

Old Town Conservation Area Management Plan



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1. Introduction

The need for a Management Plan

- 1.1 The Old Town of Brighton is one of 33 conservation areas within the city of Brighton & Hove. Originally designated in 1973, it was extended in 1977. In February 2017, the Old Town Conservation Area Character Statement (CACS) was adopted by Brighton & Hove City Council. The appraisal outlines the architectural and historic interest of the area and provides an assessment of its special interest. In order to protect and enhance the aspects that make the area worthy of designation, active management is also required.
- 1.2 It is the role of the Management Plan to take forwards the challenges and opportunities identified in the appraisal and to identify means by which the special interest of the conservation area will become self-sustaining into the future. To achieve this requires a partnership between those living, working and carrying out property improvements and development in the conservation area and Brighton & Hove City Council. This management plan outlines a framework for future action, which is primarily the responsibility of the city council,
- 1.3 The document has been subject to a consultation process involving local stakeholders and will be used as a material planning consideration by Brighton & Hove City Council. The document accords with good practice guidance issued by Historic England.



Key

 Conservation Area Boundary

OLD TOWN CONSERVATION AREA

FIGURE 1. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY



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The Need for Action

- 2.1 The character of conservation areas (CAs) is rarely static and is susceptible to incremental change, such as the replacement of shopfronts, windows and doors, as well as dramatic change such as the wholesale redevelopment of a building, the formation of a new street or lane; the redevelopment of underused sites or major development within the setting of the conservation area. The pressure for redevelopment persists at all scales both within and on the fringes of the Old Town CA. Positive management is essential if such pressure for change, which can alter the very character that makes the area attractive, is to be channeled in a positive manner.
- 2.2 The proactive management of CAs gives clarity and robustness to decision making, which means that issues are more defensible in, for instance, planning appeals. Alongside the Old Town Conservation Character Statement, this management plan will be of use to the city council when determining planning applications and proposing works to the public realm, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for refurbishment or alteration of existing buildings or new development.
- 2.3 The Old Town conservation area was included on the Historic England 'at risk' register in 2016 as a result of a steady decline in its appearance, character and vitality. This management plan will form an important step in addressing that 'at risk' status.

3. Aim of the Management Plan

- 3.1 The designation of a CA is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic assets and places. CAs are living environments that, despite their history, will continue to adapt and develop.
- 3.2 Designating a CA does not mean a prohibition on development. Rather, it means the careful management of change which ensures that the character and appearance of these areas are safeguarded and enhanced for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.
- 3.3 The aim of this management plan is to complement the existing national and local planning policies and to provide further advice on the management of the Old Town conservation area. All the recommendations set out in this document are intended to preserve and/or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area without compromising the wider historic environment.

4. Community Involvement

- 4.1 In order to ensure that the management plan is a robust document, it has been important to include key stakeholders throughout its evolution. The key stakeholder group included:
 - *Council officers*
 - *Councillors*
 - *Residents*
 - *Amenity groups*
- 4.2 A steering group was involved in initial discussions on the content of the Management Plan and a review of the draft prior to the formal consultation period. The extent of the consultation has ensured that the document is robust and able to be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, the making of additional planning controls and the promotion of enhancement schemes .



Figure 2 – Brighton Town Hall within Bartholomew Square

5. Conservation Area Policy Context

5.1 The council is encouraged to prepare Management Plans for CAs in conjunction with character appraisals. The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 71), sets a statutory duty upon Local Authorities to periodically review conservation areas and to undertake proposals for their management and enhancement.

National Planning Policy

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's national planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. The policies within the NPPF are a 'material consideration', which must be taken into account when local planning authorities exercise their planning powers.

5.3 However the NPPF does not provide detail about the correct approach to managing the historic environment and therefore account has been taken of good practice guidance published by Historic England.

Local Planning Policy

5.4 The City Plan Part 1 was adopted in March 2016 and accords with the NPPF. The city's heritage is considered to be an important asset which encompasses the internationally renowned and iconic Royal Pavilion and its Estate, regionally recognised museum collections, historic parks and gardens. The city is known internationally for its extensive Regency and Victorian architecture.

5.5 Strategic Policy SO12 seeks to 'Enhance and maintain the distinctive image, character and vibrant, varied heritage and culture of the city. Strategic Policy SO16 'seeks to 'preserve and enhance the city's recognised cultural heritage and bring vacant buildings of national or local architectural or historic interest back into appropriate uses. Furthermore it ensures new developments contribute positively to their historic surroundings.'

5.6 Policy CP 15 'Heritage' sets out the intention to conserve and enhance the city's historic environment, designated heritage assets and their settings. The council has updated and reviewed its Conservation Strategy forward for future conservation area management proposals.¹

5.7 Policy SA2 'Central Brighton' sets out that new retail development should respect the different but interconnecting shopping identities of the various areas, including Old Town. It also recognises the role of small independent /local traders in maintaining the area's viability and attractiveness.

5.8 'Saved' Policies of the adopted Brighton & Hove Local Plan (2005) will be replaced by

City Plan Part 2 when adopted. Policies HE1, HE2, HE3, HE6, HE8, HE10, HE11 and HE12 seek to ensure development accords with statutory legislative duties and to proactively conserve heritage assets and, where appropriate, enhance them.

Additional Guidance

5.9 In addition to the national and local planning policy framework, a number of Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance have been produced and are relevant to the conservation area.

Old Town Conservation Area Character Statement

5.10 This document was adopted in February 2017. The appraisal considered the character of the conservation area. It is currently used as a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Document 02 'Shop front design' (2005)

5.11 The aim of this SPD is to give detailed policy guidance on the replacement of existing and the installation of new shop fronts throughout the city.

Supplementary Planning Document 07 'Advertisements' (2007)

5.12 This SPD gives detailed policy guidance on the erection, fixing or replacement of advertisements and signs throughout the city. When considering proposals for signs within conservation areas, the council will expect signs to preserve the particular appearance and character of the conservation area in question and will be guided by the published character appraisal of that area.

Supplementary Planning Document 09 'Architectural Features' (2009)

5.13 This SPD is intended to provide detailed policy guidance on the repair, restoration and enhancement of historic buildings.

¹ The Strategy for the Conservation of Brighton & Hove's Historic Built Environment (2015)

6. Special Interest of the Old Town Conservation Area

- 6.1 The Old Town Conservation Area Character Statement (2017) describes the special interest of the area. It explains its historical development from a fishing settlement and centre for an agricultural hinterland that grew into a municipality and a fashionable holiday resort in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It became more densely built up with a mixture of housing, hotels and guesthouses and, as the resort developed, a focus for entertainment venues. With its grand Town Hall it adopted the role of the 'Town Centre'.
- 6.2 The mid-to-late 19th and early 20th century saw further growth with the addition of banks, civic and religious buildings. It remained part of the expanded commercial heart of the town with its outer main streets accommodating larger shop units, many of which were redeveloped during the 20th century. Within the Old Town the dense network of streets retained the finer grain of smaller properties, which has contributed to and developed a distinctive mix of mainly independent businesses.
- 6.3 The character of the area has been influenced by social and economic boom and depression that the area has experienced and is therefore more complex than that of many areas of the city. These influences have resulted in much variation in building heights, dates, styles and building materials, which have emerged within the confines of the narrow internal streets, displaying a rhythm related to the plots of the medieval layout. This interplay has provided the area with its sense of place, identity and attachment to history.
- 6.4 There is a strong north-south grain generated by parallel streets – West Street, Middle Street, Ship Street, Black Lion Street, Market Street and East Street. This pattern is interrupted by the diagonal overlay of the later Prince Albert Street and more recently by the creation of Bartholomew Square.
- 6.5 The streets forming the edges of the area, particularly North Street, West Street and King's Road have a much more urban scale, which derives from street-widening in the 19th and 20th centuries and redevelopment with buildings on a larger scale. In contrast, the east-west connections are tertiary in scale and often no more than narrow twittens or lanes.
- 6.6 The 'Key Elements of Character' are summarised on pages 3 and 4 of the Old Town Conservation Area Character Statement. The appraisal identifies that the conservation area has a high percentage of listed buildings, locally listed buildings and those that display positive characteristics and attributes.
- 6.7 The character appraisal notes that as the commercial and retail functions of the 'Town Centre' increased, there was a notable reduction in residential uses. Some single residential dwellings remain but are in the minority. The majority of residential uses within the historic core tend to be flats above the commercial ground floor units in both historic and new developments.
- 6.8 The character appraisal provides more in-depth information regarding character areas, individual streets and buildings and the public realm. It identifies that not only are commercial pressures affecting the special interest of the area, but also the neglect of buildings through the loss of historic features, inappropriate alterations and 'repairs'.
- 6.9 There is an increasing trend of vacant buildings, including where the commercial ground floor level remains in use resulting in the upper floors of many buildings left uninhabited and unmaintained.
- 6.10 In certain parts of the conservation area, street furniture is cluttered and crowded; surfaces are tired and in need of upgrading and where repairs have been carried out to the pavements these have not always been applied in materials to match the existing, resulting in an array of forms that are visually detracting. As with many historic areas, traffic and parking management; waste management and the siting of waste receptacles as well as the activities of statutory undertakers remain issues of concern.



