Built Heritage Service

Town Centre Conservation Area
Proposed Extension of Boundaries

October 2014
# PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

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# Proposed Extension to Town Centre Conservation Area

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 The Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1984. It was originally named the Talbot Square Conservation Area and was centred on Talbot Square, the historic civic and commercial core of Blackpool. It was renamed and extended in 2005 following a conservation area appraisal and conservation area management plan being produced by Paul Butler Associates in 2004 in preparation for the lottery-funded Townscape Heritage Initiative, which offers grants to owners of historic buildings in conservation areas for repair and restoration of lost features.

1.2 The extended boundary included Clifton Street, Abingdon Street, Church Street and Cedar Square, but key buildings such as the Winter Gardens, Grand Theatre and the Central Library were deliberately excluded on the premise that they would impose an unreasonable financial burden on the relatively limited funding available for the initiative. The THI exit strategy recommended that the boundaries should be revised once the scheme came to an end in 2012.

1.3 In 2008 the Architectural History Practice Limited (AHP) was commissioned by Blackpool Council to prepare historic townscape characterisation assessments of eight areas of Blackpool, including the Town Centre, to inform the Council about the heritage value of the areas as part of the development of regeneration proposals.

1.4 The main recommendations to come out of the characterisation assessments were the designation of a number of new conservation areas, and the establishment of a list of historic buildings of local architectural and/or historical interest (local list). In particular, the report for the Town Centre characterisation assessment stated that there was merit in extending the conservation area boundaries. Although this would include some buildings of more negative townscape value, the larger conservation area would enable all the essential elements of Blackpool’s historic town centre to be encompassed. It would also include more of the historic street pattern which contributes to the area’s historic significance.

1.5 AHP’s recommendations were taken forward with a local designation review, beginning with the establishment of local list. The local list has now been established, and so far 200 buildings have been formally adopted including those in the town centre. The list for the whole borough should be complete by late summer 2014.

1.6 There are a number of locally listed buildings which fall outside the current conservation area boundaries yet help define the overall character of the historic town centre and demonstrate its rapid social, economic and cultural development up to the end of the nineteenth century.

1.7 In addition, a number of key town centre listed buildings, such as the Grade I Blackpool Tower and the majority of the grade II* Winter Gardens remain outside the conservation area.
1.8 On 9 September 2013 executive approval was received to produce a conservation area appraisal for an extension of the town centre conservation area to include all the elements which contribute to its distinct character and demonstrate its historic place as a leader in mass tourism. The proposed new boundaries are Springfield Road to the north of the area, Topping Street to the east, the Promenade to the west and Adelaide Street to the south.

1.9 Approval was also received to take the appraisal out to public consultation with a view to incorporating feedback into a final appraisal and conservation area management plan. These would form the basis of a request for approval to designate the extended conservation area.

1.10 The character of the current conservation area is understood, therefore the focus of the appraisal will be on the streets proposed for inclusion in the extension. The management plan will cover the whole of the conservation area.

2. Policy Background

National

2.1 A conservation area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”, as set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.2 Under this legislation, local authorities have a duty to designate such areas and to review them, and to use their planning powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within a framework of managing change with a positive approach. Designation automatically entails control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development and gives special protection to trees within the area.

2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that heritage assets, including conservation areas, are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities are required to ensure that an area justifies such status. This justification exists in the current designation, and the collection of listed and locally listed buildings outside the conservation area but which are contemporary with historical development within it, justifies its extension.

Regional

2.4 At a regional level, English Heritage supported Blackpool through the process of examining the town in the context of a World Heritage Site based on its claim to be the first mass market seaside resort and the site of the earliest working class consumer economy. The support and interest of English Heritage North West office in the bid was demonstrated by the funding of the Characterisation programme by them.
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Local

2.5 The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy - Revised Preferred Option points out that Blackpool, as the world’s first seaside resort for the masses, has a rich and well recognised social and built heritage, with the town’s past success founded on iconic and innovative Victorian landmarks. Development proposals would be supported which respect and draw inspiration from Blackpool’s built, social and cultural heritage, complementing its rich history with new development to widen its appeal to residents and visitors. The strategy states that the Council will seek to safeguard heritage assets from inappropriate development, and strengthen the existing character created by historic buildings. Extending the conservation area in the historic centre would enable the delivery of this policy underpinned by a conservation area management plan.

2.6 Blackpool Council’s Heritage Strategy 2006-10 set out a vision for using the town’s built heritage as a tool for regenerating the town as a world-class resort destination. The Strategy noted, however, that much of our built heritage itself was in need of regeneration. The authentic core was there, but unsympathetic accretions and alterations over the years had detracted from its historic character. Extending the boundaries of the conservation area would strengthen development management control leading to enhancement of the character by the restoration of lost architectural detailing in the longer term, and ensuring high quality new development appropriate to the character of the area. Approval has recently been received to produce a new Built Heritage Strategy which will continue the aspirations of the earlier strategy, whilst underpinning the delivery of a number of outcomes from the local designation review.

2.7 The Town Centre Strategy was published in 2013, and the extended conservation area would facilitate the delivery of the strategy’s objectives of lifting the quality of the retail and entertainment environment. The revised boundaries have been discussed with the Development Plans and Projects, and Develop Management teams who support the proposal and its objectives.

3. Historical Development of Blackpool

3.1 In the early eighteenth century very few visitors braved the journey to Blackpool, which consisted mainly of a few humble cottages straggled along the shoreline, and Fox Hall itself, a large late medieval half timbered house belonging to the Tyldesley family. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the

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1 Eyre, Kathleen *Seven Golden Miles* Dalesman Books, 1989, p. 15
3.2 By the late 1780s there were about 50 houses on the seafront and, by the early 1820s the population excluding visitors was about 750. The steady growth through the first half of the 19th century was focused along the one mile stretch of coastline.

3.3 Blackpool’s 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, further expansion was hampered by the town’s relative remoteness and patterns of landholding.

3.4 The town became more accessible with the opening of the Preston and Wyre railway to Blackpool North station in 1846. By 1848 Talbot Road had replaced Church Street as the principle east-west thoroughfare, linking the north railway station with the Promenade. The line of Dickson Road was laid out in the early 19th century, running inland from the coast, connecting to a lane along the coast south of Cocker Square.

3.5 Town centre development surged forward in the 1850s when Blackpool’s principal shopping area was conceived, and by the late 1860s the fields surrounding Upper Church Street, Topping Street and Edward Street were developed. Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Market Street and West Street, and later Abingdon Street, Birley Street and Clifton Street (named for the wealthy Clifton family who owned much of the land on which Blackpool was built) became the heart of Blackpool’s commercial centre in the late 19th century.

3.6 Springfield Road, Queen Street, Birley Street, Church Street, Edward Street, Cedar Square, Topping Street and Deansgate were mainly lodging houses with a handful of tradesmen. The streets closest to the Promenade were the first to respond to commercial pressures, and ground floors began to be converted to retail or other businesses. For example by 1866 most of Church Street was retail. Streets further east were slower to respond. By 1904 Topping Street was 50% commercial and 50% lodging houses. However, by the 1930s every street in the extended conservation area, with the exception of Springfield Road and Adelaide Street, had been converted to office or retail premises.

3.7 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

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2 Talbot Square Townscape Heritage Initiative Conservation Area Appraisal Paul Butler Associates, p.4
planned on a larger scale with long outshuts filling most of the rear yards, and with large single or 2- storey bay windows to the front. The larger lodging houses closest to the sea were built with basements and attics, with steps up to the front doors and letting rooms arranged over four floors. Those on Springfield Road are relatively intact examples of this building type (fig. 1).

