

# Morecambe Conservation Management Plan

Lancaster City Council

Planning Services

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## 1.0 Introduction

There has been a conservation area in Morecambe since 1991, though the current, enlarged boundary dates from 2003.

The effectiveness of the Conservation Area depends on the way in which it is managed. This is not simply about the City Council effectively exercising its planning powers. Local businesses and residents all have a part to play. The purpose of the plan is to show how each can play a part in making Morecambe a better place in which to live, work and visit.

### **Conservation areas and their importance**

Conservation areas were first introduced in the *Civic Amenities Act 1967*. The same legislation has since been consolidated into subsequent Acts and the current powers are to be found in the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* (the Act). However, the *Heritage Protection Bill* (currently in draft form) seeks to supersede this by 2010.

There are now more than 9,000

conservation areas across England and Wales.

Local authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. Conservation area designation is the primary means by which local authorities can safeguard, for future generations, areas of valued distinctive places that help to define the individual cultural identity of communities.

The special character of conservation areas does not come from the quality of their buildings alone. The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular 'mix' of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; trees and street furniture; significant views – all these and more make up the familiar and cherished local scene.

## **The need for proactive management**

Government guidance (*Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment - PPG15*) makes it clear that change is inevitable and that the challenge is to manage the change in a manner that does not lose sight of the special historic qualities of a place.

English Heritage's recently published *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (April 2008) also states that, "Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change". However, the *Principles* go on to state that, "Conservation is the process of managing change..." (Principles 4.1-4.2)

Local authorities are expected to publish appraisals of their conservation areas, in order to identify their special interest. They are also encouraged to prepare management strategies to address the issues that arise from that analysis.

## 2.0 The Area

### **Conservation value**

Morecambe's Conservation Area Appraisal should be referred to for a fuller account of the area's conservation or heritage value. However, in summary, Morecambe Conservation Area's special character can be said to stem from its relationship with the Bay; from the early origins of Poulton-le-Sands as a fishing village, to the development of Morecambe as a popular holiday resort. In addition to agriculture, the Bay has driven the economy of the area, both in terms of its resources and its spectacular views. When people think of Morecambe, it is the backdrop of the Bay and the views of the Lake District beyond which spring to mind. Indeed, it is this view that Eric Morecambe famously found so appealing.

This spectacular setting has also impacted upon the architecture of the area. The historic village of Poulton can still be read through the road layout and buildings which remain, with Poulton Square at its heart, but this was focussed inland. However, with the arrival of the railway in the

mid-nineteenth century, the buildings began to look to the sea.

The architecture was designed to take advantage of the spectacular views. This is evident from the earliest waterfront buildings, such as Craven Terrace, with its bowed bay windows, the orientation of the Corner House Café with its corner windows, to the Art Deco Midland Hotel built on the shore line and designed to appear as a visiting ocean liner. This curved building with its convex side facing the Bay commands unobscured views.

Much of Morecambe's character also stems from what is intangible, such as its fishing heritage and its historic associations with the stars of music hall and variety theatre. Even the positive air that Morecambe currently has about it now that its regeneration is well underway contributes to the area's character, with the restoration of the Midland Hotel providing the catalyst.

It is all of these things which help to define Morecambe Conservation Area's local distinctiveness and which are the qualities that make the area so unique.

## **Vulnerability of the asset**

Morecambe's decline during the second half of the twentieth century has inevitably taken its toll on the historic fabric of Morecambe.

Morecambe was a thriving holiday destination from the late nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. However, the rise of affordable foreign holidays certainly impacted upon the economy of Morecambe. Not only have a large number of the resort's important buildings been lost, including its two piers and numerous entertainment buildings, but low property values and a high incidence of under-use and vacancy, have meant that there has been little incentive to spend money on improvements, or even routine maintenance in many cases.

The impact of failing to carry out essential maintenance is heightened by the inevitably greater maintenance requirements of coastal towns, where the weathering is always more pronounced, maintenance cycles

shorter, and therefore more expensive.

Conservation-led change has played a vital role in the regeneration of Morecambe in recent years, not least with the restoration of the grade II\* listed Midland Hotel. Many see this building as the catalyst to the renaissance of Morecambe. The Midland Hotel benefited from Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) funding, as did over sixty dwellings as part of the THI's Housing Renewal Scheme and several commercial premises under the Shop Front Improvement Scheme. A successor scheme, entitled 'Morecambe THI 2: A View for Eric' currently has Stage One approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Should a Stage 2 bid be successful, the scheme will commence in Spring 2009.

## **Objectives of the Management Plan**

- a) To address the issues and recommendations made in the Morecambe Conservation Area Appraisal;
- b) To ensure a conservation-led approach to the management of the area over the long-term;

- c) To preserve and enhance the historic townscape;
- d) To reinforce a sense of place through the reinstatement of historic and architectural features, and improvements to public realm;
- e) To ensure that the benefits gained through the Townscape Heritage Initiatives are sustained;

### 3.0 Consultation

#### **Conservation Area Appraisal**

When the Morecambe Conservation Area was extended in 2003, a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) was produced. The Appraisal was placed on the Council's website with a request for comments. A re-appraisal has now been carried out. The new appraisal was placed on the Council's website in June 2008 -

[www.lancaster.gov.uk/morecambecaa](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/morecambecaa)

in order to seek people's views on what they considered to be of special significance, as well as a pamphlet drop and press release, inviting comments. The draft CAA was also publicised at two public consultation events held in Morecambe on 5 and 6 August 2008.

