

## **6. ARCHITECTURE, DETAILS AND MATERIALS**

The Conservation Area is characterised by different types of properties built over a period of almost 200 years. The buildings exhibit a mix of different architectural styles which sit side by side in an attractive composition.

The Conservation Area contains examples of a variety of different styles of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, together with more modern later 20<sup>th</sup> century developments. A variety of styles have also been imported from abroad including Greek, Flemish and Italian. Classical styles have generally been used for the most imposing properties, including hotels, hospitals and commercial premises.

Most commercial buildings are built in these styles and are generally very decorative, features include prominent chimney stacks, gables, balconies and turrets.

The most ornate designs are largely focussed along The Promenade itself, which is characterised by Italianate style villas.

By way of contrast the earlier residential properties display a much simpler style of architecture, and a more limited palette of materials.

The Promenade Area can be characterised by three distinct areas:

- The recreational area along the former shoreline
- The Promenade frontage
- The side streets between the Promenade and Lord Street

Below is a description of the variety of features to be found in the Conservation Area.

### **6.1 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER**

The architectural character of the area is quite diverse and for ease of interpretation can be split into three distinct character areas as identified above.

#### **THE RECREATIONAL AREA ALONG THE FORMER SHORELINE**

This area contains few buildings, although a variety of architectural styles are displayed. Funland Arcade is an undistinguished building but is characteristic of a seaside town with bright lights and colour. The nearby tea room which was formerly a ladies toilet, has distinctive merit. The Floral Hall, which opened in 1932, displays both Art Deco and Classical influences. The modern extension to the Floral Hall is concrete block, as is the recently constructed Ramada Hotel and associated buildings.



**Silcocks Funland**



**Southport Theatre and Convention Centre**



**The Ramada Hotel**



**The former ladies toilet**

The more traditional buildings, such as the Lakeside Inn, and former ladies toilets are ornate timber framed structures with clay tiled roofs and the boat house is built of brick with cast iron balustrading around a flat roof. The shelters along the Promenade and within the park are a distinctive feature of the area which include Art Nouveau motifs and contain highly detailed cast-iron benches facing outwards on all

four side. These groups of structures contribute much to the historic character of the gardens.

## THE PROMENADE FRONTAGE

Due to the late Victorian development of this area, the Promenade has a variety of styles ranging from the North German Gothic Revival of the former hospital to the French Classical of the Victoria Baths and the French Renaissance of the Royal Clifton Hotel.



**The Victoria Baths is a prominent structure within the Conservation Area constructed a classical French style.**

Although there are some detached buildings, the majority are terraced. There are several groups of buildings that display identical features, such as those in Scarisbrick Avenue.

The traditional buildings are substantial with thickset details. Most incorporate classical motifs such as columns and pediments to accentuate doors and windows. Splayed bay windows are a characteristic feature along with decorative timber cornices, stringcourses and quoins. Window openings are graduated and have strong vertical proportions, some have retained their traditional sliding sashes, although many have been replaced with harmful Upvc casements.



**A number of older buildings within the Conservation Area have an array of architectural features which add to the roovescape, such as windows and chimneys**

The traditional buildings have chimney stacks, although several have unfortunately been reduced in height, possibly owing to the exposed location. Some properties have dormer windows to the attics, usually in a round headed style, such as those at Waterloo Terrace along The Promenade.



**Rounded dormers feature on a small number of the area's Victorian residential properties**

### **THE SIDE STREETS BETWEEN THE PROMENADE AND LORD STREET**

The side streets contain a wide variety of building types and styles dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Residential properties are fairly small scale and mostly terraced. Some have attics and basements, and are faced in brick or render. Buildings faced in brickwork have stone details including window heads and sills. Characteristic architectural features include dentilled eaves, splayed bays and prominent main entrances. Most buildings are Italianate in style. Window openings have strong vertical proportions, although relatively few properties have retained their sliding sash windows.

Commercial buildings are more varied in character, some were built as dwellings in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and have shop fronts installed on the ground floor, while others are larger and grander purpose-built premises with a range of ornamental features including gables, dormers, oriel windows and leaded lights. Styles range from Gothic to Arts and Crafts and Art Deco. The majority of retail premises have lost their original timber shop fronts and a number have large, inappropriate signs in bright poor quality materials.

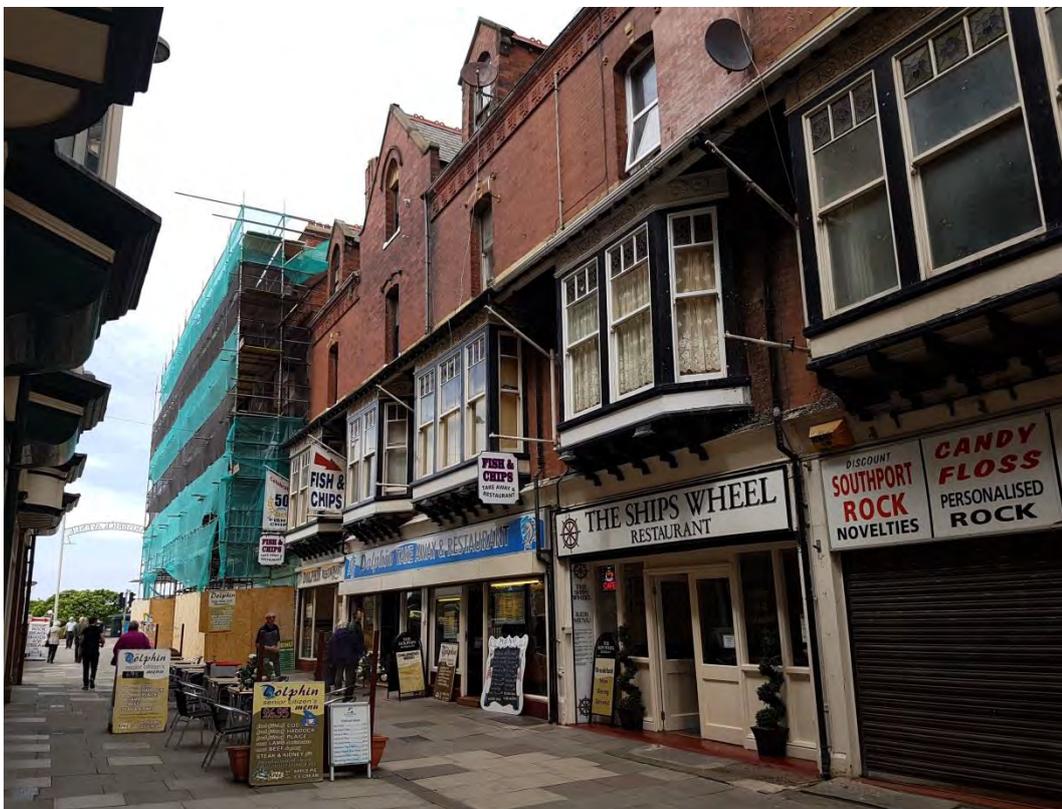


Many properties have been redeveloped to a significant degree, along with the addition of inappropriate and oversized signage

A number of small sites within the area have been redeveloped in recent years for both commercial and residential uses. Many are bland in appearance or have not been designed to reflect the character of the area. The properties within Scarisbrick Avenue however are of interest being of a substantial; nature, with decorative bay windows and traditional shopfront features including recessed doorways.



Properties along Scarisbrick Avenue contribute positively to the conservation area



However the installation of roller shutters, A-Board signage and a lack of maintenance has harmed the character and appearance of this key side street

## 6.2 ROOFS

Within The Promenade Conservation Area there are a number of commercial, civic and ecclesiastical buildings which incorporate elaborate roof level features. The turrets such as those at the Royal Clifton Hotel and Marine Gate Mansions are particularly eye-catching and contribute greatly to wider views of the streetscape.



