

Bath and North East Somerset Council
Development Management

Midsomer Norton and Welton

Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



April 2018

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Contents

1	Introduction	3	7	Issues	26
	Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area			Summary of issues	
	Context			Enhancement opportunities	
	Summary of key characteristics and recommendations			Development opportunities	
	Summary of management proposal recommendations		8	Management proposals	28
	Conservation area designation			Issues and recommendations	
	Community involvement			Protecting the conservation area landscape setting	
2	Landscape setting	5		Traffic, pedestrian movement and parking	
	River valley landform			Control of new development	
	Topography and geology			Buildings	
	Relationship of the conservation area with its surroundings			Possible enhancement opportunities	
3	Archaeology and historic development	7	9	Monitoring and review	31
4	Spatial analysis	9		Appendices	32
	Layout and street pattern			1 National and local planning policy	
	Open spaces, trees and landscape			2 Further Reading	
	Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas			3 Glossary	
	Boundaries			4 Contact details	
	Public realm				
5	The buildings of the conservation area	14		All maps are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence number 100023334	
	Listed buildings				
	Positive buildings/undesigned heritage assets				
	Building types				
	Building styles, materials and colours				
6	Character areas	18			
	1 High St, Church Square and The Island				
	2 Millards Hill and West Road				
	3 Station Road				
	4 Radstock Road				
	5 Stone's Cross/upper High Street				
	6 Town park, riverside open space and Norton Radstock Greenway				
	7 Rackvernal Road and Excelsior Terrace				
	8 Middle High Street and South Road				
	9 Dymboro and The Vicarage				
	10 Church Lane and Redfield Road				
	11 Silver Street				

1 Introduction

Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area

The area was identified as being of special architectural and historic interest and first designated as a conservation area in April 2004. It was redesignated in April 2018 and covers 68.93 hectares as shown on the Character Appraisal Map. The conservation area contains thirty seven entries on the National Heritage List for England.

Under the Town and Country Planning legislation the Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area in exercising its planning powers, and to periodically re-appraise its boundaries. This provides a consistent and sound basis on which planning and other applications are determined in the area.

As part of this process local planning authorities are encouraged to carry out character appraisals of its conservation areas. An appraisal identifies features which contribute toward the special interest and character of the area and those that detract from it. This enables local residents to participate in identifying features which are of particular value to them and to the special character of their area, and provides a base upon which to develop management proposals for preservation and enhancement.

A conservation area character appraisal for the Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area was adopted in 2004 as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

The conservation area is currently included on Historic England's 'At Risk' register, where its condition is assessed as 'very bad', its vulnerability as 'medium' and the trend as 'improving.' This trend will require future review and assessment.

This document updates the 2004 appraisal and seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the Midsomer Norton and Welton conservation area and identify the issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area (in the form of the character appraisal)
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement (in the form of the management proposals)

The previous conservation area boundary was drawn around three areas, physically separated from each other. They are now combined within one boundary.

Following review, parts of the previous conservation area were removed, including the late C20 developments at Somervale School and Priory Close. Other parts have now been added, including the Town Park and the significant C19 terraced miner's housing in the Radstock Road area.

It was prepared with an awareness of emerging projects in the conservation area which include those of the Town Park, the Town Hall and the wider Midsomer Norton Town Centre Regeneration Projects. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan has also been recognised.

Context

Midsomer Norton and Welton are located in the southern part of Bath and North East Somerset Council, south of Bath and in close proximity to neighbouring Radstock and Westfield. Their historic cores are bounded to the south and west by mainly C20 housing development with open countryside to the north and east.

Midsomer Norton is an ancient market town dating to the medieval

period. It became an important coal-mining settlement in the C18 and C19, which is reflected in a historic townscape in a river valley landscape setting.

The historic area developed along the valley of the River Somer, a tributary of the Wellow Brook which it joins at Welton Hollow after running the length of the town centre. It is enclosed by higher ground creating characteristic views from the town to open fields and wooded skylines beyond.

Welton is in the valley of the Wellow Brook and developed primarily as a coal mining community from the C18. A number of batches, evidence of the coal mining heritage, now form important landscape features on the edges of Welton and Midsomer Norton. Welton abuts open countryside to the north and east with C19 and C20 development to the south and west. Midsomer Norton has playing fields and the cricket ground on its south west boundary, with the proposed town park abutting it to the south east. Modern C20 development encloses the remaining boundaries.

Historically the economy of the area was based on agriculture and mining, and many of the buildings within the area were once farm buildings or those associated with the collieries. Other industry was established in the C19/C20, including brewing and brick and tile manufacture.

Modern Midsomer Norton and Welton owe much of their growth to the river location, railways and coal mining. Today many residents work in Bath, Bristol and Keynsham with an increasing number working from home.

Summary of key characteristics and recommendations

This character appraisal concludes that the key positive characteristics of the Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area are:

- historic settlements with high proportion of historic buildings and archaeological potential
- ancient fair town of medieval origins
- coal mining legacy dating from the early c17.
- distinct topography based on the two river valleys which contribute towards the important views from within and to the area
- historic street pattern with a variety of historic listed buildings and other non-designated heritage assets
- range of historic buildings of varying status including the distinct rows of C19 terraced miner's houses
- consistent use of local white lias limestone with oolitic limestone dressings and clay pantiles and natural slate for roofs. Occasional use of red sandstone and brick dressings
- stone boundary walls of various heights, typically of white lias limestone but also red sandstone
- River Somer – which is well 'treed' on entering and leaving the town centre and channelled along High Street. Wellow Brook – a former source of power for mills
- important trees and groups of trees which make a significant contribution to elements of the street scene and setting
- grassed and wooded batches and other significant green public open space



Summary of management proposal recommendations

In summary the **management proposals** make the following recommendations:

- ensure that new development preserves or enhances the existing character and appearance of the conservation area;
- protect the setting of the conservation area;
- protect key views;
- protect historic buildings;
- address traffic and pedestrian movement issues;
- explore improvement opportunities.

Conservation area designation

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest. A conservation area is defined as: *'...an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*.

The quality and interest of the area as a whole, rather than individual buildings, is the main consideration when designating such areas.

Designation also provides the basis for applying national and local policies designed to preserve or enhance all aspects of character or appearance that define the special interest of a conservation area.

Section 71 of the Act requires the local planning authority to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and an appraisal provides the means for this. Section 72 requires that, in considering applications for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of that area.

Conservation area appraisals are considered by Historic England to be vital to the conservation of these special areas. The content of this statement is based on the suggested approach set out by Historic England.

Conservation area designation introduces controls over:

- the way owners can alter or develop their properties. These include the requirement in legislation and national planning policies to preserve and/or enhance and for local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in their local planning policies;
- demolition of most unlisted buildings;
- works to trees
- types of advertisements that can be displayed with 'deemed consent';
- types and size of development which can be carried out without the need for planning permission (permitted development rights).

Community involvement

Public support and involvement is essential to the successful management of conservation areas. This document was initially drafted following meetings with representatives from Midsomer Norton Town Council and local Ward Councillors in July and August 2016, which included discussion on the extent of the conservation area boundaries together with some of the main problems and issues which face the local community.

Following this meeting a first draft was agreed with the Town Council for public consultation. Full public consultation took place in June and July 2017. In response to comments received amendments were made to the documents and they were formally adopted by the Council for planning guidance purposes on 6th April 2018.

2 Landscape setting

Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as “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 the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

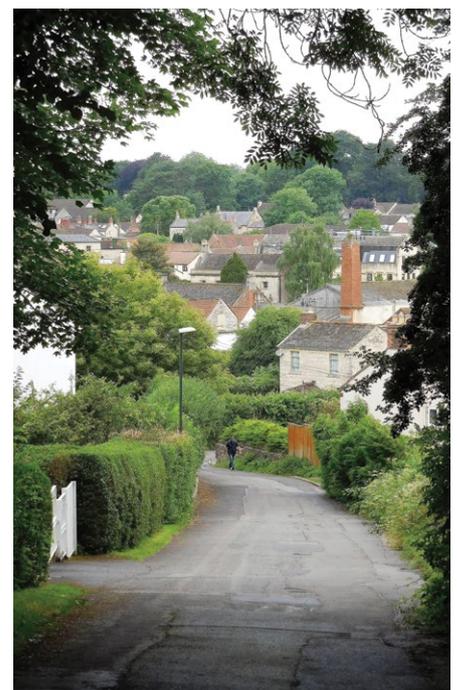
River valley landform

To the south and west the conservation area is bounded by mainly C20 housing development. Welton adjoins open countryside to the north and north-east. The town overall has a distinctive river valley landscape setting, formed from the River Somer and Wellow Brook which are carved out of a much larger scale landscape of ridge and plateau.

The developed area, including the conservation area, predominantly follows the more sheltered and shallow valley sides. The underlying coal reserves of the Somerset Coalfield led to a proliferation of mines in the area which drove the development of the towns, including Midsomer Norton and Welton, from the C17 to the mid C20.

It is primarily the combination of the strong landform with the mining industry legacy which has given the very distinctive pattern and form to the town today. The coal mining industry and its associated railways is seen in the green landscape today as distinctive wooded coal batches, networks of paths and tree-lined disused railways.

Considerable importance and weight must therefore be given to this sensitive setting of the



conservation area in the consideration of any development proposals that may cause harm.

Topography and geology

The main geological feature in this area south of the Mendip Hills and south of Hallatrow consists of Supra-Pennant Measures, which include the upper coal measures and outcrops of sandstone. The local geology is very complex. Mercia mudstone from the Triassic period overlies the coal measures, and there are several limestone quarries locally, particularly in the nearby Mendip Hills.

This complex geology has formed a distinct local landscape character of plateau areas with deep river valleys cut into it.

The historic core of Midsomer Norton and Welton is focussed on the two river valleys. That of the Wellow Brook runs in an east-west direction, with the River Somer running from the south west to the north east before joining the brook.

High Street rises gently up the north side of the River Somer valley to the ridge level at the mini-roundabout junction with Radstock Road, North Road and Station Road. Station Road then descends the valley side to Wellow Brook, and ascends on the opposite valley side at Millards Hill in Welton.

This undulating valley side topography is also evident elsewhere in the conservation area. Examples include Silver Street as it slopes downhill towards High Street junction, and Church Lane which rises gently up to the junction with North Road.



Relationship of the conservation area with its surroundings

The adjacent open and gently rolling countryside to the north and east along Millards Hill forms an attractive and clearly defined rural edge to this part of the conservation area.

Elsewhere it is surrounded primarily by C20 suburban type housing development and public open space. There are strong visual and physical links with these surroundings for both pedestrians and vehicles. Many of the surrounding rear gardens back on to and overlook the conservation area.

Some key views from and within the historic area are marred by this modern development in Midsomer Norton. Previous views or glimpses

of the surrounding countryside and treed skylines from the town centre are now blocked by buildings.

There are significant areas of open space adjoining the boundary, including the cricket ground and playing fields to the south, and the proposed Town Park to the east which is on the site of the former Norton Hill Colliery.

The proposed Town Park includes pedestrian links with a network of open space linking to Radstock. The conservation area also has strong links with the network of cycle ways in the Norton Radstock area.

The two rivers naturally link the conservation area with its surroundings, but access to them beyond the town centre is generally restricted.

3 Archaeology and historic development

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the conservation area.

