

**BUILDINGS AT RISK (BAR) REGISTER 2004**  
(Report by Planning Policy Manager)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Present the 2004 Edition of the Huntingdonshire Buildings at Risk Register
- Provide a brief update on the condition of Listed Buildings at Risk in the District through conveying the key findings of the 2003 re-survey; and
- Introduce future strategies to be adopted when dealing with Buildings at Risk in Huntingdonshire and seek the cabinet's endorsement of the proposed approach.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 In accordance with Policy En4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan the District Council undertakes the publication of the Buildings at Risk Register. This document provides a publicly accessible report of the condition of Listed Buildings within Huntingdonshire. The 2004 Register is the third edition of the Register with earlier ones having been published in 2000 and 2001.

2.1.1 It is important that the condition of Listed Buildings within the District is monitored to ensure that the owners of problem buildings are offered professional advice and support from the Local Planning Authority at the appropriate time.

**3. THE BUILDINGS AT RISK INITIATIVE 2001 - 2003**

3.1 A copy of the 2004 Buildings at Risk Register will be made available for review within the planning department. The foundation of the register is the Buildings at Risk Management Database. The database record and individual building files are systematically updated as new information on a building's situation is obtained.

3.2 Over the last year a comprehensive re-survey of all buildings categorised as being at risk in Huntingdonshire in 2001 or earlier has been undertaken. Such a full survey had not been undertaken since 1998 and was needed in order to provide an accurate statement on the condition of built environment within the District. Whilst the condition of Category 1 and 2 Buildings had been re-assessed strategically on a biennial basis since 1998, due to limited resources the condition of buildings included in Categories 3-6 had previously only been assessed on a sporadic basis. The 2004 statistics detailed in this report and the published register therefore reflect a higher number of changes to the register than were seen in the 2001 Register or would have been expected to have occurred had the recent full re-survey not have been undertaken.

3.3 The comprehensive re-survey has informed and/or identified:-

- Risk Categories for each building at risk that are reflective of the level of resources it would be appropriate for the District Council to consider allocating in the interests of securing a buildings future repair (this information is presented within the published register).
- Those buildings 'at risk' where offers of District Council Financial Assistance under the Section 57 Historic Building Grant Scheme could achieve

significant benefit by helping to secure and encourage the necessary repair works or surveys needed to inform repair works.

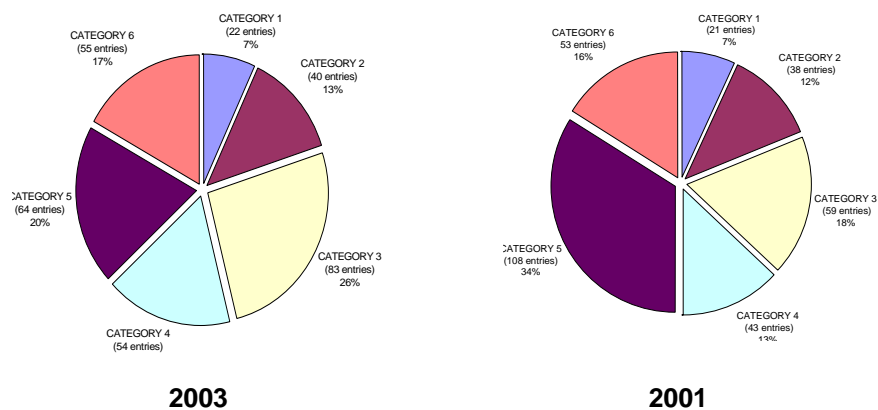
- Those buildings 'at risk' where the use of statutory powers, detailed further in Section 5 of the Register, may be appropriate to secure the future of a 'Building at Risk'
- Potential options for the beneficial re-use of redundant buildings that are compatible with Planning Policies and could be discussed with owners.
- The types of proactive work that could be undertaken by the Local Authority, such as the provision of education on the importance of maintenance, to ensure that owners of listed buildings or particular building types could be encouraged to maintain their buildings properly and do not allow them to deteriorate to the point where they become at risk.

#### 4. THE RESULTS OF THE 2003 BUILDINGS AT RISK RE-SURVEY

A brief summary of the findings of the 2003 re-survey is given below, further details are provided in Section C of the Register.

