



Howe Bridge, Atherton
Conservation Area Appraisal
March 2010



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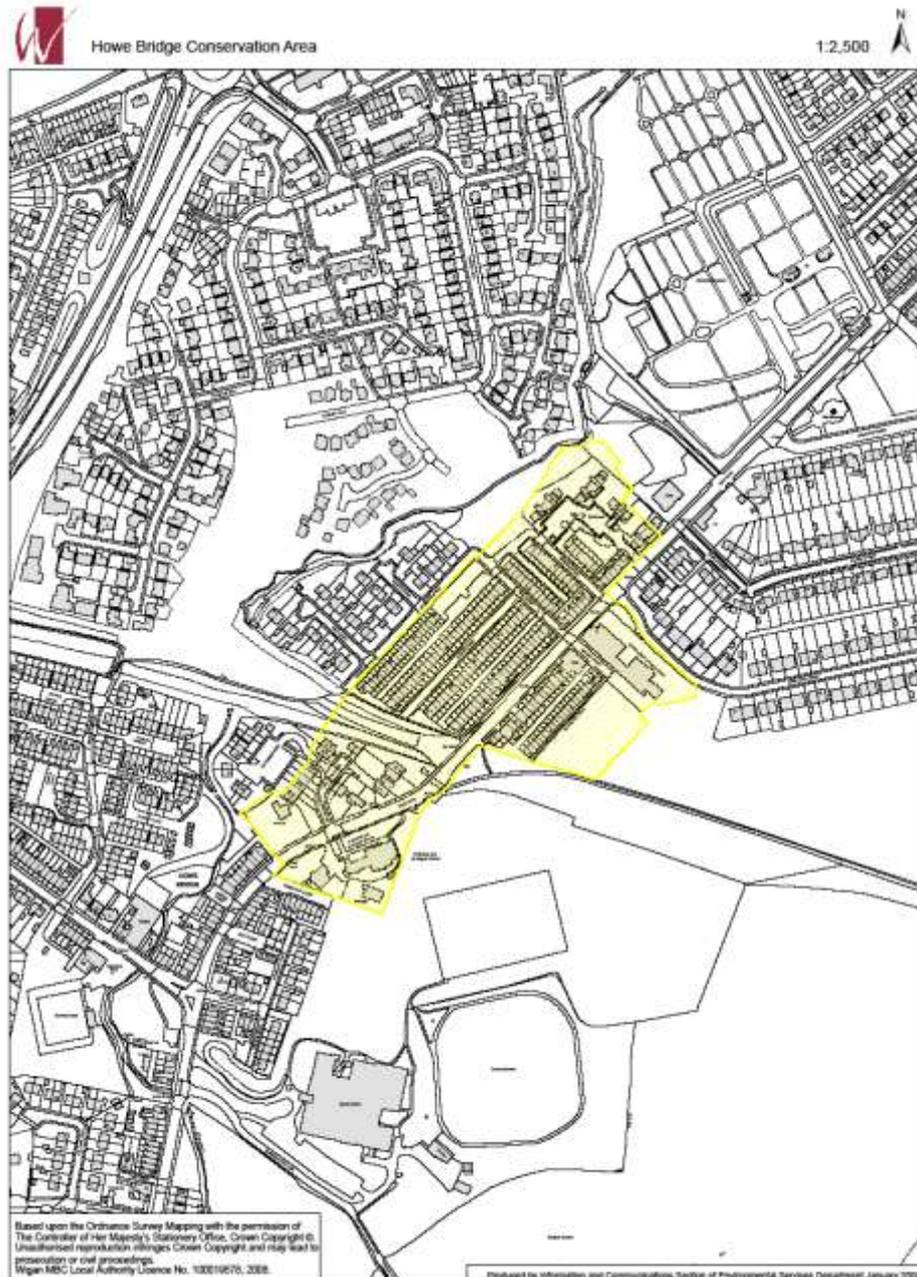
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1. Introduction

Howe Bridge conservation area was originally designated on the 29th December 1987. The current boundary covers an area of 5.35 hectares and the area has been characterised as a village. There are currently a number of listed buildings within the conservation area including rows of miners housing along Leigh Road and the local church St. Michael and All Angels.

Map 1: current boundary of Howe Bridge Conservation Area



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.

The purpose of Conservation Area appraisals is to define what makes up the special character and sense of place in these areas. The appraisal looks at topography and landscape setting, history, buildings, settlement form, important views and activities and uses, streetscape, green spaces and trees. Negative features that detract from the special qualities of the area are identified and management recommendations for protection and enhancement of the area are proposed.

English Heritage as statutory advisor to the government on the historic environment, define 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 provision 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 has 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 any 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 basis on which planning applications for development within the conservation area can be assessed to ensure high quality development which is not detrimental to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

1.2 Community Involvement

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 processes, 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 Howe Bridge, the local community and interested stakeholders including elected members were asked to contribute their thoughts, opinions and suggestions regarding the current conservation area and draft report. The preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal has been subject to public participation and involvement of the local community. A strong community spirit exists in Howe Bridge and an active residents group has been in place for many years. Further detail regarding the Howe Bridge Conservation Area Appraisal consultation is set out in Appendix 4.

1.3 The Planning Policy Context

This document should be read in context with the wider policy framework of land use, planning and development. For Wigan Borough this is the Wigan Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 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 its conservation areas through protecting buildings that lie within them, Ancient monuments, sites, buildings and structures of archaeological interest and historic landscapes. Buildings of local interest are protected and enhanced through the application of development control powers. (Appendix 3 for expanded UDP policies).

The Conservation Area Appraisal will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications affecting Howe Bridge.

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

Howe Bridge Conservation Area is predominantly residential in nature with some retail and public buildings scattered throughout. There are several notable historic buildings within the conservation area, for example St Michael and All Angels Church and school.

Atherton and the surrounding areas have a varied history and the area is regarded as a mining area. The impact from the borough's extensive mining industry can still be seen across the countryside in the form of old mine workings and spoil heaps. A purpose built mining village, Howe Bridge itself was in close proximity to several, now cleared collieries.

The Fletcher family were renowned industrialists who were responsible for the construction of the village itself. The Fetters played such an active role in village life, and were responsible for the development of Howe Bridge. The construction of the public baths and the Mine Rescue Station in the village were two firsts in the country.

