



BIRKENHEAD PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

PART 2 – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared for Wirral Council by Donald Insall Associates Ltd 2007 – Wirral Council 2009

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PART 2 – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.0 ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1 At this stage of the process the Management Plan is an agenda for future action and consideration. This part of the document relies on the analysis contained in the appraisal to set out the issues and negative factors affecting both the private and public realm. As such it is the first stage in a management plan process which will refine the plan through further consultation, joint officer working and budgetary request.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Appraisal, as an audit of the Conservation Area, is adopted by the Council and used as a material consideration in determining any planning applications within or visually affecting the conservation area. The Management Plan should be adopted for the time being pending further consultation with the local Conservation Area Advisory Committees and further review. In accord with English Heritage guidance, the Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed every 5 years. This review process may be tied into that of the key Local Development Framework documents to ensure consistency in approach and referencing.

2.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

- 2.1 The following is a list of features that are part of Birkenhead Park Conservation Area's special character:
- Landscape, structures and buildings by highly influential / well respected designers Paxton, Kemp, Hornblower and Scott.
 - Revolutionary concept – the first park to be built by public money for the benefit of all.
 - Design subsequently had a worldwide influence – for instance, having a direct impact on the design of Central Park, New York.
 - Design of park to encourage 'perambulations' and an escape from the surrounding built-up areas, with trees screening most buildings.
 - Sense of intrigue and suspense created by sweeping curve of paths and driveways.
 - Higher intensity of planting around man-made lakes.
 - Original buildings within generous plots, allowing plenty of space for trees and planting.
 - Grand scale of original buildings, but height limited so that they are not unduly visible from the park.
 - High quality cast iron railings and sandstone walls around much of perimeter.
 - Areas of stone setts to driveways and hard landscaped areas.
 - Mixture of architectural styles.
 - Earliest buildings generally built of buff sandstone with slate roofs.
 - Other and later buildings of red or buff brick. Mixture of slate and plain clay tile roofs.

- Mixture of sash and casement windows, depending on style of parent building.
- Elaborate porches and door / window surrounds and decoration – mostly of carved stone but some of polychromatic brickwork.
- Elegant chimneys.
- Decorative eaves, gables and verge details.
- Many listed buildings and terraces, several unlisted buildings of high quality and with relevance to the historic development of the park.

3.0 ISSUES, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

3.1 UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER EXISTING PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1.1 The current council policy restricting residential development on the Wirral to areas within designated zones effectively prohibits new housing within the Birkenhead Park Conservation Area. The designation of the central park area as Urban Greenspace means that development is not permitted that would prejudice the continued use of the site for open air recreation or the visual amenity, landscape character or nature conservation value of the site. Development within this area is not permitted unless alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available. There is therefore a general presumption against most development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Applications for planning permission would be assessed for compliance with the policies set out in Section 7 of the UDP and Policies CH1, CH2 and CH6 in the Unitary Development Plan, as well as Supplementary Guidance Note SPG35. Whilst several of the earlier properties within the park are listed, special regard should be had to retaining the integrity of the unlisted nineteenth century buildings through their improved recognition, preservation and enhancement.

DESIGNATION OF LAND WITHIN UDP	
Issue	Location
The future re-designation of land within or around the conservation area in the Unitary Development Plan may be detrimental to its character or setting	Throughout
Policy	
The future re-designation of land within or around the conservation area in the Unitary Development Plan should be considered in terms the effects on of its special character and setting.	
Action	Priority
Consider special character of area before any proposed changes of policy.	Mid-long-term

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URBAN GREENSPACE POLICY	
Issue	Location
In the application of Urban Greenspace policy on land and affecting buildings within the conservation area or affecting its setting, the character and appearance of the conservation area should be preserved or enhanced.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
In the application of Policy GR1 the effects of any proposals on of the special character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting should be strong material considerations	
Action	Priority
Consider the special character of the Birkenhead Park Conservation Area in the application of policy	Immediate

APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF EXISTING POLICY	
Issue	Location
Policies CH1, CH2 and CH6, together with the guidance in PPG15, may not always be rigorously applied during the planning process, resulting in development or changes to buildings which are detrimental to the character of the conservation area.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
Ensure that all new development within the conservation area complies with policies CH1, CH2 and CH6 together with the relevant sections of PPG15/16.	
Action	Priority
Rigorous inspection of planning, conservation area and listed building consent applications. Improve allocated resources and knowledge of planning staff to ensure that proper consideration is given to these issues in applications.	Immediate

3.2 NEW DEVELOPMENT AND ALTERATION TO EXISTING BUILDINGS AND SITES

- 3.2.1 In the event of new development being allowed under the criteria set out above, the following recommendations are made regarding the quality and character of new development, scale, materials, and effect on views:

QUALITY OF NEW BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Any potential buildings constructed within the conservation area may not be of an equal quality and do not have the design attributes of the historic buildings that characterise the area, therefore cannot be shown to be preserving or enhancing its character.	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
In any new development within Birkenhead Park Conservation Area, there should be a strong presumption in favour of using traditional materials such as natural buff sandstone, red brick, plain clay tiles and slate. The choice of materials should be made with consideration of the sites immediate context.	
Any new buildings should match the quality of materials and level of architectural design of the original buildings, although simplification of the detailing may be acceptable. Where a particular style is used, such	

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as gothic, classical or Italianate, the building's design should be well-informed with appropriate design rules (such as proportion) correctly applied and carried through to all building details. It should not be deemed appropriate to simply apply copied details onto a standard building shell.

The use of contrasting modern materials of the highest quality may be appropriate if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they do not have an adverse effect on the setting of neighbouring existing buildings.

The use of imitation materials such as reconstituted stone or slate should not be permitted.

Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details including materials	Immediate

SCALE, MASSING, POSITION OR PROPORTIONS OF NEW BUILDINGS

Issue	Location
New buildings may detract from existing buildings in terms of their scale, massing, position or proportions	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
New buildings should generally be no higher than existing buildings within their immediate vicinity in terms of both their eaves and ridge heights.	
New buildings should respect the footprint sizes of existing neighbouring buildings and their relationships with each other (spacing), the road and their site boundaries.	
New buildings should match the floor-to-ceiling heights and general proportions of existing neighbouring historic buildings.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT ON KEY VIEWS

Issue	Location
New development or extensions to existing buildings may adversely affect key views within or the setting of the conservation area	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
Applications for planning permission for new development or significant extensions to existing buildings within the conservation area must demonstrate, where appropriate, that key views or the setting of the conservation area are not adversely affected.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

3.2.2 SPG 16 “Landscaping and New Development” and SPG 17 “Trees and Development” set out guidance landscaping throughout the Wirral. The following are matters which have been identified as particular issues in the Birkenhead Park Conservation Area by Donald Insall Associates:

LANDSCAPING ASSOCIATED WITH NEW OR EXISTING BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Poor or inappropriate landscaping around new buildings or extensions to existing buildings can detract from the character of the area	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
A detailed landscaping scheme should be submitted with any planning application for new buildings or significant alteration to existing sites	
The magnitude of necessary car parking should be considered alongside the level of occupation of any proposed building. Schemes for buildings that require an extent of car parking / number of cars that will detract from the character of the conservation area should be rejected.	
New buildings should preserve existing areas of mature trees and other landscaping. Where any trees are removed, they should be replaced with semi-mature trees of the same or more appropriate species (e.g. native).	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by full landscaping schemes.	Immediate

PROTECTION, RETENTION AND PROVISION OF HEDGES AND TREES	
Issue	Location
To maintain and enhance the character of the area attention needs to be paid to the retention of hedges as well as trees and their provision where appropriate	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
Hedges of native species or those appropriate to a historic landscape should be retained particularly in locations visible from public areas.	
Trees which contribute to the character of the conservation area should be retained and if needing to be removed for reasons of health, replaced by trees of appropriate species and maturity.	
Planting of further trees and hedges of native species should be promoted, particularly in areas devoid of such trees and hedges	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of hedges and trees within the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by full landscaping schemes showing the retention of trees and hedges and any replacement planting.	Immediate

