

# Promenade Southport

## Conservation Area

### History

Southport is an almost totally 19<sup>th</sup> century creation. It grew from a collection of scattered fishermen's huts in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to a fashionable resort town, with a population of 10,000 by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The sea frontage prior to the construction of the Promenade consisted of an extensive beach of smooth sand backed by dunes within which the cottages were 'embosomed' and which were regularly engulfed by drifting sand and the sea.

The Promenade was thus developed initially as a form of coastal protection in 1834 by the estate owner Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood, to include new building plots laid out fronting the seashore some 15 to 20 feet above the beach.

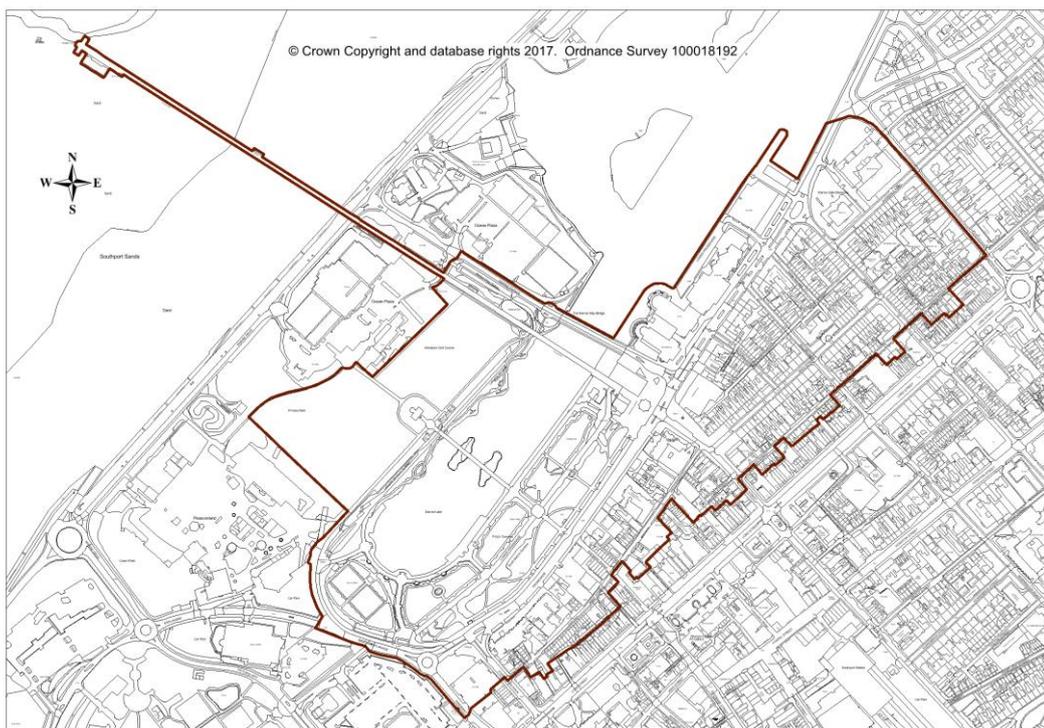
The new Promenade met with universal acclaim and resulted in a period of frenetic building along the frontage transforming a snug, rural retreat into a resort of "style and importance". The railway era brought increased opportunities and competition for the resort. This and the

ever retreating tide stimulated the development of the "large and substantial, but at the same time light and elegant pier" as reported by the Manchester Examiner on its opening in 1860. Financially, the pier was an immediate success notwithstanding criticism of access problems resulting from the incompatibility of the turnstiles with contemporary ladies' fashions and, more seriously the length of the walk to the end of the pier. In response to the latter the tramway was opened in May 1863.

The resort evolved further after 1885 when the Borough Council acquired ownership of the foreshore. The Marine Parks and Lakes were laid out by the Borough Engineer in 1887 and 1892. Their current form results from various phases of remodelling of the gardens, creating also King's Gardens between 1911-21 and the construction of the Venetian bridge in 1931. Their remodelled design was influenced by the designs of Thomas Mawson, the noted landscape architect and town planner. Between 1914 and 1921 as a result of landfill the area seaward of King's

Gardens and the Marine Lake was reclaimed to become Princes Park and to accommodate the development of the fairground site.

