



**Dicconson Conservation Area Appraisal  
October 2011**

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## **1 Introduction**

Wigan Borough has a population of around 305,000. It is strategically located between the two city regions of Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

The borough has a proud history. Much of its past is centred on Wigan itself, which can trace its origins to at least Roman times. As one of the principal Lancashire market towns, Wigan's fortunes expanded with the discovery of coal and the development of textiles and heavy industries.

Conservation Areas are "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" (section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Wigan Council has a duty to designate and review conservation areas. There are 23 conservation areas in the borough. The first was designated in 1976; the most recent in 2006. The Dicconson Conservation Area was designated in 1982.

## **2 Conservation area appraisals**

The legislation relating to conservation areas obliges councils to review their conservation areas from time to time and to formulate proposals for their enhancement. Best practice guidance on the carrying out of such reviews was issued by English Heritage in 2006.

This document broadly aims to follow the approach recommended in that guidance.

### **2.1 Aims**

The aims of this conservation area appraisal are to:

- Increase local awareness of the conservation area and promote commitment and support for its ongoing conservation or enhancement.
- Describe and analyse the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.
- Identify those buildings which materially contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in order to encourage and support their sympathetic repair and maintenance and their ongoing use.
- Identify any areas that detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and secure enhancement of the significance and special character.
- Support the regulatory and policy framework for the protection or enhancement of the conservation area through the development management process.

- Guide, co-ordinate and influence development, maintenance or minor works by statutory authorities to ensure that they secure the conservation or enhancement of the conservation area.

### **2.2 Consultation**

Throughout the process of reviewing the conservation area, local residents and community groups have been involved. The Swinley residents group have been particularly involved.

Prior to the appraisal, an initial survey of residents was carried out by questionnaire to identify any issues or concerns. 14 responses were received, raising concerns about the loss of street trees, demolition of unlisted buildings and protection of original details such as roof coverings, original windows, doors, stone walls gates and railings.

During a 4 week consultation process ending 30 June 2011, local residents and businesses were invited to comment on the draft appraisal and provide formal comments. An informal drop in session was held at St Michaels Parish Hall on the 10 June, for residents to discover more about the process and the conservation area itself, and to ask questions and seek information from the Conservation Officer. 38 people attended. A summary of the responses received together with our proposed responses was included with the report to the Council's Cabinet for adoption of the appraisal.

### **3 The Dicconson Conservation Area**

#### **3.1 Location and setting**

The Dicconson Conservation Area is situated on rising ground to the north of Wigan town centre. It is located north of Northway / Powell Street, part of the town centre relief road, which cuts across Standishgate and separates that part to the north from the main shopping street to the south.

The eastern edge of the conservation area overlooks a large superstore at Water Heyes, and the wider valley of the River Douglas. It falls away steeply from the edge of the conservation area.

To the north is a largely residential area part of which is designated as the Wigan Lane Conservation Area. Wigan Lane itself, immediately to the north of the conservation area as a continuation of Standishgate, is the exception. At this point it is largely commercial, with a number of shops, public houses and hot food establishments.

To the west is Bridgeman Terrace, a former residential street now largely offices, and Mesnes Park, a Victorian town park. These are both designated as the Mesnes Park Conservation Area.

#### **3.2 Summary of the special interest**

The historical significance of the conservation area is closely aligned with the history of Wigan as a market town.

Standishgate formed the key route northwards to Standish,

Chorley and Preston beyond and subsequently became a turnpike road.

The historical development of Standishgate is clearly identifiable through its medieval Burgage plots: large houses and generous rear plots. This contrasted starkly with numerous crowded cottage courts, such as Griffin Yard, Little Croft, Little London and Cross Yard.

The remainder of the conservation area was developed incrementally, originally as part of the Wrightington Estate. This can be clearly identified through its period architecture and building layout, with significant Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian era developments.

In addition to its historical significance and origins, the conservation area contains many of the borough's most significant listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit. It also contains the borough's oldest monument or structure: Mab's Cross. The area also has an historical association with Lord Lever.

The special interest of the conservation area as a whole is its historical interest, with historic period buildings and a medieval street plan layout, and its character as a quiet attractive residential area, interspersed with commercial, retail and civic features and uses.



Figure1 - Dicconson Conservation Area Boundary

## **4 Historical development and archaeology**

### **4.1 Prior to 1845**

The origins and subsequent development of the conservation area are closely associated with the growth of Wigan as a town. Indeed there is visible evidence in the area of its medieval origins, particularly at Standishgate.

Standishgate, together with the other 'gates' of Wigan - Bishopgate, Hallgate, Millgate and Wallgate - are all named after particular entrances at the once Wigan Wall, or at least an earth rampart that surrounded the town for defensive purposes. Standishgate was given its name due to it being the main route to Standish.

This main thoroughfare soon became the main route north to Preston, Chorley and other parts of Lancashire. Indeed, Standishgate became a key trading route.

As the main north-south route through Wigan, it was also part of the London to Carlisle road through the north west of England. This route was probably developed because it connected the lowest crossing points on the River Mersey at Warrington and the River Ribble at Preston. Wigan is approximately half way between the two points and conveniently located as an overnight stopping point.

The development of Standishgate has medieval origins; the area's oldest feature/structure is Mab's Cross. It originates in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and is now a scheduled ancient monument.

The oldest building within the conservation area is the Whitesmith Arms public house at 86 & 88 Standishgate. It dates from 1600 – 1650

A typical plan form for a medieval town was the establishment of Burgage. Burgage is a medieval term which means Borough. It was the term given to rental property on land owned by a king or lord. Burgage plots are long, narrow strips of land running at right angles to main streets. The houses or shops would usually be at the front, facing directly onto the street. Behind them would be workshops and garden areas. They had connecting alleyways at the back. The traces of burgage plots can still be identified.

The Burgage plot system also influenced politics and the right to vote. The right to vote was attached to the occupation of a burgage plot tenancy. Therefore, many members of parliament (House of Commons) prior to 1832 were Burgage plot tenants. This gave rise to the 'Burgess' of a town or elected person. The word Burgeis or Bourg is French in its origin and means 'market town'

In 1827, Mr John Mather began to survey the principal towns of Lancashire and produced a series of detailed maps. These are some of the first maps to clearly show and indicate individual buildings. Tithe maps from earlier dates also show this detail but no tithe map exists for Standishgate. A pen and ink copy of the Mather 1827 map is shown in figure 2, page 9.

In the first ordnance survey map of 1845, shown at figure 3, page 10, Standishgate can clearly be seen with a number of

large buildings fronting the street. Burgage plots are clearly visible to the west of Standishgate.

In Wigan, many of the main streets had Burgage plots, many of which were further developed as a result of the industrial revolution and the rapid expansion of the population. Many of the backland parts of the plots along Standishgate were developed as workers housing. This gave rise to small terrace properties such as Little London, Griffin Yard and Cross Yard. Many of these smaller houses survive today as does evidence of medieval Standishgate on today's modern Ordnance Survey maps.

#### **4.1 1845 onwards**

Further development of the area only took place after 1845. At that time much of the land beyond Standishgate was pasture, with Cabbage Lane occupying the line of what is now Upper Dicconson Street.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1907, shown at figure 4, page 11, clearly shows the incremental development that had occurred by that time. Dicconson Street and Upper Dicconson Street have been laid out. To the west, just off the map extract, Mesnes Park has been laid out.

The Wrightington family of Wrightington Hall, near Parbold, had large land holdings in the area and further afield, including Standish, Shevington and large parts of what is now West Lancashire, where they established place names such as Eccleston. Following the death of Sir John Wrightington,

his heir, Hugh Dicconson Wrightington established them as a powerful family with royal connections.

The family's influence gave rise to the names of many of the streets within the area, such as Dicconson Terrace, Dicconson Street, Dicconson Crescent and Eccleston Street.

Many of the buildings developed at this time survive today. These include the late Georgian terrace properties on the corner of Dicconson and Upper Dicconson Street, and the development of early Victorian properties along Upper Dicconson Street.

From the 1850s onwards, Wigan experienced phenomenal growth in both population and industry, as the industrial revolution gathered apace.

The extraction of coal and the expansion of the transport system transformed Wigan from a market town to an industrial powerhouse.

The Ordnance Survey maps of 1907 and 1920, shown at figures 4 and 5 respectively, provide a snapshot of this growth. They show the clear development of the medieval burgage plots and the smaller streets that provided terraced worker housing, such as Acton Street. The once prosperous and prestige area of Standishgate became an area synonymous with cramped and unfit dwellings within courtyards.



