



St Margaret's Conservation Area MANAGEMENT PLAN

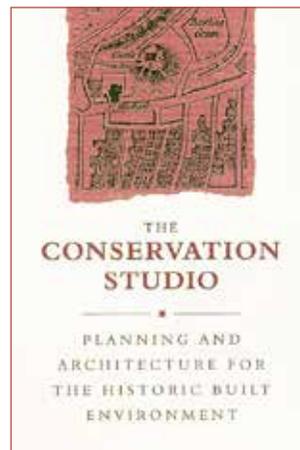
Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



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I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The need for a Management Plan

Local authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any parts of their district that have ‘special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.¹

The special interest of conservation areas can take many different forms related, for instance, to traditional buildings, the development of settlement patterns, industrial history or historic landscapes. It is important, therefore, that the reasons for designation are explained and justified. Best practice, recommended by English Heritage, is that this should be achieved through a conservation area character appraisal which defines the special interest that gives rise to the designation.²

While there are immediate consequences from the designation of conservation areas, such as control over the demolition of buildings or the felling of trees, the expectation is for active management. Indeed, planning legislation places a further duty on local authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas.³

A management plan can fulfil that statutory duty and explain the steps that should be taken to maintain the special interest of the area. However, conservation areas are not necessarily preservation areas and, in most places, change is inevitable. The challenge, therefore, is to manage change in a manner that does not lose sight of the qualities that make a place special.

Effective management needs the participation of all sectors, so the plan should make clear what is expected of residents and businesses, as well as the local authorities. The purpose of the plan, therefore, is to show how each can play a part in preserving and enhancing the conservation area and thus make King’s Lynn a better place to live in, to invest in, to work in and to visit.

1.2 Relationship with the Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The King’s Lynn Conservation Area was first designated in 1969, but it was revised and extended in 1979, 1991, 1992 and 2003. This has resulted in a sizeable designation that reflects the influences that have shaped the town over time – ecclesiastical foundations, a mediaeval market town, civil war defences, maritime wharves and successive phases of commercial and residential development.

In response to this diversity, the conservation area has been divided into five character areas each with its distinctive qualities:

- The St Margaret’s area
- The St Nicholas area to the north
- The Norfolk Street area to the north-east
- The Walks area to the east
- The Friars area to the south and south-east

Character Appraisals for each of these areas were first prepared in 2003 and were revised in 2008. A new Character Appraisal for the St Margaret’s area

has been prepared as the basis for this Management Plan in the context of a programme of investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund through their Townscape Heritage Initiative.

The Appraisal describes the range of elements which, together, make up the character of St Margaret’s and justify its designation as a conservation area. It then identifies a number of issues that have a bearing on the conservation area character, both positively and negatively. It is not, however, the purpose of the Appraisal to offer solutions.

It is the role of the Conservation Area Management Plan to take forward the issues raised by the Appraisal. It will consider them in the context of legislation, policy and community interest in order to develop a plan of action.

This Management Plan should therefore be read in conjunction with the Character Appraisal of the St Margaret’s Conservation Area, also prepared by The Conservation Studio and also finalised in December 2013.



Guildhall, Saturday Market Place

¹ Section 69 – Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

² English Heritage – *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* – 2011

³ Section 71 – Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

1.3 Aims and objectives

This Conservation Area Management Plan must be read in the context of:

- The National Planning Policy Framework – 2012
- The St Margaret's Conservation Area Character Appraisal - 2013
- The Local Development Framework Core Strategy - 2011

The overall aim of the Management Plan is to identify the means by which the special interest of the Conservation Area can be maintained so that it will become self-sustaining into the future.

The more immediate aim, however, is to support the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) in the St Margaret's area. The THI will make significant investments in the town on behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Borough Council and other funding partners. This provides a valuable opportunity to secure added value for King's Lynn. Equally, it is important that the effectiveness of this investment of public funds is protected in the future and is not undermined by less sensitive actions.

The objectives for achieving the necessary managerial approach include:

- Ensuring that there is general understanding of the factors that make the historic environment important



Tower Street

- Establishing a quality agenda for all development proposals taking full account of the special interest of King's Lynn
- Encouraging community interest in both the maintenance and the enjoyment of local heritage
- Making full use of the planning powers available
- Developing corporate commitment to the conservation of the historic environment across all local authority departments and their partners

2 PLANNING POLICY

2.1 National context

The legislative background to the designation and protection of conservation areas is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72 of this Act requires local authorities to ‘preserve or enhance’ their conservation areas, and there is also a statutory duty for Councils to regularly review their conservation areas and to also consider new designations as appropriate.

Government planning policy on conservation areas is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It sees three dimensions to sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and the latter includes ‘... contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’ (para.7).

The core planning principles contained within the NPPF (para.17) state that planning should achieve a high quality of design, take account of the different roles and character of different areas, encourage the reuse of existing resources and conserve heritage assets. Local planning authorities are expected to include a positive strategy for the historic environment in their Local Plan (para.126).

The NPPF addresses designated heritage assets whether they are scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens or conservation areas.

Legislation already requires local authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing a conservation area when considering development proposals⁴ and the NPPF echoes this by stressing that ‘... great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’ (para.132).

The NPPF does, however, invite local authorities to seek opportunities for new development in conservation areas where this would ‘... enhance or better reveal their significance’ (para.137). For the consideration of development proposals, the NPPF introduces the need to balance any harm to the significance of an asset against any public benefits that would result.

Further guidance concerning the management of conservation areas is also included in the draft National Practice Policy Guidance (NPPG) dated August 2013.

2.2 Development plan

This currently consists of the Core Strategy, adopted in 2011, and saved policies from the King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 1998. Of the latter, the only policy relating to the historic environment is Policy 4/14 which addresses development proposals which are outside the Conservation Area but which would affect its setting:

‘Development proposals in the vicinity of Conservation Areas should have regard to their impact on the settings of and views into and out of the areas, which will be taken into account by the Council in assessing any consequential effect for the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.’
Policy 4.14

Other Local Plan policies for conservation have been superseded by the Core Strategy. In respect of the historic environment, the Core Strategy generally defers to the Government’s planning policy.⁵ However, the Spatial Strategy states at Policy CSI that ‘Development priorities for the Borough will be to protect and enhance heritage, cultural and environmental assets’.

