

Port St Mary

Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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by Manxsearch Limited

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INTRODUCTION

Scope of the Study

This conservation study of Port St Mary has been undertaken to identify those areas of the village which merit the protection and enhancement which follows from conservation area status.

Without doubt there is a significant part of the village which is of sufficient quality to receive conservation area status. The object of this study is to define the boundary of any such conservation area, highlight characteristics which require special protection, and identify aspects which call for enhancement or improvement.

Whilst there are individual buildings of architectural interest and groups of buildings that are of townscape value outside of the village nucleus, this study focuses on the main built up area of the village.

Port St Mary is regarded as a village by its residents, its commissioners and by the Isle of Man Government despite the fact that it has a Town Hall. Throughout this study the term 'village' is used.

Location and Population

In the 2006 Census, Port St Mary is shown as having a resident population of 1,913. This was a decrease from the 2001 figure of 1,941, which had slightly increased from the 1996 Census figure of 1,874.

From these figures it can be deduced that the population is relatively static. All census figures for Port St Mary do include the small out-lying areas of Fistard and Four Roads which are not included in this study.

Since the 2006 Census there have been no significant housing developments, nor demolitions that would significantly alter the census figures.

The area of Port St Mary proposed for conservation area status is concentrated on the nucleus of the village, comprising the areas surrounding the harbour and Chapel Bay and the built-up area that links them.

The Origins and Development of Port-St-Mary

Early Origins

The earliest evidence of human habitation in the area is a burial ground or tumulus and two standing stones. These prehistoric remains are located to the north of the present village, the tumulus being beyond the station. The standing stones, known as the 'Giants Quoiting Stones' are located some distance apart, one on the slope of Cronk Skibbylt behind Cronk Road and the other on open land bordering Beach Road

Later activity came with the building of a Celtic keeill or chapel dedicated to Saint Mary, the origin of this chapel is thought to be an act of thanksgiving by Irish Christian missionaries for a safe landfall. Nothing today remains of this chapel. The chapel was situated in the vicinity of the present Town Hall, it gave the early settlement its name and later to the bay which it overlooked.

The earliest Ordnance Survey map covering the Isle of Man was published in 1869. Unlike most areas of the UK, there was no revision published until 1967. Therefore, it is much more difficult to chart the progression of the development that took place in the intervening period.

In 1869, the Ordnance Survey map shows a village with only sporadic development between Ballacreggan Farm and the Bay View Hotel. Two pairs of cottages that still stand today, now adjacent to the old school were the first properties on the seaward side of Bay View Road. The next property, some distance away, was a school which was located in the grounds of Ballamona, this later became the first Town Hall. With the exception of a handful of cottages, there was no other development until the junction with the Lhargan. At this point there was a group of buildings on the lower part of the Lhargan, including the terrace of cottages which remain today.

On the seaward side, just beyond the Bay View Hotel formerly known as Millar's Hotel and the Port St Mary Hotel, a Methodist chapel can be seen. This Wesleyan chapel was erected around 1835. When the new chapel was built around 1895, this building became the Sunday school. It was demolished in 1970 to allow road widening; the site is now occupied by the Garden of Remembrance.

On the 1869 map, High Street basically follows its current plan form. Some dwellings and alleyways can be transposed onto present-day maps. Shapes of many dwellings have however altered, due either to replacement or extension.

Little of Athol Street was built in 1869, although the Albert Hotel, formerly known as The Ship Inn and The Temperance Hotel can be noted. Houses on The Quay can be seen to have a similar plan to those present today. Lime Street strongly resembles its current-day layout, houses and alleys follow very similar patterns on both the 1869 and 1967 maps.

The large Huntersfold building, erected in 1854 and which was originally Joseph Qualtrough's warehouse, can be seen on the 1869 map at the corner of Lime Street and Loch Road. This building has variously been used for sail repairs, a net factory, paper works and general store. On the opposite corner was the first Primitive Methodist chapel. This chapel was opened in 1832, and later became a coal store after the Mount Tabor Chapel was opened in 1903, it was demolished in 1976.

At the southern end of Lime Street, opposite where the Point Apartments stand, there was a saw mill and limekiln. Further around the shoreline, opposite Clifton Road, was a rope works and rope walk.

The chronological development of Port St Mary from before the 1869 Ordnance Survey map, appears to have come about as a result of several key historical developments.

The Fishing Harbour

The early chapel did not result in an adjoining settlement. This grew instead to the south in the vicinity of the harbour. Here the shore was more favourable for land and sea access and it became the location for the development of a fishing port.

The port grew slowly over the centuries, firstly with the fishing and then the running trade. With the restriction of the latter in the 1770s, fishing once more became a main activity on the Island. This resulted in the substantial Manx herring fleet, with many of the boats based in Port St Mary. The first herring houses were established by 1770.

By the 1850s the harbour was sheltered by a six hundred foot long stone pier and was home to over one hundred herring boats.

