

December 2006



STANDISH

CONSERVATION

AREA APPRAISAL





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"بالإمكان توفير هذه المعلومات في اللغة العربية."

Cantonese

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Farsi

این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی هم میتواند در دسترس شما قرار گیرد.

French

Disponible en francais sur demande

Gujurati

આ માહિતી ગુજરાતીમાં મળી શકે છે.

Urdu

یہ معلومات اُردو میں بھی دستیاب ہو سکتی ہیں۔



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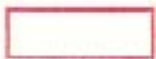
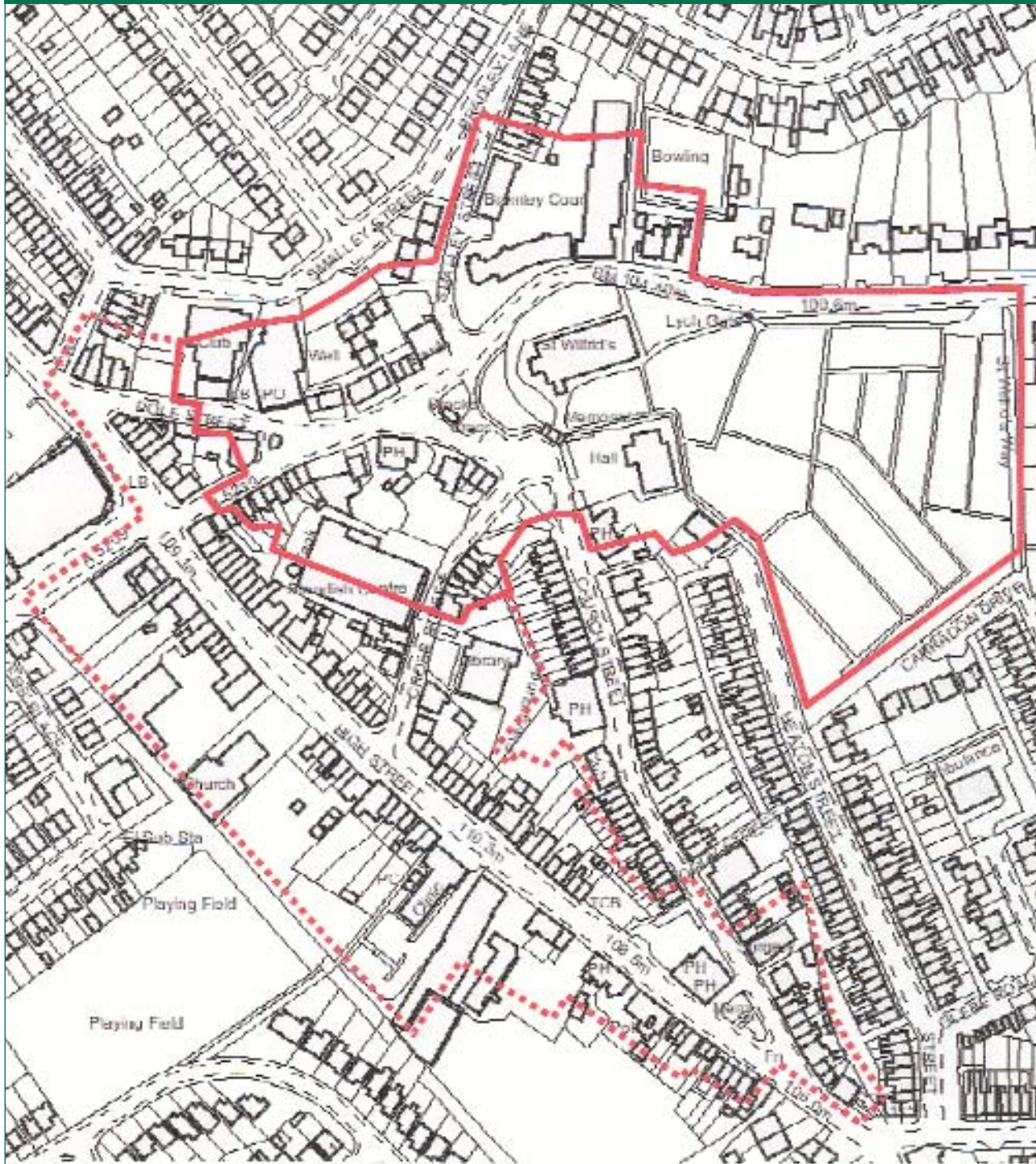