There are many key characteristics which stand out in the conservation area and contribute towards making the area one of special architectural and historic importance, for example:

- Dominance of red brick building material;
- Slate roofing materials;
- Dutch architectural styling on several properties;
- The unusual 'Promenade' feature;
- Dense urban fabric.

2.2 Justification for Designation

Howe Bridge conservation area is fairly compact in size, currently covering an area of 5.35 hectares. It has been characterised as a village and is dominated by residential properties. The area of Howe Bridge has a very distinctive character when compared with the nearby centres of Atherton and Hindley.

Purpose built by the Fletcher family from 1873, when the public bath house was constructed, Howe Bridge was intended to provide quality housing for the company's local employees as well as a self sufficient community. The village was the first of its kind for the mining industry and was regarded at the time as being a model village which set a precedent for similar developments across the country.

2.3 Boundaries and Extent of the Conservation Area

The current boundary of the conservation area is focussed along Leigh Road with the majority of properties situated to the north-west of the road. The northern boundary of the conservation area is the land on which the old Briarcroft Hall once stood, and to the north-east is St Michael Church of England Primary School. Moving further south the boundary incorporates a large area of terrace housing along Leigh Road before reaching St Michael and All Angels Church and Vicarage, where the conservation area ends.

Development in the conservation area is relatively dense in nature and in the most part dates from the period 1878 to 1887. The extensive terrace housing from this period, forms a large part of the areas architectural and historic interest along with the local church and school. There are two areas of more recent development to the north and south of the conservation area, at the site of Briarcroft Hall and Hindles Farm respectively.

3. Historical Development

3.1 History

Roman Period

There is currently no evidence of Roman occupation within Howe Bridge itself; However, there is some limited evidence of Roman occupation at the nearby settlement of Atherton. There is strong archaeological evidence at Gadbury and there have been excavations of Roman military roads in and around this area which are believed to have connected the Roman fort in Manchester with settlement in Wigan and Warrington.

Anglo Saxon Period

The Anglo-Saxon period saw Atherton begin to develop into a small rural settlement and it is from this time that the name Atherton is believed to have come into existence. In the 14th century, Atherton was held by the Botelers (Butlers) of Warrington who in turn gifted land to the Atherton family. At this early time the area now known as Howe Bridge would have been open farm land with perhaps a few small farmsteads scattered throughout.

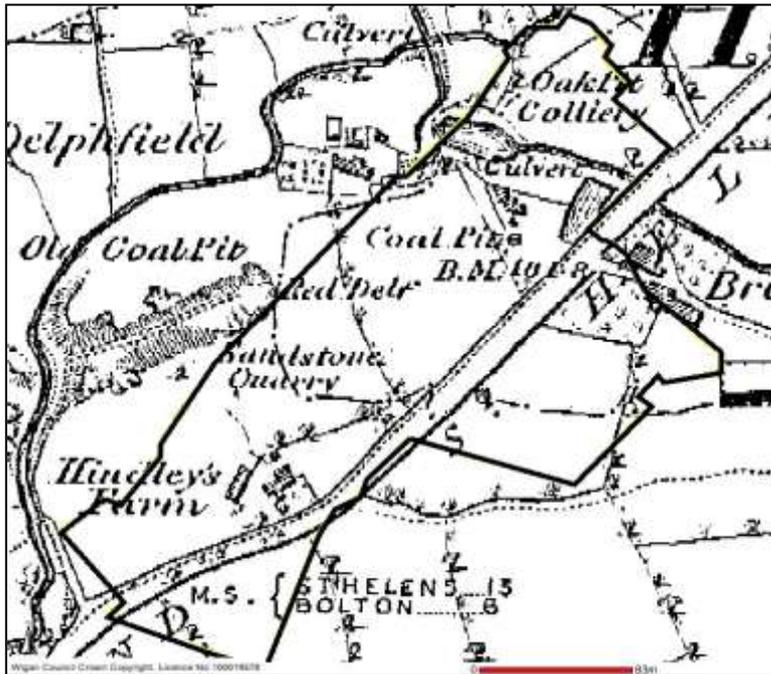
Medieval Period

The Medieval Period saw Atherton and many of the surrounding townships starting to gain a reputation for their rich coal deposits. The archaeological works at Gadbury found evidence of coal mining believed to date back to the 14th century. It was also during this time that Atherton's traditional cottage based industries also began to expand and develop.

