

# **Scarisbrick Park Conservation Area**



## **Conservation Area Appraisal**

**September 2001**

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(Planning & Development Services)**

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## AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

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## **Foreword**

**This Conservation Area Appraisal sets out some of the general legislation relating to Conservation Areas. It traces the historic evolution of Scarisbrick Park and describes the architectural and historic features, which make the area special. It is to be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Proposals Document. The Conservation Area Proposals document also includes recommendations, particularly about what the Council considers should be done to increase planning control and amend the Conservation Area boundary. These should be read in conjunction with one another.**

**The two documents have undergone a public consultation exercise and have been amended to reflect public opinion where considered appropriate.**

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## **PREFACE - PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL**

This appraisal is part of a programme of appraisals of all the current and proposed conservation areas in West Lancashire.

The District 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 consider any new areas, and under Section 71 of this Act, to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

When West Lancashire's existing conservation areas were designated in the 1970's and 1980's it was generally recognised that these areas were of a special character which warranted preservation and enhancement. However, very little was actually written down as to which features were important in this respect. English Heritage now recommend the carrying out of appraisals which will allow a full assessment of the characteristics of existing and proposed conservation areas. This will enable the Council to decide whether the conservation area still has sufficient character to warrant its designation or whether the area needs extending in any way.

The appraisals will also highlight the implications for the future preservation and enhancement of a conservation area and will provide a useful basis for the publication of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas as is required by Section 71 of the Act.

The policies on conservation areas contained within the West Lancashire Local Plan form the basis for determining planning applications for development in these areas. This appraisal should be read in conjunction with these policies and will form a material consideration in the consideration of planning applications and planning appeals.

The appraisals will also provide a basis for: reviewing conservation area boundaries; guiding future local authority action in preparing enhancement schemes and in guiding the actions of others; and, where appropriate, increasing planning controls.

It is intended that these issues will be considered in full consultation with local residents and landowners, local interest groups, the Parish Council, the Conservation Areas Advisory Panel and Lancashire County Council. Proposals for this Area will be the subject of a separate document.

Finally, this document will hopefully raise awareness of the special qualities of the Conservation Area so that as the area continues to evolve, it does so in a sympathetic way and the essential character of the area is maintained for future generations.

### **What is a Conservation Area?**

A conservation area is an area of "special architectural or historic interest", the character of which is considered worthy of protection and improvement. It is the combination of the buildings, street patterns, open spaces, vistas, landmarks and other features which give a conservation area its distinctive character. This character should be the focus of efforts towards preservation and enhancement.

Under Planning Legislation the local authority has wider powers than usual to control development which might damage the area's character. The controls which exist in conservation areas are contained at the end of this document.

It is important that there is a consensus on the quality and importance of a particular conservation area in order to assist in its maintenance and enhancement. To be successful, conservation policy must be a partnership between West Lancashire District Council and the many interests involved in the conservation area's future.



# INTRODUCTION

The Scarisbrick Hall Conservation Area was originally designated by West Lancashire District Council in 1975 because it includes the parkland associated with Scarisbrick Hall which has been the seat of the Scarisbrick family since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and therefore has much historical and architectural interest. There are a number of large estates in and around West Lancashire, some of these include, Rufford Old and New Hall Estates, Lathom Park Estate, both of which are conservation areas, and Wrightington Hall Estate, now a hospital and Harrock Hall Estate, which is in private ownership. All of these historic parks represent a record of human influence over the natural environment and as such are part of our cultural landscape.

Scarisbrick Park is on English Heritage's Historic Parks and Gardens Register, Grade II, and although it is a recognition of its special interest in a national context this does not afford any statutory protection.

Scarisbrick Hall was largely rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and is without doubt a dominant feature within the landscape as its tower can be seen for miles around in the relatively flat West Lancashire Plain.

The main defining feature of the conservation area are the large belts of woodland surrounding the park boundary. The parkland is also enclosed by a wall around much of the boundary, brick in some parts, stone in others, and post and wire fences which effectively make the area well contained within its historic enclosure. The small village of Bescar lies at the northern end of the Park and the Leeds and Liverpool canal marks the southern boundary.

The conservation area also includes a large privately owned wooded area called Dam Wood which is an attractive feature east of Hall Road, just outside the Park boundary. This woodland on either side of Hall Road at the eastern boundary of the park forms a tree canopy over Hall Road which even in summer blocks out the light creating a micro climate and different atmosphere.

## **Historic landscape character**

The Council carried out an assessment of the landscape character of the District in January 1994, highlighting five main types of natural areas which have developed over time. The Council subsequently produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on development in those Natural Areas, and included Policy LN.1 in the Local Plan. Scarisbrick Park is within Natural Area 2a: Clieves Hill and Scarisbrick Natural Area which essentially is a flat open landscape resulting from loss of banks and hedges through changes in farming practices. However, it can be argued that even 200 years ago parts of this area were open common grazing land which was not particularly distinctive.

The most important site in this area is Scarisbrick Hall and its Parkland which have obvious exceptional historical landscape and architectural importance. Equally important to the development of this Park is the draining of this area and adjacent areas including bogs, lakes and Martin Mere, the latter said to be the largest inland lake in England, gradually enabling lowlands to be developed for agriculture. Celia Fiennes writing in 1689, "avoided going by the famous Mere called Martin Mere.... It being near evening and not getting a guide I was a little afraid to go that way it being very hazardous for strangers to pass by it" (Duggan, M 1996)

The land drainage activity should not be underestimated especially in terms of the effect it had on the surrounding landscape and neither should the influence that the Scarisbrick family had on the landscape in their involvement with land drainage and progressive agricultural methods.

Scarisbrick Park has been identified in the Local Plan as an area of Regional Importance in terms of its landscape history value, where archaeological investigations are a pre-requisite of major

developments. New development will be allowed provided that it does not damage the historic character of the landscape. Policy LN.2 in the West Lancashire Local Plan protects these features of landscape history.

Scarisbrick Park is also designated as a Biological Heritage Site as it contributes to the biodiversity of the County. Policy LN. 9 to protect its special ecological characteristics is included in the West Lancashire Local Plan (Dec 1999).

The Natural Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance provides background for the conservation area appraisal and proposal document which suggests strategies for the conservation of the area.

Set out in this document is a detailed assessment of what makes Scarisbrick Hall Conservation Area special. Although important features are identified separately, it is the combination of the features which justifies the designation of the conservation area rather than any one in particular.

