

Athol Street & Victoria Street Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

To be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Order 22nd November 2007



Department of Local Government and the Environment
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Athol Street / Victoria Conservation Area

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The character appraisal of Athol Street and Victoria Street has been formulated following careful consideration and in-depth study and the to designate the conservation area has been the subject of consultation with The Douglas Corporation, Manx National Heritage and the Isle of Man Victorian Society amongst other interested parties.

2.0 Location and Boundaries

- 2.1 The Athol Street Conservation Area occupies a pivotal position in the history and geography of Douglas. The boundaries enclose a small surviving section of the old town, an early part of the new developments of the 19th century and an interesting example of Victorian street improvement. It is this latter which links the low-lying area near the harbour with the brooghs of Upper Douglas via Victoria Street and Prospect Hill. Athol Street itself sits atop one of these brooghs, forming the south end of the new town which grew up from 1810 onwards. It remains one of the longest streets in central Douglas, retaining much of its original character despite the continuous pressure of redevelopment over many years of the Island's recent economic development.

3.0 Origins

- 3.1 Until the period of the Napoleonic Wars, Douglas was confined to the area around the harbour. Not having the prestige and patronage of Castletown, the then capital, the town consisted of narrow winding streets and a mixture of buildings; warehouses, fishermen's cottages and a scattering of town houses for the 'quality'. From the beginning of the 19th Century, however, Douglas began to expand, first around the

natural harbour, and then to the west and north.

- 3.2 Like a modest version of Edinburgh, a 'new town' grew up, mainly on the higher ground at the back of the old settlement. Parts of the large estates around the town were redeveloped in sections during the 19th century as speculative ventures.
- 3.3 One of the first of the new areas to be laid out was Athol Street. The name was an obvious choice, as the aristocratic Murray family, the Dukes of Atholl, had played a major role in the history of the Island during the 18th Century as the Lords of Mann, until the regalities of the Island were purchased for the British Crown in 1767. From then until 1830, the Atholl name continued to be prominent, particularly during the Governorship of the 4th Duke. Early maps show the name of the street to be Atholl Street: in the mid-19th Century, Douglas, alone among the towns of the Island, changed the spelling to Athol Street.
- 3.4 While the new town developed apace, the authorities began to propose street improvements in the old town and major works to create the promenades. The sketches of John Nicholson and others depict a picturesque town of winding lanes, but Old Douglas was by the 1860's a challenge to the promoters of traffic improvements and public health alike. Moreover, economic pressures were making redevelopment attractive, and the creation of Victoria and Ridgeway Streets must be one of the first instances in the Isle of Man of re-development as opposed to building entirely on open land.
- 3.5 From the establishment of the Steam Packet Company in 1829-30 to the transfer of the capital to Douglas in 1869, the town assumed a new importance. It had become a fashionable place to live, and it was the capital of business as well as government. Athol Street developed as a mixture of residential, business and civic uses. Down the hill, Victoria Street took a new line through the old town, eventually linking with Prospect Hill and Athol Street. It became the principal shopping street of Douglas, swelled in the

season by a growing visiting industry.

3.6 Though this was never the hotel quarter of the town, the architecture of tourism influenced the character of Victoria Street, as by 1870, three and four storey frontages with intricate decorative renders became the style adopted for the hotels and shopfronts of the town. Despite the depredations of 20th Century redevelopment, much of the original mid-Victorian character survives. Even the building designs of the 1960's and 70's for the most part respect the scale and form of the streets, contributing to the consistency of the conservation area, though not always to its quality.

3.7 Prior to the modern redevelopment boom which accompanied the Island's growing status as a financial centre, the previous 75 years had seen a slow progression towards today's mainly commercial uses. Most of the houses were converted to offices, and one by one the shops migrated to the lower part of the town. The last major re-ordering of the area had occurred in the closing years of the 19th century, when a new street, named after Lieutenant-Governor Ridgeway was driven from the North Quay to the foot of Prospect Hill. It was here that the splendid Municipal Buildings and Library were built for Douglas Corporation and opened in 1900. Incomparably the best building in Ridgeway Street, the Town Hall has some worthy neighbours, notably two large public houses, sited in a street scene largely unchanged.

4.0 Architectural and Historic Importance

4.1 Though the area is important as the commercial hub of Douglas, it can be analysed in three or four sections;

4.2 The oldest and smallest is the cluster of town houses at the foot of Church Street and John Street. They are some of the last vestiges of Old Douglas and interesting examples of the early Georgian style. With their steep roof pitches and heavy sash windows, they

illustrate the new 'polite' style of the early 18th Century (as distinct from the local vernacular). Most of the original features have survived, and they are worthy of their status as Registered Buildings.

- 4.3 St George's Church was built on the outskirts of town, indeed with very few surrounding buildings until the early part of the 19th Century. Legal and financial problems attended its inception, and it took more than 20 years from the launching of the first subscription to the consecration in 1781. Its function was to serve the growing town and to supplement Braddan and St Matthews of 1708, as the principal place of worship. Designed to accommodate a large congregation, it presents a bluff and ungraceful appearance outside which belies a handsome classical interior with galleries and colonnades. Grey and craggy on the outside, the radical reconstruction of 1910 added lumpen sandstone details to windows and external features. In its materials and heavy details it matches the former Sunday school opposite.
- 4.4 St George's possesses one of the most interesting churchyards on the Island, despite its comparatively late origin. As the principal burial ground for Douglas in the period of its most rapid growth, it contains a fascinating collection of memorials with associations linking many of the principal events and people of the times. One of the worst catastrophes to befall Douglas, the cholera epidemic of 1841, has left its mark in the shape of communal graves, now wide swathes of lawn separating the clusters of gravestones. Like many well-maintained town churchyards, it provides a welcome expanse of green space in a heavily built-up area.
- 4.5 Athol Street lies between of St George's churchyard and the steep bluff that was Shaw's Brow. It was laid out by John Taggart, surveyor and architect (1778-1836), and developed piecemeal from 1810 onwards. G. J. Strutt's painting of 1833 depicts a semi-rural churchyard and an incomplete Athol Street. By the late 1860's it had become largely developed, with a predominance of town houses, mostly 3 storeys high and 3 windows wide with plain rendered frontages and elegant front doors. Early photographs

show that, despite many variations in decoration and detail, the street architecture was consistent, with a late Georgian feel and more or less continuous cornice lines. Despite many changes, it is this character which has survived to the present day.

