

CABINET – 1 OCTOBER 2003

RINGWOOD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the draft of a conservation area appraisal for Ringwood, the fifth of an agreed programme of six appraisals being prepared for those conservation areas in the District where there is the greatest likelihood of commercial development pressure, and therefore the greatest need for detailed design guidance. The document is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.2 In April 2003 the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Planning approved the draft of the appraisal document for public consultation. Appendix 1 summarises the representations in response to the consultation exercise. Appendix 2 contains the few amendments to the text considered necessary in the light of representations received.
- 1.3 The intention is that the Draft, as with the previous conservation area appraisals, should be adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the New Forest District Local Plan. The recommendation is that the document as contained in Appendix 2 be recommended to Cabinet to be so adopted.

2 THE APPRAISAL

- 2.1 The appraisal is in the same form as ones already adopted for Milford-on-Sea, Fordingbridge, Lymington and Lyndhurst.
- 2.2 It is important to raise in the Introduction to the Appraisal some recurring significant design issues likely to be faced in the conservation area. They are set out in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.18 of the Appraisal.

The Appraisal and Town Centre Redevelopment Proposals. Emphasising the effect on the fabric of the whole historic town centre of major commercial redevelopment, and pointing out that some aspects of past commercial redevelopment have not benefited the conservation area.

Defining Character in Areas of Mixed Development. Character definition needs to concentrate on the older buildings, many of which are modest and restrained in character. New development must have regard to this.

The Effect of Major Highway Schemes. Pointing out that major road and highway management schemes are likely to have a long-term impact on the condition and vitality of historic areas.

Defining Character in Areas with Indifferent Newer Development. Parts of the conservation area contain entirely newer development, and some make a negative contribution to conservation area character. Some individual sites might offer opportunity for redevelopment to enhance that character.

Potential for Further Development. Ringwood centre has an undeveloped reserve of land and opportunities for redevelopment. In the light of pressure to develop town centre sites intensively, the challenge is nonetheless to create living environments that are not characterless or cramped.

- 2.3 Particular guidance is given on the issue of height (i.e. number of storeys) of new development. There is a growing expectation that new development will have as many storeys as possible in central locations, but there are types of location in Ringwood where a limitation on the number of storeys is appropriate in order to retain the historic character of the town.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Organisations consulted comprised Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Ringwood Tourism Group and the Ringwood Society, English Heritage, and the members of the Council's Architect's Panel. Responses were received from Ringwood Town Council, the Ringwood Society, a local resident, and from three members of the Architect's Panel.
- 3.2 **Ringwood Town Council** supported the contents of the appraisal in principle, but reserved the right to consider individual planning applications on their merits and within the context of the appraisal.
- 3.3 The **Ringwood Society** was generally in agreement with the full and thoughtful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the conservation area. They stressed however that, without the guidance in the appraisal being followed closely in future decision-making, the appraisal would remain only a statement of good intentions, but would not have beneficial impact on Ringwood.
- 3.4 The **local resident** pointed out several factual and historical inaccuracies, which have now been corrected.
- 3.5 The responses from the **members of the Architect's Panel** varied. One thought the appraisal was excellent. Two considered that its guidance was too restrictive. Terms in the Implications For Development such as 'should' did not allow imagination and creativity to be used in design solutions. Instead, guidance that used terms such as 'promote and enhance' would avoid stultifying and dictatorial solutions and would counter mediocrity.
Response. It is not agreed that the guidance is too restrictive. It has been an aim of the conservation area appraisals to set down guidance that allows a range of stylistic approaches and layouts. At the same time it is recognised that Ringwood has a historic context that features many modest and understated historic buildings, and it is not therefore appropriate to encourage a design 'free-for-all'. Also guidance, if it is to be useable by applicants and by planning officers, must contain an amount of hard-edged and specific requirements for new development.
- 3.6 One general requirement has been reassessed and rewritten. Instead of requiring new development to reflect the local vernacular style of architecture, now the requirement is that it should respect the pattern and scale of existing development, and enhance the variety and quality of the townscape of the conservation area. This avoids justifiable criticism that the guidance was too restrictive. It reflects guidance in 'Building in Context – New development in historic areas', recently issued by English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

- 3.7 Generally the representations received through the consultation exercise have focussed on the analysis of the character of the conservation area, but not addressed the content of the guidance in the Implications For Development, which would have been of great value.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of adoption of the Ringwood conservation area appraisal is contained within existing approved budgets.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The benefits of having available as supplementary planning guidance a detailed assessment of the special interest and character of the conservation area, which can guide the submission and determination of proposals, is obvious. It should result in improved development proposals, better decisions and a higher standard of completed development.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications to this report.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That the Economy and Planning Review Panel/ Planning Development Control Committee advises the Cabinet that the Ringwood Conservation Area Appraisal, as attached at Appendix 2 (which contains amendments resulting from the public consultation exercise), should be adopted as supplementary planning guidance to the New Forest District Local Plan.

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SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT RESULTING FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXERCISE

Ringwood Town Council – support in principle for the contents. They reserve however the right to consider individual planning applications on their merits and within the context of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Response – noted.

Ringwood Society – in agreement with the full and thoughtful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the conservation area. Concern is expressed that if the Planning Committee and planning officers ignore the provisions of the appraisal and the Local Plan, the exercise will be of no value. The appraisal should be given more ‘teeth’.

The appraisal, in its analysis of recent buildings, is insufficiently critical of some poor buildings, and praises other buildings that are not generally liked in Ringwood.

Response – noted. The text of the appraisal does not need to be altered in response to any of the Society’s comments. A more critical condemnation of some past buildings would not be beneficial. It is still considered that those recent buildings that are praised deserve to be.

Mrs M Baldwin – Points out many inaccuracies and errors relating to the history of the town, to archaeology in the town, and to the origins of certain recent buildings. Concern is expressed that the aspiration to make the Meeting House a free-standing structure may be practically difficult to achieve, even if aesthetically desirable.

Response – Grateful for the matters that have been pointed out as being incorrect, and the amended text contains many small corrections of fact as a result. Despite the difficulties in separating the Meeting House from the supermarket to which it attaches, the higher aim of making it a free-standing building should not be abandoned.

Mr J Pardey (member of Architect’s Panel) – the appraisal is excellent.

Response – noted.

Mr R Blaylock (member of Architect’s Panel) – interesting and informative analysis, highlighting buildings and spaces that are detrimental to the conservation area. However the guidance on appropriate design is too prescriptive, encouraging a standardisation of design without variety.

Response – noted. After further consideration of the design guidance, it is not thought that it unduly restricts the range of stylistic solutions that are appropriate on particular sites. The guidance given on height of new development, it is felt, is needed, but this also provides for some buildings that could be higher than the norm (of two-and-a-half storeys) where the location allows.

Dr P Stewart (member of Architect’s Panel) – Wanted a more contextual introduction, with aerial photographs and more informative maps. The terminology in the Implications For Development is too prescriptive – terms such as ‘should’ should be replaced by terms such as ‘enhance’, ‘protect’ and ‘maintain’, in order to facilitate imagination and innovation, and avoid stultifying and mediocre design solutions.

Response – noted. The format is as for previous appraisals that have been generally well regarded. The comments about prescriptive guidance are as for those in the previous response (above), but the overall guidance on designs that reflect the local vernacular architecture has been altered to require only that designs should respect the pattern and scale of existing development.

RINGWOOD – A CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

(The text of the conservation area appraisal in Appendix 2 contains all the amendments to the Draft considered essential following consideration of the representations received during the public consultation exercise. These amendments are summarised in Appendix 1.)

RINGWOOD

A Conservation Area Appraisal

1 PREFACE

1.1 A conservation area is defined in legislation as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. ‘Conservation areas’ were introduced in 1975, and there are now 37 of widely differing sizes and types in New Forest District. It is important that the areas designated are genuinely considered to be of architectural or historic interest, and not just attractive areas to live or work in, however desirable that may be. The Council would not, for example, use the tool of conservation area designation specifically to prevent unwanted development in an area, if there was not a definite and extensive base in the area of buildings of architectural or historic interest. To show that there is a core of such buildings in an area, it is important that a Council should in writing assess and record the special interest of the area, either at the time of designation or else subsequently via a conservation area appraisal.

1.2 This conservation area appraisal provides supplementary planning guidance on the subject of the design of development in Ringwood’s conservation area. It does so by assessing and analysing the character of the conservation area, and then setting down what implications that has for future development. The appraisal amplifies the policies of the New Forest District Local Plan, and the policies relevant to the Ringwood appraisal are referred to in Section 3. The policies are also cross-referenced where appropriate during the analysis and assessment in Section 4.

1.3 There is no statutory requirement for local planning authorities to prepare conservation area appraisals. However, it is the strongest advice of English Heritage, the government’s adviser on issues relating to the historic built environment, that appraisals should be prepared for any newly designated conservation area. The advice goes on that appraisals should be prepared for all existing conservation areas, although it recognises that this may be difficult and impractical for a local authority with many conservation areas. Therefore English Heritage recommends that appraisals are at least prepared for conservation areas in town and commercial centres where there is the greatest likelihood of change and repeated development pressure.

1.4 New Forest District Council has therefore responded to this by planning a programme of appraisals covering the conservation areas in the towns of Lymington, Ringwood, Fordingbridge and Hythe, and the larger village centres of Lyndhurst and Milford-on-Sea. The appraisals for Milford, Fordingbridge, Lymington and Lyndhurst have been formally adopted following public consultation.

1.5 This appraisal has previously been issued in draft for public consultation, and has been revised in the light of the range of comments received. Subsequently it has been adopted formally as supplementary planning guidance to the New Forest District Local Plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Ringwood conservation area was first designated in 1970 very soon after the legislation in 1969 that introduced conservation areas. It then covered just the plots on High Street, Market Place, West Street, Christchurch Road and parts of Southampton Road. A major expansion of the area took place in 1983, when land to the south-west up to and around Bickerley Common was included, as well as the Cattle Market at The Furlong, more of Southampton Road, and streets running up to and including The Quomp. In 1993 College Road was included, and in 1999 the whole boundary was reviewed.

2.2 Conservation area character is assessed in the appraisal under several headings. Under each heading an 'Analysis and Assessment' (a record of the elements present, and a judgement on how far they contribute positively to or detract from the conservation area) is followed by 'Implications For Development' (design considerations for future development). The headings are:-

- Settlement Origins, Location and Topography
- Historic Development of Settlement and Structure of Area
- Historic Uses and their Influence
- Archaeological Significance and Potential
- Architectural and Historic Character of Buildings
- Prevalent and Traditional Building Materials
- Characteristic Local Detailing
- Character and Relationship of Spaces within Area
- Streetworks and Public Utilities
- Focal Points and Views within Area
- Key Unlisted Buildings
- The Contribution of Green Spaces and Features
- Setting of Area and Relationship with Landscape
- The Negative Elements – Loss, Intrusion and Damage

2.3 Any brief appraisal of Ringwood's conservation area reveals certain aspects of its current condition that dictate the approach taken to the appraisal. These have to do with the generally modest and low-key nature of the historic development in the town, but also necessarily focus on some of the less attractive aspects of the character of the conservation area. These include the impact on the town of successive major commercial and highway-related schemes, and the difficulties of concentrating on historic character in areas where there has been such a lot of redevelopment. These aspects are focussed on in 2.4 to 2.18 below.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Town Centre Redevelopment Proposals

2.4 Ringwood town centre has undergone several periods of upheaval since the conservation area was designated, caused by large-scale commercial redevelopment. Pressure periodically continues for further major retail development generally north of High Street near The Furlong. The appraisal neither identifies sites where large-scale development could or should be located, nor suggests specifically how existing developments could be remodelled or redeveloped. (The New Forest District Local Plan, Policy RW-3, already identifies the south-west corner of The Furlong car park as a site for further commercial development). The appraisal does however highlight the failings of existing development both within and just beyond the conservation area that detracts from its character. It also specifically lists some prominent sites that have a negative impact on conservation area character where alterations or even new development would be welcomed. Recognition of the worst aspects of what exists can inform the submission of better new schemes in and around the conservation area.

