

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Carnforth

Should Carnforth centre be designated a conservation area?

Report of consultation

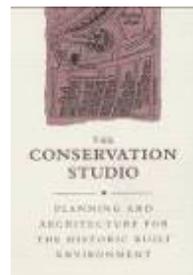
April 2010

This report has been prepared on behalf of Lancaster City Council by:

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Contents:

1. Summary
2. Background
3. Consultation responses
4. Assessment
5. Recommendations

Appendix: The questionnaire

1. Summary

- A heritage assessment of Carnforth has been carried out by specialist consultants
- They recommended the designation of a conservation area
- Lancaster City Council has supported this in principle, subject to public consultation
- Consultation was launched on 1 March for a four-week period with an exhibition and drop-in session
- All properties in the proposed area were notified
- 82% agreed that Carnforth has a special character that is worth preserving and 77% considered that a conservation area should be designated
- Suggestions for adding to the proposed boundary have been considered
- Several ideas were put forward for improving the town centre

Summary of recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- Lancaster City Council should proceed to designate a conservation area for Carnforth Town Centre
- The boundary should be as shown on the attached map
- A Conservation Area Appraisal should be prepared
- The appraisal should take account of the management issues raised in the consultation

2. Background

- 2.1 The City Council has been asked in the past to consider the designation of a conservation area for Carnforth. In 2008, the opportunity arose for the Council to commission an assessment to establish whether there was a case for designation.
- 2.2 In July 2009 a Scoping Report considered the historical development and special interest of Carnforth. It recommended:
- That a conservation area should be designated for Carnforth as identified on the Conservation Assessment map included in the report
 - That the designation should be supported by a conservation area appraisal to define and record its special interest
 - That the local community should be given the opportunity to comment on the conservation area appraisal before it is adopted for planning purposes
- 2.3 The Council supported the report in principle as the basis for public consultation. A summary of the report and a brief questionnaire were prepared and were circulated to all properties in the proposed area. The report, summary and questionnaire were also made available at the Carnforth Station Visitor Centre and Lancaster Town Hall as well as being posted on the City Council website.
- 2.4 On 1 March 2010, the consultation was launched with a small exhibition and drop-in session at the Carnforth Station Visitor Centre. The event was attended by staff from Lancaster City Council and The Conservation Studio. It was also well-attended by local people.
- 2.5 The consultation remained open for just over four weeks until the end of March.

3. Consultation responses

- 3.1 The consultation was primarily intended to establish local views rather than statistics. The questionnaire (see the appendix) therefore provided space for comments with the questions themselves acting as prompts. It also invited people to expand on their views if they wished.

- 3.2 By the end of the consultation period, 22 responses had been received.
- 3.3 **Question 1:** Do you think Carnforth is different from anywhere else?
82% agreed. Typical comments were:
- An intact late Victorian town
 - A compact town with lots of character
 - A large number of Victorian buildings
 - Good independent shops attract visitors
 - Founded by industry and transport and the ability to change rapidly
 - Survival of a unique railway history

 - But also: No – very similar buildings in Lancaster
- 3.4 **Question 2:** Do you think Carnforth has a special character?
82% agreed, citing the railway and steel industries as generators of character and the survival of Victorian frontages including the distinctive rounded corners. But also:
- It is rather unattractive and messy in layout
 - It is quite scruffy to the outsider
- 3.5 **Question 3:** Do you think the character of Carnforth is worth preserving?
82% agreed because of the sense of history, the survival of historic buildings and the value of the few trees in the town. There was also a concern that the character is vulnerable to new development, such as the replacement of the Methodist Church on Lancaster Road. But the point was also made that the character is born of change.
- 3.6 **Question 4:** Are there any buildings, spaces or trees you would particularly like to see preserved?
- The old Post Office building
 - Engine shed
 - Coaling plant and ash hopper
 - Lower Market Street
 - Station area
 - Railway houses on Grosvenor Place and Hewthwaite Terrace
- 3.7 **Question 5:** Do you think that a conservation area should be designated for Carnforth?
77% agreed. Typical comments were that it is essential to preserve the character of the town and 'long overdue' although there was one concern about planning restrictions. Dissenting views considered that protection should be limited to specific buildings or that 'under

present planning laws, major alterations to a building are not allowed’.

3.8 Question 6: If so, do you agree with the suggested boundary?

64% agreed with the proposal. There were suggestions for wider boundaries to include:

- The whole of North Road and Kellet Road up to the High School
- Stanley Street, Hill Street and Oxford Street
- Everything west of the canal
- Grosvenor Place and Hewthwaite Terrace

3.9 Question 7: Are there any improvements you would wish to see in Carnforth?

- Improve parking to reduce congestion
- Weight restrictions to remove heavy vehicles from narrow streets
- Railway site should be tidied up
- Plant more trees
- Remove industrial sites to the north of the town
- More policing, street-cleaning, street-lighting
- More trains stopping at Carnforth
- Preserve and repaint the street names
- More signage for pedestrians

However, an alternative view was:

- Leave it to private investment and sensible planning rules

3.10 Question 8: Please add any other comments using a separate sheet if necessary

- If anything it needs modernisation not conservation
- Provide sport, leisure and recreational facilities for those who share the town from outside
- Re-open Steam Town – Great tourism potential
- If Carnforth became a main-line station again, it could truly be ‘the gateway to South Lakeland’
- This exercise is a waste of public money

4. Assessment

4.1 The consultation has revealed a keen interest in the special character of Carnforth and strong support (77%) in favour of designating a conservation area.