For King’s Lynn, this means making ‘appropriate use of the high quality historic environment in the town through sensitive inclusion in regeneration proposals’. CSI also proposes a major review of transport strategy to enable improved circulation within the town.

Kings Lynn is identified as a Sub-Regional Centre where a significant expansion of housing and employment is expected. It is recognised that this could place a stress on heritage assets and Policy CS8 emphasises the need for development to be of high quality. It adds that:

‘New development will be required to demonstrate its ability to:

- *Protect and enhance the historic environment*
- *Respond to the context and character of places’*

Transport proposals in Policy CSI I provide for improvements to the public realm in King’s Lynn that ‘will prioritise pedestrian and cycle access helping to make King’s Lynn less car-orientated’.

The Core Strategy addresses environmental assets in Section 7. This recognises that ‘the historic and built environment play a crucial role in delivering environmental quality and well-being. Therefore, the Council will preserve

⁴ Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

⁵ References are made to Planning Policy Statement 5, which was superseded by the NPPF in March 2012

and where appropriate enhance its qualities and characteristics". Policy CS12, which covers the natural environment as well as the historic, states:

'Development should seek to avoid, mitigate or compensate for any adverse impacts on biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage as well as seeking to enhance sites through the creation of features of new biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage interest. The design of new development should be sensitive to the surrounding area, and not detract from the inherent quality of the environment.'

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a document that defines the Development Plan Documents that the Council will publish and the timetable for their preparation. At present, this is limited to the Core Strategy and the Site Specific Allocations and Policies (to be adopted in 2014).

Prior to its revision in 2009, the LDS included a list of proposed Supplementary Planning Documents in which additional planning guidance can be given. However, this list has been withdrawn pending a review of the Borough's needs.

The Borough Council is preparing a Detailed Policies and Sites Plan and hopes to submit this for Examination in the first half of 2014. Preferred Options were published in July 2013 for consultation. There are currently no plans to prepare any Supplementary Planning Documents.

2.3 Previous initiatives

In 2006, the King's Lynn Urban Renaissance Strategy identified a range of key issues that included:

- The poor relationship between the high quality historic core along the waterfront and the functional/operational town centre
- The varying quality of buildings and public spaces
- The lack of an evening economy
- Heavy traffic congestion

Also in 2006, a Town Centre Study undertaken to inform the emerging Core Strategy found that 37% of visitors spent less than two hours in the town centre. In addition to the retail offer, the reasons for this included the isolation of the riverside from the town centre due to a lack of signage and poor permeability. Nonetheless, the study concluded that the town *'has a variety of strengths on which to develop a coherent tourist product'*.



New development in Queen Street



New development on the South Quay

3 PLANNING MEASURES

3.1 Development management

Where development is not already permitted, planning permission is required for any material changes to the appearance of properties, but the interpretation of what is 'material' is largely left to the Council. For instance, a new shopfront is generally regarded as a material change, but there is less certainty about the renewal of windows on the floors above or a change of roof materials.

Good quality design in new development is an expectation of policy at national and local levels. In King's Lynn there are several examples where this has been successful, but equally there have been less successful cases.

3.2 Article 4 direction

Single dwellings have considerable permitted development rights that enable a range of alterations to be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission. These works, including changes to doors, windows, roof materials and chimneys, can be undertaken despite the designation of a conservation area and, although they may be minimal in each case, the cumulative effect can be damaging to the character of the area. The King's Lynn Civic Society has specifically mentioned how important the control of windows and roof materials is within the Conservation Area.

An Article 4 direction prepared by the local authority can remove permitted development rights. This does not necessarily prevent alterations, but it does mean

that planning permission is required and that allows the Council to take into account the potential effect of works on the character of the conservation area.

There has already been an Article 4 direction in place for the King's Lynn Conservation Area since 1983. However, in recent years there have been many amendments to the General Permitted Development Order, under which Article 4 directions are made and it would be advisable to consider updating the scope of the existing direction and the buildings to which it applies, although this is not considered a priority at the moment.

Many of the buildings in the St Margaret's area are in commercial or mixed uses, such as shops and flats, and these already have very few permitted development rights. This means that planning permission is already required for a variety of relatively minor alterations such as replacing windows or changing roof materials. The scope for an Article 4 direction for such properties would therefore be very limited, but could bring the following changes under planning control:

- The removal or alteration of front or back boundaries
- The painting of any previously unpainted surface, such as brick or stone
- The addition of energy-generating equipment, including PV and solar panels

For the St Margaret's area, and particularly for the commercial buildings which lie within the proposed

THI area, the control of the back boundaries facing the public car parks could bring very positive benefits in terms of improving the general appearance of the car parks and also the setting of adjoining historic buildings.

If permitted development rights are withdrawn from one sector (dwellings) through an Article 4 direction, it is vital in the interests of parity that the same standards of development management are applied to other sectors, such as commercial, retail and flats where the controls already apply.

It should also be noted that listed buildings are not affected by Article 4 directions because controls over detailed changes already exist.

3.3 Monitoring and Compliance

It is important to understand the nature of change so that appropriate adjustments can be made to planning policy and practice. An objective understanding can be gained from a photographic survey, which provides a baseline for measuring change, monitoring building condition or providing evidence for enforcement. Photographic records should be updated at least every four years because works carried out in breach of planning permission, or contrary to a condition of an existing permission, cannot be enforced against after four years. (There is no such time limit in respect of enforcement related to listed building consent).

The Cabinet Office Enforcement Concordat sets out principles of best practice for enforcement, such as openness, consistency, proportionality and response to complaints. The Council explains its position on

enforcement on its website and in leaflets for those who wish to make a complaint and for those who have been the subject of a complaint. A particular emphasis is given to listed buildings and protected trees because they are irreplaceable.

While the photographic survey will provide the evidential baseline, it is important that the area is monitored on a day-to-day basis so that action against unauthorised works can be taken promptly. This function is performed informally by local amenity groups and Council officers from conservation, planning and enforcement.

