

# Town Hall 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 the Town Hall 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. 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 policy and guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 5 “Planning for the Historic Environment” (PPS5) and its supporting Practice Guide (2010), English Heritage guidance set out in “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas” (2006), and Local Authority policies within Stockport’s Core Strategy DPD and saved policies from Stockport’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

### **Stockport Local Development Framework and Core Strategy DPD**

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 new 'Local Development Framework' (LDF) for Stockport will shape future planning and development of the Borough not just in physical and environmental terms but also in social and economic terms. The LDF will comprise a series of plan documents; the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) is one of these.

The Core Strategy is the most important document in the LDF because it sets an overall strategy and vision, establishing the broad aims and objectives for the use of land in Stockport. It embraces the priorities of the Stockport Sustainable Community Strategy, particularly where this involves the use of land. The Core Strategy outlines how future strategic development needs including housing, employment, retail, education and healthcare will be met, providing the overall context for how policies and proposals will be used to promote positive change and guide planning and other policy decisions across the Borough.

The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 17th March 2011 with its Development Management Policies being applied to planning applications from the 1st April 2011 onwards. It supersedes many (but not all) of the policies set out in the Stockport UDP Review; a schedule of those UDP policies that are replaced (and therefore no longer apply) is set out in Appendix B of the Core Strategy.

The proposals in this management plan reflect the policies in Stockport’s Core Strategy DPD, and most particularly those contained within **Core Policy CS8** Safeguarding and Improving the Environment: Development Management Policy SIE-3 (D) Protecting the Historic Environment and saved UDP policies: HC1.1: (Demolition And Tree Felling In Conservation Areas), HC1.3: (Special Control Of Development In Conservation Areas), HC1.4: (New Uses For Buildings In Conservation Areas).

Other relevant saved UDP policies include:

- L1.8 (Strategic Recreation Routes)
- HP1.5 (Living Over the Shop)
- PSD2.2 (Services Uses in Town Centre, District and Large Local Centres) and PSD2.3 (Use of Upper Floors in Shopping Centres)
- SE1.2 (Shopfronts); SE1.3 (Advertisements on Shops); SE1.4 Security Measures for Shop Fronts) (Shopping and the Built Environment)
- TCG1 (Town Centre/M60 Gateway): TCG1.1 – TCG1.5; TCG 2.1 (Central Shopping Area); TCG3 (Town Centre Mixed Used Areas): TCG3.5 (Civic Quarter)

The Governments Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) emphasises the key role of local authorities in the stewardship of the historic environment and in Policy HE3 states that that though local development frameworks they should:

*“...set out a positive, proactive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their area, taking into account the variations in type and distribution of heritage asset, as well as the contribution made by the historic environment by virtue of:*

- (i) its influence on the character of the environment and an area’s sense of place*
- (ii) its potential to be a catalyst for regeneration in an area, in particular through leisure, tourism and economic development*
- (iii) the stimulus it can provide to inspire new development of imaginative and high quality design*
- (iv) the re-use of existing fabric, minimising waste; and*
- (v) its mixed and flexible patterns of land use that are likely to be, and remain, sustainable.”*

HE3.4 goes on to state that:

*“At a local level, plans should consider the qualities and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and how these can contribute to the development of the spatial vision in the local development framework core strategy. Heritage assets can be used to ensure continued sustainability of an area and promote a sense of place. Plans at a local level are likely to consider investment in and enhancement of historic places, including the public realm, in more detail. They should include consideration of how best to conserve individual, groups or types of heritage assets that are most at risk of loss through neglect, decay or other threats.”*

## **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: The Town Hall Conservation Area SWOT Analysis**

This section of the management plan examines key characteristics of the Town Hall Conservation Area following the designation and appraisal process carried out in 2005. 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
- Public frontages forming a defining image of the Town Centre
- Clear local identity with well established Civic, commercial, residential, educational and leisure uses
- Visual harmony resulting from use of a limited palette of natural building materials
- Hard and soft landscaped areas and tree planting enhance the environment
- Strong continuity of buildings in use for their original purpose
- Quality of individual buildings reflected in the number of statutory listings
- Large number of locally important buildings
- Survival of historic street furniture/features
- Generally well maintained private buildings and land
- Above and below ground archaeological potential reflected in the number of Sites and Monuments Record entries for the area

