

# Kettering Conservation Area

(As reviewed March 2007)

Produced for Kettering Borough Council

by

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**Kettering**  
*Borough Council*

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**KETTERING CONSERVATION AREA**

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*Borough Council*

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Kettering Conservation area was designated by Kettering Borough Council in March 1982 and extended following approval by the Council in December 1985. The 1985 conservation area includes most of the Headlands and the southern part of the historic town centre including the Parish Church and Art Gallery.
- 1.2 Kettering Borough Council appointed Donald Insall Associates to undertake this appraisal of Kettering Conservation Area in September 2006. This includes expanding the conservation area to the east and the north to take in additional parts in the historic town centre as well as discrete and localised areas adjoining the main conservation area where it has been felt that the boundaries had previously been too tightly drawn.
- 1.3 The appraisal begins with a brief overview of the planning context and a summary of the special interest before looking in more detail at the setting, historic development and spatial and character analysis. Key issues affecting the area and management proposals proposed for these then follow with sources for further information.
- 1.4 No appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive and omission of any particular building, feature or space in this document should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

## **2.0 Planning Policy Context**

- 2.1 This Appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the English Heritage publications, *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* and *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*.
- 2.2 The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act defines a conservation area as “an area of architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” The Act places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and from time to time to review the extent of Conservation area designation within their districts. It also requires the local authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.
- 2.3 The designation is seen as the first step in a dynamic process, to quote English Heritage “the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area – and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future through the development of management proposals”. Designation gives the local authority additional powers to foster a spirit of good neighbourliness and to encourage sensitive new development and to stop, for example, removal of significant features. In conservation areas demolition of any building and most parts of buildings is unlawful without Conservation Area Consent from the Council. All trees are protected against felling, lopping or pruning without authorisation. A wider variety of extensions, including all roof alterations, require planning permission. This

particular study needs to be seen as part of the series of planning documents which already exist serving Kettering town centre: These include *the Kettering Local Plan, 1995*; *Kettering Development Framework, Kettering Masterplan 2005*, and the North Northamptonshire, *Statement of Community Involvement*.

- 2.4 Government policy set out in Planning Guidance Note No.15 (PPG15 – *Planning and the Historic Environment*) includes, “The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of appearance of a conservation area.” The appraisal reflects the values expressed in *Power of Place – The Future of the Historic Environment*, by English Heritage, 2000 and *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, 2001.
- 2.5 Additionally, some changes that do not normally require planning permission (known as permitted development rights) have been identified as detrimental to the special interest of the conservation area. These are discussed in section 12.0

### **3.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

- 3.1 Kettering remains an attractive and cohesive town with its town centre buildings and street pattern reflecting their medieval, market town origin, dominated by the medieval Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, and with suburbs still little altered from their creation in the nineteenth century when Kettering rapidly expanded, particularly in connection with its thriving shoe industries. Reminders of this are all around, whether it be the former shoe factories in the suburbs, the rows of nearby artisan housing, or the more lavish residential areas laid out for wealthy managers and factory owners. This boom time is marked also in the handsome town schools and community facilities of the time – the churches and chapels, parish rooms and cooperative society shops and stores – and most famously in the later Wickstead Park of 1921. It was the era of the great business families of Kettering such as the Timpson’s and Gotch’s of shoe fame and Toller, leading solicitors.
- 3.2 Kettering was the birthplace of the Independent Baptist Missionary Society, no mere accident of history given the fervour of non conformity in the borough in the nineteenth century – with several local evangelical figures including William Carey, missionary; William Knibb, missionary and emancipator (responsible for the liberation of some 300,000 slaves) and Andrew Fuller, Baptist minister. Sites or buildings connected with all three figures remain in Kettering together with a rich variety of churches and chapels.
- 3.3 There is a surprisingly rich stream of artists and architects connected with the town: John Alfred Gotch, leading architect and president of the RIBA and his brother Thomas Cooper Gotch a leading artist, both sons of the Gotch shoe family. Above all looms Alfred East, metaphorically and physically. He was an important artist nationally of the late nineteenth century, knighted in 1901 and his gift of a gallery (with paintings) still graces the centre of the town, a memorial both to him and an important era of civic pride.

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

- 4.1 The nineteenth century development of the town centre – with several buildings by interesting and nationally important, locally based architects, is complemented by suburbs of the same date including several high quality residential areas with leafy roads and villas, as well as significant areas of terraced housing to a much higher density but of no lesser interest. These areas, with their surviving industrial and community buildings, are especially significant because of their completeness and because of their distinctive localised regional details – with stone dressings and decorative embellishments and frequent use of the motif of three linked doors in a common frontage (two doors as house entrances, one door for yard access). These are the types of neighbourhoods which in other industrial towns and cities have been greatly altered or eroded with demolition and new unsympathetic construction. But here at Kettering whole late Victorian neighbourhoods remain intact with seemingly only superficial twentieth century alterations.
- 4.2 The *Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey: Kettering* notes that even beyond the designated Conservation area “The survival of the urban topography of the process of late 19<sup>th</sup> century urbanisation is exceptionally good and there are areas to the north east of the town that are of national significance requiring direct conservation action to ensure the survival of their distinctive character representative of a key phrase and industry in the urbanisation of Northamptonshire in the modern period”.
- 4.3 Significant also are two distinctive building types: firstly the late nineteenth century former shoe factories, never more than four storeys high and rarely more than say ten bays in length with regular patterns of windows – sometimes round headed – a much more domestic scale of industrial building than say the traditional cotton and woollen mills of the north or the engineering factories of the west midlands. Altogether the factories in Kettering are much more integrated into their streetscape without the barriers offered by mill yards, detached office/engine room buildings or mill reservoirs found elsewhere.
- 4.4 Secondly Kettering exhibits quite distinctive school buildings – owing to their late building date and the decision to use these to act as landmark beacons in the Kettering townscape with several designed on key sites with splendid lofty towers.

## 5.0 Location and Setting

- 5.1 Kettering is in a central geographical position in England, on the old A6 road from London to Carlisle and midway between the M1 Motorway and the A1 at Huntingdon, a position now further enhanced by the new cross country road (the A14) linking the M6 motorway with the east.
- 5.2 The town lies at the heart of Northamptonshire – an under-rated county, known traditionally as the “county of squires and spires”, of pleasing countryside and stone built villages and small market towns, a county marked by its great estates and country houses, such as locally Rockingham Castle and Boughton, and its towns and villages dominated by the spire of the parish church.
- 5.3 The landscape is gently undulating reflecting the south west – north east grain of the geology. With the higher ground to the north west of the country of Middle Lias ironstone, then the clayey limestones south east of this – and the Lias, the Northamptonshire sand and ironstone group with other sandy rocks, but importantly south of Kettering is the band of Lincolnshire limestone that stretches through the county and up to the Humber – the most famous of all English freestones, and with its variants known under different names including Ketton and Collyweston slate.
- 5.4 Kettering’s past has been marked by transition from a rural market into a busy modern industrial centre – which with Northampton and Wellingborough once formed the heart of the shoe making area of Northamptonshire – But with the passing of industry its future is being built on service industries with some commuting even as far as London and Northampton.

## 6.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

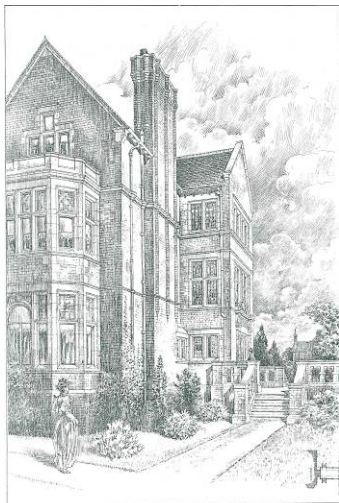
- 6.1 According to the RL Greenall writing in *The History of Kettering* the town, whose name means ‘the place of Ketter’s people’, grew up immediately south of an old Romano – British Settlement initially as a planned foundation. It was in an area which has been noted for its iron-working in Roman Britain and discoveries of an ancient furnace of an allegedly Roman type were made in Gold Street in the nineteenth century.
- 6.2 In Anglo-Saxon Britain Kettering was a village in the Midland Kingdom of Mercia. There is reference to it in The Domesday Book and in 1227 it was granted its market charter. The *Extensive Urban Survey* records that there seems to have been two components to Medieval Kettering – the first state being its village origin – with development along the High Street, then in the thirteenth century the settlement expanded dramatically to the North East attracted by “the pull of the London to Oakham road” The first map of 1587 provides a useful snapshot of a growing village with a linear street pattern: the church and market place at one end, nearby the Manor House; the High Street extending northwards to meet present day Gold Street, where there was a cross, and was built-up as far as Newland Street. Very little else extended

beyond this nucleated settlement. To the south was an open field system established from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, with its organised communal farming pattern of individual cultivated strips within each field and with rotations of cultivation every third year leaving one field fallow. North and east lay the royal forest of Rockingham, with other fields, commons and woods to the west.

- 6.3 The town's gradual development is marked by the founding of a Grammar School in 1577 and Almshouses in 1637 (Sawyers Hospital). The Brasier map of Kettering, made in the 1720s, shows a town still in a form recognisable to that shown in the plan of a hundred and fifty years earlier, though now with much more urban development to the north. Greenall records that the housing would have been of "one or two storeys, made of local stone or timber, wattle and daub, most roofs being of thatch..."
- 6.4 The eighteenth century was a period of expanding trade with road travel flourishing particularly in the form of mail coaches. Kettering was well placed to benefit from this with its good road links to London and the north – and at the centre of a system of turnpikes. Again Greenall records that by 1825 the Glasgow Mail was running from the George Hotel and that the town's inns did good business - until that is, the arrival of the railway. They were also at the centre of the town's social life. With their rear service yards and, stabling and in the case of the George and the White Hart (the latter where both Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens stayed, now rebuilt as The Royal), attached assembly rooms, they formed a distinctive building type, one still recognisable in the town.
- 6.5 It is likely that there was a textile industry in the town in at least the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries which it seems was thriving by the seventeenth century - in the form of woollens. The industry collapsed in the late eighteenth century however the leather industry, principally shoe manufacture, was introduced, expanded from its original base in Northampton by the Gotch family, whose business thrived with the wars against the French. Indeed the Gotch family remained the only leather shoe manufacturer until the 1850s when others rapidly entered the field.
- 6.6 The arrival of the railway in the mid nineteenth century together with a growing iron extraction and smelting industries here and in nearby villages changed Kettering dramatically and from the 1870s until the early 1900s Kettering was transformed: Its population rose from 5,100 in 1851 to 30,000 in 1914 with an accompanying massive building campaign. Much of the development was by the town's leading businessmen who financed waves of new building in the town's suburbs and in the town centre itself where successive blocks of buildings were rebuilt. Greenall illustrates this expansion in plan – to the north, the Milligan Estate from 1869; The Holyoake Estate, 1873; Meadows and Bryan 1876, and to the east, Stockburn from 1865. In contrast to these rows of terraced houses, laid out on grid plans, was the gradual development of the leafy residential suburb along the Headlands to the South and along Rockingham Road to the North. .



