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Introduction

The Rotherham Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a component part of the broader Town Centre Renaissance programme and Housing Market Renewal strategy. The aim of the initiative is to contribute to the wider regeneration of the town centre by bring historic buildings back into beneficial use. It will complement and add value to other initiatives such as the Living Over the Shops programme, shop fronts improvement scheme, High Street Rejuvenation Project and public realm improvements. The enhancement of public realm is common to both the THI and Renaissance objectives. An integrated approach to the enhancement and where appropriate, the historic restoration of key spaces within the area will be adopted.

A substantial amount of public funding is being targeted at the Town Centre and this is already attracting significant private sector investment. To ensure that the Region, the Borough and the Town Centre benefit from these funding and investment opportunities and safeguards the interests of all businesses in the area, a strong regeneration framework has been developed. This framework includes:

- Rotherham Unitary Development Plan
- The Town Centre Charter has 10 goals, some of which are relevant here:-
  - Goal 2 to populate the town centre
  - Goal 3 to improve the green spaces in the town
  - Goal 8 to encourage an improved standard of architecture and urban design in the town and its open spaces
- These goals feed into the Strategic Development Framework
- Housing Market Renewal Town Centre Area Development Framework

The present Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in October 1995 and incorporates three previously designated areas; the All Saints Conservation Area (designated 1969); the Crofts Conservation Area (designated 1969); and the Clifton Bank Conservation Area (designated 1973). A Draft Conservation Appraisal was produced by the Council and Woodhall Planning and Conservation in May 2005. It defines the special character of the Town Centre Conservation Area, identifies its core qualities and assesses their significance. The form and content of the appraisal has been revised and updated and follows the advice of English Heritage contained in the guidance leaflet “Conservation Area Appraisals” (English Heritage, 2006). This updated appraisal forms Part 1 of this document.

The Management Plan which forms Part 2 of this document relates to the target area of the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the wider Town Centre Conservation area (Refer to plan showing both boundaries and character areas). Its form and content follows the advice on preparing THI management Plans contained in “Guidance on the management of conservation areas” (English Heritage, 2006). The purpose of the Management plan is to set
out those management issues that need to be addressed in order to achieve and maintain the objectives of the THI during the lifetime of the Initiative and beyond.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will eventually be formalised as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and form part of the Local Development Framework. However until the Council considers that it is in a position to achieve this it has been adopted as an Interim Planning Statement which can be taken into account when determining planning applications within the Conservation Area Management Plan area. This does not have the full weight of SPD; however preparation and consultation has followed the requirements set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (the Regulations) as closely as possible. It is acknowledged that further work will be required in the future to comply fully with SPD requirements.

Part 1 – Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

1.1 This appraisal is a statement of the special architectural or historic interest of the Rotherham Town Centre Conservation Area. It is provided to inform the management of the conservation area and, in particular, the formulation of policies, the determination of applications for development and proposals for enhancement.

2 Policy context

2.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Also, from time to time authorities are required to review the extent of conservation areas within their districts.

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

2.3 The Rotherham Unitary Development Plan, which was adopted in June 1999, contains general policies relating to conservation and specific policies for Rotherham Town Centre (see Appendix D).

3 Summary of special interest

3.1 The Rotherham Town Centre Conservation Area is primarily the historic centre of the town. This is not to say that there are not other historic buildings or areas in the vicinity but as with any town or city its natural development has resulted in modern infill on its
outskirts unsympathetic to such buildings and providing no sense of unity in these areas. The conservation area is therefore distinguishable by its high number of historic or architecturally attractive buildings that have developed in such a fashion to give uniformity and cohesion to the town centre.

4 Assessing special interest

4.1 Location and Setting

Location and Setting

4.1.1 Rotherham lies in the county of South Yorkshire, formerly part of the West Riding of Yorkshire. It is located approximately 9 kilometres north-east of Sheffield in the valley of the River Don. The historic core of the town lies on rising land to the south and east of the River Don, close to its confluence with the River Rother. Rotherham is the centre of a metropolitan borough with a population of over 250,000. However, the population of the central area is only around 8,000.

4.1.2 The Conservation Area covers a significant part of the town centre (14.12 hectares). It includes the streets around the medieval Parish Church which still conform to their medieval layout as well as large areas of later 19th and 20th century development that reflect the growth of the town during this period due to Rotherham's booming industries. The conservation area is therefore a splendid mix of medieval, 18th, 19th and 20th century development surrounding one of the largest and stateliest parish churches in Yorkshire.

General character and plan form

4.1.3 Although the majority of the medieval streets have been widened and new streets created, the majority of the Conservation Area retains a medieval, unplanned, character with casual views and informal spaces. This is reinforced by the dominance of All Saints Church with its spire that is visible from many locations within and beyond the Conservation Area.

4.1.4 Most of the streets are broad, having been widened or created in the late nineteenth century, the main exceptions being High Street and Wellgate. The dominant building type is three storey, commercial premises, with retail frontages at ground floor level. Although many of these date from the nineteenth century, there are a significant number of large, early twentieth century commercial developments. These, together with the public buildings of the same period, give some parts of the Conservation Area a predominant early twentieth century appearance, albeit within an earlier and unplanned layout of streets.

Landscape setting

4.1.5 The Conservation Area generally turns its back on the River Don and there is little sense of the importance of the river to the early history of the town. The majority of the designated area spreads across the northern end of a ridge that reduces in height towards the medieval bridge, and into the valleys on either side. This topography results in some steep streets and generally short or closed views, but with occasional, unexpected, glimpses across the area.
4.2 Historic development and archaeology

Origins and historic development of the area

4.2.1 Early settlement of Rotherham is not fully understood but archaeology close to the town centre has revealed a possible prehistoric burial mound. in the garden at Chatham House (see section 5) and the discovery of flint implements to the south of the conservation area at Canklow Wood suggests that this sandstone ridge above the valley floor was the site of Neolithic or Bronze Age settlement.

4.2.3 Evidence for Roman presence is greater, during the 1st century AD the Romans occupied a fort at nearly Templeborough. It housed in the region of 800 men and was probably constructed to monitor the Brigantian frontier on the opposite side of the Don. Excavations revealed that the fort was abandoned and rebuilt in both the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

4.2.4 Excavations at the fort in 1916-17 identified an industrial complex outside the fort with evidence for iron smelting, glass making and bronze and silver work being carried out. Other Roman finds have been unearthed across the conservation area; including a coin hoard (see section 5).

4.2.5 Rotherham developed as an Anglo-Saxon administrative and trading centre and in 1086 the Domesday Book records that it had a church, with a priest and a mill. The oldest feature to survive from this period is the very unusual churchyard, raised up on its north side surrounded by tall well-dressed stone walls with curved corners to east and west. This is a characteristic feature of other Anglo-Saxon churchyards that survive throughout the country. During the medieval period Rotherham was the market centre for a wide rural hinterland, a role that was reinforced by its location at a key crossing point of the River Don. King John granted the first charter for an annual fair in 1207.

4.2.6 The medieval town was centred on the Parish Church of All Saints, the present building dating from the fourteenth century (see Appendix B) built on its earlier island site. The church sits at the centre of the town acting as a hub with streets running around the outer perimeter of the raised church yard island site. High Street to the south is an encroachment on the edge of the church yard and is a typical medieval development seen in other towns. Church Street is to the west and Jesus Gate to the east, linked to the church yard by Vicarage Lane. Bridge Gate to the north formed an important link between the bridged crossing over the River Don and the church. The town was also accessed via Westgate (to the west), Wellgate and Doncaster Gate (to the east) all of which directly linked to the High Street. The term “gate” is from the Anglo-Danish word for street – ‘gata’ or ‘gatan’. Rotherham was never protected by walls. South of the town centre, The Crofts was a cattle market of regional importance, which remained a cattle market until the early 20th century. Also the west of the church an open space between Church Street and the river was used as a sheep market. An area that was later to become a market hall and meat sellers stall, known as The Shambles.

4.2.7 During the late fifteenth century the town developed under the patronage of Thomas of Rotherham, Archbishop of
Canterbury. In 1482 he constructed the Chapel of Jesus on the south side of All Saints Church and the following year saw work start on the Bridge Chapel (see Appendix A). Thomas was also responsible for the College of Jesus on the site of his birthplace, accommodating church choristers and grammar school teachers. Following the suppression of chantries in 1547, the college buildings were converted to a mansion, before becoming part of the College Inn. Parts of the college building survive incorporated into later buildings (see Appendix B). For many years College Yard was a focal point of the town; large crowds gathering to hear the proclamation of new monarchs, the declaration of election results and on other public occasions.

4.2.8 In 1583 Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter to the Feoffees of the Common Lands of Rotherham. The Feoffes undertook a variety of duties, using revenue from the common lands. They looked after the sick and poor, were responsible for the water supply, built roads and bridges, punished minor offenders, appointed parish staff and looked after the town archery butts. Later they opened a charity school, known as the Blue coats School from its uniform. The listed school building of 1776 stands in The Crofts (see Appendix B).

4.2.9 During the Civil War, Rotherham was a puritan stronghold and was twice attacked by Royalists. Battles were fought at the junction of Wellgate and High Street and later at Rotherham Bridge.

4.2.10 The 1774 Map of Rotherham (see Appendix A) shows the layout of the town at that date and this is probably little different from the late medieval settlement. There is a dense cluster of buildings around the parish church and long, narrow, burgage plots on the south side of High Street and on some of the other principal streets. A few buildings survive from this period, including mid-eighteenth century houses in Bridgegate, High Street and Moorgate, and John Platt’s stone house of 1794 in Westgate (see Appendix B).

4.2.11 Iron had been worked around Rotherham since the medieval period. However, the industry grew rapidly after 1740 when Samuel Walker and his brothers transferred their business
from Grenoside, attracted by the local availability of coal and ironstone and easier transportation on the newly built Don Navigation. This was the real start of the industry that would dominate the town until the mid-twentieth century. In 1743 the population of Rotherham was approximately 4,300. In 1801 the first official census recorded a population of 8,418 and by 1837 it had risen to 13,539. The population in 1901 was recorded as 50,855, an increase of nearly 700% in 100 years. The growth in manufacturing industry and the consequential rise in population was to have dramatic influence on the physical appearance of the town.

