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

4.1.2 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’ are being retained and upgraded.

4.1.3 SECTOR SIGNAGE
The County Council’s subdivision of the core area into sectors with road signs clearly directing service vehicles to the most appropriate entry point has attempted to remove confusion and improve access arrangements in the city centre.

4.1.4 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 core area on a regular basis should also be implemented.

4.1.5 CITY CENTRE PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY
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, 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.

4.1.6 CORE TRAFFIC SCHEME – PERIODIC REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS
One of the biggest impacts of the 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 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 the City Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD.

4.1.7 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.

4.1.8 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.

4.1.9 CONTROL OF REINSTATEMENT WORKS
The City and County Council work together on schemes to improve the quality of streets and spaces in the 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.
4.1.10 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) and 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.

4.1.11 RECOMMENDATIONS (subject to review by the City Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD):

4.1.12 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.

4.1.13 ALL SAINTS PASSAGE
Improving vitality through enhanced commercial and other uses, repairs to paving and improvements to lighting.

4.1.14 BRIDGE STREET (south end)
Giving greater priority to pedestrians, enhance townscape and commercial viability of the street.

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

4.1.16 BOTOLPH LANE
Remove parking and repave to link Free School Lane with King’s Parade to spread tourist honeypots.

4.1.17 LITTLE ST MARY’S LANE
Resurfacing in more appropriate materials to reflect historic character particularly if Peterhouse delivery route can be moved elsewhere.

4.1.18 QUEENS’ LANE
Repave footways on west side in York stone

4.1.19 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.

4.1.20 MAGDALENE STREET / NORTHAMPTON STREET REPAINTING
Repainting of buildings in historically appropriate, but more varied colours needed to add life to streets and enhance them as destinations.
4.1.21 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.

4.1.22 SIDNEY STREET CLOSURE POINT
More appropriate detailing / gate where Sidney Street enters St Andrew’s Street.

4.1.23 GUILDHALL STREET / FISHER SQUARE / GUILDHALL PLACE
Rationalising traffic, improvements to tour bus parking area, resurfacing, improvements to street furniture.

4.1.24 PEAS HILL
Additional repaving (accepting that special delivery access is required), and 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.

4.1.25 EMMANUEL ROAD / SHORT STREET
Rationalising the road signage and other paraphernalia associated with the road closure point; improving the quality of the footpaths.

4.1.26 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.

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

4.1.28 PORTUGAL PLACE
Repaving throughout in York stone and repairs to railings.

4.1.29 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 and Cambridgeshire District Council, are preparing a "Cambridge Access Study" to support on-going work related to the Greater Cambridgeshire City Deal. 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 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 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 CORE AREA

The 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 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 surrounding 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 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 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 useful 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, rooftop 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 core area. Every effort must be made to retain such buildings if the character of the 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 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
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 core area.

Developers should contact the County 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
Deposit Thickness Model: Indicating anticipated thickness of archaeological deposits beneath present ground level

KEY:
- < 0.50m
- 0.50m - 1.00m
- 1.00 - 1.50m
- 1.50m - 2.00m
- 2.00m - 2.50m
- 2.50m - 3.00m
- > 3.00m
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 and Design 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 core area. 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
The Backs and several of the college grounds are registered as Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England. 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 core from the west, they are also important to the townscape of the more built-up parts of the core. The commercial parts of the 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 CHUCHYARDS 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 Core Area. 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)

4.4.7 CONSERVATION / MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR OPEN SPACES
Conservation Plans for the city’s parks and open spaces have been produced by the Environment and Planning Department. These are vital in informing decisions on the future of the spaces and will advise management plans which may be developed.

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. Conservation & Design 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).