

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section highlights the key conclusions and recommendations from the Conservation Area appraisals.

4.1 Building condition and impact of building alterations

Buildings in the conservation area are in generally good condition and as the majority are in active use, most buildings are well maintained. The largest group of 'at risk' buildings is in Character Area 5, between St Leonard's Gate and Moor Lane, where uncertainty about redevelopment is causing buildings such as the former Mitchells brewery, the former Tramway Hotel and other buildings fronting Stonewell and St Leonard's Gate to deteriorate. Buildings elsewhere that appear to be 'at risk' include Number 35 Sun Street which is partly boarded-up, the vacant former hotel on Westbourne Road, 1, 3 and 5 Cable Street and a few properties on North Road.



Former brewery buildings awaiting repair and a new future

Accumulative alterations to historic buildings and repairs using non-traditional materials and door and window patterns erode the character of frontages and in the case of terraces, their visual unity. Article 4 Directions introduced in 1990 have had mixed results and in some cases, have not prevented the loss of some historic doors and windows on houses, for example on

Dallas Road, but in other areas, this additional control has protected traditional features, for example on Sulyard Street. In residential areas previously outside the conservation area and not protected by Article 4 Directions, there has been a varying loss of historic features; most extensive in areas of historic workers' housing. Over-painting stonework, the use of concrete tiles to replace traditional roofing, the loss of chimneys and the impact of satellite dishes and external services also occurs throughout the area, but is most marked on housing lower down the social scale.

The City Centre retail area retains many good examples of historic shop fronts and doors, although some intrusive shop fronts and fascias were installed in the late 20th century. The Council's 2001 Shopfront and Advertisement Guide has since been successful in promoting a good standard of recent design and should continue to be used for guidance and in development control.

4.2. Capacity to Accommodate Change

The Conservation Area is, for the most part, a densely developed urban environment with a fine grain of development. This has meant that up to now most new development has been accommodated by refurbishing and adapting existing historic buildings or by integrating new infill development into established streetscenes. This approach has had varying degrees of success and the Conservation Area includes both good and poor examples of adaptation and infill development.

The best examples of new development respond to the grain, scale, form and character of the historic city, integrating well with surrounding townscape and historic buildings. This approach is likely to continue as the principal form of accommodating change within the area. It will be important to carefully control development through the planning process, to ensure that the design is of a sufficiently high quality and takes sufficient account of the distinctive character of its surrounding environment in the

conservation area. This document will assist designers in understanding the distinctive character within each character area and will assist conservation officers in assessing the impact and merits of submitted schemes.

Some recent development responds well to the historic context, using appropriate materials, colours and proportions whilst using a subtle contemporary design (see examples below).



Well considered new development in the Conservation Area

There are currently a few larger sites that may offer the potential for more comprehensive development. These are set out below.

4.2.1. Damside Street

Cleared sites on Damside Street, opposite the bus station are currently used as surface car parks. At the time of writing there is a current planning application for redevelopment of these sites. The principle of this is welcomed, as restoring a built frontage here would re-establish Damside Street as a street, complement the bus

station opposite and mask the exposed rear properties on Church Street. The new frontage will have to be of a suitably high design standard and of appropriate scale and form to reflect the distinctive character of the Conservation Area. Places Matter have undertaken a review of the current proposals.

4.2.2. The Castle

With the ceasing of the prison use in the Castle there is a great opportunity to enhance the heritage asset and provide greater public accessibility to the public. Proposals to provide an expanded visitor attraction and accommodate a boutique hotel are at an early stage; the scheme would open up the central courtyard to public access and enable its use as an events space. This greater accessibility, and new long-term use and repair of the historic Castle is positive for the city. Changes to the building will be subject to listed building control and will need to undergo great scrutiny to ensure that harm to the historic fabric is minimised. The opportunity should also be taken to enhance the public realm surrounding the Castle. In particular the heavy tree cover surrounding the Castle should be pruned and better managed in order to create better long range views.

4.2.3. Canal Corridor North Site

The large expanse of cleared land, currently used for car parking, between St Leonard's Gate and Moor Lane is the largest single development opportunity in the Conservation Area. At the time of writing there is a current development proposal for mixed use by the developer British Land Lancaster Limited Partnership for this site. The proposals are for a mix of retail, leisure and residential uses which would comprehensively regenerate the site.

Appropriate development of this site would improve the northern part of the Conservation Area. The area was originally cleared as part of once planned inner ring-road scheme and has remained vacant and somewhat blighted since. The current proposals retain listed buildings (such as the Grand Theatre) on the two principal streets

and completes these frontages with new and refurbished buildings. The proposals include a new street which will pass from Stonewell into the centre of the site, effectively forming a significant extension to retail core of the City Centre. New housing to the north and open space to the east complete the scheme.

