



Junction Lane Conservation Area

Draft Character Appraisal



September 2014

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This appraisal is part of a rolling programme of appraisals of all the conservation areas in West Lancashire. The Borough Council has an obligation under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review, from time to time, its Conservation Area designations, and under Section 71 of this Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.
- 1.2 The Junction Lane conservation area is a good example of a Victorian residential development, containing some impressive historic buildings which contribute significantly to the quality of the environment in Burscough. The Junction Lane Conservation Area was designated by West Lancashire District Council in 1985. It was extended in 1998 to include numbers 1-15 (odd) Junction Lane, plus 31 Junction Lane – the former Junction Hotel and the War memorial and memorial garden, in which it is located (see **Location Map**).
- 1.3 The last appraisal of the conservation area was carried out in 1998. Whilst we feel that the levels of change have been modest since that time, this document aims to identify and re-affirm the special architectural or historic interest of the area which justifies its designation. In this instance this review is not intended to supersede the previous 1998 appraisal, but rather adds a further layer of understanding in recording changes and potential threats to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 1.4 English Heritage, in its relevant guidance¹, states that the outcome of a review might typically result in an addendum to the existing appraisal, recording what has changed, confirming (or redefining) the special interest that warrants designation, setting out any new recommendations and revising the area's management strategy.
- 1.5 As part of this review an objective study has been conducted, which has assessed the contribution (both architecturally and historically) that individual properties make within the conservation area. This appraisal work has extended beyond the boundaries of the current conservation area and is used to examine the potential for extending the boundary of the conservation area. The outcome of this study is illustrated in **Map 2**.

2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's Planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The *framework* recognises that a core role of the planning system is to

¹ Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (English Heritage, March 2011).

conserve heritage so it can be enjoyed by future generations and sets out the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage.

- 2.2 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should ensure that conservation areas justify their status because of their architectural or historic interest.
- 2.3 The West Lancashire Borough Council Local Plan Development Plan Document 2012 – 2027 guides development within the Borough. The vision for the plan is for West Lancashire to be an attractive place where people want to live, work and visit. The distinctiveness of West Lancashire including the contribution made by its historic buildings and places should be valued, sustained and where possible enhanced.
- 2.4 Policy EN4 of the Local Plan (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Cultural and Heritage Assets) identifies that the historic environment has an aesthetic value which helps create a unique sense of place. Protection is to be afforded the historic environment, and there is a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets (which includes conservation areas).
- 2.5 The West Lancashire ‘Design Guide’ Supplementary Planning Guidance (published in January 2008) provides specific direction in relation to design, including works to buildings in the historic environment. It states that development proposals should always be sensitive to the character of the historic environment, be of high quality in terms of design and the materials used and aim to enhance the character and appearance of the building and/or wider area.
- 2.6 In the wider context, Burscough is the Borough’s third largest settlement. It is designated in the Local Plan through Policy GN1 ‘Settlement Boundaries’ as a Key Service Centre – this makes it a key location for new development.

3. History and Development

- 3.1 A brief history of the Junction Lane conservation area and its surroundings was published in the 1998 conservation appraisal. This history, together with those of all the 28 conservation areas in the Borough, has been published in a document entitled *The Conservation Areas of West Lancashire: A Brief History (2007)* which is available to download from www.westlancs.gov.uk/heritage

4. Summary of Special Interest

- 4.1 The Junction Lane Conservation Area is a Victorian development possessing significant group value, visually illustrating the era’s eclectic architectural style. The area represents the Victorian period of prosperity in Burscough, owing to its location at the junction between the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and railway. The re-naming of

what was previously known as 'Old Green Lane' to Junction Lane reflected the importance of the railway's arrival to Burscough.

