

REVIEW OF

Clarendon Street Conservation Area



Review of Clarendon Street Conservation Area

The Department of the Environment proposes to review the Clarendon Street Conservation Area designation, under Article 50 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. This area was designated as a Conservation Area in 1978 and associated guidance was published at that time. Therefore given the length of time that has passed the Department considers a review of the boundary and associated guidance as necessary. The area is still considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Conservation Area status brings with it control over the demolition of unlisted buildings under Article 51 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. In addition, trees in the Conservation Area will be protected as if a Tree Preservation Order was in place.

You are invited to send your views on the review of the Conservation Area and the contents of this issues paper which has been prepared in order to stimulate debate and comment.

How to give your views

Responses should be made in writing and sent to:

Clarendon Street Conservation Area

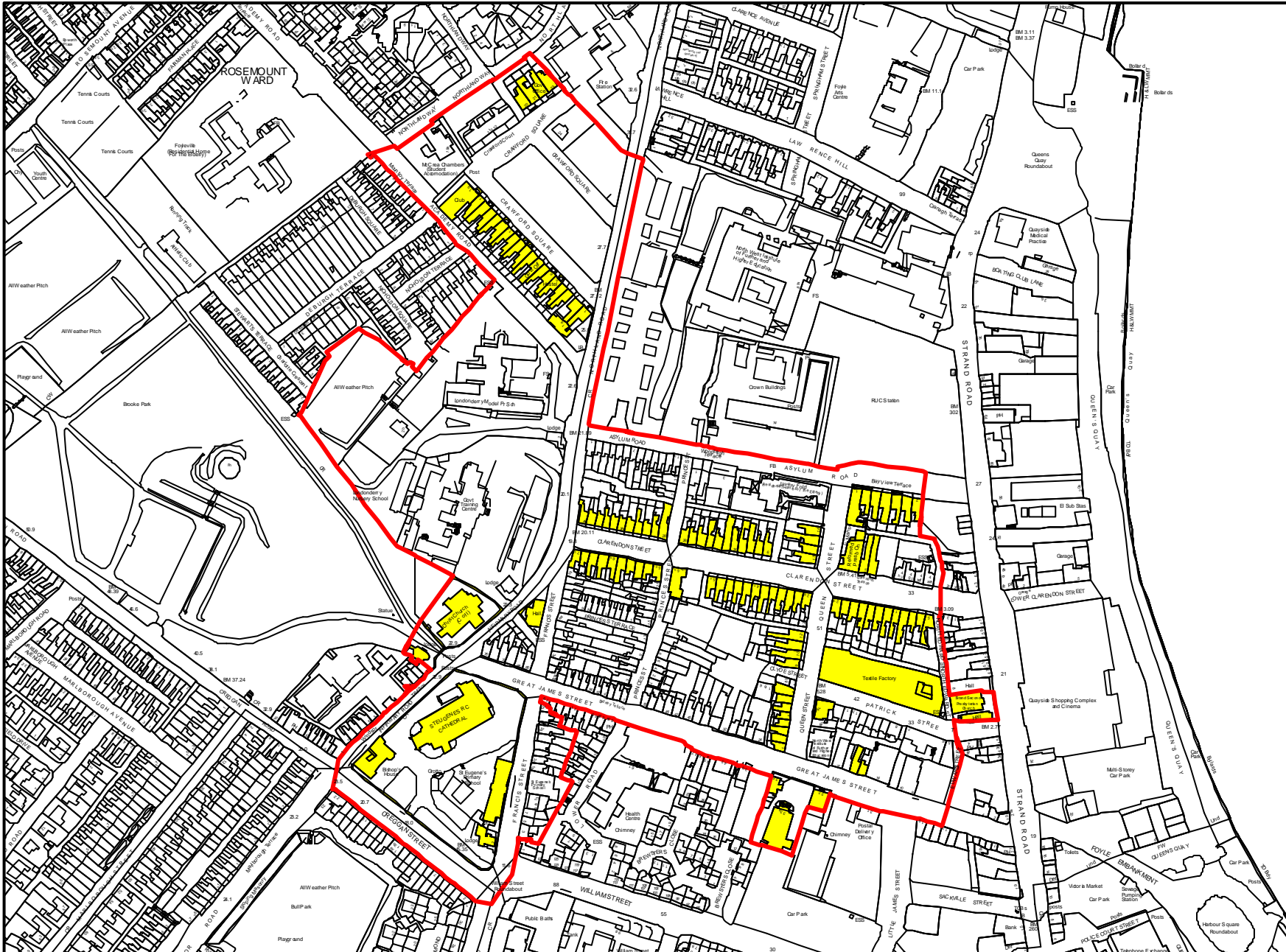
Orchard House
40 Foyle Street
Londonderry
BT48 1JY

