

PROPOSED NORTHDOWN ROAD CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Thanet District Council

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cliftonville in east Margate is a well preserved seaside resort, and most of the original streets, spaces and buildings remain relatively unaltered. Built to high standards of design and construction from the 1860s onwards, the buildings provide a fine example of historic seaside architecture which is compatible in quality to similarly dated seaside developments elsewhere in England. Against this remarkable survival must be balanced the fact that today, the Margate Central and Cliftonville West wards are amongst the most deprived wards in the south east (as defined by the Indices of Deprivation 2011).

In their report following a recent visit to Margate, the Urban Panel of the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) stated that "Cliftonville could, by a different fluke of social history and demographics, be one of the most desirable parts of the country to live". For the past few years, the District Council and its partners have been taking a strategic approach towards the social and economic regeneration of Margate Central and West Cliftonville, as evidenced by the designation of new conservation areas, the provision of grant aid, and the provision of new planning policies and guidance. A successful future can often be secured by keeping and improving that which is best from the past.

Cliftonville has also been identified as important part of the local heritage by officers of the District Council, by Historic England (this Appraisal was in the main grant funded by Historic England), and by the local community, which has been consulted on initial drafts of this document.



19th century railings in Northdown Road

Conservation Area designation is not intended to prevent change or adaptation but simply to ensure that any proposals for change are properly considered. Restoration of the historic built environment will not impede its regeneration, and, indeed, designation will enable the District Council as the planning authority to incrementally improve the appearance of the buildings and the spaces between them, providing an impetus for private investment. Further work is being done by the District Council under separate initiatives to encourage larger residential units and the creation of more owner-occupied property.



Well detailed purpose-built shops in Northdown Road

This document provides a detailed analysis of the special interest of the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area and records those features which make the Conservation Area worthy of designation (the 'Character Appraisal'). It also provides proposals for enhancements (the 'Management Plan'), most of which will be the responsibility of either Thanet District Council or Kent County Council (as Highways Authority). All of the recommendations will, of course, be subject to funding and staff resources being made available.

The production of up-to-date Character Appraisals assists the Council in making decisions on planning applications within or on the edges of the Conservation Area. Character Appraisals also help the local community appreciate what is 'special' about their area and encourages local involvement in the planning process. Whilst some of the recommendations in the Management Plan will have to remain aspirational for the time being, it is considered good practice to identify where improvements are needed so that actions can be taken promptly if, and when, funding becomes available.

Subject to public consultation, it is anticipated that the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area could be designated during 2015 by Thanet District Council. Other conservation areas may be designated in Cliftonville as part of a review of the Cliftonville area which commenced in the summer of 2010. This Character Appraisal and Management Plan will be subject to a eight week public consultation between 11 January 2016 to 7 March 2016 after which any necessary amendments will be made to the document and the accompanying mapping. The final Appraisal and Management Plan will be approved by the Council in due course as a material document for development control purposes.

This Northdown Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal with its attendant Management Plan has been produced for the Council by The Conservation Studio. The survey work and background research were undertaken between August 2010 and January 2011. The general format of these documents follows guidance produced by Historic England on the effective management of conservation areas.

Conservation Area Designation

Despite what some people think, conservation area designation is not a bureaucratic way of preventing property owners from exercising their rights to alter their buildings as they wish. Conservation areas designation does not preclude development, but seeks to ensure recognition of the area's historical value in planning that development. Conservation area designation is aimed at managing change so that positive qualities of an area are protected and opportunities for improvement identified. Designation of a conservation area therefore, has a number of benefits that

a wider community can enjoy including:

- The positive identification of an area is designed to focus attention on its qualities, which may include the historic layout and development of the area, scale and detailing of their individual buildings and spaces between them, construction materials, open spaces and trees, walls etc. The interaction of the buildings and spaces within designated areas create unique environments that contribute irreplaceable components of our local, regional and national heritage.
- Conservation area designation brings the advantage of living, working and socialising in an attractive area with a unique sense of place and where local identity and architectural and historical distinctiveness are fostered and maintained.
- People value conservation areas for their distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character and research by the London School of Economics and Historic England has found that this value is reflected in the price of properties in conservation areas and overall there is no negative attitude toward planning regulations.
- The planning controls that come with conservation area designation are more limited than many people imagine and are designed to benefit the wider community.

The designation of a conservation area is intended to encourage a sensitive approach to proposals for development. The legislative duty that designation brings provides a framework to achieve higher quality of development and promote more sensitive improvements in conservation areas.

- Conservation area designation brings the requirement to apply for planning permission to demolish most buildings. Outside a conservation area, planning permission is not required for the demolition of buildings leaving many buildings not protected and vulnerable to removal. Designation provides a framework to protect buildings that make a significant contribution to the character of an area.
- Additional benefits of conservation area designation include the possibility of accessing grant schemes. Where appropriate it may provide the basis for the local planning authority to make bids under the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme such as the one which operates within Dalby Square Conservation Area. This scheme provides financial assistance to property owners with works to the fabric of their buildings or to restore derelict properties. THI is a grant programme administered by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the repair and regeneration of historic buildings. Projects are generally led by local partnerships.
- The local authority is under a general duty to take into account the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the area when determining planning applications affecting conservation areas.

PART 1

THE PROPOSED NORTHDOWN ROAD CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary of the special interest of the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area

Northdown Road forms a linear 'spine' to the seaside suburb of Cliftonville which lies to the east of the older settlement of Margate. It connects further proposed conservation areas which lie to the north and south of it. Whilst the western end of Northdown Road retains some buildings which are shown on the 1821 map, the majority of the buildings in the Conservation Area are commercial premises which were largely built during Cliftonville's heyday between the 1870s and the early 20th century to provide goods and services to the area's many visitors and residents. It is notable for its rows of well detailed shops, which are interrupted by individual buildings such as St Michael and St Bishoy's Church (the former St Stephen's Wesleyan Methodist Church). Nearby, St Paul's Church and its vicarage (listed in 2010) are further landmark buildings. There are also terraces of well detailed late 19th or early 20th century houses, the most notable being the Arts and Crafts houses in Crawford Gardens and a pair of similarly-dated houses in Prices Gardens.



Arts and Crafts houses in Crawford Gardens

Despite the economic problems of Cliftonville, Northdown Road remains a vibrant and popular shopping area, with many of its customers travelling from outside to use its various facilities. These include branches of the national banks and building societies and a wide variety of shops including (just outside the Conservation Area) a small Tesco's Supermarket. A number of public houses, cafes, and restaurants all add to the attractions of this part of Cliftonville.

Issues facing the Conservation Area include the provision of a Northdown Road Enhancement Scheme to improve 'negative' sites and buildings; the production of a Public Realm Strategy to improve the spaces between the buildings; the poor and eroding condition of the buildings and the need for grant aid; the need for additional planning controls, possibly through the use of Article 4 Directions; to ensure that all new development is of the highest possible standards; improving shopfronts and advertising generally; adding a number of buildings to the emerging Local List for Cliftonville; encouraging civic pride and providing publicity and guidance for local residents and business owners; and regularly monitoring change in the Conservation Area and adhering to the Action Plan timetable set out in the end of this document.

