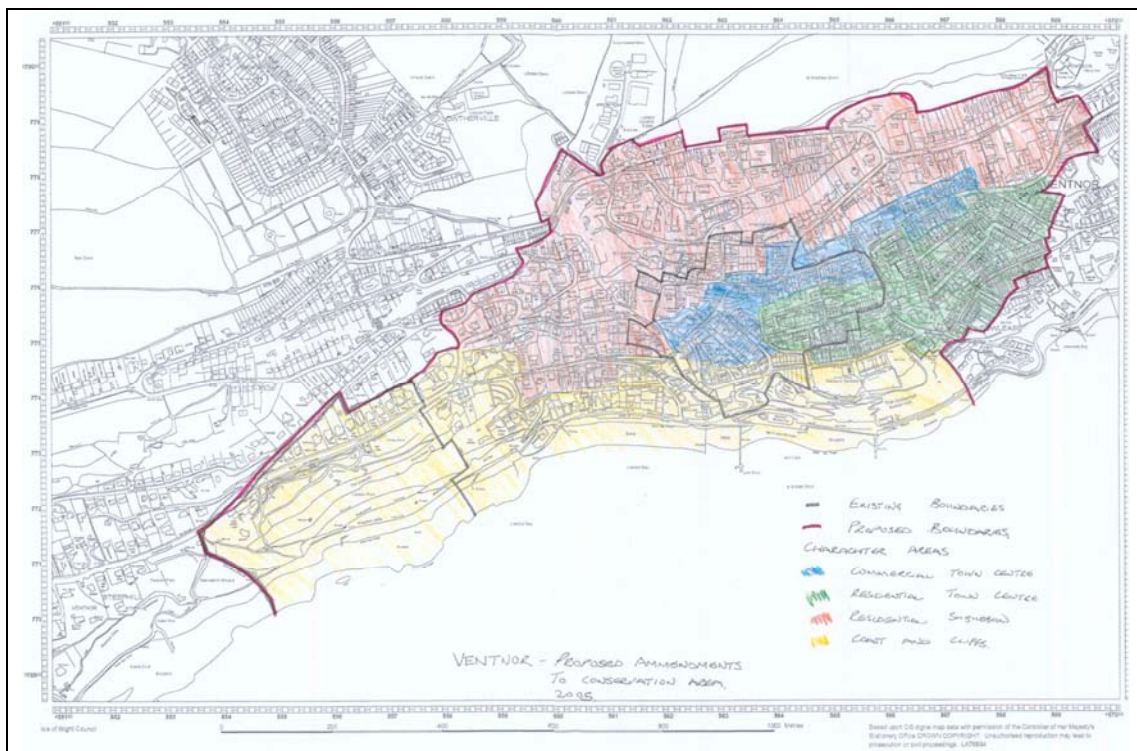


VENTNOR CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER STATEMENT

COMMERCIAL TOWN CENTRE CHARACTER AREA



The legal background

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 also requires authorities to review their areas from time to time to see if further designation or alteration to existing designations is necessary.

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) deals in some detail with the assessment and designation of conservation areas in section 4, and the adopted planning policy documents for the Island contain sections relating to development within such areas.

Character

This area is characterised by a sense of enclosure and commercial activity.

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

History of development

This area developed as the commercial centre of the town and appears in its present form on maps from the 1860s onwards. Apart from the later demolition of buildings to form the central car park it is much as originally developed. The commercial uses have contracted in recent years and properties in the peripheral parts of the High Street, Victoria Street and Spring Hill have converted to residential use.

Setting

This area is located on a fairly level plateau above the coast and cliffs to the south and below the raised residential terraces to the north. The area is centrally located within the town and is based around the High Street which comprises the east/ west core of the commercial town.

Materials

This area contains the greatest mix of materials compared with the remainder of the town. Elevations of brick, stone and render are common. Roofs are of slate or tiles, but are not a particular feature in this area, due to the height and close proximity of buildings. Some properties also have parapets which partially conceal the roofs from street level. The ground floors are dominated by shopfronts many of which retain attractive timber detailing. Windows and shopfronts are mostly of traditional painted joinery although there has been some encroachment of modern UPVC and metal replacement.

Height, mass & form

The buildings in this area are mostly linked together as terraces or small groups resulting in continuous built frontages which contrast with the more spacious development which surrounds it.

Buildings are often of three or even four stories in height particularly where changes in level allow the use of lower ground floors.

There is however considerable variety in building height which relieves the enclosure created by the taller buildings. Building frontages follow the winding street lines and variations in topography are also reflected in building form.

