



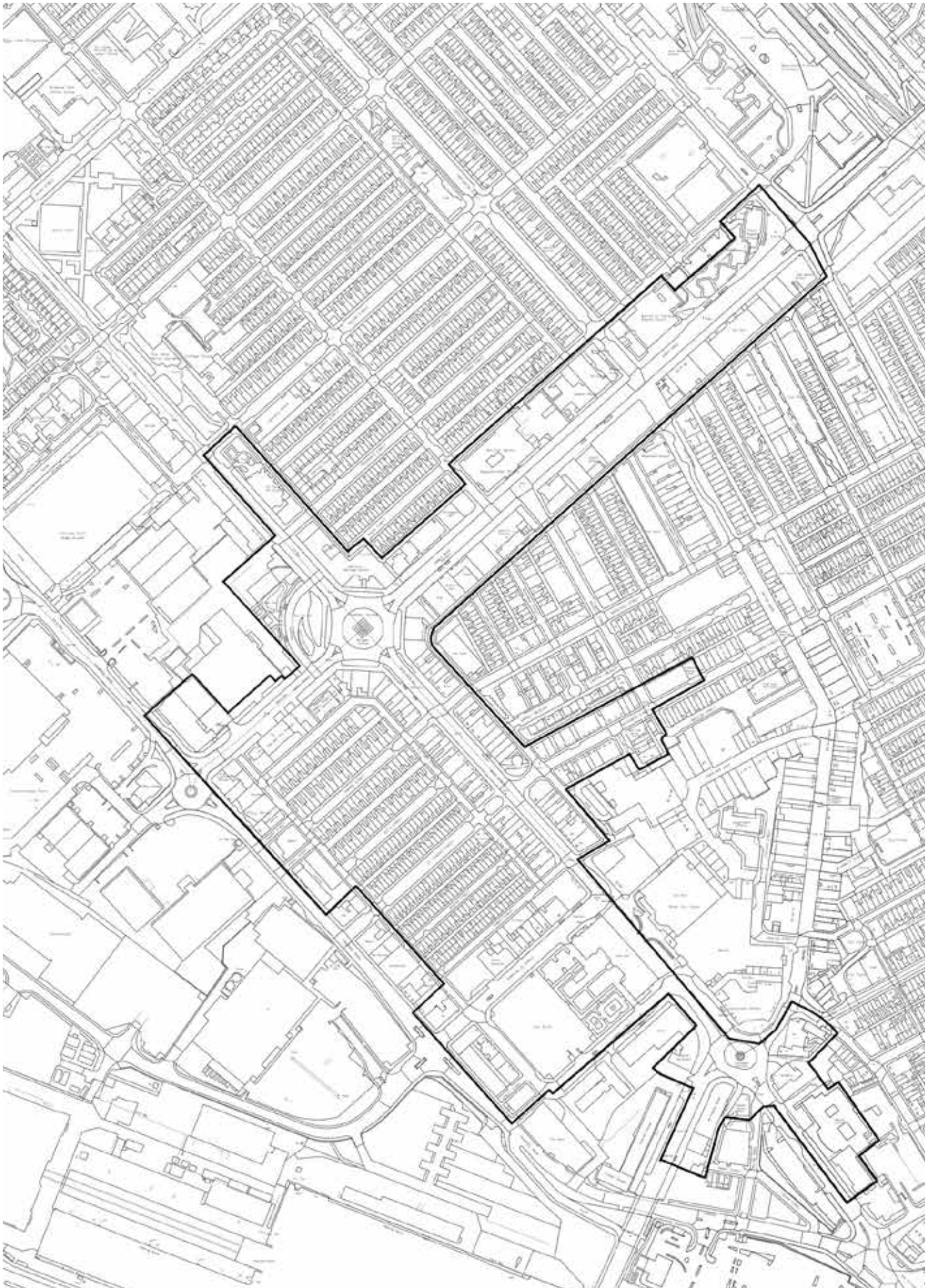
Westmorland
& Furness
Council

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Central Barrow Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

October 2025





Map Showing Conservation Area Boundary

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The Duke of Edinburgh Pub, Abbey Road

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been prepared by Buttress on behalf of Westmorland and Furness Council as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme to support the regeneration of Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness.

The Central Barrow Conservation Area was first designated in 2005 due to its special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which is considered worthy of protection and enhancement. This report builds on the work of the 2005 Central Barrow Conservation Area Character Appraisal prepared by Westmorland and Furness Council, bringing it in line with relevant policy changes, and changes to the character, setting, and nature of the conservation area.

1.2 Purpose of the document

The document outlines the history and development of the conservation area and provides a comprehensive breakdown of the area's special character and interests. It aims to identify and explain important local features and materials, identifying buildings and structures which contribute to the area's character, distinctive streetscapes, and important local views. It also highlights features, buildings, and sites which may detract from the area's character or may be at risk of losing their significance. The document builds on this understanding to outline opportunities and potential for positive change, providing guidance for future development, and outlining actions which will facilitate such change.

The conservation area has been surveyed as part of the Historic England Heritage "At Risk" Assessment, and as a consequence has been included on the conservation area "At Risk" Register. This document has been developed in line with Historic England's Advice Note 1 (2nd Edition) Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019).

2.0 Summary

2.1 Summary of special interest

The Central Barrow Conservation Area incorporates a layout of streets which characterises the ‘boom-town’ spirit of the middle of the 19th-century. Centred on Duke Street, the conservation area covers the civic core of the town, along with the more traditional retail streets and worker housing associated with the growth of Barrow. The strong physical and visual connections between Duke Street and the industrial areas adjacent, highlight the almost ‘stage-set’ nature of the buildings fronting these broad avenues, and capture an important element of the historic development of Barrow.

2.2 Key characteristics:

- The town's settlement reflects the rapid industrial and economic growth that occurred in the town in the 19th-century. The grid-iron street pattern and back-to-back worker housing reflect the planned nature of the town centre.
- The residential and retail areas of the town centre lie within close proximity to the large industrial quarter that sits on the coast. Key views out of the conservation area capture this close proximity.
- Barrow Town Hall, St Mary's Church and the statues located in Ramsden Square, and Schneider Square, form the principal landmarks within the town centre.
- The built environment is characterised by 19th and early 20th-century buildings that were constructed during Barrow's 'boom-town' phase. These buildings reflect the industrial and economic prosperity of the town during this period and embody a sense of civic pride.
- The wide set streetscape of Duke Street, along with the more intimate Cavendish Street, form two of the principal shopping streets in the town centre and are characterised by predominantly high-quality 19th-century buildings.

2.3 Summary of issues and opportunities

The protection and enhancement of the special character of the conservation area depends on the positive conservation management of the town. In addition to the existing national statutory legislation and local planning policy controls the following opportunities for protection and enhancement have been identified:

Buildings at Risk

Promote and secure the repair, reuse and regeneration of Barrow's buildings of heritage interest.

Gap Sites

Promote the redevelopment of gap sites. Ensure that new development is high-quality and responds appropriately to its context and the historic environment.

New Development and Design

Promote high-quality new development that responds appropriately to its context.

Demolition

Ensure that demolition is effectively managed.

Detractor Sites

Ensure that detractor sites are effectively managed.

Shopfronts

Promote the repair, retention and restoration of historic shopfronts, and the appropriate and high quality design of new and contemporary shopfronts.

Protection of historic features and architectural characteristics

Encourage the protection and restoration of historic detailing. Encourage the use of appropriate materials and detailing when making change to buildings within the conservation area.

Public realm

Encourage the enhancement of the public realm to enhance the character of the conservation area. Ensure that new interventions and changes to the public realm are appropriate to the historic environment.

Public art

Encourage the wider use of public art schemes.

Key views and setting

Ensure that Key Views and the setting of the conservation area is protected and maintained, and enhanced where possible.

Celebration of history and identity

Promote and celebrate local identity and the special historic interest of Barrow.

Green Space

Explore the opportunity to introduce more green space and recreational areas into the conservation area.

Sustainability

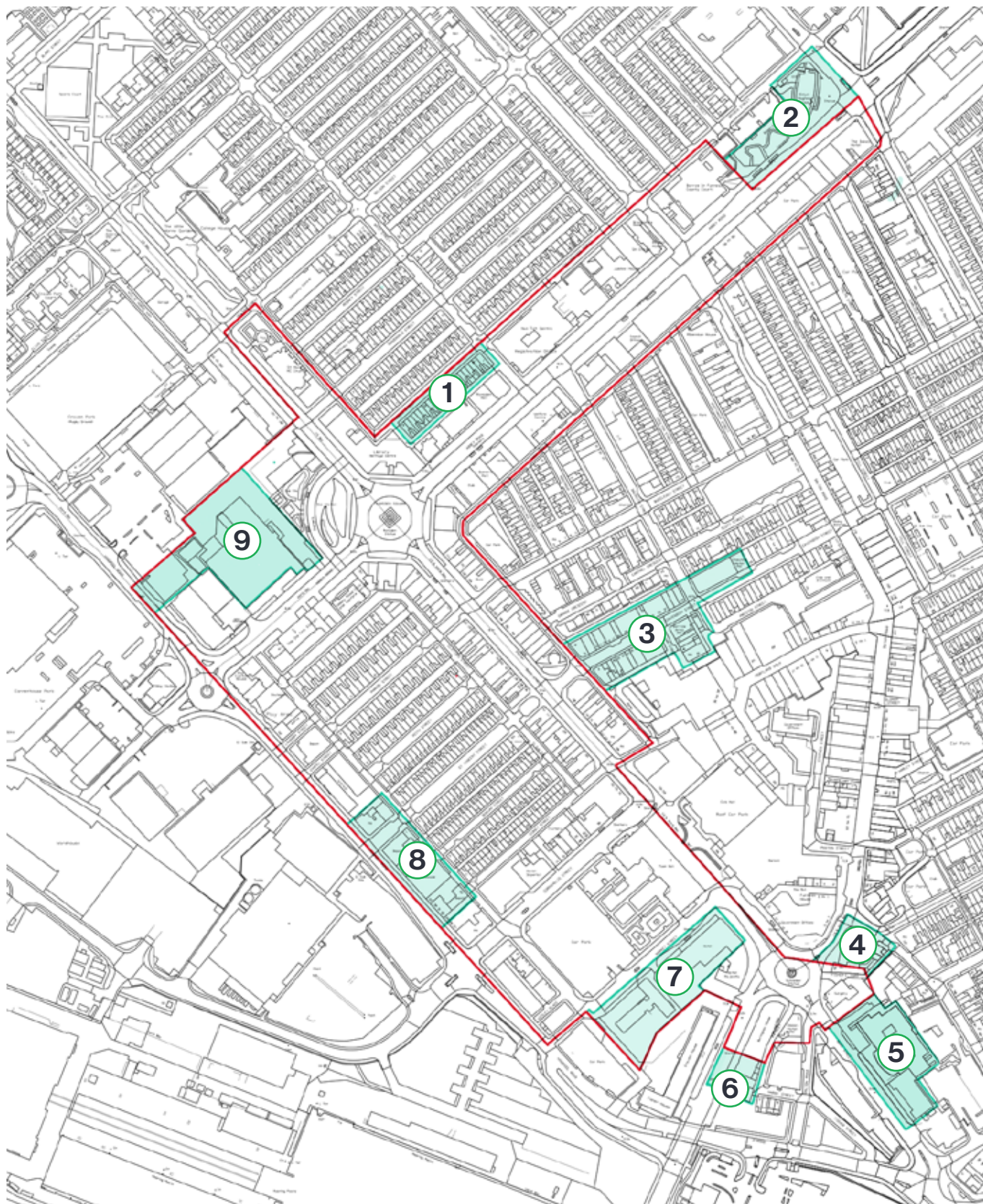
Consider sustainable approaches when designing new shopfronts and making changes and enhancements to buildings.



Conservative Club, Abbey Road

3.0 Proposed changes to the conservation area

The existing Central Barrow Conservation Area was designated in 2005. As part of this appraisal, the existing adopted boundary has been reviewed and the following alterations have been proposed in line with changes to the character, setting, and significance of the conservation area:



1 - Exclusion of Residential Terraces on Hawke St

The terraces along Hawke St offer no specific architectural interest. They relate to the wider residential area to the north and do not contribute specifically to the significance or understanding of the conservation area.

2 - Inclusion of Coronation Gardens

Coronation Gardens provides an area of high-quality green space, the inclusion of this within the conservation area would introduce additional protection of this space. The gardens also have potential for sub-surface archaeological remains.