- 4.6 Without doubt the grandest building on the street is the former Courthouse, completed in 1841 as the Oddfellows Hall and later partially converted to a theatre, then the Tynwald and Law Courts and Rolls Office. It was the work of John Robinson (1790-1880) one of the most prolific architects of his time who also built the Falcon Cliff, Greeba Castle and the stateliest of the Douglas terraces. The style chosen was full-blown classical with a magnificent Corinthian portico and a splendid corner into Church Street. Of considerably grander scale than its neighbours, some of the details, both inside and out, have been lost, notably the swaggering balustrades on the skyline. However, it is hoped that the present office conversion project will restore the exterior at least to its Victorian splendour.
- 4.7 As late as the mid 1890's, there were more than 60 dwelling houses in Athol Street, and approximately 20 shops. There had been one or two interesting additions, notably No 9, a tall brick building in an advanced neo Gothic style, built for the Isle of Man Times in 188-. A more modest example exists in No 32 (opposite). Of even greater impact is the group of three buildings erected on the corner of Prospect Hill between 1893 and 1899 as part of the contemporary street improvements. This must be one of the most spectacular street corners in Douglas, to rival the 'wedding cake' of the Legislative Buildings further up the Hill. The style is difficult to define - a mixture of neo-Gothic, Arts and Crafts and Queen Anne- but of equal impact is the choice of materials: rich stock brickwork with unusual red tiled canopies and elaborate joinery. St George's Chambers is the best of the corner group, coping effortlessly with the steep rise of Prospect Hill.
- 4.8 More than half the Athol Street frontages are the late Georgian or early Victorian originals, in varying states of preservation. Possibly the best is the group around Talbot Chambers, originally the Talbot Hotel, the only one of the original buildings in the street

to be stone-faced. Here the sash windows are well proportioned and retain their original thin glazing bars. The fine cast railings survive, and in the case of No 18, the stately front door is sheltered by a substantial stone portico – a later addition to the property. On the opposite side, there is a graceful double porch on Nos 29 and 31, also Registered Buildings and the best of a group of dignified classic frontages.

4.9 The centre section of the street is characterised by more decorative treatments of the rendered stonework. On Nos 36-42, the hood mouldings over windows have a distinctly neo gothic character. As the century progressed, frontages became less restrained, with freer groupings of windows more characteristic of Victorian professional chambers than of town houses, as exemplified by No 23. Further down the street, the 2 storey high pediment, tall windows and rusticated base of No 35 is a dignified feature, rather at odds with the featureless office blocks beside it.

4.10 Regrettably, the legacy of middle and late 20th Century redevelopment has not been distinguished. Traditional plot widths have been ignored, as have the finer details of fenestration. Featureless brick has been substituted for decorative render, and the desire to cram in another upper floor has resulted in some clumsy penthouses and dormers. However, in general the cornice line has been maintained, and there are several recent introductions which respect their neighbours and provide individuality and interest. Notable among these is the group extending from No 43 to the Lord Street corner. There is one extensive façade in a confident commercial classical style and, by contrast, two richly detailed examples of fine pressed brickwork, reflecting the detail of the Railway Station Archway and Clock which terminate the vista at the end of the street.

4.11 Although the main impact of Athol Street is made by the principal street facades, the byways, alleys and side streets are important in the conservation area. The 'backs' of Shaw's Brow and especially of St George's Walk retain some of their original character. St James Chambers on the corner of St George's Street is a fine town house and the

wine warehouse on Upper Church Street is now a rarity with its naïve classical rendered front and barred windows on the side elevation in Manx slatestone.

- 4.12 The conservation area includes the upper part of Victoria Street as it rises into Prospect Hill. Victoria Street was the major street improvement of the 1870's. It was linked to the harbour and promenade works initiated during the Loch governorship and its inception was marred by controversy. The new street was sanctioned by Act of Tynwald in 1874, and reclamation work began immediately, opening up the thoroughfare in part of the old town. The selected scheme was the work of the Liverpool architect Charles Ellison. It incorporated a grandiose town square at Duke Street, later dropped on cost grounds. The rapid development of Victoria Street was less comprehensive, taking the form of individual plots or small blocks linking the minor street intersections. The alignment of the upper part of the street is irregular, with many minor variations of frontage in terms of height, width, fenestration and decoration.
- 4.13 More than half of the Victorian frontages survive in the upper part of the street, despite considerable redevelopment in the last thirty years. Compared with the sober facades of Athol Street, those of upper Victoria Street and Prospect Hill display individuality and exuberance. By the 1870's and 80's, a variety of styles was acceptable, notably the neo-gothic as exemplified by Nos 35-7 and 53. Most popular however was an ebullient version of seaside classical, in which bays, pediments, balustrades and finials are mixed with decorative rendered motifs to create a series of highly individual facades. The best examples are the related properties of No 26, No's 25-33 and No 45, where interesting changes of window design are enriched by classical mouldings and decorations. Almost all the Victorian facades are rendered and painted, and it is this common use of materials, combined with a consistency of scale that lends some order and character to the street.
- 4.14 Although the character is mainly Victorian, there are several prominent additions from the 20th Century. No 18-20 has the familiar house-style of the Montagu Burton tailoring

group originating in Leeds, and seen in every major town in the 1930's. Here white faience blocks in alternating courses are enlivened by Art Deco motifs: zigzag mouldings and elongated capitals. Though radically different from its neighbours, the design has an appropriate scale and an interesting grouping of upper windows. It is a good example of its type, spoiled only by the later fascia over the shopfronts. By contrast, the Manx Telecom and Barclays buildings take up too much height and plot width, and have thin window details which do not compare with their older neighbours. At least the larger than life-size statue of Queen Victoria has been rescued and re-sited over the former corner entrance of Telecom House.

- 4.15 The largest modern intrusion is the HSBC building at the end of the street. Occupying a key 'hinge point', the building is seen from three major streets, achieving a successful turn into Prospect Hill. The style is a classical pastiche, and despite the crudity of some of the detail it is a composition which adds to the townscape of the area without competing with its distinguished Victorian neighbour, the Nat West Bank. This is a tour-de-force of Italianate detail and decoration, complete and unspoiled down to its heavily moulded street frontage although the return onto Nelson Street is a later addition.
- 4.16 The HSBC Building leads into Ridgeway Street and to Douglas Town Hall, opened in 1900 and perhaps the best piece of civic architecture on the Island, and now a Registered Building. It is the work of Arthur Ardon F.R.I.B.A. of Messrs Ardon and Dawson, Westminster who obtained this important commission as a result of an architectural competition. He adopted a Queen Anne/ Arts and Crafts style much in favour for institutional buildings at the turn of the century. The main façade to Ridgeway Street has much interest and refinement, with a choice of materials not seen elsewhere on the Island. 'Queen Anne front and Mary Ann back' was the old joke, but in fact the back is as competently handled as the main façade, fitting in well with the intimacy of the narrow alley that is Church Street.
- 4.17 Ridgeway Street was a creation of the 1890's, and the Town Hall has some worthy

neighbours of that period. Notable are the former hotels, the Ridgeway and the Wheatsheaf, massive urban public houses that would not be out of place in one of the big cities. Their style echoes that of the Town Hall in a rather blousy and theatrical way. The remaining properties in Ridgeway Street are more sober, conforming to the pattern of smaller properties on Victoria Street, with narrow frontages, attractive window patterns and interesting skylines. Nos 28-30 are good examples of modern replacement facades on existing buildings with self-effacing render and window details. The corner of Lord Street is framed by the Salvation Army Citadel, opened in 1934 and bearing some classical detail, rather thinly expressed. The Memorial Gardens help to open out and relieve the canyon-like character of Lord Street.

5.0 Spaces, Landmarks and Corners

- 5.1 Although Athol, Victoria and Ridgeway Streets were consciously laid out, there are no planned formal spaces in the Conservation Area. The opportunity was missed in the 1870's for a town square, and since then successive developments have maintained the containment of the street frontages. Happily there are few, if any 'gap teeth' vacant sites seen in other towns, and the problem has usually been to contain developments to the established heights and widths of existing buildings.
- 5.2 There are some important landmarks which provide focus and interest to the vistas along principal streets. Looking to seaward, the Jubilee Clock of 1887 is a valuable reference point outside the boundaries of the area, as is the splendid stock brick screen and twin towers of the Railway Station which terminates Athol Street. Reference has been made to the strongly expressed group of red brick buildings on the corner of Prospect Hill and Athol Street and to the heavily modelled Isle of Man Bank building opposite.
- 5.3 In addition to the major landmarks, the area is enlivened by some attractive street corners. The entrance to Duke Street shows that the Victorians could turn corners with

skill, and the oriel on the Ridgeway Hotel displays real panache to be compared with the Town Hall corner into John Street opposite. Modern examples like the Queen Victoria Building (Manx Telecom) have followed this tradition, with an octagonal corner turret.

6.0 Building Materials

- 6.1 The most common external material is stonework, rendered and painted. The earlier buildings on Athol Street were built of slatestone, quarried locally, and faced in plain lime render. As the century progressed, the classic Georgian features were elaborated with mouldings and decorations in hard render. Most of the Victoria Street frontages exemplify a style of decoration seen also on the hotels of the Promenades with casings, consoles, bays, oriels and gables faced and moulded in render. Much of this has survived and is the dominant style of the area.
- 6.2 There was very little use of local stone as uncoursed masonry, apart from back yard walls and lean-tos. Exceptionally, Manx stone was adopted for St George's and the Town Hall, combined with a contrasting ashlar stone for window dressings, etc. The combination of slatestone and a pale Bath sandstone, carved, on the Town Hall is particularly attractive.
- 6.3 At the end of the Victorian period, polychromy, the deliberate use of materials for their contrasting colour and texture was much in vogue. The island could offer only a limited palette, but this was enriched by the use of imported bricks of various colours. Many red stock bricks were brought to the Island as ballast, from makers like J.E. Edwards or Monk & Newall manufacturers of red Rhuabon brick. The Town Hall and the two neighbouring hotels are good examples of the contrasting use of local grey and red stocks, interleaved with stone dressings and roofed with Cumbrian green slate. The Athol Street-Prospect Hill corner is perhaps the most confident and bold use of fine brick and tile work, and happily this tradition has been revived in two recent buildings at the Station end of Athol Street.

6.4 The revolution in building materials introduced by the post war modern movement did not do much for the character of Douglas. Insipid bricks and featureless concrete are seen too often, and even expensive materials like granite and sandstone facings appear to be alien to their neighbours. Occasionally, however, bold contrasts do work, as with some of the best shopfronts and extensions. However the quality of many shopfronts and office entrances is lamentable, often spoiling the fine facades above. The incidence of flat render, cheap bay windows and even pebbledash is a negative element, as is the unfortunate tendency of multiple shops and stores to apply their 'house styles' without regard to the character of an area.

6.5 One very positive feature which has survived in Athol Street is the iron railings and steps to older properties. A characteristic of Georgian domestic architecture, these graceful features serve the very practical purpose of providing defensible space in front of the property and protecting the basement 'areas' below street level. There are a variety of locally produced examples of ironwork, the best and most robust being outside the former Courts and in front of St James' Chambers further up the street.

7.0 Paving, Street Furniture and Parking

7.1 Apart from the stately railings and steps of Athol Street, there are no original features to be noted. The pillar boxes of Athol Street are traditional to the professional and financial heart of Douglas: all other street furniture is recent and happily not too numerous.

7.2 According to Stuart Slack, the original residents of Athol Street were anxious to have their street surfaced using Macadam's system, but since that was achieved about 1840, the paving has been undistinguished, being a mixture today of concrete slabs, in-situ concrete and tarmac. There is nothing to remark about the paving of the other streets apart from the stone paving which improves the setting of the Town Hall and the narrow section of Church Street behind. While Victoria Street remains a major one-way

thoroughfare, a hectic mixture of kerbs, signs and road markings will continue to detract from the quality of the streetscape. Unfortunately the pressure for parking spaces has a similar effect throughout the Conservation Area, as any photographs will show. The opportunity exists for improvement everywhere, and particularly on the Shaw's Brow section of Church Street which is much used by pedestrians as a link between the upper and lower town.

- 7.3 There is very little green space, and what exists is well maintained. The gardens by the Town Hall are a showpiece, and the Churchyard is a pleasant tree-lined space as well as a site of historical importance.

8.0 Opportunities

- 8.1 In the last thirty years, redevelopment sites have tended to exceed the established plot widths, and consequently new buildings have appeared to be clumsy or bland intrusions. The pressure to maximize plot ratios has resulted in some regrettable squeezing in of extra floors. Dormers and penthouses are all too evident on the skyline, generally failing to conceal the extra space.
- 8.2 Traditional Victorian detailing is usually full of interest. Modern versions tend to be thinly detailed and lacking finesse. The idea of progressive reductions in storey height above 1st floor and the varying of window groupings within an overall pattern is rarely achieved.
- 8.3 The use of aluminium and Upvc as a substitute for finely detailed timber sash windows is particularly regrettable. In Athol Street, for instance, the late Georgian style of façade relies upon the refinement of detail in its fanlights, railings, cornices and windows to achieve its effect. To date, Upvc suppliers have never approached the quality of detail that is required. There is every justification for using traditional restoration techniques and materials for window replacement.

8.4 The loss of character at ground floor level has been remarked upon. On Athol Street, the contrast between the stately upper storeys and the poor quality of street level entrances and shopfronts is particularly regrettable. By contrast, signs and light-boxes seem to be well controlled. In Victoria Street and Prospect Hill, many good shopfronts have been replaced with poor quality designs. The few original examples that remain should be conserved and used as patterns for new fronts. And there is plenty of scope for innovative modern designs that respect their surroundings.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The area contains a high quality mix of properties, which are predominantly residential and are principally of the Victorian style of architecture. A good number of properties in the area appear to be well cared for and retain many qualities which together are worthy of protection and enhancement.

9.2 Negative elements identified are largely judged to be reversible, given time, appropriate guidance and support. As such, they are not considered to be of sufficient weight so as to deflect from the overall special quality and character of the Athol Street / Victoria Street Conservation Area. Many problems can be rectified and features improved with careful consideration and appreciation of the urban environment. The support of appropriate planning policies and improved levels of grant assistance, now in place, is of great importance to this initiative. Conservation Area designation aims to maintain and improve the unique qualities of a particular area, whilst also allowing it to prosper and consolidate.

Conservation Policy

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1999 provides that:

- (1) The Department shall determine which parts of the Island are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall by order designate such areas as conservation areas.
- (2) Before making an order under subsection (1) the Department shall consult - every local authority in whose district the area in question, or any part of that area, falls.

POLICY CA/1

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than that of individual buildings which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas. Features such as:-

- The historic street pattern and definition of property boundaries;
- A particular mix or variety of uses;
- The use of materials or styles local to the particular area, or the island;
- The quality of "period" architecture;
- The quality and detail of contemporary buildings;
- The survival of building types or features, such as shop fronts, street furniture, decorative ironwork;
- The presence and form of hard and soft landscaping;
- The quality of enclosure, spaces between buildings and vistas along streets;
- The presence of green open spaces and trees as "breathing spaces";
- The presence of water in the landscape: this might be in the form of a stream, river, weir or waterfall, dub or pond, lake, estuary, harbour or coastline. Other physical features, not listed above, may also make a major contribution to the over all interest of a locality.

