

Houldsworth Conservation Area Management Plan

Introduction to Management Plan

The aim of this management plan is to complement existing national and local policies by providing further advice on the management of the conservation area. It sets out a possible management plan for the conservation area. The recommendations contained within the management plan are intended to put in place management measures to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced, and assist in managing change by paying due regard to the area's special interest.

This management plan has been developed from, and should be considered in conjunction with Houldsworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

The management plan is divided into three sections. **Section A** sets out policies and controls in relation for the preservation of the special interest of the area; **Section B** highlights the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the area; **Section C** relates to general proposals for the enhancement of the Conservation Area.

Section A: Policies and Statutory Controls

This section deals with the following three areas:

- An overview of the planning legislation as it relates to the conservation area
- An interpretation of the existing planning policy framework
- An overview of the statutory powers of the Council

Legislative Background

The designation of a conservation area and production of an appraisal document is not an end in itself. The character appraisal provides the basis for developing management proposals for the conservation area that fulfil the general duty placed on the Local Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, now formalised into a national Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 219c) to draw up and publish such proposals. The purpose of this document is to present draft proposals which seek to promote the preservation and enhancement of the special character of the conservation area, informed by the appraisal for internal consultation. The special qualities of the conservation area have been identified as part of the appraisal process in the first part of this document, and both will be subject to monitoring and review. The national legislative framework for guiding development in conservation areas is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this guidance draws on the themes identified in the appraisal,

and satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, namely:

“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas”.

This document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”, English Heritage guidance set out in “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas” published in February 2006, and policies within the Stockport Unitary Development Plan 2006.

Unitary Development Plan and Local Development Framework

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires the Council to prepare a Unitary Development Plan (UDP) setting out the Council’s policies and proposals in respect of development and other use of land in the Borough. The UDP contains detailed planning policies relating to conservation areas, listed buildings and the protection of archaeological sites that guide and inform decision-making in respect of planning applications which affect the historic environment. The Council adopted the current Stockport UDP on 31st May 2006 to provide development guidance up to 2011.

Relevant UDP Policies:

The proposals in this management plan reflect the policies in Stockport’s UDP, in particular those contained within Chapter 4, *Heritage Conservation*: HC1 (Conservation Areas); HC2 (Listed Buildings); HC3 (Protection of Archaeological Sites).

Other UDP policies which are relevant to Houldsworth Conservation Area include those contained within:

- Chapter 1 *Design and Character of Development*: DCD1 (Character and Development)
- Chapter 7 *Urban Open Space*: USO1: UOS1.3 (Protection of Local Open Space)
- Chapter 8 *Leisure*: L1: L1.8 (Strategic Recreation Routes)
- Chapter 11 *Control of Development in Predominately Residential Areas*: CDH1 (Development in Predominately Residential Areas)
- Chapter 12 *Economy*: E1 – E4 (General Policies) E3.1 – 3.2 (Protection/Regeneration of Employment Areas)
- Chapter 13 *Pattern of Shopping Development*: PSD1 (Hierarchy of Shopping Centres) PSD2 (District Shopping Centres – D6)
- Chapter 14 *Shopping and the Built Environment*: SE1 (Shopping and the Built Environment)
- Chapter 15 *Strategic and Sustainable Transport*: SE1: ST1.4 (Walking)

The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 proposes new arrangements for the Planning system. This will involve the adoption of a Local Development Framework (LDF), which will in time replace the UDP. The LDF will consist of a combination of core strategies and policies

supplemented by Supplementary Planning Documents on a range of topics. Where new policy is proposed to address particular issues identified in the Conservation Area, such documents will be incorporated in the LDF and a detailed programme for their development will be set.

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note, PPG15 paragraph 1.6 emphasises the key role of local authorities in the stewardship of the historic environment urges local authorities to:

“...maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies and their allocation of resources. It is important that, as planning authorities, they adopt suitable policies in development plans, and give practical effect to them through their development control function. As highway authorities too, their policies and activities should reflect the need to protect the historic environment and to promote sustainable economic growth, for roads can have a particular impact at all levels – not only through strategic decisions on the siting of new roads, but also through the more detailed aspects of road building and road maintenance, such as the quality of street furniture and surfaces. Above all, local authorities should ensure that they call on sufficient specialist conservation advice, whether individually or jointly, to inform their decision-making and to assist owners and other members of the public.”

