

Barrow Island Conservation Area Appraisal

July 2007



BOROUGH OF
BARROW IN
FURNESS

GILLESPIES

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2. INTRODUCTION

Definition of a Conservation Area & its Implications

A Conservation Area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest with an appearance and/or character that it is desirable to preserve, or enhance. A Conservation Area designation means that the Local Planning Authority (in this case Barrow Borough Council) will subject the allocated area to Special Controls which cover the demolition of buildings or removal of trees, and allow for policies to be put in place that can very tightly control the appearance of a building and its surroundings.

A Conservation Area can also be subject to 'Article 4 Direction' which provides an Authority with extra powers to protect the character of non-listed residential buildings in the Conservation Area. This limits the circumstances in which works can be carried out without planning consent. Barrow Island Conservation Area is, however, not subject to an Article 4 Direction.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on Barrow Island, although there are a number of listed buildings in the Conservation Area. Whilst Conservation Areas are designated by Local Authorities as the primary instrument to give effect to their conservation policies, listed buildings are defined individually as buildings of special architectural and/or historic interest.

Scope of the Appraisal

The scope of this appraisal is to define the special interest of the Barrow Island Conservation Area which was designated in April 1994, and ensure that it is recognised, preserved and enhanced. This has been done through an examination of the history of Barrow Island and its role in the development of Barrow, and an analysis of the architectural quality of the built environment in the Conservation Area. From this, the major issues and actions required have been drawn.

This Conservation Area Appraisal is based on the provisions of the Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals published by English Heritage (2005) in conjunction with Communities and Local Government (CLG).

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- All other photographs used in the document were taken on Friday 31st of March 2006

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy Context

- **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**
This Act legally defines a Conservation Area and under the provisions of Section 71 of the Act, a Local Authority must formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. In Section 72, it states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing, November 2006**
PPS3 sets out the policy framework for the Government's housing objectives. At Paragraph 49 it states that attention to design is considered important, especially when it involves intensification of the environment. It further states that in Conservation Areas, if proper attention is paid to achieving good design, development opportunities can be taken without adverse impacts on character and appearance.
- **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, September 1994**
PPG15 sets out the Government's approach to the protection of the historic environment and includes specific guidance in relation to Conservation Areas. The designation of a Conservation Area introduces general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for further policies to preserve or enhance aspects of the area.

In identifying Conservation Areas, the quality and interest of areas rather than individual buildings is the prime consideration. The designation is the means of identifying the quality of these areas, and should ensure that Conservation Area policy addresses the quality of townscape as well as individual buildings. Conservation Areas must justify their status and Local Authorities are duty bound to review the areas periodically to consider the need for further designations or amendments.

The definition of a Conservation Area's special interest should come from a Conservation Area Appraisal. Local Authorities are urged to maintain and strengthen their commitment to the historic environment and reflect it in their policies and allocation of resources. Suitable policies should be put in place through the Development Plan and given 'practical effect' through the development control process.

Conservation area designation intrinsically brings with it a certain number of additional controls to protect the existing character of the area:

- Removal of certain permitted development rights including various types of cladding; the insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes; the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway; the installation of radio masts, antennae or radio equipment. Applications for planning permission for these alterations must be made to the Local Planning Authority.
- Control over the demolition of buildings, applications for consent must be made to the Local Planning Authority.

- The Local Planning Authority is required to pay special attention in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This requirement extends to all powers under the Planning Acts, not only those which relate directly to historic buildings. It should also be a consideration for proposals that affect the setting of the Conservation Area.
- The local authority has powers (under Article 4 of the General Development Order) to control development which would normally be allowed without the need for permission, but which could lead to the deterioration of the character and appearance of the conservation area. (For further details of these controls see PPG15) Listed buildings, which usually form an integral part of a conservation area, are afforded more stringent protection. The Local Planning Authority must give listed building consent before any work that would affect the character or interest of the building can be carried out, be they internal or external alterations. Tight control restricts the nature of any alteration to which consent will be given.
- Many trees in Conservation Areas are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), which means that consent must be obtained from the Local Authority before they can be cut down, topped, or lopped. However, even if there is no TPO in place, special provision is made for other trees in Conservation Areas, whereby six weeks notice must be given to the Local Planning Authority to cut down, top, or lop a tree.
- **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)**
The planning policy system is changing thanks to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004. The Borough Local Plan will be replaced with a Local Development Framework, which is made up of a portfolio of spatial planning documents including Area Action Plans. The old Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance have been 'saved' for 3 years or until they are replaced in whole or part by the new Local Development Framework documents.

At present the Regional Spatial Strategy, Cumbria and Lake District Structure Plan, and the Barrow Borough Council Local Plan form the Statutory Development Plan for the use and development of land in the Borough of Barrow (see below).

Regional Policy Context

The current Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West is the Adopted Regional Planning Guidance (RPG13), adopted in March 2003. Work has since begun on the new Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and the Draft Submitted RSS was published for public consultation in March 2006. It has been subject to an Examination in Public (EiP), the process of which began in Autumn 2006. The report of the Panel that conducted the Examination has recently been published and changes recommended to the draft RSS will be the subject of formal consultation later in 2007. Whilst this document indicates the direction policy will take in the future, it does not yet carry the weight of the Adopted RSS (RPG 13).

- **Adopted RSS (2003)**
The Adopted RSS (RPG 13) deals with the issue of conservation at Chapter 8 on the Active Management of Environmental Resources. Policy ER1 – Management of the North West's Natural, Built and Historic Environment promotes the enhancement and protection of the Region's natural, built and historic environment. Policy ER3 – Built Heritage requires Authorities to identify, protect, conserve and where appropriate, enhance the built heritage

of the region including listed buildings, Conservation Areas and the wider historic landscape that contributes to the distinctiveness of the Region. The policy makes mention of specific sites that, together with their settings, create an integral whole that provides interest and should be regarded as a cultural asset in its own right.

Policy ER4 – Contribution of Built Heritage to Regeneration encourages Authorities to work with English Heritage to develop strategies and programmes that maximise the opportunities for the historic environment to contribute to the physical, economic, educational and cultural life of the Region. Conservation-led regeneration is particularly encouraged to exploit the potential of the maritime heritage of the Region's coast "including docks, waterspaces; coastal resorts and piers; and historic buildings and features, including their settings".

- **Draft Submitted RSS (2006)**

Within Chapter 11, Enjoying and Managing the North West, Policy EM1 – Integrated Land Management sets out how an integrated approach to land management based on detailed character assessments and landscape strategies should be delivered. With regard to the issue of Landscape and Heritage, plans and proposals should identify, maintain, and where possible enhance natural, man-made and historic features that contribute to the character and culture of the Region. Particularly supported is the conservation-led regeneration of the maritime heritage of the North West including docks and waterspaces.

Local Policy Context

The Cumbria and Lake District Structure Plan provides land use strategy and policies in the Cumbria and Lake District National Park area, and forms a context along with the Local Plan for the decision of planning applications. The current Structure Plan was adopted in April 2006.

The old Local Plan system is gradually being replaced by the Local Development Framework (LDF) and at present the transitional situation means that the old style Local Plan will be saved for a limited period until replaced in whole or in part by new LDF documents. Therefore, Barrow Borough Council's saved Local Plan consists of the Local Plan Review (2001) and the Housing Chapter Alteration (2006).

- **Cumbria and Lake District Structure Plan 2001-2016**

Section Six of the Structure Plan deals with Caring for The Environment. It provides a broad framework for Local Plans to establish policy for the management of environmental and cultural assets.

Policy E34 considers the protection of 'Areas and features of National and International Conservation Importance'. The justification for this policy defines the Areas of National and International Conservation Importance as including Listed Buildings although it does not include Conservation Areas.

It is worthwhile to note that Paragraph 6.11 acknowledges Cumbria's unique cultural heritage, which includes buildings and structures. "The layout, date or design of individual components and the use of traditional materials, in a traditional way, help to give an area its character. The historic environment gives a sense of identity and can be a valuable stimulus for economic regeneration."

Policy E38 – Historic Environment states that proposals which fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, or which damages, obscures, or removes archaeological sites or other historic features, or are detrimental to character or setting of a listed building will not be permitted unless the harm caused to their importance is outweighed by the need for development.

- **Barrow-in-Furness Local Plan (2001)**

Barrow has nine Conservation Areas; of which one is the Barrow Island Conservation Area. Included in these are around 249 Grade II listed buildings (classed as being of special interest), 15 Grade II* (classed as being of more than special interest), and 8 Grade 1 listed buildings (of exceptional interest). A number of the policies in this document are relevant to this Appraisal and they are outlined below.

Policy D15 permits development within or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas only where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Area. Policy D16 concerns the demolition of Listed Buildings on Conservation Areas, and Policy D17 encourages the re-use of listed or prominent buildings in Conservation Areas. Policy D18 states that alterations to a listed building or those affected by Article Four Directions will not be permitted if they negatively affect setting, character or architectural features.

- **Local Development Framework**

In response to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Council is proceeding with the development of its Local Development Framework (LDF). This is a suite of documents that will, when adopted, form the development plan for the Borough. The lead document for the LDF is the Core Strategy, which sets out the general non-site-specific policies and principles for the Borough.

Detailed site specific guidance is set out in Area Action Plans, which are development plan documents that form part of the LDF. The Council is currently preparing an Area Action Plan for the Port Area of Barrow, and its vision, objectives and policies are consistent with the key themes of the Barrow Community Plan (2005) and its draft replacement.

4. DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Definition of Special Interest

Barrow is a town that, like a number of others in Britain grew quickly during the Industrial Revolution. It is unusual in that a very large proportion of the houses are terraced, reflecting the pressures on land at the time of construction and illustrating the predominantly working class social mix of residents. While this is evident throughout Barrow, it is exacerbated on Barrow Island.

The area now known as the Barrow Island Conservation Area was intensively developed in a burst of activity in the 1870s to 80s and stands broadly unchanged in its form since then. The Conservation Area's most prominent buildings are the tenement blocks which are unique in the region and important links to the Victorian era. The Island was at the heart of the town's pre-eminence as a railway town, then an iron town, and for the last century as a boat-builder specialising in submarines. The factory buildings have remained active throughout the distinct eras of industrial development in the town.

The value of the Barrow Island Conservation Area as a whole can be seen in the way that immediately adjacent to each other lie prominent factory, residential and community buildings that uniquely stand as an intact record of both the industrial and domestic developments at the end of the 19th Century, and the links between the two. The Barrow Island Conservation Area in effect stands as a unique isolated example of Victorian industrial society.

