



St. Helens
Council



Rainford I & II Conservation Area Appraisal

July 2008



Located immediately north of St Helens town, Rainford is well known for its industrial past. It was the location of sand mining for the glass factories of St Helens and was a major manufacturer of clay smoking pipes, firebricks and earthenware crucibles.

Natural resources brought fame and prosperity to the village during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The resulting shops, light industries and subsequent dwelling houses contribute to Rainford's distinct character.

In recognition of its historical significance and architectural character, a section of Rainford was originally designated as a conservation area in 1976. Rainford remains a 'typical' English country village and this review is intended to help preserve and enhance it.

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1.0 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Rainford is a bustling linear village between Ormskirk and St Helens in Merseyside. Until the late 19th Century, it was predominantly a rural community reflecting typical light industrial trades. It has a variety of natural resources that have aided its economic expansion. A wealth of coal, clay and (eventually) arable land meant that mining; clay pipe manufacture and farming flourished (The Lancashire Federation of Women's Institute, 1990).

The clay pipe industry had been present in Rainford since the mid 17th century. The growth of this industry was aided by the development of the port of Liverpool making the export of clay pipes to North America and South Africa possible. By the early 19th Century there were over 30 shops and factories in the village that were involved in the industry (Rigby, 1977).

Rainford is situated on the Wigan Coal field, which through history has been reputed as one of the richest coalfields in the country (Rigby, 1977). With mining having been present in the area since the Tudor period, coal contributed also towards the development of the village. The introduction of the railways in the area further opened up opportunities for trade and industry.

Today the village retains a lot of the distinct character associated with these industrial activities. However, it is evident that more recent developments are undermining this distinctiveness. In recognition of this threat, parts of Rainford were designated as Conservation Areas in 1976. Under this designation, the Council is committed towards positive action to safeguard and enhance Rainford's character and appearance.

Designation, however, is not an end in itself. It is recommended that the Council along with other interest groups and residents should be aware of those elements that contribute to a conservation area's uniqueness (English Heritage 2006). Accordingly, further to clarifying the designation of a conservation area, this appraisal is intended to highlight these elements.



What does conservation area status mean?

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, which is considered worthy of special attention, protection and improvement (DoE, 1990). Rather than individual buildings, it is a combination of buildings, street pattern, trees, open spaces and other features, which give a Conservation Area its distinct character. Within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the local authority has powers, which enable it to control development, which could damage the area's character and appearance.

The purpose of a Conservation Area designation is not to prevent change but to manage it in the interests of the existing character of the area. Accordingly, designation requires that the local authority formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Local residents and property owners also have a major role to play by ensuring that properties are regularly maintained and original features are retained.



1.1 Purpose of Appraisal

This appraisal is aimed at:

- Identifying, defining and analysing those factors that make up the two parts of Rainford areas of special architectural and historic interest;
- Providing property owners and potential developers with clear guidance on planning matters and the types of development, which are likely to be acceptable within the Conservation Areas; and,
- As material consideration, providing the Council with the basis for dealing with applications for development, where applicants need to demonstrate how their proposals take account of the essential character of the Conservation Areas.



Beyond their use as planning tools, appraisals have a much wider application, as educational and informative documents for the local community.

This appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with current English Heritage guidance (2006) and represents a factual and objective analysis of the two Conservation Areas in Rainford. It has involved:

- A thorough survey and visual appraisal of the area within and beyond the existing Conservation Areas' boundary;



- A desktop study including reference to previously published studies for the area, archive material, aerial photographs, relevant national and local policies and liaison with relevant organisations; and,
- An analysis and evaluation of the information gathered, identifying key issues for consultation purposes.
- A public consultation exercise involving local residents through an open day event and information published on the council website.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

2.1 Planning Legislation

In general, the process of designation and review of Conservation Areas in England has been influenced by three Acts:

The Civic Amenities Act 1967

This is the first legislation, which provided powers to Local Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas, areas that they considered to be 'special'.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – “The Act”

'The Act' consolidated the powers provided by the Civic Amenities Act. Areas of 'the Act' concerning the designation and review of Conservation Areas are covered under sections 69 and 71 respectively:

- Section 69

Under section 69(1), every local planning authority:

- a. Shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of which is desirable to preserve and enhance;
- b. Shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.

The designation of these two areas in Rainford as Conservation Areas by St Helens Council is in fulfilment of this statutory obligation.

Under section 69(2), The Act further places a duty on the local planning authority from time to time to review the designated Conservation Areas. This appraisal is in fulfilment of this other statutory requirement

- Section 71

This Section 71 also places statutory duty on a Local Planning Authority to, “from time to time formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their areas which are Conservation Areas”. This covers the preparation of management plans for the two areas which will be undertaken after the appraisal.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Under Section 38(6), the above Act further requires a determination of planning applications

2.0 Planning Policy Context

to be made in accordance with provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is further advised:

“A clear definition of those elements, which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a place, will enable development of a robust policy framework for the future management of that area, against which the application is made”.

Accordingly, this appraisal will be a material consideration, under the provisions of this Act.

2.2 Planning Guidance

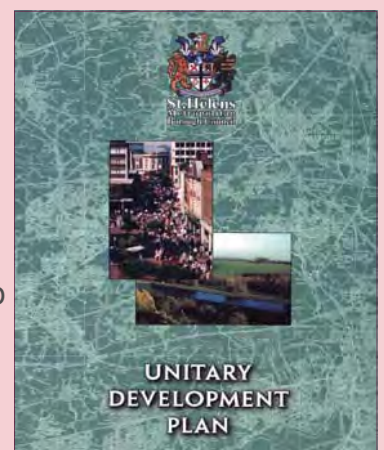
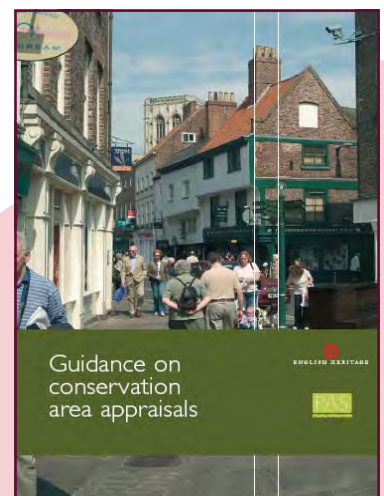
The following policies provide guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals:

- *Guidance on Conservation Areas* (2006) by English Heritage, offers a framework for the appraisal as well as suggestions on next steps after the process;
- *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 15): Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994), the key government guidance on all development affecting historical buildings, Conservation Areas and sites of archaeological interest; and,
- *Regional Planning Guidance for the North West*; and,
- *Policies of St. Helens Council Unitary Development Plan (UDP, adopted 1998)*, also offers guidance on designation and review of Conservation Areas at a local level.

