



12. WHITELADIES ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

DESCRIPTION

- (1) The layout of the area is a series of irregular street grids, based on Whiteladies Road, a principal shopping street and route to the north out of the city centre. They are three district areas.
- (2) In the main the buildings run parallel to the streets, and for the most part are regularly spaced in relation to each other. The residential dwellings are generally set back behind medium-sized or generously proportioned individual front gardens. This area falls either side of Whiteladies Road.
- (3) To a considerable extent its character relies on the subtle combination of mainly domestic qualities: solidly built, substantial villas and terraces in local Brandon Hill, and Bathstone with interesting and varied elevational use of classical architectural motifs; well constructed boundary walls in local stone



- complementing the buildings and harmonising the ground level environment; attractive gardens; trees of good stature in streets and gardens.
- (4) The conversion to flats of the large villas has created pressures for car parking within front gardens, and on street frontages car parking is at capacity. The generous street pattern enables high vehicle usage across the area by commuters, resulting in congestion at peak periods.
 - (5) Whiteladies Road, the second area, conveys the impression of a gently curving road, built to a grand design, ascending between the 'town', represented by the Queens Road area, and the 'country' seen in terms of The Downs. It is generously proportioned but varied in character, with highly ornamented, large-scale, villa-type buildings set back from their boundaries, contrasting with the informal small-town character of the continuous shopping frontages in the Blackboy Hill section. There is also a more dense terraced element linking the two. It is also distinguished in parts by being lined with mature plane trees.
 - (6) Although the visual scene is one of architectural variety, there is an overall unity deriving from the predominant use of Bathstone and Brandon Hill rubble.
 - (7) Parts of Whiteladies Road have a special character where the continuous shopping parade is broken to give views of tree-lined residential streets, aligned at right angles. Much of the scale of the street consists in its considerable width in relation to its general height of 3–4 storeys, its relatively broken skyline, sometimes hidden by trees, and generous setting back of buildings behind forecourts. Some of these forecourts are now paved car parks, having replaced the mature gardens which previously must have added so much to the landscaped character of the area.
 - (8) Some of the earlier avenue character of nineteenth century Whiteladies Road was removed by tree felling for road widening and the building of shops.
 - (9) The third area, around Worrall Road/Quarry Steps, lies to the west of Blackboy Hill and below the large terraces of Belgrave Road which overlook the Downs. The area comprises a tightly-knit pattern of development based on the steep slopes of earlier quarry working. The area is predominantly residential with smaller, two and three storey terraces built generally at the back of pavements. There is a concentration of industrial and commercial uses along Quarry Steps and Highland Square. These are small-scale and in line with the close-knit character.

KEY ISSUES

Traffic and Movement

- (1) The character of the Conservation Area is strongly and adversely affected by traffic both moving and stationary.
- (2) Major through-routes such as Whiteladies Road, Blackboy Hill, Hampton Road, Cotham Hill and Cotham Brow are heavily congested by commuter traffic.
- (3) The high density of roadside parking detracts from the quality of the street scene.
- (4) The success of Whiteladies Road as a linear shopping street has generated an excessive demand for on-street car parking, causing obstruction and inconvenience despite the provision of off-street car parking at the Clifton Down Centre. This problem also spreads into the adjoining residential streets.
- (5) Whiteladies Road generally has a good standard of pavement provision except for Blackboy Hill and Cotham Hill, where the pavements are inadequate and unevenly paved.



- (6) Heavy flows of traffic cause danger and inconvenience to pedestrians crossings Whiteladies Road, compounded by an inadequate number of proper crossing points.
- (7) The environment for shopping and living in Whiteladies Road is adversely affected by noise, vibration, and pollution. The major through-routes are similarly affected.

Land Use

- (8) There is a continuing pressure in the area, particularly along Whiteladies Road for intensification of office use at the expense of shopping and residential use.
- (9) The effect of office permission where granted has fragmented the shopping frontages, eroding the character both of the buildings themselves and their surroundings, generating more pressure on local car parking in the area and downgrading the existing environment.
- (10) Pressure to demolish traditional buildings still continues. The domestic architecture styles have a consistency of design and materials contributing to the essential character of the Conservation Area.
- (11) There are congested conditions associated with rear access to shops and offices.
- (12) Office development and conversion of large houses into flats has led to the loss of attractive front gardens, trees, boundary walls and gates and their replacement with hardstanding for cars.
- (13) Redundancy of churches has led to the vacancy of some outstanding buildings in the Conservation Area, creating pressures for demolition and posing problems for sensitive conversion and re-use.

Townscape

- (14) The broad character of the area remains largely intact and consists of large scale terraces and some detached villas in traditional materials. This character has been marred by some post war reconstruction, particularly where petrol filling stations, car showrooms and garages have been erected.
- (15) The character of shopping streets in the Conservation Area has also been eroded by the installation of unsympathetic shop front fascias and illuminated signs.
- (16) Trees planted in streets and front gardens are an integral part of the character of this Victorian suburb. In places the pattern of planting has been eroded, undermining the landscape structure of the area.
- (17) The introduction of unsympathetic paving materials, such as tarmac in front of terraces and buildings with distinguished and prominent public frontages, has undermined the character of these streets.

GENERAL ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES

- (1) An environmental traffic management and parking scheme including provision for cyclists, needs to be prepared in conjunction with the Highway Authority.
- (2) This traffic management scheme should promote pedestrian safety by the introduction of more pedestrian crossings along principal traffic routes and improvements to pedestrian areas in Blackboy Hill and Cotham Hill.
- (3) Traffic-calming measures which reduce vehicle speeds are desirable and must be of a high quality and complement materials used in adjacent buildings and boundaries.
- (4) To reduce the loss of shopping and residential use to offices.
- (5) To resist the demolition of Listed Buildings, or of any unlisted building which contributes to the character of the Conservation Area.



12. *WHITELADIES ROAD*

- (6) Development and conversion proposals which compound problems of rear access to shops and offices will be resisted.
- (7) The loss of attractive front gardens and trees to hardstanding for cars will be resisted in line with Principle P34 of Bristol City Council's Conservation Handbook.
- (8) The City Council will encourage the re-use of redundant churches in the Conservation Area, particularly for community purposes. Conversion will be acceptable so long as the architectural integrity of buildings is not destroyed. Office use may be acceptable in order to secure the retention and refurbishment of redundant churches, but will need to comply with other policies in this enhancement statement.
- (9) New development within the Conservation Area will have to comply with Bristol City Council Conservation Principles P2–P10 and the Local Plan guidelines B1–B12.
- (10) The installation of unsympathetic shopfronts, fascias and illuminated signs will be resisted, in line with Bristol City Council Conservation Principles P26–P29.
- (11) An Environmental landscape framework for the area needs to be developed in conjunction with the Leisure Services Directorate which restores and enhances the landscape character of the Conservation Area.
- (12) Streets should be paved in high quality materials which complement the character of the street in question and adjoining buildings.