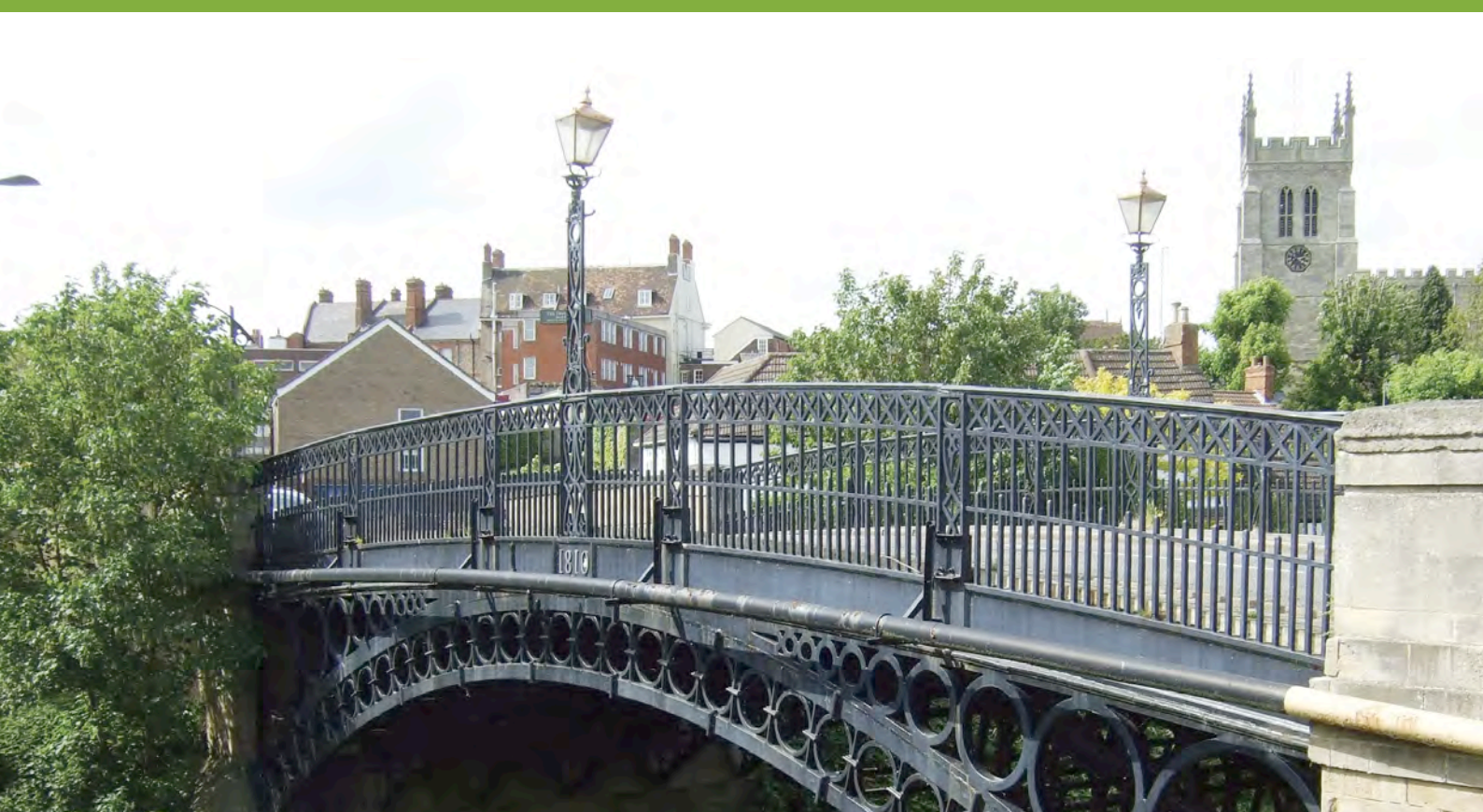


Newport Pagnell Conservation Area Review

July 2010



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1 General Context

Introduction

1.1 Conservation areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance⁽¹⁾. Newport Pagnell was first designated as a conservation area by Buckinghamshire County Council in 1969 and last reviewed in 1996. In 2009 the conservation area was extended to include the surviving former Aston Martin works buildings on Tickford Street. Map 1 'Newport Pagnell: Conservation Area Boundary and Listed Buildings' shows the extent of the revised boundary. Map 7 'Amendments to the Conservation Area Boundary (27.7.10)' illustrates the additions to the 1996 designation and 2009 south eastward extension arising from the review.

1.2 To protect the character and appearance of the conservation area a character statement is written that identifies and describes those features that are of special interest or which contribute to local character (see 2 'Local Character and Appearance'). By doing this, the character statement and supporting information provides the knowledge and understanding against which proposals that require planning permission can be assessed.

1.3 Since the last review new government guidance has made it a requirement that conservation areas and their character statements are reviewed every five years to ensure relevance and effectiveness. This review document replaces and expands upon the 1996 character statement for the Newport Pagnell conservation area.

1.4 The conservation area review is an opportunity to review the line of the conservation area boundary, re-evaluate its defining qualities and put updated strategies for its management into place.

Picture 1 St Peter and St Paul's from Tickford Bridge



Picture 2 Shops on the High Street



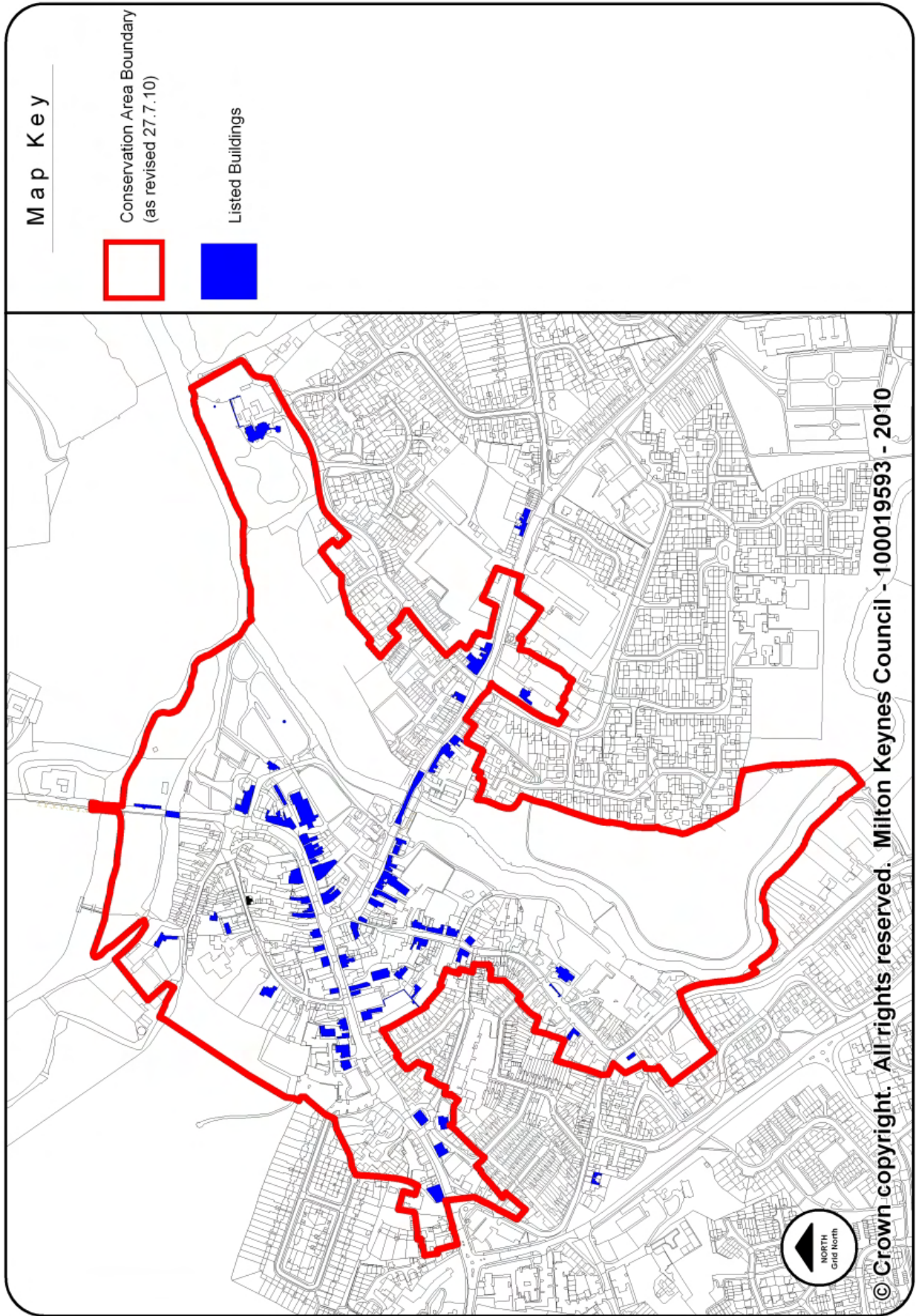
Picture 3 Doors on Tickford Street



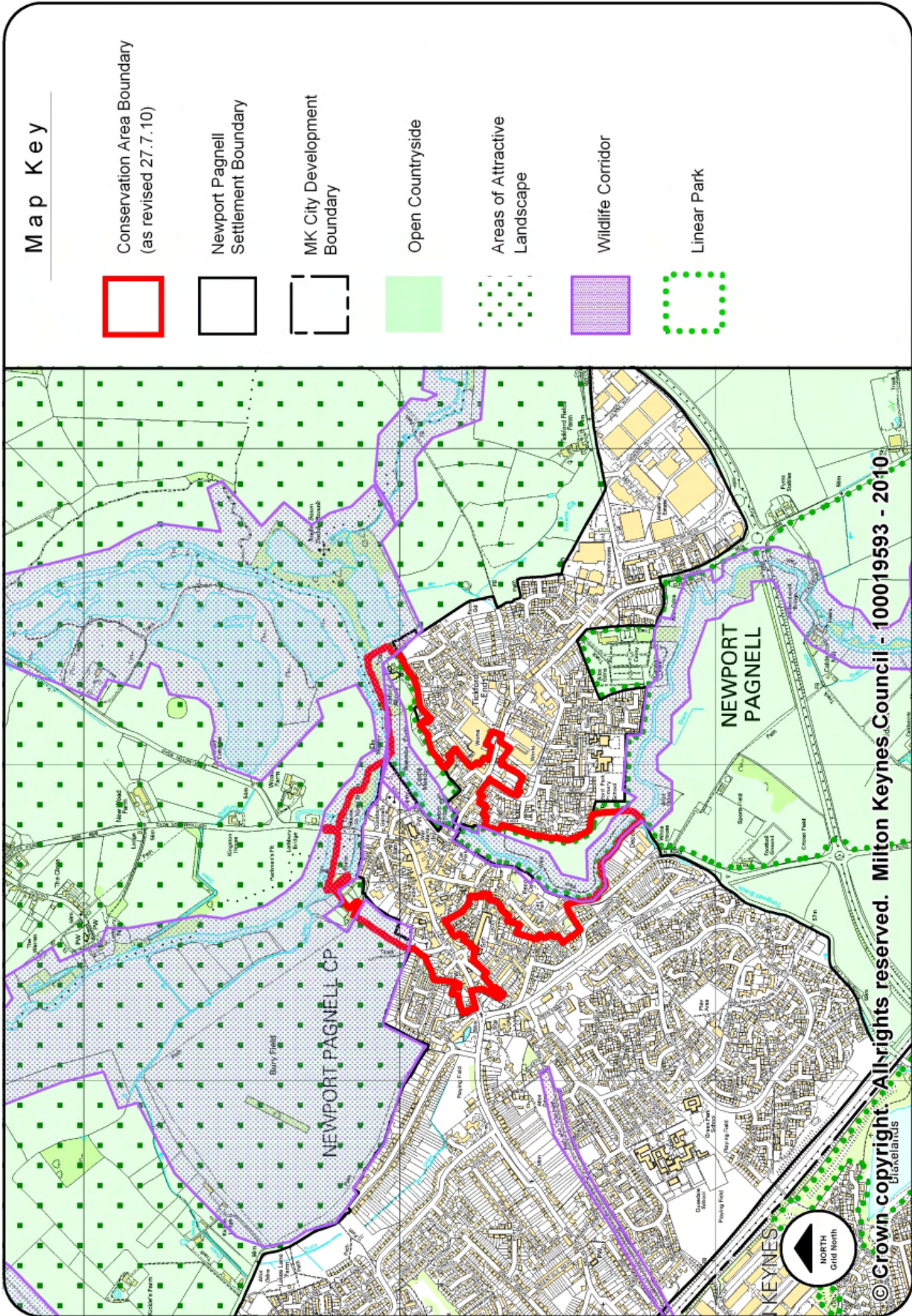
¹ Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 available to view at: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1990/Ukpga_19900009_en_1.htm

