

### 6.11.7 Essential Development Principles to Protect Character

Not applicable.



**70:** *The imposing former Bamford's headquarters building, now the Balance Street Health Centre, merits local listing*

## 6.12 12 - Trinity Walk and Furbecks Car Sales Site (South)

### 6.12.1 Character

The character of this zone is very much that of back land and of peripheral town centre nature. The zone is dominated to a considerable degree by the former Bamford office building and Trinity Square car park, both of which lie outside the Conservation Area boundary. The Bamford office building, now a Health Centre, is far and away the most imposing and interesting building in this zone.



**71:** *The approach to the Trinity Walk shopping precinct from Queen Street - an uninviting prospect resulting from bad planning, design and the use of basic materials that are inappropriate to the setting*

The zone is blighted by the under-use and poor quality of the Trinity Walk shopping precinct, which connects Trinity Square to Queen Street to the north. This development was constructed after the designation of the Conservation Area, but it has done nothing to enhance its character. Indeed, the nature and state of the development have impacted on more historic areas to its north within the Conservation Area. The reasons for the lack of success of the Trinity Walk shopping precinct are not entirely clear, since in theory there is a strong pedestrian footfall through the area passing from Trinity Square car park to Market Place. However, the design of the development is exceedingly poor and uninviting, and today the space is quite threatening in daylight, let alone at night.



**72:** *The Furbecks car lot – currently this site has a considerable negative impact upon the zone and also on the otherwise characterful Market Street*

To the west of Trinity Walk and across from the southern end of Market Street lies the Furbecks car site, which is identified as a development opportunity within the 2003 town centre master plan. The presence of this site so close to the historic core of Uttoxeter is unfortunate and degrades the character of the remainder of Market Street.

To the west, Spiceal Mews has resolved the unsatisfactory end to Balance Street that was identified in the 1971 appraisal. The modest modern housing development is reasonably well designed and makes a neutral contribution to both Balance Street and Trinity Walk zones. However, in character, it seems to belong more with the modest nature of the latter zone than with the coherent and attractive character of the remainder of Balance Street.

### 6.12.2 Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings within this zone. At the very least, the 1930s former Bamford office building should be entered on a local list to reflect its architectural interest and contribution.

### 6.12.3 Other Positive Elements

The view up towards the strongly enclosed northern end of Market Street is perhaps the only significant other positive element in this zone apart from the Bamford office building. Equally, there is a fine view down Balance Street westwards, although this is slightly tempered by the modest structures in the foreground on either side.

### 6.12.4 Particular Negative Contributions

The character of this zone is decimated by unsatisfactory and unsightly open spaces, the unloved shopping precinct, and the feeling of threat that these all introduce. The zone desperately needs careful attention and good new architecture to improve its standing. Lest this be felt to be an unnecessary and unproductive investment of time and money, it should be recognised that, lying immediately to the south of Market Place, further deterioration in this area could have a significant detrimental impact upon that core zone.

### 6.12.5 Vulnerability and Threats

Continued neglect is probably the greatest threat to this area, which is already of poor and incoherent character. Urgent attention is required to resolve its problems. Undoubtedly, this zone is particularly exposed to continual antisocial behaviour, with all of the burdens and negative impact that this can bring.

### 6.12.6 Opportunities for Enhancement and Development

The Furbecks car sales site is identified within the 2003 Town Centre master plan as being a development opportunity and is earmarked for commercial/residential mix to infill the townscape. Depending upon the nature of the commercial use, this may be appropriate, although residential use is preferable. The Trinity Walk development may be hard to resolve without clearance and redevelopment. This would facilitate a wider approach being taken to the re-planning of this zone's future.



73: The attractive enclosed vista up Market Street from the edge of the zone

Perhaps the greatest opportunity that exists in this zone is to make use of the former Bamford's office building and its health centre use as a driver for regeneration of the various unsuccessful sites that are clustered in this area.

### 6.12.7 Essential Development Principles to Protect Character

Redevelopment of the Furbecks site, preferably with residential use, needs to incorporate an outer building that continues the existing building line along Market Street. This might beneficially be of three storey warehouse style, built in red brick under a pitched, clay tiled roof and incorporating traditional detailing.

Redevelopment of the Trinity Walk shopping precinct should build back missing urban grain along the southern side of Queen Street, with a building that reflects the massing and style of the adjoining properties. The site connecting Trinity Square car park to Queen Street would benefit from more substantial buildings than those provided in the Trinity Walk development. The pedestrian passageway would be enhanced and improved in character by being more enclosed than at present to reflect the medieval passageways that connect different areas elsewhere in the town centre.



