



Orchard Road Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document



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1 Introduction

“Our built heritage represents the very best of our past. It provides a huge resource that can play an important role in the future of our towns, cities and rural areas in giving the stimulus provided to regeneration and the promotion of sustainable development” - Heritage Works, English Heritage, 2005.

1.1 Orchard Road Conservation Area was designated in December 2007 and Figure 1 illustrates its boundary. A conservation area is defined by the Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990 s.69 as being an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. English Heritage note that the area of Orchard Road has a definable character that warranted its designation.

1.2 The management plan is the next step after the designation process and preparation of the character statement. The plan provides guidance to enable the effective management of change and secure the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is in accordance with the Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990 s.71 and 72; s.71 specifically requires the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas and to submit these proposals for public consideration.

1.3 The character statement provides a comprehensive assessment of the physical character and appearance of the conservation area and defines what elements are of merit, what the key issues are, what opportunities exist for preservation/enhancement and which elements detract from the conservation area.

1.4 Its purpose is to provide a benchmark for assessing the impact of development proposals on the character and/or appearance of the conservation area.

1.5 The management plan is based on the Conservation Area Appraisal⁽¹⁾ and advice from English Heritage⁽²⁾.

1 Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal, BEAMS, 2009

2 Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, 2006 and Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, 2011

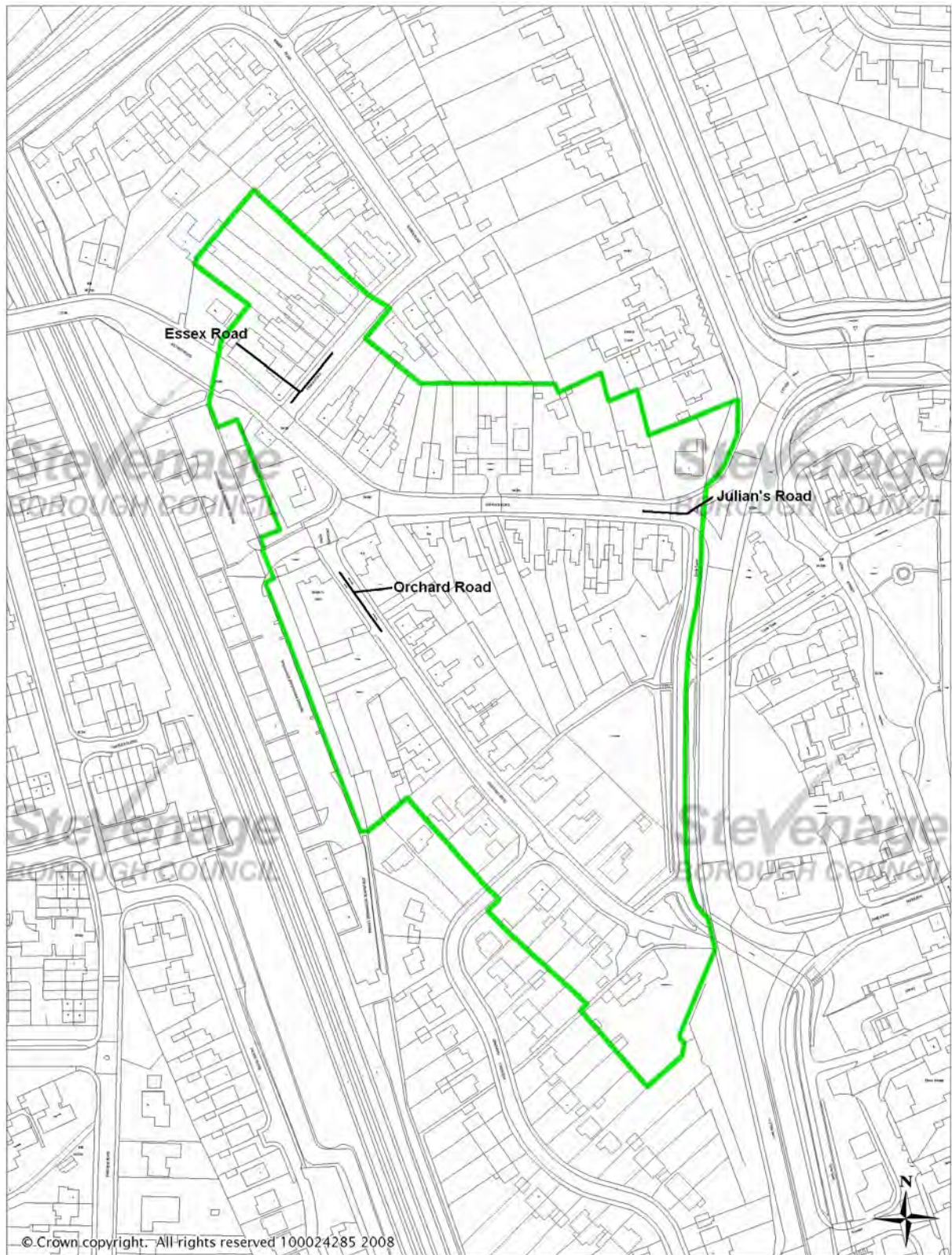


Figure 1 Orchard Road Conservation Area map (Green line denotes boundary)

2 Conservation areas and planning procedures

2.1 The Council has a duty to only allow developments in a conservation area that preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Demolitions, alterations, extensions and other works affecting the character or appearance of properties in a conservation area will probably require planning permission and/or listed building consent or conservation area consent.

