

MANAGEMENT PLAN SEATON CAREW CONSERVATION AREA



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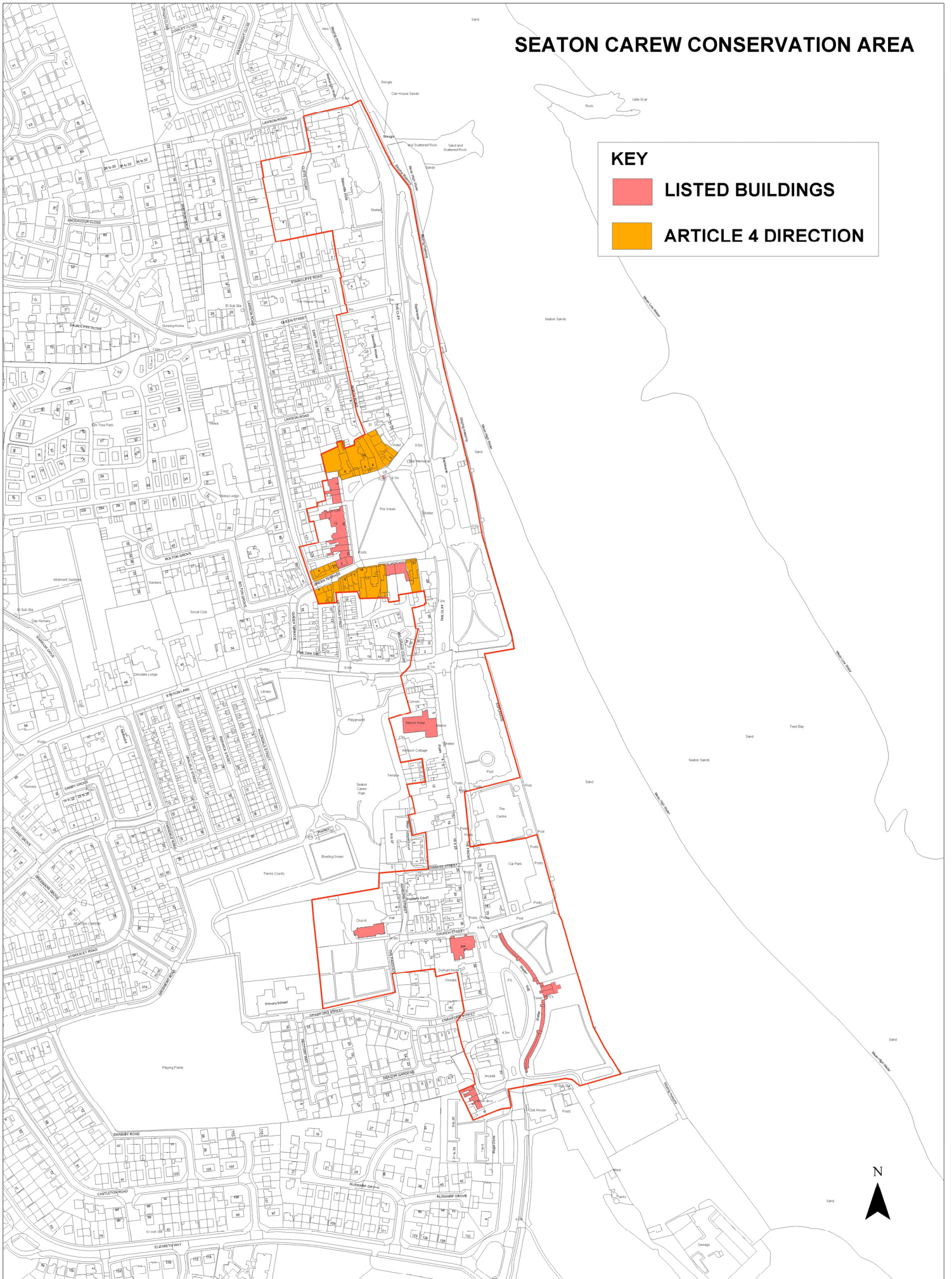
KEY



LISTED BUILDINGS



ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION



1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation areas in Hartlepool are intended to add to the quality of life of those living in and visiting the town.

