



**Wigan Town Centre
Conservation Area Appraisal
April 2010**



**Environmental Services Department
Civic Buildings
New Market Street
Wigan
WN1 1RP**

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We can make this information available in other formats and languages on request. Contact us at Environmental Services, Civic Buildings, New Market Street, WN1 1RP.

Phone: Conservation and Design - 01942 404253

Email: j.tunney@wigan.go.uk

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1. Introduction

Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area was originally designated on 25 August 1980 and was extended in 1982 and 1984. The boundary of the conservation area currently covers an area of 10.69 hectares and is designated as a Historic Town Centre. The conservation area contains many of the Borough's significant historic buildings, many of which are listed.

1.1 Purpose of this appraisal

Conservation area appraisals are a method by which Local Authorities can evaluate the important architectural and historic features within an area and provide a basis for character assessments and the production of a management proposal.

English Heritage, as statutory advisor to the Government on the historic environment, defines a conservation area as being *"an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"*. Conservation areas are designated in legislation under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Under Section 71 of the same Act, Local Authorities are required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any conservation areas under their jurisdiction. Section 72 specifies that when making decisions on development applications within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document has been produced in response to these statutory requirements and in accordance with the Government's national planning policy note *"Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the historic environment"* (PPG15). English Heritage have also published guidance which includes *"Conservation Area Appraisals: Defining the special architectural or historic interest of Conservation Areas"* (1997) and *"Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals"* (2005).

Conservation area appraisals are a way of defining the special interest of an area, identifying issues which may threaten the special qualities of that area and providing guidelines in order to prevent damage to and achieve enhancement within that area. This document should provide a basis on which planning applications for development within the conservation area can be assessed to ensure the provision for high quality development which is not detrimental to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

1.2 The Planning Policy Context

This document should be read in the context of the wider policy framework for land use planning and development. For Wigan borough this is the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in April 2006.

Wigan Unitary Development Plan

This document contains the Council's adopted planning policies and proposals for the

use and development of land for the period 2006-2016. Under Policy EV4 'Conservation', the council conserves the historic built environment through not permitting development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. To this end, the policy maintains the character and appearance of the Borough's conservation areas through protecting buildings that lie within them, ancient monuments, sites and structures of archaeological interest and historic landscapes. Buildings of local interest are protected and enhanced through the application of development control powers. (See Appendix 3 for expanded UDP policies).

The Conservation Area Appraisal may be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications affecting Wigan Town Centre.

Current planning policy also provides planning authorities with additional permitted development controls within conservation areas. Article 4(2) directions can be applied within residential areas to give extra protection to their character and appearance. These effectively remove specific permitted development rights within the conservation area therefore introducing the need for planning permission. They can be used to control the installation of satellite dishes, cladding, removal of windows and doors and the fitting of dormer windows. Separate to this, the demolition in whole or in part of any building within a conservation area requires conservation area consent and there are also controls over works to and the removal of trees within conservation areas.

2. Summary of Special Interest

2.1 Key Characteristics

Wigan Town Centre conservation area is primarily commercial in nature with some office space located throughout the area along with a small number of residential properties. Many notable and historic buildings are contained within the conservation area and include, for example, the Parish Church.

Wigan has a very long and varied history and is generally regarded as a traditional market town. Many of the town's medieval elements still remain, such as the street patterns and plot layouts, however most of these have been overlain by 19th and 20th century improvements or alterations. As the borough's commercial centre, there is very little evidence within the conservation area of Wigan's industrial heritage.

There are several key features which can be found within the town centre, as well as the wider townscape, these include:

- Red brick construction;
- Slate roofing materials;
- Detailing on properties;
- Varied architectural styles;
- Strong building lines along streets.

2.2 Justification for Designation

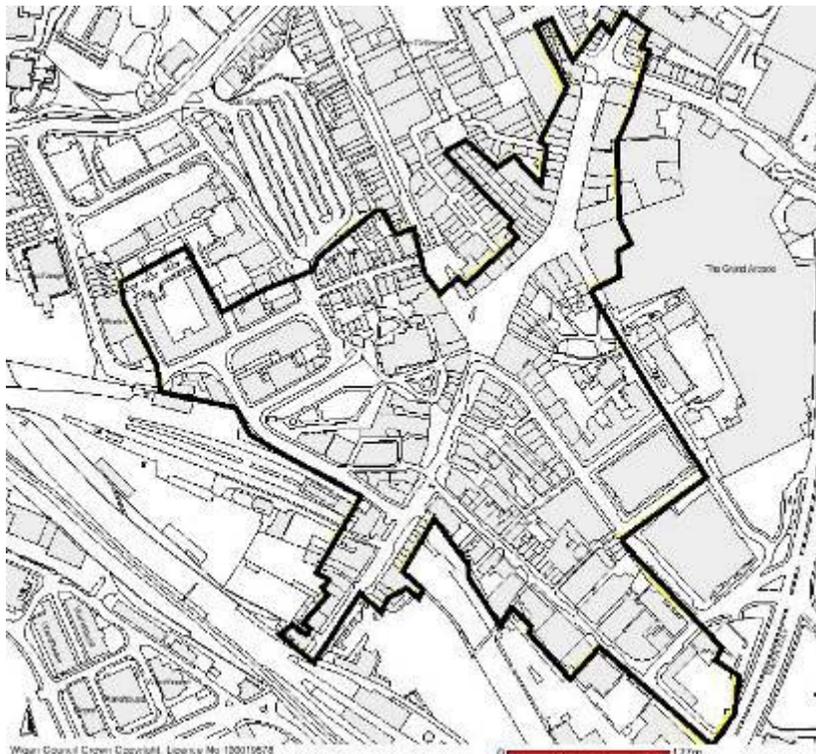
Wigan town centre is one of the Borough's larger conservation areas, covering 10.69 hectares of the town centre area. It has been characterised as a Historic Town Centre and is dominated by commercial buildings. The settlement of Wigan is believed to date from around the Norman Conquest in 1066. From the late 12th Century Wigan grew and developed into a thriving market town and later it became a significant player in the industrial revolution.

The principal buildings within the conservation area date from the late 18th – early 19th centuries, however, there are still several older properties scattered throughout the area, including some 17th Century cottages and several burgess plots. Several of the buildings in the area were also important civic buildings of their day and include the original town hall, the existing town hall and the county court buildings.

2.3 Boundaries and Extent of the Conservation Area

The current boundary of the conservation area focuses around the historic centre and incorporates some of the main thoroughfares in the town, including: Wallgate, Market Place, Millgate and Standishgate. The conservation area is centred on the towns 'All Saints' Parish Church and the Market Place, with limbs extending outwards to include parts of Standishgate, Wallgate, Library Street, King Street and Dorning Street.

Development in the conservation area is relatively dense in nature with the majority of the settlement having been well established by the late 19th Century. Many of the area's dominant buildings are contained within the boundary, such as the 'All Saints' Parish Church, the Tower Buildings, the new Town Hall and Coops Building.



Map 1: Boundary of current conservation area.

3. Historical Development

3.1 History

Roman

Located between the significant Roman settlements at Manchester, Warrington, Chester and Lancaster; Wigan is believed to be the site of a Roman settlement known as Coccium. The main evidence for this comes from a single mention in the 2nd Century Antonine Itinerary which lists a “road station named Coccium, 20 miles from Bremetenacum (Ribchester) and 17 miles from Mancunium (Manchester)”. These distances match the location of modern day Wigan very closely. There have also been several significant Roman archaeological remains found within the town centre area which look to provide physical evidence to this claim.

Medieval

Wigan is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086; however it is generally accepted to be ‘the Church of the Manor’ of Newton which is mentioned in the book. The first written reference to the settlement of Wigan was not until 1199 and at this time the town was regarded as a manor in its own right. The town was granted Borough status by King Henry III in 1246, several other charters were also granted around this time: establishing a local market and two annual fairs in the town. At this time Wigan’s economy was predominantly based around the market and local agriculture however, industries such as pottery, brewing, textiles, mining and metal working were also prosperous at this time.

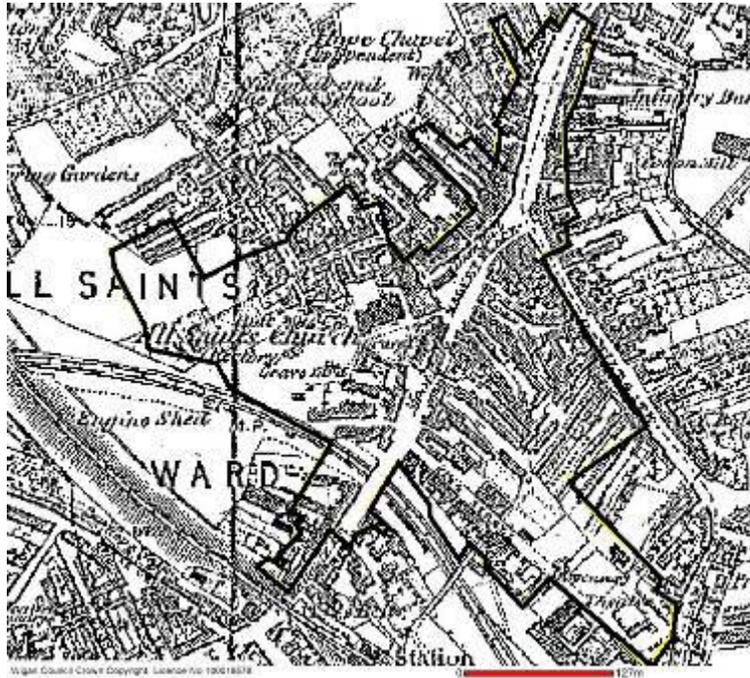
The core of the medieval settlement at Wigan is located around the Parish Church, its graveyard and the Market Place. A substantial part of the church tower dates from the 13th Century although the building has been substantially modified and rebuilt in the 15th and 19th Centuries. Much of the street pattern was also laid out at this time, with the primary streets Wallgate, Hallgate, Standishgate and Millgate already in existence. Secondary streets and alleyways like the Wiend, Bishopsgate, Coopers Row, Bretherton Row, Clarence Yard and Barracks Yard also survive in their original locations although the street scene has changed somewhat along each.

