Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This Conservation Area Management Plan for Newport follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the community that was adopted in December 2009.

1.2 It is hoped that 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 Newport – 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 Newport 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 Newport. 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 which enjoy statutory protection against inappropriate alterations.	Major Traffic Route (Newport Road) with demands for short term on-street parking.	Encourage reintroduction of traditional boundary features such as metal railings, particularly along terraces.	Inappropriate changes as a result of permitted development (replacement windows, satellite equipment etc.)
Good retention of historic features such as window joinery, doorcases, railings etc.	Unsympathetic CCTV installations fitted to clashing bare metal poles.	In buildings with retained shopfronts the possibility to reintroduce commercial use in future is always present.	Gradual reduction in the number of active commercial units within Newport Road.
High quality formal open spaces both public (Rock Park) and private (terrace gardens and Trafalgar Lawn).	Footways and Access at Rock Park Terrace blocked by 'temporary' Heras fencing inappropriately fixed to listed lamp stands.		Parts of area at risk from Flooding
Consistent and above average quality street furniture in good overall condition.	Storage of waste and wheelie bins, particularly in properties converted to apartments.		Potential for additional through traffic if housing site options at Portmore are progressed and developed.
Consistent strong architectural character of terraces.			

3 Archaeology

3.1 The small amount of archaeological investigation that has currently been carried out within the Newport Conservation Area has revealed details of historic street surfaces and a Newport Road that was historically wider than it is today.

3.2 Not much detail is known about the early origins of the settlement outside of the records of its foundation by the Bishops of Devon, and further opportunities for excavation and investigation could reveal significant information about the historic development of Newport.

3.3 The greatest potential for significant archaeological discoveries are most likely within Newport Road and its immediate surroundings, as well as within Rock Park near the site of the former port workings, although much of the material here was probably removed for the landscaping of Rock Park.

3.4 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.

3.5 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 Newport 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.

3.6 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 and many of the terraces have their roofs hidden behind parrapet walls in the Georgian style. Despite this the roofscape still adds interest to views along Newport Road, and is more prominent along Park Lane. 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 Newport. The main roofing material is slate, often imported from Wales. Clay pantile and plain tile roofs do appear within the area, more notably within Park Lane than Newport Road, although examples can be seen at 12 South Street and on a portion of the Old Dairy. Modern man-made materials can be seen on several roofs throughout the area, such as concrete and fibrous tiles. These have a very different appearance to natural materials, being more bulky than slate and often having a rough textured surface. One building (The Old Dairy) retains a thatched roof, the survival of which within the main street is a reminder of how the centres of our towns and villages would have appeared hundreds of years ago. The Old Dairy itself is listed and as such its thatched roof protected from a change of material.

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. Many buildings within the area have retained their chimneys, whether they remain functional or not, 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 buildings 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 be stretched 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 or came from more local sources such as the quarries at Delabole.

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 The mix of buildings within the Newport Conservation Area lead to a variety of issues regarding walls. The most obvious being repointing of buildings where brick or stone is left exposed, as is the case on many of the Victorian buildings in the conservation area, and rendering on the majority of the area's Georgian buildings. Cleaning may also be an issue, the process of cleaning masonry inevitably causes some degree of damage to the surface of stone or brickwork as almost all cleaning methods are abrasive or caustic. Where cleaning is carried out for purely cosmetic purposes, it is unlikely that the result will justify this damage. Equally when cleaning is carried out on only part of a building, such as one property within a terrace the visual effect is striking and aesthetically unpleasing.

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 A few 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, an example being the shop on the corner of Newport Road and South Street.

5.9 The greatest threat to this architectural feature comes from painting or rendering over the building, although there are no obvious examples of this having been done within Newport. 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 Newport has retained a degree of historic joinery which sits alongside sensitive replacements as well as unsympathetic, poorly detailed modern joinery. The impact of replacement joinery within terraces can be particularly dramatic as it damages the consistancy and repeating patterns of the frontages.

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.

