

An aerial photograph of the Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area. The image shows a dense urban environment with a mix of building styles. A prominent feature is a large, Gothic-style church with a tall, pointed spire, situated in the center-right. Surrounding the church are various residential and commercial buildings, many with grey slate roofs. A curved road with a parking lot is visible in the lower half of the image. The overall scene is a well-developed town center with historical architecture.

Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan

May 2008

اگر آپ اس لئفلیٹ (پرچہ) کو اپنی زبان میں سمجھنے کے خواہش مند ہیں تو براہ مہربانی کمیونٹی ایڈوائس سنٹر سے ٹیلیفون نمبر (01254) 380144 پر رابطہ قائم کریں

آپانی যদি ائی لیفلےٹاٹا آپنار نیجےر باسای جانته چان تاهله انوغھپوربک
کمیڈنیٹی اڈوائس سنٹرے ۰۱۲۵۴ ۳۸۰۱۴۴ نامبارے یوگا یوگا کران۔

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1. Purpose of the Management Plan

- 1.1 Further to the designation of conservation areas and the assessment of their character, Local Planning Authorities are required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to consider proposals for their preservation and enhancement.
- 1.2 This document complements the Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal and has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Hyndburn Borough Council in accordance with national and local planning policy guidance, including English Heritage's '*Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*' and its companion document '*Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*'. Whilst the character appraisal defines and evaluates the buildings and features that contribute towards the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area, this management plan formulates proposals to help secure the area's long-term viability as an important heritage asset.

2. National and Local Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.1 Hyndburn Borough Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the special character of Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced. The Council acknowledges that designation alone will not secure the protection and enhancement of the area and that active management is vital to ensure that it can adapt and develop in a positive way.
- 2.2 When taking development control decisions within the conservation area, the Council will have full regard to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides the principal legislative policy base for the conservation of the historic environment, and to Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 '*Planning and the Historic Environment*' and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 '*Archaeology and Planning*' which provide the main sources of detailed advice for the implementation of the 1990 Act.
- 2.3 The Hyndburn Borough Local Plan (Saved Policies 1997) contains a full suite of planning, conservation and design policies that are of direct relevance to the

preservation and enhancement of listed buildings and conservation areas: Policy E.6 is concerned with safeguarding listed buildings and structures, whilst Policy E.8 addresses development within and adjacent to conservation areas. In accordance with national policy, Hyndburn Borough Council have begun to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) which will include planning and conservation policies to ensure the continual preservation, enhancement and long-term maintenance of the area's special character. In addition, the Council has produced advisory guides for each of their conservation areas. The guide for Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area details the design criteria that the Council require all new development within the conservation area to meet.

- 2.4 These national and local planning policies provide a consistent and sound basis upon which to determine planning applications and also help the Council to defend appeals against refusals of applications that could have a detrimental impact on the special character of the conservation area.

3. Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area

- 3.1 Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area is one of two within Accrington's urban extent, the other being Christ Church Conservation Area which is located to the southeast of the town centre. Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1976 and extended in 1979 and 1991 and now incorporates much of Accrington's municipal centre.
- 3.2 The conservation area's special interest is derived predominantly from its collection of fine nineteenth and early twentieth retail, commercial, civic and ecclesiastical buildings that are arranged around the east-west axes of Blackburn Road, Cannon Street and Warner Street. Its western boundary of the conservation area is formed by the viaduct that carries the railway line between Preston and Colne and by Eagle Street, whilst the northern boundary is formed by the rear of properties on the northern side of Blackburn Road. The eastern boundary follows the rear plots of buildings fronting the eastern side of Abbey Street, whilst the southern boundary is formed by the rear of properties on the southern side of Warner Street and Cannon Street and by the junction of Paradise Street with Eagle Street.

