



Area Management Plan
May 2012

Prescot town centre conservation area



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Foreword: The Conservation Area Management Plan should be read in junction with the following documents:

- The Prescott Conservation Area Appraisal
- The Knowsley Unitary Development Plan (2006)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- The Knowsley Design SPD

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Part 1

1. Introduction

The Prescot Conservation Area Management Plan underpins work already undertaken in the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal, drafted early 2012. The Conservation Area Management Plan will be subject to full public consultation and will be a material planning consideration once adopted. The Conservation Area Management Plan in conjunction with Character Appraisal provides:

- A clear analysis of the special interest of the Conservation Area, including details of its historical development, plan form and buildings.
- A summary of its special character.
- The identification of both positive and negative features.
- The basis for the proactive management of the special interest of the Conservation Area through planning policy, decisions and enforcement.
- The fulfilment of the Council's statutory duty in regard to s.71 and s.72 of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- An illustration as to how the Council will work to give full regard to the historic environment in accordance with The National Planning Policy Framework (March 28 2012).
- Management of Prescot conservation area through local policy in the Knowsley UDP 2010 and the Local Development Framework currently under preparation.
- A clear illustration of the Council's commitment to our partners for the active management of the Conservation Area and the proactive use of external funding for conservation area betterment.

The Management Plan establishes:

- A plan for the future management of the Prescot Conservation Area through funding streams including the Townscape Heritage Initiative.
- A clear indication of the Council's commitment to its partners for the future implementation of the THI.



1.1 The Conservation Area

Building Conservation Value and Historical Context

Prescot is one of the oldest settlements in Merseyside and is situated within the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley. It is believed that an early Christian church was established here in the 7th Century, as evidenced by the circular churchyard which may confirm a Saxon foundation. However, documentary evidence for the settlement does not start until the late 12th Century. In medieval times, Prescot was a thriving market town and the ecclesiastical centre of a large parish covering much of south west Lancashire. In the 18th and 19th Century the area became renowned for the skill of its clock, watch and tool makers, a nationally important local industry which continued until the Americans and Swiss took over from about 1875 onwards. A few workshops associated with the industry still remain (of which two are listed and lie within the Conservation Area), although at one time, in the mid-19th Century, they could be found throughout the town. Coal mining and pottery were also significant, the coal being dug from various sites in the immediate vicinity of the town.

The town retains a legacy of high quality Georgian and Victorian buildings, the best preserved of which can be found in Vicarage Place, Derby Street and High Street. Surprisingly, only 21 of them are statutorily listed, including several groups of cottages. The principal listed building is St Mary's Church, listed grade I and dating mostly to the early 17th Century, when it was substantially rebuilt. Other notable buildings include Prescot Museum, No. 34 Church Street, a substantial and very prominent red brick Georgian house, and the Roman Catholic Church of our Lady immaculate and St Joseph in Vicarage Place. This was built in 1856-7 to the designs of J Hansom, and forms a group with other listed houses in Vicarage Place. Other listed buildings include an early 19th Century purpose-built office (No. 2 Derby Street) and

West End House, No.54 Derby Street, built as a dower house to the adjoining Knowsley Estate. No.30 Eccleston Street is the only obviously timber framed building in the Conservation Area with a highly decorative timber framed gable above a modern shop front. No. 9 Market Place and No. 17 Atherton Street are both late 18th or early 19th Century in date and are unusual in that their fenestration provides evidence of watch-making workshops.

Apart from these listed buildings, there are a number of unlisted buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. These largely date to between the mid 18th Century and the early 20th Century, although there are also some Art Deco buildings, most notably in Eccleston Street, of which the former cinema (dated 1922) is the largest and most prominent, although it appears to have been significantly altered as part of the Prescot Centre project.

The majority of the buildings are two or three storey houses, built in a terraced form although the Conservation Area does also include a number of prestigious detached brick houses dating to the Georgian period. Atherton Street contains a long row of late 18th Century houses, of which only one (No.17) is listed. There are further groups of unlisted but 'positive' historic buildings, mainly in residential uses, throughout the Conservation Area with some notable late Victorian villas in West Street. Mixed in with the residential properties are a number of public houses and churches, and whilst the town was once heavily industrialised, little remains (at least within the Conservation Area) to remind the onlooker of this fact. Many of the buildings in the two main streets (Eccleston Street and High Street) were built as residences but have since been converted into ground floor shops, so they provide both streets with a largely domestic sense of scale. However, they are marred by the poor quality of the modern shop fronts.

In addition to these positive historic buildings, there are a number of very large mid to late 20th Century structures in the Conservation Area, the most visible being the blocks of 1960s flats in Sewell Street (Greenall Court). A large care home and further blocks of flats can also be seen to the north of High Street, their scale and large footprint being somewhat out of character with the area. Some of these are proposed to be removed from the Conservation Area (see 3.2 Issues below).

2. The issues

In the middle of the 20th Century, Prescot suffered from the usual effects of post-war clearances and redevelopment. The creation of large areas of surface car parking and the construction of the Prescot Shopping Centre have eroded parts of the medieval street layout and the cohesiveness of the historic townscape which had remained relatively unaltered until this time. In the late 1980s, the largest local employer, the BICC factory, closed, although manufacturing continued on a much smaller site. The Cables Retail Park was built in the 1990s on the former factory site, including a large new Tesco's Supermarket. Although within walking distance of the shops in Eccleston Street, the two shopping areas are separated by changes in level and poor pedestrian connectivity.

In addition, traffic management schemes now prevent vehicles from passing through the town centre and despite the provision of a landscaped surface car park with adjoining bus stops between Eccleston Street and Church Street, and the enhancement of the area around St Mary's Church with well detailed hard and soft landscaping, the flow of shoppers into the town has incrementally fallen. This has resulted in a number of shop closures and a diminution in the quality of the

remaining shops. Buildings have not been maintained and there is evidence for vacant premises at both ground and above ground floor levels. This has resulted in a number of key historic buildings which are considered to be at risk, as well as a number of sites where redevelopment would be welcome. Dominant advertising hoardings have been allowed to blight the streetscape of the Conservation Area in several locations.

