

Central Barrow Conservation Area Appraisal

June 2005

Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council



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Summary of the special interest of the Conservation Area

The Central Barrow Conservation Area incorporates a layout of streets, which characterises the 'boom-town' spirit of the middle of the 19th century. The strong physical and visual connections between Duke Street and the industrial areas adjacent, highlight the almost 'stage-set' nature of the buildings fronting these broad avenues, and capture an important element of the historic development of Barrow, as something of a fragile, commercially-driven opportunity, rather than the more sustainable and robust growth pattern of a more conventional settlement.

Several negative factors are identified: throughout the area as a whole there is a general poor standard of maintenance as well as some vacant buildings, particularly upper floors, which has led to loss of architectural and heritage details; there are several gap sites within the area, and Ramsden Square in particular, suffers from a lack of 'completeness' in respect of buildings around its perimeter; the residential parts of the area have suffered from incremental changes to windows, doors and the size and proportion of openings; the retail vitality within Duke Street is fragile and there are several vacant shops; other retail units incorporate crude shop fronts and signage, detrimental to the overall heritage quality of the area; Abbey Road incorporates several large buildings, some of which are not in active use, with a consequent impact on the vitality of the streetscape as well as the potential loss of the original details and architectural features of the buildings themselves.

Management and enhancement proposals are described including: potential changes to the boundary; the opportunities for enhancement, with controls using technical guidance and a potential Article 4 Direction; and the involvement of the community.

The aim of this Conservation Area Appraisal is to assist the Council to protect and enhance the heritage while enabling the public to recognise the benefits and their own responsibilities.



View north west along Duke Street, across Ramsden Square from 1940

1. Background

1.1 Current status of Central Barrow Conservation Area

The Central Barrow Conservation Area was designated by Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council in 1981 and covers an area of 17.1 hectares. Figure 1 identifies the current boundary and highlights the listed buildings within the area.

1.2 Statutory background

Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Conservation Area designation is more dependent on the overall quality and interest of an area, rather than individual buildings, although it is common for such areas to contain a number of Listed Buildings.

Designation as a conservation area has a number of implications. Most importantly, the Local Authority is required to give special attention to preserving and enhancing the conservation area in exercising its planning functions. Also, planning consent must be gained for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development, such as various types of cladding, dormer windows, satellite dishes and radio masts/antennae. Consent is further required for the demolition of buildings within conservation areas. Designation also brings controls over works to trees.

The protection of an area does not end with conservation area designation. PPG15 “Planning and the Historic Environment” urges Local Authorities to prepare detailed assessments of the special interest, character and appearance of their conservation areas. A character appraisal defines and analyses the special qualities and the architectural and historic interest that warranted the conservation area designation. PPG15 states that “the more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area”. Character appraisals should therefore provide a framework against

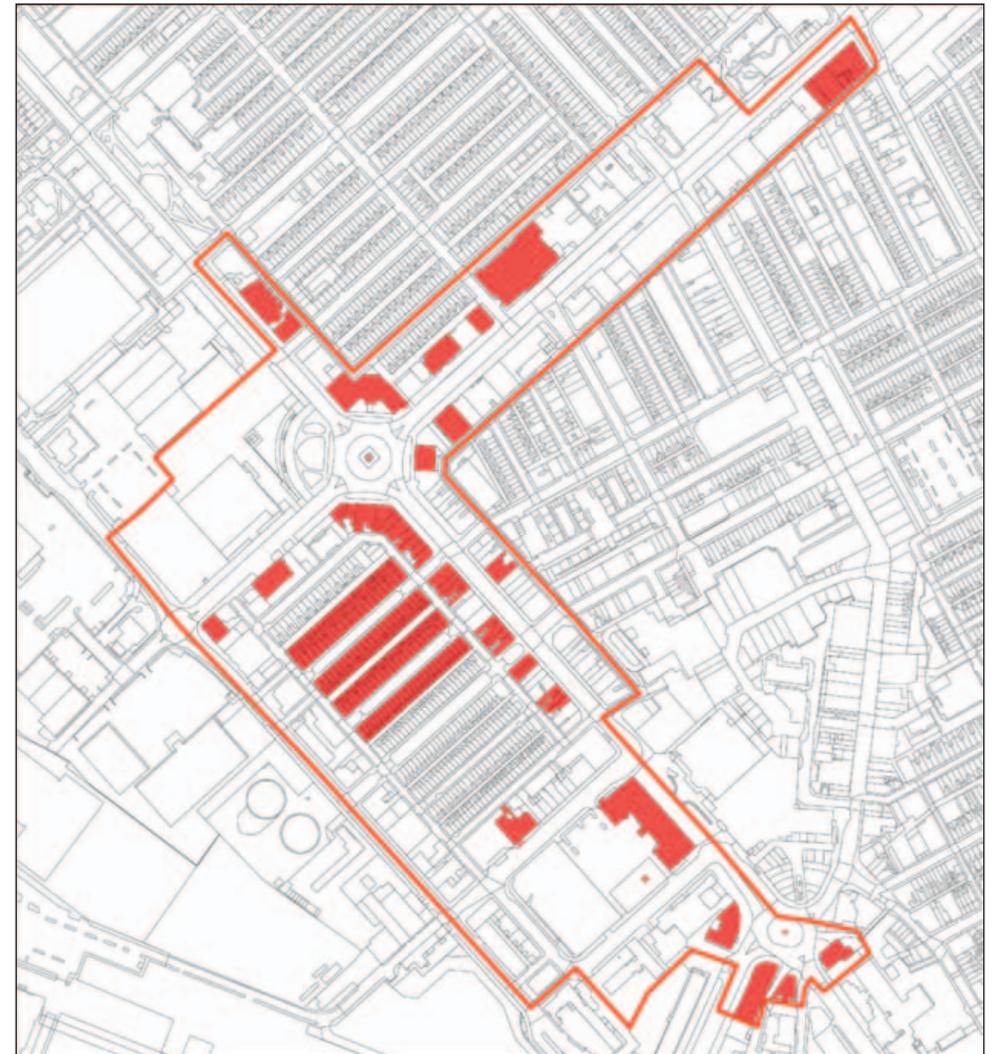


Figure 1: Conservation Area Boundary and Location of Listed Buildings

which development proposals can be assessed for their appropriateness in the historic environment.

Local Authorities are under a duty from time to time to “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas” (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (LBCA)) Act 1990, s.71).

1.3 Planning policy framework

POLICY D15 of the Barrow-in-Furness Local Plan 2005-2006 states that ‘Development within or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Area’.

Other, more specific Policies relevant to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the Central Barrow Conservation Area include: Policy D17- reuse of empty Listed, (or prominent), buildings in conservation areas; Policy D18- Alteration and additions to Listed buildings or those properties affected by an Article Four Direction; Policy D19- Development around the Town Hall area; Policy D20- Specific sites in the Central Barrow Conservation Area suitable for infill development; Policy D30- Protection of trees within conservation areas; and Policy D41- Shopfront design and advertisement displays.

All of the above Policies are set out in full in Appendix A.

1.4 The Purpose of the Conservation Area appraisal

This Appraisal has been prepared in response to the guidance outlined above and, as such, discharges the Borough Council’s obligations and duties under the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, as well as complying with English Heritage’s recommendations. The study may subsequently form a Supplementary Planning Document to the Adopted Barrow-in-Furness Local Plan and will be a material consideration when considering applications for development within the conservation area.



Schneider Square and the Town Hall, circa 1910.

2. Location and setting

2.1 Location and population

Barrow-in Furness is situated at the southernmost tip of the Furness Peninsular, in South West Cumbria, linked to Kendal, and the M6 motorway, via the A590.

The Central Barrow Conservation Area incorporates the civic core of the town, including the Town Hall and Public Library, as well as a group of residential streets, which accommodate approximately 250 houses.

