

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Conservation Area Appraisal for Proposed New Conservation Area

“The Nestlé / Rowntree Factory” : Consultation Draft

Summary

- 1 The report requests that a draft character area appraisal describing proposals for a new conservation area relating to the former Rowntree Factory site should be considered for approval for consultation purposes.

Background

- 2 The Nestlé South Development Brief was approved for use as non-statutory supplementary planning guidance by the Planning Committee on 31st May 2007. The brief provides guidance for redeveloping the south side of the existing Nestlé site, the area containing the majority of the earlier factory buildings. Buildings and land would become available for redevelopment following the implementation of business consolidation measures announced by Nestlé earlier this year.
- 3 Sections 6.8 and 6.9 of the Planning Brief describe the intention to designate part of the historic factory site as a conservation area. The conservation area designation, including the determination of its boundaries, would be informed by an appraisal.
- 4 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas “areas of special architectural and historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the quality and interest of an area, rather than of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.
- 5 Designation of a conservation area places obligations on the local authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area. The local authority must also pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The designation of a conservation

area for the Nestlé/Rowntree factory site would contribute towards achieving the overall vision and key objectives for the site as set out in paragraphs 1.17-1.18 of the Brief.

- 6 The conservation area appraisal has been carried out by an independent conservation consultant who was chosen through a selective tendering process. The format and initial content of the report were discussed with officers in the Design Conservation and Sustainable Development Section.
- 7 The draft appraisal is attached as **Annex A**. Section 4 of the appraisal sets out the explanation for the area covered by the proposed conservation area (refer to pages 13,14 &19) and it goes on to discuss the nature and line of the proposed boundary.
- 8 The proposed conservation area would centre on a zone either side of Haxby Road, between the former railway bridge to the south and the roundabout junction with Haley's Terrace to the north. This area is distinctive within the surrounding environment. It also retains the cohesion of the early factory design being an example of the integration of buildings, artefacts and landscape intended by successive owners of the Rowntree factory. It also includes buildings of agreed distinction with manufacturing buildings in close proximity to those designed for social welfare and culture. The larger site area has been intensively infilled in an ad-hoc manner driven by production needs. This has resulted in a much poorer quality of environment and a loss of legibility.
- 9 The area proposed for designation is the most visually accessible part of the complex and therefore it is likely that it best represents the wider factory in the public imagination. The physical survival of the area will preserve a significant element of the cultural and economic heritage of the City.

Consultation

- 10 This report seeks approval for a consultation process to take place. If Members agree the draft appraisal, including the proposed conservation area boundary, Public Consultation would be carried out. This would take place over a six week period and be based upon the methods used for other conservation areas. Consultees would include Local Ward Members, the Clifton Planning Panel, Amenity Societies. A leaflet drop to residents and non-residential properties surrounding the proposed conservation area will also be carried out. The map **Annex B** shows the suggested catchment area for the leaflet. Members should note that this would not be as extensive as the area chosen for the June 2007 leaflet drop about the Development Brief and masterplanning of the Nestlé South site. In that leaflet we promised to contact directly the properties more immediately adjoining the proposed conservation area. Officers considered this would target available resources effectively, bearing in mind the relatively restricted

size of the proposed conservation area. Additional publicity will be provided by lodging details at focal points in the community, such as schools, shops and libraries. See **Annex C** - Consultation Outline and **Annex D** – Consultee List.

Options

- 11 Option 1 - To approve the draft document for consultation and to approve the method and range of the consultation.
- Option 2 - To amend the draft document and/or change the method and range of the consultation process.
- Option 3 - Do not approve the draft document.

Analysis

- 12 Unless there are obvious errors or omissions option 1 is preferred to option 2; so feedback from the full consultation process can be assessed in a holistic way.
Option 3 would have major implications for the master planning process which is due to start in late Autumn. The legal status of the area would not be known and therefore the criteria against which design work takes place would be uncertain.

Corporate Priorities

- 13 The designation of a new conservation area for The Nestlé / Rowntree Factory would assist in improving the actual and perceived condition and appearance of this part of the City. The appraisal would provide a more informed basis for decision making during the masterplanning process and in the future.
- 14 Designation of a new conservation area would contribute to the Local Authority's statutory obligations to protect the historic environment under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Implications

- 15 **Financial** - Production of the consultation documents and delivery costs would be met by existing budgets
- 16 **Human Resources** – No known implications
- 17 **Equalities** - Different formats of the consultation leaflet will be made available on request. Documents will be lodged in accessible locations.
- 18 **Legal** – No implications at this stage
- 19 **Crime and Disorder** - No known implications
- 20 **Information Technology (IT)** - No implications

21 **Property** – No implications

Risk Management

22 There should be no additional risks

Recommendations

23 Members are asked to approve the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the proposed new conservation area – The Nestlé / Rowntree Factory - for use as a consultation document using the consultation process set out above.

Reasons:

The appraisal has adopted a rigorous approach to the assessment of the area under the terms set out in the approved Nestlé South Development Brief, and the document accords with known guidance for conservation area appraisals.

The consultation method and range accords with previous practice.

Contact Details

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*
Clifton, Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without, Huntington & New Earswick

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Nestle South Development Brief May 2007

Rowntree Cocoa Works York Historic Building Report August 2006

Annexes

Annex A – Nestle Rowntree Factory York Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Annex B – Map showing Proposed Area for Consultation

Annex C – Consultation Outline

Annex D – Consultee List