The Alfred Pier's foundation stone was laid by The Duke of Edinburgh on the 31st January 1882, but the pier was not completed until 1866. The new pier was nine hundred and thirty foot long and vastly increased the area of sheltered water in the harbour. Until recently both piers had a lighthouse on the end. However in January 2009 the lighthouse on the Alfred Pier was swept away in storms.

By the 1860s, the original chapel had long since disappeared and the village had grown to some one hundred dwellings. These were grouped around the harbour on what is now High Street and the Lhargan, and along the beach southwards in Lime Street. In 1869, there were two Methodist chapels, a hotel, school, two public houses and a Post Office.

Industry associated with the fishing industry included: salt houses; a net factory; smithy; sail making and facilities for boat building. To the south of the settlement was a saw mill, limekiln and rope walk.

The Victorian Seaside Resort

The steam railway from Douglas to Port Erin was opened in 1874 and with it the station for Port St. Mary which is situated between the village nucleus and Four Roads. The combination of improved transport, an increase in population and the demand for seaside holidays resulted in a rapid expansion of the village from the 1880s.

One of the first developments was the construction of the Cliff Hotel (now Carrick Court apartments and previously The Golf links Hotel) constructed in 1882 by Mr Fred Callow.

A new estate company proposed extensive expansion of the village, that stretched to Perwick Bay, however only Queen's Road and Clifton Road were constructed. To the north, the frontage to Chapel Bay (now The Promenade) was sold for division into building plots. A new school was opened at the junction of The Promenade and Bay View Road; this has a date plaque of 1880.

By the mid 1890s the construction on the upper promenade was largely complete, forming an almost continuous terrace of high and narrow boarding houses, and wider hotels similar to those built on the promenades in Douglas. Owners of some

of these guest houses were responsible for the construction of family housing built in Cronk Road and Victoria Road for their own occupation. Further development took place along Bay View Road consisting ground-floor shops with residential accommodation above.

A distinct division of uses was very apparent, with the northern end of the village being dependant on summer visitors for its livelihood. At the southern end of the village in the vicinity of the harbour laid a more mixed area supporting the fishing industry.

Major new buildings at the turn of the century, were the Lifeboat House, built within two years of the station being established in 1896. It was constructed adjacent to the Alfred Pier. The Public Hall was built in 1898 on The Promenade.

On Bay View Road, which links these two distinct areas of the village, two new buildings of worship had been constructed. St. Mary's Church (Plate 21) was consecrated in 1884, and a new Wesleyan chapel was opened around 1895.

In 1903, a Primitive Methodist chapel, known as Mount Tabor, was built to replace the earlier chapel which was situated in Lime Street.

20th Century Development

Following this burst of development at the turn of the 19th century, new building was at a much slower pace. An exception was the development of the Ballaqueeney Hydro on The Promenade, which grew from a small Victorian property into a grand hotel by virtue of a large extension completed in 1935. It was designed by Alexander J Davidson of Douglas and was built in the Art Deco Style.

Gradual filling out of the earlier proposals to the south of the village continued, but these were altered by the relocation of the golf course. In more recent years, with the exception of infilling throughout the village, almost all residential building has been concentrated to the north of the village, between The Promenade and Beach Road. A new school, at the junction of Bay View Road and Plantation Road was built in 1994.

The Prevailing and Former Uses within the Area

Port St Mary's former prevailing uses as a major fishing and fish processing village have largely disappeared. The fishing net industry had closed by the beginning of World War Two. Today there are a limited number of fishing boats and a small-scale fish-processing industry.

Several multi-storey buildings formerly associated with the industry are the only evidence of the village's past association with it. These include the Huntersfold building and the stone-built apartments on Shore Road.

The village has, like many similar settlements, retained a small proportion of its retail shops. There are few employment prospects within the village, certainly an insufficient number for the economically active residents. This has led to a high

proportion of residents travelling daily to employment elsewhere, and the village, like many on the Isle of Man, has largely become a dormitory settlement.

In addition to the residential and retail content, the village has two churches and a Methodist chapel. There are a number of restaurants, two public houses and offices. The village has no bank, although it still retains a sub Post Office, there is also a village school.

The majority of guest houses, which were responsible for the rapid growth of the northern end of the village in the Victorian era, are now in private residential use. These are either large single dwellings, or divided into apartments. Just a handful remains open as visitor accommodation. The former Point Hotel was converted into luxury apartments in recent years.

In past years fishing spawned associated industries, including net and sail making. Whilst this is no long prevalent, some small-scale industry remains within the village.

Building Types and Styles within the Proposed Conservation Area

The types and styles of buildings in Port St Mary strongly reflect the different phases of its development. The earlier cottage-style fishermen's dwellings that grew around the harbour and extended southwards along Lime Street are on a small, compact scale. They are built in stone, although some are rendered. Also in the vicinity of the harbour are a number of multi-storey stone buildings built on a much larger scale, these having been previously associated with the fishing industry.

In contrast at the opposite end of the village around Chapel Bay, the buildings are tall and strong, forming a continuous terrace of former guest houses on The Promenade. This terrace is built on a curve, which reflects the curved nature of the sandy bay and coastal banks below them.

