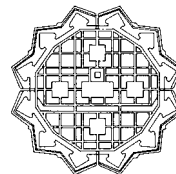


Wigan MBC
Green Hill Conservation Area
Revised Character Appraisal

Prepared by



Paul Butler Associates

31 Blackfriars Road
Salford
Manchester
M3 7AQ
Tel: 0161 835 3530
Fax: 0161 835 3531
Email: pba@urbanistics.co.uk
www.urbanistics.co.uk

Contents

1. Foreword and purpose of report
2. Introduction to Green Hill Conservation Area
3. Summary definition of special interest of Green Hill
4. Location and setting of Green Hill
5. Origins and historic development
6. Prevailing and former uses and their history
7. Archaeological significance and potential
8. Architectural and historic qualities of buildings and their contribution to the special interest of the area
9. Character and relationship of spaces within the area
10. Prevalent and traditional building materials, textures and colours
11. Local details
12. Contribution made by green spaces, trees and hedges to the character of the area
13. Setting and relationship with the surrounding landscape.
14. Existence of neutral areas
15. Potential threats to the character
16. Development control implications

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy and Information

Appendix 2: A Potted History of Wigan

Plans and Photographs

Dwg 002: Photographic Building and Streetscape Survey Record supported by:

- Photographic Building Survey (Photographs 1-116)
- Photographic Streetscape Survey (Photographs 1-16)

Dwg 003: The Growth of Green Hill

Dwg 004: Heritage Assets

Dwg 005: Townscape Analysis

Visual Dictionary of Architectural Terms:

Dwg 006: Typical Late Nineteenth Century Properties (278 and 280 Wigan Lane)

Dwg 007: Typical Late Nineteenth Century Properties (282 Wigan Lane)

Dwg 008: Typical Interwar Properties (359, 357, 355 Wigan Lane)

Dwg 009: Typical Interwar Properties (324, 326, 328 Wigan Lane)

Archives

Dwg 010: Historic Ordnance Survey Plan Extract 1847

Dwg 011: Historic Ordnance Survey Plan Extract 1892

Dwg 012: Historic Ordnance Survey Plan Extract 1909

Dwg 013: Historic Ordnance Survey Plan Extract 1956

Dwg 014: Archive Photograph: Wigan Lane in 1905

Dwg 015: Archive Photograph: the Bee Hive Inn, Wigan Lane

1. Foreword and purpose of report

- 1.1 The interwar ribbon of housing that sprang up fronting Wigan Lane in the early part of the twentieth century, between about 1920 and 1930, transformed semi-rural Wigan Lane at Green Hill into suburbia. Ribbon development continued to spread northwards and along Wigan Road until World War II effectively ended the building boom. The residential ribbon development that took place along Wigan Lane and Wigan Road during the interwar period blurred the former urban-rural divide and contributed to the merging of Wigan with Standish to the north.
- 1.2 The initial phase of interwar building boom took place on Wigan Lane around Green Hill. The architecturally interesting buildings that were produced by this intensive phase of development survive remarkably intact and provide an excellent built record of the period. That part of Wigan Lane between Brock Mill Lane to the south and Standish Mere Oaks School to the north, in terms of group value, contains some of Wigan's most architecturally and historically interesting large interwar dwellings. This area is considered to be of special architectural and historical interest and worthy of designation as a Conservation Area. This report explains what is special about Green Hill.
- 1.3 The Conservation Area, which lies circa 2.5 km to the north of Wigan Town Centre will be known as 'Green Hill Conservation Area'. The 'Green Hill' name originates from the eighteenth century when this part of Wigan Lane was still a green ridge of land. By the 1930's, however, Green Hill had been suburbanised by ribbon development.
- 1.4 It has long been felt that the pleasing suburban character of Green Hill should be formally recognised by designation as a Conservation Area. In 2006, research work by Paul Butler Associates (PBA) confirmed that Green Hill was worthy of Conservation Area status. PBA were subsequently commissioned by Wigan MBC to prepare a Conservation Area Character Appraisal to identify those heritage buildings and features that contribute towards the special architectural and historic interest of the area.
- 1.5 For readers unfamiliar with Conservation Area policy and Character Appraisals, a review is provided at Appendix 1. This is supplemented at Appendix 2 by a summary of the history of Wigan which provides the wider historical context into which this appraisal should be placed.

2. Introduction to Green Hill Conservation Area

- 2.1 Wigan Lane, a major arterial route within Wigan forms the backbone of Green Hill Conservation Area. Green Hill has long been recognised as possessing buildings and spaces of special interest and character. Although some buildings date back to the mid-19th century, the majority were developed between World Wars I and II.
- 2.2 The large interwar detached and semi-detached houses were built to meet the property aspirations of Wigan's wealthy new business classes. The buoyant local economy fuelled demand for large houses and suburban development. Green Hill with its pleasant green environment and tramway links to Wigan and Standish provided an excellent location for this new commuting class, who were keen to escape the industrialised parts of the Town.
- 2.3 The ribbon development in Green Hill was an unplanned response to an interwar building boom: wealthy Wiganers demanded large new houses, heavily modelled, rich with fashionable features and set in equally well proportioned gardens. Individually designed houses were constructed, purposefully fronting Wigan Lane and competing with one another for attention in this opulent new streetscape.
- 2.4 The building of much of Green Hill took place after World War I, 'the war to end all wars.' People were looking towards a brighter future, free of the ravages of war and the design of light and airy houses reflected the optimism of the day. Unknowingly for the first occupants of these houses, a World War II lay just around the corner and the suburban tranquillity they were enjoying was about to shattered.
- 2.5 Despite the turbulence of World War II and the varying fortunes of the local economy since then, the interwar building fabric and spaces created in Green Hill have survived remarkably intact. The gardens and trees have steadily matured and streetscenes are largely dominated by soft landscaping. Green Hill is acknowledged locally as a pleasant place to live.