Statutory Controls

Conservation Area Designation

Designation as a conservation area brings with it a degree of additional statutory protection under planning legislation aimed at assisting the preservation or enhancement of the area. The main consequences of conservation area designation, as defined in the Planning Act (1990), are as follows:

- Conservation area consent is required for the demolition of listed and unlisted buildings
- Planning consent is required for the installation of satellite dishes visible from the public highway
- 6 week notice period for works to trees not already protected by Tree Preservation Orders
- Local planning authorities must publish detailed proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and should show what weight will be attached to Supplementary Planning Guidance on individual conservation areas
- The desirability of preserving a conservation area is a material issue in determining a planning application
- The GPDO 1995 requires planning applications for certain types of development that do not require planning applications elsewhere and are 'permitted development'
- Local planning authorities can further restrict development rights on dwellings where the development fronts a public area through Article 4(2) Direction.
- Permitted Development Rights of non residential properties can be restricted using Article 4 (1) Directions which require approval of the Secretary of State

Demolition of buildings

Section 74 of the Act provides for control over the demolition of buildings in conservation areas, (subject to various exceptions). Paragraph 4.27 of PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment indicates that, “*The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area*”. It goes on to advise that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (paragraph 3.16 - 3.19 of PPG15). Conservation area consent for demolition would not be granted where it affects a building or other structure which makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Permission for development involving the demolition or removal of such a building or structure will only be granted where it is beyond repair and incapable of beneficial use. In exceptional cases permission will be granted if the redevelopment or the result of the demolition would produce substantial benefits for that community (including the physical revitalisation of the conservation area) which would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

Article 4 Directions

Article 4(1) and 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning Authorities to make certain directions to withdraw permitted development rights given under the order. Article 4(2) Directions are most commonly in relation to conservation areas and apply only to parts of dwelling houses and associated buildings and structures fronting onto highways, waterways, or open spaces. The Local Authority can confirm Article 4(2) Directions once the Direction has been advertised locally and notice served on residents. They may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. Article 4(1) Directions can be used to withdraw permitted development rights on any type of land or building, whether or not fronting onto highways, waterways or open spaces and is the means for the Local Planning Authority to withdraw permitted development rights on non residential properties within a conservation area. An Article 4(1) Direction requires the approval of the First Secretary of State.

Government Guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is set out in DoE Circular 9/95. It states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where there is firm evidence to suggest that permitted development, which could damage the character or appearance of the conservation area, is taking place or is likely to take place.

Works to Trees

If not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), anyone intending to lop or fell a tree within a conservation area greater than 75mm in diameter at 1m above ground level, is required to give the Council 6 weeks written notice before starting work. This provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a TPO may be served.

Urgent Works and Repairs Notices

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural interest by affording the Local Planning Authority powers to take action in the following circumstances:

- Urgent Works

Where a historic building has deteriorated to the extent that its preservation may be at risk, the Act enables the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) to carry out urgent works for the preservation of listed buildings following notice to the owner. These powers can be used in respect of unoccupied parts of listed or unlisted buildings in conservation areas (in the case of the latter, only with the agreement of the Secretary of State, advised by English Heritage). The powers are confined to urgent works, such as emergency repairs for example to keep the building wind and water tight and safe from collapse. The LPA may recover the cost of such works from the owner.

- Repairs Notice

If the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) considers that a listed building is not being properly preserved it may serve a Repairs Notice on the owner. This Notice specifies the works, which the authority considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building and can only be served on statutorily listed buildings.

- Section 215 Notice

Local authorities have the power to serve a Section 215 Notice on the owner (or occupier) of any land or building whose condition is adversely affecting the amenity of the area, particularly a conservation area. This Notice requires the person responsible to clean up the site or building, or the authority may carry out works and reclaim the cost of such works.

Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)

The Planning Act 1990 affords Local Planning Authorities the power to serve Compulsory Purchase Notices, with authorisation from the Secretary of state, on land or buildings that are required to secure development, re-development or improvement.

Section B: Houldsworth Conservation Area SWOT Analysis

This section of the management plan examines key characteristics of Houldsworth Conservation Area following the designation and appraisal process carried out in 2006. It draws upon the findings of the character appraisal as well as comments received following the public consultation exercise. **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**, are summarised below:

Strengths

- Strong historical roots
- Retention of original building fabric
- Strong development patterns and rich architectural detailing
- Clear local identity with well established residential, commercial, ecclesiastical and community / leisure uses
- Strong continuity of buildings in use for their original purpose
- Quality of individual buildings reflected in statutory and local listings
- Large number of locally important buildings
- Generally well maintained private buildings and land
- Well established District Centre
- Active local community groups
- Well used park and recreation space at the heart of the Conservation Area
- Sensitive redevelopment of Victoria and Elisabeth Mill buildings