5. CONSERVATION AREA CONTEXT

Location

Barrow Island is located to the south of Barrow town centre and looks out over Morecambe Bay to the south. Barrow Island is one of the Islands of Furness off the West Cumbrian Coast (along with Walney, Sheep, Roa, Piel, and Foulney Islands), and benefits from its direct road link to the nearby town centre and through to Walney.

The designated Conservation Area itself stretches from the gateway to the Island at the High Level Bridge on Michaelson Road to the southernmost building on the 'old' Island, south of which lies the reclaimed land area owned and operated by Associated British Ports. Due to the dock area being built on almost entirely reclaimed land, it lies at a lower level than the Conservation Area.



Fig 1 – Aerial Photo showing Barrow Island in context with the town centre

Barrow Island Context

Duke Street and Abbey Road intersect at Ramsden Square, framing much of the town centre's grid pattern. The layout of the streets is a trait shared by Barrow Island, which underwent its most active growth period in the Victorian heyday in which the rest of Barrow blossomed. Vehicular access to the Island is from either North Road/Bridge Road or along High Level Bridge. The Island has been permanently connected to the mainland since the late 19th Century and is accessed either along High Level Bridge or by North Road/Bridge Road.

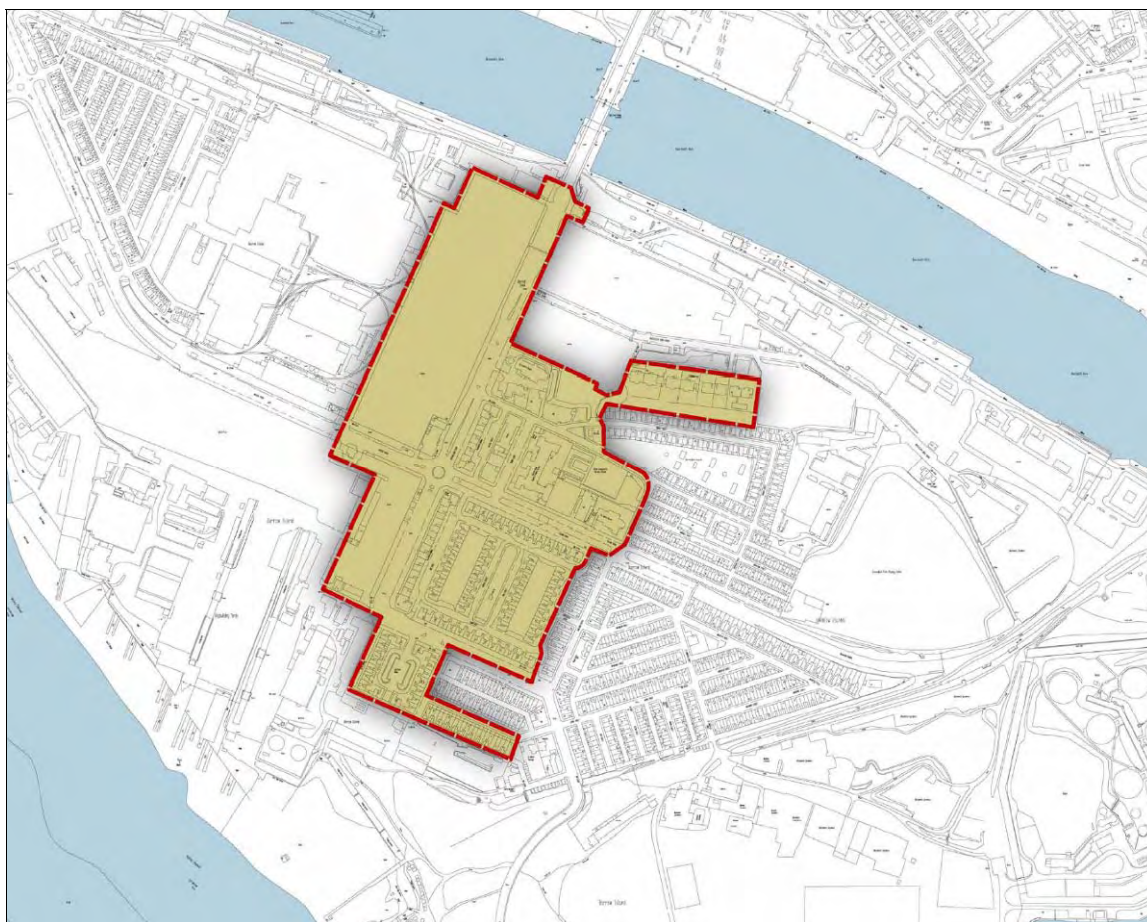


Fig 2 – Designated Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is centred around the crossroads at Bridge Road and Michaelson Road on Barrow Island. To the North lie Buccleuch and Devonshire Docks that are crossed over by the High Level Bridge, and the boundary of the Conservation Area runs up to the edge of the bridge. Due to the proximity of the Docks and industrial landscape, the town centre seems far removed.

To the east and south of the Conservation Area lie terraced workers houses built along with a significant number of semis also on Dundee, Dunoon, and Ancaster Streets by Vickers at the turn of the 20th Century. They are different in character to the Conservation Area housing, and are made up of the 'D' Streets houses (where Street Names begin with the letter 'D', such as Dunvegan, Dunbar, and Dundalk Streets), enclosed by Cavendish Park Fields. Further south are the 'A' Streets (where Street Names begin with the letter 'A', such as Annan, Afton, Ayr, and Abercorn Streets), although set on a grid they are at a different angle, following the line of the original Island, marked by a change in level down to the man-made Port Area. The Port Area is extensive, covering not only the dock area to the south of Barrow Island, but also the Cavendish Dock nature reserve as far as Roosecote, while Ramsden Dock Road that runs through the Conservation Area extends south through the Dock Area to Anchor Basin and Dock Basin.

To the North West, Bridge Road passes through the extensive BAE Systems facility. Its primary original and historic listed frontages are in the Conservation Area, and behind these the scale of the industrial buildings becomes more evident. North of Bridge Road there are four terraced rows of workers houses which are flanked on three sides by the large engineering sheds. Bridge Road continues up to the town centre.

The scale of many of the buildings on the Island is large, and is comparable with the major civic building projects of the 19th Century in the rest of Barrow in form and use of materials. The tenement blocks compare favourably in height and scale with their contemporary the nearby Town Hall. Although the BAE Systems buildings are not as tall, the scale of the buildings in length and depth is significant. The most significant building of this type is Devonshire Dock Hall which, although not in the Conservation Area itself lies in between the Conservation Area and the Town Centre and maintains a great influence over both the Island and the town centre.

Barrow Island, according to the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, suffers from a high rate of empty private sector housing, with problems circulating around the age and unfitness of the housing stock. The April 2006 Housing Condition Survey (HCS) for Barrow notes that in the borough the highest rate of unfitness by building type is in purpose built flats (45.4% of all unfit buildings in Barrow). Also, the highest proportion of non decent dwellings (at 79.2%) is purpose built flats. With purpose built flats, the reasons for failure are generally failures under thermal comfort. Here the failures are due to the general condition of the tenement blocks (including the presence of room heaters).

There are currently 1600 unfit dwellings in Barrow, 550 of which are flats. Para 4.3.2 of the HCS attributes the high proportion of 'non-decent dwellings' by tenure in Barrow-in-Furness reflects to a degree the large number of purpose built tenement blocks. The highest rate of unfitness is in the pre-1919 housing stock and the housing in Barrow Island Conservation Area all dates from before 1919. Approved Housing Market Renewal programmes are to be undertaken to deliver regeneration in Barrow Island.

6. ASSESSMENT

General Character

The Conservation Area is primarily made up of residential terraced and tenement buildings, industrial factory buildings, and associated community facilities. The area is intensely developed and features no vacant sites due to land shortages and industrial development being such a priority when the Island was developed.

Form and Structure

The Conservation Area is accessed along Michaelson Road along the High Level Bridge from the Strand, directly linking across Devonshire Dock to the town centre of Barrow and there are two low-level office buildings at this point, the buildings behind this are working buildings utilised by BAE Systems. Michaelson Road itself is a wide boulevard, flanked on the one side by tall tenement buildings and on the other by contemporaneous tall factory buildings.

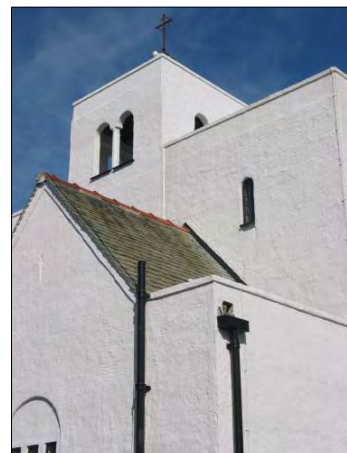
The General Engineering Shop on the east of Michaelson Road (a corrugated structure built in 1951) is not in the Conservation Area, although the Victorian engineering buildings on the western side of Michaelson Road are. The Engineering sheds both in and surrounding the Conservation Area are single storey buildings with high ceilings, which helps create a consistent strong frontage to Michaelson Road and the character is entirely industrial. Between Devonshire Dock and Ramsden Dock Road it is possible to witness nearly a century of industrial factory building styles adjacent to each other.

The General Engineering Sheds obscure the Cavendish Park Villas, which are within the Conservation Area although they are located in the curtilage of buildings constructed since the Villas fell into disuse. It is a shame that the Villas are barely visible as they are consistent with the Devonshire Buildings on Michaelson Road and if in use would be a valuable contribution to the residential character of the Island.

The occupied residential area is located facing Michaelson Road and Ramsden Dock Road, laid out in regular blocks, south of Island Road. There is a clear hierarchy to the road network as it feeds into smaller access roads. Michaelson Road and Ramsden Dock Road both are very wide and have a boulevard feel leading from the gateway at High Level Bridge.

Streets and Buildings

Michaelson Road is intersected by Bridge Road/Island Road which forms the backbone to the grid layout of most of the Conservation Area. North of Island Road there is one of the Devonshire Tenement Buildings and a number of smaller low-rise buildings, mostly centred on a range of community facilities. There are two churches and two schools, as well as a shop and two clubs. These are low-rise buildings between one and two storey, and are consistent in scale with the early 20th Century terraced property outside the Conservation Area. The most prominent of the community buildings is St John Church of England Church, (*right*) rendered with a white finish and providing a focal point along Island Road. To the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area there are more contemporary residences (The 'D' Streets), which also obscure the Cavendish Villas.