1.2 The control of conservation areas

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. 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”.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with recently published Historic England guidance as set out in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas can be found in ‘Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment’ (PPS5), published in March 2010.

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area and identify the issues which threaten its special qualities (in the form of the ‘Character Appraisal’);
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and also achieve the enhancement of the Conservation Area (in the form of the ‘Management Proposals Plan’).

1.3 Community involvement

Informal consultations were carried out with the local community on the proposals for the new Cliftonville conservation area designations in October 2010, after which a Character Appraisal and Management Plan for each of the new conservation areas was prepared. Following this eight week public consultation on the Council’s website between 11 January 2016 to 7 March 2016 a Public Consultations Report will be prepared (copies may be obtained from the District Council) and amendments to the text and mapping will be made as appropriate. Finally, each Character Appraisal and Management Plan will be approved by the Council as a material document for development management purposes.

2 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

2.1 Location and context

The proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area lies within the seaside suburb of Cliftonville, a 19th century expansion of the medieval port of Margate, which lies immediately to the west. Margate is located on the Isle of Thanet, a coastal district at the eastern extremity of the county of Kent in south east England. Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs are the principal settlements in Thanet District, and each is famous for its seaside setting and attractive historic town centres.

Margate is approximately 76 miles south east of London by road and is accessed via the M2 and the A299, the Thanet Way. Railway routes lead to Canterbury, Dover and along the north coast via Herne Bay and Whitstable to London.

The proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area abuts several proposed or already designated conservation areas. To the immediate west lies the Margate Conservation Area, and to the north (from west to east) lie the Ethelbert Road and Athelstan Road Conservation Area, the proposed Edgar Road and Sweyn Road Conservation Area, and the proposed Norfolk Road, Warwick Road and Surrey Road Conservation Area. The Dalby Square Conservation Area, which has also already been designated, also lies to the north. To the south lies the proposed Grotto Hill Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area lies within the Cliftonville West Ward of Thanet District Council. The area of Cliftonville is in the region of 120 hectares and the population (at the 2011 census) was 7,608. Demographically, the population is predominantly white European.



View from Northdown Road towards the sea along Edgar Road



View down Athelstan Road to the sea

2.2 Landscape setting, topography and geology

Margate is located over solid chalk, with high chalk cliffs rising to either side of the beach and harbour in the centre of the town. The Dane Valley rises gently southwards through the town from this beach. Cliftonville lies on roughly level ground on the eastern cliff tops above the town about 20 metres above sea level, although cuts have been made through the cliffs in previous centuries to allow access to the sandy beaches below. These cliffs lie about five hundred metres to the north of Northdown Road. A slight south to north drop in ground level reinforces the opportunities for long views over the seascape to the north of these cliffs. To the south of Northdown Road, the land falls steeply – this is most evident in the proposed Grotto Hill Conservation Area.

3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Archaeology

Archaeological remains are frequently found in the Cliftonville and Margate areas. The remains of all periods from the Neolithic to Modern are recorded within the area and consist of both burial and settlement archaeology. Archaeological remains of Roman date have been recorded within the Dalby Square Conservation Area and there is a high potential for further remains of this and other periods to be present there.

Romano-British activity seems to cluster around both sides of the Dane Valley leading up to the present harbour with most of the activity concentrated at the seaward end of the valley on both high ground and further down the valley sides. Activity is similarly recorded further inland, also along the valley sides. A Romano-British cremation burial dating to between 75 and 125 AD was found by workmen excavating a trench in Arthur Road, Cliftonville. The pit contained a carinated urn in Upchurch Ware filled with ashes and burnt human bone, and was accompanied by a stamped Samian platter. The burial is recorded by the workmen as having been truncated by former Victorian ground works and sealed by a floor. Other Roman burials are known from the Britannia Public House, Fort Hill site, located to the west of Cliftonville.

3.2 The development of Margate

Margate developed from a minor medieval port to a seaside resort from the mid-18th century onwards. By 1800 the town had assembly rooms, residential squares, bathing establishments, libraries and theatres, all designed to cater to the needs of aristocratic visitors – the only class of society to take ‘holidays’. In 1828 increased numbers resulted in Holy Trinity Church being built on what was then the eastern edge of the town, close to what was to become Ethelbert Road, as a chapel-of-ease to St John’s – it was soon extended to provide 800 rented pews and 1,200 free seats. In 1845 the land which was to later develop as Cliftonville was still fields, with a Coastguard Station on the cut through the high cliffs which dropped down to the beach (now Hodges Gap). The arrival of the railway in 1846, and the addition of a further line and station in 1863, changed the type of visitor to the town from a limited number of wealthy long stay guests to a greater number of short stay visitors with less per capita income.

The town’s established place in public consciousness was a good foundation for creating a new resort in Cliftonville, a resort that reversed the popular perception that Margate was increasingly becoming an attraction to the pleasure-seeking working classes. Cliftonville’s distance from the town centre, and its open cliff-top walks, were promoted as part of its exclusivity – Cliftonville was a place where one stayed to improve one’s health and peace of mind, all year around if necessary. In 1824 Clifton Baths were built to provide an opportunity to bath in heated seawater ‘for the nobility and gentry’, and in 1855 Thomas Pettman leased the cliff-top and shoreline from the Marquis of Conyngham so he could access his Bathing Platform down one of the old gaps on the cliff face (Newgate Gap) which had been used by farmers collecting seaweed from the beach. At this time other major land-owners in Cliftonville included the Church Commissioners and charities such as the Bethlehem Hospital and the Ragged School Union.

The exclusivity of Cliftonville was bolstered by the area’s relative isolation. Until the building of a tramway in 1901 the only method of transport from Margate’s stations was by horse brake. Access was improved in the late 1880s by the building of Marine Drive which completed the seafront thoroughfare from Buenos Ayres to Eastern Esplanade. Between 1880 and 1899 the station of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company was known as ‘Margate and Cliftonville’ (it was later to be known as ‘Margate West’). Plans for a branch line from Margate to Cliftonville, with a terminus at the rear of Dalby Square, were first proposed in 1893 but were never implemented.

The association of the area with a ‘better class of person’ became the key selling point for the new

resort. The entry for Cliftonville in the Ward Locke Guide of 1903 stated:

'It is the most exclusive and aristocratic part of Margate. It cannot be said too often that there are two Margate's and that Cliftonville has scarcely anything in common with the area frequented by the vulgar tripper. Cliftonville has magnificent hotels with their private orchestras and admirable cuisine catering for all types of continental clientele. It has been often said that on a Sunday morning between Newgate Gapway and Hodges Flagstaff one may see the prettiest and best dressed women in Europe.'

The centrepiece of this 'Margate New Town' was Dalby Square, with a massive terrace of seven houses, Warriar Crescent, on the south side. This space had been laid out by the 1850s, and was originally called Ethelbert Square, the name being changed to Dalby Square in the 1870s after the then mayor (and local builder), Thomas Dalby Reeve, who also owned both the Clifton Baths and the Hall by the Sea. The Reeve family was one of the early developers of the Cliftonville estate, and Dalby Reeve's son Arthur, after whom Arthur Road is named, married George Sanger's daughter Harriet. George Sanger and his brother John Sanger, who are both buried in Margate Cemetery, were circus proprietors who were famous for their equestrian spectacles. They leased the Agricultural Hall at Islington and their show was eventually purchased in 1874 by the American showman P T Barnum.