- 3.2.3 Extensions to dwellings are covered by Policy HS 11 in the UDP in terms of house extensions. The policy covers matters relating to scale, materials, design details, dormers, set backs of extensions and retention of amenity space. The following are additional matters which have been identified as particular issues in the Birkenhead Park Conservation Area:

EXTENSIONS TO BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Extensions to buildings within the conservation area may detract from the significance of the individual building or the setting of adjoining buildings	Throughout
Policy Recommendations	
Extensions to those buildings that have been shown to contribute to the conservation area should only be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the additional structure has no adverse impact on the principal elevations of the parent structure. Extensions should be subservient to the parent building	
The choice of the materials of the extension should be considered so as to provide the minimum visual distraction from the original structure. Generally, it should be assumed that materials should match in terms of colour and texture. Traditional and/or natural materials such as sandstone, brick, timber and slate should be used unless an alternative can be adequately justified in terms of its visual effect on the conservation area. Where buildings are extended using traditional forms and materials, the subtle dating of the new element should be encouraged.	
Where a building has existing detrimental features, the opportunity should be taken to secure improvements as part of the new building work.	
There should be a strong presumption against extensions that adversely affect the balance of single structures or pairs or groups of buildings which had symmetry as one of their original predominant design characteristics.	
Dormers, if acceptable, should be confined to rear elevations (where the building does not face onto the park), situated below the ridge and of a scale and design appropriate to the building on which they are mounted.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications.	Immediate

- 3.2.4 In carrying out conversions or alterations to the fabric of buildings and boundaries the following good conservation practice should be applied:

ALTERATION TO HISTORIC FABRIC	
Issue	Location
Alterations to the historic fabric of a building can lead to the loss of some of its visual history and aesthetic value and can be detrimental to the visual setting of the area as a whole.	All pre Second World War buildings
Policy recommendations	
Where alterations can be justified to be necessary for the continued use of the building they should be prioritised towards the less significant areas of the building.	
Alterations should be chosen that require the least possible degree of permanent loss of or change to historic fabric. For instance, secondary glazing should be installed in preference to the wholesale replacement of existing windows.	

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Where replacement of existing original or early fabric is proved necessary it should always be done on a like-for-like basis where possible, not exchanging materials for modern alternatives.

Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Immediate

ALTERATION OR LOSS OF FEATURES ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Issue	Location
Alterations to or loss of specific features on historic buildings can be detrimental to the character of the individual building and the area as a whole.	All pre-WWII buildings
Policy recommendation	
Existing original or early features should be retained if at all possible. Where their replacement is necessary, it should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Any changes to primary features such as windows, doors, chimneys and boundary walls should be carefully considered by the local authority.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Immediate

INSTALLATION OF NEW FIXTURES

Issue	Location
The installation of new fixtures, such as aerials, satellite dishes, rooflights and ventilators, generally detracts from the character of the individual building and the area as a whole. Particular needs to be taken in the use and location of microgeneration equipment to minimise intrusion on the building or its setting	All buildings
Policy recommendation	
The installation of rooflights into existing roof slopes should not generally be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that they are not visible from public areas or adversely affect the setting of other buildings. Any rooflights installed should be of a 'conservation' type and fixed flush with the roof covering.	
Building owners should be strongly encouraged to only install satellite dishes and aerials in positions not visible from public areas or adversely affect the setting of other buildings.	
Building owners should be strongly encouraged not to install ventilators and other fixtures onto roof slopes or prominent elevations. Where they are absolutely necessary their visual impact should be minimised in terms of their location, number, size and design.	
Whilst microgeneration of energy is to be encouraged in terms of conservation principles, the impact on buildings and their settings within the conservation area should be minimised by careful positioning in parts and areas not visible from public locations	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Short term

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LOSS OR ALTERATION TO BOUNDARY WALLS / RAILINGS	
Issue	Location
The loss of or alteration to boundary walls, railings and gateposts would adversely affect the character of the conservation area.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
All existing historic or high quality replica boundary walls and gateposts should be retained. Alteration as part of any planning permission should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and when fully justified and mitigated.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Immediate