Despite past investment in the Church Street/St Mary's Church area, where high quality paving and street furniture have been installed, much still needs to be done to improve the quality of the public realm across the whole of the Conservation Area. New street surfaces, street furniture (signage, litter bins, seating, etc) and street lighting would all be welcome, and should aim to provide a sense of place which is currently lacking.

Whilst the listed buildings are protected from unsympathetic alterations, the unlisted family properties have been subject to a number of unsympathetic changes allowed under permitted development rights. The use of an Article 4 Direction to control these changes is recommended later in this chapter.



In addition, some of the positive buildings should be recognized as being of particular local significance, and the creation of a new Local List for the Conservation Area is also recommended. Changes are needed to the Conservation Area boundary to more adequately reflect the area of special architectural or historic interest.

In summary, the principal issues currently affecting the Conservation Area are:

- Economic decline and poor local employment opportunities.
- The need to provide more connectivity between the Conservation Area and the Cables Retail Park, and to improve pedestrian flows through the Conservation Area in general.
- The poor condition of the buildings and shop fronts in the main commercial core, centred on Ecclestone Street.
- Vacant upper floor space.
- Size of Shop units.
- Some important 'Buildings at Risk' which need urgent attention.
- A number of empty sites, or sites where existing buildings make a negative contribution.
- Prominent advertising hoardings in several locations.
- Improvements to the public realm are needed, continuing the high quality of the work already achieved in the Church Street area.
- Unsympathetic alterations to unlisted family dwellings.
- There is currently no Local List for the Conservation Area which would recognise the existing significance to some of the buildings.
- Changes are needed to the existing Conservation Area boundary.

3. Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the Prescot Conservation Area Management Plan are interlinked with the delivery of the Prescot Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative. Both the Conservation Area Management Plan and the Prescot THI are measures that will lead to the betterment of Prescot Town. The management plan set out the guidance and policy and proposed future actions. Whilst the THI is the funding mechanism for partnership working to tackle a range of issues which are social, economic and regenerative.



4. Planning policies

The Government has made significant changes to the planning process with planning guidance and policy being simplified and local planning decisions being made at a local level. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides national guidance on what a local authority is expected to deliver in the Local Plan. At the time of writing it has been announced that the National Planning Policy Framework will be available/published March 28th 2012. The NPPF supersedes all previous planning policy guidance and planning policy statements. The NPPF relies on the Local Plan produced by each local authority to reflect the local issues pertinent to each authority. The Local Plan has a core strategy and a suite of documents which will relate to the development and the management of each authorities built environment.

The Government's objective is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

To achieve this, the Government's objectives for planning for the historic environment are to:

- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- Contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by capturing evidence from the historic environment and making this publicly available, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

To achieve this, the Government's objectives for planning for the historic environment are for Local Authorities to take into account:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The policies which relate to Prescot Conservation Area are included in the Appendix 1.



5. Planning measures

5.1 Statutory Powers

In addition to offering financial assistance, there exists an equal need to address the use of various powers available under the Planning Acts. The principal powers available to a Local Planning Authority in dealing with issues affecting the historic environment and its proactive approach include:

- Amenity of Land Notice
- Urgent Works Notice (Listed Buildings)
- Urgent Works Notice (Unlisted Buildings)
- Repairs Notice
- Compulsory Purchase Order
- Planning Enforcement Notice
- Conservation area Enforcement Notice
- Listed Building Enforcement Notice

See Appendix 2 for full detail of statutory powers.

5.2 Historic Buildings Trusts

Building Preservation Trusts (BPT) are approached in instances where a building has remained vacant for a long period of time and where the building is not attractive to buyers on the open market. Any historic building that has fallen into obsolescence and has no foreseeable value for the open market may benefit from Building Preservation Trust intervention. The use of statutory powers leading to compulsory purchase must be seen as a matter of last resort. However, in such cases, the Council has the option to enter into a back-to-back agreement with a building preservation trust, where the property is sold for a nominal fee to the Building Preservation Trust. The BPT manages works required to consolidate the building and to ensure that the acquired property is returned to productive re-use.

Historic building trusts may also be appropriate partners to address the problems of buildings-at-risk before formal action becomes necessary. Preservation Trusts currently active in the North include:

- The Heritage Trust for the NW.
- The Merseyside Building Preservation Trust



- Heritage Works Building preservation Trust (the former Ancoats BPT)

Building Preservation Trusts may be approached to consider any historic building in the Prescott Conservation Area that is not viable for market forces. However, these Trusts can be oversubscribed with potential projects and may not choose to take on a building but they may offer advice.

5.3 Shopfront Guidance

The Council will draft a guidance document to support applications for shop front premises and replacement shop fronts. The shop front guidance will be an accompaniment to the Prescott Conservation Area Management Plan and will advise applicants of appropriate principles of shop front design. The guidance will explain where and when planning permission or listed building consent is required. It will explain the importance of the streetscape and how the building that incorporates the shop premises should relate to the streetscape and its setting. Advice will be given on security, lighting, advertisements, signage and canopies.

The guidance will direct the applicant to related national guidance and exemplar case studies. The guidance will incorporate contact details for further information.

5.4 Article 4 Directions

Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended, permitted development rights can be limited in conservation areas through the imposition of an Article 4 Direction. This would control minor changes to unlisted buildings used as single dwellings, such as the insertion of new windows or front doors, changes to the roof, the addition of a porch, painting or rendering principal elevations, the removal of part of a chimney or front boundary, and the creation of a car parking hard standing in the front garden.

Unlisted buildings which are used as flats, or commercial buildings, have fewer permitted development rights although painting and the loss of front boundaries for car parking are not permitted development so can also be controlled by an Article 4 Direction, if the Local Planning Authority perceive these changes as a threat to the special interest of the Conservation Area. This also means that the Council can already control changes such as the replacement of windows or the changing of roof materials (for instance, from natural slate to concrete tile) on these types of unlisted buildings. Commercial properties, such as those along Eccleston Street and High Street, are already subject to a degree of control which needs to be consistently applied.

