



**ENVIRONMENT AND  
ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY PANEL**  
*Committee Report*

**Public**

**Date of Meeting: 10th September 2009**

**Title: CITY CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW**

**Report of: Head of Planning and Housing Services**

**Report reference: DS. 61/09**

**Summary:**

Following the completion of the City Centre Conservation Area boundary review public consultation exercise this report summarises the responses received and considers what action should be taken concerning the Conservation Area boundary.

**Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:**

Is the level of consultation considered to be adequate?

Has sufficient attention been given to the responses received?

Do the amendments proposed to the boundary of the Conservation Area reflect the comments made?

Are the amendments proposed to the conservation area boundary appropriate?

Are there any other issues that should be considered?

**Recommendations:**

That the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the amendments proposed in this report and as shown on the attached plan for the City Centre Conservation Area be referred to Executive for its consideration of the City Centre Conservation Area boundary.

Alan Eales

**Head of Planning and Housing Services**

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**Ext: 7195**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: Executive Report DS.55/09

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The City Centre Conservation Area was last reviewed in 1986 when three central conservation areas were amalgamated. The boundary largely followed the line of the walled city with two exceptions:  
The Lanes area - which was being redeveloped at the time and for this reason it was left out of the new conservation area; and  
Court Square, Citadel Station, The Crescent, the top of Warwick Road and part of Lowther Street. These areas were outside the City Wall but had been included for their townscape value.
- 1.2 Work done by Carlisle Renaissance and local campaigns concerning the Lonsdale Cinema and Rickergate prompted this review of the present boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area, which has looked at the whole of the boundary and not just small sections of it. The previous report highlighted the significance of the different areas around the edge of the Conservation Area and this was part of the information presented to the public in the consultation.
- 1.3 Executive considered report DS.55/09 on the 27 July 2009 and resolved that the amendments to Carlisle City Centre Conservation Area proposed in Report DS.55/09 and as shown on the attached Map 1, be referred for consideration to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel at its next meeting.

## **2.0 CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 The Consultation Exercise took place at the Lanes Library and the Old Town Hall from Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009 until Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2009, with staff being available to answer questions from 10am to 4pm each day. It included an exhibition, leaflets and a questionnaire (See Appendix 1). The exhibition was available to the public throughout that period during the opening hours of both venues.
- 2.2 At the same time leaflets and questionnaires were distributed to all occupiers of property within the areas being examined. Comments have been received from individuals and groups as well as from the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Carlisle Renaissance. This report summarises the points made by all those who responded to the consultation, including suggestions for amending the boundary. The re-assessment of the boundary of the Conservation Area was broken down into seven areas and the responses received for each area are dealt with separately.

Respondents were also asked for their views on more general issues relating to Conservation in the City and where relevant these are included in this report.

### **3.0 RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION**

#### **3.1 Area 1**

3.1.1 This covered the Sauceries, Bitts Park and Devonshire Walk Car Park. This area has as its backdrop Carlisle Castle and its Walls. It creates the setting for these views of the Castle and this area has generally been welcomed as an inclusion to the Conservation Area.

3.1.2 The one issue that has been raised is the possibility of proposals to extend or develop the Car Park. Inclusion in the Conservation Area would require that any development should respect the character of the area and not damage it. This is, however, such a sensitive site, being adjacent to Carlisle Castle, that any development proposal would need to be treated in this way irrespective of its Conservation Area status. Inclusion would nevertheless add further weight to the significance of the site.

#### **3.2 Area 2**

3.2.1 This area covered from Caldew Bridge to the Victoria Viaduct, from West Walls to the Viaduct Road. The proposal to extend the boundary would include Backhouses Walk and Town Dyke Orchard. Within this area it would strengthen protection for a number of buildings which are not listed. It would also help to ensure a higher quality of development for those sites and buildings capable of being redeveloped. It has been suggested that inclusion in the Conservation Area may hinder a possible proposal for a multi-storey car park on Town Dyke Orchard. It is more likely that the Scheduled Ancient Monument of West Walls and adjacent listed buildings, including the Cathedral and the Deanery, would be more significant constraints.