#### **Conservation Area Management Plan**

As well as a duty to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, Section 71 of the Act states that these management proposals shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate. Furthermore, the Act states that the local planning authority shall have regard to any views

concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

This is very much in line with one of the English Heritage *Conservation Principles* which states that, "Everyone should have the opportunity to contribute his or her knowledge of the value of places, and to participate in decisions about their future, by means that are accessible, inclusive and informed" (Principle 2.1).

This Management Plan was placed on the Council's website, inviting comment. The Plan was also publicised and submitted for consideration at the public consultation events held in Morecambe, beside the Eric Morecambe statue, on 5 and 6 August 2008.



**Public consultation event in Morecambe  
6 August 2008**



## 4.0 Implications of Conservation Area Designation

### Legal consequences

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the 'preservation and/or enhancement' of the area. These are as follows:

- In exercising powers under the Planning Acts, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area;
- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting conservation areas. This means that the applications are advertised in local newspapers;
- Conservation area consent is required for the demolition of most buildings in a conservation area (if the volume is more than 115 cubic metres) and walls of more than 2 metres in height (or 1 metre abutting a highway);
- Written notice must be given to the Council six weeks before any works are carried out to any tree in the area above the minimum size;
- The display of advertisements may be more restricted than elsewhere;
- The Council, or Secretary of State, may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices;
- Powers exist for local authorities, English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to assist with the upkeep of buildings in conservation areas.
- English Heritage should be consulted where development which in the opinion of the local planning authority (LPA) affects the character or appearance of a conservation area and which involves:
  - i) the erection of a new building or the extension of an existing building where the area of land in respect of

- which the application is made is more than 1,000 square metres;
- ii) the material change of use of any building where the area of land in respect of which the application is made is more than 1,000 square metres;
- iii) the construction of any building more than 20 metres in height above ground level.

### **Planning permission**

Permitted development rights granted under the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008* are limited in conservation areas. Planning permission is required for certain external works to a dwelling house within a conservation area, which would not normally require planning permission elsewhere. For example, where an extension would extend beyond a side elevation of the original house, or the extension would be of more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall, planning permission will be required. There are also further

restrictions, for example:

- Cladding any part of the exterior;
- Adding to or altering the shape of the roof;
- Erecting another building between a side elevation and the boundary of the curtilage of a dwelling;

for which planning permission would be required.

Where a building is statutorily listed, different legislation applies, as all internal or external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building require listed building consent.

Furthermore, commercial properties, such as shops, offices and public houses, and houses in multiple occupation (flats) have far fewer permitted development rights. Therefore, planning permission is already required for many alterations to these buildings.

### **Satellite dishes**

The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly

tighter than outside such areas. These state that the installation of a satellite antenna on any building or structure within the curtilage of a dwelling house in a conservation area does not require planning permission provided that:

- The dish is not installed on a chimney, wall or a roof slope which faces onto, and is visible from, a road;
- There will be no more than two antennas (including satellite dishes) on the property;
- If you are installing a single antenna it is not more than 100cm in any linear dimension;
- If you are installing two antennas, one is not more than 100cm in any linear dimension, and the other is not more than 60cm in any linear dimension;
- The cubic capacity of each individual antenna is not more than 35 litres; and
- An antenna fitted onto a chimney stack is not more than 60cm in any linear dimension.

#### **Article 4(2) Directions**

Article 4(2) directions enable the local LPA to withdraw certain permitted

development rights for a range of minor developments which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. These can include controlling the replacement of windows and doors, and the removal of boundary treatments, such as walls and railings.

There are already two Article 4(2) directions in Morecambe which affect several properties. See Section 7.0 for further details.

#### **Trees**

All trees with a trunk diameter of 75mm or more at 1.5m above ground level within a conservation area are protected under Section 211 of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. Any proposed works to them will require a written notification to the Council six weeks prior to beginning those works.

Careless works to trees such as unauthorised felling, lopping, topping or uprooting can have a detrimental impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area, as well as spoiling the setting of nearby buildings.

The Council has a Tree Protection Officer, within Planning Services, whose advice should be sought when considering carrying out any works to trees within the Conservation Area. See Section 9.0 for contact details.

### **Implications for LPAs**

The designation of a conservation area must come with the commitment of sufficient resources to fulfil the associated duties, as stated in PPG15. LPAs must have access to the necessary skills and ensure that appropriate policies are adopted. LPAs must also raise awareness of conservation areas and ensure that the local community is appropriately informed (PPG15, Section 4)

It is essential that all the departments within the LPA work together, as well as the County Highways Authority (Lancashire County Council Highways and Environment Management), to ensure that any decision made, whether development control, building control or highways related, preserves and/or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Standards designed for modern environments should not be applied unthinkingly to historic areas and buildings. This should be borne in mind when in exercising building controls, fire regulations and highways standards within conservation areas and in relation to listed buildings.