4.2 Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area

- The linear form of development which affords views along the whole of the conservation area.
- Numbers 5 -15 Junction Lane are substantial two storey semi-detached houses constructed of 'fair faced', mellow red brick which demonstrate a number of Victorian details including:
 - Painted sandstone dressings for window cills, and heads, incorporating a carved floral design above the ground floor bay window
 - Steeply pitched roofs covered with natural blue slate
 - Overhanging roofs with sculptured barge boards and pronounced eaves supported on moulded brackets or corbels
 - Cast iron rain water goods
 - Painted timber vertical sliding sash windows with horns and without glazing bars.
 - Large porches located to the side of the property, featuring fine detail including moulded painted plasterwork to the eaves and gothic arched windows.
- Numbers 21 – 23 Junction Lane are substantial 2½ storey Victorian red brick, blue slate roofed properties with decorative coloured black and buff brick banding. Detailing includes decorative barge boards and sandstone dressings for window cills, and heads, incorporating a carved design above the first floor windows.
- Numbers 12 – 20 and 25 Junction Lane are substantial 2/3 storey villa-style properties, all of which (apart from number 16-18) are detached.
- Number 20 reflects the Victorian taste for Gothic architecture with its ecclesiastical² detailing and is the only property faced with a buff coloured stone rather than brick
- Numbers 27 and 29 are smaller scale semi-detached brick built and slate roofed properties. They have buff sandstone dressings for window cills and heads, canted bay windows to the ground floor, 2 over 2 sash windows and wood panelled doors with plain fanlights over.
- Most houses in the area have generous plot sizes of around 100m² and a building line set back to around 10m creating a feeling of openness and spaciousness – of villas within a garden setting.
- Well-established tree cover to the frontages of the properties, which forms a canopy over the roads and softens the built features.

² Contains architectural elements which display features found in Church architecture, including mullioned windows, a Canterbury cross and pinnacle in the shape of a Christian cross.

- Mature gardens with defined boundaries created by brick walls or hedges.
- A number of properties on the eastern side of Junction Lane have retained their original brick front boundary walls with stone capping and some also have ornate gate piers, inscribed with the name of the property. Others have re-built them in a similar style.
- Most front boundaries on the western side are formed by hedges.



5. Assessment of Special Interest

Location and Setting

- 5.1 The Junction Lane conservation area is close to the town centre of Burscough and is entirely surrounded by urban land uses. To the North West and South East of the conservation area there are residential developments of varying ages and density. To the North East is a former industrial site which is currently the site of a new housing development – including new build homes and the conversion of the former Ainscough Flour Mill to apartments. To the South West is a recreational Park. Junction Lane itself is a busy route, linking the Liverpool to Preston, A59 to the A5209 and the M6 beyond. Close by to the east is the Liverpool to Preston railway line and Burscough Junction Station only 75 metres from the conservation area. The Leeds - Liverpool Canal is approximately half a kilometre to the north of the conservation area.
- 5.2 Burscough is situated some 50 feet above sea level, on a low sandy ridge standing above what was formerly inhospitable marshy land. The higher ground was a more attractive place to live and developed as a communication route.

- 5.3 The conservation area and the immediate surrounding area is extensively flat, although the road rises as it passes over the railway line. The long straight nature of Junction Lane enables views through and along the conservation area (east to west and vice versa). Trees and shrubs in the front gardens of properties filter expansive views of the buildings from the roadside. Views of the roofscape can be seen from the bridge over the railway. The important views within and outside the conservation area are illustrated in **Map 2**.

Historic Development

- 5.4 Prehistoric relics such as ancient canoes have been found around Burscough, confirming that it had prehistoric inhabitants, probably attracted by the fish in the nearby Martin Mere which was then much larger than it is at present. However, there are no known sites of archaeological interest within the conservation area. There is a reference to Burscough at the end of the 12th Century being called “Burgustud”, suggesting a Norse origin. The settlement was raised in status by the founding of the nearby Burscough Priory in 1189 under the Augustinian Order who ran a Leper Hospital. The Priory had a major influence on the settlement until its dissolution in 1536.
- 5.5 The draining of Martin Mere began in 1692, and enabled the reclaimed fertile land to be put to intensive agricultural use, and Burscough became a centre for the sale and processing of agricultural produce. This role was given impetus by Burscough’s role as a communication centre: the Liverpool to Preston road became a turnpike in 1771; the Leeds and Liverpool Canal was commenced in 1774; the Liverpool, Ormskirk and Preston railway was opened in 1849 and the Southport to Wigan line was opened in 1855.
- 5.6 From examination of historic mapping of the area it is apparent that the phasing of development along Junction Lane occurred as follows:
- The original development took place between 1845 and 1893
 - The second phase, during the 1930s, saw nos. 12 and 14 built
 - The third phase during the 1980s/1990s saw the houses within the grounds of no. 1 Junction Lane and the Lathom Close mews development to the rear of no. 25 constructed.

