Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This Conservation Area Management Plan for Croyde follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the town that was adopted in May 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 Croyde – 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 Croyde 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 Croyde. 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
Popular destination with a good number of visitors and tourists with a thriving local economy driven by tourism, surfing and walkers.	High pressure for car parking provision within the village.	Alleviate the pressures on the central carpark through review of alternate parking arrangements within and around the village.	Increased risk of flooding in future years as a result of climatic change.
Attractive traditional character of the core of the village with features such as thatched roofs being a key element.	Growing number of second homes resulting in a shrinking 'full-time' population.	Potential for reduction of traffic passing through the village core through redistribution of carparking areas.	Impact of potential flood defence infrastructure to alleviate increased flooding risk.
Local facilities such as the village stores and the Village Hall.	Many local shops focused on the needs of visitors and tourists rather than the requirements of the local population.	Improvement of business signage through the recommendations of the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.	
Lengthening of the holiday season with many more shops and businesses staying open year-round.	Inappropriate or excessive corporate signage and illumination on some business premises.	Reduction in the number of cars visiting the village through schemes such as the proposed 'Surf Bus'.	
Retention of some views into the surrounding undeveloped landscape.			
Easy access to long distance footpath links ie.			

2 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
South West Coast Path. These paths also allow longer distance views into the village.			

3 Archaeology

3.1 In light of the numerous recorded archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity, almost the entire area of Croyde and its environs should be considered to have at least some potential for archaeological survival. Beyond the historic core, which has the potential to contain below ground remains of medieval date, the demonstrated prehistoric presence in the area may be represented by buried remains and further surface artifacts. It is possible that prehistoric archaeology may survive within the village itself. The survival of medieval archaeological deposits and building fabric should be expected anywhere in the Conservation Area, and in particular in the area around St Helen's chapel and the known medieval farms and dwellings, both within and outside the historic village.

3.2 The likelihood that as yet unrecognised medieval elements survive within other houses and cottages in the village should be considered.

3.3 There is the potential for the survival of waterlogged artifacts and palaeoenvironmental information within the area under consideration. Favourable environments for survival may occur within the Conservation Area in close proximity to the stream, but also, importantly, beyond this area, close to the bay within the dunes and estuary region.

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 Croyde 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 village's 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 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 village 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 hide many roof slopes from view from short distances although some can be seen and others can even be considered prominent.

4.2 There are a significant number of thatched roofs within the village, as well as examples of particularly unusual cedar shingle roofs, and these make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area.

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

Chimneys

4.4 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 St. Marys Road, particularly frontal or lateral stacks and those of uneven appearance with several corbels in their height.

4.5 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.

4.6 Alterations which damage the distinctive character of chimneys include 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

4.7 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.

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

4.9 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.

4.10 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.

4.11 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

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

4.13 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.

4.14 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.

4.15 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.

4 Roofscape

Thatch

4.16 Despite the majority of the buildings within the conservation area having slate roofs the proportion of thatched buildings is significant and all except one of those buildings which retain thatch are listed buildings.

4.17 The retention of thatched roofs on listed buildings is highly important, as is the continued use of the correct vernacular thatching material, which in the case of North Devon is combed wheat reed.

Clay Tiles

4.18 Some properties within the village are roofed in red clay tiles which were manufactured at Branhams and sometimes referred to as 'Barnstaple Tiles. These tiles are of local red clay with a moulded semi-circular ridge along one edge allowing the tiles to interlock together. The visual effect is similar to, although less dramatic than, that of clay pan tiles which have an 'S' shaped cross section.

4.19 The tiles are no longer manufactured and as such cannot be replaced except for when small numbers are available from reclamation yards. As a locally produced material these tiles add to the local distinctiveness of the area and should not be lost where this is avoidable.

5 Walls

5.1 Croyde possesses a mix of buildings constructed of a variety of materials. The majority of buildings are of rendered cob and local stone, although there are examples of red brick and Marland brick buildings within the conservation area as well as exposed stone buildings such as the Church on St. Mary's Road. Repointing is a major long-term maintenance consideration on the un-rendered buildings while maintenance and repair of render is the largest issue with buildings the remainder, particularly where this render offers protection to cob.

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. Cob buildings tend to be particularly susceptible to this type of damage as water ingress can quickly damage the walling material, particularly with freeze and thaw action during the winter months.

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.

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 Croyde 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 St. Mary's Road and Hobbs Hill have retained traditional joinery to some degree, whether it be as shopfronts or windows, and this lends positively to the character of the conservation area, although almost inevitably examples of inappropriate modern replacement joinery can be seen within the streetscape of the village.

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 There are several commercial retailers along Hobb's Hill with surviving elements of traditional shopfronts. The majority of these are plain and unadorned although the level of signage on several of the properties is beginning to proliferate. As many of these retailers are local and regional specialists rather than national companies their signage and corporate identity is prone to change over time, ensuring that colour schemes and signage designs remain appropriate to the traditional character of the area is a significant issue.

6 Joinery

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 Features

7.1 There are several features within the streetscape of the conservation area which add to its character and appearance, the most striking of which are front boundary walls, occasionally of local herringbone laid slate, and the various small bridges across the Crydda on the south side of St. Mary's Road.

7.2 Other features such as the numerous thatched roofs, traditional joinery elements such as windows and doors, lateral chimney stacks which feature on several properties as well as the occasional tree and green space which breaks up the built environment all add to, and form an important part of, the local streetscape of the village.

7.3 Together with wider intangible features such as views into the wider landscape surrounding the village these physical elements are all relatively small features which add together to create the attractive and distinctive appearance of Croyde which in turn attracts numerous visitors each year.

8 Article 4(2) Directions

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 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.

8.5 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.

8.6 The possibility of utilising Article 4(2) directions within Croyde 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.

8.7 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.

9 Action plan

Action	Timescale	Lead Agency
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Croyde Conservation Area.	Ongoing	NDC
Investigate the options and practicalities of Article 4(2) directions to control unsympathetic alterations.	6 Months	NDC
Implementation of the above if considered practical and appropriate.	12 Months	NDC
Implement the recommendations of the 'Shopfront and Signage Design SPD' within the conservation area.	Ongoing	NDC
Investigate options to reduce through traffic and increase parking provision outside the village centre so as to reduce the need for traffic to flow through centre of the village.	Ongoing	NDC
Liaise with Devon County Highways to avoid the unnecessary growth of highways signage and supporting columns within the village centre.	Ongoing	NDC / DCC