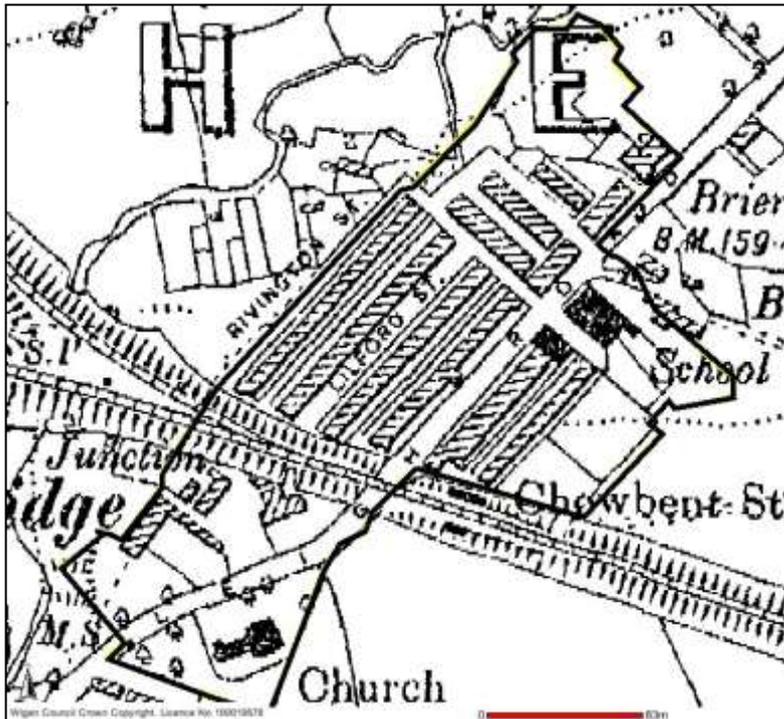
Post-Medieval Period

The industrial revolution in the late 18th - 19th century saw industries such as coal mining and cotton manufacture take hold throughout Lancashire. Through this period Atherton became a major industrial settlement with several coal mines surrounding the settlement. The nineteenth century saw a flourish of new mines being sunk, new mills opening and in 1828 the first railway was built through Atherton to transport both produce and passengers to the nearby cities. The industrial revolution also brought about the active development of the nearby towns and infrastructure which contributed to the growth of the settlement. In the late 19th century there were a total of 7 coal mines within close proximity to Atherton, several of which were owned and operated by Fletcher-Burrows: Lovers Lane Colliery, Howe Bridge Colliery, Gibfield Colliery and Chanters Colliery. The family dominated both industrial and civic life in Atherton during this time bringing experience dating back to the late 1700s. The company Fletcher-Burrows and Co was formed in 1892 and survived until the formation of Manchester Collieries in 1929 and was a great benefactor to the local community.

Map 2(below): 1849 OS Map of conservation area



Map 3(below): 1894 OS Map of conservation area



It was during this period that the Fletchers commissioned the building of a village at Howe Bridge to provide better quality housing and a higher standard of living for their local employees. This was a planned village in association with the nearby Howe Bridge colliery.

As well as houses and basic amenities the Fletchers also built the public bath house on Leigh Road, the school and the church. Briarcroft Hall was also built at this time and served as the Fletcher family residence until it was gifted to the community in 1921.

The family were also responsible for the building of pithead baths at Gibfield Colliery in 1914 which were the first in the country. Howe Bridge Mines Rescue Station was another groundbreaking investment, which opened in 1908. It was the first central rescue station in the country.

Modern Period

In the early 1970s, the National Coal Board inherited the housing from Fletcher-Burrows and many improvements were made at this time, including the installation of internal toilets and bathrooms. At the end of the 1970s the Coal Board sold the properties to the local council and since then the majority of properties have remained in Wigan Council ownership. Some of them are now in private ownership but the vast majority have been transferred to Wigan and Leigh Housing.

It was also during this period that the new housing developments to the north and south of the conservation area were built on the sites of Briarcroft Hall and Hindles Farm. Briarcroft Hall, originally the Fletcher's family home was gifted to the local community in the 1920s, and functioned as an active community venue at the centre of village life. Briarcroft closed as a community centre in the late 1980s and was suffering from extensive neglect and vandalism when it was demolished in 1998.

3.2 Archaeology

The area of Howe Bridge itself has limited archaeological potential with most of the industrial archaeology in the surrounding area has been removed over the years to make way for modern development.

There has been some extensive archaeological investigation at the nearby Gibfield, and specifically at Gadbury and Hatton Folds. Here, the remains of a large scale medieval settlement were discovered with some evidence of industrial activity nearby. A large ditch, possibly dating to pre-historic times, was also found during the investigation. No evidence of the roman road between Wigan and Warrington was found in this location.

4. Location and Landscape Setting

4.1 Geographical Location

Located in the east of the Borough, the village of Howe Bridge, forms part of the larger township of Atherton. Howe Bridge Conservation Area lies to the south of Atherton town centre, and is situated along a section of Leigh Road, which is the main thoroughfare through the village.

4.2 Topography and Landscape

As part of the character assessment, it is important to take into consideration any topographical, geological or landscape features which may impact upon the character of the conservation area. Atherton itself lies on relatively flat, even land and is enclosed on three sides by the Borough's Green Belt. Howe Bridge to the south of the town is also adjacent to an area of green belt. The land surrounding Atherton is rich in coal deposits and as a result of the extensive mining activity carried out in this area during the industrial revolution. The terrace layout of the settlement is also indicative of many industrial settlements which date to this time.

Photograph 1: Terraced row in conservation area.



Photo 2(below):
View south to St Michaels Church



Photo 3(above): View north towards Atherton

5. Spatial Analysis

5.1 Key Views

There are several key views within Howe Bridge conservation area, each one providing different focal points and aspects.

(1) View south along Leigh Road towards St Michael's Church

This view is along the length of Leigh Road, from the northern boundary of the conservation area. The view terminates at the southern edge of the area with St Michael and All Angels Church. The church, a dominant building within the townscape, becomes the main focal point in this view and provides a clear boundary marker for the conservation area.



Photograph 4: Playing fields at Bowling Green Road



Photograph 5: area of grass at Rivington Street

(2) View north along Leigh Road towards Atherton

This view is also along the length of Leigh Road, but from the southern boundary of the conservation area to the northern boundary. This view runs up towards the larger settlement of Atherton and terminates far in the distance. No one property is dominant in this view and the linear nature emphasising the strong building lines on each side of Leigh Road.

Photograph 6: St. Michael and All Angels Church



5.2 Open Spaces, Focal Points, Landscaping and Trees

Open Spaces

There are very few open spaces within the conservation area, with the largest area of open space is the large expanse of land to the east of Bowling Green Lane. This area of land was, as the street name suggests, once the village bowling green. It is now part of the grounds associated with the neighbouring St Michael and All Angels Primary and functions as the school's playing fields.

The only other significant area of open space within the conservation area is a small area of grass on Rivington Street. Previously this area was occupied by terrace housing, with Rivington Street extending up to this point. These properties were demolished in the mid-20th century as a result of mining subsidence in the area. Today this space has been grassed over and has no clear function within the village except to create a break in the urban form.

Photograph 7: Land to the north of St. Michael's Church



Focal Points

At the southern end of the conservation area is St Michael and All Angels Church. Dating from 1875-7 this building is contemporary with the construction of the settlement, and was commissioned by Fletcher-Burrows to serve the local community. Previously, the nearest church had been St John's in Atherton. A local church is often central to village life and because of its size and location, St Michael's church it is a dominant feature within the village.

There are several other focal points within the conservation area, including many properties which stand out within the streetscape. Many of the buildings along Leigh Road are listed buildings and are characterised with distinctive architectural features and differing styles. As a result of the linear building lines along Leigh Road, it is difficult to distinguish any one property as being visually dominant.

However, properties such as the school, village club and bathhouse are prominent within the townscape as a result of their location and building styles.



