



Conservation Area Appraisal

Thornton



This appraisal reviews the Thornton Conservation Area Assessment, which was published in 2002. The Management Proposals included in this appraisal are based on the outcomes and priorities established by the local community during the public consultation process for the Conservation Area Assessment.

The next appraisal of Thornton Conservation Area will be undertaken by December 2011

December 2006

City of Bradford MDC

www.bradford.gov.uk

What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

A Conservation Area Appraisal describes the character of a conservation area. It also describes the changes that have taken place in the conservation area over recent years.

The appraisal finishes with management proposals which will help to conserve and enhance the area's special character and improve decision making in the future.

The Government requires that all conservation areas have an up-to-date conservation area appraisal.

An up-to-date appraisal is one that has been undertaken within the past five years.

The following work has been done to deliver this conservation area appraisal:

- A photographic survey of the buildings in the conservation area.
 - The assessment of the level of authenticity of most of the historic buildings
- An assessment of the issues facing the conservation area at present
- The survey and update of map data relating to the conservation area
- A review of the appropriateness of the conservation area boundary
 - An assessment as to whether new development has made a positive, negative or neutral impact on the character of the conservation area
 - The formulation of management proposals for the area

What is a Conservation Area?

A conservation area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Thornton Conservation Area was originally designated in 1978. An assessment of the conservation area and a review of its boundary were undertaken in 2001-2002. The current boundary of Thornton Conservation Area was adopted in February 2004.

Conservation area designation brings with it extra controls. These controls cover:

- demolition of unlisted buildings;
- minor developments such as porches, extensions, satellite dishes and boundary walls; and
- works to trees.

The objective of these measures is to help preserve the special character and appearance of the area and maintain or improve its environmental quality. Whilst it is recognised that conservation areas must be allowed to evolve to meet changing demands it is important that this occurs within a framework of controlled and positive management.

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Contacts & Further Information

Design and Conservation Team
8th Floor, Jacobs Well,
Manchester Road
Bradford BD1 5RW

Telephone:
(01274) 434605

Fax:
(01274) 433767

e-mail:
conservation@bradford.gov.uk

Webpages:
[Conservation homepage:](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/conservation)
www.bradford.gov.uk/conservation

[Conservation Area Assessments:](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/conservationassessments)
www.bradford.gov.uk/conservationassessments

[Listed Buildings:](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/listedbuildings)
www.bradford.gov.uk/listedbuildings

Background and Brief History

Bronte birthplace, Market Street



Thornton Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village and contains buildings from different eras of its history. The following timeline briefly summarises its development.

9th century

The earliest evidence of a settlement at Thornton dates from this time. The agricultural nature of early Thornton is evident in the medieval croft field pattern to the south of Thornton Road.

Middle Ages - 18th century

Thornton remained a scattered group of hamlets along the main road between Bradford and Halifax, with no core or focus. Agriculture and small scale quarrying are the main industries with a cottage-based textile industry becoming a larger scale employer as the 18th century progressed.

1800 - 1830

Thornton expands significantly as textile mills and workers' cottages are built to the north and south of Market Street. This development and its associated chapels and shops created the village centre as we know it. In 1829 a new turnpike road, Thornton Road was built to create a better link between Bradford and Halifax. This new link bypassed Market Street and aided the local textile and quarrying industries. Charlotte, Emily and

Anne Bronte were all born at 72-74 Market Street between 1816 and 1820 before the family moved to Haworth.

Mid - Late 19th century

Thornton's status as a bustling industrial village was consolidated as religious and social institutions either grew or became newly established. The village's commercial and retail functions expanded, though the commercial heart of the village shifted towards Thornton Road with the opening of Thornton Railway Station to the southwest of the village in 1878 as part of a branch line between Bradford, Halifax and Keighley.

20th - 21st century

Thornton expanded as commuter dwellings were built in and around the historic core of the village. At the same time the local textile and quarry industries dwindle to nothing and the village's commercial and retail functions decline. Nonetheless Thornton remains an attractive, busy village and key elements of its textile heritage remain to this day.