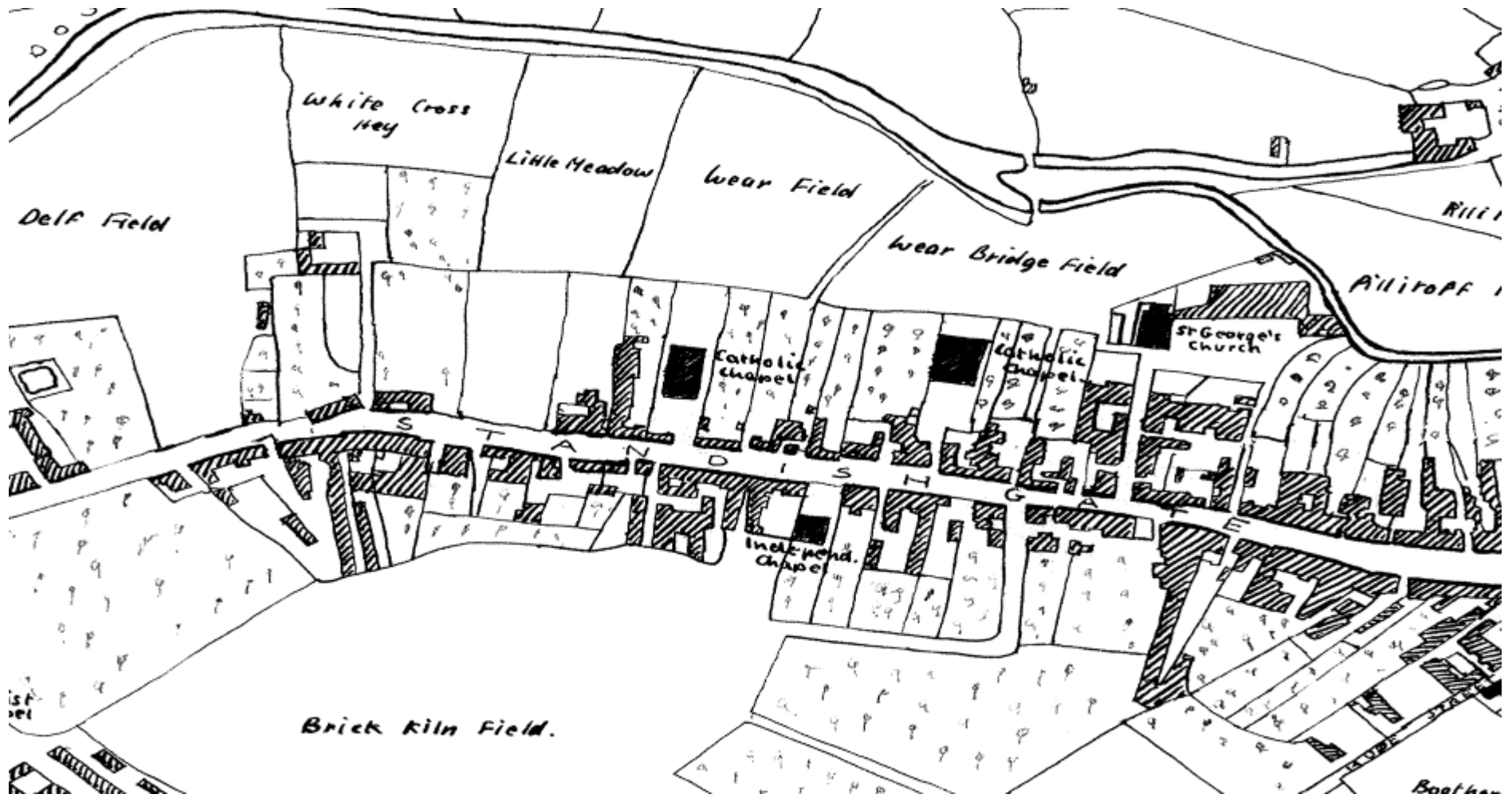


Figure 2 - Mather Map, Standishgate, Wigan, 1827 (pen and ink copy)



Figure 3 - Ordnance Survey map, Standishgate, Wigan, 1845



Figure 4 – Ordnance Survey map, Standishgate and Dicconson Street, Wigan, 1907

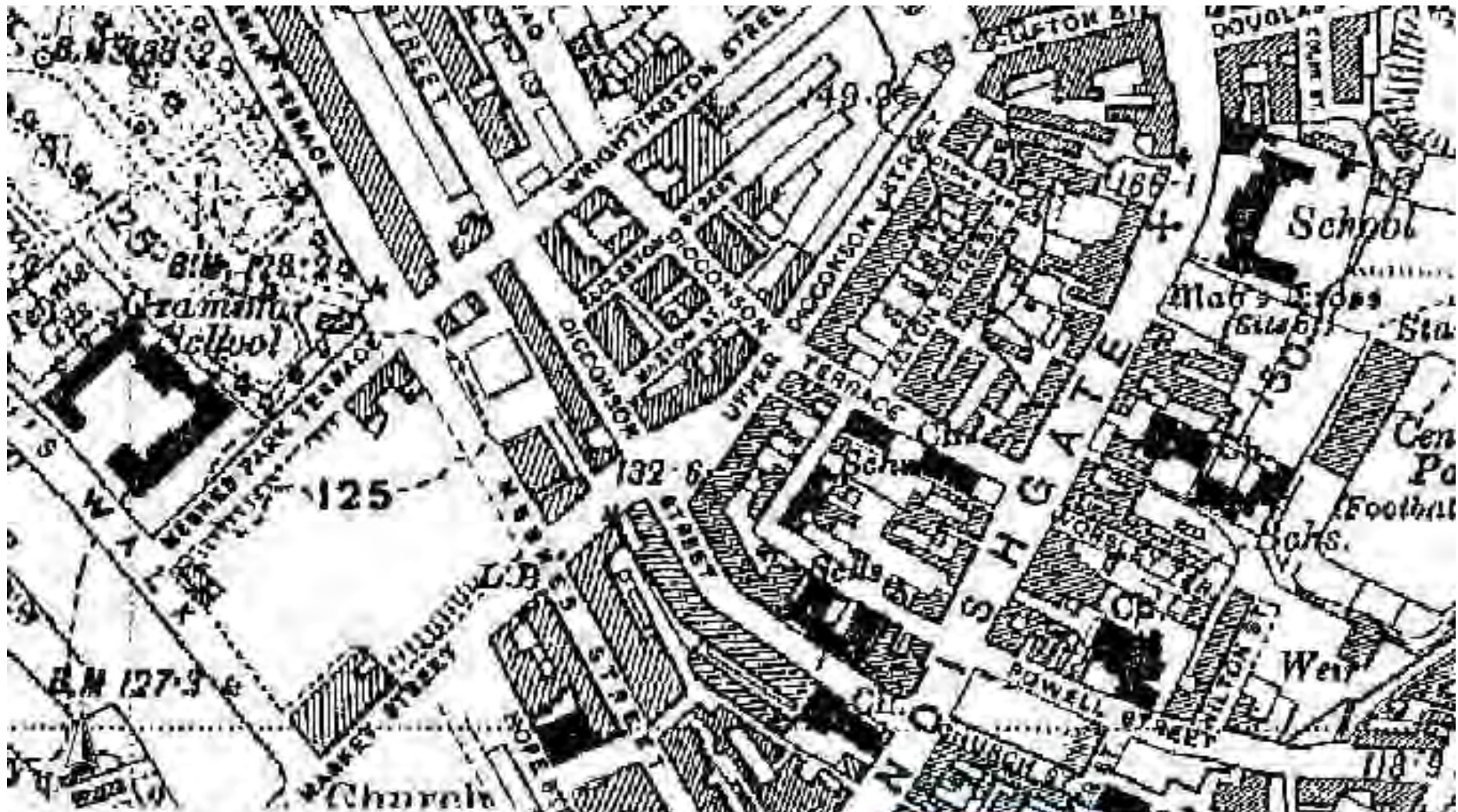


Figure 5- Ordnance Survey map, Standishgate and Dicconson Street, Wigan, 1920

## 5 Historical associations

### Mab's Cross

Mab's Cross is believed to be named after the penance of Lady Mabel Bradshaigh as she walked barefooted to the cross from Haigh Hall in 1322.

What remains is the cross base and part of a shaft. They are set on a plinth of modern slabs. The cross base is of dressed grit stone and the shaft is a skewed base block of grit stone. It has chamfered edges. It is located at the pavement edge in Standishgate, in front of a school that is named after the cross. It is listed as grade II\*.



Figure 6 - Mabs Cross, 1920

The cross was moved from the other side of the road in front of No. 138 Standishgate during road widening works in 1921. It was one of 4 medieval crosses used as way-markers along the medieval route from Wigan to Preston. There is a change in

colour of the kerb edge, with an engraving at the approximate location of Mab's Cross prior to its removal to its current location.

The story of Mab's Cross is a well known Lancashire legend. It is also one of Wigan's great links with literature, for Sir Walter Scott immortalised it by mentioning it in his novels, 'Waverley' and 'The Betrothed'.

The story tells how Sir William Bradshaigh, a great traveller and soldier, living in the reign of Richard II, married to Mabel Norris, heiress of Haigh and Blackrod, absented himself for ten years in the 'Holy Wars'. Lady Mabel thinking him dead, became betrothed to a Welsh knight, one Sir Osmond Nevill.

Eventually, Sir William returned, and hearing the news in advance, decided upon a surprise. Thus he appeared at Haigh disguised as a 'palmer' or 'Pilgrim' from the Holy Land. His wife seeing through his disguise, wept, for which Sir Osmond chastised her. Sir William then revealed who he was and Sir Osmond fled with his bodyguard.

Sir William pursued and slew Sir Osmond in single combat near Newton. For her error, Lady Mabel did penance by walking barefooted from Haigh to the cross in Standishgate.

The cross has since been referred to as Mab's Cross. It has been said that a ghost of Lady Mabel can be seen walking from Haigh towards the cross.



Figure 7 - Mab's Cross today

### **No. 21 Upper Dicconson Street**

This property was occupied from 1877 to 1884 by WH Lever, subsequently Viscount Leverhulme, who founded the soap manufacturing empire. At the time he was establishing his business in Wigan.

The interior decoration and fittings of 21 Upper Dicconson Street are early evidence of the artistic interests of Lord and Lady Leverhulme, and of the earliest origins of the Lady Lever Collection. William Hesketh Lever was a multimillionaire businessman, entrepreneur and philanthropist. He lived at the property in his early years and it was his marital home.

He was born in Bolton, the son of a wholesale grocer. He left school at 16 to join the family firm which he expanded and

transformed. In 1884 he decided to focus on just one product - household soap, primarily because of its potential for marketing in pre-wrapped bars under a brand name.



Figure 8 – portrait of Lord Lever

Previously soap had to be cut to order from a single large block. Two years later he began to manufacture soap himself and set up the firm of Lever Brothers with his disabled brother.

He initially produced his soap in an existing factory in Wigan but by 1888 had outgrown the site. The business was moved to a purpose built and much larger building on the Wirral shore of the Mersey. He also built a village there to house his employees and named it Port Sunlight after his most successful brand of soap.

Within a few years the interests of his company Lever Brothers stretched from the United Kingdom to West Africa, the Pacific

and the United States. The company grew until it was employing 85,000 workers around the world.

The success of his company made Lever very rich. By 1912 in addition to his income, he had personal assets valued at nearly three million pounds.

Lever made a large contribution to the lives of ordinary people. He built Port Sunlight to provide his workforce with good housing and he campaigned for better welfare and a shorter working day. Art was another of Lever's passions. He used his enormous wealth to put together an outstanding collection. He built the Lever Art gallery to give everyone the chance to see and be inspired by it.



Figure 9 - 21 Upper Dicconson Street

## 6 Character Analysis

The Dicconson Conservation Area covers around 8 hectares and has a mix of buildings, styles, ages and uses. There is one scheduled ancient monument, 26 statutory listed buildings, 36 other buildings considered to be of architectural and/or historic merit, and many other buildings that contribute in a positive way to the overall appearance and richness of the conservation area.

The variety derives from the setting, the period of development, the architectural style and the spatial attributes of the buildings.