**Roofs within the Conservation Area add interest to views across the horizon, especially those of more substantial buildings**

### 6.3 ROOFING MATERIAL

Welsh slate is the predominant roofing material, though there are instances of concrete tiles. Concrete tiled roofs are non-traditional, inappropriate and out of keeping with character of the Conservation Area. Where slates have been well maintained or have been reintroduced with appropriate like for like replacements, such materials provide a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



**The use of appropriate materials helps buildings harmonize with the wider character of the Conservation Area**

Hipped roofs are a feature of many of the traditional buildings in the area, although there are gabled roofs which are largely confined to the less grand properties and more modern 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

Dormers are not a particularly common feature within the Conservation Area, and where they exist, original dormers are mainly confined to larger properties. Modern and inappropriately large dormer extensions exist on several properties along Bath Street in particular.

Eaves brackets, decorative projecting brickwork and stonework decorate the eaves of many buildings.

Chimneys are varied, some being plain others elaborate. Some have been removed altogether.

The roofs of earlier domestic properties such as at Gordon Street are simple without ornament, dormers or rooflights and with a low pitch displaying simple shapes, rather than hipped. Particularly along Bath Street there is a long history of adaptations to several of these buildings some have a more convoluted roofscape than is befitting.



**The residential properties of Gordon Street are less elaborate, offering a more simple and uncomplicated design**

Replacement materials such as concrete tiles and felt are not sympathetic to the age and style of the buildings, and in particular, the thickness of concrete tiles gives an incongruous bulkiness to the appearance of roofs.

## **6.4 WINDOWS**

The style of the window and window surround flows from the original use, age and architectural style of the building, they are always integral parts of the architectural composition of the buildings.

Windows within the Conservation Area vary considerably in their detailed design, depending largely on the type of building to which they belong. On the whole windows set within the frontages of the purpose built shops are highly decorative with multi-paned designs, shaped heads and some incorporating leaded and stained glass lights. Larger oriel windows display timber and tile hung details are a feature of a good number of the shops. Windows are generally set deep into reveals. Heavy architectural decoration around windows is the norm creating deeply modulated façades. Pillars are often seen between windows and rounded, horseshoe or lancet arches create further decorative interest.



**Windows of historic commercial premises within Scarisbrick Avenue are of exceptional interest**

Windows on less prominent elevations of the Victorian and Edwardian shops are largely timber sash windows with simple arched heads, some include coloured or leaded glass.

Window openings within the houses, or converted former houses generally have strong vertical proportions. Many of these properties have retained traditional sliding sash windows of Georgian or Victorian designs. Early casement windows, including the leaded and coloured glazing to the top lights are also found in places. Splayed bay windows are characteristic features of some of the residential and former residential properties

Where windows have been replaced with windows of standardised modern design the effect is damaging. Alterations to standard Upvc and modern timber casements fail to adequately reflect or reproduce the character or appearance of traditional windows. Where the openings have been enlarged or altered in proportions the character of the properties is particularly poorly affected.

## 6.5 DOORS

Original doors, door furniture and surrounds are an important architectural feature on historic properties. Some buildings within the Promenade Conservation Area retain their original doors and decorative fanlights above. Where these exist, they make an important contribution towards the special character of the area.



The Conservation Area includes a mixture of attractive door designs

## 6.6 SHOPFRONTS

Originally the shopfronts along Bold Street incorporated recessed entrances. Fortunately this characteristic layout has been largely retained. This creates a degree of modulation, texture and interest, this should continue to be required when shop fronts are altered or replaced.



Recessed doorways are a traditional architectural feature of the Victorian shopfronts in Bold Street which should be retained

Some modern shopfronts are of a good standard. The following elements seen in more modern shopfronts help to ensure that the shopfront is harmonious with the building:

- Timber painted in traditional colours (or varnished hardwood)
- Timber Stallrisers
- Timber Pillasters
- Maintain traditional proportions
- Incorporate suitable mouldings to their elements
- Incorporate recessed entrances

Several shops and hot food takeaways incorporate roller shutters. Where these are external or solid they create a deadening effect in the evening when the shops are closed. External guide rails and projecting boxes are jarring elements which obscure and detract from glazing bars, transoms and fascias. This has a harmful effect on the area.



**Roller shutters often create a hostile effect within their surroundings**

## 6.7 SIGNAGE

Remnants of original signage add interest and a sense of history to the streetscene. Examples of historic signage should be retained on display.



Examples of historic signage should be retained

Some signage within the Conservation Area obscures or boxes in architectural features, meaning that these cannot be enjoyed by visitors to the street.

Where retail premises exist along Nevill Street, Bath Street and Bold Street, many are blighted by examples of overlarge fascias, (particularly hot food takeaways and restaurants) upon which correspondingly overlarge and poor quality signage is displayed. In addition, overlarge lettering and cluttered design of the signage detracts from the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## THE RECREATIONAL AREA ALONG THE FORMER SHORELINE

The paths and gardens are laid out in a semi-formal arrangement, with some bounded by low stone walling or clipped privet evergreen hedging to some of the beds.



**Public gardens along The Promenade provide attractive views and places of recreation**

The boundary to the model village is a high close-boarded timber fence with barbed wire above and is not sympathetic to its landscaped setting.



**The opaque nature of the structure restricts views of this area to a considerable degree**

The southern part of the Marine Lake is enclosed by concrete balustrading and along the Lower Promenade at the rear of the Floral Hall by painted iron railings. There is a substantial stone retaining wall to the southern end of South Marine Gardens adjacent to the Esplanade and Promenade boundary to the Floral Hall Gardens. The retaining wall to the promenade incorporates pavilion sheltered seating overlooking the recently refurbished gardens.

A variety of differing boundary treatments and railings have been erected piecemeal in this character area. This includes a variety of designs in a range of materials such as unpainted galvanised fencing, painted steel railings and concrete.

## THE PROMENADE FRONTAGE

A number of traditional front boundary treatments remain, including some hedges and low stone or brick walls with stone copings and gate piers. All the original railings and gates were removed during the Second World War and some brick walls have been rendered. In some instances the boundary walls have been removed altogether to allow improved access to vehicles, which are parked on the former gardens. There are also a number of bland modern boundary treatments including brick walls with piers and railings.



**Property frontages originally featured gardens and some with carriage ways**



**Changes to accommodate vehicle parking in more recent times have resulted in a loss of boundary distinguishability**

## **THE SIDE STREETS BETWEEN THE PROMENADE AND LORD STREET**

The majority of traditional residential properties were originally constructed with relatively low boundaries to the front and sides and high walls to the rear yards. Unfortunately, the majority of these original boundaries have been removed, particularly those fronting the street. However, many of the original stone gate piers still remain. In some instances, original boundary treatments have been replaced in poor quality concrete block, timber fencing panels and modern brickwork or railings. These alterations detract from the character of the area.

### **6.8 RAINWATER GOODS**

Many of the gutters, downpipes, hoppers, brackets and shoes have been replaced, or partially replaced using extruded metal or Upvc. The originals would have been largely cast iron. The replacements unfortunately do not have the same substantial appearance as cast iron and fail to match the grandeur of the architecture.

### **6.9 MATERIALS**

A varied range of traditional materials has been used in the construction of the older buildings, predominantly brick and stone with Welsh slate for roofing.

Other roofing materials include red and grey concrete tiles, glazed metal frames and asphalt. The latter material is frequently used on flat roofs, which are usually concealed behind parapets and occasionally on ancillary buildings, such as garages.

Houses and former houses are of rendered brickwork, or brick. Those built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century tend to be of higher quality brickwork with narrow mortar joints.

## **THE RECREATIONAL AREA ALONG THE FORMER SHORELINE**

The Floral Hall is constructed of brick and rendered with the later theatre extension of concrete block. The recently constructed Ramada Hotel and conference complex is of modern concrete block. The adjacent Funland is partly faced in render.

The Lakeside Inn and the former ladies toilets are timber framed structures. The shelters along the Promenade and around the Marine Lake are constructed of cast iron and glass with lead-clad roofs. Within the shelters are decorative iron and timber benches recently refurbished as part of the Kings Gardens Parks for people Heritage Lottery Funded Scheme.