- 2.6 Today the low density residential ribbon development that survives here is under threat. Increased redevelopment pressures in the late 20th and early 21st century have led to large older properties set in large gardens becoming targets for developers, keen to take advantage of relatively low acquisition costs and potentially high returns. Proposals to demolish the original dwellings and redevelop sites with higher density redevelopment schemes have the potential to destroy what is special about the character of Green Hill. The potential loss of such fabric would damage the quality of Wigan's townscape generally.
- 2.7 This Character Appraisal explains the special character of Green Hill. It takes the form of text and plans. Whilst every effort has been made to highlight those features that contribute toward the special character of the area, the appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space must not be taken to imply that it is of no visual or historic interest to the Conservation Area.

3. Summary definition of special interest of Green Hill

- 3.1 Green Hill Conservation Area is a predominantly residential area. The majority of properties were developed between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The houses are larger than average, almost exclusively detached and semi-detached and set within well proportioned grounds. Most properties remain in single family occupation which is important to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 3.2 The area is characterised by low rise - low density ribbon development which spread rapidly along Wigan Lane during an intensive period of interwar development. The houses are almost entirely two storey. Generally their principal elevations front the roads they are serviced by and in most cases their main roof ridges are parallel to the road.
- 3.3 Whilst the majority of buildings within the Conservation Area belong to either the mid-late nineteenth century or interwar periods, as a result of the dispersed siting of the mid-late nineteenth century houses, it is not possible to identify any meaningful sub areas within the Conservation Area that have their own special distinctiveness.
- 3.4 There are differences between the mid-late nineteenth century and interwar houses and these are detailed in subsequent sections of this appraisal. In summary however, the mid-late nineteenth century buildings are finished in red/orange brick with stone detailing with slate roofs and timber detailing. In contrast the heavily modelled interwar properties use brick and/or render/timber. Half timbering in arts and crafts style is also evident. Bay windows are common on the interwar properties as are deep eaves. Plain tiles and slate are used on gabled, hipped or pitched roofs.
- 3.5 Within the Conservation Area, properties are generally set back from the pavement along a common building line. In plan form, generous front gardens create linear spaces on either side of Wigan Lane between back of pavement and building frontages. The cul-de-sacs of Broomhey Avenue, Ludovic Terrace and that off Brock Mill Lane have a similar plot layout. Views of the deep rear gardens of houses are also evident between properties and are equally important to the spatial character of the area. Mature trees in streets and front and rear gardens are an important feature within the Conservation

Area. Low red brick or stone walls with privet hedges above define many front gardens. Soft landscaping including street trees is a key feature of the Conservation Area.

4. Location and setting of Green Hill

- 4.1 Green Hill lies approximately 2.3 km north of the Town Centre and forms part of Wigan's urban area. It lies a few hundred metres north of the previously designated Conservation Area of Wigan Lane. Perhaps 400-550 people live in the 160 or so properties of Green Hill Conservation Area.
- 4.2 Green Hill Conservation Area is predominantly a ribbon of development which follows the line of Wigan Lane. The Conservation Area takes a linear form with several short cul-de-sacs located directly off Wigan Lane. Residential density throughout the Conservation Area is low.
- 4.3 Most properties are in single family occupation which is important to the character of the Conservation Area. Properties are exclusively detached and semi-detached properties, the majority of which were completed before 1930. Houses are large by modern standards. There are no terraced houses or apartment buildings. A row of cottages which predate the ribbon development survive on Brock Mill Lane, although the majority of the original properties located here, such as the Bee Hive Inn (see Archive Photograph), were demolished to make way for the ribbon development along Wigan Lane.
- 4.4 Wigan Lane is located on a ridge of slightly elevated land. Green Hill Conservation Area is generally fairly level with a slight rise in height from the south to the north. To the eastern side of the Conservation Area (including Broomhey Avenue, Ludovic Terrace and Brock Mill Lane) the land falls away quite steeply into the Douglas River Valley. To the south, north and east are built up urban areas of Wigan.
- 4.5 Wigan Lane forms the spine of the Conservation Area and the majority of properties front it. Four cul-de-sacs are fed from Wigan Lane: Elmfield Road, Broomhey Avenue Ludovic Terrace and that off Brock Mill Lane. The eastern tip of Walter Scott Avenue also forms part of the Conservation Area and joins Wigan Lane near its junction with Elmfield Road. The cul-de-sacs of Broomhey Avenue, Ludovic Terrace and that off Brock Mill accommodate properties on their respective southern sides only. This is a result of the cul-de-sacs having been built along a narrow ridge with land to the north falling away steeply into the Douglas River Valley.

- 4.6 The properties fronting Wigan Lane are located within a bustling transportation corridor and suffer slightly from the negative effects of proximity to a busy main road: noise, fumes, etc. The cul-de-sacs fare better in this respect and the majority of properties enjoy a much pleasanter residential setting.

5. Origins and historic development

- 5.1 Green Hill was still a rural area in the mid-19th Century and was pepper potted with rural buildings. Wigan Lane is the main surviving feature shown on the 1847 OS plan and the line of the road at this time follows a broadly similar route of today's Wigan Lane. The 1847 Lane is noticeably narrower than today.
- 5.2 Only one or two properties appear on the 1847 plan, including to the eastern side of Wigan Lane; 'the Larches', 'Sicklefield House', 'Green Hill Cottage', 'Southworth House' and to the western side of Wigan Lane, 'Bates', 'Haltons Row', 'Whitley Hall' and 'Lower Whitley'. Of these buildings the only survivors are Sicklefield House and the cottages on Brock Mill Lane (near Lower Whitley on the 1847 plan).
- 5.3 Old Lane which joins Wigan Lane between 312 and 314 Wigan Lane is another surviving feature from 1847 as is the narrow pedestrian footpath which links Sicklefield House and Wigan Lane. Brock Lane (later to become Brock Mill Lane) is also apparent on the 1847 plan
- 5.4 Wigan was transformed by the industrial revolution. By the beginning of the 19th century the population of Wigan was 11,000. It boomed during the 19th century and by the middle of the century it was almost 32,000. At this time the journey along Wigan Lane would have been a journey out of a rapidly industrialising town, along a rural tree lined Wigan Lane, through the countryside, and on into Standish to the north.
- 5.5 By 1894 several large residential properties had been built around Green Hill (Photographs 3, 4 and 8) and further development had occurred around what would later become Elmfield Road (Photographs 27,33 and 37). The former were constructed close to an existing well and were built fronting Wigan Lane.
- 5.6 A historic print from 1903, looking northwards up Wigan Lane towards the ELF service station (formerly located at the corner of Walter Scott Avenue and Wigan Lane), shows "*A narrow gauge double deck electric tram entering the double track passing station*". Records show that in 1905 the service was suspended while the narrow gauge tracks were widened and the line upgraded to standard gauge. The new standard gauge tramline opened on 5th July 1905. By 1909 early development in Green Hill