**74:** Looking west along Balance Street showing the predominantly residential nature of its western half

## 6.13 Balance Street (South West)

### 6.13.1 Character

Balance Street is a highly characterful part of the Conservation Area, containing a mixture of fine brick town houses of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century together with attractive but less grand terraces. Although towards its western end the zone is predominantly residential in character, it contains a number of civic, social and cultural buildings, as well as Pugin's Catholic Church.

Balance Street is a wide thoroughfare that is straight towards its eastern end, but curves gently to the west. Curiously, the 1971 appraisal commented that the "lack of continuity (between architectural styles) detracts from the curving street line and gives to it a broken appearance". In fact, this slight disunity is a fundamental part of the charm of Balance Street and helps to accentuate the individual architectural merits of the worthier buildings.

The contribution of many of the lesser buildings should not be overlooked. For example, the red and vitrified brickwork



**75:** The listed Police Station (32 Balance Street) - architecturally interesting and providing perfect closure to the vista up Pinfold Street

to the walls of the Victorian industrial building on the east side of Pinfold Street (11) and the curved end of the opposing house provide much interest in this part of the streetscape. There are fine views eastwards towards the end of Market Street, although the lack of closure at the end of this vista is disappointing. Similarly, the westward view along Balance Street is very satisfactory, given the closure provided by the bend in the road. Views into Balance Street up Pinfold Street are just as interesting and are satisfactorily closed by the listed Police Station.

On the north side, the historic continuity of buildings has been interrupted in a number of places, giving views into the large medieval block of land that lies between Balance Street and Carter Street. Generally, this is a pleasant sight, except where unconsidered, modern back land development has taken place.

### 6.13.2 Listed Buildings

There are five listed buildings along Balance Street in this zone. It is entirely appropriate that all of these should be statutory protected and their grading is adequate. However, there are a number of other candidates for statutory listing to be found in the street, including Pugin's Church. At the very least, a substantial part of the streetscape should be locally listed, either for specific architectural merit or for group value and contribution towards the vistas and street scene. Balance Street is important because of the extent of survival of much of its historic and distinctive form as is clear from late Victorian photographs. Overall, this should be reflected in entries to the statutory and local lists.

### 6.13.3 Other Positive Elements

The positive elements of Balance Street are satisfactorily described under 'character' and 'listed buildings' above. The overall composition and survival of its integrity are of paramount importance.

### 6.13.4 Particular Negative Contributions

The main significant negative contributions to the character of Balance Street are provided by the care home (both in terms of recent additions and the condition of parts of the property) on its northern side and by unattractive hard standings and landscaping materials to various parking areas and gap sites, again on the north.



*76 & 77: The western end of Balance Street c1900 and in 2004. Among other changes, the loss of vegetation and the use of tarmac as a paving material have had a negative impact on character*



**78:** Pugin's St Mary's Catholic Church - a strong candidate for statutory listing

### 6.13.5 Vulnerability and Threats

Balance Street is particularly vulnerable to further and ongoing backland and infill development on its northern side.

### 6.13.6 Opportunities for Enhancement and Development

Essentially, the character of the Balance Street zone will be best protected and enhanced by restricting further development and material changes to the external appearance of existing buildings. The proliferation of non-traditional PVCu and other replacement windows incorporating modern float glass will damage the integrity of the street, as well as the appearance and character of individual buildings. Such alterations need to be controlled by placing restrictions on permitted development rights.

Careful redevelopment of the Furbecks Car Site at the eastern end of Balance Street would improve the local vista in this direction.

### 6.13.7 Essential Development Principles to Protect Character

As has been identified above, material change to the external appearance of the existing buildings is one of the greatest threats to the character of the Balance Street zone. Any alterations to the historic buildings should be carried out in a traditional material, reflecting traditional and historic forms of fenestration, detailing and the like. If extensions to buildings are permitted, they should be subservient to the existing and respect the foregoing criteria in terms of material and detailing.

## 6.14 14 - Carter Street/Hockley Road (South West)

### 6.14.1 Character

The character of the south western end of Carter Street, the westernmost end of Balance Street, and the north eastern end of Hockley Road differs markedly from that of the remainder of Balance Street and Carter Street.

The zone forms the south western entrance to the Conservation Area and a principal approach to the town centre. The edge of the Conservation Area is marked by a



**79:** 75 and 77 Carter Street - typical buildings at this entrance to the Conservation Area

rise and enclosing of the road by small scale, largely terraced buildings. Notable buildings can be found in two almshouses on the east and west sides of Carter Street.

To the rear of the terrace, 49-59 Carter Street, a glimpse can be obtained of the historic strips that once filled the deep medieval block of land between Carter Street and Balance Street.

A 1960s development, Jubilee Court, on the north west side of Carter Street is uninspired and causes local damage to the character of the area, but fortunately its scale is small enough to restrict the harm it causes to the otherwise attractive Carter Street streetscape.