The proposals will need to be considered in detail by the Conservation Team. Key considerations will be:

- The overall scale, form and grain of development.
- The internal layout of streets and spaces and integration with the established street pattern. It will be important to ensure pedestrian permeability through the site to surrounding streets.
- The quality of new frontages on Moor Lane and St Leonard's Gate (and the degree to which these reflect and complement existing historic buildings)
- The setting of adjacent listed buildings.
- The retention of unlisted buildings that contribute to the conservation area.
- The new connection into Stonewell
- The design of housing at the northern gateway formed where St Leonard's Gate meets Alfred Street.
- Maintaining long range views from surrounding streets and the canal, especially to the Castle and Cathedral.

4.2.4. Auction Mart Car Park

The site at the south end of Thurnham Street, alongside the canal, is currently used as a car park. This is a low grade use of a relatively prominent City Centre site with a waterside location. There are no current plans for development but appropriate development here would enhance the Conservation Area. This site has a history of development of significant massing and new development here could help to enclose and

define both Thurnham Street and the canalside. It should be of an appropriate massing and scale (the site is at a lower level to Thurnham Street, offering potential for greater height here) and with good quality frontages that reflect local character. Development should also create a strong waterside public realm and allow for linkage with adjacent canalside sites to the east. The site would benefit from the preparation of design guidance, which could be used to inform and assess subsequent design proposals.

4.2.5. Penny Street Junction

Elsewhere in this document the weakness of the southern gateway to the Conservation Area at the Y-shaped junction of Penny Street / King Street has been discussed. This is a high profile location that is currently occupied by a take-away use in a rather plain building that has been much altered and is not in good condition. In front of the building is a space used for highways and parking which has a standard highways treatment and is dominated by standard lighting columns, a telecommunications signals box, highways signage and road markings.



Penny Street junction

The redevelopment of this building and the space in front of it would represent a significant enhancement to the Conservation Area and the approach to the City Centre from the south. The building could be adapted or redeveloped to provide a stronger landmark building with a higher profile use. This would need to be a feature building of high quality design. It must hold the corner well, providing activity and surveillance to all street elevations, and a building of greater

height than the existing building would be effective in this location. The design would need to respond to the local character of the area, as defined in this report, but a contemporary response to this character would be appropriate.

The space in front of the building should become a high quality piece of public realm, complementing the building – ideally with a ground floor use that can spill out onto this space. The space should be attractive for pedestrian use and uncluttered by highway and utility infrastructure. This is likely to require changes to traffic movement and parking and arrangement, which will need to be fully discussed with the Highways Department. The site would benefit from the preparation of design guidance (covering both built development and public realm treatment), which could be used to inform and assess subsequent design proposals.

4.3 Traffic and Streets

It should also be noted that much of the Conservation Area suffers from high levels of traffic. Unlike many other historic cities, Lancaster does not have an inner ring road and so must still bear heavy traffic through the historic core. This has a negative impact on historic buildings as a result of exhaust fumes. It also a significant negative impact on local character in terms of the noise, fumes and nuisance of heavy traffic on the pedestrian experience.

These effects are exacerbated by the nature of roads that are designed as highway spaces before streets, and consequently have footways which are made narrower and less inviting by safety railings, bollards and highway signage. These highways typically coincide with historic streets with historical street frontages. As a result they are narrow and not designed to carry the level of traffic that currently use them. This is a conflict that currently exists in the Conservation Area. The most visible examples of these difficulties is on King Street and Great John Street/Stonewell. Without a comprehensive transport strategy it is difficult to envisage a solution but the differing roles of these streets, and differing needs of their user

groups, could perhaps be better understood and reflected in public realm design.

4.4 Open Space and Public Realm Enhancement

The quality and maintenance of open space and public realm varies across the Conservation Area. This has been discussed within the various Character Area sections. Several key public spaces would benefit from enhancement, for example Dalton Square. In many cases the better maintenance of trees would significantly improve public spaces, for example on Castle Hill and at Aalborg Place where the large number of trees risks dominating the space if left to grow. This is true of streets as well as spaces, for example Westbourne Road benefits from an abundance of mature street trees. These should be retained but they require better maintenance as they currently obscure buildings and dominate views. Trees can also pose maintenance issue for historic buildings. Elsewhere, the installation of higher quality street furniture and lighting columns in key streets and spaces would enhance the public realm. At present many streets in the Conservation Area have standard lighting columns and street furniture.