During this time the principal streets in the town were lined by narrow burgage plots. These plots were usually very deep plots with extensive land to the rear of the properties. Over time these were gradually filled by industry, stables and service buildings.

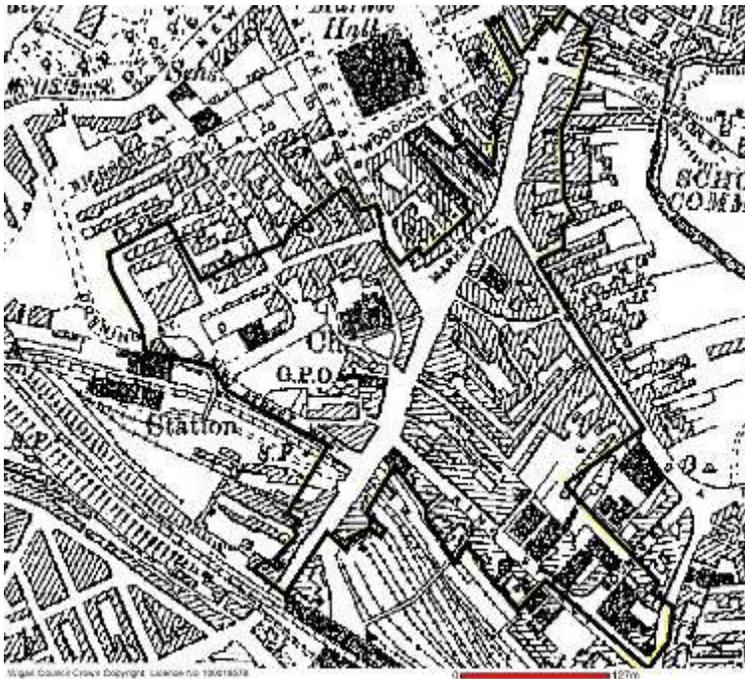
Post Medieval

The 17th Century saw the rebuilding of many burgess housing as well as the more intense infilling of plot back lands throughout the town centre. Some of these properties remain today, such as 2-14 The Wiend and Coopers Row (John Bull Chophouse).

With the advancement of the industrial revolution, larger and more expensive styles of property began to appear in the town centre. During this period many of the town’s fine Georgian style properties were constructed. Civic buildings also became more prominent during this period with the building of a new town hall, a grammar school and a dispensary, none of which survive today.



Map 2 (above): 1849
Ordnance Survey map of town centre conservation area.



Map 3 (above): 1894
Ordnance Survey map of town centre conservation area.

The late 18th Century saw the rapid expansion of industries and the construction of the Leeds Liverpool Canal. In the town centre one of the first planned extensions to the

town, comprising King Street, Queen Street, Princess Street and Caroline Street, commenced. In addition to housing, Wigan's industries were also rapidly expanding during this period with the development of textile mills to the south of the town.

The construction of North Western Station, 1832 and Wallgate Station, 1848 promoted the growth of the town and its major industries by providing quick and effective transportation of goods throughout the country. During this period, Wigan became one of the major manufacturing centres outside London.

Modern Period

The 20th Century saw the decline and collapse of many of the town's industrial enterprises. Within Wigan borough mines, factories and mills closed causing vast unemployment and changing the character of the borough's towns dramatically. No longer a thriving industrial settlement, Wigan's economy faltered, and the rapid expansion that had been seen during the industrial revolution came to an end.

Development of the town centre also slowed at this time, with any development continuing to conform to the older individual plot patterns. Even during the 1960s and 1970s when other UK towns and cities were blighted by mass clearance and redevelopment, Wigan remained relatively unscathed. It wasn't until the late 1980s-early 1990s that the town centre saw its first large scale, modern development with the construction of the Galleries and Market Hall.

From the inter-war period until the 1980s the development of shops was generally concentrated along Standishgate. The construction of the Market Hall and the Galleries had a massive impact on the town centre area. Even more recently the town centre has undergone further development in the form of the Grand Arcade, a modern shopping centre located at the heart of the town.

3.2 Archaeology

Wigan town centre has a relatively high archaeological potential and several significant archaeological remains have been discovered during excavations prior to major development within the town centre area.

In the past there have been chance Roman finds including coins, a cemetery, pottery and an altar. Previous excavation work at the Wiend uncovered extensive Roman evidence; including a road, a large structure (thought to be a timber framed warehouse), several industrial structures, pottery and hearths which showed signs of iron and cannel coal deposits.

More recently the development of the Grand Arcade site has produced significant Roman remains, giving more weight to the argument that Wigan was in fact the Roman settlement of Coccium. This location, at the rear of Millgate, saw the discovery of a substantial Roman hypocaust which is usually a feature associated with bathhouses or alternatively a large manor house or Mansio (Roman Hotel). Additionally the remains of a large colonnaded building dating from the early 2nd Century were also discovered in the same area. These remains were some of the best preserved in the area and archaeologists now believe the site was a complex, consisting of a bathhouse and

possible Mansio with nearby lead workshops. As a result of the density and quality of the remains found here it is entirely possible that there are similar extensive remains buried elsewhere in the town centre area.

4. Location and Landscape Setting

4.1 Geographical Location

Situated between the cities of Manchester and Liverpool, Wigan is the largest settlement in the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan. Located on the River Douglas, Wigan is located 15 miles south of Preston, 16.5 miles WNW of Manchester and 17.4 miles ENE of Liverpool.

4.2 Topography and Landscape

As part of any character assessment it is important to take into consideration any topographical, geological or landscape features which may impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area. The settlement of Wigan is located on a slope with the highest point being the site of the Parish Church. Originally the township was a triangular area enclosed by the River Douglas making it an attractive defensive site.

5. Spatial Analysis

5.1 Key Views

(1) View east along Wallgate towards Market Place

This view is along one of the main gateways into Wigan Town Centre, terminating at the top of a small hill at Market Place. The buildings in this streetscape are a mix of commercial properties and office space. A very consistent building line is emphasised by the large-scale Tower Building (left) and York Chambers (right). As a result of its corner location and being set forward of the building line the Tote building, located towards Market Place, becomes an obvious focal point within this view.



Photograph 1(above):

View down Wallgate towards Market Place

Photograph 2(above):

View down Standishgate from Market Place

(2) View east along Standishgate from Market Place

This view incorporates a large proportion of the main shopping area in the town centre, terminating in the distance past the boundary of the conservation area. Again there is a very strong and consistent building line to both sides of Standishgate. As a result of the linear nature of this streetscape, no single property is visually dominant and in the most part a sense of cohesion prevails in this view.

(3) View west along Standishgate up to Market Place

This view is from the top of Standishgate looking south-west towards Market Place and terminates at the building line behind the main space. The consistent building line found along Standishgate continues to the right hand side, ending at Thomas Cook, whilst to the left the building style and form begins to change and becomes less regular. In this view the streetscape opens up around Market Place making this area a natural focal point.

(4) View south up Market Street to Market Place

This view along Market Street follows the natural topography up towards Market Place where it terminates. This view is from outside the conservation area looking towards a central focal point within its boundary. Previously the view would have been framed by a row of similar shops to either side of Market Street however, the Galleries shopping centre has replaced these on the north-east side and this is now a prominent feature along this streetscape.



Photograph 3(above):

View from Market Street to Market Place



Photograph 4 (above):

View from Standishgate up to Market Place

5.2 Open Spaces, Focal Points, Landscaping and Trees

Open Spaces

There are several areas of open space which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, each of which is very distinctive in its own right.

Market Place: This area is one of the more obvious open spaces and it is centrally located within the conservation area. A large expanse of hard landscaping, its size and location make it a natural focus for activity within the town centre. Market Place was pedestrianised and subject to extensive refurbishment in the late 1990s, this included a programme of resurfacing works and a public art scheme. Enclosed on all sides by strong buildings lines of shops and financial institutions this area is well used by the local community on an everyday basis.

The Wiend: As one of the oldest areas in the town centre the Wiend features some of the few remaining medieval burgage plots in Wigan. Several vernacular properties are also found in this area, such as the former cottages on Coopers Row, now known as the John Bull Chophouse. Although the majority of this historic area has been grassed over to provide a pleasant public space, it still provides an important link to the past and an important insight into the town's historic development.

The parish church gardens: The area surrounding the parish church is predominantly green in nature with gardens laid out to the west of the church building. These open gardens provide a welcome break from the dense urban fabric of the town centre area and create a pleasant space which is well used by the public for both recreation, relaxing and as a thoroughfare in to the town centre.

Focal Points

Market Place: The Market Place area is a natural focal point in the conservation area. Being centrally located, with three main routes extending out from it, the area becomes an obvious node of activity within the town centre. The space performs a variety of functions through the year, including venue space for small local events. In the most part the area is an open and informal gathering space for local residents and is popular with the town's young people and is a pleasant focus for activity and daily life.

Parish Church: The parish church is one of the oldest buildings in the boundary and is located at the heart of the conservation area. The church serves as an immediately recognisable focal point in the town. Its tower, standing high above the building line creates a landmark which can be seen throughout the town centre. Parts of the church date back to the 13th century and as a result of its hill top location it is one of the most recognisable buildings in this area.