These areas are special quality places in which to live, to establish a business, to work and provide a link to Hartlepool's past through the buildings, coastline and countryside.

Conservation areas are attractive to those visiting the area and provide a stage to show Hartlepool at its best.



The following report provides a basis for managing the Seaton Carew Conservation Area. Change in a conservation area is inevitable and the purpose of a management plan is to direct this change in such a way that it strengthens rather than undermines the conservation areas special quality. It will ensure that the characteristics that contribute to make the area attractive and of high quality are kept and reinforced to ensure that Seaton Carew Conservation Area continues in the future to add to the quality of life of Hartlepool.

The Seaton Carew Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the Seaton Carew Conservation Area Visual Appraisal completed in June 2009. The Appraisal, in summary, identified some particular issues affecting the quality of the Seaton Carew Conservation Area which needed specific management to protect the appearance and character of the area.

2 KEY ISSUES WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA

The key aims of the Management Plan are:

- To raise awareness of the importance and value of local heritage
- To provide guidance and set out objectives to preserve and enhance buildings, structures and public spaces within the conservation area.
- To provide design guidance on key development issues within the conservation area.
- To outline key statutory requirements with respect to development within the conservation area.

The Visual Appraisal identified some very particular issues affecting the quality of Seaton Carew Conservation Area which needed specific responses to manage the area. These were:

- building maintenance
- alterations to buildings
- inappropriate alterations to shop fronts including roller shutters and signage
- vacant properties
- development opportunities
- the street environment.



Each of these subjects are dealt with on the following pages. An in depth analysis of each of the issues is provided alongside solutions to tackle these problems.

3 SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AND POLICIES



Seaton Carew has no long term vacant properties either commercial or residential which would affect the character and integrity of the conservation area. The conservation area at Seaton Crew can be characterised as two distinct areas one to the north of Station Lane the other to the south. The area north of Station Lane is predominately residential with some commercial buildings in the form of hotels and bed and breakfasts, dotted through the area. Both commercial and residential buildings within this area are well maintained.



The area south of Station Lane is predominately commercial and retail in character. While there are no long term vacant properties (a situation changed by recent public investment under a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme which brought a number of vacant properties back into use) the predominate issue is building appearance arising from inappropriate repairs and alterations, inappropriately designed and detailed business advertisements and incoherent appearance of the street environment.



The public environment is also to a high standard with the possible exception of The Green which is an impressive area surrounded by housing where there is an opportunity to create a significant environment which could improve and enhance the character of the conservation area.



The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and other relevant planning legislation provide for various powers that enable local planning authorities to discharge their responsibilities to preserve the unique character and appearance of conservation areas. At a local level the current development plan for Seaton Carew is the Local Plan adopted in April 2006. Relevant policies from this plan can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.



4 BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Objective — To continue to maintain and enhance the properties in the Seaton Carew Conservation Area.



One of the issues identified in the Conservation Area Visual Assessment is that of suitable maintenance of properties. Advice from English Heritage encourages timely maintenance of buildings in order to prevent major and costly repairs becoming necessary later.



Powers are available for vacant listed buildings in the form of urgent works and repair notices to achieve re-use of a listed building. Further details can be found in Appendix 2 of this document. There are no long term vacant buildings in Seaton Carew Conservation Area. Most listed buildings are in residential use, well maintained and therefore unlikely to become long term vacant. Of the remaining listed buildings two are in commercial use as hotels/public houses where there is a possibility of long term vacancy at some point, another is a church (i.e. Holy Trinity) and the final listed building is the Bus Shelter which is in Council ownership.



