

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

XXV MONTAGUE STREET

Location and Topography

Set back from the seafront some 150 metres at its eastern end, Montague Street leads westwards from the centre of town towards Heene. Not quite parallel to the seafront, which curves away to the south slightly, Montague Street at its western end is set back some 200 metres from the esplanade. Generally, the slope of the land is across Montague Street falling to the seafront with Montague Street itself more or less level, undulating slightly about the 5 metre contour.

Origins and Development of the Area

Leading westwards from the centre of town towards Heene, the route of Montague Street was originally Cross Lane or West Lane. Although named Montague Street after Montague Place by 1814, the western section remained Cross Lane until circa 1820. In the 19th century, pockets of development occurred along the street from the centre of town westwards and had reached West Street by circa 1825 with a notable group of buildings at Caledonian Place. In the 1880s, the street was made up through to Rowlands Road. Montague Street emerged as an important commercial and retailing street with a lively character which it retains today. Pedestrianisation in 1968 from the centre of town to Crescent Road has enhanced its lively bustling character and reputation as a shopping street. Towards the western end, Worthing's largest cinema, The Plaza, opened in 1933. The art deco style building is now a bingo hall. Otherwise, the western half of this section of Montague Street is characterised by small individual specialist shops ranging from charity shops through to local family businesses with reputations for quality.

Architectural Townscape and Landscape Qualities

Montague Street east of Crescent Road

This section of Montague Street is an important part of the town centre shopping area. Wholly pedestrianised, it is a corridor type urban space enclosed by two to four storey buildings on both sides of the street. In this section of the street, there are two listed buildings and several other buildings have considerable local historic or architectural interest. The north side of the street especially has good townscape quality. The quality and character established by the buildings is to some extent eroded by intrusive street furniture, several unsympathetic shopfronts and advertisements and the poor design and inappropriate materials of some post war building. During shopping hours, the street is bustling with pedestrians; it is a lively retail street which attracts people from Worthing and beyond. Montague Street is also a popular destination for many of the resort's visitors. Upper floors of buildings are used for purposes ancillary to the retail uses.

Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- A common building line at the back of the pavement.
- Cohesive paving materials.
- A vertical emphasis to front elevations.
- Original architectural detailing on 19th century properties including string courses, parapets, slate roofs, quoins and timber sliding sash windows.
- Elevations in stucco or red brick.

Enhancement Opportunities:

- Encourage owners and occupiers to implement schemes of repair, maintenance and external decoration which complement the street scene as well as being appropriate to the individual properties.
- Exercise strict control over unauthorised advertisements, for example, A-boards on the pavement.
- Encourage the provision of planting tubs, beds and boats and attractive co-ordinated street furniture at the same time having regard to the need to avoid physically obstruction and visual clutter.
- Rationalise the provision of junction boxes and posts for signs and CCTV camera so as to reduce physically obstruction and visual clutter.
- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic shopfronts and signs with shopfronts and signs that respect the individual buildings and the character and appearance of the street scene.

Byron Road, Rowlands Road and Montague Street west of Crescent Road

This westernmost section of Montague Street is joined with the easternmost section of Rowlands Road. Moving from west to east, the distance between the buildings on either side of the street narrows and the height of the buildings increases from two to four storeys. This funnelling effect creates an increasingly strong sense of enclosure. There are slight kinks in the highway which allow changing views and perspectives of the front elevations. Located on the edge of the town centre, the area has experienced relatively little redevelopment and most of the original 19th century buildings remain. Almost all the buildings in this area have historic or architectural interest to some degree. Many original architectural features remain. Ground floor uses are predominantly retail serving the day to day needs of the local population and the specialist requirements of town centre shoppers. There are a significant

number of pubs, cafes and restaurants and many upper floors are in residential use. The area is heavily parked, particularly during work hours but rarely is it busy with traffic and there is a large purposeful pedestrian flow. The mix of uses encourages activity outside shopping hours when the local population and general visitors visit the pubs and restaurants, the bingo hall and the night club. Moving west to east, there is also a shift in the character of the area from the residential neighbourhood quality to a level of increased activity and retail uses more clearly associated with the pedestrianised section of Montague Street. Indeed, in the section of street immediately west of Crescent Road, it is noticeable that pedestrians tend to claim occupation of the carriageway even though it is not pedestrianised. This part of the street is narrow and has a particularly intimate character and attractive appearance. It is apparent that retailers in this part of the street co-operate to promote the special qualities of this area.

