

TAVISTOCK CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT
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West Devon Borough Council

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This Management Plan and accompanying Character Appraisal were commissioned by West Devon Borough Council on behalf of a number of funding partners. In addition to the Borough Council, these are Tavistock Town Council, Devon County Council, the Cornish and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS, and the Tavistock and Villages Development Forum. The preparation of these documents has been guided by an Officer Steering Group and the newly formed Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership (TTHP) who are made up of representatives from the local authorities (West Devon Borough Council, Tavistock Town Council and Devon County Council), local businesses, and community interests.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the Management Plan

This Management Plan has been drawn up following the production of a detailed Character Appraisal for the Tavistock Conservation Area. It provides a framework for future actions which are primarily the responsibility of the Borough Council, although their successful implementation will also depend on the co-operation and enthusiasm of the other local authorities (Devon County Council and Tavistock Town Council), local people and local organisations.

Government policy¹ has made it clear that conservation areas are not necessarily 'preservation' areas. Change is an inevitable facet of modern life and the challenge is to manage change in a manner that does not lose sight of the special historic qualities of a place. This Conservation Plan seeks to provide a framework for 'managed' change which will ensure that the special architectural and historic interest of the Tavistock Conservation Area is both preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Local authorities are required by law to periodically review their conservation areas and the preparation of Character Appraisals and Management Plans is part of this obligation. Indeed, in the past keeping Character Appraisals has been a Key Performance Indicator in the Best Value assessment of local authorities, and as a result, a five year review cycle is now considered to be best practice.

The involvement and approval of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and will hopefully mean that the various actions identified in the Management Plan will have greater impact and longevity. For Tavistock, this has been achieved by the establishment of the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership, with representatives from local businesses and amenity groups, which has provided comments on the emerging documents and monitored the whole process. Additionally, the documents were subject to six weeks of full public consultation, commencing with a public exhibition at the Methodist Church Upper Hall on Saturday 25th October 2008. Following this, a Public Consultations Report was prepared (copies are available on request from the Borough Council), the text amended, and the documents illustrated and printed.

The proactive management of conservation areas gives clarity and robustness to decision making, which means that issues may be more defensible in, for instance, planning appeals. The Character Appraisal and this Management Plan will therefore be of use to the Borough Council when determining applications for change within or on the edges of the conservation areas, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for refurbishment, alteration or new development. The documents will also be of interest to visitors and to Tavistock's residents and business community, all of whom value the buildings and spaces of the town so highly.

¹ Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) – *Planning and the Historic Environment* - 1994

1.2 The Tavistock Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Tavistock Conservation Area Character Appraisal was prepared in consultation with local people, through a stakeholders' walkabout and discussion, further discussions with stakeholders' groups, and a full public consultation exercise. This Character Appraisal, which is published in association with this Management Plan, identifies the positive and negative features of the town, and provides an outline of the main issues that may affect its distinctiveness.

A summary of the key characteristics of Tavistock, as defined by the Character Appraisal, is reproduced below. This is followed by a summary of the principal issues that the town faces. It is these issues that the Management Plan seeks to address.

Summary of key characteristics of the Tavistock Conservation Area:

- The location in West Devon between the Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The beautiful setting in the valley of the River Tavy, which flows through the conservation area;
- The Meadows and adjoining Benson's Meadow, both of which provide attractive green spaces and many trees close to the centre of the town and are linked by the river;
- The association with the former Benedictine abbey which lies beneath the town centre, with some above ground remains;
- The industrial heritage of tin and copper mining, foundries, wool production and quarrying, with some buildings in the conservation area which relate to these;
- The impact of the patronage of the Bedford Estate, which owned a high proportion of the buildings and land in the area between the Dissolution of Tavistock Abbey and 1911;
- The high quality townscape, much of which is the result of 19th century town planning when the Bedford Estate provided new roads and a succession of new or converted buildings;
- The 'set piece' of the Town Hall with its associated buildings, mostly built or converted by various dukes of Bedford to give the town prestige and status;
- The Bedford Cottages, mostly listed, which were built to provide improved housing for miners and other workers in the 19th century;
- The use of Dartmoor granite and local Hurdwick stone for many of the buildings or pavements
- A busy shopping centre, popular with tourists and residents alike

Summary of the principal issues:

Strategic:

- World Heritage Site and mining heritage – recognition and connections to Morwellham Quay and the Tavistock Canal;
- The role of different stakeholders – Borough and Town Councils, amenity groups, businesses and residents

- Understanding Tavistock – tourism, interpretation, guidance, town trails
- Roads, railways, cycling and traffic management
- Car parking.

Organisational:

- Human resources – staffing/skills;
- Development control processes;
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee;
- Heritage Champion.

Policy and control:

- Designation of heritage assets, including additions to statutory list and new Local List;
- Local Development Framework;
- Development control issues – maintaining quality;
- Control of new development affecting the conservation area;
- Control of permitted development - Article 4 Direction;
- Enforcement Strategy;
- Use of statutory powers : Urgent Works, amenity notices (Section 215), Repairs Notices;
- Buildings at Risk – survey and strategy;
- Householder guidance needed e.g. shopfronts, listed buildings, living in a conservation area;
- Sustainability.

Economic:

- Vitality and variety – the importance of Tavistock as a service provider; maintaining its mixed uses; the retail 'offer'; building repairs; use of upper floors;
- Potential Townscape Heritage Initiative grant scheme in Market Street, King Street, south of the Pannier Market, West Street and Dolvin Road areas;
- Historic Buildings Grants.

Spatial:

- Protection of views across Tavistock;
- Protection of roofscapes;
- Protection and care of trees, parks, cemeteries;
- Public realm – review of paving, street furniture, street lighting, wirescape;
- Boundaries and front gardens.

Site specific:

- Market Street, King Street and Bank Square enhancements;
- Bedford Cottages – enforcement/Design Guidance;
- Future of Police Station and Guildhall;

- Conservation and Management Plan for the Town Council Estate;
- Buildings at Risk – Still House, Betsy Grimbal's Tower, no. 1 Dolvin Road;
- Archaeological evaluations of early buildings in Market Street/King Street/West Street.

2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

2.1 The implications of conservation area designation

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and enhancement” of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a statutory duty to review designations ‘from time to time’ and to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area; There is a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as conservation area appraisals, grant schemes or enhancement proposals) to that end;
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area;
- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting conservation areas. This is usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper;
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any unlisted building in a conservation area, subject to minor exceptions, and the local authority or the Secretary of State may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained;
- Written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area, subject to minor exceptions;
- The display of advertisements may be more restricted than elsewhere;
- The Council or the Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices;
- The energy conservation expectations of the Building Regulations (Part L) do not necessarily apply to buildings within a conservation area;
- Powers exist for local authorities, English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to assist with the upkeep of buildings in conservation areas, although funds are usually targeted to areas to economic deprivation.

2.2 The control of development and change

The requirements for planning permission

Certain works to dwellings within a conservation area, which are normally considered to be ‘permitted development’ will require planning approval from the Borough Council. The overall effect of these additional controls is that the amount of building work which can be carried out to a family house or within its grounds without a planning application is substantially less in a conservation area than elsewhere.

These are:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to dwellings in conservation areas where they add more than 10% or 50 cubic metres in volume to the property

(whichever is greater). This is a slightly smaller amount than the usual requirement for planning permission which is limited to 15% or 70 cubic metres, except for terraced houses which are also limited to 10% or 50 cubic metres, wherever they are located;

- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to dwellings in conservation areas, for instance using stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles;
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a dwelling resulting in a material alteration to its shape, most notably the addition of dormer windows;
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a dwelling in a conservation area if the cubic capacity exceeds 10 cubic metres. This is especially important for sheds, garages, and other outbuildings in gardens.

Recent (October 2008) changes to planning legislation may mean that these constraints have changed. Property owners are therefore strongly advised to contact the Borough Council's planning officers before starting work to see if planning permission is required.

Where a building is statutorily listed, different legislation applies, as all internal and external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building require Listed Building Consent. Furthermore, commercial properties (such as shops and public houses), and houses which are in multiple occupation such as flats or bedsits have far fewer permitted development rights and therefore planning permission is already required for many alterations to these buildings.

Satellite dishes

The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas and are set out in OPDM Circular 10/2005. This states that for all unlisted buildings in a conservation area, in whatever use and of whatever size, planning permission is required for all 'antennas' (which includes satellite dishes and any other equipment used to deliver electronic communications) which are located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which both face onto, and are visible, from a road. In such cases, planning permission will usually be refused. The rules governing other locations on the building are extremely complex so it is always best to ask the local planning authority if planning permission is required before carrying out the work.

For listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is practically always required for the installation of 'antennas' and if the Borough Council considers that the installation will have an adverse effect on the special architectural or historic interest of the building, Consent will usually be refused.

Conventional TV aerials and their mountings and poles are not considered to be 'development' and therefore planning permission is not required.

(See also the DCLG pamphlet, *A Householders' Planning Guide to the Installation of Antennas* available on the DCLG website).

Article 4 Directions

Permitted development rights may be withdrawn if the Borough Council imposes an Article 4 direction. This does not mean that development, such as changes to windows or the erection of satellite aerials, will necessarily be impossible. It does, however, mean that planning permission has to be sought and this allows for the merits of a proposal to be considered against the conservation interests.

Telecommunications masts

The law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in conservation areas without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand. Further information can be found in the second edition of PPG8 *Telecommunications* (2001).

Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending to carry out works to a tree greater than 75 mm diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. 'Work' is defined as lopping, topping, or felling. This provision provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are no longer exempt, although slightly different constraints occur where the tree forms part of a commercially managed forest or orchard.

2.3 National policy and guidance

Central government policy on conservation areas is contained in PPG15.² This covers the designation of areas and the responsibilities that stem from designation, including the appraisal of the special interest of conservation areas and the control of development affecting them. It also makes the general point that *'conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives and should not generally be seen as in opposition to one another'*.

PPG15 sets the expectations by urging local authorities *'to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment'*. The expectations are further developed in English Heritage guidance on the appraisal and management of conservation areas.³

Government policy for archaeology is provided in PPG16⁴. This affects statutorily scheduled ancient monuments, such as the substantial area of the Benedictine abbey at the centre of Tavistock. Requirements for scheduled monument consent

² PPG15 - *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the historic environment* – 1994

³ English Heritage – *Guidance on Conservation Area appraisals* – 2005

English Heritage – *Guidance on Management Proposals for Conservation Areas* – 2005

⁴ PPG16 – *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* – 1990

take priority over listed building consent, but neither of these removes the normal need for planning permission.

Further government advice, providing local authorities with the power to reject any development that does not positively contribute to the improvement and regeneration of its setting, is set out in Planning Policy Statement no. 1 (PPS1). Whilst not specifically concerned with conservation areas, it does provide broad support for improving standards of design and sustainability.