A former boathouse, The Lakeside Inn is reputedly Britain's smallest pub



The pier is a cast iron structure with painted iron railings in blue and white, with wooden decking. The Venetian bridge across Marine Lake has recently been refurbished and is constructed of timber and concrete with a turned wooden balustrade and handrail.



Southport pier



The Venetian Bridge

## THE PROMENADE FRONTAGE

The Queens Hotel and the former Victoria Baths are prominent buildings along this frontage as they are constructed of stone, whereas the remaining properties are built of brick with stone details, such as the stone window heads and sills, or have a stuccoed or rendered finish. The former hospital has terracotta details and Maritime Court, the large block of flats on the corner of Nevill Street and the Promenade, is constructed of intrusive buff brick. The majority of roofs have retained their original covering of natural Welsh slate.



The former stone-built Victoria Baths stands out alongside its more modern neighbours

## THE SIDE STREETS BETWEEN THE PROMENADE AND LORD STREET

Most streets have an even mixture of materials, although in some side streets including Nevill Street and Coronation Walk, brickwork predominates, and in other streets, including Victoria Street and Bank Square, render is the prominent finish. Buildings faced in brick tend to include stone details to the windows and doors. The traditional roof covering is natural Welsh slate, although some properties have been re-roofed in unsympathetic concrete tiles.

### 6.10 BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

The decorative walls which encircle and unify the public gardens are classical in style; the concrete they are constructed from is intended to have the appearance of stone, and is of interest in itself. Sections of the walls were faithfully replicated during recent improvements. The low walls are adorned with decorative classically styled

cast iron columns topped with globe lanterns, concrete columns and urns, which are particularly striking when planted up.



**Decorative stone balustrades provide a sense of grandeur to the newly refurbished gardens and walkways**

The front gardens to the original residential properties on the landward side of Lord Street display a wide variety of boundary treatments such as low stone or brick walls with stone copings and gate piers, or by shrubs, trees and hedges.

## **6.11 PUBLIC REALM**

Several colour schemes and different materials are apparent within the Promenade Conservation Area. Maroon and cream street lighting columns are evident along the Promenade itself, although the ornate railings close to the Lakeside Inn and Marine Lake are painted in turquoise and white.

A recent grey and buff public realm scheme, with street trees provides a pleasant and spacious pedestrianised area, has been installed on Nevill Street. This provides a quality setting for the Queen Victoria memorial and an important through link from Lord Street to the sea front and vice versa. The space is complemented with contemporary seating, stone bollards painted grey and cylindrical steel bins. Street lighting within this area is modern brushed steel in a simple double swan neck style with top hanging lantern lights in a conical design.



**The Queen Victoria memorial is an important and unifying feature between the seafront and the built environment of Nevill Street and beyond**

Bath Street has a late 20<sup>th</sup> century block paving scheme in brown with modern, yet traditional styled Victorian street lighting columns with a single lantern painted in black. There are, however, instances of grey coatings and also plain galvanised unpainted columns being used on discreet one-off type installations scattered across the area, and evident on Stanley Street, Bold Street and Gordon Street.

The combination of all of the different schemes and styles is not unduly incoherent as they tend to occur in geographic blocks rather than a mix of styles within one area.

## **6.12 STREET FURNITURE**

### Lighting

There is a variety of lighting columns and lanterns throughout the Conservation Area. Along the Promenade there are tall street lights painted cream with a brown base. These extend to an extensive height and are positioned along the length of promenade itself in a regular rhythm. Some, such as those near to Victoria Baths are

missing their bulbs and are in need of maintenance. Alternative lighting designs can be found in Nevill Street which is a mixture of modern single and double headed lamps in a chrome finish. In side streets such as Bath Street, traditional looking lanterns line the roadside, many of which have been decorated with hanging baskets. West Street offers further variety in lighting styles, again painted a mixture of cream and brown but with bulky overhead lighting boxes which do not appear to blend in with the wider character of the Conservation Area. Near to the carousel, a series of blue and white lighting columns have had seats incorporated into their bases. These however appear tired and in need of repainting, as well some bulb replacements.

In the gardens new lights painted in a shade of green and white have been installed. These overlook the marine lake. The boundary walls to the public gardens on the landward side of the street have their original style globe lanterns on cast iron posts, which act as street lights for the secondary carriageway.



**Various lighting styles can be found throughout the conservation area.**

## Benches

The stained timber benches are one of the more consistent street furniture items within the Conservation Area. They have a low key genteel appearance; some have additional visual merit with rounded legs. Benches of similar design furnish the gardens and are also set in long lines along the pavements, facing the roadway and again overlooking marine lake.



**Benches are in good condition and designs are largely consistent, especially within gardens**

## Bollards

Excessive bollards exist in Scarisbrick Avenue at the junction of West Street. These clutter the streetscape and harm the historic character of this important thoroughfare between the Promenade and Lord Street Conservation Area whilst not deterring vehicles.



**Excessive bollards distract from the architecture of nearby buildings and character of the Conservation Area**

Bus stops

Bus stops within the Conservation Area are defined by either road markings or simple bus stop pillars. The pillars are of modest proportions but the road markings are quite noticeable.

Litter Bins

Due to various landlords and ownerships, there are a multitude of different styles of litter bin within the area. These include square black metal bins, red metal bins, freestanding round stainless steel bins, beige plastic bins and grey plastic bins. It would be beneficial if bins were designed to a consistent scheme, ideally of cast iron to complement the existing character and appearance of the Promenade Conservation Area.



**There is a variety of differing bin designs throughout the Conservation Area**

Traffic Signs

There is a proliferation of traffic signs, particularly in relation to parking restrictions and the pay and display machines.



**An unnecessary amount of signage makes parts of the Conservation Area appear cluttered**

## Telephone Boxes and Post Boxes

An interesting post box can be found set into the wall of Bath Street. It is positioned alongside a plaque commemorating a visit by Lord Strathclyde, Minister for Tourism in 1999, when the Bath Street Guest House Improvement Scheme was officially launched. Telephone boxes are not a common feature within the Promenade Conservation Area and all date from the modern era. Unfortunately no historic versions, such as the K9, survive.



Examples of the style of telephone boxes and post boxes around the Conservation Area

## Commemorative and artistic features



### **The Fernley Monument**

The monument dates to 1861 and was a gift to the town by local benefactor John Fernley. It originally contained a drinking fountain, a thermometer, barometer and weather vane to warn of oncoming storms. Works to restore this monument were undertaken in 1995. It is Grade II listed.



### **Queen Victoria Monument**

The Grade II listed Queen Victoria Monument was unveiled on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1904 and constructed to the designs of the international sculptor George Frampton. It had originally been located in Town Hall Gardens near to the Atkinson, but was later moved to Nevill Street in 1912.



### **The Monumental Obelisk**

The monument dates from 1888 and commemorates the work of the Southport lifeboats and in particular the loss of fourteen life boatmen when their boat capsized in 1886. The monument was designed by Thomas Robinson, and is constructed in granite. It is Grade II listed

### **6.13 STREET SURFACES**

Some elements of the surfacing have historic significance.

Carriageways are surfaced in black, hot rolled asphalt and stone chippings, some sections of the Promenade have received a top dressing in contrasting colours, which is visually obtrusive.

The stone kerbs remain along many of the Promenade Conservation Area pavements, although the central reservation and the majority of the side streets have concrete kerbs.

Nevill Street public realm works used a different palette of materials again, and a stainless steel modern styled suite of street furniture.

The way that painted linings have been designed is variable, with some instances of the narrower and subtler double yellow lines being used, and some areas where standard linings are used. A consistent use of the narrower lines throughout the historic Promenade Conservation Area would be helpful in improving the appearance of the area.

### **6.14 INTACTNESS**

One of the features of the area which contributes towards the character of the Promenade Conservation Area is the high degree to which the individual buildings and their architectural details have survived intact. Whilst there is a high degree of survival, losses of individual historic buildings and losses of architectural features, have impacted on the architectural diversity, importance and integrity of the street.

