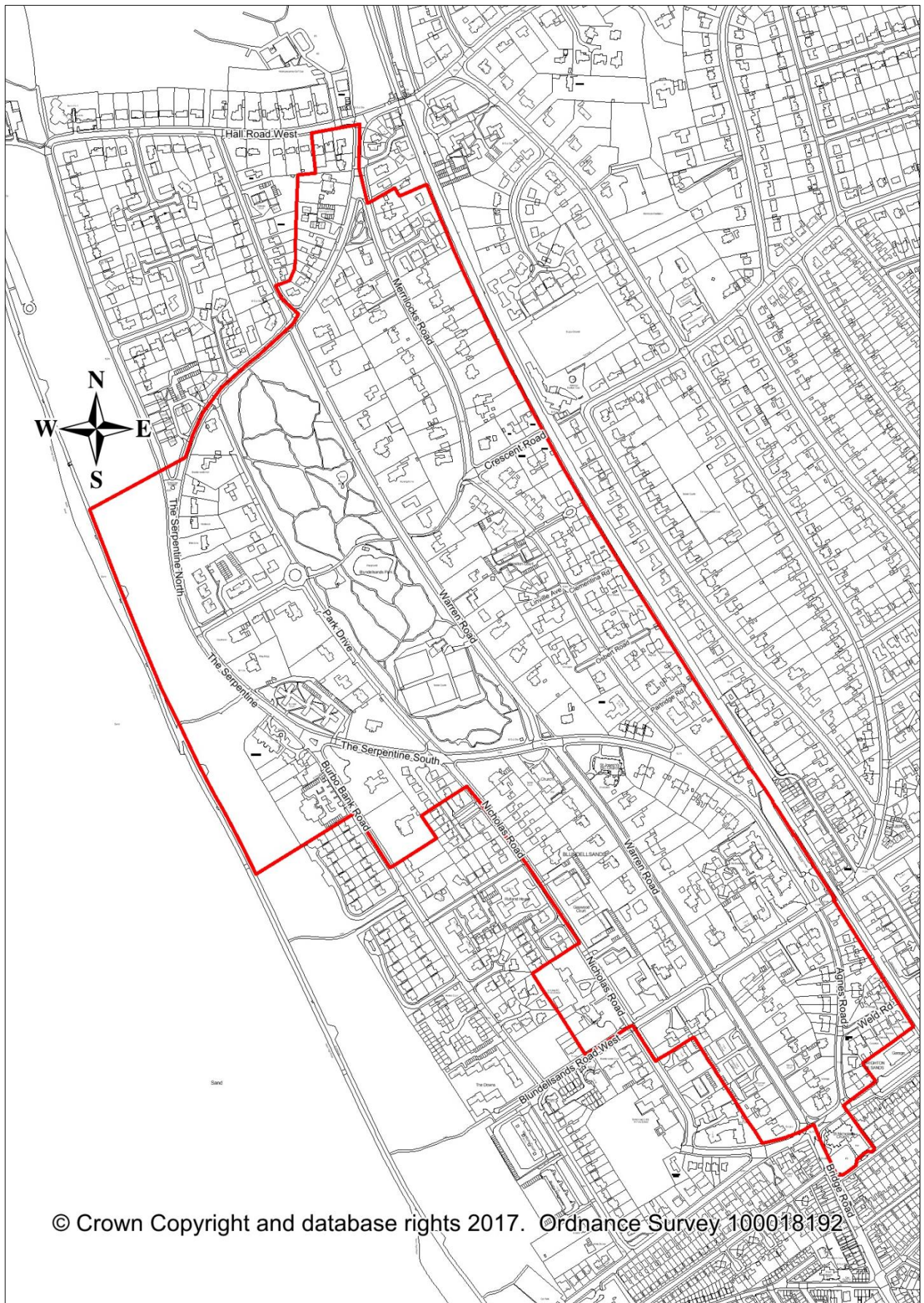


Blundellsands

Conservation Area Appraisal
Adopted March 2008

This Conservation Area was prepared by Donald Insall Associates in November 2006, amended following public consultation in September 2007 and adopted including the suggested boundary changes shown below in March 2008. For more reasoning on boundary changes please see Section 8.0



BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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BLUNDELLSANDS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

PREFACE

Legislative Background

Since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act local authorities have been empowered to designate as Conservation Areas those areas within their districts which were considered 'special'. The subsequent Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 consolidated those powers and defined Conservation Areas as:-

"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Such areas are diverse. They may be large or small; residential or commercial; civic or industrial; old or relatively modern. They may represent social ideals or civic pride. They may be specifically designed or speculatively produced; modest or grand. They may contain Listed Buildings of architectural or historic interest or may simply have local historic association. However, common to all will be an identifiable environmental quality which should be protected from unsympathetic redevelopment or alteration.

Sefton Council has declared 25 Conservation Areas throughout the Borough reflecting the variety of building styles and environments exhibited within its borders.

Policy Framework

The content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is clarified by national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment and is supported by more recent Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), which identifies as a key objective the need to ensure active management of the regions environmental and cultural assets.

The principles of these documents are further supported by Sefton Council's local Heritage Conservation policies contained within its Unitary Development Plan.

This legislation and policy framework enables the authority to exercise greater control over development within Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, this may be supplemented by the use of 'Article 4 Directions' to remove permitted development rights. In this way, minor changes, such as window replacement or loft conversions, which may be cumulatively detrimental, can be controlled.

National policy stipulates that local authorities have a duty to review, from time to time, their regions to ensure that places of special architectural or historic interest are being protected. The boundaries of existing Conservation Areas may be revised, new areas may be designated and those areas which have been eroded to the extent that

their special character has been lost may be de-designated.

How status affects Planning decisions

Whilst the Council recognises that, for Conservation Areas to remain 'live' and responsive to a changing society, changes must and will occur, it nevertheless undertakes to ensure that all changes make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its Conservation Areas and do not result in any serious loss of character or features.

Planning legislation supports the authority in this by increasing its control over development. It does this in the following ways:

- Buildings and structures may not be demolished without formal consent from the Council (Conservation Area Consent).
- Trees are protected and all work to them requires consent from the Council.
- New development is expected to reflect the quality of design and construction of the surrounding area and should make a positive contribution to the area's character.
- Local planning authorities may, if necessary, exercise even greater control by removing the basic permitted development rights of householders.
- Under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of the area when formulating decisions on planning applications.

Need for an appraisal

The first step to protecting the inherent qualities of a Conservation Area is having a thorough understanding of its character and Planning Policy Guidance PPG15 advises that "the definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it".

This should then underpin local policies for the areas protection. Such a definition requires a thorough appraisal of the area to assess the contribution of each element (eg. buildings, boundaries, trees, surfaces, etc.) to the areas overall character. PPG15 notes that "the more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions".

Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements which give an area its character, it is not intended as a detailed evaluation of each building and feature. Therefore any buildings, features and details may still have importance even though not specifically referred to in the document and any omissions do not indicate lack of merit or interest.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This report has been prepared by Donald Insall Associates Ltd on behalf of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council. Its purpose is to clarify the designation of the Conservation Area, which will protect and enhance the character of the historic core of Blundellsands, Crosby (shown on Plan 03). Designation as a Conservation Area provides the Local Planning Authority with additional powers to protect and enhance the area's special characteristics.

1.2 SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this Conservation Area Appraisal is based on the guidelines published by English Heritage and represents a factual and objective analysis. In accordance with the guidelines, the following framework has been used as the basis for this analysis:-

- Location and population
- Origins and development of the settlement
- Prevailing former uses and their influence on plan form or building type
- Archaeological significance
- Setting of the Conservation Area and its relationship with the surrounding landscape
- Character and relationship of spaces
- Contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, etc.
- Architectural and historic qualities of buildings
- Contribution made by key unlisted buildings
- Prevalent and traditional building materials
- Local details
- Extent of loss, intrusion or damage
- Existence of any neutral areas

The document has been structured to encompass these areas of study and concludes with recommendations for the area including amendments to the Conservation Area boundary.

It is the aim of this appraisal to identify and examine those elements which individually and collectively define the essential character of the area.

2.0 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 LOCATION

The Blundellsands Conservation Area is located on the west coast of the region approximately 8 miles north of Liverpool, on the edge of the larger settlement of Crosby. The local village centre of Little Crosby is approximately 1 mile to the east of Blundellsands with the other settlements of Hightown and Waterloo a short distance to the north and south respectively.



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Plan 01 – Showing Location of Blundellsands Conservation area

2.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Prior to the 19th century development, the area would have predominantly been a dune slack, with a wetter, more fertile area of flat marshland behind the sand dunes along the coast. Given its position alongside the sea on the mouth of the River Mersey it is unsurprising that the landform of the area is predominantly flat, and is approximately only 10m above sea level.

The area sits on an underlying bed of Keuper sandstone and Keuper Marl, which was laid down in the Triassic period.

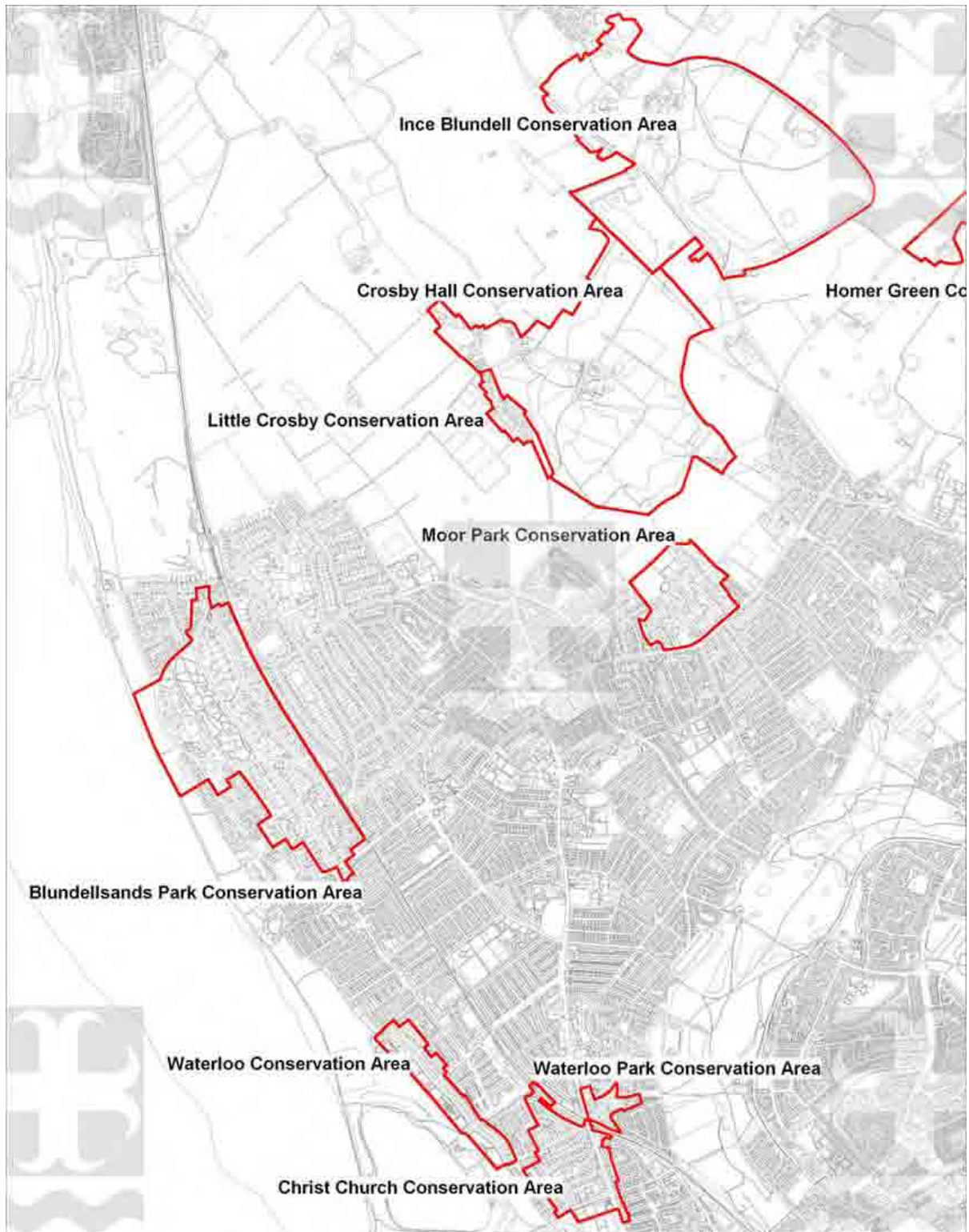
2.3 USES

The Blundellsands Park Conservation Area is almost entirely residential with the exception of buildings such as the three churches, schools and former hotel.

