

4. Good Practice / Management

This part comments on issues and impacts found in the Conservation Area and provides guidance and commentary. It does not contain policies as these are to be found in the Local Plan. It does however, relate specifically to conservation matters in this Conservation Area, setting out good practice/management, and statements of the city council's intent/practice.

4.1 Issues/Guidance

4.1.1 CITY CENTRE PUBLIC REALM

The council intends to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as guidance about how development should contribute to improving the capacity and quality of the public realm. Cambridge retains many areas of historic paving and has several other streets where high quality materials have been used for street enhancement works. It is important that the best areas are safeguarded and that other streets are improved. Street enhancements should be designed to respect and enhance a street's history by reinstating historic materials where appropriate and removing inappropriate modern additions. It is important that a 'streetscape manual', which sets out where and when different surfacing materials might be used, which street furniture is most appropriate and even what colours items should be painted, is developed. Given the clear relation of such a strategy to future investment in the city centre via the Greater Cambridge City Deal/Greater Cambridge Partnership, the city council intends to collaborate with the county council on producing the SPD. It is important that historic street signage, e.g. cast-iron street nameplates, is retained and, if appropriate, expanded. The needs of the visibility and mobility impaired must also be considered - the approved City Centre Accessibility Study (April 2015) sets out recommended actions.

4.1.2 CITY DEAL and SPACES & MOVEMENT STRATEGY/SPD

Initial City Deal/Greater Cambridge Partnership schemes were being developed as this appraisal document was nearing completion. These primarily affect routes into the city centre rather than say, junction changes within the Historic Core. However, further Greater Cambridge Partnership schemes are envisaged and potential impacts on the Historic Core will need to be taken into account. In partnership with Greater Cambridge Partnership, the city council intends that a Spaces & Movement SPD will be produced to ensure that effective management and targeted development/enhancement of the public realm and key spaces, along with accommodating the needs of the movement networks can be secured.

One of the biggest impacts of the (1990s/ early 2000s) Core Traffic Scheme has been the need to provide high levels of signage to ensure that drivers do not enter restricted streets if they have no business there. The signage of traffic restriction schemes is potentially the most damaging aspect in terms of its impact on the appearance of the Historic Core area and in the past, schemes were devised and the signage added later almost as an afterthought. Recent schemes have realised the danger of this.

It is important that those with an interest/expertise in the historic environment are fully involved in the development of schemes from day one. It is also recognised that the need for signage diminishes over time and there is the chance to reduce the impact on the character of the streets by reassessing the signage levels. It is recommended that an audit of signage and street furniture should be considered as part of a city centre public realm strategy.

(This section was previously headed “Core Traffic Scheme – Periodic Review & Development of Future Traffic Restrictions”)

4.1.3 CYCLE PARKING

Adequate cycle parking within the city centre remains an important need. It is vital that public realm and new development makes sufficient cycle parking provision and so obviate hazards caused by inappropriately parked cycles.

4.1.4 MAINTENANCE REGIMES FOR KEY STREETS

Streets such as King’s Parade cope with a huge number of visitors particularly in the summer months. For many people, the few streets around King’s Parade are their one experience of the city. Cleaning and maintenance is frequently undertaken and it is important that they are increased as necessary (sometimes seasonally) in order to meet need and demand, and that dialogue is good with adjoining owners to ensure that private buildings and spaces are similarly well maintained.

4.1.5 CONTROL OF REINSTATEMENT WORKS

The city and county councils work together on schemes to improve the quality of streets and spaces in the Historic Core area. Often, however, reinstatement works by statutory undertakers lack the original quality, are unsightly and occasionally a danger to pedestrians and cyclists. Dialogue with the statutory undertakers is essential to ensure that the quality of reinstatement works is improved and that historic and high quality surfaces are better protected.

