

## **Port Erin**

# **Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

Prepared for the Department of Local Government and the Environment

By AOC Archaeology and Costain Heritage

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# Contents

Port Erin 1

Draft Conservation Area Appraisal 1

Contents 2

Summary 4

Acknowledgments 6

**PART ONE – CHARACTER APPRAISAL 7**

**1 Introduction 7**

- 1.1 Background 7
- 1.2 Planning policy context 7
- 1.3 Conservation area boundary 8

**2 Assessing special interest 11**

- 2.1 Location and setting 11
  - 2.1.1. Location and context 11
  - 2.1.2. General character and plan form 11
  - 2.1.3. Relationship with its surroundings 12
- 2.2 Historic development and Archaeology 12
  - 2.2.1. Historic development 12
  - 2.2.2. Archaeology 16
- 2.3 Spatial analysis 17
  - 2.3.1. Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area 17
  - 2.3.2. Key views and vistas 18
- 2.4 Character analysis 19
  - 2.4.1. Definition of character areas 19
  - 2.4.2. Characterisation 19
  - 2.4.3. Qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area 21
  - 2.4.4. Registered buildings 22
  - 2.4.5. Local details 29
  - 2.4.6. Building materials 30
  - 2.4.7. Contribution made by green spaces 30
  - 2.4.8. Intrusion or damage 31
  - 2.4.9. Neutral areas 31
  - 2.4.10. Condition and buildings at risk 31

**3 Key issues 31**

**4 Community Involvement 32**

**5 Conservation area boundary review** Error! Bookmark not defined.

**PART TWO – MANAGEMENT 33**

**6 Management Proposals 33**

6.1	Introduction	33
6.1.1.	Background	33
6.1.2.	Local plan	33
6.2	Local generic guidance	33
6.2.1.	Development control process	33
6.2.3.	Promotion and awareness	36
6.3	Specific Actions – Port Erin conservation area	36
6.3.1.	Maintaining the special character of the conservation area	36
6.3.2.	Positive and negative buildings	37
6.3.3.	Streetscape improvements	37
6.3.4.	Buildings in need of repair	37
6.3.5.	Registered buildings	37
6.4	Monitoring and review	38
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>39</b>
<b>Glossary of relevant architectural terms</b>		<b>42</b>
<b>Criteria for assessing the contribution of buildings in the conservation area</b>		<b>43</b>
<b>Contact Details</b>		<b>44</b>

## Summary

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared by AOC Archaeology Group and Costain Heritage on behalf of the Department of the Local Government and the Environment (DLGE) in relation to the proposed designation of a new conservation area in Port Erin.

The main problems and pressures identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal for the area are as follows:

- A number of the hotels on the Promenade have been demolished and replaced. As such, the remaining original hotels in this area are an important element of the conservation area.
- Although those buildings replacing the hotels on the Promenade have to some extent provided a continuation of the line and mass of the original hotels, the designs do not reflect the local building styles or use local materials.
- There are at least four buildings in Port Erin which are currently empty. There is the potential that these buildings will fall into a state of disrepair.
- Street furniture on Athol Park is particularly obtrusive.
- There has been a gradual loss of historic features in the area due to minor alterations to buildings and structures.
- The very attractive early fishing village along the seafront is somewhat "lost" on its narrow strip of land and use of this area for car parking, public toilets etc has detracted from its attractiveness.

It is recommended that:

- The conservation area should be monitored regularly going forwards and should be re-assessed and updated on a regular basis (every five years would be ideal).
- A number of buildings in the area should be registered. These are:
  - Milner's Tower
  - Falcon's Nest Hotel
  - Railway station
  - Collinson's Café
- Positive buildings in the area should be used as exemplars for future design in the area, and any planning applications for their demolition should be carefully considered whilst being mindful of the current Planning Policy toward the retention of buildings of merit within a conservation area. Positive buildings identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal are:
  - Grosvenor Hotel, Promenade

- York House, Gleneagles, Regent House, the Stanley and Aalin, Promenade
  - Marine Biological Station, Old Lifeboat Station and the Herdman Institute, Shore Road
  - Bay Hotel, Shore Road
  - Railway station
  - Collinson's Café
  - Athol Park and Glen View Terrace
  - Primrose Cottage, St Marys Road; Cozy Nook Café, Shore Cottage, Surfside, Condor House and Edmund and Margaret Christian cottage, Shore Road and Sycamore, Strand Road
  - Old Police Station
- Any proposals for the alteration or replacement of negative buildings should only be allowed where they are designed in a fashion that is more sympathetic to the area. Negative buildings identified are:
    - Milner Towers, Promenade
    - Erinville Flats, Promenade
    - Princess Towers, Promenade
    - Snaefell House, Promenade
    - Eagle Towers, Promenade
    - New Buildings, Promenade
    - Beachcomber Amusements, Shore Road
    - The new wings of the Marine Biological Station
    - Isle of Man Bank, Station Road
    - Single level shops
    - Tag Cashtal and Sea Breeze, Shore Road
- The condition of Trader Jacks is of obvious concern. It may be beneficial for the Local Authority to provide assistance in finding new occupiers for the empty buildings in the conservation area.
  - Street signage in the entrance to Athol Park from St Georges Crescent should be minimised, and replaced with street calming measures such as street narrowing.

## **Acknowledgments**

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the people who assisted us in the preparation of this work, in particular the staff at the Port Erin Commissioners Office and the Isle of Man National Library and Archives, who set aside considerable amounts of time to help us locate documentation relevant to the project.

# **PART ONE – CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

## **1 Introduction**

### ***1.1 Background***

This report was prepared in 2008/09 by AOC Archaeology Group and Costain Heritage on behalf of the Department of the Local Government and the Environment (DLGE). DLGE has proposed the designation of a new conservation area in the seaside town of Port Erin.

The purpose of this appraisal is to provide an analysis of the proposed conservation area as a background to the designation. It will also seek to refine the original proposal and amend where necessary to create a coherent and workable conservation area.

This report has been prepared on the basis of the brief for the work issued by DLGE, in accordance with English Heritage guidelines<sup>1</sup> for the preparation of Conservation area appraisals, and in association with the Town and Country Planning Act, 1999 (relevant sections of which have been reproduced in Appendix 1) and the Port Erin Local Plan and Written Statement, 1990.

### ***1.2 Planning policy context***

Conservation Areas are governed by the Town and Country Planning Act<sup>2</sup>, which defines them as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Section 18 of the Act requires DLGE to determine which parts of the Island are areas of special architectural or historic interest, to consult with relevant local authorities and to publish the details of the conservation area.

The Policy and Guidance Notes for the Conservation of the Historic Environment of the Isle of Man Planning Policy Statement 1/01<sup>3</sup> sets out the Government policy in terms of conservation areas and registered buildings.

The Port Erin Local Plan<sup>4</sup> sets out the local policies for conservation in Port Erin: Policy 9.6 details that 'discretion will be used in relation to the use of registered buildings in order to ensure their continued use'.