Photograph 8: Wigan Parish Church

Landscaping

Within the conservation area there is a mix of both soft and hard landscaping the most prominent areas being the Wiend and Market Place respectively.

The Wiend: This area is fairly small in size and contains remnants of some of the town's oldest street patterns. This area of public open space was created in the early 1970's following the clearance of a dense maze of buildings and has remained undeveloped. Landscaping here consists of a mixture of hard and soft features, grassed sections surrounding a centrally paved area. The grassed areas are intersected by pathways leading down alley ways which give access to the Market Place. The central paved area features a piece of public art work called 'The Maze' which was designed in 2001. The maze marks the site of a Roman foundry from 1st Century Wigan, the remains of which were excavated in the 1980s. It is currently being covered over by another piece of commissioned art 'Face of Wigan'.



Photograph 6(right): The Wiend



Photograph 7(left): Parish Gardens

Market Place: This area underwent extensive refurbishment in the 1990s. Previously open to traffic, Market Place was a busy intersection of the three main routes through the town centre. The area is now a focal point in the town centre, its hard landscaping providing a safe pedestrian area. The space has been used to showcase public art with the large Market Cross Floor Mosaic which marks the spot of the original market cross and celebrates the conferring of the Royal Charter granted to the town in 1246 by Henry III.



Photograph 5: Market Place

Trees

Any trees over which measure more than 7.5cm when measured 1.5m from the ground, within a conservation area are protected under government legislation from being topped, lopped or felled without the appropriate permission having been granted. Tree Preservation Orders can be applied to individual trees and are a method by which local authorities can protect specific species from being damaged or removed. There are no Tree Preservation Orders within the town centre conservation area.

Trees are found in a number of locations within the conservation area, the most mature being around the Parish church and the Wiend areas. New trees have been planted along Market Street and Standishgate in an attempt to soften and introduce variation to the urban streetscape.

6. Definition of the Special Interest

6.1 Current Activities and Uses (see appendix 1a for map)

Wigan Town Centre is currently dominated by commercial properties with a variety of locally owned businesses and commercial chains. Unfortunately wider market forces within the retail sector, has seen the town centre suffer from an obvious decline and there are a high number of vacant properties. Many of the vacant units found within the conservation area are on upper floors and so present challenges when trying to secure new uses. There are also several public and community buildings within the conservation area, including the Parish Church, Council Offices, Libraries and the Town Hall. Within the conservation area are several public houses, which are identified as buildings of historic interest.

6.2 Architectural and Historic Character

The architectural character of the town centre is varied due to a combination of different styles, materials, building phases and architects. The architectural character of the conservation area can be broken down into two main categories: grand and elaborate i.e. along Wallgate, Library Street and King Street West; and simple and understated i.e. on Hallgate, King Street, The Wiend and Coopers Row.

The area around the Wiend and Coopers Row is one of the oldest surviving areas within the conservation area, and several of the 17th century vernacular buildings survive here, albeit in altered forms. The John Bull Chophouse on Coopers Row was originally three vernacular cottages which have been redeveloped to form one building.

Elsewhere in the town centre is a mix of architectural styles, the majority of the buildings date from the 19th century when the much of the town underwent extensive redevelopment. Several notable architects were responsible for the redevelopment of the town centre with a few having a dominant influence over the emerging styles and forms seen today. The list includes Sir Alfred Waterhouse, G.E. Street, Bradshaw and Gas, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and Sharpe & Paley to name but a few.

The vast majority of the town centre buildings were designed by a small group of local architects; Heaton, Ralph & Heaton, W. Verity and W.E.V. Crompton. Their works include the following buildings:

W.E.V. Crompton:

1-3 Wallgate (HSBC Building); 1-5 Library Street (Vacant properties); 7-15 Library Street (Stephenson's Solicitors-Haworth Music); Officers Club (former warehouse), Barracks Yard; former warehouse Arcade Street (rear of 33 Library Street); Clarence Hotel, 40 Wallgate; Swan & Railway Hotel, 80 Wallgate; extension to rear of the post office, 28 Wallgate.



Photograph 9-10:

Examples of work by the architect W.E.V. Crompton: 1-3 Wallgate (above left) & Clarence Hotel (above right)

Verity & Isitt

47 King Street (Platt & Fishwick); Coops Building, Dorning Street; 6-10 Wallgate (Moot Hall Chambers); 22 Wallgate (Tote Building); 30/32 Wallgate (former RBS building).



Photographs 11 (above left): Coops factory building and **12(right):** Tote building, both by Verity & Isitt.

Heaton, Ralph & Heaton

1 Standishgate (WH Smith); 38-44 Standishgate (Subway-Cash Generator); 41/43 Standishgate (Lloyds Pharmacy/McDonalds); 26-38 Market Place (Thomas Cook- Royal Bank of Scotland); 35/37 Market Place (Yorkshire Bank); 54-56 Market Place (Makinsons Arcade entrance shops); 12-20 Wallgate (Healds Solicitors-Newsagents); 5

Wallgate (Raven Hotel); 42-50 Wallgate (The Coven-Bowker Eli); façade 25 Wallgate (Entwhistle); Victoria Hotel, 52 Wallgate (Brunells); façade 58/60 Wallgate (vacant properties); 2-16 Library Street (Bairstowes-Widdow Masons); 25-29 Library Street (Copper Kettle-McNulty's Shoes); 2-5 King Street West; 15 King Street West (Number 15); 25.27 Hallgate (Jaxon's Court - left of entrance); Arcade Street/Bretherton Row - North side (Flax Mill or Arcade Chamber); Dorning Street/Hallgate, corner of (The Anvil); 5 Rodney Street (Franco's Restaurant).



Photograph 13(right): Raven Hotel & **14 (above):** Old Victoria Hotel; both by Heaton, Ralph & Heaton.

All of these buildings have a positive impact on the character of the conservation area. The majority of the buildings date from the late 19th century but despite their similarity in age, they incorporate a huge variation in architectural styles. Renaissance Revival architecture was the dominant style of architecture for new buildings during this period and this included Italian, French, Dutch and Flemish variations with Baroque influences.

In terms of modern development the town centre area is relatively limited. There are examples of 1960s and 70s infill development on several streets however, unlike most towns during this period, Wigan escaped mass redevelopment. An unusual example of 1970s infill development is the extension to Marks and Spencer which is sympathetic to the neighbouring building whilst being obviously a modern extension.

6.3 Building Materials and local details

The predominant building material used in the conservation area is brick and it often appears in combination with other materials such as terracotta, stone and mock timber-framing. The oldest surviving brick built properties date from the 17th Century and are found in The Wiend (10 The Wiend and John Bulls Chophouse, Coopers Row (now painted)). Over the centuries brick making techniques developed from hand-made, dark red coloured bricks of irregular shape into machine-made, lighter coloured and regular shaped bricks. Bricks of both varieties, and the many stages in between, can be found in

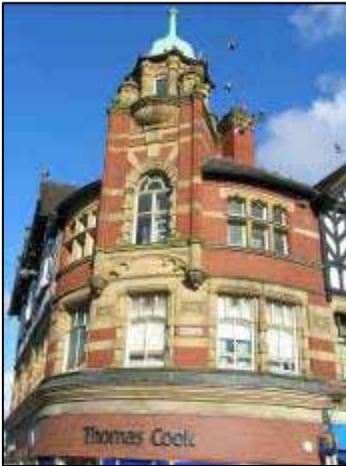
the town centre area. These variations not only contribute to the character of the individual buildings and the conservation area, they also provide useful markers for the chronological development of the area. As of the mid 20th Century, brown and sand coloured bricks were being introduced into the streetscape, mainly in the form of large office blocks such as Rodney House (King Street) and Westwood House (King Street West). This style of brick is relatively bland and does little to enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.



Photographs 15-17: Examples of detailing on buildings in the conservation area

Decorative brickwork is also used for creating ornamentation on various buildings. The most common features include brick arches over window and door openings, coggling and corbelling details. The type of bond used when laying bricks also provides a more interesting visual surface, the most common being Flemish bond (alternate header and stretcher bricks (i.e. laid end on then side on, etc) in each course). The external painting of brickwork, seen in several locations in the town centre, is not a traditional practice and historically, if colour was required, a lime wash or render would be used. The painting of brickwork can often result in surface erosion of the bricks due to water damage as the paint does not allow water to permeate through the brickwork.

As mentioned previously, brick is often combined with other materials in order to add character and individuality to buildings. Many of the brick built properties also feature small amounts of stone detailing, most commonly in the form of sills and lintels to windows and doors. As well as stone detailing, the late 19th Century saw a rise in popularity of terracotta as a building material and it can be found throughout the conservation area. Rarely used for entire facades, terracotta was generally used to add detailing and ornamentation to building frontages. The use of terracotta is generally concentrated on buildings around Library Street and Hewlett Street, although examples are found elsewhere in the conservation area. A similar material is faience and is similar to terracotta but glazed and comes in a variety of colours and is unusual in the conservation area. An example is the façade of the County Cinema (now Ibiza Bar) on King Street.



Photographs 18-20: examples of building materials (left = brick and stone; centre = terracotta; right = faience).

Stone is the other common building material found within the conservation area. The stone buildings found in the town centre are all relatively grand and the use of this high quality material reinforces their significance within the townscape. The parish church and its associated War Memorial are possibly the most prominent of the stone built structures. The other properties are of an equally high standard and they date predominantly from the Victorian period. The majority of these stone buildings were originally built to house the town's financial institutions and several continue to do so (4 Standishgate and 6-10 Wallgate). Several of the stone buildings are very ornate in their detailing with a variety of architectural styles are present including French Renaissance and Baroque styles.



