

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

Planning Unit

Spittal

Conservation Area



Part 1: Character Appraisal

Part 2: Management Strategy

Produced by _____

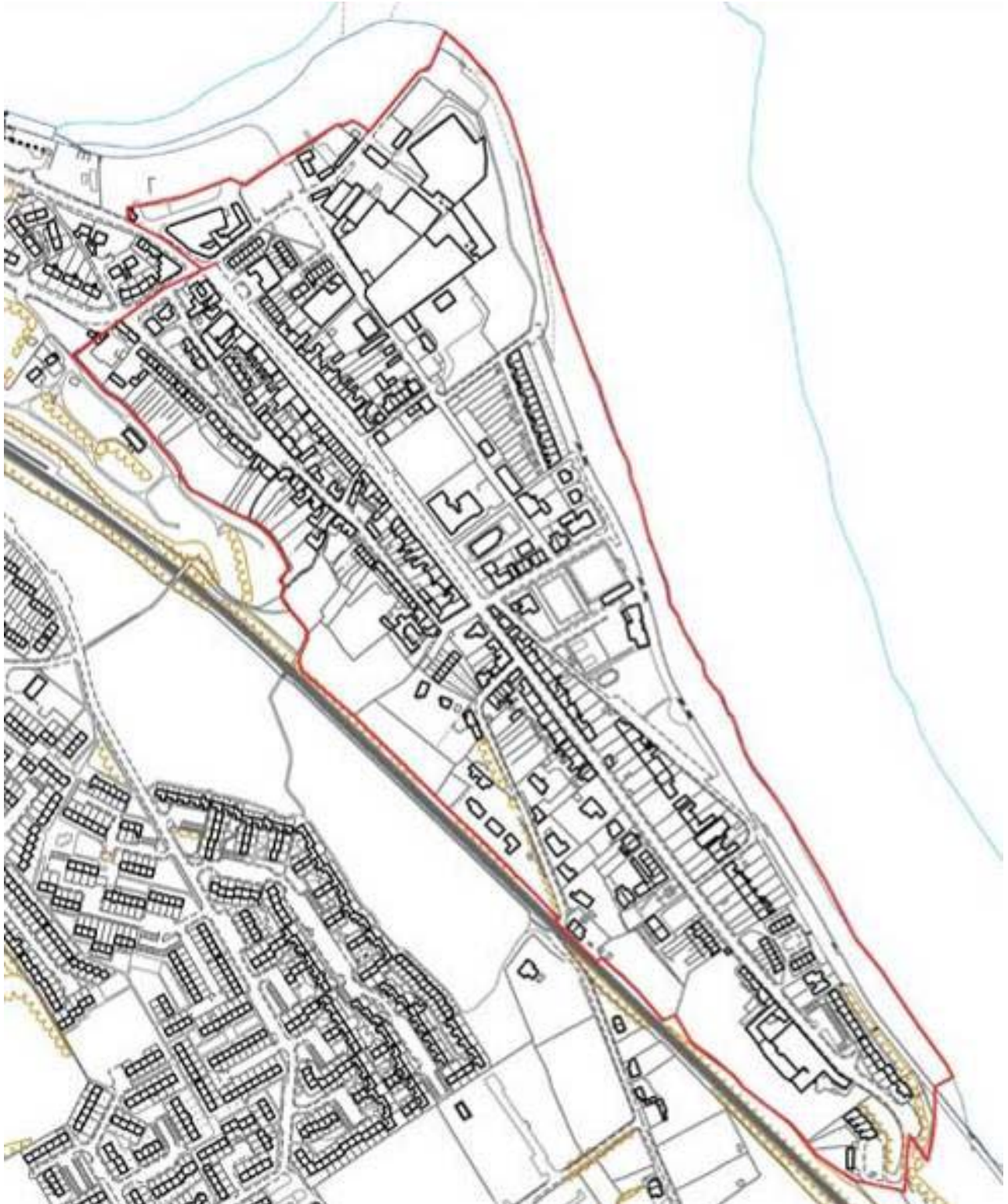


NORTH of ENGLAND CIVIC TRUST

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Map 1. Spittal Conservation Area Boundary



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1 *Introduction*

1.1 *Conservation Areas*

Conservation areas are “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”¹. They are designated by the local planning authority using local criteria.

Conservation areas are about character and appearance, which can derive from many factors including individual buildings, building groups and their relationship with open spaces, architectural detailing, materials, views, colours, landscaping, street furniture and so on. Character can also draw on more abstract notions such as sounds, local environmental conditions and historical changes. These things combine to create a locally distinctive sense of place worthy of protection.

Conservation areas do not prevent development from taking place. Rather, they are designed to manage change, controlling the way new development and other investment reflects the character of its surroundings. Being in a conservation area does tend to increase the standards required for aspects such as repairs, alterations or new building, but this is often outweighed by the ‘cachet’ of living or running a business in a conservation area, and the tendency of a well-maintained neighbourhood character to sustain, or even enhance, property values.

The first conservation areas were created in 1967 and now over 9,100 have been designated, varying greatly in character and size. There are currently 12 in Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough, as set out below:

- Bamburgh
- Belford
- Berwick-upon-Tweed
- Chatton
- Holy Island
- Kirknewton
- Norham

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s69.

- North Sunderland
- Seahouses
- Spittal
- Tweedmouth
- Wooler

1.2 **Town Planning Context**

Designation remains the principal means by which local authorities can apply conservation policies to a particular area. The Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. It also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for preservation and enhancement, and to consult local people on them². The local planning authority also has extra powers in conservation areas over demolition, minor developments, and tree protection (see page 40). Government policy in PPG15³ stresses the need for local planning authorities to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts.

The current development plan for Berwick-upon-Tweed borough is the Local Plan, adopted 1999 and the county-wide Joint Structure Plan, adopted 2005. Under the government's new planning system, the Council will soon work to update these as a single Local Development Framework (LDF), a portfolio of planning documents used to plan and control development across the borough.

1.3 **This Character Appraisal and Management Strategy**

Spittal Conservation Area was designated in November 1995. A Character Appraisal was prepared in 2003 by McIntyre Associates for Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, and was adopted in 2004. The Management Strategy was prepared during spring and summer 2006 by North of England Civic Trust for Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council. Extensive community involvement was included during 2006, and a draft version was put out for public consultation during 2007. This final version, which takes account of responses given, will be adopted as council planning policy. The document can be downloaded from www.berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk.

The document is split into three main parts:

- **Part 1: Character Appraisal** (*dark blue footer*)
- **Part 2: Management Strategy** (*light blue footer*)
- **Appendices** (*grey footer*)

By its very nature, this document cannot be exhaustive. Omissions should not necessarily be regarded as having no special interest or making no positive

² Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s72 and s71

³ Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning & The Historic Environment

contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The character appraisal and management strategy should be updated every five years or so, taking account of changes in the area and further understanding of the place.

1.4 **Further Information**

For further information on the conservation area or this character appraisal and management strategy, please contact:

- Annette Reeves
Conservation Officer
Council Offices
Wallace Green
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Northumberland
TD15 1ED
- Tel: (01289) 330 044
- E-mail: ar@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk

Information can also be provided in other languages and alternative formats eg. Braille, audiotape and large print. For further information please contact Annette Reeves on (01289) 330 044.

2 *Character Appraisal*

2.1 *Introduction*

A character appraisal for the Spittal Conservation Area was prepared by McIntyre Associates in 2003 and is included as an Appendix to this document. It was adopted by the Council in 2004. The Management Strategy which forms the remainder of this document refers to the Character Appraisal and includes guidance to review it within five years (2008).



The bay and promenade looking north past Spittal Point's chimney towards Berwick-upon-Tweed

3 *Management Strategy*

3.1 *Introduction*

Change is an inevitable component of most conservation areas; the challenge is to manage change in ways which maintain and, if possible, strengthen an area's special qualities. The character of conservation areas is rarely static and is susceptible to incremental, as well as dramatic, change. Some areas are in a state of relative economic decline, and suffer from lack of investment. In others, the qualities that make conservation areas appealing also help to encourage over-investment and pressure for development in them. Strong, positive management is essential if such pressure for change, which tends to alter the very character that made the areas attractive in the first place, is to be limited. It is necessary to strike a balance between pressure for change and conservation of character.

Proactively managing Spittal Conservation Area will therefore be an essential way of preserving and enhancing its character and appearance into the future. New English Heritage guidance suggests the following topics should be addressed when considering a management strategy for the area⁴:

- boundary review
- article 4 directions
- enforcement and monitoring change
- buildings at risk
- site specific design guidance or development briefs
- thematic policy guidance (eg. on windows or doors)
- enhancement opportunities
- trees and green spaces
- urban design and/or public realm
- regeneration issues
- decision making and community consultation
- available resources

These form threads running through the Management Strategy set out below.

⁴ *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, English Heritage, 2006

The value of completing the Management Strategy at the same time as the related studies for Berwick and Tweedmouth conservation areas is that the complex conservation relationships between the three areas at the mouth of the Tweed can be dealt with in a comprehensive and coordinated way.

Spittal is the smallest of the conservation areas and its present special character has been determined by its long life as a fishing village and then as a popular seaside resort.

This Management Strategy sets in place guidance and policies to help protect, restore and enhance this unique character for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations of residents and visitors. The Management Strategy, like the Character Appraisal which precedes it should be actively used to understand and manage the area, and should be reviewed regularly, preferably every five years.

3.1.1 **Management Strategy Structure**

The temptation for any Management Strategy is to recommend the full range of possible conservation activities to be carried out, irrespective of the physical need, the cultural appropriateness or the availability of resources. On the other hand, by under-recommending, there is the danger of not providing sufficient vision to stimulate the public and community will to improve, to control, and to seek sufficient resources to give the conservation area a distinctive and sustainable future.