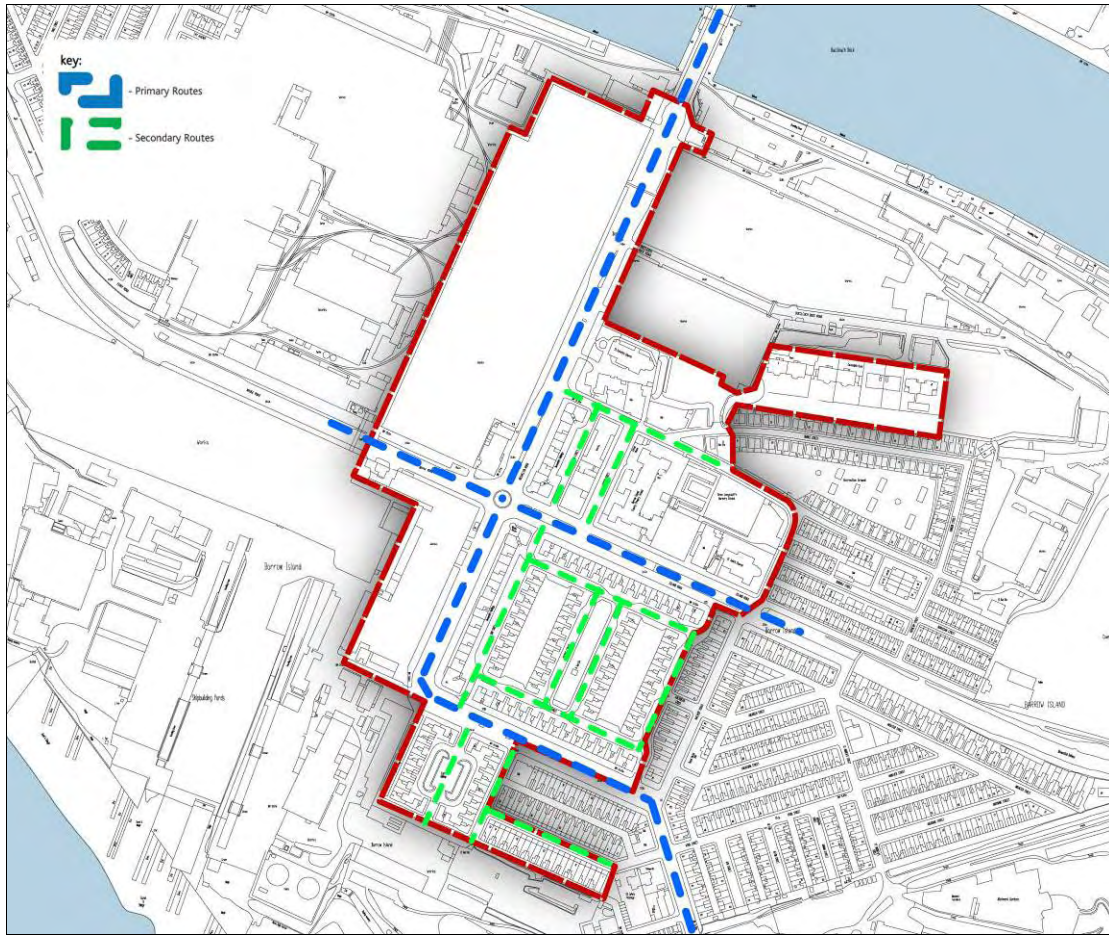


Fig 3 – Street Pattern Major Roads highlighted in blue and smaller roads highlighted in green

West of Michaelson Road the boundary of the Conservation Area is occupied by BAE Systems buildings. Between Island Road and Ramsden Dock Road the Conservation Area obeys a strict grid layout and is occupied by tenement buildings, all built to a consistent design, having exposed communal hallways and being four storeys tall, yet each having their own individual details and use of materials. The housing outside the border of the Conservation Area on Schooner Street facing away from the street, is of a conventional two-storey housing style and scale, and faces away from the tenements. (Right)



South of Ramsden Dock Road the Egerton Buildings are the two remaining tenement buildings and east of Siemens Street James Watt Terrace is the only other street included in the Conservation Area and is a conventional two storey row of houses, differentiated by detailing from the terraces bordering the Conservation Area. James Watt Terrace is the last building in the Island's residential area and the view from the rear of these terraced houses stretches out over the Port Area and the bay beyond taking advantage of the ground level change at this point. To the east of this there lie further later terraced houses (the 'A' estate). The line of the built form along James Watt Terrace and the 'A' Estate marks the original end of the Island as it was before the dock system began to be built in the 1870s.

Landscape

Landscape Setting

The landscape setting of the Conservation Area is unusual in that while the Island has existed for many years, it was ambitiously developed with the construction of the network of docks during the 19th Century involving extensive land reclamation. Therefore it now stands as an almost entirely man-made environment and the Island today deserves to be considered not just as the Conservation Area and its surrounding uses, but as an environment as a whole.

The Dock is an historic, economic and visually important element to wider Barrow. Although primarily man-made the port is a very open space, allowing generous views of the other Furness Islands and Morecambe Bay.

Green Space

Owing to the primarily industrial and intensely developed nature of Barrow Island, Cavendish Park is the only significant area of green space close to the Conservation Area. While there are areas of open space in the wider Dock system that could possibly be used for recreational purposes, such as at Cavendish Dock, vacant property in the dock does not contribute to the intensive land use character of the Conservation Area itself.

When the 10 tenement buildings were constructed, there were small grassed banks between Ship Street and Schooner Street. These are gated and are privately owned and leased back to the Council. They betray some signs of use, although they are not landscaped. There is a similar grassed area between the Egerton Buildings and the BAE Systems facility, but due to the narrow area for the footpath and the wide area of grass in the centre, the impression is one of an overcast and ill-defined space containing unusable green space at the expense of narrow and poorly lit footpaths.



Grassed banks between Steamer Street and Sloop Street (left), and Egerton Buildings and BAE (middle). (Right) The only planting evident in the tenement block area is on Schooner Street and is an isolated case. The majority of entrance areas to the tenement blocks are paved with tarmac and paving slabs.

There are a number of Prunus Cherry trees on Michaelson Road both north and south of the Island Road junction, and there a number on Island Road, located specifically outside the County School, and on Ramsden Dock Road. The majority of these trees are semi-mature, and whilst there have historically been trees located on Michaelson Road and Ramsden Dock Road since the factory and tenement blocks were constructed, they are universally of a small scale, being usually no more than 5-6 metres in height, with some up to 10 metres.

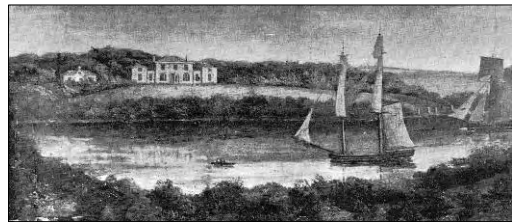
The scale of the trees is in all cases comparable only to the lower level buildings, and any attempt for the trees to compliment the impression of the wide Michaelson and Ramsden Dock Roads and the tenement blocks and BAE sheds is not successful. Due to the heavy salt content of the air and high winds along

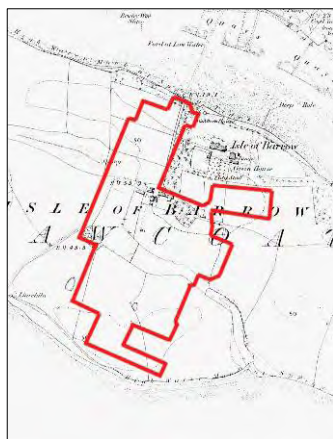
these wide boulevards at this coastal location, street trees tend to suffer at this location and can be difficult to establish and thrive.

Historic Development

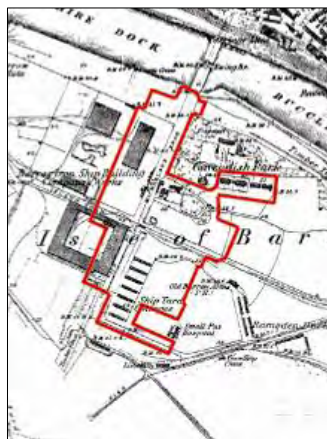
Barrow's growth from a small village to a Victorian industrial powerhouse was rapid and initiated by the confluence of three factors: the building of a railway to link this isolated area begun in 1846; the easy access afforded to shipping; and the discovery of major iron ore deposits. In the development of the docks and shipbuilding, the Island has been greatly expanded over the last 150 years. The area now occupied by Ramsden Dock is an artificial landscape built up primarily by sand and soil from dock excavations, while the area now occupied by Barrow Island Conservation Area is situated on what was Barrow Island before the land reclamation took place.

In the 18th Century Robert Michaelson was Controller of the King's Boat at Piel (in charge of the port and the customs due), and the Michaelson family took over Barrow Island. The Island was mostly farmed, but also featured a mansion with a plantation and park. The whole of Barrow Island was purchased from the Michaelson family in 1863 by James Ramsden for the purposes of the Furness Railway Company, although it was a number of years before the Michaelson Mansion (*both right*) was demolished. The construction of the docks then proceeded, with the scale of construction ambitious in a speculative attempt to draw further industry to Barrow.

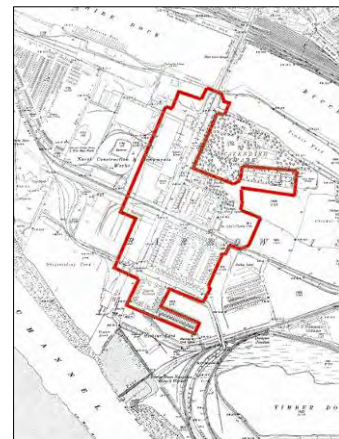




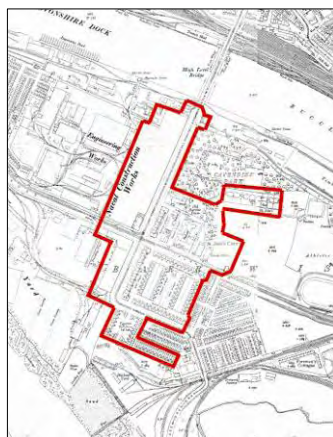
1851



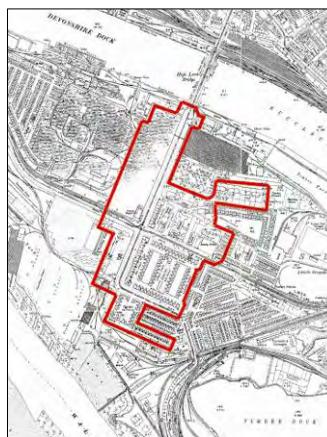
1867



1890



1913



1933

These maps show the growth of the Island from Michaelson family ownership to shipbuilding in the 1900s. The boundary is on all plans. By 1867 the Villas were developed close to the site of the Mansion, which retained the park well into the 1900s. The basic road layout and built elements had been established by 1890.

