

Wirral Borough Council

Hamilton Square: Conservation Area Regeneration Plan

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Prepared by LUC



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Project

Hamilton Square: Conservation Area Regeneration Plan

Client

Wirral Borough Council

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12520

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Note

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Chapter 01

Summary

This Plan is about the conservation area and is forward-facing.

Its purpose is to update the existing conservation area appraisal and set out new preservation and enhancement proposals for the conservation area. These proposals also support the multi-billion pound regeneration programme currently underway in Birkenhead via the 2040 Regeneration Framework.

Chapter 02 of the Plan introduces the Conservation Area Regeneration Plan and its purpose.

Chapter 03 of the Plan briefly sets out the significance and the story of how Hamilton Square Conservation Area developed and has been shaped over time.

Chapter 04 discusses the conservation area boundary. The boundary has been reviewed in preparing this Plan and in response to comments received during the public consultation. Following review, the conservation area is considered to cover a cohesive area of special architectural or historic interest.

Chapter 05 briefly sets out the wider regeneration context of the study area. There are many projects, enhancements and new developments either planned or underway in Birkenhead. This chapter sets out where the main regeneration proposals affect the study area.

Chapter 06 is an analysis of the study area in its current form. It reviews the status of the physical environment, as well as activity and connectivity within the study area. This section also considers the impacts of the immediate surrounds of the study area on its character or appearance.

Chapter 07 draws together the preceding chapters into a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis. This analysis focuses in turn on the built environment, activity, community and connectivity of the study area.

Chapter 08 draws on the SWOT analysis and preceding chapters to draw together a set of preservation and enhancement proposals for the study area. The level of regeneration activity underway and planned for Birkenhead mean that the proposals have a particular focus on regenerating the conservation area and making it a vital and cherished part of the town centre.

Chapter 09 assesses the preservation and enhancement proposals from the perspective of how they would be delivered, by whom and when.



Hamilton Street. This vista includes two of Liverpool's 'Three Graces', including the distinctive silhouette of the Royal Liver Building on the opposite side of the Mersey.

Chapter 02 Introduction



This Conservation Area Regeneration Plan ('the Plan') is a new type of document. This Plan:

- **Updates the conservation area appraisal, management plan proposals and boundary of Hamilton Square Conservation Area. The updated conservation area boundary is below.**
- **Supports the delivery of the [Birkenhead 2040 Framework](#) and the masterplans and guidance documents that support it.**

The Plan informs and guides the regeneration and conservation of the area. This way the regeneration activity of the 2020s, 2030s and 2040s will maintain, enhance or better reveal the significance of the developments of the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s and the decades that followed. The past two hundred years have shaped the conservation area as we know it today.

Hamilton Square Conservation Area is identified as Birkenhead's 'Heritage Heart' in the 2040 Framework. It is also geographically adjacent to several proposals and projects to increase the economic performance, environmental quality, vitality and/or number of people living in the town centre. Some of these proposals and projects extend into the conservation area itself.

There is a legal duty for decisions over new development to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. In addition, there should be up to date proposals in place to preserve and enhance the conservation area. This Plan assists with both of these duties. It provides a conservation area-focussed review of the current regeneration proposals and identifies any gaps and new opportunities to preserve and enhance the conservation area.

The starting point of the Plan is to understand the significance of the conservation area and use this to review its boundary.

The Plan then draws together an assessment of the study area, and the present, emerging and planned regeneration plans and projects in the town centre to identify:

- Where regeneration will help to preserve or enhance the conservation area.
- Where regeneration can make a bigger contribution to preserving or enhancing the conservation area.
- Where regeneration could potentially conflict with preserving or enhancing the conservation area.
- Ways of preserving or enhancing the conservation area that have not been identified in the current regeneration proposals.
- Ways of preserving or enhancing the conservation area that can support Birkenhead's wider regeneration.

These findings are then used to identify a set of proposals for the future management and change affecting the conservation area. These proposals are the outputs of the conservation area regeneration plan, to be used to inform future conservation area management and regeneration activity.

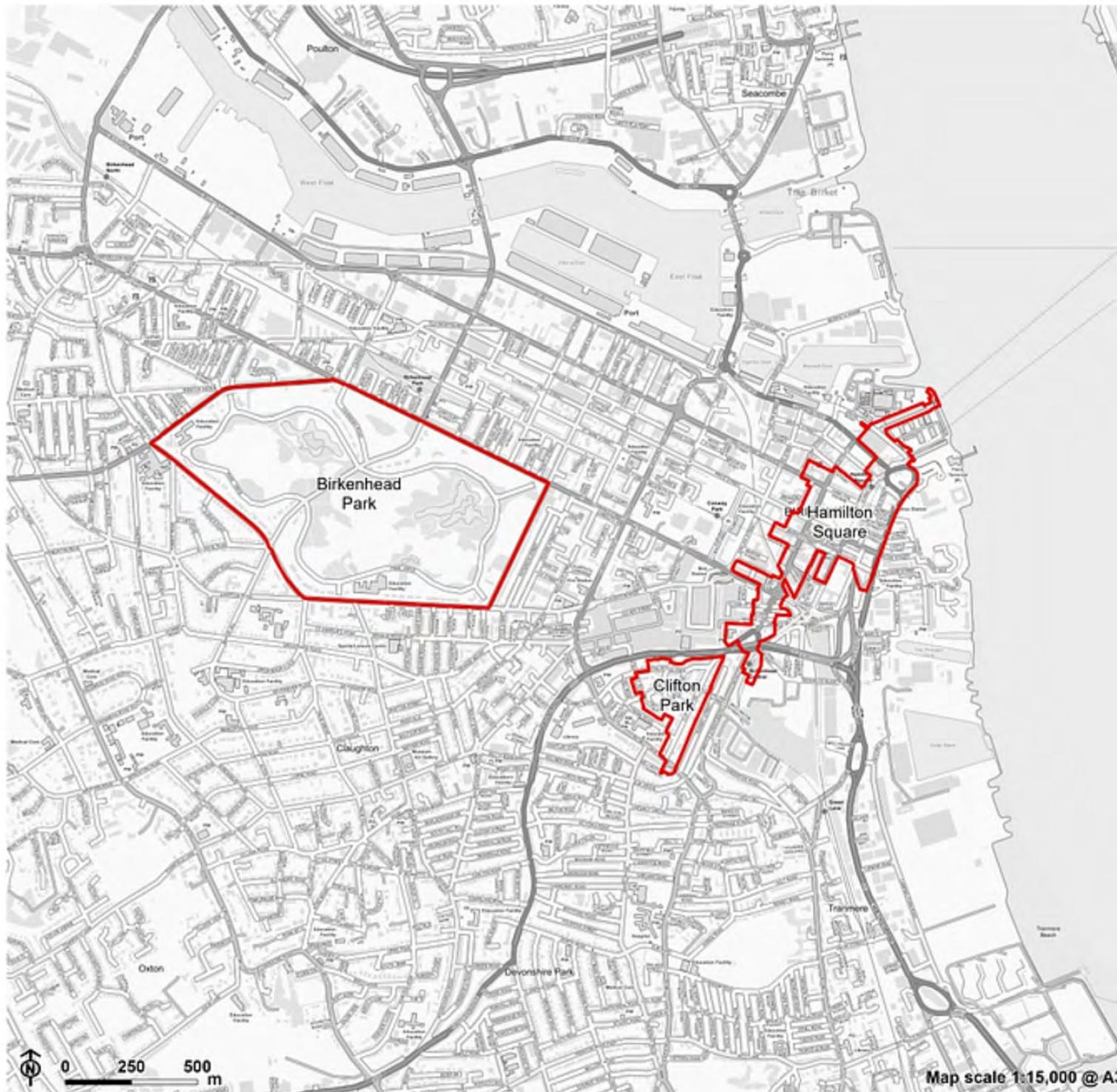
The location of Hamilton Square Conservation Area in relation to the wider town of Birkenhead and Birkenhead Park and Clifton Park Conservation Areas is shown on the map on the next page.



The conservation area contains some excellent buildings and demonstrates the use of strong urban design principles.

Location of Hamilton Square Conservation Area

 Conservation Area



Chapter 03 Historic Development of Hamilton Square Conservation Area



Chapter 03

The Significance of Hamilton Square Conservation Area

Historical Development

The first step for any strategy for a historic place is to understand the place and how it has been shaped over time.

The conservation area's significance, and its character and appearance are fundamental to informing the entire conservation area regeneration plan.

This chapter summarises the main themes or 'building blocks' of the conservation area's historical development. Some of these are found across the whole conservation area, others across most of it, others in smaller areas of particular character.

The sources of information used include the 2006 Conservation Area Appraisal, walkovers of the area, and historic maps and aerial photographs, and commonly and freely available sources of information about heritage assets.

The earliest surviving recorded history of Birkenhead is the foundation of Birkenhead Priory around 1150. It owned the land between Tranmere Pool, Wallasey Pool and the Mersey, which is in other words the 'birch tree covered headland' after which Birkenhead is named.

A record of 1330 refers to the Priory providing and charging tolls for a ferry across the Mersey to Liverpool, the first surviving record of such. The importance of the river crossing is shown on historic maps, with roads from the east, centre and west of the Wirral peninsula converging in Birkenhead and leading to the original and newer ferry launches. A map of the Wirral published in 1665 sums up the importance of the river crossing: it refers Birkenhead simply as 'The Ferye' (the ferry).

The ferry also sparked the biggest transformation in modern Birkenhead. New steamboat ferry services from Woodside to Liverpool started in 1815 and greatly improved the connectivity between Birkenhead and its neighbour, offering a safer and more regular service. This link opened Birkenhead up to new possibilities. It was the catalyst for Birkenhead's population expanding from just 110 in 1801 to around 33,000 in 1845, and shaped the town as we know it today.

From 1817, the Lord of Birkenhead Manor, Francis Richard Price of Flintshire, expanded the ferry facilities, and laid out a few streets with houses, a hotel and the Church of St Mary (built 1819-21), with the plan of making the area a bathing resort and place to live or holiday for those who could afford. This modest development was very soon eclipsed by the development instigated by William Laird (1780-1841) who purchased land from Mr Price in 1824.

William Laird came from Greenock near Glasgow to Liverpool in 1810 to develop the family's rope-making business. Seeing the development potential of Birkenhead, both inland and along its waterfront due to its better connections to Liverpool, he purchased land outside of the small village of Birkenhead. At the waterfront, Laird

established Birkenhead Iron Works c.1824, then in 1828 by a new venture William Laird and Son, which made boilers for steam engines. The boilerworks soon specialised in making iron steamships, which were in much demand in the 1830s and 40s. William Laird and Son became Birkenhead's main employer.

Laird appointed the Edinburgh architect James Gillespie Graham (1776-1855) to plan and design the initial buildings of a new town. Mainly a designer of country houses and churches, Graham laid out the Earl of Moray's Estate in Edinburgh's New Town, including the design of terraces and crescents, shortly before his work in Birkenhead.

For Birkenhead, Graham devised a 0.25 by 1-mile grid of streets of different widths and importance forming a clear hierarchy. This design was strongly influenced by the planned streets and squares being developed at the time in Edinburgh's New Town, which is itself part of a World Heritage Site today.



Hamilton Square was built for William Laird and was designed by James Gillespie Graham. It set a high standard of urban design and architecture for the planned new town of Birkenhead.

Also taking its lead from Edinburgh's St Andrew and Charlotte Squares, Hamilton Square was laid out and built as one of the key parts of the grid plan. The four sides of the square were built between the 1820s and 1844, overlooking a shared private garden in the centre, with a space left on the east side for a town hall.

The scale of the grid and the high quality of the terraces of Hamilton Square and the grid's early commercial buildings show the ambition and grandeur of Laird and Graham's plan to create a town for the mercantile and commercial classes of Liverpool and the Wirral. The main streets of the grid survive today. The grid has characteristic 'endless' vistas along the straight lines of the main streets. The grid was planned to have an urban character from the very start. The urban character persists today too, with the streets lined and enclosed by long terraces of buildings that are often three or four storeys in height.

Laird and Graham also set a very high standard for the quality of architecture and materials used for buildings, and so the earliest buildings and those that followed often have impressive formal front elevations following the latest architectural styles, and service access from rear and side streets.

As hinted at by the time it took to build Hamilton Square, the grid of streets was also slow to develop, especially for housing rather than commercial uses. This was partly due to a general dip in the economy in the 1830s, but also other developments that competed to attract the same residents as Laird's new town. Edinburgh's New Town also faltered and stalled as it developed, but had the advantage of few competitors, the 'push factor' of the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in the medieval Old Town, and being very close to (and growing) the economic, administrative and cultural core of the Scottish capital. The grid of streets at Birkenhead, by contrast, was simply one of many options on both sides of the Mersey where commuters to Liverpool could choose to live, with yet more options opening up over time as rail and road links improved.

The new town in Birkenhead soon had on its doorstep the competing suburbs of Clifton Park and Claughton (c.1843 onwards) while further along the estuary the Rock Park Estate (1836 onwards) had its own ferry pier to Liverpool. A crucial difference between these estates and the Graham grid of Birkenhead is that they were all developed as suburbs: detached or semi-detached villas set in large gardens along winding, leafy lanes. These estates were more fashionable, higher status and therefore more desirable than living in an urban grid of streets with fewer green spaces and trees.

From the 1840s, Graham's grid of streets gradually filled with commercial buildings and smaller, humbler homes built at a higher density, while the better-off occupied villas in the suburbs of Birkenhead. Only the area around Hamilton Square, and Argyle, Market and Hamilton Streets developed broadly along the lines of Edinburgh's New Town. In its role as the commercial centre of Birkenhead, the grid also faced competition in the form of Grange Road, which in time became the town's high street and, in the mid-20th century, the new site of its market and shopping centres. The grid did, however, become the town's administrative centre as the site of the Town Hall and Sessions Court (both 1887), police station, library, post office and secondary school.

John Laird (1805-1874), son and business partner of William Laird, lived at 63 Hamilton Square and as well as being Birkenhead's key employer was also its first mayor and first MP. A statue to commemorate him was erected in Hamilton Square within a year of his death.

Rail transportation also profoundly impacted the town in the form of branch lines, stations, yards and goods sheds serving docks and industry, which, with improvements to ships and shipping, drove the town's prosperity and growth in the 19th century. They also enabled greater connectivity for commuters. The Dock Branch Railway of c.1838 cut through the grid of streets for freight trains, while Hamilton Square Station opened in 1886 as part of the Mersey Rail

tunnel, offering a faster commuter link than the ferries. The town was the first in Britain to have a street tram line in 1860. This horse-drawn system was electrified and grew to several lines, including along Hamilton, Price and Argyle Streets.

In the 20th century, the grid remained a mixed use commercial, and administrative centre, with a declining resident population, particularly as substandard housing was cleared. Further clearances were to accommodate the Mersey Road Tunnel (built 1925-34), which runs under Market Street and Hamilton Square. The town has since 1974 been the administrative centre of Wirral Council.



The Graham grid of streets and its periphery was developed in stages over the 19th and early 20th centuries. This has created an interesting and rich mixture of buildings styles and types.

Summary of Significance

The significance of the Hamilton Square Conservation Area is set out according to four high-level themes:

- Evidential value (also termed archaeological interest) this is the potential of the place to provide evidence about past human activity. While archaeological evidence is generally thought to relate only to below ground remains it can also include built fabric, evidence of street layout and historic landscape features. Rarity value, preservation and date can also all form a part of evidential value.
- Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This can be illustrative – relating to a specific period – or associative – relating to a person, event or community.
- Aesthetic value (also termed architectural and artistic interest) the visual qualities and characteristics of a place, including architectural style, design, public arts and character. This also encompasses how people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place (the ‘wow-factor’, impressions or feelings evoked from a place).
- Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, including collective experience or memory. This does not directly equate with community use or amenity value.

The following table sets out the significance of the conservation area according to these four main themes.

Value	Description
Evidential	<p>Birkenhead Priory and ferry crossings, the Priory was founded around 1150 and owned the land between Tranmere Pool, the Mersey and Wallasey Pool (modern day Birkenhead).</p> <p>A record of 1330 is the earliest surviving reference to the Priory operating a ferry across the Mersey. The Priory site survives and is a scheduled monument. The ferry launch influenced the early development of Birkenhead.</p>
Historical: Illustrative	<p>The Late Georgian Suburb. The conservation area is representative of urban planning for the 19th century industrial and mercantile class with Hamilton Square itself a particularly excellent example, reflected in the grade I listing of the terraces.</p> <p>Hamilton Square and its gridded network of streets were conceived along the lines of Edinburgh New Town: large houses in a formal arrangement on an elevated, flat site sufficiently distanced from the industrial docks and riverside. The societal hierarchy of the time is expressed via the formal frontages and private central garden, with servicing access via backstreets. Similar terraces can be found in other parts of the conservation area, though these are oriented to the street rather than a square.</p> <p>The 19th Century Town and Municipality. The conservation area is essentially a Late Georgian and Victorian town built on what was a greenfield site with few prior constraints, growing from a population of 110 in 1801 to 51,649 in 1861.</p> <p>Birkenhead grew around Graham’s grid of streets in a patchwork fashion rather than along old routes or around an ancient church or market place or within defensive walls. The town therefore illustrates late Georgian, but especially Victorian and Edwardian economic activity, governance / administration and social structure.</p> <p>The Movement of People, Materials and Goods. The development of the conservation area reflects two strands of improvements to transportation in the 19th century.</p> <p>The first strand was the opening of the steam ferry service to Liverpool from Woodside which made Birkenhead attractive to holiday makers, day trippers and those who could afford to build a house and commute to Liverpool from the Wirral.</p> <p>The other strand is the railway: branch lines, stations, yards and good sheds serving docks and industry, which, with improvements to ships and shipping, drove the town’s prosperity and growth.</p> <p>The railway and tramline network also saw Hamilton Square and the town centre ‘bypassed’ by the middle, commercial and mercantile classes as Woodside became a rail, tram and rail terminus from 1878. The town was the first in the world to have a tram system. In addition, the Mersey and Wirral lines, served by a new tunnel under the river, opened in 1886. Both improvements to transportation enabled the better-off commuters to live in leafier, coastal, less industrialised and less densely populated parts of the Wirral peninsula, but still be a short journey from Liverpool and Birkenhead.</p>

Summary of Significance (continued)



The photos above and below show the level of ambition Laird and Graham had for Hamilton Square and the 'Graham Grid' of streets. They were not planning a satellite or suburb of Liverpool, but a fully fledged town made of beautiful buildings, terraces and streets housing all aspects of daily life, business, commerce, leisure, culture and governance. From the start they employed the best urban design principles and most fashionable architecture of the day, shipping building stone into the port.



Value	Description
Historical: Associative	<p>Birkenhead Priory, earliest known activity and landowner in Birkenhead and operator of the first known ferry boat across the Mersey.</p> <p>William Laird (1780-1841), initial developer of Hamilton Square and Birkenhead as a town, and an early mass employer in Birkenhead at his shipbuilding works. Although he simultaneously developed Birkenhead as an attractive suburb and an industrial area, in the early 1820s he could not have foreseen the future impacts of the railway system and ever-larger ships in bringing the waterside industry, its attendant infrastructure, and its workforce, ever-closer to his version of Edinburgh's New Town.</p> <p>At the same time, the development of trains and trams made more rural areas further afield accessible as places to live for the middle, industrial and mercantile classes for whom Hamilton Square was built.</p> <p>James Gillespie Graham (1776-1855), architect of the bulk of the Square and designer of the 0.25 by 1 mile grid layout bounded by Hamilton Street, Conway Street, Duke Street and Cleveland Street.</p> <p>Primarily a designer of country houses and churches, Graham laid out the Earl of Moray's Drumsheugh Estate in Edinburgh's New Town, including the design of terraces and crescents, shortly before his work in Birkenhead.</p> <p>John Laird (1805-1874), eldest son of William Laird and resident of Birkenhead from 1824, John joined his father in business in 1828. He lived for much of his life at 63 Hamilton Square, the largest house on the Square, with the largest garden and views out to Mersey, Liverpool and the ferry launch.</p> <p>Laird drove the innovation and expansion of the shipbuilding business and a developer of Birkenhead Docks from 1844 to rival Liverpool, though the two soon merged.</p> <p>He was one of the town's first Commissioners in 1833 and retired from business in 1861 to become Birkenhead's first Member of Parliament following the town's incorporation. He served as an MP until 1874. He also made several donations to the improvement of Birkenhead, and a statue was erected in tribute to him in Hamilton Square within a year of his death.</p> <p>Birkenhead Municipal Borough / County Borough / Wirral Council, The Municipal Borough was the builder and initial occupier of the Town Hall and Treasury House offices and was replaced by the County Borough in 1889. Wirral Council, formed in 1974, replaced all existing local authorities on the Wirral peninsula within the county of Merseyside, which was also created in 1974. Wirral Council retains its Council Chamber and principal offices in the town centre.</p>

Summary of Significance (continued)



The conservation area has a very 'hard' and urban character, especially towards the waterfront. The urban character is reinforced by the many features that form its skyline, like the Mersey Tunnel Ventilation Tower.



The expression of pride via the use of high quality materials and architecture extends to buildings like the Shore Road Pumping Station, which pumped water out of the railway tunnel under the Mersey.

Value	Description
Aesthetic	<p>Planned gridiron network of streets with a formal square at Hamilton Square. This gives street spaces a distinctive linear character and levels of enclosure by the buildings that line them. The conservation area appraisal describes 'endless views' along the broad, straight thoroughfares of the grid as a characteristic of the place.</p> <p>Urban character of buildings both in terms of density, height and scale, but also in terms of mixtures and juxtapositions of uses and activities. This urban character is a result of the grid-like plan, and many of the earliest buildings being terraces of three storeys plus basement or attic (four storeys in the case of Hamilton Square itself). The largest green open space, the centre of Hamilton Square is urban in character due to its design and context.</p> <p>The urban plan and urban character of the earliest developments of the town in the 1820s set the tone that was followed by successive designers and generations.</p> <p>Polite architecture: this started with the late Georgian composed and formal classicism of Hamilton Square and echoed in other buildings and terraces erected between the 1820s and 40s.</p> <p>Later developments in the conservation area demonstrate the evolutions of architectural tastes and style through the Victorian, Edwardian and early 20th century periods to give a rich and varied townscape, united by a desire for architecture to keep with the times and impress. This is particularly the case for commercial, transportation and municipal buildings as well as the earlier terraces of housing.</p> <p>Materials: imported ashlar sandstone for Hamilton Square itself and a number of buildings outside.</p> <p>The railway allowed factory-made brick to be used in later phases of development, and railway and sea connections enabled the use of imported granite and Portland stone where prestige was sought. There are several examples of terracotta cladding in buildings erected or re-faced in the first half of the 20th century.</p> <p>Welsh slate is the principal roofing material of most 19th century 20th century buildings.</p> <p>Skyline: the domed Town Hall tower and the square Italianate tower of Hamilton Square Station dominate the skyline and are landmarks visible from across the Mersey. Only the three ventilation towers of the Mersey Tunnel compete as landmarks.</p> <p>Although there is a scattering of taller office blocks in the vicinity of the conservation area, they are neither especially memorable nor landmarks by comparison.</p>

Summary of Significance (continued)



The Old Boys of Birkenhead Institute War Memorial is often called the 'Futility' Statue. This is a reference to the poem of the same name by the war poet Wilfred Owen, who was one of the 88 old boys of the Institute who died in the First World War. The poem is set into the statue's plinth.



The ferry routes between Birkenhead and Liverpool have existed for centuries, but have taken on a new and popular resonance via the Merseybeat music scene of the 1960s.

Value	Description
Communal	<p>'Ferry Cross the Mersey' was a hit 1964 Merseybeat single by Gerry and the Pacemakers. It refers to the ferry service running between Liverpool's Pierhead, Woodside and Seacombe. It is today one of many tourist attractions related to Liverpool's popular culture heritage. Tens of thousands of people, including many tourists from abroad or elsewhere in the UK take the ferry every year.</p> <p>Commemorative Structures and Plaques. These reflect the people and events that were and often are still valued by the people of Birkenhead. Their locations, design and materials reflect the culture of the times these commemorations were created.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> John Laird Statue, 1877, Hamilton Square Monument to Queen Victoria, 1901, Hamilton Square Birkenhead War Memorial, 1925, Hamilton Square Old Boys of Birkenhead Institute War Memorial (Futility Statue), 2019, Hamilton Square / Duncan Street Various tablets, plaques and memorial trees sited in front of the Town Hall, Hamilton Square <p>At least two of the above have been moved to different location by later generations, reflecting changes in priorities or changes in the esteem held in these memorials.</p> <p>Places of Spiritual Value: the national Christian revival of the 19th century that coincided with the growth of Birkenhead resulted in several places of worship and associated halls and schools being erected in the 'Graham grid' of streets. The majority of these were demolished in the 20th century, perhaps reflecting both the depopulation of the town centre and its fringes, and the national trend of declining congregations of all denominations.</p> <p>A local factor could be the grid layout of the conservation area: it meant most churches and chapels occupy mid-terrace, or, at best, corner locations which undermines the landmark status and likely wider communal value of these buildings. The lack of churchyards and burial grounds also effectively renders the sites of churches as chapels as mere building plots once worship ceases.</p> <p>It is perhaps telling that the one surviving 19th century church in the town centre is outside of the 'Graham grid' and has a small burial ground. The recent establishment of a new place of worship by a denomination originating in Hong Kong perhaps reflects changing demographics in the town centre, and its growing population.</p>

Chapter 04
The Conservation Area
Boundary



Chapter 04

The Conservation Area Boundary

Introduction

Following the understanding of the conservation area's significance, the next step is to look at the area it covers. Are there any buildings, spaces, sites or areas outside of the current conservation area that share its significance and should be included in the conservation area?

This chapter outlines the conservation area boundary and explains the extent of the conservation area boundary.

The conservation area boundary review uses the same information sources as the understanding of the conservation area's significance. It has also been informed by public consultation.

The review has identified a number of additions to the conservation area. These are all considered to strongly share aspects of the significance of the previous extents of the conservation area.

The original 1978 conservation area boundary was drawn tightly around Hamilton Square and Hamilton Street. This suggests that it was the Square and landmarks such as the Town Hall, Courts and Hamilton Square Station that were perceived as significant.

The 1994 boundary review extended the conservation area boundary in most directions. It added the Woodside Gyratory, more of Argyle Street, Market Street and the west side of Chester Street. These changes perhaps reflect the significance of the wider grid of streets being recognised. There was still, however, a focus on a largely mid-19th century townscape, though later buildings such as a 1930s cinema on Argyle Street and the Mersey rail tunnel pumping station were also included.