Of more concern is the maintenance and appearance of some of the shops, takeaways and restaurants in the conservation area which are not listed buildings, particularly in the area south of Station Lane. With these buildings advice on proper and timely maintenance combined with appropriate powers would be the most suitable management approach.

Actions:

- 1. The Council will negotiate through the development control process and / or make use of its statutory powers to institute urgent works and repairs notices to protect listed buildings or unlisted buildings that contribute positively to the special character of a Conservation Area in cases where buildings within the conservation area are shown to be under threat as a result of poor maintenance*
- 2. The Council will accept proposals for the appropriate repair of the buildings in Seaton Carew if the designs are sympathetic to the existing architectural detail, style and proportion of the existing building.*
- 3. The Council will produce guidance documents regarding the maintenance of buildings in conservation areas.*

5 ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS

Objective — To ensure the preservation of the architectural integrity of properties in Seaton Carew Conservation Area



The buildings in Seaton Carew Conservation Area have a strong vertical emphasis with pitched roofs, mostly roofed in a grey slate but with some examples of clay pantiles or plain tiles.

Traditional vertical sash windows are common features of the conservation area but there are examples of horizontal sash and casement windows all of which enhance the character of the conservation area.

The earlier buildings in Seaton Carew are usually constructed in a random stone often painted while later buildings are constructed in brickwork. Many buildings have had later additions in the form of Victorian canted windows and Edwardian square windows at the first floor.



Actions:

- 1. The council will discourage the introduction of any roofing materials that are un-sympathetic to the character of the existing area.*
- 2. The council will discourage any proposals that seek to introduce inappropriate or oversized windows i.e. none sash, Victorian Canted and Edwardian square windows.*
- 3. The council will discourage all applications to clad buildings with materials that are not appropriate to the appearance of the conservation area or that will negatively affect the appearance of any group of buildings within the conservation area.*



6 SHOP FRONTS

Objective — To secure the preservation, restoration or improvement, as appropriate, of shop frontages in Seaton Carew Conservation Area.



Of particular note within this conservation area are traditional shop fronts with many original examples surviving. These are relatively simple in design without elaborate decorative features.

Some of the buildings in the conservation area have undergone unsympathetic alterations which have affected the quality and character of the Area. One example of this is 34 The Front where the original details consisting of shop front, first floor bay and sash windows have been removed. Another example are amusement arcade frontages where a single modern shop front design has been introduced across the front of a number of buildings removing the variety and detail between buildings.

Other inappropriate alteration to shop fronts can include the introduction of roller shutters. It is important to note that any decision regarding attempts to restrict the use of shutters to shop fronts has to consider the need of owners to protect their properties. To achieve a balance between protecting properties and protecting the quality and character of the conservation area the Council could consider less intrusive means of ensuring the security of the properties in the conservation area. CCTV operates in Seaton Conservation Area which could be used as a way to reduce the need for shutters.

Repair and reinstatement of shop fronts and other features like bay windows by building owners can be beneficially assisted by public financial support where available.

Specific grants made available to building owners can offset the additional cost of shop fronts and reinstatement of other traditional features within the conservation area. Possible source of finance for such grants could include Council budgets and specific grant schemes from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and English Heritage.

Action

- 1. The Council will produce a document to inform owners of the preferred shop front and signage designs within the conservation area.*
- 2. The council will encourage the reinstatement or repair of original doors, windows and any features that reflect the original features of the area.*

7 ADVERTISING ON SHOP FRONTS

Objective — To encourage the use of traditional signage on commercial properties in Seaton Carew Conservation Area.



The Area Assessment identifies a number of the shops within the conservation area where the design and presentation of business adverts could benefit from design guidance regarding their shop front and business advertising from the property. The use of guidance leaflets and other documents is supported by section 7.18 of English Heritages 'Guidance on the management of conservation areas'.

Central Government policy advises that before any action is taken against particular advertisement the Council should make every effort to produce a well formulated advertisement control policy.

