

# Corporation Park Conservation Area.

## Part 2 Management Plan & Guidelines for Development

### 1.0 Introduction

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to designate as a conservation Area any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' whose character or appearance is considered worthy of preservation or enhancement.

As such conservation area designation is the primary means by which Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council can safeguard valued distinctive places that help to define the individual historical, architectural and cultural identity of its communities. However designation alone will not secure the preservation and enhancement of these areas and active management is vital to ensure that they can adapt and develop in a positive way.

This report is called a 'management plan' and it has been produced in line with English Heritage Guidance. The primary aims are to:

- Provide the basis for the proactive management of the Corporation Park Conservation Area by informing future Council policy and decision making services for the next 5 years.
- Act as a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission and Conservation Area consent.
- Full fill the Councils statutory duty in regard to section 71 and section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- Illustrate the Councils commitment to the provisions in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Support the development of the future local planning policy and the emerging Development Plan Document for the Local Development Framework.

### 2.0 National and Local Planning Policy Guidance.

When determining applications within the Conservation Area the Council will have regard to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides the principal legislative policy base for the conservation of the historic environment and to the historic environment policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **2.1 Local policies**

The Core Strategy 2011 is the established plan for the Borough and saved policies from the Local Plan are directly relevant to the preservation and enhancement of listed buildings and conservation areas. The relevant policies are;

- Policy HD11 Development in and adjacent to conservation areas
- Policy HD 12 Alterations to unlisted buildings in conservation areas.
- Policy HD 13 Alterations to listed buildings
- Policy HD14 Demolition of listed and demolition of unlisted buildings in conservation areas.

## **2.2 Local Development Framework**

The Core strategy of the LDF was adopted in 2010. It will be followed by a suite of documents which will include specific policies to promote and manage change.

## **3.0 Implications of Conservation Area Status.**

Conservation area status is not intended to stifle new development nor preserve areas as museum pieces but rather conservation areas should evolve to meet changing demands. The Council however, is legally obliged to ensure that the special architectural and historic characters of their conservation areas are not eroded when taking planning and development control decisions. In addition to the above statutory obligation extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting conservation areas by advertising in the local newspaper (s.73 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Area Consent is also required for the demolition of most buildings in a conservation area over 115 cubic metres. Trees are also protected within conservation areas and when carrying works to trees the Council should be consulted There are also more restrictions on the display of advertisements than elsewhere.

The Council or Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair through the use of urgent work notices and Amenity of land Notices (s54 and s76 of TCPA (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Council is expected to adopt appropriate policies and commit adequate resources to support these statutory duties.

The Council should also ensure that local communities are informed about the implications of conservation area designation to encourage the collective benefits of conservation area designation by those who live, work and build in them. It is important that owners, residents and developers are well informed of the qualities of the conservation area and understand the need to take a contextual view of development proposals and not in isolation.



Figure 1 Development in rear gardens, Adelaide Terrace

Some degree of change is inevitable in conservation areas and the issue is often not whether change should happen but how it is carried out. Owners and residents should employ skilled advisers when preparing development proposals to ensure that change is sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area. The Council is one useful source of advice as are amenity societies and stakeholders.

### 3.1 Permitted development

Planning permission is usually required for material changes to buildings and changes of use. However there is permitted development to dwelling houses for some works of alteration, and extension and these works can be found on the Planning Portal Web site (include web site) There are more restrictions in conservation areas and it is advisable to contact the Local Planning Authority before commencing any works of development. Article 4 directions can be applied by the Council to remove permitted development rights and it is also worth checking if additional restrictions apply.

### 3.2 The Registered Park.

Corporation Park is a registered historic park on the National Register of Parks and Gardens and has been designated Grade II\*. There are no extra controls on development within registered parks but there is a duty on the Local Authority to consult the Garden History Society when applications are submitted for development within the Park and to have regard on the conservation of the significance of the Heritage Asset.

## 4.0 Issues

The character appraisal for the Corporation Park Conservation Area identified a number of issues which detract from and/or are threatening to harm the town centres historical and architectural character and its important features.

