Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This Conservation Area Management Plan for Rumsam follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the area which was adopted in December 2009.

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 Rumsam – 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, as amended October 2008 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended April 2008.

1.4 The special character of Rumsam 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 Rumsam. 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
Good degree of survival of historic features such as window joinery.	Some poor quality modern infill developments out of character with surrounding properties.	Enhancement of modern infill properties, including bungalows at the northern end of the conservation area.	Further infill development, particularly if of an ill-considered, unsympathetic design attempting a significant increase in development density.
Mixed styles of development arising from piecemeal development over a long historic period, while retaining the villa character and open nature of the area.	Use of some routes as a short cut to avoid traffic at the Newport Road / South Street junction, despite access restriction signs.	Planting of new trees, including rare or native species to replace those at the end of their lives. Fruit trees may be particularly appropriate given the historic presence or orchards in the area.	
Most buildings in good repair and fully occupied, with owners/occupiers sensitive to the historic character of their property and its setting.	Use of the northern parts of the area for residential parking from neighbouring streets, including vehicles parking on pavements.	Enhancement of street signage, some of which is standardised signage of indifferent quality compared to local historic signage.	
	Original street now split by the route of the North Devon Link Road.	Enhancement / reinstatement of traditional front	

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
		boundary features such as iron railings.	
	Mature trees now coming to the end of their lives - possibly needing felling or becoming hazardous.		

3 Archaeology

3.1 The potential for Rumsam to have its origins as an 11th century settlement and its confirmed existence as early as 1499 give the area a good degree of archaeological potential. Some limited archaeological recording was carried out in 1983 but this had its main focus on the medieval borough of Newport and not on Rumsam itself. Archaeological investigations within Rumsam have been mainly the result of watching briefs such as the work carried out at the Willow Tree Road junction in 2005.

3.2 It is suggested that the earliest phase of building at Rumsam may have been along Rumsam Road in the area of Deer Park Cottage.

3.3 Where work is subject to the planning process it will be considered within the context of PPG 16 and may be subject to relevant conditions such as a period of professional quality archaeological investigation and recording. This is most likely to affect any engineering or construction works along Rumsam Road, particularly at its southern end.

3.4 When work not requiring consent is being carried out by private owners they should be aware of historic features; such as artifacts and wall footings to changes in colour of the earth. If anything is found people are encouraged to contact the Council for advice. Significant finds ought to be recorded to add to our understanding of the history of Rumsam and its development over time, and even relatively small finds that could at first glance be considered insignificant can add to our understanding of the settlements history.

3.5 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 Roofscape

4.1 The roofscape is not a particularly prominent part of the conservation area as no elevated viewpoints are immediately possible, but does still add interest in places to views along Rumsam Road. The appraisal identifies other key views in which the roofscape plays its part, but it is not possible to identify every important view within the appraisal and the roofscape is generally of importance throughout the conservation area.

4.2 Other features such as chimneys, ridges and rainwater goods, add further interest to the roofscape in Rumsam. The main roofing material is slate, often imported from Wales. Clay pantile roofs do appear within the area, mainly on ancillary buildings such as the agricultural outbuildings associated with Ashcroft. This difference in roof covering helps to establish a hierarchy of functions.

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. The buildings within the town have retained their chimneys, but the potential threat of their removal should not be ignored.

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 There is a good degree of survival of historic cast iron rainwater goods within the conservation area. 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. However, with improved modern paints maintenance periods can stretch to several years and the life span of properly maintained iron rainwater goods still approach the 100 year mark. 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, much of which arrived by sea from Wales.

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 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 Rumsam possesses a mix of buildings constructed of a variety of materials and over a long period of time. Some cob buildings survive particularly at the southern end of the conservation area, Deer Park Cottage and Honeywells (number 23) being examples. Examples of Georgian buildings constructed from local stone or brick and rendered over are also prominent, with Rumsam House and Orchard Cottage being good examples of this type. In several locations, but particularly at the northern end of the conservation area the use of polychrome construction materials is also apparent, both for buildings and features such as boundary walls. Repointing is a major long-term maintenance consideration on the brick buildings while maintenance and repair of render is the largest issue with buildings of cob or the rendered Georgian buildings, which could potentially be built of poor quality stone.

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 ensured that the inner surface would not get wet and that when dry weather returned 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.

5.4 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 within the building fabric, cement will crack at the slightest movement allowing moisture to further penetrate into the building.

Rendering

5.5 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, such as cob, 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.

5.6 Movement within a building almost invariably leads to cracking of the brittle and inflexible 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 and the potential for damage to the fabric through the transfer of soluble salts from the cement itself.

5.7 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 the use of lime based renders and plasters.

Polychrome Decoration

5.8 Several buildings within the area feature 'structural polychromy', that is to say that their materials have a variety of colours and these materials are used to create a decorative design feature, or to highlight architectural features.

5.9 The greatest threat to this architectural feature comes from painting or rendering over the building. Examples of this form of redecoration can be seen within the northern parts of the conservation area, including 'The Old Vicarage' and its associated boundary walls along Bishops Tawton Road. The rendering over or painting of buildings displaying polychrome decoration should be avoided wherever possible and only considered where the fabric of the building is decaying to the point at which a protective layer of render is required to safeguard the building.