3.2.2 The railway viaduct is a physical boundary which has its own historic and architectural merits and does lend itself to marking one edge of the Conservation Area. Its proximity to the proposed university site should help to focus the design of new buildings in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

3.2.3 The majority of responses on this part of the proposal felt that it should be included within the Conservation Area.

### **3.3. Area 3**

3.3.1 This area dealt with the Victoria Viaduct to Crown Street. The proposal shown during the consultation included the Viaduct, the Enterprise Centre, the Baths (including the Turkish Baths) and part of the Metal Box factory. The only other inclusion was the remaining (greater) part of the Citadel Station which was omitted from the conservation area. The response received support the inclusion of these areas, in particular giving the unlisted buildings a measure of protection from demolition. It does not prevent demolition but before this can be considered proposals for replacement must be approved and if these harm rather than enhance the character of the area they should be refused.

3.3.2 The former Paton's garage and the building next to it which fronts onto the Victoria Viaduct have also been pointed out as being worthy of special attention. These buildings are unlisted and inclusion within the conservation area would put them in the same situation as those described in the previous paragraph.

3.3.3 The area to the south of the Turkish Baths is either newly developed or consists of a variety of buildings and structures that have relatively little merit. It is situated well away from the City Centre Conservation Area and the impact of development here is not likely to have a great significance on its character.

### **3.4 Area 4**

3.4.1 This area covers Portland Place, Mary Street, Cecil Street and Warwick Road. The public consultation response mainly focussed on the buildings at the top of Warwick Road, the Lonsdale Cinema, the Post Office and the White House pub (formerly the Crescent Inn). The latter two properties are already within the conservation area but considerable concern has been raised by their closure. Most of the responses suggest the Lonsdale should be included within the Conservation Area.

3.4.2 The southern section of this area consists of modern building (including the Bingo Hall) and Car Parks relating to the Botchergate Conservation Area development, and includes the Telecom building together with the newly converted Travelodge Hotel. The latter development has improved the appearance of this building and, at

least in part, this was due to the site being immediately adjacent to the Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Area.

3.4.3 The position regarding the Lonsdale and the request for delisting has still not been resolved. It is currently protected from demolition by its listed status but should this be withdrawn then this protection would be lost unless the building was by then within a conservation area. It would have the same status as the buildings mentioned in paragraph 3.3.1.

### **3.5 Area 5**

3.5.1 This area covered from Warwick Road through to Lonsdale Street via Crosby Street and is sandwiched between the City Centre and the Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Areas. Buildings excluded from these areas included the Manse to St George's Church, the former Thurnam's building and the eastern side of Crosby Street. The Thurnam's building in particular was marked out as being worthy of special attention.

3.5.2 The boundary suggested in the consultation included all of Area 5 except the Stonemasons and the buildings fronting onto Spencer Street and St Paul's Square. However all of the latter group face onto the designated conservation areas and some of the properties may be redeveloped at some stage. It may be worth considering inclusion of areas such as these where the proposed developments could have a significant impact, because of their close proximity, on the character and quality of the adjacent conservation area. It could be argued that any development of a sensitive site would be expected to acknowledge this in the quality of the design but this is not always the case. It may strengthen the Council's position for requiring a development which improves the character of the area rather than having to fend off a scheme which harms that character.

### **3.6 Area 6**

3.6.1 This area includes the Bus Station, Lowther Street to Drovers Lane. The Lanes was being developed when the City Centre Conservation area was last reviewed and this is probably why the area was left out. Listed buildings such as the Appletree (now Pippins) public house and the Howard Arms were left out of the area because they were on the wrong side of the development. Most people regard the Lanes as a success and there seems to be no reason why it should be left out of a revised

conservation area. A considerable portion of the area is surface car parking and at some future date this could be developed. Including these in the conservation area would allow greater control over any redevelopment proposals.

