

Historic Townscape Characterisation Assessment

Bloomfield, Blackpool



AHP Architectural
History
Practice

August 2009

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bloomfield is a rectangular grid of streets to the south of Blackpool town centre, immediately inland of the Promenade. It stretches from Haig Road and Duke Street in the south to Chapel Street in the north, with Bolton Road and Foxhall Road forming the western boundary and the former railway line east of Elland Road and Hyde Road defining the eastern edge of the study area. Bloomfield developed as a dense area of lodging houses and private housing over a 50-year period beginning in the 1860s, prompted by the opening of the Central Pier in 1867. Located just south of the town centre and immediately inland of the Promenade, Bloomfield was made more accessible by the opening of Central Station in the mid 1870s, attracting an entertainment development and dense housing to provide affordable holiday accommodation for working people.

Lytham Road is the main north-south route, laid out in the late 18th-century as part of the enclosure of the moss, with regular fields either side. This linear layout provided the basis for a pattern of regular streets either side Lytham Road, with the better-class accommodation nearest the sea to the west. The historic social hierarchy of the area flanking Lytham Road is reflected in the varying spatial density of streets and housing, with a clear contrast between the more spacious western streets and the very dense streets of workers' housing to east and north. The area has been divided into two character areas: Lytham Road and the south area which has a very regular layout, and north of Lonsdale Road, where the streets pattern and urban grain are more varied. Here, there are dense streets on a tight grid to the north with the 1930s tram depot and utilities depots dominating the area between Rigby Road and Lonsdale Road.

Some of the earliest development in the area is around York Street where three-storey terraces were built in the 1860s; with no gardens the terraces create tightly enclosed street-scenes. Contemporary but of a different scale, terraced workers' housing was built on streets further south and east of Lytham Road; the best examples are on Duke Street and Lowrey Terrace, with intact front gardens and little altered frontages. Representative of the 1880s and 1890s phases of development are terraced streets of handsome lodging houses on the roads closest to the sea, such as Trafalgar Road and Barton Avenue. Alexandra Road retains some good groups of large semi-detached houses, built as private residences from the 1870s.

Development was gradual and most of the area was not fully developed until the early 1900s. The last phase of development provided the residents with a good group of community buildings including several churches, chapels and schools and entertainment buildings. Lytham Road, served by the tram, developed with a wide range of shops and services, with other local services on Chapel Street and Dale Street to the north. Bolton Street serves as a back lane for hotels fronting the Promenade.

The regular street pattern has resulted in long views along streets, important particularly to the west towards the sea. North-south streets provide tightly-framed views of Blackpool Tower, with more open views along Lytham Road, the main route through the area. Late Victorian churches act as local landmarks along Lytham Road. The area is short of trees and public open spaces, as none were provided as part of its Victorian development. Although the utility depots include some large spaces these have no amenity value. The high spatial-density and tight grain remains one of the most characteristic aspects of the area and has not been disrupted by clearance; recent infill has followed the same pattern and density.

At a detailed level there has been a high degree of alteration, particularly to doors, windows and shop fronts. Many of the lodging houses on streets closest to the sea have been altered with roof extensions and ground floor additions over front gardens. Front garden walls are generally still *in situ* along residential streets with relatively few lost for frontage parking. Most buildings appear in reasonable condition, and are occupied and in use, although there are signs of low maintenance levels on some properties dependent on tourism.

Every street and group of buildings was assessed for townscape and heritage merit as part of the study, and 17 potential historic buildings selected for a potential Local List (Appendix 2). These include some good examples of large houses on Alexandra Road and pubs with good frontages such as the Stanley Arms, as well as unique local buildings such as the tram depot and a former lifeboat station on Lytham Road. No buildings are currently statutorily listed in the area, although St Cuthbert's RC Church and St Peter's Church on Lytham Road may be potential candidates for listing.

Streets of overall positive heritage townscape value include Alexandra Road and Duke Street in the south of the area and the grid between Princess Street and York Street in the north of the area. The relative townscape significance of buildings has been mapped. The best-preserved area is the grid of streets including York Street, Shannon Street, Yorkshire Street, Bairstow Street, Dale Street and east to Coop Street and Caroline Street. This distinctive group of densely-developed streets is one of the earliest parts of the study area and has potential for conservation area designation. However, most buildings are of modest architectural quality and it is the unity of the terraced streets rather than the individual merit of buildings that gives the area its distinctive character.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Architectural History Practice Limited (AHP) was commissioned in September 2008 by Blackpool Council (The Council) to prepare a historic townscape characterisation assessment of the Bloomfield area in the context of developing plans for regeneration. One of six similar reports, this study has been commissioned to inform the Council about the heritage value of the area, as part of the development of regeneration proposals for the area. In parallel to this report, a Local List review of the area was undertaken, to advise the Council on buildings having potential for inclusion on a potential list of historic buildings of Local Interest, to be covered by policy in the Local Plan.

1.2 The Brief

The brief for this project was provided by The Council in August 2008, and on guidance from English Heritage in *Extensive and Intensive Assessment: A Model Brief for the Commissioning of Work to Assess Historical Significance in Areas of Housing Renewal*, 2005. The Brief explains the purpose of the assessment, the principles involved, and provides a summary of matters to be covered by the characterisation assessment.

1.3 Authors

This characterisation assessment was prepared by Marion Barter, BA MA IHBC, Director of AHP and Samantha Barnes BA MA, Associate of AHP.

1.4 Acknowledgements

AHP is grateful for assistance and advice offered during this project, in particular to Carl Carrington of Blackpool Council, Tony Sharkey and the librarians at Blackpool Library, to Ted Lightbown, and to Preston Records Office. AHP is grateful for contributions from individual Bloomfield residents, including Michael Edwards. The use of historic images from particular websites (credits in captions) has enhanced the document and we are grateful to John Burke, and to www.rossallbeach.co.uk for permission to use images from their collections.

1.5 Location of study area

Bloomfield is a rectangular grid of streets to the south of Blackpool town centre, immediately inland of the Promenade. It stretches from Haig Road and Duke Street in the south to Chapel Street in the north, with Bolton Road and Foxhall Road forming the western boundary and the former railway line east of Elland Road and Hyde Road defining the eastern edge of the study area. [See Fig.1 for a map of the area.] Bloomfield covers an area of approximately 38 hectares. The NGR centred on the middle of the study area (Kirby Road) is SD30803490.

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Fig.1: Location of study area and character areas

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Assessment

The current assessment was carried out as an intensive assessment exercise, with the work divided into an initial rapid research phase and a detailed fieldwork phase, which included photography and an assessment of buildings.

2.1.1 Research

Secondary research was mainly carried out at the Local Studies Library in Blackpool, with additional research at Lancashire Record Office. This consisted of a detailed review of historic maps, historic photographs and trade directories, a general review of published works on the local history on Blackpool, and of its development through to the late twentieth century. The Extensive Urban Survey report published in 2005 by Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea was particularly useful as a starting point. See the *Bibliography* for full details.

Blackpool is unfortunate in that Building Control records dating to the late nineteenth century have almost all been lost. Local websites containing private collections of images were reviewed, and information sought from local historians, particularly Ted Lightbown.

2.1.2 Fieldwork

The streets in Bloomfield were all physically assessed on foot in October 2008, with research being undertaken shortly before and in parallel to the fieldwork and writing-up stages. The assessment is generally based on what could be seen from the public highway and frontages, and interiors were not inspected unless publicly accessible.

2.1.3 Knowledge Gaps

There are a number of additional lines of research which might produce additional historical information on the history and development of Bloomfield, such as a full search of local newspapers (Blackpool Library has a good collection) or the Inland Revenue 1912 house survey at the National Archives, Kew. However, whilst further research may provide greater detail and depth to an understanding of how the area developed, it is not considered that this will significantly alter the overall findings of this assessment of the area.

2.2 Limitations

AHP were commissioned to assess the architectural and historic character of Bloomfield as part of an urban characterisation assessment of a large part of Blackpool, concentrating on heritage value and including an assessment of potential local list buildings. This study has not assessed other important factors which may be relevant to a decision on the future of the area's buildings, including the physical condition of buildings, their internal or external facilities, thermal performance,

repair costs and economic viability, market value, potential for adaptation, environmental consequences of demolition and rebuilding, current housing standards or any other factors that are not directly related to their heritage value.

2.3 Consultation and Community Involvement

2.3.1 Previous consultation

Good community consultation is essential for the success of urban regeneration projects. In relation to housing areas that include historic buildings, English Heritage advises that all organisations, public bodies and community groups that “are directly involved” should be consulted as part of heritage characterisation projects (Model brief accompanying *Low Demand Housing and the Historic Environment*, 2005). Bloomfield residents were extensively consulted in 2008 as part of the *Foxhall Area Action Plan* which covers the area between Chapel Street and Rigby Road. This exercise considered the current issues affecting the area and set out a range of options for its regeneration. Heritage issues were not a specific part of this work, although some conservation-led regeneration was included in most of the options.

2.3.2 Consultation on the characterisation assessment

The local community, including members of the Blackpool Heritage Forum and the Foxhall Village Regeneration Association will be consulted on this document and its conclusions by Blackpool Council.

3.0 PLANNING AND REGENERATION CONTEXT

3.1 Population decline, unemployment and economic context

The population of Blackpool has declined over recent decades, from a peak of 153,185 in 1961 to 142,283 at the 2001 census (Office of National Statistics). The population is also ageing with nearly one in four residents of pensionable age in 2001, and with more women than men, partly reflecting traditional boarding house ownership.

Figures for Foxhall, the northern third of Bloomfield, were collated as part of the *Foxhall Area Action Plan: Issues and Options* report (June 2008). Blackpool has an unemployment rate of 7%, with parts of Bloomfield having a higher rate of 15%. This compares unfavourably with the national average (5%) and the average for the North West Region (6%). The local economy depends on tourism; a shortage of employment outside the tourist industry results in seasonal unemployment.

In 2007, the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked Blackpool as the 12th most deprived local authority in the country (out of 354). Bloomfield is within the Lower Super Output Area within the borough; in 2007, IMD ranked Foxhall the 7th most deprived area in Blackpool, in terms of employment deprivation.

The area has a large number of one person households (48% of all households in Foxhall); many of the larger properties are divided into flats and over half households rent from private landlords.

3.2 The Blackpool Local Plan

Blackpool Local Plan was adopted in 2006, and provides the framework for planning decisions in the city; the Local Development Framework is also evolving with annual monitoring reports produced. On the Local Plan map, most of Bloomfield is identified as a housing area, with a key tourism investment site south of Rigby Road and on the former gas works site south of Princess Road. The Area Action Plan will form one of a series of documents in the Local Development Framework.

