

## Appendix 3

### All Saints Conservation Area – Questionnaire Feedback

**Q1.** Did you know that the All Saints Area was a Conservation Area?

YES - 54.5%                      NO – 45.5%

Our comments: responses were evenly divided to the awareness of the Conservation Area.

**Q2.** Do you agree that the change in the boundary (as described in the leaflet) is appropriate for the conservation area?

Very appropriate	27.3%
Appropriate	45.5%
No opinion	9.1%
Inappropriate	9.1%
Very inappropriate	9.1%

Our comments: the overall consensus seemed to be in support of an extension. Those who replied generally supported an extension, but thought that the one proposed was not large enough.

**Q3.** Do you have any other comments about the boundary of the Conservation Area?

Responses:

- does this mean the night club on College Street will have to adhere to noise regulations?
- not sufficient info to provide the whole picture
- extension should include the 19<sup>th</sup>C leather works on Kingswell St/Foundry St as it contributes to the area.
- It should include the area bounded by Guildhall Rd/Angel St/Fetter St.
- The current boundary excludes the burgage plots between Gold St and St Katherine's St. It is skewed thinking to include the backs of plots along Drapery and Bridge St and not Gold St.
- It should include Abington Street to Abington Square.
- St Katherine's Churchyard should be included, along with the Baptist Church and the College St Mews.
- The length of Abington St should be included within the boundary.
- The King William IV public house and factory next door at the south of Kingswell St. should be included.

- The Victorian Terrace along Marefair should be included.
- The whole island at the south of Bridge St. should be included as if it was redeveloped, it should be done so sensitively.

Our comments: The leather works was considered but it was decided not to include it as although it is important to Northampton's history, the test for its inclusion is its contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The building in question is an industrial building and incorporating it would be a move away from the character of the All Saints Conservation Area. The same issue applies to the public house.

The plots to the rear of Gold Street were originally burgage plots, but historic and more recent backland development along the south side of Gold St and along St Katherine's St has significantly eroded this medieval pattern of development. The plots along College St and Kingswell St are virtually in-tact and have not suffered the same degree of backland development. It is recommended that the rear of No.51 Gold St be included within the Conservation Area as the former burgage plot is clearly recognisable.

Abington Street is an important thoroughfare which contains many examples of 1930-40s architecture. Incorporating the whole of this street would significantly increase the overall size of the Conservation Area and add an area which is also different in character to the rest of the Conservation Area. This is especially so if the extension was carried up to include Abington Square. Abington St is worthy of protection but because of its different character to All Saints Conservation Area, it would benefit from being considered as a Conservation Area in its own right.

The inclusion of a terrace along Marefair would mean that the Conservation Area boundary crosses Horsemarket, which is a major road route through the town and therefore forms a natural boundary for the Conservation Area to the west.

The island to the south of Bridge St contains St. John's Hospital, which is protected through its Grade I Listed status. Any redevelopment of the site, or those adjacent to it, would have to take into account the Listed Building and the Conservation Area.

**Q4.** Do you have any other comments on the All Saints Re-Appraisal document?

Responses:

- I would like to know the actual number of replies rather than percentages.
- It covered the issues very comprehensively.
- I would like Northampton's good points to be maximised.

- I trust that much more stringency will be applied in maintaining the area as it is, removing unnecessary signage and things out of keeping.
- The boundary on the south side of Gold St should also be regularised by including the gap made by the arcade.
- The All Saints School site should also be included.
- St Giles' St up to Fish St should also be included.
- The boundary should extend south of County Hall.
- St John's Hospital should also be included.
- Anything that protects the historic buildings is a good thing. They make the town unique.
- It's a shame the shop fronts are not covered by the rules as they are not always in keeping with the buildings above.

Our comments: The report tried to highlight the good points, but also identified areas which would benefit from some enhancement. Highway signage is controlled by the County Council not the Borough Council.

The burgage plot pattern has been altered due to back land development.

The All Saints School is a Grade II Listed Building and therefore is protected due to its Listed status.

St. Giles' St is included in the Derngate and St Giles' Conservation Areas.

The area south of County Hall is within the Derngate Conservation Area.

St John's Hospital is a Grade I Listed Building and is therefore protected due to its Listed Status.

Changing shop fronts within the Conservation Area will require Planning Permission and the Borough Council has an adopted document *Northampton Shop Front Design Guide (1998)*.

**Q5.** Can you indicate whether or not you support the statements about managing the Conservation Area?

**Q5a - Building Styles and Materials.** Any work that is carried out on the buildings will be carried out sympathetically, including repairs, alternations and new build. Any work will be done using high quality materials.