2.4 CONSERVATION CONTEXT (PLAN 02)

The Blundellsands Park Conservation Area is situated near to the Little Crosby and Crosby Hall conservation areas to the east and is approximately 1 mile north of the Waterloo Conservation Area, with Christ Church Conservation Area being just beyond it.

The development to the south of Blundellsands along the coast at Waterloo dates from the early 19th century and represents the catalyst for the subsequent 'villa' development of Waterloo Park (from 1858) and Christ Church (c.1860's). Little Crosby has a longer history with buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.

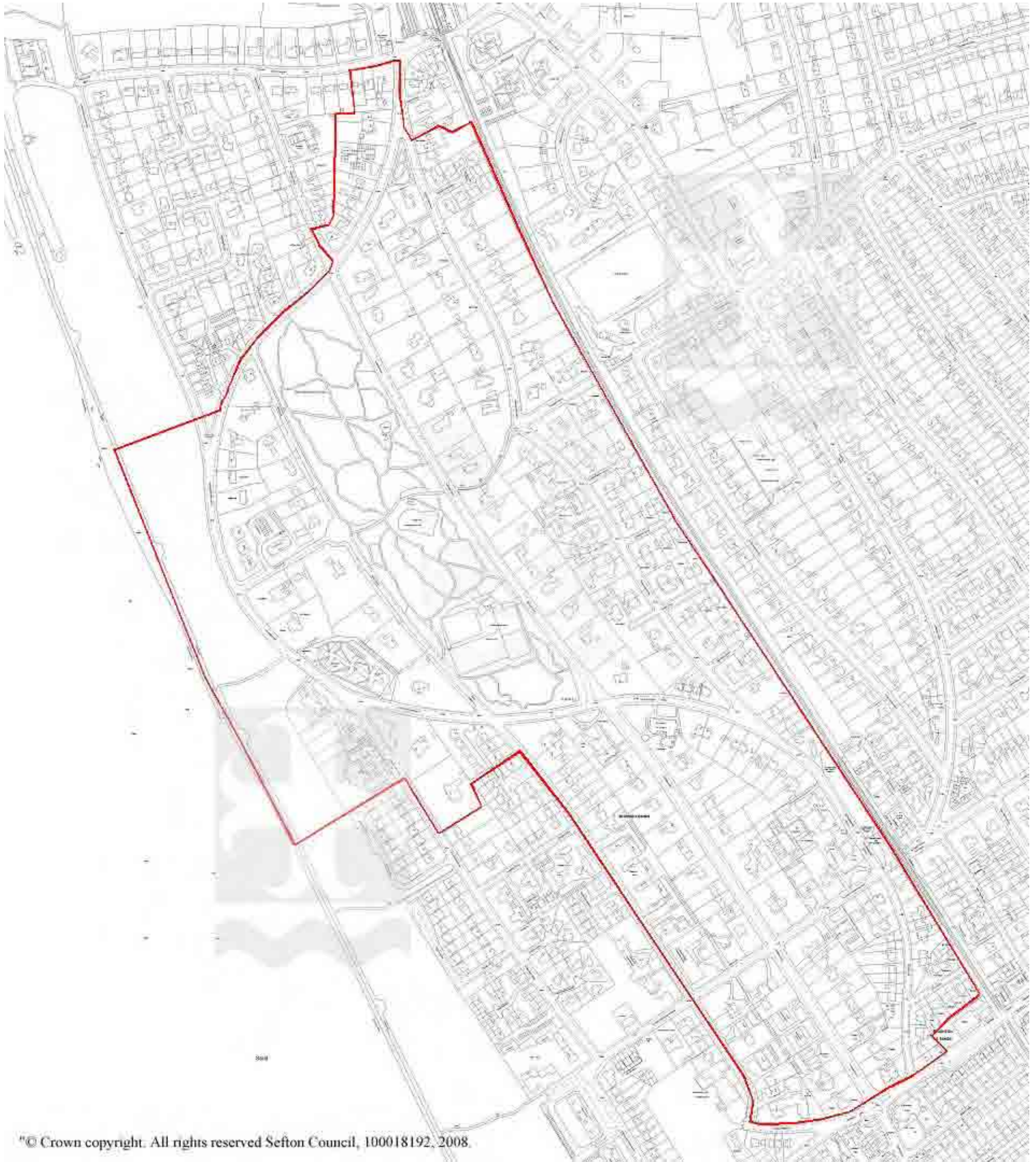


PLAN 02 – SHOWING CONSERVATION CONTEXT OF BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA

2.5 STUDY AREA BOUNDARY (PLAN 03)

The Conservation Area boundary is an irregular shape that follows the properties surrounding the sweeping 's' shape of The Serpentine and its continuation, Agnes Road. The only regular boundary is that of the Liverpool to Southport railway line, on the east side. Threaded through the heart of the conservation area is Warren Road which runs through its entire length north-west to south-east. The westernmost edge includes a section of the promenade along the Sefton coastline.

The area studied for this appraisal did not extend beyond the defined boundary greatly but did consider a number of historic properties and features which abut the boundary.



BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

PLAN 03 – CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

Adopted by Sefton Council 2008

3.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

(see Plan 06 at the end of the section for the relative ages of buildings and features)

3.1 EARLY HISTORY AND ORIGINS



Plan 04 - Historical map surveyed 1845/48. The approximate site of the existing conservation area is shown in red. Plan reproduced from Sefton Council's archives.

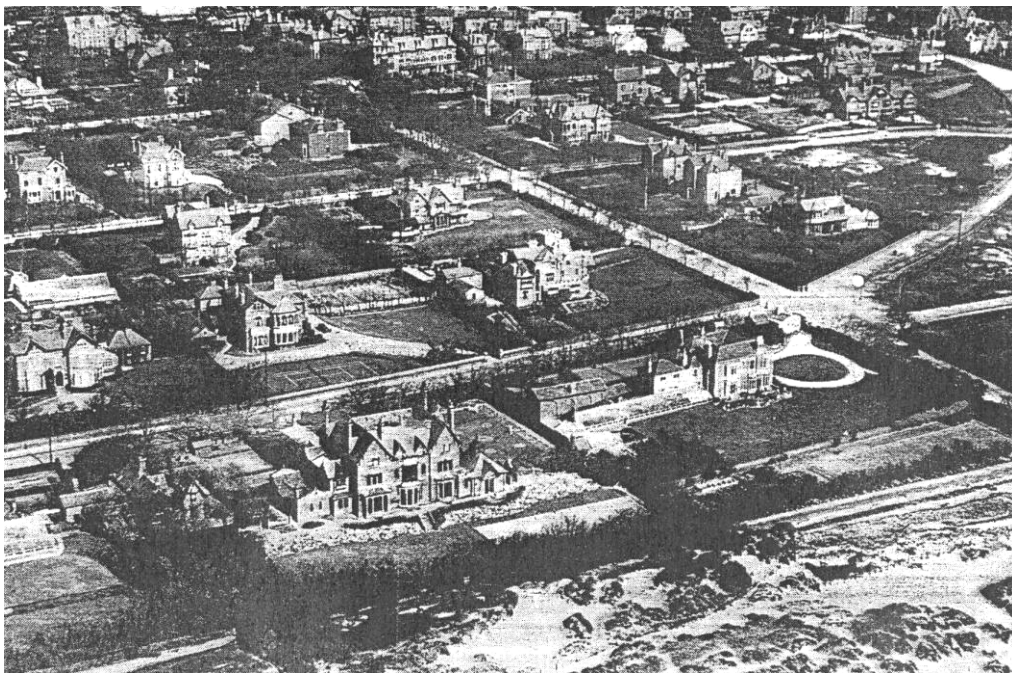
Although the built fabric of Blundellsands itself is entirely from the later 19th and 20th centuries, the surrounding area of Crosby has a much longer history, dating back to Viking times, as evidenced by its Norse name. Little Crosby first appears in writing in the Domesday Book under the name of 'Crossebi', when the manor was held by the Saxon thane, Uctred. Great Crosby was not included as it would have fallen within the royal manor of West Derby. After the conquest in around 1212, Little Crosby was in the possession of the Molyneux family of Sefton. In 1362 the

manor came into the hands of the Blundells, whom it has remained with since. The manor of Great Crosby was sold to the Blundells in 1798.

An act of 1779 enabled the regulation of the nearby River Alt and the subsequent drainage of the surrounding land for use.

During this period, the area, which later became known as Blundellsands, remained undeveloped, forming part of Great Crosby Marsh. The 1850 historic map of the area shows the area undeveloped, simply marked as a rabbit warren. There is evidence that the nearby shoreline was once part of a forest that spread across the estuary to North Wales. This can be seen in the ancient sub-marine forest and peat beds are exposed at Hightown, just to the north.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT (SEE PLAN 06 AND THE HISTORIC MAPS)



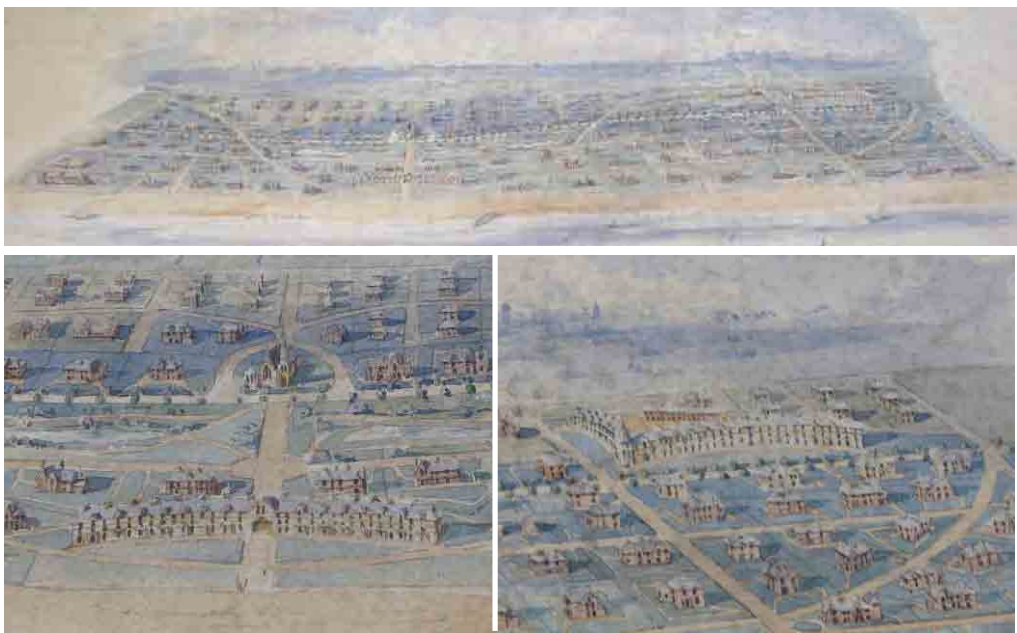
Pre-war aerial photograph. Burbo Bank Road is in the foreground with Blundellsands Road prominent going top-left to bottom right.

