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1 Introduction

1.1 This Conservation Area Management Plan for Morteheo follows on from the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the village that was adopted in March 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 Morteheo – the council, property owners, tenants, businesses, planners, developers, designers, and statutory undertakers and service providers.

1.3 The Management Plan was produced as a draft and was subject to public consultation from 30th April 2009 -until the 12th June 2009 before being amended and adopted in its current form.

1.4 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.

1.5 The special character of Morteheo 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.

1.6 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 Morteheo. 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
Strong and prominent local character.	Narrow streets.	Local tourism has grown following the growth in surfing at nearby Woolacombe, allowing for increased investment.	Increasing loss of traditional joinery materials – especially to uPVC replacements.
Located within the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.	Steep slopes make pedestrian access from nearby Woolacombe difficult.	Good access to long distance paths such as the South West Coast Path.	
Good level of survival of historic joinery – including doorcases, windows and untreated lintels etc.	Lack of an actively worked source of new Morte Slate for repairs and new works.		
Good quality of modern development which is largely in keeping with the established character of the village.			
Extensive walks and trails across Morte Point and on National Trust owned lands.			
Good car park provision for tourists and visitors.			
Extensive usage of local building materials, especially Morte Slate.			

3 Archaeology

3.1 The historic character of Morteheo is such that there is archaeological potential virtually everywhere within the historic core of the village – focused around the Parish Church. Consequently any works that involve excavation may reveal interesting finds. 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.

3.2 Although there have been no prehistoric finds recorded within the conservation area, activity is demonstrated by finds of flint tools from the surrounding landscape as well as two stone burial chambers to the north-west and south-east. The village is recorded in Domesday Book and as such there would have been a Saxon settlement here, again most likely focused on the site of the parish church.

3.3 When work not requiring consent is being carried out by private owners they should be on the look-out for features; from artifacts and wall footings to changes in colour of the earth. If anything is found people are requested to contact the Council for advice. Significant finds ought to be recorded to add to our understanding of the history of Morteheo, and even relatively small finds that could at first glance be considered insignificant can add to our understanding of the village'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.

4 Roofscape

4.1 The roofscape is a prominent part of the conservation area, as a result of the setting of the village within a shallow bowl. Views from the north, east and west look down into the village highlighting the form of roofs. 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 the village. The main roofing material is slate, often the local Morte slate, or imported from Wales.

From outside of the conservation area the roofscape becomes the most prominent feature of the village, and thanks to the low height of the buildings and the raised churchyard views of the roofscape are also prominent from within the area.



Chimneys

4.3 Loss of chimneys is nearly always detrimental to the character of the roofscape and can interfere with the pattern of the streetscene. It is seldom necessary to remove a chimney and ought to be resisted with repair often being a less costly option. Removal of a chimney should be avoided unless there are extenuating circumstances such as

serious structural concerns that have been professionally identified. The buildings within the village have retained their chimneys, but the potential threat of their removal should not be ignored.

4.4 Alterations damage the distinctive character of chimneys by the application of smooth, crisp render that hides stonework or flattens an uneven surface. Removal of drip slates and historic pots also detracts from the character of the area and should be avoided wherever possible.

Rainwater Goods

4.5 The majority of the historic rainwater goods within the conservation area are of cast iron. 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 factory finished. 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. Typically this was historically a local 'Morte Slate' or, after the coming of the railways, imported from Wales. Today many of the local sources of slate in the south west are either exhausted or no longer worked due to high costs and there is no source of new morte slates available today.

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 Morteheo possesses a good number of stone built buildings constructed from the local slate, with some that possess slate hanging and slate window sills. The three major issues relating to walls are re-pointing, rendering, slate hanging.

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 with a structure, cement will crack at the slightest movement allowing moisture to further penetrate into a 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 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.

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 lime based materials.

Slate Hanging

Slate hanging features prominently on several buildings within the conservation area and the use of local slate for a variety of purposes is a local characteristic.