3 - Inclusion of Cavendish Street

This street contains buildings of architectural interest that meet the standard of the wider Duke Street area and contribute to the understanding of past retail development in the area. Examples of high-quality features of interest include ghost signage above 'Baby Bitz' shopfront, Strong architectural variation at upper floors with ornate and interesting details.

This would form its own character area within the conservation area. The former Roxy Cinema building is to be included as a building of interest with potential for future enhancement.

4 - Inclusion of King's Arms Pub

The existing boundary cuts through between the King's Arms pub and the adjoining chemist building. The pub sits within the wider context of the square and contributes to its setting and appreciation. The Pub also has potential archaeological interest relating to previous phases of Barrow's development.

5 - Inclusion of Alfred Barrow Health Centre and School Building

The former Alfred Barrow school building (now ambulance station) is a prominent listed building within the town and contributes to the wider setting of Schneider Square. The new health centre contributes high-quality contemporary design to the conservation area.

6 - Inclusion of Buildings of Michaelson Road

Currently excluded buildings are of the same architectural interest as buildings included within the conservation area and hold group value.

7 - Exclusion of Holiday Inn and The Sofa Group Building

These buildings offer no specific contribution to the character of the conservation area. The Sofa Group building is of unsympathetic design and form.

8 - Exclusion of low-quality buildings along Hindpool Rd

These buildings make no contribution to the character or setting of the conservation area and are of low architectural quality. Removal from the conservation area may encourage redevelopment. Club M as building of merit.

9 - Exclusion of Modern Retail Units around Abbey Road South

Modern retail units, including Costa, Subway and The Range. These buildings, along with their car parks offer no contribution to the character of the conservation area.

4.0 Living in a conservation area

4.1 Summary

Conservation areas exist to protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place - in other words the features that make it unique and distinctive.

Although conservation areas mean some extra planning controls and considerations, these exist to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the place special. They are most likely to affect owners who want to work on the outside of their building or any trees on their property. For further information on conservation areas and how they are managed, please see Historic England's advice page, visit: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/conservation-areas/>

4.2 Your home

Many conservation areas have Article 4 Directions in place which impose special planning measures on properties that lie within the conservation area boundary. The Central Barrow Conservation Area does not currently have an Article 4 Direction in place.

Nonetheless, Permitted Development (PD) rights are slightly different in conservation areas compared to other areas. This means that you need to make planning applications for some forms of development which would not need such applications outside of conservation areas. For example:

- Detailed residential changes like two-storey extensions, dormer windows, and stone cladding
- Extensions to retail premises (smaller floorspace increases; appearance should match the existing; limitations to click and collect facilities)
- Industrial and warehouse buildings (smaller floorspace increases)
- Controls on materials for buildings on the site of a school, college, university or hospital
- Limitations on change of use such as retail or agricultural to dwelling house.

4.3 Demolition

If you live in a conservation area and want to demolish your building, you will need Planning Permission. If the building is listed you will also need Listed Building Consent.

4.4 Trees

If you want to cut down, top, or lop any but the smallest of trees in a conservation area you must notify your Local Planning Authority (LPA) six weeks before work begins. The authority will then consider the contribution the tree makes to the character of the area and if necessary create a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to protect it.

4.5 Benefits of living in a conservation area

Financial benefits:

People value conservation areas for their distinctiveness, visual appeal and historic character and research by the London School of Economics and Historic England has found that this value is reflected in the price of properties in conservation areas.

Generally properties may cost more and appreciate in price more than properties in other areas, even after adjusting for location and other factors.

Architectural and historical value:

Conservation areas often boast a rich architectural heritage, featuring historically significant buildings, landmarks, and unique streetscapes. Living in such an area allows residents to be surrounded by aesthetically pleasing and historically valuable structures, enhancing sense of place and cultural identity.

Preservation and quality development:

Living in a conservation area means adhering to some more specific planning controls and design guidelines. While these may require additional permissions for alterations or developments, they help maintain and enhance the area's overall visual appeal, ensuring that changes align with the area's historic character, while introducing high-quality, durable design to the area in which you live.

Environmental considerations:

Conservation areas often prioritise environmental sustainability and the protection of natural elements. Preserving green spaces, mature trees, and wildlife habitats within these areas can contribute to improved air quality, biodiversity, and overall environmental health.



Appraisal

5.0 Location, context and setting

Barrow-in-Furness is situated at the southernmost tip of the Furness Peninsular, in South-west Cumbria, linked to Kendal, and the M6 motorway, via the A590.

Barrow is a lively industrial town with a mix of commercial, residential, and industrial uses. It provides key shopping and social services for the surrounding settlements.

Set beyond the Cumbrian mountains and the Lake District, Barrow lies within a relatively flat landscape on the coastal shelf. Views to the hills in the north are far ranging and not dominant or significant within the context of the setting or character of the area.

More significant is the adjacency of the industrial quarter to the southwest of the town centre. The ground level falls to the southwest, such that Hindpool Road is several metres below the level of Duke Street, allowing views towards the industrial buildings and dockside development to the west and south of the conservation area, including: along Abbey Road; glimpse views from Duke Street; and radial views between buildings around Schneider Square.

The regular layout of the streets forms strong axial views both within, and in and out of the conservation area.

The principal approach to the town, the A590, links to the town centre down Hindpool Road, connecting to Duke Street via Ramsden Square. Ramsden Square forms a strong gateway at the junction of Abbey Road and Duke Street; the two formal axes through the centre of Barrow-in-Furness.

At the south-eastern edge of the Central Barrow Conservation Area, Schneider Square forms a secondary gateway, less formal than that at Ramsden Square.

6.0 Planning policy context

6.1 National planning context

A conservation area is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving and/or enhancing the character of appearance of the area.

The demolition of a building within a conservation area will usually require planning permission from the Council. It is now a criminal offence to carry out demolition in a conservation area without Planning Permission. Cutting down a tree or carrying out any extensive pruning work to a tree within a conservation area will require the Council to be notified six weeks in advance.

6.2 Local planning policy

In 2023 Westmorland and Furness Council began operating as a unitary authority, replacing Cumbria County Council, Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council. At the time of writing, the local plans from the old councils remain in place, and the council will continue to decide planning applications in line with these existing local plans, until the adoption of a new holistic local plan. When adopted, this will replace all the existing local plans, and should be referenced accordingly. Current local policy relevant to the following document includes:

Policy HE4 of the Barrow Borough Local Plan 2016- 2031 states that ‘Development within or affecting the setting of conservation areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area. Proposals for all new development, including alterations and extensions to buildings and their re-use, must be sensitive and appropriate to the character of the area.’

Other policies relevant to the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas include: HE1 Heritage Assets and their setting, HE2 Information Required for Proposals Involving Heritage Assets, HE3 Listed Buildings, HE5 Demolition in a Conservation Area, DS5 Design, and N4 Protecting other Wildlife Features.



7.0 History and development

7.1 Early history

It appears that the earliest visitors to the Furness Peninsula were Mesolithic, (Middle Stone Age), followed by Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age people, although no evidence of their existence has been found within the Central Barrow area. Despite widespread Roman settlement across wider Cumbria, there is no evidence for Roman settlement in Barrow-in-Furness.

Although West Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness were never conquered by the Angles, the multiplicity of Anglian place names in Low Furness proves Anglian colonisation: i.e., Dalton, Newton and Ulverston. During the 9th and 10th-centuries Furness became a refuge for the Vikings, who essentially farmed the uplands. The name Barrow derives from the Norse 'Barrai' meaning either 'bare island' or 'island off the headland'. It was therefore first given to what is now known as Barrow Island. The area we now know as Central Barrow was known as 'New Barrow' when developed at a later date.

Barrow was not mentioned in the 11th-century Domesday Book, suggesting it remained undeveloped and uncultivated at this time. This appears to have been the case until 1190 when the original grange of the monks was situated somewhere near what is now Schneider Square, though no known archaeological evidence exists.

Barrow's late and slow development is a characteristic feature of its history. By the middle of the 18th-century Barrow consisted of only eight houses, five of which were farmhouses and by the middle of the 19th-century the population had only reached around 150. It was essentially an agricultural community, although the shelter of Walney Island offered a safe harbour at Barrow and a small port of jetties developed to carry away Furness iron ore to smelting works in Wales and the Midlands.

7.2 The growth of Barrow

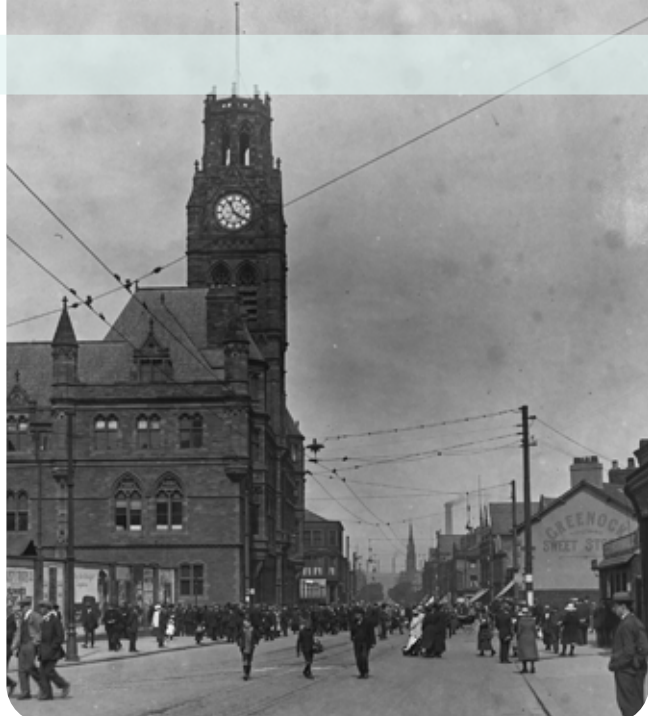


Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness, early 20th-century (Image no.109, Duke Street. Early 20th-century) © Sankey Family Photography Collection published courtesy of Signal Film and Media and Cumbria Archive Service.

The first significant step in the transformation of Barrow was the opening of the Furness Railway in 1846, providing much greater potential for the expansion of the mining industry, carrying iron ore from Dalton, and slate from Kirkby to the port at Barrow. The line was then extended beyond Furness to connect to the national network.

The next major development was the establishing of a local ironworks, with blast furnaces at Hindpool, built by Henry Schneider and Robert Hannay, which started production in 1859. A steel plant was opened by James Ramsden (the Duke of Devonshire and a major local landowner) in 1865 and acted as a major driver for Barrow's growth for the following 30 years.

The growth of the town of Barrow was remarkably 'planned' in its form. In 1854 160 acres of land at Hindpool were offered for sale. Under the vision of James Ramsden this land was developed to a plan created by Job Bintley of Kendal,



Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness, early 20th-century (Image no.7743, Duke Street) © Sankey Family Photography Collection published courtesy of Signal Film and Media and Cumbria Archive Service.



Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness (Image no.A553A, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness) © Sankey Family Photography Collection published courtesy of Signal Film and Media and Cumbria Archive Service.

for a residential suburb with sites for social amenity and recreational seafront. The layout consisted of irregular avenues, designed to maximise land values, attract investment, and provide ease of communications. Behind the grand avenues were smaller scale streets of residential terraces.

The town grew phenomenally quickly in the late 19th-century: the population rising from only 50 in 1850 to 45,000 in 1879. The new arrivals were fuelled by the workforce demands for the steel industry. Competition in the steel industry then slowed down growth but it picked up again as Barrow transformed itself into a shipyard town. This saw the population rise to 90,000 in 1917. During the 20th-century the population steadily declined, from 66,300 in 1931 to 56,745 in 2011, however has recently seen a steady rise to 67,407 in 2021.

7.3 Later history

The Vickers shipyard remained a key presence within the town and contributed significantly to the war effort during the Second World War. This resulted in Barrow becoming a target for the Luftwaffe and the town suffered significant bombing raids, known as the Barrow Blitz.

After the War, Barrow reached a peak population of 77,900 in 1951. The post-war period marked the beginning of a slow decline in Barrow's industry. The ironworks closed in 1963 and the small steelworks in 1983; leaving the shipyard as the town's principal industry. From the 1960s the shipyard concentrated on submarine manufacture, constructing several classes of submarines for the Royal Navy, and also those of other nations. The shipyards declined significantly in the 1980s and 1990s, with unemployment reaching 10% in 1995. There has recently been a revival however, with the shipyards (now owned by BAE) now constructing the UK's new Trident class nuclear missile submarines.

The changing fortunes of Barrow's principal industry has had major impacts on the wider economy and consequently on the built form of the town.



