CLIFFTOWN ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

Planning Permission is needed for development which materially affects the appearance or use of buildings or land. This can include, for example, re-roofing and altering windows, painting over facing brickwork of any part of a building which fronts a highway, altering and constructing a means of enclosure which fronts a highway (walls, gates, fences, etc.).

No fee is needed for a planning application required by the Direction. The Direction will be reviewed from time to time.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Listed Buildings in Clifftown are shown on the plan. These have special architectural or historic interest in their own right and, in addition to planning permission, require listed building consent for internal and external works (see the Listed Buildings leaflet).

GRANTS

Clifftown is one of the Borough's most important historic areas and has received much financial support over the years for repairs, reinstatements and enhancement. The restoration of boundary railings, balconies and other features has been especially targeted by recent grant schemes. The Conservation Grants leaflet outlines grants currently available.

ADVICE AND CONTACTS

Officers from the Technical Services Department are available to offer practical and technical advice on conservation and the need for consent. Contacts and sources of further information are given in a separate conservation leaflet.

INTRODUCTION

Clifftown was designated a Conservation Area in 1968 (and later extended to its present boundaries) because it has special architectural and historic interest and a unique character which needs to be preserved and enhanced.

It has an important place in our history - the Georgian Royal Terrace and the Victorian Cliff Town Estate mark the first major attempts to develop Southend as a seaside resort and as a residential town. And its building styles and planned layout overlooking the estuary give the area its own charm and character.

This leaflet describes the main features that give Clifftown its special interest, and outlines additional controls on development that apply specifically to the area. It is one of a series of leaflets forming the Council's Conservation Guide and should be read, in particular, with the Conservation Area Guidance leaflet. Together, these leaflets will help residents make informed decisions about development at their properties and so, help to preserve and enhance Clifftown's special character.

CLIFFTOWN'S SPECIAL INTEREST

The Conservation Area has four distinct sections. Each has its own particular character which together provide Clifftown's unique quality:

GEORGIAN NEW SOUTHEND

1-15 Royal Terrace and the Royal Hotel were built in the 1790's to be the nucleus of New South End, a fashionable seaside resort to rival Margate, Brighton and Weymouth. The Shrubbery fronting the houses was laid out as a private garden for residents and Royal Mews to the rear were their stables.

The Terrace was named "Royal" following visits by Princess Caroline and for a short time attracted some of the fashionable society. But difficult access from London by road and river and other factors discouraged further development until construction of the railway in 1856. It was, therefore, the only Georgian terrace to be built in Southend.

The terrace was designed to have an imposing 'palace' frontage on a prominent site overlooking the Shrubbery and estuary. The return frontage to the High Street, the stables in Royal Mews and the remainder of Royal Terrace complement the principal Georgian frontage.

Important aspects of the Georgian design include:

- materials (stock brick with rendered ground floors),
- uniform cornice line and fenestration with emphasised end and centre properties,
- a 'piano nobile' of enlarged first floor windows,
- full-width first floor balconies and canopies (possibly added shortly after completion of the terrace, each with slightly different detailing).

The design emphasised the two end properties (Royal Hotel and no.15) with, for instance, increased height and a slight projection forward. But the main emphasis was given to the two centre properties - note their painted timber pilasters, deeper cornices, enlarged second floor windows, and more ornate door cases.

At the west end of Royal Terrace, nos. 19 and 20 also date from this Georgian period. The separation of Royal Terrace from Clifton Terrace reflects the original estate boundary and the exclusiveness of the Georgian development.
CLIFF TOWN - PLANNED ESTATE

The London-Tilbury-Southend railway was completed in 1856 and provided the impetus for the next major step in the town’s development. The railway developer leased 40 acres from Daniel Scratton for development.

Scratton imposed strict design controls on the first phase of development which resulted in a unique example of mid-Victorian non-conformist church.

The development started to attract residents from London either to retire or commute and provided accommodation for increasing numbers of visitors brought by the railway. Among its notable residents were the mountaineer Edward Whymper (the first to conquer the Matterhorn) and Benjamin Waugh who founded the NSPCC.

The different classes of terrace have design variations, reflecting their status and position in the estate, but within a common design theme. Some are three storey plus basement; others are two storey plus basement. Most have cantilevered porches and balconies. The estate, however, has a remarkable degree of design unity provided by:

- uniform brickwork - stock brick with pale yellow brick detailing to openings and bay,
- recessed arched porches and doors,
- sliding sash timber windows,
- roofs of terraces in slate with hip ends and prominent chimney stacks,
- similar cast iron balconies, boundary railings and gates.

The London-Tilbury-Southend railway was completed in 1856 and provided the impetus for the next major step in the town’s development. The estate provided five classes of terraced housing, including shops, with unified designs and materials. Its layout around open spaces, gardens and carefully aligned streets enabled estuary views from every house and many public parts of the estate. Despite later infill development and tree planting, these views remain an important component of the estate’s character.

The rear elevations of some terraces are visible to the public from streets, mews or alleys and their treatment needs to respect the traditional designs, materials and boundary enclosures.

The estate’s visual relationship to the railway - the boundary wall to Scratton Road and the view of the station canopy (outside the conservation area) from Nelson Street - is also an important link with its origins.

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The rail town from Royal Terrace. Its original stabling remains in Clifton Mews to the rear, and has an unusual arrangement of paired stables with hipped slate roofs and stock brick elevations.

1-15 Nelson Street was designed as the estate’s terrace of shops. It echoes the residential terraces with its similar materials, detailing and ironwork but is given greater design emphasis in its detailing. Note the symmetrical treatment of the terrace, its prominent gables and projecting eaves, the continuous balcony above the fascia, the original elegant shopfront at no. 15 and the raised Yorkstone pavement.

Clifftown Church is an important focal point for the estate with a typical gothic design and materials for a mid-Victorian non-conformist church.

Clifton Terrace, built to a different design shortly after the main estate, shows the importance of the cliff-top position with more imposing detailing. The wide roadway fronting the terrace provided a turning circle for horse-drawn vehicles stopped from entering Royal Terrace. Its original stabling remains in Clifton Mews to the rear, and has an unusual arrangement of paired stables with hipped slate roofs and stock brick elevations.

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