

Bowness Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

October 2011



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BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Summary of special interest

The special interest that justifies the designation of Bowness-on-Windermere Conservation Area can be summarised as follows:

- ❑ Origins as an early Norse fishing and trading settlement in a sheltered bay on the east side of lake Windermere;
- ❑ Rural setting of the town at the foot of low-lying hills beside lake Windermere in view of distant high fells;
- ❑ Early haphazard layout of Lowside, the vernacular core of the town;
- ❑ St Martin's Church, churchyard and ancient yews;
- ❑ Informal development of the town around two 'squares' (Queen's Square and Royal Square) located on a broad level shelf slightly elevated above the lake;
- ❑ Separate and isolated examples of 18th century and earlier dwellings, notably New Hall Inn (c.1650) and Fold Head (1751), Old Fallbarrow (Fallbarrow Road), Rose Cottage (Church Street), Laurel Cottage and The Spinnery (Brantfell Road), all listed grade II;
- ❑ Mid/late 19th century post-railway developments alongside Lake Road comprising non-conformist chapel, former police station, suburban villas, semi-detached houses guest houses and terraces of Victorian stone built houses;
- ❑ Attractive views across lake Windermere;
- ❑ Good examples of typical provincial Victorian and Edwardian commercial and residential architecture embellished with period details such as decorative bargeboards, bay windows, dormers, finials, ridge tiles;
- ❑ Architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, including 13 listed buildings dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and numerous significant unlisted buildings;
- ❑ Good examples of large 19th century mansions and purpose-built hotels, located to take advantage of views over Windermere, e.g. The Old England, The Belsfield, The Hydro and Crown Rigg (now private apartments);
- ❑ The green open space and planted copse within the grounds of The Belsfield and Biskey Howe;
- ❑ The Promenade and lakeside area of jetties and landing stages, Victorian-style ticket offices and the margins of Bowness Bay;
- ❑ Trees and groups of trees that enhance the setting of historic buildings and soften the streetscene, notably in the grounds of The Belsfield, and individual trees in an urban setting in Queen's Square and Royal Square;
- ❑ Prevalent use of local stone, reflecting the underlying geology of the area, used for walling, roof slates and boundary walls;
- ❑ Small items of street furniture that add to Bowness-on-Windermere's local identity e.g. iron street name signs, ER VII letter boxes, stone boundary walls, wall plaques and datestones;

1 Introduction

Bowness-on-Windermere is a town on the shore of Windermere. It has developed from its medieval (and probably earlier) origins as a lakeside trading and fishing settlement to become one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Lake District, exploiting its marvellous lakeside location. Although the influx of tourists and 'off-comers' began in earnest in the early 19th century, the coming of the railway to Windermere in 1847 and the launching of the lake's first steamer service in 1845 opened the floodgates to a major expansion and redevelopment of the town in the period 1850-1914.

The Bowness-on-Windermere Conservation Area encompasses the pre-1914 phases of historic development of the town. It includes the site of original settlement in the low-lying Lowside area of town, St Martin's Church (1483) and environs, a scattering of 18th century houses, large hillside hotels from the early tourist era of early/mid 19th century and post-railway Victorian and Edwardian development in the town centre and alongside Lake Road.

The historic core of the town has a notable and special architectural and historic interest that well merits its conservation area status.



Fig.1 The tower of St Martin's Church was raised in height in 1870.



Fig.2 The Old England Hotel, like The Belsfield Hotel, was originally built as a grand house.

The Bowness-on-Windermere Conservation Area was designated on 9th August 1982 by the Lake District National Park Authority. Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area and identifies

opportunities for enhancement. These features are noted, described and marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map along with written commentary on how they contribute to the special interest of the conservation area. While the descriptions go into some detail, a reader should not assume that the omission of any characteristic, such as a building, view or open space, from this Appraisal means that it is not of interest.

The document conforms with English Heritage guidance as set out in *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* (August 2005) and *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (August 2005). Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5).

This document seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the conservation area and identify the issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area (in the form of the Appraisal);
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement (in the form of the Management Plan).



Fig.3 Edwardian architectural detail on a house in Kendal Road.



Fig.4 A view of distant fells across Bowness Bay.

This document therefore provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Bowness-on-Windermere Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider adopted development plan policy framework produced by the Lake District National Park Authority. These documents include:

(i) *The Lake District National Park Local Plan (adopted 1998)*: Chapter 3 addresses the conservation of the built environment;

(ii) *Lake District National Park Core Strategy (adopted 2010)*: The Spectacular Landscape chapter addresses conservation of the built environment

Survey work for this document and the accompanying townscape appraisal map was carried out during February and March 2010.

2 Location

Location

Bowness-on-Windermere is a town in South Lakeland on the shore of Windermere, about halfway along the 12 mile length of the lake between Waterhead at the north end, and Lakeside at the south end. Although the two settlements have almost merged, Bowness is distinct from the nearby town of Windermere.

Bowness is located on the north-south A592 between Barrow-in-Furness and Penrith. It lies just south of the A591 Kendal to Ambleside road, one of the main routes into the Lake District. A rural minor road leads eastward from the town to Crook and Kendal.



Fig.5 Bowness has a lively roofscape of chimney stacks, pots, ridge tiles and gables.



Fig.6 Fallbarrow Road, narrow and winding, is one of the earliest routes through the town.

The nearest railway station is at Windermere, a mile and a half to the north-east. Local buses serve the town but the service is restricted outside the holiday season. There are ferry connections to north (Waterhead) and south (Lakeside).

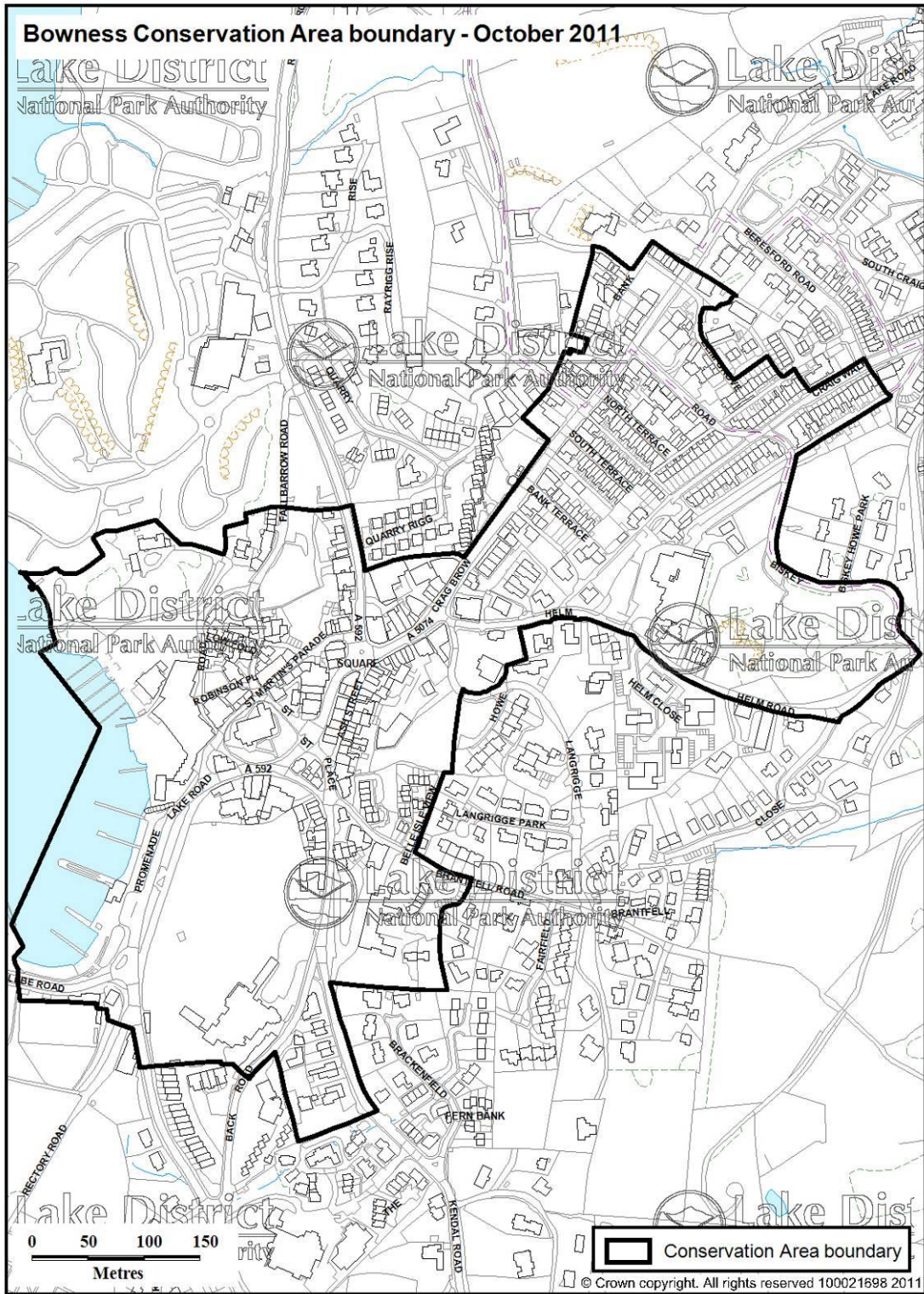
Bowness lies within the Lake District National Park and is wholly within the Parish of Windermere in the administrative county of Cumbria, in that part which comprised the historic county of Westmoreland.