Figure 3 – Harbour View Hotel, Kings Road c.1850s.

7. Management Issues

7.1 All development proposals should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the Development Plan. In a conservation area some additional controls are in place for works to buildings and advertisements but generally these do not extend to single dwelling houses.

Control of development

7.2 It is essential that any development should preserve or enhance the setting of any adjacent historic building(s), streetscene, the existing topography, trees, key views, and the overall special qualities of the character area.

7.3 Although limited, there is some potential for new build schemes, whether as a result of proposals to demolish existing buildings or proposals for under-utilised sites or additions to existing buildings, including to rear elevations and roofslopes that are visible from the public domain. Where development proposals are presented, careful consideration must be given to the size, scale, urban grain, layout, design, massing, height, plot width, frontage activity, landscaping and materials in any such development. This does not dictate architectural style but does attempt to ensure that proposals respond positively to their context.

7.4 The council encourages applications for planning permission or other consents for proposals which meet these criteria and avoid:

- the demolition of any building, part of a building or structure if its loss would harm the character or appearance of the conservation area;
- development (including extension/alteration) which would be harmful to the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting; and
- development which would adversely affect or result in the loss or partial loss of important views, open spaces, trees or boundary features within the conservation area.

Heritage Assets

7.5 There is a high number of listed buildings within the conservation area², There are some key buildings that act as local landmarks and focal points, for example the Town Hall, Hippodrome, the Synagogue and the Harbour View Hotel. There are also some especially important groups such as the buildings of the former Hanningtons department store on North Street.

7.6 There is currently one listed building in Old Town that appears on the Historic England 'At Risk Register':

- Hippodrome, 52-58 Middle Street, Grade II* listed³, which has been vacant long term and remains so. It has been categorised as being 'very bad' in terms of condition and at immediate risk of further deterioration or loss of fabric, with no solution for its future use having been agreed. The building is now in new ownership and new uses for the building and wider site are being explored. The Hippodrome also sits at the top of the Theatres at Risk register, which was updated in January 2018.



Figure 4 a, b, c – The Hippodrome - 'Building at Risk'.

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/49835>

³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/395090>

- 7.7 It is important to ensure that any listed buildings that fall into disrepair are identified early so that the city council can work with the owners to find appropriate solutions. Where vacant, the council should work with owners to bring the building into a viable and sustainable use. Whilst the main responsibility falls with city council and the owner, it is advantageous that others interested in the built heritage ‘keep an eye’ on the historic fabric and report matters of concern.
- 7.8 There are three buildings on the local list of heritage assets within the Old Town: East Street/Grand Junction Road – 1930s former cinema; King’s Road – The Old Ship Hotel; and West Street – the Molly Malone PH. The whole of Old Town, apart from the seafront, lies within an Archaeological Notification Area and is known to have archaeological remains or features.

Historic Built Environment - Specific Issues

Loss of traditional built and architectural features

- 7.9 The Conservation Area Character Statement identifies the loss of traditional windows as notable within the conservation area. It acknowledged that individually these changes may appear minor but when there are multiple changes, the cumulative impact can be harmful, reducing the quality of the conservation area.
- 7.10 There are a small number of remaining single residential dwellings in the conservation area that can enjoy permitted development rights to change features such as windows and doors without any formal permission, unless listed. These rights also apply to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). However, residential flats above ground floor commercial premises have no such entitlement. Retail and commercial premises enjoy only very limited permitted development rights in conservation areas.
- 7.11 A number of changes have occurred in the past and may have acquired immunity from enforcement action. Not only do these include windows, doors, and architectural details but also the change of natural roof materials such as plain clay tile and slate to concrete or other manufactured substitutes.
- 7.12 The fact that such changes have occurred does not justify further changes or loss, but rather strengthens the need for retention and reinstatement and the potential for consideration of an Article 4 Direction for single dwellings and HMOs. Therefore, the council should seek to ensure that architectural details are retained and conserved. Where already removed, it is appreciated that historic fabric and detail has been altered or lost and the council should seek to achieve sensitive enhancement and reinstatement based upon sound evidence.



Figure 5 - Wholesale uPVC windows and bays.



Figure 6 - Side elevations in the public eye.



Figure 7 – Loss of cornice and capital white glazed Terracotta to former cinema, East Street.



Figure 8 – Shopfronts in North Street failing to respect architectural details.

7.13 The following enhancements should be encouraged as part of future development, where appropriate:

- timber windows, sash and casement
- doors including ironmongery and fanlights
- tiled / mosaic thresholds
- boundaries including walls and railings
- natural roof materials – plain clay tile or slate
- ridge tiles, decorative tiles and finials
- pavement lights, grilles etc.
- other architectural details

7.14 The loss of traditional windows, ironmongery and glazing from our older buildings poses one of the major threats to our heritage and the character of historic areas. The type and style of windows profoundly affects the appearance of buildings and they are particularly vulnerable as they are easily replaced or altered. The desire to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings encourages window replacement with inappropriate and inferior quality modern alternatives. Energy efficiency and improved insulation can be achieved by more benign methods.



Figure 9 – Recessed doorway in moulded architrave with tiled threshold.



Figure 10 – late 19th century shopfront.

7.15 Within the conservation area, historic windows should be retained whenever possible and their repair prioritised. Within the conservation area there are a variety of timber casement and vertical sliding sash windows. The design of traditional windows evolved through the early modern period and so, where repair is not possible, replacement windows should be designed to either replicate the traditional windows being replaced or be based upon a period design contemporaneous with the host building. In general, a consistent approach should be taken across a building.

Shop fronts

7.16 The Old Town conservation area retains a number of well-designed and well-maintained traditional shopfronts, the continued retention of which will be expected. However, there are a number of commercial premises that have garish and poorly designed shopfronts as well as intrusive fascias, hanging signs and canopies.



Figure 11 – Terracotta pilaster and corbel eroding but also damaged.



Figure 12 – Traditional details to shopfront.

7.17 The council will seek to work with owners, applicants and agents to encourage the replacement of poor quality frontages with traditional shopfronts and appropriately designed signage that complements the building and streetscape, particularly where listed buildings and locally listed buildings are concerned. In certain locations and premises, contemporary shopfront designs may be supported where no historic features or materials survive. Such proposals will be required to respect the existing building including bay widths, relationship with upper floors, adjacent buildings and the wider streetscene.

7.18 Changes to shop fronts and commercial premises often occur when a new business wishes to implement a corporate style or to make their business distinctive within the street scene. This normally means that the colour, finish or cladding of the shop front is changed and new signage installed which may not require planning permission or Advertisement Consent. Consideration should therefore be given to the need for an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development right to repaint a shop front in a different colour, but allowing a range of suitable colours to be used without the need for an application. It may also be prudent to consider introducing an Area of Special Advertisement Control which further reduces the 'deemed' consent provisions for fascias and hanging signs, including the size of lettering.



Figure 13 – A traditional shopfront painted burnt orange but it works.



Figure 14 – A dark colour scheme that does little to enhance Duke Street.

