

Albert Street Study

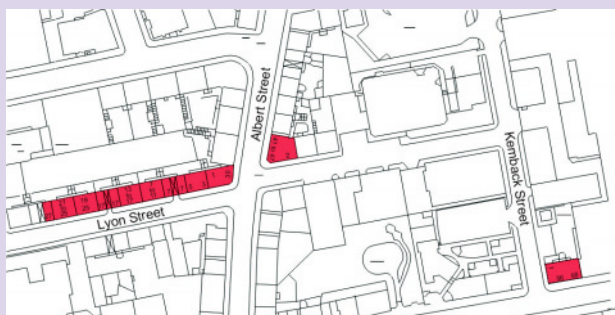
ISSUE NUMBER 1 : FEBRUARY 2002

Historical Background

The Albert Street area of Dundee was primarily developed during the period 1850 - 1900. The Dundee Burgh (Dens Road Area) Statutory List produced by Historic Scotland gives a selection of Albert Street area buildings and the date of their construction.

Address	Date Built	Category
41-57 Albert Street and 2 Raglan Street	1850	B
56-58 Arbroath Road and 1 Kemback Street	1865-70	B
1-31 Lyon Street and 30 Albert Street	1866-67	B

Plan showing position of Listed Buildings



Historically it formed the principal northeast route out of Dundee to Forfar and beyond. The area bordered by Baxter Park in the east, Morgan Academy to the north, Arbroath Road to the south and Dens Road to west, was built up as a mixed use area, that is to say that uses such as residential, commercial and industrial were built during this period next to one another. Its development was privately led by local entrepreneurs who were involved in the development of the jute industry. The Baxter family, then (the mid 19th century) the biggest employers in Dundee, were the only textile

company to build housing for employees in the Albert Street area. The property situated in Lyon Street, in 1871 housed 648 people in 30 x 2 room, 73 x 3 room and 1 x 4 room flats. This average of over six persons per flat gives an indication of how densely developed the Albert Street area had become. The development of Albert Street as a shopping parade from Arbroath Road to Dura Street was completed by the early 1880s.

The Impact of the Motor Vehicle on Albert Street

The development of the motor vehicle from the early 20th century led to local authorities throughout Great Britain developing a road strategy which could accommodate the growth of traffic. James Thompson became an architect in 1904 and city engineer in 1906. His development plan of that period devised the northern bypass which became the Kingsway. By the early 1950s a land use plan prepared by planning consultants W Dobson Chapman and Partners recommended that a central area ring road be constructed. This project was only completed in 1992. It was also envisaged that between the ring road and the Kingsway, arterial routes would run to the northwest (Lochee Road) and to the northeast (Albert Street) linking these road networks.

The arterials were proposed against the background of an expanding local economy, associated with a sharp rise in car ownership. What originally was selective road widening became large scale road proposals. With the reorganisation of local government in Scotland in 1975 the pace of implementing the arterial routes gathered momentum. Looking at the Albert Street area large swathes of properties were acquired in the vicinity of North Erskine Street, Arthurstone Terrace, Dura Street and

Mains Loan to facilitate the construction of what became known as the northeast arterial route. Due to restrictions placed on local government funding the construction of the roads projects was delayed. Some properties were acquired, but properties within the landtake of the road which were not acquired became difficult to sell or to mortgage. This planning blight had a ruinous effect on not only the road landtake but also on adjoining properties.

The Changing Scene

By the early 1990s with the United Nations holding a conference on environment and development, known as the Earth Summit, Agenda 21 was developed as a programme for action to be taken from now into the 21st Century. Agenda 21 recognised the interdependence of environmental, social, health and economic issues. It was against this background of sustainability that the future of the Albert Street area was re-examined. In February 1997 Dundee City council took the decision to abandon the northeast arterial route.

The Way Forward

Major concern had arisen in recent years regarding the decline in the Albert Street shopping area. This stemmed from a deterioration in the quality and appearance of many shops in the area and from a significant level of shop vacancies, particularly in the southern section. In November 1998 the Planning and Transportation Committee authorised the commencement of the Albert Street Study, to address these problems in light of the northeast arterial now no longer being part of the long term plan for the area. The study involved the following main elements:

- A physical appraisal of the study area.
- An analysis of retail and related floorspace change within the centre over the period since 1985.

