NORTON ON DERWENT

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

JULY 2017

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This Appraisal was prepared by Lindsay Cowle (Conservation Consultant) in July 2017, on behalf of Norton Town Council, in order to assist the Council in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Norton. The report has been prepared in the absence of a formal Conservation Area Character Appraisal prepared by the local planning authority.

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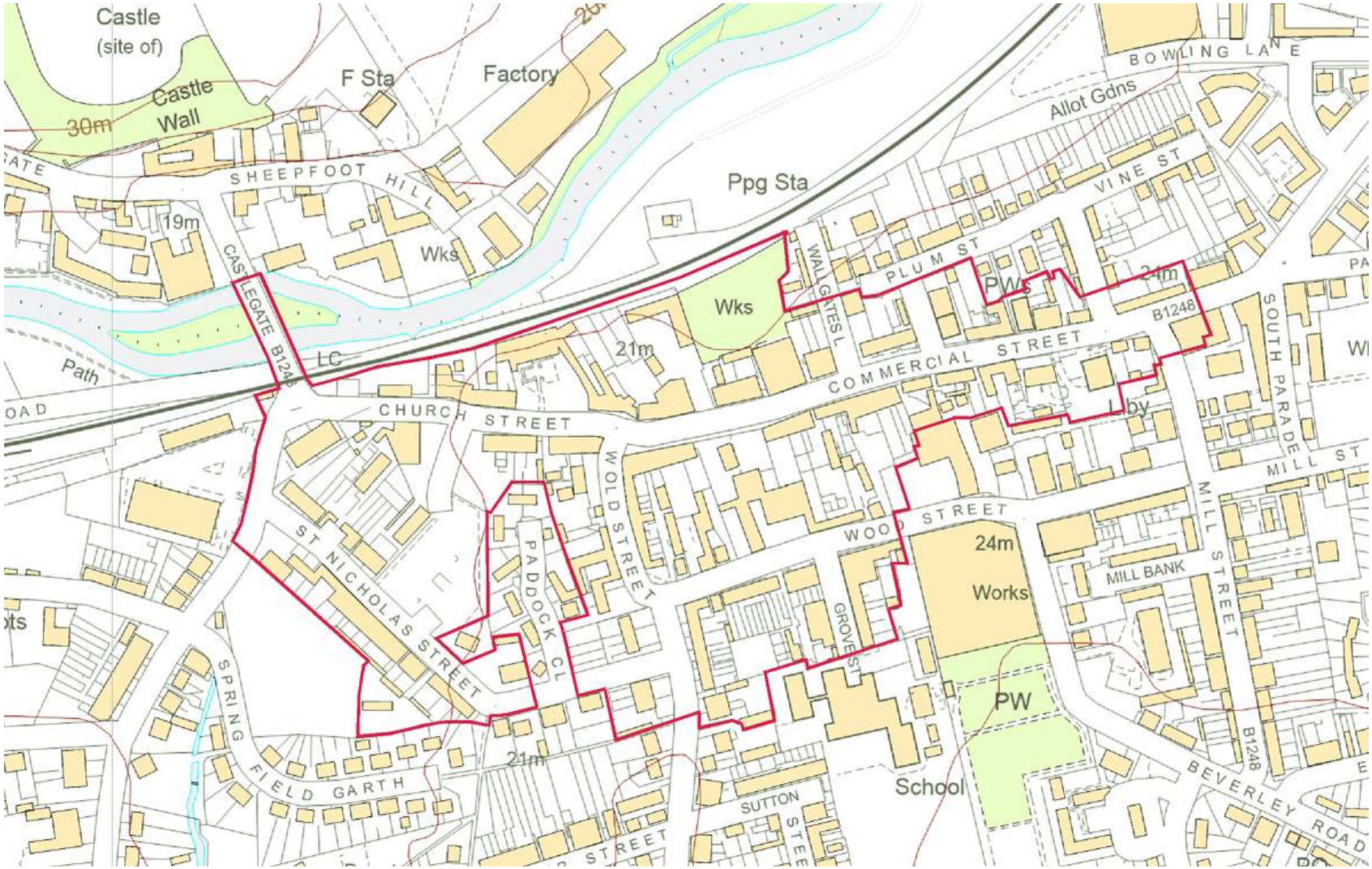
1 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". In addition, authorities are required to carry out periodic reviews of the conservation areas under their control.

1.02 Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to submit them for consideration by the general public. Following designation, under Section 72 of the Act the planning authority, in exercising its planning powers, must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.



Plan of Norton town centre - conservation area bounded in red

1.03 The Norton Conservation Area was designated by Ryedale District Council in 1999. It occupies the historic core of the township of Norton, which is located close to the east bank of the River Derwent in a strongly rural area of North Yorkshire, roughly 18 miles northeast of York. The township is closely related to the township of Malton on the opposite (west) bank of the river, the two being joined at the river crossing, and their respective histories are inextricably linked. Much of the historic township of Malton is also designated as a conservation area and the two conservation areas are contiguous at Malton ('County') Bridge.

1.04 This document sets out the findings of a character appraisal of the Norton Conservation Area and can be regarded as being in three parts. The first part (Sections 2 and 3) sets the scene by analysing the general history and baseline factors of the conservation area. The second part then describes the character of the area in more detail, as 3 'sub-areas' (Sections 4-6). Finally, the third part (Sections 8-10) contains an outline of the relevant policies and suggestions for future management.