Canopies, blinds and umbrellas

- 7.19 Blinds and awnings can add interest and vitality to a shopping street and provide protection from sunlight but should be carefully considered as an integral element of a shop front design. Blinds that can retract into a recessed box are usually more appropriate, especially on listed buildings or within conservation areas. The colour should complement the character of the surroundings and the building. The use of stripes, patterns or bright colours will not normally be supported in Old Town.
- 7.20 Within the tight-knit confines of The Lanes canopies and blinds are generally likely to be considered inappropriate as they would restrict and obscure views of the historic buildings and are unlikely to be necessary for shading.
- 7.21 The council will seek to ensure existing historic blinds in conservation areas and on listed buildings are retained and wherever possible brought back into working order.
- 7.22 The use of large umbrellas have become more commonplace and in some locations are considered to add to the identity and vitality of the area, for example, the forecourt in East Street which is shared by a number of restaurants. There are however a number of locations where they over dominate the frontage and are visually distracting.



Figure 15 – A traditional roller blind respecting the historic environment alongside inappropriate Dutch blinds emblazoned with text.



Figure 16 – A jumble of umbrellas that works for East Street but may not be appropriate for other locations.

Advertisements including fascias and hanging signs

- 7.23 Under the deemed consent provisions of the Advertisement Regulations, commercial and retail premises with a shop window are able to display non-illuminated fascias and projecting signs, subject to meeting particular criteria. Where these criteria are met, architectural details can be being covered up or lost, for example to overly large fascias.
- 7.24 In some instances where individual units have been amalgamated, fascias extend across more than one unit, creating a visual discord that fails to respect the proportions of the building and relationship with upper floors. In many instances, box framed fascias are applied over the existing and cheap plastic materials with applied lettering are used. The council will seek to engage with owners and retailers to encourage the replacement of inappropriate fascias and signs.
- 7.25 Where the council considers that fascias, hanging signs and other commercial signage that have been displayed with Deemed Consent are causing serious injury to the amenity of the conservation area, then consideration may be given serving a Discontinuance Notice.
- 7.26 The council will take the appropriate action to secure the removal of unauthorised advertisements and signage. The display of adverts without consent is a criminal offence. In addition, the council will consider whether the Old Town conservation area should be designated as an Area of Special Advertisement Control, which would remove or reduce some deemed consent provisions, increasing the level of control.
- ### Advertisement boards (A-boards), blade feather signs and banners
- 7.27 Advertisements play an important role within the street scene, adding to the vibrancy of an area. Freestanding advertisements such as A-boards and blade feather signs can however undermine the appearance of an area, provide hazards to those with mobility issues and create street clutter. This is particularly noticeable in streets with narrow pavements. Within the Old Town conservation area there are notable A board problems in The Lanes, Duke Street, the approach to Market Street and Pool Valley and, at weekends when the road is closed, on East Street.
- 7.28 The council operates a licensing system for A-Boards on the public highway and this covers The Lanes, North Street and West Street but greater enforcement or further controls (for example over boards on private forecourts) may need to be considered.



Figure 17 – Duke Street crowded with street clutter, A-Boards in particular.



Figure 18 – The approach to Market Street also obstructed by A-Boards.

7.29 Blade feather signs are also freestanding adverts and have often been used as temporary mobile signage. However, to gain maximum visibility and exposure many retailers have been displaying this type of signage in addition to fascias, hanging signs and banners. Some are attractive in their own right but, when viewed in conjunction with the accumulation of signage, add to the visual clutter and can cause obstruction in the street.

7.30 Banners have seen an increase in presence within the Old Town conservation area and are considered to be linked with the rise in the amount of outdoor seating, dining and smoking areas. Some eating and drinking establishments have taken advantage of the fact that screens can act as additional advertisements. When added as an afterthought, the impact is not so successful and can create visual chaos and unacceptable forms of advertising paraphernalia. They can also encroach onto pavements, forcing pedestrians onto the road.

7.31 Banners, often allegedly temporary, are increasingly being attached to railings and buildings to maximise advertising potential. The resultant visual impact is often negative and can have a cluttered and harmful impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is not only unsightly but undermines the effectiveness of advertising.

7.32 Where adverts and signage such as blade feathers and banner signs are considered harmful, the city council will seek to exercise its powers under the Advertisement Regulations to require the removal of offending signs. Corporately the council will work together to remove signage that causes an obstruction and will seek to control outdoor seating areas to prevent pavements being overrun.



Figure 19 – Additional advertising attached to the existing wooden containment.

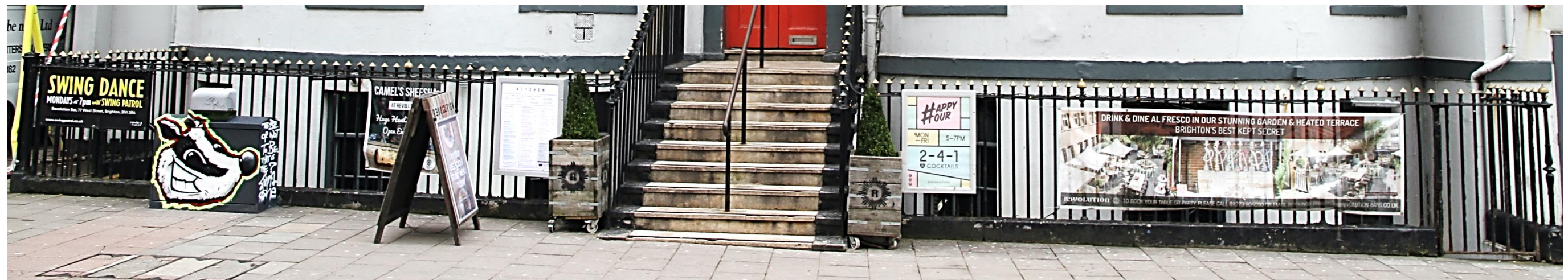


Figure 20 – Traditional railings unacceptably adorned with banners and boards.

Roller Shutters

- 7.33 Roller shutters obscure the shop front and window display when down, creating an unattractive, dead appearance to the frontage which harms the vitality of shopping streets and the seafront. They also attract graffiti and the box housings often protrude beyond the shop front.
- 7.34 There are a number of solid roller shutters appearing in Duke Street and on the seafront in particular. A number of part-open chain shutters can be seen protecting jewellery shops but still tend to have a deadening impact on the streetscene.
- 7.35 It is accepted that a number of lower seafront premises tend not to operate during the day and are predominantly night-time entertainment providers. The Seafront Strategy seeks to improve the appeal of the seafront, broaden and enhance the main tourist draw and improve the economic vibrancy with premises that provide a daytime use as opposed to remaining closed during the day.
- 7.36 In accordance with the council's local development plan policy, it will be an objective of the Management Plan to resist the introduction of solid roller shutters or those that appear dark and only partly perforated. The preference will be laminated glass or, where grilles are required, internal grilles, demountable grills and scissor expanding metal grilles. Open roller grilles may be acceptable where the box housing is concealed.



Figure 21 – A partially perforated grille appears largely solid



Figure 22 – Roller shutters deadening impact on the seafront.

Lighting on buildings

- 7.37 Although the streets of the conservation area are generally well served by street lights and lights mounted on buildings, there remains a desire by some property owners to over illuminate premises such as those with a tourist draw or night-time business including amusement arcades, night clubs and bars. There are a number of retailers who have festooned their premises with unnecessary and inappropriate lighting that is visually harmful day and night.



Figure 23 – A fascia festooned with light bulbs above an illuminated sign.

7.38 The Old Town Management Plan will support subtle lighting schemes that provide focussed 'accent' lighting and light washes to highlight and emphasise architectural features.

7.39 However, it will equally be an aim of the Old Town Management Plan to seek the general reduction in lighting to premises where fittings create clutter, planning permission and /or Advertisement Consent has not been obtained and where there is no clear need for the building to be emphasised or illuminated at night-time.

Old street signs

7.40 Two original street name plates survive in Old Town: one on number 53 Ship Street and one on 12 Meeting House Lane, which refers to Poplar Place as this lane's former name. They are cast iron framed flat-edged signs with white-on-black china letter inserts. This type of sign was used between the 1850s and 1930s. These signs must be retained and the city council will seek the reinstatement of new street name plates to this design where appropriate as part of development proposals, such as the Hannington Lane scheme. Later flat metal signs with black lettering on a white background, with the wording 'County Borough of Brighton', can be seen throughout the Old Town and are also of historic interest.