- 6.7 Within the 1985 Conservation Area three particular street improvement schemes of these years should be noted: the building of Station Road on axis with the railway station and spire of the Parish Church in the mid nineteenth century; the complete rebuilding of the south side of Market Street in a coordinated scheme of the Sun Hotel and adjoining Jacobethan style shops of the 1870s and 1880s and the rebuilding of the corner of High Street and Market Street around 1900. While after the boom period came the removal of buildings on the south side of the Market Place in the 1930s; the widening of Silver Street in 1933 and the formation of a square as recently as the 1970s and 1990s on the site of the earlier Parish Church Schools on the Horse Market.
- 6.8 It was to Kettering's great good fortune that the boom years created the ideal conditions to support several local firms of architects who were fully capable of outstanding work. These include Blackwell & Storry (and later Scott) and Gotch, Saunders and Surridge of whom John Alfred Gotch (1852-1942), of the famed shoe family, in particular achieved national fame, principally through his writings – on historical architecture, particularly the Early Renaissance. His career was capped by his becoming President of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in 1923, the first practitioner based outside London to be so honoured. He could readily turn his hand to designing buildings of great charm and quality: The richly varied treatment of his former Sun Hotel on Market Street –with chimneys boldly expressed on the street front is a case in point, buildings which were illustrated at the time in the national building and architectural press. In all these, much use was made of local red brick and Northampton ironstone ashlar – often in simple Jacobethan designs with a characteristic use of strapwork detailing. Blackwell & Story, though perhaps less prominent, equally could produce mature and confident work, such as the modest domestic vicarage to St. Andrews Church and the neo-baroque National Westminster Bank on the High Street.



DESIGNED BY  
BLACKWELL & STORRY  
ARCHITECTS



SUN HOTEL, KETTERING  
DESIGNED BY  
BLACKWELL & STORRY, ARCHITECTS

- 6.9 These firms and no doubt others virtually rebuilt the modest market town and with local builders grafted onto it a townscape chiefly late Victorian in character, whose

centrepiece is the art gallery and library group in Sheep Street – which exudes a stylish civic dignity.

- 6.10 The terminal decline in the shoe and iron industries from the 1960s resulted in the loss of many of the town’s distinctive factories as well as the economic basis for the working population, while rebuilding of major parts of the centre (to the north and north west) in the 1970s/80s has locally eroded some of its distinctive character. But apart from these Kettering still retains an enviable cohesion with an urban fabric noticeably more intact than other similar or larger towns.

## **7.0 Spatial Analysis**

- 7.1 Three distinctive localities are identified in the character appraisal following: The Shopping Centre, ‘Civic’ Centre and the Headlands. Each of the three has its own particular spatial qualities though at the centre of all is a single focal point – the spire of the parish church – seen from a distance in approaching the town particularly from along the Northampton and London roads then at closer proximity in Station Road and along The Headlands: It is a point emphasised by the *Extensive Urban Survey*: “the impressive tower and spire of the church, surrounded by a group of tall trees, still dominates the distant approach to the town from the west, just as it did in 1720 when the prospect was recorded by Tillemans”.

Closer in, the spire is less conspicuous, within the town centre visible at the bottom of the High Street, from the Horse Market, and top end of West Street: It is however prominent from much of the open space in the Civic Quarter, then along the Headlands looking northbound.

- 7.2 These views relate directly to the nature of the different grain of development – from the tightly-knit, organic form of the town centre to the much more linear-like planning of the Headlands: The shopping centre streets are closely defined with buildings built hard up to the pavement edges following the organic curves of the generally narrow shopping streets – the plan is dominated by two principal open spaces – the Market and The Horse Market from which most of the other streets lead. A few straight roads, particularly to the west and south, provide views out of the centre to the distant tree covered ridge to the west or to tree lined suburban roads to the south but these are in contrast to the otherwise tight sense of enclosure characteristic of the curving town centre streets.
- 7.3 In contrast the ‘Civic’ Quarter is outward looking in its buildings, relating directly in the main to the perimeter roads – leaving an open prairie-like, public car park dominating its core. Away from this are the quieter semi/public, quasi private, walled spaces around the Manor House, Rectory and graveyard – some also defined by railings, providing quiet oases in the heart of the busy town.
- 7.4 The Headlands again offers a third type of spatial experience-of buildings set back from the road and laid out to a generally regular pattern and rhythm, defining, with their planting and trees, a long linear space – leading to the town centre and Parish

Church at one end and out to the open countryside at the other.

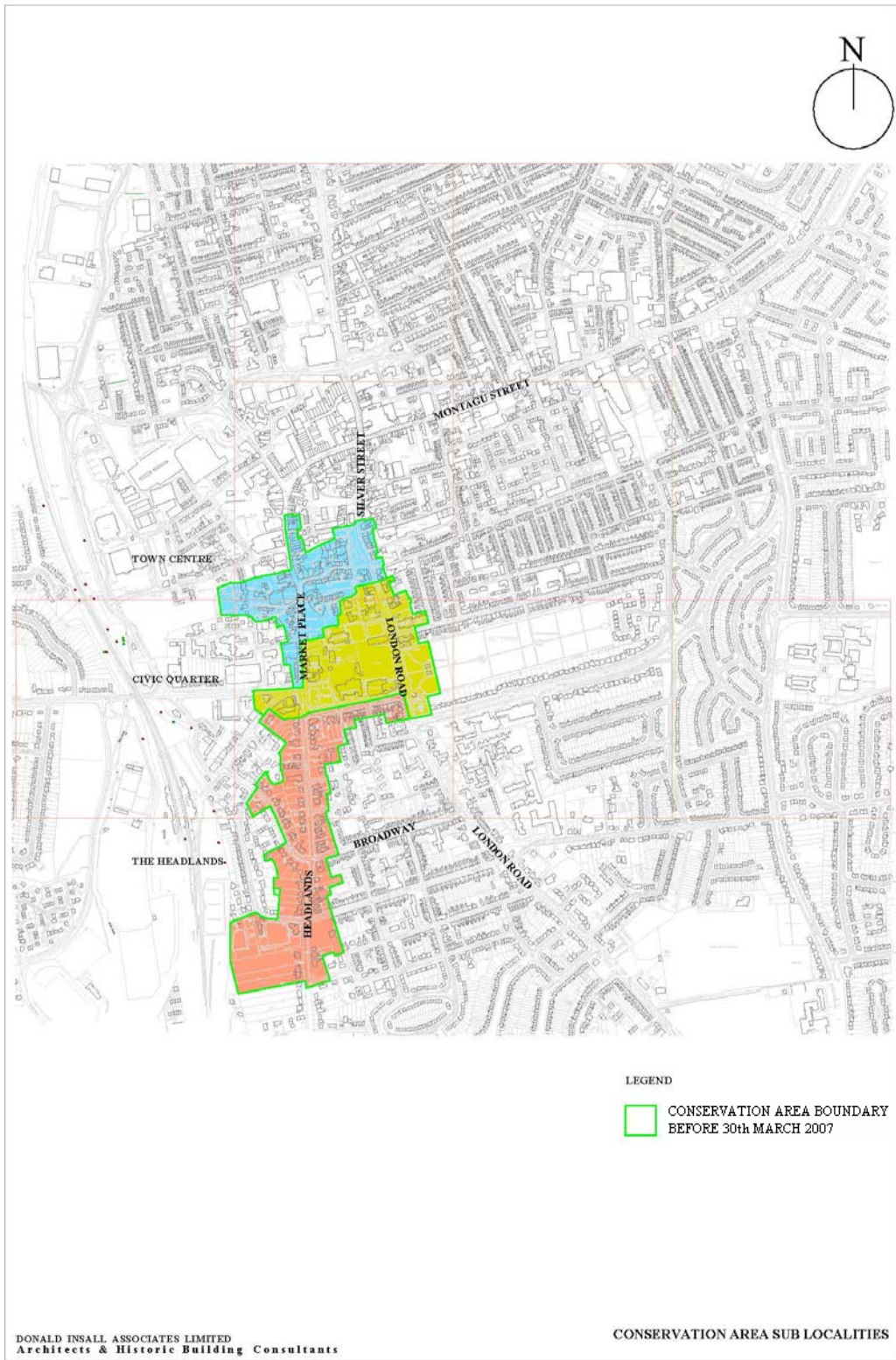
- 7.5 Above all when approaching Kettering from some directions, e.g. London Road and Northampton Road, it can still be perceived as relatively compact: A walk from the High Street to the southern end of The Headlands takes no more than 15 minutes: taking in the busiest part of the town centre and ending in a quiet residential street with the golf course and countryside readily to hand.

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## 8.0 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### 8.1 GENERAL

8.1.1 The Kettering Conservation Area owes its rich layering of building periods and uses to the last four hundred years of continuous development and growth. Moreover, as the designated area extends from the town centre into one of the inner suburbs, it covers radically different types of building. The Conservation Area can therefore be most usefully divided into a few quite distinct 'localities' which, although allowing for some blurring along their boundary edges, display quite different characteristics – influenced by different historical development, use and architectural character. Three separate localities are identified and described following. They comprise:

- Town Centre (in reality the historic core and southern half of the old town centre).
- 'Civic Quarter' – the area adjoining the parish church comprising civic/community buildings and open space (broadly similar to that area designated as the 'Heritage Quarter' in the *Kettering Masterplan* Report of May 2005).
- The Headlands – the residential area immediately to the South.

### 8.2 TOWN CENTRE

#### 8.2.1 General

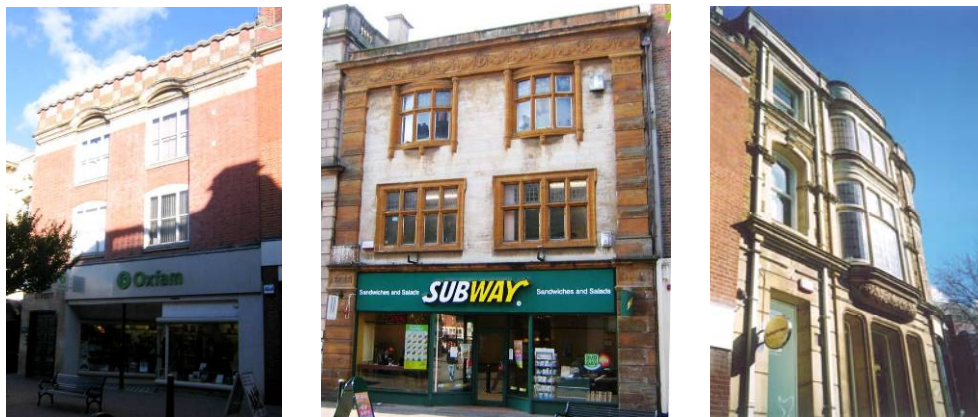
The part of the town centre within the Conservation Area is the southern part of the historic medieval core of the town from which the main centre developed 'organically' in a northwards direction. The plan form is thus ancient with plot boundaries and irregular curving streets and setbacks still reflecting this heritage, together with the overlying layers of later more regular building forms and improvements, particularly of the late nineteenth century when the town expanded in grid-iron fashion. The widening of the southern end of the High Street, redevelopment of Market Street in the early twentieth century and the comprehensive removal in the mid twentieth century of former buildings, delineating the southern edge of the Market Place, being radical interruptions in the otherwise gradual progress of development and change of the town centre.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner was unfairly dismissive of Kettering town centre when he said "there is remarkably little of architectural note in Kettering" but his remarks were written almost fifty years ago when there was minimal appreciation of Victorian and Edwardian architecture, and still less of their 1930s successors in traditional styles and the study of townscape was in its infancy. Later historians will undoubtedly revise this view in the anticipated new edition of *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire* for the town centre offers much that is of interest, with buildings testifying to Kettering's transformation from medieval market town to Victorian industrial centre, with Georgian frontages interspersed with grand Victorian Banks, public houses and the occasional smart 1930s classical or moderne interloper.