3.4 Amenity Notices, Urgent Works and Repairs Notices

These are further devices that local authorities can use to seek specific outcomes. They range in severity:

- An Amenity Notice (S215 Notice) can be used to require works to remedy a local nuisance, such as tidying an overgrown garden or painting a neglected facade. Failure to respond can lead to action in the Magistrates' Court
- An Urgent Works Notice requires emergency works to address the disrepair of an unoccupied building, or part of a building, that is either a listed building or one that contributes to the character of a conservation area. If the works are not undertaken, the Local Authority can carry them out and charge the owner
- A Listed Building Repairs Notice requires the owner to carry out a detailed specification of repairs and failure to comply can ultimately lead to compulsory purchase

Clearly enforcement and related notices should be a matter of last resort to be used where negotiation is not able to succeed. It should be noted, however, that awareness of the options available is itself an important management tool. Research carried out by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation has shown that, in the vast majority of cases where formal notices have been embarked upon, they have not run the full course because the necessary works have been carried out by agreement.



View of the back boundaries of Nos. 7-19 odd Tower Street from the first floor of the adjoining car park



These unlisted cottages in Priory Lane are already protected by the existing Article 4 direction

4 DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

4.1 Design

For most applications, a Design and Access Statement will be needed which will set out the applicant's design process and justify the proposed development in terms of its appearance, use and impact on the locality. However, despite advice to applicants on their submission, such Statements are notorious for their shortcomings.

For a listed building, or for new development within a conservation area, or on the edges of a conservation area, a Heritage Statement will also be required which should:

- Describe the heritage assets affected
- Describe the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage asset(s)
- Justify the development in terms of any loss of historic fabric and any public benefits that may be achieved

Detailed guidance for applicants is always helpful and the Borough Council could consider preparing guidance on specific issues that can threaten local character, such as the alteration and repair of historic buildings, energy conservation and micro-generation, landscape and boundary treatments. Better guidance will lead to better applications and reduce the time spent by Council staff and applicants in explaining

expectations and negotiating outcomes. For the most significant sites, the publication of development briefs will set out the Council's expectations before proposals are brought forwards.

Interpreting the rationale and quality of design in development proposals requires particular skills. The Council can call upon a wide range of advisory bodies for advice within the planning process. Whenever a site is in an area in which archaeological remains are likely, this is indicated on the in-house GIS electronic map system and the County Archaeologist and, possibly, English Heritage should be consulted. More generally, the Council should also seek specialist advice from English Heritage, Natural England, The Ancient Monuments Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), The Victorian Society, and The Georgian Society. In some cases, such consultation is mandatory, particularly where the demolition of a listed building is proposed.

The management of change in conservation areas is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and occupiers can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations. The submission of proposals for pre-application advice from the Borough Council is another way of improving the quality of the final application.

4.2 Maintenance

In addition, there is further scope for guidance on maintaining buildings in order to prevent deterioration and higher costs in the long run. The publication *A Stitch in Time*⁶ should be a familiar tool in the promotion of maintenance. It is still available on the Institute of Historic Building Conservation website, although it is about to be revised and updated. Services and guidance are also provided by the charity Maintain Our Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings through their websites⁷.

⁶ IHBC and SPABA *Stitch in Time: Maintaining your property makes good sense and saves money – 2002*

⁷ www.maintainourheritage.co.uk | www.spab.org.uk | www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk

5 ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preparation of the accompanying Character Appraisal of the St Margaret's Conservation Area has included consultation with stakeholders, specifically a walkabout and meeting on 22 October 2013. Following this meeting, notes of the discussions were circulated to give further opportunity for reflection and comment.

A number of issues and negative features were identified. These were recorded in the individual Character Areas set out in Chapter 5 of the appraisal and summarised at Chapter 6 in the same document. These have been used as a basis for the following recommendations for change, some of which will be delivered by the Borough Council as part of its on-going responsibilities for development management, and some of which will be made possible through the THI grant scheme for a focused part of the St Margaret's Conservation Area.

The principal issues to be addressed by this Management Plan are considered to be:

» *Conservation area boundary:*

- Minor revisions

» *Historical buildings:*

- Designation
 - Listed buildings
 - Buildings of local significance
- Building condition

- Loss of detail
- Insensitive alteration and extension
- Use of non-traditional materials and detailing
- Use and vacancy
- Deterioration of shopfronts

» *New development:*

- Development opportunities not being taken up
- Buildings that do not respond to their historical context
- A lack of development briefing

» *Public realm:*

- Property boundaries
- Enhancement opportunities
- Poor maintenance
- Traffic management including the effect of parking and of one-way streets
- Pedestrian management

» *Overall:*

- A lack of confidence to make long-term investments leading to short-term 'quick fix' solutions

5.2 Conservation Area boundary review

Local authorities are obliged to re-consider the boundaries of conservation areas 'from time to time'.⁸ Further to its designation in 1969, the King's Lynn Conservation Area was reviewed and extended in 1979, 1991, 1992 and 2003. The boundary of the St Margaret's area has been considered again in 2013 in the course of the new conservation area character appraisal.

Three proposals put forward and supported in the stakeholders' workshop were:

A. Inclusion of the south bank of the River Millfleet up to the edge of the northern pavement in Boal Street

Justification:

The existing boundary takes an undefined course along the river so that one side is included but the other side is not. The river is an important feature within the locality despite its rather neglected appearance. It also has historical significance as the southern boundary of the original layout of the town in the early 12th century. The proposed addition would also include shrubbery, a small car park, a public footway and an area of grass verge. All would benefit from improvements.

B. Inclusion of the former Post Office and King's Lynn Museum, including a vacant site and an undertaker's premises in Blackfriars Street

Justification:

The General Post Office undertook a major expansion in the 1930s that resulted in a number of purpose-built Post Offices often constructed in a neo-Georgian style. The King's Lynn Post Office is a particularly fine example that remains relatively unaltered. The town museum was converted from a Victorian Gothic church in 1904 and is Grade II listed. The undertakers' premises are a mid to late 19th century building with some remaining historic features.