CHANGES OF USE	
Issue	Location
Changes of use of an existing building (subject to other policy) can result in a number of incremental changes which result in an adverse effect on the conservation area.	All buildings
Policy recommendation	
In considering applications for change of use, the council will require information on the design of refuse storage, waste pipes, ventilation fixtures, satellite dishes and aerials, any other fixtures, signage and car parking.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and insist that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS	
Issue	Location
Small scale alterations to buildings in the conservation area can lead to a gradual and progressive loss to its character. Article 4 directions can bring such alterations under control as matters requiring planning permission	All buildings
Policy recommendation	
Consider the need for article 4 directions in respect of windows and doors; roof coverings and roof features; colour and surface treatment of elevations; and boundary walls	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area, discuss the need for and extent of Article 4 directions, and determine the priority for them in relation to other conservation areas and the resources available	Short to mid- term

3.3 GENERAL GUIDANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

- 3.3.1 The following are recommendations relating to building condition, management of the public realm, highway matters, and involvement of local groups in securing improvements to the Conservation Area. They have major implications in terms of staff resource and finance but are set out as an agenda for future action.

CONDITION OF INDIVIDUAL SITES AND BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
The condition of an individual site or building can be detrimental to the appearance of the area and may set a poor example to other owners.	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
The local authority should serve Section 215 notices on owners of buildings or land whose condition adversely affects the amenity of the area, requiring them to remedy the detriments or face the necessary costs for the local authority to do so.	
Under section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, urgent works notices should be used to secure emergency or immediate repairs on any unoccupied building (or part of a building) within a conservation area where it adversely affects the character of the area. Where the building is unlisted a direction from the Secretary of State will be required.	
Prepare a guidance leaflet and issue to all residents within the conservation area explaining the benefits of good, regular maintenance and appropriate repair techniques.	
Action	Priority
Regularly visit the conservation area, noting any sites or buildings in a poor condition. Serve relevant notices where appropriate. Preparation of guidance leaflet.	Immediate to midterm

CONDITION / MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PUBLIC REALM AREAS	
Issue	Location
Parts of the existing public realm areas are insufficiently maintained and act as a poor example to conservation area residents.	Park and pavements / roads elsewhere
Policy recommendation	
The existing public realm areas should be maintained and where necessary replanted / resurfaced to a standard that befits the conservation area and enhances the setting of the existing buildings.	
Action	Priority
Prepare and agree a maintenance plan for the area, improving maintenance regimes and identifying necessary physical improvements.	Short-term

DETRIMENTAL CHANGES TO LISTED BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
There have in the past been a number of detrimental changes to listed buildings, such as insertion of replacement windows and changes to boundary walls and roof coverings. These are not only detrimental to the appearance of the individual buildings and their immediate setting, but they are also setting a poor precedent to	Listed buildings

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other building owners.	
Policy recommendation	
Owners of listed buildings should be notified of unauthorised changes to their buildings. Where evidence is available, (e.g. in the form of dated photographs) enforcement should be taken to ensure the reinstatement of the original fabric unless retrospective consent can be given.	
Action	Priority
Carry out a survey of all buildings, photographing them and noting any changes. Notify building owners of unauthorised changes and take necessary enforcement action. Where changes are unenforceable and not attributed to the current owners, the potential for grant-funded reinstatement should be investigated.	Short to mid-term.