Of the many buildings in the town centre pre-dating Kettering's industrial boom years there remain, for example, the two storey, eighteenth century (?) domestic buildings in George Street and the three storey Thornton Jewellers at 1-7 High Street. In some cases an earlier history is only indicated by rear walls and wings, such as this late medieval, stone-building to the rear of buildings on the Market Place.



The great rebuilding of the town in the late nineteenth century bequeathed however a fund of good buildings, buildings such as 15-17 High Street, with rusticated stone pilasters and decorative cornice and festoons, or 12-14 High Street with its chequeboard papapet and moulded arched window heads.



Sadly the architects of two later simple but attractive arts and crafts designs in the town centre remain unknown: the simple shop front at 66 High Street ('RARE'), with projecting pegged window frames, a design of almost Voysey-like simplicity and the incomplete row of workers cottages in St. Andrews Street which retains bold original arts and crafts ironmongery and cast iron window hood brackets.



Equally good though understated are the classical frontages of 59-65 Gold Street and 11 Market Place both probably in the 1920s -30s – that to Gold Street suggestive of the work of Clough Williams Ellis.

### 8.2.2 Topography



The town centre has developed on the flattish high level between two small rivers – the Slade Brook running north-south to the west and the Ise Brook a similar stream running parallel to it to the east. Between these the highest part is marked by the Parish Church from where the land gently falls to the south. The valley of the Slade in particular results in modest climbs up to the town centre from the west, such as the hill forming Northampton Road and Meadow Road with e.g. West Street terrace and Westfield House taking full advantage of their raised position to benefit from long views across the valley to the west.

### 8.2.3 Building Scale, Height and Type

From a distance, for example approaching Kettering from Northampton, the centre is dominated by the spire of the Parish Church but within the town centre itself – the main shopping streets – it is only really visible from the Market Place and Horse Market – the tightness of the buildings otherwise restricting views, though it is glimpsed occasionally – such as at the top end of West Street. From the south it is more noticeable with views of it across the former cattle market, up Station Road, when approaching the town from the South West, or along the Headlands. Nothing challenges it as the principal high feature of the town – not even the modern



developments to the north of the centre which are far enough away to avoid damaging this relationship, though it may be noted that the large roof of the former cinema in the High Street now compromises the view of the Church from the north.

Heights generally range from two to three storey, though there is a surprising number of key buildings of single storey form only – even in the centre of the town – such as the stone market building at the south end of the Horse Market; the 1920s single storey shops in the middle of the north side of Market Street, Carpetwise on Station Road, the group on the corner of Market Street and Horse Market and the single storey Parish Hall (formerly the Parish church school) on the Market Place. Elsewhere there are unattractive single storey later additions in front of the main building line – such as on the west side of the Horse Market and to the block on the east side facing.

A characteristic of some of the older public houses is that they are of three storeys e.g. the Old Market Inn and the George Inn on Sheep Street, The Royal Hotel, the Watercress Wine Bar, (a former public house on Market Street), and the former public house on the west side of the Horse Market inscribed on the gable “Hopwell & Co Ale & Stout Stores”.



However at the turn of the last century there were a number of buildings near to the 1985 conservation area of four storey height – and of far greater scale and ambition than the generally small scale of buildings presently in the town centre: the factories and warehouses of the various shoe and clothing industries, such as the Kettering Cooperative Clothing Co on the corner of Dryden St and Upper Field Street, or the factory of Charles East and Sons. This is a building type now almost wholly missing from the immediate central area – a rare remaining example being the former Abbott and Bird shoe factory in Green Lane (i.e. immediately outside the 1985 Conservation Area), of 1873, currently (2006) under conversion to domestic accommodation and recently listed, also the nearby factory in Newman Street of similar design and scale, also recently listed.

In contrast the 7-8 storey telephone exchange and multi storey car park in Trafalgar Road appear as aberrations threateningly looming over the town in the distance.



A characteristic of a number of streets is how effectively they are terminated by a well designed building feature or interrupted by an offset – never a bold aggressive front but rather a canted bay or a simple entrance and gable. Such examples include the angled bay with mullioned upper windows at 8-10 Huxloe Mews, the curve of the south side of Market Street - the former Sun Hotel, and Parkstile Chambers and (beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area) KLM taxis in Dalkeath Court; Davis Optometrists in Crispin Place; the former Cross Keys Temperance Hotel now Abacus, on the Horse Market, and Lloyds Bank at the southern end of the High Street. It is galling to see where such key features have been lost – such as the former simple but effective block at the corner of West Street – now replaced by a tree.



A further special feature of the town centre is the existence of quite modest residential streets or buildings right in the heart of the town – relics of Kettering’s late industrialisation and growth or of recent infill development. Within the conservation area are the terraces of West Street and the houses overlooking the valley to the west and just outside the boundaries, Dalkeith Avenue, while Rectory Gardens and houses in George Street offer examples of modern infill.

#### 8.2.4 Building Materials

Stone, that is local Northamptonshire ironstone and limestone, is to be found on many of the surviving late medieval buildings – including the two storey Henry’s on the Horse Market, The Red Pepper on Market Street, cottages on the north side of West Street and the Old Corn Stores Parade on the Horse Market, with finely jointed Ketton ashlar generally reserved for the later key buildings such as banks – The former Midland bank, now HSBC (by Gotch and Saunders) and the former Northamptonshire

Union Bank, now NatWest (By Blackwell and Thomson), on the High Street, as well as a few other individual blocks, including Westfield House in West Street. In the case of nos 18-22 West Street, brick is used for the window and door surrounds to an otherwise coursed ironstone frontage.

Render is similarly to be seen on a number of town centre buildings. It appears for example on the frontage of A.A. Thornton's store in High Street, a late eighteenth century, three-storey building with domestic sash windows at upper levels – and also the solicitors on the Horse Market.

But by far the most common material is the local orange brick – generally used in conjunction with Ketton stone dressings, - window mullions, string courses and parapets and the occasional date stone or decorative feature such as the strapwork decoration over the doorway entrance to Parkstile Chambers, Market Street.

Traditional pitched roofs are much the predominant roof form throughout the central area with ridges almost always parallel to the street front, with natural slate predominating, though frequently with rear wings and ranges with pitched roofs at right angles to that of the main front

### **8.2.5 Architectural Decoration and Detailing**

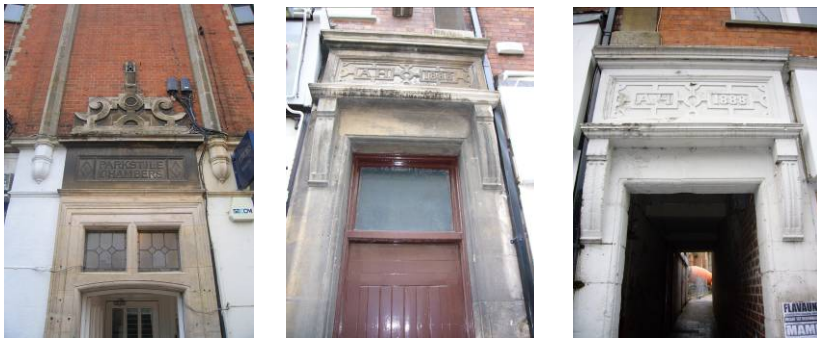
A characteristic of a number of commercial buildings in the town centre of the last century is the use of a robust strapwork decorative feature or open balustrade at rooftop parapet level –seen at its most developed in some of the buildings on the south side of Market Street e.g. over Xtreme and to the former Liberal Club on The Horse Market (now the public house, XTRA). A more dramatic parapet roofline is evident in the antler-like broken pediment at 'Speight Corner' between Bowling Green Road and London Road in The Headlands locality.



Fronts of buildings tend to be fairly flat, relieved only by projecting detail: the first floor projecting bay windows, for example over Piazza on the Market Square or to the wine bar in Market Street, or in the form of a canted angled bay within the general wall depth, such as in the first floor to Piccadilly Buildings (over Picadilly Classics) and the gentle bow of the upper floors of Parkside Chambers in Market Street or narrow, flatish angular bays as on Shiplay's Amusements in the High Street and above 'Select' in Gold Street.

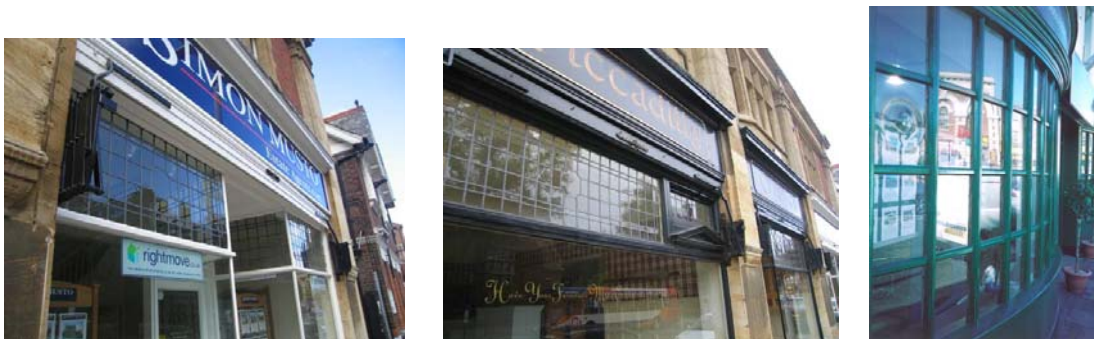


Decorative stonework detailing is used to great effect at doorways – a particular feature being some of the carved decorative overdoor details at entrances.



Chimneys form important features seen at their most effective on the face of the elevation – such as those on the Gotch designed former Sun Hotel on Market Street, with their vigorous moulded stacks and (beyond the Conservation area boundary) Attica/Abacus – the former *Temperance Hotel*, but elsewhere they are an important element in usefully breaking up roof lines and giving additional accent and articulation to the main body of the structure. Regrettably some have lost their chimney pots – but these still remain to e.g. the terraced houses on West Street and those listed above:

Where chimneys have been lost, for example at the north end of the High Street beyond the Conservation area boundary, the buildings look bland and much weaker as a result.



There are few good shopfronts in the central area of Kettering Conservation Area – almost all are bland modern replacements lacking both the style and vigour associated

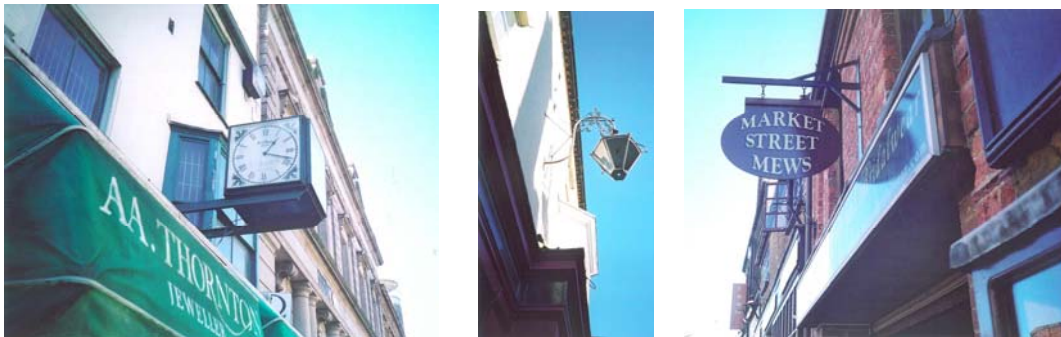
with traditional forms or the simplicity and sophistication of good contemporary design. This is a pity and new design must generally look elsewhere for inspiration. However a few traces of original shopfronts do remain and these provide some useful pointers to how some new shop fronts might be considered:

The upper leaded lights and mouldings of the shop fronts in the Piccadilly Buildings on Sheep Street (architects Gotch and Saunders); the 1930s timber framing to the Baguet/Away on the High Street (with its remnants of a Dunne & Co type shop front) and the modern reproduction of a traditional bow-fronted shop at Henderson Connellan in the Market Place – lacking however the lambs tongue mouldings expected in this type of period joinery detail. Attractive multi coloured geometric tile thresholds are a feature of some of the shop entries on Market Street celebrating their doorway entrances in an individual and colourful way.