In addition, the plan also details four zones of interest (policy 9.5):

- St Catherine's Terrace and the Promenade;
- Shore Road;
- Section of St Mary's Road; and
- Sections of Bradda East and Bradda West.

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<sup>1</sup> English Heritage, 2006

<sup>2</sup> The Town and Country Planning Act, 1999

<sup>3</sup> DLGE, Planning Policy Statement 10/1

<sup>4</sup> DLGE, Port Erin Local Plan and Written Statement, 1990

And advises that maintenance or refurbishment is encouraged in these areas, particularly at the upper levels, and mixed use will be permitted where appropriate.

Policy 9.7 states that although no conservation area exists in Port Erin, special attention should be paid to alterations and replacement buildings in the zones of interest which might affect the general environment.

Furthermore, the plan specifies (section 4) that alternative uses for hotels no longer in tourist use must be identified in order to maintain the fabric of the buildings, and uses employed should recognise the characteristics of the buildings. Wherever possible, it states that the buildings should be retained as hotels, but residential use would be an alternative option.

### ***1.3 Conservation area boundary***

As noted above, DLGE has proposed a provisional area for the conservation area.

As part of our work on the conservation area appraisal we have reviewed this area to ensure that it is of special architectural or historic interest. We have concluded that the area should be altered as not all of it is suitable for inclusion, while we believe that other areas should be added.

Suggested alterations are detailed below.

The original area includes a number of buildings which we believe should be excluded from the conservation area. These are:

- Beachmount and Highcliffe off Darrag; believed to date from the early 1900s, although attractive, and with excellent views over Port Erin Bay, these buildings are not of sufficient historical interest to be included in the conservation area.
- Buildings on Darrag; although attractive and with good views over the bay, these buildings largely date from the 1930s and again are not of sufficient historical interest.
- Ballafurt Close; an estate built in the 1970s. This estate is of no interest from an historic or architectural perspective and as such should not be included. It is noted that the estate is all single storey and as such conservation of this aspect could be beneficial in respect of views from buildings above the Close, however, it is anticipated that even two storey buildings in this location would not obstruct views from Darrag towards the sea.
- The Southern end of Ballafurt Road, between the two entrances to St George's Crescent; this area contains some late 1800s villas on the West side, and houses dating from 1924 to 1957 on the East side. None of these houses are of particular historic significance, and a number of the houses on the East side are unattractive.
- St George's Crescent; this road consists of attractive villas dating from 1908 to 1950. However, the buildings are not of significant historical interest.
- Breagle Glen café, tennis courts and bowling green; although an important green space in Port Erin, this is not an area of any particular merit. In addition, with the exclusion of the above areas from the conservation plan, this area no longer connects buildings in the conservation area, and it would not make sense to include it.



- Buildings at the Eastern end of Athol Park; there are a number of buildings in this area built in the 1930s, 1950s and 1960s which have little, if any, architectural merit.
- Buildings in Droghadfayle Road and Droghadfayle Park; the buildings included in the original conservation area in these roads are villas dating to the early 1900s and 1910s. Although attractive, these buildings are not deemed to be of sufficient historical interest for inclusion in the conservation area.
- Boarding houses on the North side of Church Road; these buildings were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but have no particular historical importance.
- Victoria Square; built in the early 1900s (with the exception of the Sunday School which was built in 1931), these building have no particular historical importance.
- Traie Meanagh baths (more recently used as a fish hatchery); the baths are of historical significance as they were an important resource for the tourism industry in Port Erin (they were used as baths from 1899<sup>5</sup> to 1981<sup>6</sup>), however, it is anticipated that it would be extremely unlikely that a new use for the structure could be found, and in its current state of dilapidation, it is an increasing danger to the public. We would propose that the baths are excluded from the conservation area, and would actually suggest that the baths should either be demolished, or allowed to continue to disintegrate. Neither option would be ideal as we anticipate that demolition is unlikely to be popular with local residents who are interested in retaining heritage features in the village, and taking no action could lead to increased potential for accidents to occur.

Although the above details the removal of a number of early 1900s buildings from the conservation area, those in the western end of Athol Park and in Glen View Terrace have been retained. This is due to the fact that these buildings form continuous lines of buildings erected in the same period.

Conversely, there are also a few areas that should be added to the conservation area. These are:

- Bradda Glen and Bradda Glen café; Bradda Glen is an attractive area of publicly accessible green space, criss-crossed with a network of distinctive terraced paths. Much of this landscape relates to the heyday of Port Erin's tourist industry and is still very popular with walkers and visitors. The café (known historically as 'the Hut') was built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a holiday home for the owner of the Bellevue Zoo in Manchester and was subsequently extended to form Collinson's Holiday Camp. This area should be considered for addition to the conservation area as it consists of important publicly accessible green space together with buildings and features of particular historical and architectural significance.
- Darrag hamlet; Darrag is shown on the tithe maps for the area (1840)<sup>7</sup> and so clearly existed at this date. The hamlet is also likely to be far older than this, as references to "the

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<sup>5</sup> Examiner Annual 1900

<sup>6</sup> Dearden and Hassell, 1997

<sup>7</sup> Tithe Maps, 1840

<sup>7</sup> Tithe Maps, 1840

Darrag" exist as far back at 1774<sup>8</sup>. The hamlet includes the former home of William Hoggatt, an eminent Manx artist, who lived at Yn Darrag (the former farm-house<sup>9</sup>) from 1920 to 1961<sup>7</sup>. This area should be considered for addition to the conservation area as it is historically part of Port Erin village yet retains something of its historical setting.

- Strooansnail hamlet; Strooansnail is also shown on tithe map for the area, so was in existence by 1840. In addition there are references to the hamlet from 1825<sup>10</sup>. This is also the location of Primrose Cottage, the one registered building in Port Erin<sup>11</sup>. This area should also be considered for addition to the conservation area as it is part of the earlier settlement pattern and includes Port Erin's only currently registered building.
- The former thatched cottages at north of promenade near the entrance to Bradda Glen; these buildings are shown on the title maps for Port Erin, and so existed in 1840. These buildings reflect some of the (now largely lost) traditional architecture in this part of the Island and are evocative of the town's earlier agricultural and fishing heritage. As an area of special historic interest, this area should be considered for addition to the conservation area.
- The south side of Port Erin Bay; this area incorporates the former Marine Biological station, new lifeboat house and breakwater. The breakwater was constructed in 1864<sup>12</sup>, although only a small section remains visible today after it was damaged beyond repair in a storm in 1884<sup>13</sup>. (The engine sheds to the rear of the original lifeboat station included in the original conservation area housed the narrow gauge tram used to build this breakwater). The Marine Biological Station is included in the list of registered buildings<sup>14</sup> as a proposed registered building, with the oldest part of the building dating to 1902 (although many additions have been made over the years)<sup>15</sup>, and the Art Deco lifeboat station dates to 1925<sup>16</sup> (replacing the former lifeboat station built in 1884 which is still extant and lies within the original conservation area).