4.2.12 Until the mid-nineteenth century the town still clustered around the Parish Church, with commercial life centred on High Street, College Street, Bridgegate and Church Street. Other areas of settlement were on Westgate and Wellgate, but most of the industry concentrated at Masbrough, west of the River Don. The area north of Bridgegate and east of College Street was still given over to fields. The rising population was crammed into back to back cottages squeezed into yards and courts behind the houses and shops on the main streets. The majority of these buildings do not survive.

4.2.13 The historic maps (see Appendix A) show that the town gradually developed. Small terraced housing can be seen to the north-east of the town centre; most of this has been replaced by later improvements. Better quality housing gradually developed away from the town or on its fringes. The stone, detached and terraced residences at Clifton Bank are a good example. To the south of the centre there were some very large properties in generous grounds, such as South Grove off Moorgate. Some indications of these survive outside the Conservation Area.

4.2.14 By 1850, Rotherham, like many other industrial towns, was an unhygienic place with a high mortality rate. The average life expectancy was only 25. This situation resulted from the overcrowded housing and the lack of both a proper water supply and any form of sewage disposal system. In 1852 the Rotherham and Kimberworth local Board of Health was established. Within the next ten years the Board had taken over the Water Company and the Gas Company, together with the town’s markets, and Rotherham Hospital was constructed on land east of Wellgate.
Proper sanitation and an assured clean water supply led to a steady improvement in health which proved to be a turning point in Rotherham’s physical growth.

4.2.15 Rotherham expanded rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. New roads, such as Effingham Street, improved access between the centre and the growing housing areas on the edge. Most of the other streets in the centre were widened and this, linked to extensive new building, effectively changed the face of Rotherham. The prosperity of the town was reflected in extensive new commercial buildings, such as Imperial Buildings, a shopping arcade with offices above that is listed Grade II (see Appendix D).

4.2.16 The construction boom in the town centre during the 1920s and 1930s coincided with the peak of the Rotherham/Sheffield steel production period. Buildings erected during this period included the Municipal Offices (1924), a new Cattle Market (1927), the Technical College (1930) and the Central Library (1931). Also, All Saints’ Square to the north of the Parish Church was opened up by the demolition of a block of older buildings and laid out as a bus station. Apart from the construction of a number of buildings on the periphery to cater for the growth of the public and educational sectors in the second half of the twentieth century, the town centre has remained relatively unchanged since the outbreak of the Second World War. Since that date a number of buildings have been demolished, leaving vacant sites, and some of the principal streets and spaces have been pedestrianised.
Archaeology and scheduled monuments

4.2.17 Despite the limited archaeological investigation that has been carried out in the town centre the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) identifies a number of sites that provide further historical information on the development of Rotherham. At Appendix B is a table and map that highlight the SMR sites and find spots in and around the town centre conservation area.

4.2.18 As the table at Appendix B shows, there is one Scheduled Ancient Monument within the conservation area. This is the 15th century bridge where the chapel is located (Monument number 54).

4.2.19 Recent excavation at 15 Vicarage Lane, known locally as the Speeds building (between High Street and the churchyard) revealed medieval deposits. Medieval surfaces and an outside oven were found during the evaluation by West Yorkshire Archaeology Services. Pottery shards from the 11th to 16th centuries were also recovered from the two trenches. Although no evidence for Saxon occupation was found the finds at the Speeds

Advertisement for local industry from 1879. Source Whites Directory of Sheffield and Rotherham 1879.
building suggest that settlement was located in this part of the town at the end of the Saxon period. Therefore there is the potential for Saxon remains to be found within the town, especially in the vicinity of the church, and certainly for medieval remains throughout the town centre.

4.2.20 Post-medieval and industrial remains depend significantly on the disturbance of the ground. It is difficult to assess the potential of such deposits surviving. However, a desk based assessment of the Westgate area conducted by ARCUS (Archaeological Research and Consultancy at the University of Sheffield) in 2004 has identified the potential for the recovery of post medieval and industrial deposits. Fourteen potential archaeological sites have been identified of which further assessment is recommended prior to any development. Nine of which are in or border the conservation area. The table and map at Appendix C identifies these sites and the shows their location.

4.2.21 The table and map at Appendix C is the result of a comprehensive survey undertaken by ARCUS (May, R and Jessop, O, 2004, Project Report 833.1) in one part of the conservation area. It must be acknowledged that if a survey was conducted across the entire conservation area it is likely that many more sites of archaeological potential would be identified. The impact of development within the conservation area could therefore seriously irreversibly damage the archaeological resource especially if the excavation of foundations or basements, or levelling of sites post demolition occurs.

4.3 Spatial analysis

The Character and Relationship between spaces in the area

4.3.1 The spaces in the central core of the conservation area, to the south of the churchyard, have an overall enclosed intimate feel reflecting its medieval origins. Streets here are narrower than elsewhere and a number of significant secondary, pedestrian routes exist including Vicarage Lane, Snail Hill and the route between High Street and the churchyard. From Snail Hill views of All Saints church spire and the roof features of buildings on High Street are significant. These form a contrast with the more open aspect of All Saint’s Square where the church forms a dramatic back-cloth to this large public space.

4.3.2 At Clifton Bank the sharp incline allows dramatic views of the unbroken terrace, and at the head of the street the view is closed by a fine pair of large semi detached houses in their own gardens. The private gardens of Wellgate Terrace offer an important area of green space. In the opposite direction the high-level view is unsatisfactory as it focuses on the multi-storey car park which is outside the Conservation Area.

4.3.3 The major space in the Westgate, Main Street and Moorgate area is the civic area in front of the Town Hall on Moorgate Street, an area that was once the cattle market. This space is enclosed on one side by the long façade of the Town Hall and on the other by the dominant gable and tower of Talbot Lane Methodist Church. However, the space is relatively open to north and south. As a result there are medium and long distance views up and down the main streets. Like All Saints Square, this space has benefited from recent environmental improvements.
4.3.4 The spaces around Westgate tend to have a diffuse character, because of the existence of vacant sites both within and immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area. Such vacant sites are particularly damaging to the character and appearance of Westgate and the narrow lanes that run up the hill to the south.

Key views and vistas

4.3.5 The topography of the town centre results in generally short or closed views, but with some occasional, unexpected, glimpses across the Conservation Area. In the northern section, spaces are predominantly commercial streets enclosed by buildings. However, there are two significant breaks in this pattern. The area around the bridges has a more diffuse character as a result of both the river and the adjacent open spaces that are outside the Conservation Area. All Saints Square, to the north of the parish church, is a successful urban space surrounded by a variety of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century buildings. With four major streets converging on it and its proximity to All Saints Church, it is a natural destination and focal point in the town centre. It benefits from the recent imaginative environmental improvements.

4.3.6 Within the northern section, a number of key buildings close important views. All Saints Church dominates views south up Bridgegate and across the churchyard from Church Street and High Street. The view north up College Street focuses on an interesting building of the 1930s, No 1 Effingham Street. The view up Howard Street is closed by the fine curved façade of Rotherham College of Arts and Technology.

4.3.7 The higher terrain of the central core of the conservation area provides the few opportunities to see beyond the conservation area and the whole town centre. The north part of All Saints churchyard is a particularly good vantage point. Looking north from here the industrial areas beyond the town are clearly visible.

4.3.8 Throughout the Conservation Area there are a number of narrow pedestrian alleys between and behind the main frontages. These provide a series of shortcuts and occasional glimpses or vistas of open spaces and unexpected views of key buildings.

4.3.9 Looking west from Westgate and beyond the conservation area boundary housing developments and countryside can be seen. There are significant views from outside, looking into the conservation area. There is a dramatic view of All Saints Church from the north west of the town. Likewise the spires of Talbot Lane Methodist Church, and the adjacent church on Moorgate link in with views of All Saints spire to create an attractive skyline for the conservation area. The entry points to All Saints’ Square funnel dramatic but narrow views of the church and its tower and tall spire, gradually opening these views up as the roads, such as Bridge Gate, run into the square.
4.4 Character analysis

Definition of character areas, activity, prevailing and former uses

4.4.1 As already mentioned, prior to 1995 Rotherham town centre had 3 separate conservation areas. Those areas still do form distinct areas of character, however a fuller assessment of the town resulted in a larger area being designated.

4.4.2 This fuller assessment incorporates 4 areas of distinct character. These are;

- The northern section
- The central medieval core
- Wellgate Terrace and Clifton Bank
- Westgate, Main Street and Moorgate

4.4.3 The **Northern section** of the conservation area from All Saints’ Church to Our Lady’s Chapel on the bridge has all the qualities of a town centre with a range of retail uses and associated offices. The streets are wide and mostly pedestrianised. Architecturally they are dominated by handsome and imposing, early 20th century buildings of 3 storeys that occupy corner plots or stand in uniform rows. The row effect provides a strong horizontal feel contrasted by the use of columns and pilasters particular on the upper floors. This is best seen along College Street and Effingham Street. Bridgegate is one of the oldest streets in this area and thus provides a slight difference in character in comparison to College and Effingham Street. On Bridgegate there is a greater variety of architectural style with buildings from differing periods. The horizontal emphasis is not so strong. A number of late nineteenth century buildings also survive with attractive stone detailing. Gables and parapets are dominant features, yet the building materials vary, with red brick, stone and mock timber framing all to be found. This is the busiest area within
the conservation area boundary.

4.4.4 The **central medieval core** area of the town centre includes All Saints church and churchyard, All Saints Square, High Street, Snail Hill, The Crofts and Wellgate. The buildings here are predominantly 18th and 19th century but they are situated around the medieval core of the town. Notable medieval buildings also survive here including the magnificent All Saints Church and The Three Cranes (25-27 High Street) building dating from the fifteenth century. The building plots here are much narrower than the northern part of the conservation area, reflecting earlier burgage plots.

4.4.5 High Street was never widened so is narrower than the streets in the northern area of the town demonstrating a variety of architectural styles and periods, including simple and detailed stone facades. The Three Cranes is an important twin-gabled jettied timber-framed building (grade II* listed) disguised by its later white painted plaster rendered facade. This is the only known timber framed building in Rotherham town centre, contrasting with late-Victorian red brick shops and offices, and a number of larger twentieth century buildings. There is also a fine example of an 18th century townhouse at 29 High Street (grade II listed). Most of the buildings are 3 storeys, giving the street a feeling of unity. A feature seen in two late-nineteenth century buildings on High Street is the use of timber turrets (now partially removed), which compliment the spire of All Saints Church behind them.

4.4.6 The churchyard to the south of All Saints church is a significant green space offering views of the rear of High St which incudes the Georgian origins of No. 36 High Street. The Speeds
Building (15 Vicarage Lane) is a fine, early nineteenth century former townhouse (grade II listed), which has pride of place next to the church. Vicarage Lane which leads up to the churchyard from College Street is an interesting historic route to the church but suffers from inactive building frontages on the ground floor. Glimpses of the church and this green space can also be gained from High Street, between No.’s 32 and 30 High Street. Likewise, this passageway offers a visual link between the church and the Three Cranes building.

4.4.7 Through a narrow alley off High Street is Snail Hill which leads up to The Crofts. This area, only used by traffic for loading is quiet, mainly used as a pedestrian thoroughfare it winds through behind the backs of shop and office premises. Although views here are dominated by unattractive rear extensions of shops, the former George Wright office building stands here which is a highly decorative neo-Gothic building. Views of the predominantly stone buildings at The Crofts can also be gained from Snail Hill. The Crofts is a small group of 18th and 19th century buildings, now mostly commercial premises, built from stone with defined boundaries denoted by stone walls. These include the 18th century school, (Grade II listed, now Feoffees pub) and the early 18th century house at No 16 The Crofts. This distinct group of buildings and the narrow winding pattern of the street is an historic oasis within the town centre.

4.4.8 Wellgate, a historic route in the town, was already substantially developed by 1775 (see Appendix A). The street has been much rebuilt in Victorian times with red brick 3 storey buildings predominating. The narrow building plots remain as seen in 1775; it is probably the most densely developed street in the conservation area. The buildings are mainly retail / commercial and many can be regarded as significant buildings such as the Temperance Hall and the Masonic Hall (see 8.03 for a full list), many of the buildings are noted particularly for their decorative use of brick, in motifs and gables. Wellgate is open to vehicular traffic which contributes to its busy feel. The height of the buildings coupled with the density and narrowness of the road make the street feel very enclosed compared to other streets in the conservation area.

Map showing Wellgate Terrace and Clifton Bank that runs off Wellgate to the east.
4.4.9 **Wellgate Terrace and Clifton Bank** is the only purely residential area within the conservation area. This area is characterised by the modest early nineteenth century Wellgate Terrace and the impressive early – mid nineteenth century terracing of Clifton Bank which is interspersed by a couple of impressive villas. Clifton Bank in particular is characterised by impressive stone boundary walls and railings (many of which have been lost). Some of the houses retain original features such as doors and windows, which greatly enhance the area. The character of this area is undermined by the more recent housing on the southern side of Clifton Bank and unsympathetic alterations to the elevations of the houses through the alteration of windows and poor repairs to brick and stonework. The semi cobbled nature of the road, especially at Clifton Bank and the large garden space at 20 and 21 Clifton Bank and the other smaller gardens collectively adds to the charm of this unexpected area within Rotherham town centre.

4.4.10 The **Westgate, Main Street and Moorgate** area has a variety of building styles which are predominantly Victorian, Edwardian and early twentieth Century. It has a more open feel than the adjacent central core area and is open to traffic giving it a less intimate character.

4.4.11 **Ship Hill** has a number of mid 20th century office buildings, whilst the Town Hall dominates Moorgate at the site of the old cattle market. Similarly Talbot Lane Methodist Church is a key landmark building here. Around Moorgate the area is very
open in character due to the public space in front of the Town Hall, however this is in stark contrast to the narrow lanes of Downs Row and Wilfred Street. The latter links Moorgate to Westgate via a steep hill which is still cobbled in parts.

4.4.12 The part of Moorgate that runs from the Town Hall to High Street was a Victorian extension to the original road. The architectural style on this road is distinct. Most of the buildings, especially on the eastern side are built of red brick, many of the bricks are decorative with motifs or ornamentation. The roofs to most of the buildings cross gable, therefore the triangular brick gables are a significant feature of this road. On the western side is the exit of a former Empire Theatre. This is a small but unusual structure, black with interesting details reflecting early 20th century/Art Deco style.

4.4.13 The area of Westgate is at the boundary of the conservation area. Its historic character has been damaged by unsympathetic 20th century infill in parts but still retains many buildings of interest, which give it a distinct late Victorian and Edwardian character. The listed public house, the ‘Cutlers’ Arms’ and the neighbouring Alma Tavern and Wellington Inn opposite are good examples of early 20th century public houses and have excellent group value. Likewise, the faience- clad office building at No 22 Westgate copies the architectural detailing of these buildings in a more contemporary, Modern manner.

4.4.14 At the northern end of Westgate is Main Street. This street and the area behind at Domine Lane is currently primarily used by car drivers for access to a supermarket and a car park. The buildings vary in style from the late 18th century, such as 7-9 Westgate (Grade II listed) to the attractive Victorian old post office on Main Street. The majority are 3 storey. Whilst the Westgate, Main Street, and Moorgate area is varied in architectural style most of the buildings are three storeys and built from either brick or stone, giving the area a red and white/stone colour palette.

Architectural and historic qualities

4.4.15 The majority of the buildings in the Conservation Area are commercial properties, dating from the nineteenth and twentieth century. Generally these have retail frontages on the ground floor with two or more storeys of offices above. Other building types include public houses, banks, churches and chapels. There are few houses within the area; a small group in The Crofts have been converted to other uses and there is the residential enclave around Clifton Bank.

4.4.16 The architectural qualities of the commercial streets in the northern section of the Conservation Area are the result of the predominant late nineteenth and twentieth century development which generally re-built large blocks. These tend to have a strong horizontal emphasis. This is particularly true of College Street, Effingham Street and Upper Millgate. It is also the predominant quality of Corporation Street.

4.4.17 Many of the buildings in Bridgegate and the High Street were also built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, although this was on a piecemeal basis and there is greater variety with many of the buildings having relatively narrow frontages. This is also true of the northern end of Wellgate. In
these streets some of the earlier buildings have survived which provides more interest and visual display.

4.4.18 There are a number of key buildings within the northern section of the Conservation Area that break the general architectural quality. All Saints Church with its fine perpendicular detailing and prominent tower and spire dominates All Saints Square and the churchyard to the south, and is a key feature in many views. Chantry Bridge, the medieval bridge and chapel alongside, is complemented by the Bridge Inn pub, now renamed as Nellie Denes. These small scale, stone buildings and structures form a distinctive group. The Howard Building of the Rotherham College of Arts and Technology (RCAT) is a fine building of the 1930s. Its height and location on rising ground to the west of College Street makes it prominent in both Howard Street and in views from All Saints Square.

4.4.19 In the southern section of the Conservation Area the architectural qualities are more diverse and each street needs to be described separately.

4.4.20 The northern end of Westgate has many of the architectural qualities of the main commercial streets although the overall scale of the buildings is larger and more imposing. This changes in the southern section of the street where there is a predominance of two storey buildings with narrow frontages. This gives a more intimate scale. The two public houses on the western side of the street are very elaborate examples of their type.

4.4.21 Ship Hill and the section of Moorgate that lies within the Conservation Area have a very diverse architectural quality. At the northern end, close to the commercial centre, the buildings are large scale twentieth-century structures with a predominant horizontal emphasis. Talbot Lane Methodist Church, which is a listed building (see Appendix B), with its prominent tower and spire, dominates the central section. It towers over the varied small-scale, two storey buildings to the north. On the opposite side, the former church, (now the Jamia Masjid Ahl·e·Hadith Moorgate A·H Community Centre) with its spired turret, is the most prominent structure in a very diverse group of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings (some of which lie outside the Conservation Area).

4.4.22 On the east side of Moorgate Street, between High Street and The Crofts, there is a very fine group of three storey brick buildings, some with prominent gables and elaborate detailing. These are complemented by two similar buildings on the west side, although the mid-twentieth century bank building that dominates the western side is clad in unsympathetic materials. Further south, the Town Hall, with its classical, Portland stone façade, is a striking example of small-scale civic architecture.

4.4.23 The Crofts and Snail Hill, tucked behind the Town Hall, have a very different architectural quality, with two-storey late nineteenth century houses of stone with simple details. These complement the earlier listed school building, now a public house, at the southern end.

4.4.24 The architectural quality of Wellgate is varied (see
6.03 above). The buildings fronting the majority of the street (south of the Nos 12 and 13) are generally undistinguished and this part of the street is of limited architectural or historic interest.

4.4.25 Clifton Bank and Wellgate Terrace form a small residential enclave at the south-eastern corner of the Conservation Area. The houses in Clifton Bank are predominantly of stone and, although they are small, many have very fine details. In contrast, the houses in Wellgate Terrace are of brick with simple detailing, but they have the same graceful nineteenth century proportions. Unfortunately, many of the fine details and overall qualities of both these groups of houses are being lost as a result of inappropriate and damaging alterations.

Listed Buildings

4.4.26 There are seventeen buildings or structures within the Conservation Area included on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Three are Listed Grade I, namely the medieval bridge, the bridge chapel and the parish church. Nos. 25 and 27 High Street, is Grade II*. All the others are listed as Grade II. All these buildings are identified on the map in Appendix D and the list descriptions are included in Appendix E.

4.4.27 A number of the listed buildings are reminders of Rotherham’s medieval past. The Church of All Saints is the third church building on the site, the earliest sections dating to the fourteenth century. Nikolaus Pevsner describes it as, ‘... one of the largest and stateliest parish churches in Yorkshire ….’ The bridge and the bridge chapel were constructed in the fifteenth century. The remnants of the College of Jesus also date from the fifteenth century but are now encased in a building of the 1930s. These remnants are notable as the earliest surviving brick structure in South Yorkshire.

