

# Pilton Conservation Area Management Plan



■	Region	
1	Introduction	2
2	SWOT Analysis	3
3	Archaeology	5
4	Roofs and Roofscape	6
5	Walls	8
6	Joinery	9
7	Streetscape Features	12
8	Opportunities for Enhancement	14
9	Parks & Open Spaces	15
10	Article 4(2) Directions	16
11	Management Action Plan	17
■	Appendices	
1	Conservation Area Map	18

## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This Conservation Area Management Plan for Pilton follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the town that was adopted in \*\*\*.

**1.2** The management plan document will act as a reference and guide for all those who make decisions which may impact on the special character of Pilton – the Council, property owners, tenants, businesses, planners, developers, designers, and statutory undertakers and service providers.

**1.3** The policy context for this management plan is set out in the Planning Acts – particularly the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**1.4** The special character of Pilton is identified in the preceding character appraisal. It is the purpose of this document to lay down what actions will be taken in the future to safeguard and enhance that character. Part of this process is to inform and advise local residents and businesses so that they better understand how their actions can affect the historic character of the area.

**1.5** It is of fundamental importance that owners and contractors recognise that their actions can, and do, have a significant impact on the character and appearance of Pilton. Good decisions and sympathetic works do take more thought and can often cost more; but the rewards are great and will be appreciated in years to come by future generations. All actions, good and bad, form part of the legacy we leave.

## 2 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
High number of listed buildings along Pilton Street has allowed this area to remain relatively unaltered.	Modern housing to the north of the church show no regard to the established building pattern.	Limited archaeological work within the town leaves scope for future excavations to reveal more about the development of Pilton.	Pressure from infill development, particularly in the lower density regions of the conservation area (Bellaire).
Prominent and distinctive local character.	Some streets have generic street furniture that appears poor compared to that along Pilton Street (Bellaire, Under Minnow Road)	Some sites are suitable for potential enhancement - such as the Pilton Auctions site, however redevelopment of this site is constrained by flooding issues.	Loss of traditional joinery materials, especially to uPVC replacements.
Remains as a recognisably separate settlement despite the proximity of Barnstaple.	Short term on-street parking is an issue, particularly along Pilton Street.		
Good quality street furniture within the conservation area, especially along Pilton Street.	Traffic speed is an issue throughout the conservation area but particularly along Bull Hill and The Rock which are both narrow.		

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Good survival of traditional joinery, such as timber doors / doorframes and shopfronts along Pilton Street where a large proportion of buildings are listed.</p> <p>Trees and public open spaces make a positive contribution to the local environment.</p>	<p>Overhead cables are intrusive within the conservation area, particularly in the Bellaire and Under Minnow Road areas.</p>		

## 3 Archaeology

**3.1** The historic character of Pilton is such that there is archaeological potential virtually everywhere within the historic core of the village – which is similar in scope to the boundaries of the conservation area. Post medieval trading activity around the Quay lends potential to the southern end of Pilton Street while evidence of the Priory around the church gives interest to the northern end. Evidence of the defended Saxon settlement could also remain within modern Pilton.

**3.2** Where work is subject to the planning process it will be considered within the context of PPG16 and may be subject to relevant conditions such as a period of professional quality archaeological investigation and recording.

**3.3** When work not requiring consent is being carried out by private owners they should be on the look-out for features; from artifacts and wall footings to changes in colour of the earth. If anything is found people are requested to contact the Council for advice. Significant finds ought to be recorded to add to our understanding of the history of Pilton, and even relatively small finds that could at first glance be considered insignificant can add to our understanding of Pilton's history.

**3.4** Statutory undertakers doing trench work ought to seek advice before starting and agree a watching brief where appropriate – for example, if cable undergrounding is carried out within the conservation area or when new service runs are being installed.

### 4 Roofs and Roofscape

**4.1** Some areas of the conservation area have a highly visible roofscape, the southern parts of the conservation area having roofs particularly prominent from the elevated areas to the north of the conservation area. Furthermore the roofs of Pilton Street properties are visible from the more elevated areas at the northern end of Pilton Street. As such from the southern end of Pilton Street looking north the roofscape is of minor significance, but from the northern end looking south it is prominent. It is, however, not possible to identify every important view within the appraisal and the roofscape is generally of importance throughout the conservation area from any location from which it can be seen. The main roofing material in the conservation area is natural slate, with a mix of local Slates, from within Devon and Cornwall, and slates imported from Wales.