Photograph 8: Newsagents, Leigh Road



Photograph 9: Village Club, Leigh Road

Landscaping

There are no areas within the conservation area which have been subject to planned landscaping schemes. In general, development within Howe Bridge has been relatively dense in nature leaving little space for landscaping features. There are several areas in which landscaping could occur in the future, but as yet no plans exist for such measures for example, the areas of land north of St Michael's church and to the south of Bowling Green Lane could provide opportunities for a landscaping scheme.

At this time the largest expanse of open land would be the old Bowling Green, now attached to St Michael and All Angel School. This area is currently utilised by the school as a playing field and as such there are no plans to implement any schemes here at this time.

The majority of properties within the conservation area have small private garden areas to the front and/or rear. These have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.





Photograph 10: Chimney detailing brickwork

Photograph 11: decorative

Trees

All trees in a conservation area are subject to controls which enable Wigan Council to protect the special character of the area created by trees. For example, consent is required to remove a tree within a conservation area even if it is not covered by a TPO. If trees have a specific Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on them, then the normal Tree Preservation Order controls apply. Four trees around the site of the old Briarcroft Hall are protected by TPOs.



Photograph 12: The Promenade

Trees are not a defining feature of the character or appearance of the conservation area. Where they exist, they are generally to the south of the Conservation Area, around St Michael and All Angels church and around the new housing at the site of Hindles Farm. However, where they are present, the trees have a positive impact on the Conservation Area, especially around the church

where they help create a pleasant and tranquil space within the conservation area.

6. Definition of the Special Interest

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

The conservation area is predominantly residential in nature with the main body of the settlement, to the west of Leigh Road, consisting of back-to-back terrace rows. There are several commercial properties along the eastern side of Leigh Road, for example a hairdressers, take-away and newsagents. There are also some public buildings in the conservation area: St Michael and All Angels Church and School and the village club.

The houses within the conservation area are a mixture of terrace rows, detached houses and apartment blocks. There is a combination of privately owned and council owned properties, although the majority are in council ownership.



Photograph 13 (above): Example of an upgraded window frame



Photograph 14(above): Example of decorative brickwork

6.2 Architectural and Historic Character

The buildings along Leigh Road are believed to have been designed by the architects J. Medland and Henry Taylor. Medland and Taylor were Manchester architects who were renowned for their quirky and unorthodox designs. Many of the buildings in the conservation area have been designed with a distinctly Dutch influence, for example the Bath House on Leigh Road.

It has been claimed that the village was designed by a Dutch architect as a result of the examples of Dutch influence of the design of several buildings. Although present, the Dutch influence is not dominant and it is generally restricted to the properties situated along Leigh Road. Many of these properties have quite distinctive and unusual construction features and detailing. For example, the chimney stack on the village club has been built at an angle into the roof, creating a visually interesting feature. The elevated platform providing access to the properties on the west side of Leigh Road is known as the 'Promenade'. The houses along here are larger than the neighbouring properties and are believed to have been occupied by the company overseers and those who held positions of responsibility.



Photograph 15: 94-117 Leigh Road



Photograph 16: 147-191 Leigh Road

6.3 Building Materials and Local Details

Red brick and slate roofs are the dominant building materials found in the conservation area. The two areas of recent development to the north and south also use red brick, but this is of a modern style and different shade. St Michael and All Angels Church is the only stone built structure within the conservation area.

There is an abundance of brick detailing found within the conservation area in the form of corbelling, banding and other intricate features. Several of the properties have very unusual brick work on chimney stacks and gable ends. This architectural detailing forms an attractive feature within the conservation area, particularly as these features are found on nearly all the properties. The symmetry and uniformity of style, creates a cohesive townscape, especially along the terrace rows. Unfortunately, very few of the properties have retained their original windows and doors. There was an extensive upgrading scheme carried out by the local council in the 1980s where the windows were replaced with

modern alternatives deemed (at the time) to be sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

6.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit

There are currently several listed buildings within the Howe Bridge conservation area:

- 94-118 Leigh Road - Grade II;
- 147-191 Leigh Road - Grade II;
- St Michaels and All Angels Church, Leigh Road Grade II*

94-118 Leigh Road

This row of miners cottages was built to house Fletcher Burrows employees and dates back to approximately 1875. Many of these properties have 20th century alterations, including replacement windows and doors as mentioned above. This terrace row includes the 'Atherton Collieries Village Club' which has a modern extension to the front elevation which functions as the main entrance to the building. The other properties along this terrace row are a mix of houses and shops, all of which are of red brick construction and have brick banding and arches above the windows as well as interesting panelled brick chimney stacks.

147-191 Leigh Road

Similar to above, this is another row of miners cottages built for the workers of the Fletcher Burrows mines and also date from 1875. These properties are larger than those directly opposite, and were most likely the homes of managers and overseers. Built in a similar style they are also of red brick construction with brick detailing along the façade. This row of properties includes the old public Bath House, which has been converted to private residences.

Photograph 15: 94-117 Leigh Road



Photograph 16: 147-191 Leigh Road



Church of St Michael and All Angels

This church dates from 1875-7 and was designed for Fletcher Burrows by architects Paley and Austin, renowned for their church architecture throughout England. It is the only stone building in the conservation area, constructed of narrow coursed sandstone with red Runcorn ashlar dressings and plain roof tiles. The church is set in an area of land at the southern boundary of the conservation area, which includes the vicarage and churchyard.



Photograph 17: St Michael and All Angels

There are also unlisted buildings within Howe Bridge which have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these are also worthy of note. The following non-statutorily listed building within the conservation area is deemed to be of significant townscape merit. This building has a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and may be a possible candidate for future listing.

St Michael and All Angels School

The school was built in 1887 and was commemorated to Ralph Fletcher. The building has remained largely intact over the years. The school building has many unique features such as the tall, decorative chimney stacks for its fireplaces and the wooden bellcote. There have been some alterations to the building over the years to meet modern standards and needs. These alterations have been sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building and its wider setting.