However, there are sufficient unifying features within the character areas that allow the Dicconson Conservation Area to stand out as a distinctive area, and as one of the legible areas of Wigan.

There are various types and styles of buildings, many semi-detached and terraced residential dwellings from the Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian, inter and immediate post-war periods. However, other buildings are present, particularly churches. These ecclesiastical buildings act as local landmarks, with their spires, articulated rooflines and bell towers punctuating the townscape.

The houses and buildings are generally brick and stone with blue slates. Terracotta dressings feature throughout the conservation area, featuring on walls, quality friezes and other ornate decoration.

Facades of dwellings are generally modulated with features typical of their periods of construction: projecting bays, square

and canted bay windows and gables. Simple roof lines and symmetry of window openings.

These dwellings have a commonality of massing, with generally a main block to the street frontage and subservient blocks to the rear. There is a human scale to openings and doors.

Embellishments are also present, in the form of brick 'specials' such as string coursing and terracotta panels. Roofs capes are articulated with gables, dormers and chimneys.

These elements differed according to style of building and the period of construction, each with their own 'accents'. The red brick gable of the Victorian building with terracotta panel and eaves coursing can be compared with the simple yet elegant lines of the brick built Georgian terrace. The sliding sash timber window frames set in vertical emphasis openings of the Victorian period contrast with the more horizontal emphasis of Arts and Crafts influence, where verticality is imparted with strong mullions. Thus, the unifying features of mass, scale and proportion are counterbalanced by variety of form, detailing and materials ascribing an aesthetically attractive built environment.

Over time, the social and economic history of more than a century is represented by the physical built fabric. Indeed the dwellings were often designed and constructed for those who influenced and shaped the history of Wigan, from wealthy industrialists and merchants to working class mill workers.

As well representing several periods of architectural evolution, buildings throughout the conservation area are articulated within the public spaces by strong boundary definitions, often low brick



built walls with terracotta and stone copings or railings and privet hedging.

The landscaping elements of mature street trees and vegetation to gardens, though of a variety of species, also form a unifying element.

In summer Upper Dicconson Street is under a green canopy that provides glade-like shading to spaces and buildings. In the case of plots with semi-detached and terrace houses their spatial quality derives in part from the visual depth to plots and the spacing between buildings. These allow for many interesting micro views of both public and private spaces.

### **Character areas**

To be able to give an accurate and considered conservation area appraisal, good practice suggests that such areas should be broken down into smaller 'character areas'.

For the purposes of this character appraisal, two distinct areas can be identified based primarily on the use of the buildings, their type, age and contribution to the overall appearance of the conservation area. These areas are divided by Standishgate and, as such, are

1. East of Standishgate
2. West of Standishgate.

These areas are shown on the plan at figure 10, on page 18.