However, this Management Strategy for Spittal's conservation area avoids this dilemma by concentrating on the real needs and aspirations of the conservation area. These are to be found expressed as living conservation issues, from the four following main sources:

- Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Plan adopted 1999, the current statutory development plan which applies to Spittal Conservation Area,
- Spittal Conservation Area Character Appraisal, ie. that prepared by McIntyre Associated in 2003 and included as Part 1 of this document,
- The results of consultation with stakeholders and local people in preparation for production of this document by the Trust and the Council,
- Additional conservation issues highlighted by the professional expertise of the Trust as consultants engaged by the Council, using checklists of generic conservation operations it has devised.

The issues raised in this way, which are listed from page 41, are amalgamated into a single Working List in the next section, each then discussed in the body of the Management Strategy. This will ensure the Strategy is comprehensive and inspirational, yet tailored to the realities of Spittal today and tomorrow.

3.2 **Working List of Issues**

The conservation issues raised in this way have been amalgamated into a coherent series of issues and organised under three simple operational themes to provide the working structure of this Management Strategy. The issue numbers in brackets refer to the source lists from page 41.

3.2.1 **Operation 1: Identification & Protection**

- **1A** Importance of environmental wealth (P1, C17)
- **1B** Review of unsatisfactory boundaries (P3, P24, P27, A1, C1, N1)
- **1C** Increase protection for individual buildings (P17, A2, C2)
- **1D** Future of the chimney on the Point (C10)
- **1E** Permitted development rights and Article 4 Directions (P5)
- **1F** Research the areas of archaeological interest (P18, A3, N2)
- **1G** Education of builders and promotion of the value of heritage (C17)
- **1H** Advice & Guidance For Owners (C18)
- **1I** Tree Preservation Orders (P16)
- **1J** Additional identification and protection issues

3.2.2 **Operation 2: Control Of Change**

- **2A** Controlling new development (P1, P2, P4, P6, C14)
- **2B** Retail floorspace and shopfronts (P12, P14)
- **2C** Demolition (P7)
- **2D** Spittal Point redevelopment (P19, A4, C11, and linked to 3J below)
- **2E** Seaview caravan site (P21)
- **2F** Car parking (A8)
- **2G** Satellite dishes (P13, C8)
- **2H** Small scale renewable energy projects (P15)
- **2I** Protection of open spaces from development (C13)
- **2J** Council decisions and enforcement (C15)
- **2K** Capacity of Council conservation staff resource (C16)
- **2L** Capacity of local amenity groups and networks (C19)
- **2M** Formalised monitoring structure (N4)
- **2N** Additional control issues

3.2.3 **Operation 3: Maintenance, Repair & Enhancement**

- **3A** General maintenance of the public realm (P9, A6, A9, C3, C12, C21)
- **3B** Improve general appearance of floorscape / street furniture (C4, C6, C7)
- **3C** Public and private trees (A9, C12)
- **3D** Improve appearance and repair neglected buildings at risk (A5, C9)
- **3E** improve the contribution of neglected open spaces (A11, A12, C13)
- **3F** Enhancement of the railway environment (P11)
- **3G** Remove or re-route telephone poles and wires in main streets (A10, C5)
- **3H** Maintain and enhance Stone Quay (P25)
- **3I** Comprehensive enhancement of north end of Main Street (P10, P22, A7)
- **3J** A comprehensive enhancement of West and Middle Streets (N3)
- **3K** A conservation-led regeneration plan for the Sandstell Road, Spittal Point, East Street and the north end of North Greenwich Road area, together with others (N2, and linked with 2D above)
- **3L** Review and implementation of grant regimes (P8, C20)
- **3M** Additional maintenance, repair and enhancement issues

3.3 **Operation 1: Identification & Protection**

3.3.1 **Position**

The following heritage designations are found within the conservation area. For information on what these designations mean, go to www.english-heritage.org.uk.

0	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
0	Grade I Listed Building entries
0	Grade II* Listed Building entries
3	Grade II Listed Building entries (covering at least 23 buildings)
0	Historic Parks & Gardens
0	Historic Battlefields
0	Local List entries (the Council does not have a local list)
6	Tree Preservation Orders (covering a number of trees)
0	Article 4 Directions
0	national Buildings At Risk
0	local Buildings At Risk (the Council does not have a local register)

3.3.2 **1A: Importance Of Environmental Wealth**

The environmental wealth to be sustained and enhanced by Local Plan Policy F1 includes the Borough's conservation areas as part of its valuable human heritage.



Spittal environmental wealth includes historic, architectural, natural and other features.

This is a fundamental policy statement, and its significance should not be diluted in the emerging LDF Core Strategy. Policy F31, to which F1 refers, places the statement in the context of the borough's social and economic welfare, reflecting the fact that conservation areas are designed to manage change, not prevent it. It is important therefore to actively use the Character Appraisal and Management Strategy during the process of change towards social and economic sustainability.

Defining 'human heritage' to include conservation areas would help to strengthen the application of this policy in line with the passionate enthusiasm for built heritage that was evident in the consultation carried out for this Management Strategy.

3.3.3 **1B: Review Unsatisfactory Boundaries**

The original conservation area boundary was set on 6 November 1995 based on the village core of North Greenwich Road, Sea Road and South Greenwich Road, most of Main Street, half of Middle Street and half of the Promenade. The boundary was extended by about 30% in December 2004, following the Character Appraisal of January 2003. The new boundary now includes all of Sandstell, the industrial area on Spittal Point, and the previously omitted parts of Main Street, Middle Street and the Promenade. The boundary has remained unchanged since.

The existing boundary fails in two aspects. Firstly, it does not give sufficient protection to all the buildings which define the important gateway junction at the north end of Main Street, and secondly it does not include the full length of the Promenade (as far as an old boundary stone) to the south.

However, any desirable local boundary extensions should be incorporated into an overall intention to extend conservation area coverage to the entire Tweed estuary, extending and conjoining Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal Conservation Areas. This would maintain the separate entities of the three settlement by retaining three separate, but conjoined, conservation areas.

This strategic extension of the conservation areas is described and justified for all three settlements in the boundary section in the Berwick Conservation Area Management Strategy.

3.3.4 **1C: Increased Protection For Individual Buildings** *Statutory Listing*

Berwick borough's entries in the national statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are some of the oldest in the north east region and need to be generally reviewed by English Heritage in order to secure the proper protection of the borough's historic assets.

Before the January 2003 character appraisal, no buildings in Spittal were listed and thereby protected by the need for listed building consent. Although the appraisal perhaps surprisingly indicates that very many properties within the conservation area were potential listed buildings (possibly for their group value, see Figure 13 of the appraisal), the following buildings were identified as being particularly suitable for listing (see section 6.0 of the appraisal):

- Nos.202-206 Main Street (Wilson Terrace, built c1850 by William Wilson, a local sculptor);
- Nos.178-180 Main Street (also by William Wilson);
- Nos.137-139 Main Street (with distinctive timber watch houses on their roofs);
- St Helen's Terrace, Promenade (18 mid-Victorian two storey terraced houses, much featured on nineteenth century postcards and pictures);
- Spittal County First School, Main Street (a 1908 Arts & Crafts style school with fine boundary railings);



- Fisherman's Shiel, Sandstell (probably 1735 with nineteenth century alterations; fishing industry storage and rest shed built to a traditional design and the only remaining un-modernised salmon shiel on the Tweed).

Whether all six were put to the DCMS for spot-listing is not known, but the first one and last two in the list above have subsequently been listed Grade II, the first buildings to be listed in the village. The current listings still ignore the considerable historic assets of Spittal and more buildings are worthy of the status and protection afforded by statutory listing. Early discussions should be held with English Heritage with a view to adding such buildings to the list in advance of a general review of the borough's list entries (ie. spot-listing them), such a review to begin as soon as resources (including local community capacity) can be identified and certainly within three years.

Local List

The statutory list identifies those buildings with special architectural or historic interest at a national level. Many local authorities are now preparing lists of buildings important locally which, although without any statutory protection, can be considered material to any future planning considerations. Berwick borough does not yet have such a Local List.

The development of a Local List is usually run as an inclusive process with the community invited to make suggestions and a mixed panel of professionals and local representatives led by the Council put in place to refine the list. This process has the added value of encouraging local 'ownership' of the buildings on the list as well as usually attracting political support.

A Local List would be a positive step for the Council as it would help to bridge the protection gap between statutory listed and unlisted buildings, would help to enhance the relationships between local communities and the Council and would promote the importance of the historic environment at a local level.

Other Buildings That Make A Positive Contribution To The Conservation Area

Unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area should be identified and recorded. Again, local capacity could be sought to help with this. English Heritage publish guidelines to help judge which buildings make a positive contribution, included here on page 41.

3.3.5 **1D: Future Of The Chimney On The Point**

The tall industrial chimney on the Point has also been put forward for spot listing in the past but was turned down, most likely on the grounds that it was not sufficiently 'special'. Although it is currently



The chimney at Spittal Point.



protected from demolition without consent by being in the conservation area, its industrial character and significance may make it a potential Scheduled Monument rather than a listed building (see 1F below). In spite of the negative industrial associations it may have for some local people, the chimney should be retained because of its historic and landscape significance to the village and to the Tweed estuary as a whole.

3.3.6 **1E: Permitted Development Rights & Article 4 Directions**

As in so many historic settlements since the late twentieth century, the main erosion of historic features in Spittal has been in residential properties. In particular, traditional timber sliding sash windows and traditional timber front doors have been replaced with modern convenience items in PVCu, aluminium or hardwood, sometimes though not always altering the original window or door opening as well.

Such changes, even in conservation areas, have often been customary due to their sheer scale and also because they have been interpreted as being within the permitted development rights which apply to dwellinghouses. Consequently, in many cases, the matter of controlling this kind of change has become a minefield of natural justice ('fairness') and local political consequences. It is usually 'safer' to tackle the planning misdemeanours of individual developers than those of larger numbers of residential owners.