4.4.28 Nos 25 and 27 High Street are part of the former Three Cranes Inn. This timber-framed structure was erected in two phases. The earliest section dates from the fifteenth century, with a second phase in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. It has also been altered and extended in subsequent centuries. This is a very important building, being the only surviving example of a medieval town house in Rotherham and containing the only known example of a dais canopy in South Yorkshire.

4.4.29 The majority of the listed buildings date from the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, demonstrating this period of Rotherham’s development. Three early twentieth century buildings are also listed. These are the magnificent Imperial Buildings with its internal shopping arcade, the dramatic Talbot Lane Methodist Church, which must have been a deliberate attempt to compete with the parish church, and the Cutler’s Arms, public house on Westgate, a fantastic faience block building with Art Nouveau style stained glass windows.
Contribution of key unlisted buildings

4.4.30 In addition to the listed buildings there are a large number of unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Many of these buildings reflect both the social and economic history of the town as well as being prominent landmarks. Many of the buildings play a part in shaping the structure and layout of the streets with their rounded corner positions.

4.4.31 The northern section of the conservation area is mainly commercial buildings, predominantly early 20th century. A large number of these buildings make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Details of these buildings can be found in Appendix F.

4.4.32 Within the central medieval core area there are a mixture of architectural periods and styles. The buildings that are most significant to this part of the conservation area are listed in Appendix F:

4.4.33 The only residential area within the conservation area provides some fine examples of 18th and 19th century housing at Clifton Bank and Wellgate Terrace. These properties are important to the character of this part of the conservation area.

4.4.34 The Westgate, Main Street and Moorgate area has a variety of styles and periods, mainly from the late 19th and early 20th century, the buildings that provide this area with character are listed in Appendix F:

Local details

4.4.35 As a result of the diversity of architectural styles within the Conservation Area and, particularly, the predominance of early twentieth buildings, there are few specifically local details that could be regarded as vernacular. One feature, however, is of importance, the use of rounded corners. Key examples include Imperial Buildings (listed Grade 11), Disraeli’s at No 2 Doncaster Gate and the County Borough Public House on Bridgegate.

4.4.36 However, it is often the many smaller details that provide clues to the history of an area and sustain its character. Smaller details in an area can often be overlooked therefore threatened with loss through neglect or removal.

4.4.37 A number of buildings make very good use of architectural lettering. Examples include the Old Bank Buildings at No 5 High Street and the Cutlers Arms Public House, Westgate.

4.4.38 Few towns reveal any evidence of their once extensive tram networks. Here a few buildings still have the overhead fixing brackets for the electrical wires. These include Imperial Buildings and the Old Town Hall (just outside the conservation area)

4.4.39 Amongst the many modern street name signs throughout the area there are numerous older examples attached to building walls. These particularly enhance the character of the streets in which they are found.

4.4.40 Clocks are often focal points and places to meet or gather. A fine example can be found on High Street. The clock here is a dominant feature and landmark.
4.4.41 Traditional shop details such as folding canvas canopies are still retained by some shops. Historic photographs of Rotherham reveal that they were once a common feature to most streets.

Building materials and public realm

4.4.42 The oldest buildings in the Conservation Area, All Saints Church, the Bridge and the Bridge Chapel are built of Rotherham Red Sandstone. However, this was probably always a high status material reflecting the relative scarcity of this highly coloured stone. Timber framing was probably common during the medieval period but only a single known example now survives in the town centre, The Three Cranes dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The use of brick for the fifteenth century College of Jesus was probably very uncommon as it is the earliest surviving example of brickwork in South Yorkshire; brick would have been chosen as a prestige material.

4.4.43 Local coal measure sandstone was probably the most common building material in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Surviving examples include the Bluecoats pub (18th century school) in The Crofts, Nos 8 and 29 High Street, and Nos 59-61 Moorgate. Stone was also used during the nineteenth and early twentieth century for those buildings which were designed to impress, such as the chapel in Downs Row, the Royal Bank of Scotland, High Street and the Talbot Lane Methodist Church. It was also used for the small, but well-detailed houses in Clifton Bank.

4.4.44 Red brick is, however, the predominant building material within the Conservation Area, particularly on the commercial streets in the northern section. This is generally used simply but there are examples of its decorative use. Brickwork is often contrasted with stone or render for details. At Wellgate Terrace examples of handmade bricks are found.

4.4.45 In addition to the use of brick, the late nineteenth and twentieth century buildings make use of mock half timbering, faience, concrete and a variety of other cladding materials.

4.4.46 The traditional roofing material is predominantly slate but later buildings use a wide variety of roof coverings. However, from street level roofs are not generally prominent in the Conservation Area, often being concealed behind parapets.

4.4.47 A variety of materials are found in each character area.
Greenspaces; ecology and biodiversity

4.4.48 There is little soft landscaping within the Conservation Area and this general absence of trees and grass is an essential part of its character and appearance.

4.4.49 The churchyard on the south side of All Saints Church is the major exception. This is a public oasis of grass and trees within the hard, commercial streets. It is an area of significant historic importance as it was originally the parish churchyard but the headstones have since been removed. The grass bank on the north side of church provides the setting for the church when viewed from the north. Its gradient and position behind a retaining wall ensures that the church dominates All Saints’ Square to which it lends its name. The grass bank is a pleasing transition between the square and the church and again it was once part of the graveyard therefore is an area of historic significance which deserves respect – note the grave stones to cholera victims that can still be found here.

4.4.50 All Saints’ Square directly to the north of the church is a large pedestrianised space (not exactly a square though) that provides the second public oasis in the town centre. It was originally created in the 1930s after the demolition of a number of buildings and was the site of the bus station for many years. Now it is a public space and a focal point in the town centre with contemporary lighting, a fountain and plants and trees in contained beds. It is extremely popular with shoppers and workers as a place to rest. It is paved with York stone, whilst walls are dressed stone, there is also some imaginative uses with metalwork to provide unusual bollards and fencing.

4.4.51 The gardens in front of the houses in Clifton Bank and Wellgate Terrace are significant areas of soft landscaping within the Conservation Area. These provide a very important setting to the buildings and make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of these areas.

4.4.52 Recent pedestrianisation and improvement schemes have led to the introduction of trees into a number of the commercial streets, particularly All Saints Square, Bridgegate, Upper Millgate and in front of the Town Hall.

4.4.53 There is a variety of street furniture throughout the area. Recent additions around the Town Hall and All Saints’ Square are contemporary and complimentary. There is also good use of historic display boards.

4.4.54 Black is the predominant colour for most street furniture, i.e. lamps, bike racks etc.

4.4.55 As already indicated, much of the conservation area is pedestrianised. This consists of paving slabs and block paving in a variety of patterns and colours. Some of the narrow streets/lanes are still cobbled, a particular feature of the conservation area.

4.4.56 Property boundaries, where explicit, are defined by stone walls (which originally supported railings. These railings and their associated gate piers again are a distinct feature of the area. These walls are a particular feature at Clifton Bank, here railings at some properties are still intact, the walls and railings are
very important to the character of this area and the conservation area as a whole where they exist

**Extent of intrusion or damage**

4.4.57 The conservation area has been undermined since its designation by a variety of factors. The loss of many retailers from the town centre has resulted in vacant units around the town leading to the disrepair of many buildings. Where units are occupied, often this is only on the ground floor and upper storeys have an abandoned appearance and often suffer from disrepair. The level of vacancy and disrepair around High Street, The Crofts and Westgate is particularly noticeable.

4.4.58 The size and scale of buildings are particularly important at infill sites. Buildings that significantly differ from size and scale to their neighbours have a dramatic effect on the streetscape in this area. This is apparent at All Saints Square and on High Street. Likewise at Clifton bank the modern bungalows conflict with the adjacent two storey terraced houses.

4.4.59 There are some cleared sites within and on the edges of the Conservation Area, often used as surface car parks, which have destroyed the sense of enclosure that is such an essential part of the character and appearance of the area. The car park at Market Street is particularly damaging. Similarly, some modern development on the edges of the area has left meaningless landscaped areas around the buildings, which is detrimental to the townscape.

4.4.60 The conflict of commercial uses with conservation is evident with some of the modern shop fronts and advertisements on traditional buildings. Many are unsympathetic and are particularly damaging to the character and buildings of the area when they extend across several different properties or disregard the scale of the building to which they are applied.

4.4.61 Likewise the loss of original fenestration has undermined the character of the conservation area. This is particularly true of Clifton Bank and The Crofts where casement and UPVc windows have replaced sash timber windows. Altered and damaged boundary walls and enclosures also detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. In particular the loss of iron railings, as seen at The Crofts and Clifton Bank leaves gaps and meaningless dwarf walls in the streetscape.

4.4.62 The current state of the area around Snail Hill is detrimental to the conservation area. The area consists of a narrow lane with a striking Victorian Gothic building (listed) which is in a dilapidated condition and a fire damaged house (removed in 2005). Surrounding these are the back of late twentieth century buildings that are not complimentary. This area is used as a pedestrian thoroughfare between two areas and currently provides no reason for anyone to stay.

4.4.63 In the same way as the scale and positioning of a building can have a negative impact in the area, so can the choice of building materials. The use of modern materials adjacent to historic buildings can have a significant detrimental impact on the area; this can be seen at the rear of the Town Hall where modern brick and steel has been used at the extension.
4.4.64 The pedestrianisation with a variety of road surfacing materials has resulted in confusing pavements in some areas. The variety of colours and the use of non traditional materials detracts from the buildings.

Neutral areas

4.4.65 There are a number of late twentieth century buildings within the northern section of the Conservation Area which have a neutral impact on the appearance of the area, for example the bank building on the west side of Moorgate Street, Nos 14-20 Ship Hill and the retail unit at corner of College Street and Doncaster Gate.