The 2006 boundary review made no changes.

The 2025 boundary review considered the conservation area's character and appearance, and identifies where there is continuity of this character and appearance beyond the former boundary.

The review was therefore not focussed on the ages or histories of individual buildings, though these have been understood and factored into consideration.

The boundary review focussed on ensuring the conservation area is an area with a cohesive character and appearance, and where buildings and/or spaces add to the sum total significance of special character or appearance of the conservation area, and are worthy of preservation and enhancement.

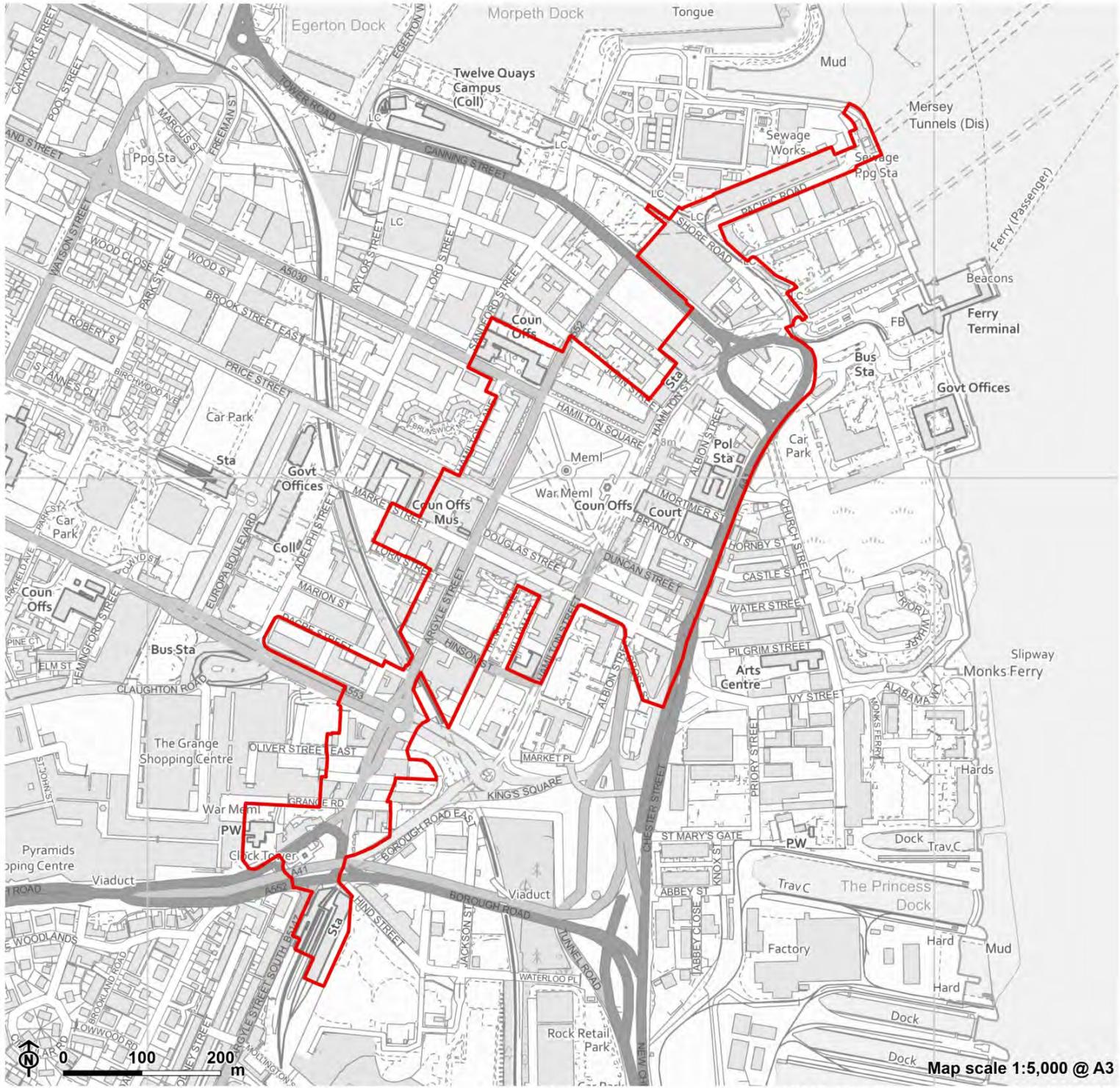
The adopted post-consultation 2025 boundary of Hamilton Square Conservation Area is on the next page.



Argyle Street: This extension to the conservation area includes a mix of building uses and styles. It continues the urban character and building lines of the portion of Argyle Street.



Clifton Crescent brings together several aspects of the town centre's history: the original 1840s houses of the crescent, the 1939 Central Hotel, a Victorian church hall and the clocktower to commemorate Edward VII.



Conservation Area Boundary

Conservation Area Boundary: Hamilton Square

Map scale 1:5,000 @ A3

Additions to the Conservation Area Boundary

The following additions have been made to the conservation area boundary:

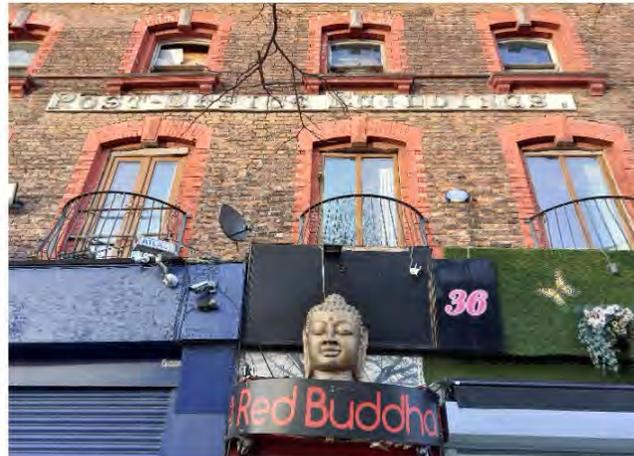
SOUTH: the continuation of Argyle Street up to and including Birkenhead Central Station. It continues the strong building lines, rhythm of building plots, consistent building heights and character, active frontages, mix of uses of the conservation area. The architectural styles create a rich townscape that ranges from the revival and commercial styles of the Victorian era and exuberant Edwardian neo-baroque through to modern and classical revival styles of the interwar period.

The high street character of Argyle Street, and former locations of the town's post office and haymarket are components of the town's municipal heritage. Birkenhead Central Station relates to the rail buildings and infrastructure in the existing conservation area.

Clifton Crescent and the Church of St Werburgh are contemporary with the earliest development of the grid, but stand outside of it, and are rare survivals of this aspect of the town's history.

WEST: the north side of Conway Street as far as the Conway Centre is part of the Graham grid of streets that was developed during the mid-Victorian and Edwardian periods. Its strong building lines, rhythm of building plots, consistent building heights and character, active frontages, mix of uses complement the conservation area.

It also has the hierarchy of the most important buildings facing Conway Street, with lower status buildings along the backstreet, Dacre Street. Buildings include a long Italianate terrace, a former post office remodelled into a free classical style; and a substantial former school that is a landmark in the town centre. The former post office and school are components of the municipal activity in the grid.



Post Office Buildings is a mid-Victorian Italianate terrace built as a parade of shops with dwellings above. It is next door to Birkenhead's former post office, which was remodelled into a cinema in the 1920s.



The Conway Building was built as the Birkenhead School Board Secondary Elementary School. It opened in 1903 and was for boys and girls. Its scale, height and impressive architecture make it a landmark in the town centre.

NORTH: This area is mainly part of Birkenhead's historic docks, particularly the Morpeth Dock Lairage, where animals in transit were kept. It includes the dock gateway and offices on Shore Road, the former goods station, warehousing and transit sheds associated with the docks, plus the tallest of the Mersey Tunnel ventilation towers.

This surviving group of dock and transportation buildings are important survival of the town's port, and continue the urban character and theme of large transport buildings such as Hamilton Square Station and the pumping station. The ventilation tower in particular is a key part of the skyline and views along Chester Street.

SOUTHEAST: the active frontages, strong corner feature, building line, vertical emphasis, height and scale of the Birkenhead County Court are effectively circa 1970 interpretation of how buildings in the Graham grid were built in the 1820s-40s. It is modern in its materials and architectural style, but otherwise conforms to the character of the historic buildings in the grid. Its municipal use also complements other buildings relating to law and order in the conservation area.

OTHER CHANGES: other boundary alterations are minor. They correct where the former boundary divided buildings or properties in two. Examples of this are the former Council offices at the corner of Hamilton Square, where only part of the complex of buildings is included. Another example is on Market Street where the former boundary cut through buildings and splits buildings from their curtilages.

Other Conservation Area boundary changes that have been considered

Other boundary changes that have been considered

The two stages of public consultation in preparing this Plan identified suggested boundary changes made by consultees, including members of the public.

These areas and the responses to these suggestions are below:

Extend the conservation area along the waterfront at Woodside. The conservation area boundary extends to the waterfront where it forms a cohesive area of special architectural or historic interest. This is reflected by the current boundary extending along Pacific Road to the waterfront at the Mersey Tunnel Ventilation Tower. To the north and south of this is modern development that is of no special architectural or historic interest. It would therefore be inappropriate to include this in the conservation area. The Woodside Ferry Terminal Building is of special interest, but it already benefits from stronger controls to change affecting it by its status as a grade II listed building. The Ferry Building stands in an area of modern development that is of no special interest. **It would therefore be inappropriate to extend the conservation area to include the Ferry Building and the adjacent stretches of waterfront.**

Extend the conservation area to include the Dock Branch Railway Line from Haymarket Tunnel to Price Street. The Dock Branch Railway is of historic interest due to its associations with Birkenhead's docks which prospered greatly due to the connectivity the line created. However, it has little relationship to the wider conservation area, as it cuts through the grid of streets and is not related to the development of the streets and buildings of the conservation area itself. The Haymarket section of the line is below modern highway bridges and decks of no special interest. The section from Argyle Street to Price Street outside of the conservation area is lined on both sides by cleared plots and modern buildings of no special interest, therefore the historic and architectural relationship between the line and its context is minimal along this stretch. The Dock Branch

Park regeneration proposal seeks to enhance the railway line as a linear park in a manner that retains the cuttings, the level of the track bed, retains features relating to its original use, and removes self-sown vegetation. The railway line is therefore to be adapted in a way that retains its former character. **It would therefore be inappropriate to include the Dock Branch line in the conservation area.**

Extend the conservation area along Price Street. Price Street is part of the 'Graham Grid' of planned streets. To the west of the conservation area, Price Street is largely lined with modern buildings and spaces that are not of special historic or architectural interest. **It would therefore be inappropriate to include more of Price Street in the conservation area.**



The Dock Branch Railway Line sweeps through the Graham grid of streets and is set below the street level of the town centre. It is set to be reinvented as a linear park via the Birkenhead 2040 Framework.



The former Shore Road Goods Station serving Morpeth Dock and Lairage reinforces the urban character of the conservation area. It is complemented by the nearby transit sheds, lairage offices and former tramline.



Birkenhead County Court is a circa 1970 building that responds to the urban design criteria that were applied to the earliest buildings in the Graham grid of streets.



Chapter 05 The Regeneration Context

The Julia Mary House

Chapter 05

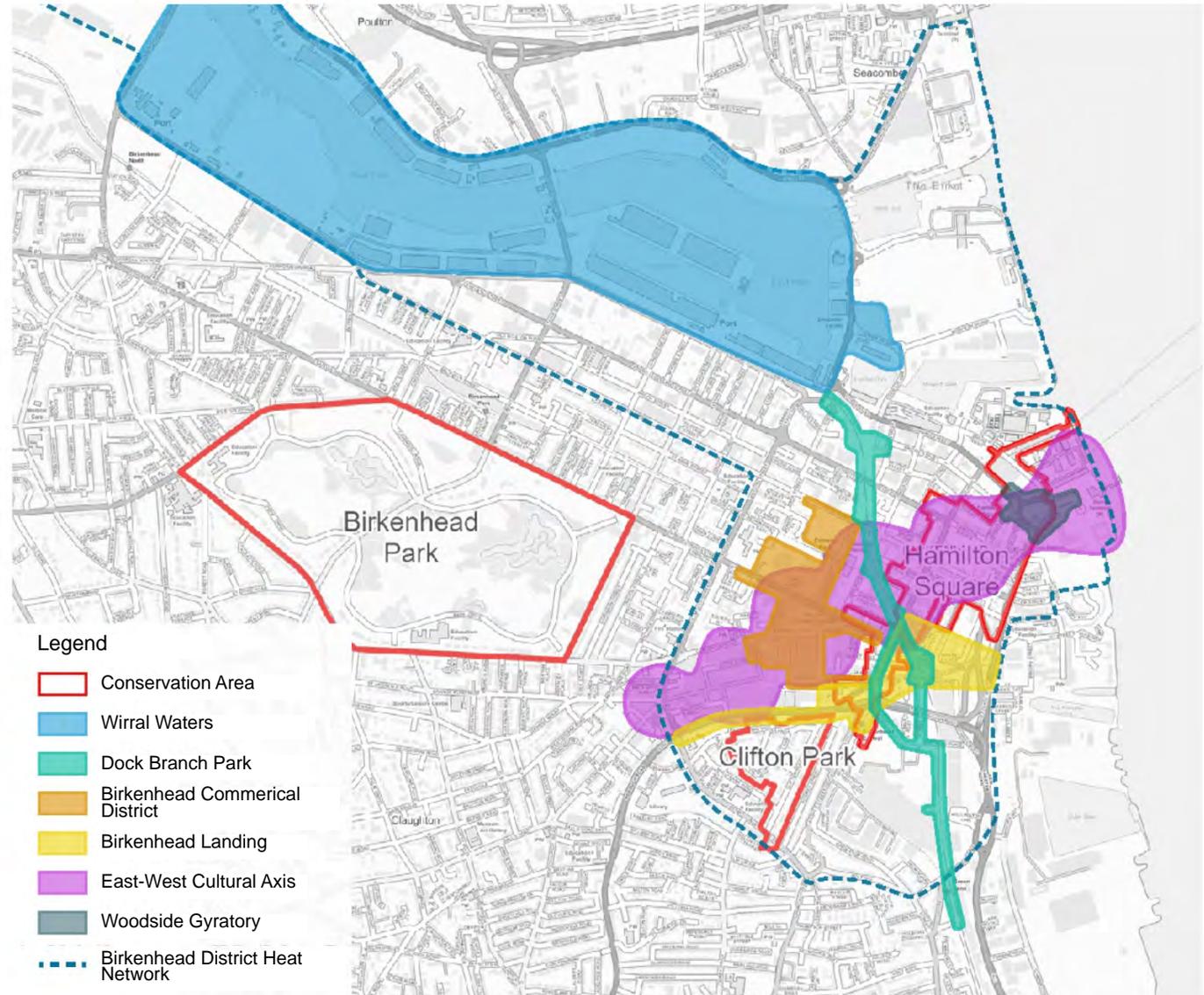
The Regeneration Context

The ambitious, transformative regeneration plans for Birkenhead are already visibly and physically changing the town centre. The [Birkenhead 2040 Framework](#) has reignited William Laird's vision for Birkenhead.

Laird created a thriving and beautiful town from a small village. Today's vision is to revitalise the legacy of fine historic streets, buildings and spaces left by Laird, Graham and those who followed.

This chapter puts the conservation area in the context of the town's regeneration plans. It identifies where and how the Plan can support the wider regeneration programme through the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

The Conservation Area and the Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework



The Conservation Area and the Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework's catalyst projects

Nearly two hundred years after the creation of Hamilton Square, Birkenhead's docks are once again driving the town's prosperity and stimulating new development, this time under the auspices of Wirral Waters, the largest urban regeneration project in the UK that is on its way to securing £5 billion of investment. The ambitions of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework are such that Wirral Waters is just one of eight catalyst projects that will make Birkenhead meet its potential in terms of its residential population, economy, culture, tourism, inclusivity, connectivity and sustainability. These interconnected catalyst projects will drive change and re-invent the town in a progressive and forward-looking manner.

Although **Wirral Waters** (blue on the plan overleaf) does not adjoin the study area, Birkenhead will be the nearest town centre for these thousands of new residents, and it is therefore important for the study area to be an attractive and convenient place to visit. This is especially the case given that another catalyst project,

The other catalyst projects all overlap with the study area:

Dock Branch Park: the re-landscaping of the Dock Branch Railway line into a linear park that is the focus for a new neighbourhood with its own masterplan. This bisects the study area at Argyle Street and partly continues along Argyle Street, which is a key entrance to the linear park.

Birkenhead Commercial District: the town's new, expanded and revitalised shopping, office and leisure core. This extends into the study area at Conway Street and Grange Road. Both of these streets are due to have substantial public realm improvements. The study area will therefore be on the doorstep of the new town centre.

Birkenhead Landing: the once-in-a-lifetime removal of the Borough Road Flyovers and general downgrading of the highway infrastructure between Grange Road and

Birkenhead Central Station, and the area east of Argyle Street leading to the Queensway Tunnel portal. The space released from highway use is to be redeveloped, including a public realm that promotes walking, cycling and public transport.

East-West Cultural Axis: the other projects are about the built environment; this cultural axis is concerned with creating a critical mass of cultural venues, activity and attractions between the ferry landing and town centre, drawing visitors through the heart of the study area, including Hamilton Square itself.

Woodside Gyrotory: like Birkenhead Landing, this project is about downgrading the highway infrastructure and reconfigure and redevelop the area, so the activity and vitality of the town extends down to the ferry landing. This catalyst project is mostly within the study area.

Birkenhead District Heat Network: to de-carbonise the local energy supply, feasibility studies are underway for the entire study area, catalyst projects and wider town centre to be connected to a heat network that draws heat from the water of the docks, transport tunnels and wastewater treatment works as a renewable source of heat for homes and businesses.

The 2040 Regeneration Framework divides the town into neighbourhoods, with their own identity and purpose. Each neighbourhood has one or more masterplans or frameworks to focus and drive regeneration activity in each of these areas.

As the figure to the right shows, the study area is mainly in Central Birkenhead neighbourhood, with smaller portions in the Waterfront and Hind Street neighbourhoods. Consequently the study area overlaps with the St Werburgh's Masterplan, the Hind Street Masterplan, the Dock Branch Railway Masterplan, and the Woodside Landing Masterplan.



Chapter 06 Conservation Area Analysis



This chapter analyses the current status of the conservation area. This is mainly in terms of its physical environment, but also how it is performing.



70-72a Argyle Street is a non-designated heritage asset.

Other Historic Environment Designations

Listed Buildings

There are 51 listed building entries within the conservation area. Five are grade I listed buildings, three grade II* and 43 grade II.

Many of these list entries cover more than one building. Hamilton Square has five list entries that cover 63 individual properties. If individual listed buildings (such as individual terraced houses) and structures (such as telephone boxes and statues) are counted, there are 175 listed buildings in the conservation area. Over one third of these are the terraces of Hamilton Square, with terraces such as 38-50 Argyle Street and the Market Cross terraces each being single list entries that encompass several individual buildings.

There is a high concentration of listed buildings around Hamilton Square and the adjacent streets, but there is a spread of listed buildings across the conservation area. The spread of listed buildings means that the impact of changes to these listed buildings or their setting must maintain or enhance their special interest, and any harm should be exceptional in order to justify this harm.

Locally listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets

Locally listed buildings are buildings that are on the Local Heritage List for Wirral. They are recognised by Wirral Council as being of local significance, and this significance should be given weight in any planning decisions affecting them. Non designated heritage assets are buildings or structure that hold some heritage value, but are not currently locally listed. The significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be given weight in planning decisions affecting them.

The Local Heritage List for Wirral is at an early stage of being compiled. The conservation area contains 12 locally listed buildings that are of heritage value in their own right

as well as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Some of these locally listed buildings comprise more than one property, for example a terrace or connected buildings.

The Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy Mapping Research (2021) identifies 14 buildings of architectural merit within the conservation area as part of a wider survey of Birkenhead. As this survey forms part of the evidence base of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and its supporting plans, this Plan has classed them as non-designated heritage assets unless they are locally listed.

The map on the next page shows all national, and local heritage designations in and around the conservation area.



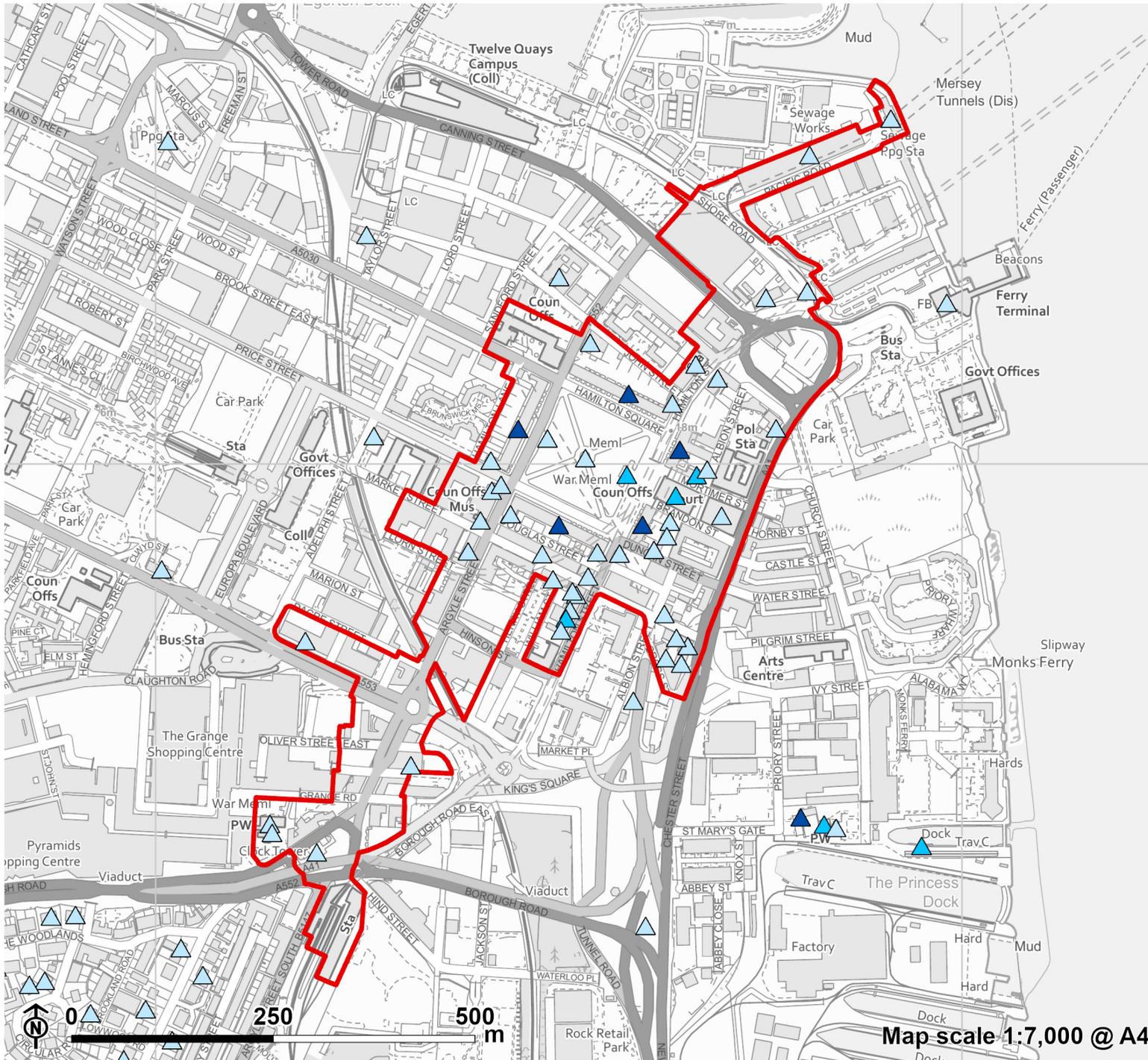
Birkenhead Central Station is a non-designated heritage asset.

Heritage Designations

Conservation Area Boundary: Hamilton Square

Listed Building

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II



Map scale 1:7,000 @ A4

Buildings that make a positive, neutral or negative contribution to the conservation area

The non-designated heritage assets, locally listed buildings and listed buildings are shaded green in the map to the right, as they all make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In terms of the NPPF, the loss of any of the green-shaded buildings, listed or otherwise, could amount to substantial harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The map to the right shows at a glance the overall high quality of the conservation area's building stock: there is a very high proportion of buildings that each make a positive contribution to its character and appearance.