Action:

1. The Council will produce guidance documents regarding appropriate forms of shop front advertising.
2. The Council will exercise control over the display of advertisements in Seaton Carew Conservation Area to ensure that signs are designed and located to respect the character and appearance of the host building and historic street scene.
3. The Council will consider making a direction under regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of advertisements) Regulations 1992 to control advertisements within the Seaton Carew Conservation Area.



8 VACANT PROPERTIES

Objective — To secure the occupation and restoration, where necessary, of vacant buildings in and adjacent to the Seaton Carew Conservation Area.

Vacant or underused buildings can have an impact on the character of an area. The seasonal nature of the resort means that some of the buildings within the area are fully occupied for only a small part of the year and some of the larger properties are choosing not to open up all of their building during the season. This can create dead frontages with shutters on properties providing an uninviting backdrop to the area.

Partial closing of larger properties is difficult to tackle and challenging economic climates may lead to total closure of some premises. Through the planning process the gradual replacement of external, solid shutters with internal shutters or perforated shutters can result in a more active frontage when buildings are closed which addresses this problem. Alongside this support for a variety of uses in the area will go some way to ensure buildings are occupied to capacity.

Buildings on the edge of the conservation area can contribute to the character. The Longscar Centre is in the middle of Seaton Carew, although the boundary of the conservation area skirts round the property. The site is largely unused and empty. Having frontages to both the seaward and commercial sides of Seaton Carew this property dominates the area and as a result has a detrimental effect upon the character of the conservation area.

There is in place a master plan for the wider area of Seaton Carew which aims to tackle a number of sites including the Longscar Centre. Although outside the area, such is the impact of the property on Seaton Carew, any solution for this site would have a positive impact upon a wider area than just those within the boundaries of its own site.



Actions:

- 1. The Council will investigate the use of statutory powers where appropriate to bring buildings back into use and encourage owners to keep them in a good state of repair.***
- 2. The Council will give favourable consideration to a wider range of uses than might normally be appropriate to help bring otherwise vacant buildings back into beneficial use, providing these do not adversely affect the architectural character or setting of the buildings or amenity of nearby properties.***

9 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Objective — To ensure that all new developments are appropriate to the character and appearance of Seaton Carew Conservation Area.

A Master Plan has been drawn up for Seaton Carew. The aim of the plan is to bring together the regeneration aspirations of the council by tackling key sites and buildings, along with addressing the coastal defence needs of the area.

Development proposals within the conservation area can provide opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. To determine whether enhancement is being achieved full details, including detailed plans, sections, elevations and landscape proposals should be submitted as part of a planning application.



Actions:

1. *The Council will expect any application for planning permission for development within the conservation area to include full details of the proposal.*
2. *The Council will expect any proposal for a development within the conservation area to be supported by a Design Statement, which should include a full analysis of the surrounding area.*
3. *The Council will encourage proposals for future developments in the conservation area that compliment and reinforce the existing character. Proposals should respond to the surrounding development in terms of scale, height, massing, alignment and materials. All proposals should enhance the character of the conservation area.*

10 THE STREET ENVIRONMENT

Objective — To maintain and enhance the public realm of Seaton Carew Conservation Area.

The Area Appraisal identified the incoherent appearance of the street environment mostly to the Esplanade, as an issue which was detracting from the character of the conservation area. Public investment in the street environment has necessarily been piecemeal due to the successive public investment programmes.

The adoption of a consistent design approach for the street environment in Seaton Carew, including materials to be used, could be implemented over an extended period. A completed, costed design study could be used to bid for public investment programmes when these occur. Over time a consistent overall result would be achieved in an improved public street environment.

Action

1. *The Council will ensure the retention / reinstatement of traditional paving and hard landscaping where appropriate.*
2. *The Council will encourage like-for-like replacement, in appropriate materials where damage to street surface occurs.*
3. *The Council will ensure the good maintenance of street furniture, and, where replacement is required that they are an appropriate design.*

11 TREES

Objective — To manage the tree coverage in and around Seaton Carew Conservation Area.