Weaknesses

- Loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations (windows, doors, boundary treatments, shopfronts)
- Loss of character arising from inappropriate repairs
- Some loss of original workers housing
- Loss of character arising from inappropriate new development and loss of original street pattern
- Loss of traditional road surface materials, street signage/furniture and street lighting
- Loss of important tree groups
- Listed buildings in poor condition with one appearing on the National Buildings at Risk Register
- Loss of front gardens
- Traffic and parking issues
- Potential of some areas of open space not realised
- Loss of historic fabric/architectural details from listed buildings
- Vacant building in need of active reuse and investment

Opportunities

- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on maintenance and repair for land and property owners
- Introduction of Article 4(2) Directions to control incremental change
- Review of buildings of local historic and architectural merit for inclusion on local list
- Enhancement and maintenance schemes in public realm involving the reinstatement of traditional street lighting, street furniture and paving materials
- Enhancement and maintenance schemes involving public open spaces to increase amenity value of the area
- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on maintenance and repair for home owners, developers, property owners and agents
- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on expectations for quality of new development within the area
- Archaeological potential – above and below ground
- Shopfront Grant Scheme operational in Reddish District Centre
- Active repair and restoration of Houldsworth Mill Engine Houses Complex and Houldsworth Working Men's Club
- Appropriate reinstatement works for missing architectural details from listed buildings

Threats

- Development pressure for alterations to buildings in the form of extensions etc.
- Further erosion of character through loss of historic fabric/original architectural details, boundary treatments etc.
- Further erosion of character through inappropriate modern development
- Further erosion of special character of the area through loss of important trees and green space
- Loss of character through the introduction of insensitive highways and traffic schemes including obtrusive road markings, unnecessary street clutter and poor quality paving schemes
- Alterations to historic street layouts
- Alteration of historic settings by the inappropriate redevelopment of sites in the surrounding area
- Continuing decline and loss of listed buildings

Section C: Enhancement Proposals for Houldsworth Conservation Area

This section of the management plan relates to proposals for the management and enhancement of Houldsworth Conservation Area as identified within the character appraisal.

Listed Buildings

There are at present 7 statutory listed structures within the Houldsworth Conservation which are recognised not only for their individual significance but for the important contribution that they collectively make to the Houldsworth area. Under Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, listed building consent is required for demolition of a listed building, and for any works of alteration – internal and/or external - or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Building Consent is not normally required for maintenance and like for like repairs unless they would result in a loss of historic fabric or change to the appearance of the building. It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building.

The requirement for listed building consent is distinct from the need for planning permission. Under Section 6(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council, when considering proposals involving works to listed buildings, has a statutory duty to pay “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

Recommendation for Action

- Use of development control powers to ensure that proposals involving works to listed buildings or affecting their settings will be considered in the context of HC2: HC2.1 - 2.4 of the UDP and government guidance contained within PPG15
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy to identify and address unauthorised works effecting listed buildings in line with guidance contained within *Enforcement Guidance on Listed Building Prosecution* (Department for Communities and Local Government: London 2006)
- Continue to provide professional advice in relation to works to listed buildings
- Seek to work with owners to develop a pro-active strategy for maintenance and repair works

Locally Listed Buildings

The identification of buildings or groups of buildings of local interest helps to ensure that owners, developers and other interested parties are aware of their local importance and merit. In this way the Council, through the control of development or by giving advice, will seek sensitive treatment where renovations or alterations are proposed.

At the time of the conservation area review in 2007, no buildings within the Houldsworth Conservation Area were included on Stockport's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest'. However, the Character Appraisal, written at this time, identifies a large number of key unlisted buildings of particular architectural or historic distinction which contribute much to the special character and appearance of the area.

Following the Conservation Area Review the Council has undertaken a review of key buildings within certain areas of the Borough (including those within the Reddish area), in accordance with established listing criteria, for inclusion on the Council's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest'. This has resulted in the inclusion of 5 of these 'Key Unlisted Buildings' on the Council's Local List, namely, Elisabeth and Victoria Mills, the Houldsworth Arms PH, the Grey Horse PH and Broadstone Bridge

Recommendation for Action

- Where buildings are identified as being of particular local interest and are included on the Borough Council's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest' their retention, repair and renovation will be sought as far as possible and applications for works to such buildings will be subject to particular scrutiny in accordance with HC2.5 and other relevant Policies of the UDP
- Where buildings are identified as being of particular interest and are included on the statutory schedule of buildings of 'Special Architectural or Historic Interest' applications for works to such buildings will be subject to particular scrutiny and will be considered in the context of HC2, HC2.1, HC2.2, HC2.3 and HC2.4 of the UDP and government guidance contained within PPG15
- Continue to ensure that accurate, up to date all information is available with regard to all statutory and locally listed buildings and will be incorporated into the Stockport Historic Environment Database
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of any unlisted 'key historic building' (as identified within the Character Appraisal and on the relevant appraisal map) should only be granted where justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 (paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19)
- Continue to provide up to date, accurate information and guidance with regard to buildings of local interest

Key Unlisted Buildings

The Houldsworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies a number of key unlisted buildings of particular architectural or historic distinction which contribute significantly to the special character and appearance of the area. As such these building should be considered for inclusion on a local list of buildings of significance. It is recommended that the Council carry out a survey of any buildings within the conservation area, which make a positive contribution to the conservation area, in order to identify those for inclusion on a local list of buildings of significance.

