

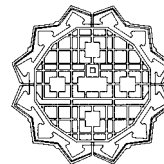
Blackpool BC

***Talbot Square Townscape
Heritage Initiative***

Conservation Area Appraisal

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Prepared by



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Talbot Square Conservation Area is one of the oldest parts of Blackpool and contains many of the town's civic buildings. Talbot Square was declared a Conservation Area on 25th January 1984. It includes many of the buildings necessary for the proper functioning of a town, including the Town Hall, the former Public Library, Market, main Post Office, former Theatre and former Banks. It also includes grandiose hotels and the Wintergardens.
- 1.2 Several of the buildings and structures are listed as a result of their individual merit. The townscape character of much of the area, however, is formed by the group value of the many smaller late nineteenth century properties which front the crowded streets to the eastern side of the Conservation Area. These blocks of two and three storey late nineteenth century properties, with shops at ground floor, form the character of Clifton Street, Talbot Road, Abingdon Street and Cedar Square.
- 1.3 A significant length of the seafront, including North Pier, the War Memorial and the Hotel Metropole is located within Talbot Square Conservation Area. Most of the historic buildings close to the seafront are grandiose and include the Clifton Hotel, Yates's Wine Lodge (the former Public Library) and Blackpool Town Hall. These buildings have been located to frame Talbot Square, once the Town's most important civic space.

2. Historical Development of Talbot Square/Blackpool

- 2.1 Blackpool as a town is first recorded by cartographer Emmanuel Bowen in 1751 and at this time consisted mainly of cottages and Fox Hall. By the end of 1770 the town was becoming fashionable as a sea bathing location for the wealthy and this new ‘craze’ resulted in the building of the first visitor accommodation to meet this new demand.
- 2.2 A growing number of visitors were making the twelve hour horse drawn coach ride from Manchester to bath in (and to drink!) the health giving sea waters of Blackpool. Bailey’s Hotel opened on the seafront in 1776. This was later redeveloped and expanded to become the present Hotel ‘Metropole’ which occupies a prominent position within the Talbot Square Conservation Area. By the 1840s Blackpool consisted of a small collection of buildings spread along the seafront between Chapel St and Cocker Square. The majority of the hotels occupied seafront positions and Blackpool began to grow in a linear fashion with new development following the seafront.
- 2.3 In 1844 the Talbot-Clifton family purchased land from the site of the soon to be North Station to the seafront and laid out the new Talbot Road which culminated in a grand square (Talbot Square) which was bequeathed to the town in perpetuity. Talbot Square was at the heart of the town from the 1840s onwards. The square survives today although is very much dominated by highway infrastructure.
- 2.4 During the 1840s, the town continued to develop along genteel lines catering for the wealthy and privileged. By the opening of the Railway Station in 1846, Blackpool was attracting several thousand well to do visitors per year.
- 2.5 The fabric of the Talbot Square Conservation Area developed from the 1850s onwards, functioning as Blackpool’s civic, retail and tourism heart. Today there are a diverse range of buildings within the Conservation Area.

Amongst them are several listed buildings and structures. In chronological order, earliest first, the listings include:

- The Church of the Sacred Heart in Talbot Road. This is Grade 2* listed and was built in 1857, by E.W. Pugin, before being enlarged in 1894. It is built in stone and has slate roofs which are gothic in style.
- In 1862-3 North Pier was built to allow steamers to take pleasure trips from the promenade. It comprised of cast iron screw piles and columns supporting iron girders and a wooden deck 1,405 feet long. A 474 foot jetty was added in 1867. The Pierhead was enlarged with wings in 1874.
- Clifton Hotel was developed between 1865-74. It now fills a three sided site having replaced the original building. It has sea views and also fronts Talbot Square.
- The frontage of the Winter Gardens entertainment complex is included within the Conservation Area. It was largely built between 1875 and 1878 by Thomas Mitchell of Oldham, with later additions and alterations continuing through to 1939.
- St John's Church on Church Street, dates from 1878 and is built in stone with slate roofs.
- The Town Hall was developed in 1895-1900, by Rotts Son and Hennings. It is built in brick with stone dressings and slate roofs in Jacobean style. Whilst the building is impressive, it has lost the upper part of its tower.
- The General Post Office in Abingdon Street dates from 1910. It was built in Portland stone with a hipped roof of green slate.
- The white granite obelisk War Memorial on Princess Parade was constructed in 1923 and is probably by Grayson.