1. General Context

Map 1 Newport Pagnell: Conservation Area Boundary and Listed Buildings

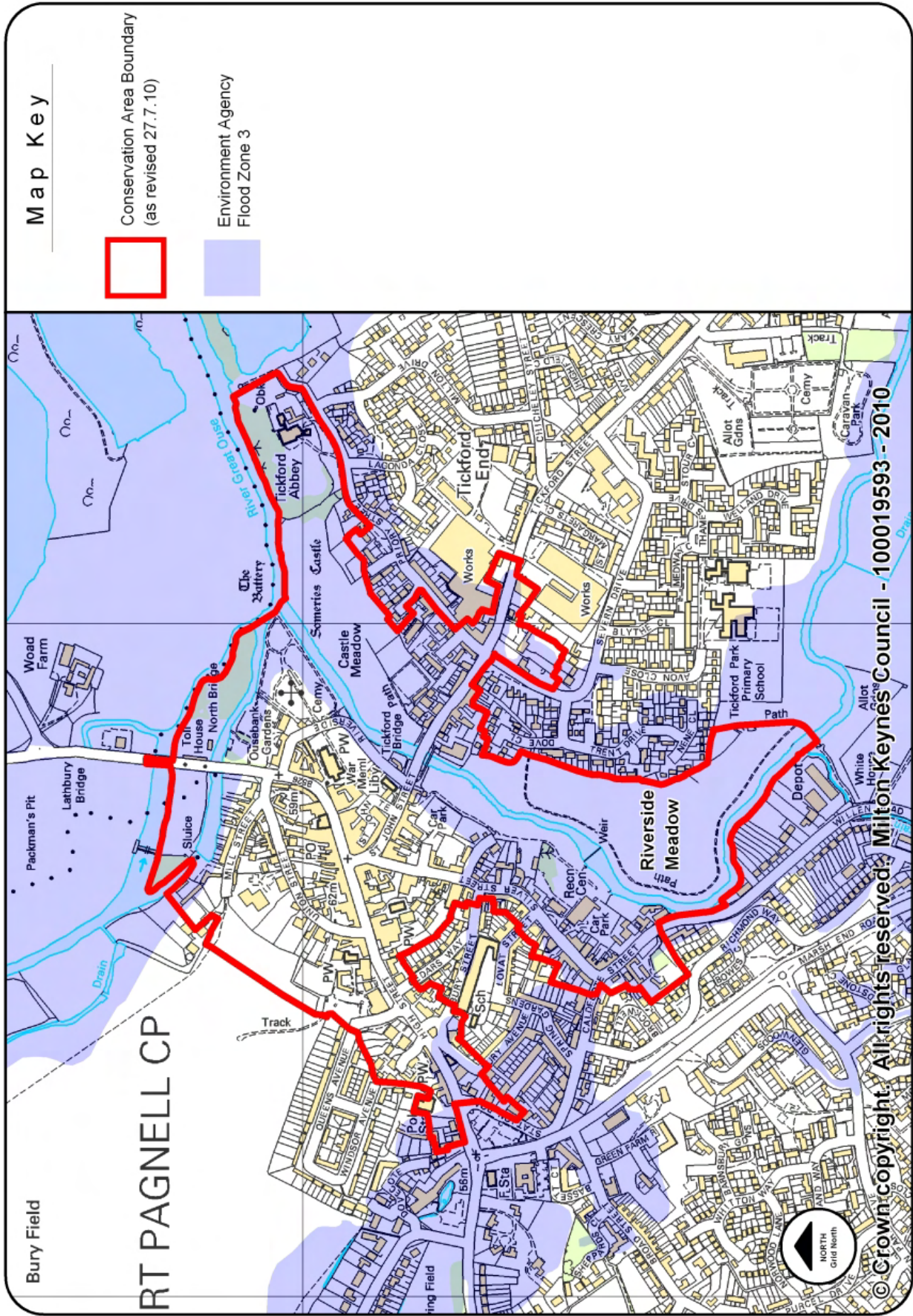


Map 2 Newport Pagnell: Local Context



1. General Context

Map 3 Newport Pagnell: Low Lying Land (Source: Environment Agency)



Location

1.5 The town sits above the confluence of the River Great Ouse and the River Lovat (or Ouzel). To the south and west lies Milton Keynes which is separated from Newport Pagnell by the line of the M1 motorway and the line of the A422 and A509 dual carriageways. Two miles south of the town lies junction 14 of the M1. The Newport Pagnell to Northampton route, the B526 brings some non-local through traffic into the town but otherwise the town is effectively bypassed.

Town Environs

1.6 To the north and east of the town lies attractive low lying meadowland. A meander in the River Great Ouse loops southward towards the town and its confluence with the River Lovat.

1.7 The shallow valleys through which these rivers meet and flow is subject to a variety of planning constraints which apply either singly or in combination depending on the precise location (see Map 2 'Newport Pagnell: Local Context').

1.8 Open countryside policies apply and the land is also designated as an 'Area of Attractive Landscape'. The land either side of the course of the River Great Ouse (and the Lovat to the south) are Areas Liable to Flooding⁽²⁾ (see Map 3 'Newport Pagnell: Low Lying Land (Source: Environment Agency)'). These represent significant constraints to the northward extension of the town. The effect of this has been to leave the historic northern edge of the town open to southward views. From the Northampton Road approach, in particular, there are important views of historic and distinctive buildings in the conservation area.

1.9 The River Lovat flows through Newport Pagnell, separating Tickford End from the town centre and forming the northern extent of the linear park and wildlife corridor that winds through the Milton Keynes new town developments to the south.

1.10 To the south and west Newport Pagnell's boundaries are defined by the M1 and the A422. Beyond the conservation area boundary the landscape has become one of late twentieth century housing estates and employment land as areas allocated for the town's expansion have been taken up. Map based inspection (including historic maps and aerial

photographs) and visual inspections on the ground confirmed that significant or recognisable survivals of land or buildings from the pre-development phase are rare. The exceptions are some buildings and land on the west side of Marsh End Road and the line of the old railway branch line, built on the course of the canal that once extended to Old Shipley Wharf on the western threshold of the Victorian town.

1.11 Between the conservation area and the M1 and further west, following the Wolverton Road, is a ribbon of housing that contains the occasional older building. Those that survive tend to be much altered with standardised late twentieth century materials used indiscriminately in extensions and for alterations and repairs. However, a handsome terraced run of late Victorian or Edwardian houses along the south side of Wolverton Road still conveys a sense of original character and quality.

² a 1% chance, or greater, of a flood in a year

1 . General Context

Geology and Topography

1.12 The centre of Newport Pagnell occupies a strategic location on a raised promontory of land defined by the confluence of the Rivers Great Ouse and Ouzel or Lovat. This riverine fork, in which the core of the settlement lies, partly determines the topography of the conservation area which exhibits considerable variation in elevation. The highest point at around 63m being reached at the parish church; from here the ground drops sharply away to the Ouse at North Bridge (58m) and to the Lovat at Tickford Bridge (56m).

1.13 Geologically the high ground of the town centre comprises a knoll of Oxford Clay yielding to the sands and clays of Kellaways Beds and ultimately the terrace gravels and alluvium lining the river valleys. North of the town the Ouse valley deposits give way to the Oolitic limestone belt which straddles the Northamptonshire border; this distinctive stone lends character to many of the surrounding villages and in part to Newport Pagnell itself. To the south and east the Oxford Clay vale resumes, reflected in the former brick and tile manufactories in Tickford and Tickford End. Moving west beyond the broad terrace gravels of the Lovat the land rises again to the Boulder Clay plateau that defines Milton Keynes.

Historic Development

1.14 There is little evidence of Roman occupation, although generally, North Buckinghamshire was extensively settled and farmed throughout the Iron Age and Roman period. There is scant evidence available to suggest significant early settlement, although an Anglo Saxon burial ground was discovered in gravel workings about 1km south east of the present town centre. Students of local history and archaeology consider Newport's origins as a burgh to be late Saxon - probably early 10th century as defence against Danish invasion along the Ouse Valley.

1.15 The Anglo Saxon core of the town was probably oval in shape, possibly having burgh defences and gates on the approach roads, these being adapted in medieval times. The name Newport implies a 'new market town'. Newport is recorded on the Domesday Book as a Manor held by the Ansculf family. It later passed to the wealthy Paynel family (the modern derivation of which gives the town its distinguishing name), who built a motte and bailey castle on the promontory.

1.16 The Manor passed by marriage to the de Somerie family, before passing to the Crown and, in Charles I's reign, to Sir Frances Annesley. In 1819, the Manor was split up and further enclosures took place. Bury Field, to the north-west of the town escaped enclosure and has important common rights held by many of the older properties in the town on account of the burgage plot arrangements.

1.17 The medieval town has the simple form of a long High Street running south-west and north-east, joined about midway along its length by St Johns Street. There is evidence that in medieval times a row of shambles stood between opposing sides of parts of the High Street at the northern end.

1.18 Other important elements in the medieval street pattern were Mill Street, Union Street, Silver Street, Church Passage and Ousebank / Riverside (once known as Dungeon Lane). The market function was the most important influence on Newport's Medieval townscape. The original High Street site was augmented by the wider Market Hill area, and also possibly by North Square, which was larger than it appears today.