This area should be considered for addition to the conservation area as it includes several historical buildings which are well preserved examples of their type and are important to the history of Port Erin; these buildings also have a relationship with other buildings already in the conservation area. In addition, the inclusion of this area will mean that the conservation area encompasses the whole the Port Erin Bay.

We note that it is unfortunate that the new conservation area is somewhat disjointed and not as 'neat' as the original area proposed, however, we anticipate that the suggested area is more appropriate as it incorporates the majority of the buildings, structures and features in Port Erin which are of special architectural or historic significance. It is also representative of the main phases of development of the town from fishing village to a thriving tourist destination. The

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<sup>8</sup> Broderick, G, 2002

<sup>9</sup> Rodgers, K, Book Two, 1986

<sup>10</sup> Broderick, G, 2002

<sup>11</sup> DLGE, Registered Buildings

<sup>12</sup> Stenning, EH, 1978

<sup>13</sup> Belchem, J, 2000

<sup>14</sup> DLGE, Registered Buildings

<sup>15</sup> Stowell, L, 1986

<sup>16</sup> RNLI

proposed area will allow current and future uses to be incorporated more harmoniously into the historic townscape

This report has been prepared on the basis of this new area.

## **2 Assessing special interest**

### ***2.1 Location and setting***

#### ***2.1.1. Location and context***

Port Erin is located in the South West of the Isle of Man, approximately 12 miles from the capital Douglas, 6 miles from Castletown and 1.5 miles from Port St Mary.

The Port Erin conservation area constitutes approximately a third of the area of Port Erin village, and is largely located along the seafront and in the historic core of the village.

According to the 2006 census, there is a population of 3,575 living in Port Erin.

There are no particularly large companies based in Port Erin, and employment is now predominantly public sector or retail.

Historically, the main industries in Port Erin were fishing, and later tourism. Both industries have left their mark on the village, particularly tourism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which resulted in the development of a number of hotels along the seafront and boarding houses in the town. As tourism has declined on the Isle of Man, so has the use of some of these buildings. While boarding houses have largely been converted into private residences and B&Bs, a number of the hotels on the Promenade have been demolished, with a few remaining hotels standing empty and unused. Clearly an important factor to be considered as part of this conservation area appraisal will be the future use of these buildings.

#### ***2.1.2. General character and plan form***

Port Erin sits on the west side of Port Erin bay. The main front of the town sits in a crescent on the low bluffs and cliffs (the Brooghs) fronting the sea. Behind this lies the main part of the town with many streets running east-west away from the sea. To the north and south the land rise steeply into hills and from the east the approach is flatter. Along this side the buildings are less dense and include suburban and light industrial spaces. The conservation area itself is generally urban in nature, although it does also include some green areas within the historic townscape.

The most significant geographical feature in the layout of the conservation area, and Port Erin in general, is the sea and its related topography; there is a band of flat land next to the seafront, but this then rises up a steep hill to a flatter area in the valley above.

The early fishing village lay on the narrow strip of land below the bluffs on the seafront. The constricted nature of this narrow shelf behind the beach means that elements of the fishing village have surprisingly survived the large-scale tourism on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historic map evidence shows that this earlier settlement was tiny and was centred around a small medieval

chapel. The layout of this fishing settlement survives along the front and along Strand Road. However, as the village developed, it was constrained both by the sea and the steep hill rising from the sea and as such the earliest expansion was probably the cluster of buildings on Strand Road which provided access from the sea to the road beyond. On the Brooghs above this earlier settlement are sited many of the large hotels (and their replacements) of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century surge in mass tourism. These are the most spectacular and dominating elements of this important stage in Port Erin's growth. There are, however also numerous boarding houses and shops in the streets behind which relate to this period of massive expansion. As well as the main buildings the cliff side paths on the front and at Bradda Glen with their wrought iron fences are important survivals of this period.

Despite being a tourist centre Port Erin remained a centre of industry. The breakwater, the harbour and the lifeboat stations are key reminders of this fact.

Several of the approach roads are lined by fine early 20<sup>th</sup> century villas, many of these are associated with the growth of the town as a retirement centre. 20<sup>th</sup> century infill of bungalows and houses has continued this eastward expansion, together with the creation of a number of more modern estates.

The history of the village is covered in more detail in the section on historic development below.

### ***2.1.3. Relationship with its surroundings***

The town has always been focussed primarily on the sea although it has a key visual relationship with the rising land on either side. At the northern end of Port Erin Bay (but outside the extent of the conservation area) is the rocky promontory of Bradda Head which overlooks both the village and the bay. Milner's Tower (built in 1871 in remembrance of William Milner, a Liverpool safe-maker who lived in the town) is located on Bradda Head and forms an important visual focal point from the village.

To the southeast of Port Erin lies the Meayll peninsula, an area made up predominantly of agricultural land or moorland. Just off the Meayll Peninsula is the Calf of Man, a small island measuring approximately 1 square mile in area.

## ***2.2 Historic development and Archaeology***

### ***2.2.1. Historic development***

#### Early Christian/Scandinavian settlement

It is likely that such an obvious site with good access to the sea was the location of early prehistoric settlements, but no trace of earlier activity is known. The earliest known development in Port Erin dates from the early Christian/Scandinavian settlement period, as it is understood that there was a keeill here (there are references to a keeill (St Catherine's Chapel) and an associated well on maps of the area from as early as 1595<sup>17</sup>). The well survives today, just above the high

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<sup>17</sup> Broderick, G, 2002

water mark on the beach, but no remains of the keeill are apparent. Most keeills on the Isle of Man date from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries<sup>18</sup> and as such, the keeill probably dated from this period. There is a local belief that the chapel marks the landing point of some early Irish missionary monk<sup>19</sup>, and as such it is possible that the keeill dates from the early Christian period in the Isle of Man, prior to the Scandinavian settlement from 800AD, although this is conjectural.

It is not clear whether the keeill was associated with any other buildings at this early stage of the village's development. It is possible that there were other structures in existence, which have either subsequently disappeared, or have been subsumed into other more recent structures without visible trace. Conversely it is also possible that the keeill was the only structure.

### Early farming and fishing village

Due to a paucity of detailed map data for Port Erin prior to 1869 (the first map to show Port Erin in any detail) it is difficult to piece together the development of the village further to the creation of the keeill.

The name 'Port Erin' (either in this or similar form) appears on maps from 1583<sup>20</sup> onwards and it seems likely therefore that there was at least some form of hamlet/village in the area from this time, if not earlier.

