

Beauchief Abbey

CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

March 2007



MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

**BEAUCHIEF ABBEY
CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

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After a period of public consultation Sheffield City Council adopted these Conservation Area Management Proposals and the accompanying Appraisal for Beauchief Abbey on 19th March 2007, which means that they are now a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications in the area.

1.0 Introduction

The recommendations in this document are based upon the findings the *Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal*, which assesses the special interest of the Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area and identifies negative factors and weaknesses which detract from the conservation area's character and appearance.

Based upon the appraisal and supported up by a further site survey, this document identifies a number of specific and general issues affecting the Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area, including enhancement opportunities, negative features and threats. Each issue is accompanied by recommendation(s) for action, sometimes identifying further or more detailed work needed for their implementation.

The recommendations include proposals for enhancement and policies for the avoidance of harmful change, some of which are the responsibility of the City Council

The proposals are written in the awareness that in managing the City's conservation areas the Council's resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals for which it is responsible may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the conservation area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas* (2005). Both the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Management Proposals will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis (see below).

2. Legislative background

2.1 This document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15: 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 namely:

"It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas."

2.2 The *Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* is the statutory development plan for Sheffield, adopted in March 1998. Policies BE15-22 relate to historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and archaeology (pages 76-86).

Other key documents include:

- The emerging *Sheffield Development Framework (SDF)*.
- *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Designing House Extensions*.
- *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Historic Parks and Gardens*.
- *Sheffield Urban Design Compendium (2004)*.
- *Sheffield Buildings at Risk Survey (2005) and emerging Buildings at Risk Strategy*.
- *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology (HMSO)*

2.3 Up-to-date details of current planning policy can be obtained from Sheffield City Council's Development Services or the Council's website at: www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development

2.4 Breaches of planning control that are causing significant harm and are clearly unacceptable will be enforced against. A planning application may be invited where breaches of planning control might be acceptable, possibly with amendment. This will enable the issues to be thoroughly tested, including consulting local people.

2.5 Sheffield City Council have signed up to the 'Enforcement Concordat' (1998), which sets national best practice standards for planning enforcement. The concordat can be viewed and downloaded from: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/reform/enforcement_concordat

2.6 Other specific strategies that will impact upon this management plan either currently being developed or already adopted:

- Woodland Policy (1987)
 - Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy (1991)
 - Forthcoming Tree Strategy (proposed 2007)
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3. Issues and recommendations

3.1 Possible loss of natural stone roof tiles

3.1.1 The character and appearance of historic buildings at the north end of Beauchief Abbey Lane has been adversely affected by the replacement of original timber sash windows or doors with uPVC or aluminium. Experience from elsewhere in the City shows that further erosion of character may be caused by the replacement of original natural stone roof tiles with an alternative material.

3.1.2 Where single family dwellings are concerned, the changes noted above can, with certain exceptions, normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is called "Permitted Development" and falls into various classes which are listed in the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995*. Powers exist for the Council, known as Article 4(2) directions, to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interest of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. This might be considered to prevent the further erosion of historic character of residential properties, particularly where they form a coherent group of well detailed properties.

Recommendation:

- *Consider the need for Article 4(2) Directions to protect buildings that retain original features from inappropriate alteration in particular the stone roofscape. The primary focus will be on dwellinghouses that have been identified in the relevant conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

3.2. Unsightly appearance of the rear of Abbey Cottage (flat-roofed extension, lean-to garage, inappropriate windows);

3.2.1 The northern approach along Beauchief Abbey Lane affords a fine view of the former abbey's west tower (St Thomas a Beckett's Church) beside Abbey Cottages against a backdrop of a wooded hill. Unfortunately this view is marred by the two-storey flat-roofed extension to Abbey Cottages, lean-to garage and modern windows that are all out of keeping with this historic grade II listed building.

Recommendation:

- *Encourage property owners to reverse unsympathetic alterations and to reinstate architectural features, notably windows and doors, with modern replacements in the style and materials of the originals.*

3.3 Poor state of repair of Beauchief Abbey Farm outbuildings

3.3.1 Some of the farm buildings at Beauchief Abbey Farm, which are listed grade II, are in a poor condition. In particular, the southernmost range has plant growth under the eaves and its roof in need of repair.

3.3.2 Where a listed building is threatened by a lack of maintenance or repair, the Council does have statutory powers to force the owner to take action. These powers include Urgent Works and Repairs Notices, allowing the Council to carry out the works themselves if necessary and to recover the costs from the owner.

Recommendation:

- *Ensure the effective repair of the listed building making sure that that it is made water- and weather-tight. Further, the Council will seek to monitor the condition of all historic buildings and will report findings and advise action, as necessary. Where the condition of a building gives cause for concern, appropriate steps will be sought to secure the future of the building, including the use of statutory powers.*
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3.4 Stone walls and tomb stones in need of repair

3.4.1 Stone walls are a particular feature of the conservation area and are generally in a good condition. There is however, at least one section of collapsed wall in the southern half of the conservation area. In addition, a number of tomb stones beside St Thomas a Beckett's Church have collapsed.

Recommendation:

- *Encourage those responsible for the maintenance of stone walls and tomb stones to repair as necessary. (See also item 3 above).*
- *The Council will normally resist proposals for demolition of, or alterations to, boundary walls, gate piers, fences and gates that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

3.5 Potential decline and loss of trees

3.5.1 Trees make a vital contribution to the rural ambience of the conservation area and the setting of its historic buildings.