Boundary

The boundary of the conservation area has been drawn to encompass almost all of the pre-1914 extent of the town. Twentieth century intrusions within the area are restricted to infill and redevelopment that cannot be excluded by a reasonable line on a map.

To the west the boundary has been drawn to include the site of the original settlement in the low-lying Lowside area of town together with Fold Head, a mid-18th century house in a semi-rural setting, listed grade II. The boundary also includes the Royal Yacht club and Old Fallbarrow and its grounds, the latter being a grade II listed building.

From here the boundary proceeds southward to enclose The Old England Hotel and part of the lake that contains jetties and landing stages with accompanying ticket offices, shoreline and Promenade that have attracted visitors for over 150 years.



To the south and east, the boundary encompasses Belsfield Hotel and its sweeping lakeside grounds, Crown Rigg and The Hydro, 19th century hotels. The boundary omits modern residential development but includes a row of elegant late 19th century houses behind the Belsfield Hotel in Kendal Road. The viewpoint and former Victorian pleasure grounds of Biskey Howe are also included.

At its northern end the boundary encloses the planned post-railway late Victorian and Edwardian development of the town and includes most of the historic buildings illustrated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1862 together with later infill such as Craig Walk. It proceeds southward along a length of Lake Road (omitting modern development on the north side) before turning westward to enclose the old laundry and historic buildings in Rayrigg Road.



Fig.7 Different types of local stone are combined to great effect on this Victorian building.



Fig.8 View of rooftop dormers and bay windows in the north-east of the conservation area.

Geology

The Lake District comprises a mass of ancient rocks in three major bands running north-east to south-west. In the north, forming Skiddaw, Saddleback and Grassmoor are the Skiddaw Slates. South of this is the central area of Borrowdale Volcanic Series which provides much of the mineral wealth of the area and contains the rugged peaks of Scafell Pike and Helvellyn.

Geologically, Bowness and lake Windermere are situated in the southernmost third of the Lake District which is composed of sedimentary rocks laid down in the Silurian Period approximately 400 million years ago. This area is characterised by low-lying land with few hills over 300 metres in height. The majority of vernacular buildings in the locality are built with local freestone from the Silurian beds.

Because of the geological differences, the countryside in Southern Lakeland is less rugged than land to the north and is characterised by small walled fields interspersed with rough pasture.

Topography and landscape setting

Bowness is located about half way down the eastern shore of lake Windermere. There is a general fall in the land from the east and north east down to Lowside and the fringe of the lake.

The town meets the lake along a length of shore enclosed within a small bay. Bowness Bay is overlooked to the east by gentle low smooth-topped fells which barely rise above 200 metres. To the west, ½ mile across the lake, a steep wooded hillside rises to Claife Heights and High Blind How (270 m).

Lowside, the oldest part of the town, lies almost at the level of the lake nestled between two small knolls - New Hall Bank to the north and the rise containing St Martin's Church to the south. The early settlement spread out along a broad level shelf of land around the church, slightly elevated above the lake shore. As the town began to expand in the 19th century it began to move up Crag Brow and, to a lesser extent, steeply up Helm Road and Brantfell Road. As Lake Road proceeds uphill towards the town of Windermere, it is difficult to discern a gap between the two settlements.

Overall, the conservation area has an urban setting being mostly encompassed by modern development that does not merit inclusion in a historic conservation area. The town as a whole, however, has a spectacular Lakeland rural and waterside setting framed by low hills and woods.

Archaeology

In a settlement such as Bowness, which has a history of settlement for at least 1,000 years, it is very probable that archaeological deposits underlie many of the dwellings. Many of the buildings within the conservation area are themselves of archaeological interest, and are likely to retain evidence of their age, use and construction that is only likely to be uncovered during building work.

3 The historical development of the town

Roman remains at Galava, a fort in the meadows close to Ambleside, are the first archaeological evidence of settlement in the immediate vicinity. The Romans came to the area around AD 80. Roman remains were reputedly discovered on an island in Bowness Bay in the late 18th century but there does not appear to have been any Roman settlement on the shore of the lake.

Bowness is first mentioned as 'Bulebas' in 1190, becoming 'Bulness' in 1282. The name is believed to derive from Old English meaning 'Bull Headland', perhaps referring to the keeping of a parish bull.

The town probably has its origins in the 11th century when much of the area was colonised by Scandinavian settlers. The vast majority of settlements in the Windermere area date from this period of Norse migration when Windermere – 'Vinand's Lake' – became a trade route.



Fig.9 This cottage in Church Street is one of the few remaining 18th century buildings.



Fig.10 North Terrace (1873) is one of the stone terraces built after the arrival of the railway in 1847.

By medieval times Bowness was already well established as a settlement, primarily a fishing village, grouped around St Martin's Church. Bowness lay almost directly on the ancient packhorse route from Hawkshead to Kendal which crossed the lake on the site of the modern ferry. Over the centuries, the lake also came to support commercial traffic associated with slate, copper, timber, wool, fish...and tourists.

St Martin's Church, the parish church of Windermere, was first recorded in 1203. This church burnt down in 1480 and only its font and the base of the tower remain. St Martin's was rebuilt and reconsecrated in 1483. It was restored, enlarged and the tower heightened in 1870 by Paley and Austin of Lancaster.

Although there are no longer any medieval buildings surrounding the church and what might have been a market place, subsequent rebuilding in situ in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries has crystallised this early pattern of intimate building groups and interlinking spaces.

From the end of the 18th century, the district saw an influx of wealthy industrialists and the environs for Bowness became a fashionable place for grand houses and mansions, for example The Round House (1774), an unusual circular house erected on Belle Isle in Bowness Bay, and the nearby Brathay Hall (1788) and Storrs Hall (1790).

Glowing accounts of the Lakeland landscape published in the early 19th century, notably Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes (1810), encouraged visitors and sightseers. From the start of the 19th century Bowness's admirable lakeside location on an elevation rising directly from the margin of the lake made it a popular tourist destination. This set in motion a change in the function of the village from a small local fishing and trading settlement to a popular tourist destination for sightseeing and boat trips – first the wealthy, then, following the coming of the railway, the working classes from Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow and Liverpool.

William Green's 1819 'Guide to the Lakes' already describes Bowness as: "Good place for enjoyment, boats being kept by Mr Ullock for accommodation of tourists. The Inn at Bowness is extensive and excellently well provided". Parson and Wight's 1829 directory describes Bowness as "... a small but neat market town. It is the chief port on the lake and has a few fishing vessels, a number of pleasure boats and a trade in charcoal and

slate. From its admirable situation it is much frequented by tourists and has excellent accommodation for them in two good inns...as well as lodgings.”

In 1801 the first census of population recorded 500 people in Undermillbeck township, the majority living in Bowness. By 1841 the township population had reached 1,033. The town’s status was boosted by a visit by the Dowager Queen Adelaide in 1840. At this time Bowness boasted two large hotels, The White Lion (renamed The Royal in honour of Adelaide’s visit) and The Crown.



Fig.11 Craig Walk still retains small front gardens and original stone gate-posts.



Fig.12 The Spinnery, listed grade II.



Fig. 12a The floor of a recessed shop entrance, Royal Square.



Fig.12b The date is carved into a sandstone block set in a wall of local greystone.

The opening of the Kendal to Windermere railway line in 1847 was the catalyst for an expansion of the town and a huge increase in resident and visiting population. In 1869 steam-driven paddle steamers (which had begun services from Bowness in 1845) connected with the railway which came to Lakeside at the foot of the lake. Excursion trains from the mill towns of Lancashire poured into Windermere and Lakeside – and thence to Bowness. By the end of the 19th century over 100 lodging houses had been built and a further three large hotels created – The Belsfield, The Hydro and The Old England.