The map below shows the current boundary of the conservation area.





# LOCATION AND SETTING

## Location

Scarisbrick Hall Park is situated within the parish of Scarisbrick and is halfway between Ormskirk and Southport. The park covers approximately 182 hectares (450 acres). The parish of Scarisbrick has a population of approximately 2,975, is the largest Parish within Lancashire and is almost entirely in the Green Belt.

## Landscape setting

The conservation area is set within the West Lancashire plain and its distinctive wooded boundary contrasts with the surrounding flat and predominantly agricultural landscape. The larger village of Burscough is situated approximately 3 miles east of the park. The park is set between the two main routes from Bursough and Ormskirk through to Southport. Southport Road runs around the western park boundary, Bescar Brow Lane and Bescar village form the northern edge of the park, Hall Lane forms the eastern boundary and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal curves along the southern boundary of the Park.

The park is heavily wooded around the edges of the conservation area and there are also large areas within the park, particularly around the Hall itself with smaller more dispersed areas of woodland around the former phesantry.

Much of the land within the park is in agricultural use, with both arable and pasture farming in the surrounding fields.

Scarisbrick Hall is centrally located within the park, comprising the Hall, stable block, modern classrooms, formal gardens, car parks and a lake in front of the Hall. There are several pools and ponds scattered throughout the estate which is also crossed by Eas Brook/Hurlston Brook running from south-east to north-west passing around the east side of the stables, feeding the large lake.

## Topography

The landscape is predominantly flat within the parkland. A gentle slope upwards to the Hall, west to the centre of the park slopes away gently down past the modern classrooms towards the Farm and Mausoleum. Another bank of earth north of Eas Brook runs parallel to it and lies roughly in the position of the former Mill Stream as shown on the 1850 map, which rises up behind Old Wood and slopes gently down towards Culshaw's Plantation and the Church.

## Views



Views in and out of the conservation area are hidden from view for the most part by extensive bands of trees around the boundary. The former Home Farm and its associated buildings can be seen from Hall Road where there are gaps in the trees. And of course the tower is also visible from this point but carefully planted woodlands screen the Hall from all parts of the Conservation Area boundary. Access points into the Park, principally where there



are existing lodges or from the former position of Castle Lodge, also provide important views into the park. Public views are also limited to looking from the road side since there is no public access into the park but there are nevertheless many impressive vistas within the Park for those who have the privilege to enter.

There is a public footpath into part of Dam Wood which provides important views into this part of the conservation area, principally into the woodland areas.

Views out of the conservation area are reduced by the extensive woodland coverage and often limited to main access points down linear driveways. From the Hall's front entrance the view is delightful stretching onto the lake, across the fields and beyond that, dense woodland, a very natural and pleasing setting for the Hall.



Views within the conservation area are long and wide if not interrupted by trees because of the flat landscape. Views in parts of the Parkland are closed off, for instance, once inside the area of the former pheasantry views are limited to that enclosure because of Canal Wood and Paddock Wood.



# HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

## Archaeology

There are currently three important archaeological sites designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area. Scheduling gives the sites statutory protection against harmful development and policies in the West Lancashire Local Plan help the Council to ensure that these sites and any future potential sites are protected and enhanced.

1. Medieval Wayside Cross, Southport Road. Cut from a single slab of rough stone this medieval cross originally supported a wooden crucifix. It had a dual purpose of a wayside shrine and route marker, over the treacherous ground. There was another cross further up Southport Road on the corner with Gorsuch Lane but was removed many years ago.
2. Scarisbrick Park Holy Well, located a few metres north of the Wayside Cross on the edge of the park over a natural spring. It is covered by rough cut stone which has been cut as a cross, square with points on the compass. It is likely the Cross and Holy Well had a close association.
3. Moated site of Scarisbrick Hall, located in Old Wood, north of the present Hall. It includes a tree and shrub covered island. The moats north-east side is formed by East Brook, whose banks contain dressed stone.

There is much scope for archaeological investigation within Scarisbrick Park, particularly around the Hall and its associated buildings as much of the land has remained undeveloped over the centuries (Crosby 1993).

## Historical Evolution

The historical evolution of the site dates as far back at least as the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, as records show that Scarisbrick is mentioned during the reign of Richard I, when Simon de Grubhead of Lathom gave land to his brother Gilbert de Scarisbrick (who adopted the name of his property).

Scarisbrick Hall and the family have dominated life of the inhabitants of the locality for many centuries, indeed it was as recent as 1945 when Sir Everard Scarisbrick sold the Hall and its associated parkland for use as a college. The Park as it exists today was probably formed in the 1790's.

The first hall was built in the reign of King Stephen. Evidence of the original hall can be found just north of the present Hall beyond the modern classrooms in Old Wood, in the form of a moated site. These archaeological features form two of the sides of the moated site, the third is formed by Eas Brook. The moat was probably created for drainage, sewerage or fishing rather than defensive reasons (Duggan, M 1996).

In 1802-3 Thomas Scarisbrick (formerly Eccleston) commissioned John Humphrey Repton to produce plans for a new house and park respectively. Eccleston was responsible for much of the land reclamation around Martin Mere at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century between 1786 and 1789 particularly. Indeed he was presented with a gold medal for his success in this matter in 1788. His replanting scheme for the Park is set out in Repton's Red Book (January 1803) included the rebuilding of the mansion on a new site. The Red Book was sold at Phillips in June 1981 (lot 175). The proposals were never fully implemented although this may be why the lake was dug (English Heritage 1998). On his death in 1809, Eccleston's son Thomas Scarisbrick employed John Slater (NW Civic Trust, Treasures of Lancashire), a Liverpool builder, and Thomas Rickman to carry out repairs and restoration work at Scarisbrick between 1813 and 1816. These works were as follows, the Hall was refaced in stone, new windows were installed, the porch was redesigned and gothic detailing such as battlements, pinnacles and crockets were added. Some internal features also still remain from this period. However, the Hall's current gothic character was not seen until Pugin's later additions.



Thomas died in 1833 and was succeeded by his younger brother Charles Scarisbrick. This was only after much dispute which ended up in the House of Lords where it was decided in his favour and gave him an estimated income of £40,000 a year. The Park was completed by 1839 as shown by the tithe map.

