

Civic Amenities Act, 1967.

Conservation Areas.

1. Section 1 (1) of the Civic Amenities Act, 1967, requires that every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and shall designate such areas as "Conservation Areas."
2. Prior to this legislation a local planning authority's powers in this field were limited to preservation of buildings of particular architectural or historic interest. Now, however, it is possible to secure the planned retention, by preservation and enhancement, of an area of special architectural or historic interest. Such an area may not necessarily contain individual buildings of particular merit, it is sufficient that the area as a whole has a distinctive character.
3. In considering suitable areas within the County Borough my attention has been drawn to the Jib Hill locality of Burnley Lane Head. In order to assess the present character and future potential of this area a Probe Study has been undertaken. The area may be described as extending from the Black Bull Inn to Lane Head School bounded by old Marsden Road and the disused Lane Head Quarry.

The following facts are now apparent:

(1) The area, a community of mainly older people, at present contains 33 dwellings which, with the exception of the properties known as Baldwins Hill and Plane Tree Hill, date back to early 19th century.

(2) All dwellings have mains water supply and drainage, gas and electricity and the majority are well maintained and appear to be structurally sound. All have a living room and separate kitchen or scullery and many have water closet facilities, some 50% having bathrooms.

(3) Other principal features in the area include the Black Bull Inn, The Lane Head Club (at present being rebuilt), a fried fish and chip shop of temporary construction and the Lane Head School - known to have existed prior to 1835 and with extensions in 1883. In addition a number of private garages, sheds etc. are contained in the locality.

(4) Many of the dwellings have private gardens to the front and/or rear of the properties and the area includes other open spaces and several notable trees. With the exception of Marsden Road none of the streets are adopted or made up.

(5) Four of the cottages are at present vacant and one, not in occupation as a dwelling, serves the purpose of a registered office for Fred N. Loads and Co. Ltd., horticulturalists.

(6) The area in total is included in the Programme Map of the operative Development Plan for redevelopment for Public Open Space purposes and a number of the properties are included in the Medical Officer of Health's current Slum Clearance Programme because of lack of internal amenities.

5. I am of the opinion that the character of the area determined by the appearance, layout and disposition of the buildings and the presence and influence of other features in the locality warrants conservation and enhancement for the following reasons:

(1) Although none of the properties in the area have individual architectural merit the grouping, possessing a certain charm and amenity, is of particular interest and a surviving example of early 19th century development.

(2) Burnley Lane Head is known to have existed prior to 1820, then described as a straggling hamlet with one row of cottages built with every variety of shape and frontage. The staple industry of the area at this time was hand-loom weaving. By 1844 the area existed very much as we see it today. The sand stone quarry to the rear of the dwellings was apparently in active use during this period and no doubt employment in this field supplemented the hand loom weaving industry of the locality.

The area is, therefore, of particular interest as an example of a settlement of this period, established in isolation of the main urban areas of the time and relying primarily on internal, local industry.

6. In consideration of these facts I am of the opinion that the following measures should be taken:

(1) Removal of the present Public Open Space allocation shown for the area in the Programme Map of the operative Development Plan.

(2) Re-allocation of the area as Residential in the Town Map of the operative Development Plan.

(3) Inclusion of the quarry area (now shown as White Lane) in the Programme Map of the operative Development Plan for development for Public Open Space purposes. Early enquiries indicate that the present owner is willing to open negotiations with a view to the Council acquiring the quarry and I am of the opinion that negotiations should now be commenced.

(4) Residents of properties at present included in the Medical Officer of Health's current Slum Clearance Programme be given the opportunity of bringing their dwellings up to a satisfactory standard which it is felt could be reasonably achieved.

(5) Designation of the area generally as a Conservation Area.

7. I recommend, therefore, that these measures be taken and that in Conservation the following policies be adopted.

(1) That Conservation be seen as a measure providing greater control in the area rather than preventive action.

(2) That owners and occupiers of dwellings in the area be encouraged to improve and renovate their properties in a manner in-keeping with the character of the locality.

(3) That proposals for development or re-development in the area be the subject of detailed applications which should adequately indicate the elevational appearance of the proposal in relation to neighbouring properties. Outline applications should not be accepted and proposals should have regard for the site, surroundings and neighbouring properties including colour and texture of materials. Proposals which do not meet an acceptable design standard will be refused planning permission.

(4) That further study and consideration be given to other measures which would aid the conservation of the character of the area. In this respect, however care should be taken not to adopt too rigorous an attitude of "improvement", which could destroy the existing qualities and character. Conservation and enhancement should be seen as the main aim but action by designation as an Improvement Area in accordance with the current Bill of Parliament may well be considered at a later date.

In addition a detailed survey of the existing trees in the locality should be undertaken with a view to preservation.