Between 1851 and 1891 the combined population of Bowness and Windermere rose from 2,085 to 4,613. The lake frontage at Bowness changed from a collection of fishing

boat jetties to a more formal arrangement of landing stages, pleasure boat facilities and promenade. The Royal Windermere Yacht Club received its Royal Warrant in 1887. In 1881 Bowness is described thus: "... the streets are narrow and built with little regard to regularity, the chief object being to place the houses so as to obtain a good view of the lake".

The popularity of the area developed as the English working classes became more affluent and the working week became shorter. By 1911 the resident population of Bowness and Windermere exceeded 5,000 and this was more than doubled in the summer. The First World War and economic depression in the 1920s slowed the growth of tourism.

The 1898 OS map shows that although the centre of Bowness was tightly built up, the surrounding area consisted of gardens, orchards, trees or grounds. It was these open areas that have largely been developed during the 20th century in some cases seriously affecting the setting and scale of older Bowness. The grounds of the Belsfield Hotel have fortunately survived, both as a reminder of the fashionable elegance of Victorian times, but also providing an ideal setting and contrast with the adjacent building groups.

Bowness and Windermere continued to expand towards each other and merged in the mid 20th century with the building of large estates and residential infill of large grounds. Today both towns have a separate and distinctive identity but continue to share a role as hosts to Lakeland visitors.

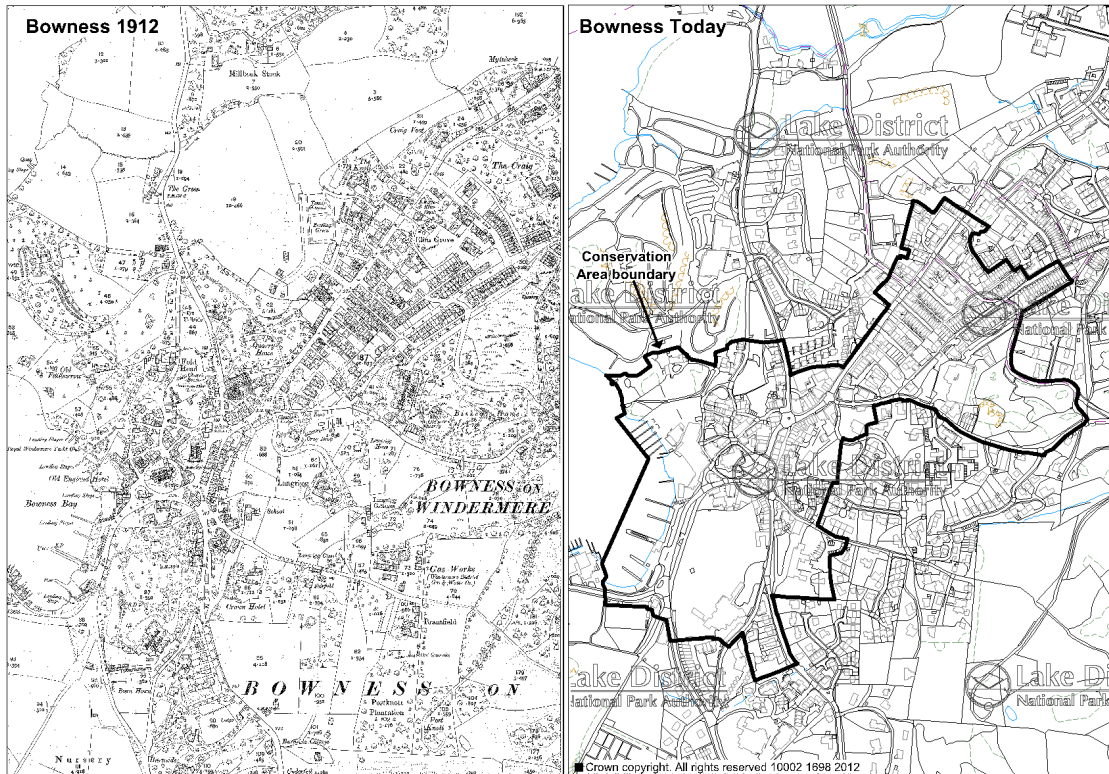
4 The character and appearance of the conservation area

Historic layout and street pattern

Bowness originated as a lakeside village and its early connection to neighbouring settlements was via a thoroughfare that followed a north-south direction across low-lying land parallel to the lake shore. Thomas Jefferys' map of c.1770 clearly illustrates this route, today followed by the course of Rayrigg Road and Kendal Road. At the end of the 18th century, the core of the village around St Martin's Church lay between this main north-south route and the lake shore. A smaller route forking from this main road followed the course of today's Promenade and Fallbarrow Road. It led directly through the village and closely held to the shoreline where presumably it would have linked with lake vessels. Jefferys' map (not completely reliable) does not indicate any road leading eastwards out of the village.

However, by 1820 at least, map evidence indicates a road from Bowness leading in a north-easterly direction to join the Kendal to Ambleside turnpike in the vicinity of Birthwaite, now the town of Windermere (which came into existence following the arrival of the railway in 1847). This route follows the course of today's Crag Brow and Lake Road.

By the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1862) the conservation area's street pattern had been substantially formalised and remains intact to this day. In addition to the old routes, Helm Road and Brantfell Road are shown rising steeply up the hillside. The Promenade (not formalised until 1912) appears as a substantial route leading directly to a series of lakeside jetties. Development on either side of Lake Road comprises dwellings, guest houses, a police station and Methodist Chapel.



The Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1899 shows the near-completion of the Victorian ‘suburb’ along Lake Road. Its rectilinear street pattern of terraces beside a planned straight length of highway contrasts markedly with the informal higgledy-piggledy layout of the buildings on the original site of the village in the declivity just north of the church.

Broadly speaking, the conservation area covers the 1899 extent of Bowness. At the turn of the 19th century the verge of this urban area directly abutted rural farmland and countryside but 20th century housing developments (mostly post-1960), a large caravan park and piecemeal infill have almost encircled the historic area.

Townscape analysis – character areas

The Bowness-on-Windermere Conservation Area can be divided into seven sub-areas of distinctly different character. The distinctiveness of each character area derives from its formative period of development, topographical location and layout. The character areas are broadly defined and overlap. The seven areas are:

- ❑ 1. **The Belsfield Hotel and grounds**
- ❑ 2. **Promenade, landing stages and lake shore**
- ❑ 3. **St Martin’s Church and environs**
- ❑ 4. **Queen Square, Crag Brow and core shopping area**
- ❑ 5. **Lowside – the oldest part of the town**
- ❑ 6. **Helm Road, Brantfell Road and Kendal Road**
- ❑ 7. **Lake Road**

The following examines the characteristics that distinguish each area:

□ **1. The Belsfield Hotel, surroundings and grounds**

The Belsfield Hotel and its grounds, which sweep down to the promenade, is one of the defining characteristics of the conservation area. Viewed from a lake steamer, and to a lesser degree from the promenade, the long white frontage of the Italianate-style hotel sitting above an apron of green grass and set against a backdrop of hillside trees is an iconic image of the town. Conversely, from the grounds of the hotel looking westward, there are exceptionally pleasant views of Bowness Bay, boats at the pier and jetties, and distant fells.



Fig.13 The Belsfield Hotel became a hotel soon after the death of H.M.Schneider in 1887.



Fig.14 Trees in the grounds of The Belsfield add to the ambience of The Promenade.

It is fortuitous that car and coach parking for the hotel is hidden from lakeside views. The windowless building in the sloping lawn was once known as 'The Shelter' and has a deep cellar possibly used as an ice house. It is in need of minor repair and renovation.

The Belsfield Hotel was built in 1845 for the Baroness de Sternberg and later became the home of the Barrow-in-Furness industrialist H.W. Schneider. The third storey was added c.1912. Modern extensions to the north-east and north-west do not harmonise well with the host building.

The grounds comprise the largest open space in the area and contain some of its finest trees, some of which date from the mid-19th century. The grounds are bounded by a stone wall with formal stone entrance pillars on Back Belsfield Road. A gateway in the wall along the Promenade was used by Schneider to reach Bowness Pier, built specially for his personal steamer.

The grounds are quiet off-season and in poor weather, but can be vibrant and well-peopled at other times.