Within Seaton Conservation Area there are few trees with the exception of the church yard to Holy Trinity Church which is set away from the main part of the conservation area. This group of trees together with other groups on Station Lane and in Seaton Carew Park create a back drop to the conservation area and are part of its setting. Those trees in the conservation area do not require specific tree preservation orders being automatically protected by conservation area status. Other groups of trees outside the conservation areas boundary which provide the setting to the conservation area are protected by specific tree preservation orders. The requirement to submit consent for works to trees protected by an order and the required six week notice regarding works on trees in the conservation area should provide sufficient time for the council to make a decision as to the validity of the proposed works.

Action:

1. *The council will encourage the planting of new and replacement trees where appropriate within the Conservation Area and outside the Area where these support the setting of the conservation area.*

APPENDIX 1

EXISTING NATIONAL AND LOCALLY BASED CONSERVATION AREA POLICIES

1. Existing national legislation and policy advice in the form of the “**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**” and “**Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment**” (including the Practice Guide published by English Heritage to interpret PPS5) provide guidance and advice on how to manage development in conservation areas. They provide specific advice on the decision making process and issues to be considered as regards listed buildings, non listed buildings in conservation areas and conservation areas themselves.
2. Many of these national policies and advice are translated specifically to Hartlepool via the Local Development Framework (previously the **Hartlepool Local Plan**) which provides specific policies to manage listed buildings and conservation areas. The relevant local plan policies and guidance are listed below:

HE1: Protection and Enhancement of conservation Areas

HE2: Environmental Improvements in Conservation Areas

HE3: Developments in Vicinity of Conservation Areas

HE8: Works to Listed buildings Including Partial Demolitions

HE12: Protection of Locally Important Buildings

Supplementary Note 5: Design Guidance for Development in Conservation Areas and for Works to Listed Buildings.

New Local Development Documents within the Hartlepool Local Development Plan will replace the Hartlepool Local plan over time.

The Council will follow the guidance under the current Local Plan and the Local Development Framework once it is adopted when considering applications.

APPENDIX 2

EXISTING STATUTORY POWERS

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Powers are available under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act to make an **Urgent Works Notice** (Section 54) for the urgent preservation of an unoccupied (or partly unoccupied) listed building to prevent further deterioration of a building.
- Under Section 48 of the same Act a **Repairs Notice** can be served on an empty listed building to carry out physical works of preservation. If the owner declines to undertake the works specified, then compulsory acquisition powers can be invoked to acquire the building. With CPO powers “back to back “ deals can be considered with a building preservation trust (like the Cleveland Building Preservation Trust operating locally) as a development partner, giving access to grant for feasibility studies and loans of up to £500,000 for development works from the Architectural Heritage Fund. The costs associated with this type of action are staff time which will have been budget for. The willingness of the authority to use the powers described may be enough for the owner of a listed building to sell to an owner more willing or able to re-use a building.
- Some of the above powers also apply to non-listed buildings in conservation areas. Section 76 of the 1990 Act allows the local planning authority to invoke Section 54 (outlined above) with the agreement of the Secretary of State allowing an **Urgent Works Notice to be served on an unlisted building**. Powers are not available to invoke Section 48 to serve a Repairs Notice on an empty non-listed building. There are further alternative powers relating to public safety (1984 Building Act), or to provide residential accommodation under Section 17 of the 1985 Housing Act by acquiring buildings.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- Other relevant powers are provided by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Under this legislation a **Section 215 Notice** is a notice that is served on the owner or occupier of a property when the poor condition and the appearance of the property or land are detrimental to the surrounding areas or neighbourhood. The notice requires proper maintenance of the property or land in question, and it specifies what steps are required to remedy the problem within a specific time period.