5.8 Slate hanging is found on buildings scattered around the conservation area, sometimes as a functional element of a building's design to protect porous stonework on exposed elevations or timber framing. It is also found as a decorative feature of some more modern buildings. Where the slate hanging is functional it is typically found on the south-facing elevations of buildings. Older examples feature the local Morte slates, which are relatively thick and grey-blue in colour, while modern slate hanging is machine cut, relatively thin and dark blue in colour.

5.9 Slate hanging forms an important element of the character of the conservation area and should be retained where it is already found. Similar to the way slate roofs are handled, comprehensive replacement of historic slates with modern imported slate should be avoided.

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 village. Like most places Morteohoe has retained a degree of historic joinery which sits alongside sensitive replacements as well as unsympathetic, poorly detailed modern joinery.

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 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, however, 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 to be commended.

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 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

uPVC windows showing yellowing of the false glazing bars through exposure to uV light. These windows cannot be shown to outlast timber windows and do not successfully replicate their appearance.



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 few traditional shopfronts that survive in Morteheo, the majority being found at the south of the conservation area opposite the Chichester Arms.

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.
- 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.

There are few shops within Morteheo, but several feature traditional shopfronts which contribute to the character of the area.



7 Streetscape Features

Surface Treatment

7.1 The majority of the surfaces within the conservation area are of tarmac, with many areas of the roads being too narrow to have pavements. There are isolated areas where patches of flattened bedrock can be seen protruding through the tarmac surface, especially in front of the shops to the north of Dukes Cottage.

Morte Slate Boundary Walls

7.2 Throughout the conservation area the local Morte Slate has been put to a variety of uses, and the most widespread and visible example is the use of the material in boundary walls. The local slate is laid in a variety of ways, including a decorative herringbone pattern, which add variety and visual interest to the conservation area.

7.3 Further variety is introduced by the use of large white spar pebbles as a coping for some of these walls. These pebbles are often found washed up on local beaches and as such can be found in other coastal settlements such as Ilfracombe where they are also used as copings on walls and gate piers.

Local morte slate is used throughout the conservation area in boundary walls, occasionally these have a coping course of white spar.



7.4 Due to the lack of an active quarry for Morte Slate many new developments have attempted to use alternate materials to produce similar boundary walls, often with a good degree of success, although the exact colours and the laminar nature of the Morte slates is difficult to find a good match for. This makes it difficult for the Council to specify a like for like replacement or repair, which is in this instance often an unworkable specification.

7.5 Identifying possible sources of reclaimed Morte Slate, as well as the possibility of re-opening a quarry for a short period could be investigated to maintain a supply of this important local material.

Trees

7.6 There are few trees within the conservation area, as the exposed position of the village makes it difficult for trees to become established. The majority of trees can be found in the sheltered area to the north and north-west of the Parish Hall. These trees do give an element of seclusion and shade to the lane that they flank, maintaining the narrow and enclosed feeling of Morteheo's streets.

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’ 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 Morteheo 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

Task / Issue	Timeframe	Agency
Investigate the opportunities for undergrounding of services and removal of overhead cables with the relevant utility companies.	Ongoing	Western Power Distribution / LPA *
Investigate options for Article 4(2) directions to control unsympathetic alterations.	9 Months	LPA / AONB Management
Implementation of the above if considered practical & appropriate.	18 Months	LPA
Produce a signage guidance note for Woolacombe & Mortehoe so as to guide the design and siting of future signage within the conservation area. This document will supplement an updated version of the district-wide Shopfront Design SPD which will also be produced.	18 Months	LPA / AONB Management
Use the character appraisal & management plan as material considerations in determining planning applications within and adjoining the Mortehoe Conservation Area.	Ongoing	LPA / PC**

* Local Planning Authority (Currently North Devon Council)

** Parish Council

This management plan is to be reviewed and updated on a 7 year basis, with the next revision intended for mid 2016

1 Conservation Area Map