In 1869 the Cliftonville Hotel, located at the eastward end of Dalby Square, was opened. It is noted that at that time it sat 'on an island site in the middle of corn fields'. The hotel had 250 bedrooms, a dining room which could hold over 300 people, a ballroom, a palm court and facilities for croquet, tennis and archery amidst formal gardens along the cliff top. In all, the hotel provided the accommodation for about 50% of all hotel guests in Cliftonville, but by 1890 this figure had dropped to around 15% as so many other hotels had been built.

Another important contribution to the locality was provided by the large number of private schools. A resort guide of 1893 described Cliftonville as:

'The end of the town affected by visitors who like a good address, and also by ladies' schools, if one may judge by the endless chain of them travelling churchwards on Sundays.'

In 1900 the Cliftonville Hydro Hotel with 110 bedrooms was opened, later being renamed the Grand Hotel (from 1956 this formed part of Butlins). By 1900 a grid pattern of streets off Northdown Road had also been completed (Edgar, Sweyne, Godwin, Harold, Norfolk and Surrey Roads), all with a mixture of houses and guest houses along them. In 1913 'Bobby's' was opened as a department store in Northdown Road, although it closed in 1973.

Along the seafront, the Oval, a former school cricket field, was excavated in 1897 and an amphitheatre created with a new bandstand being added in 1903. This area became the centre of Cliftonville's entertainments for the next 50 years with many concerts and other events taking place. In 1906 mixed sea bathing was finally allowed in Margate, and by 1913 donkey (or 'Jerusalem pony') rides were being provided by local gypsies along the sea shore.

After World War 1 the Borough of Margate was increasingly seeing Cliftonville as the prime attraction of the town and in 1920 the Council acquired the cliff top land from Sacketts Gap to the Borough's eastern boundary – 61 acres in all. This land was used to provide new public walks and pleasure grounds, continuing the 19th century concept of promoting Cliftonville as a health-giving place where the benefits of sea water and sea air were unparalleled.

The growth of Cliftonville during this period between the late 19th and the early part of the 20th century is demonstrated by the number of Cliftonville school children – around 2,000 in 1885 and about 5,000 in 1922.



St Paul's Vicarage and the church beyond date to the 1870s

Cliftonville continued to thrive until World War 2, and Dalby Square particularly was noted for the prestigious hotels, guest houses and convalescent homes which fronted it. However, the War saw the evacuation of schools to other parts of the country and most never returned. Warrier Crescent suffered bomb damage and was only partially reconstructed after the War – it was finally demolished in its entirety in 1988.

From the 1960s onwards the provision of cheap holidays to Spain and other exotic locations completed a process which had begun some 30 years earlier. Many of the bigger hotels closed or were converted into flats, the demolition of the Cliftonville Hotel in 1961 being particularly disastrous. It was replaced with a complex of buildings which are currently used as a café, public house, bowling alley and other leisure-related facilities.

3.3 The development of the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area

The earliest buildings in the proposed Conservation Area lie close to Margate town centre and are shown on the 1821 map. They face Dane Hill (Nos. 18-32 even) and a short adjoining section of what is now Northdown Road and were presumably all built as residential properties. Further along Northdown Road the properties date to the 1850s – Clifton Lodge, No. 90 Northdown Road, retains a date plaque of 1857. This area was known first as Clifton Place (1852), then Northumberland Road and Alexandra Road (1879), but at some time after 1905 the whole road became known as Northdown Road from Dane Hill to beyond Wyndham Avenue. Most of Northdown Road was constructed from the 1870s onwards– it is shown as nearly completely built-up as far as Harold Road on the 1899 Map, although in 1900 less than 12 shops are recorded. However, by 1912 many of these new houses had been converted into commercial premises, no doubt assisted by the provision of the new tramway from Margate town centre in 1899. Cliftonville reached the zenith of its popularity between 1890 and 1905, and the more eastern end of the proposed Conservation Area contains a number of early 20th century shops and houses which were designed in the Arts and Crafts style. St Paul's Church was consecrated in 1873 and St Stephen's Wesleyan Methodist Church (now St Michael and St Bishoy's Church) was opened in 1876 – they are both in Northdown Road.

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

4.1 General character and plan form

The proposed Conservation Area retains the character of a busy historic shopping area, and is linear in form, stretching along Northdown Road and being usually no more than one plot deep on either side. The road runs in a north-west to south-east direction and curves gently, so views along the street are contained by the buildings on either side. Most of these were built between the 1870s and the early 20th century, and they are usually arranged in long terraces which face Northdown Road, the groups being punctuated by the openings into the grid pattern of streets which lie to the north and south.

4.2 Open spaces and trees

Historically, the Northdown Road area was always served by the wide open spaces and promenades which now lie within the proposed Cliftonville Cliff Top Conservation Area (to the north) or the planned landscape of Dane Park, which was opened in 1897 (to the south). As a result, the proposed Conservation Area contains hardly any public open space apart from the (modern) landscaped area in front of St Paul's Church. This is paved, with raised brick planters, a number of semi-mature trees, and some public seating. An historic gas light, now converted to electricity, is of note at the entrance to the church. A small 'green' of grass and some semi-mature trees can be seen in Crawford Gardens, heavily compromised by unregulated car parking.



The landscaped area in front of St Paul's Church

Elsewhere, as the buildings are usually located on the back edge of the pavement, there are no front gardens although in the side streets, where the properties are mainly used as family houses, there are some modest front gardens.

It follows that there are few trees of any note in the Conservation Area (an issue which is raised later in the Management Plan), the only group of mature trees being on the south side of Clarendon Road, where the Conservation Area boundary has been specifically drawn to include most of them.

4.3 Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

Focal points and focal buildings:

The historical development of Northdown Road as a functional shopping street means that there are no planned focal points, although the two churches (St Paul's and St Michael's and St Bishoy's

Church, formerly St Stephen's Wesleyan Methodist Church) both provide important focal points in views along Northdown Road.



The spire of St Michael and St Bishoy's Church is a key focal point

Views and vistas

The long, linear shape of the Conservation Area, the flat topography, and the enclosure provided by the continuous groups of buildings, mean that there hardly any notable views apart from long views along Northdown Road in each direction. The two churches, as mentioned above, do provide some focus to the longer views along the western end of Northdown Road.

4.4 Boundaries

Most of the properties in the Conservation Area sit on the back edge of the pavement so there are few boundaries to the front. There are a variety of very mixed boundaries to the rear, although these are largely hidden by the buildings. In the more residential areas off Northdown Road, such as Wyndham Road and Lyndhurst Avenue, many of the terraced houses retain their original late 19th century front boundary walls which are built from red brick with stone copings. They are about 800 mm high, and the adjoining gate piers are similarly detailed, but taller with pyramid-shaped copings. Some of these walls have been removed to create a car parking space.

Clarendon Road contains a terrace of c1870 Gothic-style Victorian houses very much in the style of Edward Pugin with raised ground floors accessed by paired steps leading up to the adjoining front doors. The front gardens to either side of these steps are not large but provide some welcome greenery in the Conservation Area. They are defined, where they survive, by brown brick walls about 450 mm high with white painted copings topped by a single cast iron railing supported on decorative brackets. These match the railings which can be seen on either side of the steps. Cast iron coal holes remain in places and are marked 'Joseph Brown and Son Builders Margate'.

