



Cleator Moor Conservation Area Appraisal

2021

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Glossary

Acanthus	A carved decorative representation of the leaf of an acanthus plant
Architrave	The lowest part of an entablature, sitting on columns in a classical façade. Also a moulded surround for a doorway, window or arch
Article 4	A local authority direction that restricts specified permitted development rights
Ashlar	Masonry consisting of squared, close-jointed blocks
Capital	The distinct, broadened pad at the top of a column
Chamfer	A sloping face at an edge or corner
Cornice	A projecting ornamental band at the top of a façade; the top section of an entablature
Entablature	The upper section of a classical façade, supported by columns, consisting of three layers: an architrave, above that a frieze, and above that a cornice
Fenestration	The arrangement of windows
Fluting	A set of narrow, parallel grooves used as decoration
Frieze	A horizontal band in the middle of an entablature, sometimes decorated
Hipped	(Of a roof) Having pitched ends over the gable walls
Kneeler	A horizontal, slightly projecting stone at the ends of the roof eaves, parallel with the gable wall
Pediment	An ornamental gable, often triangular or arched, used above windows and doors
Pilaster	A vertical strip of projecting masonry or timber, resembling a column, used as decoration
Portico	A porch in the form of a projecting roof with columns
String Course	An ornamental horizontal band formed by raised or carved masonry
Stucco	Fine, smooth plaster for wall facing and forming decorative features
Rectilinear	Consisting of straight lines
RSJ	Rolled steel joist
Wesleyan	Relating to the teachings of John Wesley, founder of Methodism

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Copeland Borough Council (the Council) currently administers eight conservation areas (Whitehaven, Corkickle, Hensingham, Egremont, Cleator Moor, Beckermeth, St Bees, and Millom). A further conservation area, Ravenglass, is located within Copeland but administered by the Lake District National Park Authority.

These range in size and character, with Whitehaven, the country's first post-medieval planned town and one of its most complete, being the largest in area (approximately 80 hectares) and the first designated (1969). Hensingham is the smallest at approximately two hectares.

Cleator Moor was designated in 2001. More recently, a brief overview was provided in the Borough's Conservation Area Design Guide (2017), but this appraisal has the capacity for a more in-depth assessment.



Figure 1 Cleator Moor within Copeland

1.2. What is a Conservation Area?

Local Planning Authorities have a responsibility under law to:

...from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance... [Underlines added]

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69(1)

These areas are designated as conservation areas, and the authority also has a duty to from time to time review the areas designated (Section 69(2)). This means the Council has made a commitment to take account of the effect on character and appearance of any development proposed within the area, and this applies to its entirety, not merely its buildings.

The special interest of a conservation area is engendered by all its positive qualities, and a job of the planning process is to ensure that change in a conservation area avoids harm to its positive aspects while allowing its negative aspects to be addressed. In order to do this, its character in positive, neutral and negative terms must be understood, stated and agreed upon. This is the job of the character appraisal (a requirement of Section 71(1) of the Act).

The appraisal is created through a process of public engagement with local people, whereby attendees at a meeting have the opportunity to present their views (1990 Act Sections 71(3-4)).

Once finalised, conservation area designation brings the following work under planning control:

- Demolition of buildings (where demolition is not already controlled)
- Works to or removal of trees
- Development that may be permitted elsewhere, e.g. some house extensions

Generally, home owners benefit from conservation area designation as the controls sustain and/or enhance property values, a finding that has been confirmed by research from the London School of Economics (Ahlfeldt, Holman and Wendland, 2012).

Planning applications made in conservation areas are typically made in full rather than in outline as this allows their implications to be fully understood. This process is not only governed by the 1990 Act mentioned above, but also from guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policy such as found in the Copeland Local Plan.

Additionally, conservation area appraisals are useful in discharging Section 72(1) of the 1990 Act, in which “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance” of the area. The appraisal does an important job in describing that character and appearance comprehensively.

1.3. What is the Purpose of this Document?

A conservation area appraisal is a tool that explores and defines what is special about the area's architecture and history, and therefore worth preserving or enhancing:

A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 18a-025-20190723

Appraisal takes a broad approach, looking at the development and evolution of an area, the relationships within and outside it, how it is used and has been used in the past, and if it has any associations with notable people, movements, innovations or practices.

A place's street pattern may be of importance, along with the style, appearance, construction and arrangement of its buildings. Key views, connections, boundaries, nodes where people meet, junctions, routes and zones are important: in other words, what makes the place what it is, what makes it valuable, and what makes it distinct from other places.

With this process there is the opportunity to reappraise what is already known about the area. Places are in constant flux, both in terms of their physical makeup and in what we understand of them.

The appraisal will be used during the development control process to gauge the impact of potential developments. It can also be used by those making planning applications as a resource to assist in self-assessment, and may be of interest to people living in or studying the area, either generally or in the course of commenting on a planning application.

The relationship between a conservation area and its occupants is particularly important because the maintenance of property within the area is one of the key ways by which its character can be preserved and enhanced, and harm avoided.

This appraisal has been prepared following detailed assessment of Cleator Moor using Historic England's 2016 advice document on conservation area character appraisals. It contains appendices mapping building quality and landscape analysis, which should be viewed in conjunction with the descriptive sections. While it attempts to reach a sufficiently high level of detail, it is not possible to describe all that is significant and interesting, so where aspects have been omitted or overlooked this should not be taken to mean that they lack architectural or historical importance.

2. Location, History and Development

2.1. Overview of Cleator Moor Conservation Area

Cleator Moor conservation area was designated in 2001, making it the second most recent of Copeland's areas to be designated. It is a relatively small area centred on the Market Square, including a short section of the High Street.