### **Implications for owners and residents**

It is particularly important that those who live and work in the Conservation Area understand the implications of designation. In considering options for alterations, extensions or redevelopment, it is important that applicants consider the changes in context and do not act in isolation. The best proposals are those which enhance both the individual property and the Conservation Area.

Change within a conservation area is inevitable. The Council does not seek to prevent this, but simply to manage it in a way which is beneficial to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Applicants can assist in this through entering into dialogue with the LPA at an early stage and through employing skilled advice.

It is important that communities are well-informed about the qualities of their conservation areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. While the LPA is a useful source of advice, there is a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible and what is expected.

Community involvement must be maintained following the adoption of this document. The establishment of a Morecambe THI Partnership for the life of the scheme can assist here. The Council is proposing to work with key stakeholders and form a Partnership for the THI area. Whilst the THI area only forms a small element of the larger Conservation Area, its work will inevitably impact upon the area as a whole.

## 5.0 Conservation Area Policy

### **National policy and guidance**

Central government policy on conservation areas is contained in PPG15. This covers the designation of areas and the responsibilities that stem from designation, including the appraisal of the special interest of conservation areas and the control of development affecting them. It also makes the general point that “conservation and sustainable economic growth are complementary objectives and should not generally be seen as in opposition to one another” (PPG15, 1.4).

PPG15 sets the expectations by urging local authorities to “maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies and their allocation of resources” (PPG15, 1.6). The expectations are further developed in English Heritage guidance on the appraisal and management of conservation areas (February 2006).

### **The Local Development Framework**

The Council is well underway with the

Local Development Framework (LDF) which is replacing the Lancaster Local Plan. The Core Strategy has recently been adopted and covers the period up to 2021. It contains strategic policies on conservation.

### **Lancaster District Local Plan**

The current Local Plan was adopted in April 2004. It provides a comprehensive body of saved policies for the control of development within the conservation areas. The policies address the design of new buildings, alterations and extensions, demolition of unlisted buildings, views into and out of the conservation area, new shop fronts and advertisements. There are also a number of listed building policies within the Plan, which cover alterations and extensions, demolition and new uses.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

When guidance is formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), following public consultation, it has the full weight of planning policy. It is important therefore that where conservation advice cannot be included in principal policies, it should be adopted as SPG. At present, the

Council has no SPG that relates specifically to the historic environment, though there are several development briefs and a spatial strategy which deal with sites within historic areas. There is also a generic *Shop Front and Advertisements Design Guide* (SPG7, 2004) and *Residential Design Code* (SPG12, 2004).

### **Future Guidance**

The approved Local Development Scheme (LDS) (March 2007) states that the following supplementary planning documents (SPDs), all of which have some relevance to the Morecambe Conservation Area, are included among those planned for the next three years:

- Affordable Housing;
- Design Code for new development (including energy efficiency); and
- Planning Obligations.

However, the Council is committed to reviewing the need to bring forward SPDs on further subjects as required and resources permit.

Work on the *Central Morecambe and West End Area Action Plan* is due to commence imminently. Unlike SPDs, area action plans (AAPs) are development plan documents (DPDs). This means that they undergo an independent examination by a Planning Inspector on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Once adopted, they are one of the main considerations when determining planning applications. According to Government guidance, *Planning Policy Statement 12* (PPS12), AAPs should be used where there is a need to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed.

AAPs should:

- Deliver planned growth areas;
- Stimulate regeneration;
- Protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
- Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressure; or
- Focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.

Morecambe is the Council's number one regeneration priority. It is

considered that the Council should build upon the successes of previous regeneration schemes and promote further and more extensive regeneration in Morecambe. A first and key stage in this process would be the production of an AAP.

The AAP for Morecambe would underpin and complement other initiatives in the area and provide a detailed spatial planning framework for the area.

### **Monitoring**

The extent to which the policy objectives and implementation of the AAPs and SPDs is achieved will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is available to view online, on the Council's website ([www.lancaster.gov.uk/AMR](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/AMR)).

There will also be regular monitoring as part of the THI Scheme for the HLF.



## 6.0 The Challenges

A wide range of issues that may threaten the historic character of the conservation area have emerged from the Conservation Area Appraisal.

### **Managing change**

Change is inevitable. This is manifest in new development, but not so much in the incremental changes made to shop fronts, above shop accommodation, advertising and signage, and other changes whether they be commercial or highways related. However, it is the smaller incremental changes which can, over time, have a damaging affect on an area, such as inappropriate dormer windows and satellite dishes. It is these changes which need to be monitored and managed.

### **Maintaining character and appearance**

The loss of important architectural features is a major problem within this conservation area. The tendency to replace historic pattern timber windows and doors with uPVC, cast iron or timber gutters with plastic, or natural slate roofs with concrete substitutes, is all too common. Similarly, many of the fine shop front

details have been lost or diluted, as well as the characteristic cobbled and stone boundary walls which may have been over-rendered or removed completely.

Maintenance is critical to ensuring the longevity of these features. It is their deterioration through lack of maintenance which drives people to replace them with inferior materials and styles. The importance of maintenance needs to be reinforced and promoted.