It is not however possible to determine how large the hamlet/village was, other than that it is likely to have had fewer buildings than were in existence in the late 1830s/1840s when guides<sup>21</sup> stated that the village consisted of about 'forty dwellings, a small Wesleyan chapel [(Actually a Primitive Methodist chapel) on Dandy Hill, opened in 1832<sup>22</sup>, but demolished circa 1973<sup>23</sup>], and a comfortable inn [White Lion in 1837, Queen's Arms in 1843 and 1846 (the site was re-used for the building of the Falcon's Nest Hotel in 1859/60 by R Cain<sup>24</sup>]' and in 1860 when there were 'only thirty-five houses'<sup>25</sup>.

The 1869 OS map shows the buildings in Port Erin located on the water's edge along the Shore Road, on Strand Road and Dandy Hill (together with some houses in the former villages of Darrag, Strooansnail and at the north end of the Promenade near the entrance to Bradda Glen). It appears reasonable to assume that the earlier buildings in the village were also located in these same areas.

The main employment in the village during this period of early development was fishing and husbandry<sup>26</sup>. It is also possible that at least some of the inhabitants of the village were involved in mining, with the North and South Bradda mines being located only a short distance away. These

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<sup>18</sup> Kinvig, RH, 1978

<sup>19</sup> Bruce, JR, 1966

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Saxton's map of 1583

<sup>21</sup> Pigot's Directory, 1837; Pigot & Slater's Directory 1843 and Slater's Directory 1846

<sup>22</sup> The Primitive Methodist Magazine, 1860

<sup>23</sup> Rodgers, K, 1986

<sup>24</sup> Cubbon, S, 1998

<sup>25</sup> The Primitive Methodist Magazine, 1860

<sup>26</sup> Pigot's Directory, 1837

<sup>26</sup> Pigot's Directory, 1837

mines have been used since prehistoric times, but with significant use from the mid 1700s to 1883 when the mines were last worked<sup>27</sup>.

### Marine Development

In light of the importance of the fishing industry in the area, some of the earliest documented development in the village relates to this trade.

Between 1864<sup>28</sup> and 1876 a breakwater was built in Port Erin Bay to create a safer harbour. (The breakwater was damaged by a storm in 1882, and destroyed beyond repair by another in 1884<sup>29</sup>. Today only a small section of the breakwater is visible above water level.) The engine sheds (and harbour master's house) housed the train used to build the breakwater and therefore date to the same period as the construction of the breakwater (they are also visible on the 1869 OS map). The lighthouse on the beach at Port Erin, adjacent to the Cozy Nook Café, was presumably also built around this time as it guides boats into the beach around the breakwater.

In 1884 the RNLI established a lifeboat station in Port Erin in built the old lifeboat station<sup>30</sup>. This is now a public toilet.

In 1902 the Marine Biological Station was built on Shore Road (this replaced the original Marine Biological Station built on the beach in front of the Royal Hotel in 1892)<sup>31</sup>.

The Raglan Pier was built in 1916<sup>32</sup>. It is assumed that the small fishermen's huts lined up in front of the engine sheds also date to this period, and replaced former fishermen's huts in the area.

The Herdman Institute was opened by Professor Herdman of the Marine Biological Station in memory of his son who was killed in the First World War. This comprised social facilities and a library for the fishermen of Port Erin. (Anecdotal evidence suggests that this building contained shops prior to its conversion to the Herdman Institute).

### Tourism

The first real expansion of the village was due to tourism. The early village (as detailed above) had one hotel in 1843/46 (the White Lion/Queen's Arms, which was later replaced by the Falcon's Nest), which had been added to by a further hotel, the Castle Hotel, by 1863<sup>33</sup>.

However, following the opening of the railway line from Douglas to Port Erin in 1874<sup>34</sup> there was considerable development in the village with the building of hotels on the Promenade in the

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<sup>27</sup> Bawden, TA, Garrad, LS, Qualtrough, JK and Scatchard, JW, 1972

<sup>28</sup> Stenning, EH, 1978

<sup>29</sup> Belchem, J, 2000

<sup>30</sup> RNLI

<sup>31</sup> Stowell, L, 1986

<sup>32</sup> Stowell, L, 1986

<sup>33</sup> Thwaites, 1863

<sup>34</sup> McNab, I, 1968

<sup>35</sup> Belcham, J, 2000

1880s<sup>35</sup> and then boarding houses further away from the sea (in particular in Athol Park and Glen View Terrace) in the 1890s and early 1900s.

In addition, a number of key buildings/features of the town were also built around this time, these include:

- Bradda Glen café (also known as 'the Hut') was built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This was later extended to form Collinson's Holiday Camp;
- St Catherine's Terrace on the Shore Road (which was built by William Milner, and let out to fishermen) in the 1870s;
- Milner's Tower built as a monument to Milner in 1871;
- The new St Catherine's Church on Church Road in 1880<sup>36</sup>;
- Traie Meanagh open air swimming pool in the 1899<sup>37</sup> (this closed in 1981<sup>38</sup>);
- Bay Hotel, built at the turn of the Century<sup>39</sup>;
- Station Hotel, which was of recent construction in 1903<sup>40</sup>;
- The new railway station in 1903<sup>41</sup> (this replaced the original simple wooden structure); and
- The Primitive Chapel on Station Road in 1903<sup>42</sup>.

#### Later expansion

Port Erin saw considerable further expansion in the 1920s in particular, but also in the 1930s, with large areas being developed for private houses, some of which are fairly sizeable buildings. These houses were generally built further back from the sea.

Of particular note in relation to development in the 1920s is St George's Crescent, which was built in the arts and crafts style.

Other significant development in this era includes Collinsons' Café on the Promenade, which also dates to the 1920s (as do the four adjacent shops) and the cinema on Church Street (which opened in 1935).

The village saw further development in the 1960s and 70s with the building of a number of estates, again even further away from the sea, together with the creation of the shopping centre and other village centre shops.

Since then, further estates (such as Ponyfields, Ballakilley and Heritage Homes in Ballahane Meadow) have also been built, together with the some limited key developments, for example the

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<sup>36</sup> Rodgers, K, Book One, 1986

<sup>37</sup> Examiner Annual, 1900

<sup>38</sup> Dearden and Hassell, 1997

<sup>39</sup> Cubbon, S, 1998

<sup>40</sup> Cubbon, S, 1998

<sup>41</sup> Macnab, I, 1968

<sup>42</sup> The Primitive Methodist Magazine, 1860

building of the Cherry Tree Hotel and the conversion of the 1909 Wesleyan Chapel in Victoria Square to the Port Erin Arts Centre in the 1980s.

### ***2.2.2. Archaeology***

A search of Manx Archaeological Survey<sup>43</sup> shows that there are no registered archaeological sites in the proposed conservation area. This does not mean however that archaeological deposits are absent from the area and the older settlement area along the seafront may be considered to have archaeological potential. The settlement pattern on this narrow strip is little altered since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and the undisturbed areas may retain features relating to earlier phases of occupation. It is highly likely that the site of the first fishing village is of considerable antiquity. Such a location with easy access to the beach and sea and a spring (the holy well) would have been attractive from the prehistoric onwards. Although there is no material evidence to support this theory, this should be borne in mind.