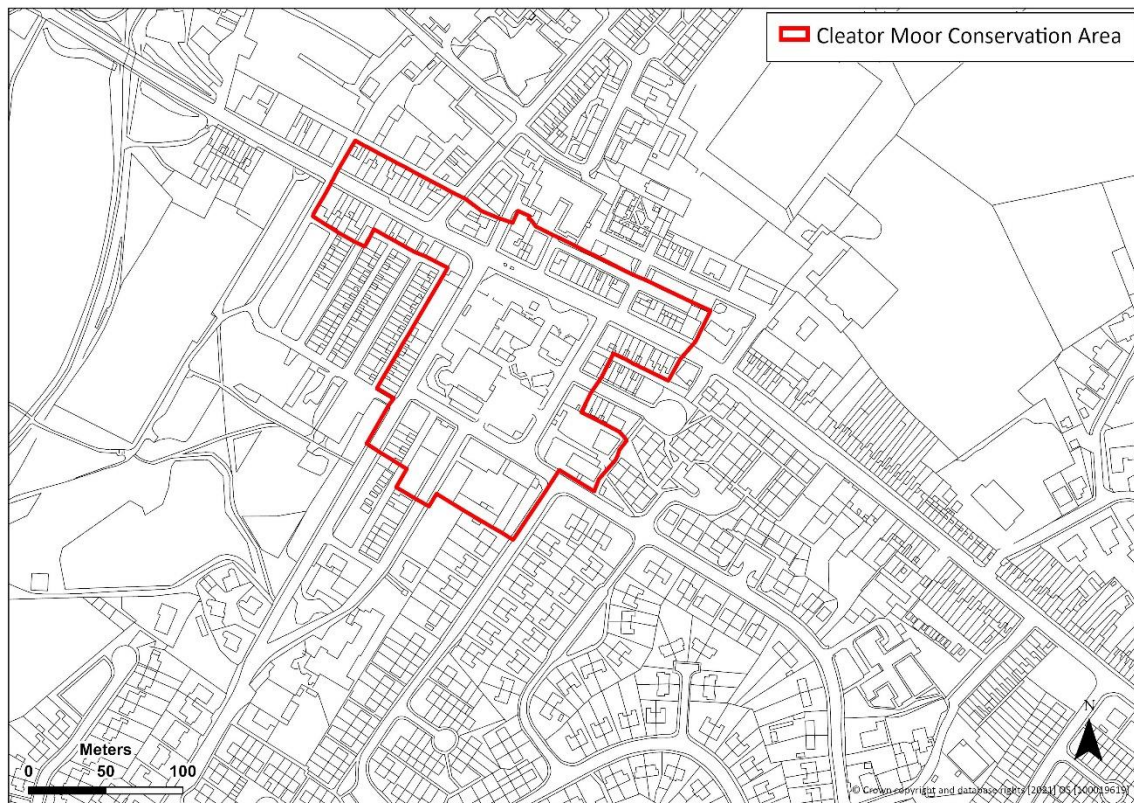


Figure 2 The conservation area within Cleator Moor

The area contains six listed structures, one of which is a terrace comprising eight premises (13-20 High Street). Additionally, it contains 58 High Street, formerly the NatWest Bank, 5 Jacktrees Road including its cast iron and glass veranda, and three structures within the square itself: the Victorian local government offices, Edwardian library, and the 1903 memorial fountain that stands before them adjacent to High Street. All these structures are listed grade II.

The pattern of the conservation area's urban grain is rectilinear, with streets meeting at right angles and lying parallel with each other. This gives a strong sense of corners with straight edges enclosing blocks between them.

Buildings are a mixture of two and three storeys, with those lying around the square generally taller than those within it, which gives a sense of an open space that is partly given over to car parking, surrounded by a clearly defined edge. Though the attractive 13-20 High Street lies on the north side of the square, apart from this the north side is generally less strongly defined than the remainder, with a less consistent series of facades. High Street is framed by a series of two and three storey frontages that are varied in quality. This section of the conservation area features

two or three attractive higher status buildings that are slightly taller and more elaborate than those around them, including the listed former NatWest branch at number 58.

The conservation area was added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk register in 2019 on account of its poor and deteriorating condition.

2.2. Historic Development

2.2.1. Origins

Cleator Moor's conservation area is primarily a product of industrial and mining activity during the late Victorian period, however the town's history extends back as far as the 12th century. High quality haematite prompted the development of the town from a few cottages into a booming settlement with a peak population of over 10,000 people in the early 1880s.

Though Cleator Moor's population increased dramatically during the latter half of the 19th century, it was the late 17th century that first saw iron smelting take place in the area, 1694 when the village of Cleator became the site of Cumbria's first blast furnace. Coal mining also took place in the town, with the first coal being extracted from the later 18th century onwards.

A significant proportion of those arriving in Cleator Moor for work in its heyday were from Ireland, leading to the nickname "Little Ireland" and a corresponding level of Catholicism in the town that was uncharacteristically high compared with the majority of England.

2.2.2. Development History

A key aspect of Cleator Moor's growth from a scattered rural settlement into the hive of industry it became was the availability of Irish workers who arrived in the North-West of England following the Great Famine in the 1840s. This ready source of labour, combined with the presence of high-grade raw materials, spurred the creation of the town. It was during this period that the grain of Cleator Moor began to transform from little scattered clusters to the regimented arrangement of terraced houses, interspersed by larger buildings, recognisable today.

The attractiveness of Cumbria's iron ore was due to its low phosphor content, which made it suitable for the Bessemer process of steel manufacture, the first such inexpensive mass production technique. During the 1860s and 1870s, expansion of Cleator Moor's population led to a housing shortage, although levels of prosperity in the town were relatively high due to the demand for steel.

This transformation was accompanied and accomplished by the introduction of a network of railway lines, served by two stations, which connected to the Whitehaven, Cleator and Egremont Railway and the Cleator and Workington Junction Railway respectively. However, by the early 20th century other forms of steel manufacture were gaining traction, which left the relatively expensive Cumbrian haematite at a disadvantage. Following the First World War, mining in the area steadily declined. In this sense, the story of Cleator Moor closely resembles that of Millom in the south of the Borough, which expanded during the same decades (between about 1860, when the railways arrived, and 1920, or the end of the First World War) on the viability of iron ore mining and steel working.

2.2.3. Map Progression



Figure 3 OS Map 1860 – Urban development is fairly light, consisting of two small clusters of terraced houses at the intersections of Birks Road and Crossfield Road with the Ennerdale Road. Despite the lack of housing that was to become problematic in the 1870s and 80s, a number of pits and the haematite ironworks are already marked and connected by railways.



Figure 4 OS Map 1898 – By 1898, Cleator Moor has expanded quite noticeably. Housing is being developed in two main clusters: around Crossfield Road and St John's Church, and around the junction of Birks Road, where the majority of the buildings within the conservation area have been built, including the Market Square.



Figure 5 OS Map 1923 – Between 1898 and 1923, relatively little changes. The majority of the development Cleator Moor experienced in the 20th century postdates World War Two and has been focused on residential provision and decommissioning/redevelopment of mining sites. The listed library on Market Place is a notable exception, dating from 1906.