Conservation area designation should take account of and recognise the wide variety of qualities, including the historic development of the neighbourhood, which can all serve to be important in making up the unique and special character of an area.

There are at present sixteen conservation areas in the Island and whilst Registration focuses on the merits and protection of individual buildings, conservation area designation is the main means whereby the special architectural quality or local character of an area may be preserved and enhanced for our present enjoyment and that of generations to come.

POLICY CA/2

SPECIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

When considering proposals for the possible development of any land or buildings which fall within the conservation area, the impact of such proposals upon the special character of the area, will be a material consideration when assessing the application. Where a development is proposed for land which, although not within the boundaries of the conservation area, would affect its context or setting, or views into or out of the area; such issues should be given special consideration where the character or appearance of a conservation area may be affected.

POLICY CA/3

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

It is proposed that in future a reasoned appraisal should be carried out of any proposed conservation area, prior to formal designation. The appraisal will take the form of a statement identifying the special features of the area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The statement will act as a benchmark against which future proposals for development, or demolition may be judged.

The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is

defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for development control decisions, or any policies which may be outlined in the area plan. Identification of the particular character of the conservation area in the form of a reasoned appraisal, will also play a vital part in the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of that very character or appearance.

Under Section 18 subsection (4) of the Act, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a conservation area, in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in the area, of any powers under the act.

POLICY CA/4

PROPOSALS FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

It is important that designation is not seen as an end in itself, but that there be an opportunity for the designation to be considered in a wider context, such as that of an area plan. It is this overview which will basically determine the long term validity and prosperity of the conservation area. For example, proposals and policies contained within an area plan may take the opportunity to improve matters such as traffic congestion in and around a conservation area by traffic management and improvement, the provision of off-street parking and the introduction of some pedestrian or bicycle priority ways. The plan will also prescribe the use of land and buildings within the conservation area and beyond and may indicate opportunities for enhancement by restoration and re-use, or if appropriate, for replacement of elements within the conservation area which detract from the special character of the area.

POLICY CA /5
CONSULTATION

The character and appearance of many conservation areas is heavily dependent on the treatment of roads, pavements and other public spaces. It is important that conservation policies are integrated with other policies for the area, for example, land use, tourism, traffic management, highways, drainage, telecommunications and other considerations. The department will welcome the opportunity to consult with other such bodies when formulating detailed conservation area proposals.

Public interest and participation are viewed as being an important ingredient in achieving a successful and vital conservation area and in formulating proposals for preservation and enhancement and the department welcomes the advice, suggestions and views of local residents and amenity groups.

The undergrounding of overhead electricity and telecommunication cables, together with proposals which promote "good housekeeping" and appropriate landscaping are examples of ways in which a Conservation Area might be significantly enhanced.

Section 18 subsection (5) provides that the Department shall from time to time formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

POLICY CA/6
DEMOLITION

Any building which is located within a conservation area and which is not an exception as provided above, may not be demolished without the consent of the Department. In practice, a planning application for consent to demolish must be lodged with the Department. When considering an application for demolition of a building in a conservation area, the general presumption will be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Similar criteria will be applied as those outlined in RB/6 above, when assessing the application to demolish the building, but in less clear cut cases, for example, where a building could be said to detract from the special character of the area, it will be essential for the Department to be able to consider the merits of any proposed new development when determining whether consent should be given for the demolition of an unregistered building in a conservation area. Account will be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole.

ADVERTISEMENT CONTROL

All external advertisements affect not only the appearance of the building upon which they are displayed, but also the neighbourhood where the building is located. This will apply particularly to illuminated signage which is often formed from shiny, non-traditional materials and can result in an unsuitable and harsh appearance which detracts from the character of the building and a conservation area as a whole. The aesthetic quality of a building can be markedly affected by the installation of inappropriate external signage.

Where matters such as Corporate Image are a consideration; for a conservation area the Department may require a deviation from what might be acceptable in other high street locations and many large corporate bodies do have alternative designs of signage which might be suitable for use in conservation areas. In many cases it will be necessary for signage to adopt traditional design and materials, in keeping with the character of the building and neighbourhood as a whole. Externally illuminated signage with the appropriate detailing and colour rendered lamps may be judged suitable.

ABSENCE OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

Permitted Development Orders which apply elsewhere and enable minor development to be carried out in particular circumstances, may apply in designated Conservation Areas,

but to a more limited extent. Most proposed development and any proposed demolition will require to have first been granted planning approval before any works may be progressed. If in any doubt, property owners are advised to consult the Department direct, rather than to rely upon the advice of a third party.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Work which might be considered as preserving the architectural or historic interest of an individual building, or which might be judged as enhancing the special character of a Conservation Area, historic townscape or the Island's rural landscape, may qualify for financial assistance under one of the schemes which the Department operates. Each case will be judged upon its own particular merits.

DEMOLITION

Under Section 19 of the Act, conservation area designation introduces control over the demolition of most buildings within conservation areas. Those buildings which are exempted from such control are listed in the said Section 19, but may be summarised as follows:-

- (a) registered buildings;*
- (b) a building for the time being the subject of a preservation order under section 11 of the Manx Museum and National Trust Act 1959,*
- (c) a building for the time being included in the list of monuments prepared under section 13 of that Act; or*
- (d) any buildings, a description of which is specified in a direction issued by the Department under Section 19 subsection (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1999, which are by virtue of such direction, are excluded for the time being from an order designating a conservation area.*

11.0 Designation

11.1 The buildings which make up the area encompassed by the Athol Street / Victoria Road Conservation Area as a group, form a part of the Island's built heritage justly deserving of the protection and recognition afforded by Conservation Area designation.

12.0 Conservation Grants

12.1 The Department of Local Government and the Environment operates the Historic Buildings Conservation Scheme, which provides that financial assistance may be granted for appropriate works to the exterior of properties within Conservation Areas. In compliance with certain conditions contained within the Scheme, up to 50% may be offered to help with works which are judged to enhance the character and appearance of the property and which will contribute to an improvement in the townscape. The amount of such grants may vary according to the merits of the particular case and availability of funds.

13.0 Role of the Public

13.1 It is important that having identified and acknowledged the importance of the area by designation as a Conservation Area, property owners are made more aware of the special qualities of their buildings and that emphasis should be on the repair rather than the replacement of original fabric and features, as these contribute to the character of the area as a whole. Alterations will be subject to development control, but should be sympathetic to the original style and of an appropriate scale.