⁸ Section 69 – Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990



River Millfleet



The former Post Office, Blackfriars Street

C. Inclusion of the car parks at Church Street and at the end of Regent Way

Justification:

These car parks are already almost surrounded by the conservation area, and many important buildings adjoin them, some of which are listed. Any development on these two sites is likely to be extremely sensitive and designation will assist the Council is resisting development which is not appropriate to this setting.

The proposed changes are shown on the Management Proposals Map.

Recommendation 1:

- *Following public consultation, the Borough Council will make the proposed changes to the St Margaret's Conservation Area boundary as indicated on the Management Proposals Map*



Church Street car park

5.3 Historical buildings

Designation – Listed buildings

Listing began in 1945 and early designations in King's Lynn include St Margaret's Church (The Minster), Clifton House, Thoresby College, Marriot's Warehouse and Hanse House, all listed in 1951. However, most of the listed buildings in the St Margaret's area were added as the result of the re-survey in 1972 and, while there have been additions since then, English Heritage would argue that listing coverage is generally complete. It is unlikely, therefore, that any further buildings will be added to the statutory list unless exceptional evidence is revealed and there is a demonstrable threat.

There is, however, a case for investigating the former cinema in St James' Street in order to understand the extent to which the existing building includes elements of the earlier Theatre Royal and whether they would justify listing.



The former cinema in St James' Street

Recommendation 2:

- The Borough Council will continue to monitor the statutory list of buildings throughout the Borough and will make recommendations for new listings as considered appropriate.

Designation – Buildings of local significance

Government policy has always acknowledged that there are buildings which, although they may not qualify for statutory listing, are nonetheless of special architectural or historic interest in the local context. Such buildings may be identified in the course of considering development proposals and can be regarded as heritage assets to which policy considerations may apply. It is better practice however to identify buildings of local interest in a more systematic manner in advance of any threat and publish them in a local register.

The Borough Council does not currently have such a register, but it is recommended that the Council should adopt a set of criteria and a planning policy for the protection of locally listed heritage assets. This could be undertaken in the forthcoming Detailed Policies and Sites Plan. Recommended criteria are provided at Appendix 2 with a schedule of suggested buildings.

The process of selecting candidates for a local list need not be onerous as it is an excellent way to involve local amenity groups and promote understanding of local heritage. Public suggestions can be assessed against adopted criteria by a steering group facilitated by the Council. The King's Lynn Civic Society has already offered to assist with the preparation of a Local List.

Recommendation 3:

- The Borough Council will adopt a planning policy and criteria for a new list of heritage assets of local significance
- The Borough Council, working with the local community, will ensure that a new local list is established in the St Margaret's Conservation Area

Building condition

It has been noted that in various locations within the St Margaret's Conservation Area, buildings are vacant, poorly maintained, or in several cases, actually derelict. These tend to be commercial buildings in the eastern side of the Conservation Area, as the residential properties in the western side are generally well maintained and cared for. The influence of the large Vancouver Shopping Centre to the north of the Conservation Area has not always been positive in that it has drawn shoppers away from the shops in the Saturday Market Place, St James' Street, the southern part of the High Street, and Tower Street.

The lack of a 'draw' and the poor visual appearance of some of the buildings in these streets is also affecting footfall adversely. Grant aid could help to reverse this decline but it needs to be focused on the most visually important buildings and sites.



Buildings in need of improvement in the Saturday Market Place



Tower Street



The former Courts building, St James' Street west



High Street



Shopfronts in St James' Street west



Historic shopfront in Tower Street

Recommendation 4:

- *The Borough Council will use its statutory powers to protect both listed and unlisted buildings in the St Margaret's Conservation from neglect, unauthorised alteration, or from unjustified demolition*
- *The Borough Council, working with its partners, will support a grant scheme for the St Margaret's Conservation Area*

The control of unlisted buildings

The loss of details, insensitive alterations and the use of non-traditional materials are all issues that can arise from uncontrolled development. There is already an Article 4 direction in force in the entire King's Lynn Conservation Area which covers alterations to unlisted single dwellings. This brings under planning control a number of minor changes which would otherwise be considered 'permitted development'. The direction was served in 1983 and the definition of permitted development has been revised many times since. When resources allow, there is a need, therefore, to review the Article 4 direction and update it.

Although the existence of the Article 4 direction will be apparent in local land charges, its effectiveness depends upon continuing awareness and an understanding of the implications for property owners. It is therefore proposed that a new Article 4 direction leaflet should be prepared and distributed to all residents who may be affected. The leaflet should provide the following:

- A map showing the area affected
- Confirmation of the types of buildings affected
- A description of the works which will need planning permission
- Guidance on suitable repairs and alterations

Recommendation 5:

- *The Borough Council will review and update the Article 4 direction for Kings Lynn as resources allow*
- *When practicable, the Borough Council will prepare guidance notes for the existing Article 4 direction, to be distributed to all householders affected*
- *In implementing the Article 4 direction, the Council will ensure that development management standards are rigorously applied, including regular monitoring of the properties affected and the use of its statutory enforcement powers were breaches occur*

Shopfronts

Whilst the Conservation Area retains a number of well designed and well maintained traditional shopfronts, several of them historic, a large number of commercial premises have discordant, garish and poorly designed shopfronts which could incrementally be improved as opportunities for their replacement present themselves. The Borough Council already has a 'Shopfronts and Advertisements' leaflet, aimed at assisting applicants when considering changes to their properties. A copy of this has already been submitted to the HLF as part of the Stage 1 THI bid in 2012. The adoption of more detailed and fully illustrated shopfront guidance would assist in the Council's control over these changes.

Recommendation 6:

- *The Borough Council will recognise traditional shopfronts as heritage assets for the purposes of development management*
- *The Borough Council will prepare guidance on the design and maintenance of traditional shopfronts*

5.4 New development

Whilst the St Margaret's Conservation Area is contained by the River Great Ouse on one side, and by buildings or roads on the others, it still forms part of the cohesive whole which is the town centre of King's Lynn. Perhaps because of this, it has retained a distinct character created by its riverside location, the narrow winding medieval streets, and the very high quality of many of the buildings. However, this character could easily be threatened by poor quality development within it or around its edges.