## 7.0 Preservation and Enhancement

### (i) Boundary

The current conservation area boundary was made in 2003. It is proposed to extend the boundary slightly to the area's south so that it encompasses Lunesdale House and the adjacent public realm (see Appendix I)

Lunesdale House is a prominent building at an important entrance into the commercial heart of the Conservation Area. The building dates from the 1930s and has some typical features of this period. It occupies the former site of the Victoria Market. The area of public realm in question provides the setting for Lunesdale House as well as the grade II listed Barclays Bank.

### (ii) Education and training

There is a need for education and training measures to ensure a conservation-led approach to the management of the area over the long-term. Not only does this involve informing the residents themselves, but it is also about ensuring the appropriate skills are available locally within the construction industry.

The Council is proposing to hold a Lime Workshop for local builders and architects. The proposed best practice guidance on *Re-pointing Stone Walling – a guide to good practice* (see **Design Standards and Maintenance** below) will also provide useful guidance for homeowners and builders alike, as well as assisting Development Control in assessing pointing and mortar samples.

The Council, through the proposed second THI scheme: *A View for Eric*, would like to help address the national, regional and local skills shortage in the built heritage sector. The Council will consider how it might fund places on recognised courses such as the NVQ Level 3 in Heritage Skills. The course is run at Craven College in Skipton. The purpose of this course is to help meet the high level of demand for traditional craft skills used in the repair and conservation of historic buildings. This qualification is the current requirement for the conservation endorsement of the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card. The CSCS card allows craftspeople in the heritage sector to

demonstrate their competence to potential clients.

The Council is proposing to endorse and tap into the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building's (SPAB) National Maintenance Week. Launched in 2002, this annual event is held in November, and concludes with National Gutter Day on the Friday: [www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk](http://www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk) . This is the perfect platform upon which to promote the importance of maintenance in the conservation area.

### **(iii) Planning Measures**

#### **Article 4(2) Directions**

There are two Article 4(2) Directions in Morecambe. One affecting Edward Street and, the other, Green Street.

The Edward Street Article 4(2) Direction was confirmed on 14 February 2005, and covers the following property numbers:

1, 3, 7, 11, 12 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27, 33, 35 37, 39, 41, 43, 45 (Flats 1 & 2), 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57.

The Green Street Article 4(2) Direction was confirmed on 25 May

2006, and covers the following property numbers:

54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66.

Article 4(2) Directions are made under the *General Permitted Development Order 1995*. Each Direction is accompanied by a schedule that specifies the various changes to dwellings which will require planning permission, since the Direction withdraws certain permitted development rights.

These two Directions bring the following alterations under control:

- The enlargement, improvement or other alteration (including replacement windows and doors) of a dwelling house where the work would front a highway or open space;
- The alteration to a roof slope fronting a highway or open space;
- The erection or construction of a porch outside an external door which fronts a highway or open space;

- Where a satellite antenna attached to a building would front a highway or open space;
- The erection, alteration or removal of a chimney;
- The erection, alteration or removal of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure fronting a highway or open space; and
- The painting of the exterior of any part of the dwelling house or a building or enclosure within the curtilage of a dwelling house, which fronts a highway.

All the domestic properties which benefit from THI funding are proposed to be the subjects of further similar Article 4(2) Directions.

In addition, there are those properties that perhaps sit in the middle of group schemes which, whilst they have not participated in one of the THIs, could have a detrimental impact upon those that did if their permitted development rights were left intact.

Furthermore, there may be similar properties, perhaps on the same street, which again, may not have

participated in the THIs, but which still retain original features, such as windows or railings, which it is important to preserve. There is certainly scope for including other properties within the proposed Directions.

A photographic survey is produced at the time of an Article 4(2) Direction's confirmation to provide a useful baseline for future monitoring and dealing with subsequent enquiries. These surveys will be repeated every three years so that the results may be used as an enforcement tool. This will enable the LPA to date confidently the date within which works were carried out (i.e. within the last four years).

### **Local lists**

PPG 15 states that an assessment of a conservation area should “always note those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area” (PPG 15, paragraph 4.5). Several such buildings have been identified within the Morecambe CAA. However, there is also scope for taking this further and including them within a list of designated buildings of local architectural or historic interest.

The Government is encouraging LPAs to look upon local designation as an important tool within its local planning policies by proposing to bring the demolition of locally important buildings within the sphere of development control (*Heritage Protection White Paper*). A local list in Morecambe is therefore something which the City Council will consider implementing.

### ***Area of Special Control of Advertisements***

Morecambe does not currently fall within an Area of Special Control of Advertisements. However, it is acknowledged by the Council that those already in place across the District are in need of review. Government guidance states that they should be reviewed every five years.

The designation of new areas should form part of the review and is likely to include Morecambe.

An Area of Special Control of Advertisements is an area specifically defined by the LPA because it considers that its historical,

architectural, archaeological or visual characteristics are so significant that a stricter degree of advertisement control is justified in order to conserve the visual amenity of the area. Legislation requires Areas of Special Control to be rural areas or other areas which appear to the Secretary of State to require 'special protection on grounds of amenity'.

Before an Area of Special Control can be effective, the Secretary of State must approve it. This approval procedure ensures that nationally applicable standards are used in determining what areas are to have stricter advertisement control.

In any Area of Special Control of Advertisements, three main categories of advertising are permitted. They are:

- public notices;
- advertisements inside a building; and
- advertisements for which there is deemed consent.