7.41 It is an objective of the Management Plan to see the maintenance and reinstatement of all historic signs within the conservation area. A programme of renovation will also be encouraged and in some instances an appropriate re-siting to ensure that views of the signs are not blocked or obstructed.

Dormers and Rooflights

7.42 New dormer windows and rooflights should generally not be located on street-facing and prominent roofscapes. Where new dormer windows and rooflights are considered appropriate, they should be in scale with the building; of a traditional form with windows of a lesser size than those to the floors below; not dominate the roofslope; and ensure that a large area of the roof remains visible. Rooflights should be flush with the roof face and normally a metal 'conservation' type rooflight will be required.



Figure 24 – A selection of street nameplates, the white ceramic lettering in cast frame being the oldest.

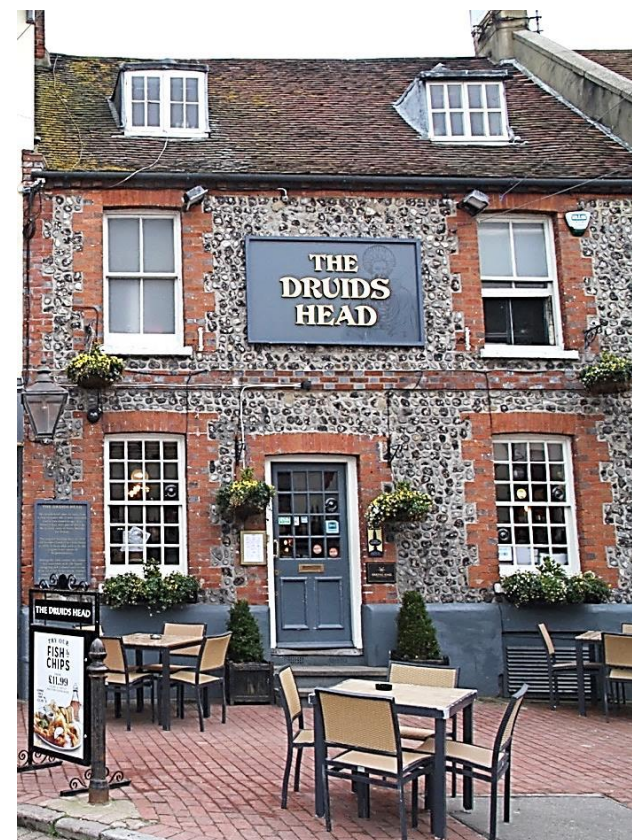


Figure 25 – Dormers with replacement windows that do not match.

Cladding, rendering or painting of walls

- 7.43 In most cases the walling material of a building is part of its character and contributes positively to the appearance of the conservation area. There may, however, be cases where the existing wall surface is unattractive or is decaying and cladding, rendering or painting may be justified. Where this is the case, cladding needs to be in a locally used material, such as tile hanging using local red clay tiles, lime render, mathematical tiling or timber weatherboarding. The painting of natural facing brickwork and flintwork is inappropriate.
- 7.44 The buildings of Old Town, where rendered, are largely traditional muted tones, predominantly variations of cream or white/off white, reflecting the original intention of render to mimic stone. However, there has been a growing tendency for the use of bright colours or very dark colours such as black or dark grey. These significantly undermine the coherence and traditional character of the area. Recently and more damagingly the properties in Duke's Lane (which date from the 1980s but mimic 19th century styles) have been painted in bright geometric patterns.
- 7.45 The council should give consideration to the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to control external decoration and in doing so limit the choice of acceptable colours to a palette of neutral, muted tones.



Repointing of brick or flint walls

- 7.46 Repointing can ruin the appearance of brick or flint walls. The purpose of the mortar in the joints is to stop rainwater penetrating into the wall and to act as a conduit for moisture trapped in the wall to escape. The mortar joint or pointing is therefore sacrificial and needs to be softer and more porous than the wall material. This is why for conservation work a lime mortar is normally expected. Mortar should fill the joints but not spread out onto the surface of the wall material, particularly flints or brick. With brick, where the arises (edges) have been worn away, the mortar face should be slightly set back. It will be essential to identify the original mortar mix and colour and to match the original pointing style, avoiding replication of harmful later repointing.
- 7.47 When repointing random and coursed cobbled flintwork the flint should remain exposed and mortar tamped / brushed back to reveal the aggregate. Raised or 'strap' pointing should be avoided as not only does it stand out and change the appearance of the wall, it can act as a shelf for rainwater.



Figure 26 a, b, c – Painted cobbles, dark painted renders to buildings.

Boundary enclosures

- 7.48 Most buildings within Old Town are hard up against the street so boundary enclosures such as walls and railings are not common. Some buildings within the conservation area do reveal signs of their former residential uses and this can include former front, side and rear gardens that have given way to accesses, service yards and forecourts. In such cases historic means of enclosure have often been altered or removed.
- 7.49 Nevertheless, there are some boundary treatments that add to the visual richness of the area as identified by the character appraisal. Traditional treatments include metal railings, flint or brick walls, rendered walls with railings or open rendered balusters. For example and of particular note are the railings to Brighton Town Hall; the railings to the seafront hotels; the railings to 77 West Street; the railings to 15-17 Ship Street; and the cobbled flint walls with rendered piers in Prince Albert Street to number 15 and to Friends Meeting House. There are also some side and rear boundary walls, often in brick or flint that are visible from the public realm. Where traditional boundaries exist, the council will seek their retention and appropriate repair.

Street surfaces

- 7.50 The city council has previously implemented improvements to the public realm along parts of the seafront (including the junctions with side streets) and in East Street, whilst private investment has funded new paving in North Street. Earlier schemes are now starting to show their age and require upgrading. This includes parts of Duke Street, East Street, Bartholomew Square and Brighton Square.
- 7.51 Where traditional Sussex red brick pavors exist, the council has sought to retain and extend these within public realm schemes in Nile Street and parts of Market Street, Brighton Place and Duke's Lane, for example. Where appropriate, the council will seek to further extend the use of brick pavors, for example in the new Hannington Lane development. Where existing pavors are in poor condition, such as in Union Street, careful matching repairs should be undertaken.
- 7.52 In other parts of the conservation area, as well as looking tired and worn, there is a confused mixture of surface materials including brick pavors, concrete blocks, concrete paving flags of different sizes (both grey and pink tones) and random patches of tarmac.
- 7.53 This inconsistency is exacerbated by the scars left by statutory undertakers who fail to reinstate surfaces to match the existing, including around inspection and service chambers and where private land to the front of premises and properties is of a different material to the adjacent pavement.

- 7.54 The use of high quality paving materials, together with the layout and jointing detail are key elements of the overall surface appearance. In key civic areas such as around the Town Hall a large format paving slab in natural stone should be used as part of a considered approach to the location and the heritage context. Where historic details such as granite kerbs, pavors, cobbles and setts, cast iron drainage covers and coalhole covers exist, they should be retained as part of the paving scheme.

a) Pavors, shingle and brick slips.



b) Wooden Block to an entrance.



c) Original cobbles.



d) Modern surfaces in East Street.



e) Traditional Pavors and brick steps.

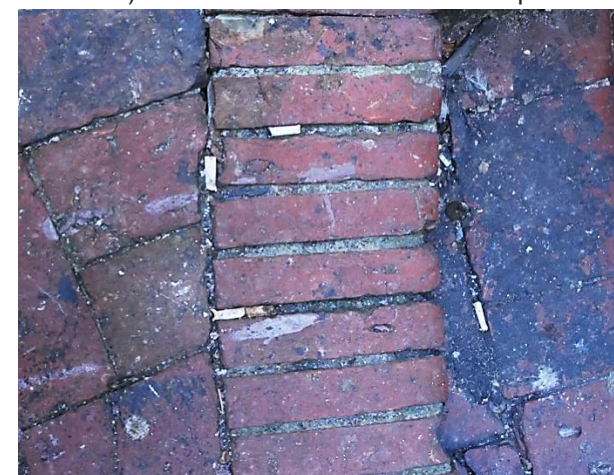


Figure 27 – Traditional paving surfacing and a modern mix introduced in the late 1980s.