General condition

4.4.66 Vacancy of shops and upper floors, particularly on High Street, has led to some buildings being boarded up and shop fronts totally covered by metal roller shutter blinds. Upper floor windows are in poor condition and some have broken panes such as no. 20. The Three Cranes (nos25/27) currently vacant and designated at risk in a recent BAR survey, and no 29 occupied as a restaurant on the ground floor but with empty and derelict upper floors, both urgently needing a programme of repair work to halt further dereliction and to bring the buildings in to full use. The public realm in certain parts of the conservation area is tired and outdated. There are rusting metal benches at the top of Church Street, immediately adjacent to the church yard where its sole wooden bench which lacked a seat for some time has recently disappeared. Other areas around All Saints Square are in a better condition, though the planters on Bridgegate appear uncoordinated and the street could be much improved by a revised public realm strategy.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

4.4.67 The vacancy rates on High Street in particular reflect the low economic decline suffered by the town following the closure of the traditional coal and steel industries. The effect of semi-derelict buildings that do little to encourage new traders to occupy the buildings without substantial grant aid to repair and restore the buildings.

4.4.68 Some gains have been made in 2005 when the building work on no.18 (the street frontage for the former Speed’s Building) was completed and its neighbour no.16 was refurbished as a shop after several years of being empty. This has attracted a new specialty shop on to the High Street that acts as a demonstrator to show what we as a planning department are looking for.

4.4.69 In the last 18 months the Council received several applications for new inappropriate internally lit signage with deep fascias; these were revised before approval to accord with the conservation principles outlined in the new design guide referred to above. The Council will take a proactive role, using its statutory powers where necessary, to address the problem of unoccupied derelict buildings that have a detrimental effect on the conservation area both visually and on the confidence of other traders occupying buildings nearby.
5 Community Involvement

5.1 The Rotherham Town Centre Conservation Area is currently managed by the Town Centre Management Group who meets on a monthly basis. The membership of the group is a diverse mix of various sections of the Council but also including the police and members of the wider community, the group being chaired by the Town Centre Manager. An Action Plan for the period 2005-2008 has been prepared and a copy of this is provided in Appendix G.

5.2 The management of the THI will be supported by the above Town Centre Management Group with additional co-opted members from local amenity groups.

6 Suggested boundary revisions

6.1 There are three new areas suggested to be included within a revised conservation area boundary. These are:

- The triangular block of traditional stone-built buildings bounded by Effingham Street, Howard Street and Fredrick Street to include the Old Town Hall and nos 35 to 39 (Effingham Arms) Effingham Street, and no. 29 Frederick Street.

- The lower section of the road on Oil Mill Fold down to its junction with Westgate. This is one of the few remaining traditional roads laid with stone-sets that survive in the town centre.

- South Terrace, no.65 Moorgate Road and 5 Grove Road together with the former Municipal Offices on Grove Road, all buildings of merit regarded as of local interest. Immediately adjacent to Moorgate Conservation Area.

Please refer to Plan at Appendix H.

7 Local generic guidance

Please see Appendix I containing UDP Policies

8 Summary of issues

8.1 The continued vacancy and dereliction of several key buildings in the conservation area, including three listed buildings (nos 25-29a, 29 High Street, and the George Wright Building), need urgently addressing. Within the statutory powers of the council are those to serve repairs notices and Compulsory Purchase Orders. Such action has the support of the Cabinet Member for Economic and Development, who is also the Council’s Design Champion and the Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning, Culture and Leisure, who is also the Council’s Heritage Champion.

8.2 It is hoped that a successful THI scheme will act as a catalyst for regeneration where these issues will be addressed with the financial help of the Heritage Lottery Fund in conjunction with other funding supported by Yorkshire Forward. Investment in these key buildings will provide confidence for other smaller scale investment by existing commercial operators in the town to improve their premises, and in turn attract new businesses into the town.

8.3 Most of the conservation area is occupied by commercial premises, but just off Wellgate is an important small enclave of
domestic properties, on Wellgate Terrace and Clifton Bank. These form attractive terraced rows with some detached properties of late Georgian style with 12-paned sash windows and pilastered door cases with overlights. The character of these buildings is gradually being eroded by replacement windows with double glazed uPVC windows and doors, the boundary walls losing their railings. To halt further inappropriate alterations the need for the introduction of Article 4 (2) Directions is required that will remove the house owners permitted development rights to alter doors and windows and boundary walls.

8.4 A SWAT analysis of the areas of public realm within the conservation area and the smaller THI action plan area, which includes High Street, Snail Hill, the top end of Church Street and the church yard, has identified the need for environmental improvements and a more co-ordinated street scape using materials sympathetic to the character of the town and the historic buildings within it.
Part 2 – Conservation Area Management Plan

1 Issues and objectives

The area's conservation value

1.1 The centre of the town is dominated by the Parish Church recently accorded Minster status. The town is unusual in having the church so centrally placed with the principal streets running around the perimeter of the boundary of its church yard. The church is built on a ridge its church yard raised high up above All Saints Square that is thought to date from the Anglo Saxon period when the church was first founded in the 10th century. The church is a fine Perpendicular church built in the 15th century having a cruciform plan with central crossing tower and a spire that is a landmark for miles around, built more like a small cathedral than a typical parish church. Its church yard is an important area of green space within the centre of the town and offers potential for improvement, particularly to provide additional and improved seating. A general enhancement of the pedestrianised area at the top of Church Street will improve the setting of this fine Grade 1 listed building.

1.2 The town has an interesting mix of 18th and 19th century stone buildings, both public and commercial premises, with a large number of late-19th and early-20th century brick and stone buildings mostly of three storeys built on widened streets such as Effingham Street and College Street that form an architectural unity. Wellgate and High Street are older streets that survived the widening of the early 20th century to accommodate the needs of trams and trolley buses. The south side of High Street preserves long narrow plots behind the buildings, survivals of medieval burgage plots. Here fronting the High Street is the only remaining timber-framed building in the town its frontage dating from c.1600 with a rear wing now completely hidden from view that dates from the 15th century, a former open hall with a fragment of its curved dais canopy still surviving at the 1st floor, the only one in South Yorkshire. It will be a major objective of this plan to ensure the repair and restoration of this building in an appropriate manner by conservation specialists; this is supported by Rotherham Civic Society. If necessary the council will use its statutory powers to achieve this. The street also has a small number of former Georgian town houses, mostly reduced in size, now forming shops, their upper floors originally glazed with timber sashed windows; many have suffered from inappropriate shop windows, and altered upper floor windows. It will be a major objective to see these buildings improved with new shopfronts and restored sashed windows to the upper floors.

1.3 The lay-out of the streets mostly follows its original historic pattern as illustrated in the Earl of Effingham’s Estate Plan of the town dated 1774. The only major intervention has been the demolition of buildings immediately to the north-east of the church and the creation of All Saints’ Square, originally to accommodate a bus station in the 1930’s, and the addition of Effingham Street and Howard Street in the later 19th century. Thus the town is unusual in preserving its medieval street pattern through to the 21st century. Several of these streets have been pedestrianised.
around the parish church that has been to the benefit of the town, its resident population, and its visitors alike. Few people actually live in the town centre and one of the major objectives of this plan is to create a new resident population living in flats above shops, the LOTS initiative that is supported by Yorkshire Forward. This will be achieved by some new building in the western part of the town and the conservation area, closer to the river; the upper floors of shops on College Street and High Street have already been identified for conversion through the involvement of a housing trust.

1.4 The Crofts area at the top of the hill is something of a surprise having an attractive open space in front of the 1930s former Court House, currently occupied as the Town Hall. This is a fine Classical-style building constructed of white Portland stone its setting enhanced by a sensitive public realm scheme and an interpretation board explaining something of the history of the area, once the site of a cattle market. The other striking building is the fine early 20th century Talbot Lane Methodist Church built in a Gothic Revival style in a conscious effort to rival the Anglican church; this too has a tower surmounted by an octagonal spire that is an important landmark adding a distinctive feature to Rotherham’s sky-line. Close by is the Blue Coat’s School, an elegant Georgian building built in 1776 to the designs of local architect John Platt now occupied as a public house.

1.5 Platt’s own house survives, though much altered, at the start of Westgate in an area dominated by night clubs and public houses, one of which, no.29 Westgate The Cutler’s Arms, is a listed building. Dating from 1907 it is constructed of faience blocks and has fine raised lettering and retains its attractive stained-glass windows in an Art Nouveau style. The three public houses including the Alma and the Wellington Boot Inn relate well to each other, and add much architectural interest to the street scene.

Present and potential future threats

1.6 The continued vacancy of several shops, particularly on High Street, has led to their deterioration, some with broken upper-floor windows, and shopfronts covered by metal roller shutter blinds that blight the area. Inappropriate signage with deep fascias is gradually being addressed as new applications are submitted to the council. The provision of advice in the form of a new Shopfront Guide by the Council (2006) will assist in explaining what the Council considers appropriate especially for shops within the town centre conservation area. Applications for illuminated box signs have been resisted, but many already are in place having a detrimental effect on the street scene. Where shop fronts are altered in any way with unauthorised signs the Council will take enforcement action to remedy the situation.

1.7 Without substantial grant aid (available through the THI and other funders) it will be difficult to address the problems of several targeted buildings and persuade property owners to invest in their vacant premises thus changing the face of High Street with new shop fronts similar to that recently installed in no. 16.

Objectives of the Management Plan

1.8 To ensure the long term benefits of an enhancement scheme for the town centre, putting measures in place that will
support the initiatives of the council and the investment of the funders. To put policy guidance in place to ensure consistent decision-making of planning applications and to improve the quality and content of planning applications, discouraging outline applications, and requiring applicants to show proposed elevations in their setting illustrating adjacent buildings (as suggested in PPG15).

2 Planning Policies

2.1 The significance of the area’s historic and architectural importance is acknowledged through the designation of conservation area status over the whole of the THI area and the number of listed buildings that are within its boundary. With such status its special character is safeguarded through established planning legislation, national and local policies and practice.

Central Government Policy

2.2 Planning Policy Guidance notes represent the Government’s policies on development and are given significant weight when determining planning applications and appeals. The key guidance notes for conservation issues are PPG15 Planning and the Historic Built Environment and PPG16 Archaeology and Planning. Planning Policy Statements (PPS) are the national planning policy statements that will replace Planning Policy Guidance notes over time. Some powers have recently been devolved down to Regional Government Offices. Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) is increasingly important in determining planning applications and policies and enabling the guidance of development in a way that reflects local and regional issues.