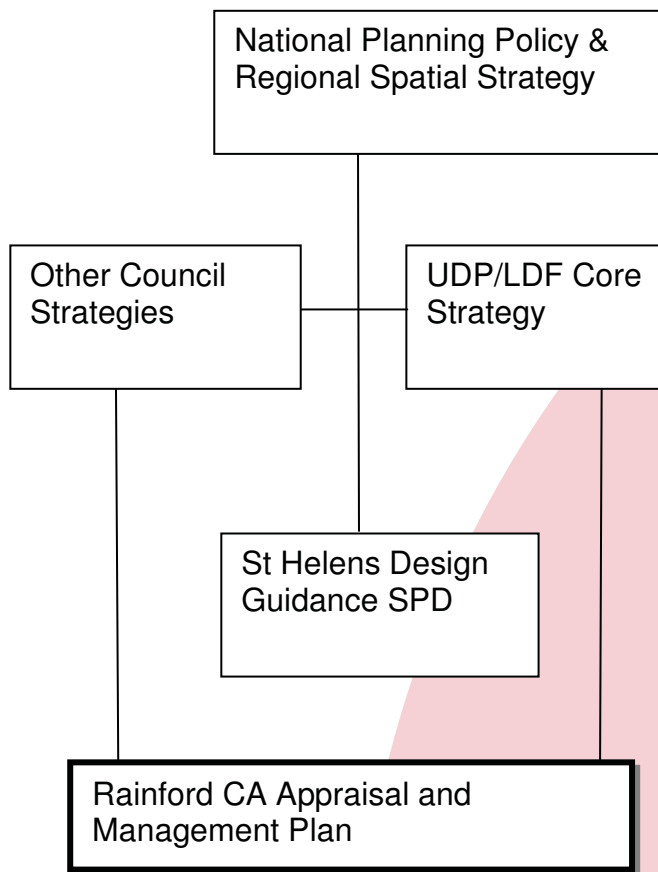
It is under PPG 15 that the content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is clarified. It highlights the need to protect physical survivals of the past to form part of the nations cultural heritage and aid the sense of national identity.

The key area concerning Conservation Areas is in Section 4 (4) of PPG 15 where: “*Local Planning Authorities are required to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all Conservation Areas in its area; and, some of the aspects that will always form the basis for a coherent evaluation are outlined.*”

The more recent *Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13)* supports PPG 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment*. Essentially, it clarifies the contents of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)*. Through its *Regional Spatial Strategy*, it identifies the need to ensure active management of the region’s environmental and cultural assets.



The principles of all these documents are further supported by St. Helens Council's local heritage policies contained within its Unitary Development Plan (1998) and Design Guidance SPD (2007). Accordingly, this appraisal should be looked in this wider policy context.



Status of the Conservation Area Appraisal Document

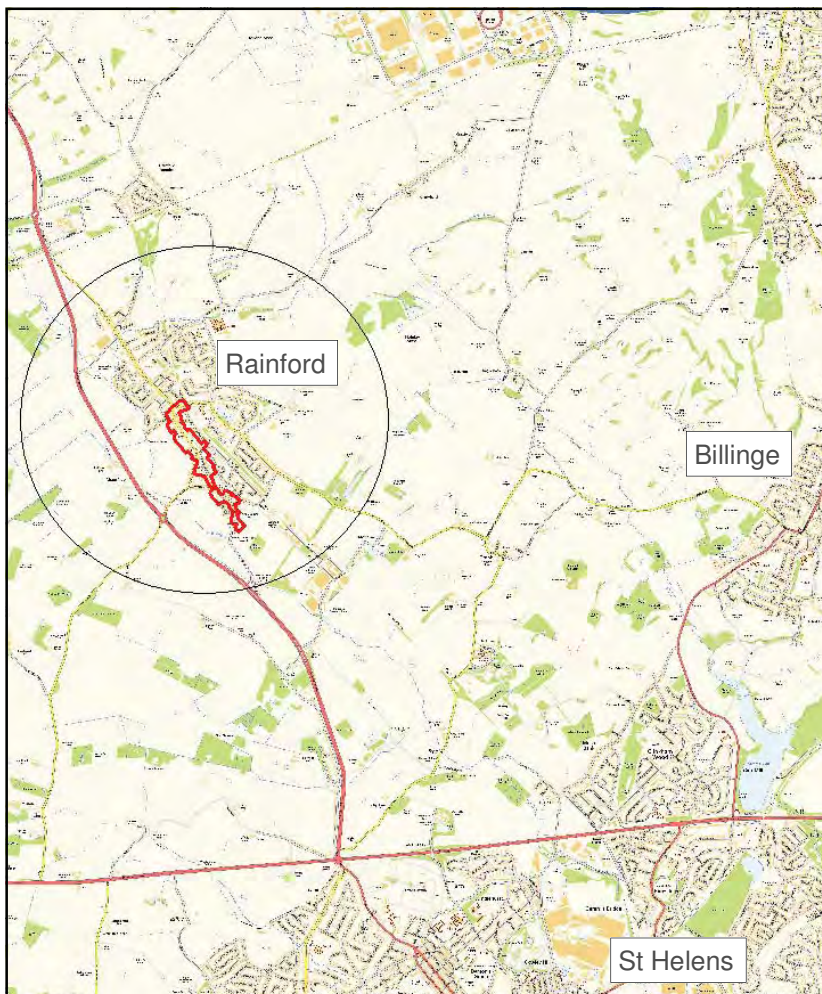
3.0 Location and Setting

3.1 Regional context

Rainford is a village in North West England, just north of the town of St Helens in Merseyside. It is one of the 15 townships into which the Parish of Prescott was historically divided (Dickinson and Dickinson, 1968; Farrer and Brownbill, 1990). Situated midway between St. Helens and Ormskirk, it was originally an Urban District in the County of Lancashire, but it now forms a Civil Parish and ward within the Metropolitan Borough of St Helens.

Its main access routes are via the A570 Rainford by-pass, with the principal roads being the B5205 and B5203. The Liverpool to Wigan railway line also runs along north of Rainford with a stop at Rainford Junction.

Its siting and proximity to major rail and road networks and the consequential ease of access to Liverpool, Wigan and St Helens and have undoubtedly caused a rapid growth. This and its location in the heart of attractive countryside, make it a popular place to live.



Location of Rainford in St Helens

3.2 Population

From a small rural settlement with a population of less than 4,000 people at the beginning of 19th Century, Rainford has grown rapidly. Much of the population increase occurred in the 1950s when Council housing estates were built off the main road through the village (Lancashire Life, July 2006). With little new house building now occurring, the population has stabilised at about 12,000 (Office of National Statistics).



3.3 Boundaries

The OS 6th 1st edition map (1841-1853) depicts Rainford as a sparsely built area of two centres along Church Road. The historic core lay at the junction of Ormskirk Road (formerly Johnson's Brow), Cross Pit Lane and Church Road (formerly Chapel Lane). This has traditionally been and remains the commercial centre. The growth of the southern section of Rainford was largely residential and centred on the Star Inn. The existing boundaries of the two conservation areas in Rainford tend to roughly mark the extent of this historical development.



3.4 Topography and geology

Embracing open countryside and flat land with ground gently rising towards Skelmersdale and Billinge, Rainford 'Township' has an area of nearly 6,000 acres. The main village is located below a ridge fringed on its western edge by Rainford Brook with the built up area surrounded by cultivated land.

The agricultural land surrounding Rainford is of good quality, made up of post-glacial deposits overlying rocks of the Carboniferous Age, also known as Coal Measures. The carboniferous system includes the great coal-field in which all the principal manufacturing towns, Burnley, Blackburn, Chorley, Wigan, Bolton, Preston, Oldham, Rochdale and Manchester. However from Rainford village westward, there are wide belts of Triassic sandstones. Varying thickness of boulder clay covers the basic rocks and to the north, east and west there are extensive areas of moss lands that are raised thereby producing a gentle undulating landscape.



Location of the two Conservation Areas

4.0 Historical Background

4.1 Early origins

Documentary evidence is scant and little is known of the Rainford's early history. The first record of Rainford appears in the Domesday book of 1086, suggesting that it pre-dates Liverpool (Rigby, 1977). The origins of the name of the township have therefore been subject of much debate.

According to some sources, Rainford takes its name from a little river called Randle. Others believe that the first element of the name Rainford is an old English personal name Regna (Page, 1966). This is a shortened version of names such as Regengan, Regnheah and Regnhere. Another plausible theory is that the root of the name is derived from the word Ragan, which is a component part of many German words.