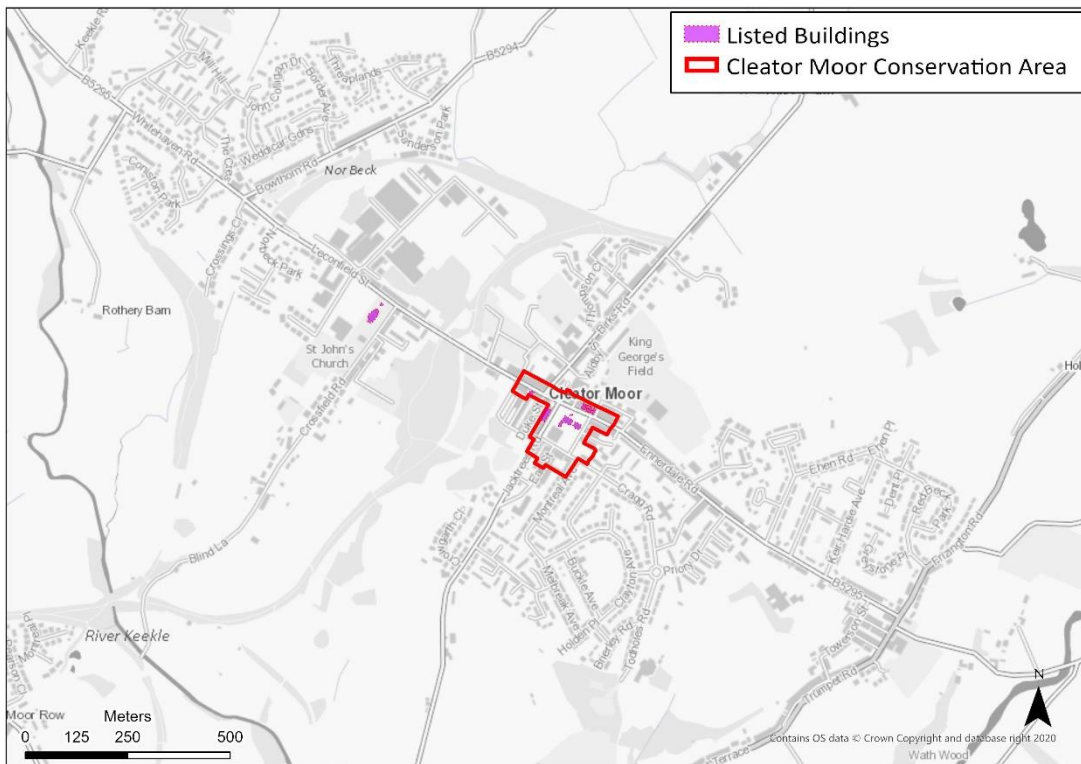


Figure 6 OS Map 2020 – Post-war residential development has significantly increased the surface area of the town and all of the mining and steel working related infrastructure has been removed. The site of the iron and steel works has been redeveloped into an industrial estate; the path of the railway that bisected the town is left now as an unusual area of “no-man’s land”, creating a town of two halves. The paths of the railways are still visible as strips of vegetation.

3. Character

3.1. Built Environment

3.1.1. Architectural Quality and Built Form

Virtually all of Cleator Moor's conservation area's built environment dates from the late 19th century, with a small amount from the early 20th. Within Market Square, and facing its forward section adjoining Market Street, which is known as Market Place, the original and central building is the grade II listed Local Government Offices. This dates from 1877-79 and is of red sandstone in a classical style as is common for public buildings from this period, to a design by GE Grayson. This building was originally a market hall and public offices, and was augmented by library spaces in 1894, however, this use was not to last as a dedicated library was built next door in 1906. This later building is still Cleator Moor's library and is of a similar style and appearance to the Local Government Offices.



Figure 7 Local Government Offices, listed grade II

The Local Government Offices is a handsome, symmetrical building consisting of a single tall storey with cellars. It is well proportioned and detailed, with a hipped slated roof with iron rainwater goods. Chimneys are retained. Ashlar moulding and string courses break up the squared, coursed rubble that constitutes the majority of its masonry. Sash windows with plain panels below are arranged two per side to flank a porticoed main entrance with engaged columns and dog-legged stairs. This approach to design is quite typical of the period, whereby civic buildings are given a temple-like appearance, reflecting their stature as places set apart from and above the workings of daily life.



Figure 8 Local Government Offices, listed grade II, along with two of the Square's three sculptures by local artist Conrad Atkinson (1988).

The neighbouring 1906 library is similarly listed grade II and styled in the classical way, which essentially lasted until the Second World War but quickly came to be seen as passé in the post-war years. Nonetheless, this and the Local Government Offices make an attractive pair and a high quality centrepiece to the conservation area, dignifying the Market Place with a stature that is unapologetically civic and accentuated by the space allowed around the buildings, setting them apart from their surroundings.



Figure 9 Public Library, listed grade II

This public library is a Carnegie Library, which is to say an example funded using a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, which for a thirty year period between approximately 1890 and

1920 engaged in the greatest period of philanthropic support of public buildings there has ever been. This endeavour has been called the “advent of transatlantic standards for public space” because the same organisation was funding the same types of buildings concurrently in both the UK and US. The library dates from 1906, which was during the middle of the period, in which the Corporation was transitioning to a more tightly controlled approach to the architecture of the buildings it was funding. This was a period in which Carnegie’s secretary James Bertram was taking a more central role in the organisation of the funding process, which culminated in his publication in 1911 of the pamphlet “Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings”, which essentially provided six template layouts to suit different site sizes and shapes. The aim of this was to minimise the scheme’s expenditure on grandiose architecture.

In Market Place, to the front of the Local Government Offices, stands the grade II listed memorial fountain. This is not a war memorial, but a dedication to the town’s benefactor John Stirling on the occasion of his golden wedding anniversary. It dates from 1903, and was originally topped with a finial in the shape of a heron or pelican, which had been lost by the time of listing in 1973. It is conceivable that this still exists somewhere in the locale, but no information about it is currently known.



Figure 10 The 1903 memorial fountain, listed grade II, which used to be topped by a finial shaped like a bird

The impression of Market Square has been eroded by the large quantity of railings that were fitted during a public realm scheme in the early 1990s. They are not objectionable by themselves, and are indeed of good quality in isolation, but collectively they overpower the space, making it appear cluttered and partitioned.