1.19 The town has important Civil War connections brought about by its strategic position at the confluence of two rivers and the bridges and fording points that crossed them. Defences consisting of banks and ditches were placed around the town by the victorious Parliamentarians in 1643. A gun emplacement, known as the Battery, survives in the present-day Churchyard, and traces of the earthworks (now a scheduled ancient monument) can be seen in Bury Field to the west of the town centre. Oliver Cromwell's eldest son, also Oliver, died of smallpox in the town whilst serving in the Newport garrison.

1.20 The town grew into an important market centre; wooden and, later, stone bridges having been provided to replace fords over both the Ouse and Lovat. Maintenance for the bridges became the responsibility of the town burgesses from 1394, when tolls became payable. The bridges were always troublesome, and following a serious flood in 1809, an Act of Parliament resulted in the rebuilding of both the North Bridge (over the Ouse) and the Tickford Bridge (over the Lovat). These structures were crucial to the trade of the town which had developed in importance in the coaching trade, particularly on the turnpike road between London and Northampton.

1.21 Tickford Priory was founded in 1100 by Fulk Paganell on a site east of the River Ouzel, on the southern bank of the River Great Ouse. This Benedictine Priory was dissolved in 1524 in the reign of Henry VIII, as part of a scheme of Cardinal Wolsey's for funding Oxford Colleges. The building fell into ruin although parts were used in the building of a residence for Anthony Cave. The ownership passed to Thomas Hooton who, by 1680, had built the present Tickford Abbey as a house from the earlier remains. Tickford Abbey is separated from the town centre by Castle Meadow, locally known as the Bully - perhaps a corruption of the castle's bailey defence. Tickford Abbey had a gatehouse on Priory Street, in an area known as Tickford End. This was a separate medieval suburb of Newport as was the Marsh End area on the low lying part of Silver Street.

1.22 The nineteenth century brought many changes, both on account of these improved communications and industrialisation in general. The Newport Pagnell Canal was opened in 1814 (as a branch of the Grand Junction Canal) and was superseded by the Newport Pagnell Railway (as a branch to the London North Western Railway) in 1865. The balance of the town spread westward, with considerable housing areas erected between the Railway Station and the original town's edge. Various new industries were established, replacing the traditional pillow lace industry. Amongst these were brewing, parchment making, mustard manufacture, milling and coach building. Prominent local families in the Victorian period were Salmons, Taylor and Coales. Significantly however, because of the Ouse flood plain, only limited change and expansion took place to the north and east of the town centre.

1.23 Major changes in the evolution of the town came about after the Second World War, when pressure on the road infrastructure resulted in road widening schemes in St John Street (complete north side demolished), High Street (north-west side building line pushed back on redevelopment) and Tickford Street (north-east side). These latter proposals would have also demolished the Iron Bridge and greater parts of Tickford Street had they been fully implemented. The resulting redevelopment at St John Street has had a lasting effect on the historic core of the town.

1.24 The expansion of the town from about 4,500 to 15,000 population, particularly since the 1960's, has in the main avoided large scale disruption in the conservation area. The bypass, which opened in 1981, and the earlier Caldecote Street diversion (Marsh End Road), provided the town with an adequate road infrastructure for the remaining local traffic, and eliminated pressure for more road space. The demands of car parking and shop servicing resulted in considerable loss of historical fabric and frontages on the fringes of the town centre, noticeably the Church Passage area, Union Street, Queens Avenue and Silver Street. These changes were all part of a national trend for town centre redevelopment, one effect of which was the emergence of the conservation movement.

Planning Framework

1.25 Planning applications within conservation areas are determined in accordance with national, regional and local policy. Section 69 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990⁽³⁾ establishes the Council's duty to identify those places within its administrative area that are of special architectural or historic character or appearance and designate those places as conservation areas. Once designated, section 72 of the Act cited above establishes the Council's duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of its conservation areas.

1.26 Within Newport Pagnell conservation area there are a high number of 'listed buildings' (see Map 1 'Newport Pagnell: Conservation Area Boundary and Listed Buildings'). Listed buildings and structures are individually protected for their special architectural or historic interest. Such buildings are entered on a list held by the appropriate Secretary of State. They are held to be of significance at the national, rather than local level. Works to listed buildings require 'listed building consent'. Even quite minor alterations may require listed building consent. Undertaking works without consent is a criminal offence.

1.27 Advice should be sought from the Council if there is any uncertainty over whether a building is listed or whether proposed 'works' of alteration will require consent. The protection extends to all aspects of the building including the interior and, in some

3 available to view at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1990/Ukpga_19900009_en_1.htm

1 . General Context

cases, ancillary buildings and structures. The controls directly pertaining to works to listed buildings are unaffected by the presence of a conservation area.

1.28 Government policy for listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5), (2010) DCLG⁽⁴⁾, supported by PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (March 2010) English Heritage, DCLG and DCMS⁽⁵⁾

1.29 National legislation and guidance is supplemented by Section 12 of the South East Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (May 2009) published by the Government Office for the South East (GO-SE)⁽⁶⁾

1.30 The Council's responsibility and intention to meet national legislation and implement government guidance is confirmed under Policy HE6 of The Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011, adopted December 2005⁽⁷⁾.

1.31 Further information on supporting guidance and local policy can be found by following the link to conservation areas on the Conservation and Archaeology Team webpage⁽⁸⁾

1.32 The relationship of the planning framework to the practical management of the conservation area is set out in section 4 'Management Proposals'.

4 available to view at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5>

5 available to view at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.21136>

6 available to view at <http://www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/seplan.html>

7 Available to view at <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-policy/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=61299>

8 <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/conservation-archaeology>

2 Local Character and Appearance

Defining Special Interest and the Management of Conservation Areas

2.1 The definition of special interest (see: 'The Definition of Special Interest for Newport Pagnell Conservation Area') is a succinct summary of the reasons for designating a conservation area. The definition, in combination with adopted local plan policies, forms the basis of the management proposals for the Newport Pagnell conservation area and guides the decision-making process on applications for planning permission in the conservation area received by the Local Planning Authority (Milton Keynes Council). A draft definition formed part of the public exhibition held in the town before the consultation draft of the review was published (see section 3.2 onwards).

Conservation Area Review: Local Exhibition

2.2 Prior to drafting the review, a local exhibition was held for two weeks at the town's library. Officers were in attendance for one Thursday evening and for one Saturday morning. Information about Article 4(2) directions was also included as part of the library display.

2.3 The local exhibition took place before the Newport Pagnell Conservation Area Review (Consultation Draft) document was written and was not part of the formal consultation based on the consultation document. Although written responses received from the local exhibition were limited in number some themes, such as the need for local guidance on the constraints affecting people living in the conservation area, became apparent. These responses were taken into account when the consultation documents and the associated management strategy were written.

2 . Local Character and Appearance

The Definition of Special Interest for Newport Pagnell Conservation Area

Newport Pagnell's special interest is derived from the tightly knit conglomeration of commercial and domestic premises, interwoven with yards and passages, set on a promontory above the confluence of the Rivers Great Ouse and Lovat. The waterside approaches and green spaces provide foreground for attractive views of the town, crowned by the tower of St Peter and St Paul's Church. The rivers are bridged at Newport Pagnell, encouraging passing visitors and trade to the town.

In the town's centre is the busy High Street with a range of small independent retailers and commercial premises, creating active, diverse and visually interesting street level frontages. Important views along High Street, St Johns Street and Northampton Road are confined by a broad range of building types, age and styles, chiefly dating from the late Georgian period to the Edwardian phase.

These easily legible and comparatively open commercial spaces belie a tightly meshed collection of cottages, chapels, workshops, outbuildings and yards behind them that can be reached via a series of intriguing passages and other irregular open spaces. From here rear views of the commercial parades lining the central streets reveal timber framing, non standard brick walls and clay tile roofs, in disordered arrangements, arising from piecemeal growth along linear plots. Here too are derelict but intriguing remains of the former Taylor's mustard works.

Leading out from the principal streets are fingers of residential terraces, again of varied date and form. These rows are occasionally broken by an ornate, architectural set-piece house, inn or public house, chapel or working men's club. There are also occasional means of access to the riverside spaces that lie close to the northern and eastern fringes of the town.

Effectively spanning the commercial core of the town and the riverside spaces are St Peter and St Paul's church and yard, occupying the space known as The Battery from the civil war period. The church is the most important visual focal point of the town and, via its precincts, leads out to some of the town's most important green spaces.

This picturesque combination of green meadow and river south of the town centre provides important open space and very attractive views of the southern edge of the town as it steps down the side of the promontory from the church at the top. Through this space flows the River Lovat dividing the town centre from the Tickford End adjunct. Reached over the graceful iron bridge Tickford end is characterised by the collection of neat Georgian and Victorian houses gathered together in terraces on either side of Tickford Street and Priory Street.

Also found here are the remaining buildings of the Aston Martin manufacturing works, including a distinctive three storey carriage shop, that convey an industrial quality to the eastern periphery of the conservation area.

This mix of tightly packed domestic houses, commercial and light industrial buildings vying for space on the raised land above the river, interwoven by green meadows and rivers, creates a variety of visually pleasing views and panoramas. The Council recognises that the special character derived from this balance of built forms and open spaces is a delicate one that it will do its utmost to protect and preserve.

2 . Local Character and Appearance

Individual Character Areas

2.4 Whilst the definition of special interest embraces all of the conservation area there are streets and open spaces within the town that combine to create their own discernible character. These detectable variations of character are mainly established by the prevailing function of each area and the type of buildings found there, or lack of them. Map 4 'Newport Pagnell: Character Areas Based on Predominant Use' illustrates how the High Street is not only the focus for shops, restaurants and commercial and professional services, there is also a significant element of domestic housing, particularly at its western end and on the north side of Union Street. The prevailing character of the High Street is that of a commercial centre however. Further blurring tends to occur at the edges of character areas because in reality the change from one character area to another tends to be gradual with building types and forms interleaved. Only occasionally are there abrupt changes, for example where the domestic and commercial areas abut the open spaces of Castle Meadow.

2.5 For the purposes of this review three types of character area have been identified within the existing conservation area. These are:

1. Commercial and Retail Areas
2. Domestic Areas
3. Public and Private Open Spaces

2.6 The following paragraphs describe these constituent elements in more detail:

1. Commercial and Retail Areas

2.7 The commercial area of the town is defined by tightly knit historic properties, principally of mid to late Georgian origin with some older buildings, possibly dating to the early or mid 17th century (including a few constructed in timber frame) aligned on either side of the High Street. Here the buildings contain a large variety of food and retail outlets at ground floor level, creating a busy, bustling atmosphere on most days. Overall the impression is quite informal with the variety of built forms, colours and details giving a strong sense of visual diversity, despite the predominance of brick as the building material.

Picture 4 High Street, Looking East



2.8 Behind the buildings is an intricate and complex arrangement of plots, outbuildings and passageways creating intriguing nooks and crannies within the general built fabric of the town. Important to the character of the town is the surviving burgage plot pattern which, although fragmented, is still readily discernible as linear plots extending back from the High Street. On the north side of the High Street these plots are not at right angles to the line of the road but are cranked eastwards, further distinguishing the town's noticeably cramped arrangement.