The Liverpool and Southport line of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway opened in 1848, with the stations in Waterloo and at Crosby (positioned slightly to the south of the current Blundellsands and Crosby Station, near to the Mersey Road bridge). This facilitated easy access to Liverpool and enabled the city's wealthy businessmen to have a fashionable seaside residence.



The original plan for Blundellsands Park (now held at Crosby Library) by architects Reade and Goodison of Liverpool (see Appendix D for larger version)

Blundellsands Park was laid out to a design by Liverpool architects Reade and Goodison from 1865, under the instructions of Nicholas Blundell of Crosby. The original plan (illustrated above) shows the strong concept of the Serpentine winding across three straight roads running parallel to the sea and with the key park at its core. The layout today differs little from the original plan. Early changes to the original plan include the moving of the church from the hierarchically important position on the centre point of the Serpentine curve to Warren Road. The plan shows that it had been originally intended to have a road linking Warren Road directly to the sea cutting perpendicularly across the park. On its inland end would have been the church with two roads sweeping around it to Merrilocks Road. This had obviously remained an intention during the early years of construction as the awkward 'kink' in Merrilocks Road was obviously intended for this purpose.



The original perspective illustration for Blundellsands Park (now held at Crosby Library) by architects Reade and Goodison of Liverpool. Also shown are extracts illustrating (left) the intended Crescent on The Serpentine with link through to a church on Warren Road opposite the Key Park and (right) the intended form of the incomplete crescent now represented by Treleven House. (see Appendix D for larger version)

The original plan and perspective drawing shows the Blundellsands Park development to be consisting of large detached villas set in spacious grounds, with smaller units confined to Merrilocks Road. The only terraced buildings were to be the crescents on the Serpentine and the corner of Warren and Blundellsands roads. The 1893 historic plan (appended to this document) shows that for the first few

decades the estate was developed generally in accordance with the original concept although the idea of the two crescents had been abandoned. Pivotal to the development was the Key Park, situated in the centre of the housing. The Key Park is today much as it was intended to be in the 1860s. The proposed size, shape and naturalistic layout shown on the watercolour drawings were adopted, although the grand central avenue was never built, therefore the park remained as one, uninterrupted space.

It was perhaps the need to provide churches of different denominations that meant that a single church was not built in the originally designated position that might upset other congregations. As Blundellsands began to develop, there was a growing need and desire to replace the small iron church used temporarily as a place of worship that ‘nestled in the sand dunes’ to fit with the quality and character of the surrounding houses. Money was eventually raised to build St Nicholas’ Church in 1874. It was followed by the Catholic St Joseph’s Church in 1885-6. The Presbyterian Church of England built the church on the corner of Warren Road and The Serpentine South in 1898 (later converted to the United Reformed Church).

A quote in ‘Crosby, Sefton and Litherland’ by Charles L. Lamb from a paper by W. Gregson describes Blundellsands in around 1910:

‘The District Council has to be congratulated on the well-made and picturesque roads [such as the appropriately-named Serpentine], parks and recreation grounds. Altogether, the place has become very attractive, and before long will probably be the favourite suburb of Liverpool. This is all the more likely owing to the splendid service of trams (now motor-buses and trains: it is doubtful if such facilities for business men exist anywhere else in the world.’

The series of historic plans show that development continued through the first decades of the 20th century. Buildings after 1900 are typically smaller and more modest with smaller plots than their earlier counterparts and those on the original plan. It is possible that this may have been because of prohibitively high land prices; indeed many of the most desirable plots along Warren Road and Park Drive still had not been taken up after over 40 years.

The development of houses continued to the north and south along the coast outside of the current conservation area, however the appearance of Blundellsands from the seaward side was dramatically changed following coastal erosion and storms during the 1920s and 30s. Houses on the west side of Burbo Bank Road North were lost to the sea. For a number of decades various sea defences were tested before the current system was built in the 1960s. At that time an area of land was reclaimed, using the remains of buildings bombed during the war in the surrounding area and in Liverpool. Today bricks and tiles can be seen in patches underneath the sandy grass. The houses were not rebuilt, instead the area is used for recreation.



Photographs showing the dramatic coastal erosion and storm damage of the 1920s and 1930s. (Top left) looking towards The Serpentine – The Glen (now demolished) appears on the left; (top right) The Serpentine; (bottom left) Beachside Towers and its neighbour in 1921 before it was swept into the sea; (bottom right) The Serpentine

3.3 ARCHAEOLOGY

The Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record lists three sites of interest in and around the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area. These are as follows:



Plan 05 – Showing Archaeological Finds

Site 1 - Axe head found in 1929. Made of Lake District Andersite. Lost in blitz in 1941 (Liverpool Museum).

Site 2 - Bronze coin found in 1979 of Claudius II (268-270AD) on beach.

Site 3 - Celtic(?) stone head found 1977.



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Key

- Buildings built before **1893**
- Buildings built between **1893** and **1908**
- Buildings built between **1908** and **1927**
- Buildings built between **1927** and **1937**
- Buildings built after **1937**

BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

PLAN 06 - SHOWING RELATIVE AGES OF BUILDINGS

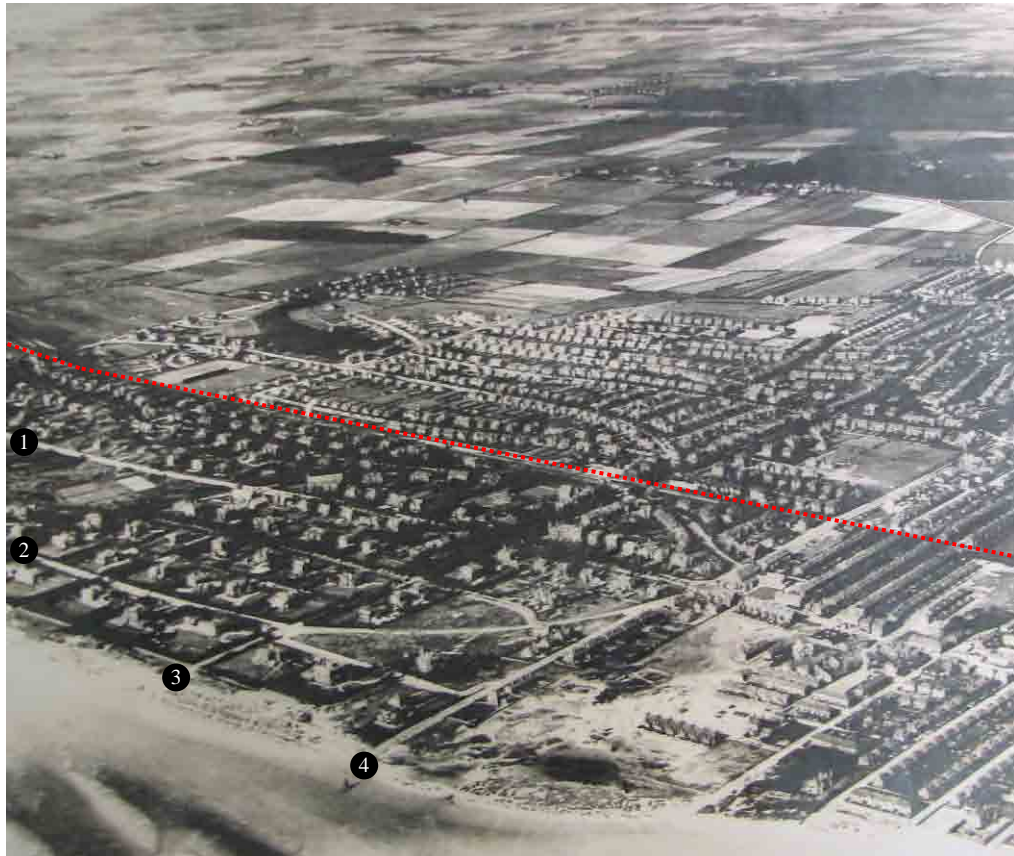
Adopted by Sefton Council 2008

4.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISTAS

4.1 SETTING AND RELATIONSHIP WITH SURROUNDING AREA

The Blundellsands Park Conservation Area sits within the wider residential area of Crosby. To the south-east Blundellsands merges with the Brighton-le-Sands. Despite its physical proximity, Blundellsands is separated from the local amenities and other housing at Little Crosby, lying to the east, by the railway line. Road access from Little Crosby into the Conservation Area is limited to the level crossing bridge at its far northern and southern extremities. An additional point of access into the conservation area is via the pedestrian subway at Blundellsands and Crosby Station at the eastern end of Blundellsands Road West.

Vehicle and pedestrian movements into the area are relatively limited due to its predominantly residential use with relatively few facilities used by non-residents. The tennis club, churches and schools are perhaps the exception to this rule. The roads within the Conservation Area, therefore, are generally quiet with school opening and closing time perhaps being the exception.



Aerial view of Blundellsands, c. 1931. The railway line is marked with a red dotted line. The principal roads are as follows: 1 – Warren Road; 2 – Burbo Bank Road; 3 – Blundellsands Road West; 4 – Mersey Road

To the south, are the small communities of Brighton-le-Sands and Waterloo. Both of these places have historic origins and also experienced a boom as coastal resorts. However, in recent years they have been in decline with many of their old and once grand buildings in a poor state of repair.

To the north of Blundellsands the buildings make way for an open landscape. The golf and sailing clubs indicate that the leisure resort is still a critical part of Blundellsands' character.

4.2 CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIP OF SPACES

The spatial character of Blundellsands is largely defined by the strong linear influences of the coastline and the railway and the roads that run parallel to it, together with the sweeping curves of The Serpentine that dissect them into small blocks. The only prominent road running in a south-west / north-east direction, perpendicular to the coast line is Blundellsands Road West.

Due to its proximity to the Mersey Estuary and coastline the conservation area is almost entirely flat. Also, as the area was completely laid out to a plan as an entirely residential area (i.e. has no earlier origin), it has no obvious centre or one particular focal point.

Although the area's character, defined by straight, wide roads lined with large houses, continues throughout its boundary, a hierarchy of roads exists (see Plan 07). The primary and secondary roads are wide, long and straight (or sweeping in the case of The Serpentine). A number of tertiary cul-de-sacs exist which have a distinctly different, intimate character.

The largest and grandest of houses are along the primary and secondary routes with smaller, often semi-detached houses along the narrower secondary and tertiary roads. The relationship with the coastline is surprisingly limited, although there is some hierarchy between the sizes of older buildings, with many of the larger houses originally adjacent to the coast, which would have afforded them with a greater sense of spaciousness.

4.3 VIEWS AND VISTAS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

There are relatively few vistas towards specific points of interest within the conservation area due to the density of trees along the pavements and on the front boundaries of the houses. The curved form of The Serpentine, Agnes Road and Merrilocks Road do not permit long ranging views; instead the winding roads gradually reveal the varied architectural streetscape, as intended by the original developers. The longer of the straighter roads (Warren Road, Blundellsands Road, Burbo Bank Road and Park Drive) always terminate at the edge of or outside the conservation area where there is little of any particular interest.

Localised views of the three churches are of importance to the character of the conservation area. The openness of the land surrounding them adds to their almost panoramic visual influence. The visual connection between the two churches in the centre of the estate is also of importance.



(Left) view towards the United Reformed Church along Warren Road; (right) the visual connect between the two churches

Perhaps the most important of views to the character of Blundellsands are those into and out of the conservation area. Most notably these include views from along the coast and from the water itself. Blundellsands is prominent from the elevated dunes at Brighton-le-Sands, although of the buildings, most are modern.



