



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOLY SEPULCHRE CONSERVATION AREA RE-APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



Planning Policy & Conservation Section
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Holy Sepulchre Conservation Area
Draft Re-appraisal and Management Plan

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Introduction

Conservation Areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act in 1967. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Local Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Local Authorities also have a duty to review the Conservation Areas from time to time.

Section 71 places a duty on Local Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas.

The primary objectives of Conservation Area designation are: -

- ◆ to preserve worthy buildings and prevent their demolition unless this is shown to be the only suitable action;
- ◆ to ensure that redevelopment, renovation or the extension of existing buildings will harmonise with other buildings in the area;
- ◆ to preserve or enhance the setting of the area;
- ◆ to encourage positive schemes for the restoration of buildings within the area.

The purpose of this re-appraisal is to provide guidance for owners and occupiers on how the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area can be achieved. It will also provide a sound basis for the assessment of planning applications and will help identify proposals for preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

The Conservation Area

The Conservation Area was designated on the 25th June 1986. Its boundaries have remained the same since then. It can be characterised by its high quality 18th and 19th century architecture, focused on the 12th century church and churchyard.

History and Development

Holy Sepulchre is located in the very north of the medieval town of Northampton. To the north of Regent Square the Northgate was located, and the northern edge of Campbell Street marks the old town walls.

Large sheep markets were held here which gave the street its name. Holy Sepulchre Church is one of the earliest buildings still standing in Northampton. One of only four surviving round churches in England, it was founded circa 1100 by Simon de Senlis, Earl of Northampton, on his return from the First Crusade. Much altered since then, it sits in the heart of the conservation area.

By the time of Speed's map in 1610, most of the recognisable street patterns in the area are in place. The majority of the centre of the town centre was destroyed by the Great Fire on 20th September 1675. Holy Sepulchre Church survived the fire. Much of historic Northampton's architecture dates from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Holy Sepulchre Conservation Area reflects this, and its historic buildings date predominately from these centuries.

In the 1830s development pushed northwards along Barrack Road, and Sheep Street became a route to the town centre and Market Square. By the 1880s and the First Edition Ordnance Survey map, the area is surrounded by housing. Northampton Corporation's trams ran up Sheep Street from the Drapery to Kingsthorpe village from 1897. Originally horse-hauled, the route was electrified in 1907, but was closed in 1934 and replaced by buses.

Later road widening on Campbell Street led to loss of the top of Regent Square. In the 1960s Broad Street lost most of its historic frontage due to road widening. Lady's Lane was constructed to the south of the conservation area, removing Bull Head Lane and properties facing it. Since then, little has changed. New offices have been constructed at the corner of Lady's Lane and Sheep Street, as well as Northgate House to the north. The isolation from neighbouring suburbs and the town centre has meant that the area has faced little development pressure and has not been greatly altered.

Archaeology

Holy Sepulchre Conservation Area is within the medieval walled area of Northampton's historic core. Past pre-development archaeological excavations within the town centre, although not extensive, have revealed the survival of buried archaeological remains associated with the development of the town from the 12th century onwards.

Architectural and Townscape Character

Building Ages and Primary Uses

Much of the conservation area is in use as offices. There is some retail use on Regent Square, while food and drink and leisure uses are common on the southern part of Sheep Street and parts of Regent Square. The isolation from the town centre has led to the area having a quieter character than Bridge Street, as it is free from traffic due to the inner ring road being created on Broad Street and traffic management measures within the designated area.

Views

The major view into the conservation area is from Sheep Street and the south. Here the impact of the modern building on the southern side of the road and a large wall-mounted advertisement substantially detract from the view, but beyond it the historic buildings are visible.



11-13 Regent Square

From the north, the conservation area can be glimpsed by passing motorists on Broad Street. The lack of appropriate care and maintenance of buildings on Regent Square detracts from the area. On the eastern side of the conservation area, views from Campbell Street of the Conservation Area are green and verdant, and provide a change of character in the neighbourhood.

Zones of character and buildings of note

Sheep Street leads away from the noise and traffic around the Greyfriars bus station. Its narrower roads and eighteenth century buildings mark it from the modern roads surrounding it.