3.8 Blackpool’s second railway station, Central Station, the terminus of the Blackpool and Lytham Railway to the south-west of Albert Road, was opened in 1863 (closed in 1964). The transport links were conveniently placed for entertainment complexes, the central shopping district and also the boarding houses to the south of the Winter Gardens. In addition, the construction of North and Central piers, and a new promenade which was both a tourist attraction and part of the town’s sea defences, helped attract the development of respectable accommodation, and new streets were laid out in a grid behind the seafront.

Fig. 1 Former lodging houses, Springfield Road

3.9 South of Church Street and west of King Street boarding houses and residential properties were being constructed from the 1880s on newly laid-out streets; Adelaide Street and Albert Road were the principal east-west streets, with shorter streets such as Leopold Grove and Alfred Street crossing north-south. The location of Adelaide Street and Albert Road to the east of Central Station was prominent and convenient
for holiday makers, hence the high proportion of high-quality boarding houses, although there were also some private residences.

3.10 Contemporary with the development of the boarding house district, the spiritual needs of the community and the growing number of visitors were met by a range of churches and chapels. Before 1821, the nearest parish church for Blackpool was at All Hallows in Bispham. St John’s Church was consecrated in 1821, and the current building was completed in 1878. Until Sacred Heart Church was constructed in Talbot Road in 1857, Catholic services were held in the cellars of the Railway Hotel a few yards further up the road on the corner of Abingdon Street.

3.11 Nonconformist chapels and churches on Dickson Road included the Mount Pleasant Wesleyan Chapel, first built in 1888 on the corner of Cocker Street and replaced by the present grade II listed North Shore Methodist Church and school rooms in 1907. The Unitarian Church on the corner of Banks Street opened in 1873 (now converted to apartments). Victorian church spires still act as landmarks along Dickson Road, the main route north-south through the area. The Baptist Tabernacle and Sunday school were built at the west end of Springfield Road in 1904 (fig. 2) replacing an earlier building used as a school, and Springfield Road Methodist Church opened in 1889 (fig. 3).

3.12 Several non-conformist churches and chapels were built in the town centre in the mid 19th century although they were demolished in the second half of the twentieth century to make way for shops. Most of the remaining historic churches across the town are now on the local list to help control their loss.

3.13 Banks, public houses and theatres and, from the early 20th century, cinemas were also constructed to service and entertain the growing resident and visitor population. Many of these buildings survive relatively intact across town and within the conservation area, and are included on the local list (fig. 4).
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Fig. 2  Baptist Tabernacle, Springfield Road

Fig. 3  Former Springfield Road Methodist Church
Mapping clearly shows the rapid development of the town between the proposed new boundaries of the conservation area, and beyond (figs. 5, 6 and 7). However, streets to the north of the proposed northern boundary of Springfield Road are not included within the proposed extension, although they were contemporary with historical development of the area, because the level of change is too high to merit conservation area designation. In particular, the proliferation of sun lounge extensions to the fronts of properties undermines the historic character of these streets. Limited information on peripheral streets has, however, been included in this document to demonstrate their contextual development. Candidates for the local list in those areas will be treated on their individual merits.
Fig. 5 Detail of 1848 OS map (1:10560)
Fig. 6 Detail of 1877 street plan
Fig. 7: Detail on 1893 OS map (1:2500)
4. **Summary of Special Interest**

4.1 The western part of the current conservation area is formed by grand buildings around Talbot Square. The Town Hall, North Pier and the War Memorial are all listed Grade II. The Clifton Hotel is also grade II and, together with the locally listed Metropole Hotel, provided some of the first purpose-built accommodation for visitors. Important public buildings such as Abingdon Street Post Office, St John’s Parish Church, Sacred Heart RC Church and the Church Street façade of the Winter Gardens complex fall within the current boundaries of the Town Centre conservation area, together with eleven listed K6 telephone kiosks. Away from Talbot Square the character is generally formed by smaller more functional buildings, most of which were in use as shops by the 1920’s. However, the town centre is probably secondary in character and importance to the Promenade and seafront buildings, including the Tower, which currently fall outside the conservation area.

4.2 The proposed extended conservation area contains more of the town’s listed buildings including a number of famous nationally significant entertainment buildings. The increasing visitor population in the 1870s prompted the rise of a new sort of commercial entertainment, with large-scale theatrical presentations heralding the modern world of show business. The first purpose-built theatre was the Theatre Royal (later Yates -1868), followed by pleasure gardens at Raikes Hall estate in 1872 and from 1878 by the Winter Gardens (grade II*). Blackpool became the resort with the greatest number of attractions in Europe, crowned in the 1890s by the opening of the Tower in 1894 (grade I), followed by the Grand Theatre (grade II*), Empress Ballroom, gigantic wheel, the Alhambra (1899), a third Pier (1893), and the Pleasure Beach.

4.3 By 1866 Church Street was mainly retail and commercial, and the streets of lodging houses to the north as far as Queen Street and eastwards to Topping Street were beginning to yield to commercial pressures. By 1904 this had resulted in a mix of lodging houses and business premises with shop fronts inserted to the ground floors, and first floor bays or picture windows installed above the shop entrance so that the upper rooms could continue to be used as lodgings (fig. 8). This is a feature prominent and particular to Blackpool.
Many modest public buildings for the service of residents and visitors were constructed on street corners (fig. 9). These include banks, public houses and churches as well as the grade II listed Central Library and Art Gallery. Overall the scale has been maintained within the proposed boundaries, with buildings generally two or three storeys high and no more than four storeys.
Fig. 9 Washington Hotel, Topping Street

4.5 Perhaps the most noteworthy small scale buildings are those which make up the boarding house districts of the town. John K. Walton, Professor of Social History at the University of Central Lancashire, stated in the first heritage strategy that Blackpool’s unique accommodation system, with its endless streets of boarding-houses and legendary landladies, contributes to the town’s unique identity as the world’s first working-class tourist resort. The streets of boarding-houses, Victorian around the old railway stations and along the central promenade, Edwardian and inter-war at the extremes, form a unique industrial landscape, the landscape of the accommodation industry. He concluded that they must be allowed to adapt to new markets without damaging the unique urban landscapes that conjure up hard work and pleasure in equal measure. Springfield Road and Adelaide Street are amongst the best preserved examples of the town centre streets, many retaining original boundary treatments and other features (fig. 10). They will form the north and south boundaries of the extended conservation area, and will provide a buffer between the commercial and entertainment core and the outlying boarding house districts.
4.6 A range of materials were used dependent on the importance of the buildings and availability of materials. Most buildings were constructed from red brick with slate roofs, many then or since have been rendered and painted. Some major buildings such as Sacred Heart Church and Abingdon Street Post Office used other materials such as stone. In the 1930s faience was a fashionable cladding material and many buildings, including the Winter Gardens, were remodelled during this period as a signal of progressive ideas in the resort. The grade II former Odeon cinema on Dickson Road was built at this time. Topping Street has a number of good examples of faience cladding on Victorian buildings (fig. 11).

4.7 Street surfaces have been re-laid with modern materials in many areas, particularly in the inner shopping areas which have been improved recently using porphyry stone setts. Elsewhere footways are mostly now laid with either concrete paving or tarmac. Kerbs are almost all concrete, although some original examples of granite or sandstone kerbs have been retained on narrow side streets. Historically footways would have been laid with stone paving and roads either rolled gravel with setted gulleys or fully setted. Rear alleys are now generally laid with tarmac, but historic setts are visible in some places where the tarmac has worn through.
5. Assessing special interest

5.1 Location and setting

Blackpool town centre is the commercial heart of the town containing a mix of buildings of different styles, types and ages, but the conservation area currently excludes the Promenade, piers and Tower Buildings which characterise the town as a whole. The seafront has always been Blackpool’s key driver, from its early days attracting visitors eager to bathe and promenade to today’s collection of leisure facilities along its length, and modern public spaces such as the Comedy Carpet.
The historic shopping area is focused around Abingdon Street, with a grid of north-south and east-west streets containing shops and other commercial premises running off it.