Photographs 21-23: Examples of stone built buildings within the conservation area.

Another common architectural style found within the conservation area is that of Mock Tudor timber framing. This style is limited to the area around Market Place and Standishgate and helps to create a vibrant streetscape in this area. This majority of these properties were refurbished in the early 20th Century and along with what was

seen as fashionable architecture at this time the mock-Tudor style was introduced into the town centre where it prevails today.



Photograph 24 (above): example of mock Tudor detailing at 6 Standishgate.



Photograph 26 (above): example of mock Tudor detailing at 58-60 Wallgate



Photograph 25: Mock Tudor detailing

6.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit (see appendix 1b for map)

There are a number of listed buildings, all Grade II listed, found within the boundary of the conservation area including:

- Tower Building
- Wallgate Station
- Former Mining and Technical College (New Town Hall)
- History Shop

Also of worthy note are also several unlisted buildings within the town centre area which have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The following non-designated buildings within the conservation area are deemed to be of significant townscape merit and may be possible candidates for future Listings and are:

Number 15, King Street West

This building dates from 1893 and was built originally by the Liberal Party as the Wigan Reform Club. A competition was held to choose the design and architect for the building and the 2nd place design by Heaton and Ralph was the one which was eventually constructed. Designed in a rich Flemish Renaissance style of architecture the building is a prominent feature within the streetscape along King Street West. Unfortunately, its grandeur is somewhat diminished by the adjoining bland and unsympathetic 1970s office block.



Photograph 27(above): Number 15



Photograph 28: Crofter's Arms

Crofters Arms, 14 Market Street

Listed in the 1825 Wigan Directory, but could be older, this pub is prominently located at the northern edge of the conservation area. The ground floor has been tiled using red and white glazed tiles and its unusual appearance is unique within the town centre area. The building has been vacant for the last few years, however, a planning application has recently been granted for conversion into a restaurant. These proposals are sympathetic to the nature of the building and its setting and retain the external facades in their original state.

2-14 Library Street

This group of buildings date from 1899-1903, the variations in the gables reflects the four, very distinctive, buildings phases. Designed by Heaton, Ralph and Heaton in the Edwardian Baroque style of architecture, these buildings have extensive terracotta detailing at first floor level. Library Street was developed between 1895 and 1905 and was one of the last phases of major redevelopment within the town centre. These grand and elaborate buildings along Library Street hold many of the town's solicitors, estate agents and several civic buildings.



Photograph 29(above): 2-14 Library Street



Photograph 30(right): 3-5 Standishgate

3-5 Standishgate

This building most likely dates from the early 20th Century, fitted with a modern shop front at ground level, the first floor façade contributes to the character of the conservation area. Constructed of dark red brick and stone, the dark are a contrast with the predominant half-timbering detailing commonly found in Standishgate and Market Place. The modern shop front is sympathetic in character and appearance and the unique herringbone brickwork adds positively to the conservation area.

6.5 Public Realm: Floorscape, Street Lighting and Street Furniture

The quality of the public realm, within the conservation area, is of a mixed standard with some areas such as Market Place undergoing extensive refurbishment in the early 1990s, seeing better quality street surfacing and furniture being introduced.

The quality of surfacing varies throughout the conservation area; however there is a tendency for deterioration in quality once away from the main thoroughfares and central area. The type of street surfacing varies between cobbles and stone slabs, concrete paving slabs and flag stones. There are several areas within the conservation area which are in need of resurfacing, in particular the areas that have traditional paving surfaces.

Cobbles are mostly found in the historic Wiend area of the town centre but also in smaller areas throughout the town centre, such as the entrance to Wallgate Station. This historic surfacing is in keeping with the historic character of this area. Similarly the flag stones which are found around the parish church area are another traditional paving surface. These areas, although retaining their historic surfacing, are in need of repair and re-laying of the surfaces as they are uneven in parts. There are currently proposals in both areas to undertake improvements of this nature in the near future.



Photographs 31-34: Examples of street paving found in conservation area

In terms of street furniture there is a variety of items found within the conservation area which includes advertising billboards, litter bins, railings and bollards. Benches have been placed along Standishgate, Market Street and around Market Place and these are well utilised by members of the public. Whilst the majority of the street furniture is painted black there is no real sense of cohesion throughout the conservation area and in some areas the volume of street furniture present creates an overcrowded streetscape. Features such as bins, bollards and benches are all of a standard design commonly found in historic areas across the UK. However, more imaginative alternatives could be an option as a way of adding variety and interest into the streetscape.



Photograph 35: Example of cluttered street furniture. Utility unit, bin, camera stand, bollards, signs all found in very small area.

Street lighting is not consistent throughout the conservation area and several varieties of 'heritage' style lighting are present. Several properties also feature wall mounted heritage lamps, like those found in the Wiend.



Photographs 36-38: Examples of street lighting found in conservation area.

The siting of public art within key areas in the town centre is an interesting way of adding variety into the streetscape. The incorporation of these art works into paving materials helps to provide a break in the urban fabric. The use of public art within in the town centre also has a positive impact on the conservation area by adding variety to the streetscape.

6.6 Historical Associations

Wigan has many historical associations with a large variety of people from different backgrounds such as politicians, industrialists, actors and sports personalities.

The company Marks and Spencer has had a long standing association with Wigan, since Michael Marks moved to Wigan from Leeds in 1891 and opened his first store at stalls 82-83 in the Market Hall. When Thomas Spencer bought into the company in 1894 they

established their company headquarters in the town. The company also occupied 19-21 Makinson Arcade from 1900-1931 before moving into its current store, on Standishgate, in 1931.

Other notable figures associated with Wigan include:

Roy Kinnear - Jan 1934-Sept 1988

- Actor - Wigan born, educated Edinburgh.
- Theatre, TV & film - 'George & Mildred', 'Willy Wonka and the chocolate factory'.
- 1994 Roy Kinnear Trust - helps improve the lives of young adults with physical or mental disabilities

Sir Ian McKellen - May 1939

- Born Burnley, Lancashire - spent early life in Wigan.
- Attended Bolton School and acting career started at Bolton Little Theatre (now Patron).
- Popular actor and now renowned world wide for roles in films such as Lord of the Rings, X-men and the Da Vinci Code.

7. Issues

This appraisal has highlighted several issues within the town centre conservation area which have both positive and negative impacts on its overall character and appearance.

7.1 Positive

1. There are a number of buildings within the conservation area which are of a good architectural quality. A variety of architectural styles are represented with many being good examples of their type. The eclectic mix of building styles plays a significant part in what defines the special architectural character of the Wigan town centre conservation area. The fact that these varied styles mix together coherently without creating unattractive streetscapes or strange juxtapositions is a testament to the architects responsible.
2. A large percentage of architectural and historic detailing survives throughout the conservation area particularly with upper floors featuring ornate detailing such as carvings, reliefs, finials, balustrades and pediments. Subtle elements of traditional shop front details also add character and animation to the buildings. These contribute to the architectural significance of the conservation area.



Photograph 39: Stone detailing on roof



Photograph 40: brick detailing

3. Street surfacing along the main thoroughfares in the conservation area is generally in good condition. In areas such as the Wiend and around the Parish Church, traditional surfacing materials remain; setts, cobbles and stone flags. These surfaces help to maintain the character of these areas and are in keeping with their historic nature. The installation of public art into the street surface is an interesting way of adding to the appearance of the area. The installations at Market Place, King Street and The Wiend have a positive impact and add variety to an otherwise unremarkable surface treatment.

5. Many of the shop fronts found within the town centre area are generally sympathetic to the character of the conservation area. In the most part shop fronts are of a high standard and many of the buildings around Market Place underwent extensive refurbishment during the late 20th Century. The abundance of mock half-timbered upper floors also adds to the character and has a positive impact on the appearance of the conservation area. Properties such as Miss Selfridge, Burton/Dorothy Perkins and Yorkshire Bank are good examples of sympathetic, quality shop front design whilst maintaining their own individual architectural styles.



6. The survival of shopping arcades such as, Makinson's Arcade and Royal Arcade, is important in helping to define part of the special interest of the town centre area. The fact that these traditional shopping streets have survived and are in relatively good condition has a positive impact on the conservation area. They also provide an insight into the historic development of the town centre as they were the starting point for many local businesses. The arcade style design was also used in the design of the Galleries shopping centre which was built in 1990 and this maintained a sense of cohesion within the area and allowed the new development to fit more easily into the existing character whilst being modern at the same time.



7. Unlike most other towns, Wigan town centre managed to avoid the mass redevelopment which occurred throughout the UK during the 1960s and 70s. As a result there are very few examples of infill development within the conservation area. Several large schemes have occurred on the periphery over the years, such as The Galleries, Market Hall and the Grand Arcade. There are examples of infill development, of varied design and merit, along Standishgate, Millgate and Wallgate. The Marks and Spencer building of 1931 is a unique example of where Modernist architecture has been entirely sympathetic to its earlier counterpart in terms of scale, materials and design whilst retaining its distinctly modern character.

7.2 Negative

1. The majority of properties within the town centre are adequately maintained and are in good condition however, there are many examples of poorly maintained properties and these have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. General maintenance issues such as peeling paintwork, faulty rainwater goods, rotting wood and broken windows are common in the conservation area. As a result of the general high standard of surrounding properties, poorly maintained buildings stand out dramatically within the townscape and detract from the architectural quality of the area.