Notable historic losses include inappropriate changes to architectural features such as roof details, windows shopfronts and walls has occurred both historically. More recently Shopfronts have proven particularly vulnerable to loss and change, both before and after the Conservation Area designation, with relatively few early shopfronts now remaining in the area. Most shopfronts are relatively recent insertions which largely do not enhance the character of the building of which they form part.



**The design of this Bold Street shopfront does not correspond to more traditional layouts**

There are several buildings where original feature bay windows have been replaced with flat windows, thus removing the architectural interest.

The gardens which front many of the residential buildings within the Promenade Conservation Area have been largely lost to car parking with less than half remaining intact as garden spaces. Over 90% of the properties with front gardens have lost their garden spaces wholly to car parking, a situation which is having a detrimental effect on the soft landscaped quality and loss of historic or original features.

## 6.15 NOTABLE ARCHITECTS

Thomas Withnell was responsible for the Royal Hotel on the Promenade. He also designed Southport Town Hall.

Other known architects include Witham & Connard, Palmer & Holden, Sydney Ingham, William Owen, W.W. Gwyther, Grayson and Barnish, E. Kenrick, Robert Todd, F. W. Finchett, Thomas Mawdsley, H Jansen, Francis Jones, H Langman, MacGibbon and Ross, and Mellor and Sutton.

## 7. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The Promenade Conservation Area is a vital component of Southport's attractiveness and distinctiveness.

The architecture of the buildings and spaces portray the character of a prosperous 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century seaside resort. The persevering fashion for seaside holidays meant that the prosperity lasted well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The current desire for holidays abroad however means that the town is now less a destination for long breaks, but remains popular for days out and weekend breaks. Decay as a result of a lack of maintenance, vacancy and poorer quality changes to buildings have taken their toll and continue to harm the appearance of the area.

A great deal has been achieved in terms of landscape improvements and the renovation of individual buildings. However much work remains to be done in terms of enhancing the public realm, encouraging the reuse of vacant buildings, the repair of historic buildings, the proper reinstatement of missing architectural features and securing of higher design standards for new buildings and alterations to existing properties.

## 7.1 CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUILDINGS

Several buildings within the Promenade Conservation Area are statutory listed in recognition of their special architectural and historic interest. Together the quality of both the listed and unlisted buildings is a key determinant of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Of particularly outstanding value to the Conservation Area are the following buildings:



### Victoria Baths

Built of sandstone and positioned centrally on the promenade facing the important junction with the Marine Way Bridge, Victoria Baths is architecturally of high quality with a distinctive shape. It was the earliest building to be built on the Promenade in 1839 but was extensively remodelled in c1870. It is listed Grade II.



### **The Pier**

Standing at 1,216 yards in length, Southport Pier is the second longest pier in Britain, and the longest to be built of iron. The Pier is of fundamental importance to the seaside resort, visible across long range views when entering the town centre. It has recently undergone repairs and is Grade II listed.



### **Marine Gate Mansions (Former Promenade Hospital)**

This building was built in several phases, the first by Thomas Withnell for the Southport Stranger's Charity in 1852-1853. Paull and Bonella designed the larger section in 1883 in a North German Gothic Revival style. Its crow-stepped gables and turrets punctuate the skyline and is the dominant structure looking north along the Promenade.



### **Shelters, Kings and South Marine Gardens**

Nine decorative shelters were erected during the construction of Kings Gardens in 1911-1913. They are positioned within the gardens and serve a practical use as seating shelters and are each Grade II listed.



### **Royal Clifton Hotel**

The original building was built by Thomas Withnell 1852-3 this portion was designed with Jacobean influences. It was enlarged 1865 in a French Renaissance Style and later amalgamated with two houses which display an eclectic Victorian style. The square turret is a key landmark on the skyline which punctuates the end of the Promenade. The building is listed at Grade II.



### **Byng House**

Built as 'Claremount House', it was originally a high-class hotel but is now occupied by the British Legion. Despite undergoing numerous alterations the main core of this property remains intact. Its stuccoed frontage provides an elegant architectural highlight along the Promenade.



### **St. Marie's RC Church & Presbytery**

The original church of St Marie on the Sands, opened in 1841 and was designed by A.W.N. Pugin. In 1852, the south aisle was added again, designed by Pugin. The church was practically rebuilt in 1875. Additions included a north aisle, a baptistery, the lengthening of the nave and the raising of the main roof. It is Grade II listed.



### **Queens Hotel**

Differentiated from its surroundings by its stone built facade, the property was a respectable Victorian hotel. It had fallen into disrepair but has since been converted to apartments. It is Grade II listed.



### **Kenworthy's Flats**

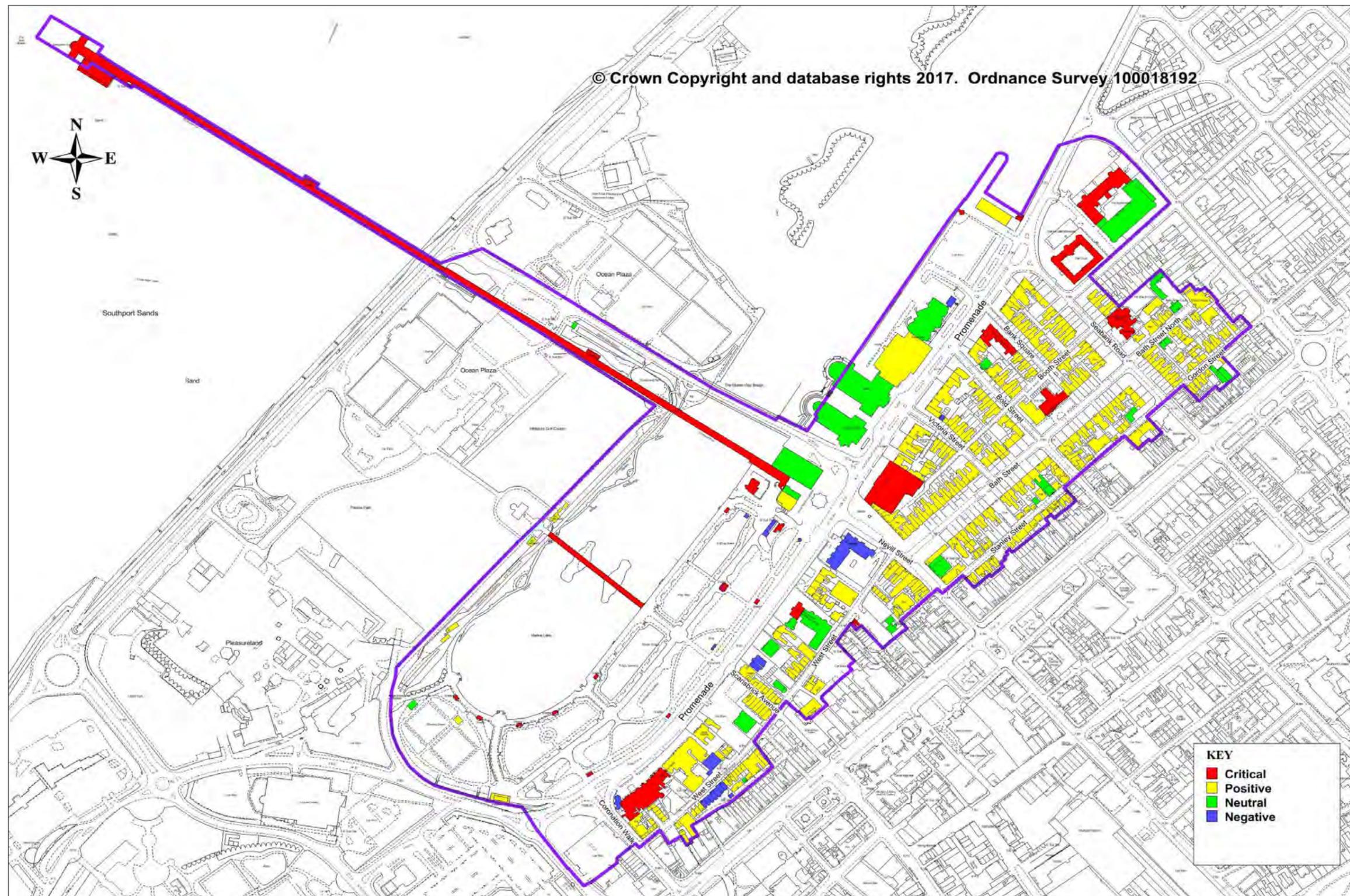
An imposingly large building this was formerly the "Limes Hydropathic Establishment" Originally built 1876, it was altered and extended regularly during its early operation.