There is no evidence to suggest that there was any Roman activity in Rainford, as at this time it would have been mostly mossy wasteland. The nearest area of Roman occupation to Rainford was Coccium at Wigan, on the road to Cheshire. The area surrounding Rainford was more likely to have been inhabited by an undisturbed native group of Britons (Chitty, nd).

In 614 AD this situation changed with the victory of the Northumbrian King, Aethelfrith, over the Britons. The borders of the Northumbrian kingdom engulfed the area presently called South Lancashire and Cheshire. The years that followed saw the usurpation of this land by the Mercian Kingdom. The Danes and Norwegians were the next people to settle in the area of Lancashire between the 9th and 10th centuries. It was at this time that the townships of Ormskirk, Burscough, Latham and Skelmersdale were established (Rigby, 1977).

4.2 Medieval origins

Following the Norman Conquest of 1066, William I granted the land between the Ribble and the Mersey to his kinsman Roger of Poitou. He rebelled against the king and forfeited his lands to the crown in 1102, following which, the land remained in the possession of the non-reigning members of the Plantagenet family, who were created Earls and later Dukes of Lancaster (1352). In accordance with the feudal system, the land holding was subdivided into Hundreds¹ with Rainford forming part of the Hundred of West Derby. Most of the land was of little agricultural value until the 18th century when it was drained, which may account for the previously sparse and dispersed pattern of settlement in the area with a number of isolated farmhouses (Rigby, 1977).

4.0 Historical Background

1. A Hundred is a territorial subdivision of a county or shire with its own Court, particularly in the Saxon and Norman period.

The oldest surviving building in Rainford, Mossborough Hall was erected in 1300. Mossborough is a moated site, a common surviving earthwork feature of medieval life in the area (LFWI). The hall stands on a piece of high ground to the southwest. The origins of its name can be seen in the second part of the name, “Borough”, derived from the old English word, ‘barrow’ meaning hill.

Up until the 14th Century the villagers in the area had been part of a feudal system, able to work a small plot of land that would provide sufficient sustenance for their families.

4.3 Middle Ages

By the 17th Century, Rainford was still a comparatively small settlement. A hearth tax that dates to 1660 gives an estimation that the population was between 70-80 people (Smith, 1985).

During the civil war, Catholics and Anglicans of the area supported the King, while the puritans tended to give their allegiance to the parliamentarians. This war resulted in a decline in the prosperity of the area.

In this post-medieval period, both the labouring classes of the rural community and the Yeoman found themselves much better off. The rise of the Yeoman class in the Rainford area is reflected by the erection of a number of 17th century farmhouses. Some of these still survive today namely Guild Hall, Maggots Nook, Reeds Brow and Hydes Brow. Although it is much altered, The Eagle and Child Inn also dates from the 17th Century (Chitty, 2001).

4.4 Rainford’s Industrial past

Rainford has a variety of natural resources that have aided its economic expansion. A wealth of coal, clay and later arable land meant that mining, pipe manufacture and farming flourished (LFWI).



4.0 Historical Background

It is thought that the tradition of clay pipe manufacture, which had been present since the mid 17th Century, was brought to the north with the movement of Stuart Catholics to Rainford to escape persecution by the Elizabethan religious reform in the south. Its growth in Rainford was further aided by the development of the port of Liverpool, which made the export of clay pipes to North America and South Africa possible. By the early 19th Century there were over 30 shops and factories in the village associated with in the clay pipe industry. However, non-clay pipe manufacture and the discovery of coal deposits in the area meant that by the mid 19th Century the mining industry overtook the clay pipe industry as the primary industry in Rainford (Rigby, 1977).

Mining which has been present in Lancashire since the Tudor period, also influenced the growth of Rainford. Rainford is situated on the Wigan Coal field, which through history has been one of the richest coalfields in the country (Rigby, 1977). The resultant development of the railways in the area around Rainford opened up opportunities for trade and industry. The early 20th Century saw the decline in coal mining in the area and the Rainford Coalfield eventually closed in 1928. The people of the area then focussed once again on agriculture.

4.5 Archaeological interest

Records from Merseyside Archaeological Services show little archaeological potential for the Prehistoric period of Rainford. The poor drainage of the area would probably not have been suitable for early settlement. Land within and around medieval moat sites of



4.0 Historical Background

Mossborough Hall contain the main significant archaeological remains in the area.

4.6 Resultant pattern of development

Rainford was depicted as a village from 1876 on Yate's Map (1786). It was a village of two centres: in the 18th Century, the northern half centred around the Eagle and Child Inn and the church while the southern one was centred around the Star Inn (Page, 1966).

At this point the village of Rainford was presided over by elected parish officers as a part of the Parish of Prescott. (Smith, 1985). The historical developments of the village seem to have parallels with the pattern of development of its historic core as some evidence of 18th century life in Rainford is still visible today. These include the Golden Lion Inn and 22, 35 and 37 Church Road, among others (The Lancashire Federation of Women's Institutes, 1990).

It was in the 19th Century, however, that the village of Rainford established itself. This was mainly due to the clay pipe industry and the exploration of local coal deposits. It became an independent township in 1869 and the parish set up a local board after adopting the Local Government Act in 1872. Starting with only 15 members, the Rainford Urban District Council was later formed in 1894.

With a population of 1,185 in the early 1800s the population of Rainford rose dramatically in the following century and by 1901 it was home to 3,359 residents (Smith, 1990). The demands of the rising population gave way to new housing throughout the 19th Century. In 1841 there were 344 houses in Rainford and by 1891 the number had risen to 706. Generally it was mainly for worker accommodation and most housing was in the form of small terraced rows.

The character of the present village reflects the expansions that took place in the late 19th Century when Rainford was at the peak of its industrial era. The old village core was clustered on either side of Church Road. Later on the village developed further in a linear form on either side of this old core along Church Road and Ormskirk



4.0 Historical Background

Road. This village core still contains several 18th Century buildings – the Golden Lion Inn for instance, as well as the village stocks at the junction of Mossborough Road and Church Road. The second core, developed around Star Inn at the southern end of Church Road.

One of best examples of finer 19th Century housing was Muncaster Hall, the home of a Richard Pennington, a wealthy village squire who had made his fortune in the cotton industry. The grand building once stood between Muncaster Drive (now) Heyes Avenue. It was demolished in the 1960s, and the only remaining trace of the estate is the lake situated between the junction of Cross Pit Lane and Higher Lane (Smith, 1990).



5.0 Character Area Analysis

5.1 An overview

The character of the two conservation areas in Rainford is derived from a varied collection of historic buildings built in a rich mix of domestic architectural styles and local building materials.

5.2 Spatial Analysis

Spatial layout

The spatial layout of Rainford was well established by the end of the 19th Century. Church Road remains the spine linking the two conservation areas. All the main access roads in and out of the village connect to it. It is enclosed on either side by a continuous line of terraced houses in the south and a row of detached and semi-detached houses in the middle section and a group of commercial properties on the northern end. Trees on either side of this main road are one of the key features of Conservation Area I.

Key views and vistas

There are five main entry routes into the two Conservation Areas, from the south (Mossborough Road), southeast (Pasture Lane), east (Rookery Lane) and north (Ormskirk Road and Cross Pit Lane) and each approach provides unique views of the village. The main views in Rainford Conservation Area I are however along Church Road and Mossborough Road.

Views along Church Road are as diverse as they are interesting. Along Church Road most of them are deflected by the twists and turns of the road and serve to define the area's townscape with open countryside on the left as one approaches the church. This illustrates the rural feel of Rainford as well as creating a sense of enclosure and anticipation as the village unfolds, contributing to the area's townscape.

5.3 Character Analysis

The village is predominantly residential with a small shopping centre on Church Road, north of the Church.