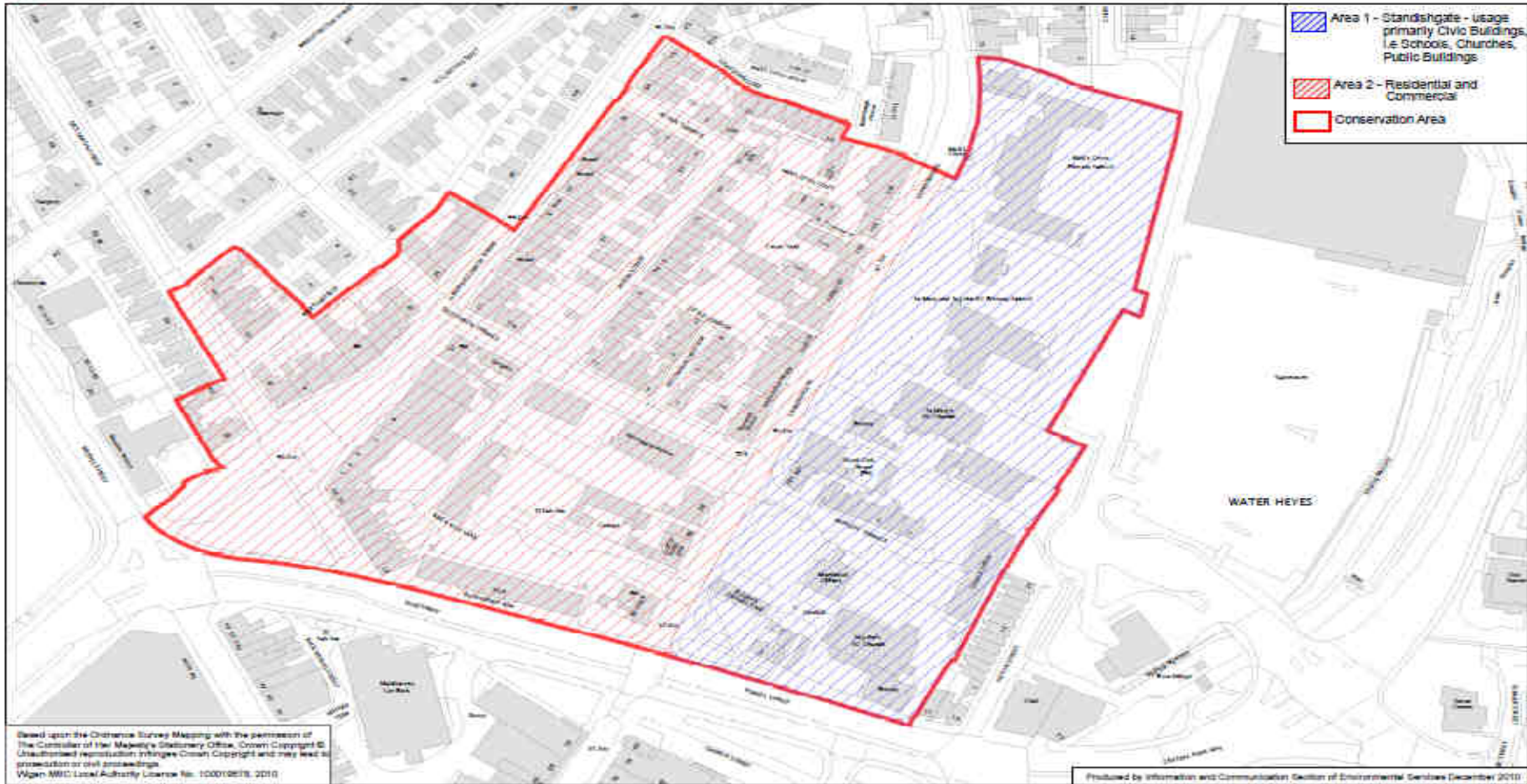


Figure 10 – Dicconson Conservation Area character areas

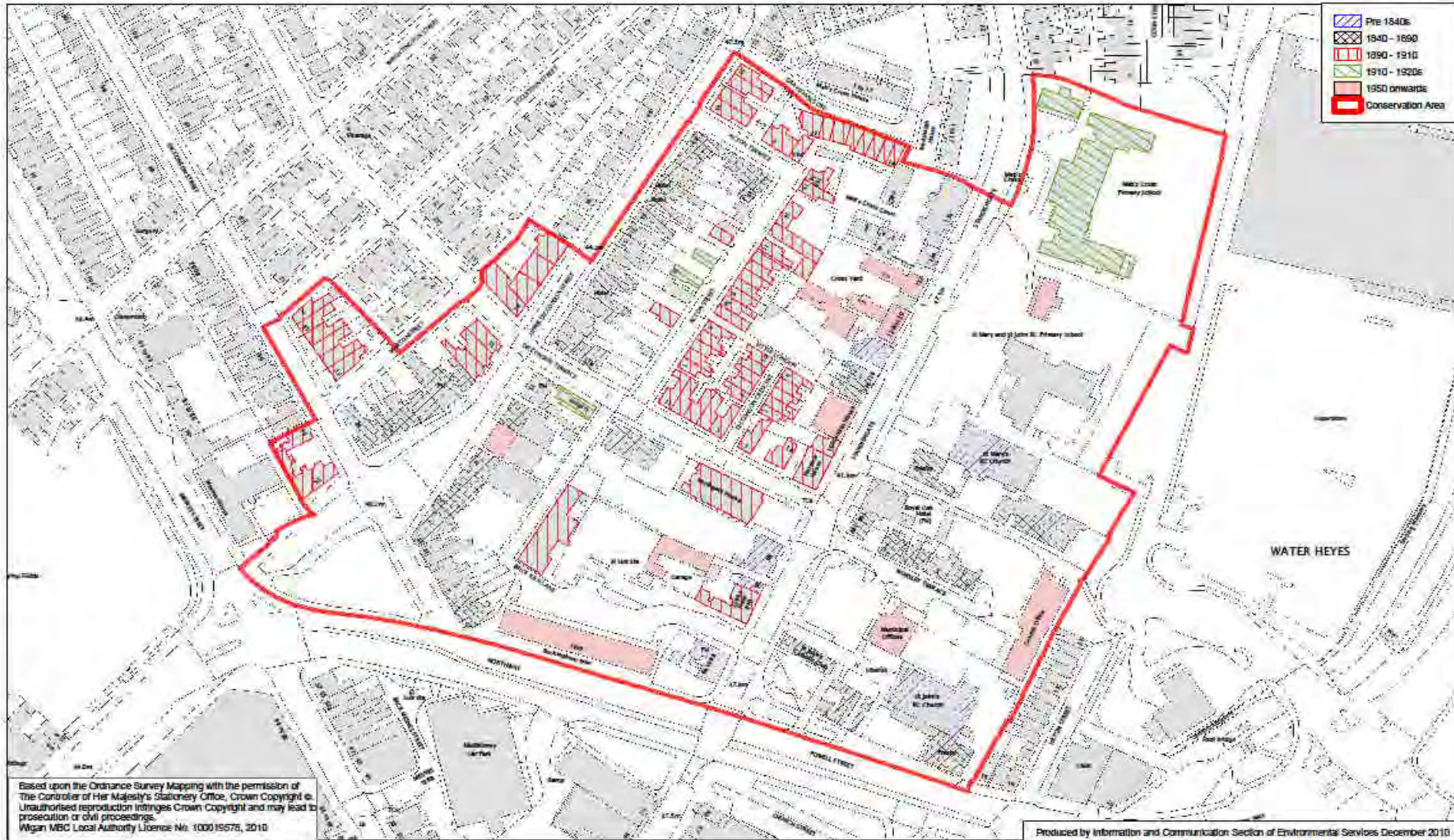


Figure 11 – Dicconson Conservation Area – age of buildings

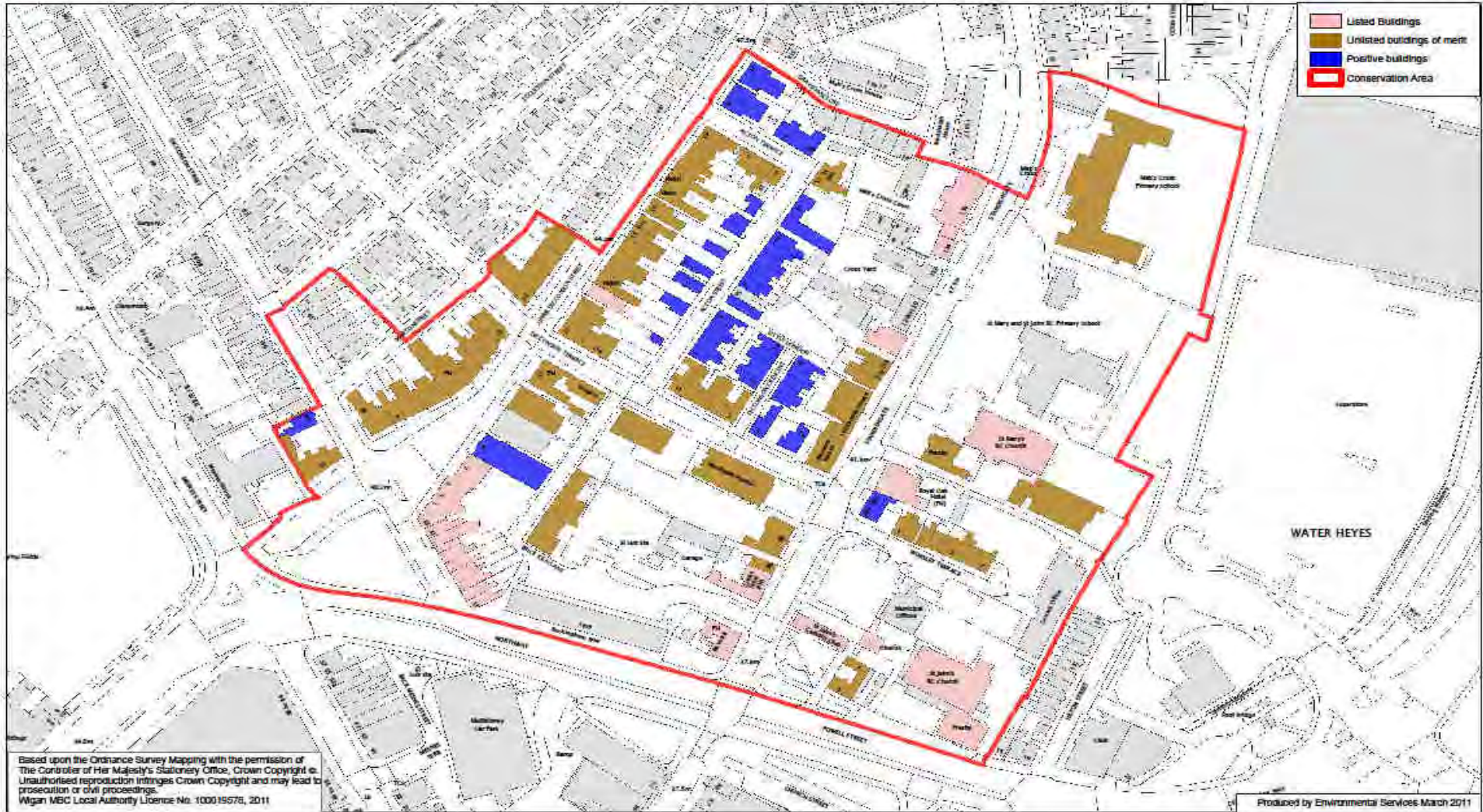


Figure 12 - Dicconson Conservation Area – listed buildings and buildings of merit

## 7. Character Area 1 - East of Standishgate

### 7.1 General character and plan form

The character of this area has been influenced greatly by the historic role of Standishgate as the main thoroughfare northwards from the town centre. As such it contains some of the most significant buildings in the conservation area, both listed and unlisted buildings of merit. Uses include schools, council offices and churches. There are no properties in residential use other than the presbytery for St Mary's church.

The buildings have no direct plan form or block design character other than being linear and set back from the road with an almost common building line. This is a result of the demolition of buildings that formerly fronted the road. As a result, much of enclosure that would have been no longer exists.

The feature buildings remaining are detached with spacious gaps between them, which enable them to be viewed in a wider context. Their spatial grouping and informal arrangement contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area.

### 7.2 Quality of buildings and frontages

As noted above, Standishgate is medieval in its origin and developed predominately via Burgage plots with buildings directly fronting the street and plots of land stretching behind.

On the eastern side the Burgage plot system is not as prevalent and there is a civic character with a domination of church based buildings. The Mather Map of 1827 and the

Ordnance Survey map of 1845 clearly identify the church buildings that remain today.

In addition, the existing Mab's Cross School replaced an earlier church school and Gateway House, now vacated Wigan Council offices, replaced the former Notre Dame Convent. Indeed, the building includes part of the former convent's rear elevation. Figure 13 below shows a photograph of the old convent building and the strong building line that it contributed to. These buildings are all now demolished as shown in figure 14.



Figure 13 – The former Notre Dam Convent, 1920

In general, the qualities of the frontages of the buildings today are of high quality individually. When viewed as a group, the informal arrangements of their frontages are hidden with large

gaps between the buildings. As a result they are dispersed rather than homogeneous when viewed.



Figure 14 – the site of the former Notre Dam Convent, 2010.

The Notre Dame convent school was clearly a very important building and by virtue of its location, flanked by two Roman Catholic churches, the area was developed as a church campus, with an inter-relationship between the buildings and their spaces.

The process of map regression indicates how little this character area has changed.

### **7.3 Audit of heritage assets**

This character area contains some the most interesting and architecturally aesthetic buildings.

### **Mab's Cross School**

The current Mab's Cross School replaced an earlier school in 1914. It is constructed of red stock brick in an English garden wall bond. It is the work of the then Lancashire County Council architect Henry Littler, who designed many Lancashire schools. It is obviously named after the Mab's Cross that is located within its boundary.



Figure 15 - Mab's Cross School, 2010

It is a large primary school with central hall and atrium. The building is richly embellished in decorative features such as arched windows and stonework, Dutch gables, pediment door surrounds and parapet guttering. This embellishment is carried into the interior with highly decorative tiling and stained

glass. The small ventilation cupola on the roof provides a distinctive feature.

The school is at the most northerly part of the Dicconson Conservation area and is a distinctive, yet unlisted building that serves to define the northern boundary on the eastern side of Standishgate.

### **The Church of St Mary, Presbytery and the church rooms**



Figure 16 - Church of St Mary

The **Church of St Mary** is a Roman Catholic church that dates from 1818. It is constructed in squared and coursed ashlar sandstone in a Gothic style. With a 5 bay symmetrical

façade with pinnacles, it is both an interesting and visually satisfying building. It is listed at grade 2\*.

Set back from Standishgate with a generous forecourt, paved in natural stone, the church building is accompanied by its presbytery.

The **Presbytery** is clearly later in its build, dating from around 1900, and shows its Victorian origins. It is limited in decoration and modest in appearance.

Constructed of smooth red pressed brick of Accrington engineering type stock, it is double fronted with a sandstone bay window, heads and sills. It has stepped corbels at eaves, original timber sash windows throughout and slated roof. It is orientated with the main entrance opening onto the forecourt of the church.



Figure 17 – St Mary's Church Presbytery

Albeit modest in design, the building provides for a strong visual contrast to the church. It is a large 3 story building and is prominent within the conservation area. Whilst it is not individually listed, it is considered to be a curtilage building to the church and is, therefore, treated as a listed building.

To the rear of the church are the imposing **Church Rooms**. These date from around 1850 and were used originally as school rooms. While the buildings are hidden from view in Standishgate, they dominate the skyline from the opposite side of the valley at Scholes. Built of common brick under a slate roof, with little or no ornament and almost at 3-4 storeys, the buildings are substantial in their build.

### **The Royal Oak**

Listed at grade II, the Royal Oak public house dates from around 1820, although it has a later extension. It is constructed of handmade brick, with sandstone plinth, head, sills and quoins and with a painted and scored stucco render (not original). At three storeys and with a double depth plan form, the Royal Oak is a dominant building that makes a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area.

The photograph at figure 18 clearly shows the former shop to the building, now windows, and at the left hand side, two small one and one and a half storey shops that had early 16<sup>th</sup> century origins. These shop buildings were replaced with late Victorian terraces in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or very early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as shown at figure 19.



Figure 18 - The Royal Oak and neighbouring shop.



Figure 19 - The Royal Oak, 2011



### **The Church of St John, Church Club, commemorative cross, Presbytery and Limes Bridge House**

The Church of St John is a Roman Catholic church that dates from around 1819. There are many similarities with the Church of St Mary's. It is of a similar age, construction and material and it is the same denomination. However, St John's is designed in the classical style. It is of two stories with five bays and a full width ionic colonnaded porch. It is generously set back from Standishgate and almost hidden from view and is listed at grade II\*.

The adjacent church rooms, '**St John's Church Club**' dates from 1829. This is a Georgian 2 storey building, constructed of handmade brick in a Flemish bond, with sandstone heads, sills and string course. The doorway is typically Georgian in its style with arched fanlight and pediment. Timber sash windows remain at all windows. It is listed at grade II.

The **commemorative cross** in front of the church dates from 1852. It commemorates Charles and Elizabeth Walmersley. It is made of sandstone and is believed to have been designed by the architect Edward Pugin. It is separately listed at grade II.

Also adjacent to the church, the **Presbytery** dates from around 1860. It is a well-balanced building of rectangular plan form with twin gables that is positioned to outlook over Powell Street to the south. It is constructed of brick with slate roof and is original to its design, with original sandstone heads and sills and an interesting use of string coursing to add slight

embellishment. Windows are timber sash and appear to be original.



Figure 20 - Commemorative cross at St John's Church

**Limes Bridge House** at Powell Street is a modest Georgian former residential property, with stable/coach house to the rear. The building is of brick construction in a Flemish brick bond upon a stone plinth, with modest embellishment such as a stone string course.



