Mexborough Conservation Area
Appraisal

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Mexborough Conservation Area Appraisal

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Preface

The guidance contained in this document is provided to assist developers and the general public when submitting planning applications. It supplements and expands upon the policies of the Core Strategy of Doncaster Local Development Framework (LDF).

The LDF will ultimately contain both the strategic and the local planning policies necessary to guide development in Doncaster but for time being the saved policies of the UDP are used by the Council for development management purposes in conjunction with policies contained in the Core Strategy (see Appendix II). At the time of writing this appraisal, the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document is being developed, which when finalised will mean that all parts of the UDP will be superseded.

It is not possible however for the future LDF, as it was not previously possible for the UDP, to address in detail all the issues raised by the many types of development. This appraisal will be a material consideration to be taken into account when determining planning applications. Also included within the Appraisal are Management Proposals that will be considered for adoption by the Council as part of its approval processes.

It is hoped that this guidance will cover most eventualities, including all the main guidelines, which a prospective applicant should bear in mind when considering development proposals. The appraisal however is not intended to be wholly comprehensive and the failure to mention any particular building; feature or space should not be assumed to imply that they are not of significance. Advice is available from Doncaster Council’s Design and Conservation Team and you are advised to make early contact before carrying out any work within the conservation area.

The Design and Conservation Team would like to give special thanks to the Mexborough Heritage Society with regards to the sharing of their knowledge of the history and architecture of the area.
Part I – Appraisal

1. Introduction

A conservation area is an area “…of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”1

Conservation areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The Act has now been incorporated and expanded into the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides the statutory basis for planning control within conservation areas. This current Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to designate conservation areas (where appropriate), to review them from time to time, and to bring forward policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of such areas.

Before bringing forward policies and proposals for any conservation area it is important to define what its special historic or architectural character is. Government guidance contained in Planning Policy Statements 1 and 5 emphasises the need for the character and local distinctiveness of an area to be analysed and clearly defined in a written appraisal. English Heritage has set out in their 2011 guidance “Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management” a methodology for analysing this character.

Aerial photograph showing existing boundary of Mexborough Conservation Area

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1 As defined under S61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
This appraisal covers the Mexborough Conservation Area, which was originally designated on 8 June 2004. The appraisal follows the English Heritage guidance and aims to identify the special architectural, landscape and historic interest of Mexborough Conservation Area.

Mexborough is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Mechesburg and there are remains of a motte and bailey castle, which is a scheduled monument, within Castle Park about a mile to the east of the conservation area. Mexborough lies at the confluence of the Rivers Don and Dearne, and a market has reportedly been held here for 800 years. Relatively few buildings remain from pre - 1800 but what does lies close to the 12th Century Grade I Listed Church of St. John the Baptist, half a mile east of the conservation area. The settlement expanded rapidly in the Victorian period mainly as a colliery town, although other industries were also developed. The area that is now designated as a conservation area was developed at this time serving as part of the main retail area along Bank Street, a role it still serves today.

Building forms are mainly kept simple with civic buildings tending to be more elaborate. Buildings range in height from parades of single storey shops, to two and three storey terraces dotted with individual buildings of a similar scale. The architecture is mainly Victorian/early Edwardian clearly relating to a period of development. Buildings are mainly kept to the pavement edge along the main road. Sandstone was the traditional material but there is also some red brick. The principle roof materials are slate.

Within the conservation area there are no listed structures, although at a short distance to the south of the conservation area lies Mexborough Railway Station which is listed, and which is visible from the conservation area at the end of Station Road.

The special interest of the conservation area is as the Victorian/Edwardian extension of the historic town and its designation as a conservation area is due to its cohesive grouping of Social, Civic and Commercial buildings of this period. Whilst many of these buildings have experienced a change from their original use they still represent an important stage in the development of Mexborough.
2. Location

Mexborough is located approximately 7 miles west of Doncaster, almost equidistant from Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham, with major roads connecting Mexborough to these and beyond. Mexborough is situated on the northern slope of the River Don just before its confluence with the River Dearne to the east and has a population of nearly 15,000.

The conservation area itself is centred on Bank Street and is part of the Victorian expansion to the west of the original settlement. It is close to the railway station which is listed, although a dual carriageway separates the two. The conservation area is part of the retail centre of Mexborough, however this is mainly concentrated to the west on High Street.
3. Origins and development of the settlement

Mexborough is thought to have developed near the site of the old Ferry, which was until 1963, at the end of Ferry Boat Lane. This was the only place for miles around where the River Don was fordable and a settlement developed on its northern side.

Mexborough is located towards the north eastern end of the northern branch of the dyke known as the Roman Ridge or Roman Rig. The northern branch extended from Kimbermarsh to Roman Terrace, Mexborough and then along Wath Road to Dolcliffe Common. At this point the defensive earthwork met a natural fortification in the form of a cliff. The earthwork then appears again to the east of Mexborough in fields to the rear of the Clayfield Estate and to the north of Pastures Road. It then extends to the River Dearne. This series of earthworks is thought to have been built either by the Brigantian tribes in the 1st century AD, perhaps as a defence against the Roman invasion of Britain, or after the 5th century to defend the British kingdom of Elmet from the Angles.

The Don Valley became a natural boundary between warring parties in the Saxon period. Fortified places were established along the River Don which included Mexborough, as well as Conisbrough. The name of Mexborough comes from the Old English suffix burh meaning a fortified place with an Old English or Old Norse personal name, which may be Meke, Muik, Meoc, or Mjukr. Mexborough is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Mechesburg and there are remains of a motte and bailey castle, which is a scheduled monument, within Castle Hills Park about a mile to the east of the conservation area.
Mexborough lies at the confluence of the Rivers Don and Dearne, and a market has reportedly been held here for over 800 years with a charter granted by Henry II in 1177.

**Mexborough Market**

Prior to 1804 the market was held in the Green Yard which was on land to the west of the Ferry Boat Inn. In 1804 the market was then moved to ‘The Pleasure Ground which was situated at the junction of Swinton Road and High Street, close to the present day General Post Office. In 1870 it was yet again moved this time to the site of the Old Market Hall (now Wetherspoons).