Fig 4 – Historic Maps

Growth of the Port

The opening of the Furness Railway and improvement of facilities for exporting iron ore led to demand for a shipyard. Although the repair and building of ships had already begun, new firms were slow in coming. In 1870 James Ramsden invited the Duke of Devonshire as chief landowner of the area to visit Barrow Island and during this visit it was decided to promote The Barrow Iron Shipbuilding Company. The conditions were seen as ideal for establishing a shipbuilding works as established mills and factories were able to provide a ready stream of materials.

The Duke of Devonshire was, as a major landowner in the area a major shareholder in the Furness Railway Company. He was intimately involved in the investments that pushed Barrow's rapid growth in the 19th Century.

A Railway Company Town

The Railway Company was the dominant force in Barrow's expansion, growing incredibly quickly. More and more after the 1860s, Barrow Island was to witness this expansion firsthand.

"The isolation of Furness meant that the Railway was free of any threat of take-over, but it also dissuaded outside capitalists from joining the original Furness Railway investors." (Trescaheric, 1998)

Towards the end of the nineteenth Century, the Steelworks, formerly a major driver of the whole economy and fabrication industry and considered one of the largest works of its type in Europe, was "living a precarious year-by-year existence" (Trescaheric, 1985) since local mines had started to run low on ore reserves.

For Barrow at the beginning the 1880s, it was clear that much of the economic expansion of the previous decade was now looking more risky, and consistent labour troubles and fluctuations in the market were unable to be ignored. "The Barrow Haematite Steel Company began to lose its former omnipotence, the fortunes of the Furness Railway stagnated and the docks, juteworks and shipyard continued to underachieve." (Trescaheric, 1998)

When Devonshire Dock, (immediately adjacent to what is now the Conservation Area) was opened in 1867 it was a time of celebration. After the major land reclamation that brought Buccleuch Dock in 1873, by the time Cavendish Dock was opened in 1879 there was no commercial user for the dock. The original grounds for the growth of Barrow had now gone, and the dominance of the Railway Company in effect locked out any competition.

"The elaborate system of Docks, on which more than £2 million had been spent, was still regarded with wonder but it was a wonder tinged with incredulity."
(Trescaheric, 1985)

Shipbuilding

As the iron and railway-induced growth faded away, the Naval Construction and Armaments Company (NCAC) was created in 1887 to consolidate the shipbuilding efforts in Barrow to focus on warships. This was set against a backdrop of pan-European arms escalation that would lead to World War in 1914.

Vickers steel company of Sheffield had begun working in armaments in 1888 and seeing the success of the newly formed NCAC saw that Barrow Island "allowed plenty of room for expansion and at last the dock system would prove to be of benefit, being large enough to allow large warships to be fitted out." (Trescaheric, 1998)

The sale to Vickers of the shipyard and engineering works was completed in 1897. The first order received under the new ownership was the Vengeance, the first battleship to be built, armed and equipped at Barrow. There was no other company in the world in a position to build, arm and equip a vessel in one location.



Left – The Armaments Drawing Office as viewed from Michaelson Road in 1912 – note tramway route onto the Island. Right – Vickers employees swamp the old High Level Bridge at the end of shift in the 1950s

From the dominant force of the Railway Company, Barrow Island was to enter the 20th Century as a company town under new management. The shipbuilding and armaments development by Vickers has lasted at Barrow for over a century and the shipyard, now owned by BAE Systems, celebrated a centenary of Royal Navy submarine manufacture at Barrow in 2001.

Barrow remains a unique industrial town due to its remote location, favourable maritime aspect, and the rapid industrialisation that led to the domination of the town by a single employer. The Island has grown with mainland Barrow through its phase as a railway town, a steel town and a shipbuilding town and the Island, unlike anywhere else in Barrow reflects these distinct chapters.

Road Names

As the built form was set out in large phases of expansion on Barrow Island, the road names in the Conservation Area are mostly very consistent, and provide an interesting record of the history of the Island and its major influences.

Farm Road was named after the 17th Century farm on the Island originally located south of the Michaelson Mansion. Michaelson Road was named after Thomas Michaelson (born in 1814), and the Road as it exists today follows the approximate route covered to the mansion and the farm. Ramsden Dock Road is named after the dock development to which it leads, itself named after the figurehead who arguably contributed more to the development of Barrow than anyone else.

The Haematite Iron and Steel Company had one of the World's largest iron and steel works at Barrow in the early 1870s. The Siemens open hearth furnace had been recently developed commercially and allowed the rapid production of large quantities of basic steel far more easily than earlier furnaces, hence the naming of Siemens Street leading from Ramsden Dock Road by the Egerton Buildings.

James Watt Terrace is named after the Scottish steam engineer (1736-1819) whose developments of the steam engine gave power sources to industry. Watt's steam engines helped create the Industrial Revolution and doubtless the founding fathers of Barrow's growth saw Watt as an industrial innovator in whose footsteps they were eager to follow.



*Left – View of Ramsden Dock Road and Egerton Buildings from Siemens Street
Right – James Watt Terrace facing Siemens Street*

The streets running around the main group of seven tenement blocks (Sloop, Schooner, Ship, and Steamer Streets) are all named after types of vessel beginning with the letter 'S', and Brig and Barque Streets surround the central parking area. A Barque is a ship with three or more masts and is a term that came into use in the 18th century, whilst a Brig is a vessel with two masts.

The housing outside and adjacent to the Conservation Area is worthy of mention as the 'A' streets (Aberdare, Athol, etc) and 'D' streets (Dunvegan, Dundee etc) were laid out and built by David Caird who also built the Devonshire Buildings. Their naming strategy was obviously maintained through this period and when taken as a whole the road names on the Island add to the unique character of the grid layout housing.

The houses of the Cavendish Park Estate (The 'D' streets) are immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area (off Farm Street, immediately behind the Cavendish Villas) and were completed in 1914. The land had been purchased from Furness Railway and developed in association with the Council. Their development was unusual in that due to the historical industrial development pressure of the area, housing land was severely limited (*Trescaithric, 1992*, but due to expansion at Vickers, workers housing was once again desperately needed.

Spatial Analysis

Views In and Out

Barrow Island Conservation Area is laid out with a grid street pattern, and it shares this trait with the centre of Barrow, also developed in the Victorian era. The street grid of the Conservation Area is at a different angle to the majority of the 'A' streets, built around 20 years after the Devonshire Buildings, thereby creating a number of vistas and key views into, through, and out of the Conservation Area.

The dominant built feature through most of the Conservation Area are the ten four – storey tenement blocks. Larger than the surrounding BAE factory units and much greater in scale than the terraced housing around, they are landmark features. Where Michaelson Road becomes Ramsden Dock Road, a view down Michaelson Road is possible out of the Conservation Area towards the town centre. From the footpath between the Egerton Buildings and BAE Systems, it is possible to capture an even longer vista all the way down Michaelson Road, being the longest of the key views in the Conservation Area.



Left – The Devonshire Buildings tenement blocks as viewed from Michaelson Road, Middle – View into the Conservation Area along Ramsden Dock Road, Right – view down Michaelson Road from between Egerton Buildings and BAE

Panoramas

A key view opens up along Ramsden Dock Road, when it enters the Barrow Island residential area from the Associated British Port land. The width of this road, which is able to accommodate parking in the central reservation, creates a powerful view, reinforced by the strong single façade of the tenement blocks. However, the view is terminated in either direction by distinctly underwhelming low-rise buildings that fall outside the Conservation Area. Where Ramsden Dock Road turns towards the dock area the 'A' Streets are angled diagonally away and there is no strong termination or draw. At the corner of Michaelson Road a rather nondescript BAE Systems works entrance joins the Conservation Area. Also, when viewed from Michaelson Road, it is possible to see the BAE building adjacent to Egerton Court from a long distance away. These corners unfortunately lack the spires that distinguish the tenement buildings and reinforce their corners at the junction of Island Road and Bridge Road and the view would benefit from a vertical stop similar to the spires at the Egerton Buildings.



Key view down Ramsden Dock Road

Landmarks

The Barrow Town Hall spire is clearly visible from Michaelson Road, as is Fisher House and Craven House. They terminate the vista down Michaelson Road. While the Town Hall is in many respects a companion building to the Devonshire buildings and the older factory facades, being built of the same sandstone type and from the same era and to the same scale, Fisher House and Craven House are a discordant face to the Victorian town centre when viewed from the Conservation Area.

The Devonshire Buildings facing Michaelson Road are prominent landmarks, being set higher than the other tenement blocks, having more detailed facades to the main thoroughfare, and the corner spires to the Island Road junction. They are the most prominent of the tenement blocks, although the blocks on Island Road and Ramsden Dock Road are also prominent. While they are not constructed in sandstone, rather with red bricks, their long facades mark out the route through the designated Conservation Area.



Barrow Town Hall viewed from Michaelson Road (left), and Craven House as seen from the Conservation Area (Centre). The Church of St John itself is a dramatic building in built form and in its clean white surfacing, and is easily visible from some distance along Island Road. Another key view is from Schooner Street where a glimpse of this landmark can be easily seen (right).

