HILLSBOROUGH
Conservation Area

Department of the Environment (NI)
The aims and policies set out in this booklet are for the guidance of District Councils, public bodies, local residents, landlords and tenants, intending developers and amenity and other groups.

PART I .... sets out the general objectives of designating Conservation Areas and the principles of designation.

PART II .... describes and delineates the Conservation Area of Hillsborough.

PART III .... contains a developers brief for the designated area.

The booklet should be regarded as but a first step in securing the special architectural or historic interest of the designated Area. It is anticipated that local initiative and discussion will give rise to proposals for repair and restorative works and developments which will not only preserve but will positively enhance the Area's special character. Designation will be of little practical value without this local support.

June 1976
Part 1
A. Introduction

1. The Planning (NI) Order 1972 provided legislation for the first time in Northern Ireland for the protection of the Province's heritage of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and for the designating of whole areas of similar interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

2. While responsibility for the statutory listing of Historic Buildings and for the designating of Conservation Areas rests with the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland one vitally important principle needs to be established at once. The task of conserving the heritage of Ulster cannot be left solely to Government Departments, a sprinkling of voluntary bodies and a band, albeit a growing one, of responsible conservationists.

3. The message that "conservation in Northern Ireland is the concern of everyone" must find its way into board rooms of every kind, into public and voluntary bodies with diverse aims and objectives, into schools and universities, into factories and shops and into the homes of every citizen whether they be in large conurbations or in lonely rural settings.

4. The aim of conservation must not be confined simply to keeping areas and buildings pleasant to look at or as a record of some aspect of history. It must additionally involve the continuing life and function of the areas in a present day context.

B. Development Control

Development within a Conservation Area will be controlled with the primary aim of ensuring the retention and importance of the Area's character. Every possible effort will be made to preserve the individual buildings and groups of buildings on which that character depends.

This control will be exercised as follows:

1. Where permission is sought to demolish or alter a building which has been listed under the Planning (NI) Order 1972 as of special architectural or historic interest it will be necessary to demonstrate that such works would in themselves be an enhancement or that they are required for overriding and exceptional reasons relating to the development of the Area.
2. New buildings will be expected to take account of the character of their neighbours. They should, in mass and outline, continue (where applicable) the rhythm of a street scene.

3. Materials should generally be sympathetic in texture, colour and quality to traditional local usage.

4. Changes of use necessitating a planning application which are likely to have an adverse effect on land or buildings which contribute significantly to the character of Conservation Areas will not normally be permitted.

5. The siting of new open spaces will be carefully considered to ensure that they make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and that proper provision is made for their maintenance.

6. The Divisional Planning Office will normally expect planning applications, submitted in respect of sites or buildings within Conservation Areas, to be submitted with full details in order to ensure at the initial planning stage that the development is satisfactory in all respects to the needs of the Conservation Area. It is desirable that applicants should consult informally with the Divisional Planning Office before the preparation of detailed plans.

7. Development near, but not inside a Conservation Area and visually related to it, should be sited and designed in size, form and materials, to be in harmony with the buildings and general appearance of the Conservation Area.

8. Under the Planning (General Development) Order (NI) 1973 certain types of development do not require specific planning permission. However the Department has power to direct that in any particular area these types of development should require planning permission. Such directions could be applied in conservation areas.

C. Positive Action

Schemes will be encouraged to initiate and, where appropriate, to undertake works for the visual improvement of buildings and sites. It
is anticipated that District Councils may play a leading role in the formulating of such schemes. These would include the re-painting of neglected buildings, the removal or replacement of rusted and broken fences and the clearing away of rubbish.

Appropriate steps will be expected to be taken by those responsible to tidy up, improve and enhance the appearance of Conservation Areas by the control of street furniture, overhead transmission lines of all kinds and to ensure the removal of undesirable examples of the latter where at all possible.

Existing advertisements and signs of all types displayed in the Area will be the subject of special consideration and it is hoped that with the co-operation of local business men the number of advertisements displayed within a conservation area could be reduced to a discreet level.

Preservation Orders will be made to protect trees or groups of trees which form an essential feature in the character of the Conservation Area. The general appearance of many of these will be further enhanced by the selective planting of additional trees and sowing of grass areas.

In some conservation areas, schemes for pedestrianisation might be appropriate and as such would be carried out by the Department.

Present security arrangements have accustomed people to the concept of vehicle-free areas and it is widely accepted that the opportunity should now be taken to create permanent pedestrian zones. It will be the intention of the Department to carry out works for the improvement of the amenity of such areas.