Key Characteristics

The following summarises the key elements of the character of the Thornton conservation area:

*Below: The natural stone buildings and setted street at Back Field give the area its unified feel.
Below right: 1 Havelock Square has an unusual canted end facing onto Market Street.*

- Dramatic sloping valley side topography which opens up expansive views over the Pinch Beck valley.
- Streets running at right angles to the main thoroughfares of Market Street and Thornton Road to create steeply sloping streets and buildings stepping down the valley side.
- Significant areas of stone setts and flags survive, adding authenticity to the streetscape.
- Vernacular architecture predominates though there are significant numbers of stylised Georgian and Victorian buildings.
- An organic street pattern.
- Buildings and open spaces are well interspersed.
- Mix of building and land uses.
- Character which varies from agricultural to industrial to commercial.
- Traditional natural building materials with local sandstone being the strongest unifying feature.
- Vibrant village centre with Market Street and Thornton Road being the main areas of activity.
- Fine grain of development and the interspersal of larger and smaller buildings.





Top right: 1 Lower Kipping Lane is a good example of local vernacular architecture.

Top: Cloggers Row was built to house workers in the early 19th century.

Middle: Traditional features can be reinstated such as sash windows and make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Bottom: Traditional shopfronts are a key feature of Thornton conservation area.

Summary of Important Features and Details

Features and details contribute to the essential character of the conservation area:

- Original / traditional architectural detailing to houses reflecting local vernacular style or past architectural styles, in terms of: form, roofscape, chimneys, stonework, openings, joinery, windows and doors. These all vary according to building age, original function and style.
- Traditional shopfronts, to buildings still in commercial use and shops which have been converted to dwellings.
- Terraced rows of traditional weavers' cottages.
- Railing and wall details.
- Survival of key open spaces such as fields, and burial grounds.
- Traditional windows and doors.
- Uncleaned nature of the stonework.
- Lack of alteration / modern engineering to some streets.
- Group value of buildings.
- Sensitive conversion of buildings.

Current Condition

AUTHENTICITY 71%

- Each historic building in a conservation area will have originally had features and details which contribute to the character of the conservation area.
- The level of authenticity is based on an assessment of each building to ascertain the level of retention of original features.
- Features assessed are: chimneys, roofs, rainwater goods, walls, windows and doors, boundary walls, porches, bargeboards, bay windows and shopfronts. Not all buildings will have all the above features and the scoring sheet is adjusted to take this into account.
- Only residential, commercial and civic buildings built prior to 1956 are scored.
- 357 properties were assessed for the purpose of the study; this is 90% of all properties within the conservation area.
- The listed buildings had an average authenticity rating of 75%.



A breakdown of the authenticity assessment shows which features and details in particular are being retained and/or maintained and where there are the greatest threats.

Strengths

- A significant proportion of the buildings retain a significant number of traditional features and details.
- Significant areas of traditional stone sett and stone flag paving survive.
- Definite sense of place and strong Pennine character.
- Busy village centre with a range of activity.
- Street pattern has changed very little.
- Rugged, unpretentious street scenes and groups of buildings.
- The successful re-use, and adaptation of many buildings.
- The area's listed buildings tend to retain a high proportion of their original features and details.
- Key open spaces maintain their traditional character.
- A high proportion of buildings retain traditional roofing materials, giving a strong roofscape.
- Lack of modern engineering to some streets.
- The survival of traditional shopfront details.
- Mature and semi-mature street trees along main thoroughfares.
- Quiet, attractive side streets and lanes.
- Mature trees and the larger houses retain substantial gardens.
- Discrete character areas including Market Street, Sapgate Lane, Lower Kipping Lane, Back Field and Havelock Square and Havelock Street.
- Clustered and strip development is interspersed with open spaces.
- Permeable conservation area with footpaths, lanes and roads.
- Survival of key buildings such as Prospect Mills, Kipping Barn and Kipping Chapel.