PPG 15 states that there should be a presumption in favour of the retention of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area and

advises that proposals that may involve the demolition of such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals for the demolition of a listed building.

Recommended Actions:

- Undertake a survey to identify buildings of historic interest for inclusion on the Local List
- Where buildings are identified as being of particular local interest and are included on any update to the Borough Council's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest' their retention, repair and renovation will be sought as far as possible and applications for works to such buildings will be subject to particular scrutiny in accordance with HC2.5 and other relevant Policies of the UDP
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of any unlisted 'key historic building' (as identified within the Character Appraisal and on the relevant appraisal map) should only be granted where justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 (paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19)

Buildings at Risk

Listed buildings are a valuable and irreplaceable resource, representing, amongst other things, an existing investment in local history and culture, of building materials, arts and craftsmanship. They are important landmarks in the local scene and their retention and reuse reduces the need to expend additional energy and resources in providing their replacement. It is recognised good practice that listed buildings should be retained in use and it is part of the role of a local authority to ensure that the local stock of listed buildings is being appropriately managed. This requires an up to date working knowledge of the relevant properties and accepted procedures to be followed in the event of problems being encountered.

The Houldsworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies buildings which are poor condition with deteriorating fabric. The grade II* listed Houldsworth Mill Engine House Complex appears on the national Buildings at Risk register (published by English Heritage) as a priority C (Slow decay, No solution agreed), vacant building in poor condition with deteriorating fabric which is in need of urgent repair and restoration. In March 2005, planning permission and listed building consent were granted for a mixed-use scheme for the Houldsworth Mill Engine Houses Complex. Following this, Donald Insall Associates were commissioned to produce a Conservation Management Plan, Heritage Impact Assessment Report and Conservation Condition Survey for the Engine Houses Complex. The existing planning permission will remain in place for a period of 5 years. Work has yet to commence on site but any phasing of works should take into account the vulnerable condition of the building and prioritise works which improve the condition of the listed building. The Conservation Management Plan, Condition Survey and Impact Assessment should be used to assess these priorities.

Houldsworth's grade II* listed Working Men's Club, whilst not appearing on the national Buildings at Risk register has been identified, via the Council's Buildings at Risk Survey, as a vulnerable building with deteriorating fabric requiring significant repair and restoration works.

Unless appropriate repairs are undertaken and where necessary suitable and viable new uses identified, these listed buildings are under significant threat of further decay or loss.

Once buildings deteriorate they are less attractive to future tenants and occupiers, and the cost of maintaining them rises relative to their value; buildings without occupiers or viable uses are unlikely to be adequately maintained and can deteriorate rapidly. To prevent this cycle of decline, a pro-active strategy is required in order to secure investment and identify a suitable new use for the building.

The listed boundary walls at St. Elisabeth's Church and Rectory, whilst being in fair condition are suffering from some erosion of pointing and spalling brickwork, some structural movement, missing features such as stone detailing and gates as well as some minimal amounts of graffiti. Repointing work in inappropriate material has taken place in isolated locations on the wall and it is unclear whether part of wall either cleaned or rebuilt.

The Council's Building's at Risk Survey identifies other buildings and structures within the conservation which are in a fair or generally good condition which require minor repair or restoration works. The Council shall continue to monitor the condition of these buildings and encourage appropriate repair and restoration where possible.

Recommended Actions

- Work to find economically sustainable uses for vacant and underused buildings within the conservation area that are in keeping with the overall character of the conservation area in accordance with HC1.4 of the UDP and HC2: HC2.1 - 2.4 of the UDP
- Continue monitoring the condition of buildings in the conservation area through the Council's Buildings at Risk Survey
- Continue to provide owners and occupiers with advice and guidance on repair and maintenance issues
- Consider the use of Statutory powers (as defined within **Section A** of this Management Plan) to secure the future of 'at risk' buildings
- Encourage the production of Conservation Condition Survey's and Management Plans for vulnerable buildings in poor condition to inform their repair and reuse
- Ensure that proposals for the repair and reuse of historic buildings are based on a sound understanding of their fabric, condition and significance, and accord with established conservation principles
- Ensure that restoration, repair and any proposed alterations to enable new uses respect the architectural, historic and cultural significance of the site