It is possible that there are buried remnants of St Catherine's Chapel on the waterfront, however, no remains are visible, and the exact location of the original site of the Chapel is unknown. The possible presence of an early church and perhaps associated burials or even monastic features must be considered.

The archaeology of the fishing and seafaring industry is represented by many of the older buildings along the seafront and harbour. Features such as slips, iron rings, sea defences etc are all related to this important phase in Port Erin's development. The Industrial archaeology of the area is most visible in the quarrying on Bradda Head (outside the proposed conservation area). Industrial remains such as the pier engine shed and tramway and the railway station and facilities are all significant examples of Manx industrial archaeology. These industrial sites include not only standing buildings but also many smaller features and fittings which relate directly to their use and development.

The archaeology of the tourism industry is highly visible throughout the town. This is represented not just by the large hotels and boarding houses but also by the railings, benches, shelters etc which were provided for the use of visitors. Such features are important survivals of an important stage in the town's historic development.

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<sup>43</sup> Bruce, JR, 1966



## 2.3 Spatial analysis

### 2.3.1. Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The sea is an important feature in the conservation area, creating considerable interrelationships between spaces in the area. A number of roads follow the line of the seafront (the Promenade, Shore Road and Dandy Hill) and as such, there is a natural flow of movement around the bay, linking the buildings along the bay. The only constriction to this is the point between the Promenade and Shore Road where there is a considerable change in level (and pedestrian access only).



Photo 1: Change in level between the Promenade and Shore Road

The footpaths along the Brooghs (to the seaward side of the Promenade) also run in parallel with the sea.

The conservation area also includes a number of roads running away from the sea, which therefore have an interrelationship with the sea – these are Strand Road and Station Road.

The railway station on Station Road creates a clear link between the buildings in this area and the station and railway. From here, a footpath leads through Athol Park Glen to Glen View Terrace and Athol Park providing a link through to this area.



Photo 2: Lane to Railway station between Brooklands and Glen Cairn



Photo 3: Footpath through Athol Park Glen

Athol Park and Glen View Terrace both only have houses on one side, and as such face each other over Athol Park Glen.



Photo 4: Athol Park and Glen View Terrace

### ***2.3.2. Key views and vistas***

The key views and vista from the Port Erin conservation area relate to the sea/beach and Bradda Head (in particular Milner's Tower).

The sea is clearly an important view for all of the buildings along the waterfront. In addition, it is also clearly visible from the majority of roads running away from the sea, including Strand Road and Station Road.



Photo 5: View from Shore Road



Photo 6: View from Promenade (North end)



Photo 7: View from Dandy Hill



Photo 8: View from Traie Meanash Drive

Bradda Head and Milner's Tower is visible from a number of locations in the conservation area; it is visible along the majority of the shoreline (up to the start of Bradda Glen) and also from Athol Park.



Photo 9: View along Athol Park

## ***2.4 Character analysis***

### ***2.4.1. Definition of character areas***

The conservation area falls into five different character area types. These are:

- Early settlement – the locations of the earliest buildings in Port Erin
- Marine – area associated with fishing and marine research
- Seafront hotels – area along the seafront containing hotels which were all built at approximately the same time, and are located on the Brooghs overlooking the sea
- Boarding houses – areas with boarding houses which are smaller than the seafront hotels and further in-land, but again built in a similar period
- Railway – areas associated with the railway

Broadly these areas relate to different periods in the development of the village. However, some of the areas were developed at the same time, although they have very different uses.

The make-up of the areas is also somewhat subjective in that they are made up of areas which are physically linked.

### ***2.4.2. Characterisation***

The categorisation of the conservation area into these character types are outlined below.

#### Early settlement

This character area comprises three separate areas:

- The original Port Erin Village (incorporating Dandy Hill, the cottages on Shore Road and the buildings in the block between Strand Road and Station Road including the Falcon's Nest Hotel)
- The remaining buildings of the Darrag hamlet (Shen Valley, Yn Darrag and Myrtle Cottage)
- The remaining buildings of the Strooansnail hamlet (Primrose House and Primrose Cottage) and

- The group of houses at the north of promenade near the entrance to Bradda Glen. These areas contain the oldest buildings in the Port Erin conservation area, the majority of which pre-date 1869, but may be even older.

### Marine

The Marine area is the area to the South of Port Erin Bay comprising the Marine Biological Station, the Herdman Institute, breakwater (and associated engine shed), Raglan Pier, the old and the new lifeboat stations, the Bay Hotel and some shops and private houses in the same area.

This area is the centre for marine activity in the village, partly dictated through the introduction of the Raglan Pier and the (still effectual but damaged) breakwater, both of which create a calmer sea environment in the south of the bay.

The area is particularly important in the conservation area as it demonstrates the importance of fishing to the village (it was one of the key industries for the village), and also shows the link between the village and the sea – both in terms of rescue (the lifeboat stations) and research (the marine biological station)

### Seafront hotels

The seafront hotel zone consists of the area along the Promenade where the larger hotels are (or were) located, together with associated walks (along the Brooghs and Bradda Glen).

This is perhaps the most iconic part of the conservation area, as it is clearly visible due to the stature of the buildings and their prominent location on the seafront. It also shows the importance of tourism in the village.

While a number of the hotels have been demolished in recent years in this area, they have been replaced by apartment blocks that have been designed in such a manner that they largely follow the line, height and form of the original buildings, as such providing a continuation of the 'line' of the buildings in this area.

### Boarding houses

This area consists of Athol Park, Glen View Terrace and Athol Park Glen and incorporates boarding houses built in the 1890s and early 1900s. Athol Park Glen was landscaped as a public amenity by internees in circa 1942<sup>44</sup>.

This area is of importance in the conservation area because although less impressive architecturally than the seafront hotels, these buildings also demonstrate an important part of the history of tourism in the area. In addition, nearly the whole of the area is made up of boarding houses and as such there is a consistency of style. Furthermore, it is particularly fortunate that, despite minor alterations (particularly the introduction of pvc windows), the majority of the buildings in the area remain largely unaltered externally.

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<sup>44</sup> Trustrum, DG, 1984

## Railway

This character area comprises the railway station, associated shops and hotel (the Station Hotel) and the railway line.

This area is of importance to the village both historically (the railway was first introduced in 1874<sup>45</sup>), but also as a current transport hub. Shops and a hotel are associated with the railway station.

### ***2.4.3. Qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area***

There are two key areas in the conservation area with dominant architectural styles; the buildings along the Promenade, and the boarding houses in Athol Park and Glen View Terrace.

#### Promenade

All these buildings are of approximately the same height (generally 3-5 storeys), with have largely the same roof type. In addition, they have nearly all been built with bay windows. Although a number of the original late 19<sup>th</sup> Century hotels have been demolished in this area, these have been replaced with buildings which are similar in form and bulk. This line of buildings has lost much of its historical context but the historic buildings which remain are good examples of their type and should not be developed without appropriate consideration of their significance and suitable mitigation.