The population of Barrow at the time of the 2001 census was 71,979 in comparison to an overall population for the County of Cumbria of 487,607. The 1991 census figure for Barrow was 73,125.

2.2 Landscape setting

Although the area of Cumbria as a whole incorporates the dramatic scenery of the Cumbrian Mountains and the Lake District National Park, the setting and context of Barrow-in-Furness is, by comparison, relatively flat. Although views towards the hills to the north are possible from the town centre, they are not dominant or significant on the setting or character of the area. What is of more significance is the adjacency of the industrial quarter to the southwest of the town centre. The ground level falls to the southwest, such that Hindpool Road is several metres below the level of Duke Street, allowing views towards the industrial buildings and dockside development to the west and south of the conservation area, including: along Abbey Road; glimpse views from Duke Street; and radial views between buildings around Schneider Square.

The axial nature of the street layout forms axial views both within, and on the approach to, the conservation area. The principal approach to the town, the A590, links to the town centre to approach along Duke Street, arriving at Ramsden Square. A secondary axial approach is from the northeast, which comes into the town centre along Abbey Road. Approaches to the town centre from within the Barrow area itself include the approach over the xxx



The gridded layout of streets allows for long views, such as here along St Vincent Street, seen from Duke Street. These are accentuated by the scale and visual dominance of the industrial buildings around the dock to the south west of the conservation area.



From the edge of Schneider Square the ground level falls towards the south and west allowing long views towards the industrial buildings and structures beyond.

bridge, which connects with Duke Street at Schneider Square.

These principal views into, and out of, the conservation area are indicated in the photographs below and right and indicated in figure 2.



The approach over Michaelson Road Bridge arrives at Schneider Square, although the setting is dominated by the 20th century buildings to the left of the road and beyond the square, due to their significant scale. The exposed flank of the buildings to the right of the picture, which are not within the conservation area itself, also contribute to a somewhat bleak character, which is not softened by the street trees found in Abbey Road and Duke Street.



The combination of the spire of Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church, the avenue tree planting within the streetscape, the distinctive profile of the tower of the Town Hall and the formal space of Ramsden Square, gives the approach to the conservation area, and town centre, from the northwest a very formal quality.



The approach to the conservation area, and the town centre, from the northeast, crosses the railway, the slight elevation of which accentuates the axial view along Abbey Road and beyond to the large industrial buildings to the southwest. The Grade II listed Duke Hotel, to the left side of the photo, forms an important gateway building to the conservation area and the town centre as a whole, accentuated by the open aspect in front of the building.

Key views within the conservation area

The most notable views within the Conservation Area are those along the axes of Abbey Road and Duke Street, as seen in photographs below and right and indicated on figure 2.



The tower of the Town Hall and the spire of the Saint Mary's Church form the two vertical landmarks at either end of Duke Street, within the conservation area, emphasised by the strong axial nature of the street. The pedestrianised space in front of the Town hall allows the room to appreciate these vistas and the scale of the two landmark buildings is sufficient to provide a significant impact despite being some 500 metres apart.



Ramsden Square forms an important arrival space for the town centre, from which the axial qualities of Duke Street, and the vista to the Town Hall are very apparent.



View to the northeast along Abbey Road, looking past Ramsden Square to the substantial buildings adjacent to Abbey Road. The unifying element of the boulevard tree planting occurs to both sides of Ramsden Square, creating a consistency of character despite the varied quality and character of the buildings within the streetscape.



Abbey Road is characterised by street trees and a series of relatively monolithic buildings, which collectively form an 'urban boulevard' within the town centre of Barrow.



The street trees within Abbey Road are of varying quality, size and condition. In places they do not provide an effective screen, or unifying element, to the streetscape, exposing the somewhat disjointed nature of the built form.

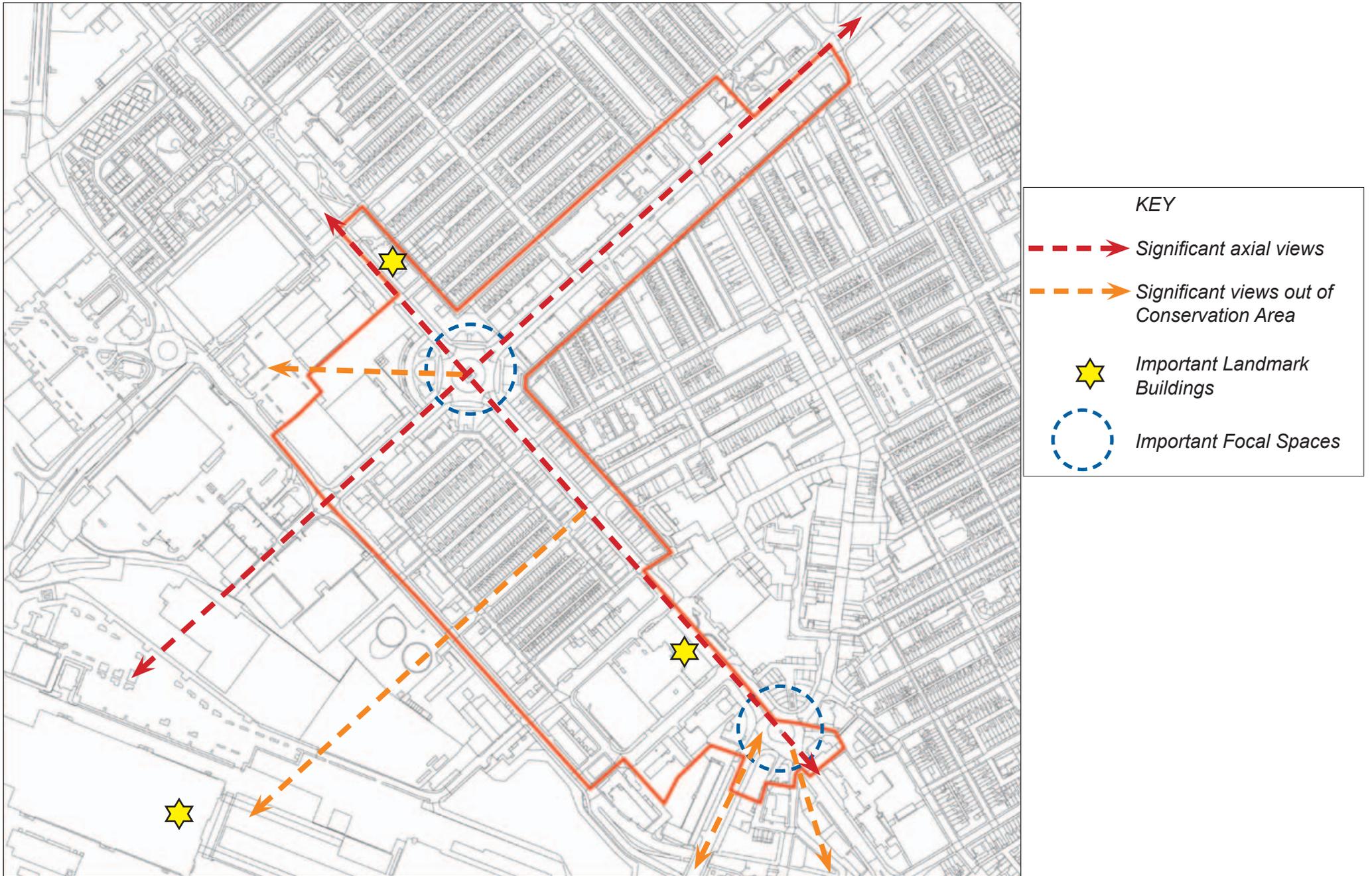


Figure 2: Landscape Setting and Key Views

3. Historic development

3.1 Origins and historic development of settlement

Early settlement

It appears that the earliest visitors to the Furness Peninsular were Mesolithic, (Middle Stone Age), followed by Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age people, although no evidence of their existence has been found within the Central Barrow area. There is very little evidence of Roman occupation in Furness. Although West Cumberland, Westmoreland and Furness were never conquered by the Angles, the multiplicity of Anglian place names in Low Furness proves Anglian colonisation: ie Dalton, Newton and Ulverston. During the 9th and 10th centuries Furness became a refuge for the Vikings, who essentially farmed the uplands. The name Barro derives from the Norse 'Barrai' meaning either 'bare island' or 'island off the headland'. It was therefore first given to what is now known as Barrow Island. The area we now know as Central Barrow was known as 'New Barrow' when developed at a later date.