- 3.3 The shape of the conservation area is reflective of the town's early organic development which was initially restrained to the east by Abbey Street which follows the course of an earlier eighteenth century turnpike road and to the west by the railway viaduct which carries the East Lancashire Line. The street pattern and form of the area has remained little changed since the early twentieth century, with the only alterations being the addition or demolition of individual buildings, and as such it contains a number of buildings, both listed and unlisted, which provide a built record of the transition of the town from an agricultural and small-scale domestic industrial settlement through to the arrival of mass industrialisation.

4. Preservation and Enhancement Proposals

- 4.1 The Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal identified a series of problems and pressures for change, which if left to persist without intervention, could put the historic fabric of the area at risk from chronic deterioration. The aim of this management plan is to formulate proposals to address the issues identified in the character appraisal:

Proposal 1

The boundary of the conservation area will be amended as shown on the plan at Appendix 1 to incorporate the former Empire Picture House at 1 - 13 Edgar Street.

- 4.2 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas, the appropriateness of the conservation area boundary was reviewed during the preparation of the character appraisal. The review identified where the boundary was originally drawn too tightly and should therefore be extended to incorporate buildings and/or features of historic interest.
- 4.3 The conservation area boundary should be extended to incorporate the former Empire Picture House at 1 - 13 Edgar Street. This ornate red brick building is highly visible within the northwestern section of the conservation area and, as such, contributes significantly to its special architectural and historical interest.

- 4.4 The Council will continue to review the conservation area boundary over time in accordance with planning policy and best practice guidance.

Proposal 2

The following buildings and features are identified as being of local architectural and/or historical interest and will be added to the Council's emerging list of locally important buildings and features – the 'Local List':

- 32 Blackburn Road;
- 43 - 51 Blackburn Road / 2 – 12 Church Street;
- 48 - 56 Blackburn Road;
- 55 - 59 Blackburn Road;
- 63 - 79 Blackburn Road;
- 81 Blackburn Road;
- The Railway Public House, 84 - 86 Blackburn Road;
- 99 - 101 Blackburn Road;
- 109 - 117 Blackburn Road;
- 119 Blackburn Road;
- Former Empire Picture House, 1 -13 Edgar Street;
- Former Liberal Club, Eagle Street;
- Former Sunday and Day School, Willow Street;
- 7 - 17 Cannon Street;
- Ewbank House, Cannon Street;
- Setted ginnel adjacent to the Baptist Church, Cannon Street;
- 3 - 5 St James' Street;
- 15 – 23 and 18 – 30 St James' Street;
- 16 - 18 Church Street;
- 43 Church Street;
- 1 – 45 and 6 – 46 Warner Street, and;
- 49 Abbey Street.

- 4.5 There are a number of buildings and features within the conservation area which do not meet the criteria for national statutory listing, but which are considered important to the history, appearance, character and cultural value of Accrington. The government's heritage white paper '*Heritage Protection for the 21st Century*' (March 2007) strongly encourages the creation of local lists to identify locally significant buildings and other

features which may not be considered eligible for statutory listing. Whilst local listing status does not afford buildings or features statutory protection, it can be a significant material consideration when determining planning applications.

- 4.6 The Council is currently preparing a 'Local List'. This list will be kept under continual review in accordance with planning policy and best practice guidance.

Proposal 3

Applications for the demolition of locally listed buildings and features in the conservation area will be assessed using the criteria set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 for the demolition of listed buildings. Applications for alterations and extensions to locally listed buildings and features will also be assessed using the criteria set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 for listed buildings.

- 4.7 Whilst locally listed buildings do not enjoy the full protection of statutory listing, their historical and architectural importance and contribution to the special collective character of the conservation area should be considered in determining applications for change or demolition. Saved Local Plan Policy E.8 sets out the Council's adopted approach to proposals for development in and adjacent to conservation areas in order to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of these areas. Proposal 3 provides detailed advice on how this policy will be applied.

Proposal 4

Legislative powers, including the service of Urgent Work Notices, Repairs Notices, Section 215 Notices and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO), will be exercised to target key buildings and structures which are considered to be 'at risk'.