4.1.6 REDUCING STREET CLUTTER

Official street trading pitches are controlled by the city council and provide interest for shoppers and tourists. Similarly where cafes are licenced to provide outdoor seating this adds vitality and is generally encouraged. However, unofficial trading on the street, including displays from shops spilling over onto the pavements (usually from short lets), A-boards and other signs can cause extreme nuisance on narrow busy streets and can be a danger to the visually impaired. The city council will therefore work with the county council to control unacceptable displaying and advertising on the street through powers under the Highways Acts.

4.1.7 REMOVAL OF STREET CLUTTER/SIGNAGE AUDIT

In recent years, there has been a good dialogue between the city and county councils with the aim of removing obsolete street signage, fixing signs directly onto buildings and reviewing the location of street furniture with the aim of reducing street clutter. This trend should continue and be encouraged to gain momentum. A plan to review all street furniture in the Historic Core area on a regular basis should also be implemented.

4.1.8 LIGHTING STRATEGY

A key issue is the need to carefully balance the need for clear and energy efficient lighting with the traditional historic character of Cambridge's streets. The county council's 25 year contract for replacement and maintenance of street lighting is resulting in the removal of existing lighting columns though the city council has sought an improved design in historic areas and the surviving 'Richardson Candles', which are listed, are being retained and upgraded

4.1.9 GRAFFITI REMOVAL

Incidences of graffiti on some streets within the city centre were becoming commonplace and affect the appearance of parts of the Historic Core. The Streets and Open Spaces team will remove graffiti on request. On unusual or particularly historic fabric the Conservation Team can provide advice first.

4.1.10 RECOMMENDATIONS

(Subject to review by the City Centre Public Realm SPD/Management Plan):

4.1.11 KING STREET

Reducing impact of vehicles and improving pedestrian experience to consolidate character of area and encourage greater use of specialist shops, bars and restaurants.

4.1.12 ALL SAINTS PASSAGE

Improving vitality through enhanced commercial and other uses, repairs to paving and improvements to lighting.

4.1.13 BRIDGE STREET (south end)

Giving greater priority to pedestrians, enhance townscape and commercial viability of the street.

4.1.14 FREE SCHOOL LANE

Increase potential of street by removing parking, repaving and promoting history of street/museums, etc.

4.1.15 BOTOLPH LANE

Remove parking and repave to link Free School Lane with King's Parade to spread tourist honeypots.

4.1.16 LITTLE ST MARY'S LANE

Resurfacing in more appropriate materials to reflect historic character particularly if Peterhouse delivery route can be moved elsewhere.

4.1.17 QUEENS' LANE

Repave footways on west side in York stone

4.1.18 PETTY CURY

Repave in less monotonous paving and reintroduce a notional kerb line (particularly on the north side) to improve the scale of the street.

4.1.19 THE MARKETPLACE

Repairs to fountainhead and its setting, paving repairs, improving the vitality of the market by encouraging café, event and civic uses, enhancing the setting of the Guildhall, preventing vehicle overruns onto pavements, shielding of waste storage and potential for interpretation.

4.1.20 SIDNEY STREET CLOSURE POINT

More appropriate detailing/gate where Sidney Street enters St Andrew's Street.

4.1.21 GUILDHALL STREET/FISHER SQUARE/GUILDHALL PLACE

Rationalising traffic, improvements to tour bus parking area, resurfacing, improvements to street furniture.

4.1.22 PEAS HILL

Enhancement to give opportunity for interpretation of the area as the city's former fish market. This area contains the Corn Exchange and Arts Theatre and could also, therefore, be enhanced as a 'cultural quarter' of the city.

4.1.23 EMMANUEL ROAD/SHORT STREET

Rationalising the road signage and other paraphernalia associated with the road closure point; improving the quality of the footpaths.

4.1.24 WHEELER STREET/PARSON'S COURT

Restricting vehicle numbers, improvements to path and carriageway to enable a more pleasant pedestrian environment to be created. Any modifications to the street must ensure that access to the Corn Exchange is maintained.

4.1.25 DOWNING PLACE

Improvements to footpath, boundary treatments and street furniture would enhance the street and create a better setting to the chapel.