This phasing is illustrated in **Map 1**.

Layout, Architectural Quality and Built Form

- 5.7 The War Memorial and no. 1 Junction Lane with its unusual red brick extension mark the current entrance to the conservation area which continues down to the station.

5.8 Most properties within the conservation area have plots of a regular size and shape, the average plot size being around 100m². Exceptions to this are:

- The Lathom Close development which was formed from the garden space of no. 25
- Numbers 27 and 29 both have plots of reduced depth, possibly due to the previous sale of land to the rear.
- Numbers 1a – 1d which were created from the sub-division of the plot of no. 1 during the latter half of the 20th century. There remains physical evidence that this was once all part of one large garden space in the retention of a red brick wall with distinctive baluster feature which runs in front of both 1a and 1b Junction Lane.



Former garden feature of no. 1 running in front of no. 1b Junction Lane

5.9 The architectural style of the original houses on Junction Lane is typically late Victorian. As a group they provide a visual illustration of how speculative builders of the era made use of the canals and new railways, enabling the easier and cheaper transportation of building materials. The buildings within the Conservation Area demonstrate High Victorian eclecticism to a greater or lesser degree. This includes the craze for including a variety of colours and textures in their façades, a combination of different architectural styles including some with strong Gothic elements (particularly no. 20), and others using a more simple vernacular building style with some Gothic overtones.

Open Space, Parks, Gardens and Trees

5.10 There is one area of public open space within the conservation area. This is the memorial garden area at the corner of Liverpool Road South and Junction Lane which provides the setting for the war memorial. It is characterised by low, clipped

hedging, formal flower beds and grassed areas intersected by tarmac paths. Recent additions include bench seating.



- 5.11 In the rest of the conservation area, one of the most important aspects and defining features is the tree cover, particularly along the Junction Lane frontages. Every garden has at least one mature specimen tree in the front, side and rear garden. There is a wide range of species, including holly, chestnut, beech and silver birch. The trees are important to the conservation area for many reasons, not least because they are attractive features in their own right. They also add colour to the area, changing with the seasons, soften the hard edges of buildings and structures and can screen and frame views. There are a number of individual trees and groups of trees within the conservation area that are protected by designation. These are illustrated in **Map 2**.
- 5.12 Many of the boundaries to properties along Junction Lane are created by hedges and shrubs, both evergreen, such as holly, privet, yew and laurel, and deciduous such as hawthorn.
- 5.13 The footways and the carriageway are all surfaced with black bitumen, as are many of the private drives. The kerbs are all relatively modern concrete.

6. Further Action and Issues

Possible changes to the conservation area boundary

- 6.1 In relation to conservation areas, national planning guidance states that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest. Although this section specifically refers to designation, this principle is also be used when considering boundary revisions to existing conservation areas.
- 6.2 The boundary of the Junction Lane conservation area was extended in 1998 to include numbers 1-15 (odd) Junction Lane, plus 31 Junction Lane – the former Junction Hotel and the War memorial and small park in which it is sited.
- 6.3 Any review of a conservation area should further assess properties beyond the current boundary, whilst ensuring it remains coherent and does not contain features which dilute the special character of the area. As part of this survey process, a number of properties in close proximity to the existing boundary were evaluated for their potential for inclusion within an extension. Two possible extensions have been assessed to determine the extent to which they reflect the conservation area’s key characteristics. They will be subject to further public consultation before any further action is taken and would require Council approval as part of any agreed appraisal.
- 6.4 On both Liverpool Road North and Liverpool Road South there are a number of properties which echo some of the styling and features of those within the conservation area. However the character of much of the development along both Liverpool Road North and Liverpool Road South differs from that within the conservation area, principally due to the lack of tree cover, narrower plot size and lack of mature garden area to the front, which is largely tarmac. This detracts from the ‘garden setting’ and spacious feel to the plots and therefore links these properties more closely to Burscough centre, slightly further north, rather than to the conservation area.
- 6.5 A Local Authority’s power to cancel or vary a designation is given by Section 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In terms of procedure, the local authority must follow the same publicity procedures to vary or cancel a designation as they do to designate an area. In addition, notice will be given to the Secretary of State and English Heritage with details of the area affected.

