



FOUR

Character Area Analysis

English Heritage suggest that the analysis of the character and appearance of some larger conservation areas can be facilitated by subdividing such areas into zones of similar or distinctive character for example reflecting differences in the style of buildings or in their spatial arrangement. Subdivisions will involve a degree of subjectivity and the ultimate purpose of the appraisal will be to evaluate the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole.

As noted in the 'summary of character,' Standish Conservation area lends itself to this form of analysis because it falls naturally into two distinctive sub- areas representing the original conservation area centred upon the Parish Church and the later extension focussed upon High Street. These areas demonstrate differences in form and layout and represent distinctive stages in the physical development of the historic village. This analysis therefore adopts the two character area approach but the appraisal will consider the relationship of the parts to the whole.

No appraisal can be fully comprehensive in detail. In the interests of succinctness, the appraisal must focus upon the most important factors which contribute to the area's special character and those which potentially detract from it. Local people may wish to draw attention to aspects not mentioned in this report.

Character area 1 comprises the historic core of the village and includes the Parish Church and graveyard, Market Place, parts of Market Street, Pole Street, Cross Street and Rectory Lane.

Character Area 2 includes High Street, residual parts of Market Street, Pole Street and Cross Street and part of Church Street. The divisions of Market Street, Cross Street and Pole Street reflect the stronger visual connections with each sub area but inevitably such divisions are blurred rather than sharp and of course shift with movement through the areas.

For the purposes of this analysis, the character areas coincide with the initial and later designations as shown on Plan 1.

5.1 Character Area 1 Appraisal

The ancient village centre takes the form of a 'scissors' cross roads where the Market Street -Rectory Lane route is intersected at an oblique angle by Pole Street- Church Street. Market Place is in effect a widened area of highway within which are located the ancient cross, the village stocks and well enclosure.





The space is contained by built frontages on its northern and south western sides and by the Church on its eastern side. Once the heart of the village, Market Place is now a relatively quiet backwater but carries traffic south to High Street via Church Street because of the left turn prohibition from Market Street to High Street.



Market Place North Side

Visually, Market Place is enclosed on its northern edge by a row of buildings fronting onto Market Street. Except for the pair of heavily altered cottages, the frontage is modern. The flat roofed bank adds nothing of conservation value, but Chadwick House 1994, successfully blends with the unpretentious style and domestic scale of the village centre. (Below).



The organic layout of the intersection of the two ancient routes results in an informal arrangement of buildings in contrast to the more or less parallel frontages of High Street.

Adjoining Chadwick House to the west is a modern 3 storey block of shops consisting of glazing and cladding panels between brick party walls. Large Perspex fascias adorn the shopfronts.



This building is clearly out of keeping with the scale and character of the village centre, its three storey height-emphasised by the adjacent single storey shop.

It is a design which would not be acceptable in conservation terms today.

Chadwick House, nos. 16-18, dating from 1994, clearly represents a more sympathetic approach to design within the conservation area in regard to proportions, materials and shop fronts. The Village Lighting fascia (no.18), as at May 2006, is one of the better ones in the village.

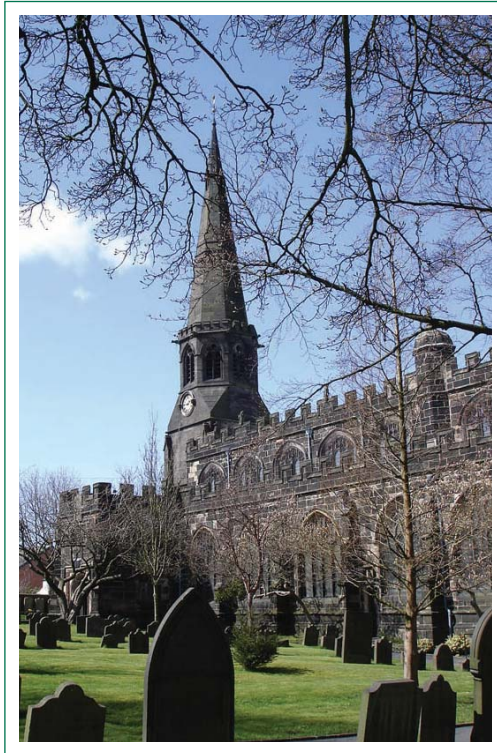


Market Place East Side

St. Wilfrid's Parish Church

Denoting the heart of the ancient village, the west front of St. Wilfrid's Parish Church is within 30 m of Market Place, dominating the space whilst its octagonal tower and spire provides a landmark for an extensive area. The generous size of the Church reflects its role in catering for its very extensive ancient Parish consisting of ten townships.

