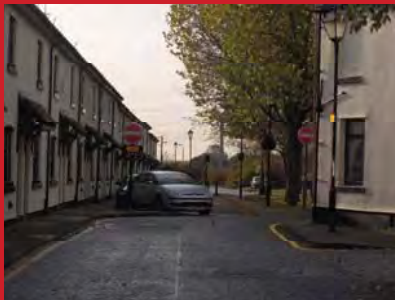


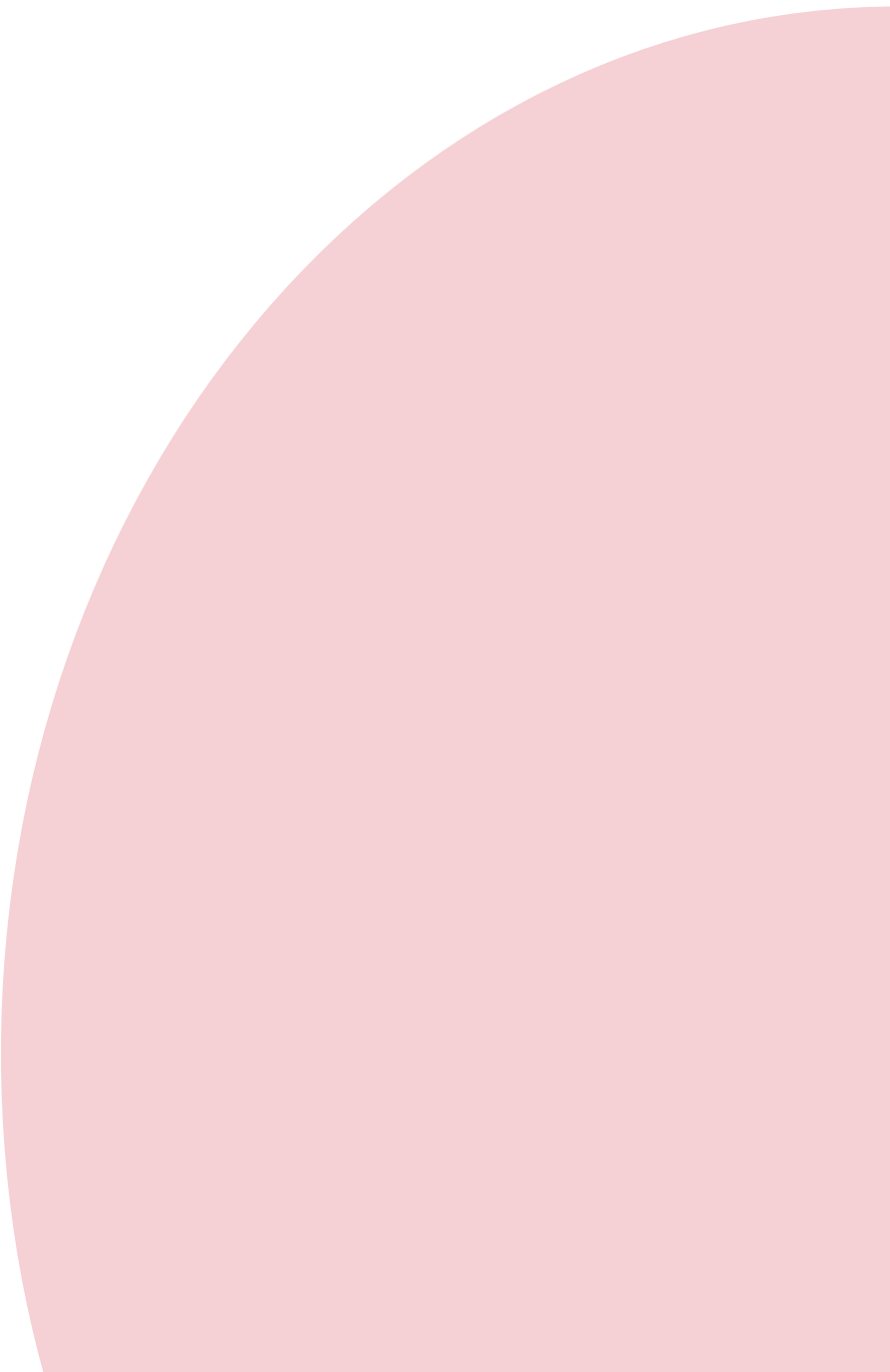


St. Helens
Council



Vulcan Village Conservation Area Appraisal

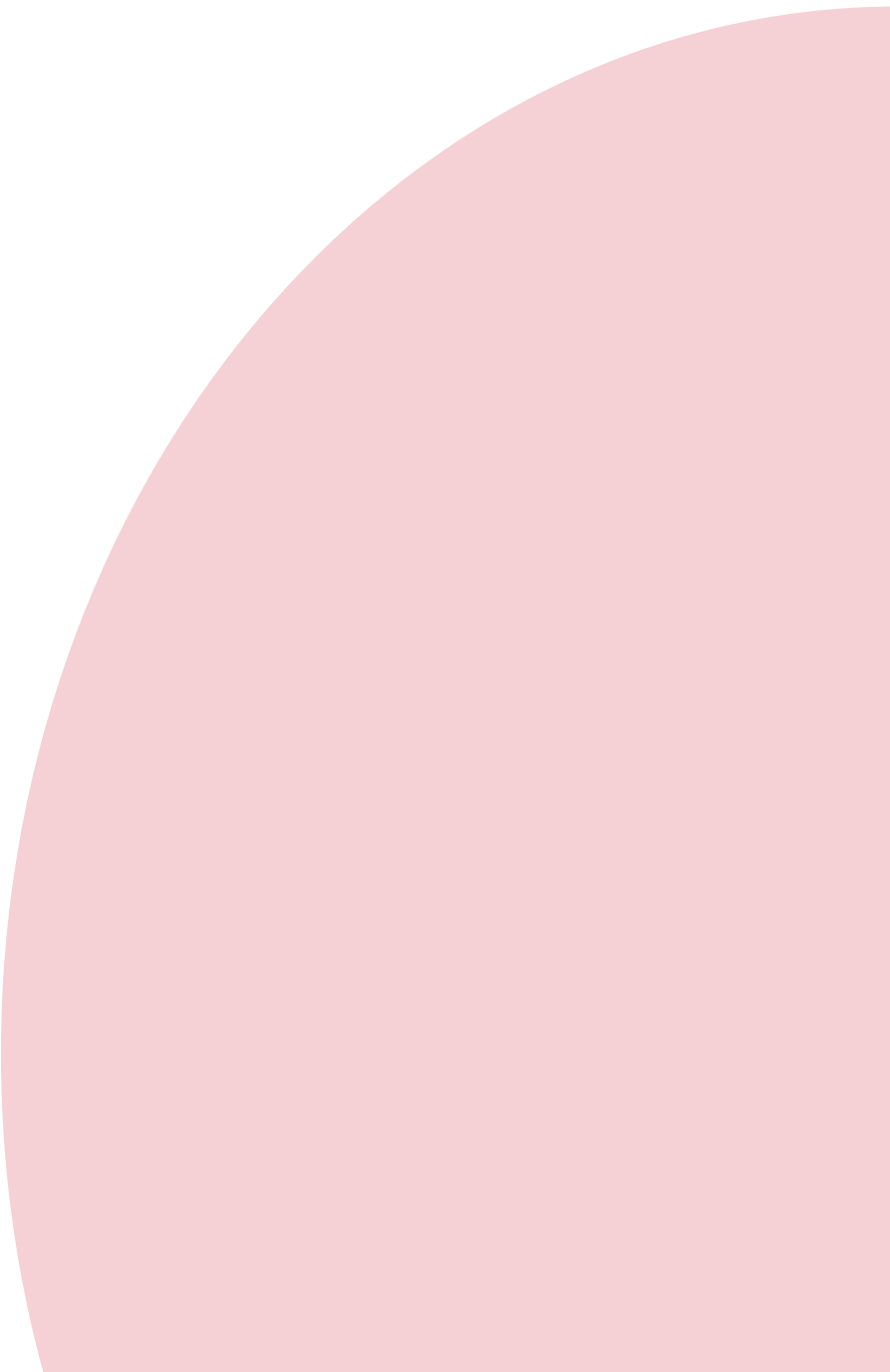
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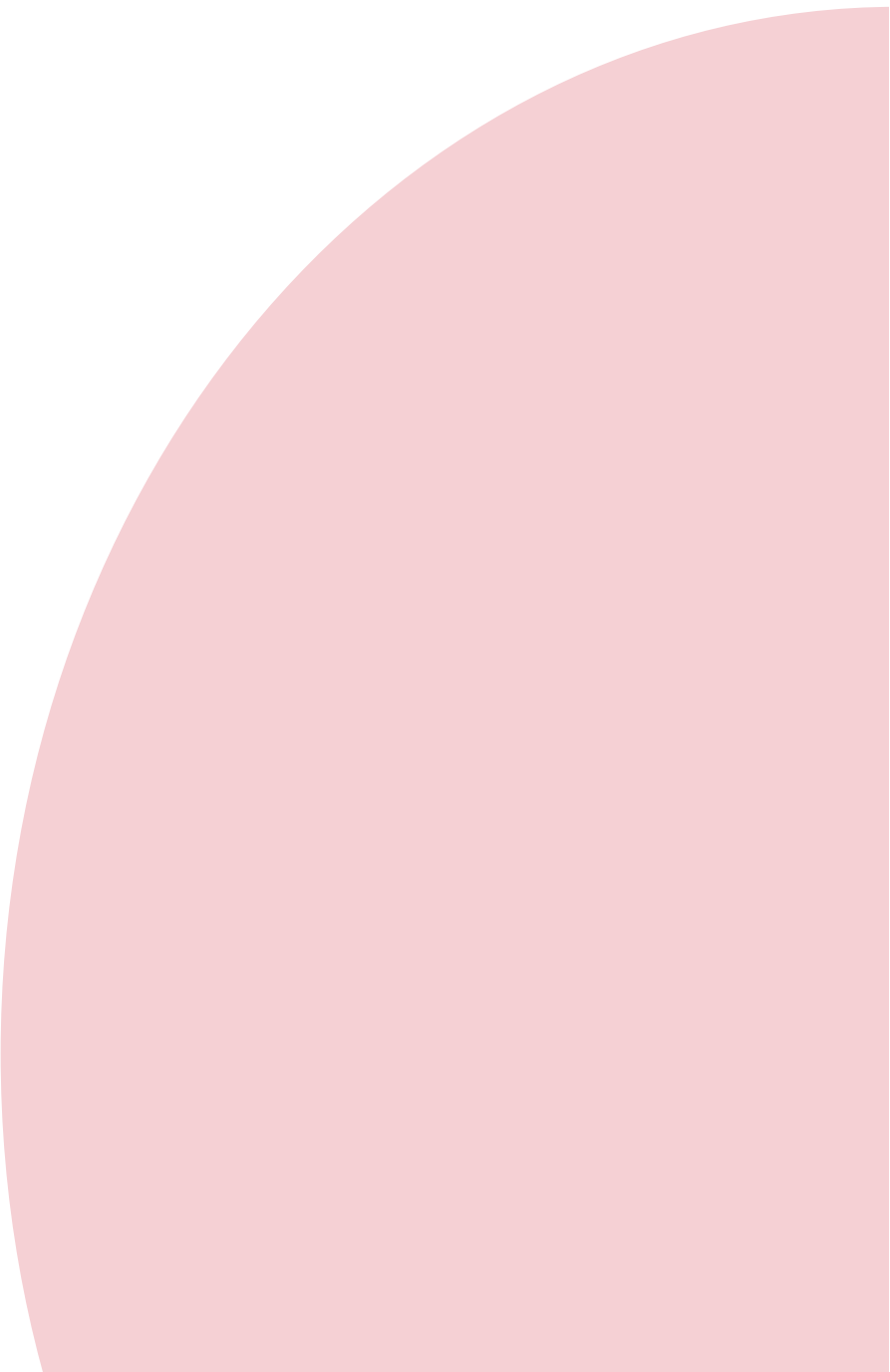
Vulcan Village was built to accommodate the workers of the Vulcan Foundry and was closely linked with the Liverpool—Manchester railway. It combined a concern for sanitary living conditions with the objective of providing an attractive suburb for the working class—an early and classic example of English philanthropy.