2.5 Even where proposals lie in whole or in part outside the conservation area, the appraisal is concerned about the nature of development beyond the conservation area boundary that

affects its character. Several potential commercial development sites come within this category.

2.6 Major shopping redevelopment affects the condition and economic health of places beyond the immediate area where it happens. Previous redevelopments have changed the balance of the town's shopping centre, favouring some locations and adversely affecting others. Particularly, many shops and buildings in the Market Place stayed empty for long periods. A physical shift in the pattern of shopping provision happens relatively quickly, but the resulting change in function of other areas is a slowly evolving process. A period of decline often has to be suffered while the town adjusts and recovers. Thus the Market Place is now finding a greater use as a location for specialist shops, for 'wining and dining', and also for residential town-centre conversions. Planning policies and guidelines in planning documents such as this appraisal can assist the transitions that are needed.

Definition of Character in Areas of Mixed and Modest Development

2.7 Ringwood's large conservation area contains the commercial town centre and many areas of mixed use. It is not easy to identify separate areas of distinct architectural character with clear-cut boundaries, especially as new development often waters down the area's historic character or cuts across its established pattern. In such areas the definition of character concentrates on the older building that remains, although it is hard to be precise in describing character, and the 'Implications For Development' do not prescribe much about the characteristics of future development.

2.8 Where the stock of older buildings is intact, and it is consequently easier to define character, it is often the case that that character is defined by more modest buildings in restrained architectural styles that are the opposite of flamboyant. Where established character is quite subdued in this way, there is usually more limited scope for the introduction of different or clearly modern styles in new building. That is so in High Street and Market Place where the ensemble of buildings is of a very good quality, and buildings with obviously differing masses, rooflines, scales or styles stand out conspicuously. Guidance in the 'Implications For Development' below tends in these instances to be conservative.

Major Highway Developments and the Conservation Area

2.9 Several major alterations to the highway system near the town centre have had major affects on Ringwood, both directly on traffic circulation, and also over years on the vitality of parts of the town, the character of those areas, and ultimately on the physical fabric of the conservation area.

2.10 Originally, the market town of Ringwood had a very simple form, a High Street linking two junction spaces, the Market Place and Fridays Cross. From one the roads to the north and west left town, and from the other the roads to the south and east. Long-distance traffic funnelled through these streets. In the 1930's, an east-west bypass removed most of it, but the streets of the town were still connected to the bypass at three points, and the traffic from the south still came through the town centre. The impact on the historic town was that the church was deprived of its close relationship with the vicarage and corn mill (demolished) and the Mill House (marooned on the north side of the bypass).

2.11 In 1977 the bypass was fully dualled and rerouted in part, with a roundabout at the junction of the A338 northwards towards Salisbury. From there a new road, Mansfield Road, connected, via another roundabout with Southampton Road, to Christchurch Road at Greyfriars. This at last took traffic from the south out of the town centre. Also the road connection to the bypass by the Parish Church was severed. The longer-term effect was that less passing traffic moved through the town. This, combined with the shift of the shopping centre further away from the Market Place, meant less trade and activity at the west end of the town centre, its historic focus, contributing to its physical decline.

2.12 There is now some concern that, with increasing traffic everywhere, the Market Place and West Street are being used as a traffic 'rat-run' for local vehicles gaining access to the A31 westbound. Whilst measures could be sought to reduce this traffic and make the route less attractive, a solution as unsophisticated as closing off the access to A31 from West Street would be bound to have other, possibly unforeseen, consequences. Particularly, it would make the major part of the historic core of the old town – High Street and Market Place – a cul-de-sac. Although this situation has by degrees been developing for a long time, that final action would create an unnatural situation and would take away much meaning and relevance from the place.

Defining Character in Areas with Much Indifferent Newer Development

2.13 There is a lot of new building and redevelopment in the centre of the conservation area, and much of that has resulted in unappealing buildings of low aesthetic quality. In conservation areas most buildings and sites contribute positively to our ability to perceive the area as one of architectural or historic interest. Others make a negative contribution, while some have at best a neutral impact. In Ringwood, the many that make a negative contribution are concentrated along the north-western edge of Bickerley Common, on parts of Southampton Road nearer to the centre, at the Meeting House shopping centre, and also to the south of West Street, and on Christchurch Road near the former station.

2.14 The role of some of these areas in the town's historic pattern can still just about be discerned, despite unsuitable newer buildings, as long as they remain in visual contact with more historically valuable areas. It is often obvious that the newer buildings adversely affect the setting of the older buildings, and that they weaken the overall quality of the conservation area. In such cases it is possible to suggest measures in the Appraisal that could over time allow these areas again to contribute positively to the conservation area, for example by referring to the possibility of sites being suitable for redevelopment.

2.15 In other areas it is no longer possible to sense that they have a role to play in a historic town. There is an absence of buildings of traditional appearance, the plots do not register as being of long standing, and there are no remaining attractive boundaries between sites. Nor do they affect the setting of areas of better character. Such an area is the development along the north-west edge of Bickerley Common.

2.16 Map(s) xx show the buildings and sites that it is considered adversely affect the character and appearance of the conservation area. Identification of these sites does not mean that the District Council is or will be in a position to bring about property improvement or redevelopment. Nor may some owners ever have the intention to carry out major modifications to their properties or sites. Identification of these sites does however give the green light to owners that the Council would be prepared to discuss proposals for those sites.

Potential for Further Development

2.17 Relative to other local towns with central conservation areas (e.g. Lymington and Fordingbridge), Ringwood still has a significant reserve of land, which is either undeveloped or which offers the scope for redevelopment. New building in this area has been continuing apace for several years, with a quality of result that is showing a steady improvement. Areas still with land to develop include sites generally to the south of Market Place, land behind the Crown Hotel on Southampton Road, some sites south-west of Christchurch Road, and smaller sites such as the yard on Nursery Road. Guidelines for new development therefore are much more than academic, and would be relevant to substantial areas of development yet to be developed.

2.18 The context in which new development in urban locations is currently considered nationally is to do with the pressure from central government to maximise the use of available

development space, including 'brownfield' sites, in order to reduce the amount of land taken on 'greenfield' sites. Densities must be considered seriously by the Council, and policy guidance in the New Forest District Local Plan is that a density in central locations of at least 50 dwellings per hectare should be achieved. Significantly higher densities can be accepted. The challenge in sensitive and historic conservation areas is to accommodate such densities without providing living environments that seem characterless or cramped, or that do not reflect the patterns of historic development in the particular settlement.

Other Relevant Publications

2.19 Some recent publications add to the knowledge and understanding of the historic and archaeological centres of the District's towns, and their relationship to their surrounding landscape, including Ringwood. The Environment Group of Hampshire County Council, with English Heritage, have published a series of archaeological studies under the general title of '**An Extensive Urban Survey of Hampshire's and the Isle of Wight's Historic Towns**'. These contain an archaeological assessment, summarising the archaeological knowledge of and finds from the area. The medieval and post-medieval history and architecture of the towns is detailed, and the potential of the town for holding and revealing archaeological evidence is then assessed. An accompanying archaeological strategy deals with the planning response to developments proposed in areas of archaeological importance, and addresses the issues of presentation and interpretation of the archaeological resource. The information contained informs decisions taken by the Council on matters having an archaeological dimension.

2.20 Early in 2000 a '**New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment**' was published, commissioned by the District Council, Hampshire County Council, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage. A part of this focussed on the principal settlements and their landscape settings, noting the evolution and character of the towns, how their relationship with the landscape should be managed, and the principles of the built form. Those principles suggest appropriate patterns, forms and scales for landscape management and new development, the aim being to ensure that changes help to reinforce and enhance local landscape character. The '**New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment**' has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

3 NEW FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

3.1 Design issues are often central to the consideration of development proposals in conservation areas, and many refusals or the conditions attached to grants of planning permission or listed building consent are related to those design issues. This appraisal, and particularly that part containing 'Implications For Development', is closely related to the policies in the New Forest District Local Plan. At the time of preparation of this Appraisal the current version of the Local Plan was the First Alteration – First Stage Deposit.

3.2 The relevant objectives of the New Forest District Local Plan are:

Objective 3 Town centres

To enhance the attraction of town centres in the District.

Objective 5 Landscape

To achieve and maintain a high quality landscape in rural and urban areas; and to protect and maintain trees and woodland of high amenity and landscape value.

Objective 7 Built heritage

To protect and enhance the archaeological and historic built heritage of the District; ensure that the integrity of buildings and places is respected; and promote public education and understanding of the historic built environment.

Objective 9 Environmental design

To encourage the highest possible standards of design in new development and in environmental improvements; and to provide attractive, stimulating and safe places in which to live, work and play.

3.3 The following policies are particularly relevant. The policies may be referred to in full with their reasoned justifications in the New Forest District Local Plan.

Policy DW-E1 General development criteria

Achieving appropriate and sympathetic development in terms of scale, appearance, materials, form, siting and layout of building.

Policy DW-E9 Protection of landscape features

Protecting open areas and landscape features that contribute positively to the visual character of an area.

Policy DW-E10 Protection of historic street and footpath patterns

Respecting historic road, street and footpath patterns.

Policy DW-E14 Alterations, extensions and repairs to listed buildings

Maintaining the historic character of the listed building stock.

Policy DW-E15 Demolition of listed buildings

Preventing demolition of all or parts of listed buildings.

Policy DW-E16 Setting of listed buildings

Preventing development that adversely affects setting of listed buildings.

Policy DW-E17 Change of use of listed buildings or other important buildings

Preventing uses that cause harmful alterations, or constrain proper maintenance.

Policy DW-E18 Exceptional development to retain listed buildings or other important buildings

Allowing on occasions development, otherwise considered contrary to policy, to enable retention of such buildings.

Policy DW-E19 New development in conservation areas

Preserving or enhancing conservation area character by protecting historic plot layouts, important views, significant open spaces, and valuable trees and landscape features, and by ensuring that development respects the best characteristics of the locality.

Policy DW-E20 Demolition in conservation areas

Preventing demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Policy DW-E21 Shopfronts in conservation areas

Retaining good traditional shopfronts, and obtaining new shopfronts in character with the area.

Policy DW-E22 Advertisements in conservation areas

Obtaining appropriate and sympathetic advertisements.

Policy DW-E23 Development affecting archaeological sites

Protecting valuable archaeological sites. Ensuring archaeological investigation and recording takes place where necessary.

Policy DW-E24 Archaeological field assessment

Obtaining assessment of archaeological potential of sites before development proposals are determined.

Policy RW-1 Bus depot

Allocating the bus depot site in West Street for residential use, with retail/ food and drink at ground floor on street frontage, and public access alongside Mill Stream.

Policy RW-2 Town centre development, The Furlong

Proposing development in the south-west corner of The Furlong car-park, which enhances the town centre's vitality, is of appropriate scale and design, provides for buses and taxis, and provides public conveniences and a visitor information centre.

Policy RW-4 29 to 33a Southampton Road

Allocating site of 29 to 33a Southampton Road for retail/ food and drink/ entertainment and leisure uses at ground floor, with retail frontage to Southampton Road and building frontages to Meeting House Lane. Residential uses would be permitted on upper floors.

Policy RW-5 Rear of the Crown Hotel

Allocating land for retail/ food and drink/ entertainment and leisure uses, with office/ business uses as part of a mixed use scheme. Residential uses would be permitted on upper floors. (Subsequently planning permission has been granted for residential development on the site).

Policy RW-7 Bickerley Road

Proposing its improvement between Coxstone Lane and Kingsbury's Lane.

Policy RW-8 Sites in Ringwood conservation area needing enhancement

Identifying sites where improvement or redevelopment proposals would be encouraged at:-
New House, West Street/ Strides Lane corner,
Rear of Bank, 25 High Street,
17 Market Place,
24-26 Christchurch Road,
29-31 Christchurch Road,
rear of 17-19 West Street,
rear of Shopping Centre, Market Place,
area adjacent to Star Lane,
34a Christchurch Road,
11 High Street

Policy RW-9 Rear service yards

Encouraging improvements to rear servicing yards and private parking areas at:-
Safeway store,
adjacent to Northumberland Walk,
Centre Place,
Rear of Conservative Club, 20-22 Christchurch Road

3.4 The appraisal expands on some of the above policies, making specific reference to particular sites, and identifying particular aspects of the conservation area in Ringwood that should be protected. It provides a basis for detailed consideration of submitted development proposals by the District Council, and for formulation of those proposals by individuals and development organisations.

