

WIGAN EASTERN GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS  
REPORT

OCTOBER 2007

## **PREFACE**

This document can be provided in alternative formats upon request.

Please contact the **Environmental Services Department** on **01942 404243**.

## CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Introduction	8
1.2 Context	11
1.3 Relevant Planning Policy	15
1.4 Development Context	18
<b>2 ANALYSIS</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Introduction	22
2.2 Eastern Gateway Function and Uses	22
2.3 Eastern Gateway Built Form Characteristics	26
2.4 Eastern Gateway Movement and Access	34
2.5 SWOT Analysis	40
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>47</b>
Appendix 1	48
Appendix 2	50

## FIGURES AND TABLES

### FIGURES

1.1 Planning Guidance Area	13
1.2 Context Plan	14
2.1 Existing Land Use	25
2.2 Building Height	29
2.3 Urban Grain	30
2.4 Heritage and Conservation	31
2.5 Street Front Interaction	32
2.6 Views and Landmarks	33
2.7 Nodal Points	37
2.8 Linkages and Blockages	38
2.9 Access and Movement	39

### TABLES

1.1 Planning Guidance Structure	10
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Gateway is a strategic area of land situated just 400 metres to the east of Wigan town centre. The area contains a diversity of uses and built forms and is seen as a distinct quarter on the fringe of the town centre.

Whilst many areas of the town have seen dramatic and successful regeneration initiatives, the Eastern Gateway has been left largely neglected.

Stimulated by the approval of Phase III of the Grand Arcade development, which includes a mixed use 18 storey tower block, the area has been receiving increased speculative development interest over recent months. It is critical that the emerging opportunity sites are managed and delivered in a sustainable and integrated manner.

The number of low intensity land uses in the area and the amount of vacant and

derelict properties, means that an excellent opportunity for the regeneration of the area has arisen.

The Eastern Gateway also forms part of Wigan South Central, which is an initiative aimed at regenerating the wider area south of the town centre.

### ANALYSIS

For clarity and ease of use, the **Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework** has been divided into two separate publications. This document, the *Background and Analysis Report*, provides a detailed analysis of the existing make-up and characteristics of the Eastern Gateway.

From the analysis, the following strengths and weaknesses of the area have been identified.

#### Strengths of the Eastern Gateway

- 1 The area is in close proximity to the town centre, public transportation, the civic core and residential areas;

- 2 The River Douglas flows along the eastern boundary of the Eastern Gateway and has the potential to be an environmental asset for the town;
- 3 The area has a large amount of vacant, derelict and developable land; and
- 4 The Grand Arcade development, which has recently opened, has stimulated increased interest in the area and will act as an attractor for people and investment, which the Eastern Gateway is well placed to capitalise on.

#### Weaknesses of the Eastern Gateway

- 1 The Eastern Gateway is bisected by the A49, a six lane ring road with a high volume of traffic which results in access and permeability problems for pedestrians, disabled members of the community and cyclists;
- 2 The area contains some poor urban design, with a significant amount of unsightly derelict and vacant land, producing a highly fragmented area lacking in character;

- 3 The area has an acute lack of open space and outdoor recreational facilities; and
- 4 The River Douglas is in a very poor condition with limited access for the general public.

The points noted above illustrate that the area has many positive attributes. However, the negative characteristics which have been identified need to be addressed and are seen as key elements in the overall regeneration.

## **PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Based on the findings noted above, the council has proposed a series of measures to manage and guide future development in the area. These policies, along with an overall vision for the area, will ensure the Eastern Gateway is developed to be a truly integrated district of Wigan.

The second document of the Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework, the Planning Guidance, sets

out the proposed policies and is the document which should be consulted by developers, residents and anybody with an interest in the development of this area of the town.



# SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Wigan town centre is the major focus of retail, business and community activity for much of the borough. With regeneration initiatives already underway for Wigan Pier and the retail core, it is anticipated that other areas of the town will experience unprecedented development interest over the short to medium term.
- 1.1.2 With a concentration of vacant sites and low intensity uses such as car parking, it is considered the Eastern Gateway will be particularly vulnerable to speculative development, capitalising on recent investment in the town.
- 1.1.3 The Eastern Gateway is approximately 12.25 hectares in area and consists of land on either side of the A49 Riverway. The area includes Wigan

International Pool, the old Town Hall and the Darlington Street gas works. The area has suffered from a lack of major investment for many years and has in some respects been left behind with the recent improvements to the town centre and Wigan Pier.

- 1.1.4 The Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework is non statutory but is set within the policy framework of the Wigan Unitary Development Plan (UDP), providing further, more detailed guidance on relevant UDP policies. The guidance will also be incorporated within the Local Development Framework (LDF) in due course. The document will be used as a material consideration in determining applications for planning permission and other matters in the Eastern Gateway area.

## STRUCTURE

- 1.1.5 For clarity and ease of use, the Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework has been divided into two separate publications.

- The Background and Analysis Report; and
- The Planning Guidance.

The structure of the framework is graphically illustrated in **Table I.1.**

This document is the Background and Analysis Report, that contains the detailed analysis which has been carried out as part of the background research on the Eastern gateway.

The document contains the following sections:

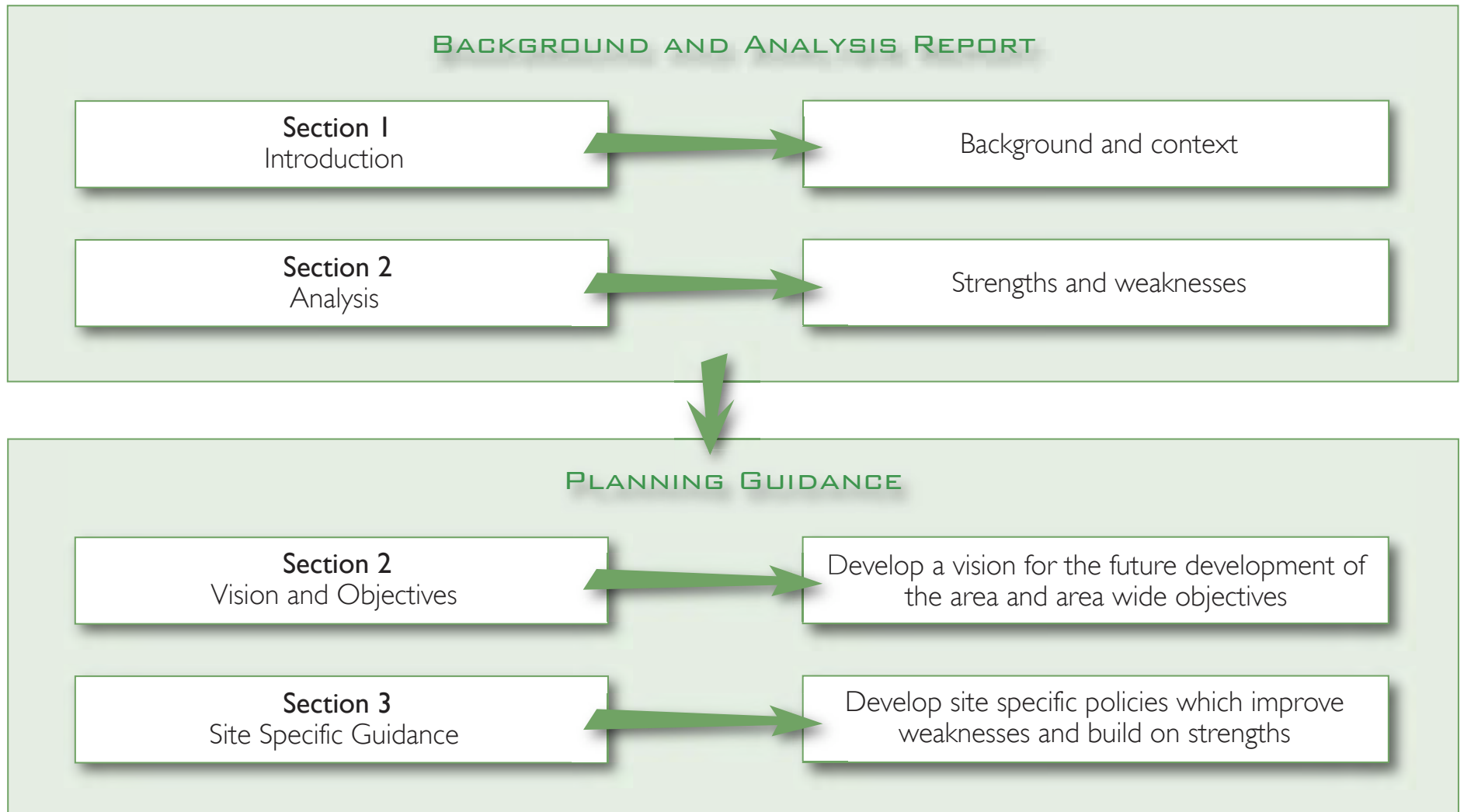
- Context
  - Geographical Context
  - Historical Context
  - Planning Policy Context
  - Development Context



- Analysis
  - Function and Uses
  - Built Form Characteristics
  - Movement and Access

On the base of the detailed analysis the Planning Guidance proposes on overall vision and policies to be implemented in the area.