7.55 Overall, the following measures should be taken forward:

- existing areas of high quality traditional paving must be protected;
- further areas of traditional paving should be added as part of new development or traffic schemes, or as other funding allows;
- uneven surfaces should be lifted with the sub-material improved and appropriate surfaces re-laid;
- consistency in the use of surface materials in individual streets and at junctions should be sought;
- red brick paviors should be the chosen material within The Lanes and any extensions to The Lanes;
- large York stone slabs or smooth grey concrete slabs should be the chosen material in the main streets;
- where yellow lines – double or single - are required, they should be narrow and primrose yellow in colour.

Equipment and installations

7.56 The presence of modern types of equipment on or around buildings, such as large aerials or satellite dishes, telecom equipment housings, extract ventilation and micro-generators, can detract from the character of the conservation area and/ or the special architectural qualities of buildings. To minimise their visual impact, they should be positioned away from public view or prominent positions where they would affect the skyline. The removal of existing fixtures cluttering front elevations is encouraged and care should be taken to repair the affected surfaces.

Waste receptacles

7.57 The high density of the Old Town conservation area, together with development pressure, the number of businesses, a growing number of flats, along with the lack of off-street space, has resulted in difficulties for the storage of waste and refuse receptacles out of sight. Unfortunately this has resulted in a proliferation of domestic and commercial bins being left on the street, often overflowing.

7.58 The council has sought to address this in respect of residential properties by introducing communal waste bins. These can, however, bring additional problems by adding to the existing mix of street paraphernalia and being targets for vandalism and graffiti.

7.59 Where new developments are proposed, the city council requires the submission of a waste management strategy which, and particularly for commercial operators, should seek that waste packaging is taken away at the same time that deliveries are made. Encouragement will be given to the provision of on-site waste management, which should reduce the amount of waste being accumulated for standard collection.

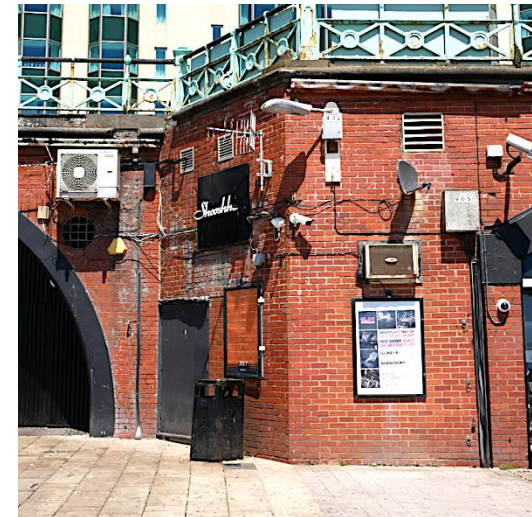


Figure 28 – A jumble of equipment on the front of a seafront premises.

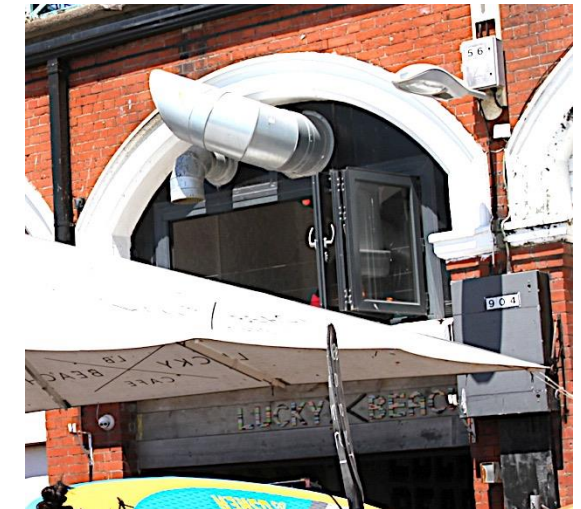


Figure 29 - Prominent extract equipment.



Figure 30 - a graffiti covered utilities cabinet.



Figure 31 – An ugly equipment cabinet in North Street.

7.60 Overall there needs to be a considered and coordinated approach to refuse and recycling (both domestic and commercial) within the conservation area to ensure that waste receptacles do not clutter, obstruct or dominate the streetscene and views of key buildings.



Figure 32 - Seafront receptacle overspill.



Figure 33 - Bin clutter at the Town Hall.



Figure 34 - Congregating bins on Prince Albert Street

Street furniture

7.61 Street furniture can also add to the visual interest of the conservation area. However there needs to be a consistency of style to help create a cohesive identity for the conservation area. The city council has embarked on public enhancement schemes and where such schemes have been implemented their success is recognised through the consistency in appearance, style, use of materials and de-cluttering. Nevertheless, Old Town sees the presence of street furniture of a variety of styles and types, often excessive or redundant, and this creates an unattractive and cluttered public realm.

7.62 This concern relates to seating, bollards, litterbins, signage, electric vehicle charging points and cycle stands. It also relates to the proprietors and owners of eating and drinking establishments, as well as hotels, who have demarcated their frontages and to areas that have been licensed for outdoor seating. The lack of consistency is particularly noticeable along the seafront, in Duke Street and Market Street.

7.63 A comprehensive rationalisation of street furniture, including the standard heritage finger posts and the more recent way finding totem signage is desirable. A coordinated review should be undertaken of the existing street furniture to identify redundancy and excess. Actions to follow should seek to reduce the clutter and improve movement for pedestrians, which is a particular concern where pavements are narrow.



Figure 35 - Clutter at the entrance to Bartholomew Square.



Figure 36 - Taking over the pavement.



Figure 37 – Poorly located totem sign.



Figures 40 - 43 – Historic lighting variations.



Figure 38 – Redundant rail post.



Figure 39 – Bollards multiplied.

Car parks

- 7.65 The main car parks within the conservation areas are out of sight, concealed below ground or contained within high walls or to the rear of buildings and accessed via historic carriage entrances.
- 7.66 There are however some car parking and commercial and service areas that create a disjoint in the character and appearance of the streetscene. These areas would benefit from enhancement through environmental improvements and in some cases, redevelopment. These are notably the Hippodrome car park and on the adjoining land between 47 Middle Street and 22 Ship Street. In the case of the Hippodrome car park, any development must not prejudice the appropriate future reuse and servicing of the Hippodrome itself.

Trees

- 7.67 Trees within the public highway are under the control of the council and therefore safeguarded in conservation areas. Trees elsewhere benefit from protection; six weeks prior notification needs to be served of the intention to carry out work to a tree with a diameter 75mm or more at 1.5m above ground level.
- 7.68 There are generally few trees within Old Town and, due to underground vaults and services; there is limited opportunity for more on-street tree planting. Where trees do exist, they make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, such as the large fig tree in Ship Street Gardens. Other trees are present and noticeable within the grounds of the Friends Meeting House, in Duke Street and on East Street. New container planted trees placed along North Street are yet to mature but are already having a greening effect and improve the appearance of the street.

7.64 Streets are generally well served by street lighting, with street columns and lanterns attached to buildings. There are locally listed 'Bleeco' lampposts in East Street (four) and Middle Street (two). The 'historic' Windsor lanterns are replicas rather than originals but still add to the visual richness of the conservation area. However there are locations where there are a variety of lampposts and lanterns which, and when in close proximity to each other, are visually jarring. Wall mounted lanterns – original and replicas - are present in the conservation area due to the narrow pavements but are often competing with security cameras, alarm boxes and other paraphernalia. Although there is a place for more modern lighting, the Old Town conservation area Management Plan will aid the retention of both original and replica historic lanterns in the area. The siting of any new lighting will need careful consideration.

7.69 The council will seek to increase the greening of streets in Old Town where possible through public realm schemes and environmental improvements where streets offer the space to accommodate them, either planted directly into the ground or in suitably sized containers. A priority for this should be in Middle Street around the primary school.

Graffiti

7.70 Graffiti can significantly undermine the quality of the environment. It has been noted within various parts of Old Town, including on buildings, particularly side walls, along twittens and on street furniture. Often the worst occurrences are in areas where there are vacant buildings or where there is little natural surveillance. Co-operation between property owners, businesses, the council and the Police will be necessary to help to reduce and reverse the blight. Middle Street in particular is badly affected.

