





## THREE

# Summary of the Special Qualities of Standish Conservation Area

This summary precedes the review of the historic development of the conservation area and the appraisal of its character and appearance which are set out respectively in sections 4 and 5.

Standish conservation area consists of two broadly distinctive parts:

-  The area of the original designation centred upon the Parish Church and ancient market place
-  The extension area centred upon High Street.

The special qualities of Standish Conservation Area can be summarised in the following terms:

## 3.1 The area of the 1976 designation based upon Market Place.

This area comprises the pre -19thC village centre focussed upon the Parish Church of St.Wilfrid and the adjacent ancient market place. St.Wilfrid's served an extensive Lancashire parish of ten townships and in pre-reformation times was the manorial Church for the nearby Standish Hall, the village being part of the manorial estate.

The village is located on a hilltop site and developed around the angled intersection

of ancient north-south and east-west routes. The layout of the historic village can be traced on plans to at least the mid 18thC, though its origins are much earlier. The old north-south route through Standish is a road of regional importance and is believed to follow closely the alignment of a Roman road. St.Wilfrid's Church is first mentioned in a document of 1205. Rebuilt in the 16th C in the perpendicular style, St.Wilfrid's is one of Lancashire's finest parish Churches and is Grade I Listed.

The market, which was never granted charters, has long gone but the former market place contains a number of relics of its historical role, notably the ancient cross, stocks and village well and a former 17thC inn which survives in residential use (no.39, Market Place).





St. Wilfrid's Parish Church steeple is a local landmark which dominates the village core, whilst its extensive graveyard contains numerous mature trees which form a wooded background to the old village centre. The Church is complemented by the Grade II listed Memorial Gate, 1927 by Austin and Paley.

The development pattern is characterised by the sweeping curves linking two back to back splayed junctions which form an organic street layout which is effectively enclosed by the frontage buildings on the north and south west sides and by the Church on the north east side. The frontage buildings are for the most part of 19thC origin with some modern infilling. Market Street, Pole Street, Church Street, and Cross Street converge upon Market Place and are visually strongly related to it. The curvilinear layout reveals unfolding views with progression through the area.



**Market Place, converging onto Market Street**

The unusual angular road alignments with almost back to back splayed junctions and the related built form give this part of the conservation area a distinctive physical character.

Market Street and Rectory Lane are busy roads but Market Place Church Street and Cross Street are less heavily trafficked.

The special qualities of this part of the conservation area therefore derive from a combination of unusual physical layout in the form of the junctions and the relationship of buildings to the spaces thus formed, especially the Church and its wooded graveyard, and the area's associations with the pre-industrial era of Standish village.

### 3.2 The area of the 1988 extension based upon High Street.

This area is different in character from the original designation in that its physical layout is that of major highway. High Street almost certainly originates from the formation of the Wigan-Preston Turnpike road c.1727. Turnpike roads were an early form of toll road controlled by gates or bars, the tolls being used to pay for the upkeep of the road. Turnpike Trusts were set up by private Acts of Parliament to construct and manage the roads. Turnpike roads were often built on entirely new alignments. The road through



Standish, the present A49, was one of the first turnpikes in Lancashire, a measure of the route's strategic importance to north-south communications.

The turnpike alignment formed a cross-roads with the east-west route, about 100m west of Market Place. The cross roads is offset so that frontages project into the line of sight particularly when viewed from Preston Road, School Lane and Market Street. The cross-roads is now the commercial focus of the village.



High Street is a wide, subtly curving carriageway fronted mainly by terraced houses of two storeys many of which have been adapted for business uses. The frontage properties date mainly from early to late 19th C.

The special character of High Street is derived from a combination of residential and commercial uses, in buildings of modest scale, sited on or close to the highway. The frontages are almost wholly built up providing a well defined linear space permitting long vistas. A number of gaps and alleys provide glimpses into back-land. Two groups of terraced cottages

are of particular interest, nos 37-47 which are stone built and of early 19th C period; nos. 24-34 are brick of mid late 19th C and feature decorative round arched doorways. This part of the conservation area contains a number of buildings of individual character such as the Police Station, Globe Inn, Wellington Place, the Methodist Church, no 52-54 High Street and nos. 18-20 Pole Street. These add variety and interest.



The conservation area extension is legibly defined by the projecting frontage of Pole Street to the north and by the Queen Victoria Jubilee Gardens located at the fork of High Street and Church Street at the southern approach to the village centre.



### 3.3 The conservation area as a whole

The centre of Standish today is a bustling local centre with a variety of retail and service businesses. Converted terraced dwellings have provided accommodation attractive to independent businesses which contribute to the vitality and diversity of the village centre in contrast with larger town centres which tend to be dominated by multiple stores. The buildings within the conservation area are for the most part of the Victorian era but despite some modern infilling, the pre-industrial era street pattern remains intact. Generally the stone cottages represent the early-mid 19thC stage of development.

Throughout the conservation area, the built form is unpretentious in style and domestic in scale. Ornamentation is sparse in contrast with the more flamboyant styles found for example in Wigan town centre. Materials include brick and stone but some buildings have been rendered or over painted. Roofs are mainly slate except where replaced by modern materials. A pleasing feature is the consistency of pitches, typically of 26-30 degrees. Round arches to doors and passages are a distinctive local feature.

The High Street /Preston Road part of the conservation area representing the later designation is of different

character from the Market place area in that it consists of an almost straight highway with parallel frontages.

The two parts of the conservation area however represent stages in the evolution of the village centre from

its original focus around the Parish Church and Market Place to the area around the cross roads. The two areas are thus



complementary in historic interest and character.