It would be particularly helpful if comments could be forwarded by e-mail to:
divisional.planning.office.londonderry@nics.gov.uk

The Department will also be consulting Derry City Council, the Historic Buildings Council and other appropriate bodies in any review of this Conservation Area.

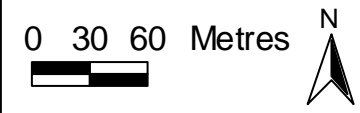
The consultation period will end on 1st October 2004.

Further copies of this document can be obtained by telephone: (028) 71319900, fax: (028) 71319777 or textphone (028) 90540642. The document is also available at the Planning Service website: www.planningni.gov.uk or by writing to the address above. In keeping with our policy on openness, the Department may make responses to the consultation publicly available upon request.



CLARENDON STREET CONSERVATION AREA

- Conservation Area
- Listed Building



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Introduction

Conservation is not a cosmetic exercise. Securing the preservation or enhancement of the historic built environment stems from strong cultural, economic and environmental objectives, the recognition of which is long established in various International Charters.

The character and appearance of a Conservation Area is inseparable from the physical fabric of which it is made. It is important therefore that anyone intending to carry out any work in a Conservation Area which affects its buildings, their settings, trees, open spaces or street scenes consider the implications and see all prospective changes, however small, within the context of their wider impact.

Policy Context

The Department's regional policies for Conservation Areas and other features of Northern Ireland's built heritage are currently set out in Planning Policy Statement 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage' published in March 1999. Planning Policy Statement 7 'Quality Residential Environments', published in June 2001 also includes specific policy provision for new residential development in Conservation Areas.

The original guidance for the Conservation Area was contained in the designation document which has now been republished. It is intended to inform all those with an interest in the Conservation Area, or those undertaking work on its buildings, landscape, streets or spaces. The Derry Area Plan 2011 contains specific proposals and policies relating to the Conservation Area which are a material consideration for Planning Service in discharging its planning functions.

This issues paper which has been prepared to stimulate debate and comment on the future of the Conservation Area and incorporates an appraisal and some issues for consideration.

Applicants seeking planning permission, conservation area consent, advertisement consent, listed building consent or grant aid for work in the Conservation Area should be able to demonstrate how they have regard to the guidance and the contents of this issues paper on how their proposals will contribute to its preservation or enhancement. The Department will endeavour to ensure that the activities of statutory undertakers and public agencies will maintain or improve the environmental quality of Clarendon Street Conservation Area.

Clarendon Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The city owes its origins to the 6th Century AD Christian Monastic settlement, which was established by Saint Columba within an oakgrove on a hill overlooking the River Foyle. The settlement continued to thrive and grow over the following centuries and it was because of its success and strategic location that made the town attractive for the English garrison established in 1566. Several attempts were made to break the English hold on the settlement, and in 1608 the fort and town were destroyed by the Irish led by Cahir O' Doherty. During the Plantation of Ulster, the Guilds of London were granted the city of Derry and in 1613 the construction of the new town began with the city's name being changed to Londonderry. The Honourable Irish Society was entrusted with the role of rebuilding the settlement, which became the first planned city in Ireland. In 1618 the City Walls were completed and withstood three separate sieges. After the third and final siege the city was rebuilt in the 18th century with the development mainly retained within the walls.

The development of the area to the north of the walled city, the area which is now known as the Clarendon Street Conservation Area, did not begin until the early 19th Century when the first building was erected, a Free Church bequeathed by Dr Knox, the Bishop of the Church of Ireland. Other development followed including a parish school, an infirmary (the old Foyle Hospital) and an asylum. The gentleman's residence, Clarendon Cottage, was also built at the beginning of the 19th Century. It still remains set in its private garden amid the terrace of Clarendon Street. By the end of the century the area had seen many changes. The river Foyle's banks had receded providing opportunity for growth of the city, new streets were formed and the new Presbyterian Meeting House was built. However it wasn't until the second half of the century that construction on the Georgian terraces of Clarendon, Queen, Princes and Great James Streets began. It was also around this time that construction of St Eugene's Cathedral began although it was 1903 before the spire was finally completed.