2.2 At the time of writing, none of the buildings within the Orchard Road Conservation Area are listed. You should confirm whether the property is listed prior to consideration of a potential scheme as listed buildings have more stringent management methods.

2.3 The Council generally requires more detail than usual with applications submitted for listed building consent or for planning permission and conservation area consent for buildings within a conservation area.

2.4 The following section provides a brief overview of applications in conservation areas but you should always contact the Council to clarify how your proposals might be affected by conservation area designations.

Building alterations

2.5 In a conservation area you sometimes need planning permission for changes to buildings which would normally be permitted elsewhere. This might include extensions, alterations, dormer windows, satellite dishes or altering the external appearance of a property. You should contact the Council to determine how your proposal might be affected.

Demolition

2.6 For any unlisted building within a conservation area, a planning application to demolish a building is not required, however conservation area consent will be necessary. Conservation area consent is required to totally or substantially demolish most buildings within a conservation area.

2.7 Conservation area consent is also required to totally or substantially demolish a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1m high where it is next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2m high elsewhere.

Works to trees

2.8 The Council requires six weeks notice in writing before felling or cutting back the majority of trees in conservation areas, even if they are not specifically protected by a tree preservation order (TPO). In giving notice it is necessary to specify precisely what works are to be carried out.

2.9 Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are designed to protect important trees that make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area. At the time of writing, there are seven trees within the Orchard Road Conservation Area covered by TPOs. Any works to trees covered by a TPO must be approved by the Council.

Advertisements

2.10 Additional planning procedures apply to the display of advertisements within a conservation area. In particular prohibiting the use of advertising hoardings around building sites and the use of captive balloons for advertising.

Enforcement

2.11 The failure to comply with any of the special planning procedures listed above could lead to prosecution by the Council. It is therefore advisable to consult the Council before proceeding with any works, which might affect the character and appearance of a conservation area and/or a listed building.

It is always advisable to discuss any proposals with the Development Management team at Stevenage Borough Council at the earliest opportunity.

Please see our website for further information and direct contact details.

Alternatively you may telephone the Council on 01438 242159.

3 The aims

3.1 The management plan has four objectives:

Objective 1

To establish and define the significance of the conservation area as a whole and of the individual elements which contribute to that significance, building on the character appraisal.

Objective 2

To assess and define the threats and opportunities within the area and how these impact on the significance of the individual elements and of the conservation area as a whole.

Objective 3

To provide a benchmark for assessing and managing change.

Objective 4

To provide guidance to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area will be maintained through the effective management of change and that opportunities to enhance the character and appearance are maximised.

4 In context

Planning policy context

4.1 The management plan will support existing planning policy as adopted by Stevenage Borough Council.

Regional Spatial Strategy [RSS] – The East of England Plan

4.2 The management plan complies with policies ENV6 and ENV7 of the RSS as adopted May 2008.

4.3 It should be noted that the regional level of plans (The East of England Plan) is proposed for revocation.

Stevenage District Plan 2nd Review 2004 [SDP]

4.4 The management plan supplements the following saved policies within the SDP:

Policy number	Policy title
Town-wide	
TW2	Structural open space
TW9	Quality in design
TW11	Planning requirements
Transport	
T6	Design standards
T13	Cycleways
T14	Pedestrians
T15	Car parking strategy
T16	Loss of residential car parking
Environment	
EN13	Trees in new developments
EN21	Other sites of nature conservation importance

Table 1 - Policies of particular relevance in the Stevenage District Plan (2nd Review)

4.5 This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Emerging planning policy

4.6 Emerging planning policies within the Old Town Area Action Plan document are also relevant as material considerations. The following policies are of particular note:

OT01	Housing allocations (OT01/03)
OT11	Character zones (OT11/01)

Table 2 - Policies of particular relevance in emerging local planning policies (Old Town Area Action Plan)

Wider planning policy framework

4.7 The following is a list of existing policy and strategy documents which are supported by the management plan:

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework
A Better Life - The role of culture in the sustainable development of the East of England Plan, 2006
The Biodiversity Action Plan, 2010
The Stevenage Green Space Strategy 2010

Table 3 The wider planning policy framework

4.8 For up to date details of relevant planning policy please refer to our website www.stevenage.gov.uk.

5 A brief history

5.1 The conservation area lies to the north west of the town centre, beyond the area of the Old Town High Street. The area once linked directly to the Old Town High Street via Orchard Road, once known as New Road and Railway Street, as Figure 2 shows.



Figure 2 Maps of Orchard Road area from 1881 (left) and 1898 (right)

5.2 The conservation area is bounded by Lytton Way to the east and Stevenage Enterprise Centre to the west. The northern edge is formed by the property boundaries along Julians Road. The overall character of the area has been shaped by 19th century and very early 20th century development. The 1970s development of three properties forming Julians Close is the only exception.

5.3 The area around Orchard Road expanded as a result of the development of land at Julians Farm for a new railway station from 1850. The influence of the railway and its new station set up a new trade route through the town. By 1851 two public houses were already in place ⁽³⁾ and these buildings are still in place today as Figure 3 illustrates.

3 The Rising Sun and the Railway Inn



Figure 3 The Railway Inn circa 1900 (left) and today, known as The Mallard (right)

5.4 By 1861, New Road was known as Railway Street. The road gained a reputation as a street of ill-repute and its buildings were largely demolished and rebuilt by John Bailey Denton of Orchard Court, who then renamed it Orchard Road. By the end of the 19th century, and with the addition of a number of public buildings, the road had become something of an administrative centre of the town as well as the location of a number of comfortable villas from which wealthier residents could commute to London.