(Top) view towards houses on Burbo Bank Road from sand dunes at Brighton-le-Sands; (bottom) view south from conservation area towards Seaforth Docks.

The picturesque views towards the Wirral and North Wales were an important part of the reason for the estate's initial conception and remain vital to its significance as a seaside resort. It is likely that many of the larger, slightly inland houses along

Warren Road, Nicholas Road and Burbo Bank Road were given a third storey to enable partial sea views to be afforded.



View towards Wirral with North Wales in the distance with Antony Gormley's sculptures in the foreground;



**PLAN 07 – SHOWING
HIERARCHY OF ROUTES**

Key

- Primary route 
- Secondary route 
- Tertiary route 
- Footpath 

4.4 GREEN SPACES AND PLANTING

4.4.1 Green Spaces

The Blundellsands Park Conservation Area contains two significant green spaces:

- The 20 acre Key Park is in the heart of the Conservation Area. It is bounded by Warren Road, Park Drive and the northern and southern parts of The Serpentine. It is a private park for the use of key holders only. The landscaping within the park varies from dense woodland / shrubs to more open grassland and dunes. There are a small number of areas of water which act as a habitat for wild birds. The original watercolour plan and perspective drawing show that the naturalistic arrangement within the park was always its intended character. There is no formal landscaping within the park, with natural features such as sand dunes dictating its visual character.

There are few views into the park from the surrounding roads as the edges of the park are generally bounded by trees and high shrubs. However, in a small number of places the high sand dunes within the park afford views out over Blundellsands and towards the coast. A high metal fence with locked gates maintains the security and exclusivity of the park. Vehicular access is only provided (from Warren Road) to the car park of the tennis club at the southern end of the park. Some children's playing equipment is also provided within the park. The Key Park plays a limited role in the character of the conservation area due to the density of the perimeter planting and the lack of views across it. However, it is important as a green backdrop to the adjoining roads and for its important role in the formation of the layout of Blundellsands in the 1860s. In recent years efforts have been made to reintroduce indigenous species back into the park and to encourage biodiversity. This helps to ensure that the park is important to the area as an ecological resource as well as a visual and recreational asset.

- The strip of land along the coast is used as a recreational area. It was formed in the 1960s following the reclamation of land lost in the 1920s and 30s from coastal erosion. Due to its exposed nature there are few species present, although there is some variation from the neatly cut turfed grass to the wilder grasses as seen in the dunes. Only a few footpaths cross this strip of land to the promenade along the defensive sea wall. It is important as a recreational area, but its historical and visual interest is limited.

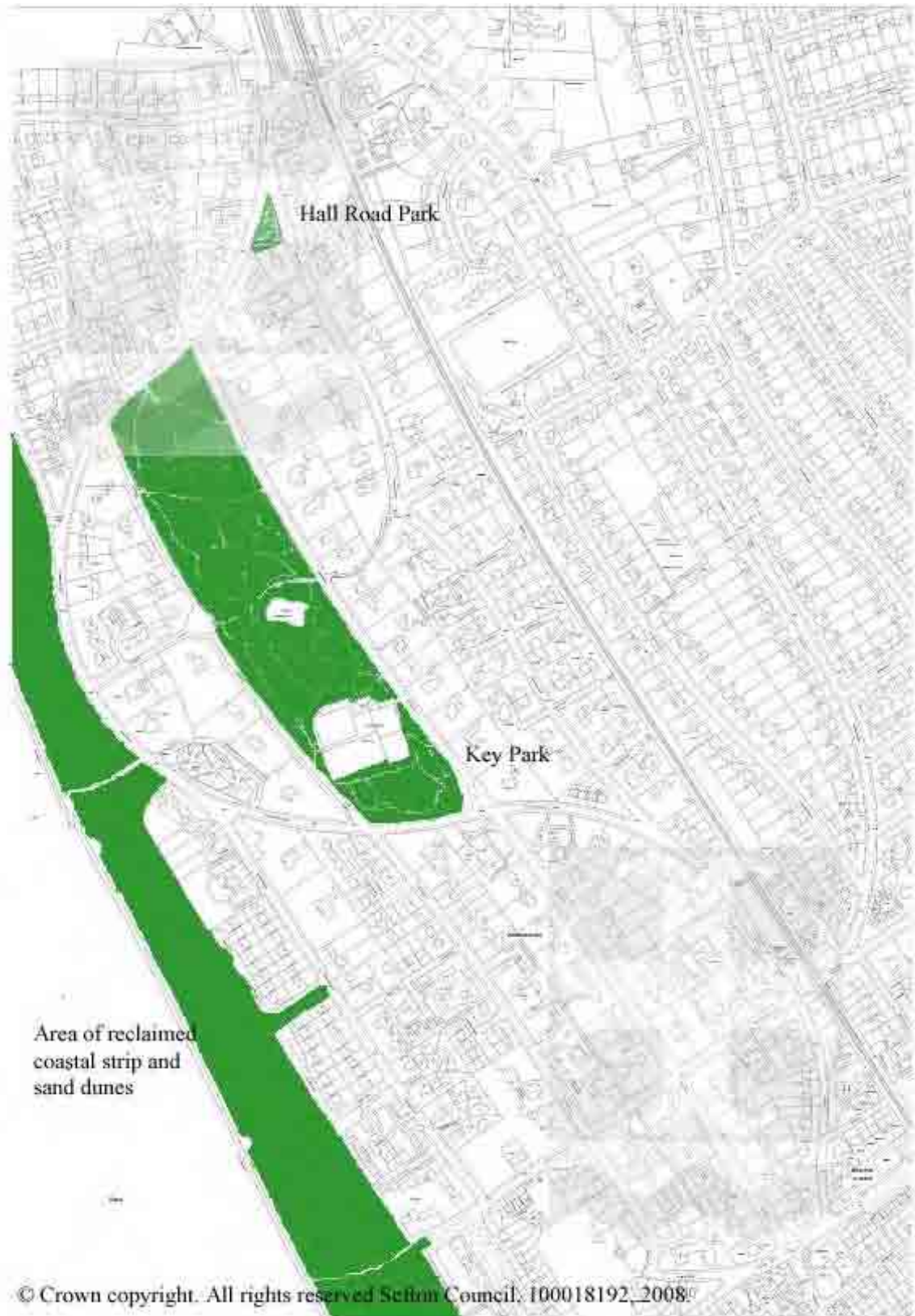


The green space along the promenade. (Right) – exposed debris from buildings bombed in the second world war used as landfill to reclaim land lost to the sea.

A much smaller communal green space exists at the northern end of Merrilocks Road. Hall Road park is maintained and managed by Sefton Council. It is shown as being a small park since around 1900 on the historic maps. It is a small triangular area with trees and low shrubs and a small number of benches. It enhances the setting of the corner of Merrilocks Road and The Serpentine North, but its very limited size means that it has little influence on the overall character of the conservation area.



Hall Road Park at the northern end of Merrilocks Road



PLAN 08 – SHOWING PRINCIPAL GREEN SPACES

4.4.2 Planting

Arguably the most important contribution to the character of the conservation area as a 'leafy' suburb comes from areas of planting within the plots of individual houses. In the vast majority of cases, houses are pleasantly screened by mature trees and shrubs with only their roof or upper storeys visible or a glimpse of the whole house can be afforded at a driveway or pedestrian path. The large distance that some of the houses are set back from the road adds to the desire of residents to create a secluded garden. In a very small minority of cases this significant part of the building's character which contributes positively to the conservation area is lost, due to either over or under-use of planting. Particularly where some houses have been converted into flats, large areas of the front garden has been hard landscaped for parking allowing very little room for planting. On the other hand, some houses have an opaquely dense screen of trees at the front boundary often 4 or 5 metres high. Particularly where the trees within the screen are not considered to be good quality (e.g. leylandii) this can be detrimental to the streetscene.

The landscape feature that is of particular importance to the special character of Blundellsands is the occasional instance of a sand hill being incorporated into a garden. It is likely that the sand dunes currently incorporated within the landscaping of the conservation area are a combination of natural and manmade features. Sand dunes can be seen on The Serpentine, Warren Road and Merrilocks Road. These are an important visual link between the developed area and the coast line.



Examples of natural coastal landscape features being incorporated into gardens

Historical photos indicate that most roads were originally tree lined. It is not known when these trees were lost, but relatively few exist today. Where front gardens of houses are well planted with mature trees, the visual effect of having or not having trees along the road is marginal, however, where original houses and/or gardens have been lost a regular pattern of trees along the pavement would improve the setting of the street. Many of the streets in Blundellsands are wide (particularly Warren Road) and in places can become visually overpowered by the large number of cars that visit in school hours. Trees along the pavements can both visually de-clutter the street and act as a discrete traffic calming tool.



Merrilocks Road – although few trees still exist along the pavements the overall feel of a well planted road is maintained by the dense planting behind the boundary walls.



Old photographs of Blundellsands Road West (dates unknown)

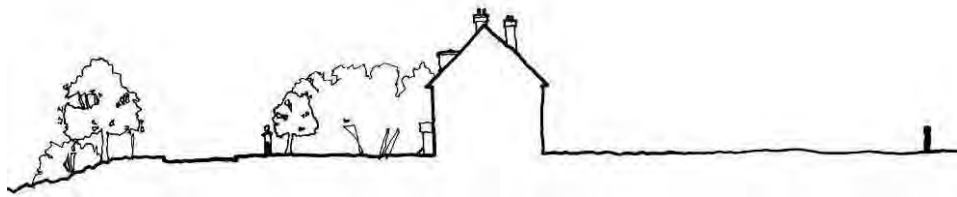
5.0 TOWNSCAPE AND FOCAL BUILDINGS

5.1 TOWNSCAPE

5.1.1 Grain

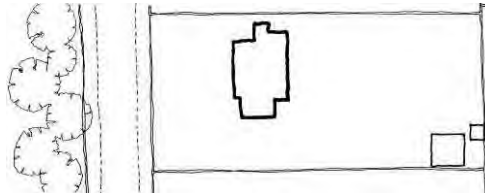
The grain and density of the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area is predominantly defined by generous plots (between 1 ½ -3 x longer than their width) containing large semi-detached or detached houses. The spaces between properties contribute to a sense of openness, as do the widths of the streets (which are generally considerable). Buildings generally fill only about 10-15% of their plots. This sense of spaciousness is critical to the character of the conservation area.