The Roads Service will take all possible action to ensure the management of pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement in the interests of the amenities existing in a Conservation Area. Action will also be taken wherever possible to ensure that the parking of motor vehicles and the location of car parks is carried out in such a manner as to have the minimum effect on the character of an Area.

The use of floodlighting at night could in many cases be particularly effective.
If, before designation of an Area, individual listings of buildings of special architectural or historic interest have not already been considered early action will be taken by the Department after consultation with the Historic Buildings Council and the appropriate District Council to consider appropriate listings.

D. Financial Assistance

In considering schemes for conservation the potentials for self-financing operations should not be lightly ignored and the fullest consideration should be given at an early stage to the use of voluntary contributions, gifts, income from sales and leases etc. — see under "other grants" below.

Department of the Environment (NI)

The Department may give financial assistance towards the cost of repairs or maintenance of buildings which have been listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. There is no fixed rate of grant and each case is considered on its merits. Grants are made on the recommendations of the Historic Buildings Council for Northern Ireland. Churches in use for ecclesiastical purposes are not eligible for grant aid.

The Department may also on the recommendations of the Historic Buildings Council consider for grant-aid expenditure to be incurred in connection with the preservation or enhancement of a Conservation Area. Such expenditure is normally expected to be part of a co-ordinated scheme.

Details from: Historic Buildings Branch, Department of the Environment (NI), Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3SS. (Telephone No 68716)

Department of Education

District Councils have a duty to secure for their areas adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities and the approved expenses of a District Council for such purposes may be grant-aided under the Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1973.

The acquisition of lands for public open spaces for these purposes may also be grant-aided by the Department of the Environment (NI).
Grants of up to 75% may be made under Section 16 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1966.

Details from Sports & Recreation Branch, Department of Education, Londonderry House, Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4JJ (Telephone No 32253)
Conservation Branch, Department of the Environment (NI), Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3SS (Telephone No 68716)

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Housing Act (NI) 1971 enables the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to pay grants of one-half of the approved cost of modernisation subject to a maximum grant of £1,600 for each house improved. Where however new dwellings are provided by the conversion of a house or building, the upper limit of grant is £1,850 for each dwelling provided. In certain circumstances these maxima may be increased where higher costs arise through the conversion or improvement of buildings of historic or architectural interest.

Standard Grants may also be paid to help meet the cost of improving houses, by providing, for the first time, such standard amenities as a fixed bath, a wash-hand basin, water closet, hot and cold water supply at certain fixed points.

Details from any office of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.
Headquarters Address... 10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BN (Telephone No 23491)

Other Grants... Charitable Trusts are sometimes willing to help with conservation of buildings in charitable or other non-profit making ownership. The Pilgrim Trust may be prepared to give grants of this sort. The Landmark Trust is interested in purchasing properties of historical or architectural interest which can be converted into lettable holiday houses. They particularly favour buildings of individual character. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust makes grants to support countryside projects of various kinds. These include schemes for practical conservation but not for the preservation of buildings. Details may be had from:
(a) Pilgrim Trust, Fielden House, Little College Street, London, SW1P 3SH;
(b) Landmark Trust, Shottesbrooke, White Waltham, Berkshire;
(c) Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, Comely Park House, Dunfermline, Fife.

For details of other grant-giving bodies, reference may be made to "The Directory of Grant-Making Trusts" published by the National Council of Social Services.

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Part 2
Hillsborough

Description of the Conservation Area

Although it received a charter in 1661, the small town of Hillsborough as it now stands, was largely formed in the early 18th century by the Hill family, subsequently the Marquesses of Downshire, with intention of fostering linen making.

Hillsborough has been described as one of the most interesting small towns in Ireland and owes much to its position between the open park lands and lakes about Hillsborough Castle on the West and about Hillsborough Fort on the East.

Approached from the North, Lisburn Street and Ballynahinch Street form a Y-junction with Main Street which steeply rises to the Square and thence from the South West Corner issues the gently curving roadway which leads eventually to Dublin.

Opening off Main Street on the North East is the fine gate screen leading by way of a rising avenue to the uplifting spire of the Parish Church of St Malachi, described as the grandest 18th century church in the county . . . . . . . . . . indeed in Ireland.

Each side of Main Street as it rises to the Square is lined by two and three storey terraced houses and shops which continue on three sides of the Square. Most exhibit their Georgian character in the form of windows and doorways.

In the middle of the Square rises the fine pyramidal form of the Court and Market House of 1780. On the West is the gate screen, removed from Richhill House, which now fronts the entrance courtyard of Hillsborough Castle, until recently Government House.

From the Square on the East, a narrow avenue leads through a fine wrought iron gateway to the partially rebuilt 17th century Hillsborough Fort.