When the Market Hall was under constructed, it was moved temporarily to the north side of Bank Street, where Montagu Chambers now stands. On the opening of the Market Hall, in 1880, the market was moved to a specially prepared area to its fore.

In 1968, after nearly a 100 years being held in and around the area of the Old Market Hall it moved again, this time due to the construction of Mexborough By-pass. It moved to a car park to the west of the Montagu Arms Public House. Here it stayed until 1974 when a new indoor and outdoor market were constructed in York Square, off High Street, Mexborough.

Relatively few buildings remain in Mexborough from pre - 1800 but what does lies close to the 12th Century Grade I Listed Church of St. John the Baptist half a mile east of the conservation area.

![Simple map showing some of the most significant elements influencing the development of Mexborough](image-url)
The River Don was made navigable in 1722 and was accompanied by an increase in river trade between Sheffield and the Humber. In 1839 the South Yorkshire Railway reached the extreme west of Mexborough just over the border at Swinton. In 1841 the new Conisbrough to Swinton Turnpike was built. In 1850 the previous railway was linked through to Doncaster with a station close to Mexborough Ferry. Later communication was further improved with the Sheffield to Hull line which brought the present station in 1871.

The settlement expanded rapidly in the Victorian period mainly as a colliery town, although other industries also developed which utilise the railway and canal links and local materials. The main social, civic and commercial activities of Mexborough began to be established in and around Bank Street, including the establishment of the market in this area from 1870 onwards, and this is the area that is now designated as a conservation area.

In the late 1960s/early 70s a by-pass was built through Mexborough which destroyed many of the old buildings in this area and separated, physically and visually the area now designated as a conservation area from the areas to the south including the historic centre of Mexborough around the church, as well as the area including the station, the canal and river sides.
4. Prevailing and former uses and the influence on the plan form and building types

Mexborough is a place where the focus is mainly on the street and the street frontage but due to its position on a slope, views of the roofscape are apparent when looking at the conservation area from higher ground to the north. Within the town centre, frontages tend to be to the back of footpath. There are a few pedestrian routes between buildings but many of these routes are not well frequented as these either lead to dead ends or to the open land to the side of the dual carriageway. The construction of this dual carriageway has also exposed the rear of properties along the south side of Bank Street and, together with the few gap sites that exists, weakens the overall townscape of Mexborough.

The conservation area is characterised by its continuing role from the mid 19th century as part of the retail area of Mexborough, with a predominance of Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Many of these are in the form of terraces with shops to the ground floor and residential accommodation above. As retail has moved out some of these ground floor units have become residential. There are also some single storey parades of shops. As with many Victorian places there are various banks, civic buildings chapels/churches that were developed at this time.
5. Archaeological significance and potential of the area

As noted previously the area is well away from the historic core of Mexborough, the latter having the motte and the church as its main features. The conservation area in its present form came into existence in the mid 19th century although there may have been some previous individual buildings. This may mean that important archaeology may currently be hidden and whose significance is unknown.

It is therefore advisable that in order to reduce the risk of encountering important archaeological remains late in any development process (which could involve unforeseen time and cost implications) - any development proposals for this area should be accompanied with a supporting archaeological desk based appraisal. This will determine whether there is a need for field evaluation prior to a planning application being devised, whether there is a need for an archaeological evaluation to be secured by planning condition or whether there is no further archaeological input required.
6. Architectural and historic qualities of the buildings

The conservation area contains buildings mainly dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods with some more modern buildings interspersed. Many are of sandstone and the form of most is fairly simple although most civic buildings are more decorative in their form and detail. They make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area and they are shown on Map 2 – Positive Features. Their contribution may not be of national significance and they are therefore not listed buildings but they do add to the distinctive character of the town.

Key unlisted buildings
Although there are no listed buildings in this conservation area there are many that make a positive impact on the conservation area. Some of these make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area and are considered to be key unlisted buildings.

Key unlisted buildings in Mexborough Conservation Area are:

- Mexborough Congregational Church, Garden Street
- Montagu Chambers, Bank Street
- Montagu Arms PH, Bank Street
- Old Market Hall, Market Place
- NatWest Bank, Bank Street
- Ex - Primitive Methodist Chapel now Bulls Eye, Bank Street
- Oriental Chambers, 65 Bank Street
- Spice Library, Bank Street
- The Majestic Suite, Bank Street
- The Red Lion PH, Bank Street
- The Royal Electric Theatre, Bank Street
Mexborough Congregational Church, Garden Street
The foundation stone was laid in 1866 and the chapel was opened in March 1867. It is in simple Gothic Revival style. It is in regularly coursed sandstone of a rugged appearance with Welsh slate roof. Set at higher level than Garden Street due to slope of the land up to the north.

A square tower of three storeys is attached to the south-west corner of the nave. It is buttressed on the ground floor and diminishes slightly in area to its top floor which presumably serves as a belfry. On the ground floor of the tower there is an arch-headed door within the right-hand return, reached by steps, with a lancet window to the front. On the first floor are smaller paired lancets with larger paired lancets on the second floor which are louvred. There is a stringcourse at the springing level of the head of the second floor lancet. The top of the tower is crenellated.

The nave is five bayed and on its street elevation, after the tower, there are tall single lancet windows on the second, fourth and fifth bays and on the third/central bay are paired lancets with a quatrefoil above surmounted by a gable. The nave also has buttresses marking the bays. This has on its gable facing west a large paired lancet window to the middle with a separate lancet either side. The roof is of Welsh slate with five bands of plain and diamond patterns.

At right angles and extending to the side of the nave and presenting a gable to the street is the former schoolroom which is set at a lower and its foundation stone was laid on 9th November 1868. This has on its gable a large
paired lancet window to the middle with a separate lancet either side lighting the main floor of the building with a roundel above. In front of the gable to the right is a forebuilding housing the entrance which is again reached by steps. The lower left hand has two separate lancet windows lighting the basement, which has a plainer entrance from the street. There is a buttress to the left-hand corner. On the left hand return of the Church Hall there are two paired lancet windows with two separate smaller lancets below each to the basement. There is a chimney stack at eaves level to the centre.