### **Leo's Bar**

Though its fenestration and ground floor frontage has been altered unattractively, its overall symmetrical shape and central tower are unmistakably Art Deco, which marks it out from surrounding buildings.

Plan 8 to show contribution of buildings within the Conservation Area



## **7.2 CONTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES**

The seafront gardens and the Marine Lake make a critical contribution to the townscape of the conservation area as they play a very important role in compensating for the impact of the retreat of the sea, and provide an essential open setting for the buildings on the Promenade frontage. These gardens have become visitor destinations in their own right. Plan 8 shows how structures within the Promenade Conservation Area contribute to the locality. Examples include the highly significant shelters (in red) as well less favourable additions such as the row of properties in West Street (in blue).

The recent restoration of many of the built features of the gardens and removal of overgrown specimens has enhanced the character of the gardens and the area has consequently benefitted from increased use. There do however remain degraded features which would benefit from further enhancement for the seafront gardens to reach their full potential.

## **8. NEGATIVE FACTORS**

### **8.1 POOR QUALITY MID-LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DEVELOPMENT**

The more recent buildings within Ocean Plaza lack architectural merit, which is disappointing given the fine setting provided by the lake and landscaped gardens and the impressive traditional buildings along the Promenade. Many are of a somewhat plain design compared to their more historic neighbours and add little if anything to the visual appeal of the Conservation Area.

### **8.2 CONDITION OF BUILDINGS**

A high number of the historic buildings have visible signs of a lack of maintenance and are in need of some degree of repair. Typical issues include problems such as paint flaking off joinery details, damaged stone work to stringcourses and cills, weeds growing out of gutters and brickwork and dislocated flashings. The declining condition of the historic buildings has a particularly immediate impact on perceptions of the Conservation Area. Notable examples include 22 Promenade and Leo's Bar in Nevill Street which currently harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Poorly maintained buildings can significantly harm the appearance on large sections of the streetscape

### 8.3 UNSYMPATHETIC ADDITIONS

Disproportionately sized and poorly designed extensions disfigure some properties. This is particularly prevalent along Bath Street, where modern single storey front extensions have been added to the Victorian villas. These additions have a negative impact on the buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole by disrupting the traditional layout and rhythm of the street and obscuring architectural detailing at ground floor.



A substantial number of properties in Bath Street show signs of inappropriate alterations

## 8.4 ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC FEATURES, DETAILING AND MATERIALS

The removal of or alteration to the architectural features of buildings is fortunately quite limited, however there are some examples where losses of historic details and replacement with inappropriate details has had a significant impact on the character and architectural integrity of buildings. Particularly poor examples can be found in Bath Street with the addition of a number of brick-built frontages, signage and even Juliet balconies. Further significant alterations can be found at 51 Bold Street with the modern extension breaking the rhythm of this section of The Promenade.

Where alterations have been made to some of the simpler properties, the changes mean that the age and original appearance of these is not always evident. The historic cottages in Nevill Street illustrate this point.



Over-development has affected the legibility of this row of historic properties

## 8.5 DECORATIVE ELEVATION TREATMENTS

Alterations to traditional details, such as removal of projecting stone details and change to the constructional details of timber boarding, results in a simplification of the architecture which lessens the architectural integrity and harms the appearance of buildings.

## 8.6 WINDOWS

Changes to the proportions of windows or removal of bay windows have a damaging and significant effect on the architectural appearance of the building. The additions to historic building of Upvc double glazing or changes from traditional casements to

modern weatherproof casements, which are devoid of historic detail and are cumulatively detrimental to the character of the area.



**Inappropriate uPVC windows at St. Albans, Bold Street**

The use of uPVC for windows is fortunately limited, though there are some unauthorised examples. Such changes should not become established or accepted as the material is alien to the age and architectural character of the buildings and does not display the same fineness of detail as the original timber features.

## **8.7 RAINWATER GOODS**

Rainwater goods have been altered in quite a number of cases, or replaced with inappropriate Upvc systems. The sections which remain demonstrate that several of the buildings involved the use of quite ornate cast ironwork. Occasionally downpipes are used as architectural ornament, not just used functionally. The losses of these details are particularly unfortunate, especially given that most of the replacements lack the design detail and robust appearance of traditional cast iron rainwater goods.

## **8.8 SHOPFRONTS**

The overwhelming majority of early shopfronts have been lost. Replacement shopfronts are of variable quality though most fail to match the quality of the building they front. Many commercial buildings have inappropriately designed shop fronts which are not in keeping with the good, traditional detailing seen within the upper floors.

## 8.9 ADVERTISING

Since the last appraisal there has been an increase in the amount and size of signage visible in the Conservation Area. While the size and scale of the Promenade helps to reduce visual impacts from wider views, the impression at closer quarters is not positive, with some sites visually damaged by inappropriate and overbearing signage, including illuminated signage.



**Bright and oversized signage is not appropriate for the Conservation Area and such changes to shopfronts have harmed their character**



**Lower quality temporary pvc banners are used in a quite permanent fashion and have become tatty and soiled**

Much of the signage is poor quality and overlarge. Plastic signs with shiny finishes and over fussy graphics are not in keeping with the style of the historic shops within

which they are set. Built up box signs generally relate poorly to the shopfront to which they are attached as they project in front of pilaster details where these exist, and look over heavy and inconsistent with modern flat fronted shopfronts.

Signage in some cases is poorly located on elements of the townscape which are not designed for the purpose. Signage outside the Victoria Public House and the Royal Clifton Hotel on the Promenade, are examples of inappropriate banner signs.



**Wooden boards detract from this historic brick boundary**

## 8.10 SERVICES

Service installations involving extracts, wiring and alarm boxes have impacts in some locations, as they appear alien to the age and style building. Those on frontage locations have the greatest visual impact on the Conservation Area. Modern service installations particularly feature on frontages where residential conversions have taken place. Some of the service installations are deteriorating and appear to no longer be in use, however have not been removed

Service installations are very obvious in the planting beds at the rear of the Southport Theatre. These look very untidy and detract from any aesthetic appeal of the greenery.

Ventilation and extraction equipment is not an attractive or sympathetic addition to historic buildings. In some cases the vents or external ducting is sited in visually obtrusive locations, the colouring of such units sometimes means they particularly stand out against the brickwork. A high number of units or significantly sized ducting increases the degree of harm. Such units can be noisy and vent unpleasant odours. The above issues mean that the locations of vents often become less desirable places. A particularly poor example of several air conditioning units attached at first floor level to a front elevation occurs at 25 Bold Street.