There is no mention of Norton/Welton in the Domesday Survey. The name 'Midsomer Norton' is mentioned in the Royal Charters for a weekly market and mid-summer fair of 1242-1248. The patron saint of the parish church (of c12 Norman origins) is St John the Baptist, whose saint's day is mid-summer's day. The Fayre was therefore chartered for mid-summer's day and this is the most likely explanation for the derivation of the town's name, although unsubstantiated.

Evidence of Roman occupation was found at The Dymboro on North Road and the history of the Somerset coalfield has been traced to Roman origins. Information on the settlement in the Saxon period is lacking.

There is evidence of local Norman occupation in the parish church with its C12 origins, and the surviving Norman archway in the grounds of the vicarage. The village was probably nucleated in the C13 immediately around the church, itself a building with Norman origins, where the few surviving early buildings are located.

These include the C14 stone tithe barn, in use until recently as the Roman Catholic church, and the Priory which may have C16 or earlier origins. There is documentary evidence of other early buildings in the vicinity of the parish church.

There were two medieval manors cited from the C13 on, one rectorial belonging to the Canons of Merton Priory in Surrey, and the other annexed to the Duchy of Cornwall which owned Midsomer Norton and had its manor house in Church

Square. Both were demolished in the C19.

Manor Farm in Welton was a medieval settlement area with an associated hollow way. An upland industrial landscape is evident at Welton including the landmark spoil tip which formed part of the Welton Colliery. Most surviving industrial archaeology is related to the coal mining heritage of the area.

At the site of the old Welton brewery on Station Road (more recently used as part of the Welton, Bibby and Baron printing works but now closed), there is map evidence of a former mill with a leat, mill pond and sluices on Wellow Brook, worthy of further investigation. This part of the brook is now culverted. Brick and tile works located on the north side of the brook later became part of the brewery site.

Late nineteenth century map of Midsomer Norton and Welton



Historically the Duchy of Cornwall owned most of the mineral rights around Midsomer Norton and various small pits opened from the early C17 to exploit these. By the 1690's mining was already profitable in Welton in the north east corner of the Parish and from the mid C18 the town rapidly developed.

The particular conditions of tenure in Midsomer Norton combined with the profitability of the coal pits enabled local individuals to acquire their own freehold estates. These estates encouraged the development of a mercantile class and both were centred on the town High Street. The street provided a pleasant and respectable residential base away from the mining activities at Welton, as well as a site for shopkeepers and tradesmen who took a prominent part in the development of the town from the C17 – C19.

The wealthier individuals built substantial houses or remodelled existing properties in the town in the late C17 – mid C18. These included the imposing Island House which closes the view looking west along The Island, and The Hollies, a grand house now converted and extended for use as council offices. Alongside these more substantial houses were cottages, although many are now gone.

In High Street and Silver Street at this time many of the larger early C19 properties had their gardens enclosed by long stretches of high walls on the street frontage, constructed of coursed rubble stone.

Expansion of the town in the C19 also created a need for other types of buildings, including schools and churches. The parish church was largely rebuilt in 1830. Further development and redevelopment of existing property took place, including the rebuilding of the Vicarage in 1844 on a new site at the top of Church Lane.



The 1860's were a defining decade for the town with a boom in building. The Market Hall, (later the Town Hall), was constructed together with the Greyhound Inn and bank buildings on Silver Street, all designed by the same architect in the Italianate style. These important heritage assets were built by Thomas Harris Smith, a developer and entrepreneur whose family was involved in the profitable brewing industry in the town. They continue to form a distinct group today and make an important contribution to the significance of this part of the conservation area. The imposing Smiths brewery building with its distinctive chimney was built on the south side of High Street c1861, originally with a third floor, since removed. The Methodist Church was also built during this decade, and the river improved, including installation of the distinct iron railings which survive today.

The opening of the Somerset and Dorset Railway station in Midsomer Norton in 1875 was a significant factor in the developing character of the town and that of Silver Street. The railway line was closed in the Beeching cuts in the 1960's.

In High Street the distinctive Arts and Crafts style Beauchamp

Almshouses were built c1895. These were a charitable donation made to the town by William Beauchamp's family who were the most powerful group of Somerset colliery owners. Beauchamp lived at Norton Hall, a large country house c1869, set in substantial grounds. It was demolished and developed for housing in the early to mid C20. Nearby is the early C20 Palladium Cinema in High Street, now standing empty and 'at risk'. There are current proposals to restore the building for use as a Wetherspoon public house.

Since the Second World War many properties in the High Street have been demolished to make way for large scale footprint retail units, some with associated car parking. The one way traffic system in the High Street was introduced in the 1960's to ease traffic flow.

After the final closure of the coal pits in the early 1970's, Midsomer Norton and Welton have remained as a flourishing residential and commercial area whilst still retaining much of their historic village character with its coal mining legacy.

4 Spatial analysis

Layout and street pattern

The principal spatial feature of the Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area is the linear north east to south west alignment of High Street which terminates to the west at the junction with Silver Street and to the north at The Stone Cross.

There is a fairly consistent medium density of buildings in High Street, comprising a pattern of two storey terraced properties now mostly shops, interspersed by individual houses, many of C17 – C19 origins which are generally higher than the two storey terraces.

Elsewhere in the conservation area the layout, street pattern and densities are less ‘formal’ with more varied character. Long and short terraces of miner’s cottages and their gardens intermingle with individual buildings and groups of buildings. Welton displays a particularly attractive example of such distinct local character.

On Silver Street and Church Street there is a much lower density of buildings and a more spacious character. This building pattern is also found at Welton in the Millards Hill and West Road area.

By the C18 High Street and Silver Street were the only public thoroughfares of any consequence, neither of which was a main road. Redfield Road and Church Lane probably originated as fieldways and later served as road links from the late C19. Today they act as clearly defined road routes to and from the town centre. Midsomer Norton has a ‘back Lane’ at the rear of the settlement which eventually became North Road.

The medieval core in the vicinity of the parish church and The Island

has a distinct ‘nucleus’ character with a less formal pattern and arrangement of buildings and roads than High Street. The widening space in the road outside the Town Hall at The Island acts visually as a focal point or ‘square’ in the town. Pedestrian movement is not always easy in this area, partly due to traffic and also because alternative and safer pedestrian routes are not clearly marked.

Moving north from the town centre, the mini-roundabout at the junction of High Street, Station Road, Radstock Road and North Road is particularly identified by the historic Stones Cross public house adjoining, which is a local landmark. Combined with the buildings on the other corners of this visually and physically important junction it acts as a key gateway feature, but is currently vacant and in need of a new use and restoration.

The steep hill of Station Road leaves the junction in a northerly direction past the imposing stone built former brewery building before passing over the Wellow Brook at the bottom of the valley. It then becomes Millards Hill, rising steeply up the opposite side of the valley in Welton.

The junction of Millards Hill with West Road in Welton is distinguished by the tight bend in the road with historic buildings on its north side grouped close to the back edge of the footpath, together creating a distinct sense of place.

Open spaces, trees and landscape

The most significant green public open space is the proposed Town Park adjacent to the site of the former Norton Hill Colliery. Its elevated well-treed position ensures long distance sky-line views of this

green space which make a contribution to local significance including the setting of the conservation area. Linked to the park is the Norton Radstock Greenway which follows the former railway line as far as Silver Street. This is now an elevated local cycle way and footpath route with an important belt of mature trees and vegetation along its entire length.

The former Welton Hill Colliery spoil tip on the northern edge of Welton now provides a tranquil treed area adjoining the pedestrian friendly local environment. It also acts as an important green visual backdrop to this part of the conservation area.

Between Welton and Midsomer Norton adjoining the Wellow Brook on Station Road there are grass verges and impressive Hornbeam and Willow trees which significantly contribute to the appearance of this part of the street scene.

In High Street next to The Hollies and fronting the Sainsbury’s supermarket is the most distinct urban space. Less recognised is the tranquil churchyard which contributes to the important setting of both the church and this part of the conservation area.

On the periphery of the conservation area is the large level area of green public space between Redfield Road and Somervale School. The green open space on Silver Street, opposite the former station at the Charlton Road junction, positively contributes to the open low density character and setting of this part of the conservation area.

Private green spaces in the historic area also contribute to local character by providing green gaps and visual ‘relief’ including the enclosed garden at the rear of the

Roman Catholic Church at the top end of High Street, and the school playing field at Midsomer Norton Primary School.

Wellow Brook and the River Somer both have green space adjoining lengths of them but are not generally accessible to the public. These green spaces and links make a positive visual and spatial contribution to local character. Outside the Town Hall, the Market Square at the junction of High Street with The Island forms an identifiable space enclosed by historic buildings. It is primarily used for car parking with tarmac surfacing throughout.

Private gardens within the conservation area also provide visually important green spaces which contribute to the setting of buildings and also that of the conservation area. Many of the historic miner's terraces have long narrow allotment style rear gardens designed for growing vegetables. Some are visible from the public realm due to the local topography. These provide visual 'green' breaks which contribute to the quality and tranquillity of the townscape.

Distinct low stone front garden boundary walls adjoin the footpaths, some supplemented by hedging and trees. Good examples are the front gardens of terraces on Radstock Road and Gladstone Street.

Gardens of some of the larger houses also contain large mature trees, with some projecting into the street scene and visually contributing to local character and appearance. An example can be seen on Church Lane where trees in the grounds of The Vicarage overhang the significant wall on Church Lane. They are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

Elsewhere, important mature tree groups are located in the parish churchyard, partially obscuring the



historic building, and along the river where it adjoins Redfield Road. The mature specimens on either side of Church Lane frame the street scene in this part of the conservation area, and the same value is provided by the substantial tree specimens on Silver Street.

Outside the Town Hall is a group of pollarded limes which play an important role in the urban street scene. There is other significant tree planting on High Street beside the river which successfully contributes to the historic street scene.

The surrounding hillsides are well-treed, and form an attractive skyline feature and backdrop where visible from the conservation area.

The rural landscape at Millards Hill adjoining the northern edge of Welton also makes a significant contribution to the setting and character of this part of the conservation area. The break on Millards Hill between the open countryside and built edge of Welton forms an important 'point of arrival' at the historic settlement.

Some trees in the conservation area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Others in any event would require notification to the Council of intended works to them.

Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

Due to the historic character and development of the conservation area there are no 'planned' focal points. Some are fortuitous and result from the way the area has developed over the centuries.

Key focal points

- The Stone Cross mini-roundabout junction is a recognisable focal point in the conservation area, marking the start of High Street and added to by the adjoining Stone's Cross public house, now vacant and at risk. This key visual point is partly a result of its visually prominent and elevated position on the ridge line between the two river valleys.
- The south west end of High Street at its junction with Silver Street and The Island is a further focal point, where the roads converge. At The Island, the built frontages around this key 'node' assist by tightly enclosing the space, adding to the sense of place.