Charles was very resourceful and entrepreneurial, acquiring much land throughout South Lancashire. He owned coal mines in nearby Wrightington and Shevington and prospered much from sale of land which was eventually developed as the Victorian seaside town of Southport. He was also reputed to be the richest "commoner" in Lancashire, his income reaching about £60,000 in later life. Charles was a very keen collector, buying antique pictures, furniture, books and armour. Charles was reputed to be a recluse and never married but had a common law wife, Mary Braithwaite and illegitimate children. Their inheritance was secured through the sale of his collections

ANW Pugin was introduced to Charles Scarisbrick in 1836 and as a recent convert to Catholicism, he was fascinated by medieval architecture and his designs reflect these strong religious and artistic feelings. Interestingly Charles insisted that the new hall should follow on the same foundations of the old hall, limiting Pugin, but revealing some interesting designs. The commission for Scarisbrick Hall certainly offered Pugin his first real opportunity to put his ideas into practice and the design must also have delighted Charles Scarisbrick.(County Museums Guide)

ANW Pugin died in 1852 and when Charles died in 1860 the estate was inherited by his sister, who changed her name to Lady Ann Scarisbrick on her return to England from Paris in 1861. Lady Anne commissioned Pugin's son Edward Welby to redecorate and extend the hall and interestingly whenever possible incorporate the monogram 'A.S.' E.W. Pugin's design into the decoration of the building was more elaborate than his father's and the clock tower was removed and replaced by the tower which exists today, taller and more flamboyant. In 1872 Anne Scarisbrick died and was succeeded by her daughter Elizer Margaret, Marquise de Casteja. On her death, her husband commissioned the building of St Elizabeth's Church, designed by Pugin and Pugin in 1888 within the grounds of the Park, on the site of the former Catholic Chapel, in her memory.

The Casteja family sold the Hall back to Sir Thomas Talbot Leyland Scarisbrick, a grandson of Charles and when it passed to his son Sir Evererd Scarisbrick he sold it in 1946 as a training college. In 1963 the college closed and a development company wanted to demolish the Hall and redevelop the grounds for housing. Planning permission was thankfully refused and the Hall was again sold for use as an independent school. At this time the internal fittings were under threat and the County Council served a Building Preservation Order in 1963 to prevent their sale and removal. This was upheld and in 1969 the County Council acquired the works of art in situ at Scarisbrick Hall. The land ownership was divided up in 1964 and is now currently fragmented. Part of the estates woodland was offered up for timber for up to two years and this is when much of the historic woodland plantations, as shown in 1892 map were cleared.

The 1850 and 1892 maps show the chronological layers of development of Scarisbrick Hall Park which reveal interesting patterns of the history of the site.

The garden was designed as a setting for the Hall and to enhance the views from it but has been developed from a number of elements which have evolved over the years and these are described below.



## LAND USES

### Land uses around the conservation area

The surrounding land use around the conservation area is predominantly agricultural, mainly producing carrots and brascicas from a number of farmsteads. The area is characterised by a number of small villages including Snape Green, Carr Cross and the larger village of Bescar which is directly adjacent to the edge of the northern edge of the Parkland and includes the Church of St Elizabeth and Parish Centre. To the South beyond the Leeds and Liverpool Canal is the village of Pinfold, which is also a conservation area, and Shaw Hall caravan site.

### Land Uses in the conservation area

The major land use within the conservation area is also agricultural, although the type of agriculture relates to the ownership. The area to the west of the Hall including the field with the listed Grade II former animal shelter is used as arable land, as is the land north of Eas Brook and along the north eastern boundary.



Land east of the lake and at the southern end of the Park are used as grazing land for sheep and cattle. The central area around the Hall belongs to the school and the area contains tennis courts, playing fields adjacent to the lake and large areas of hard surfacing for car parking. The playing fields and car parks are adjacent to the main entrance to the Hall and detract from its setting.

The former pheasantry and Paddock Wood are owned by the Girl Guides Association and are used for camping and other related activities.

Large areas of woodland still exist particularly around the perimeter of the park and north of the Hall.

The former Home Farm north of Mill Wood is now residential and the original farm buildings have been converted into residential uses. At the northern boundary of the Park in Bescar there is a

primary school located within the grounds. The rest of the Park is open pasture land and used for grazing of cattle and sheep.

Historically of course Scarisbrick Hall was a private residence for the Scarisbrick family and was used as such, however the family allowed the grounds to be used for sports days and agricultural shows, and once a year the tenants were invited to an open day to wander around the gardens and see the orangery (Duggan, M 1996).



# NATURAL FEATURES

## Repton and the Picturesque

Repton and his school of thought in landscape gardening were very popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and he developed many plans for large country estates including Scarisbrick Hall. His plans for Scarisbrick were set out in his Red Book in 1803. Although the plans were not fully implemented at Scarisbrick, the basic principles appear to have been applied to the park and garden at Scarisbrick. The following points below on the woodlands show how the principles appear to have been applied at Scarisbrick.

- The woodlands should form a continuous line with prominent variations in the depth to enlarge the appearance of the wood.
- A few trees standing out from the main plantation again add interest.
- Trees should not be so dense as to feel confined but should obscure views.
- Clumps of trees should also be used to vary the monotony of lawns and create a more natural appearance.

Studying the landscape at Scarisbrick, and the historical plans, these principles certainly seem to have been applied, the woodland is formed in this way screening from view for example Bescar village with Culshaw's Plantation. There is evidence of clumping and dotting of trees at Scarisbrick. Green Clump is depicted on the 1892 map. Other features such as the ha ha and the use of water to add interest also reflect the Repton principles of landscape garden design.