DETRIMENTAL CHANGES TO UNLISTED BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
There are a number of instances of detrimental changes to un-listed buildings, such as insertion of replacement windows and changes to chimneys, boundary walls and roof coverings. These are not only detrimental to the appearance of the individual buildings and their immediate setting, but they are also setting a poor precedent to other building owners.	Un-listed buildings which contribute to the conservation area
Policy recommendation	
Through example and encouragement promote reinstatement of historic features, consider the requirement for an Article 4 Direction and / or local listing.	
Action	Priority
A guidance leaflet should be issued explaining the benefits of reinstatement works.	Mid-term

CHANGES TO FABRIC OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
The character of unlisted building may be threatened by future changes to historic fabric.	Un-listed buildings which contribute to the conservation area
Policy recommendation	
Through example, encouragement and extended control, promote good conservation practice for older buildings and sympathetic change to more recent buildings, whether or not they are specifically listed.	
Action	Priority
Put in place article 4 directions to protect unlisted features of interest. A guidance leaflet should be issued explaining the benefits of retaining historic fabric.	Short to mid-term

HIGHWAYS SURFACES, INSTALLATIONS, MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE	
Issue	Location
Many highways installations such as bus stops and railings are visually intrusive and detrimental to its character and appearance. The choice of highways surfaces and markings are often inappropriate for a landscape / area of this significance. Future highways features, such as speed control or safety measures may also be visually obtrusive and of an inappropriate design / materials.	Roads and pavements
Policy recommendations	
Reconsider all existing surfaces, signage, highways features and markings and make necessary improvements to enhance the character of the area, whilst maintaining / enhancing the safety of all park /	

area users.	
Ensure that all future highways features, such as speed control measures, railings etc are proven to be necessary and are of an appropriate design and constructed of appropriate materials.	
Action	Priority
Carry out an assessment of existing surfaces, signage, highways features and markings in terms of their impact on the character of the area. Obtain advice on appropriate alternatives (e.g. narrower lines etc).	Mid-term

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND CONTRIBUTION	
Issue	Location
Residents are often inadequately aware of the purpose of a conservation area, the benefits designation may have to them and how they may influence its future. The skills and expertise of local residents groups, individuals or major landowners may be underutilised.	-
Policy recommendations	
Make conservation area information readily available to residents, using for instance existing notice boards to publicise boundaries and making appraisals / managements available in local libraries (or other well used public buildings) / on the internet.	
Encourage the involvement of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee for the area to help preserve its special character and to instigate enhancements where appropriate. Residents groups may be particularly useful in the recording of the area in terms of its present day character and historical development.	
Encourage dialogue between local residents groups and major landowners to promote enhancement and maintenance works within the conservation area.	
Action	Priority
Dialogue between local authority, residents groups and major landowners	Immediate

4.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

4.1 REINSTATEMENT OF LOST FEATURES AND REPAIRS

- 4.1.1 The current programme of reinstatement of lost features and the repair of historic structures should continue beyond the existing programme. A budget should be set aside to allow for a regular, probably small scale, programme to be continued. The priorities for works should be regularly assessed, occurring to degree of urgency and other projects in the park. This programme of works will help to ensure the longevity and long-term use and vitality of the park. The grade I listed status and international importance of the park should be recognised in the allocation of budgets for such works.

4.2 GENERAL PUBLIC REALM

- 4.2.1 There are great benefits to carrying out high quality public realm works as they have help to re-unify the park visually and they are often the elements most experienced by visitors. The recent works, such as the reinstatement

and repair of railings around the perimeter, have helped to provide a better impression of the park to people passing by and therefore entice in visitors. It would also hope to create a positive impression on neighbouring buildings owners, showing that the area is improving and inspiring them to carry out positive works themselves.