Residential permitted development rights have eroded some features (above), notably historic windows & doors (below).



Making an Article 4(2) Direction would require planning permission to be sought for certain types of development which would otherwise be permitted without the need for consent. Directions are made to further protect character and appearance from 'minor' incremental changes which, over the years, can accumulate to cause considerable harm to character. Article 4(2) Directions can control:

- enlargement, improvement or alteration of a house, including repointing, cladding, and alteration to windows and doors
- alteration of a roof (including, for example, a dormer window or rooflight)
- erection, alteration or removal of a chimney
- erection of a porch
- provision of hardstanding

- installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite dish
- erection, alteration or demolition of a gate, fence, wall or means of enclosure
- provision or alteration of a building, enclosure or pool in a house’s curtilage
- painting of the exterior of a building or enclosure

Directions made only apply to ‘dwellinghouses’ and only control development which fronts a highway, open space or watercourse. It is also normal to only select the most relevant of the above categories to control, and to apply the Direction only to specific parts of the conservation area.

Although Article 4 Directions do not offer the means of reversing harmful change that has already taken place (this usually requires encouragement supported by financial incentives and guidance), they can be used to prevent more harmful change. But, because of the extent of existing losses and the hesitancy of local authorities, their use has become a complex and delicate issue.

However, the council is not unfamiliar with the operation of Article 4 Directions as one has been in force for 15 years covering all dwellinghouses in Berwick Conservation Area and controlling improvement or replacement of existing windows, doors and other openings in any elevation, or the creation of a new window, door or other opening in any elevation, or the erection of a porch outside any door. In general, it has been successful in retaining the character of individual buildings and of historic quarters of the town.

Could this success be repeated in Spittal? Because it means initially an increase in planning applications, and Spittal is a more architecturally modest settlement than Berwick, could the required additional resources be justified in Spittal? Such questions are not easily answered.

To reach some kind of decision, it may help to first identify the extent of the surviving vulnerable features in the conservation area that remain to be protected, to see if they are sufficient in numbers and worthy of retention, possibly even as surviving models that could be carefully recorded as the basis of a future popular revival in reinstatement of character.

Action on the results of such an investigation could then be combined with a pilot to restore the lost features of a single, discrete building group such as St Helen’s Terrace, to test community, owner and political support. This investigation and pilot would go a long way to answering the difficult questions involved with Article 4 Directions.

A model elsewhere in the region would be in

Timber features in poor repair are vulnerable to loss. In particular, several timber shopfronts have been replaced to the detriment of Main St’s character.



Hartlepool where the council is working to control and restore the loss of traditional architectural features in the Headland Conservation Area.

The cost of such an exercise could be offset by the use of local or student capacity at the identification stage of the survey. A source of funding would need to be identified and professional supervision time included. In the case of a relatively small conservation area such as Spittal, only a modest amount of public resource would be needed.

Several traditional shopfronts on Main Street have been lost or altered when shops change use to housing. In fact, this may in some cases be the reversal of an earlier change from housing to retail, but the loss of good quality traditional timber shopfronts which contribute to the character of the area is to be regretted. In this case of change to retail buildings, planning permission is generally required for material changes and so sensitive change is often achievable by careful development control and competent use of design guidelines to assist both the developer and the planning department to achieve an appropriate treatment. Such guidelines are contained in Local Plan Appendix B and in a separate leaflet, *Shopfront Design Guide for Conservation Areas* but they will need to be revisited, including addressing the issue of conversion from retail to residential use.

The future of the Carr Rock and Stone Quay areas (outside the existing conservation area) should be discussed with the Harbour Commission through open and collaborative dialogue. The Harbour Commission is granted extensive permitted development rights for this and other operational land under Schedule 2, Part 17, Class B of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, and exercising these rights has the potential to significantly affect the setting of the existing conservation area. Understanding and influencing the Commission's right to develop will therefore be important to protecting the conservation area. The possibility of using an Article 4(1) Direction to withdraw some of those rights should also be explored were it deemed necessary, which would require planning permission to be sought. See 3H below.



Carr Rock Lifeboat Station and Stone Quay.

3.3.7 **1F: Research The Areas Of Archaeological Interest**

Spittal currently contains no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, designations made by central government on the advice of English Heritage against national criteria.

As indicated above, the chimney on the Point may have qualities that make it suitable for scheduling.

The three areas of archaeological interest identified in the Character Appraisal, including a possible medieval leper hospital, eighteenth and nineteenth century smoke houses, a fishing shiel, an industrial complex and a gasworks house, should all be professionally investigated to determine their national and local archaeological significance and potential. Martins Printing Works complex in Main Street should also be added to this list for investigation.

These investigations should be prioritised and could lead to further protection of underground or above ground assets in these areas, either by their inclusion as material considerations in the emerging LDF or by statutory protection through listing or scheduling (the on-going national Heritage Protection Review is to resolve the differences between the two designations).

3.3.8 **1G: Education Of Builders And Promotion Of The Value Of Heritage**

Consultees expressed disappointment with the level of knowledge about traditional building methods and materials amongst local contractors. It is normal for owners of historic buildings to trust their builders but some had felt let down when contractors had not fulfilled their client's expectations. This is not an uncommon problem nationwide and is a difficult situation to improve.

Firstly, it should be possible to identify local contractors who do have sufficient knowledge and skills to deal appropriately with traditional buildings, so that owners can choose with confidence a suitable contractor for the job. Belonging to an appropriate trade association, such as the Guild of Master Craftsmen (look for relevant logos), may point owners in the right direction but many competent contractors are not members of trade associations. The government is currently promoting a scheme of accreditation called Trust Mark to identify reputable tradespeople of all kinds but, as little progress has yet been made in this well meaning scheme, it is not yet comprehensive enough to be reliable.

Consequently, most contractors get chosen by word of mouth but this too can be no guarantee of conservation standard. Contractors are therefore best judged on their work as assessed by experienced conservation professionals such as



Good work could be better. Left: Good pointing method but a poor mix with insufficient lime. Right: Good match in terms of bonding and stone size, but yellow sandstone is the wrong colour for this area.

conservation architects or conservation surveyors. Although Council conservation officers may often be familiar with the work of local builders, they may be precluded from making single recommendations, but may well be able to suggest several suitable builders or else assess suitability if presented with a list of builders drawn up by the building owner themselves.

Some local authorities and/or local amenity groups have drawn up their own lists of reputable tradespeople to help owners and officers to make the right choice. This could be explored here by the Council and the local amenity groups, perhaps in conjunction with the county council.

Another difficulty implied by the consultees' concerns is that in an area such as this (or even the whole of north Northumberland), there are few contractors of an appropriate conservation standard from which to choose anyway, and are thus not always readily available. Widening the area of search can help but this pushes costs up.

The most challenging task is to increase the supply of suitable contractors by offering traditional building skills training to existing ones, as well as new ones coming into the business. This shortage of skills is a nationwide problem recognised by organisations such as English Heritage and the National Trust which are currently attempting to increase the availability of suitable training and to encourage both existing contractors and novices to become trainees.

The task of securing appropriate contractors may therefore become a costly, uncertain and long-term solution. So, in the short-term, it is probably best to seek advice and to try to make the most of the present availability of skilled contractors through better understanding amongst historic building owners of what their skills are.

There are many ways of promoting the importance of our common heritage but they are always more effective if targeted, and if like-minded enthusiasts are prepared to help. There is plenty of support around from local and national heritage organisations, and there are ready-made campaigns which can be plugged into such as the current *History Matters: Pass It On* campaign. The target audience should be carefully considered to ensure the right message is sent. Designated Historic Environment Champions – both senior councillors and lead officers – can be responsible for exercising considerable influence in the interests of conservation areas. The regional Champions Club can provide more information and advice.

3.3.9 **1H: Advice & Guidance For Owners**

Nationally, more and more printed advice, information and guidance is becoming available for owners and developers of historic buildings and spaces. A combined search by the



Council's Conservation Officer and local amenity groups could provide the basis for suitable literature and guidance to be published and kept up to date.

The real difficulty in smaller planning authorities such as Berwick Borough Council is to get hold of advice from the conservation officer that is tailored to particular owners and to particular buildings. Only an increase in conservation resources (hours per week) can make this valuable guidance more widely available (see also 2K).



Above and previous page: Guidance to private owners can help maintain the impressive contribution made by residential properties to Spittal conservation area.

One possible solution to the more efficient use of scarce resources such as these is for owners of historic buildings to form an interest group or club which then can receive information and guidance through talks and visits, to better understand and care for their own property. This can raise the information and awareness levels of historic buildings in their local communities.

3.3.10 **1I: Tree Preservation Orders**



Although few in number, trees contribute greatly to the local scene

Existing TPOs (T1-T8 and G1-G2) were made in August 1973, 22 years before the village received the comprehensive tree protection afforded by designation as a conservation area. These TPOs only cover trees in several adjoining private gardens on the east side of the south section of Main Street.

Although these should be retained, the case for creating more on private land within the conservation area is not yet conclusive so further action on this should be taken in the future to define the need for more TPOs. Extending the boundaries of the conservation area further could re-activate this issue.

It is important to recognise that, because the maritime climate of the village may not be as encouraging of tree growth as inland settlements, residents do value the trees that survive in the village and would like to see their numbers increased, especially in Main Street (see 3C).

3.3.11 **1J: Additional Identification & Protection Issues**

The following are additional issues which could be explored in the future:

- Boundary considerations
- Statutory protection:
 - listing of buildings
 - scheduling of monuments
 - TPOs
 - Article 4 Directions to protect traditional architectural features
- Non-statutory protection:
 - historic parks and gardens
 - historic battlefields

- local list
- other buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

3.4 **Operation 2: Control Of Change**

3.4.1 **Position**

No additional planning controls, such as Article 4 Directions, have been set by the Council for Spittal Conservation Area, although it is subject to policies in the Local Plan, adopted 1999, which are specific to conservation areas and to Tweedmouth.

