

M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) Marketing Template

Project Title				
History and the high street 1750s to 2030s: Uppingham reimaged				
LEAD INSTITUTION				
Name of HEI institution		Nottingham Trent University		
Lead regional city		Birmingham <input type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/>
				Nottingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PARTNER ORGANISATION				
Name of organisation		Uppingham Town Council		
Website URL		https://www.uppinghamtowncouncil.gov.uk/		
THE RESEARCH PROJECT				
<p>This project addresses the crisis of the high street. Challenging presentist explanations - online shopping; taxes; consumption patterns – and solutions, you will analyse the changing composition and meaning of the high street in the market town of Uppingham from 1750-2022 to show how history can inform future policy.</p> <p>The project is framed with the understanding that the modern ‘crisis’ of the high street has substantial historical precedent and that the analysis both of the changing focus of business in Uppingham and actual, discussed and failed policy responses can show us something about how we might or ought to react to current pressures. You will find your own examples of pressure and crisis but as an example, Typhoid in the 1880s closed Uppingham for longer than the current Covid epidemic, while the closure of venues such as the cinema and the opening of a supermarket prompted an existential debate about the future of Uppingham’s unique ‘feel’.</p> <p>This is a <u>practice-based</u> PhD. It will combine a written thesis dealing with your historical research (c.40,000 words) and then three substantial practical interventions which you will conduct with and through Uppingham Town Council. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exhibition on the history of the Uppingham high street. This will include material generated as part of the written part of your thesis and might encompass photographic representations, manuscript documentation or some of the oral histories that we envisage you will collect. The exhibition will likely be in the town hall and last 3 months. • Public engagement activities including pop up talks, contributions to town and heritage trails and a presence at the set pieces of the Uppingham year. This may include pop-up talks at the Uppingham Stock Fair, developing new content for the online town trail and tree trail; and talks to local schools and heritage groups. • A substantial policy-orientated report (including maps, statistical appendices and analysis of policy responses) summarising the history of Uppingham high street, analysing the evolution of policy responses to the ongoing and episodic ‘crisis’ of the high street and asking what we can learn from historical analysis that is relevant for current and future policy-making. The audiences for this report will be Uppingham Town Council, Rutland County Council, local stakeholders and the general public. Full training will be given in constructing such reports as 				

we do not assume a background in policy.

You will have the chance to feed into the overall aims and key questions of the project but our initial drafting of the proposal involved these key questions:

- How has the complexion of Uppingham high street changed chronologically and in response to national/local policy initiative or particular moments of crisis?
- How has this changing complexion influenced the role of Uppingham in its local and regional socio-economic and cultural economy?
- What policy initiatives did councils/stakeholders discuss, discard or implement?
- Can these experiences provide a resource for new ways of thinking about the high street both in Uppingham and nationally?

The source potential of the project is considerable and you will discuss the exact source and analysis schedule with your supervisors but in planning the project we envisaged use of national (census; ONS surveys) and regional (rate books, business archives, trade directories, photographs, at the Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office) sources, but above all local sources from the town itself. These sources – ranging from adverts and posters through to shop signs, oral histories and life-writing – have been scoped for the project but you will of course want to do more work. We anticipate conducting a further 15-20 oral histories of business owners, long-term residents and current or ex-council staff.

The methods that you will bring to analysing these sources will be partly dependent on your own background and expertise but we envisage that you will have a background in at least some of the following approaches: (i) Quantification: how many businesses, of what type, how long etc; (ii) Mapping of the high street to show changing usage; (iii) Close reading and case study analysis of oral histories and forms of life-writing; (iv) Visual and material culture analysis; (v) Policy process mapping to trace changing thinking on the meaning and function of the high street.

The diverse range of sources and methods to be employed and the fact that this is a practice-based doctorate means that we welcome applications from people with experience of a range of disciplines including but not limited to: History, English, Social Policy, Politics and Sociology. Policy practitioners with interests in the use of History to inform the present and future will also be interested in this opportunity. During the project you will be working closely with local stakeholders, the Uppingham Town Clerk and Council and the Nottingham Trent Supervisors Steven King and Charlie Pratley. We will meet at least monthly and Professor King and the Uppingham Town Clerk will be providing direct support to the successful candidate while they are researching in the town. Full training in report-writing, public engagement and the making and running of exhibitions will be provided.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

Lead HEI Supervisor:	Professor Steven King
Lead HEI Supervisor Email:	Steven.king@ntu.ac.uk