### **Weaknesses**

- Loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations
- Impact of heavy traffic volume using busy trunk road
- Loss of character arising from inappropriate modern development
- Loss of traditional road surface materials, street signage/furniture and street lighting
- Full potential of open space has not been realised
- Areas of unattractive hard landscaping
- Lack of effective Planning Enforcement
- Litter and street-cleansing issues
- Inappropriate alterations involving replacement shop fronts and signage
- Vehicular dominated environment with a proliferation of guard rails, many in poor condition
- Negative impact of inappropriate signage and advertising

## **Opportunities**

- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on maintenance and repair for land and property owners
- Enhancement and maintenance schemes in public realm involving the reinstatement of traditional street lighting, street furniture and paving materials
- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on expectations for quality of new development within the area
- Archaeological potential
- Appropriate maintenance and enhancement and interpretation of green spaces
- Review of Tree Preservation Orders
- Enhancement of public realm involving appropriate highways and traffic schemes

## **Threats**

- Development pressure for alterations to buildings in the form of extensions etc.
- Development pressure for alterations to buildings in the form of alterations to commercial properties / shopfronts
- 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
- Decline in the quality of the environment as a result of lack of maintenance of open spaces

## **Section C: Enhancement Proposals for the Town Hall Conservation Area**

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

### **Listed Buildings**

Following the designation of the conservation area in 2005 the Council has undertaken a review of its key historic buildings in certain parts of the Borough. This has resulted in the statutory listing of the War Memorial Art Gallery, the Greek Street and Wellington Road South Bus Shelters, the Signpost on Edward Street and the Stockport College Annex. As a result there are now 8 listed buildings / features situated in the Town Hall Conservation Area. This review has also resulted in the upgrading of Stockport Town Hall from a grade II to a grade II\* listed building.

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.”

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- 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 CS8: SIE-3 (D) of the Council’s Core Strategy DPD and government guidance contained within PPS5
- 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**

Following the production of the designation of the Town Hall Conservation Area, Stockport Council has undertaken a review of key historic buildings in certain areas of the Borough. This

review has resulted in the inclusion of the Mount Tabor building and Hollindrakes building on Stockport's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest' from 2009. There are, at present, 4 locally listed buildings within the Town Hall Conservation Area.

***Recommended Actions:***

- 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 CS8: SIE-3 (D) and other relevant Core Strategy Policies and Government Guidance contained within PPS5
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of any historic asset (as identified within the Character Appraisal and on the relevant appraisal map) should only be granted where justified against the criteria specified in PPS5
- Continue to provide up to date, accurate information and guidance with regard to buildings of local interest

*Supplementary Documents / Guidance:*

- Good Practice Guide for Local Listing: Identifying and Managing Significant Local Heritage Assets (English Heritage Consultation Draft Feb 2011)

**Key Unlisted Buildings**

The Town Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies key unlisted buildings of particular architectural or historic distinction which contribute significantly to the special character and appearance of the area.

In accordance with Government guidance within PPS5 there will be a presumption in favour of the conservation of historic assets that make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area and proposals that may involve the demolition of such buildings will be assessed against the criteria set out in within that document.