Vista along setted Havelock Square

Weaknesses

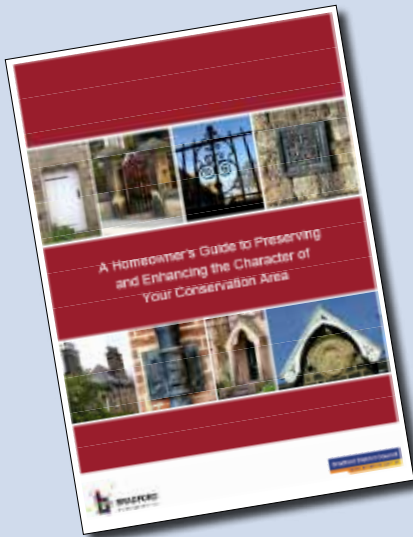


- The use of inappropriate mortar, pointing, the painting of stonework and clutter are undermining the group value and historical character of buildings.
- Few traditional door and window details remain in situ.
- On average, the listed buildings in the conservation area scored only marginally better than the unlisted buildings in terms of authenticity.
- Small minority of vacant or underused buildings and sites.
- More traditional chimneys have been inappropriately altered or removed than in most other conservation areas surveyed in the district so far.
- The replacement of traditional rainwater goods with inappropriate modern ones.
- The inappropriate alteration or removal of traditional boundary features are harming the street scene.
- A minority of traditional shopfront details remain in situ.

Left: Painting of stonework undermines the historic character of a conservation area.

Opportunities

- Better decisions by all stakeholders (property owners, the Planning Service, Highways) through reference to the Conservation Area Assessment and this review and subsequent workshops and more communication with the Design and Conservation Team.
- Recently published Repair and Maintenance Guidance should help property owners make better informed decisions.



- Recently adopted Shopfront Design Guide SPD should result in better planning decisions in applications involving shopfronts.
- Bringing vacant and underused buildings and sites back into full use.
- Taking out enforcement action against unauthorised works.

