

BURNLEY TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA

HISTORY

The Central Area of Burnley began to develop in the 19th Century when the town's market was transferred from the Top O'Th Town (near St. Peter's Church) to the junction of St. James's Street with Manchester Road around 1800.

With the market came a host of related activities, including small businesses, industries and services making this area a focal point, around which the town centre developed.

The town centre possesses some fine, stone buildings, largely constructed at the time of Burnley's establishment and growth as a major manufacturing town (1850-1930) and contains such buildings as the Town Hall, Head Post Office, former Burnley Building Society Headquarters, Burnley Co-operative buildings, major banks, public houses and important retail buildings such as the former Lefton's premises and Burtons. A large proportion of buildings within the town centre are either Statutory or Locally Listed.

The town centre retains an attractive environment today, but due to the nature of its uses, it is under pressure for constant change which could threaten its character and possibly undermine its possible contribution to economic regeneration.

SPECIAL CHARACTER

The Conservation Area encapsulates the old part of the town centre which is the heart of the business, commercial and service community.

This area is characterised by traditional local sandstone terraced buildings with traditional roof pitches of 25-35°, constructed of either natural grey or blue slate, situated amongst larger civic buildings, also largely constructed of local sandstone. The development is quite dense with the buildings dominating the street space.

The pattern of buildings within the area is very regular due to the grid iron street pattern which they are set around. The two principal streets of the area are Manchester Road and Grimshaw Street/Hammerton Street. On the east side of Manchester Road, the grid pattern is not as well defined as that on the west due to it being eroded over the years by the addition and removal of buildings. It would however be possible to reinstate this pattern again by sympathetic infill development.

The street pattern ensures the repetition of building forms in terms of height and size. Buildings in this area are generally two and three-storeys in height with a plot width of approximately 6 metres.

This area of the town centre is very Victorian in character. The wealth of the Victorian era can be seen in the majestic buildings constructed which used ornate masonry and ashlar to illustrate the Victorian civic pride which was felt.