Montagu Chambers, Bank Street
This was built around 1920 and is of two storeys and nine bays. The upper level is in white faience and has a steeply pitched Welsh slate roof. There are shopfronts to the ground floor under a conspicuous modern canopy, the original was of glass and wrought iron. Some shop units retain much of their original elements, such as decorative shopfronts with elaborate transom lights and doors, and granite stall risers, which are further enhanced with attractively tiled entrances. Some shopfronts have been replaced with inappropriate modern ones and would greatly benefit having the original designs reinstated. All units are made less attractive by having external roller shutters.

On the first floor, there are semi-circular headed large windows to first, fourth, sixth and ninth bay with tall gables above, all having decorative motifs within their tops. The semi-circular tops of these windows are leaded and patterned
with some colour. One of the windows, on the second from the left, also has ‘Billiard Room’ and ‘Lounge’ in the glasswork.

There are square headed large windows to the other bays with curved pediment over the central bay, also with decorative motif, and balustrade above rest. All windows have decorative surrounds with large paneled divisions which within the top of the curved headed windows are leaded.

Montagu Arms PH, Bank Street
Built c.1861, this building occupies the corner from Bank Street to Station Road, which it curves around. It is of two storeys, mainly white painted brickwork which is rendered at low level with black painted dressings. It has rendering most notably on the ground floor of the Station Road elevation. The roof has been recovered with concrete tiles on most slopes although where it is curved this is still in the original clay plain tiles. Windows are vertically proportioned with well defined surrounds. Most windows are large paneled vertically sliding sash windows, although some, especially on the ground floor of Station Road frontage, have less appropriate top-hung casement replacements.

The main frontage is on to Bank Street and is of three bays. This was the first part of the pub to have been built with that to the corner and along Station Road being built later (possibly when Station Road came into existence). To the centre is the main entrance door within a circular headed surround. There is a canted bay window to either side of the door. The front window to the
bays is non-opening which is subdivided with a curved large paned to the lower division and two much smaller panes above. Directly above the ground floor openings are three first floor windows which have curved heads (which unlike all the other windows do not have cornices). These have small wrought-iron balconies to their sills, which are also on the first floor windows on the corner and first bay of the Station Road elevation. The sills are part of a stringcourse that continues through all elevations. Quoins are at either end of this element. There is a plinth that continues around the corner. At first floor ceiling level is a corniced stringcourse with a small parapet above. The latter raises above the central bay to form a panel in which the raised letters of ‘Montagu Arms’ are contained.

There is a curved pediment on the corner (within which the letters ‘Montagu Arms’ and an eagle are portrayed) which is directly above a paired window on first floor and triple window on ground floor. The latter, like the window to its left and the ground floor windows of the Station Road elevation, has tiled panels below. There is a first floor window above the left-hand window. To the right is another window that originally was a doorway, which now has an unfortunate looking top-hung casement.

The elevation to Station Road is now of five bays. The right-handmost bay has a doorway with a circular arched surround, the left-handmost is also a doorway and due to the slope down Station Road is set at a lower level and has a square head with a narrow window to its right-hand side. There is ‘Main Entrance’ etched in fanlight glass. The windows to the second to left and middle bay appear to have been fore-shortened at some time. Above all ground floor openings are corresponding first floor ones. The right hand end of this element is quoined the same as on the main frontage to Bank Street but there is none to the left-hand end. The building has been foreshorted with part of it being demolished, its previous appearance can be seen in the photograph below. The plinth of the Bank Street and the curved corner continues on this elevation as a low level stringcourse with a lower plinth following the slope.
Old Market Hall, Market Place
Constructed by G. H. Smith in 1880 as an indoor market and town hall it is now a public house. The building is freestanding and is made up of two elements. One is of two storeys the other is single storey and both are painted brickwork with stone features. The two storied element fronts onto Market Street and on the lower floor market business was conducted with the upper floor having the Council Chamber and a Court Room.

It is irregular in plan with its entrance on the corner of Market Place and Station Road. The wide doorway has semi-circular top and elaborate surround. It is positioned against the extreme left of its elevation with a window to its right, with another window directly above. On the other three elevations the windows are irregularly spaced but tend to symmetrical within their individual elevations, with ground and first floor windows aligning. All windows are large paned sliding timber sashes with stone surrounds. There is a plinth that continues through at the same level to the one storey element, and there is also a stringcourse at window sill level on both storeys. To the top is a projecting stringcourse with cornice above with a slight parapet. The building originally had a shallow pitched slate roof which was not visible from the ground and has been recently replaced with a flat roof but this has not affected its overall public appearance.

The large single storeyed element once housed the market. It is nine bayed on its longest length and five bayed on its shortest and has a double pitched
roof which is hipped at its ends. It is windowless on Station Road and towards the dual-carriageway and has brick piers marking its bays with doorways centrally placed within elaborate surrounds with pediment above, and in which the date of 1880 is inscribed. Along the bottom is a plinth which on the Station Road elevation has windows. The elevation facing the adjoining car park is similar but has a full height basement and has had additional doorways added to ground floor which now lead on to an external terrace which was added at the same time.

**NatWest Bank, Bank Street**

The building has a date stone of 1874 but was not actually completed until the year after. It was built for the Sheffield Banking Company (SBC) whose initials appear on the portico. The building is located on a narrow triangular site between Bank Street and Market Street, and fronts on to Station Road. It is in a neo-Jacobean style.