Rotherham Unitary Development Plan

2.3 The majority of planning and conservation responsibilities are dealt with at the level of the Local Planning Authority. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority for the THI area and therefore has statutory duties as well as the discretion to undertake other functions. Rotherham Borough Council is required by the Local Government Act 1985 to prepare a development plan. The Rotherham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was formally adopted as the statutory development plan for Rotherham Borough on 14th June 1999.

2.4 The planning authority’s objectives for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment in Rotherham Borough are set out in the policies at Appendix I.

The Local Development Framework

2.6 The Local Development Framework is a spatial strategy, rather than a land use plan. It will address a broad range of issues affecting the nature of places and the way they function and will contain spatial as well as land-use policies. This new system places a strong emphasis on working with others and the need for policies to be locally distinctive and able to be implemented by a variety of means in addition to the granting or refusal of planning permission. This broader approach is considered both a challenge and an opportunity for positive protection, management and enhancement of heritage and recognition of its existence and value.

1 Recent changes in the development plan process following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, (September 2004), requires Local Planning Authorities (Borough, District and Unitary Councils) in England and Wales to have a Local Development Framework (LDF) in place by Spring 2007. The Local Development Framework will take over from the adopted policies incrementally over a period of time.

2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a project plan and timetable showing all local development documents a local planning authority intends to produce over the next three years.

3 These include Development Plan Documents (DPD) which are a statutory document within the Local Development Framework, such as a document containing the core strategy, site allocations and development control policies, or an Area Action Plan. Local Development Document (LDD) is the term applied to any document within the Local Development Framework (apart from the Statement of Community Involvement) whether it is a statutory Development Plan Document or a non-statutory Supplementary Planning Document.
2.7 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a portfolio of local development documents, which together provide a spatial strategy for the Borough. Heritage, by its very nature, is crosscutting and will be relevant to several topic areas. The preparation of the LDF for Rotherham Borough is already in process with the activation of the Local Development Scheme\(^2\) which identifies all of the documents that make up the LDF\(^3\).

2.8 As part of the LDF, the Council will produce Area Action Plans and Concept Statements setting out more detailed proposals and policies for areas of change or conservation. These will be Development Plan Documents and have much stronger status than conservation plans or supplementary planning guidance. Area Action Plans will provide a positive tool for protecting and managing the historic environment, by bringing together appraisals, development control polices, proposals and management programmes. Their purpose will be; to deliver planned growth, stimulate regeneration, and protect areas sensitive to change through conservation policies, make proposals for enhancement and resolve conflicting objectives in areas facing significant development pressure.

2.9 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are an integral part of the Development Framework. They have greater status than their predecessor, Supplementary Planning Guidance (which is not produced as part of the Local Plan process). All SPD as with all documents that form the LDF will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which considers their environmental, economic and social impacts including the historic environment.

2.10 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – August 2005 sets out how communities and stakeholders will be engaged in active, meaningful and continued involvement in the preparation and revision of local development documents and the consideration of planning applications.

2.11 The historic environment makes a major contribution to economic development and community well-being. HPBC will support schemes that secure the restoration, repair and sympathetic re-use of historic buildings and areas. Policies and proposals in the LDF will maximise the environmental, economic and community benefits of heritage-led regeneration.
3  Planning Measures

Supplementary Planning Documents

3.1  The Borough Council has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance to support conservation policies in the UDP and enable their provisions to be put into practice. This includes Shop Front Design Guides at Appendix K and existing Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to development in Conservation Areas which is incorporated in the body of this document.

Buildings at Risk Survey

3.2  Of the four listed buildings in the Conservation Area that are on the Council’s ‘Buildings at Risk’ register, three are the subject of renovation proposals, which are included as a THI project.

Enforcement

3.3  There have been no recent instances in the proposed Conservation Area where enforcement action has been taken against non-compliant works to a listed building. In addition to maintaining vigilance of buildings at risk and unauthorised development, the Council may employ enforcement powers in the proposed Conservation Area, should the need arise.

3.4  Inappropriate advertisements and signage do not currently present a threat to the Conservation Area. However, the attraction of new businesses to the area could lead to a proliferation of inappropriate signage. Policy ENV2.11 of the UDP makes specific reference to advertising in Conservation Areas. Policy ENV2.10 states that the Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. This gives the Council a strong basis for control over new advertisements in the area.

3.5  The Council may in certain circumstances issue discontinuance notices to secure the removal of adverts, signs or banners that cause substantial injury to the amenity of the locality. If a stricter degree of control is then deemed necessary, the imposition of an ‘Area of Special Control of Advertisements’ may be sought. Stricter advertisement control would then apply with restrictions on poster hoardings and the size of signs and characters.

Urgent Works and Repairs Notices

3.6  The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest. The Act gives the Local Planning Authority powers to take action in the following circumstances:

i)  Urgent Works

3.7  Where a historic building has deteriorated to the extent that its preservation may be at risk, the Act enables the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) to carry out urgent works for the preservation of listed buildings after giving notice to the owner. These powers can be used only in respect of an unoccupied building. The powers are confined to urgent works; on other works emergency repairs for example to keep the building wind...
and water tight and safe from collapse. The LPA may recover the cost of such works from the owner.

ii) Repairs Notices

3.8 If the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) considers that a listed building is not being properly preserved it may serve a ‘repairs notice’ on the owner. The Notice specifies the works that the authority considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building.

Article 4 (2) Directions

3.9 This is a discretionary power given to the LPA to restrict specific permitted development rights in relation to dwellings in Conservation Areas, where the permitted development would front a public area. Although there are few residential properties within the Conservation Area it may be appropriate to consider the use of Article 4 (2) directions in the future as there is considerable residential development planned. Nevertheless, most planned residential development is new build and the principle use of Article 4 (2) direction would be to ward against inappropriate changes to historic buildings.

Article 4 (1) Directions

3.10 This is a means for the LPA to withdraw permitted development rights on non residential properties within the Conservation Area. However, an Article 4 (1) direction requires the approval of the Secretary of State, which is a potentially lengthy procedure. The Council will consider the use of an Article 4 (1) direction to mitigate against the threat to the character of the Conservation Area posed by inappropriate alterations. Article 4 (1) directions can be applied to geographic areas or to an architectural feature that occurs throughout the area, for instance stone archways and cobbled lanes.

Section 215 Notices

3.11 Circular 2/98 – prevention of dereliction through the planning system – promotes the use of Section 215 notices to require owners to maintain their land and buildings properly, if they affect the amenity of the surrounding area. Such notices can be used to deal with a wide range of problems including:

- Clearing rubbish and waste materials from open land
- Removal of abandoned vehicles from private land
- Removing the remains of derelict/fire-damaged buildings
- Restoring damaged paintwork
- Refurbishing important features (e.g. porches, doorcases) which have been left to deteriorate to the point where they harm, rather than enhance, a building or the street scene
- Removing fly-posting and graffiti, where they adversely affect amenity
- Tidying up land awaiting redevelopment

Where land and buildings (through fire damage or general dereliction) are considered to adversely affect the amenity of the conservation area the Council will seriously consider the serving of Section 215 or ‘Wasteland Notices’. If the work is not done
within the period specified in the notice, the local authority can follow it up with prosecution or enter the land and take direct action to carry out the works, in default of action by the owner. Changes to the regulations which came into force in January 1998 mean that local authority can recover its costs if direct action is taken in default, if necessary.

**Compulsory Purchase Orders**

3.12 English Heritage advises that when listed buildings, or unlisted ones identified as contributing positively to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, are falling into decay the local planning authority should use its statutory powers to secure their preservation. The Council will consider the serving of urgent works notices and/or repairs notices on listed buildings considered ‘At Risk’ within the conservation area as a first step to ensuring their emergency repair and/or towards compulsory purchase of the building by the Council.

4 Framework for Design Standards

4.1 The regeneration of the area requires that proper attention is paid to maintenance and repair of the existing historic fabric and the traditional detailing of works of reinstatement. In new buildings and the public realm high quality design is also paramount if the quality of the area is to be preserved and enhanced. The section briefly summarises the issues relating to the historic fabric of Rotherham’s buildings. The aim of this section of the management plan is to support the fundamental practical objectives of the Rotherham THI in maintaining and restoring the historic built environment. In the public realm and new building design the guidance is intended to encourage contemporary design that has respect for Rotherham’s distinctive local character.

4.2 The section is set out in five parts:

- Repair and maintenance
- Reinstatement
- New Design
- Building Materials
- Public Realm

**Repair and Maintenance**

Windows and Doors

4.3 Windows and doors are important elements in the character of buildings. Often it is windows and doors that stand out as key features from the building structure.

4.4 Based on the relatively small number of surviving traditional windows in Rotherham, it is likely that the predominant style would have been vertical 12 paned sliding sash, with smaller ‘3-over-6’ 9 paned sashes to the 3rd floor windows, as is most typically found in Georgian buildings. Modern replacements do not tend to follow this traditional form. Also, traditional forms of windows and doors are set back from the front of the building in a frame, whereas modern replacements often appear to be hung off the façade. This detail dramatically alters the visual nature of tradition buildings and
the streetscape. The promotion and support of good standards of repair and maintenance will help to retain these distinctive features.

4.5 Repair is preferable and cheaper than replacement, old timber is much better quality than modern softwoods and will last longer. New pieces of preservative treated softwood can be ‘spliced in’ to replace the lower sections of a rotten frame, removing the need for a new window.

4.6 Badly fitting windows can be re-hung after accumulated layers of paint have been removed, vertically sliding sash windows will usually require new sash cords, parting beads and sometimes new pulleys.

4.7 Old glass was hand made and therefore not flat and flawless like modern sheet glass, it should always be saved. Care should be taken when repairing windows not to damage old glass as it is thin, it should be protected when using chemical paint stripper, or removed and replaced later.

4.8 Traditional windows should always be painted and not stained. Microporous paints should be used as they allow the timber to ‘breathe’ and so the paint is less likely to peel or blister. As a general rule windows should be painted light colours such as white or cream. Strong colours can be used on doors and sometimes window frames. The use of modern paints and methods can lengthen the time between redecorations.