Photograph 18-19: St Michael and All Angels Church of England Primary School

6.5 Public Realm: Floorscape, Street Lighting and Street Furniture

A combination of tarmac and concrete are the most common paving surfaces found in the conservation area. Many of the street surfaces are in relatively poor condition with patchy repairs and mismatching materials. This does very little to enhance the appearance of the conservation area and actually detracts significantly from any architecture of quality in the area. The streets away from Leigh Road are generally in the worst condition with the areas of new development having the most recently laid surfaces. The council has recently undertaken a footway condition survey across the borough which is due to be completed in the next few months and will determine priority areas which require attention and upgrading.



Photograph 20-21: Examples of paving surfaces in conservation area.

Street lighting in the conservation area is provided by various styles of lighting

columns. Along Leigh Road the columns are of the standard grey 'hockey stick' style, whereas the terrace rows to the west are still lit by older concrete posts. Conical style lighting columns are also found in some parts of the conservation area. Although the lighting found to the west of Leigh Road is of an older style of column, it is in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Street signs and other street furniture such as benches have been kept to a minimum in the conservation area. There are very few examples of any street furniture other than lighting within the conservation area. Street signs have in the most part been placed on existing columns to minimise street clutter although there are some areas along Leigh Road where signage could be combined further.



Photograph 22-23 (above): Examples of street lighting found in conservation area.



Photograph 24-5 (above): Examples of street furniture found in conservation area.

6.6 Historical Associations

The main historical association with Howe Bridge are the Fletcher family, the renowned industrialists who were responsible for the construction of the village itself. The Fletchers played such an active role in village life and were responsible their developments at Howe Bridge, many of which were very forward thinking for their time. The construction of the public baths and the Mine Rescue Station in the village were two firsts in the country.

7. Issues

7.1 Positive

1. A large number of historic properties survive within the conservation area, with the core properties dating back to the villages conception in the 1870s. Only two buildings from the original village have been lost, therefore the settlement of Howe Bridge is an unusually intact example of a planned mining village and is one of only a few surviving in the north west.

2. Historic detailing survives on many buildings within the conservation area with decorative brickwork the most commonly found feature. These all help to create individual character for many of the buildings as well as having a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Features such as honeycomb and diaper brickwork are common, as are arches and tumbling-in.

3. St Michael and All Angels School has been subject to several alterations over the years, all of which have been carried out in a sympathetic manner and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area. The school is a significant building within the settlement and as a result of its prominent location it is important that it continues to have a positive impact on the

conservation area.

4. The grounds surrounding St Michael and All Angel Church have a positive impact on the appearance of the conservation area. This area of open space, with mature planting not only enhances the appearance of the church itself but it also creates a pleasant space within the conservation area.

7.2 Negative

1. Poor quality street surfacing, mismatching materials and poor quality repairs have a negative impact on the overall appearance of the conservation area. The surfaces in Howe Bridge are generally of poor quality with nearly all streets having patchy and uneven tarmac paving. This seriously detracts from the appearance of the quality buildings within the conservation area and does little to enhance its overall character.

2. Loss of historic features such as doors and windows has occurred throughout the conservation area. Extensive upgrading works in the 1980s has resulted in no original windows or doors surviving within the conservation area, although the majority of properties have had the same window designs fitted which limits their impact slightly.

3. Vacancy is not a particular problem within the conservation area as most of the properties are occupied. A few vacant properties can be found along Leigh Road however, some of which are in quite poor condition. These properties have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the streetscape as a whole.

4. The two areas of modern infill development to the north and south of the conservation area do very little to enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. These developments are on the sites of 2 demolished historic properties: Briarcroft Hall and Hindles Farm. The developments at both sites have very few links to the historic character of the neighbouring historic properties.

5. Some unsympathetic alterations have occurred within the conservation area, for example, rendered or painted facades. These features are not in-keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area. In some cases steps are being taken to restore properties back to their original state however, this can often be a long process to ensure no damage occurs to the brickwork underneath.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Opportunities for Enhancement

1. Poor quality street surfacing can have a negative impact on the appearance of a conservation area. Street surfacing throughout this conservation area is generally of poor quality and mismatched materials. This does little to enhance the area's character or appearance. Wigan Council has recently undertaken a footway condition survey throughout the borough which should be completed in

the next few months and will determine priority areas in need of upgrading and repair.

2. Where historic details remain, in full or in part, action must be taken to preserve these remaining features. Simple detailing such as date stones, corbelling and dentil sills all contribute to character and can have a positive impact on the appearance of an area by creating a visually interesting streetscape.

3. The refurbishment and reuse of vacant properties within the conservation area must be promoted. Vacancy is not a prominent concern within this area however, there are a few properties especially along Leigh Road which look to have been vacant for some time. One of these properties has been granted planning permission for conversion into residential flats.

4. Conservation area designation is not intended to prevent change, but to influence change in order 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 or appearance of that area". The encouragement of high quality design in any future development must be promoted to ensure it is appropriate and sympathetic to its surroundings without being considered pastiche.

6. At the time of writing this report there were several examples of unsympathetic alterations within the conservation area. Painted brickwork and concrete renders are not in-keeping with the character or appearance of the area and can in fact lead to problems with water retention.

7. Redundant street furniture should be removed where possible and the combining of lighting columns and street signs should be promoted in order to create an uncluttered streetscape. There is not an abundance of street furniture found within the conservation area however, where present more care should be taken in regards to style and quality when implementing any future up grade schemes.

8.2 Boundary Changes (see appendix 1b for map)

As a result of the historic nature and unified architectural style of the conservation area, identified as a purpose built village, it is proposed to remove the area of new development around Manor Park. This area was previously the site of Hindles Farm and nothing now remains of the original buildings. The new development is not in keeping with the character of the area and does little to enhance the appearance of the conservation area. For similar reasons it is also proposed to remove the area of new development to the north of the conservation area at Brookfield. Built on the site of Braircroft Hall, this development also does not relate to the surrounding properties and does not enhance the character or appearance of the Howe Bridge Conservation Area.

It is also proposed to extend the Conservation Area to the north to include Atherton Cemetery and Cenotaph. These are two significant features within the

townscape of Howe Bridge that provide important links to the past and both have a positive impact on the Conservation Area by virtue of their amenity and landscape value. The cemetery was opened in 1857 and represents a valuable area of amenity green space within the Conservation Area. Its chapels and lodge house all date to this period. Atherton Cemetery is included in the Council's list of Historic Park, Gardens and Cemeteries, which identifies it as an important landscape with historic remains. The neighbouring Atherton Cenotaph was also deemed worthy of inclusion, designed by Arthur John Hope of Bradshaw, Gass and Hope in 1902. Opened in 1922, the cenotaph is constructed of Darley Dale Stone, which is a very unusual material in this area. Both of these features are of significant townscape and historic merit and represent locally important heritage assets that commemorate the lives of the people of Howe Bridge and Atherton. Inclusion of these important features within the conservation area will ensure adequate protection in the future.