Athol Street / Victoria Street Conservation Area

Architectural Appraisal

Victoria Street - South Side

- 25-33** Not quite symmetrical but conceived as one unit with splayed corners and a central, gabled penthouse and attic storey. Bay windows to the first floor and an elaborate stucco frieze, arched windows and cornices at first and third floors. Most of the shop fronts remain intact. Three storeys originally five units. Earliest part of the street.
- 35-7** Three storey stucco gothic with naïve gables and finials. Unusual bay with lancet lights, a square oriel and diaper work. Little of the ground floor shop fronts left.
- 37-9** A three storey rendered Neo-Gothic façade similar to Numbers 35-7 but less elaborate.
- 41-3** **Queen Victoria House (Manx Telecom)**
- 1980's or 90's pastiche with octagonal corner termination and turret. One storey higher than its neighbours. Ground Floor Arcade modelled and rusticated at Ground Floor. An example of modern thin detailing of windows on floors 2-4. Larger than life-size statue of Queen Victoria that used to stand over Victoria Street now reinstated and housed on the street corner, over the door.
- 45** **Ulster Bank**
- A little gem of ornamental render, three storeys high with splayed corner. Fluted pilasters between ranges of windows with Corinthian capitals and arches decorated with guilloche pattern roundels. A balustrade and dormer gallery adorn the skyline although the roof has been replaced by an unsightly flat roof. The Ground Floor is a later addition, with correct, classical, Doric detailing in Portland stone.
- 47** Narrow frontage, but nearly as exuberant detailing as its neighbour. Three storeys high and three windows wide with delicate lace-like plasterwork, it rises to a curved gable and ornamental finials.
- 49** A modern infill. Not much detail, but good in scale and proportion. The white render, fits in well.

51 Manx Gas Offices

Originally the MANX SUN office and still bears the name in large letters on the frontage. Three storeys, rendered and agreeably proportioned, but more restrained than neighbours. Italianate in style rather than high Victorian.

53-61 All are original, narrow frontages mainly three storeys high. Most of the ground floors have been spoiled by inappropriate shop fronts

53 Heavy, primitive gothic with fine filigree work on upper floors

55 Less Gothicised with blind arches

57-59 More orthodox with decent render detailing which is enlarged on the 1st floor window

61 Corner with Ridgeway Street – bigger in scale than its neighbours.

Victoria Street (north side)

20-18a In terms of materials, as opposed to the actual design, this is a typical Montague Burton branch of the 1930's. Art Deco in white faience blocks, in alternating thick and thin courses with a Zigzag motif around central windows, central flat pediment and elongated capitals.

22, (24 & 26) Formerly three related 1870's buildings, now only number 22 survives. Three storeys in height but with fine, rendered details. The three windows per bay layout set out with arch-headed windows on the 1st floor and segmental windows on the 2nd. Round dormers and elaborate pierced balustrades terminate the building at roof level. The 2nd floor balconies have lost their balustrades. Numbers

C'est la Vie.

Originally built around 1950 by Tom Kennaugh as the Isle of Man Bank, it has a plain brick, three-storey front facade with somewhat Art Deco fenestration and a Café at ground floor.

Barclays House

A modern, commercial and relatively plain building despite the lavish use of granite facings. Its size disturbs the rhythm of the street.

Thomas Street Corner

Another group of very good three storeys narrow frontages. Some of the ground floor rusticated treatment has survived.

- 30** Has nice corner three storeys, three windows wide, arched at 1st floor going to two at 2nd floor and one window on the 3rd.
- 32** Small gablet with blind arcading on the skyline
- 34** Nice three storeys, two arches on 1st floor with a central aedicule for a clock (long gone). At Cornice level the words CLOCK & WATCH DEPOT and three legs of Mann on the top dormer.
- 36** Another good frontage with a central attic window and pilasters which begins the turn into Prospect Hill. Unfortunately, the ground floor is very poor.
- 38-40** Curving, plainer, but with classical pilasters on ground floor strange moulded strings, which conceal a steel framework which supports the building, cross the window heads. This was designed by Davidson & Marsh in the post-war era.

Duke Street (East)

40 – 20

40 Dukes Diner

At the junction of Duke Street and Fort Street, where Duke Street bisects Victoria Street, Dukes Diner occupies the corner plot. This four storey property is largely dominated by its unassuming shop frontage. The first floor pair of windows are Georgian in appearance with the second floor pair consisting of later 19th Century adaptations. The top floor windows have been bricked up.

The gable end to the property, facing onto Fort Street is featureless, lacking even the simple cornice moulding that sits just below the roof line on the front elevation, other than a small 'return'.

18 Cowley Groves

Occupying the corner site as it faces onto Victoria Street, the front elevation benefits from typical neo-classical detailing in the forms of molded cornice' and pilasters surmounted by a low pitched roof line. Whilst the front elevation accounts for the more detailed mouldings and

features, the side elevation fronting onto Dukes Street is more restrained and its windows Georgian in style. The ground floor shop front has remained largely unchanged, to its credit.

33 - 20

Chrystals

This four storey building occupies the opposite corner site of Victoria Street and was constructed as part of a larger development running down Victoria Street. Elaborate stucco frieze is used extensively as are the arched headed windows and pilaster columns.

Fenton Campbell

This neighbouring property also shares many of these architectural details as it continues the theme set further along in Victoria Street.

On the ground floor, both properties display individual shop front arrangements which bare little resemblance to the originals.

Richmond Travel

Again a four storey building though on a smaller scale as it steps down. Less detailed in many aspects, it none the less exhibits ornate arched heads and mouldings to the three first floor windows. The second and third floor windows, plain sliding sashes display no architectural detailing. Like it neighbouring properties, this buildings also displays a heavy cornice at the roof junction, though without the stucco frieze. The shop front is not original.

Burgundy

A two floor property with a simple though heavy modern shop front, the building is notable for its upper floor window arrangement. Above the shop front sits a 'triptych' window arrangement with a dominant centre section with smaller attached windows either side. Sharing the same pilaster style columns and arched hood as its neighbour, this window arrangement dominates the first floor.

Extreme

Consisting of three floors, this property, though separated by two other properties, bares greater resemblance to those of Chrystals and Fenton Campbell's in the form of its window styles and stucco frieze along the cornices. The shop front is again modern though sympathetic to the overall style of the property.

The adjoining property to Extreme, a Café mirrors the overall design in its upper detailing. This includes the three cornices and first floor windows,

however the upper pair of windows, though of the same style and size, lacks the moulded hood detailing.

- 20** This property, other than its overall stature and arrangement, no longer resembles that of a Victorian property having lost all its period details over time.

Dukes Street (West)

- 20-18a** In terms of materials, as opposed to the actual design, this is a typical Montague Burton branch of the 1930's. Art Deco in white faience blocks, in alternating thick and thin courses with a Zigzag motif around central windows, central flat pediment and elongated capitals.

- 35** This building dominates the corner plot as it extends into both Victoria Street and Dukes Street. Aside from its large expanse of glass shop front, this building is particularly noteworthy for its Gothic elements which are most notable in its window hoods and pinnacles details. Other smaller details are evident throughout the façade including the stucco frieze cornice.

29 – 31 Varley House

Consisting of two modern shop fronts with offices above, this building retains little of its original character having been extensively 'refurbished' over the intervening years.

- 27** Similar to 29-31, this property has suffered slightly less, although only the basic shell and fenestration remain, the windows themselves having been replaced with uPVC units. The façade itself has been pebble dashed at some point.

- 25 – 23** This corner sited property houses two businesses, the first, an antiques shop which is in sharp contrast to other properties on the street. Whilst it no longer retains the original shop front, it has clearly been replaced, and retains a notable 1930's Art Deco themed frontage. This is complete with stained glass panels above the main shop window showing a 'Sun burst' and 'Zigzags' (See Burtons Building). Additionally, the lower and side sections are plain black with a polished metal surround/frame. Unassuming, yet under-rated.