5.5 In the late 19th century, a number of large villas were also built along Julians Road. The road already existed as a lane leading to Fisher's Green but it was widened and improved in the late 19th century. A station master's house was also constructed at this time. Opposite the Railway Inn, the house is still in place today. Further houses were also built in the early part of the 20th century.



Figure 4 Julians Road 2010

5.6 Essex Road had been laid out by the late 19th century and some of the houses were built by the Educational Supplies Association for their workers in the factory beyond the railway bridge. Further houses were built along the north side of Essex Road in the early part of the 20th century.



Figure 5 Essex Road 2010

5.7 The creation of the Lytton Way/Bowling Green gyratory system in the 1970s signalled the most significant change for the area. The south-eastern end of Orchard Road was cut through by the newly created Lytton Way. This involved the demolition of some buildings and left some buildings stranded on the east side of the new road. However, these buildings are situated within the Old Town High Street Conservation Area. The remaining eastern section of Orchard Road was renamed James Way.



Figure 6 Orchard Road 2010

5.8 The Orchard Road Conservation Area is a small corner of Victorian expansion and development now divided from the Old Town High Street area by Lytton Way. The railway station on Julians Road closed down in 1973 and was subsequently demolished.

5.9 For a detailed analysis of the area history please refer to the Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal, available on the Council's website.

5.10 The conservation area is in a good to fair condition and has a number of attributes and features which have a positive impact upon the character of the area. These relate to its relatively unaltered Victorian and Edwardian buildings, spatial layout, green spaces, early land boundaries, hedgerows and landmark buildings that provide the area with local distinctiveness. There are, however, some negative issues which could be better controlled through the adoption of a management plan.

5.11 The plan includes an analysis of the area which outlines the area's strengths and acknowledges key issues. The following sections consider how best their strengths can be enhanced and preserved. It also provides guidance on maximising opportunities to prevent erosion of locally distinctive features.

6 An analysis

"The character appraisal should provide the basis for developing management proposals for the conservation area." - Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, 2006.

6.1 This section considers the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the conversation area. This information has been compiled from a number of sources including the conservation area appraisal, site surveys and previous consultation comments.

Strengths

6.2 The Orchard Road Conservation Area was designated in 2007 and there are a number of strengths which warranted its designation:

- Excellent selection of large villa style properties.
- High quality decorative use of materials and design including:
 - Brick, red brick being the most common, some with yellow brick dressings;
 - Slate roofs;
 - Timber sashes, varying in style, with timber casements;
 - Timber doors;
 - Chimney stacks matching the walls, some chimney pots also survive;
 - Low red brick boundary walls, some with red brick gate piers and decorative caps.
- Smaller but significant proportion of buildings built as sheds and workshops.
- A number of buildings considered of importance to the conservation area (see Appendix 1).
- Layout, mass and scale of area as developed by early 20th century has been retained.
- Retention of key features visible within the public realm such as lamp posts and boundary walls.
- Significant views and vistas along Orchard Road, Julians Road and Essex Road.
- Several tree preservation orders and other trees and hedgerows of significant merit.
- Leafy and attractive setting.

6.3 This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Figure 7 illustrates some of the key features.

6.4 The individual strengths combine to establish an area worthy of its conservation area status. The Orchard Road Conservation Area is in a good condition. A significant number of small historic features help to retain the Victorian/ Edwardian character of the conservation area and the green spaces and hedgerows provide an attractive setting.