4.1.26 PORTUGAL PLACE

Repaving throughout in York stone and repairs to railings.

4.1.27 GARRET HOSTEL LANE (east leg)

Building cleaning and streetlight improvements would lift the sombre character. Improvements to the floorscape would discourage vehicle use and make it more attractive generally.

4.2 Access and Traffic Management

4.2.1 CORE TRAFFIC SCHEME

The Core Traffic Scheme was devised in 1997 to manage traffic moving through the core area. Phase 1 saw the closure of Bridge Street to all but public transport and service vehicles. Phase 2 imposed similar restrictions on Emmanuel Road. The last, phase 3 comprised an off-peak closure and peak-

time tidal flow system, on Silver Street. Future controls should consider the use of alternative control technologies that may require less signage.

4.2.2 CAMBRIDGE ACCESS STUDY

Cambridgeshire County Council, together with Cambridge City Council are preparing a "Cambridge Access Study" to support on-going work related to the Greater Cambridgeshire City Deal/Greater Cambridge Partnership. This study will include a review with specific measures in and around the Historic Core of Cambridge in relation to how enhanced capacity and accessibility can be achieved for sustainable modes of travel. The study will need to consider how interventions to the built environment can be appropriately delivered and at the same time respect the city council's stated policy intent to ensure preservation and enhancement of the historic environment as set out in this appraisal and the Cambridge Local Plan.

- 4.2.3 Issues such as traffic flows, parking, coach set-down, private car access and servicing and deliveries will all need to be considered in the context of the Cambridge Access Study. This appraisal will be an important reference document in the development and assessment of future options and recommendations that flow from the access study

4.2.2 PROTECTING BUILDINGS AND FEATURES FROM VEHICLE DAMAGE

Traffic restriction measures in the Historic Core area have helped to protect vulnerable buildings and where necessary this has been supplemented by changes to road layouts and the location of bollards, etc. to stop vehicles colliding with specific features. Relocating street furniture and modifying kerb lines etc can help prevent vehicles damaging buildings. However, there are occasions when this is not feasible. These include where features will obstruct and cause a danger in the footway, where there are large amounts of underground services close to the surface or where the design or location of a feature is not appropriate in townscape terms.

4.2.3 THE SIZE OF DELIVERY VEHICLES

The Historic Core area is typified by narrow streets with buildings on the back edge of footpaths. This means that junctions can be tight and are not conducive to large vehicles manoeuvring around them. Vehicle damage to buildings can be a problem on Trinity Street for instance, particularly at the junctions with Green Street and Jesus Lane, and on Sidney Street close to the Jesus Lane junction. Part of the problem is undoubtedly caused by the use of unsuitably large servicing vehicles.

4.3 Built Environment Conservation

4.3.1 CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DESIGN OF NEW BUILDINGS IN THE HISTORIC CORE AREA

The Historic Core area is of great architectural and historic interest and it is important that the designers of new buildings recognise its character when considering new buildings. Generally Cambridge has a diverse range of buildings constructed over 1000 years, and it is the range of building types, styles, materials and heights which give it so much character. However, this

analysis has shown that there are specific character areas where the design of buildings is more homogenous. Designers should respect the forms of existing buildings and spaces if the character of Cambridge's Historic Core area is to be maintained. They should also protect the setting of key buildings and features. The 'Street by Street' analysis contained within this document sets out the existing character and information about the form of existing buildings, features and spaces. Designers should refer to this and demonstrate that their proposals maintain the existing scale and materials, or provide a sensitive contrast in justifying the design approach adopted. Where buildings are in prominent locations, their impact on the townscape from surrounding streets or long views should be properly considered. Designers should also consider how the building will be serviced, how sustainable its construction and use will be in the long term, how waste will be stored and disposed of and where cycle parking will be located.

4.3.2 TALL BUILDINGS

Although there are some tall buildings in the Historic Core, they are generally well-articulated and have pitched roofs, spires, pinnacles, lanterns, cupolas or chimneys which add positively to the skyline. This means that their mass is much less than a tall flat-roofed building of consistent or relatively unvarying height. The Cambridge Local Plan contains policy on how any proposal for a tall building will be dealt with.