- A socio economic profile of the study area.
- Consultation with parties and organisations having an interest in the area.
- Questionnaire surveys of study area residents and those shopping in or visiting the centre.
- Proposals and recommendations.

The study was carried out in-house by the Planning and Transportation Department.

The proposals included the following:

1 Urban Design Approach

Consideration was given to the scope to create an improved residential environment within the Study Area. The feasibility of removing less attractive and under occupied tenement blocks will be examined. These could be replaced by lower density housing offering better amenities. This offers the opportunity to improve the local housing stock while simultaneously enhancing the environment and reducing the level of vacant tenement stock. This could also assist in offsetting pressure for on-street parking.

2 Improvement of Existing Tenement Accommodation

Encouragement will be given to the improvement/conversion of existing tenement properties to create amenities not presently offered by such accommodation, eg (balconies, better space standards, better sound insulation).

3 Opportunity Sites

A number of major opportunity sites exist within the study area - mainly former industrial properties which are now either vacant or largely unused. The key examples are as follows:

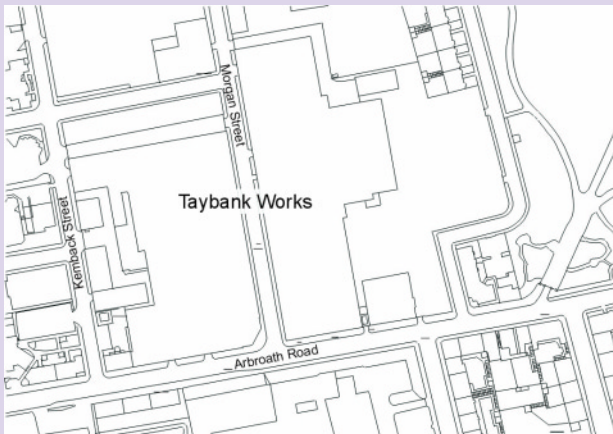
- **Manhattan Works, Dundonald Street - Planning Application No D22474**

This proposal on a gross site area of 3 hectares provides 11,137 m² of office floorspace and car parking facilities for 64 cars.

- **Taybank Works (Tay Spinners Ltd), Arbroath Road**
- **Taybank Works (Old Powerloom Factory), Arbroath Road - Planning Application No D24938**

This proposal is to convert the former high mill into 18 flats and to provide 43 houses within the remaining part of the site.

Location Plan



It is not appropriate to be over-prescriptive as to the future use of such sites. There may be a certain windfall element to the opportunities which may present themselves and while a resumption of industrial use may be acceptable, low/medium density housing would be a suitable alternative, as in Taybank Works.

4 Property in City Council Ownership

Throughout the Study Area there exist a number of vacant properties in City Council ownership which were acquired in connection with subsequently abandoned road building proposals. Concerns have been expressed regarding the maintenance and appearance of certain of these properties pending the resolution

of their longer term future. The condition of such properties has also raised concerns regarding children's safety. In the light of this situation it is proposed that:

a Buildings not to be Retained

In such instances, where there is no imminent prospect of redevelopment, consideration should be given to its possible demolition and to making the cleared site available for suitable temporary use, eg car parking.

b Buildings to be Retained

Every effort should be made to maintain such property in reasonably attractive condition. While the need for security is fully recognised, alternatives to the boarding up of such property should be explored.

Two site planning briefs for new housing development have been prepared by the Planning and Transportation Department.

These are located at Victoria Street/Albert Street and Mollison Street/Eliza Street (see overleaf).

5 Facade Enhancement Grant Scheme

In April 2000 the Planning and Transportation Department, after receiving committee approval, instigated a scheme which gives grant assistance to shopkeepers to improve their shopfronts. This is seen as a positive step to improve the appearance of this inner city area of Dundee. Certain sections of the street have been targeted and to date four shops have been improved.