Figure 21 (above) - St John's Presbytery and Figure 22 (below) - Limes Bridge House



Both the Presbytery and Limes Bridge House, when viewed together, provide for an attractive enclosure and framing to the southern end of the conservation area, and an interesting townscape character when viewed from Wigan town centre.

#### 7.4 The townscape and public space

As referred to previously, many of the buildings in this character area are set back from the main edge of Standishgate itself, with the Royal Oak being the exception.

Standishgate is a generally wide thoroughfare and the land rises on a slight gradient. This change in levels is represented in the changing roof lines of the buildings. At the cusp near Mab's Cross School, a distinct and agreeable view back towards the varied skyline of Wigan town centre is presented.

It is likely that it was the prominence of this rising land on the edge of the town centre that attracted the churches to this location. As a result many existing buildings fronting Standishgate were demolished.

With the buildings being set back there are open spaces to the frontages which make a contribution to the conservation area. A large stone wall runs nearly the full length of Standishgate with the conservation area and makes a positive contribution.

Mab's Cross School provides for a large open aspect, with low boundary railings and mature trees. Further down Standishgate, many frontages are utilised as car parking and surfaced in tarmac. St Mary's Church forecourt is surfaced in

a natural material and provides a fitting setting to the listed building.

The only green open space is adjacent to St John's Church Club and Limes Bridge House. This small area provides for limited open relief to the urban fabric. Although underused there is an opportunity for enhancement with trees and benches and so act as a welcoming gateway to the area. At present it is dominated by a large advertising hoarding.

There are limited areas of public realm away from the main footpaths. Most boundaries are of walling stone, with some brick walling.

### **7.5 Lighting and signage**

Street lighting is of a utilitarian type and whilst not in keeping its impact is neutral.

Signage is limited due to the linear nature of the character area.

### **7.6 Surface treatments**

The surface treatment of the character area is of a standard acceptable within a conservation area. Most footpaths are surfaced with tarmac or a concrete flag, with a tegular brick edging to provide relief to what is generally a wide footpath. There are no street trees.



Figure 23 - Stone boundary wall and path outside St Mary's Presbytery, Standishgate.

Between the Royal Oak public house and St Mary's Presbytery, there is a footpath that links Standishgate to Hilton Street and Tesco's. This is a popular, well used footpath. Lighting and cleanliness are issues and the footpath could be improved and enhanced to make it more accessible. Opportunities for environmental enhancement are shown on the plan at figure 38.

## 8 Character Area 2 - West of Standishgate

This area includes the western side of Standishgate, Upper Dicconson Street and Dicconson Terrace.

### 8.1 General character and plan form

This area was once firmly residential. However, there has been an increase in commercial properties including small industrial premises and office uses as well as shops and public houses. This has clearly been influenced by the proximity of the town centre. This incremental change of character has resulted in the area having a transitional feel although residential uses still predominate.

The residential properties range in age, style and form. Many of the larger single dwelling houses have been converted to flats, apartments or houses in multiple occupation. There are a small number of church buildings but these are now used for other purposes.

The layout and plan form of the area is one of uniformity, utilising the 'block' approach to development.

At the cross roads of, a 'fishtail' junction has been incorporated. This is both to enhance visibility for road users but also to improve the exposure to the imposing Georgian townhouses at 1, 3 and 5 Upper Dicconson Street. The fishtail splay works to create views and vistas and draws the eye.



Figure 24 - Fishtail junction splay at Dicconson Street and Upper Dicconson Street

### 8.2 Character of spaces

This character area, like the conservation area as a whole has little public open spaces of any high usable merit or hierarchy. A private space hierarchy does occur but is generally hidden and is shaped by private rear gardens. Notable exceptions are the open space on Upper Dicconson Street which, whilst limited in size, does provide for visual relief. It also marks a change in character from the town centre to a more residential area.

The open splay of the junction of Dicconson Street and Upper Dicconson Street provides for a feeling of space, a sequence of views from wide space to linear and the ability to appreciate the quality of the buildings adjacent.

Other incidental spaces exist but are used as back spaces to buildings and car parks. These do not make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

### 8.3 Quality of buildings and frontages

The embellishment of traditional buildings is a characteristic feature of this area. Terracotta is used in abundance to articulate building facades, doors and window openings. Many of the individual buildings have remained fairly intact and original to their design. It is this survival of original detailing, material use and variety of embellishment that provides for a pleasing and positive character.



Figure 25 - Example of decorative terracotta features

The character and appearance of the area is shaped overwhelmingly by traditional domestic scale buildings, boundaries and openings. Architectural elements common to all three periods (Georgian, Victorian & Edwardian) are clearly discernable, such as roofs, chimneys, external walls, window and door openings, detailing and materials.

It is a visually satisfying environment, derived in part from the variety of building types, styles, ages and sizes. Indeed there is a particular spatial hierarchy ranging from large Georgian town houses and Victorian villas down to compact terrace properties on Dicconson Crescent.

This hierarchy is further reinforced with key buildings occupying corner sites and thus framing views and vistas and being local focal points.

### 8.4 Audit of heritage assets

#### 134, 136 and 138 Standishgate, commonly known as Mab's Cross Hotel

These buildings are town houses dating from around 1800. They are constructed of handmade brick in Flemish bond typical to the age of construction. Built upon a sandstone plinth they are double fronted and double depth, all with rear extensions. No 136 is slightly built forward with an interesting convex corner.

The properties are of similar architectural detailing with sandstone dressings to heads, with keystones and chamfered sills. They are typically Georgian and modest classical in appearance and symmetrical in their design, with a

consistency in window opening. The timber sash windows have 12 panes each at the ground floor and the windows decrease in size and number of panes on successive upper floors.

These prominent and impressive early Georgian townhouses provide for a robust character and are some of the earliest surviving town houses in Wigan. Each has undergone refurbishment and restoration which has been managed carefully to ensure the integrity remains.

Whilst they are individually listed at grade II, for the purposes of the appraisal they are combined for their group value and their similarities in design, age and construction.



Figure 26 – 134, 136 and 138, Standishgate

### 118 Standishgate

118 Standishgate is a Georgian town house dating from around 1730-1750. It is similar to other properties on Standishgate in its age, design and appearance.

Constructed of handmade brick in a Flemish bond with a large, deep chamfered sandstone plinth, it is a double depth, double fronted building with symmetrical proportioned openings. It also has originally timber windows with possible mullions and a slate roof with a deep dentilled eaves and cornice and box guttering. It listed at grade II. Currently vacant, the building is a priority for remedial action.



Figure 27 - 118 Standishgate

### **Former St Paul's Congregational Church, Dicconson Terrace**

The former St Paul's Congregational Church dates from 1903. Its date stone is insitu. It is constructed of pitched faced ashlar stone with smooth ashlar to window and door surrounds, quoins and copings. Its bell tower and spire are still present. Originally a full height single aisle, a sympathetic residential conversion was undertaken in the 1990s.



Figure 28 – Former St Paul's Congregational Church

The building is generously set back from Standishgate such that its presence is emphasised with its landscaped area to the front and its side steeple puncturing the skyline. Although unlisted, it is a striking building of merit and makes a

considerable contribution to the character of the area. The Mather Map of 1812 indicates an earlier chapel prior to the construction and layout of Dicconson Street. Therefore, today's church is a replacement of an earlier chapel.

To the rear of the former church are the former school rooms that were dedicated to St Pauls Independent Chapel. They date from 1849.

The undated photograph at Figure 28 shows the properties that were removed to make way for Dicconson Street. Just to the left of the image are what appear to be railings of a grandeur commonly found within the boundary of a church.



Figure 29 - Near St Paul's Church, Standishgate (undated)

### 94 Standishgate - The Griffin Hotel

The Griffin Hotel at 94 Standishgate dates from 1905 and is listed at grade II. The date stone is located over the doorway.

The building is a good example of early Edwardian Baroque design. Built of brick in English garden wall bond with terracotta dressings, it is double fronted with three storeys. It exhibits a symmetrical appearance with a flamboyant use of detailing such as moulded cornices, ionic semi columns, pediments, pilasters, keystones and segmental archways. Above the doorway is an impressive and prominent wrought iron bracket with signage. There is also a white tiled frieze with the name 'Griffin Hotel'.



Figure 30 – The Griffin Hotel, circa 1940

The hotel is a visually distinctive building. Its over-use of materials provides contrast and colour to the street scene and is a positive feature of the conservation area.

### 86 and 88 Standishgate – The Whitesmith's Arms

The Whitesmith's Arms at 86-88 Standishgate is listed at grade II. Dating from around 1600-1650, it is the oldest Burgage building in Wigan, indeed one of the oldest properties in Wigan town centre.

The building is constructed of handmade brick and is of two and a half storeys with four first floor windows and three pitch gables projecting from the roof to the front elevation. It has raised cruck framing at first floor and wattle and daub partitions that provide vital clues to the date of the building.



Figure 31 - 86 and 88 Standishgate – The Whitesmith's Arms



Modest in its appearance, with scored stucco render and moulded sills and surrounds, the render covers up what is an interesting brick built building.

At the rear the brick is revealed. A stair tower is also present and accommodates a 17<sup>th</sup> century dog-legged staircase.

On the side gable fronting Brick Kiln Lane, there is an exposed brick gable, again of handmade brick, with lime mortar pointing and blocked up openings. Exposed purlin ends add to the interest of this building.

### **17 - 33 (odd) Dicconson Street and 1 – 5 (odd) Upper Dicconson Street**

This is a large terrace block of twelve Georgian town houses dating from the 1850's. They are constructed of red brick in Flemish bond, with sandstone dressings to sills and string course. At three storeys, the buildings produce a very ordered and regular façade. Windows are timber sash with 12 panes.

Perhaps the most striking and easily recognised row of large Georgian terraces in Wigan, the properties provide for both significant architectural interest and for the framing of the adjacent green space and Upper Dicconson Street, due to their obtusely angled plan on the corner property. They are listed at grade II.



Figure 32 - Georgian town houses, Dicconson Street / Upper Dicconson Street

### **50 New Market Street**

50 New Market Street is a prominent building on the edge of the conservation area, overlooking the open space at the lower end of Upper Dicconson Street.

It is a double fronted building of two and a half storeys dating from 1880. Constructed in smooth red brick, there is a central pitched gable at the eaves with a window that helps to provide balance and rhythm and a double bay at the round floor. It exhibits many of the original detailing to its construction.