Opportunities for new development must be considered carefully and the effect of new buildings on the setting of the Conservation Area, and on views both into it and out of it, particularly taken into account. New development must be sympathetic to its context in terms of its scale, materials and details. It should also follow the existing pattern or grain of development, not obstruct important views, and not dominate buildings in the immediate vicinity.

Active promotion of development on opportunity sites can be assisted by the publication of development and design briefs. While briefing sets the constraints for development, it also provides certainty. On major sites, additional external advice should be sought through the use of design review panels.

Recommendation 7:

- *The Borough Council will prepare briefing to guide the development of significant sites*
- *The Borough Council will take external design advice for developments that may have a significant effect on the Conservation Area*

5.5 Public realm

Property boundaries

The majority of buildings in the Conservation Area butt up to the back of the pavement, so there are no front boundaries. However, the rear boundaries are highly visible in a number of locations due to backland development such as modern public car parks. These buildings are mainly in low key commercial uses and many of them are severely neglected, which is obvious when the backs of the properties are seen from the public domain.

Using its normal planning controls, and by encouraging change through the use of grant aid, the Borough Council should be able incrementally to improve these boundaries by the following measures:

- Reinststate boundaries where they have been removed to their original height and footprint
- Ensure that new boundaries are built from quality materials, paying full attention to brick bond, lime mortar, and coping details

- New gates should be good quality traditional timber gates
- Negotiate with property owners to remove visible air conditioning units, out of date wiring, and other extraneous additions
- Encourage the use of good quality paving, trees or planting where the back yards or gardens are visible from the public domain
- Consider the potential for developing new active frontages with mews-type buildings

Recommendation 8:

- *The Borough Council will seek the improvement of the back boundaries to the properties as indicated on the Management Proposals Map.*



Back boundaries to the shops in the High Street from the Baker Lane car park

Enhancement

Advice on public realm issues in historic towns is already provided on a regional basis by English Heritage⁹. However, there is a strong case for aligning this with local aspirations in a highway design guide to address local distinctiveness and the particular needs of King's Lynn. This could include co-ordination in the design of street surfaces, signage and street furniture, the reduction of clutter and principles for traffic management.

Some steps have already been made such as the rationalisation of the street nameplates (a simple design of black letters on a white background) and the provision of a standard sage green for finger posts and litter bins, examples of which can be seen throughout the town. The adopted colour could be used for other street furniture, such as streetlights, seats and new litterbins in order to promote an identity for the historic town centre.

It is important that there is a mechanism in place to ensure that the Highway Authority (Norfolk County Council) has adequate records of conservation area boundaries and an understanding of the different sensitivities that apply. For instance, although advantage has already been taken of the relaxation in conservation areas for yellow lines to be 50mm wide rather than the standard 100mm there is plenty of evidence that this is not applied consistently.

In time, much of the yellow lining and associated signage in the St Margaret's Conservation Area could be removed if the whole area was designated as

a Restricted Zone where parking and loading are allowed only in marked bays. This device has been used successfully along the quaysides and could be extended.

Involving the local community in the preparation of a 'Street Audit' can also be a positive move. This should identify all unnecessary or redundant street clutter and signage, as well as both good and bad paving. Subject to proper training and management, this could be carried out by volunteers. After the survey work has been recorded, a schedule of preferred street furniture, materials and colours could be prepared for use by the Borough Council or the Highways Authority as and when funds for enhancement are available. This should build on the high quality achievements already noted in the production of standard finger posts, street name plates, bollards and litter bins. Street lighting is a further topic which needs detailed assessment as well as the agreement of individual property owners if the streets are to be continued to be lit (as they are in many cases) by street lights attached to privately-owned buildings.

A study has already been initiated to consider traffic management in the town. This should clearly demonstrate that full consideration has been given to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and the safety of pedestrian movement as well as vehicular access.

Both the Borough and the County Council should take the following measures to ensure that the conservation area is enhanced:

- The existing areas of high quality traditional paving must be protected



Back boundaries facing the Regent Way car park



Fingerpost in the Saturday Market Place

⁹ English Heritage – *Streets for All: South East* – 2006

- Further areas of traditional paving should be added as funding allows
- The street lights need to be upgraded and out of date fittings removed
- The replacement of the paving and brick planters in the High Street and Tower Street needs to be considered along with other improvements such as new street trees
- Enhancement of the Saturday Market Place should use quality materials in a simple design

Recommendation 9:

- *The Borough Council and Norfolk County Council will work together to improve the public realm in the St Margaret's Conservation Area.*

Maintenance

The degradation of previous enhancement schemes has been due to inconsiderate subsequent work by statutory undertakers and by inadequate levels of maintenance. It is vital to the management of the conservation area that undertakers are held to account and that adequate resources are provided to maintain, often expensive, investments in public realm work.

Recommendation 10:

- *The Borough Council will use its statutory and fiscal powers to ensure that the public spaces in the St Margaret's Conservation Area are properly maintained.*

Traffic management and pedestrian movement

Traffic flow around the Conservation Area is already limited by one way systems, but the availability of free parking spaces on South Quay has resulted in the generation of additional traffic as car owners search for unused spaces. Busy traffic along South Quay and into the Saturday Market Place via Queen Street is a particularly important local issue. Parking around The Minster is also in urgent need of review as the current arrangement has a seriously adverse effect on the setting of the adjoining, highly graded, listed buildings and the general ambiance of the area. Local cyclists also consider that their needs are not being met due to the dominance of the car in the narrow streets within the Conservation Area, and due to the lack of any meaningful provision for safe cycle routes.

Whilst there are currently plans being drawn up for some limited improvements, these do not address the whole of the Saturday Market Place. More pedestrian-only areas, or shared surfaces, might be advisable, particularly in St James' Street and the Saturday Market Place. Improved pedestrian crossings should also be considered for Boal Street, Church Street, St James' Street/Tower street junction, and the Saturday Market Place. Overall, improving pedestrian flows and the quality of the pavements, controlling traffic, and reducing on-street car parking (where this impacts on pedestrians) could all be considered. Local residents have also proposed that the Purfleet Bridge is shut to remove through traffic from the Conservation Area, that the present 20 mph speed limit is extended throughout the whole of the St Margaret's Conservation Area, and that the redevelopment of the three surface car parks with new housing which could include some multi-storey car parking facilities, is considered.