In 1986, in recognition of the special qualities of this village it was declared a Conservation Area. This appraisal is aimed at reviewing this designation in order to help preserve and enhance the village.



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Vulcan Village is associated with the housing ideologies of the 19th Century. This time was marked by a number of attempts to set up communities in model towns and villages, the ideology being that new physical forms would serve as a basis for happier lives (Cleave, 1980). Such settlements were intended for different social groups: one for the middle class in search of Utopia, the other for workers, instigated by philanthropic industrialists.

Built in 1835 to accommodate the workers of the Vulcan Foundry, it is one of Britain's last privately owned villages of its kind; an excellent example of a small scale "worker village". The foundry has since been demolished, however the Village still retains its original triangular layout and setting, notably its isolation from the hustle and bustle of the nearby towns of Earlestown and Warrington. It has a special quietness that has come to be associated with since it was built by the foundry's owners over 170 years ago.

In 1986, in recognition of the special qualities of this village, it was declared a Conservation Area; an area of special interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

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 the conservation area, this appraisal is intended to highlight these elements.

1.2 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.

1.3 Purpose of Appraisal

This appraisal is aimed at:

- Identifying, defining and analysing those factors that make the Vulcan Village an area of special 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 Area; and,
- As a 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 Area.

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 Conservation Area. It has involved:

- A thorough survey and visual appraisal of the area within and beyond the existing conservation area 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.
- An analysis and evaluation of the information gathered, identifying key issues for consultation purposes.

2.0 Planning Policy Content

2.1 Planning legislation

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

i) The Civic Amenities Act 1967

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

ii) 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:

a) Section 69

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

- 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.
- Shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.

b) Section 71

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 area which will be undertaken after the appraisal.

The designation of Vulcan Village as a Conservation Areas by the 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.

iii) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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

PPG 15 clarifies the content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It highlights the need to protect physical survivals of the past to form part of the nation’s cultural heritage and aid the sense of national identity.

The key area concerning conservation areas is in Section 4 (4) of PPG15 where:

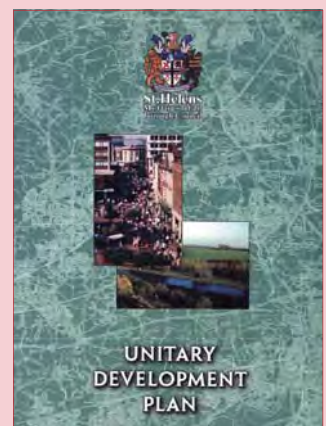
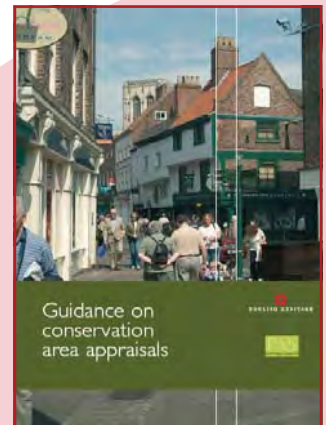
- Local Planning Authorities are required to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all Conservation Areas in its area.
- Some of the aspects that will always form the basis for a coherent evaluation are outlined.

The following policies provide guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals:

- *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (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.

The wider policy context is provided by:

- Regional Spatial Strategy for the Northwest (September 2008), which identifies the need to ensure active management of the region’s environmental and cultural assets.
- St Helens Unitary Development Plan (1998)
- St Helens Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2007)



3.0 Location and Setting

3.1 Location and context

The Vulcan Village Conservation Area is situated about four miles north of Warrington and about 1.6 kilometres south of both Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows. It is the southernmost suburb of the Newton Ward in the Borough of St Helens. It is surrounded on two of its three sides by the rolling farmlands of Winwick, providing a strong sense of approach into Newton-le-Willows from the south. Its only road access is via Wargrave Road which cuts through the Village leading to Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows to the north and towards Warrington to the south.

The nearest train stations are at Earlestown, Newton-le-Willows and Warrington. Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows are on the Liverpool-Manchester railway line running east to west to the north of the village. A branch from Earlestown to Warrington passes on the western edge of the Conservation Area joining the west coast mainline south of the village. On raised ground the Earlestown-Warrington railway line provides a physical edge of the Conservation Area to the west.

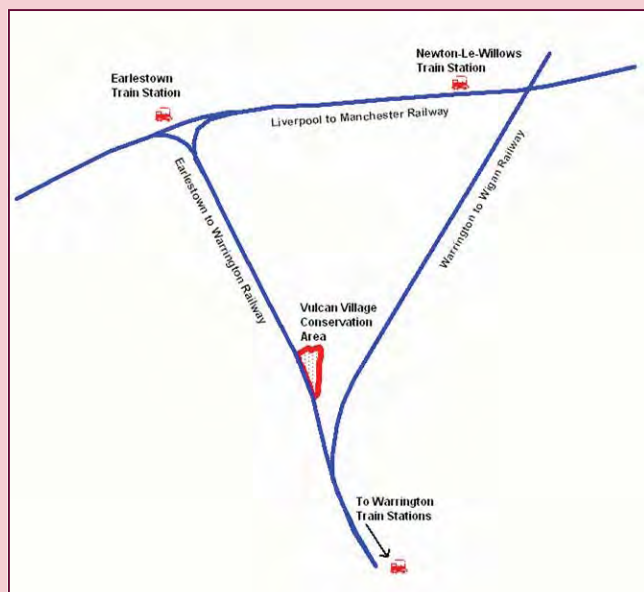
The site of the former Vulcan Foundry forms the boundary of the Village to the north. To the immediate west is the Warrington-Earlestown railway line, further beyond is open farmland. To the east, a row of mature trees on an embankment separates the village from other open farmland. To the south is yet more open farmland with the electric cables of the two railway lines dominating the sky line.