Hillsborough was selected in 1974 as one of the four pilot schemes for European Architectural Heritage Year 1975. A coordinated repainting scheme has been undertaken by the Northern Ireland EAHY Committee. Attention has been concentrated on the buildings of Main Street and The Square, and the co-operation of public bodies has been sought in the refurbishing of public buildings and lighting standards and in the containment of electricity transmission.
The Designation

Notice is hereby given that the Department of the Environment (NI) in pursuance of powers conferred upon it by Article 37 of the Planning (NI) Order 1972 has designated the area outlined on the map below as a Conservation Area being an area of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

A map of the designated area has been deposited at the District Council Offices and at the Divisional Planning Offices at the addresses indicated below:

- Lisburn Borough Council
- District Development Office
- Divisional Planning Office

The Borough Offices, The Square, Hillsborough, (Telephone No. Hillsborough 682477)
Town Hall, Castle Street, Lisburn, BT27 4SP, (Telephone No. Lisburn 2259)
Rathdune House, New Bridge Street, Downpatrick, (Telephone No. Downpatrick 3721)
Part 3

Hillsborough Village
Brief for Developers
within the village and
environs of Hillsborough
2.2 Materials

Facing bricks, ashlar masonry, coursed rubble masonry and random rubble, often with smooth rendered finishes, are the traditional walling materials of Hillsborough (Plate 3). Most buildings in the town are constructed of locally quarried Silurian shales and rendered. Ashlar masonry has been used for some of the more important public buildings; the lower storey of the Court House, for example, is of sandstone ashlar on a granite plinth and Hillsborough Castle is of sandstone ashlar masonry. Facing bricks are not widely used in the town but there are a number of redbrick houses in the Square and on Main Street. Arthur Street is of rubble masonry construction with brick dressings and sandstone label mouldings. Within recent years roughcast and pebbledash finishes have been applied to some existing walls and a number of buildings have lost their original character. Roofs are generally of slate.

2.3 Details

The established format for windows is the typical vertical sliding sash of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Windows are generally Georgian type multi-paned. In some instances inappropriate casement windows have been substituted for the original sash, occasionally with an enlarged window opening and unsympathetic facade treatment.

A number of original shopfronts have survived. Detailing is simple but effective with vertical mullions dividing the glazed area into smaller units which are more compatible with the townscape than very large plate glass windows. Fascias are narrow with good hand-painted or applied lettering. (Plate 4).

Many well designed eighteenth and nineteenth century doorways of various types enrich the townscape. Doors, doorcases and architraves exhibit good period mouldings. Hillsborough contains a variety of wrought iron railings, lamp brackets, screens and gates, some of which are of exceptional merit and interest. Changes of level have resulted in a broken roof line as buildings climb the hills and this together with the tall chimneys and handsome chimney pots give an interesting skyline. (Plates 5–8).
The doorway of No. 9 Main Street

This house (formerly occupied by Lord Downshire's agent) has a fine portico flanked by excellent wrought iron railings and lamp brackets.

A well designed early nineteenth century milestone

A fine gateway with ornate eighteenth century wrought ironwork framing the rebuilt Gothic revival gate-house
2.4 Colours
Rendered wall surfaces are generally painted in pastel colours. Window frames and glazing bars are usually painted white. Doors and shop fascias are often painted in bright colours. Railings and other wrought ironwork are usually painted black or white.

2.5 Landscape
Splendid parkland, two large artificial lakes and extensive woodlands provide a most attractive landscape setting, permitting the town to merge easily with the surrounding countryside. (Plate 9). Much of the woodland dates from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and is now in its prime. Vegetation consists mainly of indigenous tree and shrub species together with those naturalised in the area. The fine avenue of tall mature lime trees leading to the Parish Church and the numerous specimen oak trees in both large and small parks deserve special mention.

3.0 Design Guidelines
Within the historic urban core appropriate renovation and improvement rather than demolition and replacement is desirable. Where demolition is unavoidable or where infilling occurs between buildings it is essential that new development should reflect the distinctive character of the town. It is hoped that the existing mixture of residential and small commercial uses will be retained.

3.1 Siting of Buildings
The siting of buildings should be determined by their relationship with adjoining buildings or open spaces. New buildings in existing streets should maintain the existing frontage line in order to avoid gaps in the street frontage and a loss of the sense of enclosure (Plate 10).