**4.2** Other features such as chimneys, ridges and rainwater goods add further interest to the roofscape in the village.

#### Chimneys

**4.3** Loss of chimneys is nearly always detrimental to the character of the roofscape and can interfere with the pattern of the streetscene. It is seldom necessary to remove a chimney and ought to be resisted with repair often being a less costly option. Removal of a chimney should be avoided unless there are extenuating circumstances such as serious structural concerns that have been professionally identified.

**4.4** Alterations damage the distinctive character of chimneys by the application of smooth, crisp render that hides stonework or flattens an uneven surface. Removal of drip slates and historic pots also detracts from the character of the area and should be avoided wherever possible.

#### Rainwater Goods

**4.5** The majority of the historic rainwater goods within the conservation area are of cast iron. These are typically of traditional profiles, being half round or ogee. These rainwater goods add to the historic character of their buildings and enrich the streetscape, and have the added advantage that they can be painted to be in keeping with the building's wider colour scheme.

**4.6** Correctly maintained cast iron rainwater goods can have a functional life in excess of 100 years, and when replacement is needed there are still suppliers of traditional gutter profiles available factory finished. Lightweight cast aluminium rainwater goods may also be suitable for use on some buildings.



**4.7** Plastic is in many ways an inferior modern product for use as rainwater goods, because it can be affected by exposure to sunlight and become brittle relatively quickly. Although plastic rainwater goods can last for over 25 years it is unlikely that an entire gutter system will last this long without some sections splitting and requiring replacement.

**4.8** Plastic rainwater goods do not accept paint well and are available in a limited range of colours; typically fading of the plastic occurs within the first 5-10 years. Modern box profile rainwater goods do not fit well with historic buildings as traditional guttering was never produced in these forms.

### **Slate as a Roof Covering**

**4.9** The dominant roofing material within the conservation area is natural slate. Typically this was historically a local slate such as Morte Slate or, after the coming of the railways, imported from Wales. Today many of the local sources of slate in the south west are either exhausted or no longer worked due to high costs.

**4.10** A much wider variety of slate is now available in the UK, including slate imported from Spain, South America and China. Some of these imported slates may be suitable for roofing on new buildings or buildings not in prominent locations but their use on prominent historic roofs should be avoided as they have a noticeably different appearance, especially when wet. The implications of fuel miles of imported materials also favours more locally sourced slates.

**4.11** New slate should be fixed to roofs using nails, as this is the traditional method. By using the correct double lap wind lift can be avoided and so is not justification for the use of clips. With some imported slates the recommended use of clips is to disguise the fact that the slate is of poor quality and will split if holed for nailing. As such, slate from a source that recommends the use of clip fixings should be looked at cautiously.

**4.12** It should be remembered that slate is a highly durable natural material and it is highly unlikely that an entire roof needs to be re-covered. In most cases slates slip because their nails have exceeded their functional life and the slates themselves can be salvaged and re-attached with new nails. Roofs that feature rag slate, or slate in diminishing courses are particularly important and are also particularly vulnerable. Opportunistic and unscrupulous contractors will offer owners of such buildings an amazingly cheap price to re-roof in artificial or imported slate, knowing that the rag or random slate they reclaim can be sold on or re-used on much more lucrative work elsewhere.

## 5 Walls

**5.1** Pilton possesses many rendered buildings, particularly in Bradiford and along Pilton Street, a legacy of the town's wealth and affluence during the Georgian period which saw many of its buildings remodelled. Together with these rendered buildings there are also buildings and walls which are un-rendered, either in brick or stone where re-pointing may be a major maintenance issue.

### Repointing

**5.2** Repointing of historic masonry is a process that needs to be carried out over the period of a building's history. The major risk this poses to historic buildings is when an ill-informed owner or contractor elects to use modern Portland cement to repoint historic masonry.

**5.3** Traditional buildings were designed to be porous, the thickness of their walls ensuring that the inner surface would not get wet and that when dry weather returns the wall could dry out again. As the traditional lime mortar was softer than the surrounding brick much of the evaporation of moisture occurred through the mortar joints. In this way the mortar itself was sacrificial, slowly weathering away and eventually needing to be replaced by the process of repointing. When modern cement is used the method of moisture transfer is altered. The Portland cement is harder and impermeable and as such moisture transfer is forced to occur through the face of the brick, eventually causing the decay of the brick itself. Portland cement is also brittle and inflexible and while lime mortar will allow a degree of movement with a structure, cement will crack at the slightest movement allowing moisture to further penetrate into a building.