Map Showing Listed Structures and Buildings of Merit

8.0 Heritage and archaeology

7.4 Archaeological significance

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Central Barrow Conservation Area. Although most of the conservation area was not developed until the latter half of the 19th-century, the area around Schneider Square lies within the zone occupied by the earlier settlement. There may therefore be evidence below ground of earlier development, which is undisturbed.

The Historic Environment Record (HER)

The Historic Environment Record for Barrow lies with Westmorland and Furness Council. Records are partially available online through a digital mapping system. Full information can be accessed through contact with the records office.

7.5 Listed buildings

There are currently a total of 145 listed buildings and structures within the Central Barrow Conservation Area. Listed buildings are heritage assets which have been designated, or 'listed' due to their special architectural and/or historic interest.

Listed buildings are included on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE). Buildings and structures on the list are given one of three grades: Grade I (exceptional interest); Grade II* (particularly important); and Grade II (nearly 92% of all listed buildings of special interest).

The listed buildings that currently lie within the Central Barrow Conservation Area can be seen in Figure 6. The list is constantly being updated and it is always best to check the designation status of a property by visiting the Historic England Website.

7.6 Landmarks and buildings of merit

Alongside the formally designated buildings and structures within the conservation area, there are also a number of non-designated buildings of local architectural and/or historic merit which also contribute to the character of the conservation area.

Additional buildings of merit that are considered to be 'at risk' can be found in 9.8 Buildings At Risk.



86-94 Abbey Road

A traditional red brick terrace with roof features including gables and detailed ridge tiles. Oriel windows, stone window dressings and mullions also feature. Doors feature pediments, fan lights and stone casings.



Co-operative Building, Abbey Road

Former department store constructed in 1889. The red brick building features Dutch style gables, prominent chimney stacks and detailed ridge tiles. The building addresses the corner of Abbey Road and Dalton Road, with windows rounding the corner.



Rossall House, Abbey Road

Rossall House, at the corner of Abbey Road and Hartington Street is a red brick, three storey building. The building has an attractive gable with brick detailing and a two-storey stone bay window.



Salvation Army Building

The Salvation Army Citadel is located adjacent to Rossall House. The roofline creates interest through a turreted façade and Dutch style gable. The red brick building is detailed with sandstone, including a pediment and columns framing the main entrance.



19 Abbey Road

Three-storey red brick building with projecting shopfront, and attractive ashlar banding. Constructed late 19th-century. The shopfront is a later addition but compliments the character of the building well.

Lakeland House

Built in the 1930s, on the site of the former Barrow Jute and Flax Works, Lakeland House was occupied by Barrow Steam Laundry company Lakeland Laundries until 1997. The Art Deco building is two storey, constructed of brick with windows detailed with red lintels and cills.



10 Lawson Street

Three-four storey building at the corner of Lawson Street / Cornwallis Street constructed using red brick and features stone mullions, lintels and window sills.



8-14 Cavendish Street

A high-quality historic shopfront dating from late-19th-century. The shopfront retains a large proportion of its original features including stained glass transom lights and external ghost signage.



Former Hindpool Rd Congregational Church

Built 1857 and rebuilt 1863. Gothic style, constructed of red brick with stone dressings. Significantly modified, with loss of original Gothic style windows and the main entrance door. Front and side elevations have been rendered and pebble dashed. The rear perimeter walls remain as originally built, with the rear elevation forming a key terminating the view along Parade St.



Hollywood (former Roxy Cinema) and The Theatre Bar

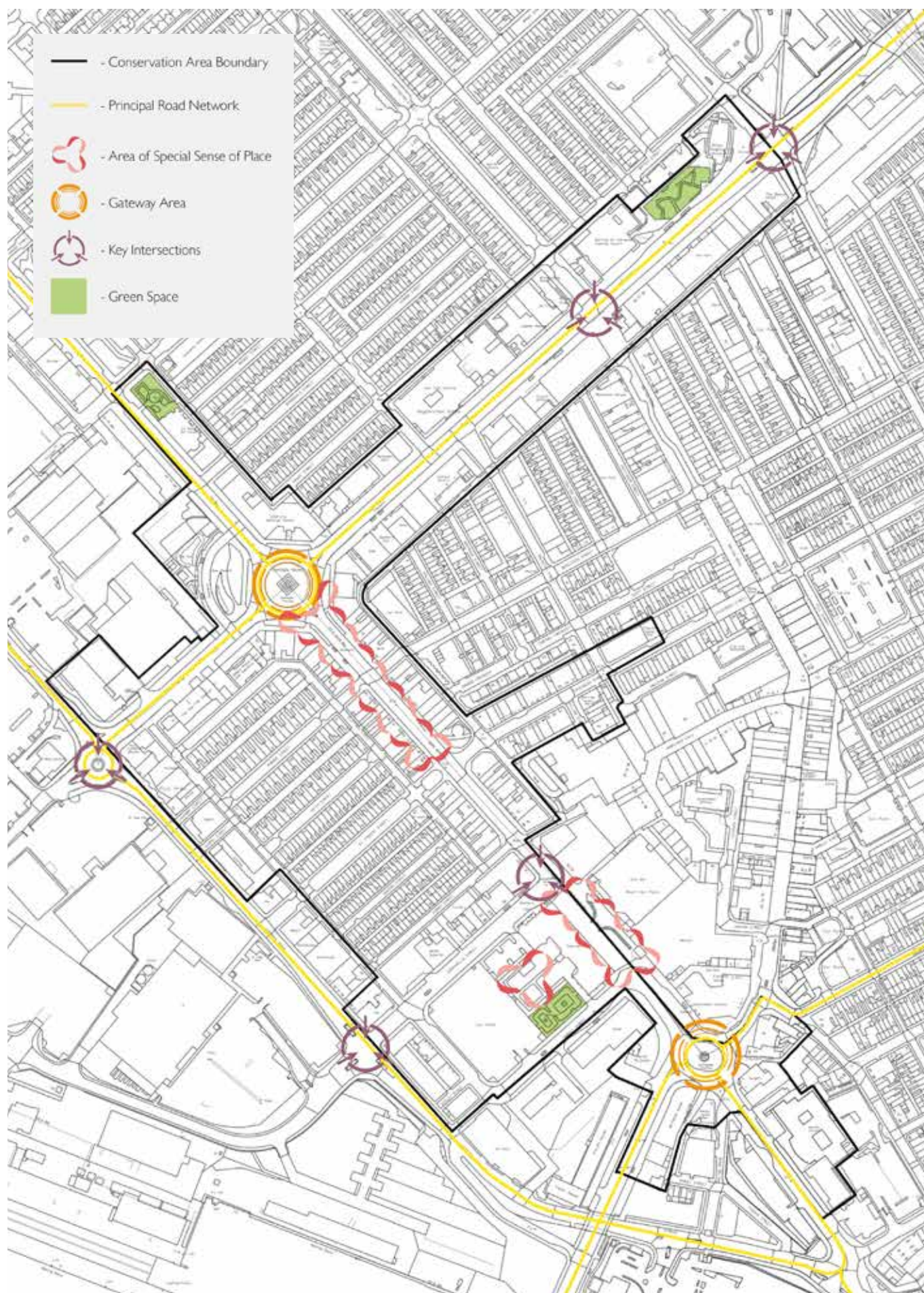
One of the few Art Deco style buildings in the town, the former Roxy Cinema was remodelled in 1937, previously the Royalty Theatre and Opera House. The property was converted into a nightclub in the 1970s and is currently occupied by Hollywood Nightclub.



5 Michaelson Road

Early 20th-century three-storey red brick building with symmetrical elevation facing Michaelson Road. Banded sandstone detailing to match flanking buildings.





Spatial Analysis Map

9.0 Character of the conservation area

9.1 General character

The Central Barrow Conservation Area incorporates a layout of streets which characterises the 'boom-town' spirit of the middle of the 19th-century. The strong physical and visual connections between Duke Street and the industrial areas adjacent, highlight the almost 'stage-set' nature of the buildings fronting these broad avenues, and capture an important element of the historic development of Barrow, as something of a fragile, commercially driven opportunity, rather than the more sustainable and robust growth pattern of a more conventional settlement.

Several negative factors have also been identified. Some areas of the conservation area suffer from a poor standard of maintenance as well as an increasing number of vacant buildings, particularly upper floors, which has led to loss of architectural and heritage details; there are several gap sites within the area, and Ramsden Square in particular, suffers from a lack of 'completeness' in respect of buildings around its perimeter; the residential parts of the area have suffered from incremental changes to windows, doors and the size and proportion of openings; the retail vitality within Duke Street is fragile and there are several vacant shops; other retail units incorporate crude shop fronts and signage, detrimental to the overall heritage quality of the area; Abbey Road incorporates several large buildings, some of which are not in active use, with a consequent impact on the vitality of the streetscape as well as the potential loss of the original details and architectural features of the buildings themselves.



Ramsden Square



View down Duke Street towards Ramsden Square

9.2 Streetscape

Frontages

Strong frontages within the conservation area are provided by many of the listed buildings, including the grid of the terraced houses on Parade Street, Keith Street, St Vincent Street, and Duncan Street. A sense of enclosure is created on Duke Street by the uniform scale of the three-story buildings, as well as a strong frontage provided by the Grade II* listed Town Hall. Ramsden Square and Schneider Square are both subject to strong frontages from listed buildings, however gap sites at Ramsden Square weaken the containment of the gateway.

A small number of gap sites on Duke Street detract from the strong frontage. Policy D20 of the Barrow Borough Local Plan identifies the site at 80-82 Duke Street as a potential infill site, however this space has since received investment in the form of public realm improvements and public art.

Abbey Road is subject to a less uniform frontage than Duke Street. Listed buildings including the Nan Tait Centre, Former Fire Station and Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, along with buildings of merit such as 86-92 Abbey Road and the Salvation Army Building provide a strong frontage to the street, however there are a number of weak frontages and varying setbacks which detract from the containment of the street.

Cavendish Street retains a strong and consistent building line. Variation between two and three-storey buildings creates interest within views towards Dalton Road.

Public Realm and Boundary Treatments

The general street environment varies throughout the conservation area. Historic streetscape features, as well as high-modern interventions and treatments, contribute to Barrow's special character and the sense of place experienced when moving around the conservation area.

Abbey Road and Ramsden Square benefit from attractive public realm, with street trees lining the road and wide pavements. The use of Doric-style bollards and classically detailed roadside fencing provides a high-quality appearance to boundary treatments, that respond positively to the historic environment and contribute to the character of the area. The style of boundary treatment and street furniture becomes more modern towards the junction with Rawlinson Street, and the roundabout at Hindpool Road.

Parade Street, Keith Street, St Vincent Street and Duncan Street all benefit from attractive public realm characterised by cobbled entrances with street trees, which create an effective soft boundary between the commercial Duke Street and the historic residential zone.

The public realm on Duke Street is well designed and sympathetic to the historic character of the area. Investment in areas of open space has been made at the junction of Duke Street / Cavendish Street, a former surface car park which is now the site of a landmark public art piece. Additional enhancements to boundary and surface treatments, and planting were also completed in 2023, which have enhanced the public realm.

The public realm at Hindpool Road is less attractive, resulting in a lower quality, backstreet character. Investment is needed to improve the quality of this area.

Town Square (formerly Cavendish Square) to the north of the Town Hall is a pedestrianised space which benefits from public art and street furniture. Seasonal planting and hanging baskets contribute positively to the character of this area. There is an opportunity to enhance this



Boundary Treatment on Keith Street



Boundary Treatment at Schneider Square



Heritage-style Railings on Duke Street



New Paving and Street Furniture along Duke Street, 2023



Enhanced Public Realm on Duke Street, 2023



New Paving and Planting Between Ramsden Square and Duke Street, 2023

area of public realm to encourage increased dwell time and appreciation of the significant town hall elevations.

The public realm around Schneider Square is well maintained and attractive, contributing to the setting of the Grade II listed statue and the wider setting of the Town Hall. The contemporary boundary treatment introduced in front of the Bupa building offers variation in materials and style while remaining appropriate and attractive.

9.3 Green space

Due to the town centre nature of the Central Barrow Conservation Area, there is very limited green space available.

Coronation Gardens on Abbey Road is one of the few formal areas of public green space. The site was historically occupied by Abbey Road Baptist Church, however the gardens were laid out when the church was destroyed during the Blitz. A long-standing area of public green space, the gardens make an important contribution to the conservation area, both visually and in relation to wider communal value.

The parcel of land to the west of Ramsden Square also provides a small area of green space. This area provides outdoor seating, however due to its main road location, is not ideal for public enjoyment.