Photo 10: Promenade

#### Athol Park and Glen View Terrace

The boarding houses included in the conservation area in Athol Park are nearly all of an identical design; terraced, with three storeys and a semi-hexagonal bay running the whole height of the building (the exceptions are Erin House which was built about 10 years later, which is crenulated and has a tower, and 1-3 Park Court which although relatively modern, was designed in a manner which is fairly sympathetic with the boarding houses of Athol Park). In Glen View Terrace the buildings are also nearly all the same (these are terraced, with 3 storeys and a semi-hexagonal bay on the ground and first floors), although there are also 2 houses which are semi-detached with mock timber frame detail on second floor at the front.

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<sup>45</sup> Macnab, I, 1968



Photo 11: Athol Park



Photo 12: Glen View Terrace

#### ***2.4.4. Registered buildings***

##### Registered buildings

At the current point in time, Primrose Cottage in St Mary's Road is the only registered building in Port Erin. The Marine Biological Station has also been proposed as a registered building.

As part of this report, it is recommended that a number of additional buildings in Port Erin may be suitable for registration; these include buildings outside the proposed conservation area. The buildings are:

- **Milner's Tower** – this purely decorative building which was built in 1871 as a monument to William Milner a prominent resident of the town. The building has a unique plan form as it was built in the form of a lock (because of Milner's trade). The building is a prominent feature visible from throughout this part of the Island.
- **Falcon's Nest Hotel** – Despite considerable extensions to the original building in the 1930s, this is the oldest known hotel in Port Erin, with records of the Falcon's Nest going back to 1859/60, but evidence of another inn in the building, or on the site going back to 1843<sup>46</sup>. This is a stucco-rendered building with a crenelated roof line on the older part of the building.



Photo 13: Falcon's Nest Hotel

- **Railway station** – An attractive brick building which was built in 1903 and which retains many of its original internal features (including a clock inserted into a window which can be read on both sides and the original ticket booths). The building is still used as a station, with part of the building also being used as a café.

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<sup>46</sup> Cubbon, S, 1998

- **Collinson's Café** – This building is of an iconic architectural design with an attractive domed roof and other art deco architectural features. Built in the 1920s, the building was a café, but was also used as a school and recreation area when Port Erin was used as an internment camp during World War II<sup>47</sup>. Despite modern additions and alterations to the building it retains its distinctive form and should be considered for registration.



Photo 15: Collinson's Cafe

### Unregistered buildings

In terms of unregistered buildings in the conservation area, there are a number of buildings which should be noted here as either particularly positive, or negative buildings.

Positive buildings are those which, according to the guidance used in the UK<sup>48</sup> 'make an important contribution to the character of a conservation area'. These buildings are seen as the epitome of the architecture in the area, and the design of any future development in the conservation area should mirror these buildings in preference to the negative buildings listed later in this report. In addition, it would be particularly detrimental to the conservation area if these buildings were demolished.

Positive buildings in the conservation area are:

- **Grosvenor Hotel, Promenade** – similar to the above, this building provides further evidence of the architecture of the grand hotels along the Promenade and should also be used as guidance for future development.
- **York House, Gleneagles, Regent House, the Stanley and Aalin, Promenade** – These buildings are all also located along the Promenade, but are smaller than the Grosvenor Hotel, and provide a good representation of what the boarding houses along the Promenade looked like in their heyday.
- **Marine Biological Station, Old Lifeboat Station and the Herdman Institute, Shore Road** – These are all historic buildings of importance to the village and as such their preservation is important. (Only the older parts of the Marine Biological Station are seen as positive).

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<sup>47</sup> Chappell, C, 1986

<sup>48</sup> English Heritage, 2006

- **Bay Hotel, Shore Road** – Similar to the grand hotels on the Promenade, this building provides an example of the original design of hotels in the area and can be used for guidance for future development.
- **Railway station** – Again, another building that we have recommended for registration, but a positive building as its demolition would be detrimental.
- **Collinson’s Café** – Also recommended for registration; an important historic building with an interesting architectural design, the loss of which would be detrimental.
- **Athol Park and Glen View Terrace** – As detailed in the section above ‘Qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area’ there are eight terraced buildings in each of Athol Park and Glen View Terrace of the same style. These buildings should all be seen as positive buildings in the conservation area as they demonstrate the historic style of the area which should be emulated when designing new buildings.
- **Primrose Cottage, St Marys Road; Cozy Nook Café, Shore Cottage, Surfside, Condor House and Edmund and Margaret Christian cottage, Shore Road and Sycamore, Strand Road** – These are all buildings relating to the earlier settlement of Port Erin [Primrose Cottage is also registered]. Although the actual dates of construction for these buildings are unknown, the Edmund and Margaret Christian cottage has a plaque above the front door giving a date of 1781, which may therefore be the date the building was erected. These buildings should be seen as providing a positive contribution to the area as they are the most complete examples of their type in the conservation area.



Photo 16: Surfside



Photo 17: Sycamore



Photo 18: Edward and Margaret Christiansen House



Photo 19: Shore Cottage

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Photo 20: Cozy Nook Cafe



Photo 21: Primrose House

- **Old Police Station** – The original police station; this building has an attractive projecting porch which has been filled in with art-deco style glazing. As an important heritage building, this should be preserved.



Photo 22: Old Police Station

Negative buildings are seen as those buildings which, although included in the conservation area, should on no account be used as the basis of design for future buildings. These buildings all use imported architectural styles, materials and building techniques which do not fit comfortably with the historic streetscapes. Although the 19th century hotels and boarding houses were also created using imported styles, they still made use of local materials and developed a distinctive local style which differentiates them from similar buildings elsewhere. The buildings listed below however may be regarded as rather “generic” and pay little respect to their historic setting.

Negative buildings included in the conservation area are:

- **Milner Towers, Promenade** – This building has been erected on the site of the Rest (later York House), William Milner’s house which was evident on the 1869 OS map. Milner Towers is a fairly modern building. Unfortunately, the design of Milner Towers has taken on very few of the design features of the original buildings on the Promenade; although the height of the building is equivalent with others and the windows are of similar proportions, unsympathetic balconies have been introduced (which to some extent mirror the bay windows of earlier buildings). The building does not use traditional materials or techniques and sits uncomfortably with its neighbours.



Photo 23: Milner Towers

- **Erinville Flats, Promenade** – Located next door to Milner Towers, this modern building is entirely symmetrical, and flat fronted, unlike the remaining earlier buildings on the Promenade which all have bay windows and are unsymmetrical.



Photo 24: Erinville Flats

- **Princess Towers, Promenade** – Located next to the Port Erin Royal Hotel, this building does not have any windows at the base of the building, and contrasts significantly with the nearby historic buildings.