The Domesday Book indicates that the Central Barrow area was uncultivated in the 11th century, probably still wooded, as it goes unmentioned. This appears to have been the case until 1190 when the original grange of the monks was situated somewhere near what is now Schneider Square, though no archaeological evidence exists.

By the middle of the 18th century Barrow consisted of eight houses, five of which were farmhouses and a population of about 50. Over the next century the population of Barrow grew slowly, reaching approximately 150 by the middle of the 19th century. It was essentially an agricultural community, although the shelter of Walney Island offered a safe harbour at Barrow and a small port of jetties developed to carry away Furness iron ore to smelting works in Wales and the Midlands, as evident in the map of 1847, figure 3. The current template of the town's streets has been superimposed on the 19th century map to indicate the relationship between the two.

The Furness Railway

The first significant step in the transformation of Barrow was the opening of the Furness Railway in 1846. Prior to this the potential of the mining was constrained by the primitive roads and the physical limitations of the carts

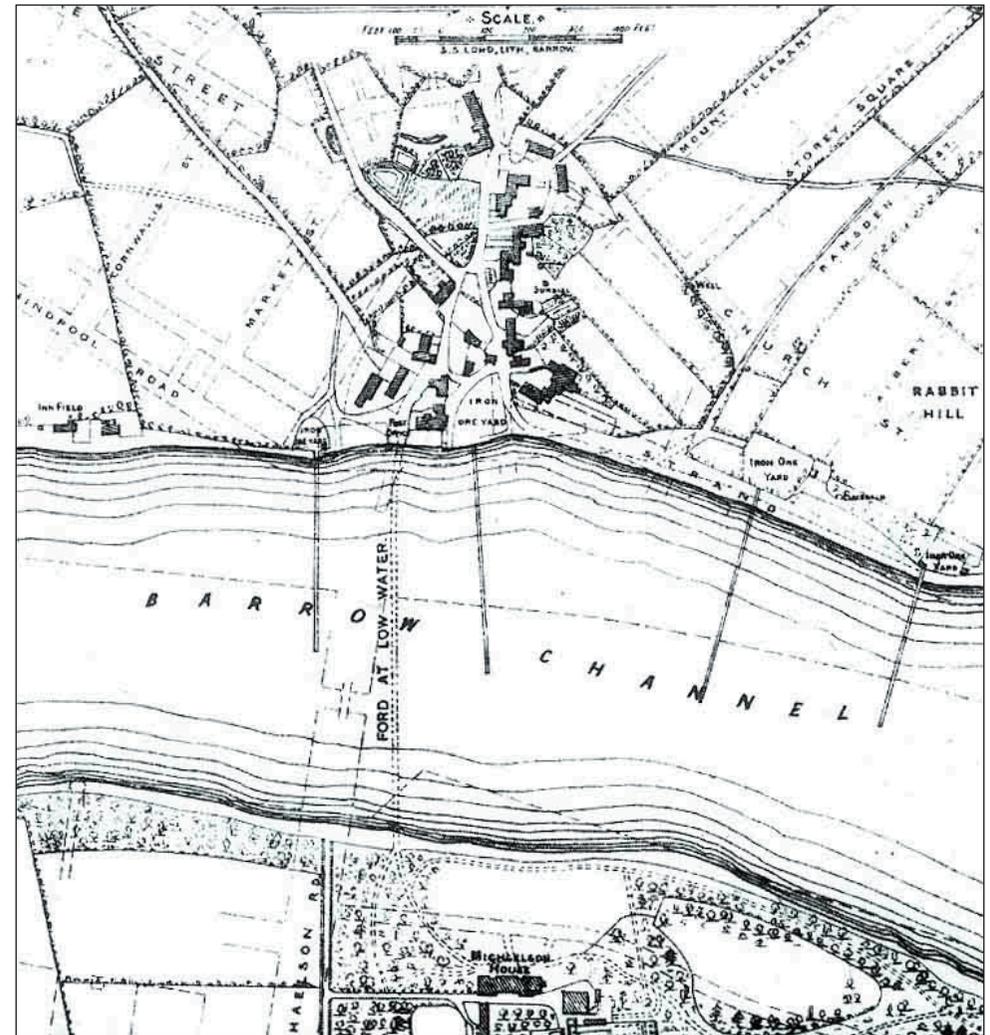


Figure 3: Historic Map: Plan of 1847

that carried the ore. The Furness Railway was intended to carry iron ore from Dalton and slate from Kirkby to the port at Barrow. At first the line was self-contained within Furness, but the network was gradually extended to connect more widely.

Iron and Steel

The next logical step was to create a local ironworks and the blast furnaces at Hindpool were built by Henry Schneider and his partner Robert Hannay, and started production in 1859.

Four years later, James Ramsden, managing director of the Furness Railway, and the Duke of Devonshire, (who with the Duke of Buccleuch owned most of Furness), visited Brown's steelworks in Sheffield where Hindpool pig iron was being used to make high quality steel. A steel plant was started at Barrow in 1865 and the following year it merged with Schneider and Hannay's ironworks to form the Barrow Haematite Steel Company, which was to be the engine that drove Barrow's growth for the next 30 years.

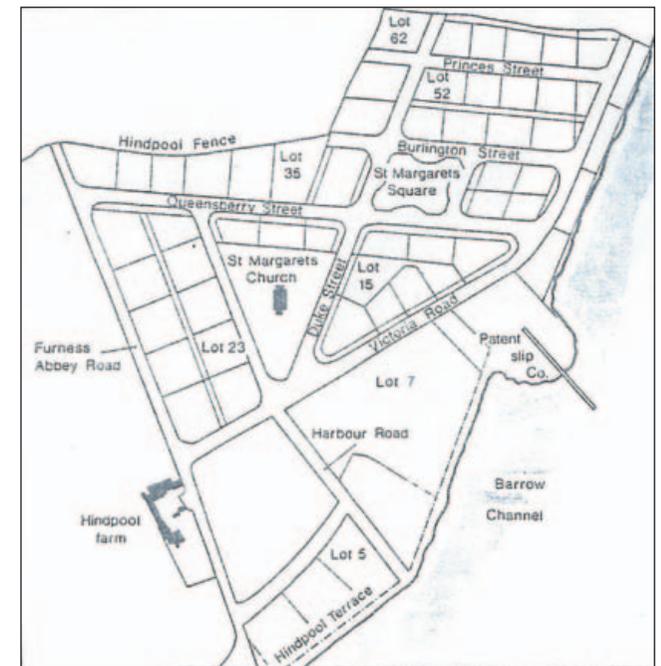
Alongside these industrial innovations there was a broader vision for the town of Barrow, albeit driven by the recognition that the workforce required to fuel the business needed to be housed. This pragmatic approach was the key to the simplicity and logic behind the commercially driven 'grid-iron' plan of streets structured around the principal axes of Duke Street and Abbey Road, which was the brain child of James Ramsden.

The potential for these grand plans had only been realised when 160 acres of land of the Cranke Estate at Hindpool, were offered for sale in 1854, to be bought by the Furness Railway for £7,000. The layout of the town might have been quite different however. At the auction of the land, a plan was published, by Job Bintley of Kendal, for a residential suburb of irregular avenues complete with sites for social amenity and use of the seafront for recreational purposes. It was Ramsden's vision that was to be pursued based on the maximisation of land use, ease of communications and the encouragement of investment by speculators. The commercial drive behind the vision also explains why, behind the grand avenues the vision was somewhat 'thin'.