The main consequence for advertisements which can be displayed

with 'deemed consent' in an Area of Special Control is that there are stricter limits on permitted height and size of the advertisement than elsewhere. These limits are explained in relation to each class of deemed consent.

#### **(iv) Enforcement and monitoring**

##### ***Unauthorised works***

The Council is monitoring and will continue to monitor the carrying out of unauthorised development within the Morecambe Conservation Area.

The carrying out of unauthorised works to a listed building is a criminal offence and is punishable in the Magistrates' Court. Enforcement action is likely to be taken by this LPA against this or any unauthorised development within the area where there is a breach of control.

The conditions attached to any planning permissions, listed building consent and conservation area consent will be closely monitored in the Conservation Area.

Planning enforcement measures that the LPA could use include the issuing

of Enforcement Notices, Listed Building Enforcement Notices and Breach of Condition Notices. Stop Notices can also be issued which will immediately prohibit any commenced unauthorised development from continuing, as specified in the Enforcement Notice.

Unauthorised advertisements are likely to be the subject of either a prosecution or the issue of a Discontinuance Notice, whichever is appropriate.

##### ***Upkeep and repair***

###### *Amenity Notices*

The LPA has powers under Section 215 of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* to serve notice on the owner and occupier of land whose condition is adversely affecting the amenity of the area. They can be served for issues such as poor external maintenance, broken walls or fences, accumulated rubbish or overgrown gardens. The LPA will use these powers where appropriate.

The LPA has recently commenced such a scheme along Marine Road Central in Morecambe to address

these sorts of issues. More than 40 properties along Marine Road Central have recently been sent a warning letter, and separate schedule of works, inviting them to carry out the prescribed works, or similar. Failure to do so is likely to result in a formal notice being served on the owner and occupier. Subject to the owner's right of appeal, the local authority is entitled to carry out the works if the owner fails to comply with the notice, and to reclaim the costs which are registrable as a local land charge. The LPA can also prosecute the owner for non-compliance.

Further such schemes are likely to be carried out within the Conservation Area.

#### *Urgent works*

The LPA will consider serving an Urgent Works notice under Section 54 of the Act in order to execute any works which appear to be urgently necessary for the preservation of a listed building.

In addition, Section 76 of the Act enables the Secretary of State (SoS) to direct that the powers shall apply to an unlisted building in a conservation

area where the preservation of that building is important for maintaining the character or appearance of that area. The LPA will consider asking the SoS to make such a direction where an unlisted building makes a positive contribution to a conservation area.

#### *Repairs notices*

The LPA will consider serving a Repairs Notice under Section 48 of the Act where the LPA considers that a listed building is not being *properly* preserved. These works are not just confined to urgent works or to unoccupied buildings. Repairs notices are intended to secure works for the *long-term* preservation of a listed building.

Whilst the LPA cannot itself carry out the works specified in a Repairs Notice, it can carry out any necessary urgent works under Section 54 of the Act.

If at least two months have elapsed following the service of a Repairs Notice, and reasonable steps are not being taken for the proper preservation of the building, the LPA may begin compulsory purchase proceedings. A compulsory purchase

order (CPO) made by an LPA requires the SoS's confirmation.

Where a Repairs Notice is deemed necessary for the proper preservation of a listed building within the Conservation Area, this is action which the LPA will consider taking.

### **(v) Design Standards and maintenance**

The Council intends to extend its range of published guidance to include guidance on issues which affect the Conservation Area and which will make a difference to public understanding. These topics include:

- *Shop Fronts – Morecambe Design Guide;*
- *Traditional doors and window – Maintaining, repairing and reinstating;*
- *Re-pointing Stone Walling – a guide to good practice;*
- *Maintaining Historic Buildings – Stave Off Decay*

### **Design Framework**

Whilst the Council intends to produce comprehensive guidance documents covering the topics

listed above, as well as the proposed *Design Code for New Development SPD* (see Section 5.0), the Design Framework provides some general guidelines on those and other topics.

### **New buildings**

New buildings, including extensions, within the Conservation Area should be “carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials” (PPG15, 2.14).

A thorough understanding of the context and relating the new building to its surroundings are critical. A successful scheme will comply with the six principles set out in the English Heritage and Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) document: *Building in Context: New development in historic areas* (2001). The building should:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it;



- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings;
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

### ***Repair and restoration***

The guidance below outlines those works considered by the LPA to be desirable. Through the making of THI grants (where properties meet the eligibility criteria) and the application of planning controls (where relevant) the Council will seek to encourage the following works of repair and restoration/reinstatement and discourage changes which it considers to be undesirable:

#### *Chimneys*

Chimneys are important features within the townscape and form an important element of the character of the Conservation Area. The Council will seek to retain chimneys where possible. Many are of coursed rubble or dressed stone, and some have been

over rendered. The re-pointing of the stone stacks should be carried out using natural hydraulic lime (NHL) 5 (eminently hydraulic) in a mix of 1:3 (one part NHL 5 to three parts aggregate). The aggregate should be of an appropriate colour and texture.

The Council will also seek the retention or reinstatement of appropriate clay chimney pots.