Table 1.1 Wigan Eastern Gateway Development Framework - Structure



## 1.2 CONTEXT

### GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

- 1.2.1 The Eastern Gateway comprises 12.25 hectares of land approximately 400 metres to the south-east of the town centre. The area was chosen, in part, because of its unique character and its readily identifiable boundaries which mark transitions to other zones of the town where different design approaches may be required (**Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2**).
- 1.2.2 To the south, the boundary of the area is marked by the rail infrastructure of the West Coast mainline.
- 1.2.3 The eastern boundary marks the transition point into the main residential areas on the fringe of the town centre. Scholes Village is not included as part of this planning guidance.
- 1.2.4 To the west, the area extends to include the MFI showroom site and its associated car parking. Sites including the former Town Hall and Wigan International Pool are included and are seen as strategic areas within the plan.
- 1.2.5 To a large extent, the area has retained its historical layout with the majority of major pedestrian streets radiating to Market Place. Some of the town's key routes pass through the Eastern Gateway, which link the surrounds to the town centre.
- 1.2.6 The area is bisected by the A49, the ring road around the town. The intersection of the A49 with town centre feeder roads creates a number of complicated signalled junctions, particularly at Millgate. The ring road is three lanes in each direction, increasing further at the major junctions.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 1.2.7 Wigan has a history that can be traced back to at least Roman times. The early settlement grew up on rising ground above the River Douglas and was situated on the alignment of the Roman road between Preston and Warrington.
- 1.2.8 With the aid of historical maps, the form and development of the area can be chartered from 1847 until the present day. This analysis is considered useful in identifying the historical spatial development of the town and may act as a cue for further changes to the built form.
- (a) 1847 Ordinance Survey Map**
- 1.2.9 The 1847 map of the area illustrates that the primary uses were the Wigan Brewery, which was located in the general vicinity of the former Town Hall building and the Wigan Gas Works which

are still operating. As it does today, rail infrastructure dominated the south-western area of the town.

1.2.10 For the most part, the area was sparsely populated, with buildings primarily focused on the main routes such as Chapel Lane and Rodney Street. The land between Chapel Lane and the River Douglas was largely vacant except for two large dwellings.

**(b) 1907 Ordinance Survey Map**

1.2.11 Between 1847 and 1907 the area, and Wigan in general, underwent considerable growth. While Wigan Brewery and the Gas Works were still one of the major landholdings in the area, a large amount of the open land between Chapel Lane and the River Douglas and further east had been developed for terraced housing, presumably to accommodate the large influx of miners. King Street was also extended to meet Chapel Lane,

with the Borough Courts (former Town Hall) occupying the site on the corner of Rodney Street.

**(c) 1929 Ordinance Survey Map**

1.2.12 The 1929 map shows extensive changes to the urban fabric of the area, with the proceeding 20 years creating much of the street pattern which still exists today. By 1929 the Mining and Technical College (currently the Town Hall) had been constructed. To improve accessibility and reorganise



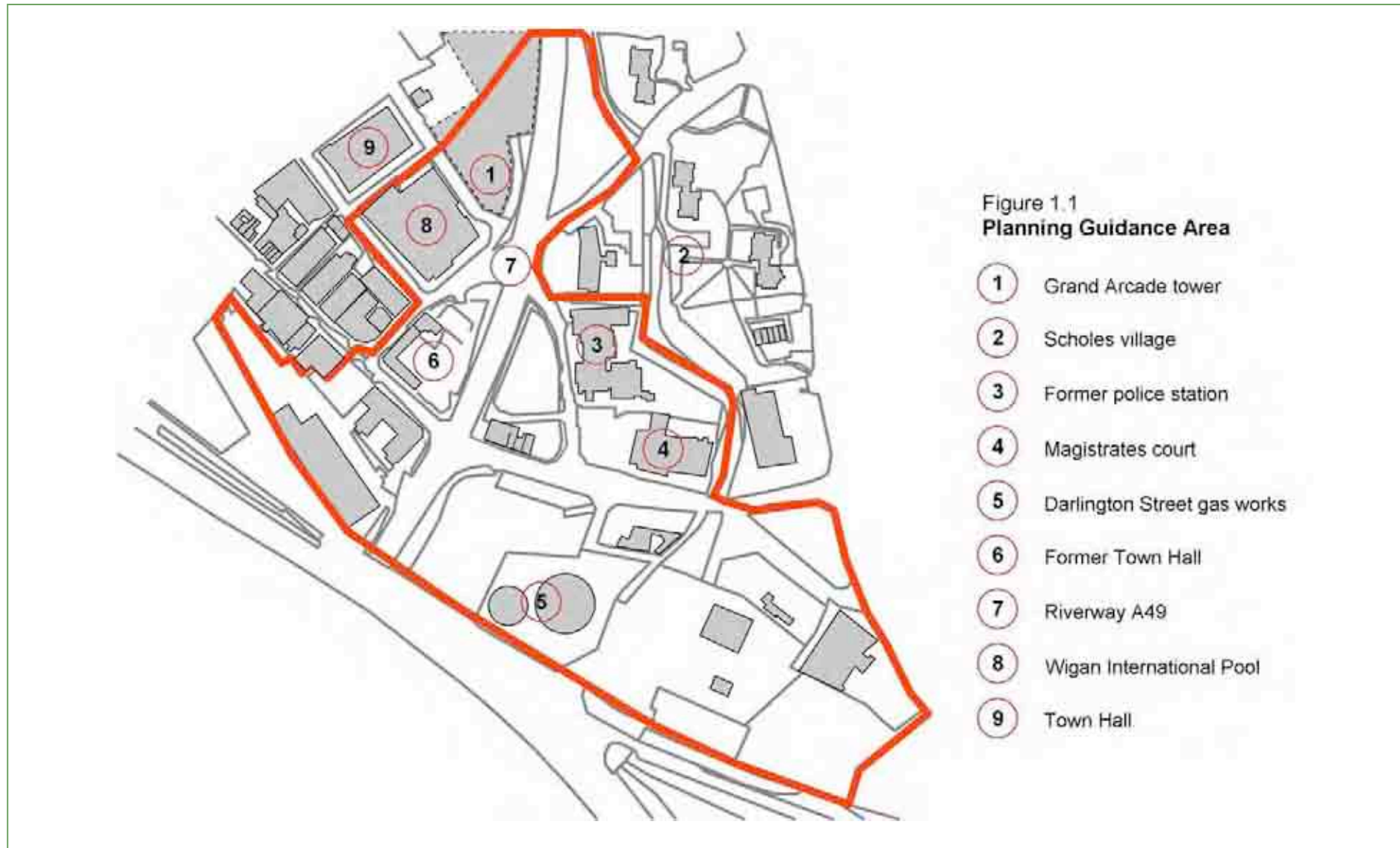
smaller plots, Library Street was created with links to Millgate through College Avenue and

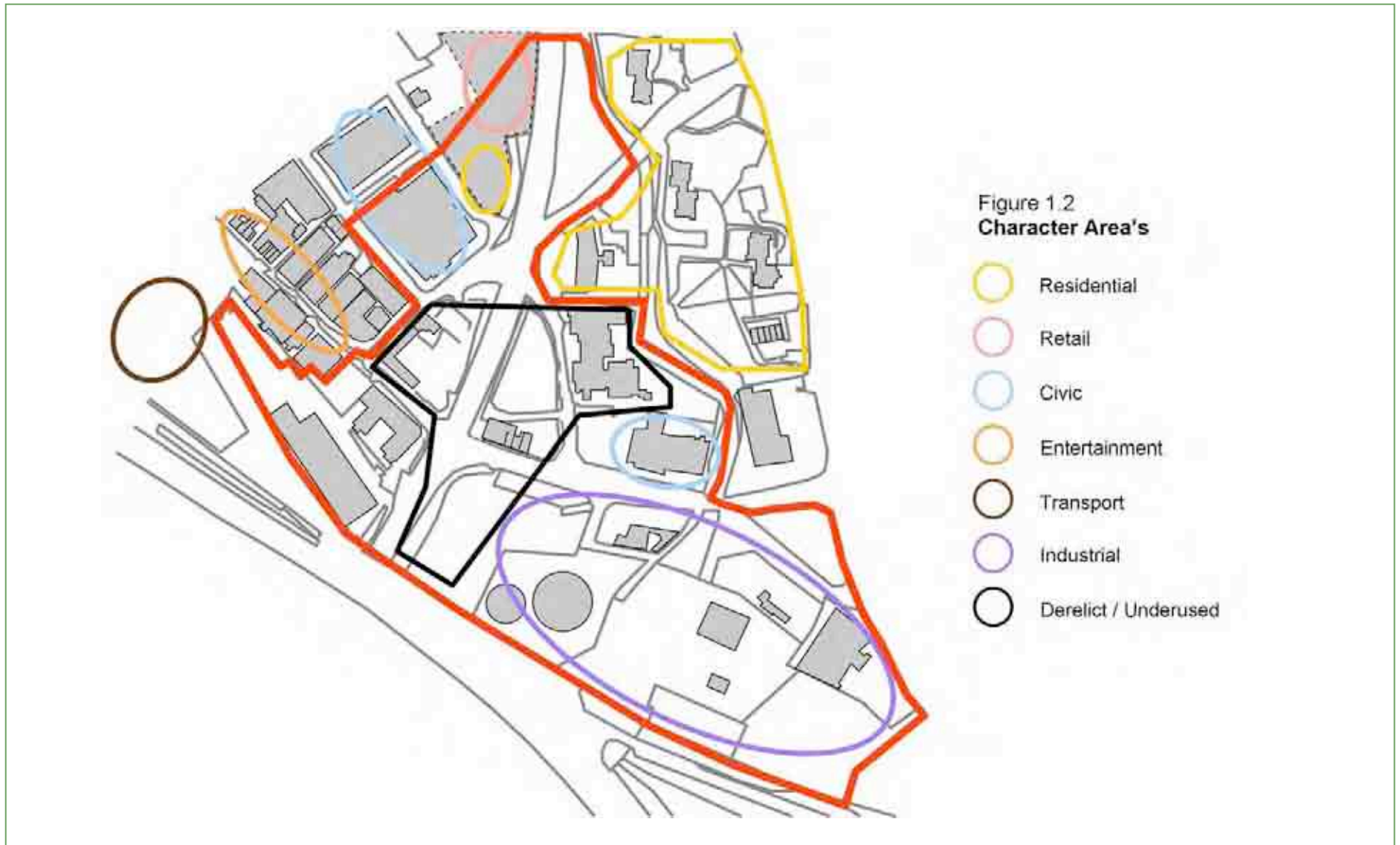
Hewlett Street.