4.3 SPECIFIC PROJECT AREAS, POSSIBLE GRANTS AND OTHER MANAGEMENT TOOLS

- 4.3.1 Once the initial framework is in place to protect the conservation area, some of the most beneficial improvements often come about by gradual processes led by local residents. This could be brought about by an existing or newly set up group with assistance and advice provided by the council. The Friends of Birkenhead Park have played an important role in the conservation and restoration of the area over the past 30 years and their involvement should be further encouraged and supported. Similarly, the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee should continue their role in the monitoring of conservation issues and the recommendation of further improvements.
- 4.3.2 The local authority can also serve Section 215 notices on owners of buildings or land whose condition adversely affects the amenity of the area (not solely conservation areas), ordering them to clean it up or face the necessary costs for the local authority to do so. This action should be taken in the case of 72 Park Road South, which has litter strewn over much of its land.
- 4.3.3 Set up and agreed jointly by the council and a group of local residents, there should be a mechanism for monitoring change. Changes to the area are inevitable and may not be negative if well managed. Photographic surveys should be kept of buildings and structures by the council and updated ever 5 years. There should be an agreed framework for updating the Conservation Area Management Plan (usually every 5 years) and the Appraisal (possibly every 10 years), depending on factors such as physical changes within the area (e.g. development) and factors that have a knock-on effect on the functioning of the area such as traffic and the economy. It may be necessary to monitor the condition of the most 'at-risk' of buildings to ensure that the necessary enforcement action can be taken before the condition deteriorates irreparably.
- 4.3.4 Works may be at least part funded by, for instance, PSICA (Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas) grants. Most other necessary works (discussed in the chapter below) relate less to the conservation of buildings and more to the landscaping and setting of the area. Other government or lottery grants are often available for works to shared areas and community buildings. Landfill Tax grants may be available to projects in Birkenhead Park.
- 4.3.5 A priority for future funding and efforts should be in the reinstatement of railings and gateposts. There should be a long-term move towards the

complete reinstatement of railings and gateposts around the perimeter of the conservation area and the outer edge of Park Drive. There should be focus towards obtaining consistency of colour and design based as closely as possible on what would have originally existed. Further information is included in appendix G to this document.

5.0 ISSUES AND POLICIES

5.1 ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC BUILDING FABRIC

- 5.1.1 Issue: Alterations to the historic fabric of a building can lead to the loss of some of its visual history and aesthetic value and can be detrimental to the visual setting of the park as a whole.

Policy: Where alterations can be justified to be necessary for the continued use of the building they should be prioritised towards the less significant areas of the building. However, in the case of most of the buildings within the conservation area, elevations are of equal prominence therefore finding a satisfactory solution is likely to be problematic. The effect on long-ranging views across the park should be assessed. Alterations should be chosen that require the least possible degree of permanent loss of or change to historic fabric. For instance, secondary glazing should be installed in preference to the wholesale replacement of existing windows. Where replacement of existing fabric is necessary it should always be done on a like-for-like basis where possible, not exchanging materials for modern alternatives. The use of UPVC, aluminium or stained timber windows and doors is not likely to be appropriate to historic buildings in the conservation area. Some limited insertion of rooflights into buildings may be appropriate it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they are not highly visible. This may exclude the higher buildings which feature in views across the park. Conservation rooflights, fitted flush to the surface of the roof covering should always be used. The replacement of existing slate or plain clay tile roof coverings in artificial alternatives, concrete tiles or pantiles will not be permitted. The loss or alteration to sandstone boundary walls will not generally be acceptable and where it is justified, it will need to be mitigated by other landscaping works. In granting applications for change of use, the council should impose conditions of the design of refuse storage, waste pipes, satellite dishes, signage and car parking and should consider the degree of alteration to internal building fabric and features as well as the more obvious building exterior.

5.2 NEW BUILDINGS

- 5.2.1 PPG15 encourages ‘controlled and positive management of change’ of historic areas with policies so that the area remains prosperous but retains its special interest. The text goes on to encourage imaginative, high quality design in opportunity gap sites that make no positive contribution to the area; advising that buildings should not imitate earlier styles but be designed to respect their context.

5.3 SPECIFIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

5.3.1 Issue: Many of the buildings within the conservation area highlighted as being critical to its character have had particularly poor quality repairs, potentially accelerating the natural decay in their materials, as well as having had detrimental alterations such as replacement windows. These buildings are vital to the character of the area and their current condition is a poor precedent to other building owners. These buildings include and their key issues include:

- Grand Entrance Lodges – ground floor windows boarded over
- Royden House – satellite dishes, waste pipes and fixings such as signage
- Norman Lodge – obtrusive timber fence, too screened by planting, alterations to windows
- Gothic Lodge - obtrusive timber fence, poor repairs
- 20-30 Park Road South – uPVC windows, satellite dishes, loss of front boundaries, painting of stone dressings, loss of group unity
- 8 Ashville Road – wide block-paved driveway

Policy: Building owners should be written to, explaining the nature of any issues that are detrimental to their buildings character and advising broadly of suitable replacements or repairs. In the case of listed buildings where the previous condition was known (e.g. evidenced in dated photographs) action could be taken with repairs notices if the contents of the aforementioned letter are not heeded.