The scope for an Article 4 Direction in the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area is considerable and would encourage property owners to use traditional materials and details when altering or repairing buildings. Residential properties in West Street, Derby Street, Atherton Street, Eccleston Street (east end), Warrington Street and High Street will be protected from unsympathetic changes and incrementally it is hoped will be restored to their original appearance. It is worth noting that many of the properties in West Street remain relatively unaltered so an Article 4 Direction will simply ensure the survival of existing historic features. It is suggested that the Article 4 Direction covers the whole Conservation Area, rather than individual buildings, as this ensures that if a building is converted into use as a family dwelling, it is automatically protected. If an Article 4 direction is actioned it will be subject to statutory consultation and the owners of all affected properties will be able to comment. A full photographic survey will be needed when the Article 4 Direction is served to record materials and details on the buildings on the day on which the Direction comes into force, for monitoring and enforcement purposes.

5.5 Development Management

Consideration of Article 4 Directions illustrates the extent to which development controls are already available where buildings are not single dwellings. It is important, therefore, that development management standards are reviewed to ensure that they are applied consistently to non-dwellings and to buildings subject to an Article 4 Direction. This is particularly the case in the interpretation of what constitutes material change and is, therefore, subject to planning permission.

The National Planning Policy Framework and the Conservation Area Appraisal (and the Local Plan) provide a new policy context for development management decisions. The Local Planning Authority will use this policy framework (and forthcoming documents such as the Shopfront Guide) to ensure that new development of any type or scale maintains or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

5.6 Enforcement, urgent works and amenity notices

The Council has experience of using enforcement, urgent works and amenity notices, and is fully prepared to use them where co-operation cannot be secured by other means. In addition to the photographic record which has already been undertaken as part of the Character Appraisal, the extension of the detailed photographic survey mentioned above to all buildings within the Conservation Area would be useful to ensure a 'baseline' is established against which changes can be monitored.

At present, the indications are that there is a growing willingness to co-operate with the aims of the THI on the part of many owners and occupiers of target buildings as it forms an element of the wider regeneration of Prescot. Of course, the ultimate sanction of the various powers should be held in reserve as a means to tackle owners where they fail to

engage with the THI. This will assist in ensuring the scheme's timely delivery, most especially of projects identified as being drivers of change as a result of their high or medium priority. The obstacles to progress are more related to questions of viability and confidence - issues which the THI scheme is designed to address.

6. A framework for design and maintenance standards

With the commitment to producing a Conservation Area Management Plan, comes recognition that design standards in the implementation of development have not always been given a high priority. However, there are several complementary initiatives under development that will raise the level of design awareness. There will be a number of key elements to ensure the continued growth in the appreciation of good design standards having a clear role in the regeneration of Prescot. These include:

- The adoption of general principles to guide decision-making and the implementation of THI funded works.
- Ensuring maintenance becomes an ongoing part of historic property ownership within the Prescot Conservation Area.
- The continuation of a Heritage Champion role at Cabinet level from within Council members.
- The establishment of a broad partnership representing a wide range of stakeholders with interest in Prescot's historic environment.

- Establishment of a Borough-wide Street scene Design Group, as the multi-disciplinary officer group for the public realm.

It is crucial that the grant aided works of conservation and conversion act as exemplars to other projects in order to illustrate the value of the approach and the proper use of public investment. Their excellence will need to be guided through well known principles as advocated by BS 7913:1998 '**Guide to the principles of building conservation**' and have regard to all English Heritage guidance including '*General principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment*'.

With regard to the public realm, there is a clear opportunity to expand the successful work that has been undertaken in Church Street. Currently works are being proposed for Leyland Street. However, the lesson has been learnt in Eccleston Street that the quality of improvement schemes relies as much on future maintenance as it does on initial capital outlay.



It is important to recognise that successful public realm schemes require a multi-disciplinary approach and it is recommended that a Borough-wide, Streetscene, Design Group is established to co-ordinate issues such as heritage, access, safety, practicality and maintenance. Such a group should be informed by:

- English Heritage's Streets for All initiative, which published a specific volume for the North West region in 2005 (www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/streets-for-all-north-west).
- The Historic Towns Forum (www.hstorictownsforum.org), which has published widely on traffic management including the Manual for Historic Streets (2008).
- PRIAN - the Public Realm Information and Advice Network (www.publicrealm.info)
- Further guidance provided by the Design Council (CABE) and the Urban Design Group.

7. Education

The decline of a conservation area is usually initiated by a series of relatively minor alterations that lead on to poor development and lack of maintenance. To restrain this circle of decline the Council and key partners will advise on general maintenance for historic buildings and on general good housekeeping and building maintenance works. This pre-empts much larger and costly repairs works being required at a later date. Simple repairs such as repairing and clearance of gutters can prevent damp and other water ingress problems.



8. Community and consultation engagement

The Council recognises that public involvement is the key to a self-sustaining historic environment. The Council offers advice on appropriate works in the conservation area in relation to new development and proposed changes to heritage assets. The Council seeks public consultation on its strategies, frameworks and supplementary documents. The Council recognises the role that Knowsley residents play in the protection and management of the historic environment. Friends groups, historic societies and amenity groups play a vital and valued role in the enhancement of the historic environment. The Council seeks to improve those linkages and strengthening joint working partnerships. Integral to this will be the ongoing involvement of stakeholders through the THI partnership. See Part 2 for further details also the Knowsley Community Strategy.



9. Visitor economy / destination marketing

Prescot already has the potential to be Knowsley's premier day visitor destination, and is highlighted in the Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy strategy as a priority area for investment in the city region. Prescot's heritage is unique from its earliest settlement it has been a town to visit and pass through on to other locations. From the days of the stage coach to the rail systems and motorways links Prescot is a vital artery on the transport network. The town has some unique heritage industrial, social and in the built environment.

Prescot is home to Knowsley Safari Park, which attracts in the region of 500,000 visitors and Spaceworld, a children's soft play centre welcomes a further 150,000 visitors to the town each year. Knowsley Hall is one of the most exclusive venues in the region and The Chill Out Spa, located in the grounds of Knowsley Hall is one of the most prestigious day spas in the country.

The Visitor Economy Network, a public / private sector group meets regularly to maximise the value of the visitor economy and to instigate initiatives to encourage growth in the sector. Members include all the major tourist attractions in the Borough, hotels, Knowsley Council officers, elected members and the Knowsley Chamber. The group recognises the importance of Prescot and a separate focus group for Prescot has evolved.