Some of the older buildings in the Conservation Area, mainly in the western end of the Conservation Area, have very small front areas which are enclosed by their original wrought iron and cast iron railings, dating to the 1850s to 1870s. Examples include:

- Fluted cast iron railings to entrance to No. 26 Dane Hill
- Plain wrought iron railings to Nos. 28 and 30 Dane Hill
- Spear-headed cast iron railings to front steps and front area to No. 42 Northdown Road
- Similar railings further along the road outside some of Nos. 54-116 Northdown Road



Houses in Clarendon Road



Cast iron coal hole cover, Clarendon Road

A few properties have modern boundaries of no merit – these include No. 78 Northdown Road, which is fronted by a low wall built out of concrete blockwork.

4.5 Public realm

The public realm includes the public spaces between the buildings and covers items such as the type of pavement or road surface, street signage and street lighting, public seating and litter bins, and any other features of local significance. Most of them will be the responsibility of the District Council or the Highways Department of Kent County Council. In general, whilst some attempts have been made to standardise and simplify these features, and some landscaping work has been undertaken, the overall effect is somewhat disparate and low quality. In several locations, modern steel railings have been installed to prevent pedestrians crossing the road, although there are also several controlled pedestrian crossings. Street lighting is strictly utilitarian, and is provided by tall steel lamps, and litter bins are plain black plastic, all to a standard design.

Outside No. 178 Northdown Road (formerly Sandy-Wiches) the 1930s shopfront is enhanced by the small scale tiled forecourt which is presumably contemporary to the building. There is a very small area of historic York stone paving at the entrance to Price's Avenue, but this appears to be the only remaining example of traditional paving in the Conservation Area, although York stone was probably once far more common. Occasional wooden 'tub' planters with somewhat neglected planting also feature in places.



Examples of the poor quality public realm in Northdown Road

Pavements are mainly covered in black tarmacadam or concrete slabs or concrete paviors. An

enhancement scheme was carried out in part of Northdown Road some time ago, providing parking bays, widened pavements, and areas of higher quality paving. Some of the shops appear to own their immediate forecourt as there are changes of materials in many locations, all adding to the overall feeling of clutter, although occasionally, such as outside The Secret Garden, this is a positive thing as the shop owner uses the forecourt to display a range of flowers and plants.



The Secret Garden, Northdown Road

Northdown Road retains a number of probably late 19th century street name plates which are fixed to the buildings and can be found throughout Cliftonville. These are made from cast iron with white letters on a black background, and the corners are attractively indented. These need to be retained and their long-term maintenance assured.

5 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Building types and dates

Nearly all of the buildings in the proposed Conservation Area were originally built as family houses or as commercial premises, including a few purpose-built shopping developments. They date to between the early 19th century (though most are post-1870) and 1914. Non-domestic or commercial buildings include the two large churches in Northdown Road, which date to the 1870s, the Northumberland Gospel Hall (probably c1900), and several 1920s industrial buildings, such as the car workshop in Wyndham Avenue. There are also a few 1960s buildings or later, although generally these do not intrude in the streetscape except where they are 'negative', such as the car wash centre off Athelstan Road.

5.2 Listed buildings

There are currently three listed buildings or building groups in the Conservation Area. St Paul's Church and its adjoining vicarage are both listed grade II. The church was built in ragstone between 1872 and 1873 to the designs of R K Blessey of Eastbourne, although it was completed by R Wheeler. The vicarage is also by Blessey and was similarly completed in 1873. Both of these buildings are key buildings within the Conservation Area.

St Michael and St Bishoy's Coptic Church, opened as St Speshen's Church in 1878, is listed Grade II.



St Paul's Vicarage, Northdown Road

Nos. 7-12 Caroline Square form a short terrace of early 19th century cottages, located in a quiet backwater off Northdown Road. Listed grade II, they date to the early 19th century and are two storeys high over a basement. They retain a few original features including some sash windows and panelled front doors, but are otherwise rather altered.

5.3 Locally listed buildings

There are currently no locally listed buildings in the proposed Conservation Area, but the Management Plan includes a recommendation to add the following buildings to the emerging Local List:

- The Gospel Northumberland Hall, No. 39 Northdown Road
- Nos. 214/216 even Northdown Road, western corner of Northdown Road and Cliftonville Avenue
- The former Snooker Hall, built as Bobby's Department Store in 1913, on the eastern corner

- of Northdown Road and Cliftonville Avenue
- Nos. 242-250 and 256-268 even Northdown Road
- Nos. 1-6 consec. Crawford Gardens



The former Snooker Hall, built in 1913

Descriptions of these buildings can be found in the Management Plan para. 2.6.

5.4 Positive buildings

Most of the historic buildings in the proposed Conservation Area have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map as being positive buildings of townscape merit. Buildings identified as being 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. In the Northdown Road Conservation Area, the earliest 'positive' buildings are along the south-western side of Northdown Road where they date to the 1850s. Otherwise, most of these buildings date to between the 1870s and 1914, although a few in the eastern end of the Conservation Area (as well as the occasional building elsewhere), date to the 1920s or 1930s.

The identification of these 'positive' buildings follows advice provided within Historic England's Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and management, which provides a helpful list of criteria on page 15. The guidance advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a 'positive' contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Proposals to demolish such buildings will therefore be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. This implies therefore that all buildings marked as 'positive' on the Townscape Appraisal Map will be retained in some form in the future unless a special case can be made for demolition.

5.5 Building styles, materials and colours

Most of the buildings in the proposed Conservation Area are typical of the early or mid 19th century to the early 20th century, and are notable for their substantial, well detailed brick, stuccoed, or tiled façades. They are largely arranged in cohesive terraces of varying design, most commonly being two windows wide. Roofs are usually slated or tiled, often concealed by parapets from the street below. Whilst most are three storeys high, a significant number are only two storeys (particularly the residential houses in the eastern end of the Conservation Area), and occasionally, such as can

be seen in the western end of Northdown Road, they are three storeys high. Many were planned developments, with definite groups of matching terraced properties which remain relatively unaltered, although modern shopfronts have often been inserted and many have had their original windows replaced using modern materials. The overall style is Italianate, with sash windows and parapets which conceal the slated roofs, and some properties in the western end of the street, such as Nos. 86, 88 and 90, which date to 1857 (date plaque) have or had first floor balconies with their original cast iron railings. No. 82 retains a similar balcony but this time the railings are far more decorative.



These properties at the western end of Northdown Road date to the mid 19th century



Caroline Square

Caroline Square retains a short terrace of mid-19th century two storey houses with six over six sash windows and painted brick facades. Some of these have their original cast iron spear-head railings. A similarly aged building, which must have once been detached, stands on the corner of Clarendon Road and Northdown Road – No. 200. This has its principal entrance on the side (now blocked up) with six over six sash windows suggesting a date of c1850. Later buildings, dating to 1900 onwards, may have more decorated facades with canted bay windows or gables which face the street. Apart from the buildings which are proposed for local listing (for details see the Management Plan), other groups of special interest include:

- Nos. 182-192 Northdown Road c1910 – these are three storeys high, and one window wide with a variety of eaves details. Whilst the ground floor shopfronts are all modern, they are unified by the survival of attractive oriel windows at first floor level with ogee curved lead roofs.