- 3.6.2 Part of Lowther Street was incorporated within the Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Area and this included Iceland and Farm Foods, both of which are buildings of little or no quality and are likely to require renewal or redevelopment at some point in the future. Being within a conservation area it should be possible to ensure that any replacement buildings are of sufficient quality to improve rather than harm the character of the area.
- 3.6.3 Although the Bus Station is a relatively recent development it and adjoining buildings are of a relatively low quality and as such they may come under development pressure. This area lies between the Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Area and it clearly has an impact on the setting of both this and the City Centre Conservation Area. On the Lowther Street frontage there is a mixture of listed buildings, buildings of local interest and some of very little interest. The Bowling Green Hostel was considered to be noteworthy in the consultation. The Argos building was also referred to as a building that could be improved and if it were to be brought within the Conservation Area any scheme relating to it would be expected to be an improvement on the existing.

### **3.7 Area 7**

- 3.7.1 This area received the greatest number of responses which is not surprising as this area has the greatest number of residential properties and the community is clearly concerned about its future.
- 3.7.2 The most frequent of the points raised was that not only should the Magistrates Court/Fire Station/Police Station be included in a revised conservation area as a fine example of the Percy Dalton/Laing partnership but that the residential streets to the north should also be included. Several suggested that the Civic Centre should be included also as well as Adriano's Restaurant.
- 3.7.3 It was mentioned that the Car Park at the back of Corporation Road was in poor condition and yet it occupied a prominent location adjacent to Castle Way and presented a poor image to anyone visiting the City.

3.7.4 The Save Our Streets campaign felt that it was appropriate to include areas where development proposals might endanger the character of the existing Conservation Area. This suggested that the whole of area 7, for example, should be included as the Civic Centre/Car Park/Eden House may be remodelled or redeveloped in the future. Rather than isolate the dual carriageway it would be sensible to draw the line right across from Bitts Park to Rickergate and also to have Georgian Way as the north-eastern boundary.

### **3.8 Extending the Conservation Area**

3.8.1 In response to the question asking if the area should be extended only one respondent said that it should not be extended. More widespread support came for Areas 1,2,4,5,6 and 7 being added to the Conservation Area. Some felt that the whole of these areas should be included irrespective of the suggested boundary additions shown on the leaflet. There was also some support for the Victoria Viaduct area to be included.

3.8.2 One comment made the point that there is no reason NOT to support the proposed expansion of the Conservation Area boundary as this will enhance arguments for higher design standards in those areas and that the proposed changes should be welcomed.

### **3.9 Other Issues Raised**

3.9.1 Traffic and parking were seen as significant issues and the comments made have been forwarded to the County Highway Authority and to the Council's Director of Community Services. The suggestions for dealing with traffic and parking issues varied from:

banning all cars from the City Centre, improving the pedestrian experience, improving public transport and having Park and Ride;  
introducing congestion charges;  
providing multi-storey car parks and/or improving existing car parks;  
allowing more traffic into the City Centre to retain its vitality.

3.9.2 Signage is considered to be an issue, particularly the removal of excessive traffic signs. In addition information signage for tourists should be greatly improved. Street names, especially the original cast signs should be renovated. A report from the Director of Development Services (DS 46/08) concerning criteria to be adopted for

the repair or replacement of historic street name plates was approved last year and this established the Council's policy on this issue.

- 3.9.3 Many comments were received asking for various parts of the city to be tidied up or enhanced. Some of these related to the City Centre Conservation Area, such as Blackfriars Street and Lowther Street, but there were also several people who raised the condition of Botchergate, indicating the negative impact this must have on visitors to the City.
- 3.9.4 Finally concern was expressed on a number of the questionnaires about the future of empty buildings in the Conservation area, including the Methodist Central Hall, the Lonsdale, the White House, the Post Office, Woolworth's and the former Thurnam's building in Lonsdale Street. These are properties not owned by the City Council, however officers have had discussions with prospective purchasers/occupants and continue to do so on the options that are available.

#### **4.0 OFFICER APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 From the comments above, which have been drawn from the questionnaire responses received, it is clear that there is support for extending the City Centre Conservation Area. There is not always a consensus on how the new boundary should be fixed however and it is necessary to look at the criteria on which a determination should be made.
- 4.2 A conservation area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. So the area should have historic or architectural interest but in order to preserve its appearance it may be necessary to ensure that new development nearby does not damage its character. In this way the setting of the area becomes significant, it may not have great value in itself but its redevelopment could be a threat to it retaining its character.
- 4.3 Ideally the area should have clear and well defined boundaries but often a decision must be made on relatively inconclusive criteria. The City Wall was seen as a clear boundary when the area was redefined in 1986. But the City Wall has a setting and outside the wall are other features of historic or architectural interest. Unfortunately the eastern city wall was demolished at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a boundary on this side of the City is more difficult to identify.