- 4.8 In the interests of preserving and enhancing the special character of the conservation area legislative powers, including the service of Urgent Works Notices, Repair Notices and Section 215 Notices, will be exercised on the owners of key buildings and structures that are considered to be 'at risk' through neglect and decay and which adversely affect the amenity of the conservation area. Where a mutually acceptable negotiated position cannot be reached, and where there is a compelling case in the public interest, the Council will use Compulsory Purchase Orders (under the Planning and Compensation Act 2004) in order to take ownership of property.

- 4.9 Regular surveys will be undertaken to actively identify buildings and structures 'at risk' within the conservation area.

Proposal 5

Opportunities to secure regional and national funding for the preservation and enhancement of statutory listed buildings, locally listed buildings and other historic buildings and features within the conservation area will be actively pursued.

- 4.10 There is a significant opportunity for heritage-led regeneration within Accrington town centre. The funding of historic building repair, restoration and reuse will assist with achieving the wider regeneration objectives of the town while preserving and enhancing the special local character. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) promotes regeneration through its awards to historic building projects and there is an opportunity to bring vacant historic buildings back into use, encourage the reintroduction of lost architectural details and deliver essential building maintenance in the conservation area through the implementation of a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). This would enable building owners to apply for grant monies to regenerate the historic environment from a partnership funded in part by the HLF.
- 4.11 Other possible funding sources include: English Heritage, North West Development Agency, Elevate East Lancashire and developer contributions.
- 4.12 Any regional and national funding will be focused on the heart of the conservation area, with a particular emphasis on the east-west axes of Blackburn Road, Cannon Street and Warner Street.

Proposal 6

Opportunities for establishing a conservation fund to assist building owners with the costs of the authentic repair and restoration of original doors and windows or the replacement of inappropriate modern features with appropriate materials and designs will be actively pursued.

- 4.13 The Council is keen to encourage building owners to use traditional materials and techniques when carrying out repairs and restoration works to buildings within the conservation area. The Council will actively pursue the implementation of a conservation fund to provide financial assistance to owners of statutory listed, locally

listed and other historic buildings and features within the conservation area to help with the extra costs necessary to ensure the authentic repair and restoration of historic fabric. Grant monies made available through the fund will be required to be used in a sympathetic manner to carry out either significant repairs to the fabric of a historic building or the restoration of original features where there was clear evidence of their earlier existence. The decision as to whether any proposed works are eligible for assistance will rest with the Council and all buildings will be subject to a clawback condition that will be applied if the property is sold within three years of the grant being paid.

Proposal 7

Important views and vistas within, into, and out of the conservation will be preserved and enhanced. These include:

- Views from Cannon Street and St James Street towards the moors north of the town centre;
- Views of The Coppice from Abbey Street and Avenue Parade;
- Sloping southwesterly views from Abbey Street towards Scaitcliffe, Holme Street and Cannon Street;
- Views in both directions along Cannon Street;
- Framed glimpses in both directions along Blackburn Road through the railway viaduct arches;
- Views of the Baptist Church, Cannon Street from various points within the town, including from junction of Manchester Road and Nuttall Street and from Eastgate and Scaitcliffe;
- Glimpses of the tower of St James' Church from Dutton Street and from Church Street in the north and Warner Street in the west, and;
- Glimpses of Cannon Street from Willow Street via the ginnel adjacent to the Baptist Church.

- 4.14 The Council will exercise its legislative powers to ensure that views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area are preserved and enhanced in perpetuity.

Proposal 8

All new development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, within and immediately adjacent to the conservation area will respect the historical context, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and accord with local, regional and national planning policy.

- 4.15 The established character of the conservation area will be protected to maintain its special architectural and historic interest. The character appraisal considered one of the main threats to the area's character to be the insertion of unsympathetic infill developments adjacent to listed or other notable, yet unlisted, buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. New development constructed with little regard to the scale, massing or form of existing buildings can have a significant detrimental impact on the visual and physical character of the conservation area. To avoid further dilution of the area's special interest, all new development in the conservation area will respect the historical context, preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and accord with local, regional and national planning policy. More detailed guidance is provided in Proposals 10 and 11.