4 THE APPRAISAL

4.1 Settlement Origins, Location and Topography

- Ringwood is located at a point on the banks of the River Avon where a maze of river channels and boggy islands offered opportunity for the river to be forded and later bridged. The west-east route crossed the north-south route along the valley near this point. It is recognised as a classic example of ribbon development, moving eastwards from the bridgehead area along West Street and into the Market Place.
- There has been scarcely any evidence of Roman activity, and no Anglo-Saxon finds. There was a population of 86 recorded in the Domesday Survey. There are 13th century features in the (rebuilt) parish church, but the earliest remains in domestic timber-framed buildings are probably of the 16th century.
- The whole town lies on beds of valley gravel, and the land within the conservation area is almost level, rising above the level of the river's floodplain by very little. There is a gradual rise east of Christchurch Road towards The Quomp and College Road.
- The name 'Ringwood' may mean 'border wood', i.e. on the edge of the New Forest.

4.2 Historic Development of Settlement and Structure of Area

4.2.1 Analysis and Assessment

Medieval Period

- The Market Place is Ringwood's historic core. High Street and West Street are also medieval streets. A market charter was first granted in 1226. There is clear evidence of planned growth with the laying out on the south side of long, narrow plots that probably ran back to Bickerley Common. These are not 'burgage' plots, as Ringwood was never created as a Borough. On the north side, there were broader, rectangular plots nearer the Church, and off High Street more long, narrow plots, the evidence for which has been obliterated by historic fires and recent development.
- Associated with the medieval development were mills and a manor house, all now disappeared or swallowed up by newer development or the bypass.
- The main streets – High Street, West Street (formerly Bridge Street), Christchurch Road, and Southampton Road (formerly Up Street) – survive nearly intact. The road north up the valley from the Market Place has been severed by the A31 bypass, and Mansfield Road has interfered with both Southampton and Christchurch Roads.

Post-medieval Period

- It is uncertain how much of Christchurch and Southampton Roads were further developed in the post-medieval period. There is certainly early building on Southampton Road up to the present Manor House, and on Christchurch Road down to the junction with Coxstone Lane and Hightown Road. Both roads probably had only sporadically developed road frontages with significant areas remaining open, especially east of Christchurch Road south of Greyfriars. The pattern of ribbon development gradually intensified on the main roads, but no new roads were made.
- Records show a growth in population through the 17th century, although the town's economic prosperity was declining from a high point in medieval times. In 1334 Ringwood was taxed more heavily than any towns in Hampshire excluding Winchester and Southampton. Local industries were leather and cloth working.

18th Century

- Although the town was not growing rapidly, buildings were replaced during the 18th century, as in many towns, as earlier buildings of less durable materials were pulled down or succumbed to fires.

19th Century

- Not until the mid-19th century were new roads, such as Nursery Road and Woodstock Lane, added. Meeting House Lane, running along the edge of the town's main open space at The Furlong, The Quomp, and School Lane, were all absorbed into the built-up area of the town.
- There was however no wholesale redevelopment with new building on the main streets. Rather, piecemeal replacement took place.

20th Century

- The impact of highway works on Ringwood, especially the A31 bypass, has been already discussed in **Section 2 – Introduction**. New roads changed traffic flow round the town, by degrees taking through traffic out of High Street and Market Place. That affected the vitality, attractiveness, character and physical condition of the buildings there. The new Mansfield Road gave a different look to parts of Southampton Road.
- The open spaces around the town changed character. The Furlong became a car park, and Bickerley Common was lined on its north-eastern and western edges with housing. The channelling of the River Avon through its marsh allowed a small park, the Jubilee Gardens, to be formed at the river's edge by the Old Bridge at the end of West Street.
- The Close was built, and infill development occupied almost all the land lining and between the many lanes running south of Market Place/ High Street/ Christchurch Road towards Bickerley Common. That process continues still.

- The most far-reaching recent changes to the structure of the town have been the creation of The Furlong and Meeting House Shopping Centres, one in place of the old cattle market and Framptons Yard, and one around the old Meeting House. One of these was able to develop a largely cleared site, while the other had to fit its buildings into an already densely developed location within the town centre.
- While the core of the town centre is entirely commercial, peripheral areas are entirely residential in land use and character. The commercial zone tapers out gradually along Christchurch Road, with mixed residential, retail, office and institutional uses. Only on Southampton Road is there a sudden and absolute switch from commercial to residential uses at the entrance to Carvers Industrial Estate.

4.2.2 Implications for Development

- 1 Development, including new road layouts, which cuts across the intact medieval street pattern, should be avoided.**
- 2 To the south of West Street/ Market Place/ High Street/ Christchurch Road, where there remains the evidence of medieval plot layout, development should be aligned along the direction of the plots. Proposals that seek to develop at right angles to the direction of the plots by straddling or running through existing plot boundaries, should be avoided.**
- 3 Developments should be promoted that sympathetically add to the existing concentrations of historic buildings and that reinforce the historic and commercial network of roads and streets, and developments that establish remote or disconnected centres of commercial activity should be avoided.**

4.3 Historic Uses and their Influence

4.3.1 Analysis and Assessment

- There are no obvious examples in Ringwood of buildings, the appearance or layout of which reflect their original intended use. The industries of Ringwood have left no legacy of purpose-built buildings.
- Numbers of outbuildings to larger houses or to inns remain, although many have been swept away. Most outbuildings in the central area have either been converted to a separate more profitable use, or are retained as ancillary storage to the main building on the site. Some succeed in finding new use as undercover garaging with limited storage above. Small old outbuildings, once part of the agricultural merchants, are incorporated as shops in the Furlong Centre attached to 'Frampton's Mill'.

4.3.2 Implications for Development

- 1 Development on plots in the town centre, reusing or extending traditional outbuildings, or replicating in new development that type of outbuilding, should have a character, form, scale and less domestic detailing, typical of those buildings and the relationship they have with the principal buildings on site.**

4.4 Archaeological Significance and Potential

4.4.1 Analysis and Assessment

- There have been only incidental finds of Roman coins etc, and there are no sites of Anglo-Saxon origin. There are no standing remains from the medieval period, and there is no suggestion that the medieval town extended further than is now apparent. Although

the town's late- and post-medieval economic fortunes had declined, there is little prospect of uncovering evidence of abandoned medieval sites.

- The Town Ditch ran through land south of High Street, providing water power for businesses such as tanneries. Much land here has been redeveloped, but a few open sites remain where there is both development potential, but equally also the potential to uncover archaeological evidence.
- The oldest building fabric is probably to be found in some timber-framed cottages, such as the Old Cottage Restaurant on West Street. In such small buildings the construction is quite easy to see and understand, but there are more substantial timber frames inside other buildings, since refaced, which prove their early origins. For example, Old Bank House in Market Place, despite a date of 1801 (conjecture related to documentary evidence) for the refacing of the front, has a timber-framed rear wing of at least two centuries earlier.
- For archaeologists any development land in a medieval centre could contain evidence of earlier buildings or activities. Much of the centre is categorised in the Archaeological Assessment Document forming part of the Hampshire County Council/ English Heritage survey of Hampshire's historic towns as being of 'high archaeological importance'. This includes both sides of High Street (running back to the Town Ditch on the south side), and all the sites around the Market Place, as well as West Street (excluding the Bus Depot).
- 'Archaeologically important areas' are identified on the west side of Christchurch Road up to the former railway line, and on the east side as far as Mansfield Road. The main stone bridge on West Street replaced a medieval bridge, and this area is also 'archaeologically important'.
- There are three 'Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance', between the old Town Ditch and Bickerley Road from Dewey's Lane to Kingsbury's Lane; at Clarke's Almshouses on The Quomp; and The Furlong car-park. This last area is included because of the relatively very light ground disturbance involved in creating a car-park from what had been open grazing and wetland areas. The lower parts of the archaeological resource therefore, it is believed, remain essentially undisturbed.
- The anticipated findings from archaeological investigations in Ringwood would relate to the extent of the medieval town and the industries and activities being undertaken. Also, conjecture based on the history of similar sites might cause one to suspect that the site of Clark's Almshouses could have been the site of a medieval hospital. (It is this conjecture that justifies the designation as an 'Area of Limited Archaeological Importance').
- There will be times when opportunities should be taken to investigate the standing archaeology of early buildings in the central parts of the town, on the rare occasions that major intervention in the fabric of such buildings is planned and allowed.

4.4.2 Implications for Development

- 1 Proposals involving significant ground disturbance on sites of archaeological importance will be subject to Policies DW-E23 and DW-E24, Section C2 of the New Forest District Local Plan.**
- 2 On rare occasions, when significant disturbance to the historic fabric of listed buildings is granted consent, the principles of Policies DW-E23 and DW-E24 would be applied to the recording of aspects of the standing archaeology of such buildings, whenever it is suspected on available evidence that items of substantial archaeological and historic interest would be uncovered during work.**

4.5 Architectural and Historic Character of Buildings

4.5.1 Analysis and Assessment

Overall Character and Diversity

- Ringwood has a very large and varied conservation area, but there is nonetheless more consistency and uniformity of scale and character than in many towns. It is a country market town, and most buildings are of modest scale and unostentatious design. Those few buildings, originally designed to be more impressive, such as Greyfriars, Old Bank House, or the former Town Hall and Corn Exchange, still stand out conspicuously.
- In the post-medieval period expansion has been piecemeal, without distinct phases of growth, each new addition, often in backland or on minor streets, being absorbed into the whole without disturbing the modest, small-scale rhythm of the town.

Land Uses

- The commercial core of the town has always been High Street and Market Place, although retail uses have tended in recent decades to move out of Market Place. In the 20th century the commercial centre focussed more on Southampton Road, and has expanded again more recently with the creation of the Meeting House and Furlong Shopping Centres.
- West Street and Christchurch Road both contain a longstanding scatter of commercial uses amongst houses and offices. Elsewhere, including Southampton Road north of Carvers Industrial Estate, the conservation area is almost entirely residential in character and land use with only occasional small businesses and community uses (schools etc).
- Even within the commercial centre most of the shops, especially of the 19th century or earlier, are in buildings built as houses, where the ground floors were only later provided with shopfronts. There is a scatter of purpose-built shops from the Edwardian era or later in High Street.

Groupings

- With few outstanding individual buildings, in Ringwood it is the ensemble of buildings that particularly matters. Sadly, in many places individual late 20th century buildings mar otherwise intact pieces of 18th/19th century townscape. Unspoiled compositions of good and original adjoining traditional buildings - for example 17th and 19th century buildings on the north side of West Street – are especially important.
- High Street and Market Place are essentially intact as collections of traditional buildings. Although only a small minority is listed and few are architecturally outstanding, they are both coherent pieces of townscape, and the modern intrusions do little to disturb the rhythm of good 18th and 19th century buildings, listed and unlisted. Both streets warrant a special effort to maintain and enhance their attractiveness and appeal.

Pre-18th Century

- There are no medieval buildings or building fabric in Ringwood. The earliest buildings are thatched cottages with timber frames, such as the well-known group on Coxstone Lane, two of which have 17th century origins. The Old Cottage Restaurant in West Street is of the 16th century. Examples of pre-18th century cores inside 18th century or later buildings are 10 High Street (a 16th century timber frame), The Original White Hart Inn, Star Inn, Old Bank House, and Nos. 1 and 5 (all in the Market Place), 5/7 Southampton Road, and Monmouth House in West Street.

18th Century

- The buildings in the main historic streets are predominantly 18th century, some having datestones dating them to a particular year of construction. They are mostly small scale, with two storeys, low eaves and frontages of three bays.
- A few larger townhouses, such as Greyfriars (No. 44) and Netherbrook House on Christchurch Road, have three storeys and five bays. Manor House (Southampton Road) had been rebuilt in 1624, although what is seen today is an 18th century building. Other such buildings were built at the then edge of the town, such as Crescent House, 79 Christchurch Road, and Southend House, 42 Hightown Road (although there is a much longer history of houses on this site).
- The architecture of the 18th century buildings was subdued, plain and restrained. Even the more impressive buildings made only limited use of contrasting materials or refined

applied decoration. The townscape obtains its character from the repeated presence of such buildings, rather than from variety and richness of detail.