The roller coaster of the economic fortunes of Barrow can be observed in the population figures for the town with phenomenal growth in the third quarter



Blast Furnaces, Hindpool, 1870's



Bintleys plan of 1854

of the 19th century from a population of 50 in 1850, 800 in 1859 and 45,000 in 1879 on the back of the iron and steel production and the demands for an extensive workforce.

Growth stalled in the last quarter of the 19th century, when technical innovations in steel making introduced more competition and diminishing reserves made Furness ore extraction more expensive. However, Barrow was to transform itself from a Steel town to a Shipyard town, which would see the population rise to 58,000 in 1901 to an estimated 90,000 in 1917 only to crash back to 74,200 in 1921 diminishing further to 66,300 in 1931. In 2001, approximately 57,000.

With thousands of workers flooding into Barrow in the 1860's and 70's, the growth of the place as a town was, at first, somewhat ad hoc with the industrial companies contracting builders to erect flats and houses, which were then rented to the workers. A significant step occurred in 1867 when the new town of Barrow formed its own Municipal Borough and Town Council, with James Ramsden as the town's first Mayor. The plan of 1867, figure 4, shows the spine of Duke Street to either side of which a grid of streets is laid out. To the south west of Duke Street is predominantly the industrial zone with two small clusters of residential streets, whilst to the north east of Duke Street, the rows of terraced dwellings accommodate the workforce. Ramsden Square and Abbey Road have been set out, but are not well defined by built form. The more informal arrangement of streets at the south eastern end of Duke Street indicates the location of the original village settlement at Barrow and explains the alignment of Dalton Road, which cuts across the rigid geometry of the grid. Schneider Square itself is not really apparent, other than as the south eastern termination of Duke Street. Proposals for the Town Hall were not to be finalised for another decade.

The Ordnance Survey plan of 1890, figure 5, shows the new Town Hall in front of what is known as Cavendish Square. Schneider Square has yet to be defined as a 'place' although the new connection to the south, to link across the docks, increases the significance of the space at the junction with Duke Street. Development along Duke Street is complete, south east of Ramsden Square, Whilst Ramsden Square itself, together with Abbey Road, are beginning to be developed in a piecemeal manner. Hindpool Road can be seen, as it remains today, as the dividing line between the employment zone to the south west and a more mixed use area of streets and blocks to



Figure 4: Historic Map: Ordnance Survey Plan of 1867

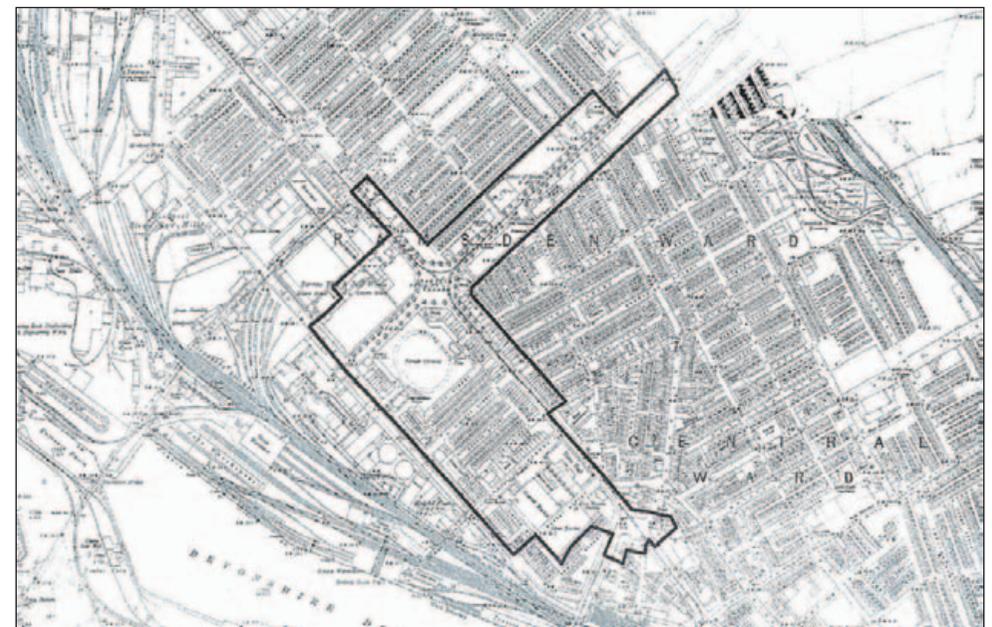


Figure 5: Historic Map: Ordnance Survey Plan of 1890

the north east. The Parade Ground, (indicated as Cricket Ground in 1867), is gradually being surrounded by new development.

By 1913, Figure 6, Schneider Square has been named and is more fully defined by the Hotel Majestic on its western side. The Parade Ground has been replaced with more streets of terraced housing, continuing the earlier grain. Ramsden Square and Abbey Road remain 'incomplete' in respect of built form to define them.

In the following twenty years there is relatively little change evident within the conservation area, as can be seen in the Ordnance Survey plan of 1933, Figure 7, although new development includes the Public Library on the north side of Ramsden Square and further incremental development on Abbey Road.

3.2 Archaeological significance

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Central Barrow Conservation Area. Although most of the conservation area was not developed until the latter half of the 19th century, the area around Schneider Square lies within the zone occupied by the earlier settlement. There may therefore be evidence below ground of earlier development, which is undisturbed.

