

*Designation Statement*

# Clytha Conservation Area



June 1999

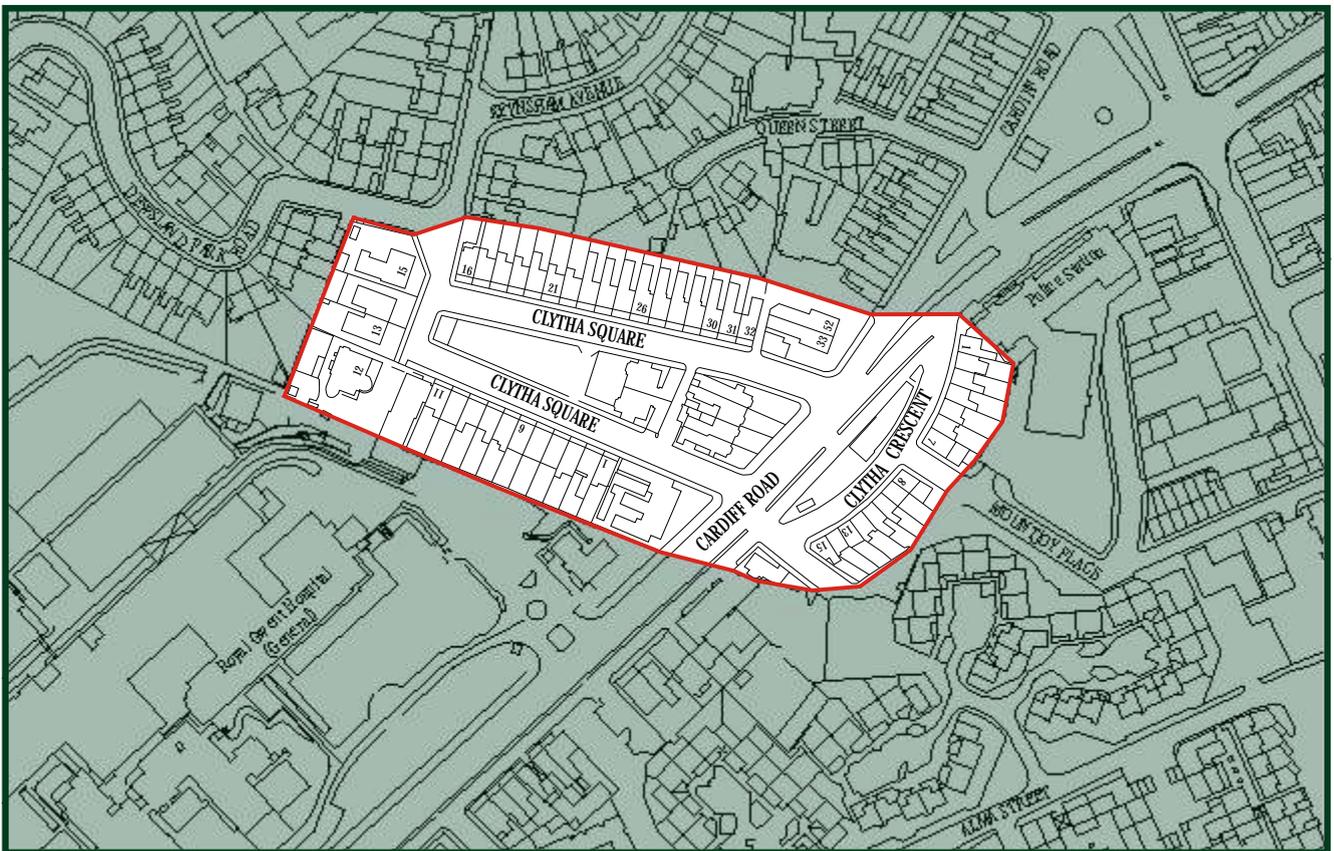
# *The Clytha Conservation Area*

## *Designation Procedure:*

A conservation area is defined by s.69(1) as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Conservation areas may be designated by a local planning authority or the Secretary of State. A resolution to designate an area should subsequently be advertised locally (usually via an advertisement in the local press) and a statutory notice placed in the London Gazette. The notices must provide sufficient detail to enable the area to be identified (normally a schedule of properties) together with a note (Para 25, Circ.. 61/96, s.70(7) 1990 Act) outlining the effects of designation.