Figure 11 Iron railings, dating from the early 1990s

The impression is further eroded by the Civic Hall, an unfortunate post-war building, the harm of which is fortunately limited by it being only a single storey. It replaced an earlier market hall that dated from the first phase of the Square in 1879 but burnt down in 1966 following its use to a plastics factory.

The current hall does feature an octagonal annexe, which is a slightly interesting addition, although it is not externally detailed to a high standard. Alteration involving higher quality fenestration, coupled with a more attractive solution for the rest of the building, could do much to improve and add definition to the whole rear half of the square, bounded by Jacktrees Road, Cragg Road and Market Street. Most recently, this site has been added to with a meeting room, granted consent in 2007. Interestingly, this building closely resembles a Victorian goods shed. It is in red-orange brick, with coped and kneelered gables, slate roof and semicircular-headed windows. It is of quite minimalist design and sits unobtrusively within its surroundings despite being something of an anachronism, this site never having been used for rail freight.



Figure 12 Civic Hall

On the corner of Jacktrees Road and High Street there used to stand a substantial three storey building with shop fronts around its base, however, following fire in 1921 this was mostly demolished, leaving a gap site that does little to define the junction.



Figure 13 The vacant corner plot of Jacktrees Road and High Street. This robs an important junction (between High Street and the Market Square) of a lot of stature.

Surrounding Market Square there are several buildings that contribute to the conservation area's character and distinctiveness. 5 Jacktrees Road, the former Co-Operative building, is listed grade II and is notable for its cast-iron veranda carried on thirteen fluted Gothic columns. The building itself has a simple, handsome façade of thirteen bays that features fluted pilasters at its ground floor. It is a rebuild and enlargement of the original premises,

which were constructed at the time of the establishment of this part of the town, probably in the 1860s, and today constitute the central part of the building. The veranda is likely part of the rebuild, and therefore dates to the early 20th century, at which time the building was lengthened at the ends and the gables/ridges raised to a consistent height.

The building's current colour scheme, like that of most of the buildings surrounding the square, is very muted, with an essentially white-on-white theme that, while it does accentuate the dark green of the ironwork, fails to add much vivacity to the townscape.



Figure 14 5 Jacktrees Road and its veranda, listed Grade II

A terrace of small but engaging two-storey houses adjoins 5 Jacktrees Road, enclosing the western end of that street and defining one side of the corner along with the Columba Club on Cragg Road. Numbers 14 and 15 appear to be pairs of houses that have been merged together Cragg Road, which forms the “back” of the Square, was mostly laid out by the end of the 19th century, consisting of the three storey Columba Club building, a Wesleyan Methodist church, a former flour mill and a former auction mart.



Figure 15 Numbers 16-23 Jacktrees Road. Plastic windows and doors, pebbledash, satellite dishes and roof tiles are very much in evidence, but the row has much potential.



Figure 16 Columba Club. Aside from the need for external redecoration, this building suffers from an inactive ground floor, which could be altered to make more of this corner.



Figure 17 Methodist church and Phoenix Court

The Methodist church is gothically styled in red sandstone. Adjoining it to the rear is a Sunday school in the international style. This is an unusual but not unwelcome addition to the conservation area and presents a handsome façade to Earl Street composed of a mixture of pink, brown and umber bricks. This building dates to during or shortly after World War Two, although the pink brick sections of the façade appear later and are poor. Its two main doorways are beautifully executed in bricks of various sizes and colours with butterscotch coloured pointing, but both have been disfigured by the inept insertion of steel joists, presumably to support the lintels.



Figure 18 Sunday school doorway on Earl Street. This excellent brickwork would greatly benefit from the replacement of the RSJs with something more subtle, and greater care in future repairs with the pointing.

On the other side of Earl Street is a substantial pair of buildings formerly used as a flour mill and dating from shortly after 1892, when the original 1882 mill on the site burnt down. Both these buildings are currently operated by Phoenix Enterprise Centre, which uses them as offices in addition to 5 Jacktrees Road. The first building, closest to the Square, consists of three-and-a-half tall red brick storeys with windows featuring segmental arched heads in red sandstone. It sits on a plinth of squared sandstone rubble. Behind it on Earl Street is the largest building in Cleator Moor's conservation area, a substantial and impressive red sandstone mill of four tall stories with a tower adding another three stories' worth of height at the north end. This forms a landmark across much of the surrounding area. It is constructed from coursed squared rubble and features segmentally arched window heads, plain raised sill courses, and a slightly projecting entrance on Earl's Road with a cornice. It is finished in white render on its north, south and east sides.



Figure 19 The former flour mill on Earl Street

Beside the mill, and forming a corner to the conservation area on Montreal Avenue, is a former auction mart, now part of Phoenix Court, constructed in the early twentieth century. The long, single-storey range extending back down Montreal Avenue is a simple, largely windowless volume that nonetheless defines an edge to the square and encloses a yard between itself and the mill, providing a hidden area for car parking.



Figure 20 Former auction mart on corner of Cragg Road and Montreal Avenue

On Market Street on the east side of the square, there were formerly two buildings that have now been demolished, both of which dated from the early 20th century. One of these was a picture theatre. Currently, their sites form a vacant square of grass.



Figure 21 Site of the former picture theatre. Although the square is missing a piece here, it does allow a lovely view of the mountains. The concrete, garages and weeds, however, do not allow the view to be fully enjoyed.

Victoria Street, which intersects Market Street, contains housing that is earlier than the buildings mentioned above, dating from the late 19th century. Most of this is excluded from the conservation area, but the end buildings on Market Street, which are three stories on the southern side (the Masonic Hall of 1898) and two stories with a set of attractive pedimented

dormers that give the impression of three storeys on the north, establish a prevailing façade height that is continued northward with 48 High Street on the corner of Market Street.



Figure 22 Number 48 High Street and the end of Victoria Street, viewed from the front of Market Place

The three storey facades continue some way down High Street in a row of shops with residential uses above, and terminate with a short row of two storey houses that ends at number 40. Opposite this is a row of two storey shops and houses that are quite modest in appearance.



Figure 23 Looking east along High Street from the corner of Union Street towards the edge of the conservation area



Figure 24 Numbers 43, 44, 45 and 46 High Street

Note the ground floor treatments of 43, 44 and 45. Fortunately, at first and second floor height, ornate console brackets, string courses and window pediments survive. The paint scheme of Number 45 has had the effect of both hiding its ornamentation and failing to match with 44. Note that the roof of 45 has also lost its ridge tiles and no longer matches 44. There is a distinct contrast between the windows of 43-45, and those at 46. There exists much potential to improve these buildings using Copeland's guidance on shopfronts.