Right: Vacant and underused buildings on Green Lane and Market Street



Havelock Street

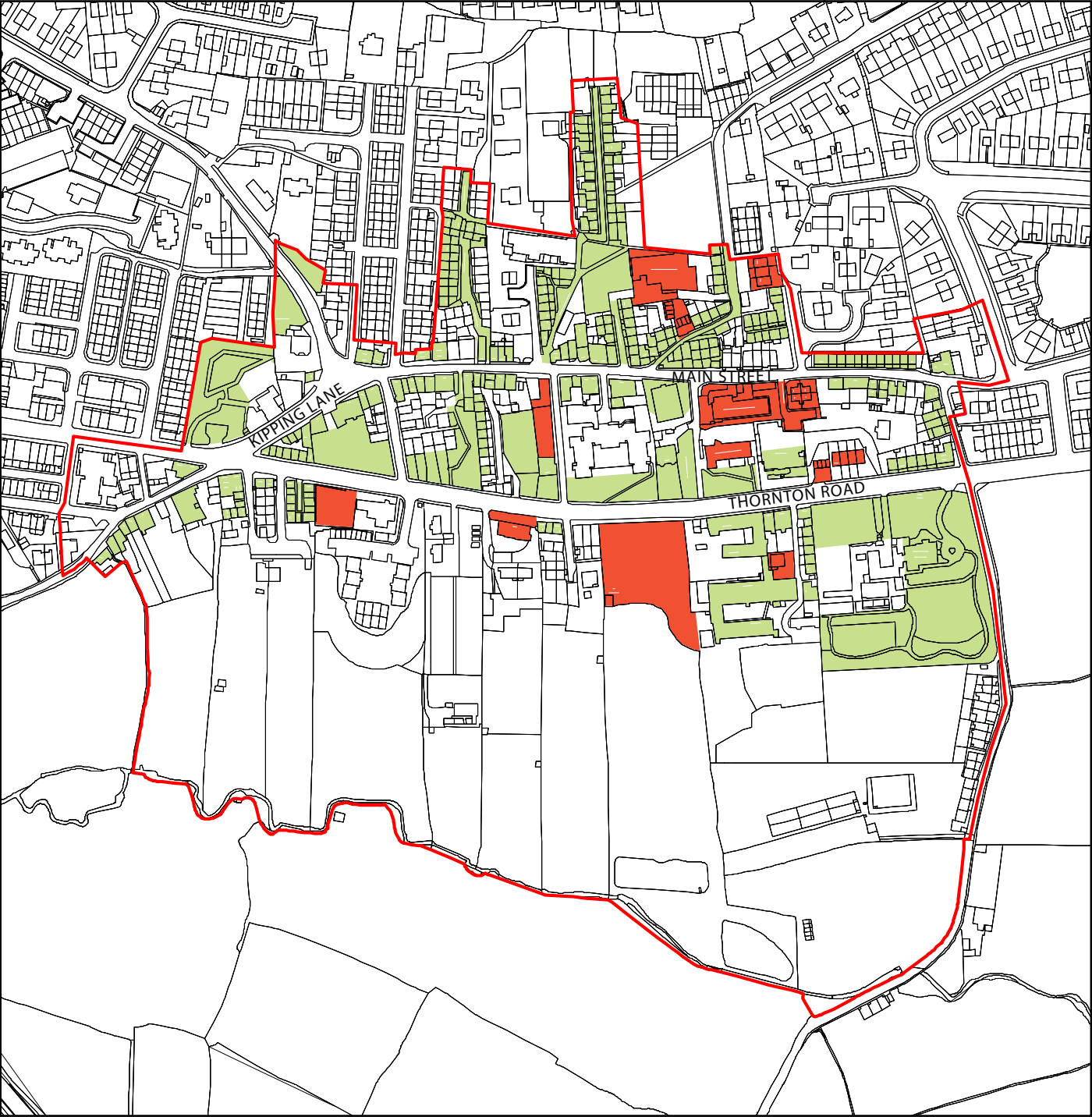
Threats

- Continued removal of traditional features and details from buildings.
- Poor decisions concerning planning applications, enforcement cases, listed buildings, highway management, and trees.
- Loss of historic street surfaces and traditional character of public realm.
- Continued vacancy and underuse of buildings and sites.
- Loss of commercial and related activity in the village centre.
- Loss of key open spaces.