The village can be subdivided into seven distinct areas with four in the first conservation area and three in the second:

A) Church Road/Cross Pit Lane

This area includes buildings around Cross Pit Lane and the 'Eagle and Child Inn'. The area is made up of large detached properties set in generous grounds with mature

5.0 Character Area Analysis

trees and landscaping bounded by low crenulated walls.

B) Shopping Centre

This is the main commercial area of Rainford made up of shops, and offices. These are predominantly two-storey properties with shop fronts, though there are a few examples that have retained their original proportions. Many of these properties have lost their original features to the detriment of the conservation area.



C) Church and surroundings

The Parish Church is a key landmark in Rainford, visible from the main approaches and as far as the Rainford by-pass. The church hall, the vicarage and other properties along Church Road all contribute to the quality of the area. Large detached properties in generous grounds of mature trees and landscaping, bounded by low decorative walls also characterise this area.



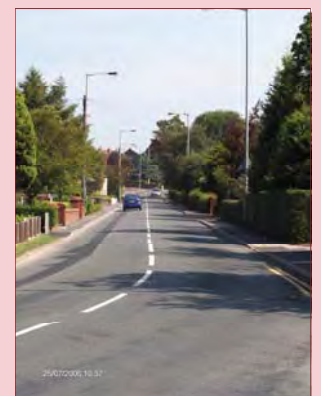
D) Mossborough/Church Road

This is a predominantly residential area with detached or semi-detached dwellings with boundary walls or hedges fronting the highway.



E) Church Road/Rookery Lane

This is a predominantly residential area. The houses are small terraces with front gardens and stone boundary walls. Some front gardens have been given over to vehicular access. Most properties have small porch entrances and date plaques.



F) Star Inn and surroundings

The Star Inn is the main focal point and is surrounded by terraces similar to those on Rookery Lane only larger.



5.4 Architectural Character

Dominant Architectural Styles

With the exception of the Parish Church and the Village Hall, most buildings in the two conservation areas of Rainford are in a style and scale that exhibit many of the popular domestic styles and features of the Victorian period. From the relatively simple and narrow terraced properties in the Rookery Lane/Church Road area to the opulent detached houses on generous plots around the Church. In between there are semi and detached properties around Cross Pit Lane and Church Road/Mossborough Road. The variety of commercial properties in the shopping centre completes the diversity of Rainford's architecture.

The differing character of the two Conservation Areas is defined not only by the building styles but also the associated architectural elements and materials. For example both areas have characteristic front boundary walls and hedges yet the predominant use of sandstone walling in Conservation Area I contrasts with the red brick walling in Conservation Area II. Another contrast is in the relationship of the buildings to the street, with those in Conservation Area I being much closer to the footpath edge.

Traditional building materials

Traditional building materials in terms of type, colour and texture also contribute to the character of an area. Dark grey Welsh slate roofs are a unifying feature across both Conservation Areas seen on almost 70% of buildings. In Conservation Area I walls are predominantly sandstone, with red brick being more common in Conservation Area II. The use of stone for lintels, window surrounds and stringcourses also add more colour and contrast. Unfortunately, some of the stonework of window heads and sills has been painted.

Windows in the two Rainford Conservation Areas are predominantly timber, either in the form of casements and to a small extent, sliding sash. The larger houses in Conservation Area I tend to have elaborate stone or brick bay windows at ground floor level. The details and quality of some of the original windows is an important feature in defining the Conservation areas. Unfortunately in many instances, original timber window frames have been replaced with uPVC.



5.5 Public realm audit

The road surface of all streets in the two conservation areas is black rolled asphalt edged with a concrete kerb. Most of the footpaths are in similar material, flexible black bitmac. The only car park in Rainford (opposite the village hall) is also in black rolled asphalt with little landscaping. This results in over dominant roads and footpaths with no contrast between the road surface, the footways and the car park.

Street lighting and highways signage is standard grey galvanised steel columns that fail to take account of the conservation area designation.

5.6 Open Spaces

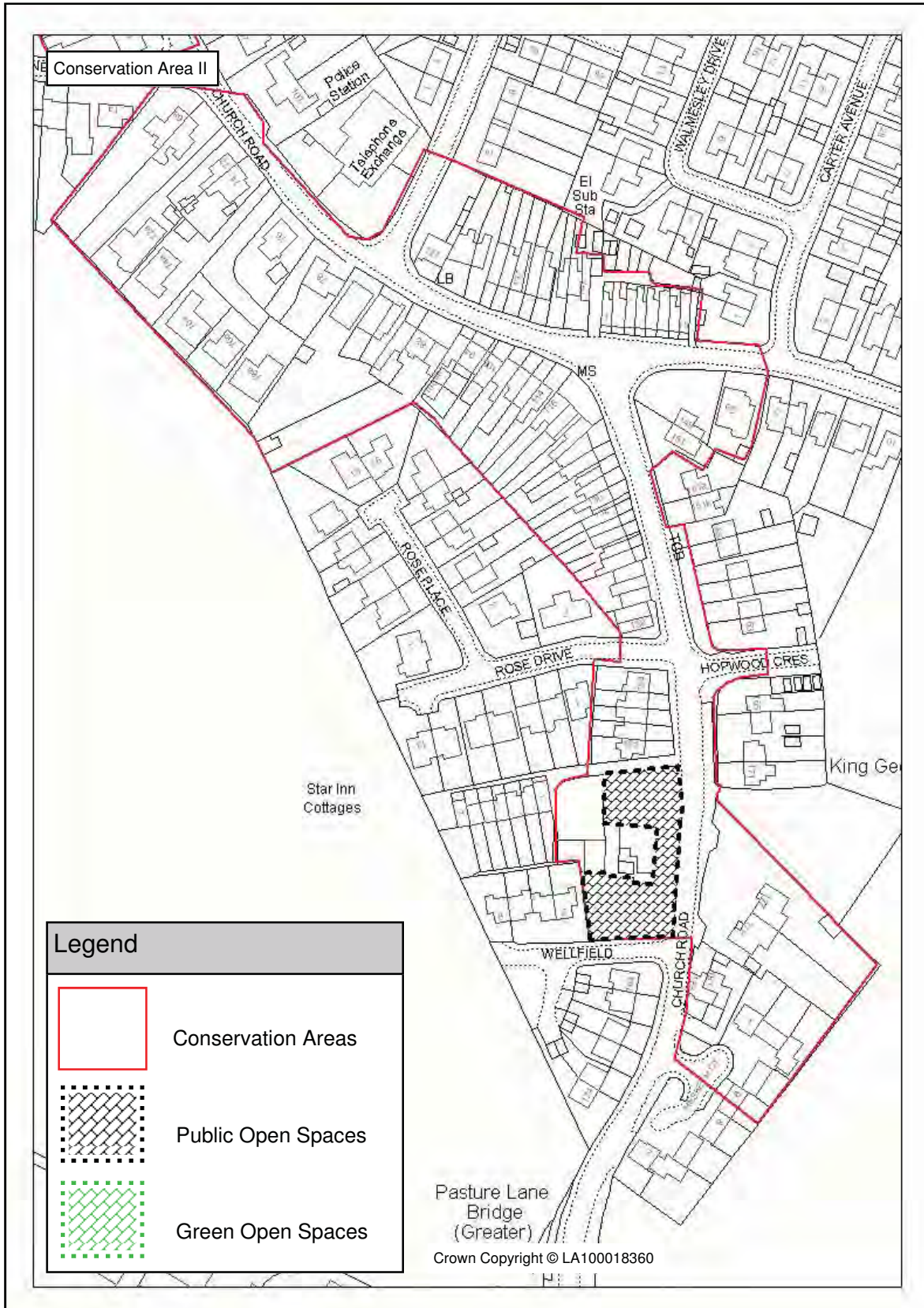
Open spaces tend to influence the pattern of settlement and reinforce its historic rural character and appearance, and are extremely important in a Conservation Area.