The history of the development of the Promenade, Pier and Gardens is therefore inextricably linked with the growth of the town itself and is consequently of intrinsic and fundamental importance in both architectural and historic terms to the appreciation of the resort.



## The Conservation Area

Promenade Conservation Area was designated in November 1990 and was last appraised in 2008.

The Government requires that from time to time we formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas. In order to fulfil this obligation, an updated Conservation Area Appraisal for the Promenade was adopted by the Council on November 16, 2017.

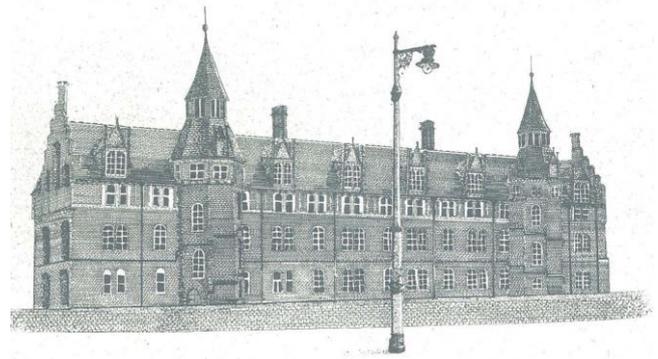
The core of the Conservation Area is the Promenade itself and includes the streets to the rear of the frontage and those linking it with Lord Street. On the seaward side, the Marine Lake, King's Gardens, South Marine Gardens, part of Marine Parade and the Lower Promenade are included.

The Conservation Area includes a substantial number of buildings and structures which are listed as of special architectural or historic interest. These include the imposing Promenade Hospital by Paull and Bonella of 1883, now converted to apartments. The former Victoria Baths, built in 1871-2 to replace the earlier baths of 1838, marks the centre point of the frontage and lies opposite the entrance to the Pier. Designed by J. Brunlees, the Pier opened in 1860 and was the first example of an iron pleasure pier in the country and remains the second longest at 1200 yards long. The southern end of the Promenade is highlighted by the Royal Hotel (now Royal Clifton Hotel), built in 1854 by Thomas Withnell, originally as a terrace of three large impressive houses.

The mixed commercial and residential area to the rear of the frontage is included in the Conservation Area. Inclusion of these streets assists in the enhancement of the streetscape quality to the general benefit of the resort area.

Within the Conservation Area it is not the intention to prevent change but rather to ensure that any new developments, alterations or extensions are in keeping with its existing character and that any harm is balanced against wider public benefits. The character of the Promenade Conservation Area is derived from the informal grouping and scale of the building within a rigid street pattern and the relationship with the formally laid out open spaces and the coast. The quality of Southport's townscape is one of its most important assets and designation as a conservation area lays greater stress on the retention of historic buildings, the preservation of trees and the maintenance and enhancement of streetscape features. Any new developments will

accordingly be expected to be of a high quality of design and materials.



## Additional Planning Powers

**If a building is a Listed Building additional special controls will also apply.**

Within the Conservation Area the following additional planning powers apply:-

- Any proposal involving the demolition of any building, wall or other structure within the Conservation Area (with minor exceptions) will require planning permission.
- Anyone wishing to cut down, top, lop or uproot a tree with a stem diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above ground level must give the Local Planning Authority six weeks written notice of their intention to do so (a "Section 211 notice" under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) subject to specific exemptions. Within this time the Authority may grant consent for the proposed work, or they may consider making a Tree Preservation Order. It is an offence to carry out tree works without permission.
- There are greater restrictions over 'permitted development' rights for the alteration and enlargement of dwellinghouses, and on the provision, alteration or improvement of outbuildings within their curtilage.
- Dormer windows will require planning permission, and in some cases, other changes to roofs and chimneys may require planning permission.
- The cladding of any part of external walls in stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic would require planning permission.