Proposal 9

Development proposals to replace the following buildings will be strongly encouraged providing that the new development respects the historical context, preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area and accords with local, regional and national planning policy:

- Telephone Exchange, Bank Street
- 2 – 16 Broadway
- Former Barnes Furniture Store, Church Street

- 4.16 The character appraisal recognised that a number of buildings within and immediately adjacent to the conservation area have a serious negative impact upon the visual quality of the area. Should the sites of these buildings ever be redeveloped, the new development must understand and respect its immediate and wider historic context, preserve and enhance the conservation area's character and appearance and fully accord with local, regional and national planning policy.

Proposal 10

Development will not be permitted to exceed:

a) 16m above adjacent ground level within 250m of the spire of the Baptist Church, Cannon Street

or

b) 40m above adjacent ground level within 500m of the spire of the Baptist Church, Cannon Street

- 4.17 The character appraisal identified the spire of the Baptist Church, Cannon Street to be an important landmark whose prominence is further enhanced by its location on a steeply sloped valley side. It is vital that the church spire is protected from visual encroachment and that the distinctive skyline of this part of the conservation area is preserved.
- 4.18 Within the area defined by 10a, development is restricted to an overall height of 16m – this approximately equates to the ridge height of the church’s nave. Within the area defined at 10b, development is restricted to an overall height of 40m – this approximately equates to the total height of the spire. Beyond the 500m radius, the height impact of development proposals will be treated on a case by case basis.

Proposal 11

Development of single buildings with footprints in excess of 200sqm will not be permitted within the conservation area.

- 4.19 The character appraisal identified that the conservation area does not have a homogenous built form - developments with larger footprints (approximately 600sqm – 1000sqm) are generally grand late nineteenth/early twentieth century municipal buildings and located within the Cannon Street/Willow Street area, whilst the remainder of the conservation area is formed by more domestic scale buildings with smaller footprints (approximately 50sqm – 200sqm). However, the introduction of new single buildings with large footprints will be detrimental to the general scale and grain of the character area and will threaten to destroy the intimate mix of grand municipal and domestic scale buildings that gives interest to the conservation area. This proposal does not preclude a terrace or cluster structures, but seeks to ensure that the scale and grain of development is appropriate. Beyond the conservation area boundary buildings with larger footprints

may be more acceptable, but development proposals will be treated on a case by case basis.

Proposal 12

An Article 4 Direction will be implemented on the east-west axes of Blackburn Road, Cannon Street and Warner Street to withdraw the following classes of permitted development:

- alterations to elevations;
- change of roof material;
- insertion of roof/dormer windows;
- alterations to doors and windows;
- painting or rendering of exterior masonry, and;
- alterations to hardstandings and demolition of curtilage walls

Enforcement action will be taken to remove any unauthorised works which do not accord with the objectives of the Direction.

- 4.20 The character appraisal identified one of the main threats to the special character and appearance of the heart of the conservation area to be the cumulative impact of numerous alterations, some quite small in themselves, to historical and architecturally interesting buildings in the area. If left unchecked, such works will gradually erode the special historic or architectural qualities that justified the original designation.
- 4.21 At present the law allows certain alterations to be made without planning permission. The proposed Article 4 Direction will be targeted at bringing under control those alterations which, if not sympathetically designed, pose the greatest threat to the area's distinctive character. Whilst the Direction will not necessarily stop changes taking place, it will require building owners to gain planning permission for alterations or works which would front open space, a waterway or a highway (roads, back streets and footpaths) and as such will protect the area against unsympathetic changes which, if left unchecked, will gradually erode its special character.
- 4.22 Regular surveys will be undertaken to investigate whether unauthorised changes have been made to buildings within the Direction area. Appropriate enforcement action,

including the service of Listed Building Enforcement Notices and/or Conservation Area Enforcement Notices, will be taken to remove unauthorised works.

