Vale Royal Borough Council

FRODSHAM
(OVERTON, FIVE CROSSES)
(ALSO KNOWN AS FIVELANES END)
CONSERVATION AREA
APPRAISAL

AUGUST 2005
Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, and are now an accepted part of Town and Country Planning legislation and practice. Local Authorities are required to identify "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". They are also under a duty to review existing designations from time to time.

It has been recognised that if the special interest, character and appearance of a conservation area is to be retained, it must be managed. The first task in this process is to define and analyse the special characteristics that justify the designation of the conservation area. This is achieved by carrying out a Conservation Area Appraisal.

The character of an area depends upon its historic background, the architectural quality and interest of its buildings, their materials and detailing, the way they relate to each other, the line of the highway, the quality of the landscape, trees and open spaces and a variety of unique features.

A Conservation Area Appraisal provides a description of those elements that contribute to and define the character of the conservation area. It also provides the basis for development plan policies and development control decisions, both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary. Subsequently the appraisal will provide the background for proposals to preserve or enhance the area. It may also identify development opportunities. Therefore the Government has stated that appraisals are considered to be essential for all existing and proposed conservation areas.

Vale Royal Borough Council understands the importance of involving the local community in the appraisal process. It has recognised that these studies are only valid if those people who are most closely affected by the designation of the conservation area accept the content of the appraisal. As a result, a public consultation exercise has been undertaken, the considered responses from which have been incorporated into this final version of the appraisal.

The Borough Council’s methodology for conducting Conservation Area Appraisals has been accepted as an example of Good Practice In Conservation by the Royal Town Planning Institute. However the Council has resolved to continue to revise and improve its methodology for conducting conservation area appraisals whilst striving to maintain a degree of consistency between the various completed studies.

The principal effects of this designation are as follows:
1. The Council is under a duty to prepare proposals to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the area
2. In carrying out its functions under the Planning Acts, and in particular determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent, the Council and the Secretary of State are required to take into account the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area
3. Permitted development rights are more restricted within the designated area
4. Consent must be obtained from the Council for the demolition of any building in the area (subject to certain exceptions)
5. Special publicity must be given to planning applications for development in the area
6. Six weeks’ notice must be given to the local planning authority before any works are carried out to trees within the designated area. It becomes an offence, subject to certain exceptions, to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy any tree in the area without the prior written consent of the local planning authority
HISTORY

1. Historic evolution of the settlement

1.1 Origins and development of the settlement

- Important area in prehistoric period.
  - Hill forts overlooking the Rivers Mersey and Weaver nearby.
- Little evidence of Roman activity.
  - Roman road leading to Chester probably along Howey Lane.
- Importance of Frotesham noted in Domesday survey of 1086.
  - Frod’s village held by Earl of Mercia.
- Overton provided ideal conditions for early settlement.
  - Afforded flood protection from the River Mersey.
  - Natural springs in the area provided water.
- Probable post-Roman royal estate centred on Overton.
- Site of St. Lawrence – an ancient mother-church.

- Five Crosses or Fivelanes End – an important junction of key roads in the past.
  - For many years a smithy was located in the road centre.
  - Few isolated properties shown on 1870 O.S. map.
  - ‘Overton Hall’.

- ‘Oak in the Dale’.
- ‘Heathdale’.
- Five Crosses Smithy (now demolished) and Methodist Chapel also shown.

![1898 Ordnance Survey Map](image)

- Extensive late C19th and early C20th Victorian development – many large, detached private dwellings with elaborate outbuildings erected.

1.2 Topographic elements that have influenced the development form

- Vicarage Lane/Kingsley Road, main route into Frodsham from the south, dictated line of early development.

1.3 Influence of current or previous land uses on the area

- Previous agricultural use – relatively large fields.
- Road layout and Smithy were significant.

2. Archaeological significance and potential of the area

- No scheduled ancient monuments within the Conservation Area.
- Northern part is identified as having archaeological potential in Cheshire Historic Towns Survey (2002 final report).
  - Reference to possible early medieval ancillary settlement and post medieval expansion.
TOWNSCAPE