- Buildings of little architectural merit mostly on later infill sites.
- Changes of use from residential and associated impacts.
- Unsympathetic development.
- Inappropriate features and loss of architectural details.
- Gradual erosion of special character.
- Vacant and underused buildings.
- Poor quality or inappropriate public realm.
- Dominance of in curtilage parking.
- Loss of trees and landscape features.
- Subdivision of properties.



Figure 2 Original Windows replaced with inappropriate styles.

## **5.0 Opportunities for Protection and Enhancement.**

### **5.1 Threats from changes of use.**

A significant pressure on the Conservation Area is the change of use of residential properties to other uses such as offices, apartments or homes in multiple occupation and pressure. Changes of use can give rise to inappropriate alterations on buildings and increased pressure for parking within the curtilages. There is an article 4 Direction within this area which removes permitted development to convert small dwellings into houses in multiple occupation. Applications for changes of use to sub divide buildings should only be permitted where there is no unacceptable harm to the building and the conservation area. Principles in relation to this issue are set out in the Development Guidelines Section 6. The Council will continue to monitor changes of use will and how harm arising from them can be minimised.

**Action: Harm arising from sub-division of properties and changes of use to be resisted and accord with principles set out in section 6.0 on Development Guidelines.**

### **5.2 New development to be of sympathetic design and appropriate to the site context.**

There have been a number of recent developments which have been constructed with little regard to the special historical and architectural character of Corporation Park Conservation Area. Careful consideration will need to be given to the treatment height, scale, massing form and quality of all future development, alterations and extensions within and adjoining the town's conservation area. In particular a number of gap sites following the demolition of buildings visually undermine the special character and where opportunity arises to develop them the Council will only encourage the highest quality schemes. The development guide at the end of this section provides guidance on how new development can respond positively to the historic setting and fully accord with planning policy.

**Action: Ensure that all new development within the Conservation Area will preserve and enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area have regard to principles in the development guidelines in the following sections.**

### **5.3 Additional Control**

Planning permission is usually required for alterations and extensions to buildings, although dwellings have some permitted development rights in conservation areas for certain works. These works include changes to doors, windows, roof materials and constructions of minor extensions. Given that the area is characterised by residential dwellings many alterations can be carried out without planning permission and can undermine the quality of the

area, such as loss of boundary walls, loss of original windows, and inappropriate extensions. It would thereby be beneficial to the area if additional controls were put in place in the form of an Article 4(2) direction to control works to frontages of building fronting the highway and ensure that changes are carried out in a sympathetic manner.

**Action: It is recommended that the Council considers the application of an article 4 direction for alterations to dwellings within the conservation area to remove permitted development rights for minor works.**

#### 5.4 Dominance of parking within plots



The change of use of properties into offices or subdivision into apartments or bedsits can give rise to garden areas being taken over by car parking. This is more prevalent on properties on the south side of Preston New Road. Former garden areas have been tarmaced with significant loss of landscape character and loss of boundary features. It is considered appropriate to reduce the visual impact of parking and it is recommended to resist proposals which have an adverse impact on landscape character and to ensure that developments are accompanied by an appropriate landscape scheme that reduces the dominance of car parking.

**Action: Resist proposals that might require extensive hard surfacing of the garden areas from car parking and ensure that developments are supported by an appropriate landscape design.**

Figure 3 front garden parking

#### 5.5 Vacant and underused buildings.

There are a number of buildings that are vacant or deteriorating such as the listed conservatory in the Park. It will be important to engage with owners or public funding bodies to secure the reuse of empty buildings. There is scope to relook at the bid for the conservatory and resubmit in the next round of Heritage Lottery funding to secure the restoration of the Corporation Park Listed Conservatory.

**Action: Contribute and support a bid to Heritage Lottery for the restoration and reuse of the Conservatory in Corporation Park.**

## 5.6 Compliance and Monitoring.

The incremental erosion of character from inappropriate alterations is a significant threat to the Corporation Park Conservation Area. Effective monitoring and compliance is required to maintain standards and reduce harmful impacts from unauthorised works. Carrying out a photographic audit of the Conservation Area to form a baseline record for measuring change and a proactive enforcement strategy be adopted would be desirable. The council should also take steps to make use of Repairs Notices , Urgent Works Notices and Amenity of Land notices where applicable.