Supplementary Documents/ Guidance

- Stopping the Rot (English Heritage 1998)
- Stockport's Buildings at Risk Survey (SMBC)
- Houldsworth Mill Engine Houses Conservation Plan (Donald Insall Associates Ltd 2005)
- Houldsworth Mill Engine Houses Heritage Impact Assessment (Donald Insall Associates Ltd 2006)
- Houldsworth Mill Engine Houses Conservation Condition Survey (Donald Insall Associates Ltd 2006)

Minor Alterations

The special character of the Houldsworth Conservation Area, as highlighted within the appraisal document, is mainly derived from its setting, history and the architectural quality of its buildings and survival of original details and materials which make a significant contribution to the individual character of buildings in the area. Buildings and structures within the conservation area share certain characteristics, with a limited palette of materials and decorative architectural features.

The cumulative impact of minor alterations to buildings, including fixtures and fittings, have had a negative impact on the character and appearance of the area and some loss of original architectural features has occurred. Doors, windows and boundary treatments have been the most significantly affected along with the loss of front gardens for parking provision. As such the special character of the conservation area could be eroded by the further loss of these original materials and architectural details.

Without an Article 4 Direction many unsympathetic changes can occur without the need for planning permission as they constitute "permitted development".

Special controls over minor development through the removal of certain permitted development rights, in the form of Article 4(2) Directions, are therefore considered appropriate for this conservation area and this proposal was authorised in principle by SMBC Executive on 30th October 2006. The aim of an Article 4 (2) Direction is to encourage retention of the high quality features of buildings in the Conservation Areas and to enhance the environment of which they are part. 'Like for like' repairs and replacements of original architectural features will be encouraged, as will the removal of previous unsympathetic changes to buildings.

Recommendations for Action

- Introduction of Article 4(2) Directions to control permitted development within the conservation area
- Undertake a comprehensive photographic survey of architectural features within the conservation area
- Make available advisory notes for the owners and tenants of land and buildings within the conservation area and those affecting the setting of the conservation area to raise awareness of their role in preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Provide informal guidance and advice to the owners and tenants of land and buildings within the conservation area and those affecting the setting of the conservation area, as requested, in relation to sympathetic works
- Seek to procure funding to make grant assistance available to home owners for appropriate repair/restoration/reinstatement schemes

Satellite Dishes and Antennae

Inappropriately sited satellite dishes are a common problem within the conservation area. These have a negative impact on the special character and appearance of the conservation

area as a result of being fixed in locations which are visible in the streetscene. In all areas, it is a condition of installing any antennae or dish that you must site it in such a way that minimises its impact on the external appearance of the building. In many circumstances, planning permission will be required for the installation of a satellite dish or antennae. Satellite dishes will therefore only be acceptable where they cannot be easily seen from the street or other public vantage points.

Recommendations for Action

- Continue to provide advice and information on suitable locations for satellite dishes on buildings within the conservation area
- Ensure that where there is an application for consent for the erection of a satellite dish or antennae a suitable and unobtrusive location is sought
- Make available advisory notes for the owners and tenants of land and buildings within the Conservation Area and those affecting the setting of the Conservation Area to raise awareness of their role in preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Undertake a review of satellite dishes in prominent locations on buildings within the conservation area
- Development of an enforcement strategy to address inappropriately sited satellite dishes and antennas

Supplementary Documents / Guidance

- Planning Portal – Interactive Antennae Guide
- A Householder's Planning Guide for the Installation of Satellite Television Dishes (*Office of the Deputy Prime Minister*)

New Development

The special interest of Houldsworth Conservation Area derives from its form and character as a 19th century industrial community with a mixture of industrial, educational, leisure, community and residential uses. Individually designed key buildings contrast with and are complimented by regular and harmonious groups of workers housing. Visually there is a marked contrast between the monolithic nature of the mills and the human scale of the rest of the area, especially the terraced housing, some of which still retains its grid iron plan. Buildings share certain characteristics with visual interest deriving from a limited palette of materials and architectural and decorative features. The area is greatly enhanced by key areas of open space which are fundamental to the character and appearance of the area as well as its historic development.

The Character Appraisal identifies modern development which is intrusive in the conservation area by virtue of its, design, materials and detailing. This is seen in the late 20th century redevelopment of houses in the area bordered by Rupert Street, Bedford Street, Leamington Road and St Elisabeth's Way, which has significantly altered the original street pattern of the area and in buildings, such as the garage on Broadstone road.

New development which pays minimal respect to local building traditions and which detracts from the special character and appearance of the conservation area such as inappropriate new housing developments, the construction of unsympathetic extensions, and development which results in the loss of open spaces would result in the loss of the special qualities the designation is intended to protect. It is therefore critical that any development which occurs within the conservation area complements the qualities of its context.