The church yard at St Mary's Church also provides an attractive open green space within the conservation area.

There is additional green space to the rear of the Town Hall. The small plot encompasses a statue of Lord Fredrick Cavendish, a well known 19th-century politician, whose father invested heavily in Barrow's local industry.



Green space to the rear of the Town Hall



9.4 Materials and local details

Landmark Buildings

Larger landmark buildings within the conservation area are highly detailed and most often constructed of local sandstone or red brick. Banded detailing and buff or ashlar coursing is seen widely. Windows with arched or segmented heads are also common.

General Buildings

Other residential and commercial buildings within the conservation area feature a range of details and materials. Most common materials and finishes include brick (either traditional red or painted), pebble dash or render, sandstone/ashlar. Detailing varies dependant on age and architectural style however common features include stone detailing and window surrounds, segmented heads and stone mullions.

Other details and features

Local details that are seen across building types include: Chamfered corners, oriel bay windows. Arched window heads, gable signage, upper floor architectural detailing such as floral reliefs or metal fixtures.

9.5 Key views

The key views in a conservation area contribute to how its special character is experienced and understood. Views aid in the understanding of the relationship between landmarks, heritage assets, and the wider setting of the conservation area.

Key Axial Views

Central Barrow Conservation Area comprises of two key routes, Abbey Road and Duke Street which create axial views from north-east to south-west and north-west to south-east respectively.

The view north-west to south-east along Duke Street captures the Grade II* listed Town Hall building and the opposite view, south-east to north-west includes the Grade II listed St Mary's Church. These views are effectively channelled by the strong and largely undisrupted building line along both sides of Duke Street.

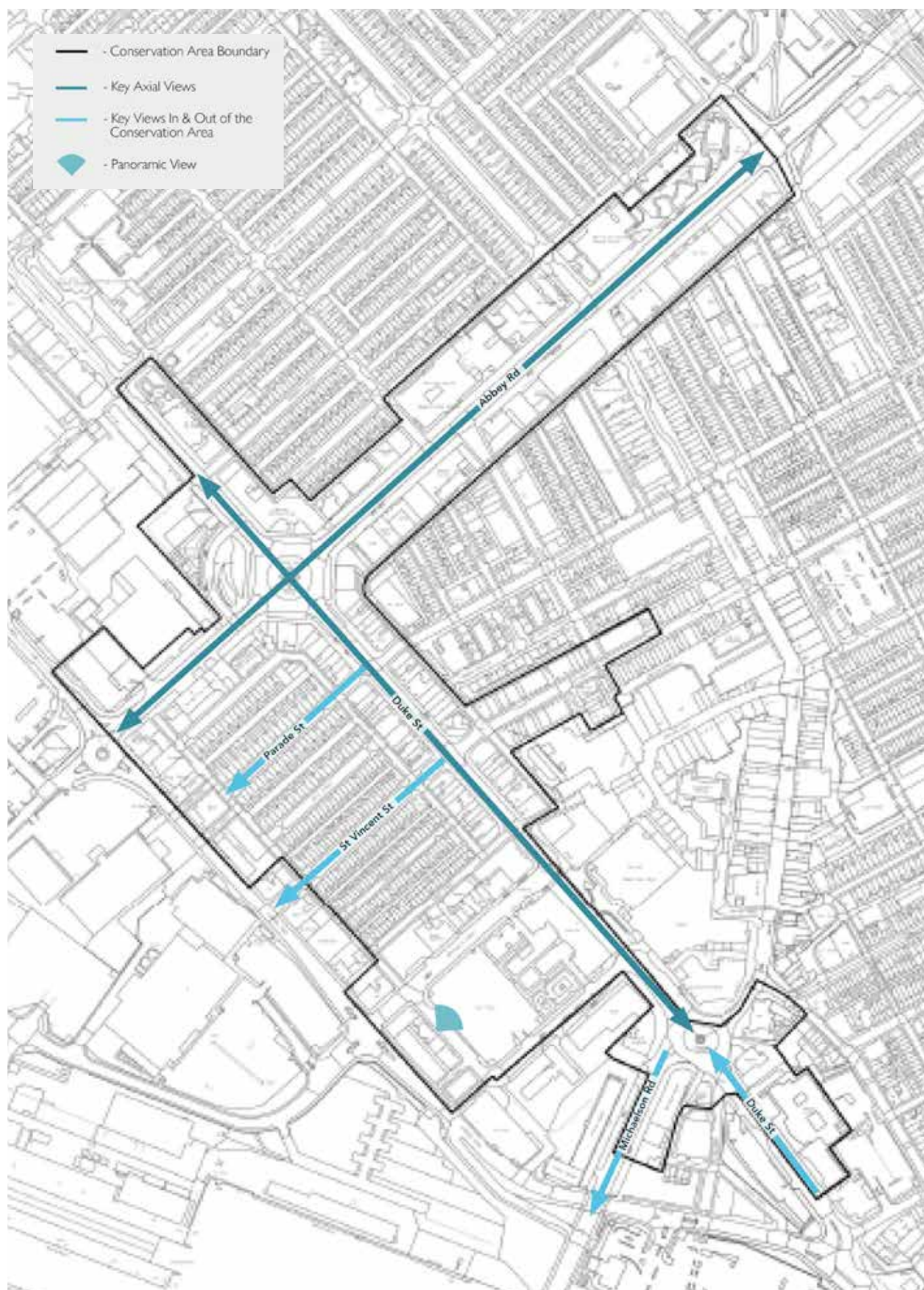
The views along Abbey Road include the Ramsden Square statue, but are otherwise characterised by strong building lines rather than landmark buildings. The views south-west down Abbey Road are terminated in the distance by the dominating industrial skyline characterised by the large BAE Systems warehouses.

Key Views In and Out of the Conservation Area

There are a number of key short ranging views that capture the character of the conservation area, looking both inwards and outwards beyond the boundary.

Views down Parade Street and St Vincent Street out of the conservation area towards Hindpool Road capture the uniform and unbroken frontages of the listed worker housing which lines either side of the streets and are prominently terminated by longer ranging views of the large industrial buildings that sit along the docks. These views capture the juxtaposition of residential and industrial architecture within the wider townscape and aids the understanding of the development of Barrow as an industrial 'boom-town'.

Views out of the conservation area from Schneider Square, down Michaelson Road, capture long ranging vistas across Michaelson Bridge and out towards the Cumbrian Coastline and Barrow Island. These views capture the termination of civic and commercial architecture and the diminishing urban grain as you move towards the industrial quarter.



Map showing Key Views



9.6 Buildings at risk

The following buildings have been highlighted as being at risk of either; being lost entirely, or losing their significance or architectural/historic interest. These buildings are either listed or considered to be buildings of merit, and should be treated as such despite their vulnerable condition.

26-30 Cornwallis Street

The Former Cry Bar is a three storey mid-terraced building dating from the early 19th-century, constructed of redbrick with timber windows and original timber oriel window. The buildings are vacant and in a deteriorating condition.

The former Methodist church / Skint Club

The former Church was constructed in 1862 and enlarged in 1870. The church was constructed using red brick and features Gothic style windows. The original entrance to the south has been removed and both the gables rendered. The former Methodist church / Skint Club on Lawson Street is currently vacant and in a poor state of repair. This building has the potential to contribute positively to the character of the area.

Former Working Men's Club and Institute

On Abbey Road, the Grade II listed former working men's club and institute was badly damaged in a fire in January 2017 and remains in a state of disrepair.



Fire damaged Grade II listed former Working Men's Club

9.7 The heritage 'At Risk' register

Along with the conservation area itself, the Church of St Mary has been placed on the Historic England 'Heritage at Risk' Register due to its poor condition. The church does not visually detract from the conservation area and is considered to contribute positively to its character and setting. However, the building has been subject to stone decay (now addressed) and is currently suffering from defects caused by water ingress.

9.8 Gap sites

Surface Car Park on Hindpool Road

The surface car park located between Lawson Street and Hindpool Road, bound by Wesley Place and Cornwallis Street, creates a gap in the frontage along Hindpool road.

Brownfield Site to the rear of Traditions Pub

The excavated brownfield site the rear of the Traditions pub, on the junction of Lawson Street and St. Vincent Street, is unattractive and creates a weak frontage and corner.

Land to the west of Ramsden Sq

Brownfield site to the rear of the public realm surrounding Ramsden Square bus stops. This area detracts from the setting of the adjacent listed buildings and the wider setting of the square. The site would benefit from sympathetic infill development.

Duke St Car Park

The surface car park adjacent to the former Wilko building creates a weak frontage along Duke Street and exposes the blank elevations of the former Wilko store which detract from the character of the conservation area.

116-118 Duke Street

Small parcel of land bound by three storey construction on the junction between Ramsden Square and Duke Street. The site is currently occupied by a small car park. The site detracts from the strong frontages of Duke Street and Ramsden Square.

57 Duke Street

Small parcel of land on the junction between Duke Street and Sidney Street. Currently occupied by a surface car park and fronted by a large billboard, the site detracts from the character of Duke Street.

Site on Junction of Ramsden Square and Abbey Road

Small parcel of land bound by three storey construction on the junction between Ramsden Square and Abbey Road. The site is currently occupied by a small car park. The site detracts from the strong enclosure of Ramsden Square.

Land off Abbey Road/Dalkeith Street

This is a small brownfield site that visually detracts from the strong frontage along Abbey Road.

9.9 Detractor sites

Detractor sites are identified as buildings or plots in the conservation area that detract from its character and/or appearance. This may be due to factors such as materiality, unsympathetic design, or inappropriate alteration or extensions. It may be just one of these factors that results in the building or site being considered as a detractor.

Buildings of any age can be defined as detractors however no historic buildings have been designated as such within the conservation area. This is because despite their variety, they tend to fit in with the general character and appearance of the conservation area. Any that were in poor condition were identified as 'at risk' rather than detractors.

The following sites have been highlighted as detractor sites and should be considered for redevelopment or enhancement.

Hindpool Road Frontages

North-west along Hindpool Road are weak frontages created by the poorly maintained Old Business Depot.

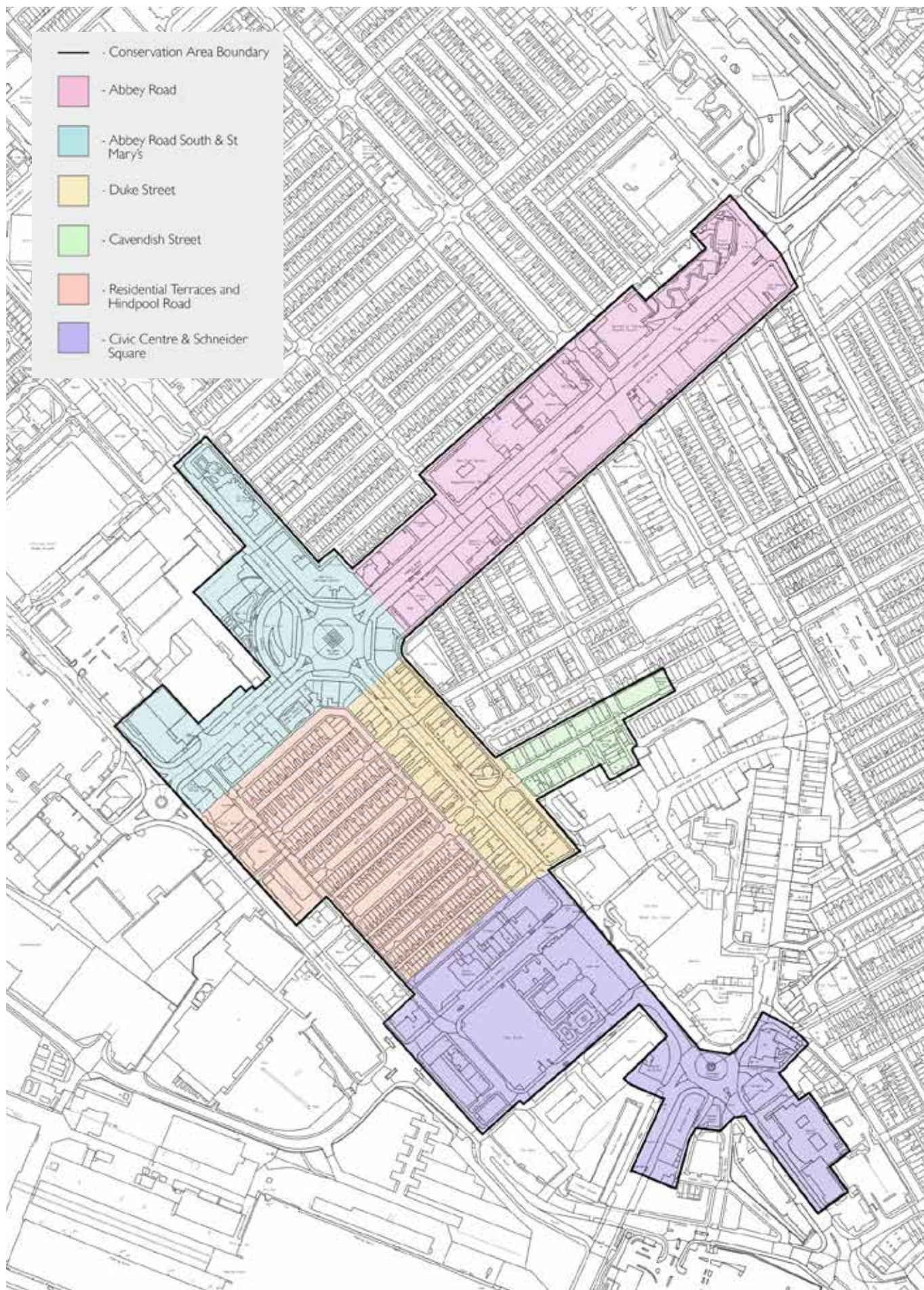
3 Cavendish Street

Pebble-dashed corner plot with brown ground floor cladding and two-storey corner chamfer. This building is appropriate in scale and form however its materials and lack of architectural detailing detract from the character of Cavendish Street.