### Rendering

**5.4** Render was traditionally applied to buildings for a variety of reasons, either to cover up a poor quality building material which was visually unpleasant, or to protect a particularly porous building material against damp ingress. Traditionally render was lime based, in the same way that mortars were lime based. Re-rendering a building in modern cement based renders or applying modern barrier paints can cause similar problems to repointing in modern cement mortars.

**5.5** Movement within a building almost invariably leads to cracking of the brittle cement render allowing moisture to get in through the cracks, the impervious nature of the cement render will trap this moisture within the wall and force it deeper into the building causing internal damp problems.

**5.6** Unrendered buildings should not typically be rendered for purely aesthetic reasons. Instead render should be applied only where there would be a technical advantage to doing so and when this is necessary materials must be compatible with the construction of the building. For historic buildings this invariably means lime based materials.

## 6 Joinery

**6.1** Historic joinery can add significantly to the character of an area and the extent of its survival is typically representative of the proportion of Listed Buildings in an area, but is also dependent upon the value that people place on the historic value of their village. Like most places Pilton has retained a degree of historic joinery which sits alongside sensitive replacements as well as unsympathetic, poorly detailed modern joinery.

**6.2** At present the replacement of windows and doors is not controlled on unlisted buildings in use as private dwelling houses. Buildings in other uses, including apartments and retail units require planning permission for alteration and replacement of windows and doors. North Devon Council will consider Article 4(2) directions to prevent harmful alterations to dwelling houses in the future. It is always preferable, however, for owners to recognise that sensitive maintenance adds value to their own property and contributes to the sense of place.

**6.3** Historic joinery ought to be seen as antique furniture that changes hands as part of a larger deal and can easily be overlooked. It only takes one inconsiderate owner to destroy the historic appearance of a building by ill-considered renovation; with property changing hands as frequently as it does today there is a steady stream of buildings whose luck has run out. There are few people who would throw a 200 year old chair or table in a skip – their potential value is usually appreciated – yet it happens to windows and doors regularly. These artefacts are a finite resource that embodies the craftsmanship of earlier generations and records the materials and techniques they used.

**6.4** Unless badly neglected over a long period of time, traditional joinery is rarely beyond repair. In many cases the timber used was so well sourced and seasoned that it is far more durable than any modern alternative. If repair is not possible, replica replacement is the next best thing; though replacement requires the use of primary resources and energy that makes it a less sustainable option. The use of imported hardwood from unsustainable sources ought to be avoided and uPVC has significant ecological issues associated with its production process and later disposal. From a sustainability standpoint timber windows made from managed sources of timber are more environmentally sound than uPVC which does not decompose in landfill and produces chlorine based by-products and gases during manufacture.

**6.5** There is no product that is maintenance free. Timber needs painting every few years, but each time the result looks fresh and new. After a hundred years or more sash cords or hinges may need renewal; this is quite easily done and gives the unit a new lease of life. When modern opening mechanisms or double glazed units breakdown the answer is replacement of the whole unit – hence the piles of PVCu windows accumulating at recycling centres in the absence of satisfactory means of disposal.

## Windows

**6.6** The size, type and design of the windows in an historic building reveal much about its age or development, its use and the status of its occupants in the past. Humbler buildings often have casement windows that vary in design according to age, use and local custom. Sash windows also vary in size and detail according to age and use. The enduring popularity of sash windows reflects their versatility in providing controlled ventilation.

**6.7** Historic glass survives in some windows and should be retained where possible, however installing modern glass that has been treated to give it the appearance of historic glass is not to be commended.