1.2.13 Vacant land to the east was now developed with terraced housing, creating a fine urban grain and densely populated area. One other notable development was



the construction of the new central train station which was located at the top of what is now Riverway. Public baths and a picture theatre were also developed where the present day swimming pool is located.





## 1.3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### LOCAL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

1.3.1 A number of local strategies and plans are in place for other areas of Wigan town, some of which are in close proximity to the Eastern Gateway.

#### **(a) Wigan Town Centre Northern Crescent**

1.3.2 The Wigan Town Centre Northern Crescent Masterplan comprises the principle shopping district, the Galleries and Mesnes Park, on the opposite side of town to the Eastern Gateway.

1.3.3 The main proposals contained in the Masterplan include the rationalisation of the Galleries shopping centre to include new open squares, and a green corridor linking the town centre

from Mesnes Park.

#### **(b) Wigan Pier Quarter**

1.3.4 The Wigan Pier Quarter Planning and Regeneration Strategy aims to build upon recent investment in the Trencherfield Mill site and provides a detailed framework for the revitalisation of Eckersley Mills and surrounding areas.

1.3.5 Amongst the proposals is the creation of two major mixed use areas in the former mill buildings, as well as improving pedestrian links to the town centre. Preliminary plans include a hotel, restaurants, cafes and public houses, cultural and entertainment activities and a substantial housing element.

### LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL POLICIES

1.3.6 This section of the Background and Analysis Report will outline relevant national, regional and

local plans and policies which apply to the area. Future development in the Eastern Gateway will be required to comply with these documents as well as being mindful of the relevant policies contained in this framework.

#### **(a) Wigan Unitary Development Plan 2006-2016**

1.3.7 The Wigan Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted by Council in April 2006, provides a number of policies which are relevant to the 'Eastern Gateway'. These are identified in Appendix I.

#### **(b) The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West**

1.3.8 The overriding aim of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is to promote sustainable patterns of spatial development and physical change. The RSS's core development principles deal with:

- economy in the use of land

- and buildings;
- enhancing the quality of life;
- quality in new development; and
- promoting sustainable economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion.

1.3.9 Although the RSS gives priority to development and regeneration in the city centres of Manchester and Liverpool, in other parts of the region, including Wigan Borough, priority will be given to development which will enhance the overall quality of life where there are concentrations of social, economic and environmental problems.

**(c) Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development**

1.3.10 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery

of sustainable development through the planning system.

1.3.11 The key principles of PPS1 are noted as follows:

- Development plans should ensure that sustainable development is pursued in an integrated manner;
- Local planning authorities should ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change - through policies which reduce energy use, reduce emissions, promote the development of renewable energy resources, and take climate change impacts into account in the location and design of development.
- A spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable Development

- Planning policies should promote high quality inclusive design in the layout of new developments and individual buildings in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- Development plans should also contain clear, comprehensive and inclusive access policies - in terms of both location and external physical access.
- Community involvement is an essential element in delivering sustainable development and creating sustainable and safe communities.

**(d) By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Best Practice**

1.3.12 By Design is a guide which is aimed at helping to encourage better urban design and is a companion to the principles



contained in PPS1 as listed above.

1.3.13 It notes that good urban design should be centred around seven core objectives which are listed below. These objectives should be carefully considered by parties interested in pursuing development in the area.

1.3.14 The core objectives are:

- Character: To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture;
- Continuity and Enclosure: To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas;
- Quality of the Public Realm: To promote public spaces and

routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people;

- Ease of Movement: To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport;
- Legibility: To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around;
- Adaptability: To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions; and
- Diversity: To promote diversity and choice through a mix of

compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

## 1.4 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

1.4.1 At the present time Wigan is experiencing unprecedented development and investment interest. This is spread across a number of sectors including residential, commercial and retail. The Eastern Gateway in particular is seen as a potential prime growth area due to the amount of potential development site's and its close proximity to the town centre.

### MAJOR APPROVED PROPOSALS

#### (a) Grand Arcade - Millgate and Riverway

1.4.2 Phase III of the Grand Arcade development was approved by the council in 2005 and has yet to commence construction. Plans include a mixed use scheme with small scale retail and commercial

units on the ground floor and 153 residential apartments in the upper floors. The building will rise to 18 storeys and will be a major landmark building in Wigan town centre.

### MAJOR SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

1.4.3 The following large scale applications have been submitted to the council over recent months:

#### (a) Former Police Station - Harrogate Street

1.4.4 Applicants for the demolition and redevelopment of the former Police station submitted an outline proposal for a mixed use scheme in 2006. Plans include the provision of 253 residential units in two separate buildings and small scale retail and commercial units on the ground floor.

#### (b) Former Town Hall - Rodney Street

1.4.5 An outline application for the redevelopment of the former Town Hall site was received by the council in 2007. The proposal is for the restoration of the heritage listed properties and the construction of two new buildings. The mixed use development will include office and commercial units on the ground and first floors and 164 residential units. One of the major elements of the scheme is the proposal for a 12 storey tower on the northern section of the site at the junction of Riverway and Rodney Street.

### MAJOR SCHEMES IN PLANNING

#### (a) Joint Service Centre

1.4.6 The Wigan Joint Service Centre is a new concept in Local Government where all public services will be combined into

one area or 'one-stop shop'. The Joint Services Centre will be developed in the civic core and will include the sites of the International Swimming Pool, the Town Hall, the Municipal Buildings and the Children's Library.

- 1.4.7 As part of the scheme it is expected that the International Swimming Pool will be demolished to make way for a healthy living zone, including a remodelled pool. Details of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme are not yet finalised.
- 1.4.8 The scheme is due for completion in 2010 and will transform the civic core of the town centre providing regeneration opportunities for the wider area and public domain.



# SECTION 2 ANALYSIS

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 The following section of the Background and Analysis Report provides a study of the area as it currently exists. It is hoped that through a thorough investigation of the Eastern Gateway and its surrounding area, its key characteristics in terms of structure, function, built form and general townscape qualities can be successfully identified.
- 2.1.2 The analysis will be used to identify those areas, assets and features of the area which should be retained and reinforced and equally will identify those areas of the environment that require improvement.
- 2.1.3 This section of the report will include an analysis of the Eastern Gateway under the following headings:
- Land use;

- Building height;
- Building grain;
- Heritage and conservation;
- Street front interaction;
- Landmarks and views;
- Nodal points and gateways;
- Pedestrian linkages and blockages; and
- Access and movement.

## 2.2 FUNCTION & USES

### LAND USE

#### (a) Retail and Commercial

- 2.2.1 The area comprises of a number of typical edge of town centre land uses (**Figure 2.1**). The major retail areas of Wigan are located on the periphery of the area and include The Grand Arcade, The Galleries and Marketgate Shopping Centre. Small scale retail and commercial units will extend into the area when Phase III of

the Modus development is constructed (See 1.4.2).

- 2.2.2 The area also contains secondary shopping areas with a mixture of retail and commercial enterprises. Small pockets of commercial activity are noted along Darlington Street and also the MFI outlet on Chapel Lane. There is also a supermarket on the boundary of the area to the south-east on Warrington Lane.

#### (b) Entertainment

- 2.2.3 The main entertainment district of Wigan town centre is located along King Street to the south west. Currently the entertainment area does not physically extend into the Eastern Gateway. King Street mainly contains nightclubs, public houses and takeaways aimed at the younger market.

**(c) Civic/Government**

2.2.4 A civic quarter is also evident to the west of the area and includes the new Town Hall, Municipal Buildings, Wigan library, Wigan Council Civic Centre, the heritage centre and Wigan International Pool. This civic core will be strengthened further with the proposed redevelopment of the area as the Joint Service Centre. Wigan Magistrates Court is situated along Darlington Road, adjacent to the former police station.

**(d) Residential**

2.2.5 Scholes Village residential area is located just outside the area. At present, the Eastern Gateway does not contain a significant amount of residential accommodation, even though it is in a very accessible location.

**(e) Industry and Car Parking**

2.2.6 The south eastern corner of the area is dominated by the gas yard which is currently fully operational. The large compound includes two gas holders and other associated infrastructure.

2.2.7 The two main car parks on the eastern side of the town centre, Chapel Lane and Harrogate Street, are located along the A49. Both are owned by Wigan Council and are in active use. King Street car park provides limited additional town centre capacity.

