamptonshire Council’s emerging site allocations development plan documents.

2.4 Purpose of the appraisal

This appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest for which the Titchmarsh Conservation Area merits designation. It identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character and appearance. It will be used by the Council in considering proposals for demolition or alteration of buildings, as well as for new developments. It will also help property owners and developers to take account of the importance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the conservation area.

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal leads to Management Proposals, setting out policies and actions to conserve and enhance the conservation area’s special architectural and historic interest and to mitigate the effects of negative features. The Management Proposals will be included within a Supplementary Planning Document within the Local Development Framework and, as such, will be adopted as local planning policy.

Preparation of the appraisal involved an extensive survey of the conservation area undertaken in August 2009. The omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

2.5 Community involvement

The survey of the conservation area has included a process of public consultation to identify the following:

- The special characteristics of the Titchmarsh Conservation Area;
- The key negative features and issues;
- A range of possible actions that would mitigate or offset these detractors.

The consultation began with a meeting with the Titchmarsh Parish Council on 2 September 2009 when the proposed conservation area boundary was discussed. The draft appraisal and management proposals were put out to full public consultation between 20 November 2009 and 9 January 2010 after which a Public Consultations Report was prepared and any necessary amendments made.
3.1 Designation

The Titchmarsh Conservation Area was designated in (fill in date)

3.2 Activities and uses

Titchmarsh is primarily a residential village with many of the residents working outside the village, although one working farm remains. There are also two popular public houses, the Wheatsheaf and the Dog and Partridge, and the Titchmarsh Village Shop on The Green, which is largely run by volunteers, is an important part of village life. Titchmarsh also retains a Church of England primary school, located close to the church in an historic building which has been much extended over the years. The conservation area also contains the Parish Church of St. Mary’s, and a former non-conformist chapel in Chapel Street, now converted into a house. Otherwise, the remaining buildings are all in use as homes, including the historic almshouses in Islington.

Originally, the village would have relied upon its local farms and rural hinterland to provide jobs in agriculture. Many of the historic buildings in the conservation area therefore relate to these uses, with a number of former farmhouses, barns, and stables, all located within or on the edges of the village. Today, most of these have been converted into residential uses, the most notable group being the barns which once formed Manor Farm. Another sizeable farm group can be seen on the eastern edge of the village, at the northern end of Polopit (Castle Farm). Two further farms (Rectory Farm and Newbrook Farm) lie on the western edge of the village at Islington and appear to retain their original function. However, an obviously working farm (Village Farm) is still located within the centre of the village in North Street, and the activity generated makes a major contribution to the character of the area, with tractors and other machinery regularly moving through the village. At harvest time, spilled grain from these vehicles brings a large number of wild birds into the village centre.
4 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

4.1 Geographic location

Titchmarsh is a small village on the northern edges of East Northamptonshire, less than one mile from Thrapston, which lies to the south west. The A605 which connects the A14 to Oundle and beyond separates Titchmarsh from the river valley and is a primary route for cars and lorries. The village is connected directly to the A14 to the south by a straight but narrow lane which leads off Polopit.

4.2 Topography and geology

The defining feature of Titchmarsh is its location on a slight ridge overlooking farming land to the north and south. The valley of the River Nene lies close by to the east beyond Plum Pudding Lane, the continuation of Church Street. To the south west, the land drops down the end of the High Street, rises slightly, then drops again down Polopit and St Andrew’s Lane to the line of a north-south flowing stream. This lies just within the conservation area and defines the boundary of the large field which separates the two roads. The village centre is relatively flat but because of the changes to the topography on every side, has the character of a small plateaux. This is particularly noticeable when approaching Titchmarsh from the north along the A605, from where there are dramatic views of the village and the tower of St Mary’s Church.

Northamptonshire lies next to the coal measures of Leicestershire and the availability of this coal, local iron ore and Jurassic limestone for use as a flux in the 19th and 20th centuries led to the development of local iron work such as Twywell, to the west of Thrapston. Titchmarsh itself lies on a limestone ridge and this limestone is also used extensively for buildings in the village, both as rubble stone and as ashlar blocks. Along the Nene Valley, the geology is more mixed with alluvium and gravel providing opportunities for agriculture and industrial-level extraction, mainly from the 1920s onwards, leading to the creation of a large number of lakes.

Areas of Oxford clay and boulder clay lie close to Titchmarsh, on its east side. Further south, around Higham Ferrars, the limestone gives way to Upper Jurassic Oxford Clay, which provides the raw material for roof tiles and brick, and there are a number of brick-built buildings in the village, often using contrasting yellow and red brick for architectural effect. Collyweston stone ‘slate’ can be seen on many roofs in Titchmarsh, brought over from limestone quarries closer to Stamford.

4.3 Landscape setting

Titchmarsh sits in rolling countryside which has in the past been under the control of large country estates which exploited the land for farming. Whilst the valley of the River Nene lies immediately to the west, the immediate setting to the village is provided by large, open arable fields with little woodland. These fields have straight boundaries, suggesting that they post-date the enclosure of the common fields which took place in the 1770s. Ecologically, local residents report a large number of animals and birds in the vicinity including muntjac deer, foxes, hedgehogs, pheasants, partridges, red kites and many other wild birds. There are pleasant walks along the river and the lakes close to Thrapston (the Nene Way footpath), and close to the village, the Titchmarsh Nature Reserve was created in 1987 by the Wildlife Trust. Covering over 178 acres, the Reserve is now a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is notable for its varied flora and fauna. Next to the Reserve, Elinor Lake is now operated as a commercial trout fishery.
5  HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1  Archaeological interest

The River Nene valley provided good soils for farming and plenty of fresh water so it is not surprising that there is evidence for prehistoric settlement near Titchmarsh, with occupation sites dating back to the Neolithic and Bronze Age. A late Bronze Age or possibly early Iron Age ring fort has also recently been identified to the east of Thrapston, and another Iron Age site lies at Aldwincle to the north west of Titchmarsh.

More important is the Roman town of Titchmarsh which lay between the River Nene and the modern A605 just to the north west of the modern village. It probably formed a group of substantial nucleated settlements with Irchester, Ashton and Durobrivae, which lay at intervals along the River Nene valley and may have acted as local centres for the extensive agricultural communities in its hinterland. However, it does not appear to have survived as an important settlement focus in the Early and Middle Saxon periods when occupation probably shifted to nearby Thrapston. In places, the modern A605 follows the line of the Roman road which connected these settlements, and the modern village of Titchmarsh may also lie in part along a more minor Roman road which lay along the top of the ridge.

