

# STRANTON CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

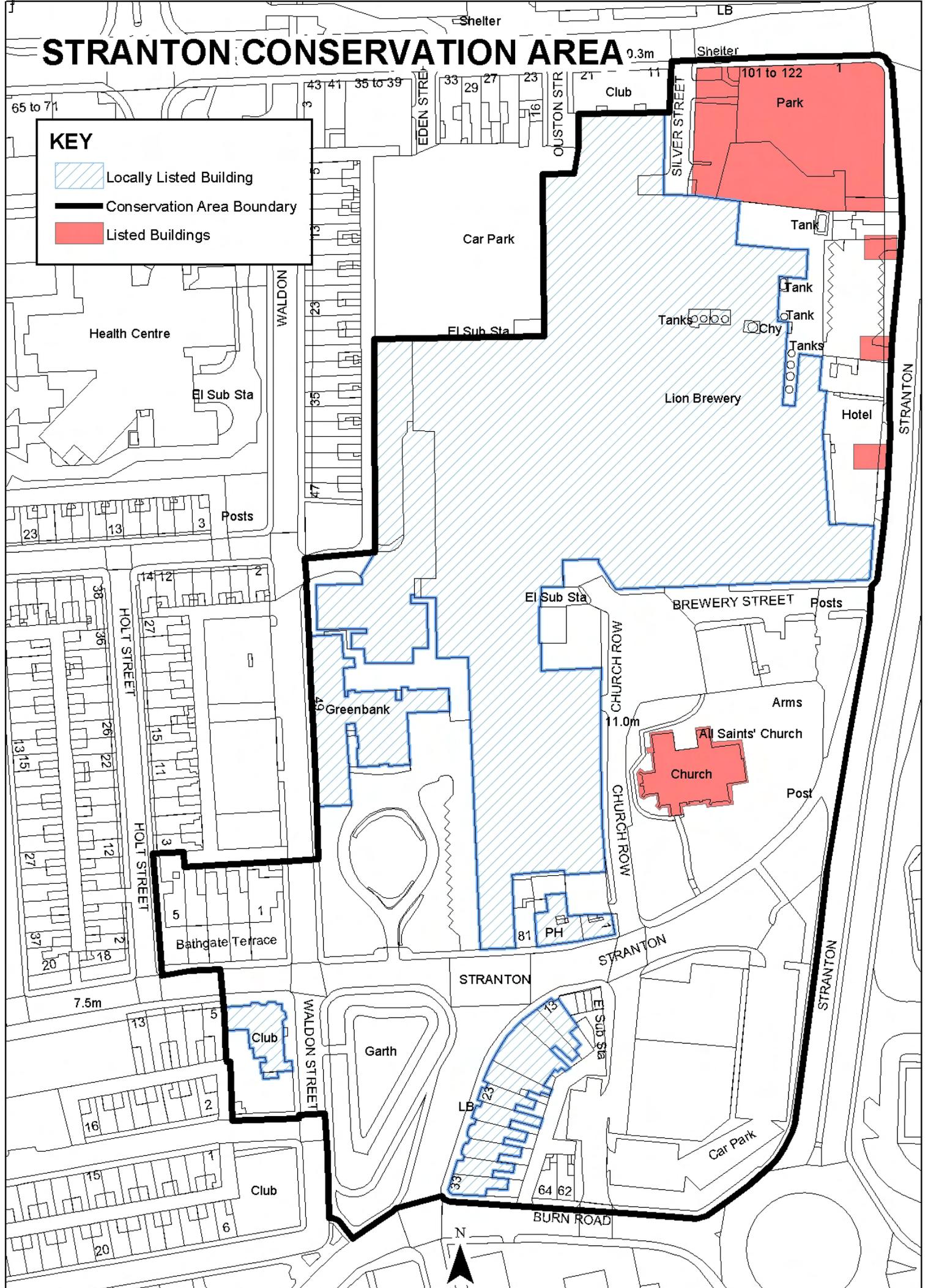


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# STRANTON CONSERVATION AREA

**KEY**

-  Locally Listed Building
-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Listed Buildings



# 1. INTRODUCTION

Conservation areas in Hartlepool are intended to add to the quality of life of those living in and visiting the town providing a stage to show Hartlepool at its best.

