

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 30 November 2020

Title: Adoption of updated Northumberland Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Portfolio: Deputy Mayor	Cabinet Member: Councillor Bruce Pickard
Report from Service Area: Environment, Housing and Leisure	
Responsible Officer: Phil Scott – Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure	Tel: (0191) 643 7295
Wards affected: Riverside and Tynemouth	

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

An updated Character Appraisal has been prepared for the Northumberland Square conservation area. Character Appraisals are used to define the special character and appearance of conservation areas and are useful tools in supporting planning decisions. In this case, the updated Character Appraisal is also necessary to support the implementation of Historic England grant funding through the High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programme. Only a small number of minor changes are proposed.

A draft updated Character Appraisal has been subject to four weeks of consultation with the public and relevant consultees. Only Historic England responded to the consultation, welcoming the review at the start of the HAZ programme.

This report informs Cabinet of the feedback received to the consultation and asks that the updated Character Appraisal is adopted as planning guidance.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (1) Note the feedback received to the public consultation on the draft updated Northumberland Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the suggested amendments; and
- (2) Agree to adopt the updated Northumberland Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal as planning guidance.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 18 September 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the 'Our North Tyneside' Council Plan 2020-2024 priorities, including:

- Our people will be listened to so that their experience helps the Council work better for residents.
- Our places will be great places to live, provide an attractive, safe and sustainable environment and be a thriving place of choice for visitors.

Updating and adopting the Northumberland Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal would support the vision, objectives and policies of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017. The key policies are:

- S6.5 Heritage Assets
- DM6.6 Protection, Preservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets
- DM6.1 Design of Development
- DM6.2 Extending Existing Buildings
- S6.4 Improving Image

These policies commit the Authority to preserve and enhance heritage assets, keep evidence about the Borough's historic environment up-to-date, and deliver well designed development that creates successful places. This is in line with national planning policy as set out in chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) and chapter 13 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Introduction

- 1.5.2 This report brings forward an updated Character Appraisal for the Northumberland Square conservation area. Character Appraisals describe the special character and appearance of a conservation area and are a useful tool in supporting development management decisions, informing planning policy and guidance, and in securing external funding.
- 1.5.3 The conservation area was originally designated in 1975 and includes Northumberland Square itself and the length of Howard Street, forming a key route connecting North Shields town centre and the riverside. The existing character appraisal for the conservation area was adopted by Cabinet in January 2014.
- 1.5.4 The Council has recently been awarded funding from Historic England, through their High Streets Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) programme, to support physical improvements to the historic and built environment within the conservation area, and to facilitate more varied and vibrant uses, including cultural, leisure and tourism uses.

1.5.5 Requirements to update the Character Appraisal

- 1.5.6 As part of the delivery of the HAZ programme, the Council is required to adopt a Management Strategy for the conservation area that sets out a clear vision and objectives for the future preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. A robust Conservation Area Management Strategy must be informed by up-to-date evidence about existing character and appearance. This evidence is provided through Character Appraisals.
- 1.5.7 For Northumberland Square, the adopted 2014 Character Appraisal is not sufficiently up-to-date to support an effective Management Strategy. There have been several physical changes in the area, notably the rescue from risk and refurbishment of 13-16 Northumberland Square and development of the gap site to the rear. Additionally, national and local planning policy and guidance have been updated since 2014.
- 1.5.8 To reflect this, a small number of changes are proposed to the Character Appraisal and its photographs have been updated. However, the majority of the document remains as adopted in 2014. A copy of the draft updated Character Appraisal is available as an **Appendix** to this report.
- 1.5.9 Historic England guidance advises that it is good practise for conservation area reviews to be carried out around every five years, depending on available resources and development pressure within an area.
- 1.5.10 It is recommended that the updated Character Appraisal is adopted by Cabinet as planning guidance and as a tool to support an emerging Management Strategy for the conservation area. Not doing this would harm the Local Planning Authority's ability to continue to preserve and enhance the conservation area in accordance with its statutory duties, as set out in section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- ### 1.5.11 Consultation
- 1.5.12 In accordance with Historic England guidance, the draft Character Appraisal was subject to consultation. The engagement took place over four weeks, ending on 5 October 2020, as follows:
- A briefing note to the Deputy Mayor and Ward Members ahead of public engagement to seek any views or input.
 - A letter to all properties within the conservation area boundary, describing the draft document and how people could provide their thoughts on it.
 - An email to Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England to invite comments.
 - The draft Character Appraisal was available to view on the Council's website.
 - In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, hard copies were available to be sent to individuals without internet access.
 - Comments were invited in writing via email or letter.
 - Planning Officers were available via phone or email to answer queries.
- 1.5.13 Historic England provided some comments on the draft Character Appraisal. These comments, with the Planning team's response, are summarised below.