***Recommended Actions:***

- Where appropriate consideration should be given to the inclusion of buildings identified as key historic buildings on the Council's Local List
- Works to buildings identified as historic assets or affecting their settings will be considered in the context of CS8: SIE-3 (D) of the Council's Core Strategy DPD and government guidance contained within PPS5
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of all 'key historic buildings' (as identified within the Character Appraisal and on the relevant appraisal map) should only be granted where justified against the criteria specified in PPS5

*Supplementary Documents / Guidance:*

- Good Practice Guide for Local Listing: Identifying and Managing Significant Local Heritage Assets (English Heritage Consultation Draft Feb 2011)

### **Vacant and Underused Buildings / Buildings at Risk**

Historic 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. The historic environment plays a crucial role in the creation of a unique sense of place, which can strongly influence peoples decisions about when, why and how often they visit an area and as such the distinctiveness of the town centre is a tangible asset They are also 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 the Council to ensure that the local stock of historic assets 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.

Buildings become especially vulnerable as a result of being vacant or partially vacant and underused. The Council will continue to monitor the condition of buildings in the conservation area via the Council's Buildings at Risk survey.

Unless appropriate repairs are undertaken and where necessary suitable and viable new uses identified, vacant and underused buildings are at 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 and are significantly more at risk of loss due to anti-social behaviour. To prevent this cycle of decline, a pro-active strategy is required in order to secure investment and identify a suitable new uses for vacant buildings.

### ***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 Core Strategy Policy CS8: SIE-3 (D)
- 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
- Seek opportunities for grant assistance to address issues of vacancy and deteriorating fabric
- 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 2011)
- Vacant Historic Buildings (English Heritage 2011)
- Stockport's Buildings at Risk Survey (SMBC)

### **Minor Alterations**

The special character of the Town Hall Conservation Area, as highlighted within the Character Appraisal, is mainly derived from its development, history and the architectural quality of its buildings and survival of original detailing which make a significant contribution to the individual character of buildings in the area. An attractive street scene is an important objective of the Council, one which enhances the character of the environment and setting of historic buildings.

The cumulative impact of minor alterations to buildings including fixtures and fittings has a negative impact on the character and appearance of an area and as such the special character of the conservation area could be eroded by the loss of these original materials and architectural details. All minor alterations should therefore be sympathetic to the architectural styles of the building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

While some minor alterations may be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission under 'permitted development rights' or under advertisement regulations, permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation area. Flats, commercial buildings, educational buildings and properties in mixed use enjoy only limited permitted development rights and planning permission will therefore be required for most development, including minor alterations to the exterior of buildings, the construction of hard surfaces etc.

Repairs to existing historic structures must be undertaken sensitively to ensure that the appearance and condition of the fabric is not harmed. The regular maintenance of historic buildings can help to avoid the costly repair work required to rescue a building from dereliction. It is especially important to ensure that historic buildings are kept weather and water tight to prevent further deterioration and for this reason it is necessary to keep roofs, in particular, in a good state of repair. It is therefore the responsibility of the owners and tenants of buildings in the Conservation Area or those likely to affect its setting, to ensure minor alterations are sympathetic to the architectural style of the building and the character and appearance of the area. The Council will work with owners and tenants of buildings in the area to encourage such sympathetic works and to provide guidance and advice.

## Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most important and urgent problems facing us today. Without action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the direct impacts of a changing climate will have major adverse effects on society, the economy and the environment, including our cultural heritage. The wide-ranging actions required to limit further damaging emissions, combined with the need to adapt historic assets to make them more resilient to a changing climate, will also have significant implications for the historic environment.

Some of the Borough's historic assets have already experienced and survived significant climatic changes in the past and may demonstrate considerable resilience in the face of future climate change. However, many historic assets are potentially at risk from the direct impacts of future climate change. Without action to adapt to a changing climate and limit further changes it is likely that these will be irreparably damaged and the cultural, social and economic benefits they provide will also be lost. Equally, the significance and integrity of important historic assets can be threatened by poorly designed adaptation and mitigation responses. The non-renewable character of historic features and the potential for their damage and loss should, therefore, always be taken into account when adaptation and mitigation responses are being planned and executed. Guidance on the adaptation of heritage assets to ensure their safeguarding against the impacts of climate change is available from English Heritage.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- 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
- Continue to provide information and guidance as requested to property owners in respect require for works to properties
- 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 owner for repair/restoration/reinstatement schemes
- Ensure all minor alterations are sympathetic to the architectural styles of the building and the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- The Council will ensure that alterations to buildings within the conservation area preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the building and wider conservation area through the implementation of policies CS1: SD-6 and CS8: SIE-1 and SIE-3 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD

### ***Supplementary Documents / Guidance:***

- Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (plus relevant amendments)

- Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers (Communities and Local Government June 2007)
- Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Application of Part L of the Building Regulations to historic and traditionally constructed buildings (English Heritage May 2011)
- Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings (full series of English Heritage guidance documents 2011)
- Climate Change and the Historic Environment (English Heritage 2007)
- [www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk](http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk)
- Small-scale solar thermal energy and traditional buildings (English Heritage 2008)

### **Satellite Dishes and Antennae**

Inappropriately sited satellite dishes are identified as a concern within certain areas of 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 street scene. 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 public vantage points.

#### ***Recommended Actions:***

- 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

### **New Development**

The special interest of the conservation area derives from its form and character, the quality of its buildings, topography and key strategic views. The contrast in size, scale, siting and design between the individually designed key historic buildings and the relatively modest and functional two storey public houses and commercial buildings is an important element in shaping the character and appearance of the conservation area. All buildings in the conservation area are highly visible and most key buildings are set back and elevation above road level. Public frontages of buildings make an important and positive contribution to the area which forms a defining image of Stockport Town Centre. The built environment is greatly

enhanced by a small number of attractive, well maintained green spaces within the area. The conservation area exhibits a strong linear form focusing on principle routes which creates memorable views, vistas and visual relationships between key buildings. Stone, red brick and slate constitute the main building material in the Conservation Area and a wealth of architectural details is evident in ornamental brick and stone work.

New development which pays minimal respect to local building traditions and which detracts from the special character and appearance of the conservation area results in the loss of the special qualities that 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 defined within the Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

New development within the Conservation Area and its setting should aspire to the quality of design and execution related to its context. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will involve respecting values established through the assessment of the form and significance of the area. Developers and/or their designers will be required to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the urban context of the area and the way it has evolved. The Council will encourage new development that complements the established urban grain and settlement pattern of the area whilst representing the time in which it is built. The main consideration must be on the built and natural environment, key strategic views and approaches, the conservation area and setting of key historic buildings. Development proposals should be accompanied by a comprehensive urban design analysis of surrounding areas that details the positive and negative contributions that the proposed development makes to the visual quality of the area. 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. Boundary walls 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.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- The Council will ensure that new development within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the conservation area preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area through the implementation of CS8: SIE-1 and SIE-3 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD and saved policies TCM1 and TCM3.2 of the UDP
- Enhance and maintain the fabric of the built environment and public realm in accordance with policies CS8: SIE-1 and SIE-3 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD, and saved UDP policies HC1.3 and HC1.4
- Encourage pre-application discussion with the Council's Conservation Officer and Development Management Officers in relation to all development proposals affecting the special character and appearance of the conservation area

- The Council will expect any proposal for a development within the Conservation Area to be supported by a Design Statement and Access to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme was developed and to show how proposal relate to their context
- Proposals for development must demonstrate by means of a townscape/landscape impact assessment, how the proposal sits within the existing townscape and landform and describe the extent to which the proposal contributes to the creation of an attractive cluster of buildings or individually. Where appropriate proposals may be required to be loaded into the Stockport Town Centre Model as a method of assessing its wider impact
- Continued 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 (e.g. English Heritage and CABI)
- The Council will resist developments which have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Applicants with development proposals within the Conservation Area should provide accurate elevations of surrounding buildings showing how the new development will relate to the surrounding buildings

