

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF BUILDINGS FOR LOCAL LIST

Policy Context

Statutory protection of the historic built environment dates back to the late 19th century. The Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882 made arrangements for the 'guardianship' of some 50 pre-historic sites and appointed a single inspector of ancient monuments.

Responsibility for sites and monuments was developed through further Acts during the 20th century. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 began the system of listing buildings and structures of special historical, architectural or cultural importance. However, the demolition of listed buildings, particularly in the countryside, continued almost unchecked in the 1950s and 1960s until rigorous new planning procedures were laid down in the Planning Act of 1968. This Act also explicitly introduced for the first time the concept of a listed building, a status which now carries full statutory obligations of care and conservation.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislation which underpinned policy guidance PPG15, revised and re-issued in 2010 as PPS 5. PPS 5 put further emphasis on the importance of local character and distinctiveness in providing a positive sense of place and enhancing the quality of daily life. PPS 5 has since been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework which states that local authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Local planning strategies should take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring.

Policy CS8 of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012-2027, states that the importance of Blackpool's heritage is little understood outside key structures like the Tower, Winter Gardens and Grand Theatre, and that there is a need to critically appraise the current condition of key buildings, and safeguard and reinforce their heritage. To this end the Council should identify and adopt a list of buildings of local architectural and/or historic interest, so that it can be assured that future development proposals respect and draw inspiration from Blackpool's built, social and cultural heritage, and so widen the town's appeal to residents and visitors. In line with this policy, the list was initially informed by the characterisation studies of various parts of the town, but has since been extended to include the whole of the borough.

Statement of local significance

The historic built environment illustrates patterns of growth and change in urban development. Houses, shops and public buildings such as schools, churches, public houses, banks, workhouses, libraries, town halls and cinemas signify the tastes, wealth and aspirations of local people. Industrial and commercial buildings indicate sources of income and employment.

A few 18th and early 19th century cottages and farmhouses are almost all that remain 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. 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. By the late 1780s there were about 50 houses on the seafront and the population, excluding visitors, in the early 1820s was about 750. By the 1830s there were more than a thousand visitors a year due to the resort's growing popularity with working people from the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile districts. However, growth through the first half of the 19th century continued to focus along the one mile stretch of coastline, as further expansion was hampered by the town's relative remoteness and patterns of landholding.

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. 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. By 1861 the resident population had risen to 3,506.

The period of greatest 19th century development began in the 1860s and 1870s around the edge of the town centre, prompted by the construction of North and Central piers, and a new promenade. New terraces of lodging houses were constructed, surrounded by densely packed terraced houses for the working people employed in tourism or the railway industry. North Shore 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. 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. By the end of the 19th century Blackpool had become the resort with the greatest number of attractions in Europe, with the Grand Theatre, Empress Ballroom, gigantic wheel, the Alhambra, a third Pier and the Tower, soon followed by the Pleasure Beach.

Blackpool absorbed surrounding settlements such as Layton and South Shore, and between 1911 and 1939 the town's population more than doubled. 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 and large seafront hotels. By 1936 there were 15 cinemas, including the Odeon on Dickson Road which catered for 1,800 and was 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 prosperity and draw of the coast ensured continued expansion through the inter-war years and, following the Second World War, Council housing estates developed on the periphery of the borough. The population of the town peaked at 153,183 in 1961, but once package holidays to Spain and Mediterranean resorts became affordable, the resort's role as Britain's most popular summer holiday destination declined.

Socio-economic and cultural change has always been reflected in Blackpool's built environment. From the very beginning, traditional cobble fishermen's cottages were demolished to make way for hotels and inns, which then expanded to accommodate the growing numbers of visitors. Lodging houses in what is now the town centre developed retail facilities at ground level. New small churches were replaced by more and much larger churches. Change is part of the nature of Blackpool, and many buildings which were once the fabric of modern everyday life have now had to change their use to remain viable. Many more have been changed either to provide facilities which are considered more modern and appropriate, or have disappeared altogether. In recent years a number of building types have become at risk due to functional redundancy, for example due to church congregations declining, and the impact of the smoking ban has had a noticeable effect on the viability of many public houses. Political initiatives such as Building Schools for the Future have had an impact on historic schools across the country. This practice of constant use and re-use of old buildings, and changes to their appearance driven by changes in taste, lifestyle and behaviour, means that many buildings which have become part of the local scene may yet be in danger of being irredeemably changed or lost forever. These buildings are now put forward for the local list to ensure that they receive a measure of protection from damaging development.

Criteria for selection

When the local listing process began English Heritage (EH) was in the process of drawing up a good practice guide for local listing. Draft pre-consultation guidance circulated in 2010 put forward suggested criteria for selection based on criteria used to determine suitability of heritage assets for statutory designation. It also suggested that heritage assets put forward for a local list need only meet a minimum of one of the criteria.