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Plan I The Standish Conservation Area

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Old Conservation Area Boundary 1976



Extension to Conservation Area Boundary 1988



ONE

Background

I.1 Purpose of this document

This report provides an assessment of the character and appearance of Standish Conservation Area. Its principal purpose is to identify and evaluate the important architectural and historic features of the area to provide a basis for a conservation area management strategy which will protect the best of the past whilst meeting modern needs.

I.2 Conservation Areas

The legal framework to secure conservation of the built environment was introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967.

Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

The current legal framework for conservation areas is contained in section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Local Planning Authorities are empowered to decide which parts of their area should be designated as conservation

areas. Indeed they have a duty to review their areas from time to time to consider the need for new conservation areas. In England there are now over 9,000 designated conservation areas. The Borough of Wigan has 22.

Standish and Haigh Village were the earliest designations in the Borough, both being designated 2nd April 1976.

The idea for Conservation Areas arose out of the growing pace of redevelopment of our towns and cities which had gathered momentum during the 1960s. It was increasingly realized that locally valued buildings and places were being eroded by piecemeal demolition or mediocre new buildings. Standish was no exception, a number of locally distinctive buildings having been lost in modern times to demolition and redevelopment.

Concerns about the potential further erosion of the village’s character and heritage led to the extension of Standish village centre conservation area in 1988 by the inclusion of High Street.

The **special interest** of a conservation area will generally derive from the relationship between buildings of historic or architectural significance and the spaces which provide their setting. The prevalence of locally sourced construction materials and craft traditions in their use may contribute to the special character of an area as may aspects of the public realm, for example, paved surfaces, walls, railings, trees and green spaces and waterways.



1.3 Standish Conservation Area

As originally designated, Standish conservation area was based upon the historic core of the village including the Parish Church of St. Wilfrid, with its extensive churchyard and the area around Market Street and Market Place. Market Place contained a number of features of historic significance including an ancient cross, stocks and well, the whole dominated by the imposing 16th century Church, itself a Grade I Listed Building.

On 27th April 1988 the Conservation Area was extended to include properties fronting High Street up to its junction with Church Street and the east side of Preston Road between Market Street and Pole Street.

The enlarged conservation area extends some 460m on its north-south axis and a maximum of 400m on its east-west axis. It occupies an area of 8.92 hectares (22 acres).

The two designation boundaries are shown on **Plan I** (at the start of this section) and described in Appendix 1.

1.4 Planning Controls in Conservation Areas

The legislation relating to conservation areas brings the demolition of unlisted buildings located within such areas subject to planning controls, i.e. the so called 'conservation area consent'.

In addition, Local Planning Authorities have stronger controls over certain types

of minor development and must publicise planning applications for development within or likely to affect a conservation area. There are also additional powers to protect trees. In exercising their planning powers, Local Authorities are obliged to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

It is not the purpose of conservation area designation to preserve areas 'in aspic, rather to ensure that changes necessary to meet evolving social or economic conditions are managed in such a way as to ensure the survival of the local distinctiveness and sense of place which warranted their original designation.

The demolition of Almond's Brewery and the Wheatsheaf Public House and replacement by the Somerfield Store, represent examples of the continuing adaptation of the village to modern needs, (though this site was not within the Conservation Area).



This development has undoubtedly strengthened Standish's role as a service centre. Efforts have been made to blend in the large building by gabled bays but



the lack of upper floor windows contrasts with the more traditional styles of building.