2.9 Also sitting amongst these, are fragmented remnants of light industrial buildings, notably the remains of the Taylor's mustard works, and other isolated fragments, conveying an impression of the historic manufacturing component that existed within the town's core.

2.10 Throughout the commercial and retailing area there is a general absence of mature trees. This does not mean that those which exist are unimportant in this context, but, instead, are of particular value, contributing an element of leafiness to an otherwise resolutely and intensively built landscape.

2.11 At the northern end of the High Street this cramped layout is at its most extreme because here the promontory above the Ouse and Lovat on which the oldest part of the town sits is at its highest above the rivers and was therefore more sought after for building. Given this circumstance the main street is generously wide. It continues from the town's northern threshold in the North Square / Ousebank Street area, all the way through the conservation area to the junction with Marsh End Road, which effectively marks

2. Local Character and Appearance

the western extremity of the town's older quarters. The High Street gives the town centre a strong sense of cohesion and unity; it is also an important linking feature drawing the different parts of the town together.

Picture 5 A narrow passage through cramped rear yards



2.12 At its north eastern end the town is overlooked by the handsome stone tower of St Peter and St Paul's church. There is no sizeable market square or other subsequent, overt element of pre-planned layout here, but nevertheless the arrangement and quality of the buildings and the position and height of the church tower, all positioned on the rising land beyond the southern end of the bridge, create a distinctively picturesque and charming nucleus within the wider settlement. The proximity of the river has prevented views of these buildings being obscured by newer development on the north side with the result that the oldest part of the town is encountered first when arriving from the north. The low land in the foreground also allows good views from the Northampton Road area of the old town and its riverside setting

2.13 Intricate and makeshift arrangements of buildings and plots continue along High Street. The roundabout at the junction of St John Street and High Street marks the approximate centre of the older quarters of the town. To the north this distinctive area is bounded by Union Street and to the south by Silver Street and the River Lovat.

2.14 St Johns Street was redeveloped on its north side in the late twentieth century when many characterful shops were lost to a nondescript and 'block' like redevelopment. On the opposite side, however, are some of the town's most distinctive and memorable old shops and houses. The row progresses in fairly random (but highly distinctive and very attractive) order down to the Tickford Bridge.

Picture 6 St Johns Street



2.15 Further west the town centre begins to develop a more open character as High Street broadens, although the strongly linear enclosed views continue to predominate. Shops and business still line the street which is often busy with pedestrians. The tight knit character of the buildings also continues as does the surprising level of permeability which adds interest by giving glimpsed views of buildings set behind the roadside frontages, the Methodist church being a particular example. However, the sense of enclosure breaks down noticeably in the area between the medical centre and the old Town Hall Chambers.

Picture 7 Baptist Chapel, High Street



2.16 A number of domestic side streets enter this space on the north and south side, adding to the through traffic and making this area seem congested at times. The character of the town also becomes more dilute because there is a greater age range in the buildings and in their type (a number of houses, both large and small, are located here, some providing office space) and because the constraints and competition for plots are less intense.

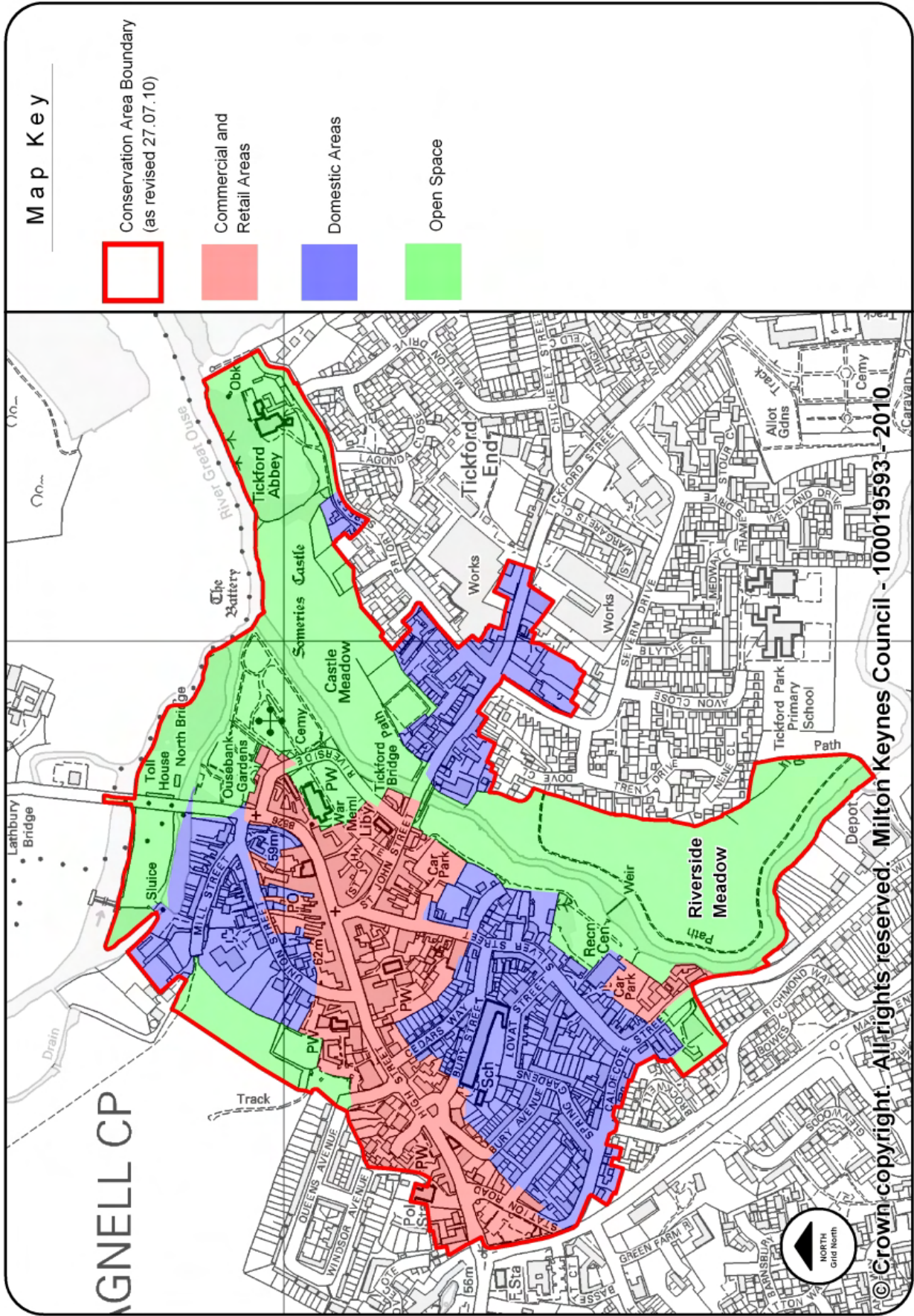
Picture 8 High Street, Western End



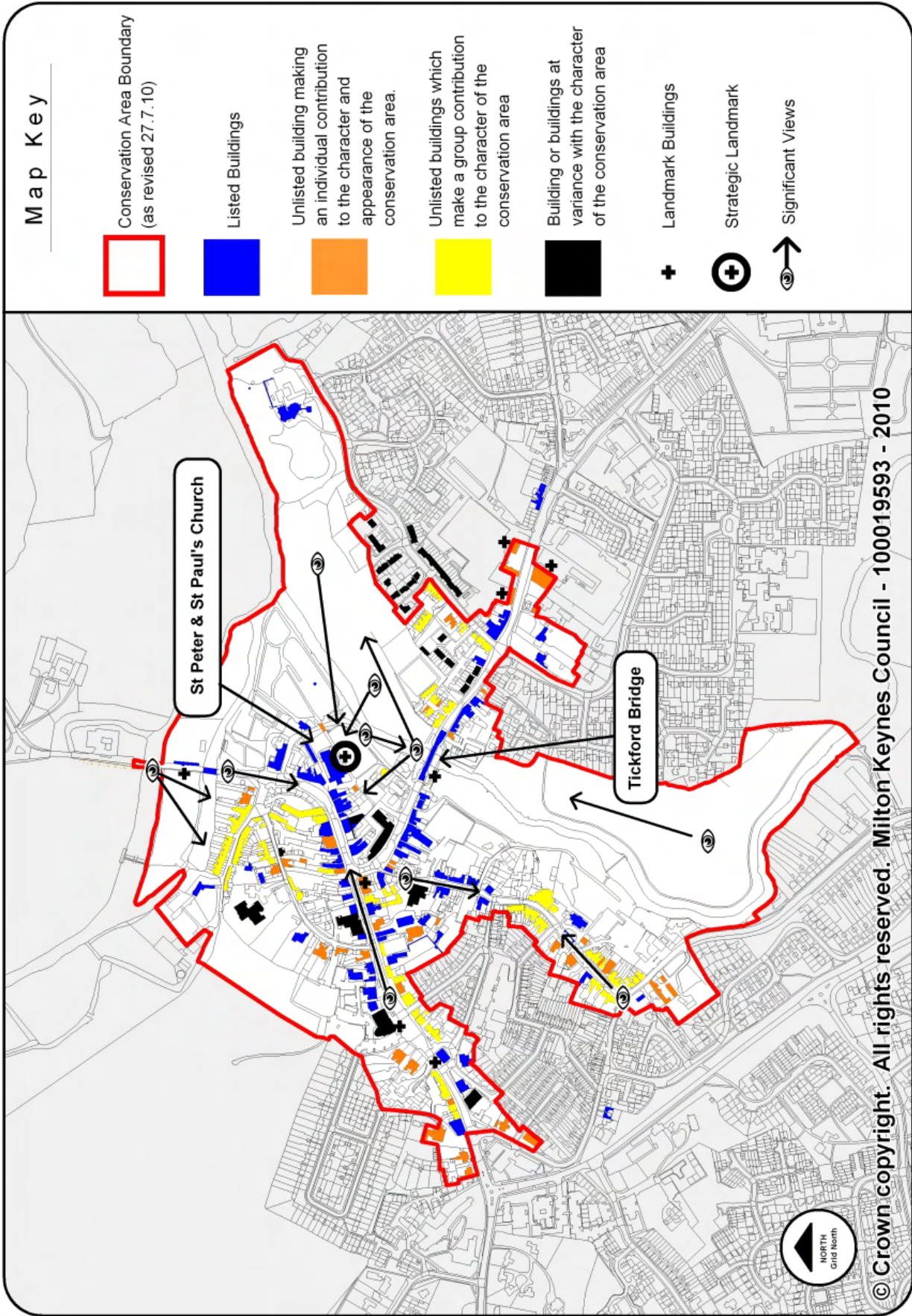
2.17 There are nonetheless important individual buildings on larger plots and collections of smaller buildings that impart strong visual interest and important cumulative built character and appearance to the locality. The balance is delicate however and so even a relatively minor or modest contradictory change could do disproportionate harm to the area's distinctive appearance.