3.2 General character and plan form

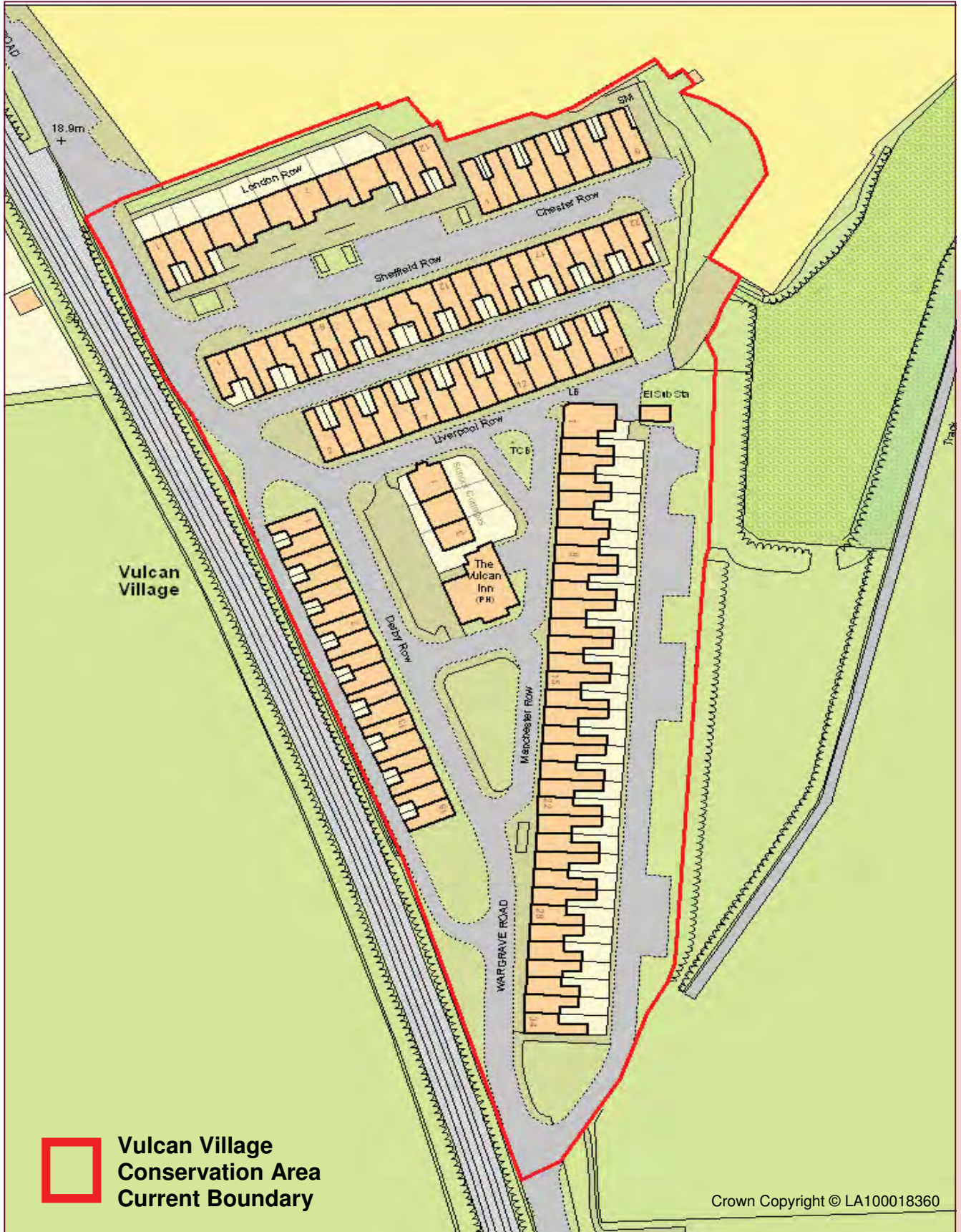
Historically, the village has been surrounded by railway infrastructure lending the Conservation Area to more of an industrial character. To the north was the now demolished Vulcan works and to the west is the Earlestown-Warrington railway line.

There are 114 properties in six rows of terraces (Manchester, Liverpool, Derby, Sheffield, Chester and London Row) all within two hectares. This compact and dense plan form reinforces that industrial character.

To the east of the village is an embankment with mature trees which together with the raised Earlestown-Warrington provide a sense of enclosure and containment to the Conservation, reinforcing the compactness. However beyond these physical edges, the village is surrounded by open countryside



3.0 Location and Setting



3.0 Location and Setting

lending some rural setting and a sense of quietness that it has come to be associated with it since it was built. In this way it also acts as a transition between the quiet countryside to the south and the hustle and bustle of the nearby areas of Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows.

In terms of layout, it is triangular in shape, tapering southwards to a point. It is derived from the Warrington-Earlestown railway line to the west, the defunct Vulcan Works to the north and the historical shape of the open farms to the east. From historical maps, the treed embankment on the eastern edge of the village appear to be a recent occurrence and apart from the children playground, it has no historical association with the Conservation Area.

3.3 Landscape setting and geology

Landscape setting

At the southernmost edge of Newton-le-Willows, Vulcan Village Conservation Area is located on a raised area near the confluence of two rivers (Land Use Consultants, 2006). These are the Sankey Brook to the southwest and Newton Brook to the south east. Both of these rivers offer some containment to the setting of the village, particularly the Newton Brook which defines part of the administrative boundary of the Borough to the south. providing a setting to the area. Despite being generally the Village being generally flat, it slopes gently southwards towards the brooks as a result.

The Village is also located near the junction of two railway lines. The Warrington-Earlestown line and the west coast main lines. These two also provide another setting to the area. However, a stronger containment and an immediate physical setting of the Conservation Area is provided by the raised area of the Warrington-Earlestown railway line to the west and the treed embankment to the east.

Geology

The geology of Vulcan Village, as in most parts of the Newton-le-Willows township, is predominantly pebble beds of the bunter series of new red sandstone.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

- **Vulcan Village is surrounded on two of its three sides by rolling farmlands, providing a strong sense of approach into Newton-le-Willows from the south;**
- **Located at the southernmost edge of the ward, the Conservation Area provides a transition into Newton-le-Willows: from the predominantly countryside atmosphere to the south to the built up area to the north;**
- **The plan form of the village and its historical association with the Vulcan Works lends the Conservation Area to an industrial character;**
- **The surrounding open countryside provide a wider rural setting to the Conservation Area;**
- **It has a triangular plan form defined by the site of the former Vulcan Foundry to the north and the raised features of the Warrington-Earlestown railway line to the west and well-treed embankment to the east;**

4.0 Historical Background

4.1 Historical origins

Vulcan Village is inextricably linked with the history of the railway, notably the opening of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway line in 1830. Soon after it began operations, a number of branch lines were constructed, making Lancashire the centre of railway development in the world with Newton-le-Willows as its focus.

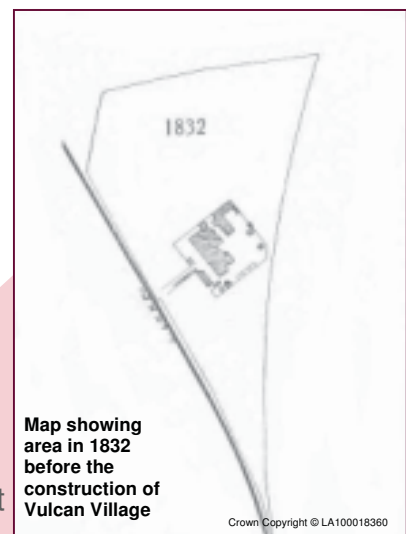
At about the same time, two large foundries—the Viaduct Works in Earlestown and Vulcan Works adjacent to Vulcan Village—were well known worldwide for making locomotives and wagons. With the two foundries, Newton-le-Willows, which was then a small market town of little significance, became one of England's important towns.

As the two foundries increased production, skilled workers were attracted from other parts of Lancashire and further afield. The railway entrepreneurs saw the acquisition of a highly skilled and stable workforce living nearby to the works as central to their development. As a result, they began building settlements adjacent to their works. The suburb of Wargrave provided accommodation for workers of the Viaduct Works while the Vulcan Village was built for the workers of Vulcan Works.

It is thought that the construction of Vulcan Village began in 1833, though records of the origin of the Village are few and fragmented. The only indication that the Village existed in 1835, is the notice to hawkers and ballad singers, which is located on the gable ends of Derby Row in the Village (Shaw). Dated 1st of May 1835, the notice was probably the result of harassment by hawkers and others in a similar plight, which was a common occurrence in the years following the Napoleonic Wars.

Adding to the somewhat obscure origins of the Village, there are several theories regarding its early beginnings. There is a theory that the Village was built by the railway pioneer George Stephenson to house railway workers, when the Liverpool-Manchester Railway was being constructed in the 1820s (Smith, 1980).

A similar source has linked the early years of the Village with the workers engaged with a different railway line, the Colliery line, later replaced by the Warrington and Newton Railway. It is believed that the houses were subsequently bought by another railway pioneer Mr. Tayleur who sited his works (The Vulcan Foundry) alongside them (Vulcan Magazine of Spring, 1960).



4.0 Historical Background

Historical records however, show that neither of those two theories are an accurate representation of the Village's early origins. Maps of the 1830s, show that the Village was built after the Vulcan Foundry, making the village, as it is widely believed, to have been purposely built for the workers of the Viaduct foundry (Farrer and Brownbill, 1911).

4.2 Resultant pattern of development

Originally the Village was a triangle of three terraces of approximately three quarters of an acre, around an open space which became the village green. This triangle comprised 76 houses in Manchester, Liverpool and Derby Rows, as the terraces were later known.

As the Vulcan Works grew, the Village was later extended between 1839-1841. A school building and three more terraces—Sheffield, Chester and London Row—were added bringing the Village up to slightly over 100 dwellings. The houses in the second phase of development are slightly larger, the largest being the last to be built in London Row. Much later in the century, the village hostelry, the Vulcan Inn and the bath/washhouse were erected on the village green, losing the majority of the central open space.