It is of two storeys built in red brick in English bond with sandstone dressings and Welsh slate roof, the latter slightly hidden by a balustraded parapet. Windows are large paned metal casements set in stone mullions, which have flat brick arches on the front and rear elevations. The frontage on to Station Road is narrow and is curved to its corners. The entrance in the centre of the frontage is elaborate with a single storey pedimented vestibule. There are railings on the right hand side on to Market Place. At roof level on the frontage is another pediment housing a clock.
Ex - Primitive Methodist Chapel – now Bulls Eye, Bank Street
The building was originally built as a Primitive Methodist Chapel but is now used as a retail unit. The building is in regularly coursed smooth faced sandstone with concrete tiles now on the roof but it is likely to have been originally roofed in Welsh slates. It is of two storeys with a gabled frontage, the central part of which is slightly projecting. The corners and the slight projection are marked by quoins. It is set slightly back from the pavement and its ground floor is set at a higher level. Originally there were central steps up to the entrance level but those to the left have been replaced with a ramp. A pair of doorways with curved heads forms the entrance with three arched window openings to first floor with oculus above. Side bays have arched window openings to ground floor and semi-circular headed window openings directly above to first. All window openings to frontage are blocked in.
Oriental Chambers, 65 Bank Street
Built in 1913, this building is unusual on the streetscene as it is gable fronted. It is two storeys of sandstone to the upper floor with a slate roof. On the ground floor is artificial stone, perhaps added in the 1950s or 60s. There is evidence that the ground floor was stone faced originally being bonded into the brickwork sides. On the left-hand side of the frontage is its shopfront but this is obscured by an inappropriate external roller shutter. To its right is a wide doorway with a pair of dark painted four panelled timber doors under a leaded fanlight. A thin stringcourse is at first floor level.

The upper part of the buildings is in thinly course sandstone with a rugged appearance with dressing in smooth sandstone. The first floor window is positioned centrally. It is tripartite under an ogee shaped cornice within which the date of 1913 is inscribed. Below the projecting sill is a smooth stringcourse with raised carved letters of ‘Oriental Chambers’. The gable has a coping and there is a mock arrow/ventilation slot within its top.
The old library – now Spice Library, Bank Street
Has a date stone of 1905 and was opened on 26th May 1906 as Mexborough Library, the building is now an Indian restaurant. It has a single storey frontage with a gabled building behind which due to the slope is taller to the rear. It is in red brick with sandstone dressings with Welsh slate on the pitched element of the roof. The building is set on the pavement edge.

The frontage is of five bays with a central doorway reached by steps set in semi-circular headed recess within a projecting surround with decorative cornice. The building is slightly marred by its current signage, which appears to be crammed in. The top is surmounted with a panel carved with 'Free Library' with curved cornice above. Three narrow windows are set between columns in second and fourth bays with pilasters with balls at their top marking the division to the end bays in which are single windows. All windows are modern chunky replacements but recently simpler windows have been approved matching the recently installed front door. Arched lunettes to basement are masked by unfortunate vinyl cladding which detracts from the architecture.
The Old Majestic Cinema – now a party venue/snooker hall, Bank Street
Built in 1929 as a cinema the building is now a function suite and snooker club. It is in red brick with painted faience dressings. It has a two storey flat topped frontage to Bank Street, with a pitched roof rear taller offshot due to the slope. The building is set back from the pavement edge with the central element projecting forward housing the main entrance into the building. Front doors and canopy are later unfortunate replacements.

The central projection is edged with quoins to corners and is surmounted with a pediment at eaves level in which is a recessed panel. Currently there is a large sign at first floor level which could be obscuring any remaining detailing behind but on old photographs of the building there was a stone balustrade (see below). A continuous cornice stretches along all of frontage. There are secondary doors which are centrally placed within the recessed frontages either side of the central projection. These doorways have surrounds which have decorative panels above.

[Images of the Majestic Cinema and old photographs]
**The Red Lion PH, Bank Street**

The present Red Lion building is mainly from the Victorian period (c.1850), although the side building looks of an earlier Georgian date. The main element is of two tall storeys to the front with three to back, due to the sloping site. From early photos it appears to be constructed of ashlar stone which has later been rendered and painted white. It is elaborated with curved headed window openings and doorway to the ground floor. On both floors all windows/doorway have surrounds, as well as recessed panels on ground floor and stringcourse to first floor and cornice at eaves level. The side building is smaller in scale, but is still two storeys to the front and three to the rear and its architecture is simpler with only the doorway having a surround. The side building is however still considered to add to the interest of the main building.

Several windows are currently boarded up on the property but underneath there were curved headed small paned fixed windows to the ground floor of the main building, which appears to be the original windows of the building. Elsewhere there are modern casement windows to the upper floor of the main building and to all windows of the side building. The upper windows of the main building are most likely to have been similar in appearance to the ground, but may have been vertically sliding sashes and been three over three. The side building is likely to have also been sliding sash but as it is older may have been six over six.

All of the premises has been reroofed at some stage in concrete tiles which are unsympathetic to the appearance of the building, and Welsh slate would have been most likely to have been originally used. The roof is hipped on all sides and to its centre is a substantial stone chimney stack. The rear of the building has had the adjoining buildings demolished when presumably the nearby dual carriageway/bypass was built. There is also a flight of wide steps to the east of the building and to the west is the former beer garden, which is on two levels, and a car park.
The Royal Electric Theatre, Bank Street
Originally built in the mid-Nineteenth century as a Police Station and Parish Lock-up, in 1910/11 it was partially demolished and incorporated into what was to become The Royal Electric Theatre. It is now a Chinese restaurant and is in coursed sandstone with concrete tiled roof. It is against the back edge of the pavement and is of two storeys and of eight bays. The most striking feature of the building is an applied plaster plaque (or cartouche) located over the main door which is situated in the third bay from the left.

In 2004 the Cinema Theatre association stated that We believe the large ‘cartouche’ on the street façade to be a rarity nationally. Although poorly restored in the recent past and painted in crass and incorrect colours for its date, 1911, this feature is a fine example of Edwardian baroque design. Most interesting is its shear scale – it is difficult to think of a comparable sign of this type on an Edwardian Cinema in Britain”. The external roller shutter over the doorway further mars the building.

To the left of the doorway and plaque is a door, set in a surround and to the left-hand most bay is a window opening, again with in a surround which is a side hung casement window. On the first floor directly above these two ground floor openings are small paned top hung casements with only a stone lintel and which are part of relatively recent alterations in the late 1980s.