**Visible ventilation units strongly detract from the aesthetic appeal of historic properties such as 25 Bold Street**

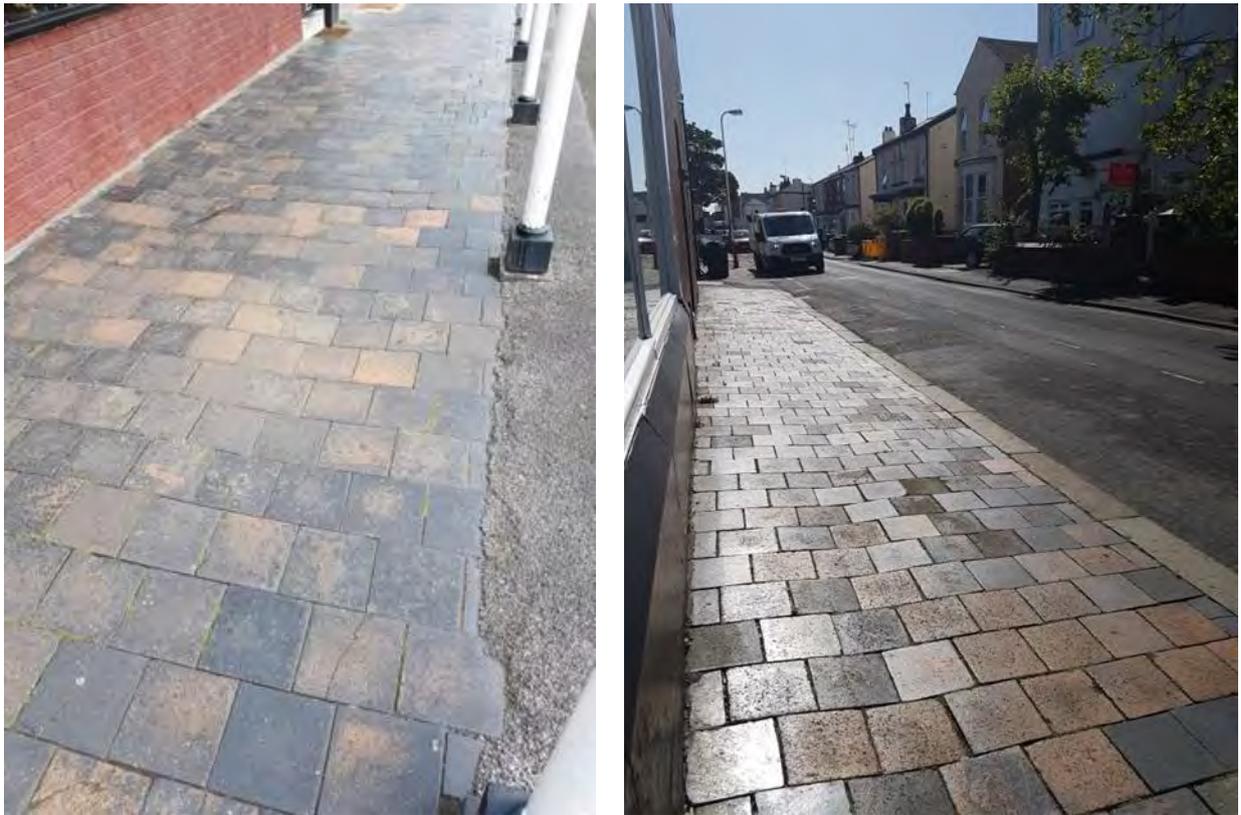
Where satellite dishes are poorly located, in large numbers or are in poor condition, they have a poor appearance and are of detriment to the Conservation Area. They seem particularly out of place on the purpose built commercial buildings.

Television antennae are generally affixed to chimneys, the impact of these is poor particularly where they have become dislodged or have bent and rusted.

Cables are run across the faces of some of the buildings, the effect is universally detrimental but particularly so where these have become dislodged and are loose, are of a colour which stands out in front of the masonry or are numerous.

## **8.11 STREETScape FEATURES**

Much of the traditional Southport paviers which once characterised the footway surfacing in the Conservation Area have been removed over the years. They have been replaced with a variety of materials some of which detracts from the character of the Conservation Area.



**Southport pavements remain in parts of the Promenade Conservation Area, including Bold Street and Gordon Street**

Some elements of street furniture need repainting. A variety of colour schemes, materials and finishes are used, creating discordance in the streetscape.

The clutter created by traffic signs, advertisements and various items of street furniture also detracts from the appearance of the area. This is particularly noticeable at the Nevill Street junction with the Promenade, where there is a proliferation of traffic lights and signage.

The heavy amount of through traffic and large numbers of parked vehicles detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area along the Promenade itself, although the width of the carriageway helps reduce this impact somewhat. It can sometimes be difficult for pedestrians to cross the road especially at the busy junction with Nevill Street.

## **8.12 TREES**

There are examples of poor quality trees which have been planted as part of the public realm landscaping where the Southport Theatre and Conference Centre front onto Marine Lake. Together with overgrown and unmanaged planting, weeds and service installations this gives a neglected feel to the area. It does not appear that any replacement trees have been planted to compensate for the loss. Over time the

periodic loss of trees due to disease or damage, without replacement, will harm the character of the area.

## 8.13 PRESSURES FOR CHANGES AND LOSS

### PRESSURES ON BUILDING TYPES

#### Dwellings

The streets between the Promenade and Lord Street are laid out in a grid iron pattern and characterised by large detached and semi-detached 2 ½ to 3 storey properties in Italianate style. These properties display fine architectural features, such as hipped roofs, eaves brackets and elaborate door entrances. Although the majority of these buildings remain, many have been converted from single dwellinghouses or guest houses to houses in multiple occupation or flats. Conversions have resulted in visual changes to these properties, including the loss of front garden areas and boundary walls for car parking, the loss of original timber sliding sash windows and original doors, multiple wheelie bins stored to the front of properties and many unauthorised satellite dishes attached to front elevations. There is also a noticeable lack of maintenance to many of these properties, including damage to boundary walls, which have not been repaired and untidy frontages. This highlights the vulnerability of conversions of single dwellings into multiple occupation within the Promenade Conservation Area.



The majority of the former dwelling houses in Bath Street have become divided into separate flats or guest rooms

## Shops

Standard modern retailing requirements are for square shaped spaces. The deep plots with narrow frontages of the shops which characterise parts of the Promenade Conservation Area do not fit this prospect. Pressures to knock through into adjacent units arises occasionally and this should generally be resisted, particularly along Bold Street where the regular form and grain of the units under covered verandahs is a distinctive feature.

### **8.14 VACANCY**

There are a relatively high number of vacancies of commercial units currently. However retail demand fluctuates considerably over time and care should be taken to ensure that trends are long term and irreversible before considering changes which could harm the resilience and historic value of the town centre in the future

A considerable number of commercial buildings have vacant upper floors, which give a run down and economically depressed appearance to certain sections of the street frontage.

## **9. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT**

This section highlights a range of improvements, which if enacted would enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

### **9.1 HERITAGE REGENERATION SCHEMES**

The Promenade's unique heritage can act as a catalyst for its regeneration. Funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund are able to grant aid works to historic areas that also support economic regeneration. In particular, Townscape Heritage schemes can help to reverse the decline of our historic townscapes by bringing buildings and the public realm within conservation areas back to a high standard. A previous Townscape Heritage scheme successfully improved a number of buildings within the Promenade Conservation Area in 2008 with the facades of several buildings along one side of Scarisbrick Avenue being repaired and restored at that time. Opportunities to draw on such funding for further works in the Promenade Conservation Area should be seriously considered.

### **9.2 REPAIRS AND RESTORATION TO HISTORIC FEATURES**

The character and appearance of a number of buildings and structures would benefit from repairs and maintenance works. Repairs to render, painting of joinery details, repairs to roofs and rainwater goods, and the use of more long lasting and traditional

materials when undertaking repairs would help to improve the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Where buildings are being refurbished the opportunity should be taken to restore lost features such as sliding sash windows, leaded lights, decorative verge boards and eaves, doors and other architectural details and roof features. The opportunity should also be taken to remove existing unsympathetic front extensions and inappropriate dormers.



**Repairs are needed to this boundary wall on the Promenade**



**An example of poorly executed brick infills and structural amendments**

Some of the structures on the Promenade such as the Pumping Station, the Fernley Drinking Fountain and the old sea wall and railings have suffered from vandalism and reduced maintenance. Reinstatement of damaged features and regular maintenance would enhance their visual appearance and restore their architectural integrity.

### 9.3 SHOPFRONTS

Commercial buildings would benefit from the removal of overlarge signs, roller shutters and installation of shop fronts and signs which better reflect the age, materials, style and decorative detail of the upper floors. Ideally these should be based on the original designs. Such an approach would allow the architectural diversity and interest of the Conservation Area to be more easily recognised and therefore better enjoyed by visitors.



**Shopfronts would benefit from the removal of inappropriate roller shutters, signage and regular maintenance**

## 9.4 VERANDAHS

The repair and regular maintenance of the verandahs where they exist along Bold Street would significantly improve the appearance of the area. This would improve this part of the town centre's attractiveness and secure the future of these features which represent a critical feature adding to the distinctiveness of the Conservation Area and Southport town centre.