At the corner of High Street and Union Street, which forms the opposite side of a crossroads with Market Street, stands one of the conservation area's most attractive buildings, 13-20 High Street. This listed building is similarly three stories, with shop fronts on the ground floor and sash windows above, those on the first floor being in eight pairs with pediments of either a segmental or triangular design. The windows are in plain surrounds, but the pediments, which are deeply moulded, are supported on half columns with corbels shaped like masks. The second floor windows are also in plain surrounds. They lack pediments but the surrounds are splayed at the base and sit on a sill course. The eight shop fronts are separated by pilasters that feature acanthus capitals below a frieze that carries the shop signage, with a cornice above, upon which sit the first floor windowsills.



Figure 25 13-20 High Street, listed grade II

Between 13-20 High Street and Aldby Street stand 10, 11 and 12 High Street. These are low, two storey buildings that have lost much of their historic detailing. Number 10, which stands on the corner, retains its chamfered corner containing the door but has lost its attractive pierced bargeboards and spiked ridge tiles. All three of these properties once featured rounded corners on the ground floor windows, and the upper floor ones too at Number 10, but these have all been lost and replaced with standard rectangular openings.



Figure 26 Number 10, 11 and 12 Market Place. Almost no facets of their original beauty have survived

The entrance to Aldby Street is both one of the most conspicuous locations in the conservation area as it is at the “front” of the square, facing the area of highest footfall and traffic, and one

of its least successful. The buildings to either side of the junction are low and irregular and suffer from poor quality detailing and alteration. 9 High Street, on the west side of the junction, makes a particularly negative impression. It is a single storey unit in brown brick which is to the detriment of this conspicuous part of the conservation area. It appears to originally have been a continuation of the adjoining number 8, which extended to the corner.



Figure 27 Entrance to Aldby Street from High Street, showing the building housing Numbers 7 and 8 High Street (the two storey building), which formerly extended to the corner now occupied by the single storey number 9

On the corner of High Street and North Street is the Commercial, a public house of three stories with a distinctive curved Dutch gable on its corner. It also features five dormer windows flush with the facades, two on High Street and three on North Street. It has the potential to be an attractive part of the local area, although this potential is not currently capitalised upon. This building, and the junction of Jacktrees Road and High Street, serve as a gateway into and out of the square for traffic taking the road to Hensingham and Whitehaven.



Figure 28 The Commercial public house on the corner of High Street and North Street

The conservation area projects a short way down High Street until it reaches Montreal Street. The buildings in this section are a mix of two and three storeys. Most of the two storey ones are modestly ornamented, consisting of shop units at ground floor with residential space above. 84 High Street features an interesting corner detail with a Dutch gable, however the corner door and its moulded surround, and that of the window above, have been lost. This building was not originally rendered.



Figure 29 Facing the entrances to North Street and Birks Road from the corner of Market Place

These are interspersed with higher status buildings of two tall storeys, in red sandstone, which form attractive additions to this varied section of streetscape, which has a characteristically late Victorian appearance. These buildings are of an ornate style, featuring pilasters and pediments and were designed from the outset as banks. Number 58 High Street, formerly NatWest, is the only listed building in this section of the conservation area. It is grade II listed.



Figure 30 The grade II listed former Natwest at 58 High Street

Number 55 High Street is another such red sandstone building, as is the former conservative club that was built in 1883 with funding from local mine owner John Stirling to designs by T.L Banks, who also designed the Methodist church and Market Hall in Whitehaven. Adjacent to the conservative club was Montreal Church of England School, one of the town's finest buildings, completed and subsequently enlarged between 1865 and 1890. It was completed in a grand gothic style, with a ninety-eight foot high clocktower and space for over a thousand children. This was demolished following the Second World War due to damage caused by subsidence, an ironic legacy of Cleator Moor's mining years.



Figure 31 The former conservative club of 1883. Note the ornamentation to the windows and the lettered frieze and pediment at the top. Timberwork such as this is vulnerable and requires regular inspection.

3.1.2. Materials

The majority of the buildings in Cleator Moor's conservation area are faced with render, although some that were originally masonry have since been rendered. Pebbledash features here and there, although is mostly restricted to the less historic buildings and domestic properties.

Higher status buildings sometimes make use of the local red sandstone, likely to have been quarried near St Bees, although the use of stucco is notable on 13-20 High Street, which allows the attractive window mouldings to be picked out in contrasting colours. The library and local government offices in Market Place are notable for having porticos ornamented with grey granite columns.

The smaller front building of Phoenix Mill on Cragg Road is constructed from red brick, and the international style Sunday school nearby on Earl Street is mostly in brown and burnt umber bricks, with some more modern pink/red brick added.

Apart from these, the main wall finish is likely to be a plain cement render, usually painted white.

Graduated slate roofs have survived well. Some have been replaced in tile, although this has been fairly minimal.

Use of inappropriate windows has particularly affected the residential properties in the conservation area, most likely as a consequence of permitted development rights. This could be restricted through the use of an Article 4 direction, however, one is not currently in place.

3.1.3. Uses

Uses are varied within Cleator Moor conservation area. Shops and other services are to be found on High Street, occupying ground floors with either accommodation or back-of-house uses above.

A number of offices and other commercial spaces can be found surrounding the Square on its east and south sides, along with terraced houses.

The Square itself is occupied by civic buildings and car parking.

3.2. Public Realm

3.2.1. Views, Vistas, Glimpses

Views are fairly limited from within the conservation area as the space mostly consists of the Square, which is surrounded by taller buildings. One exception is where two buildings in the south-east corner have been removed, permitting a view out towards the Lake District.



Figure 32 View eastward across end of Market Street, toward the Lake District hills

There are several vistas of interest, mainly taking in the buildings in and around the Square.



Figure 33 Vista from the corner of High Street and Jacktrees Road, taking in 5 Jacktrees Road and its veranda, and the local government offices and old library. This is framed at the rear by the Columba Club, Methodist Chapel and Phoenix Mill on Cragg Road.



Figure 34 A vista opens up at the end of Market Street, looking left past the front of the library across Market Place, and ahead to 13-20 High Street



Figure 35 Vista from High Street, looking west past Market Place and 13-20 Jacktrees Road. At the centre of this vista is a gap site, where the building on the corner of Jacktrees Road and High Street has been demolished.