4.3.3 RESPECTING TRADITIONAL PLOT WIDTHS

Traditional town buildings, as opposed to college buildings, within the Historic Core were often on very narrow plots. This gives the resulting buildings a strong vertical emphasis. Many retail redevelopments of the C20 ignored this, swept away buildings and consolidated plots to produce wide frontages to the street. The southern end of Sidney Street in particular provides several examples. The rhythm and form of the traditional street pattern is a characteristic feature of the Conservation Area.

4.3.4 EXTENDING BUILDINGS

Extending a building is often a good way of prolonging its usefulness and, in sensitive historic buildings, may often be the best way of providing modern facilities such as lifts. However, great care is needed to: 1) respect the character of the existing building 2) preserve its significant features, and 3) maintain the setting (avoiding in-filling its historic plot) of the building and its neighbours. Roof extensions need to meet the Local Plan policy for tall buildings. (See also Roof Extensions Design Guide.)

4.3.5 ROOFTOP PLANT

On new buildings, roof top plant should be designed either to be invisible from ground level or long views or, where it is visible, should be successfully integrated into the design of the building. In the latter case and where plant is being added to the roof of an existing building the Local Plan policy for tall buildings may need to be addressed.

4.3.6 DESIGNING OUT CRIME/VANDALISM

When designing new buildings, or extending existing ones, giving buildings active frontages so that areas around the building are well surveyed, making passageways and storage areas easy to secure, providing adequate lighting and not designing the outside of buildings to have recesses or hidden corners can all be important. Similarly landscaping should not give the opportunity for people to hide and that buildings do not have large, smooth wall planes which are easy to cover with graffiti.

4.3.7 DEMOLITION AND ALTERATION

This document describes those buildings which are of particular importance to the character of the Historic Core area. Every effort must be made to retain such buildings if the character of the Historic Core area is to be maintained. Provisions affecting the demolition of such buildings are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and in the Cambridge Local Plan.

Disfiguring alterations to buildings can affect the character in much the same way. Some buildings have been poorly altered in the past. Where this has happened, the restoration of lost features or alterations which improve the appearance of the building is likely to be supported.

4.3.8 BUILDING CLEANING

Cleaning buildings can cause significant damage to historic fabric unless appropriate methods are used. Before considering such works, advice should be obtained from an historic building specialist and/or from the city council's Conservation Team. The latter should be consulted to ascertain whether Listed Building Consent will be needed.

4.3.9 CONSERVATION IN PRACTICE

A conservative approach to repair is fundamental to good conservation. This means that no building should be repaired before such repair is strictly necessary or unless there is good reason. A traditional craft-based approach to repair, replacing decayed material on a like for like basis is preferred, although there are occasions when it is more appropriate to use non-traditional materials and methods if these are more discreet and allow more existing fabric to remain in situ, undisturbed.

4.3.10 EXTERNAL PAINTING

Previously unpainted surfaces [such as natural stone or brickwork] should not normally be painted over. Cement based or other waterproof and hard gloss paints should not be used on surfaces covered with traditional render. The correct finish for traditional renders and plasters is limewash. When inappropriate paint has been applied, expert advice should be obtained on suitable methods of removal.

4.3.11 CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The aims of building conservation and sustainability overlap in many respects, although there is some potential for conflict over energy efficiency measures. However, most historic buildings, if carefully considered on an individual basis, could be made more sustainable without the loss of their character. Therefore, wherever possible, sustainable materials should be used in repair and

construction operations. Sustainability can entail sourcing local materials, creating energy efficient designs, using energy efficient materials, installing adequate insulation and recycling materials.