10. Putting the Management Plan into practice

Several of the actions arising from this Conservation Area Management Plan are already underway as part of the commitment of the Council and its partners to the regeneration of Prescott. The actions can be summarised within Table 1:

CAMP Aim 1: Ensure consistent decision making across Council services, which have regard to the significance of the town's historic environment			
Action	Achieved through	Main responsibility	Timeframe
Securing quality development	Development Management	Development Management & Heritage Champion	Ongoing
Proactive enforcement	Statutory powers	Development Management & Conservation Officer	Ongoing
Promoting regeneration	Prescot Strategy and THI Action Plan	Conservation Officer & Town Centre Manager	Ongoing
Appoint Heritage Champion	Support from HELM	Knowsley Council - Corporate	2012
Guidance SPGs	Local Development Plan	Planning Policy	2012 to 2014
CAMP Aim 2: Offer grant assistance to support the repair, architectural reinstatement and reuse of historic buildings			
Action	Achieved through	Main responsibility	Timeframe
Deliver THI programme	THI Action Plan	Knowsley Council & THI Partnership	2012 to 2017
Ensure relevance of Action Plan	Annual Review of progress	THI Partnership & THI Project Officer	2012 to 2017
Maintain Conservation Values	National guidance, THI Action Plan, Knowsley Strategy	THI Project Manager & Conservation Officer	Ongoing

CAMP Aim 3: Increase the awareness and understanding by the local community and key stakeholders of the value and role of the historic environment in the regeneration of the town

Action	Achieved through	Main responsibility	Timeframe
Establish Prescott THI Partnership	Stakeholders	Knowsley Council Project Team & THI Project Officer	2012
Maintain 'Project Champion'	Appointment of a lead officer	Head of Regeneration	2012 to 2017
Increase access to historic buildings	Establish Open Heritage Weekend	THI Project Officer & Conservation Officer	2012

CAMP Aim 4: Work with other key stakeholders to encourage complementary initiatives for both physical enhancement and the positive promotion of the town as an attractive place to work, live and visit

Action	Achieved through	Main responsibility	Timeframe
Education & Training	Detailed programme of community activities	Knowsley Council Regeneration Team and Conservation Officer	2012 to 2017
Establish Streetscene Design Group	Coordinated action	Highways Team and Conservation Officer	2012
Public realm improvements	Public Realm Guidance	Streetscene Design Group	2012 onwards
Improving Urban Form / Dereliction	Prescot Strategy, Planning/Design Briefs	Knowsley Council Regeneration Team and Conservation Officer	2013 onwards
Protection of Trees	Preparing guidance on care and succession	Knowsley Council Arboriculturalists & Conservation Officer	2012 onwards

Table 1. Conservation Area Management Plan - Key Actions

It will be an important part of the THI Project Officer's role, and that of the partnership, to ensure that the objectives of the THI are represented on the agenda of other initiatives in the regeneration of the town centre. The Project Officer will lead the monitoring and review of the Conservation Area Management Plan with the THI Partnership on an annual basis.

Although this management plan suggests that a greater priority is given to the historic environment in Council decision making, it is not expected that the plan will require any significant changes to existing resources and practices once the supporting Project Officer has been recruited, as this document largely formalises existing practices.

11. Commitment to the Management Plan

This document was considered in detail by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting held on the 31st May 2012. The recommendations were to:

- Adopt the Conservation Area Management Plan and support its proactive implementation throughout the lifetime of the THI and beyond.
- Endorse the Conservation Area Management Plan as a companion document to the Prescot Conservation Area Appraisal, to ensure that both have equal status as material considerations in planning decision-making.
- Endorse the establishment of the partnership, with representation from interested stakeholders and consultation with amenity groups.
- Commit the Council to using the full range of planning powers to ensure proper management of the conservation area.
- Support the monitoring and review of the Conservation Area Management Plan by the THI Partnership on a regular basis.
- Undertake to support the review of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan at 5 year intervals.

The minute of the Cabinet's consideration and decision will be provided.

The Conservation Area Management Plan provides the basis for the proper management and implementation of the THI scheme. It will need to be monitored regularly and reviewed annually to ensure its remains relevant and is protecting the historic environment for future generations.



12. Adoption of the Conservation Area Management Plan

The process the adopting the Prescott Conservation Area Management plan is identified as:

- i. Cabinet approval of consultation draft on 11 April 2012
- ii. Consultation on the Management Plan, in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and relevant national regulations between 16 April 2012 and 11 May 2012
- iii. Preparation of a revised Management Plan, taking into account results of the consultation on 14 May 2012 to the 18 May 2012
- iv. Cabinet approval to adopt the Management Plan as a material consideration in planning application on 2 April 2012
- v. Formal notices issued in the press and adopted on 31 May 2012



Part 2

13. Management of Prescott Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

Through the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) make grants that help communities to regenerate conservation areas displaying particular social and economic need throughout the United Kingdom (except the Channel Islands and Isle of Man). It encourages partnerships to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic properties within those areas, and improve the quality of life for all those who live, work or visit there.

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is a two stage programme over a five year project duration. Knowsley Council submitted a Stage 1 Prescott Town Centre, Townscape Heritage Initiative in November 2010 and was successful in obtaining a development grant to undertake the preparation and development work required to submit a Stage 2 application. The Prescott Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative is based on the

existing Prescott Conservation Area. At the time of writing the Prescott Conservation Area Management Plan, the Stage 2 Prescott Town Centre, Townscape Heritage Initiative is being prepared with the aim of a summer 2012 submission.

The Prescott Town Centre, Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) key themes are to regenerate the area of Eccleston Street, Market Place, Sewell Street and the conservation area as a whole. Increasing the economic activity within the target area and strengthening the links between the town centre and edge of town retail park. This will be achieved through a combination of repairs, reinstatement of historic features and the conversion of properties. The conversion of the upper floors of retail premises into new uses to support office use and accommodation. These proposals together with a programme of enhancement works to the public realm will enable self sustaining and mixed use of buildings within a high quality environment.