- 2.6 The development of the railway served to fuel the development of Blackpool which became progressively more accessible to the mill workers of Lancashire and Manchester. The opening of the Winter Gardens in 1878 was almost certainly the town's last attempt at catering for a 'sophisticated' audience.
- 2.7 By 1893 the street grid and layout of the Conservation Area had been largely completed. The street grid which had been established by 1893 is little different to that which survives today. The 1893 plan is particularly interesting and shows that the villas fronting Clifton Street were originally built in two very long terraces, each building with a uniform plot size, footprint and building width. In plan form each villa was of 'tunnel back' design with a walled forecourt/garden to the front. Archive photographs suggest that these properties were residences rather than visitor lodgings. Located at the head of Talbot Square and close to North Pier, the Public Library and the Theatre, Clifton Street would have been a prestigious part of Blackpool in which to live. By the 1920's, however, all these properties were to have been converted into shops.
- 2.8 The 1912 plan shows that Talbot Square, Clifton Street, Talbot Road and Albion Street had all been converted to accommodate trams. Other major changes from the 1893 plan included the addition of the Post Office and Town Hall. The development of the Post Office followed the demolition of the Union Chapel.
- 2.9 By 1920, Clifton Street had changed from a residential street to a vibrant shopping/commercial street. The original villas had been converted and had shopfronts installed at ground level. Most were also extended backwards onto Cheapside. Some properties were combined and converted to larger retail units. Selective demolition occurred and some of the villas were demolished to allow a new bank to be built. The building survives and is today occupied by Lionels Bar.

2.10 From the 1890s through to the 1950s Blackpool developed rapidly and increasingly catered for the quickly expanding mass holiday market. Notable milestones in the towns development over this period included:

- 1885 – First fare paying electric tramway opened;
- 1894 – Blackpool Tower opened;
- 1899 – Towerball Room opened;
- 1920 – The Dunlop Guide identified Blackpool as the ‘most popular seaside resort in England’;
- 1919 – The Golden Mile develops after sideshows were banned from the sands;
- 1923 – Big Dipper opened; and
- 1937 – A total of 425 special holiday trains ran to Blackpool over August Bank Holiday Monday.

2.11 After 1950 there have been few major changes to the Conservation Area. The main influences at work have been a general deterioration in the historic fabric of the area and inappropriate redevelopment of shopfronts in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980’s prior to the designation and extension of the Conservation Area.

3. Character

3.1 Talbot Square Conservation area neatly divides into two distinctive areas of townscape character; 'Talbot Square' and the 'Promenade' with their grand buildings; and then the smaller scale buildings of the remaining streets to the east which include Clifton St, Abingdon St, Church St, Cedar Square and the south side of Talbot Road.

'Talbot Square' and the 'Promenade'

3.2 At the western side of the Conservation Area, are very grand civic buildings including the New Clifton Hotel, the Counting House (formerly a Bank but now a public house), the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Sacred Heart Church, the former School (now the Parish Centre), Yates's Wine Lodge (formerly the Public Library) and the Town Hall.

3.3 The majority of these buildings either border, or are located close to Talbot Square. Together they helped form the civic heart of Victorian and Edwardian Blackpool. This part of the Conservation Area was also the focus of early visitor facilities. The Hotel Metropole sits on the site of Bailey's which was the first hotel to be developed in the Town. Equally North Pier was the first of the Blackpool piers to be completed as early as 1863. The New 'Clifton' Hotel still bears the name of the Talbot-Clifton family whose investments in the 1840s facilitated the development of this part of town.

3.4 The character of the western part of the Conservation Area is formed by the grand and ornate civic buildings located here, principally by the hotels, the former Public Library and the Town Hall. Although each is of different architectural character, the unifying influence is certainly their grandiose scale and civic setting.