- 4.4 A northern boundary can be identified with the rivers Eden and Caldew, from the Eden Bridge round to the Caldew Bridge and Castle Way. Beyond here the railway viaduct acts as a discrete boundary as far as the Victoria Viaduct. The southern and eastern boundaries are more difficult to establish. Still looking for architectural or historic interest the Viaduct itself is a significant contributor, likewise the Enterprise Centre and the remaining block of the Metal Box factory on James Street. The Swimming Baths have little to offer but the Turkish Baths are of considerable interest. Beyond this block the character of the area changes dramatically with little of interest other than the rear of the Citadel Station. The new development such as Matalan or any of the smaller business units near Crown Street could be redeveloped in future but the impact of such renewal so far from any of the significant elements of the Conservation Area, would have little or no impact. So the boundary proposed here could be justified.
- 4.5 As pointed out in 4.3 the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area is more difficult to define. Since the revision of the boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area in 1986 both the Botchergate Conservation Area and the Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Area have been designated. Areas 4, 5 and 6 mark the gaps between the designated areas. Depending on the type and size of a development proposal in these “black holes” the area may get the benefit of being treated with more sensitivity because of its impact on the setting of the conservation area. On the other hand developers will use the fact that the site is not within the conservation area as an indication that it is of less importance and therefore there is less justification for a sensitive approach.
- 4.6 Of the responses received from the public consultation, many considered that the character of the City with its historic buildings are part of its charm and they form one of its main assets which should not be destroyed or diminished. Within areas 4,5 and 6 there are elements which have special architectural or historic interest. Adjacent to these are sites which could benefit from redevelopment proposals and such renewal could have a significant impact on one or more Conservation Areas. Rather than work around these areas and leave out sites that may or may not be redeveloped it would seem a simpler approach to put ALL of these sites in the conservation area and thus give them a measure of protection. However if buildings are to be replaced then it will be with the knowledge that the replacement should not harm the character of the area. It is considered that this would not make it any more onerous for development to take place and that this should be welcomed as mentioned in paragraph 3.8.2.

- 4.7 In Area 7 the point is taken from the response referred to in 3.7.4 that the area may be the subject of redevelopment proposals and consideration should be given to using the two main roads, Georgian Way and Hardwicke Circus as the boundary with the line crossing to Bitts Park and the Eden Bridge.


## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

- 5.1 Following the public consultation and after assessing the comments received it is considered that the following amendments should be made to the City Centre Conservation Area boundary.
- 5.2 That the boundaries shown on the original consultation document for Areas 1,2 and 3 (shown on the consultation leaflet in Appendix 1) be retained.
- 5.3 That the eastern boundary of the conservation area be butted up to the boundaries of the Botchergate and Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Areas.
- 5.4 That the north-eastern boundary of the conservation area be the western side of Georgian Way to Hardwicke Circus, across Castle Way to join with Bitts Park.
- 5.5 Once a revised area has been designated the full conservation area will be the subject of a detailed appraisal. This will highlight, for example, areas of significance, areas for possible redevelopment and areas which need to be enhanced.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