The following are comparative example sections indicating the street widths in relation to typical building heights:



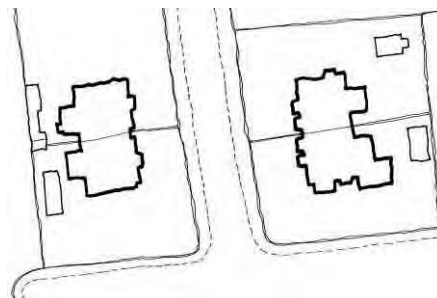
Warren Road Grain

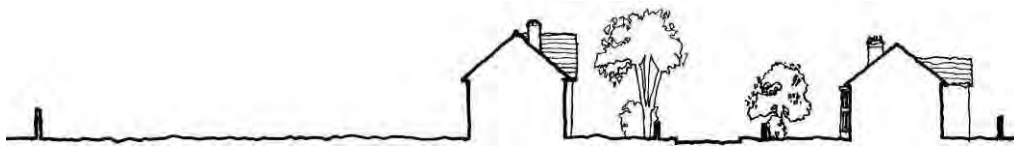
- Deep plots with large detached houses
- Houses set well back from road
- Houses generally taller
- Many houses overlooking Key Park.
- Some houses have dunes within their gardens
- Also similar: Merrilocks Road (north); Park Drive; Blundellsands Road West



Merrilocks Road (south end) Grain

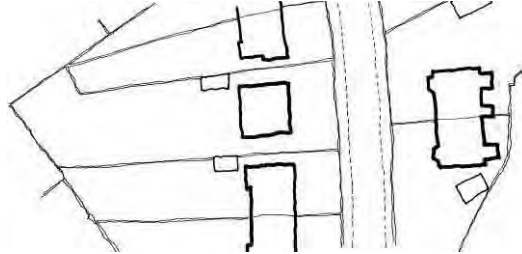
- Semi-detached, fairly large houses
- Generally shallow plots
- Houses spaced well apart
- Also similar: The Serpentine South; the series of culs-de-sac along Merrilocks Road





Agnes Road Grain

- Generally less space between houses
- Long, thin plots, often irregular in shape
- Small distance between footprint and road
- Narrow road width
- Lower roof lines – houses generally only 2 storeys with lower floor to ceiling heights
- Also similar: Weld Road



Away from Key Park, the plot sizes are smaller with houses much closer together (although it should be noted that Burbo Bank Road once had some of the most spacious plots and grand houses). Whereas along the northern end of Warren Road and at the older addresses along the sea-facing part of The Serpentine the houses have at least their own width between them and their neighbours, the detached houses at the southern end of the conservation area are spaced apart at barely a third of this distance. The lower-key, slightly later housing along Agnes Road and the southern half of Merrilocks Road has correspondingly smaller plot sizes.



Typical cul-de-sac off Merrilocks Road

The layout of Blundellsands as a series of often curved small blocks has left a number of corner plots. Typically these plots contain large, detached houses with a dual aspect. Alongside the railway the original layout used a series of planned culs-de-sac carefully integrated within the rhythm of the large semi-detached houses on the north side of the east end of Merrilocks Road. Although a feature of the original layout,

this device of using culs-de-sac was strictly limited to the small area of land backing on to the railway.

5.1.2 Scale

Historically, the scale of buildings within Blundellsands was carefully used to define hierarchy. Although many of the grandest of the houses are only of two storeys, these would dwarf a modern counterpart with their high floor to ceiling heights and steeply pitched roofs. There are a number of houses where a third ‘half’ storey is added at eaves level with fenestration provided using dormers or windows inserted into gable ends. Very few buildings are over this height, where it is the case, it is generally because of the building’s importance such as the spire or tower of the churches or the turret of Treleavan House. A number of more modern buildings have broken this rule, such as the new retirement flats on The Serpentine South or those on Burbo Bank Road. Both of these new developments are of four storeys. Although these two buildings are probably no higher than other buildings within the conservation area in terms of ridge height, they appear taller due to their eaves height being higher and their higher floor area to plot ratio with few trees to screen them.

There is a strong relationship between the scale of the properties and the widths of the streets. The widest of Blundellsands’s streets, Warren Road, has the largest houses, with the much smaller roads such as Agnes Road, with a more intimate feel, and more conventionally sized principally semi-detached houses.

5.1.3 Rhythm

Whereas most areas that have been principally developed over a short period of time are characterised by a strong sense of rhythm, this is not the case in Blundellsands. The density of planting around, particularly the larger properties, makes the houses almost entirely hidden until the viewer is immediately opposite. This means that there is little visual relationship between wider groups of buildings, only perhaps between neighbouring houses. Most of the houses are designed to have individual characters, although there are common themes running through the design of some groups. Eaves lines and roofing materials are not often consistent in adjacent buildings. The variation to the building line and the plot widths weakens the rhythm of the street. Each of the houses are generally only linked within the longer streetscape view by their common boundary wall treatment, which is almost consistently brick walls with stone gate piers.

Perhaps unusually for a conservation area, the only faintly defined rhythm of Blundellsands’s layout must be considered a positive attribute to some parts the area. This point is supported by the evidence of the effect of a development of modern houses within the area. Where there is a significant degree of repetition (say 4 or more repeated units) the effect is generally more jarring than 4 individually designed houses of equally alien construction methods. Where the existing rhythm set out by the large spaces between the buildings is broken, the results are generally hugely detrimental. An example of the ill-effects of breaking the conservation area’s rhythm is illustrated in section 7.2 of this document.

Some streets, such as Warren Road, have a very varied layout, however, some of the ‘rules’ that define the rhythm of the conservation area still apply. The rhythm can easily be broken, for instance by a significant extension, that largely fills the gap between the building and its neighbour and the character and appearance of the streetscape would subsequently change, to the detriment of the conservation area.

5.1.4 Repetition and Diversity

With the exception of a small handful of buildings built since the war, there is almost no repetition of house design within Blundellsands Conservation Area. It is clear that individuality was an important part of the original concept of the estate, giving it an air of exclusivity and making it quite different from the mass housing being built in and around Liverpool at that time.

It is clear that often small groups of buildings were built at the same time by the same designer / builder as they are visually linked by their common basic design and materials, such as the front boundary walls, chimneys, gate posts and brick type. However, each building was made to be different to its neighbour by varying the fenestration, walling materials (e.g. using areas of timber framing, pebbledashing or render) and by adding details such as porches, gables and bays. Subsequent high quality changes, such as the Edwardian porches and conservatories have further increased their individuality and character, although always within the common theme.



Simple variation to a common house design to buildings on Merrilocks Road.

Greater levels of repetition are seen along Merrilocks Road and Agnes Road than Warren Road, The Serpentine and Park Drive.



Repetition of footprint patterns to housing along and off Merrilocks Road

5.1.5 Roofscape

All buildings built before the 1st World War have pitched roofs. A small number of buildings built, particularly around the 1960s and 70s have flat roofs. The trend in more recent decades has been again towards pitched roofs.

The roofs of buildings within Blundellsands are a particularly important feature to its special character as they are often the most prominent part of a building as the rest can be hidden by trees. The roofs of the buildings express the individual character of the buildings beneath and many use elaborate detailing around the eaves, verges and chimneys as part of their often exuberant character, in many cases clearly competing for attention. A number of houses have decorative ridge tiles and some roofs are further detailed by bands of fishscale slates.

Hipped roofs are seen in about half of buildings, perhaps more frequently in the slightly later and often smaller houses. Roof pitches are generally fairly high, often allowing space for a third 'half' storey to be accommodated and the roofscapes to be picturesquely broken up with dormer windows.

5.1.6 Condition

The vast majority of the buildings within the Conservation Area appear to be occupied and therefore dereliction is not prevalent. However, there are a number of buildings undergoing building work, which if continued over a prolonged period can have a detrimental effect on the streetscape. The smaller properties within the conservation area are in single family occupancy and these are generally well-maintained. Larger properties are sometimes in multiple occupancy often resulting in some alterations occurring and potentially leaving the condition of shared areas (such as gardens) less well maintained and/or decorated / planted to a more basic standard.

5.1.7 Building Groups

(see Plan 09 for locations of the building groups)

Due to the linear nature of the area and the loose spacing of the houses, few of the buildings within Blundellsands are read as groups.

Building groups generally occur where houses are attached and/or are closely spaced and of a similar design. Very small groups occur off Merrilocks and Agnes Roads where short culs-de-sac create small, intimate clusters of houses.



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Plan 09 – Building Groups

5.2 FOCAL BUILDINGS AND FEATURES

(see Plan 10 at the end of the section for the locations of focal buildings)

Blundellsands has very few focal buildings and structures due to the limited height of buildings, their predominant residential usage and the large degree to which buildings are screened by trees and set back from the road.

However, the following buildings and structures act as landmarks to visitors and residents:

Primary landmarks:

Being the three highest buildings, the three churches (St Josephs (1), The United Reformed Church (2) and St Nicholas' (3)) are perhaps the most notable landmarks, providing a visual point of reference to visitors.

The following, smaller features also add interest to the streetscene and are important as landmarks:

- The ornate wrought iron gates to Key Park at the ends of Park Drive (4).
- The St Nicholas Fountain on the corner of The Serpentine and Burbo Bank Road North (5).
- The Gateway to Treleavan House (6)



Primary landmarks within Blundellsands: (left) the gateway to Treleavan House; (middle) the St Nicholas Fountain; (right) the ornate wrought iron gates to Key Park

Secondary Landmarks

There are a few further buildings that add to the character of a specific point within the conservation area and help to provide a point of reference:

- Redcot on Warren Road – visually distinctive for its architectural character and ornate gate and gate posts (7).
- The detached red brick house with timber framing to the gables adjacent to the station (8).
- Blundellsands Station (9)
- The former Blundellsands Hotel (10)
- Blundellsands Hall, 108, The Serpentine (11)



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BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

PLAN 10 - SHOWING FOCAL BUILDINGS

Adopted by Sefton Council 2008

6.0 ARCHITECTURE MATERIALS AND DETAILS

6.1 PROMINENT STYLES

The predominating style in Blundellsands is Victorian gothic although there are many variations on the theme. Some houses, although sitting comfortably with the overall gothic style, lean more towards the Arts and Crafts movement or have Italianate features and more classical proportions.

The most *gothic* inspired houses are generally from the earlier decades of Blundellsands's history and generally date from before 1900. Typical features are ornate terracotta or stonework detailing, steeply pitched roofs, pointed arch openings, polychromatic brickwork and dormer windows.



Buildings with gothic style detailing

Another important style influencing early buildings in Blundellsands is '*Suburban Italianate*'. Many of the houses demonstrate features of the style such as stuccoed quoins, double-bracketed eaves, tripartite windows, classically inspired pilasters or columns to porches. It is associated with the large suburban villas of the 1830s and 40s and later became diluted for mass middle-class housing around the mid to late 19th century.



Buildings with Italianate detailing

Domestic revival styles also influence late Victorian and Edwardian domestic architecture. Prominent in Blundellsands are features such as Dutch gables, tall ornate chimneys and turrets.



Domestic revival styles within Blundellsands. The ‘Jacobethan’ former Blundellsands Hotel and the Queen Anne Revival influenced Dutch gables of a building on Warren Road.

Arts and Crafts style houses display a high degree of craftsmanship, for instance in carved timber elements, and use traditional forms of decorative timber construction.



Buildings influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement

6.2 LEADING ARCHITECTS

Little information is readily available about the architects and the original owners of the buildings in Blundellsands, however further research would help to enlighten the understanding of the area and should well-known architects be found to have designed any houses this may add to the architectural significance of the conservation area.

However, there are, within the Conservation Area, a number of buildings by known architects:-

Conservatory attached to Glencaple, on Osbert Road (grade II listed)

By Herbert Rowse (late 19th century) – this appears to be an early example of his work. He became particularly well known for his work in Liverpool during the 1920s and 30s (generally following the Art Deco style) which includes: George’s Dock Ventilation Station (Pier Head), the Birkenhead Tunnel Entrance, the Philharmonic Hall (1939), Martins Bank Building, Water Street (1927-32) and India Buildings(1924-31)

St Nicholas Church (unlisted)

By T.D. Barry and Sons (1873-4) and west end by W.D. Caröe (1894)

T.D. Barry and Sons appear to be most noted for their churches within the north west of England. These include: St. Stephens of Edge Hill, Liverpool (1881), St Cuthbert's of Everton (1875-7) and St Matthews of Bolton (1876).

W.D. Caröe is also known for churches including the Congregational Church at Huyon (1889-90) but also for Martins Bank Building on the corner of Brunswick Street, Liverpool.

St Josephs Roman Catholic Church (grade II listed)

By A.E. Purdie – perhaps, nationally the most documented, with work designing houses, office buildings and churches across the country including Suffolk, London, Yorkshire and Surrey.