- *318 Buildings are included in Categories 1-6 of this 2004 Building at Risk Register (compared with 322 Buildings in 2001)*

##### *2003 & 2001 Comparative Building at Risk Category Statistics*



- **CATEGORY 1:** A building at **severe** and **immediate risk** of further rapid deterioration where extensive repair and/or stabilisation works are urgently needed.
- **CATEGORY 2:** A building, structure or architectural feature at **high risk** of further deterioration where extensive repair and/or stabilisation works are urgently needed.
- **CATEGORY 3:** A building, structure or architectural feature at **moderate risk** and in need of a scheme of essential repairs to prevent further deterioration, loss of historic fabric and the potential for structural failure.
- **CATEGORY 4:** A **vulnerable** building, structure or architectural feature in need of a scheme of general repair to secure its future preservation.
- **CATEGORY 5:** A building, structure or architectural feature that is in need of **general maintenance** and **localised minor repairs** to secure its future preservation.
- **CATEGORY 6:** A building or structure with some individual elements being **liable to future deterioration** and therefore requiring further monitoring.

- 235 (74%) of the 318 Buildings/structures entered into the 2004 Buildings at Risk Register are located within a Conservation Area.

- 121 (38.3%) of the 318 entries included in the 2004 Register relate to residential properties. (This figure is slightly above the 29% national average figure for residential buildings at risk).
- Over the last three years the District Council has been in contact with the owners/occupiers of 140 (46%) of the 318 Listed Buildings currently categorised as being at risk
- 72 (22.6%) of the 318 entries in the 2004 Register have been added to the register since the publication of the 2001 Register.
- 39 (12%) of the 318 entries included in the 2004 Register represent buildings included in the 2001 Register that have seen an improvement in their condition and demotion in their risk category over the last two years.
- 67 (21%) of the 318 buildings included in the 2004 Register represent buildings included in the 2001 Register that have seen a deterioration in their condition and upgrade in their risk category over the last two years
- 79 (24.5%) of the Buildings at Risk included in the 2001 Register have been removed from the 2004 Register in recognition of being fully repaired. In addition to this 8 new buildings, added to the register since the publication of the 2001 register, have now also been fully repaired and are therefore no longer at risk.
- Over the last two years a total of 41 separate offers of financial assistance under the Section 57 Historic Building Grant Scheme and St Neots CAPS scheme totalling £129,000, have been made by the District Council towards the cost of repairing Buildings at Risk in the District. In addition to this the District Council has commissioned a further 10 professional surveys to inform necessary repair works to other Buildings at Risk in the District.

## 5. THE BUILDINGS AT RISK (BAR) STRATEGY 2003 - 2005

5.1 Whilst the specific reasons for individual buildings being categorised 'at risk' varies considerably, analysis of the entries in the 2004 Buildings at Risk Register has identified reoccurring factors/themes leading to the deterioration of particular buildings and building types in the Huntingdonshire District. These include:-

- **Buildings suffering from Redundancy and under-use** *such as Industrial buildings; upper floors of commercial premises; redundant churches & non-conformist chapels; long term unoccupied buildings and outbuildings (39.2% of all BAR)*
- **Buildings incapable of beneficial use** *such as boundary walls, statues, tomb-stones, headstones. milestones and gates (19% of all BAR)*
- **A limited awareness of the importance and value of the regular maintenance and repair of listed buildings amongst owners and occupiers.** *A small regular investment in maintenance can limit the need for, or extent of, expensive repairs e.g. the annual cleaning of gutters and drains will prevent the need for costly repairs to address water ingress problems caused by blocked gutters and drains.*

- 5.2 The results of the 2003 re-survey and the trends identified from the survey demonstrate the scale and scope of this area of work that the conservation team are involved in to safeguard this districts historic buildings. Investment in both financial and personnel resources will need to be maintained in order to ensure that solutions are developed to facilitate the repair and where appropriate re-use of Buildings at Risk in the District.
- 5.3 The availability of grant aid is an important factor that will continue to contribute to the future success of the Buildings at Risk initiative in Huntingdonshire. The reason for this being that offers of financial assistance often provide the stimulus that is needed to kick-start action on a problem site or coerce an uncooperative or obstructive building owner into taking responsibility for their assets.
- 5.4 Contacting owners or occupiers of buildings at risk regarding the importance of regular maintenance and the availability of grant aid will be a priority over the next two years. This initiative will commenced immediately following the publication of 2004 register, when letters will be written to the owners/occupiers of Category 1, 2 and 3 buildings to inform them of their buildings' inclusion in the register. Similar letters will be written over the next two years to the owners and occupiers of buildings included in Categories 4-5 of the register.
- 5.5 In circumstances where the level of a building's deterioration is extensive and severe the District Council will continue to make full use the statutory powers available to promote and secure the preservation of listed buildings at risk, as outlined in Section A of the register.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Buildings at Risk Register is an important monitoring resource. It illustrates the Council's commitment to conserving the historic built heritage of the district and allows resources to be prioritised to meet these aims.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 That the contents of this report and the 2004 Buildings at Risk Register be noted and the future strategy endorsed.

**Contact Officer:** Miss Katie McAndrew, Assistant Conservation Officer  
Tel: 01480 388417