The Townscape Heritage Initiative will bring economic and environmental renewal to Prescot thorough heritage led regeneration. It will promote the preservation and enhancement of the historic buildings and public spaces. Create a high quality, attractive environment to encourage investment, new enterprise and employment opportunities. The THI will engage with the community and raise awareness of Prescot's historic environment. The project will schedule activities to increase the existing heritage values of the Prescot community by hosting a range of heritage and arts activities. Linkages will be formed with existing local tourist venues to attract day tourism in Prescot.

Extract from the Stage 1 Prescot Townscape Heritage Initiative (November 2010)

Aims of Prescot Town Centre THI.

The principal aim of the Prescot Town Centre THI is to increase economic activity in the town's commercial core by using the historic environment as a positive resource. This will safeguard employment opportunities while improving the quality of life for the local resident community, those who work in the town and visitors. The aim will be achieved through the following Management Plan objectives:

- Ensure consistent decision making across Council services, which have regard to the significance of the town's historic environment.
- Offer grant assistance to support the repair, architectural reinstatement and reuse of historic buildings.
- Increase the awareness and understanding by the local community and key stakeholders of the value and role of the historic environment in the regeneration of the town through the Prescot Strategy.
- Work with other key stakeholders to encourage complementary initiatives for both physical enhancement and the

positive promotion of the town as an attractive place to work, live and visit.

Further objectives of the Prescot Town Centre THI are:

- Secure the repair and reuse of the identified priority projects within the lifetime of the scheme.
- Significantly reduce the number of other historic buildings within the town centre in disrepair or underuse, in particular those able to be used for commercial or mixed uses.
- Promote the authentic reinstatement of lost architectural detail of target and other properties, which assists in securing the local distinctiveness, quality and interest of the town.
- Further engage the local community in promoting a sense of civic pride and awareness of the value of the historic environment.
- Promote principles of conservation repair and proper maintenance to arrest further problems of buildings at risk in the future.
- Ensure other Council programmes, policies, strategies and service delivery have special regard to the town's historic environment.

The THI presents a unique opportunity to co-ordinate diverse public sector funding in a manner which has full regard to the proper care and treatment of the historic environment. Without this, statutory powers alone could only secure short term solutions in arresting further deterioration because there is no financial incentive for property owners or tenants in the current poor state of the local commercial property market. Co-ordinated public sector funding through the THI can move beyond arresting deterioration to securing sustainable improvements to both the local economy and the appearance of the town's historic environment, as an integral part of its wider regeneration.

The strategy for achieving this is to embed conservation principles not only in the work of the THI but also in the programmes of other funding agencies, in the actions of owners and occupiers, and indeed in the proper management of the Conservation Area by the Council, other public bodies and statutory undertakers.

The THI will mainly be directed at groups of buildings, rather than at individual projects, unless the building is considered to be particularly focal or important within the streetscape. Eligibility has been assessed according to the following criteria:

- Condition and degree of risk;
- Architectural and historic significance;
- Ability to meet programme outputs and outcomes;
- Potential for enhancement or the reinstatement of lost architectural detail.

A Framework for Design and Maintenance Standards

With the commitment to producing a Conservation Area Management Plan, comes a recognition that design standards in the implementation of development have not always been given a high priority. However, there are several complementary initiatives under development that will raise the level of design awareness. There will be a number of key elements to ensure the continued growth in the appreciation of good design standards having a clear role in the regeneration of Prescott.

- The adoption of general principles to guide decision-making and the implementation of THI funded works
- Ensuring maintenance becomes an ongoing part of historic property ownership within the THI area
- The continuation of a Heritage Champion role at Cabinet level from within Council members

- The establishment of a broad partnership representing a wide range of stakeholders with interest in Prescott's historic environment
- Establishment of a Borough-wide Streetscene Design Group, as the multi-disciplinary officer group for the public realm

14. Prescot THI Steering Group and Partnership Working

A broad partnership is essential if there is to be any wider community involvement and buy-in to the THI, its aims and objectives. The partnership, as noted in Section 1 of the THI Stage 2 submission, will have representatives from business, the community, professionals, stakeholders and others who have a role in the future of Prescot and its historic environment. A significant role of this group will be to regularly monitor and to annually review the progress of the THI. They will also have a watching brief for ensuring that the quality of the development within the town centre makes a positive contribution to the urban design of Prescot and does not adversely affect the historic environment.

A further role will be to work with the THI Officer in promoting the Prescot Open Heritage Weekend. The Weekend will form part of the annual Heritage Open days event throughout England, which offers free entry to buildings not normally open to the public. This will serve as a means of promoting the historic environment to both the local community and those further afield to increase their awareness of the distinctiveness and history of Prescot's finest architecture.



15. Education and skills training

The historic environment requires continuous repair and maintenance to conserve it for future generations. Inappropriate repairs with unsuitable materials can often exacerbate problems in buildings rather than solve them. Therefore, as part of the Prescot THI, heritage skills training is incorporated into the five year programme. The skills training will range from general maintenance guidance given to property owners to specific skills training in a range of disciplines. These will include the skills required to work with traditional building materials such as stone, slate, thatch and lime mortar to name but a few. Certain skills and crafts require long term training and apprenticeships. In these instances colleges, universities and historic agencies such as SPAB provide the appropriate training. The THI will work in partnership with these skills providers to allow participants to take up apprenticeships and graduate courses to train in the use of traditional materials and traditional building skills.



Glossary

Anglo-Saxon

Refers to the period of the history of the part of Britain that became known as England, lasting from the end of Roman occupation and establishment of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the 5th Century until the Norman conquest of England in 1066 by William the Conqueror. Anglo-Saxon is a general term referring to the Germanic peoples who came to Britain during the 5th and 6th Centuries, including Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The term also refers to the language spoken at the time in England, which is now called Old English.

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance an evolution of places and of the people and cultures that made them.

Art Deco

(c.1908 to 1935) Art deco began in Europe, particularly Paris, in the early years of the 20th Century but didn't really take hold until after World War I. It reigned until the outbreak of World War II.

Article 4 Direction

A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

Burgage

Is a medieval land term used in England and Scotland, well established by the 13th Century. A burgage was a town rental property owned by a king or lord. The property usually consisted of a house on a long and narrow plot of land, with the narrow end facing the street.