The removal of the corner building on Jacktrees Road and High Street has had a negative effect on the vista shown in Figure 35, which would be a far stronger embodiment of the conservation area were it resolved fully. Also apparent here is the potential for the Market Place public realm to be improved, bringing a more useable public area and less partitioning between the street, the buildings and the interstitial space.

3.2.2. Roads and Paths

The square is characterised to an greater than ideal extent by car parking, primarily on its east and west sides. Though parking is a valid and needed function, this creates a poorly defined area that is not useable for anything other than parking.



Figure 36 Surface car parking to the rear of Market Square creates seas of grey, ill-defined tarmac

The vast majority of the surfacing of pavements and other public realm within the Square dates from the early 1990s. It is neither especially good nor especially poor quality, and is today rather dated in appearance without having any historic character.



Figure 37 Concrete and tarmac surfaces abound

The surfacing of pavements and the road itself is otherwise tarmac in poor condition, with some pavements on High Street being a slightly more attractive grey cement paving slab.



Figure 38 An area of original stone setts outside a door at Phoenix Mill on Ehen Road. This is one of very few original areas of surfacing left

3.2.3. Boundaries

Iron railings dating from the early 1990s public realm works characterise and dominate much of Market Square, and particularly Market Place adjacent to High Street. These are not unattractive in and of themselves, but are overpowering together and distract from anything else.

They are placed in conjunction with dwarf walls in red sandstone. Some of these relate to the construction of the local government offices and the library, but others have been added subsequently to delineate various parts of the Square, which is mainly used for car parking around its periphery.



Figure 39 Edges in Market Square are characterised by slightly haphazard and untidy collections of fencing, bollards etc. These are not optimal.

Bollards are also frequently used as part of this scheme to separate vehicle access areas from those for pedestrians, and this adds to the clutter and lack of meaningful hierarchies or relationships between the buildings and the spaces around them.

These pseudo edges are composed variously of bollards, fencing and low walls. They are also demarcated by two different kinds of lamppost, litter bins, benches and trees in protectors, all in various states of dilapidation. Together, they give an impression of edges almost like tide lines, where objects have washed up alongside one another without much in the way of organisation.

Boundaries are formed in a lot of places by the facades of the buildings themselves, which extend up to the rear of the pavement. This is one of the key differences in feel between Market Square and the areas around it: in the former the boundaries are made by the numerous objects described above, in the latter they are mostly made by the buildings.

3.3. Natural Environment

3.3.1. Open Spaces

Natural open space characterises little of the conservation area. It is highly urbanised, with only a view out toward the Lake District permitted where two buildings have been demolished and not replaced (see above).

3.3.2. Water

There are no designed or adventitious water features of note in the conservation area, apart from the memorial fountain, which does not appear to have operated in decades.

3.3.3. Trees

Trees are not numerous, being limited to a number of examples that date from the early 1990s public realm works. These are located in tree pits, mostly with metal protectors around them at regular intervals around the perimeter of the Square. Some of them have died, and none is a particularly fine example. They do not frame or highlight any particular qualities of the area, and instead clutter and obscure views across it, but do at least provide softening and greenery to break up the mass of hard surfaces.



Figure 40 Trees in pits dating from the 1993 public realm works

4. Key Characteristics



Figure 41 Market Place as viewed from Crowgarth House on the corner of Market Street and High Street

- Cleator Moor town, and hence conservation area, has a short history, essentially dating to between about 1850 and 1910. Following the First World War, its prosperity declined along with the market for its haematite and steel. The town, like many former industrial towns in the UK, has struggled to capture a new source of prosperity and has experienced a protracted period of underinvestment.
- The conservation area is laid out on a grid, arranged around a square, with streets extending from the sides and corners.
- Materials, building heights, styles and uses are all quite varied but are almost all of a solid wall construction, later development having taken place in other parts of Cleator Moor.
- Although predicated on the arrival of the railway, Cleator Moor's conservation area does not closely relate to it. The urban area developed in two clusters to the east and west of the railways, which connected further to various mining and industrial sites. From within the conservation area, the influence of the railway is not appreciable.
- The character of the Square is quite different from that of the surrounding streets, with the former being characterised to a greater extent by open space, but cluttered with parked cars, fencing and other street furniture. The surrounding streets are characterised by taller buildings in varied styles set flush with the rears of the pavements.

5. Summary of Issues



Figure 42 High Street looking to the west, showing unsympathetic fenestration, loss of shop fronts and unattractive signs. Note also the nearest building, which has lost its corner doorway at some point, upsetting the emphasis of its façade. The streetscape is particularly uninspiring, comprising tarmac, concrete and steel, none of it deployed with any thought for attractiveness.

- The Square has been compromised by clutter and car parking, which robs it of much spatial hierarchy, flow and definition, and confuses it to the point circulation and the vistas across the buildings are harmed.
- Maintenance problems and poor quality alterations are also much in evidence, particularly among the commercial and residential buildings, which make up the majority of the building stock.
- The locations of the car parks result in parked cars being one of the primary uses of the Square, which was laid out several decades before car ownership started to become widespread in the early twentieth century.
- In several locations, buildings have been demolished and either replaced with very poor quality buildings of the wrong size and appearance, or not replaced at all, leaving a gap site.



Figure 43 The side elevation of the Methodist Church bears particular witness to the damage that can be caused by hard cement pointing. Much of the stone has delaminated and powdered as a result.

Solid walls constructed from soft, porous materials such as sandstone require soft, porous materials to repoint, render and plaster them. The Council can give advice on the use of lime, which is the recommended material.