In recent years several gaps which had existed since the majority of the terrace was completed have been filled in. These new buildings have been sympathetic to the form and mass of the original buildings to either side, but their detailed design, particularly with reference to window openings and styles is out of character.

The terrace has an almost continuous roof level, but one property, Clifton Court, is higher than the rest. It was constructed with an extra floor and this interrupts the flow. Until the mid 1990s, a large gap existed in the frontage between Summerville and Forester House. St Mary's Bay Apartments, which was constructed whilst broadly reflecting the architectural style of the adjacent terrace, is out of scale with its neighbours.

Beyond the terrace are the more modern Dolphin Apartments. These are of inappropriate scale and character for this special location.

Only a section of the Bayqueen Hotel remains. The earlier Victorian guest houses from which it grew were removed in recent years, the remaining portion stands empty and neglected awaiting redevelopment.

Between the village and Gansey Point are a number of varied dwellings, the most notable being Chapel Bay House, with its adjacent former boat house. This property is distinct and totally individual not only in Port St Mary but probably within the Isle of Man.

Between the two widely differing areas at opposite ends of the village are other distinct areas of development each reflecting its period of construction and original use.

The link between the north and south ends of the village runs parallel to the shoreline, and extends through Bay View Road, High Street, Athol Place, Athol Street and The Quay. At its northern end, this thoroughfare is the current commercial heart of the village, where the remaining shops are located. Buildings vary in scale and type, but dominant are the tall Victorian terraces, starting on either side of Gellings Avenue. Here there is a matching pair of corner feature-buildings built in red Ruabon brick, with decorative detailing.

The adjacent properties on either side are identical in scale, but are rendered. All have commercial users at ground-floor level and residential use above. A number of shops have been vacant for several years. The majority of shop fronts are of poor design and inappropriate, only a few original shop fronts remain. Opposite is the former school, now occupied as offices, and the adjacent cottages which were built prior to 1869.

There are two roads between Bay View Road and Cronk Road, these being Victoria Road and Gellings Avenue. The former has solid terraced housing, dating from the turn of the century, to either side of the steeply inclined road. These differ in design, to the right (northern side) the houses are of three storeys, whilst those on the left (southern side) are two-storey with triangular dormer windows at roof level. At the top of the road on the right-hand side, are three modern town houses which do not integrate well with their Victorian neighbours.

Gellings Avenue is of much less architectural or historical interest. It has newly finished apartments, modern town houses and garages. Below the apartments are the public conveniences.

From the junction of Gellings Avenue and Bay View Road, there are retail premises on the landward side and the recently built Living Hope Community Church. This replaced the stone-built Baptist church which was originally built as a Methodist chapel. This modern building makes no attempt to replicate its ancestor; its façade is of a striking design and is set back from the neighbouring buildings.

On the seaward side of Bay View Road are several large private dwellings: Rocklands, set at lower level; Balla Maria, built close to the highway, and Ballamona. The Carrick Court Apartments were built as the Cliff Hotel. This building has been extended, particularly to the rear, and has lost much of its original charm.

Opposite, on land once attached to the hotel, is Carrick Mews. This a modern town house development set back behind its car park. Between Carrick Mews and the interesting shore accommodation for lighthouse keepers, is the stone-built St Mary's Church of 1884.

The remainder of Bay View Road mainly comprises two-storey rendered dwelling houses on the landward side of the road, and a steeply sloping bank on the seaward side leading down to the picturesque dwellings of Willow Terrace at sea level.

The Bay View Hotel Public House, which occupies a prominent corner position, has a neglected external appearance. To the rear of the public house, the Lhargan extends to join Cronk Road. Both of these roads have development only on the landward side, much of which is set high above the road and comprises of mainly stout Victorian terrace houses, together with some later infilling. These properties have panoramic views over the rooftops of the development on Bay View Road to the sea beyond. There is an older stone-built terrace of several houses at the lower end of the Lhargan which were built prior to 1869.

High Street continues from Bay View Road, the street is narrow with continuous house frontages to either side. The northern entrance is dominated by the former Isle of Man Bank, built in granite and has been empty for many years. The houses vary in style, but small two-storey dwellings dominate. There are some much larger and grander houses on the seaward side, including Anchorage House and Broome House.

On both sides of the street, there are a number of residential properties with shop fronts that are poorly adapted for their current use. This illustrates the changes in shopping trends over the last century.

High Street merges with Athol Street beyond Athol Place, and the road widens and development is on the landward side only. The dwellings are larger, grander and more robust than those of High Street. This architectural style extends around The Quay and buildings are generally of a high quality. Modern development on both sides of the junction of The Quay and Lime Street detract from the street scene. In this area several buildings have inappropriate window openings and designs, altered to obtain maximum benefit of the harbour views, but with a detrimental effect on the quality of the area.

In the area to the rear of High Street, extending to Park Road and between Athol Street and Queen's Road, the remaining industry can be found. This is mainly light industry still associated with the fishing industry, including boatbuilding and repairs.