- An exception is in the Market Place, where Church Hatch and Old Bank House are buildings of substance and visual importance with detailing and materials designed to impress.
- The severely plain Meeting House of 1727 was built discreetly away from the main streets facing open fields. This meeting house, through loss of other such buildings, is a rare and valuable part of the national history of Nonconformism, and deserves its special Grade II* listed status.

19th Century

- The 19th century started with a continuation of the pattern and styles of building from the previous century, although the dimensions were a little more generous, and eaves were higher with panels of brickwork above the first floor window-heads. The only significant area of new building was the terrace of elegant and well-proportioned brick houses on the south side of Southampton Road (Nos. 76-86).
- In the 1880's further areas were developed on new roads east of Christchurch Road. The style of certain local builders became familiar, notably the Barrow Brothers. The new building was concentrated on Hightown Road, The Quomp, Nursery Road and Woodstock Lane. A few houses were built on Bickerley Road and on the lanes leading off it. In style these were similar to national patterns of the period.
- Individual buildings, often institutional or religious in type, were provided. The most prominent was the Town Hall and Corn Exchange in the Market Place, built philanthropically in 1868 in French Empire style by the Morants, who owned many freeholds in the town. It would have looked as out of place then as it does now, being of a scale and style unsuited to a small country market town. The building attached at its rear was in Gothic Revival style, quite unlike the monstrous bulk of the old cinema (1937) that occupies the site today.
- Another prominent introduction was the Congregational (now United Reformed) Church (1866) almost opposite Greyfriars on Christchurch Road. Its interest is concentrated in the west front facing the road, with ornate pinnacles above towers or buttresses, and a large central west window

20th Century

- Until the 1950's new building had limited impact on the town. Attractive low terraces with jettied and tile-hung first floors were built on The Quomp and Woodstock Lane, and spacious, detached villas on a nursery site on the east side of Christchurch Road. College Road was constructed from 1897 onwards, with pleasing semi-detached and detached villas with individual stylistic touches in their designs.
- Then from the 1950's onwards, Ringwood suffered greatly from the generally poor quality of the designs of building. Scarcely a building from the period 1950-1980 does anything other than detract from the appearance of the conservation area.

New Development – Bad Aspects

- The impact of individual examples of poor buildings is often out of proportion to their size. There are though two larger redeveloped or newly developed areas, which entirely fail to contribute acceptably to the character of the conservation area.
- One is the part of Southampton Road from the Crown Tap up to the entrance to Carvers Industrial Estate. New building of two and three storeys, with both flat and pitched roofs, commenced in the 1930's with the Woolworth's buildings, that then set the tone for later replacements in the street. Nothing historic (other than its general alignment) has survived, except for the listed Mansfield House. There is no visual connection between the historic parts of Southampton Road in either direction.
- The other area of very poor development is between High Street/ Christchurch Road and Bickerley Road. A century ago there were no more than about twenty or so cottages here, but in the last forty-plus years it has filled up with three-storey blocks of flats, bungalows, 'concept' housing from the 1960's with jagged rooflines, and larger 'executive' housing. The developments are not of a standard that should be expected in a

conservation area. Any structure once afforded by the Town Ditch, and by the deep plots that ran back to Bickerley Common, can no longer be discerned.

- The new development of the Meeting House Centre and the Safeway store, built in 19xx, is also visually damaging, illustrating how hard it is to place such large buildings into a confined and intricate town centre site. The shapes and masses facing Meeting House Lane are brutal and quite ugly, and the buildings facing the service yards are monolithic and oversized. The scale of other buildings in the Centre is also too great, and the shapes - 'topheavy 'mansard' roofs with inverted dormers using oppressive colours – appear alien and hostile. This creates unpleasant spaces, and an unfriendly pedestrian environment, well illustrated on the approach to the Centre from High Street along Pedlars Walk.
- Several extensive blocks of three storey flats at one stage created an undesirable precedent for building at three storeys in any area close behind the frontages to the historic streets. However more recent buildings have reverted to two storeys, or have combined elements at two and at three storeys. Assessing these schemes shows that buildings with two storeys, or with small elements only of three storeys, fit better into the townscape of the market town than buildings uniformly of three storeys.
- Even the best buildings and parts of the conservation area did not escape the ravages of the 1960's/70's. Market Place is scarred by the flat roofs of the awful redevelopments of 17/17a and the three-storied New House on the corner of Strides Lane. Greyfriars, the best townhouse in Ringwood, has an unsuitable single-storey addition to its east, and Clarks Almshouses are flanked by grossly inappropriate side wings that dwarf the delicate architecture of the old almshouses.
- The final section on '**The Negative Elements – Loss and Intrusion and Damage**' lists those sites where the Council would welcome discussions on alterations to and refurbishments of properties, or redevelopment of their sites.

New Developments – Good Aspects

- Post-War building that has stood the critical test of time is rare in Ringwood. In the 1960's the area between the Manor House and Red House north of Southampton Road (Linden Gardens, Orchard Mead etc.) was developed by local builders. Unity is provided by the creamy/ buff bricks and the layout and boundary treatments. The builders were probably influenced by the best examples of estate layout then being practised, including the 'Collins' estates in Southampton.
- More than 20 years passed before anything else notable was built. Considered objectively, the most successful new building in Ringwood is the side extension to the Conservative Club on Christchurch Road. Its scale is appropriate, the choice of brick is good, the detail - English bond, oversailing courses, and upstand parapet - is interesting, and its overall design is clearly modern while still being a reinterpretation of the local vernacular style.
- Other good schemes have respectfully and conservatively maintained local architectural styles. White Lion Courtyard on Bickerley Road has elevational variety, a pleasing interplay of linked masses, and only two storeys, making it by far the most successful scheme of many south of High Street. Behind Crescent House on Christchurch Road a small scheme blends successfully into an older setting, and includes a fine piece of contextual design looking onto Nursery Road.
- The Furlong Centre and the Waitrose store deserve mention for their overall quality. The large shop buildings are successfully broken up into smaller masses, giving a human scale that complements well the character of the space in the central square. The Centre is anchored by Frampton's 'Mill' and adjoining lower buildings, survivors from the corn merchant's premises that had occupied the site. The Waitrose store is nearly exemplary in the way it accommodates a very large building into an existing context, yet manages to conceal its true size. It looks good approaching along Star Lane, where its tower does not overwhelm the smaller foreground buildings. The lime trees break up its mass, when viewed from the car park, and the old high boundary wall (formerly the rear wall to Church Hatch in the Market Place) screens the lower part of the store from A31.

The modest roof is in proportion to the walling below and a refined specification and detailing gives the building a relatively pleasing appearance.

Street by Street Analysis

- *Where comments relating to the character of specific streets are not covered by the general character analysis above, they are made here.*
- **Market Place.** Here the buildings are seen across a space, as if at the edges of a stage, and each, irrespective of style, is therefore conspicuous. Most have two storeys, although in many the dormers are also prominent.
- **High Street.** There is greater visual uniformity here than elsewhere in the town centre. The eaves are at a consistent height, especially on the north side. On the south side near Market Place, the repeating pattern of traditionally constructed roof dormers is apparent. Around Fridays Cross, rather more buildings of three storeys appropriately emphasise the importance of the space around that junction.
- **West Street.** West Street is a convincing and coherent piece of townscape, spoilt only by the Bus Station site, where there is the prospect of redevelopment at some point in the future.
- **Christchurch Road.** There is much new building nearer the town centre, and also further out on the western side, and a very wide variety of historic building types. On the eastern side the spacious layout and pronounced setback from the road of the substantial detached Edwardian villas, although attractive in themselves, rather disturbs the rhythm of the view along the street. The plots on Christchurch Road otherwise are generally narrower and the building lines are at or close to the edge of the pavement. Beyond the Coxstone Lane junction, the character of the road breaks down irretrievably with anonymous 1960's housing.
- **Southampton Road.** In the residential area beyond Carvers Industrial Estate, the historic buildings have widely differing sizes, periods, styles and colours. Walls and railings at front property boundaries are noticeably more attractive and original here than elsewhere in the conservation area.
- **Meeting House Lane.** This street has no coherent character, with, both in its older and newer parts, buildings sometimes facing it, and at other times having the character of a back lane passing rear yards.
- **Bickerley Road.** The buildings here looking onto Bickerley Common are notably suburban in character, especially east of Kings Arms Lane. West of this point, although nothing is of architectural merit, the buildings are more similar in scale and appearance, and some good old brick boundary walls still front the plots.
- **Strides Lane.** The character of Strides Lane was utterly destroyed by very unsuitable and relatively massive redevelopment in the early 1960's.
- **Lynes Lane.** This is by far the best of the connecting lanes between High Street and Bickerley Road. The character of the edges to the lane and of a few of the cottages is still semi-rural. While other buildings are more unsuitable, their impact is reduced by the retention of the old property hedge and fence boundaries.
- **Kings Arms Lane.** This lane typifies the worst development that filled up these backland areas, being quite unsuited to the context of a historic country market town.
- **Coxstone Lane.** This street with its thatched cottages has the most distinctive character of any in Ringwood. The wide, blank flank wall of the Kingdom Hall sadly intrudes into this most sensitive and vulnerable built environment. Redevelopment at both the Bickerley and Christchurch Road ends of the lane would be bound to have an impact on its character.
- **Hightown Road.** The part nearer Christchurch Road has the feel of being at the 'working' end of the town, with small, modest but nonetheless attractive terraced cottages. The garages opposite, although of no great conservation value, appear to have changed little during more than a century.

- **Nursery Road.** This cul-de-sac is most attractive with quite original late 19th century houses now complemented by new development that maintains well the scale of local building. Further new development is likely on the old builder's yard.
- **The Quomp.** The Quomp now has a very varied character, and semi-detached houses and the bungalows of Harry Barrow Close do not enhance its appearance.
- **College Road.** The red brick villas are individually treated, with building lines set well back from the road, and a noticeably lesser density of development.

Rears

- The rears of older buildings in the town centre are seldom seen. North of High Street, the buildings lost their rear plots quite early, and now often look directly onto service yards, to which they could contribute in a pleasing way when those service areas are redesigned. To the south there are few plots where the pattern of smaller and lower rear outbuildings is retained. In some places large three storey buildings from the 1970's/1980's come close to the backs of the frontage buildings.
- In many cases the rears of buildings are not as original or have not been treated as sympathetically as the fronts. Particularly poor is LloydsTSB Bank at the end of Kings Arms Lane, with extensive portable buildings with almost flat roofs, and without any redeeming feature. These are temporary buildings provided as an expedient but now made to serve as permanent accommodation in a location that demands better.

Boundary Treatments

- The conservation area is not rich in good and historic boundary treatments to old plots. Of course, many sites are developed up to the pavement edge, and have no independent front boundaries. There are just a few notable old brick boundary walls, and rather fewer noteworthy railings fronting properties. Streets like Lynes and Coxstone Lanes retain the hedges which, together with the absence of pavements, allow their rustic feel to be maintained.
- The best old wall surrounds the churchyard of the Parish Church facing Market Place. It is officially ascribed an 18th century date, but is likely to contain older material, especially the stones at low level which are of the deep brown local heathstone. (Interestingly the wall contains an extremely rare survival within it, being a parish cast-iron safe dated 1813).
- Other good walls run round the end of Strides Lane going towards Bickerley Road; on the north side of Southampton Road east of the Manor House, the extended grounds of which it once bounded; and to the rear of Old Bank House and Church Hatch separating those properties from each other and from the Furlong service yard.