3.4.2 **2A: Controlling New Development in Conservation Areas**

There was very strong concern expressed during consultation about control over the quality of new development. In particular recent development in Sandstell Road and new housing in North Greenwich Road and Sea Road were considered to be out of keeping with the character of the conservation area in terms of number of storeys, detailed elevational treatment and use of materials.

Some new development has not always responded well to local character



The Local Plan sets out that development anywhere in the borough should accord with its surroundings (Local Plan Policy F5) and that new development should protect the character and setting of conservation areas (Local Plan Policy F21); these are material to the approval of developments of this kind in this location.

These policies, especially Policy F21, would be strengthened by design guidance on new development in conservation areas that was similar in status to existing shopfront design guidance in Local Plan Appendix B, preferably developed with the help and support of local amenity groups. This was a major issue in the consultation and therefore needs early attention.

3.4.3 **2B: Retail Floorspace and Shopfronts**



Some shops are now in residential use; good quality traditional shopfronts can be vulnerable.

There appears to be no pressure for the increase in retail floorspace in Spittal Conservation Area that would trigger Local Plan Policy C35. In fact, a number of shops are currently vacant and others are being converted away from retail use to residential, requiring the design action suggested under 1E above.

The shopfront design guidance in the Local Plan and published in the Council’s *Shopfront Design Guide for Conservation Areas* is positive, but it will need to be reviewed to bring it up-to-date and to make it relevant to the historic areas it covers, as well as to increase their scope to include guidance on the conversion of shops to other uses including residential.

3.4.4 2C: Demolition

Local Plan Policy F24, in line with national conservation legislation, controls demolition in conservation areas and, in combination with demolition conditions on new development, is an essential policy in safeguarding the character of conservation areas. Although concern about demolition of industrial buildings on Spittal Point was not particularly raised in the consultation, this demolition has taken place in a designated conservation area and, apparently, in the absence of approved plans for replacement uses and buildings. The status of this demolition in relation to the Spittal Point Development Brief of December 2004 should also be determined as a preliminary to the concerns under 2D and suggested solution in 3J below.

3.4.5 2D: Spittal Point Redevelopment

The redevelopment of this part of the area was shadowed in Policies S26 and W33 which identified 3.71ha for mixed use redevelopment. Development was required



to respect the conservation area and involve the restoration of key buildings on the site, in order to encourage a responsible and sensitive response to the site.

The Character Appraisal, while expressing concern for the dilapidated condition of buildings on the Point, felt that these policies had in fact blighted this industrial area, leading to neglect and vacancy. Whether this is the case is difficult to determine but the current situation seems far from satisfactory and firm action is required.

Consultees were convinced of the inevitability of redevelopment at the Point. However, they felt that, because of what was termed ‘the current vision vacuum’ for the site, redevelopment was a risky opportunity for the conservation

area. Any firm action should therefore include improved and updated understanding, and the involvement of the local community in developing a satisfactory future for this most strategic and prominent location.

3.4.6 **2E: Seaview Caravan Site**

Local Plan Policy R23 prevents the expansion of the caravan site whilst welcoming its physical upgrading. As the pressure to expand this amenity for visitors is still likely to exist, this policy should be retained in the emerging LDF.

3.4.7 **2F: Car Parking**

The character appraisal noted that the lack of garaging and off-street parking amongst the terraced streets of Spittal, and the growing car ownership of residents, has meant that most streets in the conservation area are cluttered with parked cars much of the time. This is now a problem of ease of movement as well as a visual intrusion. The problem is less significant at the north end of Main Street which is wide enough not to be visually dominated by cars and does informally accommodate vehicles on its generous verges.

Such parking problems are becoming endemic in UK residential areas and simple, short-term solutions are not readily available. An objective study of the particular problems in Spittal could explore an early solution for Main Street and longer-term possibilities for elsewhere in the conservation area. Spittal is, however, by no means as heavily parked as some parts of Berwick.

3.4.8 **2G: Satellite Dishes**



Consultation recorded concern around the thoughtless siting of satellite dishes and other equipment such as aerials on principal or other highly visible elevations and roof slopes. This was seen as damaging the appearance of the conservation area. Local Plan Policy C15 requires that the installation and nature of such dishes should not adversely affect the surrounding environment and that they be removed when redundant.

In Spittal therefore a rapid survey is needed to assess the extent of the problem and to explore solutions involving testing legality, encouraging relocation of prominent dishes and removal of redundant ones. The survey element could make use of local amenity group capacity, who could also assist with monitoring once improvement has been secured.

3.4.9 **2H: Small Scale Renewable Energy Projects**

Local Plan Policy C36 controls small scale energy production projects, and is remarkably forward looking in its nature. It anticipates the current Government-led encouragement to householders to consider renewable energy production on a domestic scale via solar panels and small wind turbines. This is not yet a significant issue in the conservation area but could become one in time.

Although sustainable energy production is to be welcomed as a general policy theme, specific policies need to be updated and refined with special reference to historic buildings and conservation areas, to ensure protection of their interests.

3.4.10 **2I: Protection Of Open Spaces From Development**

In the consultation, comments were made about the open green banks which provide a backdrop to the village and the 'scrubby fingers' of green that reached the centre from the edges, for example the space on Main Street containing an electricity sub-station. Concern was expressed that they be protected from development and thus remain as part of the green setting to the west in which the settlement sits. These spaces help to define the settlement and should be kept tidy but not developed. This would require a policy in the emerging LDF.



Open green areas provide a backdrop and, in some places, reach into the village.

3.4.11 **2J: Council Decisions & Enforcement**

During consultation, concern was raised that decision-making on new development in the conservation area was felt not to be sufficiently 'strong', did not manage the expectations of developers well, and that development could be better enforced. Comments made were something of a blanket statement, and the perceived problems (and solutions) may be better understood in relation to particular developments and the application of particular policies or guidance. The problem may also relate to a lack of policies or guidance.

The way forward on this sensitive topic is constructive dialogue and action with the local community. This should ideally take place in the context of the Statement of Community Involvement, or as public consultation on this character appraisal and management strategy. The resolution should involve action and reassurance by the Council in return for local co-operation and support.

Since this consultation took place in Spring 2006, the Council has made progress in improving community links on the topic of conservation. In particular, the Council's Conservation Area Advisory Group (CAAG) has been re-launched to provide better representation of all communities involved in the three conservation areas at the mouth of the Tweed, and with a new mission to be proactive and collaborative. Also, a useful training event has been held to assist members of CAAG to offer helpful comment on development proposals. This Management Strategy should encourage further improvements in this invaluable area of partnership activity.

3.4.12 **2K: Capacity Of Council Conservation Staff Resource**

During consultation, the role of the Council's conservation officer was welcomed and recognised by many, not only as a source of technical, statutory and process advice, but also as an advocate in the Council for the conservation of their area that many cared so passionately about. The main concern, however, was that this valued resource is in too short a supply due the part-time nature of the post. The creation of a full-time post would be locally welcomed, not only to increase

availability of an essential public service, but also as confirmation of the Council's commitment to the environmental wealth of Berwick's human heritage.

There is an irresistible case for greater resources to be put to supporting the vital work of the conservation officer in the three conservation areas at the mouth of the Tweed, based on creating a full time conservation officer post. It should, however, be recognised that the successful management of both the quality and quantity of the areas' historic environment could outstrip the capacity of even one single full-time post.

3.4.13 **2L: Capacity Of Local Amenity Groups & Networks**

Consultation recorded the concern that the network of local organisations interested in the amenity of conservation area neighbourhoods was not always sufficiently strong or wide, with the south side of the Tweed expressing concerns they were perceived as 'the poor relation'.

A representative special interest group can bring residents and Council together in a creative and productive relationship, to the lasting benefit of all.

Although the 'poor relation' concern is already being addressed by Berwick Civic Society (which covers more than just Berwick town), the development of a successful amenity network for Spittal (and Tweedmouth too) requires a different kind of approach in which advice and support can be offered by the Council and experienced local bodies such as the Berwick Community Development Trust or the Spittal Improvement Trust. Any initiative to explore possibilities should begin with a round-table discussion with existing amenity groups and the Council, a creative continuation of previous discussions that have already taken place.



Extensive consultation was carried out during preparation of this Management Strategy.

3.4.14 **2M: Formalised Monitoring Structure**

A helpful way of keeping abreast of change and cementing a partnership between the Council and local interests is to have a formalised monitoring structure which is creatively operated by the Council and local amenity groups. There are pitfalls on both sides for the unwary but it should be possible, with good will and understanding, to forge a regular and helpful arrangement which will usefully serve the interests of all parties.

3.4.15 **2N: Additional Control Issues**

The following are additional control issues which could be explored in the future:

- Policies, developed from national and local guidance to control:
 - changes to existing buildings; current and recommended

- changes in the public realm
- new build in historic areas
- Enforcement:
 - existing system
 - improvements
- Other advice given and contact made by Council officers
- Monitoring Change:
 - day-to-day
 - occasional and regular survey

3.5 **Operation 3: Maintenance, Repair & Enhancement**

3.5.1 **Position**

The general level of maintenance and repair of the buildings and public realm in Spittal Conservation Area is no better or worse than most other UK conservation areas. Also, like many others, it has pockets of industrial neglect and decay; Spittal's is mainly at the Point. Only one part of the area has been the subject of comprehensive enhancement, the Promenade, which has recently received new sea walls, paving, seating, fencing and play area. The Spa Gardens have also been restored and enhanced under an initiative by local people, no other parts of the area have been tackled in recent years.

3.5.2 **3A: General Maintenance Of The Public Realm**

Local Plan Policy M6 encourages repairs and enhancement of the highway area to be designed to take into account the character of the surrounding landscape or townscape. This should include the retention and/or restoration of vernacular floorscape treatments which have survived or have evolved from the past. Although this policy is positive for enhancement, for general repairs it may only be aspirational and may need to be reviewed.