Clifton St/Abingdon St/Church St/Cedar Square/South side Talbot Rd

- 3.5 In marked contrast, the character of the eastern part of the Conservation Area is generally formed by smaller more functional buildings, most of which were in use as shops by the 1920's.
- 3.6 The streetscapes here include Clifton St, Abingdon St, Church St, Cedar Square and the south side of Talbot Road. They comprise of a plethora of smaller late nineteenth century properties, modified to varying degrees, which are currently occupied by a variety of shops, cafes, restaurants, offices and other small businesses.
- 3.7 Clifton Street is perhaps one of the most interesting streets within the Conservation Area and the buildings here possess similar architectural features to other buildings on Abingdon St, Church St, Cedar Square and on the south side Talbot Rd.
- 3.8 In 1893 Clifton Street comprised three storey accommodation. The Victorian villas were grand with impressive bay windows to ground and first floor level. The second floor windows were plain and without bays. The brick built villas were richly detailed with sandstone: with banding, cills, doorways and bays all decorated in stone. Although these properties were heavily modified (and some demolished) when Clifton Street was converted for retail/commercial use from 1900-1920, many of the surviving buildings still retain period features. This is particularly the case at first and second floor level where feature stone banding and original fenestration can be seen.
- 3.9 As noted above, although Clifton Street was originally developed as a residential street, it had been transformed by the 1920's when most buildings had been converted to shops.
- 3.10 A variety of new architectural features were introduced. Shopfronts were installed at ground floor. These were well designed with period architectural

detailing including; pilasters and plinths (which form the main vertical elements of the frame and define the lateral extent of the shopfront); stall risers (which give the shopfront a solid physical and visual base); fascias and cornices (which provide the shopfront's horizontal capping and the main area for advertising the name and function of the shop) and mullioned windows. Retractable canopies on the south side of the street provided shade for the shop windows here. These well proportioned shopfronts replaced the former domestic frontages along the entire length of Clifton Street.

- 3.11 As domestic use gave way to commercial use on Clifton Street, upper floors were also converted to accommodate retail uses, storage and service uses such as opticians. Fashionable square bays taking up the entire building frontage replaced the previous smaller bay windows. Domestic curtilages and gardens were lost to be replaced by wide pavements. The retail conversions on Clifton Street were of a similar style to refurbishment of retail units on Abingdon Rd and the south side of Clifton St about the same.
- 3.12 Many of these period shopfronts have since been replaced by unsympathetic architecture, particularly at ground level. Fortunately much of the older fabric above ground floor level has survived redevelopment and this combined with the narrow building frontages and back of pavement development, has helped to retain the character of the Conservation Area.
- 3.13 Today, the buildings of Clifton Street display an eclectic mix of architectural and historical features. The regular scale of the buildings (largely three storey) and their back of pavement building line gives the street a uniformity which is sufficient to off set the diversity of architectural features on display. The townscape merit of Clifton St, Abingdon St, Church St, Cedar Square and the south side of Talbot Rd are all derived from the group value of their small late nineteenth century properties. There are also several larger buildings in the eastern part of the Conservation Area including St Johns Church, the Post Office, the Market and the frontage of the Winter Gardens.

4. Urban Form

Streetscape

- 4.1 Most of the original grid-iron street pattern developed within the area survives intact, and for the most part, little altered. Narrow alleyways service the rear of the majority of terraced blocks of property.
- 4.2 Original late nineteenth century building lines have been retained and the majority of buildings are located at the back of pavement and front the street.
- 4.3 Historic streetscape materials have been replaced by successive improvement schemes and the ornate cast iron lamp columns which once adorned the area have been replaced without exception. The tramways which once ran along the major streets such as Abingdon Street have also been removed as have the six huge Portland stone gate piers which were once located outside the General Post Office. These supported ornate cast iron railings which have also been removed. The cast iron railings around St. John's Church had the same fate.