**6.8** When new windows are needed there are a number of issues to consider:

- Proportion and subdivision – The glazing pattern of the original windows ought to be retained, (or restored if lost), as that is a critical part of the whole building. It indicates the size of glass available or affordable at the time of construction.
- Mode of opening – The introduction of top hung or tilt-and-turn opening lights is always visually jarring and harmful to historic character. Overlapping ‘storm-seal’ type details are an entirely modern introduction and are unnecessary if flush fitting units are properly made. Spring loaded sashes are an inferior replacement mechanism compared with properly weighted double-hung sashes.
- Glazing – Traditional glazing bar profiles, properly jointed and glazed with putty, (or glazing compound), rather than beading, will give a genuine appearance.
- Thermal insulation – Double glazing cannot be achieved within traditional multiple pane designs without bars being either much too thick or false. Beading is nearly always added which further detracts from the appearance. Attempting to introduce double glazing into a traditional design usually means a small air gap that hugely reduces the insulation properties anyway. The use of shutters and/or insulated curtains can greatly reduce heat loss without the need for window replacement.
- Draught-proofing – The majority of heat loss from historic windows is often through draughts caused by ill-fitting frames. Draft proofing systems are available that can be fitted to existing windows in situ and can be highly effective in reducing draughts and heat loss.
- Sound insulation – Cutting down noise is often given as a reason for replacing existing windows with double glazed units. However tests have shown that secondary glazing is actually more effective at reducing transmitted noise. It is often less costly than fitting double glazed units and also allows for the historic windows to be retained.
- Sills – Traditional sills should be retained unless beyond repair, when they should be replaced with replicas in terms of materials and details.

## Shopfronts

**6.9** Pilton retains historic shopfronts, some of which show a startling degree of survival, especially the bowed frontage of 21 Pilton Street, which incorporates curving glass display windows, a mosaic tiled entrance, with stallrisers and pilasters with consoles at either end of the hand painted fascia signage.

**6.10** There are significant issues relating to shopfronts that can have a profound impact on the character of a place:

- Signage – There was a time when the emphasis was on quality, legibility and illustration of function. Today the approach to shop signage seems to be to achieve the largest and brightest advertisement. Clumsy box fascias and totally obscured windows draw attention in the wrong way and detract from neighbouring businesses. Illumination should only be considered for businesses that trade at all hours and then should be limited to that needed for identification. The commercial premises along Pilton Street generally have good quality and well designed signage.
- Design – New shopfronts and signage require planning permission, and/or advertisement consent – North Devon Council will expect these elements to be competently designed to suit their context.

## 7 Streetscape Features

### Parking & Traffic

**7.1** Within the Pilton Conservation Area parking is a particular concern. One side of Pilton Street is given over to short term parking for visitors to the various shops along Pilton Street, however people regularly park on the opposite side of the road on double yellow lines to visit the Fish and Chip Shop.

**7.2** Added to this is the fact that although Pilton Street is sufficiently wide for its two way traffic this is not the case once space has been given over to parking, and the speed at which some vehicles use Pilton Street causes concerns for residents.

**7.3** Although the level of traffic using Pilton Street, Bull Hill and The Rock has fallen with the opening of the new downstream bridge, the area is still used by some as a short cut during rush hour, often ignoring the speed limits already in place.

**7.4** Parking along The Rock also causes problems. The street here is barely wide enough for two way traffic and the fact that large delivery vehicles continue to use this road despite signs advising against such actions is of major concern to residents.

### Infill Development

**7.5** The central (Bellaire) section of the conservation area is vulnerable to inappropriate infill development by virtue of its low development density. Although the construction of new dwellings within the grounds of existing buildings may relieve pressure to develop greenfield sites, the inappropriate development of gardens can have a major adverse effect on the character of established areas.

**7.6** Where infill development would have an adverse effect on the established spacing of buildings and plot sizes, or result in new buildings of differing scale then these proposals will be resisted so as to protect the identified architectural and historic character of the Bellaire region.

**7.7** Existing examples of inappropriate infill will not be seen as establishing a precedent and infill development that is shielded from view by planting or walls will not be allowed on the basis of it being out of sight as such features are either seasonal or transitory by their nature.

### Street Lighting

**7.8** Along Pilton Street lighting is provided by traditional style lighting units with mock ladder bars and lantern style lamps. These units add to the character of the streetscape in a more positive way than standardised aluminium or concrete lighting units would and as such they should be retained and correctly maintained.

**7.9** The remainder of the conservation area has a mixture of differing styles of standardised lighting units and these lack the character of those found along Pilton Street.

### **Litter**

**7.10** Litter is an issue in some isolated areas of the conservation area, most noticeably outside of food outlets such as the fish and chip shop. Although litter is not a major negative factor, it may be necessary to supply litter bins in strategic locations, such as outside of premises which sell food.

### 8 Opportunities for Enhancement

**8.1** The former glove factory occupies a central position within the conservation area, being located to the west of the Parish Church and to the north of Bull House. The building is currently under utilised with its upper floors being mostly vacant. Its current uses are mainly light industrial which have attracted low-rent occupiers, which has had the result of a general lack of investment in the maintenance of the building.