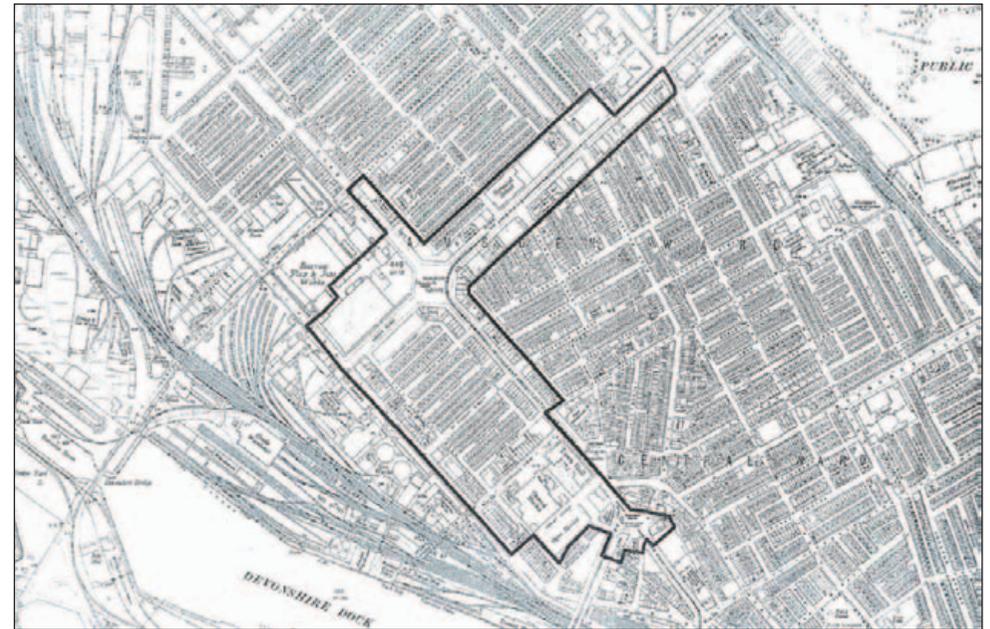


Figure 6: Historic Map: Ordnance Survey Plan of 1913

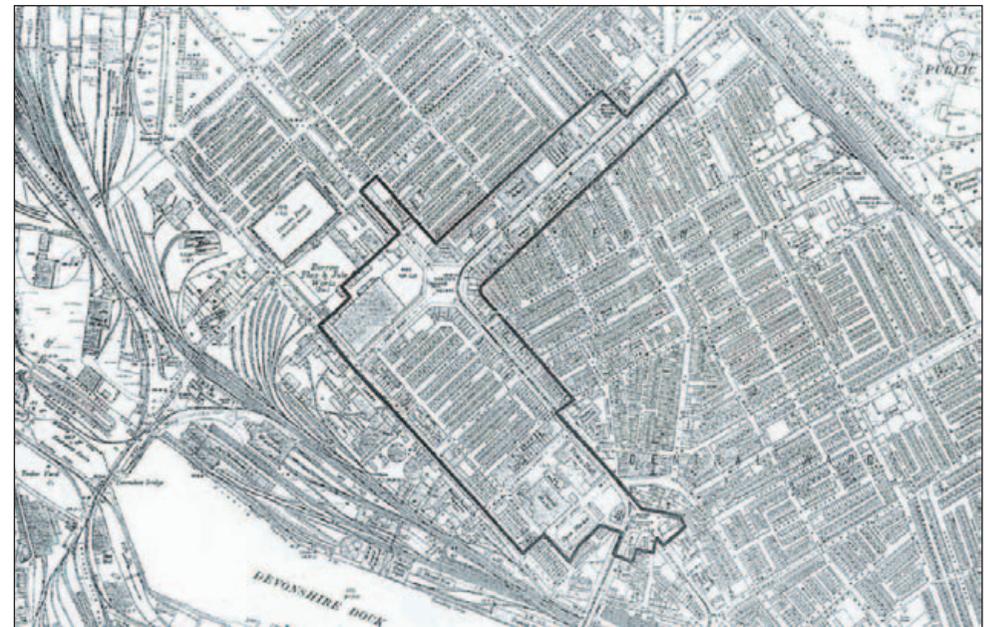


Figure 7: Historic Map: Ordnance Survey Plan of 1933

4. Character and appearance

4.1 Identification of Character Areas

The Central Barrow Conservation Area incorporates a significant part of the network of James Ramsden's gridded street layout, which can be divided into a series of sub areas, each of which displays different characteristics in respect of built form and general ambience. These include Duke Street and Abbey Road, (which in turn display a range of character changes along their length), Hindpool Road, and the network of residential streets between Duke Street and Hindpool Road. Each of these is described in more detail below.

4.2 Duke Street

Together with Abbey Road, Duke Street forms the principal axis around which the grid of streets within the town is constructed. The uniformity of the building line to either side of the wide street and generous pavement, give the street as a whole a consistency of character, although there are several distinct zones along its length.

St Mary's Catholic Church

At the north western end, the Catholic Church of Saint Mary's dominates the streetscape. Although development to the southern side of the road has no heritage merit, the street trees provide a unifying effect and reinforce the strong linear character of Duke Street.



The spire of the Catholic Church of Saint Mary's provides a prominent landmark within the town centre. The avenue planting unifies the street character and reinforces the linear characteristics of Duke Street.

Ramsden Square

Ramsden Square provides an important arrival point to the town centre and anchors the junction of Duke Street and Abbey Road. The western side of the Square has never been fully developed and, combined with the relative weakness of the enclosure of the eastern side of the Square, the space is somewhat lacking in continuity of development. However, the formality of the axes of Abbey Road and Duke Street, radiating out from the square give it a strong sense of place and it encapsulates the planned and structured layout of Ramsden's proposals for the town. The buildings around its perimeter are all listed and include the Public Library on the northern side.

The heart of Duke Street

Between the poles of Ramsden Square and the Town Hall / Schneider Square, the generous width of Duke Street is complemented by the unified building line, the consistency of scale of the three storey buildings that enclose the street and the balance of variety and regularity in the rhythm of the elevational treatment. There is a very ordered structure and hierarchy to the street, with a subtle change in the building to building distance at the junction with Buccleuch Street/Parade Street, creating a more enclosed and intimate central portion to this area.

The skyline is punctuated by views to the Town Hall to the south east and the spire of Saint Mary's Church to the north west. Although significant parts of the streetscape have been replaced with 20th century development, particularly on the north eastern side of the street, on the whole this has been achieved in a sympathetic manner and retains the principal characteristics of the original development. There is one significant gap site on the corner with Cavendish Street, but otherwise, the continuity of development is very good.



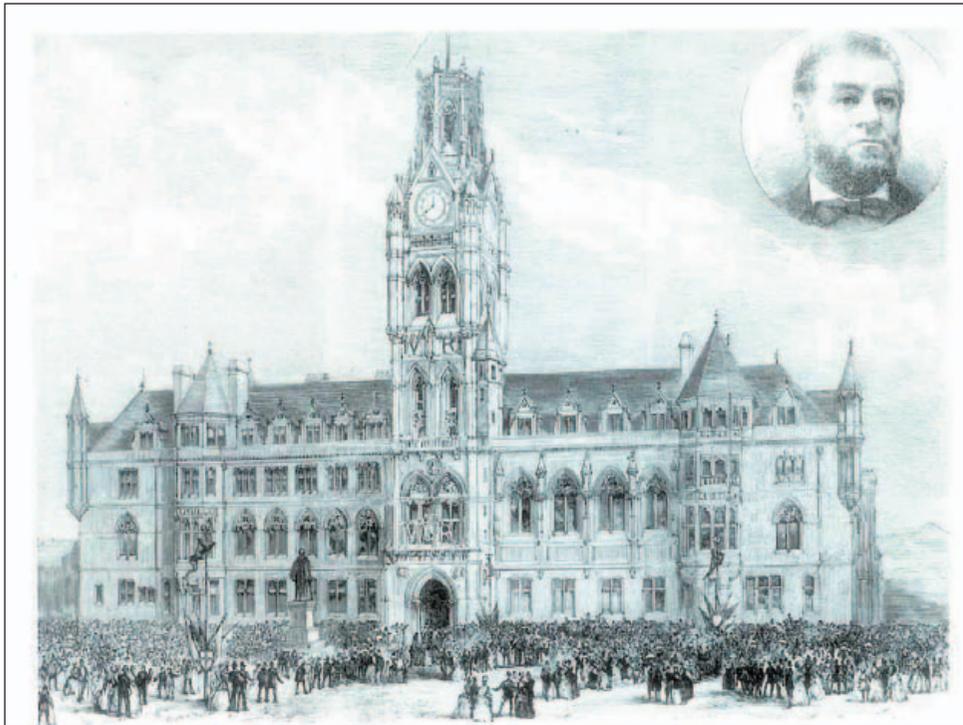
Ramsden Square, with a statue of the man himself at its heart, forms the junction between Duke Street and Abbey Road. Here, the axial view south east along Duke Street is punctuated by the tower of the Town Hall.



The generous width of Duke Street is complemented by the unified building line, the consistency of scale of the three storey buildings that enclose the street and the balance of variety and regularity in the rhythm of the elevational treatment. The tower of the Town Hall forms a prominent landmark to views to the south east.

Town Hall

The decision to build the Town Hall was made in 1877, on a site to the east of the temporary council offices in Cornwallis Street and Lawson Street. Following a design competition and lengthy amendments, building began in 1882 and formally opened five years later. The building dominates the town centre with its Gothic style, prominent clock tower and warm, Hawcoat sandstone. The setting of the Town Hall was originally as part of Cavendish Square, a triangular space evident in earlier plans of the town, (see figure 7). Today, a 20th century retail development faces the Town Hall although the pedestrianised space benefits from good quality, contemporary street furniture and an uncluttered and open character.



Engraving illustrating the opening of the Town Hall, 1887



The Town Hall was a symbol of the commercial success of Barrow, following its rapid expansion in the third quarter of the 19th century.