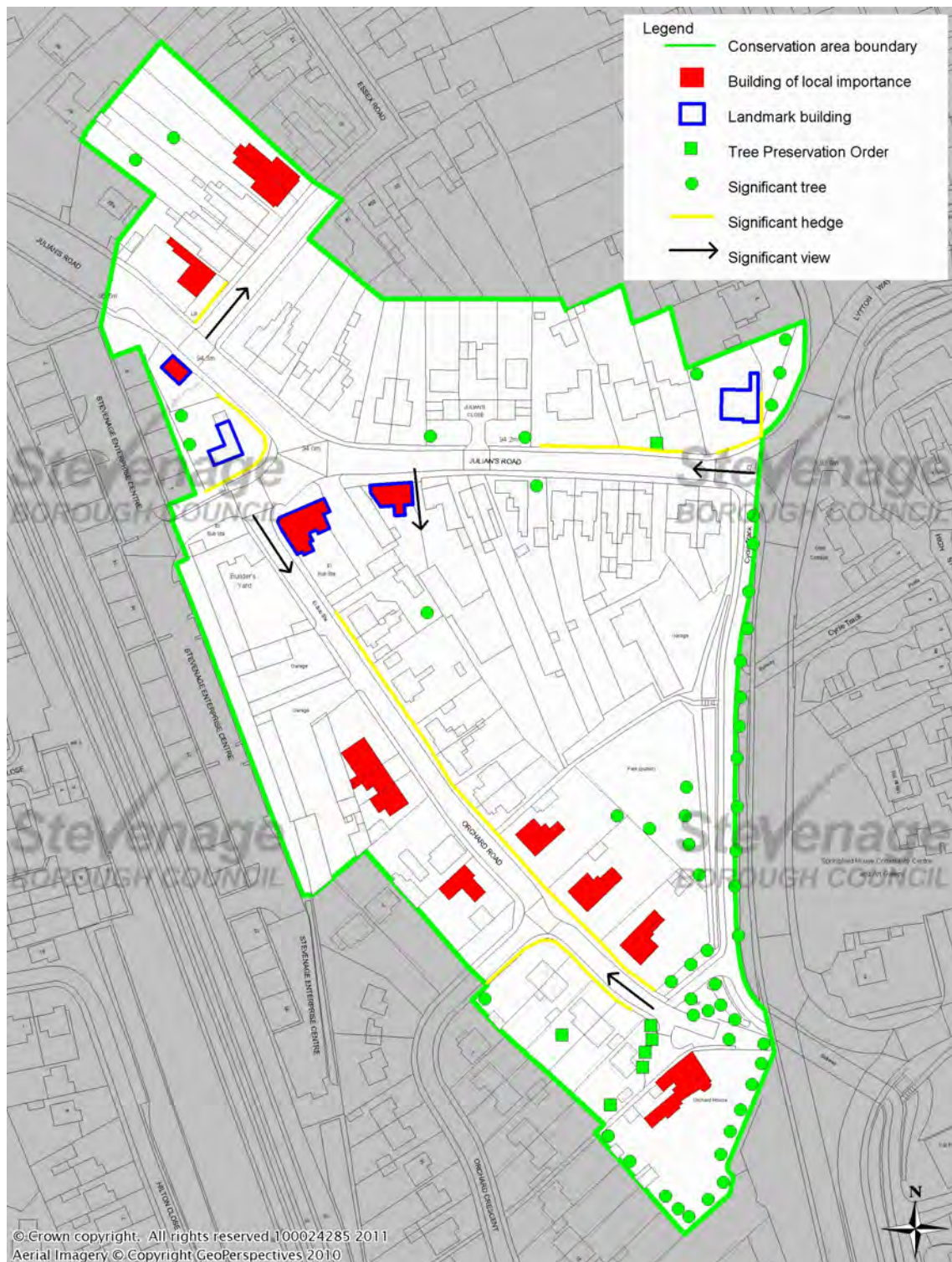


Figure 7 A character analysis of the Orchard Road Conservation Area

Weaknesses

6.5 The Orchard Road Conservation Area is regarded as a generally well-kept neighbourhood and many of the houses have retained their original features; however the following issues have been highlighted.

- The loss of (or poorly maintained) traditional architectural features including:
 - Slate tiles replaced with clay tiles; and
 - Timber windows replaced with UPVC.
- Loss of front gardens.
- Loss of boundary walls.
- Disused warehouse buildings.
- Through route of Julians Road.
- On street parking.
- Tall and obtrusive lamp posts.
- Broken paving and visible pipe laying tracks.
- Visually intrusive sign at entrance of Stevenage Enterprise Centre.

6.6 The set back nature of Julians Close is a feature highlighted by the Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal as a development which does not relate well to the rest of the properties along the northern edge of Julians Road. However, it is noted that the houses are subservient to the general street scene.

6.7 Together, these weaknesses impact upon the conservation area. The loss of traditional features, vacant buildings and parking issues all have a negative impact on the area. Unsympathetic repairs detract from those features which make the area special. A continuation of such practices could potentially lead to a reduction in the size of the conservation area, or complete removal of designation. If those special features are lost forever, future reviews of the area would determine that there are no points of special architectural or historic interest which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Opportunities

6.8 There are a number of opportunities which may provide solutions to some of the mentioned issues.

- Take advantage of Old Town location.
- Promotion of the historic qualities of the area.
- Strengthening connections to the past.
- Bring workshops back into use.
- Replace lamp posts.
- Encourage block paving.

- Introduce traffic management.
- Encourage use of traditional materials.
- Enforce breaches of planning law and legislation.
- Maintain area of parkland and promote it's location.

6.9 These opportunities present options to promote the area to visitors and improve local knowledge of the historic qualities of the area. Improving the image of an area will encourage sympathetic repairs and development.

6.10 During the lifetime of this management plan these recommendations would significantly enhance the special features of the area. Increasing pedestrian activity through the area, completing sympathetic restorations and/or development and the continued maintenance of green spaces will ultimately ensure that the conservation area is preserved. The pressure for development in this location enables an opportunity for sustainable decisions to be considered at an early stage in the development process.

6.11 A pro-active enforcement process will ensure that conservation is at the forefront of people's minds when considering alterations or home improvements.

Threats

- The cumulative negative effect of the continued loss of architectural features.
- The cumulative negative effect of the continued use of non-traditional materials.
- The demolition of unlisted buildings.
- Redevelopment of historic workshops could detract from the traditional layout and key design features.
- Economic decline of local businesses.
- Access to land at rear of larger plots.
- Loss of boundary walls in poor condition.
- The effects of new uses on parking.

6.12 These threats are potentially damaging to the conservation area in the long-term. The pressure for development alongside unsympathetic changes to the existing environment could lead to erosion of all the special local features. It will be necessary for various stakeholders to integrate their activities, to work together and ensure that these threats do not impact negatively on the conservation area as a whole.

Strengths**Weaknesses****Opportunities****Threats**

Illustrative examples of the analysis: the strong built form of the conservation area is a key strength. The loss of boundary walls is a weakness. Small development sites provide opportunities to bring old buildings back into use. The area of parkland can be maintained and promoted as an attractive asset. Economic decline can put buildings at risk if they are left dormant for long periods. This is a threat to the area.

7 Development issues

“Re-using buildings and adapting landscapes help reinforce a sense of place.” - Regeneration and the Historic Environment, English Heritage, 2005.