#### *Supplementary Documents/Guidance:*

- SPD *Sustainable Design and Construction* (SMBC 2006)
- SPG *Design of Residential Development* (SMBC 2007)
- Buildings in Context: New Development in Historic Areas (CABI & English Heritage 2001)
- 21st Century High Streets - A new vision for our town centres (British Retail Consortium 2009)
- Future Stockport - Supplementary Planning Document for the Town Centre Masterplan (SMBC)
- Future Stockport Review 2009 (SMBC)
- Stockport Town Centre Action Plan - Stage 2 Summary Report (SMBC February 2009)
- 21st Century High Streets - A new vision for our town centres (British Retail Consortium 2009)
- Design and access statements How to read, write and use them (CABI 2006)

### **Shopfronts, Advertisements and Signage**

Alterations to commercial premises within the conservation area involving the insertion of new and replacement shop frontages, unsympathetic signage and advertisement boards (including digital screens) and replacement windows to upper floors, are a concern in the area and are 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.

The use of unsympathetic security measures such as external roller shutters is also highlighted as an area of concern. Attractive frontages on commercial and retail premises enhance the appearance and appeal of an area and are important factors in attracting

customers and new business to the area. Consequently the type and design of security measures on such premises play a crucial role in how the area is perceived, especially outside normal trading hours. The use of external solid shutters creates unwelcoming and hostile environments as a result of their fortress like appearance. This restricts natural surveillance, discourages pedestrians and as a result may assist in criminal and anti-social behaviour. Solutions should be found which make premises secure but which do not damage the safe, inviting and attractive atmosphere desired for the area.

All surviving features of traditional shop fronts in the area shall be protected as far as possible and opportunities to reinstate original designs should be required whenever alterations are proposed. New or replacement shop fronts should be of a high quality, sympathetic to the building and local architectural traditions, avoiding detracting from the character or appearance of the area as a whole. 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 and will be taken as they arise.

### Lamp Column Banners

Lighting columns along Wellington Road South have been designed to incorporate banner arms which are used for the displaying of Council information / events. While the incorporation of this facility within the lighting provision is in the interests of reducing street clutter, the potential impact on views through the area and impact on the setting of historic buildings must be recognised. Therefore usage should be managed in a sensitive manner by relevant Council departments to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- 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
- Ensure high standards in the design of new shop fronts and in the design of alterations to existing shop fronts through the implementation of relevant Core Strategy and saved UDP policies and guidance in the determination of applications for development
- Lighting columns with banner arms shall be used in accordance with agreed specifications and time frames so as to not impact negatively on the special character and appearance of the conservation area
- 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 funding opportunities for the implementation of sympathetic shopfront enhancement schemes within the conservation area

- Undertake a photographic survey of surviving traditional shopfronts and associated architectural and decorative detailing in the conservation area and its setting

*Supplementary Guidance:*

- SPG: *Shopfronts and Related Advertisements* (Stockport MBC Adopted 2002)
- PPG 19: *Outdoor Advertisements*
- *Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers* (Communities and Local Government June 2007)
- *Large Digital Screens in Public Places* (CABE & English Heritage December 2009)
- *21st Century High Streets - A new vision for our town centres* (British Retail Consortium 2009)

### **Boundary Treatments**

Stone and brick boundary walls, some with railings, are identified as important features within the conservation area providing continuity to the streetscape and clearly defining the extent of public and private spaces.

Boundary features surrounding the area's individually designed buildings in particular add much to the overall character and appearance of the area, such as the Town Hall's low, balustraded Portland stone wall, the War Memorial Art Galley site bounded by the stone retaining wall which related to the grammar school formerly on the site, and the substantial stone wall and gate piers at the former Infirmary. These Boundary features also play an important role in defining the topographical locations of these buildings which are all raised above street level. As such the demolition, unsympathetic alteration and lack of maintenance of these important elements would have a detrimental impact on the special character and appearance of the area and alter the important demarcation of spaces.

Proposals involving the inappropriate removal or alteration of boundary treatments / features in the area will be resisted. Conversely, the renovation or replacement of existing unsympathetic boundary walls, with boundary treatments of an appropriate design could enhance the street scene and will be encouraged where appropriate.