The scale, massing, architectural detailing and pattern of development of any new development within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the conservation area will be expected to respect that of the existing built environment of the conservation area. Appropriate external materials and finishes will be expected on all new development. Traditional materials typical of the conservation area, identified within the appraisal, will be encouraged to complement the local built heritage. Where modern materials are proposed these should be in harmony with traditional materials. Extensions and alterations to buildings will be expected to follow scale, proportions, features, detailing and materials of existing buildings. Stone-built boundary walls and wrought iron railings are important features in defining public and private spaces in the area and as such boundary treatments will be expected to reflect those identified as typical of the area.

Recommendations for Action

- The Council will ensure that new development within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the conservation area preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area through the implementation of HC1: HC1.1 - 1.3 & HC2, HC2.1 - 2.2 & HC2.4 - 2.5 and CDH1: CDH1.1 - 1.2 of the UDP
- Production of guidance notes for applicants on expectations for submission of planning applications in conservation areas including the requirement for a Design and Access Statement in the validation of all planning applications which should clearly demonstrate how the proposal fits the context of the site and its immediate surroundings.
- Production of design briefs and guidelines in relation to any specific development sites in the area
- Promote high standards of design of any new development within the conservation area, in accordance with national best practice and guidance (English Heritage and CABE)

Supplementary Documents/Guidance:

- SPD *Sustainable Design and Construction* (SMBC 2006)
- SPG *Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings* (SMBC 2001)
- SPG *Design of Residential Development* (SMBC 2007)
- Buildings in Context: New Development in Historic Areas (CABE & English Heritage 2001)

Shopfronts and Signage

The conservation area appraisal identifies intrusive signage which has a detrimental effect on key views, particularly on Broadstone Bridge, on the southern approach to Houldsworth Mill. Opportunities to address the negative effect of existing signage on the character and appearance of the conservation area should be sought and the expectations for any future applications for Advertising Consent will be for high quality signage which is not harmful to its special interest or make a positive contribution to the conservation area

A small part of Reddish District Centre, which lies to the north east of the conservation area, falls within the Houldsworth Conservation Area boundary. Alterations to commercial premises within the conservation area involving the insertion of new and replacement shop frontages, replacement windows, unsympathetic signage and advertisement boards are potentially very harmful to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It is essential therefore to ensure that these elements do not detract further from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Surviving examples of traditional shop fronts in the area should be protected as far as possible. Opportunities to reinstate original designs should be required whenever alterations are proposed. New or replacement shop fronts should be high quality, sympathetic to the building and local architectural traditions and not detract from the character or appearance of the area as a whole.

Within the conservation area there will be a presumption against projecting box signs, oversized fascias and internally illuminated signs. Formal policies contained within the Council's UDP, adopted SPGs and PPG19 should be adhered to in order to preserve or enhance the character of buildings and that of the Conservation Area. Opportunities to replace inappropriate signage will be taken as they arise.

The conservation area appraisal identifies intrusive signage which has a detrimental effect on key views, particularly on Broadstone Bridge, on the southern approach to Houldsworth Mill.

Reddish District Centre Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme

The Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme aims to bring about substantial improvement in the physical appearance and condition of shop fronts within a Reddish District Centre boundary. This is a discretionary grant that has been developed by the Council working in consultation with Reddish District Centre Partnership. It is offered on a first come, first served basis, for the improvement of a shop fronts subject to applications meeting the criteria for eligible works.

Recommendation for Action:

- The Council will give special regard to applications to alter or develop commercial frontages within the conservation area and ensure proposals are high in overall quality and make a positive contribution to the conservation area
- The Council will give special regard to applications for advertising consent within the conservation area and ensure proposals are high in overall quality and make a positive contribution to the conservation area
- Ensure high standards in the design of new shop fronts and in the design of alterations to existing shop fronts through the implementation of SE1, SE1.2 - 1.4 of the UDP in the determination of applications for development

- The Council will apply high standards when considering applications for Advertisement Consent in the Conservation Area
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy to identify and address inappropriate signage in the area in line with Planning Policy Guidance 19 *Outdoor Advertisements*
- Continue to provide design guidance in relation to appropriate signage and advertising in conservation area
- Seek to procure funding for the implementation of sympathetic shopfront enhancement schemes within the conservation area
- Liaison between relevant Council departments such as Local and District Centre Regeneration should be further developed, with an agreed approach to works/advice within the Local Centre
- Undertake a photographic survey of surviving traditional shopfronts in the conservation area
- Encourage the reinstatement of traditional shop fronts in the area through the take up of Shop Front Grant Schemes in liaison with the Council's District Centre Team