3.1 Boundary of the conservation area

- Commencing in the northwest corner of the area at Overton Memorial Hall bowling green and running clockwise, the boundary follows the bowling green’s northern boundary east, then crosses Vicarage Lane;
- It follows the curtilage boundary of ‘Mary’s Cottage’ before heading south along the rear boundaries of ‘Westward’ and ‘Belmont House’ arriving at ‘West View’ No. 2 Vicarage Lane;
- Here the boundary proceeds east skirting the rear gardens of Nos. 1-4 Ranulph Court and a small section of the curtilage boundary of No. 35 Doric Avenue before arriving at the rear of No. 33 Doric Avenue;
- The boundary then proceeds south following the rear gardens of Nos. 33-21 Doric Avenue before reaching ‘Overton Hall’;
- It continues south following the eastern boundary of ‘Overton Hall’ before arriving at the road centreline of Bradley Lane, where it heads east then briefly north and around the curtilage of No. 9 Bradley Lane;
- Returning to the road centreline which it briefly follows east, it then heads south, skirting the rear gardens of ‘Tynedale’ and the properties on Oakdale Avenue until meeting the rear curtilage of ‘Meadowside’ which if follows first to the east then south, along the boundary with ‘Rushwick’ to arrive at the road centreline of Royleen Drive;
- Here it heads briefly east before turning south along the eastern boundary of the paddock, reaching and then following the boundary of ‘Heathdale’ before arriving at the road centreline of Kingsley Road;
- It then proceeds south until it reaches ‘Hallgarth’ and ‘Ingle Dene’ whose boundaries it follows clockwise, returning to the Kingsley Road centreline to turn north until it is adjacent to the curtilage boundary of ‘The Meads’ which it follows west and then north before reaching the southern boundary of Five Crosses Methodist Church;
- Turning west, it includes ‘Chapel House’ and then the curtilage of ‘Brackendene’ No.9 Manley Road before once again arriving at Kingsley Road centreline where it goes north until adjacent to the rear curtilage of ‘Inglenook’, which it encloses and then crosses Hillside Road to follow the western curtilage boundary of the Scout Hall in a northeast direction to the rear of ‘Lynden’;
- It then goes north and skirts the rear boundaries of ‘Lynden’ and ‘Oaklands’ to arrive at ‘Wrenton’, at which point the boundary heads northeast until it arrives at the road centreline of Vicarage Lane which it follows to the northwest until ‘White Cottage’ whose curtilage boundary it follows clockwise back at the bowling green.

3.2 Views within, into and out of the area

- Most views within and into the area are short and terminate quickly due to the sweeping nature of the highways.
- Closure is often provided by features of no special interest.
- Exceptions include;
  - From the north, looking south along Vicarage Lane – distinctive form of ‘White Cottage’ gives strong closure.

‘White Cottage’ - closure of view from north

- Notable views within;
  - Framed linear view through gates into Oakdale Avenue cul-de-sac.
  - View south from Royleen Drive over paddock towards ‘Heathdale Cottage’.
• Heading north along Vicarage Lane, turning into the chicane – Overton Memorial Hall provides closure.

Memorial Hall - closure heading north at chicane

• Linear view travelling north along Kingsley Road – prominent 3-storey gable end of ‘Lynden’ provides closure.
  • Black and white, Georgian style conservatory with small pane glazing in bold framing also draws the eye.
  • Glimpsed views of various properties from driveway entrances and through gaps in hedging and trees.

Glimpsed view of ‘Ingle Dene’ and ‘Hallgarth’

• Notable views out of the area;
  • Looking west from Overton Memorial Hall bowling green toward heavily wooded Overton Hill.
  • Ugly modern antenna a focal point to the southwest.

• War Memorial/Cenotaph a focal point to the west.
• Looking east from the end of Royleen Drive and extreme south of area over expanse of open farmland.

View east over gate in south of the area

3.3 The importance of spaces within the conservation area

• The Bowling Green adjacent to Overton Memorial Hall provides an important open space of recreational importance.
• Paddock adjacent to Royleen Drive is an important link to open countryside.
• The detached nature of the majority of properties within, many set in large pleasantly landscaped gardens, are important open spaces despite their enclosure.
• The relatively large road junctions and associated grassed seating areas help provide a sense of openness.

3.4 Enclosure within the settlement

• Most properties within the area have retained their original boundaries.
• Majority of properties well screened from street view.
• Boundary treatment varies throughout.
• Combinations of hard and soft features create a subtle form of enclosure to many properties.
• Most common form is a sandstone wall in conjunction with formal maintained hedging, railings or wooden fencing.
• Coursed sandstone wall with sandstone coping a common feature throughout – most notably:
  • Adjacent to roadsides upon entering the area from the south where it provides a ‘gateway feature’.
  • At Five Crosses Methodist Church, fronting Kingsley Road.
• Many properties with substantial sandstone gate piers and gates – notably:
  • ‘Heathdale’.
  • Five Crosses Methodist Church (although no longer used).
  • Interestingly – leading into Oakdale Avenue cul-de-sac.

• Hedges including species such as privet, holly and beech are used to define some curtilage boundaries.
• Modern slatted wooden and concrete post fence to No. 9 Bradley Lane – design unsympathetic to the local character.

3.5 Urban form
• Conservation area is an irregular shape, although generally dictated by alignment of Vicarage Lane/Kingsley Road.
• Characterised by sparse urban fringe development of large detached and semi-detached properties set in large pleasantly landscaped grounds.
• Extensive greenery throughout and links to adjacent countryside gives the area a rural feel.

3.6 Road pattern
• Area previously known as Five Crosses or Fivelanes End consists of off-set crossroads between:
  • Bradley Lane, Vicarage Lane, Kingsley Road and Manley Road.
  • Hillside Road joins Manley Road just to the west.
• Primary highway – Kingsley Road/Vicarage Lane – runs in a southeast to northwest direction through the area.
  • Runs along the break where gentle valley edge and steeper hillside meet.
  • Main vehicular route into Frodsham from south.
Subject to large volume of traffic.
Speed limit frequently not adhered to despite speed calming measures.

Two short private culs-de-sac;
- Oakdale Avenue off Bradley Lane.
- Royleen Drive off Kingsley Road.