2.2.8 The old Town Hall and former police station are amongst the largest potential development sites in the Eastern Gateway. The former Town Hall is a listed building but has been vacant for a number of years. The land behind the building has been cleared and is also derelict. Since moving to Robin Park Road, the former

police station on Harrogate Street is also now vacant.

**OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

2.2.9 With Mesnes Park located on the western side of town, the area lacks a sizeable open space area. The space opposite the Grand Arcade car park in the north of the Eastern Gateway is heavily planted with trees and is inaccessible to the public. It does contain a small grassed area which is mainly used for flower displays and does not contain rest areas **(Figure 2.1)**.

2.2.10 There is also an area of unutilised open space towards the rear of the former police station on the eastern bank of the River Douglas.

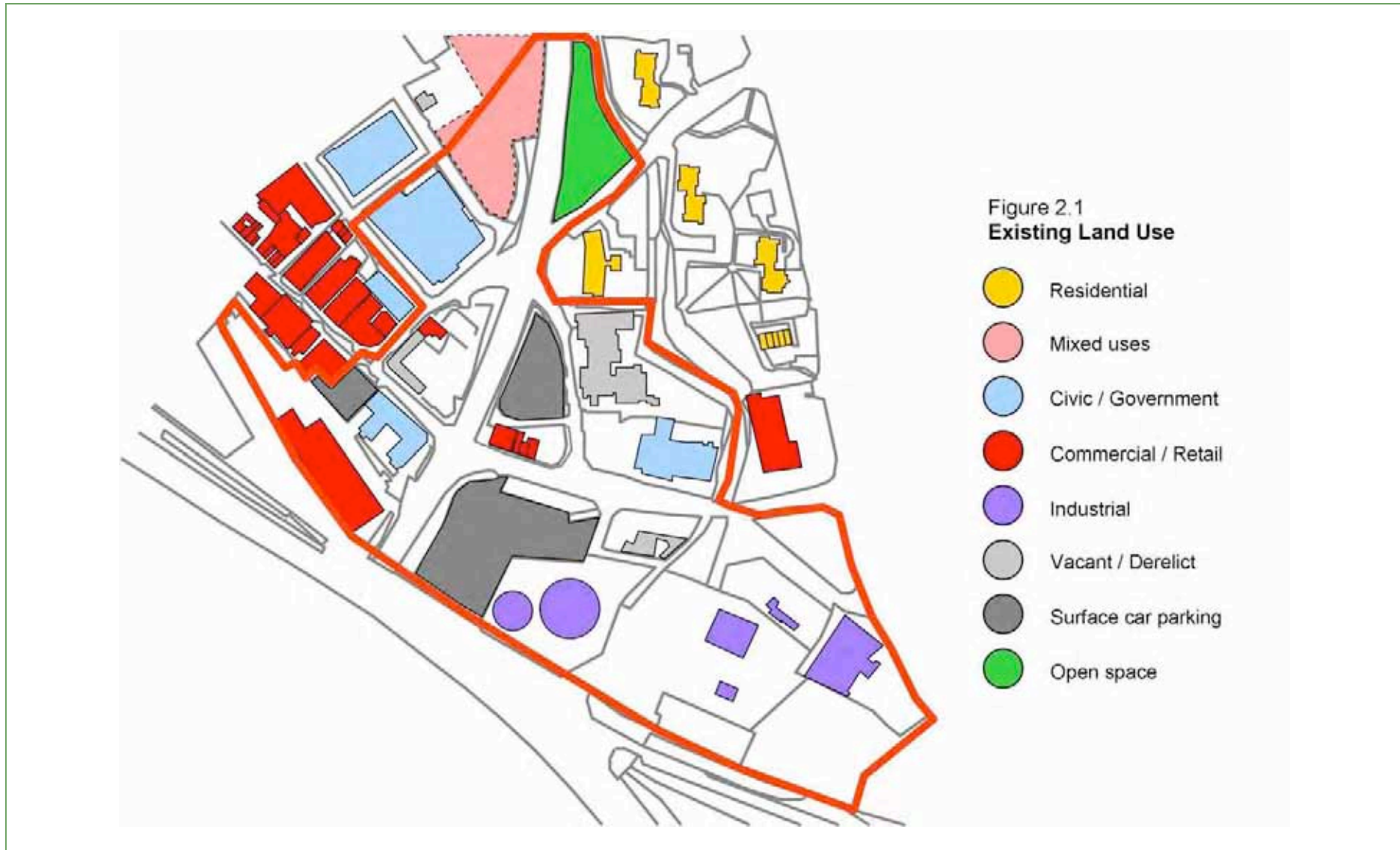
2.2.11 The only area of useable open space in the immediate area is the park and gardens associated with All Saints church. While this is maintained in a good condition, it

is not in close proximity to the Eastern Gateway and its size does not allow for active recreation.

2.2.12 The River Douglas flows along the eastern boundary of the area and is a much under-used asset. The bank and river bed are in a poor condition and access is not possible for walking or cycling, even though some sections would be capable of trafficable pathways. The orientation of neighbouring buildings does little to enhance the appeal of the river and further detracts from the surroundings. Further sections of the river are culverted through the area







## **2.3 BUILT FORM CHARACTERISTICS**

### **BUILDING HEIGHT**

2.3.1 The Eastern Gateway exhibit heights of generally two to three storeys (Figure 2.2). The landmark building of the new Town Hall extends to four storeys and as such is visible from many vantage points around the area. To the east there is a clearly discernable increase in building height with modern structures such as Douglas House, Woodcock House and Brook House all rising in excess of ten storeys. Brocol House, the Magistrates Court and the old police station are between four and five storeys. The skyline of the Eastern Gateway is also broken by the two gas holders on the National Grid site to the north of the railway line.

2.3.2 Phase III of the Grand Arcade development which has been approved at a maximum height of 18 storeys, will if constructed dramatically alter the skyline of Wigan town centre.

### **BUILDING GRAIN**

2.3.3 As with building height there is a clearly discernable change in the built form of the area from east to west. The eastern section of the area comprises Wigan town centre's historic early streets and lanes with their characteristic fine building grains. The majority of these buildings are contained within the town centre conservation area. More modern developments, which have been added around the core, tend to be of a larger footprint including the MFI showroom, Brocol House, the Magistrates Court and former Police station (**Figure 2.3**).

### **HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION**

2.3.4 The Eastern Gateway is on the boundary of the historic core of the town centre. Although much of the development in the east of the area could be classified as modern, a number of listed buildings are evident.

2.3.5 The former Town Hall building is located in the western section of the Eastern Gateway and is considered to be one of the landmark buildings in the area. However, the site is currently derelict and in a state of disrepair. The curtilage includes a sizeable parcel of vacant land which further detracts from the setting of the listed building.

2.3.6 The building immediately adjacent the former Town Hall is also heritage listed and is identified as Westwood Estate Office, 5 Rodney Street. The building has

undergone an adaptive reuse and now houses a restaurant (**Figure 2.4**).

- 2.3.7 The town centre conservation area extends into the area to include the two aforementioned properties. This conservation area includes some of the most significant buildings in the borough including the Town Hall, the Central Library and the Municipal Buildings (**Figure 2.4**).

### **STREET FRONT INTERACTION**

- 2.3.8 Wigan town centre generally exhibits buildings which provide an acceptable level of interaction with street level in the form of active shop fronts and offices providing interest and stimulation for passing vehicular and pedestrian traffic. However, as one moves from the centre this interaction significantly decreases (**Figure 2.5**).

- 2.3.9 The area exhibits three different types of interaction. King Street, whilst predominantly inactive during the day, becomes one of the liveliest and active areas of the town by night. This is associated with its high concentration of bars, night clubs and fast food restaurants.

- 2.3.10 Generally, the remainder of the area has poor interaction with the public domain which is due to the prevalence of vacant and derelict sites and the use and functions of buildings. Wigan International Pool for example has three inactive street frontages due primarily to its layout and orientation.