The following possible extensions are illustrated in **Map 2**:

Possible Extension 1

No. 255, 263 and Clayton House Liverpool Road South

6.6 No. 255 – a former vicarage built around 1850 - and Clayton House were built around the same time as the original 19th century development in Junction Lane. No. 263 is the associated Lodge/Coach House of Clayton House, but is now a separate dwelling.



255 Liverpool Road South



Clayton House, Liverpool Road South



263 Liverpool Road South

- 6.7 These properties share a number of characteristics with the properties within the Junction Lane conservation area, including a mature garden setting, Victorian styling and detailing, as well as their form as substantial detached villa properties.
- 6.8 Whilst it is noted that these properties identified above are of value in themselves, they are however disconnected from the conservation area by the main road – Liverpool Road South, which acts as a barrier to movement and views. The inclusion of these properties would effectively change the focus of the conservation area to the war memorial, rather than the value attained by its present linear form. It would create a conservation area with a distorted and rather convoluted boundary. Changing the boundary may in this sense dilute its special character.

Recommendation – *Not to amend the conservation area boundary to include possible extension 1 indicated above.*

Possible Extension 2

Section of garden wall to the front of 1b and side of 1a Junction Lane

- 6.9 No. 1 Junction Lane formerly occupied a larger site than at present, and would have been a prominent property given its location. Its grounds included pleasure gardens incorporating the land now occupied by 1a, 1b and 1c. The only remaining evidence of this is a terracotta garden wall with elaborate balustrade detail which runs at the front of no. 1b and to the side of no. 1a. A small section of this feature is included within the conservation area boundary by virtue of it being located within the plot of no. 1, however it would seem logical to adjust the boundary to include the whole of this feature.

6.10 Having considered the above, our recommendation, subject to consultation with local residents, is that the entirety of the balustrade wall feature, stretching across the boundary of 1a and 1b Junction Lane should be included within the conservation area.

Recommendation – *To amend the conservation boundary to include the garden wall feature located to the front boundary of 1b, and side of 1a Junction Lane.*

7. Article 4 (2) Direction

7.1 Property owners within the conservation area have had their permitted development rights to carry out certain works, without planning permission removed. The implications of this ‘direction’ are summarised below:

Element of Article 4 (2) Direction.	Importance in the context of the Junction Lane Conservation Area
Erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on dwelling or building in curtilage.	These features are important in the context of the buildings in this conservation area.
Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of dwelling.*	Strong justification is required to remove this particular right but the Council does feel it to be justified in terms of windows doors and other building features. Control over extensions is also considered to be extremely desirable in this conservation area.
Alteration of dwelling roof.*	Alteration to the roof materials in this conservation area would severely affect its character due to the current predominant use of natural materials.
Erection/construction of a porch outside any external door.*	The erection of an unsympathetically designed porch would be detrimental to the buildings in the conservation area.
Provision within curtilage of a building’s, enclosure, swimming or other pool incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling or required for the maintenance, improvement or alteration of building or enclosure. *	The provision of such features which do not currently require planning permission could have a great effect upon this particular conservation area.
Creation of hard surfaces within the curtilage of a house incidental to its enjoyment.*	The introduction of hard surfaced areas could severely affect the character of this conservation area.
Installation, alteration or replacement of satellite antenna on house or curtilage.*	Satellite antenna will need to be controlled to ensure that they are correctly sited.
Erection or demolition of gates, fences,	Boundary walls in particular are important

walls or other means of enclosure within the curtilage.*	features in this conservation area.
Painting of dwelling or building or enclosure within the curtilage.*	Painting of the buildings would affect the character of the conservation area.