Most of the public open spaces in the village are located within Rainford Conservation Area I and are mostly in the form of:

- The green space around the church and behind the Golden Lion public house;
- The public car park on Church Road;
- The forecourts to the Village Hall, Derby Arms and the Village library;
- The open spaces to the frontage of properties in the commercial area of the village.

The area around the church is an open green space used as a graveyard. It is a place for quiet contemplation for the public and provides a suitable setting for the church. Along Church Road, it also offers an opportunity for long outward views from the Conservation Area including a glimpse of the open countryside beyond the Rainford by-pass. This open space and that behind the Golden





Public Open Spaces in Conservation Area II

5.0 Character Area Analysis

Lion, which is used as a bowling green, contribute to the setting of the area.

The car park along Church Road is in black bitumen. As the only public car park in the village it plays an important community role. However, this large area of hard landscaping may detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

The forecourts in the public areas of the Village Hall, Derby Arms and the library provide pockets of spaces for social interaction in the residential part of the village. On the other hand, the open spaces in front of the shops and offices in the area to the north of the church provide similar spaces in the commercial area.



5.7 The contribution of listed and unlisted buildings

i) Listed buildings

There are 4 Listed buildings within the two designated conservation areas. They are all on Church Road and are listed grade II, three in Area I and one in Area II:

- Church of All Saints

Built between 1877 and 1928, the church is in rock-faced stone with ashlar dressings and bands and aslate roof. The nave has aisles under lean-to roofs, a chancel with south chapel, and a northeast tower. The tower has low diagonal buttresses; octagonal bell stage with square pinnacles in angles, embattled parapet and pyramidal roof. The round stair turret has projecting octagonal top stage with cornice and pyramidal roof. Clerestory has alternate paired and triple lancets. West end has 4 stepped lancets and leafshaped window in gable; flanking weathered buttresses. Chancel has east window of 3 lights with plate tracery and south window of 2 lights; foundation stone dated 1877. South chapel has shallow canted apse with parapet and gable behind, south window of 2 lights. It is the largest building in Rainford visible from many parts of the village.



5.0 Character Area Analysis

- Golden Lion Public House

The public house was built around 1769 and has rough cast and stone dressings and a stone slate roof. It has five bays of three storeys and the second bay of two storeys. Windows have rusticated wedge lintels and moulded sills, C20 louvred shutters (since removed); most are sashed, no glazing bars, 2nd floor casements. Round-headed entrance has Doric door case with flat pilasters and open pediment; 6-panel door 3 brick gable-end stacks.



- Village Stocks

18th century stocks with stone posts with rounded tops and grooves for boards, that to left has benchmark. The boards are 20th century replacements. It is a physical reminder of the social history of the area.



- Two statues at 133 and 135 Church Road

Probably 19th century but maybe earlier. Cast artificial stone or terracotta. A pair of statues in Roman type costume, the one on the left (No. 133) perhaps Perseus with the head of Medusa or perhaps Minerva who had Medusa's head on her shield as here. The one on the right (No. 135) apparently Mars. Both stand on square plinths which are on brick bases. Both have an iron ring in the small of the back. They are in line, at the same level and 6 metres apart and are apparently in situ. The brick base visible at No. 133 undisturbed. They may have been connected with Image House previously on the site.



ii) Unlisted buildings

In addition to these listed buildings, there are a number of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the area. These include:

- The former School, Cross Pit Lane
- The Eagle and Child Inn
- The Vicarage
- Rainford Village Hall
- The Derby Arms
- The Star Inn



The former school, The Eagle and Child Inn, the Village Hall as well as the Derby Inn are located at the intersection of major streets in Rainford and due to their size and siting, are visible from many directions. The scale and setting of the Vicarage, with its generous landscaped grounds is an important landmark in Conservation Area I. The Star Inn is the first main building visible as one approaches Rainford from the south through Pasture Lane and it forms a key building in Conservation Area II.

5.8 Activities and use

The historic activities of an area influence its character and appearance. Agriculture, pipe making and mining were the main industries in early Rainford and many properties associated with these activities remain.

Agriculture

The 1841 census indicated that 47% of the inhabitants of Rainford depended on agriculture for their livelihood. This does not take account of supporting trades such as blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carters, etc., nor the casual labour employed at busy times. Farming was therefore an important element in the life and economy of Rainford when livestock and a small acreage of arable land were essential for a self-sufficient household. Most of the terraced houses in Conservation Area II accommodated those who were employed in this industry.



Mining

Rainford lies on the western edge of the Wigan Coalfield and mining has been present there since Tudor times. There is evidence of small, shallow workings on Bushey Lane since 1696 and these continued throughout the 18th century in an area now bisected by the Liverpool to Wigan railway line. In the 1840's mining began on a commercial scale when William Harding sunk pits on the north side of the railway and at the site of the old Bushey Lane School. This later became known as Rainford Coal Company. When these workings were exhausted in 1860 they sunk four new shafts to a depth of 600 feet further west at Sidings Lane. This became Rainford's largest colliery and after being bought by Bromilow, Foster & Co. in 1903 mining continued until 1928.

5.0 Character Area Analysis

At about the same time that Harding opened his pits, the firm of A. F. & D. Mackay & Co. were sinking pits for their Victoria Colliery in the fields on the south side of the railway near the top of Junction Road. In 1850 the Mackay's built a row of colliers houses on News Lane, commonly known as "Mackies Terrace".

Clay pipe making

Although, agriculture and mining played an important role in the growth and development of Rainford, it is the clay pipe industry that had the most significant influence on the built heritage.

Most of the clay pipe making activity took place along Mossborough Road. One of the surviving examples of these buildings is the cottage at number 22.