Public Spaces

- 4.4 Talbot Square was designed to be the focal point of the area and this historic road pattern survives today with seven roads converging on the Square: Promenade (north), Promenade (south), The Strand, Talbot Road, Clifton Street, Corporation Street and Market Street.
- 4.5 Talbot Square has changed in character over the years. The ornate wrought-iron drinking fountain and clock tower which once stood in the centre of the Square was removed many years ago. The space, once shared by pedestrians and carriages has unfortunately been taken over by transport infrastructure, first by tram lines, later by highways. Nevertheless, the location of the

Square, set as close to the seafront as the designers dared, coupled with the grand hotels and civic buildings which survive along its borders (New Clifton Hotel, Town Hall, former Library, Counting House, North Pier etc), leave one in no doubt of the former importance of this space.

4.6 Another significant space within the Conservation Area, although poorly defined by buildings, is Princess Parade which links the Metropole Hotel with North Pier. The character of the space has changed over the years, although the white granite obelisk War Memorial on Princess Parade remains as erected in 1923 and is now listed. Princess Parade and North Pier are physically separated from Talbot Square by tramlines and Promenade Road which together act as a deterrent and barrier to movement between these important areas.

4.7 The remaining historically important space within Talbot Square Conservation Area, is the area adjacent to St. John's Church. This space was originally the grave yard to St. John's Church and was originally enclosed by cast iron railings. These are thought to have been removed as part of the war effort and the site of the grave yard is now part of the public realm.

Vistas

4.8 The regular street pattern and the location of landmark buildings in prominent positions creates a series of focal points and vistas. Arguably the best vistas in the Conservation Area are:

- Looking down the length of Clifton Street towards North Pier;
- Looking down the length of Clifton Street towards the Head Post Office;
- Looking down the length of Abingdon Street towards the Winter Gardens;

- Looking from North Pier towards Yates Wine Lodge and the Town Hall.

Landmark Buildings

4.9 Landmark buildings within the Conservation Area include: North Pier, New Clifton Hotel, Blackpool Town Hall, Sacred Heart Church, Yates Wine Lodge, the Head Post Office and the Winter Gardens.

Soft Landscaping

4.10 Unlike many Conservation Areas, Talbot Square does not contain any street trees. The streetscape is hard and the lack of greenery notable. The harsh salty climate is probably part responsible combined with limited opportunities for planting.

5. Listed Buildings

Introduction

5.1 Talbot Square Conservation Area accommodates ten listed buildings/structures including the Town Hall, the Head Post Office, Winter Gardens and the North Pier. The following section provides details of these listings.

North Pier (Grade 2 listed on 19/08/1975)

5.2 Description: Pier, 1862-3, by Eugenius Birch, contractors R Laidlaw and Son of Glasgow. Cast iron screw piles and columns supporting iron girders and wooden deck 1,405 feet long, with jetty of 474 feet (added 1867).

5.3 Pierhead enlarged with wings 1874 (for Indian Pavilion later destroyed by fire) now has modern theatre on north side and curved glass and iron shelters on south side. Promenade deck lined each side by wooden benches with ornamental open-work backs of cast iron: a continuous bank of stars in circles surmounted by semicircular fan-shaped backs in groups of three, the centre one having a grotesque in the middle, and the groups divided by voluted armrests.

5.4 Two pairs of original kiosk-bays on deck have kiosks built c1900: each an elongated hexagon of wood and glass, with 2-tier swept-out lead roof bearing octagonal lantern of blue glass and minaret roof with finial.

War Memorial, Princess Parade (Grade 2 listed)

- 5.5 Description: War Memorial, 1923, probably by Grayson. Very tall obelisk of white granite ashlar on 3-stepped plinth, standing on raised platform. Square pedestal with large bronze relief panels depicting stylised scenes of warfare on north and south sides, continued round corners of east and west sides as sentinel figures: 2 soldiers on east, sailor and airman on west. Base of obelisk surrounded by band of incised square meander ornament with overlaid wreath in centre of each side. Large freestanding chest tombs on platform on north and south sides of plinth, with roofs of cast bronze bearing names of the fallen in relief.