- Church Square forms an important focal point, enclosed by historic buildings which include the east side of the parish church and the churchyard wall.
- The road junction of High Street, Church Lane and Redfield Road is a further focal point in the town. The backdrop of the parish church of St John the Baptist combines with other significant townscape features to form a visual focus. These include the raised pavements outside the church on Church Lane, the River Somer flowing parallel to the road and the significant groups of tall mature trees in this part of the streetscape.
- In Welton, the group of historic buildings forming the tight bend in the road at the junction of Station Road, West Road and Millards Hill, together with the road configuration form a focal point

Focal buildings

Key focal buildings in the conservation area street scene, both listed and undesignated heritage assets include:

- Primary school, Radstock Road (undesignated)
- Welton Church, West Road (grade II)

- Former mid C19 Welton brewery on Station Road (undesignated)
- Church of St John the Baptist (grade II*)
- Redundant Roman Catholic Church – former medieval tithe barn (grade II*)
- The Priory (grade II*)
- The Hollies (grade II*)
- Former post office No 26 Church Square (grade II)
- Methodist Church, High Street (late C 19 – undesignated)
- Beauchamp Almshouses, High Street c1895 (undesignated)
- Former late C19 High St brewery and its chimney – (undesignated)
- Former early C20 Palladium cinema (undesignated)
- Town Hall (grade II)
- Island House, The Island (grade II)
- The Mill House, The Island (undesignated)
- The Island House (grade II)
- Group of listed and undesignated historic buildings at 10 – 16 High Street
- 128 High Street (former rectory grade II listed)
- No 130 High St (undesignated – narrow curved façade stone outbuilding prominently on corner)
- No's 1 and 3 High Street – late C19 Italianate public house and bank (undesignated)

- The Masonic Hall, Redfield Road c 1904 (undesignated)
- St Johns C of E School and the school house, Redfield Road (undesignated)
- Midsomer Norton South Station (undesignated)
- The Dymboro, North Road (c1904 undesignated)

Key views and vistas from within the conservation area

The most important views are described below and identified on the Character Appraisal Map, but the omission of a view does not mean it has no significance.

Key viewpoint 1 – approach to the conservation area on Millards Hill

Key viewpoint 2 – looking north up Millards Hill from the road junction with West Road

Key viewpoint 3 – view of the group of historic buildings on the road bend and junction on Millards Hill with West Road, looking north

Key viewpoint 4 – looking south along Station Road with the former brewery buildings and elevated C19 stone terrace framing the view towards Stone's Cross

Key viewpoint 5 – looking south along the curving layout and sweep of the High Street from Stone's Cross

Key viewpoint 6 – looking north up High Street towards Stone's Cross, with the view enclosed by the two storey historic buildings

Key viewpoint 7 – sequential views looking south down the High Street towards the Town Hall, with the river running alongside the road and footpaths. These sequential views are also of importance when viewed in reverse, looking north up the High Street.

Key viewpoint 8 – sequential views starting at the road junction of High Street and Silver Street with The Island, past the landmark Town Hall and then passing through the enclosed space of The Island to Island House and its imposing wall and entrance, terminating the final view.

Key viewpoint 9 – looking north along Church Square towards and terminated by The Priory, enclosed by historic walls and buildings

Key viewpoint 10 – looking south down Church Square to focus on No 128 High Street, the former vicarage which is a distinct handsome red sandstone listed building, recently restored

Key viewpoint 11 – looking east from the top end of the High Street with the varied grouping of historic buildings framing the view, including the grand Italianate C19 buildings on the north side of the street which closely group with other traditional historic buildings. The view in reverse, looking west up High Street, has equal importance and includes the focal point of the church tower glimpsed through the large tree group surrounding it

Key viewpoint 12 – looking north up Church Lane from its junction with

Redfield Road, with the churchyard boundary wall and raised footpath complimented by the impressive large trees lining the lane and enclosing the vista.

Key viewpoint 13 – from the end of St Chad's Avenue, with the River Somer footbridge and the attractive open view of the river and the rear elevations of historic buildings on The Island

Key viewpoint 14 – looking east along Redfield Road from Somervale School towards the church

Key viewpoint 15 – looking south up Silver Street with the former railway station and C19 semi-detached stone and brick cottages on one side, complimented by the green open space on the other, and distant views of the distinctive mature trees lining the street and skyline further south

Key viewpoint 16 – as in 15 above but in reverse, looking north down Silver Street towards the town centre

Key viewpoint(s) 17 – elevated panoramic views of the town centre from the Norton Radstock Greenway, glimpsed between the trees and from the linking footpaths

Key views and vistas from outside the conservation area

Key viewpoint 18 – elevated view from the proposed Town Park looking west towards the town centre and roof tops

Key viewpoint 19 – views of the former Norton Hill Colliery batch, now part of the proposed Town Park, and elevated line of the former railway, from the terraced streets running downhill on the opposite side of the river valley, including Railway View Place and Lilac Terrace. Similar views are glimpsed between the buildings on Radstock Road, looking south to the hillside and mature trees

Boundaries

Boundaries are generally restricted to stone walling and natural planting, including hedging. The most visually dominant treatment is the use of white lias stone set in lime mortar for walls which vary in height throughout the conservation area and make a significant contribution to local character. A small number are constructed with red sandstone. The practice of removing front garden stone walls to form parking spaces removes the enclosure they provide and is visually intrusive, harming the appearance of the conservation area.

Historically many gardens of the larger properties had high stone boundary walls, including long stretches along High Street, Silver Street and Church Lane. Where surviving they are often complimented by large mature trees in the gardens, which add to the street scene character. These walls also help to frame views in the townscape.

Walls vary from rubble stone to coursed stonework. Some have the locally distinct 'cock and hen' placing of stones at their top whilst others are finished with stone copings. The stonework of walls is generally in a sound condition



although some are repointed and/or rendered in cement based mortars rather than traditional lime, which has had a detrimental effect. The importance of using traditional repair methods for historic walls should be recognised in any development proposal affecting them.

The lower walls are sometimes backed by hedging. Timber interwoven fence panels are common throughout the area, particularly at end of terrace side garden boundaries. These are of poor appearance and detract from local character.

There are some black painted cast iron railings and gates, primarily associated with the larger properties, including school buildings. The historic set of low black painted iron railings c1860 which adjoin the River Somer in High Street and Redfield Road have significant value

Public realm

One of the most distinct feature in the conservation area public realm is the stretch of the River Somer which flows along the south side of Redfield Road and the back of properties on The Island. It is then hidden for a short length in a culvert before re-emerging in High Street where it flows in a cut with river planting. The river is a well-maintained and attractive feature which positively adds to local distinctiveness. There is a local aspiration to reinstate a further stretch of the river up to the almshouses on High Street.

Most of the roads and footpaths in the conservation area public realm are surfaced with tarmac. The condition of the tarmac footpaths at the top end of High Street is poor. An exception to tarmac is the natural stone paving next to the river in High Street which enhances the appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Concrete kerbs are common throughout, but occasionally stone kerbs survive, although worn. Remnants of traditional stone and other natural materials only survive within private properties, such as the brick pavers at the Beauchamp Almshouses in High Street, and the attractive mix of stone cobbles on the forecourt of The Hole in the Wall on Church Square.

The pedestrian link between High Street and the public car park on South Road has a very poor and uneven surface treatment, and is an unattractive entrance for the visitor to the town centre from this direction.

Similarly the existing footpath links leading from The Island to St Chads Avenue and Redfield Road would visually benefit from enhanced surface treatment and other improvements.

At the south end of High Street there are sections which either have a narrow footpath or none at all. This is a difficult environment for the pedestrian with fast moving traffic adding to the issue. Alternative safer pedestrian routes from the Redfield Road area to High Street and The Island do exist but are not promoted. The end of St Chad's Avenue terminates in a public footpath route which leads over the river to The Island and Redfield Road. There is an opportunity for enhancement of this both visually and physically important pedestrian route.

There are limited parking restrictions in the town centre, and on street parking is available. The main public car park is at South Road, outside but adjoining the conservation area boundary (free parking) with the other large public car park within the boundary, behind The Hollies and Sainsburys to the north side of High Street. The South Road car park is built on the valley side of the River Somer and visually prominent. Its redevelopment potential has been considered but to date there

are no agreed future proposals. The visual impact of the car park is reduced by soft landscaping. Street lighting in High Street comprises a mix of tall lamp columns with drop-pendant fittings on brackets and traditional lamp columns, all painted black. Elsewhere in the conservation area standard lamp columns and fittings are used. Other painted street furniture, including bollards, continues the black colour theme.

Some parts of the conservation area, including Radstock Road and North Road, suffer from a proliferation of overhead power cables and poles which visually intrude on and harm the appearance of the street scene.

Generally highway signage has been kept to the minimum in the conservation area, but there is a proliferation of poles and street furniture generally at the traffic controlled junction of High Street with Silver Street. Historically the junction included an elaborately designed cast iron Jubilee lamp which was a focal feature in the early C20 street scene, together with a fountain and war memorial. Other street furniture, including bus shelters, signposts and notice boards are all generally well-maintained. Subject to availability of resources the bus shelter at The Island should be replaced with a design more sympathetic to the historic setting.

Historic interpretation could improve the visitor experience, together with 'way finding' signage. Further well-designed and suitably placed seating for visitors and shoppers could also be considered.

5 The buildings of the conservation area

The most unifying element of the conservation area character results from the consistent use of the local white Lias stone and lime mortar for walling together with clay pantiles and natural slate for roofs. Many roofs were originally thatched. Visually, these natural materials complement each other and significantly contribute to the sense of place.

The locally distinct topography provides views of and over the roof tops with their attractive clay tile and slate claddings which add to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. Unfortunately some of the natural roof materials have been replaced with concrete roof tiles or other artificial materials which are less attractive and detract from local character.

Throughout the conservation area architectural detailing and traditional fenestration have been harmed by the common replacement of original painted timber sliding sash and casement windows and painted timber front doors with Upvc types. These are of very poor visual quality and harm appearance.

Similarly, most of the original cast iron rainwater goods are now replaced with plastic.

The height and scale of buildings varies from that of the grander stand-alone buildings interspersed with the two storey terraces of miner's cottages or houses. The larger buildings include the Church of St John the Baptist and other churches, school buildings, the Town Hall and large residential properties including The Hollies and The Dymboro, an Arts and Crafts style early C20 house on North Road. Larger properties on Silver Street and Church Street are set in large grounds with walled gardens and mature trees surrounding them. Manor Farmhouse in Welton is of larger scale with historic rural vernacular architecture.

In the historic core of Midsomer Norton the buildings are close-knit on narrow plots, and built close up to the back edge of footpaths. They are generally two to two-and-a-half stories, many of C18 origin.

The terraced rows of C19 miner's cottages are particularly distinct in Welton and at the west end of Radstock Road, including the steeply sloping roads leading north and south from Radstock Road. Simple lean-to open or enclosed rear porches are typically found on these terraces, and some have retained rows of privies and various other outbuildings set at the rear.

Modern infill buildings have damaged the historic fabric of Midsomer Norton in particular. The large footprint and bulky modern retail units in High Street, including Lidl and Argos, together with their large open areas of associated car parking have resulted in large gaps, fragmenting the street scene. Other modern redevelopment has introduced bulky built forms, often with large expanses of flat roof which have seriously harmed local character.

Some smaller scale modern residential developments have been more successful at harmonising with local character, for example Mill Court at the rear of The Island. Its design has clearly been influenced by the conservation area location.