2. Local Character and Appearance

Map 4 Newport Pagnell: Character Areas Based on Predominant Use



Map 5 Newport Pagnell Conservation Area: Location of Principal Buildings and Features



2. Local Character and Appearance

2. Domestic Areas

2.18 Areas of predominantly domestic character have been identified in three separate locations. They are along Silver Street, Mill Street and the Tickford Street/Priory Street area. All three are different from each other despite their overall domestic character. One shared characteristic is a generally lower level of traffic and bustle than is the case in the central commercial areas.

Mill Street

2.19 Mill street is the smallest of the domestic areas, commencing at North Square before running westward to Mill House and giving out onto the open meadows of Bury Field on the town's northwest flank. At its eastern end the larger housing overlooking the square is of Victorian origin. Clever handling of form and detail give the properties an attractive, balanced appearance.

Picture 9 North Square



2.20 The openness of the square, and the stature of the houses overlooking, quickly gives way to enclosed and more modest, nineteenth century, terraced cottages on either side of Mill Street. The overall character of the opposing rows survives well but, disappointingly, individual detailing and consistency has been eroded by arbitrary replacement of roofing materials and original windows and doors using inappropriate modern materials.

2.21 Smaller houses, particularly, often rely on their original doors and windows for expression and sometimes, when used in combination with a neighbouring property, or as part of a row of several houses, can make a strong architectural statement.

Almost all the houses have been robbed of their original external features and the authenticity and indeed quality of their external appearance has significantly diminished as a result.

2.22 Those house set back from the road have had their front gardens removed (which would once have helped to soften the austere appearance of the street) to create hard standing for vehicles. This is a regrettable change but one which can be made, in certain circumstances, without seeking planning permission first, even in a conservation area.

Picture 10 Cars Parked On Garden Space



2.23 Nonetheless, visual interest continues to be created by varying building heights, window and door arrangements, brick patterns and glimpses of green fields through the intervening gaps between houses. The area terminates in the well kept and imposing Mill House (grade II listed). Even where some aspects have begun to fall below the criteria for inclusion within a conservation area, the overall historic appearance of the street, its sensitive location at the fringe of the northern part of the town and Mill Street's historic line convey a sufficient sense of history to warrant continued inclusion.

Silver Street

2.24 Silver Street is entered by an unassuming, narrow opening at the town centre end of St John Street. This quirky hemmed-in entrance soon widens out to become perhaps the most important (in terms of survival) and visually characterful domestic street in the town. The older properties, many of them listed, are, unsurprisingly, at the town centre end of the street, but important architectural set pieces, as well as

2 . Local Character and Appearance

distinctive vernacular buildings, continue along its full length to the junction with Caldecote Street. The overwhelming building material is brick with tile for roofing, but there is also some timber framing and applied plaster or stucco work. The older houses, at the street's northern end, are constructed in an appreciably darker brown brick, helping to set them apart from their later neighbours.

Picture 11 Houses on Silver Street



2.25 The street twists sinuously along its northern length, dropping gently as it does so, creating inviting vistas as a more distant building passes behind another in the foreground, or as an obscured building or feature slowly emerges from behind another. The curiosity that this creates acts to draw one forward to see what is around the next turn in the road. Further on the street straightens and levels out giving enclosed vistas of later, predominantly orange brick Victorian housing, some with white plaster applied to the upper storey and occasionally of two and half or three stories high thereby perpetuating the street's enclosed feeling, despite a slightly wider width.

Picture 12 Silver Street



2.26 Standing at the threshold of the last quarter of the street is the distinguished architectural set piece of Lovat Bank, built by the Taylor family who had commercial interests in the area, including the mustard works. Such a large house would not look amiss in much more spacious grounds, or even in a countryside setting, but has intentionally been placed amongst relatively modest housing, albeit, as the house name suggest, with a large back garden overlooking and reaching down to the river. Placing such a prominent, ornamental house here made a clear statement about the family's influence and resources and indeed the sense that they still belonged within the town community, rather than set apart from it.

Picture 13 Lovat Bank



2.27 Despite the assertive presence of Lovat Bank and the age of the properties at the north eastern end of the street the overall appearance of the street is comparatively low key and modest. Fortunately, the protection that has been given by listing has prevented

2. Local Character and Appearance

the loss of detail on houses that is evident in Mill Street and elsewhere. The result is that constituent historic elements of important street fronts still have the expression and charm that modern replacements rarely achieve. There are numerous items of interest, including datestones, wrought iron work and a variety of door and window designs from different historic periods that make a walk along Silver Street very rewarding.

2.28 In places the presence of trees, either in the foreground of a larger house, or glimpsed as background behind smaller houses is more evident than on the other domestic streets within the conservation area.

2.29 A couple of public houses still remain (although one has recently closed) but there are no longer any shops. A club and a chapel building also remain and there are a couple of commercial yards and car parks off Silver Street. The narrow entrance from St Johns Street prevents two way traffic and whilst there is no vehicle access from Silver Street to the town centre, in the other direction Silver Street provides an important exit as well as two way access to the car park set behind premises fronting St Johns Street. In combination with parked cars the impression during the day is one of a fairly busy and important thoroughfare.

Picture 14 Timber Framed House, Caldecote Street



2.30 At the southern end of Silver Street there is a grade II listed timber framed, thatched cottage and the farmhouse and outbuildings of Green Farm (no longer

in agricultural use) to the south. A short unmade track runs between the two to a small collection of modest Victorian villas tucked away at the end. The urban quality feels distinctly different to that of the town centre's streets as the cottage, and its informal garden foliage, the farm house, the wall, and even the former public house on the corner, combine to add a village-like quality to the immediate locality. In particular the large timber framed cottage provides an important visual conclusion to this south-westward extension of the conservation area.

Tickford Street / Priory Street

2.31 Of the three domestic areas this is the most diverse in terms of building age and strength of built landscape character. Hence, whilst there are some important collections of characterful, modestly scaled yet neatly proportioned historic buildings that add much to local distinctiveness, there are also some modern standardised house types fronting the thoroughfares that do little to bolster the area's historic character. Fortunately there is so much to catch the eye as one passes over the exceptional iron road bridge⁽⁹⁾ into Tickford End that the weaker modern housing developments barely make any impression. On Priory Street however, modestly specified standard development of recent years has undeniably started to overwhelm those remaining buildings that contribute to local character.

Picture 15 Tickford Bridge



9 "Tickford Bridge is the oldest surviving cast-iron bridge in the western hemisphere still carrying everyday traffic on a main road": Mynard Woodfield and Bailey, *Newport Pagnell's Bridges* (2009)

2 . Local Character and Appearance

2.32 Standing on the iron bridge at the threshold of Tickford End there are fine views back to the town centre with buildings stepping up the slope surmounted by the church tower. Either side of the bridge are views of the River Lovat flowing through Castle Meadow and Riverside Meadow, enhanced, particularly in summer, by stands of mature trees close at hand and in the distance. The views ahead are of the road between late Georgian and early Victorian rows of brick houses and stone terraced cottages, a number of which are listed. The picturesque accumulation buildings and views at this point is one of several that exist in the town, but the historic iron bridge is at the centre of one of the finest and most memorable, and one of the most sensitive.

Picture 16 Tickford Bridge and Church



2.33 Overlooking the roundabout at the junction of Tickford Street and Priory Street are two public houses as well as other small commercial premises. The conservation area boundary was extended eastwards from here in 2009 to protect the remaining industrial and office buildings of the former Aston Martin works on the north side of Tickford Street from demolition. Although they are not listed buildings, they are important (possibly unique) industrial monuments.

Picture 17 View of Tickford End from the 'Three Storey Building'. (The metal roof of the former 'Wrestlers Inn' is in the foreground).



2.34 They were purpose built in 1910 for car body manufacture and remained in use for that purpose until Aston Martin vacated the site in 2008. Although now in the conservation area their setting is quite bleak as the area behind them has been cleared of the manufacturing plant of which they once formed a part. Adjacent to the 'Three Storey Building' is a small garage and a grade II listed timber frame building (formerly The Wrestlers Inn) originally thatched but now covered in corrugated iron. The building is a notable juxtaposition against the later Edwardian industrial building.

Picture 18 The Kings Arms



2.35 The area centred around the Priory Street roundabout is diverse in character, appearance and use. The large, open, neatly kept garden of the Kings Arms and the mature trees that stand upon it or in the more enclosed gardens of adjacent houses are now

2. Local Character and Appearance

included in the conservation area boundary and add important contrast to the confined plots and modest scale of the cottages that stand on the other side of the road. Building details, which survive well, help to add distinction to this quarter of the conservation area.

2.36 There is also a good level of quality amongst the older buildings along Priory Street itself, particularly on some of the more imposing terraced dwellings that front onto the street. Elsewhere there has been the usual decline in quality encouraged by the belief that modern materials bring about energy and maintenance cost benefits. A series of arbitrary modern window and door replacements, amongst other items, have had a corrosive effect on the special character of the street, although, like Mill Street, the general scale, quality and position of buildings in relation to the road, and each other, survives sufficiently to warrant the retention of some parts of Priory Street in the conservation area for the time being.

Picture 19 Tickford End



2.37 Along the eastern reaches of Priory Street newer standardised and derivative housing development encroaches more and more. Fortunately, the character of the street is heightened by the presence of trees and occasional older buildings that relieve an increasingly diluted sense of place.

2.38 Access is available between the houses on the north side of Priory Street to Castle Meadow beyond, and to the footbridge that permits access to the town centre

2.39 The very far end of Priory Street looks out over hedgerow onto green open spaces which provide further relief from, and contrast to, more recent housing encroachments. In particular the leafy setting of Tickford Abbey, creates a valuable visual focal point at this location.

Picture 20 Tickford Abbey



2.40 Although Tickford End has become a mixed collection of characterful rows of older buildings and indifferent development of recent years, relatively minor realignments of the conservation area boundary should remove some of these elements. Their proximity will mean, however, that they continue to impart a downward pull on the general quality of the historic environment.

3. Open Spaces

2.41 There are broadly two divisions within the significant areas of open space that define the town. Firstly the closely kept church grounds that form important immediate setting and foreground for the church and Tickford Abbey and; secondly the less formal and significantly larger grounds of Castle Meadow and Riverside Meadow. Whilst the church grounds and Castle Meadow are open to the public there is no right of access to Waterside Meadow or the grounds of Tickford Abbey. Nonetheless, all the green spaces play a crucial role in establishing local character and distinctiveness by providing picturesque settings for buildings and some important long distance views.

2.42 Those spaces that are publicly accessible, and even those that aren't, are an important asset to the town.

The Church Grounds

2.43 The church grounds are tucked away but reveal themselves slowly by exploring the paths that permeate the neatly tended, sombre graveyard spaces. Amongst the gravestones are a number of important

2 . Local Character and Appearance

mature trees, standing in groups or along the river's edge, giving the visitor an impression of progressing from one wooded clearing to another.

2.44 On the lower ground at the eastern extremity of the graveyard the trees thin a little and there are vantage points, including 'The Battery' from which to see the confluence of the River Lovat with the River Great Ouse. Behind, the land rises upwards, quite steeply in places, to the church from where there are views out across Tickford End, and the 'Three Storey building' of the disused Aston Martin site can be clearly picked out.