3.3 Heritage assets and regeneration

The protection of the historic environment is a Government priority, enshrined in planning legislation and guidance, such as PPG15 *Planning and the Historic Environment*. The level of protection depends on the value attached to the historic building or asset and Planning Policy Statement 1, *Delivering Sustainable Development* states that “a high level of protection should be given to the most valued townscapes and landscapes...”; this encompasses designated heritage assets such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation areas. There is also now recognition of the value of the local historic environment which whilst it may not be listed or specially designated, may be of value to the local community. However, it is also recognised in national planning policy that not all

aspects of the historic environment can be retained; PPG15 notes that “the historic environment is all-pervasive, and it cannot in practice be preserved unchanged” (para 1.3). It is therefore important to understand the relative value of the historic environment before making decisions about the future of an area.

The Government recognises that heritage assets can play an important role in the success of sustainable urban regeneration, helping to create distinctive places with a strong identity. English Heritage, the government’s advisor on the historic environment promotes the re-use of historic buildings in regeneration; their published guidance includes *Regeneration and the Historic Environment*, 2005 and *Regeneration in Historic Coastal Towns*, 2007. Current guidance stresses the value of heritage in creating sustainable neighbourhoods, and the importance of first identifying the heritage value of affected areas, as recommended in recent guidance jointly produced by CABI and English Heritage, *Character and identity, townscape and heritage appraisals in housing market renewal areas*, 2008. The contribution that historic buildings can make to sustainable development was investigated by a 2004 House of Commons Select Committee, which reported that “it is simply better in sustainability terms to use and recycle old buildings than to demolish them and build new ones”.

The case for retaining historic buildings in urban regeneration is also presented in *Heritage Works*, a good practice document produced jointly by RICS, English Heritage, British Property Federation and Drivers Jonas in 2006. *Heritage Works* states that “there is a strong economic case for regenerating historic buildings”, but also notes that “critical to the success of regeneration is finding a viable economic use that can support initial refurbishment, provide the owner or developer with a reasonable return...and which generates sufficient income to ensure (the) long-term maintenance...”. Viability, as well as heritage value is therefore a critical factor in determining the future of an area, particularly in an economic climate when capital funding may be hard to secure.

Blackpool Council adopted a Heritage Strategy in 2006, which recognises the value of the boarding house districts, as well as the Promenade and iconic buildings such as the Tower and three piers. The Council aspires to have the town inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites as a Cultural Landscape, to celebrate its importance as a purpose built seaside resort. This characterisation study contributes towards one aim of the Heritage Strategy, to complete an audit of historic buildings in the town.

4.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BLOOMFIELD

4.1 Location and brief description

Bloomfield is an area of densely-developed streets beginning a mile to the south of Blackpool town centre, just east of the Promenade. The area is bounded by Chapel Street to the north, the line of the former railway to the east (Seaside Way), Bolton and Foxhall Roads to the west and Duke Street to the south. Despite superficial changes to buildings, the late 19th-century urban character of the area is remarkably intact.

There are currently no conservation areas or listed buildings in the area.

4.2 Historic development

4.2.1 Context: an overview of the development of Blackpool

A few 18th and early 19th-century cottages and farmhouses are almost all that survive of Blackpool's heritage before about 1850. The area now occupied by the town was within the historic township of Layton with Warbreck and part of the parish of Bispham. Following the reclamation of wetlands and mosslands from the 16th century onwards, there was pressure to enclose the land leading to the creation of farmsteads (including Foxhall and Raikes Hall); income from farming was probably supplemented by fishing. In the early 18th century the manorial land around Blackpool was owned by Alexander Rigby, but after this land was dispersed it was developed in a piecemeal and unplanned manner by smaller estates. The 1767 Enclosure Plan of Lawton Hawes, the area south of Manchester Square, shows the newly laid out Lytham Road and regular plots of land (Fig.53).

By the late 1780s there were about 50 houses on the seafront and the population, excluding visitors, in the early 1820s was about 750. Until the early 19th century, the resort was without most services and Poulton was the nearest market town. One of the earliest accounts of Blackpool as a visitor attraction was written by Bishop Pococke in the early 1750s, who recorded that accommodation was available for those who came to bathe. The steady growth through the first half of the 19th century was focused along the one mile stretch of coastline, as Blackpool's seaside location attracted increasing numbers of visitors. Blackpool was attractive to the middle classes in the early 19th century but its great expansion was due to the resort's growing popularity with working people from the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile districts; by the 1830s there were more than a thousand visitors a year. However, unlike Fleetwood and Lytham, Blackpool was not planned as a seaside resort. Expansion in the early 19th-century was hampered by the town's relative remoteness and by patterns of landholding. The 1838 Tithe map shows that the mile-long stretch of houses on the seafront had evolved into a double row of buildings, with South Shore a separate settlement.

The town became more accessible with the opening of the Preston and Wyre railway to Blackpool in 1846, to Blackpool North station. The Blackpool and Lytham railway opened in 1862 using Central Station. This helped attract the development of respectable accommodation and public buildings; between 1841 and 1851 the housing stock grew by 83%, and new streets were laid out in a grid behind the seafront; the priority for new development was to be as close to the foreshore as possible. Between 1841 and 1861 the resident population had risen from 1,378 to 3,506, and although this was still less than at rapidly developing Fleetwood, by the middle of the 19th century Blackpool was considered a significant resort and in 1842 was described as 'the Brighton of Lancashire' (Redding & Taylor, 1842).

The period of greatest 19th century development began in the 1860s and 1870s, with fields being developed around the edge of the town centre, prompted by the end of the construction of two piers (North and Central), and a new promenade, begun in 1868; the latter was both a tourist attraction and part of the town's sea defences. Building development, untrammelled by dominant landowners or effective local government, was initially undertaken piecemeal in small freehold units. New terraces of lodging houses were built in the 1870s on the fringes of the built up area, surrounded by densely packed terraced houses for the working people employed in tourism or the railway industry. Bloomfield is typical of this phase of development. Hotels of the period included the Imperial (1867) at North Shore, an area developed as an enclave for middle-class residents and visitors. As part of the social segregation that occurred in the resort, South Shore was also developed for the middle classes, particularly after South Shore station opened.

By the 1870s, the population was around 7,000 and visitor numbers were estimated at more than one million, in a decade that saw the first large-scale visitor attractions promoted by entertainment companies. These led to the rise of a new type of commercial entertainment, with large-scale theatrical presentations heralding the modern world of show business. The first purpose-built theatre was the Theatre Royal (1868), followed by pleasure gardens at Raikes Hall estate in 1872 and from 1878 by the Winter Gardens. The 1870s boom was supported and promoted by the Corporation, who saw improvement of the town for tourism as their single-minded goal. Provision for visitors included increasing numbers of 'company houses', respectable boarding houses aimed at working-class visitors. The promenade was lit by electricity from 1879, placing the town in the vanguard of electric street-lighting, the famous electric tramway was inaugurated in 1885, and by the end of the century many amenities were controlled by the Corporation which had been formed in 1876. The latest technological advances were swiftly adopted in a policy which aimed at attaining a high profile and creating a new kind of mass holiday-making.

Blackpool became the resort with the greatest number of attractions in Europe, crowned in the 1890s by the opening of the Tower in 1894 when in six years, in addition to the Tower, investors in commercial entertainment constructed the Grand

Theatre, Empress Ballroom, gigantic wheel, the Alhambra (1899), and a third Pier (1893), soon followed by the Pleasure Beach. The promenade was extended in 1895 to the north of the town centre and expanded in 1902 and 1905, extending the sea front 100 feet beyond the high tide mark.

The population in 1901 was 47,348, although Blackpool had absorbed surrounding settlements such as Layton and South Shore. Tourist numbers rose to four million in 1914, while the resident population had risen to almost 60,000; between 1911 and 1939 the town's population more than doubled. In 1912 the Corporation inaugurated the Illuminations which extended the autumn season. The prosperity and draw of the coast ensured expansion through the inter-war years, and in response to booming populations of both residents and visitors, North Shore was earmarked for extensive development in the 1920s and '30s with avenues of detached and semi-detached houses. Between 1925 and 1935 around 12,500 houses were built, and a significant number of the properties were lived in by retired people, who constituted for a significant proportion of the population increase. One significant response to an influx of visitors in the 1930s, one of the earliest by any municipal authority, combined provision of multi-storey and underground car parks with investment in the tram system.

There were few large scale developments after the Second World War. Tourist facilities continued to grow; for example by 1936 there were 15 cinemas, including the Odeon on Dickson Road which catered for 1,800 and was then the largest Odeon ever built. The growth of the Pleasure Beach also quickly became a forerunner to the giant themed amusement parks of the later 20th-century. The population of the town peaked at 153,183 in 1961 (Walton, p.148). Ambitious plans to redevelop the centre stuttered to a halt in the early 1970s and later developments including the Hounds Hill shopping centre were built for both residents and visitors. Post-war hotel developments included the Hilton, but once package holidays to Spain and Mediterranean resorts became affordable, the resort's role as Britain's most popular summer holiday destination declined. However, continuing demand for budget accommodation has ensured that many of the purpose-built boarding houses have remained in use.

4.2.2 The development of the Bloomfield area

A discussion of the study area's development can be divided into two parts. In the south part of the study area, Lytham Road was laid out as part of the 1760s enclosures, shown on an enclosure plan dated 1767 (Fig. 53). Little development occurred along this road in the first half of the 19th century, when the land either side of the road consisted of drained moss, divided into regular fields, clearly shown on the 1838 Tithe map (Fig.2) and 1877 street plan (Fig.3). The geometric field pattern influenced the layout of parallel rows of streets from the third quarter of the 19th century, resulting in today's regular street layout and the homogenous character of the southern part of the study area.



Fig.2: Detail from 1838 Tithe map showing the regular field pattern either side of Lytham Road; the road to the east is Bloomfield Road (Blackpool Library)

4.2.3 Foxhall Village area

In the north of the study area, north of the present Rigby Road, a tight grid of streets was developed after the opening of the Central Pier in 1868, close to the junction of Foxhall Road and Chapel Street. This area has recently become known as Foxhall Village, after the former Foxhall Inn (see *Central Promenade* characterisation report). The 1877 street plan (Fig.3) shows the speculative development of streets such as York Street, Yorkshire Street and Bairstow Street for lodging houses. On the edges of this area more densely-developed terraced streets like Singleton Street, Caroline Street and Shannon Street were developed with a mixture of lodging houses and workers' housing. A meandering open stream, the Spen Dyke, ran east-west along the line of Rigby Road until the last quarter of the 19th century when it was culverted.