The key opportunity for enhancement of open space is Quay Meadows (or Vicarage Fields): the large area of open space between the Priory and St George's Quay. The section on Character Area 2 has discussed the problems associated with this space, principally concerned with overgrown vegetation and under-use of the space.



Quay Meadows – currently largely overgrown

On a positive note, it is an asset to have such large open spaces at the heart of the City but with no formal sports or outdoor recreation facilities, few benches, dense vegetation and with no attractive views out, the area is poorly used, except to walk dogs. Historically this land would have been well-managed as the glebe land of the Priory, with open views across it. An appropriate management regime for the site today would enable it to contribute more strongly to the historic character of the area, whilst also providing wider public benefits.

Although under-used at present these spaces offer the potential to provide a well-located city park. With public consultation, a programme of extensive felling and pruning, regular maintenance, well-designed street furniture, new recreation facilities and an improved network of well-signed pedestrian and cycle routes would realise this area's potential. Providing an attractive green route from the Castle to the Quay through the site would significantly add value and increase its use. The opportunity should also be taken to improve accessibility and visibility to the Roman bath house ruins and provide interpretation for this asset. In general it is important that the relationship of these spaces with the surrounding City is improved by opening up views and routes, installing signage and generally improving awareness.

Many of these ideas are being addressed by 'Imagination Lancaster' and their 'Beyond the Castle' project. This scheme should hopefully allow the open space to realise its potential and contribute fully to the life of the City.

4.5 Article 4 Directions

As noted above, there is an existing Article 4 (2) Direction, introduced in 1990 that covers residential property in several areas of the conservation area (see map). It is recommended that this is continued, and that public support is explored for some additional areas added to the conservation area. In particular, an Article 4 Direction could protect the character of the area by removing some classes of permitted development from houses on both sides of Westbourne Road, and Ashfield Avenue in Character Area 10.

These frontages are important and retain a high proportion of traditional joinery, front boundaries, doorways, chimneys and roofs. It is generally recommended that Article 4 Directions are not worthwhile in Area 7, where almost all the doors and windows have been replaced and the houses directly front the footway. It would, however, be worth exploring public support to remove permitted development for rear additions to houses backing onto the canal as these are very visible from the towpath (Nos. 4-34 Wolseley Street). This could also include the group of four houses facing north-east to the Dry Dock.

4.6 Alteration to Conservation Area Boundary

It is recommended that the boundary is extended to include the former Station Master's house at 25 Meeting House Lane. This 2-storey detached house was built between 1844 and 1852 (it is first marked on the 1852 OS map). The stone house has bay windows that face the railway line, gable end stone stacks, deep eaves and overhanging verges, a pretty gabled porch and stone boundary walls.