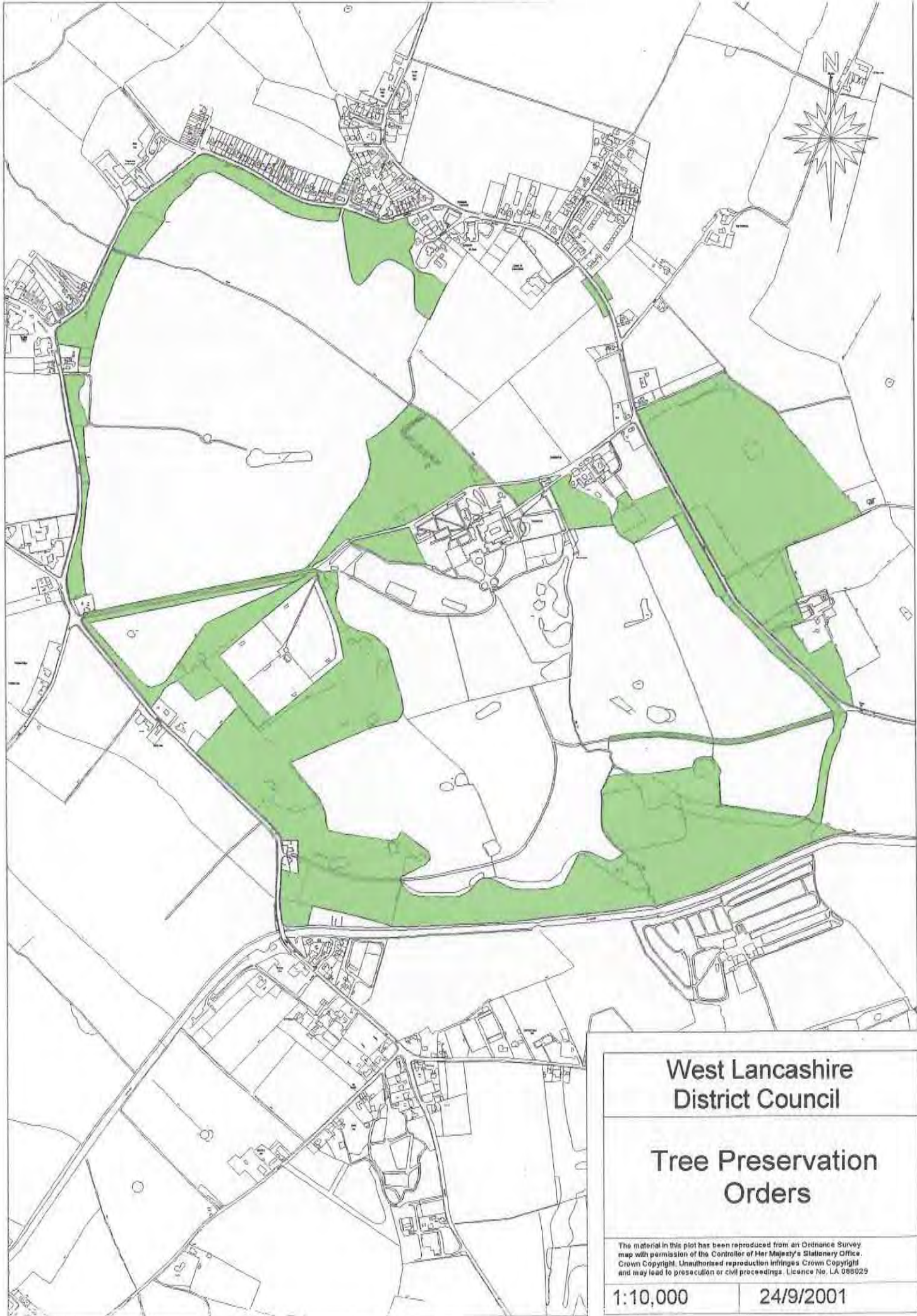
## Natural Features

One of the main features in the conservation area and the park are the large areas of woodland both in the Park and adjacent to the Park on the east side of Hall Road at Dam Wood, particularly as it contrasts significantly with the rest of the landscape around the West Lancashire Plain. Extending west of the Hall is mature ornamental woodland with rhododendron, which stretches north of the Hall into Old Wood. Paddock Wood, Canal Wood, Such Hey Wood and Meadow Hey Wood form an unbroken belt of woodland when viewed from the south. Bath Wood on the north side of Meadow Hey Wood has a pond, as shown on the plan and as its name suggests it may have been used as a cold bath in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century (English Heritage). Spring Wood joins this band up to meet the former Marchioness Bridge along the edge of Hurlston Brook.

To the east of the Hall is Mill Wood which screens the former Home Farm. A thin plantation runs around the northern perimeter of the Park broadening at Chapel School Plantation screening the village. Chapel School is depicted on the 1850 map on Bescar Brow Lane by the junction with Southport Road but is not shown on the 1892 plan. Culshaws Plantation in the north blocks views of Bescar village. The large belts of trees mentioned above are protected by Tree Preservation Orders principally applied in 1964. Although over the years this has served to protect the areas of woodland mentioned above and they remain generally intact, some review is necessary to ensure the Order is up to date. The woodlands are made up of mixed hardwoods generally such as, Oak, Elm, Sycamore, Ash, Horse Chestnut, Beech, Birch and Poplar. There are also some Willow and Pine in Culshaws Plantation. Old Wood has Holly, Yew Pine and Sweet Chestnut. Unfortunately some areas of historic woodland have been lost since 1892 such as Green Clump and Mullers Plantation, although it is not known exactly when they were lost.

Smaller clusters of woodland exist throughout the site and are important features in the historic landscape. They form an integral part of the historic garden and parkland and its evolution which was designed and set out in this specific way to maximise the enjoyment of the environment for the Scarisbrick family. It is therefore essential that the trees are recognised as a very important features by the land owners, as they represent a key part of the historic landscape. There was clear reasoning





**West Lancashire  
District Council**

**Tree Preservation  
Orders**

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behind their layout, and management plans should be prepared to ensure their long term maintenance. Long term plans are essential when considering replanting maintenance and felling schemes.

Trees and plants are important to the conservation area for other reasons, principally as defining boundaries and routes and as attractive elements. They add colour, and change with the seasons providing a setting for the important buildings in the Park, screening and framing views. They provide a welcome contrast to the flat surrounding relatively treeless landscape. They contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the area, providing shelter and shade for wildlife, they improve and maintain air quality by acting as natural air filters, reduce noise pollution from the main roads surrounding the park and perhaps most importantly provide visual enhancement acting as screening between the built and open environments.

Hurlston Brook flows from the south through the Park past the edge of Spring Wood past the lake (originally feeding the lake) around the rear of Old Wood. Here it is called Eas Brook and continues to flow up to the north-west corner of the Park. Eas Brook formed the eastern edge of the moat which was the original site of Scarisbrick Hall. There are other smaller natural springs and ornamental ponds in Paddock Wood. These all add to the attractiveness of the natural areas in the Park and contribute towards the biodiversity of the District.