Consultation and the Character Appraisal have identified a general lack of maintenance of the public realm which was making Spittal look neglected in parts. Furthermore, the pavements in Main Street were being damaged by parked cars.

Consultees suggested that if a regular and adequate maintenance regime could be operated throughout public parts of the conservation area, this would resolve several conservation issues. There was also some confusion as to which authority was responsible for which parts of the public realm, the borough or county council.

These concerns suggest that public realm maintenance regimes and responsibilities be reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness in supporting the character and appearance of the conservation area, and that the worst areas be identified for early treatment, whilst surviving areas of traditional treatments be retained and/or extended in a coherent way. Maintenance of the extensive public facilities on Spittal's lengthy promenade is a big issue due to exposure to the sea.

3.5.3 **3B: Improve The General Appearance Of Floorscape & Street Furniture**

Concerns on this topic were expressed during consultation. There was perceived to be unnecessary ad hoc clutter, decaying and mismatched signs and out-of-character street furniture. The solution suggested included an integrated system of



The Promenade is lively with a uniform treatment of features.

furniture and signs which would give a sense of unity whilst creating a distinctive identity. The uniform treatment of such features on the Promenade was seen as a model seafront identity.

Random and mismatched floorscape materials and treatments across the conservation area were also of

concern. Particular dissatisfaction was expressed about the process that brought about the modern shelter at the south end of the Promenade. Several consultees explained it fails to actually provide shelter due to its design, and that no more of this design should be installed.

The solution could be tackled in stages within an overall strategy. Signs and street furniture could first be audited for presence, condition, design, integration, etc, using local amenity groups to help and the 2004 national *Save Our Streets* campaign as a model. This will help to define the problem and pave the way to possible solutions. The same audit could include floorscape surfaces and materials with suggestions made for repair or change. Although the audit could be swift, implementing solutions would take longer and be dependent on funding. Patience and determination are therefore needed.

3.5.4 **3C: Public & Private Trees**

Old photos of the north end of Main Street show that both sides of the street were once lined with trees. Some have since been removed and not replaced.



Care and management of trees is important to protecting their contribution to the area into the future.

Consultation recorded considerable support for the complete avenue of trees to be reinstated. A scheme should be prepared by local amenity groups and the Council seeking local support.

Concern was also expressed about the care and treatment of trees in private ownership in the conservation area. In particular, attention was drawn to bad practices including excessive pollarding. Conservation areas bring extra controls over trees as long as local people are occasionally reminded of their responsibilities and the area is regularly monitored. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) can control such threats more strongly, but it may be more useful to explore stronger guidance and a voluntary code of practice to which owners of trees which make a contribution to the character and appearance of the area can sign up. This would need the backing of the Council to encourage success.

3.5.5 **3D: Improve Appearance & Repair Neglected Buildings & Those At Risk**



A number of buildings in the conservation area are in need of attention to improve their appearance, ranging from a coat of paint on the joinery to extensive rescue and re-use as local buildings at risk. Some of them are identified in the Character Appraisal including buildings at the Point (many along Sandstell Road and North Greenwich Road since demolished), several fishing industry buildings, and the Grade II listed shiel (since partially repaired). There are further such buildings in the area including a ruined mill behind Main Street (now damaged by fire and at high risk of loss) and, potentially, the Pavilion on the Promenade.



Some historic buildings, eg. on Sandstell Rd, East St, North Greenwich Rd, are in poor repair or have a poor appearance. Top: the mill above Middle St.

This list is now dated and needs to be reviewed. A complete register should be identified using accepted criteria based on English Heritage's national buildings at risk register and local 'appearance' criteria. Listed buildings and those which make a significant contribution to the conservation area should be given priority in any subsequent programme of encouragement, treatment and rescue. With some

instruction, such an audit could be within the capacity of local amenity groups. In particular, rundown buildings in the area around the Point could also be included in the regeneration plan proposed in 3K below.

3.5.6 **3E: Improve The Contribution Of Neglected Open Spaces**



Some open spaces do not contribute to the area in their current form.

The Character Analysis suggests open spaces such as the green in East Street, the east fringes of the Point and the triangle on the Promenade, were too bare, and that tree planting would enhance them. Although this proposal can be supported in principle, individual planting sites should be reviewed in the light of exposure and historical appropriateness.

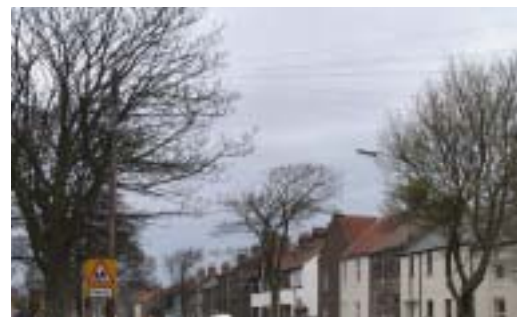
Other open areas identified as 'scrubby' areas in the Appraisal include the coastal fringes of the Point and the car park behind the Pavilion on the Promenade. These were to be tidied up, but care should be taken to ensure this does not harm biodiversity (particularly of any foreshore habitats which exist) or alter a wild, river's edge character where this is significant to the character of the area. Areas around the Point could be included in the regeneration plan suggested in 3K below.

3.5.7 **3F: Enhancement Of The Railway Environment**

Local Plan Policy M7 encourages rail operators to invest in facilities to improve the fabric of the East Coast mainline railway. In locations where a main line rail route runs alongside a conservation area, there would be a temptation to mitigate its adverse visual or noise effects with, for example, strategic tree planting. However, here on the west side of Spittal, such planting of the railway embankment would not be appropriate on the seaward side of the track as the drama of the estuarine views from the train would be interrupted, whilst the structure of the embankment itself – and the dramatic elevated views of moving trains – may become obscured. This policy should be modified accordingly to protect these views in this area of Spittal.

3.5.8 **3G: Remove Or Re-Route Telephone Poles & Wires In Principal Streets**

The Character Analysis and consultation identify the adverse effects of the clutter of poles and wires in several of Spittal's streets. Because of expense and a growing unwillingness of the telephone operators, undergrounding of wires is rarely likely except in extraordinary circumstances. An alternative could be to explore re-routing some wires into less visually important back areas. A pilot re-routing scheme for the north section of Main Street could be considered. This would have the benefit of freeing up space for tree planting along the street (see 3C).



Telephone wires on Main Street.

3.5.9 **3H: Maintain & Enhance Stone Quay**

The purpose of Local Plan Policy M45, which suggests the rundown area around Stone Quay be maintained and improved, is to secure not only the amenity of the quay but also its economic development potential, both good reasons for conserving an important bit of human heritage. Although the quay lies outside the existing conservation area boundary, it would be included if revisions to the boundary suggested in 1B above were implemented. The issue of permitted development rights is also of concern here (see 1E above).



3.5.10 **3I: Comprehensive Enhancement Of The North End Of Main Street**

Local Plan Policy M16 encourages the Highway Authority to implement traffic calming measures in the older parts of settlements where the impact of traffic has become increasingly detrimental. In addition, Local Plan Proposal 18 sets out that the stretch of Main Street from Sandstell Road to Sea Road could benefit from traffic calming measures and environmental improvements as it suffers from fast traffic and a rundown public realm. The Character Analysis also proposed environmental improvement works in Main Street, but made no mention of traffic calming measures. Traffic on Spittal Main Street was not raised as a key issue during consultation but its plain, simple character and surface treatment was highlighted as a positive characteristic.



The key to Main Street's character is its subdued simplicity

As traffic calming measures such as speed humps, bollards, chicanes and signs would change the historic character of Main Street, the case for such measures needs to be much more carefully considered. Traffic surveys, analysis of accidents statistics and local opinion should be carefully assessed before such a character change should

be contemplated. The cost of comprehensive improvements suggested in the Character Analysis (eg. reinstating stone flags, undergrounding overhead wires) should also be carefully assessed.

Such works to this part of Main Street would represent a major intervention in the fabric of the street which has evolved over time to present the plain character seen today, and have the potential to cause considerable harm rather than good. If the condition of pavements and pressure of traffic requires work, then repairs, maintenance and reinstatement of trees may be a more suitable approach. Such works could be rolled out conservation area-wide.

3.5.11 **3J: Comprehensive Enhancement Of West & Middle Streets**

The sterility of the large tarmac space and the sustainability of the public gardens between West and Middle Streets is a cause for concern. Neither makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and they provide an opportunity for enhancement. Although the historical record of the development of Spittal is sketchy, it is possible from the general pattern of the settlement that West and Middle Streets were once the centre of the village. This is certainly the area where most single storey fisherman's cottages survive, an early vernacular building type. So, an improvement scheme here could provide an opportunity to restore the feel of a village centre, as well as resolving the visual impact of large areas of tarmac. Unifying the area could give its current backland feel a new sense of arrival. Further research would be necessary to ensure a 'village centre' approach was historically accurate.

3.5.12 **3K: A Conservation-led Regeneration Plan For The Sandstell Road / Spittal Point / East Street / North Greenwich Road Area**

Concern for the fabric decay and environmental deterioration of this area is strongly expressed in the Local Plan, the Character Appraisal and during consultation. This

issue should be combined with 1D, 1F and 2D above. This is the single most important issue for Spittal Conservation Area as well as being crucial to the future appearance of the whole of the Tweed Estuary.



Spittal Point from the west looking towards the estuary.

A strong response to this major concern would be to defer planning decisions until a comprehensive conservation-led regeneration plan for its future has been adopted. This should be an Area Action Plan as part of the LDF. Such a plan could be funded by the Council in partnership with other agencies as recommended in Local Plan Policy F25. Progressing such a plan should be given absolute priority.