Nos. 182-192 even Northdown Road



Magdala Villas, Nos. 99-125 odd Northdown Road

- Magdala Villas, Nos. 99-125 Northdown Road – these are shown on the 1879 map as a group of 12 paired villas, set back slightly from the road – single storey shopfronts were probably added in c1900. They are notable for their tall stuccoed gables at first and second floor level, which retain their attractive stucco details.

Nos. 1-8 consec. Clarendon Road – these are shown partly built on the 1879 map and are an unusual example of stock brick three storey houses with Gothic details including pointed window heads and pierced parapets. The raised ground floors are accessed by paired steps with cast iron railings. Nos. 1 and 2 have ground floor verandas with cast iron railings and cast iron columns which support roofs covered with fishscale slates. Many of the original heavily moulded panelled front doors remain.



Detail of the front doors, Clarendon Road

Of note are the well preserved terraces of quite modest late 19th century houses in Wyndham Avenue and Lyndhurst Avenue, with their red brick or pebble-dashed facades, pitched tiled or slated roofs, and sash windows set in double height canted bays which are surmounted by gables which face the street. Some of the original six over one sash windows remain, the design suggesting a date of c.1910 (they are not shown on the 1905 map, when this part of Cliftonville was still fields).



Houses in Wyndham Avenue



Houses in Lyndhurst Avenue

5.6 Activities and Uses

The proposed Conservation Area is in a very wide variety of uses, with most of the properties which

face Northdown Road being occupied at ground floor level by commercial premises. These include retail shops, banks, buildings societies, and offices. A small 'Costcutter' Supermarket can be found at Nos. 39-41 Northdown Road, and just outside the proposed Conservation Area to the east is a small Tesco's Supermarket and a petrol-filling station. Many of the upper floors of the shops appear to be used for residential purposes, but some are also used as offices or as storage for the shops below.



Early 20th century shops in Northdown Road

Family houses can be found in the late 19th century terraced properties in Lyndhurst Avenue and Wyndham Avenue, and also in the Arts and Crafts houses in Crawford Gardens. Further residential uses are evident in many of the houses in Northdown Road but they largely appear to have been converted into flats. There are two churches (St Michael and St Bishoy's Church and St Paul's Church), both in Northdown Road and both are still in use. Other uses include the former Northumberland Gospel Hall (No. 37 Northdown Road), a car repair premises in Wyndham Avenue, and further car wash premises at the entrance to Athelstan Road, a 'negative' site.



Northumberland Hall

Although clearly struggling in the current economic climate, with some vacant shops and a certain amount of poorly maintained property, Northdown Road appears to have partially survived the loss of the visitors who once frequented Cliftonville because it now serves a large residential area. This includes the 19th and early 20th century residential development in the immediate vicinity as well as the Inter-War houses to the east. Northdown Road is also used by Margate residents who appreciate the variety of shops and the ease of car parking – there is plenty of on-street car parking so the 'shoppers' car park off Harold Road is not heavily used.



The car wash off Athelstan Road

5.7 Shopfronts

There are a very large number of shopfronts in the proposed Conservation Area, the majority being (at best) neutral in their impact, and some, due to their design, colour and lighting, being strongly negative. However, a number of well preserved historic shopfronts remain, mainly dating to between 1900 and the 1930s. Some of them form part of ground floor extensions to buildings which were originally in full residential use (such as Magdala Terrace) and some were purpose-built as part of the building. Until the early 20th century there were few shops in Northdown Road (only 12 are recorded in 1900) and it appears that many were either converted or added to existing buildings in the 1900-1914 period. The most notable historic shopfronts are listed at Appendix 2.

The control and enhancement of these shopfronts is further discussed in the Management Plan.



Shops of the 1870s in Northdown Road

6 THE EXTENT OF INTRUSION OR DAMAGE

6.1 Key negative features

This Character Appraisal concludes that the most significant negative features of the proposed Northdown Conservation Area are:

Spatial:

- Poor quality pavements
- Modern street lighting
- Very little public open space and what there is, is poor quality
- Busy traffic along Northdown Road, and subsequent impact on pedestrians
- Poor quality pavements and street furniture

Buildings:

- Many of the properties (apart from the three streets in the east – Wyndham Avenue, Lyndhurst Avenue and Crawford Gardens)) have been sub-divided into small flats resulting in very high densities of population
- Many of the windows and front doors of the buildings have been changed using modern materials such as uPVC
- The loss of front boundaries to some of the properties to create car parking
- Poor quality shopfronts, including over-dominant fascias, badly detailed lighting and the use of garish colours and signage (e.g. the bright red National Tyres and Autocare premises in Edgar Road)
- Under-used upper floors
- Buildings in urgent need of routine maintenance and repair
- Vacant commercial property with attendant impacts on the street scene
- A number of the most notable buildings, such as the former Snooker Hall, are for sale

Site specific improvements:

- The public open space in front of St Paul's Church
- The car valeting site on the junction of Athelstan Road and Northdown Road

General:

No information about the shops or what is available in the street.

6.2 Summary of issues

Taking the 'negative features' identified above into account, the following issues are considered to be the most pressing matters which need to be addressed by the Management Plan for the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area:

Northdown Road enhancement scheme

- There is a need for an overall strategy to address both privately and publically owned land and buildings - this could include a grant scheme to encourage property owners to repair and enhance their buildings

The poor condition of the buildings

- Many of the buildings appear to be in urgent need of repairs
- The use of modern materials such as uPVC for windows and front doors
- The loss of other architectural features from the front elevations

- Poorly designed front extensions (to provide shops)

Public realm improvements

- A new public realm strategy is needed, possibly in partnership with a new grant scheme, to improve the public realm in the Conservation Area – all of the area would benefit from improvements to street surfaces, street lighting, and street furniture
- Street name plates – the existing historic nameplates should be maintained and new nameplates made as appropriate

The control of new development

- All new development must be to the highest possible standards

Local List review

- There are a number of possible additions to Thanet District Council's proposed list of locally significant buildings

Site specific improvements

- A number of sites, both in private and public ownership, would benefit from either improvements or total redevelopment