Nevertheless despite their often poor design, on the whole the town centre shopfronts respect the bay width of the building on which they are fixed. Only rarely do these overrun across several different blocks, an objectionable feature which always challenges the architecture and integrity of the building.

There are surprisingly few hanging signs in the town centre though there are many fixed, projecting, standard commercial signs, e.g. the logo on the Natwest Bank in High Street. However the hanging lamp of the Watercress Wine Bar (a former Public House) in Market Street, The Market Street Mews sign and the projecting clock on the front of Thorntons in the High Street show that there is some tradition of projecting detail.



### 8.2.6 Paving Materials

There are depressingly few examples of good paving in the town centre – small setts at the entrance to the Royal Hotel service yard and at the entrance to West Street off the Market Place, other setts at the archway entrance by Central Chambers and under the archway to the HSBC Bank and some fragmentary brick paviours in the derelict/open car park behind the western buildings of the Market Place.



Otherwise, use of high quality traditional materials, such as Yorkstone, is markedly lacking and concrete materials are much in evidence in several new paving schemes - neat and crisp in the case of the Market Place, the landscaping of the Horse Market of the 1990s and Crispin Place (not in Conservation Area) but dull and monotonous in the northern reaches of the High Street – and everywhere somewhat monolithic, lacking the sparkle and interest of traditional setts generated by their polish and faceted finish which gives endless varied and changing textures and reflections. There is a wonderful opportunity here to reintroduce good paving using a limited palette of well-chosen, high quality paving materials.

### 8.2.7 Private Areas



Among special features of the town centre which have been eroded over a long period are the tightly planned rear yard and service ranges. Some still remain however, in the form of the stable and carriage court and service buildings (complete with steel frame

roof canopy) to the Royal Hotel; the 1920s former fire station on the north side of Market Street and the fascinating, partly stone-built range at the rear of 12A Market Street, a relic of earlier rear workshops and possibly stables, dating back perhaps to the late eighteenth century (complete with an early twentieth century petrol pump) and now a rare survival.

Giving access to these spaces often are archways: Archways of single storey height are a common feature in the town centre – these include the round headed arch at the south end of the George Hotel on Northampton Road and in the frontage of the former Midland Bank on High Street, and square headed – The Watercress Wine Bar in Market Street; that adjoining the Red Rose Indian Restaurant on the Marketplace; the former ‘Central Chambers’ on the Market Place and the now blocked archway to the Old Corn Stores Parade, facing onto the Horse Market.



### 8.2.8 Trees

By the very nature of the location trees are not as common here as in the other localities but by their placing have a major impact on the streetscape. Of greatest significance are the four mature trees forming a row opposite Piccadilly Buildings creating a most effective approach to the town centre as well as a dignified setting for the library behind. Otherwise trees are restricted to the few recently planted in the Market Place, those in the Horse Market and one planted at the junction of High Street and Market Street. Outside the Conservation Area on Northampton Road is a mature Ilex oak greatly benefiting an otherwise dull streetscape approaching the bus depot, while a few individual trees have been planted in Gold Street and High Street where they serve to help conceal some of the poorer quality more recent buildings and break up the monotony of the concrete pavements, though they do conceal some of the more historic frontages.



### 8.2.9 Vacant Sites

An unfortunate characteristic of the town centre is the number of cleared, semi-derelict sites. At its worst this can be seen in the vast cleared area immediately north of the town centre conservation area in an area formerly packed with workshops, houses and factories between the two historic streets of the town and of which only fragments now survive.

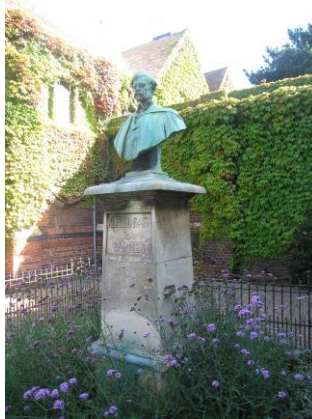
Within the Conservation area itself these are generally limited to areas immediately behind key frontage buildings and are used for car parking – e.g. behind the buildings on the west side of the Market Place or for car sales as on the east side of the Horse Market.

These have a negative impact on the Town Centre giving an impression of untidiness, decay and a lack of care – while generally offering unflattering views of rear elevations, not designed to be exposed to general view.





### 8.2.10 Monuments



There are a number of monuments in strategic locations in both the Town Centre and Civic Quarter localities: The Dryland Memorial and horse troughs, of lovely eighteenth century design, by John Alfred Gotch; the War Memorial; the bust of Sir Alfred East by Sir George Frampton on an elegant stone plinth and the Bryan fountain in the Horse Market (formerly situated in Rockingham Road Park). In keeping with the domestic scale of the town, these tend to be modest and human in scale and with carefully considered decorative detail. The same cannot be said of the modern clock at the junction of the High Street and Gold Street.

## 8.3 'CIVIC' QUARTER

### 8.3.1 General

Immediately to the south of the town's traditional shopping centre is the leafy area surrounding the parish church, spacious and green in marked contrast to the dense concentration of streets immediately adjoining: This is the direct outcome of its different historical development with the juxtapositioning of Church and Manor House, combined with the more recent Cattle Market and civic conversion of the former Grammar and High Schools.



In Brasier's map of the 1720s the area is shown as one of largely open spaces with gardens around the Manor House (then called Kettering Hall), possibly an orchard to the Headlands end and with a Bowling Green on the corner of London Road. The plan also shows buildings to the west of the church including a large barn, which in 1837 was purchased allowing the present avenue to be laid out, perhaps the earliest 'town planning scheme' in the town and providing a rare formal approach to a medieval parish church, so unusual that Pevsner commented that it gave the church "a curiously ungentle look".

Adjoining these buildings are the areas now used for car parking but which formerly, from 1880 until 1967, served as the Cattle Market. Similarly facing Sheep Street in the late nineteenth century was situated an engineering works but this was cleared at the turn of the last century.

The open spaces and community functions have attracted other 'civic' buildings: the County Police station on London Road, replaced by the present Police Station 1968-71; The Carnegie Library of 1904 on Sheep Street (architect Goddard, Paget and Catlow), the Alfred East Gallery of 1913 (architect J.A.Gotch); The War Memorial and then the former Schools, now Municipal Offices of 1913 (architect, Gotch and Saunders); the training centre, housed in the former Cattle Market Attendant's House and Market Weighbridge building of 1880, the Cornmarket Hall of 1913 and lastly the Public Swimming Pool of the 1970s.



Not surprisingly these buildings are all of great individuality and high architectural quality, distinguished by harmony of proportion, quality of materials and dignity of design.

Across London Road, to the east, there are still significant groups of houses but above all there is Kettering Cemetery with its significant chapels, consecrated in 1867 and, according to the *Extensive Urban Survey*, extended in 1871, 1894 and again in the early twentieth century, with the town's war memorial cross sited at the boundary with the later extensions. The cemetery's rectangular form, progressively elongated to the east, and all now engulfed by expansion of the town, has given to it on plan something of the characteristics of Central Park in New York - a strangely insistent geometric shape in the otherwise free flowing organic town plan. The cemetery, along with the group of open spaces and community buildings, has effectively halted any expansion of the town centre southwards and has provided a clear separation, between the high urban density of the town centre and the more spacious residential suburbs to the south – in which role it still serves.

### **8.3.2 Topography**

The locality continues the flattish high land of the town centre with a steep drop down Northampton Road to the west and more gradual falls towards the railway station and the Headlands to the south. Its main spaces are characterised by the relatively flat area of the dominant car park and cemetery open spaces which permit longer views out to the more distant suburbs and ridges.

### **8.3.3 Building Scale, Height and Type**



This is a spacious and, with the exception of the car park, a leafy quarter dominated by the Parish Church, with groups of mature trees around the Church, Manor House and Graveyard, and with a surprising cross pattern of narrow footpaths contained between high walls and railings. The locality lacks the homogeneity of the Town Centre or the Headlands and it offers the greatest range in scale and height in the town Conservation area. That said the space remains dominated by the spire of the Parish Church – much more effectively so than the other two localities.

The buildings are all of great individuality and are generally of high architectural quality distinguished by harmony of proportion, quality of materials and dignity of

design.

Heights range from the single storey tourist information office to the four high storeys of the Town Hall – the former grammar school, and the dominant, towering spire (54.2m/178 feet tall overall) of the Parish Church.

While the scale similarly varies between the small domestic scale of the manor house to the grand unrelieved classical screen walls of the Art Gallery – successfully designed to impress and evoke civic pride and dignity.



#### **8.3.4 Building Materials**

Materials, like those in the town centre, include a range of brick and stones, local red brick in the Council Town Hall, in the Library and modern police station on London Road, with fine crisp ashlar to the Art Gallery, coursed golden brown local ironstone to Sawyers Hospital and the Corn Market Hall

Collyweston stone slates make their appearance only here – in the roofs to the library, Sawyer’s Hospital, the bus shelter and tourist information office, though once they must have been common throughout the town centre.

#### **8.3.5 Architectural Decoration and Detailing**

The variety of building type in this locality makes generalisation on architectural detail here difficult, nevertheless there is consistency in the richness and refinement of detail which marks out these buildings from others in the town; Each of the main buildings is marked by its careful grouping, its harmony and cohesion of design, often of some sophistication, with interest focused on a particular well-considered decorative detail or entrance: for example the carved coat of arms on the Sawyers Hospital; and the tablet bearing the carefully cut lettering of the Alfred East Art Gallery. There are the side door architraves and portico in antis of the Town Hall’s main front; the entrances to the Art Gallery and the Corn Market Hall.



Roofs can be very large in the case of the Corn Market Hall, London Road Church and Library – and capped with a cupola in the case of the Town Hall and Library or tall chimney stacks on the Sawyer’s Hospital and Town Hall.

### 8.3.6 Paving Materials

Within the locality there are two wonderful examples of traditional paving with cobbles for the path between the Parish Church and the Manor and the gravel drive leading up the Avenue to the church.



### 8.3.7 Private Areas

Nearly all the compartmented open spaces here offer public access, whether it be the graveyard to the Parish Church or the quiet public gardens around the Manor House or the gardens looking onto London Road, surrounded by their historic (of late nineteenth century? origin) railings or high walls these offer peace and tranquillity in the heart of the town centre with lush planting and lawns and flower beds – in marked contrast to the barren open car park adjoining. The planting in both these walled areas, as well as the older part of the cemetery, are valued for their biodiversity and provide habitats for wildlife close in to the town centre.

### 8.3.8 Trees

This locality is memorable for its mature trees including the formal avenue of lime trees forming the approach to the Parish Church and the woodland trees including silver birch in the graveyards and grounds of the Manor House and Art Gallery including cedars and pines in the areas between the church and London Road. The former cattle market is in marked contrast for this is without any mature tree cover.



