

*Birkendale*

**CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

*March 2008*



**MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

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## **BIRKENDALE 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 Birkendale on 3rd March 2008, which means they are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the area.

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## 1. Introduction

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

1.2 Based upon the appraisal and supported up by a further site survey, this document identifies a number of specific and general issues affecting the Birkendale 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.

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

1.4 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.

1.5 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 (2006). Both the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Management Proposals will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis (see below).

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## 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](http://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 has signed up to the 'Enforcement Concordat' (1998), which sets national best practice standards for planning enforcement. The concordat can be viewed and downloaded from: [http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/enforcement\\_concordat/enforcement\\_background](http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/enforcement_concordat/enforcement_background)

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
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### 3. Issues and recommendations

3.1 Birkendale is typical of the Freehold Land Society developments that played a major role in the growth of Sheffield's suburbs in the mid to late 19th century; like other developments built by Freehold Land Society's, the houses of Birkendale are set in very generous plots.

3.2 Many of the negative features of the Birkendale Conservation Area stem from this fact, because houses have been converted to commercial premises, involving the loss of gardens to parking space and the construction of fire escapes, or they have been subdivided to form flats, with the result that common parts are neglected. Large gardens have been built upon to create additional houses, often to the rear of the main house, and many of these are of substandard design. Where gardens remain undivided, original stables and carriage houses have survived, but these are neglected and at risk or else have been clumsily converted to form subsidiary accommodation.

#### 3.3 Loss of historical and architectural features and poor quality of design

3.3.1 Many of the buildings identified as 'positive' in the Birkendale Conservation Area Appraisal have suffered from the loss of historical features. Their positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area has been weakened by:

- Large extensions that do not match the original building in terms of material, colour or scale;
- Replacement of traditional timber windows and doors with aluminium framed, uPVC and treated timber windows, some with leaded diamonds instead of plain glass or traditional glazing bars;
- Walls rendered with concrete or pebble dashed and repointing carried out in cement-based mortar rather than lime-based mortar;
- Large rooflights and poorly designed dormers intruded into prominent roof slopes;

- Front elevations marred by drainage pipes, wiring, burglar alarms, exterior lighting and satellite dishes. Side elevations supporting large fire escapes where buildings have been converted to flats or commercial use;
- Traditional timber guttering on brackets being replaced by plastic alternatives;
- Garden walls built of patterned breeze block or timber fencing in place of stone walls;
- Conversion of buildings to flats, leading to neglect of the common parts, such as boundary walls, and the loss of gardens to garages and storage;
- Conversion of front gardens into hard standing for vehicles;
- Insensitive siting of garages.

3.3.2 In addition, the conservation area has a number of infill buildings whose style is undistinguished and not in keeping with surrounding buildings, some of them built in the back gardens of larger properties. On the positive side, buildings constructed on the site adjacent to 223 Upperthorpe are a good example of the way that infill buildings can harmonise with existing buildings.

3.3.3 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.

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*Recommendation:*

- *The Council will 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.*
- *In particular, the following individual buildings might be considered for inclusion within an Article 4(2) Direction on the grounds that they are the best representatives of their type and have retained more of their original features than neighbouring properties of similar type:*

*Alpine Road: Nos 1, 3 and 13;*

*Upperthorpe: Nos 217, 283, 150/152, 140, 134, 132, 130, 118 to 12, 104;*

*Birkendale Road: Nos 26 to 46;*

*Birkendale View: Nos 28 and 26;*

*Birkendale: No. 40.*

- *The Council will 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.*

### **3.4 Property subdivision, houses in multiple occupation and backland buildings**

3.4.1 Mention has already been made of the number of properties within the conservation area that have been converted to multiple occupation or had their gardens subdivided, with new properties being built to the rear. This is a trend that is being encouraged by recent property sales, where the estate agents have divided the property into separate lots (for example, Lot 1: the house; Lot 2: a land plot carved out of the garden; Lot 3: subsidiary buildings, such as stables or garages).

*Recommendation*

- *The Council will consider whether, as a matter of policy, subdivision of gardens and conversion of historic residential properties to flats of commercial premises should be permitted and under what conditions.*
- *When considering an application for conversion of a dwelling to flats, the Council will carefully consider such matters as bin storage, clothes drying, car parking and fire safety works to ensure that the change of use does not adversely impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.*
- *If it is considered that development would not detract from the character and qualities of the conservation area, developments need to be appropriately scaled and designed.*

### **3.5 Buildings at Risk**

3.5.1 Birkendale has several buildings that could be described as ‘at risk’ because they are currently neglected, unused or are being used in an unsympathetic manner. They are:

- *The carriage sheds and stables along Birkendale View (at the rear of Nos 48 and 52 Birkendale) are threatened by neglect and vandalism;*
- *The Blake Pub in Daniel Hill Street is boarded up and disused;*
- *No. 48 Birkendale shows signs of neglect that might eventually lead to damage to the fabric of the property.*

*Recommendation*

*The Council will seek to encourage owners of buildings at risk to take steps to ensure that historic buildings are watertight and weather tight and kept in a good state of repair. If necessary the Council can use its statutory powers to secure repairs of listed buildings or, in certain cases, unlisted buildings within a conservation area.*

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### 3.6 Boundary walls and public realm

3.6.1 The conservation area contains areas of stone setts or flags (in Birkendale Road) and of historic gas standards (now converted to electricity).