St. Andrew's, to the north of the Belsfield, is a rare example of a relatively unaltered, domestic scaled lakeside Italianate villa still in residential use. The building is set within a treed-backdrop with forecourt gardens and wall and its spacious setting belies the enclosed rear courtyard and access – in short a typically illusory example of picturesque landscape design which the Victorians were so fond of. The building itself has many fine

original features, such as tower and asymmetric form which are significant in views from the Lake frontage.

□ 2. Promenade, landing stages and lake shore

This area was developed in the mid-19th century with a steamer pier and moorings for private and hire boats. The promenade was formally created in the early years of the 20th century.

This lakeside area is the destination of almost all the visitors to Bowness and, unsurprisingly, it has a contemporary character arising from many cars and coaches, road signs, modern street lighting columns, CCTV, traffic management features and a plethora of advertising boards, litter bins, seating and railings.



Fig.15 Pier and jetties overlooked by The Old England Hotel.



Fig.16 Ticket offices by the pier have been built in a Victorian Gothic style.

The area descends from the grounds of The Belsfield in a series of flat tiers to the shore. First, a wide and straight north-south tarmac footpath abuts the stone boundary wall of The Belsfield's grounds. From here a grass lawn with formal flower beds drops gently to a wide tarmac two-way carriageway painted with traffic control signs. A paved pedestrian area on two levels separated by a length of iron railing extends from the road to the gravel shoreline. The pedestrian area (concrete interlocking blocks) serves hordes of milling tourists; the shore is host to numerous ducks, geese and swans – and the tourists who feed them.

The north end is for public hire boats and the nearby lakeside series of timber clad sheds (ice cream, boat hire, tourist information) are good replicas of former 'cushion huts' (huts in which local boatmen kept cushions for the comfort of their customers).

The south end of the bay hosts the Tourist Information Office. A line of trees at the start of Glebe Road helps to soften the stark bulk of The Lakeview, a 20th century intrusion of no great distinction (outside the conservation area).

At the height of the tourist season this is a frantically busy space by day but early in the morning or late at night it can still be a tranquil and peaceful waterside place. From certain vantage points there are picturesque views across the water. Looking north from the shoreline the multi-gabled grey stone buildings of The Old England Hotel and St

Martin's Church tower are an indication of the historic origins and development of the bay.

The timber ticket offices with decorative bargeboards, wide eaves and exposed rafters have been built in the style of 19th and early 20th century lakeside buildings. Together with the replica cushion huts, these small Victorian-style buildings dispel some of the area's uncompromising modernity and help to promote the historic origins of the landing stages despite the accretions of contemporary tourism.

□ 3. St Martin's Church and environs

This character area is centred on St Martin's Church and churchyard and includes all the development overlooking the church's almost circular churchyard. The church is a low-lying edifice. Almost encircled by trees, it is not prominent in the streetscene. To the west, the cliff-like stone facades of The Old England Hotel and adjacent Stag's Head Inn seem to amplify the squat appearance of the church, despite its west tower. Trees in the churchyard soften the stern character of these austere hostelries.



Fig.17 The low-pitched lead-covered roof of St Martin's Church is unusual in the Lake District. Most churches have slate roofs.



Fig.18 Steep gables and corner turret make this building a landmark feature of the conservation area.

To the east of the church there is a more spacious feeling created where the churchyard abuts a wide road intersection in front of the late 20th century replacement of the former Royal Hotel. There was a row of cottages located just east of the church until they were demolished in the early 20th century to widen the road. This space is enhanced by the presence of several fine Victorian buildings overlooking the square.

Buildings on the south side of St Martin's Hill once had front gardens. The forecourt of The Village Inn is now used for parking. Architectural character is lost as the road descends to the lakeside beside Belles Howe, a large Victorian building hemmed in by roads on an island site. Atkinson's Arcade, an early 20th century development of three shops the design of which does not enhance the area, is built on the frontage of a 19th century house. This part of the road was known as Sepulchre Hill after the discovery of a Quaker burial site during road-widening in the 1890s.

❑ 4. Queen Square, Crag Brow and core shopping area

This sub-area includes the commercial centre of Bowness comprising Queen Square, Crag Brow, Ash Street and Rayrigg Road. It is principally a shopping area but also contains pubs, cafes and restaurants.

Queen's Square takes its name from the Dowager Queen Adelaide who visited Bowness in 1840. It is the central point of the town where three major and two minor roads meet and it is dominated by traffic, with no apparent sense of a civic 'square'. The chestnut tree is the focus of the square. Though isolated on a traffic island adorned with road signs the tree has considerable presence in this urban setting.



Fig.19 This building has been designed to neatly fit its wedge-shaped site at the end of Ash Street.



Fig.20 Typical late 19th century use of local stone (first floor) and applied timbering (second floor).

Ash Street is one of the busiest streets in the town and was pedestrianised in 1993. The street has a small courtyard off its north end and narrows markedly at its southern end. The architectural appearance of the street is 19th century. Storey height varies and there is a mix of gables and eaves, stone and roughcast. However, building appearance is often marred by numerous hanging signs, applied lettering, balconnettes, lighting appliances, electrical wiring etc. The street has a lively commercial character, although numerous A-boards and advertising obstruct free passage.

On the north side of Crag Brow, a row of gabled three-storey buildings with first-floor oriel windows and vestiges of original shopfronts date from the early 20th century. On the opposite side of the street, a similar but less distinguished development from the same period is marred by garish signage. However, both developments are typical of Bowness's Edwardian development. Proceeding uphill, the architectural standard is let down by unremarkable 20th century shops on the brow of the hill at Crag Brow's junction with Helm Road. Here, 'Lakeland' is a well proportioned Victorian building with discreet signage that illustrates how a building can maintain its historic character despite its commercial purpose – fortunate considering its prominent corner location.

The east side of Rayrigg Road is dominated by a large former laundry building that now houses The World of Beatrix Potter, a major indoor tourist attraction (in a town full of guest houses and hotels there was once a great need for such a large laundry). The street has a disjointed architectural appearance – building design, type and age vary considerably and there is no overall theme or character. The set-back of both the restaurant and the former laundry (elevated above a stone retaining wall) increases the

spacious feel around Queen Square. Of note are the cylindrical stone chimney stacks on the restaurant building, a particular feature of vernacular Lakeland buildings.

□ 5. Lowside – the oldest part of the town

The oldest part of the town lies hidden from view in a hollow to the north of St Martin's Church. It is not so much the buildings as the haphazard layout of the area and small details of vernacular architecture that testify to the historic origin of this small area. Fallbarrow Road is the ancient northern approach to the settlement winding its way down from New Hall Bank and up to The Old England Hotel. Sawpit Hill descends past the New Hall Inn (grade II) and up to St Martin's Church. Both roads undulate and vary in width. Lowfold is a narrow lateral narrow street of two storey cottages.



Fig.21 The datestone above the front door reads: "Reginald Shepherd built this house in the year 1751".



Fig.22 Narrow streets with no pavements are typical of the Lowside area.

Robinson Place, closest to the town centre, contains a pub and two bar-restaurants and has the appearance of a busy tourist destination with its outdoor tables, A boards and external signage. The White House is an early 19th century grade II listed building. The atmosphere becomes more tranquil, and even rural, within a short walk northwards.

A wedge-shaped unbounded small sloping grassed area stretches out below New Hall Bank, an imposing Victorian building. From here there is a view westward to boats moored on the lake by the Royal Yacht Club and the clubhouse with its distinctive saw-tooth roof, a memorable building on the foreshore; and eastward to Fold Head Cottage (grade II, datestone 1751) nestling closely into the grassy bank beneath a line of trees. New Hall Bank and a large beech tree overlook the scene from a high position on the promontory. A lane from Fold Head Cottage leads west to Old Fallbarrow (grade II), the most western point of the conservation area, which lies hidden within a woodland glade adjacent to the lake. The sound of bird song rather than traffic prevails.

□ 6. Helm Road, Brantfell Road and Kendal Road

These three roads are outside the core shopping area and, being less frequented, have a much quieter ambience.

Helm Road rises steeply from Crag Brow. Old stone walls still bound the roadside and double yellow line road markings accentuate the bends in the road. There are no shops

here and the bustle of shoppers in Crag Brow quickly fades. Pleasing downhill views across the lake improve as one ascends the hill.