The corner of Balance Street and Hockley Road has been widened, involving some demolition and the construction of an acceptable, but essentially unappealing, small block of low rise apartments. This has marginally degraded the western end of Balance Street.

#### 6.14.2 Listed Buildings

There is a single listed building in this zone, Laythropp's Almshouses (61) on the east side of Carter Street. A number of other buildings merit local listing, whilst in the back land, Old Brewery Cottage, might arguably warrant statutory listing at Grade II.

#### 6.14.3 Other Positive Elements

Not applicable.

#### 6.14.4 Particular Negative Contributions

A number of the houses in this zone require maintenance and repair and some upgrading. Several buildings - regrettably including the almshouse - have had PVCu replacement windows inserted, which have damaged their character and that of the local street scene.

Otherwise, the most marked negative contribution is that caused by Jubilee Court, the entrance to Stone Road, and the proliferation of concrete blocks and other modern street materials that have done nothing to enhance the character of the area.



**80:** 92 Carter Street - a three storey artisan's dwelling - worthy of local listing for its contribution to the general street scene, as are adjoining buildings



**81:** The former George & Dragon (65 Carter Street) - warrants local listing for its architectural interest and contribution to the streetscape



**82:** Jubilee Court - architecturally undistinguished and damaging to the character of this part of the Conservation Area

### 6.14.5 Vulnerability and Threats

This zone is particularly at risk from continued neglect of buildings. This will rapidly degrade its character and lead to further lessening in its popularity as a residential area. Increasing traffic travelling into and from the town centre or accessing the redeveloped cattle market site may have a similar impact.

### 6.14.6 Opportunities for Enhancement and Development

Improvements to the area can be achieved by remodelling the entrances to Jubilee Court and Stone Road and by additional environmental improvements to those recently carried out, with good quality and traditional materials.

### 6.14.7 Essential Development Principles to Protect Character

Alterations to existing buildings should be undertaken in traditional materials and respect the fenestration and other detailing that prevails. Restrictions should be placed on permitted development rights to protect against further incorporation of PVCu and other non-traditional replacement windows and satellite dishes.



**83:** Looking east along Carter Street towards the High Street and Church - variation in building heights and frontages are critical to local character. Regrettably, however, paving and highway materials have a negative impact

## 6.15 15 - Carter Street (West)

### 6.15.1 Character

Views along Carter Street are dominated by the imposing and projecting White Hart Inn, a historic coaching inn. Other historic buildings spread along Carter Street are generally of much smaller scale, but equally as worthy. Mention must be made of the listed Friends Meeting House and the associated residential property, 39 Carter Street, and of the Congregational Church set back between nos 11 and 13 (21).

Part of the essential charm of Carter Street is its visual porosity, providing regular glimpses of more open views of what lies behind the frontages. Some of these views are through archways within buildings, others are provided by open passages to yards and buildings at the rear. A fine example of a range of rear buildings are those belonging to the White Hart, which are clearly visible from Carter Street. These historic passageways and views are of vital importance.

The commercially-occupied older buildings towards the eastern end of Carter Street function well and add much to the historic town centre. The damage caused by the redeveloped 2 Carter Street has already been noted. Conversely the modern building society offices immediately opposite present a better-proportioned and robust full stop to Carter Street's south side.

### 6.15.2 Listed Buildings

There are 10 listed buildings in this zone, including a substantial and historically valuable row running from the White Hart Hotel to 42 Carter Street. The architecturally characterful 1930s Sheard's garage to the east of the White Hart Hotel, a good example of its type and age, should be considered for statutory listing at Grade II. Additionally, there are a number of buildings that merit local listing.

### 6.15.3 Other Positive Elements

The views along Carter Street in either direction and laterally out into the medieval block of land between Carter Street and Balance Street have already been mentioned. It is important to recognise that these views are largely – indeed, surprisingly – unaltered since the late Victorian period, as photographic evidence demonstrates. Care should be taken that this invaluable asset is retained for the future.

Further mention should be made of the medieval passageways and lateral routes as well as those that have been created since the 1850s development of the cattle market. Old Saddlers Yard at the eastern end of Carter Street, linking to High Street, provides a positive contribution that could be further enhanced by improvements.

### 6.15.4 Particular Negative Contributions

In addition to 2 Carter Street, there are a small number of modern developments along the street that disrupt the character and attractiveness of vistas. Arguably, foremost amongst these is the ambulance station and Wilfred House development on the south side of the road, close to the Friends Meeting House.



**84:** Looking west along Carter Street from the High Street junction - taller buildings such as the White Hart Hotel and 12 Carter Street are vitally important to the balance of the townscape. Again, street materials are visually intrusive



**85:** 15 Carter Street (Stanley House) - a strong candidate for local listing for its architectural interest and contribution to the streetscape





**86:** *Sheard's Garage - architecturally important and, despite its somewhat perverse juxtaposition to the substantially greater massing of the White Hart Hotel, a serious candidate for statutory listing at Grade II*

Problems with replacement fenestration are affecting this zone as much as others and likewise the paucity of street materials and furniture locally degrade the character of the zone, as elsewhere.