3.6.2 Boundary walls in general have been neglected and many show signs of collapse and poor-quality repair, with re-pointing in thick lines of grey Portland cement (in place of more subtle pointing in lime mortar). Where entrance gates and railings have been lost, they have been replaced in new materials that are alien in style and colour; similarly, new garden fences have introduced a discordant note to the area's gardens.

#### *Recommendation*

- *Historic paving and lighting should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials.*
- *The Council will encourage those responsible for boundary walls to keep them in a good state of repair using historic materials and techniques.*
- *The Council will normally resist proposals included within planning applications 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.*
- *Consideration will be given to the publication of guidance on best practice in pointing natural stone walls for the use of local residents, property owners and building contractors.*

### 3.7 Opportunities for enhancement

3.7.1(a) The environs of St Joseph's Chapel is unkempt and neglected, disfigured by rubbish, broken fencing, traffic cones, brambles, Lawson cypresses (planted to screen the site) and scarred walls where a porch has been demolished.

#### *Recommendation*

- *Encourage the Sheffield Buddhist Centre, which owns the church and its environs, to improve the appearance of the area around the chapel and turn it into a garden, perhaps working with the residents of the owners of houses within the St Joseph's housing development who look onto the church.*

3.7.1(b) There is a vacant green triangle to the west of the Blake pub on Daniel Hill Street, which is not currently developed or used as a public green space. A large and intrusive gate has been installed to create an access route crossing this open space to the rear of No. 74 Birkendale Road.

#### *Recommendation*

- *The site might suitably be developed with an appropriately scaled and designed development. Alternatively, if development is not considered compatible with the character of the conservation area, steps could be taken to enhance the area, bringing it back into suitable new use, perhaps as public open space, managed by local community groups.*

### 3.8 Trees

3.8.1 Large and mature trees make a major contribution to the character of the Birkendale Conservation Area as individual specimens or as groups of trees.

#### *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.*
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### 3.9 Archaeological issues

3.9.1 Although the Sites and Monuments Record and the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service's Historic Environment Characterisation Study cannot be regarded as definitive or comprehensive, data from both sources suggest both Neolithic and Roman activity in the area.

3.9.2 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.*

### 3.10 Buildings of Townscape Merit/Positive buildings

3.10.1 Marked on the Townscape Appraisal map for the Birkendale 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 Birkendale Conservation Area Appraisal together with relevant Development Plan policies and any other material considerations.

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## 4. Monitoring and review

4.1 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 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.

4.2 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.

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## 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](http://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: 0207529 8920

The Victorian Society,  
1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, LONDON W4 1TT Tel: 0208994 1019

The Twentieth Century Society,  
70 Cowcross Street, LONDON EC1M 6EJ Tel: 020 7250 3857

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## 6. Photographs



*Replacement of traditional timber windows and doors with uPVC.*



*Mature trees and vegetation provide an important aspect to the character of many gardens in the area.*



*Infill buildings in a style that is not in keeping with surrounding buildings.*



*Buildings at risk: the Blake Pub in Daniel Hill Street is boarded up and disused.*



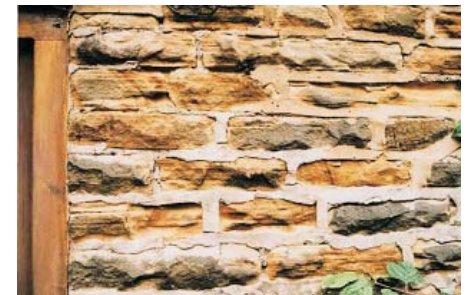
*Large rooflights and poorly designed dormers intruded into prominent roof slopes.*



*Carriage sheds and stables along Birkendale View threatened by neglect.*



*Incursion onto public open space.*



*Repointing in cement-based mortar rather than lime-based mortar.*



*A good example of the way that infill buildings can harmonise with existing buildings.*



*Buildings at risk: graffiti on carriage sheds and stables along Birkendale View.*



*Vacant green triangle to the west of the Blake pub on Daniel Hill Street.*



*Insensitive siting of garages.*