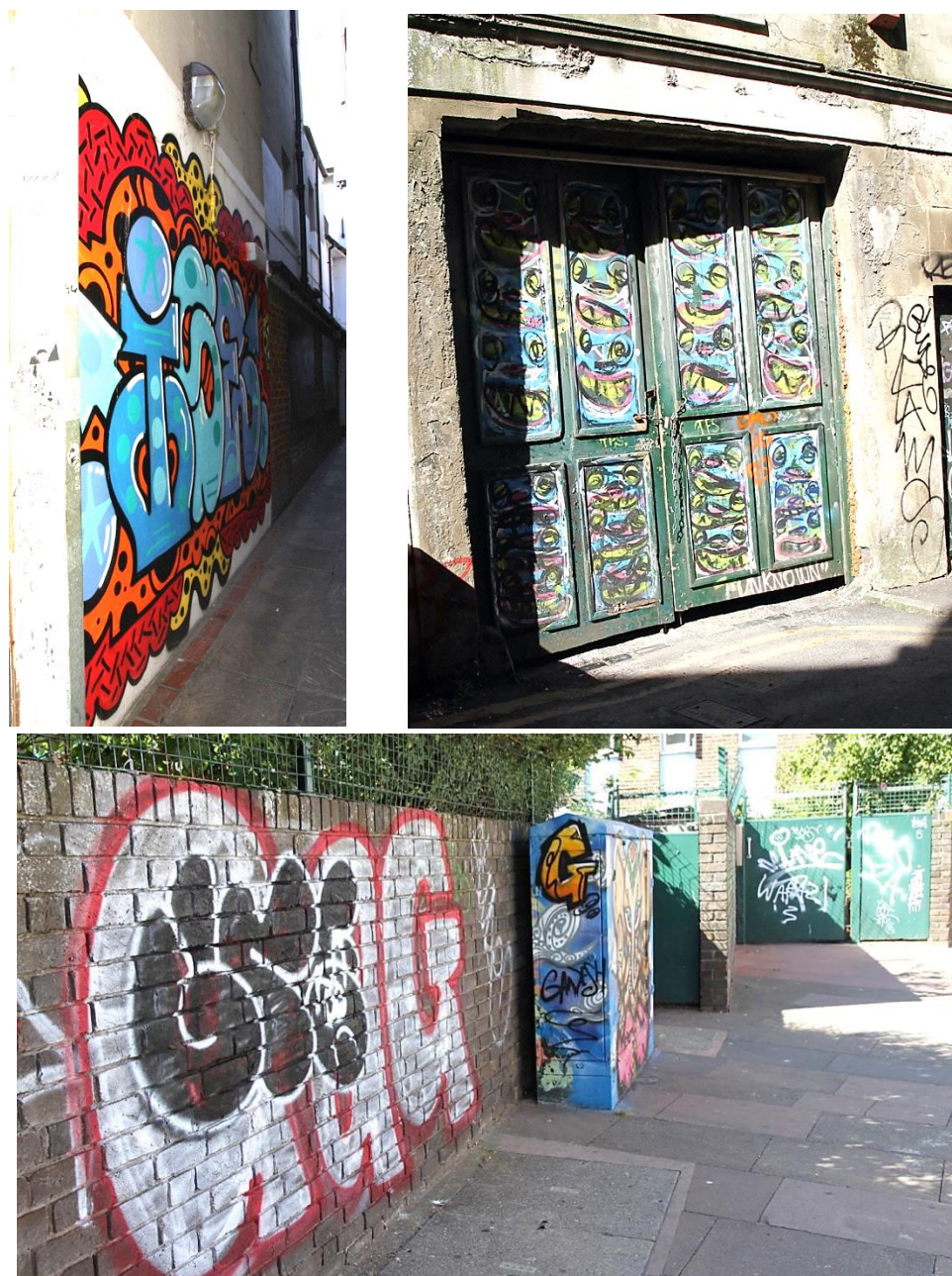


Figure 44 - Graffiti in a) Ship Street, b) Middle Street and c) South Street.

Vacant buildings and sites

7.71 The Hippodrome in Middle Street (together with Hippodrome House) is a vacant listed building at risk. Together with land to the north of it and the car park to the east, it is the single most significant vacant building or site within the Old Town and is the key to revitalising Middle Street and the wider Old Town area.

7.72 The council will expect any acceptable scheme for the site to fully restore the Hippodrome for a use that retains the auditorium as a single open volume capable of maintaining a performance function, together with the conservation of the other front and back of house spaces (including the foyer and Hippodrome House) that contribute greatly to its significance and which enable its appropriate reuse. The adjoining land offers the opportunity for new development that would partially fill the gaps on Middle Street and Ship Street and enhance those street scenes through development, for a mix of uses, of sympathetic scale and massing. Such development must not, however, prejudice the appropriate reuse and future servicing of the Hippodrome itself. The centre of the site adjacent to the fly tower may potentially accommodate greater height than the street frontages but must be mindful of longer views. The view eastwards from Boyce's Street is of particular importance as Hippodrome House terminates this view in an attractive manner. The building frontage to Middle Street should be carefully restored in accordance with the available historic drawings.

7.73 If ongoing discussions on the future of the Hippodrome site do not make positive progress within a reasonable timeframe, the council should consider the option of producing a planning brief for the site with clear guidance on how it could be acceptably developed in order to secure the reuse and restoration of the listed building.

7.74 The other key vacant building on Middle Street is the grade II* listed Synagogue, which is vulnerable to being declared 'at risk'. It is rarely used and the adjoining rabbi's house is also now vacant. This lack of use results in a dead street frontage and lack of footfall, whilst the sumptuous interior of the building could be an attraction in its own right. Every effort should be made to bring the Synagogue, and rabbi's house, back into a viable and sympathetic use consistent with its significance

7.75 Also with a frontage to Middle Street, the vacant former nightclub site running from number 78 West Street and 7/8 Middle Street has permission for redevelopment and, if implemented, would greatly enhance the street scene and replace dead frontage on both streets.

7.76 Planning Permission has also been granted for the development of the site known as 8-12A South Street, which is currently a notable eyesore on this secondary street connecting Middle Street with West Street. If the approved development fails to proceed the council should work with the owner to find a way to unlock the potential of the site and, in the meantime, consider enforcement action to improve the visual amenity of the site.

- 7.77 Ship Street Gardens is also suffering from vacant buildings and, due to scale of this narrow twitten, the vacancy rate has had a disproportionately greater impact. The vacant listed buildings at the north-east end, and including 15 Ship Street, are understood to be in common ownership. Their vacancy has attracted graffiti and is blighting this otherwise attractive area. The council should encourage the owner to bring these buildings back into use as soon as possible and, in the meantime, should consider enforcement action to improve their appearance.
- 7.78 At the south end of East Street the vacant former public house to the ground floor of Clarendon Mansions (grade II listed) has been vacant for some time and has a negative impact on the listed building and on the wider street scene on this key corner site. Some enforcement action has been taken to improve its appearance but a long-term viable use is needed at this seafront 'gateway' to the Old Town.
- 7.79 The former Ship Street Post Office has now been largely brought back into use for a mixture of retail, restaurant and residential accommodation but the former sorting office element, known as 4 Clarence House Yard, remains vacant. Its full repair and reuse would help to animate this under-utilised lane.

Demolition

- 7.80 Within the Conservation Area, the demolition of an unlisted building or wall over a certain volume, height or length without prior planning permission is a criminal offence. There will be a strong presumption against the demolition of buildings or built features that have been identified as making a positive contribution to the appearance or character of the area. Where buildings and features have been identified as making a negative contribution demolition may be permitted, provided that the replacement building responds positively to its local context.

