

# **ST GILES' CONSERVATION AREA**

## **RE-APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**



Planning Policy & Heritage Section  
Northampton Borough Council  
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## 1. Introduction

1.1 A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Section 69).

The 1990 Act requires the Council as local planning authority to review its conservation areas from time to time to determine whether new areas should be designated, whether existing boundaries should be revised or whether designation should be cancelled if an area no longer possesses special interest. The Council is also required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

Conservation areas were introduced under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and there are 21 designated conservation areas in Northampton. St Giles' Conservation Area was designated in June 1986 and the boundary extended in 2006, when the last review was undertaken. The boundary of the Conservation Area is shown as Map 1. An Article 4(2) Direction (which means that planning permission is required to make alterations to the front elevation of houses) came into effect in March 2008.

### 1.2 The purpose of a conservation area

***“The contribution that historic areas make to our quality of life is widely recognised. They are a link to the past that can give us a sense of continuity and stability and they have the reassurance of the familiar which can provide a point of reference in a rapidly changing world. The way building traditions and settlement patterns are superimposed and survive over time will be unique to each area. This local distinctiveness can provide a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well designed new development which brings economic and social benefits. Change is inevitable.”***

*Historic England: “Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management”, February 2016*

It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent new development but to manage

change, in order to maintain, reinforce and enhance the special character and quality of the area that justifies its special status. It requires that new work in or adjacent to a conservation area either preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

The planning controls within St Giles' Conservation Area can be summarised as:

- Most demolition requires permission and will be resisted if the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area;
- Some minor works affecting the external appearance of houses requires planning permission. Examples are side extensions, replacement of windows and doors, alterations to the roof (such as changing the roof material or inserting rooflights or dormer windows), removal of chimneys, addition of a front porch, removal or alteration of front boundary walls and gates, cladding or painting the walls of buildings and the installation of satellite dishes on the front elevation;
- A higher standard of design applies for new buildings and for extensions and alterations to existing buildings;
- The Council is required to be notified of most work to trees six weeks before the work is due to take place.

In addition to statutory legislative and local planning controls, the following opportunities for enhancement have been identified:

- Encourage the preservation and reinstatement of historic detailing on buildings within the Conservation Area.
- Promote the sympathetic management of open space and the public realm.
- Establish a list of locally significant buildings.

- Promote retention of trees which contribute to the appearance of the area.

### 1.3 St Giles' Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, 2006

An Appraisal and Management Plan for the Conservation Area was adopted by Northampton Borough Council in September 2006, when the boundary was extended to include Spring Gardens and properties on St Giles' Street. This review updates the previous Appraisal and Management Plan to comply with guidance contained in Historic England's Advice Note No.1 "*Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*", issued in February 2016. The review also re-assesses the Conservation Area to ensure that it continues to justify its status as an area of special architectural or historic interest.

An Appraisal and Management Plan is intended to identify the special character of a conservation area and to provide guidance on how the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area can be achieved. It will also provide a sound basis for the assessment of planning applications and will be a material consideration when Northampton Borough Council, as local planning authority, considers planning applications within the Conservation Area or which impact upon its appearance or setting.

### 1.4 St. Giles' Conservation Area Article 4(2) Direction 2008

Extra planning controls were introduced in March 2008 through the making of an Article 4 Direction. This has meant that planning permission is required to alter the external appearance of houses when viewed from the street, which could otherwise be undertaken without requiring permission.

The current review provides the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the measure.

## **2. Planning policy context**

Conservation areas sit within national planning legislation, regional policy and local planning policies

### 2.1 National planning policy

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires the Council as local planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when considering planning applications.

The major change to planning legislation since the previous appraisal was adopted is the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012, revised in 2019.

The NPPF identifies conservation areas as "designated heritage assets". The following paragraphs in the NPPF are relevant:

Paragraph 186: local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies conservation area status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Paragraph 188: local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment publicly accessible.

Paragraph 189: applicants for planning permission should describe the significance of any heritage asset affected.

Paragraph 192: in determining planning applications, the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets should be taken into account.

Paragraph 193: when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of the level of harm; significance can be harmed through development within its setting.