4.3.12 CHANGING THE USE OF BUILDINGS

Reusing buildings can be laudable in terms of sustainability and aesthetics. When considering changing the use of any building, but particularly an historic building, it is important that all the implications of the use change are fully considered and their impacts on the interest of the building properly assessed. The need for air conditioning or other plant, fire precaution and detection measures, access for disabled people, improvements to the 'performance' of the building in terms of conserving fuel and power or noise attenuation, appropriate arrangements for storing and disposing of waste, increased vehicle usage and parking, delivery access, bicycle parking and the effect on the amenity of neighbours are all issues which should be fully assessed. The poorly thought out introduction of services can be detrimental to the structure, appearance and character of buildings and streets.

4.3.13 RETAINING RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER

In some areas, adjacent colleges have gradually acquired residential properties to house their students. Often the use of family houses by students does not require Planning Permission. Even when it does, this may still be acceptable provided that there is not adverse effect on any nearby private residential uses. It is important, however, that the residential character of these areas is retained. Proposals for knocking several buildings into one, or for removing boundary walls or railings are likely to have undesirable impacts. Where the latter have been lost in the past, their restoration will be actively encouraged. (See also Cambridge Local Plan.)

4.3.14 OFFICE USE

In the past, the conversion of buildings to offices has been discouraged in the Historic Core area. However, such a use may prove to be more sensitive for historic buildings than retail or food and drink uses, for example.

4.3.15 CLUSTERS OF SIMILAR USES

Local Plan policies seek to protect the level of retail uses on commercial streets. This is appropriate as some other uses, financial institutions or betting shops, for example, tend to have quite dead frontages. Shop location and type is often determined by their ability to meet rents. As a result, a high concentration of similar shop types often occurs, sometimes in prime locations. Whilst a concentration of non-retail uses could reduce the vitality of a street, the concentration of specialist shops or bars and restaurants may have more beneficial effects.