New development and uses

- 7.81 Opportunities for new development in and around Old Town must be considered carefully. The effect of new buildings on the historic roofline and on the setting of the conservation area, including views both into and out of it, should be particularly taken into account. New development must be sympathetic to its context in terms of its siting, scale (including height, size and massing), materials and details. It should also follow the existing pattern or grain of development, not obstruct important views and not dominate historic buildings in the vicinity. Small retail units are a key positive characteristic of the Old Town and should be protected and, where appropriate, replicated. City Plan policy also recognises the role of small independent/local traders in maintaining the area's viability and attractiveness
- 7.82 Development on backland sites is generally acceptable in principle in Old Town but should be subservient in scale to the frontage buildings and should retain open courtyard of sufficient size in relation to the plot. Historic evidence, such as mapping, and an understanding of development pattern and grain should be used to inform the scale, mass, form and footprint of any proposal. Materials should be

carefully chosen to complement the conservation area's existing palette of materials.

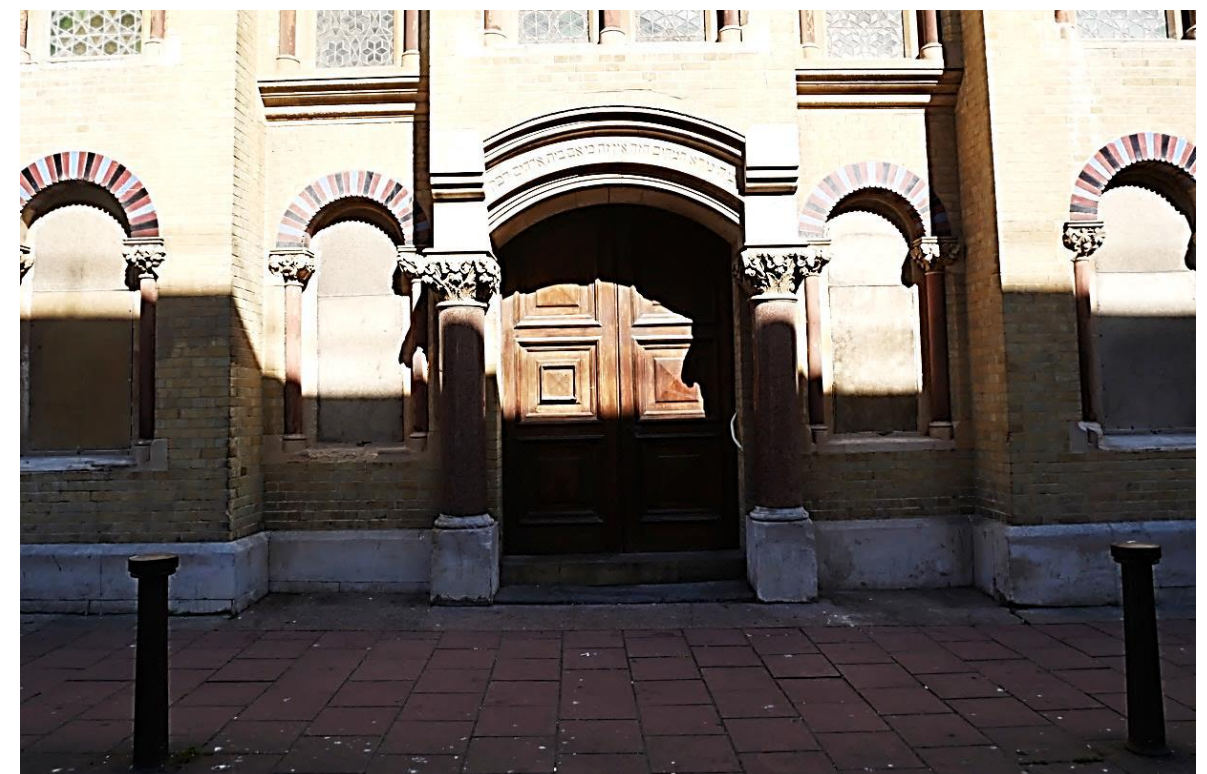


Figure 45 –Vacant Synagogue, Middle Street.



Figures 46 and 47 – Vacant shops in Ship Street Gardens and at 15 Ship Street.

7.83 In addition to the new Hannington Lane, other opportunities for achieving enhanced public realm through new development schemes should be pursued as part of the development of key sites at:

- The Hippodrome site, 51 Middle Street
- Land between 47 Middle Street and 22 Ship Street
- Land at 8-12A South Street
- Brighton Town Hall, particularly Bartholomews & Little East Street
- Clarence Yard, between North Street and Meeting House Lane

Setting and views

7.84 All development affecting the setting of the Old Town conservation area should demonstrate how the setting and medium and long distance views, into and from the conservation area, are conserved and enhanced. Key views are illustrated with the Old Town Conservation Area Character Statement. Account should also be taken of views from vantage points including those on higher ground to the valley sides, from the seafront and along the coast.

Summary of key threats:

7.85 Based on the Old Town Conservation Area Character Statement and the findings of this document, it is considered that key threats include:

- Development that is out of scale or out of context in the conservation area
- Closure of shops and increased vacancy rate
- Deadening of the street scene, e.g. from roller shutters.
- Loss of the mix of uses that forms part of the area's character through, for example, permitted change of use to residential
- Loss of small independent shops
- Loss of traditional joinery details in windows and doors and in particular shop fronts, as properties are upgraded
- Loss of traditional roof coverings, chimneys and chimneypots.
- Street clutter with mixed forms of A-boards, lighting, signage, bollards, bins, seating and cycle stands
- Proliferation of an incoherent mix of street surfaces and loss of historic paving
- Inappropriate paint colours and patterns and graffiti
- Impact on the skyline / roofscape of the conservation area from proposals for taller buildings, roof extensions and height increases
- Development outside the conservation area but affecting its setting in longer views to and from it.



Figure 48 – The seafront, Lower Promenade.



Figure 49 – Relocated kiosk on the Upper Promenade.

8. Enhancements and Public Realm Improvements

Bartholomew Square / Market Street / Bartholomews/ Little East Street

- 8.1 The area around Brighton Town Hall consists of Bartholomew Square, Bartholomews, Little East Street and the former lower section of Market Street. This area has seen significant change since the 1830s but more significantly in the 20th century with the development of the former Thistle Hotel, now the Waterfront, the civic offices and Priory House. Bartholomew Square has since become downtrodden, worn and cluttered in its appearance. It is not a hospitable environment particularly at night.
- 8.2 The relocation of some council services has resulted in less active buildings in the square and has had a deadening impact. It could be said that the introduction of the Moshimo restaurant brought a degree of activity and life to the square. Its upward extension– Skylight, referred to as a striking architectural project - has been suggested as a potential catalyst for the regeneration of Bartholomew Square. Skylight would rise up to the equivalent of seven floors in height with a suspended restaurant, visible above the rooftops.
- 8.3 On the ground and around the Town Hall, the streetscape and public realm is in need of improvement through a holistic approach to surface materials, street furniture and signage, parking and cycle stands. The area around the Town Hall now offers the opportunity for the emergence of a public realm improvement scheme that could realise an improved future for the building and how it interacts with the streets and spaces around. This should include the provision of a new civic space to Little East Street, in conjunction with plans for the Town Hall to better fulfil its potential as a civic hub and visitor attraction.
- ### Brighton Square
- 8.4 Sitting at the centre of The Lanes, Brighton Square dates from 1966 and was constructed to the plans of Fitzroy Robinson & Partners. It was regarded as a good example of how to integrate new development into historic settings and as a result received a Civic Trust Award in 1967. The sculptural fountain by James Osborne in the centre of the square is not part of the original design but was added in the 1980s. The Square sits in contrast to the historic buildings around and is a surprise encounter when walking through the narrow network of lanes. The Square itself has altered in appearance over time and lost some of its original design coherence.
- 8.5 The buildings to four sides rise to three storeys in height and comprise a mix of retail, café and restaurant uses. The buildings are now showing their age whilst the public realm space itself has become tired, with the treatment of the square appearing out-dated. A number of the retail units are currently vacant. The Square is very much in need of revitalising in order to maintain its role at the heart of The Lanes.

- 8.6 With the development of the 'new' Hannington Lane to the north providing an additional pedestrian route into the Square, there is an opportunity for greater accessibility, legibility and footfall but also a threat from greater competition for attracting businesses. Therefore, and in order to compete with the surrounding historic environment, visitor and retail experience, Brighton Square would benefit from improvement to inject it with a new lease of life, day and night.