2 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 Norton is located on the east bank of the River Derwent, a short distance to the south of the North York Moors, at a point where the river has almost fully evolved from its various tributaries and is starting its route southwards towards the Humber estuary through the flat Vale of York. At this point the river is generally flowing in a northeast-southwest direction, and at the river crossing is actually flowing east-west, putting Norton on the south side of the river and Malton on the north.

2.2 Norton is usually approached from the centre of Malton via the stone bridge over the Derwent, known locally as 'County Bridge' as a reminder of past times when the river used to form the boundary between the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire. The level-crossing of the York-Scarborough railway line immediately after the bridge creates a confusing entrance to the town. The main street then leads off eastwards to join the A64 road to Scarborough and Filey, with the B1248 soon branching off to the southeast towards Beverley and Hull.

2.3 The town stands on flat land not far above river level, making it historically prone to flooding. At the same time the topography of the area has made Malton and Norton an important communication and transportation hub, and given it a greater commercial and industrial role than a simple agricultural centre. However, whilst located close to Malton, Norton's historic location within a different Riding (until 1974) has given it a different identity and to some extent independent facilities.

3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Little or no evidence survives of pre-historic occupation although the fertile area may well have been attractive to early settlers. The prime origin of the settlement was the establishment of a Roman fort at this location (Derventio Brigantium), where the Roman roads from Scarborough and Filey crossed the river en route for York and the north of England. The fort is thought to have straddled the river, with the larger part on the north bank and a smaller outpost on the south, linked by a ford near County Bridge. Little evidence remains of the southern part but Norton main street (Commercial Street) is thought to follow the line of the road eastwards and there have been many small 'finds' of Roman date in the town, including evidence of a thriving 3rd century pottery industry.

3.2 A small settlement in Norton may well have survived the end of the Roman occupation for although little is known of the pre-Conquest period Norton is included in the Domesday Book under the name 'Nortone' (meaning north farmstead or village). The first recorded baptisms (in the 7th century) supposedly took place on the south bank of the river, marked later by the mediaeval church of St Nicholas and now the site of the current swimming baths on Church Street. However, the northern settlement at Malton took precedence in the Middle Ages as a major religious centre run by the Gilbertine Canons of Malton. In the mid 12th century the Canons are recorded as governing a religious hospital for feeding the poor, on an island in the river and within Norton township, but its exact location is unclear.

3.3 Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries the two townships seem to have adopted more traditional roles as agricultural centres, but semi-navigation of the River Derwent (first achieved during the Roman occupation) allowed goods to be transported widely. An Act of 1702 enabled the river to made more navigable as the 'Derwent Navigation', and by the end of the 18th century the area was exporting grain, butter, meat and hides to Leeds, Hull and London, and in return importing coal, wool, sugar and salt: to support this distant trade a boat-building industry developed. A stone bridge (County Bridge) was built around 1760 to link the two riversides and townships together, utilising a natural island in the river.

Norton and Malton town maps c1835

3.4 The first detailed map of Norton (of c 1835) shows the main street of Norton (Church Street and Commercial Street) fully lined with buildings on the south side and intermittently on the north side, turning north at the west end to cross the river via County Bridge. A parallel road to the south, probably a rear access lane, is also well developed at its west end (Wood Street) and returns back to the main street via Wold Street (at the west end) and by Mill Lane (formerly Hall Walk and Green Lane) at the east end. The uses of the surrounding land are not shown. Some of the buildings shown on the map still survive, including 'The Elms', an early 18th century house standing in a tree-lined garden on the south side of Commercial Street and Norton's manor house until the late 19th century.

3.5 The first directory of Norton (Baines' Directory of 1823) shows the population at that time as being 1017, comprising 5 farmers and smaller numbers of the tradesmen, inn-keepers, craftsmen and professionals typical of a small rural town of its age. Malton had greater control over the river-based industries, the wharfs being on the north river bank.

3.6 In 1845 the York and North Midland Railway was constructed to connect the West Riding to Scarborough via Malton, at this point running hard against the south bank of the river and County Bridge and presenting something of a barrier between the two settlements. River trade declined sharply, and largely ceased after 1855 when the railway company bought the Derwent Navigation and raised the tolls on barges to stifle competition. The railway station was originally only accessed from Malton town centre via a timber bridge (replaced in 1870 by the present iron bridge). The arrival of the railway boosted trade and industry and in the second part of the 19th century the area had flourishing breweries, maltings, flour mills and saw mills. Norton gained additional reputation as a centre of horse-racing stables.

3.7 The nature of the town at this time is shown in the first Ordnance Survey map of Norton surveyed in 1850-51. The awkward approach over County Bridge is shown, with a terrace of houses opposite (North Midland Place) apparently orientated to clear a CAMP which early maps show as being Roman, but of which no trace remains above ground. The mediaeval church of St Nicholas has been replaced (in 1816) by a Georgian style church of the same name. Railway activity has intensified with the new Driffield to Thirsk railway line skirting the north side of the two townships and a connecting branch line under construction just to the north of Norton.

3.8 Otherwise it will be seen that the town is growing considerably, with orchards, rear buildings and no doubt small industries appearing behind the frontages, in what appear to be narrow burgage plots. Site observation shows that the commercial centre was concentrated on the junction of Church Street, Commercial Street and Wold Road, with town houses and cottages further away to the south and east. With the coming of the railway other building materials became available, and more cheaply, so that the traditional building finishes of clamp brick or local stone walls with red pantile roofs gave way to red or polychrome facing brick, West Yorkshire stone and blue Welsh slate.