Paragraph 195: substantial harm to a designated heritage asset should be refused

consent unless necessary to achieve substantial public benefit.

Paragraph 196: less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Paragraph 200: local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Paragraph 201: loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm, taking into account the significance of the building and its contribution to the conservation area.

## 2.2 Regional policy

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the area until 2029, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development. Policy BN5 states: designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings and landscapes will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance and contribution to West Northamptonshire's local distinctiveness and sense of place.

## 2.3 Central Area Action Plan, 2013

Policy 1 – Promoting Design Excellence: new development must demonstrate a high design standard and preserve and enhance the character, appearance and setting of heritage assets and pay suitable regard to adopted Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans.

## **3. Assessment of special interest**

### 3.1 Location and setting

St Giles' Conservation Area covers an area of approximately 6 hectares on the eastern edge of Northampton town centre. It straddles St Giles' Street and Spencer Parade, with the eastern boundary formed by York Road and Cheyne Walk, creating a tight boundary centred on the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Giles' Church and church yard. It adjoins Derngate Conservation Area to the west and

the Boot & Shoe Quarter and Billing Road Conservation Areas to the east. It is one of the smaller, more compact conservation areas in Northampton.

Building types vary from early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century villas along Spender Parade and Cheyne Walk to smaller Victorian terraced houses along St Giles' Terrace and York Road. A defining characteristic is the quality of the buildings and the careful attention given to architectural detailing and the use of high quality materials – evident in most building types – which cumulatively adds to the character of the area.

## **4. Archaeology and historic development**

4.1 St Giles' Conservation Area lies within the medieval walled area of Northampton's historic town core and the southern and eastern boundaries broadly follow the line of the historic wall and town defences. Archaeological investigation within this part of town has been relatively limited, although excavation and observations during development works have demonstrated the survival of buried archaeological remains associated with the development of the town from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

4.2 In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, only London and Lincoln were bigger towns than Northampton and during the 13<sup>th</sup> century Northampton was considered the most important town in the Midlands, by then a Royal Burgh with its own constitution. Northampton was the administrative centre of the surrounding Shire, a function first recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 921. The town received its first Charter in 1189 from Richard I.

4.3 The Church of St Giles and its churchyard dominate the area and provide a central focus for the Conservation Area. The Church dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century but was largely rebuilt in 1616 following the collapse of the tower, which severely damaged the building.

4.4 The line of St Giles' Street, St Giles' Terrace and Spring Gardens all pre-date the earliest map of 1610. Cheyne Walk and York Road were laid out in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and follow the alignment of the Town wall, which bounded the eastern side of the town until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The

original Town Wall was extended in 1311 bringing St Giles parish into the town. As a punishment for supporting the Roundhead cause during the Civil War, the town walls were demolished in 1662 following an order from Charles II.

4.5 Most development in the area occurred in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the quality of the buildings reflect the wealth generated by Northampton's growing boot and shoe industry at that time. Properties along Spencer Parade, Nos 1-12 York Road and the villas in the southern part of Cheyne Walk are all shown on Wood & Law's map of 1847. St Thomas's Hospital (74 St Giles' Street) dates from 1834, while the Primary School (now St Giles' Church Centre) and 1-8 St Giles' Terrace were built around 1860. Most other buildings are later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The principal 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the area are the care centre in Cheyne Walk, a large extension to the rear of 7 Spencer Parade and the telephone exchange on Spring Gardens.

## 5. Primary Uses

The predominant uses of buildings within the Conservation Area are residential (either as single houses or where larger properties have been converted into flats) or commercial. Most of the larger 19<sup>th</sup> century villas are in professional use as offices or clinics but a trend since the last review has seen former offices converted back to residential use as apartments – notably along Spencer Parade. Apart from along St Giles' Street, there are few retail uses within the Conservation Area

## 6. Street analysis and built form

The following section describes the main architectural and townscape qualities that help to define the character of the area and identifies changes that have occurred since the last review in 2006.

The character of the area varies from street to street, primarily due its town centre location and has seen considerable change over many decades. The area is characterised by a nucleated pattern of development with the Church as its focus, relatively low building heights and high

quality architectural and design detail. A significant proportion of buildings are included on the statutory list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, whilst several other buildings, although not of national importance, are candidates for inclusion in a proposed Local Heritage List for Northampton.