The built form within the conservation area and its enveloping suburbs, generally restricts views outwards to the countryside but from School Lane there is a fine view of the Church against the background of Winter Hill on the Pennine escarpment. Westwards on School Lane St.Marie's R.C. Church, outside the conservation area, can be seen against a wooded background.







**Plan 5** shows the basic development pattern of the conservation area. It is notable that the more recent buildings often occupy much larger footprints than those of earlier date. Significant trees, individually or in groups and green spaces are also indicated. (Reference to section 5.4).

**Plan 6** shows elements of the street scene which contribute to or detract from the special qualities of the area, as described in the character assessment, sections 5,6,7.

**Plan 7** illustrates an assessment of the quality of frontages from a conservation perspective. The majority of frontages are considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Of those commercial properties considered neutral or negative, a change of shopfront or fascia might represent a significant improvement. Dwellings which have been substantially 'modernised' resulting in the loss of original window proportions or architectural detail would be considered of negative conservation value.

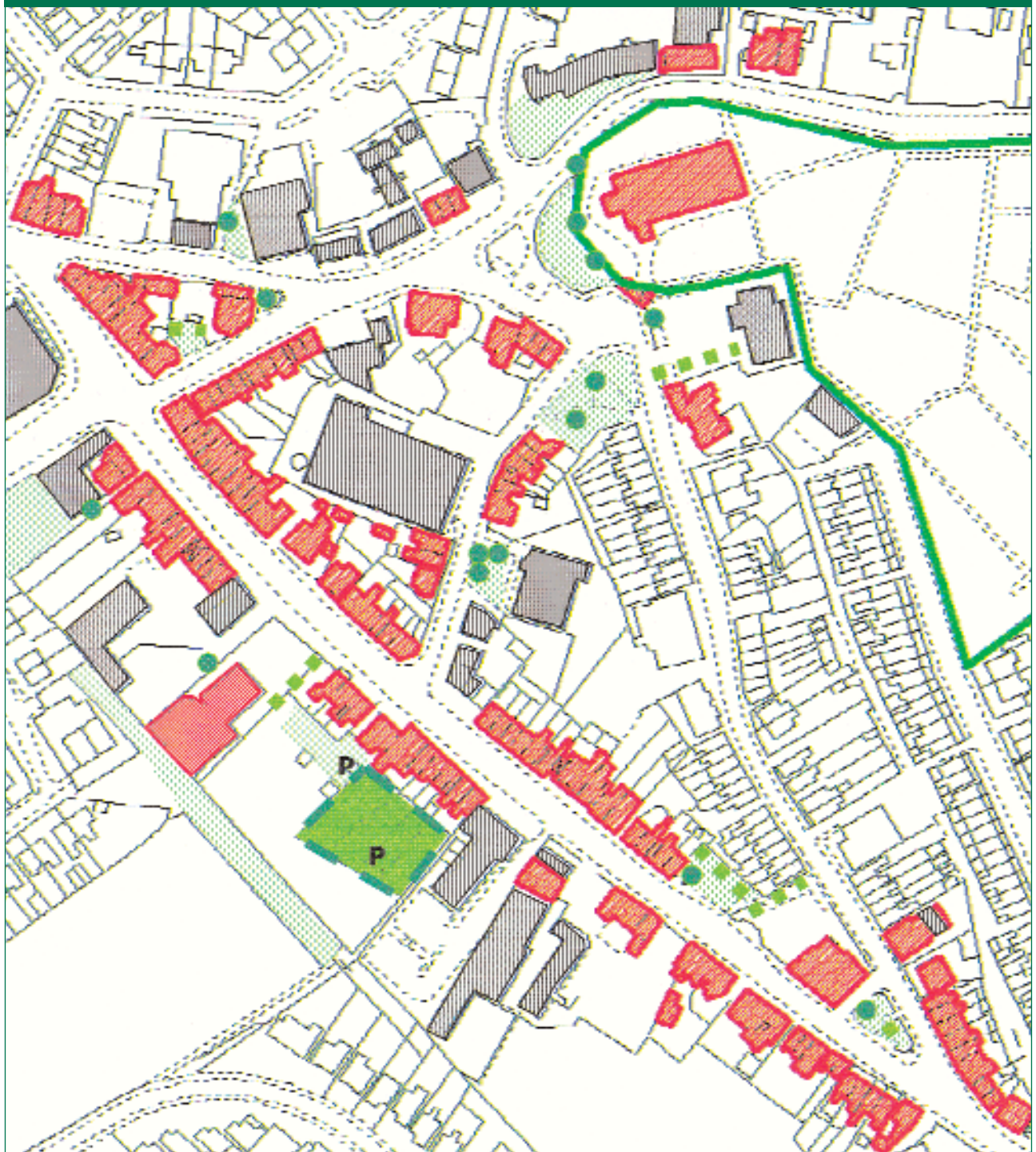
The character area appraisal, section 5, sets out a more detailed description and analysis of the buildings and the street scene within Standish Conservation Area.

## 3.4 Heritage Audit

Reference has been made to the Grade I Listed parish Church, (Wigan's only Grade I Listed building) and to the Memorial Gate, cross and stocks which are Grade II Listed. The cross is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Other List entries all Grade II, are the Jubilee Drinking fountain; no. 39 Market Place, south side, (former Eagle and Child Inn); St. Wilfrid's Church club, (former school), now private housing, Rectory Lane. A list of the various Heritage items is set out in Appendix 4.

# Plan 5 Standish Conservation Area Pattern of Building Development

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**Modern Development:**  
Generally post World War II



**Historic Development: Mainly**  
19th century and earlier



**Cemetery - Mature woodland**



**Overgrown Garden Area**



**Amenity Landscape**  
Area



**Private Space**



**Important Public Realm**  
Trees



**Important Public Realm**  
Hedges and Shrubby