The history of the Church and descriptions of its interior and memorials have been well documented. An illustrated account is provided in 'About Standish' by M.D.Smith.



The architectural and historic importance of St. Wilfrid's is recognised in its Grade I Listing.

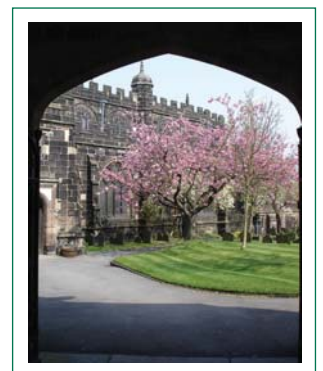
The Victoria County History of Lancashire described the Church as "built of local gritstone in even and regular courses, but at the eastern end of the north side and in some other parts there are fragments of yellow and red sandstone, probably remnants from the earlier building. The walls throughout have embattled parapets and the roofs which are of very flat pitch and therefore not seen are covered with lead."

"The nave and chancel are lofty with a continuous range of wide four light clearstorey windows with four centred heads", ... "All the tracery of the windows is modern, (from the renovations of the 1850s) of late Gothic character with apparently little attempt to carry out the original design. The jambs and pointed heads to the windows, however, are original."

Porteus considered the Church "remarkable for its height, spaciousness and beautiful proportions. The combination of late Gothic and Renaissance in the details is harmonious and the limited use of the latter style does not spoil the result. The Church has the quiet dignity and charm of a mediaeval building and is one of the most interesting parish churches in Lancashire."

A Church had existed on the site from at least 1205 when one Alexander de Standish was Rector. In 1544 the court of the Bishop of Chester made an order that the whole parish should assemble to decide on the repair and rebuilding of the old church as the King's Commissioners had found it to be in "grete ruyn and decay." Rebuilding did not however commence until 1582. Porteus considers the delays probably due to the political and religious unrest of the period but speculates that this may have been a second effort to secure the rebuilding.

The nave and chancel date from the reconstruction of 1582-4. Robert Charnock was in charge of the work,



Laurence Shipway the master mason. The rebuilding was funded by both bequests and the levying of a general rate on the parish yielding nearly £400 in 1582. The rebuilt nave was on the footprint of the medieval church but slightly wider. Some masonry belonging to the earlier building



is thought to have been retained or reused in the reconstruction. The original steeple thought to be of 14thC consisting of a tower surmounted by a spire was untouched in the 16thC rebuilding. The spire had been struck by lightning in 1814 and was finally blown down in a great storm in 1822. In 1867 it was dismantled and rebuilt to be more in proportion with the enlarged 16thC building.

Various other alterations have been made over the years, externally the most significant being the construction of a new east window in 1799 and the addition of a vestry extending the full width of the church in 1913, by Austin and Paley.

Pevsner considered St. Wilfrid's to be "the most important church of the Elizabethan age". He describes it as entirely perpendicular, except for the rather illiterate west steeple with its octagonal top stage, which dates from 1867.