The Conservation Area can be broken up into three distinctive segments, the Clarendon Street Precinct with its fine Georgian architecture, St Eugene's Cathedral Quarter at the southern end of the Conservation Area and Crawford Square to the north.

Clarendon Street Precinct

This section of the Conservation Area is clearly defined by the grid iron pattern of the streets running off Clarendon Street. Georgian architecture dominates this area. Clarendon Street and the northern part of Queen Street provides some of the best examples of Georgian architecture within the city. They are three storey terrace houses predominantly finished with red brick, natural slate, wood sash windows and cast iron rainwater goods with semi-elliptical fanlights crowning the doorways. The properties on these streets are set slightly back from the footpath with a small area to the front enclosed,

typically, by wrought iron railings. Clarendon Street itself gives the impression of grandeur given the width of the street and the rise of the terraces up the hill toward the Northland Road. The terraces are uniform in design with only the church and manse on the corner of Queen Street and Clarendon Cottage on the corner of Princes Street breaking the rhythm. Other predominant buildings within this area include the City Factory on Patrick Street, the former Presbyterian Church and the former church hall on Great James Street.

While the fabric of the Conservation Area has largely remained the same since its designation in February 1978 a number of changes have occurred within the boundary. These vary in degree from the redevelopment of sites to re-use of existing buildings.

There have been a number of major developments within the Clarendon Street Precinct. The site of the former Foyle Hospital on Northland Road has been redeveloped to provide a housing scheme of apartments and townhouses. This development, known as Clarendon Manor, is located on a sloping site and can be viewed on approach from the east along Clarendon Street. Clarendon Terrace was erected on a gap site at the eastern end of Clarendon Street. The development consists of apartments designed to appear as 4 townhouses. Other changes include Lavery Fold, which was erected as a four storey home for the elderly, on the corner of Queen Street and Asylum Road. The properties at 8-14 Patrick Street were replacements for previous dwellings and were developed in the mid 1980's. The dwellings are finished in red brick which compliments the City Factory on the opposite side of the street. The properties are a mixture of two and three storey dwellings and flats and front directly onto the footpath. The design picks up on elements from the surrounding environs and includes a vertical emphasis with semi-elliptic fanlights over the doors.

Within the Conservation Area a number of opportunities have arisen for the redevelopment of gap sites. One example is the erection of a dwelling to the rear of No 27 Clarendon Street. This one and a half storey, stone dwelling is gable end onto Queen Street and fronts onto a walled courtyard. This could be considered as a traditional approach to design with the development reflecting the mass and character of the stable buildings traditionally located to the rear of such Georgian dwellings. A second example is the extension of No 48 Clarendon Street, an end of terrace dwelling, where the new development fronts onto Northland Road. The extension is of a modern design, an example of a contemporary approach to development within the Conservation Area.

Many of the properties on Clarendon Street and Queen Street have changed their use from mainly residential to office or commercial use. A number of ecclesiastical buildings have also retained their vitality by adopting new uses. The Reformed Presbyterian Church and Manse on the corner of Queen Street / Clarendon Street have been refurbished to

provide offices. The Church Hall at 20 Queen Street has had a number of uses and is currently used as an architect's office. The property at 33 Great James Street has also experienced several changes of use but is presently vacant. Similarly the City Factory has resisted redundancy after the decline of the textile industry. By finding a new use as an educational facility, this important listed building has been retained.

St Eugene's Cathedral Quarter

A number of buildings make up St Eugene's Quarter, the primary school, the gate lodge, the Bishop's house and the Cathedral itself. Given the setting of the Cathedral on a hill, the spire can be seen from many locations throughout the city. The Cathedral is of gothic design, dating from 1851, as is the much smaller Christ Church which is located just to the north of St Eugene's. The Cathedral Quarter is located at the southern end of the Conservation Area and the buildings are surrounded on four sides by roadways.