* In respect of these developments a direction only relates to those developments fronting a highway, a waterway or an open space (defined as any land laid out as a public garden, or used for extension, if any part such as the side fronts the highway etc. then this will be covered. The Secretary of State advises that powers in relation to extensions should only be used exceptionally.

7.2 The Council considers that following this review of the Junction Lane conservation area, there remains justification for the continued application of an Article 4 (2) Direction on the whole of the conservation area in relation to the aspects of development set out in the above table.

Recommendation – *To retain the Article 4 (2) Direction in its current form.*

8. Further Development in the Conservation Area

8.1 In principle further development could be allowed within the conservation area as it lies within the settlement boundary of Burscough as defined by the West Lancashire Local Plan Development Plan Document 2012 - 2027.

8.2 However, in practice we feel there is little scope for new development other than small scale extensions/alterations to the existing buildings. Development proposals need to respond to the key characteristics identified in Section 4 and retain elements which are seen as positively contributing to the character and appearance of the area.

8.3 Maintaining a linear built form and layout consistent with the majority of the conservation area, with properties set back from the frontage is important. Retaining existing boundary treatments and the established trees and hedges is essential to overall feel of the conservation area.

8.4 If any significant development proposals did come forward in the future, their impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area as a whole would need to be carefully assessed.

9. Positive Contributors

9.1 The key characteristics of the conservation area, as identified in section 4.1, form the basis of the positive contributors to the area. This includes the value of the original development, in terms of the buildings and landscape and the intrinsic link between the two. **Map 2** also illustrates the outcome of an assessment of the houses within

the conservation area – including those that make a positive contribution to the special character of the area.

10. Management issues

10.1 The Management Plan for a conservation area is an essential tool in ensuring the special character of the area is preserved and enhanced. The issues identified during the previous (1998) Appraisal included:

- High volume of vehicular traffic
- Bland surface treatment of carriageway and footway
- Gaps in hedges on South West frontages
- Unsympathetic lighting columns and lanterns