The use of more proportionately sized hanging signage beneath verandahs would be less distracting.

## 9.5 GAP SITES

The sympathetic redevelopment of the car park site at the junction of Scarisbrick Avenue with the Promenade would be beneficial. To enhance the Conservation Area, development should be set on the established building line, be of a height, scale and massing which correlates with the historic character of the Promenade and recreate a sense of enclosure, while ensuring vertical divisions break up the facade.



**Appropriate development would benefit the small number of gap sites within the Promenade Conservation Area**

The former 'Kingsway' site is now used as a car park. Suitable development here will improve the appearance of the site. While the site is awaiting redevelopment the boundary treatment and site should well designed and kept tidy given its prominent position within Southport town centre.

## 9.6 FUNLAND AND PIER FORECOURT

Funland and the Pier forecourt would benefit from a comprehensive scheme of redevelopment to improve the legibility of the space and enhance its character as the central focus of the Conservation Area. The existing features and paving are starting to appear tired and unbecoming of Southport's wider heritage.



The popular area around Silcocks Funland is in need of refurbishment

## 9.7 VICTORIA BATHS

This important Grade II listed building is prominently sited. A sympathetic scheme for its re-use and restoration would benefit the perception of the Conservation Area. Given the importance of the building and its listed status, heritage grant funding options could be investigated to support a comprehensive scheme of repair and restoration.

## 9.8 CORONATION WALK JUNCTION

Improvement to the definition and visual appearance of the road junction with the Promenade would be beneficial. A scheme to rationalise and improve the appearance of the existing complicated hard landscaped arrangement should aim to improve the pedestrian experience of this space. Such a scheme could potentially be developed in connection with redevelopment of the vacant former 'Kingsway' site.



The junction between West Street and the Promenade lacks individuality and interest

## 9.9 LINEAR ROUTE THROUGH EASTBANK STREET TO SEAFRONT

The raised pedestrian junction within West Street is designed in a visually obtrusive manner that fails to be sympathetic to the setting of the buildings or character of the surrounding surfaces. Improvements to the materials and layout of the bollards so that they enhance the character of the buildings and improve the pedestrian experience would be beneficial.

Large metal arches have previously been installed along Scarisbrick Avenue along with a series of banner fixtures. These have been partially removed and it would be beneficial if the remaining fixings could also be removed. There are no streetlights along this narrow street an enhanced scheme of lighting at night would help to improve the perception of the street, though it is recommended that any additional lighting be affixed to the buildings, rather than crowding the already narrow pedestrian route.

The narrow nature of Scarisbrick Avenue creates a dark & uninviting space compounded by large expanses of solid roller shutters. These should be removed.

Improvements to the historic shopfronts and wider public realm of this route would benefit both the Promenade Conservation Area as well as the nearby Lord Street Conservation Area. Scarisbrick Avenue is an important gateway between the two and has the potential to be a welcoming and visually pleasing focal point.



**Scarisbrick Avenue has the potential to be a key gateway between Lord Street and The Promenade and would benefit from a high standard regeneration scheme**

This route led to the former Lido, although the route continues over the Venetian Bridge towards the café in Princes Park and eventually reaches Ocean Plaza. Neither of these offer visually attractive destinations that correlate to the distinctiveness of this route.

### **9.10 CAR PARK ADJACENT THE FLORAL HALL THEATRE**

The expanse of tarmac which forms the car park would benefit from additional tree planting and/or planting beds to recreate some of its former character as gardens and break up the visual monotony of the space.

### **9.11 CONTROL OVER USES**

The guest house and hotel uses are essential contributors to the resort area's historic character and appearance, though many have a dated appearance. In refurbishing such premises many of the frontages would benefit from more appropriate signage, removal of inappropriate additions and reinstatement of historic features and to add to their unique appeal.



**Several guest houses and houses of multiple occupation have fallen into a state of disrepair**

The seasonal operation of some of the resort uses leads to some units taking on a forlorn shuttered up appearance outside of the tourist season. In particular the

appearance of units on Scarisbrick Avenue when closed would benefit from improvements and careful controls.

## 9.12 FORMER FRONT GARDENS

Where front gardens have been hard landscaped for car parking, the reintroduction and enhancement of planting would help soften their appearance



**Residences within the Promenade Conservation Area would have originally featured carefully designed front gardens**

The reconstruction of lost boundary treatments, and the improvement or replacement of poor quality front boundary treatments would help to recreate the sense of enclosure and definition between public and private spaces within streets.

Removal of built features within frontage gardens and spaces such as shelters and bin stores would increase the 'garden' character and openness of frontages and benefit the settings of buildings and the appearance of the streets as a whole.

These works would provide a more historically and architecturally appropriate setting for the buildings, thereby enhancing the Conservation Area.

### 9.13 SEAFRONT GARDENS

The concrete panel fence that wraps around the Esplanade is visually unappealing and inappropriate. Its replacement with privet hedging or a more suitable style of built boundary would enhance the entrance to the Conservation Area and views across the seafront gardens from the Esplanade.

Within South Marine Gardens adjacent to the Promenade, the reinstatement of low hedging around some of the lawns in the manner of the original design would add definition and interest.

### 9.14 THE PIER

The Pier has undergone repair in recent years but requires constant maintenance in order to retain its visual appeal. The area beneath the pier is a dark and unattractive part of the Conservation Area which gives an impression of neglect. Pigeon droppings are a major problem which is harmful both on an aesthetic level but also damaging to the structure itself. Additional deterrents to help prevent further decay would be welcomed, as would works to brighten this unwelcoming corner.



The area beneath the pier is very dark and suffering from pigeon damage

### 9.15 ACCESS FROM OCEAN PLAZA

The linear route from Ocean Plaza through the Promenade Conservation Area is disrupted by a café which blocks the otherwise clear line of sight towards the Venetian Bridge and Lord Street. This building is flanked by two smaller structures, formerly public conveniences, which like the café are in a poor condition. This public walkway towards the town centre is uninviting and due to a lack of adequate lighting, it is rarely used after dark. In addition a large hedge prevents views across the

conservation area. Improvements to enhance the visual amenity, use and safety of this part of the conservation area should be considered.

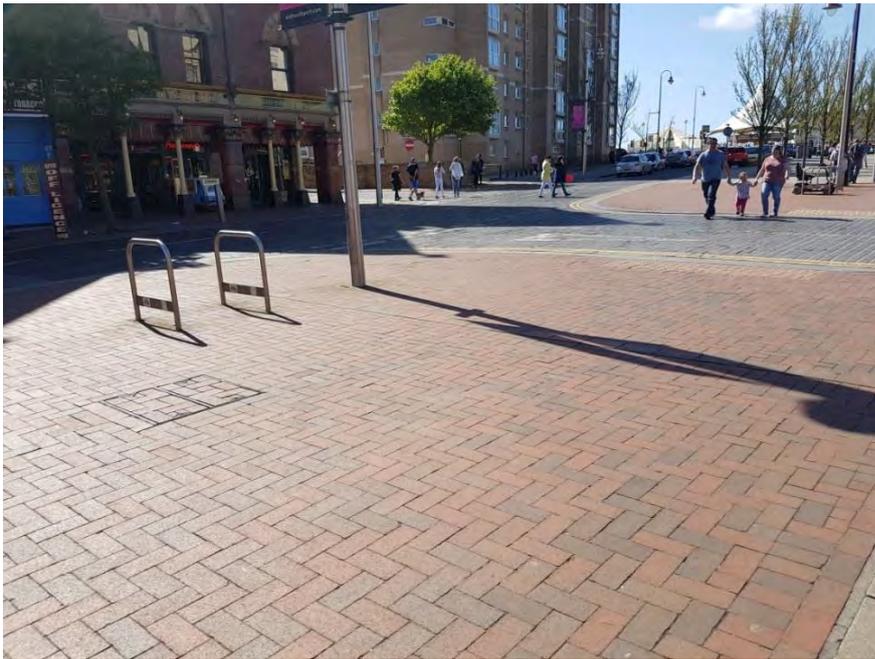


The route from Ocean Plaza is uninviting and impeded by the modern building ahead

## 9.16 SURFACING AND STREET FURNITURE

The general appearance of the area would benefit from the rationalisation of traffic signs and street furniture. A streetscape audit would help identify where features are redundant or unnecessary allowing these to be removed or combined.