Currently occupied as a dental surgery, the building is unlisted but makes a significant contribution to the conservation area.



Figure 33 – 50 New Market Street

### **15 Upper Dicconson Street**

15 Upper Dicconson Street is a striking corner building dating from 1891. Constructed in the Queen Ann style, it was built primarily as a doctor's house and surgery. At two and a half storeys the building is double fronted, embellished with large timber bay windows and pitch dormers to roof space with semi elliptical dormers in the centre. Brick detailing and the use of terracotta at heads, sills and string course add interest.

A rear extension has been added in the late 1930's and the chimneys have been reduced in height. The building is

unlisted but it makes a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. It is now run as a successful public house and hotel. The neighbouring property at 13 Upper Dicconson Street makes a similar contribution.



Figure 34 - Little 15 at 15, Upper Dicconson Street

### **21 Upper Dicconson Street**

As noted in section 5, 21 Upper Dicconson Street has an historical association with Lord Leverhulme. However, the building itself is listed at grade II and is of architectural interest itself.

Dated together with similar neighbouring properties at 1870, the building is brick in English garden wall bond. It is double depth and single bay fronted.

The interior is of note due to its originality and survival of details such as internal porch, embossed wall coverings and

motifs, Adam style plaster work, deep skirting boards and large fireplaces throughout.

The type and size of the property and the adjacent properties signifies the importance the area once held adjacent to Wigan town centre: a home to large important residential properties of prestige.

### **8.5 The townscape and public spaces**

Many aspects of townscape have been described in the preceding sections of this appraisal.

The main townscape feature in this area is the large open junction splay on Upper Dicconson Street, which acts to funnel the view as the land rises slightly to the north, whilst providing a setting for important buildings. The splay also assists in providing a feel of openness and defines a hierarchy of spaces, and provides enclosure to buildings.

#### **Street trees and greenery**

One of the most overriding features and contributors to the character of this area are the street trees. They help to provide a softening effect to the urban area. Many are original features of the street designs and layout.

Figure 35 shows the relationship between the street trees and the buildings on Upper Dicconson Street in the 1930s. However over recent years many of the trees have become diseased or have grown too big to be accommodated and have been removed on safety grounds.



Figure 35 – Upper Dicconson Street, 1930s

Whilst some new trees have been planted, a programme of further tree planting is required to ensure that this character remains for future generations.

Public open space is limited to Dicconson Street fronting Northway, as shown at figure 36 below. It contributes positively to the character of the conservation area by providing a green separation to the noise and visual impact of the dual carriageway. It is also a pleasing gateway to the conservation area.



Figure 36 - Open space at Dicconson Street

## 8.6 Lighting and Signage

Lighting in the area is of a variety of types and styles that are not in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Replacing lighting columns with a style more fitting to the character of the area would enhance the conservation area.

Traditional street name signs are of a cast iron plate style or timber lettering and are attached to buildings at a high level to avoid theft or vandalism. Newer street name signs are of aluminium and at ground level and have suffered from vandalism.

Given the mixed but primarily residential nature of the area, there is relatively little highway signing other than a small number of directional signs and car parking regulation signs.

## 8.7 Surface treatments

Much of the conservation area has a mix of surface treatments from black top tarmac, concrete flags and tegular concrete blocks. Many of the concrete flags are cracked or broken and patched with tarmac.

Standishgate itself has a durable and robust public realm, with a consistent palette of material use. Ideally this should be carried out throughout the conservation area.

The splayed end of Upper Dicconson Street is used as a car park. It is a large space that is surfaced in traditional setts that reinforces the historic character to the area. However the surface is uneven and some of the setts are loose. It would benefit from the relaying of the setts. This would also further enhance the area.



Figure 37 - Parking in the splay at Upper Dicconson Street

## **8.8 Boundaries**

On the west side of Standishgate generally, buildings are built direct to the pavement edge. Many of the Georgian era buildings within the conservation area have a similar boundary treatment.

Later Victorian buildings, typically on Upper Dicconson Street, have modest privacy strips of 1-2 metres, enclosed by a low brick wall with stone or terracotta copings. Many may have had railings to complement the low walls.

Many of the boundary walls retain their original openings and are of a domestic scale.

## **9 Issues for conservation area management**

Many of the buildings within the Dicconson Conservation Area are statutory listed or unlisted buildings of high merit value and their capacity for change is limited. However the conservation area does suffer from some serious pressures that need to be addressed.

### **9.1 Empty or derelict buildings**

The most visible issues are the empty or derelict buildings that include both listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit.

118 Standishgate is a listed building. It has been empty for a number of years and is considered to be a 'building at risk'. As such it is a priority building for the council in partnership with the property owner and English Heritage to find a sustainable long term use for the building.

29, 31 and 33 Dicconson Street and 1, 3 and 5 Upper Dicconson Street are long term empty properties, despite having planning consent for sympathetic conversion to apartments. Due to the extensive internal alterations that have taken place, conversion to family housing may not be feasible. They are high profile buildings next to the town centre relief road and contribute to a poor image for the area and the town as a whole. They are also classed as buildings at risk.

### **9.2 Loss of traditional details**

The majority of new development within the conservation area has been alterations to existing properties, such as extensions, conversions and partial demolitions and rebuilds.

It is likely that development will continue on a similar scale for the foreseeable future. In carrying out such works it will be important to ensure that architectural details are retained; that inappropriate replacement window frames and external doors are not fitted; that hedges, street trees, garden walls and railings are not lost; and that prevalent materials are used in both new development and repairs.

Change must always be judged against its possible detrimental effect not only upon the property but also upon the surrounding environment. The cumulative effect of small developments, if undertaken without regard to the established architectural and townscape character, can result in the quality and appearance of the conservation area being seriously eroded.

In many cases, original detailing such as slate roofs, chimneys, timber windows and doors still survive. However, a growing number of replacement doors and windows of PVCu are having an impact upon the traditional appearance of the area, particularly in business properties.

Permitted development rights allow householders to carry out certain works and alterations, without the need for planning permission. Although permitted development rights are limited in a conservation area, these additional controls cannot sufficiently prevent many changes, including replacement windows and doors, the erection of a porch or the replacement of a roof using different materials.

#### **Article 4 Directions.**

Article 4 directions are a tool for the removal of specific permitted development rights from householders. They allow the local planning authority to require planning permission for certain works if those works have been identified as a threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Article 4 directions apply only to the elevation of a property that fronts a highway, public space or a waterway.

## **10 Future development opportunities and areas for environmental enhancement**

It is good practice as part of the conservation area appraisal to identify opportunities for development and areas suited to general improvement that will enhance the area.

Opportunities for enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area should be aimed at reinforcing those qualities and characteristics that provide the special interest.

One of the largest development enhancement opportunities within the conservation area is the redevelopment of Gateway House, as highlighted in the plan at figure 38.

Owned by the council but recently vacated, Gateway House is a relatively modern, purpose-built four storey office block. Land to the front of the building is used for car parking.

The building dwarfs other buildings on the site and due to its scale, design and materials it is incongruous with the traditional character of the area.

A replacement building of no more than three-storeys and of a design sympathetic to the character of other properties on the site would be appropriate. It would enhance the conservation area.

Any replacement scheme should seek to reinforce the established building line between the Royal Oak Hotel and the St John's Church Club. Therefore any new building should provide for a back of pavement building line, yet provide adequate space for amenity space and landscaping. Careful

use of materials would be necessary. Car parking provision should be hidden so as not to dominate the streetscape.



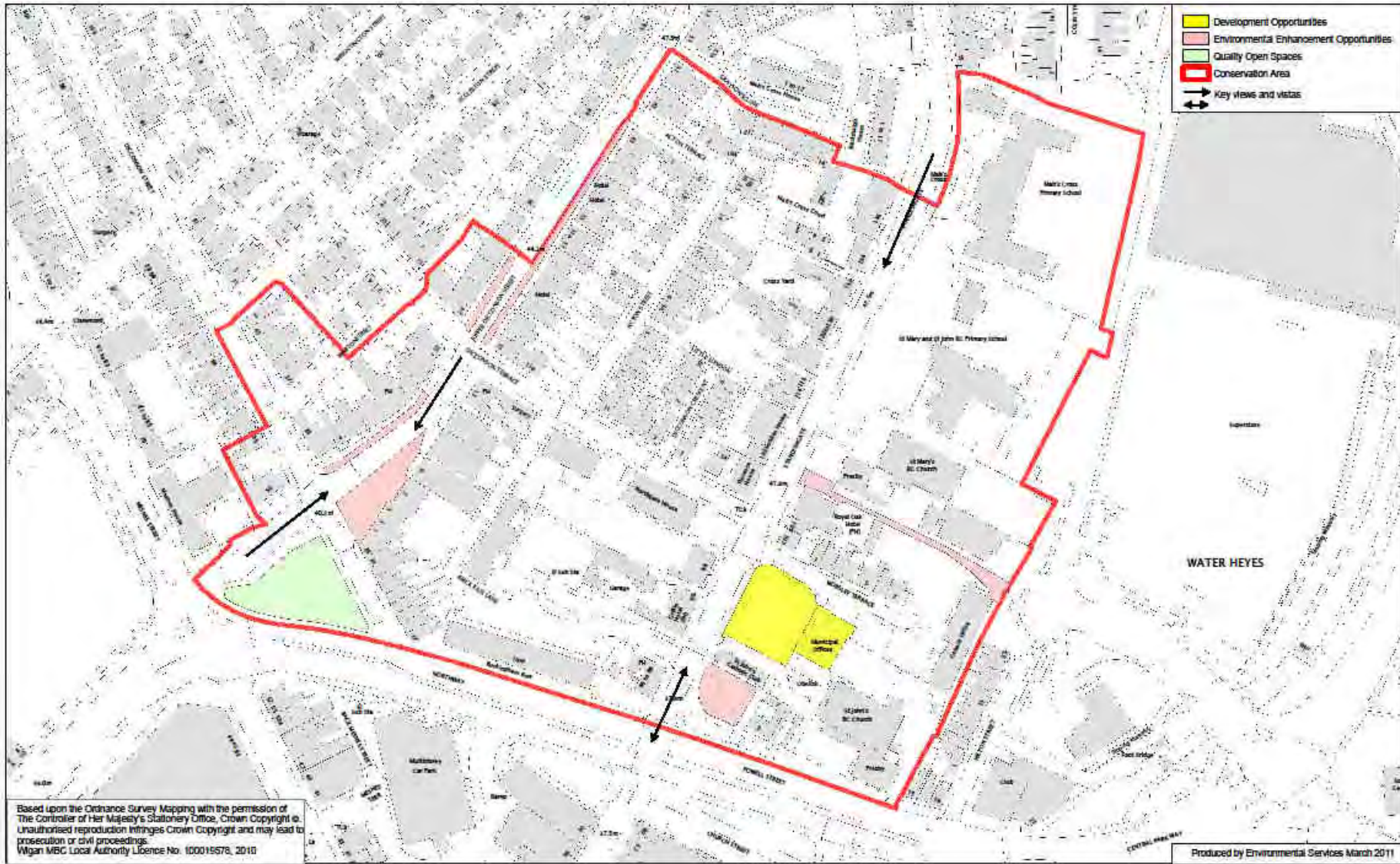


Figure 38 - Enhancement opportunities in the Dicconson Conservation Area

## 11 Boundary review and revision

The Dicconson Conservation Area has not been reviewed since it was designated in 1982.