The modern retail core, the majority of which is excluded from the proposed extended conservation area, is located immediately to the east of the Promenade buildings, approximately 25 metres above sea level. Beyond that the land rises to the east along Adelaide Street. These 19th century terraces of residential and boarding houses with their relatively intact historic boundary treatments frame the proposed southern boundary.

5.2 Character and appearance

The spatial character of the north of the area is uniformly dense, with a regular, tight urban grain and a strong sense of enclosure in the streetscene. The spatial character of streets is related to the role of each street in the street hierarchy with Dickson Road being the widest street reflecting its role as a through route and local centre. East-west streets leading to the sea and close to the town centre tend to be wider than those further inland, with funnel-shaped spaces towards the sea particularly at the west end of Queen Street; these ‘squares’ provide valuable open spaces, connecting to the Promenade with views of the sea. Most of the grid-pattern streets have a homogenous spatial character, narrower in width than principal routes and with well-defined building lines created by uniform terraces.

The key group of historic buildings in the extended conservation area is the entertainment buildings. The Tower is a constant visual presence. The Winter Gardens is a vast, unique indoor entertainment complex with extraordinary interiors ranging from the 1870s to the 1930s. It is an enormously distinctive and important building with an exterior treatment which reflects investment and expansion during the interwar period and the influence of the cinema in interior design. The Grand Theatre is in contrast quite small, but it is one of the best preserved and most appealing theatres of its date by one of the best-known theatre architects, Frank Matcham.

The architectural character of the town centre area is varied, representing architectural styles from the mid to late 19th century to the present day. The buildings exhibit an eclectic mix of styles and finishes, with many 20th and 21st century characteristics, typical of a busy town centre. Typical architectural styles from the late 19th century are fairly well represented, including Renaissance, Baroque and classical styles, while Gothic Revival is largely confined to places of worship. Quite a number of buildings exhibit interwar features, reflecting a spike in activity during this period when re-building and re-fronting of existing properties occurred. Styles adopted are typical of the period and include free classical compositions and others of Art Deco inspiration. A good example of the latter is the collection of faience-clad buildings on Topping Street. No. 28 was re-modelled in 1933 as the new showrooms for Naylor’s Fireplaces by John C. Derham, FRIBA, of Blackpool, emulating a proscenium arch or even a giant fireplace.
Stanley Buildings on Caunce Street/Church Street is another good example, which was designed by J C Robinson of the Borough Surveyor’s Department (fig. 12).

Post-war architecture is more apparent in the town centre area than on the Promenade or in boarding-house districts to the south and north, and therefore there is a variety of modern materials. Brutalist concrete buildings, such as the NatWest and Yorkshire banks, and the Marks & Spencer store on Church Street, are of varied quality and scale. The south elevation of Marks & Spencer’s on Victoria Street is extended beyond the building line at first floor level and partially blocks the view towards the Winter Gardens from Bank Hey Street (fig. 13).
North of Adelaide Street the area is characterised by the various shopping streets at the heart of Blackpool. There is varied treatment of shopfronts, fascias and advertising signage, most of which are modern and of low merit. Their poor design is an overriding issue in the town’s commercial area, and often erode the quality of positive buildings such as the Stanley Buildings on Church Street, which otherwise has good examples of shopfronts to the ground-floor. The survival of mosaic tiled surrounds and recessed entrances with plate-glass windows are rare features within the town. Hardly any complete 19th-century timber shopfronts or surrounds have survived although one example to locally listed Churchill’s Bar at No. 83 Topping Street is an attractive survivor (Fig. 14).
Despite containing a mix of retail, civic and entertainment buildings the character of the proposed conservation area is fairly homogenous in that it contains the historic commercial and entertainment heart of the town. The proposed north and south boundaries, which demonstrate good examples of terraces of historic boarding houses, provide an appropriate break between this heart and the wider boarding house districts of the town. The eastern boundary of Topping Street and the south end of Dickson Road provides the break between the historic core and the emerging Talbot Gateway sector. The Promenade provides the natural and historic boundary on the western side.

The extended Town Centre Conservation Area will bring together many of the town’s key entertainment and public buildings. This will include listed buildings such as the Tower, Winter Gardens, Post Office, Grand Theatre and listed churches but also locally listed buildings such as public houses, banks and other commercial premises. This will enable the settings of these buildings to be managed more effectively and will help raise the quality of design for new buildings and alterations to existing buildings.

Fig. 14 Churchill’s public house
The pedestrianised areas of the town centre have a range of street furniture, much of which has little historic interest. The modern curving streetlamps are boldly designed, though they compete with the height of the buildings. The listed K6 telephone boxes outside the Abingdon Street post office and the Church of the Sacred Heart, Talbot Road are positive examples of street furniture, although they are also structures in their own right. Other phone boxes are modern, such as on Bank Hey Street, and not of an appealing design. Modern steel benches are rather industrial in character and do not suit the architectural character of many of the streets. Telephone boxes and advertising stands are often also poorly sited, for example to the north of the Tower Buildings a group of phone boxes obstructs one of the few views from the town centre to the Promenade (fig. 15).

Fig. 15 Telephone boxes and other obstructions

5.3 Building materials and architectural features

Due to the different types and uses of buildings across the conservation area, no single material characterises the architecture. Buildings in the residential and boarding-house areas are generally constructed of brick, although many have now been painted or rendered. Nos 120-150 Adelaide Street are a positive example (fig 16). Bricks were made locally in the Fylde, on the edge of the urban area. Some of the earlier lodging houses, built around the 1860s and 1870s were finished with stucco scored to resemble ashlar and plainly detailed.
A fine-grained sandstone is generally used for architectural details such as hoodmoulds, bay windows, sills and lintels, door surrounds and string courses, although the stone has usually been painted. Moulded brick and terracotta are occasionally used for friezes and other details for late Victorian and Edwardian buildings. The quality of detail is generally higher on public buildings and on larger lodging houses. Chimney stacks are in red brick, most with projecting bands, often rendered. Pots where they have been retained are in cream or red clay.

Fig. 16 Adelaide Street

Roofs were originally laid with Welsh slates; on the whole this original roof covering has been retained, although a few roofs have been re-laid using concrete tiles. Rain water goods were historically 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. Several boarding houses have roof lifts which are unsympathetic to the buildings’ original design. These should be removed if the opportunity arises in line with SPD New Homes from Old Places. http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Planning/Planning-policy/Blackpool-local-plan/Supplementary-planning-documents-and-guidance/New-homes-from-old-places.aspx Applications for new or additional roof lifts will not be supported.
Few buildings retain historic door or window joinery, although original openings have largely been retained on terraces to preserve the proportions and overall unity of frontages. Front doorways were fitted with panelled doors made of pine, with variations including part-glazing to upper panels. Inner halls were lit with a transom or fan light above the doors. Doors on terraces are sometimes designed in pairs with a shared canopy or surround.

Streets on the proposed new boundaries have small front gardens with boundary walls. Some walls 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, for example on Springfield Road. Gate piers are stone or brick, often carved with gothic motifs or caps and now painted (fig. 17).

Fig. 17 Gate piers Springfield Road

Historic streets which were originally terraces of lodging houses have lost their boundary treatments. For example, Clifton Street had front gardens and boundary walls but these were lost due to relatively early commercial pressures to convert to retail and install shop frontages. These losses make it important to take steps to prevent further erosion of these historic details where they remain close to the town centre. This will be addressed in the section on opportunities for enhancement.
Many of the listed and local list buildings retain attractive features such as moulded red terracotta decoration (the Town Hall), or faience panels (Stanley Buildings), carved sandstone panels (Municipal Buildings), stone cartouches (Abingdon Street post office), or cast-iron canopies to the street (Grand Theatre - fig. 18).