These buildings are listed and therefore very little change has occurred at this location since the designation of the Conservation Area. Change has been confined to a number of small extensions to the school, the Bishop's residence and the Cathedral building.

Crawford Square

Crawford Square is located at the northern tip of the Conservation Area. This area is made up of a terrace of Victorian properties facing onto a communal private garden. The name of this area would indicate that it was envisaged that dwellings would front onto the communal garden on more than two sides however the completion of the square was never realised. The properties in this area are typically three storeys high and two bays wide.

Overall Crawford Square has largely remained the same since the Conservation Area designation. Alterations have mainly involved the change of use from residential to commercial and office use as well as the sub-division of dwellings into flats. The most dramatic change has been the redevelopment of the former McCrea Chambers site to provide a mixed residential development.

Approaches to Design

The design of new buildings or the extension or alteration of existing ones should be carried out with sensitivity. This requires particular architectural and historic knowledge, judgement, skill and care. The design of any new building should be appropriate to and influenced by its site, the character of the area and the best of the surrounding built environment, while extensions or alterations should not damage or devalue the old.

Design solutions within the Conservation Area can be approached from a number of directions:

- The **REPRODUCTION** approach.

This is the most obvious way of maintaining the character of an original building and applies particularly to works affecting a listed building and other locally important buildings. Repairs and renovation works should be in the style of the original building and attention to detail is vital, including correct materials, colours, finishes and external joinery detailing. New work should be matched and blended with the old in order to achieve an architectural whole, but it should not be the intention to deceive or falsify the historical record as to the age or authenticity of the work. Substantial new work should be made distinguishable only to the expert eye or through appropriate records.

- The **TRADITIONAL** approach.

This is the approach most frequently followed for new buildings and extensions to unlisted buildings. It allows more flexibility in parameters of design than the purely reproduction approach. Massing, scale and use of materials should blend with their surroundings and whilst detailing is still important it need not involve slavish reproduction. This approach should be based on a knowledge and respect of the characteristics of existing adjoining buildings and sites. The end product should be a building which respects local character, preserving a measure of the uniqueness which the area has evolved.

- The **CONTEMPORARY** approach:

This is to design an uncompromisingly modern building or extension which can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing historic urban fabric. This approach is the most subjective and controversial. It may be acceptable within Clarendon Street Conservation Area, but only for a contemporary building which clearly demonstrates its quality.

The Conservation Area contains a number of Listed Buildings. These are buildings of special architectural or historic merit, and are afforded particular statutory protection. Once a building is listed, the consent of the Department is required for its demolition and for any works of alteration or extension, including works to the interior, that would affect its special character. Protection includes fixtures and curtilage structures. As indicated above proposals to alter listed buildings

should be generally in the style of their period and the Department's Environment and Heritage Service should be consulted on such matters before any work is commissioned.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance for works to the built heritage is available from a number of sources. However, the ongoing situation can be fluid with sources and levels of funding changing.

Information on sources of funding for works to the built heritage of Northern Ireland was brought together for the first time in 1999 in the publication 'Directory of Funds for Historic Buildings Northern Ireland', by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society in association with the Department's Environment and Heritage Service.

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) launched in April 1998, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), is the main source of funding currently available within Conservation Areas. This aims – in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sectors – to create exemplars of conservation practice and management.

The Future of Clarendon Street Conservation Area

Clarendon Street is one of two Conservation Areas within the city. It was designated as a Conservation Area in February 1978 and as twenty six years has passed since designation, a review of the Conservation Area is now desirable including a reassessment of the boundary and a review of the design guidance. At this stage, the views of the general public, interested bodies, the Historic Buildings Council and Derry City Council are being sought.

A number of issues need to be considered including:

1. Is the Conservation Area boundary still appropriate and if not where should the boundary be redefined?
2. Is there sufficient merit to extend the boundaries of the Conservation Area to include other significant areas such as Deburgh Terrace, Clarence Avenue, Lawrence Hill and part of Great James' Street or should they be considered as separate Conservation Areas?
3. Do you consider that extensions and alterations of buildings within the Conservation Area require restriction or relaxation in terms of guidance?
4. Is the contemporary design approach appropriate within the Clarendon Street Conservation Area or should any new build/extensions take the reproduction or the traditional approach?
5. Comments on other relevant issues would also be welcomed.