As part of the appraisal process it is appropriate to review the existing boundary and to determine if it is drawn too tightly or too generously. If the former, it would omit key areas of townscape, architecturally interesting buildings or an area essential to the historical development that is now considered of special interest. If the latter, it might be as a result of decline and/or unsympathetic development in the intervening years.

The existing southern boundary of the conservation area is secured by the edge of Northway and Powell Street, parts of the town centre relief road. It is anchored by buildings such as The Whitesmiths Arms and St John's Presbytery. Given the severance of the relief road, it is an appropriate boundary.

The eastern boundary follows higher land overlooking the valley of the River Douglas and the large superstore at Water Heyes. Given the topographical differences and the modern style of the supermarket, it is also an appropriate boundary.

The western boundary is primarily along Upper Dicconson Street before diverting behind properties on that street either side of Dicconson Terrace and then incorporating a small number of properties to the north on Dicconson Street. It is proposed that this boundary be extended to include additional properties of merit at 2 Marton Street, 15 - 23 Dicconson Terrace, 1 - 5 and 14 Eccleston Street, and 6 Wrightington

Street, known as 'The Vicarage' an impressive eastern gateway building.

5 Eccleston Street is a mid Victorian property. It is of two storeys and is double fronted with double bay features at the ground floor. With original details, the property is symmetrical in appearance.



Figure 39 – 5 Eccleston Street

Figure 40 (right) – 14 Eccleston Street



14 Eccleston Street is a late Victorian property, double fronted with double height bays. An embellished building with original detailing, it articulates its corner position.



Figure 41 (left) – 6 Wrightington Street

6 Wrightington Street, known as 'The Vicarage', is built in the Queen Anne style with arts and crafts influences. The property is a large double plan on a corner location. It is double fronted with a double height bay and pitch

gable. There is a square bay on the opposite side. It is a significant building exhibiting richness in material use and craftsmanship.

The northern boundary ends where Standishgate becomes Wigan Lane, notably at Mab's Cross School. However, historic maps show that Standishgate did not always end at this point. Indeed, significant development took place that is now of conservation value. As such it is proposed that the northern boundary is redrawn to include the local shopping centre on Wigan Lane. This would also include the terrace properties on Clifton Street, Scarisbrick Street, Charles Street, Lord Street and Earl Street and elements of properties on Shaw Street and Wrightington Street.

The terrace properties on these streets were laid out in block form of short rows. They are of late Georgian in their architectural style, dating from 1850. A date stone is in-situ. They are, therefore, some of the earliest terraced housing in Wigan and of particular importance as a record of industrial terraced housing in the area.

Much of their interest is derived from the date of the buildings and their associated social history. They were constructed probably to a local byelaw, but also may be Wigan's first terraced housing as a result of the Public Health Act, 1848. That Act resulted in the standardisation of terrace housing in size, dimensions, sanitary provision and access.

The terrace properties themselves are of simple form, two rooms up and two down, with provision for outside space and access via a shared alley between the properties. Built of

brick in the Flemish brick bond, they show interesting articulation, with simple stone string course at first floor and canted or shaped brickwork to window sills and heads. Later additions include timber door surrounds.



Figure 42 – Terrace housing at Scarisbrick Street

The proposed extension to the north also includes a significant church building: Wigan Baptist Church and school rooms on Scarisbrick Street. The church is an impressive brick and stone building in an elevated position in relation to the street. Dating from 1875, it is a building of architectural merit.

Also within the proposed extension is the listed Georgian townhouse at 4 Lansdowne Terrace, Earl Street, with a return to Scarisbrick Street. Possibly a mill manager's house dating from 1840, it is listed at grade II. The property bookends the adjacent terraced properties and, together, they are located on the brow of a hill, giving them good views over the Wigan skyline. Constructed of brick with a stucco render finish, the property is typical of its age and the development of the area.



Figure 43 - 4 Lansdowne Terrace, Earl Street

The proposed northern edge of the extended conservation area is the large stone wall forming the boundary to Lord Street.

Whilst stone walls are not uncommon in Wigan, stone walls of such length and build are an unusual occurrence in a largely urban area. Built of coal measures sandstone and in a random appearance, the wall is approximately 1.8 metres in height and runs in an east-west direction for the length of Lord Street, at the rear of the properties. Historical maps indicate a possible boundary wall in the same location, forming a field boundary adjacent to the then Swinley Hall. Whilst Swinley Hall is long gone, remnants of its gardens and orchards survive, in particular, boundary walls, and have been woven into today's built fabric.

The map of Wigan from 1845 at figure 44 shows the land south of Lord Street, where the early byelaw housing was developed, laid out as an orchard.

The map also shows the historical link between Standishgate and Wigan Lane and gives further evidence of the historical interest of the area and justification for its inclusion in the proposed extension of the conservation area.

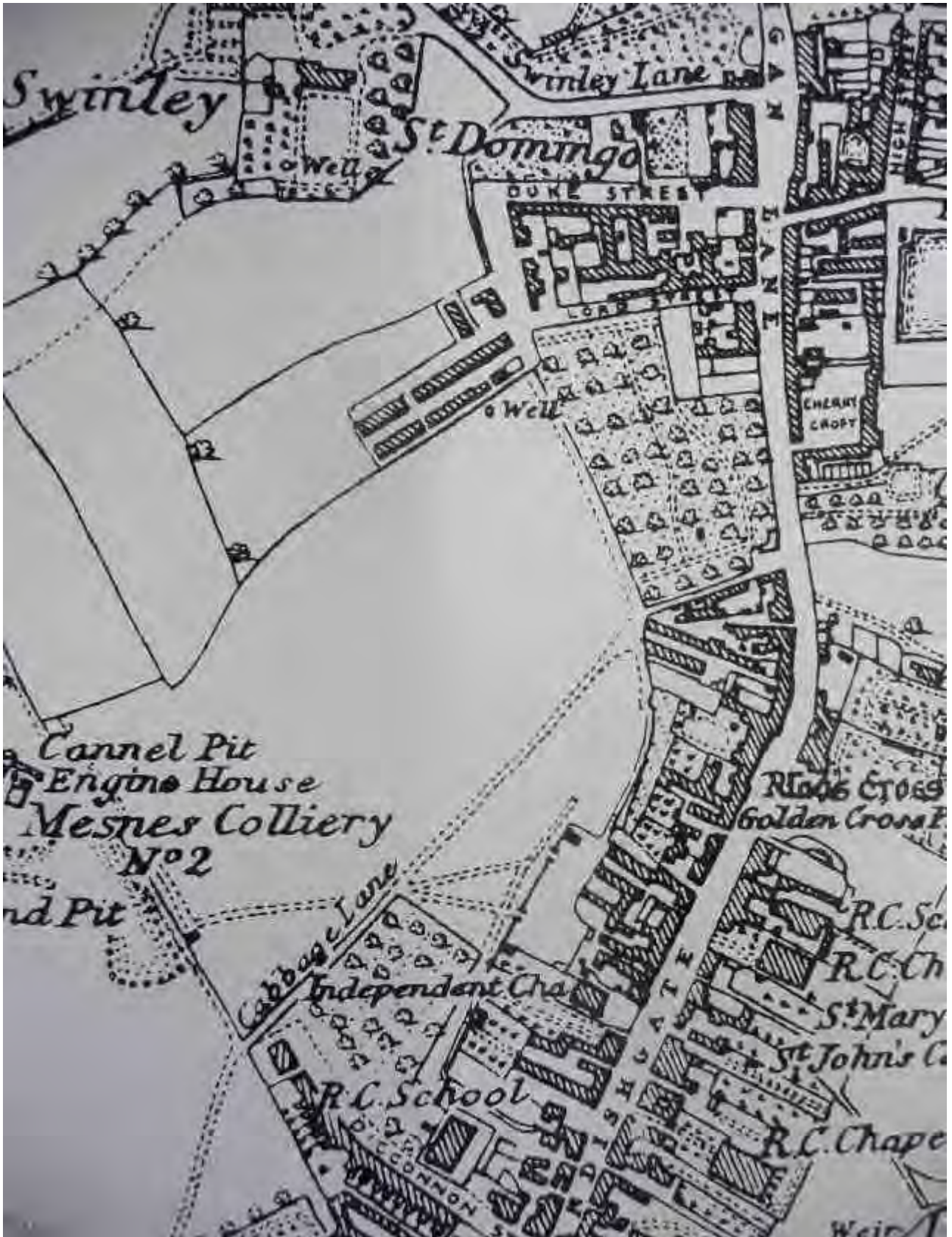


Figure 44 – Ordnance Survey map, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Standishgate / Wigan Lane, 1845