### 8.3.9 Vacant Sites

There are no vacant sites in this locality though longer term plans envisage transfer of functions of the Town Hall and police station/magistrates court elsewhere in Kettering which will release a considerable area for possible new uses.

## 8.4 THE HEADLANDS

### 8.4.1 General



The Headlands follows the line of an ancient lane leading away from the church in a south western direction – shown clearly in the town map of 1587 and in even more detail in the famous Brasier map of Kettering of the 1720s made for the Duke of Montagu and where the individual strips of the open field system are arranged with their narrow ends open to the roadway. Its urbanisation came relatively late, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards with development by wealthy industrialists and merchants of Kettering in a low density and leafy, residential area, chiefly from the 1870s to the 1900s coinciding with the industrial boom years of the town.

The earlier volumes of *The Buildings of England* do not as a whole give much detail on, or enthuse over, nineteenth century traditional domestic architecture - thus the *Northamptonshire* volume refers to only one house in the area, Sunnylands, now St Peter's School, not surprisingly by J.A. Gotch, for the Timpson shoe manufacturer. But The Crossways is also known to have been designed by Gotch, for the Toller family (Baptists and solicitors) and many of the other houses are also of high quality and must have been the work of other local architects – and not least the work of local builders. Their value thus is not simply that of contributing to an attractive, cohesive and identifiable district: They are a testament to the power and talents of Kettering in its exciting years of expansion.



Most of the houses face directly onto the road and are aligned in parallel with it but those on the east side of the Headlands, between Glebe Avenue and The Drive are

noticeably aligned on the geometry of the street grid layout behind (indicating they were built after the Hawthorn Road development).

#### **8.4.2 Topography**

This is a fairly flat area though with a general slight fall to the south and more pronounced paths to the west allowing houses to look over rooftops to the valley beyond. There is also a more localised dip to the Bowling Green Road and away to the east falls down to the London Road as it descends the hill to bridge over the Ise brook.

#### **8.4.3 Building Scale, Height and Type**



The area is characterised by substantial detached or semi detached villas in their own grounds with mature trees and bushes. Houses are most commonly three storey in the central part of the street, generally with the second floor partly within the roof, and two storeys on Bowling Green Road, side roads and at the southern end of the area.

#### **8.4.4 Building Materials**

The local red brick is used on almost all the buildings – (exceptions include the white gault brickwork of no 1, Headlands on the very edge of the area and the stone built gothic design at no 20) with local stone dressings – in window and door surrounds, string courses and frequent decorative plaques – particularly celebrating dates or house names, a characteristic particularly of the later nineteenth century blocks. Roofs are almost wholly of Welsh slate, steeply pitched with effective use of chimneys, (with frequent use of corbels at chimney level) gables and dormers, often with robust painted woodwork.

#### **8.4.5 Architectural Decoration and Detailing**

Much of the variety reflects the varied dates of building: the plain ‘four square’ villas of the 1870s and the gothic of the Lloyds Surgery of the same period – characterised by their plainness with large plate glass window sashes and simple panelled entrance doors. But even here are surprises such as the elegant cast iron window frames with six sided panes to the rear of no 43.





But many of the later houses exhibit all the characteristics of the late nineteenth century English domestic revival when the full influence of the work of architects and designers such as William Morris and Philip Webb left its mark on sensitive domestic design – with more varied massing and with touches of the Queen Anne style in arched window openings, with multi – pane sashes and canted window bays (see for example nos 2 and 4 the Headlands) or the vernacular revival in timber framed jettied gables.



Windows are in both casement and sash form with frequent use of a plain lower plate-glass sash in contrast to the upper, either subdivided by glazing bars or intricate leaded lights. Much use is made of ground floor projecting bay windows.



Two blocks in particular are of a more restrained, almost garden-city type of design, built around the time of the First World War (nos 69 & 71, the block on the corner of Hawthorn Road) and Nos 107-111, beyond the Conservation area boundary. These make use of more understated design and colour with ‘softer’ materials, presenting simple and attractive domestic frontages without any sense of show or display.

No two houses are alike though differences are subtle and within a limited palette

giving considerable variety and interest to the streetscape without restlessness and where even two blocks may initially appear similar, such as nos 2/4 and 6/8 Headlands, variations in door details and projecting bays are enough to testify to their different identities.

#### 8.4.6 Paving Materials

In public areas paving is virtually wholly tarmac on both roads and footpaths though it is possible the roadway would have been in setts originally with flanking pavements in brick or stone, at least for the northern stretches. A water-bound macadam or crushed gravel may well have surfaced for the southern end of the street in its earliest days. But private areas offer a richer palate of materials with brick, gravel and stone in addition to tarmac.

#### 8.4.7 Private Areas

To the road continuous brick walls mark the garden boundaries, capped by moulded stone copings – occasionally these clearly were surmounted originally by robust decorative wrought iron railings but most were World War II casualties and few now remain, e.g. Ferndale (no 17 Headlands) with evidence elsewhere in the form of cut-off stumps e.g. at nos 49-53 Headlands. Post-war replacements tend to be thinner and less rigorous e.g. on no 55 (Tollers, Solicitors) while at no 2 Headlands the wall has regrettably been removed in its entirety.



Garden entrances are commonly marked by brick gate piers – generally capped with elaborate decorative moulded pier caps and sometimes incorporating the name of the house carved with in a stone panel – the gates themselves have sadly almost wholly been replaced by modern substitutes which are rarely of any note – but fortunately a very few early gates remain at nos 43, to The Crossways (now no 131 Hawthorn Rd), and no 109 (beyond the Conservation Area) to show just how appropriate these robust and simple, well detailed, timber gates would have appeared originally.



In a few cases front gardens have been converted to hard standing for car parking – often to the detriment of the setting of the house and the whole quality of the street – particularly harmful are those where the whole garden has been paved over to form a hardstanding.



Views between the houses offer tantalising glimpses into these rear and private domains. Many of these gardens extend well back, often to include dense mature planting or in some cases carriage blocks or workshops, those to gardens nos 56-60 and others beyond the conservation area boundary uncannily reflecting the cultivation strips of the earlier open field system in their long narrow form.



Within this lush and suburban setting the open space afforded by the grounds of Crossways, part lawn and part orchard surrounded by mature trees, appears as a key (if private) open space and given added significance because it is at an important crossroads where it provides a welcome pause between two of the most important houses on the Headlands.

#### 8.4.8 Trees

The mature planting of the private gardens – with occasional forest trees including both coniferous and deciduous trees with silver birch in the roadway, gives the Headlands a particularly memorable character and this would originally have been even further emphasised:

Early photographs of the Headlands show that the roadway was fully tree lined, like many other main suburban roads laid out in Kettering in the late nineteenth century – such as the improved London Road, Station Road, Glebe Avenue, Roundhill Road and Broadway. In all these but particularly in both the Headlands and Station Road many of the trees have now been lost and some new planting would be highly desirable to make good these losses.



#### 8.4.9 Vacant Sites

Although there are no sites which are vacant in the locality the characteristic long and generous gardens to the large houses of the Headlands offer tempting sites for smaller additional houses – too many of which will seriously erode the unique character of the neighbourhood.

### 8.5 Other Residential Areas (Beyond the Conservation Area)

#### London Road

Beyond the Conservation Area both London Road and Rockingham Road offer similar townscapes to The Headlands though with slightly less cohesion - with large houses of villa or semi detached form, two or three storeys in height set back from the road in their own grounds and with the gardens defined by low brick walls or timber paling fencing. Their individual design is also of similar quality and range – the London Road houses for example varying from the early Victorian two storey, four-square block of the Funeral Directors at 92A, London Road, to the three storey, late Victorian, semi detached villas at 112 and 114. Greater ostentation can be seen in the decorative swags of the semi detached block, nos 152 & 154, of late Victorian manner.



As with The Headlands the early twentieth century is represented further out by two buildings of ‘softer’ materials and more sensitive form – the chaste classical villa ‘Overdene’ of 1913, and ‘The Orchard’ of 1915, complete with its original decorative oak boarded gate, arched bracket over and semi circular entrance steps – something of a period set-piece: Further out still ‘The Yews’, No 123, is a charming Arts and Crafts design, set well back from the road in extensive grounds, with white painted rough cast walls and fine ashlar decorative surround to the entrance door. As with The Headlands the buildings generally face directly onto the road and are aligned in parallel with it but with the exception of some houses laid out on the orthography of Broadway/Hawthorn Road behind.

### **Rockingham Road**

Whilst the Headlands is a relatively quiet cul-de-sac, Rockingham Road is a busy through-road, but it repeats the same design motifs and restricted variety of forms and materials, though here interspersed with handsome terraces and villas some with fine examples of Victorian joinery including some decorative wooden porches. In all these roads the emphasis is on quality of material and design with harmonious non assertive forms and character testifying to the erudition and good manners of clients and architects.



### **Terraced Housing Areas**

Away from these three key residential areas the vast majority of Kettering’s working population lived in the handsome simple terraced houses laid out in the

1860s – 70s by leading industrialists and citizens of the town in grid plan form. The growth of these suburbs is identified and documented by Greenall in his *A History of Kettering* which shows how these major estates were formed, including the Holyoake Estate, Milligan Estate and Meadows and Bryan Estate – all off the Rockingham Road as well as the Stockburn Estate off Montagu Street.

Their character is similar and consistent across the town: the local orange/red brick predominates – sometimes used with coloured brick or stone string courses and often with elaborate brickwork modelling to give high level ‘cornices’. Terraces are seldom very long but have varied elevational treatment so that even on a long road such as Regent Street there is never risk of boredom. The terraces are set hard up to the back edge of the pavement – giving to the area a tight and close grain, with even the corners fully built up – sometimes marked by a traditional corner shop. Modern practice, seen elsewhere in Kettering, has tended to the use of angled/splayed corners set back from the building line which erodes the architectural unity and cohesion of these fine simple terraces.



A particularly characteristic detail is the use of groups of three doorways, the outer flanking doors for house front entrances and the central door giving access to a passage through to the yards and gardens at the rear. Almost always paved in blue engineering brick paviours the passages are traditionally guarded at the street entrance by a four panelled door, sometimes with a decorative grille as fanlight. The rear brick paved yards are lined with continuous rows of privies and workshops laid out parallel to the terraces they serve. Rear access is achieved elsewhere along ‘jitties’ parallel with the streets.



Roofs are almost wholly now of machine-made tile but these would have been in slate originally – and which would have given a more subtle and smoother roof finish. Fortunately however the chimneys remain giving rhythm and punctuation to the roofline.



Articulation of the rows of terraces and long vistas is afforded by the four storey high former shoe factories and workshops and Cooperative Society Warehouses – now mostly all in other uses – (including some successfully converted to residential use) and which like their adjoining terraces are built hard up to the rear of the pavements.

The same tight relationship is maintained by public buildings – community halls, churches and schools – all similarly built hard up to the pavement and fitting tightly into the urban grain of the housing.



Schools are a particularly distinctive feature of the Kettering landscape; A School Board was formed late in the town in 1890 and made up for lost time by building several memorable and distinguished buildings – almost always given heightened stature by being grouped around handsome towers – Examples include the Rockingham Road School, with central tower forming a landmark when viewed along Regent Street; the Stamford Road School with its heavily modelled gabled tower, now the County Council’s William Knibb’s Centre for Youth Services Centre (still with its wartime timber board blanking off the name ‘Kettering’ in the decorative stone panel name) and the Hawthorne Road School, all very much ‘anchored’ into their respective areas by their use of similar material to and close grouping with their adjoining terraces.