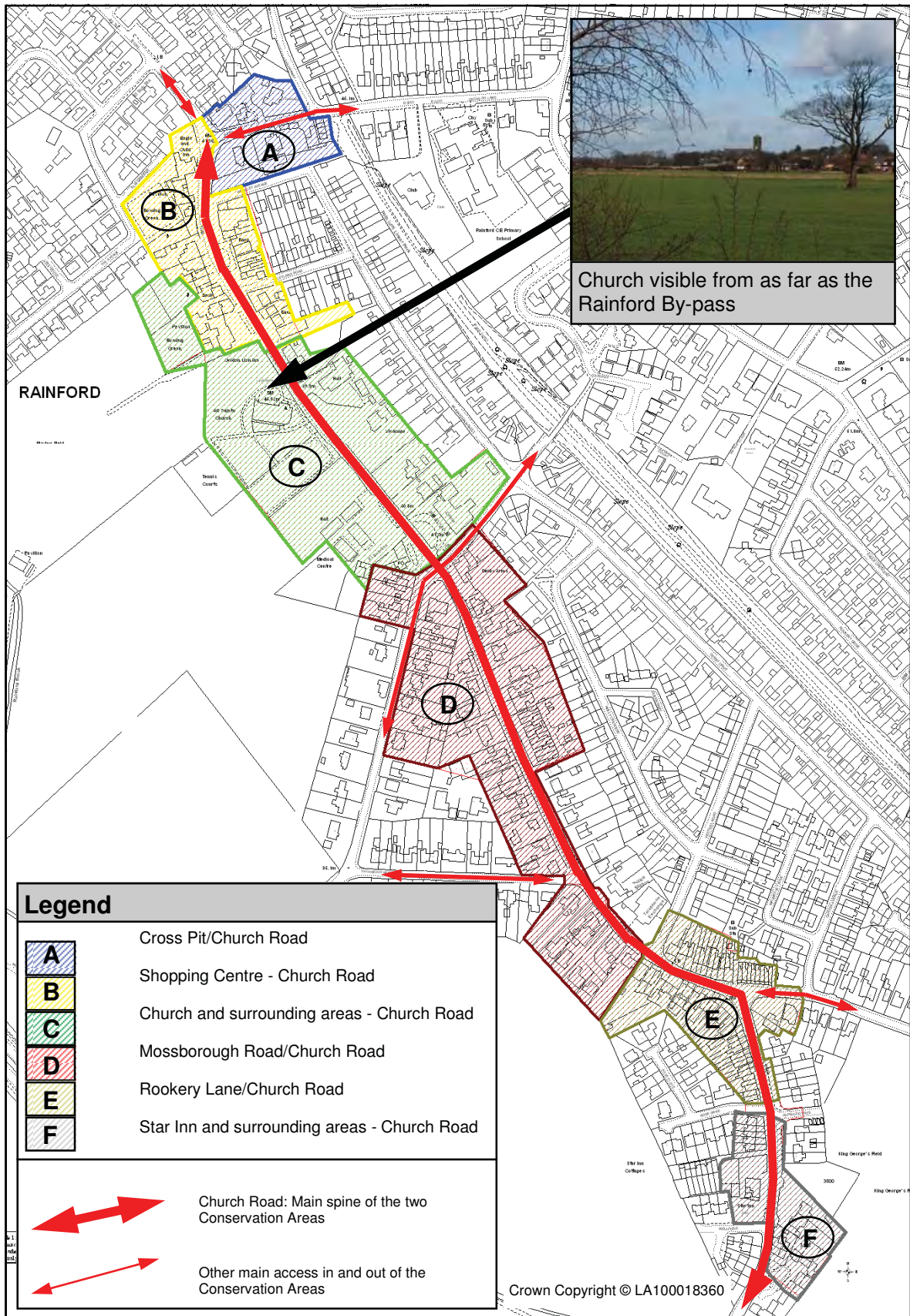
Soon after the introduction of tobacco at the end of the 16th century, the manufacture of clay smoking pipes became established throughout the country. By about 1620, the clay potters and mug makers of Rainford had established themselves. Many of the early pipe makers combined the trade with farming, however by the 1690s many Rainford families were solely dependent upon pipe making for their livelihood. By the end of the 17th Century Rainford was an important regional centre distributing pipes over a wide area of the northwest and beyond.

The 19th Century saw a decline in the industry nationally but the Rainford makers continued to prosper. By the 1850s production was at its peak with about 120 men and women employed in the industry, working mainly in small workshops throughout the village. A number of shops grew up in the village, particularly along Mossborough Road. Many of those employed in this industry lived in the terraced houses along Church Road.

In addition to these three industrial activities, the Church also played an important role in the early development of Rainford. As the most conspicuous building in Rainford both in size and location, the Parish Church (and associated buildings around it) are the most significant buildings in Rainford.



5.0 Character Area Analysis



Characterisation of Rainford Conservation Areas I and II

6.0 Distinctive Details and Local Features

There are several local features which add to Rainford's distinctiveness and which form part of the special interest of the area. These features include boundary walls, stone lintels and window surrounds, gardens, trees and hedges, chimneys and date plaques:

6.1 Boundary walls

Many properties in the two conservation areas have boundary walls fronting the street with Conservation Area I predominantly in red brick and Conservation Area II in stone of different varieties. In addition, many of these walls incorporate iron gates, gateposts and railings, with varying degrees of decorative details.



6.2 Stone lintels

Stone lintels over windows are characteristic of most of the residential properties in the two conservation areas. With some natural and others painted, these lintels are equally distinctive local features in the conservation areas.



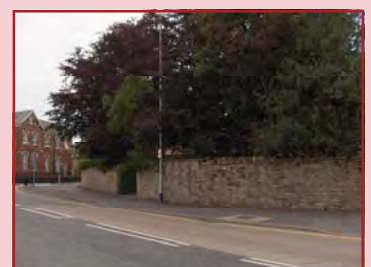
6.3 Gardens, trees and hedges

Well maintained front gardens, mature trees and hedges are some of the main features of the Rainford Conservation Areas. The properties around the church and those around Church Road/ Cross Pit Lane area are particularly notable for these features. In addition to creating a landscaped buffer to the busy Church Road, this greenery frames many of the buildings and provides a landscape link to the surrounding countryside.



6.4 Chimneys and chimney pots

With most buildings pre-dating central heating, many retain their original chimneystacks. These chimneys contribute to the rhythm and vitality of the streets, enriching the area.



7.0 Extent of Loss, Intrusion and Damage

7.1 New buildings and alterations

Most of the buildings in both conservation areas have managed to retain their original functions from church buildings, shops, offices and residential dwellings. This has meant that overall the two conservation areas have maintained their respective character over a long period of time. However, new buildings and extensions that ignore local architectural style also undermine the character of the Conservation Areas.



7.2 Use of inappropriate materials

The predominant (traditional) building materials in the two conservation areas are red brick, sandstone, slate and timber. The arrangement of forms, proportions and details of these materials are crucial to the definition of Rainford's character.



The use of building materials sympathetic to the area for any new development or alterations is an important way of preserving unique character. The replacement of original features, such as timber windows or doors, with other materials, such as aluminium or uPVC, has had a detrimental effect on the character of Rainford.



7.3 Sites with negative impact

There are some sites in the two Conservation Areas which have a negative impact on them and these are mainly found along Church Road and include numbers 31 and 55.

31 Church Road - The single storey building has a flat roof with an external metal shutter on the shopfront. Many of the properties in Rainford have pitched roofs, the flat roof is therefore not in keeping with the area. With respect to the external solid metal shutters, they are considered inappropriate in conservation areas.

55 Church Road - The building and forecourt are in poor condition. There are a large number of cars associated with the business and there are instances where cars have been parked on the pavement posing a danger to the public.

7.0 Extent of Loss, Intrusion or Damage

7.4 Visual clutter

Inappropriately sized or excessive amounts of signage along streets and on buildings can potentially create visual clutter and detract from the conservation area. Some highway signs along Church Road are arguably oversized and some signage associated with the shopping centre, impact negatively on the character of the area. More considered signage would significantly enhance Rainford.



8.0 Community Involvement

8.0 Community Involvement

It is important that property owners accept their maintenance responsibilities.

As they contribute to the conservation area as a whole, the emphasis should be on repair rather than replacement of original features. Alterations or additions should be sympathetic to the original style and be of an appropriate scale.

The Council is committed to meaningful community involvement in the process of reviewing the two conservation areas in Rainford. A comprehensive consultation will take place during the review and feedback from residents, businesses and the voluntary sector will be taken into account in developing recommendations for the improvement of the areas.

The Statement of Community Involvement for Local Development Framework sets out the consultation considered appropriate in relation to planning for the Borough. That statement will guide this consultation process.



9.0 Boundary Changes

9.0 Boundary Changes

As part of this character appraisal, the Council is required to review the boundaries of the Conservation Areas. This is in line with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 15) on Planning and the Historic Environment (DoE, 1994):

“Parts that are considered to possess similar special interest, which led to the original designation, may be added, while those that are considered to no longer to possess that special interest could be removed”.

The main issue to consider in the boundary review is whether the area under consideration has the same “demonstrably special architectural and historic interest” as the main parts of the conservation area, thereby indicating that the character and appearance should be preserved or enhanced.

9.1 Criteria

Taking into the account the essential qualities of the two conservation areas the following will be critically reviewed in the proposed amendment of the present boundaries:

- Boundary;
- Architectural quality and historical significance; and,
- Townscape quality.