2.4 The Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework

The context for the local plan is provided by:

- Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) – 2001
- The Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West
- The Devon Structure Plan 2001 to 2016 - adopted October 2004

The current local plan is the West Devon Borough Council Local Plan Review, which was adopted in March 2005. This provides a range of policies for safeguarding the special interest of conservation areas.

The local plan is due to be superseded by the West Devon Local Development Framework (LDF), however it will be saved in full to become part of the LDF until it is gradually replaced. The LDF is at an early stage and its scope is still being formulated.

The Local Development Scheme defines the documents that, together, will make up the LDF. This was published in 2007 and is currently being revised. The revised LDS will include the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal as part of its evidence base.

The LDF Core Strategy document will set out the key themes and a vision for the future development of West Devon. The Core Strategy concentrates on issues of employment, business development, transport, the accommodation of housing targets, and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment. The Core Strategy Document will provide an over-arching strategic policy on which future policies and supplementary planning documents can be developed. The Borough Council is currently developing a creative partnership between conservation and development needs. The next key stage of the LDF will be the publication of the pre-submission Core Strategy due for publication during March 2009.

Existing supplementary planning guidance includes a series of development briefs for specific sites. These sites have been saved under the current adopted Local Plan Review as part of the Local Development Framework. Further Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are planned to address a number of key topic areas including the *Re-use of rural buildings* and *Design and local distinctiveness*. At present there are no plans to provide guidance on conserving the historic environment in the LDF, however the Borough Council does intend to develop the Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan into an SPD or an informative document (as appropriate) as part of the LDF.

The Borough Council is working in partnership with organisations such as English Heritage and Devon County Council to ensure that the historic environment is protected and enhanced through the Local Development Framework. The Council recognises that the historic environment is a significant driver for the local economy and regeneration and the implications this has for several business sectors, such as tourism and retailing.

2.5 Sustainability

With rising concerns about climate change and energy efficiency, there is an increasing demand for facilities to generate energy at individual buildings, for instance through wind turbines, solar and photovoltaic panels, and heat pumps. The government wishes to encourage sustainable energy generation and has indicated that devices should be permitted development provided they cause no nuisance to others. This includes any adverse effects on the character of conservation areas.

Many residents in Tavistock are keen to further the principles of sustainable development and in making their own homes more eco-friendly. The greatest heat loss in a house is through the roof and insulating the roof is the most effective way of reducing heat loss which has no impact on the appearance of the building. The installation of double glazing can also help, but because many of the buildings in Tavistock are listed, or are likely to be controlled in the future by the Article 4 Direction, double glazing and the use of uPVC is unlikely to be acceptable in planning terms. In any case, regardless of the planning issues, the 'sustainability' of uPVC, which is the product of the plastics industry and is not bio-degradable, is highly questionable. Heat loss and improved sound insulation through existing single glazed windows can be greatly improved by the installation of draught stripping and there are several companies which offer this service, the cost of which compares well with total replacement of the original windows. The installation of secondary glazing is another worthwhile improvement, particularly effective in reducing noise levels on busy roads, which can be carried out without affecting the original windows.

In the broader context, it is important to recognise that historic buildings are, by definition, inherently sustainable on account of their embodied energy, the low 'product miles' of local building materials, their adaptability and their high thermal mass.

English Heritage is publishing a series of documents to provide guidance on climate change and the historic environment.⁵ The Borough Council has published its West Devon Borough Council Sustainable Development Planning document which deals with sustainable development in general.

⁵ For instance: English Heritage – *Micro wind generation and traditional buildings* – 2008
English Heritage – *Micro-generation and the historic environment* – 2008

3 STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The following chapter deals with a number of strategic issues which have been identified in the Character Appraisal for the Tavistock Conservation Area. Most of the actions will be the responsibility of West Devon Borough Council, sometimes in partnership with other organisations.

3.1 World Heritage Site and tourism

Tavistock forms one of ten separate sites stretching from St Just in Cornwall to Tavistock in West Devon which comprises the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site, inscribed by UNESCO in 2006. During the period 1700-1914 these sites were transformed by an industrial economy based largely on hard rock mining which produced the highly distinctive landscapes which can still be recognised today. A World Heritage Site Management Plan for the period 2005-2010 has been produced which suggests ways in which these sites can be improved, preserved and interpreted over the next few years. The current boundary of the Tavistock World Heritage Site is shown on *Map 1 Conservation Area Boundary Review* at Appendix 3 in the Character Appraisal.

Tavistock lies outside the main groups of World Heritage Sites which are centred around St Just; to the north of Penzance; to the north west of Truro (Camborne, Pool and Redruth); and along the Tamar Valley. The Tamar Valley, to the west of Tavistock, played a major part of the revolution in hard-rock mining technology that developed here and in Cornwall. The valley and surrounding upland area retain features relating to the mining of tin, copper, silver-lead and arsenic, ore processing and smelting. It includes the unparalleled group of Tamar industrial mineral river quays (e.g. Morwellham), a mine railway (Devon Great Consols), a mineral railway (East Cornwall Mineral Railway), a mineral canal (The Tavistock Canal, including the tunnelled section) and an ancillary industries canal (Tamar Manure Navigation). The first three possess innovative and characteristic nationally rare inclined planes (a feature of the Valley) tracks and mine roads.

The Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project (TVMHP) is jointly managed by the Borough Council and the Tamar valley AONB Service (TVS) under the umbrella of the Tamar AONB Partnership. Projects include additional improvements at Morwellham Quay and making accessible the mine sites across the area that have little or no official access via new trails, making sites and buildings safe, and interpreting the remains.

Tavistock town is the most extensively remodelled metal mining town in Britain. The development of Devon Great Consols and its neighbours brought enormous profits to the Dukes of Bedford who owned the land on which they were sited. The Bedford Estate used this money to finance the development and remodelling of Tavistock to create the spacious, attractive town centre which can be seen today.

Information about the industrial development of Tavistock is already provided by displays at Tavistock Museum, situated in Court Gate in the town centre, and by a series of publications by the Tavistock and District Local History Society, also available in the museum, the Tavistock Subscription Library and the Public Library. A Tourist Information Centre (TIC), located in the Town Hall, additionally provides

information about Tavistock and the various attractions in the vicinity. However, there is no specialised visitor orientation facility for the Mining Heritage in Tavistock, although it is planned as part of the TVMHP.

Strategic Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will continue to jointly manage the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project and will also seek ways of promoting Tavistock's role as part of the World Heritage Site, including the improvement of the interpretation and orientation facilities.*

3.2 The role of different stakeholders

Tavistock has a large number of established organisations (at least 32) which all have an interest in the town, whether due to statutory responsibilities, business economics, charitable status or simply an enthusiasm and regard for its many attractions. The most relevant are:

- Devon County Council
- West Devon Borough Council
- Tavistock Town Council
- Tavistock Chamber of Commerce
- Tavistock Forward
- The Cornish and West Devon Mining Landscape WHS
- The Tavistock and Villages Development Forum
- Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership
- Tavistock Museum
- Tavistock and District Local History Society
- Tavistock Tree Preservation Group

In addition, the residents and business community in Tavistock take an active interest in the future of their town and there are many other local societies which cater for a variety of leisure, religious and cultural activities. Surprisingly, there is no local Civic Society, that role being partly provided by the Tavistock and District Local History Society. There is also no particular organisation or individual who takes responsibility for the town centre, the role being shared by the Borough Council and the Town Council.

Tavistock is unusual in that the Town Council acquired large amounts of land and buildings in 1911 when the then Duke of Bedford disposed of much of his property in Tavistock. Overall the Council manages some 32 properties, most let at commercial rents. Some are listed buildings and three (Court Gate, Abbey Chapel Tower and Betsey Grimbal's Tower) are scheduled monuments. The most important buildings in their ownership are:

- Tavistock Town Hall (but not Bedford Square, which is owned by Devon County Council and managed on its behalf by the Town Council)
- Court Gate and Librarian's Cottage
- The War Memorial
- The Pannier Market, the Auction Rooms, and nos. 9-18 Duke Street

- Abbey Chapel Porch
- The Still House
- Betsy Grimbal's Tower
- St John's Well in Benson's Meadow
- The statue of the 7th Duke of Bedford in Guildhall Square
- The statue of Sir Francis Drake in Plymouth Road

The Town Council also own The Meadows public park, the Dolvin Road and Plymouth Road cemeteries, the Cattle Market in Whitchurch Road, other smaller pockets of land in the town (including Guildhall Square and all of Market Road), and land outside Tavistock. Tavistock Wharf was leased to West Devon Borough Council in 1987 for 999 years and is the location of the Wharf Arts Centre and Meadowlands Swimming Pool complex with associated car and coach parks. The Town Council also provides the Tourist Information Centre and Tavistock Museum with their premises in the Town Hall and Court Gate on a rent-free and helps towards the cost of their business rates and building maintenance.

The Town Council have offices in Drake Road and 17 maintenance staff who look after the various parks and buildings, including St Eustachius Churchyard. The Council has a detailed five year maintenance programme which includes regular assessments of building condition and a programme of repairs and maintenance.

Strategic Action 2:

- *The Borough Council will continue to support local organisations and to act as intermediary between different action groups as required.*

3.3 Understanding Tavistock

Tavistock is a confident town with a strong sense of community and history and in some respects a strong economy. Surveys of local interest groups have confirmed that Tavistock is perceived as a 'quality' destination because it provides a variety of specialist shops, a thriving Pannier Market, a number of cafes and restaurants for relaxed eating and drinking, and proximity to outstanding countryside including the Tamar valley AONB and the Dartmoor National Park. Other tourism 'hot spots' such as Calstock, Morwellham and Cotehele are close by – Morwellham has experienced some of the largest visitor numbers for any industrial site in the South West.

There are plans within the scope of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project, which is jointly managed by the Borough Council and the Tamar Valley AONB Service, for the provisions of interpretation facilities in Tavistock, including a Visitor Orientation Centre. It is also proposed to improve linkages to the Tamar Valley along the former railway line and the Tavistock Canal.

To this end Heritage Destination Consulting Ltd have been appointed to prepare a Town Interpretation Plan and advise on how best to configure a Visitor Orientation facility. This will include improving the interpretation facilities for the town as well as providing a gateway to Dartmoor, the area's mining heritage, and the World heritage Site in general.

At the moment, the two main sources of information for tourists in Tavistock are the TIC and Tavistock Museum, both located centrally in Bedford Square. It has already been noted that there is as yet no specific centre for the Mining Heritage Site in general.

A certain amount of visitor information is already provided at the Museum in the form of leaflets (such as the ones on Tavistock's iron foundries, or on the Bedford Cottages). Also available is an excellent town walk and short history, which has also been produced by the Tavistock and District Local History Society. This provides a town map and details of the most significant buildings and historical events.