Typical details

Buildings retain many decorative details typical of their Victorian heritage. In particular there are many survivals of Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts with moulded pilasters projecting cornices and fascias and a wealth of decorative detail. Ventnor retains one of the most intact collections of traditional shopfronts on the Island.

Projecting bay windows with sliding sashes are also a characteristic feature of the upper floors, again many with decorative joinery. The alteration or loss of some of these is an obvious degradation of some properties.

The use of decorative brick work and stone detailing is an important element of some buildings.

Shop fascias and signs are a dominant element of the street scene and the majority have been retained as traditional painted signs.

Paving

The road surfaces are traditional tarmac and the pavements are finished with a mixture of modern concrete slabs and paviers. Some stone kerbs and gutters remain and there are some examples of old sets and cobbles in access ways and yards.

Trees and open space

There is very little open space in this area as the buildings are closely linked and generally abut the pavement.

One exception is the central car park which old maps indicate was originally occupied by frontage buildings. Whilst this detracts from the enclosed urban form it does provide a useful facility and is also used as an open market one day a week. The open character here allows a break from the enclosure of the rest of the High Street and allows views of the downs from the town centre.

Old views of the town do show some large street trees which were a significant feature. These have now mostly been lost, although some remain in reduced form in the eastern section of the High Street.

Sound and smell

Due to the enclosed nature of the streets the impact of traffic is particularly noticeable with parked and moving vehicles resulting in noise and smell. The area is protected from the sea and natural elements which are characteristic of other parts of the town.

Day and night and Seasonal

This area is busiest during the day, but retains some activity at other times by virtue of the Public Houses and restaurants.

It is considerably livelier in the summer due to an influx of visitors and there is a tendency for some premises to close in the winter.

Positive elements

- Consistency of period and overall character
- Quality of individual buildings and details
- Survival of traditional shopfronts
- Relationship between built form and topography.

Negative elements

- Poor condition and loss of original features (e.g. bay windows and traditional joinery) on some buildings.
- Installation of unsympathetic replacement shopfronts and doors and windows.
- Intrusive highway signage.
- Intrusive traffic
- Central car park.
- Some intrusive modern development has destroyed the original urban form, particularly around the High Street/ Victoria Street junction and in other individual locations where new development has not respected the existing character.

Potential for enhancement

- Possible development or environmental enhancement of central car park.
- Reinstatement of traditional details and features.
- Improve paving materials.
- Rationalise traffic and signage.
- Opportunities to replace poor buildings with more appropriate development in the longer term.

Further information please contact

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The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.

Db/nov/05

**TOWN CENTRE RESIDENTIAL
CHARACTER AREA**



The legal background

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 also requires authorities to review their areas from time to time to see if further designation or alteration to existing designations is necessary.

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) deals in some detail with the assessment and designation of conservation areas in section 4, and the adopted planning policy documents for the Island contain sections relating to development within such areas.

Character

This area is characterised by close knit residential properties in the town centre which is close to and an extension of the commercial centre.

The area is less lively than the commercial centre but still retains an urban feel. The road pattern is tight in form and follows a grid like layout.

The character is dependant on the use and activity as much as the appearance of the buildings.

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

History of development

This area developed along with the commercial centre and in places the boundaries are blurred as uses convert from commercial to residential.

Evidence from old maps indicates that the layout and built form as essentially unchanged from the 1860s.

Setting

The area comprises a continuation of the commercial urban centre and is situated above the southern coastal cliffs and below the residential areas on raised terraces to the north. It is surrounded by more spacious suburban residential and mixed use properties.

Materials

Local stone and brick are the predominant building materials with slate for the roofs. There are some properties with painted rendered elevations and also significant use of flint pebbles which is a distinctive local feature both for buildings and boundary walls. Windows and doors were originally traditional timber joinery although there have been significant incursions of UPVC replacement windows.

Height, mass & form

Buildings are predominantly of two or three stories in height with simple pitched roofs. Properties are mostly linked together as small groups or terraces although some individual buildings stand in their own gardens. Some about the pavement but small front forecourts are also common. These were originally provided with iron railings which have now almost all been lost. Some properties are located in small courts accessed between other buildings. There is a sense of surprise as these hidden elements are revealed.

Landscape is not a dominant element here but some garden trees are evident especially at corners and on rising ground where there are spaces between the buildings.

Typical details

These buildings are generally of simple form, but incorporate some attractive details typical of their Victorian construction. Combinations of materials have been used for decorative effect. Projecting bay windows are a feature of many buildings, some retaining their timber sliding sashes. Chimneys are a feature of the roofscape.

Paving

Most areas have been repaved with concrete slabs and brick paviors. Some stone kerbs and gutters remain and there are some original slabs and sets in entrances and yards. Roads are tarmac.

