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Foxhall Conservation Area management plan

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Introduction

This management plan has been prepared by Blackpool Council and forms part of the council's commitment to increasing understanding, appreciation and care of Blackpool's historic built environment.

The aim of this document is to complement existing national and local policies by providing further advice on the management of the conservation area. The recommendations contained within the management plan are intended to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced, and assist in managing change by paying due regard to the area's special interest.

This management plan has been developed from, and should be considered in conjunction with, the [Foxhall Conservation Area Appraisal](#). The conservation area was formally designated on 9 February 2015 following a period of public consultation.

Foxhall Conservation Area

Foxhall forms one of the oldest self-contained mixed use districts in Blackpool. It developed as a dense area of lodging houses and private housing over a 50-year period beginning in the 1860s and providing affordable holiday accommodation for working people.

This tight grid of streets was developed after the opening of Central Station in 1862 and Central Pier in 1868, close to the junction of Foxhall Road and Chapel Street. This area has recently become known as Foxhall Village, named after the former Foxhall Inn.

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 a tightly enclosed townscape with the main streets originally having a view of the sea at the western end. The 1877 street plan shows the speculative development of streets such as York Street, Yorkshire Street and Bairstow Street for lodging houses.

Terraced streets like Singleton Street, Caroline Street and Shannon Street were more densely developed with a mixture of lodging houses and workers' housing.

Immediately to the south east of Foxhall 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. 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.

Character

The Foxhall Conservation Area has a single unified character. It can be summarised as a dense area of streets, developed with a range of terraced housing for both holiday accommodation and

workers' housing. Development in this area was built at a high density with the building line following the back of the footway, creating tightly framed streets.

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 holidaymakers. These were similar in appearance to Lancashire urban terraced housing but were planned and built 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 around Yorkshire Street,



York Street looking east

The character is also 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, and there was a brickfield and brickworks in nearby Revoe at the time this area developed. A fine-grained sandstone was generally used for hood moulds, bay windows, sills and lintels, door surrounds and string courses, although this has generally been painted. Moulded brick and terracotta was sometimes used for friezes and other details.

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. Windows were originally vertically-hung sashes in a number of sizes and formats.

The terraces of two-storey housing in the area are on streets north of Shannon Street on Bickerstaffe Street and Caroline Street. The dense three-storey terraces on Bairstow Street and Yorkshire Street are the most unaltered.



Bickerstaffe Street

The area is fairly complete, although there was a notable loss in the centre of the Conservation Area. A drill hall between Yorkshire Street and Shannon Street was demolished in 2005 and replaced with four-storey flats of no architectural merit which has had a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area. The flats themselves also overlook the rear of properties.

There are two locally listed buildings in the Conservation Area: The former Methodist Church on the corner of Chapel Street/Singleton Street, and the Stanley Arms on Chapel Street. The locally listed Lifeboat Inn is just beyond the boundary on Foxhall Road. There are no statutorily listed buildings.



The Maltings, view down Shannon Street

Urban form

The distinctive linear or grid street pattern with densely developed frontages provides well-framed views and a sense of enclosure. Foxhall retains a strong sense of place and community and has a very distinct character which differs from the other key boarding house areas in the town.

Historic map evidence shows that no open spaces were provided within the area. There is still an absence of street trees, and gardens are too small to provide significant greenery.

Views and vistas

Views out of the area to the west provide tightly framed glimpses of the sea and promenade. With the exception of York Street these are uninterrupted by other buildings. Views north provide good views of Blackpool Tower along the main north-south routes.

Views into the area from the west are tightly framed, with buildings following historic building lines. The close grain of the streets

suggests a sense of enclosure and community which has survived superficial changes to the area.



York Street looking towards the seafront



View north along Coop Street towards Blackpool Tower

Negative issues

Most properties retain Welsh slate roofs, although some properties have been re-roofed with heavier concrete tiles, and some have modern roof lifts which disrupt the unity of the roofline.



Roof dormers, different window treatments and cladding on Yorkshire Street



Traditional panelled door





Original Sliding Slash Door

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 treatments. Properties that retain original Victorian doors and windows are rare, although enough remains to be able to understand the original appearance of the buildings and can be used as a template for more sympathetic replacements in the future.

The unity of terraced frontages has been affected by individual approaches to the cladding, painting or rendering of brickwork; concrete 'stone' cladding is particularly intrusive for example on Caroline Street. Paint has generally been applied to decorative stone features such as bay windows, sills and lintels.



Various cladding treatments on Caroline Street

Commercial premises, particularly on Dale Street and Chapel Street, are adversely affected by modern signage and solid external roller shutters. However, these intrusive elements are reversible, and the appearance of commercial premises and therefore the Conservation Area would be enhanced by more appropriate signage, and internal roller shutters if appropriate.