Queen's Road has a mixture of modern Commissioners and older private housing. There is a fine example of a Victorian Terrace at the seaward end of Queen's Road.

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Registered Buildings

At the present time there are just two registered buildings within the proposed Port St Mary conservation area. These are the remaining section of the Bayqueen Hotel on The Promenade and The Old Sail Loft on Shore Road.

The Bayqueen Hotel grew from a number of Victorian guest houses, these were demolished relatively recently. The remaining section of the hotel which includes the ballroom was erected in 1935. The hotel was originally called the Ballaqueeney Hotel, named after the farm owned by the proprietors. Its name was changed as a consequence of a visit by King George VI and Elizabeth the Queen Mother at the end of World War Two. Planning Permission was granted on appeal in 2003 for two apartment buildings housing 56 units, and refurbishment of the remaining wing of the hotel.

The Old Sail Loft is situated at sea level on Shore Road. The ground floor served as a blacksmith's shop, a most unusual slit can be seen in the wall below the stone exterior staircase. This was the opening through which the keels for vessels under construction would be slid out.

Above the blacksmith's shop was a carpenter's shop, and above this the sail loft which was occupied until the 1950s. This stone-built structure was converted to residential use in recent years.

Key Unregistered Buildings

Whilst there are only two registered buildings within the proposed conservation area, there are several buildings of merit that are considered to be of special interest or landmark buildings:

The Public (Town) Hall

This building on The Promenade was erected by the Port St Mary Public Hall Company Limited in 1898. It is built in stone and has a public hall with a sprung maple floor and stage at the upper level. The building was sold to the Port St Mary Commissioners in 1938, and was renamed Port St Mary Town Hall in 1939. The Commissioners Offices are at the lower level.

St Mary's Church

This beautifully proportioned building on Bay View Road was designed by Barry and Son, of Liverpool, in 1881, the foundation stone being laid in 1882. It was consecrated in 1884, but at that time it had no organ, lighting or heating and no porch. The porch was added in 1896, and by 1904 the tower had been built and gas lighting installed.

Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel

This chapel which faces Queen's Place was built in 1903 to replace an earlier chapel in Lime Street. It was designed by Todd and Morris architects of Southport to seat 320 people. It is a spacious, distinctive, landmark building.

The Lifeboat House

The Royal Naval Lifeboat Institution established the Port-St-Mary station in 1896. The stone-built boat house at the southern end of Lime Street was erected within the next two years at the cost of £845.

There are a number of additional buildings that merit further investigation as to their historical significance, which could result in them being considered worthy of the protection that is offered to buildings protected by The Registered Buildings (General) Regulations 2005. They are:

- Chapel Bay House, The Promenade.
- The old school, Bay View Road.
- The former Isle of Man Bank, corner of High Street and Park Road.
- Anchorage House and Broome House, High Street.

Beyond the proposed conservation area, there are a number of buildings that should also be considered for the inclusion on the Register of Protected Buildings. These include: Port St Mary railway station; Willoughby and Applegate on Fistard Road; Perwick Villa and Windy Rig on Clifton Road, that are a pair of half-timbered houses in the Art and Crafts style, reputed to have been designed by Mackay Hugh Baille Scott.

Significant Archaeological Sites

The earliest evidence of human habitation is a burial mound or tumulus and two standing stones. These prehistoric remains are located to the north of the present village, the tumulus being situated off Station Road opposite Ballaqueeney Farm.

The standing stones are known as The Giants Quoting Stones. One is located in a field at Ballacreggan, close to the junction of Station Road and Beach Road. It is 10 feet high with no trace of associated features, but flint flakes were noted to have been found. The second of the standing stones is shown on the lower slopes of Cronk Skibbylt, to the rear of the houses on Plantation Road. Two site visits found no evidence of this stone as the whole area has become overgrown with gorse.

Later activity came with the building of a Celtic keeill or chapel dedicated to St. Mary, the origin of this chapel is thought to be an act of thanksgiving by Irish Christian missionaries for safe landfall. There is a reference to it in Speeds Map of the Isle of Man, 1605. This map is based on a survey by Durham in 1595; the map includes a conventional pictogram labelled "Chappell", on the shore at "Portell Morrey". A second reference can be found in Feltham's book "Tour through the Island of Mann" in 1798. The chapel was sited in the vicinity of the Town Hall and no evidence of it remains today.

The Character and Hierarchy of Spaces and Vistas, Green Areas and Trees

Views into the Proposed Conservation Area

Whilst it is possible to enter Port St Mary from Fistard along Fistard Road, or from Port Erin or Cregneash, along Plantation Road, almost all vehicular traffic enters the village from the north. This can be either along Station Road from Four Roads, or from Beach Road. These two roads meet at the crossroads with Plantation Road, and access to the village is along Bay View Road. It is only at the junction of Bay View Road and The Promenade that a sense of arrival in the village is felt.