#### **6.15.5 Vulnerability and Threats**

The redevelopment of the cattle market may increase vehicular traffic at the western end of the zone, whilst threatening changes to pedestrian movements that occur from the northern side of Carter Street. Damage to the economic health of retail premises in Carter Street would also lead to erosion of its character.

#### **6.15.6 Opportunities for Enhancement and Development**

As elsewhere, improvements in street materials and furniture will positively enhance the character of Carter Street. Similarly, implementation of the recent shop front design guidance will strengthen its integrity and character.

#### **6.15.7 Essential Development Principles to Protect Character**

No additional vehicular traffic should be permitted to flow through Carter Street to the redeveloped Cattle Market site or other parts of the town centre.

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## **7 SYNTHESIS FOR CONSERVATION AREA**

### **7.1 Wider Vulnerability and Threats**

- 7.1.1 Specific threats to each zone within the Conservation Area have been dealt with in the preceding section. Over and above this, there are a number of wider concerns about the vulnerability of the Conservation Area as a whole to future change that need to be raised.
- 7.1.2 There are interesting parallels between this appraisal of the Conservation Area in 2004/07 and that undertaken soon after designation in 1971. It is somewhat ironic that on both occasions the appraisal process has been conducted at a time when significant development pressures exist and large scale change in the town is starting to occur. In the event, as we have seen, coherent planned change did not occur during the 1970s and 80s in the way that was anticipated in 1971.
- 7.1.3 From this vantage point, we can do no more than surmise as to how much change will occur in the next decade or more and how far the 2003 Uttoxeter Town Centre master plan will be implemented on the ground. However, such is the nature and state of the Conservation Area that some concerns over its future in the light of the new developments and other master plan proposals must be expressed.
- 7.1.4 Some positive characteristics of Uttoxeter are readily identified. The town and the great majority of its buildings are very human in their scale. A significant - perhaps remarkable - part of the town's vitality, interest and fundamental character revolves around historic patterns, views and pedestrian connections/routes. Lose these positive attributes and the town and its Conservation Area risk becoming spiritless and without sense of place.
- 7.1.5 Analysis of the Conservation Area today shows that very great potential exists for small scale improvement. Large scale re-planning is a different matter. Repairing and re-knitting damaged urban grain will enhance the character of the town considerably. Sweeping it away to be replaced by a different kind of morphology and grid may be dangerous.
- 7.1.6 This rationale should dictate fundamental area-wide guidance for future developments in order to protect and enhance Uttoxeter's character. Respect and build on the roots of the town's positive attributes. Think small scale

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and human, not grandiose. Repair damaged and lost urban grain, rather than imposing monolithic massed structures that cannot and will not enhance Uttoxeter's special characteristics. Protect, develop and utilise existing passageways and pedestrian routes through sites, rather than re-routing such movement around perimeters on the pavements to roads. None of this should be taken to imply that new developments need safe imitative architecture. Uttoxeter has a number of key sites on focal points that desperately need good innovative architecture that complements its historic strengths. These two objectives are not mutually exclusive.

## **7.2 Changes in the Conservation Area Since Designation**

7.2.1 Understanding how and why designation has affected the Conservation Area is important. This helps to pull together the lessons of this appraisal and enables consideration of changes that need to be made in strategic planning, where this is appropriate.

7.2.2 It has already been seen that, in 1971, the County Planning and Development Department foresaw a very different kind of Uttoxeter more than 30 years in the future than we actually see today. Optimistically, at that time, it was presumed that designation of the Conservation Area would play its part in the revitalisation of the town centre, achieving a satisfactory balance between the old and new, ensuring proper use of town centre buildings, and the widespread rehabilitation of older properties both in the town and on its periphery. Clearly, this step change has not occurred; indeed, after 36 years it has barely been initiated. Conservation Area status may have prevented Uttoxeter's further major demise, but it has neither been a catalyst for change nor, to judge by developments such as Trinity Walk and the standard of street furniture and materials, has it influenced planning or design in any coherent substantive way. Overall, regrettably, designation of the Conservation Area has not acted as a stimulus to thought or to enhancement in quite the way that was intended. This has compromised the considerable advantages that such status can bring. As if to reinforce this point, although the need to build upon the "unique historic environment" of the town centre is part of the vision driving the 2003 master plan, the existence of the Conservation Area barely impinges upon the text of the master plan report. This is not a criticism, merely a reflection on the perceived status of the

Conservation Area as an entity and the benefits that its existence might bring.