Photographs 47-8 (above/right): Examples of maintenance issues on buildings

2. There are a disproportionate number of vacant properties found within the town centre conservation area. Wider economic and retail factors have contributed to an increase in vacant retail units, with several relocating to new premises within Wigan town centre. Many of these properties have now been vacant for a substantial length of time and many are the same properties which are suffering from a lack of maintenance and are now having a negative impact on the conservation area. Vacant upper floors are also a problem in the conservation area. A number of buildings have upper floors which are no longer in use, for example York Chambers and Tower Building. These properties are no longer required for their original purpose and as yet no feasible proposal for alternative use has been received. In respect of this many upper floors above retail units are vacant often as a result of poor access.
3. Away from the principal streets (Market Street, Market Place and Standishgate) there are some areas where the quality of street surfacing could be improved. Streets such as Library Street have not undergone the same refurbishment as other parts of the town centre. The areas where traditional surfacing is present such as the Wiend and the church gardens are also in need of attention however, there are plans in progress which incorporate improvement works to these historic areas.
4. The loss of historic detailing is apparent on several properties the extent of which varies throughout the conservation area. Loss of detailing can range from loss of traditional shop fronts (pilasters and riser stalls), to original openings, façade detailing and roof detailing. The loss of roof details is common in the town centre area with several buildings having been altered. An example is Moot Hall Chambers building which originally had a rich roofline with a large stone balustrade and other decorative features, in comparison to today. The Tote building and Municipal buildings have both lost cupolas from their roofs at corner locations, a common feature which survives throughout the conservation area.

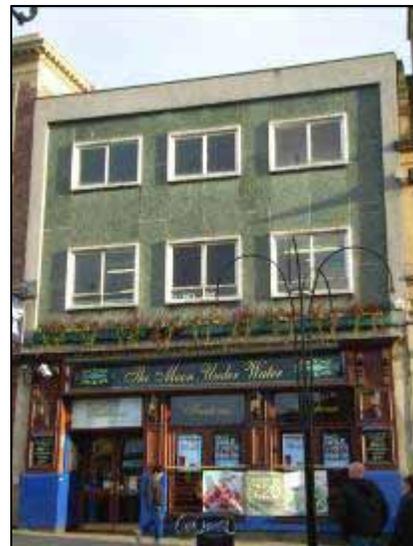
5. The vast majority of shop fronts within the conservation area are of a high standard and are in keeping with the historic character of the area. There are however, examples of unsympathetic shop front alterations found in the conservation area that does little to enhance its character or appearance. Poorly designed shop fronts do detract from the architectural quality of any surrounding buildings and properties on Standishgate and Wallgate are examples where inappropriate signage, in terms of size, colour and style and where signage dominates the shop front results in a poor and unsympathetic addition to the conservation area. These examples highlight how important quality design is in regards to shop fronts in order to ensure they enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area rather than detract from it.

6. Although Wigan town centre escaped the worst of the 1960's and 1970's redevelopment trend, there are still examples of unsympathetic infill development within the conservation area. The largest of these is the Telephone Exchange building on Dorning Street. This development adjoins an earlier building and its modern style is in conflict with its counterpart. Other office blocks in the conservation area such as Westwood House and 13-15 Wallgate are starkly modern buildings in comparison with neighbouring buildings. Their simple and stark architecture makes them prominent within the streetscape and doing little to enhance the character of the conservation area. There are some examples of upper floor infill development which is in direct contrast with the surrounding buildings, in and around Market Place.

7. Although street furniture found within the conservation area is generally of a high standard, and predominantly black in colour there is a mix of styles and a lack of cohesion. In many areas, the volume and 'clutter' of street furniture detracts from the character of the area and blocks important views along town centre streets.



Photograph 49: example of unsympathetic shop front



Photograph 40: example of unsympathetic infill development

8. Recommendations

8.1 Opportunities for Enhancement

The following list is drawn from the negative issues highlighted in section 7. It identifies areas and provides methods for which the qualities presenting a special interest in the conservation area can be preserved and enhanced.

- The active maintenance of properties in the town centre conservation area must be promoted. Buildings in a state of disrepair only serve to detract from the overall quality of the conservation area. This in turn can have a wider impact in terms of deterring potential investment, as unkempt buildings are often perceived as an early sign of a declining economy. It is vital that buildings are maintained adequately in order to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. This will also help to promote 'pride of place' within the local community.
- Similar to above, vacant properties are often regarded as an indicator of a stagnant or declining economy and can therefore deter investment in property. To promote economic vitality and to ensure a buildings survival, sustainable uses must be sought in order to bring the properties back into active use. This is especially true along Wallgate, which features the towns' two railway stations and is a major gateway into the town.
- Improvement schemes are currently being considered for several areas in the conservation area, including the Parish Church Gardens, The Wiend, Market Place and Wallgate. It is important that should these schemes be implemented that they are carried out to a high conservation standard. Some of these areas feature traditional paving surfaces and where possible these should be retained as a significant aspect which contributes to the character of these areas. It is also important that other alleyways and back streets are not neglected and are included in any resurfacing schemes where possible. The Council's recent footway condition survey of the borough may also highlight other areas in need of repair or upgrading for future implementation.
- The historic building detailing found within the conservation area has a significant impact on its character and appearance with many of the buildings having already lost some of their historic features such as windows, balustrades and cupolas. Depending on the significance and location of these buildings it may be appropriate, in instances, to reinstate missing features as part of future regeneration schemes.
- The large number of well designed and sympathetic shop fronts within the conservation area should be commended. In future, as a way of improving those shop fronts which are not in-keeping or sympathetic, owners should be directed to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Shop Front Design Guide' when submitting planning applications or for advertisement consent. Statutory powers must be used to enforce against unauthorised development and inappropriate designs in the conservation area and where necessary, changes are made to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. Traditional shop fronts should be retained as they help create a visually interesting streetscape and have a positive impact on the appearance of the conservation area.

- Conservation area designation is not intended to prevent change, but to influence change to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. In accordance with planning policy EV4A 'Development and Design in Conservation Areas', "The Council will ensure that any proposals for development within a conservation area will preserve and enhance and will not harm the character of appearance of that area". The encouragement of high quality design of any future development, new or infill, within the conservation area must be promoted to ensure it is appropriate and sympathetic to its surroundings without being considered pastiche.

8.2 Boundary Changes (see appendix 1c for map)

The boundary of the town centre conservation area has been amended several times in the past to reflect the historic and architectural significance of the area. At the time of writing, proposals have been approved for the construction of the Council's Joint Service Centre. This development will incorporate a portion of the conservation area, including the Town Hall, Municipal buildings and part of The Wiend. The Draft appraisal suggested that these be removed from the conservation area, but there was no justification for the removal. The development proposals include the façade retention of the former Municipal Buildings, which is a significant building in the Town Centre, providing important architectural interest. The façade retention of this building will remain in the conservation area as an important feature fronting Library Street, Millgate and Hewlett Street.

In addition to the above, it was also proposed in the draft appraisal that Coops building be removed from the conservation area. This building, visually dominant in the streetscape and was deemed to relate poorly to neighbouring properties. The building is Grade II* listed, and is a significant building of architectural and historic industrial interest; playing an important role in the growth of the textile industry in Wigan. Having been built by R Todd of Southport, for Timothy Coop and James Marsden; with large additions of 1888, by Isitt and Verity, and 1892 by W Verity (a local architect), the building is regarded as an excellent example of a yellow and red brick 4 and 6 storey warehouse and will be retained within the boundary of the conservation area.

Similarly it was also proposed previously, to remove the buildings on the corner of Standishgate and Crompton Street. It was deemed that these buildings have little architectural or historic significance, with the exception of 43 Standishgate which despite extensive alterations over the years has remained sympathetic in design and appearance. Having re-surveyed these properties, it is felt that their exclusion would be to the detriment of the town centre. The upper floors of these properties are a mix of neo-classical architecture, with a stone entablature and pediment, and Victorian architecture displaying stone dressings and Dutch gables, which together form an interesting corner feature on Standishgate and Crompton Street. These properties contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area and will be retained within the boundary.



Photograph 51: Corner of Standishgate and Crompton Street

8.3 Proposals

There are proposals to extend the conservation area in two places. The NE side of Mesnes Street up to the junction with Mesnes Terrace is deemed to be of historic significance, with many of the shops providing good examples of traditional shop fronts and a number of the upper floors retaining their original features, which provide architectural interest. The building is known as Market Street Buildings and displays Dutch gables with stone dressings and finials, together with sash windows and canted bay windows to the first and second floors. Sills and lintels are stone and provide an interesting contrast to the red brickwork on the front elevation.



Photograph 52: Mesnes Street: Market Buildings

Wigan North Western train station is also identified as an important building/site, with the original station being constructed in 1832 and redeveloped in the 1970's. This station, along with Wallgate, is a major gateway into the conservation area and the town centre. It is therefore important that any proposed development in this area is carefully observed to ensure that it does not harm the character or appearance of the conservation area or the cluster of listed buildings nearby.