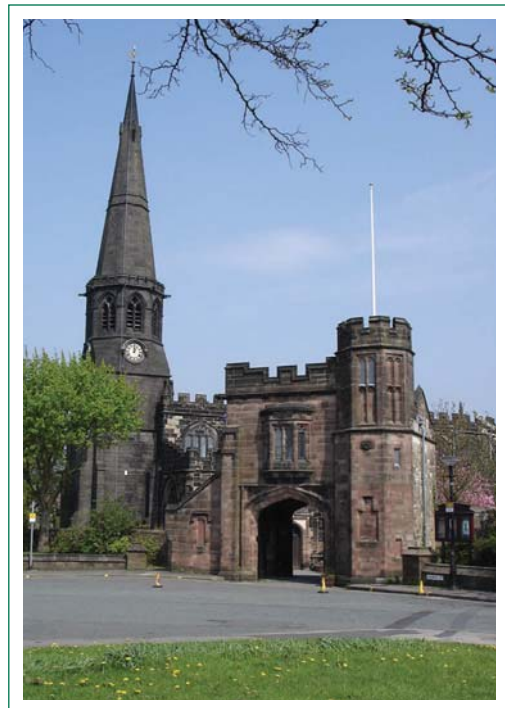
The stonework of the Church is now darkened but in places patches of the natural buff grey colour can be seen. The Church stands in a slightly elevated position within a walled graveyard which slopes away eastwards. The graveyard was extended in 1805 by grant of land by E.T. Standish and again in 1854 when the lych-gate to Rectory Lane was constructed.

It contains a number of monuments as well as a dense array of weathered headstones and numerous trees many of which are ancient gnarled specimens. Some gravestones date from the 17thC.



The churchyard offers a fine eastward prospect towards Winter Hill some 11km away.

The stone boundary wall of the churchyard sweeps around the west front of the Church becoming a retaining wall to Rectory Lane. The lych-gate leads to a network of paths within the extensive graveyard. The most heavily wooded part of the Churchyard is the older part closer to the Church itself.



Close to the south - west corner of the Church facing Market Place, stands the impressive Peace Memorial Gate, Listed

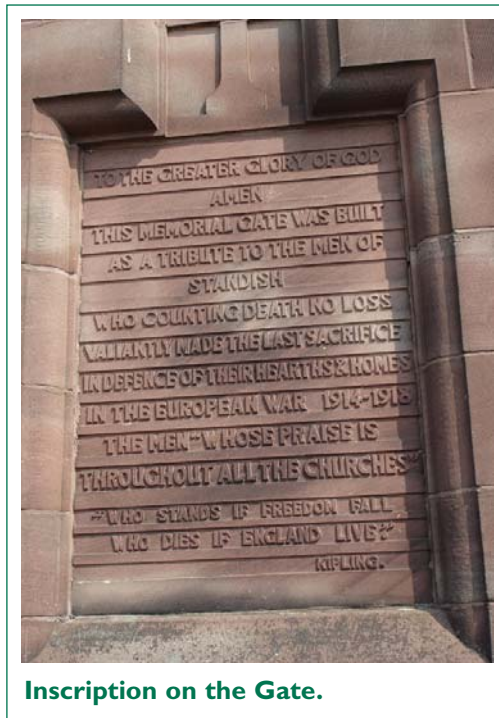


Grade II. Completed in 1926 to the design of Austin and Paley, the memorial was funded by public subscription to commemorate the 73 Standish men who fell in the First World War.

The names of those killed in WW II were added in 1948.

The Memorial is in the form of a Tudor style arched gateway in sandstone surmounted by an embattled upper section containing a canted oriel window. It is flanked to the right by an octagonal turret.

The archway contains a number of bronze plaques commemorating the names of men from various mines in and around Standish.



Inscription on the Gate.

The stone of the Gate is of a slightly redder variety than the Church masonry.

St. Wilfrid's Parish Hall abuts onto the south wall of the church yard. A modern building, mainly single storey but with projecting 2 storey gabled portion above a hipped roofed entrance lobby. The roof is grey slate. It is a neat and unobtrusive building clad in art stone, the colours of which blend well with the Memorial Gate and the Church. Regrettably, it is set behind a car park.



Beyond on Church Street is the Lychgate Tavern; 3x two storey bays, the northernmost, gabled parallel to the road, a lower central section containing the main entrance and the southernmost a gabled wing at right angles to the road, the central and southernmost parts angled slightly away from the road. The whole is rendered with some applied timbering. The building is shown on the 1892 OS as a single unit but not captioned as a PH. On the 1845 OS a post office is shown in this location. Originally it was the Glebe Inn, part of the large estate belonging to the Rectors. By 1950 it had become the Black Horse Hotel. The 'owl and rat' Standish symbol appears on its front wall.

The varied profile of the Lychgate Tavern and its unpretentious style and domestic scale, ensure that this



inn makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the



conservation area, its white painted elevations contrasting sharply with the sombre masonry of the Church.

The Cross, Stocks and Well.

Market Place, as noted, contains a group of items of historic interest, notably the Cross, stocks and well.

The cross base and steps are thought to be medieval, the cross probably 18thC. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The cross and stocks are also listed Gd II.

The old stocks, having been at some time discarded were found in a field and were installed c.1900 within the well enclosure.

The well was probably once a source of drinking water for the hilltop village, superseded by the arrival of piped water in 1892. In a photograph of the early 1900s the well is shown guarded by railings and lit by an ornate gas lamp column on a stone base. The well in latter years had become used for washing fish, a stone slab being provided for this purpose. A canopy was installed over the well in

1930, paid for by James Ainscough a local businessman, benefactor and antiquarian who was mayor of Wigan in 1922.

During WWII the well was identified as an emergency water supply but in 1943 its relatively new canopy was demolished by an American service vehicle! The well was subsequently sealed.

The present canopy structure dates from a 1998 reinstatement following archaeological excavation of the well. The reinstatement of the well canopy has been accompanied by an information plaque explaining the historic interest of the area.

In the background are the incongruous flat roofed bank and the rather more imaginative Bramley Court Apartments named after a long serving Rector of Standish Church.



Standing between the Church and Market Place was once a row of terraced houses, shops and warehouses known locally as 'Spite Row'. The name derived from a local belief that they had been erected c.1800 by Catholics to spoil the view of the Parish Church. Today, this is thought unlikely. 'Spite Row', had however long been considered an eyesore and when all the buildings became vacant in 1929,



Mr.J.M.Ainscough seized the opportunity to purchase them for demolition.

The design for the reinstatement of the site was evidently assisted by the office of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. A semi- circular landscaped area was formed extending from the west wall of the churchyard and bounded by a low sandstone wall with splayed coping and intermediate piers.



Former 'Eagle and Child' Inn in centre background

One of the boundary wall piers contains a carved inscription of the Standish UDC and 'owl and rat' cartouche of the Standish family with a plaque commemorating the benefactor.



The design also provided for the reinstatement of the stocks to their original position at the base of the cross. Their proximity to the old manor court to the rear of the Eagle and Child Inn must have been convenient for those dispensing punishments!

The grouping of the well, cross, stocks and Memorial Gate, the whole dominated by the Church, creates a unique sense of place, its historic artefacts perpetuating links with Standish's pre- industrial identity and its social history.



Market Place south- west side

The space is effectively enclosed on the south side by nos 39-45 Market Place. No.39 was once the 'Eagle and Child' Inn of 17th C origin. Grade II Listed, it is a low two storey building; plaster probably over stone; twin gabled dormers. The stone slab roof has been asphalted over. The gable windows are modern top-light types. The inn lost its licence in 1916 and was a butcher's shop before conversion to a dwelling. It once had its own fields behind, Cross Hey and Cross Hey Meadow on which visitors' horses were pastured.



Numbers 41,43,45, are two storey red/ brown brick terraced houses, tall in proportion with steps up to the front doors. 43,45 in English garden wall bond; 41 rebuilt in stretcher bond. Flat stone



sills and lintels and what appears to be a stone eaves gutter. All windows are replacements. They are of early 19thC appearance, probably those which appear on the 1845 OS.

Despite re-windowing this group of buildings retain their historic character and effectively enclose the south side of Market Place, providing part of the setting for the cross stocks and well.

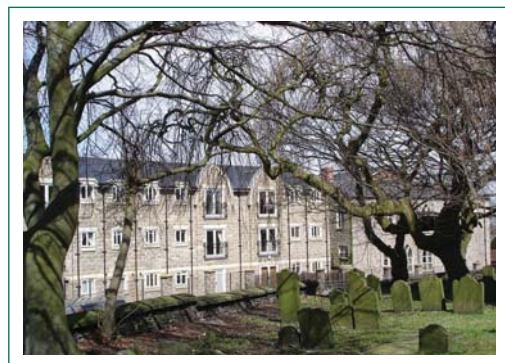
The Black Bull public house to the west of no 39, is late 19thC, once one of local Almond's Brewery houses, two storeys, hipped roof yellow painted brick. Its central door has a circular arch with 3 brick reveals. All windows replaced, but in wood, those on ground floor widened.



sills and lintels, stained wood window frames and projecting gable window features. Regrettably, it is surrounded at the rear by car parking.

A lane leads northwards along the side of the TSB bank. Now called Smalley Street it leads into modern housing estates but it is an ancient lane shown on the 1845 OS becoming Bradley Lane, leading to Bradley Hall about 1.2km to the north east of the village.

Beyond Smalley Street is the modern housing development of Bramley Court occupies a frontage of over 40m to Rectory lane. It is a three storey apartment block curved in plan, reflecting the highway alignment. The frontage is clad in light grey art stone with slate roof. Its principal features of interest are the pointed arched gables containing groups of full height windows with mock balconies. Other windows are small, mullioned, with art stone lintels and sills.



Rectory Lane

Rectory Lane is the eastward continuation of Market Street, bounded on its southern side by the Churchyard.

Well Court at the rear of Chadwick House, is a compact modern group of two storey apartments arranged around a small garden court; rustic brick with art stone

Adjoining Bramley Court on the frontage of Rectory Lane is an older building now renovated as apartments. This was the former Sunday School, erected by voluntary subscription in 1829. It is Grade II Listed.



The forerunner of the Sunday School was a local educational institution of some social interest, the Mistress Smalley's School of Pious Learning and Useful Industry. This was founded in the late 18thC by the niece of a former Rector for the education of poor girls. The emphasis was on practical matters e.g. spinning and sewing. This institution was later merged in the Church of England Elementary School for Girls and Infants, the nucleus of which was the 1829 Sunday School Building. In later years the building was used as a Church youth club before conversion as part of the neighbouring apartment development.



The former school is two storey in typical local gritstone cleaned to a light grey/buff colour. The Gothic style window shape is echoed by the gables of the modern development.

Rearward extensions of the development are of similar style but faced mainly in brick.

Bramley Court makes a dramatic impact upon the exit and approach to the village on Rectory Lane. Overall the concept is successful in achieving a distinctive if idiosyncratic form of

development which responds to the scale, materials and detail of the older building. It is set within neatly landscaped grounds bounded by railings supported by art stone piers. It provides a robust if austere back-ground when viewed from within the graveyard.

A footpath leads northwards along the eastern flank of the former school, leading to modern housing estates to the north of the village centre. This path once linked into Bradley Lane and may well follow the course of the Roman Road described by Margary as aligned towards the east end of the Parish Church. The eastern extremity of the conservation area on the north side of Rectory lane is denoted by a pair of pleasant but unremarkable semi detached red brick villas c. 1900, set above the road in mature gardens.



Pole Street (within Character Area 1)



Pole Street is one of the village's ancient roads with development shown clustered around it on the 1846 OS. Pole Street however now offers little of conservation merit. Its northern frontage is occupied by a car park beyond which is a modern social club. A modern two story betting



shop is next and then the Co-operative store, a single storey building which incorporates the Post Office. This building is awkwardly aligned to the road. A wedge of left over land between the betting shop and the Co-op store contains a large tree and a footpath to a car park and the housing estates on the north side of the village centre.

The south side is a nondescript service frontage of yard walls and old coach houses, but trees in a small amenity area off Market Street soften the scene.



ground floor bay windows flank the entrance, modernised but with moulding detail which suggests they are of long-standing. Adjoining no 8, 8a, is a single storey lean- to which must be the narrowest shop in Britain, its shop front barely wider than its door!



The corner buildings effectively contain the space around the road junction and offer a varied interplay of roof profiles.



Market Street South Side



Market Street, between Preston Road and Market Place.

Frontage development on Market Street had been established by the mid 19thC. The north side is occupied by the return frontage of no 2 Preston Road and a small amenity space which includes several trees, the site of a demolished building. The corner building no 6,8, is angled so that its main elevation faces onto the V of the junction with Pole Street. It is shown as two buildings on the 1892 OS but now appears to be a single occupation.

It is two storey in Flemish bond brick with slate roof of shallow pitch. Two



The first building from the cross roads is the return frontage of the Royal Bank of Scotland. This is described in Character Area 2 Appraisal. Early 20thC photographs, corroborated by the 1892 OS show a row of 7 terraced cottages extending eastwards from the cross roads. Development in this area is shown on the 1845 OS which most



probably represents the buildings which remain today. The frontage is now almost wholly commercial. Nos. 3,5,7, have recently been refurbished and a traditional form of wooden shopfront installed.

First floor windows have received new art stone sills and lintels and additional small windows inserted. Thick UPVC frames have however been used. Nos 9,11 are a pair of shops with widened first floor windows, one UPVC shopfront and one wooden. No 13, a charity shop a little shabby, the upper part painted timbering. Nos 15,17,19 are c.1930s. No 17 seems to be still residential. No.19 a building society retains 1930s style wooden mullioned windows. Adjoining is the wide forecourt of a tyre depot, a modern utilitarian structure but with a two storey office of domestic scale. The adjacent building is the Black Bull public house, Market Place.



Market Street is of varied quality in conservation terms. As elsewhere in the village, shopfronts and signage are key factors influencing the overall image of the conservation area. In this regard, the refurbishment of nos.3,5,7, being carried out with some sensitivity to the location is a welcome sign, moreover

demonstrating confidence in the vitality of the village as a commercial location. Uses such as the tyre depot are inherently difficult to accommodate with sensitivity within an historic environment. However such uses contribute to the commercial vitality of the centre and must be accepted as such.



Cross Street (north end)

The angle of the junction of Cross Street/ Church Street is occupied by a landscaped amenity space, the site of a number of small cottages. Their demolition has undoubtedly weakened the sense of enclosure in this area.

Nos 1,3, Cross Street appear on the 1977 OS but the first building is now no.5. This and no 6 are post 1845 pebbledashed cottages.



Nos 7,8,9 are red /brown brick cottages stone sill, lintels, round brick arches to doors. No 8 has widened UPVC; all other windows are replacements.

No 10 is a larger house central 4 panelled door with square fanlight, stone sills, lintels;



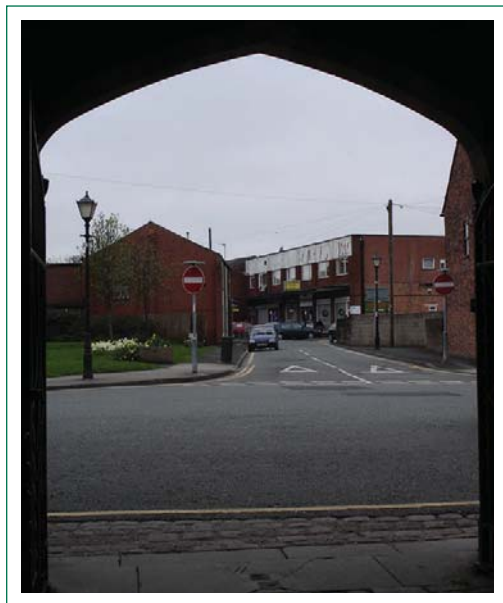
front is pebbledashed but side still exposed brick. Windows wood framed but not of original pattern; but two on side elevation are 4 paned sashes. A house in this position is shown on the 1845 OS.

Adjoining is the library described under Character Area 2.

Cross Street is one of the original streets forming the ancient village centre.

The north west side of Cross Street is occupied by garden walls, one section being an old stone wall. The scene is however dominated by the Standish Centre a large modern two storey building multi-occupied by small businesses and a social club. Its front elevation has an upper rendered portion. The ground floor has shopfront type windows.

The Standish Centre - seen (below) from the Memorial Gate – its utilitarian side elevation is prominent . It is clearly an important local businesses centre which contributes to the variety of employment opportunities in the area but the building would benefit from external refurbishment.



Despite some modern development and ‘modernisations’ of cottages, Cross Street manages to retain a certain charm due to its narrow winding alignment which offers unfolding views towards the Church. The library gardens provide a pleasing element of trees and greenery and views of the steeple.



5.2 Character Area 2 Appraisal:

Church Street (south end), High Street, Preston Road

High Street extends 350m from its ‘V’ junction with Church Street to the cross roads. It curves subtly, rising about 4 m from the junction to Cross Street, then falling by 1 m to the cross roads. The carriageway is 8-9m in width, slightly narrower at its southern end. The footways are generally 2-3 m in width. The frontages comprise mainly continuous rows of 2 storey buildings of modest domestic scale and are either directly at back of footway or set back in shallow forecourts most of which have been hard surfaced and merge with the footways. The east side frontage



is continuous 230m from the cross roads apart from Cross Street. On the west side there are a few gaps in the frontage though these are not obvious in long vistas.

The continuity of frontage and slightly curving alignment gives the road a sense of enclosure whilst the variations in building alignment and profile add further visual interest.



High Street-Church Street Junction

The southern end of the conservation area contains a number of features of interest. The road from Wigan via Boar's Head, opens out into a small triangular green, the Queen Victoria Jubilee Gardens, located at the forked junction of High Street and Church Street. The gardens are bounded by a low stone wall on which there were once railings. At the apex stands the Queen Victoria Jubilee drinking fountain, 1897, Grade II listed. The fountain consists of a square section stone column with chamfered corners. Marble basins are fed by lion head spouts. The tapered stonework top is surmounted by an ornate cast iron lamp standard with reproduction lantern.

Centrally placed within the gardens is Standish War Memorial erected 1920 and unusual in its inscription 1914-19 acknowledging that hostilities continued in other theatres after the 1918 Armistice. The names of the local men who fell in WW2 have been added. The memorial is a polished marble column on a stone plinth and surmounted by a marble urn,

the whole standing approximately 3m high. Floodlighting set into the paving has been provided as part of a recent refurbishment by a partnership of Standish Community Forum and the British Legion, supported by the Standish, Aspull, Shevington Township Forum.

Facing southwards onto the gardens and a prominent feature of the southern approach to the village is the Globe Inn; two storeys, roughcast render with hipped slate roof. 3 bays, principal door offset. Originally two inns built back to back. It is well presented, with decorative quoins, sills and lintels picked out in the render but probably masking the original details.



Flanking the green to the right are two large houses, respectively a surgery and Pharmacy and a row of 2 storey cottages. The larger houses are similar in style, double fronted with ground floor modernised bays. The surgery is in smooth red brick and dates from between 1908 and 1928. Its site was occupied in 1892 by three cottages which had been cleared by 1908. The pharmacy is pre 1892, rendered and has 4 paned sashes on first floor.



The War Memorial with Police Station in background.

Nos.65- 71A are stone cottages, probably those indicated on the 1846 OS. No.65 is a chip shop. 71 is a photographer's shop with

enlarged window openings 71,71A have elliptical arched doorways;. 73-75 are pebbledashed, of probably later date. All this group have modernised windows. In front of no 73 is an iron OS benchmark with a curious 20ft 0 ins legend which does not relate to any OS map reference. The spot height at the junction is 346 ft (106m) above sea level!

The southern extremity of the conservation area is marked by a substantial stone house, no 100 High Street, now a bridal wear shop. Two storey coursed rubble with stone quoins, sills and lintels but UPVC windows.

No.79 is a cottage retaining flat stone lintel; 79a, 81, are shops probably converted cottages with modernised shopfronts, somewhat shabby in presentation.



Though the buildings surrounding the Jubilee Gardens are in themselves unremarkable, the overall spatial grouping emphasised by the prominent south elevation of the Globe Inn, together with the fountain, lamp and War Memorial, combine to make this area a distinctive entry point to the old village centre. To the right the subtly curving Church Street leads up to the old village centred upon Market Place; to the left, High Street, the 1727 turnpike route, leads to the cross roads.



High Street West side S-N

Facing the green on the west side of High Street, the outermost property is a small detached shop, followed by a row of 4, two storey brick cottages,(nos. 87-93), displaying 'Park View 1889'. They have stone chamfered lintels, round brick arched doorways, terracotta corbelling detail at eaves. All have modernised windows.

The Police Station located opposite to the Globe Inn, is an appropriately robust late Victorian edifice of two storeys but substantial mass, in red brown brick; blue brick plinth course; stone cills and flat stone lintels and stone drip moulds to two massive doorways. The doors are raised and fielded, 6 panelled. At first floor above both doors are roundels with arms proclaiming 'Constabulary Station'. Windows have been replaced with UPVC versions.