The housing accommodation provided a parlour and a kitchen on the ground floor with bedrooms above, a small scullery projected from the house at the rear. In addition to the school, the public house and the other communal facilities, the Village had its own post office as well. At that time the village was self-contained and was considered as accommodation of comparatively very high quality.

As the railway system developed, workers were able to commute from surrounding towns and there was thus no need to further extend the village. As a result Vulcan Village stands substantially in the original layout of the 1840s, making it one of the earliest examples in the country of a planned settlement built specifically to house artisan workers of nearby manufacturing works.

4.3 Later development

The Village underwent two major renovations during the 1930's and again during the 1950s. This was after the war intervened when it was first decided that the village was to be demolished in 1938 (Newton Reporter, 1975). These renovations had a major impact to the appearance of the village.

Originally, the two-storey houses were built in brick with slated roofs, timber window frames and doors. During the renovations of the 1980s roof slates were replaced with brown concrete tiles, the exterior rendered and the window and doors replaced.

4.0 Historical Background

During the 1950s alterations, outrigger extensions were built at the rear of the houses, providing bathroom and kitchen facilities. In terms of materials and outward appearances, these houses were very different in appearance to the original ones. However, the Village still retained its original form of terraces around an amenity space with a sense of enclosure and security.

4.4 Vulcan Village in the 20th Century

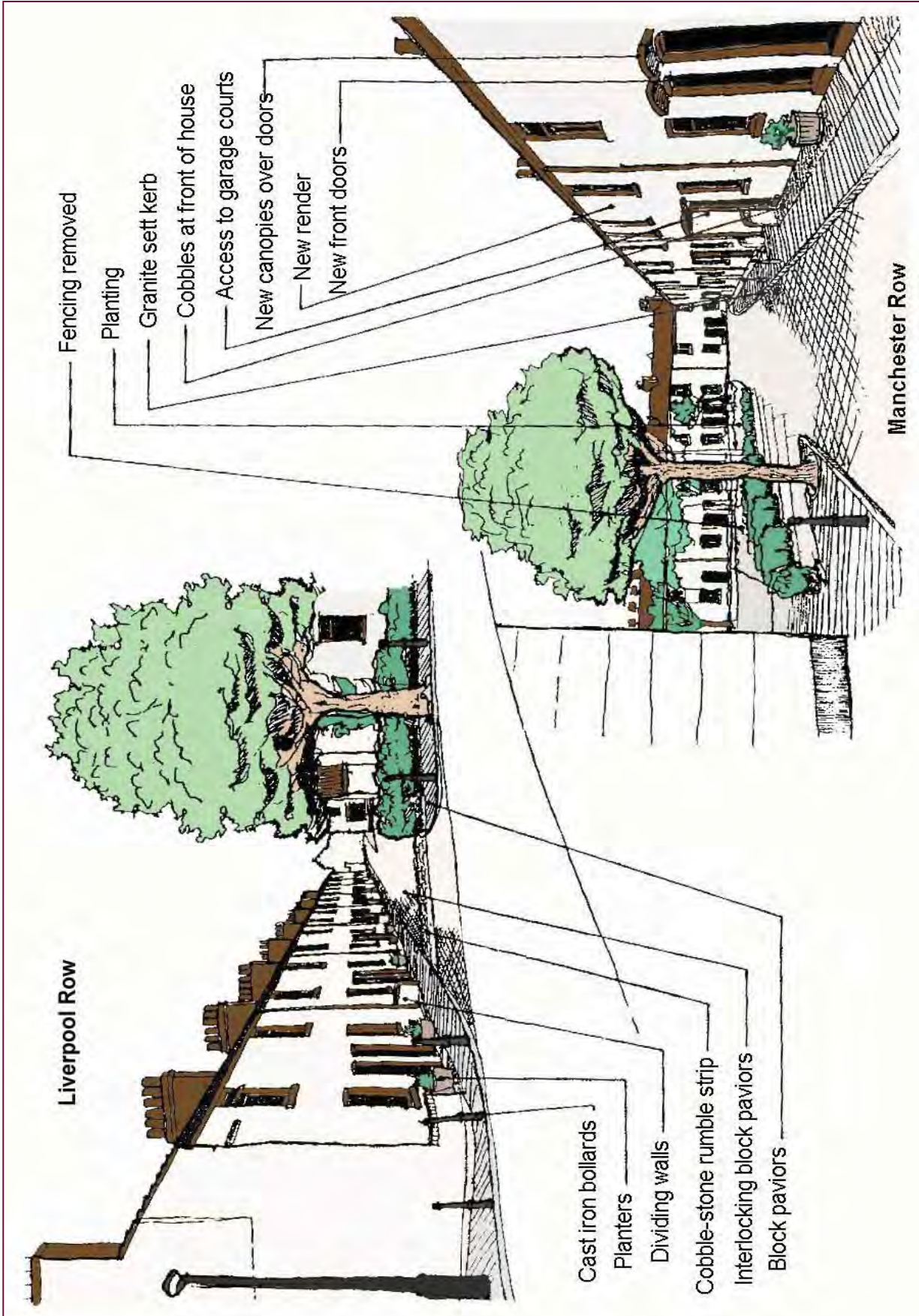
During the 1970s and 1980s, the Village became rundown and almost derelict until it was acquired by Maritime Housing Association, who refurbished and adapted the properties to modern standards. The works included re-roofing, door and window replacements, the introduction of damp proof courses and porches and the extension of the kitchens and bathrooms, providing modern facilities and conditions. The window proportions were changed and dark woodwork was used. Despite changes in materials and window shapes, the improvements did not detract from the basic character of the terraces.

During these improvements, the old foundry school was converted into three bungalows for the elderly and disabled. In its garden, there is a plaque that celebrates this and marks the occasion in which Princess Anne officially opened the new premises.

In the 1980s the Council undertook, comprehensive improvement works to the Village. The works included the surfacing of the roads and footpaths, landscaping and the demolition of the washhouse, which created some amenity space. Three houses were demolished, the one closest to Wargrave Road on Liverpool Row and two adjacent to the same road on Manchester Row, to improve visibility. Despite these extensive works, the general set up of the village in terms of enclosure and the amenity area remained intact.

As with the Vulcan works, it passed through various hands since first built. English Electric was bought by GEC, which in turn became GEC Alstom then Alstom, and finally as part of MAN B&W Diesel in 2000. At the end of 2002 the works closed and the business transferred to the MAN B&W Diesel Ltd, Mirrlees Blackstone site at Stockport. It was then an industrial estate, appropriately called "Vulcan Industrial Estate" (Engine Museums.org). In the process of all this some works were transferred to other plants in the UK and some sections closed.





Sketch drawing of redevelopment of Vulcan Village (Warrington & Golborne Guardian newspaper, 1984)

4.0 Historical Background

Following these partial closures, period plaques were put on gable ends of Derby Row and a stone motif removed from the factory was incorporated on one gable end of Manchester Row. Memorabilia from the factory was put in the public house for display. The Vulcan Foundry was finally demolished in 2006 to give way to a proposed urban village.

From the historical development, it is evident that the Vulcan Village is of significant local if not national interest. Its close association with the historic Liverpool-Manchester railway makes it an important part of railway history.

Again, despite the closure and eventual demolition of the works, the Village still retains its original layout and setting, notably its isolation from the nearby towns of Earlestown and Warrington. It has a special quietness that has come to be associated with it, since it was built by the Vulcan Foundry nearly 170 years ago.

As one of Britain's last privately owned villages of its kind, it provides an excellent example of a small scale "worker village", worthy of protection and preservation.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

One of Britain's last privately owned village of its kind, providing an excellent example of a small scale worker village:

- **Purposely built to accommodate workers of the Vulcan Foundry which built engines for the Liverpool-Manchester Railway Line, extricably linking the village with the history of the railway;**
- **Resultant planned village of terraced properties around a village green, developing over time as the Vulcan Works grew;**
- **Improvements in transport systems led to its retention of its original size and boundaries; and,**
- **Despite going through several improvement programmes, the village has retained its original form and historical character.**



5.0 Spatial Analysis

5.1 The character and interrelation of spaces

Whilst the Vulcan Village Conservation Area has an overall character that stems from its historical setting, it derives most of its physical character from the grouping of terraced properties and their relationship with the spaces they enclose.