7.1 There is evidence to suggest that historic buildings (whether originally in residential or industrial use) can command higher prices in residential use than new build. Many historic buildings are seen to be more desirable than their most recent equivalents. Historical residential properties, for example, carry a premium. Research suggests⁽⁴⁾ that houses built before 1919 are worth on average 20% more than an equivalent more recent house.⁽⁵⁾

7.2 Re-using existing buildings is a simple way of achieving sustainability. The re-use of buildings can also retain those features which make an area special.

"To demolish a Victorian terraced house is to throw away enough embodied energy to drive a car around the world five times. None of this is wasted if the building is refurbished" - Heritage Counts, 2004.

7.3 The area of Orchard Road, like other Victorian examples, contains large properties on sizeable or elongated plots. The accumulation of garden sections are attractive development propositions and previous consultations have identified that home owners in this area have been contacted by developers. When sensitively handled, the combination of large gardens can provide attractive housing schemes but, in this area, the development of new homes to the rear of properties would create safety concerns on the highway and overlooking of neighbouring properties.

7.4 However, the potential to develop small sections within the area which could bring old workshops and out-buildings back into use must be regarded positively. Redevelopment can maintain the historic layout and re-use vacant historic buildings. English Heritage favour an approach which promotes repair and refurbishment as an alternative to outright replacement. Within such a small conservation area it will be even more important to ensure that developments are carefully considered so that the fine grain which characterises the area is not lost.

7.5 After discussions with local landowners, previous consultations have proposed the redevelopment of the depot buildings along Orchard Road (see Figure 8) into residential accommodation. The current use of garage repair workshops and business units creates parking

4 Nationwide Building Society, What Adds Value, 2003

5 Regeneration and the Historic Environment, English Heritage, 2005

issues during working hours. The 2009 appraisal also acknowledges that the workshops are not in optimum condition. An appropriate redevelopment of this site could provide solutions to these issues.



Figure 8 Depot buildings along Orchard Road

8 Transport issues

"Many problems in conservation areas can arise from, or be associated with, the measures required for traffic safety, control and calming." - Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, 2006.

8.1 Julians Road is the main route through the Orchard Road Conservation Area. The conservation area appraisal mentions this through route within the section concerning negative issues. The lay-out of the road and its topography (particularly its rise towards the railway) gives the impression of an unsafe route. However when speed of travel is within an acceptable range, no problems have been reported.

8.2 Traffic along this road is not considered excessive. Given the location of this road, which links the main distributor of the town centre to the outer villages as well as the immediate residential and commercial areas, the volume of traffic is as anticipated.

8.3 Parking within the area was noted as an issue by one respondent to the previous conservation area consultation in 2007, particularly where on-street parking restricts pedestrian use of the footpath on Orchard Road. Issues are also often reported to the Council and it is acknowledged that parking is a particular issue in this part of the conservation area.



Figure 9 Parking on Orchard Road during the day and traffic restrictions along Julians Road

8.4 It is recognised that parking for commercial uses in this area may significantly affect the demand for parking during working hours. The potential redevelopment of the depot buildings (see Figure 8), with sufficient off street parking, would help to alleviate this problem.

8.5 The 2009 appraisal notes that the creation of private off street residential parking has necessitated the removal of some boundary walls which are considered key features of the built environment. This is particularly an issue along Julians Road.

8.6 Cycling and pedestrian routes are particularly important considerations in terms of sustainability. The sustainable location of the Orchard Road area, in close proximity to the Old Town High Street, should be promoted. Local residents and employees of the nearby Stevenage Enterprise Centre should be encouraged to utilise these links. A significant objective of the Old Town Area Action Plan is to improve cycle and pedestrian links to the town centre and Forster Country.



Figure 10 Pedestrian and cycle route alongside Lytton Way and the underpass to the High Street

9 The Management Plan

9.1 All development in the conservation area, or which forms part of its setting, must respond to its immediate environment and context, in terms of scale, alignment, form, materials and detailing. This plan sets out a series of design guidelines aimed at ensuring appropriately designed development in the conservation area.

Alterations and extensions

9.2 Alterations and extensions should not dominate an existing building's scale or alter the composition of its main elevations. Any alterations, including partial demolition, should respect an existing building and its materials. All new work should complement the old in quality, texture and colour as well as method of construction. Given that a significant strength of the area is the visual attractiveness of brick work, artificial wall claddings and coatings would be considered inappropriate on any elevation. Walls and stone detailing which have traditionally not been painted should remain undecorated.



Figure 11 Sympathetic side extensions along Orchard Road

Layout

9.3 Building footprints provide a reference for how the conservation area has developed over time. For the Orchard Road Conservation Area the layout of the buildings generally illustrates a linear pattern facing onto the main streets. The eclectic arrangement of workshops provides interest to the street scene. Figure 12 illustrates the building layout. Where possible, we will seek to retain the traditional urban layout in this area.



Figure 12 The built form of Orchard Road Conservation Area.

Materials

9.4 The predominant and traditional building materials are brickwork walls, slate roofs, timber sash windows and timber doors. For new planning applications, the applicant is provided an opportunity to illustrate how the traditional building materials will be incorporated in the design and access statement.

9.5 Some properties in the conservation area have undergone alterations which have utilised more contemporary materials. The cumulative effect of such alterations can erode those features which support the special architectural or historic interest of the area. The potential for an Article 4 Direction has also been considered for the area, see 'Opportunities for an Article 4 Direction' later in this plan.