Responses:

Very appropriate	63.6%
Appropriate	27.3%
No opinion	9.1%
Inappropriate	0%
Very inappropriate	0%

- Most businesses don't seem to adhere to this.
- Plastic and lots of lights seem the order of the day.

- It is a priority to maintain and improve the appearance of the area.
- Some 19thC façades conceal older frontages.
- Care needs to be taken when renovating.

**Q5b - Alterations and Extensions.** Any extension or alterations to shop fronts will have to be of a high standard of design and not compromise the overall character of the area. They should form an overall positive contribution to the site, building, street scene and area as a whole.

Responses:

Very appropriate	72.7%
Appropriate	18.2%
No opinion	9.1%
Inappropriate	0%
Very inappropriate	0%

- You have lost the battle already.
- It depends on whose opinion the standard of design is agreed by.
- The upper storeys are beautiful and interesting but spoilt by frontages at street level.
- Businesses need to minimise the impact of their own logos and identity.
- On Drapery and Gold St there is a mix of burgage and half burgage fronts. These will be destroyed if modern wide frontages are allowed.
- Should have been tighter controls in the past to control shop fronts.

**Q5c - New Development.** As space is limited in the town centre, to build something new will require something to be demolished. It will have to be proven that demolition is a necessary option. Any new development should make a positive contribution to the area and respect and harmonise with the existing buildings.

Responses:

Very appropriate	58.3%
Appropriate	25.0%
No opinion	8.3%
Inappropriate	8.3%
Very inappropriate	0%

- pity it doesn't include the bus station.
- There is too much demolition.
- There is not enough refurbish / rejuvenate.

- Provision should be made for archaeological investigation where demolition/new build is proposed.
- Careful consideration needs to be given when demolishing old buildings.
- Can old buildings be retained / incorporated into the new development?
- This should be done preferably in keeping with the burgage plot pattern.
- Replacing an old building with a new one should be the last option.

Our comments: Very little demolition is infact proposed within the All Saints Conservation Area.

Shop owners are encouraged to refurbish their buildings and some works may be eligible for an Historic Building Grant.

Provision is already in place for archaeological investigation to take place before developments are undertaken.

Demolition is considered to be the last resort and other options should be considered before demolition.

**Q5d - Vacant Buildings.** Vacant buildings are a concern for all town centres. Applications to reinstate the sympathetic reuse of vacant buildings will be looked upon favourably. Uses of buildings will contribute to the Conservation Area's character and apperance and proposed uses (planning applications) will look at the impact of the use on the area.

Responses:

Very appropriate	54.5%
Appropriate	45.5%
No opinion	0%
Inappropriate	0%
Very inappropriate	0%

- lots of floors are vacant in the town centre.
- Rents are too high.
- There should be a consortium of small businesses similar to the old arcades.
- Encourage a variety of new and viable businesses.
- Many interesting shops fail to thrive.
- There are too many estate agents, cheap shops and sandwich bars.
- Action needs to be taken to prevent the blight by intentionally induced deterioration.
- More buildings should be occupied and used.
- Need controls over use – more shops need to be encouraged rather than gaming arcades and offices.

Our comments: there is little that can be done to encourage shop owners to use their upper floors. The Council did used to run a 'Living Over the Shop' grant to housing associations to develop above shops. The Urban Capacity Study also identified properties that it considered has the potential to be used for residential purposes.

Rents are also out of our control.

The type of use is determined by a building's Use Class – these are national use classes which are extremely generic, and the Council cannot dictate the type of shop which goes into a retail unit.

The Council is not in a position to force an empty building into use, although it certainly encourages it and looks upon planning applications, which propose to reinstate the use of a vacant building, favourably.

**Q5e – Demolition.** Any proposals for demolition will be strictly controlled by Northampton Borough Council. It is vital that the replacement building will not be detrimental to the area's appearance and character.

Responses:

Very appropriate	63.6%
Appropriate	27.3%
No opinion	0%
Inappropriate	9.1%
Very inappropriate	0%

- there is too much demolition.
- Provision should be made for archaeological investigation.
- Careful consideration should be given before demolition is allowed.
- Once a building has gone you can't change your mind.
- As long as architecture is good it can be modern.
- Demolition will lose Northampton's medievally derived character.

**Q5f - Areas for Enhancement.** Some areas of the town have been identified as a focus for enhancement in the future. It is important to note that Northampton Borough Council will only be able to take action on making changes in these areas when an opportunity becomes available in the future, for example this might be when a planning application is made.