5.4 Open spaces and views

There are few open spaces within the current conservation area. The high density of development along streets such as Clifton Street and Edward Street creates an enclosed character to the streetscene. The newly pedestrianised St. John’s Square/Cedar Square provides relief from this dense grid of streets. Talbot Square, immediately opposite the North Pier, is another important open space, with views over the sea and to the grade II listed North Pier. There is also a sense of space and important views towards the town, including several prominent historic buildings. Although Talbot Square is thoroughly urban its spatial characteristics are part of its importance.
Queen’s Square opposite the Metropole Hotel is another important public open space which has views of the sea and the war memorial. The square was pedestrianised c. 2000 and was supplemented with seating and planters, giving users an opportunity to rest and enjoy the view (fig. 19).

Fig. 19 Queens Square public space

The northern tip of the Central Promenade has fine views out of the town towards Bispham and beyond. A walkway leads towards the beach from outside North Pier, and provides vistas of the sea, sand and, on a clear day, the hills of the Lake District. To the south of the Metropole Hotel the grassed Remembrance Square with its war memorial is the only space of its type in the town and contributes to the spatial character north-west of Talbot Square.

The Tower is a consistent landmark when looking towards the west. Views through to the seafront from the retail areas are few as the Promenade buildings are tall and densely built. Where gaps do appear, the view is obstructed by poorly placed telephone boxes and other street furniture.

Other urban open aspects include the junction of Abingdon and Church Streets, giving a view east towards the former Regent Cinema, and King’s Square, where the view is split along Church and Caunce Streets by the 1930s triangular-sited Stanley Buildings with adjacent bank.
5.5 Public realm

Street surfaces have been re-laid with modern materials in many areas, particularly in the inner shopping areas, some of which have been improved recently using porphyry stone setts. However, some areas of street surfacing have been replaced with patches of black tarmac where work has been carried out. This practice detracts from the visual cohesion of the streetscape (fig. 20).

In addition, any utilities or telecommunications works which result in above ground installations should be sited as sensitively as possible following full consultation with the Built Heritage and Conservation team.
The extended conservation area will include the Promenade from the Metropole Gardens up to and including the Comedy Carpet. The Promenade has been extended many times during its history, and the modern sea defences and Comedy Carpet are visually significant additions to the famous Golden Mile which provide an appropriate modern setting to the west side of Blackpool Tower (fig. 21). Festival House, whilst being a good example of a modern sustainable public building, designed to utilise views of the Tower and the sea from its windows, blocks views of the sea from Church Street (fig. 22). The expansive views out to sea from the Promenade, and glimpses of the sea from east-west streets, are part of the natural heritage of Blackpool and should be preserved without further barriers in the form of buildings to the west of the tram tracks.

Fig. 21 Comedy Carpet looking towards Blackpool Tower
Albert Road and Adelaide Street rise above the surrounding streets and have excellent views from the east ends towards the Tower and Winter Gardens’ dome. The changing character of these streets, from two-storey terraces to three or four storey boarding houses, is also evident in these views. The density is lower in the residential streets of this area where houses have small front gardens, giving a more spacious feel to streets (fig. 23).
6. Assessment of streets outside current conservation area

6.1 Promenade

The area between Talbot Square and the Central Pier is a unique seaside landscape at the heart of Blackpool’s famous ‘Golden Mile’ and is central to the character of Blackpool with some of the town’s most famous buildings and landmarks, notably the Tower. It is an area dedicated to leisure and, although it has been continuously updated, it broadly retains an early 20th century character.

The Promenade was laid out in 1870 and successively altered and embellished. The generous width of the walkway is enhanced by Princess Parade Colonnade created in 1912, which sweeps round to meet the tramway before stretching along the north Promenade towards Gynn Square. A series of grade II listed shelters erected in the early 20th century to designs by John Shanks Brodie, originally located opposite Alexandra Road, Wellington Road and Trafalgar Road, were removed during refurbishment work on the Promenade and re-sited along Princess Parade (fig. 24).
To the south of the locally listed Metropole Hotel is the grassed Remembrance Square with its grade II listed war memorial. It contributes to the spatial character of Talbot Square, and is a spacious setting for the grade II North Pier. This section falls within the current conservation area. The stretch between North Pier and the boundary of the extended conservation area includes the Comedy Carpet and the new sea defence works which incorporate access to the beach via wide curving steps. The densely built-up eastern side of the area which contains Blackpool’s principal entertainment complexes is in direct contrast with the spacious Promenade to the west and the sea beyond. Views around this area are linear.
and stretch north to south, either along the Promenade to the sea or to the inland side, dominated by the built-up street frontage and the Tower.

The architectural character of the area as a whole is dominated by the principal entertainment structures which give Blackpool its unique quality. Blackpool is the only British resort with three piers, all of 19th century origin, all of structural interest. Blackpool Tower is unique and one of very few buildings which can accurately be described as iconic. These structures, central to the character of the place, are all essentially Victorian (repairs notwithstanding), immense cast-iron structures of the railway age and potent symbols of the birth of the mass entertainment industry. Broadly speaking the architectural character is Victorian and Edwardian.

The New Clifton Hotel (1875-6) designated Grade II, is one of Blackpool’s earliest large hotels, and is a landmark building marking the corner to the Golden Mile. North Pier was the first of the piers to open, in 1863, and was designed by Eugenius Birch, the premier pier designer of the day. The buildings on the seafront include some relatively small premises, as well as the former Woolworth’s building of 1936 immediately south of Tower Buildings which is locally listed (fig. 25) and a landmark in its own right. The buildings form a mix of old and new, which differ in scale and materials. Roberts Oyster Bar and its neighbours to the north are amongst the earliest, and the new Woolworth’s store (on the Lewis’s site) and frontages to entertainment buildings to the south date from the late 20th century and 21st century. Interwar buildings on the corner of Church Street are considered positive despite ground-floor alteration. The Grade I Blackpool Tower is the dominant building in the block, in the town centre and beyond. All development within the neighbourhood of the Tower should pay due regard to its national importance and local visual qualities.

The row of buildings to the east of the Metropole (Nos 114-190) are neutral, although the former Princess Cinema with off-white faience cladding and the flanking terracotta faced former market buildings (Nos 174-186) are of positive value (fig. 26). Appropriate shop fronts and signage would greatly enhance this block. The Counting House pub (No. 10 Talbot Square) is locally listed.
Fig. 25  Former Woolworth’s building

Fig. 26  Former Princess Cinema and Metropole Arcade
The back streets running parallel to the east of the Promenade include The Strand, a pedestrianised street connecting Talbot Square with Queen’s Square acting as a service street and lined with the backs of shops and restaurants. The north section of The Strand is negative (fig. 27). This service street is highly visible from Queens Square and owners should be encouraged to improve the visible elevations of their properties if the opportunity arises. The southern section is neutral in character.

Fig.27 View of North Strand from Queens Square
6.2 Springfield Road

Springfield Road leads west from Dickson Road to the sea front. It follows the line of a former field boundary, including the kink in its alignment which blocks views of the sea from the east. The street is tightly framed by 3-storey terraces, set behind short front gardens with boundary walls. Most of the street was not developed until the 1890s; the trade directories record almost all of the houses in the street in use as lodgings between 1898 and the 1930s. After this date the buildings were divided into flats and most are now in office use.

The buildings vary in design; the terrace on the south side was built in 1894 and is stone-faced with 2-storey bays (fig. 28), other groups are brick or rendered. On the north side the terrace of large former lodging houses has gabled roofs and is faced in red brick. Some buildings retain sashes and panelled front doors, and there are a few examples of cast-iron railings on the north side (fig. 29).

Fig. 28 Nos. 35-49 on the south side of Springfield Road
The street has a good group of places of worship all now on the Local List: on the north side is The Baptist Tabernacle (1905 – fig. 2) and on the south side the former United Methodist church and Sunday school, the latter dated 1897 (fig. 3).