On the eastern side of Sheep Street, the Northampton West Indian Cultural

Association centre is set back from the street line of the rest of the conservation area, and is not especially in character with neighbouring buildings. The setback, with the adjacent green space, does however mean that it is less viewed in conjunction with the historic streetscene, and partly neutralises its appearance. No. 44 Sheep Street, is an eighteenth century stone property, now painted, and is Grade II listed. It has a large and unsightly sign on its southern elevation which significantly detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area and the listed building.



Chancery House, 52 Sheep Street

Much of the eastern side of Sheep Street is of a high quality, and numbers 52, 54, and 56A & 56B are all listed at Grade II. In the main, buildings here date from the eighteenth century and are formal, well proportioned offices that contribute positively towards the character of the conservation area.

The Viewpoint development at 50A is a new complex of flats built in a traditional style in keeping with the neighbouring properties. It is well-proportioned with timber windows, and complements its historic neighbours despite its high entrance to its courtyard.



56A & 56B Sheep Street

The Working Men's Club at 56A & 56B is an earlier building dating from the seventeenth century, and its two-storey height leads the eye along to Holy Sepulchre church well.

The western side of Sheep Street has a more varied character. The former job centre on south-western corner detracts from the character of the area due to its ill-matching materials and plain window details. However, it is well proportioned, and its height matches neighbouring properties well.

No. 39 appears to be vacant at present, but the alterations to the frontage when it was used as a nightclub are out of keeping with the building and the street. Its fascia is badly maintained and uPVC windows have been installed on upper storeys.

41-43, is an eighteenth century Grade II listed three-storey townhouse, now in use as offices. Its neighbour, Regent House, is of the same age and is also Grade II listed but is two storeys in height with attic windows. Its formal doorway adds to the street scene.



39 Sheep Street

The adjacent Ex-Servicemen's Club (No 47) also dates from the eighteenth century, but its two storey height and less formal detailing contrasts well with the stiff formality of its southern neighbours. It is also Grade II listed. It was formerly the home of William Kerr (founder of the Northampton General Hospital), who, with another surgeon, largely rebuilt Sheep Street and commissioned most of the Victorian terrace housing west of Holy Sepulchre.

The land behind the Club has always been open according to historic maps. Historically, it had many trees and was used as gardens and then as green space for the Club. Now it is used as car parking, and many trees have been lost.



47-57 Sheep Street

49-53 and 55-57 Sheep Street are both Grade II listed and date from the eighteenth century. The modern entrance on to the rear parking for 49-53 detracts slightly from the building, but has been done with some restraint. 55-57 has a high quality oriel window projecting over the street, which adds to the high overall quality of the western side of Sheep Street.



55 & 57 Sheep Street

Northgate House on the north-western side of Sheep Street currently houses the Inland Revenue offices and appears to date from the 1970s. Viewed from the south, it is reasonably in scale with the rest of the street due to its sympathetic proportions and colour. As Sheep Street drops away, the building does not step down to match. When viewed from the north, this leads to a certain degree of discontinuity with the rest of the streetscape as window heights drift out of sync with neighbouring buildings. The Mansard roof is an alien feature in the area and is not in keeping with the rest of the street scene.

Regent Square forms the northern focal point in the conservation area. Due to its location by the inner ring road as constructed in the 1960s, it is noisier with more traffic. Spatially, it opens up from the narrower Regent Street to provide an open space, with higher, more formal buildings mainly dating from the nineteenth century. The loss of the northern end of Regent Square due to the widening of Campbell Street has meant that the streetscene peters out by the junction of Broad Street and Campbell Street.

Currently, the isolation of the area from both the town centre and the surrounding residential neighbourhoods has adversely affected the appearance of the area. Many buildings are in a poor condition and have been inappropriately altered with windows and shopfronts not in keeping with the properties. The uPVC windows on the



12 Regent Square

upper floors of some properties are of a low quality and detract significantly from the building.

No. 12 Regent Square is a Grade II listed classically-proportioned 19th century three-storey building and has a high quality shopfront. It is currently being refurbished.

No. 11 Regent Square is an impressive Victorian shop with good quality shopfront and upper storeys, while 10 and 9 Regent Square suffer from low quality shopfronts.

No. 8 Regent Square needs some renovation to its upper floors, but like 7 Regent Square, it has been disfigured by ill-suited modern shopfronts. No. 6 Regent Square is well proportioned, but suffers from uPVC windows to its upper storeys and a low quality modern shopfront.