Two key buildings stand at the lower end. The Angel Inn, listed grade II as 'Crag Brow Cottage', is a mid 19th century building with an outstanding location above a steeply inclined open space, now a pub garden. On the other side of the road stands Oakbank House. Curiously this building faces uphill, away from the lake, and thus acts as a focal point in the descent from The Hydro. Lake View Villas, immediately to the north, are two robust pairs of large Victorian houses that, like many detached buildings in the conservation area, have forecourts that have been given a hard surface for the parking of cars.



Fig.23 This listed building overlooks a welcome green space close to the town centre.



Fig.24 The Hydro Hotel is in an Italianate style not unlike The Belsfield Hotel.

Near the top of the hill stands the Hydro Hotel, opened in 1881 to provide accommodation that included bath and water treatment, fashionable at that time. The grade II listed building has been extensively extended to the south. From here there are fine views. A small apron of greenery below the forecourt is an important 'breathing space' for the area. The lodge, south of The Hydro, is built in a contrasting Gothic style, also listed grade II. To the rear, the viewing point and overgrown landscaped grounds of Biskey Howe provide a green backdrop for the town from which there are fine views of the surrounding landscape.

Brantfell Road is a narrow winding road with a pavement on one side only. It ascends steeply from St Martin's Place to modern housing further up the hill. Beyond Wordsworth Court, ivy-clad stone boundary walls, greenery and trees on the brow of the hill give this road a rural feel, only partly dispelled by double yellow lines on both sides of the road. Wordsworth Court is a former school of 1867, converted to holiday flats in 1975. A plaque on the wall to John Bolton, a benefactor, and the twin stone entrance pillars and iron gates still remain.

Two of the area's oldest buildings stand at the foot of Brantfell Road, both listed grade II. Laurel Cottage is on the site of the early 17th century original village school. The Spinnery stands on an island site and dates from the same period. Crown Rigg is the much altered shell of the former Crown Hotel, one of Bowness's earliest hotels. Its architectural detail has been lost but its mass and elevated location indicate its prestige as a 19th century hotel. The grounds still contain many mature specimen trees.

□ 7. Lake Road

Lake Road was not completely developed until the last quarter of the 19th century when the full impact of the coming of the railway to Windermere was being realised. The 1862 Ordnance Survey map shows residential development at Elim Grove, Bank Terrace and Bank Road (including Lonsdale House dated 1851) but little roadside development along Lake Road itself. Over the next fifty years the east side of the road was fully developed. North Terrace bears a datestone of 1873; Biskey Howe Road has a datestone of 1881.

Lake Road has a predominantly commercial character as far as Biskey Howe Road, after which it becomes more residential. As well as shops and services, there is a cinema (1926) and Methodist Chapel (1883). The roadside frontage is regularly interrupted by gaps leading to residential streets: Bank Terrace, South Terrace, North Terrace and narrower back alleys.

This length of road is almost straight, indicative of Victorian planning as opposed to the informality of the layout in the historic core of the town. Unusually, building height at the commercial town-centre end of the street is generally lower than that at the residential outer end – perhaps an indication that this was a place where commerce was less important than accommodation. Victorian town character is stronger at the upper end where three storey multi-gabled buildings oppose each other across the street.



Fig.25 This plain two-storey terrace contrasts markedly with the richly adorned Victorian guest houses nearby.



Fig.26 A three-storey Victorian development of shops with two floors of living accommodation above.

This area contains mid/late-19th century development on either side of Lake Road. Bank Road and Elm Grove were built out by c. 1860 and the formal terraces to the south and east did not appear until about 20 years later.

North Terrace and South Terrace have a rhythmic terraced appearance, the former with more architectural details (e.g. first floor bays, dormers) than the latter. Bank Terrace has a less formal layout and includes gardens where an opposing terrace is expected. Houses in Biskey Howe Terrace are larger, on the north side set back behind gardens.

Craig Walk is a later, more prestigious terrace than North and South Terraces. At its southern end the steepness of the hillside is accentuated as an elevated three-storey row of houses bears over a sunken two-storey terrace. The expansion of Bowness from

the 1870s onwards was reputedly, to a large extent, engineered by the speculative building programme launched by H. Schneider, the then owner of Belsfield.

Focal points, views and vistas

Obviously the most prominent and pleasing views from such a conservation area are those which include lake Windermere with the distant fells as a backdrop. The best of such views (not public) are to be seen from high vantage points above the lake such as the forecourt of The Belsfield Hotel, The Hydro and Crown Rigg – not surprisingly all three are buildings of status that were deliberately located to take advantage of the views. These views across rooftops are often complemented in the foreground by the town's attractive roofscape of gables, dormers, chimney stacks, chimney pots, ornate ridge tiles and bargeboards. A popular viewpoint above the town is Biskey Howe. This former Victorian pleasure ground to the Hydro Hotel provides the best views in the town of the lake and distant mountains.



Fig.27 The tower of St Martin's Church barely rises above the rooftops.



Fig.28 A building in Royal Square embellished with architectural details.

Direct views of the lake and fells can be gained from the Promenade and the grounds of The Belsfield Hotel, from where Hen Holme Island is backed by the woods of Claife Heights and the Langdale Pikes. There are also intermittent glimpses, between buildings, of lake and distant fells from the inclines of Craig Walk, Helm Road, Brantfell Road and Back Belsfield Road. These views give the area its distinctive local identity and help to place it in its Lake District context.

The generally unplanned layout of the conservation area does not include any purposely planned vistas although several buildings, mainly because of their prominence on rising land, act as eye-catching focal points. These include the afore-mentioned Belsfield Hotel, The Hydro and Crown Rigg as well as less grand buildings such as The Pharmacy ('Vinegar Jones'), Royal Square and the 'Lakeland' building in Crag Brow.



Fig.29 Crag Brow is in the commercial core of the town.



Fig.30 Local stone slates, graded and cut carefully to fill an awkwardly shaped roof.

Although a church spire or tower is often a local landmark, the low tower of St Martin's is not prominent in the streetscene being overshadowed to the west by the mass of The Old England, Stag's Head Inn and Belles Howe. The church and historic core of the village may have been deliberately located in a hidden low-lying depression within the folds of surrounding land and thus it has always been relatively unobtrusive. However, the church tower does feature in views from some hillside vantage points and is especially notable looking downhill along Brantfell Road.

Significant views are shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map as follows:

- A – View towards lake from 'top' of Lake Road on the approach from Windermere;
- B – Panoramic views of lake and fells from the forecourt of The Hydro;
- C – Panoramic views of lake and fells from Biskey Howe;
- D – View down along Helm Road to Oakbank, with lake in distance;
- E – View of typical 19th century development across Queen Square;
- F – View of lake and boats at Royal Yacht Club from Fallbarrow Road, Lowside;
- G – View of St Martin's Church (landmark building) from St Martin's Place;
- H – Immediate view to the low tower of St Martin's Church from Lake Road;
- I – Panoramic westward views from Crown Rigg;
- J – View across the grounds of The Belsfield Hotel from the hotel car park;
- K – View of The Belsfield Hotel from The Promenade (landmark building);
- L – Panoramic views of lake, landing stages and distant fells from the open space in front of (west) of The Belsfield;
- M - View of The Old England Hotel from landing stage;
- N - Views of lake, Hen Holme Island and Langdale Pikes from landing stages;
- O – View of Fold Head Cottage (grade II) from Fallbarrow Road, Lowside.

Current activities and uses

Tourism is the dominant element in the local economy. Bowness is one of the 'honeypots' of the Lake District attracting thousands of tourists throughout the year. Convenient access to the mainline railway and the M6 motorway means that the area receives day trippers and longer term visitors arriving by car, coach and train.

The main attraction, of course, is the lake. Steamers and launches sail throughout the year between Ambleside, Bowness and Lakeside. As well as those coming to enjoy the lake for boat trips, sailing and watersports, others come to relax and enjoy the atmosphere of the area and the town's shops and attractions. Many are drawn by the lakeside ambience and 'rooms with a view'.



Fig.31 'The Shelter' in the grounds of The Belsfield.



Fig. 32 Chestnut tree in winter, Queen's Square.

The activities and uses within the conservation area have changed little since the mid-19th century but visitor numbers are much increased. The Promenade is still the place to embark on a boat trip, hire a boat, have an ice-cream, feed the swans or just sit and take in the view.

The conservation area, which includes the core of the town, contains a high proportion of guest-houses, bed and breakfasts, hotels and self-catering holiday cottages and flats as well as pubs, cafes, restaurants and gift shops catering for the vast numbers of visitors. The locality has a high number of second/holiday homes. Shops and businesses catering for visitors possibly outnumber outlets for items for day-to-day living. There is a small town-centre supermarket but the nearby town of Windermere caters much more for food shopping and everyday services. There is a car repair workshop south of (behind) Crag Brow.