Black Lion Street

- 8.7 With the development of the hotel and civic buildings with access to the underground car park, Black Lion Street adopted a more secondary 'service' role. The pedestrian access through to Bartholomew Square has become a haven for homeless persons, antisocial behaviour and graffiti.
- 8.8 The mixed development on the west side with restaurants to the ground floor and flats above has helped to uplift the street, not only brightening it but adding a complementary vitality both day and night. However, the public realm has suffered from damage by the parking of delivery vehicles on the footways. The east side is blighted by the entrance to the car park and a dead frontage and it would greatly benefit from a comprehensive redesign and an enhancement of the connection through to Bartholomew Square

Land to rear of Hippodrome and between 22 Ship Street and 47 Middle Street

- 8.9 As discussed at paragraphs 7.71 to 7.73 the Hippodrome occupies a key site between Middle Street and Black Lion Street. The unattractive rear section of the site and building is open to public view from Ship Street. It and the rear service and parking area to between 22 Ship Street and 47 Middle Street read as under-utilised sites. Combining the two sites could realise the optimal development potential for both and regenerate this part of the conservation area. Together they could accommodate a meaningful mixed use development, whilst safeguarding the future ongoing servicing requirements of a functioning Hippodrome. The potential benefits include:

- Improving the significance and importance of Old Town as a historic centre
- Improving the cultural and entertainment offer in the city
- Provision of active frontages to Middle Street and Ship Street to add vitality
- Providing suitable access and servicing for both sites and their buildings
- Creation of a new pedestrian 'lane' between Middle Street and Ship Street to improve east- west permeability and legibility
- Improved public realm in Middle Street and Boyce's Street

Duke Street

8.10 This is a popular through route between Churchill Square, West Street and Ship Street. It has seen a shift in its retail experience with a greater number of cafés and restaurants appearing. Although the mix of uses has added to the vitality of the street, external tables and seats for eating and drinking, the placing of A-boards and fixed planters, causes obstructions for those wishing to pass through. A review of the street should be undertaken to assess the potential to increase the space available, including the possible removal of the central brick planters but retaining the trees.

East Street

8.11 This area includes the part pedestrianised East Street and the shared forecourt space in front of the public house and restaurants. It was last upgraded in the late 1980s and has generally served its purpose. However, it is becoming tired and worn and overcrowded with signage and paraphernalia which detracts from the pleasant pedestrian experience of the street. The roots of mature trees have caused ground heave and with that, disturbed the pavements. It is now in need of a review to rationalise unnecessary clutter and, working with private landowners, to address the worn and uneven surfaces.

Ship Street

8.12 The northern end of Ship Street is closed to traffic each day from 11.00am, by the use of bollards, which has helped to make this a more welcoming ‘gateway’ to the Old Town and encourage café culture. However, this stretch of street would benefit from physical environmental improvements in order to reinforce the pedestrian experience and to enhance and animate the public realm.

Lanes and Twittens

8.13 There are some key lanes and twittens that provide east–west routes through the conservation area. They add visual interest and a distinctive experience to Old Town. Ship Street Gardens and Black Lion Lane are the most well known. However others, whilst perhaps known to the ‘local’ populace, are often forgotten:

- Twitten between East Street and Little East Street
- Pool Passage forming the boundary of the conservation area
- Twitten running between North Street and Duke Street, including Duke’s Court and Duke’s Passage (formerly Cragg’s Lane)

8.14 In some instances, former lanes and twittens have been consumed by the extension of buildings at ground floor level and the only indication of their existence is the presence of a street plate. Unfortunately these lanes and twittens have become dumping grounds, locations to a plethora of waste receptacles and antisocial behaviour. Perhaps secondary, they do offer the opportunity for connections between streets and, in some instances, the introduction of new uses to improve security and surveillance. They contain the remnants of old Brighton with walled rear gardens and yards and in some cases outbuildings, but also unseen views of the rear of buildings

and their roofscapes. These twittens and lanes also contain original historic surfaces as shown in Figures 24 a) and e).

8.15 The Old Town Management Plan will encourage a review of the lanes and twittens in order to assess their condition, function and potential upgrading to add to the richness and distinctiveness of the conservation area and its historic street pattern.

Middle Street, South Street and Boyce’s Street

8.16 Running north–south, Middle Street is a key route from the seafront and the core of the conservation area. It has connector routes running east- west. including South Street and Boyce’s Street. With the proximity to the seafront and West Street, the number of pubs, nightclubs and music venues has increased. As a result and apart from the fact that the pubs open during the day, the lower end of Middle Street and South Street are more active during night-time hours. Although these uses add to the night-time economy, they have an unfortunate deadening effect during the day. Middle Street, being relatively narrow with taller buildings to each side, is generally in shade and along with boarded up premises; vacancy rates and graffiti, there is a sense of hostility and a lack of safety with a ‘back street’ identity.

8.17 Middle Street however contains a number of important buildings including the Hippodrome and the Synagogue, long-standing traditional pubs and some quality eating establishments, as well as residential properties and a school. The day-time experience and vitality of this part of Middle Street and Boyce’s Street could be improved through better traffic management, pro-active approaches to the improvement of the public realm, removal of graffiti, better siting of waste receptacles and the promotion of the reuse of vacant buildings and upper floors above ground floor premises.

8.18 The Old Town Management Plan will therefore seek to work with owners and stakeholders to improve these streets and seek to address the negative character that has arisen. An emphasis will be placed on improving the environment around Middle Street School through work with the school; this could include more trees and greenery.

Seafront – Kings Road, Upper and Lower Promenades

8.19 The condition and quality of the Seafront can create a lasting impression and significantly influence people’s impressions. It is the showcase for the city and plays a major role in attracting business visitors to conferences and events. It attracts residents and visitors in large numbers and is the meeting place of resident and visitor, recreation, entertainment and business, both day and night-time.

8.20 The combination of the harsh corrosive seafront environment together with heritage requirements makes the challenge to resource and on-going maintenance programme challenging. However, the area has also been affected by the appearance of a number of the premises along Kings Road with garish colours to retail frontages, signage, canopies and seating paraphernalia to forecourts. Whilst the lower

promenade may be able to accommodate a more relaxed approach, the area is becoming tired, surface materials worn out and cluttered by service equipment, whilst graffiti and waste have become significant issues. This is an area where a joined up approach is required between various council service areas and the seafront traders.

9.8 However, the future improvement and management of the conservation area is above all a shared responsibility involving the various council services, the Police, property owners, traders and retailers, management agents, residents and amenity interest groups who may individually and collectively be more appropriately placed to lead certain initiatives and schemes.

9. Conclusion

Actions and monitoring

- 9.1 The council should implement a programme of pro-active enforcement work, using the range of powers available to it, to require building owners to repair and redecorate buildings which are harming local amenity or, in the case of listed buildings, are vacant and in serious disrepair. Such a programme of enforcement work should also include action on unauthorised and harmful signage or other alterations.
- 9.2 A council initiative is in place to address graffiti in the city but is limited to public property and council-owned buildings, though if graffiti is offensive it will be removed. It is however the responsibility of owners to remove graffiti on private property. The council should therefore work corporately with private property owners to encourage the prompt, active removal of graffiti and with other agencies to control its spread and re-appearance.
- 9.3 The council should consider the introduction of an Article 4 Direction to control harmful permitted development rights and should consider designating Old Town conservation area as an Area of Special Control for advertisements.
- 9.4 A further review should be undertaken, in conjunction with stakeholders and amenity groups, to review street surfaces, the condition and state of street furniture and a potential de-cluttering exercise. Priority should be given to Duke Street and East Street. Collectively, the recording of the condition of the historic environment will assist in delivering the objectives of the Management Plan.
- 9.5 The development, reuse and restoration of key vacant sites and buildings should be actively encouraged and public realm improvements should be brought forward as part of such schemes and elsewhere as identified in Part 8 of this Plan.
- 9.6 Monitoring should be carried out to check that City Plan policy on the protection of small retail units within the Lanes is being successfully implemented and that a healthy mix of uses is being retained within Old Town to ensure its future viability and attractiveness.
- 9.7 The city council should consider other potential means to assist in arresting and reversing the decline of the conservation area, including environmental improvements through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), s106 Planning Agreements, the Local Transport Plan and possibly Historic England's Heritage Action Zone scheme.