Trees and open space

Open space is limited in this area and generally comprises garden areas. Some of these have trees and landscaping which are important to the setting of the buildings.

Sound and smell

This area is quite active but not to the same extent as the commercial centre. Albert Street is part of the through route and traffic noise and smells are noticeable at times.

This area is relatively protected from the coast but the sea and wind are noticeable in some conditions. The presence of seagulls draws attention to the coastal location.

Positive elements

- Integrity of built form and building details.
- Use of materials especially stone, brick and flint.
- Attractive individual buildings and features.
- Unusual location and access to some properties. Sense of surprise and discovery.

Negative elements

- Loss of traditional detailing, particularly windows, doors iron railings, etc.
- Poor upkeep and maintenance of some properties.
- Loss of original street furniture and poor quality street clutter.

Potential for enhancement

- Improved maintenance of buildings and reinstatement of lost details.
- Improve and rationalise street furniture and paving.
- Potential for Article 4(2) Direction to control alterations to residential properties.

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Db/nov/05

**RESIDENTIAL SUBURBAN
CHARACTER AREA**





The legal background

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 also requires authorities to review their areas from time to time to see if further designation or alteration to existing designations is necessary.

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) deals in some detail with the assessment and designation of conservation areas in section 4, and the adopted planning policy documents for the Island contain sections relating to development within such areas.

Character

This area is characterised by substantial distinctive properties within large gardens which are set within and against the landscape of the downs and form a backdrop to the lower levels of the town.

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

History of development

This area appears to have developed concurrently with the town centre and coastal areas. Old maps indicate that the area was substantially developed between 1850 and 1890 and is little changed today. This consistency of period is one of the defining characteristics of this area and Ventnor as a whole.

Setting

This part of the town is set on the lower levels of the downs and forms a visual backdrop to the town centre and is itself seen against the wooded downs to the north.

To the east and west is later suburban development which gives way to wooded cliffs and the downs.

Materials

Natural local greensand stone is the dominant building material both for the buildings and the boundary walls, some of which are substantial. This is often combined with red and buff brick for structural and decorative purposes. The use of flint and pebbles is a local characteristic.

Slate and red/ brown clay tiles are traditional roof finishes in this area.

External painted joinery is a strong feature being used extensively for balconies and porches as well as windows bargeboards finials and other decorative elements.

Height, mass & form

Buildings are on level terraces or natural platforms between steep slopes which provide green gaps and wedges between the buildings.

Buildings comprise a mix of detached properties and small groups and terraces. Spaces between buildings and groups allow trees and landscape to dominate.

Building sizes vary considerably but most are two stories in height often with additional accommodation in roof spaces. Some of the terraces include three story buildings and other features such as gables and turrets can add to the apparent height of individual structures. Although many buildings are large in scale they are mostly broken down into different elements.

The topography allows long distant views across the town where individual buildings act as local landmarks and also obscures certain areas resulting in an element of surprise and mystery.

Typical details

The buildings include typical Victorian elements such as projecting bays and roof gables as well as smaller elements like porches, lean too and ancillary structures etc.

Roofscapes are important with varied pitches, turrets and dominant chimneys.

Paving

Roads are generally tarmac although some access roads are unmade which adds to the informal feel of some parts.

Paving is mostly recent concrete slabs although stone kerbs and gutters often remain.

There are a number of pedestrian passages and steps which retain their stone surfaces, but unfortunately these are lacking maintenance and are falling into disuse.

Trees and open space

Trees and open spaces are particularly important characteristics of this area. The buildings are viewed in their landscape setting and the topography allows unusual views and surprise vistas of the buildings and across the town.

Sound and smell

This area is generally quiet apart from the traffic on the through roads. The sound of birdsong and the smells of scent from gardens are evident in some seasons.

Positive elements

- Consistency of period and overall character.
- Relationship between buildings, trees and topography.
- Quality of individual buildings and details.
- Winding roads with stone walls and evolving views with element of surprise.
- Survival of traditional street furniture.

Negative elements

- Poor condition and loss of original details on some buildings
- Installation of unsympathetic replacement doors and windows.
- Poor condition and closure of steps and paths.

Potential for enhancement

- Encourage repair and reinstatement of traditional details.
- Repair and reinstate foot paths and steps.
- Improve paving materials based on historic precedent.
- Consider introduction of Article 4(2) Direction to improve control over alterations to buildings and boundary walls.

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Db/nov/05

**COAST AND CLIFFS
CHARACTER AREA**



The legal background

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 also requires authorities to review their areas from time to time to see if further designation or alteration to existing designations is necessary.

Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) deals in some detail with the assessment and designation of conservation areas in section 4, and the adopted planning policy documents for the Island contain sections relating to development within such areas.

Character

This area is characterised by a sense of openness with buildings dominated by the landscape. The sea is ever present and exposure to the changing weather conditions is particularly noticeable. The steep cliffs with trees provide green wedges between the developed terraces.

NB this expression of 'character' is derived from the study below.

History of development

The beach and esplanade area originally formed part of a small fishing community. Little evidence of this remains although some fishing boats still use the beach and their produce is sold from beach huts and small sheds nearby.

The area developed rapidly in the Victorian era as the benefits of the local climate were recognised.

The development mostly comprises substantial villas and terraces built on the flat ledges between levels. The Winter Gardens building in 'modern movement' style is a dominant and interesting example of the inter war period when seaside holidays were very popular.

Parts of the cliffs have been landscaped as public gardens with paths which zigzag between levels although a combination of erosion and lack of maintenance has reduced their number.

The area also includes the more formal park in Park Avenue and links with the cliff tops to the south. More recent development includes the water treatment works including a bandstand which replaces the pier which was burnt down in the 1980s and contemporary flats built on the site of the former Rex cinema in Church Street.

Setting

This area is located to the south of the downs and forms the coastal boundary of the town. The ground rises steeply to the north in a series of terraces upon which the buildings have been constructed. To the east and west the rugged Undercliff coastline continues with tree covered cliffs.

Materials

Local greensand stone is the predominant material both for buildings and boundary and retaining walls. This has been combined with other materials, particularly brick, for structural and decorative uses. Painted render or stucco is also common and has

been used on some of the more formal terraces.

Roofs are mostly of slate with red/brown plain clay tiles also being fairly common. There are also examples of pantiles or other special shapes being used for special effect.

Height, mass & form

Buildings of two or three stories in height are most common. There is however considerable variety due to changes in topography and landscape. In general the building mass is subservient to the cliffs and landscaping with some buildings acting as landmarks. The cliffs and landscape provide a series of green wedges between these levels and the buildings are therefore viewed within this landscaped setting.

A group of single storey buildings in the central section of the Esplanade allows an open feel and views of the larger buildings at the upper level.

There is a mix of detached and grouped buildings some in formal terraces.

Many buildings are local landmarks viewed at a distance across the town.

Typical details

The development is typical of its Victorian era. Many buildings are of substantial proportions and incorporate elements such as projecting bay windows, balconies and verandas which are typical of the coastal location where there are excellent views.

Roofscapes and chimneys are important elements in views across the town.

Windows are mostly of vertical proportion and many retain their original sliding sashes.

Stone walls are also important to the character of this area and there are also outcrops of rock which together with the landscaping and trees are important elements of this area.

Iron railings and some old street furniture also add to the character of the area. An original Victorian street lamp is a rare survival in Alma Road.

Paving

Paving is generally modern slabs or paviers. There are some remaining stone kerbs and gutters and some survivals of sets and cobbles in entrances and yards etc.

Trees and open space

This area is dominated by the open spaces and cliffs which provide the setting for the buildings and intrude into the more developed parts of the area. The areas immediately close to the sea and cliff edges are mostly open but trees become a more significant element inland. The topography is such that relatively large areas are not built on which has allowed large groups of trees and additional landscaping to provide breaks between the buildings.

Sound and smell

This area is most exposed to the sea and at times the wind. The impact varies with the conditions and seasons and this is an important characteristic of this area. In summer when the beach is busy this also has its own characteristics of children shouting and smells of chips and candy floss.

Day and night

This area is busiest during the day but activity continues into the evening with the hotels and pubs etc providing venues for visitors.

More noticeable however are the seasonal variations and the dramatic differences between summer holidays when crowded with visitors and the lonelier winter days when the area can be almost deserted.

The weather is always a dominate feature here.

Positive elements

- The topography and landscape which provides a dramatic setting for the buildings.
- The character and quality of individual buildings.
- Buildings forming landmarks in the local scene.
- Remaining elements of traditional street furniture.
- Continuing use as a seaside holiday venue with associated activities.

Negative elements

- Intrusive signage and public realm works and unsympathetic paving etc.
- Poor condition of some buildings and inappropriate alterations.
- Loss of some of footpaths along the coast and cliffs.

Potential for enhancement

- Coordinated and sympathetic approach to the public realm.
- Encourage sensitive repair and restoration of buildings. This could be linked with an Article 4(2) Direction to improve control of alterations to dwellings.
- Develop strategy for improving access and stabilising of cliffs paths.

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Db/nov05