

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 2007).

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 English Heritage (this Appraisal was in the main grant funded by English Heritage), 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 understand 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 2011 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 six week public consultation between (fill in dates) 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 English Heritage on the effective management of 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, connecting 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 iconic 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 Price's 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 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 English Heritage 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 six week public consultation on the Council's website between (fill in dates), 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 proposed Ethelbert Road and Athelstan Road Conservation Area, the proposed Edgar Road and Swayne Road Conservation Area, and the proposed Norfolk Road, Warwick Road and Surrey Road Conservation Area. The Dalby Square Conservation Area, which has 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 2.7 hectares and the population (in the 2001 census) was 12,900. Demographically, the population is predominantly white European.



View from Northdown Road towards 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 from 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.



View down Athelstan Road to the sea

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 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, Warrior 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 is 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, Swayne, 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. Warrior 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 as it was replaced with a poorly designed complex of buildings which are currently used as a café, public house, Bowls 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 Bishop's Church) was opened in 1876 – they are both in Northdown Road.



Shops of the 1870s in Northdown Road

3.4 Activities

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 Stephen's Wesleyan Methodist Church), both in Northdown Road and both 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-orientated 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 repair workshop off Athelstan Road

4 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

4.1 General character and plan form

The proposed Conservation Area retains the character of 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 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 Michael and St Bishoy'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 semi-mature trees can be seen in Crawford Gardens, heavily compromised by untidy car parking.



The landscaped area in front of St Paul's Church

Elsewhere, as the buildings are usually located on the back 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 carefully 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 of the pavement so there are few boundaries to the front although 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 c1870s Gothic-style Victorian houses 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'.



Houses in Clarendon Road



Cast iron coal hole cover, Clarendon Road

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 or 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

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.

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

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

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 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. 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
- St Michael's and St Bishoy's Church, formerly St Stephen's Wesleyan Methodist

- Church, 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 English Heritage'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 large 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 deep 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 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.



Magdala Villas, Nos. 99-125 odd Northdown Road

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 Shopfronts

There is a very large number of shopfronts in the 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.

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

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