(Photographs 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62) had been planned between the pedestrian footpath to Sicklefield House and the line of what would later become Broomhey Avenue. Other early development during this period included the building of the cul-de-sac off Brock Mill Lane (Photographs 100-108) and some properties close by on Wigan Lane (Photographs 94, 95, 97 and 98).

- 5.7 After the first world war, the pace of development picked up and between 1920 and 1930, the development of semi-detached and detached houses filled up the frontages of Wigan Lane turning the semi-rural landscape into a ribbon of suburban development with countryside to the rear. The majority of houses here sprang up between 1920 and 1930 as fields were sold to developers and then subdivided into generous building plots. Ludovic Terrace and Broomhey Avenue both originate from this period. Existing houses and cottages were demolished to make way for this new ribbon of individually designed properties which spread northwards along either side of the upgraded tramway. Without exception large houses were developed with proportionate gardens.
- 5.8 The tramway along Wigan Lane probably facilitated initial development interest in the area by permitting commuting. The tramway, however, had soon had its day and by the time the flurry of 1920's development had been completed, the private motorcar had emerged as a means of transport for these wealthy residents. These houses were built with garages and the last tram ran between Wigan and Standish in March 1931. The generous width of Wigan Road today can probably be attributed to the width needed to accommodate trams and other traffic during the early part of the twentieth century.
- 5.9 By 1940, there had been a complete transformation in the character of the area, changing it from a tree lined semi-rural lane to a ribbon of suburban development stretching the length of Wigan Lane/Wigan Road as far as Standish. Particularly noticeable is the lack of facilities developed to serve this expanding but mobile population. Trams and later buses and the private motor car would have provided easy access to jobs, entertainment and other facilities in Wigan/Standish.
- 5.10 The built fabric of Green Hill Conservation Area was largely completed by 1930. Little further development took place until after World War II when post-war infill development took place in the extensive grounds of some of the large late nineteenth century properties fronting Elmfield Road and on previously undeveloped plots fronting Broomhey Avenue. At Elmfield Road, the late nineteenth century buildings and more

recent additions generally face inwards onto Elmfield Road, a private cul-de-sac, so this enclave has a more intimate feel than other parts of Green Hill.

6. Prevailing and former uses and their history

- 6.1 Farm land and rural lanes dominated the area until the mid 19th century. By the mid 19th century, the area's coal resources were being exploited and an 1847 archive OS plan shows the wider area becoming pepper potted with odd coal pits. A colliery was located to the west of Wigan Lane, just to the south of Brimelow Farm.
- 6.2 Along Wigan Lane during the mid-nineteenth century, land use remained primarily agricultural, punctuated by the odd rural building, inn, house and row of cottages. Most of the original buildings, including Bee Hive In, were demolished to provide land for interwar housing.
- 6.3 The field boundaries apparent in 1847 influenced the later development of the area since fields were often sold off for development. Fields were then subdivided into building plots, so former field boundaries are sometimes reflected in today's building plots. Residential use had displaced all agricultural activity from the Wigan Lane frontages in Green Hill by the 1930s.
- 6.4 As noted above, residents within this ribbon of development commuted to jobs, and travelled to facilities elsewhere including shops, places of worship and schools. The Conservation Area therefore developed without such facilities, although it is equally fair to say that housing development was so rapid and unplanned that other uses were simply not considered. The low residential density would not have helped in this regard.
- 6.5 The only non residential facility in the Conservation Area was a former Elf garage at the junction of Walter Scott Avenue and Wigan Lane, the site of which is currently vacant. Today the character of the area remains predominantly residential.
- 6.6 In the early part of the twenty first century there has been growing interest in converting properties into apartments and demolishing existing properties and replacing them with high density residential developments. Such development pressure has already eroded the character of parts of Wigan Lane, particularly the Thorn Hill area just to the north of the Conservation Area boundary. Here individual houses have been demolished and replaced by high density residential development. The Conservation Area boundary excludes this area where the suburban 'ribbon' streetscape has been destroyed.

7. Archaeological significance and potential

- 7.1 According to official records, there is no known archaeological significance in the area and there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- 7.2 Interestingly, however, the 1972 OS plan records that a Roman coin hoard was found in the garden of 255 Wigan Road in 1926. Assuming this unsubstantiated record were indeed accurate, the potential for further finds can not be ruled out. Most settlements contain archaeological evidence of their origins and of the lives of past inhabitants and Green Hill will be no exception. Bearing in mind the hasty clearance of the existing landscape (including houses and cottages) and the large rear gardens of properties, further finds might well be made in the future.

8. Architectural and historic qualities of buildings and their contribution to the special interest of the area

Listed Buildings

- 8.1 Surprisingly, in an area with such architecturally and historically interesting properties, no buildings are listed for their individual architectural or historic interest.