The red brick and terracotta south west block facing the Tabernacle was erected in 1900 and continued round onto the Promenade. First known as the Metropole Arcade, the Princess Electric Cinema opened in 1912 in the central section of the Promenade side, remodelled in 1922 to become the Princess Cinema.

The section on Springfield Road housed the first synagogue in Blackpool and is relatively well preserved (fig. 30) although it would benefit from having more historically appropriate shop fronts and signage, and removal of roller shutters.
6.3 Queen Street

Queen Street has a varied character with a few late 19\textsuperscript{th} century former lodging houses surviving amongst 20\textsuperscript{th} century retail premises. Buildings are generally 3-storey in a mixture of render and red brick, built up to the back of the footway and framing views down to Queens Square and the promenade; the street widens towards the seafront. First floor display windows are a feature of some properties but most have been replaced and have little intrinsic merit. Queen Street was developed with lodging houses in the 1880s. Just one of these on the north side, No. 6 (fig. 31) has survived at the west end with sash windows intact, but most of this block was rebuilt in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century for shops, now partly a bar.

The south east side of the road has a group of much altered stucco houses. The best group of lodging houses is Nos. 53 and 55, a pair of double-fronted houses with 2-storey stone bay windows and central doorways, in late gothic style. The modern apartments immediately alongside, although respecting the height of the adjacent historic properties, undermine the historic character of the block due to the unsympathetic design and materials (fig. 32)
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 31  6 Queen Street with original joinery and modern roof lift
Fig. 32 Well preserved lodging houses adjacent to modern block

Queen Street was once a fashionable street in the town, one block north of Talbot Road and the setting for Christ Church, built in 1871 and taken down after closure in 1982 (now the site of the Job Centre). Until the early 1900s, a bowling green occupied the north-east corner of Abingdon Street and Queen Street until the Library and Art Gallery was built here in 1911. This prominent building dominates the street and is listed Grade II. East of this on Queen Street were the Christ Church vicarage and another detached villa, both shown on the 1877 town plan and demolished in the 1960s. Their site is now a car park occupied by a poor quality postwar club, a low grade setting for the art gallery (fig. 33).
Fig. 33 Car park and social club adjacent to Grundy Art Gallery

The character of the street has been undermined by the removal of historic features such as stone bays and the insertion of modern shop fronts. In particular there are a number of buildings on the south west side which have been extended beyond the building line with modern large canopies. Such features disrupt the uniformity of the historic building line and encourage further unsympathetic development (fig. 34). Future applications for these features in the conservation area will not be supported, and existing features such as these should be removed if there is an opportunity for redevelopment in the future.

In addition, planning applications will not be supported which propose the removal of stone bays, and applicants will be encouraged to reinstate canted or box bays to first floor windows wherever possible. Caves Corner is a good example of traditional shop front design with retained stone bay and window openings to upper floors (fig. 35).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 34 Modern shopfronts and canopies disrupting the visual unity of Queen Street

The Job Centre (fig. 36) and the Home Bargains store (fig. 37) are relatively modern utilitarian brick buildings which contribute no character to the street. In addition they are within the setting of the grade II Central Library and Art Gallery. These are negative buildings which offer opportunities for enhancement or redevelopment in the future.

Although it is recognised that, without grant aid, it will be difficult to enforce the replacement of modern shop fronts with traditional timber shop fronts, it will be expected in future that any applications for replacement shop fronts will adhere to SPG 6: Shop Fronts and Signs. More detailed guidance to aid good design will be produced in due course.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 35  Caves Corner

Fig. 36  Job Centre
6.4 North end of Abingdon Street

The northern end of Abingdon Street has historically been named Parker Street (1877 plan) or May Bell Avenue (1893 OS map). It is dominated by the Library on the north side, with the former United Methodist Church adjacent. The west side of the road is lined with two groups of large 3-storey terraces; Nos. 77-79 were built as lodging houses and are fairly unaltered and retain low front boundary walls and gate piers (fig. 38). To the north, the brick terrace at No.81-95 is faced in brick with inserted shopfronts, and is of lesser quality. More appropriate shop fronts should be installed if the opportunity arises.
6.5 Deansgate

The south west side of Deansgate falls within the current conservation area. The street was historically known as Upper Talbot Street and is now a minor thoroughfare running east-west from Cookson Street to Abingdon Street. The westernmost part of the street is pedestrianised and is characterised by terraces of late 19th-century domestic scale buildings, mainly now in retail use. The buildings on the north side have some interesting features such as faience to Nos 10-12 which also have a strong inter-war character (fig. 39) although later alteration to shop fronts has generally damaged their integrity. This presents an opportunity for more appropriate shop fronts being inserted in future.

An exception to the domestic scale character is the 3 storey British Telecom building on the corner of Edward Street built in 1976 which falls within the current conservation area. Constructed in Brutalist style relieved by decorative panels of ceramic tiles whose design and method of production was patented in 1972 by nationally-renowned artist and sculptor Fritz Steller for his Transform Ceramic Company Ltd. The panels are a rare in situ survival of his work (fig. 40).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 39  10-12 Deansgate

Fig. 40 Ceramic panels on BT building
6.6 Talbot Road (from Abingdon Street to Dickson Road)

Talbot Road is a principal town centre street running east-west to Talbot Square and the Promenade. There are views westwards down the street towards the North Pier with the Grade II* listed Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church and the grade II Town Hall also providing good landmark quality. Talbot Square to Abingdon Street falls within the current conservation area. Buildings between Abingdon and Topping Streets are largely in retail or commercial use. They are mainly of late 19th and early 20th century date with a few later examples, and their consistent scale and building grain makes the street of neutral value. However, the views eastwards along Talbot Road from Abingdon Street are blighted by poor quality shop fronts and modern facades (fig. 41). In future changes to shop fronts should comply fully with SPG 6: Shop Fronts and Signs, and over large canopies should be removed.

Fig. 41 Poor quality shop fronts on Talbot Road
6.7 Dickson Road (Springfield Road to Topping Street)  This long road is an important historic linear feature in the townscape, and the principal north-south route through North Shore. The street was laid out by the mid 19th century and gradually developed over the next 50 years. The earliest buildings are along the western side of the southern stretch with 3-storey lodging houses built in the 1870s. The east side of this stretch was developed by c.1900 with tall red brick terraces. The street is divided into regular blocks by east-west streets; those to the west lead to the Promenade giving glimpses of the sea. Handsome blocks of 1870s lodging houses towards the south still retain their overall form intact and the blocks still define the street (fig. 42). Shops and pubs enliven the street scene at the north and south ends of the road, although 20th century shop fronts and advertising are mostly of poor design quality and visually intrusive (fig. 43).

Fig. 42 Former lodging houses south west end of Dickson Road
Fig. 43 Poor quality shop fronts south west end of Dickson Road

The former Odeon is a local landmark and represents the entertainment world. However, The Wilko Store and the former Station Hotel are negative buildings and may offer opportunities for enhancement or redevelopment in the future (figs. 44 and 45).

Fig. 44 Wilko Store
Edward Street runs north-south linking Deansgate and Cedar Square. The street is an unusual survivor in the town centre, retaining on its west side a domestic scale terrace now in use as offices (Nos 12-28), with canted bay windows and front boundary walls (fig. 46). Overall the street has strong positive character. The rear of the listed Abingdon Street Post Office, although being its service face, is another positive aspect with the retention of wrought-iron railings and lamps to the back of the footway (Fig. 47).

Although Edward Street has an enclosed character, there are views south towards Cedar Square, where the vista opens out a little.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 46 Edward Street

Fig. 47 Post office railings
6.9 Topping Street

Topping Street was originally a street of lodging houses in close proximity to the first Blackpool railway station. By 1904 around 50% had been converted to retail or commercial services. It runs north-south between the principal east-west thoroughfares of Talbot Road and Church Street. It is a street of generally positive value and is characterised by a mixture of retail premises built on a tight grain up to the back of the footway. Most buildings are of late 19th century date with several examples built or re-fronted in terracotta during the interwar period (fig. 48).