There is one Scheduled Monument in the Titchmarsh Conservation Area – Titchmarsh Castle moated site and fishponds on the south side of the High Street (ref: 13628). This appears to be the remains of John Lovell’s manor house which he was given permission to crenelate in 1304 and which was finally demolished in about 1778.

5.2  Historical development

In the 7th century documents confirm the grant of land in the area by Ine, King of Wessex, to one Ticcea, leading to the name ‘Ticcea’s Marsh’, later Titchmarsh. In AD 973 Titchmarsh was held by the Abbey of Peterborough as part of Knolles Manor, but by the Domesday Survey 1086 there were two manors in the area, one held by Ascelin de Waterville and one by Henry de Ferieres, which appears to have been the larger land-holding. By 1286 this had passed to Sir Henry Lovell, and it was his son, Sir John Lovell, who obtained a licence to crenelate his manor house in 1304 and convert it into a castle. His son, another John Lovell, obtained a charter for a weekly market and annual fair at Titchmarsh in 1359, confirming the importance of the settlement to the local community. Lovell’s castle was described as ruinous by 1363, and a new manor house may have been built although its location is not known. Meanwhile, also in the 14th century, the de Waterville manor was passed by marriage to Henry de Tichmerse. In 1486 Francis, Lord Lovell, was deprived on his estates at the end of the War of the Roses, and Henry VII granted the Manor of Titchmarsh, comprising the former Lovell’s Manor and Knolles Manor, to Sir Charles Somerset.

In 1553 Gilbert Pickering purchased the Manor of Titchmarsh. Pickering had been appointed as the king’s bailiff in Oundle when the abbey there was dissolved in the 1530s, and no doubt he wanted to strengthen his land holdings in the area. This principal land holding continued in Pickering ownership for several generations until it was sold to Thomas Powys in about 1778, whose descendant Lord Lilford became Lord of the Manor in the 19th century.

In the 12th century, St Mary’s Church may have consisted of an aisleless nave and chancel, but in 1250 the Lovell family added an aisle to the north and a chapel, and extended the chancel to its present length. A reset 12th century arch in the chancel is a notable feature. In the early 14th century a south aisle was added, and a little later the
north aisle was rebuilt in its present form and the transept added. The tower, which is built of Weldon limestone and has been described as the finest church tower outside of Somerset, the clerestory, and the porch, were all added in the 15th century.

A number of changes took place in the village during the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1756 Dorothy Pickering founded some almshouses in Islington, the road which runs along the west side of Titchmarsh, the cost of running the buildings being paid for by income from a farm in Molesworth, Huntingdonshire. These were extended in 1856 under the will of T Coades. In 1778 the fields around Titchmarsh were enclosed, and the long, straight boundaries can still be plotted on modern maps. At about this time the ruins of Titchmarsh Castle were also taken down and the site presumably returned to agriculture. During the 18th century the village was the birthplace and home of the poet Sir John Dryden, whose parents were Erasmus Dryden and Mary Pickering. He was therefore a cousin of the Pickerings and he was brought up in a house in Polopit.

In 1842 a new National School was provided for the village next to St Mary’s Church, although the original building can only be seen clearly now from the field behind it due to modern additions. Close by, a substantial new rectory was built in 1861 by the then incumbent, and in 1871 a new Wesleyan Chapel was built in Chapel Lane, which has since been converted into a house. At this time, the Baptists already had a small chapel in Titchmarsh, served from Thrapston.

(Insert maps of 1875 and 1901)

Historic maps of 1875 and 1901 confirm the long, linear nature of Titchmarsh at the time, with notable groups of agricultural buildings on either side of the road, built close up to the roadside. This layout remain relatively unaltered into the 21st century although there has been some infilling and new development, principally in Dryden's Close, St. Andrew's Lane and in Polopit, where some of the historic buildings were demolished as part of a slum clearance initiative in the 20th century. Within the last thirty years or so, former agricultural buildings at Manor Farm, Park Farm, and Castle Farm, have all been converted into houses, sometimes with additional new houses. Today Titchmarsh is an attractive residential village with a church, a working farm, two public houses, a school, and a popular village shop.
6 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Layout and spaces

The defining feature of the layout of Titchmarsh is the long main street (Church Street/School Lane/High Street/Polopit) which runs approximately north west to south east along a ridge. This falls and rises again before dipping once more to the valley of the small stream on the eastern edge of the conservation area. For a small village the main street is exceptionally long and may reflect how the village developed as a collection of individual farms, scattered along this road with each farm complex having a certain amount of land. This may also show changes in land holding in the late 18th century when the Powys family (presumably absentee landlords) took over Titchmarsh, as many of the farm groups appear to date to the late 18th or early 19th centuries. The same family presumably also instigated the enclosure of the surrounding common fields in about 1778.

The exception to the linear layout is between School Lane and Chapel Lane, which with North Street form a long rectangle which is connected in the middle by The Green. This is a wide fairly open informal space with irregularly sized grass verges which must have once formed the main entrance to Manor Farm, which lies immediately adjacent. The Green is the only ‘public’ open space in the village apart from the churchyard and the adjoining field, although these are of course privately owned. The Green retains a possibly 1930s concrete seat, a reproduction Victorian park seat, dated 1997, and an oak bench, which provide some focus to the area. Also important is the Titchmarsh Village Shop, which is located in a single storey stone building which was once used as an Engine House for the local fire engine (this fact is recorded on a Titchmarsh Parish Council plaque on the side of the building). The Green is surrounded by a variety of buildings of which the large converted barn at Manor Farm is the most prominent. Behind the Village Shop and accessed from School Lane and from The Green, the former Village Pound has been turned into a small public garden for use of the ‘People of Titchmarsh’ with some seats and an area of modern paving. Further east, North Street leads to Village Farm, which is located in a somewhat tucked away position at the side of a dead-end road, although farm tracks do lead out over the fields to the north and east.

Approaching Titchmarsh from the north west along Plum Pudding Hill, which leads into Church Street, the openness of the field and churchyard is the defining feature on the south side of the road which contrasts with the tightly packed cottages along the north side. The field and churchyard is also at a slightly higher level than the road, adding to the prominence of the church. The field is crossed by public footpaths which connect the centre of the village with the almshouses, the Old Rectory and Rectory Farm. It is notable for its views of the church and the Old Rectory, for the longer views out of the village, and for its mature trees. At the time of survey, the field was being used to graze a small flock of sheep, contributing to the rural character of the area. Because of the close proximity of animals, a ha-ha was built around the churchyard, probably in the late 18th century, which is an unusual feature.