The issues to be considered are in three broad categories:

Criteria		Feature
a	i	Is there a clearly defined edge to the existing boundary with definite change in character and quality?
	ii	Is there an area clearly meeting the defined criteria which lies outside such an edge?
b	i	Is the area of similar demonstrable special architectural or historic interest as the rest of the Conservation Area?
	ii	Does the development within the area date from a similar period to substantial parts of the Conservation Area?
	iii	Do the uses within the area reflect prevailing or former uses of substantial parts of the Conservation Area?
	iv	Is the development the work of the same architect/developer active elsewhere within significant parts of the Conservation Area?
	v	Is it of similar massing, bulk, height and scale to a significant portion of the development within the Conservation Area?
	vi	Is it within the area is of notable architectural and historic interest in its own right, necessitating a separate designation?
c	i	What proportion of the buildings within the area would be defined as positive contributors if located in the Conservation Area?
	ii	Is there is evidence of significant alteration to the area as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations and extensions? • Alterations to roofs? • The loss of original details (doors, windows or chimneys) or re-facing of brickwork?



9.0 Boundary Changes

In general, it is considered the existing boundaries continue to include areas of special architectural and/or historic interest. However there are a few sections in and out of the designated areas, which need to be reviewed.

9.2 Proposed amendments

Areas recommended for exclusion

In Conservation Area I, it is recommended that 1 Cross Pit Lane (The Tree Tops) be removed. This is a new and modern property built in the early 2000's and whose character is not in keeping with the area.

In Conservation Area II, it is recommended that the following properties should be excluded in this designated area:

- 2a Rookery Lane
- Hesketh Court

These buildings are more recent additions to the area that do not warrant special protection.

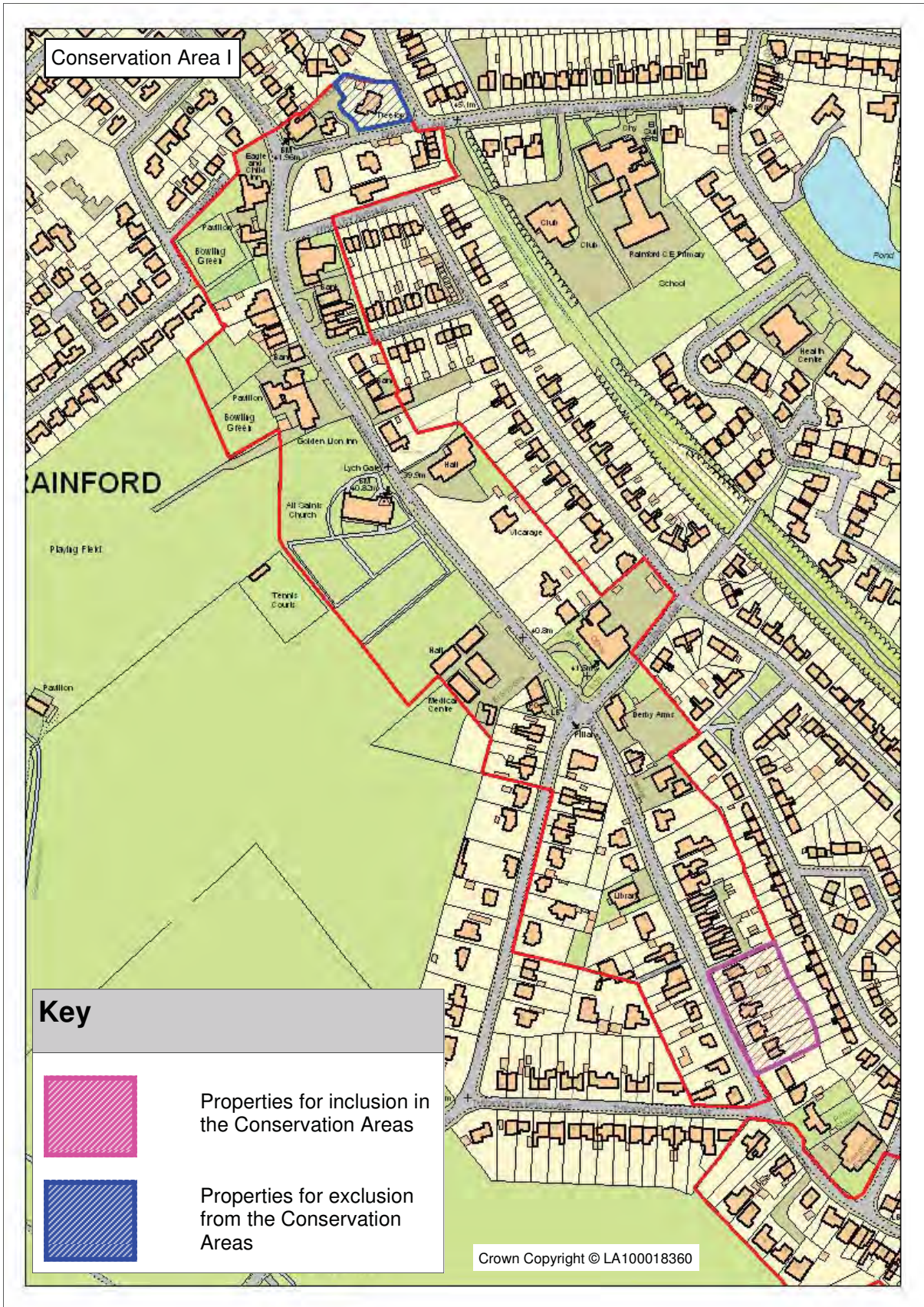
Similar properties at numbers 77 and 79 Church Road were also considered to be excluded from the Conservation Areas. However, their location at the southern end of Conservation Area II made their exclusion difficult due to the position of the former historic mill building (which is included). These two properties (77 and 79 Church Road) are to be retained on the basis of the difficulty in amending the boundary.