In addition, there is a Parish Church, Methodist Church, community hall, children's playground, post office, cinema and small theatre. The Royal Yacht Club and the Windermere Steamboat Museum are popular destinations just outside the conservation area.

Open spaces, landscape and trees

The most notable open space in the area is the grounds of The Belsfield Hotel, complemented by the much smaller grounds of Crown Rigg, which descend down to the margin of the lake. This provides a fine setting for the listed building and gives a spacious uncramped feel to the Promenade and the lakeside landing stages.

The churchyard of St Martin's Church, together with the adjacent Royal Square, forms a central open area in the town centre. Similarly Queen's Square, focussed on a single mature chestnut tree, breaks up the continuum of roadside development.

Apart from these notable places, open spaces in the conservation area are small and few. With the exception of Rayrigg Road Car Park and the grassy playground off Langrigge Road, open space is confined mainly to the gardens of large houses or small roadside front gardens, notably in the Victorian suburbs at the upper ends of Lake Road and Kendal Road. Regrettably many front gardens and forecourts have been hard-surfaced for parking or shop display. This can involve loss of the original stone boundary walls and gate-posts which are a historic feature of the area. Where front gardens do remain, they improve and soften the streetscene. For example, The Angel Inn in Helm Road, Laurel Cottage in Brantfell Road and Rose Cottage in Church Road (all dating from the mid 19th century and earlier) have preserved their front garden to the enhancement of the town and conservation area.



Fig.33 A rare example of historic floorscape in Ash Street.



Fig.34 The town's public realm is modern, designed to cope with thousands of visitors.

Trees are a vital part of the conservation area's identity. Trees and greenery are a feature of the area's green open spaces such as the grounds of The Belsfield Hotel and St Martin's churchyard. The former has a grove of mature trees, including a huge Wellingtonia, some of which date back to the mid-19th century planting of the grounds. The church is encircled by a row of yews which may well be at least 500 years old.

Groups or short avenues of trees help to soften the boundaries of the Rayrigg Car Park and the southern end of the landing stages. The conservation area is also enhanced by individual mature trees in prominent locations, for example, the chestnut in Queen's Square, the beech beside New Hall Bank and the monkey puzzle beside The Hydro.

Within the town centre, there is an ash tree at the south end of Ash Street planted in 1993 to replace the 'Deborah Ash' said to have been planted in 1631 (felled 1879).

Indeed, tree naming seems to have been a local tradition. The chestnut in Queen Square was one of two planted in about 1900 named Martha and Mary.

Significant trees or tree groups are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. Lack of a specific reference does not imply that a tree or group is not of value.

Public realm: floorscape, street lighting and street furniture

Bowness's public realm is mainly functional and appropriate to the continuous heavy wear received in a town that hosts such high numbers of pedestrians and road vehicles. The conservation area's floorscape is predominantly modern in appearance. Pavements in the central area are either tarmac or paved with interlocking concrete blocks.

Ash Street, pedestrianised since 1993, has natural stone pavements and kerbs abutting a central 'carriageway' (at the same level as the pavement) of interlocking concrete blocks. The stone paving extends into the open spaces at either end of the street. Elsewhere, pavements are mostly of tarmac with concrete kerbs, but natural stone kerbs and gulleys can be found along isolated lengths of Church Street and Fallbarrow Road. Small cobbled areas also exist, and there is an area of re-set natural stone cobbles off Ash Street. A path of pebbles and stones leads to the front door of Laurel Cottage in Brantfell Road. These small areas of natural stone paving, perhaps dating from the late 19th/early 20 century add to the area's sense of place.

Street lighting columns vary according to location and are modern. Street furniture is modern. There are many benches along the promenade and numerous nondescript litter bins of functional design throughout the conservation area.

Fig 34a. Some items of interest within Bowness Conservation Area:



King George VII (1901-1910) post-box, Kendal Road.



Stone wall built over the bedrock, Biskey Howe Road.



Monument to John Bolton, Brantfell Road.



Nineteenth century shopfront, Lake Road.



Gateposts and iron railings to former school, Brantfell Road (Wordsworth Court).



Original gatepost and iron gate, Kendal Road

5 The buildings of the conservation area

Architectural styles, materials and detailing

The oldest building in the area is St Martin's Church. The present building dates from 1483 and is built of local slate rubble with sandstone dressings and simple mullion windows. The New Hall Inn (also known as the Hole in t'Wall) dates from the early 17th century but has been much altered. A cylindrical chimney declares its local vernacular origins (The Spinnery, Brantfell Road and a building in Rayrigg Road have similar distinctive rounded chimney stacks).

There are only a few good examples of 18th century building – for example the grade II listed Laurel Cottage, Brantfell Road and Rose Cottage, Church Street. Both are rendered and have well proportioned plain facades with formally placed recessed window openings typical of the Georgian period. The former has 8 by 8 vertical sliding sash ground floor windows and a semi-circular hooded front door canopy, the latter has two canted bays placed symmetrically on either side of the front door. Fold Head, Fallbarrow Road is dated 1751. It has a similar Georgian-style symmetry but a more rustic appearance arising from its small window openings and rugged slate canopy.

These buildings, and others such as The Spinnery and the low-lying part of The Stag's Head Inn, have been built in a debased provincial Georgian style. They are in separate and disconnected locations and are remnants of the pre-railway town. Many of the town's central 17th and 18th century buildings were swept aside to make way for post-1850 Victorian redevelopment.

The overall historic architectural character of the conservation area may be broadly described as Victorian, covering the period from c. 1840 to 1900 - i.e. the period of post-railway growth of the town. 'Victorian Gothic' is the prevalent style, typified by a riot of pointed gables, ornate bargeboards, steeply pitched dormers, oriels, bay windows, turrets, ridge tiles and finials. The special architectural interest of the place lies in the robust, well-detailed formality of the town's post-railway expansion and the high quality of stonework and joinery. Variation in scale, design, material and detailing adds to a lively streetscene.

Although the area lacks variety in building types, there are modest examples of places of worship, a school, banks and purpose-built shopping arcades. The most prevalent building type is hotels, guest houses, boarding houses and other residential uses. The Belsfield Hotel, The Hydro Hotel and The Old England Hotel are 19th century hotels, all listed grade II.

The most prevalent building material is natural stone, easily accessible in the locality and relatively inexpensive. With the coming of the railway and improved lake transport, import of stone from further afield became easier e.g. 'blue' Coniston stone or 'red' Furness stone. This has been used with local greystone to contrast or complement tone, colour or texture.

The Stag's Head Inn is a traditional Windermere greystone building with sandstone window dressings and quoins. Next door, The Old England has similarly coloured Lakeland stone walls with heavy limestone window lintels. The palette of building materials reflects the underlying geology. The sombre stone colours are distinctive but can be seen as dour and unattractive. High quality stonemasonry and joinery is shown

admirably on buildings in, for example, Royal Square, St Martin's Square and Crag Brow.

Although stone prevails, smooth and roughcast render is not uncommon. Mock half-timbered upper storeys (black timber on white render) can be seen in Crag Brow and Royal Square, an Edwardian period detail. The apex of a gabled bay or window is also occasionally treated in this way.

Slate is the most prevalent roofing material. Roofs of graded Lakeland slate laid in diminishing courses are a characteristic feature. Stone chimneys and tall clay chimney-pots add to a roofscape already embellished by pointed gables and dormers.

Historic window and door joinery would originally have been timber but in several instances these have been replaced with aluminium or PVC almost always to the detriment of the host building, especially where the original glazing pattern has been ignored. Vertical sliding sash windows are common, sometimes with a multi-paned upper sash or a more ornate pattern of glazing. Dormers are common, sometimes with glazed cheeks and ornate bargeboards that match the bargeboards of the gable ends.

Bay windows are common, sometimes rectangular, sometimes canted. First-floor overhanging windows (oriel), three-storey bay windows and paired ground floor bay windows beneath a long canopy that also protects a pair of front entrances are typical Victorian building details.

Fig 35. Architectural detail on Victorian and Edwardian building in Bowness Conservation Area:



Fig. 35a Finials, ridge tiles, chimneys and a striking corner turret.



Fig. 35b Carefully detailed first floor overhanging window (oriel). Mix of stone and mock timber-framed upper floor.



Fig. 35c Finely decorated bargeboards on the front porch and main elevation. Canted bay window with multi-paned upper sashes.