Open spaces within the conservation area are also important areas. They provide valuable views across the Park. The grassed area on the former Pheasantry was historically cleared for its use for rearing pheasants and fits well with its new use as camping and outside activity areas for the Girl Guides.



## BUILDING FEATURES

Many of the buildings within the Park are of considerable architectural or historic merit and as such help to create the special interest of the conservation area. Most of them represent different stages of the Parks development and usage and are important elements in tracing the evolution of the Park.

Scarisbrick Hall is without doubt the most significant building within the conservation area. Indeed it is one of only two secular Grade I listed buildings in West Lancashire and is of great importance and perhaps “the best Victorian House in Lancashire” (Robinson). It was placed on the statutory list in 1963.



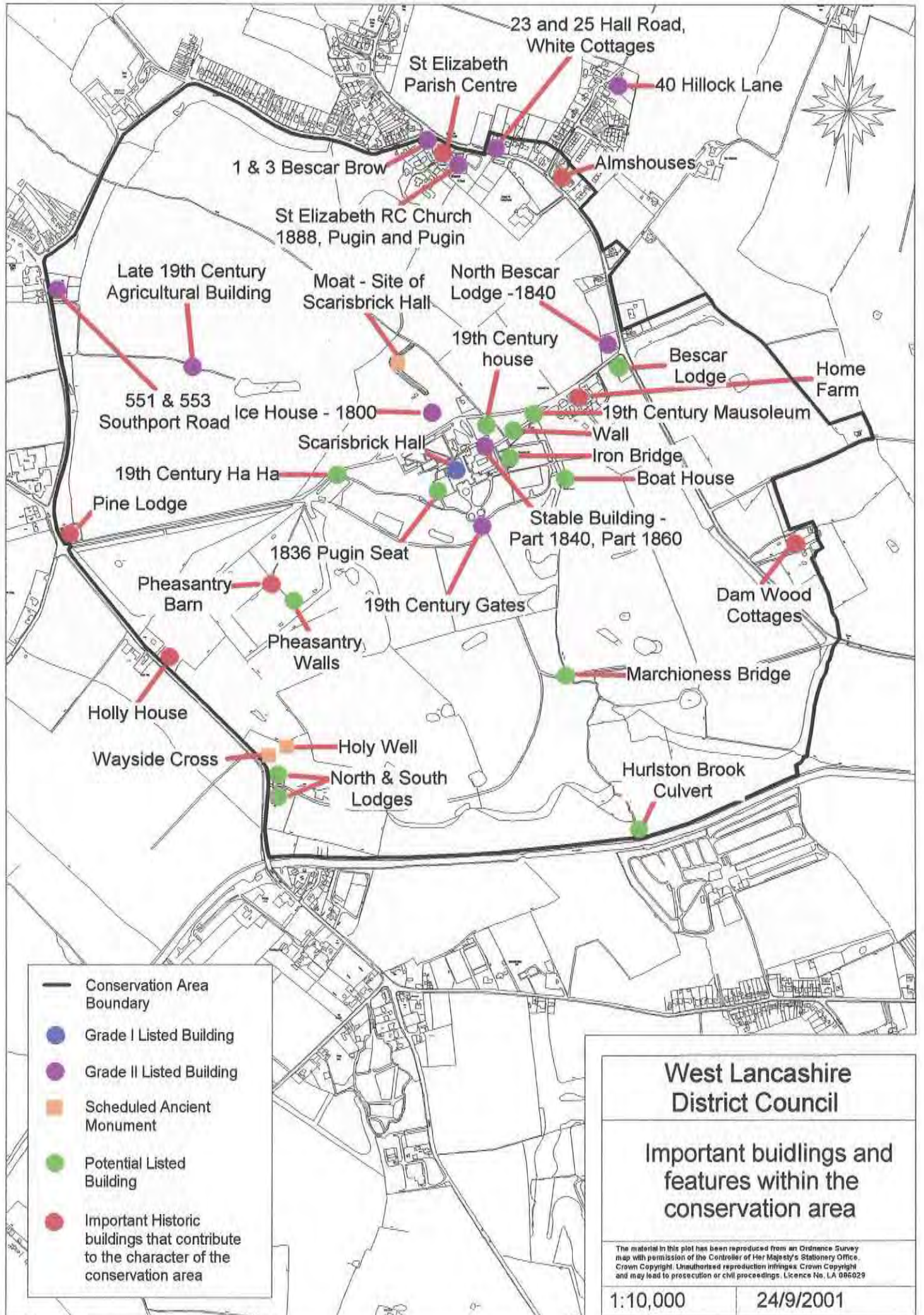
The Hall is the principal building in the Park, of gothic style and is the work of AWN Pugin and his son EW Pugin. Pugin senior worked on the house 1830-45 and his son was commissioned by Lady Anne Scarisbrick from 1861. The West Wing was modernised by Pugin and forms a cross wing to the Great Hall. The East Wing was added by EW Pugin who also pulled down his fathers clock tower and replaced it with the 50m high tower we see today - clearly the Hall's most dominant feature and indeed the Parkland's. There are gates 100m south of the Hall which are listed Grade II structures, dated 1870, and these were probably installed by the Casteja family replacing gates designed by Pugin which were moved to Bescar Lodge. A detailed architectural description of the including important internal features Hall is in Pevsner's North Lancashire (1969).



It has long been known that the roof of Scarisbrick Hall is defective because of its age and complexity. The ingress of water has resulted in extensive fungal decay. It is essential that the owners and the appropriate public organisations work together to ensure the proper preservation of the building.

The gothic stables complex, east of the Hall contains elements from both Pugins. These are listed Grade II but their setting is affected by the modern classrooms and sports hall built within the yard and insensitive alterations. Further modern classrooms, located north of the Hall and separated from it by a grassed area, occupy the site of the former kitchen gardens.





