

North Street, Bridgtown Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document



April 2014

Conservation Area Management Plan: **North Street, Bridgtown**

Introduction

This area-specific Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) follows from the Council's Conservation Areas Management Plan which sets out a package of measures available to the Council to apply to all of its Conservation Areas. The area-specific plans relate to each of the individual Conservation Areas based on the recommendations in the individual Conservation Area Appraisals and should be read in conjunction with the generic Management Plan.

North Street, Bridgtown Conservation Area

North Street, Bridgtown Conservation Area was designated in November 1988 and covers a historic group of shops and other buildings along North Street and the adjacent Union Street and Church Street. They make up the centre of the industrial settlement of Bridgtown which developed from the 1870's. The Conservation Area boundary is shown on Plan 1. The core of historic Bridgtown lies to the north of the Roman Road of Watling Street (A5) in the triangle formed by the southern edge of the Walsall Road (A34) into Cannock, close to where the two roads meet at Churchbridge.

The Conservation Area comprises the frontages along North Street from the Union Street/Longford Road junction to the Broad Street/Church Street junction, including some buildings along the Union Street and Church Street frontages. The buildings follow the curve of North Street and are of two storey height in red brick (some painted brown or cream in recent years) under plain red and blue clay tiles or blue slate. Many retain their rear outbuildings accessed through passageways from North Street below the first floor accommodation. The Bethel Methodist Church in Union Street is testimony to the spiritual importance of the non-conformist movement in this period. Current uses comprise shops, residential and small businesses. In Union Street the Church is built of red brick and is a simple but attractive design with pointed arched windows and door. None of the buildings in the Conservation Area are listed.

Issues identified in the draft North Street, Bridgtown Conservation Area Appraisal

The draft Conservation Area Appraisal for North Street, Bridgtown has been prepared and will be reported to Cabinet to authorise public consultation. It defines the special architectural character and historic interest of the Conservation Area and identifies its negative features. These are illustrated in the Townscape Plan 4. It makes recommendations for future management and enhancement opportunities arising from this assessment, aiming to reinforce the positive features and eliminate the negative to ensure the continued quality of its special interest over time.

Summary of its special interest:

- Its distinctive group of terraced shops, houses, church, associated buildings and outbuildings, including some historic boundary walls, all characteristic of a settlement core developed over a short time at the end of the Victorian period
- Its homogeneity of townscape in scale and materials with diversity of detail typical of that period
- Its mix of small scale uses
- Its role as a focal point in the wider settlement where a substantial number of buildings survive from the 1870's.