Shopfronts and Signage

- The design of shopfronts and shop signage is closely related. In Ringwood both are undistinguished, but typical of those in many other towns, whether with a historic core or not. The District Council's Shopfront Design Guide should be referred to for further advice. Many shopfronts and schemes of signage fall short of the advice on best practice contained in the Design Guide. However relatively few are conspicuously harmful to the overall appearance of the conservation area. There are also few really good shopfronts, either old or new, to serve as models for best practice.
- The double bow-fronted shop window with matching fascia at 23 Market Place is the best in the town, and uniquely one where the shopfront is of about the same age as the rest of the building. Until about 1900, when purpose-designed shop premises started to appear, the shopfronts are usually later insertions in earlier buildings. This is hard to achieve successfully, and they often feature overlarge sheets of glass, and appear to be planted on the face of the building, rather than placed within the plane of the wall. A few very appropriate Edwardian shopfronts in High Street are worth retaining.
- The shopfronts in the worst buildings from the later parts of the 20th century are usually equally bland and unattractive. The fascias are often too deep, leading to signage that is too conspicuous and intrusive.
- Some fascias are too shallow for the traders, causing there to be advertising in the shop window, or maybe at first floor level. 13-15, 17/19 and 21 Christchurch Road have large,

shabby and ugly signs attached to projecting wooden three-dimensional constructions between the first-floor windows.

- Some shops on Southampton Road beyond Mansfield Road have no fascias, and advertising is placed on fixed canopy blinds that are usually quite harmful visually.
- Most of the worst poor shopfronts and signage is around Fridays Cross. Next to the Crown Inn on Christchurch Road is a modest but appealing 18th century house with a grossly inappropriate shopfront and signage, entirely wrong and visually damaging in its materials, fascia style, colour and window design. Nos. 6 to 12 opposite is a larger 18th century house that goes almost unnoticed because the 20th century ground floor projects forward to the pavement under a flat roof. The fascia is conspicuously and disproportionately deep with garish and ugly modern signs. In this context the signs on the deep and disfiguring fascia to 17/17a Market Place deserve mention again.

Modern Design

- Modern design is not readily apparent in Ringwood, most new building being pastiches of older styles. A lot of newer buildings that were at the time clearly of their period now appear very dated. The housing in Kings Arms Row, with poor materials and a repeating use of monopitch roofs giving a serrated roofline, is an example. The Conservative Club extension, although not radically innovative in its architecture, is probably the best modern building in Ringwood.
- The older buildings of Ringwood are mostly plain with little ornament or decoration. It could therefore be inappropriate for new buildings to make too strong, elaborate, bold or flamboyant a statement. The more successful designs, while still being well-detailed and suitably proportioned, are likely to have a more subdued and restrained style and treatment. There would however be occasions when new schemes could provide an architectural highlight to lift the character and interest of a wider area.

4.5.2 Implications For Development

- 1 New development should relate well to the geography and history of the place, and sit happily in the pattern of existing development. It should respect important views and the scale of neighbouring buildings. It should add to the quality and variety of the townscape of the conservation area.**
 - 2 Any redevelopment of buildings or sites fronting the principal historic streets (Market Place, West Street, High Street, Christchurch Road, Southampton Road, Meeting House Lane) should result in developments that clearly make a more positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area than do the buildings being replaced or the sites as they exist.**
 - 3 Where new development is allowed, building fronting the principal historic streets should not exceed two and a half storeys (see 5 below). Exceptions would be:-**
 - **where sites are at focal points in the townscape of the conservation area, or important in terminating views along a street, in which case an isolated point of three storey development would be acceptable,**
 - **where building results from the redevelopment of sites where there are already unsatisfactory three storey buildings, the removal of which would benefit the conservation area.**
- No development in the conservation area should exceed three storeys in height.**
- 4 Where new development on backland sites behind buildings fronting the principal historic streets is allowed, no more than 50% of the footprint of the building should be occupied by three storey development. Where all the surrounding development has two storeys, or where the only adjoining development with three storeys is considered to be unacceptable in that part of**

- the conservation area for that reason, then all of the building should be at two (or two and a half) storeys.
- 5 Where building is proposed with accommodation in a 'half storey' in the roofspace, the dormer windows to that accommodation should be at a vertical plane set back from the plane of the wall, and should be significantly smaller than the windows in the wallspace below, with dormers of a size to match. The plan of a floor of accommodation in a half storey in a roofspace should be significantly less in extent than a corresponding plan of a floor below.
 - 6 Flat roofs should not be used on buildings, except where a clear case can be made in terms of good design for a small area of flat roof to be incorporated as a minor element in a larger building with traditional roof forms.
 - 7 New buildings should not have footprints of a size that results in roofspans that cannot reasonably be spanned by simple or more complex roofs of traditional form and pitch, are of moderate size, and remain in correct proportion to the height of the walls below.
 - 8 Buildings housing new retail premises should have a roofline and an elevational treatment above ground floor that is typical of domestic architecture.
 - 9 Rear extensions to buildings with frontages to the principal historic streets should be at a height lower than that of the ridgeline of the main building.
 - 10 Any redevelopment affecting the Meeting House Centre or in the vicinity of the Meeting House should result in buildings and spaces with a smaller and more familiar scale and a more traditional appearance than the existing buildings of the Centre, and an improved setting for the Meeting House itself.
 - 11 Any development or redevelopment on sites on Meeting House Lane should incorporate principal elevations that face onto the street.
 - 12 Development affecting Lynes Lane and Coxstone Lane should have regard to the existing semi-rural character of these streets and seek to retain and where possible strengthen that character with buildings and boundary treatments that complement the older buildings in those streets.
 - 13 New or replacement shopfronts in commercial premises should be of high quality, and be modern interpretations of an established or traditional style, i.e. sympathetic to the character of the building and area, as required by policy DW-E21 of the New Forest District Local Plan, and as detailed in the Council's Shopfront Design Guide.
 - 14 Where shop premises have no fascias or fascias of inadequate depth for signage, advertising material should be accommodated within the shop window or via hanging signs, or where appropriate on planted fascia boards, but not on permanent fixed canopies.
 - 15 Opportunities should be taken to replace the first floor signage mounted on three-dimensional projecting constructions above the shopfronts at 13/15, 17/19 and 21 Christchurch Road with two-sided traditional hanging signs.
 - 16 Opportunities should be taken to replace the shopfront, fascia and signage at 3 Christchurch Road with a shopfront and signage that complements better the 18th century building frontage above. Also the fascia and signage at 6 -12 Christchurch Road should be replaced with a less deep fascia and more appropriate signage.
 - 17 Security shutters and grilles to shopfronts should where possible be internal within shopfronts, and be designed so as still easily to allow sight into the shop at all times.
 - 18 Redevelopment on certain sites in the conservation area should be in line with policies in the New Forest District Local Plan. The relevant sites are the Bus Depot in West Street (Policy RW-1), The Furlong (Policy RW-2), 29-33a Southampton Road (Policy RW-4), rear of the Crown Hotel (Policy RW-5), various

sites in the conservation area needing enhancement (Policy RW-8), and rear service yards/ private parking areas in the town centre (Policy RW-9).

4.6 Prevalent and Traditional Building Materials

4.6.1 Analysis and Assessment

- In Ringwood one material is not noticeably used in preference to others. The basic building material is brick, with slates or roof tiles in use above. Many elevations are rendered, and many, whether rendered or not, are painted. Seldom are obvious sequences of adjoining buildings seen with unpainted old brickwork, Nos. 76 to 86 Southampton Road being an obvious exception.
- The stock brick is a uniform dark red, with very few of the relieving lighter tones in the clay found in other towns of the District. Just a few earlier 18th century buildings have orange tones. When matching these bricks it may be easier, and enable a match to a wider range of circumstances, to mix the stock with a close match to the dark red brick, together also with a lesser proportion of slightly lighter bricks.
- The buildings of the Meeting House and Furlong Centres, where almost all elevations are of unpainted brick, use a lighter, more mixed and orangey stock, although these are self-contained locations well removed from the buildings of the main streets.
- In Southampton Road, it appears to have been the principle of brick choice during the last sixty years that 'anything goes'. This area also shows the danger of using self-coloured matching mortar, resulting in oppressively monotone buildings.
- Buildings built by Barrow Bros. about a century ago are elegantly distinguished by contrasting buff bricks in bands and in surrounds to door and window openings.
- Where brick or rendered buildings are painted, the palette of colours has been very restricted, concentrating on whites, creams and the lighter shades of buff and fawn. A colour consultant advised on the repainting of facades of 1 to 13/15 Market Place, which resulted in a number of paler pastel colours being added to that palette.
- Two prominent buildings – Old Bank House in Market Place and Mansfield House in Southampton Road – use buff-coloured mathematical tiles, although Old Bank House has been painted for many years.
- Slates and tiles are both used widely on roofs, with no direct correlation between age of building and material used. Sometimes poorly chosen examples of either slates or tiles have seemed unsuitable. Clay tiles (the majority) are the indigenous materials, and are most appropriate where there are numbers of adjoining old clay tiled roofs on traditional buildings.
- Stone is not used, other than for the Parish Church, and as dressings to the very late Victorian villas on the eastern side of Christchurch Road.
- Natwest Bank, which used high quality materials such as slate and marble, now looks grubby largely due to the deterioration of some of the fixed vertical panels.
- Some newer buildings on Southampton Road use large areas of tile hanging on the walls, or, at the Meeting House Centre, on the near-vertical 'mansard' roofs. Unfortunately in Ringwood tile-hanging only appears appropriate on the early 20th century houses of The Quomp and Woodstock Lane. Elsewhere it looks like a cheap but unconvincing attempt to give interest to dull buildings.

Paving Materials

- Most streets have quite narrow 'blacktop' Bitmac pavements, not inherently attractive, but also (with one exception) not conspicuously ugly. Where the surface has been frequently dug up, it shows up its inability to sustain disturbance, without thereafter looking like a muddled patchwork of different layers. On wide pavements, its sheer extent usually makes it look drab. Unfortunately this coincides with Southampton Road, the area that also has the poorest built environment.

- The only significant area of old and interesting surface detail is alongside the church wall in the Market Place, where there is a sweep of old stable paviers in Staffordshire blue clay, recently extended in a similar material.
- Environmental enhancement schemes in the High Street/ Fridays Cross area, on Meeting House Lane, and in Market Place have generally used a nationally familiar interlocking artificial paving block. The pavements of Meeting House Lane, in its narrowest parts, use a warm red brick, the small unit size of which ideally suits this more confined space. The Market Place combines artificial blocks with natural York stone paving (in front of Old Bank House), granite setts, and two types of clay block paving in a visually interesting mix. The sparing use of such materials is rightly saved for the most important civic space in the town.

4.6.2 Implications For Development

(It is accepted that there is usually no control over the painting and rendering of buildings, or over change of roofing materials, except where the building is listed. Paragraphs below dealing with those issues therefore relate to those circumstances, but would also be used in negotiation on new development. At the least the paragraphs contain advice on best practice.)

- 1 In new development in the conservation area, where there is a mix of buildings with painted brick, unpainted brick and rendered elevations, any of those finishes should be acceptable, except where there is a need to match or complement the materials of an existing building on or adjacent to the site.**
- 2 Unpainted brick should be a good or complementary match for the dark red stock brick of the older buildings, or should be used in proportion in a mixed stock with bricks of a slightly lighter tone. The use of contrasting bricks, for which there is no reasonable local precedent, used only in order to provide supposed interest to the streetscene, should be avoided.**
- 3 Either clay tiles or slates are acceptable for use on buildings of traditional construction on the principal historic streets, or which are or will be clearly visible from those streets. In such instances, the slates used should only be natural slate.**
- 4 On buildings elsewhere in the conservation area roofing materials, whether clay tiles or slates, should be of high visual quality, and, if not handmade natural products, should be a good match for the natural materials.**
- 5 Tile hanging on walls should be avoided other than where the context of buildings surrounding the site allows it.**
- 6 On painted brick or rendered buildings, the palette of colours used for walling should be taken from the restricted range of colours previously used in the conservation area, avoiding vibrant, bright and rich colours and tones.**

4.7.Characteristic Local Detailing

4.7.1 Analysis and Assessment

- There are no recurring building details specifically typical of Ringwood. Some period buildings have simple detailing, but there are few Classical features, and not many buildings with 'Arts and Crafts' adornment. The following details are amongst those found on the traditional buildings (whether listed or unlisted) of the town:-
 - triangular dormers within old tiled roofs at 80-84 Christchurch Road and also on the south side of High Street near Fridays Cross,
 - the restrained and elegant 5-panelled door and shallow doorcase and canopy at the unlisted St Katharine's (86a Christchurch Road),
 - the first floor balcony with iron brackets and railings with scrollwork which spans

- the deeply recessed central bay at Grove House, 61 Southampton Road,
- the moulded cornices and raised brick parapets with shallow recessed panels above first floor level at Nos 5 and 7/9 Market Place,
- the scrolled brackets and shallow canopy with concave lead roof at the unlisted Dalkeith (4 West Street),
- also on West Street, at the CIU Club, the shaped leading line to the front gable, showing distinct Dutch influence,
- and the Venetian window at first floor in Old Bank House, and the 19th century louvred sun-blinds next door at Church Hatch, both in Market Place, and both illustrating the importance attached to buildings in this prime location.