**Rainwater Goods**

4.9 Rainwater goods are another traditional feature that when replaced by modern plastic detracts from the character and traditional appearance of the building. In Rotherham the main materials used are timber gutters or cast iron gutters, with cast iron down pipes and hoppers. It is important to carry out simple basic maintenance of rainwater goods to prevent minor problems that can lead to serious structural damage.

4.10 Cast-iron down-pipes and eaves gutters can give many years of service of if properly maintained by periodic re-painting and rodding to free blockages. Every spring and autumn any plants, leaves and silt should be cleared. Bird/leaf guards can be fitted to the tops of soil pipes and to rainwater outlets to prevent blockages.

**Roofs and Chimneys**

4.11 The traditional roofing material in Rotherham is stone slate, however from the early nineteenth century onwards Welsh blue slate has been used and over the later centuries some stone slate roofs will have been replaced with Welsh slate. From the mid-nineteenth century and the development of rail transport for materials almost all new buildings used Welsh slate. In Rotherham today there are still buildings with stone slate roofs, on most of these the stone appears to be in reasonable condition, but the timber structure beneath may be in need of attention. Due to the problems of availability and the cost of materials many owners may be tempted to replace stone slate and Welsh slate with modern synthetic alternatives.

4.12 Maintenance is essential to keep roofs weather-tight and prolong life expectancy. A common problem particularly with blue
slate roofs is slipped and/or broken slates. Broken slates can usually be removed and replaced with reclaimed slates. Slipped slates can be retrieved and fixed back by making new nail holes and fixing to the battens or by using a copper or wire 'tingle', these should be used sparingly. Most pre 1940 roofs have no roofing felt and were weather proofed by torching the underside of the slates with lime/sand mortar, this can easily be re-applied.

4.13 Cement/sand mortars should never be used as it will not allow any expansion of the roof covering and will soon crack and fall off. External coating of roofs with bitumen products should be avoided; it is unsightly and prevents the roof from 'breathing' which will lead to decay of timbers and slates. Due to the exposed position of chimneys, re-pointing will often be required.

4.14 Many of the defects visible in stone roofs are attributable to the method of laying the roof rather than deterioration of the roofing material. The most common failures occur in the wooden pegs, which shrink and dry out with age and allow slates to slip and laths that tend to give under the weight of the stone slates. In many instances roof timbers have bent under the weight of the roof and unless the timber is cracked or badly infested with Death Watch beetle or dry rot there should be no cause for alarm. If a single stone slate has slipped, the adjacent slates can be raised and wedged to allow the slate to be removed, the area uncovered and the slate must be thoroughly cleaned to remove all dust and moss. It can then be re-fixed by bedding the slate in mortar on the slates at either side below. On no account should the slate be bedded at, and under, the tail as the mortar attracts moisture through capillary action and the repair will be unsightly. On no account should cracked or broken slates be re-used, nor should slates be reversed or hung from the tail.

Walls

4.15 It is important that maintenance of walls uses traditional techniques and materials. Strap point and the use of hard mortar mixes will usually lead to problems, such as damp inside the buildings and eventually cause failure of the stone or brick fabric. Inappropriate pointing and material treatments, such as cladding, will also damage the appearance of the building.

4.16 Stonework and brickwork will deteriorate as a result of natural weathering, exposure to damp and structural defects. Lack of maintenance will accelerate the rate of decay. Walls should be kept dry by maintaining gutters, downpipes and roofs. If a damp proof course has been installed it should be checked for damage and not bridged by piles of soil. If rising damp is a problem it may be more effective to reduce the ground level and install land drains around the building.

4.17 Painting of stonework should be avoided at all costs as it is difficult to remove without damaging the stone and requires regular maintenance, it also seals the surface and does not allow moisture to evaporate naturally. Cleaning stonework using high-pressure water jets or more destructive sand blasting will remove the surface of the stonework allowing accelerated deterioration to begin.

4.18 Repointing should only be carried out where the mortar is soft and can be easily scraped out with a screwdriver. Never fill an
eroded joint without raking out first. Never use a hard cement mortar as this will accelerate the weathering of the brick or stone. Never fill the joints so that the mortar projects in front of the stone/brick.

**Temporary Works or Scaffolding**

4.19 From time to time scaffolding will be required to enable access to maintain or reinstate elements such as roofs. It is essential that care be taken when erecting scaffold or if other temporary works are required to ensure that permanent damage is not caused to the building. Fundamental to this is in educating those who will erect scaffolds, as usual on-site practices may not be acceptable when working on or near historic buildings. The aim is to avoid scarring and damage to any features.

4.20 Where fixings are made to stone or brickwork there is increase danger that fixing could dislodge stone or brick as well as damaging the building, this will endanger the scaffold. All fixings to historic walls must be made of stainless steel, this avoids damage by corrosion. Contractors should be aware of the value of historic fabric, plastic end caps should be used to protect walls and old glass should not be smashed to make ties.

**Reinstatement**

**Windows and Doors**

4.21 Windows and doors are important elements in the character of buildings. Often they stand out as key features from the building structure. The majority of the traditional timber windows and doors in Rotherham, particularly on domestic buildings, have been replaced with poor modern alternatives. In some properties, particularly those used for commerce, there are many doors and windows in poor condition, some of these may be beyond repair. Reinstatement of traditional windows replacing poor or modern windows and doors would enhance individual buildings, the streetscape and promote local characteristics. Some of the properties on High Street (in the THI area) preserve evidence of the original form of the sashed window: 12-paned at first floor, and 9-paned at second floor (eg no. 20). Such windows shall be restored to their original form copying the mouldings on the glazing bars. Windows shall be single glazed. Where properties are to be used for LOTS accommodation it may be necessary to install secondary glazing on the inside of the windows.

4.22 New windows should be exact replicas of the old; do not enlarge or change the shape of window openings unless it reflects the age and character of the house. Windows should not project in front of the frame and should not have an integral projecting timber cill. Appropriate cill and lintels to match the existing should be used i.e. a natural stone lintel or brick arch to match the rest of the building. Where no original windows survive, to provide a pattern for replacements, neighbouring houses should be studied for detail.

**Roofs and chimneys**

4.23 Due to the problems of availability and the cost of materials many owners may be tempted to replace stone slate and Welsh slate with modern synthetic alternatives. The reinstatement of
traditional materials is important for the local character of Rotherham.

4.24 When stripping a roof at least one-third wastage should be allowed for slate. If not enough matching slates are available, then the original slates should be used on the most visible slopes. Reclaimed and new materials should not be mixed on the same pitch. If under-felt is used provision must be made to ventilate the roof space using discreet ventilation of the eaves. Slates should be re-fixed in the same pattern using copper or alloy nails. Surviving traditional ridge tiles should be re-used and re-pointed. Where chimneystacks and pots have been removed or reduced they should be reinstated to their original height with clay pots to match.

4.25 Shopfronts

Within the Rotherham THI Area, many of the traditional timber shopfronts have either been replaced or are in poor condition. Reinstating poor modern shopfronts with good quality modern alternatives that make reference to traditional features would help to enhance this key historic area of the town. The design of shopfronts has a major role to play in creating a quality environment. It is important that they should not compromise the local character, scale and architectural quality of the individual buildings.

4.26 Principles of good shopfront design are contained in the Council’s new Draft Shopfront Design Guide published in April 2006, which has been subject to a four week formal consultation period from 13th April to 11th May 2006. This comprehensive Guide addresses issues such as: signs, canopies and blinds, lighting, materials and security measures. It is intended that the Council will adopt the final Shopfront Design Guide as an Interim Planning Statement, which can be taken into account when determining planning applications. It will eventually be formalised as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and form part of the Local Development Framework. Please refer to Appendix J.

New Design

4.27 Good quality new design can help to promote a vibrant local economy and encourage development to support and enhance the locally distinctive character. The key aims and importance of new design are best expressed in PPG1. “Good design can help promote sustainable development; improve the quality of the existing environment; attract business and investment; and reinforce civic pride and a sense of place.” (PPG 15 paragraph 15).

Building Materials

4.28 The use of appropriate local building materials in new development enhances the local character and supports the local craft and construction skills. Artificial stone and synthetic roof materials tend to perform poorly over time and do not weather in the same manner as natural materials. Where these materials are used alongside existing natural materials the visual effect is poor.

Public Realm

4.29 Improvements to the Town Centre streets and spaces are a key part of the various wider regeneration initiatives. The
Rotherham Renaissance Strategic Development Framework, February 2005, recognises the importance of the public realm. The Framework proposes a clear hierarchy of spaces that connect the key locations within the town centre. The aim is to create a distinct, attractive, safe and clean pedestrian environment that enhances the experience for residents and visitors to Rotherham’s Town Centre. The aim of successful public realm in the urban context is to create a network of hard and soft open spaces which are overlooked from adjacent properties and are linked to pedestrian desire lines, create focal points for social activity and use existing landscape elements. Street furniture should be coordinated to minimise clutter and materials should be durable and robust.

4.30 As part of the Work Programme for the THI Stage 2 Bid an appraisal of several parts of the THI Area has been carried out by the Council’s ‘Streetpride’ Landscape Design Team. Copy attached at Appendix G. This document will form part of the Conservation Area Management Plan, which will be adopted as an Interim Planning Statement by the Council. This Appraisal has divided the THI Area into four smaller sub-areas: (A) All Saint’s Minster Yard; (B) High Street; (C) Church Street, Market Street and Upper Millgate; (D) Snail Hill and Links. Opportunities for improvement have been identified for these four areas, and priority works suggested.

4.31 The Council is also working towards the preparation of a Public Realm & Lighting Strategy for Rotherham Town Centre, which should be completed by mid-2007, and eventually adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

5 Education and Training

5.1 Training and education will be necessary to sustain a conservation-based approach to managing the conservation area(s) over the longer term. There are potential opportunities related to heritage and the local environment provided by a range of existing national and local training initiatives. In combination these various initiatives address the need for knowledge and skills across the range of stakeholders; individuals and organisations.