Fig.3: Detail from Harding's 1877 street plan showing the area south of Chapel Street (Blackpool Library)

The area around Rigby Road was developed for utilities from the mid 19th-century; the corporation coal gas-works were built on the north side of the road, supplying street lights from the 1850s (Fig.58). Electric lighting for the Promenade and town street lights was generated by the electricity works located off the south end of Coop Street; opened in 1893. Both sites were supplied with coal from sidings off the Blackpool and Lytham railway line, which had opened in 1863. The corporation tram depot was developed on a narrow site along the east side of Blundell Road, later expanding south of Rigby Road. The railway acted as a limit to the eastward development of the area, with terraced streets terminating at the line, and only Bloomfield Street crossing the line to the farmland further east.

West of the depots and works, the area between Princess Street and Lytham Road was developed at the end of the 19th century; Tyldesley Road was developed during the 1890s. On the 1893 OS map only Numbers 1 to 30 are shown; the street is shown fully developed on the 1912 OS map (Fig.59). The street was built-up with substantial three and four-storey brick terraced lodging houses; these have small back yards and front gardens (Fig.4).



Fig. 4: Lodging houses built in the 1890s on the east side of Tyldesley Road, from the south

4.2.4 Lytham Road

Lytham Road was laid out as the primary early route south out of the town, linking Blackpool town centre with South Beach and eventually leading south to settlements along the coast. The straight, wide road was laid out as part of the enclosure of the moss shown on the 1767 Enclosure Plan (Fig.53). The 1838 Tithe map (Fig.2) and first edition OS map shows that little development was attracted by the road during the first half of the 19th century, and it remained largely undeveloped until the last quarter of the century.



Fig.5: Detail from 1893 OS map, showing gradual development either side of Lytham Road (Blackpool Library)

Initially, development took the form of scattered villas, shown on the 1877 street plan (Fig.3), but by 1900 these had been replaced by the regular blocks of commercial buildings that line the road today; the block on the east side between Alexandra Road East and Clare Street was one of the earliest. Properties to the east side of the road were built up to the back of the pavement with no forecourts, but on the east side some properties had front gardens or forecourts, including the Library built in 1893-4 by the Borough Surveyor. Lytham Road was the area's main retail street with a full range of shops and other services – pubs, schools, churches and chapels. The 1893 OS map (Fig.5) shows that shops were often fronted with glazed canopies; the junction of Bloomfield Road appears to have been a commercial centre with two banks and a post office. Pubs were built on the corners of Haig Road (The

Albert) and St Chad's Road. The north end of the road close to the Promenade was developed with handsome blocks of lodging houses, built in the last quarter of the 19th century, and a Lifeboat Station was built in 1864 (Slater's 1865).

The tram opened along Lytham Road in the early 1900s (Fig.6), serving South Beach. The 1912 OS map (Fig.59) shows that the present street layout of the area was by then fully developed.



Fig.6: Lytham Road tram lines in the 1930s, looking south with St Cuthbert's RC Church to the right (Blackpool Library)

The spiritual needs of the community were met by two large churches on Lytham Road; St Cuthbert's RC Church was built in 1890 (Fig.7), and St John's Anglican Church in 1906, built on the site of an earlier mission chapel. A United Methodist church and Sunday school was built on Shaw Road in 1909.



Fig.7: St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham Road c.1900 (image from www.rossallbeach.co.uk)

4.2.5 The east-west streets off Lytham Road

The streets either side of Lytham Road express a historic social and functional hierarchy; the most densely-developed terraced streets east of the road contrast with more spaciouly developed streets to the west, leading to the Promenade. There is a zoning in the street profile; the Trade Directories for the 1880s and 1890s show that the houses on streets closest to the Promenade, west of Lytham Road and towards the north end of this road were predominately used as lodging houses whereas the terraced streets east of Lytham Road were mostly occupied by working people such as train drivers, builders and joiners (Barrett's Directory 1895). The 1893 map (Fig.5) shows the gradual development of streets west of Lytham Road that took place over a thirty year period, beginning with a few large semi-detached villas on Alexandra Road in the 1870s. By 1912 (Fig.59) the remaining streets had been built-up with large terraces with front gardens and deep outshuts, mostly used for lodging houses.



Fig.8: Lodging houses and a shop on Trafalgar Road, looking east, c.1900 (from www.fyldepostcards.co.uk)

East of Lytham Road, the short streets were densely-developed with small terraced houses for worker's housing rather than lodgings. Among the first to be developed were Alexandra Road East and Duke Street (formerly called Princess Street) (Fig. 9), both shown on the 1877 plan. These earlier terraces have small front gardens enclosed with low brick walls, and rear yards with access from the front via through-passages. Later terraces are served by back lanes, an improvement prompted by the bye-laws.



Fig.9: Duke Street, one of the earliest terraced streets, with plain stone details for bays and doorways

4.3 Context: Blackpool holiday accommodation and housing

To meet the rapidly growing needs of the resort's influx of visitors, grids of streets were densely developed with lodging houses during a short period in the last quarter of the 19th century. Nineteenth century holiday accommodation in the resort was built to reflect a social hierarchy and the proximity of the site to the sea. The sea was the defining factor in the scale and status of boarding houses and small hotels, with the Promenade reserved for hotels and higher class establishments. Lodging houses for middle-class families were built on the streets running east-west off the Promenade in large semi-detached or terraced houses (Fig.8), with the best locations on westward-facing street corners with views of the sea; these are often distinguished by full-height octagonal bay windows forming corner towers (Fig.30). Denser terraces of lodging houses were built further inland away from the sea, on streets such as Shannon Street, Rigby Road and Coop Street.

The town's requirements for affordable, mass holiday accommodation resulted in a distinctive range of specialised housing known as 'company housing', built to provide lodging houses for working class holiday-makers. These were similar in appearance to Lancashire urban terraced housing, but built and planned on a larger scale, with

long outshuts filling most of the rear yards and with large single or two-storey bay windows to the front. Streets characteristic of this development include those to the north of the area around Yorkshire Street and Coop Street.

Late 19th century workers' housing was also provided to house those employed in the trades and in roles that supported the resort such as on the railways. Built at a higher density than the boarding house areas, inland from the sea, these streets are similar to workers housing in industrial Lancashire; typical are those east of Lytham Road, south of Bloomfield Road. The need to improve the quality of the housing stock, amenity space and drainage was recognised in late 19th-century local bye-laws although it appears that these were often ignored (Walton, 1998, p.85).

Externally, builders distinguished the boarding houses using stone details and decorative brickwork for door surrounds and windows. Most houses had large bay windows, often double-height, and windows were generally vertically-hung sashes. The larger lodging houses, such as those on Tyldesley Road and Lonsdale Street, were built with basements and attics, with steps up to the front doors and letting rooms arranged over four floors.



Fig.10: Typical lodging houses on Kirby Road, with basements and attics

5.0 BLOOMFIELD: CHARACTERISATION ASSESSMENT

5.1 Character and appearance

Due to the contrast in the character of the north and south parts of the Bloomfield area, the study area can be divided into two character areas, shown on the map in Fig.1 - the Foxhall Village area and tram depot north of Lonsdale Road, and to the south Lytham Road and the streets either side. The overall character of the townscape can be summarised as an area of regular streets, laid-out on a tight grid to the north or on 'ladders' either side of Lytham Road, densely-developed with fairly homogenous stone or brick-built terraced housing. The character of the area was assessed during field work and the principal characteristics recorded; these are set out in sections below.

5.2 Spatial attributes, views and open spaces

The spatial character of the area is derived from a combination of the underlying topography of the area, and the pattern of superimposed development. The area is situated on gently sloping land at a height close to sea level. The underlying geology consists of Permo-Triassic sandstones, overlain with a deep layer of drift deposits. In 1838 the soils were described as fine sand and gravel (Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea, 2005, p.10).

The overlay of late 19th-century streets onto a regular field pattern on reclaimed moss has resulted in an area of linear views and long vistas. The views south down Lytham Road are terminated only by the rise of the road for the railway bridge in South Beach. To the north there are constant views of Blackpool Tower. Most of the east-west streets provide tantalising glimpses of the sea beyond the Promenade, whilst to the east views are blocked by the football stadium, the tram depot or are open across the line of the former railway.

Today, views along streets still have townscape merit, particularly to the north with glimpses of the Tower, or to the west towards the sea. Views along Lytham Road are punctuated by churches and prominent corner buildings such as pubs. Views along the back alleys are partly obscured by inserted 20th century alley gates; these confined spaces reinforce the tight urban grain of the area.



Fig.11: View north along Coop Street



Fig.12: Narrow alley to rear of Bairstow Street, looking west

The hierarchy in the street pattern is expressed by the greater width of Lytham Road, a principal route laid-out in the 1760s enclosures. The street has an open character, the blocks either side interrupted by junctions with side roads. Views along the road are not closely-framed due to its greater width, but the Tower is always visible to the north.



Fig.13: Lytham Road looking south, from the junction with Tyldesley Road

The street widths of Rigby Road and Bloomfield Street reflect their slightly higher status as through routes in the street pattern; both cross east of the railway line. Most of the east-west streets have a homogenous spatial character, narrower in width than principal routes and with well-defined building lines created by uniform terraces. Earlier development, for example 1860s lodging house development north of Princess Street, was built at a high density with the building line following the back of the footway, creating tightly framed streets (Fig.14). Whilst the presence of front gardens is often an indicator of social scale, on these streets the lack of front gardens may express the limited availability of land in relation to demand at the time.



Fig.14: Tightly framed view east along Bairstow Street

The streets west of Lytham Road are noticeably wider than those to the east, lined with larger houses with long rear outshuts, built as lodging houses. This contrasts with the streets to the west of the road, built for workers, where densely developed terraces have short rear outshuts and narrow back yards. All but those to the south such as Duke Street have rear alleys for servicing. The spatial character of the parallel streets east of Lytham Road is uniformly dense, regular and linear; the highest density is along a few narrow cross streets such as Hyde Road and West View Avenue behind St Peter's Church.



Fig.15: Densely developed streets of workers' housing on West View Avenue, looking east

There have been few changes to the historic density of the area, with recent infill built at the same or a higher density, generally respecting historic building lines, if not the form and height of existing buildings.



Fig.16: Four-storey infill flats on Caroline Street, the site of the drill hall

Historic map evidence shows that no open spaces were provided within the study area; the assumption being that the sea and sand dunes would provide open space for recreation and fresh air. There is an absence of street trees and gardens are too small to provide significant greenery.