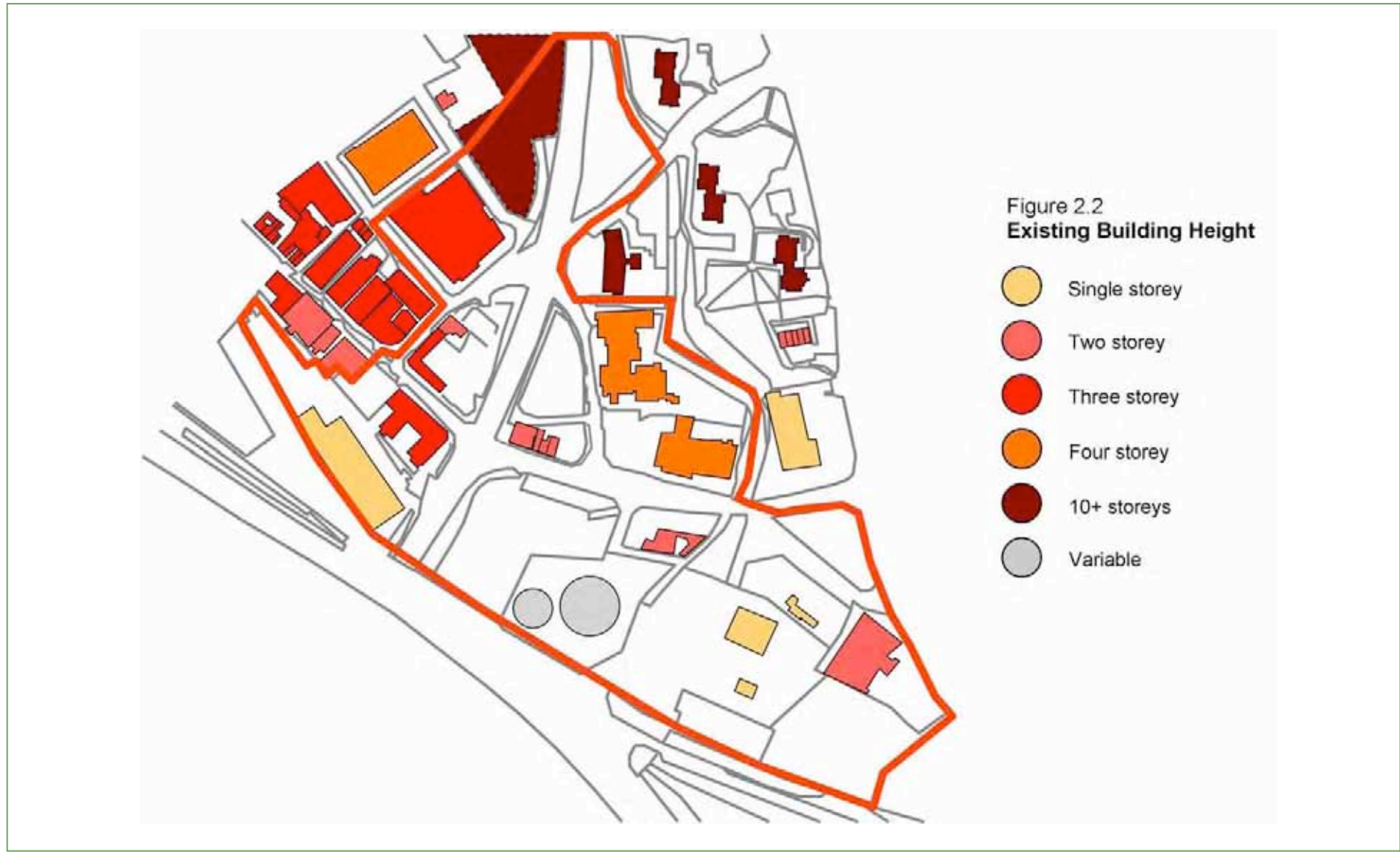
### **LANDMARKS AND VIEWS**

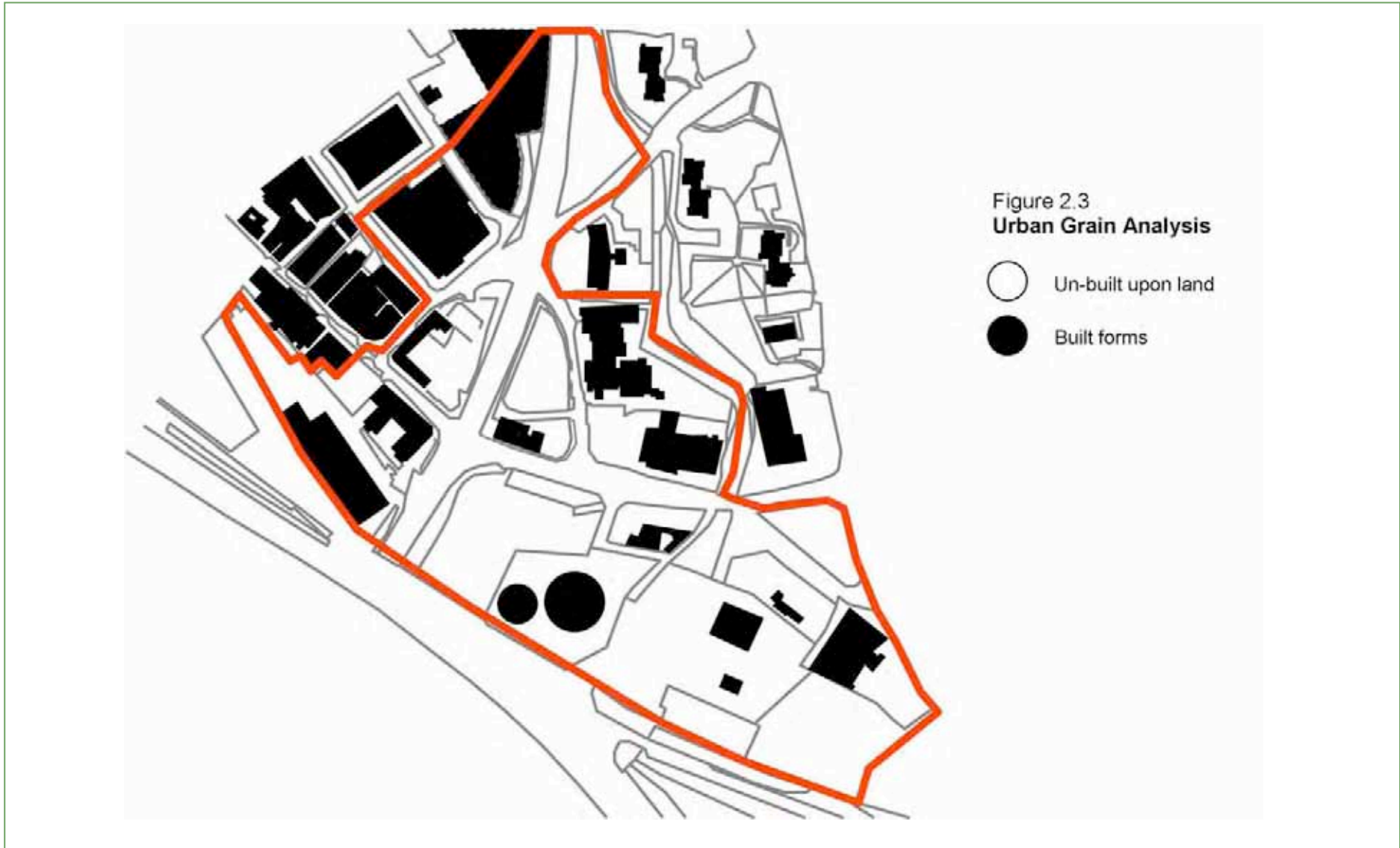
- 2.3.11 There are currently a number of landmark buildings in the Eastern Gateway which help to shape its character. In a historical sense, the Town Hall is an important landmark building within the area,

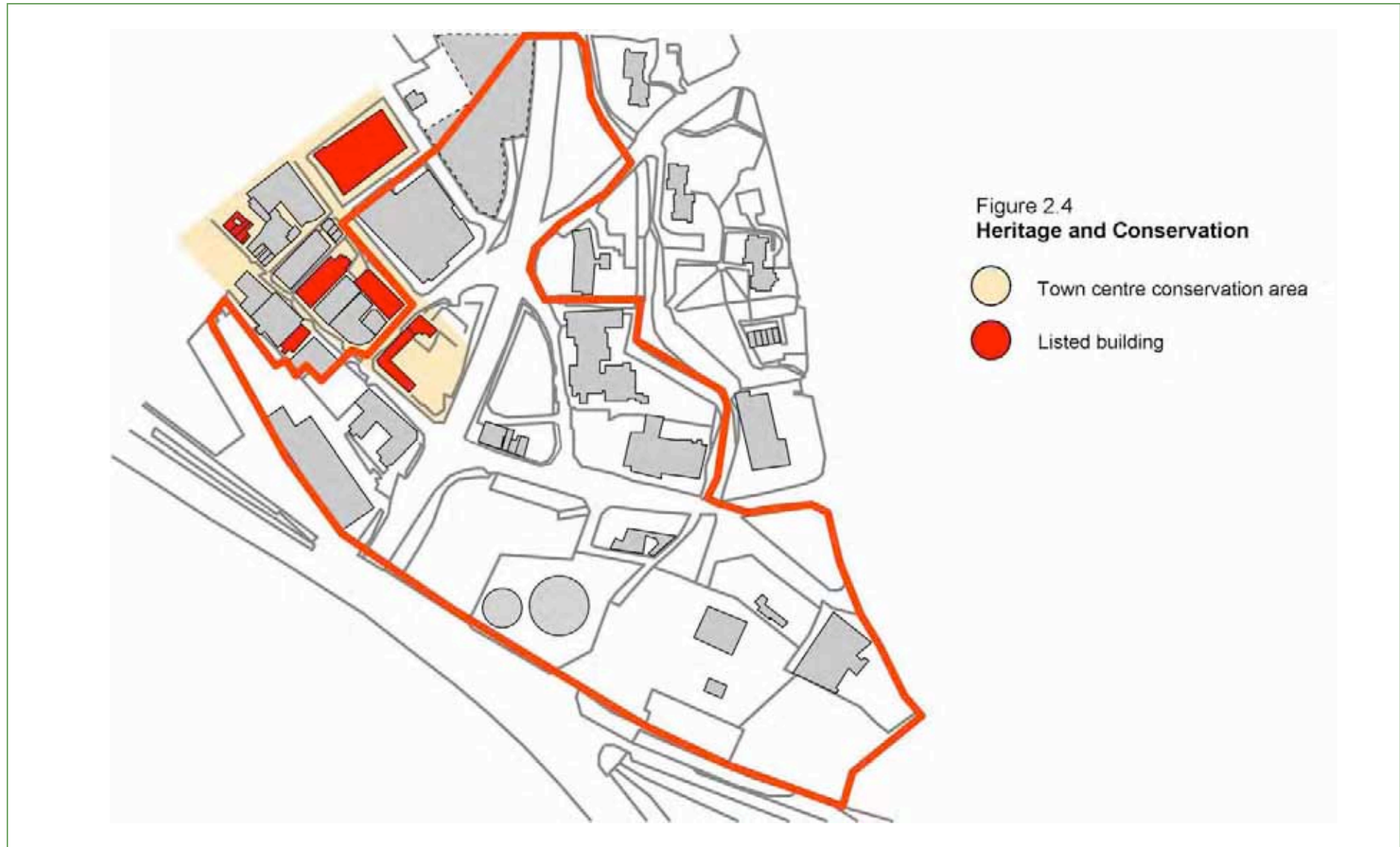
as is the History Shop on Library Street.