Ordnance Survey Map 1854 (surveyed 1850-51)

Ordnance Survey Map 1913 (surveyed 1909)

3.9 Between 1941 and 1871 Norton's population almost doubled from 1,644 to 3,170 as the residential and industrial suburb of Malton, whilst that of Malton decreased slightly.

3.10 By 1890 Norton had secured its own direct access to Malton station via a new road along the south bank of the river, although this further complicated the road junction and railway crossing at County Bridge. New roads and terraces of quality houses had appeared, reflecting the new affluence of the town (- St Nicholas Street at the west end, Langton Road, Grove Road off Wood Street, and Vine Street at the east end). One notable area left undeveloped for many years was the large area on the northeast side of St Nicholas Street now occupied by the main town car park.

3.11 Public buildings appeared along the east end of Commercial Street (- a school, library, reading room and non-Conformist chapels -) and a police station near Malton Bridge. In order to accommodate the increasing congregation a new church (St Peter's church) was under construction in Wold Road, to be completed in 1894, and six years later the earlier Georgian style church was demolished. A southerly loop in the river nearby, originally crossed by a railway viaduct, was infilled.

3.12 The nature of the town at the start of the 20th century is shown in the Ordnance Survey map of Norton 1913 surveyed in 1909, and it shows the town centre and conservation area much as it is today. A cinema (the 'Majestic') was built on the south side of Church Street in the 1920's.

3.13 Historic maps show little change by the 20th century but by the outbreak of the Second World War the continued growth of Norton and decline of Malton had by then made Norton the more populated settlement. This was despite the closure of the Driffield -Thirsk railway line in 1958 and the general downgrading of railway transport as an alternative to road transport. By 1991 Norton's population was 6,230 as compared with Malton's population of 4,220. The differences in speed of growth are probably attributable to Norton being an 'open' community, whereas Malton was more tightly controlled by the ground landlords, the Fitzwilliam family estate.

3.14 As mentioned before, County boundary changes in 1974 brought Norton and Malton together within the same administrative authority (North Yorkshire) but the presence of the river and railway between them has hindered integration and both settlements have retained different identities and some separate functions. Malton has retained its character as a market town whilst Norton has a more industrial base.

3.15 There have been few changes to the historic core of Norton over the last 100 years but those worth mentioning are - the erosion of the Church Street frontages by clearance and only partial redevelopment; the new Derwent 'swim and fitness centre' on the site of the original church; the new public library at the east end of Commercial Street; and some inhibition of retail trade in the historic main streets due to the appearance of large retail supermarkets to the west.

4 GENERAL CHARACTER

4.1 The core of the conservation area is the main street, which extends west to east from County Bridge to Mill Street, with a significant road junction part way along where it is joined from the south by Wold Street. Wood Street, as the original rear access road to the frontage buildings, has always been important historically and has been included in the conservation area for that reason, whilst not being of the same status.

4.2 The Wold Street junction marks a distinct change in the character of the main street: to the east, Commercial Road is spacious, level, of fairly consistent character, and at least partially 'stopped' visually at each end; to the west, Church Street is more constrained (where the frontages survive), falling towards the west, of variable character, and less self-contained. The land to the south of the main street is higher, with Wold Street rising noticeably to the higher level.

4.3 The character of the area is principally one of a small traditional North Yorkshire town focussed on retail trade and commerce, but with a large residential content including some surprisingly large town houses. Further away from the main street the area quickly changes to almost totally residential. The main street can be busy with traffic at times, especially at the Wold Street junction and at the west end (compounded by the railway level crossing and the nearby supermarket) but otherwise the roads are fairly quiet.

4.4 Despite its historic derivation as a river crossing, and its later affluence due to the coming of the railways, the conservation area has no real visual connection with these apart from the area next to County Bridge: neither is included in the conservation area, although the northern boundary runs part way alongside the railway line. The delineation of the boundary is clear at the west end of the town, where the difference between the traditional and modern buildings is distinct, but otherwise the boundary threads its way through backland areas and across streets where the change of character and quality is much less obvious.

4.5 The scale of the buildings is mostly domestic, at generally 2-3 storeys high. The character of the buildings is mostly retail or domestic, apart from the public buildings, and there are few remaining industrial or warehouse buildings apart from a noticeable range bounding the east side of the original St Nicholas' churchyard in Church Street. Many houses, even on the main street, have walled or railed front gardens which can be attractive features.

4.6 The oldest surviving buildings date from the 18th century but are limited to The Elms (early C18), County Bridge (c1760) and The Union public house (late C18), all of which are Listed Grade ll. The remainder are 19th or early 20th century and include a handful of other Grade ll Listed buildings, either singly or as terraces.

4.7 Since relatively few buildings are of intrinsic merit, the attributes of the townscape tend to derive from their collective appearance, either as unified terraces (in the case of the later houses) or as random buildings of different heights resulting in a varied and sometimes picturesque roofscape. It is therefore difficult to identify buildings of positive value to the townscape unless they are exceptional. The older, smaller buildings tend to be of local coursed stone (at times rendered) or brown/buff clamp brick with red pantile roofs; later buildings are often of red facing brick, sometimes enlivened by creamy white bricks, under blue slate roofs. Roofs are a major feature, and large chimneys. Sadly, most traditional panelled doors and sash windows have been replaced by modern pvc alternatives which do not reflect the original proportions or subtlety.