Picture 21 The small mausoleum and memorial to the Taylor family



2.45 This change in level has allowed the creation of an intriguing feature in the form of a neat iron bridge with red brick abutments that crosses over Ousebank Street, creating a notable and eye catching feature and one that is very sensitive to change.

Picture 22 The footbridge connecting the churchyard and the cemetery



The Meadows

2.46 The function of the Castle and Riverside meadows is three fold. First of all and most obviously, the meadows provide attractive foreground to the town and important recreational space. Secondly and less obviously, the meadows are integral to the built form of Newport Pagnell, strongly defining and separating Tickford End from the town centre. Thirdly the meadows have a wider role in providing a wildlife corridor and linear park through the centre of Milton Keynes. The meadows therefore hold an increasingly important strategic worth in the context of the expanding new town.

Picture 23 Castle Meadow



2.47 The land is flat and less closely tended than the formal spaces of the church grounds and the trees are more scattered, although there are some important stands nevertheless. Memorable, verdant pastoral

2. Local Character and Appearance

views are easily accessible from the town centre and numerous houses nearby. The overall impression is akin to the outer formal parkland of a country house estate. Again, the church forms the focal point of many views. This open, quiet, spacious land is an important and pleasing contrast to the busy and complicated pattern of buildings, passages and yards of the town centre.

Building Materials Guide

2.48 An appreciation of materials (in terms of both variety and methods of use) and their role in establishing the character and appearance of Newport Pagnell is critical to a successful development project, whether a domestic house extension or a larger scale site redevelopment.

2.49 Materials such as brick and slate help to create 'blocks' of colour, while the subtle variations in timber windows add visual detail and can provide important dating evidence.

2.50 Such an understanding often prevents loss of character through ill advised, poorly specified alterations or just unnecessary and counter-productive work; for example, applying modern cement render to good quality traditional brickwork, or the loss of characterful original windows. Using traditional materials also encourages the retention of craft skills which are important for repair and maintenance in the future and the avoidance of premature replacement.

2.51 When selecting material for a new development it is worth taking time to source complementary materials so that mismatches between old and new work do not occur. Below are examples of features commonly found in Newport Pagnell with a brief description of the traditional materials from which they are built:

- **Walls:** Local, non-standardised or imperial size brick, red / orange in colour, for house and boundary walls. Occasionally dark and pale varieties are used to create patterns. A selection of triangular and half-round brick boundary wall copers (used to finish wall tops) are also evident. Flemish and English bond is typical whilst modern, metric, stretcher bond is absent. Modern cement render will normally be discouraged by officers when asked for advice because it masks authentic historic materials. Cement render also tends to create maintenance problems by

trapping moisture behind it and because of the need to repaint it regularly. A case may be made for porous lime renders where it can be demonstrated that the property was intended to be coated with this material. There is little precedent for this in Newport Pagnell, however.

Picture 24 The Lodge, Lovat Bank: Clay tile roof, fancy ridge tiles with finials; ornamental, tile hung, cantilevered, first floor front wall; stone canted bay; stone cills and lintels; timber bargeboards and applied 'timber frame' and roughcast decorative detail



- **Stone:** used for external walls or as dressing for windows or for sills. Also used for decorative detailing. Usually local Blisworth limestone where used for building houses or boundary walls. The ashlar work on the church may be from a different source but the rubblestone used in the church body is likely to be local.

Picture 25 St Peter and St Paul's shows rubble and carved stone used in combination



2 . Local Character and Appearance

- **Timber Framing:** Frequently of oak posts, transoms, braces and collars, the black and white outer faces of timber buildings add immediate vernacular distinction to the town. Infilled with brick, lath and clay and possibly rubble stone (no evidence for this was found in the town as part of the review) timber framing is indicative of an area short of building stone at a time before or contemporary to the onset of local brick making. It is vital to ensure that the grain of new timber is placed so that moisture cannot cut across the grain. Lime mortar and plaster must be used for any patch repairs as damp held against timber by impermeable cement renders can have disastrous long term consequences.

Picture 26 Timber framing in High Street



- **Pointing:** Lime mortar. Until the 19th and early 20th century building mortars were cement free. The use of lime-based sandy or earth mortars created a true sacrificial pointing which allowed moisture in masonry to evaporate from between individual bricks or stones. The mortar decayed slowly as a result of this process and would be repointed at intervals of about 35 to 50 years. Indeed there are examples of Victorian houses that have never been repointed since construction but the masonry is still in very good condition. Pointing an old building requires skill and understanding. Pointing with cement often creates a mortar that is stronger than the

surrounding masonry thereby creating the risk that the body of the wall will become the sacrificial element as moisture is forced into, and then evaporates from, the surface of the actual bricks or stone. There are numerous examples of buildings with blown outer skins of brick or stone caused by dampness, whilst hard mortar protrudes obstinately, indicating the original line of an outer face. For the most part, in Newport Pagnell, the high quality of brick and stone has prevented this from happening but, nonetheless, repointing soft lime mortars with a cement-based alternative is considered poor practice. Decay and discolouration arising from poor pointing also undermines the character of the conservation area.

Picture 27 Lime pointing (minerals in the lime will encourage plants to grow; creepers such as ivy should be discouraged, however)



Modern bricks are able to withstand harder pointing materials and so the use of lime in new construction is not so critical. However, an understanding of finish is still important. The picture above shows flush or marginally recessed pointing which accentuates the qualities of the brick and the bond. Ribbon pointing (where the mortar stands proud of the brickwork) and dark or otherwise mismatched pointing mortars are unlikely to lead to a satisfactory finish.

- **Roofing (1):** Plain clay tiles add a mottled and darker orange hue to the blocks of colour found in the conservation area. Concrete tile replacement varies significantly from clay in terms of colour, texture, finish and size. Such tiles often fade to brown, irrespective of their original

2. Local Character and Appearance

colour. Clay tile is often used in conjunction with lead. Often crowned by fancy ridge tiles though frequently missing now.

- **Roofing (2):** Welsh slate has a more textured finish compared to the smoother finish of imported replacements. Welsh slate also tends to be more robust and lends itself to recycling with typically 70% being reused on roof refurbishment work. Often used in conjunction with lead.

Picture 28 A handsomely proportioned house with Welsh slate roof, brick dressings around the upper windows and timber canted lower bays either side of the central door. The stone coursing is intended to convey a robust rustic character to the house



- **Decorative detailing (1):** Gutters and down pipes: originals in wrought or cast iron, often hand made or bespoke. Iron guttering is more substantial and has greater longevity than plastic replacements. Officers will encourage retention of iron detailing whenever possible.
- **Decorative Detailing (2):** Applied decoration in timber and roughcast, or similar, to evoke a rustic finish, often as a mock timber frame effect. Some houses (particularly mid or late Victorian) in Newport Pagnell use local stone laid in a manner intended to create a contrived rustic texture to the roadside face.

Picture 29 Church Cottage, Church Passage



- **Doors, windows, some gates, fascias (bargeboards):** Timber, frequently painted in white but the option exists to vary colours (this is normally encouraged in conservation areas providing the final finish does not draw the eye away from the overall composition of a building). Failed parts can usually be replaced and, if attention is paid to repair and maintenance, timber items can survive for decades.
- **Windows:** Timber with glass. Being handmade rather than mass produced, timber windows feature slight irregularities and imperfections which add to the individuality of the properties where they survive. The combination of longevity and quality of construction provides dating evidence and insights into the status of buildings in the conservation area. Officers will not normally support their replacement. In particular, uPVC windows and doors rarely, if ever, reproduce the look of timber with regard to profiles of glazing bars and other aspects of finish. The structural elements of uPVC windows are frequently flatter and broader in profile with protruding (storm-proof) rather than flush casements which are further differentiated by mitred corners. uPVC windows (and doors) supplied in a white finish are also susceptible to staining and discolouring and are difficult to repair (thus necessitating wasteful premature replacement of whole units). Installing uPVC exterior details often leads to a shabby, tired look to a property and causes awkward mismatches between neighbouring properties, particularly

2 . Local Character and Appearance

where these were intended to form a row with shared features.

Picture 30 Materials and details: glazed, wooden casement and sash windows (some with margin lights), timber frame with brick nogging infill and fine ornamental stonework add considerable character and visual interest to St Johns Street



2.52 This relatively limited yet harmonious palette of historic materials is central to understanding and maintaining the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Larger developments can harm local character by ignoring the subtleties of context and as a result look awkward and imposed upon their surroundings.

2.53 It is also important that the process of small incremental change arising from modern replacement is prevented or mitigated against whenever possible so that the historic character of the conservation area is not undermined. Appreciating the contribution of authentic materials and the traditional combinations and manner of use when repairs and new development are being specified helps to prevent loss of local character.

2.54 Further comments on new design can be found at paragraph 4.21 of section 4 'Management Proposals' onwards.

Further Afield - Buildings, Structures and Spaces Beyond the Conservation Area Boundary

2.55 The review acknowledges that there are important buildings that continue to lie outside the conservation area which add to the character of the town but for which designation is not warranted. These include:

The Victorian terraced housing including Cedar School on the south western flank of the town centre.

The terrace row that lies on the north side of Tickford Street from the former site of the Aston Martin Works as far as the junction with Chicheley Street.

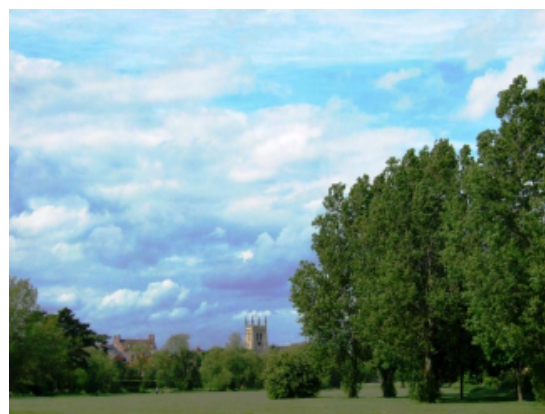
The surviving parts of the Aston Martin Factory on the south side of Tickford Street.

2.56 The contribution that these buildings make to the character, context and history of the town is acknowledged and the council would not wish to see harmful alterations or demolitions in these places.

Trees

2.57 Trees help to soften the uncompromisingly built up character of the town centre. Although largely absent from the principal thoroughfares their presence helps to soften the appearance of back yards and gardens, particularly in the domestic areas. Around the waterside areas the trees make a crucial contribution to the quality of the flat open vistas and frame views of or provide foreground for individual buildings and groups of buildings within the conservation area. A linear arrangement of trees helps to pick out the course of the River Lovat as it flows through the low lying meadows (see Map 6 'Significant Trees / Tree Preservation Orders').

Picture 31 Trees, Riverside Meadow



2.58 The contribution of the trees to the setting and appearance of the conservation area is an important, distinguishing characteristic of the town. Further information about the provisions that exist to protect trees in the conservation area can be found in section 4 'Management Proposals'.

The Setting of the Conservation Area

2.59 Trees and open meadow spaces create a pastoral rural backdrop to the town and are thus an essential element of the town's setting. There are important vistas in and out of the town around its northern, eastern and southern perimeters. The proximity of countryside and open spaces creates good links from the town to recreational spaces.