Do you agree with the three areas identified in the Management Plan for future enhancement (as detailed overleaf)?

### Gold Street

#### Responses:

Very appropriate	63.6%
Appropriate	18.2%
No opinion	9.1%
Inappropriate	9.1%
Very inappropriate	0%

- Gold St is a rat run for cars and buses.
- Traffic calming is required, as well as along St Katherine's St and College St.
- To agree gives a green light.
- Want to see proposals before give any agreement.
- This street is a disaster. Hideous cheap shops and vacant Grand Hotel.
- Reject applications for more low grade shops. These should be relocated.
- Should be pedestrianised.
- Any improvement should take into account the town's medieval style.
- Gold Street has lost its way and needs bringing back into the town centre.

### Bridge St

#### Responses:

Very appropriate	54.5%
Appropriate	27.3%
No opinion	18.2%
Inappropriate	0%
Very inappropriate	0%

- To agree gives a green light.
- Want to see proposals before give any agreement.
- There is an imbalance of the usage of buildings.
- Consumer use of this road should be encouraged.
- Bridge St is a 13thC modification which cuts through burgages.
- Bridge St should be recognised as the entertainment district of the town. It encourages a lot of visitors here in the evenings and should be encouraged rather than seen as a problem.
- This area of the town has potential so lets not ignore that.

### Market Square

#### Responses:

Very appropriate	54.4%
Appropriate	36.4%
No opinion	9.1%

Inappropriate 0%  
Very inappropriate 0%

- As long as no more loud speakers are plastered around the square.
- I am cautious about proposals and would want to see them before commenting.
- I would like to see the Market 'Square' again as I hate the current design/layout.
- This could be a major focus area.
- The current Market layout should be changed to have stalls around the edge.
- There should be a focus in the middle – reinstate the fountain.
- The original square included the Drapery and All Saints to George Row.
- The units on the edge of the square are based upon 14thC wooden shop stalls.
- The square needs to be celebrated and recognised as it's an important part of the town.

**Finally....are there any other areas (not specific buildings) that should be the focus for future improvement when opportunities arise, within the All Saints Conservation Area?**

Responses:

- The Drapery – needs wider footpaths as people waiting for buses block the pavements.
- College St and Kingswell St.
- Issue of upper storeys needs to be addressed.
- Enforce any by-laws which make businesses maintain the outside of their premises.
- Install a good and significant sculpture in the Market Square.
- NBC should make strenuous efforts to use our wonderful Market Square.
- Gold St burgage backs and St Johns need to be included. St Johns is the town's oldest surviving building and its worrying that it isn't included.
- The Billing Road to include the cemetery gateway.
- The shops in Mercer's Row should be of a higher standard.
- The overall cleanliness of buildings and street scapes needs consideration, especially refuse storage.
- There is now a proliferation of ashtrays and 'No Smoking' signs on buildings and lots of applications for awnings – guidance should be produced on sensitive examples of how to achieve these.
- The Conservation Area should be reviewed every six months, not annually.



- Education and publicity should be included and leaflets produced for a trail around the Conservation Area.
- There should be signs highlighting that there is a Conservation Area and perhaps studs in the pavement.

**And finally.....Are there any other comments you would like to make about All Saints Conservation Area Re-Appraisal and Management Plan?**

Responses:

- I am suspicious of proposals such as this.
- I feel there is more destruction of good buildings than there should be.
- Please look at enhance, rejuvenate, refurbish first.
- I am confused as to what department and Council is responsible for what, as I have seen the NCC's plans for the Train Station to Gold St.
- Encourage people to value their own town by having a photographic display of buildings.
- The document is an effort deserving of praise.
- I have researched Northampton's heritage and I am afraid that I haven't been able to convince NBC of what is valuable.
- The Conservation Area may be getting too large but the inclusion of burgages is vitally important.
- There is too much signage which clutters the area.
- I would like to see more hanging baskets and window boxes, which would enhance the buildings.
- I would like the vision of the Conservation Area to bring Northampton back into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century without taking away the historic value of the town.
- Lack of imagination in the past has degraded Northampton town.
- Northampton needs to be on a competitive level with Milton Keynes else it will become a ghost town.
- Northampton has a lot to offer and I hope that the work on this Conservation Area will lift the spirits of businesses and the general public to put pride back into Northampton.
- The Wood Hill area could be improved and should be extended to include the Guildhall. The shop, bank and estate agents should be located somewhere else.
- It is important that the area is given attention it deserves.
- The town centre should be more than just an extension of the Grosvenor centre.