Thornton Conservation Area

Character Contributions



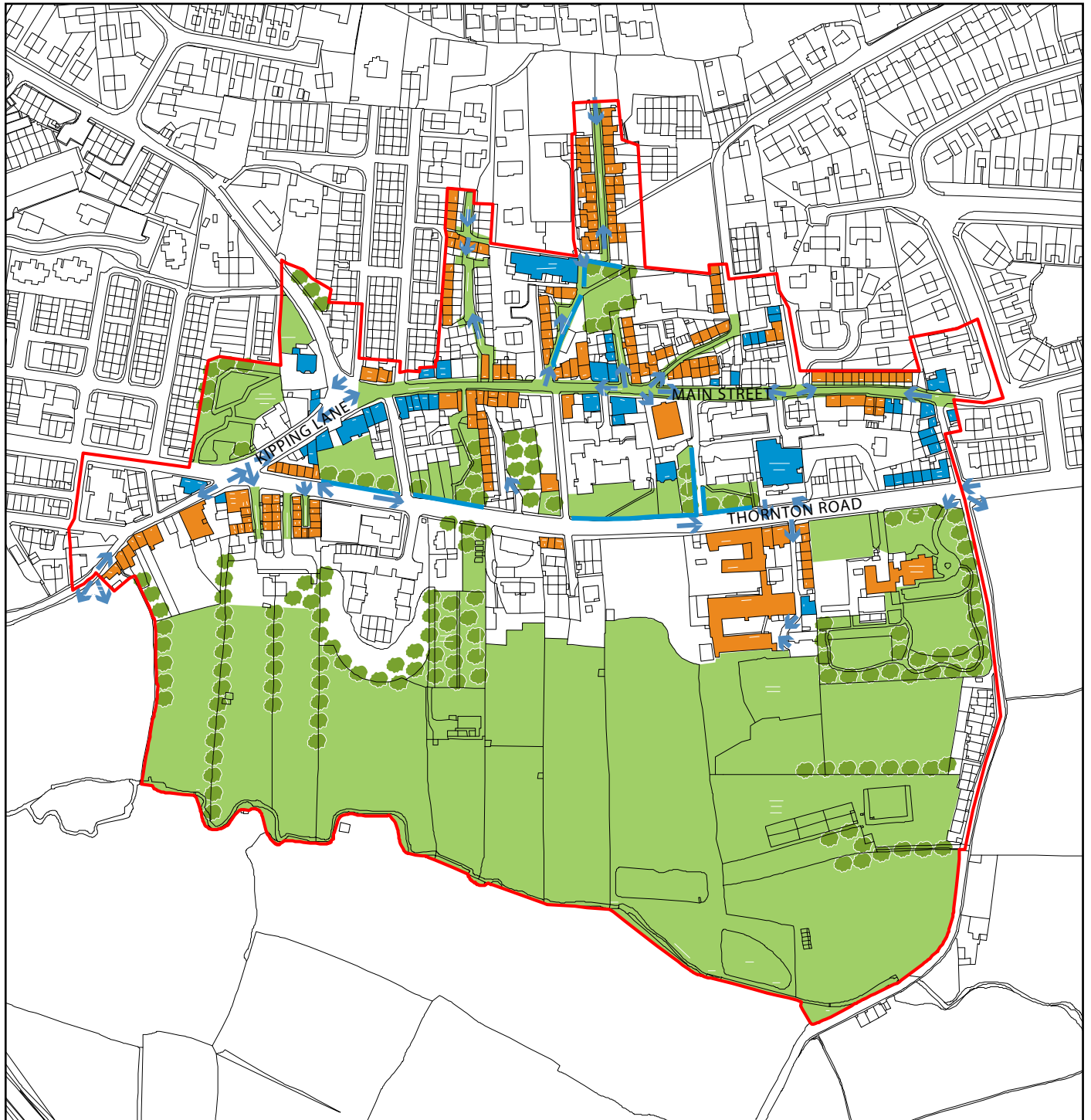
Key

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Areas providing a **positive** contribution to character
- Areas providing a **negative** contribution to character
- Areas providing a **neutral** contribution to character

NB The 'positive', 'negative' and 'neutral' areas relate to the contribution the site/building currently makes to the character of the Conservation Area. The classification in no way means that the site/building has no special architectural, historic or archaeological interest.