Photograph 53: Wigan North Western Station

APPENDIX 1



Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area
Land use and key views

Scale: 1:2,500





Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area Listed Buildings and Buildings of Merit

Scale: 1:2,500 



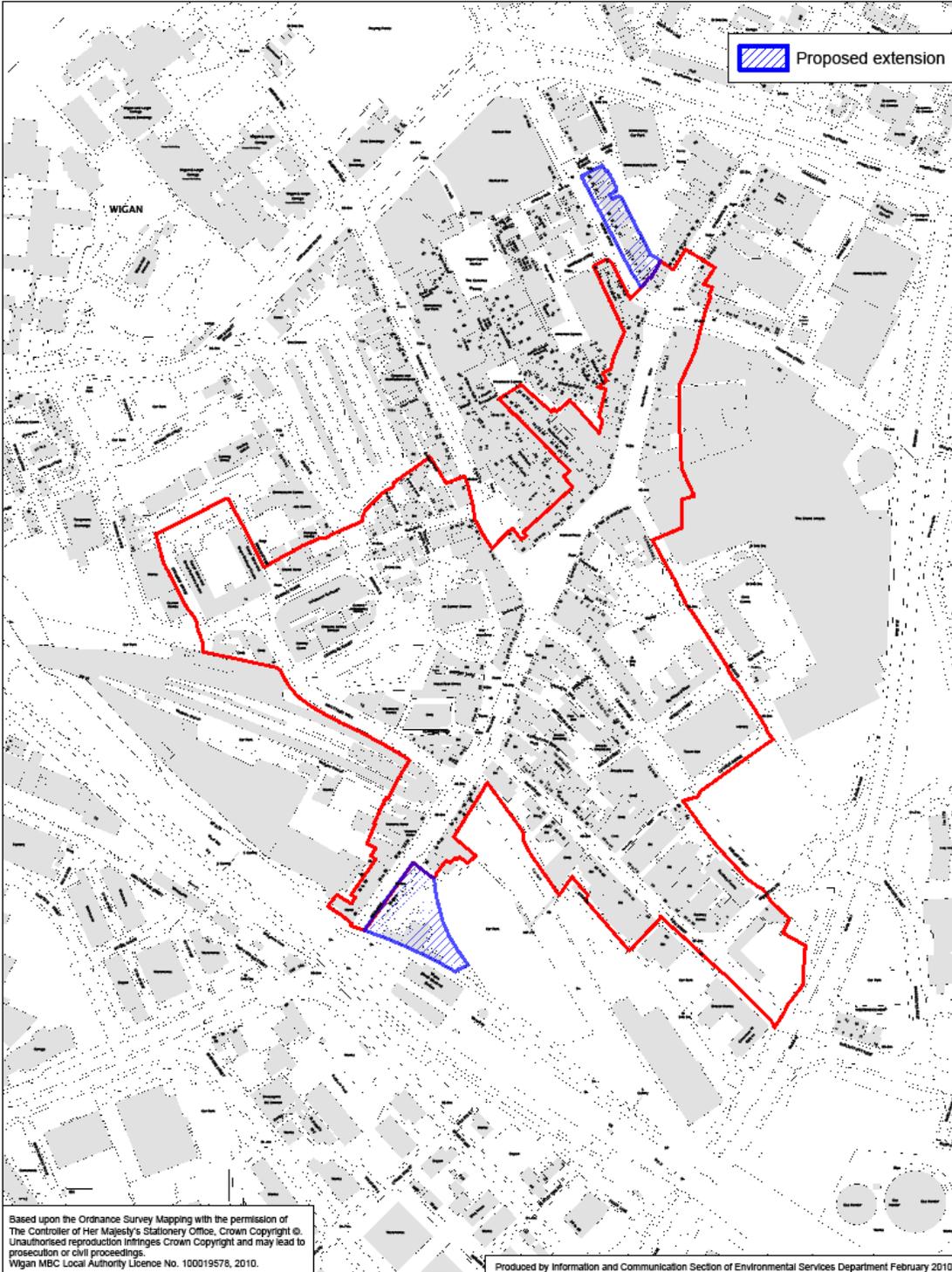
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Produced by Information and Communication Section of Environmental Services Department November 2008



Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area Proposed Boundary Changes

Scale: 1:2,500



APPENDIX 2

Management Proposal

1. Introduction

This management proposal is intended to stand along side the Wigan Town Centre conservation area appraisal. Whilst area appraisals assess and document the elements that combine to make up the special character of a conservation area, management proposals are intended to act as a reference for all those who make decisions which may impact on that special character.

This management proposal is set in context by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, plus amendments 2008, and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It should also be read in conjunction with the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006) policies EV3 Design and EV4 Conservation which set out the Council's aims to help protect the character and appearance of conservation areas, as well as promoting high quality design in any impacting new development. (See section 3(c) for expanded policies)

The thoughts and recommendations put forward in this management proposal may influence future policy development for the area, depending on the availability of resources and effective partnership between the local authority, private sector and the local community. It is of vital importance that owners and contractors recognise their actions can have a significant impact on the quality of townscapes. Every action, good and bad, forms the legacy we leave behind for future generations.

1.1 Priorities

(a) Buildings

- Vacant and underused buildings in need of repair and a viable use;
- Repair and maintenance of buildings;
- Repair of historic shop fronts and reinstatement where appropriate;
- Repair and reinstatement of traditional features and detailing where appropriate;

(b) Townscape

- Repair and maintenance of public realm where necessary;
- Continued maintenance of open spaces;
- Regeneration of key sites and areas.

2. Preservation and Enhancement

2.1 Buildings

2.1.1 Vacant and underused buildings

The council will seek to promote the reuse and redevelopment of vacant properties within the conservation area, which would also include the reuse of the upper floors. Should these be in Council ownership, proactive marketing should be used to find viable new uses.

This should be a priority in order to secure the economic vitality of the town. It is important that purpose built retail units are retained to preserve the character of the area. There may be opportunities for alternative or mixed uses, such as professional services, office space or residential use, in some parts of the conservation area. An application for Heritage Lottery Funding is being developed by the Council for a Townscape Heritage Initiative. This will see a number of vacant buildings being repaired and brought up to a standard that is suitable for modern town centre uses.

2.1.2 Repair and maintenance of properties

The Council will promote the active maintenance of properties within the conservation area and will use their statutory powers to implement works where necessary.

This is essential to promote an active and vibrant town centre. Poorly maintained buildings promote a run down image and do little to enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Good maintenance of buildings helps to attract investment in the area and also helps add to people's pride of place in the community.

2.1.3 Traditional features and detailing

The Council should consider a method of financial support for works to reinstate traditional shop fronts where required and encourage high quality design proposals for new shop fronts within the conservation area.

There are a number of commercial properties within the conservation area, the vast majority of which have good quality, well designed shop fronts. There are some properties however, that have poorly designed shop fronts and signage which is not sympathetic to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Any future applications for shop front design must be carefully considered to assess their impact on the area's special character. Applicants should also be referred to the Council's SPD Shop Front Design Guide.

2.1.4 Architectural features and detailing

The Council should consider grant aid as an option for encouraging property owners to retain and reinstate traditional features such as doors, windows and other architectural features within the conservation area.

Unfortunately a large proportion of these features have already been lost in the town centre over a prolonged period of time. Where the losses have occurred in historically significant buildings or buildings of substantial townscape merit, every effort should be made to reinstate or reproduce the original fabric where possible.

2.2 Townscape

2.2.1 Floorscape, Landscaping and Street Furniture

The Council will encourage the enhancement of floorscape, landscaping and street furniture within the conservation area as a method of improving the appearance of the area. Any refurbishment proposals must be carried out to a high conservation standard to ensure they enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The refurbishment works to Market Place and Standishgate have had a positive impact on appearance of the town centre area. The Council's recent footway condition survey, along side any proposed enhancement schemes, should identify priority areas for attention. The council's emerging Wigan Town Centre Street Scene Strategy and English Heritage 'Streets for all' should be used as a reference for high quality design and finish.

The creation of less cluttered public spaces with a more consistent style of street furniture and appropriate street planting should be a priority within the area and should be carried out as opportunities arise.

2.2.2 Open Space

The Council will ensure that open spaces within the conservation area are protected from infringing development or unsympathetic proposals. They will also promote the continued maintenance of these spaces to provide pleasant, functional spaces within the urban fabric.

The open spaces within the conservation area are each relatively large in size and each has its own distinct character and function. They are all well utilised spaces and are individual focal areas for activity. These areas must be actively maintained as they have a substantial impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2.2.3 Regeneration

The Council will actively promote the regeneration of key areas within the town centre conservation area. Through the implementation of various mixed use partnership schemes and grant funding, key areas will become a focus for improvement works. These must be implemented to a high conservation standard to ensure they enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Again there are several proposed regeneration schemes within the town centre conservation area. These schemes have the potential to add economic and social value to the conservation area and their implementation should be actively promoted and pursued. Care must be taken to ensure schemes are of a high design standard to ensure they have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2.3 General Points

2.3.1 Demolition and Alteration

The Council will seek to preserve the areas listed buildings and buildings deemed to be of local architectural or historic interest. The demolition or inappropriate alteration of buildings which make a positive contribution to the historical, architectural or industrial character or appearance of a conservation area will not be permitted.

Under Sections 8 & 74 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Local Authority has control over the demolition of all buildings within the boundary of a conservation area. PPG15 states that proposals to demolish unlisted buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, will be assessed against the same criteria as proposals to demolish a listed building. Enforcement action should be considered where alterations have already taken place without permission which have a significant detrimental impact on a building or streetscape.

2.3.2 New Development

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.

In line with PPG15, the Council will not accept outline applications for proposals within conservation areas. Applications should be submitted in full and supported by plans, sections and elevations and depending on the

size of the proposal, perspective drawings showing the development in context. The Council would also recommend that applicants seek consultation with experienced professionals as well as planning services as this will help to ensure that any proposal is of high quality design and will meet the expectations of the planning authority.

3. Monitoring and Reviewing

This document along with the associated conservation area appraisal should be reviewed every five years in light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area;
- A photographic record of the conservation area;
- An assessment as to whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
- A building condition survey;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action required.

APPENDIX 3

Unitary Development Plan Policies

EV3 DESIGN

The council is committed to the achievement of good design in all development. The design qualities and standards will be key considerations in judging proposals with the aim of creating places and spaces which are attractive, accessible, safe, uncluttered and which take into account public health, crime prevention, community safety, sustainability principles and heritage conservation.