Conservation (for heritage policy)

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

Court Leet

The court leet was a historical manorial court of England and Wales and Ireland. The court leet was a court of record, and its duty was not only to view the pledges, which were the freemen's oaths of peacekeeping and good practice in trade, but also to try by jury, and punish, all crimes committed within the jurisdiction. The most serious crimes were committed to the King's Justices.

Gap Site

A gap site is usually a site or piece of land where demolition of a building has occurred and has not been re-developed. This leaves a vacant site on the streetscape, breaking the flow of the urban fabric.

Georgian Period

(1714-1837) The Georgian period of British history takes its name from, and is normally defined as spanning the reigns of, the first four Hanoverian kings of Great Britain: George I, George II, George III and George IV. The era covers the period from 1714 to 1830, with the sub-period of the Regency defined by the Regency of George IV as Prince of Wales during the illness of his father George III. Often the short reign of the fifth and final Hanoverian king, King William IV (1830 to 1837) is also included.

Gothic

Originating in 12th Century France and lasting into the 16th Century, Gothic architecture, is characterised by certain features including the pointed arch, the ribbed vault and the flying buttress. Gothic architecture is most familiar as the architecture of many of the great cathedrals, abbeys and churches of Europe.

Heritage Asset

A building, monument, site place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic environment record

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

Horology

Is the art or science of measuring time. Clocks, watches, clockwork, sundials, clepsydras, timers, time recorders and marine chronometers are all examples of instruments used to measure time. Historically Prescot is a renowned horological area with a number of its horological workshops still in existence, often designated as heritage assets.

Local Development Plan

A development plan is an aspect of town and country planning in the United Kingdom comprising a set of documents that set out the local authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area. The development plan guides and informs day-to-day decisions as to whether or not planning permission should be granted, under the system known as development control. In order to ensure that these decisions are rational and consistent, they must be considered against the development plan adopted by the authority, after public consultation and having proper regard for other material factors.

Medieval Period

Dates from the year 800 to 1599. Early Britain before 1066, Middle Ages 1066-1485, Tudors 1485-1603.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

Tithe

A tithe is usually one-tenth part of something, paid as a contribution to a religious organization or compulsory tax to government. Today, tithes are normally voluntary and paid in cash, cheques, or stocks, whereas historically tithes were required and paid in kind, such as agricultural products.

Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programme, is a grant scheme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). HLF make grants that help communities to regenerate Conservation Areas displaying particular social and economic need throughout the United Kingdom (except the Channel Islands and Isle of Man). THI encourages partnerships of local organisations to carry out repairs and other works to a number of historic buildings, structures or spaces within these defined areas.

Turnpike

Is another term for a toll road. Turnpike trusts were, a body set up by Act of Parliament, with powers to collect road tolls for maintaining the principal highways during the 18th and 19th Centuries.

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Appendix 1

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The Government's objective is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations.

To achieve this, the Government's objectives for planning for the historic environment are to:

- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- Contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past by capturing evidence from the historic environment and making this publicly available, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

To achieve this, the Government's objectives for planning for the historic environment are for Local Authorities to take into account:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Local planning authorities should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of Conservation Areas.

Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan, June 2006

The Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted by the Council on the 14th June 2006.

The document can be viewed at:

<http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents/building-and-planning/development-plans-and-policy/local-development-framework-1/adopted-documents/local-development-documents.aspx>

Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area is identified as an area of special architectural or historic interest on the UDP Proposals Map, with the designation reflecting the desire to ensure its character and appearance is preserved or enhanced.

The CAMP will supplement policies in Chapter 11 of the Replacement UDP: Design Quality in the Built Environment. The policies in this chapter include objectives which prioritise:

- High quality design;
- Sense of place;
- Townscape character, and;
- The preservation and enhancement of Knowsley's historic heritage.

With regard to the above, the specific policies which are relevant to Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area are listed below.

Policy DQ1 states that developments should respond to, and, where appropriate, enhance the characteristics of the immediate surrounding area through the use of appropriate scale, density, massing, height and building lines. There is also reference to the preservation or enhancement of views of important landscape features and buildings / structures of intrinsic architectural or historic interest, which contribute to the character of the area.

Policy DQ2 is focussed upon security in the built environment in seeking to ensure good levels of visibility, natural surveillance, access and defensible space.

Policy DQ3 requires enhancements to the visual appearance to gateway sites and corridors, including those which link to any of Knowsley's town centres.

Policy DQ5 sets criteria for development in Conservation Areas which broadly aligns with the requirements of DQ1 in terms of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Area. However it also requires the Council to prepare Conservation Area Appraisal and offers additional consideration relating to the value of materials, architectural detail, structures, landscape features, visual impact of parking areas, and important views into, within and out of the Conservation Area.

Policy DQ6 is concerned with the demolition of buildings and structures in Conservation Areas which require Conservation Area Consent. Demolition is permitted to occur when the building or structure makes no existing or potential future contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, or otherwise where the subsequent re-development of the site would be of exceptional quality and pre-let.

Policy DQ7 relates to development which may affect Listed Buildings in seeking to preserve and enhance the architectural and historic value of Listed Buildings and their setting. It also restricts the possibility of total or substantial demolition unless the building or structure is beyond repair and has no reasonable prospect of secure its future through continuation of its present use or a suitable alternative use. In this regard the policy obligates the Council to take positive action in seeking to ensure the retention, repair, maintenance and continued use of Listed Buildings.

In addition to the policies in Chapter 11 listed above, there are also a number of other policies in the UDP which have spatial relevance as follows:

- Policy CP1 priorities new development and regeneration areas towards specific locations which include Prescott Town Centre as a preferred location for new shopping and leisure development of a scale and nature appropriate to its role and function.
- Policy S1 provides the retail and town centre development strategy which includes a requirement for Prescott Town Centre to contain the provision of shops and a range of other town centre uses, consistent with maintaining the position of these centres in the sub-regional shopping hierarchy, thereby reducing the need for Knowsley residents to travel to centres outside of the Borough.
- Policy S5 is specific to Prescott Town Centre and designates it as an appropriate location for new development, redevelopment and / or improvement of existing buildings for new retail, assembly, leisure and other town centre uses, which are of an appropriate scale and nature to its role and function. This includes the suitability of a Development Opportunity Site on Sewell Street / Kemble Street for a mix of retail, assembly / leisure and residential uses.