It is from the main A5 road at points between Fisher's Hill and Gansey Bay that Port St Mary can be best viewed from a distance, rising from sea level to the high point of Cronk Skibbylt, behind the village. From Gansey Point, a clearer perspective of the same view can be enjoyed.

The reverse of this view from Cronk Skibbylt, or from the upper levels of the golf course looking down into the village is particularly pleasing.

Vistas within the Proposed Conservation Area

Due to the somewhat linear nature along the main thoroughfare of Bay View Road, High Street and Athol Street, the opportunities for vistas within the proposed conservation area are limited. From the higher ground of Cronk Road or the Lhargan, views tend to be over the development below and out to the sea and Scarlet Point beyond.

From various areas along the lower end of Bay View Road from its junction with High Street, and also from the harbour area, there are pleasing views of Chapel Bay and the development on The Promenade above. Similarly from The Promenade, views of the harbour can be enjoyed.

In the area around Queen's Place, there is sufficient open space to allow the eye to look into the village, rather than through it or out of it. From the Junction of Victoria Road and Cronk Road, there is an interesting view over the cottages on Bay View Road to the Bayqueen Hotel.

Views out of the Proposed Conservation Area

To describe the views out of the proposed conservation area as breathtaking or outstanding is in no way an exaggeration. From almost any point, with the opportunity to look towards the sea, from Chapel Bay to the harbour, this panoramic vista can be enjoyed. From many points in the village there are most attractive hill views. From the harbour area these are particularly impressive when looking towards Chapel Bay.

These views can be up to 180 degrees when looking from Chapel Bay, lower Bay View Road, the harbour or from Clifton Road. Very interesting limited views out to sea can be gleaned from between buildings. Such views can be found at various points along the main thoroughfare.

One of Port St Mary's jewels is the Karran Quirk footpath, usually known as 'The Cat Walk'. This was built as a winter- works scheme between 1962 and 1965. The Cat Walk is an elevated walkway above the sea and links the lower promenade with Shore Road. It was severely damaged by gales in 2002, but has been fully rebuilt since that time.

From The Cat Walk, extensive sea views can be enjoyed and also views into the village between the houses on the seaward side of the thoroughfare.

Open Spaces, Green Areas and Trees

Almost all open spaces within the proposed conservation area are also green areas. Such areas can be formal or informal, and both are to be found in Port St Mary. The largest informal area of open space is the area between the lower promenade and Gansey Point. Much of the area was excavated to house vast storage tanks for the IRIS scheme. Whilst the excavated areas have been re-seeded, in one area grass growth is thin and sporadic. This area is popular with motorists who wish to park close to the sea, and also for dog exercising. On The Promenade, there is a formal linear green area separating the highway from the steep coastal bank.

A further informal area is on the seaward side of the road between the Alfred Pier and Clifton Road. This area is, however, used as an informal boat park. This area widens out at the junction of Clifton Road and Queen's Road into a formal grassed area, extending as far as the sea wall and for some distance towards the former Strathallan Hotel. Further formal open spaces include: Queen's Place, between Queen's Road and Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel, and a smaller area between the chapel and Loch Road. A little further down Queen's Road, at its junction with Clifton Road, is a further grassed triangle outside the Point Apartments. This area has no planting relief and contributes little.

At the entrance to the village, at the junction of Bay View Road and Plantation Road, stands the new junior school. It occupies a spacious site with green recreational areas to the rear; these are particularly visible from Cronk Road. Opposite the junction of Bay View Road and Gellings Avenue is situated the bowl-shaped area known as Happy Valley. This is steeply sloping green area is difficult to use due to its topography.

Trees are in short supply in the proposed conservation area, other than in private gardens. There are numerous trees in the garden of Rocklands. The proximity to the sea and the associated winds probably limit the opportunity for tree growth. Planting at Queen's Place has been very slow to develop, and any future planting should only be done with species suitable for exposed locations.

At the end of both The Promenade and Clifton Road are fields which are in private ownership. As any future development on either of these sites would have a direct effect on the proposed conservation area, they have been included within the area proposed for designation.

Prevalent and Traditional Building Materials, Textures and Colours

Due to the phased development of the area proposed to be included within the conservation area, there is no prevalent style of construction. However, the vast majority of properties are built in stone, many having a render coat.

Some exposed Manx stone buildings include: the former school; Town Hall; The Lifeboat House; St Mary's Church; Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel, and the former Isle of Man Bank. Several residential properties still retain their natural stonework including: the majority of a terrace of houses at the lower end of the Lhargan; Willow Terrace; other buildings on Shore Road and many properties on Lime Street. Adjacent to Willow Terrace recently completed residential properties have been finished in traditional materials. These harmonise very well with the older neighbouring properties. To the rear of the Post Office is a particularly good example of a Manx stone building.

The later Victorian properties are again usually built in stone and mainly finished in render, which is typically smooth and often painted white or a pastel colours. There are exceptions to the above, particularly in the case of the two landmark corner buildings at the junction of Gellings Avenue and Bay View Road. These are built in red Ruabon brick. The public conveniences on The Quay have a simple Arts and Crafts style and are finished in rough-cast render.

