

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

What are Scheduled Ancient Monuments?

Wigan Borough contains 12 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, ranging from medieval cross bases to colliery machinery. Scheduled Ancient Monuments are sites of national historical or archaeological importance which are given legal protection by being placed on a list or 'schedule'. Most commonly, Scheduled Ancient Monuments are man-made earthworks, unoccupied structures or their remains, protected for their archaeological interest. Their importance is assessed through a number of different criteria including age, rarity, vulnerability, condition, and survival of documentation. Sites are recommended for scheduling by English Heritage and added to the list by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Local Authorities are also closely involved with their identification and management.

How to apply for Scheduled Monument Consent

As outlined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979, written consent must be obtained before any work on a scheduled monument is carried out. It is an offence to execute works which could destroy or damage a scheduled monument. Scheduled Monument Consent is given by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport based on recommendations given by English Heritage. Application forms should be sent to the relevant English Heritage regional office as English Heritage also takes responsibility for the administration and handling of applications. Further information and application forms for Scheduled Monument Consent can be found on the [English Heritage website](#).

Wigan's Scheduled Ancient Monuments

1. Winstanley moated site and five fish ponds

The moat on this site surrounds a rectangular island on three sides on which would have stood a medieval hall. The moat is water-filled and 15 metres wide in some places, although the southern arm is dry and partly in-filled. In Workshop Wood to the north-east of the moat are five fishponds, probably constructed at the same time as the moat. These are included in the schedule along with the moat and island. The manor is first mentioned in 1212 and the Winstanley family occupied the site until the late 16th century when a new hall was built 400 metres to the south. The site is of archaeological importance as it has survived well and evidence of the original buildings and organic material exists.



2. Morley's Hall moated site at Astley

The site includes a two storey brick farmhouse rebuilt in 1804 but incorporating 16th and 17th century elements, surrounded by its original medieval moat. A house has stood on the site since the early 14th century. The farmhouse is grade II* listed with the moat and the land under the house forming the Scheduled Ancient Monument. The moat is completely water-filled and is between 12 and 15 metres wide. It widens in the south-eastern corner to form a feature known as a 'Cheshire bulge', traditionally considered to be a watering place for cattle. A late medieval brick and sandstone bridge provides access to the island on which the house stands. The site is in good condition and is a good example of



a medieval moated site. There is also a large archaeological resource with surviving evidence of earlier buildings and organic material in the waterlogged moat.

3. New Hall moated site at Tyldesley

The hall and moat were constructed in 1692 by the Launder family; however older timbers found in the hall suggest that the house and moat could have medieval origins. The house has since undergone major alteration work and is excluded from the scheduling. The water-filled moat forms a complete circuit, measuring between 20 and 30 metres wide, and is in good condition. Access onto the island is gained by a brick causeway on the south-east side. It is likely that archaeological remains survive on the site.



4. Gidlow Hall moated site at Aspull

Gidlow Hall is on the site of a medieval house surrounded by a moat. The current house bears the date of 1574 and was largely rebuilt in 1840, but documentary evidence suggests the existence of an earlier house. The current house is grade II listed and excluded from the schedule, although the ground beneath is included. The moat is water-filled, surrounding the island on which the house stands. Access is gained on the south side by a late 16th century stone arched bridge with parapet constructed of large dressed stones tied together with iron clamps.



The site is of archaeological importance as the moat is complete and likely to contain organic remains and there are also significant remains of the original medieval structures on the island. An excavation of the moat at the rear of the house revealed a gravel and stone platform and an accumulation of household rubbish including numerous Victorian pot shards, coinciding with the possible dredging of the moat during the 1840 rebuilding of the house. A wide foundation wall and a well have also been discovered to the north-west of the house.

5. The Moat House moated site at Haigh

This site consists of the moat of a now lost medieval manor house. The moat is completely dry and has been incorporated into the garden of the 19th century Moat House. Although no documentary evidence survives, the house probably stands on the site of the medieval house on the island in the centre of the moat. The house is grade II listed but excluded from the schedule, although the ground beneath is included. The house was built



c.1840 by the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres for one of the land agents of his Haigh Estate.

The moat is square in plan and with each side being 50 metres long. The sides are stone lined and on the north side the remains of a stone bridge survive beneath an outbuilding, which was probably the original approach to the medieval house.