Buildings with Listing Potential

- 8.2 There are considered to be several individual buildings of architectural and historic interest which should be considered for either national or at least local listing. These are identified on the 'Heritage Assets Plan' (Drawing 004) and include:

Elmfield Road

- 8.3 The Sycamores fronting Elmfield Road (Photograph 33 – Refer to Dwg 002 for locations of building photographs) should be nationally listed. The building is identified on an 1894 OS plan. At this time it was a grand house located in extensive grounds. The grounds have since been developed and accommodate infill houses (Photographs 28, 29, 30, 31 and 34). The imposing Sycamores house was built in red/orange brick. It has an 'M' shaped roof (with a valley gutter) and two hipped sections to the northern side. It has four red/orange brick chimney stacks which announce the prominence of the building. The roof is finished in slate. The size of this building is not appreciated from Elmfield Road and three of the facades can not easily be seen. The façade to Elmfield Road was designed to impress with fenestration arranged symmetrically about a grand central ground floor doorway. The ground floor is dominated by two huge bays located to either side of the central doorway. Headers and cills are in buff coloured sandstone with a matching sandstone band carried through into the side elevations.
- 8.4 1-2 Elmfield Road (Photograph 27), formerly 'Old Elms' is another of the earliest buildings in the Conservation Area, dating from the mid-late nineteenth century. The property encompasses a pair of red brick semis and has an extremely long 'tunnel back' plan form that extends deep into the rear gardens. There is an unsympathetic extension

to the front of the building but these properties are worthy of inclusion on any local list of notable buildings.

- 8.5 Morning Side and Elm Bank (Photograph 37) are also early buildings within the Conservation Area and date from the mid-late nineteenth century. These buildings have two storeys of accommodation with a third floor contained within the roof. Morningside is one of the few properties within the Conservation Area that is non-residential use and contains some characterful pairs of rectangular shaped windows. Again these buildings would be a worthy addition to any local list. They are complemented by the fine mature within the curtilage.

Wigan Lane

- 8.6 278-280 Wigan Lane (Photograph 1) are a pair of grand red/orange brick semi-detached houses dating from between 1895 and 1909. These properties should be considered for national listing. They have interest the four dwellings to the north (discussed below). Photograph 1 shows an interesting projecting double height section with pairs of windows underneath a single header and below a gabled roof. Both houses have a recessed wing on each side which extends into the rear garden. The plan form is almost symmetrical, although No.280 appears to be slightly larger at the rear.
- 8.7 282 Wigan Lane (Photograph 2) and 284 Wigan Lane (Photograph 3) are fine double fronted villas facing Wigan Lane. They are considered to be worthy of national listing. Each villa follows a similar format although the detailing is slightly different. The principal fenestration is arranged about an impressive central doorway which sits below an arched fanlight. A fine slate roof overhangs the front elevation creating deep timber eaves. Each of these imposing buildings occupies a slightly elevated position. Each property also features at least one impressive full height ground floor bay window in the frontage facing Wigan Lane. Both are constructed with buff coloured sandstone mullions and have commanding views of Wigan Lane. An integral part of each property is the external setting: mature gardens front and rear gardens. The front gardens are bounded by a low brick wall topped off in buff coloured sandstone. 282 Wigan Lane features decorative ridge tiles whilst No. 284 has a decorative band of buff coloured sandstone running horizontally between the first and second floors.

- 8.8 286 and 288 Wigan Lane (Photographs 4 and 5) are an interesting building grouping and contain one of the oldest properties in the Conservation Area. No 286 Wigan Lane (Photograph 4) with its hipped roof is almost certainly the building shown in the 1903 archive photograph. No 286 Wigan Lane is an imposing three storey property and is a landmark building within the Wigan Lane streetscape. The building is now sited to back of pavement having had its front garden removed when Wigan Lane was widened to accommodate standard gauge trams. It has listing potential and has interest with the properties to the south: 278, 280, 282 and 284 Wigan Lane.

Sicklefield

- 8.9 Sicklefield House (Photograph 69) is the oldest group of buildings in the Conservation Area and appears on the OS plan of 1847. Full views of the property are next to impossible as a result of its relatively isolated location and its heavily landscaped setting. Viewed from the Sicklefield footpath, the building nestles into the valley side. It has a rural charm and the pale red brick in parts carries a sheen of green algae. The slate roofs sit over deep eaves. The design is simple and Sicklefield appears to have been built in two phases or built as two dwellings. This might go some way to explain the complicated fenestration of the rear elevation which contains square windows and vertically proportioned windows: the latter being both rectangular and arched.

Key unlisted buildings

- 8.10 The vast majority of buildings within Green Hill Conservation Area are architecturally and historically interesting and make a positive contribution to the special character of Green Hill Conservation Area. These buildings are identified on the 'Heritage Assets Plan' (Drawing 004) and include those with some defects such as inappropriate extensions, inappropriate picture windows or inappropriate boundary treatments.
- 8.11 It is the relationship of these various buildings to each other, to their sites and to the streetscapes in which they are located that mostly determine the low density ribbon form and character of the Conservation Area, rather than any individual buildings of outstanding architectural or historic quality. The mid-late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings form the main body of the Conservation Area and whilst constructed in different periods, do have many characteristics in common:

1. Properties are larger than average and were constructed for occupation by relatively wealthy single households.
2. Houses are predominantly detached properties standing in mature gardens, although there are some semi-detached properties and bungalows. There were no cottages, terraced dwellings, purpose built apartment buildings or backland development apparent at the time of survey. It is possible that this may change as any extant planning approvals are implemented. Such forms of development should be resisted as being out of character in Green Hill.
3. The principle façade of each property generally fronts the road from which it is accessed. Front doorways are grand and normally visually prominent from the public realm.
4. Generally properties are sited to respect established building lines on Wigan Lane, Broomhey Avenue, Ludovic Terrace and the cul-de-sac off Brock Mill Lane. The exceptions are 288-300 evens Wigan Lane (Photographs 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) which were developed in advance of a formal building line being established and properties fronting Wigan Lane between Ludovic Terrace and Brock Mill Lane (Photographs 91-100) where the sloping topography resulted in a progressively staggered building line. Elmfield Road developed more organically via the gradual infilling of the extensive former grounds of the Sycamores and also lacks a uniform building line.
5. Almost every property, bar the cottages on Brock Mill Lane, is separated from the road by a well proportioned front garden with a relatively deep garden to the rear. The mature gardens and the trees they contain contribute significantly to the streetscapes and character of the Conservation Area.
6. Properties are generally constructed wholly or partly in brick with timber detailing. Stone built buildings are not a characteristic of the Conservation Area and are very much an exception within the streetscene (Photograph 44).
7. Generally properties are no more than two storey.
8. Pitched roofed buildings form the character of the Conservation Area. Flat roofed buildings would be out of character in the Conservation Area.
9. The main roof of buildings generally has a ridge that lies parallel to the street.
10. Roofs normally project forming deep eaves finished in timber.
11. Gables are finished with timber bargeboards to conceal the ends of roof timbers. Finials are common on the apexes (Photograph 23).
12. Tall chimney stacks make a significant contribution to character of the Conservation Area.

9. Character and relationship of spaces within the area

Private Gardens

- 9.1 Almost every dwelling is set within a generous garden area: front and rear. These have matured over the years and now play a significant role in forming the green character of the Conservation Area.
- 9.2 The well proportioned gardens of Green Hill Conservation Area are a direct result of the generous plot sizes that were sold off for development. Along Wigan Lane fields were subdivided quite regularly and so, therefore, are the gardens. Front gardens sizes are determined by the width of the plot and the distance the buildings are set back from Wigan Lane. The spaces around the properties on Elmfield Road are less regular and are the product of the more organic infill development that occurred here over the years. The six properties on Walter Scott Avenue have extremely long and thin gardens. This is a product of the narrow frontages of the semi-detached houses here and the deep plot upon which these properties were developed.
- 9.3 The prominence of front and rear gardens from inside and outside the Conservation Area means that visually they are part of the public realm and help form the suburban character of Green Hill Conservation Area.
- 9.4 The front gardens of properties are generally contained by low brick or stone boundary walls whilst gate piers mark the driveways. The gardens of many properties contain mature trees which help form the green character of Green Hill Conservation Area. Equally important are the rear gardens of properties which not only provide for the essential amenity needs of residents but also contribute to the environmental quality of the Conservation Area. They provide an important amenity because they can be viewed between buildings from the roads. The trees they contain contribute towards the streetscapes of the Conservation Area. These rear gardens are an integral part of the suburban character of Green Hill.
- 9.5 The preservation of gardens will safeguard the character of the Conservation Area. The protection of rear gardens from the threat of backland development will preserve the ribbon development pattern that characterises Green Hill Conservation Area.

Other Spaces

- 9.6 The vast majority of space within the Conservation Area is taken over by residential curtilage. At the time of survey there was only one other space worthy of note within the Conservation Area: the group of trees at the opposite side of Wigan Lane to Elmfield Road makes an important contribution to the streetscene and the character of the Conservation Area. The trees here act as part of a wildlife corridor allowing species to move between the Douglas River Valley and the railway line and thereafter to other parts of the Borough.

10. Prevalent and traditional building materials

Mid to Late nineteenth century properties:

1. These are generally constructed in red/orange brick, with buff coloured sandstone dressings used for headers, cills, mullions and ornamental bands. Buff coloured sandstone is also used for steps, gateposts and for topping off garden walls.
2. Timber is commonly used on these properties: for window frames, eaves and barge boards. The use of timber contributes significantly to the special character of the Conservation Area.
3. Roofs are pitched and finished in grey slate. Occasionally properties have ornamental ridge tiles (Photograph 2).
4. Originally the windows would have all been timber framed sash windows.
5. Simple red/orange brick chimney stacks are a feature of these roofscapes.
6. Iron would have been commonly used for drainage goods and gates.

Early twentieth century properties (Interwar):

1. Generally these properties are constructed in entirely in red brick or in part red brick and part timber/render. Render and timber features are common on these buildings, particularly on gabled roofs.
2. The buff coloured sandstone used on the mid-late nineteenth century buildings is notably absent from the early twentieth century properties. Headers are either brick or timber and cills predominantly timber.
3. Gateposts and garden walls are predominantly red brick with shaped copings.
4. Timber is commonly used for doors, window frames, eaves, barge boards and for other decorative features. The use of timber contributes significantly to the special character of the Conservation Area.
5. Generally properties have grey slate roofs or plain tile roofs. Sometimes the streetscape is punctuated by a roof with red plain tiles. Commonly ridges are finished with red ridge tiles.
6. In the twentieth century buildings, sash windows are dropped in favour of wooden framed casement windows with transom windows above. Often the transom held decorative leading and stained glass.
7. Iron would have been commonly used for drainage goods and gates.
8. Tall brick chimney stacks are a common feature of roofs

11. Local details

Late to nineteenth century buildings

1. The design of these properties is generally simpler and less heavily modelled than the later interwar buildings.
2. The tall floor to ceiling heights favoured in the mid-late nineteenth century give the elevations of these buildings a strong sense of verticality.
3. The principal frontages commonly feature a full height bay window(s) under a flat roof. No.282 Wigan Lane, features both a traditional bay window and a square bay (Photograph 2). Some bays are constructed using brick piers whilst others use stone mullions.
4. Windows are vertically proportioned (Photograph 4). Originally these windows would have had timber sash windows which slid open vertically. Sash windows were most likely a British invention dating back to around 1670. They allow smooth opening using a system of pulleys and counterweights. Where original sash windows survive, the oldest windows are the two over two panes which predate the one over one pane. The later being permitted by advances in glass manufacturing technology which reduced the cost. In either case the frames are recessed from the outer face of the brick facades creating relief and shadow lines on the frontages which creates interest to the elevations and adds character to the buildings.
5. Simple headers and cills are usually finished in buff coloured sandstone. Occasionally these are complemented a matching decorative horizontal band of sandstone (Photograph 33).
6. The front doors are often recessed. Sometimes below a semi-circular brick roman arch detail, below which sits a semi-circular fan light and below that a panelled timber door.
7. Slate roofs overhang to protect quite deep timber eaves. Gables are finished with plain timber barge boards, the apex of which sometimes carries a decorative finial. Finials are believed to have evolved from poles mounted on the roof to prevent witches landing on the ridges!
8. Occasionally roofs carry ornamental ridge tiles (Photograph 2).
9. Tall chimneys stacks characterise these buildings and add to the quality of the roofscape.

10. Garden walls are usually built in simple red/orange brick with buff coloured sandstone toppings. Gateposts are generally matching buff coloured sandstone.

Early twentieth century buildings (Interwar):

1. The majority of interwar buildings are individually designed which provides a pleasing and contrasting streetscape.
2. Lower floor to ceiling heights became popular in the early twentieth century which gives these buildings a stronger horizontal emphasis. On many properties, the frames of the first floor windows lie immediately below the eaves and there is no masonry above them as with the mid-late nineteenth century buildings.
3. The elevations of the early twentieth century buildings are heavily modelled and have interesting principal elevations. The vast majority have a gabled elevation fronting the street and commonly feature a single or a pair of bay windows. Predominantly these are full height bay windows under a gabled roof.
4. The visual prominence of gables is often increased by virtue of their being finished in render and timber. The timber generally forms a simple geometric pattern. Commonly the timber is painted dark and the render in white/cream in an 'arts and crafts' style.
5. The brick corners of some of the wholly rendered frontages contrast with the render (Photographs 60 and 61).
6. Bay windows can be either single height, or double height (extending from ground floor to first floor) adding to the heavily modelled characteristic.
7. Bays take a variety of shapes, including traditional bays and square box bays (Photograph 53). Unlike the early nineteenth century properties, bow windows are also evident (Photograph 75A). Interwar bays tend to have a simple red brick plinth at ground floor with a timber construction above. Bays are set beneath a variety of roof styles including projecting gabled roofs (Photograph 21), lean to roofs (Photograph 14) and occasionally flat roofs (Photograph 9). Bay windows are sometimes supported by shaped timber brackets (Photograph 17).
8. The original windows to these properties would be vertically proportioned casement windows with a small rectangular shaped transom opening light above. Such windows were used in most windows, including the bays. Originally windows would have been single glazed with thin glazing bars. The transoms were often decorative and held leading and stained glass arranged in a simple geometric design.

9. On the side elevations, arched windows are sometimes used to light stairs. These side windows were often finished in stained glass to ensure privacy (Photograph 63).
10. Timber work is quite decorative around the front door. The original doors would have been geometrically shaped panelled hardwood timber doors.
11. Most properties have a weather porch: either recessed into the frontage (Photograph 54) or a timber projecting roof providing weather protection to the door (Photograph 43). Recessed arched entrances are a common feature and sometimes the doorway have a semi-circular light above with a glazed panel to either side (Photograph 62). Buildings with a smaller arched entrance often contain a single semi-circular fan light above the door (Photograph 59). Some of the arched doorways are formed using a brick arch and keystone (Photograph 64).
12. Tiled and slate roofs overhang the elevations, protecting deep timber eaves. Where eaves are particularly deep, the eaves are sometimes supported by feature timber brackets (Photograph 65). End gables are finished with timber barge boards. The gable apexes are often decorated with finials (Photograph 58). The grey roofed streetscene is punctuated by an occasional house with a red tiled roof.
13. The majority of roofs carry red ridge tiles (Photograph 54).
14. Tall and slender brick chimneys stacks characterise these buildings and add to the interest and quality of the roofscape (Photograph 57).
15. The interwar properties were built at a time when car ownership was growing and many of the houses were built with a driveway and a garage. Two car families were rare so most houses tended to have a single garage.
16. Garden walls are varied and generally finished in red brick, often matching the house (Photograph 53). Occasionally stone walls are apparent. The brick walls are mostly heavily modelled and make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area (Photograph 43). Often these protect a privet hedge. Red brick gate piers are often topped off with an ornamental cap. Originally these would have supported wrought iron gates.
17. Whilst the purpose of this appraisal is not to consider the inside of dwellings it should be noted that common internal characteristics of interwar dwellings would probably have included panelled hardwood doors, hardwood floors and quite decorative timber staircases often with carved features.

12. Contribution made by green spaces, trees and hedges to the character of the area

- 12.1 As noted above greenery makes a significant contribution to the character of Green Hill Conservation Area. Trees, hedges, mature front and rear gardens form the green backdrop for the buildings and hence determine the suburban character of the Green Hill Conservation Area.
- 12.2 The visual significance of trees and front gardens is enhanced by the linear nature of the Conservation Area and the green vistas along streets that result. Rear gardens are equally important and the trees they contain are often visible from the public realm.
- 12.3 The street trees planted in the public realm are equally important contributors to the character of the Conservation Area.

13. Setting and relationship with the surrounding landscape

- 13.1 Wigan Lane follows a ridge of higher land. To the east of the Conservation Area, the land comprises of countryside which falls away into the Douglas river valley. The southern boundary of the Conservation Area is contained by other suburban development. Immediately to the north of the Conservation Area boundary, the original dwellings have been redeveloped and replaced by apartment buildings. The western side of the Conservation Area is bordered by late twentieth century development and a railway line.
- 13.2 Many people pass through the Conservation Area on a daily basis since Wigan Lane is a key route into and out of Wigan. Residents of and visitors to the Borough, travelling along Wigan Lane, will appreciate the interesting properties and the mature gardens that form the special character and interest of Green Hill Conservation Area.
- 13.3 Given the linear nature of the Conservation Area, long vistas are created when looking north and south down along Wigan Lane. Only the slight kink in Wigan Lane close to Elmfield Road provides an end to these vistas. An interesting vista also exists from Wigan Lane looking into Elmfield Road toward Lauriston (Building 28) which forms a strong focal point at the end of the vista.
- 13.4 The rapid nature of the ribbon development that took place here filled the Wigan Lane frontages with buildings. From the public realm on the eastern side of Wigan Lane, potential views of the open countryside abutting the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area are generally obscured by buildings. Residents of Ludovic Terrace and the cul-de-sac off Brock Mill Lane, however, enjoy good views of the countryside and Douglas Valley.

14. Existence of neutral areas

14.1 Some of the late twentieth century properties on Elmfield Road do not possess sufficient architectural detailing/interest to be regarded as making a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area in the same way as the heavily modelled interwar buildings and older mid-late nineteenth century buildings (Refer to Dwg 004 Heritage Assets). At the same time, these properties are not bland and are not considered to warrant classification as having a negative impact on the Conservation Area.

15. Potential threats to the character

15.1 The low density of development would suggest that the Conservation Area may be increasingly subject to redevelopment pressure. Fortunately the majority of the built fabric remains intact. Future demolitions will be resisted in the Conservation Area unless they involve the redevelopment of 'neutral properties'. Backland development will also be resisted.

15.2 The Conservation Area fabric is at risk from loss of detail. Negative influences that appear to have eroded the special character of the area in the past have included:

1. Replacement of timber framed with unsympathetic Upvc windows;
2. Replacement of timber with Upvc (bargeboards etc);
3. Replacement of timber doors with Upvc doors;
4. Removal of chimney stacks;
5. Painting of stone detailing;
6. Inappropriate boundary treatments;
7. Removal of mature trees/hedges/gardens and their replacement with hard standing to provide for vehicle parking/manoeuvring and/or for low maintenance curtilage (Photograph 66).

16. Development control implications

16.1 Applications made to Wigan MBC to make changes within the Conservation Area will be assessed against relevant national and local planning policy guidance. Within the Conservation Area:

- Wigan MBC will resist any proposals to demolish characterful buildings. Proposals to redevelop any of the identified 'neutral properties' will be considered on their merits.
- Wigan MBC will resist any backland development proposals since these would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area and also potentially to the residential amenity of neighbouring residents.
- The design of any new development must be informed by the architectural character and urban form of the surrounding Conservation Area. Applicants for new buildings/extensions will need to demonstrate, having regard to this Character Appraisal, that their development and alteration proposals maintain or enhance the character of the area. Wigan MBC will carefully consider whether the overall scale, density, massing, design, height, site layout, access and landscaping of new development is compatible in relation to neighbouring buildings, the streetscape and the Conservation Area generally.
- Proposals affecting characterful buildings with some defects, such as inappropriate window frames or inappropriate boundary treatments, will be expected to include suitable repairs and the replacement of inappropriate features with sympathetic ones.

16.2 The above Character Appraisal will enable architects, designers and their clients to plan new development, extensions and alterations that are appropriate to the character of Green Hill Conservation Area. It will also allow householders to make better informed decisions about how proposed changes might enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

16.3 Finally, the appraisal should not be seen as an attempt to impose particular architectural styles or tastes, nor is it intended to stifle innovation or originality. It is however seeking to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Document Information:

PBA Project Number: 06/404
Printed: 12 February 2007

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy and Information

What is a Conservation Area?

The Planning Act of 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to determine which parts of their areas merit Conservation Area status. The Act defines Conservation Areas as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve - or enhance*”.

Whilst it is important that buildings in Conservation Areas are of historic or architectural value, it is their group rather than individual value that is important. The character of an area is not derived from its buildings alone, but from a combination of factors, including: the historic layout of roads and paths, characteristic building and paving materials, vistas and spaces.

Conservation Areas in Wigan

There are currently 22 designated Conservation Areas within Wigan, each designated as a result of its special architectural or historic interest. The Council are obliged to protect each Conservation Area from development which fails to maintain its special character.

Conservation Area Appraisals

The designation of any Conservation Area demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding and enhancing its special character and appearance. It is, therefore, important that the Council, residents, property owners, and others with an interest in the Conservation Area are aware of what features (buildings, spaces, features, trees etc) make up the areas special interest. This is best achieved by a Conservation Area Character Appraisal which defines the area's special historic and architectural interest, including identification of what contributes positively towards the character of the area and the existence of any neutral or negative features. Where necessary an appraisal may assess the need for any sympathetic preservation and enhancement proposals. The appraisal will provide a consistent and sound context for implementing policies and making informed development control decisions.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Green Hill

This Character Appraisal was undertaken in Autumn/Winter 2006 by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Wigan MBC. The appraisal uses best practice guidance as advocated by English Heritage in their publication entitled '*Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*' (2005).

It is intended that this appraisal will become a publicly available document and will be used as a reference point by the Council when taking decisions on applications for planning permission and conservation area consent. It should be regarded as supplementary to the conservation policies set out in the adopted Wigan Unitary Development Plan (2006).

The appraisal takes the form of text and plans. Whilst every effort has been made to highlight those features that contribute toward the special character of the area, the appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space must not be taken to imply that it is of no visual or historic interest to the Conservation Area.

Future development and change within Green Hill Conservation Area will be influenced and guided by national and local planning policy guidance. The following sections summarise the key conservation policy documents.

National Planning Policy

Conservation Areas are formally designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 (1) defines a Conservation Area as '*an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. It is the duty of local authorities to designate as conservation areas any area of special architectural or historic interest, whose character and appearance it is worth preserving or enhancing. Detailed guidance about the legislation is given in 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment' (PPG15) published in 1994.

Wigan MBC Replacement Unitary Development Plan (Adopted January 2006)

The Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006, describes the Council's intentions for the development and use of land within the Borough and forms the basis against which planning

applications are assessed. Relevant policies include ENV4 'Conservation', EV4A 'Development and Design in Conservation Areas' and EV4B 'Listed Buildings'.

EV4 'Conservation' advises that the Council will conserve the historic environment by:

1. *Not permitting proposals which would harm the character or appearance of listed buildings or their settings, or proposals which fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
2. *Protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of ancient monuments, sites, buildings and structures of archaeological interest and historic landscapes;*
3. *Exercising its normal development control powers to encourage the protection and enhancement of buildings of local interest;*
4. *Encouraging the occupation of old buildings and permitting new uses which are compatible with their character and settings; and*
5. *Carrying out environmental improvement schemes in conservation areas.*

EV4A 'Development and Design in Conservation Areas' details the main considerations that the Council will apply when assessing development proposals within Conservation Areas. It advises that in addition to other Borough wide development and design policies, other considerations will be applied within Conservation Areas and their settings. Those considerations listed by EV4A that are most relevant to Green Hill include:

1. *The Council will ensure that any proposal for development within a Conservation Area will preserve or enhance and will not harm the character or appearance of that area;*
2. *The demolition or inappropriate alteration of buildings which make a positive contribution to the historical, architectural or industrial archaeological character or appearance of a Conservation Area will not be permitted;*
3. *Consent for demolition will only be granted subject to the building not being demolished before a contract for carrying out the redevelopment of the site to a high standard of design is made for which planning permission has been granted or some other legally binding commitment has been made*
4. *Proposals which include the demolition of significant features including porches, chimneys and boundary walls/railings or which remove or alter architectural features of value will not be permitted. The retention or, where features are missing, restoration or where inappropriate forms or features are present, the remodelling of the external character of buildings, particularly with regard to windows, roofs, materials and advertising will be required;*

5. *The Council will encourage the removal of buildings detrimental to the character of Conservation Areas;*
6. *The rendering or cladding of stone and brick buildings will not be permitted*
7. *Proposals which involve development, including relatively large-scale extensions, within the grounds/gardens of dwellings and other buildings such as churches where the grounds contribute to the character of the Conservation Area will not be allowed.*

In accordance with national policy, Wigan MBC have begun to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) which when adopted will replace the Unitary Development Plan.

Implications of Conservation Area Status

Conservation Area status is not intended to stifle new development nor to preserve areas as museum pieces. Conservation Areas will be allowed to evolve to meet changing demands although the Council when taking development control decisions will take extra care to ensure that the special architectural and historic qualities of Green Hill are not eroded.

In Green Hill the normal requirements for planning permission and building regulation approval apply with some additional restrictions:

- Planning applications will be carefully considered by the Borough Council to ensure that they enhance or preserve the special character of the area.
- The impact of any development outside the boundary of the Conservation Area, which might affect its setting and character, will also be carefully considered.
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of most buildings or structures.
- The Council must be given six weeks notice of any intention to undertake works to cut down, lop, prune or uproot any trees over a certain size in the Conservation Area.
- In order to be able to consider the implications of development proposals, the Council will normally require proposals within the Conservation Area to be submitted in the form of a full, and not outline, application.

In addition, works which elsewhere are classified as permitted development in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 may require planning consent . Developers are advised to check with the Borough Council at an early stage on the need for any permissions. Unauthorised work can lead to prosecution and the Council may take enforcement action requiring the work to be 'undone'.

Appendix 2: A Potted History of Wigan

Early Wigan

The Romans built a fort at Wigan. However it was abandoned by the 5th century AD when the Romans left Britain. Then in the 7th century the Saxons founded a village at Wigan. In the 13th century it grew into a town. In 1246 Wigan was granted a charter and weekly markets started. By the end of the Middle Ages it probably had a population of 2,500-3,000.

From the Middle Ages onwards coal was mined around Wigan but in the town itself the main industry was wool. There was also a pewter industry . By the early 17th century the population of Wigan was around 4,000 and a grammar school had been founded.

In 1642 came the Civil War between king and parliament. Although the people of Wigan almost all supported the king, by April 1643 parliamentary forces occupied the town. Wigan Lane just to the south of Green Hill Conservation Area was the site of a battle where the royalists were defeated by the parliamentarians.

Wigan in the Industrial Revolution

During the 18th century Wigan continued to be an important market town. Towards the end of the century the Leeds and Liverpool Canal was completed as far as Wigan, coal mining became increasingly important, an ironworks was opened, the cotton weaving industry was booming and the clock making industry continued to flourish. In terms of social amenities, a waterworks was created and a dispensary opened where the poor could obtain free medicines.

During the 19th century amenities in Wigan continued to improve with the introduction of gas light and connections to Manchester and Liverpool by railway. In 1856 a cemetery opened and in 1873 Wigan Infirmary opened.

A new Town Hall was built in 1867 and a Market Hall was built in 1877. Mesnes Park opened in 1878. The same year a public library opened in Wigan. From 1901 electric trams ran in the streets of Wigan (electricity was first generated in Wigan in 1900). Trams were gradually replaced by trolley buses from 1925 onwards.

Modern Wigan

In 1937 Wigan became famous when George Orwell (real name Eric Blair) wrote *The Road to Wigan Pier* (the pier was a landing stage on the canal where boats could unload cargo). The book painted a grim picture of poverty and unemployment in the town but ignored the positive aspects of life in a working class community.

In the late 20th century the traditional industries in Wigan declined rapidly. The last important colliery closed in 1992. Today the service industries, including tourism, are the most important ones in Wigan. In 1974 Wigan and Leigh became part of Greater Manchester. The Galleries Shopping Centre opened in 1991. At the beginning of the 21st century a new shopping centre is being built at The Arcades. Today the population of Wigan is 301,000.

Some outsiders might think of Wigan as a grim northern town noted for coal mines, cotton mills, cobbled streets, rugby league and, of course, Wigan Pier. Possibly this image had some validity when applied to the town as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But, where once there were at least 1000 pit shafts within a 5 mile radius of the town centre, none remain. Many of the old sites and associated railways are nature conservation areas and pleasant pathways. Similarly, the cotton industry met its demise some years ago. Many mills are still standing but now function as museums, warehouses etc. Wigan Pier, redeveloped in the 1980s is a folk museum and part of an award winning heritage centre.