Non-conformist chapels – particularly the Fuller Baptist, Toller Baptist, Carey Baptist, the Congregational (now United Reformed) and Salvation Army churches also form a distinctive group of buildings in this case reflecting the strong free-church tradition in the town.

Grander terraces, often with modest front gardens, dominate some of the principal roads such as Broadway, St Peters Avenue, Tennyson Road, Eden Street and Hawthorne Road. These share and amalgamate many of the characteristics of both the villas and terraces found elsewhere in the town: rarely showy or insistent with their detailing and always putting individuality second to the overall unity and cohesion of the complete terrace design. In these the same type of gables and bays of the villas on the Headlands are used in terraces to give punctuation and rhythm to the longer form.



There is frequent use of stone dressings or modelled brickwork and with the names of the terrace or date of erection celebrated within a decorated plaque. In these areas also, rear passages and mews-like rear workshops and alleys continue to be commonplace. These are handsome houses, built to a high density but providing a useful model for future urban development.





## **9.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- 9.1** The community has been closely consulted as part of the process of undertaking the Appraisal in line with the guidance given in the North Northamptonshire *Statement of Community Involvement*. A copy of the draft document was published on the Council's website and a display was mounted in Kettering in the Corn Market following press notices. Community feedback has been carefully considered and amendments made following in the light of these.

## **10.0 BOUNDARY CHANGES**

- 10.1** The 1985 conservation area boundaries are almost twenty years old and no longer reflect the present day heightened appreciation and awareness of historic buildings and townscape. The boundaries were tightly drawn and inexplicably cut through the historic town centre rather than including it as a whole. Two areas for extension to the north are confirmed – an addition including Gold Street and an extended area including part of Montagu Street.

Important individual good buildings adjoining the earlier boundary are also added. These are shown on the accompanying plan. To the south, three discrete areas of houses are also an addition. Parts of: The Grove; The Drive and buildings immediately adjoining The Gables on Station Road. These all contain good quality houses of a quality comparable with those in the 1985 main conservation area.

The extension to the area was the subject of much debate before being drawn up. Given the urban quality of Kettering there is a case for much further extension of the boundaries than is here adopted, including, for example, residential streets immediately bordering the extended conservation area.

This applies particularly to streets such as Tennyson Road and blocks in Garfield Street backing onto the Headlands, also sites or blocks in Victoria Street and off Southlands Road. A pragmatic approach has inevitably had to be adopted though to avoid creating further anomalies by creating boundaries cutting through homogenous neighbourhoods of quality. Thus in general discrete additions are made which will reinforce or complete the existing area – for example adding the remaining part of the historic town centre. However this reassessment of the conservation area does emphasise the importance of streets such as Station Road and Tennyson Road as being 'buffer' zones where future development might not only threaten the quality of the street but also the greater setting of the conservation area itself. These buffer areas will therefore need just as careful planning control as the conservation area itself and their character should be the subject of a reassessment in the new future along with the other areas in Kettering identified in the Kettering Extensive Urban Survey: These buffer areas include

Garfield Street, Broadway and Hawthorn Roads (west end); London Road (north end); Tennyson Road; Green Lane, Victoria Street; Eskdail Street, Newlands Centre, High Street, west side); Meadow Road and Northampton Road (east end); Station Road and Queensbury Road; the open areas by Crispin Place, Printers Yard and Jobs Yard; and finally the ‘viewing corridors’ of long established views to distant hills or to the Parish Church steeple.

The following relates only to extensions to the 1985 conservation area but it should be noted that the *Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey: Kettering* recommended the designation of several new conservation areas within the town because of the completeness of their nineteenth century fabric which it regarded as being of “national importance”

Similarly for ease of understanding and administration it could be argued that the boundaries should be regularised to follow main streets and boundaries in preference to individual building plots. However this would result in the conservation area increasing to take in many cleared sites and substandard buildings diluting the quality of the conservation area as a whole.

#### **A. Continuation of Town Centre: Gold Street and Dalkeith Place**

Continuation of town centre locally to include historic buildings on the main shopping streets including: all buildings on east side of High Street and south side Gold Street, also Silver Street, Dalkeith Place and streets to east. This will complete the historic town centre including key buildings such as the corner building on the Gold Street, Montagu Street Junction, the Fuller Baptist Church, buildings in Meeting Lane; the British School in School Lane, the terrace and gardens in Dalkeith Avenue and former rear workshops in British Lane.



#### **B. Continuation of Town Centre along Montagu Street**

This extends the area to the natural boundary on Eskdail Street/Victoria Street, including in it the listed, Conservative Club on Montagu Street, good street buildings on Montagu Street and good quality, interesting terraces in the streets behind, such as that in St Andrews Street.



### **C. North Town Centre High Street**

There are various individual building adjoining the High Street including the splendid Art Deco Cinema frontage (how splendid this would look with its original flagpoles reinstated and with uplighting to the concave roof feature) the classical 1930s Court building and buildings on the west side of the High Street which do much to relieve the otherwise poor quality adjoining modern frontages (which are given undue prominence by the curve of the street).



### **D Residential area south of Bowling Green Road**

The Grove forms a cohesive and compact area of good quality terraces and tree lined streets connecting directly onto the southern building of the existing conservation area on Bowling Green Road.

### **E. Station Road**

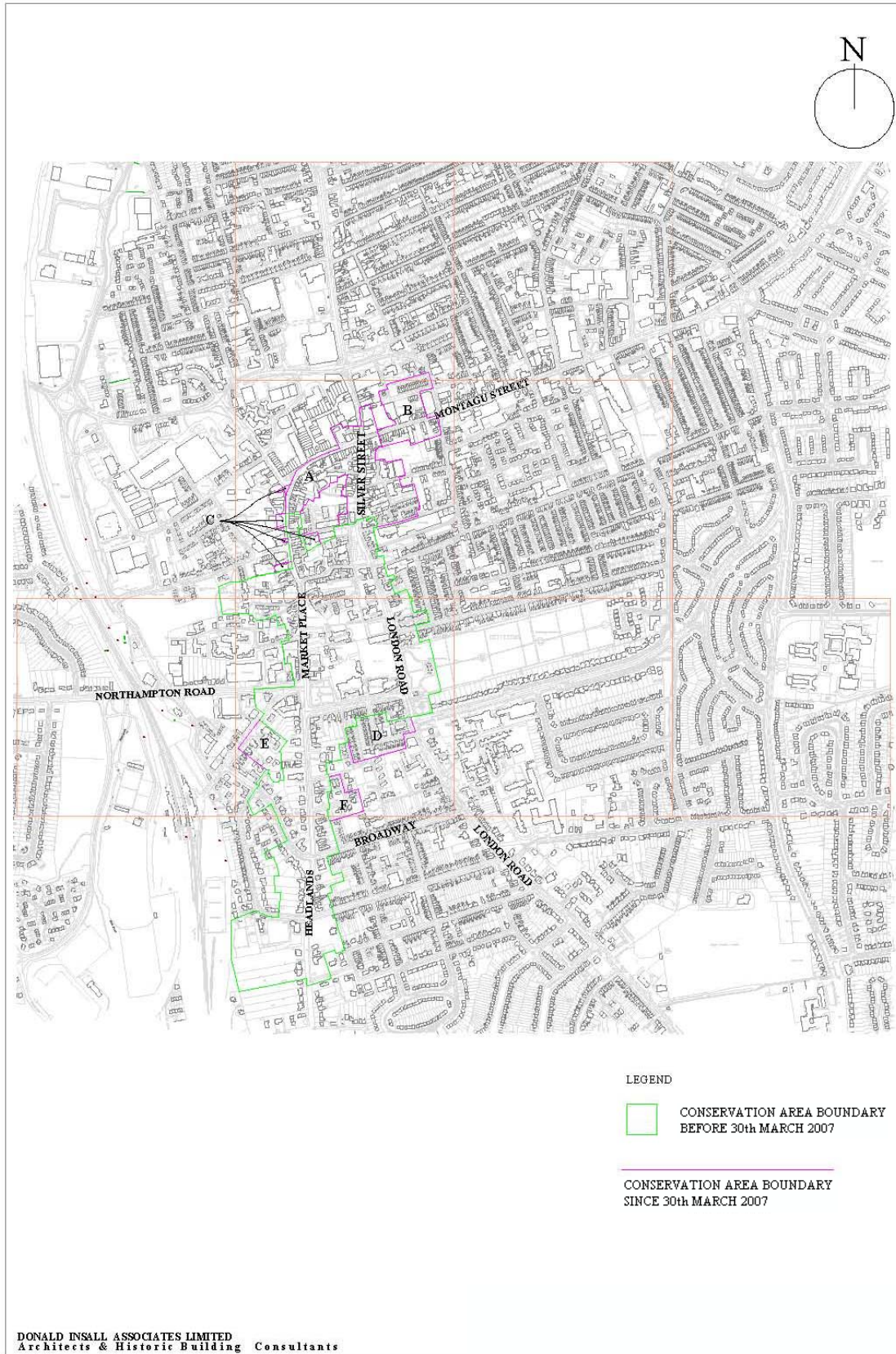
Although the architectural character of Station Road has been largely eroded by the office buildings on the north west side of the road of consistent low quality, it still maintains a residential feeling through its avenue of mature trees and with three former houses (now either converted to flats or offices, including the Gables, said to have been the home of Alfred East's brother) at the north end retaining sufficient quality to justify a modest extension of the conservation area along the street.

### **F. The Drive**

This area includes several good houses which form a natural extension of the Headlands locality.



**KETTERING CONSERVATION AREA**



## 11.0 LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

This Appraisal raises a number of important issues described following together with policies for their control or improvement. These will be the subject of a separate policy guide to be issued by the Council. Similarly the design of extensions and new developments as well as shopfronts (including security measures) will be dealt with by a separate document expanding the guidance given here in the Appraisal.

## 12.0 ISSUES

*The survey and research undertaken in the course of this appraisal of the conservation area have identified a wide range of issues and trends which threaten its unique historic and architectural character:*

### 12.1 The Existing Fabric

#### 12.1.1 Undervaluing the Historic Fabric: Statutory listings in the areas do not reflect the quality and significance of the buildings in the conservation area.

The national listing descriptions in Kettering date from 1950 when several key historic buildings were listed including: Carey House, Chesham House, The Manor House, Parish Church, Sawyers Almshouses and 12 West Street. Later still additional listings were made – including in 1974 (Fuller Baptist Church and 1 Silver Street; 1975 (Royal Hotel) and a revised list was completed in April 1976. There have been few major additions subsequently and yet there are many buildings of significance in the town which have not been included in the lists and which nevertheless meet the criteria for listing outlined in *Planning Policy Guideline 15* (such as: *The Toller Chapel Sunday Schools, Meeting Lane; the former Liberal Club, now Xtra in Horse Market; the HSBC Bank in the High Street and Crossways in Headlands – to name but a few*). These could however in the meantime form the nucleus of a list of buildings of local significance.



KETTERING CONSERVATION AREA



**Kettering**  
*Borough Council*

**12.1.2 Ignorance:** With little historical information published on individual buildings, with the exception of the Parish Church and Manor House, the value of the historic fabric is not always recognised by owners and developers in putting forward proposals for their alteration.

**12.1.3 Buildings at Risk:** For the town centre part of the conservation area the problem of dereliction has the double effect of placing significant buildings at risk as well as blighting the neighbourhood.