Clifton Hotel, Talbot Square, (Grade 2 listed on 31/10/1994)

- 5.6 Description: Hotel, 1865-74. Brick with stone dressings, stone quoins and string courses, now stuccoed and rendered, slate roofs. Now fills 3-sided site having first extended (1865) and then replaced (1874) original Clifton Arms Hotel on corner of Talbot Square and Promenade.
- 5.7 North front of 1865 5 bays, the middle 3 symmetrical, extended on west by addition of 2 wider bays; 4 storeys; 3rd and 5th bays canted to full height, 7th and 8th bays canted to 1st floor level.
- 5.8 Ground floor of rusticated stucco now has large balustraded pavilion extension in front of first 5 bays, with arched windows; porch in Tuscan order to entrance in 6th bay. 1st and 2nd floors have segmental-headed sashed windows with stilted architraves; 3rd floor has round-headed sashes.
- 5.9 Bracketed eaves cornice, hipped roofs. West return wall has two 2-storey canted bays with balustrades, and stepped-out extension 4 windows wide. Interior has staircase with carved balustrades and richly ornamented dining room.

Town Hall excluding extension to rear (Grade 2 listed on 11/01/1974)

- 5.10 Description: Town Hall, 1895-1900, by Rotts Son and Hennings. Brick with stone dressings and slate roofs. U-shape plan with receding wings. 3-storeys, right wing 2-storeys. Jacobean style.
- 5.11 Symmetrical front of 5-bays with central tower; central 2-storey stone entrance porch in Tuscan order at ground floor, Ionic above, with segmental pediment, balustrade with corner finials.
- 5.12 Ground floor of stone with continuous entablature; four 6-light mullioned and transomed windows, the outer ones being shallow rectangular bays surmounted by corner finials on the entablature.
- 5.13 1st floor has similar windows, the outer ones being shallow bays with curved corners, and all have scrolled pediments in the entablature; 2nd floor has mullioned windows with sashes.
- 5.14 Outer bays rise to stone gabled attics with niches, entablature, pediments and finials; centre bay rises to clock tower of 2 stages, the lower (of brick) containing a window with stone segmental-pedimented architrave, and bearing a dentillated cornice surmounted by a stone belfry with coupled pilasters, cornice, and balustrade with finials. (This was originally topped by a tall fleche).
- 5.15 Facade and right wing are hinged on a curved 2-storey stone bay with domical roof set in concave re-entrant above.
- 5.16 Left wing: 3rd bay with arched stone entrance and corbelled 1st floor oriel, rises to square attic turret with stone cornice and parapet surmounted by finials with open scrolled brackets; 4th bay has tall round-headed and traceried 1st floor window, and a shaped stone gable with finials.

- 5.17 Right wing: 2 storeys, the lower shops, the upper the Council Chamber with 4 tall oriels set in round arches, steeply pitched roof surmounted by belfry with domical lead cap; this wing ends with one 3-storey bay with hipped roof, dated 1896.

Telephone Kiosks (Grade 2 listed on 31/03/1995)

- 5.18 Description: Telephone kiosk Type K6. Designed 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Made by various contractors. Cast Iron. Square kiosk with domed roof. Unperforated crowns to top panels and margin glazing to windows and door.

Talbot Road, Church of the Sacred Heart (Grade 2*)

- 5.19 Description: 1857, by EW Pugin, enlarged 1894 by Pugin and Pugin. Decorated Gothic. Stone with slate roofs. West tower of 4 stages, angled buttresses and battlemented coping with tall corner pinnacles.
- 5.20 Nave of 4 bays, with buttressed aisles, and nave transepts; octagonal crossing also with transepts, and octagonal lantern to the crossing. Aisle windows of 3 lights. Nave transepts have 4-light window with geometrical tracery, octagon transepts have large 6-light window with reticulated tracery and a 3-light gable eye with archivolt. Octagonal crossing has pyramidal roof bearing a distinctive octagonal wooden lantern with a pair of traceried windows in each side, and a pyramidal copper roof with gablets on alternate sides.
- 5.21 Interior: nave arcade of moulded lancet arches on clustered marble columns. The unusual crossing is formed by an octagonal arcade of moulded arches on shafted piers; lantern above is carried on two tiers of hammerbeams in the angles, the upper tier supporting an unglazed prolongation of the wooden lantern above.