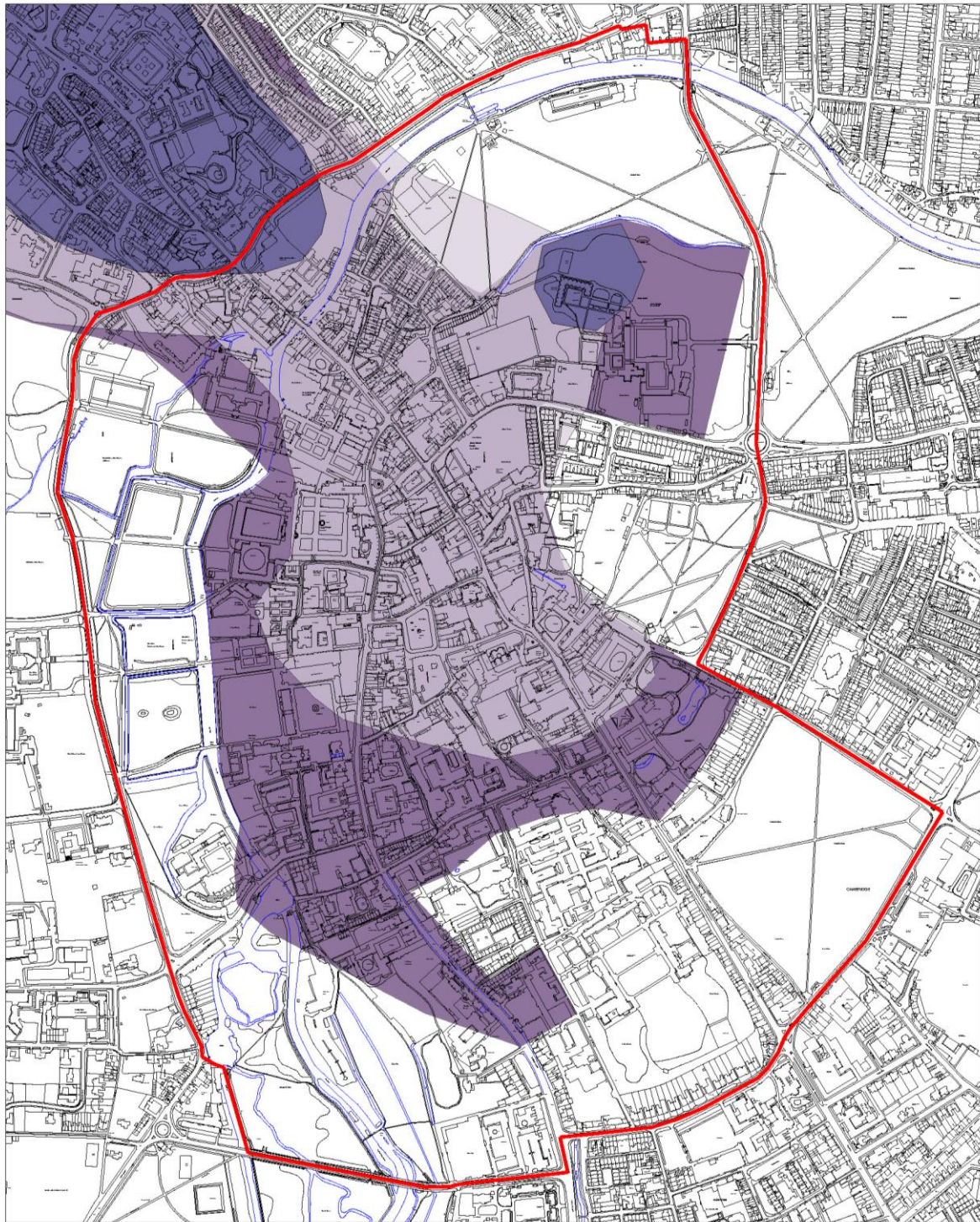
4.3.16 ARCHAEOLOGY

A statement of archaeological potential is included in section 2 of this appraisal.

Remains related to the many medieval colleges are known to be present within the Historic Core area. There is also a high potential for remains of the

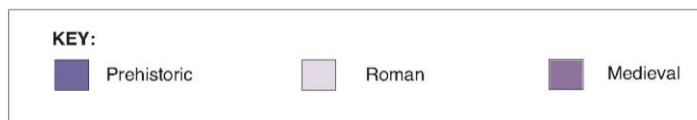
post medieval period to be present. In addition, chance finds from Roman and other periods have been found within the Historic Core.

Developers should contact the County Council Historic Environment unit for informal pre-application discussion about commissioning a desktop survey to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and guidance.



Interpretive Period Map: Predicted extent of archaeological remains by period

Fig: 8



4.3.17 PROTECTION OF HOBSON'S CONDUIT

Hobson's Conduit is a unique survival. Although the Conduit Head itself was moved from the Market Square in 1856, the runnels along Trumpington Street date from the late eighteenth century and the Conduit Trust is responsible for their maintenance. Any proposals to cover over, fill in or in any way damage or obscure the conduit would be inappropriate. Where areas of conduit previously covered over are revealed, where possible they should be repaired and their position marked (such as on St Andrew's Street).

4.3.18 SHOPFRONTS DESIGN GUIDE

This was produced by the city council in November 1997 and gives guidance on works to shopfronts, signage and security measures (see Cambridge Local Plan).

4.3.19 GRANTS

The city's Conservation Team can no longer offer grants for repair works to historic buildings or for the reinstatement of historic fabric that has been irreparably damaged or lost in the past.

4.3.20 ACCESS ISSUES

This need can be in conflict with preserving the character of historic buildings/streets. Reconciling the needs of disabled people with the historic interest of a building or area requires a thorough knowledge of the quality of the building or area and consideration of a range of options. Rarely can a standard solution from one situation be reapplied to another. Early consultation with the council can be the key to a successful resolution.

4.3.21 REPAIRS TO WALLS AND BOUNDARIES

Walls, railings and fences are important to the character of many streets in the Historic Core. Many of them are listed and of great historic interest such as the railings in front of the Senate House which are amongst the earliest cast iron railings in the country. Others however, particularly those on back streets can be neglected and left in a poor state of repair. Often the walls are constructed of clunch blocks or other vulnerable materials which, if not sensitively repaired, will deteriorate quickly. The owners of such walls are encouraged to draw up maintenance programmes for repair and the council can give advice on suitable techniques. In extreme cases, where features are deliberately being neglected and deteriorating rapidly, or where they are becoming a public danger, the city council may have to take action under the Building or Planning Acts.