Education and publicity

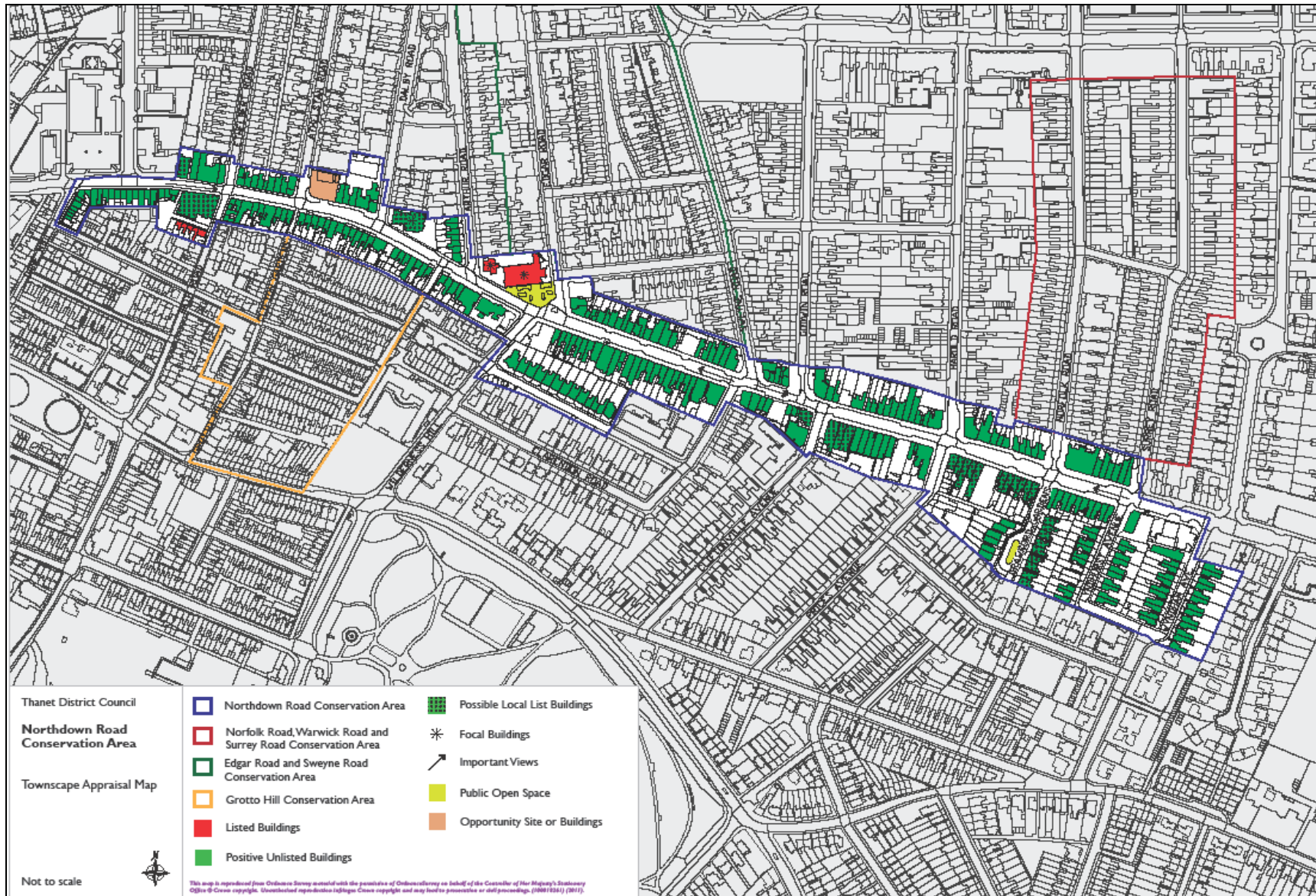
- There is a need for further education and publicity, including encouraging civic pride and a sense of place

Monitoring and enforcement

- The District Council needs to set up a programme of implementation to ensure that the recommendations in the Management Plan are taken forward at the earliest opportunity.



Appendix 1 Map 1 Development Phases



Appendix 2 Map 2 Townscape Appraisal Map

Appendix 2 Historic Shop fronts in the Northdown Road Conservation Area

(Surveyed March 2011)

Northdown Road: South side

Nos. 278/280 (Reflections – 1920s/1930s – slightly altered on right)
No. 262 (Pottons Taylors – building dated 1910)
Nos. 238/238a (S T Jewellers – c1900/1910 – curved glass)
No. 202 Northdown Road (Cash Makers) is a purpose-built shop with an almost fully glazed first floor with curved window heads – No. 204 next door has similar though not so impressive details
No. 180 (A H Mortley – 1930s – green framework and decorative glass frieze)
No. 178 (Sandy-Wiches – closed and for sale – probably 1930s)
No. 176 (Thompson Lettings – recessed entrance – blue 1920's shopfront)
No. 160 (National Westminster Bank – 1920s neo-Georgian)
No. 122 (Milton Ashbury c1910 – painted purple)
Nos. 48/50 (vacant – to let)

Northdown Road: north side

No. 101 (Arrow Taxes – part only c1900)
No. 119 (Talk Shop c1900 – recessed front door)
Nos. 147/149 (Cooke and Son – prominent corner site – curved glass c1920s)
No. 209 (John Bello – 1930s with brick stallriser)
No. 233 (Pet Rescue Centre – green – 1920s/30s)

PART 2

THE PROPOSED NORTHDOWN ROAD CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the Management Plan

Part 1 of this document, the Character Appraisal, has identified the special positive qualities of the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area which make the Conservation Area unique. Part 2 of this document, the Management Plan, builds upon the positive features and addresses the negative features which have been identified to provide a series of recommendations for improvement and change, most of which are the responsibility of Thanet District Council or Kent County Council.

The involvement and approval of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and will hopefully mean that the various actions identified in the Management Plan will have greater impact and longevity. For Northdown Road, this has been achieved through the current six week public consultation exercise. Any necessary amendments will be made before the final version of the document is completed. The document will be adopted by the Council as a 'material' document for development control purposes.

1.2 Relevant documents

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by Historic England in Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011). Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Plan should be subject to regular monitoring and reviews, as set out in section 3.

Other relevant documents include:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
 - This Act sets out the legislative background for the control of conservation areas and listed buildings.
- National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)
 - This provides government policy guidance which relates to the historic built environment in particular section 12.
- The Kent Design Guide
 - This advocates high quality design for all new development and provides detailed guidance.

Documents produced by Thanet District Council:

- The Thanet local Development Framework (which is incrementally replacing the Thanet Local Plan 2006)
- The Margate Renewal Study (undated but post-2006)
- This document was commissioned by the Margate Renewal Partnership to carry out a study of the drivers of deprivation in Margate Central and Cliftonville West Wards and make recommendations on future regeneration activity to tackle deprivation.
- Conservation Areas in Thanet – Conservation Areas Management Plan (March 2008) - This document sets out the Council's approach to the management of the conservation areas within Thanet – it draws on both national and local planning policies

Documents produced by Thanet District Council which relate specifically to Cliftonville:

- West Cliftonville Neighbourhood Renewal Area (2006)
- This report produced by Thanet District Council and consultants identifies the need to improve the housing stock in four parts of Thanet including Cliftonville West, and provides some policy guidance.
- The Cliftonville DPD (February 2010)
- This document provides planning policies for the Cliftonville West Renewal Area (in advance of the Core Strategy) to be used to inform development control decisions on the large number of planning applications which are submitted in the area – its main thrust is to enhance the existing building stock in terms of physical condition and use (particularly the reduction in number of poor quality flats and their replacement with family houses), encourage community pride in the area, and support the growth of high quality tourism-related facilities. One of the outcomes of this DPD is the imposition of a surcharge on local landlords which is aimed at encouraging a reduction in the number of small residential units, and an increase in the number of family dwellings within the Cliftonville area.

1.3 The scope of this Management Plan

This Management Plan has been drawn up following detailed survey work of the proposed Esplanade Conservation Area by The Conservation Studio in collaboration with Thanet District Council's conservation staff. Its recommendations relate specifically to the Conservation Area, and it is not intended to include general advice about the control of conservation areas, which is set out in the Council's document Conservation Areas in Thanet – Conservation Areas Management Plan (March 2008 – under revision). This document also includes advice about the quality of new development which will be needed in all of Thanet's conservation areas.