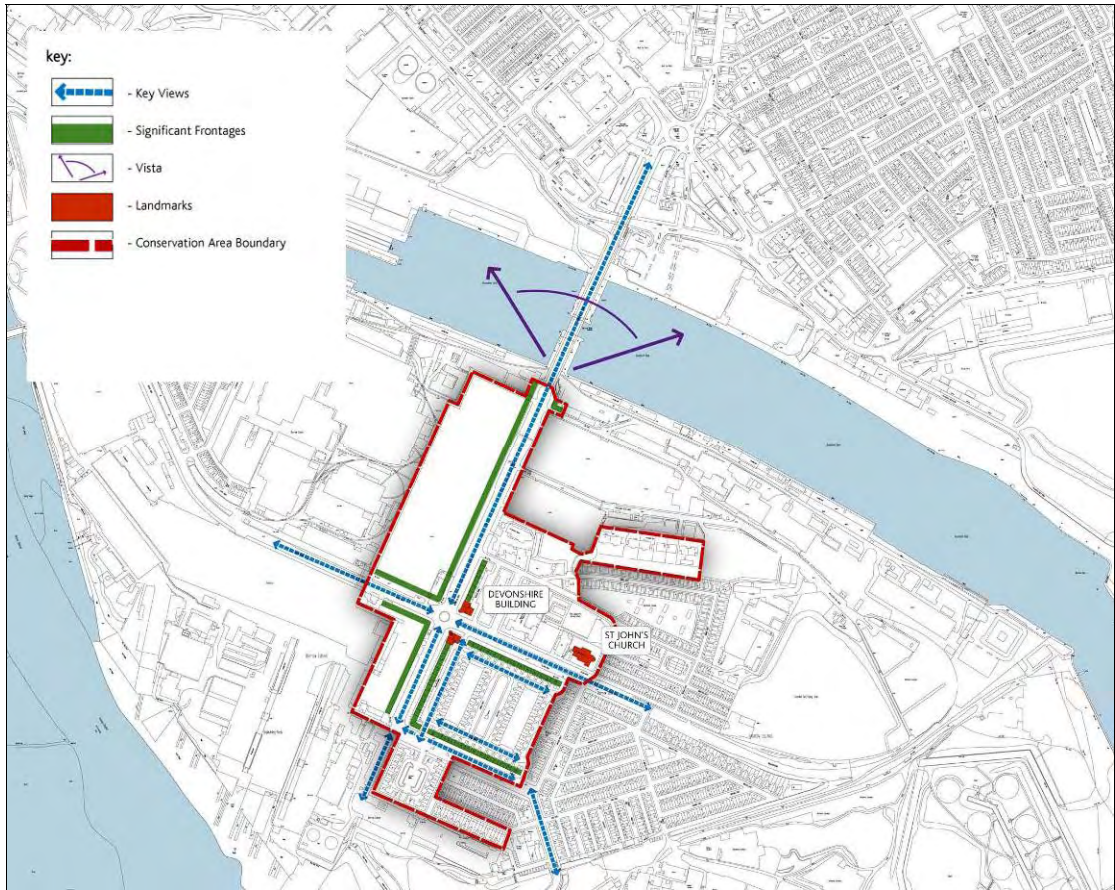


Fig 5 – Key Views & Landmarks

Character Analysis

Definition of Character Areas

The Conservation Area can be naturally divided into three areas identifiable by their primary land uses although the characters of these three areas are all different as well. They are well defined through their strong built form and uses that have broadly remained the same for over a century. The observations and analysis in the following section is structured in three areas to follow this division. The areas are: Industrial Area, Community Facilities and a Residential Area. High Level Bridge is also discussed separately as the key gateway to the Conservation Area.



Fig 6 – Character Areas

Community Facilities

There has been a school here since 1873, when a temporary National School was constructed. The Victorian County Primary School was a landmark for the Island, resplendent with an ornate clock tower that stood as one of the Island's landmarks (Demolished in 1959). The Community area of the Conservation Area is very well defined as this same block features Bram Longstaffe Nursery School located immediately adjacent, facing Farm Street. The County Primary School is built in a traditional Victorian style and noticeably more appealing than the Nursery School.

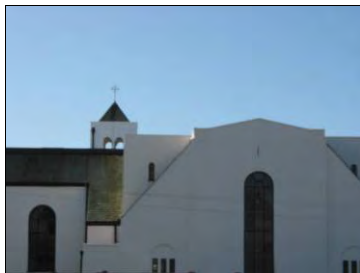


(Left to right) County Primary School

The Barrow Island Community Centre (1899) contributes to the character of the Community area through it being contemporary with the adjacent school and of similar size. There is, however, a render to the surface of building, which originally will have provided protection to the surface of the brickwork but now is in poor condition. This contributes to a poor presentation to the street on Island Road. So, while the presentation is poor, the scale and location – between St John’s Church and the School is a primary contribution to the character of the area.



Barrow Island Community Centre



St John’s Church, Island Rd is a Church of England church founded in 1876 and replaced in 1935 by the present highly unusual Grade II listed Moroccan-style building. Despite its appearance, it is actually a concrete structure.

The Roman Catholic school and chapel opened in 1885, and the modern building of St Patrick’s Roman Catholic Church on Michaelson Road opened in 1933, immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Conservation Area. This block of buildings is part of the Conservation Area, but is not listed. While remaining distant from the other Community Facilities on Island Road and south of Farm Street, the Church compound is immediately adjacent to St Patrick’s Club building, immediately adjacent to the Vicarage for the church. This building is consistent with the Conservation Area, being constructed in the same sandstone as many of the other buildings in the area. Immediately adjacent to the Club lays the TS Sovereign Sea Cadet Corps building, which has an open courtyard area to the side. This small area of buildings north of Farm Street lies in the Conservation Area, the road becoming a residential road from this point onwards, featuring small red brick semi-detached houses, changing in character completely.



St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church (left), Vicarage (centre), St Patrick's Club (right)



TS Sovereign Sea Cadet Corps is located on Farm Street (top left). The Co-Op is on Island Road (centre) and 'Turf Accountant' (bottom left) form part of the tenement buildings

Island Road Co-Op between Buxton Street and Trinity Street, which has recently been refitted, is the only retail unit within the Community Facilities area; the other retail units are located individually within the tenement blocks in the residential character area. The small units include Buy Wright general store Chas Kendal Turf Accountant on the corner of Island Road and Ship Street, and the Estate Office on the corner of Ramsden Dock Road and Ship Street.

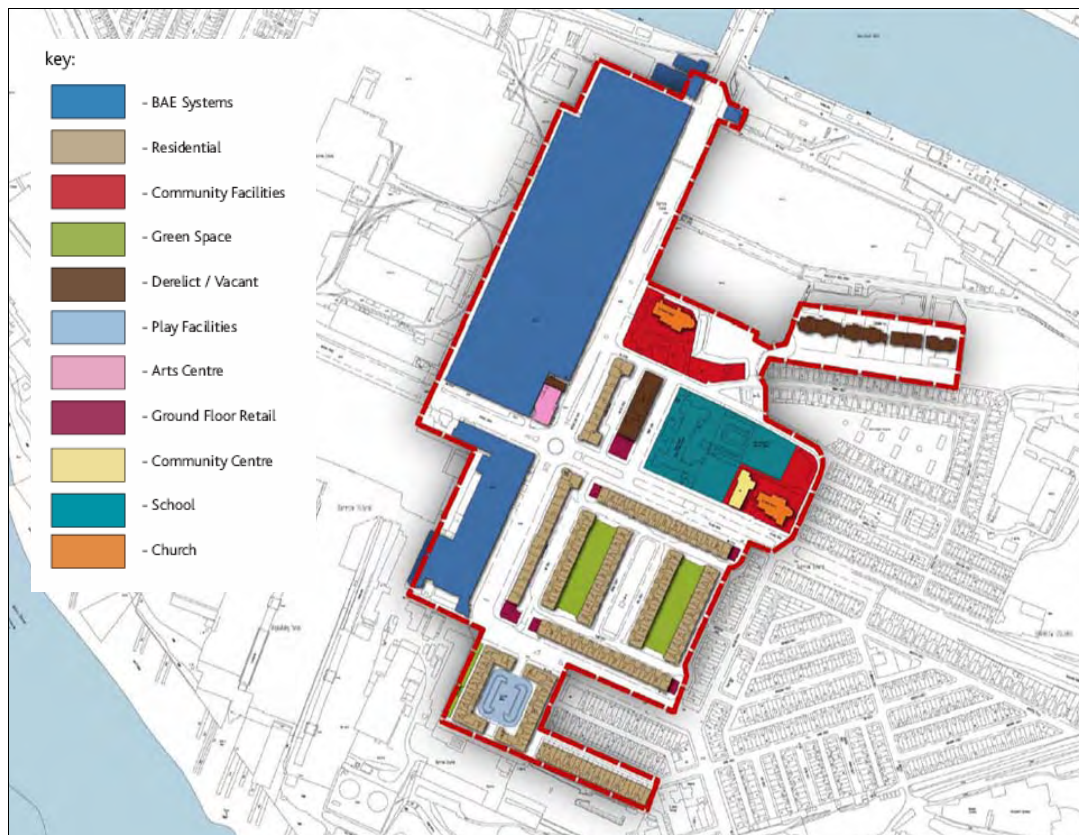


Fig 7 – Land Use

Industrial Area

BAE Systems presence in the Conservation Area is a major feature which not only is a major driver in the economy of the area but a well established land use in the Conservation Area. While there are a number of large industrial buildings surrounding the Conservation Area, there are only two major BAE industrial buildings in the Conservation Area itself. The BAE shed south of Bridge Street (*right*) is a characterful building faced in the same sandstone as the Devonshire Buildings opposite and along Michaelson Road there is an industrial façade.



The building changes from a single storey industrial block of a traditional factory layout to a three-to-four storey block facing Bridge Road. This block dating from 1872 still contains older features such as a gated entrance and servicing area, which contribute to the character of the area by their continued use in the historic facade. The entrance treatments to this building include modern doorway and porch interventions which are distinctive, but at the same time of high quality, and ultimately they are sympathetic to the purpose of this working building.



The BAE block on the south of Bridge Road (Top left) with original features retained (top and middle centre) and new entrance areas (top right, bottom left). This building faces the engineering shop (bottom right)

North of Bridge Road the BAE workshop façade is of a different style, although still faced with the same stone as the two Devonshire tenement blocks. The tall windows and doors of building are distinctive and very much different from the block south of Bridge Road but still convey the scale of this single storey structure.

On the northern corner of Bridge Road and Michaelson Road there is a small block of low-rise buildings that served administration and catering services for BAE. The Old Canteen has now been refurbished and brought into use as a Media and Arts Centre, while the old retail unit immediately adjacent, remains unused. The

refurbished Old Canteen opened in November 2005 and has already established a reputation as a live music venue.



The Old Canteen media and arts centre (left), vacant unit (centre), and office building (right)

The gateway buildings to the Conservation Area when entering the Island over the High Level Bridge are both listed. The three-storey Armament Drawing Office is opposite King's Gate Offices which is a smaller building. These buildings are distinctive in that while they are of a smaller scale than the tenement blocks or the factory sheds nearby, they act as gatehouses to the industrial area.