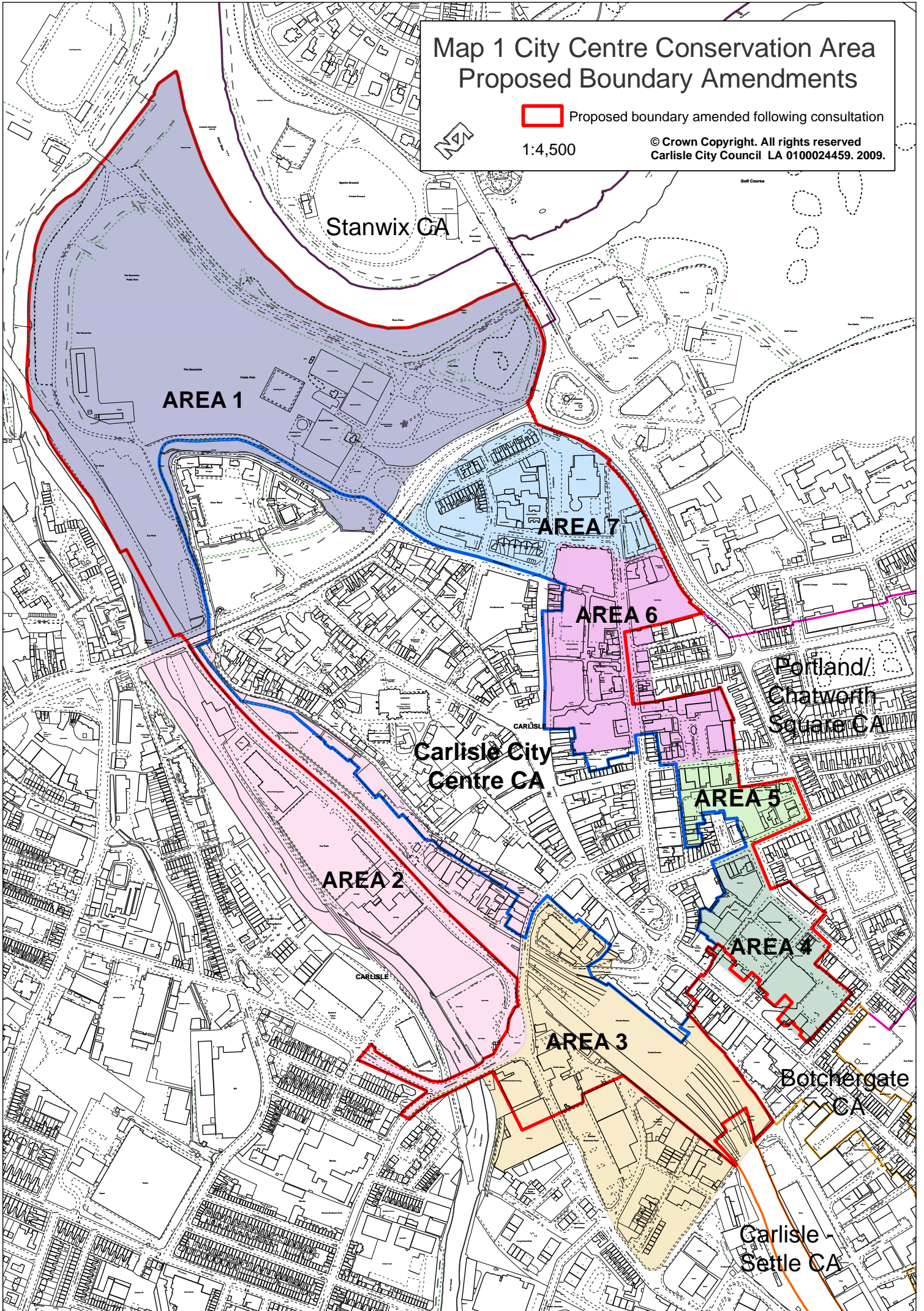
- 6.1 That the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the amendments proposed in this report and as shown on the attached plan for the City Centre Conservation Area be referred to Executive for its consideration of the City Centre Conservation Area boundary.

# Map 1 City Centre Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Amendments

 Proposed boundary amended following consultation

1:4,500

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Carlisle City Council LA 0100024459. 2009.