Photo 25: Princess Towers

- **Snaefell House, Promenade** – This building is located next to Princess Towers. Again it is a modern building, which does have the advantage of following the line of the slope of the hill (like the remaining 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings). However, the building also has continental style projecting balconies, inconsistent with other buildings on the Promenade.



Photo 26: Snaefell House

- **Eagle Towers, Promenade** – Located next to St Catherine’s Church, this modern building replaced the original Eagle Hotel (detailed on 1869 OS Map). This building makes no use of local materials or styles.



Photo 27: Eagle Towers

- **New Buildings, Promenade** – There are two new buildings currently being built on the Promenade, one located between Erin Court and the Ocean Castle Hotel, and the other replacing the Bay View Hotel. We anticipate that the style of these buildings will also be inconsistent with the historic appearance of the Promenade.



Photo 28: New building between Erin Court and Ocean Castle Hotel



Photo 29: New building replacing Bay View Hotel

- **Beachcomber Amusements, Shore Road** – This is a particularly unattractive 1960s building located between the Bay Hotel and the Herdman Institute. This square and featureless concrete building is unsympathetic to the older buildings in the conservation area and detracts from the visual amenity of this area of the bay.



Photo 30: Beachcomber Amusements

- **The new wings of the Marine Biological Station** – These sections of the Marine Biological Station were erected in the 1960s and later and are unattractive and utilitarian additions to an important historic building. These should not be emulated in building design in the area.



Photo 31: Marine Biological Station

- **Isle of Man Bank, Station Road** – The Isle of Man Bank building at 7, Station Road was built in the 1970s, is unattractive and completely unsympathetic to any of the architecture in the area. As such, any future designs for buildings should not be based on this building.



Photo 32: Isle of Man Bank

- **Single level shops** – The shops at 19, 21 and 23 Station Road are single storey and fairly non-descript, as such we would suggest that these buildings be seen as negative buildings.

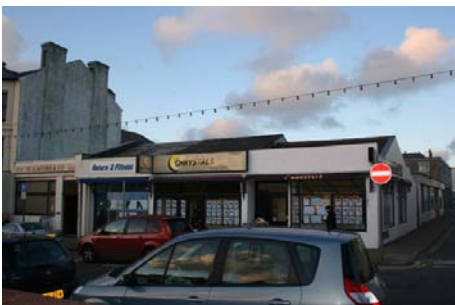


Photo 33: Single level shops

- **Tag Cashtal and Sea Breeze, Shore Road** – Both 1960s bungalows, these buildings are not sympathetic with the earlier buildings in the conservation area and should not be emulated.



Photo 34: Tag Cashtal

#### ***2.4.5. Local details***

A distinctive Manx architectural feature occurring occasionally in the conservation area is relict evidence of the use of thatch. Primrose Cottage is the only building in Port Erin which is still thatched, however, the Cozy Nook Café on Shore Road, one of the houses on Dandy Hill and one of the cottages at the entrance to Bradda Glen all have indications that they may have been thatched in the past. The Cozy Nook Café and building on Dandy Hill both have weatherings on their chimney stacks (see photo below), while the cottage near the Bradda Glen has Bwid sugganes (these are small stones projecting from the exterior walls just under the roof line, used to hold ropes to tie down the thatch).



Photo 35: Roof of Cozy Nook Café

The town retains a remarkable amount of ironwork fixtures and fittings, these range from decorative wrought and cast iron fences and balcony details on the 19<sup>th</sup> century hotels, to the many iron fences protecting the users of the cliff-side walks. Despite the survival of some very good quality ironwork, much has been lost in recent years. The loss of front gardens has contributed to this process, but fortunately Port Erin suffers little from the creation of new driveways etc. Many of the railings at Bradda Head and on the cliffs are in poor condition and should be repaired by an experienced smith using appropriate techniques.

A particularly distinctive feature of the Island, but one which is particularly notable at Port Erin, are the gilded house names painted in the light above doors of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses (particularly boarding houses). Many of these signs still exist and are usually painted in a variety of late 19<sup>th</sup> or

early 20<sup>th</sup> century sign writer's fonts. The practice seems to have died out by the 1920s but has left a distinctive and attractive local feature.

There are a number of late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century stained glass leaded windows in the conservation area, as well as on surrounding streets. These windows are usually in the top lights and are made up of flower shaped or geometric panes, in style they owe something to the Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts Movement. The similarity of a number of these windows may suggest that they were made by the same craftsman and are of a broadly similar date.

#### ***2.4.6. Building materials***

The predominant stone used for building in the Isle of Man is the heavy local grey slate, and the majority of the buildings in the conservation area are constructed of this material. Those earlier cottages remaining in the village are constructed of irregular rubble walling bonded with local mud/lime mortar and some lime rendered. Much of this lime mortar has now been replaced with non-porous cementitious mortars and renders.

The majority of boarding houses, hotels and houses from 1880s to early 1900s are constructed from slate rubble walling, almost always rendered in either cement or lime (there are also examples of decorative stucco). Some of the later buildings may also have used render-covered brick and timber<sup>49</sup>.

Public buildings from this period tended to be built of slate and are also un-rendered. Examples include St Catherine's Chapel and the engine house for the breakwater (which are both entirely slate), the old lifeboat station (which has a combination of slate, sandstone and brick) and the marine biological station (the older part of which is slate and brick, but the newer part is brick). Exceptions to this are the railway station and the Herdman Institute which are both of red brick (also un-rendered).

Buildings within the conservation area have suffered in recent years from the universal problem of the addition of upvc windows and doors. Not only are these unattractive and cause the loss of much historic fabric, they are completely sealed and can cause real problems with condensation and damp. Such windows are also likely to have a very short life span and once the (often non renewable) paint has worn off there will be problems with rust and metal decay. None of the modern windows appear to have been designed to fit harmoniously with the historic buildings apart from the most basic, and unconvincing false glazing bars.

#### ***2.4.7. Contribution made by green spaces***

The Port Erin conservation area is fortunate to include a number of green spaces. These are:

- Athol Park Glen (running from Glen View Terrace to the railway line)
- The Brooghs and
- Bradda Glen.

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<sup>49</sup> Beckerson, J, 2007

#### ***2.4.8. Intrusion or damage***

The key area for intrusion of damage to the area is the reduction of tourism in the region, which is leading to a reduced need for the historic hotels and boarding houses in the town. While this has not been an issue with the smaller boarding houses in Athol Park and Glen View Terrace, this has had and continues to have a substantial impact on the Promenade.

A number of hotels on the Promenade have already been demolished and replaced with modern flats. While these new buildings have largely been designed to fit into the line and mass of the hotels they replaced, they have no relation to local styles or materials.

Today a few of the original hotels on the Promenade remain, but the majority of these have closed down and currently sit empty. There is a distinct possibility that these hotels will also be demolished and replaced with inappropriate buildings.