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.



Commercial premises on Chapel Street

The large modern apartment blocks, The Maltings (2005) and Naventis Court (c.1990), are the main factors undermining the historic character of Foxhall. They overshadow and dominate Bickerstaffe Street and Shannon Street and are a highly inappropriate intrusion in the domestic scale historic townscape.

The creation of two surface car parks on York Street (on the north side in 2011 following the demolition of the Jaggy Thistle public house) and on the south side (date unknown) have also had a negative impact on the townscape. Not only has the loss of buildings on these sites resulted in gaps in the otherwise densely built townscape but also the backs of historic buildings have been exposed which has had an added negative impact on appearance.

As the apartment blocks and car parks have a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area they provide opportunities for appropriate redevelopment should the opportunity arise.



Surface car park York Street





Proliferation of satellite dishes and general disrepair on Shannon Street

Decline in the holiday industry, and subsequent loss of income and investment, has led to a lack of maintenance which is having a growing impact on the Conservation Area, especially on streets dominated by permanent rented accommodation such as Shannon Street. Further deterioration may lead to the Conservation Area being added to Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register.

Opportunities for enhancement

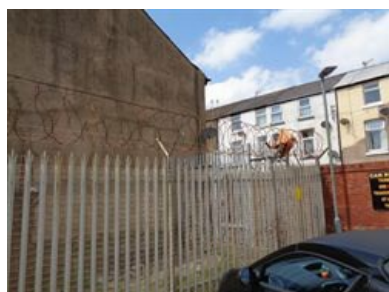
New development and alterations to buildings in the conservation area should preserve or enhance its character. There is little scope for infill development within the conservation area, although the two surface car parks are the most likely sites should the opportunity arise.

Any new construction will need to be of a high quality and design especially in terms of scale and height, and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and the Core Strategy 2012-27. In general, development should be low rise to reflect the height and density of the historic townscape. This standard should apply equally where views into or out of the conservation area would be affected. Any new development will always be assessed for detail, account being taken of the history of the site, the character of surrounding buildings and its contribution to the townscape.

Demolition of historic buildings in the conservation area will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Planning applications which involve works to the backs of properties which are visible as a result of being exposed by previous demolition, and the rear of any other property visible from the road within the conservation area, will be subject to the same degree of scrutiny as main elevations in order to enhance the conservation area.

The car parks are negative elements in the townscape and could be improved by removing unsightly items such as barbed wire (eg Shannon Street) and introducing more attractive hard and soft landscaping.



Car park on Shannon Street



Car park on York Street exposing the rear of properties

The historic character of the public realm has also been undermined by the introduction of modern street lighting and pavement surfaces. When enhancement and maintenance schemes are being considered in future, traditionally designed street furniture and paving materials should be used wherever possible to enhance the appearance of the area.

Improved commercial frontages, together with enhancement of the public realm with soft landscaping where space allows, should improve perceptions of the area and encourage increased footfall from the promenade. Engagement with local residents to create appropriate and innovative artwork could support this.



Painted bollard courtesy of World Bollard Association



Painted bollard courtesy of World Bollard Association

Most original timber windows and doors have had modern upvc replacements. In future, when replacement of existing standard upvc windows is being considered, slimline upvc double glazed sliding sash windows are an acceptable alternative. Standard upvc windows with top hung sashes designed to imitate sliding sashes are inappropriate in a conservation area. [Guidance on replacement windows](#) in conservation areas is available on the council website.

Where stone bays have been replaced with upvc bay windows in the past, stone bays should be reinstated when the upvc units are in need of replacement.

Individual approaches to cladding, painting or rendering of brickwork has had a damaging impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Rendering and painting of historic brickwork can also cause internal damp issues. Further works of this nature will be strongly discouraged and in future planning permission will be required for cladding, rendering or other such work to the front elevations of properties.

Where render is damaged and/or is causing internal damp problems it should be hacked off and replaced with a smooth finished lime render and then painted with a breathable paint finish.

Where modern roof lifts or roof dormers have been installed these should be removed, and the original roof covering reinstated, whenever the opportunity arises.

Chimney stacks and crown pots add historic interest to the roofline and should be retained.

Commercial premises have been blighted by over-advertising, inappropriate signage and solid external roller shutters. In future all shop fronts and signage should comply with SPG 6: Shop fronts and signs. Guidance is also available on the council website [Shop front guidance](#)

In particular, upvc shop fronts will not be permitted. Traditional details such as a stallriser and pilasters should be included and can be constructed from timber, stone, brick or tile. The signage should sit between the pilasters, and the overall design should create a vertical connection between the upper and lower floors.