No. 5 Regent Square appears to have been recently damaged by fire and is partly boarded up. It significantly detracts from the streetscene and should either be renovated or rebuilt as soon as possible.

The Bird In Hand public house has been rendered on its first storey in the past, but its shopfront and signage are in keeping with the character of the area. The neighbouring takeaway has a fine shopfront and upper storey, but its appearance is spoilt by a clumsy fascia sign. To the south is a modern shop unit which is not especially in character with the rest of the street.

The Black Cat Jazz Café, formerly a Charity property, has been in use as a music venue and discotheque for many decades, and its colour adds a touch of character to the area. It is in reasonable condition and acts as a key point in the street scene.

Broad Street was once a major street into the town centre which was lined with shops and commercial buildings. Within the conservation area, only 50 Broad Street, now part of the grounds of 55-57 Sheep Street survived the 1960s highway improvements.

Holy Sepulchre Church lies at the heart of the conservation area. Originally built with a round nave and a rectangular chancel in the twelfth century, it has been altered in subsequent centuries.

The circular nave's upper storey was altered in the fourteenth century, and subsequently re-roofed in the nineteenth century. The



Holy Sepulchre Church

chancel was extended between the twelfth and fourteenth century. The west tower dates from the early fourteenth century. George Gilbert Scott restored much of the church in the nineteenth century, and rebuilt much of the eastern end of the chancel, which by then had fallen into disuse. The circular apse dates from this period.

Its churchyard provides the only publicly-accessible green space in the area and is a valuable 'green lung' for the area. The church is not often open to the public, but the churchyard is regularly visited by members of the public. Its covered lych gate, facing on to Sheep Street, breaks up the open expanse of wall and provides a link to the church which is set back from the road. The churchyard offers a tranquil area for users and is a valuable area for flora and fauna, close to the town centre. The northern boundary of the Church Yard marks the route of the former Rope Walk.

Church Lane is a quieter, greener street without much of the footfall of Sheep Street. On Church Lane is the church hall, which dates originally from the 1930s but has a later single storey extension which is not especially in keeping with the street scene. Facing it is 4 Church Lane, a modern block of flats built in a neo-Georgian style and reasonably well detailed and proportioned.

At the junction of Church Lane and Sheep Street, a block of flats called Sussex Court is located on the north-eastern corner. The property appears to have been built in the early 1990s in a modern gothic style. This is out of keeping with the historically classically proportioned and detailed buildings in the vicinity. It is also set back from the street line and while a reasonable building, is out of place in the conservation area.

Campbell Street was widened in the 1960s and is dominated by car use. Forming the northern edge of the conservation area boundary, the frontage of Campbell Street feels rather divorced from the rest of the conservation area. Holy Sepulchre's vicarage is a modern two storey house facing Campbell Street, but the light brown bricks and its distance from neighbouring buildings and the road means that it blends into the background well. The block of flats to its north is a bland "heritage" development that, whilst providing an edge to the area, does not make a positive contribution to it. The medical centre beyond it is plain and does not address the street well when viewed from Barrack Road and the north.

Boundaries

The conservation area is well defined by new development and road widening schemes. Latymer Court to the east is a modern development in a pastiche neo-Georgian style and is excluded from the conservation area, while the New Roadmender to the south-west is visually isolated from the conservation area and therefore makes little contribution to the character of the area.

The Northampton West Indian Community Association building at the south-eastern corner of the conservation area on Lady's Lane lies partly within the conservation area. The boundary should be redrawn to completely exclude the property, as it is not in character with the rest of the conservation area and does not make a positive contribution to it.

Management Plan

A conservation area management plan is intended to draw up methods of improving the character and appearance of the area. It focuses on points highlighted by the appraisal, and where reasonable action can be taken to enhance the area's character.

A photographic survey of the conservation area should be carried out in order to provide a baseline of information to compare development with. It may also highlight particular breaches of planning and listed building control and provide a basis for potential, appropriate enforcement action.

Several properties within the conservation area, particularly in Regent Square, are poorly maintained. This, along with unsympathetic alterations detract from the street scene. A Section 215 notice can be considered for 5 Regent Square, which has been recently damaged by fire and has yet to be refurbished. 12 Regent Square is a prominent listed building in the conservation area and has lost several glazing panels in its shop front window. These should be re-glazed as soon as possible, and owner should be encouraged to do so.