Roof coverings are typically slate, although there is limited use of concrete tiles and man-made asbestos slates. In the area to the rear of High Street extending to Park Road, and between Athol Street and Queen's Road, the remaining industry can be found. A large proportion of the industrial premises have corrugated asbestos roofs.

Within the village a number of properties retain their original timber windows dating back to the late Victorian period. This is particularly applicable to the upper floors of shops. A substantial number of residential properties now have uPVC windows. Many of the uPVC windows are not too incongruous, particularly where the replacements replicate the originals accurately. However, some of the uPVC replacement windows are inappropriate, particularly where wood-grain effect frames have been used. Many replacement windows, both in timber and uPVC, fitted in recent years are out of character making no attempt to replicate those which they replaced.

Generally the blend of natural stone, rough-cast and smooth render finishes, with occasional punctuation of brick, pebble and spa dash, serves to give a pleasing visual impression.

Vernacular Architectural Details

The oldest remaining buildings which date before 1869 include: cottages on the seaward side of Bay View Road, adjacent to the old school; a terrace of cottages at the lower end of the Lhargan and cottages on Lime Street. Many of these retain their original form and to an extent their exterior appearance in Manx stone.

These older residential properties followed the local vernacular style of the period. They are usually built in rough-random stone with broad Manx chimneys at gable

ends. The roof is typically shallow pitch, clad in slate that in some cases replaces the original thatch. Windows and door openings have stone lintels and sills and original windows would have been small-pane, timber sashes.

Many of these early buildings were replaced towards the end of the 19th century. Their replacements are often three-storey with rendered walls. Windows in later Victorian buildings are usually larger sashes, often with moulded architraves and moulded string courses. Some buildings have a mock ashlar finish, particularly the larger houses on Athol Street. In High Street, a number of shop fronts are evident in premises now in residential use.

The Victorian expansion, which occurred due to the growth of the tourist trade, resulted in much larger properties, with up to four floors and increased floor-to-ceiling heights. Most properties were still built in terraced form, with occasional semi-detached or detached houses. Windows in these properties are typically two-pane sashes, often set in bay windows, and rendered eaves brackets were used. Roof coverings were still slate, but with steeper pitches to accommodate rooms in the roof, which often had dormer windows. Walls were usually rendered, but with a hood drip moulding replacing window architraves.

Early 20th century housing was usually semi-detached or occasionally detached, often finished in rough-cast render, with a slate roof covering. Window styles were often timber casements with fanlights.

From the 1920s housing designs had broken away from the simplicity of the traditional pattern. Plan forms and choice of materials and windows became more varied and individual. From the 1950s onwards, detached bungalows became the most common form of development, having larger windows and smaller chimneys. Their design often replicated those to be found anywhere within the UK. The main difference being that they were often finished in spa dashed render rather than in brick or re-constituted stone, which was widely used in the UK.

These properties, whilst being more functional, do not contribute positively to the street scene in the same way as do their older counterparts. Many of the post war two-storey dwellings have 'McArd' style triangular dormer windows.

Recent extensions to older buildings have in many cases destroyed the original architectural character. An example of this is the rear extension to the Carrick Bay Apartments. Particularly disruptive are enlarged and incorrectly proportioned windows, and inappropriate roof windows designed purely to maximise views.

Recent development of the St Mary's Bay Apartments on The Promenade, and the newly completed Chapel Court Apartments on Gellings Avenue, do not harmonise well with the Victorian terraces. Their scale is not complimentary, and it is regrettable that firmer planning controls were not enforced to ensure that the finished developments contributed more to the street scene.

Shop Fronts, Advertisements and Street Furniture

Shop fronts are a particularly challenging issue within Port St Mary. Many of the retail premises at the northern end of Bay View Road have inappropriate shop fronts

in timber or aluminium, some have oversized plastic signage. Only a few original shop fronts remain at this end of the village. Every encouragement should be made to retain and repair these, rather than replace them.

In High Street, there is again a challenging issue with shop fronts. Many properties on both sides of the road were formerly retail premises, with living accommodation to the rear and above. These are now exclusively residential but the shop fronts have remained. Occupants variously use Venetian blinds or net curtains in an attempt to obtain a degree of privacy. The issue of whether it is more acceptable to retain these shop fronts, or replace them with doors and windows more appropriate to residential use needs careful consideration.

Street furniture is varied and there is ample scope for improvement. To the side of Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel is a red K6 telephone box, with a cast-iron pillar box adjacent. A further pillar box is located outside the Post Office. However, outside the Co-op store, at an important location at the entrance to the village, there is an inappropriate stainless steel and glass telephone box. Litter bins are modern plastic throughout the village. Unsympathetic concrete planters are located: on Queen's Place; The Promenade and Bay View Road.

Throughout the village there are many public seats and these vary in design, from attractive hardwood seats with arms to inappropriate benches. At several locations there are above-ground telecommunication boxes.

There are no advertisements noted within the proposed conservation area, other than a notice board adjacent to the telephone box on Queen's Place.