Proposal 13

The Council's adopted shop front, shop front security and advertisements design guides will be actively applied. Enforcement action will be taken to remove any unauthorised works which do not accord with the objectives of these guides.

- 4.23 A substantial number of commercial and retail buildings within the conservation area have lost some or almost all of their original shop front detailing, whilst other frontages have been substantially altered and replaced by unsympathetic modern materials, including aluminium or uPVC. As a result, there are a large number of poor quality shop fronts within the conservation area which fail to harmonise with the building on which they have been placed.
- 4.24 The Council will ensure that all new shop fronts proposed for retail and commercial premises within the conservation area are designed and developed in accordance with the adopted shop front and shop front security design guides. Where original or traditional shop front detailing survives intact, sympathetic repair will always be favoured above the complete replacement of traditional elements, whilst applications which involve the removal of existing surviving traditional shop frontages or traditional elements will not be approved. Where complete replacement is deemed necessary to replace inappropriate modern installations or where erosion and decay dictate that no original details have survived then new installations will be undertaken in accordance with the shop front and shop front security design guides. Equally where modern inappropriate replacements already exist, the Council will seek to secure the reinstatement of traditional appropriate shop fronts when replacement occurs in the future.
- 4.25 Similarly few traditional signs survive within the conservation area. Instead the majority have been replaced with inappropriate modern, vivid and inconsistent signage which is considered damaging to the character and appearance of the area. New signage proposed for retail and commercial premises within the conservation area must be designed to complement both the shop frontage and overall building frontage on which it is to be displayed and must comply with the Council's adopted advertisements design guide. Internally illuminated box signs and bright garish modern materials will not be accepted within the conservation area.

- 4.26 Regular surveys will be undertaken to investigate whether unauthorised changes have been made to shop frontages and signage. Appropriate enforcement action, including the service of Listed Building Enforcement Notices and/or Conservation Area Enforcement Notices, will be taken to remove unauthorised works.

Proposal 14

A public realm strategy will be developed to ensure that all future public realm and streetscape works within the conservation area and immediately beyond its boundary preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. The strategy will be made available to all agencies responsible for maintaining and enhancing the town's highways and public realm to ensure a consistency within the conservation area and the wider town centre.

- 4.27 Recent attempts have been made to improve the quality of the streetscape within the conservation area. However, these have been inconsistent and have often resulted in a magnitude and variety of individual landscaping elements that add clutter to the streetscapes and forms visual and physical barriers between the streets and the historic and architecturally interesting buildings that align them.
- 4.28 The Council will develop a public realm strategy to provide detailed guidance to ensure that a consistent and historically and architecturally sensitive strategy is applied to all future public realm works within the conservation area and the wider town centre. In particular, the strategy will address the following issues:
- Prevent further loss of, and damage to, traditional paving materials and promote the reinstatement of traditional paving flags, kerbstones and setts to enhance the character and appearance of the area and reinforce its special identity;
 - Enhance key gateways into the conservation area:
 - junction of railway viaduct and Blackburn Road;
 - junction of Abbey Street and Blackburn Road;
 - junction of Abbey Street and Warner Street;
 - junction of Blackburn Road and Peel Street;
 - junction of Church Street and Cannon Street;
 - junction of Broadway and Blackburn Road, and;
 - junction of St James' Street and Paradise Street