**12.1.4 Gap Sites:** A Major problem in the area is the proliferation of cleared sites in the town centre. These break up its tight knit urban 'grain', revealing the backs of buildings and destroying the continuity of street frontages. Whether cleared or derelict, used for car parking or simply left empty these sites merely add to a sense of incompleteness and lack of care.



**12.1.5 Archaeology:** The radical rebuilding of the town centre over the medieval base provides little opportunity for archaeological deposit – nevertheless as the *Extensive Urban Survey* shows there are particular areas where archaeology may provide useful information on the historic development of the town and throughout the medieval town centre.

#### **12.1.6 Inappropriate Alterations**

Even minor inappropriate alterations can radically alter the whole appearance of a frontage, breaking up the unity of a terrace or otherwise blighting the streetscape. Issues arising out of alterations include the following:



**a) Town Centre Shopfronts:** With few exceptions these are of poor quality and make little contribution to the street scape. In addition a few fascias continue across neighbouring frontages, compromising the architectural clarity and rhythm of the façade design.



**b) Security:** Within the town centre use of solid roller shutters blights and disfigures several frontages. Inevitably closed solid shutters give a bland and threatening appearance and are, for example, more prone to graffiti than open grille shutters.

**c) Windows and Doors:** There is an increasing tendency to replace original windows and doors with modern items, often of quite different material and design. While good contemporary design has a place, particularly e.g. in new shop fronts where it should be encouraged, there is less scope for change with historic window patterns whose design and detail form an integral part of the whole façade and contribute so much to its enjoyment. Replacement of finely detailed moulded joinery in traditional sash windows, for example, by simpler bulkier 'plastic' window frames, merely gives blandness to a frontage and removes any sense of authenticity and depth.



**d) Frontage Cladding:** Part of the delight of the terraces and villas of Kettering is that they are built of the harmonious local materials of orange/red brick and ironstone. Both these used superior quality bricklaying and masonry skills with generally fine joints and crisp detail – superior to much contemporary workmanship. Moreover like the city of Bath, in Kettering these materials contribute to the richness and identity of the town and by their use in long terraces, provide a homogeneity and cohesion to whole neighbourhoods.

It is therefore particularly surprising and distressing to find examples of inferior modern cladding materials, being introduced to the frontages of a number of houses across the town, fortunately as yet not into houses in the Conservation Area. These materials are offensive to the eye because they generally cover good quality masonry or brickwork; they intrude in an insistent way and break up the unity of well considered designs in the case of terraces and moreover they introduce materials at once both foreign to the local building tradition and cheap looking. They have nothing to recommend themselves to Kettering and their use will be discouraged.



**e) Painting of Brickwork:** In general, painting of brickwork can compromise architectural design and in many instances may cause damage to the brickwork or stonework to which it is applied by entrapping moisture in the fabric.



**f) Dormer Windows/Roof Extensions:** Again, as yet roof extensions/dormers have not become an issue in the conservation area but evidence elsewhere in Kettering shows that this could become a problem. This is because ill-considered roof extensions can alter the proportion of the whole frontage and, in the case of a terrace, radically affect the harmony and cohesion of the whole length of the structure. There may be cases where individual, discreet dormers will have minimal effect on the overall design and each case will therefore need to be looked at on its merits, but in general, on terraces at least, roof level additions of any type will be discouraged.

**g) Roof Materials:** Loss of slate roofs and their replacement with machine made tiles and replacement of original cast iron gutters and rainwater pipes with plastic compromises the quality the character of a building.

**h) Satellite Dishes and Television Aerials:** These features can have a seriously detrimental effect on ‘architectural’ frontages when seen en masse and if allowed to spread without any control. At present these do not pose a problem here in Kettering but consideration could usefully be given to their control in future to avoid this becoming an issue.

**i) Loss of Garden Walls, Fences and Gates:** The traditional walls, boarded fences and gates play a major role in the appearance of the residential streets such as The Headlands, defining the public boundary, giving a sense of enclosure and providing a suitable foreground for the buildings behind. Loss of these features therefore has a seriously negative impact on the whole street.

**j) Subdivision of Plots:** A major part of the appeal of the Headlands is its low density – in comparison with say the town centre: The substantial and handsome houses require an open setting of a size directly in proportion to the footprint on which the original house sits, to avoid the house losing its sense of ‘place’. Subdivision of plots can therefore only be successful in extreme cases of exceptionally long and unwieldy rear gardens where further development and loss of the ‘distant’ part of the garden will not affect the setting of the house or other neighbouring houses causing them loss of amenity.

**k) Forecourt Car Parking:** Pressure for car parking space within Kettering residential areas such as the Headlands has led to the removal of the mature planting and compromises the traditional sense of enclosure resulting in some erosion of the historic townscape by the provision of unsightly and intrusive hardstandings.



**12.1.7 Changes of Use:** In the Town Centre ‘locality’ upper floors in historic buildings are either underused or in some cases lacking completely an active use. Consideration will need to be given on how to make best use of these spaces, either for office use or new residential conversions.

Within the Civic Quarter, historically some uses have changed: the school became the Town Hall, the art gallery partly occupies the site of an earlier

engineering works and the car park the former cattle market. With the probable relocation of some facilities elsewhere in the near future consideration will need to be given to new uses within the site and how these will be accommodated.

Within the Headlands 'locality' there is a continuing spread of office or other non-residential uses (e.g. surgery, schools etc.), outwards from the Town Centre, taking over houses and converting these to new uses. This has the side effects of increasing need for additional car parking on the site; use of unsympathetic office lighting internally – seen outside in the form of intrusive brightly lit (often by fluorescent fittings) windows, - additional signage and a loss of activity at weekends and in the evenings

## 12.2 Quality of New Development

With a few exceptions most new developments in the town centre have been of a poor quality of design which neither relates well to the adjoining buildings nor is of an acceptable standard in itself. This largely arises from defects such as:

- **Excessive Bulk:** primarily because of height and size of footprint. Historically development in most of the conservation area was of two or three storeys.
- **Loss of Historic Plots:** similarly amalgamation and subsuming of historic plots creates a scale of development generally unrelated to its context and to the historical development of the urban grain within the Conservation Area.
- **Inappropriate Materials:** a characteristic of the Conservation Area is the dominance of a limited palette of traditional materials, generally local orange/red brick or stone and blue/grey Welsh slate. Indiscriminate and seemingly arbitrary use of other materials and colours fits uncomfortably into this context.
- **Arbitrary Setbacks:** another key feature of the Conservation Area part of the Town Centre is the way main frontages of buildings are built hard-up to the back of pavements maintaining a tight urban quality. Arbitrary setbacks and breaks in formerly continuous frontages weaken the townscape qualities and conflict with the character of the area.
- **Superficial, Fussy and Contrived Design:** contrived and fussy architectural design is at variance with the generally robust and straightforward quality of the traditional domestic buildings in the Conservation Area which are generally of a clear, restrained and unambiguous form.
- **Lack of Respect for the Hierarchy of Buildings and Streets:** the subtle hierarchy of main street with subsidiary streets leading off and with major

corner buildings ‘fronting’ the main street is characteristic of the Conservation Area, a subtlety lost in large monolithic developments.

- **Additional Storeys:** these are out of context in the predominately 3 storey shopping streets or the predominantly domestic scale of the Headlands. An increase in height alters the character of an existing building, it may block views and it also has the undesirable effect of levelling off rooflines the variety and contrast of which adds so much to the character of the Conservation Area.
- **Over-Development of Sites:** pressures to maximise returns have led not only to schemes with many of the faults listed above but also to the use of poor and contorted plans to fill in the site area.

#### 12.4 Other Issues

**Retention of Views:** views to and from the Parish Church spire, local schools and roads out to nearby countryside, contribute significantly to the character of the Conservation Area. These are at risk with insensitive new development.

**The Public Realm:** Throughout the Conservation Area there has been an erosion of the character and quality of original features and details. The setts and Yorkstone paving, seen in the photographs of nineteenth century Kettering, have largely been replaced.

Some improvements have been effected in recent years and losses made good in for example, new paving taking the place of tarmac, but selection of paving needs to have regard to the high quality and interest of the buildings to which it provides a setting.

Some tree planting has taken place as part of street improvement works in the town centre and, while this may be welcome in obscuring views to the poor quality development of the late twentieth century and in relieving the monotony of concrete paving, their selection and positioning is not always ideal. They conceal some good quality older frontages as well as transforming a streetscape of distinctive and traditional form into something more alien and mall-like. A quite different issue arises in the residential roads where the avenues lining main residential roads to the south have lost individual trees, resulting in a patchy appearance and where new planting would be very welcome.

Modern light standards have rarely been selected for their visual appeal and in the largely nineteenth century streets of Kettering the small human scale of traditional gas light standards has been replaced by the bigger scale of tall standard highway light fittings. Where this is the case in the conservation area some consideration should be given to their replacement.

## 12.5 Town Trails

Although Kettering is well served by a number of excellent publications on its history and recent changes, by way of historical and photographic publications, there is nothing on the town's architecture apart from a less than satisfactory entry in *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire* volume, now nearly fifty years old. There is much in Kettering waiting to be 'discovered' and currently not generally appreciated for its artistic or historical worth. Much information is readily available in the Local History Collection in the Library and it would be highly desirable if this information could be brought together with on site descriptions to provide a series of town trails covering the whole of 'old' Kettering, which would both inform and interest tourists and locals alike. Encouragement could also be given to the installation of plaques on buildings whose history or associations are of historic interest.

## 13.0 USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

### 13.1 PLANNING GUIDANCE

Kettering Borough Council  
Bowling Green Road  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire  
NN15 7QX

01536 410333

[Customerservices@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:Customerservices@kettering.gov.uk)  
[www.kettering.gov.uk](http://www.kettering.gov.uk)

### 13.2 AMENITY GROUPS

<b>Kettering Civic Society</b>	Paul Ansell (Chairman) Monica Ozdemir (Secretary)	01536 312 272 <a href="mailto:mmozdemir@yahoo.com">mmozdemir@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Victorian Society</b>	The Victorian Society, 1 Priory Gardens London W4 1TT	020 8747 5895
<b>Georgian Group</b>	The Georgian Group 6 Fitzroy Square London W1T 5DX	087 1750 2936 <a href="mailto:info@georgiangroup.org.uk">info@georgiangroup.org.uk</a>
<b>The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings SPAB</b>	37 Spital Square London E1 6DY	020 7377 1644 <a href="mailto:info@spab.org.uk">info@spab.org.uk</a>

### 13.3 HERITAGE GUIDANCE

#### English Heritage Eastern England Office

East Midlands Region  
44 Dergate  
Northampton  
NN1 1UH

01604 735400

## 13.4 TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE

The Coach House  
Sheep Street  
Kettering  
NN16 OAN

01536 410266

[tic@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:tic@kettering.gov.uk)

## 13.5 FURTHER INFORMATION

### Related Planning Documents

*Kettering Local Development Framework*  
*Kettering Local Plan*, January 2005  
*Kettering Town Centre Master Plan*, May 2005  
*Kettering Town Centre Conservation Area Document*  
*Extension to Kettering Town Centre Conservation Area, Draft Designation Document*, 1988  
*North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement*, 2005  
English Heritage, *Streets for All: East Midlands*, 2005  
Glenn Foard and Jenny Ballinger *Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey: Kettering*, 2000

### Historical Background

Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry, *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1973

R.L Greenall, *A History of Kettering*, 2003

J. Smith, *Kettering Revisited: Pictures from the Past*, 1993

Tony Ireson, *Northamptonshire*, 1954

Bill Warren and The Rotary Club of Kettering Huxloe, *A Pictorial History of Kettering*, 1985

Tony Smith, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Kettering: A Book for the Millennium*, 1999



## **14.0 MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

### **14.1 Protecting the Existing Historic Fabric**

#### **14.1.1 Planning Guidance**

The purpose of the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance set out in the Kettering Conservation Area Management Plan is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The conservation area appraisal also highlights the need to manage the significant levels of new development in the area which, if unrestricted, will adversely affect the special character the designation was intended to conserve. In order to mitigate the effects of harmful change, policies which set out appropriate standards for new development and for alterations to existing buildings, including specific design guidance, are central to the management plan.