13 High Street and Former Council Offices

Two-storey red brick building with pebble-dashed finish on Abbey Road elevation, and surface car park on the High Street elevation. Adjoined to the south-west is a two-storey red brick building with large orange panelling on Abbey Road elevation and blue banded detail at the eaves.

The car park results in a weak frontage along High Street that is inconsistent with the rest of the street. The design of the buildings does not respond to the character of the conservation area, and the use of materials such as uPVC windows detracts from the quality of the streetscape.



Character Areas Map

10.0 Character areas

10.1 Overview

The Central Barrow Conservation Area incorporates a significant part of the network of James Ramsden's gridded street layout, which can be divided into a series of sub areas, each of which displays different characteristics in respect of built form and general ambience. These include Duke Street and Abbey Road, (which in turn display a range of character changes along their length), Hindpool Road and the network of residential streets between Duke Street and Hindpool Road, Cavendish Street, and the civic centre surrounding the Town Hall and Schneider Square. Each of these areas is discussed in more detail in the following section.

10.2 Character Area 1: Abbey Road

10.2.1 Summary of character

Abbey Road forms one of the principal routes in and out of Barrow town centre and is a busy main road through the town. Although the buildings on Abbey Road are not as unified or consistent with each other as those along Duke Street, there is a very strong character to the street itself, in terms of the axial formality of the alignment, the unifying quality of the street trees, and a generally consistent building line.

Overall, the street is wider and more expansive than other streets within the town, with wide set pavements, lined with trees along the road edge. The trees create a high-quality street environment with a defined and filtered view directly up and down the main road.

The key axial view south-west down Abbey Road is terminated by the large BAE System dock buildings which captures the wider character and nature of Barrow's industrial development. The street also includes the northern gateway to the pedestrian high street along Dalton Road.

10.2.2 Architectural character

The architectural styles of buildings on Abbey Road vary significantly due to the combination of traditional buildings and more modern infill. Buildings are predominantly large-scale civic or communal buildings, with a small number of commercial buildings on the south side of the street.

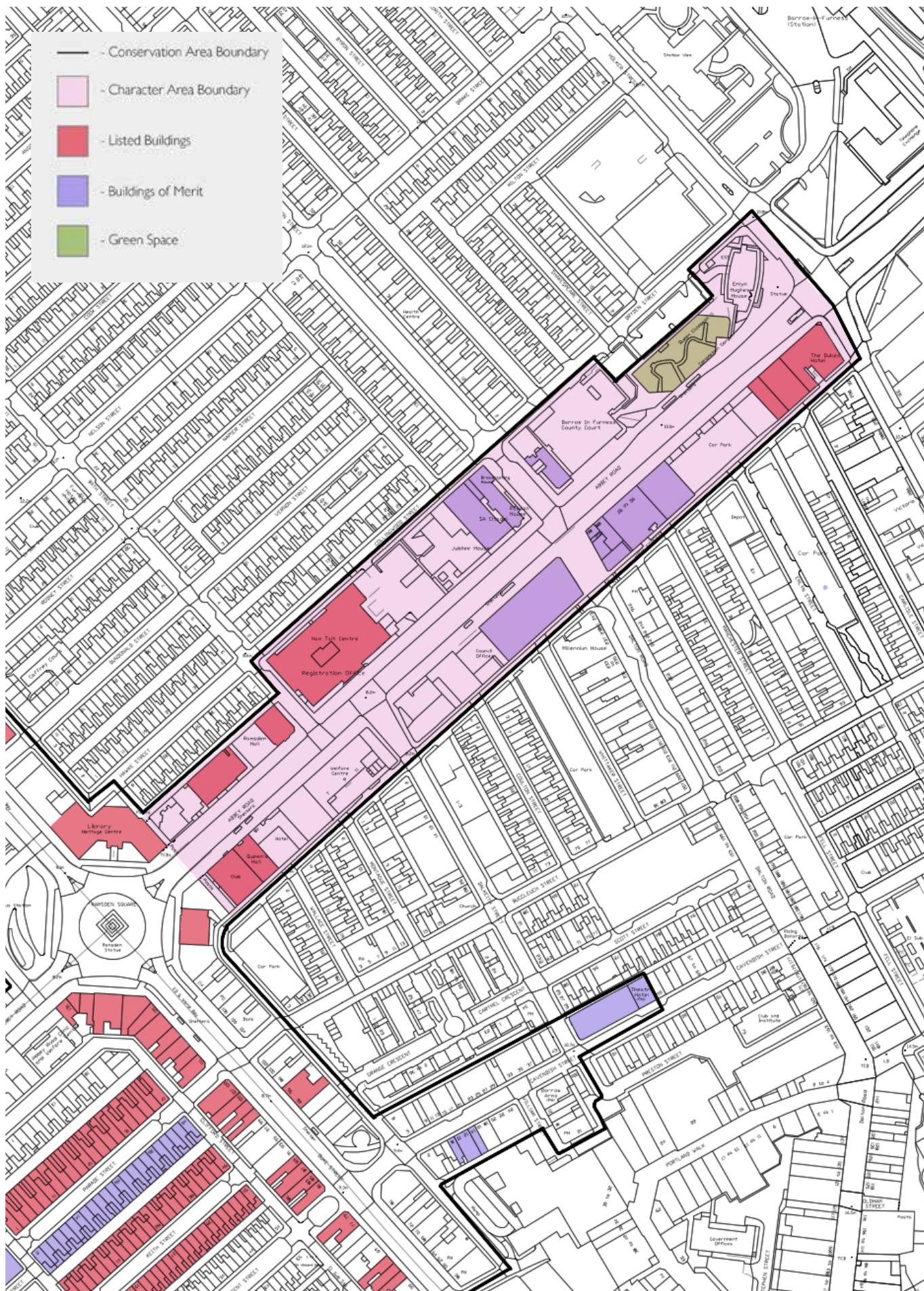
The 17th-century Oxford Chambers, Cooke's Buildings and Duke of Edinburgh Hotel are red brick with ashlar sandstone dressings, and are built in a Gothic revival style. Bay and oriel windows are common features of traditional windows on Abbey Road, particularly in the terrace rows.

Roof lines include dormer windows, detailed gables and decorative ridge tiles. Buff detailing is common on red brick buildings including the Grade II listed Nan Tait Centre, 86-94 Abbey Road and the former Cooperative Building. The Cooke's Buildings feature the traditional signage from when the building was formerly used as a tobacconists.

More modern buildings vary greatly in style. Mid to late 20th-century two storey buildings are constructed using brown and red brick and include materials such as pebble dash. The flat roofs of these buildings contrast with the detailed roof lines of the traditional buildings.

10.2.3 Opportunities for management and enhancement

- There are a large number of gap sites along Abbey Road, as well as vacant historic buildings. There is an opportunity to redevelop and regenerate these sites in a way that contributes to the special character of the conservation area.



Map showing Character Area 1

- The restoration of the Grade II listed Conservative Club and the fire damaged Grade II listed Working Men's Club and Institute.
- The streetscape is generally well maintained. This should be preserved and enhanced where possible. There is an opportunity to enhance street furniture towards the junction with Rawlinson Street to ensure style and quality is consistent along the street.
- The buildings along Abbey Road retain high-quality historic detailing and features, where historic buildings have been well maintained. These features should be protected and maintained wherever possible, and opportunities should be sought to reinstate or reveal lost or concealed features where appropriate.





10.3 Character Area 2: Abbey Road South and St Mary's

10.3.1 Summary of character

The character of Abbey Road south is more varied than that of Abbey Road north and Duke Street. It includes the mid-century former John Whinnerah Institute Building and adjacent Lakeland House, the Grade II listed early 20th-century Central Fire Station, and later 20th-century buildings. To the south-west of Ramsden Square is an area of public open space, the location of the Grade II listed war memorial. Beyond this is a large surface car park which detracts from this character area.

Abbey Road south of Ramsden Square, as it extends towards the docks, is of lesser significance. The street generally has a similar wide, tree-lined character to the rest of Abbey Road but modern insensitive development has often replaced the historical form and disrupted spatial arrangement of the street frontage. The exceptions are the fine Edwardian fire station and interesting art deco Lakeland House opposite.

St Mary of Furness Catholic Church

North west, along Duke Street, the Grade II listed Catholic Church of Saint Mary's dominates the streetscape. Although development to the southern side of the road has no heritage merit, the street trees provide a unifying effect and reinforce the strong linear character of Duke Street.

Ramsden Square

Ramsden Square provides an important arrival point to the town centre and anchors the junction of Duke Street and Abbey Road. The western side of the Square has never been fully developed and, combined with the relative weakness of the enclosure of the eastern side of the Square, the space is somewhat lacking in continuity of development. However, the formality of the axes of Abbey Road and Duke Street, radiating out from the square give it a strong sense of place and it encapsulates the planned and structured layout of Ramsden's proposals for the town. The buildings around its perimeter are all listed and include the Public Library on the northern side.

10.3.2 Opportunities for management and enhancement

- There is an opportunity to enhance the quality of the public realm and boundary treatments within this area to bring their appearance and style in line with that of Abbey Road and Duke Street.
- There are a number of gap sites within the Ramsden Square area, as well as along Abbey Road South. There is an opportunity to redevelop and regenerate these sites in a way that contributes to the special character of the conservation area. Where new development is proposed, design should seek to reinstate and consolidate the building lines around the Square and along abbey road to create strong frontages.



10.4 Character Area 3: Duke Street

10.4.1 Summary of character

Historically, Duke street was one of the primary retail streets in the town. It plays host to a range of architecturally interesting and significant buildings, and contributes significantly to the character of the town.

Together with Abbey Road, Duke Street forms the principal axis around which the grid of streets within the town is constructed. The street is characterised by unbroken frontages of three-storey buildings, terminated to the southeast by the town hall. The uniformity of the building line to either side of the wide street and generous pavement, gives the street as a whole a consistency of character, although there are several distinct zones along its length.

Unlike Abbey Road, Duke Street is instead characterised by smaller scale retail/commercial uses in terrace form which gives the road a more intimate feel. These generally remain in the commercial use for which they were first planned but condition and quality has fluctuated with the economic condition of the town and continues to do so. Buildings mostly have some historical architectural interest but generally have significance from their group value rather than as individual assets.