Presbyterian Church (Now United Reformed Church) (grade II listed)

By W.G. Fraser (unknown) and A. Thornely (1898 - 1905) – Sir Arnold Thornley is well known, particularly for his projects with Briggs and Wolstenholme, notably the Port of Liverpool Building and King Georges Hall in Blackburn.

Redcot – 78 Warren Road (unlisted)

By F. Atkinson (1913) – Atkinson is also known as the designer of the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool (1912)

Maeldune – 90 The Serpentine North (unlisted)

By J. Roy Parker (1961) – worked primarily in Wirral. Wirral examples include Charleville on Eleanor Road, Claughton, Birkenhead (1959), 1 Ingestre Road, Oxton, (for himself, 1956), Low Barn, Plymyard Avenue, Bromborough, (1968).

6.3 MATERIALS

(see also Gazetteer of Buildings at Appendix C)

Throughout the Conservation Area a varied palette of construction materials has been used. However, brick is the dominant material and is used in some part of almost all buildings. There is some variety in the type and colour of brick used, from soft brown to hard red pressed bricks with blue and buff bricks used for limited detailing. Bricks are also used decoratively both two-dimensionally (e.g. polychromatic detailing) and three-dimensionally (e.g. corbelled eaves).



Brickwork detailing: (Left) terracotta detailing to eaves; (right) polychromatic brick banding

Sandstone is used widely within the conservation area as a dressing. Red and buff sandstone are both used extensively for window cills, lintels, door surrounds and gate piers. Many of these stone dressings have now been painted.

Timber framing and hung tiles are often used on the upper storeys of buildings and within gables. Painted render and pebbledashing are also widely used, particularly on buildings built in the early years of the 20th century.



Sandstone used for dressings and in boundary walls.

The buildings within Blundellsands have a mixture of slated and plain clay tiled roofs (e.g. rosemary tiles) with the type of roof covering dependant on the architectural style of the building. Some buildings have been re-roofed in either concrete tiles or pantiles.

6.4 TYPICAL FEATURES AND DETAILS

In the same way that a diverse palette of materials has been used, so too have a range of features:-

Decorative leaded windows: These are seen extensively throughout the area. In some windows a simple rectilinear pattern is adopted but with different coloured glass in other instances elaborate patterns are used. Leaded lights can be used in all windows in the building (where they are just casements) or in panels above other windows or doors. A peculiar feature seen within the area is the use of a small pane of leaded lights above sash windows.



Examples of leaded lights. The middle and the right photographs show instances where leaded lights have been used as part of a sash window.

Sliding sash windows: In the majority of instances, the original sash windows, or good quality replicas, still exist within the conservation area. Most sash windows are simply glazed without glazing bars dividing the sashes. There are some instances where each sash is dividing into two panes and others where they are divided into 6 or 3 panes. In some cases the upper sashes only are subdivided. Most sash windows

within the conservation area have horns. Sash windows are often grouped in twos or threes or used within bays.



Examples of sliding sash windows

Bay, bow and oriel windows: Bay, bow and oriel windows are used prolifically within buildings in Blundellsands. They are used to enhance almost all building styles, except perhaps the buildings with the purest forms, such as Redcot. These projecting windows create a hierarchy of rooms, denoting the principle living and bedrooms and engage the building with the streetscape. A variety of building materials are used – some are heavy and structural with thick masonry posts dividing the windows; others are lightweight, with simple timber mullions and transoms.



Oriel and bay windows

Doors and door surrounds: The high quality of doors within Blundellsands is one of the special characteristics of the conservation area. Doors and door surrounds are generally specifically designed to suit the character of the individual house although have some common themes. Most doors are panelled, without glazed panes. Daylight is generally provided through fanlights which are often arched or semi-circular in shape. Many doors are simply six panelled or have other arrangements of rectilinear panels. Others are specially designed to suit the character and pick up some of the design themes of the building. The criss-cross pattern of the framing on the door below cleverly produces pointed-topped upper panels which emulate the shape of the porch and the projecting gable. Most front doors are within shallow projecting porches. Moulded brickwork and carved stonework is seen to great effect

around door openings within Blundellsands and often shows great craftsmanship and individuality.



Doors within Blundellsands

Porches, conservatories and canopies: There are a number of very attractive glazed timber porches and conservatories within the conservation area. These may be original to the building or built at an early stage in their history. Some of the Italianate houses have metal canopies.



Porches, conservatories and canopies within the conservation area

Ridge Tiles: Many buildings within Blundellsands have decorative terracotta ridge tiles in a number of different patterns. Where gables are a prominent feature in a building, the ridge tiles often terminate in a higher, decorative finial.



Typical ridge tiles

Eaves detailing: The decorative treatment of buildings at their eaves is widespread throughout Blundellsands. Corbelled brickwork is most commonly used often with dogtoothed bands. Many of the more elaborately decorated houses have Italianate-inspired eaves with classical details replicated in terracotta and with rendered panels

and covings. Where corbelled masonry is not used, a large overhang is seen, with exposed carved rafter ends or timber brackets.



Eaves details

Gable detailing: Decorative detailing on projecting gables is widely used as a feature on buildings within the area. Elaborately carved exposed trusses and timber framing are often seen. Original barge boards are generally deep with some carving to their profile.



Gables details

Chimneys: Chimneys are a common feature throughout the Conservation Area. Many are particularly tall and elegant and their presence is critical to the skyline character of the area. Chimneys are either brick or rendered. Some have elaborate terracotta detailing. Corbelling is often seen where a chimney rises from the exterior wall of a house.



View across Key Park showing the contribution which chimneys make to the character of the area

Gate Piers: Sandstone gate piers are a typical feature throughout the Conservation Area. Their size and design vary to some extent with the grandeur and scale of the property to which they relate. Some of the gate piers are now painted. Their contribution to the dynamic and character of the street scene is significant, even where the related property has been lost or replaced by new development. Whereas the buildings are often completely hidden from view, the gate piers mark the rhythm and grandeur of the houses beyond. Some of the gate piers are constructed from red brick, but most have at least sandstone cappings. Most houses within the conservation area have retained their original gate piers, although very few have original or appropriate gates between them.



Examples of the variety of gate pier designs within the Conservation Area

Garages and outbuildings: There are a number of particularly attractive garages and outbuildings that are as critical to the character of the conservation area as the house themselves. Most of these were built at the same time or shortly after their associated house and have similar detailing and materials. Some of these early small buildings are relatively rare survivors as in many places such buildings would have been lost as the needs of the householder changed.



Early garages and converted coach houses



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Key

- Buildings critical to the character of the area
- Buildings that contribute to the character of the area
- Buildings of neutral interest
- Buildings that are detrimental to the character of the area

BLUNDELLSANDS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

PLAN 11 - SHOWING CONTRIBUTIONS OF BUILDINGS

Adopted by Sefton Council 2008

7.0 NEGATIVE FACTORS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

7.1 OVERVIEW

The Blundellsands Park Conservation Area contains many fine buildings and much historic interest which, together, contribute to its special character and justify its designation.

However, there are a number of issues which impact on the character of an area and these fall broadly into the following categories :-

- Poor quality later 20th century development
- Unsympathetic extensions
- Alterations to historic detailing and materials
- Development pressures and loss

7.2 POOR QUALITY LATER 20TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

Few developments which have been constructed within the Conservation Area since the Second World War can be assessed as preserving or enhancing its historic character. Examples are evident in all of Blundellsands' principal and secondary streets.



(Left) Incongruity of scale between old gate piers and modern replacement housing; (right) housing on Merrilocks Road

Modern houses are generally of a much smaller scale and therefore look incongruous in the street scene. In addition, a number of small houses are often fitted within the old plot of a larger house, often in the form of a cul-de-sac, and therefore change the existing building line along a street and the spacing and rhythm of the buildings.



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A comparison between OS plans from 1908 and 2006 of the north end of Merrilocks Road. The map on the right shows a typical example of the detrimental effect that the creation of a small cul-de-sac of housing can have on the existing streetscape. The small development of 9 houses has been created from the demolition of 2 large, turn of the century villas. The blue dotted line shows the original building line.

Flat developments are also generally of an inappropriate scale often almost filling the width of their plots. Although they are probably not taller than many of the existing villas at their highest points, their much greater width (often 4 or 5 times that of the larger houses) and complete lack of any roof detail or break in the eaves line makes them appear of a completely alien massing.



Flats built around the 1970s

There are a number of blocks of flats built within the conservation area (built around the 1970s) that pay absolutely no reference to the detailing of the surrounding buildings. These were of a time when Victorian and Edwardian buildings were considered deeply unfashionable and the buildings are a rebelliously stark response to that. Many of these buildings have flat roofs and almost all are of a simple box shape with no variation to the plan form. Most have picture windows with a horizontal orientation. Buildings of the 1980s and early 1990s are less brutal in their form but nonetheless inappropriate. Although pitched roofs are once again used in this period, these are not of the same steep pitch that would compliment the surrounding existing buildings.



Examples of recent development

Buildings built within the last decade show more understanding of the character of Blundellsands although generally still lack the quality of materials and detailing of their historic counterparts. There also still remains the tendency to build at much higher densities than the historic building plots. The extension to the former Blundellsands Hotel to form sheltered housing is an example of this problem. Whilst the roofscape and footprint is broken up through the use of gables and other features, the majority of the eaves line of the building is higher than seen elsewhere in the conservation area. Many modern buildings have an additional storey within the same

height as their neighbouring historic buildings. This changes the 'grand' appearance of the buildings and therefore is detrimental to the character of the area.

The materials are poor imitations of the historic materials with imported slate and reconstituted stone being used. Although there is some attempt at detailing at the gable, other areas of the eaves have just a simple unadorned soffit. Although these short-fallings would not be perceivable when viewed from a distance, the building is within much closer proximity to the road than other buildings, further highlighting the problems.

7.3 UNSYMPATHETIC EXTENSIONS

There are fortunately relatively few examples of extensions that are either detrimental to the character of a building or the overall streetscape. Such examples include, on a small scale where an extension is of a different character to the building (e.g. it has a flat roof) and therefore detracts from it aesthetically, or on a larger scale where an extension physically obscures part of the original building, therefore reducing its contribution to the streetscene. There are a small number of further examples where a modern extension has tried to emulate its older neighbour but using poorer quality materials and detailing. In these instances (The Blundellsands Sheltered Housing is an example) the building is seen as a whole and therefore the character of the original element is effectively diluted.



Small and large scale unsympathetic extensions. The left example shows the dramatic effect a relatively small addition to a roof can have. The right hand photograph shows a dramatic extension / alteration to a historic building that entirely obliterates its original character from the sea facing side.

7.4 ALTERATIONS TO HISTORIC DETAILING AND MATERIALS

Unfortunately many of the historic properties have suffered from external alterations.

Roofs: Original slate and plain clay tile roofs have been replaced in many instances by concrete tiles or pantiles. Roofs play a critical role in the character of Blundellsands as they are often the most prominent part of the building, with the rest obscured by trees. Even when roofs are not always completely visible from the street, they nevertheless contribute to long views. Where properties form a run (either as a terrace or a group of the same design), the alteration of one roof seriously detracts from the quality of the street scene.



The dramatic effect changing roofing materials can have on the visual balance of a semi-detached or terraced group.

Satellite dishes: The installation of satellite dishes is not unachievable within Conservation Areas, as long as they are positioned sympathetically and are kept as small as possible. There are, however, many instances throughout the area of poorly positioned and very visible satellite dishes. Their visibility is often increased because they are seen against the sky. The least obtrusive dishes tend to be those positioned on the rear or sides of houses and those constructed from a dark grey semitransparent material.