The quality of the built environment in the Borough is crucial to its success as a place in which to live, work and play. Well designed buildings, streets and neighbourhoods can help promote sustainable development, attract businesses and investment and reinforce civic pride and sense of place. All applications from the smallest extension to major development schemes will be expected to achieve high standards of design.

EV3A Design of New Development

All proposals for development will be required, through their design, to promote where relevant:

- (a) The character and identify of places through responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, spaces, natural topography, landscape and materials;**
- (b) The continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas and takes into account the microclimatic conditions;**
- (c) Public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, visually and physically uncluttered and function effectively for all in society;**
- (d) An environment that is inclusive and accessible for all, making places that connect physically and visually with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic;**
- (e) Legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and protects and enhances both local and strategic views of landmarks and focal points in order to help people 'visually navigate';**
- (f) Adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions;**
- (g) Diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs;**
- (h) Appropriate scale of development that reflects and enhances the buildings and roofs, scale, massing, heights and densities that are**

- specific to that locality and which take into consideration the human scale relationship with the buildings themselves;
- (i) **Sustainability principles including, wherever possible, reducing the impacts on climate change; the efficient use of energy and water; the use of sustainable drainage systems wherever possible, innovation in building design; reducing the use of primary minerals; and reusing and recycling buildings and materials.**

The importance of good design is increasingly being recognised for its contribution to urban regeneration as well as its value in its own right. In line with this policy the council will expect applicants for planning permission to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their development proposals.

The policy provides clear guidance on the objectives and key principles of design and is consistent both with the approach to design in PPG1 and that put forward in *“By Design. Urban Design in the planning system: towards better practice”*, published by the Government.

EV3B Advertisements

The display of advertisements will be controlled to ensure that they do not adversely affect the character of the buildings, the amenity of the area or public safety.

Although the council recognises that outdoor advertising has a useful role to play in the commercial life of the borough and the appearance of the built environment, it is important to avoid gaudy, unsightly cluttered signs which obscure the detail of buildings and destroy the human scale of urban spaces. The council wishes to raise the general standards of advertisement displays in the borough by the application of principles and guidelines specified in its approved Design Guide for Advertisements.

Particular care will be taken over advertisements in conservation areas and which affect listed buildings or buildings of local interest in line with the provisions of policies EV4A, EV4B and EV4C.

EV3C Design of Frontages to Shops/Commercial Properties

In addition to meeting the requirements of EV3A, proposals for new frontages or alterations to shops and commercial properties will be required to:

- (a) **Use materials and a design in sympathy with the whole façade of the building or, where more appropriate, satisfactory surrounding**

- premises;
- (b) **Have display windows at ground level unless they would be inappropriate to the design of the whole façade;**
 - (c) **Avoid using external security measures where the choice of design and colour would have an adverse effect on the appearance and character or the shop front, building, street and wider context. The choice of appropriate security measures must aim to maximise transparency opportunities in order to increase natural surveillance and reduce uninviting dead frontages;**
 - (d) **Provide level or ramped access into the building wherever possible.**

The quality of the street scene in town and district centres is strongly influenced by the quality, design and materials of shop and commercial building frontages. This policy aims to control these aspects of town centre design by specifying the requirements which such frontages must meet. The council has also produced a Shop Front Guide which provides supplementary planning guidance to promote good design in shop and commercial frontages. Particular care will be taken over the design of frontages in conservation areas and which will affect listed buildings or buildings of local interest in line with the provisions of policies EV4A, EV4B and EV4C.

EV3D Landscaping of Development

Development will be required to incorporate good quality hard and soft landscaping as an integral part of the proposals to enhance the environment and setting of a new building and help integrate the development into its surroundings.

The including of landscaping in development schemes can usefully provide screening, softening, colour, texture and seasonal variations and can break up large wall or parking areas. Hard landscaping can also be effective in introducing attractive textures, colour, patterns and sculptural features into floor areas and should be designed to incorporate crime prevention considerations. Only in exceptional circumstances will it be considered appropriate to dispense with a landscaping scheme in the submission for new development.

EV4 CONSERVATION

The council will conserve the historic built environment by:

- (1) **Not permitting proposals which would harm the character or appearance of a listed building 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 setting;**
 - (5) Carrying out environmental improvement schemes in conservation areas;**
 - (6) Designating new conservation areas and reviewing the boundaries of existing ones where the quality and interest of the area is of special architectural or historic interest due to:**
 - The historic layout of properties, boundaries and thoroughfares;**
 - The particular mix of uses;**
 - The use of characteristic materials;**
 - The appropriate scaling and detailing of building;**
 - The quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces;**
 - The quality of vistas along streets and between buildings; or**
 - The extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of space between buildings.**

The conservation of the best of the built environment forms a major component in enhancing and protecting the heritage of the borough. This is not only a matter of protecting and enhancing historic buildings themselves but also their settings. Such an approach can only be successful if new uses can be found for old buildings so as to provide funding for their preservation and restoration and by sensitive control over all aspects of design.

The use of reclaimed materials in restoring buildings will usually make economic sense as well as helping minimise the use of primary minerals. Further areas will also be considered for designation as conservation areas and the boundaries of existing conservation areas will be reviewed by consideration against the broad criteria listed in clause (6) of the policy.

EV4A Development & Design in Conservation Areas

In addition to other development and design policies which apply throughout the borough, the following considerations will be applied within conservation areas and their settings:

- (a) The council will ensure that any proposals for the development within a conservation area will preserve and enhance and will not harm the character or appearance of that area;**
- (b) 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;
- (c) 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;
 - (d) 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;
 - (e) Signs should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting and will be permitted provided they meet the following criteria:
 - (i) Facia signs should, particularly in terms of their size, proportions, degree of projection, positioning, materials, type of construction, colour and the style and size of lettering, be in keeping with the character of the shop front, fascia details and materials, the building as a whole and the area. If they are to be illuminated they should be externally illuminated using unobtrusive and discreet light fittings or take the form of individually illuminated and individually affixed letters;
 - (ii) The cumulative impact of advertisements should not detract from the character or appearance of the building or locality. Advertisement structures should not be superimposed on other advertisement structures;
 - (iii) Projecting or hanging signs should be of small size, thin section and if illuminated, should be discreetly externally illuminated and located at fascia level;
 - (f) The council will encourage the preservation and, where necessary, the sensitive relocation of attractive items of street furniture and will encourage the preservation and, where possible, the enhancement and extension of stone sett and flag surfaces, such as paviers, temporary or permanent reinstatement should be in the original material;
 - (g) The council will encourage the removal of buildings detrimental to the character of conservation areas;
 - (h) The rendering or cladding of stone and brick buildings will not be permitted;
 - (i) 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.

There are currently 23 conservation areas in the borough which represents a major part of its historical and architectural heritage. This policy details the main considerations that the council will apply when assessing development proposals within them or within other conservation areas which may be designated in the future. Buildings which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area include those with some defects such as inappropriate window frames, advertisements or shop fronts which are in need of repair. Any development of such premises will be expected to include suitable repairs and the replacement of inappropriate features with more sympathetic ones.

Advertisements can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of conservation areas. Well designed signage can be both sensitive and visually interesting in relation to the character and appearance of such areas whilst being commercially effective. It is important however that signs are not too prominent or dominant and that they do not cover up high quality materials such as brickwork, stone, tiles or polished finishes which are integral to the building. Signs should also not cover up, obscure, detract from or damage architectural features of the building, or fascia area and their size, proportions and location should not alter the extent of glazing in the shop front or the proportions of the upper façade and fenestration pattern.

Standardised solutions such as the use of illuminated boxes or box-like structures are unlikely to be acceptable. For certain building types such as public houses a location for hanging signs above the fascia level may be justifiable in relation to traditional practice in the area.

EV4B Listed Buildings

The Council will encourage the protection and where appropriate enhancement of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and their settings. In particular, it will:

- (a) Not permit the demolition of Listed Buildings or significant parts of them unless a convincing case for demolition has been made out and the council is satisfied that all possible means of retaining the building have been exhausted;**
- (b) Ensure that proposed internal and external alterations, extensions and other development proposals affecting Listed Buildings or their settings will not be permitted unless they are in keeping with the buildings character;**
- (c) Permit appropriate alternative uses for Listed Buildings which**

- ensure their preservation and which would not adversely affect their architectural character or settings;**
- (d) Secure proper preservation of occupied and unoccupied Listed Buildings to prevent their falling derelict where further deterioration would irreversibly affect their long term future;**
 - (e) Require the replacement of inappropriate features, materials or sections as part of any scheme involving the change or use of Listed Buildings.**

This policy details the main considerations the council will apply when assessing development proposals to or affecting buildings included in the list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest in the Borough. It may be necessary to relax the strict interpretation of other policies of the plan, for example Green Belt policy, in order to ensure the survival of particularly important buildings or to ensure that extensions are in scale or character with a listed building.

EV4C Buildings and structures of local architectural or historic interest
The council will encourage the protection and enhancement of buildings and structures of local architectural or historic interest and their settings. Development schemes including alterations, changes of use and advertisements will be expected, wherever practicable, to respect their character and retain or restore their original or historic features, materials and form.

There is a whole range of buildings and structures in the borough which form a significant part of the familiar and cherished local scene. Further extensions of the list of buildings and structures of local architectural or historic interest will be published as supplementary planning guidance and incorporated into the plan at review. The relative weight to be given to the content of an adopted development plan and of supplementary planning guidance is set out in PPG12. These buildings, whilst not currently justifying inclusion on the statutory list, do possess local historic or architectural merit, are a major part of the borough's historic environment, its day to day history and are a rich source of local identity, memory and distinctiveness.