The five right-hand most bays appear to originally have had a symmetrical appearance with a circular headed archway on the ground floor at the centre.
This archway, as well as other openings, have been altered with its lower part filled in. Windows openings either side have been completely filled in and the window of the fifth bay from the right has been foreshortened and houses a top hung casement window. There is a wide doorway with frame within the right-hand most bay. On the first floor there are further top-hung casements over all existing and previous openings apart from above the central archway which is blank. All windows are likely to have been originally vertically sliding sashes rather than casements as now existing. The roof is likely to have been originally Welsh slate. On the roof is a long raised vent. Modern vents are less discrete.

To the left is a single storey building which has moulded glazed brick columns to either side. The modern shopfront infill and concrete tiled roof however are not of interest and more sympathetic replacements would be welcome.

Other Positive Buildings
As well as the above there are also many other buildings that make a positive contribution to the area and which are shown on Map 2 – Positive Features and feature materials and details outlined in the next section. Unfortunately many have had inappropriate extensions and/or other alterations and this is discussed later in section 10. One of these is the Mezza.
Mezza was originally built as a chapel and from the rear this can be clearly seen. It has sandstone walls, red clay plain tiled roof and curved headed window openings. Its form and appearance is therefore seen as positive and can be seen in the old photograph below. Unfortunately the front has suffered from previous alterations which do little to enhance the building. The use of two different applied treatments (render and brick) and different windows shapes to the original have no regard to its historic form and detract from both the building and the conservation area. However, with some sensitive works this building would be better revealed as a significant heritage asset and be potentially a key building in the streetscape.

Mezza is the building to the extreme right with the portico
7. Traditional building materials and local details

The majority of the buildings in Mexborough Conservation Area are terraces which are of two and three storeys. There are also some individual buildings which are generally two storey and also parades of single storey shops. There is a limited palette of materials, with sandstone and Welsh slates predominating. There are a few properties which are of red brick with stone dressings. The original roofing material of natural slates has in certain cases been replaced with concrete pantiles. The use of concrete tiles is having a negative impact on the area and is discussed later. Buildings are mostly set to the rear of or close to the pavement edge, however some do have some grandeur by being placed behind forecourts.

The details of the terraces are similar. Buildings mainly have a simple form, with plain frontages that are of narrow span with fairly steep roof (about 35-45 degrees). Some buildings have bay windows and window openings have stone surrounds that are often paired. Windows are vertically proportioned and would have been originally large paned timber sash windows. Doors would have been four panelled. Unfortunately many of the original panelled doors and vertically sliding sash windows have been lost and which again is considered to have a negative impact (see Section 10).
Civic buildings, banks and prestigious commercial premises, and recreational/entertainment buildings are more decorative and as such stand out in the streetscene. Many of these can be found in the section on Key Unlisted Buildings.

Public Realm
Within a conservation area the public realm contains features that add to the local distinctiveness of the area. These can include street furniture and the materials in pavements. Some of these features may be more prominent than others, whilst some may not be original but still add to the character of the area.

Example of setts within roadscape

Pavement pipes give local distinctiveness to pavements
Although now lacking a purpose these steps add to the local character.

These bollards add interest to the streetscape.
This street lighting junction box has been commemorated by the local community due to its link to their history and adds to the streetscape. The plaque commemorates William Blount who, by laying cables, brought electricity to Mexborough in the 1920s.

When changes are proposed to the public realm the above elements should be used to guide the choice of materials and design.
8. Character and relationship of the spaces in the area

Open spaces, such as gardens, car parks and playing fields can contribute to the Conservation Area as much as the buildings. Trees and green spaces are dealt with in Chapter 9 of this document and are indicated on Map 2 at the rear of this appraisal.

There are few open spaces within Mexborough Conservation Area. Those that do exist are sites of former buildings and now are occupied by formal and informal car parks, and scrubland. Bank Street is set out as a relatively broad street which helps to give a sense of grandeur to the street. The feeling of enclosure and of an inward facing character is most prominent in establishing a strong streetscape, especially on Bank Street. Gap sites, which are often car parking, weaken this and are part of a reason why these can often be seen as having a negative contribution to the conservation area (see also Section 10 – Negative Features). Due to the typography of the area there are views of the roofs from the higher grounds to the north and also outward views from Bank Street towards the countryside to the south which is heightened when these are as glimpses through built up frontages.

Strong building lines give a sense of enclosure to the streetscape on Bank Street
9. Green Spaces and Trees

There are few trees within the conservation area which as the conservation area is urban is not surprising. Those that do exist appear to be accidental and are usually self sets within cleared sites,

The main area of green space is to the side of the dual carriageway which is well treed but in form seems to be an unplanned space. The frontage of Bank Street Church uses the site of the former nave as a formal green area on the approach to the church.

In recognition of the special contribution that trees can make to the character and appearance of conservation areas, they are afforded a level of protection similar to that of a Tree Preservation Order. Doncaster Council must be notified in writing 6 weeks before any work is carried out so that it has opportunity to assess whether the proposed work will harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. Any person removing or pruning a tree within a conservation area, without first giving the statutory notification, is guilty of a criminal offence and liable on summary conviction to a heavy fine.
10. **Negative features**

Negative features are described in the English Heritage guidance as elements that detract from the special character of the area. In terms of the Mexborough Conservation Area, there are fortunately only a few negative features, these are shown on Map 3 as well as outlined below.

**Hire and Sales, 46a/b Bank Street**
This building dates from the 1980s and has a suburban feel to it. Both its form and its material are inappropriate due to the deep single storey front projection, the horizontal proportioned openings and the use of artificial stone and concrete tiles.

![Image of Hire and Sales, 46a/b Bank Street](image-url)

**Stacey House, Bank Street**
Built in the 1990s this building by being set behind its car park gives little enclosure to the street. The square windows and large areas of blank walling give the building a bland appearance and whilst there has been some attempt to give interest by the use of a contrasting brick stringcourse this is not appropriate and decorative bricks and/or stone detailing, such as surrounds to the openings, would have been more appropriate. The use of concrete tiles further detracts.
Yorkshire Bank, 6a High Street
Built in the 1960s the bank has a modern appearance at odds with its neighbours due to its flat roof, white banding, horizontal windows, and large area of solid masonry using a mix of uncharacteristic purple bricks and white render.