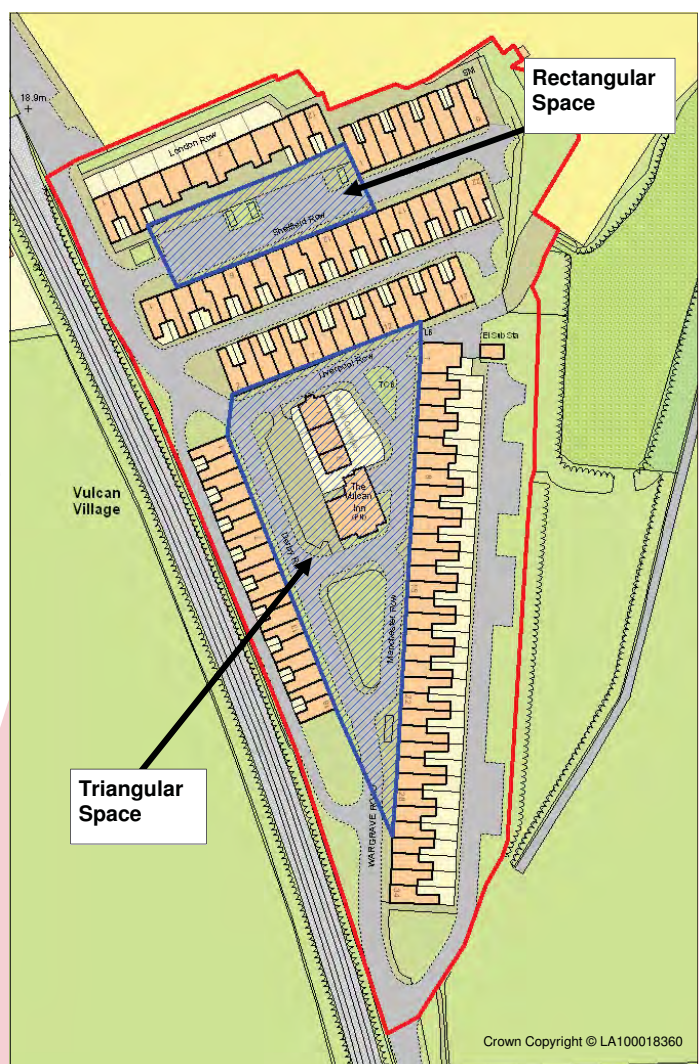
The terraces are comprised of two storey properties directly fronting the footway, forming a uniform building line and roofline punctuated by chimney stacks. The uniformity of the properties as well as the terraces gives the Village a strong cohesive identity. Further, the long rows of terraces gives the Conservation Area a predominantly horizontal emphasis.

The Village contains 114 houses, a public house and amenity space all within an area of five acres. With a density of an average of 57 dwellings per acre or approximately 180 square metres, the Village is a dense and a compact area.

The spatial layout of the village is also characterised by spaces or zones of activities, a rectangular one to the north and a triangular shaped one to the south.

The rectangular space is enclosed on three sides by London, Sheffield and (gable end) Chester Rows. The fourth side which is open, affording good views of this section of the Conservation Area along Wargrave and long outward views. This space is landscaped with soft and hard materials and most of it is used for car parking.

However, it is the triangular space to the south, which is the most significant. Historically, it contained the social centre of the village including the Vulcan Inn public house, the school, post office and a communal wash house. Today the Inn still remains, the former school and post office have since converted into housing though a



historical K6 telephone booth still remains outside the post office. The wash house has been demolished and a landscaped amenity was created. This area also includes a bus stop, near the telephone booth. Its central location and the variety of activities makes this rectangular space the main focus of the village.

It is enclosed on the three sides by the Manchester, Derby and Liverpool Rows. These three terraces provide strong boundary features, creating a sense of enclosure and security. At the end of these three terraces, there are gaps where this tight space spills out allowing glimpses of the surrounding countryside.

To the west and east of the Conservation Area are raised areas created by the Warrington-Earlestown railway line and an embankment of former contaminated land respectively. These two features provide some containment and immediate physical setting to the Conservation Area. Since decontaminated, the embankment is well landscaped with mature trees with an area cleared to the south for recreational activities.



Beyond these strong features is the open farmland between Manchester Row and the Warrington-Wigan railway line. It provides a setting to the Conservation Area.



5.2 Key views and vistas

The village is bounded on most of its three sides by strong physical edges:

- To the north is a high brick wall which was used to separate the Village from the former works. This restricts views outwards from both London and Chester Rows;
- To the southwest is the Warrington-Earlestown railway line, which is on higher ground. The elevated railway together with associated overhead electric cables and posts obstruct outward views from the rear of Derby Row; and,
- To the southeast is a man-made embankment with mature trees, restricting views from the rear of Manchester Row.

This physical setting of the Conservation Area restricts long outward and

inward views. The only possible long views are from the two points where Wargrave Road enters and exits the village.

From the northern approach, the inward view into the Conservation Area is limited to the first few houses of London Row to the left. As one gets into the village the period plaque on the gable end of Derby Row is the main direct view. Outward views from this exit is that of the residential development of the suburb of Wargrave.

From the south approach, the picturesque sight of the gable end of Manchester Row with the large motif is the main view. The Vulcan Inn with the landscaped amenity area in the background and a plaque on the gable end of Derby Row, similar to the one on its other gable, is the main view as one gets further into the village. The overhead railway electric cables and posts dominate the outward view from this exit with the open farmland further afield forming the background.

The compact and dense layout of the Village offers excellent internal views and vistas within the Conservation Area (as mentioned above).

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

- **Vulcan Village Conservation Area derives most of its physical character from the grouping of terraced properties and their relationship with the spaces they enclose.**
- **The terraces are long and comprise of two-storey properties of the same style and materials:**
 - ◇ **The long terraces give the Conservation Area a predominantly horizontal emphasis;**
 - ◇ **Uniformity in height, style and materials gives the Conservation Area a strong cohesive identity; and,**
 - ◇ **The strong boundary features of the terraces creates a strong sense of enclosure and security.**
- **With an average of 57 dwellings per acre, the village is a dense and compact area.**
- **The compact and dense layout of the Village as well as raised physical edges restricts outward views. However, it offers excellent internal views and vistas within the Conservation Area.**

6.0 Character Area Analysis

6.1 An Overview

Vulcan Village Conservation Area is a well defined homogeneous area with no significant variations in character. Using English Heritage's guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2005), this section seeks to analyse the character of the area through the identifying and carrying out the following:

- Activities and prevailing uses and their influence on the plan form and buildings.
- Public realm audit.
- Architectural character: The qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area.
- Listed buildings.
- Key unlisted buildings of merit.
- Amenity spaces and their contribution made to the character of the area.

6.2. Activities and prevailing uses and their influence on the plan form of the buildings

The Conservation Area has been and still is predominantly residential. At one time, when the Vulcan Foundry was still operational, it was a self-contained community with a school, post office and a public house as well as a communal bathhouse, washhouse and laundry.

The Vulcan Inn public house is still operational, however the post office and the school have since been converted into residential accommodation. With the modernisation of the houses, the communal facilities were demolished and the area was landscaped.

6.3. Public realm audit

This is the space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

Footpaths, Streets and amenity spaces

The original street pattern of the Village is largely intact. In 1986, an improvement scheme was undertaken of the infrastructure and environment in the Village. The improvements included the use of a specific palette of materials for roads and footpaths as well as landscaping. It is considered that this enhanced the Conservation Area.

The main arterial road, Wargrave Road as well as the internal streets are still in black bitmac, with small areas of paving blocks at the junctions of the arterial road with the internal streets.

The footpaths are in pre-cast concrete paving slabs and kerbstones. Other hard surfaces, such as the space beside the Vulcan Inn and the one to the rear of London Row, are in red concrete bricks.

The other open areas are landscaped with hard and soft materials with trees and hedges planted, closing internal vistas. The forecourt of the Vulcan Inn is enclosed by cast iron bollards and chains along its frontage with Wargrave Road, creating a pleasant amenity area.

The use of different materials for the streets, footpaths and the open spaces create a relatively high quality public realm to the Conservation Area, contributing to its overall visual amenity.

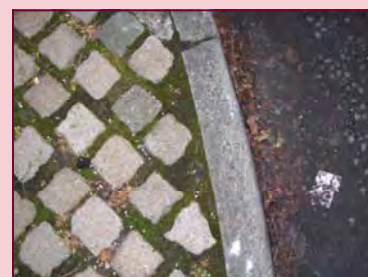
Street furniture

Traffic signs in the Conservation Area are in the form of direction signs at the junctions of Wargrave Road with the internal streets. These are of an appropriate size. However, considering the status of the Village reducing their number to avoid clutter could be considered.

Most of the street lights within the Conservation Area are in 'Victorian' style lighting columns and lanterns, erected at prominent positions on the frontages of the houses.

Reinforcing its historical links with the railway in general and the Vulcan Works in particular, these heritage features enhance the Conservation Area.

Another historical feature in the Conservation Area is a K6 type telephone kiosk. This red structure is located in the triangular open



6.0 Character Area Analysis

space and outside No. 1 Manchester Row which used to be the Village's post office.

Within the Vulcan Inn forecourt, there are street benches, in wood with cast iron supports. These benches make this well landscaped amenity space the main recreational area in the Conservation Area.

There is also a number of litter bins along the street. Many of them are in a design, size and colour which are considered appropriate in the Conservation Area.

6.4 Architectural character: The qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area

The Conservation Area contains buildings whose fabric is from the 1830s. With the exception of two, all the buildings are modest two-storey domestic dwellings of 19th Century origin and style.

All of these residential properties are in the form of terraces with narrow frontages directly onto the footways, creating a strong uniform building line. The terraced form also gives a strong horizontal emphasis to the streetscape.

External Walls

All the main houses in the Conservation Area are cement rendered and painted white, creating a uniform and homogenous character. However, the outrigger extensions at the back are in red brickwork.

Roof

All properties have pitched roofs with concrete roof tiles and cast iron rainwater goods. Along the ridge, but off-centre, are a series of chimney stacks, breaking up the roofline. There are eight clay pots per stack, with one stack for two houses.

Windows

All windows in the terraces are recessed onto cambered arches. They are in painted timber casements with black sills. The windows on the upper floors of the front elevation are in four panes while the ground floor ones are wider with six panes.

Doors

All the doors are painted brown, panelled with glass insets and some



6.0 Character Area Analysis

have arched fanlights. With the exception of Chester Row, many of them also have a concrete tiled roof with overhang.