Boundaries

There is no single consistent boundary treatment within the proposed conservation area. Where Manx stone walls are present, they should be carefully conserved. Cast-iron railings remain on a number of front boundary walls to residential properties and to the boundary walls to Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel. These should be retained. In the UK, the majority of such railings were removed as part of the war effort, but in the Isle of Man a large proportion survived intact.

NEGATIVE FACTORS

During the course of this study, a number of areas have been noted that can be categorised as detracting from the proposed conservation area.

Traffic

As with most villages with street widths designed for use by pedestrians and horse-drawn transport, Port St Mary inevitably has problems with modern-day traffic levels. From the northern end of the village up to the junction with Park Road, traffic is two-way along the main thoroughfare, with parking on the landward side only. This system works as well as can be expected, but difficulty arises in several places when oncoming traffic is encountered.

From its junction with Park Road, High Street is one-way in a south to north direction, again with parking on the landward side. All other roads in the proposed conservation area, with the exception of Athol Street, are two-way.

In addition to the protection and enhancement of the physical character of a conservation area, it is also desirable to reduce the environmental affects of excessive or disruptive traffic. Recommendations in this respect can be found under the heading 'Subjects for Enhancement'.

Car Parking

There are currently two public car parks within the village: one opposite the Town Hall on The Promenade, and the second off Bay View Road which is accessed to the side of the Lighthouse Buildings. As many residential properties have no on-site parking facilities, occupants have to utilise available on-street spaces or one of the two public car parks. The Promenade car park has recently be re-surfaced, and whilst it is a bare open space, nevertheless provides a valuable facility for the northern end of the village.

The second car park off Bay View Road has inadequate signage and is often overlooked. Both the car park and its access are un-surfaced and potholed.

Miscellaneous Negative Factors

The Manx Electricity Authority has already placed a large proportion of their overhead cables underground, remaining electricity cables and telephone wires are obtrusive. Some of the modern steel street lights have been replaced by more appropriate black-painted, swan-necked lighting columns.

To either side of Carrick Court Apartments are galvanised steel railings, these are out of character with the area.

A number of individual properties are considered to detract from the proposed conservation area, due to poor design, neglect or inappropriate but well-meaning alterations. These include:

The Chinese takeaway on Bay View Road has a large box-section stainless steel extractor flue on the gable wall adjacent to the Living Hope Community Church. This is particularly visible when travelling north along Bay View Road.

The Island Seafare Building on the Alfred Pier is particularly inappropriate for its location. Other buildings to the rear of Lime Street, within the boat park, are also considered to detract from the street scene.

Hudson's Yard on Lime Street is an untidy jumble of business units and lock-up garages, which detracts from the proposed conservation area. The area was formerly the home to a kipper curing works and a builder's yard. A fine stone chimney remains, but no other buildings have any architectural merit.

On the highest point of the Village, Cronk Skibbylt, is a tall telecommunications mast, this is visible not only from most parts of the village, but also from considerable distance, due to its height.

The informal boat parking area on the seaward side of the road between Clifton Road and Lime Street, has led to an untidy street scene at a particularly visible point.

Throughout the proposed conservation area, there are properties where alterations, particularly to windows and entrance doors, have a negative effect on the area as a whole. This includes replacement of original timber windows and doors with incorrectly proportioned uPVC replacements. These often have an inappropriate wood grain. There are many examples of enlarged and oversized window openings with no consideration to appearance, but merely to improve the view out from the property. This problem is particularly prevalent with dormer and roof windows.

There are a number of areas within the proposed conservation area awaiting development or redevelopment that have a negative impact. These include: the former Bayqueen Hotel; a vacant parcel of land to the rear of the Post Office and vacant land between Cronk Road and the car park.

NEUTRAL AREAS

There are a number of individual properties built in recent years that neither contribute to, nor detract from the character of the proposed conservation area. It has been necessary to include these properties to prevent unnecessary deviations of the boundary. These properties include: Bungalows at the southern end of Lime Street; Carrick Mews, and other modern properties which have in-filled gaps in recent years.

SUBJECTS FOR ENHANCEMENT

Whilst conservation areas are designated to preserve existing character, they have a secondary purpose in identifying subjects where enhancement is possible and would be beneficial to the area as a whole. It is acknowledged that enhancement works require expenditure, and to persuade individuals and businesses to participate

requires them to be convinced of the overall benefits, and be encouraged by way of grants and other assistance.

Whilst many negative factors have been identified, it is clearly not feasible for enhancement work to be carried out to them all particularly in the short term. An example of this is the telecommunications mast on Cronk Skibbylt. However in the future, with improved technology, it may be possible that an alternative structure with a lesser visual impact could replace the present mast.

Other areas where enhancement would be beneficial are set out below:

Traffic

The following proposals are put forward for consideration as they would increase the desirability of the proposed conservation area.