External security shutters have a significant negative impact on the streetscene. It is widely accepted that excessive levels of security can have a detrimental effect on townscape and have an adverse effect on the overall perception of an area. It is recognised that security is

an increasing concern of shop owners, but by discouraging unsympathetic development and promoting good design it is possible to achieve a safer and more welcoming environment. This in turn will increase public confidence and reduce the opportunity for vandalism as well as crime generally. In future, therefore, only internal shutters will be permitted in the conservation area and if security issues can be demonstrated.

Vacancy, disrepair and anti-social behaviour is having a negative impact on the appearance and perception of the conservation area. The work of the council's community safety team will be supported to secure properties where necessary to prevent further deterioration, and planning enforcement action will be taken against landlords who fail to maintain their properties.

Conservation area guidance offering [advice on maintenance and repair](#) for home owners, developers, property owners and agents.

A baseline photographic survey has been undertaken, and the condition of the conservation area will be monitored. This will enable targeted action where necessary.

Planning policies

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the main legislative policy base for the conservation of the historic environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy guidance, replaces all previous planning policy and guidance for the built environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies and how these should be applied, with Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment being particularly relevant. National Planning Practice Guidance provides further guidance to NPPF with a specific section on the historic environment.

The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2012-27) was adopted by the council on the 20 January 2016 and sets out a number of strategic policies including policy CS8: Heritage. The Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies was adopted in February 2023 and supersedes all remaining policies in the 2006 Local Plan. Relevant policies are DM26: Listed Buildings, DM27: Conservation Areas, DM28: Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

Control of new development

Where necessary the council will take enforcement action against unauthorised development where it has a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Where necessary the council will apply for compulsory purchase orders and take ownership of property where a mutually acceptable negotiated position cannot be reached.

A framework for design standards, design guidance and conservation standards

The council is committed to achieving a high quality of design and materials in all new development within conservation areas. Guidance is available on the council website.

All projects will be required to build on the quality inherent in traditional buildings and ensure that new works pay the same attention to design, detail and materials. They will be required to meet the highest standards possible be they part of repair, reinstatement or new development works.

Quality assurance measures for conservation areas

The quality of character within the conservation area will be maintained using the following measures:

- Encouraging applicants to appoint an architect to provide a full or partial service in designing any alteration or extension works
- Promoting the appointment of consultants and tradesmen with a track record of experience of similar types of work
- The built heritage and conservation team will provide assistance and guidance to applicants upon request
- Drawings illustrating the proposals are to be submitted both at pre-application stage and for planning approval. Planning applications should include a [heritage statement](#) describing the significance of the conservation area, details of the proposed works, and an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the property and the conservation area as a whole

Section 215 – Removal of eyesores

Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act) provides a local planning authority with the power, in certain

circumstances, to take steps requiring land to be cleaned up when its condition adversely affects the amenity (pleasantness) of the area. It is a relatively straightforward power that can achieve imaginative and effective improvements to the quality of the historic environment.

In Section 336 of the act it states that land includes buildings and not just vacant, undeveloped land. The dereliction of both can lead to a detrimental visual effect on the surrounding land and buildings and can have a negative effect on both the setting of conservation areas and historic buildings. The character of a conservation area, having been identified as special and worthy of designation, can be seriously affected by unsightly derelict land and buildings and, therefore, Section 215 is a useful legal mechanism for councils to use against such elements when they arise.

If it appears that the amenity of the conservation area is being adversely affected by the condition of neighbouring land and buildings, the council may serve a notice on the owner requiring that the situation be remedied. A notice served under Section 215 will require steps to be taken for remedying the condition of the land within a specified timescale. The notice will take effect at the end of the period specified in it which should not be less than 28 days after service of the notice.

Penalties for non-compliance with a Section 215 Notice within the specified period is an offence punishable (on summary conviction) by fine. A person on whom a notice is served may, at any time before the notice takes effect, appeal on any of the grounds specified in Section 217.

Under Section 219 of the act any steps required to be taken which have not been taken, the council who served the notice may (a) enter the land and take those steps; and (b) recover from the owner of the land any expenses reasonably incurred by them in doing so.

Putting the management plan into practice

The conservation area management plan will be formally adopted and put into practice by Blackpool Council, which will take responsibility for implementing the conservation area management plan. The team responsible for advancing the conservation area management plan will be the built heritage and conservation team. The relevant director will take direct responsibility for the plan.

Commitment to the management plan

Blackpool Council will deploy its corporate resources and staff skills to support the delivery of the management plan.

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