Listed buildings

In the conservation area there are thirty three building entries on the National heritage List for England. Some entries cover more than one property. They are itemised below and shown on the Character Appraisal Map:

Grade II*

- Welton Manor House, Millards Hill
- The Hollies, High Street
- RC Church of the Holy Ghost (now redundant)
- St John the Baptist Parish Church
- The Priory, Church Square
- 37 Priory Close (Norman tympanum set in the south-west end wall)
- Norman archway in garden wall to r/o No 83 North Road (The Vicarage)

Grade II

- Old Farm, West Road, Welton
- Welton Baptist Chapel, West Road
- Barn south east of the Manor House
- Old Welton Farmhouse





- Former Crown Inn, Welton
- 26 & 27 High Street
- Garden wall with grotto arches set in, to NE of 19 High Street
- 11 – 13 High Street
- 128 High Street (former vicarage)
- Entrance piers and flanking wall to east of parish church
- 5 Church Square
- 26 Church Square
- Church Farmhouse, Church Square
- The Hole in the Wall, Church Square
- 18 Church Square
- The Vicarage, North Road
- The Town Hall, The Island
- The White Hart PH, The Island
- Island House (No 11) The Island
- East garden wall to No 11
- The Island House, The Island
- The Mill House, The Island
- Monument and St Chads Well
- 1 Silver Street
- Silva House, Silver Street

Positive buildings/undesigned heritage assets

The most significant buildings in the conservation area are listed, but other 'positive' buildings range from churches to those surviving from the area's coal mining and industrial legacy.

Buildings identified as 'positive' will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most

importantly they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered with inappropriate renovation works and restoration would be impractical they are excluded.

These positive buildings are 'Undesignated Heritage Assets.' Such buildings are considered worthy of adding to any Local List and a more detailed survey could help to further identify and preserve their character. Some may be eligible for listing.

The condition of both listed and positive buildings varies. Some are considered to be at risk due to their state of repair or if empty and unused.

There are a large number of undesignated heritage assets in the conservation area. They are itemised below with their approximate date, and are identified on the Character Appraisal Map:

- White Rose Barn, Millards Hill (now a house) – C18
- 25 Millards Hill – c1919
- The Old Forge, Millards Hill – C18
- 31 Millards Hill – mid/late C19 (key building)
- 32a Gladstone Street – C19 (key building)
- 11 Belle Vue – early C19
- 1, 3 & 4 Belle Vue – C18/C19 (group value)
- 10 Gladstone Street – early C19
- 1 & 2 West Road – late C18/early C19 (key buildings)

- The Dolphin Inn PH & No 23 West Road – late C18
- 35 & 36 West Road – mid C19 pair of cottages (key buildings)
- 1 – 5 Millards Court – former chapel c1935, now residential. Key building.
- 6 -8 Millards Court – Former Methodist Chapel, now residential
- Former brewery on Station Road, Welton – mid to late C19
- Barn r/o former Crown Inn, Station Road – C18/C19
- 17 Station Road – C18 detached house with C19 addition
- 23 Station Road – C18
- The Stone Cross PH and hall – C18 origins
- Salvation Army Hall on corner of Radstock Road/Station Road – Late/early C19
- Primary school, Radstock Road – late C19
- 53 High Street, Sheldon House – late C19 important corner building
- 1 North Road – late C19 important corner building (dental practice)
- The Dymboro – key building, early C20
- 57 – 59 High Street – terrace of three mid C19 houses
- 61 & 62 High Street (Salvation Army Charity shop and Columbard) – mid C19
- 63 – 70 High Street (Your Move, Wicks and Pierce, Solitaire brides and Dominos) – mid C19
- 80 – 82 High Street – former poor house)
- 98 High Street – early C20



- 107 & 108 (Bath Bakery and The Chip Inn) – late C18
- 109 High Street (Sweet Pea, Flory design and Jacarandas) – late C18 house
- 113 & 114 High Street, including stone building wing linked at rear of 113 – probably late C18 origins
- 115 High Street, The Riverside bar – early C20
- 125 High Street, All Instruments Ltd – important corner building late C19
- 27 – 33 High St, Vernon Villas c1896
- M&Co, 35 High Street – former Co-op store – early C20
- The Beauchamp Almshouses c1895
- 22 & 23 High Street – possibly C18 outbuildings altered in C19/C20
- Rustic House, North Way – late C19 detached house
- Mallards, 20 High Street (PH)
- Outbuildings r/o Mallards – late C18/early C19
- Methodist Church, High St – late C19
- Palladium Cinema, High Street – early C20
- Former brewery buildings on High Street – mid/late C19
- War memorial (c1920)
- Cast iron railings adjoining the River Somer
- 2 Silver Street – late C18 bank buildings
- Former hall on Rackvernal Road (now converted to a hairdressers) – late C19
- Former gas works building off Primrose Lane – late C19
- 14 High Street, Geoffrey Smith – early C19
- 1,2 & 6 The Island, Barclays bank, Eyetech and No 6, – mid/late C19
- 9 The Island, Riverside House – mid C19
- 18 – 20 The Island, A M Hobbs, Pierre & Feet 1st 4U – mid/late C19
- The Greyhound, 1 High street – Italianate public house late C19, including the outbuildings which are C18/C19
- 3 High St, Italianate bank building – late C19
- 128 – 129 High Street – late C18/early C19 stone outbuildings to former vicarage
- The Masonic Hall, Redfield Road c1912
- St Johns C of E School and school house, Redfield Road c1840
- Bank House, Italianate bank next to Town Hall, Silver Street – mid to late C19
- Engine house and station, Silver Street – late C19
- Pairs of late C19 cottages north of the station
- Lynwood House, Lynwood Close – late C19
- 44 & 46 Silver Street – detached late C19 houses

Building types

A high proportion of the protected buildings in the conservation area date from the main period of village to town status growth between the C17 – C19, although closer internal inspection may reveal that some have earlier origins.

A large number of undesignated buildings found throughout the conservation area are regarded as ‘positive’ buildings. The retention and preservation of these undesignated heritage assets is important for the character of the settlement.

The majority of buildings were originally built for residential use although there are a number of former barns or outbuildings interspersed throughout the area which historically relate to agriculture. Many of the former residential properties in High Street were converted to shops or other commercial uses, and as the town prospered in the C19 civic buildings, churches, public halls, schools, breweries and public houses were built. The town cinema on High Street was previously a barrel store for Smith’s Brewery which was first converted to a choral hall and then to a cinema, originally in 1912 and then further developed for this use in 1934.

Some vestiges of buildings associated with the coal mines and other C19 industrial uses survive today, but many are unoccupied, such as the former gas works building adjoining the South Road car park. One most at risk is the highly significant former brewery building on Station Road, an imposing local landmark.

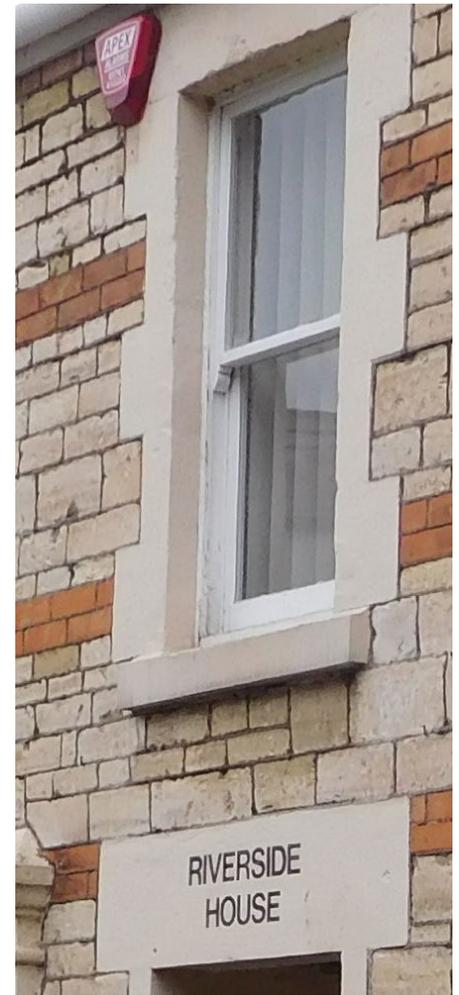
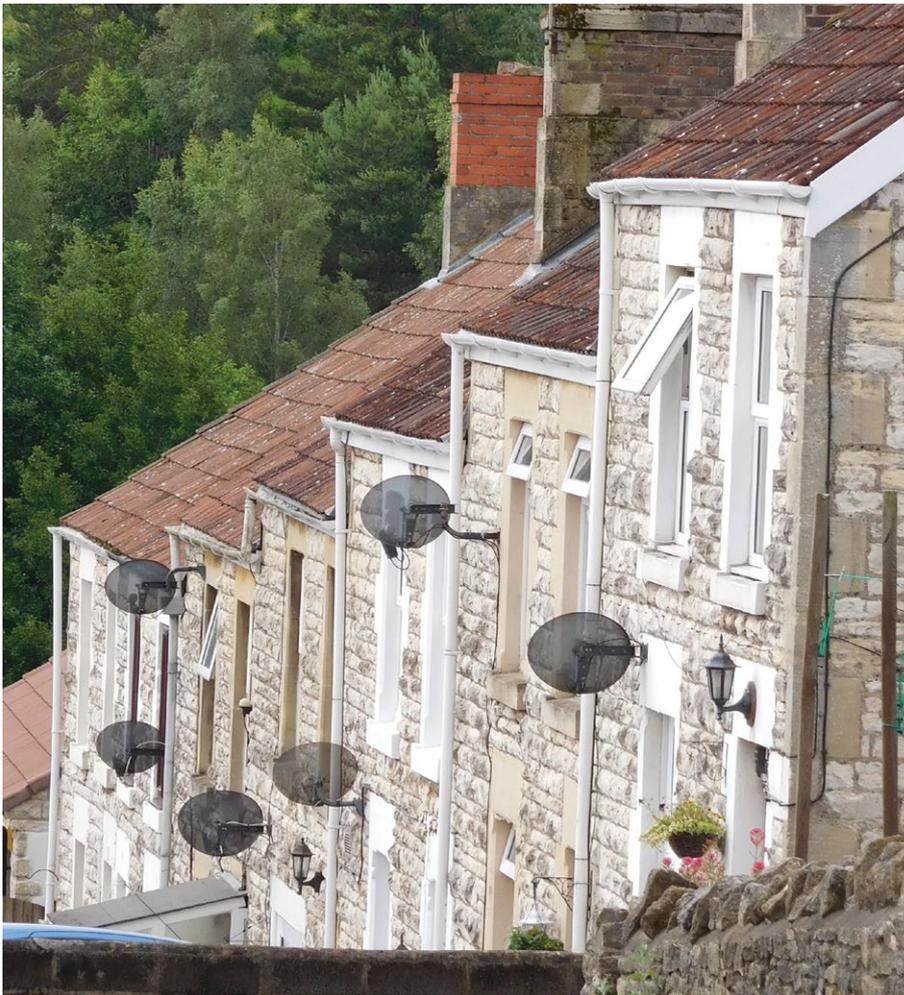
The most distinctive building type in the conservation area is the rows of stone two storey C19 miner’s cottages, predominantly located in Welton and at the west end of Radstock Road, close to the location of the collieries. The built forms of these visually distinct groups of stone structures survive intact despite the majority now having replacement plastic windows and doors and concrete roof tiles. The strong architectural form, rows of chimney stacks and the rhythm of window and door openings visually dominate the many unfortunate changes to architectural detail and help to sustain their character.