Historic England comment	Planning team response
The draft appraisal is very good and successfully follows our guidance in <i>Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (second edition)</i> .	Comments noted.
As the adopted appraisal is six years old, reviewing it now, at the start of the High Street HAZ programme, is welcome.	Comments noted.
The appraisal will need reviewing soon after the High Street HAZ programme has ended to take account of the enhancements the programme will bring, and as part of HAZ legacy planning.	Reference added on the need to update following completion of the HAZ programme.
The emerging management strategy should be mentioned in the Introduction as well as in the Management section from p53.	References added.
On p5, the number of conservation areas in England is now estimated to be over 10,000.	Figure updated.
The new development almost complete on the long-standing Albion Road gap site should be mentioned.	References added on p20 and p54.
On p53, the section on boundary review could refer back to the section on setting and the significance of individual buildings nearby discussed on pp8-9.	Boundary review section now refers back to Setting section.
On p53, it would be worth adding the dates of the High Street HAZ programme - April 2020 to March 2024.	Dates added.
More could be said about the need to consider whether control of permitted development rights (PDRs) should be extended, particularly due to the changes in land use expected as a result of the High Street HAZ programme and the general changes to PDRs in recent years.	A discussion on Article 4 Directions and the effect of permitted changes of use added to Management section.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Agree with the recommendations as set out at paragraph 1.2 of this report.

Option 2

Do not approve the recommendations as set out at paragraph 1.2 of this report.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

Having an up-to-date Character Appraisal in place supports the Council in its statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of its conservation areas. It is also in line with local and national planning policy and guidance.

Funding has recently been secured from Historic England through their HAZ programme to support enhancements in this conservation area. A condition of the funding is that a Management Strategy, informed by a Character Appraisal, will be prepared for the conservation area. The existing Character Appraisal, adopted in 2014, is not sufficiently up-to-date to support an effective Management Strategy.

Historic England welcome the proposed updated Character Appraisal.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix: Draft Updated Northumberland Square Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1.9 Contact officers:

Martin Craddock, Team Leader Planning Policy (0191 643 2310)
Jackie Palmer, Planning Manager (07711425574)
Colin MacDonald, Senior Manager, Technical & Regulatory Services (0191 643 6620)
David Dunford, Acting Senior Business Partner (0191 643 7027)

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [North Tyneside Local Plan 2017](#)
- (2) [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)
- (3) [National Planning Policy Framework 2019](#)
- (4) [Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management \(second edition\), Historic England Advice Note 1, Historic England 2019](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The staff, printing and other costs to publish the Character Appraisal will be met from within the existing budgets. The document will be placed on the Authority's Web Site.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The matter has been subject to dialogue and engagement with the Deputy Mayor and the affected Ward Members.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The engagement methods are outlined from paragraph 1.5.11 of this report.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

The Character Appraisal is a document used to guide planning decisions and is part of the evidence base that underpins planning policy. A significant factual error in the Character Appraisal could therefore lead to challenge. Any risks arising will be monitored through the Service's usual risk management process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

Conservation practice is consistent with the aims of promoting environmental sustainability as it advocates the re-use of buildings and the use of locally sourced traditional materials. The draft Character Appraisal also encourages sensitive improvements to the area and provides information that can increase the understanding of the historic environment.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Head of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service