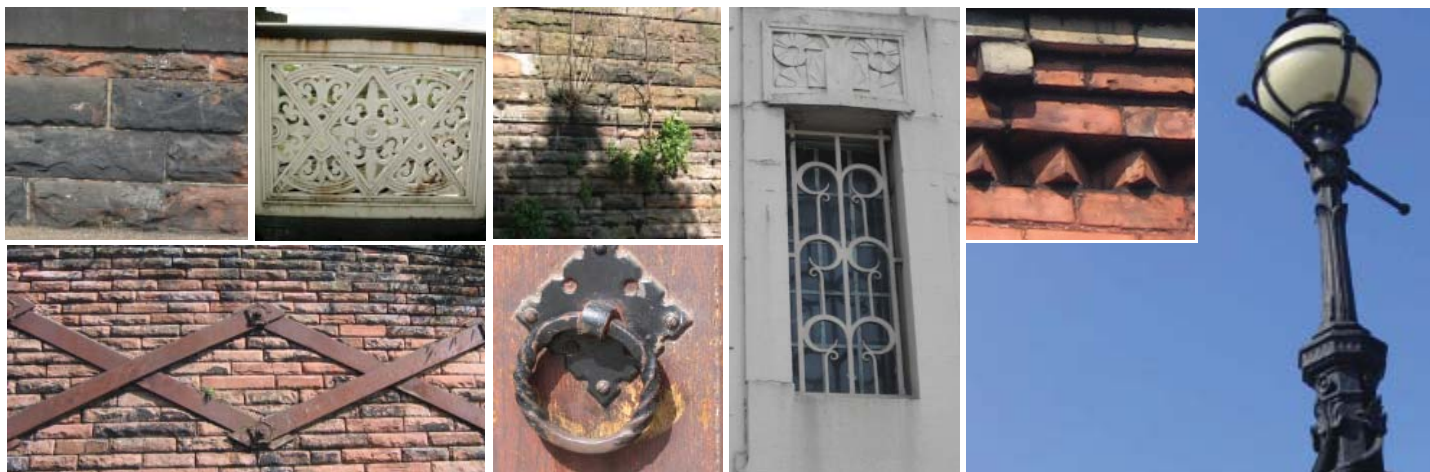


**APPENDIX 1**

**Consultation Leaflet and Questionnaire**



# Carlisle City Centre Conservation Area Review



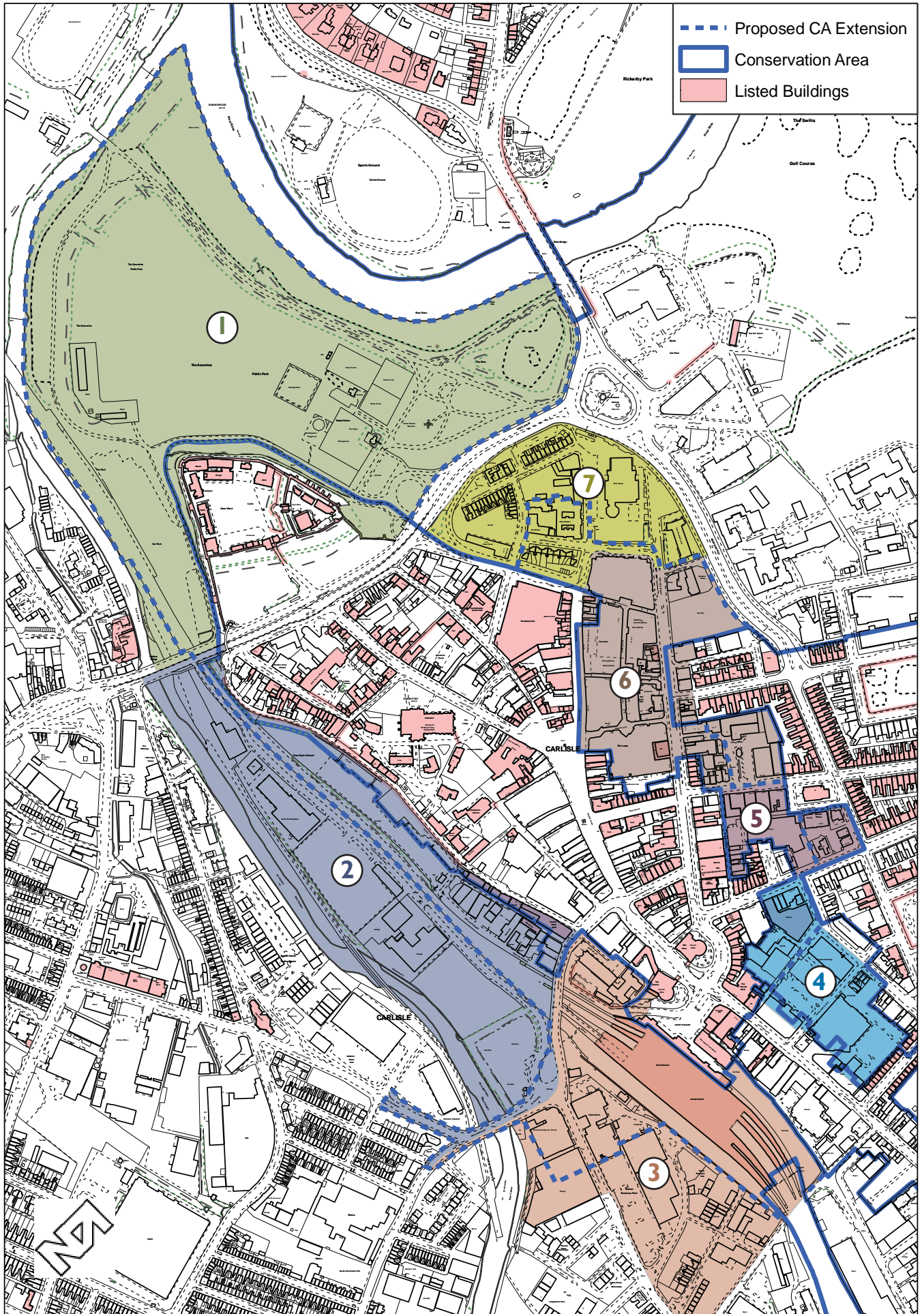
Carlisle City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has a statutory duty to review, from time to time, its designated conservation areas. It is currently reviewing the boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area as part of the ongoing assessment of this area.

This boundary review consists of an appraisal of those parts of the City immediately adjacent to the existing designated area to examine their historical, architectural and townscape significance. It highlights those positive features that could support additions to the Conservation Area and draws attention to those elements that have a negative impact on their character.

This review is intended to encourage debate and comment from anyone who has an interest in the conservation of Carlisle's historic and architectural heritage. We would like to know your views, what you consider to be the important issues, what you feel are important positive or negative aspects of these areas and whether you have any suggestions for resolving problems raised.

Following this consultation the views and comments will be assessed and the results will form the basis of a report to the City Council with whatever recommendations are thought appropriate.

A Conservation Area is “ an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”





## 1 The Sauceries and Bitts Park

Where the Caldew meets the Eden, this is, in the main, a quiet area with pleasant footpaths. An attractive area with a mixture of open and well-wooded spaces that provides an excellent setting for Carlisle Castle and its ramparts. This area is important for leisure and recreational facilities.

A well managed landscape that forms part of the green heart of the City.

## 2 Caldew Bridge to Victoria Viaduct

This area epitomises the 19th century growth of Carlisle beyond the City's West Wall. The Caldew Bridge, the Railway Viaduct and the Victoria Viaduct, together with railway sidings, Mills and Warehouses. The surviving structures are significant architectural and engineering features which give the area its special character. Beyond the railway line the area has been redeveloped in the 20th Century with modern framed buildings. Due to be redeveloped again in part by the University of Cumbria.

## 3 Victoria Viaduct to Crown Street

From the Victoria Viaduct the area is dominated by the Citadel Station. The Station and its flanking walls are very impressive but are in need of considerable care and attention. The vegetation growing from the walls is a sad sign of neglect. Much of the industry in the area has gone and the spaces filled with modern sheds of little interest or attraction. Some gems survive including the Turkish Baths. The Electric Lighting Station is still interesting despite its interior being gutted. At the southern end there are cleared but undeveloped sites which detract from the character of the area.

## 4 Portland Place, Mary Street, Cecil Street and Warwick Road

This gap area lies between the Botchergate and Portland Square/Chatsworth Square Conservation Areas and most of it has been redeveloped in the last few decades. The new development does little to enhance the City and some of it definitely detracts from its character. The area includes Mary Street and the Lonsdale Cinema.

## 5 Warwick Road/Crosby Street/ Lonsdale Street/and Lowther Street

A small section between Warwick Road and Lowther Street, linked by Crosby Street and Spencer Street. The centre of this block is formed by the Crown Court and its associated buildings. The buildings facing onto Spencer Street and Crosby Street are mostly modern and their appearance detracts from the character of the Spencer Street listed buildings. The buildings on Lonsdale Street, facing the Bus Station, are of interest but several need improvement. The former Thurnam's building is of particular interest.