Small front gardens are a feature of most of the terraced streets south of Princess Street, although these have often been built on for sun lounges on streets west of Lytham Road. Rear yards are very small and some have been built over for extensions (Figs.12 and 24), offering little space for planting or trees to the rear of houses. The very small rear yards and narrow alleys limit the potential to adapt the houses or improve private amenity space to the rear.

5.3 Historic and current uses

Although superficially the use of buildings on the streets within the study area has generally changed little since they were first constructed, the social status of the area has altered, with a significant proportion of former holiday lodging houses now occupied by tenants on low incomes and sub-divided into flats. The houses on the parallel streets east of Lytham Road built for working people are still private dwellings. Lytham Road is lined with a range of shops, community buildings, pubs and other businesses, although the economic decline of the area is reflected in a more limited range of businesses.

The 19th century Trade Directories provide an insight into the social hierarchy and the social history of this part of the resort. On the streets east of Lytham Road and north of Princess Street, the Directories record a wide variety of artisans and people providing services to holiday makers such as joiners, builders, shrimp dealers, bathing van proprietors and engine drivers (1898 Barrett's Directory). The larger houses west of Lytham Road and in the north of the area, for example on Tyldesley Road, Lonsdale Street, Yorkshire Street and Shannon Street (named West Caroline Street until the early 20th century) were almost all used as lodging houses.

Lytham Road was the principal street within the neighbourhood, lined with a full range of shops, interspersed with lodging houses and private houses, the latter occupied by a few professional people such as an architect, G. Speight, and a school master (Barrett's 1901 Directory). Retail or service businesses included banks, newsagents, bakers, butchers, hosiers, confectioners, drapers, hairdresser, tobacconist and a chemist (Barrett's 1901 Directory). Shops still line the street, with a high proportion of fancy-goods shops towards the north end of Lytham Road. Dale Street and Chapel Street to the north were also busy with retail premises in the 1890s. The principal streets were served by back streets and lanes, where garages and warehouses were built, for example on Pier Street, Singleton Street, Cragg Street and Bolton Street North.



Fig.17: Lytham Road lifeboat station in c.1900 (from www.rossallbeach.co.uk)

Community or public buildings within the study area historically included four churches or chapels and Sunday schools; of these St Peter's Church and St Cuthbert's RC Church are the most prominent, facing each other across the road and still in regular use. Smaller places of worship include the Seventh Day Adventists on Bolton Street North. The Library on Lytham Road was built in 1893, and but is no longer in use. Further north, the Lifeboat House was an important addition to the resort's services in the third quarter of the 19th century (Fig.17), opened in 1864 when the Robert William lifeboat was launched. The building (No.19) is now vacant.

The architectural character of the existing buildings is described in the following section.

5.4 Materials and construction

5.4.1 Elevations and roofing

The character of Bloomfield is unified by the use of brick and slate, although much of the brick has been painted or rendered. Bricks were made locally in the Fylde, on the edge of the urban area. A fine-grained sandstone is generally used for hoodmoulds, bay windows, sills and lintels, door surrounds and string courses, although this has not weathered well in the marine environment and has generally been painted. Moulded brick and terracotta are less often used for friezes and other details. The quality of detail is generally higher on the more spacious streets west of Lytham Road such as Alexandra, Crystal and Wellington Road, than on other streets, reflecting their higher social status. On Lonsdale Road and Kirby Road, the lodging houses were built with stone steps and cast-iron railings to the front doors, although most steps are now concrete.



Fig.18: Elaborate stone details on large houses on Alexandra Road, built c.1870

The brick is generally laid in English garden wall bond; usually three or four courses of stretchers to one of headers. On terraced streets east of Lytham Road there is subtle variety in the use of details to provide simple decoration and to distinguish one of group of houses from another. Terraced houses were provided with stone details for door surrounds and bay windows, either using classical or gothic motifs.

Eaves are often finished with a timber board cut into simple repeating patterns; the same detail also used on bay windows eaves.

The brickwork on many front elevations has been obscured by modern treatments. The most common is paint, followed by pebble-dash and render, with a few examples of cladding using concrete facing tiles to resemble stone (Fig.39).



Fig.19: The contrast between rendered brick frontages and an original fair-faced brick frontage on Lowrey Terrace

Chimney stacks are in red brick, most with projecting bands, often rendered. Pots where they have been retained are in cream or red clay.

Roofs were originally laid with Welsh slates although some roofs have been re-laid using concrete tiles. Rainwater goods were provided in cast-iron; the larger buildings have ogee-section gutters, which were a more expensive choice than simple half-round gutters. Most down-pipes are now plastic, although some cast-iron examples have survived.

5.4.2 Doors and windows

Very few houses retain historic door or window joinery, although original openings have largely been retained on terraces. There are a few notable examples of houses

that have retained panelled timber front doors and plate glass sash windows; No.11 Clare Street (Fig.38) is a good example of a modest terraced house with intact features, and No.27 Tyldesley Road is an example of a large lodging house with intact joinery and features.



Fig.20: Nos 25 & 27 Tyldesley Road; historic sashes survive to the right with uPVC to the left.

Front doors would have been panelled doors made of pine, with variations including part-glazing to upper panels. Inner halls were lit with transom or fan lights over front doors. Doors on terraces are sometimes designed in pairs with shared canopy or surround (Fig.20). There are some examples of replacement doors from the inter-war period, including those with oval inset glazing and leaded coloured glass fanlights, but most doors are now modern replacements in uPVC or timber.

Historic sash windows are rare (Figs 19 & 20). Some replacement windows respect the divisions between the plate glass sashes, which has helped to retain the historic proportions of the frontages. In most cases, historic windows have been removed and replaced with modern casements or top-hung windows that ignore historic window patterns.

On Lytham Road there are no intact examples of Victorian shop fronts, although it is possible that some historic joinery may have been retained, hidden behind modern fascias. A few early 20th-century shop fronts survive on secondary streets such as Bickerstaffe Street, Dale Street and Foxhall Road.



Fig.21: A corner shop on Bickerstaffe Street

5.4.3 Boundaries

The presence of front gardens with boundary walls expresses the higher social status of the property. None are provided at the low end of the social scale where houses directly front the footway, for example on Coop Street. Historically, front boundaries generally comprised low brick walls with stone copings. Some houses had iron railings, mostly removed with some replaced with modern steel railings; historic railings have generally only survived on steps to basements or up to front doors where there is a drop to protect. Gate piers are stone, often carved with Gothic motifs or caps. No original iron gates were recorded.



Fig.22: Victorian gate piers and cast-iron railings on Kirby Road



Fig.23: Early 20th century brick boundary walls on Alexandra Road with decorative brick coping

Boundary walls to the rear of the streets, dividing rear yards from back alleys were historically built in red brick, but most sections have been re-built in modern brick or taken down and replaced with the rear walls of rear additions. Modern steel gates have been added to the ends of the most alleys for security.



Fig.24: Alley off Coop Street, with rear extensions and rebuilt boundary walls

5.4.4 Signs and details

Distinctive cast-iron and ceramic street signs have been retained on many streets. These have decorative cast-iron frames with individual letter tiles and are important features. They probably date from the early 20th century when streets were renamed to rationalise street names in the town. These survive on most streets, although they may be vulnerable to theft and modern steel replacements have been used on some streets. No other historic items of street furniture were recorded in the area.



Fig.25: Cast-iron and tiled street sign on Lonsdale Road

5.4.5 Roads and footways

All footways are now laid with either concrete paving or tarmacadam. Kerbs are almost all concrete, although some original examples of granite kerbs have been retained on side streets. Historically, footways would have been laid with stone paving and roads either rolled gravel or setted. Setted surfaces survive on some side streets, but are often in poor condition.

Rear alleys are now generally laid with tarmac, but historic setts are visible in some places where the tarmac has worn through.

Street furniture is largely modern with concrete lighting columns. Tram poles are in steel and are a feature at the north end of Lytham Road. The historic street name signs fixed to buildings are distinctive historic features in the street scene (Fig.25).



Fig.26: Tarmac surfaces and modern street furniture on Chapel Street



Fig.27: Large stone setts on a back lane off Hesketh Road

5.5 Architectural character

5.5.1 Domestic buildings and lodging houses

The area has four main types of domestic building: the terraces of two-storey housing on streets east of Lytham Road and north of Shannon Street, blocks of three-storey shops and houses along Lytham Road, three-storey terraces of large lodging houses on streets west of Lytham Road and denser three-storey terraces on streets north of Rigby Road. Other building types include shops, churches, pubs, service buildings such as garages and the tram depot (see *Section 5.5.2*).

The appearance and architectural character of the two-storey housing east of Lytham Road housing was largely determined by the local bye-laws. These houses are fairly typical of workers' housing built in most Lancashire towns; the basic plan consists of a ground floor of two and a half rooms accessed from a front hall leading directly to the staircase, with front parlour and rear living room and a scullery in the outrigger. Upstairs there are usually two bedrooms in the main body of the house with a third bedroom in the outrigger. Bathrooms were usually not an original amenity and were either provided in the third bedroom or within single-storey extensions built into the rear yard. Each pair of terraced houses shares gabled outriggers, with narrow L-plan yards. The larger lodging houses follow this basic plan, but with larger floor plans, deep rear outriggers and additional storeys to maximise the number of bedrooms for visitors.



Fig.28: Typical large outriggers to the rear of lodging houses on Bolton Street North

Externally, the terraced house plan is expressed on the street frontage by the front door, usually with a fanlight to light the hallway, and a bay or large sash window to one side for the front parlour, with smaller sash windows to the upper floor bedrooms. Attic floors may be expressed with gabled dormers.

The regular treatment of elevations, with the vertical emphasis provided by doors, bay windows, former sash windows and gabled dormers provides an overall unity to the street frontages.



Fig.29: Strong rhythm of two-storey bays and gabled dormers on Wellington Road, disrupted by front additions.

The variety of architectural details adds interest to individual streets, helps to distinguish groups of houses and expresses a social hierarchy. The simplest terraces have plain arched fanlights with keystones over the doors, whereas large lodging houses have more elaborate doorcases with canopies and pilasters (Fig.18). Doorways of adjoining properties are often treated as paired features, sharing a canopy or hoodmould. Two-storey bay windows are a distinctive feature of lodging houses, offering good quality front rooms on at least two floors. This feature is not unique to Blackpool and can be found at most British seaside towns from Scarborough to Criccieth. On prominent corners, particularly those with sea views, the bay is carried up to all floors as an octagonal tower (Fig.30).



Fig.30: Typical corner bay, on a Rigby Road lodging house.