23 and 25 Hall Road,  
White Cottages

St Elizabeth  
Parish Centre

40 Hillock Lane

1 & 3 Bescar Brow

Almshouses

St Elizabeth RC Church  
1888, Pugin and Pugin

Late 19th Century  
Agricultural Building

Moat - Site of  
Scarisbrick Hall

North Bescar  
Lodge -1840

19th Century  
house

Bescar  
Lodge

Home  
Farm

551 & 553  
Southport Road

Ice House - 1800

19th Century Mausoleum

Scarisbrick Hall

Wall

Iron Bridge

Boat House

19th Century Ha Ha

Pine Lodge

Stable Building -  
Part 1840, Part 1860

1836 Pugin Seat

Dam Wood  
Cottages

Pheasantry  
Barn

19th Century Gates

Marchioness Bridge

Pheasantry  
Walls

Holly House

Wayside Cross

Holy Well

Hurlston Brook  
Culvert

North & South  
Lodges

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Potential Listed Building
- Important Historic buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area



## Entrances

The Lodges are particularly important as they represent visible landmarks of the Scarisbrick Hall and Park from the main roads on the edges of the conservation area. They mark the historic entrances in to the Park via the main driveways and were constructed at different times. The main driveway which now serves the Hall (now school) is straight and is framed by a depleted avenue of trees and metal estate fencing on the north side which is in need of some maintenance. Within the fence are also posts where a gate originally stood serving a track leading to the feeding shelter in the middle of the field to the north. This driveway off Southport Road leads from Pine Lodge dated 1902, although a lodge in this location is depicted on the 1892 plan. Pine Lodge is constructed of buff sandstone with ashlar dressings, and has a Westmorland Green Slate roof. Unfortunately, one of the gate posts, and the gates themselves are missing.



Entrance Gate, Scarisbrick Hall. 307

This driveway and the one leading from the former Castle Lodge via Marchioness Bridge were both lined by an avenue of fir trees, the latter which ran the length of the drive up to Marchioness bridge on the south. These fir trees on the main drive were protected by a Tree Preservation Order but were given consent to be felled in 1968, providing they were replaced. Unfortunately this did not happen and only a few trees are now located along this driveway.

North and South Lodge a pair of 19<sup>th</sup> Century rendered gothic lodges with blue slate roofs stand at the end of the drive at the south west end of the Park. The driveway from these lodges formerly ran east, turning to approach the Hall west of the lake. This driveway is just visible from the aerial photograph but unfortunately it has been cut short to accommodate the playing field west of the lake in front of the Hall. Driveways are an important historic feature in a landscape park and where possible it is desirable to retain them, or accurately re-instate them on the basis of documentary evidence.

Another drive runs past Home Farm, from Hall Road and the Bescar Lodges mark the entrance. North Bescar Lodge (north side of the drive) is a Grade II listed building dating from around 1840 and has been converted into two dwellings. The south lodge is later 19<sup>th</sup> Century and between them are 2 stone gate piers which frame the entrance and are listed with North Lodge. It is reputed that the butler occupied one of these lodges.

Another stone gothic lodge, Castle Lodge has been demolished and dated from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is reputed to have been designed by Pugin, and the most architecturally important one (Pevsner) but only ruins of the structure remain. An attempt was made to make a Building Preservation Order in 1962 for the lodge but it was considered of little architectural merit by the County Council and in a poor state of repair. The driveway which led from this lodge is no longer in use but ran across the Park crossing Hurlston Brook at the south end of the lake via Marchioness Bridge. Again this track is visible from the aerial photograph.



### Ice House

The Ice House is located in Old Wood about 200 metres north of the Hall. It is a Grade II listed building dating from around 1800, made of brick stone and earth. Indeed a survey (1999) of the ice-house has revealed that there are actually two chambers, the smaller one of earlier origin and the larger built perhaps during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when there was an increased demand for ice. It has been cleared of debris and the entrance of the larger ice-house has been reconstructed with access into the structure made easier with steps and a pathway.

### Home Farm

The historic farm buildings at Scarisbrick Park Farm, have been converted into dwellings and are located east of the Hall. This complex consists of Mallard Hey, a good example of a 1960's country house in brick, the former farmhouse and a number of former farm buildings, around a former farmyard. It is believed that the gates to Mallard Hey are those which were formerly in the gateway 100m south of the Hall.



A short driveway leads for the farm complex down past the Mausoleum into the stables courtyard of the Hall and includes an ornate brick wall with a pierced stone coping. This is a highly decorative feature which should be retained. There is a section of this boundary which incorporates iron railings over the culverted stream at the bridge opposite the Mausoleum.



A similar section of wall which is mentioned in the Historic Parks and Gardens register, occupies the north side of a grassy court off the north-west side of the Hall.

#### Mausoleum

Partway down the drive from Hall Road is a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century dairy with a glazed gothic lantern turret and ribbed copper dome which for a time was used as a Mausoleum. This was almost demolished in the early 1970's but is now a private dwelling surrounded by suburban conifer trees, which provide privacy, but are out of keeping with the character of the area.



#### Cottage

There is a mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century two-storey brick cottage north of the Hall. It may have been for a gardener due to its close proximity to the former kitchen garden or it may also have some connection to a mill, explaining its proximity to the stream and adjacent Mill Wood. Evidence from archives show that there was a water mill and a windmill on the site in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. This is an attractive brick and slate roofed building which has a 'S' stone carving on its west elevation, now used as the art block for the school but

#### Boathouse



The boathouse is constructed of timber on a stone plinth and is situated in the top north-west corner of the lake east of the tennis courts and where the brook continues north around the stables. The structure is not listed but is an important and attractive structure in the Park which should be retained and maintained. The photograph shows the boathouse surrounded by trees and shrubbery, the reflection in the water is very picturesque. Just to the north of the boathouse is a large weir followed by a series of smaller ones which were designed to evoke the senses and compliment the garden experience. They add noise and movement and interest into the serene and tranquil landscape.

### Pheasantry

The former pheasantry is located south of the main driveway in the western part of the Park. There is a 2 storey brick building, somewhat altered and now used by the Girl Guides as a multi-purpose activity building. Adjacent to this is a modern building also used by the Guide Association. Original stone walls divide the pheasantry up into three sections.

### Octagonal Feeding Shelter



In the centre of the north-west quarter of the Parkland is an octagonal iron-framed feeding shelter (Grade II) built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The structure is very ornate for its intended use but was designed as an eye-catcher because it is highly visible from the main driveway up to the Hall. The Shelter originally stood at the intersection of 4 fields with radiating fences which enabled fields to be used separately more than likely for horses and cattle. Evidence from the 1892 map suggests that the two southern fields were run together (RCHME 1997). This field

system was not in place in 1850 but was set in place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The animal shelter now has permission for use as a dwelling, the principle of which was granted at appeal but it is in poor condition and in urgent need of repair.