Fig. 35d Deep eaves with exposed rafters. Elegant shopfront. Projecting corner bay with timber balustrade to balcony above.



Fig. 35e Local greystone walls with large quoins. Two-storey bay window and steeply pitched half-dormer.



Fig. 35f Ornate matching timber porches, canted bay windows and half-dormers with deep eaves.

Listed buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and



Fig.36 Fold Head, Fallbarrow Road – grade II.



Fig.37 Lodge at The Hydro, Helm Road – grade II.

consent is required from the Lake District National Park Authority before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. Listed buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. These are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Laurel Cottage, Brantfell Road | grade II |
| 2. The Spinnery, Brantfell Road | grade II |
| 3. Old Kirk Café, Church Street | grade II |
| 4. Rose Cottage, Church Street | grade II |
| 5. Stags Head inn, Church Street | grade II |
| 6. Fold Head, Fallbarrow Road | grade II |
| 7. Lodge at The Hydro, Helm Road | grade II |
| 8. The Hydro, Helm Road | grade II |
| 9. Belsfield Hotel, Kendal Road | grade II |
| 10. Church of St Martin, Lake Road | grade II |
| 11. Crag Brow, Langrigge Drive | grade II |
| 12. New Hall Inn with attached outbuildings to S., Lowside | grade II |
| 13. White House, Robinson Place | grade II |
| 14. Tomb of Rasselas Belifield | grade II |

Significant unlisted buildings

A number of unlisted buildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being “Buildings of Special Character”. These buildings vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area.



Fig.38 Former police station in Lake Road, dated 1858.



Fig.39 Row of cottages in Low Fold, dated 1861.

Local details

The distinctive local identity of the area is enhanced by a number of small features and historic elements that cumulatively help to give the conservation area a sense of place. These items should be preserved. These include:

- Several plaques and datestones around the town e.g. 1907 plaque at Church Room, Rayrigg Road, John Bolton plaque in Brantfell Road;
- ER VII red post boxes in The Promenade, Kendal Road and Ash Street;
- Historic stone front boundary walls and gates;
- Iron street name signs;
- Headstone at St Martin’s Church in memory of Rasselas Belfield a Native of Abyssinia who died on the 16th Day of January 1822 Aged 32 years”.

6 Negative features and issues

❑ Loss of historic interest

Some of the buildings within the conservation area are suffering from an incremental loss of architectural detail. The use of inappropriate modern materials, such as the replacement of original timber windows with uPVC is adversely affecting many of the unlisted buildings in the conservation area.

❑ Inappropriate alterations

There are instances where buildings have been extended in a manner which neither reflects nor harmonises with the traditional design of the host building, nor utilises a palette of traditional construction materials. There have occasionally also been alterations to door and window openings that have upset the composition of a frontage.

❑ Obtrusive installations: extractor vents, alarm boxes, fire escape stairs

Accretions such as extractor vents and alarm boxes have been installed on several historic buildings. Additions to a historic building, such as external fire escape ladders, can, if not carefully considered, severely detract from a building's character and appearance.

❑ Unsightly storage of waste and recycling bins

Wheeled refuse bins and unsecured items of waste and rubbish can be unsightly and detract from the character of the historic environment. The town's pattern of development in which back lanes allow clear views of the rear of many buildings can make such eyesores highly visible.

❑ Shopfronts and signage

Bowness retains some good examples of typical late 19th/early 20th century shopfronts comprised of timber stallriser, pilasters, corbels and fascia. There are examples of garish coloured fascias and advertising that detract from the historic streetscene. The colour red often obliterates the more subtle aspects of a building's façade. Some historic shopfronts are also in need of repair and maintenance.

❑ Poorly designed dormers

Flat roofed dormers, some almost creating an extra storey, disfigure the host building and can spoil the characteristic steeply pitched roofs on the area. Dormers are a typical feature of many of the Victorian properties but there are instances of recently inserted dormers that do not follow an appropriate and matching scale, design and materials.

❑ Temporary signs: A-boards, freestanding blackboards and banners

The popularity of Bowness as a tourist destination has resulted in a proliferation of directional and advertising signage. Competition for custom and a desire to attract visitors has resulted in the overuse of temporary signage such as A-boards, blackboards and banners. These can obstruct the flow of pedestrians, spoil the appearance of buildings and degrade the town's special historic character.

❑ Poor quality public realm, open spaces and traffic management

Despite improvements in Ash Street, generally speaking, poor quality paving and tarmac typify an uninspiring public realm with an uncoordinated range of materials. This provides a disappointing setting for many of the town's historic buildings and

inadequately highlights back lanes and ginnels which lead to hidden areas of interest within the conservation area.

The quality and management of some open spaces is a cause for concern and may merit from enhancement. Biskey Howe, in particular, would benefit from a scheme to repair historic footpaths, clear undergrowth and reinstate the landscaping/planting framework so that the fine views of the lake can again be fully appreciated.

The popularity of this access point to lake Windermere means that roads into, out of and through the town, easily become congested. Pedestrians feel threatened by passing vehicles and traffic can be intrusive in terms of noise. Parking within the town can be extremely difficult at peak times. Traffic control measures such as traffic lights can adversely affect the streetscene or the setting of historic buildings.

❑ **Loss of front gardens and use of forecourts for parking**

On-street parking can be difficult to find and this has led to former front gardens and forecourts being given a hard surface for the parking of vehicles. This can upset the setting of a building and may also result in the removal of characteristic stone boundary walls.



Fig. 40 Pavement surface patched and repatched.



Fig. 41 A-boards can be a hazard to pedestrians.



Fig. 42 Unenclosed rubbish and 'wheelie bin' to the rear of a main street.



Fig. 43 External fire escapes and air conditioning equipment can be unsightly.

PART 2 BOWNESS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the management plan

The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic assets and places. However, we also recognise that conservation areas are living environments that will continue to change and adapt. Designating a conservation area does not prohibit change or new development. However, it does involve carefully managing changes to ensure that the character and appearance of these areas is safeguarded and enhanced for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations.

The local community has a vital role to play. We appreciate that the special character of an area is often the reason why people chose to stay and live in the area in the first place. The area cannot be managed without a shared understanding of what is important and what needs to be done. Conservation Area status actually brings very few additional legal controls and the involvement of residents and businesses is essential to realise the benefits of designation. Maintaining the character of the area is, therefore, a joint endeavour between ourselves and anyone who is responsible for proposing new development or undertaking repairs, maintenance, enhancement and minor alterations. This includes the highway authority (Cumbria County Council), the district council, parish council, civic societies, local businesses and residents.

1.2 The benefits of designation

Conservation Area designation brings the potential for significant benefits by protecting the interests of the whole community. The benefits of designation can be summarised as follows:

- the potential to identify and protect existing features or buildings to retain an area's unique and special character
- the more sensitive design of new development and protection from unsympathetic and damaging change
- ensuring that important historic buildings are protected from demolition
- preventing the loss or damage to trees which contribute positively towards the area's special character
- the promotion and co-ordination of desirable enhancements
- encouraging an understanding of an area's history
- ensuring that an area's sense of place is conserved, particularly the significance, memories and associations it has for local people
- promoting the use of local and traditional craft skills
- encouraging the use of local and traditional building materials. These are often more environmentally friendly and sustainable than modern products.

The purpose of the management plan is to help deliver these benefits. It present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character, informed by the appraisal and forms the basis to involve the local community in these proposals.

1.3 Legislative background

The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process. The management plan seeks to preserve and enhance these special qualities and realise improvements and resolve the negative features and issues identified in section 6 of the appraisal. The document satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990* namely:

“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.”

Section 69 [2] also states:

“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions... and determine whether any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas”

The management plan reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: *‘Planning for the Historic Environment’*, English Heritage guidance titled *‘Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas’* (August 2005), best practice guidelines, policies within the Lake District National Park Local Plan (1998) and any policies which supersede this in the Lake District Core Strategy 2010 together with such guidance leaflets as *‘Converting an old building?’* and *‘Outdoor advertisements and signs’*.

In implementing this policy framework, our development management service aims to preserve and enhance the special character of the conservation area. We recognise that any such improvements do not have to be initiated and co-ordinated by us. The valuable contribution of local environmental and community groups to positive enhancement works and the role of the Parish Plan are also essential to enhancement. Other agencies and funding bodies also have a vital role to play.