Criteria for statutory designation are that a building should have 'special' architectural or historic interest, and the grade (I, II* or II) is dependent on the level of that special interest. There are also general principles which underpin this special interest related to age, visual quality, technological or design innovation, and exemplars of a building type. State of repair is not a consideration. Local listing criteria which have been suggested by EH are age, rarity, aesthetic or design merit, group value, archaeological interest, historical association, landmark status, social value, documentation. These also incorporate elements from the conservation principles set out by EH in their 2008 guidance. Therefore, the criteria against which heritage assets in Blackpool will be evaluated for inclusion on the local list are:

Age

- (a) Buildings surviving from the earliest phases of development (in Blackpool's case prior to 20th century) and early 20th suburban development, and surviving in anything like their original form. Superficial alterations which may be reversed in the future, e.g. reinstatement of timber windows, will not preclude inclusion on the list.

Rarity

- (a) Rare surviving examples of a particular type or form of building, material or style.

Aesthetic or design merit

- (a) Examples of a particular architectural style.
- (b) Use of quality materials and workmanship.
- (c) The work of a notable local architect

Group value

- (a) Groups which as a whole have a unified architectural or historic value to the local area.
- (b) Terraces, enclosing buildings (surrounding squares etc.), uniform rows etc.

Archaeological interest

- (a) Although archaeological finds across the borough to date have been scattered and few, they nevertheless indicate ancient settlements, and the possibility of future accidental finds should not be discounted. In addition, there is the possibility that some existing buildings have older foundations, perhaps as yet undiscovered. Where the presence of such archaeology is known, or suspected, to exist, the building will be included on the list. In all other cases, where planning applications for development in any part of the borough involve work below ground level, it is suggested that a condition be attached that archaeological finds should be notified to the Council for recording in situ, so the location can be added to the Heritage Environment Record.

Historical interest

- (a) Historical association with a notable local person, event or key period of development.
- (b) Figures or events of national interest with a direct association
- (c) Where buildings have later alterations, if the change demonstrates key stages in the town's historical development and are clearly legible, the building will be included

Landmark status

- (a) Buildings which contribute significantly to townscape appearance e.g. pubs, churches, factories, cinemas, banks, etc.
- (b) Buildings that are a focal point of social or visual interest e.g. prominent corner sites.
- (c) Form a landmark, from within or from outside an area.

Social value

- (a) The development of an area is often influenced by an individual building, which may play an integral part in the shape of the area, or in the local social scene. Such buildings may include churches, schools, village and town halls, chapels, public houses, memorials, places of employment and workhouses, which formed a focal point or key social role in the historical development of the area.

Documentation

- (a) The significance of a local historic asset of any kind may be enhanced by a significant contemporary or historic record, although this criterion alone will probably not be sufficient to justify local listing.

Implications for development

It must be made clear that local listing does not have the power of statutory designation. It does not prevent change and does not remove permitted development rights. A building's locally listed status is merely a material consideration if a planning application is under consideration so that its special interest is taken into account. Ultimately, if it is decided that a locally listed building should be demolished, local listing will ensure that it will be recorded for posterity beforehand, and that its replacement will be of sufficiently high quality that it will continue to add interest and character to the locality. If it is deemed desirable in the future that article 4 directions should be made to add further protection by removing some permitted development rights, this will only be pursued following full public consultation.

Local listing, however, is not the end of the process but the beginning. Not only is it intended to raise awareness of the diversity and importance of local historic buildings, but it is also a means to ensure positive change, if change becomes necessary and unavoidable.

Process of local listing

The local list was initiated by the findings of the historic townscape characterisation exercise undertaken by the Architectural History Practice in 2008/9, which identified buildings of local architectural and/or historic interest in those areas covered by the project. Since then historic pubs, schools, unlisted churches and libraries from across town have been recognised as building types being most at risk of demolition or unsympathetic alteration, and the decision was taken to extend the local list to cover the whole borough so that their special interest could be taken into account in planning decisions. Buildings such as dwellinghouses, which have been assessed under the foregoing criteria as having architectural and/or historic interest, have also been included. Individual datasheets for each property outlining their special interest were assessed by an expert panel followed by a period of public consultation and notification to owners. The full list has been adopted by the Council and information is available on the Council's website and forms part of the Historic Environment Record (HER). It forms a useful resource for developers who are obliged to consult the HER as a precursor to submitting a planning application for a site.

Now that the local list system has been established, a public nomination process has been opened so that members of the public may nominate historic buildings for entry onto the list of buildings of local architectural and/or historic interest.

PROCESS FOR PUBLIC NOMINATION

The application form should be completed based on the criteria listed above. This can either be done online <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Libraries-arts-and-heritage/Forms/Local-listing-nomination-form.aspx> or the form can be printed and returned to the Built Heritage and Conservation Team by post for consideration at Blackpool Council, Built Heritage and Conservation, 81 Central, 77-81 Church Street, Blackpool, FY1 1HU.

If it is agreed that the building appears to meet the criteria for local listing the nomination form will be submitted to an independent expert for further assessment. S/he will either uphold the nomination, in which case it will be taken forward for formal adoption, or will reject the nomination if it is judged not to meet the relevant criteria.

FORMAL ADOPTION

If the independent expert supports the application, the Conservation Officer will write to the owner of the building explaining that it has been nominated for the local list and the implications of listing. The owner will be given 4 weeks' notice of the Council's intention to locally list the property to allow them the opportunity to provide evidence that the building does not meet the criteria for local listing. After this period a report will be submitted to the planning committee requesting their recommendation to approve the application, which will then be taken to the relevant Cabinet member for formal adoption. The building owner and nominator will then be informed of the outcome of the local listing application.