### 6.1 St Giles' Street

Only the eastern section of St Giles' Street is within the Conservation Area. The north side consists of a group of buildings, many of which are listed, which make an important contribution by virtue of their elegance, detailing and sense of place in the street scene. It is dominated by an elegant row of three-storey red brick houses dating from 1883 (Nos. 81-87 St Giles' Street), designed in Carolean style by the notable Northampton architect Matthew Holding.



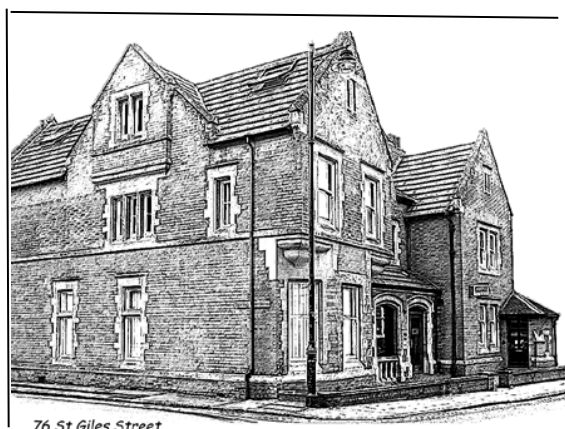
Nos. 81-87 St Giles' Street (grade II listed)

Opposite are three buildings of differing character that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. St Thomas' House (No. 74 St Giles' Street) was built as an almshouse in 1834 in Gothic style; the castellated parapet and stucco front makes it one of the most distinctive buildings within the Conservation Area.

Alongside St Giles' House, on the corner of Spring Gardens, is the former St Giles's vicarage, built in 1884 by S J Newman, who was responsible for a number of fine late-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Northampton, in red brick with stone dressings to windows and doorway and with a double arched front porch; its imposing Tudor-style elevations



are a prominent feature in views within the Conservation Area.



Hazelwood House, on the corner of St Giles' Street and Hazelwood Road, was built as the St Giles's Church Buildings in 1889, also by Newman, in Renaissance style with attractive large sash windows on the first floor; the ground floor is in retail use. The building was included within the Conservation Area as part of the 2006 review on account of its contribution to the character of the area.



The former St Giles' Church building is a prominent landmark at the entrance to the Conservation Area .

## 6.2 Spring Gardens

Spring Gardens is a narrow lane linking St Giles' Street and Derngate and is a quiet backwater. At the north end is a small group of Victorian houses which reflect the original residential character of the area and which retain most of their architectural details. The lane was formerly lined with a row of similar properties and the remaining few make a positive contribution to the area that justify their inclusion in the Conservation Area in 2006.



Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century housing on Spring Gardens

The southern end has a different character and provides rear access to former villas on Cheyne Walk; a surviving former coach house is an important indicator of the history of the area. Opposite, the 1970s-built telephone exchange dominates the area; its scale and materials form an oppressive visual weight, although the impact is softened to some extent by a group of mature trees that contribute to the appearance of the area.

## 6.3 St Giles' Terrace

St Giles' Terrace links St Giles' Street and Abington Street. The southern half of the street is dominated by St Giles' church and the former school opposite, built in Gothic style between 1858-61 by E F Law, one of the most prominent of Northampton's Victorian architects.



Former St Giles's Church School, now the church centre

Beyond the church is an elegant three-storey terrace of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century houses (Nos.1-8 St Giles' Terrace) now predominantly in business use and which provide a transition

from the peaceful atmosphere of St Giles' to the busy shopping area of Abington Street; the bend in the road creates added interest.



Nos. 1-8 St Giles' Terrace (grade II listed)

The terrace survives largely intact, with timber sash windows and front boundary railings and the curve in the road creates interest. The modern office building opposite, although outside of the Conservation Area, is overly dominant and unsympathetic to the adjacent listed buildings and is a negative feature that harms the historic character of the street.