1.4 Public consultation

The Bowness Conservation Area and Management Plan is created by collaborative working between heritage consultants, the Lake District National Park Authority and the local community. The appraisal and management plan is subject to a 4 week period of public consultation commencing in the Autumn of 2010. This includes sending consultation letters to residents and businesses placing the document on the Authority’s website and the provision of a public exhibition in the town. The document will subsequently be amended to incorporate relevant suggestions and comments.

1.5 Designation and extension

The appraisal has examined the conservation area boundaries and has identified that the conservation area should be redrawn to include the following two additional areas (see map for detail):

a) *Lake Road, Bank Road, Biskey Howe Road, Elim Grove, Craig Walk*: An area of mid/late-19th century development (contemporary with other historic development alongside Lake Road) which lies adjacent to the existing conservation area to the north-

east of the town on either side of Lake Road. This extension includes Bank Road, Elim Grove and terraced houses in Craig Walk. Within this area stand, for example, Lonsdale House (1851), Methodist Church (1860), former Police Station (1858), and The Royalty Cinema (1926),

b) *Kendal Road*: A collection of c.1900 detached and semi-detached dwellings in Kendal Road to the rear (east) of The Belsfield Hotel. These houses exhibit fine Victorian and Edwardian period details and excellent craftsmanship in stonework and joinery.

These amendments would ensure that the boundary was tightly drawn to include only the area identified as being of significant value.



Fig.MP1 Signage needs to be carefully monitored and controlled with regard to size, design and materials to ensure that any negative impact is kept to a minimum.



Fig.MP2 This extension to The Old England Hotel does not respond positively to the historic setting.

1.6 Effects of designation

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “*preservation and enhancement*” of the area. These include requiring Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of any unlisted building, restrictions on advertisements, and requiring notice for proposed tree works. We will seek to ensure that all development within the conservation area preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

1.7 Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are protected by law as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The listing covers both the inside and outside of the building, and any structure or building within its curtilage which was built before 1947. Listed Building Consent is required from the Authority for any work which affects the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. There are currently 14 listed buildings within the conservation area.

Extensions and alterations to listed buildings should conform with policy context outlined in section 1.3 and should generally:

- Take into account the prevailing forms of development;
- Complement the form and character of the original building;

- Be subordinate in bulk and scale to the principal building;
- Use high quality materials and detailing;
- Pay particular attention to roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and chimneys.

We will seek to ensure that all works to a listed building have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

1.8 Significant Unlisted Buildings

In addition to the listed buildings, there are many individual and groups of buildings and associated features which are of considerable local interest and make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, and these are



Fig.MP3 Significant Unlisted Buildings (as identified on the Townscape Appraisal map) make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Fig.MP4 The church tower and lake from Brantfell Road. The setting of the conservation area and views within, into and from the area are very important to its character and appearance.

shown as 'Significant Unlisted Buildings' on the Townscape Appraisal Map. A high proportion of the buildings within the conservation area were identified by the townscape appraisal to be Significant Unlisted Buildings. There is a presumption that all such buildings will be retained, in accordance with Policy BE12 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan (1998).

We will ensure that the contribution that they make to the character and appearance of the conservation area is carefully considered in relation to all applications for extension, alteration and demolition of these buildings.

1.9 Enhancing and protecting the local character and features within the conservation area

There is an opportunity to maintain and improve the character and appearance of the conservation area simply by ensuring that day to day improvements, alterations and maintenance of properties, however minor, are carried out sympathetically using good quality materials and details. The local community has a big part to play in this and, over time, the benefit to the conservation area can be very significant. The appraisal identified that the following alterations can, cumulatively, seriously affect the special character of the area and therefore need to be considered very carefully:

- loss of timber windows and doors to uPVC alternatives
- the replacement of traditional windows and doors with non-traditional and anachronistic designs;
- alterations to window/door openings;
- the erection of porches;
- minor installations and alteration of materials;
- loss and alteration of boundary walls;
- rooflights in prominent roof slopes or highly visible positions;
- aerials, satellite dishes, alarms, downpipes and wires in prominent or highly visible positions;
- oil tanks, garages and outhouses of non-traditional form in prominent or highly visible positions;
- the use of non-traditional building materials, mortars and roofing materials.

Retention and reinstatement of traditional features will be strongly encouraged. To help retain and conserve traditional features and to prevent harm to single family dwelling houses through alteration and extension we will consider introducing an Article 4 Direction. This would remove permitted development rights which allow unsympathetic alterations to be made without planning permission. Such a Direction would require consultation with the local community. We will also work with the local community to ensure that buildings are repaired and maintained in a timely manner and consider the use of Urgent Works Notices under section 54 and 55 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and amenity notices under section 76 and 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where appropriate.



Fig.MP5 This row of trees provides welcome shade to the lake shore in summer. Tree Preservation Orders may be appropriate where a tree has significant amenity value.



Fig.MP6 Architectural detail such as period windows and ornate metal gutter brackets could be protected with an Article 4 direction.

1.10 Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending lopping or felling a tree greater than 75mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give us six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides us with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case we may decide to serve a Tree Preservation Order. The appraisal identifies a

number of significant trees and groups of trees on verges, in areas of public open space and within private gardens. We will seek to consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be potentially under threat.

1.11 Enhancing and protecting views and the setting of the conservation area

The setting of the conservation area and views within, into and from the area are very essential elements to its character and appearance. It is important that development, enhancement and public realm work takes account of the setting of the conservation area and important viewpoints and that these are preserved or enhanced so that the special character of the conservation area is retained. Important views are identified on the Townscape Appraisal map in the character appraisal.

1.12 Enhancement through new development, alterations and extensions

While there are few opportunities for large-scale redevelopment within the conservation area, some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to sensitive design and good quality materials and details. There may occasionally be sites where completely new development is acceptable. As the quality of the general environment within the conservation area is already acknowledged by designation, we will encourage well designed schemes using appropriate materials that respond positively to their historic setting. This includes the encouragement of high quality contemporary and sustainable design and materials.



Fig.MP7 Large flat-roofed dormer above an original well-designed two-storey canted bay.



Fig.MP8 The form of this large extension and loss of garden to hard-standing for vehicles are harmful to the conservation area.

1.13 Enhancing the public realm and open spaces and mitigating the impact of traffic

The appraisal has identified that only limited areas of historic cobbled and flagged floorscape within the conservation area merit protection and some parts of late 20th century enhancement schemes are in need of upgrading. Some 19th century open spaces would also benefit from enhancement. There is significant potential to enhance the public realm and open spaces, particularly the quality and consistency of paving materials and landscaping design elsewhere within the conservation area. An appropriate specification and standard of materials, detailing and soft landscaping that is sympathetic to the character of the conservation area should be chosen to guide improvements.

Public realm enhancement is one of the key ways to deliver a better quality of environment for pedestrians and cyclists and mitigating the impact of vehicles which pass through the town. Enhanced and wider pavements, improved crossing points, cycle routes, rationalised highway signage and provision of measures to slow traffic, such as traffic calming, are all important elements to such improvements. We will work with Cumbria County Council and other relevant agencies to ensure that any highway works bring a positive improvement to the area.

1.14 Softening the impact of necessary highway works

This appraisal has noted that highway signage and traffic control apparatus such as traffic lights and control boxes can detract from the quality of the public realm. We will work with Cumbria County Council and other relevant agencies to ensure that any highway works should bring a positive improvement to the area.

1.15 Shopfronts, advertisements and signs

The appraisal has noted that some shopfront signage is garish and out of character with the historic environment. Temporary signage such as A boards and banners can be hazardous and unsightly. The use of such signs needs to be carefully monitored and controlled with regard to size, design and materials to ensure that any negative impact is kept to a minimum. We will seek to resist proposals for advertisement signage of a scale, design or use of materials which fails to respect the character of the conservation area. Where original historic shopfronts exist or previously existing, these should be conserved and reinstated respectively.

1.16 Retaining and enhancing historic boundary treatments

Many boundaries in the conservation area are defined by stone walls which form a distinctive part of the area and add to its local identity. There is a small loss of these walls where front gardens have been given a hard surface for the parking of vehicles. We will encourage the maintenance of traditional stone walls and seek their retention rather than their replacement with new non- traditional boundary treatments.

2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

2.1 Boundary review

We will seek to review the boundary of the conservation area in accordance with best practice and guidance on the management of the historic environment.

2.2 Document review

This appraisal and management plan will be reviewed every ten years. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area and boundaries;
- An assessment of whether the detailed management plans in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and proposed actions and amendments;
- Public consultation on the review findings, any proposed changes and input into the final review.

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