A scheme for repaving and other improvements to the western end of the Saturday Market Place will go out to public consultation in early 2014. This is independent of any improvements which might come forward under the new THI grant scheme.

Recommendation 11:

- *The Borough Council and County Council will work together to reduce the flow of traffic around the St Margaret's Conservation Area, provide safer routes for both pedestrians and cyclists, and moderate the effects of car parking*



Removing some of the car parking in front of The Minster would greatly improve its setting and provide a more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment

6 TRAINING, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Repairing and maintaining historic buildings, especially those of the high quality found in King's Lynn, requires a highly-skilled and well-qualified workforce. In addition to providing funds to assist physical repairs, an important strand of the THI is to identify any gaps in local provision for heritage skills training and to bring forward proposals for improving the skill-base.

Management of the conservation area can only be effective if heritage assets are understood and valued by local communities – residents, businesses and visitors. A further role of the THI is to promote understanding and enjoyment of heritage by developing new activities, by taking advantage of existing facilities and by taking opportunities to add a heritage dimension to other events. For instance it is proposed that:

- Communities should be involved in local listing
- Communities could be involved in a public realm audit
- A historical research group should be formalised through the Marriott's Warehouse Trust
- The Council should publish guidance on caring for historic buildings
- The Town should take advantage of the annual Maintenance Event promoted by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and Maintain Our Heritage

- The Town should maximise its participation in the national Heritage Open Days
- The King's Lynn festivals should be used to promote awareness of heritage issues and to celebrate the town's distinctive character

7 PUTTING THE PLAN INTO ACTION

It is important that the Conservation Area Management Plan has a practical dimension that delivers actions, rather than remaining no more than a 'wish list'. The conservation planning issues considered in Section 6 have, therefore, been presented as a series of tasks in the Action Plan. It is equally important that the tasks are actually taken into the work programmes of specific individuals.

Timescales are a matter of priorities expressed as:

- Immediate – within the first year
- Medium term – within one-to-two years
- Longer term – third year and beyond

Priorities are necessarily determined by expediency as well as urgency. There are several tasks that can be achieved immediately because they have no resource requirements, for example the reassessment of existing practices. Other proposals may take longer because budgets have to be raised before they can be realised.

Above all it is important to recognise that heritage is not an isolated issue, but rather a strand that runs through all activities. Responsibility for the heritage of King's Lynn is, therefore, a corporate matter in which everyone has a part to play.

Tasks	Responsibilities	Priority
Confirm the Borough Council's commitment to make use of all planning powers currently available	Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Planning	1
Designate conservation area boundary changes	Conservation Officer	1
Agree policy and criteria for a register of locally significant heritage assets	Conservation Officer and Planning Policy	2
Establish community project to develop the local list	Conservation Officer and THI Manager	2
Establish continuing review of the need for Amenity Notices and Urgent Works	Conservation Officer, Enforcement and THI Manager	1-3
Review and update the Article 4 direction	Conservation Officer and Planning Policy	1
Review development management practice to ensure consistency between Article 4 and other buildings	Development Management and Conservation Officer	1
Prepare updated or new guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 4 direction • Shopfronts • Historic buildings: alteration and maintenance 	Technical Support Officer (Conservation) Conservation Officer, and THI Manager	1-2
Prepare enhancement scheme for exposed backs	Conservation Officer	1
Prepare public realm enhancement schemes	County highways / landscape consultancy	1-2
Prepare development and design briefs	Planning Policy and Conservation Officer	3
Establish design review panel	Development Management	2
Improve traffic management	County highways	3
Develop training, learning and community initiatives	THI Manager	1-3
Review Conservation Area Management Plan	Regeneration & Economic Development Manager	1-3

8 VISION AND ADOPTION

The vision for the St Margaret's Conservation Area remains, as stated in the THI Stage 1 application:

The vision for this part of the conservation area is to regain its historic status by enhancing and using its heritage assets as key drivers of conservation led economic regeneration to increase the footfall in the town centre and bring more residents, consumers and visitors to the conservation area.'

The proposed programme of training, learning and celebration will underpin the aims of conservation area management and ensure that the whole community is involved rather than just the owners and occupiers of historic buildings.

Effectiveness depends upon recognition of the fact that everyone has a part to play. For their part, the statement by the Chief Executive as a part of the THI submission and the adoption of this Conservation Area Management Plan demonstrates the commitment of the Council to the conservation of heritage assets.

The ultimate aim of conservation area management is to turn best practice into everyday practice. In this way, the process of maintaining the qualities that give King's Lynn its distinctive character can become self-sustaining and the peaks and troughs of decline and rescue can be anticipated and avoided.

Local residents have mentioned the need for the Council to provide an overall framework or 'Vision' for the economic and social well-being and development

of the town as past initiatives are now out of date and disparate in their scope. A Masterplan for the whole town is therefore a concept which needs to be considered by the Council as and when resources allow. The THI bid and Management Plan for the St Margaret's Conservation Area could form part of a number of documents which would contribute to this Masterplan in due course.

9 MONITORING AND REVIEW

While the Action Plan identifies tasks and assigns responsibilities and establishes timescales, the management function will only be meaningful if the programme is subject to periodic review in order to evaluate progress and to make any necessary adjustments.

To begin with, it is recommended that reviews should be undertaken on a quarterly basis in order to ensure that management tasks are taken into individual work programmes and short-term tasks are undertaken as soon as possible. In time, it may be reasonable to relax the review cycle as individual projects develop programmes of their own.

Responsibility for conducting the review is with the Regeneration & Economic Development Manager in association with the Conservation staff.