- Planning permission is needed for satellite dishes where they are to be located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto a highway.
- Micro-generation (e.g. wind turbines/solar panels) installations will require planning permission in some cases.
- Some aspects of commercial development and adverts are subject to additional restrictions.

For up to date advice on what needs planning permission go to [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) In determining applications for the development of land and alterations or extensions to buildings within the Promenade Conservation Area the Council will pay special regard to:-

- The retention, replacement and restoration of historical details and features of the buildings and their grounds including layout, boundary walls and landscaping, shop fronts, historic advertisements and joinery details.
- The design, materials and detail of extensions and alterations to existing buildings which will be expected to be in sympathy with the architectural and historic character of the building as a whole and to the setting of that building.
- The detailed design of any new building (including form, massing, height, scale and materials) and its integration with its immediate surroundings and the special architectural and visual qualities of the Conservation Area.
- The retention and preservation of existing trees and the provision of further appropriate landscaping.
- The retention and enhancement of views into and out of the area, vistas within the area and the general character and appearance of the street scene and roofscape.

#### **Guidance Notes for planning applications and use of materials:**

##### **Pre-Application Advice**

You can request advice from Planning Services prior to submitting a formal application. In some cases we make a charge for this service. Forms are available on the Council's website.

##### **Planning Applications**

A Heritage Statement will be needed to support your planning application; this should include an explanation of what the significance of the property is, and what impact the proposals have on that significance.

Outline applications will not usually be considered.

##### **Demolition**

There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of buildings of individual or group value. Accordingly demolition or redevelopment of any such building will normally be resisted. Any consent to demolish would normally be conditional on the building not being demolished before a contract is made to carry out redevelopment. This is to avoid gap sites developing. The redevelopment must be of a high standard of design.

##### **New development on vacant sites**

Any new development should be conceived with the original layout, architectural character and scale of the area in mind. Early discussions with Planning Services are advised prior to any design work being commenced. The services of a qualified architect are strongly recommended.

##### **Conversion of existing buildings**

Where planning permission to convert buildings into new uses is sought, the new use and internal layout of the building should be carefully considered. Particular attention will be paid to the building's external appearance, use of materials, the layout of gardens and car parks and the position of bin stores.

Different parts of the resort area have different characters, brought about by similar uses being clustered together, such as amusement arcades on Nevill Street and guesthouses on Bath Street. Existing clusters should be strengthened, to enhance the distinctive character of these areas.

##### **External alterations to existing buildings including extensions**

Every effort should be made to minimise external alterations, such as fire escapes and new windows (including dormer windows). Where external changes are required it should be made to a non-prominent elevation. Alterations or extensions should use the carefully chosen materials that match/complement the building. Again, the services of a qualified architect are strongly recommended.

##### **Windows**

Although scale, proportions, sizes and style may vary, vertical sliding sash windows are typical of this area. These windows should be retained and renovated where possible taking care to also retain and restore associated details such as cills and mouldings. If all or part of any window needs to be replaced it should match the original design. Care should be taken to ensure that 'reveals' are retained. This is important for practical (weather protection) as well as aesthetic reasons. If additional windows are essential, they should be restricted to the non-prominent elevations. Their size and proportion should match the original windows.

When repairing/replacing windows care must be taken to retain and restore details. Imitation 'leaded' lights should always be avoided whilst aluminium and UPVC windows have a different surface finish, are likely to have different detailing and proportions to the existing and consequently are likely to detract from the character of the building.

### **Dormer Windows and Rooflights**

New dormer windows are not generally accepted on principal elevations unless they are part of the original design. Any new dormer windows must be well-proportioned and kept to non-prominent elevations. Any new cladding must match roofing materials. Rooflights should also be restricted to non-prominent elevations, should be flush with the slope of the roof and should be as small as possible.

### **Wall Surfaces**

Brickwork and stonework should not be painted or rendered. Areas of brickwork or stonework requiring renewal should be repaired or replaced in their original form or pattern. Brick pointing should be compatible with existing construction, which is generally flush finish. Repointing should be carried out with lime mortar rather than cement to prevent softer bricks from deteriorating. Where stonework is to be cleaned, professional advice should be sought as the incorrect choice of treatments can result in damage.