Photograph 26 (above): New development on Site of Briarcroft Hall

Photograph 27 (below): New development on site of Hindles Farm





Photograph 28: Atherton Cemetery
(above)



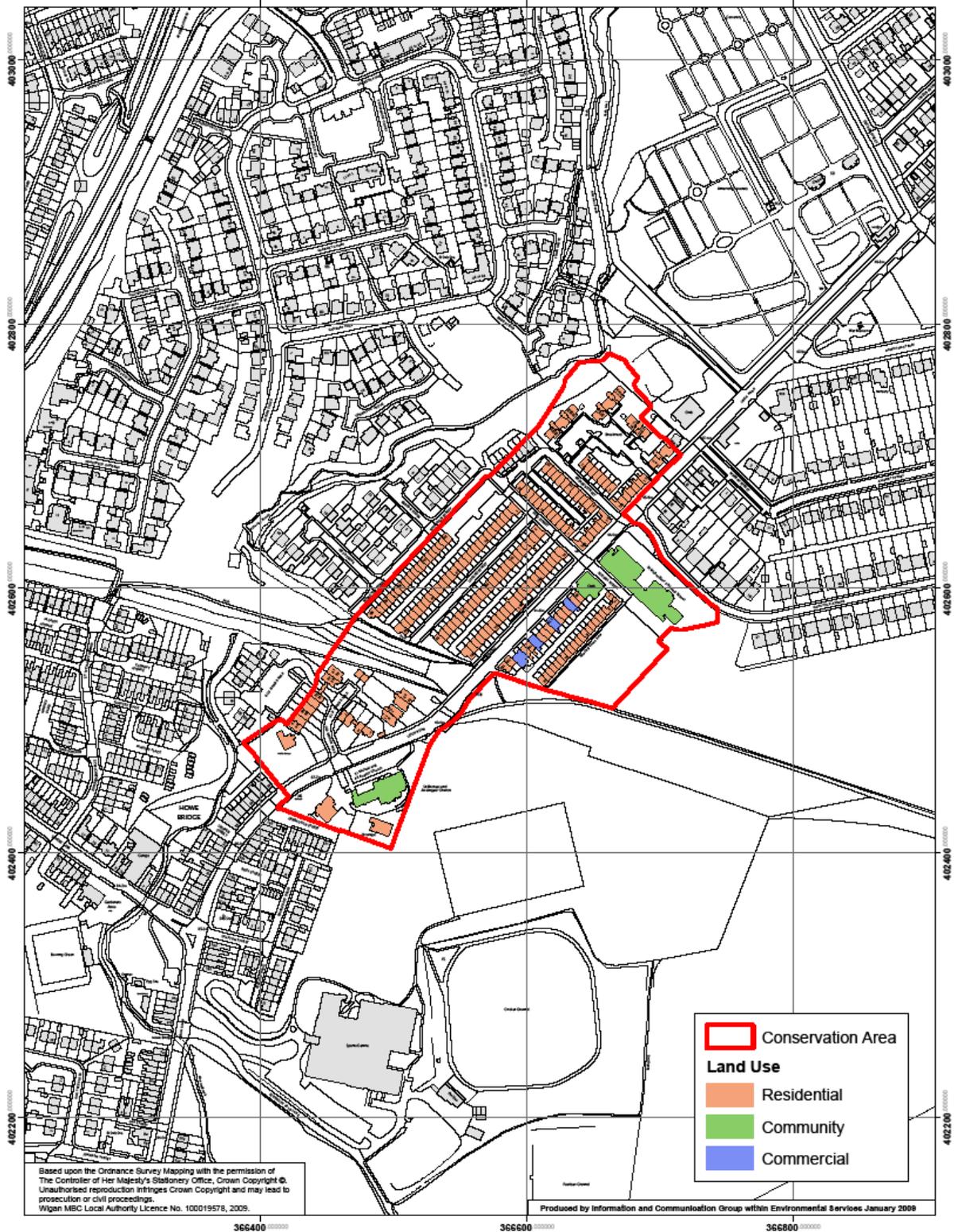
Photograph 29 (right):
Atherton Cenotaph