2 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following recommendations are based on the key negative features and issues identified as part of the Character Appraisal. Some of them may have to remain aspirational for the time being, but it is considered good practice to identify possible actions which could be implemented in the future if the funding becomes available. Other recommendations rely upon the District Council providing sufficient staff resources to ensure that the proposed actions are carried forward. All of the recommendations particularly rely upon a successful partnership between the District Council and the local community, assisted by Kent County Council as appropriate. The potential for grant aid means that other outside agencies, such as Historic England or the Heritage Lottery Fund, may also be involved in the regeneration of Cliftonville through the provision of grant funding at some stage in the future.

2.1 Northdown Road Enhancement Scheme

Until recently, Thanet District Council's main impetus, in partnership with the Margate Renewal Partnership, has been to regenerate the town centre of Margate. Relevant documents include a Strategic Urban Design Framework, which was produced in 2004, and an Action Plan for Margate, produced in 2005. One of the outcomes has been that buildings in the Old Town have been subject to a variety of grant schemes including a Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme between 2003 and 2008 which provided over one million pounds of funding. A similar scheme is also operating in the adjoining Dalby Square Conservation Area. Other initiatives include the recent opening of the Turner Contemporary art gallery and of Dreamland. Several key development sites have also been identified, including the Lido and its adjoining car park.



View along Northdown Road

So far, little of this has impacted on Cliftonville where the Council has been focusing its efforts on the various social and economic problems of the area. The Cliftonville DPD (February 2010) provides planning policies for the Cliftonville West Renewal Area (in advance of the Core Strategy), which encompasses part of the proposed Cliftonville Cliff Top Conservation Area from the Lido to Third Avenue. Its 'vision' for Cliftonville includes the provision of a range of high quality varied family housing, the enhancement of the historic buildings in the area, and the provision of higher quality tourist accommodation. It also confirms its aim to provide high quality public green spaces in the Cliftonville area, but no further details are given.

The designation of five new conservation areas in Cliftonville (in addition to the recently designated Ethelbert and Athelstan Road Conservation Area and the Dalby Square Conservation Area) provides an opportunity to revisit the advantages provided by heritage-led regeneration. Because of its open spaces, many of which are owned and controlled by the District Council, the Cliftonville Cliff Top Conservation Area provides the greatest opportunities within Cliftonville to rebrand the area and

upgrade the 'offer' for visitors (further details are provided in the Cliftonville Cliff Top Conservation Area Management Plan). However, this work needs to be undertaken in collaboration with a similar strategy for the Northdown Road Conservation Area.

A 'Northdown Road Enhancement Scheme' could provide the following:

- The agreement of priorities and a clear vision of what improvements need to be achieved, in the form of a detailed Action Plan
- This could be used as a basis for applications for grant aid from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England
- The integration of proposed works to build on other initiatives in Margate, particularly with proposed improvements to the Cliftonville Cliff Top Conservation Area
- The provision of a Public Realm Strategy (see below)
- The provision of shopfront guidance and possible grant aid to encourage shop owners or lessees to improve their shopfronts, or restore historic frontages
- The provision of a car parking and traffic management strategy (in association with other similar initiatives in Cliftonville)
- Actions to achieve a reduction of housing densities, as recommended in the Cliftonville DPD
- Site specific guidance, including the provision of Development Briefs and Feasibility Studies
- Suggestions and funding for the possible 'branding' of the area, using new street name plates, new street lighting, new street trees and other enhancements which will provide some focus to the local community and give the area a greater 'sense of place'.
- A methodology for engaging the local community, particularly business owners
- A framework for the production of educational and publicity material, designed to encourage civic pride and a sense of place

Recommendation 1:

- Once the Northdown Road Conservation Area is designated, the District Council will consider the production of a Northdown Road Enhancement Scheme.

2.2 The condition of the buildings

A consistent problem within the proposed Conservation Area is the poor standard of maintenance in many properties. This has resulted in:

- Clear evidence of the need for repairs to roofs and front and back elevations;
- The loss of architectural features such as decorative stucco work, railings, and boundary walls;
- The replacement of original features with inappropriate modern fittings such as front doors, windows, and boundary treatments;
- Inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to existing properties, such as front extensions.



Grant aid would help preserve these historic buildings for future generations

The District Council operates a Heritage Lottery Fund funded grant scheme in the Dalby Square Conservation Area. It is possible that this scheme could be extended, or a new scheme applied for the Northdown Road Conservation Area at some stage in the future. Other funding agencies, apart from the HLF, include Historic England, Thanet District Council, Kent County Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

Recommendation 2:

- The District Council will consider providing guidance on the use of traditional materials and details, which will be circulated to all property owners in the Conservation Area;
- The District Council will consider applying for a grant scheme to assist property owners in the Northdown Road Conservation Area.

2.3 Public realm improvements

A new public realm strategy would be beneficial, ideally in partnership with a new grant scheme, to improve the public realm in the Conservation Area and, ideally, in the whole of Cliftonville. The public realm includes all of the space between the buildings in the Northdown Road Conservation Area which is not privately owned, such as the roads, pavements, street lighting, street name plates, and street furniture (litter bins, seats, and other features). Whilst a small part of Northdown Road has already been improved, with widened pavements and some new paving, the work was carried out some time ago and further enhancements are needed. Grant aid for some of this work from either Historic England or the Heritage Lottery Fund might be available for some of this work.

It might be possible to include a section in the proposed Northdown Road Enhancement Strategy on the public realm, setting out goals, funding, and design criteria (in the form of a 'Public Realm Strategy'). The identification of specific sites for improvement, and the specification of outline proposals for their enhancement, would also be welcome and could be brought forward as and when funding became available.



Further improvements to the public realm are needed in Northdown Road

The most urgent matters to be addressed include:

- The compilation of a list of sites for possible action;
- Agreement between the District and County Council on the choice of materials and details for street lighting, street furniture, and paving materials;
- The use of a common palette of colours for these elements would provide a recognisable 'branding' of the area, although this would need to be very carefully controlled in the future with regular maintenance and repainting;
- Copying some of the wall-mounted historic street name plates which can be seen in the Conservation Area – these are rectangular with recessed corner details and white lettering on black (it might be necessary to adjust the design so the new plates can be positioned on poles rather than fixed to individual buildings, due to problems with their future maintenance);
- The provision of more street trees, carefully sited, would be welcome, and the removal of redundant planters.

Recommendation 3:

- As and when funding permits, the District Council and Kent County Council will consider carrying out improvements to the public realm in the Conservation Area;
- All new work must be sensitive to the historic environment and designed using high quality materials and details;
- A strategy and funding for future maintenance must be provided.

2.4 The control of new development

There are very limited opportunities for completely new development in the Northdown Road Conservation Area due to the high density of frontage buildings. However, the occasional infill site may come forward, and on a more day to day basis, incremental extensions to the backs of many of the buildings will take place.