- 7.2.3 It is interesting to reflect on the visual analysis carried out as part of the 1971 Conservation Area appraisal and which is reflected in a plan within the document. Some of the sites marked in 1971 as being “areas in need of visual improvement” have been satisfactorily resolved in the interim. Perhaps foremost amongst these is Spiceal Mews at the eastern end of Balance Street. However, by far the greater proportion of areas so identified in 1971 remain today in similar or worse condition – for example the Maltings car park, the private car park of Jervis House, the infill site immediately across Church Street, the junction between Smithfield Road and Bradley Street, the Furbecks site, and the whole of Bridge Street. Regrettably, in addition to these, some changes that have occurred since 1971 have led to substantial additional requirements for improvement: the Angus MacKinnon site and land adjacent to Town Meadows Way and the Trinity Walk development stand out strongly in this respect.

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## **8 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR ACTION**

### **8.1 Restrictions on Permitted Development Rights**

- 8.1.1 Mention has been made in the zonal analysis of the need to restrict permitted development rights in certain instances. The Council is concerned about those changes to properties (including material changes of appearance) that will not only affect the individual property, but will also affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed Policy BE12 in the Local Plan deals with this issue. Neutral and negative elements in the Conservation Area character appraisal are highlighted, as are opportunities for enhancement. Proposals that are considered likely to have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be rejected. The Council will consider the implementation of Article 4 directions (under the Town & Country Planning General Development Order (1995) or as updated) and will refer to Part 2 subsection C regarding 'material changes of appearance'. Where relevant, the Council will also consider controls under regulation 6 of the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (1992 or as updated).

### **8.2 Statutory and Local Listing**

- 8.2.1 Listing issues have been discussed for each zone of the Conservation Area in Section 6 of this appraisal. Appendix III contains a list of buildings that are currently not protected as listed structures, but which are believed may warrant such protection. Appendix IV contains a list of buildings that are recommended for consideration for entry on a local list of buildings of importance to the character of the Conservation Area as currently defined.

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## **9 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **9.1 The origins and development of Uttoxeter**

- 9.1.1 The development of the Uttoxeter as it stands today arose from ownership of lands by the de Ferrers family in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the town's first market charter was granted. From the 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, its expansion was the direct result of its market status and its strategic position in the fertile Dove valley.
- 9.1.2 In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this development was strengthened firstly by the opening of a branch of the Trent and Mersey Canal, connecting the town with Frognall, and subsequently by the construction of the railway in the 1840s, linking it to Stoke, Stafford, Leek and Derby. It was at that time that the Bamford family arrived in the town, by way of marriage. They have been significantly influential in its evolution ever since - the industry of the town being dominated today by the presence of JCB Ltd.
- 9.1.3 Principal buildings in the town include the Town Hall (1854), St. Mary's Church (14<sup>th</sup> century origins, but mainly 1828), the Manor House (16<sup>th</sup> century onwards) and the Bamford headquarter offices (1930s). Equally important in the context of Uttoxeter's development are the cattle market (1850s and later) and the JCB factory (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century elements). Within the conservation area there are 56 listed buildings/structures.

### **9.2 Landscape and setting**

- 9.2.1 The geological make-up of the area consists essentially of sedimentary clays and shales. Although there are bands of limestone in this part of Staffordshire, these are too small and distant to have significantly shaped the built form of the town. The availability of clays resulted in the formation of brickworks on the outskirts of the town to supply the local building trade.
- 9.2.2 A defining feature of the town is its setting on a plateau edge overlooking the River Dove. The proximity of the surrounding countryside means that there remains a reasonably sharp contrast between rural and urban form on any approach to the town and the Conservation Area from the southwest, south and east. This division and the slightly elevated position of the town mean that there are medium to long distance views over Uttoxeter and the former Cattle

recognises the architectural and historic interest of the medieval core of Uttoxeter and nothing else.

- 9.4.5 Interestingly, each edge of the Conservation Area boundary was strongly defined by very distinct historic elements which generally were only interrupted by fingers of residential development formed along the principal historic approaches to the town centre.
- 9.4.6 Perhaps because of the strong but individual characteristics of all adjoining lands, today, by far the greater part of the Conservation Area maintains an internal logic, coherence and relevance. However, small anomalies in the boundaries do exist. These can be tidied up readily.
- 9.4.7 One of the principal attributes of the Conservation Area is the variability of its character across even small areas. Although the Conservation Area can properly be regarded as a coherent single entity, 15 constituent sub-zones can be identified, each of which has developed distinctive qualities and characteristics.
- 9.4.8 Taken as a whole, the morphology and urban grain of today's Conservation Area reflect a substantial survival of the medieval pattern of the town. Former medieval burghage plots and contemporaneous narrow passageways giving access to the hinterland remain as definitive components of the character of large sections of the Conservation Area today.
- 9.4.9 Two major and dramatic blocks of land formed by the medieval street pattern dominate the centre of Uttoxeter and make up the greater part of the Conservation Area. Bounded respectively by Carter Street, Balance Street and Market Place/Market Street and High Street, Bradley Street/Silver Street and Church Street, these medieval land parcels remain undivided by roads and are highly distinctive and unusual within a modern town centre.
- 9.4.10 The core of historic Uttoxeter, its Market Place, is of singular shape and presents a strongly defined public open space. It retains much of its medieval street and plot patterns, along with the passageways giving access to backyards or through to other streets. These are important not only for movement and use of the area, but also for the brief glimpses and added character and vitality that they bring. Whilst the Market Place is of considerable importance and interest architecturally, critically, it is still used every week as a market place; this gives the space immense vitality and added value.