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



The following plan provides a basis for managing Stranton 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 special quality of the historic environment. It will ensure that the characteristics that contribute to make the area attractive are kept and reinforced. This will help Stranton Conservation Area continue in the future to add to the quality of life in Hartlepool.

The Stranton Conservation Area Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the Stranton Conservation Area Appraisal agreed in November 2010. The Appraisal, identified some particular issues affecting the quality of Stranton Conservation Area which needed specific management proposals to protect the appearance and character of the area.

## 2. KEY ISSUES IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

The 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 Stranton Conservation Area which needed specific responses to manage the area. These were:

- Poor maintenance of buildings.
- Poor quality of shop fronts and signage.
- Unsympathetic alterations and loss of traditional architectural details to buildings.
- Maintenance of the street surfaces, street furniture and open spaces.



Each of these subjects are dealt with in this Management Plan. 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



This compact conservation area is to the south of the town centre. At its heart is the Church of All Saints (Grade II\* Listed Building) which is a visually prominent property located on the main southern approach to Hartlepool. It stands on elevated ground in a grassed and treed church yard.



Defining the northern corner of the area is the former Co-operative Department Store (Grade II Listed Building). Since the completion of its renovation it is now known as Park Tower. Work was carried out in two phases with 50 apartments created in 2008. This was followed in 2010 by four commercial units to the ground floor, two of which are occupied. The blinds to the commercial units on the ground floor, along with the vacancies, have reduced the activity viewed at street level and the sparsely lit apartments seen on an evening can give the effect of a much underused building.



Between these two properties is Cameron's brewery, a significant industry in the town. The site of the brewery covers much of the conservation area with original, red-brick properties interspersed with more modern, utilitarian, functional structures. The site is included on the list of locally listed buildings, acknowledged as being of significance to Hartlepool however in some views these original buildings can be dwarfed by the modern paraphernalia on site.



To the south eastern corner of the area are two purpose built retail units. They do not have the same character as the rest of the site however they provide the setting to the Church of All Saints and are on a significant junction. The buildings are both occupied however the design detracts from both the setting of the Church and the conservation area.

Photographs: (1) Church of All Saints, (2) Park Towers, (3) Cameron's Brewery, (4) South eastern corner.

### 3. SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AND POLICIES CONTINUED



To the south western corner of the area is Stranton Garth. The only area of public open space within Stranton. Works carried out from 2006 to 2008 with a £346,300 grant from New Deal for Communities included providing new footpaths, seating and railings to the boundary wall enclosing this space. This work has enhanced this part of the conservation area.



Other public realm works have been carried out to compliment the work in Stranton Garth in the form of paving works to the footpaths around Stranton Garth itself and other significant routes to the front of the shopping parade, church and Green Bank.

Green Bank was once part of the Brewery complex but now provides office accommodation for Housing Hartlepool. It sits in generous grounds and faces towards Stranton Garth. The building has been extended but, this does not impact on the original house. It is included on the list of locally listed buildings.



Facing on to Stranton Garth is the Stranton Social Club. The building was constructed as a house and although the upper floors remain intact, unsympathetic alterations have marred some of its significant features such as the main entrance to the property. It is, however, included on the local list as a significant property locally.



Fronting on to Stranton Garth is a parade of eleven shops. A number of these are vacant or boarded up at ground floor level which creates gaps in the terrace. This is a significant parade of buildings and acknowledged as such featuring on the local list.

Photographs: (1) Stranton Garth, (2) Green Bank, (3) Stranton Social Club, (4) Parade of shops.