10.4.2 Architectural character

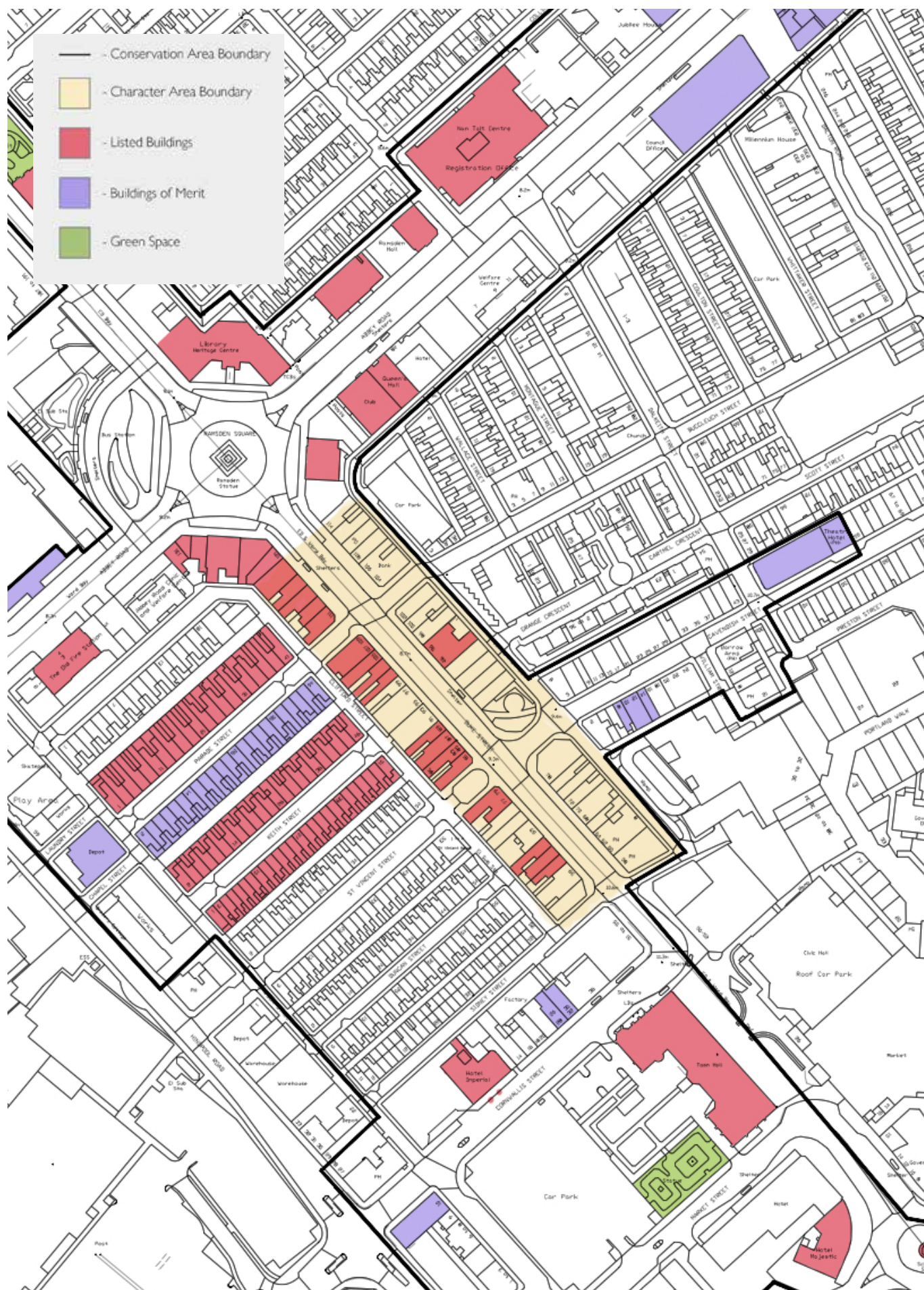
Although the scale of the buildings is uniform, the age and style of the buildings along Duke Street varies as you move along it, exhibiting a range of roof lines, window shapes and building materials. Chamfered corners are a key architectural characteristic seen along Duke Street, marking the end of building lines and the conjunction of streets. This feature is replicated across buildings of all styles and ages to provide a consistent approach along the street.

These buildings include predominantly late Victorian buildings, concentrated towards Ramsden Square and on the south side of the street. Victorian buildings are largely constructed of red brick with stone detailing and arched window heads. Many of these buildings also retain historic shopfronts.

There are also mid 20th-century and modern additions which are predominantly concentrated on the north side of the street. These buildings also utilise red brick but often feature less ornate detailing and have lower quality shopfronts. Modern development towards the town hall is typically of lower quality and does not contribute to the special character of the area.

10.4.3 Opportunities for management and enhancement

- There is an opportunity to repair, restore or replace unsympathetic or inappropriate shopfronts. The restoration of historic features and frontages should be carried out where appropriate to the building and where historic precedents are available or where existing features have been lost or obscured.
- Where examples of high-quality historic detailing and architectural features remain, these should be protected and maintained wherever possible, and opportunities should be sought to reinstate or reveal lost or concealed features where appropriate.



Map showing Character Area 3



10.5 Character Area 4: Cavendish Street

10.5.1 Summary of character

Sitting just off Duke Street, Cavendish Street forms a secondary retail zone and is characterised by its narrower street form and smaller scale buildings. Building uses are predominantly small scale retail/commercial, with a number of high-quality shopfronts retaining historic features.

First and second floor frontages often feature interesting decorative features such as moulded coursing and tiling, similar to those seen along Duke Street. There are also a number of examples of ghost signage along Cavendish Street relating to the historic building uses, such as that seen on the exposed gable of No. 8-14, a former Victorian tailors.

The architectural character and significance of the Cavendish Street diminishes significantly as the road extends north-east towards Dalton Road.

The former Roxy Cinema is one of the larger buildings within this area of the conservation area and is a building of local merit. The buildings contribution to the conservation area is limited due to its poor state of repair and loss of features.

10.5.2 Opportunities for management and enhancement

- There is an opportunity to maintain, enhance and reintroduce architectural features on the upper floors of buildings. These features contribute to the character of the street, however they are at risk of being lost or obscured by modern interventions and alteration.
- There is an opportunity to enhance existing historic shopfronts through effective care and maintenance, and restore and replace inappropriate shopfronts with more appropriate frontages. Many historic shopfronts have been altered or lost along Cavendish Street, specifically towards Dalton Road which reduces the special character of the area.





10.6 Character Area 5: Residential Terraces and Hindpool Road

10.6.1 Summary of character

The tight knit grid of predominantly residential streets to the south western side of Duke Street, forms an attractive and permeable part of the town centre.

The conjunction of Duke Street to the north east and the employment areas of the docks to the south west, reflects the very structured and 'planned' nature of the town and its essential qualities as a commercial 'campus'. Parade Street and Keith Street are listed Grade II, although there has been considerable alterations to dwellings in the area as a whole, including changes in the proportions, size and shape of openings; replacement of original timber windows and doors by uPVC and/or inappropriate designs, loss of chimney stacks and pots and an invasion of satellite dishes.

The 19th-century terraced housing was constructed for workers and is strongly associated with the industrial boom that defined the development of Barrow-in-Furness. The strong and consistent building line of the terraces creates channelled and significant views both within, and out of, the conservation area towards the docks.

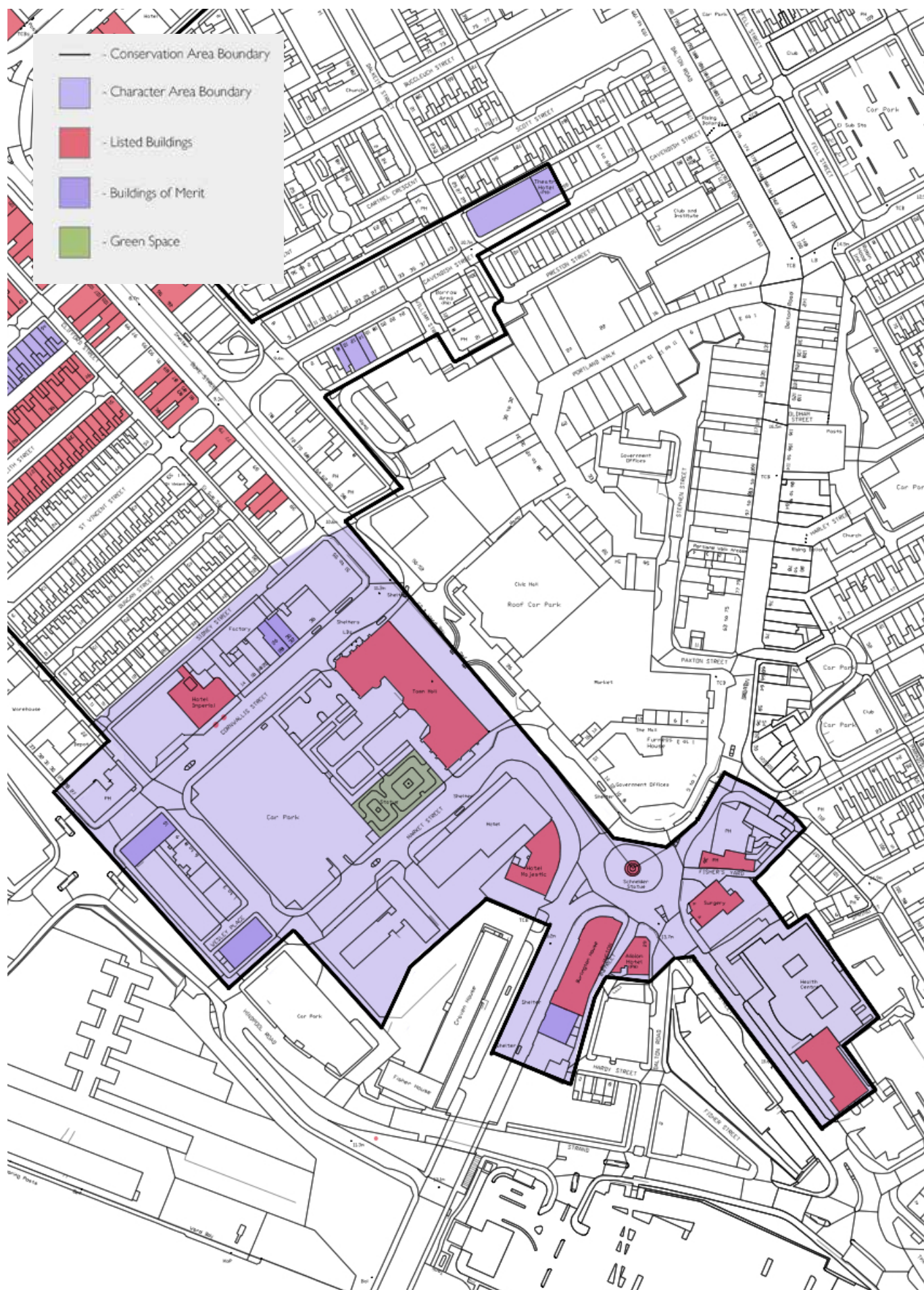
The quality and character of the conservation area diminishes towards Hindpool Road as the architectural character of the buildings becomes more varied.

10.6.2 Opportunities for management and enhancement

- There is an opportunity to improve the streetscape of secondary spaces such as Lawson Street to enhance their character.
- The unified character of the residential terraces has been negatively affected in some areas with insensitive alterations. The removal of inappropriate fixtures and fittings on the listed worker terraces should be considered to enhance their character and appearance.
- The use of high-quality and appropriate materials for repair and maintenance works should also be encouraged to prevent the use of uPVC on historic buildings. Where the opportunity arises, existing uPVC windows and doors should be replaced with appropriate materials on historic buildings.
- The removal of traditional rear brick boundary yard walls and the subsequent replacement with block and render has led to a cumulative erosion of the character of this part of the conservation area. Where the opportunity arises, boundary walls should be replaced using high-quality traditional materials to reinstate this character.







Map showing Character Area 6

10.7 Character Area 6: Civic Centre and Schneider Square

10.7.1 Summary of character

The eastern end of Duke Street is much more formal and planned than other parts of Central Barrow. This includes Schneider Square (now a roundabout), the Town Hall and its setting. Other uses and spaces are subordinate to these assets. The overall character is one of planned set piece buildings and spaces designed to impress visitors. This character generally remains although modern development has not always been sympathetic, and some historic buildings have deteriorated as economic conditions have changed.

Schneider Square is characterised by two, three, and three-and-a-half storey Victorian buildings, including the red brick, Grade II listed Hotel Majestic and no.4 Duke Street, and rendered Albion Public House and no.36, Dalton Road. These buildings exhibit characteristics typical of the late Victorian style including bay windows, archivolt panels, arched windows and doorways and chimney stacks.

The Grade II* listed Town Hall is the main landmark building within the character area. Built in the Gothic Revival style using red sandstone, the Town Hall is characterised by the central tower, turrets and windows with trefoil-headed lights. To the rear of the

Town Hall, the square created by Cornwallis Street, Lawson Street and Market Street is characterised by terraced buildings with a strong frontage at back of pavement.

10.7.2 Opportunities for management and enhancement

- Surviving historic architectural features, fixtures and fittings should be retained and maintained to preserve the special character of the area.
- Any new development should reflect the architectural quality of the area and respond appropriately to the scale, mass and materials of the existing context.
- Any future redevelopment around the Town Hall should be mindful of its importance in both short and long range townscape views.
- Secure the repair of vacant buildings and buildings in disrepair, such as 26-28 Cornwallis Street.