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Market from outside the town and pleasant glimpses of countryside from between buildings within it.

### **9.3 Materials and built form**

9.3.1 Pre 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture in the Conservation Area is heavily dominated by dark red brickwork and blue/black clay roof tiling. Interest is added to many buildings, with brick or stone dressings and decorative detailing, whilst, occasionally, structures are rendered and painted. Roofs are mostly of ridged form, sometimes enlivened by dormer structures and decorative ridge cappings. The parish church is constructed of regionally won sandstone and as such is one of very few stone buildings and structures within the Conservation Area.

9.3.2 Inevitably, most buildings are of two storeyed domestic scale, although various approaches and parts of the town centre are enriched with grander structures either of civic form or simply of larger scale. Most, although not all, of these key buildings are listed. Arguably, they should all be statutorily protected because of their positive contribution to and key role in defining the character of each part of the Conservation Area.

### **9.4 The Conservation Area and its distinctive features**

9.4.1 The Uttoxeter Conservation Area was designated by Staffordshire County Council in 1970. It was the 39<sup>th</sup> such area to be established by the County Council in the 4 years following enactment of the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Currently, it is one of 25 Conservation Areas that have been designated within the Borough of East Staffordshire.

9.4.2 The Conservation Area was last appraised formally in November 1971, a year after its designation. This current re-evaluation has been prepared following fieldwork undertaken in August and September 2004, December 2007 and January 2008.

9.4.3 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, registered parks and gardens, or battlefields within the existing Conservation Area; however, there are 56 listed structures.

9.4.4 The concepts that shaped the existing Conservation Area and the definition of its boundaries were very much driven by the fashion and interests of the time at which it was designated. In short, it is the product of its age. It



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- 9.4.11 Remarkably, besides St Mary's Churchyard, there is no public green space anywhere within the present Conservation Area. This is quite unusual for a historic town centre of Uttoxeter's size. As a result, trees and vegetation do not play a major part in establishing the character of much of the Area. Conversely, where mature trees do exist, they are of considerable significance, contributing positively to character, and making their survival of great importance to the local streetscape.
- 9.4.12 Several prominent sections of the Conservation Area have been defined by 19<sup>th</sup> century wealth, piety and civic pride. For example, the High Street and its environs today have been shaped by investment and development of the 1850s, with the imposing though somewhat stolid Town Hall and its archway to the north leading through to the almost contemporaneous cattle market. The parish church of St Mary was largely rebuilt in 1828, but saw further repair and alteration in the late 1840s and 1870s. The Catholic Church in Balance Street, built in 1839, was extended again in the 1870s. The Congregational chapel in Carter Street, built in 1827/28 (at the same time as the reconstruction of the parish church), was extended in 1848, whilst the Methodist chapel in Carter Street had been built in 1841 and was then rebuilt in 1878.
- 9.4.13 In a less positive way, today's Conservation Area has also been characterised by social and political ambitions and planning policies of the 1950s and 1960s. The 1971 appraisal remarked on the 'extensive' clearance that had occurred in the town centre in the preceding decade. This has fundamentally affected its appearance and its future. Demolition of the central Bunting's Brewery buildings has hollowed out the large medieval block of land immediately to the east of the High Street, permitting the visually intrusive Maltings shopping mall development almost opposite the Town Hall and seriously damaging the urban grain of much of Bradley Street, Silver Street and parts of Church Street. Redevelopment of a number of individual town centre sites such as that on Bridge Street almost universally has produced architecturally inferior structures, which degrade their local environment and the character of the streetscape.
- 9.4.14 Conservation Area status – conferred in 1970 - may have prevented Uttoxeter town centre's further major demise, but it has neither been a catalyst for change nor has it influenced planning or design in any coherent and substantive way. Regrettably, it seems that designation of the Conservation Area has not acted as a stimulus to thought or to enhancement in quite the way that was intended at the time

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of designation. This has compromised the considerable advantages that such status can bring.