The Town Council also plays an active role in supplying tourist related information. Seven new 'gateway' signs were procured and erected in partnership with Devon County Council at the main entrances to Tavistock in 2005. These may need to be reviewed to acknowledge Tavistock's role as a gateway for the WHS. A project to fix blue 'heritage' plaques to some 50 historic buildings in the town was commenced in 2005, partly financed by a Countryside Agency Council grant. These can be seen on buildings such as the Town Hall, Court Gate and Betsy Grimbal's Tower. Whilst these plaques are generally in good condition, a number of other visitor signs, such as the display facing Bank Square, are in urgent need of replacement. These are the responsibility of the Borough Council. Further blue plaques, and updated displays, may be appropriate.

Strategic Action 3:

- *The Borough Council will continue to implement the proposals for improving Interpretation and Visitor Orientation facilities in Tavistock as part of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project;*
- *Subject to funding, the Town Council will prepare further plaques in collaboration with the Tavistock and District Local History Society.*

3.4 Roads and traffic management

Devon County Council's Environment, Economy and Culture Directorate is the Highway Authority and is responsible for the management of all roads in the County apart from the M5, A30, A35, A38 and the A303 which are trunk roads and are managed by the Highways Agency. All roads in Tavistock apart from Market Road therefore come under their control.

The construction of Stannary Bridge and minor improvements to the Abbey Bridge roundabout were carried out by the County Council in the mid 1990s to create a partial by-pass for the town centre along Dolvin Road. At the same time, Duke Street and Brook Street were made one way and changes made to the paving to provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment. However a large amount of traffic still enters Tavistock over Abbey Bridge and through Abbey Place, creating fumes and some danger to the public, despite a controlled pedestrian crossing. Similar difficulties can be seen next to Bedford Square, with its particularly busy roundabout at the junction with Drake Road and West Street. Consideration of road improvements in the Whitchurch Road/Pixon Lane area to provide a bypass to the town centre are worth exploring.

The County Council currently has a number of plans (some yet to be financed and confirmed) for improvements to transport links, roads and pedestrian movement within or on the edges of Tavistock:

- A new roundabout at the Crowndale Road junction with the A386 Plymouth Road
- Improving road safety outside Tavistock Community College and Primary School in Crowndale Road
- Possible traffic calming in Whitchurch Road
- New rail link between Bere Alston and Tavistock, to be provided in partnership with Kilbride Community Rail
- New bridge across the A390 Callington Road near Monksmead junction
- Upgrading of zebra crossing on A386 near Bishopsmead
- Developing a Pay and Display car parking scheme in the town centre linked to a residents' parking scheme
- New car park off Pixon Lane (in partnership with the Town Council)
- Anderton Lane – new junction layout into Tiddy Brook housing estate

Strategic Action 4:

- *The Borough Council, Town Council and County Council will consider ways of improving pedestrian safety and reducing traffic through the centre of Tavistock.*

3.5 Car parking

There are a number of car parks in Tavistock with responsibility split between the Borough Council and the Town Council. They are as follows:

- Bedford and Riverside Car Parks – let on a long leases to West Devon Borough Council by the Town Council. The Bedford Car Park is the largest car park in Tavistock and is very popular – it is used by the Goose Fair once a year and for other events as well;
- Guildhall Car Park – owned and managed by the Town Council.

There are also smaller car parks in Russell Street and off Market Street (Bank Square). Somerfields Multi-storey Public Car Park in Brook Street is also available for general use and serves the eastern end of the town.

The Town Council is planning to convert an area of open space in Pixon Lane into a 110 bay pay and display long term car park to supplement the Bedford Car Park in Canal Road.

On-street car parking also affects most of the conservation area, sometimes adversely. However, this helps to maintain economic vitality in the town centre although its impact can be negative in certain residential streets which are also used for commuter parking. Additional long term parking provision would therefore help to alleviate this problem, and by removing cars from places like Guildhall Square and Bank Square, would provide the opportunity of making improvements to the public realm in the town centre.

Strategic Action 5:

- *The Borough Council and Town Council will continue to monitor the car parking situation and will consider the addition of more car parking, particularly long term, as and when necessary. An extension of the occasional Park and Ride system may be required in the future if Tavistock visitor numbers rise, in which case a suitable out of town site will need to be identified (possibly associated with a new railway station).*

3.6 Town Centre Manager

Whilst there are a number of local organisations which have a role in helping run Tavistock Town Centre, particularly the Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce, there is no one individual with ultimate responsibility for co-ordinating all the different activities and actions. The appointment of a Town Centre Manager would provide a central point of contact for the community and would also help with efforts to regenerate the town centre (including the possible THI grant scheme) as well as providing a focal point for visitor promotion and tourism activities. A Town Centre Manager would, most importantly, be able to coordinate the efforts of the Borough Council, Town Council, Devon County Council and the Chamber of Commerce, in the best interests of the town.

The Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) provides extensive advice on best practice through their website: www.atcm.org

Strategic Action 6:

- *The Town Council will consider the idea of appointing a Town Centre Manager for Tavistock, possibly in partnership with the Borough Council and County Council.*

4 ORGANISATIONAL ACTIONS

The following chapter deals with a number of organisational issues which have been identified in the Character Appraisal for the Tavistock Conservation Area. They are all the responsibility of West Devon Borough Council.

4.1 Human resources

It is important that the Borough Council as a whole should recognise and promote the value of its heritage as a driver for economic regeneration as well as for the cultural wellbeing of its communities. This should be clearly expressed through the emerging Local Development Framework and all the policy and strategy documents that cascade from it. West Devon in general, but Tavistock in particular, has an acknowledged and vulnerable historic environment which needs to be managed in a positive and proactive way.

There is a strong expectation from central government that proper expertise should be brought to bear on heritage issues. Circular 61/96, for instance, states:

'Authorities should ensure that they have appropriately qualified advice on any development which, by its character or location, might be held to have an effect on any sites or structures of the historic environment.' (Paragraph 9)

However, currently the Borough Council does not have a full time conservation officer, relying on a part time officer whose main task is to advise on a substantial weekly list of planning and listed building consent applications. This means that there is little time left over for proactive management, such as the initiation of a programme of conservation area appraisals, the production of householder guidance, or engagement with the community at large, for instance, through contact with local schools. Whilst the Borough Council has a development control team of seven, two of whom have, or are obtaining, conservation qualifications, these officers are inevitably focused on day-to-day general planning matters.

Provision equating to at least a full time conservation officer is necessary to fulfil the Borough Council's statutory duties, raise the quality of decision making in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas in general, and take forward some of the actions proposed in this Management Plan. Far from being a luxury, a full time equivalent provision will also be a necessity if significant funding is to be attracted from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Some degree of change is inevitable in conservation areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. For their part, owners and residents can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

Organisational Action 1:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider enhancing the conservation officer role to equate to a full time post;*

- *To achieve higher quality applications, residents and business owners will be encouraged to appoint appropriately qualified and experienced agents to represent them when changes are proposed, particularly where the site affects a conservation area or a listed building.*

4.2 Development control processes

Local authorities already have controls available through their planning powers, but much depends upon how they are interpreted and implemented. For instance, any material changes to the appearance of properties that are not family dwellings require planning permission, but the interpretation of what is 'material' is for the Borough Council to decide. A new shopfront is generally regarded as a material change, but there is less certainty about the renewal of windows on upper storeys or a change in roof materials.

Single family dwellings have considerable permitted development rights that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need to obtain planning permission. These works include, for example, changes to doors, windows, roof materials or rainwater goods and the construction of minor extensions such as porches. Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a cumulative effect that is damaging to conservation areas like Tavistock (see para 5.3 – Development Control issues). Where this is a problem, an Article 4 Direction should be considered. Commercial buildings and flats have fewer permitted development rights, but an Article 4 Direction can be useful for controlling, for instance, the painting of walls.

A common complaint in Tavistock is that planning decisions are inconsistent. While each has to be determined on its own merits, much can be achieved by having a clear interpretation of statutes, detailed policy and guidance, and training to help both officers and elected councillors to work within these constraints.

It is important also that these officers and council members should also be aware that development proposals can have an effect on a conservation area even when they are some distance outside it. In such cases, the duty to pay special attention to the character of the conservation area when assessing a planning application still applies, and applications can be refused if it is judged that they would have an adverse effect on the setting of the conservation area.

Organisational Action 2:

- *The Borough Council will adopt a consistent and generous interpretation of what it considers to be a 'material' change;*
- *The Borough Council will consider using Article 4 Directions where there is evidence that permitted development is having a cumulative and negative affect on the character of a conservation area (such as Tavistock);*
- *The Borough Council will promote consistent decision making and consider providing training opportunities for the decision makers to support this process.*

4.3 Promotion and awareness

It is important that local people should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. There is a clear need to publish information on the history of each conservation area in West Devon and its special qualities. This could be an effective outcome of a rolling programme of Character Appraisals, starting with the Tavistock Conservation Area where the input of the Tavistock and District Local History Society has been so helpful. Government advice is that these should be reviewed every five years. The production of a Local List for Tavistock (see para 5.1) would assist in raising public consciousness and provide additional protection to Tavistock's unlisted buildings.

Organisational Action 3:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider establishing a rolling programme of Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans, assisted where possible by the local community.*

4.4 Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Community involvement is an integral part of the Local Development Framework process, and is also strongly recommended in PPG15. Involvement already happens through Tavistock Town Council and other local organisations, but there is scepticism as to how well the local voice is heard at Borough Council level. In Tavistock, where conservation issues commonly arise, there would be benefits in formalising a Conservation Area Advisory Committee to act as an important interface between local understanding and council decision making.

Organisational Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will consider the formation of a Conservation Area Advisory Committee in Tavistock.*

4.5 Heritage Champion

English Heritage is keen to see Historic Environment Champions to promote conservation issues in each local authority. These are preferably elected councillors, but can be senior officers whose role, as defined by English Heritage, is to:

- Help unlock the untapped potential of the local historic environment;
- Provide leadership for heritage issues within the authority;
- Join up policy between departments across the local authority and ensure the historic environment is taken into account in the development of all the authority's policies and forward strategies;
- Develop a close working relationship with the Design Champion (if appointed), ensuring that the authority has a seamless and coherent approach to the built and historic environment;
- Identify opportunities for the authority to use the historic environment in the pursuit of its wider corporate objectives.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) is equally keen for local authorities to have Design Champions and it is common for the two roles to be taken up by the same person.

A Heritage Champion for West Devon Borough Council will be instrumental in seeking to raise awareness of conservation issues among elected councillors by making full use of the training opportunities offered by English Heritage through its HELM initiative.

The role description for a Heritage Champion is provided at Appendix 1.

Organisational Action 5:

- *The Borough Council will consider appointing a Heritage Champion for West Devon, possibly in association with a separate Design Champion;*
- *The Borough and Town Councils will consider membership of the English Historic Towns Forum, enhancing links with other historic towns in the West Country.*

5 POLICY AND CONTROL

5.1 The control of heritage assets

Heritage Protection Bill

In March 2007 the government white paper *Heritage Protection for the 21st century* was published, which called for greater coordination, clarity, openness and accountability in the system. It proposed unifying the designation of ancient monuments, listed buildings and registered parks and gardens into a single *Register of Heritage Assets* for which new principles of selection will be prepared. In March 2008 the draft *Heritage Protection Bill* was published which is now being considered by Parliament.