6. Appendices

6.1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis)

- Strengths
 - Generally good survival of historic fabric and original layout
 - Some attractive, high quality buildings
 - The conservation area is small, meaning its problems can be addressed in a focussed way
 - The conservation area retains good footfall
- Weaknesses
 - Widespread loss of historic detailing, poor maintenance and sense of tiredness
 - High vacancy levels of shops
 - Public realm is cluttered and tired
 - Surfaces are frequently made from unattractive materials (tarmac, concrete) and in poor condition
 - Excessive traffic and parked cars
 - Several gap sites
 - Several buildings of poor quality
 - The setting of the conservation area is poor; surrounding urban fabric is in poor condition, often unattractive and disjointed
- Opportunities
 - Gap sites provide scope for new buildings to make a great improvement to local character and distinctiveness
 - Public realm work could return the core of the conservation area to a space that functions for more than car parking
 - There is scope to greatly improve the appearance of the buildings through sensitive modification and repair, better design of signage, more attractive windows etc.
 - There are fairly large amounts of office space in the conservation area, improving the potential customer base for local shops
- Threats
 - Continued decline and lack of investment
 - Cleator Moor is unlikely to change radically for the worse, but is likely to continue its slow downward spiral without significant investment and management

6.2. Gazetteer of Designated Heritage Assets

Refer to the National Heritage List for England (historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

List Entry No.	Name	Address	Grade	Date designated	Date constructed
1086697	13-20	High Street	II	1973	Late-19 th century
1086698	Former Cooperative Supermarket, and Cast Iron Verandah	5, Jacktrees Road	II	1984	Late-19 th /early-20 th century
1086699	Cleator Moor Library	Market Square	II	1973	1906
1086700	Local Government Offices	Market Square	II	1973	1879
1336034	National Westminster Bank	58, High Street	II	1984	Late-19 th century
1336036	Memorial Fountain	Market Square	II	1973	1903