3.5.13 **3L: Review & Implementation Of Grant Regimes**

Local Plan Policy F25 encourages the funding of improvements and repairs to the public infrastructure of conservation areas by suggesting that such funds are sought in partnership with others. Such works to protect and enhance the public realm may be costly, and support through partnership is the best way forward. Partnership is also the preferred option when funding repair and improvement works to private properties in conservation areas too. The HERS funding scheme was such a partnership between the Council, local people and English Heritage which operated in the Spittal Conservation Area in the past. Consultees were

concerned that the Spittal HERS Scheme had not been more successful, and three problems were identified with the scheme – insufficient Council conservation officer time to invest in the scheme, too few suitable local contractors, and difficulties with the application paperwork. Funding to support the repair or improvement of both the public and private infrastructure of conservation areas is essential to the achievement of the ambitions of this Management Strategy.

3.5.14 **3M: Additional Maintenance, Repair & Enhancement Issues**

The following are additional maintenance, repair and enhancement issues which could be explored in the future:

- Maintenance:
 - public realm: condition, appearance, needs, maintenance, improvements,
- Private property & land: condition, appearance, assistance regimes, education.
- Repair:
 - buildings at risk
 - other buildings/structures needing repair
 - thematic reinstatement of missing traditional features
 - repairs to public realm surfaces
 - tree management
- Enhancement:
 - 'immediate need' environmental improvements
 - prioritised enhancement schemes and regeneration
 - medium and long term programmes
 - awareness raising, education, target audiences, interpretation, presentations

3.6 **Recommendations**

3.6.1 **Introduction**

The basis for these recommendations is provided by the long list of possible actions from page 46.

The recommendations may be delivered as a major, concerted joint local/Council campaign, or else steadily worked through in an order that accords with perceived priorities. Whatever the delivery process is chosen, all the recommendations should be kept as 'live' issues as a 'quarry' of ideas, possibilities and opportunities that may usefully be revisited and built on in the future. This resource was developed through a process of synthesis of quality material provided by statutory local documents, lengthy local consultation and professional character appraisal.

The most desirable form of delivery is partnership between interested parties and this should be the preferred approach. These will include CAAG, the Council's Conservation Areas Advisory Group, as well as individual local amenity groups. The list of possible actions from page 46 are grouped under useful headings which suggest priorities, rather than representing an absolute order. Necessary flexibility for choice and opportunity is therefore built in. In such a flexible situation, assessing the financial implications can be difficult and should be addressed in

deciding how to progress to implementation. More information on each recommendation is given in the body of the Management Strategy above, using cross referenced numbers (1A, etc).

3.6.2 **Flagship Actions Across The Three Operations**

- **3I:** Prepare a conservation-led plan for the Point and surrounding areas which should incorporate the following actions:
 - 1C(i):** Prepare spot-listing cases.
 - 1C(ii):** Encourage a review of the statutory list.
 - 1D:** Approach English Heritage to investigate Spittal Point chimney for scheduling.
 - 1F(i):** Research archaeological interest in the area.
 - 2C** and **2D:** Review the recent demolitions at the Point and the status of the 2004 Development Brief.
 - 3D(i):** Audit buildings for improvement and repair.
 - 3D(ii):** Prepare and seek funding for action plan.
 - 3E(i):** Audit 'scrubby' areas.
 - 3E(ii):** Prepare and seek funding for action plan.
 - 3L:** Review grant funding regimes.
- **1B:** Review the Spittal Conservation Area boundaries. Incorporating:
 - 1I:** A TPO review should be included in the above boundary review.
- **2K:** Explore opportunities for more conservation staff resource.
- **2J:** Arrange public dialogue regarding new development in conservation areas. This should be seen as a major attempt to build up a real working partnership between Council and community. This should also incorporate:
 - 2A(ii):** Prepare design guidance on new development in conservation areas.
 - 2L:** Arrange public dialogue regarding local amenity networks.
 - 2M:** Formalise a joint monitoring structure for change in conservation areas.

3.6.3 **Operation 1: Identification & Protection**

Increased Statutory Protection

- **1C(i):** Prepare spot-listing cases.
- **1C(ii):** Encourage a review of the statutory list.

Keeping Control

- Retain and strengthen the following Local Plan policies in the emerging LDF:
 - F1 (Environmental Wealth)
 - F20 (Conservation Area Boundaries)
 - F6 (Special Protection Areas)
 - Proposal 11 (Tweed Estuary Management Plan)
 - F17 (Listed Building Development)
 - F18 (Listed Building Demolition)
 - F19 (Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest)
 - F22 (Conservation Area Permitted Development Rights)
 - F27 and F28 (Archaeology)
 - F11 (Tree Preservation Orders).

Early Wins

- **1C(iii):** Carry out a pilot Local List scheme for south of the Tweed.
- **1D(i):** Audit surviving original doors and windows.
- **1D(ii):** Carry out a pilot Article 4 Direction in a suitable location, such as St Helen's Terrace.
- **1D(iii):** Audit shopfronts and design guidance.
- **1F(i):** Prepare a list of required guidance for owners.

Preparation For The Future

- **1F(ii) to (iv):** Research three areas of archaeological interest.
- **1G(i):** Explore the possibility of a local skills register.
- **1H:** Explore a possible local historic buildings owners club.

Longer Term Improvements

- **1G:** Explore possible opportunities for promoting the place's heritage.

3.6.4 **Operational 2: Control Of Change**

- Retain and strengthen the following Local Plan policies in the emerging LDF:
F1 (Environmental Wealth)
F5 (Berwick-upon-Tweed)
F16 (Water Environment)
F21 (Conservation Areas & Their Settings)
F23 (Conservation Area Planning Applications)
F24 (Demolition Within A Conservation Area)
S26 (Housing Sites within Berwick-upon-Tweed)
W33 (Mixed Use development, Spittal Point)
R23 (Holiday accommodation, Berwick-upon-Tweed)
C8 and Appendix B (Shopfronts)
C15 (Satellite Antennae)
C35 (Shopping Floorspace Within Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Centre)
C36 (Renewable Energy Projects Within Berwick-upon-Tweed).

Early Wins

- **2E:** Rapid assessment of satellite dishes.

Preparation For The Future

- **2J:** Carry out a conservation area-wide parking study.

3.6.5 **Operation 3: Maintenance, Repair & Enhancement***Keeping Control*

- Retain and strengthen the following Local Plan policies in the emerging LDF:
F25 (Conservation Area Improvements)
M6 (Highway Repairs)
M7 (Rail Service Improvements)
M45 (Improved Harbour Facilities, Tweed Dock and Spittal Quay).

- Consider excluding the following Local Plan policies from the emerging LDF:
Proposal 18 (Traffic Calming & Environmental Improvements, Main St, Spittal)
M16 (Traffic Calming).

Early Wins:

- **3I** including **3C(i)** and **3G**: comprehensive improvement scheme for north Main Street.

Preparation For The Future

- **3A**: Review public realm maintenance regimes.
- **3B(i)**: Prepare an holistic strategy for public realm and street furniture.
- **3B(ii)**: Audit street furniture and signs.
- **3B(iii)**: Audit floorscape.
- **3D(i)**: Audit buildings for improvement and repair.
- **3D(ii)**: Prepare and seek funding for action plan.
- **3E(i)**: Audit 'scrubby' areas away from the Point.
- **3E(ii)**: Prepare and seek funding for action plan.
- **3J**: Historical study of Spittal village to confirm early development pattern.

Long Term Improvements:

- **3C(ii)**: Explore guidance and use of a voluntary code for private tree owners.

4 Appendices

4.1 Other Heritage Designations

4.1.1 Listed Buildings

Entries on the 'Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest' cover the whole building (including the interior), may cover more than one building, and may also include other buildings, walls and structures in the building's curtilage. Contact us for more advice (see page 7).

No.	Name (by street)	Grade	GV	Made
<i>Wilson Terrace, Main Street</i>				
622/0/10020	202-206	II	GV	03.03.04
<i>Main Street</i>				
622/0/10021	Spittal School and surrounding walls and railings	II	GV	15.03.04
<i>Sandstell Road</i>				
622/0/10012	Fishing Shiel	II	GV	15.03.04

4.1.2 Tree Preservation Orders

There is one set of tree preservation orders in the conservation area, on Main Street, details of which can be obtained by contacting us (see page 9).

4.2 The Implications Of Conservation Area Status

The local planning authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing character and appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers. In particular, the local authority has extra controls over the following in conservation areas:

- demolition
- minor developments
- the protection of trees

4.2.1 Demolition

Outside conservation areas, buildings which are not statutorily listed can be demolished without approval under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Within conservation areas, the demolition of unlisted buildings requires

conservation area consent. Applications for consent to totally or substantially demolish any building within a conservation area must be made to Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council or, on appeal or call-in, to the Secretary of State. Procedures are basically the same as for listed building consent applications. Generally, there is a presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

4.2.2 **Minor Developments**

Within in a conservation area, legislation⁵ states that there are certain cases where permission must be obtained before making alterations which would normally be permitted elsewhere. This is to ensure that any alterations do not detract from the area's character and appearance. The changes include certain types of exterior painting and cladding, roof alterations including inserting dormer windows, and putting up satellite dishes which are visible from the street. The size of extensions to dwellinghouses which can be erected without consent is also restricted to 50m³.

Under Article 4 of the same legislation, there can be further measures to restrict other kinds of alteration which are normally allowed under so-called 'permitted development rights'. These measures, called Article 4 Directions, can be selective in the buildings they cover within the conservation area, and the types of restriction they impose depending on how they might affect key building elements and so character and appearance. These Directions effectively control the proliferation of relatively minor alterations to buildings in conservation areas that can cumulatively lead to erosion of character and appearance over time. Development is not precluded, but selected alterations would require planning permission and special attention would be paid to the potential effect of proposals when permission was sought. Examples might be putting up porches, painting a house a different colour, or changing distinctive doors, windows or other architectural details. The local authority has to give good reason for making these restrictions, and must take account of public views before doing so.