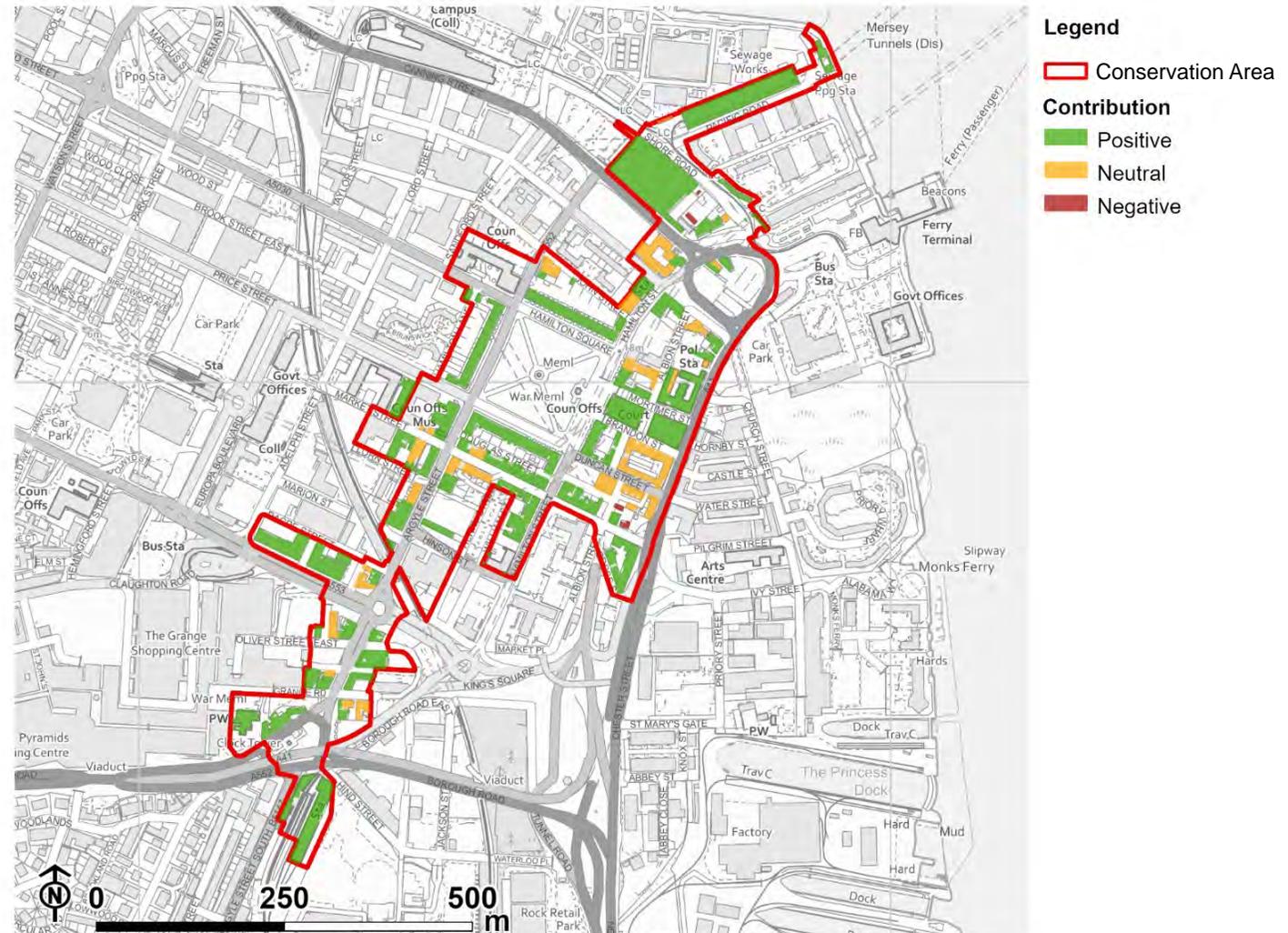
The relatively small proportion of buildings that make a neutral contribution tend to fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Historic buildings that have undergone substantial modernisations or unsympathetic alterations
- Infill development or large building extensions that maintain the conservation area's urban character and building lines, but are of low aesthetic value.
- Infill development that has been quite altered since it was built, thus lowering its aesthetic value.

The buildings that make a negative contribution are so few that they may be listed in full here:

- Utilitarian electricity substation buildings
- A utilitarian commercial garage
- A suburban style modern house / office
- The Borough Road flyover

None of the above contribute to the conservation area's heritage values or special character.



Place analysis

There are many historic landmarks and key built forms or groups of buildings that have retained their traditional character and contribute positively to create a unique sense of place.

Hamilton Square is a central placemaking feature within the conservation area. The quality and consistency of the built form makes a significant contribution to the public realm. There are no comparable spaces in the conservation area. The public realm itself can lack quality, due to inconsistent surfacing materials. Cracked concrete paving flags and patchwork bitmac on carriageways and footways contrast sharply with the quality of the built form.

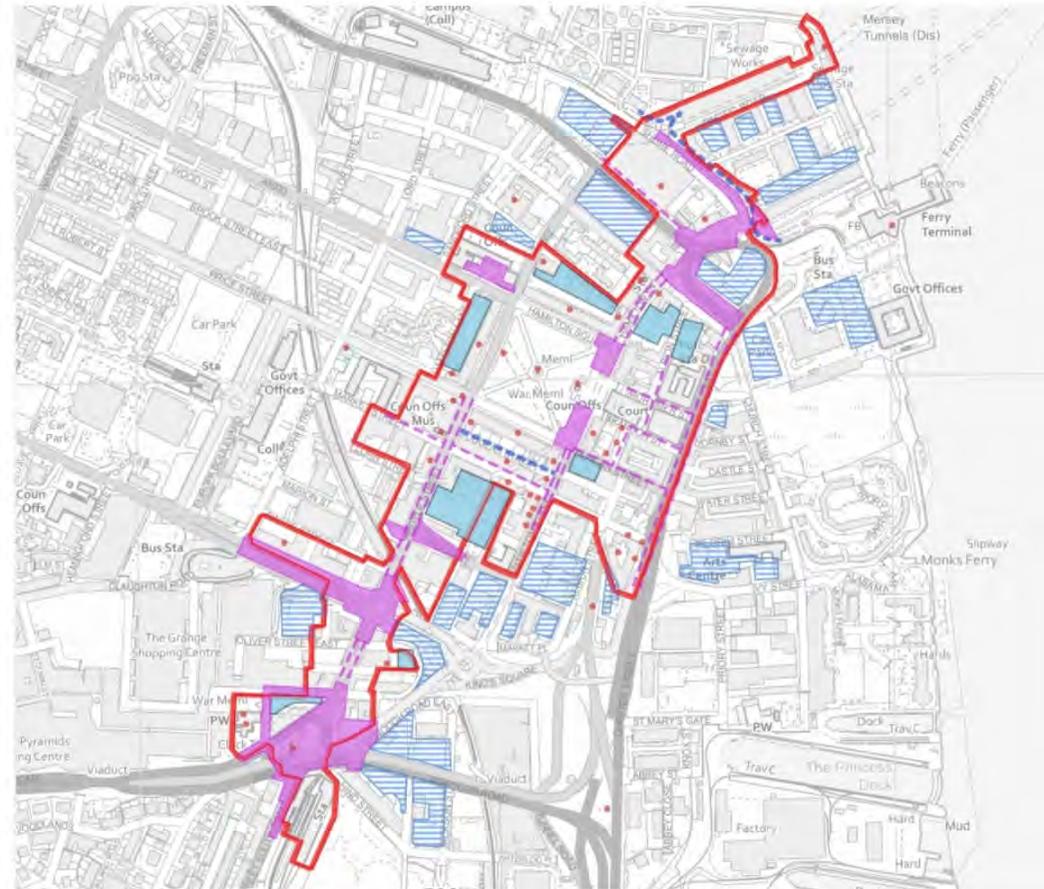
The low level railings to the Hamilton Square greenspace limit active use of the space. Planting takes the form of formally laid out linear beds of evergreen and herbaceous shrubs. The diagonal park routes are the only lit footpaths within the Square, presenting a view that this is a space to pass through, not dwell in.

The entrances to Hamilton Square are harmed by the roundabouts at what were geometrically laid out corners. As geometry is a key placemaking feature of the design intention, this dilutes its value. This is further emphasised in the south eastern corner which features a narrow and visually jarring curvilinear strip of paving laid out between Hamilton Street and Hamilton Square.

This interplay between geometrical streets and curvilinear streets form extends into the wider study area, with the curvilinear A roads appearing as intrusions into the earlier geometric grid of streets.

Those spaces left over from the laying out of the 20th century and later parts of the road network are irregular in shape, often taken up by surface-level car parking and poor quality built form. Examples are at Hinson Street, Conway Street and the Woodside Gyratory.

Visual detractors comprise poor quality built form, often with inactive and neglected frontages. These buildings



Legend

- Key heritage landmarks retaining traditional character
- Visual detractors: public realm
- Visual detractors: surface level car parking within CA
- Visual detractors: surface level car parking within setting of CA
- Positive contribution for public realm
- Conservation Area

undermine both the conservation area's sense of place and vitality.

The prevalence of surface level car parks create pervasive, inactive land use and creates gaps in the built form that also contribute to a lack of surveillance and do little to encourage walking as a mode of travel.

There are glimpses of where the public realm contributes positively, where high quality stone materials have been retained in situ (an alleyway between Argyle Street and Hamilton Street), stone paving fronting onto Birkenhead Town Hall, and along Shore Road, a former tram route.

Connectivity

The conservation area is very well served by rail, bus and road networks. Merseyrail stations are located within the north and south of the conservation area. Buses travel along the many A roads within and adjoining the conservation area, plus Argyle Street. There are also two bus interchanges close to the conservation area: Birkenhead Bus Station to the south west and Woodside Interchange to the north east.

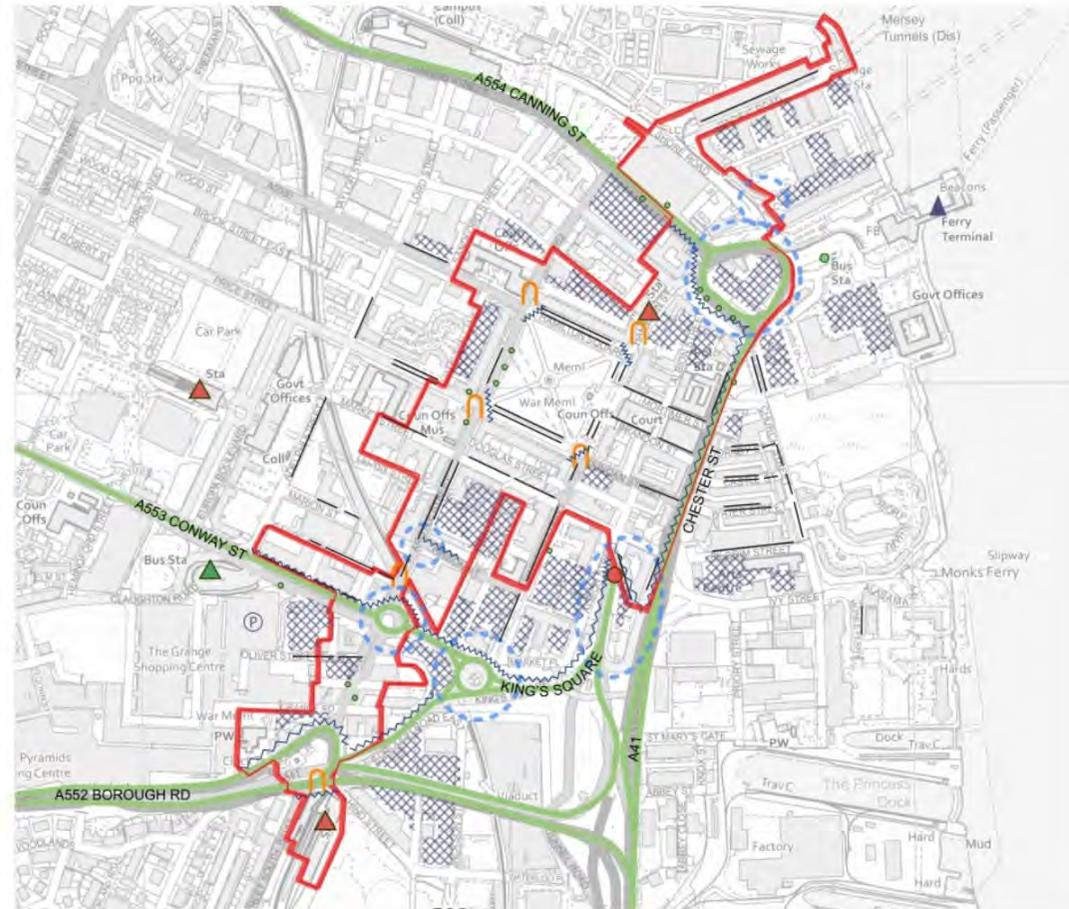
The Woodside Ferry terminal is located to the north east of the conservation area. It is currently closed for upgrades and due to reopen in 2025. This is a £8.6m project between the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Wirral Council, to turn the area into a 'vibrant and unique waterfront destination'.

Gateways into the conservation area tend to be characterised by the many busy A roads and their associated roundabouts and gyratories. Some of these routes are located along the periphery of the conservation area, such as Chester Street, however, they are a common feature of the vicinity of the Mersey Tunnel portal to the south.

Wide A roads, with their high volumes of traffic, broad and cluttered junctions, controlled crossings and restrictive barriers, negatively impacts both the setting of the study area and the pedestrian any cycling experience.

Away from the A roads, interventions to control vehicle movement such as the introduction of roundabouts to the north east and south east corners of Hamilton Square can often confound pedestrian movement.

Surface level car parking is prevalent within the conservation area and its immediate environs, highlighting the over-reliance on cars as a primary mode of transport to local businesses and services, despite the area's bus and rail connections.



- Legend
- ▲ Merseyrail station
 - ▲ Birkenhead Bus Station
 - Bus Stops
 - Woodside Interchange
 - ▲ Mersey Ferry Terminal (tourists)
 - Main transport routes
 - ~ Barrier for active travel access
 - Broad and cluttered junctions
 - Surface level car parking / inactive use
 - On-street parking
 - Multi-storey car park
 - U Gateway
 - Conservation Area

On-street car parking is prevalent throughout the area, including provision along Argyle Street, all sides of Hamilton Square, Chester Street, Hamilton Street and Market Street. Market Street is one-way to enable on-street parking.

The Conservation Area's Immediate Environs

The 'positive neutral and negative' assessment of the conservation area is with regard to its immediate environs. This assessment is distinct from the boundary review, as this is not an assessment of the heritage values of these areas. It is not a setting study that defines the characteristics and extent of the conservation area's setting, as its focus is the immediate environs.

The appearance, use, character, ambiance, sounds, vibrations and smells of adjoining land and buildings can impact both the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the suitability or attractiveness of sites or buildings for different potential uses, such as homes or for businesses. The purpose of this exercise is to identify opportunities for enhancement outside of the conservation area, and to identify where the character of the conservation area's immediate environs should be conserved. The latter can include areas that contrast in a positive manner.

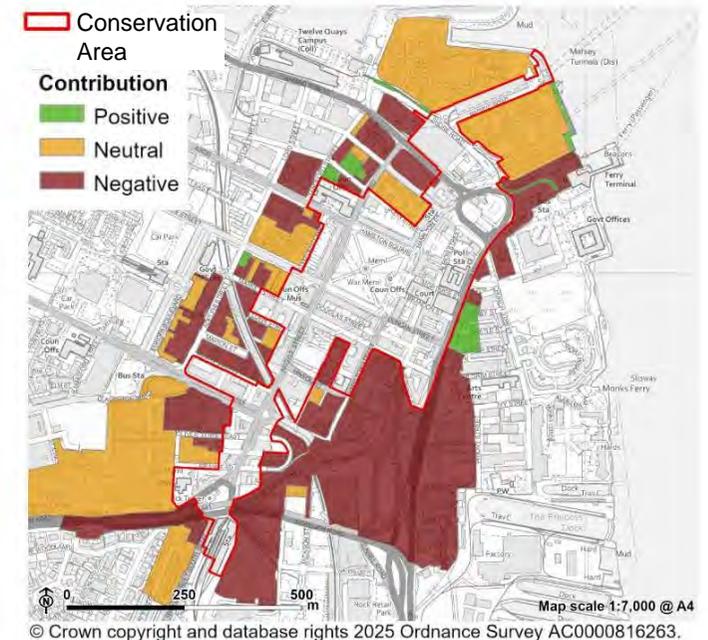
The map to the right shows at a glance that much of the immediate environs of the conservation area detract from its general character, appearance and ambiance. These negative areas tend to fall into one of more of the following categories:

- Vacant and/or untidy land
- Surface car parks, either open plan or enclosed as compounds
- Industrial estate-style freestanding sheds and buildings that are surrounded by hardstanding and stand in fenced compounds
- Large freestanding office blocks standing in surface car parking
- Large scale highway infrastructure such as flyovers, dual carriageways and the approaches to the Queensway Tunnel

The areas that make a neutral contribution tend to be areas of urban style housing, the commercial town centre, commercial buildings that uphold the area's urban character, surviving historic railway infrastructure, and small scale business park buildings in planned layouts.

The areas in the immediate environs that make a positive contribution to the study area are as follows:

- Clifton Park Conservation Area
- The 19th century terraced streets bounded by Chester Street, Hornby Street, Church Street and Water Street that are similar in character to housing with the study area at Chester street and Duncan Street
- The two ventilation towers of the Queensway Tunnel that are landmarks and complement the ventilation tower within the study area
- Mary Cole House (Wirral Ark), Sandford Street
- The continuations of the tramline on Shore Road
- Wirral Circular Trail on the south bank of the Mersey, the Mersey itself and views towards Liverpool's waterfront and landmarks.



Right: the character of the immediate environs of the conservation area can contrast sharply with the character of the conservation area itself. In this example, the predominantly three-storey Conway Centre stands next to a single storey industrial shed with a fenced compound used for parking and storage.



Building Lines

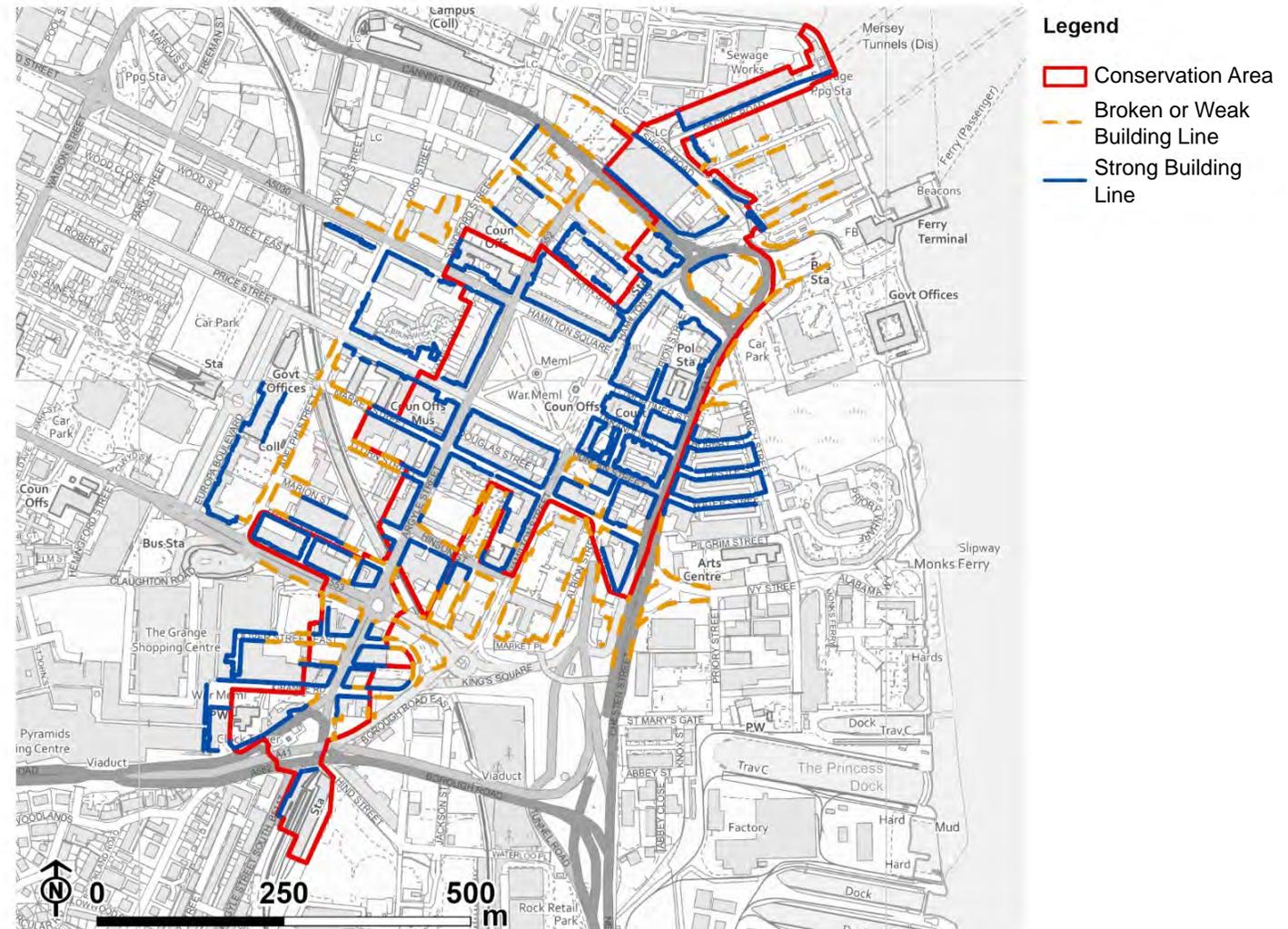
Consistent building lines are a key feature of the historic layout and urban character of the conservation area. Whether within Graham's grid of street or outside of it, buildings generally met the back line of the pavement, or as at Hamilton Square, were set behind small front enclosures and with the building lines formed by the long terrace behind.

The map figure to the right shows that across the conservation area there are generally strong and continuous building lines that enclose street spaces and provide an 'urban block' quality to the townscape. The limited clearance of buildings or redevelopment of sites mean there are relatively few gaps or breaks in the building lines.

The most significant break in the building lines of the conservation area are the broad expanse of Conway Street, and the sites directly above the Queensway Tunnel that were cleared in the 1930s.

This analysis includes the immediate environs of the conservation area. It shows how upon leaving the conservation area, the building lines generally cease or break, and the street spaces become less enclosed by buildings. This lack of continuity between the townscape and street enclosure of conservation area and its immediate environs is a particularly jarring feature of the street scene.

This analysis therefore identifies opportunities for new development to enhance the conservation area by addressing gaps or ends in the buildings lines, whether in the conservation area or its immediate environs. The building lines, built forms and level of enclosure to streets are so fundamental to an area's character but are also among the simplest things that the design of new development can repair.



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Building Height, Grain and Density

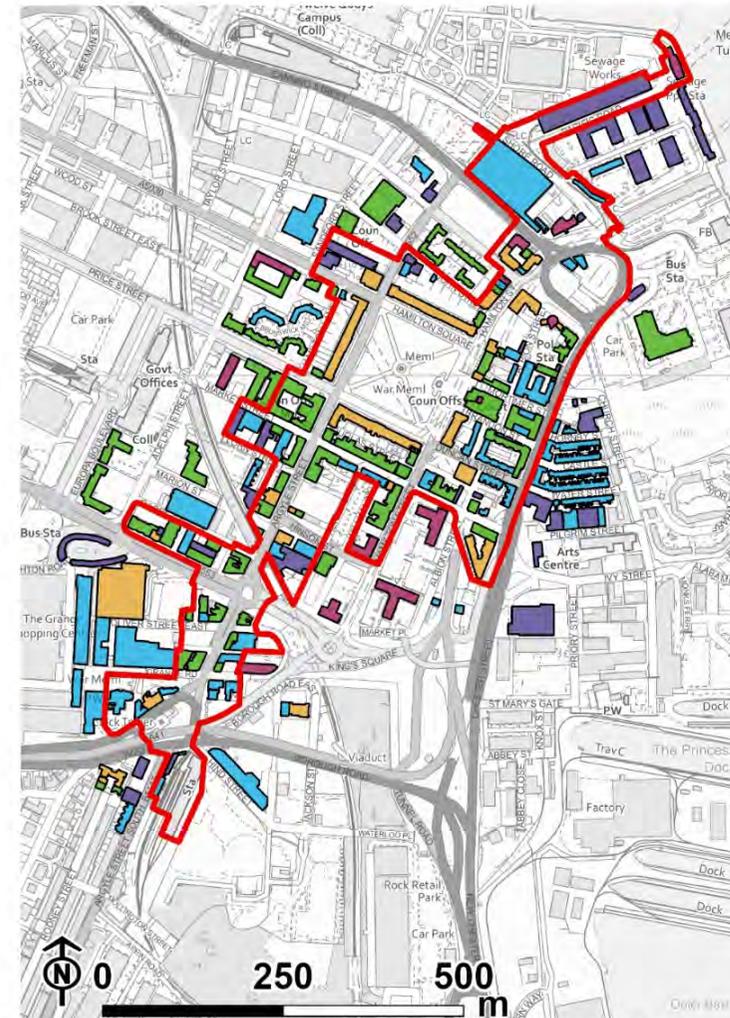
Building height, grain and density are important aspects of the conservation area's urban and historic character. They help to unify the different phases of development and redevelopment and the diverse range of uses housed in each building. These factors of course affect the spaces within the conservation area: whether they are enclosed or open, sheltered or windswept and the balance between public spaces, private spaces and built forms.

The map figure to the right shows building heights and footprints, and also gives an indication of grain. The building heights are coloured as a spectrum: five storeys or more as red, four as amber through to two storeys as blue, and one storey as violet. Within the conservation area:

- A majority of three- and four-storey buildings in the core, facing the principal streets and spaces
- Buildings, structures or parts of buildings of five storeys or more are exceptional, and tend to be landmarks in the skyline
- In many cases one- and two-storey buildings are often attached to taller buildings or occupy positions on side streets or back streets
- Towards the north, there is a noticeable change to larger footprint, lower height buildings that are associated with rail and water transportation and storage. At the opposite end there is a cluster of low buildings at and around Birkenhead Central Station.
- With the exception of the space at the centre of Hamilton Square, there is a fairly high density of building footprints, with open spaces behind built forms or within enclosed courtyards
- There is a fine grain of building plots, with even the longest terraces being made up of individual units of a standard width. Where individual buildings have a large footprint, there are changes in height across the building rather than a uniform height throughout.
- The exception to the grain of the conservation area is the northern end, where the uses of original uses of the buildings required larger structures and consistent eaves heights.

The analysis of building height, grain and density includes the immediate environs of the conservation area so that opportunities for enhancement or conservation can be identified. The analysis of the immediate environs of the conservation area shows:

- The grain, heights and footprints of buildings become diffuse and disjointed outside of the conservation area. There is uniformity in specific locations e.g. the shopping centres, Europa Boulevard, Price Street, Woodside Business Park and around Castle Street, but for the most part the building density, height and footprint becomes noticeably varied and inconsistent.
- To the northeast, southeast northwest and west of the conservation area, the townscape is generally much more open and fractured, with a lower density of buildings, and much larger grain.
- There is little coherence to the siting of buildings of five storeys or more. These are fairly liberally scattered, well-spaced and often stand isolated in their plots.
- Open spaces tend to front onto streets with the buildings set back, rather than the buildings forming the street frontage and enclosing the open spaces.



Legend

- Conservation Area
- Building Height
 - Five or More Storeys
 - Four Storeys
 - Three Storeys
 - Two Storeys
 - One Storey

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Views and Vistas

The conservation area's initial layout was planned and laid out by an architect to either respond to views into and out of the area, and to deliberately create new views or vistas. The intended views and vistas in James Gilliespie Graham's grid layout of Birkenhead include:

- Endless' vistas along the long, straight and fairly flat streets that form the 0.25 mile by 1 mile grid of streets in the planned layout. These are a result of the highly linear street spaces that are enclosed by strong building lines on either side. Rather than terminating, these vistas often peter out, giving them an 'endless' character.
- Views within Hamilton Square: over the central greenspace from the houses, or the grand terrace frontages from the streets and greenspace, and of the plot Graham reserved for the town hall.
- Views from Hamilton Square, Hamilton Street and Chester Street of the River Mersey and Liverpool
- Vistas framed by different levels of enclosure and intimacy of streets according to street width and building height (for example, Argyle Street versus Market Street versus Douglas Street).