### Statuary and garden furniture



Much of the statuary and garden furniture was sold off in 1963 which is very unfortunate. They were located mainly around the formal pleasure gardens and entrance to the Hall and old pictures and postcards reveal something of the type of statuary which was in place. West of the car park adjoining the Hall there is still a gabled garden stone seat designed by Pugin in 1836. It is designed and positioned to allow views from all sides across the grounds. Again not listed, this is an integral part of the pleasure gardens and should remain in situ.



The photographs show students of St Katherine's College 'draped' over the statues around the gardens, in the late 1950's and this is the only evidence available at present of the statues at Scarisbrick.



#### Iron footbridge

The single span footbridge dates from the 1880's across an culverted stream, Eas Brook. The bridge is decorative and includes a crest on the principal posts. The pathway leads from the enclosed Rose garden and over the weirs making an attractive walk around this part of the pleasure garden.



#### St Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Church, Bescar Brow

The Church is located at the northern edge of the conservation area on the site of the former chapel in the middle of Bescar Village. Built in 1888 by Pugin and Pugin in rock-faced red sandstone and a red tiled roof the Church is a very impressive feature. At the south gable is a memorial to Eliza, Margaret de Blandos Scarisbrick, Marchioness de Casteja who died in 1878 (Lady Anne Scarisbrick's daughter).





A small relatively modern group of houses form a cul sac into Culshaws Plantation in the north. They are hidden from view by the Plantation and therefore have less of an impact on the rural setting of the conservation area, Hall and Parkland.

Further south down Hall Road south east of the church is St Mary's RC primary school. This was built in the 1960's and is not sensitively designed nor adequately landscaped to integrate it into the historic parkland.

The almshouses relating to Scarisbrick Park are situated on the north side of the Hall Road and were built in 1884. They form part of the historic evolution of the area's development, although they have undergone some harmful piecemeal alterations which detract from their historic character and unified design. A comprehensive scheme of suitable re-fenestration and landscaping would considerably enhance the contribution which the Almshouses make to the interest of the conservation area.

#### **Other historic buildings which contribute to the character of the conservation area**

##### 551 and 553 Southport Road

Formerly one house, 551 and 553 Southport Road are now listed Grade II. The 3 storey house was built of handmade brick in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. As an important building of special architectural and historic interest the building is afforded protection against harmful development and therefore remains an important asset of the conservation area.

##### Dam Wood Cottages

Dam Wood Cottages, off Hall Lane, are located within Dam Wood on the eastern boundary of the conservation area. They are a terrace of three brick cottages that are accessed from the front via small bridges over a drain and are an attractive contribution in the conservation area.

##### Holly House

Holly House, Southport Road is located on the south west boundary of Scarisbrick Park. It is a two-storey brick building with a slate roof, and despite some extensive additions, retains its historic character. It has a date stone marked "Marquis Casteja 1879" and has important historical association with Scarisbrick Park.

### St Elizabeth Parish Centre

St Elizabeth Parish Centre, Hall Lane is adjacent St. Elizabeth's RC Church is built from brick and has gothic style windows to reflect those in the Church and therefore has group value with the Church as an important building within the conservation area.

### Scarbrick Hall Almshouses

Scarbrick Hall Almshouses were built in 1884 of red brick and are located north of the Hall and Hall Road on the edge of the conservation area boundary. They are important in an historical context with the Scarbrick Park Estate but have undergone many harmful alterations particularly with windows and doors. An example of this can be seen under the section on Detracting Features.

### Cruck framed cottages

23 and 25 Hall Road, 1 and 3 Bescar Brow and 40 Hillock Lane, which is just outside the conservation area boundary, are all part of a good sporadic group of originally thatched cruck framed cottages.

## OTHER IMPORTANT FEATURES

### Ha-Ha

The Ha-Ha which originally ran around the south edge of the pleasure gardens and formal grounds, would have provided for unbroken extensive views across the expanse of parkland to the south. Unfortunately much of it was infilled and incorporated into the car park a number of years ago. An attempt was made to enhance this feature and excavate the ha ha and although it was dismissed at an appeal in 1996, it is still a long term objective.

### Pleasure Gardens

The pleasure gardens from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century are located in front of the Hall in a symmetrical arrangement of circular and curvilinear stone-edged beds which still survive, although now they have grass instead of flowers.



North of the tennis court there is an enclosed rose garden with central oval stone-edged bed and the path around it leads to the iron footbridge over Eas Brook.

### Pathways and Driveways

The approach driveways are considered in more detail under the section on entrances. Many of the pathways are tarmacked, edged in stone meandering around the various features in the gardens. One pathway leads around passed the tennis courts to the east along to two weirs and passed the lake and is a pleasant walk. Indeed the series of bridges and pathways allowed access into a network of woodland walks in Mill Wood of which only a small section remains.

### Marchioness Bridge

The bridge was incorporated into the landscape in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the new driveway was constructed running from the Castle Lodge to link up with the main drive. It was constructed to cross over Hurlston Brook and is located north of Spring Wood. The bridge has collapsed and although badly in need of repair, is still an important part of the historic evolution of the Parkland's development and every attempt should be made to preserve and retain it, preferably through reconstruction of the bridge.



## Tennis Courts

The tennis courts are built on the site of a large free standing conservatory which was standing in 1893, which was said to be built to the design of a sort of Crystal palace (EH) and Lea writing in 1893 said it was used to house Charles Scarisbrick's paintings. Although no longer on the site it is of historical significance and is important to record its position and its relationship with the overall garden design and evolution.



The picture of a shooting party with the Marquis de Casteja shows the former glasshouse in the background (source Duggan 1996).

## Former Kitchen Garden

This was formerly located to the rear of the Hall beyond the wall and now is occupied by modern classrooms.

## Drains

The drainage channels are an important part of the historic landscape in this part of West Lancashire in relation to the development of the land and formation of the Park at Scarisbrick.



## MOVEMENT

Vehicular movement circulates the Park along the busy Southport Road around the western boundary, and along Bescar Brow Lane and Hall Road around the north and eastern boundaries. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal forms the southern boundary. Movement around the Park is clearly very different since the ownership became fragmented and split into its component parts. Much vehicular activity is generated from the school up the main drive, and less frequently with the Guide Association. Farming transport activity is dependent on the type of farming and is seasonal.

The Park is relatively peaceful and quiet creating an attractive environment that gives the impression of being far away from the built environment. Although since there are no public rights of way into the Park movement is restricted to authorised access only.