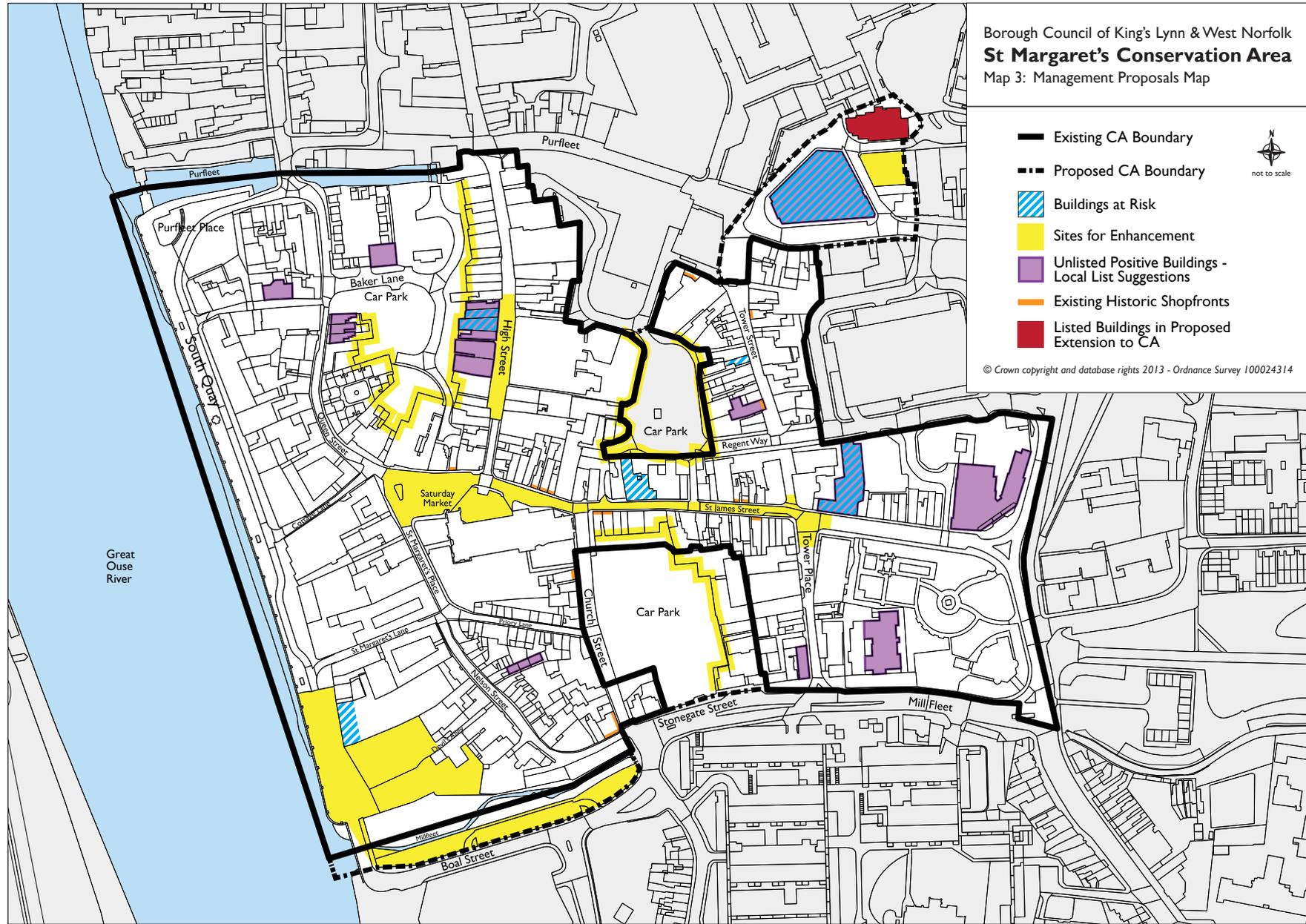
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 maps

Map 3: St Margaret's Conservation Area Management Proposals Map

Appendix 2

Locally significant heritage assets



Appendix 2 Locally significant heritage assets

Principles

The St Margaret's Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified a number of key positive buildings which, although not statutorily listed, are considered to satisfy the suggested criteria set out below. The intention is that these should form the basis for a Borough-wide local register for King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Clearly, the effectiveness of such a register will also depend upon formal adoption of the list and a primary policy under the emerging Site Specific Allocations and Policies document.

The criteria for the selection of heritage assets for the local register require that the building should fall within one or more of the following categories:

a. Age

The earliest buildings should merit greater attention towards preservation

b. Authenticity

Buildings or structures should be substantially unaltered and should retain the majority of their original features

c. Architectural Significance

Buildings or structures of local architectural significance for aesthetic merit or craftsmanship of any period; principal works of principal architects or designers of local importance; exemplars of key building types

d. Local technological significance or innovation

e. Historic Significance

Buildings/structures illustrating or associated with local architectural/social/cultural history or events, locally or nationally well known people

f. Townscape Significance

Individual buildings, objects or groups of exceptional quality in their context – for example, landmark buildings, notable buildings marking or creating interesting places, vistas, or interesting skylines

It should be noted:

- Buildings identified as being of local significance do not have to be restricted to designated conservation areas
- The definition of 'buildings' can extend to a range of structures, such as railings, walls, and gate piers, as well as features in the public realm such as street lights, bollards, milestones, historic paving, and horse troughs.

The list

The following buildings in the St Margaret's Conservation Area are considered to meet the criteria for local listing:

» *The former corn warehouse, Baker Lane*

This building was built c1900 to store grain and has now been converted into apartments. Eight storeys high, it is constructed using red brick with brick pilasters and huge stone kneelers to the eaves on either side of the gable which overlooks the Baker Lane car park. A small

structure above the eaves on the west-facing elevation probably denotes the location of lifting gear. Although somewhat altered, with modern windows, it retains a sense of its former use and is an important local landmark due to its height.



The former corn warehouse, Baker Lane

» *The Old Granary Antique Shop, King's Staithe Lane*

This building is one storey high with a steeply pitched pantiled roof facing the street with one long dormer which drops to only just above the eaves. The walls are painted brick with a large central entrance, three sets of sash windows, and a single boarded door. Despite being

called The Granary, it has the outward appearance of a stable. The Old Granary probably dates to c1800 but may retain earlier fabric. It forms a group with adjoining listed buildings, namely Nos. 4 and 5 King's Staithe Square, listed grade II and mid-18th century in date, and No. 1 King's Staithe Lane, listed grade II, an early 18th century former warehouse which is now a shop with an apartment above.