Number 23, the adjoining property has a modern canopied glass frontage that extends around into Kings Street. Above both businesses extends two additional floors. The first exhibiting plain late nineteenth century sliding sash windows whilst the upper floor appears to have retained its Georgian paned sliding sashes which extend around the corner. This property also exhibits two unusual features, one being the apparent later edition oriel window located on the corner of the property below an

existing Georgian window, the other being the pilastered frame, complete with low pitched pediment. The location and proportions of this feature suggest it may have been used in advertising.

19 - 13 An extensive property that extends along both Dukes Street and Kings Street. It has a stucco finish resembling ashlar with 'Gothicised' window head detailing. The existing windows are a mixture of original late Victorian sliding sashes and more recent uPVC units.

Whilst the lower level stucco frieze remains intact along the Kings Street façade, this feature has not been included above the shop fronts of Dukes Street.

9 - 11 Again, another corner site development, this building is particularly notable for its 'Italianate' design coupled with an intricate mixture of fine stucco detailing, pilasters and pedimented dormers. The building is also notable for its truncated corner turret section with arched window and oriel window located further down on the corner. The extensive canopied shop front extends around the front of the building and suggest little change since its initial inception.

8 Stanley House

Built around the late 1880's, this building displays many of the features employed in what was then, contemporary building, these being the use of varied coloured brickwork off-set through the use of terracotta and Ruabon brick work. Somewhat understated, this building has many fine details, not least the main entrance doorway with its pilastered columns and pediment, unusually out of keeping with its overall design. The doorway exhibits three panels of stained glass which may also have been employed in the upper sections of the main shop windows, the upper sections having been boarded up.

5 - 7 These two buildings, their modern shop front aside, mirror each other in virtually all respects. Only the oriel bay windows located on the first floor differ, number seven's being the original as it has retained its sliding sashes and timber mouldings.

1 - 3 These two period properties share many similar features with each other, particularly their curved window heads. The first floor window to number three appears to have enlarged at some point as it now extends fully across the face of the building making it a dominant feature.

Number 1, the corner property, consists of four floors, the top floor consisting of attic accommodation with a pediment styled gablet with pilasters located on the south elevation. The main feature of this property is the corner turret, not unlike that of Number 9 located further up the street. The ground floor is entered by a door located on the corner with

windows open onto Duke Street, the south facing elevation having no windows.

Prospect Hill

Nelson House

A featureless, pebble-dashed three storey corner property with a splayed corner unfortunately all that is left of the original frontage having been rebuilt in the 1960's.

4

The curve of Prospect Hill nicely continued. A three storey, three bay frontage with centre triple-arched windows and pilasters.

6-10

Three properties with large bays at 1st floor, double arches windows at 2nd and a cornice and pedimented dormers at 3rd. No 6 has lost its bay at 1st floor.

National Westminster Bank

Originally Dumbell's Bank noted as the Douglas and Isle of Man Bank on the 1869 Ordnance Survey map is a tour-de-force in a very individual Italianate style. Symmetrical in form, with spreading cornices and lavish, Classical, decorative detail around windows and doors. The urn finials on the skyline above a fine attic storey with unique fenestration are fairly recent replications. The ground floor is handsomely detailed with vermiculated rustication.

HSBC Building

A modern pastiche using massive classical elements. However, the massing is so confident, and the scale so powerful that the building is better than many of its contemporaries as a piece of townscape, sitting as it does at a hinge point between Victoria Street, Prospect Hill and Ridgeway Street.

St George's Chambers

One of the most remarkable buildings in Douglas. Like the 'wedding cake' of the nearby Legislative Buildings, it occupies a key site. It is the gateway to Athol Street and Prospect Hill. Faithful to no particular historical style, but making use of several, it is a gem of 1890's eclecticism. Like its neighbour, it rises like a cliff of brick and tile, coping effortlessly with the steep rise of Prospect Hill, and turning confidently into Athol Street. Its architect used a combination of red Ruabon and local grey brick and featured sprouting canopies of red fish-scale tiles to match the roof. Similar materials are used on the Ridgeway and Cornerhouse

hotels and the rear of the Town Hall, among other contemporary buildings in the area. Much of the original detail at street level remains, and should be preserved.

Belfast House

A big-boned version of its neighbour, but less elaborate due to the loss of its octagonal tower, flying buttress and turned balustrades on the first floor. At the time of the loss of the octagonal tower, the top corner was entirely rebuilt. The combined effect of Belfast House and St George's Chambers with their massive forms, unusual details and rich materials is a strong contrast to the neighbouring buildings which are mainly in decorated render.

Nelson Street (east)

18-24 & 25-7

An unsophisticated version of the rendered facades found on Prospect Hill with decent, classical detail and mainly two-three storeys, maintaining the height, scale and closure of the original townscape.

Nelson Street (west)

Viking House

A non-descript, four-storey, pebble-dashed building originally Art Deco in design and built for the Isle Of Man Times. Following its conversion to offices it lost its former architectural detailing.

37

The Artist

Part of the earliest group of 17th-18th century houses (see below). Small scale with simple sash windows within a rendered façade completed by a steep 45 pitched roof.

Church Street / John Street

This is the understood to be the earliest group of 17th-18th century houses surviving. The former Scott's is a primal town house in the new 'polite' style (as distinct from the traditional vernacular) five sash windows wide, small scale, three storeys with a centre 'gabled' akin to some of the early country houses (c/f Balladoole) A steep 45 pitched roof.

22

Three windows wide and three storeys high small scale

- 24 Evidence of early origins two wide sashes and three high 60 deg roof with tiny dormers

Church Street (south)

Douglas Town Hall

The rear elevation is a contrast to the splendid public front to the Municipal Buildings and Library. Still typical of the fin-de-siecle style associated with fine early Arts and Crafts details are expressed more economically than on the main frontages. Much use of grey bricks contrasting with rich red Ruabon brick dressings. Though not actually Queen Anne design, 'Queen Anne front and Mary Anne back' was the old joke, but the back is almost as interesting and just as competently handled as the front.

On the west side, the scale of **the Rovers Return public house** and its neighbours is small, and the street nicely contained. One or two frontages in the mid Victorian sub- Georgian render style, three windows wide and three high. One frontage, built as a warehouse, is clearly contemporary with the Town Hall having the grey and red brick, with pedimented and cased single dormers above.

The Salvation Army Citadel

A thinly detailed 1930's building which nevertheless presents a firmly massed corner to Lord Street and has a good rusticated ground storey.

Barrack Street

An unspoilt, three storey shop adorning the corner with Church Street. It is important to safeguard the character of the ground floors and to avoid unseemly window replacements.

The Outback Club

Originally the St George's Infant School of 1839. Dignified, tall arch headed windows crowned with a hipped roof.

Ridgeway Street (east)

The former Ridgeway Hotel

The epitome of the late Victorian town public house, three generous

storeys high with a fine corner oriel. The style is sub-Richard Norman Shaw with Queen Anne window sashes and a huge gable with theatrical scrolls and consoles. Some carved stonework, but predominantly grey local brick with lavish use of red brick dressings for brick pilasters, arches and quoins. The architecture is contemporary with the Town Hall opposite, but not as respectable.

- 28-30** A good, modern, small scale infill building of three storeys in height, with self-effacing render and window details and a decent ground floor.