(Left) a large opaque satellite dish positioned obtrusively on a high feature chimney – it is therefore silhouetted against the sky; (right) a smaller grey dish on a new building, tucked away and camouflaged against the leadwork

Windows and doors: The original buildings within Blundellsands would have had a mix of painted timber sash and casement windows. However, a significant percentage of the houses within the area have had their windows replaced either with uPVC or inappropriate timber casement windows. This is particularly damaging to the character of not only the individual properties but also to the streetscene. The fineness of the traditional framing and glazing bars is unobtrusive, yet reinforces the vertical emphasis of the facades. Thus, the introduction of thicker framing members (almost always necessary with uPVC), removal of glazing bars, reconfiguration of the

window, etc. all have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the property and overall visual quality of the area.

There are many examples throughout the area of poor quality replacement windows which not only differ from those of the neighbouring properties but also differ from others within the same façade.

Also important to the character of the area are the leaded lights. These are often examples of beautiful late Victorian or Edwardian craftsmanship and Blundellsands has a number of very good quality examples. However, these leaded panes are gradually being replaced with plain glass and double glazed units



Examples of inappropriate replacement windows: (top left) sashes replaced in uPVC – single casements with beads between the panes appear particularly out of character in some lights; (top right) casements replaced with large picture windows; (bottom left) further inappropriate window types for the openings; (bottom right) sashes replaced with uPVC casement s– original character of building is completely changed.

Though less common than replacement windows, replacement front doors are also detrimental to the character of the area. Where uPVC is used, replacement doors are particularly obtrusive and lack the quality of design and detail found in timber originals.

Loss of boundary walls and gateposts: As identified in earlier chapters of this document, front boundary walls and gate posts are an important feature of the streetscene within the Conservation Area. They contribute to the rhythm of the street

and clearly define public and private space. Their loss (or partial loss) is, therefore, detrimental and particularly damaging where this has occurred in conjunction with the hard-surfacing of front gardens for car-parking.

Replaced / altered boundaries: As with the removal of boundary walls, their replacement with inappropriate materials has had an equally damaging effect on the streetscene, destroying continuity and uniformity. It is particularly detrimental when it occurs in a pair of semi-detached houses. A particular problem within Blundellsands is the apparent desire to improve on the security / visual screening of the original walls. Commonly seen are fences fixed on or just behind the existing walls. These detract from the strong character of the walls and are an interruption on the streetscene, preventing the houses from contributing visually to the appearance of the road. In many cases the fences are not adequately maintained and therefore have a negative effect on the quality of the street. A similar problem is the provision of high railings and gates, often above the height of the gate piers.



(left) fence added on top of old boundary wall; (right) driveway widened – the left hand gate post has been carefully moved.



(Left) New railings and gates above the height of the original gate posts; (right) large parking area with no space for planting.

Loss of gardens and landscaping: Where houses have been subdivided into or replaced with blocks of flats the need for car parking often overrides that of attractive landscaping. This is particularly detrimental where a strip of planting is not allowed for around the plot boundary.

Poor quality, modern paving and street signage: Almost all paving within the village has been replaced in standard concrete slabs or tarmac. This adversely affects the high quality of the area and is a poor example to residents. Also, many of the original

street name signs have been replaced without thought as to the visual contribution they make to the area.



(Left) poor quality paving; (right) modern and original street name signage

Repairs using modern materials: Repairs to historic building fabric using modern materials can have a detrimental effect not only on the appearance of a building but they can also speed up the process of deterioration. Most notable is the use of cementitious mortars and renders. When used on soft brick or stone, hard mortars or renders can adversely affect the natural paths of water movement. As pointing, they can force moisture out through the face of the masonry, eventually causing the failure of the surface of the material. As a render, the impermeable barrier can prevent the building from breathing and can lead to damp and condensation problems.



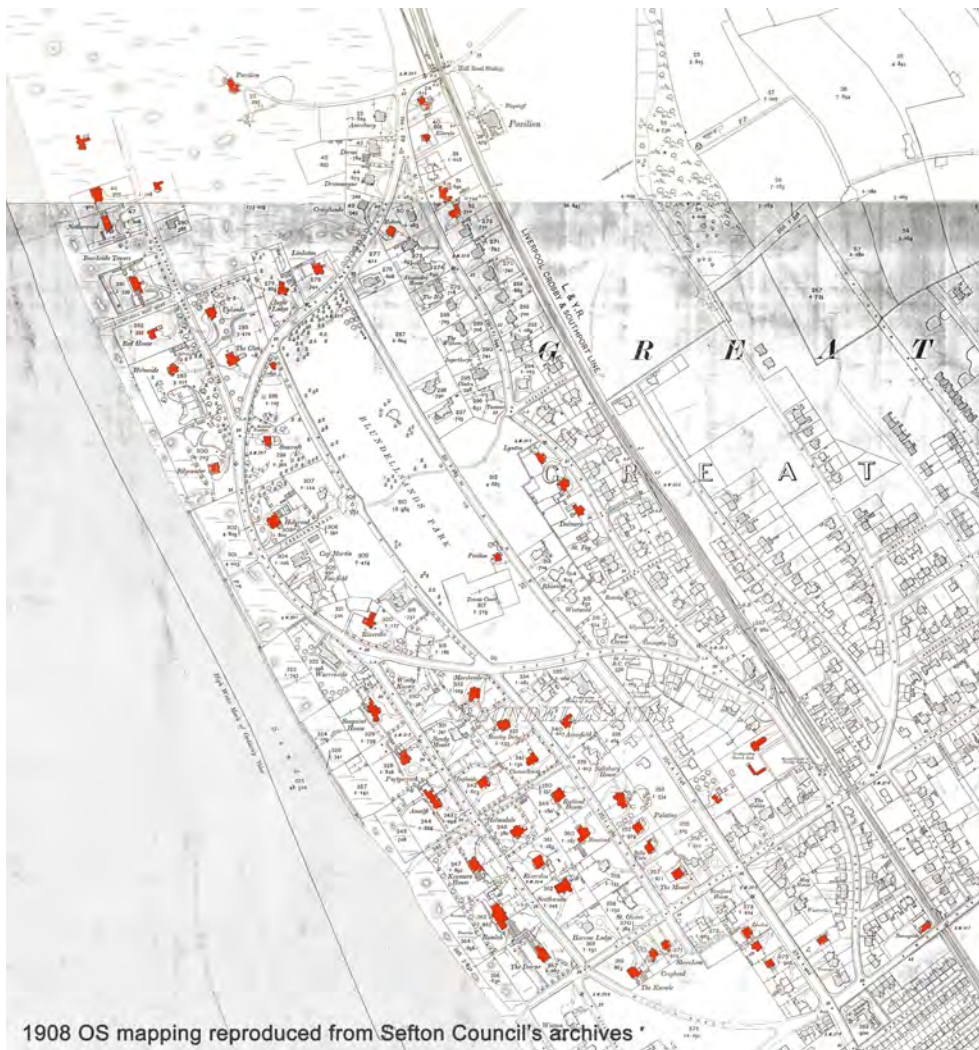
The dramatic effects of hard pointing on soft brick

7.5 DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES AND LOSS

Within the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area there are no significant vacant sites or notably derelict buildings. Development pressure is clearly evident in the level of building activity, with a number of properties being (or having recently been)

converted to apartments and a couple of substantial new build apartments recently built or currently under construction. Such pressure requires careful management if it is not to result in loss. That is, not simply the loss of individual properties, but also, and more commonly, the loss of details and elements, such as windows, gate piers, front boundaries, slated roofs, etc.

The following plan shows the extent of building loss within Blundellsands since 1908:



Plan 12 - 1908 OS plan with buildings indicated in red that are no longer present

As discussed previously, within the Development chapter of this document, a number of properties were lost in the 1920s and 30s as a result of coastal erosion. This accounts for many of the buildings indicated in red along Burbo Bank Road North. However, further buildings have subsequently been lost. Burbo Bank Road (south) and the south-western side of Nicholas Road have seen almost all their historic buildings replaced by modern houses and flats and therefore they have not been included within the conservation area.

Other building loss has been to more confined 'patches' within the conservation area although almost all of the through roads have seen some buildings replaced.

The high value of any property within Blundellsands leaves any property with significant land around it a target for developers. Many larger houses are often converted into flats. Both of these changes almost always leads to the loss of original features, such as boundary walls and gate posts as well as the alteration to the characteristic landscaping of the plots such as loss of trees and mature planting as further car parking needs to be introduced.

7.6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

To counteract the negative factors which are detracting from the character of Blundellsands Conservation Area, a number of measures might be considered and introduced:-

Guidance Leaflet

As well as the development pressures that are clearly evident, the impact on the area of small alterations which individual householders have made to their houses and which, collectively, have seriously compromised the areas character, is also of importance. It is likely that these alterations are due to a lack of awareness and appreciation of the value of the area and of those elements which contribute to its character.

An advisory leaflet already exists for the area which includes the background to the area and guidance notes. It is advised that residents are made fully aware of the leaflet and if possible the opportunity should be taken to update it to include more specific recent threats, such as UPVC windows and paved / tarmaced front gardens.

Article 4 Directions

Previous sections of this document have indicated that the guidance available to residents within the advisory leaflet has not been adequate in preventing detrimental alterations, as many changes have been made since its first issue in 1984. To prevent further negative change it is therefore recommended that article 4 directions are required. The priorities for article 4 directions should be for protection to windows and doors, roof coverings, chimneys and front boundary walls. It is suggested that as these matters are important to the vast majority of buildings within the conservation area therefore article 4 directions are applied to all buildings automatically.

Trees

Trees planted within the pavement zone, make a substantially positive contribution. The early photographs show Blundellsands with a much more densely tree-lined character. The planting of further trees within pavements should therefore be considered.

Traffic Calming

Whilst it is seldom possible or appropriate to completely remove the intrusion of vehicles, the impact which traffic has on a Conservation Area needs to be minimised. Blundellsands does not currently have any specific traffic calming measures.

The width and straightness of the roads leads drivers to drive faster than they would in other residential areas. However, measures such as speed humps and signage could detract from the character of the area. It is therefore suggested that more subtle methods are first considered such as the widening of pavements (e.g. pinch points),

the planting of trees and the introduction of rumble strips using high quality materials such as granite setts.



The street furniture within Blundellsands is often of a basic quality, with little attention paid to its design. It is often also poorly maintained.

Streetscape Elements

Much of the street furniture within Blundellsands is of a basic quality with little attention paid to the appropriateness of its design or quality. A long-term programme should reconsider replacement of most lampposts and street furniture along the coast area, together with improvements to the quality of paving and kerbs, replacing concrete or non-matching units wherever possible.

7.7 FURTHER PROTECTION OF KEY UNLISTED BUILDINGS

It is recommended as part of this report that any buildings identified as being critical to the character of the conservation area are protected further from alteration as any detrimental changes would have a significant effect not only on the buildings themselves but on their wider setting. Where the buildings are listed they are already protected to this additional extent. However, the study identified four unlisted buildings as being ‘critical’ to the area’s character: Redcot on Warren Road, 1 Agnes Road, Glencaple on Osbert Road (the latter could arguably be treated as being listed as it is within the curtilage of its listed conservatory) and 28 Blundellsands Road West. This report recommends that these buildings are put forward for consideration for listed status as their exteriors appear to be in good, original condition. Should they not be deemed to be of ‘listable’ quality it is suggested that further article 4 directions to the individual buildings are used to restrict any foreseeable changes that might adversely affect their character.