Fig. 48 Re-fronted former Shakespeare Hotel, Topping Street
Most premises have been altered at ground-floor level to incorporate late 20th century shop fronts or entrances, and almost all feature modern signage and fascia treatments. In future applications for changes to shop fronts and signage should comply fully with SPG 6.

Positive buildings include The Washington Inn (fig. 9) dated 1875, which occupies a prominent corner site and is splayed to the corner. Churchills public house (formerly The Criterion Hotel) is locally listed (fig. 14). No. 68 is also of positive value and appears little altered externally (Fig. 49). The building, which extends east along Wood Street, may have been purpose-built as offices or works. Decorative features include pilasters, inset fascias and pale green detailing.
No. 28 is also a building of positive character which preserves a little altered interwar frontage. It was re-modelled in 1933 as the new showrooms for Naylor’s Fireplaces by John C. Durham, FRIBA, of Blackpool, emulating a proscenium arch or a giant fireplace (Fig. 50). A newspaper report from 1933 announced that this was the first use of buff and green terracotta in the town (Blackpool Gazette & Herald, 25/02/1933, p10).

Fig. 50    28 Topping Street
Nos. 100-112 make up an attractive uniform red brick two storey terrace, although the character is undermined by unsympathetic shop fronts and signage. This terrace would be enhanced by a replacement scheme for the shop fronts should the opportunity arise (fig. 51).

**Fig. 51 100-112 Topping Street**

### 6.10 Wood Street and Winstanley Grove

Winstanley Grove was known as Stanley Grove in the early 20th century. Wood Street is fronted by the sides of buildings on neighbouring streets and is of neutral value. East Topping Street and Winstanley Grove, and other service streets and alleys in the study area are generally somewhat unkempt.

### 6.11 Market Street and West Street

One of Blackpool’s earliest streets, Market Street became one of the first major north-south shopping streets in the 1860s, and was the location of a large covered market until the inter-war years. Today it is populated by larger retail, restaurant and entertainment buildings of varying dates and types, and by the west elevations of the Municipal Buildings and the 1957 British Home Stores (BHS). There are good views of the Tower to the south and there is a general homogeneity of scale. BHS is typical of its time, and the curving south face is a strong feature of the building (fig. 52).
Municipal Buildings was built as the Town Hall Extension in 1937-8 to designs by J. C. Robinson. It is an eye-catching and significant building and is locally listed. The extension is linked at its north end to the Grade II listed Town Hall by Potts, Son & Hennings (1895-1900) and is therefore arguably part of the listed building. The Town Hall and Town Hall Extension are within the current Town Centre Conservation Area.

Overall Market Street is neutral in character. Positive buildings include no. 41 the Market Street Diner and Leonard Dews (Corner of Market Street/Church Street fig. 53), of four storeys, rendered brick, with consoles to the windows and a good shopfront; the building is dated 1874. ‘Fever’ (fig. 54), and Feldman’s Arcade which runs through to the Promenade are locally listed. Also of note on Market Street is the sculpture outside Nos. 43-47. Acrobats by Glynn Williams was installed in 1999 as part of a programme of public art sculpture in surrounding streets and it makes a positive contribution to the street scene.

The Clifton Hotel at the north end of the street facing Talbot Square is Grade II. The hotel and Feldman’s Arcade lie within the current Town Centre Conservation Area.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 53  Leonard Dews

Fig. 54  Fever, Market Street
West Street is a narrow street running from the Promenade to Corporation Street. It is squeezed between the elevations of the Town Hall Extension and BHS, with access to a car park within the BHS block on the south side. The Mitre Hotel (fig. 55) on the western section of West Street is locally listed, as is Roberts Oyster Rooms on the corner of West Street and the Promenade (fig. 56).
6.12 Church Street

Church Street was historically the principal east-west thoroughfare in Blackpool, and today links the Promenade with Whitegate Drive to the east. The street layout has changed little since its conception, and has retained its character as a major shopping street into the 21st century. Today the west end of the street is pedestrianised. It rises slightly from the west, and has a relatively wide aspect with 2-3 storey buildings framing both sides. There is a large amount of street furniture of varying dates and styles which gives the impression of a cluttered street scene (fig. 57). There are good views of Blackpool Tower to the west from the junction with Abingdon Street, and the dome of the Grand Theatre is also a prominent feature.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 57  Street furniture and telecom equipment, Church Street/Corporation Street

Fig. 58  Bella Italia
Church Street is a typical commercial street with a range of buildings of different styles and dates. The historic aspects of the street, augmented by St John Evangelist church, the Grand Theatre and Winter Gardens which are all listed, are positive although there is a certain amount of negative post-war infill on what is an important historic street. Nos 23-27 (Bella Italia) is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the town centre built in 1847 and retaining much of its character (fig. 58). Nos 57-59 (Beaverbrooks on the corner of Coronation Street) was built as a Post Office in 1877, later became a Labour Bureau and is a positive building (fig. 59).

The north side of Church Street comprises individual narrow units, mainly of three storeys, some of which have strong architectural character and of merit: Nos 44-46 (former Rawcliffes store fig. 60) and 56-60 (formerly Clifton Cinema, Poundland and currently British Heart Foundation outlet – fig. 61) are locally listed. Nos 74-78 (former Lyons Corner House, more recently Monsoon) is also locally listed (fig. 62).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 60 Former Rawcliffe’s Store

Fig. 61 Former Clifton Cinema
Apart from these locally listed buildings, the blocks of c.1970s shops on the north side are of negative value and offer opportunities for positive change in the future. The facades and modern shopfronts are unsympathetic in their scale, design and materials (fig. 63 and 64).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 63 Poor quality shop fronts

Fig. 64 Poor quality shop fronts
The remaining buildings are mainly of late 20th century date and constructed in modern materials, and are generally of neutral quality (fig. 65).

Fig. 65 Corner of Church Street and Coronation Street
The junction with Abingdon Street is of high townscape significance and has recently been pedestrianised and improved as part of the St John’s Plaza project. The grade II listed Post Office, with the row of eight Grade II listed telephone boxes, is highly significant to the townscape value and character of the area, and views of these assets can be obtained from the junction. The square is paved in buff granite cobbles laid in a traditional segmental arch pattern and the 11 metre sculpture ‘Wave’ by Lucy Glendinning dominates the eastern end of the square whilst illuminated fountains fringe the western end. The stained glass of the church is lit from behind at night to create a jewel box effect.

Cedar Square lies between Edward Street and Church Street, and is an area of positive value. A row of small shops on the east side, with a datestone for 1865 and formerly residential, are altered with recently inserted traditional style shop fronts, carried out as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative. St. John’s Square is dominated by St John’s church (listed grade II), which is prominent in views around the square and an important town centre landmark, and the grade II* Winter Gardens complex. There are good views down Edward Street from Cedar Square. (fig 66). St John’s Square and Cedar Square fall within the current conservation area.
Blackpool’s main landmarks remain prominent when viewed from further east on King’s Square. On the north side Nos 106-128 probably date from the 1870s to the 1890s, with Nos 106-116 being a double-fronted villa type regularly seen in Blackpool (fig. 67).

![Fig. 67 106-116 Church Street](image)

Nos 150-170 are part of the 1935 rebuild of Stanley Terrace, which is locally listed. The approach to the corner of this building from the west has strong townscape significance, and the former red-brick Midland Bank is a positive and important landmark along Church Street (Fig. 68).