Scheduled Monuments

Monuments are scheduled under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*. They are statutorily protected by law and work affecting them, including excavation, filling or flooding, as well as removing material from the site, is prohibited unless permission is first granted by English Heritage.

There are two scheduled monuments in the revised Tavistock Conservation Area:

(i) Tavistock Abbey

The scheduling covers land and buildings in Bedford Square and Abbey Place, comprising the standing, ruined and buried remains that together encompass the greater part of Tavistock Abbey (Monument no: 29679). The scheduling, which has been recently revised by English Heritage, covers the following standing structures, as follows:

- Court Gate
- South Precinct Wall
- Still House and Abbey Wall
- Betsy Grimbals Tower
- Porch to Abbot's House, Abbey Place
- Fragment of abbey church cloister in St Eustachius Churchyard

(ii) The Trendle, Tavistock

The Trendle is a ditched and banked Iron Age enclosure in the grounds of Kelly College, which was cut through by the London and South Western Railway line in 1889.

All scheduled monuments are considered to be of national importance and, as such, the presumption with regard to proposals for developments affecting them is to ensure that they are preserved in-situ. Government Policy affecting scheduled monuments is currently set out in PPG16: Archaeology.

Policy Action 1:

- *The Borough Council, assisted by English Heritage, will continue to monitor and control the scheduled monuments in its care, having regard to the advice contained within PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning.*

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are protected under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* to preserve their special historic and architectural interest. It is an offence to undertake works of demolition or alteration to a listed building, including subsidiary structures within the building's curtilage, which would affect its special character or appearance without first gaining consent.

Listed Building Consent is required from West Devon Borough Council for all applications but, if the building concerned is listed grade I or II*, or if substantial demolition of a grade II listed building is concerned, the Council is required to consult English Heritage.

There are about 390 listed buildings in Tavistock, most of them within the conservation area. Several of them are listed grade I or II*, particularly those associated with the former Abbey.

It was noted during the survey work for the Character Appraisal that some of the listed buildings in Tavistock display a number of features which are negative. These include uPVC windows, visible satellite dishes, poor quality roof materials, or modern front doors. The Bedford Cottages, most of which are listed, are particularly badly affected by unsympathetic changes. If left unchecked, such changes will incrementally affect the important historic building stock of the Borough, so there is a need to strengthen Listed Building Control, taking enforcement action where negotiation fails (see para. 5.3)

Policy Action 2:

- *The Borough Council, assisted by English Heritage, will continue to monitor and control the listed buildings in its care, having regard to the advice contained within PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.*

The statutory list for Tavistock was published in 1984 when it comprised some 360 buildings or structures. Since then, about 31 further buildings have been spot listed and added to the statutory list. This high number confirms the inadequacy of the 1984 list and suggests that further buildings could be added to the statutory list in due course. A survey to ascertain which buildings might be added, perhaps associated with work on a new Local List (see below) would be advantageous, and could be carried out in association with the Tavistock and District Local History Society, which has already undertaken some work on this subject. It is suggested that these proposed new listed buildings are sent through to English Heritage for listing in batches of no more than ten buildings at a time.

Policy Action 3:

- *The Borough Council, assisted by community groups such as the Tavistock and District Local History Society, will consider proposing spot listings to update the statutory list for Tavistock.*

Locally Listed buildings

There is currently an old Local List for Tavistock, dating to 1986, which includes 24 buildings, some of which have since been added to the statutory list. 'Locally listed' buildings are buildings of local significance which, although not statutorily listed, are nonetheless important to the history, appearance, character, and cultural value of the Tavistock Conservation Area (although of course the same principle applies throughout the Borough). At present, the Borough Council has no means for giving formal recognition to the contribution made by such buildings. However, there is an increasing interest in local listing nationally. Most recently, this was expressed as positive encouragement in the government's Heritage White Paper.⁶

Starting with Tavistock, it is recommended that the Borough Council should develop a local list in order to give better recognition and, where necessary, control, of the historic environment in the whole Borough. The first step is to agree criteria for the selection of buildings and structures for the local list. Proposed criteria are set out in Appendix 2. Buildings can be added to the list as circumstances allow, for instance through the conservation area appraisal process, or by a systematic survey of the whole district. Community involvement in the selection process will add weight to the list as a planning tool. It will also be necessary to acknowledge the local list in planning policy and state the circumstances in which it will affect planning decisions.

Policy Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will consider the allocation of resources required to prepare a Local List including:*
 - *Adopting appropriate criteria;*
 - *Including provision for local listing in planning policy;*
 - *Involving communities in the selection of buildings and structures.*

Positive buildings

Conservation area character appraisals should identify buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. In general, all listed and locally listed buildings in a conservation area will be regarded as 'positive'. However, there are often many more that, together, underpin the special interest of a place.

Government policy (as set out in PPG15) is for a presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings and any proposals for their demolition must be considered against criteria similar to those for the demolition of listed buildings. It is important that owners and occupiers of property in conservation areas should be aware of whether

⁶ Department for Culture, Media and Sport – *Heritage protection for the 21st century* – March 2007

their buildings are regarded as positive and also how applications for change or demolition will be judged.

In Tavistock, a high number of unlisted buildings in the conservation area have been assessed as making a 'positive' contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. Most of these date to the 19th or early 20th centuries and include terraced houses in Old Exeter Road and Bannawell Street, as well as the 19th century villas of Watts Road, Glanville Road or Parkwood Road. Some of these may be considered for 'local listing' once the criteria are agreed. There is a presumption that they will all be retained and all applications for change will need to be particularly carefully considered by the Borough Council.

Policy Action 5:

- *The Borough Council will ensure that local publicity for conservation areas will make clear the consequences of designation including the presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings;*
- *Applications for the demolition of any 'positive' building in a conservation area will be assessed in a similar way to applications to demolish a listed building, and the applicant will be expected to demonstrate why the building is beyond economic repair, and to prove that it has been offered on the open market as an alternative to demolition.*

Opportunity sites and buildings

A number of buildings in the Tavistock Conservation Area have been noted on the Designation Maps as making a negative contribution to the special character of the conservation area. The enhancement or redevelopment of these buildings would generally be welcomed by the Borough Council, subject to careful design and detailing.

Policy Action 6:

- *The Borough Council will support the sensitive redevelopment of sites or buildings identified as opportunity sites or buildings on the Designations Map, subject to design details being of such a quality that they make a significant positive contribution.*

Neutral buildings

Some of the buildings in the Tavistock Conservation Area have been left blank on the Designations Map as 'neutral' buildings which neither detract nor enhance the conservation area. Sometimes these are older buildings where modern alterations have removed some of their special character but with care, they could be restored to provide a 'positive' building. More often they are 20th century buildings of little intrinsic value but with limited impact. Their replacement with a well designed modern building could therefore be advantageous.

Policy Action 7:

- *The Borough Council will support the sensitive enhancement of neutral buildings or their replacement with new buildings, as long as they are well designed and detailed.*

The control of unauthorised works in conservation areas

It has already been described how current legislation affects conservation areas including the need to designate, appraise and manage effectively. Apart from guidance contained in PPG 15, local policies also set out how the Borough Council will continue to monitor change and provide a rigorous planning regime. In conservation areas a photographic survey should be undertaken as a baseline record for measuring change, monitoring building condition and to provide evidence for enforcement. For the latter, however, it is important that the record is updated every four years because breaches more than four years old cannot be enforced against.

Policy Action 8:

- *The Borough Council will continue to carefully control all conservation areas within the Borough and will, subject to funding, carry out further reviews and survey work.*

5.2 Article 4 Directions

Article 4 (2) Directions are made under the General Permitted Development Order 1995, and can be served by a local planning authority to remove permitted development rights where there is a real threat to a particular residential building or area due to unsuitable alterations or additions. An Article 4(2) Direction is accompanied by a Schedule that specifies the various changes to family dwellings, which will now require planning permission. Usually, such Directions are used in conservation areas to protect unlisted houses in use as a family unit, rather than flats or bedsits where permitted development rights are already much fewer.

Under an Article 4 (2) Direction, planning permission can be required for the following, depending on the permitted development right removed:

HOUSE EXTENSIONS – Planning permission will be required for the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house including entrance porches, any part of which fronts a highway, private road or open space (this lowers the limit of ‘permitted development’ already imposed by conservation area designation).

PAINTING OF DWELLING HOUSES – Planning permission will be required for the painting of a dwelling house.

ROOFS – A planning application will be required for alterations to a roof slope which fronts a highway, private road or open space, including a change in the roof materials and the insertion of roof lights. Dormer windows already require planning permission under separate legislation.

CHIMNEYS – The removal of a chimney or its partial demolition will require planning permission.

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS – The replacement of existing windows and doors which front a highway, private road or open space will require planning consent – note that part L of the Building Regulations, requiring double glazing for new windows, does not apply in the conservation area (or listed buildings).

CREATION OF CAR PARKING IN FRONT GARDENS AND REMOVAL OR REPLACEMENT OF FRONT BOUNDARIES – The creation of a parking space in a front garden, and or the removal of a front boundary, such as a low stone wall, will require planning permission.

There are many unlisted family dwellings in the Tavistock Conservation Area which would benefit from these additional constraints. Whilst an Article 4 (2) Direction cannot be retrospective, the serving of one would incrementally improve the character and appearance of the conservation area. An Article 4 (2) Direction can also be focused on groups of buildings, rather than the whole conservation area, such as locally listed buildings or positive buildings. Any Direction will require a photographic survey to record the present condition of the buildings concerned, and written guidance will need to be provided to householders. The provision of grants to help with the additional costs associated with traditional materials would be helpful.

Policy Action 9:

- *The Borough Council will consider serving an Article 4 (2) Direction on the Tavistock Conservation Area to cover all unlisted dwelling houses.*

5.3 Enforcement strategy

Most local authorities subscribe to the Cabinet Office *Enforcement Concordat*, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement, such as openness, consistency, proportionality and responding to complaints. Whilst the Borough Council has already published a planning enforcement procedures document (on the Council's website) the Council could take these forward into a more detailed enforcement strategy in order to:

- Explain the scope of planning enforcement;
- Openly define priorities;
- Set measurable standards for service delivery;
- Explain how investigations are carried out;
- Explain enforcement procedures and enforcement actions.

At present, enforcement staff are responsible for monitoring compliance with planning conditions. This process, which is triggered by commencement notices under the Building Regulations, is effective but it leaves mainstream enforcement as a purely reactive practice best described as fire-fighting. This situation has been made worse by the legislation on high hedges, which produces the most vociferous complaints.

An enforcement strategy would make it clear that the need to ensure public safety will always come first, but then enforcement in relation to heritage assets should generally have the next highest priority because so much historic fabric is irreplaceable. However, active enforcement in the historic environment does require the input of specialist skills, including a full time conservation officer.