## 6 Lonsdale Street to Spring Gardens Lane, including the Lanes

The Bus Station and the adjacent modern buildings are of little interest and some of these have a negative impact on the character of this area. The Lanes are included in this section. The site was being prepared for redevelopment when the Conservation Area was last reviewed and this may have been why it was excluded. The development is accepted by most people to be well designed and suits the character of the townscape. It also has several listed buildings on either side that help the Lanes to blend in. Modern sheds, such as Argos and the Iceland building, are negative features at this end of Lowther Street and this is not improved by the surface car-parking which leaves open and uninteresting spaces along the frontage.

## 7 Rickergate

This area still retains some of its 19th century character but most has been redeveloped. The houses and the former Malt Shovel public house retain the domestic character of the area. In the 1940's the Police Station, Fire Station and the Magistrate's Court were built. This attractive group of buildings were badly damaged during the 2005 floods. Since then much of the accommodation has not been used. Such an impressive group of buildings deserve to be retained even though they are not listed. The 60's architecture of the Civic Centre, together with Eden House at the bottom end of Lowther Street, have little that relates them to the character of Carlisle and the City Centre Conservation Area.

This review of the City Centre Conservation Area boundary and the areas adjacent to it is intended to identify:

where distinctive quality and character still survives or;

where damage or neglect of buildings and sites makes them unattractive and thus detracts from the character of the area.

Character can be derived from architectural and historic quality; archaeological significance; or the contribution made by natural features, green spaces, trees, walls or hedges.

## Consequences of Designation

If, as a result of this review, additions are made to the Conservation Area these areas will be subject to more stringent regulations under current planning legislation. For example, certain alterations to a dwelling that are normally permitted development, may now require planning permission. More detailed information can be obtained from the Council or its website.

## What Next?

This leaflet and the exhibition contain suggestions only. The Council would like to hear from anyone who has an interest in the care and protection of the Conservation Area and the City's heritage. Local opinion is very important and you can make your views known by filling in the questionnaire or by writing to the Head of Planning and Housing Services, Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG by the 3rd July.

The exhibition will be held:

- Wednesday, 27 May - Sunday, 31 May at Carlisle Library in The Lanes – City Council staff will be available to answer questions between 10am and 4pm, Wednesday – Friday; and
- Monday, 1 June – Wednesday, 3 June at the Assembly Rooms, Old Town Hall - City Council staff will be available to answer questions between 10am and 4pm, each day.







# City Centre Conservation Area Boundary Review

## QUESTIONNAIRE

May 2009

The City Council is seeking the opinions of the public on the possible amendment of the boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area. The views expressed will be taken into account when the Council considers this matter in the near future. Your views on the other issues referred to in the questions below will also be helpful.

Would you like to see the Conservation Area boundary extended? Yes  No

If yes – where would you extend the area?

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Are there any buildings in the Conservation Area that are worthy of special attention whether listed or not?

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Are there any sites or buildings in the Area that you feel need improvement?

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Are there any streets that you feel could or should be improved?

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Do you think traffic and parking are significant issues in the Conservation Area? Yes  No

If yes – what do you think the Council should be considering?

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Do you think signage is a significant issue in the Conservation Area? Yes  No

If Yes – what improvements would you suggest?

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.....  
.....  
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Do you think that new development proposals should be carefully controlled so as not to destroy the character of the Conservation Area? Yes  No

Any other Comments you would like to make to the Council on the way in which it deals with conservation issues in Carlisle

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.....  
.....

**Your details**

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone no .....

Email .....

For official use only  
Reference.....

Please return this form by the 3rd July 2009 to:-  
Local Plans and Conservation Manager, Planning Services,  
Civic Centre  
Carlisle, CA3 8QG or e-mail [lpc@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:lpc@carlisle.gov.uk)

Data Protection

The information you give on this form will be added to our computer database. It will only be used to administer your comments, progress the Conservation area review, or to assist Carlisle City Council in making improvements to the service. The information given will be used for no other purpose.