Three properties to the corner of Lord Street

Narrow plots and small scale following the Victoria Street pattern of oriels and feature windows on the 1st floor and a change of fenestration on the 2nd with high pediments above roof level. The corner shop front has ironwork above.

The Cornerhouse Public House

An urban public house, massive and fortress-like, to match the Ridgeway, even in the use of its materials (grey brick with Ruabon brick dressings) Norman Shaw style sashes and casements. Some decorative pressed brick diaper work.

Athol Street (south side)

3 Athol House

At five storeys, it is taller than its neighbours and less richly detailed, built mainly of stock brick with bay windows and the tiled canopies, circa 1900. This architectural treatment can be seen to better effect on St George's Chambers next door. The 'bow' windows on the ground floor are a modern (1970's) addition.

- 5** A plain but attractive rendered façade three windows wide and three storeys high with a cornice below pedimented attic storey. 1970's ground floor in slate and steel better than most, but not original.

- 7** A plain Georgian property of three storeys with two windows, a door and fanlight and good railings. Cornice reduced.

9 The former Isle of Man Times building.

Untypical for the Isle of Man. Fine brick and York stone detailing in an advanced Gothic style with mansard and centre gable. The ground floor, though not original, has an attractive glazed screen with gothic fanlights.

- 11** Pastiche Georgian in brown brick, quite well proportioned but with 'thin' detailing with little recession. A porch has laterally been added.

Former Courthouse Building

Originally the Oddfellows Hall built 1840-1 and one of the best early works of John Robinson (1790-1880) following the Derby Castle and the Falcon Cliff and arguably, the most impressive building in Athol Street. The painted render frontage has a full-blown Corinthian portico standing on square piers. It adjoins a three storey house, two bays wide which was the Savings Bank in 1869. A sweeping bay turns the corner into Church Street. Correct classical detail spiritedly interpreted. Balustrades missing on the skyline, but the railings are thankfully intact at street level.

- 17** **Cains**

A confident four storey classic, some six bays long with consoled windows at 1st floor and each storey reducing to the top terminating in a cornice and attic storey. An excellent ground floor with stately window proportions and rusticated Doric pilasters bearing lavish consoles and discreet egg and dart moulding. No 17 was formerly the IOM Banking Company Ltd according to the 1869 Ordnance Survey Map.

- 21** **Carters**

Three windows wide and three storeys nicely reducing with attractive render details punctuated with windows in six over one, six over nine and six over six formats. The centre door is a later addition, but all else is sound.

- 23** Two frontages, both three window bays wide. Exuberant centre window much enlarged. Elliptical arches and unspoilt render work. The second façade is plainer, sharing hood mould window detail at ground floor.

- 25 & 27** Plain and unspoilt, two windows wide and 3 storeys high and rendered. 1st floor windows in the six over nine format; others are six over six. The railings are of the substantial 'Athol Street' pattern. Good door case and twelve light fanlight.

- 29 -31** Four storeys high unspoilt, rendered. Three windows wide and four storeys high, the paired doors and fanlights shelter under slender canopies with elliptical arches and slim capitals.

Dickinson Cruikshank

A 1970's rebuild in brown brick which has now been rendered over,

whose scale is unsympathetic to the street, being much higher than its neighbours and not respect the façade rhythm of the street.

35 Dickinson Cruikshank - Unspoilt three bays wide and four storeys high reducing to top. Rusticated render on ground floor with a String Course with dentils separating the ground floor and 1st floor.

37 Dickinson Cruikshank – As the first purpose built office, it shares its rusticated ground floor with 35. At two storeys high with a prominent pediment, it has a version of a 'Venetian' window layout, heavy cornice with dentils and overhanging pediment.

Heritage Court

The building is poorly proportioned, being too wide and high for the street, with 'pilasters' to divide it into bays.

41 A modern, five storey building which is a pleasing contrast to its neighbour, it is built in red brick and heavily modelled with a central dormer and pediment with windows in a two over two layout.

41-51 Zurich

This is a well articulated building, seven bays wide with a rusticated base, balconies and pilasters at 1st floor and simple, robust detailing terminating in a cornice with dormers over.

53-9 Another high quality new four storey building reflecting the red-brick style of the Railway Station and Custom House opposite. Strongly modelled with a central pedimented attic but lacking a convincing cornice. It provides a good corner overlooking Lord Street with high gable and generous areas of pressed brick detail.

Athol Street (north)

The same cornice line is maintained for 24 properties, about three-quarters of the street.

The Isle of Man Bank

Fully fledged, commercial Italianate, almost Mannerist in style with heavily rusticated stone work, near detached pilasters and a massive spreading cornice.

12 Isle of Man Bank Extension

A modern building, heavily modelled to reflect its distinguished neighbour.

The polished black granite and robustly detailed façade whilst arguably out of fashion, is still good.

- 14** A modern building of three town house frontages on the site of the former chapel, three storeys high with dormers. Crude recessed entrance at street level.
- 16** A town house to match No 18 Talbot Chambers, stone-faced, three windows wide and three storeys high with a fine doorway.
- 18** **Talbot Chambers (at one time The Talbot Hotel).**
As 16 and 20 adjoining, but stone faced (probably Runcorn White) five windows wide (Two over two format with no glazing bars) and three storeys high with decent stone cornice, substantial railings and an impressive portico.
- 20** Slightly taller than 24 and 22, glazing bars in windows of lumpy section. Fine doorway, fanlight and original railings.
- 24 & 22** Originally three storeys high, three windows wide town houses, well preserved with steps and plain railings.
- 26-30** Originally a pair of three windows wide, three storeys reducing town houses. No 26 has ineptly wide window at street level, a 20th century addition. No.30 is best preserved with decent doors and fanlights, detached Doric columns and a proper plain cornice. The glazing bars, steps and railings have survived.
- 32** A late Victorian frontage in the style and materials of the Town Hall and hotels on Ridgeway Street. Local grey brick with red Ruabon quoins and dressings. Two windows wide and three storeys high like the neighbouring town houses. Tiny pediments over the upper windows flank a central gable. Probably a late 1890's frontage, the Ground Floor has been re-fenestrated, but the opening proportions are correct.
- 34** A rendered, three storey high building of three windows (a six over six format) wide with a slate penthouse. Cellar lights show above street level.
- 36** A rendered, three storey high building plus cellar lights of two windows wide, capped with gothic hood mould and elaborate carved stop ends. Steps side approach with decent railings.
- 38-42** Town houses with gothic details as 36 but not so lavish having been 'modernised' in the 1930's to become Athol Chamber Wide hood mould windows, originally six wide, three high, but some 'Venetian' lights introduced. The Doric stone porch is quite good, but, like the mouldings, all are a 20th century addition.