4.7.2 Implications For Development

- 1 Proposed alterations should retain characteristic detailing of buildings, including purely decorative detail, to maintain local visual interest and distinctiveness. (See Policy DW-E19 of the New Forest District Local Plan).**
- 2 Proposed new dormers should take their design lead from the many original and appropriate existing dormers in terms of their materials, size, form, construction and detailing. Likewise the detailing of window cills, the arches over window and door openings, and the verges and eaves of new or extended buildings, should replicate one of the types of such detailing on local traditional buildings.**

4.8.Character and Relationship of Spaces within Area

4.8.1 Analysis and Assessment

- All the main open spaces are on public land. In the principal historic streets the building lines are almost always at the back edge of the pavements, except where an 18th century building has a slight setback to emphasise its intended importance, such as Greyfriars on Christchurch Road or Bridge House on West Street. Private open spaces remain private, and do not obviously combine visually with public spaces to create larger expanses of open space.

Market Place

- Points have already been made about the high quality of the buildings in Market Place, and the way they are more conspicuous, being set at the edges of a broad public space. Also the road and pavement surfacing is discussed above, concentrating on the broad area in front of the Parish Church, around the Jubilee Lamp (1887), a five-branched cast iron lamp standard with copper lanterns marking Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. A large sundial is set into the surrounding paving.
- Refurbishment and restoration projects in recent years have helped to reverse the Market Place out of the physical decline caused by the draining of economic activity away from the locality. Nothing else is anticipated, although works to improve the flat-roofed eyesores at No 17/17a and New House would be welcome.
- The one unresolved issue relates to the old road which left the north-west corner of Market Place along the river valley towards Salisbury. The route hugged the churchyard wall, passing narrowly between the Church and the Vicarage and Corn Mill. By degrees the A31 bypass sliced through, then sealed off, that road, opening up a space west of the Church where the Vicarage and Mill had been demolished. The churchyard wall still leads the eye away along this curving line, although now the view terminates lamely in a rank of parking bays.
- The dual carriageway runs past surprisingly close to Market Place, beyond a highway wall. The larger vehicles are still seen as they pass. A thin belt of planting against the wall contains only small species, and excludes the forest trees that would in time have a significant landscape impact. Seen from some points in Market Place, that planting does nothing to prevent views of the horribly intrusive overhead gantry traffic signs on A31. The

former electricity board showroom tucked round the corner is unattractive. Overall the A31 bypass has had a dramatically brutal effect on the appearance of the town, but the landscaping measures are unconvincing and weak.

Fridays Cross

- This is the other historic junction, subtle and much smaller than Market Place. Some buildings are taller than in High Street, emphasising its importance. Highway improvements created a pedestrian area on its south side with a raised circular seat. The space still seems to lack within it elements accentuating the vertical dimension.

Furlong and Meeting House Centres

- The central spaces in these Shopping Centres contrast strongly. The cloistered square in the Meeting House Centre outside Safeway has a human scale at eye level, although the surrounding roofs seem overpowering. One particularly unsatisfactory aspect is the way the setting of the Grade II* Meeting House is damaged by being attached on one side to the Safeway store.
- The piazza in the Furlong Centre is well planned, with maturing maple and birch trees and a popular piece of public sculpture, 'Mare and Foal'. Its size is large enough to provide a setting for 'Framptons Mill', a bulky and impressive survivor from the earlier corn merchant's business. The whole piazza functions well as a relaxing circulation space and meeting point.
- The service yards east and west of the Meeting House Centre are ugly, overlooked by the rears of properties on High Street and Southampton Road. There is an obvious conflict at Northumberland Court, where the back of No 6, an attractive 18th century house, looks onto the hideous and clumsily proportioned loading bays behind Pedlars Walk.
- The service yard to the rear of Waitrose and the Furlong Centre is large, and used in part also for customer parking. Its location next to the churchyard dictated the retention of mature horse chestnut trees, and other new planting, as well as the building of undercover, open-sided parking against the churchyard boundary to obstruct a direct view between the churchyard and the service yard.

Southampton Road

- The poor appearance of buildings in a part of Southampton Road, and the expanse of dull blacktop pavements are referred to above. The old street alignment is maintained, but its flow is badly disturbed by the savage way Mansfield Road crosses it. Buildings on corners of that junction address Mansfield Road almost accidentally, with corners poking out towards the road, giving a jagged, unplanned appearance.
- Between the town centre and Mansfield Road, there is no on-street parking, and a single lane between very wide pavements funnels traffic onto Mansfield Road. Beyond Mansfield Road, Southampton Road is a cul-de-sac with some on-street parking and an unplanned turning head. Here also up to the entrance to Carvers Industrial Estate the pavements are very wide.

Footpath Routes

- Many footpaths provide convenient pedestrian routes and increase the flexibility of the town centre for its users. Of the several that link High Street or Christchurch Road with Bickerley Road, Deweys Lane is a narrow twisting route between intermittent old brick walls through one of the more densely treed parts of the town. Star Lane links the Furlong Centre and the Market Place, and has been lined in recent years with houses, shops and outbuildings, giving it an appeal and also encouraging its use as a route for people to and from the Furlong Centre.
- The pedestrian route alongside the Boots store from Southampton Road to Pedlars Walk is different, running through newer retail buildings, and crossing the edge of the western service yard. For its entire length its immediate surroundings are hostile and unfriendly, and its intensely urban character discourages use.

4.8.2 Implications For Development

- 1 In keeping with the established practice, any new development fronting onto the principal historic streets should be built up to the pavement edge. The exception is that part of Southampton Road north of Carvers Industrial Estate where the uses are entirely residential, and properties are generally set back behind private open space.
- 2 Proposals should be favourably considered that introduce either buildings or landscaping north-west of the Market Place to the west of the Parish Church, and which achieve one or more of the following objectives:-
 - better conceal the A31 and associated highway works, viewed from Market Place,
 - establish landscaping that will be more effective in the longer term in screening A31 and presenting a more natural shaping of the view out of Market Place,
 - better suggest the initial alignment and characteristics of the road that formerly ran northwards away from Ringwood past the Church,
 and which satisfy the following requirements:-
 - retain as much of the existing parking provision as needs to be safeguarded,
 - enhance the view from the Market Place,
 - are of an aesthetic quality to be seen adjacent to the Parish Church, and
 - create no other planning or highway-related problems.
- 3 Proposals that affect the immediate surroundings to Fridays Cross should seek to establish in the streetscene a strongly accentuated vertical emphasis.
- 4 Any redevelopment proposals that affect the Meeting House Centre should provide a better and more respectful setting for the Meeting House, and should particularly allow it to be seen as a freestanding building with pedestrian circulation space around it on four sides.
- 5 Any redevelopment proposals should retain the spacious characteristics of the central pedestrian space within the Furlong Centre, and should treat with respect the setting of the 'Framptons Mill' building at the centre of that space, allowing pedestrian circulation space to be maintained around it.
- 6 Any redevelopment proposals that affect the 'western' and 'eastern' service yards to the Meeting House Centre should establish spaces, that have a more human scale than the existing, with buildings surrounding of a scale and character that complement better the buildings on High Street and Southampton Road. Particularly, such proposals should provide a better and more respectful setting for the building at 6 Northumberland Court.
- 7 Any redevelopment proposals affecting the buildings at the junction of Southampton Road and Mansfield Road should if possible incorporate visually composed and interesting elevations which address and run parallel with both Southampton Road and Mansfield Road.
- 8 Opportunities should be sought to introduce within the street in that part of Southampton Road between Fridays Cross and the entrance to Carvers Industrial Estate environmental measures that improve its appearance. These may include some or all of the following;- carriageway reshaping and reduction; rationalisation of street furniture and public utilities equipment; seating provision; resurfacing; and/or planting and other landscape treatments.
- 9 Proposals on sites that adjoin the longer established footpaths within the conservation area should retain those characteristics and traditional boundary treatments of the footpaths that contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

- 10 Redevelopment proposals that affect the footpath running from Southampton Road (alongside Boots) via the western service yard to Pedlars Walk should provide an immediate environment for the footpath that is much more attractive and welcoming than that of the existing footpath.**

4.9. Streetworks and Public Utilities

4.9.1 Analysis and Assessment

- See also '**Prevalent and Traditional Building Materials**' above. It is important that, when paving repairs are required, materials are used and specifications adopted that maintain the aesthetic quality of the paved areas. When entire lengths of pavement are to be relaid, a surface finish that will appear attractive for a long time is needed. This does not necessarily mean individual paviers, but may involve consideration of a range of different dressings to the new surface, especially where the pavements are wider as in the commercial parts of Southampton Road.
- Streetlighting is inconspicuous in the conservation area, especially where the lights are wall-mounted. In the centre – High Street, Market Place and parts of Meeting House Lane – there is a mixture, both wall- and post-mounted, of replica 19th century lanterns and pendant globes under 'upturned saucers', both familiar solutions in historically sensitive areas. Star Lane and the Furlong Centre adopt another type of suitable post-and-lantern system. Very inconspicuous in locations including Greyfriars and Centre Place there remain a few Armfield lamp columns, products of the famous local ironworks at Stuckton.
- Elsewhere, e.g. Christchurch Road south of Greyfriars and Southampton Road, there has been an uncoordinated approach to provision and replacement when needed. There are many styles of post, of light unit, and of wall mounting, some tall and some short, some old-fashioned and some modern, and some ugly and some elegant. In Southampton Road, tall and ungainly posts add to the unattractiveness of the area.
- Where there have been environmental enhancement projects, new street furniture has been provided as part of the work. In other streets with narrower pavements, street furniture tends not to intrude too greatly. Only in Southampton Road, where the highway is wide, the street furniture is a random and disorganised clutter.
- Mansfield Road and the lower part of Christchurch Road are the B3347, but signage for through traffic is kept to a minimum, and handled subtly.
- It goes without notice that most wires in the town are routed underground. The overhead wires in Christchurch and Southampton Roads are not unduly obtrusive.

4.9.2 Implications For Development

- 1 When standard 'blacktop' pavements in the conservation area are resurfaced, consideration should be given to finished surface treatments that make the pavement appear more aesthetically attractive.**
- 2 Opportunities should be taken to rationalise the various types of streetlighting in Southampton Road, and to introduce columns and lights that are more suited to use in a conservation area.**
- 3 Opportunities should be taken to rationalise and reduce the total amount of street furniture in Southampton Road, introducing items that are better designed and more suited to use in a conservation area.**

4.10 Focal Points and Views within Area

4.10.1 Analysis and Assessment

- There are no obvious level changes in the conservation area. This limits the potential for longer distance views. There is no element of planned formality in the town centre, and no buildings or structures are positioned deliberately to terminate views. The Parish Church is the tallest building, but is located in the wings rather than centre-stage, and features in few views. There are no views away from the principal historic streets towards more rural areas. Indeed many views through gaps in the completed street frontages are cut off by other buildings close behind the frontages.
- Walking from the east, Market Place itself is the culmination of the journey, and no individual building in it acts as a focal point. The solicitor's offices at the end of Market Place are pleasant, although not an impressive focus for attention.
- The continuous sinuous line from Market Place along the High Street and on to the south end of Christchurch Road at the old railway is subtle. The quality and shape of views along this route changes continuously in small ways. A building may at one moment appear inconspicuous in the street, whilst a little further on the same building may seem to dominate, depending on the angle and framing of the view.