Supplementary Guidance/Documents:

- SPG: *Shopfronts and Related Advertisements* (Stockport MBC Adopted 2002)
- PPG 19: *Outdoor Advertisements*
- Chapter 13 Council's UDP: *Pattern of Shopping Development: PSD3* (Local Shopping Centres)
- Chapter 14 of the Council's UDP: *Shopping and the Built Environment: SE1* (Shopping and the Built Environment)
- Romiley District Centre: Draft Action Plan Review (SMBC 2008)
- District Centre Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme: Application Pack

Boundary Treatments

The Houldsworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies low coped boundary walls at the front of properties, some with simple gate piers with domed caps as important surviving features within the conservation area. In other areas boundary features are a notable loss from the frontage of properties, particularly along Houldsworth Street where contemporary photographs, show low brick boundary walls with stone copings and topped by ornate wrought iron railings and with decorative wrought iron gates.

The demolition, unsympathetic alteration and lack of maintenance of these important elements has a detrimental impact on the special character and appearance of the area and alters the important demarcation of spaces.

Recommendations for Action:

- Consider the introduction of Article 4(2) Direction to protect against unsympathetic alteration to boundary treatments in the conservation area
- Undertake a comprehensive photographic survey of boundary treatments in the area

- Continue to provide design guidance/advice to owners/occupiers in the area with regard to appropriate boundary treatments
- Encourage the reinstatement of missing boundary features where appropriate

Setting and Views

As identified and described within the character appraisal, key views which focus on the setting and location of individual buildings and landmark features. Key views are largely dominated by the mill buildings, towers and chimneys which give rise to elevated sightlines. Open views are afforded along Houldsworth Street and across the recreation area towards Houldsworth Mill. Sightlines have been maintained along most of the streets of houses, including the area of 20th century housing which has replaced the original workers' housing. As a fundamental aspect of the character and appearance of the area it is vital that any development proposals must be considered in the context of their impact on important views which should be fully assessed as part of the planning process. Important views are identified in the character appraisal and the Council will seek to ensure that all new development respects these views.

Recommendations for Action

- Seek to ensure all development respects the setting of the Conservation Area and important views within, into and out of the area as identified in the Appraisal.
- Key views are to be protected from inappropriate forms of development in accordance with policy HC1.3 of Stockport's UDP

Public Realm

The character appraisal has identified little surviving original floorscape within the Houldsworth Conservation Area. The carriageway and footway surfaces, street signage and street lighting in the area is mainly of modern design and construction in varying states of repair which has little in common with the architectural character of the conservation area. An exception to this is David Street where the retention of traditional stone setts enhances the area. It is important to understand the impact of floorscape and street furniture on the street-scene and to ensure that this does not further detract from the character and appearance of the area. Street furniture should be introduced only where necessary and in a coordinated manner which is sympathetic to the area and is high quality design. As such the sensitive repair and reinstatement of traditional paving materials and the introduction of high quality street lighting, street furniture and signage of a sympathetic design would do much to enhance the character and appearance of the area and reinforce its special identity.

Recommended Actions

- Seek to procure a co-ordinated approach to public realm works via consultation between all relevant Council Departments/stakeholders etc. including Highways, Streetscene, Planning, Conservation/Regeneration and Utility companies
- Seek to procure funding for the implementation of sympathetic environmental enhancement schemes within the conservation area
- Liaison between Planning, Conservation/Regeneration and Highways should be further developed, with an agreed approach to new surfacing within public areas or those likely to be adopted
- Street furniture should be co-ordinated as part of new highway and development schemes, and the addition of new poles and features should be avoided where possible in order to reduce visual clutter and obstacle to pedestrians
- The Council will seek to ensure the retention of any surviving historic streetscape features
- Any future highway works should bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the conservation area in line with best practice recommendations
- Undertake a comprehensive photographic audit of 'street furniture' in the Conservation Area and within the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Seek to develop specific guidance for public realm works within Conservation Areas which addresses reinstatement/repair works

Supplementary Documents/Guidance

- Transport and Highways in Residential Areas – (Supplementary Planning Document)
- Footways Policy (Adopted 2005)
- Traffic Management in Historic Areas: This leaflet highlights how traffic engineering and highway improvements can be designed sensitively in historic areas
- *Streets for All* (North West) - English Heritage Publication (2005)
- *Manual for Streets* (CABE March 2007)
- Romiley District Centre: Draft Action Plan Review (SMBC 2008)

Open Space

As identified within the appraisal the special character of the Houldsworth Conservation Area is defined not only by its buildings but by its equally important environmental quality created by open spaces. Green open space enhances the conservation area. The most significant and generous areas of green open space are that of Houldsworth Park and the adjacent bowling greens and tennis courts. Other green spaces which contribute to the area include the churchyard setting of St. Elisabeth's Church and private gardens.