Other spaces which add to the rural qualities of the conservation area include the triangular green in Islington, and the similarly informal islands of grass at the junction of High Street with St Andrew’s Lane.

The Scheduled Monument on the south side of the High Street, opposite The Wheatsheaf Inn, lies within a large field with a number of ‘humps and bumps’ which confirm the existence of some below-ground archaeology. The field is highly visible from the road and although in private ownership, makes a major contribution to the rural
The ambience of the conservation area which has been enhanced by the creation of a pretty flower and vegetable garden between the field boundary and the road.

6.2 Relationship of buildings to spaces

The majority of the buildings within the conservation area face directly onto the back of the pavement without any front gardens or yards. There is an occasional exception to this rule, such as the terrace of three cottages in North Lane (Nos. 14, 16 and 18), or the more prestigious village houses which lie on the south side of School Lane or the High Street, some of which date to the 17th century. Even the mainly 16th century Manor House in Chapel Street lies close to the road although an outbuilding connects directly to the boundary wall which runs along the back of the pavement. Of note are the many former barns which also lie on the back of the pavement and are extremely important to the streetscape – these include the barn at Castle Farm, Manor Farm barns (now converted), the barn which forms part of the boundary to The Green, and barns which form part of the complex of buildings, both historic and modern, at Village Farm. In other parts of the village, most noticeably along the north side of Chapel Street, the rhythm of the street is defined by the 17th century houses which lie gable-end onto the street.

Historically, development along the main street was only one property deep, so behind the cottages and houses there are substantial gardens which back onto fields. This is particularly noticeably along the south side of School Lane and the High Street, where the houses are mainly detached with large, visible gardens. In some places however, modern development has cut off the frontage properties from the surrounding countryside, most notably at St Andrew's Close, Tofts Close, and Park Road.

6.3 Landmarks and focal points

The most conspicuous landmark in the village is the tower of St Mary's Church which is visible from many miles around. Close up, the location of the church on a slightly elevated platform about Church Street adds to its visual importance. Whilst the church is undoubtedly the most important building in Titchmarsh, the adjoining Old Rectory is almost as impressive, and appears to include a double-height room with ecclesiastical references which faces the church field. The church, its churchyard, The Old Rectory and the field between them, are together the most significant group of buildings and spaces in the conservation area.

Within the village centre, The Green is another focal point which is reinforced by the proximity of the Village Shop and the Dog and Partridge Public House. Whilst a very informal space, it is here that local residents gather to chat and pass the time of day.

6.4 Views and vistas

The location of Titchmarsh on a ridge provides stunning views across the surrounding countryside, and the low density of the village buildings, and the many open spaces around and within the village, provide ample opportunity for a variety of both short and long views of note. The most important of these are as follows, but it is recognised that there are many more views, too numerous to record:

- Across the field outside Castle Farmhouse;
- From the public footpath next to Castle Farmhouse looking over the Scheduled Monument and other fields;
- From the land to the immediate west of the Scheduled Monument, looking westwards;
- From the end of North Street, looking over the fields which drop down the hill below;
- Along Chapel Street westwards to the tower of St Mary’s Church;
- A similar view across the open ground next to Manor Farm Court to the church tower;
- Many views across the field and churchyard, taking in St Mary’s Church, The Old Rectory, and the mature trees.

6.5 Trees

Titchmarsh is a rural village with many fine mature trees, some more visible from the public domain than others, which are somewhat hidden away in back gardens. The most notable trees are around the church and the adjoining field, and off Islington. More mature trees frame the south and western boundary of the Scheduled Monument, and another notable group of mature trees follows the line of the stream on the eastern edge of the conservation area. On the north side of St Andrew’s Lane, there are vestigial remains of a plum orchard in one of the back fields.

The most significant trees or tree groups are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map, but the lack of a specific reference does not imply that a tree or tree group is not of value.
7 STREETSCAPE

7.1 Public Realm

The ‘public realm’ covers a variety of features of the spaces between the buildings in the conservation area such as the pavements, pavements, street lighting, street furniture, and signage. Generally in Titchmarsh these are modern but low key and unobtrusive, as would be expected in a rural conservation area. These features are as follows:

Pavements
There are no examples of historic street paving in the conservation area although in a number of places stone cobbles can be spotted on private land, sometimes forming informal entrances to property such as between Nos. 83 and 85 High Street. Pavements within the village are usually narrow and paved in black tarmacadam, sometimes softened by the use of a rolled gravel topping, with a narrow (100 mm) modern concrete kerb. Lengths of historic granite setts are also used to create kerbing, such as the long (300 x 100 mm) setts in the High Street, Chapel Street and Church Street. In many places, deep grass verges of varying depths lie on either side of the road and are well cared for by the Parish Council. These are particularly notable at the eastern end of the conservation area, along the High Street in the middle of the village, and in The Green.

Street name signs
These are modern, and made from cast aluminium painted white with traditional lettering. They are usually fixed to plain timber boards which are in turn fixed to buildings, walls, or supporting posts painted black.

Litter bins
There are very few litter bins in the conservation area, but where they exist, they are the standard modern bins adopted by the Council throughout the District, which are black plastic drums, decorated with two gold rings.

Public seating
Three public seats can be seen on The Green – a possibly 1930s concrete seat, a ‘heritage’ reproduction cast iron and wood seat, and a more modern oak bench, which actually looks the most appropriate. Two more ‘heritage’ seats can be seen in the High Street, close to The Wheatsheaf Inn, and on the grass verge at the junction of Church Street and Islington. A concrete bench can also be seen further along the High Street to the east. There is also a bright red K6 telephone box at this location.

Street lighting
Modern ‘heritage’ steel lamps, painted black, can be seen in North Street, School Lane, and Chapel Street. In the High Street and elsewhere, they are mainly modern ‘hockey stick’ steel columns, painted light grey. Sometimes, as in Polopit and St Andrew’s Lane, the lamps are attached to the telegraph poles.

Wirescape
Overhead wires in many locations are somewhat obtrusive. They are supported on timber telegraph poles, which sometimes also support the street lights.