## *Historical Background*

The Clytha conservation area is composed of two distinctive areas of contemporary Victorian housing straddling Cardiff Road. Clytha Square and Crescent compose a neighbourhood of planned development dating from the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The continuous terraced development of three stories framing the southern and northern sides of Clytha Square were constructed between 1870 and 1880. Clytha Crescent on the south-eastern side of Cardiff Road also dates from the early 1870's. No reference is made to the Square or Crescent in the 1861 census, the first references appearing in 1871. A plan of the Square and Crescent survives from 1876. By that date the Square and Crescent have assumed their existing form, with properties in the northern side of the Square still under construction.



## Character Analysis

### *Clytha Square & Crescent 1876*



### *Clytha Square*

The Square and Crescent form an area of coherent mid C19 residential character. The square is composed of predominantly three-storey, terraced housing with stuccoed Italianate elevations, four-paned sashes and slated hipped roofs with bracketed eaves and brick stacks. The Square is approximately trapezoid in shape, with a wedge-shaped open area at its heart. This open space contains important mature deciduous trees (predominantly Lime) which are protected by a Preservation Order. The urban morphology of the square and Crescent compose a fine public space which is unique in the Town. The use of stucco typifies mid-C19 development in Newport (Bridge Street, Park Square, Kensington Place, Victoria Place) but Clytha represents the most impressive example of planned mid-C19 development.

The use of distinctive render detailing unifies the various frontages within the conservation area and illustrates the



Historic social hierarchy. The most elaborate detailing survives on the southern terrace which is probably the earliest housing in the conservation area (Ca1870) with hornless four paned sashes (some with arched heads) and a variety of original two and four-panelled doors. The northern terrace and Cardiff Road frontage which is composed of semi-detached and short runs of terraced

mid-nineteenth century, three-storey housing, (enclosing the eastern end of the Square) similarly retain raised architraves, platbands and bracketed eaves. In contrast to the southern terrace, these properties have canted bays extending to second floor level, with parapet detail. Window and door openings are emphasised by the use of projecting reeded, flat and segmental hood details.



Whilst the Square is dominated and defined in character by the classically-derived, stuccoed Italianate Victorian terracing on the north and south sides, the stylistic transition in the later Victorian period towards Gothic and Freestyle is manifested at the western end of the Square. Numbers 13-14 comprise a pair of yellow brick villas in a Gothic derived idiom with Bathstone window surrounds and steeply pitched gabled roofs. Whilst adjacent to this pair is number 12, the finest detached Italianate villa in the Square. Both developments were complete by 1876. This property has suffered from the removal of the eaves brackets and chimney stacks. At the eastern end of the Square to the rear of properties fronting Cardiff Road a semi-detached pair of late Victorian, weakly Italianate brick villas have been introduced. These properties are not indicated as plots on the 1876 plan, instead their plots form part of the sylvan glade planting at the centre of the square. Whilst the infilling of this important space is regrettable, such development may illustrate the declining social status of

the Square in the later Victorian period. These properties do provide a useful screen to the rear elevations of the Cardiff Road frontage and have largely escaped external alteration.



## Clytha Crescent



The two segmental terraces of eight houses forming the eastern side of Clytha Crescent, are more subdued in character in comparison with properties on the western side of Cardiff Road. Their two-storey scale and more modest detailing reflects their lesser social status. Each unit has two six paned sashes at first floor level set within a render architrave with a projecting reeded hood over. At ground floor level are a coupled pair of flatly arch headed, four-paned sashes also set within a rendered



architrave. Each has a keystone which intersects a string course at intermediate floor level. Many of the properties retain original three panelled doors with rectangular fanlight over. The terraces are symmetrically disposed about Mountjoy Place which bisects the Crescent. The formerly open area between the Crescent and Cardiff Road has been partially infilled by a pair of late Victorian/Edwardian yellow brick villas, which have suffered from extensive inappropriate alterations. This has severely weakened the impact of this carefully composed circus when viewed from Cardiff Road. The architectural cohesion of the Square and Crescent has also suffered as a consequence.