Left – King's Gate Office, Right – Armament Drawing Office

Residential Area

Barrow has an unusual built fabric in that there are a very large number of terraced houses. This is an historic trait reflected through the whole of Barrow, but is exacerbated on the Island. There was an historical trend of workers living in close proximity to their places of work, and this applied not only to the majority of workers in tenement flats and terraced houses, but also to the management and supervisory staff. Barrow Island Conservation Area stands now as a surprisingly intact record of both the industrial and domestic developments at the end of the 19th Century, and the links between the two.

In the industrial growth periods the need for new houses was huge and although the number of dwellings doubled from 3000 to 6000 between 1868 and 1875, the average number of residents per house in 1875 was still 7.3 (Trescaheric, 1992). It was clear that however many houses were built, they could be filled. To meet initial demand, temporary huts were constructed to what was then, before land reclamation, the south of the Island south of Bridge Road/Ferry Road (NWEM, 3/12/1971). The sanitary issues were exacerbated by the sheer number of lodgers taken in by residents of the huts. Population was estimated to be up to 3000 and the wooden huts were eventually condemned in 1877 and the brick huts in the next decade.



The picture to the left dates from the early 1900's (Credit anonymous). In the background can be seen Michaelson Mansion. To the right is a view from Ramsden Dock Road down Ship Street (Copyright, Tommy Jones). Note the large shop front on Ramsden Dock Road and the washing drying outside.

The fluctuating fortunes of industry in Barrow meant that the provision of housing was affected. This is pointed out by Trescaheric (1985) "there could be no concerted pressure for housing projects since a ready answer was always that the building of hundreds of houses could prove to be optimistic and saddle either companies or the Council with massive debts." This led to a repeated cycle of unemployment followed by massive overcrowding, and resulted in an inconsistent and piecemeal approach to housing. (In this light, the 'A' Road and 'D' Road houses on the Island are more of an unusual development owing to their scale.)

The scale and quantity of the tenement blocks, widely referred to as the Devonshire Buildings is not so surprising in light of their backer, the Duke of Devonshire. "They were built in two phases between 1873 and 1882 and consisted of ten blocks of mostly four storey flats, the major contractors being Smith and Caird of Dundee" (Trescaheric, 1992). The reason for the buildings being constructed in the manner they are seen today is that principal concern of space.

"Flats took up less land on the Island, thereby leaving more to be developed for the shipyard, and also proved to be relatively cheap to build." (Trescaheric, 1992)

The historical significance of these blocks is emphasised by the removal in the 1950s of the only other similar tenement development in Barrow (For the Jute Works at Hindpool). The Devonshire Buildings are therefore the only prominent tenement blocks in Barrow, but also in limited company through the rest of England.

The Barrow Arms Inn was the first licensed premises on Barrow Island although the building it occupied has long since been demolished. When the license was transferred to new premises at the junction of Michaelson Road and Devonshire Dock Road the name was changed to Devonshire Hotel (A public house known as the Barrow Arms is now located in the town centre – NWEM, 19/02/1957).

Between Buccleuch Dock Road and Farm Street there lies Cavendish Park, which was originally made up of eight large semi-detached villas built in a consistent architectural style and material to the Devonshire buildings. The villas at

Cavendish Park (1875) were owned by the Furness Railway Company. Housing for professionals was limited, and the Villas were provided to accommodate essential personnel of a high rank such as accountants, managers, and the Harbour Master. After the Vickers purchase of the dock area and a realisation that once again, housing was at a premium, the 'D' Road housing estate (built by Vickers in collaboration with the Council) literally backed on to the Villas, to the extent that these tall and well laid out buildings are no longer easily visible outside the rear curtilage of the houses on the North side of Dundee Street. The buildings are boarded up and they fall within the BAE Systems compound. Four of the buildings have been demolished.



The Dundee Street entrance to the BAE compound is seen on the left. Cavendish Park is visible from here (centre) and to the rear of houses on the north side of Dundee Street (right)

Only one side of James Watt Terrace falls in the Conservation Area (*below left*). This is the edge of the Conservation Area - (*below centre*) and the rear of the buildings meets a brick wall (*below right*) and look out over the Port Area. This terrace was built, in a similar vein to the Villas, to house more senior staff; in this case the foremen.



High Level Bridge

Until 1867 access to Barrow Island was only possible by boat or ford. The first bridge over to the Island was opened when Devonshire Dock was completed in 1867 and passed over the lock between Walney Channel and Devonshire Dock. A swing bridge at quay level was built between Devonshire Dock and Buccleuch Dock, but this could only cope with limited traffic (Source NWEM, 30/06/1969). The access to the Island was so inconvenient that a new gateway was necessary and involved descending to the wall of the dock and back up again.

Furness Railway Company therefore obtained an Act of Parliament in 1881 to construct the High Level Bridge. It was brought into use in April 1882 for pedestrian use, with vehicular traffic allowed later. From this point onwards, this gateway to the Island remained in use for more than 80 years, with regular tram traffic as well as road users, and it was rebuilt in 1967. It is for this reason that High Level Bridge, while historically significant and a gateway to the Conservation Area is not part of the designated Area itself.

Building Quality and Contribution

Dominant Style and Period

The layout and the majority of the built fabric of the Conservation Area as it stands today date from the 1880s to 1890s. As a result of this intense building activity in little more than a decade, the dominant style is Robust, Victorian, Industrial, brick built buildings and is shared by the residential buildings as well as the industrial buildings.

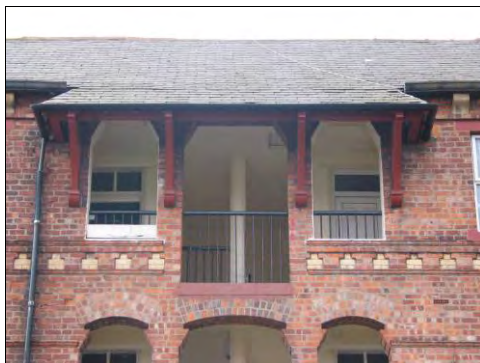
Essential Characteristics

A characteristic of all the tenement blocks on the Island is the open passageways to the communal hallway areas. The tenement blocks facing Michaelson Road do not have exposed entranceways to the main thoroughfare, and they are set slightly higher than the other blocks and feature basements.



A unique by-product of the open stairwell in the tenement blocks is a display of resident character, whether intentional or not (above left), from the parking of a bike to hanging out washing. Residents of the tenements hanging their washing out are evident also in historic photographs of the buildings shortly after construction (above right in Egerton Court, 1908).

Overhanging roof details over the communal passageway space is a detail shared by all the blocks, including Island Road tenement block (*left*), Devonshire Building (*centre*), and Ramsden Dock Road block (*right*).





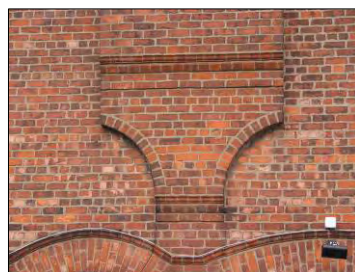
Common architectural details on James Watt Terrace in the Conservation Area such as the decorative brickwork and chimney details (*left and centre*) is shared with details on the Island Road Tenement Block (*right*).

Individual Elements and Local Details

The Devonshire Buildings on Michaelson Road have St Bees Sandstone, which is different stonework to the other tenement blocks (*below left*), although it is the same as the BAE Systems buildings on Michaelson Road. The brickwork on the Ship Street Tenement Block is plain, as is the Island Road Tenement Block (*below right*), which is itself in slightly poorer repair.



There is common brickwork detail seen throughout the Conservation Area with common chimney details that are present not just on all the tenement blocks (except the sandstone buildings on Michaelson Road) but also on James Watt Terrace. The Devonshire Building, particularly where recently restored, shows the highlights in the stonework that mark out the entranceways and windows, particularly at the Devonshire Hotel.



The Devonshire Buildings have different detailing and materials from other residential buildings in the Area (left). The Centre and right images show common brickwork detailing shared by many of houses and flats.

Key Buildings

The Conservation Area contains a number of key buildings, the listed buildings of which are listed below. The tenement blocks facing Michaelson Road, Island Road and Ramsden Dock Road are Grade II* listed and as such are considered to be of greater importance. The impact and visual prominence of these buildings is integral to the Conservation Area. The key unlisted buildings are detailed below as well.



Fig 8 – Listed Buildings

Listed

- St John's Church, Island Road (Grade II)
- Devonshire Buildings, Michaelson Road/Buxton Street (Grade II*)
- Devonshire Buildings, Michaelson Road/Ship Street (Grade II*)
- BAE Shop, north of Bridge Road (Grade II)
- BAE Shop, south of Bridge Road (Grade II)
- Tenement Block, Island Road (Grade II*)
- Tenement Block, Ramsden Dock Road (Grade II*)
- Tenement Block, Ship Street (Grade II)
- Tenement Block, Barque Street (Grade II)
- Tenement Block, Brig Street (Grade II)
- Tenement Block, Schooner Street (Grade II)
- King's Gate Office, Michaelson Road (east) (Grade II)
- Armament Drawing Office, Michaelson Road (west) (Grade II)

Unlisted

- Egerton Buildings, Siemens Street
- James Watt Terrace
- St Patrick's Church and surrounding buildings, Michaelson Road, Farm Street
- Cavendish Park Villas, off Dundee Street
- Barrow Island County Primary School

Building Materials and the Public Realm

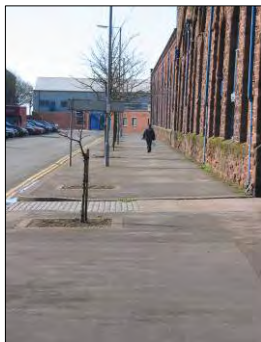
Building Materials

St Bee's sandstone is a distinctive dark red Permo–Triassic rock with a fine grain and is a popular stone in Cumbria, due to its inherent strength and resistance to weathering and it is prevalent within the Barrow Island Conservation Area. It is so named because it forms St Bees Head near Whitehaven. There was a mine for St Bee's sandstone in Hawcoat near Barrow and in construction of the Town Hall (completed in 1887), the Council had insisted on the use of local sandstone from Hawcoat quarry and this shares same distinctive look as the Devonshire Buildings fronting Michaelson Road and some of the buildings for St Patrick's Church. Furness Abbey, begun in the 13th Century is also a prominent local building constructed in the material.