**Action: Explore feasibility of carrying out a photographic audit of the area and adopt proactive enforcement strategy**

## 5.7 Maintenance.

To ensure that buildings which currently contribute to the areas special interest, character and appearance are sustained in the future it will be necessary to create awareness of appropriate and regular maintenance regimes. Guidance on maintenance could be distributed or posted on the Council website for owners to access and could be launched seasonally to remind owners of the need to prepare for the winter months.

**Action: Raise awareness of the importance of regular maintenance and adopting appropriate repair techniques.**



Figure 4 Original granite setts in Hope Street.

## 5.8 Public Realm and green spaces.

The Character Appraisal identified that only small elements of original floorscape, such as granite kerbs, paving slabs and grit stone setts survive within isolated areas of the Conservation Area. There are also a few traditional lamp posts in the area. Retaining historic features within the public realm gives streets individuality and helps create a sense of place. Public realm works should generally have regard to the historic context of the area, and retain historic features where possible. There are also a number of important green spaces and in particular the public park is a valued recreational facility, retaining these spaces in good condition is essential to the character of the area.

**Action: The Council will seek to ensure that existing green spaces for recreational uses are retained and maintained in a good condition.**

**Action: The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained and any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the Conservation area.**



Figure 5 Blue Plaque on property commemorates a historical association.

### 5.9 Promotion.

Engaging with the Local Community and key stakeholders to enable them to understand Corporation Park Conservation Area's past and the value of its future is vital to secure a more sustainable approach to conservation area management. Through education and promotional events greater understanding of the value of the historic environment in securing sustainable growth can lead to increased sense of civic pride and stewardship. Regular events in collaboration with historic societies and schools should be considered to ensure that a lasting legacy is maintained and the promotion of a Blue Plaque scheme that signals the important persons that lived in the area.

**Action: Explore opportunities for promoting the heritage significance of the area and liaise with educational establishments and historic societies to raise awareness of the area's heritage.**

## 6.0 Development Guidelines

This section is intended to guide proposals for development within the area. Particular regard should be had to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area as set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out Government Policy on the historic environment and identifies Conservation Areas as designated assets. The relevant policies are: 133,134,137. Saved policies in the Local Plan HD 11-14 are also relevant and emerging policy 39 of the Local Plan part 2 (draft publication). Details of the policies can be found on the councils web site [www.blackburn.gov.uk](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk).

### 6.1 New Development



Figure 6 New Development Shear Bank Rd.

The Conservation area is unlikely to accommodate any other than the occasional infill development and extensions or alterations to properties. New development will be expected to comply with National and Local Planning Policies and should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement that assesses the impact of the development on the character of the Conservation Area and its significance.

As the area is characterised in the main by Victorian villas set in large landscaped plots and important consideration will be to retain the open landscape character of the area. More specific design responses will be required to reflect the distinctive characteristics of each character area as set out in 6.2 below. The following general principles will apply.

- The development should be of a high standard of design.
- Scale massing proportions and height of new building should be consistent with existing built environment.
- Layout, boundary treatments and landscape elements will be expected to make a visual reference to those found traditionally in the area.
- Appropriate external materials and finishes will be required on new development within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area. Where modern materials are proposed these should harmonise with the colours and textures of the built heritage.
- Some alteration and enlargement to existing buildings may be possible, but should not over dominate the existing building or the site.
- New development should respect the scale, proportions detailing and materials of the existing building.
- The development must not lead to loss of open space or landscape features that contribute to the character of the area.
- Particular regard should be had to the retention of trees within the area.
- The development should preserve important views and vistas within, into and out of the area.
- The development should not result in a dominance of parking within the curtilage.

## 6.2 Character areas.



Figure 7 Brantfell Rd and its distinctive steps.

New development should be designed with regard to local context and in particular to the distinctive characteristics of each of the character areas. Proposals which cause unacceptable harm to the character and or appearance of an area or to visual impact of historic buildings views or landmarks will not be permitted.