#### 6.4 Spencer Parade

On the north side of Spencer Parade is St Giles' Church, which nestles within its churchyard and forms the nucleus of the Conservation Area. The view of the Church and its tower, notably from the junction of Spencer Parade and St Giles' Terrace, is a defining feature of the Conservation Area. The churchyard is the only significant green space in the Conservation Area and forms an important 'green lung' for this busy edge-of-town centre location. The ironstone churchyard wall is important in the streetscene, whilst, along the eastern boundary, the brick and stone wall, lined with grave stones, is a historic feature.



The tower of the grade I listed St Giles' Church is prominent in many views within the Conservation Area

East of the churchyard is a fine row of three early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses (Nos 9-11 Spencer Parade), built in classical style, stucco, with shallow front gardens and low walls. Only one remains in residential use with the remaining two converted for business purposes. The properties are characterised by their attention to detail with canted bays, sash windows and elegant iron canopy porches and are listed in grade II. Former service buildings to the rear, some of which are set into the churchyard wall, are important and should be retained.



Nos.9-11 Spencer Parade (1838); a row of three houses designed to read as a single composition

The south side of Spencer Parade boasts an impressive row of villas dating from c1840 that are also listed. The properties reflect the interest in the revival of 'mediaevalist' styles of architecture, with designs ranging from 'Tudorbethan' with battlements and pinnacles (Nos. 1 & 2 Spencer Parade) to Jacobean, with multi-gabled facades (Nos. 5 & 6). The properties are set back from the road and many have retained a front garden, which adds to their sense of grandeur. Unfortunately, some of the boundary walls have either been removed or reduced in height and railings removed, which has had a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area. Where possible the opportunity to re-instate the boundaries should be taken. Since the last review, some of these properties have been converted from offices to apartments.





Tudor- style villas at 1-3 Spencer Parade

There is a particularly fine view into the Conservation Area from the junction with York Road that emphasises the quality of the buildings in the area.

### 6.5 Cheyne Walk

The west side of Cheyne Walk is dominated by substantial villas on large plots, built around 1840 in Regency neo-Classical or Italianate style. The properties formed a continuation of the high-class residential area along Spencer Parade and the two roads comprised some of the finest houses in the town in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The elevated position gave open views across the Nene valley, which lasted until the 1930's when the land opposite was developed to facilitate hospital expansion. Nos.2 to 5 Cheyne Walk were originally set back and faced onto a crescent.



Former villas at the southern end of Cheyne Walk emphasise the quality of residential properties built in the area in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

The size of the properties means that most are in commercial use and this has helped to ensure that the buildings have been well maintained. Most are listed, with the distinctive, Gothic, Cheyne Walk Club, built in 1868 in patterned buff and red brick and with a prominent tower and porch, a candidate for the Local List. However, some have been unsympathetically altered and Nos.4 & 5 Cheyne Walk were demolished

and replaced by the YMCA building in the 1950s (which was itself replaced in 2014).

The east side of Cheyne Walk is bounded by the brick and surviving sections of ironstone wall forming the boundary of the Hospital site. Whilst the ironstone sections of wall contribute to the street scene, many of the hospital buildings have a poor relationship with (and are outside of) the Conservation Area. The memorial to Edward VII at the junction with Billing Road is a notable landmark.

The main negative feature is the high levels of traffic; Cheyne Walk forms part of the inner ring road and is regularly choked with stationary vehicles.

### 6.6 York Road

York Road is lined on both sides by attractive Victorian terraced properties, most of which are still in residential use. The south-western terrace (Nos.1-12 York Road) is listed and gives a balanced and visually pleasing view from the junction of Billing Road; the decorative chimney stacks are an attractive feature.



Nos.1-12 York Road, formerly named Victoria Terrace (grade II listed)



Late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses on York Road





The building at the corner of Billing Road (No.1 Billing Road) and the terrace on the south-eastern side also make an important contribution to the street scene. Properties along the east side of York road are not listed but form an attractive, continuous terrace; some of the houses have suffered unsympathetic alterations in the past, notably the replacement of original timber sash windows and removal of front boundary walls, both of which are important features. Gothic arches and heads are a notable feature of Nos. 42-47 York Road.

In order to try to prevent further erosion of the character and appearance of the area, an Article 4 Direction was made in 2008, meaning that planning permission is required to make alterations to the external appearance of the properties.