Typical early building -stone, pantile roof, Yorkshire sliding sash window

Typical late C19 building - polychrome facing brick, Welsh blue slate roof

4.8 Occasional single mature trees or groups of trees play a major part in the townscape, especially those around the former St Nicholas' churchyard, The Elms on Commercial Street, and the junction of Wold Street and Langton Road.

4.9 Behind the main street frontages there are virtually no alleyways linking the main roads and north of the main street large rear areas running up to the railway have been cleared and are awaiting new development. Between Commercial Street and Wood Street aerial views show that the mediaeval burgage plot layout still survives, but much of this area is impenetrable and invisible. Where access is possible it often reveals old workshops, lock-ups and some charming private gardens and vegetable plots.

4.10 The characteristics of the area are described in more detail under 3 geographical areas (see Sections 5-7 below).

5. AREA 1 - COUNTY BRIDGE TO WOLD STREET

5.1 Whilst this area (which includes St Nicholas Street) is not one of great integrity it is the oldest part of the conservation area and establishes its historic links with Malton, the River Derwent and the later railway.

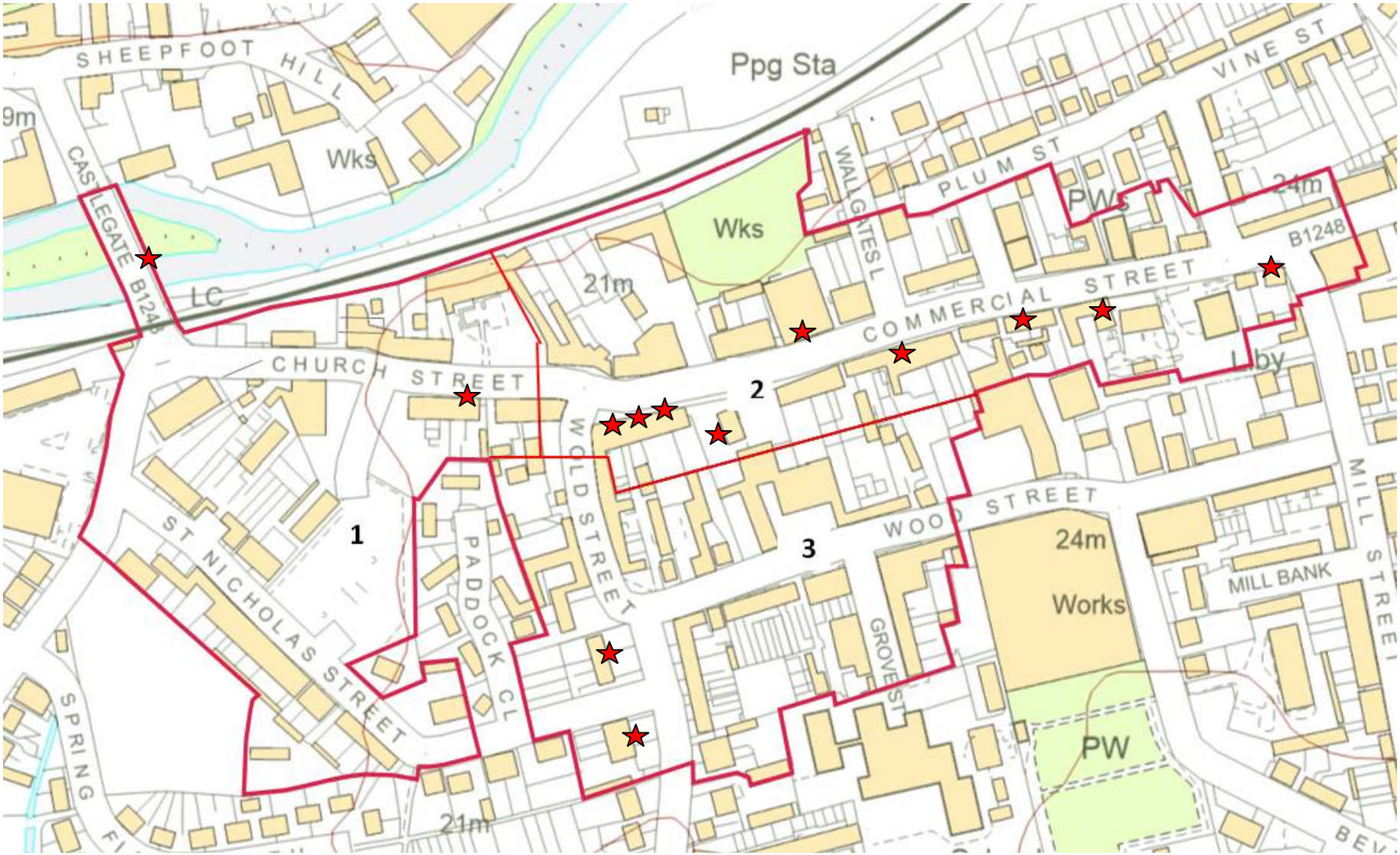
5.2 **County Bridge** leads into Norton from Malton via a single arch to an island and then a double arch to reach the south bank. The bridge (dated c1760) is Listed Grade ll (under the name 'Malton Bridge') and is unfortunately marred by two modern concrete footbridges, one each side, due to the narrowness of the vehicular route. A redeeming feature of the footbridges is that they are set away from the bridge, allowing limited views of its elevations, whilst longer distance views from the river are impossible from the east and obscured from the west by uncontrolled vegetation.