On the south side from Kings Square eastwards the street frontage is intact but there are few unaltered buildings. Most buildings have modern shopfronts to the ground floor and altered upper storeys. However, a former bank at No.137 with a rusticated ground floor has some merit (fig. 69), as do Nos 193-197 which retain timber box bays to the first floor (Fig. 70). The former Regent Cinema is locally listed and is a terminating landmark feature in the streetscape.
Fig. 68  Former Midland Bank, King’s Square

Fig. 69  Former bank, corner of Church Street/South King Street
Beyond Stanley Buildings there is a change of townscape character as Raikes is approached, with trees lining the streets and a more spacious quality to the streetscene. However, the large surface car park to the east of Stanley Buildings, which has no boundary to the back of the footway and reveals the back of buildings on surrounding streets (fig. 71), is a poor setting for land immediately adjacent to the conservation area and for the locally listed former Regent Cinema and Stanley Buildings. This area should be enhanced when the opportunity arises.
6.13 Birley Street

Along with Clifton Street, Birley Street was one of the early streets to be laid out between the seafront and Abingdon Street. Historic mapping shows that both sides of the street were characterised by small properties, few of which remain today, especially on the south side. Birley Street was pedestrianised in 1996 and has recently undergone a programme of refurbishment with a porphyry street surface and the installation of Brilliance.

The street is a principle commercial street, mainly with cafes, banks and privately-owned shops. The buildings are a mix of two and three storeys, generally two bays wide. The NatWest bank on the west corner is prominent and, although Brutalist in its architecture, is not a negative contribution to the street (fig. 72).

The north side of the street mainly comprises older, late 19\textsuperscript{th} century premises, although these have been considerably altered at the upper floors, and to the ground floor with modern shopfronts and signage. The south side is mainly of mid-late 20th-century flat-roofed blocks with modern shopfronts (fig. 73). There is little homogeneity to the streetscene and the buildings are of low quality architecture with few exceptions: HSBC (fig. 74), and Barclays bank, are both locally listed. Recent coffee shop developments have enhanced the streetscene (fig. 75).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 72 NatWest bank Birley Street
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 73  Block of shops on south side of Birley Street

Fig. 74  HSBC Birley Street
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 75  Coffee Pot, Birley Street
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Due to recent public realm installations the overall character of the street is neutral. The Rose and Crown pub on the south-west corner, however, is a negative contribution with its modern verandah and obtrusive signage, although historically the site of a pub since the early 20th century (fig. 76).

Fig. 76  Rose and Crown, Birley Street

A number of buildings on the south side extend beyond the historic building line. Although most of these are due to extended box bays and signage, two are built out from first floor level to increase internal floor space: The West Coast Rock Café on the corner of Birley Street/Abingdon Street, and nos 15-17 Birley Street (Peppermill/Toni and Guy) (fig. 77). As in cases identified elsewhere in the conservation area, extending beyond the building line encourages similar development elsewhere, thereby undermining the uniformity of the traditional building line and interrupting views into and out of the area. Future applications for similar developments within the conservation area will not be supported.
Overall Birley Street offers opportunities for enhancement in future if a programme of façade replacement or redevelopment is considered.

Fig. 77  Buildings extended beyond historic building line a first floor level
6.14 Carter Street, Adelphi Street and Matcham Court

These three streets are short service roads south of Church Street. Matcham Court was created following the construction of Marks and Spencer’s, and originally joined with Carter Street across Coronation Street. Adelphi Street runs north from Carter Street, forming an island block of buildings. Nos 73-75, currently Morrison’s express store, has an interesting architectural pediment on the east elevation (fig. 78) which has been partially covered and its merit removed by post-war surfaces. The streets are pedestrianised but have vehicular access. Matcham Court is covered by a colourful sculptural steel glazed roof. The streets are of neutral quality.

Fig. 78 Pediment above Morrisons store, corner of Adelphi Street

6.15 Coronation Street (east side)

The east side of Coronation Street is dominated by the west elevation of the Winter Gardens. The street is relatively narrow and views of the whole elevation are difficult to obtain. The east side has positive value, but overall is neutral due to the buildings on the west side of the street related to the Hounds Hill Centre. There are good views of the Tower to the west from the steps of the Winter Gardens.
6.16 Adelaide Street

Adelaide Street runs east-west between Hounds Hill and Regent Road and is characterised by terraces of private residential and boarding houses. Some terraces have strong positive value for their homogeneity, and there are two locally listed buildings. At the west end the later extensions of the Winter Gardens are a prominent feature on the north side of the street. These extensions replaced an open area which included an ice rink and bowling green. At the junctions of Leopold Grove and Coronation Street there are elaborate canted corner entrances (fig. 79), but the rest of the elevation is quite utilitarian. The Winter Gardens are listed Grade II* and, especially when combined with views of the Tower, are a strong and important positive feature on the streetscene.

Fig. 79 Entrance to Olympia buildings, corner of Adelaide Street and Coronation Street
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

The terraced buildings on the north side as far as South King Street are mainly three storey lodging-house types, with attic extensions. Due to the level of change they are neutral, although they retain some historic features. Nos 61-71 were demolished c. 2012 and replaced with a surface car park. Nos 87-89 contribute positively to the streetscene, and have group value with the adjacent locally listed Masonic Hall (fig. 80). Of red-brick and terracotta the buildings are a pair of double-fronted three storey houses with ground floor canted bay windows and panelled timber doors. The front boundary walls have been rebuilt. Nos 103-105 are also positive (fig. 81), flanked by two modern buildings, Adelaide Court and a new build to the corner of Regent Road, both of which are neutral as they respect scale and materials.

![Fig. 80  Masonic Hall, Adelaide Street](image)

On the south side of the street Nos 56-100 are three-storey lodging houses, facing the Winter Gardens. Most have been altered with replacement windows and added attic storeys, although all retain double-height stone canted bay windows with decorative mullions (fig. 82) and many retain their original boundary cast-iron railings. Four properties at the west end (Nos 56-62) have a lower roofline and the bay windows are smaller in scale. Many of the houses have been combined to create larger hotels.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 81  103-105 Adelaide Street

Fig. 82  West end of Adelaide Street south side
The east end of the south side of the street (Nos 102-150) is generally positive in character. No 102, with one gabled bay to the Adelaide Street elevation and three to Leopold Grove, was probably built as a private residence and has terracotta plaques on the Leopold Grove elevation with the initials ‘J.S’ and a date of 1912 (Fig. 83). The house is of red brick with buff terracotta dressings to double-height bay windows and a Welsh slate roof. It also has a well-maintained garden, with intact boundary walls and planting.
Nos 104-114 are typical good-quality boarding houses, and retain a high level of original detail. No 116, the former Comrades’ Club, is a detached villa, and is locally listed (fig. 84). No 118, on the south-west corner of South King Street, is a three storey detached villa, now a doctors’ surgery. It has been rendered and altered, but retains bracketed eaves and a classical-style doorcase (fig. 85). There are good views towards the Tower from this area (fig. 86).

Nos 124-150 is a red-brick two-storey terrace of residential properties, with paired doorcases and canted ground floor bay windows (Fig. 87). Some retain timber sash windows and panelled doors. All have front boundary walls to small front yards; although some of the boundary walls have been rebuilt this creates a homogenous streetscene, which is enhanced by the retention of chimney stacks and pots to the roofline. Nos 124 and 120-122 are double-fronted villa-types, probably of the same building phase as the terrace. The latter has a canted corner entrance and forecourt to South King Street; the corner premises are occupied by a pharmacy. The house retains timber sash windows with coloured glass to the upper panes, boundary walls and gate piers.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 85  Former detached villa

Fig. 86  View towards Blackpool Tower
6.17 Leopold Grove

Leopold Grove is a north-west street connecting Church Street and Albert Road, and was historically developed with lodging houses. The character of the street is a narrow one-way residential street, rising slightly towards the north. Neutral buildings of interest include the former Gas Showroom at No 115 Church Street, which has its east return to Leopold Grove, constructed in the 1950s. Nos 2-8 is a two storey red-brick terrace with dormers, with double-height bay windows, probably of late 19th century date. There is some cast-iron cresting above the front doors, and timber casements with coloured top-lights have been retained at No 4, but the boundary walls to the back of the footway have been removed. Overall these are of positive value (fig. 88).