5.10 Once a building has been externally rendered or had a decorative scheme painted over, it is difficult, expensive and time consuming, and often simply impractical, to effectively reverse these interventions and return the building to its original appearance.

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 town. Like most places Rumsam has retained a degree of historic joinery which sits alongside sensitive replacements as well as unsympathetic, poorly detailed modern joinery. Given that only one building within the area is listed the degree of survival of historic joinery is very good.

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 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 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 artifacts 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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 uPVC windows accumulating at recycling centres in the absence of satisfactory means of disposal.

Windows

6.7 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.

6.8 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 considered appropriate.

6.9 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 the historic character. Overlapping 'storm-seal' type details are an entirely modern introduction and are unnecessary if flush fitting units are properly made and maintained. 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 traditional 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.

  Modern sealed argon units are becoming available which make narrow double glazing which can be incorporated into historic frame profiles possible, the units are highly expensive and their longevity not yet proven. 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 matching sills in terms of both materials and details.

Doors

6.10 Doors can add to the character of the streetscene in much the same way. It is worth remembering that a little time and money spent on periodic maintenance and painting can allow a good quality historic hardwood door to remain serviceable for many years.

6.11 It should also be remembered that traditional timber doors may hold 'door furniture' such as knockers, knobs, letterboxes and hinges which are still serviceable even when the door itself has been allowed to decay beyond salvaging. If a replacement timber door is sourced these older pieces of door furniture can be re-used on the new door. By their nature uPVC doors come with letterboxes, hinges and handles ready fitted, often moulded as part of the unit and the sensitive, and sustainable, re-use of historic features is not possible.

6.12 Where a door is accompanied by a doorcase it is often the case that the door was designed as part of the unit and replacement by a door of different design will detract from the appearance and character of the building as a whole. Even when not accompanied by doorcases the replacement of a well designed historic door with a standardised modern unit will be detrimental to the character of the building, and thus the wider streetscape.

6.13 One property along Rumsam Road (The Laurels) has a garden gate opening onto Rumsam Road itself which has all the appearance of an old door previously in use on the house itself, incorporating as it does brass knockers, letter box and handle.

7 Streetscape

7.1 There is little in the way of street furniture within the Rumsam Conservation Area, with street lighting being the most notable component. Street lights are of modern designs and materials, not of any outstanding design or material quality but at least having a degree of consistency and continuity.

7.2 Street surfaces are tarmac pavements and road surfaces throughout, not of outstanding quality or aesthetic appeal but at least in good repair and of consistent finish. The exception being a small area of historic cobbled pavement surface in the area of Deer Park Cottage. Certainly it would be desirable to retain this last surviving section of historic street surface.

7.3 As with the mixture of periods and styles of the buildings property boundaries are also treated in different ways. Some properties have hedges, some have low boundary walls, some combine the two and others have walls topped by iron railings, the best example of the latter being at Chilbury.

Street Signage

7.4 Some streets within the Rumsam Conservation Area (Fortescue Road and Rumsam Road) have ceramic tile street signs, of the same design as those seen within the Barnstaple area.

7.5 Although these tiles can still be manufactured by the original company (Craven Dunnill Jackfield Ltd. of Ironbridge) their cost makes it prohibitive to extend the scheme to other streets or even to make repairs to the existing signs. However the modern street signage on some of the side roads and new estates is of standardised design and does not reflect the high quality of the surrounding built environment. It may be possible to improve the standard of street signage within the area in the future.

8 Infill Development

8.1 The low development density of Rumsam can potentially make the area an attractive proposition for Infill Development. The area has evolved over time by the gradual development of orchards, gardens and fields between plots resulting in an attractive mixture of buildings from different periods. Despite this the majority of buildings are still relatively large Villa style properties in substantial plots. Further subdivision risks fundamentally altering this aspect of the area's character by eroding the significance of the open spaces between buildings and the relationship between building sizes and their plot sizes.

8.2 Infill development is a complex subject to effectively tackle, as it maximises the use of existing developed areas to reduce the number of homes that need to be accommodated on previously undeveloped land. Also infill development can be a very positive thing, filling unsightly voids within the streetscape and removing vacant or derelict sites which are not only unsightly but also potentially hazardous and magnets for anti-social activities. In some cases infill can blend effectively and add to the existing character. However this form of development should not be at the expense of the distinctive local character as identified in the character appraisal, especially where open spaces and a low development density are part of what makes an area distinctive.

9 Action Plan

Action	Timescale	Lead Agency
Enforcement of the vehicular access restrictions in place within the Rumsam area.	6 months	Highways / Police
Investigate options for enhancement of street furniture, particularly standardised street signs.	12 months	NDC / Highways
Investigate options for alternate parking arrangements and restrictions.	9 Months	Highways
Investigation of options for replacement / encouraging replacement of mature trees approaching the end of their life.	12 Months	NDC / BTC
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Rumsam Conservation Area.	Ongoing	NDC
Use adopted SPD and planning policies to prevent inappropriate infill development that would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.	Ongoing	NDC