#### ***2.4.9. Neutral areas***

Neutral areas are seen as being those which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Generally buildings in the conservation area which have not been referred to as either positive or negative buildings should be seen as being neutral areas.

#### ***2.4.10. Condition and buildings at risk***

There are four buildings in the conservation area which are currently unoccupied and are therefore potential buildings at risk.

- Trader Jacks' a tall, seemingly late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial building on Strand Road which has been empty for some considerable time. It is anticipated that this building is of particular risk of falling into serious disrepair (it appears that at least part of the roof to this building has already fallen in, which will lead to a considerable increase in the rate of dilapidation).
- The Marine Biological Station on Shore Road is empty and boarded up.
- The International Hotel School has been empty since the closure of the school in 2007. The building is now boarded up.

The Ocean Castle Hotel closed in 2007 and is currently empty; however, planning permission to demolish the building has recently been received.

### **3 Key issues**

As detailed above, the main problems and pressures identified in relation to the conservation area are as follows:

- The reduction in tourism in the area has led to a reduced need for the hotels on the Promenade. This has led to the demolition and replacement of a number of these buildings. The remaining original hotels in this area are an important element of the conservation area, their significance should be thoroughly assessed prior to any proposals for development. The archaeology and significance of the buildings should be used to inform any future development at the design stage.
- Several hotels on the Promenade have been replaced. Although these new buildings have to some extent provided a continuation of the line and mass of the original hotels, the designs are quite alien to the island and do not reflect the local building styles or use local materials.
- There are at least four buildings in Port Erin which are currently empty. Notwithstanding the issues detailed above in relation to the hotels on the Promenade, there is the potential that those buildings that have only relatively recently become empty will fall into a state of disrepair, and that the condition of "Trader Jacks" will rapidly worsen.
- Street furniture on Athol Park is particularly obtrusive, and not conducive to the view of the attractive boarding houses in this area.
- There has been a gradual loss of historic features due to minor alterations to buildings and structures. With the rise in use of poor quality work such as upvc windows the scale of loss has risen in recent years.
- The very attractive early fishing village is somewhat "lost" on its narrow strip of land. Use of this area for car parking, public toilets etc has detracted from the visual amenity of this beachside settlement.

## **4 Community Involvement**

Public interest and participation are viewed as being a vitally 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.



## **PART TWO – MANAGEMENT**

### **5 Management Proposals**

#### *5.1 Introduction*

##### *5.1.1. Background*

This section sets out the proposals in relation to the management of the conservation area.

Proposals are divided between generic and specific guidance. Generic guidance is information relevant to any conservation area, while the specific guidance section provides advice for the Port Erin conservation area in particular.

##### *5.1.2. Local plan*

The Southern Area Plan is currently being prepared. The Conservation Area Appraisal will act in parallel to this document; however, policies in relation to conservation detailed in the Southern Area Plan should ideally reflect the management proposals included in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

#### *5.2 Local generic guidance*

##### *5.2.1. Development control process*

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/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.

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.

## 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.

### **5.2.2. Promotion and awareness**

While the Department's Conservation Officer will be the key party in any planning applications and other matters in relation to the conservation area, the Local Authority, Port Erin Commissioners and other Government departments have an interaction with this conservation area and as such their knowledge of the new conservation area in Port Erin will be of paramount importance.

Furthermore it is of critical importance that local residents living in the conservation area are aware of the location of their property in the conservation area, the implications that this brings in terms of planning requirements, and the potential for access to grants for external building work. This can easily be communicated through written communication with each property owner, and through street signage, either the introduction of new signage on the boundaries of the conservation area, or preferably, as an addition to road signs (see the example below).



Photo 36: Example of road signage indicating conservation area

*Action: DLGE will communicate with local residents with regard to the new conservation area, and Port Erin Commissioners will introduce new street signage.*

## **5.3 Specific Actions – Port Erin conservation area**

### **5.3.1. Maintaining the special character of the conservation area**

The Port Erin conservation area is an area of particular significance. As such, it is of particular importance that any new development ensures the protection and enhancement of these features. The Conservation Area Appraisal will assist in ensuring that informed decisions are made in relation to the suitability of any development proposals.

*Action: DLGE will use the Conservation Area Appraisal to guide development proposals in the Port Erin Conservation Area and will resist applications which threaten the special character of the conservation area.*

### **5.3.2. Positive and negative buildings**

As detailed above, there are a number of positive and negative buildings in the conservation area.

It is recommended that when considering planning applications, only planning applications which emulate the design of positive buildings should be approved. In the same light, it is recommended that any proposals for the alteration or replacement of negative buildings should only be allowed where they are designed in a fashion that is more sympathetic to the area.

This guidance is particularly relevant for the Promenade, where there is an original building line, clearly visible from a large proportion of the village which is important to maintain.

### **5.3.3. Streetscape improvements**

While the importance of a home zone with a 20 mile per hour speed limit in Athol Park is recognised, there is too much street furniture at the entrance to Athol Park from St Georges Crescent. This signage should be minimised, and replaced with street calming measures such as street narrowing.

*Action: Port Erin Commissioners are encouraged to reduce the amount of signage at the entrance of Athol Park and consider the introduction of alternative street calming measures.*

### **5.3.4. Buildings in need of repair**

As detailed in the conservation area appraisal, there are four buildings in the conservation area which are currently empty, one of which, Trader Jacks, is in a serious state of disrepair.

The owner of Trader Jacks should be encouraged to carry out the appropriate repair of this building and advised of the grants scheme available within conservation areas.

Assistance in finding new occupiers for the empty buildings in the conservation area should also be provided.

*Action: DLGE in conjunction with Port Erin Commissioners to encourage property owners to properly maintain their properties.*

### **5.3.5. Registered buildings**

A number of buildings have been identified for registration through this report. These are:

- Milner's Tower
- Falcon's Nest Hotel
- Railway station
- Collinson's Café

*Action: DLGE to consider the addition of these buildings to the Protected Buildings Register.*

#### ***5.4 Monitoring and review***

The conservation area should be monitored regularly going forwards, in order to identify changes in appearance and condition in the area. This will ensure that any problems can be identified, to enable them to be dealt with promptly.

In addition, the conservation area appraisal should be re-assessed and updated on a regular basis, to ensure that it is up to date.

This would ensure that any changes to the area are picked up and related management proposals amended accordingly. It is envisaged that, unless significant alterations have been made to the area, any amendments to the appraisal would simply constitute an addendum to the document, rather than requiring a new appraisal.

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## **Glossary of relevant architectural terms**

Bwid sugganes	Small stones projecting from the exterior walls just under the roof line, used to hold ropes to tie down the thatch.
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## Criteria for assessing the contribution of buildings in the conservation area

The following is an excerpt from the Guidance on conservation area appraisals by English Heritage<sup>50</sup>:

When considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, the following questions might be asked:

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park, or a landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

In English Heritage's view, any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

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<sup>50</sup> English Heritage, 2006

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