25 Meeting House Lane

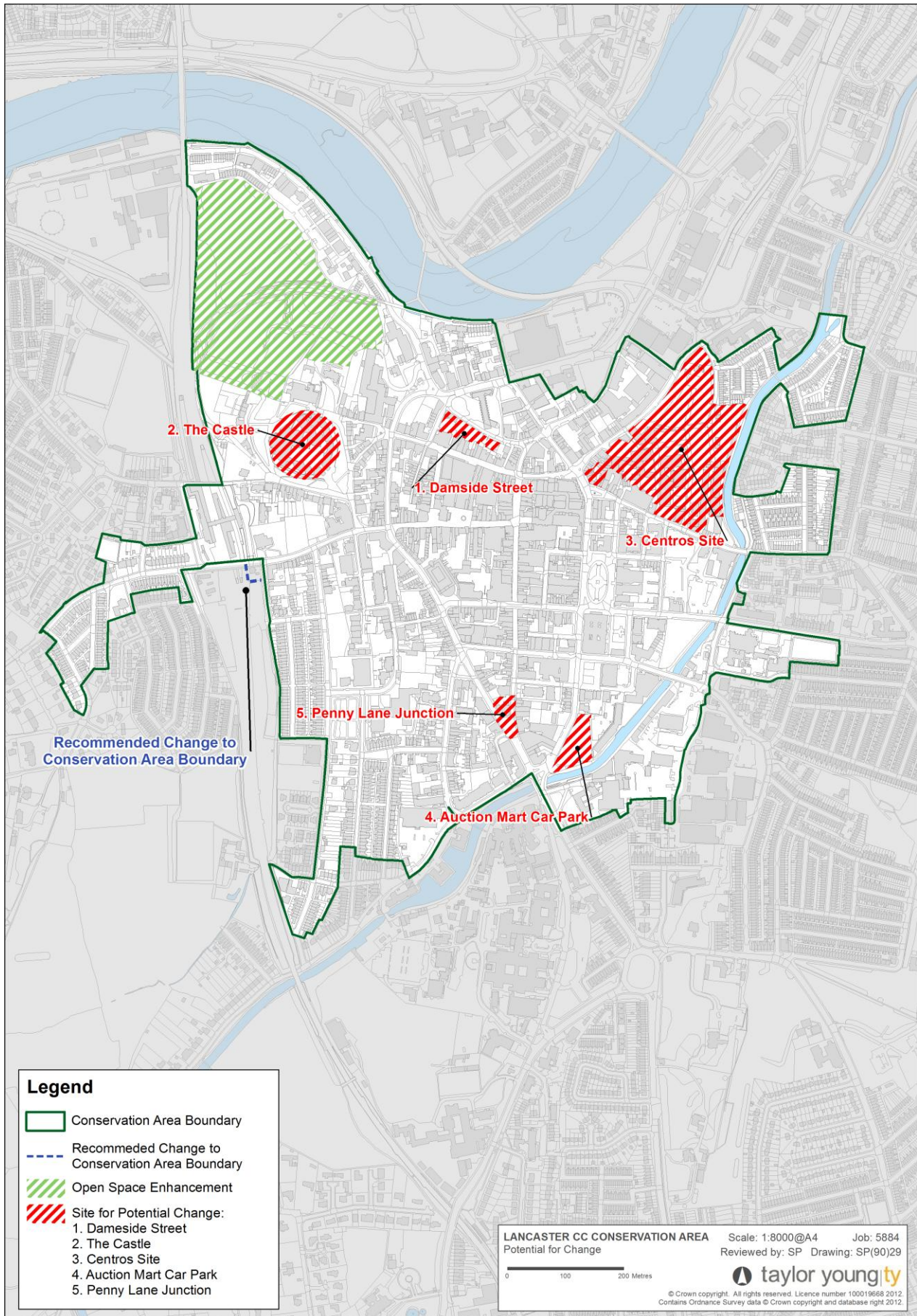
4.7 Community Engagement

The importance of involving local people in the designation and management of conservation areas is enshrined in the legislation. A draft of this document was subject to public consultation in 2012, and the text amended accordingly. Proposals for

development that affects the conservation area are advertised in public notices on site and in the press, to invite public comments within a set time-frame.

Lancaster Civic Society are actively involved in the heritage of the city and there may be more scope to involve their members in supporting the City Council's management of the conservation area, for example as 'critical friends'.

Figure 4.1: Capacity for Change



Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

Arcade: architectural feature comprising a series of arches on piers or columns.

Ashlar: masonry laid in regular courses using smooth-faced blocks of stone.

Burgage plot: a plot belonging to a land owner or burgess in the medieval period, usually long and thin with a narrow frontage onto the street.

Classical: an architectural style inspired by ancient Rome and Greece, using features from temples such as columns, pediments and refined carved details. Revived in varying forms in the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Chamfer: an angled edge cut on blocks of stone or timber beams and doorways.

Character Area: part of a wider area that has a distinct character, as evident from the type, form and appearance of its buildings, the uses and activities that occur there and the nature of its public spaces.

Cobbles: rounded stones from a beach or river, used to make a surface on a yard, lane or forecourt.

Conservation: The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Cupola: small domed turret on top of a roof.

Detractor: an area or building that creates a poor visual impression and has a negative impact on the overall character of the surrounding area.

Edwardian Baroque: a grand style of architecture fashionable between c1900 and 1914, using features and designs inspired by late 17th century classical architecture. Popular for municipal and commercial buildings.

Frontage: the buildings, spaces and boundary treatments that directly adjoin the street edge.

Gateway: a clear arrival point to a distinct area (i.e. the City Centre or a character area).

Georgian: the period between 1714 and 1837, covering the reigns of Kings George I, II, III and IV and also William IV. Used to describe a style of architecture.

Gothic: medieval architectural style using pointed arches, spires, rich stone carving and colourful decoration such as stained glass.

Gothick: a stylised version of Gothic used in the 18th century, but not on a large scale.

Hoodmould: a moulded stone detail above a door or window, used to shed water.

Italianate: an architectural style popular in the mid 19th century, using arched windows, roofs with deep eaves and asymmetrical features such as towers, derived from Italy.

Jamb: the vertical side of a door or window opening.

Landmark: a building or structure that stands out from its surroundings due to scale, status or function and is useful for orientation.