- 9.4.15 The existing Conservation Area boundaries have a logic and cohesiveness that would permit them to continue essentially unaltered.

## **9.5 Development Guidance to Protect the Conservation Area from Further Damage**

- 9.5.1 Specific threats to the character of almost all of the 15 zones within the Conservation Area can be identified. Over and above this, there are a number of wider concerns about the vulnerability of the Conservation Area as a whole to future change that should be appreciated and addressed.

- 9.5.2 There are interesting parallels between this appraisal of the Conservation Area in 2004/07 and that undertaken soon after designation in 1971. It is somewhat ironic that on both occasions the appraisal process has been conducted at a time when significant development pressures exist and large scale change in the town is starting to occur. In the event, coherent planned change did not occur during the 1970s and 80s in the way that was anticipated in 1971. From this vantage point, we can do no more than surmise as to how much change will occur in the next decade or more and how far the 2003 Uttoxeter Town Centre master plan will be implemented on the ground.

- 9.5.3 Some positive characteristics of Uttoxeter are readily identified. The town and the great majority of its buildings are very human in their scale. A significant - perhaps remarkable - part of the town's vitality, interest and fundamental character revolves around historic patterns, views and pedestrian connections/routes. Lose these positive attributes and the town and its Conservation Area risk becoming spiritless and without sense of place.

- 9.5.4 Analysis of the Conservation Area today shows that very great potential exists for small scale improvement. Large scale re-planning is a different matter. Repairing and re-knitting damaged urban grain will enhance the character of the town considerably. Sweeping it away to be replaced by a different kind of morphology and grid may be dangerous.

- 9.5.5 This rationale should dictate fundamental area-wide guidance for future developments in order to protect and enhance Uttoxeter's character. Respect and build on the roots of the town's positive attributes. Think small scale and human, not grandiose. Repair damaged and lost urban grain, rather than imposing monolithic massed structures

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that cannot and will not enhance Uttoxeter's special characteristics. Protect, develop and utilise existing passageways and pedestrian routes through sites, rather than re-routing such movement around perimeters on the pavements to roads. None of this should be taken to imply that new developments need safe imitative architecture. Uttoxeter has a number of key sites on focal points that desperately need good innovative architecture that complements its historic strengths. With care and respect, these two objectives need not be mutually exclusive.

9.5.6 In considering specific development criteria for individual sites, the key to success will lie in understanding the strengths and shortcomings of the local environs (the sub-zone and its close context) and use that appreciation to shape re-knitting of the urban grain in a way that respects its historic integrity and form.

9.5.7 Site specific guidance flowing from this appraisal for proposals in the town centre master plan is:

*i) Church Street Builder's Yard*

The Church Street site should incorporate substantial landscaping and carefully planned banks of vegetation and screening. Planted species should be appropriate to the locality.

The redevelopment of the Church Street site should be of scale and materials appropriate to permit the current and former residential character along the eastern side of Dove Bank and Church Street to be knitted back together successfully. The site represents a focal point at the end of Silver Street and should be occupied by one or more buildings that give a strong architectural line to the visible urban grain and are of pleasing and accomplished design.

*ii) The Maltings and the Maltings car park*

Any development on the Maltings car park site must reinstate the built edge and urban grain along Silver Street and Church Street opposite Eastfield and the Blackshaw's Mill with high quality buildings of appropriate scale. Opposite Blackshaw's, this means recreating the line of the street with low two storey mixed retail/residential properties, whilst along the Silver Street/Church Street eastern edge of the site two storeys or a mix of two and three storeyed buildings following the curve of the road would be preferable.

Buildings at the edge of the development recreating the morphology of the north side of Church Street should use traditional materials and respect the prevailing height, massing and separation of buildings on both sides of the

street. It will be very unfortunate if development elsewhere on the Maltings Car Park site is visible over the rooflines of any existing or new structure on the north side of Church Street.

The residential properties along Silver Street should be retained and improved to the wider benefit of the Conservation Area. New structures at the northern end of the car park behind these properties should be kept below the lowest roof line of these dwellings. This will dictate the height of buildings across much of the western half of the car park site.

Design of structures within the core of the site should produce architecture of character and high quality, with courtyards and passageways adding interest and leading the user in directions they need and want to travel. The site is best developed with individual buildings, perhaps of varying height and skyline, avoiding large and monotonous blocks such as the Kwik Save building.

Soft landscaping is important and community art, statues and the like will add interest alongside high quality street materials and signage.

In planning, considerable attention will need to be focused on the impact of increased vehicular movements resulting from the new development on adjacent zones (in particular, the Smithfield Road/Bradley Street area, Church Street and the Dove Bank residential area).