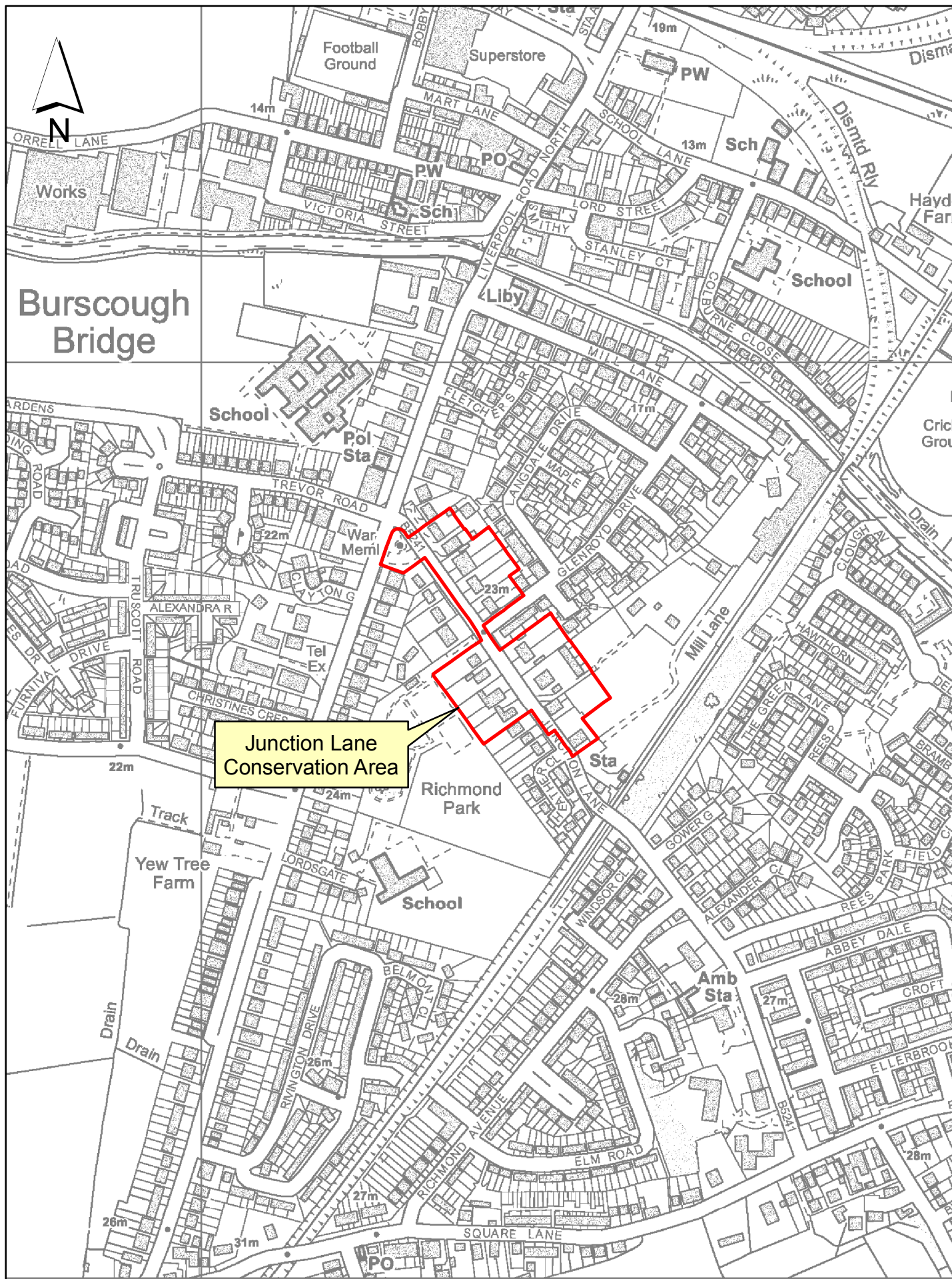
10.2 In terms of progress made with regards to these issues, the modern lighting columns have since been replaced with those of a more sympathetic design. Some of the gapping in the hedging to the properties fronting Junction Lane has been addressed through the introduction of the Council’s Hedge Planting Grant. Some gaps to hedging within the War Memorial Gardens have also been filled.