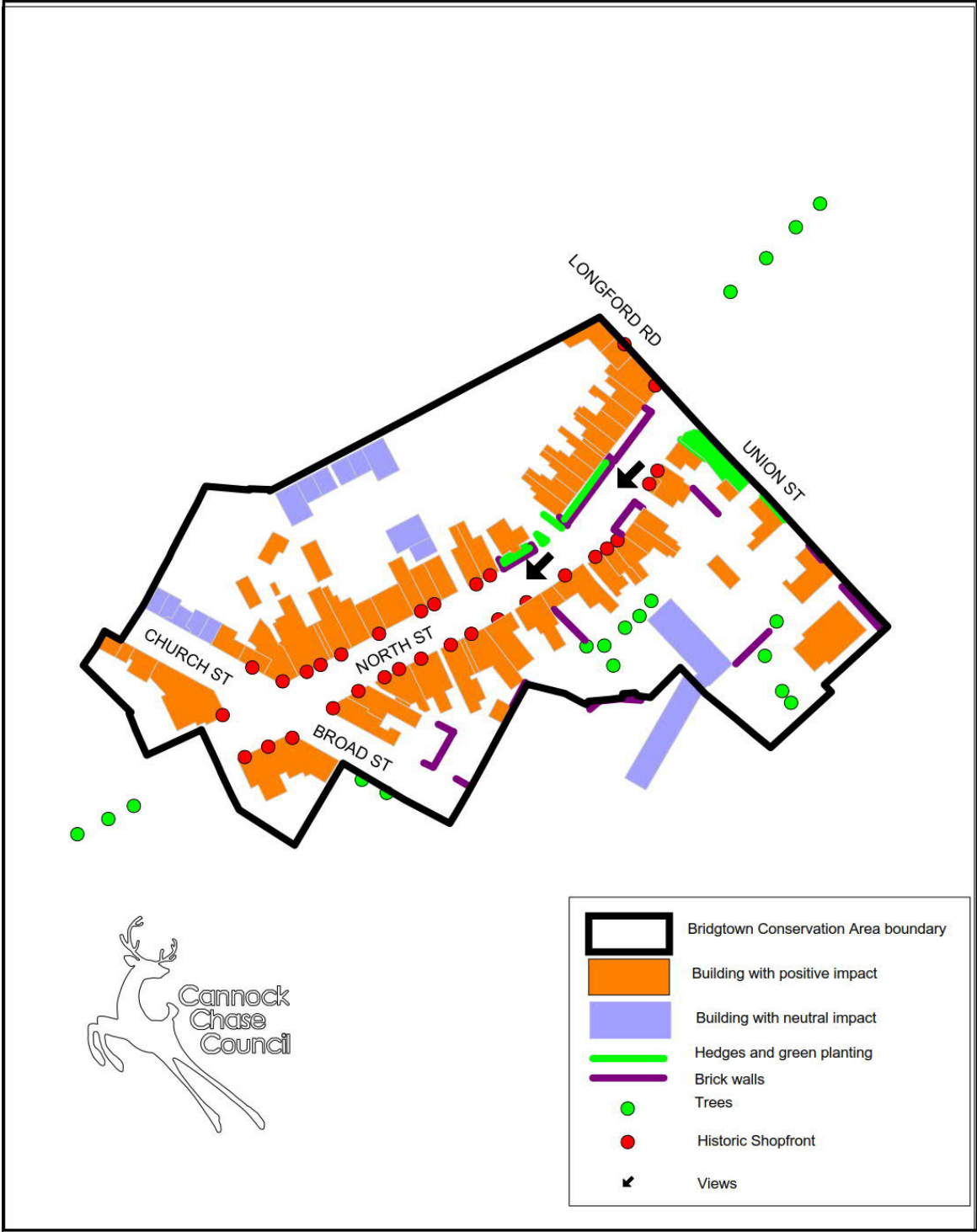


PLAN 1: CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY





PLAN 4: TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL



Main issues:

1. The retention and enhancement of buildings and characteristic features making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, specifically including the historic shopfronts and other architectural detailing, outbuildings and boundary walls.
2. The treatment of new development and new additions to existing buildings within and affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, including building lines and siting, height and mass, design, detailing and materials and relationship of buildings to spaces.
3. The potential for enhancement of the Conservation Area and its setting through the reduction of 'clutter', refurbishment of the public realm and opportunities for enhancement of the street scene with encouragement for new front garden hedge planting.

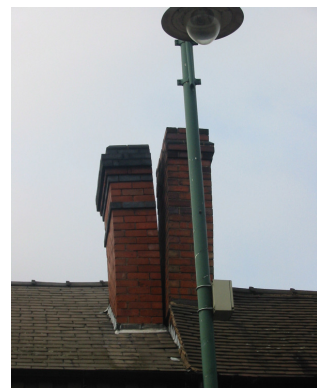
Delivery Plan/Targets/Resources

A package of measures as set out in the Council's generic Conservation Areas Management Plan is available to deal with the above issues in a way beneficial to the Conservation Area. Their effective use is dependant not only on the Council but on a partnership approach involving the commitment of developers, development professionals and the local community. This area-specific Management Plan seeks to stimulate debate on how the issues might be addressed.