All of the above UDP policies remain part of the current Development Plan through a saving direction issued by the Secretary of State on 12 June 2009. The "saved" policies will remain in place until, in most cases; they are replaced by new policies within the Local Development Framework.

Emerging Knowsley Local Development Framework Core Strategy

The emerging Knowsley Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy is approaching its forthcoming Proposed Submission stage which will be published in late 2012, which will represent the final strategy which the Council will be seeking to adopt during 2013.

The most recent public consultation on the LDF related to the Preferred Options report which was published in June 2011, and set out the Council's preferred spatial strategy for Knowsley, within a series of planning policies which the Council thought most appropriate to guide the future development of Knowsley for the next fifteen years.

The emerging policies included in the LDF which are relevant to Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area are listed below.

Policy CS1 identifies Prescott Town Centre as a Principal Regeneration Area where opportunities for development and regeneration will be maximised.

Policy CS2 provides overarching development principles for all investment, including any within Prescott Town Centre.

Policy CS4 affirms the need for a sequential approach to the location of main town centre uses and offices with town centres (including Prescott Town Centre) considered first.

Policy CS6 provides a hierarchy of retail centres with Prescott Town Centre defined as one of three higher order centres which should seek enhance their equal role in providing comparison and convenience shopping, supplemented by a complementary mix of leisure, health, residential, education, cultural, employment, service uses and complementary evening and night time uses.

Policy CS14 offers specific focus with regard to Prescott Town Centre as a Principal Regeneration Area, by prioritising support for its future viability and vitality through;

- Encouraging a wider mix of town centre uses, services and facilities in areas surrounding Eccleston Street, to create a distinctive identity and a complementary evening economy.
- Improving linkages and integration between Cables Retail Park and the existing town centre.
- Directing new retail development and other town centre uses toward Prescott Town Centre.

- Utilising the heritage assets of the town centre and surrounding areas to maximise tourism and cultural opportunities.

Policy CS19 states specific criteria for design quality and accessibility in new development through need to respond to, complement and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment, topography, use of landmark buildings, landscaping, open spaces and features of local importance and historic interest.

Policy CS20 seeks to manage the Borough's heritage through the preservation or enhancement the Borough's historic, and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance. To achieve this objective, the policy requires;

- Preservation of the local distinctiveness and character of historic assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting and immediate landscape;
- Prevention of demolition and / or development which adversely affect historic assets subject to statutory designation, unless exceptional circumstances are proven;
- Facilitation of long term preservation and enhancement of local assets and areas of historic importance, including the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans;
- Encouragement of the re-use of vacant and underused historic assets, and;
- Submission of archaeological assessments to accompany development proposals on sites which include, or are considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets comprising archaeological interest.

Appendix 2

The policies, issues and recommended action tables

1. Quality of new buildings

Issue

New development often does not respect or consider the existing built environment and submitted proposals can be at odds with existing buildings. Little or no attention has been paid to the plot layout, scale, massing and affect on the streetscape. Materials can be inappropriate jarring with the existing palette of materials. Development proposals cannot be seen to preserve or enhance the conservation area or reinforce local distinctiveness

Policy

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area and its setting complies with the National Planning Policy Framework and:

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1,DQ2,DQ5, DQ6

Local Development Framework, Policy CS1, CS4, CS14, CS19, CS20

Recommendation

New development within the conservation area should reflect the existing palette of materials namely, red sandstone, welsh slate, red brick, and timber

Where contemporary materials are appropriate they should be high quality and it should be demonstrated that they harmonise with the existing buildings

The use of imitation materials ie reconstituted slate and poor quality materials should be avoided

Action

Promote the special qualities of the conservation area and the benefits of using traditional materials

Promote good design principles

Reinforce the locally distinctive character of Prescott

2. Scale, massing, position or proportions of new buildings

Issue

New buildings can detract from existing buildings in terms of scale, massing and proportions

Policy

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area complies with the National Planning Policy Framework and:

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1,DQ5, DQ7 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

New development generally should be no higher than existing buildings comparable within their immediate vicinity

New buildings should respect the footprint sizes of existing neighbouring buildings and their relationship with each other, the highway and their site boundaries

New buildings should match the floor-to-ceiling heights and general proportions of neighbouring historic properties

New development should not dominate historic buildings in the Conservation Area by virtue of their scale, height, massing or siting

Action

Promote the special qualities of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determination of planning applications. Request robust design and access/heritage statements specifying relevant design details as part of the planning application

3. Effect of development on key views

Issue

New development or extensions to existing buildings may have an adverse effect on key views and vistas within the conservation area

Policy

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area and its setting complies with the National Planning Policy Framework and:

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1,DQ5, DQ7 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

Applications for planning permission for new development or significant extensions to existing building with the Conservation Area must demonstrate where appropriate that the key views or the setting of the conservation area are not adversely affected

Action

Protect and promote the special views and vistas of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determination of planning applications. Request robust design and access/heritage statements specifying relevant design details as part of the planning application. Request plans of the different level when it is considered that a view may be affected

4. Extensions to buildings

Issue

Extensions to existing buildings may detract from the significance of the individual building or the setting of adjoining buildings

Extensions also have the potential to have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

Policy

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area and its setting complies with the National Planning Policy Framework and:

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ5, DQ7 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

The extension materials should harmonise with the principal structure in terms of profile, colour and texture. Traditional and natural materials sandstone, brick, timber and slate should be used unless sufficient justification is given for an alternative. The opportunity for repairs and maintenance to the principal building should be considered during the extension construction

Inappropriate extensions in terms of scale, design, materials or lack of consideration of the principal or neighbouring properties should be refused

Dormers if acceptable should be confined to the rear elevations and of a scale proportionate to the principal building

Action

Promote the value of the special views and vistas of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determination of planning applications to prevent a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

5. Alteration and historic fabric

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 area as a whole

Policy

Ensure that proposed alterations comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and:

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ5, DQ6, DQ7, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

Where alterations can be justified for the continued use of the building they should be prioritised towards less 'significant' areas of the building. Harm to the significance of a building / site should be avoided, minimised or mitigated