**8.2** From certain viewpoints the building is an eyesore, particularly when the inner courtyard is viewed from the southwest where broken windows can be seen on the upper floors and ivy grows up portions of the building.

**8.3** It has been demonstrated that buildings such as this can be utilised to provide small scale units that can attract more sustainable uses, such as at the nearby Old Ice Factory. By encouraging the full use of buildings such as this, and attracting longer term letterings the issues of maintenance can be overcome. As such the biggest problem currently facing this building is its partial occupancy, an issue which must be overcome if the building is to be properly maintained in the long term.

**8.4** The Pilton Auctions site at the southern end of Pilton Street currently detracts from the character of the area and is currently disused. The adjacent site of Kirkhams tyres contains a mix of buildings, from the only remaining historic wharfside warehouse to single level 20th century industrial sheds with asbestos roofs. Both of these sites are potential targets for redevelopment or enhancement, however their flood risk status means that compatible uses must be identified for these sites.



## 9 Parks & Open Spaces

**9.1** The conservation area includes two large areas of public open space, in the form of Pilton Park and Rotary Gardens. Both of these areas have issues with anti-social behaviour, especially after dark.

**9.2** It has been suggested that lighting in these public areas may deter their use for nefarious activities, such as the use of drugs. The practicalities and implications of such works needs to be investigated, as do any alternative options that may be available.

**9.3** The improvement of the public realm, particularly in Pilton Park, by enhanced planting schemes and the replacement of several trees that were removed some years ago have also been suggested by members of the public during consultation on the character appraisal.

**9.4** The addition of dog waste bins, particularly in Rotary Gardens has also been identified as an issue, and given that these open spaces are popular with dog walkers the justification of such facilities is obvious.

### 10 Article 4(2) Directions

**10.1** Perhaps the greatest threat facing conservation areas in the UK is development not controlled by the planning system. The majority of these ‘permitted developments’ affect private dwelling houses and allow for minor works to be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission.

**10.2** These rights were granted by the ‘Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995’ and cover things such as changing windows and doors, erecting satellite dishes and, most recently, some installations of on-site renewable energy generation equipment.

**10.3** As well as granting these various rights of development the order also provided provision for revoking them under certain circumstances, primarily within architecturally, or historically, sensitive areas. The section of the order dealing with repealing permitted development rights is Article 4. For a direction to be enacted under this article certain conditions must be met.

**10.4** For example if the local authority wanted to prevent homeowners in an area from replacing windows without planning permission that area would have to contain some surviving historic windows that would be protected by the measure. Equally the area would have to contain some inappropriate modern replacement windows – as this demonstrates that there is a threat from inappropriate works carried being carried out.

**10.5** Article 4 directions do not remove all permitted development rights, rather they are targeted at specific forms of permitted development and the developments they target must be justified.

**10.6** The possibility of utilising Article 4(2) directions within Pilton will be investigated as a result of this management plan, and if considered appropriate and practical may be implemented within the conservation area. Community consultation would precede any adoption of such a scheme.

**10.7** It should also be noted that if a planning application is required exclusively as a result of an Article 4(2) direction then no application fee will be applicable.

## 11 Management Action Plan

Task / Issue	Timeframe	Responsibility
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material consideration in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Pilton Conservation Area.	Ongoing	NDC
Ensure maintenance plans are in place for the regular maintenance of historic street furniture and street lighting installations.	Ongoing	Highways / BT Royal Mail
Investigate the options for Article 4(2) directions within the Pilton Conservation Area and if appropriate implement such directions.	6 months	NDC
Investigate options & need for reducing anti-social activity within the public open spaces of the conservation area, particularly after dark.		Police / NDC
Re-investigate options for reorganisation of the traffic system within Pilton (such as one-way systems and traffic calming measures).		Highways
Re-investigate options for parking control (such as installation of additional bollards), particularly along sections of Pilton Street where free on-street parking is provided but cars can still be found parked on existing double yellow lines opposite.		Highways / NDC
Investigate the options for improving the appearance, and encouraging sustainable long-term use of, the old Pilton Glove Factory so as to secure its future maintenance.		NDC - North Devon+
Use section 215 notices to encourage property owners to maintain their property in a tidy fashion.		NDC

# 1 Conservation Area Map