The strategy should also explain the circumstances when the Borough Council would make use of Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Amenity (Section 215) Notices.

Policy Action 10:

- *The Borough Council will consider developing a more detailed Enforcement Strategy to explain the circumstances in which various forms of action are taken and the priority that is given to the historic environment.*

5.4 Use of statutory powers: Repairs Notices, Urgent Works, Amenity Notices (Section 215)

The lack of a full time conservation officer means that the Borough Council is not making use of highly effective planning tools, such as Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices and Amenity (S215) Notices. An Enforcement Strategy (see above) should explain the circumstances when the Council would exercise these powers and exploit the deterrent effect that an expressed commitment to enforcement would communicate.

It may be that the Borough Council has not made use of these powers because it has no default budget. However, it should be noted that, in some cases, costs are fully recoverable and there are also opportunities for grant aid and for back-to-back guarantees from end users, such as building preservation trusts. It should also be noted that research has shown that, in the large majority of repairs action cases, the issues are resolved without formal notices having to be served (See R Kindred report for the Institute of Historic Building Conservation⁷).

Policy Action 11:

- *As appropriate, the Borough Council will make full use of its powers to serve Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices, and Amenity Notices.*

5.5 Buildings-at-Risk survey and strategy

There is no up to date Buildings at Risk survey for the Tavistock Conservation Area so the Borough Council has no way of assessing the condition of its historic buildings. Some work will shortly be undertaken in preparation for the THI grant scheme but this will only cover a limited number of buildings in the town centre. The preparation of an up to date list would focus efforts for enforcement and grant aid, and provide a focus for Council staff.

⁷ Bob Kindred – *Listed Building Repairs Notices: A Study of Those Used in England April 1984 to March 1990 Under Sections 47-51 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990* – published 1992

Policy Action 12:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider commissioning a Buildings at Risk survey of the Tavistock Conservation Area, possibly in conjunction with a survey of the whole Borough.*

5.6 Archaeological evaluations

The Borough Council is already empowered under PPG15 to insist that listed building consent applications are accompanied by a reasoned justification for the work, as well as details about the history and archaeological value of the building. This has now been subsumed within the more recent requirement for all planning and listed building consent application to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

There are a number of buildings, particularly in Market Street, King Street and West Street, which date to the 16th or 17th centuries, where a detailed archaeological evaluation will be required before any work can be contemplated. This should be prepared by an appropriately qualified expert.

Policy Action 13:

- *The Borough Council will insist that all listed building consent applications contain a reasoned justification for the work and will also, in select cases, require a detailed archaeological evaluation, prepared by an expert in the field.*

5.7 Shopfronts

The Tavistock Conservation Area retains a high number of historic shopfronts, the best of which are noted in Appendix 4 of the Character Appraisal. Whilst the shopfronts in listed buildings are already subject to rigorous controls, those in unlisted buildings have yet to be formally recognised, for instance, by locally listing. They are therefore particularly vulnerable to unsympathetic changes. The publication of a Shopfront Guidance leaflet, detailing how new shopfronts should be designed, or how existing historic shopfronts should be enhanced, would be helpful to both development control officers, shop owners and organisations like the Chamber of Commerce and Tavistock Town Council.

Policy Action 14:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider preparing a Shopfront Guidance leaflet.*

6 ECONOMIC ACTIONS

6.1 The need for grant aid

Tavistock has a thriving town centre with a variety of both national and local shops. The Pannier Market and bi-monthly Farmers' Market (second and fourth Saturdays) also bring people into the town, many of whom come from Plymouth to use the specialist shops. Banks, building societies, estate agents, and other financial institutions are well represented. Additionally there are many small cafes and restaurants, many of which have outside eating areas, which cater for residents and visitors. Two hotels (the Bedford Hotel and Browns Hotel) provide accommodation in the town centre and there are also a number of smaller B and B establishments, together providing a useful variety of places to stay.

It is therefore surprising to note that parts of the town, most particularly Market Street and King Street, contain vacant buildings, some of which are listed. A number of charity shops, empty shops or shops which have recently closed are also evident. This, coupled with the poor condition of the public realm in these areas, and the need to enhance the adjoining Bank Square area, has provided a 'pocket' of neglected buildings, with poor quality shopfronts, peeling paintwork, boarded up windows and an overall picture of decay. This may be due to the location slightly away from the town centre which focuses on the Pannier Market and the larger shops in Duke Street. None of the buildings either in Market Street or King Street is owned by the Town Council.

Other areas where buildings are in poor condition are:

- Buildings to the south of the Pannier Market including the Auction Rooms;
- South side of West Street
- Dolvin Road – Bedford Cottages to either side of St Ruman's Primary School

Repairs and reinstatement works are also required on the other three groups of listed Bedford Cottages in Parkwood Road, Westbridge, and Fitzford.

The Borough Council is currently preparing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) grant scheme which will centre on these areas.

Economic Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will seek grant aid for the Tavistock Conservation Area from the HLF or from English Heritage;*
- *Regardless of the outcome of any grant bid, the Borough Council will consider taking action to protect listed buildings in the Tavistock Conservation Area where they are being deliberately neglected.*

6.2 Historic Buildings Grants

The Borough Council currently has a modest budget of about £10,000 (check) for grants for repairs to historic buildings in the whole Borough. Small grants are a

useful tool in helping persuade property owners to carry out much needed repairs and even a few hundred pounds achieves much in terms of improving the community's willingness to invest in their buildings. Additionally, the grants could be focused on particularly areas on a cyclical basis, for instance, by concentrating on a particular conservation area or on a group of buildings within a conservation area.

Economic Action 2:

- *The Borough Council will consider increasing the annual allocation for its Historic Buildings Grants and will promote the grant scheme more extensively*

7 SPATIAL ACTIONS

7.1 The protection of the setting to the Tavistock Conservation Area

The character of a conservation area can be vulnerable to actions taken outside its boundaries as much as to those taken within the area. It is important, therefore, that the duty to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas is exercised in relation to the use of planning powers particularly where sites come up for development just outside the boundary of a conservation area, or where significant views into or out of the area may be affected. It has also been upheld on appeal that Councils can refuse applications for development in these circumstances on the grounds that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the setting of the conservation area.

In practice, many conservation areas have a context of landscape designations that provide strong protection. The connection has to be made that policies for the protection of both landscapes and conservation areas must work together for the mutual benefit of the historic and natural environments.

Spatial Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will carefully monitor applications on the outskirts or edges of the Tavistock Conservation Area, and will refuse those which could adversely affect the conservation area due to the proposed development's use, height, bulk, detailing, loss of open space, or the loss or the negative effect on important views into or out of the conservation area.*

7.2 Urban Design Strategy

It has been noted during the recent survey work in Tavistock for the Character Appraisal how recent development has in places not been well received by the local community. Common complaints include the scale and height of new development, the use of modern materials (such as cedar boarding) which have no precedent in Tavistock, and poorly detailed roofscapes (particularly on new buildings which are visible from the former railway viaduct).

Whilst there are existing policies in the old Local Plan, and there will be similar constraints on new development in the emerging Local Development Framework, it is considered that the Tavistock Conservation Area needs specific design advice to help guide decision making in the future. This could take the form of an Urban Design Strategy which could deal with the design of new buildings and also the spaces between them.

Spatial Action 2:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider commissioning an Urban Design Strategy for the Tavistock Conservation Area.*

7.3 The control of new development

Opportunities for new development within the existing Tavistock Conservation Area are limited due to the tight urban form in some areas and the predominance of listed buildings. However, there are a number of buildings, marked as negative on the Designations Maps, where redevelopment would be positively welcome. Subject to the outcome of a new Urban Design Strategy for Tavistock, the following guidelines for new development should be adhered to:

- Any new development must adhere to policies within the Local Plan, the emerging LDF, and national guidance, most particularly PPG15 and PPG16;
- The scale and general form of new development should follow established historic precedents;
- New development should blend with the existing historic environment and should not interrupt the skyline;
- New development involving the replacement of an existing building should usually not increase the volume of development on the site;
- New development should be sympathetic to the surrounding historic buildings in terms of uses, materials and details;
- The roofs and chimneys in the Tavistock Conservation Area are an important part of its special character and new development should reflect the traditional roof forms, pitches, materials and details, of existing historic properties;
- New development within the conservation area should be carefully designed to reduce its impact on existing views, both within and into, the conservation area. New development which might adversely affect views out of the conservation area (where different planning constraints apply) will be carefully monitored.

Spatial Action 3:

- *The Borough Council will ensure that all new development in the Tavistock Conservation Area is sympathetic to the surrounding historic environment with particular reference to height, bulk, building lines, plot sizes, plot ratios, materials and details.*

7.4 The enhancement of historic character

Although many of the historic buildings in the conservation area are listed, where strict controls have applied for many years, a number, identified in the Character Appraisal, have been spoilt by inappropriate materials and details. Additionally, the Character Appraisal has identified an even greater number of buildings which are considered to make a 'positive' contribution to the conservation area, some of which might be considered for Local Listing. Overall the Borough Council needs to ensure

that all alterations to these buildings are carried out using the correct materials and details, and that where possible modern accretions are removed. This particularly affects windows (where traditionally detailed timber not plastic or aluminium should be specified) and roof materials (where slate or occasionally clay tile should be used, rather than concrete or artificial slate). Unlisted commercial buildings in the town centre are particularly vulnerable to unsympathetic changes, although 'material' alterations, such as the installation of plastic windows to upper floors, should be controlled by a planning application.

Spatial Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will insist that all applications for change to historic buildings (listed, locally listed and 'positive') use the correct materials and details.*

7.5 The management of the public realm

Streets and open spaces, collectively known as the public realm, are a major factor in the character of conservation areas, yet the management of the public realm takes place largely outside the planning system. Conservation areas can, therefore, be vulnerable to the loss of traditional paving materials and street furniture, and the imposition of unsympathetic signage without reference to their special interest.

It is important that the Borough Council should establish protocols with the Highways Authority (Devon County Council) and other stakeholders such as the Town Council for the treatment of the public realm in its conservation areas. English Heritage has provided a general manual for streetscapes in the South West Region in its *Streets for All* initiative. This urges local authorities to establish more detailed strategies for the care and enhancement of streetscapes, and some of the advice contained within the document will have direct relevance to Tavistock. Further information is provided in the English Historic Town Forum's recent (2008) publication, *Manual for Historic Streets*.

In terms of design and materials, there is a long history of the use of locally quarried granite in Tavistock for paving which can be seen throughout the town centre and stretching into the surrounding streets, providing a strong sense of local distinctiveness. As a result, this granite paving is often seen as one of the defining features of the conservation area by both visitors and residents. Its continued care and enhancement must be a priority. The surviving granite paving is marked on the Designations Maps. It is enhanced in many places by slim locally made cast iron drain covers which protect the outfalls from individual buildings. Most of the paving is in the care of Devon County Council, although the Town Council looks after Bedford Square on behalf of the County Council. This will require action on behalf of the various service providers as well such as BT, the gas supplier and the electricity supplier.