The Old Granary Antique Shop, King's Staithe Lane

» *Nos. 22, 24 and 26 Queen Street including the front boundary railings and gates*

This short terrace of three matching houses is three storeys high with a gable at second floor level. The slate roofs appear original. The houses are built from red brick in the neo-classical style of c1880 with sash windows, the larger sashes to the ground floor being topped by high quality rubbed brick arches with pediments above. There are string courses to the upper floors with brick modillions to the eaves and verges. The front doors appear original with three smaller panels to the lower part of the door and two glazed panels above. The very fine decorative cast iron railings

on a rendered plinth with matching gates to each property are clearly original. Overall, these provide a very well preserved example of its date.



Nos. 22, 24 and 26 Queen Street including the front boundary railings and gates

» *Arterton's, High Street*

This three storey building of c1870 is four bays wide and is built from red brick with painted stucco embellishments in the Italianate style. Although there is a modern shopfront of little interest, above there is a well preserved symmetrical façade with the original six over six windows to the first floor and the original three over three sashes above. Each floor has stone pilasters to each bay. The eaves are supported on a deep cornice with over-size console brackets, all in painted stucco. The pitched roof is hardly visible from the ground but what can be seen at each party wall on either side are matching chimney stacks with decorative corbelling.

The building forms a group with The Deck of Cards, Save the Children, and the former Hogshead Public House.



Arterton's, High Street

» *The Deck of Cards, High Street*

Although in use as one shop, this is actually two buildings, both built in c1900 and both three storeys high. The larger building to the south is built in good quality orangey-red brick with painted stucco decoration. The principle features are the two wide arches at first floor level, enclosing recessed oriel windows, and the almost circular two storey height



The Deck of Cards, High Street

cupola above, with curved glass windows and an ogee copper roof – a notable feature. Two plaster urns decorate the eaves, but the roof above this is hardly visible. The smaller building to the north is the same height and is also built from the same colour brick with simpler sash windows, originally arranged as a group of four to each floor, but the second floor has been slightly altered. The brickwork is decorated with moulded brick panels and pilasters which support a brick pediment or gable to the top floor.

The building forms a group with Arterton's, Save the Children, and the former Hogshead Public House.

» *Save the Children, High Street*

Dated 1898, this three storey building has a modern shopfront but a well detailed frontage above built from red brick with painted stucco decoration. The principal features are the pilasters and swagged decoration to the first floor, with the curved pediment above topped by a ball finial.

The building forms a group with Arterton's, The Deck of Cards, and the former Hogshead Public House.



Save the Children (centre right building), High Street

» *The former Hogshead Public House, High Street (currently vacant)*

The former Lynn Drapery Emporium, this building was rebuilt in 1898 (date on front) and retains a fine first floor elevation with five very large arcaded windows and two smaller windows at the northern end, presumably the location of offices. Although the ground floor has been changed in more recent times, this building is notable for the quality of the first floor arcades which would once have been used to display goods. At eaves height, there is a deep cornice with the original name of the shop and a balustrade above, concealing the roof. Overall, this is a good example of a purpose-built shop of this period.

The building forms a group with Arterton's, The Deck of Cards and Save the Children.



The former Hogshead Public House, High Street

» *May Cottages, behind No. 12 Nelson Street*

This modest row of three two storey cottages dates to c1850 and is built from red brick laid in Flemish bond with a pitched roof above. The alley leading to the cottages is paved in York stone or brick. This is an

interesting and well preserved example of backland cottages which would once have been more common in King's Lynn.



May Cottages, behind No. 12 Nelson Street

» *Pine and Things, 28 Tower Street*

This Georgian building is three storeys high and dates to c1800. There are two sash windows to each of the first and second floors, mostly six over six panes and mostly original. The walls are red brick with simple rubbed brick arches over the windows. The ground floor shopfront is c1900.



Pine and Things, 28 Tower Street

» *The former Post Office, Blackfriars Street*

Purpose-built in 1938 in the neo-Georgian style, this Post Office is a substantial three storey building with the principal five bay corner elevation facing down Tower Street. The building is constructed in gault brick with Portland stone dressings including string courses. The main entrance is defined by an elaborate stone doorcase with Tuscan columns which support a pedimented sash window at first floor. The pitched roof is covered in clay tiles. The building appears to be unaltered and is an important local landmark.



The former Post Office, Blackfriars Street

» *King's Lynn Police Station, London Road*

The Police Station occupies an extremely prominent location on the junction of St James' Street and London Road. It was built in 1953-5 to the designs of the County Architect, C H Thurston. Although the gault brick and Portland stone detailing, and general neo-Georgian character of the building, is similar in style to the Post Office, it has Crittall steel windows rather than timber sashes. The front entrance is defined by a two storey portico, created by four tall brick columns which support a deep stone cornice which goes around the whole building. Above is an eye catching copper-clad clock tower with a gently curved copper roof. The building is remarkable for the survival of all of its original external details.

» *JTC Warehouse Ltd, corner of Stonegate Street and Tower Place*

This is a modest two storey brick building with a low pitched hipped and slated roof. The first floor windows



King's Lynn Police Station, London Road

are timber casements which are grouped in three lights, each window having four panes – these appear to be original. Despite a number of external alterations to the ground floor windows and doors, it retains some of the industrial character which would once have been far more common in this part of King's Lynn. The cut-away ground floor corner to prevent damage to the building is a particular feature of merit. It dates to the mid to late 19th century.



JTC Warehouse Ltd, corner of Stonegate Street and Tower Place

» *Former School, Millfleet*

This late 19th century single storey building is built from red brick with grey brick dressings. The pitched roof is slated and there are five gables, each with a lancet window, facing the street. The principal windows have been replaced. It is now used as a youth training centre.



Former School, Millfleet

» *Nos. 33-39 St James' Street*

This is a former garage which became for some time a restaurant. In the King's Lynn Buildings of England volume, Pevsner noted that it has a reinforced concrete skeleton with angular curtain walls. As it apparently dates to 1908, it is an early example of the type of construction which was used to create the first skyscrapers.



Nos. 33-39 St James' Street