Brick and terracotta features such as keystones, corbels, finials and leaf designs should be retained wherever possible. Cladding of brickwork in stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles will not be permitted for practical as well as aesthetic reasons and the use of bright obtrusive colours for stucco render should be avoided. If missing or damaged, stucco or plaster mouldings and similar details should be replaced in their original form or pattern. Care should be taken to use correct mixes and finishing coats.

Stucco render or plaster mouldings and similar details should be replaced in their original form or pattern if missing or damaged. Care should be taken to use correct mixes and finishing coats. Dry dash or pebble dash is typical of some late 19th or early 20th century buildings and any repair should be to a similar finish.

### **Roofs**

Original rooflines and profiles should be maintained. Any renewals or repairs should use reclaimed or new materials to match the original roof covering. Care should be taken to retain roof features such as ridge and hip tiles, eaves and gables details when carrying out repairs. Roofs in the conservation area are covered in thick Welsh slate which needs to be carefully matched.

### **Chimneys**

In most cases, the original chimney stacks and pots form an integral part of the design of buildings and create an interesting 'roofscape'. It is important, therefore, to opt for repairing rather than dismantling stacks if no longer in use. If the stacks

become unsafe, then they should be taken down and rebuilt to the original height and design taking care to replace chimney pots.

### **Porticoes, Porches and Verandahs**

These features should be retained and repaired. Mineral felt or other similar roofing materials should not be used. Where new porches and porticoes are proposed they should be appropriately designed with materials that are sympathetic to the age and style of the building, though these may not be suitable additions to the more simply designed properties. Verandahs must be regularly painted with an appropriate paint system and kept in good repair.

### **Front Doors**

Original doors and door surrounds should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Replacements should be to a sympathetic design. Wooden moulded and panelled doors are likely to be the most suitable. "Georgian style" doors with imitation semi-circular fanlights and UPVC should be particularly avoided. Care should be taken to retain and repair details around openings, such as architraves, thresholds, transoms and fanlights.

### **Boundary Walls, Fences, Gates and Gate Posts**

Original brick and stone boundary walls, including their stone or terracotta copings, should be repaired or rebuilt to the original design, using reclaimed or matching materials. Where new development results in new boundary walls these should be of a similar design and material in keeping with the historic appearance boundary treatments to neighbouring properties. Historic gates should be retained or replaced to the same designs and materials where necessary. Boundary walls and gateposts should not be painted, this has a poor visual appearance and can trap moisture which will cause deterioration.

Where boundary walls have been removed to frontages their replacement in traditional designs will be encouraged. Reintroduction of low front boundary walls and gateposts and the introduction of hedges, trees and greenery will greatly improve the appearance of the streetscape, reducing the visual impact of parked cars, and soften the appearance of hard-landscaping. Wooden fences and railings should not normally be installed along existing boundaries.

### **Services**

Wherever possible original rainwater gutters and downpipes should be replaced in cast iron to the same patterns. If replacements cannot be obtained then cast aluminium of similar colour and profile could be considered. Care should be taken in the siting of burglar alarms, central heating flues, meter boxes and bin store locations so as not to detract from the appearance of principal elevations.

### **Shopfronts, Security and signs**

Every effort should be made to retain any remaining parts of historic shopfronts including fascia boards. These can be

attractive and conspicuous features of very high quality (in contrast to most modern-day equivalents). The painting of shopfronts and fascias can take a variety of forms, using contrasting colours to highlight details. Permission will not be granted for internally illuminated box signs, as these project from the fascias and detract from the traditional character of the streetscape. No new roller shutters will be permitted within the conservation area as these create a dead appearance when the shop is closed.

### **Maintenance**

It is strongly advised that owners keep their property in good repair and condition. Regular and thorough maintenance can help avoid major structural repairs that can develop through neglect.

### **Website & email:**

[www.sefton.gov.uk/planning](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning)

[planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@sefton.gov.uk)

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