Thornton Conservation Area

Open Spaces, Trees, Views, Listed and Key Unlisted Buildings



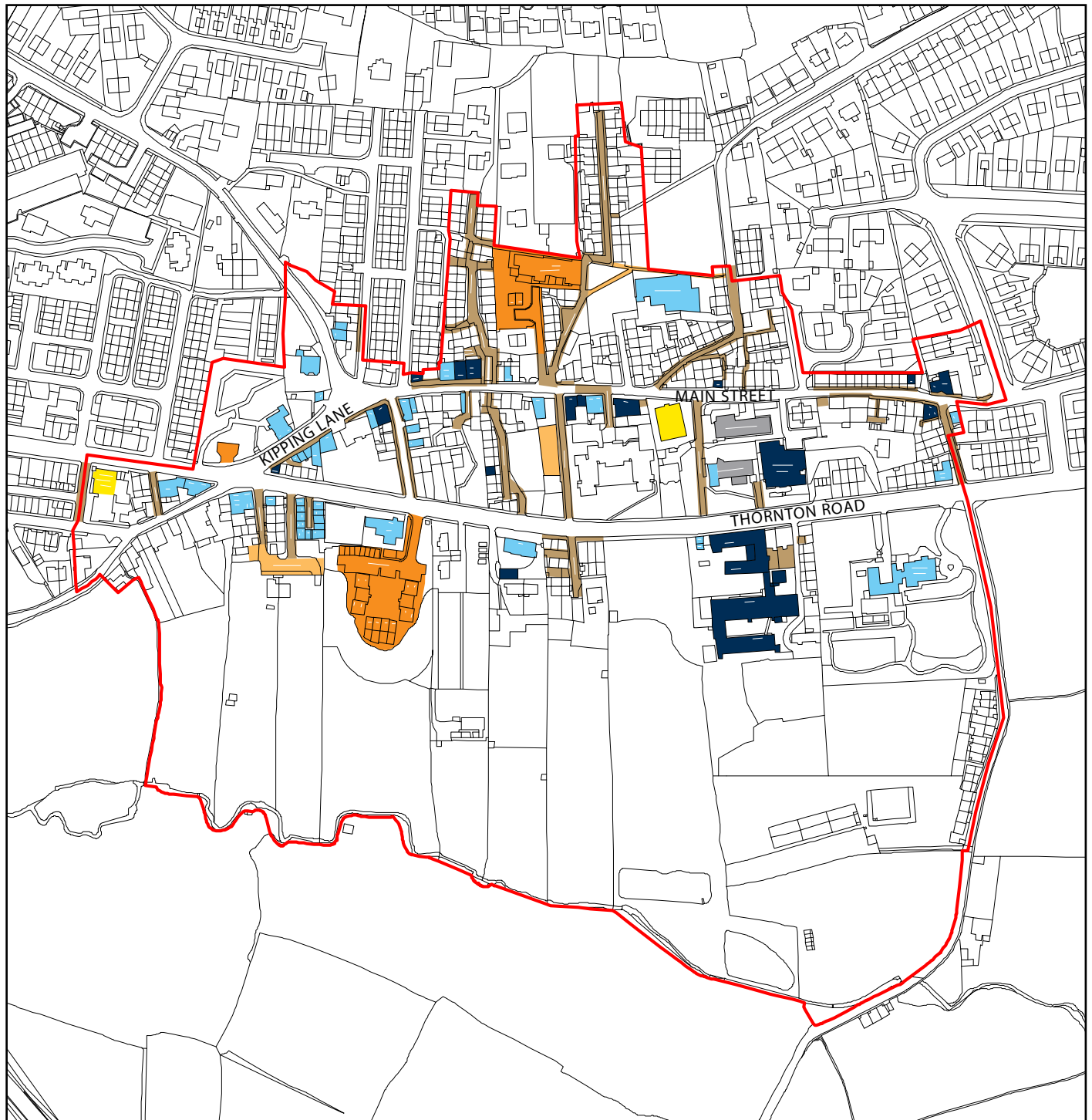
Key

	Conservation Area Boundary		Listed building
	Key open space		Key unlisted building
	Important tree(s)		
	Key view or vista		

NB This map does not identify key trees individually, but merely indicates where there is at least one important tree.

Thornton Conservation Area

Land Use and Highway Materials



Key

	Conservation Area Boundary		Demolition		Civic building
	Retail / commercial building		Residential		Stone sets / flags
	Other non residential building		Vacant building / floor space		Un-surfaced / partially surfaced
	Place of worship / religious		New development		Tarmac / concrete

Any changes that have had a significant impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area since the previous assessment in 2001-2 are detailed below.

Changes affecting the Conservation Area

New Development

The former Church School at Market Street / Havelock Square has been converted to flats and re-named **Ellingham Court**, with a pair of semi detached houses built in the former school grounds. The conversion is generally appropriately detailed and the new build is stone built. The brown uPVC replacement glazing and panelling to some of the dwellings is a jarring feature.

POSITIVE / NEUTRAL CHANGE



The three terraces of houses which comprise **Alan Court** were built on open land behind the New Inn on Thornton Road. The development stands within a clearing surrounded by protected trees, and uses natural stone slate and timber. The communal garden forms a strong focal point and the development emulates South Square in some respects.

NEUTRAL CHANGE

Appropriate doors and windows have been reinstated to the Listed Buildings at **3-5 Havelock Square, 3 Havelock Street, 11 Havelock Street, 20 Havelock Street, 1 Lower Kipping Lane, 15 Market Street, 52 Market Street, and 12 Prospect Street**. All of these minor changes have enhanced the street scene of the conservation area.

POSITIVE CHANGES

The terrace of three houses at **14-18 Sappgate Lane** was completed c.2004. The houses are built from artificial stone with slate roofs and uPVC windows and are fronted by an open area of parking.

NEGATIVE CHANGE



LESSON: Decision makers should consider the character of the conservation area when determining planning applications. Here the inappropriate materials, detailing and site layout have introduced an uncharacteristic bland development in one of the strongest parts of the conservation area.

Buildings

The following buildings have become vacant since the publication of the Conservation Area Assessment:

- 8 Market Street;
- 96 Market Street;
- 102-104 Market Street;
- 110 Market Street;
- Former swimming baths, Thornton Road;
- Building behind 329 Thornton Road.

