

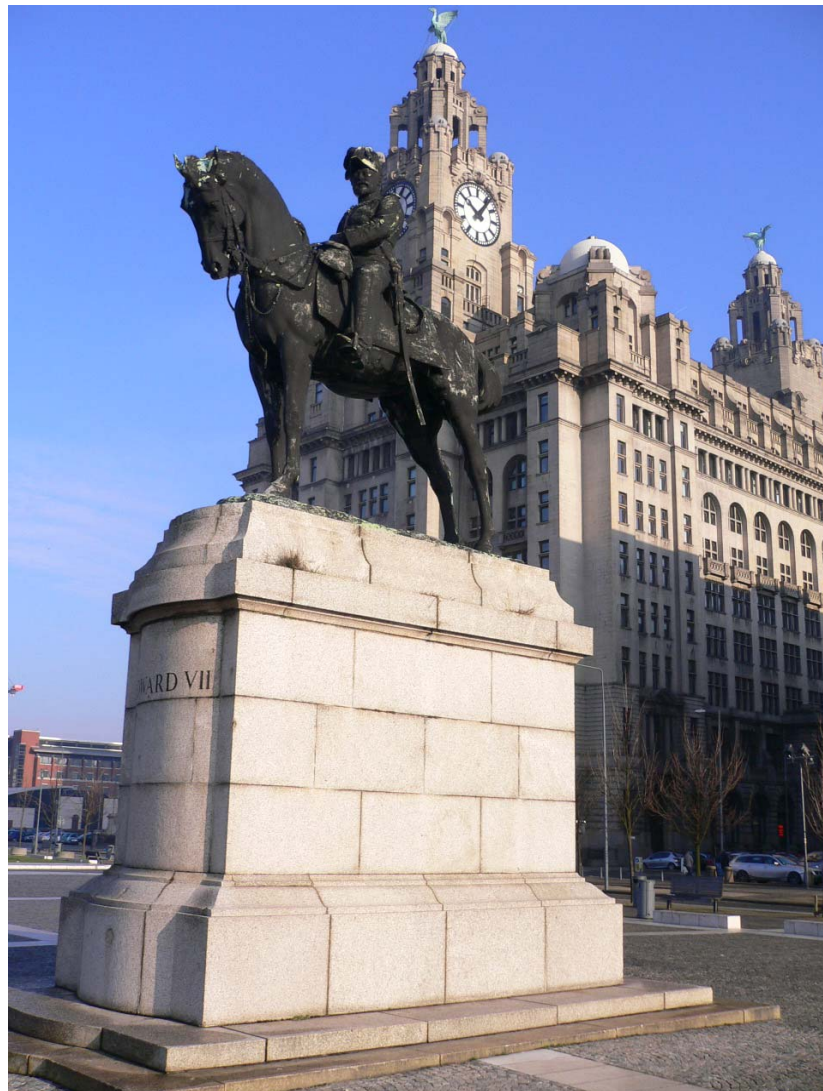
## 6.1 Area 1: The Pier Head

Central to the historic character of the Pier Head are the three buildings which dominate the waterfront: the Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building. Seen from the Mersey – the source of Liverpool’s historic wealth as a trading port – the buildings act as a grand entrance to the city. They were once the backdrop for an area bustling with trains, trams, ferries and ocean liners, and were designed to have a lasting impression upon those arriving and leaving the city by boat.



The site for the three buildings was created from 1899, when the City Corporation drained and in-filled the eighteenth century George’s Dock and extended Water Street and Brunswick Street across the new space, at right angles to the Mersey. The resulting building-plots were not regular rectangles, which ruled out a unified, symmetrical development. Although all three buildings were erected in versions of the neo-Classical style of most great Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings, the finished structures were very different from each other in character. No restrictions were imposed to ensure that the buildings harmonised or formed a coherent group, and the result is an amazingly disparate trio.