  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

6.9 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 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 There are a good number of traditional shopfronts within Newport that survive relatively intact, with the central section of Newport Road from the Methodist Church to the junction with South Street containing the majority of 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 at 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 & Street Furniture

Surface Treatment

7.1 There is a wide variety of surface treatments within the conservation area, ranging from brick paviours and concrete slabs to the more typical tarmac. Curb stones appear in a variety of materials too. Again concrete appears as the standard modern material but traditional curbs of granite can still be found, with granite appearing in patches throughout Newport Road. There are also several places along Newport Road where historic granite surfaces cross the pavements where side streets radiate from the main route. These are high quality elements of the streetscape and should be retained wherever possible.

Street Furniture

7.2 Street furniture along Newport Road and Park Lane is typically of high quality, with street lamps of traditional styles. The lamps along Newport Road are not of a strictly traditional style with their twin spherical globes, however there is consistency along the entire length of the street and they do have an aesthetic quality greater than that of standardised street furniture.

7.3 Street lighting along Park Lane is much more traditional in its form, with three lamps being truly historic examples having been converted to electricity from gas at some point in the past, possibly in the 1920's or 30's.

7.4 Railings, both along property boundaries and the long stretch at the edge of Rock Park add further interest into the streetscape, with long stretches helping guide the eye into the distance. Bollards are mostly of traditional styles and of cast iron or modern cast metal equivalents. Bins are well sited near the various food retailers and take aways along Newport Road and again are of reasonably good design.

7.5 The major intrusions into the streetscape in terms of street furniture is in the form of CCTV installations, installed onto tall and wide unpainted steel masts. The example near Spar is significantly taller than the lighting columns and as such is highly visible within the streetscape. Also by being 'unfinished' in bare metal the mast is a stark and utilitarian contrast to other decorative street furniture within the area.

7.6 Benches and Bus Shelters make up the remainder of street furniture within the conservation area, both of which are small in number, benches being limited to the retail core around Spar and its neighbouring premises and the lone bus shelter in the street being roughly opposite. Undoubtedly the bus shelter's design and appearance could be improved and made to fit better with its surroundings, but its current appearance does not make any significant detraction to the quality of its surroundings.

Trees

7.7 There are few trees within the conservation area, as the density of development restricts opportunities for planting. However away from the frontage of Newport Road trees do make a positive contribution to the character of the area, especially within the formal open spaces, such as Rock Park and Trafalgar Lawn. Elsewhere, along Park Lane, trees are more prominent and act to screen buildings on the west side of Park Lane from clear views, allowing instead glimpses of the buildings as the viewer passes along the street.

Blue Tile Street Signs

7.8 Some of the streets within the conservation area have blue tiles street name signs, similar to those found in Barnstaple, and Gloster Road has a similar tile sign in black and white tiles.

7.9 Although these tiles are still manufactured their cost makes it prohibitive to extend the scheme to other streets or even to make repairs to the existing signs. The black tiles on the other hand are still in regular production and available at a more modest cost. As such repairs to the Gloster Road sign, which is in very poor condition, should be possible in the future.

Open Spaces

7.10 Formal and informal open spaces, including the front gardens of terraces, Rock Park, Trafalgar Lawn and the gardens forming the setting of properties along Park Lane all make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area.

7.11 These spaces usually form the setting of listed, or significant buildings within the conservation area as well as the larger areas providing strategic areas of public open space. These areas should be protected and retained as open spaces both for the amenity value and their contribution to the setting of the various buildings within the conservation area.

8 Action Plan

Action	Timescale	Lead Agency
Investigate options for repair of street signage on Gloster Road.	12 months	N D C / Highways
Implementation of agreed options	18 months	N D C / Highways
Agree the retention and maintenance of historic street furniture, particularly the historic lamps along Park Lane.	ongoing	N D C / Highways
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Newport 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
Removal of temporary fencing blocking pedestrian access through Rock Park Avenue.	6 months	N D C / Highways / DCC