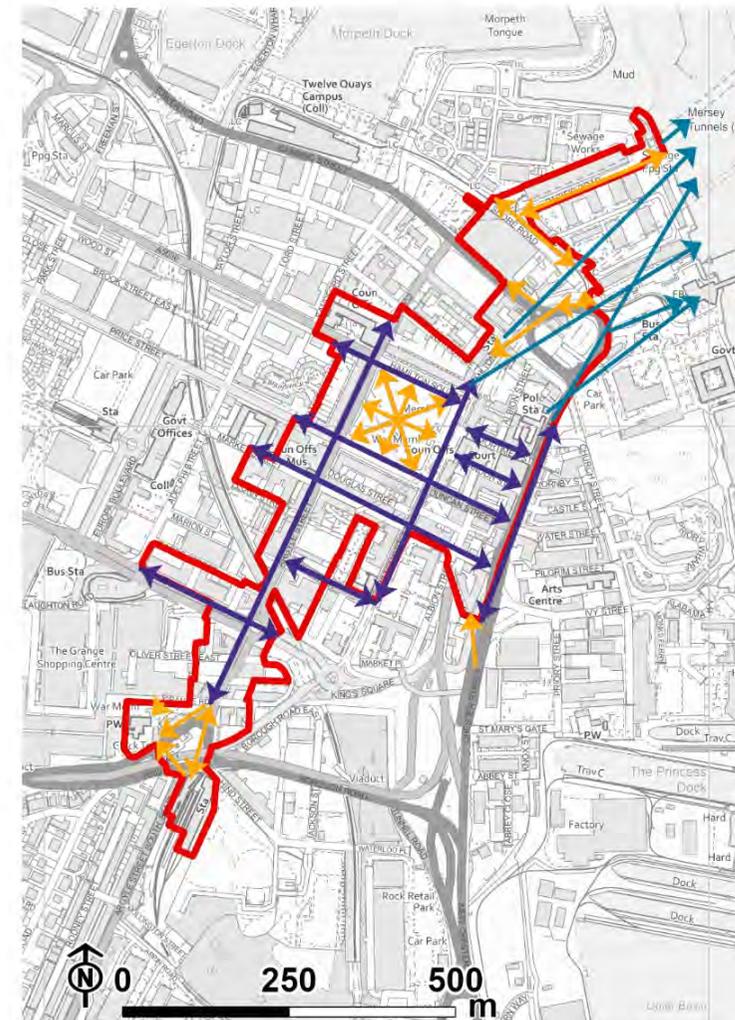
The conservation area has developed and changed over time. The following landmarks and features have been added to the skyline and spaces in the conservation area since its initial phase of development. These often form the focus of views and vistas:

- The Town Hall and its domed clocktower
- Infrastructure towers such as the Hamilton Square Station tower, the Shore Road Pumping Station and the Mersey Tunnel Ventilation Towers
- Memorials and monuments including the town Cenotaph, Queen Victoria Statue, King Edward VII Clocktower, Laird Statute, the 'Futility' Statue and St Werburgh's War Memorial

Some of the buildings of the conservation area are striking visually due to their scale, height, location or architecture. This makes views of them as landmarks particularly important to the character of the conservation area. In addition to those listed above these include:

- All of Hamilton Square
- The Town Hall and Magistrates Court
- The Conway Centre, Conway Street
- The former Post Office at Argyle Street
- Birkenhead Central Station
- Clifton Crescent and the Church of St Werburgh
- The former Pier Hotel
- The Shore Road gatehouses
- The Cheshire Lines Building and Pacific Road warehouses
- The grand terraces on Bridge Street and the Market Cross

The conservation area therefore contains a mix of long distance and localised views and vistas, some intended through urban design, others are fortuitous or juxtapositions. There are opportunities for new development to enhance or maintain these views as well as the potential to harm them.



Legend

- Conservation Area
- Key view or vista within or into the conservation area
- ↔ Key vista along the 'Graham Grid' of streets
- Key view or vista towards the River Mersey and Liverpool

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Car Parking

The mixture of building uses in the town centre requires it to accommodate car parking spaces for vehicles owned or used by residents, businesses, workers, shoppers and visitors. This is supplied via a range of means, including public and private pay and display parking, on-street parking, private contract parking, private in-curtilage parking and informal or unofficial car parking.

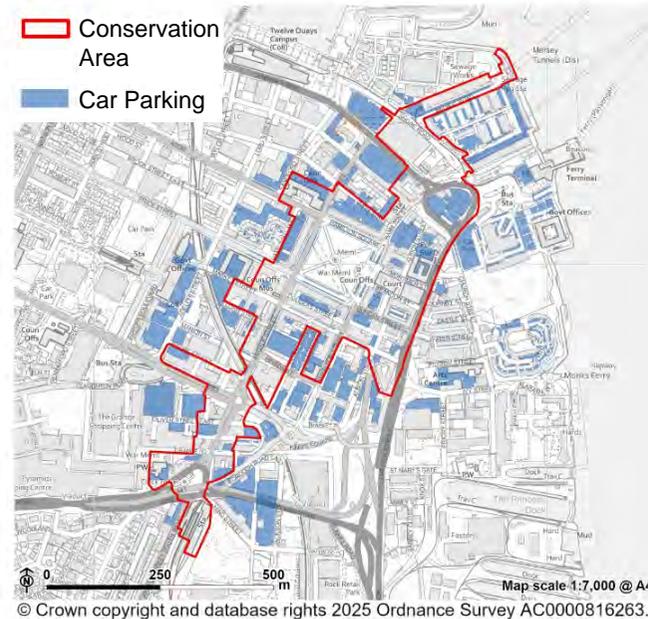
Parked vehicles are a pervasive presence across the town centre, and impact the character and appearance of the conservation area and its surroundings in different ways and to differing degrees.

The pervasiveness of spaces used for car parking both within and in the immediate environs of the conservation area, plus the way that people inevitably park their cars outside of the conservation area and walk in (and vice versa) mean this topic should be explored holistically.

The map to the right shows at a glance a considerable amount of land and public realm within the conservation area, and especially in its immediate environs is used for parking motor vehicles for between half an hour or, in the case of private land, indefinitely. Parked vehicles are therefore a fairly consistent feature of the street scene of the conservation area, and views into and out of it.

The necessity of accommodating private cars has had the following impacts on the conservation area:

- The paving over of gardens and other green spaces to provide parking
- Many detached free-standing post-1945 buildings having adjacent or surrounding surface car parks creating gaps and intrusions to the urban form and building lines
- Many private parking sites being in the format of compounds with high fences or walls that give a defensive, unwelcoming appearance.
- Land used for parking being left fairly unkempt and unwelcoming in some cases.



An analysis of the Wirral Parking Strategy (2023) and online private parking services has found:

- Any motorist arriving in the conservation area or a few minutes' walk of it has, in theory, a choice of 2,551 spaces, either on-street or off-street or Council- or privately-operated. This total excludes private parking spaces that are let on a contract basis, or the private parking spaces within residential or business premises.
- There are 1,161 car parking spaces in Council-operated pay and display car parks within the conservation area and its immediate environs. These achieve at peak times 39% occupation, meaning even at the busiest times, there are typically 708 empty spaces.
- There are approximately 310 on-street parking spaces within the conservation area and its immediate environs. Across the entire town centre each on-street space typically has 1.7 cars parked in it per day. This suggests a very low level of use of on-street spaces in peripheral locations, as the most convenient short stay spaces are used by several cars during peak hours.
- While usage statistics for privately operated car parks are unavailable, over-provision is likely here too, based on observation. It is also highly likely that many of the contract and private parking for business use are largely or wholly vacant outside of typical business hours.

The conservation area therefore appears to have a significant overprovision of vehicle parking. As mentioned above, this land use is harming the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Left: a centrally located off street car park that was nearly empty on a weekday afternoon. Multiply this level of usage across the wider area, and it is clear that these areas of land could be put to better use.

Chapter 07 SWOT Analysis



Chapter 07

SWOT Analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis draws on the analysis of the preceding chapter and the understanding of the study area's significance.

It has been divided into four categories for ease of reference. These categories are:

- **Place:** the physical and tangible environment of the study area: its heritage assets, its buildings and its spaces.
- **Activity:** how the study area is managed, the regeneration activity happening in and around it, and how buildings, sites and places are used.
- **Community:** the people, organisations and groups, such as the Town Team, that have an interest in the area and its future.
- **Connectivity:** the convenience of getting to and around the study area by different modes of transport.

The **strengths** are features or attributes that generally make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The strengths are also factors that support the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, including by making it a vibrant and economically viable town centre.

The **weaknesses** are features or attributes that currently harm the character or appearance of the conservation area. Weaknesses are also factors or circumstances that undermine the objectives of preserving or enhancing the conservation area.

The **opportunities** are actions that could be taken to preserve and enhance the conservation area. This includes making the town centre a more vibrant and economically viable place, as well as enhancing the environment. The threats are factors that if allowed to continue or to evolve without intervention, will either cause harm or cause continued harm or greater harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The **threats** columns include 'general' and 'site specific' threats. The 'general threats apply uniformly or extensively across the conservation area, the 'specific' threats relate to specific sites or activities.

The successful and long-lasting improvements delivered by past heritage-led regeneration schemes is a strength of the conservation area (upper right). A weakness is vacant and underused buildings of clear heritage and townscape value (lower right)



Place SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<p>Concentration of highly listed buildings at Hamilton Square and the area's heritage value universally recognised (e.g. the Trafalgar Square and St Andrew Square comparisons). There is also a longstanding conservation area in place since the 1970s.</p> <p>Key heritage landmarks (all listed) in the skyline / to aid wayfinding: town hall, Conway Building, Merseyrail Station, Ventilation Tower, Edward VII clock tower.</p> <p>Historic grid layout survives and provides a clear framework and hierarchy of primary, secondary and tertiary streets.</p> <p>Excellent views from several locations of Liverpool's iconic waterfront: Albert Dock, Three Graces, Cathedrals etc.</p> <p>Proximity to several key regeneration areas: Hind Street, Wirral Waters, the Waterfront, Dock Branch Neighbourhood, Birkenhead Central (including new Council offices and market).</p> <p>Large supply of private, Council and on-street car parking spaces.</p> <p>Relatively flat topography of the majority of the conservation area, well-disposed to active travel and accessible spaces</p> <p>The area's urban character supports a reasonable density of dwellings and business premises. Suitable for gentle density with good quality historic buildings providing precedents.</p>	<p>Noticeable proportion of buildings that have undergone inappropriate alterations in the past such as shopfronts, windows, rendering / painting. These alterations detract from the area's character and appearance.</p> <p>Noticeable proportion of buildings that are in need of repair (such as repainting, addressing leaks and vegetation growth) and a small proportion of buildings that require extensive major repairs</p> <p>Loss of key buildings historically (e.g. theatres, market hall, large stores) and in recent years (Woodside Hotel, cinemas on Argyle Street and Conway Street). Their sites have often not been redeveloped creating gaps in the townscape.</p> <p>Roller shutters and boarded up shopfronts creating inactive frontages that do not feel safe.</p> <p>Many highway surfaces are of a poor quality and appearance, e.g. red bitmac, clay pavements and/or in a poor condition (patchy, broken slabs, weed growth).</p> <p>More recent developments often do not present active frontages or principal entrances to the street; instead they are oriented towards their own car parks for people arriving by car.</p> <p>Some conversions and new build developments have supported the retention of existing vacant plots due to the locations of domestic windows, e.g. Hamilton Plaza, Market Street / Albion Street corner.</p>	<p>'Benign neglect' of some buildings means they retain much of their traditional character and appearance that can be retained and repaired.</p> <p>Potential for area-based heritage-led schemes to repair, restore and re-use privately owned historic buildings. Could also be used to improve certain areas of public realm and to deepen, share and celebrate the area's heritage values.</p> <p>Reduce car parking provision (public, private, on street) and make more efficient use of sites. 'Gentle intensification' to be coupled with proposals to concentrate parking in MSCPs – get people walking the last leg of their journey to work and make the town centre busier.</p> <p>Trimming back the Mersey Tunnel infrastructure (overpasses, lanes, payment booths) presents an opportunity to improve the environment around the tunnel entrance and approaches.</p> <p>New public realm projects enhance the conservation area by recognising its significance and character.</p> <p>Potential to restore the open space within Hamilton Square back to its original layout or hold a design competition for its redesign to suit its civic functions, status as the conservation area's principal green space and the growing residential population of the Square.</p> <p>Potential review of existing listed buildings and designation of new listed buildings.</p>	<p>General: Catalyst projects and masterplans may not maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and/or cause harm.</p> <p>General: planned highway improvements across the town centre may cause harm or miss opportunities to enhance the conservation area</p> <p>General: Heights of new development in the regeneration areas could harm the conservation area. This is both by 'closing in' the conservation area by surrounding and infilling with taller buildings that will dominate views and spaces, as well as impacts on the main features of the historic skyline.</p> <p>General: Grain of new development in the regeneration areas harms the conservation area. Large footprint 'urban campus' approach: single-block buildings, no townhouses, terraces or fine grain plots.</p> <p>General: Building line and built forms of new development in regeneration areas harm the conservation area.</p> <p>General: Any proposed landscaping and public realm should be conscious of the views to Hamilton Square, as the surrounding streets were designed without greenery to emphasise Hamilton Square as the principal green space. Any proposed tree planting in the surroundings may harm this relationship between Hamilton Square and its surroundings.</p> <p>General: lack of integration of regeneration activity and safety and crime prevention.</p>

Place SWOT Analysis (continued)

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<p>Very few buildings detract from the study area's character, the large majority make a positive or neutral contribution.</p> <p>Varied grain of development, ranging from single terraced units (e.g. Market Street, Hamilton Street) to large block-sized floorplates (e.g. Conway Building, courts, town hall, Cheshire Lines)</p> <p>Uniform building height across the study area, 2-4 storeys.</p> <p>Strong building lines and good sense of enclosure to street spaces (building height versus width).</p> <p>Varied material palette (ashlar, brick, render) and architectural styles spanning 200 years.</p> <p>Active street frontages to principal streets by and large.</p> <p>'Never ending' character of vistas along the main streets of the grid, with the exception of the view of the rising landform to Tranmere to the south.</p> <p>The principal green open spaces: Hamilton Square, St Werburgh's churchyard and Clifton Crescent are all well-defined with clear extents.</p>	<p>Significant and prominent areas of surface car parking in and around the study area. Often on cleared sites, 'left over' land, but also many recent employment, leisure and education developments have their own expansive surface parking despite the town centre location.</p> <p>Past highway improvements to increase traffic flow and segregate road users has created intrusions to the grid street layout and has created cluttered junctions that disrupt pedestrian desire lines (e.g. Conway Street roundabout, Argyle Street-Hinson Street junction, Hamilton Square corners).</p> <p>Clutter to the public realm: pedestrian barriers, bollards, wheelie and Euro bins, traffic signals.</p> <p>Gap sites and set back buildings have eroded the urban character, building line and sense of enclosure and overlooking of streets.</p> <p>Unkempt gap sites and car parks detract from the area's traditional urban character, as do low quality municipal and commercial soft/hard landscaping.</p> <p>The accommodation of cars within plots rather than on streets of public/private car parks results in the 'wrong' type of density: overly tall and monolithic buildings standing in their own compounds of surface parking.</p> <p>The setting makes a particularly poor contrast to the study area in many locations – it frequently creates an unpleasant intrusion on views into and out of the study area, and impacts its ambiance.</p>	<p>Potential to reconfigure the grounds of the Church of St Werburgh. Reduce car parking down to an acceptable necessary minimum and look at how this enclosed space could be more biodiverse, help with SuDS, and/or provide a distinctive space away from the bustle of the town centre.</p> <p>Redesign of Clifton Crescent Square – re-siting the clock tower, integrating the town centre and station, improved gateway and accessibility.</p> <p>Improve street slighting to improve the sense of safety whilst minimising the impact of light fittings on the street scene.</p>	<p>General: There are very few external funding options for privately owned historic buildings. This means that the catalyst projects' focus on the public realm / gateways and junctions, is less likely to be matched by co-ordinated investment in the existing buildings that surround them.</p> <p>General: Frameworks and Masterplans are heavily focussed on new build rather than improving and re-using existing buildings. Very few historic buildings are identified for improvement or re-use.</p> <p>Specific: proposed 12-21 storey buildings between the conservation area and the waterfront: blocks views to/from the conservation area, harmful height, scale and character of development.</p> <p>Specific: large open spaces proposed at Woodside, but these spaces may be out of scale with the historic buildings (1-3 storeys generally), providing a weak sense of enclosure and urban character</p> <p>Specific: demolition of boundary walls to the Church of St Werburgh, and making the churchyard part of an open campus: harm to listed building and conservation area, may impede how the building and site function.</p> <p>Specific: no proposals for the space within Hamilton Square. It could contribute greatly to the appeal of the area if sympathetically improved.</p>

Activity SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<p>The U-Boat Museum is a tourist attraction located just outside study area. It is about to undergo major investment and expansion, with a planning application for extending the museum being considered.</p> <p>Broad and long-established mix of uses: retail, leisure, office, residential, civic, spiritual, not-for-profit, transport, commemorative etc.</p> <p>Growing creative and not-for profit sector within and close to the study area: Make CIC, Future Yard, and others.</p> <p>Early signs of a diversifying evening economy: Future Yard music venue, drive-in cinema, food hall at the ferry terminal.</p> <p>Successful re-use of many buildings e.g. Future Yard and Make premises, food hall at ferry terminal, offices, homes and businesses in terraced buildings.</p> <p>Wirral Borough Council is committed to make Birkenhead the location for its principal offices and physical point of access for services. This means many employees and Council service users will be in the town centre, which can help support businesses and services.</p> <p>Diverse historic building stock: dwellings, mixed use buildings, local government premises, dock buildings, transportation buildings, warehouses, civic buildings, offices and others.</p> <p>Birkenhead 2040 Framework in place and nine supporting masterplans are in progress.</p>	<p>Noticeable proportion of vacant and underused buildings (e.g. vacant upper floors) including long- and medium-term. These detract from the vitality and sense of safety of the area.</p> <p>Only a very small proportion of tourists on the Mersey Ferry disembark and explore the town. This has the twin impacts of a lack of visitor destinations and lack of visitor awareness of this side of the river.</p> <p>Wirral Transport Museum and its tramway are temporarily closed, reducing the area's visitor offer and footfall, though visitor numbers were falling (at c.6,000 per annum before closure).</p> <p>Litter and a lack of maintenance to hard and soft landscaping.</p> <p>Low economic performance of the conservation area and its property market – local and convenience businesses, little variety in housing offer.</p> <p>Many of the public sector organisations, not for profits, institutions and businesses are feeling the impacts of austerity, inflation and economic decline. Uncertain futures, cycles of cost-cutting, short term lets, greater reliance on external support, surviving rather than having the confidence and ability to plan ahead and invest. This affects the vitality and character of the conservation area.</p> <p>Drug-related offences (possession, use, dealing) are also prevalent in the area, especially Hamilton Square, Argyle Street, Market Street and Conway Street.</p>	<p>Use of enforcement powers e.g. planning and listed building enforcement, s.215 Notices to tidy and repair buildings or land; discontinuance notices to remove advertisements; listed building repair notices.</p> <p>Use of a Design Code to guide new development within / surrounding CA generally: heights, massing, forms, identity, building lines, active frontages, materials, parking, boundary features, shopfronts and so on.</p> <p>Use of development briefs or a 'development prospectus' for gap sites where there are specific requirements over and above the requirements of a design code as identified through the analysis of the site.</p> <p>Strategy for Council-owned land and assets such as underused car parks, or sites that could provide potential catalyst development.</p> <p>Identify key areas for highway improvements that are outside of existing and planned schemes. Suggest potential re-design in order to maximise benefits to the study area's character, appearance and vitality.</p> <p>Council and public sector-led rollback of on-site parking. In line with the Wirral Parking Strategy, support more people walking the last leg of their journey to work. This could enable on-site car parks to be redeveloped as more people use edge of centre car parks.</p> <p>Liverpool University study into energy efficiency at Hamilton Square could offer a best practice exemplar / prototype / guide for the wider area.</p>	<p>General: without a co-ordinated approach to regeneration activity across the conservation area and its setting, there would be greater risk for this activity to cause harm to the conservation area.</p> <p>General: Limited economic / footfall spin-offs to conservation area from 2040 Framework and masterplans. The area therefore remains marginal in terms of the town centre's economic, tourism and leisure activity.</p> <p>Smaller impact opportunity sites in and around the conservation 'slipping through the net' by not being in a masterplan area. Placemaking is about marginal improvements having a combined effect.</p> <p>General: Council-owned and public sector owned sites could be disposed of without a clear development brief that supports the implementation of the Regeneration Framework and Masterplans and maintaining or enhancing the conservation area.</p> <p>General: without sufficient support for and encouragement of active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) to the town centre's large number of office and education sites, it will be difficult to meaningfully increase the footfall and vitality of the town centre.</p>

Activity SWOT Analysis (continued)

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<p>Liverpool City Region Combined Authority provides a means of integrating Birkenhead with the wider conurbation and offers an additional funding avenue and regeneration partner. The recent Argyle Quarter improvements are an example of this.</p> <p>The successful re-use and repair of buildings, improvement of shopfronts and the public realm by the Hamilton Quarter Improvement Scheme of the 1990s demonstrates proof of concept for heritage-led regeneration in Birkenhead. These improvements have been maintained ever since.</p> <p>Council ownership of several key sites within and adjacent to the study area.</p> <p>Considerable public sector ownership / occupation of sites within and close to the study area: Merseytravel, police, central government.</p> <p>Large employment and footfall base in and adjacent to the study area: several large office buildings, Europa Boulevard, Wirral Met College, University of Chester.</p> <p>The heritage and culture strategy mapping exercise has already identified buildings of architectural merit, local list candidates etc and these have been fed into all masterplans.</p> <p>Fairly up to date and comprehensive evidence base of the town centre can be gleaned from the 2040 Framework and supporting masterplans.</p>		<p>The Wirral Transport Museum and U Boat Story are now operated by Big Heritage who are potentially in line to take on the soon-to-be-vacated Cheshire Lines Building and Pump House. Potential for revitalised tourist attractions that would be marketed alongside the Western Approaches Museum in Liverpool.</p> <p>General review of premises licensing, pavement licensing, CCTV provision, lighting, enforcement powers, policing etc to address crime and antisocial behaviour. Address the most serious and persistent problems first.</p> <p>Review of street cleaning and cleansing, street bin emptying / locations, and domestic and commercial bin storage, and collection. Are these having the desired effects? Are the persistent issues? Where is adjustment or improvement needed? This also applies to all stakeholders in the town centre, including land and building owners, businesses and residents.</p> <p>Review existing Council-owned landscaping in and around the public highway. Identify issues and potential improvements, especially ones that provide SuDS, biodiversity, and environmental enhancement.</p> <p>Incentivise town centre shopping, food and beverage to the incumbent office / student population – discounts, special offers, loyalty schemes, newsletter, marketing.</p> <p>Use of Local Listed Building Consent Orders for certain works at Hamilton Square and/or other buildings in the area. Could relate to certain repairs or restorations and/or the findings of the energy efficiency study.</p>	<p>General: Lack of baseline and defined measures of success in terms of the impacts on the conservation area and heritage assets. What does success look like in terms of the conservation area and how is it measured?</p> <p>General: lack of suitable information, guidance and support for people who wish to occupy, convert or improve historic buildings leads to a lack of investment or new work that harms the conservation area's character.</p> <p>Specific: the key gateway between Clifton Crescent and Birkenhead Central Station is split between the masterplans for Hind Street and St Werburgh. It should be cohesively planned as a single space with a clear plan for the listed clocktower and surrounding heritage assets.</p> <p>Specific: Argyle Street in particular is featured in different masterplans and schemes proposing different design approaches and detailing to the public realm. Change to this important highway corridor needs to be done in a sympathetic and joined-up along its full length.</p>

Community SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<p>Extensive public consultation on the framework and masterplans shows very strong local support to drive the regeneration of the town centre.</p> <p>General support across the borough for Birkenhead to be the focus of new development means no competing towns in the Borough, or a need to 'balance' investment between similar centres.</p> <p>The successes of the Hamilton Quarter improvement project of the 1990s and the Argyle Quarter Shopfront scheme of 2024/5 demonstrates an appetite for improving the area among businesses and building owners. Many of the improvements made in the 1990s have been maintained since.</p>	<p>Potential 'over consultation' and 'consultation fatigue' and growing impatience among consultees after successive rounds of framework and masterplan consultation, exhibitions and so on.</p>	<p>Engagement with property owners and occupiers. Importance of repair and maintenance, but also making it easier for basic tasks to be done like getting gutters cleared, vegetation removed from masonry, joinery painted, windows cleaned, roofs repaired at the same time between adjacent and neighbouring properties: bulk discount, bigger impact, less hassle.</p> <p>Guidance and advice for owners, of traditional buildings. Myth busting, information, promoting best practice.</p> <p>Register or database of good contractors and craftspeople and building materials or component suppliers. This could be a City Region-wide list or a Pinterest-style site of the work done and details of the firms responsible. This would support and promote the local heritage skills base and make it easier for building owners to find appropriately skilled and experienced contractors.</p> <p>Possibility of a BID or similar to take projects forward, provide a source of funding for improvements, marketing etc.</p> <p>The relatively low economic base and land values open up the area to a range of different residents and businesses. The Council's existing strategies are using this to shape the area's vitality. This includes family homes, student living, social housing, meanwhile uses, pop-ups, start-ups and new businesses.</p> <p>Consider the younger generations: research shows lower car ownership and desire to live within reach of work, study, leisure and social life. Birkenhead is extremely well-connected and could be attractive to younger people.</p>	<p>Potential misinformation or disinformation about proposals for the area that could be a source of opposition to the proposals.</p>

Connectivity SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<p>Excellent rail connectivity: two Merseyrail stations within the conservation area, a third just outside. Liverpool city centre is less than five minutes away by rail. The local stations also link out to the national rail network.</p> <p>Good bus connectivity in the town centre, and its bus station is just outside of conservation area. This and the rail service have offset the loss of a direct commuter ferry service.</p> <p>The Mersey Ferry terminal offers further connectivity with Liverpool city centre and is a means of tourists reaching Birkenhead.</p> <p>The next-closest inland crossing points of the Mersey after those at Birkenhead are those at Runcorn (rail, car, lorry and bus), some 23km upstream. Birkenhead is therefore a principal destination from Liverpool and a key connection to the Wirral and north Cheshire.</p> <p>Good road links: A41, Mersey Tunnel, A552, A554.</p>	<p>Past highway improvements to increase traffic flow and segregate road users has created intrusions to the grid street layout and has created cluttered junctions that disrupt pedestrian desire lines (e.g. Conway Street roundabout, Argyle Street-Hinson Street junction, Hamilton Square corners).</p> <p>Busy and broad highways sever the study area from itself and its surroundings via active travel e.g. Woodside Gyratory, Chester Street, Borough Road / King's Square, Conway Street.</p> <p>Mersey Tunnel entrance is very busy: noise, light pollution, odour / air quality can be particularly bad at certain times of day.</p> <p>Many of the busiest employment, education and civic destinations have their own on-site parking. Their workforce, students and visitors can and do arrive by car and therefore have little or no interaction or use of the town centre, even as pedestrians.</p>	<p>Need to investigate the public realm, connectivity and land uses around the U-Boat Museum, Pump House and Cheshire Lines are part of a nascent Museum quarter / main tourist area and linking it to the town centre.</p>	<p>General: unless particular attention is paid to preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area, there remains a risk that projects to improve connectivity and promote active travel do not maximise the opportunities to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the conservation area.</p>

Chapter 08 Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals



Chapter 08

Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals

This chapter brings together the preceding understanding and analysis of the conservation area and its context and identifies proposals for the area's future management and change.