### 3. SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AND POLICIES CONTINUED



A number of the shops have been altered mainly through changes to the shop fronts. In some cases whole sale replacement of shop fronts have taken place, in others two single shop fronts have been replaced with one. Other modifications which diminish the character of this parade include the installation of roller shutters over traditional details. At first floor level the majority of the properties remain unchanged which reinforces the overall unity of the terrace.



The other commercial buildings in the area are a small group of properties on Elwick Road including the Causeway Public House which incorporates 1 Church Row. The Causeway retains much of its original finishes and 1 Church Row has been restored complementing it.



A group of residential properties exists at Bathgate Terrace. All of the properties are occupied however many no longer have original detailing such as windows and doors. This lack of unity detracts somewhat from the overall character of the 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 Stranton is the Local Plan adopted in April 2006. Relevant policies from this plan can be found in appendix 1 of this document along with the national legislative background.

Photographs: (1) Parade of shops, (2) Causeway PH, (3) 1 Church Row, (4) Bathgate Terrace.

## 4. BUILDING MAINTENANCE

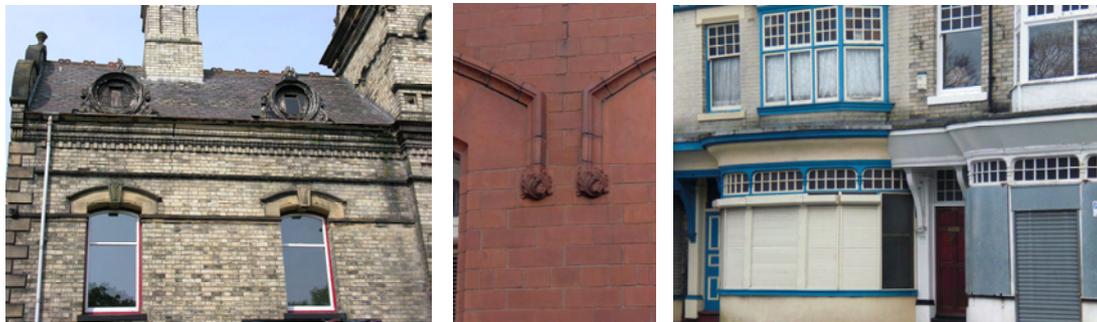
**Objective — To continue to maintain and enhance the properties in Stranton Conservation Area**

A number of measures have already been tested in this area to address the issue of building maintenance in Stranton. £86,000 grant assistance had been invested from New Deal for the Community funds in commercial premises to make them watertight and repair and restore traditional details such as shop fronts, timber windows and doors.

Despite the grant assistance there are a number of vacant premises (six), three of which are consecutive shops in the row. These units have been vacant for a prolonged period of time and although some have been recently decorated if left empty and unmaintained this can detract from the character of the area and in particular this row of shops.

In the past the Council has run a scheme offering grant assistance to residential properties constructed pre-1919 in all eight conservation areas however take up in the Stranton conservation area was low.

The good general maintenance of properties on a regular basis, be they commercial or residential, ensures the long-term future of such buildings. It is clear that in the case of large properties, where scaffolding can sometimes be required, owners are less inclined to carry out a regular programme of works. Maintenance should be encouraged by way of advice and, where available, grant assistance.



### Actions

1. **The Council will negotiate through the development control process and / or make use of its statutory powers to protect listed buildings or unlisted buildings that contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area in cases where buildings 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 Stranton 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. SHOP FRONTS

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

Of particular note within this conservation area are the traditional shop fronts. The original designs are detailed in a relatively simple form however those with curved windows to the shops can appear more complex .

Some of the buildings in the conservation area have undergone unsympathetic alterations which have affected the quality and character of the area. Examples include the insertion of modern grilles and security measures on properties without consideration for the architectural features on the building and the wholesale removal of shop fronts.

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. Grant regimes in similar conservation areas, such as Church Street, have shown how the offer of grant assistance can help owners in restoring traditional details which is to the benefit of the conservation area.

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 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. Introduction of measures such as the use of CCTV could be used as a way to reduce the need for shutters.