Throughout the conservation area there are various types of street lighting, public seats, street signs and other pieces of street furniture, which are varied and in some cases in urgent need of replacement. Many of these have been provided by the Town Council but there has never been a comprehensive plan for their replacement. The production of a Public Realm Strategy would identify those features which need

replacing and ensure that a cohesive pallet of materials and products is used as and when improvements are made.

Spatial Action 5:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council, in partnership with Devon County Council and Tavistock Town Council, will consider producing a Public Realm Strategy to provide guidance on materials and details for the public realm in the Tavistock Conservation Area.*

One of the most negative features of parts of the conservation area is the dominant wirescape, with an array of telephone or electricity cables. In some locations these have very advantageously been undergrounded but much more needs to be done.

Spatial Action 6:

- *The Borough Council will consider measures needed to achieve the incremental undergrounding of all wires within the conservation area, including entering a partnership with the various statutory bodies (such as BT).*

7.6 The protection and care of trees, parks, and cemeteries

Trees

Trees make a very important contribution to the character of the Tavistock Conservation Area and to its setting. Some of the most significant trees were planted in the 19th century by the Bedford Estate as the town centre was redeveloped and improved.

All trees over a certain size (see para 2.2) are automatically protected in the conservation area, and the Borough Council employs a part time Landscape and Tree Officer who monitors the condition of the trees in the Tavistock Conservation Area and who is available to give free advice to private owners about the care of their trees.

Additionally, the Tavistock Tree Preservation Group are a voluntary organisation, which takes an active interest in the trees of Tavistock including commenting on planning applications, advising on tree reinstatement schemes by the Borough Council, and monitoring the health of significant trees.

The Borough Council also supports the West Devon Tree Wardens Scheme in partnership with the Silvanus Trust's Our Trees project. This uses trained volunteers who know the area as 'Tree wardens'. Their role includes gathering useful information about the local trees, preparing tree trails, and organising additional tree planting.

Spatial Action 7:

- *The Borough Council will continue to provide technical advice on the care of trees in the Borough and will liaise with the Tavistock Tree Preservation*

Group and local Tree Wardens as necessary to ensure that all trees within and on the edges of the conservation area are protected and cared for.

Parks

The Meadows and Benson's Meadow are owned and cared for by the Town Council, which also manages the Tavy Cut Garden and the Celle Garden in Parkwood Road (amongst other sites outside the conservation area). The various facilities in The Meadows such as the tennis courts and bowling green, are similarly managed by the Town Council.

Cemeteries

The Plymouth Road Cemetery and the Dolvin Road Cemeteries are both owned and managed by the Town Council. In Dolvin Road, there are problems with tree growth which has in places damaged gravestones including the one belonging to Theophilus Jones. Some managed removal or pruning of these trees might be advisable to prevent further damage.

7.7 Boundaries and front gardens

Whilst front boundaries are not particularly an issue in the built up centre of the town, where most of the buildings sit on the back of the pavement, in the residential suburbs there are threats to the cohesive townscape due to the incremental loss of front gardens to car parking, the removal of trees and shrubbery, and the loss of front boundary or retaining walls. In some cases, these walls are of considerable size and height and make a very special contribution to the character of the conservation area. Potentially detrimental changes to these walls could be controlled by an Article 4 (2) Direction (see para 5.3). The production of guidance about the enhancement of front gardens/areas, as recommended in para 5.8, would also be advantageous.

8 SITE SPECIFIC ACTIONS

8.1 Police Station and Guildhall

The Police Station and Guildhall are owned by the Police Authority and form part of the most significant group of historic buildings in Tavistock. Discussions have taken place to see if the Guildhall, which has been vacant since 2001, could be used as a Visitor Orientation Facility but an alternative use is dependent on the relocation of part or all of the Police Station to another site. This is under review by the Police Authority. Due to the spatial arrangements of the rooms in both buildings, and the grade II* listing, any conversion scheme will have to be very carefully designed. Both buildings may also require extensive repair, and although no up to date survey of their condition is currently available, it has been noted that the Guildhall is beginning to look in need of maintenance. A Conservation Plan for the buildings has been prepared by Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants⁸ which usefully documents the development of the site and the various changes which took place under the direction of first the 6th then the 7th Duke of Bedford.

It might be possible for a Historic Buildings Trust to acquire the buildings and restore and convert them to suitable new uses. This would at least ensure that any conversion work was done sympathetically, as a purely commercial owner might not be so keen to defer to the special qualities of the listed buildings. The Devon Historic Buildings Trust has completed schemes in Tavistock in the past and may be in a position to help. Meanwhile the Borough Council is seeking assurances from the present owners that the Guildhall will not be allowed to fall into disrepair and will be well maintained until a scheme for its reuse is commenced.

Site Specific Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will monitor the condition of the Guildhall and will encourage the existing and any future owners to maintain and repair it to the required standard;*
- *The Borough Council will take appropriate action against the existing or future owners of the Guildhall if it is threatened by a lack of maintenance;*
- *The Borough Council will consider supporting the establishment of a Tavistock Historic Buildings Trust to take over the Guildhall, and possibly other buildings in the vicinity.*

8.2 Guildhall Square

Guildhall Square, along with Bedford Square, form the setting to the most important group of buildings in Tavistock – the Town Hall, Court Gate, the Subscription Library, the Librarian's Cottage, the Police Station and Guildhall. Bedford Square has already been pedestrianised and is a popular facility, used by the bi-monthly Farmers' Market and other events. By contrast, Guildhall Square is used for police parking and access, and also as a public car park. This generates unnecessary traffic into the area, and does not provide a suitable setting for the grade II* buildings which lie along one side of it. Guildhall Square is owned by the Town Council. A

⁸ Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants *An Assessment of Tavistock Police Station and Guildhall* October 2005

recent proposal to move the listed War Memorial to St Eustachius Churchyard may or may not proceed.

It is suggested that even if police vehicular access is required for the time being, that an enhancement scheme is considered which could:

- Remove public car parking (perhaps leaving some parking for the disabled)
- Upgrade the paving and provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment (although any new paving should be high quality granite)
- Upgrade the street furniture and lighting (in association with any emerging Public Realm Strategy)
- Restore the front boundary railings to the Subscription Library and the adjoining Caretaker's Cottage
- Provide a more appropriate setting for the War Memorial and statue of the 7th Duke of Bedford
- Provide a more appropriate setting for the grade II* buildings
- Screen the recently reopened public conveniences
- Provide an open space which could be used by any new occupiers of the Guildhall, such as a café
- Remove the existing (temporary) planting scheme near the public conveniences and replace it with a more appropriate design

Site Specific Action 2:

The Borough Council, in partnership with Devon County Council and the Town Council, will consider promoting an enhancement scheme for Guildhall Square, the long term aim of which would be to remove all but some disabled car parking spaces and provide an enhanced pedestrian only space.

8.3 Pannier Market and adjoining buildings

The Pannier Market and all of the buildings between the market and Market Road are owned by the Town Council. Some of these buildings, such as the Auction House and adjoining storage sheds, are clearly in need of some maintenance and possibly more extensive repair. Whilst the Town Council carries out repairs on a 'needs must' basis, it would be helpful if these buildings could be thoroughly surveyed and a Schedule of Condition prepared. This could form the basis for a bid for future grant aid.

A Conservation Plan, similar to that already prepared for the Police Station and Guildhall, would help to guide any changes to these buildings in the future, including their repair.

Site Specific Action 3:

- *The Town Council will consider carrying out a detailed survey to ascertain the full extent of any repairs needed to the Pannier Market and its associated buildings;*
- *The Town Council will consider commissioning a Conservation and Management Plan for Town Council Estate.*

8.4 Bank Square

Bank Square is the least attractive of all of the town centre's public open spaces but with care it could provide a hub for outdoor activities for businesses in Market Street and King Street. The square is currently used as a public car park, with informally laid out bays which cover nearly all of the whole space. The square is currently paved in concrete paviors, clay paviors or concrete, with concrete bollards mixed with granite or cast aluminium examples. Elderly 'heritage' street furniture, most of it in need of decoration, and a 'Bank Square' Borough Council notice board (which needs also attention) all add to a general feeling of neglect. A few rather scattered street trees merely provide gloom, rather than enhancing the space. Next to the square, the Tavy Textile Fabric Centre is a negative building whose sensitive redevelopment would be welcome. No. 22 Market Street, on the corner with Bank Square, is currently being restored as a delicatessen and café, and the expansion of this new business into Bank Square with tables and chairs could provide the space with a central focal point which is currently lacking.

It is suggested that Market Street, King Street and Bank Square would greatly benefit from an enhancement scheme as follows:

- Remove car parking leaving 3 disabled spaces
- Remove existing planting and trees
- Provide enclosed courtyard with high quality paving, preferably granite
- Provide minimal new street trees and planting
- Provide improved interpretation panels to match Town Council plaques
- Negotiate with adjoining owners to see if the use of the space for outdoor events or as part of a business, such as a café, can be agreed (see above)
- Consider traffic calming measures in Market Street and King Street, including full or partial pedestrianisation

In addition, there should be a third party grant scheme for properties in the surrounding streets as part of the THI scheme for the whole town.

Site Specific Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will seek an enhancement scheme for Bank Square, which could be funded through the THI grant scheme (if approved).*

8.5 Bedford Cottages

The four groups of listed Bedford Cottages in Parkwood Road, Dolvin Road, Fitzford and Westbridge, are all suffering from a variety of unauthorised alterations including plastic windows and front doors, changes to the chimneys, wall surfaces, and roof materials. The removal of boundary walls is another issue. Internal alterations may also have taken place without Council approval. Many of these have taken place since the buildings were listed. The Borough Council produced a brief guidance note some years ago, pointing out what was important about the buildings and how

unsympathetic changes would adversely affect the special character of the listed buildings. However it appears that unsuitable changes have still taken place without the consent of the Borough Council.

The Bedford Cottages are a unique and valuable survival from Tavistock's industrial past and provide an example of the enlightened patronage of the Bedford Estate. They are of national importance and must be preserved and enhanced for future generations. The following actions are proposed:

- Production of a detailed Design Guide to be distributed to every Bedford Cottage owner free of charge, showing the following:
 - Historical development
 - Social and historical significance
 - Principal architectural features
 - Methods of repair
 - Control of alterations, internally and externally
 - Procedures for Listed building Consent and Planning Permission
- Preparation of a grant scheme (perhaps using funds from WDBC)
- Possible acquisition of a Bedford cottage by a new Historic buildings Trust to act as an exemplar

Site Specific Action 5:

- *The Borough Council will consider commissioning the preparation of a new Design Guide for the Bedford cottages;*
- *The Borough Council will consider a grant scheme to help owners of the Bedford cottages with repairs;*
- *The Borough Council will consider encouraging the setting up of a Tavistock Historic Buildings Trust to purchase a Bedford cottage to act as an 'exemplar' to other owners*

8.6 Abbey remains

It has already been noted that repairs are needed to some of the abbey remains, most particularly the Still House, some of the abbey precinct walls, and Betsy Grimbal's Tower. Specific funds should be allocated to their immediate repair and possibly set aside for their future maintenance.