***Recommended Actions:***

- 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

### **Setting and Views**

As identified and described within the character appraisal, key strategic views which focus on the setting and location of individual buildings, as well as long and progressive views along key historic routes are essential to the special character and appearance of the conservation

area. 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 and any tree planting respects these views.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- 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
- All proposals for development in the conservation area must be accompanied by a comprehensive Design and Access Statement which includes a thorough analysis of the potential impact on views through the area and how key strategic views will be protected
- Key views are to be protected from inappropriate forms of development in accordance with policy CS8: SIE-1 and SIE-3 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD and relevant saved UDP policies.

### **Supplementary Documents / Guidance**

- The Setting of Heritage Assets (English Heritage August 2010)
- Understanding Place (English Heritage 2010)

### **Public Realm**

The character appraisal identifies little surviving original floorscape within the 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. Exceptions to this take the form of the stone setted carriageway of John Street. Historic street furniture survives in the form of the cast iron guidepost, the Corinthian capitals on Wellington Road South and the bus shelters in the boundary wall of the Art Gallery, all of which are listed structures. The Nelson Tavern also features a traditional letterbox set into its Wellington Road South elevation.

The cumulative impact of modern street furniture including road signs, directional signs, traffic barriers, safety railings, service installations, litter bins, bus shelters, advertisements and road markings create a cluttered appearance in some parts of the Conservation Area. For example, there is a proliferation of guardrails around the junctions of Wellington Road South, Greek Street and Edward Street, in a variety of styles and finishes and many of which are damaged. Street clutter has a significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. It is important to understand the impact of streetscape 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 co-ordinated manner which is sympathetic to the area and is of high quality design. Opportunities to improve this element of the conservation area should be sought as should the removal of any inappropriate, damaged or redundant features.

Enhancement of the public realm, particularly along the A6 corridor, is a key objective for the Civic Quarter, specified under policy TCG3.5 of the UDP. The introduction of high quality street surfacing, street lighting, street furniture and signage of sympathetic design and materials would do much to enhance the character and appearance of the area and reinforce its special identity as would the removal of existing negative features. Public realm proposals should enhance the existing views framed by the frontages of the public buildings, while respecting their different architectural styles. The choice of paving materials and street furniture and the approach to lighting will need to complement their colour, tone and texture.

### ***Recommended Actions***

- Enhance and maintain the fabric of the built environment and public realm in accordance with policies CS8: SIE-1, SIE-2 and SIE-3 of the Council's Core Strategy DPD and saved policies HC1.3 and TCG3.2 of the UDP and Key Priority 4 of the Future Stockport vision (Future Stockport Review 2009)
- Seek to develop 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
- Ensure that highways works in the conservation area conform to the standards set out in the Town Centre Public Realm Design Guide and other national best practice guidance
- Seek opportunities 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, bollards and crossing 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
- The Council will work with the Town Centre Management and Highways Department to progress the rationalisation of street furniture in the Conservation Area and within the setting of the Conservation Area
- Seek to address issues of maintenance and street cleansing through liaison with the Council's Area Conditions Officers
- Seek to develop a strategy for the development of traffic management within the conservation area via consultation with all relevant Council Departments and stakeholders
- Supplementary Documents / Guidance:

### *Supplementary Documents / Guidance:*

- Stockport Town Centre Public Realm and Lighting Guide (SMBC EDAW 2007, revised 2009)

- Future Stockport - Supplementary Planning Document for the Town Centre Masterplan (SMBC)
- Future Stockport Review 2009 (SMBC)
- Stockport Town Centre Action Plan - Stage 2 Summary Report (SMBC February 2009)
- Traffic Management in Historic Areas (Department for Transport)
- *Streets for All* (North West) - English Heritage Publication (2005)
- *Manual for Streets* (CABE March 2007)
- *Save Our Streets* (English Heritage October 2004)
- New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (c. 22)
- Managing Works on the Street (Department for Transport 2007)
- Paving the Way (CABE ODPM 2002)
- Stockport Outdoor Café Design Guide (SMBC)
- 21st Century High Streets - A new vision for our town centres (British Retail Consortium 2009)
- The Setting of Heritage Assets (English Heritage August 2010)
- Understanding Place (English Heritage 2010)