The conservation area is also characterised by the high number of stone boundary walls. Their value has previously been referred to, together with concern about walls being demolished and front gardens converted to parking.

Building styles, materials and colours

The style of the historic building stock is varied. Some are of vernacular style, generally associated with previous agricultural uses or as outbuildings for the larger scale properties. These are generally modestly sized stone buildings (one and a half or two storeys high) with traditionally proportioned spans and steeply pitched roofs.

The distinct style of the miner’s terraced cottages has been identified above. In addition, the growth of the town in the C18 – C19 introduced buildings of varying



architecture from that period, including local interpretation of classical, Italianate, Victorian Gothic, and Arts and Crafts styles. This delightful mix of style significantly contributes to local character.

Historically, stone was the predominant construction material, both white lias and red sandstone. There is some red brick found in later buildings, used for voussoirs and other architectural dressings, including string banding. Render had limited use, and is a later introduction, mainly from the late C19/early C20. Roofs are clad in plain clay tiles, clay pantiles and clay double Roman tiles, together with natural slate for roofs. Some roofs were originally thatched, but none of these survive today.

Stone was sourced locally together with brick and tiles, and the introduction of the canal and railway network in the C18/C19 enabled

natural slate to be easily sourced and transported, imported from elsewhere.

Stone has been used in the conservation area in a variety of forms including squared and coursed rubble stone, un-coursed rubble stone, and ashlar for the grander properties, a natural material which is also commonly used for window and door dressings. Distinctive rock-faced stonework was commonly used on the miner's terraces.

These natural materials visually complement each other and significantly contribute to the sense of place.

Roofs in the conservation area have a variety of forms, but are generally pitched and gabled, some with traditional design dormer windows. Later C19 hipped and shallower pitched types clad in slate prevail in some parts, including Silver Street.

Roof ridges generally run parallel with the roads, except where they are occasionally interspersed with buildings set at right angles to them, with gables facing on to the road.

Windows openings throughout the conservation area are generally vertically proportioned and originally contained vertical timber sliding sashes and timber side-hung casements, some with small panes. Others, usually of later date, had larger sections of glazing. Unfortunately the vast majority have been replaced by modern Upvc or dark stained hardwood, conflicting with local historic character. Throughout the conservation area many windows have distinct ashlar dressings, some now painted in white or cream colours. Some front entrance doors have similar dressings and most doors are painted timber types, although replacement with Upvc (plastic) types does prevail in some parts.

6 Character areas

Eleven character areas are identified on the Character Areas map accompanying the appraisal.

Character area 1: High Street, Church Square, The Island

This forms the nucleus of the medieval village with its historic street pattern. The historic buildings are distinctively linked and grouped along High Street frontage and at Church Square and The Island, forming an intimate and enclosed distinct local historic character.

It includes key buildings and focal points such as the parish church and the Town Hall which are significant local landmarks and make an important contribution to the sense of local identity and character. There are proposals to improve elements of the Town Hall building in the future.

The upper section of this part of High Street leading to and including Church Square contains significant historic buildings.

Mansbrook House (No's 15, 2, 3, & 4 High Street) prominently addresses the visually important junction of High Street and Silver Street. It is a 1960's development of dated appearance which would benefit from replacement with a design reflecting local historic character.

The stone stables at No 128 High Street (the former vicarage), is an important focal point in the street scene and is currently in a derelict condition. Its repair and conversion to a new use would be encouraged.

A section of the River Somer flows to the rear of The Island adding to local character. This part of the town centre includes the footpath link to Somervale School from St Chad's Avenue, passing through attractive open space adjoining St Chad's Well. The important space

where St Chad's Avenue ends at the river and the pedestrian link leads to The Island could benefit from an improvement scheme.

No's 1 and 2 Silver Street are late C19 listed buildings located at the bottom of the hill close to the junction with High Street. On the corner of Silver Street and South Road is the brutal 1960's concrete building owned by British Telecom, where replacement development would be encouraged. Its inclusion in the conservation area boundary improves the control of design for any future replacement building.

Negative features:

High levels of traffic movement and speeds on High Street, hindering pedestrian and cyclist movement

Narrow footpaths on High Street or none at all, hindering pedestrian movement

Derelict condition of former stables at No 128 High Street, which is an important focal point

Unattractive appearance of the British Telecom building on Silver Street and Mansbrook House on High Street.

Currently empty shop units

Proliferation of street furniture and signage at the junction area of High Street, The Island and Silver Street.

Visually unrelieved tarmac surfacing of The Island and Church Square, and the visual impact of car parking on these important public spaces in the historic environment. The current lack of status which the Town Hall and its setting at The Island deserve as a civic and cultural focus in the town should be addressed, providing opportunity for imaginative treatment and use. Poor appearance of the important area at the end of St Chad's Avenue

Some signage, shop fronts and fascias are unsympathetic to local historic character

Lack of historic interpretation and other local information

Character area 2: Welton – Millards Hill and West Road

The area is identified as having high archaeological potential.

Welton is an individual character area, primarily identified by its building stock of mining legacy terraces and buildings from its agricultural past. These include Manor Farm and other historic farm buildings on the east side of the area, within and adjoining the open countryside setting. This character area is located on the river valley side, and the resulting topography views contribute to its distinct local character.

The Somer Valley cycle route along the former railway line links the area with its surroundings and forms a green edge to the south.

The area contains important tree groups in the Station Road/Millards Hill junction area and on the former Welton Colliery batch at Belle Vue which acts as a tranquil backdrop to the built area.

Negative features:

Modern flats built excessively close to a historic terrace of four miner's cottages

Character area 3: Station Road

From the Stone Cross road junction, Station Road slopes down to the Wellow Brook. This topography, combined with the enclosure provided by the imposing landmark three storey former Welton Brewery building and the stepped terraces of No's 4 – 16, together with their front

boundary walls, forms a distinct visual character.

At the foot of the hill the road crosses Wellow Brook before passing under the former railway bridge, now a cycle route. The open green spaces adjoining the road and mature trees in this area positively contribute to local character.

The modern development at Welton Vale is retained in the conservation area to avoid creating a hole in the designated area which would be contrary to 'best practice'.

Negative features:

The brewery building is a positive building and a local heritage asset which is unoccupied. It is in the boundary of the redevelopment proposals currently being considered for the former Welton, Bibby and Baron paper bags and packaging manufacturing works which closed in 2014.

As part of the redevelopment it is essential that this important building is restored and new use(s) found. Any redevelopment must fully respect the setting of this building and enhance the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Poor pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre from the Station Road area.

Character area 4: Radstock Road

This area is distinguished by the visual dominance of terraced miner's cottages running parallel to Radstock Road and at right angles to it on the valley sides.

The cottages are of white lias limestone construction, some coursed and others rock-faced, all with oolitic limestone dressings. The stone boundary walls have a mix of giant grey conglomerate stone cappings, some with 'cock and hen' design.

The consistent form and layout of the terraces creates a distinct local character, enhanced by the trees lining the river valleys below. There are views and glimpses across the river valley to the south towards the former Norton Hill Colliery site and old railway line on the skyline, now the proposed Town Park and a cycle way.

This very distinct mining heritage character continues on adjoining roads. It includes Radstock Road, the primary school, Burlington Road, Rock Road, Lilac Terrace and Railway View Place. Virtually every property has had original windows and doors replaced with Upvc types, and natural slate and clay tile replaced by concrete varieties. Some front garden walls have been removed and the gardens used for parking. Despite these unfortunate changes, the overall strong architectural form, chimney stacks and rhythm of the terraces and street layout continues to dominate the distinctive local environment. Some rows of original low-scale

'privies' survive at the rear of the terraces.

The open area south of Hope Terrace adjoining the river is an important element of the setting of this part of the conservation area.

Negative features:

Extensive loss of original architectural features, including doors, windows and natural roof materials.

Some front garden walls removed and garden areas now used for vehicle parking.

Poles and overhead cables intruding on the street scene.

Some unattractive out-buildings and add-ons, although traditionally there could have been such structures added from occupation.

High timber panel fencing has been used, detracting from local character.



Character area 5: Stone's Cross/ Upper High Street

This core area of High Street is the historic linear route to the town centre from the north.

The Stone's Cross public house is currently vacant and in poor state of repair. It is an undesignated heritage asset and together with other heritage assets located at this junction acts as an important visual landmark on the road junction at the north eastern entrance 'gateway' to High Street and the town centre. Bathwick Tyres on North Road is included in this area. It is visually unattractive, but its conservation area location should ensure the quality of any redevelopment of the site and future enhancement opportunity, should this arise.

To the south, the commercial area of High Street is visually enclosed on its south west side by a tight-knit frontage of (generally) two storey historic buildings constructed tight against the back edge of the footpaths, creating an intimate scale and enclosed character. The stone terraces along the northern end of High Street also positively contribute to this local character.

A large gap in the street scene on the north-west side of High Street has resulted from the adjoining Argos, M & Co and Lidl late C20 developments. These have wide accesses and car parks, with buildings of large footprint and bulk set back from the historic building line. In combination they have seriously damaged the historic character and appearance of this part of Midsomer Norton, and redevelopment would be encouraged.

The footpaths in the upper part of High Street are mostly narrow, some poorly maintained.

Many shop units in historic buildings on High Street have been altered. Original C19/early C20 fabric has been removed and poor design replacements and additions

inserted. Signage, including shop fascias and other commercial signage are also generally of poor design quality.

Negative features:

The large gap in the street scene and poor visual impact resulting from the Lidl, M & Co and Argos developments. Individually and/or comprehensively they provide a development opportunity to repair the town fabric with new development of high design quality.

The appearance of the Bathwick Tyres garage buildings and forecourt on North Road.

The semi-derelict and empty state of the important former Stone's Cross public house.

Loss of traditional shop fronts and introduction of disproportionately large signage and fascias in inappropriate modern materials on some High Street shops, including unauthorised examples.

Extensive loss of original architectural features, including doors, windows and natural roof materials.

Currently empty shop units.

Poor condition of footpaths

Character area 6: Town Park, riverside open space and Norton Radstock Greenway

To the south east of the conservation area is open space contained in the river valley topography which has a distinctive local character. The important valley setting and mining heritage in this area contribute both visually and historically to the significance of the conservation area as a whole.

The proposed Town Park is located on the former Norton Hill Colliery batch, now a prominent green space with mature trees and vegetation. There are important views from this area looking west

over the historic town centre.

Leading from the park is the Norton Radstock Greenway on the former Somerset and Dorset railway line. This historic elevated and tree lined route links to Silver Street and the old railway station in character area 11. It provides important panoramic views of the historic town centre in its valley setting.

The area is currently well served by recreational cycle routes but pedestrian access from the east section of Radstock Road area is restricted. A new route to the river from Radstock Road and a footbridge crossing could improve access to the community facilities.

On adjoining land are the sports centre, the doctor's surgery, the Somer Centre and associated parking, located in the open green setting of the River Somer. Enhanced landscaping, including tree planting would improve the appearance of this area.

Views looking north from this area encompass the historic miner's cottages on the hillside leading up to Radstock Road.

Negative features:

Lack of landscaping and dominance of large footprint buildings and associated car parks.