Proposals for redevelopment or alterations to existing buildings will be required to demonstrate how the proposal has had regard to the historic importance of the area. Proposals will have to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Those which do not adequately demonstrate this will be strongly resisted.

Low quality signage and shopfronts have been installed over time on many of the shops on Regent Square. Local traders will be encouraged to install better quality shopfronts in order to improve the quality of the area. The potential of removing existing signage which has an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area will be investigated. Applications for new/alterations to shop fronts and associated signage will be determined having regard to the historic sensitivity of the area.

Due to the low amount of residential properties in the area, satellite dishes are rare. Where they are found facing the

street, the council will investigate the potential for relocation or removal.

Enforcement

National and local policy will be enforced. In cases where this is necessary, it will be carried out in a fair, clear and consistent manner. Information and advice will be available before formal enforcement is taken, to discuss the circumstances of the case. This will provide an opportunity to resolve any problems before any formal action is taken.

Streetscape

The streetscape forms an important element within the conservation area. The semi-urban nature of the area has resulted in an increased level of both pedestrian and vehicular movement. The local Highway Authority will be approached to establish an agreement as to how heritage sensitive areas will be dealt with. This will include surface treatment of roads and footpaths, signage and street furniture.

Appendix 1: Buildings of note within the Conservation Area

Grade I Listed Buildings

Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Sheep Street

One of the rare round churches, having a circular nave, derived from the Church of The Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. The original church of about 1100 has a round nave of 8 columns, supporting a triforium, and a short chancel, probably apse-ended. A North aisle was added circa 1180, leaving the present arcade. A second North aisle was added circa 1275. During the early C15 a South aisle was built, the triforium of the round was replaced by a clerestory, and a Western tower was added. The restoration of 1860-4 added further extensions to the East. The round, now the Baptistry, is still impressive, though restored 1868-73. Additions of 1860-4 by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Not a Templar church, always a parish church. Chancel screen by Oldrid Scott, 1880. Brass of 1640.

Grade II Listed Buildings

44 Sheep Street

C18. Ashlar, now painted. Tiled roof with dormer. 2 storeys and attics, quoins. 4 windows in reveals under keystones. Modern shop window in C19 surround.

50, 50A, 52, 52A Sheep Street

C18. Ashlar front with modillion cornice and parapet. 3 storeys, quoins, moulded floor bands. 6 sash windows in reveals, segmental heads. Central 1st floor later bay window. Modern shop windows.

54 Sheep Street

Late C18. Ashlar, Welsh slated roof. 3 storeys, 3 flush sash windows under flat arches. Panelled door and fanlight, panelled reveals, surround of reeded pilasters under hood.

56A, 56B Sheep Street

C17 and later. Ashlar, interlocking tiled roof with stone cornice. 2 storeys, 6 sash windows. Shop front.

41, 43 Sheep Street

Late C18. Ashlar, stone slated roof with kneelers to gables. Basement and 3 storeys, cement plinth, 1st and 2nd floor bands, cornice. 8 flush sash windows. Panelled door and reveals, reeded surround, hood. Smaller door on left in similar surround.

45 Sheep Street (Regent House)

Late C18. Painted ashlar, Welsh slated roof with dormer. 2 storeys and attics, 5 sash windows in reveals. Panelled door and reveals, fluted Doric pilasters carrying open pediment, fanlight. Glazing bars to windows.

47 Sheep Street (Ex-Servicemen's Club)

Late C18. Painted ashlar, Welsh slated roof. 2 storeys, plinth. 4 sash windows 4 steps up to panelled door and fanlight in arched panelled reveal; surround of open pediment on fluted Doric half columns. Single storey wing on right has arched gateway. Glazing bars to windows.

49-53 Sheep Street

C18. Ashlar, tiled roof. 3 storeys, plinth, floor bands, quoins on right and between Nos. 49 and 51. 7 sash windows with glazing bars in nearly flush frames under lintels and keystones. Panelled doors and reveals, plain surrounds, cornice over doorway of no. 51.

55, 57 Sheep Street

C18. Stucco front with parapet hiding roof. 3 storeys and attic box dormer. Plinth, quoins, floor bands, modillioned cornice. 5 sash windows in reveals with keyblocks. 2nd floor Venetian window above 1st floor oriel bay window with arched window on each face with archivolt, Doric pilasters, entablatures. Coupled doors in panelled reveals, surround of paired Doric pilasters, entablature. Probably once 1 house. Shop window on right now removed.