- 5.22 Chancel has arched ceiling with painted and carved panels and large skylights, and a coved cornice with carvings of angels; chancel window of 5 lights with flowing tracery; elaborate carved reredos. A lady chapel in the salient each side of the chancel. Octagonal pulpit of elaborately carved white marble on a pedestal of short columns, alternately black and red.

Abingdon Street (East side) Group of 8 telephone kiosks - Head Post Office Grade 2 listed on 14/06/1988

- 5.23 Description: Telephone Kiosks. Type K6. Designed 1935 by Sir Giles Scott. Made by various contractors. Cast iron, square kiosks with domed roofs. Unperforated crowns to top panels and margin glazing to windows and doors.

Abingdon Street 26 - 30 General Post Office (front range only) (Grade 2 listed on 02/12/1991)

- 5.24 Description: Post Office. 1910, designed by architects of the Office of Works, built by R Neill & Son of Manchester; slightly altered. Portland Stone with a hipped roof of green slate. Rectangular plan parallel to street. Renaissance style.
- 5.25 Three storeys over cellars, 4:7:4 windows, a symmetrical composition in which the main range has 1:5:1 bays (the outer bays breaking forwards slightly) and the side ranges are slightly set back; with a plinth of 3 courses of punch-dressed rock-faced blocks, channelled rustication and a plain frieze to the ground floor, similar channelling to the outer bays of the main range and at the corners of the side ranges, giant pilasters to the upper floors of the 5-bay centre, an egg-and-dart frieze, prominent modillioned cornice and a balustraded parapet to the main range terminating in upstands over its outer bays.

- 5.26 The outer bays of the main range have large round-headed doorways, each with a prominent segmental canopy borne by a pair of Atlantes on tall pedestals, a moulded head with a scrolled keyblock and double wooden doors with oval panels; its 5-bay centre has round-headed windows with run-out voussairs, triple keystones and tripartite sashed glazing with panelled-pilaster mullions and original stained glass (mostly simple wreaths and swags, but that in the centre including the Royal Arms).
- 5.27 On the upper floors the 5-bay centre has Ionic caps to the pilasters enriched with lion-masks gripping festoons; 12-pane sashed windows at 1st floor in raised architraves with segmental open pediments and 9-pane sashes at 2nd floor with simpler architraves; its outer bays have similar sashed windows, those at 1st floor with triple keystones and those at 2nd floor in architraves with aprons, and the upstands above have bulbous cartouches with carved shields (Royal Arms to the left, surmounted by a crown and Blackpool Borough to the right, surmounted by a miniature windmill).
- 5.28 The 4-window side ranges differ at ground floor, where that to the left has 12-panel sashes and that to the right has 9-pane sashes over segmental-arched posting boxes (variously altered), but all these windows have triple keystones; otherwise, both have 12-pane sashes at 1st-floor framed by panelled pilasters and two colonnaded 3-light sashed windows at 2nd floor with set-in Tuscan colonnettes. The 3-window left return wall is in similar style including colonnaded window at 2nd floor.
- 5.29 Interior: internal porches with carved wooden architraves to the doors, those to the hall with segmental pediments containing moulded plaster cartouches (lettered 'G VI R'); large main hall with central pillars which have moulded plaster festoons and coffered ceiling with egg-and-dart cornices; believed to have marble mosaic floor under modern covering. Forms group with set of 8 K6 telephone kiosks immediately in front.