### Action

- 1. The Council will produce a document to provide information to owners on shop front designs.**
- 2. The Council will encourage the reinstatement or repair of original doors, windows and features that reflect the original shop fronts of the area.**
- 3. The Council will take enforcement action against unauthorised change of use or removal of a shop front where there is a negative impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.**

## 6. ADVERTISING ON SHOP FRONTS

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

The Appraisal identifies a number of shops within the conservation area where the design and presentation of signage could benefit from guidance regarding shop fronts and business advertising on commercial buildings.

The quality of business advertising is most problematic where,

- adverts stretch across a number of properties,
- both adverts and shutters are incorporated onto an original shop front with little regard for original details,
- modern shop fronts have been installed with generic, standard signage over.

Poor quality signage can dramatically change commercial parades such as those found in Stranton.



### **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 Stranton Conservation Area to ensure that signs are designed and located to respect the character and appearance of the host building and historic street scene.

## 7. UNSYMPATHETIC ALTERATIONS TO BUILDINGS

**Objective — To encourage the preservation, restoration or improvement, as appropriate, of buildings in Stranton Conservation Area.**

In addition to works to shop fronts and signage, alterations to the upper floors of buildings, along with changes to non-retail properties, can impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

The accumulation of minor alterations in terraces can be just as damaging to the character of a conservation area as wholesale changes to individual buildings. Whilst grant funding has been available for commercial properties in the past there has not been the same level of funding for other properties within the conservation area. A combination of the planning process and grant assistance has led to improvements to 1 Church Row, the former Co-operative Department Store and 15 Vicarage Gardens which have enhanced the conservation area.

Minor works which are permitted development, and therefore do not require a planning application, can have a negative impact on the character of a conservation area. In particular the cumulative effect of alterations to a terrace can compromise the character of those buildings.

The use of the planning process alongside available financial assistance can enhance the character of a conservation area. Showing residents the type of development which is acceptable in exemplar schemes can assist in reinforcing the character of a place.



### Action

1. Where consent is required, the Council will resist unsympathetic alterations and loss of traditional architectural details through the positive use of existing development control powers.
2. Encourage appropriate reinstatement of traditional architectural details in future development negotiations.
3. The Council will take enforcement action against unauthorised removal of traditional architectural details where a breach of planning control has occurred.

## 8. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Objective — To ensure that all new development is appropriate to the character and appearance of Stranton Conservation Area.**



Vacant or underused buildings can have an impact on the character of an area.

There are a number of vacant premises in Stranton Conservation Area, some of which are being actively marketed to find an appropriate occupier, and others which have been closed but are not on the open market.



Four of the shop units on the parade, facing Stranton Garth, are vacant. None of these properties appear to be actively marketed. The dead frontages to the ground floor of these premises with shops boarded up and roller shutters permanently closed has a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area.



The large retail unit to the south eastern corner of the conservation area were vacant for a period of time. These have recently re-opened. They are located on a key site within the area as it is adjacent to one of the main roads into Hartlepool and it forms the setting for the listed All Saints Church.

This site is a prime opportunity for development which could enhance the setting of not only the church but also the conservation area.

### Action

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 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.

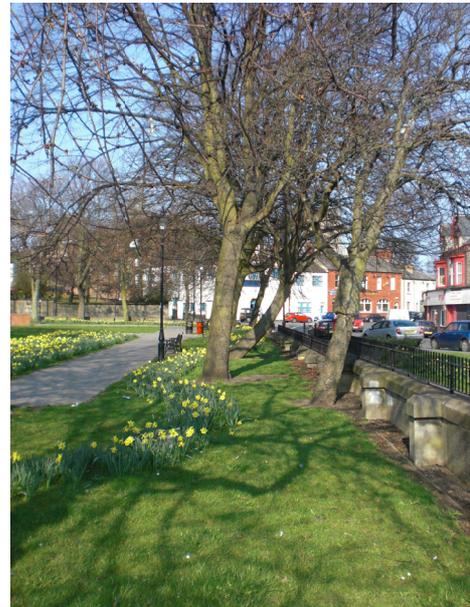
## 9. THE STREET ENVIRONMENT

**Objective — To maintain and enhance the public realm of Stranton Conservation Area**

The Appraisal identified the works that have been carried out already to enhance the street environment. New Deal for the Community invested £346,300 in public realm improvements.