From the west end of Montague Street, at its junction with Eriswell Road and Western Place, continuing westwards the street name is Rowlands Road. On the south side of the street are shops with residential accommodation over. Some examples of good shopfronts are to be found in this parade. The street scene is dominated, however, by the Gala Bingo Club on the north side. An art deco building of considerable massing, this was originally Worthing's largest ever cinema, The Plaza. At the junction of Byron Road with Rowlands Road, a terrace of three large houses in yellow brick with attractive detailing all under slate roofs strongly defines this corner with elegant poise.

Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- Red brick or stucco finish to elevations.
- Original architectural features such as cant bays, timber sliding sash windows, slate roofs, string courses, cornices, parapets, plaster mouldings, pilasters, bracketed eaves, original timber shopfronts, barge boards, and finials.
- A mixture of short terraces and single plot developments built on a common building line at the back of the pavement.

Enhancement Opportunities:

- Encourage owners and occupiers to implement schemes of repair, maintenance and external decoration that complement the street scene and terraces as well as being appropriate to the individual properties.
- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic shopfronts and signs with shopfronts and signs that respect the individual buildings and the character and appearance of the street scene.

Graham Road

The only section of Graham Road within the Conservation Area is the two storey 19th century terrace formed by Nos. 3 to 39 on the west side. This terrace has considerable local historic and architectural interest. The remaining Victorian properties in the street, however, are important for setting the context and establishing the character of the street scene. Characteristic Victorian features largely remain intact. Residential use remains often in single family occupation and the closure of the south end of the road to vehicles ensures that there is relatively little traffic or parking in the narrow street. Graham Road is a quiet residential street adjoining the town's main shopping street.

Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- Two storey terraced properties built on a common building line.
- Stucco elevations with detailing including a plain band bracketed eaves and plaster mouldings to window and door openings.
- Ground floor cant bays with sliding timber sash windows, three lights at first floor featuring slender glazing bars and horn details.
- Recessed doorways with blind window recess above.
- Original front boundary walls and piers in the balustrade form.

Enhancement Opportunities:

- Encourage owners and occupiers to implement a scheme of repair, maintenance and decoration which complements the terrace 3-39 Graham Road as a unified architectural composition.
- Retain, maintain and where necessary reinstate front boundary walls which reflect the original appearance of the walls.

Crescent Road

The southern section of Crescent Road is a one-way street leading traffic northwards from West Buildings and the seafront. The area is on the fringe of the shopping centre and only about half of the ground floor frontages are in retail use as specialist retailers, cafes and restaurants. Otherwise, the use of the relatively large properties is mainly residential, usually in the form of flats. The area was gradually developed during the 19th century and much of the original built fabric remains. Generally built to three storeys, properties form a contiguous largely stucco frontage at the back of the pavement which creates a sense of enclosure and an attractive street scene. Bays and sliding timber sash windows allied to the tall properties on narrow plots creates a vertical rhythm in the street scene. Many of the original architectural features remain

but some of the properties have been damaged by unsympathetic alterations, such as concrete tiled roofs or modern window replacements while others are in a poor state of repair. On the west side of the street, the Salvation Army Citadel, erected in 1912, provides a strong focal point to the street scene and is flanked on the north side by buildings which although smaller in scale have particularly fine stucco detailing. Further north on the east side of Crescent Road is a well balanced group of three detached villas on a curved building line set back from the road which gives them a strong architectural identity as a unified composition.

Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

- Terraced properties built on a common building line at the back of the pavement except for Nos. 30, 32 and 34 Crescent Road.
- Elevations finished in stucco.
- Original architectural detailing such as bows or bays with timber sliding sash windows some featuring slender glazing bars, string courses, cornices, decorated eaves, parapets, and mouldings to door and window openings.
- Slate roofs.

Enhancement Opportunities:

- Encourage owners and occupiers to implement schemes of repair, maintenance and decoration which complement the street scene and terraces as well as being appropriate to the individual buildings.
- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic shopfronts and signs with shopfronts and signs that respect the individual buildings, and the character and appearance of the street scene.

Gratwicke Road

The only section of Gratwicke Road within the Conservation Area is the terrace of houses Nos. 2 to 32 on the east side of the road. These buildings all have local historic or architectural interest and although predominantly of a 19th century residential character, there are a number of specialist ground floor retail uses attractively accommodated near the junction with Montague Street.