The eastern part of the Winter Gardens is a positive building, although this is jeopardised by a later extension below the positive brick gable feature (Fig. 89). Nos 7-11 (a former Roseby’s store) is negative and currently vacant (fig. 90).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 88  2-8 Leopold Grove

Fig. 89  Gable east side of Winter Gardens
6.18 Alfred Street

Alfred Street was probably constructed at the same time as Leopold Grove, with most buildings constructed as lodgings. Today the street is of similar character to Leopold Grove and comprises mainly late 19th century brick two or three storey buildings with double-height bay windows; overall the street is of neutral value. On the north-west side nos. 2-4 have shops to the ground floor and to the north of these there is a block of single storey shops. The block on the northwest corner has two original box bays and joinery (fig. 91). The north east side has a c.1950s two-storey brick garage/parking block which is of negative value (fig. 92). The rounded corner to 125a Church Street is a prominent feature; it was probably built in the 1930s but is of neutral value.
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 91  Corner of Alfred Street/ Church Street

Fig. 92  1950s garage, Alfred Street
6.19 South King Street (north of Albert Road only)

South King Street was slowly developed in the late 19th century and is similar in character and quality to other north-south streets in the area. The east side of the road is generally positive: a range of two-storey red-brick terraces with ground floor canted bay windows and front boundary walls to the back of the footway (Fig. 93). Although some have been rendered or painted, and the windows have generally been replaced, the range remains homogenous with a consistent roofline and no breaks in the building frontage. At the north end, across Adelaide Street, are the two local list buildings, the Stanley Arms and the Masonic Hall. The west side of the street is less homogenous, with a single-storey late 20th century medical centre and a range of shops (Nos 3-21) being neutral in character (fig. 94); the latter are possibly those shown on the 1877 street plan. No 118 Adelaide Street and No 137 Church Street, both corner properties, are positive in character.

Fig. 93 South King Street
Albert Road is an east-west street located between the historic site of Hounds Hill and Regent Road, and crossed by Coronation Street with smaller side streets on the north side. From Coronation Street, Albert Road rises slightly uphill, giving good views back towards the Tower. East of the junction with Coronation Street the street widens slightly and rises uphill. Overall there is a high level of change and the majority of Albert Road is not included in the conservation area. However, the two storey red-brick terrace at Nos 136-154 on the north east side on a sloping site is positive in value (Fig. 95). Although the houses have uPVC windows and some of the front boundary walls have been removed, they retain a substantial amount of architectural detail and have few major alterations or extensions, resulting in a homogenous streetscape. The eastern corner property has a corner tower to Regent Road.

Bank Hey Street was probably in place in the 1830s although there are few 19th century buildings remaining. Today it is one of Blackpool’s principle shopping streets, with several large chain stores in modern buildings. It is pedestrianised from Albert Road through to Church Street. The street is characterised by a range of buildings of mid to late 20th century date, mainly of two or three storeys with a flat roofline, with buildings built up to the back of the footway. There are some buildings of positive value, including No. 18, a two storey building, two bays wide, of red brick and terracotta with a 1893 datestone; the ground floor is altered with a modern shopfront, but this early building is a rarity on the street (fig. 96).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 95 View of Blackpool Tower from east end of Albert Road

Fig. 96 18 Bank Hey Street
Nos 6-10 was built in 1935 to replace a parade of 1840s shops then considered as an eyesore; it retains some green and buff faience to the upper floors, but is of no more than neutral value. Large canopies above ground floor level along this block project so far that the upper floors are obscured to the extent that the more positive aspect of the block is only visible from some distance away (fig. 97). These canopies should be removed if the opportunity arises to open up the visibility of the upper floors of the block and the view of the Tower from the north end of the street.

Fig. 97 Faience fronted building and large canopies, north east end of Bank Hey Street

The west side is taken up with the back of Tower Buildings, the curving termination of the old Woolworths store, the rear of the Palace Disco building (just beyond the proposed boundary) and the new Woolworth’s building (opened in 1994). The latter makes a negative contribution to the streetscape (fig. 98), and historic buildings have been altered at ground floor level with the insertion of modern shop fronts and fascias. However, the street retains some powerful streetscape presences. The former Woolworth’s building is locally listed and the Tower Buildings are designated Grade I (fig. 99).
PROPOSED EXTENSION TO TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

Fig. 98  Woolworth’s building opened 1994

Fig. 99  View towards Blackpool Tower
The former Liberal Club on Victoria Street, beyond the boundary, is also locally listed but makes a positive contribution to the views out of the conservation area towards the Winter Gardens (fig. 100). The view is, however, obstructed by the Victoria Street elevation of the Marks and Spencer store. There is a heavy canopy above the secondary entrance which should be removed if the opportunity arises (fig. 101) to help reduce the obstruction.

Fig. 100  Former Liberal Club, Victoria Street

Fig. 101  Large canopy over secondary entrance of Marks and Spencers, Victoria Street
There is a large amount of street furniture on the street, of different qualities and dates, including late 20th century telephone boxes, benches and planters, and plastic bollards which create a cluttered appearance (fig. 102).

Fig. 102  Street clutter adjacent to Tower Buildings
7. Opportunities for enhancement

Besides being a tool for preserving historic character, conservation area designation is also an opportunity to enhance those parts of the area which have been subject to unsympathetic change, both incremental and large scale. These changes include the removal of original windows and other architectural features, and modern shop fronts being inserted which have no visual connection to the historic upper floors.

It is not intended to be overly proscriptive with regard to new development in the conservation area. However, in future applications should comply fully with the Supplementary Planning Guidance 6: Shop Fronts and Signs. This guidance will be updated in due course. Canopies above entrances will not be supported, but shelter could still be provided by retractable tradition style awnings. In addition, development should respect the scale and height of nearby historic buildings, and in particular should not extend beyond the historic building line of the street. It should draw inspiration from local historic building design and materials whilst providing good quality modern buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The design of all new development will be negotiated on these terms.

Modern illuminated box signage and over-advertising undermines the historic character of a building and is inappropriate in conservation areas. If not given careful thought, signs and advertising can create a great deal of clutter. If handled carefully signs can be very attractive and add to the liveliness and interest of the street. One sign with a clearly stated message is often more effective than a number of different signs. Timber fascias with painted or applied lettering are preferred. In some cases, individually illuminated letters may be appropriate or other methods of illumination such as 'halo' or wash lighting.

When the opportunity arises unsympathetic roof lifts should be removed and slate roofs reinstated. Existing boundary treatments should be retained, and those properties where boundary treatments have previously been removed or altered will be encouraged to reinstate walls, gateposts and railings where appropriate.

Street clutter is a particular problem in the public realm, and proliferation of street signs should be kept to a minimum by using existing poles for new signs wherever possible. Seating and other street furniture should be appropriate for a conservation area.

These issues will be addressed fully in the conservation area management plan which will be produced following designation.
8. Conclusions and recommendations

The current Town Centre Conservation Area boundaries do not reflect the true extent of the historic commercial and entertainment centre of Blackpool. In particular, the areas and key buildings which characterise the town such as the Tower, Winter Gardens and Promenade fall outside the current boundaries. Many locally listed buildings which were contemporary with the historic development of the town centre are also outside the boundaries.

The Promenade, Adelaide Street, Springfield Road and Topping Street/southern end of Dickson Road represent appropriate new boundaries as supported by evidence in the historic characterisation assessment reports. The extended conservation area will support local policies for improving the built environment, including the newly published Town Centre Strategy.

It is recommended, therefore, that the proposed boundaries are approved for public consultation leading to formal designation of an extended Town Centre Conservation Area. The appraisal will form the basis of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

9. Key to map

——— Current boundary designated in 2005

——— Proposed boundaries

——— Denotes listed or locally listed building