Management Plan

11.0 Management Plan Introduction

11.1 Summary

There are a number of issues that currently face Central Barrow and detract from the area's special character and interest. Addressing these issues presents an opportunity to enhance the conservation area and its wider setting, while the encouragement of appropriate and positive maintenance and conservation works will ensure the on-going protection of the area's special character, features, and buildings.

The first part of this document has set out in detail those characteristics which make Central Barrow Conservation Area special, providing an overview of the six character areas, and highlighting the potential issues and opportunities for each. The following section explores the issues and opportunities highlighted by the appraisal and presents robust management actions that seek to address these issues and promote the effective management of the conservation area.

11.2 Key aims

- To provide guidance to the local community, developers, businesses, property owners, the Parish Council, and voluntary groups whose work may impact on the conservation area.
- To prevent the further decline in character and appearance of the conservation area and to aid in its removal from the 'at risk' register.
- To identify where there is capacity for change and positive improvement.
- To recommend actions and approaches to make the most of the area's potential and opportunities.

12.0 Buildings at risk

Central Barrow has a number of listed buildings or buildings of local significance and historic interest that are currently at risk due to their derelict, vacant or underused state.

Identifying which buildings within the conservation area are at risk is key to their effective management and maintenance. Historic England keeps a register of all those which are Grade I and II* listed. As of 2023, the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary is the only asset on this 'Heritage at Risk Register'.

Other buildings considered to be at risk have been identified in 9.8 Buildings At Risk. These buildings include Grade II listed buildings as well as non-designated buildings considered to be of local merit.

The careful management and maintenance of these buildings is integral to their survival and the preservation and enhancement of their heritage significance and special character.

Care and Maintenance

The regular care and maintenance of historic buildings can prevent their deterioration over time. Early, small-scale actions will avoid long-term costly damage and help preserve and enhance the fabric of historic buildings. Reference should be made to the Westmorland and Furness Historic Building Maintenance Guide (2023) for guidance on maintaining and caring for historic buildings.

Works of alteration, even minor works, may require one or more form of consent. Consent is not normally required for repair works or like-for-like replacements, but in the case of listed buildings, it is always advisable to check.

Where necessary repair works are beyond the scope of small scale maintenance works, an appropriately qualified professional should be engaged to lead on an appropriate scheme of works.

Active and viable use

Bringing vacant buildings back into active use will secure their maintenance and conservation, while contributing to economic activity and vibrancy within Barrow. The restoration of empty buildings will also contribute to the built quality of the conservation area and enhance its character and setting.

Temporary or meanwhile uses should be sought for vacant buildings by owners to secure their maintenance and preservation while more permanent options are considered.

New uses should be appropriate to the area and the restoration of historic buildings or buildings of local merit should be appropriate to their age and character.

It should be recognised that while all efforts should be made to preserve, enhance and restore historic buildings at risk, there may be buildings that cannot always be saved. Where robustly justified, demolition may be acceptable, in line with the NPPF (2024) Chapter 16 paras 214, 215, and 216.

Statutory obligations and enforcement

There is no statutory obligation for the owners of listed buildings to maintain their property in a good state of repair but it is usually in their best interest to do so. Where buildings have fallen into significant disrepair, there are statutory powers that allow local authorities to address the situation. These powers include requiring the owner of the building to make it safe or demolish it under Section 77 of the Building Act 1984. This general power is modified by Section 56 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 so as to prevent the loss of significant buildings in conservation areas. The use of the following powers under this Act must be considered first:

- Urgent Works Notices under Section 54 – applies to repairs which are urgently necessary to preserve a listed building. This usually means making the building weatherproof, making it safe from collapse and preventing vandalism.
- Section 76 allows for the same powers to be applied to an unlisted building in a conservation area if it is important for maintaining the appearance and character of the area.
- Repairs Notices under Section 48 – this also applies to works which are necessary for the proper preservation of listed buildings. If the work is not carried out within two months, a local authority may start Compulsory Purchase proceedings under section 47. This notice is usually used when a building is neglected and the need for substantial repair accumulates to the point there is potential for serious harm.

Another option is a Section 215 'Untidy Site' notice which can be served under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, requiring owners to improve the appearance of demolition sites and other untidy land. Such notices can be served on any land with or without buildings which are vacant or occupied.

Open communication with the building owner should be the first port of call before enforcement action is explored. Advice and guidance should be given to building owners to allow them to repair, maintain or restore their historic building appropriately.

Active frontages

Retail and commercial units may appear vacant or underused due to inactive or poorly maintained frontages. In attempts to create privacy for consumers and customers, frontages can appear unappealing and cause buildings to appear empty. As well as detracting from the character of the conservation area, this can also have security implications for owners.

6 Cavendish Street (Clarke Jefferies Accountants) and 59-61 Duke Street (Jeffersons Serviced Apartments) are excellent examples of utilising the classical forms of a traditional shopfront to create an attractive and welcoming frontage to a building while retaining full privacy for the internal spaces.

More active discussions with businesses should be encouraged to come up with better solutions to maintaining business privacy whilst making their premises look less empty.

ACTION: Promote and secure the appropriate repair, reuse, and regeneration of Barrow's historic buildings that are currently at risk.

Westmorland and Furness Council to pursue enforcement action where necessary.

13.0 Gap sites

The Barrow Borough Local Plan identified four 'gap sites' and provided general design guidance for these.

Two of these have now been developed or provided as improved public realm:

- 116-118 Duke Street - remains as a gap site
- 57 Duke Street - remains as a gap site
- 80-82 Duke Street - now public realm

Additional gap sites include:

- The corner of Abbey Road / Dalkeith Street
- Area to the rear of the bus station at Ramsden Square
- The corner of Lawson Street / St Vincent Street

For the remaining gap sites it will be important that any new development responds positively to the special character of the conservation area. The following design guidance is recommended for these sites. The general design guidance included with Policy DS5: Design in the Barrow Borough Local Plan also remains relevant and should be followed.

- Provide a strong and attractive frontage to the street, particularly the axial routes of Abbey Road and Duke Street.
- Design buildings to address corners where appropriate.
- Respect the existing adjacent buildings, particularly those identified as buildings of merit or listed buildings.
- Scale, materials and design should be in keeping with the historic townscape.

New development on gap sites should also follow the design principals outlined below in 14.0 New Development and Design.

ACTION: New development on gap sites must effectively respond to its context and the scale, mass, and materials of neighbouring sites where appropriate.

Westmorland and Furness Council to actively seek new use for gap sites and take enforcement action where necessary.

14.0 New development and design

To be successful, any future development within the conservation area needs to be mindful of the local character of the town, while being distinctly of its time and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability. Poorly designed and detailed, pastiche development can be as eroding to special character.

In determining applications, the LPA will require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed new development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the Historic Environment Record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed, using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Where the proposals relate to works affecting a listed building, or where the LPA deems it appropriate, the Heritage Assessment and Design and Access Statement should be completed by someone with Conservation Accreditation, whether this is an architect or a heritage consultant.

The LPA actively encourages early pre-application engagement for any new development within the conservation area. Further information about this can be found on the Council's Pre-Application Advice webpage.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF (2024) advises that landowners and developers may choose to prepare design codes in support of a planning application for sites they wish to develop. Such design codes should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. The agreement of a design code for key sites would be encouraged through early engagement with the LPA. Further information on design codes can be found on the GOV.UK website.

General principals for new design

Historic England (2022) provides the following principles for new development in historic contexts, informed by the 2006 Building in Context principles and corresponding National Design Guide points:

- **Baseline Understanding:** Start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.
- **Context:** Relate to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land. Identifying the existing features of the site and the wider area highlights opportunities for the design of new developments to link well into their context and enhance these features for the benefit of new and existing residents.
- **Character:** Be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context. Well-designed new development is influenced by an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents.

- **Streets and Spaces:** Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it. Street types will depend on establishing an appropriate relationship with the pattern, sizes and proportions of existing streets in the local area.
- **Views:** Respect important views. Well-designed new development is influenced by views, vistas and landmarks. New development should seek to preserve and enhance the key views outlined in 9.7 Key Views.
- **Scale:** Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings Built form is determined by good urban design principles that combine layout, form and scale in a way that responds positively to the context.
- **Materials:** Use materials and building methods which are as high-quality as those used in existing buildings. Materials should be practical, durable, affordable and attractive. Choosing the right materials can greatly help new development to fit harmoniously with its surroundings.
- **Visual Composition:** Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting. Well-designed new development is influenced by: the composition of street scenes, individual buildings and their elements;
 - the height, scale, massing and relationships between buildings;
 - views, vistas and landmarks;
 - roofscapes;
 - soft landscape, landscape setting and backdrop;
 - light, shade, sunshine and shadows; and
 - colours, textures, shapes and patterns.

ACTION: New development must respond sensitively and creatively to the historic environment, in terms of urban design (e.g. layout, density and spatial separation) and architectural design (e.g. scale, form, quality of materials and building methods).

Where appropriate Development Briefs should be prepared to guide the future development of significant and more complex sites/areas.

Where appropriate, planning applications for new development either; affecting a heritage asset and its setting, or within the boundary or setting of the conservation area, should be supported by a Heritage Statement/Heritage Assessment. This should be produced by an appropriately qualified heritage professional where appropriate.

15.0 Demolition

Conservation area consent was abolished by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act and replaced with a requirement for planning permission for demolition of a building in a conservation area

A non-listed building in a conservation area is not to be demolished without the consent of the Local Planning Authority. Listed building consent will be required to demolish a listed building.

Where demolition is being considered within the conservation area, or its setting, there must be robust justification for the proposal in line with the NPPF (2024) Chapter 16 paras 214, 215, 216, and 220 and the criteria set out in Barrow Borough Local Plan Policy HE5: Demolition in Conservation Areas.

Where demolition has been permitted, works should not begin until evidence is given of plans for new development on the site, or for appropriate long-term treatment of the site following demolition, to avoid the creation of gap sites. This falls in line with the requirements of the para 219 of the NPPF (2024). Gap sites can be harmful to the character of the conservation area if allowed to lie undeveloped for a significant amount of time between demolition and redevelopment.

Where redevelopment cannot reasonably be secured in the immediate future, interesting or innovative meanwhile uses may be considered in consultation with the Local Planning Authority.

ACTION: Where appropriate, planning applications for demolition and new development either; affecting a heritage asset and its setting, or within the boundary or setting of the conservation area, should be supported by a Heritage Statement/Heritage Assessment. This should be produced by an appropriately qualified heritage professional where appropriate.

Any proposed demolition within the boundary or setting of the conservation area must be robustly justified.

16.0 Detractor sites

Buildings or sites may detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area for a number of reasons including inappropriate or unsympathetic:

- Materials
- Scale and/or Mass
- Design (detailing, fenestration patterns, architectural features or components)

It may be just one, or all, of these factors that results in the building or site being considered as a detractor.

The replacement and redevelopment of detractor sites may be considered acceptable, however appropriate retrofit must be explored first. The justification for the demolition and replacement of detractor sites must be robust and compliant with the requirements of the NPPF.

It is important to recognise that contemporary development within the conservation area is acceptable in the instance where design is high-quality, well considered and appropriate to the building type and age. 20th and 21st-century buildings that are of high-quality, considered design and that are of their time should be recognised for their potential contribution to the conservation area and its development over time.

ACTION: Refer to actions outlined in 15.0 Demolition.

New development must respond sensitively and creatively to the historic environment, in terms of urban design (e.g. layout, density and spatial separation) and architectural design (e.g. scale, form, quality of materials and building methods).

17.0 Shopfronts

Barrow has a number of well preserved, high-quality examples of historic shopfronts that form part of the special character of the conservation area, especially along Duke Street and Cavendish Street.

Despite this, there are a large number of low-quality shopfronts where historic elements have either been lost or obscured, or where contemporary shopfronts have been installed that are of unsympathetic and inappropriate design. Key issues include:

- The loss of traditional proportions on shopfronts and the addition of oversized fascias.
- The use, and overuse, of inappropriate signage.
- The poor maintenance of existing shopfronts leading to a run-down appearance.

Historic shopfronts, and those that are considered to be appropriate to their setting and context should be retained and maintained in line with guidance set out in the Barrow Shopfront Design Guide (2023). The proper care and maintenance of these shopfronts will ensure they do not deteriorate and continue to contribute to the character and quality of the conservation area.