Recommendation:

- *The preparation of a Tree Management Programme would be welcome, identifying all mature trees within the conservation area (privately as well as publicly owned) and ensuring that priorities are agreed and funding set aside for the costs involved in remedial works or replacement;*
- *The Council will normally resist proposals to cut down a tree in the conservation area.*

3.6 Nature conservation especially maintenance of ponds

3.6.1 Being mainly rural and surrounded by woods and green open space, the conservation area is an area of natural history interest and forms part of

Sheffield's Green Network as identified in the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan 1998 (see policies GE 10 -17).

3.6.2 In particular, three ponds enhance the rural character of the conservation area and are important wildlife habitats. They are vestiges of the three monastic fishponds created for the abbey monks by William de Grenlyf who died in 1411 and are part of the Beauchief Abbey Scheduled Monument.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will work with local environmental conservation groups to ensure the ponds are protected and enhanced as wildlife habitats.*

3.7 Location in the midst of a golf course

3.7.1 The open space around Beauchief Abbey has for many years been in use as Beauchief Golf Course. Whilst the landscape of the designated conservation area does, in the main, retain a countryside atmosphere, a hard-surfaced golfers' footpath and a managed golfing area in the southern part of the conservation area do serve to dispel its rural character.

3.7.2 English Heritage have published a consultation draft document 'Guidance on Golf in Historic Parks and Landscapes' (July 2005).

Recommendation:

- *The Council will seek to work with the Manager of the Beauchief Golf Club to ensure that any proposed changes to the layout of the golf course preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area and accord with current English Heritage guidance.*
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3.8 Archaeological issues

3.8.1 The conservation area includes the Beauchief Abbey Scheduled Monument and four listed buildings. The whole of the conservation area therefore has archaeological potential above and below the ground, and it is likely that further consideration will need to be given to the effect of applications for substantial new development.

Recommendation:

- *An Archaeological Assessment of the site should be prepared prior to any application being submitted. Where below ground archaeological remains are expected, conditions may then be used to secure a detailed scheme for the foundation design and all new ground works, to protect buried remains in situ, and/or a programme of archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and publication. Further information is available from the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.*
- *Where substantial alteration/demolition of listed buildings or other historic buildings is proposed a more detailed Building Appraisal will also be required. This includes a detailed appraisal of the special architectural or historic interest of the buildings on the site. The results will inform the design process and act as supporting information with a planning application. An AABA (Archaeological Assessment and Building Appraisal) should be prepared prior to the application being submitted. Once a satisfactory scheme has been agreed, conditions may then be used to secure a programme of building recording, analysis and publication. Further information is available from Sheffield City Council's conservation section.*

3.9 Natural stone paving

3.9.1 Paving and surface materials throughout the area are generally modern, either tarmac (roads) or compacted gravel (golf path). The east side of Beauchief Abbey Lane and the path to the door of St Thomas a Beckett's Church are paved with large slabs of local natural stone which add to the conservation area's special interest.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will seek to ensure the retention of areas of natural stone paving.*

3.10 Buildings of Townscape Merit/Positive buildings

3.10.1 Marked on the Townscape Appraisal map for the Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area are a number of *unlisted* buildings, known as Buildings of Townscape Merit, which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will only grant conservation area consent for the demolition of a 'building of townscape merit' or 'positive building' (as identified on relevant townscape appraisal map) if demolition is justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19.*

3.11 New development

3.11.1 There are few opportunities for development in this small conservation area. For minor works, the City Council has produced guidance entitled 'Designing House Extensions'.

3.11.2 New development should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, which may be valued in the future. This neither implies

nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.

3.11.3 Development proposals will be judged on their effect on the area's character and appearance as identified in the Beauchief Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal together with relevant Development Plan policies and any other material considerations.

4. Monitoring and review

As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. It will need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy generally. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a full dated photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

It is possible that this review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the City Council. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement.

5. Useful contacts and addresses

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas:

Urban Design and Conservation Team
Sheffield City Council,
Howden House,
1 Union Street,
Sheffield S1 2SH.
Tel: 0114 273 5804

www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation

For information on the status and interpretation of the statutory Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance:

Forward and Area Planning Team
Sheffield City Council,
Howden House,
1 Union Street,
Sheffield S1 2SH.
Tel: 0114 273 4157

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage
37 Tanner Row
York
YO1 6WP
Tel: 01904 601901

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY
Tel: 020 7377 1644

The Georgian Group
6 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 5DX
Tel: 020 75298920

The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
Bedford Park,
London W4 1TT
Telephone: 020 8994 1019

The Twentieth Century Society
70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ

6.0 Photographs



Abbey Brook forms part of the conservation area boundary.



The outbuildings of Abbey Farm (Grade II) are in need of repair.



One of the area's characteristic stone walls is damaged by tree growth.



Flat-roofed extension and lean-to garage on rear of Abbey Cottages are out of keeping.



Trees add to the rural ambience of the conservation area.



Natural stone roofs are a feature of the area that should be preserved.



Features of the golf course dispel some of the area's historic character.



Natural stone paving on the east side of Beauchief Lane.



The three monastic fishponds are an important wildlife habitat.



Tombs in the graveyard of St Thomas a Beckett's Church are in need of repair.

7. Summary of consultation undertaken

A consultation draft of this document was subject to a period of consultation between 22nd January and 16th February 2007. All local residents in the conservation area were sent copies of the document along with a survey form asking for their comments. Residents were also invited to contact the Urban Design and Conservation Team if they wished to discuss the Appraisal or Management Proposals further. Local members and local community groups were also consulted as part of the process.