Key unlisted buildings: Redcot, 1 Agnes Road and Glencaple

Maeldune, on The Serpentine, has been seen by some exponents of modern architecture as being of listable quality. However, alterations to the prominent facades in the 1990s changed the character of the building through the insertion of large picture windows, upsetting its original simplicity. The planning application for the works was granted, despite a number of objections. The petition against the proposal highlighted the importance of the architect, J Roy Parker: ‘His work is appreciated by many making a significant contribution to the cultural heritage of the county and Sefton is extremely fortunate in having a building of this quality in the Borough. The house is one of the best architectural examples of its period, built by the best local craftsmen to a design of great integrity’. During a post-war listing programme of private houses built between 1964 and 1971, Maeldune was considered for listing, but it was not included. Although of undoubted architectural interest, Maeldune does not contribute to the special character of the Conservation Area as it does not have any of the qualities that characterise it. It is therefore inappropriate to put additional protection on the building through the conservation area designation although further investigation as to its significance is encouraged and the treatment reassessed regularly as opinion on post-war buildings inevitably changes.



No. 28 Blundellsands Road West and Maeldune on The Serpentine

8.0 RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS TO CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

8.1 DESIGNATED BOUNDARY

(see Plan 13 at the beginning of the section - designated boundary is shown in red)

The boundary as drawn for designation has generally been drawn tightly and reflects the extent of the area within which the special character of Blundellsands predominates. There are, however, a number of minor amendments which are recommended for consideration.

8.2 AMENDMENTS

Ursuline Catholic Primary School

Reason: The historic elements of Ursuline Primary School are of the character and quality of the original buildings within Blundellsands. Its prominent position on the corner of Nicholas Road and Blundellsands adds to its visual importance to the setting of the conservation area. Although the building has been considerably extended in the past, the historic elements are clearly distinguishable. The southern elevation remains unobscured by modern extensions and the boundary wall along Blundellsands Road West is a particularly good example, and is complete with original gate posts.



St Ursuline Catholic Primary School and St Nicholas's Church

St Nicholas's Church

Reason: The church was built in the same period as many of the earlier houses within the area to serve the needs of its residents. It has played an important social role in the village, but is also critical as a visual landmark and gateway to Blundellsands. The building is built of high quality materials and has the same level of design and intricacy that is seen in many of Blundellsands' finest buildings.

South-eastern end of Nicholas Road

It is recommended that this area is removed from the conservation area as it does not include any 19th century buildings or other buildings considered to contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. The properties in question have little or no visual influence over the setting of other buildings within the conservation area.

8.3 OTHER AREAS ASSESSED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

101-111 Mersey Road (adjacent to St Nicholas's Church)

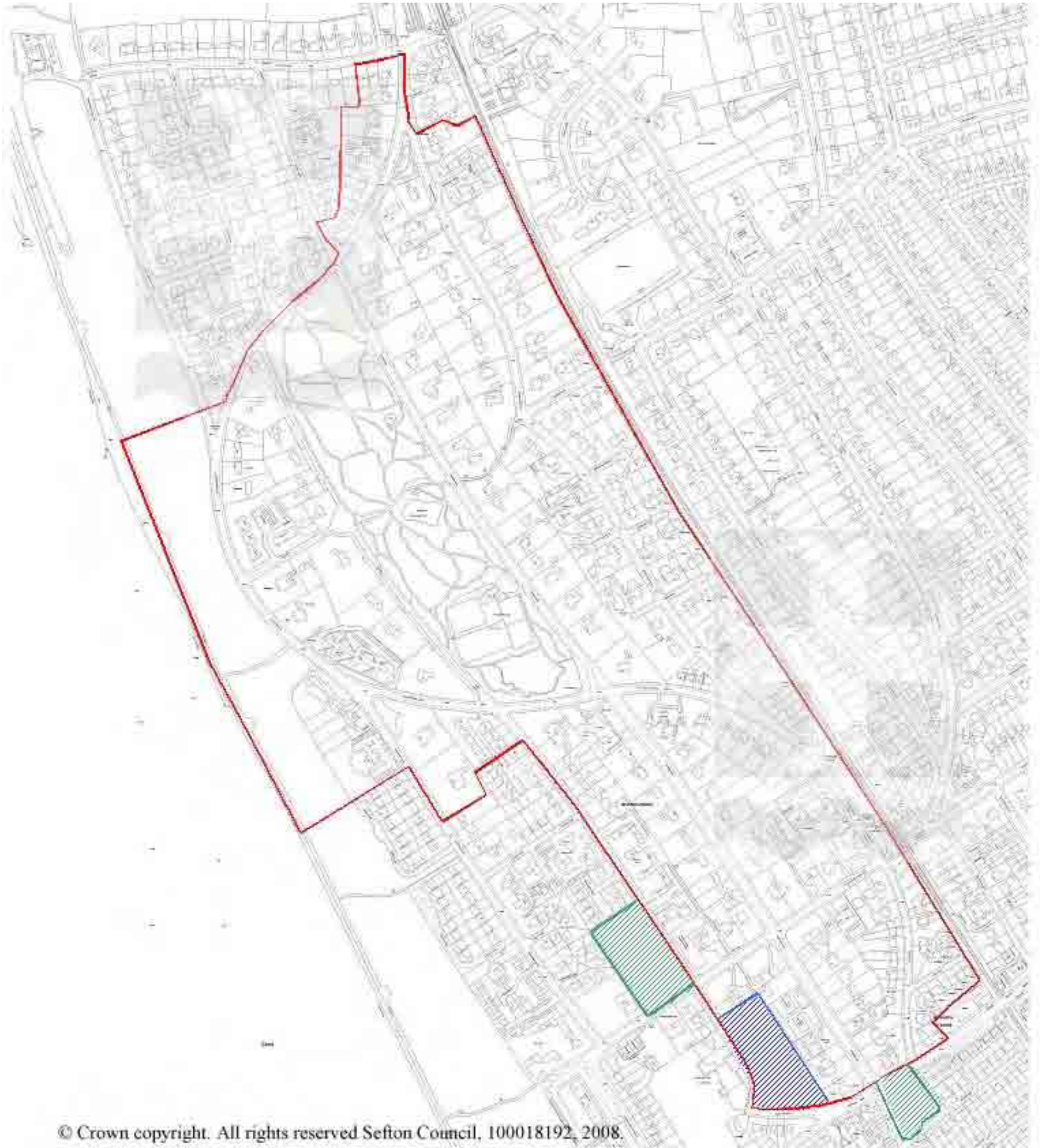
Reason: Despite being contemporary with many of the earlier buildings with Blundellsands, this terraced row is not recommended for inclusion within the conservation area boundary as it does not follow the typology of the other residential buildings and later changes, such as addition of porches and the almost complete replacement of original doors, windows and roof coverings, have significantly degraded the visual quality of the block.



Houses on around Blundellsands Road East and Abbottsford Road, outside of the existing conservation area.

Area around Blundellsands and Crosby Station (outside of the current boundary) and Abbottsford Road

The houses around the station and Abbottsford Road are of a similar architectural quality and character to those within the Blundellsands Conservation Area. There are many large, mid-to-late Victorian detached or semi-detached villas also set within spacious plots. Most appear to have retained the majority of their original features. The styles of these houses again have gothic and Italianate influences. The overall character of the buildings is similar to those in Blundellsands, although there are some subtle differences, such as the predominance of sandstone used for boundary walls. Despite the high quality of this area, it is not recommended for inclusion within the existing conservation area due to its physical detachment and the confusion it would cause to the current clarity of the boundary line along the railway. It is instead recommended that this area be considered for conservation area status in its own right.



Key:

- Existing Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed additional area to Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed area to be removed from Conservation area boundary

BLUNDELSANDS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

**PLAN 13 - SHOWING ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY
IN BLUNDELSANDS, SEFTON**

Adopted by Sefton Council 2008

APPENDIX A

Bibliography ▪ Illustration Sources
References ▪ Acknowledgements



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(history of Great Crosby)

Illustration Sources

Page		Source
3	Plan 02 – Conservation Context	Courtesy of Sefton Council
6	Historic plan surveyed 1845/48	Sefton Council's Archives
7	Blundellsands aerial photo	Crosby Herald 26.09.1990
8	Original plan of Blundellsands	Sefton Library Services
8	Original perspective of Blundellsands	Sefton Library Services
10	Various old photographs	Sefton Library Services
13	Old aerial photograph	Sefton Library Services
22	Various old photographs	Sefton Library Services

All other photographs, illustrations and plans supplied by Donald Insall Associates

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APPENDIX B

Historic Maps

This appendix contains the following maps:

Ordnance Survey Map	1893
Ordnance Survey Map	1908
Ordnance Survey Map	1927
Ordnance Survey Map	1937
Reade and Goodison original watercolour and perspective drawing	



1893 Ordnance Survey mapping reproduced from Sefton Council's archives

BLUNDELLS SANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



1927 Ordnance Survey mapping reproduced from Sefton Council's archives

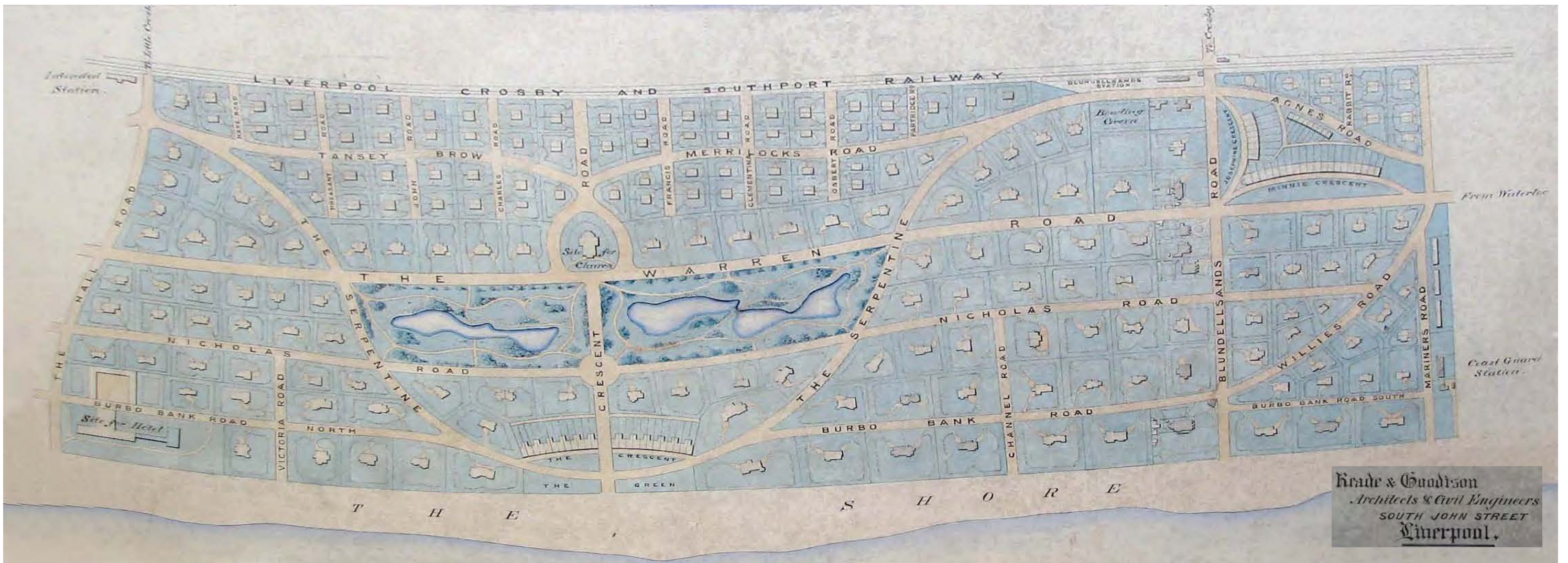
BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



1937 Ordnance Survey mapping reproduced from Sefton Council's archives

BLUNDELSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Blundellsands Estate
1865



BLUNDELLSANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

ORIGINAL WATERCOLOUR PLAN AND PERSPECTIVE DRAWING
Donald Insall Associates Ltd. November 2006