Winter Gardens (Grade 2* listed on 10/10/1973)

- 5.30 Description: The Pavilion Theatre, Ambulatory, Floral Hall, Vestibule and Empress Ballroom (formerly listed as The Pavilion Theatre with ambulatory, entrance hall and ante-room), Galleon Bar, Baronial Hall and Spanish Hall at the Winter Gardens
- 5.31 Entertainment complex, originally 1875-8 by Thomas Mitchell of Oldham, with later additions and alterations, on roughly rectangular site bounded by Church Street, Leopold Grove, Adelaide Street and Coronation Street, and incorporating elements built variously between 1875 and 1939. North-South axis composed of Vestibule and Floral Hall, leading into westward-turning U-shaped Ambulatory enclosing Pavilion Theatre. The original elements suggested in plan and elevation the outlines of a Gothic cathedral. East of Floral Hall are Opera House (1939) and Empress Ballroom; west of it are ground Galleon Bar and 1st floor Renaissance Restaurant, Baronial Hall and Spanish Hall. Site on south and west sides, originally gardens, is not occupied by exhibition areas and bounded by walls with white faience facades (1929-30).
- 5.32 Vestibule: (1875-8) circular plan; 6 piers with paired Corinthian pilasters support 12 blind arches above with iron balcony carried on deep brackets; at the top another 12 pilasters, with blind arcade between, carry the glazed dome on 6 parabolic steel arches.
- 5.33 Floral Hall (1875-8) rectangular hall of 21 bays; glazed roof supported by arched steel braces on decorated girders; east wall (partition to Opera House) of pilasters and panels in blue and ochre faience, some with octagonal mirrors inset; west side is open colonnade giving onto aisle which has pitched glass roof supported by arched steel braces with openwork spandrels.
- 5.34 Ambulatory: (1875-8) originally promenade opening into Pavilion, U-shaped, with roof construction as in Floral Hall but glazed only on outer side;

inner wall composed of cast-iron hexagonal Corinthian columns, panels infilled with faience tiles as in Floral Hall; outer wall of pilasters.

- 5.35 Pavilion Theatre: built 1878 as promenade pavilion, converted as theatre 1889 by T Mitchell, auditorium reconstructed 1897 by Wylson and Long. Apsidal-ended auditorium with 2 U-shaped balconies supported on slender iron columns. Square proscenium opening with double-tiered box each side all beneath wide elliptical arch. Comprehensive gilded and painted rococo decor. Boxes with curved fronts stand in two tiers within giant attached Corinthian columns carrying segmental pediments with reclining female figures. Ceiling of deeply coved panels, some with round skylights, supported by Atlantes in coved cornice.
- 5.36 Empress Ballroom: 1896, by Mangnall and Littlewood of Manchester, decoration by JM Boekbinder of London, faience by Doulton, parquet floor by Oppenheimer. Huge rectangular hall (189 x 110 ft) simply constructed of iron columns supporting roof of semi-circular arched steel braces and longitudinal beams, giving ceiling decoratively treated as square-coffered vault with relief patterned panels from 12 of which hang large glass chandeliers. Columns form continuous colonnade to surrounding promenade. Stage in 3 middle bays of south side, original proscenium topped by large cartouche in elaborately moulded surround, now mainly concealed by temporary extension to the front. Except for this, all sides have continuous balcony at mid-point of columns, the double-curved front in each bay forming an undulating sequence round the hall. Entablature continued at each end as upper balcony. Clerestory of semi-circular windows in each bay on both sides and continued at both ends, where an enormous hatched medallion flanked by seated figures fills the tympanum.
- 5.37 Galleon bar, baronial hall and spanish hall: Constructed 1931 by J C Derham and lavishly decorated in fibrous plaster by Andrew Mazzei, Art Director of Gaumont Film Company.

- Galleon Bar: ingenious conversion of low rectangular space below staircases into a galleon's lower deck (slightly altered recently).
 - Baronial Hall: rectangular dining room on 1st floor, is a Jacobethan hall with plaster imitations of a hammerbeam roof (under low flat ceiling), imposing stone fireplace and chimney-breast, and doorcases of elaborately carved wood.
 - Spanish Hall: large vaulted rectangular hall with glazed skylight panels along each side of ceiling. Across all 4 corners are segmental battlemented balconies containing three-dimensional representations of clustered Spanish Villages, continued along sides as mural. East end has balustraded balcony and above it a large applied relief arcade with barley-sugar columns, the apertures revealing a mural landscape; west end has 3 Moorish arches with balconies.
- 5.38 Additional Information: part of the Winter Gardens Pavilion Theatre with ambulatory and entrance hall, listed Grade 2 in October 1973. This part of the Winter Gardens Complex was built in 1878 at a cost of £100,000. The theatre is horse-shoe shaped with 2 richly ornamented balconies. The Winter Gardens Ballroom was listed Grade 2 in October 1973. It is a very large ballroom with rich ornamentation and 12 huge glass chandeliers, built in 1896 at a cost of £130,000.