The linear space separating the Crescent and Square is occupied by the busy principal route way of Cardiff Road. The Road is broad with a central pedestrian refuge and acts as a significant barrier between the two elements of



*62 Cardiff Road*

the conservation area. The substantial scale of the three storey properties on the western side of the Road (Nos 52-88 Cardiff Road) provides a strongly defined edge to this part of the conservation area. The junction of Cardiff Road, Herbert Street and Clytha Square is softened by mature Lime trees which line the carriageway.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses*



*Clytha Crescent*

The coherent character of the conservation area is derived from the repetitive use of detailing and the restricted palette of materials used. The restrained formality of the conservation area engenders a sense of civic dignity. Whilst there is limited variety, in terms of the use of architectural style and materials, nevertheless subtle differences in detailing within the Square itself and Cardiff Road lend an unexpected depth to the architectural character. It is essential that recent works which erode the integrity of the conservation area are arrested. In particular, the replacement of historic joinery (doors, sash windows) by inferior substitutes and the removal of stucco detailing has proved particularly damaging. It is of paramount importance that all additions are carried out in sympathy with the character of the parent building. The rear elevations of the terraces on the southern side of the Square have been treated with total disregard to the original historic character.

The designation of the Clytha conservation area must be reflected in the adoption of the highest architectural standards in all new works. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to “pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the area.” In particular, the demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area will be resisted. Circular 61/96 sets out a number of tests which should be applied to evaluate proposals for demolition. It is the intention of the local planning authority to rigorously apply these tests.

It is not simply the buildings themselves which contribute towards the special historic character of the conservation area, but also the spaces between them. In this instance the formally composed street frontages enclose important predominantly linear spaces in the public realm. These spaces are significantly enhanced by mature deciduous street trees which provide a counterpoint to the formality of the built frontages by their irregular nebulous form.



*Mature trees are significant to local character*

## *Enhancement*

The accurate restoration of period detail and use of appropriate materials and finishes is the most obvious approach to securing the enhancement of the conservation area. The Council will encourage the appropriate repair of properties by making grants available under the Historic Buildings Grant Programme. The potential for partnership funded Townscheme grants will be investigated with Cadw. The



enhancement of the public realm by the use of appropriate finishes and street furniture will be sought where replacement schemes are to be implemented. The maintenance of existing street trees and potential for additional planting will also be investigated. It is regrettable that the

enclosed space at the centre of the Square is not in public ownership, since this precludes the significant enhancement of this crucial site. The present railings enclosing the area are utilitarian in character and are thought to date from the turn of the century.

## *Relevant Policy*

Government policy set out at Circular 61/96 "Planning and the Historic Environment" clearly defines the statutory responsibilities of the local planning authority and provides a technical digest concerning specific aspects of building repair/alteration. The emerging Unitary Development Plan implements the broad themes set out within the Circular through clear and concise policies. The Conservation policies within the Unitary Development Plan represents an explicit statement of the expectations of the planning authority regarding management of the historic environment.

## *Key Considerations in the Clytha Conservation Area*

*✍* Does the proposal respect the architectural form and detailing of the original building?

*In terms of scale, articulation, massing, modelling, composition, materials*

*✍* Does the proposal intrude into or obstruct key views or vistas through the conservation area?

*The perception and enjoyment of the conservation area is derived from the specific way in which buildings frame space. Development can be used to reinforce existing character but if used inappropriately can significantly detract from the special historic character*

*✍* Does the proposal add to the vitality of the conservation area?