12 Regent Square

Early C19. Stucco front, Welsh slated roof behind parapet stepped up in centre 3 storeys, tall Ionic pilasters to upper floors. 3 sash windows with glazing bars. C19 shop front.

Adopted Local List

6A Regent Square

Painted brick, slate roof. Ground floor: modern shop front. Upper floors: 3 central sash windows per floor, grouped together, each with individual arch (2nd floor windows have panelled architraves and keystones to arches), and stone pillars for mullions, with impost mouldings. Window frames are modern uPVC. String course beneath narrow eaves cornice with modillions, above which is elaborate dormer with sash window (with panelled architraves and central ionic pillar) and triangular pediment, "embedded" in a semi-circular parapet. Small recessed panels beneath 2nd floor windows and dormer. Very tall brick chimney stacks. Attractive central gable. Handsome architectural composition and detailing.

8, 8A Regent Square

Brick with stone dressings, rusticated quoins with vermiculations. Slate roof. Ground floor: modern shop fronts, that to no 8 (RH side) blocked-in. Central doorway serving both units. 1st floor: 2 large full-length windows, each with moulded cornice above, with modillions, and supported on end scrolls. Windows have narrow edge panes separated from the main section by moulded mullions; similar mouldings to architraves. Inter-floor band with supporting scrolls incorporated into 2nd floor window sills. 2nd floor: 2 groups of triple-arched sash windows with impost mouldings and keystones, similar to No 6a. String course above with discs. Large cornice with modillions and dentils: outside corners have massive decorated stone blocks with pyramidal top, and finials. Tall, elegant chimney stacks with overhanging cornice - one central, one at each end (left hand stack missing cornice).