On the one hand, the regularity of materials, roofline and fenestrations displayed by the terraces adds to the cohesiveness of the area. On the other, the chimney stacks and the porches create a pattern and rhythm, breaking up the horizontality of the terraces and adding interest to the streetscape.

Key individual buildings

a) Listed buildings

There are no listed buildings in the Vulcan Village Conservation Area.

b) Key unlisted buildings of merit

Despite the lack of listed buildings, there are a number of key buildings, which contribute to the character of this area. These include:

- *The Vulcan Inn*

This building is the focal point of the Village, both socially and physically. It is one of the two buildings adjacent to the main triangular open space in the Conservation Area. It is a two storey building of a much larger footprint to that of the surrounding modest terraced houses. Its position, size, detailing and use make it a landmark building in the Conservation Area. The main features of this building include:

- ◇ Pitched Welsh Slate roof with two red brick chimney stacks and cast iron rainwater goods;
- ◇ Prominent mullioned windows;
- ◇ Stone window lintels and sills;
- ◇ Stone finials at the parapet wall facing Wargrave Road;

There is however a smoking shed in the front elevation which is of a design and materials that are considered not to be in keeping with the Conservation Area.

- *The Former School*

This former school has been converted into three houses for accommodation for the elderly. It is beside the Vulcan Inn, adjacent to the triangular amenity space and after the Vulcan Inn, it is the second largest building in the Conservation Area. As with the Vulcan Inn, its size and position, make it a focal building in the Vil-



lage. The main features of this single storey building include:

- ◇ Hipped concrete tiled roof;
- ◇ Timber casement windows;
- ◇ Pitched entrance porches to the three houses;
- ◇ A well landscaped forecourt with mature hedges and trees;
- ◇ A pitched side extension which appears to have been the entrance porch to the former School.



The former school as it used to be and as it is now, converted into accommodation for the elderly

6.5. Amenity spaces and their contribution made to the character of the area

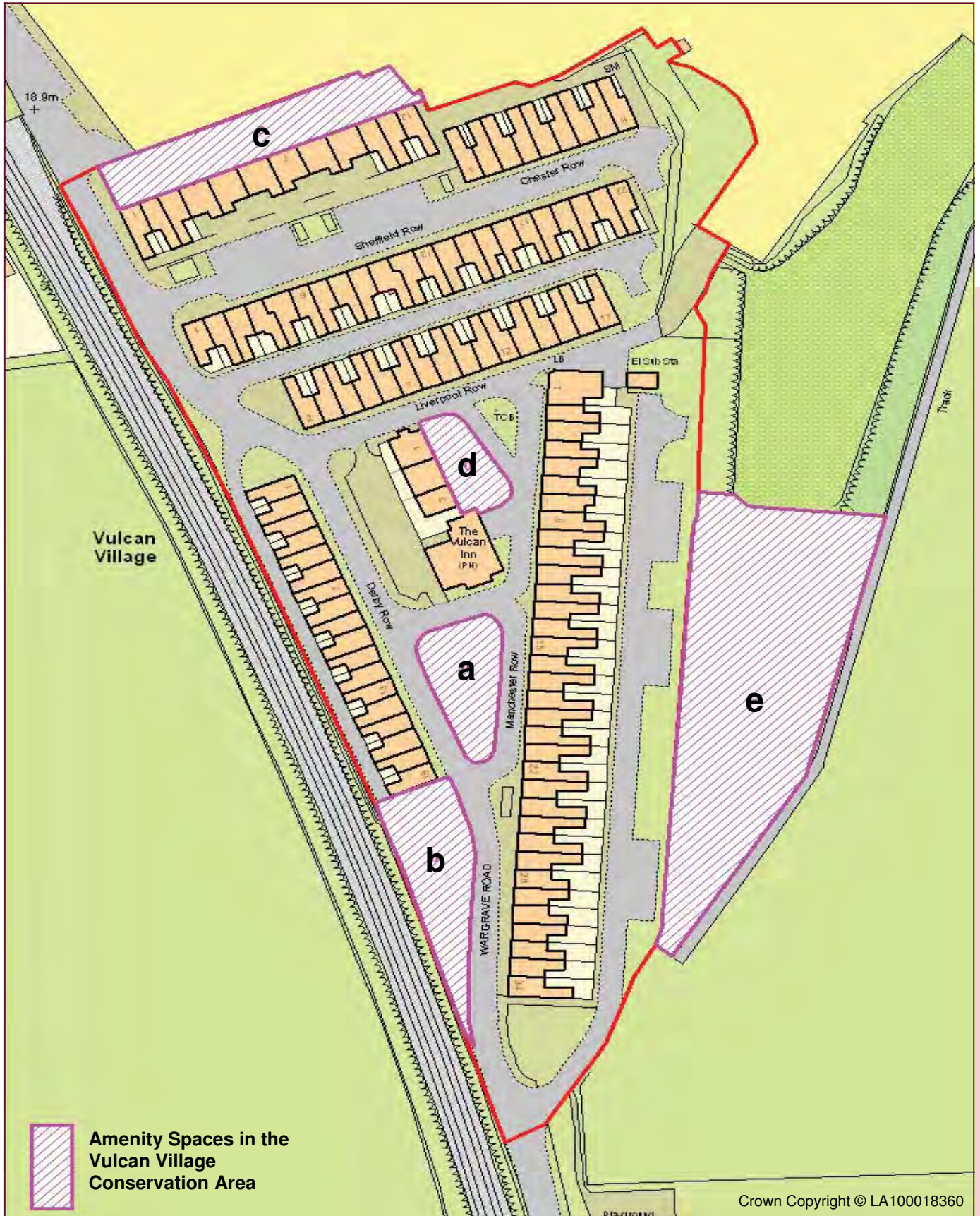
Despite the compactness of the Village, there are some small amenity spaces, which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. These are:

- a. The area between the Vulcan Inn, Manchester Row and Derby Row;
- b. The area beside the southern gable end of Derby Row;
- c. The area fronting London Row;
- d. The area fronting the former School;

All the above spaces are amenity spaces. Area “a” and “b” are well landscaped with a mix of soft and hard materials. Area “a” has wooden outdoor benches used by the patrons of the Vulcan Inn and the general public while “b” has a children’s play area with swings and other facilities. Area “c” and “d” are well landscaped with grass and in the case of the latter, is enclosed by a dwarf wall a mature hedge and some trees. Fronting residential houses, these two spaces provide important amenity areas.

Besides these four, there is a green open space to the rear of Manchester Row which could make significant contribution to the Conservation Area by enhancing its setting. Previously a dumping site for the works, it is now a green space with mature trees. The lower half has been partially cleared and is used as a play area with swings and other children’s facilities.

6.0 Character Area Analysis



6.6 Distinctive features and local details

Vulcan Village has undergone a number of transformations over the years with the replacement or modernisation of most of the original features, undermining its historic character. Original Welsh slate roofing was replaced with concrete tiles, sliding sash windows with casements, red bricks were rendered and original cobbles were covered with tarmac and paving.

However, there are few features which survived these transformations.

Chimney stacks

As already highlighted, the roofline of the Conservation Area is dominated by well-maintained, stocky red brick chimney stacks with impressive clay pots. Although these are possibly not the original pots, they are similar and are a distinctive feature of the Conservation Area. From the base of the flaunching, there is an average of about 15 courses of brick per stack. Projecting from the roof at regular intervals, they help to break up the monotony of the terraces created by the continuous concrete roof. Combined with other features such as the windows, doors and the porches, they create a rhythm and a pattern on the streetscape.

Window Sills

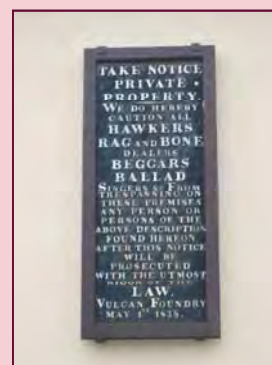
All the windows have black painted sandstone sills. Spaced at regular intervals, they also contribute to the streetscene.

Historical features

There are several features linked with the history of the village. These include:

- A mosaic in coloured concrete blocks of a locomotive associated with the early Vulcan Works;
- A brass plaque from the early days of the settlement, which was cleaned and attached to the gable ends of Derby Row;
- A 'Vulcan Motif', originally set into the façade of the Vulcan Works Institute Building, but now built onto the southern gable end of Manchester Row.

All these features make the Conservation Area distinct.



6.0 Character Area Analysis

Mature trees and hedges

Mature trees and hedges are also some of the main features of the Conservation Area.

The boundary fronting the former school is notable for its well-maintained mature hedge. In addition to confining the front garden it provides a setting to this building which is now accommodation for the elderly.

The triangular open space in the middle of the village and to some extent the one between London Row and Sheffield Row are notable for the number of mature trees. This greenery helps to frame and break up the horizontal emphasis created by the terraces. The trees and hedges also provides a link to the surrounding countryside.



ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

- **With exception of one, all buildings in Vulcan Village Conservation Area are residential, giving the village a quiet residential character;**
- **Streets, footpaths and open spaces are of high quality materials, enhancing the overall visual amenity of the Conservation Area.**
- **Various street furniture in the public realm are linked with the former Vulcan Foundry, reinforcing its historical links with the railway heritage;**
- **The architecture of the Vulcan Village is characterised by the following main features:**
 - ◇ **Painted cement rendered wall creating a uniform and homogeneous character;**
 - ◇ **Pitched roofs in concrete tiles, cast iron rain water goods and a series of chimney stacks dominating the roofscape;**
 - ◇ **Painted timber casement windows recessed into cambered arches;**
 - ◇ **Panelled timber doors with glass insets**
- **The regularity of these features create a pattern and rhythm, breaking up the horizontality of the terraces and adding interest to the streetscape;**
- **The position, size and function of the Vulcan Inn and the Former School make them landmark buildings in the village;**
- **Well-landscaped amenity spaces in hard and soft materials;**
- **Features and details which give the area its distinct identity:**
 - ◇ **Series of chimney stacks with impressive clay pots dominating the roofscape;**
 - ◇ **Black painted stone window sills;**
 - ◇ **A mosaic in coloured concrete blocks of a locomotive associated with the early Vulcan Works;**
 - ◇ **A brass plaque from the early days of the settlement attached to the gable ends of Derby Row;**
 - ◇ **A ‘Vulcan Motif’ built onto the southern gable end of Manchester Row.**

7.0 Extent of Loss, Intrusion or Damage

7.1 An overview

Following the substantial investment on the buildings and the public realm in the 1980s, the Vulcan Village Conservation Area is in excellent condition.

On purchasing the Village in 1982, Maritime Housing Association renovated all the houses. The works were to a very high standard and included re-roofing, installation of new windows (of different shape) and doors, as well as rear kitchen and bathroom extensions, providing long life modern facilities.

Around the same time, St Helens Council also embarked on a comprehensive improvement programme of the infrastructure and environment. Enhancing the townscape qualities of the village, these improvements complemented the houses.

During the works on the buildings and the public realm, different materials were used and the shape of the windows were also slightly changed. However, these improvements did not detract from the continuity of the terraces. The Conservation Area is in excellent condition and with over 90% of the properties in the village under one ownership, chances are that this level of care will be maintained.

Despite the excellent condition of the Conservation Area, there are a few issues which if not addressed, might undermine the area's special interest. These include:

- Inappropriate development and alteration
- Satellite dishes and TV antennae
- Care of mature trees
- Traffic signage clutter

7.2 Inappropriate development and alterations

There are two cases of inappropriate development and alteration which are considered to be undermining the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

First is the smoking shelter on the front elevation of Vulcan Inn. It is in a style which is not in keeping with the area and in a material consid-



7.0 Extent of Loss, Intrusion or Damage

ered inappropriate in a Conservation Area. Its prominent location at the front of a local landmark building has an adverse impact to the special interest of the area. The Council will seek the removal of new structures within the Conservation Areas which do not have permission/consent and which are regarded as inappropriate

Second is the replacement of some of the impressive traditional clay pots with modern aluminium ones. The chimneys in Vulcan Village Conservation Area have been identified as one of the most important features with the clay pots being significant elements. Replacement of the traditional pots erodes the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and therefore unacceptable.



7.3 Satellite dishes and TV antennae

Throughout the Conservation Area, there are telecommunications equipment, satellite dishes and TV antennae on chimneys and roofs in locations visible from the highway. All these features are visually obtrusive and have an adverse impact on the area's special character.



7.4 Care of mature trees

Majority of the mature trees in the Conservation Areas are well cared for. Most of these trees were planted during the infrastructure improvements of the 1990s by the Council. It was noted that some trees have outgrown the grids in which they were built when they were first planted. This does not only affect the health of the trees but it is visually unsightly where it occurs.



In addition, are some trees that the Trees and Woodlands Officer considers now require pruning and crown lifting work and some damaged trees need to be felled and replaced with new ones. He also feels that in some locations, trees need to be removed so that they can be replaced by species more suitable to the location.

7.5 Traffic signage clutter

Traffic signs in the Conservation Area are in the form of directional signs at the junctions of Wargrave Road with the internal streets. Although these are in an appropriate size, however considering the status of the Village, their number could be reduced to avoid clutter.

8.0 Community Involvement

8.1 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 of appropriate scale.

The Council is committed to meaningful community involvement in the process of reviewing the Vulcan Village Conservation Area. 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 the 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

9.1 Boundary Changes

As part of this character appraisal, the Council is required to review the boundaries of the Conservation Area. Under Section 69, The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the local planning authority from time to time to review the designated Conservation Areas.

“It shall be the duty of a Local Planning Authority from time to time to review and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as Conservation Areas; and if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly”

The Conservation Area encompasses the historic boundaries of the Vulcan Village of the 1830s. It is a planned village retaining its pleasant forms with terraces around the green area, displaying elements of enclosure, security and continuity.

The main issue to consider in the boundary review, therefore, 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 its character and appearance should be preserved.

9.2 Criteria

The following criteria was considered in making boundary changes in previous appraisals of Conservation Areas in St Helens:

Criteria		Feature	
a	Boundary	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	Architectural quality and historic significance	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	Townscape quality	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?

9.3 Proposed amendments

Areas recommended for exclusion

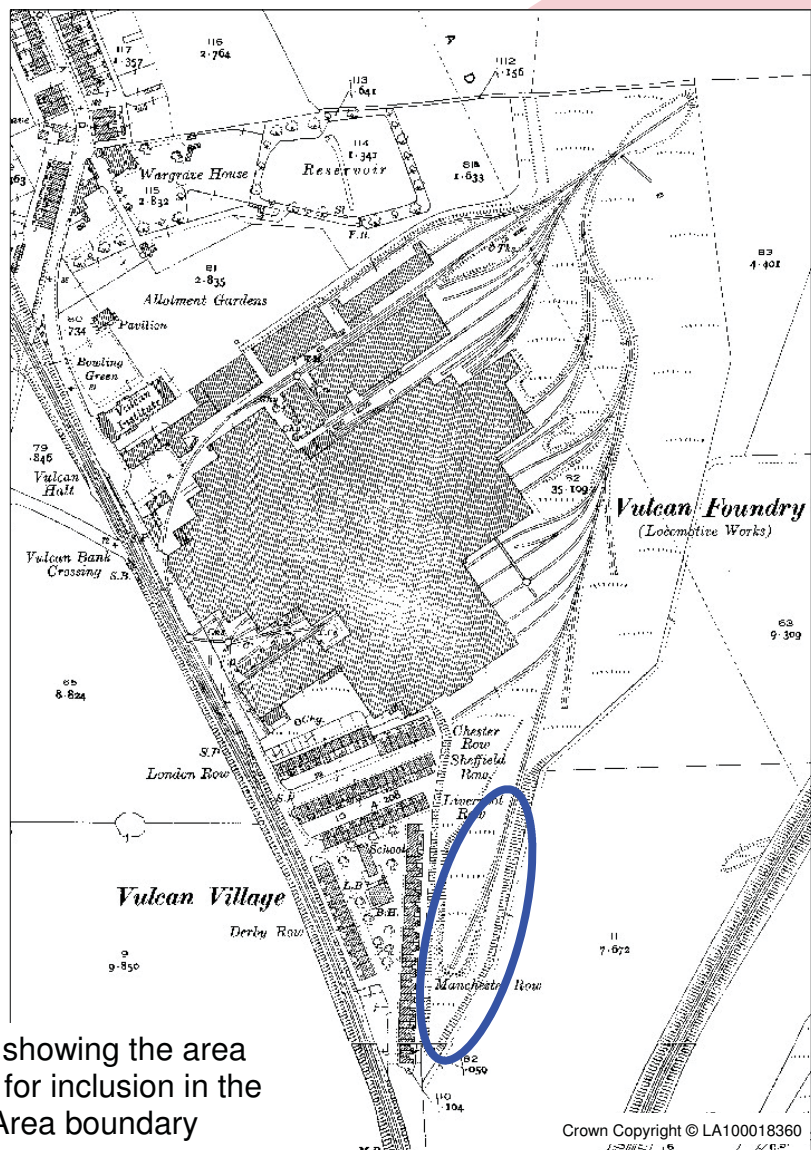
From the above criteria, no area is being recommended for removal from the Conservation Area. It is considered that existing boundaries continue to include areas of special architectural and/or historic interest and that most of the properties should be retained within the Conservation Area.

Areas recommended for Inclusion

Due to its isolation from other built up areas, boundary amendments to add any new buildings into the Conservation Areas are not possible. In any case the nearest buildings are relatively new and of modern styles. Accordingly, no buildings are being recommended for inclusion in to the Conservation Area.