4.4 Natural Environment Conservation

4.4.1 PROTECTING NATURAL FEATURES

4.4.2 THE BACKS AND THE RIVER CAM

The landscape setting and historical/cultural significance of the river corridor is a vital part of Cambridge's character. The much-trafficked river provides continuous vantage points from which the Historic Core is viewed. The Backs

and several of the college grounds are registered as Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England. A Biodiversity Assessment for The Backs has been prepared for The Backs Committee. When considering new developments, the impact upon their character must be considered. Although The Backs are heavily used, particularly by pedestrians, it is important that they are not formalised. Consequently proposals to overlay paths in paving materials or to light the paths are unlikely to be considered sympathetic.

4.4.3 THE PARKS

Although not formally registered as a Historic Park or Garden, the importance of the parks is clear to the city council and Conservation Plans have been prepared for each of them. These should be referred to before any work is considered. The impact of new developments around the edge of the parks should be fully demonstrated and works which have adverse impacts avoided. Proposals involving the rear of properties on King Street (which are very visible across Christ's Pieces) and to the streets surrounding Parker's Piece will be particularly sensitive and the city council will be actively seeking an improvement to the appearance of these areas.

4.4.4 THE COLLEGE GROUNDS

The majority of these are on the Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens. Leaving aside the contribution which these make to The Backs and setting of the Historic Core from the west, they are also important to the townscape of the more built-up parts of the area. The commercial parts of the Historic Core are very urban and the contribution of glimpsed views into the green college courts or of overhanging trees and shrubs is significant.

4.4.5 CHURCHYARDS AND OTHER GREEN SPACES

The churchyards and green spaces such as the garden of Grove Lodge, the lawn and great horse chestnut tree outside King's College and the land on Trinity Street outside Trinity College all provide a green contrast to the urban form. They make a major contribution to the character of the area.

4.4.6 TREES

There are very few 'street' trees within the Historic Core. Most of the streets are too narrow to take appropriate trees of any scale. New tree planting outside The Backs, the college grounds, churchyards and minor green spaces may therefore not normally be appropriate. (See also Cambridge Local Plan.) Trees play vital roles in, for instance, the health, sustainability and appearance of the city. The council has a strategy which sets out the policies to maximise their benefits. This Citywide Tree Strategy 2016-2026 including management and maintenance policies is available on the Cambridge City Council website.

4.4.7 CONSERVATION/MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR OPEN SPACES

Conservation Plans for the city's parks and open spaces were produced circa 2001-2 by Cambridge City Council in partnership with the then Cambridge Preservation Society in order to inform decisions on the future of the spaces and to advise management plans (these had not been reviewed at the time of this appraisal). The Councils Streets and Open Spaces department has prepared management plans.

4.4.8 FORMALISATION OF OPEN SPACES

An increase in the design formality of open spaces can be harmful as it is their very informality that is often their defining characteristic and is central to their appeal. Related to this is the pressure to put sponsorship or advertising signs on green spaces; such proposals can be visually disruptive.

4.5 Other Management Matters

4.5.1 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The city council is committed to providing advice to potential developers before schemes are formally submitted. Projects can be discussed at the appropriate forum, (i.e. Design and Conservation Panel, Development Control Forum or Disability Consultative Panel) so that people know at the earliest possible stage if their ideas are likely to be supported and so avoid wasted time and expense.

4.5.2 ENHANCEMENT OF MARKET SQUARE

The market is one of the most popular parts of the city centre and one of the most historic. However, its character is different at night when the empty market stalls and closed shops mean that there is little activity. There may be opportunities for improving the market square and it is intended the City Centre Public Realm Strategy will explore these. (See the Cambridge Local Plan.)