4.2 Among those not in favour, there appears to be a miss-placed faith in the strength of existing planning law and policy to maintain the status quo. This is despite the locally-lamented loss of the Methodist Church on Lancaster Road. It is, of course, only where there is a conservation area

that the character of the town can be properly taken into account in making planning decisions.

Boundaries

- 4.3 It is the special architectural and historic interest of the area as a whole that may merit designation and, as this implies, it may be necessary to include some parts that fall below the overall standard. In considering suggestions to extend beyond the proposed boundary, however, the balance must be in favour of 'specialness'.
- 4.4 North Road is of interest as the original route to Scotland and the focus of the pre-Victorian settlement but, while there is surviving evidence of this early history, it has been considerably infilled with relatively modern building without great distinction. It is considered, therefore, that the interest is not sufficiently special to merit inclusion.
- 4.5 A similar conclusion would apply to the blanket suggestion that everything between the town and the canal should be included. However, there is a case for including a little more of the town to the south. The proposed boundary includes the south side of Lancaster Road but the terraces of Oxford Street and Stanley Street are of a similar pre-1890 date and should be included. Hill Street, though, is more mixed and has been heavily altered by modernisation.
- 4.6 King Street and Alexandra Road (excluding Nos.1a-5a) form a slightly later group, pre-1910. They have a consistent quality that would merit inclusion.
- 4.7 The railway workers' houses on the south east side of Grosvenor Place were built around the turn of the 20th century with a striking use of contrasting brickwork. The two terraces have a definite quality, but they are surrounded by later development of no special distinction. The only way to include them in a designation, therefore, would be as a free-standing 'satellite' area.
- 4.8 The same applies to Hewthwaite Terrace, which was built in 1883 to the south of the town centre on Lancaster Road. Although the terrace has undoubted qualities, it is isolated from the special interest of the town centre by modern development. In this case, it could be included in a conservation area for the Lancaster Canal, should the suggestion for such a designation be taken up.

Buildings of special character

- 4.9 The conservation assessment map, produced as part of the Scoping Report, records buildings of special character. These are buildings which, although not formally listed buildings, nonetheless make a

positive contribution to the character of the proposed conservation area.

- 4.10 In the course of the consultation, a few additional buildings of special character were suggested, some of which had been missed in error. These have now been assessed and it is proposed that the notation should be extended to the following:
- Nos.1-11 (odd) Ramsden Street
 - Nos.14-18 Hunter Street
 - Nos.1/3 Scotland Road, but not Nos.5/7, the car showroom
 - Nos.26/28 Market Street, but not No.30
 - The former Mortuary, a red brick building behind the Fire Station, between the Health Centre and Back Hunter Street. (On the 1890 map, this is shown as a smithy)

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Taking account of the consultation responses, it is recommended that:
- Lancaster City Council should proceed to designate a conservation area for Carnforth Town Centre
 - The boundary should be that proposed in the Scoping Report with the additions described in Section 4 above and shown on the attached map
 - A Conservation Area Appraisal should be prepared consistent with those for neighbouring conservation areas, such as Warton and Bolton-le-Sands
 - The appraisal should take account of the management issues raised in the consultation

Appendix: The questionnaire



Should CARNFORTH have a Conservation Area?

QUESTIONNAIRE

Also available at the Council's website: www.lancaster.gov.uk/newcas

WE NEED YOUR VIEWS

There are 37 conservation areas across the Lancaster District defining the historic character of places, such as Warton and Bolton-le-Sands. The City Council is in the process of reviewing these areas and looking at the potential for further designations.

Carnforth has been suggested and a scoping report has been prepared to consider the implications. This is available to view at the Carnforth Station Visitor Centre, at Lancaster Town Hall and on the website above. A summary of the report has been distributed locally.

Please look at the scoping report or the summary before answering some or all of the following:

Question 1: Do you think Carnforth is different from anywhere else?	YES / NO	If so, what are the differences?
Question 2: Do you think Carnforth has a special character?	YES / NO	Comments:
Question 3: Do you think the character of Carnforth is worth preserving?	YES / NO	Comments:
Question 4: Are there any buildings, spaces or trees you would particularly like to see preserved?	YES / NO	Comments:

A conservation area for Carnforth?

Lancaster City Council has a duty to designate a conservation area if a place has a special architectural or historic character that is worth preserving or enhancing.

Question 5: Do you think that a conservation area should be designated for Carnforth?	YES / NO	Comments:
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Question 6: If so, do you agree with the suggested boundary?	YES / NO	Comments:
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Question 7: Are there any improvements you would wish to see in Carnforth?	YES / NO	Comments:
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Question 8: Please add any other comments using a separate sheet if necessary

Please return your completed questionnaire **BY Wednesday 31st March 2010** to:

The Conservation Studio, 1 Querns Lane, Cirencester, GL7 1RL

...or email us at: info@theconservationstudio.co.uk

...or phone Eddie Booth at The Conservation Studio: 01285 642428

If you prefer, you may leave comments with Lancaster Town Hall and they will be forwarded.

Thank you for your assistance. If you would like to be kept informed of the next stage, please provide contact details:

Name:

Address:

Email: