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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Copeland Borough Council currently administers eight conservation areas (Whitehaven, Corkickle, Hensingham, Egremont, Cleator Moor, Beckermet, 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 by area at approximately 80 hectares and the first designated (1969), with Hensingham being the smallest at approximately two hectares.

Millom was the most recently designated, in 2003, however no record from that time exists assessing its character and significance. 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.
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
- 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.

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, and whether there should be any revisions to its boundary. 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 Milom 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 Millom Conservation Area

Millom is a small former Victorian industrial town of approximately eight thousand people, located near the Duddon Estuary. It experienced a period of concerted growth following development of large-scale iron-ore mining and iron working activities in the area. It is a socio-economically deprived area with low educational levels and job prospects, situated approximately six miles (10km) north-north-west of Barrow-in-Furness and twenty-six miles (40km) south-south-east of Whitehaven. It is two miles (3.5km) south-east of the Lake District National Park border.

The centre is characterised by predominantly two-storey terraces in a mixture of red brick, roughcast render, pebble-dash, and watershot slate with red sandstone dressings. Roofs are a mixture of slate and tile. The conservation area is surrounded by areas of two-storey detached and semi-detached post-war housing on its west and south sides, and the regimented late Victorian streets of the New Town on its east. The town’s roofscape is relieved from certain angles by the spire of St George’s Church, but is otherwise quite uniformly low.

The landscape in which Millom sits consists of a belt of gently undulating agricultural land between the shore of the estuary, where industry was formerly concentrated and has now partially been taken over by tourism and business park activities, and rising, more jagged land towards Black Combe and the Lake District to the north and north-west.

Millom’s conservation area is at the town’s centre and takes the form of several core zones in close proximity with streets and avenues radiating off them. This is indicative of the nature of Millom as a place that grew from its connection to the railway line: the station sits at the heart of the conservation area; the railway bisects it.

The conservation area expresses a certain symmetry about the north-east to south-west line of the railway, with the bridge over it and two zones of relatively low-density open ground to either side forming a heart that is composed of distinct halves, with the Station Road area on the north side, its war memorial and the approach to the station, having a different feel from the Lancashire Road side to the south, which is characterised by a Tesco supermarket and its car park occupying the site of former railway buildings.

Progressing into the “south” half, the Market Square, a late 19th and early 20th century collection of civic buildings asserts itself as a self-consciously styled and scaled node, an attempt to create a centre for the town. At the juncture between this area and the south end of the bridge is a gateway formed by the projecting end of the West Country Hotel and the entrance to St George’s Church precinct.

The entrance and view into the precinct, combined with the entrance and view of Market Square, and the view back along St George’s Road over the railway bridge, make this junction a characterful and important component of Millom’s conservation area in expressing three key components of its formation: religion (and “enlightenment” more generally; in this sense the church has as much to do with the library as it does the town hall), civic integrity and industrial progress.
The south side of the conservation area also takes in an area of the residential terraces along Lapstone Road and Wellington Street, which characterise much of Millom new town.

To the north side of the railway line, the conservation area takes in Station Road extending up to the Station Hotel and down to include an area of space at the war memorial green. The principle node on the northern side is located at the First World War memorial, which connects to the north by a short row of terraced housing on one side of Cambridge Street to Holborn Hill, the historical origin of Millom, from which expansion has generally progressed in a southern and eastern direction.

Much of the fabric of Millom’s town centre dates from a relatively narrow window of time between the 1860s and 1900s. Since then, the main changes to Millom’s built area, aside from the loss of the iron-related industrial sites in the 1960s-70s, have been the creation of areas of housing on the edges of the Victorian settlement.

2.2. Historic Development

2.2.1. Origins (Pre “Millom”)

Millom’s founding occurred in 1866, and prior to this the settlement was called Holborn Hill, a name that now refers to a street only. Holborn Hill was issued a market charter in 1251 by Henry II.

Access to Holborn Hill was by packhorse across the Duddon Estuary. The packhorse route stopped at the Punch Bowl at the Green and then went up Holborn Hill to the Ship, which was the village’s oldest coaching inn and is now a private dwelling, situated outside the conservation area.

Prior to the initial formation of Millom, Holborn Hill had a population of around 160 people. The village was in a linear form of two rows of farmsteads arrayed either side of the street, which runs in an east-west orientation. This street is still identifiable in the urban layout.

Despite proximity to the sea, in the early 1860s few of the locals drew their main employment from fishing-related activities. At that time, though relatively small in scale, mining was the second largest occupation after agriculture. Mining of pyrite was carried out mostly around The Hill in Millom Above township, although iron ore was found here in 1848, preceding the great expansion mining was to experience in the Millom Below township.

The area was initially within the control of the Lords of Millom, seated at Millom Castle to the north of the present town. This passed from the de Boyville family to the de Huddleston family in the 13th century, who held it for more than five hundred years before it was sold to Sir James Lowther in 1774.

2.2.2. Development History (Post-railway)

The Whitehaven and Furness Junction Railway arrived at Holborn Hill in 1851 and facilitated the development of Hodbarrow iron ore mine. It became the Furness Railway in 1866. This began a period of rapid growth, with many people of Cornish origin arriving for work.
Owing to what swiftly became a housing crisis, the New Town was developed in the region between Holborn Hill, the mine and the iron works, on poorly drained land that formed the Rottingdon Estate owned by the Lowther family. The New Town was laid out by Wadham and Turner, engineers of Barrow, and named Millom for its connection with the new Millom iron works. Reflecting this, its main streets are arranged parallel in east-west lines pointing towards the works.

During the 1870s, the arrangement of Millom shifted following creation the bridge on St George’s Road, replacing an earlier crossing further north, and the Paley and Austin St George’s church, which was completed in 1877 on land donated by Lord Lonsdale. A new town square was constructed, shifting the town’s centre from Lonsdale Road, Market Street and the former market site, now occupied by St James’ Primary School. The railway station, by the same architects, dates also from the mid-1870s.

The town hall with its clocktower was constructed in the square in 1879, although the tower was later reduced in height in the 1950s for structural reasons. The square was also the location of a market, although is no longer held.

2.2.3. Map Progression

![Map of Holborn Hill and Rottingdon Estate](image)

*Figure 3 Cumberland Series 1861 (six inch to mile), showing the first railway line and Holborn Hill as a series of buildings arranged linearly along the pack horse route that comes up from the Duddon*
Figure 4 Cumberland Series 1897 (Twenty-five inch to mile), showing iron works to east of town. The extent of development that had taken place in the preceding 30–40 years is evident.

Figure 5 Cumberland Series, 1921 (Twenty-five inch to mile), showing iron works to east and iron-ore mine to south. Relatively little development has occurred since the start of the 20th century compared with in previous decades.
Figure 6 Contemporary map of Millom
3. Character

3.1. Built Environment

3.1.1. Architectural Quality and Built Form

Millom contains a range of buildings that form a highly complete, albeit largely neglected, expression of mid- to late-Victorian town planning. The townscape has been relatively undisturbed by site clearance or the introduction of unfamiliar interventions, and dates for the most part to a relatively narrow timeframe between the 1860s and 1900s.

Plots for building were sold off to developers in parcels, resulting in the development of groups of buildings that a similar to one another but differ from those nearby in construction and detailing.

For the most part, it is of good although not exceptional architectural quality, though the New Town area contains a density of two-storey terraced housing interspersed with more ornate civic and religious buildings that has the potential to be very impressive. Cambridge Street is also a notable terrace in a completely different style from the buildings on the south side of the railway. Like every part of the conservation area, New Town suffers from chronic under-maintenance and widespread unsympathetic alterations.

The station of 1872 is an attractive example by well-known Lancaster firm Paley and Austin, although it is modest in appearance, being low and set slightly below the height of Station Road. The bridge on St George’s Road over the railway is similarly modest in appearance, although forms a pleasing composition with the station. The cluster of buildings around Market Square has some stature, although suffers in places from unsympathetic alterations and dilapidation.

3.1.2. Materials

Millom is built from, indeed characterised by, a varied palette of slate, red sandstone, red brick, render and some granite and limestone in varying combinations. Walls around Holborn Hill bear evidence to a vibrant mix of materials that is engaging and characterful, with slate and alternating mixtures of slate and granite cobbles on show.

New Town contains some handsome civic buildings with walls of watershot slate (whereby the material is tilted slightly downwards to throw off rain water) in either slabs or blocks, with dressings of red sandstone around windows and doors. Certain of the houses here too are watershot slate, with others having rubble walls under a rendered finish.
The area around the war memorial green and up Cambridge Street is notable for having buildings of red brick. Those on Holborn Hill are mostly rendered and are likely to be in a range of materials underneath. Where the buildings of Millom were originally rendered, this was likely to have been a roughcast, probably thrown onto the wall, or a smoother ashlar type where used on higher status buildings. Many of Millom’s buildings today feature a pebble-dashed finish.

Roofs are traditionally slate, but many have been replaced with tile. Windows and doors have almost all been replaced with plastic units in place of the timber they would originally have had.

3.1.3. Uses

Millom conservation area contains large areas of terraced housing in its New Town, which is complemented by civic and religious buildings typical of Victorian town planning, some of which are now vacant. The station occupies the central part of the conservation area, although the profusion of rail lines that formerly comprised the goods yard on the south side has been lost and is now a mixture of car parking and commercial uses. The part of the conservation area on the north side of the railway consists of mostly residential uses around and radiating from the war memorial green, with some commercial properties.
3.2. Public Realm
This section introduces some general principles to Millom’s conservation area. For more specific descriptions of these details and others, see Section 0 below on Character Areas.

3.2.1. Views, Vistas, Glimpses
The views of Millom itself from outside are dominated by the spire of St George’s Church, which rises over an undulating townscape of low, gabled buildings. Within the conservation area, the spire again asserts itself with the view along Cambridge Street across the war memorial green being particularly evocative. This view continues to draw the visitor towards the bridge and the south side of town where the entrance to the precinct and Market Square are encountered.

![Figure 8 View of Millom from A5093 to the west, showing low, gently undulating townscape with St George’s Church spire, surrounded by open farmland.](image)

Views of Black Coombe are also of note, with that at the western end of Holborn Hill, outside the conservation area, being impressive although not framed or capitalised upon. From the bridge and the hilltop around St George’s Church, views of Black Coombe and the mountains of the southern Lake District are again impressive.

Excluding Holborn Hill, Millom does not have a winding, ancient or multi-phase character, which somewhat limits its capacity to offer intrigue and glimpses; it wears clearly its character as a planned town laid out and built within a few decades, although this is to its strength in other respects. However, the vista across the war memorial green, with the attractive buildings surrounding it and playing field on the west side, provides a pleasing change of quality that serves to create a sense of arrival in the town centre and balance to the conservation area on either side of the railway.

The buildings around Market Square form an attractive composition and have been designed to be seen, to be an expression of the civic ideals and status the town’s founders intended
for Millom, an aspiration also evident from a number of New Town’s street names that have royal and imperial connotations (e.g. “Queen”, “Albert”, “Wellington”, “Nelson” etc.).

3.2.2. Roads and Paths
The roads and pavements of Millom are a key way in which its conservation area has been harmed. The roads in New Town form a mostly parallel grid with occasional diagonals created by the need to align with the railway, although the natural stone flags and curbs have almost all been lost, replaced with tarmac and concrete that are to the area’s detriment.

Figure 9 Loss of historic surfaces; Millom’s conservation area is characterised by tarmac and concrete

Figure 10 A rare section of surviving original surfacing on Egremont Street (outside the conservation area). It appears to be sandstone flagstone and curbs, although the latter have degraded from modern traffic.
3.2.3. Boundaries

Characterful boundary and edge treatments are predominantly to be found in Holborn Hill, where walls of multiple different materials are evident. There is also a tendency here to create walls with irregular alternating bands of slate slab and granite cobbles, which are very attractive.

Many boundaries in New Town are made by the buildings themselves, which form continuous rows up to the rear of the pavement. There has been a loss of railings in Market Square and harm to the gateway into St George’s precinct.

The precinct itself notably features high quality walls in sandstone around the lower half and slate around the upper graveyards.

*Figure 11 Graveyard wall made from both slate slabs and blocks, with sandstone copings*
3.3. Natural Environment

3.3.1. Open Spaces
The land around Millom is relatively free of building and tree cover, however Millom’s historic relationship with it was fundamentally practical rather than aesthetic; it was close to the industries that founded it. The fairly flat, marshy area to the east and south was used for industrial purposes, which necessitated efforts to hold back the sea. To the north, the land rises and becomes hilly, creating attractive backdrops to some views and also making transport to the town from elsewhere circuitous and difficult.

3.3.2. Water
The route across the Duddon Estuary was the initial cause for the formation and ribbon form of Holborn Hill, and proximity to water was both a blessing and curse to the town’s industrial aspirations, as, although useful in industrial processes, the presence of the sea was a constant frustration to the extraction of iron ore, necessitating the creation of three successive sea barriers to prevent the works being flooded. The third of these survives, although the area behind it has now been inundated, creating the RSPB Hodbarrow nature reserve. This is not easily appreciable or visible from within the conservation area, but is inextricably linked to the formation and location of the town.

3.3.3. Trees
There are few trees in Millom conservation area. One notable area is adjacent to the station, where there is an undeveloped site that formerly led to the crossing through the tracks into New Town, prior to the creation of St George’s Road bridge. Another is to the west of the war memorial green, where there is a perimeter of trees around a playing field. The precinct of St George’s church contains an attractive avenue of trees leading up to it and there are more trees to the south of the former banks on Market Square, but New Town is not characterised by vegetation.
4. Character Areas

Millom’s conservation area contains sub-areas adjacent to one another that have distinct characters. Millom was largely created in zones from greenfield sites, and has not been redeveloped since to any great extent, so these areas are still easily distinguishable. This appraisal presents them in turn to allow a more detailed description of their character and appearance. These subsections should be viewed as descriptive elements for the conservation area as a whole; they are not separate conservation areas.

Figure 12 Character areas for Millom, forming a progression from Holborn Hill, through Cambridge Street, the green and Station, over the bridge and railway to Tesco’s, St George’s Church precinct, Market Square and Lapstone Road

4.1.1. Holborn Hill

Holborn Hill is the oldest part of Millom and the only part of the modern town that predates the arrival of the railway in 1851. It is a narrow, linear ribbon and effectively now no more than a street within the town. The conservation area encloses the south side of the eastern end of the street between Moor Road and Cambridge Street. The character of a hill is still quite discernible, with the street also distinct in the sense that it winds slightly as it follows the route taken by the pack horses across the Duddon prior to the arrival of rail.
Within the character area, its buildings are low, two-story and mostly aligned with the street. Their gables are of various heights, and they are predominantly in mediocre or poor condition. There is a notable gap site on the location of a demolished garage, which dominates the surroundings with timber hoardings, rubble, metal fencing and overgrowth.

Near here are several sections of historic walling that have a lively character, composed of a mixture of slate and granite slabs, cobbles and rubble. Elsewhere, walling is visible that also includes lumps of granite, engineering brick, red brick or sandstone. Sections of these are clearly much patched and altered, with many straight joints and changes in pointing visible. At the base of the wall of Number 29 is a stone that appears to have been used for mounting and dismounting a horse.
Fenestration is curiously lacking in certain parts of the eastern end, with buildings that lack upper windows, and one volume that projects forward to the street lacking windows entirely. Historic windows, doors and rainwater goods have been largely or entirely lost. Many buildings have had their origins hidden beneath successive layers of unsympathetic alteration, and the effect of the whole is disjointed. Maintenance of rainwater goods appears problematic.

There is a narrow easterly view from the top towards hills, which widens as one descends Holborn Hill. At the junction with Moor Road, traffic noise is intermittent but intrusive owing to the gradient and tightness of the corner.

4.1.2. Cambridge Street
On a walk from Holborn Hill into the centre of the conservation area, Cambridge Street would be the first part of the planned town one encounters. Its character is notably different from that of Holborn Hill. It is a short, straight street of ornate terraced houses; those on the west are included in the designation and those on the east excluded.

The area consists of a terrace of gabled two-storey houses with small front yards in a striking symmetrical arrangement, with the ends terminated by a pair of matching three-storey buildings. The architecture is of high quality, although marred by loss of detailing and unity.
The buildings are red brick, with segmentally arched windows, moulded string courses and eaves courses and plain pilasters, all in brick. Front doors are recessed. All historic front railings, windows and doors have been lost. Two houses retain red/black quarry tiled paths, the rest having been lost. Roofs are in slate with red, ornamented ridge tiles and ornate chimneys, most of which remain, although several have had their detailing covered by render. One roof has been replaced with tiles with plastic verge caps. One frontage has been coated in pebbledash, seriously harming the unity of the row. The frontages are cluttered by satellite dishes.
The surfacing has lost its historic character, with tarmac pavements and concrete curbs. Parked cars clutter the road and there was a noticeable smell of exhaust fumes at the time of survey. There is an attractive view offered to the south across the green towards the spire of St George’s church. The north end of the street, outside the conservation area, is terminated by an uninspiring block of flats.

4.1.3. Station Road and the war memorial green
This area takes the green space surrounding the grade II listed war memorial as its heart. The memorial commemorates those who lost their lives during the First World War, and was designed by Ulverston architect John Brundrit and sculptor Alec Miller, and unveiled in 1925. It is surrounded by a quartet of cast iron lampposts.

Around the memorial and lawns is a collection of buildings that form an attractive group (the Masonic Hall, 8 and 10 Duke Street, and the Old Constabulary), orientated to address the centre. The station, by Paley and Austin in pink granite and red sandstone, is attractive although low and modest in appearance, and sits alongside Station Road partly screened by vegetation. It dates originally to 1872, and was extended in 1875-6.
Towards the north end of this area, the Station Hotel demarcates a corner in the road with a larger scale than most of the surrounding buildings. This has seen some improvements in recent years, although the plastic windows prevent the impression being conveyed to its full effect. It is nonetheless a positive building that successfully provides a corner. Together with number 4 Station Road opposite, The Station Hotel forms an attractive gateway into and out of the conservation area when travelling along Station Road.

Figure 19 4 Station Road (left of image) is marred by a small extension on its rear elevation. The trees to the right mark where there used to be a pedestrian route across the railway lines, which existed prior to the creation of the bridge in 1874.
Adjacent to The Station Hotel is an area of rough tarmac that is uninviting, and an undeveloped area of trees that, although they provide a pleasant softness when viewed from the green or from Station Road, appear somewhat wild when viewed from closer. The buildings of Coniston Court and Fell House to the rear of the Old Constabulary are outside the conservation area but cast a negative impression over this part of it; they make an uninviting edge to the corner of Station Road where it meets Holborn Hill that contrasts with the positive impression of the green and its buildings.

![Coniston Court and Fell House to the rear of the Old Constabulary, which lie adjacent to the conservation area](image)

Towards the western end of this area, a filling station and garage harm the local appearance where it borders St George’s Road, although the filling station is not unattractive for what it is. On the other side of the road, which rises to meet the bridge, there is a playing field at a lower level, which is attractive enough although unremarkable and partially separated from the rest of the area by the elevation change. On the north side of the playing field is a vacant building, formerly Millom Palladium, which opened in the early 20th century and is not entirely without merit but in its current state exerts a negative impact. This area is separated from the road by an unattractive set of metal railings, which mar the approach to the bridge, although there are a pair of original iron gateposts at the path to the Palladium, though now missing their gate. From the bridge itself, there are good views towards the mountains and St George’s Church.
The area introduces visitors to the southern half of the conservation area as they cross the rail bridge. It is enclosed by two roads and contains a former goods depot associated with the railway, which lies parallel with it opposite the station. The remaining building has been converted into a branch of Tesco; it is surrounded by car parks and has a generally characterless and inactive quality that introduces a dead space at the centre of the conservation area. The shop itself, though the historic building remains and has been converted to an externally acceptable standard, has been extended with a large and unattractive flat-roofed extension that is readily visible from St Georges Road bridge and the entrance onto Lancashire Road.

The bridge dates from 1874 and replaced an earlier crossing between Station Road and what became Lapstone Road. It was subsequently widened to allow for extra traffic and a footbridge between the platforms was added in 1902. Various alterations and additions were made to the station throughout the twentieth century.
The front portion of the Tesco building is a former goods shed in squared red sandstone rubble brought to courses with matching quoins and window surrounds. It would likely once have had a slated roof, but this has been replaced with tile. There are attractive stone walls to the front in a matching pattern, possibly of reclaimed material.

The corner of Lancashire Road and St George’s Road is one of the key negative locations of the conservation area. The wall from the corner at Lancashire Road is a detractor composed of grey brick and render. At the time of survey, it was littered with dog excrement, broken
glass, rubbish and a pattern of efflorescence, and served only to separate two expanses of tarmac (the road and the car park).

Behind the wall is a WC block that makes a negative contribution and also hides the view of the only remaining historic building on the site, the former goods shed. The combined effect of the car parking, boundary treatments, enclosure by the roads and railway, and extension to Tesco, is to create an isolated rectangle of dead space that divides the conservation area in two and offers only the least successful elements of late twentieth century town planning. It is a major problem for the conservation area.

Figure 24 WC block adjacent to Lancashire Road

The opposite side of the street is dominated by the rambling and precipitous façade of the West Country Hotel, composed of scarred pebbledash, scattered fenestration, electrical boxes, clusters of air vents and a particularly incongruous industrial kitchen flu. The effect this gives on the approach to the south half of the conservation area across St George’s Bridge is powerfully negative, but fortunately ameliorated by the glimpses of St George’s Church precinct and the more attractive frontages of Market Square behind.

4.1.5. St George’s Church Precinct

The precinct has a distinct character from the rest of Millom, containing three of its four listed buildings (the church, old vicarage and Boar War memorial). The ground rises and is populated with mature trees that create a curving avenue from the attractive gate piers to the church, inducing a sense of climbing from the dense, relatively regimented urban grain to a looser area that is more characterised by light, fresh air and sense of occasion that were characteristics of late nineteenth century urban design in a context of often quite oppressive industrial conditions.

The spire of St George’s Church is one of Millom’s key landmarks, and draws visitors towards the precinct, which is accessed off St George’s Road near the entrance to Market Square.
The precinct has a distinct character within the town, being a low hill that is mostly open and green. There are two main buildings within it aside from the grade II listed church: the grade II listed vicarage on the west side that has now been incorporated into a care home, and the newer vicarage located on the east side. There is additionally a grade II listed Boer War memorial to the north-east of the church, erected c.1900.

![Figure 25 St George's Church viewed from the graveyard to the south-west](image)

The church was completed in 1877 and is by Paley and Austin, as is the station. It is of dressed red sandstone with slate roofs and features a central tower with spire that projects to a height of some 130 feet. To the east, south and west lie extensive grave-filled churchyards across the hilltop, from where a view is offered of the surroundings. The church and both old and new vicarages are accessed via the winding, tree-lined avenue.
The precinct entrance is marked by two substantial piers, one of which is twisted two blocks above ground level, presumably from a vehicle strike. The gateway, though wide, now only contains a single gate that no longer closes against anything and is in poor condition. For a town that was built on iron, the state of this gateway is a particularly troubling expression of Millom’s decline.

The original vicarage dates from the same period as when the church was under construction, and is possibly also by Paley and Austin. It is constructed in coursed red sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings and has slate roofs. The newer vicarage is not without architectural merit and occupies an unobtrusive position within the precinct. It is constructed from a reddish-brown brick, with a slate roof and nicely articulated massing that relates well to its front garden and gently sloping plot.

The precinct is quieter and the air fresher than in other parts of the conservation area. There is an edge-of-town-feel, with an interruption of urban noise and regimentation, a looser, less formal layout. It is a place that exerts a draw due to being a landmark and offers quality architecture and good views. The side of the former Natwest building on Market Square, which is dilapidated and features a very poor though mercifully small extension, is harmful to the appreciation of this area. The precinct approach features attractive sandstone boundary walls of squared rubble with triangular copings.
4.1.6. Market Square

Market Square is distinct from both the precinct and the residential streets that lie around it. It is a formal space in the sense that it is laid out as a rectangle with buildings on all four sides. Its creation by the Local Board from 1879 onwards was a successful attempt to shift the core of the town and give it a new collection of civic buildings in accordance with Victorian ideals of providing the full apparatus of civic, religious and industrial functionality together.

It appears to originally have had a surface of compacted aggregate surrounded by a simple pavement of natural stone flags and curbs, up until the 1950s, when work was carried out to reduce the height of the clock tower. At around this time tarmac was applied and a large lamppost on a plinth, with multiple luminaires, also disappeared as the square was reconfigured for cars and buses, so that by the early 1960s it more closely resembled its current state. The Beggar’s Theatre also originally featured windows that have since been removed, leaving the façade blank and incongruous.

Market Square currently has a neglected atmosphere, although it benefits from a number of attractive buildings that retain a certain grandeur despite their dilapidation. The square is surfaced in a mixture of pink cement paving slabs, grey concrete setts and tarmac, which appear tired and do not link in any particular way to the town’s heritage.

The space suffers a number of problems, including the presence of a dilapidated bus stop, some vacant and declining buildings, and the unsympathetic alterations the Beggar’s Theatre and Clock Tower have historically undergone. There is also a profusion of unattractive shopfronts and signage cluttering the north side of the space. All historic
windows in and adjacent to the Clock Tower appear to have been lost and replaced with uPVC, although the former banks opposite retain timber windows.

![Image](image-url)

*Figure 28 The windowless façade of the Beggar’s Theatre, which unbalances the square, and the Clock Tower. Shown too are a number of unattractive shop fronts.*

The elevation of the West Country Hotel facing Market Square is more successful than the opposite one facing Lancashire Road. There have been some unfortunate accretions but the overall result is still positive. The Beggar’s Theatre is a valued local institution but its windowless façade makes an unfortunate impression on the Square. The Clock Tower is of attractive slate with yellow Yorkstone dressings. It is of a heavy, stout appearance with mullioned and transomed windows and segmental arches into the base of the tower, which forms a portico. The clock faces are mounted in the sides of a copper dome that sits immediately above the tower parapet. The building currently houses a restaurant.
Figure 29 Red sandstone former Natwest building, which has lost the attractive iron railings and dwarf walls that used to front it. It has an unsympathetic but fortunately small side extension.

Figure 30 Squared slate with red sandstone dressings in the Working Men's Club building on St George's Road.
Figure 31 The impressive post office building is of grey stone with yellow Yorkstone dressings. It is one of the taller buildings in Millom, being three-and-a-half quite tall storeys, and has an striking gable end that is hung to its full height in slates, some decorative. It makes a grand and successful bookend on this junction.

Figure 32 The public library is located on St George’s Road just off the Square and presents an attractive red brick facade to the street.
Figure 33 The former Barclays building on St George's Road is an unusual building that nonetheless makes a positive impression with its quiet confidence, and is a rare example of good quality local architecture from the 1970s-80s period. These four buildings are all interesting as having been built specifically as banks (York City Bank, Lancaster Bank, Bank of Liverpool, and Barclays).

4.1.7. Lapstone Road and Wellington Road
This area is composed of residential streets laid out in a grid pattern. It is the archetypal character of New Town, although is only a small part of it, consisting of an area either side of Lapstone Road from Lancashire Road, the row of houses on St George’s Terrace including Norman Nicholson’s residence, Crown Street starting at the 1884 Baptist Chapel, and Wellington Street starting at the 1889 Salvation Army fortress, leading inwards to the road junction at the 1888 Co-Op and 1894 Conservative Club.

St George’s Terrace, which connects St George’s Road with Lapstone Road, dates from 1880. Number 14 is notable for being the location in which poet Norman Nicholson was born and lived for much of his life, taking inspiration from and writing about his surroundings. The house itself is an example of a Victorian shopkeepers premises and lodgings, but is particularly valuable for its historical association.
The Co-Op hall is the most prominent building in this character area. It was and is, despite dilapidation, an impressive structure with a tower featuring aspects of gothic revival. It is faced in squared slate blocks with red sandstone ashlar dressings and slate roofs. The ground floor, where the shop units were located, has been given an unsightly coating of grey render.

Though there has been widespread loss of historic detailing and some notable poor maintenance of rainwater goods, this character area is notable for retaining several original shop front elements, which are valuable components of its special interest.
Figure 35 Millom Co-Operative halls and shops form a dramatic, if dilapidated, corner to this important junction. The building's current condition is problematic. The tower roof would originally have featured decorative ironwork, which has now been lost.

Figure 36 The rear of the Co-Operative hall is in a poor condition and makes a very negative impression.
Figure 37 The Wellington Street façade of the Co-Operative, with blocked windows, loss of detailing and vacant shops, exerts an impression of decline and neglect.

Figure 38 Lapstone Road features attractive terraced houses. There has been widespread loss of historic fenestration but the overall impression is pleasing and varied in places. Variation in facade and roof treatment is evident here.
Figure 39 The Salvation Army fortress of 1889 sits at the furthest south-east extremity of the conservation area in a quiet backstreet, and rounds out the town’s collection of late-19th century places of worship.

Figure 40 The Baptist Chapel of 1884 features gothic-revival detailing to its front, which, like the Co-Op halls opposite, is of slate blocks with red sandstone ashlar dressings. The ogival arched openings and diamond-leaded glass, however, give it a distinctly ecclesiastical character, and it is in good condition relative to much of the nearby building stock, making a positive contribution.
5. Key Characteristics

- Town’s pre-industrial history is relegated to a minor position in the whole; the character is that of an industrial town, built at a particular time in response to a particular need. Though elements of Holborn Hill and the town’s late 20th century development are clearly apparent, it is the industrial development period of approximately fifty years following the founding of the town in 1866 that creates the overriding character of Millom.
- The pattern of development reflects both the railway at its heart and the east-west and north-south axes that branched off it to the ironworks and iron ore mine respectively. Streets in New Town are on a grid in mainly parallel lines, with some diagonals addressing the line of the railway.
- The station, war memorial green, St George’s Road bridge and Market Square form a kind of heart to the conservation area. Around this and radiating off it are residential streets that all post-date the railway, with the exception of Holborn Hill.
- St George’s Church precinct at the south side of the conservation area marks a change of character, but is linked to the civic buildings in Market Square and the industrial sites outside and within the town by being constituents of the Victorian ideal of providing comprehensive civic, religious and industrial apparatus.
- Positive contributions relate generally to buildings that have retained something like their original appearance; to a large extent, what changes have been made have been harmful.
- The town is strongly composed of two-storey terraced frontages, relieved by cornerstone buildings here and there that are taller and more elaborate. These enclose the streets, reducing views out to certain elevated locations, such as St George’s Road bridge and the precinct.
- Materials are quite varied, but slate (both for façades and roofs), red and yellow sandstone (for dressings), red brick and render predominate. Granite can also be found, and is more common in the older part of the town. Pebble dashing has been widely introduced in more recent decades, and has had a generally unfavourable effect.
- Many houses retain their external chimneys.
- Development has largely been on the periphery of the town, leaving the conservation area highly coherent.
- Tree coverage is fairly limited, being confined to certain areas such as the church precinct.
6. Summary of Issues

- Millom has experienced a prolonged period of difficulty both in maintaining its buildings and giving them long-term viable uses.
- There has been widespread loss of historic detailing, particularly relating to windows and doors, which have particularly affected residential properties, though commercial properties have greatly suffered too.
- Additional problems relate to loss of slate roofs (replacement with tile, often with unsightly plastic verge caps), covering over of facades with pebble dashing, addition of satellite dishes, loss of window mullions and loss of historic shop fronts.
- Several of Millom’s most attractive and high status buildings are vacant at the time of writing.
- Historic pavement surfaces have been lost in their entirety within the conservation area.
- The car park, WC block and wall at the rear of the pavement on Lancashire Road near Tesco currently introduce an area of unattractive space at the centre of the conservation area, giving it a greater impression of being divided into two halves with nothing at their centre. This reads as a very car-centric approach to the space use and is not welcoming visually or useable on foot.
- Historic ironwork that is missing or in poor condition is conspicuous, which is particularly pertinent considering iron was the basis for much of Millom’s development.
### 7. Appendices

#### 7.1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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</table>
| **Millom**      | • Largely complete example of mid-19th to early-20th century planned iron town  
• Varied and attractive collection of buildings  
• Legible, well-preserved layout  
• High survival rate of original buildings, arrangements | • Widespread dilapidation, vacancy and poor maintenance  
• Lack of investment/low land values  
• Loss of original purpose, difficulty diversifying/adapting  
• Widespread loss of historic detailing and surfaces | • Reinstatement of historic detailing (fenestration, materials, surfacing etc.)  
• Reuse of vacant buildings | • Continued decline in historic character and detailing  
• Unsympathetic alterations  
• Continued or increased levels of vacancy and dilapidation |
| **Holborn Hill**| • Distinct character from rest of Millom  
• Some views of surrounding countryside  
• Varied built character  
• Longest history of Millom’s areas | • Poor condition, dilapidation  
• Loss of historic detail/character | • Reinstatement of historic detailing  
• Increased rate of occupation, increased sense of life and vibrancy | • Lack of investment making improvement unlikely due to low land values and development pressure |
| **Cambridge Street** | • Formal arrangement – symmetry, ornamentation, architectural quality  
• Views across green to St George’s Church | • Loss of historic detail  
• Loss of unity of terrace  
• Clutter (satellite dishes, parked cars etc.) | • Reinstatement of historic detailing  
• Reinstatement of unity of frontages | • Further erosion of unity of frontages |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Station Road; memorial green</td>
<td>Attractive, spacious area; some good quality buildings</td>
<td>Improvement to condition of detractors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connection with Millom’s First World War history</td>
<td>Reinstatement of historic detailing and surfaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>St George’s Road and Lancashire Road</td>
<td>Retention of historic bridge and former goods depot</td>
<td>Redevelopment of Tesco site focusing on appearance, materials and circulation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attractive views of mountains and St George’s Church from bridge</td>
<td>Improvement to appearance of West Country Hotel</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement to public realm at road junction, making gateway between bridge, Lancashire Road, precinct and Market Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>St George’s Church precinct</td>
<td>High quality architecture</td>
<td>Restoration and reinstatement of entrance gates/piers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greenery</td>
<td>Improvement in state of former Natwest adjacent to precinct</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Layout, sense of space, views afforded from top</td>
<td>Dilapidation to boundary wall; further dilapidation to gate piers, gates</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Loss of function of church</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor condition of gates and piers at entrance</td>
<td>Unsympathetic development within setting</td>
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<td><strong>Market Square</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lapstone Road and Wellington Road</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attractive architecture</td>
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<td>Formal arrangement (a town square)</td>
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<td>Centrepiece of the New Town layout</td>
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<td>Loss of historic detailing</td>
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<td>Unsympathetic alterations</td>
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<td>Dilapidation and vacancy</td>
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<td>Unsuitable signage/advertising</td>
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<td>Current external layout, surfacing scheme and bus stop</td>
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<td>Traffic intermittently intrusive</td>
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<td>Re-use of vacant buildings and associated refurbishment</td>
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<td>Reinstatement of historically appropriate detailing and surfaces</td>
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<td>Improvements to layout</td>
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<td>Further vacancies</td>
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<td>Increased dilapidation and maintenance issues</td>
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<td>Increased poor advertising/signage</td>
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<td>Further loss of historically appropriate detailing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attractive terraces interspersed with high quality civic and religious architecture</td>
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<td>The residential heart of the New Town</td>
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<td>Some retained shopfronts</td>
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<td>Loss of historic surfaces and detailing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacancy and dilapidation of Co-Op halls a serious detraction</td>
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<td>Poor maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-use and improvements to vacant and dilapidated buildings, including Norman Nicholson’s house and Co-Op hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public realm improvements at junction of Lapstone Road and Crown Street</td>
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<td>Further dilapidation and decline</td>
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<td>Loss of historic shop front elements, slate roofs, window mullions etc.</td>
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7.2. Area Maps

Figure 41 Conservation area boundary
Figure 42 Millom conservation area’s character areas: 1. Holborn Hill; 2. Cambridge Street; 3. Station Road and war memorial green; 4. St George’s Road and Lancashire Road; 5. St George’s Church Precinct; 6. Market Square; 7. Lapstone Road and Wellington Road
Figure 43 Positive townscape elements and listed buildings. This includes buildings that are generally positive where condition has declined but not by enough to obscure their character.
Figure 44 Townscape features: spaces, both greened and surfaced, landmark buildings, notable vistas or broad views, and linear views
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