Builders used the architectural appearance of the houses to express subtle differences in social scale. The architectural treatment of houses, along with the spatial qualities reflect a hierarchy, with streets west of Lytham Road at a significantly higher social scale than the rest of the streets, due to the proximity of the sea. The use of bay windows on terraced workers' housing indicates a higher social scale than those without and would have justified a higher rent.

The larger three-storey terraces, built as lodging houses, contrast with the two-storey workers houses on eastern streets. Internally, the plan usually includes a front basement with steps from the street, and three good-sized rooms on all floors and two or three rooms per floor in the outrigger. These houses appear well-constructed and where they have been maintained, retain the appearance of solid middle class housing. Many have had roof extensions and some have ground floor sun lounges added to the front; other common changes include painted masonry, replacement windows and doors and the removal of boundary walls. Streets with the most unaltered houses include Kirby Road, Rigby Road, Bairstow Street, Yorkshire Street, Trafalgar Road and Woodfield Road. Later variations on the basic type can be seen at Lonsdale Road, developed in stages in the early 20th-century with large gabled red brick terraces with applied timber-framing and terracotta details (Fig.31).



Fig.31: Gabled early 20th century lodging houses on Lonsdale Road

5.5.2 Non-domestic buildings

Non-residential buildings in Bloomfield include business premises built to serve the growing holiday and permanent population. Pubs and hotels are important to the character of the area, built on corner sites or on prominent frontages (Fig.32). The principal roads and streets are lined with two or three-storey parades of shops and businesses with upper floor living accommodation. Original shopfronts are a rarity and most have been replaced with late 20th century display-windows in uPVC. Flats on upper floors are often expressed by bay windows, usually in timber.



Fig.32: Lifeboat Inn on Foxhall Road.

On service streets such as Bolton Street, garages, former stables, coach houses and workshops are functional in style and character, usually in red brick with plain details and often built with gables facing the street. The most important transport complex in the area is the tram depot on the south side of Rigby Road, developed by the Corporation in the 1930s, to expand the Blundell Street depot. The garages and workshops take the form of large sheds with steel roof trusses, clad in red brick. The buildings were designed by the Borough Surveyor over a short period and have a strong visual unity, utilitarian in style with few embellishments; an exception is the gable terminating the east end of Kirby Road, with some simple classical detail using concrete panels and brick pilasters. The 1930s tram offices (by Halstead Best, 1937) are faced in cream faience but only on the most visible elevations; the rear elevation is plain brick.



Fig.33: The 1930s tram shed gable facing Kirby Road

Building function is often expressed through architectural form, a notable example being the former lifeboat station on Lytham Road. This single-storey building has a large opening to ground floor (originally with sliding doors – see Fig.17) and is located close to the sea front.



Fig. 34: Former lifeboat station on Lytham Road, built in 1864

Among streets lined largely with lodging houses, shops and private homes, places of worship have a strong presence on the street, usually of a larger scale and architecturally of higher quality than surrounding buildings. The late 19th-century tiny chapel on Bolton Street North is an unusual, modest example.



Fig.35: Seventh Day Adventist Chapel on Bolton Street North

The area is now on the edge of the principal entertainment area and once had more premises devoted to popular entertainment, notably the demolished Colosseum at the south-east end of Tyldesley Road. The much altered cinema on Rigby Road was formerly known as the Royal Palace and is now an ugly presence in the street.

5.6 Degree of completeness

The area is fairly complete, with few losses since the area was developed in the late 19th century. Prominent buildings that have been demolished include the Colosseum between Hesketh Road and Butler Road (the site is now occupied by a large retail store), the Blundell Street tram depot (Fig.36 - demolished in 1982 and the site is now a surface car park), the school on Tyldesley Road (the site is now the Job Centre) and a drill hall between Yorkshire Street and Shannon Street (demolished 2005 and replaced with four-storey flats). There has been limited 20th century clearance and rebuilding, with a dense block south of Bickerstaffe Street replaced by Nevintis Court, a block of three-storey flats with ground floor parking.



Fig.36: Blundell Street tram depot prior to demolition in 1982 (John Burke Collection)

The most visually-intrusive change to streets with boarding houses has been the building of ground floor sun lounges over front gardens, particularly west of Lytham Road, for example on St Chad's Road. For obvious reasons, this is a feature of south-facing terraces, where the building of sun lounge extensions has disrupted the unity of the streets (Fig.35).



Fig.37: Boarding house front extensions encroach on gardens on the north side of St Chad's Road

Most properties retain Welsh slate roofs, although some properties have been re-roofed with heavier concrete tiles. Whilst openings have on the whole not been altered and the overall proportions of the elevations have been retained, the loss of historic joinery and window patterns has eroded the unity of the terraces at a detailed level, particularly where houses in different ownerships have received different replacement window and door types. Properties that retain original Victorian doors and windows are rare; most doors and timber windows have been replaced with double-glazed windows, often in uPVC.



Fig.38: Rare original sash windows and panelled door at No.11 Clare Street, with replacement windows to adjoining houses

The unity of terraced frontages has also been affected by individual approaches to the cladding, painting or rendering of brickwork, concrete 'stone' cladding is particularly intrusive (Fig.39). Paint has generally been applied to decorative stone features such as cills and lintels (Fig.38). Many rear yards have been built-up with extensions or sheds, congesting already tight spaces (Fig.24).



Fig.39: Concrete 'stone' cladding and painted brickwork on Caroline Street

5.7 Archaeological potential

The archaeological potential of the town has been assessed and described in the Extensive Urban Survey report produced by Lancashire County Council in 2005. The area was developed in largely late 19th century phases of intensive development and there is no evidence for earlier settlement. There is, however, potential for industrial archaeology on the former utilities sites north of Rigby Road (Fig.58). Prior to the development of individual sites it is recommended that advice is sought from the County Archaeologist.

6.0 SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Assessing significance

The relative significance of buildings and streets in the study area has been assessed using a variation of the assessment criteria developed and used for the Welsh Streets Characterisation report, prepared by AHP for Gleeson Regeneration in 2007. The heritage townscape value of each street and building was assigned to one of three values, negative, neutral or positive and for buildings; an additional Local List category was used for the better quality buildings. This report follows current guidance provided by English Heritage and CABE on the assessment of urban townscape in housing market renewal areas (CABE and EH, 2008). Potential Local List buildings have been selected using criteria developed by AHP for Stockport Council, based on local historic and architectural merit, degree of completeness and contribution to the street scene.

6.2 Summary of significance and designation status of the area

The character of the Bloomfield can be summarised as a dense area of streets, developed with a range of terraced housing, for both holiday accommodation and workers' housing. The rapid development of the area over a short period spanning the decades between 1880 and 1910 resulted in a grid of streets with a homogenous character, with subtle variations depending on proximity to the sea and social status. The study area includes a wide range of community buildings and other infrastructure provided to support the growing resort but it is noticeably lacking in open space. The street pattern is intact and much of the area retains a dense grain of characteristic 19th century buildings which make a positive contribution to the streetscene. On some streets, modern infill has affected the integrity of the historic townscape but the most noticeable impact is the level of superficial alterations to buildings; some streets now have neutral value.

The study area is bounded by the South Promenade study area to the west, and there are visual connections with this area along the east-west streets. The area has been divided into two character areas - to the south, Lytham Road and the streets either side, and north of Lonsdale Road, the Foxhall Village and tram depot area.

There are no listed buildings within the study area; the nearest listed buildings are the Church of Holy Trinity in South Beach and Blackpool Tower to the north, the latter clearly visible in northward views along most south-north streets. The churches of St Cuthbert (RC) and St John (Anglican) have the potential to be listed; both have well-preserved interiors. Seventeen buildings have the potential to be included on a Local List, including the former Lifeboat House on Lytham Road, the tram depot and offices and various pubs such as The Stanley Arms on Chapel Street and The Albert on Lytham Road. The most intact area in Foxhall Village to the north is considered to merit conservation area designation.

6.3 Lytham Road and the southern character area

Lytham Road was laid-out as part of the 1760s enclosure of Layton Hawes moss, south of Blackpool. The road was slowly developed during the first three quarters of the 19th century and most of the building took place in the last quarter of the century. The linear streets either side were densely developed, with mainly workers housing to the east, and with lodging houses to the west and north.

6.3.1 Lytham Road

The straightness of the road allows for good views north to the Tower. The road is the primary route through the area, reflected in its width and the variety of commercial development along its length. Properties increase in height towards the north and either front the footway or a paved forecourt. Most properties have been substantially altered, particularly at ground floor level and the overall value of most blocks is no more than neutral; few properties retain features of value. In terms of significance, the best of the late nineteenth century lodging houses are at the north end; for example, Nos.16-20 retains higher quality architectural features, relatively complete. Buildings with Local List potential include The Albert pub, the former Lifeboat Station and the churches of St Peter's (Fig.40) and St Cuthbert's (RC).



Fig.40: St Peter's Church, Lytham Road, from Clare Street

The section of Lytham Road, north of Clare Street is the most intact and characterful and has **positive value**. Further south, the urban character is less strong and the street has a more neutral value, punctuated by some locally important individual buildings such as corner pubs.

6.3.2 Bolton Street

This narrow street is an important historic linear feature in the townscape, developed primarily as a back lane to serve the properties fronting the Promenade in the last quarter of the 19th century. The street has a mixed character with small scale two-storey houses and service buildings such as garages lining the east side, with rear yards and outshuts to the taller Promenade properties along the west side. Most properties are rendered. The street is crossed at regular intervals by the east-west streets leading to seafront, giving glimpses of the Promenade. Properties are built up to the back of narrow footways, giving a tight building grain and framed views north and south, including to Blackpool Tower. Community buildings include the Seventh Day Adventist Church (No. 6) (Fig.35) and Alexandra United Reformed Church (former Wayman Memorial School), recommended for the Local List. Overall, the street has a **positive value**.



Fig. 41: Bolton Street looking south

6.3.3 Streets east of Lytham Road, south of Lonsdale Road

The dense ladder of terraced streets from Duke Street in the south to Lonsdale Road in the north were developed from the 1870s onwards, with Duke Street and Alexandra Road being the earliest and Lonsdale Road the latest, developed in the early 1900s. The densely built-up streets have a similar character, although terraces display subtle differences of detail and social status. Generally, these streets were developed with housing for skilled workers rather than for lodging houses, although lodging houses line the northern streets. Streets are tightly enclosed with two-storey terraced housing, with small front gardens behind low walls. Houses are stone or brick, although most are painted or rendered, with a regular pattern of ground floor bay windows. Almost all the original doors and windows have been replaced, attic roof extensions are common and many houses have been painted or rendered, eroding the visual unity of the streets (Fig.48).