Lintel: the horizontal top of a doorway or window, in timber or stone.

Mullioned window: window with stone verticals between the panes.

Node: A key point of movement activity within an urban area – i.e. a significant junction or well-used public space.

Parapet: the top part of a building wall that hides the roof, or the wall on a bridge.

Pediment: formal gable or triangular feature on a building front, associated with classical architecture.

Pier: a vertical column used to support an arch or lintel.

Pilaster: a flat vertical feature representing a pier, used in classical architecture.

Plinth: the lower part of a pier or wall in classical architecture, or the base for a statue.

Portico: a formal porch or entrance, usually with columns and a pediment to the roof.

Portland stone: a white limestone, quarried on Portland Bill in Dorset and fashionable for facing large 20th century buildings.

Presbytery: a house lived in by a priest.

Public Realm: the outdoor parts of a town or city that are accessible to the public, especially streets and public squares.

Quoins: blocks of stone on the vertical corners of a building, either flush or laid to project from the rest of the front, and sometimes chamfered.

Revival style: refers to a type of architecture that uses features and details derived from earlier periods, including Gothic or Classical Revival.

Rainwater goods: gutters, pipes and hoppers used to take rainwater away from a roof, traditionally made of cast-iron, lead or timber.

Render: a finish on an external wall, traditionally made using lime. Roughcast render contains small stones or aggregate to give a textured finish.

Rock-faced: stone cut with a rugged front face, fashionable in Victorian architecture.

Rubble: Rough walling using irregular sized stones, often not coursed.

Rustication: a type of ashlar masonry cut with chamfered edges or patterned faces, sometimes used in classical architecture for the lower part of a building.

Scheduled monument: Nationally important archaeological sites included on a 'schedule' by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 As Amended.

Setts: small quarried stone blocks used for road and yard surfaces, cut with square edges and not to be confused with cobbles.

Topography: the shape and form of the landscape, particularly referring to whether it is hilly.

Townscape: a short-hand term used in planning and urban design to describe the appearance, character and physical form of a town or city.

Vernacular: in architecture, a term used to describe a building made of local materials following local traditions and not designed by an architect.

Vista: a framed view, usually down a street and terminated by a landmark.

Appendix 2: Sources

Historic Maps

(Courtesy of Lancaster Library and University of Lancaster Library):

1610 Speed, Lancashire
1684 redrawn by Kenneth Docton
1778 Mackreth
1807 Clark
1821 Binns
1824 Baines
1844 Ordnance Survey, 1:10560
1846 Ordnance Survey, 1:500
1877 Harrison and Hall
1891 Ordnance Survey, 1:10560
1893 Ordnance Survey, 1:2500
1913 Ordnance Survey, 1:2500
1931 Ordnance Survey, 1:2500

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The Conservation Studio, *Lancaster City Conservation Areas: Boundary Review*, 2010
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J.A.Price, *Industrial Archaeology of the Lune Valley*, 1983
Andrew White, *The Buildings of Georgian Lancaster*, 2000
Andrew White, ed, *A History of Lancaster*, 2001
A. White and M.Winstanley, *Victorian Terraced Houses in Lancaster*, 1996

Unpublished Sources

D.D.Jones and J.Price, *Industrial Lancaster*, report for Lancaster Museum, nd, c1980s
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**Appendix 3: Checklist for
heritage assets that
make a positive
contribution to the
conservation area.**

This checklist is extracted from the English Heritage guidance, *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011). It is intended to assist local authorities identify which buildings or structures make a positive contribution to a conservation area. If any of the following factors apply, and provided the historic form and value of the structure has not been damaged, it is included on the mapping in this document.

- Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
- Does it have landmark quality?
- Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
- Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
- Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Is it associated with a designed landscape e.g. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

Appendix 4: Contacts for Further Information

Conservation Team

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Marine Road East
Morecambe
LA4 5AF

Mail to:

PO Box 4
Lancaster Town Hall
Lancaster
LA1 1QR

Tel. 01524 582535 or 01524 582340

Email: planningpolicy@lancaster.gov.uk

Lancashire County Archaeological Service

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100
County Hall
Preston
PR1 0LD

Tel. 01772 533404

Email: archaeology@lancashire.gov.uk

For general planning and building control enquiries:

Planning Advice Team
Regeneration & Planning Service

Address as above

Tel. 01524 582950

Email: developmentcontrol@lancaster.gov.uk

For advice about works to trees:

Tree Protection Officer
Regeneration & Planning Service

Address as above

Tel. 01524 582384

Email: developmentcontrol@lancaster.gov.uk