Schneider Square

Schneider Square does not possess the same formality or regularity as Ramsden Square, due to its location within the area that was already developed at the time of the formulation of Ramsden's grid plan layout for Barrow. Thus, Schneider Square had to resolve the geometry and alignment of existing routes, resulting in a more fragmented character. It forms an important termination in the axis of Duke Street as well as the link to the Michaelson Road Bridge, which crosses the docks to the south west.



The monumental scale of the town Hall and its tower have a significant impact on Schneider Square.

4.3 Abbey Road

Although the buildings on Abbey Road are not as unified or consistent with each other as those in Duke Street, there is a very strong character to the street itself, in terms of the axial formality of the alignment, the unifying quality of the street trees and a generally consistent building line. Overall, the street is wider and more expansive than Duke Street and although there are terraces of buildings there are also more free standing structures such as the Grade II listed 'House of Lords' building, as well as more variety in the scale, form and character of the buildings within the streetscape.



Grade II listed 'House of Lords' building, in Abbey Road



Although the street frontage of the B&Q building is consistent with the original building line, the exposed side elevation has a more negative impact and is open to views from Ramsden Square, giving it a particular prominence within the townscape of the central area of Barrow.



The Duke Hotel is particular prominent in the approach to the conservation area from the north east.



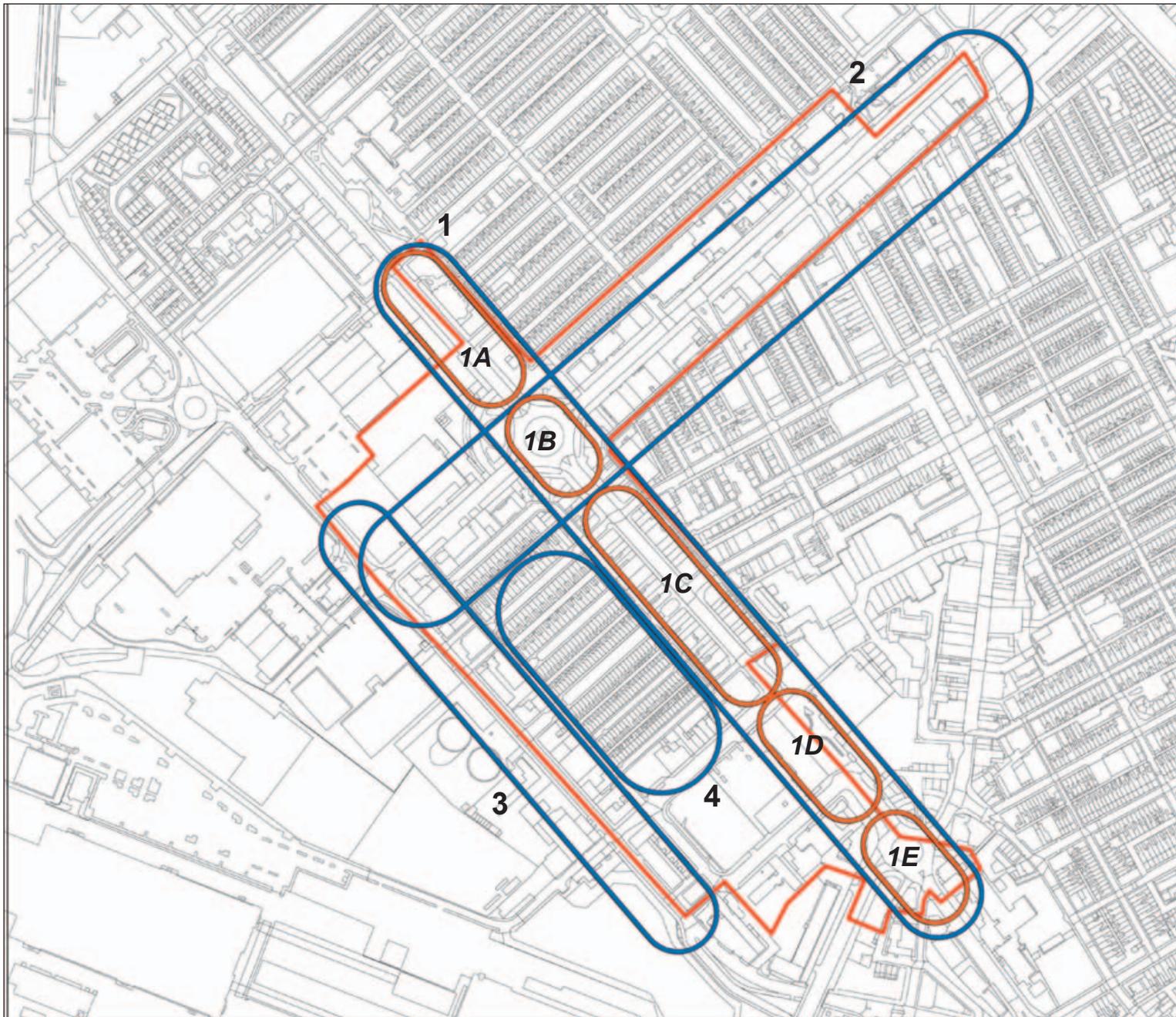
Although some of the 20th century buildings within the street are not of a high design quality, where they follow the established building line, their negative impact is greatly diluted.



*Grade II listed Nan Tait
Centre, Abbey Road*



Figure 8: Principal Townscape Characteristics



KEY

- 1. *Duke Street*
- 1A. *Saint Mary's Church*
- 1B. *Ramsden Square*
- 1C. *Heart of Duke Street*
- 1D. *Town Hall*
- 1E. *Schneider Square*
- 2. *Abbey Road*
- 3. *Hindpool Road*
- 4. *Terraced streets south west of Duke Street*

Figure 9: Location of Principal Character Areas

4.4 Hindpool Road

Hindpool Road runs parallel to Duke Street and has an ambience and character of a service road. The quality of the buildings and streetscape generally is much lower than that of Duke Street or Abbey Road and many of the buildings have been faced with rough cast render, presumably to protect the original brickwork from exposure from the south westerly, prevailing winds. This problem is exacerbated by the open nature of the south western side of the street.



The ambience and character of Hindpool Road is of a service road, exacerbated by exposed areas of car parking, such as here, to the rear of the properties facing the Market Street car park.



The streetscape within Hindpool Road is of significantly lower quality than that of Duke Street or Abbey Road. Buildings are generally in commercial use. Although there is good continuity of development on the north eastern side of the street, within the conservation area, the south western side is fragmented and poorly defined by built form and allows views to the docks and dockside buildings beyond.

4.5 Terraced Streets south west of Duke Street

The tight knit grid of predominantly residential streets to the south western side of Duke Street, forms an attractive and permeable part of the town centre. The conjunction of Duke Street to the north east and the employment areas of the docks to the south west, reflects the very structured and 'planned' nature of the town and its essential qualities as a commercial 'campus'. Parade Street and Keith Street are listed Grade II, although there has been considerable alterations to dwellings in the area as a whole, including changes in the proportions, size and shape of openings; replacement of original timber windows and doors by Upvc and/or inappropriate designs, loss of chimney stacks and pots and an invasion of satellite dishes.



The simple terraces are augmented by attractive dentil courses and eaves treatment. The glimpse views to the industrial buildings to the south west are a reminder of the commercial driving forces behind the town.



Improvements to the public realm within the area, in the form of surface materials, tree planting, street furniture and car parking compliments the simple, but ordered, qualities of the terraces.



Broad service roads to the rear of the terraces are a particular feature of the area. Note the loss of chimney stacks and pots and its impact on the qualities and interest of the roofline.

5.0 Management and enhancement

5.1 Identification of issues

5.1.1 Positive issues and assets

There are 138 separately listed buildings and structures within the conservation area, all Grade II, with the exception of the Town Hall, which is listed Grade II*.

The principal character areas, and their respective sub-areas, incorporate significant examples of the history of the development of Barrow.

New development within the Conservation Area has not always been sympathetic to the heritage styles of older properties in its detailing or subtlety, although generally the building line within the street has been respected as has the overall scale and massing of development.