Elected Members and Officers

Historic Environment – Local Management (HELM) Courses

5.2 HELM aims to provide local authorities with the tools to manage change in the historic environment with skill and confidence. As part of its remit it offers training for councillors and officers in local authorities and government agencies (see HELM’s web site for further information: www.helm.org.uk). Seminars aim to identify the resources available to non-heritage professionals and to demonstrate how the benefits of the historic environment can help to achieve targets. Expert speakers explore regional priorities using local case studies. In March 2005 HELM finished a series of continuing professional development seminars on Informed Decision Making, as well as Networking Lunches for chief executives, councillors and historic environment champions.

5.3 English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) are running a training programme for elected Members in local government who are acting as their
authority’s Historic Environment or Design Champion (see CABE’s web site: www.cabe.org.uk). The Programme is designed to raise awareness of the role of Champions, develop skills and share best practice among authorities. Each event is being delivered by a regional partner organisation. The aim is to have a self-sustaining network of Champions in place across the country.

**English Heritage Courses**

5.4 English Heritage provides a range of courses aimed at historic environment practitioners and postgraduate students (see English Heritage’s web site: www.english-heritage.org.uk). The courses are offered in partnership with Oxford University Department of Continuing Education and are usually delivered in partnership with other organisations at national and regional levels (see: www.conted.ox.ac.uk). This annual programme of short courses goes under the banner of Professional Training in the Historic Environment.

**The Building Trades**

**The National Heritage Training Group**

5.5 The National Heritage Training Group (NHTG) is responsible for implementing a coherent strategy for training and skills provision in the construction industry following the recognition that there is a shortage of practitioners skilled in the traditional crafts necessary to conserve and restore our historic buildings. The NHTG have identified ten main specialist skills that are most likely to be used on historic building work and further specialisms within each craft. The NHGT is an English Heritage Initiative 16 in partnership with CITB-Construction Skills (Sector Skills Council for Construction) 17.

**6 Consultation**

**Public consultation**

6.1 In accordance with regulations 17 and 18 of the Regulations this document sets out the consultation and public participation processes associated with preparing and adopting the Conservation Appraisal and Area Management Plan and the statement of adoption. This includes details of the formal consultation exercise undertaken and a consideration of the comments received and proposed changes to the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

6.2 The consultation exercise was devised in accordance with the RMBC consultation protocol, guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. It also had regard to the Council’s Pre Submission Public Participation Draft Statement of Community Involvement.

6.3 The draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was published for consultation for a six week period between 13th April and 25th May 2006. Press notices were placed in the South Yorkshire Times and the Rotherham Advertiser on 13th and 14th April and the 11th and 12th May respectively. A press release was also circulated publicising the consultation.
6.4 The draft document was made available to view at the Council’s Bailey House offices, at Rotherham central library and on the Council’s website. In addition a wide variety of organisations and individuals were informed of the consultation exercise and provided with copies of the draft document and relevant documents.

Consultation with property owners

6.5 Early consultation with the owners of target properties will be vital for the success of the THI and will establish the following for the purpose of the Stage 2 THI Bid:

- the type of work owners would be interested in doing;
- the level of THI grant needed to encourage as many people as possible to take up the grant;
- the individual projects that may come forward for THI grant;
- when and whether further action will be needed to bring projects forward for THI grant.

7 Putting the Management Plan into practice

The management group

7.1 The day to day management of the conservation area, and more specifically the smaller THI area within it, will be undertaken by an in-house team led by the local authority’s Conservation and Urban Design Officer supported by the Head of Planning and Transportation, the Area Environmental Planning Team Leader, Project Officers in RiDO, the Development Co-ordinator in the Development Team, an Economic Strategy Officer in EDS, the Museum’s Manager, in liaison as necessary with the Council’s Heritage Champion, and the Design Champion and Cabinet Member for EDS. If the Council is successful in its Stage 2 submission to HLF for a THI for Rotherham Town Centre Conservation Area, then the team will also include a dedicated THI officer appointed to administer the scheme over a 5 year period commencing 1st April 2007.

7.2 The Conservation Officer currently serves on the Town Centre Management Group (TCMG) working closely with the Town Centre Manager, who will report on a monthly basis to the TCMG providing an up-date on the progress of THI projects. The steering group for the THI will comprise of members of the TCMG and co-opted members from other local organisations and amenity groups.

Development Control

7.3 The Council will encourage pre-application enquiry for development in the Town Centre Conservation Area, and especially the smaller THI area. This is to achieve a consistent approach to development proposals within the town centre area. We will resist any pressure for change from retail uses for shops, especially on High Street where speciality shops will be encouraged.

7.4 Applications for new shopfronts and signage should be in accordance with the Council’s new shopfront guide (see Appendix). Such applications should take account of current DDA
requirements and fire regulations. Advice will be available regarding security issues, the installation of alarm boxes, external lighting and the use of security grills on shops; the Council will not permit external roller shutter blinds, but will encourage the use of internal perforated shutters that do not undermine the character of the building or the area.

7.5 Regarding any new build applications, the Council will discourage outline applications, requiring a design justification statement to accompany applications. This is a requirement of most applications from the 10th August, 2006. Proposed elevation drawings will be required to show adjacent buildings to illustrate how they fit in with the existing setting of the street scene, both in scale, height and rhythm of windows/bays.

7.6 Where development involves demolition there will be a requirement for impact assessments, and the need for contextual drawings and models and/or computer generated models of proposed new developments likely to have a significant impact on the surrounding area. Such applications should also be accompanied by an archaeological mitigation strategy.

7.7 The Council will encourage the use of traditional building materials, stone and brick with natural roof coverings of stone or blue slate, rather than artificial materials. Windows shall be constructed as appropriate to their context of timber or metal; artificial materials such as uPVC will not normally be permitted.

7.8 The Council will actively pursue unauthorised alterations to buildings, including new signage and shopfronts and removal of architectural details; illuminated box-signs will not be permitted; retrospective applications will not be encouraged and are likely to be refused.

Monitoring change

7.9 **Specific photographic records shall be made of all buildings receiving grant-aid through the THI scheme.** Each will have an individual file with an annual photographic record made in April each year (to be maintained for a minimum of 10 years), so as to ensure no unauthorised or inappropriate alterations, including new paint schemes or signage have been made to the building during the subsequent 12 months; it will also record restoration work as it progresses. This photographic record shall be maintained by the Council; photos shall be date-stamped using a data-back digital camera to create a digital photographic record data-base. Appendix K identifies the proposed project buildings for the THI area.

7.10 **General photographic records shall be made of all streets within the conservation area including the THI area showing each side of the street, but may include several buildings.** These shall be taken from similar viewpoints on a regular basis not being less than every 4 years and shall be similarly dated. These shall be arranged in numerical order identified by individual street.
Programme for the THI Area

7.11 The principal listed buildings deemed "At Risk" in the THI area will be addressed first. These Critical Projects are:

- Nos. 25 & 27 High Street (The Three Cranes) listed Grade II*
- Nos. 29 & 29A High Street listed Grade II
- Former Office premises of George Wright (Rotherham) Ltd, The Crofts listed Grade II

7.12 Of the unlisted buildings in the THI the most critical project is:

- No. 20 High Street.

Its condition is detrimental to the street scene and the confidence of other traders, and is in stark contrast to its immediate neighbours (nos. 16 and 18 High Street) that have received new shopfronts during the last 12 months (2005). This building will be addressed at an early stage to ensure that any necessary action by the Council can be made to achieve the restoration of the building within the THI period.

7.13 The remaining identified project buildings, while involving some measure of repair and restoration, are principally identified for replacement shopfronts and new small-paned sashed windows. The owners/tenants of these will be contacted at an early stage of the THI programme their applications phased into year two. Another critical project is the Grade II Imperial Buildings which is currently underused especially at upper floors and in need of upgrading at ground floor to meet current retail standards. This programme will be reviewed on a regular basis by the Town Centre Management Group at their monthly meetings. Please see Appendix L for a plan showing the location of the THI projects.

Public Realm

7.14 In Rotherham MBC’s Stage 1 Submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) five areas had been identified for public realm improvements. These were:

- All Saints Churchyard – North and South side of Minster Yard
- The Pedestrian Area at the top of Church Street
- The Church Wall – north and west side
- Snail Hill and Alley off High Street
- Vicarage Lane

7.15 Subsequently as part of the Stage 2 Submission preparation these areas have been looked at in greater detail by the Councils’ ‘Streetpride’ Landscape Design Team who has produced a co-ordinated appraisal that draws all the above areas together, beginning with a SWAT analysis identifying opportunities for improvement. This is included in Appendix G.

7.16 This overall appraisal forms a basis for detailed consultation and agreed improvements that will be implemented in stages as
and when finance is available. It does however set a standard and is related to the recently published Design Code for the Westgate Demonstrator Area. This provides a strategy for development and details paving and road surfaces with a palate of colours appropriate to Rotherham town centre where many of the older buildings (such as the parish church) are constructed from the unique Rotherham Red sandstone. The Code has been arrived at through consultation with various sections of the Council including Streetpride, Planning and Transportation Services. It is the intention to adopt similar standards using a complementary palette of materials throughout the Town Centre Conservation Area.

7.17 Supplementary Planning Guidance, ‘Development in Conservation Areas’ produced by the Council in June 1999, is attached as Appendix E and is supplemented with published advice from SPAB and the IHBC11, and English Heritage12

11 A Stitch in Time 2004
12 Timber Sash Windows (Technical Leaflet), Scaffolding and Temporary Works For Historic Buildings, Streets for All (2005)

8 Commitment to the management plan

8.1 This document was formally adopted by the Council’s Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Development Services on 19th June, 2006 as an Interim Planning Statement (Minute No. 37 refers).

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

8.2 When the THI programme is completed the management committee will be reformulated to continue as an independent Conservation Area Advisory Committee to ensure the improvements made are maintained in the future. Such a committee will be consulted on all planning applications within the conservation area, and be given the opportunity to voice their views on these but also to assist in formulating future policies for the Rotherham Town Centre Conservation Area, and as a continuing source of advice on planning and other applications which could affect the area. The committee will consist mainly of volunteers who are not Members of the authority; local residential and business interests should be fully represented. In addition to local historical, civic and amenity societies, and the Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, the Council will seek nominations from national bodies such as the national amenity societies and the Civic Trust.