Pavements and Road Surfacing

A noticeable characteristic of the Conservation Area is the wide pavements, which help emphasise the distinct boulevard impression given in this area. There are street trees located on the wide pavements on Michaelson Road and the presence of street trees at this location dates back to the construction of the Factory buildings and tenement blocks.

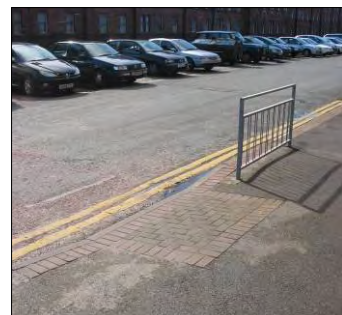
The centre of Michaelson Road is an example of the industrial past being still on display in the area. A primary reason for the width of Michaelson Road when constructed was to accommodate a tram line. While the railway is no longer active, to the south of Bridge Street where cars park in the central reservation, the cobbled surface and railway tracks that were used for industrial purposes are still on the surface. This contributes the industrial heritage and historical authenticity of the Conservation Area, and also seen further along Michaelson Road with tracks stretching across the highway from one BAE Systems building to another.



The wide pavements along Michaelson Road (far left). The tram line tracks and cobbles (centre) running down the road contribute to the character of Michaelson Road, as do the tracks between sheds.

However, the streets trees present along the major boulevards are not of a scale to create a great impact on such a boulevard setting. The materials used for adopted highways are poor and noticeably inappropriate for the Conservation Area, however they were in place when the Conservation Area designation was put in place.

There are poor edges and crossing points on the pavements, and while on major thoroughfares such as Michaelson Road it is noticeable that there is use of differing materials and dropped curving, (*right*) as is legally required for such crossing points, but there is little continuity with or thematic link to the Conservation Area status and the area's history or use of materials. Most of the paving is made up of



conventional slab surfacing or tarmac paving, while at crossing points, there is some use of different materials from the rest of the tarmac pavement, but tactile paving is not employed.

Condition of the Conservation Area

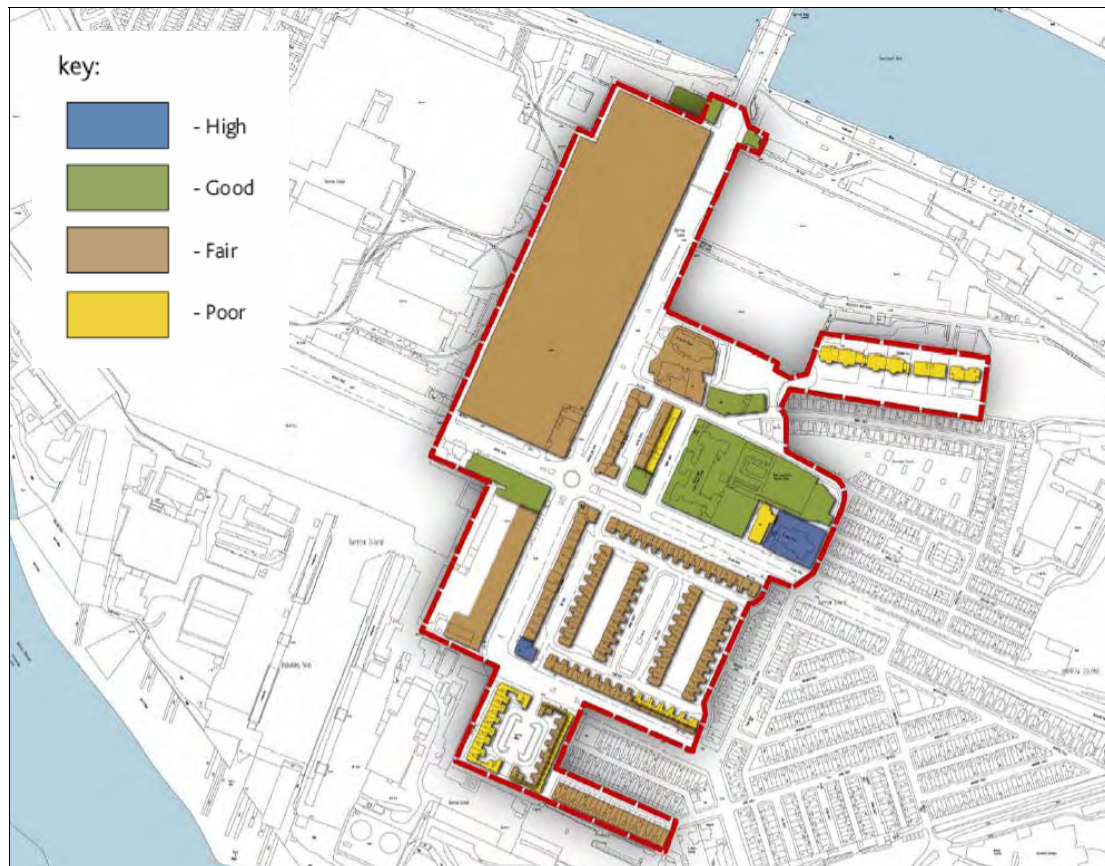


Fig 9 – Quality of Built Fabric

The Ramsden Dock Road/Sloop Street tenement block is the only tenement block between Ramsden Dock Road and Island Road that is not listed. The block is built in conventional brick rather than local sandstone and some of the building can be seen to be in poor repair, especially when viewed from Sloop Street/Schooner Street. Much of the retail and other commercial land use in the Conservation Area is in the form of small units located on the corners of the Devonshire Buildings. The presentation of the two retail units on Island Road is very poor, with poor quality signage inconsistent with the Conservation Area status and very poor for a listed building. The Trading Post on the corner of Ramsden Dock Road and Schooner Street is an old retail unit like the others, but is only partially occupied selling second hand furniture and other goods. The condition of the retail unit in this tenement block is very poor, although the building is not listed.



The poor quality of the Ramsden Dock Road block seen from Sloop Street (left). Poor quality signage and shop frontage on Island Road (centre), and on Ramsden Dock Road (right)

The Devonshire Hotel Public House is part of the Devonshire Buildings and is the only part of the tenement blocks in the Conservation Area that has undergone recent restoration works. The sandstone facing material used to be rendered at some point, although it now has been stripped back to its original bright red appearance. This is in contrast to the immediately adjacent areas of the same building, which are evidence of a far lower standard of repair and maintenance, and the occasional scrawl of graffiti.



The refurbished Devonshire Public House (middle and far left). The maintenance and repair of surrounding parts of the building can be seen middle and far right.

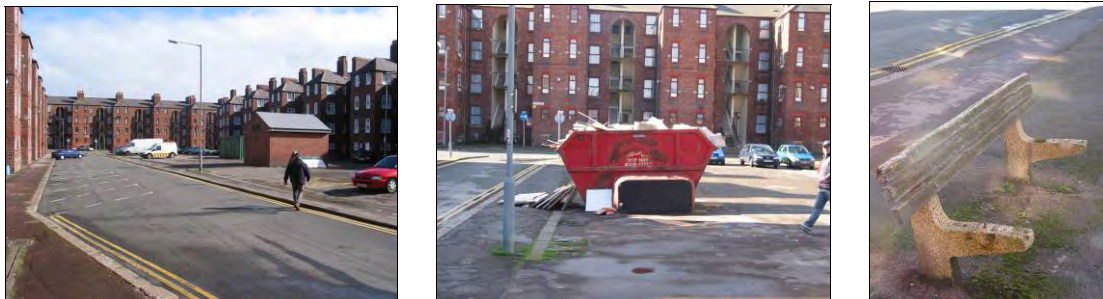
Aside from the two Devonshire Buildings facing Michaelson Road which use St Bee's sandstone, all the other tenement blocks are faced with normal bricks. The tenement blocks all have been broadly well maintained and re-pointed and repaired where necessary, with the exception of Egerton Buildings, which are in poor repair.

The entranceway steps to the rear of the Devonshire Buildings fronting Michaelson Road can be seen to be raised and accessed by steps. The open porches show inconsistency in building materials with the sandstone stone of the rest of the buildings, the porches being made of cast concrete bricks. The porch steps, as well as being inconsistent in terms of materials, are in very poor condition and appear to be in need of repair. While all the tenement blocks also have exposed communal hallways, the stairwells are accessed from ground level, without the need for stone stairs. There is extensive CCTV installation in the Conservation Area and all the tenement blocks, whether listed or not, have multiple units installed. The entire road up to the doorways is adopted highway, which helps explain why paving up to the tenement blocks is poor quality and often inconsistent.



Stairwells to the rear of Devonshire Buildings (left), paving adjacent to the tenement blocks (centre), and building mounted CCTV (right)

The Car Park at Barque Street and Brig Street has no landscaping at all and has received attention from shipping containers, an electricity substation and when the site was visited there was a skip being haphazardly filled by workmen. There is very little street furniture, and what there is does not appear to be distinctive or appropriate to the Conservation Area, nor is it in necessarily good repair.



The Barque Street/Brig Street car park (left, and centre). Vandalised poor quality street furniture (right).

The Egerton Buildings, which lie to the south of the Conservation Area, are in poor condition with poor brickwork facing, particularly on seaward face, which is also partially rendered. The render is in poor condition and damp in places as well. The condition of the buildings betrays the low quality of maintenance that has taken place, inappropriate to the Conservation Area Status. Vandalism to this building is also evident, although on the evidence of site visits vandalism does not to be especially prominent in the wider Conservation Area where there is less neglect of the buildings.