The commercial ups and downs of the town has undoubtedly had a detrimental impact on the economic vitality of the town, although it may also have protected Barrow from more significant 'improvements' to the town centre in the form of a more substantial 1960's or 70's shopping centre. What is now left intact is the well-preserved footprint of a planned, Victorian, Industrial town, complete with enough historic buildings and assets to retain a genuine heritage character.

5.1.2 Negative issues and problems

Negative issues and problems within the area include:

1. Throughout the area as a whole there is a general poor standard of building alterations, repairs and maintenance resulting in;
 - loss of heritage details and materials including low quality repairs
 - the replacement of wooden sash windows with aluminium and UPVC frames with different window bars;
 - the removal of heritage mouldings and other details;
 - the removal of chimney stacks and pots;
 - and few considerations for the heritage character of the area when rebuilding or renovating.



Boarded up shopfronts have a negative impact on both the quality of the streetscape and the economic vitality of the wider area, as here in Abbey Road.

2. There are significant numbers of vacant buildings, particularly in Abbey Road and Duke Street, which has led to loss of architectural and heritage details;
3. There are several gap sites within the area, and Ramsden Square in particular, suffers from a lack of 'completeness' in respect of buildings around its perimeter;
4. The residential parts of the area have suffered from incremental changes to windows, doors and the size and proportion of openings;
5. The retail vitality within Duke Street is fragile and there are several vacant shops. Other retail units incorporate crude shop fronts and signage. A poor quality, or inappropriately designed shop front can dominate the elevation of a building, as well as its neighbours, and can be out of scale with the balance and proportion of the streetscape as a whole;
6. Abbey Road incorporates several large buildings, some of which are not in active use, with a consequent impact on the vitality of the streetscape as well as the potential loss of the original details and architectural features of the buildings themselves.



Here, the chimney stacks and pots have been repaired and/or replaced, which has a significant impact on the overall quality of the roofline. Rendered brickwork should be avoided.



The fragile nature of the town's economy has resulted in gap sites, where buildings have been demolished and not replaced. Here, adjacent to Ramsden Square, the loss of the building has left an exposed flank wall and weakened the containment of the street and of Ramsden Square itself. The historic photograph shows the original building that occupied the site, (the second building from the left).



5.2 Management recommendations

Boundary changes

The Central Barrow Conservation Area was designated in 1981 and this Conservation Area Appraisal, 2005, has reconsidered the boundaries and proposes changes to be adopted by Barrow in Furness Borough Council. Generally the boundary is regarded as appropriate and is defined at a meaningful and robust 'edge' of an area of heritage value. The one area considered worthy of addition to the current conservation area is to the south west side of Hindpool Road as indicated on figure 10. The buildings are evident in the Ordnance Survey map of 1867 and would benefit from protection from inappropriate redevelopment or demolition.

Article 4 Direction

Article 4(2) Directions can be imposed by local planning authorities to control certain alterations to dwellings that would otherwise be automatically granted consent by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Thus, for example, the replacement of windows, doors, roof coverings etc. can come under planning control, the object being to refuse permission for works that are considered to be damaging or inappropriate to the historic fabric or features of the buildings.

A significant proportion of the built development within the conservation area is in commercial use, which does not have the same permitted development rights as residential property and is therefore less at risk from inappropriate changes and loss of heritage character. In addition, much of the residential area is listed, which gives protection already. However, it would be worthwhile to impose an Article 4 Direction on the remaining residential parts of the conservation area, to provide additional measures to protect and enhance their character and appearance, to maintain an appropriate setting or the listed residential properties and to prevent further deterioration of the heritage value of the area.

The range of development proposed to be covered by an Article 4 Direction includes:

- Enlargement, improvement or other alteration to the public face of the building



This short terrace to the south west side of Hindpool Road is evident in the Ordnance Survey map of 1867 and would benefit from protection from inappropriate redevelopment or demolition.



Figure 10 - Proposed extension to conservation area boundary

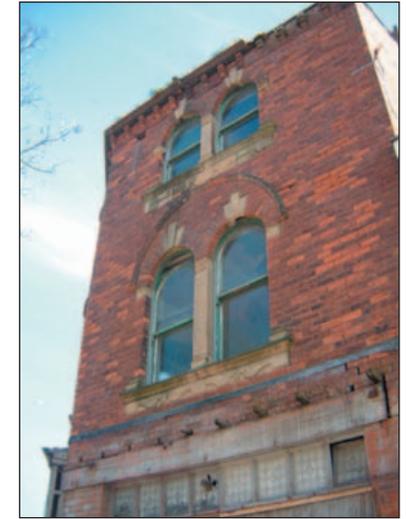
- Design and materials utilised for windows and doors;
- Addition or material alteration to the shape of the roof;
- Erection, construction, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure;
- Cladding of any part of the exterior with render, artificial stone, timber or tiles;
- Installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite antenna;
- Painting of the exterior masonry of the building.

Enhancement opportunities

Where new development is proposed it is important that it is guided by sound principles of urban design, as well as sympathetic detailing and use of materials in relation to its historic context. All forms of new development should:

- Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of historic development, including street patterns, open spaces, plot boundaries and boundary treatments.
- Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area.
- Reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the conservation area through an informed understanding of distinctive building forms and styles, features and materials.
- Repeat the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. It is essential that new development is not out of scale with existing buildings by way of its height, floor levels, size of windows and doors and overall massing.
- Reinforce existing building lines and the orientation of existing development.
- Minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles and the provision of parking areas on the streetscape and landscape setting of historic buildings.

The poor maintenance of buildings, exacerbated by disuse, can lead to dereliction and severe deterioration of the built fabric. Once original details are lost or damaged beyond repair, replacement is expensive and unless skilled craftsmen are available, can lack the subtlety of the original.



A prominent gap site in Duke Street offers an opportunity for a replacement building, sympathetic to the heritage character of the area.

Need for technical guidance

Design guidance to encourage residents and owners to repair original elements in preference to replacement, and to advise on how repairs and alterations should be carried out is available from the Council's conservation team. Its effectiveness is based on the willingness of householders and owners to observe the guidance. Most minor alterations to unlisted buildings do not require permission and the results often compromise their historic interest, architectural integrity and local townscape. It is important, therefore, that property owners and occupiers adopt the right approach to repairs and the replacement of features.



Changes to windows, in the form of uPVC windows or inappropriate designs have a detrimental impact on the proportions and balance of the elevational treatment. Changes to the size and shape of the openings themselves are even more damaging.



Boundary wall treatment, such as here in Hindpool Road, is an important part of the streetscape character, which needs to be handled as sympathetically as the built form around it.



- **General Principles**

In the first instance, regular maintenance should be carried out to prevent, or at least delay, the need for more significant repairs. Repairs should only be undertaken where considered strictly necessary to slow down the process of decay without damaging the character of the building. In the vast majority of cases, a traditional approach to repair should be adopted, replacing decayed material on a like for like basis. Occasionally, it may be more appropriate to use non-traditional materials and methods if they have been tried and tested over a long period and allow more existing fabric to remain undisturbed in-situ. In certain circumstances, decay may be so advanced that the fabric is beyond repair and the replacement of the features may be necessary. Care should, however, be taken to avoid the unnecessary loss of historic fabric. The discrete insertion of modern draft seals can greatly enhance the performance of sash windows in respect of heat retention and ease of use.

- **Example guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to advise the residents and owners of the general approach to be taken when contemplating external repairs or alterations. Owners and occupiers should, however, always seek the advice of the Council before carrying out works to their buildings.

Chimneys

Chimneys requiring repair should be reinstated or rebuilt accurately to the original height and profile, in materials to match the existing or original in brick. Original clay chimney pots should be replaced appropriately or reinstated where necessary.