Site Specific Action 6:

- *The Town Council and Borough Council should agree a long term plan to restore and maintain the abbey remains, in partnership where necessary with private owners.*

9 DELIVERING THE ACTIONS

9.1 The strategy

It is important that Tavistock should be as self-sustaining as possible – physically, socially and economically – if it is to remain in anything like its present state. Achieving this requires constant management. There is always a natural desire to leave things as they are but, in reality, nothing stands still in a changing world. Like gardens, places have to be nurtured.

With the assistance of the local community, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal has identified the challenges that Tavistock faces and these are summarised at 1.2 above. These issues can be addressed by the actions summarised in Appendix 3.

Clearly, the actions include some that can start immediately while others may only be aspirations at present pending the development of resources. Resources, however, are not the issue for immediate actions. Spending decisions are constantly being made and the challenge is to ensure that those investments are made in ways that benefit the special character of the conservation area. Priorities are, therefore, a matter of expediency as well as urgency and the Action Plan sets out the tasks in immediate, medium and long-term timescales over a five-year period.

The Management Plan can only be effective, however, if it is actually implemented. It is important that responsibility for the actions is accepted and the Action Plan assigns tasks to specific teams or individuals so that they can be included in their workplans.

Success will require commitment by all Borough Council departments and their partners to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, such as planning permissions, building control, fire regulations and highways standards, in the best interests of the town and, likewise, the sensitive deployment of such resources as are available. Success depends also on the part played by other stakeholders including the Town Council, businesses, amenity groups, and the residents of Tavistock. It is also vital that the Borough Council allocate adequate resources for these Actions to be successfully implemented.

9.2 Expectations

West Devon Borough Council

The designation and review of conservation areas are legal requirements. In support of these statutory duties, the Borough Council can be expected to commit adequate resources by ensuring it has access to the necessary skills and that it adopts appropriate policies. It should also ensure that communities are sufficiently informed about the implications of designation so that they too can play their part.

Although the administration of conservation areas is largely a planning function, there are many other actions that can impact on character and appearance, for instance the maintenance of public buildings. It is important, therefore, that conservation aims are coordinated across all local authority departments. The re-

establishment of a full time conservation officer's post will help to ensure that this coordination is achieved.

Standards designed for modern environments should not be applied unthinkingly to areas and buildings that have stood the test of time. The Borough Council can, therefore, be expected to be sensitive to the special interest of the Tavistock Conservation Area and its historic buildings in exercising, for instance, building control, fire regulations and highways standards.

Owners and residents

Those who live and work in the conservation area are expected to recognise the collective benefits they enjoy. For this, they must understand the need to take a contextual view of any proposals, rather than acting in isolation.

Some degree of change is inevitable in conservation areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and residents can minimise the effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

Community involvement

It is important that communities are well-informed about the qualities of their conservation areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. While the Borough Council is a useful source of advice, there is a significant role for the local amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere.

The Town Council, possibly working with a new Conservation Area Advisory Committee, can provide a vital interface between the community and the local authority. It can also provide local knowledge and local responses to policy initiatives and development proposals.

9.3 Priorities

It should be noted that West Devon Borough Council may, in time, become part of a larger, unitary authority covering a significant amount of the county. Priorities in this document may therefore be affected by possible changes to staffing and resources. Equally, however, they serve to inform the need to maintain those resources.

Actions for the Borough Council, Town Council and Devon County Council

Immediate project (6-18 months) are generally those that can be adopted without reference to other programmes including resource planning. They will be capable of being completed within the next year:

- Formal adoption of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as an informative document for the Local Development Framework
- Formal adoption of the Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- Designate amendments to the Tavistock Conservation Area boundary as proposed in the boundary review
- Establish a Conservation Area Advisory Committee for the Tavistock Conservation Area
- Provision of full time conservation staff
- Appoint a Heritage Champion and possibly a Design Champion
- Submit a Stage 1 and Stage II THI bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund
- Review the Borough Council's own Historic Buildings grant scheme
- Publish a Town Interpretation Plan as part of the TVMH project
- Consider appointing a Town Centre Manager in partnership with others
- Commission a Design Guide for Tavistock
- Commission a Public Realm Strategy for Tavistock
- Produce a Design Guide for the Bedford Cottages

Medium-term projects (18 months – 5 years) are those that require preparation but can be completed within three years:

- In partnership with the Town Council and Devon County Council, consider a traffic management and a pedestrian priority scheme in Tavistock
- Consider new car parks and possible Park and Ride scheme
- Produce a Shopfronts leaflet
- Produce further householder planning guidance
- Serve an Article 4 Direction on the Tavistock Conservation Area
- Carry out a Buildings at Risk survey of the whole Borough
- Seek to find a suitable new use for the Guildhall, such as a WHS Visitor Centre
- Support actions to secure the future of the Guildhall including the establishment of a Tavistock Historic Buildings Trust
- Explore the possibility of the new Trust acquiring one of the Bedford Cottages and restoring it as an 'exemplar'
- Select further buildings for possible statutory listing
- Establish a policy and criteria for Local Listing
- Use community involvement to select buildings and structures for the Local List
- Guildhall Square – carry out enhancement scheme (?THI funded)
- Bank Square - carry out enhancement scheme (?THI funded)

Continuous tasks require regularly revisiting:

- Ensure that the historic environment is adequately represented in the policy content and priorities of the Local Development Framework;
- Ensure links with other policy areas to protect the landscape setting of the Tavistock Conservation Area;
- Continue to jointly manage the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project
- Continue to support local organisations and stakeholders
- Preserve positive buildings in the Tavistock Conservation Area, and seek the sensitive redevelopment of any negative buildings
- Ensure that development control practice:

- Requires planning applications for 'material' changes such as new windows or roof materials on unlisted commercial properties
- Guarantees that all new development in the Tavistock Conservation Area is of the highest quality, with particular reference to rooflines, height, bulk, materials and details
- In conjunction with English Heritage, monitors and preserves the scheduled monuments and listed buildings in its care
- Guarantees that detailed archaeological evaluations of buildings are provided when necessary
- Provides training on conservation issues for elected councillors and non-specialist staff;
- Adopts an Enforcement Strategy, including Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices, and Section 215 Notices
- Protects and enhances trees in the conservation area in partnership with local groups
- Establishes a rolling programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans
- Monitor changes in the conservation area, including producing and the regularly updating a photographic baseline for Tavistock, which should never be more than four years old;
- Monitor the condition of the Guildhall and take action if the building is threatened by neglect
- Review of the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal on a five-year basis;
- Annual review of this Management Plan
- Seek the undergrounding of all wires in the conservation area

Actions for the Tavistock Town Council:

- Possibly extend existing historic plaques scheme
- Prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the Town Council's Estate
- Liaise with Borough Council over area improvements to Bank Square and Guildhall Square
- Carry out possible works to trees in Dolvin Road Cemetery to reduce damage to graves
- Considers appointing a Town Centre Manager
- With the Borough Council, joins the EHTF and other suitable networking associations

9.4 Action Plan

A spreadsheet setting out the various actions above, who is responsible, and their likely cost, is included at Appendix 4. The total cost for the Borough Council is difficult to predict exactly, but if all of the actions recommended were carried out in the time scale suggested, the following amounts would have to be budgeted for:

- Immediate Actions (6 to 18 months) Around £50,000
- Medium term Actions (18 months to five years) Around £33,000

These figures do not take into account officer time.

9.5 Commitment and adoption

It is important that the Borough Council and its partners should commit themselves corporately to the delivery of the Action Plan so that individual tasks are built in to the work programmes of teams and individuals.

It is also important that the Management Plan is formally adopted by the Borough Council as a Supplementary Planning Document so that it informs the Local Development Framework and that its intentions carry due weight in the consideration of planning proposals.

9.6 Monitoring and review

The efficient delivery of a conservation service requires regular monitoring of change and the agents of change. The Borough Council is expected to undertake:

- Periodic reviews of the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change
- Updating of the baseline photographic survey on a four-yearly basis
- Review the Tavistock Conservation Area Character Appraisal on a five-year basis
- Annual review and updating of the Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan

Appendix 1 ENGLISH HERITAGE ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR AN HERITAGE CHAMPION

The Champion will:

- Ensure that Cabinet Portfolio holders and senior officers (including the Chief Executive) are aware of historic environment issues and opportunities as they relate to their service;
- Promote the value of the historic environment as catalyst for urban and rural regeneration and neighbourhood renewal;
- Be alert to the opportunities for the historic environment to attract inward economic investment and funding;
- Ensure that relevant historic environment issues are taken into account in the preparation of all relevant corporate strategies and local development frameworks including Community Strategies prepared by Local Strategic Partnerships;
- Ensure that the provision of historic environment expertise is adequately resourced to enable the continuity and quality of service to be maintained;
- Work with officers in the planning service to ensure that new development in historic areas responds creatively and sympathetically to its environment and ensure quality assurance compliance and enforcement where necessary;
- Ensure that the authority's key policies, such as education, highways management, tourism and leisure, take proper account of the local and regional historic environment;
- Work with officers and colleagues in the authority to develop a Conservation Management Statement or Strategy;
- Ensure that good practice within the authority relating to heritage and the historic environment is shared and that examples of such practice from other authorities are brought to the attention of relevant members or officers;
- Work closely with corporate property officers and other colleagues and members to ensure a positive and long-term strategic approach to the management and conservation of the authority's own historic estate and to ensure that it is appropriately identified and recorded;
- Ensure that all relevant colleagues within the authority (both elected members and officers) are aware of the available external expertise and advice on the historic environment available from bodies such as English Heritage and the national amenity societies.

Source: English Heritage – *A guidance note on historic environment champions* – 2004

Appendix 2 CRITERIA FOR LOCAL LISTING

1 Purpose of a Local List

Buildings that are listed nationally are protected by law. They tend to be buildings of higher quality and generally date from before 1840. The purpose of a Local List is to identify locally significant buildings and other features which may not be considered eligible for statutory listing.

2 The effect of local listing

The protection of buildings or other features which are Locally Listed can be achieved through policies in the Local Plan, or in Supplementary Planning Guidance. The identification of these special buildings or features is also best achieved through consultation with local communities, giving them 'ownership' of the Local List and helping to inform and enlighten local knowledge.

Although there is no statutory protection for such buildings, local listing can be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining planning applications.

3 Principles of selection

Locally listed buildings or structures are those which make a special contribution to the history, appearance, character, and cultural value of West Devon. They include the following:

- Buildings which have qualities of age, style, materials and detailing;
- Well detailed historic shopfronts;
- Historic structures such as walls or railings;
- Historic street furniture including post boxes, bollards, or street lighting;
- Historic sites (where scheduling as an 'Ancient Monument' is not appropriate), such as railway remains and other features of Devon's industrial development;
- Other features which have historical or cultural significance, perhaps by association with a famous person or event.