An action plan for the delivery of these proposals is in Chapter 9: the Delivery Plan.

The proposals are divided into the following five sections:

Strategic Area-wide Proposals: these are the framework of actions to be taken or work to be done to provide a framework for a thriving and preserved conservation area.

Managing Change at an Area-wide Level: these proposals complement the strategic area-wide priorities. They are the changes and tasks that would support the preservation and regeneration of the conservation area.

Partnerships: this section is an overview of potential partnerships and the available external sources of funding for the historic environment, and how they might be employed in Hamilton Square.

Site Specific Proposals: these proposals are for the enhancement of individual sites, buildings or public realm in the conservation area.

Specific Proposals Outside of the Conservation Area: These mirror the site specific proposals, but concern sites that either adjoin or are very close to the boundary of the conservation area. The enhancement of these sites will enhance the conservation area and provide further momentum for its regeneration.



The conservation area has a wealth of fine buildings whose potential can be unlocked to drive forward regeneration, vitality and prosperity.



Here on Grange Road, regeneration activity is happening directly alongside the edge of the Plan's study area. The conservation area should be woven into the wider regeneration of the town centre.

Strategic Area-wide Proposals

These proposals are about creating and maintaining a context in which Hamilton Square Conservation Area will thrive and fulfil its potential as a distinctive and cherished place for life, work and play. These are the tools and resources that need to be in place to create a lasting 'circle of virtue' where momentum to preserve or enhance Hamilton Square builds up rather than dissipates. They address the questions of what needs to be done, why, when and by whom to preserve and enhance the conservation area, and provide the means of monitoring and reviewing the outcomes and impacts.

A setting study of the conservation area: this would define the extent and provide an analysis of the contribution that the existing setting makes to the significance of the conservation area. Such a study would conclude with a strategy for managing change within the setting and skyline of the conservation area. It would provide a clear basis for assessing the impacts of development and infrastructure proposals of the significance of the conservation area. The study would be a piece of evidence base that would support making the Council in making the best decisions for the historic environment and improve the efficiency of decision making.

Review of listed buildings. As part of the recent programme of High Streets Heritage Action Zones (HSHAZ) in conservation areas across England, Historic England reviewed existing listings and reviewed each HSHAZ to identify any potential additions to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. This process resulted in a number of new listed buildings being designated, and for some existing listed building designations to be upgraded and/or their list entries updated.

For a town centre due to experience wide-ranging changes brought about by the Birkenhead 2040 Framework, it would be logical for a similar review to take place in Birkenhead.

Updated and published local list of non-designated heritage assets that includes maps and photographs, and sets out the heritage values of the assets it contains. An up to date and user-friendly local list with useful content will help manage change to non-designated heritage assets. The list would assist with improving the efficiency of decision making and provide an important source of information about the significance of the many non-designated heritage assets in and around the conservation area.

Creation of a conservation area 'baseline' using this Plan, National Heritage List, local list, plus other data as the starting point. Identify parameters for measuring success, for example:

- review impacts of new development, highway works, enforcement action and other decisions on the character and appearance of the conservation area periodically. Identify whether they are harming, maintaining or enhancing the conservation area.
- Is conservation input into development management proposals influencing outcomes? Conservation input can come from within the Council and from specialist heritage consultees. Measuring the number and gravity of decisions against whether there was heritage or conservation officer support, objections or neutrality would help to understand whether and to what extent historic environment policies and strategies are achieving the desired outcomes.

The above processes would provide oversight of how the planned decades of change and investment are contributing towards the long-term objective of conserving heritage assets, including the conservation area, for the benefit of future generations. Regular reviews could be reported to the Council's leadership, with recommendations for action.



A setting study would help manage change along Birkenhead's waterfront in a manner that maintains and enhances the key visual connections between the conservation area and Liverpool



A setting study would also consider the immediate surroundings of the conservation area, for example whether there is scope for enhancement

Strategic Area-wide Proposals (continued)

A joined-up approach to heritage attractions: the location of the conservation area and its connectivity mean it can be the 'glue' that holds the principal heritage attractions of Birkenhead together. Birkenhead Park will undoubtedly be the jewel in this crown if it achieves World Heritage Site status, with the designation no doubt driving up visitor numbers. However, potential visitors should also be made aware of the conservation area, the ferry and waterfront, the U Boat Story, the Transport Museum and Birkenhead Priory as related attractions, all a short distance apart.

These heritage attractions need to be promoted together, with particular attention also paid to the visitor experience: arrival points, wayfinding, a central tourist information point, places to eat, drink or stay, events and activities, the character and appearance of routes used by tourists. Increasing visitor dwell time in the town centre and conservation area will make it more vital and improve its economy.

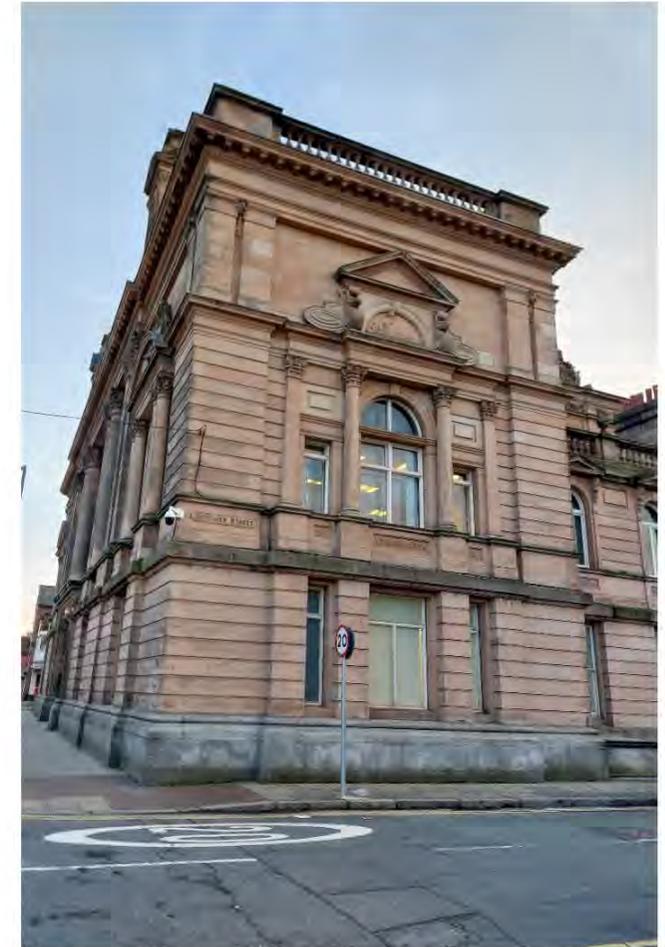
Progress is already being made via the Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy 2021-2040, and change within the conservation area should support its aims.

A higher profile for Hamilton Square and Birkenhead's heritage. The people of Birkenhead are rightly proud of its history as a place of innovation, cultural value and world firsts alongside heritage assets of local interest. This proposal is for all stakeholders in Birkenhead to spread the word about what makes it interesting, unique and special. This can be through the education of children and young people, residents new and old, businesses new and old, and investors about what is important about Birkenhead. This should also extend to awareness raising among visitors and tourists: the best views of Liverpool's waterfront are from Birkenhead and the ferry is an excellent way to being this experience. The profile raising of Birkenhead's heritage can be through interpretation, publications, marketing, artwork, events, web resources, tours and talks aimed at different audiences.

The more people understand how and why Birkenhead is special, the easier it becomes to maintain it, manage change to make sure it respects Birkenhead's heritage rather than diluting it or harming it. This simple concept of education and information can be delivered by different stakeholders and partners over the short- medium- and long-term to help further local pride and ownership of Birkenhead as a place.

Maintenance of buildings and spaces. People's first impressions and perceptions of a place and their feelings about it are often informed by how well-cared for the place is. Neglected public realm, paving, lighting, street furniture, boundary features and buildings, litter, filth and untidiness can deter people from visiting or staying anywhere longer than they need to.

This issue has been raised via consultation on the Plan. Although building repair and maintenance is mentioned above and the maintenance of Council-owned buildings, public realm and highways are mentioned as actions above, the maintenance and care of Birkenhead should be a collective effort in order to be consistently good across the town centre. For this reason it is listed as its own item in this list of proposals. All stakeholders including building and site owners and occupiers, residents, visitors and people who work in the town all have a role to play.



First-time visitors to Birkenhead are often surprised by the quality of its historic buildings and their architecture, as well as its grand streets and Birkenhead Park. Birkenhead was founded on high ambitions, and its heritage deserves to have a high profile.

Managing Change at an Area-wide level

The measures in this section concern the things that can be done to maintain or enhance the conservation area within the roles and capabilities of Wirral Borough Council.

'**Town Centre Team**' of key services operating in Birkenhead. The recently-formed Town Centre Team supports joined-up thinking around managing change in the town centre, and awareness between services of current priorities and issues, budgets, new initiatives, town centre events, feedback from partners and businesses. This approach promotes cross-cutting and seamless approach to placemaking.

Clear recommendations for Conservation Officer / heritage specialist involvement. The earlier a historic environment specialist or interest group (including statutory consultees) participates in a strategy, programme, plan, proposal or scheme, the more likely the plan or work is to maintain or enhance the conservation area. All service areas of the Council that affect the character or appearance of the conservation area (which includes its vitality and intangible characteristics) should be clear on when heritage specialist, interest group and/or statutory consultee input is recommended for a particular strategy, proposal or scheme. Failure to do could result in the project being 'called in' for review by the Town Centre Team, or its Chair, if harm to heritage assets is known or likely.

A strategy for Council-owned assets in the area. These assets range from large buildings and sites to car parks, small open spaces and highway verges. The Council should set out its short-, medium- and long-term objectives for these assets, and how they fit into the regeneration context of the town centre. This could be as small as how a space is planted or maintained, through to re-using or redesigning spaces or buildings. Where it is appropriate to dispose of an asset, regeneration and development briefs should be used and/or conditions attached to the sale (e.g. requiring redevelopment, setting land and building uses, setting buildings, structures, trees, accesses to be retained etc.)

Heritage-led design review of strategic and important plans, proposals and schemes. For those projects or proposals that could have a substantial effect on heritage assets, an independent design review panel that is chaired by a heritage specialist would provide decisionmakers with clarity over the impacts of the proposals and how any concerns could be addressed. This would assist the Council, interest groups and statutory consultees by ensuring that due consideration is given to heritage assets for major or important schemes where significant heritage impacts are identified or likely.

Design code. The NPPF identifies design codes as a key planning tool for raising the quality of design and creating (or maintaining) beautiful places. The consistent character and the heritage values of the conservation area can be used as the practical basis for producing a design code covering the conservation area and its immediate surroundings. Its topics could include, for example, building grain, height, form, and rhythm; materials; active frontages; and promote a 'fabric first' approach to change to historic buildings. The code would be applicable on gap sites and any new development.

Shopfront design SPD or guidance. This would support the retention of historic shopfronts, high quality design to new shopfronts, and an approach to security, lighting and signage that fully considers the character of the conservation area. This topic could optionally be covered by a design code to provide a stronger policy basis.

Repair and Maintenance guidance specific to the conservation area would help to conserve buildings and structures in a manner that conserves their fabric.



A design code for the conservation area and its surroundings could be used to set requirements for development in gap and infill sites such as this one. It could guide building height and massing, window proportions, materials, active frontage and bin storage, for example.



Either through a design code or a dedicated SPD or guidance, greater influence over shopfront and signage design would help manage change in the conservation area. Such an approach would need to be coupled with enforcement action against unauthorised shopfronts or signage.

Managing Change at an Area-wide level

Place-led approach to street and/or public realm lighting and CCTV provision: in any historic townscape, a greater degree of care is needed to site lighting and CCTV in a manner that meets technical and operational requirements and avoids or minimises harm to the character or appearance of the area. With any new street or public realm lighting and CCTV, special attention should be paid to maintaining or enhancing the conservation area's character or appearance.

Area-wide materials palette and co-ordinated public realm approach to SuDS, cycle provision, accessibility
This could be delivered via a design code, but otherwise a design guide setting out consistent approach to the public realm across the conservation area and its surroundings could help to unify the street scene of the 'Graham Grid' and the general character of the conservation area, including its hierarchy of streets.

Specific development management requirements for submissions within the conservation area or its surroundings:

- Not validating outline applications within the conservation area or its setting.
- Instant pausing of applications that fail to identify all heritage assets affected by the proposal (check against existing constraints maps) or have insufficient detail for heritage effects to be fully understood.
- A requirement to show street elevations to show existing and proposed works in their context and reflecting the area's topography.
- A requirement for 3D visualisations of proposals for tall or large buildings.
- Standard minor building details to be used for work to specific types of building (e.g. Victorian sashes, profiled gutters, paint colours).
- A standard set of conditions for building details (e.g. drawings, scales and information requirement for shopfronts, windows, eaves details etc)



The patchwork of highway materials gives a disjointed appearance that draws the eye away from this grade I listed terrace on Hamilton Square.



The redevelopment of the site behind the blue hoarding on the right will be diminished unless the public realm is also improved.



Repair and maintenance guidance can help building owners make the appropriate types of repair using the appropriate materials. Here, plastic impermeable paint is lifting and peeling away.



A standard timber sash window detail and acceptable palette of masonry and joinery paints could make it easier to ensure that minor changes help to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area

Partnerships

The conservation area designation plus its town centre location open up opportunities for partnerships that could deliver area-wide improvements to the environment, vitality or heritage assets of the conservation area. These measures require a start-up, and would begin to deliver positive change in the medium term due to how they deliver gradual but noticeable improvements. However, the changes they bring can be dramatic, and provide a springboard for new partnerships and additional private, public or external funder investment in the conservation area.

Formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) / Town Centre Association or similar. This would provide a platform for collaboration and co-ordination of activity across the town centre by the business community, which is a key stakeholder group in the town centre. It could also have its own budgets for small scale improvements, seasonal events, marketing and awareness raising etc. It would also be a good avenue or forum for sharing information, identifying where there is consensus and disagreement, and for businesses to feed back to public sector organisations such as the Council and Merseytravel.

Area-based historic environment funding. The improvements made to the conservation area via the Hamilton Quarter Improvement Scheme are still visible and tangible today. The Scheme ran in the 1990s and funded the repair and restoration of historic buildings, 'living over the shop' re-use of upper floors of buildings, shopfront restoration and public realm improvements. It was funded by the Single Regeneration Budget and shows 'proof of concept' that heritage led regeneration can work in the conservation area, and the investments are maintained in the longer term. The Argyle Quarter Commercial Property Improvement Scheme (2024-5) is a recent example of Liverpool City Region Combined Authority funding being used to repair and improve ten shopfronts. Funding for these purposes is also awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) or Historic England. It would require

resources in terms of time to co-ordinate, prepare and submit bids and match funding (as much as 50%). Between £250,000 and £10million can be applied for, but typical awards are generally up to £2million for large NLHF area-based schemes.

Such a scheme would be best focussing on one part of the conservation area of particular need for funding and where it would generate the largest heritage and regeneration impacts. Such areas should be where there is a concentration of vacant buildings or floorspace, buildings in need of external repair, buildings that would benefit from external restoration, and public realm to be re-used or improved. The funding could be used to address some or all of these issues and ideally create a 'multiplier effect' whereby the improvements delivered using the funding stimulate further private or public investment or generate interest from other sources of external funding.

Heritage Enterprise. This unique funding stream in the suite of NLHF programmes is niche because it supports the re-use of a historic building in a viable manner that creates new jobs post-conversion, and is led by a not-for-profit enterprise or a Council.

With there being vacant buildings and floor space in the conservation area, its town centre location, Council focus through the 2040 Framework and masterplans, and a community of CICs, Birkenhead could host a heritage enterprise project. This would be subject to there being a suitable business case and building. It could be an option for a Council-owned building or a private owner willing to subscribe to the conditions for the funding.

Heritage Enterprise projects provide futures for historic buildings and generate employment and footfall by bridging the higher costs ('conservation deficit') of converting, repairing and refurbishing a disused historic building. They do not make an unviable business viable, but instead addresses the cost of repairing and restoring a vacant

historic building so it is fit for re-use as a place of work.

They can also help address large historic buildings or complexes that have a significant backlog of repairs and upgrades. This way, Heritage Enterprise could help address empty, neglected buildings that occupy prominent positions in the townscape.

Smaller historic environment grants. The smaller grant schemes operated by the NLHF and Historic England Listed Buildings at Risk may help with particular projects or listed buildings. They can contribute to the overall regeneration of the area as well as be a way of 'road testing' new partnerships that may move on to projects.



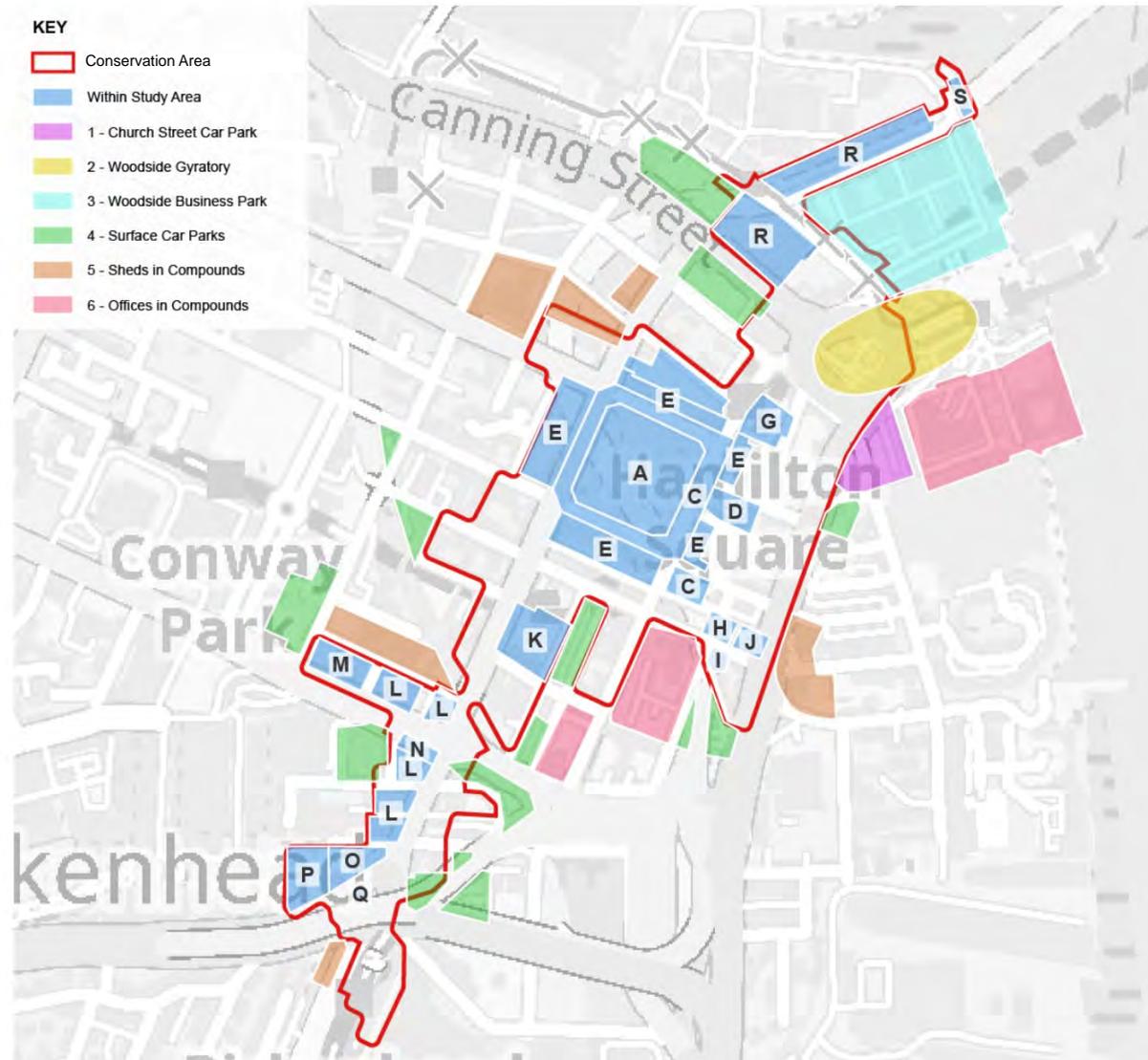
Where the condition of unlisted buildings means they are beyond economic repair, area-based funding may be the only realistic means of addressing the repair backlog and returning them to viable re-use.

Site-specific Proposals

The previous proposals have considered the conservation area at a strategic or area-wide level. The following proposals concern individual sites or locations where improvements would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, and support the objectives of town centre regeneration.

They are listed by site in no particular order. Each proposal starts with a review of the site's current context, and concludes with the specific proposal for the site. We have listed the site specific proposals within the conservation area (identified by the letters A to S) first, and the site specific proposals outside of the conservation area (numbered 1 to 6) second.

The intention is for these improvements to happen during the lifetime of the Birkenhead 2040 Regeneration Framework to maximise the impact of investment in and around the conservation area.



Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area



A design competition would provide a wealth of options for redesigning the green space in Hamilton Square. It could be well-used, cherished, and a destination in its own right.

a. Hamilton Square greenspace

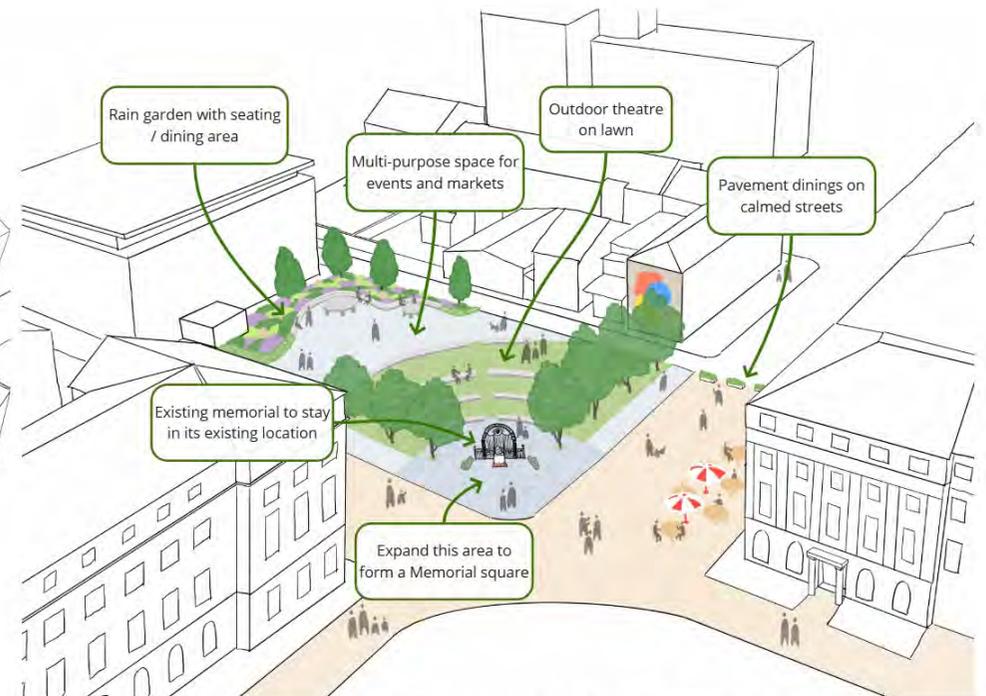
The layout of this important greenspace has changed at least twice. It started as a private amenity garden that became a public open space with commemorative uses. Although it is the biggest greenspace in the conservation area and of high importance, it has little use other than a pedestrian shortcut, and for ceremonies such as Remembrance Day. The buildings around it have also changed use over time, with commercial uses giving way to residential use.

Proposal: a design competition to re-use the space in a way that respects the conservation area but brings more life

and versatility to the space. It could be restoration to a previous state, or reinvention. A full statement of significance should inform any change. A design competition informed by the site's significance is recommended. The space should be a new focal point for the area, and somewhere for people to stop and enjoy.

b. Duncan Street car park

Cleared of buildings in the 1930s for the Queensway Tunnel that runs underneath, this car park is a prominent gap in the townscape, between two of the terraces of Hamilton Square. It provides a poor immediate context for the 'Futility' monument to Wilfred Owen that was erected here in 2019.



The smaller space at Duncan Street car park could host buildings, pop-ups and structures that could not be sited in the much more significant space at Hamilton Square. It could be a focal point for the surrounding buildings.

Proposal: If new buildings on raft foundations are not feasible, the space could be relandscaped as a pocket park, rain garden or play area, perhaps hosting items like play equipment or WCs that could harm the character of the more sensitive open space at Hamilton Square. Other options could be a kiosk-type café building with outdoor seating or a pop-up dining space with seating. Alternative uses as a craft market, pop-up market or events space could also be considered.