Other features
The Parish Council has provided attractive cast aluminium signs to mark the former Village Pound and the former Engine House, both on The Green. A ‘Titchmarsh Village Sign’ welcomes visitors entering Titchmarsh from the west.
7.2 Boundaries

There is a variety of front boundaries although because many of the buildings in the conservation sit tight on the back of the pavement, boundaries in parts of the village are not particularly dominant. Elsewhere, coursed limestone rubble walls, usually between one and two metres high, are the most prevalent boundary to both buildings and fields. These often have a simple half-round limestone render coping, such as the boundary walls around Manor Farm Court. By contrast, the coursed limestone wall which creates the ha-ha around the churchyard is topped with a stone coping, confirming that it has higher status than the neighbouring field boundaries.

Brick walls also feature within the conservation area, built from either red or yellow brick. A low brick plinth wall, with a well clipped hedge, is a more ‘urban’ boundary outside No. 31 North Street. The high brick wall around the side garden to No. 8 High Street is another brick wall which is particularly distinctive, as is the lower brick wall, with a blue terracotta coping at the Manor House.

Elsewhere there are examples of low palisade timber fencing (e.g. North Street, Chapel Street or High Street), the most appropriate examples being left a natural finish rather than painted. Other modern timber fencing occurs in several locations, and again, these are less obtrusive where they have been left unpainted. Hedging and areas of planting, particularly along the south side of the High Street, add to the rural qualities of the area.
8 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

8.1 Building types

The buildings in the conservation area are typical of a small rural village and include the impressive medieval Parish Church of St Mary's; the substantial mid-19th century Old Rectory; the well detailed almshouses in Islington; the modest, mainly 16th century Manor House; a number of early (mainly 17th century) houses and cottages; and a greater variety of farmhouses, barns and cottages of the 18th and 19th centuries. A Non-Conformist Chapel, and a Village School, both 19th century, add to local interest.

The only commercial buildings, the two public houses and the Village Shop, are housed in buildings of a domestic scale or, in the case of the shop, in a single-storey stone building which may have originally been a barn although it eventually housed the village fire engine.

It is notable that the historic maps show a number of farm groups within the village which have, since the end of the 19th century, been either partially demolished or converted into houses, sometimes in association with new development. The ‘grain’ of development shown on the 1875 and 1901 maps, with a large number of long buildings (presumably barns) in a courtyard arrangement, has therefore been lost or at best, somewhat compromised, by more recent changes.

8.2 Building form

Residential buildings in the conservation area generally retain a domestic scale of one-and-a-half or two storeys, although there are several large village houses which were presumably once farmhouses, such as Castle Farmhouse. Apart from the almshouses, there are no ‘polite’ terraces or set pieces of architecture, the overall character being of vernacular forms, developed slowly over a long period of time. Because they were built incrementally, many of them as farmhouses or agricultural workers’ cottages, each building is therefore different and although they sometimes form short groups of maybe three or four buildings, they are slightly varied in terms of their roofs, scale, use of materials and details. Some of these buildings sit at right angles to the main street, such as Nos. 25 and 27 Chapel Street, confirming their late 17th century date. Many of the 17th and 18th century cottages are only just two storeys high, as they are basically single storey with attic bedrooms served by dormer windows which lie in the same plane as the main wall, with either thatched or pantiled roofs wrapping around them. Examples include the listed cottages opposite the church – Nos. 14, 16 and 18 Church Street.

Most of the buildings in the conservation area are built from local limestone, although a number are built using brick, mainly dating to the 19th century or later. Early roofs tend to be very steeply pitched (about 65 degrees) to accommodate thatch or Collyweston stone slate, although some of the buildings have since been reroofed in concrete tiles. Later, mainly 19th century roofs, have a shallower pitch and utilise a number of materials, both traditional and modern, including Welsh slate, artificial slate, clay tiles, clay pantiles or concrete tiles. Thatch is commonly used, particularly long straw (the traditional finish, as at No. 13 High Street), as well as combed wheat reed and water reed.

Of note are the former farm groups which retain their simple vernacular forms, even where they have been converted into houses. Some of these lie along the line of the street, making a major contribution to the street scene. Notable examples include the
very large barn at Castle Farm, the barns at Village Farm, and the converted barns of Manor Farm.

8.3  Listed buildings

There are about 40 listed buildings in the Titchmarsh Conservation Area. These mainly date from the 17th, 18th or early 19th century, but a few are earlier. The majority are listed grade II but St Mary’s Church is listed grade I because of its outstanding architectural or historic interest. Of note is the survival of a large number of 17th century properties, many of them with steeply pitched thatched roofs, such as No. 6 Church Street, Nos. 25 and 27 Chapel Street, No. 13 High Street, No. 18 High Street (Birds Cottage), No. 69 High Street (The Old Bakehouse), and, close by, Brook Farm House. Some of the listed buildings were once in agricultural uses, such as the dovecot detailed below or the granary close to The Poplars (No. 35 High Street). A summary of the principal listed buildings is included below:

St Mary’s Church (grade I)

This substantial building retains 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th century fabric, and was restored in the late 19th century. It is built using Weedon or local limestone, with a Collyweston stone slate roof. The huge tower is a special feature and dates to the 15th century. The church retains monuments associated with the Creed and Pickering family and John Dryden, the poet.

The Manor House (grade II)

The Manor House has possibly medieval origins, although the majority of the building appears to date to the late 16th century with a remodelling of the late 18th century. It is built using square coursed limestone with a 20th century artificial stone slate roof above. It was probably a hall house and retains arched braced roof trusses in the first floor room of a cross wing, which may indicate that this was the solar of the original building.

Almshouses at Nos. 33 to 43 (odd) Islington (grade II)

These are an interesting row of matching one-and-a-half storey almshouses, dated 1756 and extended in the mid – 19th century. They are built from high quality limestone ashlar with stone lintels with keyblocks, over 20th century timber windows. The roofs are covered in Collyweston stone slate.

The Old Rectory, Islington (grade II)

The Old Rectory is a very substantial building which is now in use as a private house. It was built in c1861 of squared coursed limestone with ashlar banding and a Collyweston stone slate roof. The ecclesiastical character of the building is confirmed by the Caernarvon-head lights to the windows and the double-height window to the right of the main entrance.

No. 8 High Street (grade II)

This is one of the more substantial houses in the village and although dated 1837 on a chimney breast in the attic, and retaining many late Georgian features, it may have earlier origins. Of note is the coursed limestone with ashlar dressings, the tripartite sash windows, and the way the building turns its back on the main road with a large garden to one side concealed by a very high boundary wall.
The Poplars, No. 35 High Street (grade II)
This is a high quality farmhouse of mid-18th century date built from coursed limestone with a steeply pitched roof with axial stacks to either end.