#### *Roofs*

The Council will encourage re-roofing in natural slate. Existing slates should be re-used where possible, and any new slates should match the existing in terms of colour, size, thickness and texture. They are commonly laid in diminishing courses.

The insertion of new dormer windows is unlikely to be supported. The insertion of rooflights will only be considered where they do not have a detrimental impact upon the appearance of the building and roofscape of the conservation area. Where they are considered to be acceptable, they should be of an appropriate conservation standard.

### *Eaves and verges*

Existing historic eaves and verge details should be retained or reinstated. Stone corbels supporting gutters is a common feature throughout the Conservation Area. The Council will seek the retention of these. There are also examples of decorative fascias and verge boards to be found. However, where the buildings would not have had fascias and verge boards, they should not be installed.

### *Rainwater goods*

The Council will encourage the replacement of any plastic rainwater goods with cast iron or polyester powder coated aluminium of an appropriate section. An ogee section, rather than half round, is common within the conservation area and, historically, many of these were timber lead lined gutters. Where these survive, every effort should be made to retain them. Where they are beyond repair, they should be replaced, like-for-like.

### *Walls*

Existing lime mortar should be retained where existing. Where it has failed, only localised areas should be

raked out and repointed, rather than entire elevations.

Where possible, inappropriate cement strap or ribbon pointing should be removed. However, great care should be taken to ensure that the stone is not damaged in the process. Hard mortar should be removed using hand tools, such as a mason's quirk. Disc cutters should be avoided.

Generally, NHL 3.5 (moderately hydraulic lime) should be used in a mix of 1:3 (one part NHL 3.5 to three parts aggregate). The aggregate colour is important to get right. The mortar should generally be as close a match to the stone as possible or lighter. The use of Heysham Grit can add a degree of texture and interest to the mortar mix. This aggregate is dredged from Morecambe Bay and contains pieces of shell.

Uneroded stones should be flush pointed and the mortar brushed as it goes off. However, eroded stones should have the pointing recessed so that the joints are not visually widened.

Where rendered finishes are to be renewed, re-rendering in NHL 5 will be encouraged to improve the breathability and prevent trapped moisture.

#### *Masonry cleaning*

The cleaning of stonework and brickwork can be very destructive. Grit or sand blasting sandstone can cause irreversible damage to the stone, effectively ripping the face off it, and making it more susceptible to staining from pollution, water ingress and speeding up the weathering process. It can also destroy any tooling marks which the stone may have. It is for these reasons that listed building consent is required to clean a listed building.

However, there is a place for stone cleaning, provided it is carried out by specialist and competent contractors working under close supervision. Stone cleaning should only be used where pollution is causing the stone to deteriorate or to remove the worst of accumulated dirt and staining to allow the appearance of a building to be properly appreciated. However, the aim should never be to make the building appear as new. Where stone

cleaning is considered to be appropriate, non-destructive cleaning techniques that use such as the Jos/TORC and DOFF systems should be considered.

Many masonry door and window surrounds have been painted in Morecambe. It may be desirable to remove the paint in some instances. However, it should be considered that the stone beneath may have deteriorated (this may be the reason it was painted in the first place). Stone repairs may be required in some cases, depending on the quality of the stone.

#### *Windows*

Wherever possible, the Council will encourage the repair of existing historic windows and the replacement of inappropriate windows by those of an appropriate pattern and material. Where necessary, the present openings may require modification to restore the correct proportions to the façade.

It is rare for historic windows to be beyond repair. Where a cill is rotten, for example, this can be replaced by a sufficiently skilled joiner, by splicing in a new piece of timber. Only where an

historic window is beyond repair, and work is required to virtually all parts, should it be replaced like-for-like.

Where inappropriate modern windows are to be replaced, it is important to get the fenestration pattern correct. The historic street scene or archive documents should be consulted to determine this.

Double glazed timber sash windows may be considered appropriate in some unlisted buildings. However, a traditional weight and cord system should be used in preference to a spiral balanced system. Sashes must be true sliding sashes, not mock sashes with “dummy” top hung lights.

Where side hung timber casements are considered appropriate, these should be flush fitting and not storm-proofed.

The thermal performance of historic windows can be improved by the installation of draught strips, for example, or even secondary glazing.

#### *External doors*

Many doors to domestic properties do survive and examples can be found

throughout the Conservation Area. Generally these take the form of panelled doors, with different numbers and combinations of bolection moulded or raised and fielded panels. The Council will encourage their proper repair, or their reinstatement where inappropriate doors exist. Appropriate door furniture should also be used.

#### *Boundary treatments*

A common feature throughout Morecambe is its cobbled boundary walls. The Council will strongly encourage their retention and conservation.

Where original railings exists, these should also be retained and the historic pattern replicated, where new railings are proposed. Where no historic pattern remains the historic street scene or archive documents should be consulted to determine the most appropriate pattern.

Traditionally, each upright was embedded in a stone plinth. This method of installing new railings will be encouraged.

### *Shop fronts*

Morecambe has a number of fine shop fronts. However, many have undergone alterations, ranging from minor works such as the obscuring of details with inappropriate signage to more severe alterations.

Where historic or traditional shop fronts remain, renovation will be the preferred option, retaining much of the original work as possible, and replacing only those elements decayed beyond repair or of a later date and of an inappropriate design.