Roofs

9.6 The roof is one of the most important parts of a property as it makes the building wind and watertight and can bring harmony to a landscape. It would be preferable to retain, repair or replace (on a like for like basis) original roof material, ridge tiles and hip tiles. Within the Orchard Road Conservation Area, slate is the traditional and predominant roofing material. Clay tiles detract from the overall character of the area.

Dormer windows and rooflights

9.7 The conversion of loft space and the installation of inappropriate dormer windows and/or rooflights may have a negative impact on the appearance of a building and detract from the character of a roofscape. Although the predominant character of properties in this area includes low pitched roofs, which are difficult to convert, proposals to add or alter roof windows which are inappropriately designed would be resisted.

Windows and doors

9.8 Windows and doors are important components of a building and any alteration or replacement can significantly alter its character and appearance. Wherever possible the original windows and doors should be retained and repaired in order to keep the integrity of the original design so preserving the character and proportions of the building. The energy efficiency of windows can be increased through the use of appropriate secondary glazing.

9.9 Imitation replacement window styles and inappropriate replacement window materials are poor alternatives for traditional single pane, timber, vertical sliding sash windows. Mock sliding sash windows generally have heavy top opening casements for the opening section, whilst UPVC windows have thicker, cruder frames than timber windows. These unsuitable styles and materials impact on the proportions and overall appearance of a window and a building. The character of a building is then changed, which has a detrimental impact on the overall appearance of the conservation area.

Other architectural details

9.10 Chimney stacks can contribute greatly to the local character and should be retained and repaired. When retained they provide a dominant and attractive feature of the roofscape.

9.11 Functioning and decorative building features such as soffits, fascias, barge boards and porch brackets are attractive elements on many of the properties within the conservation area. Their maintenance and repair, with traditional materials, greatly adds to the attractiveness of the area.



Figure 13 Decorative features in the conservation area include brickwork, porches, bargeboards, finials and chimneys.

9.12 Various sources offer guidance when dealing with the maintenance or restoration of period homes. English Heritage provide a great deal of information on heritage protection and understanding your property. It is recommended that you engage professional help to manage a project, such as an architect or building surveyor. Only a small proportion of qualified professionals specialise in the repair of old buildings. English Heritage offer advice on how to determine the most appropriate tradesperson for your property. See www.english-heritage.org.uk for further details.

9.13 There are a number of magazines and books available on Victorian properties which offer advice, assistance and contacts for professional tradesmen. The Victorian Society is a charitable trust which aims to protect Victorian (and Edwardian) buildings or groups of buildings of special architectural merit from demolition or inappropriate alterations. They have produced a number of informative booklets on such topics as Victorian architectural details, windows, doors and brickwork. They regularly consult on listed building applications and offer a wealth of expertise on this subject. See www.victoriansociety.org.uk for further details.

Aerials, satellite dishes and alarm boxes

9.14 Aerials, satellite dishes and alarm boxes can have a detrimental impact on the appearance of a building. Where possible they should be situated inside or to the rear of a property or carefully located to minimise the impact on the character of the building.

Landscaping and open space

9.15 The Biodiversity Action Plan (2010) contains policies and action for wildlife species and habitats which must guide management and The Green Space Strategy (2010) contains an action plan with recommendations on how green spaces across the town are maintained and improved.

9.16 The attractive leafy setting of the Orchard Road Conservation Area is a key feature. The original pattern of gardens and grounds and the presence of trees contribute greatly to the character of the area. We will adopt an Amenity Tree Management Policy which will support the importance and protection of trees across the town.

9.17 The park area between Orchard Road and Lytton Way is an attractive area of public open space. During the past six years the Council have undertaken various stages of work to open this site up so that it is more visible from the outside and therefore less prone to anti-social behaviour. Initially the height of the wall that ran between the gardens and the footpath was reduced but with little effect and eventually the wall was removed entirely. A boundary hedge was also reduced in height.

9.18 The continued maintenance of this area will be monitored by the Council and emergency ad-hoc works will be completed as necessary. The area will otherwise be subject to a regular programme of maintenance.



Figure 14 Green space in the conservation area

9.19 The potential presence of protected species associated with older buildings should be acknowledged. We will support the improvement of existing habitats and encourage the development of new nesting areas for protected species as appropriate.

Boundary treatments

9.20 Original boundary treatments such as walls, railings and hedges play an important part in the character and appearance of the conservation area and they should be retained, maintained or reinstated where possible. Where reinstated or replaced, traditional materials, proportions and design should be reflected.



Figure 15 Boundary treatments in the conservation area

Street furniture

9.21 Street lighting improves night-time safety for road users and members of the community and can reduce crime and the fear of crime during the hours of darkness. Hertfordshire County Council are moving to a part-night street light operation to reduce carbon emissions and overall costs. There are some exceptions to this programme, particularly where safety is an issue.

9.22 Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for around 115,000 street lights across the County. In 2009 Stevenage Borough Council undertook a town-wide programme to highlight the importance of more traditional street lights in Stevenage. This process involved a recognition of the importance of particular columns. Each one was painted a uniform colour (black) and a badge was attached to each one signifying its historic importance. Each of these columns will be maintained by Hertfordshire County Council.

9.23 We will continue to support the use of light fittings which are appropriate to their location in terms of material, scale, design and illumination, particularly for listed buildings and conservation areas.