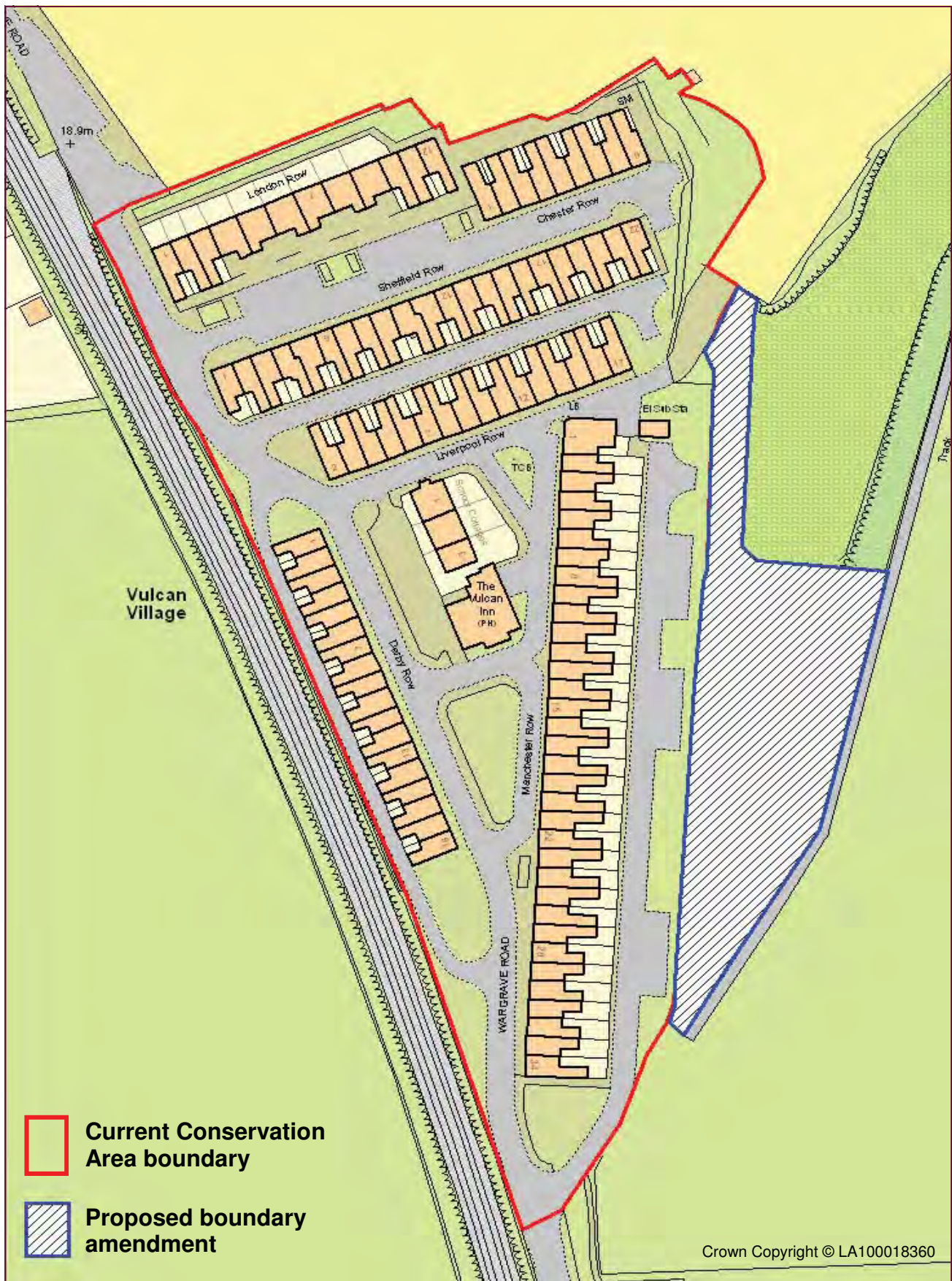
However, there is the green space to the rear of Manchester Row which is being recommended for inclusion into the Conservation Area. The ownership of this area is not clear but the green space to the north is included in the proposed urban village on the site of the former works.

Historically, this was a dumping site for the Vulcan Works when it was operational. Historical maps shows a railway line for the wagons carrying waste from the works terminated. Following the closure of the works, the area was decontaminated and trees planted. The area was partly cleared for play area with swings and other associated children facilities. Besides being an amenity space serving the village, its inclusion will enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.



Historical map showing the area recommended for inclusion in the Conservation Area boundary

9.0 Boundary Changes



10.0 Summary of Key Character

10.1 Summary of Key Character

The special architectural and historic interest of the Vulcan Village Conservation Area derives from a number of historic and architectural factors including:

- **The Village's industrial character and rural setting;**
- **The Village's historic form and layout;**
- **The Village's historic link with railway history, particularly the Liverpool-Manchester Railway and the Vulcan Foundry**
- **The relationship between the grouping of terraced properties with the spaces they enclose leading to:**
 - ◇ **A predominantly horizontal emphasis created by the long terraces;**
 - ◇ **A strong cohesive identity created by the long terraces;**
 - ◇ **A strong sense of enclosure and security provided by the strong boundary features of the terraces and the triangular form of the space they enclose.**
- **Dense and compact form;**
- **Restricted long, outward views but excellent internal views and vistas created by its compact form;**
- **High quality public realm complementing the well maintained buildings;**
- **A pattern and rhythm in the terraces created by architectural features of chimney stacks and fenestrations;**
- **Well-landscaped public open spaces in hard and soft materials;**

Features and details which give the area its distinctive identity are:

- ◇ **Series of chimney stacks with impressive clay pots dominating the roof-scape;**
- ◇ **Black painted stone window sills;**
- ◇ **A mosaic in coloured concrete blocks of a locomotive associated with the early Vulcan Works;**
- ◇ **A brass plaque from the early days of the settlement attached to the gable ends of Derby Row;**
- ◇ **A 'Vulcan Motif' built on the southern gable end of Manchester Row.**

10.0 Summary of Key Character

These are the key characteristics, which give Vulcan Village its special character. They should be a material consideration when deciding on any development in the Conservation Area.



11.0 Issues

11.1 Issues

In general, the condition of the terraced properties and the open spaces was found to be excellent. There are some issues which threaten to undermine the area's special interest.

These issues are summarised in Chapter 7 as:

- Inappropriate development and alteration
- Satellite dishes and TV antennae;
- Care of mature trees;
- Traffic signage clutter

These could be tackled through:

- Planning control;
- Action by the Local Authority and/or its partner agencies; or,
- Statutory action taken by the Local Authority.

11.2 Issues to be Tackled Through Planning Control

Many of the issues identified in the appraisal will hopefully be tackled through the normal Council's planning control measures.

Inappropriate development and alterations

The smoking shelter in front of the Vulcan Inn was identified as one, if not the only case of inappropriate development in the Conservation Area. It is in a style which is not in keeping with the area and in a material considered inappropriate in the Conservation Area. Its prominent location at the front of this local landmark will have an adverse impact on the special interest of the area. The Council will seek the removal of such inappropriate structures within the Conservation Area which do not have permission/consent and that are regarded as not in keeping with the area.

The other issue which is considered to have an adverse effect on the Conservation Area is the inappropriate alteration of the chimney stacks. The chimneys in Vulcan Village were identified as one of its most important features. Together with their impressive clay pots, they contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Replacement of the traditional clay pots with modern aluminium ones is therefore unacceptable. Planning controls such as introduction of Article 4 Directions would address this issue.

Satellite dishes and antennae

Roofscapes contribute to the character of the area. Proliferation of satellite dishes and television antennae on chimney stacks and areas of the roof visible from the highway detract from this character. Under Class G of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2008, development is not permitted if an antenna should be installed on a roof with a chimney, the highest part of the antenna would be higher than the highest part of the chimney. The Householder's Planning Guide for the installation of Antennas, including satellite dishes (Communities and Local Government 2008) also requires, amongst other things, that antenna should not be installed on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces or can be seen from the road or open space.

However, this is expected to change soon when Maritime Housing Association upgrades the television system in time for the national digital switchover. It is expected that all individual TV antennas and satellite dishes will be replaced with a single communal antenna and dishes will be placed in locations which will cause minimal impact to the Conservation Area. An agreement has also been reached with the Council on how the cables from the communal facilities into the individual houses will be treated to ensure minimum impact to the area.

11.3 Issues requiring attention from the Local Authority and its partner agencies

Care of mature trees

As previously noted, the majority of the mature trees in the Conservation Area are well cared for. It was however noted that some trees have outgrown the grids in which they were built when they were first planted. The Conservation Team will work with the Highways department to take appropriate action

Traffic signage clutter

As previously noted, many of the traffic signs in the Conservation Area are in the form of directional signs at the junctions of Wargrave Road with the internal streets. Considering the status of the village their number is considered too high and they could be reduced to avoid clutter.

The Conservation Team will work with the Enforcement Team in Development Control to take appropriate action.

11.4 Issues that need to be addressed through statutory action taken by the Local Authority

In general the Conservation Area is well maintained and in excellent condition. This is due in part because most of the properties are presently owned by Maritime Housing Association who have ensured that the special interest is retained. However should ownership change in future, measures need to be in place to ensure the continued protection and preservation of the built fabric in the Conservation Area.

Existing statutory planning control measures for Conservation Areas can include the Conservation Area Consent (CAC) on demolition and the Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). However, these measures are not deemed sufficient to safeguard the special character of Vulcan Village.

The special character of the Village is mainly derived from its historical setting and the architectural quality of terraced buildings, details and features as well as open spaces. Whereas there are planning controls against demolition, there are no controls against small alterations of architectural features, which over time can erode the appearance and character of this unique area. Currently such minor replacements and alterations are not subject to planning controls as they are deemed as permitted developments requiring no planning permission.

To address this problem, it is recommended that an Article 4(2) Direction be declared in the Vulcan Village Conservation Area. Under the Direction, planning permission will 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 Vulcan Village Conservation Area, such as:

- Extensions;
- Replacement of windows and doors;
- Re-roofing or alterations to chimneys or ridge tiles;
- Alteration of 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. This is as result of the possibility of enforcement action against any breaches of this planning control policy.

12.0 Next Steps

12.1 Adoption Procedures

Once the consultation has been completed and the appraisal revised to take into account of responses it will need to be adopted formally through the Council's 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 will be produced during the appraisal process, as this will provide an invaluable aid to any later enforcement action.

12.4 Review and Updating

Guidance from English Heritage on Conservation Area Appraisals (2006) requires that such areas are reviewed and updated on a regular basis, ideally 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 new Council.

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References

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