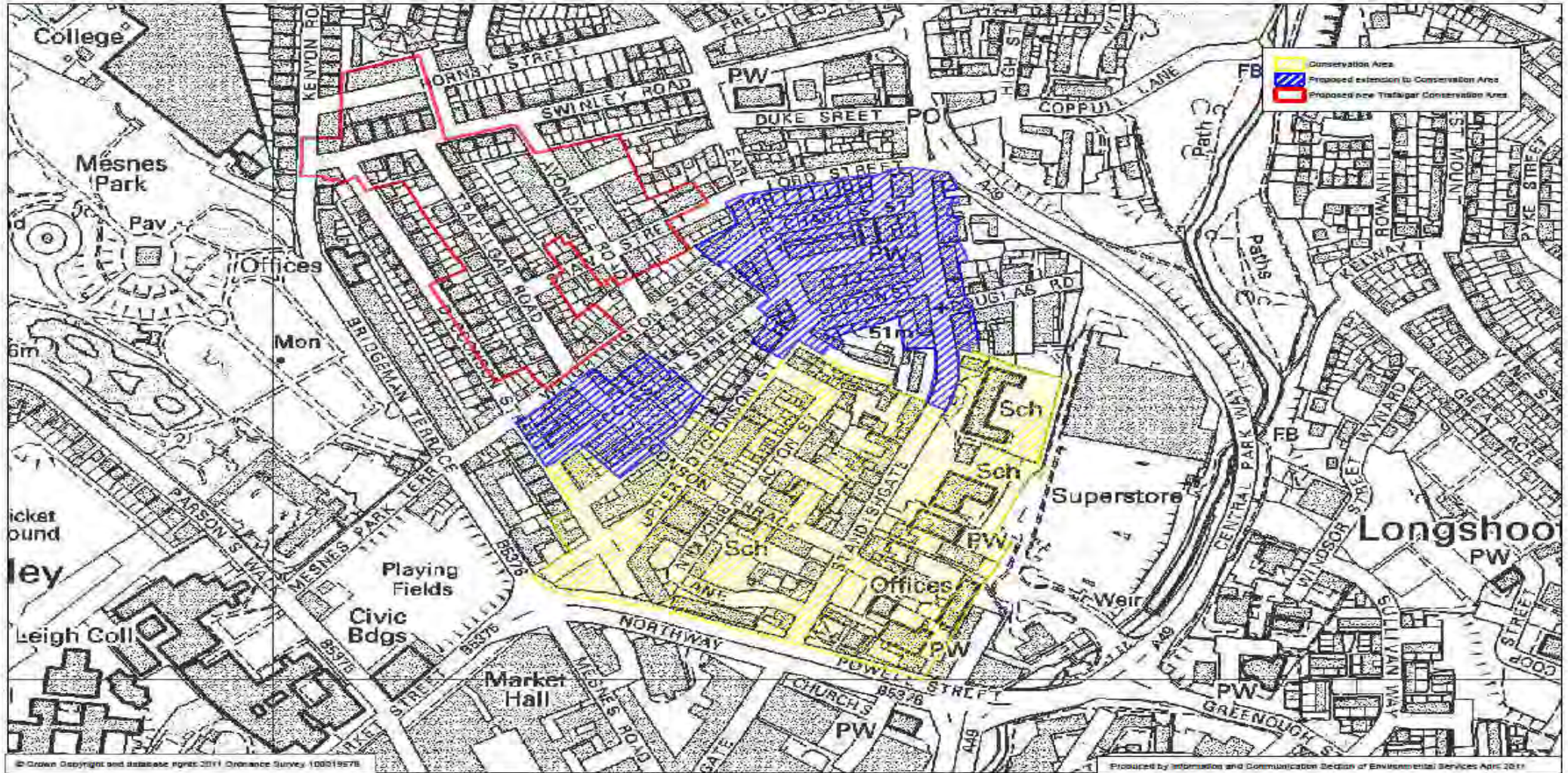


Figure 46 – Dicconson Conservation Area, the proposed extensions and the potential new conservation area to the north west

The properties to be included within the proposed extensions to the Dicconson Conservation Area are:

- **Charles Street no's:** 14, 14b to 36 and 11 to 37 including Wigan Baptist Church and school rooms
- **Clifton Street no's:** 2 to 22 and 3 to 23
- **Dicconson Street no's:** 71 - 81
- **Dicconson Terrace no's:** 2, 4,15,17,19,21 and 23
- **Earl Street no's:** 24 to 50
- **Eccleston Street no's:** 7,9,11,13,15 and17
- **Lansdowne Terrace no's:** 1 to 4
- **Marion Street no's:** 2
- **Scarisbrick Street No's:** 4 to 26 even and 9 to 29 odd
- **Upper Dicconson Street; no's:** 54, 56 and 58
- **Wrightington Street no's:** 2,4,6, 89,91,93,95,97 and101
- **Wigan Lane, no's:** 15 to 55 and 22 to 54, including the The Fox and Goose and The Millstone public houses.

## **12. Potential new Conservation Area at Trafalgar Road / Avondale Road.**

Through the process of appraising the Dicconson Conservation Area and its context, a potential new conservation area has been identified. It features significant properties primarily on Trafalgar Road and Avondale Road, including buildings of a high architectural merit. Most are late Victorian terraced properties, early Edwardian semi-detached villas and substantial semi-detached Arts and Crafts influenced properties.

The character of the area is residential with a mix of terrace, semi-detached and detached properties. It was developed incrementally in a grid layout and block plan plots. The spatial hierarchy of the area is consistent with the neighbouring conservation areas of Dicconson, Mesnes Park and Wigan Lane.

There are other similar characteristics too including brick boundary walls, private frontages of 1-2 metres, street trees and long views and vistas.

The architecture of the area is both pleasing and acclaimed within the Wigan context. Properties are constructed almost entirely of Accrington smooth red brick, with a rich use of terracotta dressings. Timber boarding and white render (mock Jacobethan style) are used to articulate gables and upper facades on some properties. This Arts and Crafts influenced architecture is a clear indication of the modern movement and characteristic of inter-war properties within the

Wigan area. Together with the Wigan Lane Conservation Area, the houses within the potential new conservation area symbolise the growth of the new middle classes in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The images at figures 47 – 52 show the type and variety of interesting building types.

Whilst the Dicconson Conservation Area Appraisal has recognised the potential new conservation area, this appraisal does not seek to include it within the conservation area. Instead, a separate detailed area appraisal is proposed with a view to its designation as a new conservation area.





Figures 47 – 52 – Images for the potential new Conservation Area at Trafalgar Road / Avondale Road



### **13. Management plan**

This section outlines a management plan for the Dicconson Conservation Area. It should be read in conjunction with the character appraisal and also relevant development plan policies.

Conservation area designation is not intended to prevent change but to influence it to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the conservation area. The proposals outlined in this section are intended to:

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

#### **Demolition**

The council will seek to preserve the area's listed buildings and buildings deemed to be of local architectural or historic interest. Any proposals to demolish buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be carefully examined.

Sections 8 and 74 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provide control over the demolition of listed and unlisted buildings respectively within a conservation area.

The existing conservation area and the proposed extension contain listed buildings to which this act applies.

#### **Alterations**

The council will seek to ensure that any alterations are sympathetic to the architectural character of the building, in terms of colour, proportion, materials and detailing, as well as to the character of the surrounding area. It will also ensure that the statutory controls over alterations, including enforcement action are appropriately used.

Under normal planning controls, certain works are classified as permitted development rights and so do not require planning permission. This includes small scale alterations such as many extensions to houses, provision of hard surfaces and the erection alteration of boundary treatments.

Within conservation areas the range of permitted development rights is limited in order to help ensure the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance. Therefore many minor alterations do require planning permission, for example; cladding, dormer windows, replacement roof materials and the installation of satellite dishes. Several of these are noticeable within the current conservation area and cumulatively they can have a detrimental impact on its character and appearance.

#### **Article 4 directions**

Local planning authorities have the power to remove, or apply for approval to remove permitted development rights, within a conservation area. This is done through an article 4 direction. This would mean that previously permitted alterations would be brought under the control of the council and would require

planning permission. The effect of alterations which are acceptable under normal circumstances, such as the replacement of windows and doors are already having a detrimental effect on the historic character and the appearance of the conservation area. These changes are widespread and further alterations of this nature will have a serious affect on the special architectural quality of the area, which is significant in its designation as a conservation area.

The council will consider imposing an article 4 direction within the conservation area to remove permitted development rights and thus preventing further erosion of the historic and architectural character of the area.

#### **‘Buildings at risk’**

The council will use its statutory powers to secure the preservation of buildings deemed to be under threat of dereliction or neglect within the conservation area. Historic buildings are finite resources which are irreplaceable once lost. The council has statutory powers to ensure that listed buildings do not deteriorate beyond repair.

These powers include ‘Urgent Works and Repairs Notices’ and also ‘Compulsory Purchase Orders’. These can be used as a last resort. These powers are outlined in Sections 47, 48, 50 and 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The council also has the power to secure the preservation of unlisted buildings within conservation areas in the form of Urgent Works Notices. These are applied in a similar way to

those on listed buildings and are invoked when a building is important for maintaining the character and appearance of the area.

#### **Boundary walls**

These are significant historical features still surviving within the conservation area although several have been removed. Therefore, every opportunity should be made to provide or restore walls to property boundaries as these traditionally constructed features are important in creating and retaining character within the conservation area.

#### **Reinstatement of architectural features**

Some buildings within the conservation area have lost their original doors, windows and other architectural features over time. As a result, their architectural character has been eroded and this has a detrimental effect on the character of the wider area.

Should proposals for alterations come forward there may be opportunities to encourage the reinstatement of these features.

However, as a further measure to encourage reinstatement or repair of original features, the council consider sources of financial support which may be available for such works.

#### **Public spaces and street furniture**

An honest and robust approach should be taken in the selection of new street furniture to avoid the creation of stereotypically ‘heritage’ installations. Any additions must be

justified and restricted to essential items. The siting of new features must be afforded careful consideration in regards to views, vistas, and the setting of buildings; particularly those identified as making a positive contribution to the townscape.

### **Monitoring and review**

This document should be reviewed every five years in the light of national and local planning policies. A review should include:

- A survey of the Conservation Area
- A photographic record
- An assessment of 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.

### **Implications of conservation area status**

Conservation area status is not intended either to stifle new development or to preserve areas as museum pieces. Conservation areas will be allowed to evolve to meet changing demands.

Although the council will take extra care when taking development control decisions to ensure that the special architectural and historic qualities of the area are not eroded.

The normal requirements for planning permission and building regulation approval apply with some additional restrictions:

- 1 Planning applications will be carefully considered by the council to ensure that they enhance or preserve the special character of the area.
- 2 The impact of any development outside the boundary of the conservation area, which might affect its setting and character, will also be carefully considered.
- 3 Conservation area consent is required for the demolition of most buildings or structures.
- 4 The council must be given six 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.
- 5 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 may require planning consent. Developers are advised to check with the council.