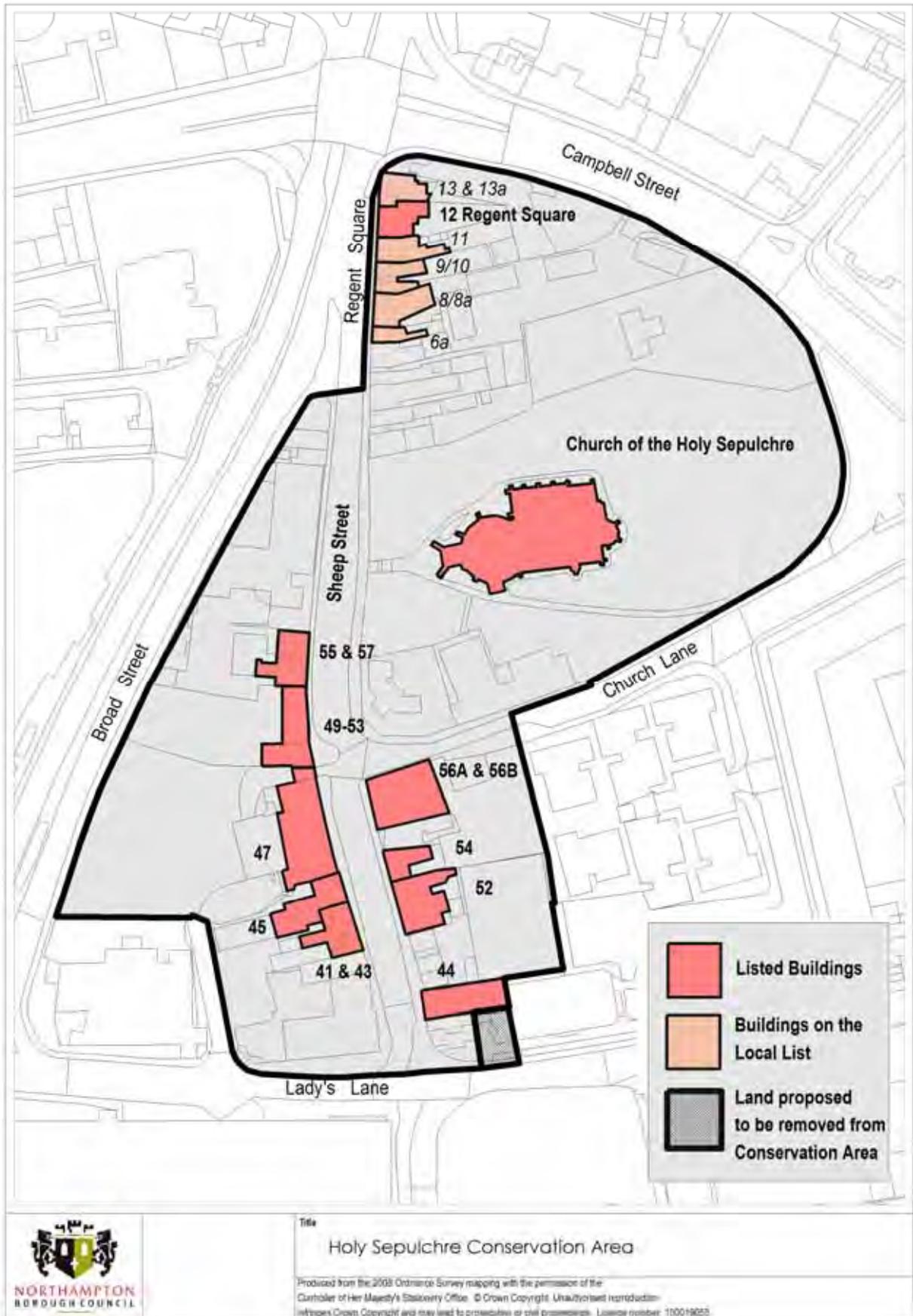
9-10 Regent Square

Two buildings identical in style to No 6a, (but with original window frames) linked by infilled arches at the level of the 1st & 2nd floor windows. Central ground floor door below the arches, with intricate surround. Band between 1st & 2nd floors with modillions above doorway. Rhythmic window arrangement with handsome gables. Venetian appeal.

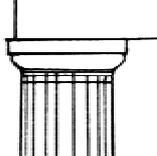
11 Regent Square

Painted brick with stone dressings, rusticated quoins with vermiculations. Slate roof. Ground floor: Ground floor shop front with some original features still present. Narrow pillars with decorative capitals either side of doorway entrance. At either end of shop windows there are double pilasters, panelled, with prominent leaf motifs at fascia level. Upper floors: 3 sash windows per floor with moulded sills and architraves; windows have low arches: 2nd floor arches have keystones. 1st floor windows have small "canopies" over, with supporting scrolls; central window is under triangular pediment. Eaves cornice with modillions.

Appendix 2: Map of the Conservation Area



Appendix 2: Glossary of Technical Terms

Architrave	Either the frame around a doorway or window, or a beam or lintel which is part of the entablature.	
Ashlar	The name given to a block of stone when it is cut or shaped to have six sides, often finished with a smooth surface.	
Capital	The decorative section at the top of a column.	
Cornice	Part of an entablature: the moulding which runs round the top of an internal or external wall.	
Dentils	A horizontal series of small square blocks under the eaves.	
Doric	One of the orders of classical architecture characterised by a fluted column rising from a basal plinth, with a plain capital.	
Entablature	The part of a building supported by a column.	
Fluted Column	A column which has ornamental vertical grooves along the shaft.	
Gable	Wall, of a building, closing the end of a pitched roof.	
Ionic	One of the orders of classical architecture characterised by a fluted column with a capital made up of a pair of linked scrolls.	
Mansard	A roof with two planes, the lower of which is steeper than the upper. Usually with dormer windows.	
Modillions	A horizontal series of small scroll-shaped blocks under the eaves.	
Oriel Window	Bay window projecting from a wall on an upper storey.	
Parapet	The low wall which extends above the exterior walls at eaves level.	
Pediment	A triangular or segmental upper-part of a building, associated with classical architecture.	
Pilaster	A rectangular column, which projects slightly from a wall.	
Quoins	The corner stones at the junctions of walls.	
Reeded	Decorative moulding of several parallel reeds in a continuous line.	
Reveals	The vertical return of a wall towards a window, door, or other opening.	
Rusticated	The surface of stonework which has been roughened (in contrast to ashlar), with sunken joints.	
Section 215 Notice	Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives local authorities the power to serve a notice on owners (and occupiers) requiring them to keep their buildings or land in good order.	
Segmental Heads	Shallow arched tops to windows.	
String Course	A projecting horizontal band or moulding, of either stone or brickwork.	
Venetian Window	Tripartite window with an arch over the central section.	
Vermiculations	Surface decoration by means of random channels resembling worm tracks.	

