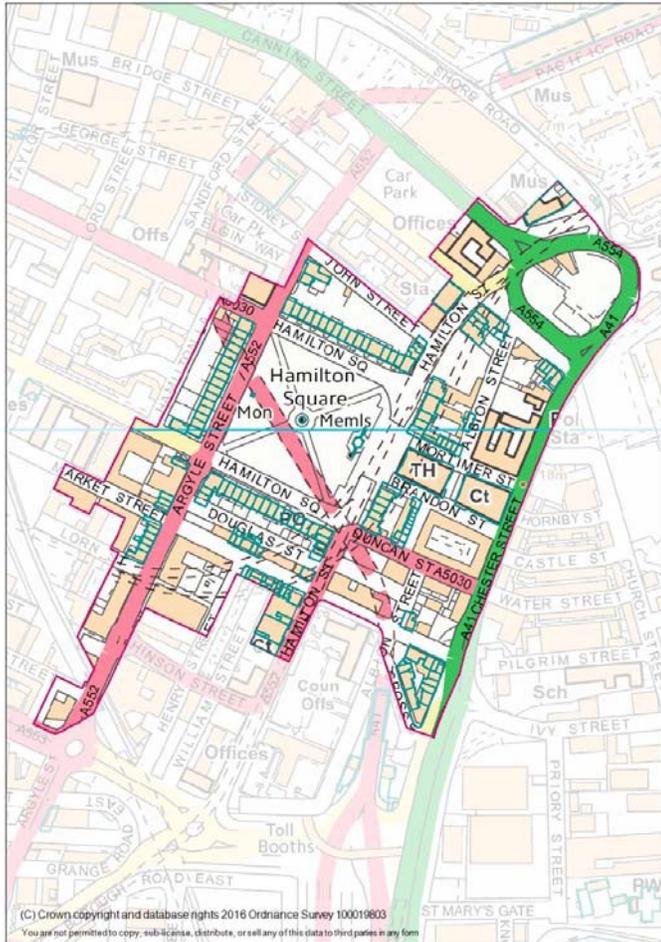


Hamilton Square to New Brighton.

The Hamilton Square Conservation Area



The Hamilton Square Conservation Area was first designated in 1977 to protect the character and uniformity of the historic square. In 1994 it was extended to include the then Woodside Hotel, period property along Argyle Street, Hamilton Street and Market Street and the triangle of land between Cross Street and Chester Street, with the aim of providing a complementary 'visual envelope' to the main square.

Hamilton Square is the largest Grade I listed Victorian square outside London. It contains 62 Grade I listed buildings as well as the Grade II* listed Birkenhead Town Hall. The houses were designed by the Scottish architect, James Gillespie Graham (1776 - 1855), famous for his work in Edinburgh New Town. The square was planned as the focal point of Gillespie Graham's formal gridiron plan for the new town of Birkenhead. Progress was slow and though the streets were laid out the houses in the square were not all completed until the 1840s.

On the east side a space was reserved for a civic building. This was filled by the Birkenhead Town Hall, built between 1883 and 1887 and partially reconstructed following a fire in 1901. At the centre of the square were private gardens, only

acquired as a public open space in 1903.



Hamilton Square terrace on the north side of the square

The gardens are now the setting for a number of memorials. In 1877 a statue was erected to John Laird (1805 – 1874), of Laird’s shipyard fame and Birkenhead’s first MP. Originally the statue stood on the east side of the square but after World War I it was moved to the west side to make way for the Borough’s war memorial. At the centre of the square is a replica Eleanor Cross, designed by Edmund Kirby and unveiled in 1905 to commemorate the reign of Queen Victoria. Most recently a series of memorials have been placed in the square in memory of people who have lost their lives in past wars and conflicts.



Replica Eleanor Cross and John Laird memorials

Beyond the square the Conservation Area has numerous listed buildings, many of them associated with prominent individuals or significant historic events. One such event was the Irish Famine. A green plaque on the corner of 22 Argyle Street and 1 Price Street commemorates the large number of Irish migrants who sought

employment and shelter in Birkenhead during the Famine Years of 1845 -52. In 1851 a quarter of the town's population was of Irish birth, the highest proportion in any English town of the time.



On the same building a red plaque marks the inauguration on August 30th 1860 of the first street railway in Europe. The brain child of the flamboyant American, George Francis Train, its horse drawn trams ran from Woodside to Birkenhead Park.

Another plaque on the Grade II listed 42- 44 Hamilton Street, commemorates Sir Henry Tate, the sugar refiner, who traded there between 1851 and 1861. (Tate was the major benefactor of the Tate Gallery.)

Also listed are 28 - 30 Argyle Street. These properties were once known as the Argyle Assembly Rooms. During the American Civil War these were an important meeting place for the anti-slavery lobby. At one such meeting, on 18th January 1863, a vote was taken pledging unanimous support for the end of slavery and a letter to this effect was sent to President Lincoln. A black plaque commemorates this event.



Former Birkenhead Town Hall built between 1883 and 1887 and terraces on the east side of the square.



Men of Birkenhead Cenotaph unveiled in July 1925

(Architect Professor CH Reilly and sculptor Herbert Tyson Smith)

Wirral Council website bit.ly/hamiltonsqca
Conservation Areas Wirral www.cawirral.co.uk

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: Exit Hamilton Square past the Railway Station Tower on your left. Enter the roundabout and immediately after the 1st exit of the roundabout is Shore Road Pumping Station, therefore take the 2nd exit off the roundabout into Shore Road.



Heritage Site 17 Shore Road Pumping Station:

Built c. 1886, the pumping station was designed by James Brunlees and Charles Douglas Fox to pump water from the tunnel of the Mersey Railway.