Areas recommended for inclusion

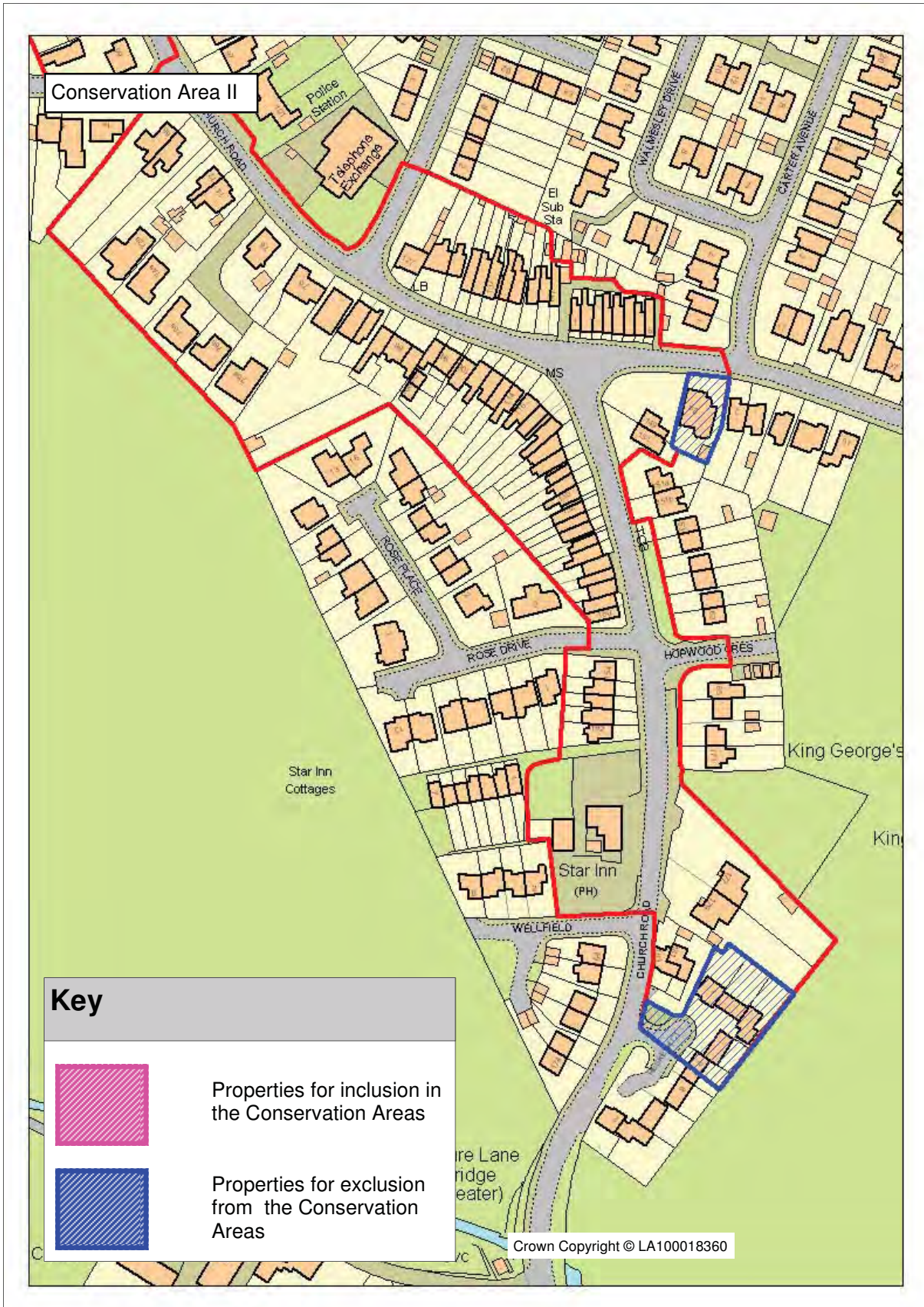
In Conservation Area I, it is recommended that nos. 81a and 83,85, 87, 89 and 91 Church Road should be included in this conservation area. These properties are on the southwestern edge and have similar characteristics to the designated area.

There are no proposed boundary change additions for Conservation Area II.





Proposed boundary changes in Conservation Area I



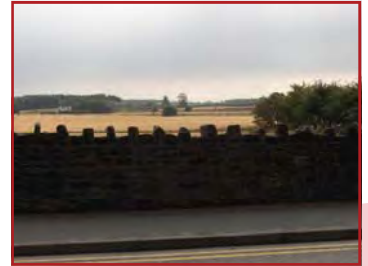
Proposed boundary changes in Conservation Area II

10.0 Summary of Key Character

From the appraisal, it can be concluded that the two Rainford conservation areas, derive most of its special interest from the following factors:

I) Setting

- Good communication networks have meant that the growth of the village has been similar to townships enjoying such facilities;
- Good siting with flat land and the ground gently rising, guaranteeing good views towards surrounding countryside;



II) Historic

Rainford's early development was influenced by the following events:

- The area's industrial past especially clay pipe manufacture and coal mining;
- Agricultural activities;
- Church activities.



III) Architectural

- Evolving from numerous events, a historical settlement developed along Church Road from two core centres – Chapel End with the Parish Church as the centre and the Haysarm end further south with the centre being on 'Star Inn'. The boundaries of the two conservation areas in Rainford follow this historical development.
- A series of terraced houses built around the same period of time.
- A number of key buildings that contribute to the overall townscape.



10.0 Summary of Key Character

- A central core with an interesting structure and grain which includes a mix of buildings, open spaces and trees within a small area.
- Traditional building materials, notably red bricks and locally available sandstone for walls and boundary walls, timber for doors and windows, slate for roofs and cast iron.
- Local features and details, especially stone lintels and bay windows, all which give the area its distinctive character and identity.



IV) Environmental

- Trees define the edges of the road and compliment the buildings.
- Hedges and landscaping in front gardens enhance the area.

These are the key characteristics, which give the two conservation areas their special character. They should be a material consideration when considering a proposal for development in the two areas.

11.0 Issues

In general, the quality of the two designated Conservation Areas and the listed buildings within was found to be of satisfactory condition. Within them however, there are number of threats to their character, which are summarised in 7.0 of this report.

11.1 Enhancement and/or regeneration

From the appraisal, several observations were made about the condition of the two Rainford Conservation Areas. The character and appearance of a number of buildings are in a bad condition and would benefit from:

- Reinstatement of traditional front doors and sliding timber sash windows on residential properties;
- Reinstatement/installation of traditional timber shop fronts; single glazed and traditional handwritten signs;
- Reinstatement/repair of architectural details like chimneys, boundary walls and entrance porches.

Detailed guidance is needed for the above works on the existing as well as any new buildings. The general appearance of the area would equally benefit from the rationalisation of traffic signs, public realm improvements and appropriate street furniture to respect the special character of the conservation areas.

11.2 Legislation and Guidance: Article 4 Direction

The special character of Rainford is mainly derived from its setting, history and the architectural quality of its individual buildings, details and features. Widespread replacement or loss of local features like brick and red sandstone walls, slate roofs as well as timber doors would greatly undermine the appearance and character of this unique area.

Already there are various planning control measures in place, which would be used to protect the built fabric in the conservation area. This includes Conservation Area Consent (CAC), Listed Building Consent (LBC) and Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).



There are other works through which are not subject to any development control (Permitted Developments) but which may affect the setting, history and character of the conservation area.

It is recommended that an Article 4 Direction should be declared to cover residential properties within the Rainford Conservation Areas. With this declaration, planning permission will now be required for works otherwise permitted without seeking planning permission from the Council.

Article 4 Direction should cover alterations that affect the external appearance of houses in the conservation area, such as:

- Extensions;
- Replacement of windows and doors;
- Re-roofing or alterations to chimneys or ridge tiles;
- Erection of new porches;
- Removing gardens or covering them in tarmac;
- Enclosures for car parking spaces;
- Erection of gates, fences or walls;
- Covering of external wall surfaces with render, paint or cladding; and
- Satellite dishes, antennae etc.

Despite pressure from property owners, tenants and developers, previous experiences have shown that Article 4 Directions have been successful in safeguarding the appearance and character of a conservation area. There is always the possibility of enforcement action against any breaches of this planning control policy.



11.3 Grant aid programme

This review has highlighted the problem of many properties within the conservation area having been altered unsympathetically or being in a poor state of repair. The Council will explore the potential to make funds available in an effort to redress these issues.

In addition to the Council, a number of other potential sources of grant aid are available. These include English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Countryside Agency.

As part of this process, a survey of the building stock within the two conservation areas in Rainford is necessary to ascertain the condition of buildings and the amount of funding needed to enhance the respective areas.



12.0 Next Steps

12.1 Adoption Procedures

Once consultation has been completed and the appraisal revised to take account of public responses, it will be adopted formally through St Helens Council internal procedures.

12.2 Developing Management Proposals

The recommendations in this appraisal will provide the basis for developing and publishing management proposals for the area.

12.3 Monitoring

To deal with any issues, changes in the appearance and condition of the conservation area need to be monitored regularly and appropriate action taken promptly. A dated photographic record of the area has been produced during the appraisal process, as this will provide an invaluable aid to any later enforcement action.

12.4 Review And Updating

Conservation Area Appraisals need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Ideally this review process should take place every five years.

The character and appearance of most conservation areas and the special interest that warrants this designation generally does not change that rapidly, although the related management proposals will need to be reviewed and updated. Rather than requiring wholesale rewriting, the five yearly reviews might result in an addendum to an existing appraisal, recording what has changed, redefining (or confirming) the special interest that warrants designation and setting out any new recommendations. The updated appraisal then needs to be re-adopted by the Council.



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