Egerton Buildings (middle and far left) have many windows boarded up. The seaward face of the building (middle right) is in poor condition and there is evidence of continued vandalism and poor quality repairs (far right)

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Key Issues

- **Industrial / Commercial vehicular traffic**
Industrial traffic must pass through the Conservation Area to access the Port Area, and even though the Port Area is subject to a regeneration masterplan, it still remains an active port and as such there is industrial traffic regularly passing through.
- **Parking restrictions**
The parking restrictions that are in place in the Conservation Area were put in place to combat parking problems that arose when there were higher levels of employees located at BAE Systems on Barrow Island. Since the staff levels are now lower, reducing the need for such parking restrictions, the parking regime should be revised to accommodate the current vehicle use patterns of residents.
- **Building condition**
Parts of the Ramsden Dock Road Building on the corner of Anchor Road are poorly maintained, and in particular the Egerton Buildings are in very poor condition.
- **Uniformly poor street furniture**
What street furniture there is in the Conservation Area is in uniformly poor condition and is not of a high standard of design.
- **Under use of Egerton Buildings**
The Egerton Buildings have a very low occupancy level and, linked to the poor physical condition of the building, raises questions over the future of the buildings.
- **Poor paving materials and streetscape**
The paving on the streets of the Conservation Area is of a standard design with no reference to the materials used in the construction of the tenement blocks or other Conservation Area buildings. The wide pavements and major roads are a significant feature of the area and are not reflected in the present streetscape aside from the cobbles and rails set in the centre of parts of Michaelson Road, which are present more through there being less need to remove the cobbles and rails rather than the desire to protect and reflect the heritage of the Island. The Conservation Area was designated in 1994, and since the designation was put in place works to the streetscape are required to materially improve the quality and standards.
- **Inconsistent approach to signage**
The signage in the Conservation Area is inconsistent, with in some places older, possibly original signage indicating street names on the tenement blocks (Steamer Street), while in some cases there is new signage of a different design (Corner of Schooner Street).
- **Non-controlled external telecommunications to the tenement blocks**
There are CCTV units on all the buildings, and satellite dishes and cabling on all the tenement blocks including the listed buildings. It is most noticeable on the tenement facing Ramsden Dock Road, although this may be due in no small part to the directional requirements of aerials and satellite dishes.
- **Public/Private Open Space**

There is very little green space or private open space for residents of the Conservation Area. The majority of housing in the Conservation Area is in the format of Tenement Blocks which, when built were done so for their space efficiency, low cost and proximity to heavy industrial sites. As a characteristic of the Island the lack of private space is unlikely to be overcome, but the public space present is often of poor quality. What green spaces there are are poorly laid out and in some cases unusable, and the trees on Michaelson Road and Ramsden Dock Road are not of an appropriate scale to contribute successfully to the impact of the major boulevards.

- **Long-Term Building Maintenance**

Building repairs and grants to owners have dried up, and due to the multiple occupiers in particularly the tenement blocks, there could be long-term maintenance issues arising in other tenement blocks as well as the Egerton Buildings.

Actions Required

- Landscaping and paving works to major public thoroughfares, specifically Michaelson Road and Ramsden Dock Road including paving and street trees
- Uniformly high quality and consistent street furniture
- Revised and updated children's play equipment
- Maintenance or commissioning works to the remaining Cavendish Park Villas
- Landscaping works around St John's Church on Island to improve the setting of this unusual building.

Egerton Buildings

- Action to be taken with regard to the Egerton Buildings – A decision needs to be made as to whether the building can be maintained to an appropriate standard or whether it should be replaced with an appropriate new development.

PPG15 discusses the actions required in this area. It states in paragraph 4.17 that many conservation areas include buildings that detract from the character or appearance of the area and states that their replacements should be "a stimulus to high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area". They should be designed with respect for their context and the character of the Conservation Area. For such development proposals, Authorities may need to ask for detailed plans and drawings of the proposal and its details and elevations, and design briefs are potentially a valuable tool to be used.

The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. The primary concern is therefore in determining whether the building contributes to the character of the Conservation Area or not.

The Egerton Buildings are located at the junction of Michaelson Road and Ramsden Dock Road, reinforcing the boundary and layout of the Conservation Area. They are also the only tenement blocks with a square self contained layout. Overall, as one of the original tenement blocks on Barrow Island,

despite their poor condition they make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

Given that the building makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, paragraph 3.19 of PPG15 therefore details the considerations to which Local Authorities should pay special attention (beyond the general considerations of the building's importance, details, setting, and regeneration benefits);

- a. The condition of the building should be assessed and its running costs and maintenance regime should be assessed based on consistent long-term assumptions. The assessment should also take into account the technical performance of the building including the function of its physical layout and the attractiveness of its design.
- b. The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use must be assessed as consent to demolish the building would not be expected to be granted without evidence of efforts to continue the use or find appropriate alternative uses for the building.
- c. The merits of alternative buildings on the site should also be assessed and are a material consideration to the planning process. The regeneration benefits in some instances of redeveloping a building may be substantial and must be weighed against the arguments for retaining the building

These three considerations are set out for listed buildings, and whilst the Egerton Buildings are not listed, procedures in Conservation Areas over demolition remains much the same as listed building consent applications and the same procedure should be observed in assessing any proposals for the future of this site.

Boundary

The Conservation Area boundary runs around the locally important Residential, Industrial and Community areas of Barrow Island, dating as far back as the 1870s. It encompasses the historic facades of the industrial buildings, the tenement blocks (1873-1882) for workers, the south side of James Watt Terrace, which housed the foremen of the works, and Cavendish Park Villas to the north of Farm Street which housed the Managers of workers. It also includes the community facilities along Island Road and along Farm Street up to the BAE Systems entrance behind which lies Cavendish Park Villas. In light of the appraisal undertaken there are a number of areas where there could be possible boundary changes:

- **Bridges** – The Conservation Area does not include High Level Bridge, the primary gateway to the Island from the Town Centre. Although a bridge has existed in this location since much of the development on the Island took place, the bridge was rebuilt in the 1960s to a new design. Therefore, it is recommended that High Level Bridge not be included in the Conservation Area.
- **Docks** – The Port area for Barrow is one of the largest in England, and is a unique development, primarily reclaimed during the Victorian era. The first dock, Devonshire Dock, was opened in 1867 although by the time Cavendish Dock was opened in 1879, it had become irrelevant. Cavendish Dock is a

unique area, a body of water that due to a higher water temperature maintains a unique ecosystem and is widely considered a heritage asset.

Expanding the Conservation Area designation to cover part or all of the dock system would create a wide area that could prove difficult to manage and covering a variety of periods and land uses. The port area is also actively used and is the focus of a recent regeneration Masterplan. Were the port area to be considered for Conservation Area Status it would be recommended to consider the docks separately from the Island's existing designation. The environmental assets associated with Cavendish Dock are already covered by Ramsar and other environmental designations. Therefore it is recommended that it should not be considered as an extension to the Conservation Area.

- **Housing** – The wider housing on the Island focusing on the 'A' Streets and the 'D' Streets immediately adjoins the Conservation Area, but as the houses date from the early 1900s they do not have architecturally significant details or form to recommend them. There are no significant or listed buildings in the surrounding streets either.

These houses were built for workers, just like the tenement blocks, in a deal between Vickers and the Council. However, the planned community developments of Vickers Ltd in the 20th Century are already detailed on Walney Island's Vickerstown, which is subject to Conservation Area status.

8. APPENDICES AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Appendix 1 – Timeline of Barrow Island

1726	Michaelson Mansion built on Barrow Island
1843	Furness Railway Act
1846	Furness Railway opened
1848	Barrow Harbour Act
1857	Railway service from Barrow to Lancaster opened
1863	Barrow Island purchased from the Michaelson estate by James Ramsden for the purposes of the Furness Railway Company
1863	The Railway Company officially becomes the Harbour Authority
1866	James Ramsden designated as Furness Railway Company Director
1867	Charter of Incorporation to the town of Barrow-in-Furness granted by the Queen
1867	Devonshire Dock was opened by the Duke of Devonshire on 19 th of September
1871	Barrow Shipbuilding Company formed
1872	Engineering Works established, demolishing the mansion and farm
1872	James Ramsden knighted for his services to Barrow
1872	Barrow was created as an independent port on November 1 st
1873	Buccleuch Dock opened
1873	The first vessel launched from Barrow Shipbuilding Works is the Steam Yacht Aries on May 12 th
1873	Construction of Devonshire Buildings begins
1879	Ramsden Dock and Cavendish Dock opened. In total, Furness Railway spent over £2 million on the docks system over 16 years, but Cavendish Dock was never commercially used.
1882	Construction on Devonshire Buildings completed
1882	Central Barrow railway station opens
1886	Shipyard builds its first submarine
1887	Naval Construction and Armaments Company is created to consolidate shipbuilding on military enterprises
1889	Barrow becomes a County Borough
1896	Sir James Ramsden dies on 19 th October
1897	Vickers purchases the shipyard for a sum of £425, 000
1901	The Royal Navy's first submarine is built in secrecy at Barrow
1911	Naval Airship Number 1 (Mayfly) launched from floating hangar at Cavendish Dock
1914	"Vickers housing" (Cavendish Park Estate) completed on Barrow Island
1935	St John Church of England Church built on Island Road
1960	The Royal Navy's first nuclear powered submarine and first ballistic nuclear submarine are both built at Barrow
1977	Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited (VSEL) nationalised
1992	A new entrance to Ramsden Dock is opened on the 125 th anniversary of Barrow Port. The port is now operated by Associated British Ports
1999	Re-privatised VSEL merged to create BAE Systems
2001	BAE Systems celebrated a centenary of Royal Navy submarine manufacture at Barrow

Appendix 2 – Further Reference

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ISBN 0 9465 2205

Echoes – Barrow in the Thirties
Bryn Trescatheric
1986
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ISBN 0 9465 2206 5

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Bryn Trescatheric
1992
43 Lord Roberts Street, Barrow-in-Furness
(No ISBN)

The Last Place God Made – A History of Victorian Barrow
By Bryn Trescatheric
1998
Printed by Trinity Press
(No ISBN)

Barrow-in-Furness Remembered
Compiled by Bill Myers
2000
Tempus Publishing
ISBN 0 7524 2083 6

Barrow-in-Furness Port Art & Landscape Strategy
Final Report
By Gillespies and Hope London Morris
March 2006

Borough of Barrow-in-Furness Council
Housing Condition Survey
April 2006

Newspaper articles out of North Western Evening Mail from the archive of
Barrow Local Studies Library
(Newspaper references in text referred to as NWEM followed by date)

Barrow Reference Library

Cumbria Record Office and Local Studies Library
140 Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria
LA14 1XW

Appendix 3 – Web Links

Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council
www.barrowbc.gov.uk

Genuki
UK & Ireland Genealogy
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/LAN/BarrowinFurness/>

The Barrow Island Website
<http://www.barrow-island.com/>

The Southlakes Website
<http://www.southlakes-uk.co.uk/>

Barrow-in-Furness Dock Museum
<http://www.dockmuseum.org.uk/>

Vickers Photographic Archive
<http://www.dockmuseum.org.uk/archive/index.asp>

The Submariners Association
Barrow Branch
<http://www.submariners.co.uk/>

The Submarine Heritage Centre
<http://www.submarineheritage.com/>

Through Mighty Seas
Merchant Sailing Ships of the NW of England
www.mightyseas.co.uk

North Western Evening Mail
Local Newspaper
www.nwemail.co.uk