



17 and No 14 Park Road and 1 and 3 Park Crescent West; the whole frontage to Parson's Walk as yet undeveloped. Nor do the first 12 houses on Parson's Walk appear on the 1907 OS. The 1903 Wigan street directory refers to the Grammar School as being located on Park Road, though Parson's Walk is named on the 1894 OS. The 1909/10 Street directory refers to Parson's Walk, but only mentions 6 occupied properties, Nos 31, 33, 43, 45, 47 and 49.

The land to the rear known as Bull Hey, is occupied by Wigan Cricket Club, which appears on the 1908 OS. On the 1848 edition, this area is shown as enclosed gardens and orchards possibly associated with the Hall and Rectory adjoining it to the south. To the north were the Mesnes No 1 colliery and a sandstone quarry.

Progressing northwards along Parson's Walk Nos 1 and 3 are a pair of Arts and Crafts style houses with gables and bays; No 5 a c1930's hipped roof bungalow followed by a group of c1930's bay fronted semis. 21 and 23 are modern dormer bungalows gable to road. Next is a detached house probably c1920's.



Nos 31 and 33 are Edwardian era bay fronted semis. Both are rendered or painted; No 31 has an enlarged 1st floor window. No.33 is in use as a day nursery. Nos 35 and 37 are red brick bay fronted gabled semis dated 1922. No 39 is a detached house

probably pre 1914, with elaborate door pediment in terracotta.

43-45 are late 19th early 20th Century semis; ground floor bays with Dutch style gables and retain raised and fielded panelled doors.



No 47-49 of similar period, have ground floor bays with balustrades over and rendered or painted stone mullions and reveals. This marks the transition from Parson's Walk to Park Road.

1, 1a- 4 Park Road form a pleasing late 19th Century terraced group with gable features and continuous slated porches over ground floor bays.

Terraced groups of similar character but varied in detail extend up to the railway bridge and flank two side streets, Park Crescent and Park Crescent West. The bridge itself features cast iron panels with mouldings.

Park Crescent and Park Crescent West are short roads containing 8 and 5 dwellings respectively mainly 2 storey semi detached of c1880's. Some are in rustic brick rather than the predominant hard reds and feature gabled bays with windows of tall proportions.

The alignment and name of these short roads suggests that perhaps they were intended to link,



however both are culs-de-sac, leading to the grounds of the Wigan Subscription Bowling Club whose sign board states its establishment in 1852. It is certainly shown on the 1894 OS. A substantial pavilion of traditional design and construction, long in proportion and with extensive veranda windows, faces the green with the railway embankment at its rear. The grounds are enclosed by high fences.

Park Crescent and Park Crescent West extend the streetscape of the main frontage forming secondary spaces with a strong relationship with the park landscape.



Nos 5-10 Park Road.

Interestingly, Nos 8, 9 and 10 with similar Flemish style gables, were occupied in 1910 by members of the Ashton family who were fish, game and poultry dealers.

The properties in this character area remain almost wholly in residential use; as noted No 33 Parson's Walk is a day nursery. Most of the properties appear to be well maintained externally though there are a few which would benefit from some care and attention. However the relentless march of replacement windows is evident.

Where the window openings and proportions remain unaltered, these modern replacement

windows tend to remain subservient to the inherently robust character of the Victorian and Edwardian era houses.

Parson's Walk/Park Road: Public Realm Aspects

Traffic and its associated signage and utilitarian street furniture are inevitable features of these classified roads. However, the bustle of activity around the junction of Parson's Walk and New Market Street soon gives way to a quieter suburban character with progression northwards. Double yellow lines extend along the whole west side and around the bend on the park side but with some kerbside permit holder parking south of the bend.

The tarmacadam footway adjacent the park is of generous width giving a spacious character to the road.

Main road Lighting columns are tall, tapered steel but painted black. The culs-de-sac have a mixture of old concrete and new steel columns of varied design. A replacement column is ominously sited on the outside of the bend. Residents refer to a history of accidents here and a bus stop being relocated away from the bend. There is certainly a feeling of vulnerability due to the severity of the bend and very restricted visibility from Park Crescent southwards.

The west side has a concrete slab footway, uneven in places with narrow grass verges within which are a number of roadside trees. The grass verge is damaged in places by vehicle overrunning.

The whole residential frontage is to a common building line of 2-3 m. Most properties retain their low front garden walls and original stone gate piers. The shallow front gardens leave no space for intrusive frontage car parking.



Despite their close spacing, most of the properties have access to off street parking, some via shared drives, though a few do not. The lane to the rear is within the grounds of the cricket club and does not provide secondary access for residents.

The introduction of a residents' parking permit system has eliminated the problem of intrusive kerbside parking by town centre users. There is however some anecdotal evidence of conflict between residents parking and traffic movements to and from the bowling green in Park Crescent and Park Crescent West.

Summary of Parson's Walk and Park Road Character Area

The Thomas Linacre building (former Grammar School) is a building of acknowledged architectural interest. It is a notable feature on the approach to the park from the town centre and thus makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. It usefully counter balances the modern technical college complex opposite - rightly excluded from the Conservation Area.

The conservation merit of the other properties within this character area is to a degree, a reflection of its stages of development. The earlier phases of the Victorian era contribute the greater interest by reason of their typically vertical emphasis with tall proportioned windows and richness of visual incident, for example, projecting bays, ornamental porches, balconies, and applied decoration such as terracotta work and ceramic tiling.

The earliest stages of its development were broadly contemporary with the laying out of the park thus providing an appropriate 19th Century setting for the park landscape and in turn deriving benefit from its outlook over the park.

Many of the dwellings represent examples of craftsmanship, detailing and use of materials which would be difficult to reproduce today.

The houses of later periods are of variable quality but overall the street retains a cohesive appearance due to its unity of scale, a common building line and generally consistent use of materials notably red brick and slate.

The Parson's Walk - Park Road section of the conservation area is of particular value in that its continuous built form provides a well-defined urban edge to the park.

Park Crescent and Park Crescent West together with the corresponding frontages to Park Road are secondary spaces of pleasing domestic scale and robust Victorian character, which like the main frontages have a positive visual connection with the park itself.

Negative factors/ opportunities

As noted, a number of houses have received modern replacement windows, usually with a different pattern of glazing bars from the original. Such alterations if widespread can erode the historic character of an area.

Alterations to the external appearance of dwelling houses are often classed as permitted development but in conservation areas there are restrictions on such matters as various types of cladding; the insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes; the erection of satellite dishes on walls roofs or chimneys fronting a highway.

However, alterations to windows will generally remain permitted development unless additional powers are sought by the Planning Authority;



(Article 4.2 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order).

To date no such powers have been obtained by Wigan BC in respect of the Mesnes Conservation Area. As such, it is not perhaps surprising that a number of householders have installed replacement glazing units in modern materials and designs. It is a matter for consultation and discussion as to whether such changes should be discouraged by seeking additional planning powers, given the extent of changes already made and the probable additional cost to householders of installing like for like replacements in traditional materials.

A further issue of concern is the conversion of original family homes to flats or for multi-occupation. Generally such intensification will require planning permission and its impact upon the character of the conservation area e.g additional parking demand, will be a material consideration.

Character Area 4: Bridgeman Terrace




The eastern side of the conservation area is formed mainly by Bridgeman Terrace but it includes an isolated property located at the corner of Mesnes Street and Wrightington Street.


Occupied by the Claremont Dental Practice, it is a pleasing 3 storey building dated 1894, in red brick with buff sandstone mullions strings and dressings.

It features an end bay with projecting barge boards and framing and a pleasing elliptical arched doorway in sandstone.

The north eastern perimeter of the Conservation Area continues with Bridgeman Terrace. The road, named after the 17th Century Rector, Dr John Bridgeman, actually includes three separate groups of buildings totalling 39 premises.

The largest group is a terrace of 28 mainly late 19th Century former town houses of 3 storeys, (Nos 1-29 inclusive; Nos 1-2 is evidently one property), extending 175m northwards from the junction with Mesnes Park Terrace; the majority of these properties are now in use as offices including professional services and consulting rooms. Two appear to remain in residential use and appear to be multi-occupied. Two are currently unoccupied.

 Bridgeman House is a modern 3 storey office building occupied by the Inland Revenue, located between Nos 29-38.

 Nos 38-44, 45 and 46 Bridgeman Terrace and Nos 7 and 8 Kenyon Road are late 19th Century/early 20th Century two storey town houses. Nos 43 and 44 appear to be unoccupied.

Reference to OS maps and the variations in design indicate that Bridgeman Terrace was developed in stages. Nos 1-11 were evidently the first to be erected and form a distinctive group. No 1/2 displays a stone plaque with the legend "Park View 1879". This group displays the characteristics of the earlier Georgian style of town house, with simple detailing and pleasing proportions. They feature 2 storey



height panelled splayed bays (except Nos 7 and 8 which have square bays), surmounted by over-sailing cornices with dentils. The continuous eaves line has brick corbel and coggling detail. The warm red brickwork is a form of English Garden wall bond. Most retain original raised and fielded 6 panelled doors and large paned sash windows though some modern replacements are evident. Upper floor windows have flat cambered lintels in stone.



Nos 12-15 and 25-29 are shown on the 1894 map, a date stone on No 29 proclaiming its date as 1881, but Nos 16-24 were later, built between 1894 and 1908.

The building of the Terrace evidently began concurrently with the development of Mesnes Park. These were homes for the emerging middle class built to exploit the pleasant outlook and amenity value of the new park. Worrall's Directory for 1885, lists 17 occupied houses in Bridgeman Terrace.

The 1885 Directory records that the occupants were mainly people of the professional and business classes, for example, the occupier of No 26 in 1885 was a Henry Farr, carriage builder operating from premises in Commercial Yard, Market Place. His landaus and broughams were awarded prize medals by the Manchester and Liverpool Agricultural Society in 1870, 1871, for excellence in design and workmanship. Mr Thos Charlson of No 30 was a corn merchant; No 6 was occupied by Thos

Baldwin a tarpaulin manufacturer with premises in Commercial Yard Ince. No 8 was occupied by Jas. McGregor, a bank manager. No 3 was the home of Edward Coupe, Iron founder, possibly part of the R & J E Coupe, Iron founders of Worsley Mesnes. Clearly the Terrace was a prestige location for the late Victorian middle classes.

The emerging fashion for more individually designed houses by the new middle classes is reflected in the later phases of more flamboyant style for example exhibiting a more elaborate treatment of doorways, fenestration, bays and gabled fronts than nos. 1-11.

No 12 -15 inclusive is a group of such bay fronted gabled town houses.

The bays are splayed, two storeys, with brick piers. The upper bay is shallower than the ground floor with projecting lead clad roof to the lower bay. Ground floor windows have



cambered stone lintels, the doorway round headed brick arch with stone springing and keystones. 1st and 2nd floor windows are round headed. Steeply pitched gables extend above the bays flush with the main wall plane.

Decorative balconies with cast iron railings extend above the doorways. No 11 and 12 appear to remain in residential use.

Nos 16 - 24 show further variations. Nos 16 and 24 have large projecting gables with tile patterned relief decoration; Nos 17-23 have smaller attic gables. Bays feature large sash windows with cambered brick lintels. Doors are grouped in pairs.



Nos 19 and 20 have a combined porch supported by console brackets.

Nos 25, 26, 28 and 29 have similar features to Nos 16-24 but steeper gables; No 27 is however of different style with large square stone mullioned bay and massive doorway with terracotta relief detail above door and ground floor window, but altered attic gable. No 29 is the northern end of the main terraced group.

View southwards showing variety of projecting bays, gables windows and doors set within reveals and other detail offering richer visual incident than most modern buildings. The buildings are set to a building line of not more than 3m providing a close relationship to the street, the scene enhanced by the presence of roadside trees. Shallow front areas are hard paved. There is evidence that nos. 11-29 were provided with low walls and railings. No.12 is the only one to retain its low stoned capped walls and



stone gate posts- inscribed 'Mona House'. The railings are no more. The shallow building line at least ensures that frontage parking does not detract from the street scene.

Detail of gable, No.16



Bridgeman House represents the only modern incursion in the 290m length of the street. It has the hallmark of the 1960's, pre-dating the conservation area designation. Though its white rendered façade and large panelled fenestration are out of keeping with the terrace, it does at least respect the eaves line and overall scale of its neighbours.



Adjoining is No 38, the Bridge Club, a doubled fronted villa in hard red brick and terracotta. Its 2 storey height aligns with the three storeys of its modern neighbour due in part to the road gradient.



(1894-1907). Unusually, it has a flat roof with balustrade. Its terracotta portico is impressive.



Nos 39 and 40 are a pair of large red brick town houses with mullioned square bays surmounted by balconies and Dutch style attic gables. Now offices. Shown on the 1894 OS.

No 41 is a large double fronted 2 storey house with stone and brick segmental lintels and 6 panelled door dating from between 1894 and 1908. The remainder of the group up to No 7 Kenyon Road, consists of 4 bay fronted 2 storey houses in red/brown brick with hipped roofs to full height, arranged as double and single fronted pairs, all built before 1894. No 7 is used as consulting rooms.

All this group retain low front walls, some with stone gate posts.



Across the road Nos 45 and 46, are a pair of houses of similar age and character, now offices, sited prominently at the Pagefield College entrance. The former Rylands Mill dating from 1864, dominates the background but the green annex is incongruous.

The Pagefield Building, formerly the Rylands Gidlow Mill



This massive three storey former cotton mill has a 120m frontage to the Park. It is aligned on a north-westerly axis, its southern end being about 75m north west from Bridgeman Terrace. The building has been adapted for its current use as an annex of the Wigan and Leigh College. Between the main building and Bridgeman Terrace is a yard area on which a system built annex has been placed.

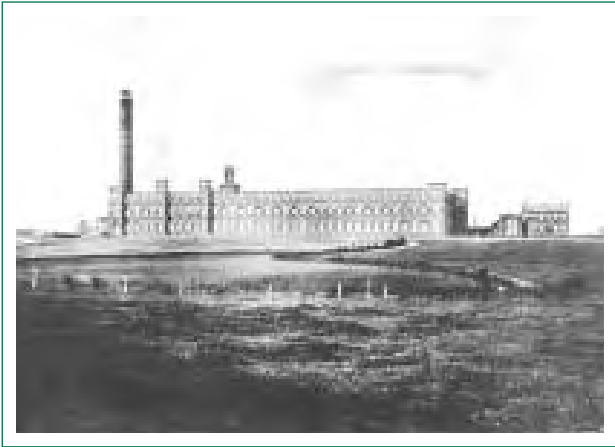
Remarkably, despite its prominent hill top site and huge bulk, the former mill is effectively screened by the summer foliage of mature trees and under-planting along the edge of the park.

The mill is Listed Grade II; 1996. It is described as: Integrated cotton mill comprising spinning mill with integral boiler and engine, associated chimney and attached weaving sheds; now part of a college, 1865, by George Woodhouse for Rylands & Sons; altered and internally remodelled. (See also SMR entries, Appendix 3).

In 1865 the Earl of Derby praised the mill "as



a pleasure to the eye to rest on, so well has architectural effect been studied in its construction".



The architect, George Woodhouse of Bolton was a leading mill architect of his time. He made deliberate use of white and blue Staffordshire brick in order to relieve the monotony of red brick.

An early view of the mill before the park was fully landscaped.

The mill remains a permanent memorial to John Rylands and embodies a triumph for aesthetic over utilitarian considerations. It was however one of the most expensive mills ever built; costs were raised by the use throughout of fireproof modes of construction. (Extract from Sites and Monuments record, GMAU).



The mill was designed for throstle spinning (a spinning machine formerly used to twist and wind fibres of cotton or wool continuously). The use of polychromatic brickwork for mill construction at this time was unusual.

'Forms a very striking feature on an elevated site immediately north of Mesnes Park' (list entry). The list entry leaves no doubt about the significance of this massive structure. The mill is an undoubted heritage asset to the park. Its chimney is a prominent landmark.

The Mesnes Conservation area was extended in November 1984 to include the original three storey section of the mill.

At that time the mill was being sold off by its original owners and was unlisted with the attendant risks of total or partial demolition or alteration to accommodate new uses.

In the designation report, the mill was described as forming "a fine enclosing element to the Mesnes Park. The roofline is enriched by turrets and an ornate water tower finished with an attractive lantern. The tower forms a dominant feature in Wigan's skyline from several different viewpoints. The mill forms a good example of the English functional tradition in early industrial architecture in which Georgian skills in proportion, window pattern and detailing were carried into the nineteenth century so helping massive industrial buildings to relate to the human scale unlike much modern architecture. The mill's special architectural character and its relationship with the existing conservation area therefore justify its inclusion in the Mesnes Conservation Area".



The Public Realm



Bridgeman Terrace appears to attract fast moving traffic. Footways are of generous width and provide for roadside tree planting on both sides. On the park side there are double yellow lines, but metered kerbside parking is available on the opposite side.

A form of traditional street lighting has been installed but the columns are rather spindly in proportion, their height probably dictated by highway requirements.

There is a substantial pedestrian movement to and from the college which gives the area more bustle than its character as a quiet professional business quarter would suggest.

Despite the considerable pedestrian flow, no controlled pedestrian crossing facilities are provided at the park entrance.

The junction is potentially hazardous due to its position at a cross roads junction and the amount of traffic turning into Mesnes Park Terrace where the town's driving test centre is located. The lack of pedestrian crossing facilities must be a deterrent for visits to the park from the town centre direction, especially for example by the elderly, the mobility impaired and people with young children.

The park's perimeter trees and neatly clipped boundary hedges, undoubtedly make positive contributions to the street scene along Bridgeman Terrace.

Whilst the dense evergreen perimeter shrubbery effectively screens views of traffic from within the park, it conversely deprives pedestrians passing along Bridgeman Terrace of views into the park which is perhaps unfortunate, moreover creating a degree of seclusion which may at times feel uncomfortable.

Summary of the Bridgeman Terrace character area

As well as being a fine terrace in its own right, the main frontage of Bridgeman Terrace contributes a strongly defined edge to the conservation area, visually containing the park, by reason of its continuous three storey built form.

The main terrace itself is a tour de force which has much variety in detail and visual incident within an overall continuity of scale and height, unified by a consistent palette of traditional local materials, predominantly red brick, terracotta and stone. Many original fixtures survive, for example, panelled doors, porches and various forms of decorative work. In general the properties seem to be well maintained most now being in commercial use. Signage is generally restrained.

The building of the Terrace is contemporary with the development of the park, providing an appropriate late Victorian era back-cloth to the gardens.

Bridgeman Terrace moreover provides a tangible link with an aspect of the town's social history in that many of the early occupants were proprietors



of local businesses and part of the late Victorian middle class.

The former mill is an acknowledged building of national importance by virtue of its Grade II listing. The present use by the College is planned to cease during 2006. Its status as a listed building and location within the conservation area should ensure that new uses are accommodated in such a manner as to respect the architectural qualities of the building and its setting.

Negative factors/ opportunities

The survival of so much of the Victorian character of the terrace into the 21st Century is undoubtedly in no small measure due its conservation area status combined with the careful custodianship of property owners. However, as with Parson's Walk, there have been a number of inappropriate alterations mainly to windows, such as the removal of glazing bars. About one fifth of the properties are so affected.

The loss of nearly all of the front boundary walls and railings and the robust stone gate piers is also regrettable as these defined the private/public realms and provided a visual 'plinth' to the terrace. The paving of the former gardens is nondescript.

Most of the terrace is now in use for commercial purposes a number of which would be expected to attract visits by the public or by clients. Ground floors are 2-3 steps above pavement level, so that providing front access for wheelchair users could be problematic.

Reference has already been made to the need for better pedestrian crossing facilities at Mesnes Park Terrace by the Park gates.

The reuse of the Gidlow Mill will present both a challenge in attracting an appropriate use or mix

of uses and an opportunity for improving the overall presentation of the site to the park and its approach from Bridgeman Terrace, including the removal of the modern green annex.

The modern office building Bridgeman House though of inoffensive design is manifestly out of keeping with the rhythm and materials of the older properties that provide its context. As such it makes no contribution to the character of the conservation area. Should the opportunity ever arise to replace this building, it would have the potential for a more sympathetic design of building which would enhance the conservation area.