Fig.42: Stone-fronted housing on the north side of Lowrey Terrace

The housing is similar to terraced housing elsewhere in Lancashire and is not unusual in the local or regional context.



Fig.43: Recent housing on Clarendon Road

The streets are mostly fairly complete, although there has been some recent infill on Clarendon Road (Fig.43), which has maintained the high density. At a detailed level, some design features are of positive value, such as the cast-iron and tile street-signs, and the few retained original sashes and doors could be used as a pattern for future repairs. Most streets have an overall **neutral** value with parts of Duke Street, Amberbanks Grove, Lowrey Terrace and the south side of Clare Street assessed as **positive**.

6.3.4 Streets west of Lytham Road

The east-west streets to the west of Lytham Road are of a more spacious layout than those to the east; this is related to their proximity to the sea, and the streets being developed with large houses for middle class occupants or visitors. This group runs from Haig Road in the south to Trafalgar Road in the north, with a regular ladder of parallel streets. The best of these streets is Alexandra Road, first shown on the 1877 town plan with a few pairs of semi-detached houses and initially occupied by gentry. By 1895 the street was fully developed and almost all of the properties were used as lodgings. The properties include large three-storey semi-detached villas with front gardens contained by stone or brick boundary walls, with stone gate piers. The high status of the street is expressed in the elaborate architectural detailing on houses,

such as Nos. 18-20 and Nos. 22-24, have local list potential. There is some infill at the west end and some roof and ground floor extensions, the latter built on front gardens, but Alexandra Street is of a **positive** townscape value, overall.

Most of the streets are of neutral value including Haig Road and Crystal Road, laid out by 1877 and developed by the 1880s with a mix of private residences and lodging houses. By 1912 Crystal Road was fully developed with terraced housing, and most in use as lodging houses. The street is lined with two or three storey terraces with small front gardens and boundary walls. Some have ground floor extensions over the gardens, especially on the north side of the street and many have rendered brickwork and added attic storeys. Most of the properties are today occupied by small hotels. The most significant building is St Cuthbert's RC church and presbytery at the south-east end, and has strong local list potential.



Fig.44: Wellington Road from the west

St Chad's, Woodfield, Wellington, Waterloo and Trafalgar Roads have similar layouts with narrow back lanes between the rear of the houses, and all are lined with large terraced or semi-detached houses (Wellington Road) with double height bay windows. These streets were largely developed in the 1880s, although they were laid out in the 1870s. The stone or brick-built houses were built as lodging houses, a use that continues today. The streets' historic character has been altered by houses being

painted, with ground floor extensions on front gardens and many have added attic extensions, instead of regular gables or eaves lines. The unity of the streets has been eroded and they are now mostly of **neutral** value. Barton Road and Trafalgar Road are less altered, lined with solid three-storey houses, and these streets are of **positive** townscape value; despite alterations the terraces create a homogenous streetscape. No. 1 Trafalgar road ('Bel's Kitchen') is of some architectural interest and has twin, Dutch-style gables to the second floor and an unusual Classical-style shopfront in stone with a timber entablature to the corner.



Fig. 45: Trafalgar Road, with little-altered shop front to No 1.

Non-residential properties in the area include the 1912 the Wayman Memorial School (on Bolton Street junction, now the Alexandra United Reform Church) and a former school on Adrian Street. On Haig Road there are buildings built as a garage and steam laundry, now of neutral value, and a few cafes or shops towards the west end, some with intact features.

The area includes some back streets, developed to serve the wider streets. Adrian Street (formerly known as North Albert Street) is a good example of this, built as a narrow back lane to Haig Road (formerly Albert Street) in the late 19th century. As well as pairs of semi-detached houses on the north side of the street, the street had a school and industrial workshop on the north side of the street with the south side

lined with the boundary walls to the rear of properties on Haig Road. Setted side alleys lead to Haig Road on the south side. Overall this street has a **neutral** value. There are no open spaces in the area and back gardens and yards are generally small; most have been built over for extensions.

6.4 Foxhall Village and the tram depot

The northern character area includes the grid of streets north of Rigby Road and south of Chapel Street, and also the tram depot and adjoining streets. The area has a more varied character than the south area, with a mixture of lodgings houses, retail and private residential buildings, as well as the unique character of the tram depot.

6.4.1 Tyldesley Road

This is an important secondary road in the study area, leading north off Lytham Road, developed in the 1890s with three to four-storey lodging houses, a few shops and a school at the north-west end. Most properties remain in use as hotels or boarding houses, with some private residences on the east side and shops on the west side. Although their form is intact and the terraces still define the street, most properties have been altered with replacement doors and windows, roof extensions and Dutch blinds.



Fig. 46: West side of Tyldesley Road

The school was demolished and the site developed in the late 20th-century for a Job Centre; the form and design of this building contrasts with the terraces and it has a negative impact on the street scene. There are vacant sites on the north-east and west sides, which have eroded the completeness of the street, but the terraces are of positive value despite superficial alterations and overall the street has a **positive** value.

6.4.2 Chapel Street

This east-west street was developed in the first half of the 19th century and is shown on the 1838 Tithe map, when the south side of the street was lined with buildings. The street was named after the Methodist Chapel that opened on the south side of the street in 1862, and flourished after Central Pier opened in 1868. The street has a curving line and rises towards the west, reflecting its earlier date and in contrast to the linear quality of most Bloomfield Streets. Scale, materials and building form vary greatly, giving the street a lively character. Whilst the street is intact along its south side, overall, the townscape is fragmented due to the late 20th-century clearance and replacement of most buildings along the north side (outside the study area). The south side has a varied historic character with a group of lodging houses at the east end and much-altered retail businesses towards the middle and west sections. The frontage is broken into distinct blocks of buildings by the north-south streets. Significant community buildings include the 1930s former Methodist Chapel whose tower is a local landmark and the Stanley Arms pub, a good example of a 1890s pub; both have Local List potential. Overall, the significance value of the south side of the street is **positive**.



Fig. 47: Chapel Street looking west towards the tower of the former Methodist Church

6.4.3 Dale Street

A linear north-south street, developed in the wake of Central Pier opening in 1868 and first shown on the 1877 street plan. Until the early 1900s, the street was named as three separate sections: South Bank Street, Wellington Street and Warbreck Street, when it was lined with retail businesses. The narrow street has a tight grain with buildings built up to the back of the footway, giving tightly-framed views north to Blackpool Tower. The street is crossed at regular intervals by east-west streets, breaking the street frontages into defined blocks. Buildings are two or three-storey, and the earlier blocks have a late Georgian character with flat frontages with no bays and regular fenestration. Buildings are mainly brick with stone details, some painted or rendered. Notable historic buildings include former livery stables at Wilkinson's Yard (now Dale Street Mews), and The Stanley Arms at the north end on the corner with Chapel Street. Historic cast-iron street signs are a feature. Overall this street has a **positive** value.



Fig.48: West side of Dale Street looking north from Bairstow St.

6.4.4 Streets between Princess Street and Chapel Street

This well defined group of streets were developed for lodging houses in response to the opening of Central Pier in 1868, and are shown as partly developed on the 1877 street plan. The tight grid of east-west streets are lined with buildings built up to the rear of the footway and with small backyards, resulting in a high spatial density. The

three-storey buildings are rendered or painted brick, often in bright colours. Regular fenestration and two-storey bay windows create homogenous frontages with subtle variations in detail reflecting different phases or builders. Many buildings have retained architectural features, although window and door joinery has mostly been replaced. Most buildings are used as small hotels or boarding houses with a few private dwellings and flats. Foxhall Road is an important historic north-south route but its character has been eroded by frontage alterations and 20th century infill such as The Foxhall Market, which replaces an earlier market building. There are some good pub buildings including the Lifeboat Inn and the Ardwick. Princess Street, Bairstow Street, Yorkshire Street, Shannon Street and York Street all have **positive** townscape value; Foxhall Road, Singleton Street, Pier Street and Cragg Street are of more neutral value.



Fig. 49: York Street looking west

6.4.5 Caroline Street and Coop Street

These densely developed north-south streets to the east of the Yorkshire Street area were developed in the last quarter of the 19th century, for a mixture of workers' housing and lodging houses. Each street has a terrace along the east side, facing the gable-end walls and back alleys of the east-west terraces along the west side of the street; a factor which must have lowered the social status of the streets. There are tightly-framed views north to the Tower and buildings are built up to the back of the footway. Terraces are two or three-storey; towards the north end of Coop Street the

quality of the buildings is higher; these have two-storey stone-built bays and are of positive value. The brick-built frontages are now partly rendered or painted and fenestration is mostly modern. Coop Street is fairly intact despite superficial alterations and has a **positive value**; the urban character of Caroline Street is less strong and this has an overall **neutral** value.



Fig.50: Lodging houses on the east side of Coop Street

6.4.6 Rigby Road and Blundell Street

Blundell Street and Rigby Road were laid out in the last quarter of the 19th century after the Spen Dyke, a brook, was culverted. Rigby Road is one of only two east-west roads in the study area leading beyond the former railway line. The road has a fragmentary character, particularly towards the east end of the road, where land either side was historically used for corporation utilities; the gas works and Blundell Street tram depot were to the north (now a partly cleared site), with the Rigby Road tram depot to the south. The 1930s tram depot offices have Local List potential and the remains of the red brick tram depot to the north has positive streetscene value and is of historic interest (Fig.51). Red-brick boundary walls line both sides of the road leading to the railway bridge with ugly partly-demolished buildings to the north. West of Blundell Street, the north side of the street is more intact with a terrace of

three-storey lodging houses built in stone, but there is a cleared site to the south. Rigby Road's significance is varied, with neutral or negative values to the east end, but some positive groups of buildings.



Fig.51: Remains of the former tram depot on the north side of Rigby Road

Blundell Street is lined with lodging houses and private dwellings along its west side, with a garage building set behind the building line to the north-west corner. The terraces date from the late 19th-century and are largely intact although their quality has been eroded by later alterations. The east side of this street is occupied by the remains of a tram depot site and overall, Blundell Street is **neutral value**.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The significance of the area is set out in *Section 6*.

7.1 Local List potential

Seventeen buildings have been assessed for their architectural and historical merit and have potential for inclusion on a local list. These buildings contribute to the distinctiveness of the local area and it is recommended that they should be a priority for retention as key buildings in future re-development.