4.10.2 Implications For Development

- 1 Particular attention should be given to the appearance and character of those buildings, both listed and unlisted, which feature prominently as focal points in views along the streets of the conservation area.**
- 2 Development proposals on the principal historic streets of the conservation area should take into account the impact the proposal would have on the streetscene in the shorter and longer distance oblique views to the site.**
- 3 Opportunities should be taken, when considering redevelopment on any site that occupies a focal position within the conservation area, to create a building that can justify its position at a focal point of the town.**

4.11 Key Unlisted Buildings

(The identification of 'key unlisted buildings' on the maps does not mean that these are the only unlisted buildings in the conservation area where there would be a presumption against demolition)

4.11 1 Analysis and Assessment

- It is especially critical in Ringwood to retain and maintain the best unlisted buildings. The shortage of outstanding 'highlight' buildings, and the many poor replacement buildings from the later 20th century in the main streets, mean that the ensemble of old buildings is all the more important. Many buildings are listed but also many in such a historic street as High Street, including several 18th century buildings, are not listed. Whether a building is listed is far from being the only measure of whether it should be kept and whether it deserves to be treated with due sensitivity.
- In Ringwood, a few unlisted buildings are worthy of individual reference because of their prominent location, or local significance, or quality as a building. They include:-
 - Letchers, 24 Market Place, occupying the whole of the west side of the place.
 - The former Town Hall and Corn Exchange, Market Place, a large dominating building. Although out of character with its neighbours, it nonetheless is very prominent and deserves special attention to reinstate some aspects of its original appearance.
 - Bickerley Terrace at the north-west corner of Bickerley Common, an attractive and essentially intact group of red-brick cottages of 1882, with sophistication in its layout as a terrace and in the detailing of individual houses. They, together with West Side, a detached 18th century cottage alongside, are the only buildings looking onto the Common with any building conservation interest.
 - Framptons 'Mill' and the lower, older buildings attached to the west in Furlong

Centre. These anchor the whole shopping centre, and maintain an emotional connection with the past for the users of the shopping mall.

- Similarly the wall running parallel with and close to the Waitrose store on its northern side is the 18th century boundary to the grounds of Church Hatch, next to the Church in the Market Place. Even stripped of that historic context, its length, height and construction remain very impressive.
- Nos 6 and 8 Southampton Road, next to the Crown Tap. Modest late Victorian cottages, but the historic environment of this part of Southampton Road is so damaged that the retention of such buildings is critical.
- the C of E School of 1848 on School Lane, a restrained but well-composed elevation, just too late and a bit too plain to have been accepted for listing.
- a corner garage building with old brickwork and tiled roof to the south-east of Greyfriars, seen centrally in the view on the approach to the roundabout from Mansfield Road.
- on Lynes Lane, No. 30 (Monks Hatch), a charming, minuscule thatched cottage, complementing the rural character of the street.

4.11.2 Implications For Development

- 1 Key unlisted buildings (including those identified in the text above and on the maps), either occupying focal positions in the conservation area, or having particular interest or character, should not be considered as candidates for demolition and redevelopment. (See also Policy DW-E20 of the New Forest District Local Plan)**
- 2 Unlisted buildings of traditional form fronting onto any of the medieval streets of the conservation area (Market Place, West Street, High Street, Christchurch Road, Southampton Road, Meeting House Lane), which retain the essential elements of their original appearance, should, in the interests of maintaining intact the ensemble of older buildings in the historic core of the conservation area, not be demolished.**

4.12 The Contribution of Green Spaces and Features

(Trees (with a trunk diameter over 7.5 cm) in conservation areas benefit from some measure of protection, requiring notification to be given to the District Council before work to trees is undertaken. The Council may then raise no objection to the proposals or make a Tree Preservation Order in order to be able to control such work).

(The showing on the maps of trees or groups of trees is not a complete record of the trees in the area. Those trees that are identified are particularly important for their townscape value, and that importance is in all cases further qualified below. Other trees in the zone may be valuable and important or have a significant public amenity, and may already be protected by Tree Preservation Orders, or may be so protected in the future. The mapping of 'trees important for their townscape value' makes no attempt to plot the branch spread of that tree or group of trees).

(Trees do not stand for ever. They grow old, become diseased, require management, and eventually die. Therefore the showing of trees on maps does not preclude the prospect that they may at times have to be felled, even those that are cherished parts of the familiar local scene).

(Further information can be obtained from the Council's Tree Team (Helpline 02380 285330), and from the published tree strategy, 'Growing Better Together')

4.12.1 Analysis and Assessment

- Green spaces are not prominent features in the historic core of Ringwood. Big trees are seldom in the foreground of views in the conservation area, although there are a lot of trees at the rear of properties and grouped at the fringe of the conservation area. Many are prominent in middle-distance views.

Green Spaces

- The largest green space is Bickerley Common, separated from the water meadows by the Mill Stream and by the abandoned railway line. The grass is rough and coarse, and old maps show a cricket pitch on its broadest part, although it is now only used for dog-walking and the occasional funfair. A hard footpath at its edge takes pedestrians off the busy Bickerley Road. At its southern edge is a dense screen of water-loving willows and alders. It is registered as a village green under the Commons Registration Act, is liable to flood, and is further protected from development by its exclusion in the New Forest District Local Plan from the town's defined settlement limits. Except for Bickerley Terrace, the surrounding buildings add nothing to its appeal as an open space.
- At the north-west end of Bickerley Common a small 'pocket park' is sandwiched between the Mill Stream and the old path running round into Strides Lane. It is an intimate and secluded space, managed largely in the interests of wildlife, and includes a group of walnut and other trees that form a good backdrop closing out the views along the length of Bickerley Common from the south-east.
- The riverside Silver Jubilee Garden at the end of West Street is another secluded park, surrounded by alders, willows, ashes and limes. It is the only point where Ringwood comes into contact with its river. Old photos show the river lapping up against a little 'shore' on West Street, and open views from Market Place to Fish Inn.
- The War Memorial Gardens were the private gardens to Greyfriars. Mature trees, including a large, spreading copper beech, line its edges. The garden and Mansfield Road alongside effectively split the course of Christchurch Road within the conservation area in two.

Private Open Space

- In the residential areas few private gardens are prominent viewed from public places in the conservation area. In the intensively developed area between High Street/ Christchurch Road and Bickerley Road gardens are small. At Bickerley Green many mature trees limit the development potential of the site. Sites between Strides and

Deweys Lanes have recently been developed within the constraints imposed by mature trees. To the north the private gardens of Grove House, 61 Southampton Road run alongside the road and back to Gravel Lane, and are enclosed by an intact boundary wall. The gardens complement the house, and any reduction in their extent would diminish the value of the whole composition.

Massed trees

- Trees at Bickerley Green, on the edge of Bickerley Common, and at the Silver Jubilee Gardens have just been referred to. A row of five mature lime trees to the east of the Waitrose store (already subject of a Tree Preservation Order) is important for its role in softening the outline of the large building seen in views across the car park.
- The parish churchyard has many mature trees, principally ash and yew trees, but also a curving row of pollarded lime trees above the old wall to Market Place. The trees here combine with horse chestnut trees in the Furlong Centre service yard and lime and pine trees behind Church Hatch and Old Bank House to give the impression of a substantial cover of forest trees in the wider area.
- A group of a dozen plane trees, planted in the 1970's when the car park was made, has become a major component of the townscape. Although their retention would be welcomed, it is also a desirable objective to link the Furlong Centre shopping area to the Meeting House Centre and High Street in the interests of the operation of Ringwood's commercial centre. Many of the trees would then necessarily be lost.
- In 4.8.1 (**Character and Relationship of Spaces within Area**) the inadequacy of the landscaping intended to screen the A31 from Market Place is referred to. Whether or not buildings are ever sited in this area or so as to replace the former electricity board showroom, there is opportunity for planting of forest tree species to screen the arterial road properly from view.
- On occasion a generous planting of many individual trees within a small area can, when they achieve a certain maturity, give the impression of a mass of trees. Blynkbonnie car park off Christchurch Road is an example where many trees of interesting species have been planted and given space in which to grow without causing a nuisance to the users of the car park. They work well visually with mature trees on neighbouring sites, and the site is exemplary in the way it provides serious and attractive landscaping in such a public location.

Individual Trees

- Few individual specimen trees are worthy of mention in Ringwood, and there is very little evidence of deliberate planting for the future in past years. Some of the more interesting trees are recent plantings in the pedestrian areas. The following are notable trees:-
 - the Atlantic cedar to the left of Greyfriars near the Christchurch Road site frontage, still impressive, even though, as with many specimens of this tree, it has had major limbs removed, including in this case the main leader.
 - the purple or copper beech opposite Greyfriars in the Memorial Garden, a tree with room to spread elegantly over the lawns.
 - on Southampton Road two trees near the former stables to the Manor House provide a refined setting for this important group of buildings, including the Grade II* listed central section of the Manor. They are an American red oak in The Manor House grounds, and a robinia at Grove House, 61 Southampton Road.
 - four silver maple trees planted in the pedestrian precinct of the Furlong Centre, which are essential to the attractive and established ambience of this recently created space. Management of these trees is keeping them to a shape and size that will still complement the surrounding space and buildings.
 - also in the Furlong Centre an 'espalier' pear tree against a south-facing wall of the oldest of the retained buildings from the old brewery in Frampton's Yard, now incorporated in the shopping centre. This is the kind of small detail that causes people to feel affection for an environment.
 - within the Market Place, three (originally four, but one has not survived) red ash trees will be a graceful and feathery screen through which the Old Bank House

will be seen to good effect. Nearer the Jubilee Lamp is a larger Oriental plane tree. Selection and siting of trees to be placed in a well-known and previously open space such as the Market Place must be undertaken with great sensitivity. It would be easy to plant trees of species or in locations that would dominate or in time have a stifling effect, when the essential characteristic of the historic space that must be preserved is its openness.

4.12.2 Implications For Development

- 1 All the trees referred to above, whether in groups or single specimens, are amongst those in the conservation area which should be retained and managed for their outstanding contribution to the appearance of the area.**
- 2 Development that reduces the extent of the gardens to Grove House, 61 Southampton Road, or that compromises the integrity of its garden boundary enclosure, should be avoided.**
- 3 If plane trees in the south-west corner of The Furlong car park have to be removed to allow schemes expanding the town's commercial area, an appropriate scheme of alternative planting of suitable tree species should be undertaken in a public space close to the location of the existing trees.**
- 4 Opportunities should be sought and land be reserved for planting of forest tree species against the boundary of the A31 highway beyond the north-west corner of Market Place, sited so as in time to screen the road from the town.**

4.13 Setting of Area and Relationship with Landscape

4.13.1 Analysis and Assessment

- Ringwood, on the flat land edging the flood plain, gives no dramatic views into the town from beyond, or from the town out into the country. Views out are curtailed by the A31 dual carriageway, and to the south by trees lining the route of the old railway and meadows beyond the Mill Stream of the River Avon. To the east the area is attached to industrial and Edwardian residential parts of the town.
- On approaches from distance, e.g. on A31 coming down Poulner Hill, the tower of the Parish Church is the only building to stand out above the trees and low-level surrounding rooftops.
- Although stripped by A31 of its proper relationship with the nearby River Avon, the conservation area obviously necessarily has a relationship instead in that area with the road itself. The Parish Church and its closeness to the road is familiar to millions of people using A31, especially coming from the west. West Street, the Silver Jubilee Gardens, and the old electricity showrooms are all screened by trees, that have grown up alongside the road. A natural division between A31 and the stub end of road leaving Market Place is not available, but screening here is certainly needed to mitigate the visual and various other environmental damage caused by the bypass.
- The Furlong public car park lies just outside the conservation area boundary, which runs along the roads at the edge of the car park. Possible future redevelopment proposals are likely to concentrate on sites around The Furlong, and are unlikely to separate neatly into buildings inside and outside the existing boundary of the conservation area. If the ambition to link The Furlong Centre and the area around the Meeting House in as natural and unforced way as possible is realised, the existing conservation area boundary would then run nonsensically through the middle of new development, and boundary adjustment would be desirable. It would be very desirable for finished new development to be of a quality meriting inclusion in a conservation area.