The north end of York Road has a more commercial character and the proximity with the primary shopping area of Abington Street results in more pedestrian and vehicular movements. Most of the buildings on both sides of the road are used for business purposes, although some have been converted back to residential use as flats since the last review was undertaken. There has been some loss of traditional details, notably windows and doors and some loss of front boundary walls. Again, the Conservation Area status should be used as a vehicle for the reinstatement of lost features.

As with Cheyne Walk, the high levels of traffic using this section of the inner ring road is a negative feature. In addition, the lack of rear access to gardens in York Road results in the storage of rubbish and bins in front gardens to the detriment of the appearance of the area

## 7. Building materials and details

7.1 The predominant building materials throughout the Conservation Area are red brick, notably for the terraced houses, and painted stucco render for the grander Regency-type villas. There are few actual stone buildings with the exception of St Giles' Church and the church school (and, unusually, the gable wall of the end house on St Giles' Terrace). The use of stone facings and polychrome brickwork on properties along St Giles' Terrace (notably the church buildings) and properties on Spring Gardens and York Road is an interesting decorative feature of the Victorian gothic style.

7.2 Roofs are traditionally covered in blue-grey Welsh slate, which became widely available from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The traditional, unbroken rows of pitched slate roofs are a feature of the terraces along York Road and St Giles' Terrace.

7.3 Windows in terraced houses are traditionally 4-pane timber sliding sash. More finely proportioned and elaborate windows are a feature of the larger villas. The quality and finesse of the timber sash windows is an important element in the character and appearance of the area. There has been some replacement of the original windows in non-listed properties, notably along York Road, which, where poorly proportioned, detract from the appearance of the building and the street scene.

7.4 The limited range of building materials in the Conservation Area provides visual unity and it is important that matching materials are used for any new work.

## 8. Trees and greenery

8.1 There are a number of trees within the Conservation Area which, either individually or as a group, make an important contribution to the attractive street scene. The following section identifies some of the more significant groups but is not exhaustive. All trees within the Conservation Area above 75mm in diameter are protected since it is an offence to undertake work without giving the Council six weeks' notice in advance (see section 12.7).

8.2 St Giles' churchyard is the only area of green space within the Conservation Area

and the mature trees within it are a significant feature in views within the area.

8.3 The surviving front gardens of former villas fronting Cheyne Walk and Spencer Parade create an interesting composition of buildings set in their own grounds. The properties are generally well set back into the plot and are surrounded by boundary walls and planting to create a visual separation between the private and public environment. Trees and greenery along Cheyne Walk in particular make an important contribution to the appearance of the area.



The importance of trees and greenery in views along Cheyne Walk.

8.4 Trees on the west side of Spring Gardens are important in views along the lane and help to soften the visual dominance of the telephone exchange building (below).



Spring Gardens, looking north

8.5 The mature lime tree at the southern end of Cheyne Walk/Derngate has the added protection of being covered by a Tree Preservation Order on account of its high amenity value.

8.6 A Monkey-puzzle tree (Chile pine) is an unusual and attractive feature on St Giles' Terrace.

## 9. Summary of special interest

9.1 The proceeding sections indicate that the distinctive character of the St Giles' Conservation Area that justifies its special status derives from:

- The area developed over a relatively short period from the early/mid 19th century onwards as a high-class residential area on the edge of the town centre, with high quality and finely proportioned villas along Spencer Parade and Cheyne Walk reflecting Regency fashion and with St Giles Church as a nucleus. Later, terraced properties along St Giles Street, St Giles Terrace and York Road reflect the growth of the town's boom and show industry and the resultant demand for housing for middle class families.

- The area illustrates the mid-19th century interest in revivalist architectural styles, both classical and gothic, but has visual unity that results from the consistent scale, mass and use of simplified detailing and a limited range of quality building materials – principally red brick and painted stucco for walls, Welsh slate roofs and timber sash windows.

- The quality of the architectural and historic interest of many of the buildings is reflected in a high proportion of them being statutorily listed.

- There is a general uniformity in building height; properties are predominantly 2 or 3-storey with some taller buildings located on St Giles' Street and with St Giles' Church remaining a dominant feature.

- Views of the Church and its tower help to define the distinctive character and appearance of the area, most notably in views from St Giles' Street/St Giles' Terrace and Spencer Parade.