It would be beneficial for the various Council services with responsibility for the streetscape to work together with the conservation team to develop a code of practice in relation to street surfacing and the design of street furniture within the town centre. This would help ensure that future work in the Conservation Area is co-ordinated and respects the character and appearance of it.



**Inconsistent paving styles should be rectified with more appropriate and unifying materials**

## **9.17 PLANNING GUIDANCE**

### **DESIGN GUIDANCE**

Production of detailed planning guidance for the following would be helpful:

- Revision of planning guidance regarding design of shop fronts, advertisements and security measures.
- Design guidance for new buildings, identification of 'opportunity' sites.
- Repair and the reinstatement of missing features of traditional buildings, identifying sites in need of reinstatements.

### **PAVEMENT CAFÉ & A-BOARD ADVERTS**

Consideration should be given to reviewing the extent to which existing advertising installations have been granted licenses/planning permission and introducing planning guidance to restrict the numbers of these and ensure any new installations are appropriately designed and sited. This should complement improved monitoring of unauthorised changes following enforcement action.



**Pavement cafes and the use of A-boards should be carefully reviewed**

## **10. RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO CONSERVATION AREA**

### **BOUNDARIES**

Towards the rear of Wayfarers Arcade the current boundary cuts through the building. It is suggested that to rationalise the boundary the whole of Wayfarers arcade be placed within the Lord Street Conservation Area, and removed from the Promenade Conservation Area.



**The rear of Wayfarers Arcade looking towards Nevill Street**

Properties on Waverley Street, 34-38 West Street, 21 Scarisbrick Avenue, 13-19 Nevill Street and 1-13 Cable Street share the night time economy, seaside and residential characteristics of the Promenade Conservation Area. It is suggested that these buildings be removed from the Lord Street Conservation Area and instead placed within the Promenade Conservation Area.

Following the development of the Floral Hall Theatre and Convention Centre, the current boundary no longer relates to built features. Although the new building does not contribute to the character of the conservation area, this site is important in defining its character. It is therefore suggested that the boundary be revised to the line of the water's edge.

The boundary currently fails to relate to the shape of the Pier head. The boundary should be revised so that it matches the features on the ground.

At the junction of Marine Parade and Marine Drive, the boundary does not relate to the shape of the road, and incorporates part of a car park which is not a feature of interest. It is recommended that the car park is removed from the Conservation Area.

The Esplanade and the roundabout at the junction of the Promenade and Kingsway roads define the key southern entrance to the Conservation Area. The roundabout has a pleasing soft landscaped appearance which complements the recreational character of the seafront gardens and lake. The cast iron streetlights along the

Esplanade and Kingsway match and enhance those along the Promenade. It is recommended that the roundabout and Esplanade be included in the Conservation Area.

### 10.1 OTHER AREAS CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION:

Princes Park was developed in the early 1920s and is part of the group of seafront green spaces including Kings Gardens. Although it is relatively simple, this was its design intention providing a different type of recreational space. Its interest lies in its simplicity of layout. The character of the space has been compromised by the loss of the Lido and colonnade, and the construction of new features such as Ocean Plaza within the former park.



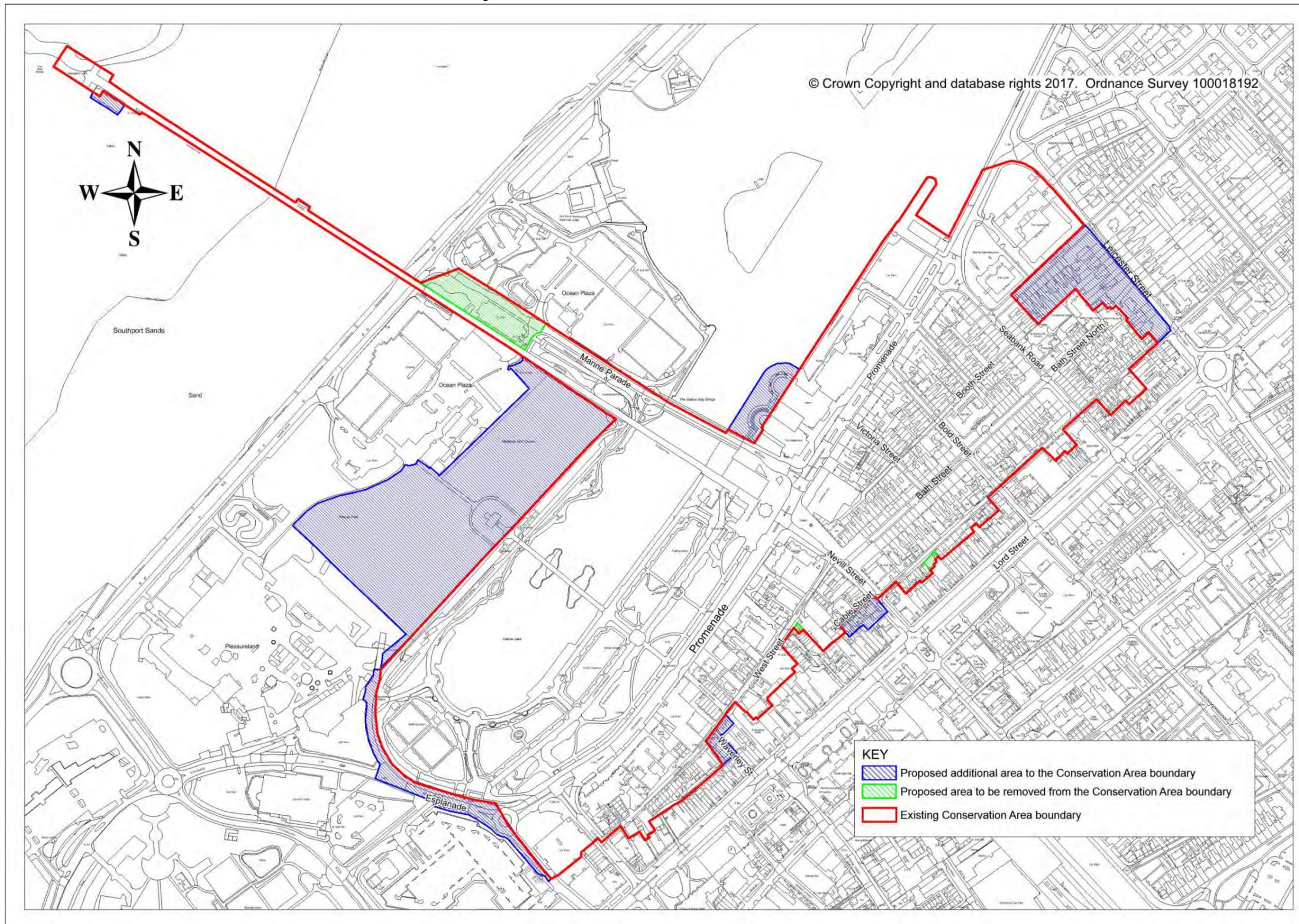
**Princes Park provides a green and pleasant open space, but it has been compromised somewhat by the adjacent Ocean Plaza and associated car parking**

Leicester Street and Avondale Road currently exist outside of the conservation area boundary, but these roads feature surviving examples of large Victorian residences. Some have been converted into hotels and have undergone some alteration, but many interesting architectural features such as recessed doorways, polychrome brick and original substantial plot sizes remain. It is recommended that both parts of Leicester Street and Avondale Road as shown on the plan are added to the conservation area.



**Leicester Street features a number of large properties with surviving historic features**

Plan 9: Recommended amendments to the Conservation Area boundary



Following adoption of this document on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 these boundary amendments have now been approved. This is explained further in chapter 10.

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