

6.0 Conclusion: Principles and Priorities



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This Appraisal has found the York Central Historic Core Conservation Area to be a place of outstanding quality and, arguably, of unparalleled richness and variety. No other British city can boast such extraordinary evidence of settlement over 2000 years combined with such a range of outstanding important buildings, structures and streets. Whilst the appraisal has also found the Conservation Area to be in generally good health and robust condition, the study has identified numerous ways in which its conservation could be improved and its character and appearance enhanced. These improvements would not only benefit the historic environment, but as this heritage is the foundation of York's present vitality, they would also sustain the city's long-term economic and social prosperity.

There are many recommendations. All have been carefully considered with stakeholders, and all of them would bring important benefits. Nevertheless, at the end of such an exercise it is necessary to stand back and identify the outstanding themes and the key priorities in order to focus energy and scarce resources on the most important management issues facing the City and its partners:

6.1 Principles for Management

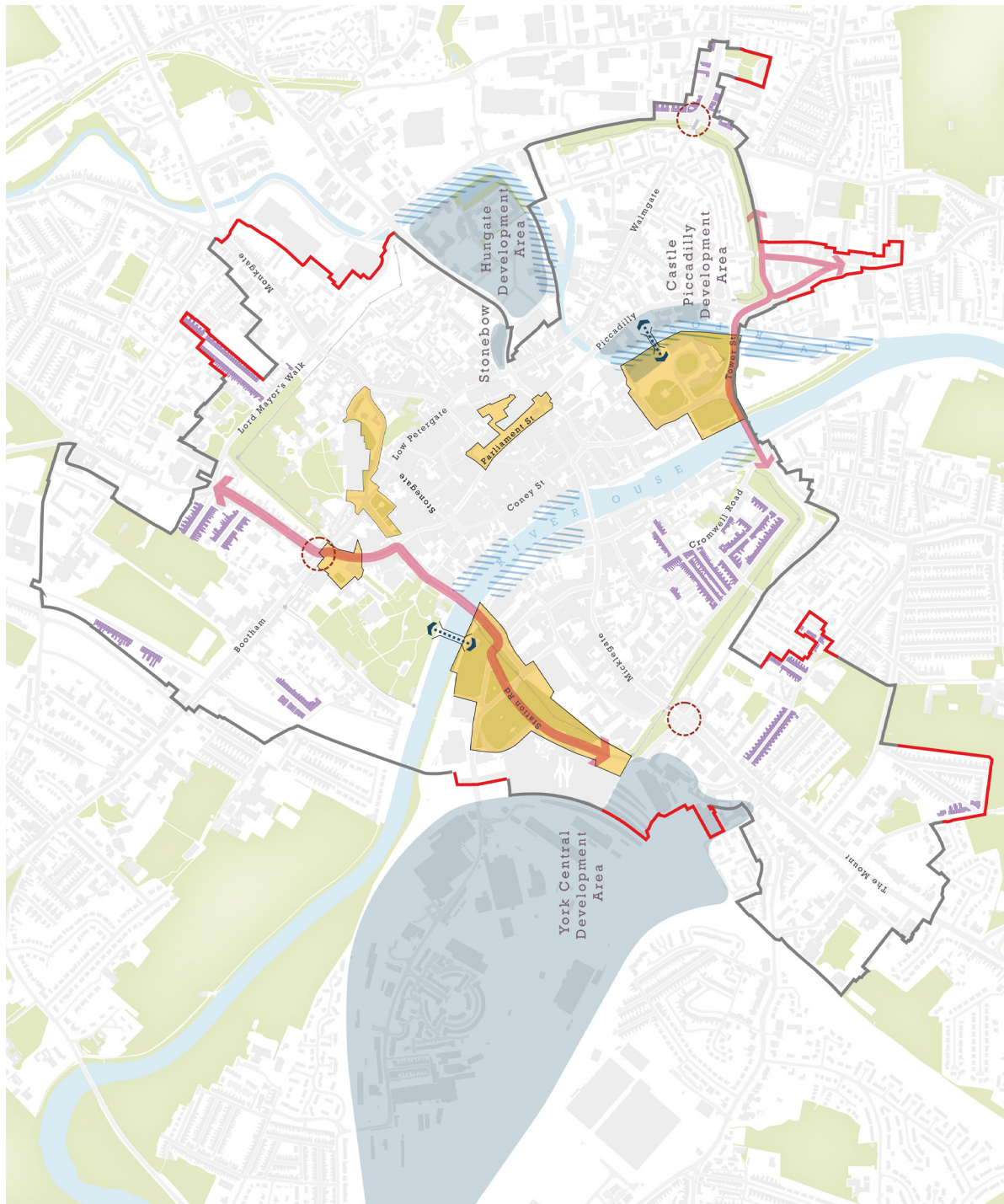
- 1) Recognise in policy and in action that the future economic prosperity and growth of the city centre is founded on conserving, enhancing and celebrating the significance of the Conservation Area and York's six Principal Characteristics, and work in partnership with stakeholders and the public to achieve this.
- 2) Communicate the remarkable interest and importance of the historic core and the principles and priorities for its conservation and enhancement to all in the Council and to residents, workers, developers, businesses and visitors.
- 3) Maintain and foster the remarkably rich mix of uses and the continued presence of substantial residential communities, which are fundamental to the historic core's social and economic strength and as essential to its special character as the medieval walls and Georgian buildings.

- 4) Rebalance the movement needs of the City in order to reduce the impact of traffic on the character, condition and human experience of the Conservation Area, whilst supporting its economic growth: this should be a city centre first and last for pedestrians.
- 5) In recognition of all of the above, City of York Council should identify conservation as a 'first tier' consideration, maximising the potential of the historic environment by using existing resources more intelligently, better co-ordinating its activities, and seeking new sources of funding and partnerships wherever possible.

6.2 Priorities for Action

- 1) Develop a strategy for communicating the remarkable values of the Conservation Area and the recommendations of this study to all relevant parts of the Council, and to the residents, businesses, institutions and landowners of York.
- 2) Develop a strategy and working practices to better co-ordinate council activity in order to use its resources more intelligently, make better use of existing partnerships and develop new ones with the people of York.
- 3) Develop a public realm strategy incorporating a streetscape manual to sit alongside the City Centre Area Action Plan, in order to declutter and improve streets for pedestrians, transform signage and wayfinding and enhance the quality and extent of public access to the rivers.
- 4) Commission and implement public realm masterplans for the key civic spaces of Parliament Street and surrounds, the Station approaches, the Minster Precinct, Exhibition Square and the Castle.
- 5) Implement a Views and Building Heights Policy to conserve and enhance key views and the core's fragile roofscape and skyline.
- 6) Reduce the impact of traffic on the most sensitive sections of the inner ring road and the Bar junctions identified on the accompanying plan.
- 7) Adjust the boundary of the Conservation Area to better reflect its special character and apply Article 4 Directions to certain residential streets, as identified on the accompanying plan.

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Priorities for Action

- Priority for public realm improvements
- Reduce vehicle traffic on sections of the inner ring road which have a significant negative impact on the Conservation Area
- Priorities for Bar junction improvement and decluttering
- Potential for new or improved riverside public space
- Proposed Article 4 Directions
- Existing Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed changes to the Conservation Area boundary
- Significant development sites