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

Promote the special quality of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determining applications. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where necessary

6. Alteration or loss of features on historic buildings

Issue

Alterations to or loss of specific features on historic buildings can be detrimental to the character of the individual building or its setting

Policy

Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and:
Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ5, DQ6, DQ7, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

Historically or architecturally significant features should be retained if 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

Action

Promote the special quality of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determining applications. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where necessary

7. Installation of new fixtures

Issue

The installation of new fixtures such as aerials, satellite dishes, roof lights and solar panels detracts from the character of the individual building and the area as a whole. Particular care should be taken in the use and location of micro-generation equipment to minimise intrusion on the building or its setting

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and:
Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ5, DQ6, DQ7, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20
Also English Heritage guidance on Micro-generation

Recommendation

The installation of roof lights into existing roof slopes should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that they are not visible from public areas or adversely affect the setting. Roof lights should be conservation type and the size and number should be reduced to the minimum

Building owners should be encouraged to only install satellite dishes and aerials in positions not visible from public areas

Whilst micro generation is encouraged in terms of conservation principles the impact on buildings and their setting should be minimised by careful positioning not visible from the public highway

Action

Promote the special quality of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determining applications. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where necessary

8. Loss or alteration to boundary walls

Issue

Town walls, boundary walls and gate piers are important features in the Prescott conservation area. The loss of or alteration of these features would adversely affect the character of the conservation area

Policy

Ensure proposed alterations comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and: Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ2, DQ5, DQ6, DQ7, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Guidance: Prescott Action Area An Archaeological View 1978

Recommendation

All historic boundary walls and gateposts should be retained. Alteration as part of any planning permission should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances when robustly justified

Action

Promote the special quality of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determining applications. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where necessary. Review and assess all historic walls

9. Change of use

Issue

Changes of use of an existing building can result in a number of incremental changes which result in an adverse effect on the conservation area

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and:

Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ5, DQ6, DQ7, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

In considering the applications for change of use, the council will require information on the design of refuse storage, waste pipes, satellite dishes any other features signage and car parking

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

Action

Promote the special quality of the conservation area. Use stringent design criteria in determining applications

10. Paving and street furniture with public realm areas

Issue

Within the public realm there are examples of historic paving, surfaces, lighting and street furniture which contribute to the character of the area. They are at risk if they are not adequately identified and protected

Policy

Ensure proposals relate to the public realm complies with the National Planning Policy Framework and: Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1, DQ7, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Guidance: Streets for All English Heritage

Recommendation

Conserve and protect historic streets and paving surfaces, street furniture and historic features

Action

Prepare and agree a maintenance plan for the area improving maintenance regimes. Identify specific elements requiring conservation and consider appropriate new features for the public realm

11. Highways markings and signage

Issue

Highways markings and signage can be visually intrusive and detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Future highways features, such as speed control measures may be visually intrusive

Policy

Ensure that proposals comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and: Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy T1, T8, DQ1, DQ3, DQ6, DQ9 Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

Consider all existing signage highways features and markings and make necessary improvements to enhance the character of the area, whilst maintaining the safety of all town users

Ensure that all future highways features such as speed control measures, railings etc are proven to be necessary and of an appropriate design and constructed of appropriate materials

Use signage to identify key buildings attractions within the conservation area to promote legibility and tourism

Action

Carry out an assessment of existing signage, highways, features and markings in terms of impact on the character of the area

12. Protection retention and provision of trees

Issue

To maintain and enhance the character of the area attention to be paid to the retention of trees and their provision where appropriate

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and:
Knowsley Unitary Development Plan, Policy DQ1,DQ4, Local Development Framework, Policy CS19, CS20

Recommendation

Trees that 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

TPOs exist for individual trees and for areas within the conservation area. These should be reviewed at intervals both to monitor compliance and conditions but also to consider potential changes to areas. Planting of trees of native species should be promoted

Action

Promote an understanding of the special qualities of 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 any replacement planting

13. Public awareness and contribution

Issue

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

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Knowsley Community Strategy

Recommendation

Make conservation area information readily available to residents, publicise via newsletters, posters the web site and libraries:- Prescot Conservation Boundaries, Issues affecting the conservation area, opportunities to be involved in the decision making process of the conservation areas future

Action

Promote dialogue between local authority, resident and amenity groups and major land owners

14. Article 4 Directions

Issue

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 require planning permission

Policy /Recommendation

Consider the need for article 4 directions in respect of windows, doors, roof coverings and roof features, colour, surface treatment of elevations, boundary walls and microgeneration equipment

Action

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 resources

Appendix 3

Statutory Powers

Power	Statutory basis	Purpose	Work required by LPA	Delegated authority	Realistic timeframes	Potential issues
Amenity of Land Notice	s.215 Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Remedy the poor condition of land and exteriors of buildings	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	Deputy Chief Executive	2-4 weeks	Appeal to magistrates
Urgent Works Notice (Listed Buildings)	s.54 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990	To allow the LPA to undertake urgent necessary works	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	DCE	2-4 weeks	Unoccupied parts of properties only
Urgent Works Notice (Unlisted Buildings)	s.76 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990	To allow the LPA to undertake urgent necessary works	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	DCE	2-4 weeks	As above but also requires prior approval of SoS DCMS
Repairs Notice	s.48 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990	To allow the LPA to undertake lasting necessary works	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	Planning Committee	4-6 weeks	Unoccupied properties only
Compulsory Purchase Order	s.47 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990	To allow the LPA to purchase the property in order to repair	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule / value	Cabinet	3 months	Follows service of Repairs Notice Appeal to Lands Tribunal
Planning Enforcement Notice	s. 172 Town & Country Planning Act 1990	To remedy a breach of planning control	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	DCE	2-4 weeks	Appeal to Planning Inspectorate

Power	Statutory basis	Purpose	Work required by LPA	Delegated authority	Realistic timeframes	Potential issues
Listed Building Enforcement Notice	s.9 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990	To remedy a breach in listed building control	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	DCE	2-4 weeks	Appeal to Planning Inspectorate
Conservation Area Enforcement Notice	s.38 Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990	To remedy a breach in Conservation Area Consent	Drafting of notice and accompanying schedule	DCE	2-4 weeks	Appeal to Planning Inspectorate

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