- 2.3.12 In addition, the former Town Hall building addressed to Rodney Street is seen as another important landmark. However, its status is currently compromised by its poor condition.
- 2.3.13 Although not yet in construction, the 18 storey residential tower block approved for the corner of Millgate and Riverway will form a major element in the area and will dramatically alter the skyline of Wigan town centre. It is anticipated that the development will act as a catalyst for future investment and will be a major part in the overall regeneration of the Eastern Gateway.
- 2.3.14 The principle views within and into the area are in both directions along King Street, Library Street and Millgate (**Figure 2.6**). On the opposite

side, views of the Town Hall, History Shop and the town centre skyline can be obtained from Harrogate Street.

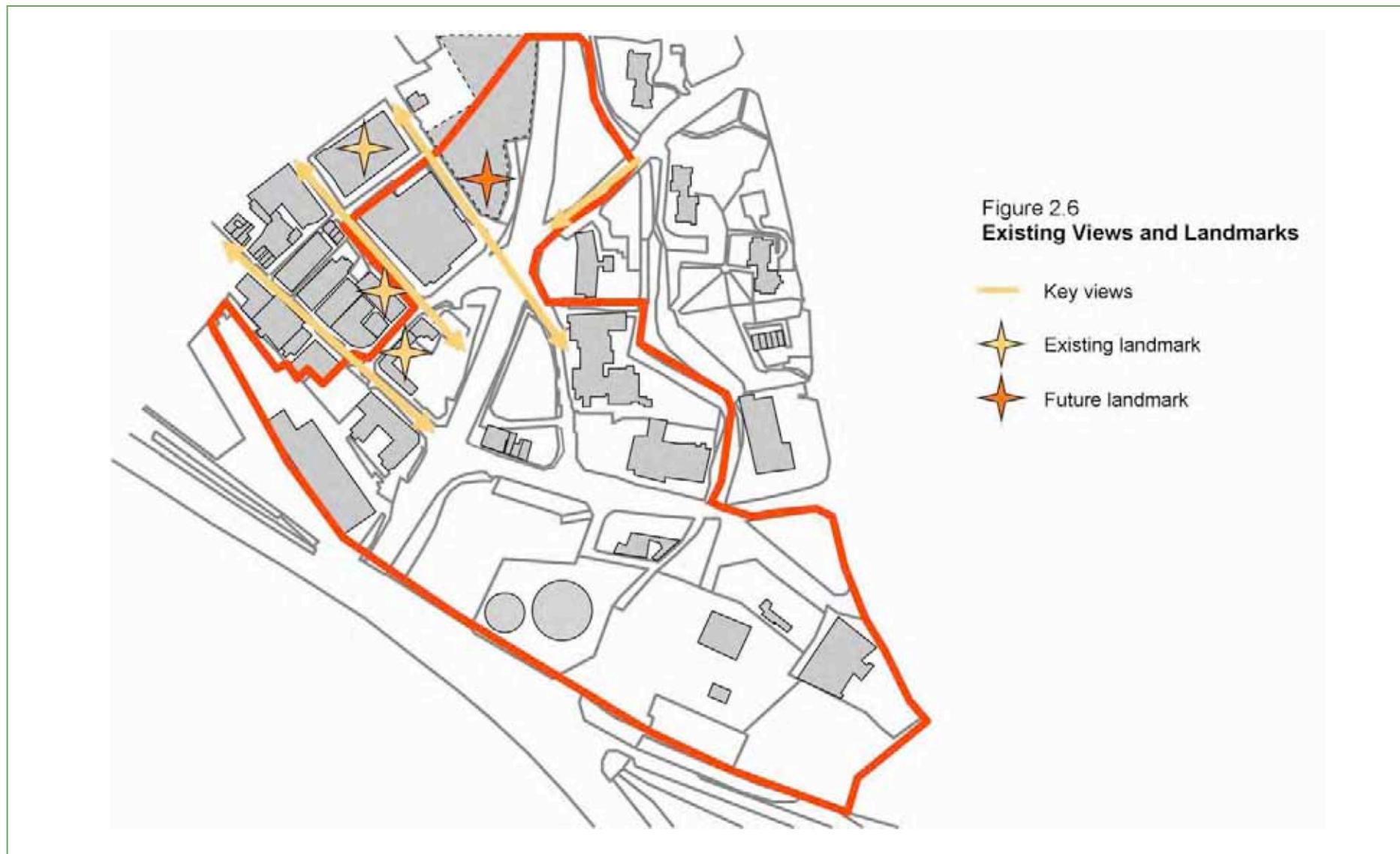












## 2.4 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

### NODAL POINTS AND GATEWAYS

- 2.4.1 Wigan town centre has an established network of activity nodes which generally reflect the main pedestrian routes, road intersections and retailing core. While the Eastern Gateway itself does not have any clearly identifiable activity nodal points, it is in close proximity to Market Place, the primary point of activity in the town. A further node of activity has developed around the Market Place entrance to the Grand Arcade shopping centre (**Figure 2.7**).
- 2.4.2 There are a number of accessibility nodes in and around the Eastern Gateway. The primary examples in terms of vehicular traffic appear to be the junction at the corner of Millgate and Riverway and also the junction of Darlington Street and Riverway.
- 2.4.3 In terms of pedestrian accessibility, the primary pedestrian nodal points are at Market Place and to a lesser extent around Wigan North Western train station.
- 2.4.4 Two gateway points have been identified in the area. The primary gateway centres around the junction of Riverway and Millgate which will be defined by the proposed multi-storey residential tower as part of the Modus Grand Arcade development. However, as it currently exists, the gateway is poorly organised and is dominated by vehicular traffic. Vacant sites on the access ways into the gateway, including the former Town Hall site and the Harrogate Street car park add further to the poor definition.
- 2.4.5 A secondary gateway is evident on the junction of Darlington Street and Riverway. However, the poor urban design of the area and proliferation of vacant sites all combine to reduce its impact and function.
- ### PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES AND BLOCKAGES
- 2.4.6 The main pedestrian routes in the area are associated with the primary retail and commercial streets and their links with residential areas to the east. The principle access streets for pedestrians are King Street, Library Street and Millgate (**Figure 2.8**).
- 2.4.7 In the western half of the area, the main pedestrian routes are Darlington Street providing access to the town centre from the south-east and Millgate which serves the residents of the neighbouring residential communities. However, these routes are not the most direct

- possible and force residents to walk along and across busy main roads.
- 2.4.8 Major blockages to pedestrian accessibility exist in the area, which act in isolating the residential areas in the east from the town centre in the west. The A49 ring road runs through the centre of the Eastern Gateway and presents a major impediment to accessibility and the development of safe and effective linkages. The junctions created along the A49 are controlled by a number of signals with controlled crossings, producing a complicated and intimidating environment for pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists. The crossings are poorly located away from the principal desire lines.
- 2.4.9 The West Coast Mainline which runs along the southern boundary of the area is a further major blockage to pedestrian links from

north to south.