The playground at Liverpool Close is a hard landscaped area of open space, the enhancement of which would do much to improve the area's visual and amenity value.

Enhancement of, or improvements to these space should respect their special qualities whilst addressing issues of local amenity and personal safety. Improvements, including the regular maintenance of the grounds, an increase in the number of park wardens, and enhancement of biodiversity, should be considered as methods of improving the amenity value of the areas as well as issues of appearance and safety.

In addition, plots of private houses with mature trees and planting make an important contribution to the special character and appearance of the conservation area and as such any proposals which compromise this important contribution should be resisted.

Recommended Actions:

- Determine existing and required functions of areas of public open space and develop landscape accordingly
- Continued application of the Council's planning powers and relevant policies contained within the UDP Review: UOS1.3
- Seek to address issues of maintenance and street cleansing through liaison with the Council's Area Conditions Officers
- Introduction of Article 4(2) Directions to protect the important contribution that front garden spaces make to the special qualities of the conservation area
- Assessment/condition survey of St. Elisabeth's Churchyard in line with English Heritage guidance to monitor condition of gravestones/monuments etc.

Supplementary Documents/Guidance

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Making the Invisible Visible: The Real Value of Park Assets (CABE 2009)
- Paradise Preserved (English Heritage & Natural Heritage 2007)

Trees

Trees make an important contribution to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to its setting both in framing and softening views and in the contribution they make to green spaces. Street trees also make a significant contribution to the visual quality of the area. Conservation Area designation automatically protects trees over a certain size. Additionally, some may already be specifically covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) which means that formal permission is required from the Council to fell or lop them. Some trees within the Houldsworth Conservation Area are protected by TPOs, however a formalised review and appraisal of trees in the area would indicate any need for increasing the number afforded this extra level of control.

Recommended Actions

- Review of protection afforded to trees through Tree Preservation Orders
- The local authority will maintain and replace as necessary street trees within the conservation area
- Continue to provide professional advice on all tree matters as required
- Continued application of the Council's planning powers and policies contained within the UDP Review to protect trees and woodland which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area

Archaeological Issues

The enhanced Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Stockport identifies a number of sites of archaeological significance within the conservation area. Inclusion of a site on the SMR gives it formal recognition in the planning system. The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled. The conservation area therefore has archaeological potential both above and below ground which will require further consideration to be given to the affect of applications for any significant new development in the area.

Recommended Actions

- Continued application of the Councils planning powers and relevant policies contained within the UDP Review: HC3
- Guidance/advice or consultation should be sought from Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit (GMAU) where development involves sites identified on the SMR
- An archaeological assessment or field evaluation may be required where archaeology is known or thought likely to exist or where the indications are that remains are likely to prove important, prior to a decision on the planning application being made
- A Building Appraisal will be required where substantial alteration/demolition of key historic buildings is proposed

Guidance

- PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning

Monitoring Change

Guidance from English Heritage in relation to the 'Management of Conservation Areas' (February 2006) recommends that arrangements for the monitoring of conservation areas should be considered. Changes in the appearance of conservation areas resulting from both the implementation of approved schemes and permitted or unauthorised alterations, as well as the condition of the areas' physical fabric, should be monitored regularly, the effects reviewed and policies modified, or specific action proposed as necessary, to deal with current issues. A review of the conservation area as a whole will also need to be undertaken on a regular basis in order for the character appraisal to be kept up to date in line with recommendations within the English Heritage publication *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (February 2006) and in accordance with the requirement in BV219b for them to be up to date. Existing appraisals should ideally be reviewed on a five yearly basis. Where there is a comprehensive and up to date appraisal in place and in areas where little significant change has occurred a review is likely to result in a supplement to the existing appraisal which records any changes, confirming or redefining the special interest that warrants designation, setting out any new recommendations and revising the management strategy.

Detailed change can be monitored using initial audits and photographic records as a bench mark. The creation of a comprehensive photographic record of the conservation area will

provide an invaluable aid to any later enforcement action. It will also provide an important baseline for measuring change in the appearance of the area and monitoring the physical condition of the buildings. Once established, such a record should be kept up to date to maintain its usefulness (enforcement action cannot be taken unless the unauthorised alteration can be shown to have been carried out within the previous four years). Where appropriate, the local community might be encouraged to help with creating a photographic record of the area and monitoring change.

Recommendations for Action:

- Seek to engage the local community in the production of a comprehensive photographic survey/record of the area
- General monitoring of the area to inform updates to appraisal and management and enhancement proposals
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy