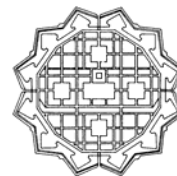


Wigan MBC
Wigan Lane Conservation Area
Character Appraisal: Consultation
Document

Prepared by



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1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 Wigan Lane Conservation Area is one of Wigan's larger Conservation Areas. This report explains why the area is considered worthy of continued protection and of possible extension. An attached plan shows the boundary of the existing Conservation Area and proposed extensions.
- 1.2 This report describes the findings of the Character Appraisal carried out by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Wigan MBC. Following a public consultation exercise on the content of the report the Character Appraisal and plans will be revised and finalised.
- 1.3 This Character Appraisal explains the special character of Wigan Lane. It is intended that the final Character Appraisal will be published and used as a reference point by the Council when taking decisions on applications for planning permission and conservation area consent.

2. Living or Working in Wigan Lane Conservation Area

Introduction

- 2.1 Readers should bear in mind that Conservation Area status is not intended to stop new development or to preserve areas as museum pieces. Conservation Areas are allowed to change.
- 2.2 Conservation Area status can bring many positives. For example, development would need to be more carefully thought out and designed than perhaps it would in other areas, whilst designation as a Conservation Area can add to the area's prestige for those living or working in it.

Conservation Area Boundary Review

- 2.3 Wigan Lane Conservation Area was formally designated on 20th December 1989. Wigan Lane formed the backbone of the area but an area of land running either side of Leyland Mill Lane was also included.
- 2.4 Best practice guidance requires that Conservation Area boundaries are reviewed when Character Appraisals are undertaken. The boundary review concluded that five extensions to the Conservation Area boundary should be considered and these are identified on the map. The suggested additions are as follows:
 - a) The inclusion of St Aubyn's Road within the Conservation Area is recommended along with the remainder of Somerville Road, St Malo Road and 271, 273, 275, 277 Wigan Lane. This area is a planned late Victorian/Early Edwardian suburb comprising of superior terraces that would have been built for the growing middle classes of Wigan. These attractive streetscapes are considered to be worthy additions to the Conservation Area, as are the interwar dwellings at the opposite site of Wigan Lane.

- b) 24 and 26 Spencer Road - this grand pair of late Victorian villas should be included within the Conservation Area boundary.
- c) 121, 123, 125, 127 Mesnes Road and 2 and 4 Tennyson Drive are considered to be of sufficient quality to include within the Conservation Area.
- d) It is recommended that 1-15 odds and 2-14 evens Swinley Street and 28-34 evens Swinley Lane are included within the Conservation Area. They are generally late Victorian and contribute towards the character of the area.
- e) Finally, it is recommended that the remaining properties on Bellingham Avenue be incorporated into the Conservation Area.

3. Summary Definition of Special Interest of Wigan Lane

- 3.1 Wigan Lane Conservation Area grew up during a relatively intensive phase of development between about 1875-1939, so the majority of properties are either mid-late Victorian, Edwardian or Interwar.
- 3.2 The Victorian properties are principally terraced houses or grander villas built in red-orange brick with sandstone dressings and slate roofs. They sit behind a small front garden with a yard at the rear and follow a common building line close to the back of the pavement. They are complemented by community buildings of the same period, notably St Michael's Church and the surviving buildings of the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary. The later Edwardian buildings are generally quite grand houses, heavily modelled with ornate features: often using 'Arts and Crafts' decoration. Interwar development filled out the Conservation Area and completes the character of the area. All these styles have common features namely, red brick and bay windows.
- 3.3 The 1875-1939 period of development failed to sweep away the existing landscape completely. Stone cottages have survived here and there, most notably to the east of the Douglas River. The semi-rural/semi-industrial Douglas Valley and the Hospital site are of a very different nature to the predominantly residential parts of Wigan Lane Conservation Area.
- 3.4 In summary, Wigan Lane Conservation Area is a miniature representation of Wigan's history from pre-industrial revolution to Second World War. The Conservation Area has a variety of building styles, from Victorian to Interwar and from terraced houses to villas and cottages. There are the remnants of a hospital, industrial sites within the Douglas Valley and community buildings. Indeed Wigan Lane Conservation Area is a built environment that reflects the historic 'work, rest and play' life of Wigan.

4. Location, Setting and Relationship with the Surrounding Landscape

- 4.1 Wigan Lane lies approximately 1.5 km north of the town centre. Wigan Lane Conservation Area follows the line of Wigan Lane. With many smaller roads connecting Wigan Lane, the road pattern in plan takes on a herringbone pattern. Residential density varies throughout the Conservation Area.
- 4.2 Wigan Lane Conservation Area is generally fairly level with a gradual rise in height from the south to the north. To the eastern side of the Conservation Area the land falls away into the Douglas River Valley. Located to the west of the Conservation Area are the urban areas of Wigan.
- 4.3 Wigan Lane is a bustling road corridor and properties on it suffer slightly from the negative effects of road use: noise, fumes, etc. The minor roads and cul-de-sacs off it fare better in this respect and the majority of properties enjoy a pleasant environment.

5. Origins and Historic Development

- 5.1 The town of Wigan has a rich heritage buried under a relatively brief period of intense grimy industrial activity based on the twin spoilers of cotton and coal.
- 5.2 Wigan Lane itself seems to have escaped the worst ravages of this industrial activity and during this period provided a welcome airway for the town rising gently as it does towards the high ground north of Wigan.
- 5.3 The tramway along Wigan Lane probably facilitated increased development interest along the Lane.
- 5.4 An 1894 OS plan shows that the Royal Albert Edward Hospital was developed on land outside the edges of the town marked by Swinley Street. Several large houses existed at this time, including The Elms, which survives today. The plan also shows that Whitley Reservoir evolved from a gravel pit and a series of rural lanes, some of which would later become key roads.
- 5.5 The Haigh Woods (or Plantations), as well as providing recreation for Wigan residents, fulfilled another social function. The American Civil War in 1860 led to a shortage of cotton and in turn to the Cotton Famine of Lancashire and unemployment for many. Unemployed mill workers planted trees in the extensive grounds of Haigh Hall. The 250 acres of park and woodland was by 1910 an amenity available to all and remains so to the present day.
- 5.6 Wigan Lane has also gained a place in the history of the English Civil War. A stone monument stands on the roadside as a memorial to Sir Thomas Tyldesley, a Royalist, killed in the Battle of Wigan Lane on 25 August 1651.

6. Prevailing and Former Uses and Their History

- 6.1 Farmland and rural lanes dominated the area until the mid 19th century. However, as the industrial revolution gathered pace the fields were developed to accommodate Wigan's rapidly growing population.
- 6.2 The prevailing land use within the Conservation Area is residential although associated community uses also exist. There are two influences on the built form of the Conservation Area that need to be mentioned in greater detail: early industrialisation in the Douglas Valley and the growth of the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary.

Early Industry in the Douglas Valley

- 6.3 Two elements, the fast flowing River Douglas and the discovery of coal, were key factors in the industrial development of Wigan and evidence of both can be seen in this Conservation Area.
- 6.4 With the increasing importance of coal came the need for transport. The Douglas navigation scheme was formed as early as 1711 and this system was later superseded by the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Railways have also played a part in the history of this area, as they have in the development of Wigan as a whole.
- 6.5 The 'History of Lancashire' published in 1911 paints a very graphic picture of the area at that time and describes a mix of uses, albeit rather more extreme than that of the present day.
- 6.6 By far the most significant building in the Conservation Area, the Old Haigh Foundry beside Leyland Mill Bridge on the River Douglas, reflects very clearly the local influences of coal and railway.

The Royal Albert Edward Infirmary

- 6.7 The Infirmary was opened in June 1873 in a rural setting. The Elms, was the most significant building nearby.
- 6.8 By 1939 there is evidence of substantial new building on the hospital site including Christopher Home. On the south-eastern corner at the Wigan Lane boundary plans show an extensive new wing to the hospital and extensive residential development in the area as a whole.
- 6.9 By 1956 the rural setting of the Infirmary and its neighbour The Elms had almost totally disappeared. From 1956 to the present day there have been numerous changes to the hospital buildings and today the Infirmary is a major hospital in the area.

7. Archaeological Significance and Potential

- 7.1 According to official records, there is no known archaeological significance in the area, neither are there any Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

8. Buildings with Architectural and/or Historic Qualities

- 8.1 Listed Buildings/Structures in the Conservation Area include:
- The Elms (Grade II listed).
 - The Infirmary clock tower building – originally the main entrance to the infirmary (Grade II listed).
 - A milestone set within the boundary wall of the hospital (Grade II).
 - The Church of St Michael (Grade II* listed).
 - 2-20 Swinley Road: a red brick terrace of ten villas (Grade II listed).
 - 5-15 Swinley Road: a red brick terrace of 6 villas (Grade II listed)
 - The gateway and lodges to Haigh Hall Park (Grade II* listed).
- 8.2 Buildings which should be considered for addition to a local list include:
- The Bellingham Hotel
 - The Bowling Green Public House
 - St Michael's Vicarage
- 8.3 With regards to Key Unlisted Buildings, the majority of buildings within Wigan Lane Conservation Area are architecturally and historically interesting and make a positive contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area.

9. Character Areas

- 9.1 Wigan Lane is a large Conservation Area and in our view can be neatly sub divided into five distinct sub areas or character areas:
- i) Whitley (Character Area 1);
 - ii) Royal Albert Edward Hospital (Character Area 2);
 - iii) St Michael's (Character Area 3);
 - iv) Interwar Housing (Character Area 4); and
 - v) Douglas Valley (Character Area 5).
- 9.2 The following part of this appraisal explains the character of each. For ease of understanding, the appraisal assumes the slightly extended Conservation Area boundary is confirmed.

Whitley Area (Character Area 1)

Character and Summary of Special Interest

- 9.3 The Whitley Character Area lies adjacent to Whitley Reservoir. Whitley is predominantly residential in character, with the majority of properties developed between the late nineteenth century and the First World War. Whitley also includes the Bel Air Hotel and Restaurant and the Trinity United Reformed Church. The character of Whitley is formed by domestic property, including the carefully laid out late Victorian streets of St Malo Road, Somerville Road and St Aubyn's Road as well as the planned interwar housing on parts of Mesnes Road, Milton Grove and Tennyson Drive. Together these planned two-storey late Victorian and Interwar housing areas form a characterful residential setting. The majority of properties comprise predominantly red/orange brick with feature rendering, commonly in the form of 'Arts and Crafts' style pediments that contribute significantly towards this character area.

Architectural, Historic Qualities and Building Materials

- 9.4 St Malo Road, Somerville Road and St Aubyn's Road form a planned late Victorian-early twentieth century area accessed from Wigan Lane or Spencer Road. Somerville Road hugs the edge of Whitley Reservoir and the only views of this largely hidden gem are to be had from here. These properties are for the most part superior terraces, each with a separate front garden and a rear yard. Tall floor to ceiling heights give these properties a strong sense of verticality.
- 9.5 Red-orange brick is the predominant building material although many properties are part rendered or carry rendered panels enclosed by decorative brick or timber detailing. Horizontal decorative brickwork bands are commonly used. Some of the later properties are more heavily modelled and have tiled roofs. Chimneystacks add interest to the roofscape. Some properties, generally the semi-detached and detached properties, have roofs with decorative ridge tiles.
- 9.6 Common detailing includes square bay windows, either single or double height. Doors and windows are set back in the elevations. Stone detailing such as headers and cill are often painted either black or white to match painted roof pediments. Most front doors are six-panelled hard wood and sit below a semi-circular brick roman arch that holds a semi-circular fanlight.
- 9.7 A series of particularly grand semi-detached and detached houses front Spencer Road.
- 9.8 To the south of Spencer Road, the remainder of the Whitley Character Area comprises mainly interwar detached and semi-detached houses. The majority of these houses are of red/orange brick and/or rendering. They possess slate/plain tiled pitched roofs which are often characterised by a pediment in the 'Arts and Crafts' style. The elevations of these properties are heavily modelled and have interesting principle elevations. The majority use timber detailing and have deep eaves. Bay windows also feature strongly.

- 9.10 The only non-residential buildings here are the Bel Air Hotel and Restaurant and Trinity United Reformed Church.

Green Spaces, Boundary Treatments and Trees

- 9.11 The properties adjacent to the reservoir are sited close to back of pavement behind a small front garden. Each has a small yard to the rear. The gridiron road pattern creates interesting views as one moves through the area. Low red brick walls topped with stone coping with shaped gate piers define the boundaries. The iron gates and railings that originally topped the low wall were removed, although some occupiers have reinstated railings.
- 9.12 In contrast the Interwar properties to the south of Mesnes Road are built at a much lower density and are set within generous front and rear gardens. They were built at a time when car ownership was becoming more commonplace and include driveways and garages. Their boundaries are generally defined by redbrick walls and gate piers. Established front gardens help create a pleasant streetscape here.
- 9.13 The area includes two informal green spaces which front Wigan Lane. The largest, off Tennyson Drive, was formerly the site of Bank House, which appears on an 1894 OS plan as a grand residence. A footpath runs through the public space and is well used by local residents. Both spaces accommodate mature trees both appear to be popular amenity spaces used for dog walking/relaxing.

Threats/Negative Influences

- 9.14 In recent years there have been relatively few major changes to the character of Whitley Character Area other than the development of the Trinity United Reformed Church. On Spencer Lane and Wigan Lane a traffic roundabout and associated build outs detract from the setting of the character area.
- 9.15 The main issues here will be ensuring that heritage fabric is not lost and that sensitive repairs are encouraged.

Royal Albert Edward Hospital (Character Area 2)

Character and Summary of Special Interest

- 9.16 The Royal Albert Edward Hospital is a distinctive character area in terms of use and scale of building. This character area lies to the west side of Wigan Lane and includes the hospital and other health related uses.
- 9.17 The Infirmary is certainly a significant landmark. The buildings here are used exclusively by the hospital and the Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust which has its headquarters at The Elms.

- 9.18 The health related uses and large footprints of the three to four storey institutional buildings contrast markedly with the domestic scale of much of the remainder of the Conservation Area. Steeply sloping pitched and hipped blue slate roofs located above red-orange brick facades with vertically proportioned window openings characterise the late 19th century buildings. The area is exclusively occupied by health related uses and in effect occupies a self-contained campus.
- 9.19 The mature trees help to soften the appearance of the site when viewed from The Elms and from Wigan Lane when travelling south. When moving north along Wigan Lane, the tower of the original hospital building announces the presence of the hospital in a fine and distinctive manner.
- 9.20 The campus can only be accessed from Wigan Lane. The gardens of Clifton Crescent form the boundary on the southern side, those of Green Heyes Avenue and Wordsworth Avenue on the western side and those of Milton Grove on the northwestern side. Movement through the campus is therefore poor.

Architectural, Historic Qualities and Building Materials

- 9.21 The Royal Albert Edward Infirmary opened on 4 June 1873. There are two listed buildings and a listed milestone within this character area and other buildings which are architecturally significant.
- 9.22 The Elms is a Grade II listed building which dates between c.1820-1840 but was later altered. It is built of red brick and has a hipped slate roof. Its style is late Georgian. The main entrance block of the original hospital with clock tower dated 1873 is Grade II listed.
- 9.23 The hospital was designed by Thomas Worthington. This building was built in the Gothic style. The two-storey main entrance building with a clock tower is built of red brick in with some blue brick, sandstone dressings and slate mansard roofs. It has been extended on a number of occasions. Later additions mirror the red brick and slate of the core building.
- 9.24 All buildings in the character area are within the curtilage of either of the two listed buildings described above, and therefore are affected by listed building legislation. Two of them are considered worthy of interest in their own right:
- i) The Christopher Home which was completed in 1936. It is a three storey building in a neoclassical style, it has a steep pitched tiled roof with dormer windows and elegant sash windows with horns.
 - ii) Also substantially intact from the beginning of the 20th century is a four-storey wing lying to the west of the 1873 hospital and built in red brick with blue trim.
- 9.25 Part of the area has been used as a hospital site since 1873. However, it is not clear whether there was an existing building on this site before 1873, which was then demolished to make way for the hospital.

- 9.26 Medical facilities within the area were further developed with the opening of the Christopher Private Nursing Home in 1936. In the northeastern corner of the area The Elms has been converted from a private residence to an office. Within the grounds of The Elms there are now two residential blocks.
- 9.27 Imaginative use has been made of the public toilet facilities in the northeastern corner of the character area. They have been converted into a flower shop and café, adding significantly to the amenity of the area.

Green Spaces, Boundary Treatments and Trees

- 9.28 Spaces that had previously been distinct, namely the grounds of the old infirmary, the Christopher Nursing Home and The Elms, are now linked up, with a single traffic system and common parking areas.
- 9.29 Little green space exists within the infirmary site, most of the external areas having been given over to car parking/servicing. Any planting is generally on a small scale: shrubs, bulbs and bedding plants. There are some high hedges between the site and neighbouring gardens.
- 9.30 There is a distinct boundary between the character area and Wigan Lane. Close to the original entrance to the old infirmary, the original low brick wall with pillars still survives although its railings have gone. The sandstone walls to the Christopher Home and The Elms are topped with stone coping and supported by original gateposts and as such provides a clear and attractive boundary. A Grade II milestone is set within the boundary wall of the hospital to the north east of The Elms. It is presumed to be Roman and formed of sandstone.
- 9.31 There are a significant number of mature trees and shrubs within the grounds of the Elms and especially on its boundary with Wigan Lane.

Threats/Negative Influences

- 9.32 Within this character area the main threats may be:
- 9.33 Resisting any demolition of listed buildings or key unlisted heritage buildings. Demolition has occurred on the campus in the past: the south east-section of the hospital building has been demolished in recent years and its site is now used for car parking. In 1915 the architects Chasen Ralph & Co designed a major extension to the hospital in the southeastern corner of the grounds. The resultant building, has recently been demolished; the pharmacy and car park now occupy this site. It important that further losses are resisted.
- 9.34 Ensuring that any proposed alterations to listed buildings or key unlisted heritage buildings do not compromise these heritage assets.
- 9.35 Proposals to develop any new buildings of the type essential to the normal function of a hospital will need to be carefully considered.

St Michael's (Character Area 3)

Character and Summary of Special interest

- 9.36 Lying at the southern end of Wigan Lane Conservation Area closest to Wigan Town Centre is St. Michael's Character Area. It is named after the mid-Victorian St Michael's and All Angels Church and it is estimated that approximately fifty percent of the built fabric here had been developed by the end of 1901. The imposing listed villas that are located at either side of the entrance to Swinley Road are particularly impressive. They are complemented by a large number of less grand Victorian terraces.
- 9.37 The character of the area is partially formed by later Edwardian and Interwar detached and semi-detached houses, including Monument Mansions, an attractive balconied four-storey apartment building with retail space that wraps around the corner of Freckleton Street and Wigan Lane. The majority of the buildings in the area are finished in red/orange brick with slate roofs, although later properties are more heavily modelled and use a wider pallet of materials including greater use of timber and render often in an 'Arts and Crafts' style.

Architectural, Historic Qualities and Building Materials

- 9.38 The Church of St Michael's is certainly a landmark building. It is grade II* listed dating from 1875-8 and designed by G.E. Street. It is a rather stocky building sited on a relatively limited plot. Its extensive slate roofs dominate the surrounding streetscenes.
- 9.39 The construction of the church on Swinley Lane appears to have gone hand in hand with the construction of some very fine villas, including the grade II listed 2-20 Swinley Road, a row of ten grand villas (now subdivided) dating from 1875. They were designed by J. Ford Mackenzie for the Wigan Land and Building Company and were built in red brick and sandstone, with slate roofs. These generously proportioned villas have fashionable bay windows to the ground floor.
- 9.40 On the opposite side of the street is 5-15 Swinley Road; a notable row of six grade II listed mid-Victorian town houses (now flats) dating from 1876. They were, again, designed by G Heaton for the Wigan Land and Buildings Company. They comprise red brick, sandstone and slate roofs; and, feature ground floor bay windows and paired first floor windows. The ground floors are elevated over basements with steps leading up to the main entrance. There is an interesting combination of Gothic and 'Arts and Crafts' style features. The three-storey villa theme continues further along Swinley Road with similar, but plainer and later, villas built facing the Church.
- 9.41 By the end of the Victorian period, plainer terraced dwellings had been built on Swinley Street, Swinley Lane and on Ashland Avenue. Typically these are built in red-orange brick with slate roofs. Windows are vertically proportioned and commonly feature single and double height bay windows. They generally feature slate roofs and often have decorative brickwork below the eaves. First floor

windows are sometimes arched with brick headers/jambs/key stones and are often matched by arched fanlights above the doorways. Some properties have moulds surrounding the window. Sash windows are common.

- 9.42 Following the end of the Victorian period, the Edwardian dwellings that followed became much more heavily modelled, often built in an 'Arts and Crafts' style with greater use of render and timber panelling. Windows became larger as glazing became cheaper.
- 9.43 The final phase of development in the St Michael's character area was on the southern side of Swinley Road and the corner of Freckleton Street/Wigan Lane where a variety of large interwar properties were completed. The properties on Swinley Road are typical of the period. Lower floor to ceiling heights became popular in the early twentieth century which gives these buildings a stronger horizontal emphasis: on many of the buildings the first floor windows lie immediately below the eaves. Bay windows remained popular and hipped roofs were fashionable. Roofs overhang the elevations, protecting deep timber eaves. The original windows to these properties would have been casements with a small rectangular shaped transom opening light above. Weather porches are evident and can be seen either recessed into the frontage or with a projecting roof.
- 9.44 Monument Mansions is a landmark four-storey building that wraps around the corner of Freckleton Street and Wigan Lane. It provides a pleasing contrast with the more heavily modelled properties of the period.

Green Spaces, Boundary Treatments and Trees

- 9.45 The only green space of any note is a small area at the junction of Swinley Road and Wigan Lane. To some extent this is compensated for by Swinley Road which has trees set along each side and runs east to west through the Conservation Area.
- 9.46 Boundary treatments are an important feature of the Conservation Area here. A sandstone rubble boundary wall bounds the modest grounds of St Michael and All Angels Church and the Vicarage. The mid-Victorian terraced properties all have small front gardens that protected by low walls and which originally would have carried railings. Stone gate piers survive in many places.
- 9.47 On the eastern side of Swinley Road, the Edwardian and Interwar detached and semi-detached properties with their relatively large rear gardens contrast markedly with the Victorian properties with their small rear yards. Here hedges often top boundary walls and the large rear gardens accommodate off street parking and garages which are accessed from the rear.

Threats/Negative Influences

- 9.48 The Infirmary car park area that replaced the former works on Freckleton Street has a negative influence on the character area. It is possible that this site could

be the subject of redevelopment pressure in the future. Any proposal here would be an opportunity to improve the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

- 9.49 The main threat to the character of this area is considered to be the potential for loss of architectural detailing and insensitive development proposals that might obscure or cut across original features on domestic properties. The replacement of historic walls/gate piers with ill-conceived contemporary materials or designs is a risk as is the replacement of wooden sash windows/hardwood doors with UPVC. Indeed the replacement of timber with poorer quality UPVC details is a concern generally. Proposals to locate dormer windows on principal elevations will also need to be carefully considered.

Interwar Housing (Character Area 4)

Character and Summary of Special interest

- 9.50 This relatively compact area is predominantly residential in character and lies to the east of Wigan Lane. It comprises mainly early-mid nineteenth century and interwar houses which are set within a dense gridiron street pattern. Other uses include the Bellingham Hotel, a church and a veterinary centre. The early-mid nineteenth century houses are concentrated about the first part of Springfield Street and occasionally rise to three storeys in height. Bellingham Hotel is of similar date and lies just to the north. The remainder of the area, including Monument Road, Kingsway, Haigh View and The Avenue, were developed later between the First and Second World Wars and front onto the gridiron street pattern. The interwar properties are predominantly small semi-detached and terraced houses set within small plots and bounded by brick walls. The majority of properties are constructed from red/orange brick. In contrast to all the other character areas, this area carries no through traffic.

Architectural, Historic Qualities and Building Materials

- 9.51 The Bellingham Hotel is undoubtedly the most interesting building in this character area. It is built in red/orange brick and has a range of single and double bay windows. Sandstone is used for the cills, headers and quoins and it has a hipped slate roof. The Bowling Club off New Lodge Street is also worthy of note.
- 9.52 The early-mid nineteenth century properties on Springfield Street are classically proportioned, often with symmetrical window and door placement. Architecturally much plainer than their later Victorian counterparts, these properties are interesting due to their classical proportions and design. Tall floor to ceiling heights create a strong sense of verticality. Columns announce many of the doorways, which are often reached by a flight of steps and slate roofs predominate. Simple stone detailing is evident on the frontages.
- 9.53 The remainder of the area is characterised by interwar semi-detached houses. These are generally two-storey and are packed tightly into a gridiron street pattern. Generally these properties are constructed entirely in red brick with a

distinctive red tiled roof although some, such as those on Haigh View, have first floors finished in render. Some of the properties including those on Widdrington Road and Monument Road have pediments finished with timber and render. Decorative bands and patterns in the brickwork are commonplace, particularly at eaves level and between ground and first floor frontages. Timber is commonly used for doors, window frames, eaves and for other decorative features. The interwar buildings generally use wooden framed casement windows with small transom windows above. Tall brick chimneystacks are a common feature of roofs. Other common details include arched doorways with fanlights and doorways with simple rectangular lights.

Green Spaces, Boundary Treatments and Trees

- 9.54 The character area is densely developed. The majority of properties sit in small plots and there is little or no green space. The area does abut the extensive open area of Haigh Country Park to the east, which may go some way to explaining the lack of planned provision within the area.
- 9.55 The majority of the streetscape is formed by interwar property. Low red brick walls with red tile copings protect their small front gardens. Some of the properties have hedging growing above the walls, whilst others carry railings. Planting within the small front gardens is predominantly low level and is comprised mainly of shrubs and hedges. Gateposts and garden walls are predominantly red brick with shaped copings.
- 9.56 The only tree planting worthy of note are those planted on either side of Monument Road. The Tyldesley Monument on Monument Road commemorates the battle of Wigan Lane where the royalists were defeated by the parliamentarians.

Threats/Negative Influences

- 9.57 This character area is relatively densely developed and there will be limited opportunities to develop new buildings. The area appears to be a generally stable residential neighbourhood and the main issues here will be ensuring that heritage fabric is not lost and that sensitive repairs are encouraged. In terms of development, the main pressures are likely to come from householder planning applications for small extensions.

Douglas Valley (Character Area 5)

Character and Summary of Special interest

- 9.58 The Douglas Valley Character Area occupies the northeastern section of the Conservation Area and borders Haigh Country Park. It follows Leyland Mill Lane down into the Douglas Valley and contains a former foundry set within what is now a degraded semi-rural landscape. The character area comprises housing which fronts Wigan Lane before the topography falls away into the Douglas River

valley where the valley bottom is dotted with industrial buildings. To the east of the river on higher ground, the architecture becomes more rural in nature with cottages and former agricultural buildings shaping the appearance of the area.

- 9.59 The importance of the Douglas Valley as a focus of the industrial revolution helped shape the character of this area. Early industrial activity was located here close to the river to harness water resources, and later coal, which was readily available locally. Later a mineral railway brought ore into the valley bottom, enabling an iron foundry to thrive. Today's employment activities, including Valley Gate Industrial Works and Leyland Mills, can be traced back to these early industrial sites.

Architectural, Historic Qualities and Building Materials

- 9.60 This part of the Conservation Area accommodates most of the buildings that precede the main phases of building in the Conservation Area. Analysis of an 1894 OS Plan reveals that the majority of cottages/farms which exist in the area today, as well as parts of Leyland Mills, date from the nineteenth century.
- 9.61 Between 1895 and 1914, the cottages on Mariebonne Place (later Marylebone Place) were redeveloped and replaced by a terrace of Edwardian houses. Interwar residential development filled in some of the plots fronting Wigan Lane. After the Second World, industrial activity continued on the site of Haigh Foundry and later a variety of basic industrial buildings were erected on the site. Today these are occupied by a variety of firms: BDZ, Leyland Mill Lane Motors Ltd, PHL Green and JT & E Castings Ltd.
- 9.62 The Douglas Valley Character Area is the most diverse part of Wigan Lane Conservation Area and includes employment uses such as the Valley Gate Industrial Works, Leyland Mills and office accommodation at Douglas Bank House. At Leyland Mills some of the red brick nineteenth century foundry buildings survive with their slate roofs intact, although these have been joined by a series of more recent buildings including prefabricated ones.
- 9.63 To the east of the river there is an eclectic mix of styles and building materials. Some of the earlier rural buildings to the east of the river are built in stone, including the aptly named 'Stone Cottages', with their narrow footprints reflecting the builder's key concern: achieving structural integrity by limiting the roof span. Some of the properties here are constructed in brick whilst others are entirely rendered: the Coach House and Wingates House for example.
- 9.64 Set back slightly from the frontage of Wigan Lane are the gateway and lodges to Haigh Hall Park. These were grade II* listed in 1951 and the green setting maintained around them has preserved a pleasant green aspect to this part of the Lane. Just to the north is Marylebone Place, which accommodates an early to mid Victorian red brick terrace with slate roofs. Unusually these properties have generous front gardens. They face a pleasing terrace of rather elaborate Edwardian properties that feature very tall first floor windows that extend to well above the height of the front doors. Further to the north, fronting Wigan Lane,

are a group of three attractive buildings: Cherry Tree Gardens Hotel, Douglas Bank House now converted and extended for office use, and Bentwood with its paired windows and four impressive chimney stacks. A variety of large interwar properties set in large gardens complete the mix.

- 9.65 In summary, the buildings here represent a varied mix of uses, dates and styles. They include simple terraces, quite grand Victorian and Interwar houses, simple cottages, red brick industrial buildings and converted barns.

Green Spaces, Boundary Treatments and Trees

- 9.66 The Douglas Valley Character Area contains no public open space. Nevertheless it has the 'greenest' appearance of all the character areas. On Wigan Lane, the beer garden of the Cherry Tree Hotel, the large mature gardens of Brentwood, the woodland in front of the Hollies and the entrance to Haigh Hall all contribute to the pleasant green character of the area.

- 9.67 The mature woodland that engulfs land to either side of Leyland Mills Lane and Wingates Road has a huge influence on the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

- 9.68 Atmospherically the majority of the area feels a far cry from the more regimented Victorian development elsewhere on Wigan Lane. Leyland Mill Lane and Wingates Road are the most significant routes through the area, although these are little more than widened rural lanes. The woodland and topography act to screen the surviving and more recent industrial buildings giving the area a semi-rural feel, particularly those parts characterised by cottages and former agricultural buildings, some of which have been converted. In contrast to the Victorian development, these properties appear randomly sited, some being accessed via long private driveways.

Threats/Negative Influences

- 9.69 It is possible that some parts of the area might come under pressure for redevelopment for residential uses, particularly those buildings standing in extensive grounds. It is possible that the employment land here might come under pressure for residential use.
- 9.70 As with housing in the other character areas, the main threat to the character of the area is likely to be the potential for loss of architectural detailing and insensitive development proposals that might obscure or cut across original features on domestic properties

10. Neutral/Negative Areas

- 10.1 Many of the buildings on the hospital site do not possess sufficient architectural detailing/interest to be regarded as making a positive contribution to the

character of the Conservation Area. The same is true of many of the basic industrial buildings that have been constructed in the Douglas Valley.

- 10.2 Elsewhere a variety of buildings are considered to fail to contribute to the character of the area, however, these properties are not bland and are not considered to warrant classification as having a negative impact upon the Conservation Area.

11. Potential Threats to the Character

- 11.1 Specific threats to each character area are discussed above. As a general comment the Conservation Area fabric is at risk from loss of detail. Negative influences that may erode the special character of the area might include:

- Replacement of timber framed with unsympathetic UPVC windows;
- Replacement of timber detailing with UPVC (bargeboards etc);
- Removal of chimneystacks and pots;
- Painting of stone detailing;
- Inappropriate boundary treatments; and,
- Removal of mature trees/hedges/gardens and their replacement with hard standing to provide for vehicle parking/low maintenance curtilage.

12. Development Control Implications

- 12.1 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 buildings of character. Proposals to redevelop any of the identified 'negative' and 'neutral properties' will be considered on their merits;
- Wigan MBC will resist any backland development proposals since these would have a negative effect on the character of the Conservation Area and also potentially on the 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 buildings of character 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.

- 12.2 The Character Appraisal will enable architects, designers and their clients to plan new development, extensions and alterations that are appropriate to the character of Wigan Lane Conservation Area. It will also allow householders to make better-informed decisions about how proposed changes might improve the character of the Conservation Area.
- 12.3 Finally, the Appraisal should not be seen as an attempt to impose particular architectural styles or tastes but it is seeking to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.