Character area 7: Rackvernal Road and Excelsior Terrace

This area is characterised by the visually distinct and attractive Victorian white lias limestone terraces adjoining the open and well treed landscape of the proposed Town Park on the valley side rising above it, formerly part of the Norton Hill Colliery.

It includes the former gas works building next to the boundary with South Road car park which is a positive building that has stood empty for a lengthy period.

The land on Gullock Tynning at the rear of properties on Rackvernal Road is dominated by parked cars and has a poor visual appearance.

Negative features:

Vacant former gasworks building requires restoration and new use

Poor appearance of land on Gullock Tynning which could be improved by tree planting to help screen parked vehicles.

Character area 8: Middle High Street and South Road

From the South Road junction to the Silver Street junction at the landmark Town Hall, High Street is strongly characterised by the River Somer and its handsome cast iron railings flowing alongside the street and footpaths, and the row of Lime trees.

The tight knit historic character has been damaged in part by poor quality late C20 development, including the corner buildings at the junction of South Road with High Street (from Lloyds Pharmacy to HSBC) , and Norton Discounts (No 111 High Street). Redevelopment of these sites with sympathetic new design would be encouraged. The junction area is also visually dominated by the roads and vehicle spaces/turning area by the river. Greater pedestrian priority and environmental improvements could assist in enhancing this part of the conservation area.

Two storey historic buildings survive in this part of High Street, interspersed by important detached taller structures, such as The Hollies and the former brewery buildings. The late C20 Sainsburys supermarket and associated green space on High Street frontage, are located in the former garden area of The Hollies and act as an active focal point in the town centre. The supermarket building has an outdated appearance, and redevelopment with an enhanced design which meets planning policy would be encouraged.

=The primary school playing field at the rear of the supermarket is also included in this character area. It provides an open visual break between the historic core and the C20 properties on North Road. Inclusion in the conservation area protects its setting and the design quality of any future development proposals, should they arise.

The conservation area boundary encloses the South Road car park on the hillside. Any redevelopment proposals for the car park will need to respect and improve the setting and topography of this part of the conservation area. Existing tree and shrub planting in the car park provides screening of parked vehicles and visual enhancement.

The rear elevations of properties facing High Street are highly visible from South Road and the public car park. This is an unattractive environment dominated by the road, metal fencing, yards, parking and signage. Subject to owner agreement there could be an opportunity to enhance appearance, and to encourage introduction of uses such as small craft units, start-up businesses and lock-up shop units. Several of the existing buildings are worthy of retention and could be adapted for such uses.

The important public footpath leading from the car park to High Street cuts through this area and has poor visual quality. Environmental improvements to this important route for visitors to the town centre should be explored.

Negative features:

High levels of traffic movement accompanied by its poor visual impact and lack of pedestrian and cyclist priority.

Poor design of modern retail units with uncharacteristically large footprints, deep spans and flat roofs, constructed in unsympathetic materials.

Altered historic shop fronts, including fascias and signage of poor design which detract from character.

Empty shop units, currently including No 114 High Street (formerly Norton Fried Chicken).

Poor appearance of High Street 'backs' in views from South Road and the public car park.

Poor appearance of the South Road/High Street junction area where the townscape has been harmed by the late C20 corner site developments and visual and physical dominance of the roads.

Poor appearance of the side and rear of the former brewery building, prominently viewed from the important pedestrian link between South Road car park and High Street

Extensive loss of original architectural features, including doors, windows and natural roof materials.

Derelict condition of former Palladium Cinema

Character area 9: The Dymboro and The Vicarage

The Dymboro on North Road is an imposing early 1900's Arts and Crafts style stand-alone domestic building. Modern detached housing development in a cul-de-sac form has taken place in a large proportion of the grounds of the house. Many large mature trees in the existing and former garden of The Dymboro survive, many set amongst the modern housing. The trees dominate and positively contribute to the significance of this part of the conservation area.

On the east side of Church Lane is the listed vicarage and its expansive grounds and outbuildings, accessed from North Road. The large mature trees within the grounds compliment those at The Dymboro to the west, adding to local character.

Negative features:

C20 housing development at The Dymboro which would not normally be included in a conservation area, but is included because it contains important mature trees contributing to local character.

Poles and overhead cables on North Road which visually intrude on the street scene.

**Character area 10:
Church lane and Redfield Road**

The distinctive raised footpath on the east side of Church Lane was constructed c1850 to improve the vicar’s walk from the vicarage to the church, and is a distinctive local feature. This is enhanced by the high stone walls and overhanging large mature trees at Priory Close which play an important role in street scene views on Church Lane.

There are C20 residential properties on Waterfall Way and Church Court, and a modern petrol station and large retail units accessed from Church Lane. This area of modern development is included because excluding it would form a ‘hole’ in the conservation area which is contrary to best practice. It also provides an opportunity to achieve higher quality design in any future development proposal which could benefit the character of the conservation area.

Historic buildings include the distinctive early C19 St John’s C of E School and the Masonic Hall c 1912 on Redfield Road. The River Somer, iron railings and mature trees run adjacent to the footpath on the opposite side of Redfield Road, creating a special local character. The school playing field and church graveyard to the north form an important open ‘green’ break between the historic core and the surrounding C20 housing development which enhances the conservation area setting.

Similar benefits result from the large green open space and mature trees between Somervale School and Redfield Road, contributing to the more open character of this part of the conservation area.

Negative features:

Extensive late C20 development of mediocre design, including the petrol filling station, large footprint retail units and Church Court

**Character area 11:
Silver Street**

This character area is centred on the surviving buildings of the former Midsomer Norton South Railway Station on Silver Street and the late C19 pairs of houses to the south of it which create a distinctive local character. The railway buildings have been sensitively restored as part of the ongoing Somerset and Dorset Heritage Railway Project.

The station buildings and pairs of late Victorian stone and brick vernacular design houses adjoining to the south together form a recognisable group of historic buildings with a distinct character. Antrim House, No 46 Silver Street and No 44 to the rear are both late C19 properties which group with the houses on Silver Street of similar date.

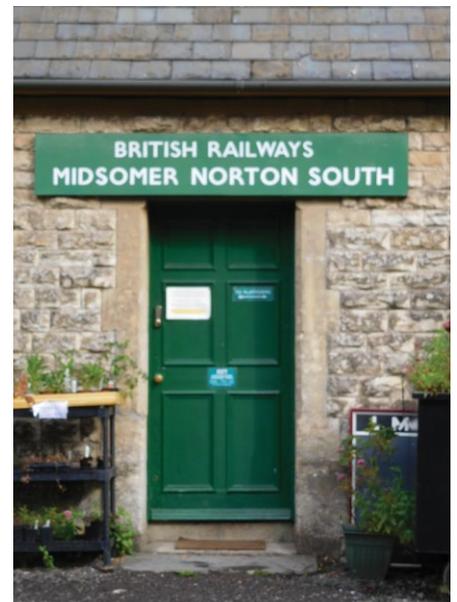
On the opposite side of Silver Street is an area of green open space with large trees on each side of the junction with Charlton Road. This open space enhances the setting of the former railway buildings which were originally surrounded by open countryside.

The route of the former railway, now Norton Radstock Greenway, links this part of the conservation area with the Town Park area on the site of the former colliery. The railway and colliery both have important historic connections with the town’s industrial heritage.

Looking south up the hill, the Silver Street view is enclosed by visually important large mature trees contributing to the street scene in the immediate setting of the conservation area.

Negative features:

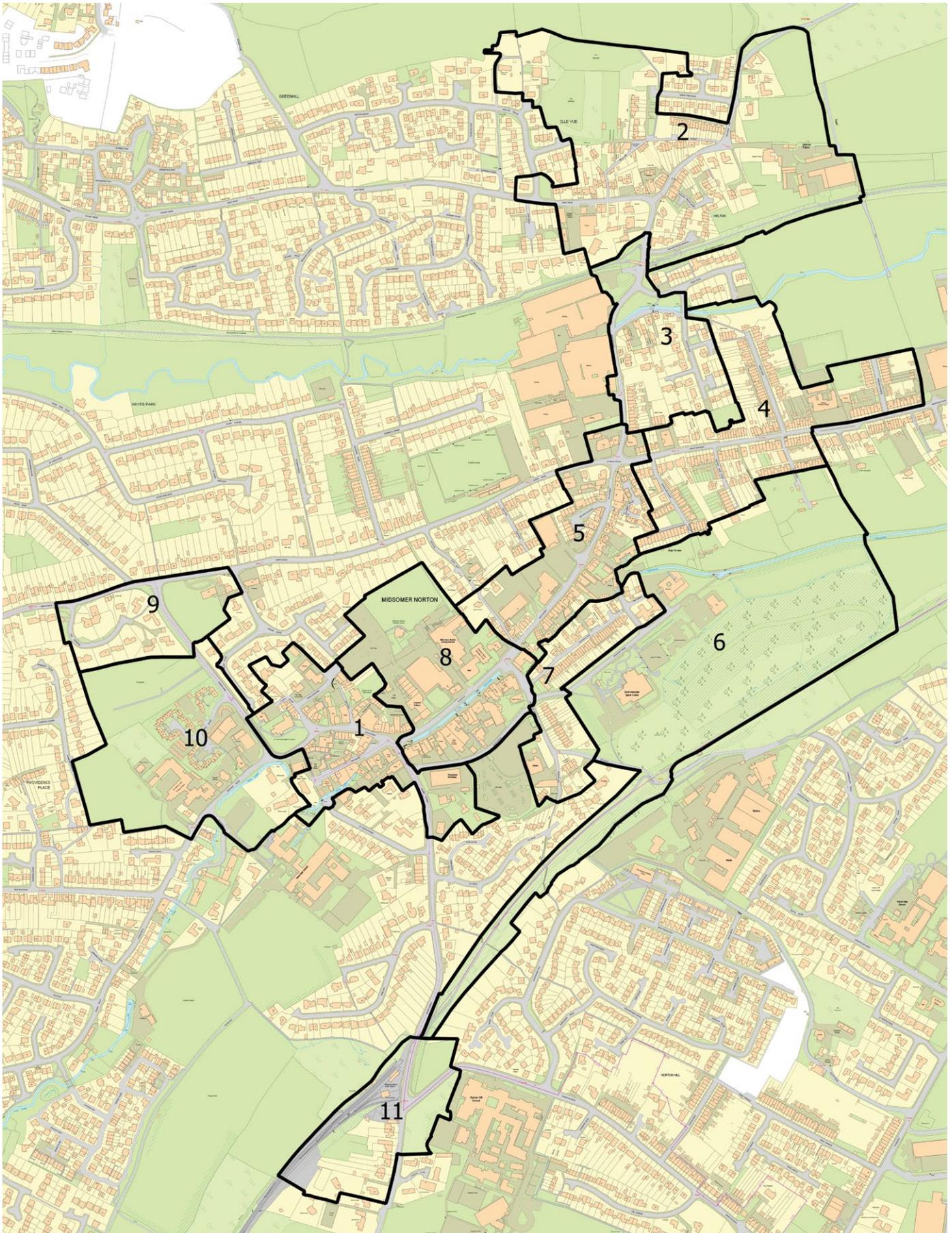
None identified.