1. The retention and enhancement of buildings and characteristic features

- The Council will encourage the retention, repair and maintenance of the following characteristic features on all buildings making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area (see Fig. 1):
 - timber windows, particularly sash windows, and doors to traditional designs and details, and timber shopfronts and doors to a traditional design
 - predominance of red brick buildings
 - blue slate and small red and blue clay roof tiles
 - predominance of pitched roofs with roof slopes facing the street
 - chimney stacks with clay pots
 - detailing to eaves brickwork
 - cast iron or cast metal rainwater pipes and gutters
 - building frontages abutting streets
 - brick boundary walls with blue brick capping
 - one and two storey outbuildings including cast iron window frames and chimney stacks
- The Council will discourage use of artificial materials and non-traditional designs, which are bland and lacking in the rich textures and colours of natural materials, and the painting and rendering of brick buildings.
- Safeguarding characteristic features will require an acceptance by property owners of their intrinsic value and a commitment to invest in their property to maintain its historic value. Historic features can be slowly lost through decay and under-investment as well as more rapidly through modernisation and unsympathetic over-investment. The Council will undertake to work with property owners to encourage appropriate maintenance.
- The Council will consider the preparation of design guidance on specific issues and offer other advice on request or via its website which can be sought prior to carrying out work.

Fig. 1 Features typical of the Conservation Area vulnerable to removal and decay: boundary walls, traditional roof tiles, chimneys, rear outbuildings, paving



- The Council will give consideration to further review of the Conservation Area boundary and to the potential for designation of a further Conservation Area to take account of the vulnerability of historic features in the wider area of historic Bridgtown to continued piecemeal development to avoid significant loss of local distinctiveness.
- The Council will pursue enforcement action where unsympathetic alterations which threaten the character or appearance of the Conservation Area are carried out without the necessary planning permission to achieve a more sympathetic result.
- The Council will encourage maximum occupancy of properties, including flats and other appropriate uses above shops, to enhance the viability and vitality of the local centre.

2. The treatment of new development

- The Council will require proposals for new infill development and redevelopment within the Conservation Area to adhere to well-established good urban design principles for scale, mass, form, materials, layout, density, landscaping and boundary treatment, with the use of good contemporary design and materials or more traditional options as appropriate, and reflecting existing variety of building types harmonised by continuity, mass, scale and materials maintaining or enhancing views through the Conservation Area. Fig 2 shows recent development adjacent to the Conservation Area which reflects local character.
- The Council will require new development to reinforce existing strong frontages with buildings abutting streets and smaller ancillary buildings to the rear, respecting the relationship of buildings to spaces.
- The Council will consider the preparation of design guidance on specific issues such as design of shopfronts, signage and enhancements along the A5 corridor and identify areas where further guidance would be beneficial.
- The existing mix of uses will be maintained with any compatible additional uses considered which would enhance the vitality and viability of the local centre.
- The Council will apply the same principles to any opportunity sites occupied by buildings of neutral or negative impact affecting the setting of the Conservation Area which come forward for redevelopment.
- The Council will seek developer contributions in conjunction with planning permissions in accordance with the Council's current policy on developer contributions, and will consider using a proportion of them for enhancement of the public realm.

3. Enhancement of the public realm and street scene

- The Council will consider appropriate detailed options for enhancement of the public realm in the Conservation Area including replacement or refurbishment of street furniture consistent with the existing predominant style, repair and relaying of areas of paving and traditional kerbs and the removal/discouragement of 'clutter' from pedestrian areas, all in accordance with the English Heritage guidance 'Streets for All'.
- The Council will consider the potential for enhancement of the local centre through new and replacement planting/environmental improvements in appropriate locations and retention of existing tree planting which enhances the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Opportunities will be taken for enhancement of the street scene through encouragement for reinstatement of front garden hedge planting behind low brick walls.

Fig.2 New development adjacent to Conservation Area seeking to pick up traditional character through design, materials, siting and scale



Fig.3 Traditional front garden boundaries with hedging behind some brick walls in North Street which 'softens' the street scene and improves the environment for people and wildlife



Monitoring

The Council will monitor progress towards the delivery of the above actions and the resultant impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area on a five-year cycle. Some of the actions will be on-going, some will relate to specific actions which can be completed. The monitoring process together with developing planning policy will inform updating of the Appraisal and Management Plan over time.

Monitoring will involve further consultation with the local community and may identify new issues and ideas for raising standards. Monitoring could also be carried out within the community under the guidance of the Council.