1. Traffic should be restricted along Athol Street and High Street to only those needing to gain access to their properties. This proposal could go hand-in-hand with resurfacing, to include granite kerbs and block pavers, which would give greater pedestrian priority, traffic calming and enhance the character of the harbour area.
2. Cronk Road and the Lhargan should be made one-way, in a north-south direction for the entire length of both roads. This should commence from the junction with Plantation Road, up to the junction with the main thoroughfare at the Bay View Hotel.
3. Lime Street and The Quay should be made one-way, in south-north direction, from the Lifeboat Station to the junction with Athol Street. At this junction, traffic would be required to turn left, other than those requiring access to properties on Athol Street or High Street. The existing two-way highways of Queen's Road and Park Road are considered to be adequate to handle the increased traffic this proposal would create.

Car Parking

It is recommended that improved signage is provided to indicate the position of the car park off Bay View Road. The access road and car park require a metalled surface.

There is an area of vacant land between this car park and Cronk Road. The possibility of extending the car park to incorporate this land requires investigation. In the future, it could provide additional car parking spaces to relieve pressure on both the main thoroughfare and Cronk Road, if a second access was provided onto Cronk Road.

Shop Fronts

As previously stated, the issue of shop fronts is particularly challenging within the proposed conservation area. There are two issues relating to shop fronts which require consideration.

At the northern end of Bay View Road, many retail premises have inappropriate shop fronts. Efforts should be made to retain remaining original shop fronts, and, wherever possible, to encourage owners of those properties with inappropriate fronts to replace them with more traditional alternatives.

It is appreciated that shop front replacement would be a gradual process over a period of years, but enormous visual benefits could be achieved.

The second issue with shop fronts is the problem where former shops are now occupied purely for residential use. This area requires further debate and consideration as to whether it is better to leave the properties as built, or whether to encourage replacement of doors and windows more suited to residential use.

Redevelopment

As noted there are a number of sites within the proposed conservation area requiring redevelopment. These include: land to the rear of the Post Office and the Bayqueen Hotel. These currently detract from the street scene, but redevelopment may not happen quickly due to the current economic environment.

The area to the rear of Lime Street, extending from the inner pier to the Alfred Pier has several poor-quality and inappropriate buildings, in particular the Island Seafare building. Ideally, this area should be redeveloped with more sympathetic buildings, as well as providing extra boat storage spaces. This would facilitate boats currently housed on land between Clifton Road and Lime Street to be relocated.

Hudson's Yard on Lime Street is another area where environmental improvements works would be beneficial. With the exception of the fine stone chimney, none of the remaining buildings have any architectural value. Detailed consideration needs to be given to the future use of this site.

A joint scheme including Hudson's Yard and the previous site between the two piers could be undertaken. This would require the involvement of the existing users of both sites, who would need to be accommodated in better designed and more appropriate buildings, as well as providing the required boat storage areas.

Miscellaneous subjects for Enhancement

An area where much can be achieved for a small investment is the replacement of plastic litter bins with cast-iron, heritage-style bins painted black. The street scene would be further improved with the removal of the modern telephone box on Bay View Road, and replacement with traditional K6 telephone box. Above-ground telecommunication boxes, such as those adjacent to Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel

and at the junction of Loch Road and Lime Street, should be replaced with manhole chamber boxes.

On the green in front of Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel and on The Promenade it is recommended that the concrete planters are removed and replaced with shrub planting directly into the ground.

If planters are to be retained on Bay View Road, the existing concrete-style should be replaced with black painted cast-iron planters.

The galvanised steel railings to either side of Carrick Court are out of character, and it is recommended they be replaced with cast-iron railings, painted black.

There is a general lack of trees and shrubs in public areas and green spaces. There are clear opportunities for further landscaping of existing green areas including: the triangle of land at Queen's Place opposite Mount Tabor Methodist Chapel; on the area of land between the Methodist Chapel and Loch Road, and on the triangle of land at the junction of Queen's Road and Clifton Road.

The visual aspect within the proposed conservation area would be greatly enhanced by removing the remaining overhead electric cables and telephone lines and placing them underground. The programme of replacing the modern-style street lights with black painted, swan-neck lights is to be commended. This work should be continued until all have been replaced.

It is recommended that where timber benches exist, they should be replaced with either hardwood or cast-iron and timber seats.

Throughout the village there is no consistent window or door style, or material used for their construction. Guidelines for future replacements should be publicised. Wherever possible, the use of inappropriate building materials should be discouraged and incentives offered to replace these with more appropriate materials. This can include doors, windows and roofing materials. A special effort should be made to replace corrugated asbestos sheets roofs on industrial buildings with slate.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The recommended boundary of the proposed conservation area is outlined in red on the map. This is by no means fixed at this stage. Its final position should be the focus of consultation and debate.

It is necessary to pose the question as to whether the area to be within the boundary justifies the additional controls which designation brings, or whether it is a matter of applying the normal process of development control that recognises and respects the character and appearance of the proposed conservation area.

The proposed boundary has been kept as regular as possible, but deviations have been made to allow modern housing developments to be excluded. Wherever possible, property boundaries have been utilised, as this is helpful for identification purposes.

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