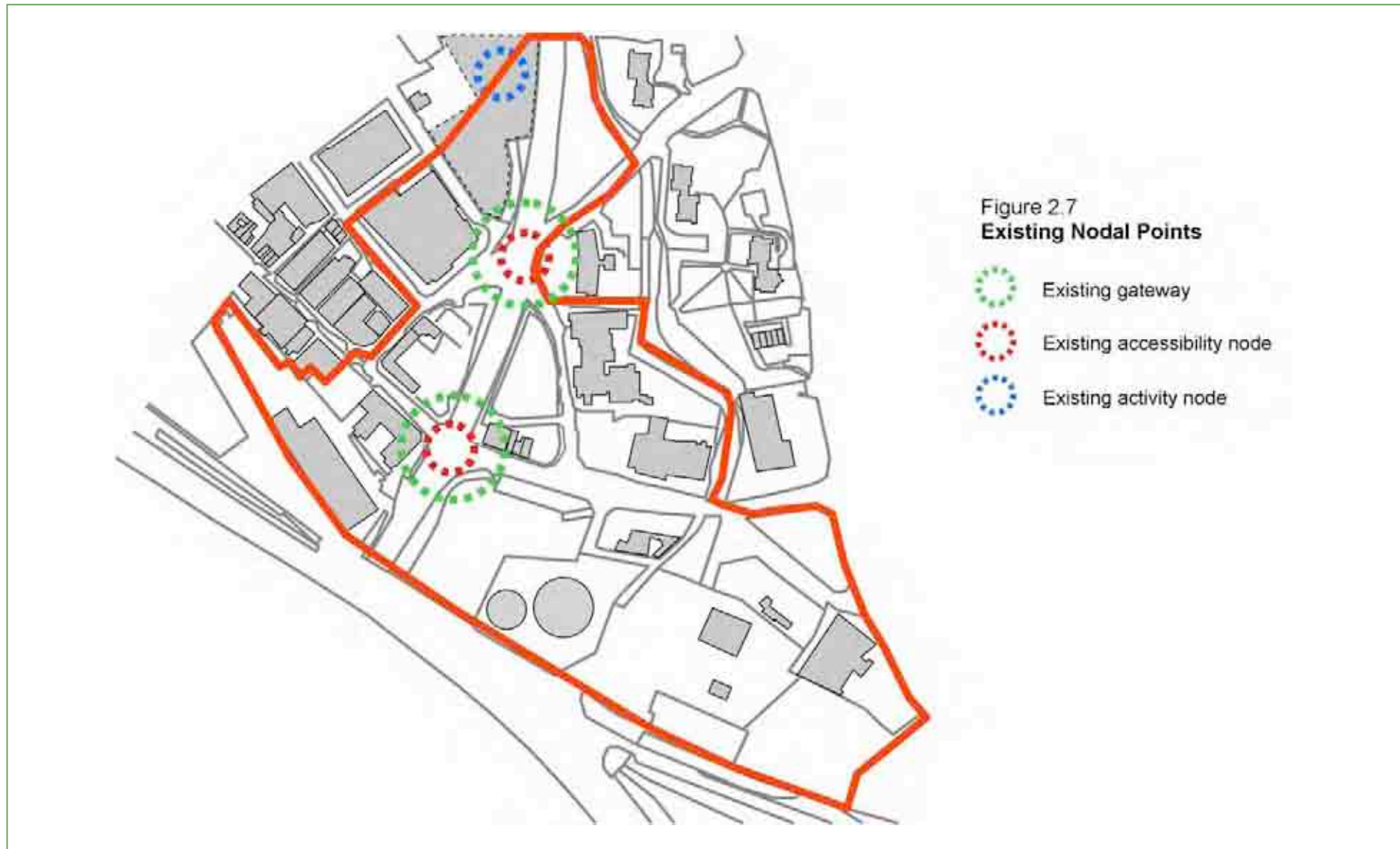
- 2.4.10 The River Douglas also acts as an impediment to pedestrian movement, albeit on a smaller scale. Although the river has a narrow watercourse and is crossed by a number of bridges, direct crossing from the Scholes residential area is not possible. As already noted, this forces residents to walk a greater distance on busy roads when travelling to the town centre.

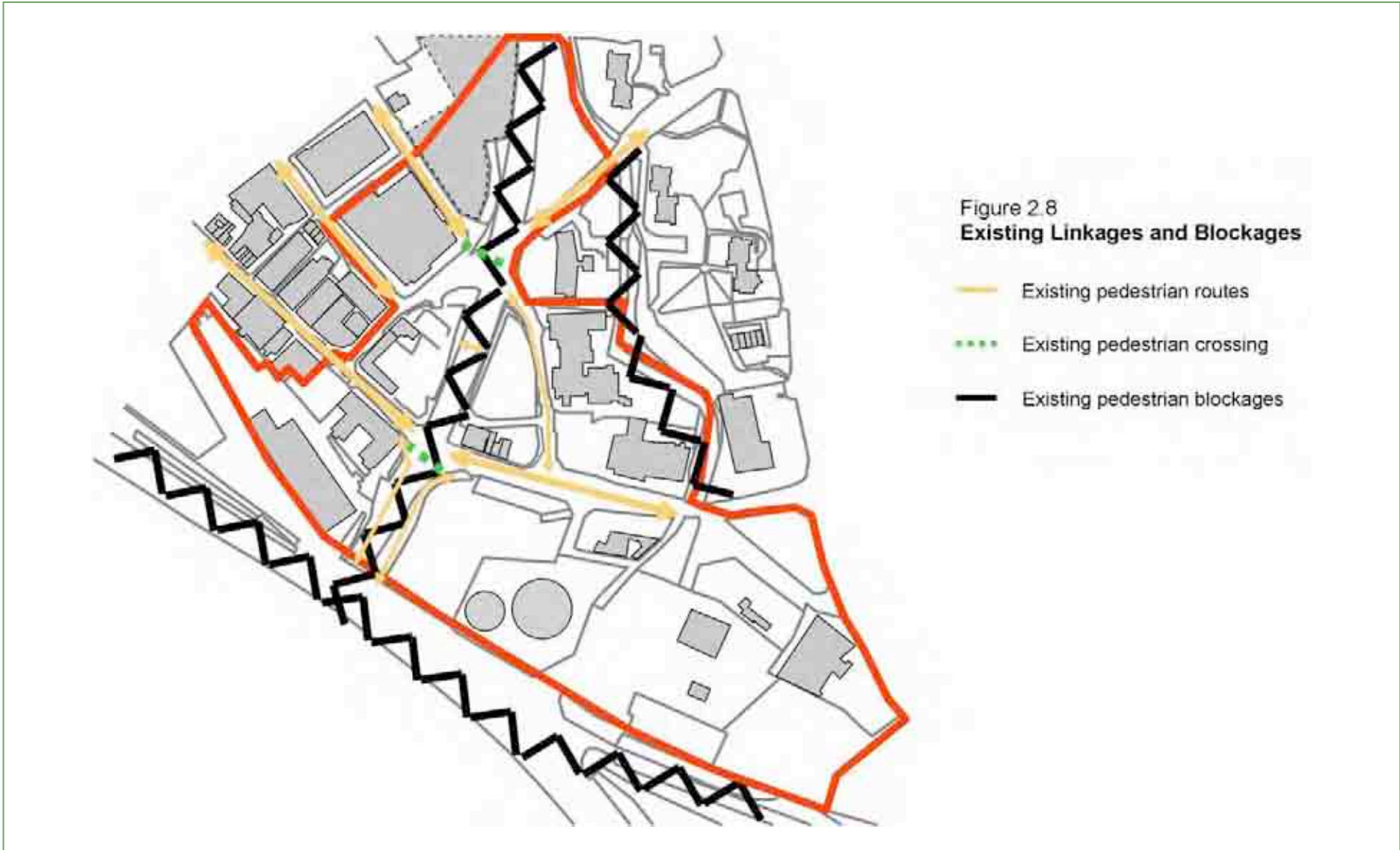
#### **ACCESS AND MOVEMENT**

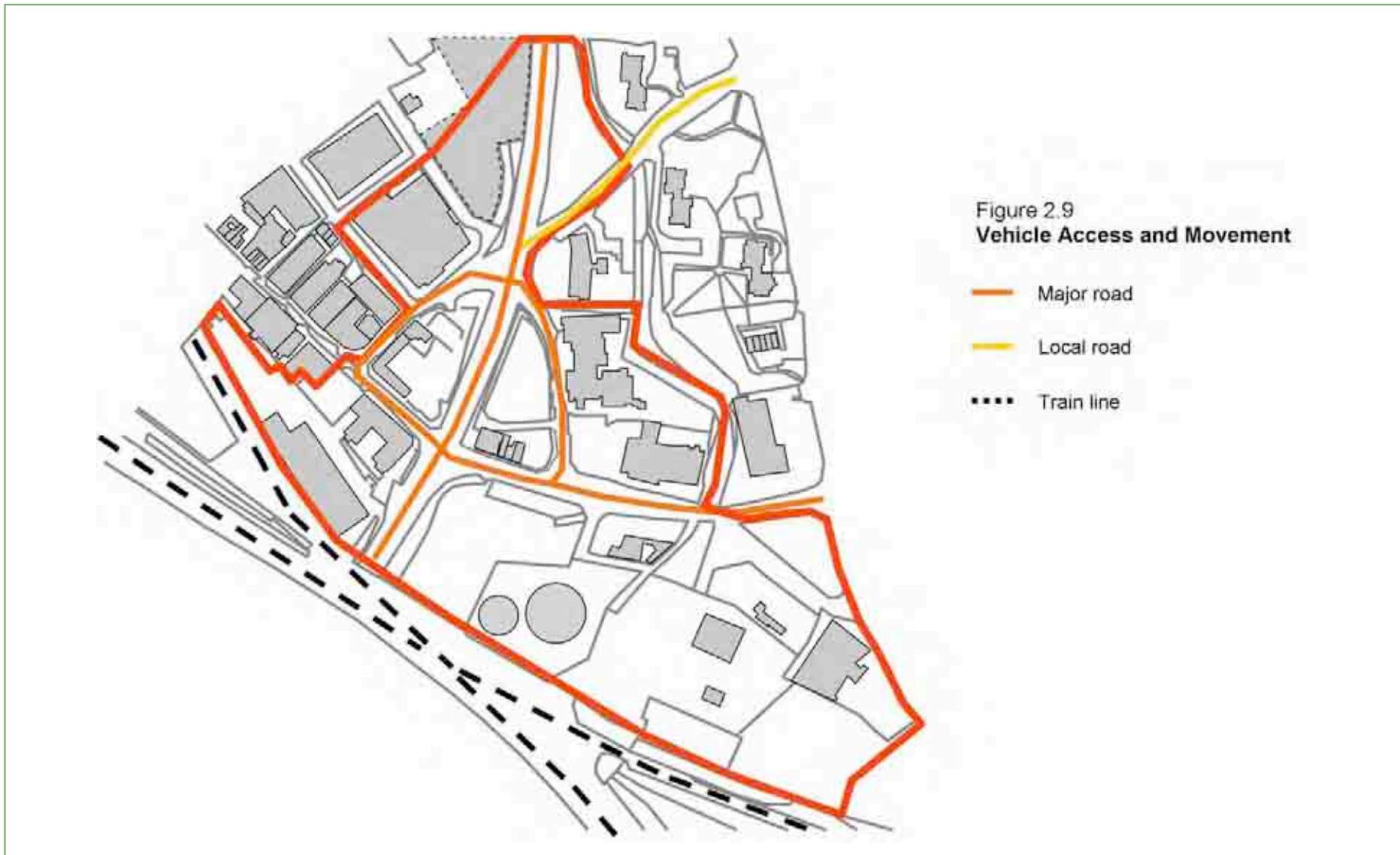
- 2.4.11 The main vehicular access route into the area is the A49, which travels from north to south. The A49 is the ring road around Wigan town centre, and as it runs through the Eastern Gateway is six lanes in width. From this road, access is provided to the town centre streets and car parks and the major residential areas to the east (**Figure 2.9**).