5.3 The setting of the bridge and conservation area could be much improved by controlling the riverside vegetation, if only between the old and new bridges, but flooding here is a real and regular occurrence, probably making this unrealistic. The flood risk has required unfortunate steel flood gates at either end.

5.4 The entrance to Norton is then made complex by the railway crossing and the various roads which converge on the extended road/railway junction. The late 19th century signal box is the only point of interest. The traffic island at the junction has an untidy collection of unrelated signs and the alignment of the terrace of mid 19th century houses facing the junction (Nos 2-12 Church Street) unfortunately suggests that the prime route is to the south rather than east to Norton town centre. The 1854 map suggests that this was in order to avoid the rectangular Roman camp which lay behind.

5.5 Heading firstly southwards along Welham Road the area is quickly taken up with modern retail development, but the conservation area turns southeast to take in **St Nicholas Street,** stopping where the street swings uphill to the east and comes to a visual 'full stop'. A complex of cottages at the start of the street, on the south side, dates from at least the early 19th century and the cottages have spacious and attractive front gardens, but the low building beyond (resembling former public conveniences) seems disused and is a detractor.

5.6 Otherwise St Nicholas Street has some presentable later 19th century houses, in 2-3-storey high terraces at the west end and mostly 2-storey terraces thereafter. They have front gardens of varying sizes, and the garden of No 1 at the northwest end of the street has a particularly large and attractive knot garden. Where the street turns eastwards a large and well preserved Edwardian detached house in mature trees (The Mount) is an imposing and arresting feature.



Conservation area (bounded in red) with Listed buildings starred red

Entrance to St Nicholas Street from the west

5.7 On the northeast side of the street, running through to Church Street, the former Roman camp has been overtaken by rear gardens and small, undistinguished terraces of cottages, and no visible traces remain. Thereafter a large open site runs through to Church Street and serves as the town's main car park, with entrances off each side. Whilst this is within the conservation area it is a detractor and was probably included to take advantage of the conservation area powers to enhance the area. More tree planting along St Nicholas Street would help firm up the damaged street frontage, and better planting within the car park would soften its appearance.

5.8 Returning to the County Bridge road junction, **Church Street** bears off to the east and has an inauspicious start, with modern toilets and an open car-wash site on the north side and a large filling station and garage on the south, finishing at the northern entrance to the public car park. The erosion of the frontages by demolition is regrettable and any new frontage development would be an asset. The combination of the public car park entrance and the car park of the Derwent Arms public house adjoining is unfortunate, further eroding the frontage, and rationalisation of the two would be of benefit.

5.9 Thereafter the integrity and interest of the street emerges as it winds its way up to the Wold Street junction. On the south side the Derwent Arms is an attractively presented and modernised traditional inn, followed by a frontage of buildings including No 28 Church Street, a Grade ll Listed town house and shop of c 1800. On the north side a random mix of traditional buildings of varying heights and alignment provide a rather picturesque roofscape, followed soon after by the former churchyard with its high trees which dominate the area. One or two buildings here, of local stone with pantiled roofs, tall chimneys and surviving 'Yorkshire' sliding sash windows, show the local building tradition.

Church Street - north frontage, former churchyard to rear

5.10 The modern swim and fitness centre is sufficiently recessed at the rear of the churchyard to avoid impinging on the streetscape. The east side of the yard is flanked by early 19th century (or earlier) former warehouses, since converted to flats, which are rare survivals. The frontage finishes with a substantial row of tall polychrome brick late 19th century buildings with good quality surviving shopfronts, and a through passageway to the converted warehouses behind gives some clues as to the commercial character of the area in its heyday.

Church Street - late C19 shopfront detail

Church Street - rear warehouse detail, north frontage

6 AREA 2 - COMMERCIAL STREET

6.1 This is the area of the most integrity and interest. It is the true traditional main street, broad, and running roughly west-east between the Wold Street road junction at the west (where it is visually 'stopped' by the mock half-timbered Railway Tavern) and the Mill Street road junction at the east where the road width narrows at the start of Scarborough Road.

Commercial Street looking west

6.2 The street is more or less straight on plan but on site the frontages are slightly sinuous, adding more interest. It is also more or less level, but at the west end the land on the south side is higher (starting at Wold Street) and the pavement and building frontages are elevated above the road on a grassed bank, adding to the visual interest. The bank reduces in height and peters out after The Elms. The street frontages are described travelling west-east, in two halves either side of the distinctive Union public house.

6.3 The **south frontage** of Commercial Street starts with a butcher's shop (No 2) at the corner of Wold Street which is of redbrick with fairly intact shopfronts, some moulded brick detailing and fretted fireclay ridge tiles. This is followed by a terraces of town houses (Nos 4-18) of various dates and sizes containing nearly half the Listed buildings in the town centre, their attractiveness increased by their elevation above the grassed bank.

6.4 Nos 4-6 are a pair of early 19th century houses entered via steps, with old iron handrails, over a semi-basement. Nos 8-12 are a group of three early 19th century town houses, some once converted to shops. No 16 is another early 19th century town house with old iron handrails. All these are Listed Grade ll and fortunately the other (un-Listed) later 19th century houses in the group are of compatible scale and quality, No 18 having paired bay windows with nicely shaped lead roofs.

