

**BUILDINGS AT RISK (BAR) REGISTER 2007**

Revised Register and Progress Report

(Report by Planning Policy Manager)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Present the 2007 edition of the Huntingdonshire Buildings at Risk Register
- 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 2007 Register is the fourth edition of the Register with earlier ones having been published in 1999, 2001 and 2004.

2.2 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**

3.1 A copy of the 2007 Buildings at Risk Register will be made available for review within the Planning Division. The foundation of the register is the Buildings at Risk database. The database record and individual building files are systematically updated as new information on the situation of individual buildings is obtained.

3.2 The Buildings at Risk Register aims to ensure that:

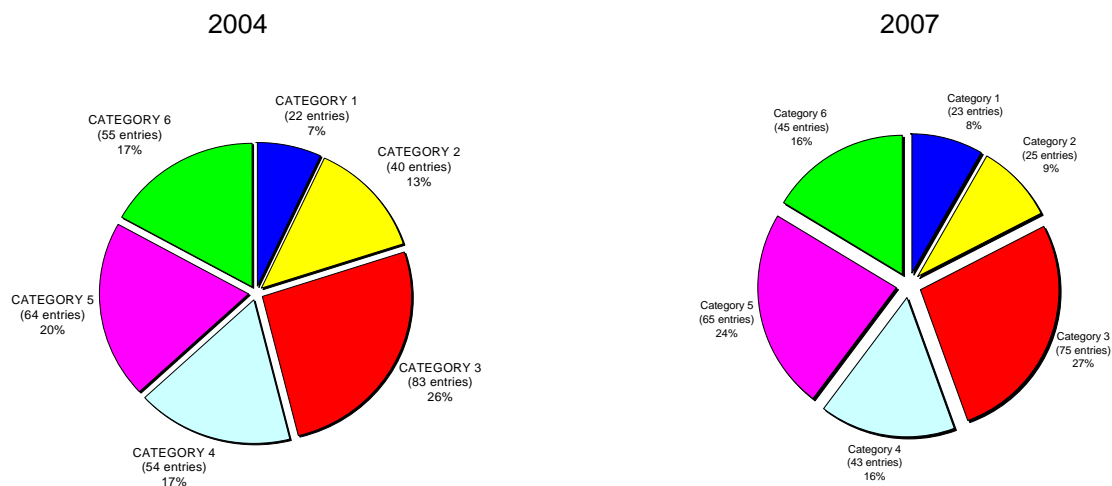
- Risk Categories for each building at risk reflect the condition of buildings, with category 1 buildings being most at risk and category 6 requiring monitoring and localised repair only. This information assists in the allocation of conservation resources such as officer time and funding.
- Those buildings '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 particular building.
- Potential options for the beneficial re-use of redundant buildings that are compatible with planning policies could be discussed with owners.

#### 4. THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 BUILDINGS AT RISK REGISTER

4.1 A brief summary of the findings of the 2007 Register is given below, further details are provided in Section C of the Register.

276 Buildings are included in Categories 1-6 of this 2007 Register (compared with 318 Buildings included in 2004)

##### *2007 & 2004 Comparative Building at Risk Category Statistics*



**CATEGORY 1:** Represents those buildings at severe and high risk. The number of buildings within this category is the same as in 2004 although there have been notable changes in the buildings held under this category. Six buildings in category 1 in 2004 have been removed from the risk register completely. Four structures new to the risk register now feature under this category with others having been upgraded from lower risk status. The new entries all relate to structures within the grounds of Hinchbrooke House and have been added following specific survey works carried out at Hinchbrooke in 2004.

**CATEGORY 2:** Represents those buildings at high risk. The total number of buildings included in this category has dropped substantially since the 2004 register was produced. This is due to our continued commitment to tackling long-term buildings at risk. Twelve buildings within this category have been removed from the register completely and 11 of those were long-term buildings at risk. Only 3 new buildings have been added to the register within this category.