The design of new shopfronts should respect the age and proportions of the building in which they are set and should use high-quality materials. The use of uPVC is not considered to be acceptable within the conservation area.

The council has a good repository of historic photos that show key features and precedents for reinstatement of historic shopfronts. This resource should be utilised where appropriate to support any new shopfront design schemes.

ACTION: Historic shopfronts should be retained and maintained. New shopfronts should preserve or enhance the special character of the area.

Westmorland and Furness Council to promote the use of the Barrow Shopfront Design Guide and additional SPDs.

18.0 Protection of historic features and architectural characteristics

Incremental loss of traditional architectural detailing and inappropriate alterations to historic buildings is an issue and ongoing threat to the character of the conservation area. Areas specifically at risk include:

- Cavendish Street - architectural features and the historic character of the street diminishes as you move closer to Dalton Road.
- Duke Street - non-designated heritage assets are susceptible to the loss of important features, specifically on upper floors.

- 19th-century Worker Housing - the listed worker housing along streets such as Parade Street have been subject to the inappropriate replacement of windows and doors with uPVC frames, as well as the addition of features such as satellite dishes and external wiring.

There is also an opportunity to restore historic features on buildings and reintroduce local characteristics and features to the area.

When repairs to historic buildings are carried out it is essential that high-quality materials are used that are sympathetic and appropriate for the building. The use of uPVC is not considered to be appropriate.

The repair and restoration of listed buildings must be carried out on a like-for-like basis and should be appropriate to the age and character of the building.

The council should seek to reinforce local understanding and appreciation for the use of high-quality materials on both historic and contemporary buildings. They should also seek to reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the conservation area through an informed understanding of distinctive building forms and styles, features and materials.

ACTION: Surviving historic features should be retained and repaired wherever possible.

The removal and replacement of inappropriate fixtures and fittings will be encouraged by Westmorland and Furness Council.

19.0 Public realm

The general quality of the public realm across the conservation area is high, largely following the successful programme of improvement works along Duke Street that completed in 2023. However, there are some locations that have the potential to negatively effect the character and setting of the conservation area.

There is an opportunity to make areas of the conservation area, specifically secondary/backstreet spaces, more attractive and appealing, to bring them up to standard with the newly enhanced spaces along Duke Street. Improvements to the quality of the public realm will contribute to an improved sense of place and enhance the setting of the conservation area and the heritage assets within it.

New street furniture should be of high-quality design that responds to the context in which it is in. The introduction of new street furniture should not lead to the over cluttering of street spaces.

Historic surfaces and coverings, such as the areas of cobble sets around Parade Street and St Vincent Street, should be preserved wherever possible.

Any new interventions to areas of public realm should take into consideration accessibility requirements.

There is also an opportunity to minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles and the provision of parking areas on the streetscape and landscape setting of historic buildings. Specific areas for attention are:

- Boundary of the Nan Tait Centre car park facing Abbey Road
- Boundary of The Sofa Group car park facing Market Street.
- Boundary of the car park to the rear of the Escape Hotel Cumbria facing Hindpool Road.

All new public realm works should reference the Westmorland and Furness Public Realm Design Quality Guide.

ACTION: Ensure that future public realm and traffic management measures respect and enhance the special character of the conservation area.

Ensure any new interventions to areas of public realm take into consideration accessibility requirements.

Westmorland and Furness Council to explore opportunities to enhance areas of public realm beyond Duke Street where reasonably possible.

20.0 Public art

There is an opportunity to enhance the quality of the public realm through the introduction of public art.

Public art can be utilised to create a sense of place and contribute to the uniqueness of a place, and celebrate local identity. Barrow has a strong history of public art from historic statues to some more recent public art projects. The most recent success was the 2023 'Paint the Town' scheme which has seen vacant shopfronts and spaces in the town centre transformed into colourful murals.

Examples of public art opportunities may include:

- Murals or Lighting Schemes
- Gable Signage
- Introduction of New Statues or Sculptures

Barrow has a history of gable painted shop signs, and some have been successfully restored. There is opportunity to restore further examples of this traditional signage, and/or implement modern iterations of gable signage where appropriate. This is an opportunity to introduce traditional, yet unique, signage into the townscape.

The introduction of public art or unique signage may require Planning Permission and/or Advertisement Consent. All planned works should be discussed with the Local Planning Authority to check requirements prior to the commencement of works.

All new public art schemes must take into consideration their setting, and the character and special interest of the conservation area and any surrounding heritage assets. New public art schemes should not cause any harm to the fabric, significance, or character of heritage assets and, wherever possible, should seek to preserve and enhance their special interest and understanding.

ACTION: Westmorland and Furness Council to consider the development of a wider Public Art Strategy.

21.0 Key views and settings

The key axial views within the conservation area, as well as the key views in and out of the conservation area contribute to the historic context and setting of Central Barrow, as well as the special character and interest of the conservation area.

These views are well maintained and their preservation and enhancement should be effectively managed.

Any new development, or changes to the public realm, either within the conservation area or within its setting, should seek to enhance key views and the setting of the conservation area where possible and should not obscure or conceal key views in any way.

Verified views may be requested by Westmorland and Furness Council in support of applications for redevelopment to impartially show the impact on the setting of the conservation area and its views.

ACTION: Any new development should not obscure key views and should seek to enhance views wherever possible.

Westmorland and Furness Council to require any applications for new development, either within the conservation area or within the immediate setting of the conservation area, to demonstrate any potential impact on key views through written, visual or photographic assessment. The council will decide on the appropriate presentation of assessment on a case-by-case basis, proportional to the scale of proposed development.

22.0 Celebration of local identity and history

There is an opportunity to reinforce the strong sense of industrial pride that exists in Barrow, and celebrate and promote Barrow's historic interest and unique development.

Support should be given to local history and heritage groups and access to the local archives and any photographic records should be encouraged and promoted.

There may be scope to incorporate interpretation surrounding Barrow's industrial past and rich history into the design of new development or new public realm schemes. This should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should only be considered where considered appropriate by the Council.

ACTION: Promote and celebrate the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.

23.0 Sustainability

Paragraph 161 of the NPPF (2024) states that the planning system should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

This can be achieved through simple maintenance and repair of properties, ensuring that they are draught free and in good condition, as well as the use of microgeneration and energy renewables such as solar panels and wind turbines. Any new works to a shopfront or building, including refurbishment, renewal or replacement, should seek to reduce carbon emissions wherever possible and enhance the thermal properties of the building in question. Policy C5 of the Barrow Local Plan states that:

'All new developments will be encouraged to incorporate renewable energy production equipment, sources of renewable energy such as photovoltaics and the potential for renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy schemes appropriate to the scale and location of the development provided they accord with the requirements of Policy C6.' In addition, the proposed installation of renewable energy equipment should not cause an unacceptable level of harm to the fabric or significance of any heritage assets. Any proposed installations should take into consideration the setting and character of the conservation area and any relevant key views.

When considering the installation of solar PV panels, reference should be made to Historic England guidance, found [here](#)^{*}, and advice should be sought from the Local Planning Authority to establish an appropriate scheme.

Double or triple glazed units in timber frames may be appropriate for a new shopfront and should be considered when a new design is being formulated. It is important to note that any double or triple glazing should be high-quality and slim in profile. Double glazed uPVC units are not considered to be appropriate.

It is important to remember that improvements to sustainability should be considered to be a whole building experience, with upgrades to other building elements also considered as part of a package of works. Taking a whole building approach is a logical process which enables the best possible balance to be struck between saving energy and reducing carbon emissions, sustaining heritage significance, and maintaining a healthy building.

Demolition and embodied carbon

Embodied carbon means all the CO₂ emitted in producing materials. It's estimated from the energy used to extract and transport raw materials as well as emissions from manufacturing processes. The embodied carbon of a building can include all the emissions from the construction materials, the building process, all the fixtures and fittings inside as well as from de-constructing and disposing of it at the end of its lifetime.

When a building is demolished, energy is used to de-construct it, and remove, process, and dispose of the waste. CO₂ may also be released through associated chemical processes. Building a new replacement requires more materials and energy, creating more embodied carbon.

Where the demolition of a building has been permitted, materials should be reused, salvaged, donated, or otherwise practically recycled as part of any new development, where possible.

The following strategies to reduce embodied carbon should also be considered:

- Using construction products that are made from locally available raw materials, through energy efficient and low emission processes and by manufacturers local to the construction site.
- Transporting materials with low carbon vehicles.
- Designing the construction process to minimise waste and reuse or recycle products where possible.
- Using systems and products that have long life spans.

The retention and reuse of heritage assets avoids the material and energy costs of new development. Consequently, retrofit should be robustly explored before demolition is considered.

ACTION: Any new developments should consider sustainability improvements, and the effects of climate change as part of the development brief, in line with Policy C5 and C6 of the Barrow Local Plan.

**Ensure the historic environment plays a positive role in addressing climate change.
Any new development should seek to reduce embodied carbon where possible.**

24.0 Green space

There is a notable shortage of accessible green space within the conservation area. Although it is recognised that this is due to the physical constraints of the urban grain and street layouts, opportunities for the introduction of new green space should be explored.

The opportunity to utilise gap sites for the creation of facilities such as 'pocket parks' should be considered as a priority. This will provide the opportunity to create more recreational space within the conservation area, while enhancing the character of the area and providing meanwhile or permanent use for vacant sites.

When exploring this potential, consideration should be given to the boundary treatments used for such sites. As small scale, minimal developments, sites such as pocket parks may effect the building line and frontage of the areas in which they are located, leaving gaps within the rhythm of the streetscape. Boundary treatments should seek to reinforce the streetscape presence of such sites.

New green spaces should champion biodiversity with the introduction of appropriate species of plants to encourage pollinators, and should also seek to include bird and bat boxes where suitable.

ACTION: Explore the opportunity for the creation of more green space and/or recreational areas.

Any large scale new development should take into account any potential impact on existing green space. New development should not result in the loss of existing green space unless robustly justified.

25.0 Appraisal and management review

Westmorland and Furness Council should seek to review the Central Barrow Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan every 10 years to establish whether a full review and revision is necessary. This should seek to capture any changes to the appearance, character or interest of the area, and to update management strategies where needed.

The document should also be reviewed in light of any major strategic development within the conservation area that has the potential to change the conclusions made regarding significance and management. In the instance where the council is intending to run a large-scale funded project, it is recommended that a fee is allowed within the budget for review and consultation of this document in light of any potential major development.

ACTION: Westmorland and Furness Council to review the Central Barrow Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan every 10 years.

The Central Barrow Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is to be reviewed in light of any major strategic development within the conservation area that has the potential to change the conclusions made regarding significance and management.

Glossary

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved.

More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Conservation

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance.

Conservation area

Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Design code

A design code is a set of design requirements for the physical development of a site or area. It is made up of rules that are clear, specific and unambiguous, and it should normally include extensive graphical illustrations. The code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.

Designated heritage asset

A building, place, landscape, etc. identified through legislation such as, A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated as such.

Development

The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or land.

Enabling development

Development that would be unacceptable in planning terms but for the fact that it would bring heritage benefits sufficient to justify it being carried out, and which could not otherwise be achieved.

Enforcement

Action by a body or organisation to make sure that its rules are being followed.

Green space

Vegetated land or water within urban areas, including, but not limited to: parks, gardens, playing fields and woodlands.



Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of the historic environment that hold significance are called heritage assets.

Historic environment record (HER)

Historic Environment Records are information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

HERs contain details on local archaeological sites and finds, historic buildings and historic landscapes and are regularly updated. This information is usually held in a database with a digital mapping system (Geographic Information System).

Local list

Local lists are formal lists of non-designated heritage assets compiled by the local authority which identify significant local heritage assets to support the development of Local Plans, celebrate local distinctiveness, and help protect the historic character of an area.

Assets placed on the local list are considered to be Non-Designated Heritage Assets and are worthy of material consideration as part of the planning process.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)

The Local Planning Authority is the local government body that is empowered by law to administer the planning and development processes in your area. They are responsible for dealing with planning applications in your area.

For properties within the Central Barrow Conservation Area, the LPA is Westmorland and Furness Council.

Non-Designated Heritage Asset (NDHA)

Heritage assets that are of local importance or merit but that do not have heritage significance or interests considered worthy of formal designation. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. Although not formally protected by planning law, potential impacts on non-designated heritage assets as a result of proposed development is worthy of material consideration during the planning process. NDHAs may be defined as part of a Local List but can also be identified at any point of the planning process by the local authority.

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

Public realm

Outdoor areas in towns and cities which are accessible to the public.

Setting

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced or understood.



**Westmorland
& Furness
Council**