New buildings may sometimes be necessary but conservation area status should ensure that careful consideration is given to their design and layout to ensure they are complementary to the overall character of the conservation area. Similarly, works involving the public realm should aim to preserve or enhance the area's special qualities –not detract from them.

The Local Planning Authority has the means to achieve these objectives by the application of the relevant policies within its Unitary Development Plan. These are set out in Appendix 2.

Councils can also seek to preserve or improve the character of conservation areas by the careful design and implementation of works which are within its corporate control, for example the siting and design of street furniture, paving and traffic management schemes.

1.5 Conservation Area Appraisals

As well as designating Conservation Areas, Local Planning Authorities have a duty to formulate and publish from time to time, proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to submit them to a public meeting in the area to which they relate. Following the first designation, steps were taken to form a conservation area partnership involving the local community but it is believed that this has since lapsed.

In 1994, Government published Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment. This important policy statement inter-alia, reminded Local Planning Authorities of their duties relating to conservation areas, stressing the need to make an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts.

Conservation Area Appraisals are now one of the Council's Best Value performance indicators and the Council is committed to undertaking a programme of such reviews.





It is now 30 years since the original Standish Conservation area designation was made. Over this time there have inevitably been changes affecting the both the village itself and the framework for conservation policy, for example the recent adoption of Wigan's Unitary Development Plan.

A review of the changes that have taken place and assessment of the current issues, challenges and opportunities affecting the village is therefore all the more pressing in order to ensure that future conservation area management strategy is relevant and effective.

This report relating to Standish Conservation Area aims to follow the approach to appraisals recommended by English Heritage in their guide to practice issued in 2006.



The purpose of an appraisal is:

-  To evaluate and analyse the character and appearance of the conservation areas and to explain its special qualities;
-  To provide an understanding of current issues and challenges which threaten the survival of its special qualities;
-  To provide a basis for a management strategy, the aim of which will be to protect the best of the past and ensure that new development and public works contribute to the area's special qualities.
-  To provide an opportunity to review the boundaries of the conservation area to ensure that they remain relevant.

The appraisal will be a basis for public consultation in regard to future conservation area management strategy. The appraisal should not therefore just be an academic exercise. By identifying the special qualities of the area, the appraisal can be used as a practical management tool to ensure that those qualities which local people value can be protected for future generations.



TWO

Location and Setting of Standish Conservation Area

2.1 Strategic Location

The conservation area as extended takes in most of the centre of the old village of Standish. Standish was once an ancient township, one of ten such settlements within the extensive ecclesiastical Parish of Standish with Langtree and is located astride the A49 Wigan-Preston road. The place name is believed by historians to derive from the Old English stan (stone) and edisc (park or enclosure), or perhaps stony pasture. Standish is not mentioned in Domesday. The Church at Standish is first mentioned in 1205. An outline of the historical development of the settlement is set out in Section 4, with further historical material in Appendix 5.

The centre of modern Standish is focussed upon the cross-roads formed by the intersection of A49 and an east-west secondary route. From this cross roads, Preston is 24 km (15 miles) to the north and Wigan town centre 5km (3.1 miles) to the south via High Street. School Lane, classified A 5206, leads westwards towards Burscough and to Southport on the Lancashire coast, some 32km (20 miles) distant. Market Street ,B5239, forms the eastward arm, becoming Rectory Lane from the Parish Church and leading towards Aspull and ultimately to Bolton some 16 km (10 miles) distant.

Interestingly, the 1953 11inch to the mile OS shows B5239 continuing westwards of Standish cross roads. The reclassification to A5206 probably occurred as a result of the connection of this route to M6 at junction 27, 2km west of Standish cross roads.

The boundary between Wigan Borough and the Lancashire District of Chorley is located 2 km (1.2 miles) north of the cross roads. The next village northwards on A49, Coppull is 4km away. All distances are quoted as the crow flies.

Despite being by- passed by the M6, A49 remains a heavily trafficked road. The proximity of the motorway junction to the village centre means that its main roads are subject to flows to and from the M6. Indeed The A49 and A5206/ B5239 routes through the village are identified as part of the Strategic Route Network in the Unitary Development Plan. (UDP Policy A1N).