**CATEGORY 3:** Represents those buildings at moderate risk. This category has the highest percentage of risk buildings within it. The number of buildings within this category has dropped marginally since 2004 although the underlying changes have been more significant as 25 buildings which have appeared under this risk category were removed completely, which is the highest number removed from any category. Thirteen new buildings and structures were added along with the migration of buildings from other risk categories.

**CATEGORY 4:** Represents those buildings and structures that are vulnerable to future decay and will generally not require extensive repair programmes but rather a small scheme of repair. The trend within this category is much the same as category 3 where there has been a slightly drop in the number of buildings

appearing under the category although the underlying changes are more significant. Fourteen buildings within this category since 2004 have been removed however 9 new buildings have also been added during this time.

**CATEGORY 5 & 6:** Buildings require general maintenance and local minor repairs to specific features. Buildings and structures under these categories are monitored for further deterioration although they are not a priority when tackling buildings at risk. In view of this the number of risk buildings under these categories has remained largely unchanged and these categories see the lowest number of buildings coming off them but also the lowest number of buildings added to them, for example 0 new buildings have been added to category 6 since 2004 and only 3 have been removed.

## 4.2 SUMMARY

- 203 (73.5%) of the 276 entries in the 2007 Buildings at Risk Register are located within a Conservation Area.
- 94 (34%) of the 276 entries in the 2007 register relate to residential properties.
- Since the release of the last Buildings at Risk register in January 2004 the District Council has been in contact with the owners/occupiers of 156 (56.5%) of the 276 Listed Buildings currently categorised as being at risk within Huntingdonshire.
- 35 (12.6%) of the 276 entries in the 2007 register have been added to the register since the publication of the 2004 register.
- A total of 74 (23%) of the Buildings at Risk included in the 2004 register have been removed from the 2007 register in recognition of them being fully repaired.
- Of these 74 entries, a total of 26 received financial assistance through the Section 57 Historic Building Grant Scheme towards the cost of their repair. Hence 34% of all properties removed from the buildings at risk register between 2004 – 2007 were removed with financial assistance from the District Council.

## 5. THE BUILDINGS AT RISK STRATEGY 2007

There will be a multi faceted approach to tackling buildings on the at risk register.

### 5.1 PROVISION OF ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Contacting owners or occupiers of buildings at risk regarding the risk concerns and the availability of grant aid will be a priority over the coming years.

All category 1 and 2 buildings and at least 50% of category 3 buildings will be allocated to a specific case officer. These cases will be regularly reviewed and owners will be contacted if active discussions regarding their repair is not already on going.

Over the next three years letters will be written to the owners and occupiers of all buildings included in Categories 1-5 of the register.

Specific attention will be paid to groups of 'at risk' buildings where they are in common ownership and the reasons for their condition are particularly complex.

Structures at Hinchbrooke school and Elton Estate in particular require this tailored approach.

Specific attention will also be paid to category 1 – 4 ‘at risk’ buildings within the main town centres. Targeting these buildings groups will help address urban decay and the blighting affect deteriorating properties have on town centres.

## 5.2 FUNDING

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. Offers of financial assistance often provide the stimulus that is needed to kick-start action on a problem building or encourages an uncooperative or obstructive building owner into taking responsibility for their assets. In the ‘*Review of the Historic Grants Scheme*’ item also on this agenda it is recommended that grant funding should be targeted only at owners of properties on the Building at Risk register. Funding rates would be increased and ownership criteria relaxed in an attempt to refocus the funding towards the Districts most vulnerable historic buildings.

## 5.3 THE USE OF STATUTORY POWERS

In circumstances where the level of a building’s deterioration is extensive and severe the District Council will look towards the use of 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 built heritage of Huntingdonshire and allows resources such as officer time and funding to be prioritised to meet these aims. It also provides an account of our achievements in tackling buildings at risk.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That the contents of this report and the 2007 Buildings at Risk Register are to be noted and the future strategy, set out in paragraph 5.1 to 5.3 above, endorsed.

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