Fig.52: The former library on Lytham Road has Local List potential

7.2 Conservation area potential

The best preserved area is the grid of streets between Chapel Street and princess Street, including Dale Street, Bairstow Street, York Street, Yorkshire Street, Shannon Street, Dale Street and east to Caroline and Coop Streets. Most of the buildings in this area make a positive contribution to the distinctive character of the townscape. This densely developed group of streets is one of the earliest parts of the study area and in view of its special architectural and historic character, it is considered that this has potential for designation. The boundary of the area is shown on the significance mapping in the appendix.

7.3 Regeneration

The distinctive linear or grid street pattern with densely-developed frontages provides well-framed views and a sense of enclosure. Bloomfield retains a strong sense of place and it is recommended that the most positive aspects of the area's urban character should be retained and reinforced in future redevelopment, with key groups of buildings of positive value retained as far as possible.

7.4 Other issues

Historic cast-iron street signs are a distinctive local feature (Fig.25) and should be retained for use in any new scheme. Some interpretation at the tram depot would enhance visitors' appreciation of the site.

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APPENDIX 1: Historic maps



Fig. 53: Detail from 1767 enclosure plan, showing Lytham Road (Blackpool Library)



Fig.54: Detail from 1877 street plan, showing Lytham Road and newly laid-out streets (Blackpool Library)

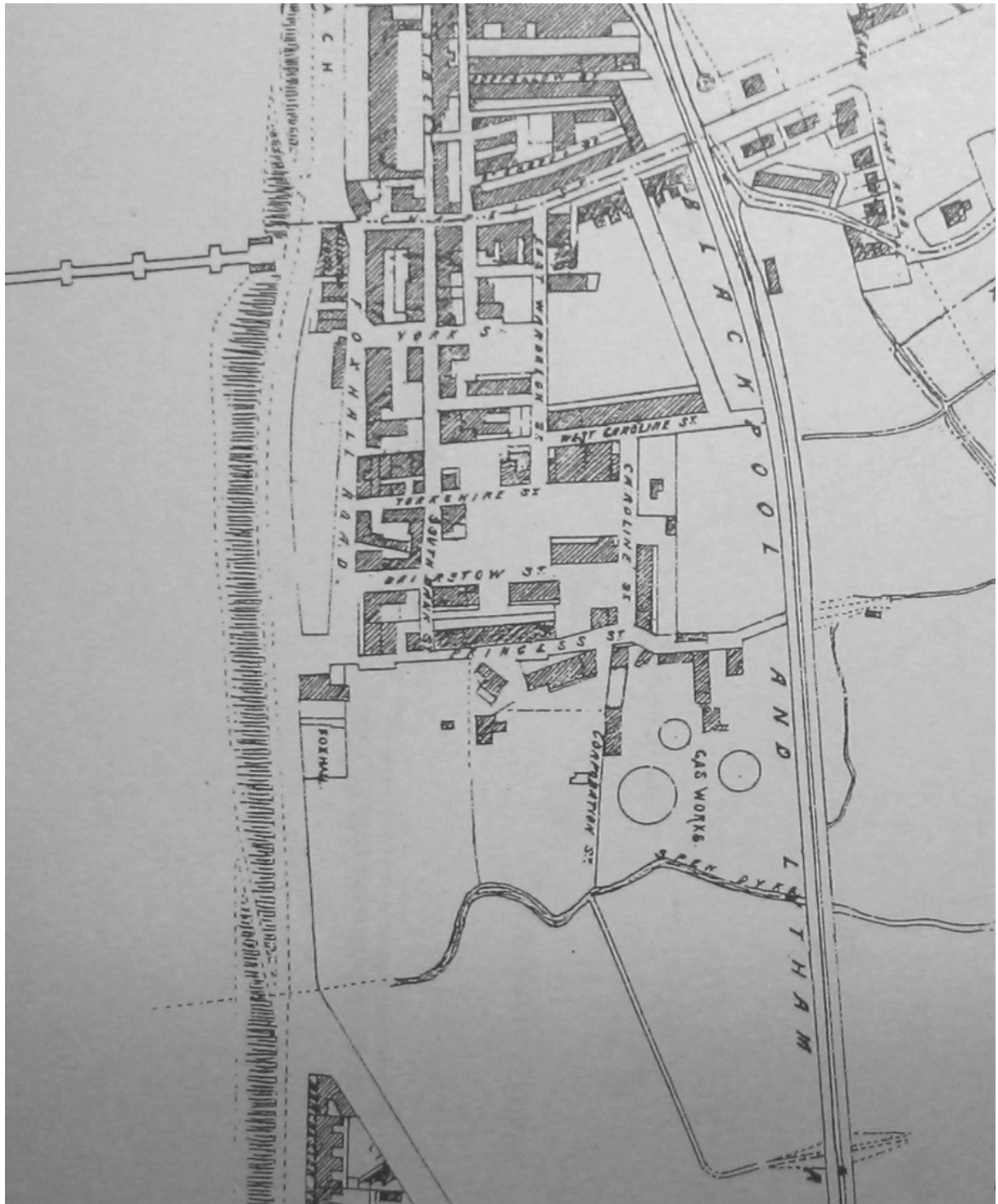


Fig.55: Detail of 1877 street plan showing area north of Lytham Road (Blackpool Library)

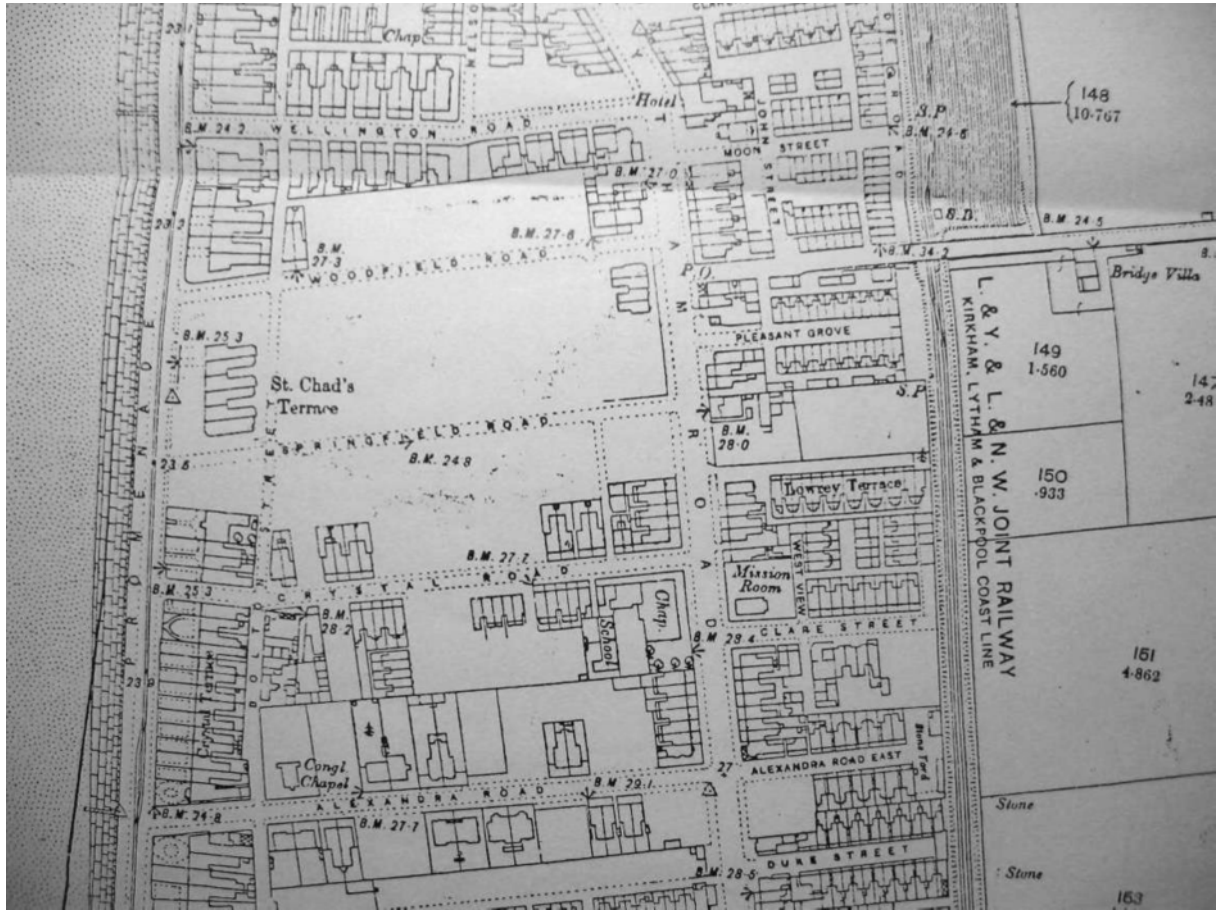


Fig.56: 1893 OS (1:2500) showing Lytham Road (Blackpool Library)