- 2.4.12 Secondary roads into the area include the A577 which travels along Darlington Street and the B5238 which enters the Eastern Gateway from Millgate.
- 2.4.13 There are no dedicated cycle tracks in the Eastern Gateway which forces cyclists to share the carriageways with vehicular traffic. Similarly, there is a lack of dedicated bicycle parking spaces.
- 2.4.14 In terms of public transport, Wigan town centre benefits from a large bus station and two railway stations which are within easy walking distance of the principal shopping and employment areas. The Eastern Gateway is approximately 500 metres from the bus station at Hallgate. Further to this, Darlington Street, Chapel Lane, King Street and Library Street are all served by a variety of local bus services.

- 2.4.15 One of the other primary points of entry into the area is Wigan North Western railway station and to a lesser degree Wallgate Station. Wigan North Western and Wigan Wallgate railway stations are both approximately 330 metres from the Eastern Gateway and provide a range of local and regional services.
- 2.4.16 Car parking in the area is generally provided in a number of surface car parks. Both Chapel Lane and Harrogate Street are owned by Wigan Council and provide 320 and 107 vehicle spaces respectively. The King Street car park is privately owned and operated and provides a limited number of spaces. Additionally, the car park associated with the Grand Arcade development has increased supply even further. The supply of parking in the area appears to be poorly accessible and highly fragmented.







## 2.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

- 2.5.1 The analysis of the area enables the identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) which the Eastern Gateway exhibits.

### **Strengths of the Eastern Gateway**

- 1 The area is in close proximity to the town centre, public transportation, the civic core and residential areas;
- 2 The River Douglas flows along the eastern boundary of the Eastern Gateway and has potential to be an environmental asset for the town;
- 3 The area has a large amount of vacant, derelict and developable land; and
- 4 The Grand Arcade development, which has recently opened, has stimulated

increased interest in the area and will act as an attractor for people and investment, which the Eastern Gateway is well placed to capitalise on.

### **Weaknesses of the Eastern Gateway**

- 1 The Eastern Gateway is bisected by the A49, a six lane ring road with a high volume of traffic which results in access and permeability problems for pedestrians, disabled members of the community and cyclists;
- 2 The area contains some poor urban design, with a significant amount of unsightly derelict and vacant land, producing a highly fragmented area lacking in character;
- 3 The area has an acute lack of open space and outdoor recreational facilities; and
- 4 The River Douglas is in a very poor condition with limited

access for the general public.

### **Opportunities for the Eastern Gateway**

- 1 The area has the potential to be developed into a distinct district on the fringe of the town centre;
- 2 The reorganisation and remodelling of the A49 to promote a road hierarchy centred around the pedestrian and cyclist with shared spaces and environmental improvements;
- 3 Development of an area where commercial, small scale retail, civic, entertainment and residential uses would exist within a 400 metre walk, promoting sustainable living;
- 4 Environmental improvements including opening up the River Douglas and the improvement of public open space and recreational areas; and



- 5 Possibility of widening the economic base of Wigan and the creation of new jobs for the town.

### **Threats for the Eastern Gateway**

- 1 Possible lack of funding;
- 2 Retaining the A49 in its current structure would severely limit the development potential of the area and would compromise the policies recommended in this framework; and
- 3 Development sites which have been identified not being released onto the market.



# GLOSSARY

**This Glossary is intended to provide general guidance, not authoritative definitions of terms which are sometimes controversial or used with different meanings in different contexts.**

**Accessibility:** The ability of people to move round an area and to reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

**Active street fronts:** Active street fronts should promote an environment which is interesting and varied and which stimulate passing pedestrians and motorists. This can be achieved through active frontages, which include shop fronts, access ways, windows and display areas. Blank walls are strongly discouraged.

**Activity node:** Concentration of activity at a particular point.

**Adaptability:** The capacity of a building or space to be changed so as to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

**Building line:** The line formed by the frontages of buildings along a street. The building line can be shown on a plan or section.

**Bulk:** The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.

**Context:** The setting of a site or area, including factors such as traffic, activities and land uses as well as landscape and built form.

**Desire line:** An imaginary line linking facilities or places which people would find it convenient to travel between easily.

**Energy efficiency:** The extent to which the use of energy is reduced through the way in which buildings are constructed and arranged on site.

**Landmark:** A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

**Landscape:** The character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, colours and elements and the way these components combine. Landscape character can be expressed through landscape appraisal, and maps or plans. In towns 'townscape' describes the same concept.

**Layout:** The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.

**Legibility:** The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

**Massing:** The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings.

**Mixed uses:** A mix of uses within a building, on a site or within a particular area. 'Horizontal' mixed uses are side by side, usually in different buildings.

**Movement:** People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces. The movement network can be

shown on plans, by highway designations, by figure and ground diagrams, through data on origins and destinations or pedestrian flows, by desire lines, by details of public transport services, by walk bands or by details of cycle routes.

**Node:** A place where activity and routes are concentrated often used as a synonym for junction.

**Permeability:** The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

**Private Finance Initiative (PFI):** The private finance initiative (PFI) provides a way of funding major capital investments, without immediate recourse to the public purse. Private consortia, usually involving large construction firms, are contracted to design, build, and in some cases manage new projects.

**Public domain:** The parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks.

Also called public realm.

**Scale:** The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person. Sometimes it is the total dimensions of a building which give it its sense of scale: at other times it is the size of the elements and the way they are combined. The concept is a difficult and ambiguous one: often the word is used simply as a synonym for 'size'.

**Settlement pattern:** The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular place.

**Sustainable development:** Defined by the Brundtland Commission (1987 and quoted in PPG1) as 'Development which meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to achieve their own needs and aspirations'. The UK's strategy for sustainable development "A better quality of life" was published in May 1999 and highlights the need for environmental

improvement, social justice and economic success to go hand-in-hand.

**Topography:** A description or representation of artificial or natural features on or of the ground.

**Urban design:** The art of making places. Urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, in villages, towns and cities, and the establishment of frameworks and processes which facilitate successful development.

**Urban grain:** The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

**View:** What is visible from a particular point. Compare 'Vista'.

**Vista:** An enclosed view, usually a long and narrow one.



# APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1 - RELEVANT UDP POLICIES**

Wigan Unitary Development Plan 2006 - 2007		
UDP Policy	Aims	Area of Eastern Gateway Potentially Affected
EV1B	Not permitting development which would result in unacceptable levels of air pollution or which would have an unacceptable effect on air quality.	Borough wide
EV2C	Protection and enhancement of features of major importance for nature conservation and wildlife corridors.	River Douglas
EV3F	Regard given to the potential of the canals, rivers and other water features when evaluating development proposals.	River Douglas
EV4A	Development and design in Conservation Areas.	Town centre conservation area, a part of which is located in the Eastern Gateway.
EV4B	Encourage the protection and enhancement of listed buildings.	Listed buildings in the Eastern Gateway.
A1D	Implementation of measures to make the walking environment more accessible, attractive, convenient and safe.	Existing routes and improvements where identified.



Wigan Unitary Development Plan 2006 - 2007		
UDP Policy	Aims	Area of Eastern Gateway Potentially Affected
AIE	Implementation of measures to improve accessibility for cyclists, including the development of a more attractive, convenient and safe cycling network.	Existing routes and improvements where identified.
AIG	Physical improvements to the bus network.	A577 and A49
AIN	Safeguard, maintain and improve the Strategic Route Network.	A49
AIU	Improving access to support a sustainable pattern of settlement.	A49, existing routes and improvements where identified.
SIB	Town centre uses and development.	Areas of the Eastern Gateway identified as being town centre.
CIE	Development of Greenway Network for walkers, disabled people and cyclists.	Banks of the River Douglas.
CIF	Enhance the use of the River Douglas.	River Douglas.

## **APPENDIX 2 - CONTACT DETAILS**

Developers are actively encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions about their proposals, particularly with council's development control, urban design and heritage conservation officers.

Queries regarding broader, more strategic issues should be directed to the Planning Policy Team.

The contact details are:

### **BY PHONE:**

Development Control: 01942 488045  
Urban Design: 01942 404252  
Heritage Conservation: 01942 404254  
Planning Policy: 01942 404238

### **BY POST:**

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

### **BY EMAIL:**

[planning@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:planning@wigan.gov.uk)

### **BY INTERNET:**

This document, *The Planning Guidance*, and the majority of Wigan Council's other planning documents are available on the Wigan Wide Web.

**[WWW.WIGAN.GOV.UK](http://WWW.WIGAN.GOV.UK)**

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