4.13.2 Implications For Development

- 1 The impact on the conservation area of development on sites close to but beyond the boundary of the conservation area should be considered.
- 2 Any new development near The Furlong should be of a quality that would justifiably allow the conservation area boundary to be adjusted to include the new development.
- 3 No development should be proposed that challenges the pre-eminence of the Parish Church tower in views to the centre of the conservation area from distance.
- 4 Proposals for development on sites running up to the A31 boundary between the Parish Church and the main river bridge near the West Street filter should consider the need for more extensive and intensive schemes of planting to provide better screening of A31 seen from the town.

4.14 The Negative Elements – Loss, Intrusion and Damage

4.14.1 Analysis and Assessment

(Map 6 shows some sites and buildings in the conservation area where it is considered that proposals for enhancement would benefit the character of the conservation area. Some, but not all, are referred to in Policies RW-8 and RW-9 of the New Forest District Local Plan.)

(Identification of these sites does not mean that the District Council will require proposals for enhancement to be submitted; or that the District Council is aware that proposals for enhancement have been prepared or are to be prepared; or that proposals for planning permission and/or listed building consent would necessarily be granted by the District Council.)

(Identification of the sites, as set out in the Implications For Development below, means that the District Council will be willing to discuss with potential applicants the opportunity for desirable development that clearly removes from the conservation area an element of visual damage, replacing it with something substantially better).

- The Appraisal above contains many references to buildings and spaces in the conservation area that damage its character. There is considerable opportunity for further new development on undeveloped sites, and also for redevelopment to replace existing substandard development. This has been recognised for many years, and this appraisal gives useable guidelines to allow that process to continue.
- **Bickerley Road.** Here one part of the conservation area is identified that has no characteristics appropriate to a conservation area, the definition of which is ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest (*underlining added*), the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. That is the area north-east of Bickerley Common, from Kings Arms Lane south eastwards to Christchurch Road, and running back from Bickerley Road to the plots that line High Street and Christchurch Road.
- **Southampton Road.** Multiple references are made in the appraisal to the unattractive environment of Southampton Road. There is no prospect of immediate development, or in the future of planned comprehensive redevelopment, however welcome that might be. Redevelopment of this area would be supported in principle by the District Council. The measures that are possible to revive the appearance of parts of this road are principally in the public domain of the street, requiring the co-ordination of a range of agencies with statutory responsibilities.
- **Market Place (north west corner).** A further area where co-ordinated planning and thinking is needed in order to bring about a significant improvement is the area west of the Parish Church beyond the north-west corner of Market Place. Following the initial, poorly considered landscape treatment of this stub end of road, no further landscaping has taken place. It is a high-profile area, and an open-minded assessment is warranted of the kinds of planting or development that could be undertaken to enhance the area.
- The sites below, individually identified on Map 6, are those where either there is a realistic prospect of development/ redevelopment, or the visual damage to the conservation area

is so great that it is worth concentrating attention on the need for improvement or enhancement. Other buildings and sites also contribute poorly to the look of the conservation area, but are not shown on the map, either because there may be little or no prospect of improvement or enhancement, or because the damage they do the conservation area is less prominent.

- Often there will be no incentive for an owner to redevelop a site, if redevelopment is not needed. It may nonetheless still be possible to improve or enhance a property without redeveloping it, by for example recladding a principal elevation, or putting new windows in, or putting a pitched roof top on a flat roof, or even just by painting.

4.14.2 Implications for Development

1 The following buildings, identified on Map 6, are those where works to improve, enhance or redevelop would most clearly be beneficial, and where opportunities should be sought and taken to bring about such works:-

- **17/17a Market Place. Short of redevelopment, to rethink the treatment of the front elevation, concentrating on fenestration and measures to reduce the apparent height of the frontage. (Site 'a')**
- **rear of Lloyds TSB Bank, 25 High Street. To redevelop replacing the buildings of temporary appearance with extensions of appropriate materials, scale, size, and more traditional form. (Site 'b')**
- **The Arcade Shopping Centre, Market Place (former Town Hall). Short of redevelopment, to achieve a scheme of conversion within the existing massive bulk that alleviates the blank rear and side elevations enabling the building in spite of its bulk to contribute positively to both its immediate surroundings and the wider context of the conservation area (Site 'c')**
- **34a Christchurch Road. To encourage redevelopment of the site with a building of traditional appearance and a conventional pitched roof. (Site 'd')**
- **3 Christchurch Road. To replace the shopfront in its entirety. (Site 'e')**
- **6-12 Christchurch Road. To provide shopfront fascias and new signage, more sympathetic to the character of the original building to the rear. (Site 'f')**
- **1-7 Meeting House Lane. Short of redevelopment, to rethink the façade treatment of the elevation, concentrating on materials and fenestration. (Site 'g')**
- **29-33 Southampton Road. To achieve, when redevelopment is sought, buildings of a greatly improved visual quality, and that incorporate attractive elevations to Mansfield Road and Meeting House Lane. (Site 'h')**
- **37/39 Southampton Road. To screen or treat the gable wall facing The Furlong so as to make it appear less bland, ugly and featureless. (Site 'i')**

2 The following sites, identified on Map xx, are those where works to improve, enhance or redevelop would most clearly be beneficial, and where opportunities should be sought and taken to bring about such works:-

- **Wiltshire and Dorset Bus Co. Depot, West Street. To redevelop as and when the opportunity arises with development as outlined in New Forest District Local Plan Policy RW-1. (Site 'j')**
- **Meeting House Centre, Western Service Yard. To take the opportunity of any redevelopment of the Meeting House Centre to obtain a service yard with buildings of a size, design, scale and layout that complement surrounding older buildings, including 6 Northumberland Court. (Site 'k')**
- **Meeting House Centre, Eastern Service Yard. To take the opportunity of**

any redevelopment of the Meeting House Centre to obtain a service yard with buildings of a size, design, scale and layout that provides an improved setting for the rear of buildings on High Street and Southampton Road. (Site 'l')

- rear of New House, Market Place, on Strides Lane. To take opportunities to redevelop the area, including the location of garages opposite New Court. (Site 'm')
- Centre Place, off Meeting House Lane. To provide development that complements buildings in the Furlong Centre and on Meeting House Lane, and lines Centre Place along a possible pedestrian route from Meeting House Lane to Market Place in a way that in part mitigates the impact on the space of the former cinema. (Site 'n')
- rear of Ringwood Conservative Club, 20-22 Christchurch Road. To secure a level of planting to soften the harshness of the perimeter of the rear parking area. (Site 'o')

- 3 Opportunities should be sought to undertake a scheme of environmental works within the public area of Southampton Road between Fridays Cross and the entrance to Carvers Industrial Estate, and such a scheme should consider the reduction of the highway areas, landscaping of pedestrian areas, the suitability of various surface materials, and the rationalisation and improvement of 'street furniture'.
- 4 Opportunities should be sought to promote discussion about the potential in the area west of the Parish Church beyond the north-west corner of the Market Place for works of landscaping and/or development or redevelopment to be undertaken, with the objectives of screening more effectively the view from Market Place to A31, and providing a more visually appropriate termination of the views from Market Place.

5 SOURCES

5.1 The following books and documents will be useful in understanding further the context in which development decisions are taken in Ringwood.

- New Forest District Local Plan – First Alteration (First Stage Deposit). (New Forest District Council, July 2001)
- An Extensive Urban Survey of Hampshire's Historic Towns (Hampshire County Council and English Heritage, 1999)
- New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment (Environmental Resources Management, for New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage, July 2000)
- Ringwood (Frith's Photographic Town Memories) (Mary Baldwin, Frith Book Co., 2002)
- Pictorial History of Ringwood Town from 1850 (Ringwood Town Council, 1977)
- Ringwood Seen and Remembered (Ruth Allen and Derek Dine, Hants. Co. Library, 1985)
- The History of Ringwood and Guide to the Neighbourhood (AH Kingsbury, 1894)

5.2 Supplementary planning guidance relating to specific probable development sites is sometimes prepared and published, and is in conformity with the policies and proposals of the New Forest District Local Plan. Currently there is no such guidance covering any sites in or affecting the conservation area.

5.3 Some supplementary planning guidance deals with general topics. Examples that could be relevant within the conservation area are:-

- Design for Community Safety
- Landscape Requirements for New Development
- Parking Standards
- Access for Disabled People
- Development in Town Centres: Primary Shopping Frontages
- Shopfront Design Guide

Ringwood Conservation area Appraisal

List of photographs and captions

- 1 'Frampton's Mill' was a warehouse built by seed merchants about a century ago.
- 2 Buildings from the 16th to the early 20th century in harmony on West Street.
- 3 High Street combines 18th and 19th century buildings of a quite modest scale.
- 4 Old Cottage Restaurant in West Street may contain the oldest building fabric of any domestic building in Ringwood.
- 5 The typical scale of three-bay 18th century buildings in Christchurch Road.
- 6 Church Hatch and Old Bank House – impressive 18th century frontages at the heart of the town.
- 7 A genteel early 19th century terrace of mellow brick houses on Southampton Road.
- 8 Town Hall (1868) was strikingly new when built, but has now fallen on hard times.
- 9 Early 20th century housing on Woodstock Lane with jettied, tile-hung first floors.
- 10 The character of Southampton Road gradually became suburban during the 20th century.
- 11 The area north west of Bickerley Road is devoid of historic character.
- 12 Ringwood Conservative Club's extension has a high-quality modern extension.
- 13 White Lion Courtyard off Bickerley Road is a successful, high-density scheme.
- 14 Parts of Christchurch Road have a varied character with some buildings set a long way back from the road.
- 15 Lynes Lane is a surprising survivor of a rustic Ringwood just off Market Place.
- 17 Temporary buildings at Lloyds TSB Bank of outstandingly poor aesthetic quality.
- 18 The 18th century churchyard wall to Market Place has earlier foundations.
- 19 The double bow-fronted shop windows at 23 Market Place are probably original.
- 20 Deep ugly fascias and disfiguring signage at 6-12 Christchurch Road.
- 21 Red-brick semi-detached villas on Nursery Road with contrasting detailing in buff brick.
- 22 These brick buildings in Market Place were painted using co-ordinated colours.
- 23 Tile-hanging on nearly vertical mansard roofs at the Meeting House Centre.
- 24 A beautifully proportioned and elegant door and doorcase on Christchurch Road.

- 25 Part of Market Place, the buildings set back to the edges of its broad space.
- 27 Beyond the north-west corner of Market Place – a serious failure of landscaping.
- 28 In Fridays Cross three-storey buildings give a much-needed vertical emphasis to this space.
- 29 Proper respect for the Meeting House requires it to be freestanding, not attached to a supermarket.
- 30 The central piazza within the Furlong Centre is an inviting and relaxing space.
- 31 Brutally ugly buildings in an unsightly service yard at the Meeting House Centre.
- 32 The Furlong Centre service yard does not detract from views of the Parish Church.
- 33 The street space in Southampton Road is unattractive and visually unplanned.
- 34 The junction of Mansfield and Southampton Roads looks like an afterthought.
- 35 An old wall lines the footpath from Bickerley Common round into Strides Lane.
- 36 The footpath from Southampton Road to Pedlars Walk does not feel welcoming.
- 37 A gable of a new building lines up in the view between buildings in Market Place.
- 38 Bickerley Terrace (1882) retains much of its original character and detailing.
- 39 This old garden wall, still immensely impressive even stripped of its historic context.
- 40 The mid-19th century school is a substantial and dignified building.
- 41 It is difficult to believe that this scene is only a few yards from the Market Place.
- 42 The end of Bickerley Common looking north-west towards the Mill Stream.
- 43 The lime trees break up the mass of the Waitrose store seen from the east.
- 44 Tree planting in Blynkbonnie car park illustrates how to undertake serious landscaping.
- 45 The old pear tree in the Furlong Centre is regarded with much affection.
- 46 Planting in the north west corner of Market Place is small and ineffective.
- 47 This unusual view is well known to tens of thousands of motorists.
- 48 17 Market Place – an ugly building needing enhancement work to its elevation.

- 49 The Arcade Shopping Centre is a massive 'lump' in need of imaginative treatment.
- 50 29-33 Southampton Road. If redeveloped, buildings should also have a frontage to Meeting House Lane.