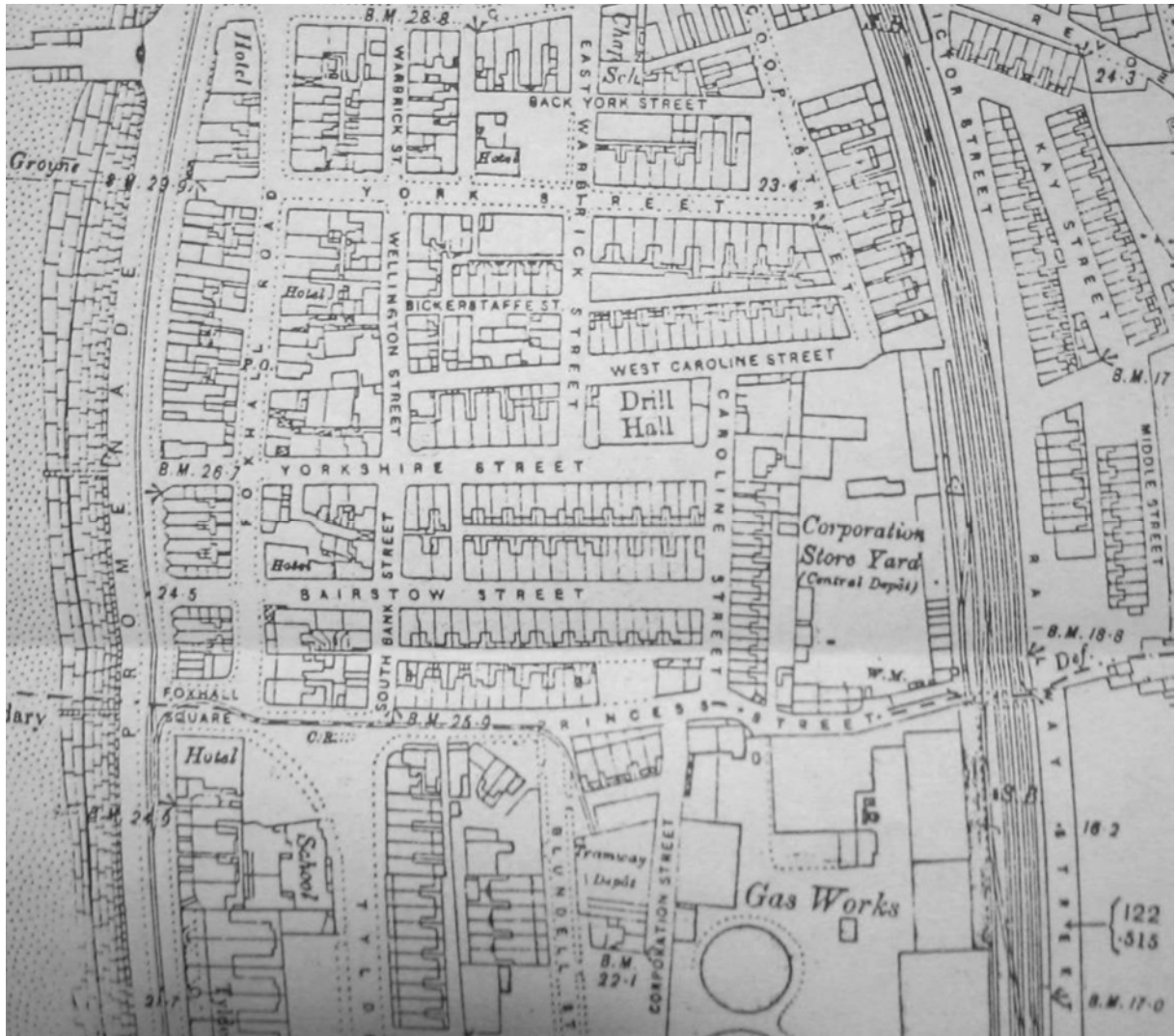


Fig.57: Detail from 1893 OS map (1:2500), area north of Rigby Road (Blackpool Library)

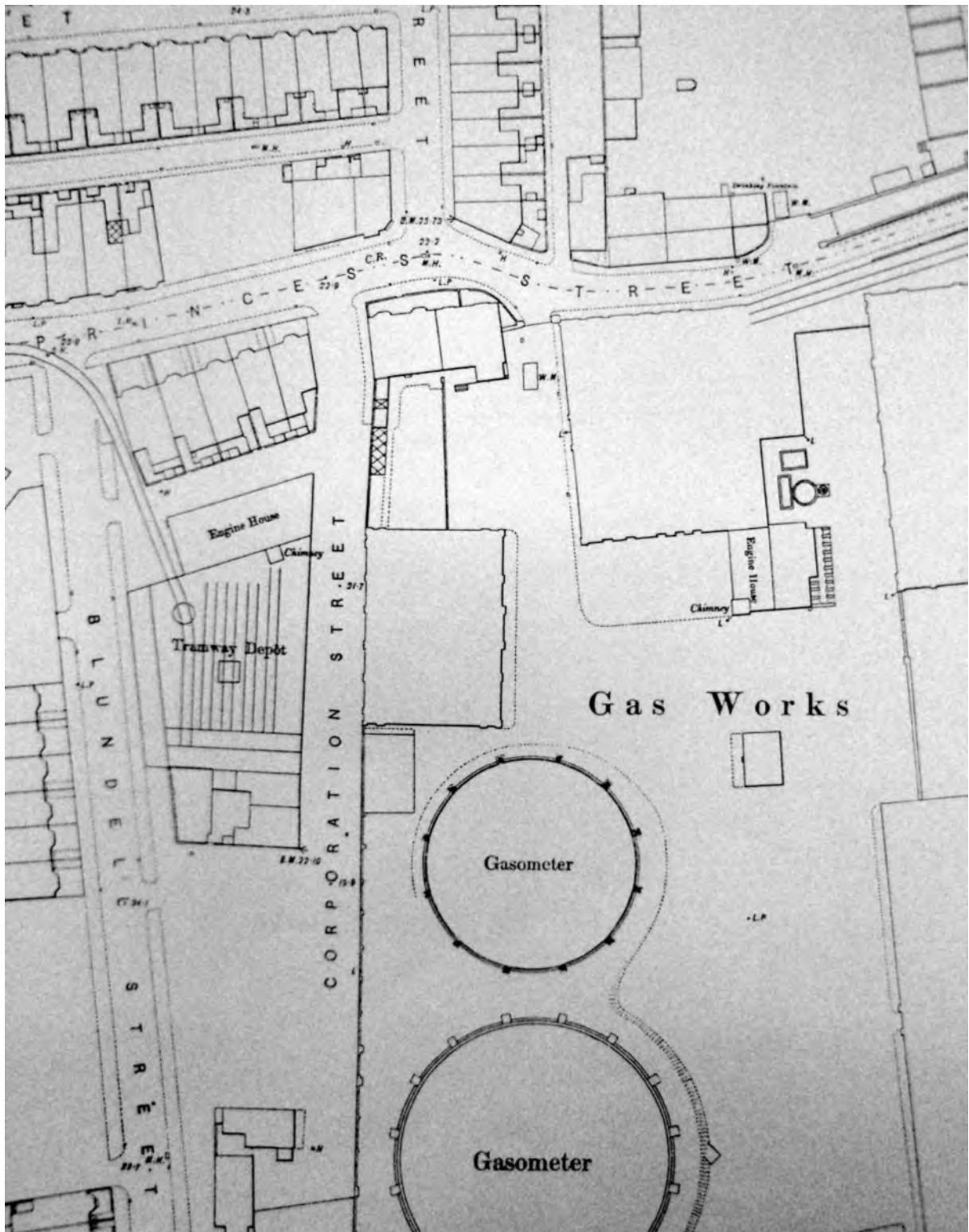


Fig.58: Detail of 1893 OS map (1:2500) showing utilities depots north of Rigby Road (Blackpool Library)



Fig.59: Detail from 1912 OS (1:2500) of Lytham Road area (Blackpool Library)

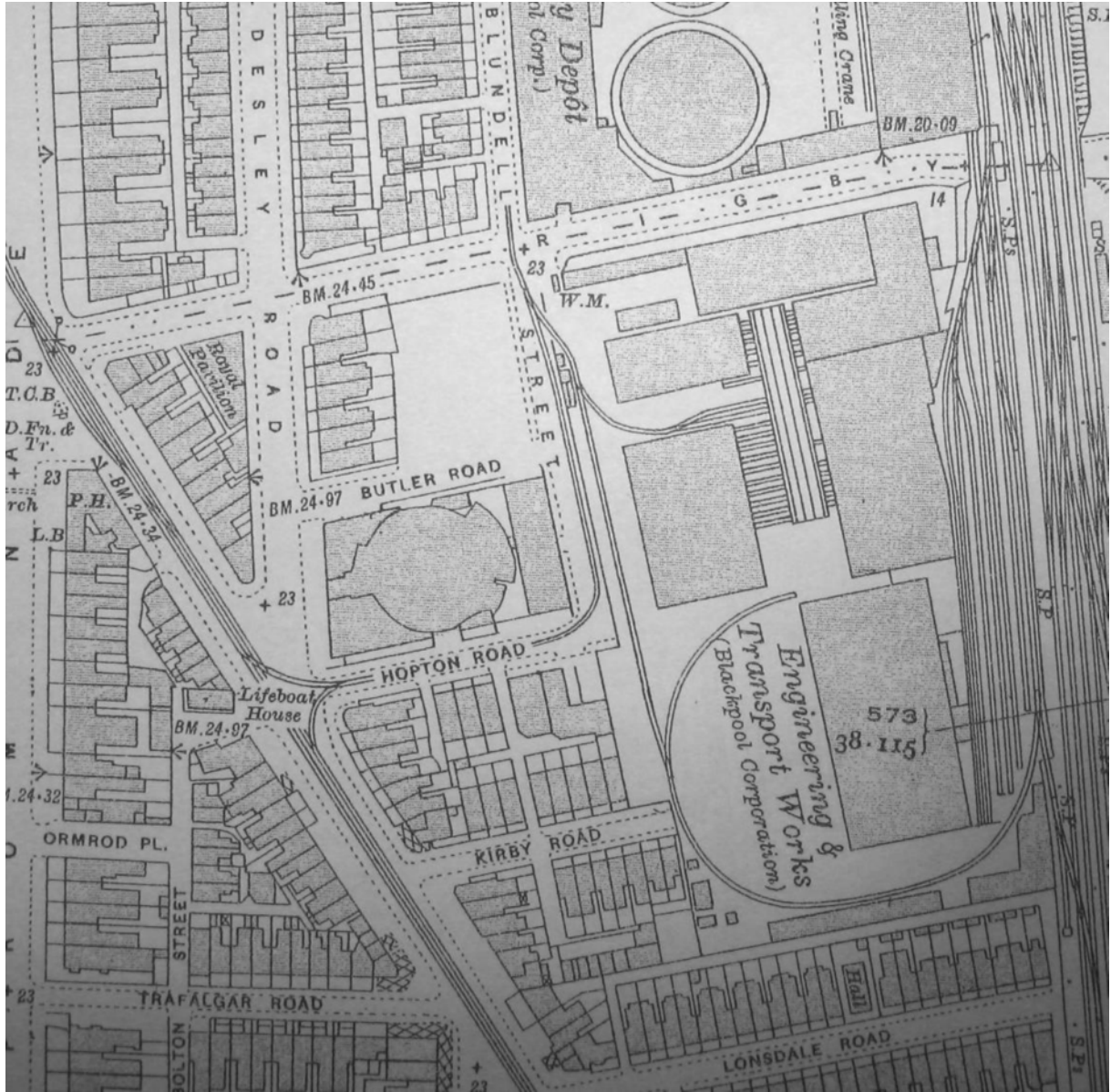


Fig.58: 1932 OS (1:2500) showing part-developed site of Rigby Road tram depot (Blackpool Library)

APPENDIX 2: Significance mapping



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Planning Department
Tourism & Regeneration Directorat
PO Box 17, Corporation Street,
Blackpool, FY1 1LZ

planning@blackpool.gov.uk



Title: Contribution to Streetscene
[Bloomfield]

Scale: 1:10000

Date: 17/02/2009 Printed by: CCC



APPENDIX 3: Proposed conservation area boundary

The Architectural History Practice Limited

29 Mount Pleasant Villas
London
N4 4HH

Telephone 01483 208633
Fax 01483 208684

mail@architecturalhistory.co.uk

www.architecturalhistory.co.uk