10.3 The following issues have been identified as part of the update or are issues of continuing relevance:

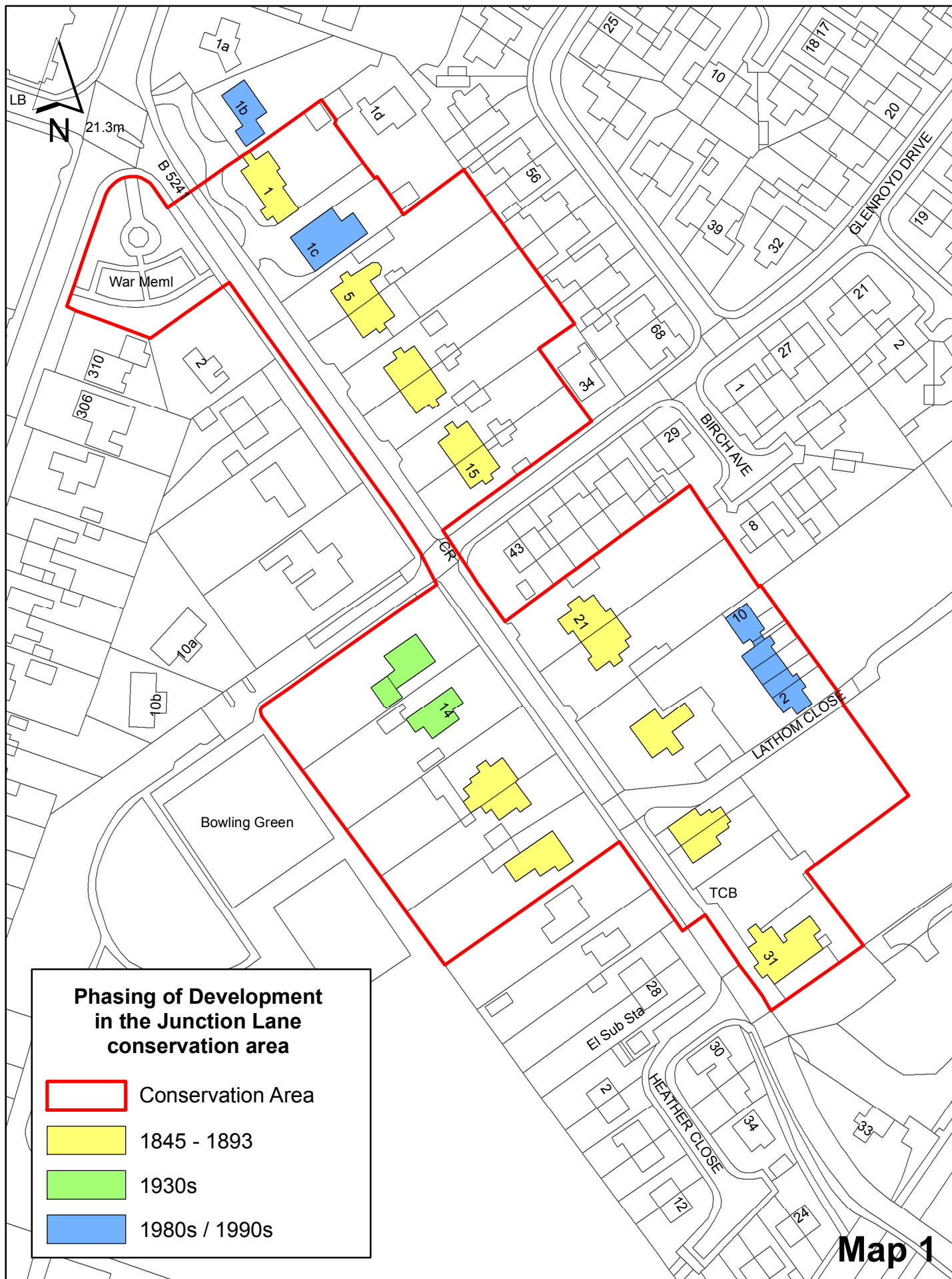
Issue	Action required	Implementation
High volume of vehicular traffic	Consider what if any traffic restrictions/regulations could be placed on Junction Lane.	Local authority action in consultation with L.C.C and Highways Agency when possible
Bland surface treatment of carriageway and footway	Resurface with more suitable materials	Local authority action in consultation with L.C.C if funding is available
Gaps to existing hedges in conservation area.	Replant gaps in hedges and/or provide new hedges with suitable species.	Residents to be made aware of the Hedging Grant Scheme.
Inappropriate boundary treatments e.g. different wall styles or heights, removal of original gate piers	Encourage owners to maintain existing boundaries and gate piers. Provide advice as required. Publish leaflets to inform property owners of their responsibilities and restrictions.	Through the development control process and through negotiation with property owners. Providing advice to owners and Potential for funding through Conservation Area Grant scheme.
Widening of driveways or extension of hard	Removal of these features and their replacement with	Through negotiation with landowners and the Article 4 (2)

standing within the frontage of the plots	a smaller parking area and natural vegetation.	Direction to prevent further such development.
Removal of the original detailing and features to important unlisted Victorian properties.	Potential enforcement action to require the reinstatement of features and prevention of further unsympathetic alterations. Encourage the restoration of any lost features.	Through Development Control enforcement section under Article 4 (2) Direction powers. Provide advice to owners as requested and making residents aware of potential funding through Traditional Features Grant scheme.

10.4 This document and the Appraisal document highlight the important features and the areas where action will be desirable in the future. How the works are financed largely depends on the ownership situation and on the availability of public sector finance to support those works that are not viable for the landowners. It is expected that the checklist above will be used as a starting point for determining the areas for priority action and for where funds should be targeted in the future should they become available.



Junction Lane
Conservation Area



Map 1