Although the council does not have the same detailed control over proposals to these buildings and structures as it has over listed buildings, it will exercise its normal development control powers to preserve or enhance the buildings. However, sensitive and well-designed alterations or extensions will be permitted, particularly if they help to ensure a buildings continued occupation.

The council will also consider, in appropriate cases, exercising the powers available to it under Section 3 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to serve Building Preservation Notices in respect of buildings which are not listed, but which it considers to be of special architectural or historic interest and which are in danger of demolition or alteration in such as

way as to affect their character.

EV4D Historic Parks, Gardens and Cemeteries

Permission will not be given to any proposal which is likely to adversely affect the character or setting of any of the following Historic parks, gardens or cemeteries:

- 1. Haigh Hall grounds, Haighlands, Moat House and Haigh House Gardens, Haigh;**
- 2. Standish Hall remnant parkland and Ashfield House gardens, Standish;**
- 3. Kilhey Court grounds, Worthington;**
- 4. Bispham Hall and Winstanley Hall parks, Billinge;**
- 5. Golborne Hall Park, Aspull;**
- 6. Hindley Hall Park, Aspull;**
- 7. Atherton Hall Park, Atherton;**
- 8. Astley Hospital, (former) Astley Vicarage and The Meads, Tyldesley;**
- 9. Hindley, Atherton, Ince, Tyldesley and Leigh cemeteries;**
- 10. Historic public parks at Mesnes Park, Wigan and Lilford Park and Firs Park, Leigh**
- 11. Other historic parks and gardens which may from time to time be identified.**

These areas are those where a landscape of particular historic interest remains and where special protection is needed to ensure their survival. Such a designation would not necessarily preclude development but would certainly require that particular attention be given to the amount and design of any development which may be allowed. Similarly, there may be some proposals which involve only the change in use of the land without any building development but which could be unacceptable by virtue of their impact on the landscape. The council will apply the terms of this policy to other historic parks and gardens which may from time to time be identified only after these have been listed in supplementary planning guidance which has been adopted in accordance with the advice of PPG12.

EV4E Archaeology, Ancient Monuments and Development

The council will protect and enhance the character and appearance of sites, buildings and structures of archaeological interest and Ancient Monuments. In particular, it will not allow development proposals which fail to:

- Enhance and preserve in situ scheduled or unscheduled ancient monuments of national importance and, in appropriate circumstances, significant unscheduled monuments of more local importance or which fail to adequately protect the setting of such monuments;**

- **Incorporate an approved scheme of archaeological investigation (including, where appropriate, excavation, recording and salvage work prior to development with subsequent analysis and publication of results), if necessary, with funding by the developer, in cases where destruction or removal of any ancient monument or archaeological remains, known or believed likely to exist, is considered acceptable by the council. Conditions may be imposed requiring such investigations as part of the planning permission.**

Where fresh archaeological discoveries of significant importance are made during development, the council will seek to ensure their preservation. The importance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites means that proposals which may affect them will be carefully vetted to ensure that they do not damage such sites. In certain cases it may be possible for an applicant to demonstrate that particular archaeological sites and monuments will be satisfactorily preserved either *in situ* or by record (i.e. adequately investigated and the results reported). Preservation by record is regarded as a less satisfactory option. Despite government advice, it is not considered appropriate to specify all the areas of and sites to which this policy applies on the proposals map. The lack of information on many archaeological sites as well as the impracticality of plotting the multitude of sites on the map rules out such an approach. However, the sites and monuments record (SMR) for the borough forms the basic source of up-to-date information to identify such sites and area. The advice and assistance of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit will be sought in assessing planning applications for development affecting ancient monuments and archaeological sites.

Implications of Conservation Area Status

Conservation area status is not intended to stifle new development nor 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 historical qualities are not eroded. The normal requirements for planning permission and building regulation approval apply with some additional restrictions.

- Planning applications will be carefully considered by the 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 6 weeks notice of any intention to undertake works to cut down, lop, prune or uproot any trees over 7.5cm in diameter as measured 1.5m from the ground within a 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 and amendments 2008 may require planning consent. Developers are advised to check with the council at an early stage on the need for any required permissions. Unauthorised works can lead to prosecution and the council may take enforcement action requiring the works to be 'undone'.

Glossary of Terms (from Neil Grieves 'Conservation Glossary')

Ancient Monument: Defined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as "any building, structure or work, whether above ground or below the surface of the land, and any cave or excavation". A Scheduled Ancient Monument is any monument included in the schedule to the Act.

Balustrade: a parapet or stair rail composed of uprights (balusters) carrying a coping or handrail, usually they are there for safety reasons e.g. at a balcony. Balusters nearly always swell in the centre, if they don't, they appear as very spindly and barely able to support the weight of the cope that they carry.

Corbel: A projecting block supporting a parapet or beam. Corbelling, is building out by projecting over the block below.

Cupola: A small dome-shaped roof structure crowning a roof or dome.

Dentil Course: A rectangular projecting blocks (dentils) , tightly spaced like teeth, usually below cornices (from Latin, *Denticulus*, a tooth). Dentilation simply refers to the presence of dentils on a building.

Façade: The front face of a building; usually implies architectural treatment.

Georgian: the period from the accession of King George I in 1714 to the death of King George IV in 1830. As wealth devolved the age became noted for schemes of town planning rather than individual buildings, these developments were usually prompted by personal gain as much as civic pride. Best known are the terraces and crescents of Edinburgh and Bath, and the building of the great London estates. The period saw many well known architects, among whom, arguably Robert Adam stands out, with the likes of Kedleston hall, Syon House.

Listed Building: A building included on a list of buildings of architectural or historic interest, compiled by the secretary of state. Listing covers any structure or erection or any part of a building, or any building or structure falling within the curtilage of a listed building and dating prior to 1948. Listed buildings are divided into three categories, I, II*, III in England.

Mock-Tudor: Tudorbethon, is being used to describe the 1930's mock-tudor style so beloved of suburban developers, and now in some areas, serious candidates for listing.

Pastiche: A design incorporating copies of styles, or in imitation of its neighbours. Generally used derogatively to describe a copy that doesn't work.

Renaissance (Italian, French, Dutch, Flemish): (rebirth) A French term for a cultural movement that is mainly associated with Italy from around the late 1300s to the early 1600s. In addition to new directions in art, literature and science, following the discovery of the writings of Vitruvius, it heralded the reintroduction of classical architecture, particularly that of Ancient Rome. It also brought a theoretical interest to city planning.

Sustainable: developing to meet present needs, without affecting the ability of future generations to develop to meet their own needs. Now used as a very relevant and occasionally telling argument for the retention of buildings.

Tree Preservation Order: A direction made by a local authority which makes it an offence to cut, top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage a tree without first obtaining the permission of the local authority.

Vernacular: An indigenous building constructed of locally available materials, to local detail, usually without the benefit of an architect. Somehow it is now taken to imply a fairly humble or practical origin. Vernacular is often referred to as the little tradition as opposed to the greater or polite architecture of national or international influence.

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Greater Manchester Sites and Monuments Record

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Wigan Town Centre Trail (1998)

Wigan Council Unitary Development Plan (2006)

Wigan Council Statement of Community Involvement (2006)

Wigan Council Shop Front Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2005)

Websites:

www.wiganworld.co.uk

www.localhistories.org/wigan.html

www.old-maps.co.uk

www.wigan.gov.uk

APPENDIX 4

Consultation

In accordance with Part 6, section 24(4) and Part 6, section 36 of the Town and Country (Local Development) (England) Act 2004, Wigan Council adopted its Statement of Community Involvement on the 12 July 2006. This statement sets out the council's policies for involving the community in the wider planning process, including the preparation of the Local Development Framework and Conservation Area Appraisals. It provides advice as to how and when communities and interested stakeholders can become involved in the planning process. In line with this statement, when undertaking this assessment of the town centre conservation area, the local community and interested stakeholders were asked to contribute their thoughts, opinions and suggestions regarding the current conservation area and the draft report.

The Draft Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal was subject to a series of targeted consultations with all property occupiers, owners and key stakeholders.

The first of the consultations took place from the 24th September until the 15th October 2008 and involved correspondence via letter to owners, occupiers and stakeholders inviting comments on Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area, prior to the Conservation Area Appraisal being written.

Following on from this, there was a second period of consultation, which took place from 7th January to 26th February 2009, with the purpose of obtaining comments on the Draft Wigan Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and proposed boundary changes. The full draft appraisal was available on the Council's Web Site for downloading. No responses regarding the Conservation Area Appraisal and proposed boundary changes were received during and following the consultation.

A third consultation was undertaken on 4th June 2009, where the Wigan Town Centre Conservation Appraisal was presented to the Wigan Town Centre Management Board for discussion with stakeholders and local businesses. The general consensus was to agree the extension to the conservation area boundary, to include important historic properties and sites.

Contacts

Conservation Officer

Civic Buildings
New Market Street
Wigan, WN1 1RP
T: 01942 404253/4
E: conservation@wigan.gov.uk

English Heritage

Customer Services Department
PO Box 569
Swindon
SN2 2YP
T: 0870 3331181
E: customers@english-heritage.org.uk

Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit

University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL
T: 0161 2752314

Township Manager

Unity House
Westwood Park Drive
Wigan
WN3 4HE
T: 01942 486764
E: E.Wystawnoha@wigan.gov.uk

Town Centre Manager

Gateway House
Standishgate
Wigan
WN1 1AE
T: 01942 828890
E: M.Matthews@wigan.gov.uk