St John's Church (Grade 2 listed)

- 5.39 Description: Church, 1878, by Garlick Park and Sykes. Stone with slate roofs. Nave with low aisles, tall transepts, apsidal chancel, south west tower. Early English style. Tower of 4 stages with angled buttresses rising to prominent pinnacles and finials, 2 tall belfry louvres on each side. Aisles have 3 triple-lancet windows, nave has 3 three-light plate-traceried windows under 2-centred arches. Transepts have 2 tall lancet-shaped windows with

plate-tracery; chancel has 3 three-light windows with similar tracery.

- 5.40 Interior: nave arcade of cylindrical columns with circular caps simply moulded, supporting 3 two-centred arches with moulded soffits. Gallery at west end. Wall posts on corbels at clerestory level; wagon roof with small hammer beams linked by metal tie-rods. Chancel has screen in Gothic style and wooden panelling with Gothic decoration. Pulpit has suspended sounding-board with domical cap of intricate open-work.

6. Negative Factors

- 6.1 Problems within the designated Conservation Area largely relate to the poor condition of the historic building stock and the loss of authentic architectural features and details, particularly on the smaller nineteenth century buildings.
- 6.2 Deteriorating fabric is a symptom of the lack of investment in the area by property owners/occupiers. Deterioration is evidenced by historic fabric in poor condition, inappropriate redevelopment at ground floor level and the loss of authentic architectural features and details. Although the ground floors are generally in use, the floors above are often underused or vacant.
- 6.3 The reasons for the deterioration of fabric within the Conservation Area are two fold. Firstly is the decline of tourism. Faced with declining revenues, owners have been less able to reinvest in buildings. Secondly is the decline in retail importance of the Talbot Square area generally. The redevelopment of the town centre, particularly the construction of Hare Hills Shopping Centre has gradually shifted the retail core southwards away from Clifton Street and Abingdon Street. Lower rental incomes for property owners have made investment in building fabric difficult.
- 6.4 The most affected parts of the Conservation Area are the retail frontages on Clifton St, Abingdon St, Cedar Square and the south side of Talbot Road. Whilst the first and second floors of many of the surviving historic properties here, have retained their features, much ground floor fabric has either deteriorated or been replaced by unsympathic frontages.
- 6.5 Negative factors include; shopfronts which do not relate to individual properties; replacement windows which do not match original bays or sash windows; fascias and signage which overlap first floor fenestration; poorly positioned signage which does not relate to the building, inappropriate lighting and badly designed signage.

7. Improvement Potential

- 7.1 Future improvements should focus on the former shopping streets which have declined: Clifton Street, Abingdon Street, Cedar Square and the south side of Talbot Road,
- 7.2 Restoration work will need to concentrate on restoring the properties here to their former condition. A grant assisted shopfront replacement programme could be complemented by a programme which encourages vacant and underused floor space on the upper floors of properties to be brought back into full use.
- 7.3 Public realm works in the Conservation Area should focus on Talbot Square and St Johns/Cedar Square where the opportunity exists to enhance these historic spaces.
- 7.4 Improvements could be made to street scenes throughout the area, allowing lost features to be reinstated. Future works within the area must consider the need to improve pedestrian linkages between the North Pier/Seafront and the remainder of the Conservation Area. This will help draw visitors from the seafront into the buildings and streets of the conservation area.

Appendix 1: Archive Ordnance Survey Plans

**Appendix 2: Plan of Talbot Square Conservation Area showing
Listed Buildings**