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1 Introduction

1.1 This Conservation Area Management Plan for Fremington Quay follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the area which was adopted in December 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 Fremington Quay – 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 Fremington Quay 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 Fremington Quay. 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
Located along a long distance footpath and cycle route, with facilities and car parking to act as a base for long distance walkers and cyclists.	Limited vehicular parking and access.		Climate change leading to increased flooding, erosion and sea level change.
The only Conservation Area in North Devon designated specifically to protect a former industrial/commercial area.	Limekilns surrounded by fencing and the elevated platforms closed to public access.		
An attractive riverside area that draws a wide variety of visitors.			
Excellent views across the estuary.			
Home to a variety of Wildlife highlighted through Interpretation panels and the 'lookout' at the visitors centre.			
A range of surviving features and elements relating to the industrial heritage of the site.			

3 Archaeology

3.1 The intensive use of Fremington Quay from the 18th century onwards gives the area a good degree of archaeological potential.

3.2 Little in the way of formal archaeological work has been undertaken within the Conservation Area. Archaeological and artefactual evidence associated with the development of Fremington Quay will be most likely focused around the 19th century limekilns, quay side and visitor centre.

3.3 The channel of Fremington Pill and its mudflats hold high archaeological potential with regard to palaeoenvironmental evidence, and there is a high likelihood for the preservation of waterlogged organic remains at this location, for example fish weirs and wreck timbers. There is also the potential for fragments of the pottery cargoes being loaded and transported to remain preserved within the alluvial silts.

3.4 There is unlikely to be any major development at Fremington Quay, however where work is subject to the planning process it will be considered within the context of PPS5 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 Fremington Quay 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 settlement'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 Surface Features

Quayside

4.1 The quayside itself, with its railings, is perhaps the most significant feature within the conservation area. As an engineered structure in the marine environment it is exposed to heavy environmental action and will require a degree of continual maintenance. Equally as an industrial structure the quayside is well built and rugged and able to withstand the rigours of its environment.

4.2 Timber elements and iron mooring rings are in a state of partial decay, a reminder of how quickly the bustling industrial and commercial activities of the quay came to an end. Although it may not be desirable or cost effective to restore or replace these elements, some degree of protective maintenance should be undertaken to ensure that these features survive for as long as is possible.

Limekilns

4.3 The limekilns to the north of the conservation area are in poor condition. In recent years some minor stabilisation works have been carried out, and fencing provided around the upper platforms as well as to block the lower openings. The result of this is visually unattractive, but necessary for safety reasons.

4.4 The costs of fully repairing the limekilns to the point at which the safety fencing is not required will be high, especially for isolated structures which no longer serve any practical purpose. As such care for the structures is likely to focus on maintaining them in their present condition and preventing further deterioration and loss.

Visitors Centre

4.5 The visitors centre is not the historic building that many visitors imagine it to be. Photographs from the mid 1990's show that there was no building surviving here.

4.6 The design of the new building is based on the former station building which was still in existence when rail traffic ceased through Fremington in 1982. However it is by no means a replica; the elevated signal box at the end of the building is shown in photographs to have been a freestanding structure on the opposite side of the railway line from the main station building.

4.7 The design is, however, very convincing and gives a flavour of a modest traditional railway station from the late 19th century which contributes to the character of the area and provides a facility for the enjoyment of visitors.

4.8 As a modern building, modern maintenance and repair methods should be utilised in its care, while avoiding works which would compromise the essence of its design.

Housing

4.9 The small number of houses in the conservation area fall into two broad categories; those around the visitors centre which are modern rendered buildings, and those closest to Muddlebridge which are buildings of traditional construction finished in exposed brick.

4.10 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.

4.11 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.

4.12 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.

4.13 Maintenance of the modern render on other buildings should focus on retaining the engineered impermeable barrier which this provides. Any cracks appearing in the render should be filled at the earliest opportunity.

4.14 Although there is little prospect of additional residential development within the conservation area the prospect of extensions to existing buildings is a possibility. Any extensions would need to be designed to be sympathetic to their host buildings, in matching materials and of appropriate scale.

Bridge over Fremington Pill

4.15 The bridge over Fremington Pill is a sturdy structure left over from when the railway operated along the route of the Tarka Trail. Even so the bridge will require continual maintenance to prevent its deterioration and decay.

4.16 The concrete piers and their iron braces, which spend their lives partly submerged, are the most susceptible to decay, while the iron bridge deck and carriers are probably more robust. Even so an iron bridge in a marine environment will always require maintenance.

4.17 Failing to undertake such maintenance would result in the eventual need for replacement, given the costs that would likely ensue and the links the existing bridge has to the historic use of the site, ongoing maintenance is considered the more appropriate and cost effective option.

5 Action Plan

Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
Continue to monitor changes made within the conservation area under permitted development rights to ensure the character of the area is not being eroded by inappropriate alterations.	NDC	Ongoing
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Fremington Quay Conservation Area.	NDC	Ongoing
Ensure continued maintenance of the 'Tarka Trail' and its associated structures and bridges.	DCC, FPC, NDC	Ongoing