- The Conservation Area effectively marks the limit of the retail part of the town centre; properties are primarily in residential or professional/commercial office-type use.

## 10. Summary of changes since the last review

10.1 Pressure for change is inevitable in any conservation area, particularly one located close to the town centre, but within St Giles', new development has been relatively limited since the last review and can be summarised as:

- there has been some increase in the number of larger properties converted from offices to residential use as apartments (Spencer Parade) or to houses in multiple occupation (York Road);
- there has been limited new development, with the exception of the care centre on Cheyne Walk;
- there has been continued loss of traditional details in non-listed properties, notably timber windows, despite an Article 4 Direction requiring planning permission being in place.

## 11. St Giles' Conservation Area & boundary

11.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act requires the local authority to periodically consider whether a conservation area retains sufficient architectural or historic interest to justify its special status, whether the boundaries should be revised or, in extreme cases, whether designation should be cancelled.

11.2 St Giles' Conservation Area was designated in 1986 and was last reviewed in 2006. The preceding sections indicate that the special architectural and historic interest that originally justified its designation still remains and it is not therefore proposed to cancel the designation.

11.3 The boundary of the Conservation Area was extended in 2006 to include properties on St Giles' Street and Spring Gardens. It is considered that the current boundary identifies the point where there is a distinct change in character and it is not proposed that the boundary be further revised as part of the current review.

11.4 An Article 4(2) Direction was made in March 2008, requiring planning permission to alter the external appearance of houses where the alteration would be visible from the

street. The Article 4 Direction was introduced to try to avoid unsympathetic alterations which, cumulatively, were beginning to erode the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 12. St Giles' Conservation Area Management Plan

12.1 Under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990, the local planning authority has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the appearance or character of its conservation areas. In St Giles' Conservation Area, the following measures are proposed:

### 12.2 Character of the Area

St Giles' Conservation Area is on the eastern edge of the town centre and, although it maintains a relationship with the town centre, it is characterised by residential properties and offices rather than retail or leisure uses, which would be more appropriately located in the town centre itself.

### 12.3 Control of Demolition in the Conservation Area

Consent is required for certain demolition work within a conservation area:–

- ♦ The demolition of a building with a cubic content of more than 115m<sup>3</sup>.
- ♦ Buildings subject to a statutory order or notice.

In the case of a listed building a separate listed building consent is also required. Demolition of buildings or structures such as boundary walls considered to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area will normally be opposed.

### 12.4 New development, alterations or extension

The Council as local planning authority is under a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area when considering planning applications. Any new building, extension or alterations will need to be of a



high standard such that the character or appearance of the Conservation Area is not harmed. New development should be sympathetic in design, scale and choice of material such that the overall character or appearance of the area is not compromised.

### 12.5 Protection of listed buildings

A large proportion of buildings within the Conservation Area are statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Listed building consent is required for the demolition, or any works of alteration or extension which would affect the character or appearance of a listed building; the regulations apply to both external and internal alterations. For the purposes of listed building control, any object or structure which is fixed to the building or has formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948 is also treated as part of the listed building.

The Council will consider enforcement action in respect of unauthorised work to listed buildings.

Repair or maintenance work undertaken on a like-for-like basis does not normally require listed building consent. However, it is always advisable to consult the Council's Conservation Officers before commencing work to a listed building.

### 12.6 Buildings of Local Interest

The Council is preparing a Local Heritage List for Northampton. There are several buildings that have been identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area but which do not meet the strict criteria to be listed as of national significance. These will be considered for inclusion in the Local List and the local authority will endeavour to protect and secure the appearance and long-term future of these buildings.

### 12.7 Trees

A number of trees contribute to the appearance of the area. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes special provision for trees within conservation areas; trees over 75mm (3") in diameter at a point 1.5 metres above ground level are protected from damage or felling and six weeks prior

written notice must be given for any works likely to affect a tree within a conservation area (this includes work which may affect the roots). Within that time the Council may decide to make a Tree Preservation Order. Once a tree is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, it is an offence to cut down, uproot, prune, damage or destroy a tree without the written consent of the Council.

