

# Conservation Strategy

2016-2021

27 January 2016

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## The purpose of the conservation strategy 2016-2021

The purpose of this document is to set out the strategic approach for the application of staffing resources towards the conservation of the historic built environment in the borough of Rossendale for 2016-2021.

### Introduction

Conservation forms an important part of the Council's statutory planning functions, contributes to the resolution of buildings at risk, the determination of planning applications, designation and management of conservation areas and the formulation of planning policies. An appreciation of conservation of the historic environment and special historic character creates high quality places, and a well-managed historic environment creates a more attractive environment for everyone.

The adoption of a conservation strategy is a way of assessing the work that must be achieved in the borough in terms of general improvement (for example buildings at risk) and statutory duties. It also provides a focus of resources based on the needs of the Council and the borough.

The five year time scale reflects that the resource allocation may shift according to the needs of the Council. The strategy outlines the most critical work to be undertaken over the next five years, and also includes ongoing activities.

### Development Control

A major part of role of the Conservation Officer is contributing to planning decisions as a consultee on all applications affecting listed buildings, conservation areas and their settings. The Conservation Officer is also Case Officer for all applications for listed building consent.

#### ACTION POINTS 2016-2021

*Provide professional guidance on the determination of heritage-related planning applications (ongoing).*

*Determine applications for listed building consent and applications for planning permission within the Bacup THI area (ongoing).*

*Attend site visits and provide follow-up guidance on listed building consent pre-*

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*application enquiries and heritage-related pre-application development proposals (ongoing).*

*Provide support for the preparation of development briefs for sites within conservation areas (ongoing).*

## **Planning Policy**

The new Local Plan being drafted will seek to update parts of the 2011 Core Strategy where it is considered appropriate, or where it is not in conformity with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

As well as considering the overall development strategy and key planning policies, this new Local Plan will allocate sites to meet Rossendale's development needs. Land which is considered necessary to protect for environmental purposes will also be designated. Development Management policies will be drafted which will be used to determine planning applications.

Other planning policy requirements include the adoption of conservation-based Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and a review of existing conservation area boundaries, conservation area appraisals, associated Article 4 Directions, and consideration of adoption of new conservation areas.

### **ACTION POINTS 2016-2021**

*Provide feedback and contribute to site allocations and conservation-related development management policies during creation of the new Local Plan. This will include consultation with Historic England on the suitability of heritage-related policies and site allocations within the new local plan.*

*Draft, consult on and adopt conservation-based SPDs to include Windows and Doors in Historic Areas, and The Conversion and Re-use of Historic Buildings. The existing Shopfront Design Guide SPD will be updated to reflect policies in the Local Plan Part 2. Provide member training to coincide with the production of the SPDs. All SPDs will become material planning considerations.*

*Review, draft and consult on Bacup conservation area appraisal, conservation area boundaries and Article 4 Direction updates, and adopt as material planning considerations.*

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*Review, draft and consult on Irwell Vale conservation area appraisal, conservation area boundaries and Article 4 Direction updates, and adopt as material planning considerations.*

*Review, draft and consult on all remaining conservation area appraisals, management plans and any appropriate boundary amendments.*

*Identify any additional areas for subsequent designation as conservation areas as appropriate and advise the Council.*

### **Bacup Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)**

The THI funding for Bacup has now been secured and the second phase (physical works) of the THI is being implemented. This will see two rows of buildings along St James Street, Bacup, refurbished with new traditional shopfronts, a new shopfront and windows at the REAL building (8 St James Square), and new shopfronts and timber windows at Pioneer Buildings, Alma Street. It is expected that the works the funding has enabled, will act as a catalyst for further investment and regeneration in the town. Several conservation-based training days have been well-attended and the training plan is ongoing.

#### **ACTION POINTS 2016-2021**

*Attend meetings and contribute to the development and success of the Bacup THI (ongoing).*

*Contribute to the design of shopfronts and refurbishment schemes (ongoing).*

*Contribute to the organising of training events (ongoing).*

*Determine all planning applications relating to THI works (ongoing).*

### **Enforcement**

There is no time limit for action against unauthorised works to a listed building or unauthorised demolition in a conservation area. Where alterations have damaged the special interest of a designated building the Council may take action when it is in the public interest to do so. Enforcement is investigated via complaint to the Council's enforcement department.

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## ACTION POINTS 2016-2021

*Attend site visits and provide conservation advice on resolutions (ongoing).*

*Assist in heritage-related planning and listed building enforcement cases and the preparation of appeal statements (ongoing).*

*Carry out a photographic survey of conservation areas protected by Article 4 Directions to assess development that has taken place to provide a time frame to any planning breaches to assist in enforcement action.*

## Heritage At Risk

The vast and rapid expansion of Rossendale as an industrial area has left a legacy of large mills and associated Non-Conformist and Church of England places of worship, many of which are statutorily designated (listed) to reflect their national architectural and historic importance. A number of these buildings are at risk due to the decline of the textile industry and church closures. Subsequent lack of investment and funding, with present low land values and the cost of refurbishment, bring little incentive to invest in the current climate. The perception of places can be affected by the appearance of at risk buildings on gateway sites, and the Council has discretionary powers to take action on the condition of such buildings.

## ACTION POINTS 2016-2021

*Advise Members on the borough's at risk assets (ongoing).*

*Monitor and take necessary action on specific at-risk cases in collaboration with colleagues and Historic England (ongoing).*

*Provide annual at-risk data for Grade II\* listed buildings and conservation areas at risk to Historic England (ongoing).*

*Monitor heritage funding opportunities and evaluate their relevance to heritage at risk (ongoing).*

*Prioritise long-term at-risk buildings and investigate assistance from Regenerate Pennine Lancashire, Historic England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and any potential funding sources (ongoing).*

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*Maintain a record of at-risk heritage assets in the borough, including non-designated heritage assets, conservation areas and listed buildings (ongoing).*

## **Archaeology**

Rossendale Borough Council has a Service Level Agreement with LCC Archaeology, a statutory consultee on certain applications involving historic areas and buildings archaeology.

### **ACTION POINT 2016-2021**

*Provide professional guidance on archaeological issues relating to the determination of planning applications on a case by case basis (ongoing via Lancashire County Council's (LCC) Archaeology service).*

## **Historic Environment Record**

The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Lancashire is held and maintained by Lancashire County's Archaeology Service. Rossendale Borough Council has a Service Level Agreement with LCC Archaeology to provide specialist archaeology information, which also includes access to the data on the HER.

### **ACTION POINT 2016-2021**

*Ensure that the Planning Control Service has access to and that potential developers are aware of the Lancashire County Historic Environment Record (ongoing).*

## **Historic Parks and Gardens**

Historic Parks and Gardens are designated by Historic England. Registered Parks and Gardens are a material planning consideration. Whitworth Cemetery, which is managed by Rossendale Borough Council, is currently the only site in the borough on the Historic England Register and is Grade II. It is significant as being one of only 106 cemeteries on the Register.

### **ACTION POINT 2016-21**

*Provide professional guidance on the heritage aspects of the management of Whitworth Cemetery on a case by case basis (ongoing).*

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## Locally Important Buildings

A list of locally important buildings and sites (a “*local list*”), is employed by Councils where the interest in the building does not merit national designation (listing) but the building holds local interest. The inclusion of a building on a local list is recognition of its local importance and contribution to the landscape and character of Rossendale. A list of locally important buildings, based on their special architectural and historic interest, becomes a material consideration in planning terms when adopted by the Council.

ACTION POINT 2016-2021

*Advise members on Locally Important Buildings (a Local List) and consult on creation and adoption of a Local List for Rossendale.*

## Recording the Historic Environment

ACTION POINT 2016-2021

*Hold any information that becomes available on the general heritage of the area and its buildings.*

## Funding

ACTION POINT 2016-2021

*Monitor heritage funding opportunities and evaluate their relevance to projects, buildings and areas within the Borough (ongoing).*

*Identify any sources of funding for conservation areas and listed buildings (ongoing).*

## Community Involvement

ACTION POINT 2016-2021

*Make contact and establish working relationships with owners and residents, appropriate local interest groups and other parties within the Borough (ongoing).*

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## Training

### ACTION POINTS 2016-2021

*Make details of external conservation and design based training events known to members as they become available (ongoing).*

*Assist with training events held by Rossendale Borough Council as part of the Bacup THI (ongoing).*

*Provide specific member training on conservation-related planning issues.*

*Provide member training to coincide with the production of the heritage-based SPDs.*

*Prepare a conservation and design based training event for all members of the Development Control Committee (accessible to all interested members and officers). This will coincide with the production of SPDs (Supplementary Planning Documents).*

## Communication and Promotion

### ACTION POINTS 2016-2021

*Upload all Council SPDs and ensure that all heritage/conservation information and guidance is up to date and available via the Council's website.*

*Ensure that if appropriate nationally organised Heritage Open Days are advertised on Council website (taking place September annually).*

*Prepare and publish guidance notes on the repair and management of listed buildings*

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