A more immediate threat is posed by the number of poor quality alterations to the existing buildings, most of which are considered to be 'positive' and therefore of sufficient architectural and historic interest to merit special treatment. Many but not all of the changes listed below would usually require planning permission:

- Badly designed extensions, particularly to the front elevations
- The loss of architectural details such as cornicing or balconies

- The insertion of unsympathetic modern windows or front doors, usually in uPVC
- The occasional loss of front boundaries

In general, all new development in the proposed Conservation Area must be of the highest possible standard and should adhere to guidance provided within the following documents:

- The Kent Design Guide
- Thanet District Council's Conservation Areas in Thanet – Conservation Areas Management Plan (March 2008)

In line with government guidance, all applications will need to include a Design and Access Statement which should, as a minimum, describe the type of development proposed and how it relates to its immediate context. Detailed drawings showing this relationship to neighbouring buildings may be required and must be accurate. The applicant must set out clearly the types of materials to be used and the detailed design of all elements of the new or extended building. Detailed drawings showing all elevations must be provided, along with large scale drawings showing architectural details. Property owners or their agents are also encouraged to contact the Council's planning department before submitting their application so that informal advice on the acceptability of their proposals can be provided at any early stage. Further information is available from the Council's website: www.thanet.gov.uk

Recommendation 4:

- The District Council will ensure that all new development in the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area is of the highest possible standard and adheres to national policies and to guidance provided in the Kent Design Guide and within Thanet District Council's own policy framework .

2.5 The control of unlisted buildings (Article 4 Directions)

The District Council is required to both 'preserve and enhance' the character of the Conservation Area. Some inappropriate alterations are visible throughout the conservation area. At the moment, however, the changes that have been made are in fairly localised locations and that on the whole the area has been fairly maintained. Whilst alterations have so far been relatively localised there is also evidence of more and more inappropriate alterations and additions within the area. In order to restrict the rights of landowners from carrying out inappropriate development an Article 4 Direction can be placed on specific buildings or areas. This enables the local planning authority to require permission for what is otherwise allowed without consent. This does not mean that permission would be refused but allows the authority to assess any potential impact to the buildings, the street scene and the conservation area.

This targeted approach could be considered to be the most relevant in the proposed Northdown Road Conservation Area as many of the residential properties are not in use as family dwellings (i.e. as a single unit) but have been divided into flats or HMOs. Even more buildings are in mixed uses i.e. retail to the ground floor, and possibly BI (offices) or residential above. For these buildings, permitted development rights are already much lower, so, for instance, planning permission would normally be needed to insert new plastic windows or to change the roof material. For these buildings, an Article 4 Direction could still be used to control front boundaries, the creation of car parking spaces, and external redecoration.



Houses in Crawford Gardens

Any proposal to consider removal of Permitted Development rights and carry forward a decision to proceed with an Article 4 Direction will result in further public consultation and assessment. The Council may take these forward in due course if a strong justification and public support following further monitoring and recording change of the conservation area show to be necessary.

Recommendation 5:

- The Council may consider making an Article 4 Direction in due course if a strong justification and public support of erosion of the character of the area show to be necessary

2.6 Advertising and shopfronts

The Northdown Road Conservation Area contains a very high number of shopfronts, many of them of poor quality. It is accepted that even with the provision of detailed design guidance, the possible impetus for improvements which are provided by grant aid, and the imposition of a rigorous enforcement regime, it will take a long time to achieve any noticeable improvements. However, in the long term the economic viability of the shopping area will be enhanced by these incremental improvements and will encourage private owners to invest in their properties. Future initiatives could include:



Historic shopfronts in Northdown Road

- The provision of detailed shopfront and advertisement guidance;
- The provision of grant aid, to provide new, higher quality shopfronts;
- The possible provision of an 'exemplar' new shopfront, possibly for use in connection with any grant scheme, to focus efforts

Recommendation 6:

- The District Council will explore ways of improving the economic activity and appearance of the shops in the Northdown Road area.

2.7 Local List review

There is currently no Local List for Cliftonville although criteria for the selection of suitable buildings have been agreed by the District Council. With the publication of PPS5 in March 2010, locally listed buildings have become an important 'heritage asset' of particular significance where they also lie within a designated conservation area. The preparation of a Local List for the whole of Cliftonville must therefore be seen as a priority, but meanwhile, this document includes recommendations for new locally listed buildings as follows:

The Gospel Northumberland Hall, No. 39 Northdown Road – this building is first shown on the 1907 map and probably dates to c1900. The symmetrical gabled frontage is built from red brick with classical details including a pediment over an arched first floor window.

- Nos. 214/216 even Northdown Road, western corner of Northdown Road and Cliftonville Avenue – a red brick corner building, possibly built as a bank but now empty, and the adjoining three bay neo-Classical building, with three curved timber columns (there were originally four) supported the canted first floor.
- The former Snooker Hall, built as Bobby's Department Store in 1913, on the eastern corner Northdown Road and Cliftonville Avenue – a substantial, white tiled building with Neo-Classical details. The corner cupola is a local landmark. Ground floor shopfronts of no interest.
- Nos. 242-250 and 256-268 even Northdown Road – this three storey terrace is built from red brick with first floor canted oriel bay windows, some of which retain their original leaded lights and decorative plasterwork – they date to c1910.
- Nos. 1-6 (consec). Crawford Gardens – this group of six paired houses is dated 1906 and provides relatively unaltered facades with Arts and Crafts details.

Recommendation 7:

- The District Council will work with the local community to produce a new Local List for Cliftonville.

2.8 Site specific improvements

A number of sites, all in private ownership, would benefit from either improvements or total redevelopment. These could be identified in the Northdown Road Enhancement Strategy and site specific guidance provided for potential redevelopment or improvement. One obvious site where enhancements would be welcome is the car valetting business on the corner of Athelstan Road. The public open space in front of St Paul's Church would also benefit from enhancing, including the provision of new planting, seating and lighting.

Recommendation 8:

- The District Council will encourage the repair and reuse, or the potential redevelopment, of the four sites detailed above, but only to the highest possible standards.

2.9 Education and publicity

There is currently little evidence of civic pride in the Cliftonville area as a whole although there are several active residents' groups which each relate particularly to one small area. Some of these have already been involved in the public consultation exercise which was undertaken in October 2010 to gauge public reaction to the designation of conservation areas in Cliftonville. However, there is no such group in the Northdown Road Conservation Area, but the formation of such a group (with representatives from both commercial businesses and private householders) should be encouraged and nurtured by the District Council.

Recommendation 9:

- The District Council, working in partnership with Kent County Council and other stakeholders, will continue to encourage greater civic pride in the Cliftonville area through the use of its statutory powers and possible grant aid;
- The production of publicity material about the Conservation Area to all local residents via the Council's website is advisable.

2.10 Monitoring and enforcement

Local authorities are required by law to periodically review their conservation areas and the preparation of Character Appraisals and Management Plans is part of this obligation. Indeed, in the past keeping Character Appraisals and Management Plans up to date has been a Key Performance Indicator in the Best Value assessment of local authorities, and as a result, a five year review cycle is now considered to be best practice.

Over the next five years the District Council should therefore be expected to regularly review the content of this document, to carefully monitor change within the Northdown Road Conservation Area, and to involve the community in any proposals for enhancement (subject of course to the funding being available).

Recommendation 10:

The District Council should therefore:

- Carry out periodic reviews of the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change.