2.60 To the west the setting is less distinguished, Marsh End Road providing the physical 'on the ground' boundary between the older town and the rather uneventful and unrelenting housing estates that lie adjacent. The Victorian terraces of Wolverton Road create an attractive early approach to the town, but this breaks down as one approaches the immediate western threshold as buildings with a poor relationship to the general character of the area, such as the austere, functional architecture of the fire station and the large rest-home opposite. Fortunately there remains some greenery to mask the over dominant, looming presence of the latter in the summer months at least.

Conclusions

2.61 The review has identified and interpreted the features and circumstances that combine to create the special character and appearance of the conservation area. The character statement summarises the town's special architectural and historic interest with further analysis of constituent character areas and immediate surroundings. In reality the town is not experienced as a series of constituent parts (as the process of examining character areas might imply), it is instead a subtle blend of them all, with a changing emphasis depending which part of the conservation area one finds oneself in.

2.62 This subtlety of architectural character and appearance is vulnerable to careless alterations that, collectively, can erode the uniformity of a street or obscure the appearance of an elegant individual house. Larger development, too, can harm local character by ignoring the subtleties of context and, as a result, look imposed upon, and at odds with, its surroundings. Abrupt and prominent contrasts to context tend to distract the eye; in the historic environment the older buildings can easily become subordinate to an assertive, mismatched, new building or extension to the detriment of genuine local character. Wherever possible new development should

pay regard to context but not always, if ever, seek faithful replication. An example of a positive approach to development in the conservation area is the new housing and office development on the corner of St Johns Street and High Street (see Picture 32 'Contemporary development in the conservation area').

2.63 In line with local plan policy and national legislation and guidance, the Council will normally seek to discourage unsympathetic larger scale development in the conservation area. However, permitted development rights for single dwelling houses mean that the Council cannot intervene on small scale development such as the replacement of windows and doors, roofing materials and so on, even in designated conservation areas.

2.64 The result of this lack of controls is illustrated by the ad hoc changes that have occurred to the unlisted properties on Mill Street and Priory Street with the result that their original character and appearance has declined quite significantly.

2.65 As a possible response to this lack of controls, a statutory mechanism exists which would allow the Council to step in to prevent ill-judged minor alterations from causing incremental harm to the character of the town's streets and spaces. This mechanism is known as an Article 4(2) direction and would remove the rights of home-owners to make some minor changes to property without first applying for planning permission.

2.66 The need for an Article 4(2) direction was raised in the consultation draft but the low level of support and the relatively high number of listed buildings and commercial property in the conservation area led to the abandonment of the proposal.

2.67 As part of its examination of the town for the review, the Council appraised places currently beyond the existing conservation area boundary that might warrant inclusion in it. Map 7 illustrates the areas included in the revised boundaries. These are discussed further in Section 3: Revisions to the Conservation Area Boundary.

3 . Revisions to the Conservation Area Boundary

3 Revisions to the Conservation Area Boundary

3.1 Map 7: Amendments to the Conservation Area Boundary (27.7.10) is taken from the review consultation document. The map shows areas A to E which were added to the conservation area and area G, which was removed, with the approval of the council's Cabinet on 27th July 2010.

3.2 The consultation discussed the areas identified on Map 7 and sought local opinion on the extensions. From those who replied there was a positive response and suggestions for further extensions. Officers returned to site to re-assess Tickford Street in particular but the fragmented and inconsistent quality of dwellings found there led officers to conclude that only the extensions proposed in the review were warranted.

3.3 Opinion was sought about the removal of Area G and there was almost no opposition to this. Contained within this area is a much altered stone built house that is now surrounded and overwhelmed by modern development. Continued inclusion of this house was deemed to be unjustifiable.

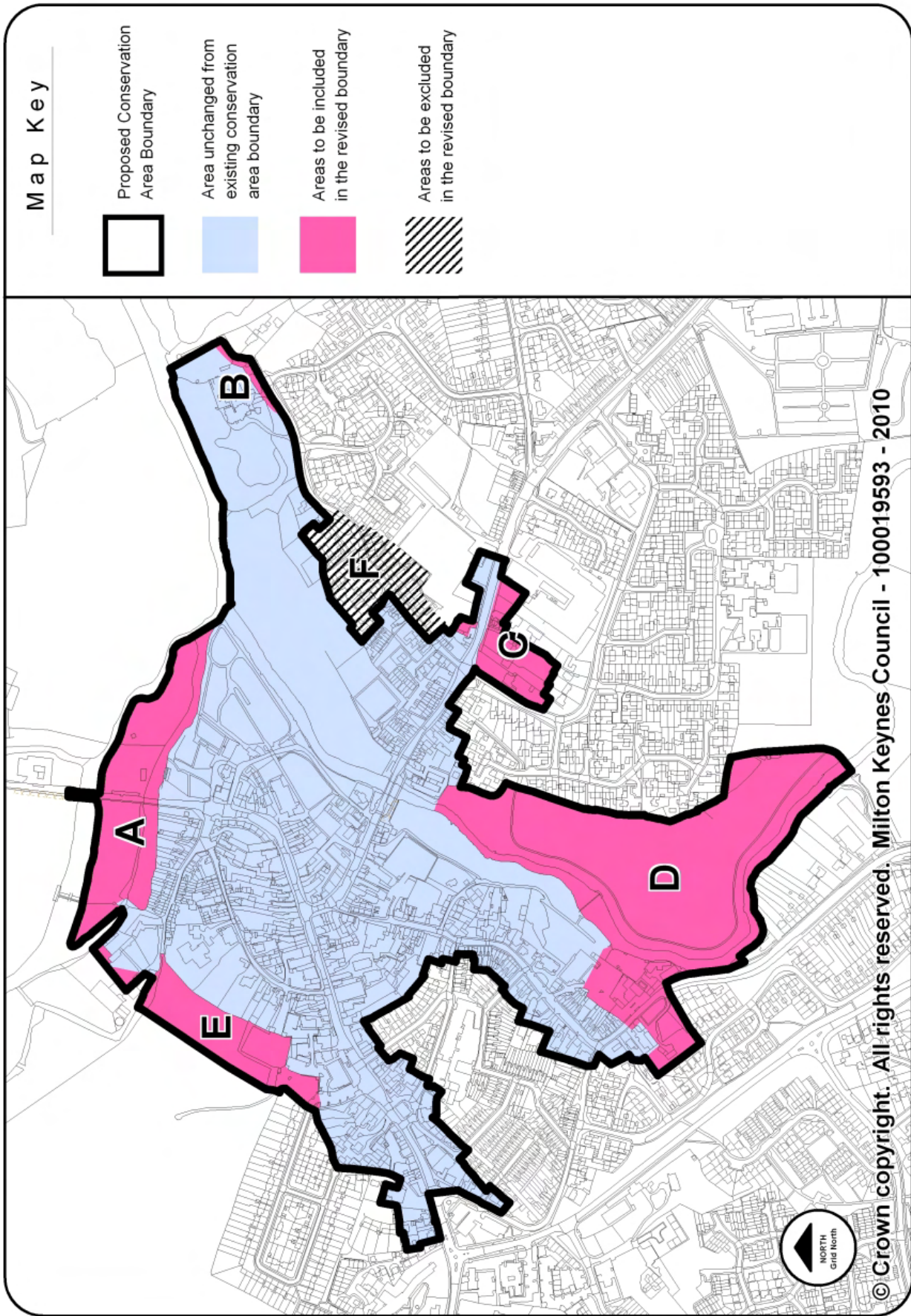
3.4 Areas A and D draw in elements of the riverside landscape. North Bridge and Toll House and the island created in the river by the redundant Mill Race now lie within the conservation area as does the open low lying land south of Tickford Bridge. Area D also includes an intriguing pocket of commercial activity that includes the site of the parchment works.

3.5 Area E contains ramparts dating to the English Civil War and also gives views of the town centre.

3.6 Finally area B is a simple rationalisation of the conservation area boundary to follow the line of the north eastern end of Priory Street more closely.

3 . Revisions to the Conservation Area Boundary

Map 7 Amendments to the Conservation Area Boundary (27.7.10)



4 . Management Proposals

4 Management Proposals

Planning Guidance

4.1 The presence of the conservation area is essential for influencing the design of new development and for protecting trees in Newport Pagnell. The conservation area review acknowledges this and reaffirms and expands upon the special historic interest of the town and the need to protect the historic character and appearance that was identified when first designated in 1969.

4.2 To help counter the possible harmful effects of ill-judged new development, the provisions of the existing planning framework (see Section 1) will be taken fully into account.

4.3 Since 2003 two key provisions have been introduced to help improve design standards, particularly in sensitive environments. These are:

Planning Policy Statement 1⁽¹⁰⁾: This document asserts that the design of new development should actively seek to improve the character and quality of an area (paragraph 34 PPS1).

Design and Access Statements: A statement must now be submitted with all applications for planning permission to develop within conservation areas. The statement should inform all those involved in making decisions on the suitability of development about the reasoning behind the proposals and the design approach that has been taken.

4.4 In March 2010 the new Planning Policy Statement 5⁽¹¹⁾ was introduced, bringing revised policies, practises and definitions for the nation's heritage assets.

4.5 These new provisions and the wider policy framework set out in Section 1 have been taken into account in producing the Management Proposals for Newport Pagnell conservation area.

Demolitions

4.6 Demolitions will not normally be permitted in the conservation area.

Alterations

4.7 The historic buildings and the mature trees found in the Newport Pagnell conservation area are its primary asset. Whilst there are numerous listed buildings in Newport Pagnell, other buildings that are not of merit in the national context still make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic character of the conservation area should be protected from harmful alterations.

4.8 Few of the older buildings in the conservation area fail to make a positive contribution to the town's character or appearance. For example, more modestly sized and simply built dwellings play an equally important role in establishing the character or appearance of Newport Pagnell as the larger or more architecturally accomplished houses. Indeed, all are examples of particular types of domestic accommodation to be found in a small town and their presence has a cumulative effect in establishing the distinctive grain, character and appearance of the settlement.

4.9 Before undertaking works of alteration to a building it is advisable to check with the Council about any constraints that may exist. Failure to specifically mention a building or structure as part of this review does not lessen its potential special character or interest.

4.10 Proposals to alter buildings in ways that diminish their special character or appearance pose the greatest threat to the integrity of the conservation area. In line with national and local policy there will be a presumption against permitting alterations to buildings that adversely affect their individual character and appearance or that of the wider conservation area.

Article 4(2) Directions

4.11 Individuals may normally carry out certain minor works to unlisted dwelling houses without the need for planning permission from the Council. This is called 'permitted development' and the rights relating to it are defined in the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development) Order 1995⁽¹²⁾. Under Article 4(2) of the Order a Council may make directions to remove such rights if it is held that the

10 Available to view at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/ppsclimatechange.pdf>

11 available to view at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5>

12 available to view at: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1995/Uksi_19950418_en_1.htm

development permitted would be harmful to the character of a conservation area. Where an Article 4(2) direction is in force planning permission must be sought for work that is no longer deemed to be permitted.