6.3. Area Maps

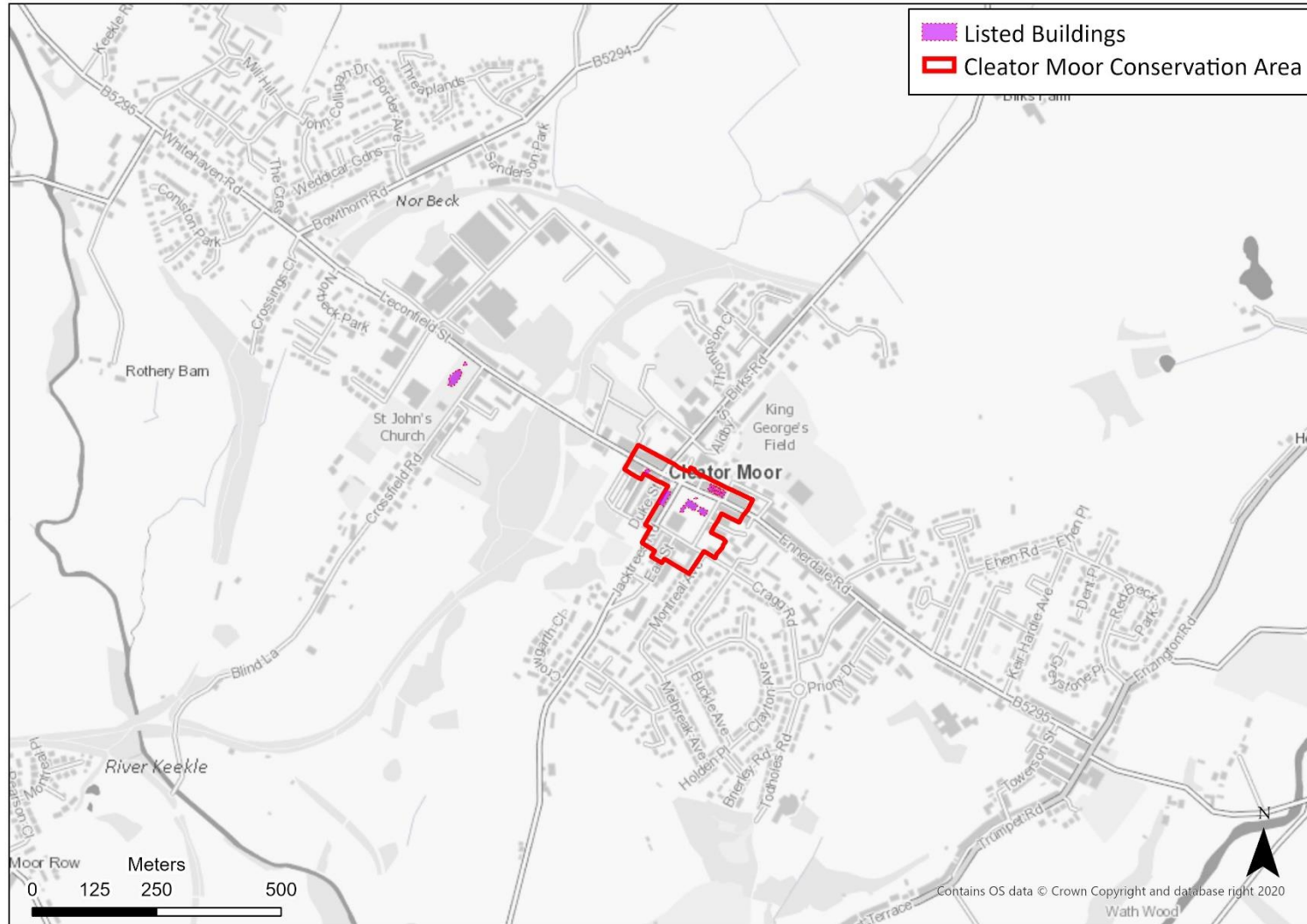


Figure 44 The conservation area boundary and listed buildings

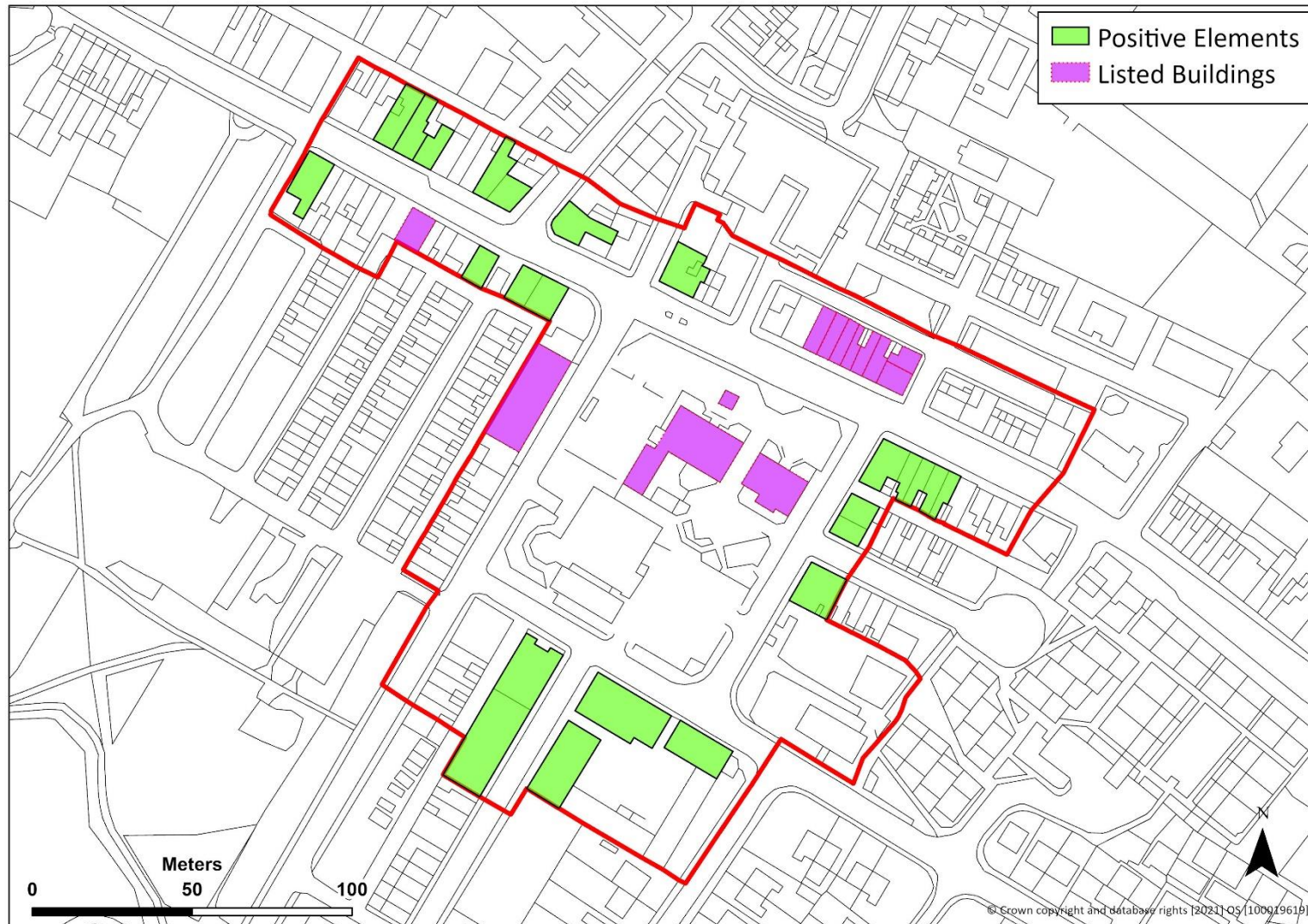


Figure 45 Positive townscape elements, where the architectural quality remains and is either on full show or could be brought to the fore again. Listed buildings and the conservation area boundary are also shown.

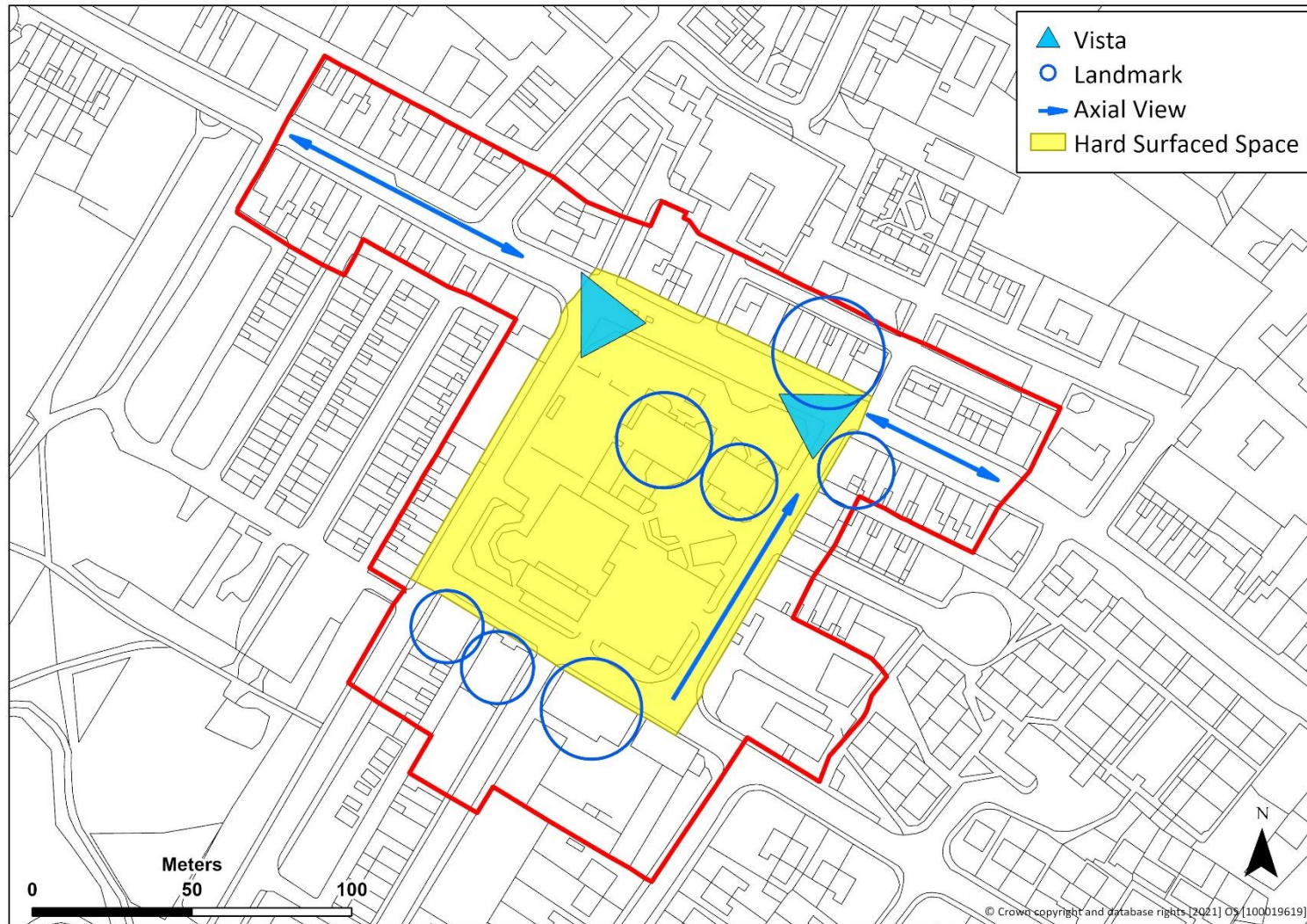


Figure 46 Townscape elements

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