NEGATIVE CHANGE

The following buildings were vacant when the Conservation Area Assessment was written and remain vacant:

- 5 Bridge Street;
- 1 Market Street / 2 Green Lane;
- 2-4 Market Street;
- 33a Market Street;
- 39 Market Street;
- 46 Market Street;
- Prospect Mills, Thornton Road;
- 482 Thornton Road (shop unit only).

NO CHANGE / NEGATIVE

The prolonged vacancy or underuse of these buildings makes their longer term future uncertain, and presents an atmosphere of neglect in the place. The conservation area would benefit if these buildings were returned to use.

The following buildings have returned to use since the publication of the Conservation Area Assessment:

- 1 Green Lane;
- Former Church School / Ellingham Court, Mark Street;

POSITIVE CHANGE

Trees and Open Space

The former public conveniences at the corner of Kipping Lane and Thornton Road were demolished and the resultant empty tarmac space re-landscaped to create a new space called Kipping Gardens. The overall design of the space, which incorporates seating, hard landscaping and information boards is of a good standard. Unfortunately this is let down slightly by the use of a grey coloured Chinese sandstone. On the whole this scheme has improved this prominent corner site.

POSITIVE CHANGE



Prospect Mill, Thornton Road

Works to Highways

There have been no significant highway works beyond regular repair and maintenance.

Boundary

The boundary of Thornton Conservation Area will be reviewed in 2009-2010.

2009-10

Negative Impacts

As part of the review of the conservation area a number of properties displaying inappropriate alterations and additions have been noted.

Whilst a minority are considered to have a severely negative impact on the character of the conservation area, there are a number of properties displaying relatively minor visual detractors, such as inappropriate pointing and paintwork

to stonework, inappropriate signage, poorly detailed shopfronts, and dormer windows. Other significant blights on the area are unused and underused buildings and sites. The Council will look to ways of mitigating these works and will

actively discourage the occurrence of similar situations arising within the conservation area in the future. Design guidance on the repair and maintenance of historic properties has recently been made available.



Management Proposals

The overall aim of the Conservation Area Management Proposals is to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area, by ensuring that the Council and the community work together to maintain historic features and details and limit the loss of character.

The objectives aim to:

- improve service delivery.
- raise awareness and understanding about the special character of the conservation area.
- improve decision making so that all repair, development and alteration result in a positive contribution to the character of the place.

The objectives of the Management Proposals are based on the issues identified in the Thornton Conservation Area Assessment and prioritised by members of the community who took part in the Thornton Conservation Area Assessment public consultation.

	Objective	Actions	Timescale
1	Design and Conservation Team to maintain contact with the local community	• Yearly newsletter about conservation area issues • Design and Conservation website to be made as informative, user friendly and up-to-date as possible	Yearly 2006 - 2012
2	Improved communication between Council officers and key partners in the conservation area	• Formation of a conservation area forum • Workshops	Monthly As required
3	Improve the quality and amenity value of the public realm, open spaces and highway materials in Thornton	• Closer working relationship between Design and Conservation and other Council Departments • Production of design guidance for the enhancement of the public realm	Continual As resources permit
4	Retain the traditional scale, proportion and character of the shopping / business areas in Thornton	• Draft shopfront design guidance to be adopted during 2007. • Planning Policy	Review guidance periodically
5	Preserve and enhance features and details that contribute to the character of Thornton	• Guidance for the repair and maintenance of historic buildings to be published by the Design and Conservation Team in 2007.	Review guidance periodically
6	Promote good quality new development	• Production of guidance on appropriate sympathetic design to suit the character of the conservation area. • Production of design briefs where appropriate.	2006 - 2012 as resources permit
7	Ensure all investment is contributing to the character of the conservation area and its activities.	Maintenance of links and discussions between Design and Conservation Team and partners outside of and within the Council.	Continual
8	Monitor Planning Applications to add value to the historic environment	Design and Conservation Team to work more effectively within the wider planning service.	Continual
9	Address illegal works to listed buildings and unauthorised development	Liaison between Design and Conservation Team and Planning Enforcement Team	Continual
10	Retain important trees	Liaison between Design and Conservation Team and Trees Team	Continual
11	Monitor Change loss/gain and feedback to local community and Council officers working in the conservation area.	Design and Conservation Team to review Thornton Conservation Area every five years in line with Best Value indicator 219a	Review by December 2011