As well as buildings other features can make significant detrimental impacts which are as follows: -
By-pass
As mentioned previously the bypass cuts Mexborough in half and creates a psychological barrier. The rears of historic buildings have also become much more visible than would have been originally intended.

Flyover
As the bridge is elevated to cross over the adjoining dual carriageway it is a dominant structure in the middle of the conservation area. It does not relate well to the human scale of the conservation area and is municipal in its design.
Car Parks
There are a few private car parks serving some of the shops and residences which depending on their prominence can have a negative impact, others are neutral (see later section on ‘Neutral Features’). Examples are the car parks to the eastern end of Bank Street, that at the junction of the flyover and Bank Street, and those to the Edwardian Bedding, Stacey House and The Red Lion.

Extensions to Frontages
Some buildings that have had shops on their ground floor have projections to their frontages. They often use poor detailing and materials that don’t match the original building. This is further worsened when the ground floor has become residential and more domestic shaped window openings created with a horizontal proportion rather than vertical of the original openings.
**Inappropriate Repair and Replacement**
Where maintenance has been carried out this is often in unsympathetic materials and design. The loss of original shop fronts, doors and windows and their replacements in modern material and with limited detailing is particularly noticeable as is the use of external roller shutters. In addition poor quality street furniture, lighting and signage are all factors that detract from the town.

**Poor Edge Condition**
Where car parks and gap sites exist they often have poor boundaries edges and which can again give poor townscape and a hostile appearance. The use of sandstone boundary walls and/or comprehensive landscape/trees can help.
11. Neutral features

Neutral features are described as areas that neither enhance nor detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. In terms of the buildings these can be seen to fall into the following categories: -

**Junior Pettits, 2 High Street**
The building is of relatively recent construction and is flat roofed with large windows. Its impact however in the streetscape is fairly minor. Permission has been granted for a more appropriate elevational treatment but this has yet to be implemented.

![Junior Pettits, 2 High Street](image)

**Moorhouse Opticians, 55 Bank Street**
This is a single storey flat roof building that is an alien form in the conservation area but by its size has a relatively minor impact. However due to its size it creates a gap in the streetscape and there may be scope for a taller building subject to its design respecting the traditional building materials and local details as outlined in Section 7.
Bank Street Methodist Church
The front parts of the church were demolished in 1964 and the previous ‘church hall’ has been converted to form the new church. The newly created frontage is very plain and is in render and artificial stone with uPVC windows. The impact of the building is mitigated however by it being set back and so does not intrude on the general street scene. In addition part of the side walls retain original elements, use sandstone and are well detailed. There is a rear extension which is unsympathetic and is in concrete brickwork.
Edwardian Bedding Company
The frontage building is flat roofed single storey with corrugated pitched warehouse to the rear and apart from the decorative cornice detail of the façade now contributes little to the conservation area. The set back of the building and its external roller shutters further detract from the character of the area.

It was originally constructed after the First World War for Frank Harrison, as one of the first purpose built car sales outlets in the area. It was built by G.H. Smith in the Art Deco style which was so popular at the time. Over the years the façade has undergone change with the sleek ornamentation, which once stood to both sides of the roof, above the windows and above the centre, being removed. It still remains an important remainder of the history of the motor car in the area, which if its frontage restored would better reveal its significance.
Disused Toilets
This building uses modern bricks and profiled steel sheets for its roof, both of which are out of character with the area. The building is however only one storey in height and is set down from Bank Street so it has minimal impact on the conservation area.

Market Stalls
These stalls have a modern appearance with a shallow mono-pitched roof but by being only of single storey construction again have minimal impact. Their use also reflects the original use of the area as a market.
Former Beer Garden to Red Lion, Bank Street
The walls are a mixture of modern and old engineering bricks with concrete paving, which due to the overall unkempt condition has an unattractive appearance. However, this area has minimal impact on views within and into the conservation area and therefore is not that significant.

Car Parks
Car parks as previously mentioned, can have a negative impact but in less exposed and sensitive sites can be considered neutral. These include the car parks off Dolcliffe Road and off Market Street.
12. Condition of Buildings

Apart from The Red Lion which has been discussed previously the generally condition of buildings is good. However, as noted in Section 10 – Negative Features many repairs, replacements and alterations have not been carried out in a sympathetic manner to the host building and give the area a tired appearance.

13. Problems, Pressures and Capacity for Change

Mexborough has a rich history and its built form has in part been spoilt by previous redevelopment. However, many old buildings of character still exist that help to give the area a distinctive character, but unfortunately sometimes they are seen as liabilities with essential maintenance and repairs being avoided or carried out unsympathetically. This in the long-term could lead for a call to remove the buildings if they become dilapidated and are viewed as eyesores. However these buildings are part of the history of the area and should be valued for their contribution and their restoration promoted. They are also important in that they are embedded with key characteristics of the area and can therefore provide the inspiration for new design that builds on the distinct nature of Mexborough.

With the need to ‘improve’ properties, this has often resulted in the loss of original features on historic properties through the introduction of uPVC windows and concrete tiles to roofs that are often detrimental to both the building and the surrounding area. Signage can also give a cheap appearance if not designed to complement the area. The desire to protect shops has led to the use of external roller shutters that has a deadening impact on the area and gives a hostile appearance to the area which serves to deter rather than attract shoppers, residents and visitors.

Many of the retail units are being converted to residential and the original ground floor frontage replaced. This can appear odd if the design is not sympathetic to the original building.

The dual carriageway splits the conservation area and the rest of the retail centre from the old centre of Mexborough based around the church, and river/canalside and railway. This major road acts as a physical and psychological barrier and has a major negative impact on the area. Its construction has also revealed the unattractive backs of properties and forms an inappropriate border to the Town Centre.