The policies contained in this appraisal plan accord with Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), *General Policy and Principles* (1997). PPG15, *Planning and the Historic Environment*, 1994; *The Future of the Historic Environment*, produced for the Government by English Heritage in 2000 and *Towards an Urban Renaissance*, in 2001. It is also intended to complement the *Kettering Masterplan* of May 2005.

#### **14.1.2 Listed Buildings**

The Council will seek to expand the existing statutory list of significant buildings in Kettering and will prepare a list of buildings of local interest and significance not covered by the national listings.

#### **14.1.3 Historical Research**

The Council will require historical documentary research to be carried out in support of proposals for significant alteration or demolition within the conservation area.

#### **14.1.4 Buildings at Risk**

The Council will maintain a register of Buildings at Risk, which will include buildings within the conservation area, and seek to secure their repair and re-use as assets which preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Some parts of the conservation area are in a good state of repair and, with continuing regular maintenance, are likely to remain in good health provided that they continue in sympathetic and active use. However, a few buildings of merit are unoccupied and deteriorating and are therefore at increasing levels of risk. Such decay will not only lead to the loss of important structures, but will

also blight the neighbourhood. A buildings at risk register will identify buildings for which action is most urgently needed and will set out the priorities for such action. This will provide the basis for a strategy for each building to include urgent works, supported by statutory provisions, where necessary, to halt further decay in extreme cases.

#### **14.1.5 Demolition**

The Council will not normally permit the demolition of buildings in the Kettering Conservation Area.

#### **14.1.6 Alterations**

There will be a presumption against alterations to buildings which adversely affect their character and appearance or that of the conservation area.

The historic buildings of Kettering Conservation Area are its primary asset. A few are statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest while others contribute to their setting or to the group value of an ensemble of buildings.

Few buildings within the conservation area fail to make a positive contribution to its character and appearance. Those with external architectural decoration most easily catch the eye but others are of equal importance, because of what their interiors contain or because of the special type. All of these factors contribute to the richly varied architectural and historical character of the conservation area. These unique qualities will be best maintained by keeping the buildings in good repair and in use. Proposals to alter buildings in ways which diminish their special character pose the greatest threat to the integrity of the conservation area.

The Appraisal recommends that the Council implement an Article 4 Direction on specific details throughout the Conservation Area to encourage retention of the high quality features of the buildings and to enhance the environment of which they are a key part. Repairs and replacements of original features in details and materials matching the original will be encouraged as also will be the removal of earlier unsympathetic alterations.

The Council will seek to control changes in the conservation area where proposals are seen to conflict with the significance of the area and conflict with Council policy. Specific areas of control which, it is recommended, should be introduced by Article 4 Direction are:

- a) Shop front design
- b) Roller Shutters
- c) Windows and doors
- d) Frontage cladding

- e) Painting facades
  - f) Dormer windows
  - g) Roofing materials
  - h) Satellite dishes/television aerials
  - i) Removal or alteration to garden walls and gates
- Extent of new paving in gardens or yards/car parking in garden

#### **14.1.7 Archaeology**

In the area of the former medieval town centre, (generally all sites with the town centre locality) redevelopment of sites, if agreed, will only be permitted after provision of a full desk top archaeology survey and with planning conditions likely to include a requirement for archaeological monitoring of work in progress.

#### **14.1.8 Changes of Use**

The Council will not normally permit changes of use to a building where the new use would adversely affect its character and adversely affect the appearance of the conservation area.

The special architectural and historic character of the Town Centre part of the conservation area reflects the historic development of Kettering and the trades of the town centre. These have produced the pattern of building types and forms which characterise the centre. Equally in both the Civic Quarter and Headlands localities each has its own very distinctive quality derived from scale, building material, layout and use. The retention of existing uses contributes to character, quality and interest and is an important part of conservation policy that addresses the character of the area and the quality of the townscape in the broadest sense as well as protecting individual buildings.

#### **14.1.9 External Advertising**

The Council will control external advertising in a way which will reconcile the needs for legitimate advertising with the conservation of buildings, streets and views so as to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

#### **14.1.10 Security**

The Council recognizes the need for security within the Conservation Area, and will seek to reconcile the security needs of building owners with the requirement to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area. Externally mounted or solid shutters will not normally be permitted. The Council will provide advice on shutters, alarm boxes, security lighting, CCTV cameras and gates.

### **14.1.11 Repair and Maintenance**

The Council will provide guidance on materials, techniques and finishes appropriate for the repair and maintenance of existing buildings within the conservation area, so as to preserve or enhance its special character.

## **14.2 New Design and Development**

### **14.2.1 The Design of New Development**

Permission for new development will only be granted where it respects the scale, form and density of the historic pattern of development, where it protects views and roofscapes and where it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **14.2.2 Gap Sites**

The Council will encourage the development of vacant sites.

In particular, the Council will have regard to:

- a) The scale and mass of new buildings –  
The Council will require new buildings to respect the scale and mass of traditional buildings within the locality.
- b) The maintenance of historic plot boundaries –  
The Council will require new development to respect the historic pattern of plot boundaries within the conservation area.
- c) The plan form, elevational treatment and materials of new buildings –  
The Council will require the plan form, elevational treatment and materials to complement the historic and architectural character of the conservation area. In particular, principal elevations should always front the street.
- d) The maintenance of street frontage building lines –  
The Council will require new development to follow the historic street frontage line.
- e) The maintenance of the hierarchy of the historic street pattern –  
The Council will require new development to follow the hierarchy of the historic street pattern.
- f) The height of new buildings –  
The Council will require new buildings to respect the height of traditional buildings within the locality. This will normally limit new developments to a three storey maximum.
- g) Car Parking –  
The Council will not normally permit development of car parking spaces where this involves demolition or part demolition of buildings. Further development of car parking spaces on forecourts in gardens or on former rear yards will not normally be permitted.

The council will seek to publish design guidance for the town centre, in particular the larger vacant sites.

*The presence of uncharacteristic buildings in the Conservation Area does not provide grounds for allowing more like them and a further erosion of historic character. By seeking to conserve traditional buildings and adding new ones that reinforce historic character, the relative impact of negative elements will be diminished.*

### **14.2.3 Residential Use**

In the Town Centre the council will encourage new residential use over existing shops where the floor space otherwise will remain empty.

### **14.2.4 Subdivision of Gardens**

In the Headlands the council will not permit further development in the rear gardens of houses within the Conservation Area.

### **14.2.5 Live-Work Units**

The Council will support the provision of live-work units as a component of mixed use development in existing cleared sites in the Town Centre in the form where the ratio of living to working space will not exceed 50% of each unit.

It is expected that a number of proposals will include live-work, defined for the purposes of this document as living and working accommodation combined within a single self-contained unit where the unit contains a defined working space with its own toilet and kitchen.

## **14.3 Other Policies**

### **14.3.1 Links and Views**

The conservation area has visual, historical and traditional links with the immediate surrounding areas which are evident on the roads and streets leading into the area – particularly those giving views of the Parish Church. The views and links will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. The Council will also seek to protect other key views which contribute to the character of the conservation area.

### **14.3.2 The Public Realm**

Policies for the public realm need to pay regard to the character of the area and to historic features. Original features should be retained and repaired and new features introduced in sympathy with the original. This includes new paving, and street furniture such as bollards and public light fittings – which should all

be designed or selected to enhance the unique character of the conservation area. In particular paving should provide at least some of that interest provided by traditional features – such as setts and Yorkstone with their variations in colour, tone and size and the apparently changing effects of light and depth in differing weather conditions – effects largely missing from standardized monolithic concrete finishes.

Landscaping strategy and design will recognize the predominance of hard surfaces in the town centre and the lush green gardens, mature trees and planting which characterize the Headlands. The contrast between these areas should be maintained, with urban trees selected for the town centre and public roads rather than the smaller ‘decorative’ species, which should be restricted to private gardens. In the town centre consideration should be given to restricting trees to set backs and corners rather than positioning in the centre of streets where their location can seriously impair appreciation of the traditional urban street form. In the suburbs where roads were originally tree-lined, missing trees should be replaced with new planting.

#### **14.4 Opportunities for Beneficial New Development**

**14.4.1** Several key sites exist within the town centre part of the conservation area and Civic Quarter locality which would benefit from sensitive development to remove eyesores and to provide sympathetic new buildings and uses which will have a beneficial effect on the rest of the conservation area. Uses will need to be consistent with those given in the Kettering Plan and opportunities identified within the *Kettering Masterplan* (May 2005).

**14.4.2** Chief amongst these are the central area of cleared sites off Meeting Lane between the High Street and Dalkeith Place. This is an important area in the centre of the town whose sympathetic development could exert benefits across the whole of the town centre.

**14.4.3** Sites on the East side of the Horse Market, including the derelict blocks by Queen Street and the car sales plot, will again provide a unique opportunity for development which could contribute positively to the town centre and restore the sense of enclosure to the Horse Market – now partly compromised by the gap site at the South East corner.

**14.4.4** The Civic Quarter includes large areas of surface car parking and buildings whose use is likely to change within the next decade. These include both the Town Hall and Magistrates Court/Police Station/Register Office. This is a key area visible from all main routes entering the town centre, at the node point of several longer views towards the spire of the Parish Church and importantly also acting as a break between the busy urban town centre to the North and the quieter leafy residential streets to the south. The Council will seek to prepare a detailed design brief for this area and ensure that any future development here takes into account its location and respects the key historic buildings in the

immediate vicinity.

Careful long term planning and phasing of this will be needed to ensure that the site does not remain empty for any period and that the Town Hall or at least its most significant parts are retained in any new scheme.



- 14.4.5** In addition to the above the redevelopment of the Newlands Centre and telephone exchange area (again areas identified in the *Kettering Masterplan*), immediately next to the town centre, will need to be undertaken with the utmost sensitivity in terms of massing, heights, scale and materials – respecting long distance views to the Parish Church and complimenting the town centre facilities rather than competing with them.

The mid twentieth century retail blocks on the west side of the High Street similarly offer scope for sensitive new development because they contribute little presently to the townscape. As with the other north end sites any development will need to have regard for the quality and character of the rest of the Town Centre.



- 14.4.6** On a different scale altogether are those very many small plots where buildings have been cleared – leaving open spaces for car parking - or simply left unused – these include: rear areas to the South side of the Market Place, the corner of West Street and Hazelwood Lane.

- 14.4.7** In addition to the above it may be noted that the bus depot on Northampton Road (immediately outside the conservation area) occupies a key area on an important approach whose scale and massing are at odds with those of the buildings in the conservation area. Should its use terminate there will be a significant opportunity both to improve the setting of the conservation area and to provide uses in support of those within the conservation area. In this same area the sites on both Station Road adjoining Northampton House and the

depot at the west end of Bowling Green Road also provide opportunities for beneficial development.





**KETTERING CONSERVATION AREA**