Nos 4-18 Commercial Street (numbered right to left)

The Union public house

6.5 The long frontage of The Elms (- a former manor house-) is lined with mature trees which dominate but soften the streetscape although the house itself is barely visible. A row of mostly modernised cottages and houses terminates at The Union, a long (5 bay) landmark building in the townscape and Listed Grade ll. It appears to have originated as a late 18th century large house and cottage later remodelled to its present use and eye-catching for its rendered facade and bold colour scheme.

6.6 The **north frontage** starts at Wold Street with a variety of two and three storey traditional houses which although not Listed have sliding sash windows and traditional roof details (eg 'kneelers' below the verges). The recent reversion / conversion of the ground floor frontages from shops to residential perhaps indicates a decline in the street's retail vitality. This is followed by a range of 19th and early 20th century shops unfortunately interrupted by a gap site (Nos 25-27) opening onto a large recently cleared site running down to the railway. It would be a great benefit for this site to be redeveloped, and in the meantime for the frontage to be strengthened by a wall and / or tree planting.

6.7 One building of note is the Grade ll Listed 'Freer Family Butcher' shop of 1912 (No 49) with its decorative green terracotta frontage adding variety to the local architecture. The roofscape is a major feature of the area and a large expanse of solar glazing on the roof of a building further east shows how easily this can harm the character of the area.

Freer Family Butcher, 49 Commercial Street

6.8 This section of the north frontage finishes, opposite The Union, at a narrow detached house dated 1904 turned (unusually) at right angles to the street and showing an attractive gable end with upper floor bay window and original shopfront. Passageways down each side lead to undistinguished rear areas and a motor repair garage which is fortunately well recessed.

6.9 The eastern half of Commercial Street, being more removed from the retail and commercial pressure of the western part, has retained more residential buildings but has also been seen as an opportunity to locate the town's civic buildings: it therefore has more variety in both uses and architectural design.

6.10 The **south frontage (continued)** has traditional cottages and houses of which Nos 64-70 (Listed Grade ll) form a relatively unspoiled terrace of early 19th century town houses with panelled doors and many Yorkshire sliding sash windows. The adjoining cottages Nos 72-74 are also well preserved. The larger and later pair of houses Nos 76-78 has cogged brick eaves, dentilled brick first floor band and well detailed window and door openings. This part of the frontage terminates with the Grade ll Listed former police station and police house (No 82) of the late 19th century - a large, imposing square building with a front portico to the police station (with detached Doric columns) and a side entrance to the house with Doric pilasters.

Former police station (right), courthouse (centre and left)

6.11 The early 20th century courthouse, adjoining but set back behind planting, is a lively composition of red brick with stone dressings under a red pantile roof with a decorative cowl: it adds variety and another time dimension to the street whilst keeping in scale. The modern public library beyond is set back in a car park which could benefit from being screened by trees; its site is that of the original manor house. Finally, the south frontage terminates at Mill Street with a detached early 19th century house (No 90) which is Listed Grade ll: its frontage is relatively intact but in need of repair.

6.12 The view eastwards along Commercial Street is then partially closed by No 94 (-now a motor cycle shop -) on the opposite side of Mill Street - a three storey high building of coursed stone with what appear to be original openings, bay windows, and both one and (unusually) two storey shop windows.

6.13 The **north frontage (continued)** resumes a terrace of attractive 19th century cottages fronted by walled gardens: No 77 at the east end is a particularly attractive double fronted cottage. It is followed by the late 19th century Trinity Methodist Church, of brick and stone with Early English style windows. A short distance further on is another non-Conformist chapel, the tiny Bethel (Primitive) Methodist Chapel of 1864, of clamp brick with stone dressings.

Trinity Methodist Church

6.14 Beyond it is a terrace of what were originally three late 19th or early 20th century houses (Nos 91-93), mostly converted to shops, of lively red brick with cream brick and stone dressings and a moulded brick eaves, showing the exuberance possible with the new building materials available. Beyond Vine Street is another terrace of three small houses (Nos 107-111) with pedimented stone canopies over the openings (- a frequent detail in the town -) and a first floor band of diagonally-set tiles. Whilst no buildings in this part of the north frontage are Listed they contain a good deal of collective interest and appeal.

Nos 107-111 Commercial Street

7 AREA 3 - WOLD STREET, LANGTON ROAD AND WOOD STREET

7.1 **Wold Street** is a short street rising quickly up from Commercial Road to the higher ground to the south. The buildings at the road junction have been described in Section 6. The east side of the street is fronted by a terrace of small houses of no great merit, although some have simple pedimented stone door canopies which seem to be a common feature of the town. On the west side the Fletchers Butchers' car park behind the Railway Tavern creates an unfortunate gap in the frontage where some form of planting or screening would be beneficial: otherwise there is a mix of buildings, finishing with a large red brick former commercial or industrial building of 1893 with moulded brick dressings and an original shopfront.

7.2 At the street corner with Wood Street some clearance seems to have taken place, leaving an open and unattractive gap which requires development or planting to resolve the junction of the frontages.

7.3 Facing the entrance to Wood Street the curving frontage between Wold Street and Langton Road is bounded by mature trees, above a brick and timber fence screen with ornate stone gateposts, which hide a small stuccoed 19th century villa once known as Arabian House, set well back in gardens

7.4 Continuing southwards along **Langton Road** there follow two terraces of major brick town houses on the west side, either side of the St Nicholas Street junction. Nos 2-8 Langton Road form a terrace of 4 large town houses of c 1855, with large front gardens and an attractive rear lane separating the houses from further long rear gardens: they are Listed Grade ll. Nos 10-16 Langton Road form another Listed terrace of houses of the same style and date, although of less integrity and lacking rear gardens.