Due to a combination of the factors above, at the time of writing, this conservation area is considered to be a ‘Conservation Area at Risk’ in the list compiled by English Heritage.
14. Suggested Boundary Changes

The conservation area was recently designated in 2004. Its boundary is tightly drawn around the buildings that make up Bank Street where there are the majority of the significant buildings that make up the Victorian/Edwardian expansion of Mexborough. There have been no major changes in or near to the conservation area since its designation. There is therefore considered to be no reason to alter the current boundary.
15. Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of Mexborough Conservation Area is due to:

- On northern slope of River Don
- Rapid Victorian expansion due to industrial developments
- Establishment of Market Place in Victorian period
- Architecture is mainly Victorian/early Edwardian
- Cohesive grouping of Social, Civic and Commercial buildings of Victorian/Edwardian period that are elaborate in their form and design
- Simple two/three storey terraces and single storey parades of shops
- Generally buildings to back of pavement or slight set back
- Limited range of materials
  - Sandstone mainly for walls, although occasionally there are brick premises. Render use is rare.
  - Natural Welsh slates for roofs
Part II – Management Proposals

16. Management Proposals

Under Section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Borough Council is required to periodically review its conservation areas and to publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

The purpose of the Management Proposals is to describe mid to long-term strategies for preserving and enhancing the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Management Proposals set out the actions needed to address the issues raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The Proposals document recommends both the provision of good practice guidance information to clarify the existing powers, and proposes increased local authority controls within the area. This includes recommendations for further work required for their implementation.

It is likely that most, if not all, of the actions itemised in ‘Recommendations’ will have to be co-ordinated by Doncaster Council possibly helped by funding from outside sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund or English Heritage. It is accepted that, of necessity, actions will all need to be prioritised according to the availability of resources and it may not be possible to achieve all those scheduled.
Recommendations

The Management Proposals recommend that:

**General**

1. The council should use ‘Mexborough Conservation Area Appraisal Part 1: Appraisal’ as a material consideration in determining planning applications.


3. The conservation area boundaries should remain as existing as recommended in Section 14.

4. There is commitment to a five yearly review of the management of the conservation area.

**Development Management**

5. The council should actively promote the protection of key unlisted and positive buildings in the conservation area. The council would be unlikely to grant consent for the demolition of key unlisted or positive buildings, whereas depending on the merits of proposed replacements, buildings that are neutral could be considered for demolition, and demolition would be positively welcomed for negative buildings.

6. The council should undertake a heritage survey on all key buildings in the conservation area to ascertain the rate of survival of original elements that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area, such as roof coverings, windows and doors.
7. The council should ensure that development within the conservation area complements the size and scale of the existing traditional buildings, and respect the overall historic nature of this conservation area.

**Maintenance and improvements**

8. The council should seek, with its partners, the implementation of grant scheme(s) to maintain and improve the historic buildings, features and spaces within the conservation area. This will be linked to Doncaster Council’s Heritage at Risk Strategy.

9. The council should assess tree cover in the area and produce a strategy for the management of trees and other landscape features within the conservation area.

10. The council should work interdepartmentally and with other bodies to ensure that any works to the public realm respect the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

**Increasing awareness and understanding**

11. The council should ensure that there is the preparation and formal adoption of guidance explaining conservation policy and good practice and its promotion. Such guidance should include:

   - shopfront, signage and security
   - sympathetic repair and alterations to historic buildings
   - guidelines for modern development

12. The council should ensure that the conservation area links into both the Strategic and Local Green Infrastructures routes and policies. Green Infrastructures are a way of linking heritage, ecology and recreational assets so as to form a network of spaces, and as such, conservation areas are seen as an important contributor.
Appendix I

Useful Information & Contact Details

Sources of Information

Design and Conservation Team
Development
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
Colonnades House, Duke Street, Doncaster, DN1 1ER
Telephone: 01302 734922
E-mail: peter.lamb@doncaster.gov.uk
Website: www.doncaster.gov.uk/planning

Local History Library
Reference Library
Central Library
Waterdale
Doncaster DN1 3JE
Telephone: 01302 734320
E-mail: reference.library@doncaster.gov.uk
Website: www.doncaster.gov.uk

Doncaster Civic Trust
43 Ellers Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, DN4 7DY
E-mail: mail@doncastercivictrust.org.uk

English Heritage - Yorkshire and the Humber Region
37 Tanner Row
York Y01 6WP
Telephone: 01904 601 901
Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Doncaster Archives
King Edward Road
Balby
Doncaster DN4 0NA
Telephone: 01302 859811
E-mail: doncaster.archives@doncaster.gov.uk
Website: www.doncaster.gov.uk

Society for the protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY
Telephone: 020 7377 1644
E-mail: info@spab.org.uk
Website: www.spab.org.uk/

Mexborough & District Heritage Society
Mexborough Library & CSC, John Street, Mexborough S64 9HS
Tel. No. 01709 582037
E-mail: j rashby@hotmail.co.uk
Website: http://www.mexboroughheritage.co.uk/

South Yorkshire Archaeology Services
Howden House
1 Union Street
Sheffield S1 2SH
Telephone: 0114 2736354 / 2736428
E-mail: syorks.archservice@sheffield.gov.uk
Website: www.sheffield.gov.uk

Mexborough & District Heritage Society
Mexborough Library & CSC, John Street, Mexborough S64 9HS
Tel. No. 01709 582037
E-mail: j rashby@hotmail.co.uk
Website: http://www.mexboroughheritage.co.uk/

The Victorian Society (South Yorkshire Group)
Graham Hague,
39 Cobden View Road
Sheffield S10 1HP
Telephone: 0114 268 6729
E-mail: admin@victoriansociety.org.uk
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Curry, R. Let’s go to the Pictures, Doncaster Library Services

English Heritage (2011) Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management

Goodall, Armitage C. (1913) Place-names of South-West Yorkshire; that is, of so much of the West Riding as lies south of the Aire from Keighley onwards. Cambridge: University Press


http://www.brigantesnation.com/SiteResearch/Iron%20Age/RomanRig/RomanRig.htm

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aezins//kepn.php

http://www.pastscape.org.uk

http://www.sytimescapes.org.uk
Appendix II

Selective Policies of Doncaster Local Development Framework and Doncaster Unitary Development Plan