6 The current situation

The next stage currently being examined by consultants appointed by Dundee City Council is what is termed Inner "Baxter" Suburb (Stobswell). The vision for Stobswell is to build on the established character and attributes of

Molison Street/Eliza Street Brief

The backland can be transformed to a communal landscaped amenity area, also accommodating visitor parking.

Nine flats in a new building to complete the Molison Street/Eliza Street corner with lawn/drying green and 12 associated car parking spaces.



A house, 8 flats and 12 car parking spaces at 8-18 Mains Loan in addition to the retention of the four existing shops. This demonstrates how two existing tenements of 12 small flats could be refurbished to create eight larger units including four maisonettes, with large south facing balconies facing over a large communal green area. A house would be created incorporating the accommodation over the pend access to the former plumbers premises.

Six lock-ups in the backland area to be available either for adjacent residents or to relocate the several existing stores on the site.



Six family townhouses with integral garages and front and rear gardens on the site of the existing Wallace's Bakery on Eliza Street.

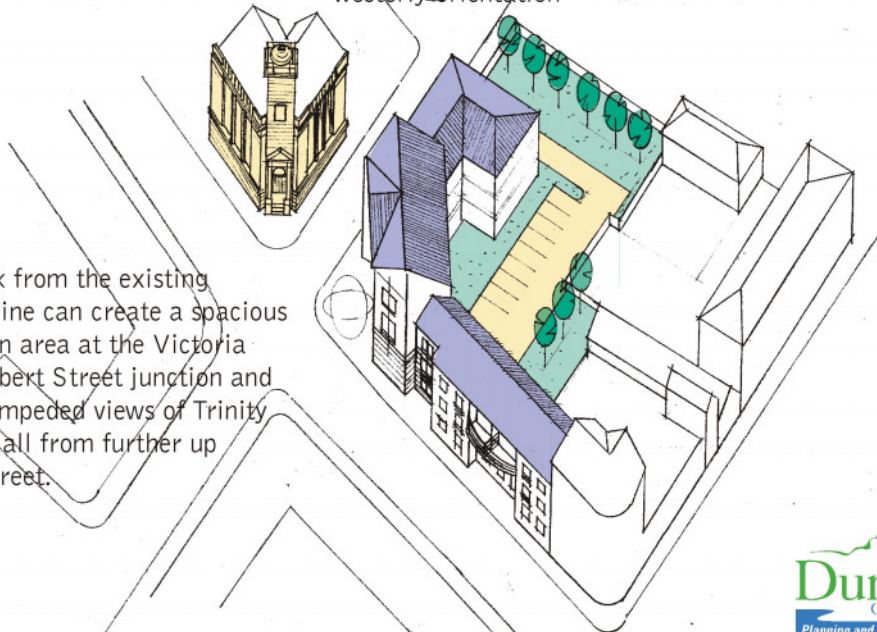
Refurbishment of the Dura Street block of the Wallace's premises to allow vehicular servicing of shops from the rear and improvement of the upper levels to provide two flats with dedicated parking in the backland area accessed by a new footpath.

NOTE : This sketch is for illustrative purposes only

Victoria Street/Albert Street Brief

Car parking for up to 15 cars can be accessed from Victoria Street and a garden/amenity area of around 450m² enjoys a south-westerly orientation

A setback from the existing building line can create a spacious pedestrian area at the Victoria Street/Albert Street junction and allow unimpeded views of Trinity Church Hall from further up Albert Street.



NOTE : This sketch is for illustrative purposes only

this traditional Victorian neighbourhood. It is hoped to create a vibrant sustainable inner city neighbourhood suited to the 21st Century. The intention is to alter the housing profile through the creation of larger homes, by the intergration of smaller flats to form larger dwellings. Other housing initiatives will also be examined.

Some of the objectives of the study will look at demand for housing in the neighbourhood. Also to produce a regeneration framework, that will identify land use and mix within the retail/residential/industry and recreational sectors. It is anticipated that the first phase of the study will be concluded in June 2002.

[Back to beginning >>>](#)

[Go to Camperdown Works paper >>>](#)

[Go to City Quay paper >>>](#)

[Go to Overgate paper >>>](#)

[Go to Glossary of Terms >>>](#)