Nos 2-8 Langton Street

St John's House, No 1 Langton Road.

7.5 The east side of Langton Road commences with 'St John's House' at the corner of Wood Street, an attractive house with bay windows either side of a central gabled bay with glazed entrance porch. A beech tree in the front garden makes a major contribution to the streetscape. This is followed by a long terrace of modest houses (Nos 3-23) with walled front gardens and fairly consistent appearance. This part of the conservation area finishes by including an extended pair of houses (Nos 25-27) in grey brick with black and white painted lintols with fleur de lys motif keystones.

Nos 3-23 Langton Street

7.6 **Wood Street** is not an immediately obvious candidate for inclusion in the conservation area: whilst one of the earliest streets in the town (as shown in the 1835 town map) the northern frontage is much fragmented compared with the continuous frontage it appears to have once had. Instead of frontage buildings it is characterised by small terraces of cottages and lockups running away from the frontage in narrow burgage plots.

7.7 There are several vacant sites on the northern frontage in need of redevelopment, and the surviving buildings are not of great merit and are much modernised. Inclusion in the conservation area could assist improvement through the conservation area powers available.

7.8 The greater justification for including Wood Street lies in its southern frontage, which starts with a terrace of cottages of consistency behind short walled gardens. A terrace of 5 houses before Grove Street (Nos 26-36), of local clamp brick with red brick dressings, has several surviving bay windows with dentilled eaves, and pedimented and dentilled doorway canopies on stepped square support brackets.

7.9 Grove Street strikes off to the south and contains presentable terraces of late 19th century houses in polychrome brick; those on the west side include some early 20th century houses in local brick with a dentilled brick eaves and first floor band, and ground floor bays under continuous slated canopies supported on decorative timber brackets eg Nos 6-8 and No 14 (The Canon's House).

Nos 6-14 Grove Street

7.10 The conservation area finishes where it meets the modern 'Bright Steels' metal forge which occupies both sides of the street. Just before that, after the Salvation Army building, is a terrace of 3 late 19th century houses (Nos 42-46) with relatively intact bay windows and door surrounds.

8 MANAGEMENT - PLANNING POLICIES

8.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines conservation areas as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to **preserve** or **enhance**'.

8.2 **Preservation** is mainly secured through the application of planning (development control) policies. At national level these are Policies 126-141 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, and at local level they are those of the Ryedale Local Plan, in particular Policy SP12 of the Local Plan Strategy adopted 2013. These policies are in addition to those of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, general planning policies, and local controls such as Tree Preservation Orders.

8.3 The purpose of the planning policies is to protect those aspects of a conservation area which give it its 'special interest' by controlling change more tightly than otherwise. The control applies primarily to new development, demolition, the alteration of buildings, and any works which might be detrimental to the area such as the pruning or removal of trees, works to the highway, advertisements and satellite dishes etc. Control over the alteration of buildings applies in particular to Listed buildings and to all buildings and features which although not 'designated' make a positive contribution to the character of the area, and regarded as 'heritage assets'. These are generally identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

8.4 It is impossible to give a summary here of all the policies which might control a particular type of development, and prospective developers are advised to consult the local planning authority or a conservation specialist for advice.

8.5 Periodic monitoring of a conservation area is required in order to determine whether its boundaries should be enlarged or reduced and to check whether the control policies are being effective. If further controls are deemed necessary the local planning authority could consider imposing these under 'Article 4 Directions' which remove the remaining 'permitted development' rights of unlisted buildings (- the rights to carry out minor works without consent) in exceptional circumstances. Otherwise further control will be applied by the policies as suggested below.

8.6 Separate controls may also be applicable within property leasehold agreements.

8.7 **Enhancement** can also be secured through the application of development control policies but is usually achieved by proactive intervention by the planning or other public authorities. Some suggested actions to secure enhancement are described below.

9. MANAGEMENT - ENHANCEMENT

It would be beneficial to address the following in order to enhance the quality of the area:

9.1 Area 1 - if practicable it would be beneficial to cut back and control the riverside vegetation either side of County Bridge, to allow clearer views of the bridge.

9.2 Area 1 - the traffic island at the junction of Church Street, Welham Road and County Bridge has an untidy collection of unrelated signs which could benefit from being simplified.

9.3 Area 1 - the low building on the southwest side of St Nicholas Street (resembling former public conveniences) seems disused and should either be removed, replaced, or brought back into use and visually improved.

9.4 Area 1 - in St Nicholas Street more tree planting along the car park boundary would help firm up the damaged street frontage, and further planting within and along the perimeter of the car park would soften its appearance rather than the few trees which exist at present.

9.5 Area 1 - at the west end of Church Street the street frontages have been badly eroded by demolition and by new buildings, mostly vehicle-related, set far back from the building line: as opportunities arise new frontage development would be encouraged, to help restore the urban form.

9.6 Area 1 - on the south side of Church Street the combination of the public car park entrance and the car park of the Derwent Arms public house adjoining erodes the already fragmented frontage, and rationalisation of the two would be of benefit.

9.7 Areas 1-2 - because of the historic origins of the town there is the potential for archaeological deposits to exist in some of these areas: measures should be in place for their detection and recording during any ground disturbance.