Plate 9 Park Lake
The Parish Church seen across the lake with the Fort in the background

Plate 10 The Square
Appropriate tree planting and the construction of a screen wall would close this unfortunate gap in the enclosing frontage which was created when the new Council Offices were set back from the established building line
3.2 Scale and Form
New development in the town centre should reflect the domestic scale of the existing structures. Two and three storey buildings of simple rectangular form with pitched roofs and gabled ends are appropriate. Narrow and medium frontage terraced buildings are acceptable but large developments with long monotonous frontages would be out of character.

3.3 Proportion
Design for new development should reflect the good proportions found in existing Georgian buildings in the town centre. (Plate 11). A balanced fenestration with the mass of wall predominating over that of window is essential in all new work. Window shapes should have a vertical rather than a horizontal emphasis.

3.4 Materials
External materials are among the more important elements which determine the character of buildings. The materials to be used in buildings should relate in character to those materials already in use in the area.

Smooth rendered and painted elevations will be suitable for most new development in the Conservation Area. Where facing brickwork is to be used, this should relate in colour and texture to brickwork already in use in the town centre.

Natural Welsh slate, either new or second-hand, should continue to be used for roofing purposes. When natural slate is unavailable, new roofing materials which harmonise with the traditional materials would form an acceptable substitute. Prior consultation with the Planning Authority regarding the use of new materials is essential.

Where wrought iron railings are used, they should be of simple design and formed by metal uprights set at regular intervals. It is desirable that new ironwork should complement and not detract from the simple yet high standards of craftsmanship in the existing work.

Doors and windows should be of wood.
3.5 Details

The detailing of all parts is important. Special attention should be given to the plane of windows and walls, doors and shop fronts etc since buildings are usually seen in perspective. (Plate 12). Eaves and roof details should reflect those of existing buildings. Sash windows should be used in preference to casement windows. Where large glazed openings are necessary it is still possible to obtain a vertical emphasis by the use of glazing bars or mullions. Shopfronts should reflect the simple but effective original examples in the town. Narrow fascias with traditional hand-painted or good quality applied lettering are desirable.

3.6 Colours

As a general rule window frames, sashes and glazing bars are best painted in white or a near white colour. Doors may be painted in bright colours with door frames in white. Rendered facades should be colour washed in harmonising colours. Downpipes and gutters may be painted in contrasting colours or match the colour of the facade depending on the effect required. Railings are best restricted to black or white.

3.7 Landscape Design

Trees and woodlands of significant landscape value will be protected by Tree Preservation Orders to ensure continued and, where necessary, improved management of woodland within the Conservation Area. Planning approvals will be subject to the retention of existing trees and shrubs and be accompanied by Tree Preservation Orders as necessary. New planting and replanting of suitable tree species may be a condition of planning approval. (Appendix 1)

Enclosing walls are an extension of buildings and should be treated with the same care. New enclosing walls should be of the same material as the buildings on the sites they enclose and should avoid unnecessary ornamentation.
Outdoor fittings and furniture should fit into the townscape in performing their individual functions. It is thus important that well designed seats, lamps and lighting, litter bins, bollards, signs and lettering are used in the town.

Hard pavings can be regarded as an extension of buildings and should be chosen to match the surroundings. Good cobbled paving which relates buildings to the surroundings and to each other should be retained and should be extended where possible.

3.8 Improvements and Conversions
Improvements and conversions should be carried out with sensitivity to retain the character of the existing buildings. New walling materials should match as closely as possible those of the existing buildings. Careful repointing of masonry walls with raked rather than protruding joints is desirable. The proportions and details of doors and windows should respect the local tradition and unsympathetic facade treatment should be avoided. (Plate 13).

Alterations and additions to roofs should be in sympathy with existing roof forms. Special attention should be given to the design of dormer windows and chimneys and to the location of television aerials. The use of large wide dormer windows and the conversion of pitched roofs to flat roofs should be avoided (Plate 14). Existing chimneys should be retained. Roof pitches and roofing materials should harmonise with those of adjoining buildings.

Undergrounding of obtrusive electricity and telephone wires is recommended.

Restraint in the use of advertising material is required.

Relaxations of the Building Regulations to preserve the character of buildings in the Conservation Area may, in special circumstances, be permitted. Prior consultation with the Building Control Authority regarding possible relaxations is essential.
APPENDIX 1

Tree Planting and Conservation

Numerous mature trees around and within the Conservation Area are a most important component of the Hillsborough landscape. Existing trees are usually forest species which are either indigenous or naturalised in the locality. Trees species for significant new planting or for replanting should be compatible with the character and ecology of the area. Where Tree Preservation Orders have been made conditions will be included to ensure the planting of appropriate species. Advice regarding tree planting may be obtained from the Department of the Environment (NI).

Existing tree species in Hillsborough

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