Where the design of the present shop front is inappropriate to the building and street scene the Council will encourage replacement. The design of new shop fronts should respect the character of the property, the historic context of the street and should, wherever possible, be based upon evidence of earlier arrangements. However, in some cases, a more contemporary approach may be acceptable.

### *Signage*

Signage should be designed in sympathy with the building, and should

not detract from it or the street scene.

The location of signage is important. For example, signs above fascia level or on gables will normally be discouraged unless of exceptional quality. Duplication of signage is unnecessary and creates clutter.

Signage materials should respect the building. Painted timber fascias with individual letters on spacers will be encouraged. Glossy materials will be discouraged. Instead, materials such as matt or satin painted timber or brushed stainless steel are recommended for use on both new and traditional shop frontages. Hand painted signs will also be encouraged.

### *Illumination*

Internally illuminated signs are obtrusive and will be strongly discouraged. Instead, subtle external lighting, such as a trough light placed over the lettering, of high quality should be utilised where illumination is necessary. A trough light on a fascia should be finished in the same colour as the fascia so that it blends in.

### *Inclusive access*

Inclusive access must form an integral part of the design process, and convenient access into the shop should be provided for everybody, whether they be customers or workers. Where a level approach is not possible, consideration should be given to a ramped entrance of gentle gradient or, where this cannot be achieved, steps with appropriate handrails. Entrances should have a minimum clear opening width of 800mm. Glazed doors should have clear contrasting manifestations to ensure perception by people with visual impairments.

All proposed schemes must be compliant with the requirements of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995), Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and British Standard 8300. The Council's Access Officer can provide further advice. See Section 9.0 for contact details.

### *Security measures*

External security shutters are considered to be visually intrusive. Outside of trading hours they can result in a very unwelcoming and even

hostile street scene. When down, roller shutters are liable to attract graffiti and spontaneous damage. They also prevent window shopping and casual surveillance. Their use will be discouraged. Where they exist already, other measures such as toughened glass, internal grilles or CCTV and internal lighting will be encouraged as an alternative.

The Council has produced a document entitled, *Policy Information and Design Guidance – Shopfront Security in Conservation Areas*. This can be found on the planning pages of the Council's website.

### **Maintenance**

Lack of maintenance is a major problem within the Morecambe Conservation Area. A shift to systematic maintenance is required, rather than sporadic major repair. Not only can well maintained buildings improve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, but as the first THI has shown, it can increase the value of property.

As PPG15 states, "Maintenance and repair are the key to the preservation of historic buildings". It is true that,

“Major problems are very often the result of neglect and, if tackled earlier, can be prevented or reduced in scale. Regular inspection is invaluable” (PPG15, 7.1).

Where the maintenance would involve working from heights, the *Working from Height Regulations 2005* should be complied with. The Health & Safety Executive’s *Using Ladders Safely* advice should be consulted:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/ladders.htm>

A separate guidance note on the maintenance of historic buildings is planned by the City Council. However, below are some general guidelines:

#### *Roofs*

The condition of roofs should be checked at least twice a year.

A good indication of their condition can be gained from a visual inspection from the ground in many cases. Binoculars can be very useful. A visual inspection such as this can reveal cracked or slipped slates, loose flashings and vegetation growth, such as moss. These problems should be

dealt with swiftly to prevent them escalating into bigger problems.

Ridges and hips should be checked for signs of failing mortar. Evidence of this can usually be found in the gutters.

#### *Rainwater goods*

Every Spring and Autumn, gutters and hopper heads should be cleared and any vegetation, leaves and silt removed. Downpipes should also be checked for blockages.

Cast iron rainwater goods should be painted regularly to prevent rust, and timber box gutters painted regularly to prevent rot.

#### *Mortar*

Missing mortar and loose or friable mortar should be inspected for. Where this is in evidence, it should be repaired, on a like for like basis, matching the color and material. Failed mortar is likely to allow water ingress. Mortar failure can be caused by water penetration and possible causes should therefore be identified, such as blocked rainwater goods.

### *Render*

Cracked render can encourage water penetration and should be patched or consolidated using an appropriately matched render mix. Where lime or hydraulic lime render has been used previously, this should be matched.

Peeling paint can be a sign of a damp and the causes should be identified. Paint peeling from external walls can be caused by things such as blocked rainwater goods or the use of a hard cement render which has trapped moisture behind it.

### *Windows and doors*

Moisture can pose a real threat to timber windows and doors, window cills being the most vulnerable elements.

Loose joints, cracked paint and perished putty can all permit the ingress of moisture. Where paintwork is peeling or blistering it may be a sign of wet rot beneath and should be investigated.

The simplest and most effective means of maintaining timber windows and doors is to regularly clean and repaint

them, and to renew any perished putty on windows,.

## **(vi) Street management and public realm improvements**

As PPG15 states, floorscape and street furniture can make a vital contribution to the appearance of a conservation area (PPG15, 5.13).

Lancashire County Council Highways and Environment Management (HEM) is the responsible body for works to highways.

It is important that Highways and the LPA work together to ensure that any maintenance or improvement schemes carried out also meet the tests of preserving and/or enhancing the conservation area.