Works to the pavements on the main routes through the area have been carried out via a phased programme of works based on an overall master plan for the area. These compliment the paving and seating works which can be found in Stranton Garth.

There are short stretches of pavement on Waldon Street, Bathgate Terrace and Burn Road that could be considered for future public realm works. A good standard of materials and design has been established and if funding becomes available these works should be repeated in those areas.



### 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 surfaces occur.
3. The Council will ensure the good maintenance of street furniture and, where replacement is required, that they are an appropriate design.
4. The Council will consider parking in the area should opportunities become available through public realm schemes.

## 10. TREES

**Objective — To manage the tree coverage in and around Stranton Conservation Area**

Within Stranton Conservation there is good tree coverage in both public and private spaces. In particular the group of trees found in Stranton Garth and in the grounds of Green Bank and the Social Club on Waldon Street contribute to a feeling of a green central area at the heart of the conservation area. This positive aspect of the conservation area is identified in the appraisal and is highlighted in the management plan to ensure that this continues.

Those trees in the conservation area do not require specific tree preservation orders being automatically protected by conservation area status. The requirements to provide six weeks notice regarding works on trees in conservation areas 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

Existing national legislation and policy advice is in

- “**Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**”, and
- “**National Planning Policy Framework**” (NPPF), 2012.

These provide specific advice on the decision making process and issues to be considered as regards listed buildings, locally listed buildings, non listed buildings in conservation areas and conservation areas themselves.

Copies of the ‘NPPF’ can be obtained from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

Copies of ‘Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990’ can be obtained at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk).

Relevant paragraphs in the NPPF in relation to development of heritage assets can be found in paragraphs 126 - 141. Of particular significance in this instance are the following policies summarised below.

**131:** Viable uses consistent with the conservation, positive contribution to sustainable communities and local character and distinctiveness.

**132:** Great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development.

**133:** Development leading to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset consent should be refused unless substantial public benefits will be achieved.

**137:** Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas.

**138** Not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance.

National policies and advice are translated specifically to Hartlepool via the **Hartlepool Local Plan 2006**. This provides specific policies to manage listed buildings and conservation areas in the borough. This document will eventually be superseded by a more up to date Local Plan, however in the mean time the relevant saved 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

## APPENDIX 1

### EXISTING STATUTORY POWERS

#### Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Powers are available to Local Authorities 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 by the Local Planning Authority on the owner of 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.
- 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.

## GLOSSARY

### **Conservation area**

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

### **Conservation area visual appraisal**

A 'Conservation area visual appraisal' is a short document which summarises the special character of the conservation area.

### **Conservation area management plan**

A 'Conservation area management plan' is a document which sets out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances historic areas.

### **Heritage asset**

A building, monument, site, place, or area of landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

### **Historic environment**

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

### **Listed building**

These are buildings of special architectural or historic interest. The protection afforded to a listed building includes its interior and any historic fixtures and fittings (e.g. memorials where fixed to the building). Objects or structures within the curtilage of a listed building, unless constructed after 1<sup>st</sup> July 1948, are also protected. Details of all of the buildings listed in Hartlepool can be found at [www.hartlepool.gov.uk/listedbuildings](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/listedbuildings)

### **Locally listed building**

Locally listed buildings are buildings, structures, parks, gardens and open spaces in Hartlepool which are thought to be of special local architectural or historic interest. Details of Locally Listed Buildings in Hartlepool can be found at [www.hartlepool.gov.uk/locallylistedbuildings](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/locallylistedbuildings)

### **Setting of a heritage asset**

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significant or may be neutral.

### **Supplementary planning documents**

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.