- Reduce the dominance of traffic and pedestrian safety measures – the railings at the corner of Peel Street and Blackburn Road are particularly visually unattractive;
 - Reduce the dominance of the bus shelters on Peel Street which currently act as a visual and physical barrier between the street and its buildings;
 - Reduce the dominance of parked vehicles – the grandeur of the residential terraces on St James' Street is dramatically affected by car parking;
 - Reinstate lost boundary treatments - the churchyard of St James' is currently defined by low stone walls, but the cast iron railings which once surmounted the walls have since been lost and as such the open space seems to 'leak' out into the surrounding streets. There could be an opportunity here to redefine the churchyard through the reintroduction of railings.
 - Enhance areas of public open space - St James' churchyard is a popular pedestrian route, however it lacks places to sit and enjoy the character this part of the conservation area. The opportunity exists here to create an area of attractive and well-managed public space. Elsewhere other smaller areas of landscaped public space at the corners of Warner Street and Bank Street, Oak Street with Church Street and Blackburn Road and Abbey Street could, with the implementation of a programme of maintenance, provide valuable amenity space for residents and contribute positively to the environmental quality of the conservation area.
- 4.29 The Council will ensure that the public realm strategy is made available to all agencies responsible for maintaining and enhancing the town's highways and public realm. Close liaison between the Council and these different agencies will ensure that the historically and architecturally sensitive strategy will be consistently applied to all future public realm works within the conservation area and the wider town centre.

Proposal 15

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) will be implemented wherever a tree of high amenity value is considered to be under threat. This will include trees within and outside the conservation area where they contribute to the setting of the area. A strategy for trees within the conservation area will also be developed.

- 4.30 The character appraisal identified a number of trees, both individuals and groups, which make a significant contribution to the special character of the area. Conservation area status dictates that if not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), anyone intending to lop or fell a tree which is greater than 100mm in diameter at 1.5m above ground level within a conservation area, is required to give the Council 6 weeks written notice before starting work. This will provide the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a TPO may be served.
- 4.31 The character appraisal identified that many of the trees within St James' churchyard are reaching advanced stages of maturity and were originally planted informally or are self-seeded. A tree strategy which considers issues of amenity, practicality and succession planning will be developed.

Proposal 16

Celebration and promotion of Accrington's history will be encouraged to ensure that the local community and visitors are able to recognise and understand the value of the town's historic resource.

- 4.32 Heritage is an extremely important motivator for tourism; however, Accrington currently lacks an obvious destination for heritage tourists. Whilst the Haworth Art Gallery, located to the south of the town centre, does house Europe's largest public collection of Tiffany glassware and in 2006 collaborated with the town's main library to hold a 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme exhibition, there is no permanent celebration of the town's involvement in the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries nor a promotion of its important social and cultural history. A new museum or exhibition space could be established within Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area, perhaps within the Town Hall or within a vacant/underused historic building, to celebrate and promote the town's history, its buildings and its influence on the wider world and support the development of Accrington as a visitor destination.

- 4.33 In addition, the character appraisal considered that it is vital that local people are able to recognise that Accrington's historic built environment is a major asset which gives the town unique character, charm and significance. The character appraisal suggested that by involving its local population, Accrington has the potential to make a significant contribution to national heritage events, including Heritage Open Days and National Archives Month and suggested that to further raise public awareness of the breadth of heritage in Accrington, an annual or bi-annual heritage festival could be established within the town.

Proposal 17

An information leaflet will be produced to raise public awareness of the conservation area, its history and significance and the implications of its designation. This leaflet will be readily available to the local community.

- 4.34 The public consultation conducted during the preparation of the character appraisal identified a lack of awareness amongst local residents and building owners of what it means to live, work and own property in the conservation area. There is a need, therefore, to raise public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the conservation area and the implications of its designation.

Proposal 18

A mechanism for monitoring change and reviewing the conservation area character appraisal and management plan at least once every five years will be developed.

- 4.35 The conservation area character appraisal and this management plan will be reviewed at least every five years in accordance with English Heritage guidance. This review will include:
- A survey of the conservation area and its boundaries;
 - An updated review of the area's heritage assets, including a comprehensive photographic building and streetscape record;
 - An assessment of whether the management proposals detailed in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
 - The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and proposed actions and amendments, and;
 - Public consultation on the review findings, any proposed changes, and input into the final review

Appendices

Appendix 1: Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area

Accrington Town Centre Conservation Area