Local character



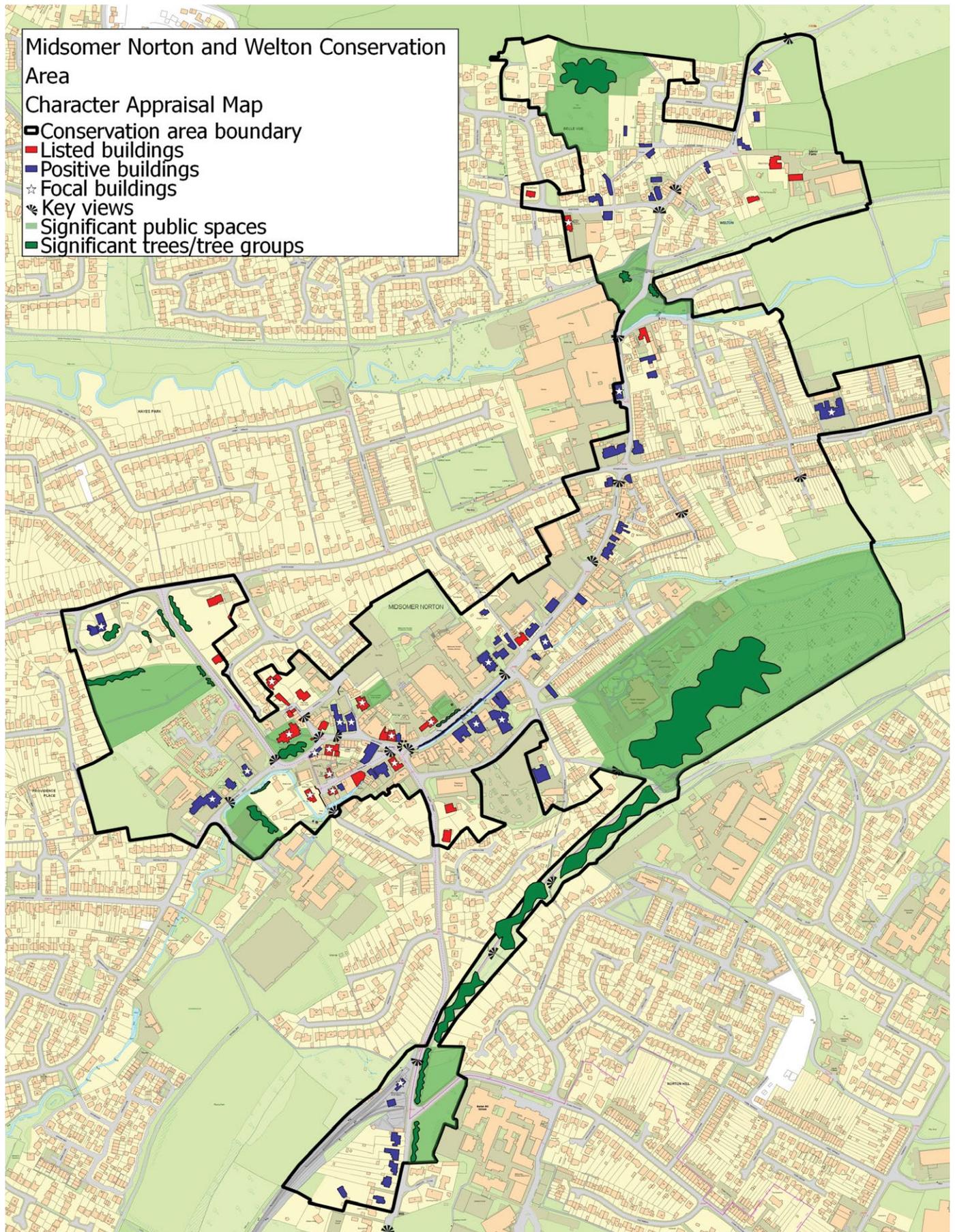
Character areas



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

Licence number 100023334

Character appraisal



7 Issues

Summary of issues

Based on the negative features identified in the character areas the following are considered to be the current key issues for the Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area.

Traffic, pedestrian movement and parking:

- Busy and fast moving traffic on main roads, particularly at peak periods
- Extensive undistinguished areas of car parking associated with large retail units in High Street
- Condition of some sections of footpath
- Difficult pedestrian movement and access in some areas, including parts of High Street
- Poor pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre from the Station Road area.
- Potential pedestrian link over the River Somer from Radstock Road to the proposed Town Park, via a new footbridge
- Proliferation of street furniture and signage at High Street, The Island, Silver Street junction area.
- Lack of visitor signage, historic interpretation of the area and other local directional information
- Front gardens converted for vehicle parking

The control of new development:

- Pressure for new development, including its impact on the surrounding conservation area setting and important views
- Design quality of new build, including modern retail units of large scale footprint and bulk which lack positive character
- Large gaps in High Street frontage caused by large scale modern developments set back from the street frontage, some with parking and wide access roads
- Need for design guidance, including adverts and signage

- Shop signs often obscuring or conflicting with the quality of the historic buildings
- Historic shopfronts harmed by modern interventions

Buildings:

- Continued protection of the historic townscape
- Continued requirement for use of traditional materials, details and craft skills
- Continuing erosion of local detail, including modern replacement windows, doors and roof coverings and loss of or damage to historic walls
- The retention and control of undesigned heritage assets
- Restoration and reuse of buildings at risk

Enhancement opportunities:

Subject to availability of funding the following suggested improvements to the public realm should be explored in liaison with the relevant BANES Council services, the Town Council, relevant property owners and others.

- **Potential Midsomer Norton town centre traffic management scheme:** Consideration of traffic management proposals that could enhance the appearance of the area, reduce traffic levels and speeds in the core area, and enhance pedestrian and cyclist movement

The area is currently well served by recreational cycle routes but pedestrian access from the east section of Radstock Road area is restricted. A new route to the river from Radstock Road and a footbridge crossing could improve access to the community facilities.

- **South Road car park pedestrian link:**

Preparation of an enhancement scheme for the pedestrian link between South Road car park and High Street. Subject to funding, this important link could be improved, including provision of directional signage and more attractive surface and boundary treatments.

- **Improving the rear of High Street properties:**

From the route described above and from South Road there are views of the backs of buildings facing on to High Street together with their parking and service yards. These views are dominated by car parking, steel fencing, signs, refuse bins and open storage.

The backs and private spaces of these High Street properties could be improved to enhance appearance and to encourage uses such as small craft units, start-up businesses and lock-up shop units. Several of the existing buildings worthy of retention could be considered for such uses and adaptation.

- **Upper High Street:**

Address the poor condition of footpaths by seeking funding for resurfacing and generally improving their quality for pedestrians. This would also improve the appearance of this part of the conservation area.

Encourage well designed screening of the large car park areas. Longer term consider redevelopment potential of these large footprint buildings and car parks to repair the damaged street scene.

- Middle High Street improvement: Subject to an agreed traffic management scheme, opportunities could be explored for potential further enhancement in High Street in the area of The Hollies, Sainsburys and the river. This could include consideration of a pedestrian or part-pedestrian scheme, and improved cycle route(s).

- **Link from Sainsburys to Church Square/High Street:**

The opportunity for a pedestrian link between Sainsburys car park to Church Square via the Garden of Friendship at the tithe barn (used until recently as the Catholic church) should be explored. This would provide pedestrians with an alternative and safe route, avoiding the busy traffic in High Street.

- **The Island, High Street and Church Square area improvements:**

Resurfacing these areas with material(s) more sympathetic to the historic setting could be considered, retaining car parking but visually improving pedestrian priority. Street furniture and signage should be rationalised as part of this consideration.

Use of the space at the Island outside the Town Hall for a weekly market could be included for consideration as part of such a scheme. Longer term, the proposed use of the ground floor of the Town Hall as a market hall is reflected in the Town Hall transformation planning permission, granted in July 2015. The use and design of the external space could be further reviewed as part of this potential project.

Improving the existing pedestrian and cyclist links to and from this area with Redfield Road and St Chads Road could be included. This may involve public realm improvement for the area at the end of St Chads Road which is a focal point in the town including the listed St Chads Well, with the river and views of the backs of historic buildings facing towards The Island.

- **Shopfronts and signage improvement scheme:**

Consider a pilot scheme focussed on two or three adjoining retail units to carry out shopfront and signage improvements, working with the retailers.

- **Planting schemes:**

Consider introducing planting to partly screen and soften the appearance of the unsightly car park areas associated with the large stores on High Street and to screen the brutal architecture of the British Telecom exchange on the corner of South Road.

- **Removing overhead power cables:**

Should the opportunity arise, support the undergrounding of power cables to improve the street scene, particularly on Radstock Road and North Road.

Development opportunities

- As part of the proposed redevelopment of the former printing works site on Station Road:
 - restore and re-use the historic brewery building;
 - aim to incorporate restoration and re-use of The Stone's Cross PH;
 - seek improved pedestrian links from Station Road to the town centre.

- Investigate the opportunity for new infill development on High Street frontage where it has been excessively widened to provide vehicle access and parking, including Lidl, Argos, M&Co and Sainsburys. Such development could assist in repairing the visual harm such development has caused to local character resulting from these gaps in the street scene.

In the short term planting schemes could assist in repairing the damaged townscape. Alternatively these sites may provide opportunity for redevelopment, either individually or comprehensively, which could significantly improve the character, appearance and vitality of this part of the conservation area. The preparation of development briefs to promote these sites and indicate their development potential should be considered.

- Support redevelopment proposals of high quality design to replace unattractive large footprint modern buildings in High Street. Identify conservation area improvements which could be derived from the potential development of the South Road car park.
- Support any scheme to replace or visually improve the unsightly British Telecom telephone exchange on Silver Street with new development of sympathetic design quality. If this is not forthcoming, a planting scheme could assist in screening the building and improving the street scene.
- Longer term redevelopment of Church Court and the adjoining retail units and petrol filling station with high quality design would be encouraged

8 Management proposals

Issues and recommendations

The character appraisal has identified the special positive qualities of the Midsomer Norton and Welton Conservation Area which make it unique. The following management proposals build upon the negative features which have also been identified, to provide a series of issues and recommendations for improvement and/or change.

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework guidance published by Historic England in *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2016)*. Both the conservation area character appraisal and the management plan proposals should be subject to monitoring and review on a regular basis.

Protecting the conservation area landscape setting

Setting of the conservation area

The open landscape to the north and east of the conservation area is notable for its attractive gently rolling countryside of fields and woodland

It is already protected by relevant planning policies, and the land within the conservation area boundary itself has similar policy protection. Constraints are also imposed on the historic environment by guidance contained in the NPPF and advice published by Historic England.

However, there may be potential threats from new development within or on the edges of the conservation area, or from changes to buildings or sites which lie within it. For example, due to the redevelopment of an existing building or site.

Recommendation:

The setting of the conservation area should be protected through the strict enforcement of policies contained within the Development Plan. Applications for change which would have a detrimental effect on the land within or on the edges of the conservation area and harm its significance should not be permitted.

Key views within and from the landscape setting outside the conservation area

There are important views within the conservation area looking out to the north and east across the surrounding countryside. There are also important views of the conservation area from the surrounding landscape. These important views need to be protected by the sensitive control of proposed development which must seek to preserve the special character and setting of the conservation area.

Recommendation:

Key views within and around the conservation area should be protected, including those from the open adjoining landscape to the north and east. Proposals for new development which would impinge on these views and harm the significance of the conservation area should not be permitted.