## DETRACTING FEATURES

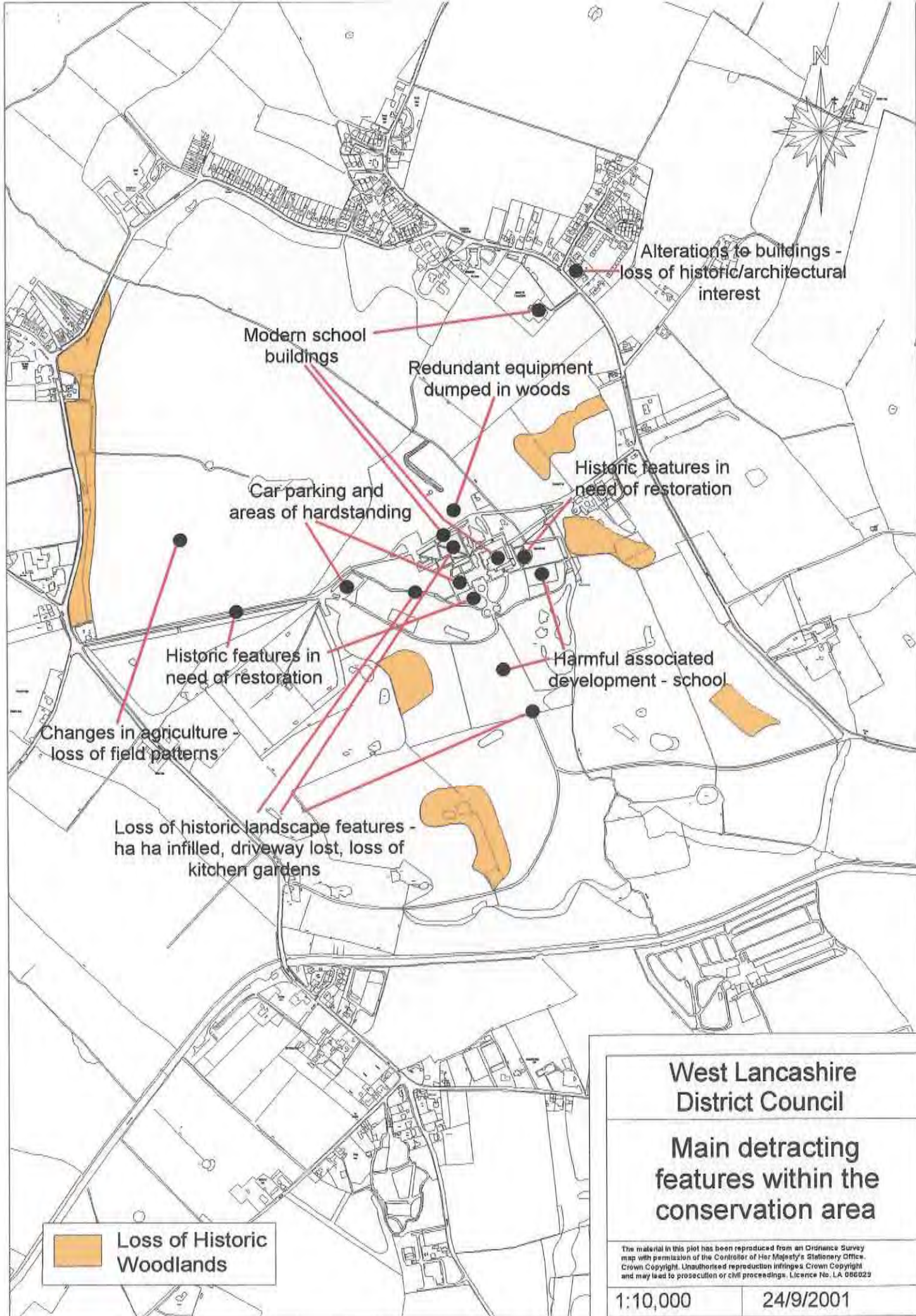
Detracting elements in the Conservation Area and threats to the historic garden landscape

There are many features that detract from the overall character of the conservation area and these are largely the result of fragmentation in ownership of the Parkland which inevitably leads to a variety of different interests and uses.

1. The overall and general loss of historic features and lack of maintenance of those which exist, including grassed formal pleasure gardens, loss of historic woodland and trees Mill Wood, Widow Hey Wood (incorporated into Paddock Wood), Green Clump, parts of Spring Wood and Mullers Plantation.
2. Modern agricultural practices and changes in the type of agriculture leading to the loss of the historical layout of boundaries and field patterns.
3. Use of the Hall as a school has led to the building of modern classrooms, tennis court and playing field, car parking and large areas of hardstanding which in turn led to the loss of the Ha Ha and redundant school equipment dumped in the Old Wood.







Alterations to buildings -  
loss of historic/architectural  
interest

Modern school  
buildings

Redundant equipment  
dumped in woods

Historic features in  
need of restoration


Car parking and  
areas of hardstanding

Harmful associated  
development - school

Historic features in  
need of restoration

Changes in agriculture -  
loss of field patterns

Loss of historic landscape features -  
ha ha infilled, driveway lost, loss of  
kitchen gardens

 Loss of Historic  
Woodlands

**West Lancashire  
District Council**

**Main detracting  
features within the  
conservation area**

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4. Harmful development to buildings within the conservation area such as lodges and almshouses such as porches, alterations to windows.



5. Poor planning decisions such as consent to convert the animal feeding shelter to residential use, granted on appeal.
6. Inadequate maintenance of Park boundary walls.

## CONCLUSIONS

A conservation area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. This appraisal clearly demonstrates that Scarisbrick Hall and Parkland contains both outstanding architectural and historic landscape interest, fully justifying its status as a conservation area. It is suggested that the name of the conservation area should not be limited to Scarisbrick Hall but renamed to include the wider Parkland, so clearly an important part of the Area's special character - Scarisbrick Park Conservation Area.

The following features have been identified as being important to the character of the conservation area;

- the historic evolution of the landscape over many centuries
- the landscape setting of the Park amidst the flat West Lancashire Plain
- the gothic mansion, and its associated historic buildings
- the close association with key famous architects and designers namely the Pugins and Repton
- the wide range of historic buildings within the conservation area
- Woodlands, trees and natural open landscape

All individuals and organisations with an interest in the Area must work together to tackle these problems to preserve the character of the conservation area and perhaps restore some original features to enhance the character of the area.



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