### 12.8 St Giles' Article 4 Direction

Owners of unlisted houses can make alterations to the external appearance without the need to apply for planning permission – this is known as "permitted development" (permitted development rights only apply to buildings in single residential use and not to flats or business premises).

The replacement of original sliding sash timber windows, often with top-hinged uPVC units, is highly detrimental to the appearance of the Conservation Area. The proportions, details and thickness of glazing bars on replacement windows seldom replicate the intricacy of the originals. Outward opening, top-hung windows, when opened at an angle, visually disrupt the clean lines of the Victorian terraces and adversely affect the appearance of the building and the street scene.

Boundary walls and railings also contribute to the appearance of the Conservation Area. Not only do they define the public and private spaces, but they also visually frame the properties. A replacement wall in non-traditional materials or the removal of a wall can substantially damage the uniform appearance of a terrace. Chimney stacks are a further important feature.

In view of the potential erosion to the character and appearance of the area through unrestricted alterations, an Article 4 direction was made in 2008, requiring planning permission be obtained for alterations to the external appearance of houses when viewed from the street. This allows the Council to consider the impact on the appearance of the area of alterations that could otherwise be undertaken without planning permission.

This means that, within St Giles' Conservation Area, planning permission is

required for the following changes to houses if the alteration is visible from the street:

- ◆ Alterations to windows and external doors (eg changing from timber to upvc);
- ◆ Construction of an entrance porch or alterations to existing ones;
- ◆ Removal or alteration of fences, railings or boundary walls;
- ◆ Changes in roof covering (e.g. from slate to concrete tiles) or inserting dormers or rooflights;
- ◆ External painting or rendering of previously untreated walls;
- ◆ Alterations to chimney stacks;
- ◆ Provision of a hardstanding.

Given the number of alterations previously made to properties in the area, notably replacement upvc windows along York Road, it has been difficult for the local authority to justify refusing planning permission for further alterations. However, the Article 4 Direction has allowed the local authority and other interested parties the opportunity to consider the impact of a proposal on the overall appearance of the area and to negotiate improvements if the proposal would have a harmful impact. It is therefore proposed that the Article 4 Direction be retained as a means of securing alterations

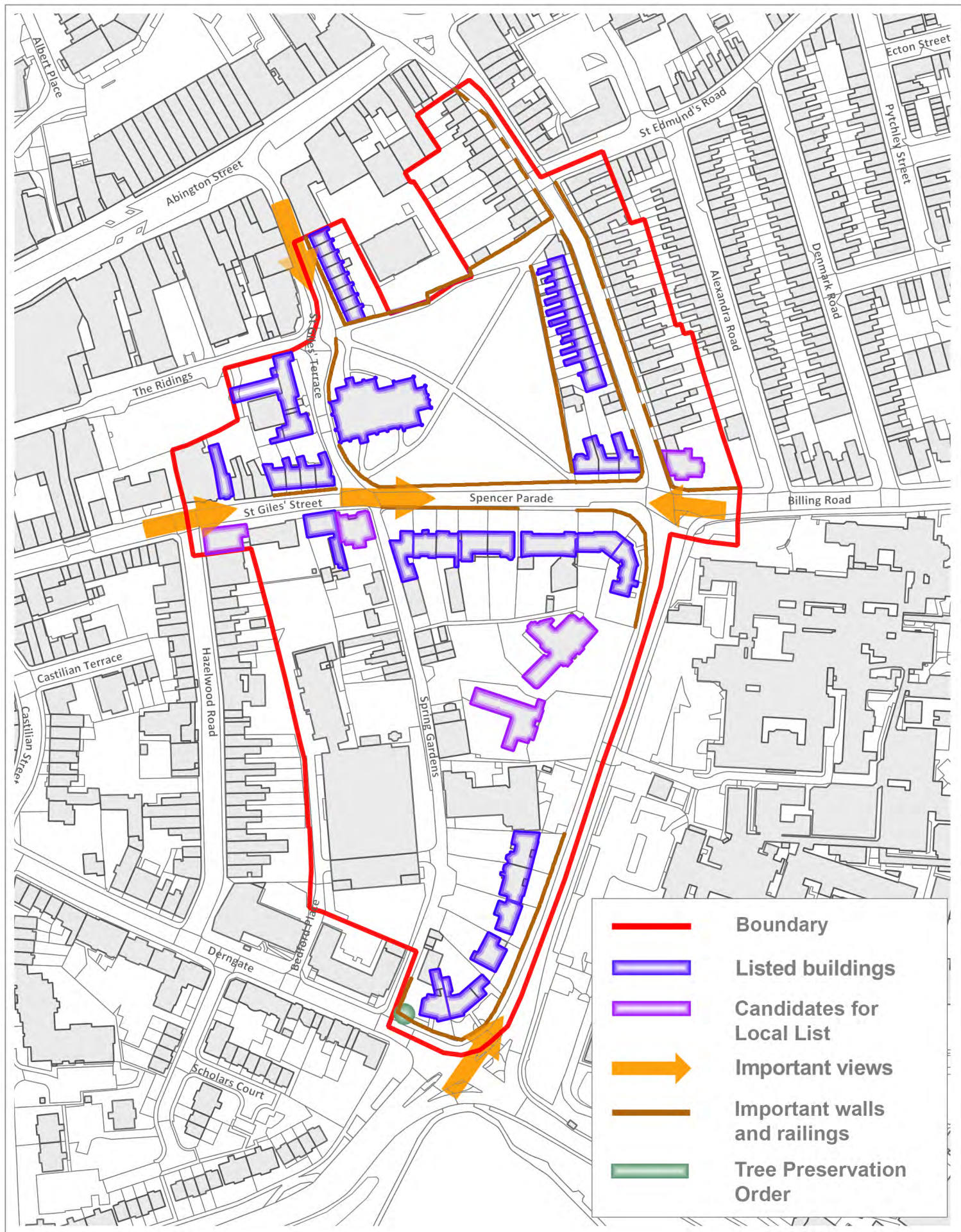
that are broadly sympathetic to the overall appearance of the area. Greater emphasis should be placed on retaining original and traditional detailing in non-listed properties if the character of the area is not to be eroded further