From Shore Road continue along and follow the road around to the right into Pacific Road to the **Ventilation Station:**



Heritage Site 18 Ventilation Station:

One of three ventilation stations, built 1925 – 1933, to house large fans used to ventilate the Queensway Tunnel. Designed by Herbert J. Rouse, the engineers were Basil Mott and John Brodie. The stations were designed and decorated in an Art Deco style and faced in brick. The doors have Egyptian style motifs. Built on a grand scale, the Woodside Ventilator is 64 metres high.

Walkers and Cyclists, turn right along the promenade for a couple of hundred yards:

Drivers: Return back up Shore Road to the A41 roundabout and take the 1st left to:



Heritage Site 19 Woodside Ferry Terminal and Submarine.

The original ferry, owned by Birkenhead Priory, operated from Woodside. Today the attractive Victorian booking hall dates only from 1861. Constructed on an ornate iron- frame, it houses a café, displays on the history of the ferries and some of the original ticket booths. An upper story provides views of the Liverpool waterfront. Adjacent to the terminal is the U-Boat Story, a visitor attraction, housing a German submarine, U534, now in four sections, together with displays illustrating its history.

Walkers and cyclists: return back to the Ventilation Tower, up Pacific Road, right into Shore Road and to the traffic lights and turn right into Canning Street.

Drivers: Return back to the A41 roundabout, taking the 2nd exit into Canning Street with Cheshire Lines Building on your right & then 3rd available left into Taylor Street to the Transport Museum:



Heritage Site 20 Wirral Transport Museum and Heritage Tramway.

The Museum and the historic tramway are run by volunteers. The Museum houses a selection of vintage and classic vehicles, including trams, buses, cars, motorcycles, mopeds, bikes, and a fire engine.

Website: bit.ly/wtrammuseum

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: From the Transport Museum return back down Taylor Street, fork left and straight over to **Egerton Bridge**:

Heritage Site 20 Egerton Bridge:

The Egerton Bridge was one of a trio of rolling counterweight lift or bascule bridges installed in the Birkenhead dock system from 1930. They were originally hydraulic and were built to replace the Victorian swing bridges which had operated previously. Their construction was part of a programme of work undertaken by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, aided by the Unemployment Grants Committee and intended to improve the infrastructure of the docks and provide employment for men out of work during the Depression.



Egerton Bridge

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: continue along Egerton Wharf, left into Tower Wharf and left into Tower Road and the **HMS Conway Mizzen Mast** is on the left:



Heritage Site 22 HMS Conway Mizzen Mast:

The training ship, HMS Conway, was originally moored in the Mersey, off Rock Ferry, but in WWII it was taken to Anglesey for safety. In 1953 it ran aground in the

Menai Straits, whilst being towed back for a re-fit and was written off. Training continued in a shore based 'stone frigate' until 1974. When this closed the mast was saved and in 1993 re-erected at the Egerton Dock, to commemorate the 11,000 young men who trained on Conway. Found to be in poor condition, it was later replaced by the present replica mast in 2007.

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: Use the roundabout ahead to turn round and go back past Tower Wharf on your right. This is in the middle of the **Birkenhead Docks:**



Birkenhead Docks

The Morpeth and Egerton Docks, opened in 1847, were the first section of the Birkenhead dock system to be completed. Morpeth Dock was named after Lord Morpeth, First Commissioner of Woods and Forests and responsible for the Crown Lands and the Egerton Dock after Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, MP, who laid its foundation stone in October 1844. Part of the Morpeth Dock and its former branch dock have been filled in to accommodate a water treatment plant.

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: Continue over the next two bridges passing the **Hydraulic Accumulator Tower and Engine House** on your left:



Hydraulic Engine House and Tower.

Designed by J.B.Hartley (1814–1869), the son of Jesse Hartley, the Liverpool dock engineer. it provided hydraulic power for operating the lock gates and bridges of the dock system. The design is based on the Palazzo Vecchio in the Piazza Della Signoria, in Florence. Both the castellated engine house and the 110ft accumulator tower suffered bomb damage in WWII. They were subsequently repaired but the lantern on the top of the tower was never replaced.

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: After this is another bridge and then at the next roundabout:

Walking: Follow Wirral Circular Trail signs along the north side of Alfred Dock to the promenade and onto **Seacombe Ferry**.

Cycling and driving: Fork right along A554 Birkenhead Road to **Seacombe Ferry** on the right:



Heritage Site 25 Seacombe Ferry Terminal.

Built as both a ferry and omnibus terminus, 1930-3, Designed in Art-Deco style by L St G Wilkinson, Wallasey's Borough Surveyor. Brick with Portland stone dressings.

Seacombe Ferry to New Brighton:

Walking and Cycling: Continue along the promenade with The River Mersey on your right as per the Wirral Circular Trail signs to New Brighton, with **Wallasey Town Hall** on the left.

Driving: From the roundabout at Seacombe Ferry, follow signs for A 554 to New Brighton initially Church Road and becoming Brighton Street, with Wallasey Town Hall on the right.



Heritage Site 26: Wallasey Town Hall

Designed by Briggs, Wolstenholme and Thornely, George V laid the foundation stone in March 1914 and the building, designed in Renaissance style and faced with Derbyshire stone, served as a military hospital during WWI, before opening as Wallasey's new Town Hall when the war was over.

Continue onto New Brighton:

Walkers and Cyclists: along the promenade keeping the River Mersey on your right.

Drivers: follow the A554 all the way through to New Brighton.

This completes the North East quadrant of Wirral's Conservation Area and Heritage Trail.

RT 24th November