To many owners, any tighter restrictions or additional costs, such as for special building materials, are more than outweighed by the pleasure they derive from living in such an area.

4.2.3 **Trees**

Trees make an important contribution to the character of the local environment. Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area, whether or not it is covered by a tree preservation order, has to give notice to the local planning authority. The authority can then consider the contribution the tree makes to the character of the area and if necessary make a tree preservation order to protect it.

⁵ Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1997

4.3 **Unlisted Buildings In A Conservation Area**

When considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, the following questions might be asked⁶:

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials, or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic or cultural associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council believes any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

4.4 **Sources of Issues Identified in the Management Strategy**

4.4.1 **Issues Identified In The 1999 Local Plan**

The Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Local Plan was adopted in 1999 and sets out policies for land use planning and other proposals that will stay in force until their replacement by those in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). Although the conservation issues raised in the Local Plan cannot reflect all changes in Spittal Conservation Area, most are still relevant to the present.

⁶ Taken from *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, English Heritage, 2006

Generic Conservation Issues Relevant To All Conservation Areas In The Borough

- **Issue P1:** Primary importance will be given to sustaining and enhancing Berwick Borough's environmental wealth, which includes its landscape and coast, its native biodiversity and its human heritage (Local Plan Policy F1).
- **Issue P2:** Development in the Borough needs to accord with its surroundings by virtue of its scale, density, height, layout, materials, landscaping, means of enclosure and access (Local Plan Policy F5).
- **Issue P3:** Conservation area boundaries are not static and will be assessed during the lifetime of the Local Plan (Local Plan Policy F20).
- **Issue P4:** New development should protect the character and setting of conservation areas by being compatible with existing buildings and spaces in terms of their scale, form, density, height, mass, layout, material, architectural detailing, landscaping, intensity of use, etc. (Local Plan Policy F21).
- **Issue P5:** The character of conservation areas can be adversely affected by the exercise of permitted development rights (Local Plan Policy F22).
- **Issue P6:** Outline planning applications without sufficient detail of siting, design and external appearance, can adversely affect the character of conservation areas (Local Plan Policy F23).
- **Issue P7:** Uncontrolled demolition can be a threat to the character of conservation areas (Local Plan Policy F24).
- **Issue P8:** Funding for improvements and repairs to the public and private infrastructure in conservation areas should be sought in partnership with others (Local Plan Policy F25).
- **Issue P9:** Repair and improvement of highways should be encouraged to incorporate materials, landscape and designs which take into account the character of the surrounding landscape or townscape (Local Plan Policy M6).
- **Issue P10:** Where the impact of traffic on the older historic parts of settlements has become increasingly detrimental to amenity and public safety, the Highway Authority will be encouraged to implement traffic calming measures (Local Plan Policy M16).
- **Issue P11:** Encouragement will be given to rail operators to invest in facilities to improve the fabric of the East Coast mainline railway (Local Plan Policy M7).
- **Issue P12:** The design of alterations to existing or new shopfronts will be considered against the criteria in the local plan (Local Plan Policy C8 and Appendix B, the design of shopfronts).
- **Issue P13:** The installation of satellite dishes should not adversely affect the amenity of the adjoining environment and they should be removed when redundant (Local Plan Policy C15).
- **Issue P14:** The development of new shopping floorspace should not adversely affect the adjoining environment or the vitality and viability of Berwick town centre (Local Plan Policy C35).

- **Issue P15:** Small scale renewable energy projects to supply individual premises should be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape or townscape (Local Plan Policy C36).

Conservation Issues Particular To Spittal Conservation Area

- **Issue P16:** Work to the trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders in the vicinity of Main Street south is controlled by the terms of the Order (Local Plan Policy F11).
- **Issue P17:** There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of Spittal's listed buildings and the protection of their setting (Local Plan Policies F17, F18 and F19).
- **Issue P18:** Spittal's areas of archaeological interest will be protected and preserved when changes or new development are proposed (Local Plan Policies F26, F27 and F28).
- **Issue P19:** Spittal Point industrial area is so underused and unsightly as to offer a site of 3.71ha (Site 57) for mixed use redevelopment; this development should respect the conservation area and involve the restoration and re-use of key buildings on the site (Local Plan Policies S26 and W33).
- **Issue P20:** The facilities and environment at the children's play area on Spittal Promenade are deficient and should be improved for locals and visitors (Local Plan Policy R22 – this has already been implemented).
- **Issue P21:** The expansion of the Seaview Caravan Club Site would be detrimental to the area around; it should not be extended although upgrading of its amenity and layout would be welcomed (Local Plan Policy R23).
- **Issue P22:** Spittal Main Street, between Sandstell Road and Sea Road, suffers from fast traffic and a rundown public realm, so could benefit from traffic calming measures and environmental improvements (Proposal 18).
- **Issue P23:** Coastal defensive work is needed at the seafront at Spittal, and the design, character and materials should take account of the character of the immediate surroundings (Local Plan Policy C22 – the recent upgrading of the Promenade is welcomed but some concern has been expressed about some of the detailing and subsequent maintenance).

Conservation issues in the coastal setting of the conservation area:

- **Issue P24:** The seafront at Spittal is the boundary of the conservation area as well as the boundary of a Candidate Special Area of Conservation under the European Habitats Directive. This nature conservation area extends out to sea and includes natural habitats which should be conserved (Local Plan Policy F6).
- **Issue P25:** Surroundings of the Spittal Quay area are rundown and neglected; they should be maintained and improved for both amenity and economic development reasons (Local Plan Policy M45).
- **Issue P26:** The conservation area is bounded on the south and east by the Coastal Zone of Landscape Value as it sweeps north across the estuary.

Within this zone, primary importance should be attached to the conservation and enhancement of its landscape and coast (Local Plan Policy F2 and C20).

- **Issue P27:** The Spittal Conservation Area is in the Tweed Estuary and development nearby could not only impact on the conservation area but also on the programme and intentions embodied in the Tweed Estuary Management Plan of 1997, which is still live and should be taken into account (Local Plan Proposal 11).

4.4.2 ***Issues Identified In Part 1 Of This Document, The Character Appraisal (Prepared by McIntyre Associates in 2003)***

- **Issue A1:** The current boundaries do not reflect today's perception of the townscape's special local interest.
- **Issue A2:** There are important buildings that should be on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest, or on a local list.
- **Issue A3:** There are significant areas of archaeological and industrial archaeological interest which have not been recognised or researched and historic upstanding and underground structures are consequently at risk.
- **Issue A4:** Concern over the neglected and dilapidated condition of the industrial area on Spittal Point, threatened by redevelopment pressures encouraged by Local Plan Policies S26 and W33.
- **Issue A5:** Several buildings are in need of repair/rescue and others are in need of improvements to their appearance.
- **Issue A6:** There is a lack of maintenance of the public realm which, especially in Main Street, is being physically damaged by parking on the verges.
- **Issue A7:** If maintenance of the current floorscape in the wide north section of Main Street is considered uneconomical, then the current surface should be replaced with a comprehensive scheme of new stone flags/setts.
- **Issue A8:** The lack of garages and other off-street parking means that most streets are cluttered with parked cars for much of the time.
- **Issue A9:** Street trees have been lost on main Street and not reinstated.
- **Issue A10:** There is an unsightly clutter of poles and over-head wires, especially in Main Street and Middle Street.
- **Issue A11:** The bareness of some open spaces suggests they should be planted with trees to add interest.
- **Issue A12:** The many incidental 'scrubby' areas throughout the conservation area need tidying up.

4.4.3 ***Issues Identified During Community & Stakeholder Consultation***

Consultation included a working meeting with stakeholders as well as a drop-in session for local people at the Berwick URC on Main Street, Spittal. Both events were serviced by the Trust and Council staff, enlivened by video and static exhibitions and focussed through returnable questionnaires. The following issues were raised:

- **Issue C1:** The boundaries were not considered adequate.

- **Issue C2:** The statutory and non-statutory protection of buildings of heritage and townscape value, inside and close to the conservation area, was not considered adequate.
- **Issue C3:** Maintenance of the fabric of the public realm was considered inadequate, leaving the public streets and spaces looking shabby – even the welcome improvements of the Promenade were now becoming overgrown with weeds in places.
- **Issue C4:** Concerned at the ad-hoc clutter of unnecessary, decaying and mismatched street furniture and signs in the streets – the integrated design of street furniture and fittings on the Promenade is seen as a model for the rest of the conservation area.
- **Issue C5:** Concerned at the clutter of poles and overhead wires in the streets.
- **Issue C6:** Concerned at the lack of meaningful design and integration of floor materials in the streets throughout the conservation area.
- **Issue C7:** Not satisfied with the over complex decision process and final design of the modern shelter at the southern end of the Promenade – no more shelters of this design wanted.
- **Issue C8:** Concerned that the insensitive siting of satellite dishes is damaging the appearance of the conservation area.
- **Issue C9:** Many buildings of value need early repair and improvements to their appearance.
- **Issue C10:** The future of the chimney at Spittal Point needs to be determined, with support for both its retention and for its removal should there be an adequate replacement.
- **Issue C11:** In the inevitable redevelopment of Spittal Point, there is concern that this is ‘a risky opportunity’, particularly in view of the current ‘vision vacuum’.
- **Issue C12:** Concern that trees, in private as well as public areas, are not just protected but are also cared for, cherished and replaced where appropriate.
- **Issue C13:** Concern that the green bank ‘back drop’ to the village and the ‘green fingers’ of scrub land associated with it, are not developed but are only tidied up to improve their appearance.
- **Issue C14:** Concern that recent infill housing schemes that are not architect designed, are too tall at three storeys and are not made from local/natural materials, do not fit into the general scale and character of the village.
- **Issue C15:** Concern that official decision-making on new developments is not ‘strong’ enough, does not manage the expectations of developers well and is not fully enforced.
- **Issue C16:** Concerned that there are not enough conservation staff available.
- **Issue C17:** There is too little education of builders and too little promotion of the value of historic environments.
- **Issue C18:** A special concern was expressed that more advice and guidance should be available to property owners on retaining and maintaining traditional

features such as windows, doors, chimneys, garden boundaries and other architectural details.