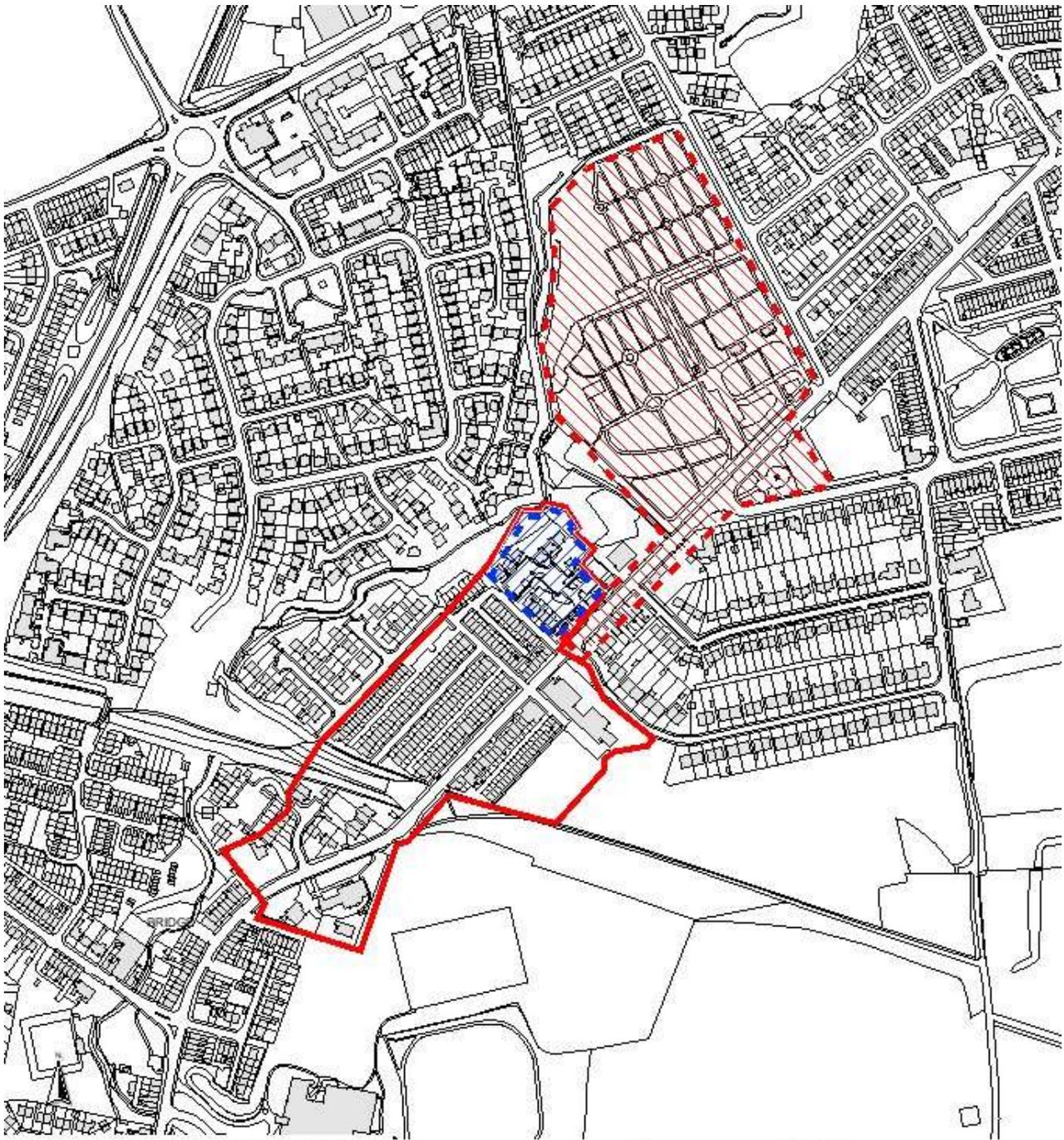
APPENDIX 1



Howe Bridge Conservation Area Land Use and Key Views

Scale 1:2,500





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0 125m

	Proposed Exclusion
	Proposed Extension

APPENDIX 2

Management Proposal

1. Introduction

This management proposal is intended to stand along side the Howe Bridge Conservation Area Appraisal. Whilst the appraisal assesses, and documents the elements that together make up the special character of a conservation area, the management proposal is intended to act as a reference for all 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 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It should also be read in conjunction with the Unitary Development Plan policy EV4 Conservation which provide guidance to help protect the character and appearance of conservation areas as well as promoting high quality design in any impacting new development. (See appendix B for expanded policy)

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

Conservation area designation is not intended to prevent change, but to influence change in order to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

The proposals outlined in this document are intended to:

- Preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- Manage the process of change without compromising the historic environment; *and*
- Consider enhancements to the area.

1.1 Priorities

(a) Buildings

- Vacant and underused buildings in need of repair and viable uses;
- Repairs and general maintenance to buildings;
- Reinstatement and maintenance of historic features and details where appropriate;
- Maintenance of decorative brickwork.

(b) Townscape

- Repair and maintenance of streetscape where necessary;
- Public realm improvements, upgrading and maintenance;
- Maintenance of open spaces and plant growth;

- Appropriate development of any future sites within the area.

1.2 Article 4(2) directions

Local planning authorities under Article 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order 1995, may remove or apply for removal of permitted development rights within a conservation area. This would result in previous alterations which did not require planning permission being brought under the control of planning authority and they would then require planning permission. Within the Howe Bridge Conservation Area Article 4 directions can only be applied to residential properties, as commercial and retail properties are already subject to limited permitted development rights. In order for an Article 4(2) direction to be implemented there has to be a group of exceptionally well preserved buildings.

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. The proactive marketing and early discussions with owners and planning authority will help ensure designs are of a high standard and in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area.

This should be a priority in order to enhance the appearance of the conservation area. It is important in order to encourage pride of place that the few retail units within the conservation area are retained as these in themselves are part of the historic character of the area.

2.1.2 Repair and maintenance of properties

The council will promote and encourage the active maintenance of properties within the conservation area. The use of the councils statutory powers should be used in order to help bring about improvements to buildings or structures which are in advanced disrepair.

This is essential to adding social and economic value to the area. Poorly maintained properties promote a run down image and do little to enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Well maintained buildings can attract investment in an area as well as create a sense of 'pride of place' within the local community.

2.1.3 Reinstatement/Maintenance of historic detailing

The council should consider some kind of grant scheme for property owners to encourage the restoration of historic features on buildings, in

particular those which are listed. Where features are in fact steps should be taken to ensure their survival and that the appropriate maintenance is carried out.

The conservation area has many unique and interesting architectural details on a large portion of the buildings present. These details have a significant impact on the conservation area and are part of what makes it an area of architectural and historic interest. These details should be actively preserved especially when the feature on significant buildings or locations within the conservation area.

2.1.4 Maintenance of Brickwork

The council will promote the use of appropriate materials and techniques for the repair of buildings and structures within the conservation area. The council will also oppose any future applications for the rendering of buildings in materials such as concrete or paint as this can cause damage to the historic brickwork.

The management of brickwork is critical in preserving historic detail. Brick is the most common construction material found in Howe Bridge and detailing such as corbelling, banding, dentils and other unique features are common place. These details all have an impact on the appearance of the conservation area and should be retained and appropriate maintenance carried out.

2.2 Townscape

2.2.1 Floorscape

The council will encourage the enhancement of the floorscape within the conservation area as a method of improving the appearance of the area. The recent footway condition survey carried out by the council should help to highlight priority areas in need of repair.

The existing paving surfaces in the conservation area are of poor quality and work must be undertaken to improve this. Poor quality surfacing does little for the character of the conservation area and often detracts for the quality of the streetscape in an area. The upgrading of street surfacing can also help to promote a sense of community pride in an area.

2.2.2 Public Realm Improvements

The council should seek the removal of any existing street furniture which is either unsightly or unnecessary within the conservation area.