5.3.2 Issue: Whilst the planting of hedges around the boundaries of gardens is generally appropriate and to be encouraged, there are a few issues. Dense planting may be a significant obstacle to the maintenance of structure and most notably the painting of railings. Also, if planting is allowed to become overgrown, it may hide historic buildings which are key to the visual setting of the park. This has happened in the case of both of the Norman Lodges, which are barely visible from the road.

Policy: Include this information within an advisory leaflet and write building owners where this is a particular issue.

5.4 PUBLIC REALM ISSUES

5.4.1 Issue: Standard requirements for Highways maintenance and installations are generally applied to the park, not respecting or understanding its international significance.

Policy: Ensure that all parties working on the fabric appreciate the significance of the area and that any installations are approved by a person experienced in the care of historic environments. The local authority's Highways department should read and sign up to this document prior to its adoption.

- 5.4.2 Issue: Despite recent improvements to the maintenance of the park, the condition of some areas, notably around listed structure, remains inferior to what should be expected of a grade I listed park. The existence of graffiti and weeds around the areas of setts near the lodges / kerbstones around the park are primary issues.

Policy: The existing maintenance plan should be regularly reassessed and adequate funding set aside for implementation of such works. The grade I listed status and international renown of the park must always be considered when allocating budgets for such projects. Residents should be encouraged to help in the removal of weeds and graffiti in and around their homes. Guidance should be made available on the removal of graffiti (methods and recommended contractors). Park features, such as the Jackson Memorial, should be restored and protected from further vandalism by, for instance, installing monitoring devices.



(Left) Weeds growing through paving adjacent to the Norman lodge; (right) graffiti and damage to the Jackson Memorial.

- 5.4.3 Issue: As visitor numbers continue to increase car parking is becoming more significantly detrimental to the appearance of the park. Similarly traffic noise and pedestrian safety may become an issue.

Policy: An analysis report should be prepared considering all aspects of this issue and proposing sensitive recommendations. This matter should be regularly assessed (for instance in conjunction with the review of this document) and the necessary action taken. Other factors such as ease of public access and the visual impact of traffic calming or dedicated parking areas should be weighed-up.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOUNDARY AMENDMENTS AND PROVISION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

6.1 BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

- 6.1.1 The current boundary follows the extent of the original park development and still covers the vast majority of buildings of a high level of interest within the immediate area. The boundary is clearly defined by Park Road, North, East, South and West. It is therefore recommended that the boundary does not change.

6.2 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

- 6.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allows building owners to carry out a range of minor developments without planning consent subject to limits and conditions. These ‘permitted development’ rights are automatically limited within conservation areas: restrictions include the addition of dormer windows, various types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway and the reduction in the size of extensions.

- 6.2.2 Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order enables local authorities to withdraw some specified permitted development rights on buildings or land, such as removal of a chimney, changes around the front boundary of a building, construction of porches, painting of houses or removal of architectural features such as windows and doors. Local authorities must notify local people and take account of their opinions before confirming an Article 4 direction and in certain instances obtain approval from the Secretary of State.

- 6.2.3 Article 4 directions are not just an automatic consequence of conservation area designation, but should derive from a careful assessment of what is of special interest within an area and should be preserved. Permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where there is evidence to prove that such development would damage the character of a conservation area and is currently taking place.

- 6.2.4 In the case of Birkenhead Park, the following items have been identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal part of this document as being important to the character of the area and therefore it is suggested that Article 4 directions are assigned to all category A and B buildings protect them from loss or change without consent:

- Windows
- Doors
- Roof coverings
- Front boundary walls and railings to all public roads and paths.
- Solar Panels
- Microgeneration