### 12.9 Opportunities for enhancement

There are few vacant buildings or sites within the Conservation Area and the Re-appraisal does not identify any particular areas that are in need of enhancement. However, there are two buildings that are considered to have a negative impact and for which, if proposed for redevelopment in the future, more appropriate designs should be sought. The two buildings are:

- The single storey 1950s-built former telephone office adjacent to Manna House on St Giles' Street;
- The telephone exchange on Spring Gardens, the height and external appearance of which dominates the local environment. If the opportunity arises, a building of more appropriate scale and form, which could enhance the appearance of both St Giles' and the adjacent Derngate Conservation Areas.





**NORTHAMPTON**  
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## St Giles Conservation Area spatial analysis

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**NORTHAMPTON**  
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## St Giles Conservation Area aerial plan

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## **Appendix 1:**

### **Useful Contacts**

#### **Conservation advice:**

##### **Northampton Borough Council**

The Guildhall,  
St Giles Square  
NORTHAMPTON  
NN1 1DE  
Tel: (01604) 837634 and 837637  
[conservation@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@northampton.gov.uk)  
[www.northampton.gov.uk](http://www.northampton.gov.uk)

##### **Historic England (Midlands Region)**

10 Holliday Street,  
Birmingham  
B1 1TF  
Tel: 0121 625 6870  
[midlands@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:midlands@HistoricEngland.org.uk)

##### **Ancient Monuments Society**

St Ann's Vestry Hall  
2 Church Entry  
LONDON  
EC4V 5HB  
Tel: 020 7236 3934  
[office@ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk](mailto:office@ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk)  
[www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk](http://www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk)

##### **Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings**

37 Spital Square  
LONDON  
E1 6DY  
Tel: 020 7377 1644  
[info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

##### **Georgian Group**

6 Fitzroy Square  
LONDON  
W1T 5DX  
Tel: 020 7529 8920  
[info@georgiangroup.org.uk](mailto:info@georgiangroup.org.uk)  
[www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

##### **The Victorian Society**

1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
LONDON  
W4 1TT  
Tel: 020 8994 1019  
[admin@victorian-society.org.uk](mailto:admin@victorian-society.org.uk)  
[www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)

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