9.24 Light columns along Julians Road are considered out of scale for their location but Hertfordshire County Council does not include the replacement of these columns within their current 5 year rolling programme. As the street lights are in perfect working order, and given current financial restraints, it will not be possible to present a County funded project to rectify this issue. We have highlighted our concerns regarding these columns and when replacement works are scheduled at a future date we will request that the columns are replaced with more traditional designs and in a scale more in keeping with the rest of the conservation area.

9.25 Signage in the area is generally well proportioned and, where possible, is attached to existing columns to prevent clutter. We will continue to encourage this approach. It is recommended that signage is removed as it becomes redundant or is replaced to reduce visual clutter.

9.26 It is recommended that consideration is given to the siting of new signage. Where possible existing poles should be used. Where supplementary poles are required these should be dark in colour unless pedestrian safety is compromised. Signs should be grouped to avoid visual clutter. Street signs or finger posts should be carefully planned in a comprehensive manner and should consider a simple but bespoke design to create distinctiveness.

9.27 Benches can provide an opportunity for people to stop, relax and reflect upon their surroundings. The open space currently provides a seating area and, given its location near a public right of way, we will retain and maintain this facility. The opportunity for people to sit and relax in the open space creates a feeling of safety for other users as they move through the area.

Pedestrian and cycle links

9.28 There are a number of links through and near the conservation area. These are currently illustrated within a number of documents. Signage, as illustrated within figure 16, guides users along the public right of way (Stevenage Public Footpath 005) and also the Great North Cycleway (Route 12 of the National Cycle Route Network) through the area. These routes are publicised on the Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council websites. We will encourage the promotion of these routes as they bring movement into the area, encourage sustainable travel and improve local knowledge of the special historical characteristics of the Orchard Road Conservation Area.



Figure 16 Pedestrian and cycle links in the Orchard Road Conservation Area

Parking

9.29 The presence of parking restrictions along Julians Road is noted as a particular issue for local residential parking but this is necessary to maintain the safety of the road as a through route. In order to protect key features such as low boundary walls, proposals which result in the retention of such features will be encouraged.

9.30 Yellow lines for parking restrictions may have a negative effect on the visual character of a conservation area. The Council will consider the narrower 'primrose lines' where new schemes are implemented, although traffic regulations do not always allow this as an option.

Advertisements

9.31 For businesses, interesting and eye-catching advertisements play an important role in attracting customers but poorly designed advertisement displays can have a negative effect on the appearance of a building and its surroundings.

9.32 Enhancing the appearance of the street scene and making the best use of the existing historic features creates an attractive, readily identifiable environment and can improve the economic and social vitality of the area.

9.33 All advertisements within the Orchard Road Conservation Area should be sympathetic to its historic character. New advertisement displays will be strictly controlled. There will be a presumption against internally illuminated projecting fascia signs and advertising above ground floor level. Advertisement hoardings of any description will not be appropriate.

Pre-application discussions

9.34 Any proposed works within a conservation area require special consideration and all applicants are encouraged to seek pre-application advice prior to submission. For extensions, alterations and significant development proposals, applicants are advised to employ the services of an agent or architect with extensive knowledge of working in conservation areas.

9.35 Proposals for development which fall within the conservation area, or which affect its setting, including views into and out of the area, will not be permitted unless they include a detailed assessment which identifies how the proposals will preserve or enhance, or otherwise complement the special character and appearance of the area. We will pay particular regard to the Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal⁽⁶⁾ when considering development proposals in, or adjacent to, the area.

6 Orchard Road Conservation Area Appraisal, June 2009, BEAMS

Enforcement

9.36 Local planning authorities have a duty to consider taking enforcement action where they believe there to have been a breach of planning control. Key aspects of the enforcement service are to investigate alleged breaches of planning control, listed building control and advertisement control. Wherever possible the Council will seek to resolve breaches without the need to take formal action.

Opportunities for an Article 4 Direction

9.37 Article 4 Directions can be used to withdraw certain permitted development rights under the 1995 Town and Country Planning [General Permitted Development] Order. In order to implement such a Direction it is necessary to prove that works carried out under the Order have a direct and detrimental impact on the character and/or appearance of the conservation area. It is recognised that incremental changes using non-traditional materials have a direct adverse impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

9.38 The potential for an Article 4 Direction has been considered for the Orchard Road Conservation Area. However, there have been a significant number of alterations already and designation of an Article 4 cannot enforce changes that have already taken place. Through promotion of the historic values of the area it is hoped that an Article 4 Direction will not be required. We will continue to monitor this situation through future reviews of the conservation area.

Summary

9.39 In conclusion, we will seek to strengthen those elements of the built environment which warranted the designation of the area. The retention of traditional architectural features will be monitored regularly. Proposals to reinstate lost features or repair existing features and/or buildings will be welcomed.

9.40 The success of the conservation area will depend in some part upon the care which individual owners take with the maintenance and repair of their properties, and their surrounding plots of land, and in any alterations or extensions they make. We will promote the conservation area to ensure that local residents are aware of the contribution they are able to make when considering even small alterations to their homes.

9.41 It is recognised that the economic decline of local businesses can pose a threat to the use of buildings located within the conservation area. Although a change in use might not be considered desirable, this has to be offset against the benefit to the built environment of a well maintained building as opposed to a derelict site. We would seek to maintain the structure and layout of existing buildings, particularly those of historical merit.

9.42 Traffic flow through the area is not considered to be a significant issue but we will seek to monitor this situation through contact with local residents and Members.