### **Open Space**

Areas of green space within the conservation area are limited which acts to highlight their amenity value and the important contribution they make to views and the setting of buildings. The lawned and planted areas of open space on either side of the Town Hall provide a pleasant setting and emphasise the grandeur of the Town Hall. Similarly an area of open space to the north of the former Infirmary serves to enhance the presence of the building, as does the planting scheme surrounding the War Memorial Art Gallery.

The highway, along with the landscaped area of public space at the corner of Edward Street and Wellington Road South (on the site of the former Mount Tabor Chapel) constitute the main area of publicly usable open space within the conservation area. This space at present features bench seating, some local authority planters and is also the site of the listed Corinthian Capital. Enhancement of the public realm, particularly along the A6 corridor, is a key objective for the Civic Quarter, specified under saved policy TCG3.5 of the UDP. This area of public space would benefit from improvements to the design of seating provision and appropriate planting scheme. Given the highly prominent position of this area of open space, any future proposals for enhancement will need careful consideration.

Some areas of surface car parking in the conservation area have a negative effect and detract from the special character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of individual buildings, such as that fronting the listed Stockport College Annex. These areas would benefit from enhancement, perhaps involving the introduction of soft landscaping and tree planting to reduce this negative impact.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Encourage opportunities to enhance of the public realm in accordance with policy CS8: SIE-1, SIE-2, SIE-3 and saved policies of the UDP
- Encourage a co-ordinated approach to the enhancement of green spaces in the area

- Seek opportunities to enhance hard landscaped areas / car parks / storage areas in the conservation area
- Determine existing and required functions of areas of public open space and develop
- Seek to develop a street cleansing strategy to address issues of untidy land and spaces through liaison with the Council's Area Conditions Officers and other relevant departments / individuals

*Supplementary Documents/Guidance:*

- Stockport Town Centre Public Realm and Lighting Guide (SMBC EDAW 2007, revised 2009)
- Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Stockport Town Centre Public Realm and Lighting Guide (SMBC EDAW 2007, revised 2009)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Setting of Heritage Assets (English Heritage August 2010)
- Understanding Place (English Heritage 2010)

## **Trees**

Trees make an important contribution to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to its setting both in framing views and in the contribution they make to green spaces. 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. 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 trees as necessary and appropriate 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 Core Strategy and saved UDP policy HC1.1 to protect trees which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area

*Supplementary Documents / Guidance:*

- Stockport Town Centre Public Realm and Lighting Guide (SMBC EDAW 2007, revised 2009)

## **Archaeological Issues**

The enhanced Historic Environment Record (HER) for Stockport identifies a large number of sites of archaeological significance within the conservation area. Inclusion of a site on the HER 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 effect of applications for any significant new development in the area.

As an archaeologically sensitive area, the Council may require an archaeological survey funded by the developer in advance of any development within the UDP policy area TCG3.6 (South east Quadrant) in which the Hillgate Conservation Area lies.

### ***Recommended Actions***

- Continued application of the Council's planning powers and relevant policies contained within Core Policy CS8: SIE-3 of the Council's Core Strategy
- Guidance/advice or consultation should be sought from Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit (GMAU) where development involves sites identified on the HER
- 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
- Detailed recording will be required where substantial alteration/demolition of key historic buildings is proposed

### ***Supplementary Documents / Guidance:***

- PPS5 "Planning for the Historic Environment" (PPS5) and its supporting Practice Guide (2010)
- Archaeology and development – a good practice guide to managing risk and maximising benefit (2008)

## **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 policy HE5 of PP5: Planning for the Historic Environment. Existing appraisals should ideally be reviewed at least 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 benchmark. 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.

***Recommended Actions:***

- 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