Dovecot, Chapel Street (grade II)
A probably late 17th century dovecot built from squared coursed limestone with a pantiled roof.

8.4 Locally listed buildings

East Northamptonshire Council does not yet have a list of locally significant buildings (usually called the ‘Local List’). ‘Locally Listed' buildings are valued for their contribution to the local scene, or for their local historic associations, but are not considered to be of national importance, so they are usually not eligible for statutory listing. Policies to control them can be included in the Development Plan or in a Supplementary Planning Document.

8.5 Positive buildings

A large number of unlisted buildings have been identified as being buildings of townscape merit or positive buildings. Buildings identified as having ‘townscape merit’ will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

8.6 Building Materials

The most prevalent building material is the local Jurassic limestone, once quarried nearby, although in Titchmarsh there is also a great deal of brick, usually used for the mid to late – 19th century buildings. The overall character of the conservation area is therefore defined by its warm yellow/brown colour which darkens with age. The limestone is used either as rubblestone, with ashlar blocks for dressings such as lintels and quoins, or as coursed ashlar blocks. There are no obvious examples of the use of decorative ironstone banding which are found elsewhere in East Northamptonshire, including Oundle. This may reflect the relatively low status of the buildings in Titchmarsh, many of which were built as farmhouses, barns, stores or labourers’ cottages, although the large barn at Castle Farm which fronts the road does retain some coursed stonework which provides visual interest. However, there are some examples of higher quality stonework, such as the church, The Old Rectory, some of the farmhouses, and the almshouses in Islington. These retain some very fine stonework details, particularly the two wings which were added in 1857 and 1863.

Brick is also used for many of the 19th century ‘positive’ unlisted buildings, perhaps the most prestigious of which is the former chapel in Chapel Street. Dating to the mid – 19th century, this uses yellow and red brick to create highly patterned (polychromatic) brick elevations with a striking gable end facing the street. Other brick buildings are in residential or agricultural uses, the most obvious group being to the eastern end of the High Street. Here Nos. 83 and 85 are another very good example of the use of yellow and red brick together, with a prominent ‘chequer-board’ gable end facing sideways down the street. The front elevation is a pleasing composition of yellow brick with red brick dressings to the windows and the central cart entrance to the back garden. No. 61 High Street is another brick building, this time using yellow and red brick together in a
very informal way, with sash windows topped by yellow brick arches. Both buildings have shallow pitched slated roofs. Similar yellow brick is also used for Nos. 55 and 57 High Street, and red brick with stone dressings can be seen at No. 47 High Street. Brick is also used for a number of barns and stables, often with clay tiled roofs, such as the single storey barn next to Castle Farm. An early use of brick is for the unlisted house which faces the almshouses in Islington which is dated 1756 (the same date as the almshouses) but is presumably not listed because the windows have been altered and the building significantly extended.

The roofs of Titchmarsh also provide a great variety of materials, principally Collyweston stone slates, thatch, clay pantiles of varying colours and profiles, and natural slate. Collyweston stone slates are made by splitting limestone — a process which historically was achieved using natural frost action. The use of this material started in the 17th century if not earlier — it is known that by 1633 there were both open pits and mines in the fields around the village of Collyweston near Stamford. However the ready availability of mass produced roofing materials and the import of slate from Wales via the new railways of the mid 19th century, meant that many of the Collyweston slate roofs have been replaced in the much flatter natural slate which does not provide the undulating, richly textured finish of the stone slate. The Collyweston Stone Slaters’ Trust (www.collywestonstoneslaterstrust.org.uk) aims to keep the traditions of stone slating alive and can provide details of craftsmen who are able to carry out this very specialised work.

For the more modest houses and cottages, thatch is used and traditionally, this would have been long straw. These roofs have a thick, somewhat ‘shaggy’ appearance with simple ridges, not raised or cut in the West Country tradition which uses the more refined combed wheat reed. Examples of traditional long straw roofs in Titchmarsh include The Old Bakehouse, No. 71 High Street; the adjoining cottage, Brook Farm House; No. 6 Church Street; and No. 13 High Street, which has been recently restored and repaired to a very high standard. Combed wheat reed is also evident in the village, such as the new thatch on No. 29 Chapel Street, which has a raised cut ridge. These thatched roofs also display a variety of window treatments, including No. 17 Chapel Street (dated 1711), which has tiny eyebrow dormers in its thatched roof, and Nos. 14 and 16 Church Street, which have much larger eyebrow dormers over three light casements.

There are also a number of buildings with clay tiles of varying colours and designs, which are usually seen on the more vernacular buildings such as the stables, barns or more modest cottages in the village:

- Clay Roman pantiles at No. 20 North Street; No. 89 High Street; outbuildings at Park Farm; The Cowshed, No. 73 High Street; No. 26 Chapel Street (which retains an interesting example of ‘Lincolnshire’ eaves dormers); and No. 18 Church Street (also with Lincolnshire eaves dormers);
- Flat clay tiles at No. 31 North Street; Brook Farm Cottage; Rectory Farmhouse; and some of the stone barns at Village Farm.

Unfortunately, the original roof coverings of some of the historic buildings in Titchmarsh have been replaced with concrete tiles or machine-made clay tiles which lack the texture and colours of the original materials. In some cases some of the concrete pantiles have now weathered to a dark brown and from a distance are not too obtrusive. The use of natural slate, which is very common, is more problematic as it is very thin and flat and lacks any of the texture of the traditional stone slate or thatch.
Because the conservation area contains a range of buildings from many different periods, there is also variety in windows and window details, mainly vernacular in form, so simple side opening casements are the most common. The unlisted Rectory Farmhouse retains some mid – 19th century metal casement windows, otherwise the material used is mostly timber. Some of the higher status buildings, such as Castle Farmhouse and No. 8 High Street, retain their sash windows, usually divided into six over six panes. An unusual feature is the former shop window surround at No. 2 North Street, with its console brackets, although the window itself has been replaced in uPVC.

Front doors are similarly varied, with many examples of simple boarded timber doors on the cottages, with four or six panelled doors on the more prestigious 18th or 19th century houses.
9 NEGATIVE FACTORS

9.1 Definition of negative factors

English Heritage’s ‘Guidance on conservation area appraisals’ (2005) states, “The appraisal should identify elements which detract from the special character of the area, and which offer potential for beneficial change”. The following is a list of such negative factors in the Titchmarsh Conservation Area:

- Unlisted ‘positive’ houses have been altered using inappropriate materials, such as uPVC windows, smooth render, or concrete roof tiles;
- Unlisted ‘positive’ buildings need to be protected from demolition;
- Unauthorised alterations to a number of listed buildings have taken place;
- A number of sites require requiring enhancement:
  - Manor Farm Court – vacant land;
- Improvements are needed to the public realm;
- Overhead cables and telegraph poles are obtrusive in many places;
- Additions may be needed to the emerging Local List;
- Some visible satellite dishes;
- Views need to be protected;
- The protection of trees and open spaces;
- New development has impinged in places;
- There is very little interpretation of the village for visitors or indeed for residents.
10  ISSUES

The following ‘Issues’ have been identified by the consultants who prepared this document following extensive survey work. They all derive from the negative factors noted in chapter 9. These issues provide the basis for the recommendations in the accompanying Management Proposals. They will be subject to regular review by the Council and new ones may be added in the future.

10.1 Control of unlisted ‘positive’ houses

- It was noted that many of the unlisted historic houses, which have been assessed as making a ‘positive’ contribution to the special interest of the conservation area, have been adversely affected by the use of modern materials and details. Most commonly, these include the insertion of uPVC windows; the replacement of thatch, stone slate or Welsh slate with concrete or machine made clay tiles, or artificial slate; and the replacement of traditional front doors with off-the-shelf modern doors;
- There is a general presumption that all ‘positive’ unlisted buildings will be retained and not demolished.

10.2 Alterations to listed buildings

- A number of listed buildings have plastic windows and inappropriate modern roof materials, possibly unauthorised.

10.3 Sites requiring enhancement

- Manor Farm Court – the open land which falls within the former farmyard is untended and in need of some simple landscape improvements.

10.4 Public realm

- Street Lighting: Whilst some of the street lighting in the conservation area utilises well designed black ‘heritage’ lamps, the High Street in particular retains its modern, poor quality street lights.
- Paving: The pavements are black tarmacadam, in places with very patched repairs.
- Wirescape: Trailing wires and dominant timber telegraph poles are detrimental to the character of the conservation area and indeed the village as a whole.

10.5 Local List

- Some of the buildings in Titchmarsh may be eligible for Local Listing and a number are suggested in the Management Proposals.

10.6 Satellite dishes

- A number of visible satellite dishes were noted during the survey work for this document.
10.7 Protection of views

- The protection of the views within, out of, and into the village is important.

10.8 Protection of trees and open spaces

- The existing open green spaces, and the many trees, in the conservation area, need to be protected for future generations.

10.9 Control of new development

- Due to existing planning policies, and to the additional constraints created by conservation area designation, there are very few opportunities for new development in Titchmarsh. However, some gardens may be vulnerable to change and some buildings may at some stage be threatened with demolition and, or, redevelopment.

10.10 Visitor interpretation

- There is very little interpretation of the special features of the village although the Parish Council has made a start with the plaques which explain the history of the building housing the Village Shop and the former Village Pound.
Appendices

Appendix 1  Townscape Appraisal Map

Appendix 2  Bibliography

Belgion, Helen  *Titchmarsh Past and Present* (1990)
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Titchmarsh Conservation Area Management Proposals

Draft no. 2
28.5.10

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Titchmarsh Conservation Area Management Proposals

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Format and Derivation

This management proposal document sets out a mid to long-term strategy in the form of a series of recommendations and guidelines for the Titchmarsh Conservation Area. It has been informed by the Titchmarsh Conservation Area Appraisal, which identified the area’s special character and concluded by outlining some of the issues that it faces.

Proposals are split into generic and specific actions. The generic actions in Section 2 are tied in with general management principles, which could be applied across all of East Northamptonshire Council’s conservation areas. The specific actions in Section 3 are informed by the findings of the character appraisal.

1.2 Purpose and Legislative Context

These management proposals set out guidelines by which the special character of Titchmarsh Conservation Area can be preserved and enhanced. They will provide a basis for preparing new policies to achieve this.

The Council has statutory obligations under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare management proposals for its conservation areas.

The Audit Commission monitors the management of historic assets by local authorities as part of the overarching Best Value scheme. Best Value performance indicator BVPI 219c was a measure of how many up-to-date (less than five years old) management proposals local authorities have for their conservation areas. This indicator is a driver for best practice in conservation area management and states: ‘Public support for conservation areas as places that give identity to people and places is well-established. This indicator will monitor how local authorities are managing their development.’ Although this indicator has now been deleted, the Council considers that up to date management proposals are an important planning tool and remains committed to their production.

1.3 Planning Policy Framework

Current planning policies for Titchmarsh, including those governing development, are laid out in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), adopted in June 2008. In particular, CSS Policy 13 (Sustainable Development Principles) sets out criteria for raising standards of design and the protection of existing historic and landscape assets. CSS policies need to be considered in conjunction with the East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009), in particular Policy 27 (Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment).

The conservation area character appraisal and management proposals documents will sit alongside the conservation policies contained within the CSS and Regional Plan and be complementary to its aims of preserving and enhancing East Northamptonshire’s Conservation Areas.

The current relevant planning documents are:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- Central government policy, principally as set out in “Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment”.
• East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009)
• The Joint Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire (adopted June 2008).
• East Northamptonshire Council’s emerging site allocations development plan documents.

1.4 Sustainability

The preparation of most of the above documents adheres to the principles of sustainability as it underpins the new planning system. The thorough survey of the conservation area, the subsequent identification and in-depth analysis of special character, and the partnership with the local community in the preparation of the documents all contribute to reaching the targets set for sustainability.

1.5 Consultation

In line with the increased emphasis on community engagement in the LDF, the proposals contained in this document have undergone full public and stakeholder consultation between 20 November 2009 and 9 January 2010. East Northamptonshire Council subscribes to the view expressed in the English Heritage document ‘Guidance on the management of conservation areas’ (August 2005) that: ‘involving the local community in their development is essential if the proposals are to succeed.’

1.6 Monitoring

East Northamptonshire Council will seek to review these documents every five years; taking into account Government policy and the emerging LDF.

As recommended by English Heritage, a review may include the following:

• A survey of the conservation area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
• An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in any conservation area management proposals have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
• The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
• The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
• Publication of an updated edition of management proposals.

It is possible that the local community, under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the Council, could carry out this review. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement. The review will monitor the changes that have occurred through the continuous processes of development and through individual changes of use. The purpose is to re-evaluate the special character of a conservation area to reach decisions about whether the area still warrants designation.
2 GENERIC ACTIONS

2.1 Policy

It is the Council’s duty to preserve and enhance its conservation areas.

2.2 Other guidance

East Northamptonshire Council has Design Guidance entitled ‘Design in Context’. English Heritage and other organisations can provide other guidance, such as specialist information regarding listed buildings, traditional construction methods and materials.

ACTION: The Council will consider preparing and issuing additional design guidance and leaflets as and when appropriate. This may be in response to the continued review of conservation areas in East Northamptonshire or other indicators.

2.3 Development Control Process

The system of considering planning applications for their suitability and conformity with national and local policies is long established and is based on more stringent criteria in conservation areas.

While there are additional policies concerning conservation areas and other parts of the historic environment, it is essential that these policies be applied consistently in the development control process.

Applications concerning land or properties within or close to a conservation area are referred to the Conservation Officer of East Northamptonshire Council. Within the usual period of time for consideration of an application, a conservation specialist will advise the planning officer assigned to the application whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The specialist will, therefore, advise on whether the application should be supported or refused on conservation grounds.

As an important figure in this process, the conservation specialist will be trained in the field of historic building conservation and/or planning, either through formal qualifications, long-term experience in the field, or both. The Skills Base Best Value Performance Indicator BVPI205 measures the suitability of persons for this and other specialist roles and East Northamptonshire Council is committed to meeting these criteria for such specialist roles.

Consistency of approach to determining planning applications is at the centre of a fair system of controlling change, especially in conservation areas. Consistent decisions also lead to an improved public perception that the system is fair and, in turn, there is a greater public engagement with the process.

Design and development briefs should be promoted and encouraged as a matter of course on any substantial application in the conservation areas. Due to the significant lack of spare land available for development purposes, any new development is likely to have an impact on the appearance and character of the conservation area. Therefore, there is a clear case for a coherent written argument in favour of the benefits of the proposal at the time of application. This could take the form of a letter, but ideally would be a more thorough development brief and include mock-up photographs that give an impression of how the proposal would look.
ACTION: The Council will consult a conservation specialist on all development control proposals affecting the character of conservation areas.

2.4 Enforcement Strategy

In some cases the development control process is not fully adhered to and planning permission is not always sought or implemented correctly. In these cases it is important that enforcement action is swift and effective. This will reinforce the message that the development control process is fair and that it must be followed in all cases. Usually, enforcement action does not result in legal action, but is resolved through effective communication between the Council representatives and the relevant party.

2.5 Street Management

While there is a presumption in favour of traditional materials in conservation areas, it is recognised that it is not always practical or financially viable to use traditional materials in large-scale projects. However, it should always be required that consideration is given to the effect that any new introductions to the public realm will have on the character of a conservation area and reasonable efforts be made to preserve that character with minor modifications to design. Also, consideration should be given to the scale of new features, particularly street lights, and ‘conservation’ alternatives should be requested and considered when embarking on any large scale scheme of public realm replacement.

It is important that the conservation section is consulted early on regarding any proposals to affect material changes to conservation areas. It is often the case that they can bring previous experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the needs of an area, to the process.

ACTION: On all street management schemes affecting the character of conservation areas the Council will consult a conservation specialist and will liaise with the Town or Parish Council and relevant County Council departments, especially Highways.

2.6 Promotion and Awareness

While it is often the conservation section that deals first hand with planning applications and other schemes in conservation areas, almost every department in the Council will deal with matters affecting them in some way. It is the responsibility of every employee to give regard to the special character of conservation areas and promote awareness of them to residents. An active Historic Environment Champion (see below) can be an effective way of encouraging understanding across Council departments.

2.7 Historic Environment Champions/Town or Parish Councils

An Historic Environment Champion is a senior member of the Council, usually an elected member, who is nominated to promote historic environment issues at the highest level of the organisation. The Champion can, therefore, play an important role in raising the profile of conservation in general and ensuring that key strategic decisions are taken with a full consideration of their potential effect on the historic environment. This role will be optimised if the champion has a thorough knowledge of the state of East Northamptonshire Council’s historic environment and regular liaison with the conservation section. East Northamptonshire District Council already has an Historic Environment Champion (currently Councillor John Richardson), and intends retaining the role in the future.
Town or Parish Councils and other local bodies are also useful contributors to the process and are consulted for their opinion of planning applications in their localities. The wealth of knowledge contained within Parish Councils is a valuable resource when identifying local character and strong ties with the conservation section are encouraged.

2.8 Education/community involvement

An active engagement with the local community should be sustained after the consultation over the appraisal and management proposal documents. The documents should be promoted in the community as useful aides in identifying and retaining what is important in their area. This, in turn, should promote a sense of ownership that will foster an improved level of understanding of the importance of preserving and enhancing special character.

ACTION: The Council will seek stronger ties with local bodies and interest groups and promote the continued involvement of the local community in managing and enhancing the character of its conservation areas – in line with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.
3 SPECIFIC ACTIONS - TITCHMARSH CONSERVATION AREA

3.1 Control of unlisted ‘positive’ houses

The character appraisal for Titchmarsh has noted how the architectural integrity of some of the unlisted residential properties in the conservation has already to a degree been compromised by the use of modern materials and details such as uPVC windows or front doors, modern roofing materials, the removal of chimney stacks, or the addition of front porches or roof lights. The Council is able, through the imposition of an Article 4 Direction, to make restrictions on the permitted development rights of owners of unlisted single-family dwelling houses in the conservation area. An Article 4 Direction is therefore useful in strengthening controls over the unsympathetic alteration of unlisted buildings, which would cumulatively have an adverse affect on the character of the conservation area.

The setting of these unlisted buildings, often close to listed buildings, adds to the need for additional controls. An Article 4 (2) can be served by the local planning authority without the approval of the Secretary of State and would affect all unlisted family dwellings in the conservation area.

Strict controls already exist over listed buildings, and unlisted buildings in a variety of other uses (such as flats or shops), where Listed Building Consent or Planning Permission is required by statute for a variety of minor alterations.

ACTION: The Council will consider designating an Article 4(2) Direction in order to protect unlisted dwelling houses in the Titchmarsh Conservation from unsympathetic changes.

3.2 Sites requiring enhancement

The following site was noted as requiring improvements when the conservation area was surveyed in August 2009. Because of the countryside setting to the conservation area, any changes to the spaces between the buildings need to be minimal and carefully controlled to prevent an erosion of the rural character.

The open space, which is in private ownership, in Manor Farm Court requires a very simple landscaping scheme as at present it detracts from the character of the conservation area and does not provide an appropriate setting to the adjoining historic buildings. Any scheme of improvement should be drawn up in collaboration with the parish Council and local residents.

3.3 Public realm

Street Lighting: The street lighting in parts of the conservation area is modern, poor quality and overall quite varied, although ‘heritage’ lamps have been installed in places. In the long term these should be utilised throughout the whole conservation area.

Paving: The pavements are black tarmacadam, although in places the appearance of this tarmacadam has been improved by rolling in a light brown gravel. Improvements could include repaving in selected locations with resin bonded tarmacadam, with a brown stone aggregate, which would blend with the limestone buildings. Pavements which have already been adversely affected by trench-digging should be tackled first.
Wirescape: Throughout the conservation area, trailing wires and dominant timber telegraph poles are detrimental to the character of the area. Improvements would include undergrounding these wires and removing the telegraph poles, in association with new street lighting, as in some places modern street lights are fixed to these poles.

ACTION: The Council will seek to review the condition of street lighting and paving in the public realm to ensure that these are well maintained and fit for purpose. The Council will aim to co-ordinate new paving or other public realm improvements in line with the principles set out in English Heritage’s latest ‘Streets For All’ publication.

3.4 Local List

While many of Titchmarsh’s historic buildings are included on the statutory list (‘listed buildings’), some others do not meet the strict criteria for listing but are nevertheless important in the local area. Buildings in the Titchmarsh Conservation Area which might be considered for the Local List are:

- Former mid – 19th century Congregational Chapel in Chapel Street, with its polychromatic brickwork and steeply pitched slated roof;
- Rectory Farmhouse in Islington, a well preserved two storey stone building with symmetrical elevations, original metal casement windows, and axial chimney stacks;
- No. 38 Islington, a red brick two storey house dated 1756 which was almost certainly built in association with the neighbouring listed almshouses, which are of the same date;
- The Engine House in The Green, now the Titchmarsh Village Shop – locally listed for its historical significance as the former garage for the village fire engine in the 1930s;
- Titchmarsh Primary School in School Lane – a building of 1842, built as a National School. Whilst the front elevation is hidden by later alterations, the rear elevation from the adjoining field appears to be original;
- Castle Farmhouse, No. 72 High Street – a substantial mid-19th century stone house with symmetrical elevation facing the street; also locally list the large stone barn on the west side as it is so important in views along the street;

ACTION: Buildings in the proposed Titchmarsh Conservation Area, as detailed above, could be considered for inclusion in the Council’s emerging ‘Local List’:

3.5 Satellite dishes

A number of visible satellite dishes were noted during the survey work for this document. 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 District 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 DCLG pamphlet, *A Householders’ Planning Guide to the Installation of Antennas* available on the DCLG website).

**ACTION:** The Council will consider taking Enforcement Action to remove unauthorised satellite dishes in the conservation area if negotiations have failed to reach any agreement.

### 3.6 Protection of views

The protection of the views within the village as shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map are important, but it is accepted that there are many more views, both within and outside the conservation area, of significance. Whilst conservation area designation inherently implies that the Council will protect or enhance the special character of the conservation area, and national and local policies exist to this end, the specific protection of the principal views in the Titchmarsh Conservation Area is worthy of a special mention in these Management Proposals.

**ACTION:** The Council will ensure that new development does not have an adverse effect on the ‘Important Views’ noted on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

### 3.7 Protection of trees and open spaces

The existing open green spaces, and the many trees, in the conservation area, need to be protected for future generations. All trees are protected within conservation areas by the requirement for landowners to notify the Council of their intention to remove, lop or trim them. This provides the Council with a 6 week period in which to assess the tree to see if it makes a special contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served on the owner. Once a tree has a TPO served on it, the owner must apply to the Council for permission to carry out any work, which may be refused.

Within the Titchmarsh Conservation Area, important trees and green spaces are indicated on the Townscape Appraisal Map. It is expected that any development would respect the positive contribution they make to the character of the conservation area, and ensure that they will continue to preserve and enhance the special character of the conservation area.

For the future, the preparation of a Tree Management Plan could identify trees at risk from disease or old age and provide a planned reinstatement programme so that the character of the conservation area is not eroded over time due to the loss of its trees.

**ACTION:** In partnership with Northamptonshire County Council and the Parish Council, the Council could prepare a Tree Management Plan, identifying all significant mature trees within the conservation area (privately as well as publicly owned) and ensuring that priorities are agreed and funding set aside for the costs involved in remedial works or replacement.
3.8 Control of new development

There are very few opportunities for new development in Titchmarsh, due to existing planning policies and the constraints imposed by conservation area designation. However, some gardens may be vulnerable to change and some buildings may at some stage be threatened with demolition and, or, redevelopment. A certain amount of infilling has already taken place, such as the 1960s houses in North Street, but fortunately these are set back from the road and do not impinge too obviously in views along the road.

Where new development does occur, it should adhere to policies within the Local Plan, the emerging LDF, and national guidance, most particularly PPG15 and PPG16. In addition:

- 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 usually not increase the volume of development on the site;
- ‘Positive’ unlisted buildings particularly will be protected from demolition or unsympathetic change; any application for demolition must be accompanied by a justification statement, setting out why the building cannot be reused or repaired; also, the applicant must prove that the site or building has been offered for sale on the open market;
- New development should be sympathetic to the surrounding historic buildings in terms of materials and details;
- The roofs and chimneys in the Titchmarsh 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.

**ACTION:** The Council will continue to ensure that new development in the Titchmarsh Conservation Area is of the highest possible quality and that it does not have an adverse impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the area.

3.9 Visitor interpretation

There is very little interpretation of the special features of the village although the Parish Council has made a start with the plaques which explain the history of the building housing the Village Shop and the former Village Pound. Subject to funding, the Parish Council could add further plaques explaining the significance of various features. Suitable sites could include:

- St Mary’s Church;
- The Pickering Almshouses in Islington;
- The Scheduled Monument off the High Street;
- The Manor House;
- Titchmarsh Village School.

ACTION: The Parish Council will consider adding to the existing plaques in the village as a way of improving the community’s understanding and appreciation of the buildings and their setting.