Traffic, pedestrian and cyclist movement and parking

Busy and fast moving traffic in the peak periods

High Street and other main roads in the conservation area serve both local residents and other road users to access the area and beyond. Some traffic moves at high speeds.

Recommendation:

Working with the highway authority and subject to availability of funding, consideration should be

given to improving pedestrian and cyclist movement and safety, including traffic management measures in the town centre.

Pedestrian and cyclist movement

Pedestrian and cyclist movement and access in some parts of the conservation area is restricted

Recommendation:

Working with the highway authority and subject to availability of funding, consider potential pedestrian and cyclist improvements as identified in the character appraisal. To include improving existing routes and links and introducing new, particularly in the vicinity of The Island and the historic core area of the town centre. Suggested schemes are included in paragraph 8.6

Conversion of front gardens to parking

This is particularly prevalent in areas with terraced housing and harms the appearance and character of the conservation area street scene.

Recommendation:

Investigate introduction of an Article IV Direction to control such development.

Historic interpretation and visitor signage

Visitor directional signage, interpretation of the historic environment and other local information is lacking in the conservation area.

Recommendation:

Subject to availability of funding sensitive 'way-marking' would assist, together with high quality interpretation of the local environment, including the historic environment of the conservation area

Control of new development

Pressure for new development

There is pressure for new development, and particularly new housing sites within and around the existing settlements in B&NES, including the Norton Radstock area. This demand for new housing land needs to be balanced against the equal requirement to preserve or enhance the conservation area and its setting.

There are already policies in the Development Plan to protect all conservation areas and other heritage assets in the area.

Constant vigilance is needed to ensure that new development does not occur, whether major or minor, that would adversely affect the special interest of the conservation area and its setting.

Several large footprint modern buildings with associated parking and servicing have been constructed in High Street which have harmed the character of the conservation area.

Recommendation:

Only development of the highest quality should be accepted in the conservation area. Open spaces, including private gardens, should be protected from inappropriate new development. Development should also be resisted on open areas with important views, short or long distance, that contribute to the special character of the area.

The opportunity to redevelop poorly designed modern developments in the conservation area with more sympathetically designed schemes should be explored. Subject to availability of resources, preparation of development briefs should be considered, to assess development potential and encourage their redevelopment.

Quality of new build – design guidance

It should be ensured that new development includes opportunities to improve the character and appearance of the conservation area

General design guidance is included in the Development Plan and in the National Planning Policy Framework.. The recommendations below provide further ‘good practice’ guidance for new development in or on the edges of the conservation area:

Recommendations:

New development in or on the edges of the conservation area should respect existing scale, plot boundaries and patterns, plot ratios and historic forms of development;

Where backland sites are being developed the existing character should be maintained and the density and scale of new development should reflect that of the surrounding historic environment;

New development should preserve or enhance the historic grain of development established by plot boundaries and existing historic buildings;

New development should not impinge on important views within the conservation area or views of it from outside, and should be carefully sited to minimise visual impact;

Existing open green space should be protected from unsympathetic development where this would have an adverse impact on the spacious character of the existing site and area;

Innovative modern design may be appropriate in certain cases subject to its reflecting local built character and form and being of the highest possible design quality. Any new development is encouraged to engage with the traditional existing

built form and to reference detailing and use of local materials to enhance the conservation area;

Historic stone walls on boundaries and elsewhere should be retained as part of development schemes and repaired using traditional methods and materials. Boundaries without stone walling, old or new, can be made more secure by the use of well-designed timber fencing and/or defensive planting which will contribute to the special qualities of the conservation area, rather than by the construction of high or low interwoven panel fencing.

Applications to demolish existing buildings will be carefully considered and only replacement buildings of the highest quality allowed, which preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Buildings

The control of undesignated heritage assets

As part of the appraisal process and in accordance with Historic England guidance, positive historic buildings have been identified as shown on the Character Appraisal Map. These are also defined as ‘Undesignated Heritage Assets.’ Generally these are individual historic buildings or structures which retain all or a high proportion of their original character, including architectural detailing and materials, and which add interest and vitality to the appearance of the conservation area. Most of them date to the mid/late C19. Where buildings have been excessively altered and restoration to original appearance is not easily achievable they are excluded. Some of these buildings are considered to be at risk.

As with listed buildings there is a general presumption in favour of their retention. Any application to demolish such a building will therefore need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification as to why the building cannot be retained and

how any replacement structure would positively improve the conservation area. The owner must also have made positive efforts to market the existing building, or to find a suitable new use, before any application can be determined.

Recommendations:

Proposals for change to undesignated heritage assets should not harm their architectural or historic interest;

Applications to demolish undesignated heritage assets will generally be refused; All such buildings should be included on any future Local List. Further more detailed work could help to identify their significance and preserve their character.

Seek restoration and new uses for vacant undesignated heritage assets.

Unsympathetic changes to historic buildings

Unsympathetic changes to some details such as windows, doors and roof tiling have eroded the character and appearance of many historic buildings in the conservation area.

Traditional and appropriately detailed windows and doors and natural roofing materials, including clay pantiles and natural slate should be reinstated to enhance the character of the buildings and area.

Use of traditional building materials such as timber, lime mortars and renders as opposed to UPVC and cement based materials is important in preserving and maintaining traditionally constructed buildings

Recommendation:

Subject to availability of resources, consider introducing an Article IV Direction to control unsympathetic changes to windows, doors and roof materials on residential properties in the conservation area. Investigate with funding organisations the opportunities for a

grant scheme to encourage and assist owners in funding alternative designs and materials should a direction be applied.

Possible enhancement opportunities

Subject to availability of funding, a number of opportunities to enhance the character, appearance and overall environment of the conservation area have been identified in detail in the character appraisal. They are not prioritised, and some would involve private land and require landowner agreement. They should recognise and respond to other projects and plans in the area, existing and proposed, including any emerging Midsomer Norton Town Centre Regeneration Projects and the Neighbourhood Plan.

The suggested improvements are as follows. They involve working with the Town Council, Bath and North East Somerset's highway authority, other Council services and relevant statutory undertakers, together with others including private owners:

- Investigate opportunities for a Midsomer Norton town centre traffic management scheme. This could encompass proposals to enhance the local pedestrian and cyclist environment, including potential for a pedestrianised or part-pedestrianised High Street in the vicinity of Sainsburys.
- Improve the pedestrian link between South Road car park and High Street
- Investigate opportunities for a pedestrian link between Sainsbury's car park and Church Square via the Gardens of Friendship
- Improve the existing pedestrian and cyclist links to and from the town centre historic core area from the Redfield Road and St Chads Road area, and links to

Westfield. To include public realm improvement of the cul de sac end of St Chads Road adjoining the river, where there are attractive views of the backs of historic buildings that front on to The Island.

- Investigate opportunities for improving pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre from the Station Road area of the town.
- Explore opportunities for a new footbridge over the River Somer In the vicinity of the St Chad's surgery to provide a pedestrian and cyclist link from the Radstock Road area to the proposed Town Park and Sports Centre, and an alternative route to the town centre
- Working with owners improve the appearance and use of land and buildings at the rear of High Street properties backing on to South Road and the public car park
- Address the poor condition of footpaths in upper High Street
- Introduce more visually sympathetic surface treatment(s) in the historic core area including The Island, High Street and Church Square. The public space outside the Town Hall is currently tarmac and used for parking. It could accommodate a weekly market as part of an enhancement scheme. The planning permission to refurbish and extend the Town Hall includes restoring the market hall use on the ground floor. This would provide a further opportunity to link with any enhancement scheme proposals for the external public space fronting the listed building in this part of the historic core, and exploring its potential use(s) and contribution to town centre vitality.

- Promote a shopfront and signage improvement pilot scheme, focussed on two or three adjoining High Street shop units, in liaison with the owners.
- Working with the owners introduce planting schemes to part-screen and soften the appearance of the car park areas associated with large stores on High Street and to screen the unattractive concrete BT exchange on Silver Street.
- Should the opportunity arise, support the undergrounding of power supplies by the statutory undertaker to improve the street scene, particularly on Radstock Road and North Road.
- Consider opportunities for landscape improvements to the area in the vicinity of the sports centre and doctors surgery, together with improving the appearance of the strip of land between Gullock Tynning and the rear boundaries of properties fronting Rackvernal Road. This could include tree planting to help screen the row of parked vehicles.

Recommendation:

Prepare a prioritised conservation area improvement work programme to form part of and integrate with any wider regeneration plans which would aim to seek funding opportunities, consider short, medium and long term timescales for implementation, and identify potential links with other schemes in the conservation area.



9 Monitoring and review

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework guidance published by Historic England in *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2016)*. Both the conservation area character appraisal and the management plan should be subject to monitoring and review on a regular basis.

As recommended by Historic England, subject to resources this document should be regularly reviewed from the date of its formal adoption by the Council. It will need to be assessed in the light of the current Development Plan, government guidance and guidance from Historic England.

Appendices

1 National and local planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for sustainable development, which includes the conservation of the historic environment. When developments are proposed, the Framework requires the significance of heritage assets including archaeology, listed buildings and conservation areas to be defined and it stresses that 'as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.'

The NPPF is further explained in the accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance.

The statutory development plan for Bath and North East Somerset comprises the Core Strategy (July 2014), Placemaking Plan (July 2017), saved Local Plan policy GDS1 sites K2, NR2, V3 and V8 (2007), Joint Waste Core Strategy (March 2011) and made Neighbourhood Plans.

Further information on the current Development Plan for Bath & North East Somerset can be viewed on the Council's website by following the link to the Planning Policy homepage or by contacting the Planning Policy Team on 01225 477548.

2 Further reading

Pevsner, N (1958) *The Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol*

Pevsner, N (2011) *The Buildings of England: Somerset North and Bristol*

Boyd, L (2013) *Radstock and Midsomer Norton Through Time*

Radstock and Midsomer Norton Historical Streetscape Survey (2001)

Field Boundaries Project, BANES (2006)

Streetscape Manual, Bath & North East Somerset Council, (2005)

Policy and General Guidance

The Bath & North East Somerset Development Plan

The National Planning Policy Framework – Chapter 12

'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', DCLG2012

The National Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG 2014

Bath & North East Somerset, Living in a Conservation Area, 2003

Bath & North East Somerset Streetscape Manual, 2005

Archaeology in Bath and North East Somerset: Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004

Rural Landscapes of Bath and North East Somerset: A Landscape Character Assessment, Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003

The 1984 revision to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan 2007 as revised

English Heritage, The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2015)

Historic England, Conservation Areas Designation, Appraisals and Management (February 2016)

Historic England, Understanding Historic Buildings (May 2016)

Historic England, Local Heritage Listing (May 2016)

3 Glossary

Listed buildings: Buildings on the National Heritage List for England compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Heritage asset: A designated or undesignated building, monument, archaeological site, place, area or landscape identified as possessing local or national significance and heritage and cultural value meriting special consideration in planning decisions and the planning process.

Conservation Area: Defined by legislation as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Some permitted development rights are removed for owners of buildings in a conservation area and special planning controls may apply.

4 Contact details

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Development Management
Lewis House
Manvers Street
Bath BA1 1JG
Telephone (01225) 394041

Further contact details can be found on B&NES Council's website: www.bathnes.gov.uk

This document can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from Planning Services on 01225 394041