- 44** A rendered, three storey high building, two windows wide with a large 20th century oriel, evidence of 1960's alteration.
- 46** **Millennium House.**
A three storey high, three window wide building plain as original with door case, railings and steps but no rusticated base.
- 48** Original town house pattern, three wide and three storeys absolutely plain with rusticated ground floor and fine door case, seven section fanlight with pilasters. Good railings. Under reconstruction.
- 50-2** **Quinn Kneale.**
Six windows wide (formerly two town houses) and three storeys in height topped off with a discreet dormer. The fine window pattern is spoiled by Upvc replacements. Fine railings.
- 54-60** Soulless, mechanical four storey facades in buff brick with shallow cornices and recessed dormer storey. Ground floor has pastiche doorways, pilasters and render at street level.
- 62** **Derby House.**
Whilst at an appropriate scale, it is a very mechanical 70's polished granite-faced four storey frontage with a recessed dormer.
- St James Chambers**
A fine three storey, two window wide, corner town house of on Athol Street. The same fleur-de-lys pattern railings as can be found on the Courthouse. A central porch on the St George's Street gable which has label moulds over the windows. A decently proportioned extension has a vehicle entrance at the rear.
- 65** A rendered, triple bay layout with arch-headed windows separated by pilasters. The ground floor has been altered as it formerly had shop style windows either side of the door. In fact the building was St James's Hall Assembly Rooms in 1869, later becoming the Sale / Auction Rooms. The mansard and dormers have been added in the 20th century.
- 66-7** This is a modern attempt to fit in, four storeys high with dormers. Even has rustication and grouped windows one/three in the middle/one with pilasters.
- 68** Currently offices, the rendered, three storey, three windows wide building has a missing cornice. Not as fine as 69, but original.

- 69** Located on the corner, this is a decent three storey, three window wide rendered building with a rusticated ground floor entered via steps to a recently added Doric porch. The classic layout of the consoled 1st floor windows and label mould on the top floor range are topped off with an attic.

Street Furniture

Happily, Athol Street is not overloaded with modern street furniture. The most prominent features are the decorative street lights. Every effort should be made to resist the tide of 'bollardism'; however, the appearance of the street would be greatly enhanced if the pavings could be upgraded, while retaining such interesting features as the street's coal holes and basement 'areas'.

Upper Church Street

- 4 Plain, classic rendered town house to match its neighbours.

Joseph Bucknall's Warehouse

Street frontage has double pediments each with three rendered pilasters. To the rear is a fine traditional stone-built warehouse with small barred windows and a central roofed over yard originally built for H.B. Noble.

St George's Sunday School & Memorial Hall

Built in 1934, the heavy, almost clumsy detailing of the Slatestone with sandstone dressings, quoins and arched window heads matches the rebuilding of the church itself. The hall was recently been partly converted to wine bar with offices over, without much loss of character.

1-3 Select House.

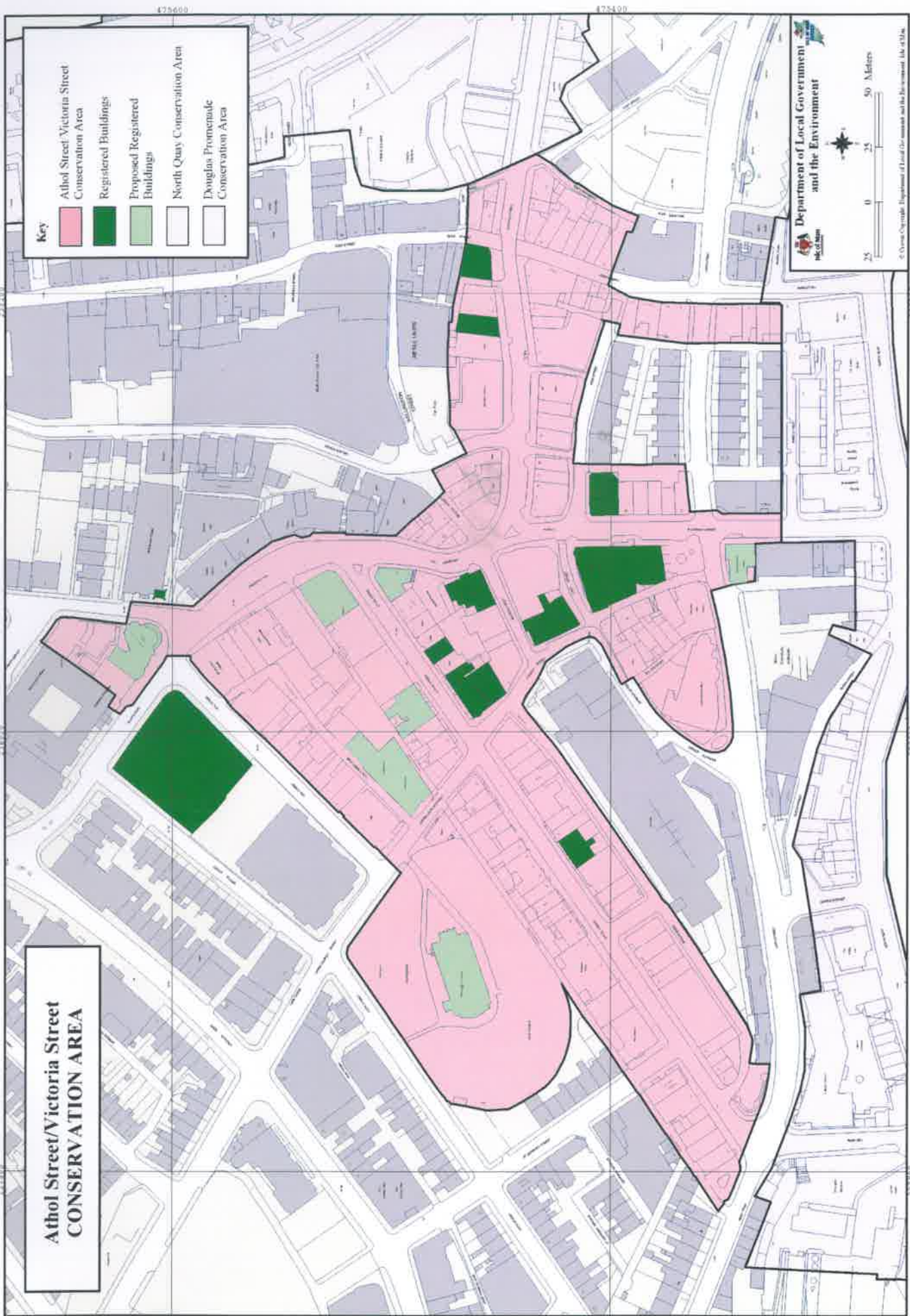
A rendered, five window wide, three storey town house with cased windows, formerly two town houses in what was known as St Georges Place. Previously the Savings & Investment Bank, originally with full length canopy, it has been somewhat modified but a decent continuity building.

St George's Church

A bluff Georgian galleried church of the 1780's, strangely modified circa 1910 with ponderous sandstone detailing. Grey and craggy outside, it is a

surprisingly graceful galleried church within. The church building is the focus of the surrounding streets and the centre of one of the most interesting churchyards in the Island. There are drifts of fine gravestones separated by green areas which may have been the site of mass burials during the cholera epidemics of the 1800's. The perimeter is marked by mature sycamores and elms flanking Hope Street and Upper Church Street.

Consideration should be given to extending the boundaries of the Conservation Area to include the terraces of Hope Street, which frame the north side of St George's Churchyard.



Key

- Athol Street/Victoria Street Conservation Area
- Registered Buildings
- Proposed Registered Buildings
- North Quay Conservation Area
- Douglas Promenade Conservation Area

**Athol Street/Victoria Street
CONSERVATION AREA**

**Department of Local Government
and the Environment**

25 0 25 50 Meters

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