9.43 The area can contribute to local historical knowledge and develop lifelong learning and improved health. The development of links which introduce people to the historic diversity of the town are encouraged. Strengthening connections to the past can be achieved through promotional literature such as the current Stevenage Cycle Map. These routes can bring movement into the area and encourage use of the open space between Orchard Road and Lytton Way.

11 Monitoring measures

"Changes in the appearance of conservation areas ... should be monitored regularly" - Guidance on the management of conservation areas, English Heritage, 2006.

11.1 The management plan will be subject to a five year review, subject to staff resources, commencing from the date of adoption. The conservation area appraisal and this conservation area management plan provide a benchmark for assessing change. This may result in a revision or expansion of the existing appraisal and management plan and will include:

- Recording changes;
- Re-assessing the definition of special interest that warrants designation;
- Identifying new issues affecting the conservation area and revising the management plan accordingly.

11.2 Reviews will link with local planning policies so that development opportunities can be properly considered against the heritage interests of the Orchard Road Conservation Area.

11.3 The input of stakeholders including local conservation groups in this process, and in the wider management of the historic environment, such as monitoring buildings at risk, will be welcomed.

11.4 Stevenage Borough Council's Historic Environment Champion will take an active role in championing the importance of Stevenage's historic environment. Officers will meet the Historic Environment Champion and local Council Members as issues arise and these meetings will be used to monitor and review the Conservation Area Management Plan.

11.5 Future iterations of the appraisal and management plan will be subject to public consultation with the local community, relevant stakeholders, and others with an interest in the area. They will be made available on the Council's website and hard copies will be placed in local libraries. Adverts will be placed in local press. Comments received will be taken into consideration in the final drafting of these documents.



Appendix 1

Appendix 1

At the time of writing, there are no statutory listed buildings within the Orchard Road Conservation Area; however a large number of the buildings could be considered of local importance to the conservation area:

Orchard House, 5 Orchard Road	A large two storey house constructed of red brick with a gabled slate roof. Timber sash windows. John Bailey Denton built Orchard House in 1854 on some land that he had acquired in 1851. Not clearly visible.
6 Orchard Road	A two-storey roughcast rendered brick house with a hipped slate roof. Red and gault brick chimney stacks with 19th century decorative chimney pots. Three 6-over-6 timber sash windows to first floor, semi-circular arch to central window. Central ground floor doorway with arched head and fanlight. Two 6-over-6 sash windows to ground floor. Projecting keystones over windows. String course. Nos. 6, 8 and 10 Orchard Road form a group.
8 Orchard Road	Two-storey brick house built of red brick with burnt headers, gault brick to window and door jambs and a gault brick string course. Hipped slate roof, red and gault brick chimney stacks. Two 6-over-6 timber sash windows to ground and first floor with a central arched 6-over-6 sash window above the central doorway. Painted keystones. Nos. 6, 8 and 10 Orchard Road form a group.
10 Orchard Road	Two-storey brick house, rendered. Hipped slate roof with two red brick chimney stacks. Early twentieth century multi-pane timber sash windows. Two early twentieth century projecting bay windows at ground floor level either side of central doorway with arched head. Nos. 6, 8 and 10 Orchard Road form a group.
Orchard Lodge, 17 Orchard Road	Sited on the corner of Orchard Road and Orchard Crescent. Brick built house, painted white with black window heads; with a gabled slate roof. Timber sash windows. Mid-nineteenth century. Its name and location suggests it had connections with Orchard House, 5 Orchard Road. Retains its mid 19th century red brick front boundary wall.
The Mallard Public House	Mid-nineteenth century public house (built when the railway was constructed). Red brick, painted at first floor level. Decorative brick banding at eaves and brick string course. Gabled slate roof. 6-over-6 timber sash windows. Early twentieth century front extension at ground floor level with timber fenestration.
35 Julians Road	Previously a mid-nineteenth century public house (built when the railway was constructed). Painted brick with applied timber decoration at first floor

Appendix 1

	level. Gabled slate roof with yellow brick end stack and red chimney pots. Two-storey projecting bay to front elevation with two large multi-pane timber sash bay windows to ground and first floor. Three 6-over-6 timber sash windows to first floor, the central window is arch headed. Projecting porch with tiled roof above continues along to bay window.
The Manse, 1 Essex Road	A two-storey, gault brick property with a gabled slate roof and two gault brick stacks. Three 2-over-2 timber sash windows to the first floor with chamfered stone lintels. Two projecting stone bays windows to ground floor with crenellated tops and chamfered window surrounds. The bay windows contain three timber sashes, a central 2-over- 2 sash with a 1-over-1 sash each side. Projecting brick porch with a crenellated stone top.
6 & 7 Essex Road	A pair of large semi-detached late nineteenth century houses. Two-storey, red brick with slate roof. Two gabled projecting bays to front elevation with mock-Tudor timber work / render. Large 8-over-1 timber sash windows to first floor. 12-over-1 sash windows to ground floor (one uPVC replacement window). All windows have chamfered brick jambs and chamfered stone lintels. Both front doors have Venetian glass lights to the side and above. The porches are of elaborate carved stonework.
Stevenage Hire Services	An early twentieth century single storey red brick building with a hipped clay tile roof and two gables to the front elevation. This double fronted shop (it was originally two separate shops) has a moulded timber shopfront.

Table 4

There are a number of other properties houses within the conservation area that have been altered / extended despite this they still retain some original features such as their timber barge boards, finials, porches, associated brick walls and other 19th century features; vital to the character of the area.