### 6.3 Architectural details

The Conservation Area's rich architectural heritage, is reflected in the quality and diversity of the built fabric. The preservation of traditional architectural details contributes to the special interest of the area and adds interest to the street scene. Some key elements are outlined below:



Figure 8 Original features such as windows and stone details.

- Roof profiles are fundamental to the architectural character of a building or group and contribute greatly to the character of the area. Alterations at roof level can have significant impact on individual buildings and the wider context and should be avoided.
- Chimney Stacks and pots form striking features when seen against the skyline. Replacement, or removal of chimney stacks or pots will be discouraged.
- Windows and doors are crucial to establishing the character of a buildings elevation. Original doors and windows including their detailing, materials and method of opening make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Where wholesale replacement is required then they should match the originals in terms of glazing pattern, style, proportions, materials and method of opening.
- Doors and their surrounds can be the most elaborately detailed element of the facades and should be retained, and only replaced if they are in a very poor condition and beyond repair. Replacement doors should match the original design.

### 6.4 Materials.

Characteristic building materials such as red brick, grit stone and natural grey slate are an important factor in contributing to the quality and interest of the area and gives texture and visual interest to individual buildings.

New developments will be expected to adopt a similar building material that is characteristic to the local context.



Figure 9 Original spear head railings.

### 6.5 Local Townscape details

The loss of private planting, the removal of boundary walls and railings, and introduction of car parking into garden areas can all adversely affect the character of the area and will not generally be acceptable where permission is required.

### 6.6 Demolition

Demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the area will not normally be permitted other than in very exceptional circumstances that comply with National and Local Policies.



### 6.6 Historic Park.

Permission will not be granted for development that would cause harm to significance of the historic park. Regard should be had to the setting of the Park and the enhancement and preservation of features, groups of trees and important views.

## 6.7 Trees .



Figure 10 East Park Road is dominated by mature trees and landscape features along its length.

Trees are an important feature of the area and contribute to the leafy landscape character of the Corporation Park Conservation Area. Trees in garden areas help to soften and add interest in the street scene. Trees in conservation areas are protected and advice should be sought from the Arboricultural Officer of the Council prior to carrying out works or fell a tree. Many groups and individual trees are also protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Developments should be designed to allow for the retention of existing trees, any loss of trees is to be resisted, or where unavoidable be replaced by an appropriate replacement tree. Regard should be had to saved policy HD8 in the Local Plan.

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## Appendix 1.

### Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

#### Supplementary Planning Document: *Corporation Park Conservation Area Appraisal, Management Plan and Development Guidelines.*

#### Statement under the Town and Country Planning, (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012: Regulation 12

##### Introduction

This statement sets out the information required by Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 relating to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

Regulation 12(a) requires local planning authorities to prepare a statement setting out:

- i) who has been consulted during preparation of the SPD
- ii) the main issues raised by the consultees
- iii) how these issues have been addressed in the SPD

Regulation 12(b) requires that this statement is made available when the draft SPD is published for consultation.

##### i. The persons the local planning authority consulted when preparing the supplementary planning document

The Council is carrying a Conservation Area Appraisal, Management Plan, and Development Guidelines to be adopted as SPD.

The draft SPD invited the following Stakeholders to inform the preparation of the SPD;

- English Heritage.
- County Archaeologist, Lancashire County council.
- Blackburn History Society
- Margaret Keighley, Park Manager.
- Victorian Society.
- Garden History Society
- Lancashire Gardens Trust.

ii. A summary of the main issues raised by those persons

- A meeting was arranged with the chair of the Blackburn History Society Ray Smith who gave some historical background to the area and expressed an interest in pursuing a blue plaque scheme for the area and preparing heritage trails.
- Margaret Keighley the Park Manager expressed an interest in pursuing a heritage lottery bid to restore the Conservatory in the Park.
- Comments were not received from the other stakeholders.

iii. How those issues have been addressed in the supplementary planning document

The SPD contains information relating to the two areas identified above.

- The promotion of a Blue Plaque scheme is set out in section 9.5 of the Management Plan as raised by the Blackburn History Society.
- Supporting and contributing to a Heritage Lottery bid for the restoration of the Conservatory in the Park is a key Action in Section 5.5 of the Management Plan.

Planning Policy

Regeneration Department

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

January 2013