- **Issue C19:** Concern that the network of locally interested organisations was not strong enough or wide enough, with the south of the Tweed feeling a little like ‘the poor relation’.
- **Issue C20:** Concern that the HERS scheme was not a success in Spittal, reflecting insufficient conservation staff, too few suitable local builders and difficulties with the paperwork.
- **Issue C21:** Special concern that a better supported maintenance regime throughout the conservation area, would resolve many conservation issues in both the public and private realms.

4.4.4 **Additional Issues Identified By North Of England Civic Trust**

- **Issue N1:** In reviewing boundaries, it is important to think laterally, particularly beyond the present boundaries, out to other nearby natural and man-made conservation areas and the enclosing landscape.
- **Issue N2:** Concerned about the decaying and rundown environments of Sandstell Road, East Street and North Greenwich Road, as well as the Point industrial area, where lack of understanding is likely to lead to threats to the future of historically and industrially important structures, features and floorscapes. The short term need is for research and for tidying up before any redevelopment is considered, in order to manage developers’ aspirations.
- **Issue N3:** Concerned about the sterility of the large tarmac space and the sustainability of the public gardens between West Street and Middle Street – restoring something of their historic character as the possible centre of historic Spittal village, should be explored.
- **Issue N4:** Concerned to have a formalised monitoring structure in place, as a joint exercise between Council and local amenity groups, to keep change under surveillance.

4.5 **List Of Possible Actions To Address Management Strategy Issues**

These actions have been collected from the body of the Management Strategy above and are organised for easy reference back. They form the basis for the recommendations in the Management Strategy. ‘Groups’ means local amenity and interest groups including CAAG, the Council’s Conservation Areas Advisory Group.

4.5.1 **Operation 1: Identification & Protection**

Agency to Action

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| • 1A: Strengthen Local Plan Policy F1 in the context of F31. | Council |
| • 1B: Review the Spittal Conservation Area boundaries. | Council, Groups |
| • 1C(i): Prepare spot-listing cases. | Council, Groups |
| • 1C(ii): Encourage a review of the statutory list. | Council |
| • 1C(iii): A pilot Local List scheme for south of the Tweed. | Council, Groups |
| • 1C(iv): Identify unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. | Council, Groups |
| • 1D: Approach EH to investigate Spittal Point chimney for scheduling. | Council |

- **1E(i):** Audit surviving original doors and windows. Council, Groups
- **1E(ii):** Carry out a pilot Article 4 Direction in suitable location. Council, Groups
- **1E(iii):** Audit shopfronts and design guidance (see 2B below). Council, Groups
- **1F(i):** Archaeological interest of Spittal Point area (see 3K below). Council
- **1F(ii):** Archaeological interest of fish-related buildings, Sandstell Rd. Council
- **1F(iii):** Archaeological interest of Martin's Print Works, Main Street. Council
- **1F(iv):** Research possible site of medieval leper hospital and quay. Council
- **1G(i):** Explore a possible local skills register. Council, Groups
- **1G(ii):** Explore possible opportunities for promoting heritage. Council, Groups
- **1H(i):** Prepare a list of guidance for householders. Council, Groups
- **1H(ii):** Explore a possible local historic buildings owners club. Council, Groups
- **1I:** Include a TPO review as part of a boundary review. Council

4.5.2 **Operation 2: Control Of Change**

- **2A(i):** Strengthen Local Plan Policies F5 and F21. Council
- **2A(ii):** Prepare design guidance on new development in CAs. Council, Groups
- **2B:** Review shopfront guidance and 1998 leaflet, Council, Groups
- **2C and 2D:** Review the recent demolitions at the Point and the status of 2004 Development Brief. Council
- **2E:** Retain Local Plan Policy R23. Council
- **2F:** Carry out a conservation area-wide parking study. Council
- **2G:** Rapid assessment of the satellite dishes. Council, Groups
- **2H:** Update Local Plan Policy C36. Council
- **2I:** Prepare a protective policy. Council
- **2J:** Arrange public dialogue regarding planning concerns. Council, Groups
- **2K:** Explore opportunities for more conservation staff resource. Council
- **2L:** Arrange public dialogue re local amenity networks Council, Groups
- **2M:** Formalise a joint monitoring structure for change in CAs. Council, Groups

4.5.3 **Operation 3: Maintenance, Repair & Enhancement**

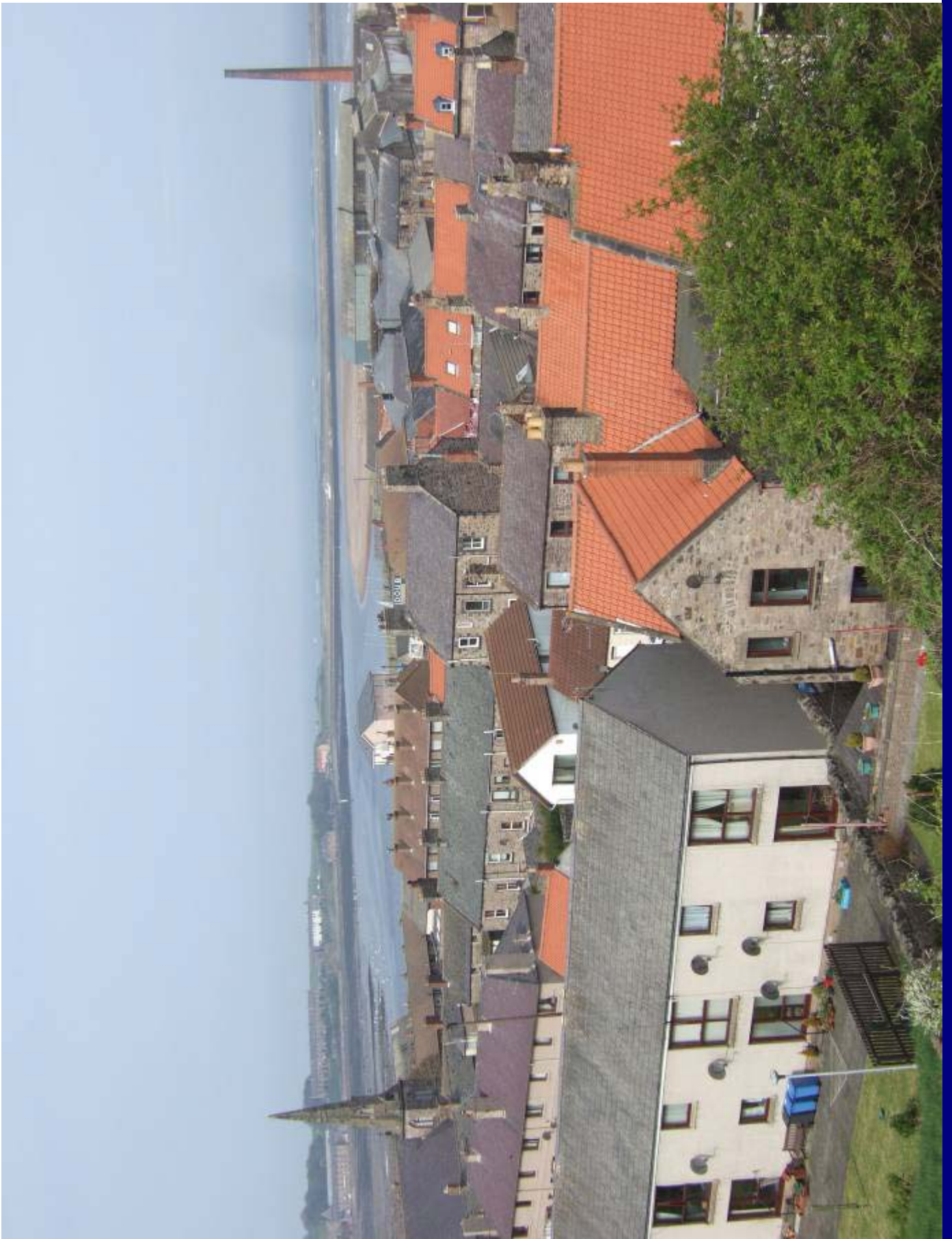
- **3A:** Review public realm maintenance regimes. Council, Groups
- **3B(i):** Prepare holistic strategy for public realm surfaces and furniture. Council
- **3B(ii):** Audit street furniture and signs. Council, Groups
- **3B(iii):** Audit floorscape. Council, Groups
- **3C(i):** Prepare planting scheme for north Main Street (see 3I). Council, Groups
- **3C(ii):** Prepare voluntary code for owners Council, Groups
- **3D(i):** Audit buildings for improvement and repair Council, Groups
- **3D(ii):** Prepare and seek funding for action plan Council, Groups
- **3E(i):** Audit 'scrubby' areas away from the Point Council, Groups
- **3E(ii):** Prepare and seek funding for action plan Council, Groups
- **3F:** Strengthen Local Plan Policy M7 Council
- **3G:** Prepare pilot wire re-routing scheme (see 3I) Council
- **3H:** Retain Local Pan Policy M45 Council
- **3I:** Prepare maintenance-led enhancement of Main Street Council, Groups
- **3J:** Study of village to confirm early development pattern Council, Groups

- **3K:** Prepare comprehensive plan (see 1F, 2C, 2D, 3D & 3E). Council, Groups
- **3L:** Review grant funding regime Council

4.6 ***Character Appraisal***

See overleaf and page 9.

[insert Character Appraisal, McIntyre Associates, 2003]



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