9.8 Area 2 - the north side of Commercial Street has a gap site (Nos 25-27) opening onto a large recently cleared site running down to the railway. It would be a great benefit for this site to be redeveloped, and in the meantime for the frontage to be strengthened by a wall and / or tree planting.

9.9 Area 2 - the modern public library car park could benefit from being more screened by trees.

9.10 Area 2 - the Listed house No 90 Commercial Street (terminating the east end of the south frontage) is in poor condition and in need of repair.

9.11 Area 2 - the pavements along Commercial Street are very broad in places and would seem to offer the potential for tree planting to add interest to the streetscape and improve its amenity.

9.12 Area 3 - the car park behind the Railway Tavern creates an unfortunate gap in the west frontage of Wold Street and some form of planting or screening would be beneficial.

9.13 Area 3 - No 42 Wold Street (- including the passageway -) seems to be unused and in poor condition and should ideally be repaired and improved.

9.14 Area 3 - the cleared street corner between Wold Street and Wood Street has left an open and unattractive gap which requires development or much bolder landscaping and planting to resolve the junction of the frontages.

9.15 Area 3 - the northern frontage of Wood Street is much fragmented and extensive redevelopment of this side of the street would be both possible and beneficial.

9.16 Conservation Area generally - a formal review of the conservation area boundary should be carried out in the near future, in consultation with the various 'stakeholders'. An informal assessment suggests that there is no obvious scope or need for extension, but that it might be appropriate to remove Wood Street and Grove Street.

10. MANAGEMENT - DESIGN GUIDANCE

Repairs and alterations

10.1 Small alterations to unlisted buildings (particularly dwellings) can be damaging to the conservation area singly or cumulatively and should preferably be agreed with the local planning authority first to ensure an acceptable design. Particular issues are listed below:

10.2 Chimneys and chimney pots make an important contribution to the roofscape and should be retained wherever possible.

10.3 Solar panels should be discreet and ideally restricted to rear roof slopes where they are less visually prominent. Rooflights, where approved, should preferably be of a 'conservation' design to sit within the roof structure rather than on top.

10.4 Traditional wooden doors and windows (including window glass) make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and should be retained where possible. Secondary glazing is preferable to double glazing and the installation of pvc windows is to be discouraged.

10.5 There are several terraces of unlisted houses in Area 3 (Wold Street, Wood Street, Grove Street and in particular the east side of Langton Road) which are attractive because of their uniformity of appearance. The addition of dormer windows, painting or re-facing frontages, changing front boundary walls etc would damage this uniformity and will be discouraged. Where new porches have started to appear (eg on Langton Road) it would be beneficial to agree a common design.

10.6 Some isolated buildings in otherwise uniform brick terraces have been painted in the past, marring the frontage (Church Street, St Nicholas Street, Commercial Street); as opportunities arise it would be beneficial for the paint to be removed and the original brick exposed.

10.7 Walled front gardens and smaller areas in front of houses make an important contribution to the appearance of the conservation area, and their removal in order to provide hard-standings in front of properties will be resisted.

New design

10.8 Unless there are overriding arguments of public benefit, or designs of exceptional architectural merit, all new development should strive to make reference to its local context in terms of its size, massing, scale and general appearance. Means by which this can be achieved are listed below, but ultimately the suitability or otherwise of the overall design is a matter for professional judgement.

10.9 Some modern shopfronts in Commercial Street are unsympathetic to the area and when future opportunities arise these should be re-modelled or replaced with better designs which are more compatible with the locality.

10.10 The preservation of traditional burgage plot boundaries in Area 2 is important and any new development should be designed to fit between existing boundaries, or otherwise acknowledge the boundaries.

10.11 All new infill or replacement development in the town centre (Areas 2-3) should finish in line with existing frontages where already established.

10.12 Roofs should be dual-pitched at not less than 35-40 degrees, of simple form, and on main street frontages should fall to the street and the rear rather than gabled to the street: at the front they should extend out from the wall heads, on projecting masonry or extended rafters. Dormer windows should be small and have sloping or dual-pitch roofs rather than wide and/or flat-roofed.

10.13 Upstand party walls and kneelers on roofs may be permitted on the older frontages (Church Street and Commercial Street) if in character with the area. Chimneys will be encouraged if they rise off ridges and are of substantial size, with well detailed cappings and pots.

10.14 Rainwater goods should be of metal, and should generally be painted black or a similar dark colour.

10.15 Finishing materials in the town centre (- Areas 1-2 -) should be exposed local clamp brick, red facing brick or matching stone for walls, with red clay pantiles or blue natural slate for roofs, to suit the local context. Painted render or brick may be suitable in some instances but relies on regular maintenance and will generally be discouraged.

10.16 Different constraints apply in the suburban areas (Areas 1and 3) where the emphasis will be on preserving the character of terraced houses as groups and ensuring that any extensions or alterations are of small scale and consistent so as to minimise impact on the whole.

10.17 In the suburban areas (Area 1 and 3) the preferred materials are red clamp brick or facing brick for walls and blue natural slate or flat red clay pantiles for roofs, all depending on the locality. In replacement houses decorative features already local to the area (bay windows, porches, variations of walling material etc) may be permitted if of good design.

10.18 In all areas openings in the walls of buildings should be designed to have predominantly vertical proportions through the shape of the openings themselves and the arrangement of glazing bars etc: where openings are unavoidably wider than their height windows should be divided by mullions into two or more sections of vertical proportions.

10.19 Where property boundaries need to be defined, exposed stone or brick walls are usually the preferred solution.