*for example by reusing an existing building or introducing a complimentary use. Uses which would conflict with existing neighbouring uses would serve to undermine the character of the conservation area. The demolition of traditional buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area will not be acceptable.*

## *Schedule of Properties within the Clytha Conservation area*

Cardiff Road

Numbers 52,54,56,58,60,62,66,68

Clytha Crescent

Numbers 1 - 15 Incl, Transport House

Clytha Square

Numbers 1-33 Inclusive

The Grove, The Trees

Herbert Street

No.32

## Householder Design Guidance



*A 4 paned sash window typical of Clytha Square - Note hornless meeting rail*

## Historic Joinery



Historic Joinery should always be respected and retained as an important element of period detail, which lends the conservation area its distinctive character. Within the Square and Crescent a variety of panelled doors survive. Surviving doors should always be repaired and not replaced by inferior modern alternatives. Where doors



have been lost, it is strongly recommended that a copy is made of a historic door in the locality. Grant aid from the County Borough may be available to subsidise the cost of replacement joinery.

Sash windows are exclusively found throughout the conservation area. The original sashes are hornless and may be two, four or six paned. It is important that

surviving sashes are retained, repaired and refurbished and not replaced by crude modern approximations. UPVC windows are entirely inappropriate to the special character of the conservation area. Where windows have been lost and replaced by inappropriate alternatives, their replacement by an appropriate sash type is encouraged. Grant assistance may be available to encourage the repair and reinstatement of sashes.

## Stucco Detailing



*A fine original door and surround*

Render detailing is an essential element of the predominantly Italianate character of the conservation area. A significant erosion of stucco detailing has occurred in the postwar period and it is essential that this is arrested. Not only does such alteration erode period character but also significantly depreciates property values. In turn, inappropriate alterations discourage investment and hasten decline. The northern side of the Square has suffered drastic alteration which has considerably weakened the cohesive character of this part of the conservation area. The accurate reinstatement of stucco detailing is encouraged and grant assistance may be available for such work.

## *Railings and Boundary Treatments*



*Ornate cast railings*



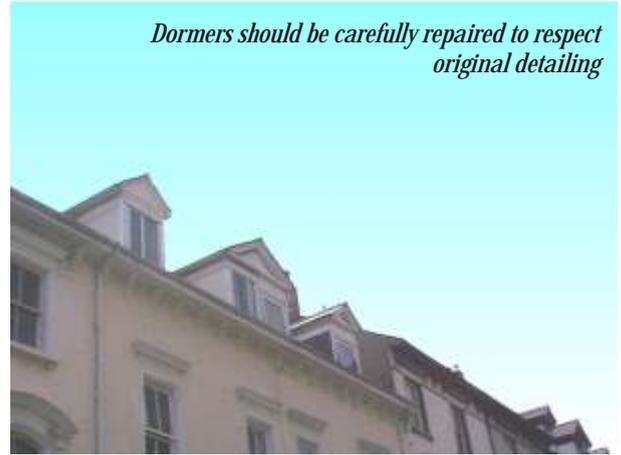
*Simple spiked wrought iron railings*

Boundary walls and railings are part of the cherished streetscene and should always be retained and repaired. Within the conservation area is a variety of different walling; including exposed natural stonework, stucco and buff brickwork. Decorative cast and wrought iron railings add a distinctive element within the streetscene. The repair or reinstatement of railings and boundary walling may be eligible for grant assistance from the County Borough.



*Original wrought iron railings*

## *Roofs and Chimneys*



*Dormers should be carefully repaired to respect original detailing*

The consistent use of natural slate roofing serves to unify the conservation area. The roofscape is punctuated by substantial multiple-flued chimney stacks with a variety of pots. On the southern side of the Square are a series of



*Clytha Square - south side*

later pedimented dormers, which have been disfigured by modifications. Such dormer windows are not to be encouraged as they disrupt the shallow pitched roofs of the Italianate properties. The removal of incongruous mutilated dormers is to be encouraged. Where fenestration is essential

to the existing use of a roofspace, small flush-set conservation-type rooflights should be installed on secondary roof slopes. The repair and reinstatement of slate roof covering and chimney stacks is encouraged and eligible for grant assistance. The demolition of chimney stacks considerably detracts from the character of the conservation area and should not be entertained. It is recommended that the Council's Conservation Officer is consulted prior to any external works being undertaken to ensure that no statutory consent is required.



*Richmond House - 12 Clytha Square*