They should all survive in a clearly recognisable form, with their historic features and layouts still present. Some selection of the better examples of these buildings or structures will be necessary, so in some cases the most authentic and interesting of a group of buildings may be Locally Listed, rather than the whole group. It is likely that most of the entries will date from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, but recent buildings of outstanding quality could be considered.

4 Categories

In summary, the Local List for West Devon could include the following categories:

(i) Buildings

These may include:

- Buildings designed by a particular architect or designer of regional or local note;
- Good examples of well designed domestic buildings which retain their original details and materials
- Good examples of educational, religious or community buildings which retain their original details and materials
- Landmark buildings or structures of notable design
- Buildings or structures of which contribute to our understanding of the development of the area

(ii) Structures

These may include:

- Notable walls or railings
- Street lighting
- Bollards
- Street surfaces
- Post boxes

(iii) Historic Association

These must be well documented and may include:

- Any building or structure which has a close association with famous people or events
- Any building or structure which has a close association with an important local feature including statutorily protected sites or buildings

Appendix 3 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS

STRATEGIC ACTIONS (Chapter 3)

3.1 World Heritage Site and tourism

Strategic Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will continue to jointly manage the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project and will also seek ways of promoting Tavistock's role as part of the World Heritage Site, including the improvement of the interpretation and orientation facilities.*

3.2 The role of different stakeholders

Strategic Action 2:

- *The Borough Council will continue to support local organisations and to act as intermediary between different action groups as required.*

3.3 Understanding Tavistock

Strategic Action 3:

- *The Borough Council will continue to implement the proposals for improving Interpretation and Visitor Orientation facilities in Tavistock as part of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project;*
- *Subject to funding, the Town Council will prepare further plaques in collaboration with the Tavistock and District History Society.*

3.4 Roads and traffic management

Strategic Action 4:

- *The Borough Council, Town Council and County Council will consider ways of improving pedestrian safety and reducing traffic through the centre of Tavistock.*

3.5 Car parking

Strategic Action 5:

- *The Borough Council and Town Council will continue to monitor the car parking situation and will consider the addition of more car parking, particularly long term, as and when necessary. An extension of the occasional Park and Ride system may be required in the future if Tavistock visitor numbers rise, in which case a suitable out of town site will need to be identified (possibly associated with a new railway station).*

3.6 Town Centre Manager

Strategic Action 6:

- *The Town Council will consider the idea of appointing a Town Centre Manager for Tavistock, possibly in partnership with the Borough Council and County Council.*

ORGANISATIONAL ACTIONS (Chapter 4)

4.1 Human resources

Organisational Action 1:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider enhancing the conservation officer role to equate to a full time post;*
- *To achieve higher quality applications, residents and business owners will be encouraged to appoint appropriately qualified and experienced agents to represent them when changes are proposed, particularly where the site affects a conservation area or a listed building.*

4.2 Development control processes

Organisational Action 2:

- *The Borough Council will adopt a consistent and generous interpretation of what it considers to be a 'material' change;*
- *The Borough Council will consider using Article 4 Directions where there is evidence that permitted development is having a cumulative and negative affect on the character of a conservation area (such as Tavistock);*
- *The Borough Council will promote consistent decision making and consider providing training opportunities for the decision makers to support this process.*

4.3 Promotion and awareness

Organisational Action 3:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider establishing a rolling programme of Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans, assisted where possible by the local community.*

4.4 Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Organisational Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will consider the formation of a Conservation Area Advisory Committee in Tavistock.*

4.5 Heritage Champion

Organisational Action 5:

- *The Borough Council will consider appointing a Heritage Champion for West Devon, possibly in association with a separate Design Champion;*
- *The Borough and Town Councils will consider membership of the English Historic Towns Forum, enhancing links with other historic towns in the West Country.*

POLICY AND CONTROL (Chapter 5)

5.1 The control of heritage assets

Scheduled monuments

Policy Action 1:

- *The Borough Council, assisted by English Heritage, will continue to monitor and control the scheduled monuments in its care, having regard to the advice contained within PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning.*

Listed Buildings

Policy Action 2:

- *The Borough Council, assisted by English Heritage, will continue to monitor and control the listed buildings in its care, having regard to the advice contained within PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment.*

Policy Action 3:

- *The Borough Council, assisted by community groups such as the Tavistock and District Local History Society, will consider proposing spot listings to update the statutory list for Tavistock.*

Locally Listed buildings

Policy Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will consider the allocation of resources required to prepare a Local List including:*
 - *Adopting appropriate criteria;*
 - *Including provision for local listing in planning policy;*
 - *Involving communities in the selection of buildings and structures.*

Positive buildings

Policy Action 5:

- *The Borough Council will ensure that local publicity for conservation areas will make clear the consequences of designation including the presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings;*
- *Applications for the demolition of any 'positive' building in a conservation area will be assessed in a similar way to applications to demolish a listed building, and the applicant will be expected to demonstrate why the building is beyond economic repair, and to prove that it has been offered on the open market as an alternative to demolition.*

Opportunity sites or buildings

Policy Action 6:

- *The Borough Council will support the sensitive redevelopment of sites or buildings identified as opportunity sites or buildings on the Designations Map, subject to design details being of such a quality that they make a significant positive contribution.*

Neutral buildings

Policy Action 7:

- *The Borough Council will support the sensitive enhancement of neutral buildings or their replacement with new buildings, as long as they are well designed and detailed.*

The control of conservation areas

Policy Action 8:

- *The Borough Council will continue to carefully control all conservation areas within the Borough and will, subject to funding, carry out further reviews and survey work.*

5.2 Article 4 Directions

Policy Action 9:

- *The Borough Council will consider serving an Article 4 (2) Direction on the Tavistock Conservation Area to cover all unlisted dwelling houses.*

5.3 Enforcement strategy

Policy Action 10:

Policy Action 10:

- *The Borough Council will consider developing a more detailed Enforcement Strategy to explain the circumstances in which various forms of action are taken and the priority that is given to the historic environment.*

5.4 Use of statutory powers: Repairs Notices, Urgent Works, Amenity Notices (Section 215)*Policy Action 11:*

- *As appropriate, the Borough Council will make full use of its powers to serve Repairs Notices, Urgent Works Notices, and Amenity Notices.*

5.5 Buildings-at-risk survey and strategy*Policy Action 12:*

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider commissioning a Buildings at Risk survey of the Tavistock Conservation Area, possibly in conjunction with a survey of the whole Borough.*

5.6 Archaeological evaluations*Policy Action 13:*

- *The Borough Council will insist that all listed building consent applications contain a reasoned justification for the work and will also, in select cases, require a detailed archaeological evaluation, prepared by an expert in the field.*

5.7 Shopfronts*Policy Action 14:*

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider preparing a Shopfront Guidance leaflet.*

ECONOMIC ACTIONS (Chapter 6)**6.1 The need for grant aid***Economic Action 1:*

- *The Borough Council will seek grant aid for the Tavistock Conservation Area from the HLF or from English Heritage;*
- *Regardless of the outcome of any grant bid, the Borough Council will consider taking action to protect listed buildings in the Tavistock Conservation Area where they are being deliberately neglected.*

6.2 Historic Buildings Grants

Economic Action 2:

- *The Borough Council will consider increasing the annual allocation for its Historic Buildings Grants and will promote the grant scheme more extensively*

SPATIAL ACTIONS (Chapter 7)

7.1 The protection of the setting to the Tavistock Conservation Area

Spatial Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will carefully monitor applications on the outskirts or edges of the Tavistock Conservation Area, and will refuse those which could adversely affect the conservation area due to the proposed development's use, height, bulk, detailing, loss of open space, or the loss or the negative effect on important views into or out of the conservation area.*

7.2 Urban Design Strategy

Spatial Action 2:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council will consider commissioning an Urban Design Strategy for the Tavistock Conservation Area.*

7.3 The control of new development

Spatial Action 3:

- *The Borough Council will ensure that all new development in the Tavistock Conservation Area is sympathetic to the surrounding historic environment with particular reference to height, bulk, building lines, plot sizes, plot ratios, materials and details.*

7.4 The enhancement of historic character

Spatial Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will insist that all applications for change to historic buildings (listed, locally listed and 'positive') use the correct materials and details.*

7.5 The management of the public realm

Spatial Action 5:

- *Subject to funding, the Borough Council, in partnership with Devon County Council and Tavistock Town Council, will consider producing a Public Realm Strategy to provide guidance on materials and details for the public realm in the Tavistock Conservation Area.*

Spatial Action 6:

- *The Borough Council will consider measures needed to achieve the incremental undergrounding of all wires within the conservation area, including entering a partnership with the various statutory bodies (such as BT).*

7.6 The protection and care of trees, parks, and cemeteries

Trees

Spatial Action 7:

- *The Borough Council will continue to provide technical advice on the care of trees in the Borough and will liaise with the Tavistock Tree Preservation Group and local Tree Wardens as necessary to ensure that all trees within and on the edges of the conservation area are protected and cared for.*

SITE SPECIFIC ACTIONS (Chapter 8)

8.1 Police Station and Guildhall

Site Specific Action 1:

- *The Borough Council will monitor the condition of the Guildhall and will encourage the existing and any future owners to maintain and repair it to the required standard;*
- *The Borough Council will take appropriate action against the existing or future owners of the Guildhall if it is threatened by a lack of maintenance;*
- *The Borough Council will consider supporting the establishment of a Tavistock Historic Buildings Trust to take over the Guildhall, and possibly other buildings in the vicinity.*

8.2 Guildhall Square

Site Specific Action 2:

The Borough Council, in partnership with Devon County Council and the Town Council, will consider promoting an enhancement scheme for Guildhall Square, the long term aim of which would be to remove all but some disabled car parking spaces and provide an enhanced pedestrian only space.

8.3 Pannier Market and adjoining buildings

Site Specific Action 3:

- *The Town Council will consider carrying out a detailed survey to ascertain the full extent of any repairs needed to the Pannier Market and its associated buildings*
- *The Town Council will consider commissioning a Conservation and Management Plan for Town Council Estate.*

8.4 Bank Square

Site Specific Action 4:

- *The Borough Council will seek an enhancement scheme for Bank Square, which could be funded through the THI grant scheme (if approved).*

8.5 Bedford Cottages

Site Specific Action 5:

- *The Borough Council will consider commissioning the preparation of a new Design Guide for the Bedford cottages;*
- *The Borough Council will consider a grant scheme to help owners of the Bedford cottages with repairs;*
- *The Borough Council will consider encouraging the setting up of a Tavistock Historic Buildings Trust to purchase a Bedford cottage to act as an 'exemplar' to other owners*

Site Specific Action 6:

- *The Town Council and Borough Council should agree a long term plan to restore and maintain the abbey remains, in partnership where necessary with private owners.*

Appendix 4 ACTION PLAN (see separate folder)