The position of the conservation area astride these important traffic routes inevitably means that the impact of traffic is a major influence upon its character and environmental quality.

Plan 2 Strategic location

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Standish Village Centre



2.2 Land form and Landscape setting

Standish is effectively a hilltop village. The main road through the village traverses a ridge of high ground forming a spur jutting out from the Pennines. The spur extends north-westwards from Wigan above a loop of the River Douglas. The approach from Wigan town centre which lies at approx. 39m AOD, involves a steady rise. The highway at Boar's Head at the southern extremity of Standish, is approx 77m AOD, reaching 106m at the south end of High Street on the edge of the conservation area. High street rises further to 110.3 m at Cross Street falling 1m to the cross roads. A benchmark at the Parish Church is 108m but Rectory lane falls rapidly eastwards to 100m within a distance of 150m. With the exception of Rectory lane and the slight gradient of High Street there are no significant changes in level within the conservation area itself. The river Douglas flows in a southerly direction to the east of the village, looping around the ridge and the town of Wigan turning northwards to the Ribble and thus flanking the village on its western side also. The river is not however noticeable from within the village centre.

Plan 3 (on the next page) shows the village in its wider setting with the contours and main topographical features.

An outline of the geology and drainage of the area is given in Appendix 3.

Although prominently sited, the Church does not occupy the highest point in the village. At a point on School Lane 240m west of the cross roads, 115m AOD is reached. It is possible that the slightly lower position of the Church and village was chosen to afford some protection from the westerly winds on the ridge. The continuation of School Lane along the ridge was named Windy Harbour Lane on the 1845 OS. (It is now Almond Brook Road). The potentially exposed location is demonstrated by the Church spire being blown down in a severe storm in 1822.

The aerial photo (**Plan 3A** on the next page) clearly reveals that Standish is surrounded by open countryside to the west, north and east.

Plan 3 Landscape Setting

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Plan 3A

Aerial photograph showing Standish in its Landscape Setting





2.3 Form and Character of the Settlement

Modern Standish exhibits characteristics of village, town and suburb. Historian JJ Bagley offered this overview of the character of Standish in his 1972 history of Lancashire:

“Standish....is no more than three miles north of Wigan. The two places are joined together by an unbroken sequence of pleasant suburban houses, particularly attractive in April and May when gardens are bright with flowering trees and spring flowers. But Standish is not a suburb of Wigan. It is an independent township with a life and history of its own. Until late in the 19th Century, its Church was the centre of a Parish, 8 miles by 6 (with an acreage of 9,432 according to Baines) and Standish was the natural market for the southern half of Leyland Hundred. In the small square by the Church, the stocks, medieval cross and old well are preserved to point out that despite its involvement in textiles and coal mining and however it may look to the motorist hurrying through, Standish is not a child of the industrial revolution”

Lancashire J J Bagley, Batsford 1972.

Most local histories and commentaries describe Standish as a village; some refer to it as a ‘former colliery village’. (e.g. N.Webb, ‘Standish 800 Years of History’, Wigan Heritage Service 1993). Until 1974, Standish was an Urban District of Lancashire County but its origins as an

ancient township can be traced to the early 13thC by the first documentary reference to its Parish Church. It was until the early 20thC, the estate village associated with the Standish family of nearby Standish Hall.

Standish village retained a very compact urban form until the early 20thC but the old village has since become engulfed by suburban housing development.

Standish has developed in a roughly linear pattern along the axis of the Preston-Wigan Road. The southernmost extremity of Standish at Boars Head (taken from the ancient inn of that name), where the direct road to Chorley branches off, is linked to Wigan’s northern suburb of Thornhill by a neck of about 0.5 km of ribbon development. Residential and related development has expanded in depth on both sides of the A49.

Excluding outliers and ribbon development, the main built form of the village today extends some 3km along its north- south axis and some 1.5 km east -west at its widest.

The ribbon development of the inter war years regrettably just prevents Standish from being a truly freestanding settlement, but the tantalising glimpses of countryside that can be obtained from the A49 west of Boar’s Head and to the east towards the Douglas valley through gaps between houses, indicate a transition from Wigan’s suburbs to Standish. The feeling of separation is assisted by the west coast railway which is in a deep cutting, bridged at Boar’s Head.



2.4 Population and administration

In 1894 Standish had become an Urban District of Lancashire County, reflecting its evolution during the 19thC from an estate village to a predominantly mining and industrial settlement. In 1974 Standish was absorbed into the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan.

Before ward boundary changes in 2004, the bulk of the settlement was located within Aspull Standish Ward, with its north-western outliers being located within Langtree ward. Since 2004, the settlement has been located within Standish with Langtree ward of Wigan Borough Council. Its area is similar in extent to that of the old township except that it does not now include land east of the London-Glasgow railway line. The enlarged village is the principal settlement within the ward. The resident population of the new ward in 2001 (estimated to accord with the new boundaries) was 12,045 (about 4% of Wigan Borough's 301,417) and the total number of dwellings was 4,918.

A major residential redevelopment of the former Worthington Bleach Works, Worthington Park, 1.6 km east of the centre of Standish (in progress 2006), will contribute a further 190 units, comprising houses and apartments.

The estimated number of dwellings within the conservation area is 101, split equally between small terraced houses and apartments in Well Court and Bramley Court with the exception of a pair of

inter-war villas on Rectory Lane. The average household size for the ward is 2.5 persons but only 22% of the ward dwelling total comprises terraced houses or types of dwelling other than family houses. It therefore seems reasonable that dwelling occupancy in the conservation area would be well below the ward average. Assuming an occupancy rate of 2 persons per dwelling, the resident population would be at most about 200 persons.

Standish is a partner in the Standish, Aspull, Shevington, Township Forum. The forums are a mechanism for affording residents, businesses and community groups a means of becoming involved in local issues.

Topographical factors together with Standish's history as an independent local authority until relatively recently, reinforce the notion that Standish is not just a suburban annex of Wigan but a settlement in its own right.



2.5 Form and layout of the conservation area.

The configuration of the old village is more or less triangular with Church Street and High Street forming the two long sides, Market Street the base. The cross roads occupy its north west angle, the Parish Church its north- east angle, 160m east of the cross roads. A smaller triangle is formed by Market Street, Preston Road and Pole Street which joins Preston Road 50m north of the cross roads. Market Place opens off southwards from Market Street. Church Street and Cross Street converge onto Market Place respectively from the south and south west. Cross Street links High Street, 90m south of the cross roads. Church Street converges with High Street at an acute angled junction 350m south of the cross roads. The middle part of Church Street is however excluded from the conservation area. Rectory Lane, a continuation of Market Street, curves around the north side of the Church and cemetery.

The centre of Standish is designated as a Town Centre in Wigan's Unitary Development Plan but the conservation area includes residential, social, leisure and cultural uses. There are two Churches, a library, police station, clinic, Parish hall together with four public houses and two social clubs. It is estimated that there are some 158 buildings i.e. separate properties identifiable on the OS and about 247 address points. The difference is explained by the inclusion of multi-occupied premises. These include the modern Well Court and Bramley Court apartment

blocks which provide about 50 units. (The Conservation Area Boundary cuts through Bramley Court as it reflected earlier site boundaries).

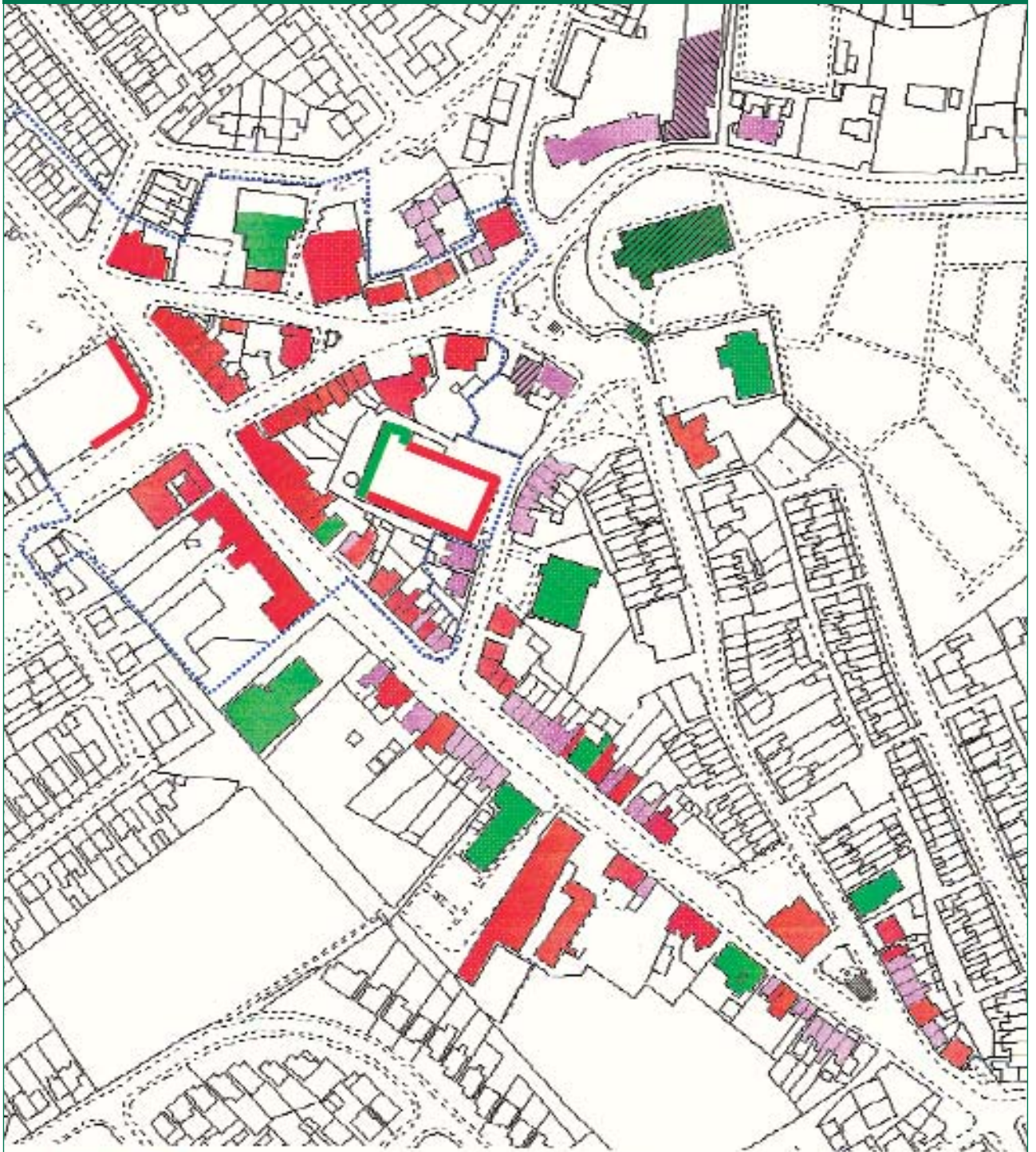
The Standish Business Centre located on Cross Street provides 23 lettable units; Environment House on Cross Street provides 5 units. A number of other premises are multi-occupied for example flats over shops.

Plan 4 shows the principal land uses within the conservation area and the extent of the town centre as defined in the UDP.

The old village centre - and thus the conservation area - remains geographically more or less central to the modern settlement, a factor which has undoubtedly helped to sustain its role as the main service centre for the district.

Plan 4 Land Use

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Commercial



Social/Cultural



Residential



Listed Building



Town Centre Boundary