6. Haigh Sough mine drainage portal

Haigh Sough was constructed by Sir Roger Bradshaigh between 1653 and 1670, with subsequent improvements made in the 19th century. It was constructed as a drainage channel for the cannel coal mines on the Haigh Estate. The monument consists of a brick and stone built portal and a brick lined culvert which originally drained water into the Yellow Brook running through Bottling Wood. Although still located on the edge of the Yellow Brook, a pumping station built in recent years above the sough now pumps water away from the sough into a series of reed beds which remove the ochre from the water before draining it into the brook.



The entrance consists of two brick pillars supporting a large concrete slab over the brick archway of the drain itself. An iron grille has also been fitted across the opening. The entrance is in reasonable condition; some of the bricks on the right-hand side of the arch have slightly deteriorated but are stable. Vegetation has grown over the brick pillars and concrete slab.

Haigh Sough is an important historical monument because it is one of the oldest surviving examples of modern mine engineering with most of its original features intact. It provides valuable information about the ingenuity of early 17th century coal mine engineers and owners.

7. Mab's Cross on Standishgate at Wigan

Mab's Cross is the stump of a 13th century cross now located in the grounds of Mab's Cross school on Standishgate, but originally positioned on the opposite side of the road outside no.138 Standishgate. It is known as 'Mab's Cross' after Lady Mabel Bradshaigh who in 1323 had to walk barefoot from her home, Haigh Hall, to the cross as penance for bigamy. She re-married a 'Welsh knight' during her husband's exile when she presumed he was dead. A metal plaque affixed to the base of the cross provides an account of the legend. It is of historical importance as a tangible feature of the legend of Lady Mabel, as well as providing an example of the importance of religion and the idea of punishment in medieval England.

The monument is constructed from gritstone and consists of a stone plinth with the cross base and stump in the centre. The stones have previously been tied together with metal clamps, now removed.



It is in good condition with the stone showing no signs of damage.

8. Cross base on Green Lane at Standish

The cross base on Green Lane is one of a sequence of four medieval wayside crosses on the medieval route between Wigan and Chorley. The base is cut from a single block of local gritstone and has a socket hole in the top where the shaft would have stood. It survives in its original location and is in good condition. It is an important monument because it is one of a group of cross bases and serves as a reminder of the importance of religion to medieval travellers.



9. Cross Base at the junction of Green Lane, Standish Wood Lane and Beech Walk at Standish

The cross base is one of four wayside crosses on the medieval route between Wigan and Chorley. It is the least visible of all the cross bases as it stands very low to the ground and is almost completely overgrown with vegetation. It is constructed from a single block of gritstone with a socket hole cut into the centre. The cross base was moved from its original position on the west side of Green Lane to the west side of Beech Walk due to the widening of the road.



10. Cross base on Standish Wood Lane at Standish

This cross base is another of the medieval wayside crosses between Wigan and Chorley. It is set into the bank on the east side of Standish Wood Lane, still in its original position. It consists of a single block of gritstone with a socket hole where the shaft once stood and grooves cut into the top from the socket hole to the edge. It is in good condition but is overgrown with moss. As with the other cross bases, it is an important monument as it provides an insight into the social history of medieval England and the importance of religion.



11. Market Cross in Market Place at Standish

The Market Cross stands on its original site close to the Roman Road between Wigan and Preston. It is located to the west of St Wilfrid's church and consists of three stone steps on which stands the gritstone base of a 14th century cross with an early 19th century stone cross above. Stocks dating from the 18th century stand next to it. The cross base and the ground below the stocks are included in the scheduling with the 19th century cross being grade II listed. The stone is in good condition and is tied together with metal clamps, although some are missing. Patch repairs have been made to some of the stone steps.



12. Astley Green Colliery winding engine and headgear

Astley Green Colliery was sunk in 1908 to exploit the coal reserves in the south Lancashire Coalfield. Due to the depth of the coal seams and the unstable nature of the ground above, the mine engineers used a sinking method known as 'drop shaft' for the first time in Britain, as well as designing large headgears and winding engines required to lift the coal from the deep seams. The headgear for the no.1 shaft was constructed by Wrightson of Stockton on Tees and completed by 1912. The colliery was nationalised in 1947 and closed in 1970. The structure stands 30 metres high with two winding pulleys 6 metres in diameter. It was designed to lift 8 tons of coal every two minutes from a depth of 80 metres. The winding engine for the no.1 shaft was one of the largest steam



winding engines used in Britain and was housed in the engine house. Both the headgear and winding engine are part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument because of their importance in displaying the history and development of mining engineering, as well as the rarity of their survival. The headgear is the only one to survive in Lancashire. The winding house and winding tower are grade II listed.

The site is in good condition and is part of the Astley Colliery Museum which occupies the grade II listed pit-head winding house.