4.12 In Newport Pagnell, an Article 4(2) direction would include all dwelling houses within the conservation area that front onto a road (including side elevations of corner properties). Commercial properties, public buildings and flats do not have the same permitted development rights and so have to apply for planning permission to make alterations considered to be permitted development on a dwelling house.

4.13 The type of development that would require planning permission after the introduction of an Article 4(2) direction includes:

- The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house. In other words changes to windows, doors, door surrounds and terracotta mouldings.
- Changes to roof coverings and demolition of, or alterations to chimneys.
- The addition or alteration of a porch on the front elevation.
- Installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna.
- Erection or demolition of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within the front garden.
- Painting previously unpainted brick or stonework of a dwelling house or a building or enclosure within the grounds of a principal building.

4.14 Planning applications for alterations held not to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area will normally be recommended for refusal. There would be no planning fees for applications arising from the Article 4(2) direction.

4.15 The Council is consulting on the need for an Article 4(2) direction because of concerns arising from the apparent uncontrolled loss of exterior details on unlisted dwelling houses in the conservation area.

4.16 A 'point in time' photographic survey would be made of the conservation area and this will be used to inform judgements about the effectiveness of the conservation area designation at the next review irrespective of the implementation of an Article 4(2) direction.

4.17 Guidance setting out the constraints and the preferred options for replacement materials and exterior details would be produced as part of the Article 4(2) designation process.

Local Lists

4.18 An alternative and more selective, targeted method of controlling works to buildings is the compilation of a 'local list'. Such a list would consist of locally significant buildings taking into account their age, intactness, rarity, architectural quality, and so on, in a similar way to listed buildings (local listing does not protect interiors as is the case with listed buildings and structures, however).

4.19 Rather than being nationally important, such buildings would be deemed to be significant at the regional level and would principally be drawn from the buildings marked in orange on Map 5 'Newport Pagnell Conservation Area: Location of Principal Buildings and Features'

4.20 The drawbacks to local listing are that it identifies comparatively few buildings for protection whilst many others that contribute positively but are not of regional significance would still be at risk of uncontrolled deterioration to the detriment of the conservation area's special character and appearance. There would still need to be additional powers granted through an Article 4(2) direction, which are still much less far reaching than for listed buildings .

4.21 Setting out Article 4(2) directions for individual properties is likely to require a similar level of staff input as the creation of an area Article 4(2) direction but by reaching fewer buildings would be less effective. The longer term management of the properties on the local list for Newport Pagnell should be less onerous for the Council, however.

4.22 A further consideration is the use of resources to place buildings and structures on to a local list because of their architectural or historic interest rather than because they are necessarily buildings at risk of unsympathetic minor alterations. In other words, a number of the town's notable buildings, such as the 'Three Storey Building' in Tickford End, which could be included on a local list, are not individual dwelling houses (where permitted development rights exist) and are thus subject to controls over minor development anyway.

4. Management Proposals

4.23 On balance, although the Council supports the use of local lists in principle, the strategic benefit of compiling one for Newport Pagnell is not thought sufficient to warrant implementation. The wider ranging benefit of an area Article 4(2) direction to preserve the character of the town is considered to be the more effective means of establishing controls over minor alterations to the dwelling houses that comprise the bulk of buildings found in the conservation area.

Design of New Development

4.24 Permission for new development will only be granted where it respects the scale, appearance, form, density, mix and layout of the historic patterns of development. In particular:

- The Council will require new buildings to respect the height and mass of traditional buildings within the locality.
- The Council will require the plan form, elevational treatment and materials to complement the historic and architectural character of the conservation area.
- The Council will require new development to follow the hierarchy of the historic street pattern.

The picture below shows a successful attempt to blend a new development with its context. As here, lively and imaginative new designs and re-interpretations of historic forms are welcome. The test will be whether the character of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced. It is quite possible for good quality new design to achieve this. Over-assertive or poorly specified designs risk being rejected however. Guidance on design in the conservation area is available from the Conservation and Archaeology Team on 01908 252599.

Picture 32 Contemporary development in the conservation area



Repair and Maintenance

4.25 The Council will provide guidance on materials, techniques and finishes appropriate for the repair and maintenance of buildings within its designated conservation areas.

Change of Use

4.26 The Council will not normally permit changes of use to a building or land where the new use would adversely affect its character or the wider historic character or appearance of the conservation area.

Links and views

4.27 Newport Pagnell has important links to surrounding countryside and parkland spaces which greatly enhance the quality of life in the town. Within the town there are important views along the length of, and out from, High Street. There are also important views along the residential streets in the town.

4.28 The Council will seek to protect or enhance the views and links that contribute to the special character of Newport Pagnell.

Shopfronts

4.29 Shopfronts and advertisements play a central part in creating local character and distinctiveness, particularly when grouped together to form a High Street, as in Newport Pagnell. A high standard of shopfronts and advertisements creates an enjoyable environment for visitors and shoppers which is good for the vitality and commercial success of the town.

4.30 Recent trends in retailing methods have created pressure for modern shopfronts and advertisements to provide much more aggressive visual competition. This can result in poorly proportioned shopfronts, overly large fascias and garish signs. Such installations frequently fail to respect any wider sense of place or the individual building on which they are located.

4.31 Familiar examples of this are corporate styles or franchise liveries used without regard to local character or the architectural composition of an individual building. A formulaic approach to shopfront design, whether a local chain of shops or a nationally known brand, can be very harmful to local character and distinctiveness. In turn this can undermine the enjoyment of such areas and ultimately lead to a loss of economic vitality.

4.32 In terms of development control, planning permission is normally required for significant alteration and replacement of a shopfront or the installation of blind, canopy, shutter or grilles. Officers will not usually support applications if there is potential for the prevailing character of High Street to be undermined.

4.33 The display of advertisements and signs is controlled by The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. The law relating to advertisements is complex. It is therefore advisable to check with Milton Keynes Planning Department to see if advertisement consent is required before proceeding. However, two key considerations are visual amenity and highway safety.

4.34 The Council will encourage a high standard of design for new shopfronts and advertisements with the intention of ensuring that they relate well to the widths and heights of the buildings and places of which they form part. Whilst there will be no requirement to recreate Victorian shopfronts visually, intrusive shapes and colours and corporate liveries will be discouraged in the interests of preserving local character and appearance.

The Street Scene

4.35 The Council will pay special attention to the street scene and its contribution to the character and appearance of the area and also to the preservation or enhancement of any historic items or features that it

contains. The clear preference is for its continued good management and retention of historic items within the highway and other areas of the public realm.

4.36 Special attention will be given to ensuring new features are sympathetic to the historic character or appearance of the conservation area including any proposed schemes for surface treatments, traffic signs, white lining etc. Highway schemes and new features within the public realm shall have regard to the Council's duty to preserve or enhance the special historic character or appearance of the conservation area.

4.37 The Council will also place an emphasis on the need to retain and keep in good repair boundary treatments, and, where possible, avoid the loss of front gardens for hard standing for motor vehicles.

Trees

4.38 Trees make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and a number of examples are protected by individual tree preservation orders (see Newport Pagnell: Trees and Woodland). In addition the Council has a general duty to make adequate provision for the preservation and planting of trees when granting planning permission for the development of land. This is done by attaching conditions to the permission to develop or through making tree preservation orders.

4.39 If a tree is subject to a tree preservation order the Council's consent must be obtained before the tree can be cut down, lopped or topped. In addition to these controls, and in view of the particular contribution that trees can make to the character and appearance of a conservation area, special provisions exist for trees in conservation areas that are not protected by a tree preservation order. With the exception of small trees and ones that are dead, dying or dangerous, anyone proposing to fell, lop or top a tree in a conservation area must give six weeks notice to the Council. This gives the Council an opportunity to consider bringing the tree under general protection through a tree preservation order. In conservation areas, the Council can require trees that are removed without permission to be replaced, whether they are

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protected by an order or not⁽¹³⁾. Further advice about works to trees can be obtained from the Conservation and Archaeology Team on 01908 252599.

Buildings at Risk

4.40 Buildings can become at risk through costs of repair, vacancy or redundancy. Negotiations on site re-use can also cause interruptions to the correct maintenance of standing buildings. In Newport Pagnell the two sites containing buildings at risk are:

- The Taylors Mustard Works site
- The former Aston Martin works buildings on Tickford Street, north side.

4.41 The Council will endeavour to ensure the buildings are secured and receive essential maintenance whilst new uses are found for these sites.

Archaeology and Historical Research

4.42 The potential impact on archaeological remains is integral to any development proposal. In certain cases the Council may require evaluative works to be undertaken prior to the granting of planning permission and with this in mind developers are encouraged to consult with the Council's archaeological officers at the earliest opportunity (tel: 01908 254259).

A References

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), HMSO ⁽¹⁴⁾
- Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and The Historic Environment (September 1994), HMSO ⁽¹⁵⁾
- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) DCLG⁽¹⁶⁾
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (November 1990), HMSO ⁽¹⁷⁾
- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005), HMSO ⁽¹⁸⁾
- Circular 01/2006: Guidance to Changes to the Development Control System (June 2006) DCLG ⁽¹⁹⁾
- Design and Access Statements, How to Read Write and Use Them (2006) CABE ⁽²⁰⁾
- Guidance On Conservation Area Appraisals (February 2006) English Heritage / Planning Advisory Service ⁽²¹⁾
- Guidance On The Management Of Conservation Areas (February 2006) English Heritage / Planning Advisory Service ⁽²²⁾
- MiltonKeynes Local Plan: Second Deposit Version (2002 - 2011) Milton Keynes Council⁽²³⁾
- The South East Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (May 2009) GO-SE⁽²⁴⁾
- Protected Trees: A Guide To Tree Preservation Procedures (October 2008) DCLG⁽²⁵⁾
- Circular 03/07 Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007 (March 2007) DCLG⁽²⁶⁾
- The English Terraced House (1982) Stefan Muthesius, Yale
- The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire (1994) Pevsner and Williamson, Yale
- Brick Building in Britain (1990) RW Brunskill, Victor Gollancz Ltd
- The Old House Handbook: A Practical Guide to Care and Repair (2009) Hunt and Suhr in association with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Frances Lincoln
- Newport Pagnell: A Pictorial History (1995) Dennis Mynard and Julian Hunt, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.

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- 14 Available to view at: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1990/Ukpga_19900009_en_1.htm
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- 16 available to view at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5>
- 17 Available to view at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningpolicyguidance9>
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- 23 <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-policy/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=61244>
- 24 available to view at <http://www.go-se.gov.uk/>
- 25 available to view at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/protectedtreesguide>
- 26 Available to view at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/circulartown>

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Newport Pagnell's Bridges: The Tickford Iron Bridge In Context (2009) Dennis Mynard, Paul Woodfield and Ray Bailey. Phillimore & Co. Ltd.

Milton Keynes Council Historic Environment Record: Various Texts

Note: If any of the links in the document no longer function please contact the Conservation and Archaeology Team on 01908 252599 or email conservation@milton-keynes.gov.uk and an officer will assist you.

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