The Port of Liverpool building, to the south, was erected between 1903 and 1907. A rectangular, neo-Baroque structure with cupola-topped corner turrets, its central dome was a design feature added later in the design process to make the building more imposing. When it opened in 1911, the ferro-concrete, granite-clad, Royal Liver Building with its two 295 ft towers which is the northern-most building of the trio, laid claim to the title of tallest office block in the country, and was referred to as a skyscraper by local newspapers. The two stepped towers topped by Liver Birds are still visible from many points in the city. The site between the Port of Liverpool Building and the Royal Liver Building was acquired in 1914 by the Cunard Steamship Company for its head office. The Italian Renaissance style of the building was apparently chosen to contrast with the discordant buildings on either side, rather than attempt to reconcile them. Behind the Port of Liverpool Building, next to the Goree is the George's Dock Control, Station and Ventilation Shaft for the Mersey Tunnel, a handsome 1930s structure with Art Deco decoration and sculpture, which groups well with the three larger structures



The character of the area in front of the area's three principal buildings, recently christened the 'Three Graces' changed as the commercial demand for ocean-going passenger ships waned and rail and road tunnels beneath the Mersey reduced the demand for ferry passages. The bustling traffic of this once-vibrant section of the city has been replaced by a high quality landscaped open space, whose centerpiece is an equestrian statue of King Edward VII flanked by two large lawns. Along the river front is a succession of public memorials, many of them to British and other seafaring heroes of the Second World War, in which Liverpool played so conspicuous a part. The World Heritage Site nomination document comments that "The Pier Head is one of the few public open spaces in the city centre and serves as a communal focal point for the people of Liverpool, providing a link between the river and the city. The cultural significance of the Pier Head partly explains why it is such a popular location for the erection of a diverse collection of monuments and statuary



The quality of the open space between the 'Three Graces' and the Mersey is marred by food concessions and a riverside restaurant, which occupies a conspicuous key position at the Pier Head. On the north side of the open space is a small shabby post-war public lavatory block, near Goscombe John's handsome Memorial to the Engine Room Heroes, which also detracts from the quality of its surroundings

Although the Pier Head is included as part of the Dale Street/Castle Street Conservation Area, it is effectively severed from the central area by the busy dual carriageway of The Strand and Goree. To the south of the Pier Head the nineteenth century warehouses of the Albert Dock reflect the city's industrial heritage. To the north the skyline is modern, with later twentieth century and more recent office and hotel blocks, but the impressive scale of the three early twentieth century buildings (and the affection in which they are held as a collective symbol of Liverpool) means that they remain the defining feature of the area.

There are currently no buildings at risk in this character area.



## Liverpool World Heritage Site

Character Area No	Building Name	Building No.	Address	Merit Status	Merit Criteria	Need/ At Risk Status
1	Public Conveniences		Canada Boulevard L1	Negative		
1	Ship's Mast in centre of roundabout		George's Dock Gate L3	M	2,3,5	C
1	George's Dock Ventilation and Central Station (Mersey Tunnel), and Dock Building		George's Dockway L3 IDD (also fronts Mann Island and Goree) L3	II		C
1	Mersey Inshore Rescue Service		George's Parade L3 IDP	Negative		
1	Mersey Ferries		George's Parade L3 IDP	Negative		
1	Shanghai Palace Restaurant		George's Parade L3 IDP	Negative		
1	Royal Liver Building (including iron railings & piers)		George's Pier Head L3	I		C
1	River Wall at George's Pier Head		George's Pier Head L3	M	1,2	C
1	The Pier Head Piazza		George's Pier Head L3			
1	Cunard War Memorial		George's Pier Head L3	II		C
1	Monument to Edward VII		George's Pier Head L3	II		C
1	Memorial to Sir Alfred Lewis Jones		George's Pier Head L3	II		C
1	Memorial to the Merchant Navy		George's Pier Head L3	M	3	C
1	Cunard Building		Goree L3	II*		C
1	The Port of Liverpool Building		Liverpool Landing Stage L3	M	1(in part),2,5	B/C
1	Memorial to the engine Room Heroes (of the Titanic)		Mann Island (including stone balustrade, iron gates & piers) L3 1BY	II*		C
1	Floating roadway (not in use)		St Nicholas Place L3	II*		C
1	Granite drum piers at head of floating roadway		St Nicholas Place L3	M	1,2	C
1			St Nicholas Place L3	M	1,2	C