Windows and doors

Existing windows and external doors should be retained and carefully repaired wherever possible; it is important to retain and repair early surviving casements. If replacement is unavoidable, new windows should be accurate replicas of the original design, in both pattern and detail. uPVC frames will fail to achieve this.

Decorative Brickwork

Existing decorative brickwork should be retained and carefully restored wherever possible. Where replacement is necessary, an accurate replica should be made, ensuring there is a careful match with the existing brick colour and finish. Natural decorative brickwork should never be painted.



Lack of maintenance has a negative impact on neighbouring properties and the wider area, as here in Duke Street.



Loss of chimney stacks and pots reduces the interest of the roofline of the terraced dwellings. Lack of maintenance will also lead to water penetration and more significant damage to the property.

Boundary Treatment

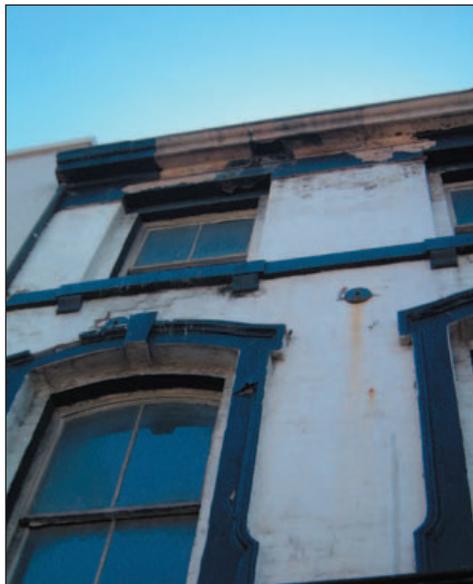
Original walls, fences, railings and gates should be repaired to match the existing, or reinstated to the original design wherever possible.

Community involvement

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG 15) advises that authorities consider setting up Conservation Area Advisory Committees, both to assist in formulating policies for the conservation area, and as a continuing source of advice on planning and other applications that could affect an area.

It is proposed that a Conservation Area Advisory Committee will be considered in Barrow to provide the Council with additional conservation advice and support. This Committee will be given the responsibility to provide the basis for review and pro-active promotion of the conservation aims and any other heritage initiatives within the conservation area.

In certain areas, financial assistance may be available to property owners who are prepared to carry out restoration work that reflects the historic character of the area.

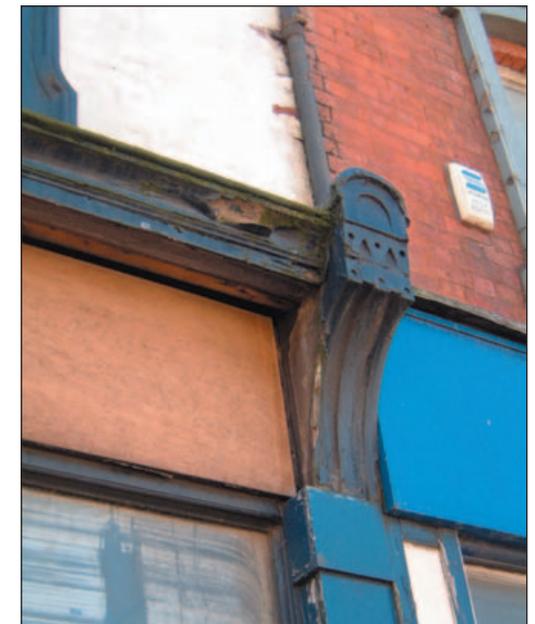


The general standard of maintenance of some buildings within the conservation area is poor, which has a detrimental impact on the qualities of the streetscape and can have a snowball effect on the economic viability of the wider area, leading to further neglect and deterioration of buildings.

Where 20th century buildings have replaced the original Victorian development, they have, generally, maintained the building line at the back edge of the pavement. However, in places, such as illustrated here in Duke Street, the subtlety of the rhythm and proportions of the openings within the street elevation, has been lost. Crude shop front signage and the intrusion of a satellite dish are further negative factors.



Derelict and under-used buildings can lead to rapid deterioration of original architectural details, making repairs uneconomic.



Appendices

Appendix A: Conservation policies from the Unitary Development Plan

POLICY D15

Development within or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Area. In particular it should:

1. Respect the character of existing architecture and any historical associations by having due regard to positioning and grouping of buildings, form, scale, enclosure, detailing and use of traditional materials;
2. Respect existing hard and soft landscape features including open space, trees, walls and surfacing;
3. Respect traditional plot boundaries and frontage widths; and
4. Respect significant views into or out of the Areas.

Applications for:

- a) Listed Building Consent; or
- b) Planning consent for alterations to un-listed buildings within Conservation Areas or new buildings affecting the setting of a Listed Building

must show full details unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

POLICY D17

Applications for the re-use of empty Listed Buildings or prominent buildings in Conservation Areas will be given favourable consideration provided the redevelopment will not result in the significant loss of the property's special architectural details or its historic fabric.

POLICY D18

Alterations and additions to a Listed Building or those properties affected by the Article Four Direction will not be permitted if they adversely affect its character and setting or its architectural or historic features. In particular, the following alterations are likely to be unacceptable, particularly where they pose a conflict with the traditions of the building type or the area;

- a) The use of non-traditional roofing materials;
- b) The use of uPVC or aluminium or other non-traditional materials or styles for windows and doors;
- c) Pebble-dashing, or rendering of any type where this would result in the loss of features such as stone-work or ornamental brickwork;
- d) The removal of any special features such as ornamental ironwork, carved stonework or brickwork, etc; and
- e) The use of uPVC gutters and downspouts.

POLICY D19

Development in and around the area between the Town Hall and Lawson Street and between the Town Hall and Forum 28 should, if possible, create open civic spaces and enhance the setting of the Town Hall. The publicly owned and accessible open areas at the core of these areas are formally designated hereby as Civic Open Space.

POLICY D20

The following sites in the Central Barrow Conservation Area are particularly identified as suitable for infill with buildings at a scale and design to complement adjoining buildings (subject to other planning criteria)-
Site of 116-118 Duke Street, Barrow (former Franchi building);
Site of 57 Duke Street, Barrow;
Site of 80-82 Duke Street, Barrow; and
The Ramsden Square Bus Lay-by Area, Barrow.

POLICY D22

There is a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of scheduled ancient monuments and other nationally important remains and their settings.

Development proposals that would unacceptably adversely affect the site or setting of remains of archaeological or historic importance will not be permitted.

POLICY D23

Where the importance of known remains, or the archaeological potential of a site is not adequately understood, applications for development will only be accepted when accompanied by an evaluation of the archaeological importance of the site. Planning permission will not be granted without adequate assessment of the nature, extent and significance of the remains present and the degree to which the proposed development is likely to affect them.

POLICY D24

Other sites of potential local historical and archaeological importance will be protected. Where an assessment/field evaluation demonstrates that development affecting such sites is acceptable in principle, the use of planning conditions and/or legal agreement will ensure the mitigation of damage through preservation of the remains in-situ: when in-situ preservation is not justified the developer will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording before or during development

POLICY D30

Development proposals which may cause significant damage or destruction to a tree or woodland protected by a Tree Preservation Order, or within a Conservation Area, will only be permitted where;

- a) No alternative site is available; or
- b) There is an overriding need for the proposal which outweighs the need to preserve the tree or woodland; or
- c) Mitigating measures are available to minimise damage and secure worthwhile replacement planting.

POLICY D41

Applications for consent to display adverts which obscure or disrupt important architectural features of a building, whether the building is listed or not, will not be permitted. On Listed Buildings and within Conservation

Areas, shop fronts shall be of a traditional design and use traditional materials except where there are buildings of an architectural style where such treatment would be inappropriate. Shop fronts in Conservation Areas should be of a suitable scale, design, materials and proportion that reflect the traditional character of the application building and the Conservation Area. Well-designed signage should be an integral part of the design.

Appendix B: Contact details

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