Architectural historic and townscape elements which should be preserved:

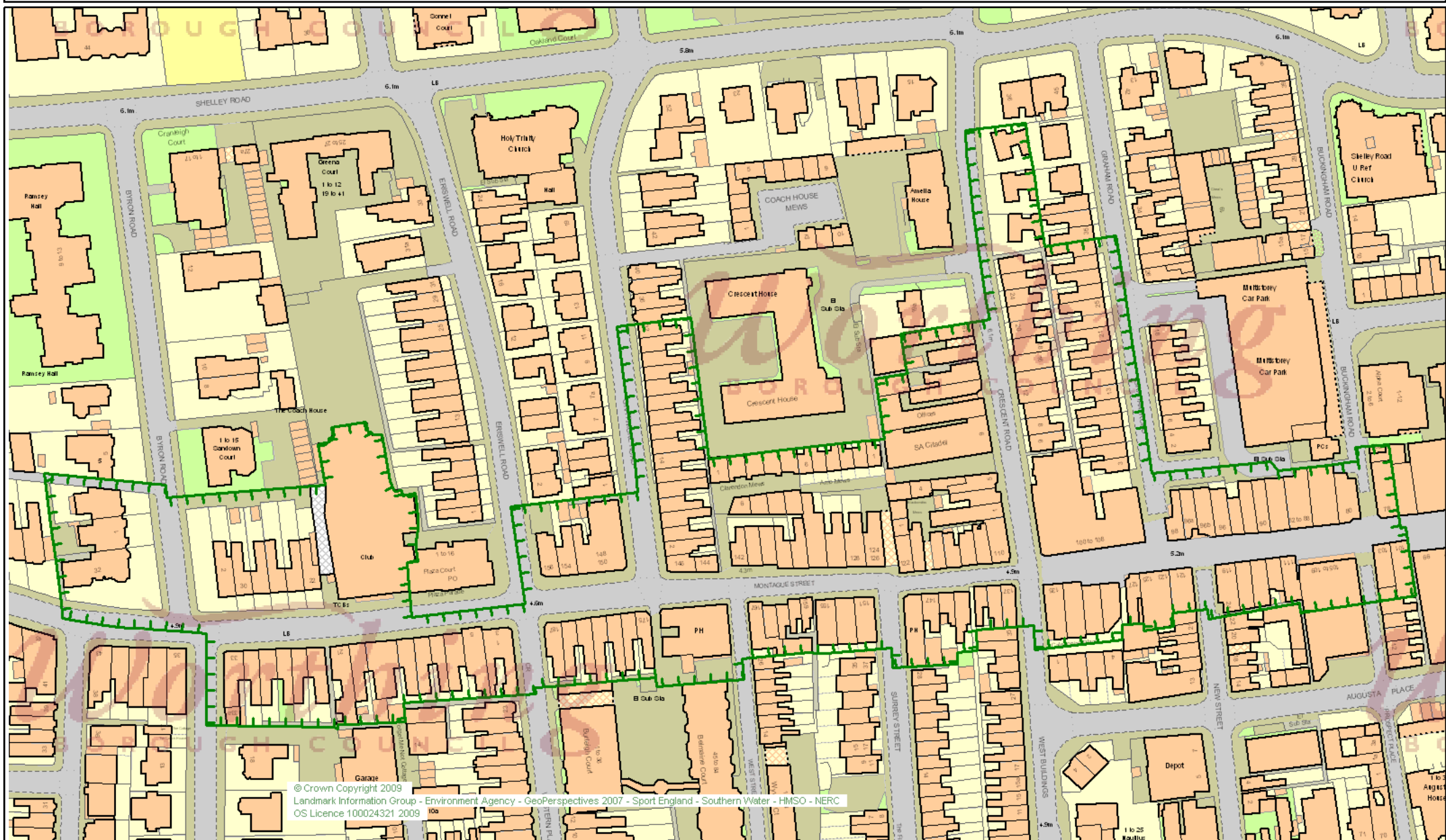
- Buildings built at the back of the pavement.
- A vertical architectural emphasis in the street scene deriving particularly from the fenestration pattern and narrow plot widths.

- Slate roofs.
- Timber sliding sash windows.

Enhancement Opportunities:

- Encourage owners and occupiers to implement schemes of repair, maintenance and external decoration which complement the composition of terraces and the street scene overall as well as being appropriate to the individual properties.

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