### *Street surfaces*

Where areas of historic paving or setts are in need of renewal within the designated conservation area, they should be replaced like-for-like.

New surfacing materials in these areas should be appropriate to the surroundings and respect local traditions.



### *Street lighting*

Light fixtures should be appropriate to their context in material, scale, design and illumination, whilst still complying with British Standard BS5489.

A simple and consistent style of lighting column and fixture should be adopted throughout the Conservation Area.

HEM's current policy in relation to conservation areas means that they can add an enhancement to the cost of the light fixture to replacement lighting columns.

### *Street signage*

New signs should be well designed and sensitively placed, avoiding the need for supplementary poles, where practicable.

Redundant signage should be removed.

### *Public realm improvements*

The City Council is proposing public realm improvement works to Victoria Street and surrounding streets. This will be delivered as part of the proposed second THI. Additional

funding for this has been obtained through a Section 106 agreement.

Design options are likely to be made available and consulted upon towards the end of 2008.

## 8.0 Putting the Conservation Management Plan into practice

Lancaster City Council's THI Team is likely to include a dedicated THI Officer, for the life of the scheme, assisted by the Council's Conservation Team (an Assistant Conservation Officer and Senior Conservation Officer). The THI team will help to implement the Management Plan, which will also involve input from the Council's Development Control, Planning Control (Enforcements) and Forward Planning Teams.

A dedicated Development Control Officer will be assigned to deal with all THI related planning applications and those within the Conservation Area, to ensure consistency across the whole area.

The Morecambe THI Partnership will also assist in the Plan's implementation for the life of the scheme.

However, the Council has existing resources in place to ensure that the Management Plan is successfully implemented and all its measures and opportunities for enhancement are put into practice for at least ten years

after the THI Scheme has ended. The Council will continue to employ in-house qualified conservation staff.

In order to ensure that the Management Plan is implemented effectively, a copy of the Plan, along with a summary, will be given to all relevant Council departments, as well as the THI Partnership. The Management Plan will also remain available on the Council's website. It is hoped this will make the Management Plan accessible to members of the public and other interested parties.

In line with the English Heritage guidance on conservation area appraisals and their management (February 2006), the Management Plan and the Appraisal will be reviewed every five years. However, the Management Plan will be monitored by the Conservation Team as part of an ongoing process.

A programme and timetable for all the action needed to put its measures into practice are set out below:

<b>Management Plan objectives</b> (see Section 2)	<b>Management Plan proposal</b> (see Section 7)	<b>Level of priority</b> (Short, Medium, Long-term)	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Organisation and Department</b>
a, c, d	<b>(i) Boundary change</b> Conservation Area boundary extension to include Lunedale House and adjacent public realm	S	Autumn 2008	LCC: PS & Legal EH & GONW
a, b, c, d, e	<b>(ii) Education &amp; Training</b>  e.g. <i>National Maintenance Week</i>	S-L	2008 & ongoing  November (annually)	LCC: PS
a, b, c, d, e	<b>(iii) Planning Measures</b>  <i>Article 4(2) Directions</i>	S-L	2008 & ongoing	LCC: PS & Legal EH & GONW
a, b, c	<i>Local List</i>	M-L	2009 & ongoing	LCC: PS
a, b, c, e	<i>Area of Special Control of Advertisements</i>	M-L	2009 onwards	LCC: PS, Legal DCLG
a, b, c, d, e	<b>(iv) Enforcement and monitoring</b>  <i>Unauthorised works</i>	S-L	In place and ongoing	LCC: PS & Legal

<b>a, b, c, d, e</b>	<b>Upkeep &amp; Repair:</b> <i>Amenity Notices</i>	S-L	2008 & ongoing	LCC: PS & Legal
<b>a, b, c, e</b>	<i>Urgent Works</i>	S-L	In place and ongoing	LCC: PS & Legal
<b>a, b, c, d, e</b>	<i>Repairs Notices</i>	S-L	In place and ongoing	LCC: PS & Legal
	<b>(v) Design standards &amp; maintenance</b>			
<b>a, b, c, d, e</b>	<b>Guidance documents</b>	S	2008/9	LCC: PS
<b>a, b, c, d, e</b>	<b>Design Framework</b>	S-L	In place and ongoing	LCC: PS
<b>a, b, c, d, e</b>	<b>(vi) Street management and public realm improvements</b>	S-L	2008 onwards	LCC: PS & Lancashire CC (Highways)

EH – English Heritage

DCLG – Department of Communities & Local Government

GONW- Government Office for the North West

LCC – Lancaster City Council

Lancashire CC – Lancashire County Council

PS – Planning Service

## 9.0 Contact details

For further information on the **Morecambe Conservation Management Plan**, please contact the Council's Conservation Team on 01524 582535.

For information regarding the **THI Scheme**, please contact the Council's Forward Planning Team (Projects) on 01524 582376.

For information on **trees**, and works to them, please contact the Council's Tree Protection Officer on 01524 582384.

For information on **access** requirements and design, please contact the Council's Access Officer on 01524 582372.

Planning Services  
Lancaster City Council  
Town Hall  
Dalton Square  
Lancaster  
LAI IPJ

T: 01524 582376

W: [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)

E: [forwardplanning@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@lancaster.gov.uk)