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## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This Conservation Area Management Plan for Barnstaple Town Centre follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the town that was adopted in March 2010.

**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 Barnstaple – 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 Barnstaple 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 Barnstaple. 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 quality architecture throughout the town, mostly in good condition giving a strong local identity and character.	Some dilapidated buildings and vacant sites lacking the funding necessary for their repair / reuse.	Some vacant / derelict sites within the town centre suitable for redevelopment.	Large portions of the town centre at risk of flooding.
Highly accessible by road and rail with good public transport links and parking provision.	Some aspects of the public realm, such as brick planters on Boutport Street, are beginning to show their age.	Sites bordering the conservation area suitable for redevelopment which could enhance the area's setting.	Sites bordering the conservation area suitable for redevelopment which could harm the area's setting if done unsympathetically.
Vibrant retail centre with a good mix of local retailers and national/regional chain stores.	Some vacant units within the retail core of the town.	Consistency of new street furniture and signage.	Loss of retail outlets and vacant premises as a result of the economic downturn.
Large number of listed buildings resulting in good retention of traditional architectural features.	Inconsistency of styles of street furniture, benches, bins etc.	New development will be directed to the town centre in a sequential approach to site selection.	Demand for additional out of town retail and commercial space may harm the retail vitality and diversity of the town centre.
Generally good quality of retail signage and signage not usually taken to excess.	Intrusion of vehicles in pedestrian spaces ie. Butchers Row, High Street etc.		Damage to Castle Mound (Ancient Monument) from proliferation of saplings and immature trees.

## 2 SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Accessibility to local heritage through the Museum and Heritage Centre.			Switch to night-time economy in some parts of town and potential for anti-social behaviour.
Vibrant use of historical buildings for the original purpose, such as Pannier Market and Butchers Row.			
Majority of buildings occupied and in good repair.			
Pedestrianised areas provide pleasant shopping environments.			
Accessible natural green spaces and green infrastructure within the town.			

## 3 Archaeology

**3.1** The centre of Barnstaple has great archaeological potential with the Conservation Area covering the historic core of the town. The area of greatest interest is that within and immediately outside the circuit of Bourtport Street, reflecting the route of the medieval town walls. Due to the density of development here there has been little scope for archaeological investigation and as such opportunities to improve archaeological understanding should be taken wherever possible.

**3.2** 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.

**3.3** 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 Barnstaple 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 town'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.

**3.5** Any future works within the river itself, dredging or flood defence schemes for example, may have the potential for uncovering artifacts, some of which may be of archaeological significance and such works would be subject to an archaeological watching brief.

### 4 Roofscape

**4.1** The roofscape is a prominent part of the conservation area, as a result of the landscape setting of the town, being within a valley with views down onto the town possible from the surrounding hills. The appraisal identifies several external 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. The enclosed streets and height of buildings hides many roof slopes from view from short distances although some can be seen and others can even be considered prominent.

**4.2** Other features such as chimneys, ridges and rainwater goods, add further interest to the roofscape in the town. The main roofing material is slate, often imported from Wales although some examples from Devon and Cornwall (Delabole).

#### 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. Indeed chimneys form a major element of the streetscape within areas such as Summerland Street and Salem Street, although chimneys also make a positive contribution to the streetscape elsewhere.

**4.4** 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.

**4.5** 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

**4.6** 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.

**4.7** In some cases rainwater goods carry decorative features and embellishments and these are largely impossible to replicate in modern materials.

**4.8** 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. With improved modern paints maintenance periods can stretch to several years. Lightweight cast aluminium rainwater goods may also be suitable for use on some buildings.

**4.9** 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.

**4.10** 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 where exposed to direct sunlight. 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**

**4.11** The dominant roofing material within the conservation area is natural slate, much of which arrived by sea from Wales.

**4.12** 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.

**4.13** 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.

**4.14** 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.

### Turnerised Coatings

**4.15** Many of the slate roofs in Barnstaple have been sensitively repaired over the years, unfortunately a few have been treated with waterproof bituminous coatings applied over hessian, in a process called 'turnerisation'. This process was first developed in the 1880's and as such is not a new technique, although the process is still carried out with some refinements having been developed over the years.

**4.16** The nature of this type of repair is a short term one as the coating softens in hot weather and becomes brittle in very cold weather, and after 10 years or so the coating begins to fail. This means that either the process must be repeated and an additional coat of the treatment applied at further cost, or the roof must be repaired in some other way.

**4.17** The major drawback of the process is that once applied it is difficult and costly to remove. A repair of a slate roof may be more expensive but will last significantly longer (80+ years) and the majority of the slates can often be reused after this period, with only the timber batons and nails needing replacement. After turnerisation it is almost always the case that all of the slates must be discarded, leading to a much higher cost as new slates must then be purchased.

**4.18** Property surveyors will be only too aware that the presence of turnerised coatings will potentially have future cost implications for owners as the coating implies that the roof covering itself was defective and the repair has only a limited lifespan as well as damaging the prospect of recycling the existing roofing materials. As such turnerisation may also have a negative impact on resale value of properties.



## 5 Walls

**5.1** Barnstaple possesses a mix of buildings constructed of a variety of materials. The majority of buildings are either of exposed brick or rendered local stone with some ashlar stone buildings constructed of imported masonry such as Bath Stone, particularly for grander buildings such as those constructed by the Bridge Trust. Other buildings contain a mixture of materials, brick buildings with stone detailing for example. Repointing is a major long-term maintenance consideration on the brick and ashlar buildings while maintenance and repair of render is the largest issue with buildings which have been rendered.

### 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. Equally during the early 19th Century, wars with France had led to the high cost of building materials, and using poor quality stone or brick and using render to give a more aesthetically pleasing result became common.

**5.6** 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 by changing the way in which moisture moves around the fabric of the building.

**5.7** Movement within a building almost invariably leads to cracking of the hard but 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 and the potential for damage to the fabric through the transfer of soluble salts from the cement itself.

**5.8** 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 using lime based materials.

### **Polychrome Decoration**

**5.9** Some of the brick built buildings within Barnstaple town centre 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.

**5.10** The greatest threat to this architectural feature comes from painting or rendering over the building. 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.

**5.11** Once a building has been externally rendered or had a decorative scheme painted over, it is difficult, expensive and time consuming 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 Barnstaple has retained a degree of historic joinery which sits alongside sensitive replacements as well as unsympathetic, poorly detailed modern joinery. The majority of properties in the High Street have retained traditional joinery to some degree, whether it be as shopfronts or windows, and this lends positively to the character of the retail core of the High Street and Boutport Street.

**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 premises 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. 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 uPVC 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 considered appropriate.

**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 the 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 matching sills in terms of both materials and details.

## Doors

**6.9** 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.

**6.10** 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.

**6.11** Where a door is accompanied by a doorcase or other associated architectural features 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.

## Shopfronts

**6.12** As a predominantly commercial area there are a good number of traditional shopfronts within Barnstaple Conservation Area that survive relatively intact, with the southern end of the High Street at its junction with Boutport Street together with Cross Street, Joy Street and Bear Street having good examples.

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

- Retention of features – Where historic and traditional features such as stallrisers survive they should be retained. It is also important that surviving features are not unnecessarily hidden by modern additions and signage.
- 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. Internally illuminated signs are not considered appropriate within historic shopping areas.

- 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.
- Standardisation – National retailers and companies with standardised shop signage may be required to vary from their standard design so as to be better in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Many national retailers will have a 'conservation' variant of their standard signage which will be more appropriate.

## 7 Streetscape Features

**7.1** Within the streets of Barnstaple several interesting historic features survive, such as drain covers manufactured by now closed local foundries. Items such as these are irreplaceable, and although they will clearly not last forever their unnecessary or early loss should be avoided wherever possible, even where this means the relocation of these drain covers to new locations.

**7.2** Some parts of the infrastructure of the streets within Barnstaple Town Centre are in better condition than others, while there is also a wide range of quality of materials and finishes. As an example the pavement materials range from stone sets with sunken drainage channels (ie. Holland Walk) through concrete slabs, flagstones (Paternoster Row area), tessellated brick pavements to standard tarmac finishes. Although there are these different materials within the conservation area they are spread over a large area and rarely change part way along a street leading to some perception of consistency.

**7.3** Other elements of the public realm, such as brick built planters near the junction of Boutport Street and Bear Street / Joy Street, are showing their age. The promotion of biodiversity within the town centre, as well as the attractive planting schemes, means that planters such as these are a desirable addition to the streets of Barnstaple. Investment in the planting schemes themselves is generally good however investment in cleaning and repairing the masonry structures is needed, or investigation into replacements which will be long lasting and need minimum maintenance.

**7.4** Due to the retail nature of the majority of the conservation area, shopfronts and signage can have a large impact on the character and appearance of many of the streets within the conservation area.

**7.5** North Devon Council has existing guidance on the design and appearance of retail signage and shopfronts, although this is in the process of being reviewed and updated. The policies within the document seek to minimise unnecessary signage, particularly unnecessary illumination of signage. A result of this is that all stores should be on an even and fair basis for signage applications with clear guidance as to what degree of signage is considered to be necessary and acceptable. This way no one retailer should stand out above and beyond their neighbours as a result of their sign displays, while all retailers should be permitted sufficient signage as to advertise their presence.

**7.6** Unfortunately many retailers choose to install their signage before applying for consent, leading to costly alterations when they find that their initial fitout is unacceptable, leading to periods when some premises have unauthorised and unacceptable signage. This requires the local planning authority to be vigilant in its

enforcement of its policies, ensuring that all signage is applied for and meets the requirements of any consents so as to avoid neighbouring retailers making the assumption that unauthorised signage sets a precedent for them to follow.



## 8 Infill Development

**8.1** The town centre of Barnstaple has few gap sites which would lend themselves to infill development, although there are several large vacant sites which could see development of this nature.

**8.2** The most immediately obvious is the former livestock market, currently in use as a public car park. When the livestock market closed in 2001, and was subsequently demolished (2003), the intention was for the site to be redeveloped and several schemes for new retail developments were proposed, all eventually coming to nothing. The site has been in 'temporary' use for car parking ever since and recent developments such as the construction of public toilets at the edge of the site have further secured this now established use. However it should be remembered that this is a previously developed brownfield site and its redevelopment in the future cannot be ruled out. The nature of the site, immediately adjacent to a scheduled ancient monument and surrounded by several listed buildings, means that any development here would need to be particularly sensitive in its appearance and design. The site is also considered by the Environment Agency to be at risk of flooding, further constraining the design and use of any redevelopment here.

**8.3** The extreme southern end of the conservation area along Taw Vale already demonstrates the dangers of inappropriate infill development, in the shape of the medical centre in the gardens of Riversvale. The flat roofed structure in no way acknowledges the 3 storey Georgian house, the garden of which it occupies. Few of the large houses in this part of the conservation area have gardens large enough to accommodate infill development in a sensitive fashion, but the limited options for development within the town centre mean that these sites will undoubtedly become increasingly attractive to prospective developers.

**8.4** Another form of infill development, though the demolition of existing buildings and the subsequent redevelopment of the site to a higher density, is possible within the conservation area. The combination of flood risk and the number of listed buildings mean that opportunities for clearance of a significant sized site for a form of redevelopment likely to obtain planning consent, would be highly restricted. However it should be noted that this type of development has happened before, with the creation of the Green Lanes shopping centre in the late 1980's.

**8.5** North Devon Council has guidance on Infill Development in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document which sets out the potential benefits weighed against the potential harm of such development and the manner in which the appropriateness of infill development will be assessed.

## 9 Article 4(2) Directions

**9.1** 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.

**9.2** These rights were granted by the ‘Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995’ (as amended October 2008) and cover activities such as changing windows and doors, erecting satellite dishes and, most recently, some installations of on-site renewable energy generation equipment.

**9.3** 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.

**9.4** 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 being carried out.

**9.5** 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.

**9.6** The possibility of utilising Article 4(2) directions within Barnstaple Town Centre 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. However, as most of the buildings within the area are either commercial premises or divided into apartments there are few clusters of dwellings to which the protection of an Article 4(2) direction could be applied.

**9.7** 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.

## 10 Major Proposed Developments

**10.1** Proposed major developments affecting the Town Centre Conservation Area include the Queen Street / Bear Street development on the site largely occupied by a public car park to the east of the Conservation Area. This development will have an impact on the setting of the conservation area as well as the character of its eastern approaches along Bear Street.

**10.2** Access to this development from Boutport Street may also have a direct impact on the conservation area as well as views along Boutport Street. The degree of this impact will depend upon the precise design, scale, materials and layout of the buildings on the site. Any development should have a positive impact on this part of the conservation area. The current economic conditions mean that this development is unlikely to go ahead in the short term.

**10.3** The sequential nature of modern planning means that new retail, leisure, and commercial development will be directed towards the town centre as long as there are available units or sites to accommodate them. The aim of this approach is to avoid developing greenfield development outside of towns when there are sites available within the town centre and to enhance town centre vitality and viability. The result is that there will be a continual and steady stream of new businesses seeking to operate out of the town centre, which may result in demand for conversions, alterations and new buildings. All of these developments will have an impact upon the character of the conservation area, although through careful control any negative impact can be managed and minimised.

## 11 Action Plan

Aim	Timescale	Lead Agency
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Barnstaple Town Centre Conservation Area.	Ongoing	NDC, BTC
Ensure maintenance plans are in place for the regular maintenance of historic street furniture and street lighting installations, & encourage the retention of irreplaceable historic streetscape features, such as locally produced ironwork.	Ongoing	NDC, DCC, BTC
Where new pedestrian signage is required it should be functional, high quality, easy to maintain and clean, and not detract from its historic setting.	Ongoing	NDC, DCC, BTC
Prepare design guides to guide the design of future developments and promote consistent styles of street furniture.	9 months	NDC, BTC
Implement the recommendations of the 'Barnstaple Design Guide' and 'Shopfront and Signage Design SPD' within the conservation area and wider areas of Barnstaple.	Ongoing	NDC, BTC
Improve / replace / repair public realm elements, particularly the planters along Boutport Street.		BTC, NDC, Barnstaple In Bloom
Investigate a cheaper / local source for replacement blue street name tiles.	Ongoing	NDC
Manage the growth of saplings and other vegetation on the Castle Mound	Ongoing	NDC / English Heritage
Investigate the possibility of reconstructing low masonry walls around the paths on Castle Mound to prevent damage to the slopes through foot and bicycle traffic.	Ongoing	NDC / English Heritage

Aim	Timescale	Lead Agency
Investigate the options and practicalities of Article 4(2) directions to control unsympathetic alterations.		NDC
Implementation of the above if considered practical and appropriate.		NDC
Promote understanding of local history and heritage through the activities of the museum and heritage centre, heritage open days, audio trails, street level interpretation and the town heritage trail.		NDC / Museum / Local Businesses / BTC
Use the management plan and character appraisal to inform development briefs prepared for redevelopment sites within and adjoining the conservation area.	ongoing	NDC