The existing plane trees, hornbeam hedges and 'Futility' monument should be retained and included. The space should be designed around the 'Futility' monument, which must remain in situ.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

c. Hamilton Square highways

The traditional character and appearance of the highway of Hamilton Square has been undermined by the cumulative impacts of inserted roundabouts, narrow pavements, rounded corners, red bitmac surfaces, poor paving surfaces, uneven lighting, and the dominance of car parking. Existing plans soon to be implemented will improve the Cleveland Street and Argyle Street highways in the Square.

Proposal: A holistic redesign of the highway could follow the existing planned improvements, and accompany the redesign of the greenspace and/or the revitalisation of the Town Hall. The buildings and urban design of the Square are exceptional, but are let down by the street spaces. A holistic redesign and programme of gradual or phased improvement would enhance the conservation area.

d. Birkenhead Town Hall

Landmark and grade II* listed building that is vacant and consequently makes the Square a less vital place. It is also suffering from water ingress and is therefore in need of repair.

Proposal: The building should be repaired in the short-term to ensure it is weathertight and secure. If there is no viable on-going local authority use, consideration should be given to whether the Council leases the building. A detailed assessment of the building's significance and condition should be undertaken, along with an assessment of its sensitivity to change, both internally and externally. This exercise will highlight both opportunities and constraints for its sensitive re-use in a manner that would increase the vitality of the conservation area and a landmark building within it. Any re-use should consider how the building interacts with and relates to the civic and commemorative space in front of it, and a potentially re-landscaped and revitalised greenspace in the centre of the Square. Long-term residents have also suggested reinstating the regular ringing of the Town Hall bells, which were once a familiar sound in the conservation area.

e. Hamilton Square Terraces

These listed terraces contain various vacant and underused buildings, but are also strongly uniform in terms of their construction, external appearance and materials.

Proposal: The vacant and underused houses should be targeted for repair and reuse that reflects their significance. Where necessary, enforcement powers should be used to secure repairs and address unauthorised alterations such as replacement windows and doors, and external grilles fixed over windows. Where funding and resources are available, these grade I listed buildings should be prioritised for investment, or, as a minimum, 'a stitch in time' repairs to stave off much larger repairs later. A small but effective measure would be to exercise greater control over the display of for sale and to let signs on these grade I listed terraces. Consultation in preparing this Plan suggested a local listed building consent order for the Square so that listed building consent is granted for specific repairs, restorations or improvements.



The Town Hall could be the beating heart of Hamilton Square, especially if its re-use helps to re-animate the greenspace of Hamilton Square.



This fine building would not look out of place in the World Heritage Sites of Bath or Edinburgh, but languishes empty and neglected.



The highways at Hamilton Square in their existing state create a visual distraction from the architecture and original design of the space.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area



Changing the space north of Hamilton Square from a car park to a mix of houses and gardens would accelerate the change in use of the buildings back to residential. Erecting mews houses along John Street would provide small homes and widen the housing offer of the conservation area.

f. North side of Hamilton Square

The desirability and scope for re-use of this terrace, which has south-facing views over the green space, is uniquely hampered by the minimal rear curtilage of each house. The former back gardens are used as a single privately operated commercial car park. This forces the wheelie bins of the terrace to be stored at the front and put out onto the pavement of the Square for emptying, which harm the character of this important space and terrace.

Proposal: The Council could help the existing parking business relocate, and return the rear curtilages back to the individual units. Costs to the Council could be offset by building a mews-style development along John Street (or leasing or selling land for redevelopment). This would echo

the historic precedent of coach houses and mews-style buildings along Gertrude Street and John Street, and allow bin collection from the back street.

g. Laird's House, 63 Hamilton Square

This house is of particular importance as the home of John Laird, shipbuilder and Birkenhead's first mayor and MP. The house is both the largest on the square, and had by far the largest garden (circa 2,000sqm in size), which may well provide views towards the Mersey from north-facing rooms. The building has a disfiguring full height side extension and the gardens cleared for a car park. These are regrettable given the building's particular historical value, and the impacts on the conservation area and listed buildings.



The large former garden at 63 Hamilton Square could be put to a range of uses that are ancillary to the use of the house itself. It could be a boutique hotel and restaurant, for example.

Proposal: This site should be sensitively adapted and re-used. It could remain as offices or be converted to apartments, a boutique hotel, a restaurant with rooms above. In any case, the garden space could be reinstated and be part of the venue's offer: a 2,000sqm private garden in the town centre, minutes away from a key Merseyrail station and offering amenity to the building's visitors or occupiers. The later office extensions could be replaced with new buildings that echo the past; for example, a large glasshouse / conservatory in the garden or a coach house and stable. Any redevelopment would need to demonstrate NPPF-compliance, public benefit and enhancement to the conservation area and grade I listed terraces of the Square.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

h. Glass Barrel pub and Albion Street gap site

The gap site was cleared in the 1930s for the Queensway Tunnel and is a fenced car park that harms the street scene. The Glass Barrel pub is vacant, grade II listed and overlooks the gap site across the narrow Albion Street.

Proposal: The site could include the single storey side extension to the Hornblower pub. The gap site could be used as workshop, craft, market or studio space that does not need permanent buildings. The Glass Barrel could provide related floorspace. The gap site could be used as outdoor or part-covered beer garden / event space by either the Hornblower and/or Glass Barrel, with Albion Street pedestrianised for additional space and flexibility. This would support re-using the Glass Barrel.

i. Market Cross gap site

The corner building of circa 1847 was cleared in the 1930s for the Queensway Tunnel, creating an ugly vacant corner site. It is used as private parking for the adjacent converted grade II listed Market Cross buildings.

Proposal: The gap site could be a private 'pocket park' for the residents of the Market Cross. A green oasis that could be used as amenity garden, space for growing, sitting out, secure cycle storage and pods for working from home. High brick boundary walls would define the street edge. Structure planting would enhance both the street and the views from the apartments that overlook it.

j. Chester Street advert site and 10 Market Street

The site was cleared and the adverts erected in the 1970s. The land behind the adverts is parking. 10 Market Street is suburban in character.

Proposal: The advert/parking site and 10 Market Street could be combined to create a single site of over 1,000sqm. It could accommodate a large corner building, similar in height, massing and character to the neighbouring 19th century buildings. The site assembly could be Council-led with a brief or conditions of sale for its redevelopment.



The eastern edge of Market Street could be transformed by using the car parks directly over the Queensway Tunnel as a mix of public and private open spaces that are directly related to the activity accommodated in the adjacent buildings. 10 Market Street and the advert hoarding site could be replaced by a large new building that reinstates the building line at the corner of Market Street and Chester Street, and restores an urban character to this gateway to the study area.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

k. 47-67 Argyle Street and Hinson Street

The bulk of the site was formerly the ABC Savoy cinema which was cleared in 2019 with the intention of a new apartment building being erected. The site is now a car park and a disfiguring gap site on Argyle Street. The 1930s office / retail building at 63a Argyle Street was recently granted planning permission for conversion to apartments. The open space between this building and the Hinson Street highway is a thin strip of municipal landscaping, probably dating from a 1960s/70s widening and realignment of Hinson Street, which is sinuous and deviates from the historic grid layout. With the exception of 63a Argyle Street, the site and Hinson Street highway collectively detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Proposal: The works to convert 63a Argyle Street will address the building's condition and issues like fly-tipping to its rear. The entire site – the cleared cinema, car park, building and landscaping could be redeveloped holistically, possibly joining on to the gable of the Brass Balance pub. The site could accommodate a substantial building and mix of uses, including cultural or leisure uses. Strong consideration should be given to taking Hinson Street back to its original alignment and right-angle junctions. The highway would occupy less space. The soft landscaping and freed-up land could be incorporated into the development site. The redevelopment of the site should be informed by a design code or a design brief, which should retain 63a Argyle Street. The site has great potential to increase the vitality of Argyle Street and Hinson Street, and reinstate the building line and urban character that has been mostly removed over recent decades.



The gap sites at Argyle Street and Hinson Street could be redeveloped in conjunction with returning Hinson Street back to its original straight course. This would transform barely used spaces into homes and places of business, and strengthen the urban character of this part of the conservation area.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

I. Argyle Street / Conway Street / Dacre Street Improvement Area

The stretch of Argyle Street from Hinson Street to Grange Road and the streets branching off, including Conway Street and Dacre Street contains a rich and varied collection of buildings. These chiefly date from the 1840s to the 1930s and include a range of historic uses such as shops, dwellings, offices, pubs, hotels, warehouses, banks, an auction house, two former post offices and a former cinema. This area links the town's main shopping area, bus station, largest car park and Birkenhead Central Station with Market Street, Hamilton Square and the waterfront. It intersects key investments including the Dock Branch Park and Neighbourhood, the House of Fraser redevelopment site, and public realm improvements at Borough Road, Conway Street, Grange Road and Argyle Street. The buildings, although of interest, provide a poor gateway to the different parts of the town centre due to their condition and underuse, inappropriate past alterations, and gap sites that are vacant or in temporary use. The public realm does not encourage dwell-time and prioritises the efficient movement of motor vehicles over other highway users.

Proposal: this area is an ideal candidate for public sector-led area-based heritage-led regeneration via programmes such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Heritage Grants (or any similar grant schemes). The Hamilton Quarter improvements of the 1990s are a previous and successful example of this approach being used in Birkenhead. The Argyle Quarter Commercial Property Improvement Scheme is a recent (2024-25) is a recent example of the same approach. It improved 10 shopfronts on Argyle and Market Streets using Liverpool City Region Combiner Authority funding.

There is clear potential for such funding to complement planned regeneration activity and public realm improvements. This would create a 'multiplier effect' where the impacts of improvements to historic buildings are multiplied by investments in the public realm and new build. The heritage-led approach would preserve the character



The north side of Conway Street after a programme of improvements to repair and restore the buildings, return the upper storeys to use and improve shopfronts and business premises. This would complement the planned improvements to the public realm of Conway Street and would help animate it and bring it to life. The improvement of the buildings happening alongside the improvements to the public realm will multiply the impacts of each.

and appearance of the area while giving it a new lease of life and re-using vacant floorspace. The buildings and public realm could be united by reuses of buildings that make use of the improved public realm such as outdoor restaurant, or café seating and outdoor retailing. More seating and artwork in the street spaces would enhance the street scene and

give the area a stronger identity. This entire area could not be addressed by a single grant application, but a successful scheme would be a springboard for a similar scheme elsewhere, and/or attract funding from other sources due to the multiplier effect. The improvements would be a long-term project, and would yield long-term results.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

m. Conway Centre, Conway Street

This purpose-built Edwardian school is a landmark, grade II listed building. It has latterly been an education centre and is currently vacant. Although in acceptable condition, the building and site are starting to show signs of neglect, including broken windows, and it is likely that parts of the building have been long-term vacant. The Council intends to sell the building for redevelopment.

Proposal: The building is on the 2040 Framework’s cultural axis. With its range of entrances and internal spaces and large outdoor space, the site could house range of uses that make effective use of its different types and sizes of indoor and outdoor spaces. Its reuse could support the town centre’s cultural scene. If the building remains in public sector or not-for-profit ownership, external funding source like the National Lottery could help fund feasibility studies, enable the conversion and repair the building. The use of the building on a not-for-profit basis would also support the creative sector through affordable workspace and studios. Few other buildings and sites in the conservation area offer this degree of flexibility.”

n. Conway Street – Argyle Street Corners

These deep pavements on the south side of Conway Street were cleared of buildings to create the roundabout. These spaces are set to increase in size when the roundabout becomes a much more compact crossroads. The public realm of Conway Street is to be enhanced soon, and is close to a key entrance to the planned Dock Branch Park.

Proposal: There is space for new buildings between the existing terraces and the rationalised road junction. These should be of a similar height and grain to the adjacent buildings, and accommodate mixed uses, with commercial at ground floor, using pavement spaces for cafes, bars or retail. Their design should formally ‘turn the corner’ of Argyle and Conway Streets, have active frontages to each and ‘bookend’ each terrace. They would provide new floorspace, physically and sensorily bring the sides of Conway Street closer together, form a gateway into Argyle Street, and continue the conservation area’s character.



The imminent scaling back of the junction of Argyle Street and Conway Street creates off-street spaces that are large enough to accommodate building plots. This creates an excellent opportunity for new development that enhances the area. Here, we have shown new corner buildings facing Conway Street. These continue the scale and building lines of the blocks along Argyle Street. They provide active frontages and form a welcoming gateway to the southern stretch of Argyle Street.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

o. Clifton Crescent

This small crescent started as houses in the 1840s, later partially becoming offices and, in 1939 partly replaced by the Central Hotel. Another terrace facing Grange Road / Argyle Street was cleared. The condition and vacancy of Clifton Crescent give a poor first impression of the town centre arriving from Central Station or the Borough gyratory. The site stands between two areas planned for public realm enhancements: Grange Road and the Borough Flyovers.

Proposal: This is an opportunity for repair, restoration and re-use, capitalising on the high quality public realm that will border this site on three sides. Early engagement with the Council's heritage team will ensure that first consideration is given to repair, re-use and restoration of the historic buildings. The reinstatement of the terrace on the Grange Road edge of the site (either linked to or standing independent from the crescent) should be considered, perhaps providing purpose built spaces for small businesses or town centre live-work units. The other option is that the new build terrace is part of the revived crescent, linking to the rear of the former hotel. The new build would provide more floorspace and help with the viability of regenerating the site, whilst reinstating the former building line and enclosure of Grange Road.

p. The Church of St Werburgh and St Laurence

Built in 1835-37 this Roman Catholic Church is still in its original use. The Presbytery is attached to the south. The existing Parish Centre is a conversion of a Victorian outbuilding. Although people are permitted to walk through the churchyard, the graveyard to the north of the church is screened from view and access, while the area south of the church is nearly all a car park. The site adjoins the shopping centres and is at an entrance to the town centre, but feels very isolated from it despite the footpath.

Proposal: This site is within the St Werburgh's Masterplan area. Opportunities to enable the use of the building and site by the wider community should be gauged with the existing congregation and diocese, as the outdoor and indoor spaces could potentially accommodate community

and cultural activity in addition to worship and ceremonies. The interior of the church was nearly entirely modernised in the years prior to its listing in 1974, therefore there may be more potential for using the interior as a flexible or shared space. Irrespective of the activity within the church building and integrating it with the life of the wider town centre, the expanses of bitmac surfacing across the site should be addressed to improve its character and appearance.

q. Edward VII Memorial Clocktower, Clifton Crescent

Dated 1911, this clock tower commemorates Edward VII who died that year. It was originally sited in front of Birkenhead Central Station and a school on Wilbraham Street, so was handily placed for rail passengers to refer to. The clocktower was relocated to its present location around 1930 for road widening. The new site included men's and ladies' public lavatories to either side of the clocktower, partially sunk in into the ground. The area was reorganised around 1970 for the Borough Road Flyover, and the land containing the clocktower and lavatories became the island of a large roundabout. The clocktower is to undergo dramatic change again with the removal of the flyovers and the creation of a new public realm that prioritises non-car modes of transport. It is unclear whether the clocktower and lavatories will remain in situ or as the existing 'set piece.'

Proposal: The removal of the flyover and reorganisation of the public realm in this area is highly likely to enhance the significance of this listed building and change its context from a roundabout to an urban square. The Council should seek early discussions with Historic England about the extent of the listing and gauge the support for potentially moving the clocktower for a second time. This is especially important given the Council must refer any works to a listed building that it owns to the Secretary of State. Parallel to this a detailed statement of significance will help to understand the heritage values of the listed building and its relationship with its setting. This can then inform to what degree the listed building could be moved, relandscaped or altered without harming its significance, and to identify how its significance can be enhanced.



The Edward VII Memorial Clocktower should once more be a focal point of a major square or junction. It appears rather forgotten and inaccessible in its present location.



The Church of St Werburgh and St Laurence and its churchyard could potentially play a greater role in the life of the town centre and its communities. This could only happen with the support of the church and its congregation.

Site-specific Proposals within the Conservation Area

r. Cheshire Lines Building and the Pacific Road Transit Sheds

These were built a few years either side of 1870 to serve the transport of freight and livestock to and from Morpeth Dock by rail. The Cheshire Lines Building was most recently used as offices with a mezzanine floor inserted to add floorspace to the railway shed. This privately owned building is now vacant. The Pacific Road Transit Shed accommodates a range of businesses plus a Royal Mail depot. The buildings are landmarks in the Woodside Masterplan Area with the historic tramline running between them.

Proposal: The vacancy of the Cheshire Lines Building presents a new opportunity for its private owners: could it and the Pacific Road Transit Shed accommodate new leisure, tourist-focussed, educational, cultural or commercial uses that would help to drive up the area's footfall and vitality and capitalise on its accessibility by foot, rail, ferry and bus? The large, open interiors provide a great degree of flexibility for potential uses.

They could form an important node or stopping off point for visitors and tourists, perhaps as a tourist information point. This could in turn help to spur on the development of Woodside Business Park and the surrounding sites. A possible obstacle to the regeneration of the Pacific Road part of this site is the adjacent water treatment works, which is a source of odours.

s. Mersey Road Tunnel Ventilation Station

Built 1925-34 and the tallest of the three ventilation stations south of the Mersey, it houses giant fans that ventilate the tunnel and is an important landmark on the waterfront and skyline. Although it continues to perform its original function, the Woodside Landings Masterplan proposes making it an attraction on the waterfront by adding a lift and high level viewing platform. This would allow 360-degree views over the Mersey, Birkenhead and Liverpool.

Proposal: A high level viewing area would be a unique attraction on the waterfront. It would be similar to the viewing platforms at the Baltic Flour Mill, Gateshead, which overlooks the Tyne. The Woodside plan gives different options for the lift tower location and the route to the viewing platform. An option that is not shown is to have the lift tower as good as freestanding, and linked to the tower platform by a bridge.

This would mean the lift and bridge would touch the listed building as 'lightly' as possible and would not alter its distinctive silhouette. It would also enhance the visitor experience, making the drama of the ascent and crossing of the high-level bridge exciting parts of the visit. On a smaller scale, the unauthorised satellite dishes and other external fixtures to the building can be removed via enforcement action.



The Cheshire Lines Building (above) and the Pacific Road Transit Sheds (above right). These buildings have large footprints and fairly open plans, offering great potential for leisure, cultural or commercial uses.



The Mersey Road Tunnel Ventilation Station is a landmark on both sides of the river. Its use as a viewing platform would offer a unique visitor experience, and help to drive footfall along the riverside path, Shore Road and its tramway.

Site-specific Proposals outside of the Conservation Area

The high permeability of the conservation area by highways means that it has a particularly close relationship with the sites and routes that immediately adjoin it or are otherwise in very close proximity. This section identifies proposals for specific sites and specific categories of site that form the immediate environs of the conservation area. The principle is that the enhancement of these spaces will enhance the area, and will cross-pollinate with the regeneration of the conservation area itself, creating a 'multiplier effect' of investments that enhance and revitalise the area.

1. Church Street / Chester Street Car Park and Railway Cuttings

This large site adjoins Chester Street, one of the busiest routes through the town centre and is at the fringes of the commercial town centre, Woodside Landings area, and Waterfront Neighbourhood area. However, functionally and visually, it belongs to none of them. From 1878 to until its demolition in 1968 this was the site of the substantial Woodside Railway Station, which was Birkenhead's main rail terminus. Related cuttings, tunnel, retaining walls and a road bridge are remnants of the railway. The site is mostly surface car parking, and the area around and under the Church Street bridge is fenced off and overgrown.

Proposal: This site is ideal for a substantial multi-level car park due to its location, level changes and the historic precedent of there being a large transport building on this site historically: the large twin-arched shed of the railway station. It adjoins Chester Road (the A41) and is convenient for the town centre and waterfront. A large, modern secure car park here would serve the twin purposes of releasing existing sites used as surface car parks for redevelopment, and would encourage more people arriving in the town centre to make the last leg of their journey on foot, thus increasing the footfall and vitality of the town centre. It could also be used to accelerate the rationalisation of underused car parks in the town centre, consistent with the Wirral Parking Strategy. This approach is similar to the centres of nearby Liverpool, Manchester and Chester, where most motorists leave their cars in secure, managed multistoreys and then proceed on foot to their destinations.

2. Woodside Gyrotory

This area is due to be redeveloped, and the highway reconfigured as part of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework via the Woodside Landings Neighbourhood Masterplan. The inside of the gyrotory contains three buildings, with the rest cleared in recent years and decades. The remaining land largely serves no purpose other than being used informally for car parking. The Masterplan proposes redeveloping the area in a manner that retains the existing buildings and simplifies and scales down the highway infrastructure. The area would be redeveloped with a new public realm and mid- and high-rise buildings with active ground floor frontages.

Proposal: The Woodside Landings Masterplan proposes a new 'urban campus' of large footprint, and, in some cases, high-rise, buildings on a hard and soft-landscaped pedestrian priority 'campus.' In terms of the conservation area it is preferable for the route from the ferry terminal to Hamilton Street being low rise and fine grained, in other words, much closer to human scale, thus extending both the character of the conservation area and the small scale of the ferry terminus. The 'urban campus' approach would return buildings and active frontages to the area, but it is an approach seen increasingly more often in urban regeneration areas and thus make these areas feel the same to visitors and occupiers. These types of development are most appropriate in places where there is either a lack of established character, and/or an existing grain of large footprint, and multistorey buildings. Otherwise they can contrast in an unwanted way with the identity of the place and local character and urban grain.

A finer grain approach that is more responsive to this important historical nexus of the ferry, docks and town would create a much more distinctive legacy and hence a much stronger sense of arrival for visitors and tourists. The opportunity for a mid-sized event space or market space should be considered given the size of the site, and its convenience for access by rail, bus and ferry.



Hinson Street car park is an example of an under-used public car park that detracts from the conservation area's character and sense of place. It could be redeveloped in a way that restores urban character and built forms.



Adelphi Street: a view across the car parks of sheds in compounds and offices in compounds. The street spaces feel unsafe due to the inactive frontages, high fences, lack of overlooking by buildings, and general lack of activity most of the time.

Site-specific Proposals outside of the Conservation Area

3. Woodside Business Park

The business park is single storey sheds and smaller units. Most of the park is for the movement, manoeuvring and parking of lorries and cars. Other land uses could make far better use of its high accessibility by public transport, waterfront location, proximity to tourist attractions and the outstanding views over the river.

Proposal: The Woodside Landing Masterplan proposes a loose grid of mid-rise and high-rise large footprint buildings for the site with a network of grass verges and tree lines bordering streets, footpaths and plot edges. It is considered that views out of the conservation area towards the waterfront and views of it from the opposite bank would be enhanced if the site had a much more consistent building height and limited greenery and tree cover in the public realm to fewer, discreet locations. This would retain the dockland character of the site to a greater effect in the new development and would extend Birkenhead as a place to the waterfront rather than place development that is distinctly different in its building heights, building forms, building footprints, layout and landscaping between traditional Birkenhead and the waterfront. The opportunity for a mid-sized event space or market space should be considered given the size of the site, and its convenience for access by rail, bus and ferry.

4. Surface Car Parks

There are over a dozen surface car parks that border the study area or are in very close proximity. These range from bitmac surfaces to compacted aggregate and from open boundaries to brick walls and high fences. Analysis has shown that the use of these car parks is low, particularly for the pay and display car parks. Although they perform a function, albeit with varying efficiency, these car parks are effectively scars in the townscape and 'dead space' that makes the area less attractive and feel less safe, especially when they are enclosed in gated compounds.

Proposal: Allied with the proposals of the masterplans supporting the 2040 Framework to have fewer but higher capacity car parks serving the town centre, these sites should be targeted for redevelopment that reinstates the built-up character of the town centre and enhances the

setting of the conservation area. This process can be staggered, and the existing large capacity in car park provision means some car parks could be redeveloped without compromising supply versus demand. Any such approach should be informed by either a design brief, design code or at least a through appraisal of the site and its context, including the significance of heritage assets. The phased redevelopment of these sites can enhance the conservation area by improving its setting, but over and above this it would make these sites far more vital and inviting than they currently are, which supports the wider regeneration of the town centre. There are presently sites that could accommodate many jobs and homes that are instead part-used, part of the week to store private vehicles.

5. Sheds in Compounds

Several sites in close proximity to the study area are modern industrial estate sheds that usually stand in fenced and gated compounds containing large areas of hardstanding for car parks, lorry manoeuvres and loading and unloading. Many of these land uses crept into the Graham Grid and the fringes of the town centre in the 20th century as residential and mixed use 'blocks' were cleared as the town centre declined and a more 'zoned' approach was taken to town planning, promoting car travel and homes away from commerce and industry. These sites are in use, but seemingly could function just as well in a business park, industrial estate or similar and do not necessarily need a town centre location, especially where bulky goods are sold or where everything entering or leaving the site is transported by lorry. The character of these sites mean they sit 'cheek by jowl' with the study area and the land and building uses of the town centre. They are inactive for much of the week and by nature the activity is inward facing, so there is minimal contribution to the vitality or sense of safety.