Doncaster Local Development Framework - Core Strategy

CS 2  Growth and Regeneration Strategy
CS 7  Retail and Town Centres
CS 10 Housing requirement, land supply and phasing
CS 11 Housing renewal and Regeneration
CS 14 Design and Sustainable Construction
CS 15 Valuing our Historic Environment
CS 16 Valuing our Natural Environment

Saved Policies of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan

ENV 21 Protection of trees
ENV 25 Conservation Areas
ENV 26 Demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas
ENV 36 Archaeological evaluation of sites
ENV 37 Development affecting Archaeological sites
ENV 38 Protection of sites from development
ENV 53 Scale and appearance of new dwellings
ENV 54 Alterations and extensions
ENV 59 Protection of trees on development sites
PH9-PH12 Residential Policy Areas
PH16&17 Priority Residential Policy Areas
Appendix III

Community involvement

Involving the community (and raising public awareness) has been part of the appraisal process. This has been undertaken by:

- Advertising of the Mexborough Conservation Area Appraisal on the Council’s web-site in advance of its draft publication
- The draft appraisal was passed to Mexborough and District Heritage Society, South Yorkshire Archaeology Service, Neighbourhood Managers, Doncaster Civic Trust and Development Management for comments.
- A handout was delivered in February 2012 to 5-6,000 Mexborough households in advance of the consultation advertising that it would be forthcoming and offering to contact anyone who wanted to be kept informed
- As a result of the handout an article appeared in the local paper which also helped promote the upcoming consultation event
- The forthcoming consultation was advertised on Doncaster Planning’s facebook and twitter pages
- On 19 April 2012 another article appeared in Dearne Valley Weekender promoting an introduction on 24 April 2012 and upcoming talk of 22 May 2012 to Mexborough and District Heritage Society.
- On 24 April 2012 introduction given to Mexborough and District Society in advance of next months presentation
- An e-mail was sent on 9 May 2012 to the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee and Local Ward Members, informing them of the appraisal, the forthcoming consultation and welcoming comments
- Site notices were erected on 11 May 2012 in and around Mexborough Conservation Area, advertising the consultation of the appraisal and asking for comments. Copies of the appraisal were also made available at Mexborough and Doncaster Central Libraries, as well as at the reception of Planning, again with notices welcoming comments
- The Consultation Period officially started from 14 May to 27 June 2012
- The appraisal was made available on the Council’s website on 14 May 2012 welcoming comments
- A public notice was placed in the Doncaster Star on 17 May 2012 advertising the forthcoming start of the consultation period for the draft appraisal and asking for comments
- A talk was held at the George and Dragon PH on the 22 May 2012 about Mexborough Conservation Area and explaining what conservation area designation means
- As a result of an enquiry from an attendant at the talk a questionnaire was compiled. This was made available on 29 May 2012 at
Mexborough Library, the reception of Planning, and was also available on-line.

- A drop-in event took place on 8 June 2012 at Mexborough Library.

Comments

As a result of the initial handout three people asked to be kept informed when the draft appraisal was available to be read. One queried how conservation areas are determined, as the listed railway station was not included as neither was Church Street. It was pointed out that the latter has several buildings that pre-date those in the conservation area including the Church of St. John the Baptist.

Mexborough and District Heritage provided extensive comments on the history of Mexborough and its buildings, as well as providing numerous old photographs.

Doncaster Civic Trust also assisted with the buildings' histories, as well as their descriptions.

Three questionnaires were also completed and returned, which generally supported the appraisal and the management proposals, but mentioned that other buildings of interest should be incorporated, including the Old Bank in Post Office Square, as well as buildings on Main Street and Church Street. Comments were also received on including buildings to rear of Mexborough Congregational Church and the allotments next door. It was also mentioned that internal features should be preserved.

Responses and Amendments

Before the consultation period commenced interested parties were informed, including those members of the public that showed an interest after the initial handout.

The appraisal has been amended, with revised history, building descriptions and old photographs being incorporated in light of comments mentioned above.

Within Mexborough the area that is designated a conservation area is felt to have a specific character, which is due to the cohesive grouping of Social, Civic and Commercial buildings of the Victorian/Edwardian period in and around Bank Street.

The conservation area is considered to have a distinct boundary formed by the dual-carriageway which separates it from the land to the south. The railway station is felt to be remote from the conservation area due to the bypass and areas of open land between the two, and this is why the conservation area does not extend to include the listed station.
buildings do not have to be in conservation areas and conservation areas do not have to include listed buildings. Extending Mexborough Conservation Area to include the station would weaken the character of the overall conservation area by needing to include the land in between which is mostly of little interest (conservation areas should be about the general ambience of an area and therefore should avoid including long stretches of roads and streets without the buildings and features that front them). In addition conservation areas should have a rationale to their boundaries and use wherever possible distinct features to demark them which the by-pass currently does.

Similarly, there are several buildings on Main Street/High Street which are of interest but these are separated from the current conservation area by modern developments and other buildings which have little architectural merit and therefore the overall character of these areas are felt to not be of enough quality to be designated as part of a conservation area.

With regard Church Street, although containing some historic and interesting buildings these are unfortunately scattered amongst many other buildings that are of little merit and therefore overall the character of the area is weak and why a conservation area has not been designated here. This does not mean that individual buildings are not of interest and in fact the Church of St. John the Baptist is Grade I listed.

The buildings behind the Congregational Church are considered to be of insufficient merit, and although the allotments could enhance the setting of the church, presently there would not be enough to justify the expansion of the conservation area in this direction. However, if any development was to be proposed in this area, this would have to be assessed as to whether it respected the setting of the church and the adjoining conservation area.

In the future we hope to identify buildings of local interest in Mexborough and the other buildings mentioned as part of this community involvement outside the conservation area will be considered as part of this. A wider study of Mexborough Town Centre may also be worth developing with character areas identified that could then be used to give guidance on planning applications however this is outside the remit of this appraisal.

Unless buildings are listed there is no protection under planning legislation for the interiors of buildings.