A long term plan for the upgrading of existing street furniture should also be considered to ensure this feature does not begin to detract from the conservation area in the future. Street furniture can also be used as a method of introducing character into a historic area in a very non obtrusive way.

2.2.3 Maintenance of open space

The council will ensure that open space such as St Michael and All Angels church, are protected from infringing development or unsympathetic proposals. They will also promote the maintenance of these spaces in order to provide relief within the urban form of the settlement, especially where these spaces include plant growth.

Open space is not a defining characteristic of the conservation area and so it is important that where it exists, appropriate protection and maintenance is provided. Areas such as churchyards must be actively maintained as they have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and are often of intrinsic local value. Trees within certain areas of the conservation area are well established and these have an impact on the appearance of the area. It is important that these are maintained and preserved appropriately.

2.3 General Points

2.3.1 Demolition and Alterations

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 the 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.

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 guidance document PPG15 the council will not accept outline applications for proposals within conservation areas. Applications should be submitted in full; supported by plans, sections and elevations and depending on the size of the proposal analytical drawings showing the development in context. The council would also recommend that applicants seek consultation with experienced professionals as well as planning services; this will help to ensure that any proposal is of high quality design and that it meets 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

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 the properties, boundaries and thoroughfares;**
- **The particular mix of uses;**
- **The use of characteristic materials;**
- **The appropriate scaling and detailing of buildings;**
- **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 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 to 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 development within a conservation area will preserve or 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 the 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 size, proportions, degree of 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. Where works are undertaken to these and other special surfaces, such as paviers, temporary or permanent reinstatement should be in the original fabric;

(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 addressing 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 or 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 a conservation area. 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 buildings, or fascia area and their size, 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 fascia level may be justifiable in relation to traditional practice in the area.

EV4B Listed Buildings

The council will encourage the protection and where possible appropriate maintenance 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 proposals affecting 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 to ensure their preservation and which would not adversely affect their architectural character or setting;

(d) Secure proper preservation of occupied and unoccupied listed buildings to prevent their falling derelict where further deterioration would irreversibly affect their long term futures;

(e) Require the replacement of inappropriate features, materials or sections as part of any scheme involving change of use of listed buildings.

This policy details the main considerations that 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 Greenbelt 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 & Structures of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

The council will encourage the protection and enhancement of building 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 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 and 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 power 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 & 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, Golborne;**
- 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 and Mesnes Park, Wigan and Lilford Park and Firs Park, Leigh;**
- 11. Other historic parks and gardens which may from time to time be indentified.**

These areas are those where a landscape of particular historic interest remains and where special protection is needed to ensure their survival. Such designation would not necessarily preclude development but would certainly require that particular consideration be given to the amount and design of any development which may be allowed. Similarly, there may be some proposals which would involve only change of use of the land without any building development but which could be unacceptable by virtue of the 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. This supplementary planning guidance will be incorporated in the development plan at the next review. The relative weight given to the content of an adopted development plan and of supplementary planning guidance is set out in 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:

(a) 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;

(b) 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 are 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 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 proposals 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 areas. It is kept within the planning and development department and performs the function of supplementary planning guidance. The relative weight to be given to the content of an adopted development plan, supplementary planning guidance which has been prepared in the proper manner and to other material considerations is set out in PPG12. The advice and assistance of the Greater Manchester Archaeology 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 a certain size in the conservation area.
- In order to be able to consider the implications of development proposals, the council will normally require proposals within the conservation area to be submitted in the form of a full, and not outline, application.

In addition, works which elsewhere are classified as permitted development in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 may require planning consent. Developers are advised to check with the council at an early stage on the need for 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')

Ashlar: Dressed stonework where the blocks have squared sides, carefully squared corners and are laid in regular courses usually with very fine joints.

Cenotaph: The dictionary definition of this is - A monument erected in honour of a dead person whose remains lie elsewhere.

Corbelling: A projecting block which usually supports a parapet or beam.

Dentil Course: Rectangular projecting blocks, tightly spaced like teeth, usually below a cornice.

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* II in England.

Promenade: A stroll or walk, esp. in a public place, as for pleasure or display.

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

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Old Maps: www.old-maps.co.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 processes, 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 Howe Bridge, the local community and interested stakeholders including elected members were asked to contribute their thoughts, opinions and suggestions regarding the current conservation area and draft report. A strong community spirit exists in Howe Bridge and an active residents group has been in place for many years.

The Draft Howe Bridge Conservation Area Appraisal was subject to targeted consultations with all property occupiers and key stakeholders during a 6 week period from 26th August 2008 to 7th October 2008.

There was a second period of consultation to obtain comments on the completed Conservation Area Appraisal on 15th January 2009.

A third consultation was undertaken on 2nd April 2009 with suggested amendments to the conservation area boundary, reflecting public feeling and opinion via previous consultations.

All occupiers were notified of the proposal and provided with a copy of the draft document and a comments sheet. The draft appraisal was available on the Council's Web Site for downloading. In total, four responses were received and these, along with Wigan Council's response are noted below:

Name of Consultee	Summary of Comments	Response and action
Conway, M	Supportive of content of appraisal and boundary changes	Noted and welcomed
Wilson, M	More information required on 'Village Club'	Noted and reference included in 'special interest' section of appraisal
Jones, P	Signage to identify Howe Bridge Conservation Area	Noted and meeting to be arranged with local Township Group to discuss provision of signage.

<p>Dunn, A G C</p>	<p>Neglected appearance of the Bowling Green Car Park</p> <p>Some merits of the two areas of new development at Hindles Farm and Briarcroft Hall</p> <p>Unsympathetic development could happen again</p>	<p>The area is highlighted in the appraisal as having a detrimental impact. Litter picks are periodically organised and monies have been raised through the Township Group to carry out landscaping improvements on the over-grown grassed area.</p> <p>Removal from the Conservation Area of the new development on the site of Briarcroft Hall new as has little in common with the original mining village of Howe Bridge. Retention of Old Manor Court within the Conservation Area boundary.</p> <p>The adopted Conservation Area Appraisal is a useful tool to guide future development proposals within Howe Bridge, and to ensure that high quality, sympathetic design is achieved in the future.</p>
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