Proposal: Like the car park sites, these sites should be targeted for redevelopment for town centre or edge of town centres uses, preferably mixed uses, with a much finer grain of development, active frontages and promoting non-car forms of transport. Assistance could be offered to relocating

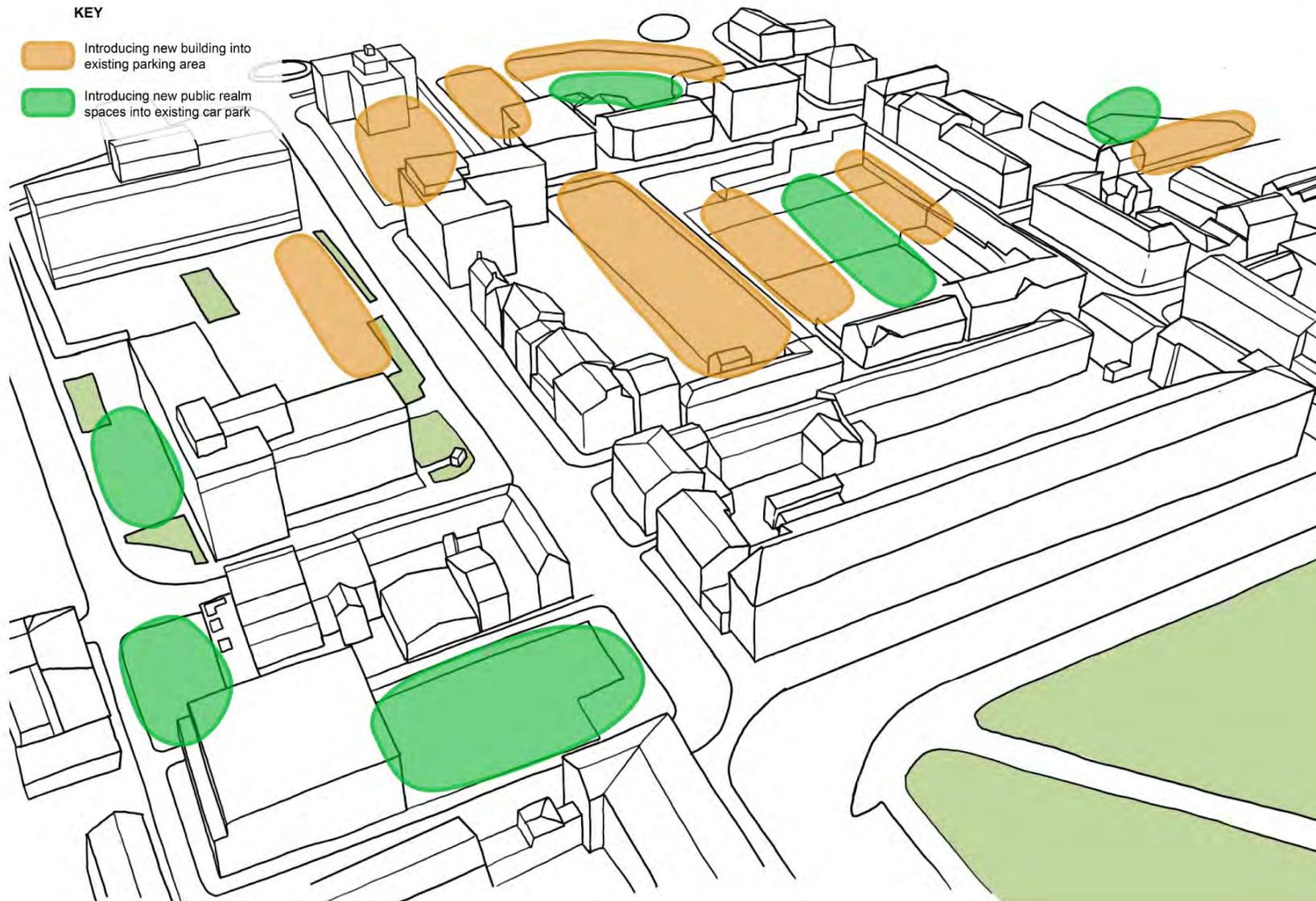
existing businesses within the town or Borough, and design briefs, design codes or similar used to ensure that redevelopment maximises the opportunities to enhance the setting of the conservation area and other heritage assets, and drive forward the revitalisation of the town centre. These currently un-intensively used sites could be redeveloped as many homes or employ more people, which is a more efficient use of these highly accessible sites.

6. Offices in Compounds

The fenced and gated office compounds are by area mostly car parking, but contain low-rise or mid-rise office blocks. Collectively these sites employ thousands of people, but the provision of parking within these compounds means many of the people using them simply drive in and drive out with little or no interaction with the town centre other than as a motorist. This, coupled with the business hour occupation of these sites, mean they make a disproportionately small contribution to the vitality of the town centre. They also jar strongly with the traditional built forms, scale, shared spaces and urbanity of the study area. It is as though a suburban business park has been broken into small pieces and scattered around the town centre, but their occupiers' general behaviour is as though they are in a remote location: many people simply drive in and out at either end of the working day.

Proposal: Many tenant businesses and members of the workforce will value having secure on-site parking. However, few people need to walk a very short from their car to the building entrance. Assuming these office buildings remain are here for the long-term, their sites should be used more efficiently; providing new buildings, units or homes, and decanting parking to the underused car parks of the town centre, or in new multistorey provision as proposed in the neighbourhood masterplans. This would make more efficient use of these highly accessible town centre sites and restore the urban character of the town centre and grid. There is also much greater scope for the sites being used in the evenings or weekends if different uses are introduced, which improves the vitality of the town centre.

Site-specific Proposals outside of the Conservation Area



This illustration summarises the development potential of the land around the conservation area that is car parking that detracts from the visual character, sense of safety and vitality of the conservation area. Built forms and strengthening building lines on what is essentially underused land can be partnered with public and private open spaces that serve meaningful purposes and provide a good levels of amenity. This would help to create a high quality, attractive and liveable urban environment - in other words fulfill Laird's and Graham's original vision for Birkenhead.

Chapter 09

The Delivery Plan



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SIMPLE TERMS
NO FEES - NO EXTRAS

Chapter 09

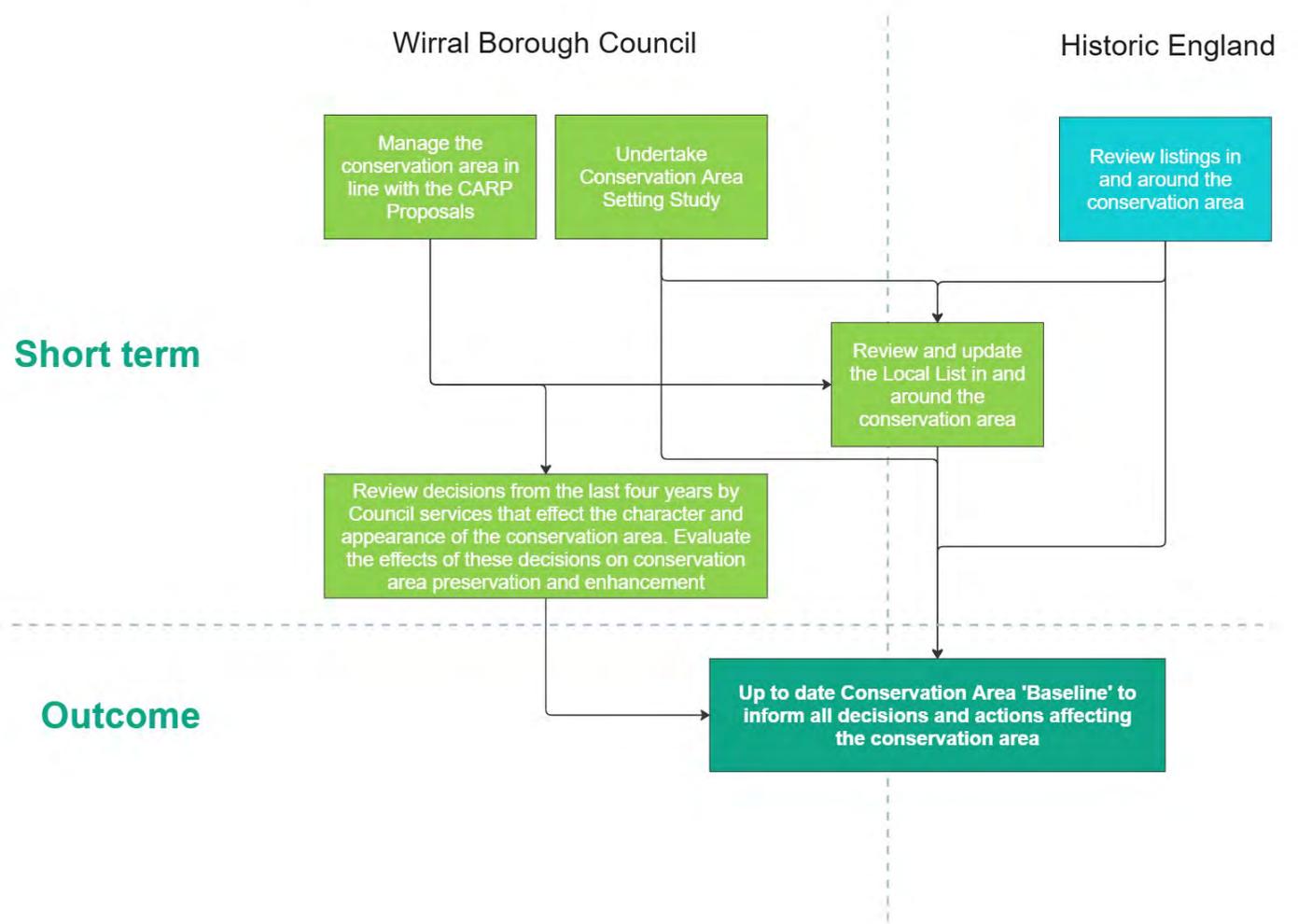
The Delivery Plan

There are 46 proposals for preserving, enhancing and regeneration the conservation area in the previous chapter. This chapter sets out a plan and sequence for making them each happen.

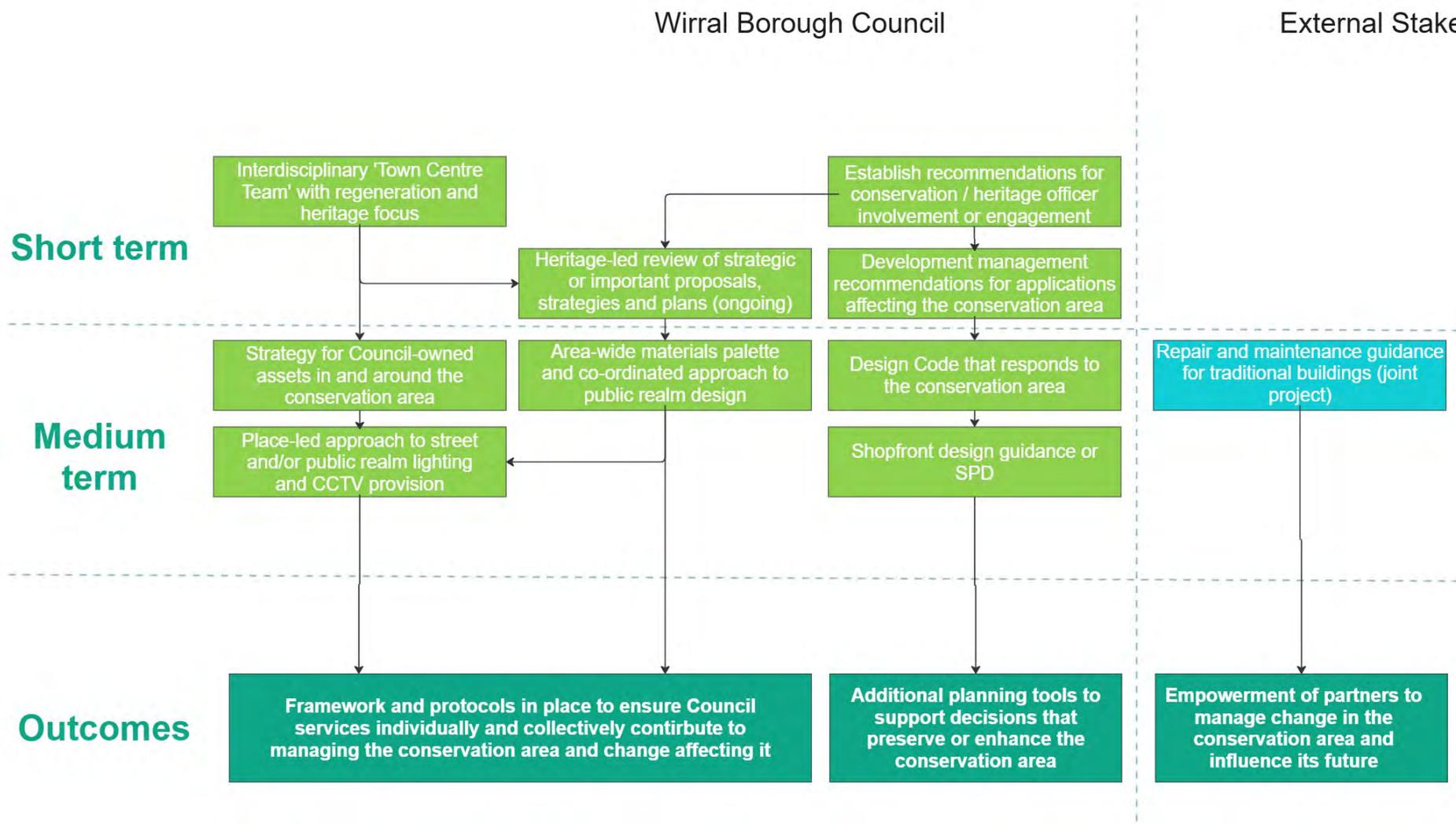
The proposals are grouped according to the categories in the previous chapter, and are divided into short- (six months to two years), medium- (two to four years) and long-term (four or more years).

The Delivery Plan also indicates who would lead and the approximate level of financial resources required.

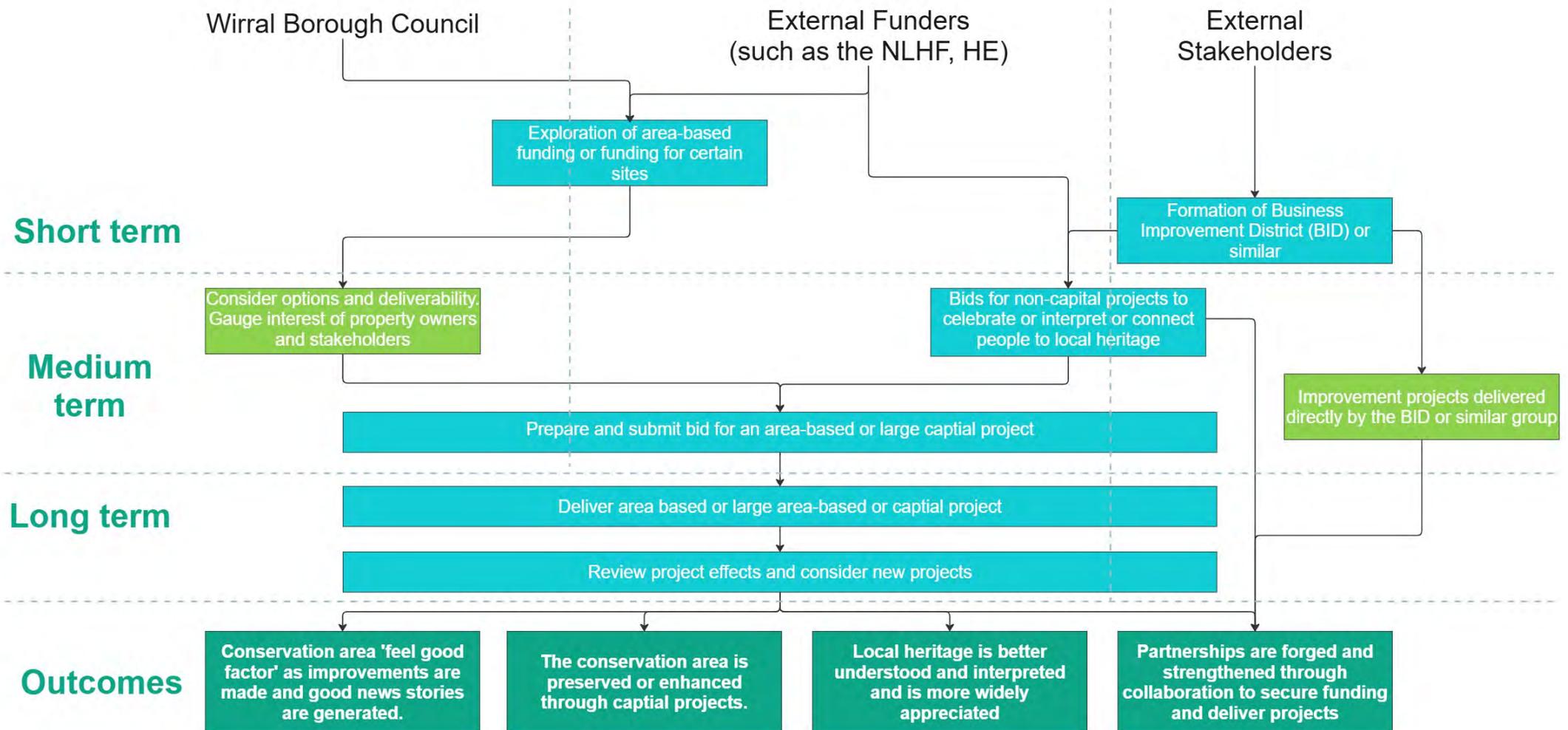
Strategic Area-wide Proposals



Managing Change at an Area-wide Level



Partnerships



Site-specific proposals inside and outside of the conservation area

For the Site Specific Proposals inside and outside of the conservation area, there are many factors at play such as the actions, priorities, circumstances and attitudes of the owners or occupiers of buildings or sites. Projects could come forward as ownership or occupation changes, the availability of funding changes or through the impacts of other regeneration projects, which may delay or bring forward works to particular buildings or sites.

This section therefore does not specify that, say, within three years a certain building will be repaired and re-occupied, or a gap site redeveloped within four years, as this is impossible to predict. Instead, this identifies what would be the positive first steps to create the conditions to bring these projects forward. These break down into three general categories:

1. Data gathering: this is generally understanding the significance of the heritage asset itself, or carrying out options appraisals or feasibility studies to assess the viability of new development or identify where gap funding is needed. This can also entail details surveys of the building or site. For parking areas, data about its viability and/or level of use is important. Last, but by no means least, speaking to the owners or occupiers of buildings or sites and maintaining an open dialogue is key as it helps to monitor how likely a project will be to progress and/or identify obstacles to its delivery.

2. Initial actions: this can be as simple as reviewing existing regeneration proposals or projects against this Plan and assessing whether any adjustment is needed to preserve or enhance the area. For Council-owned assets, it is a review of the asset's use, condition and whether there is a desire to dispose of it or invest in it. Likewise for the Council 'stitch in time' repairs to their assets will stave off higher costs of repair later.

3. Enforcement Powers: these can be a way of both opening dialogue with absent building or site owners and provides a short-to-medium term means of addressing

aspects of the study area that are either harming amenity or the significance of heritage assets. These enforcement powers include:

- Enforcement against works carried out without planning permission or listed building consent
- Section 215 Notices that requires land or buildings that harm local amenity to be tidied, maintained, repaired or made good
- Listed Building Repairs Notices to address listed buildings in a state of disrepair and declining condition
- Discontinuance Notices to remove advertisements such as billboards and advertising hoardings, even if they have been in situ for many years.

In general, the proposals that can progress the soonest are those that are in Council or public sector ownership or control. The projects, along with the projects and improvements of the wider Birkenhead regeneration programme, can act as 'mini catalysts' to stimulate investment into privately owned sites. The projects that are public-private collaborations can similarly be progressed in a timely fashion. Those projects that are entirely in private ownership and control are entirely dependent on the actions of their owners or occupiers. These tend to be delivered later, unless other regeneration activity or the use of enforcement powers can stimulate action.

Taking this general approach, the projects in Council control that can start in the short term are:

- a. Hamilton Square Greenspace
- b. Duncan Street Car Park
- c. Hamilton Square Highways
- d. Birkenhead Town Hall
- m. Conway Centre, Conway Street
- n. Conway Street – Argyle Street corners
- q. Edward VII Memorial Clocktower
4. Surface car parks (where Council-owned)

The public-private projects that could start in the short term or where initial changes can be stimulated through the use of enforcement powers but would have a longer gestation period are:

- e. Hamilton Square Terraces
- f. North side of Hamilton Square
- j. Chester Street advert site and 10 Market Street
- k. 47-67 Argyle Street and Hinson Street
- l. Argyle Street / Conway Street / Dacre Street Improvement Area
- o. Clifton Crescent
 1. Chester Street / Church Street car park and railway cuttings
 2. Woodside Gyrotory

The final set of projects are those where the Council has less influence or ability to induce change. This does not mean that these projects would necessarily take longest or happen last, but rather that their likelihood and timing of delivery is the least certain:

- g. Laird's House, 63 Hamilton Square
- h. Glass Barrel pub and Albion Street gap site
- i. Market Cross Site
- p. Church of St Werburgh and St Laurence
- r. Cheshire Lines Building and Pacific Road Transit Sheds
- s. Mersey Road Tunnel Ventilation Tower
3. Woodside Business Park
4. Surface car parks (where privately owned)
5. Sheds in compounds
6. Offices in compounds

The importance of opening and maintaining dialogue with private site owners and occupiers cannot be underestimated. It influences the delivery of two thirds of the projects, and circumstances can change suddenly such as a site changes ownership or a long-standing tenant relocates. This can drastically change the probability of projects coming forward.

Appendix A

Schedule of Amendments



Schedule of Amendments

This Schedule of Amendments provides a record of the changes that were made to the Hamilton Square Conservation Area Regeneration Plan in response to suggestions, corrections, comments and feedback from the public consultation on the Draft Hamilton Square Conservation Area Regeneration Plan (referred to here as either ‘the CARP’ or ‘the Plan’).

The public were asked to provide feedback and thoughts on Draft Hamilton Square Conservation Area Regeneration Plan. Participants were asked what they valued about Hamilton Square, and what improvements to the area they would like to see in the Plan.

The consultation was carried out between 7 April 2025 – 19 May 2025. The approach used was an online public consultation through the ‘Have your say’ consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Hamilton Square Conservation Area. The Draft Hamilton Square Conservation Area Regeneration Plan was provided for reference, as well as the supporting Case for Change document.

An online questionnaire was provided for residents and stakeholders to engage with. Respondents were also able to request paper copies, help completing the questionnaire, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the ‘Have your say’ website alongside the online questionnaire.

The questionnaire was completed by 75 people (68 online, 7 via paper copies).

An in-person consultation event for the CARP was held in the town centre at Make Hamilton (Make CIC), 69-71 Argyle Street, Birkenhead, on Thursday 24 April 2025. This event was hosted by the Council, and was attended by 15 residents and stakeholders.

Following the consultation, the feedback provided from the questionnaires and at the event was reviewed and used as the basis for updating the Plan. The updates to the Plan as a consequence of the consultation are as follows:

General / throughout the document	<p>The term '<i>study area</i>' has been replaced with '<i>conservation area</i>'.</p> <p>This is to reflect the intention to adopt the study area boundary of the CARP as the conservation area boundary.</p>
Summary, Pg.1	<p>Text deleted following completion of public consultation to reflect current stage of project</p> <p><i>'The intention is for this Plan to undergo statutory public consultation in order to update the boundary and management proposals for the conservation area. This way, it will form part of the suite of regeneration plans and frameworks that support the Birkenhead 2040 Framework'</i></p>
Summary Pg.1	<p>Summary changed to reflect updated purpose of Chapter 4</p> <p><i>'Chapter 04 identifies the Plan's study area. This study area is also the first proposal of the Plan: the study area is the suggested new conservation area boundary following a review undertaken to inform this Plan. This step of the Plan is important because</i></p>

	<p><i>the boundary establishes the extent of the area of special architectural and historic interest'</i></p> <p>was changed to</p> <p><i>'Chapter 04 discusses the conservation area boundary. The boundary has been reviewed in preparing this Plan and in response to comments received during the public consultation. Following review, the conservation area is considered to cover a cohesive area of special architectural or historic interest'</i></p>
Chapter 2, Introduction	<p>New map figure added as a new page at the end of this chapter. The map figure shows the conservation area in the context of the wider town centre and other conservation areas in the Borough.</p> <p>The following paragraph was added to the end of the Introduction:</p> <p><i>'The location of Hamilton Square Conservation Area in relation to the wider town of Birkenhead and</i></p>

	<i>Birkenhead Park and Clifton Park Conservation Areas is shown on the map on the next page.'</i>
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 3	<p>Four pages have been added to the end of this chapter. These page set out a summary of the significance of the conservation area. They were previously in the Case for Change, and officers have requested that this summary is moved into the Plan.</p> <p>In addition to the summary of significance table, six new photos and captions have been included on these new pages.</p> <p>The remainder of the changes in this chapter are changes to the table following public consultation and officer review.</p>
The Significance of the Conservation Area, Pg. 3	<p>Text removed</p> <p><i>'This work in Edinburgh was for the brother-in-law of William Laird'</i></p>
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 5	Text updated following comment from the public consultation which clarifies that the original site of the priory ferry

	<p>is Woodside and text was altered to reflect this information.</p> <p><i>'The Priory site survives and is a scheduled monument, while the possible site of the ferry launch survives as the Monks Ferry place name. This and the later Woodside ferry launch influenced the later early development of Birkenhead.'</i></p> <p>was changed to</p> <p><i>'The Priory site survives and is a scheduled monument. The ferry launch influenced the early development of Birkenhead.'</i></p>
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 6	<p>Changed after further information about Birkenhead's tram system was received in public consultation comments.</p> <p><i>'The town was the first in the world to have a tram system'</i> was added</p>
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values,	<i>'63 Hamilton Square, the largest house with the largest garden, with views towards Liverpool and the ferry</i>

Pg. 6	<i>launch, was built as his home</i> , the sentence is in reference to William Laird, this is an error, and the sentence has been removed, with the correction added below.
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 6	Text has been removed <i>'his client at Edinburgh being the brother-in-law of William Laird.'</i>
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 6	<i>He lived for much of his life at 63 Hamilton Square, the largest house on the Square, with the largest garden and views out to Mersey, Liverpool and the ferry launch.'</i> Text added, referring to John Laird and correcting previous error on Pg. 6
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 6	Text updated to provide clarification on council names and occupation <i>'Birkenhead Urban District Council / Wirral Council, builder and occupier of the Town Hall and Treasury House offices. Birkenhead has been a centre of local government and administration since 1833, and this was continued by the Urban District Council's incorporation in 1861. Wirral Council, formed in 1974, replaced all district</i>

	<i>councils on the Wirral peninsula within the county of Merseyside, which was also created in 1974. Wirral Council retains its Council Chamber and principal offices in the town centre'</i> was changed to <i>'Birkenhead Municipal Borough / County Borough / Wirral Council, The Municipal Borough was the builder and initial occupier of the Town Hall and Treasury House offices and was replaced by the County Borough in 1889. Wirral Council, formed in 1974, replaced all existing local authorities on the Wirral peninsula within the county of Merseyside, which was also created in 1974. Wirral Council retains its Council Chamber and principal offices in the town centre.'</i>
The Significance of the Conservation Area and its Heritage Values, Pg. 7	Text changed following a comment made during the public consultation, the song title error has been corrected. <i>'Ferry Across the Mersey'</i> was changed to <i>'Ferry Cross the Mersey'</i>

The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 9	Title was changed from <i>'The Study Area'</i> to <i>'The Conservation Area Boundary'</i>
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 9	Text changed to clarify the purpose of chapter <i>'This chapter sets out the Plan's study area by reviewing the boundary of the existing conservation area. It sets out recommended conservation area boundary changes as the first set of proposals of the Conservation Area Regeneration Plan'</i> was changed to <i>'This chapter outlines the conservation area boundary and explains the extent of the conservation area boundary.'</i>
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 9	Text added following completion of public consultation, to show the process has been undertaken as part of the assessment <i>'It has also been informed by public consultation.'</i> was added
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 9	Text removed

	<i>'The Case for Change that supports this Plan assesses the boundary in more detail.'</i>
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 9	The text: <i>'This boundary review considers the conservation area's character and appearance and identifies where there is continuity of this character and appearance beyond the current boundary. The review is therefore not focussed on the ages or histories of individual buildings, though these have been understood and factored into consideration. The boundary review focuses on ensuring the conservation area is an area with a cohesive character and appearance, and where buildings and/or spaces add to the sum total significance of special character or appearance of the conservation area, and are worthy of preservation and enhancement/'</i> was changed to <i>'The 2025 boundary review considered the conservation area's character and</i>

	<p><i>appearance, and identifies where there is continuity of this character and appearance beyond the former boundary.</i></p> <p><i>The review was therefore not focussed on the ages or histories of individual buildings, though these have been understood and factored into consideration.</i></p> <p><i>The boundary review focussed on ensuring the conservation area is an area with a cohesive character and appearance, and where buildings and/or spaces add to the sum total significance of special character or appearance of the conservation area, and are worthy of preservation and enhancement.</i></p> <p><i>The adopted post-consultation 2025 boundary of Hamilton Square Conservation Area is on the next page.’</i></p>
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 9	A new page was inserted. This page contains a map figure showing the conservation area boundary.
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 10	Text changed to reflect the current phase of the project.