*iii) Lion's Antiques site*

Future development of this zone must seek to maintain a balance between built form and interesting courtyards and passageways. The medieval plot layout of sites running off Market Place must be respected and enhanced. Views along Church Street in both directions are vital and the perimeters of the zone should be planned and designed to provide architectural interest without detracting from the Old Mill as a focal point.

Materials used on the eastern fringe of the site should complement those that already exist within the Church Street streetscape to the east. The site should not be overdeveloped so as to ensure that Blackshaw's Old Mill building remains as the focal point of the westward view from the Church along Church Street.

## 10 REFERENCES AND SOURCES

### of immediate interest

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Smith R J with Cox P (1986) '*The Past in the Pipeline – Archaeology of the Esso Midline*' Salisbury. Trust for Wessex Archaeology,

### previous appraisal

Staffordshire County Council (1971) *Conservation Area – Uttoxeter* [Designation document]

**general and for more research, archaeological and design use:**

### CONTACTS & SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For information regarding policies , development and regeneration within the East Staffordshire Borough, contact East Staffordshire Borough Council and go through to: Planning Policy, Planning Delivery, and / or Building Control section, and Regeneration section, respectively.

**East Staffordshire Borough Council - general enquiries**

**01283 508000**

**The East Staffordshire Borough Council website is [www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk](http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk)**  
(this has a directory of contacts and much other information)

The postal address is:

Planning Delivery ,East Staffordshire Borough Council, Town Hall, Burton upon Trent, Staffs, DE14 2EB

ENGLISH HERITAGE the official advisory body on Monuments, Historic Area and Listed Buildings is based at 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB

Customer Services telephone

0207 973 3434

The West Midlands office is at :

112 Colmore Row, BIRMINGHAM, B3 3AG

Fax: 0121 625 6821

telephone: 0121 625 6820

The DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE MEDIA AND SPORT (DCMS) which issues guidance and legislation jointly with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in regard to issues affecting the Historic Environment, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is at: 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH.

**Other useful information and addresses can be obtained from**

Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation

[www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

The Building Conservation Directory

[www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com)

The various local Civic Societies, Civic Trusts, The Staffordshire Historical and Archaeological Society and the small group of 'Village Design Statement' working groups are mines of information and are very willing to assist, with specific researches on the historic environment, planning issues etc. There are historic and archaeological societies and in addition the East Staffordshire Heritage Trust Company is committed to working on projects reviving buildings in the Borough.

Enquiries can also usefully be made of : Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Georgian Group, The Victorian Society, The Twentieth Century Society, CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and Royal Town Planning Institute. These can be found via directory enquiries or by using a 'search engine'.

## further reading, references and sources of information

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British Standard BS 7913 : 1998 *'Guide to The Principles of the Conservation of Historic Buildings'* .London.BSI.

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in Architects Journal 18 January 1967, pp 123-212.

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Cunnington. P (Henry, Alison. Ed.) ( 2002) *'Caring For Old Houses'*. Yeovil. Marston House. (note: this is an excellent book giving details of materials of construction, principles of repair, conservation and restoration, and containing an extensive bibliography and sources of information for funding, grant assistance and other help)

Department of Culture Media and Sport (previously joint author as Department of National Heritage with Department of the Environment) (1994) *'Planning Policy Guidance Note No: 15 : Planning & The Historic Environment'* London, HMSO.

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## APPENDIX 1 - Summaries Of Archaeological Reports, Provided By The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record Office

*Table 1: Entries on the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) within the Uttoxeter Conservation Area.*

HER No	Grid ref	Name	Description
00688	SK09383332	Uttoxeter Free School	Site of. Established 1558, shown on 1658 map.
00692	SK09093337	Manor House	Site of medieval manor house, no longer extant but present by late 16 <sup>th</sup> century, sited opposite the White Hart Hotel.
00696	SK09293341	Pillory	Site of Bear Hill pillory, no longer extant but shown on 1658 map. Reputedly the scene of bear-bating in Saxon times, but this is dubious.
00697	SK09233340	Market Cross	Site of, shown on 1658 map but no longer extant.
02034	SK09553350	Findspot	Pottery and metalwork, including an 'amulet', all described as Roman. The description of the finds, however, suggests a medieval date instead.
02169	SK09443326	Croft?	Place-name on the Tithe schedule. Has been taken to indicate a tithe barn, but more likely to be a croft (land attached to a house).
02357	SK09203356	Settlement	General reference number for Uttoxeter. Mentioned in Domesday Book, granted borough status in 1251/2. See appendix 1 for summaries of all archaeological projects recorded in the HER under this primary reference number.
50452	SK09133362	Crown Inn	17 <sup>th</sup> -century timber-framed building with later alterations. Probably extant in medieval times. See also Appendix 1.
50692	SK09063333	Burial ground	Friends (Quaker) Burial Ground, part of a land grant from Robert Heath in January 1700. Next to the Friends' Meeting House.