	<p><i>‘The following additions to the conservation area are proposed’</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>‘The following additions have been made to the conservation area boundary’</i></p>
The Conservation Area Boundary, Pg. 10	<p>A summary of additional boundary changes that have been considered was added following a review of consultation comments. The following text has been added on a new page at the end of this chapter:</p> <p><i>‘Other boundary changes that have been considered</i></p> <p><i>The two stages of public consultation in preparing this Plan identified suggested boundary changes made by consultees. These areas and the responses to these suggestions are below:</i></p> <p><i>Extend the conservation area along the waterfront at Woodside. The conservation area boundary extends to</i></p>

the waterfront where it forms a cohesive area of special architectural or historic interest. This is reflected by the current boundary extending along Pacific Road to the waterfront at the Mersey Tunnel Ventilation Tower. To the north and south of this is modern development that is of no special architectural or historic interest. It would therefore be inappropriate to include this in the conservation area. The Woodside Ferry Terminal Building is of special interest, but it already benefits from stronger controls to change affecting it by its status as a grade II listed building. The Ferry Building stands in an area of modern development that is of no special interest. Therefore it would be inappropriate to extend the conservation area to include the Ferry Building and the adjacent stretches of waterfront.

Extend the conservation area to include the Dock Branch Railway Line from Haymarket Tunnel to Price Street. The Dock Branch Railway is of historic

interest due to its associations with Birkenhead's docks which prospered greatly due to the connectivity the line created. However, it has little relationship to the wider conservation area, as it cuts through the grid of streets and is not related to the development of the streets and buildings of the conservation area itself. The Haymarket section of the line is below modern highway bridges and decks of no special interest. The section from Argyle Street to Price Street outside of the conservation area is lined on both sides by cleared plots and modern buildings of no special interest, therefore the historic and architectural relationship between the line and its context is minimal along this stretch. The Dock Branch Park regeneration proposal seeks to enhance the railway line as a linear park in a manner that retains the cuttings, the level of the track bed, retains features relating to its original use, and removes self-sown vegetation. The railway line is therefore to be adapted in a way that retains its former character. It would

	<p><i>therefore be inappropriate to include the Dock Branch line in the conservation area.</i></p> <p><i>Extend the conservation area along Price Street. Price Street is part of the 'Graham Grid' of planned streets. To the west of the conservation area, Price Street is largely lined with modern buildings and spaces that are not of special historic or architectural interest. It would therefore be inappropriate to include more of Price Street in the conservation area.'</i></p>
The Regeneration Context, Pg. 11	The 'Mass Transit' project was also removed from the map figure on this page, and its key.
The Regeneration Context, Pg. 12	Text removed. <i>'This is especially the case given that another catalyst project, Mass Transit (green line), will be an urban tramline connecting Wirral Waters to both the study area and the Ferry Terminal.'</i>
Chapter 6: Study Area Analysis. Pg. 15	Chapter retitled ' <i>Conservation Area Analysis</i> '
Chapter 6: Study Area Analysis.	The text: <i>'Non-designated heritage assets The study area contains 36 non-</i>

Pg. 15	<p><i>designated heritage assets that are of heritage value in their own right as well as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Some of these non-designated heritage assets comprise more than one property, for examples terraces or connected buildings. The Local Heritage List for Wirral is at a very early stage of being compiled. The Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy Mapping Research (2021) identifies 14 buildings of architectural merit within the study area as part of a wider survey of Birkenhead. As this survey forms part of the evidence base of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and its supporting plans, this Plan has classed them.</i></p> <p><i>The Hamilton Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2006) identifies one additional non-designated heritage asset to those identified in the Culture and Heritage Strategy Mapping Research. The Plan's review of the study area for this Plan has therefore identified 21 more non-designated heritage assets within the study area'</i></p>
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	<p>Was changed to <i>‘Locally listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets</i> <i>Locally listed buildings are buildings that are on the Local Heritage List for Wirral. They are recognised by Wirral Council as being of local significance, and this significance should be given weight in any planning decisions affecting them. Non designated heritage assets are buildings or structure that hold some heritage value, but are not currently locally listed. The significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be given weight in planning decisions affecting them.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Heritage List for Wirral is at an early stage of being compiled. The conservation area contains 12 locally listed buildings that are of heritage value in their own right as well as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Some of these locally listed buildings comprise more</i></p>
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	<p><i>than one property, for example a terrace or connected buildings.</i></p> <p><i>The Birkenhead Culture and Heritage Strategy Mapping Research (2021) identifies 14 buildings of architectural merit within the conservation area as part of a wider survey of Birkenhead. As this survey forms part of the evidence base of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and its supporting plans, this Plan has classed them as non-designated heritage assets unless they are locally listed.</i></p> <p><i>The map on the next page shows all national, and local heritage designations in and around the conservation area.’</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Analysis</p>	<p>A new page has been added to this chapter. It contains a map figure showing the conservation area boundary, listed buildings and key unlisted buildings, both within the conservation area and in its vicinity.</p>
<p>Conservation Area Analysis</p>	<p>A new page has been added, titled ‘Views and Vistas’ at officer request.</p>

	<p>This page sets out important view within, from and into the conservation area. The new text is accompanied by a map figure showing the key views and vistas.</p>
<p>SWOT Analysis, Pg. 22</p>	<p>Example of community group added for further clarification <i>'Community: the people, organisations and groups that have an interest in the area and its future.'</i></p> <p>Was changed to <i>'Community: the people, organisations and groups, such as the Town Team, that have an interest in the area and its future.'</i></p>
<p>SWOT Analysis, Pg. 22</p>	<p>Further text added to clarify definition of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following text was added: <i>'The strengths are features or attributes that generally make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.'</i></p>

	<p><i>The strengths are also factors that support the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, including by making it a vibrant and economically viable town centre.</i></p> <p><i>The weaknesses are features or attributes that currently harm the character or appearance of the conservation area. Weaknesses are also factors or circumstances that undermine the objectives of preserving or enhancing the conservation area.</i></p> <p><i>The opportunities are actions that could be taken to preserve and enhance the conservation area. This includes making the town centre a more vibrant and economically viable place, as well as enhancing the environment,</i></p> <p><i>The threats are factors that if allowed to continue or to evolve without intervention, will either cause harm or cause continued harm or greater harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area.</i></p>
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	<i>The threats columns include 'general' and 'site specific' threats. The 'general' threats apply uniformly or extensively across the conservation area, the 'specific' threats relate to specific sites or activities.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Strengths	Text added: <i>'Relatively flat topography of the majority of the conservation area, well-disposed to active travel and accessible spaces'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Weaknesses	Text added: <i>'Some conversions and new build developments have supported the retention of existing vacant plots due to the locations of domestic windows, e.g. Hamilton Plaza, Market Street / Albion Street corner.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Opportunities	Text added: <i>'Potential to restore the open space within Hamilton Square back to its original layout or hold a design competition for its redesign to suit its civic functions, status as the</i>

	<i>conservation area's principal green space and the growing residential population of the Square. Potential review of existing listed buildings and designation of new listed buildings.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Threats	The text: <i>'General: landscaping and public realm approach could harm the urban and traditional streetscene of the conservation area such as the 'greening' of traditional streets, and the proposed locations of street trees. Tree lines in streets and Hamilton Square would also have a harmful impact.'</i> Was changed to: <i>'General: Any proposed landscaping and public realm should be conscious of the views to Hamilton Square, as the surrounding streets were designed without greenery to emphasise Hamilton Square as the principal green space. Any proposed tree planting in the surroundings may harm this</i>

	<i>relationship between Hamilton Square and its surroundings.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text removed: <i>'Unlikely that new buildings and improved gateways alone will address these issues.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text: <i>'General: catalyst projects focus on the public realm / gateways and junctions, but not the existing buildings that surround them. They generally do not address the existing building stock, which will diminish the impacts of these projects'</i> Was replaced with: <i>'General: There are very few external funding options for privately owned historic buildings. This means that the catalyst projects' focus on the public realm / gateways and junctions, is less likely to be matched by co-ordinated investment in the existing buildings that surround them.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Place SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text added: <i>Specific: large open spaces proposed at Woodside, but these spaces may be out</i>

	<i>of scale with the historic buildings (1-3 storeys generally), providing a weak sense of enclosure and urban character</i> <i>Specific: demolition of boundary walls to the Church of St Werburgh, and making the churchyard part of an open campus: harm to listed building and conservation area, may impede how the building and site function.</i> <i>Specific: no proposals for the space within Hamilton Square. It could contribute greatly to the appeal of the area if sympathetically improved.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Strengths	Text added: <i>'The recent Argyle Quarter improvements are an example of this.</i> <i>The successful re-use and repair of buildings, improvement of shopfronts and the public realm by the Hamilton Quarter Improvement Scheme of the 1990s demonstrates proof of concept for heritage-led regeneration in</i>

	<i>Birkenhead. These improvements have been maintained ever since.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Opportunities	Text: <i>'Council and public sector-led rollback of on-site parking. Get more people walking the last leg of their journey to work. Could use underused Council-owned car parks for free / minimal cost initially. Redevelop or re-landscape the freed-up land.'</i> Was replaced with: <i>'Council and public sector-led rollback of on-site parking. In line with the Wirral Parking Strategy, support more people walking the last leg of their journey to work. This could enable on-site car parks to be redeveloped as more people use edge of centre car parks.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Opportunities	Text added: <i>'Liverpool University study into energy efficiency at Hamilton Square could offer a best practice exemplar / prototype / guide for the wider area.'</i> <i>'This also applies to all stakeholders in the town centre, including land and</i>

	<i>building owners, businesses and residents.'</i> <i>'Use of Local Listed Building Consent Orders for certain works at Hamilton Square and/or other buildings in the area. Could relate to certain repairs or restorations and/or the findings of the energy efficiency study.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Opportunities	Text removed: <i>'Economic diversification to make the area less dependent on public sector jobs and workforce, especially as working from home has reduced the level of commuting. Also need to widen out from 9 to 5 office jobs to the evening and leisure economy and non-office sectors.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text: <i>'General: Disjointed approach to regeneration activity across the conservation area and its setting causing harm to its significance.'</i> Was replaced with: <i>'General: without a co-ordinated approach to regeneration activity across the conservation area and its setting, there would be greater risk for</i>

	<i>this activity to cause harm to the conservation area.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text removed: <i>'General: the 2040 Framework and masterplans channel investment, building occupiers and footfall away from the conservation area</i> <i>General: there is no town-centre-wide strategy for on- and off-street car parking. Each masterplan tackles this issue in isolation when this would benefit from a strategic approach.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Activity SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text: <i>'General: insufficient action is taken to address the large number of office and education sites that could really improve footfall and vitality of the town centre if they lacked large on-site car parks.'</i> Was replaced with: <i>'General: without sufficient support for and encouragement of active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) to the town centre's large number of office and education sites, it will be difficult to</i>

	<i>meaningfully increase the footfall and vitality of the town centre.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Community SWOT Analysis: Strengths	Text added: <i>'The successes of the Hamilton Quarter improvement project of the 1990s and the Argyle Quarter Shopfront scheme of 2024/5 demonstrates an appetite for improving the area among businesses and building owners. Many of the improvements made in the 1990s have been maintained since.'</i>
SWOT Analysis: Community SWOT Analysis: Threats	Text added: <i>'Potential misinformation or disinformation about proposals for the area that could be a source of opposition to the proposals.'</i>
Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 31	Text removed: <i>'Chapter 4: the Study Area is the first suite of proposals of this Plan. It identifies a suggested conservation area boundary that forms the basis for the proposals in this chapter.'</i>

<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 32</p>	<p>Text changed following a review of public consultation comments, with suggestion of a central tourist information point added.</p> <p><i>‘These heritage attractions need to be promoted together, with particular attention also paid to the visitor experience: arrival points, wayfinding, places to eat, drink or stay, events and activities, the character and appearance of routes used by tourists’</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>‘These heritage attractions need to be promoted together, with particular attention also paid to the visitor experience: arrival points, wayfinding, a central tourist information point, places to eat, drink or stay, events and activities, the character and appearance of routes used by tourists’</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 23</p>	<p>Following a review of comments from the public consultation suggestions on how to raise the profile of Hamilton Square and Birkenhead’s heritage were added. The following was added:</p>

	<p><i>‘A higher profile for Hamilton Square and Birkenhead’s heritage.</i></p> <p><i>The people of Birkenhead are rightly proud of its history as a place of innovation, cultural value and world firsts alongside heritage assets of local interest. This proposal is for all stakeholders in Birkenhead to spread the word about what makes it interesting, unique and special.</i></p> <p><i>This can be through the education of children and young people, residents new and old, businesses new and old, and investors about what is important about Birkenhead. This should also extend to awareness raising among visitors and tourists: the best views of Liverpool’s waterfront are from Birkenhead and the ferry is an excellent way to being this experience. The profile raising of Birkenhead’s heritage can be through interpretation, publications, marketing, artwork, events, web resources, tours and talks aimed at different audiences.</i></p>
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	<p><i>The more people understand how and why Birkenhead is special, the easier it becomes to maintain it, manage change to make sure it respects Birkenhead's heritage rather than diluting it or harming it. This simple concept of education and information can be delivered by different stakeholders and partners over the short- medium- and long-term to help further local pride and ownership of Birkenhead as a place.'</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 24</p>	<p>Following a review of comments from the public consultation issues regarding maintenance of buildings and spaces have been listed on their own item to emphasise its importance. The following text was added:</p> <p><i>'Maintenance of buildings and spaces. People's first impressions and perceptions of a place and their feelings about it are often informed by how well-cared for the place is. Neglected public realm, paving,</i></p>

	<p><i>lighting, street furniture, boundary features and buildings, litter, filth and untidiness can deter people from visiting or staying anywhere longer than they need to. This issue has been raised via consultation on the Plan. Although building repair and maintenance is mentioned above and the maintenance of Council-owned buildings, public realm and highways are mentioned as actions above, the maintenance and care of Birkenhead should be a collective effort in order to be consistently good across the town centre. For this reason it is listed as its own item. All stakeholders including building and site owners and occupiers, residents, visitors and people who work in the town all have a role to play.'</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 25</p>	<p>Text regarding Town Centre Team was updated to reflect current phase of project</p> <p><i>'Formation of a 'Town Centre Team' of key services operating in Birkenhead. The Town Centre Team itself could be a core team that meets regularly and</i></p>

	<p><i>obtains updates and invites other services for particular discussions. The chair of the Team would be able to make decisions and set and monitor actions for the wider Team. The key is to have joined-up thinking around managing change in the town centre, and awareness between services of current priorities and issues, budgets, new initiatives, town centre events, feedback from partners and businesses. This approach promotes cross-cutting and seamless approach to placemaking.'</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>"Town Centre Team' of key services operating in Birkenhead. The recently-formed Town Centre Team supports joined-up thinking around managing change in the town centre, and awareness between services of current priorities and issues, budgets, new initiatives, town centre events, feedback from partners and businesses. This approach promotes cross-cutting and seamless approach to placemaking'</i></p>
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<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 26</p>	<p>Item was rephrased to reflect recommendations rather than requirements.</p> <p><i>'protocols'</i> was changed to <i>'recommendations'</i></p> <p><i>'required'</i> was changed to <i>'recommended'</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 26</p>	<p>Text removed</p> <p><i>'The existing Wirral Shopfront Guidance could be adapted and expanded to make it more specific to Hamilton Square Conservation Area.'</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 28</p>	<p>Following comments from the public consultation further detail regarding the Hamilton Quarter Improvement Scheme and Argyle Quarter Commercial Property Improvement Scheme was added. The following text was added:</p> <p><i>'The improvements made to the conservation area via the Hamilton Quarter Improvement Scheme are still</i></p>

	<p><i>visible and tangible today. The Scheme ran in the 1990s and funded the repair and restoration of historic buildings, 'living over the shop' re-use of upper floors of buildings, shopfront restoration and public realm improvements. It was funded by the Single Regeneration Budget and shows 'proof of concept' that heritage led regeneration can work in the conservation area, and the investments are maintained in the longer term. The Argyle Quarter Commercial Property Improvement Scheme (2024-5) is a recent example of Liverpool City Region Combined Authority funding being used to repair and improve ten shopfronts'</i></p> <p>Text regarding the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) was also updated.</p> <p><i>'This could be from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) or Historic England. It would require resources in terms of time to co-ordinate, prepare and submit bids and</i></p>
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	<p><i>match funding (as much as 50%). Between £250,000 and £10million can be applied for, but typical awards are generally up to £1million for schemes such as High Streets Heritage Action Zones and up to £2million for large NLHF area-based schemes'</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>'Funding for these purposes is also awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). It would require resources in terms of time to co-ordinate, prepare and submit bids and match funding (as much as 50%). Between £250,000 and £10million can be applied for, but typical awards are generally up to £2million for large NLHF area-based schemes.'</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 30</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal B: Duncan Street car park following comments received during the public consultation. The changes are:</p>

	<p><i>‘the First World War memorial’ was changed to ‘the ‘Futility’ monument to Wilfred Owen’</i></p> <p>Suggestions for potential uses of the space were added, <i>‘Alternative uses as a craft market, pop-up market or events space could also be considered.’</i></p> <p><i>‘The space could be designed around the memorial to a degree, making it a focal point’</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>‘The existing plane trees, hornbeam hedges and ‘Futility’ monument should be retained and included. The space should be designed around the memorial, which must remain in situ.’</i></p> <p>In addition to the updates to the text, the accompanying illustration was replaced with a new one showing the ‘Futility’ monument in its existing location and orientation. The public realm design behind the monument has</p>
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	<p>been changed, and a caption added saying;</p> <p><i>“Existing memorial to stay in its existing location”</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 30</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal C: Hamilton Square Highways following comments received during the public consultation. These included:</p> <p><i>‘Existing plans soon to be implemented will improve the Cleveland Street and Argyle Street highways in the Square’</i> was added</p> <p><i>‘follow the existing planned improvements’</i> was added</p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 30</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal D: Birkenhead Town Hall as further information regarding its use/current condition was received and following suggestions from the public consultations.</p> <p><i>‘is largely unused. Its current main use, as the town’s registry office, is infrequent and partial. Although used for weddings, civic and remembrance</i></p>

	<p><i>purposes, the town hall is for most of the time empty’ was changed to ‘is vacant’</i></p> <p><i>‘It is also suffering from water ingress and is therefore in need of repair’ was added</i></p> <p><i>‘The building should be repaired in the short-term to ensure it is weathertight and secure’ was added</i></p> <p><i>‘Long-term residents have also suggested reinstating the regular ringing of the Town Hall bells, which were once a familiar sound in the conservation area’ was added following a suggestion from the public consultation</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 30</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal E: Hamilton Square Terraces following comments received during the public consultation. The following text was added:</p> <p><i>‘A small but effective measure would be to exercise greater control over the display of for sale and to let signs on</i></p>

	<p><i>these grade I listed terraces. Consultation in preparing this Plan suggested a local listed building consent order for the Square so that listed building consent is granted for specific repairs, restorations or improvements’ was added</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 32</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal F: North side of Hamilton Square following comments received during the public consultation relating to the high number of bins visible within the area. These changes included:</p> <p><i>‘This forces the wheelie bins of the terrace to be stored at the front and put out onto the pavement of the Square for emptying, which harm the character of this important space and terrace’ was added</i></p> <p><i>‘and allow bin collection from the back street’ was added</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 32</p>	<p>In order to accommodate the additional text above, the following text was removed from Proposal g. Laird’s House, 63 Hamilton Square:</p>

	<p><i>‘Laird’s father William developed the Square and grid of streets.’</i></p> <p><i>‘long been used as offices, with’</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 33</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal L: Argyle Street/Conway Street/Dacre Street Improvement Area after receiving further information and comments during the public consultation. These changes included:</p> <p><i>‘this area is an ideal candidate for area-based heritage-led regeneration via programmes such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s Heritage Grants or Historic England’s High Streets Heritage Action Zones (or any similar grant schemes)’</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>‘this area is an ideal candidate for public sector-led area-based heritage-led regeneration via programmes such as the National Lottery Heritage</i></p>

	<p><i>Fund’s Heritage Grants (or any similar grant schemes)’</i></p> <p><i>‘The Hamilton Quarter improvements of the 1990s are a previous and successful example of this approach being used in Birkenhead. The Argyle Quarter Commercial Property Improvement Scheme is a recent (2024-25) is a recent example of the same approach. It improved 10 shopfronts on Argyle and Market Streets using Liverpool City Region Combiner Authority funding’</i> was added</p> <p><i>‘The buildings and public realm could be united by reuses of buildings that make use of the improved public realm such as outdoor restaurant, or café seating and outdoor retailing. More seating and artwork in the street spaces would enhance the street scene and give the area a stronger identity’</i> was added</p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals,</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal M: Conway Centre, Conway Street after further information was received</p>

<p>Pg. 33</p>	<p>regarding the building's use/intended future use and comments received during the public consultation. These changes included:</p> <p><i>'The Council intends to sell the building for redevelopment'</i> was added</p> <p><i>'The building is in public ownership and is on the 2040 Framework's cultural axis. With its range of entrances and internal spaces and large outdoor space, the building could house a mixture of studios and offices with indoor and outdoor exhibition and events spaces. This would support the town centre's cultural scene. This use could finance the ongoing overheads and maintenance of the building. A external funding source like the National Lottery could help fund feasibility studies, enable the conversion and repair the building. The use of the building on a not-for-profit basis would also support the creative sector through affordable workspace and studios. Few other publicly owned</i></p>
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	<p><i>buildings in the study area offer this degree of flexibility'</i></p> <p>Was changed to</p> <p><i>'The building is on the 2040 Framework's cultural axis. With its range of entrances and internal spaces and large outdoor space, the site could house range of uses that make effective use of its different types and sizes of indoor and outdoor spaces. Its reuse could support the town centre's cultural scene. If the building remains in public sector or not-for-profit ownership, external funding source like the National Lottery could help fund feasibility studies, enable the conversion and repair the building. The use of the building on a not-for-profit basis would also support the creative sector through affordable workspace and studios. Few other buildings and sites in the conservation area offer this degree of flexibility'</i></p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals,</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal N: Argyle Street Corners following comments received during the public</p>

<p>Pg. 34</p>	<p>consultation. These included further potential uses for the area.</p> <p><i>‘using pavement spaces for cafes, bars or retail’</i> was added</p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 34</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal O: Clifton Crescent to reflect intended engagement with the council. These changes included:</p> <p><i>‘Early engagement with the Council’s heritage team will ensure that first consideration is given to repair, re-use and restoration of the historic buildings’</i> was added</p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 35</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal R: Cheshire Lines Building and Pacific Road Transit Sheds. These changes included:</p> <p><i>‘The Cheshire Line Building is now offices with a mezzanine floor added to add a storey within the railway shed. These offices have recently been vacated by Wirral Council’</i></p> <p>was changed to</p>

	<p><i>‘The Cheshire Line Building was most recently used as offices with a mezzanine floor added to add a storey within the railway shed. This privately owned building is now vacant.’</i></p> <p><i>‘for its private owners’</i> was added, to reflect the current and future ownership of the building</p> <p><i>‘tourist-focussed, educational’</i> and <i>‘perhaps as a tourist information point’</i> was added to reflect comments from the public consultation</p> <p><i>‘A possible obstacle to the regeneration of the Pacific Road part of this site is the adjacent water treatment works, which is a source of odours’</i> was added.</p>
<p>Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 36</p>	<p>Changes were made to Site Proposal 1: Church Street/Chester Street Car Park and Railway Cuttings. Further information added to reflect details within other documents</p>

	<i>'It could also be used to accelerate the rationalisation of underused car parks in the town centre, consistent with the Wirral Parking Strategy'</i> was added
Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 36	Changes were made to Site Proposal 2: Woodside Gyratory regarding potential uses of the area following comments received during the public consultation. <i>'The opportunity for a mid-sized event space or market space should be considered given the size of the site, and its convenience for access by rail, bus and ferry'</i> was added
Conservation Area Regeneration Plan Proposals, Pg. 36	Changes were made to Site Proposal 3: Woodside Business Park regarding potential uses for the area following comments received during the public consultation <i>'The opportunity for a mid-sized event space or market space should be considered given the size of the site, and its convenience for access by rail, bus and ferry'</i> was added
The Delivery Plan, Pg 50	The text: <i>'Formally review and adopt the conservation area noundary and CARP Proposals'</i>

	Was replaced with: <i>'Manage the conservation area in line with the CARP Proposals'</i>
The Delivery Plan, Pg 50	The text: <i>'Establish protocols for conservation'</i> Was replaced with: <i>'Establish recommendations for conservation'</i>

Wirral Borough Council

Hamilton Square: Conservation Area Regeneration Plan