4. Buildings

4.1 Age profile

Buildings range from C19th through to the C21st.
Many large, detached mid C19th properties along Vicarage Lane/Kingsley Road such as;
- ‘West View’ (date plaque, 1842).
- ‘Overton Hall’ (date plaque, 1864).
- ‘Brackendene’ No.9 Manley Road, 1873, a former farmhouse.
Former Methodist Chapel and Sunday School, Bradley Lane – dated 1858 in pedimented front.
- Superseded by Five Crosses Methodist Church, Kingsley Road, 1885.
Oakdale Avenue – C20th cul-de-sac.
- Properties on east side date from early C20th and display Edwardian influences.
  - All shown on 1910 O.S. map.
  - ‘Tynedale’ (dated 1904 on gable).

Royleen Drive – Early to mid C20th suburban development.

Two modern developments;
- ‘Overton Court’ – late C20th property on Kingsley Road.

4.2 Dominant architectural styles & types

Victorian architecture is common throughout and reflected in many of the large properties along Vicarage Lane and Kingsley Road. Common features of the style are evident throughout including;
- Prominent gables and tall decorative chimneystacks.
- Timber framed and sometimes decorated gables.
- Decorative bargeboards.
• Bay windows.
• Victorian sash windows.
• Extensive use of contrasting brickwork and decorative banding.
• Interesting dentil courses.
• ‘West View’, Vicarage Lane – example of late Georgian style;
  • Simplistic, symmetrical design.
  • Pale headed Flemish bond brickwork.
  • Vertical sliding sash windows.
  • Plain lintels and plain projecting sills.
  • Original 6-panel front door.

• Five Crosses Methodist Church – late Victorian gothic church with simplistic common revival detailing;
  • Pointed arched and traceried windows.
  • Buttresses

• Ornate cross finials to gables and pinnacles.
• Recent front extension in keeping with and simple enough not to detract from the character of the original building.
• Former red brick chapel on Bradley Lane is a simplistic classical style with pedimented front and round-headed windows.
• Oakdale Avenue features good Edwardian examples with typical features such as Dutch gables and timber framing.

4.3 Building materials – texture and colours

• Various Lutyens-style properties typical of the early 1920-30’s suburban movement.
  • Some displaying strong arts and crafts style characteristics such as ‘Inglenook’.

• Variety of red and brown brick types predominate.
  • Brown confined to more recent C20th suburban dwellings.
• Yellow brick used for Five Crosses Methodist Church.
• Interesting change of colour and texture to many Victorian properties, achieved by;
  • Extensive use of decorative banding, often with yellow bricks.
  • Contrasting brickwork including pale headed Flemish bond.
  • String courses.
Some use of terracotta in Edwardian properties for ridge tiles, sills, wall copings.

- White render as at ‘White Cottage’.
- Decorative timber framing to some gable ends of late Victorian and Edwardian properties.
- Blue/grey welsh slate roof tiles to majority of older properties.
- Small red clay roof tiles to some properties.
  - Particularly those within Oakdale Avenue and Royleen Drive.
- Timber windows, many original, throughout.
  - Good examples of Georgian and Victorian sash windows.
  - Good examples of casement windows to Edwardian and ‘suburban’ properties.
  - ‘Inglenook’ has original leadwork.
  - Limited intrusion of uPVC.
- Some original timber doors remain – good Georgian example on ‘West View’.
- Interesting timber framed porch to the rear of ‘Inglenook’.
- Cast iron rain and water goods retained by many properties.
- Timber lattice-work veranda to ‘Ingle Dene’ and ‘Hallgarth’.

4.4 Key buildings – listed and unlisted

- No listed buildings within the conservation area.
- Several locally important buildings;

- Scout Hall, Hillside Road – former Victorian infants school by John Douglas.

- K6 telephone kiosk at the junction of Bradley Lane with Kingsley Road.
- ‘Overton Hall’, Vicarage Lane – Large classical Victorian property with extensive range of outbuildings, now converted to residential.
- ‘West View’, Vicarage Lane – pleasant Georgian property with stabling to the rear, dated 1842 (plaque).
- ‘High Lea’, Vicarage Lane – Large Victorian family house with range of outbuildings, dated 1878 (plaque).

- ‘Heathdale’ and ‘Hallgarth’ are important gateway properties to the conservation area approaching from south.
- The Methodist Church is dominant in its scale, open setting and colour of materials.
4.5 Interesting and unusual details

- Brick banding and architectural detailing on many of the large Victorian properties throughout.
- Diaper tile work and decorative ridge tiles on the roof of 'The Limes'.

- Georgian style glazed conservatory on 'Lynden'.
- Many elaborate chimneystacks and good cornice details throughout.
- Decorative, interesting barge boards on many Victorian properties throughout.

- Various statues and urns in the garden of 'Overton Hall'.
- 'Inglenook' – a well preserved and unaltered, picturesque arts and crafts style suburban house complete with pleasant gardens.

- Lattice-work veranda to 'Ingle Dene' and 'Hallgarth'.
- Detailing to tracery windows and finials on Five Crosses Methodist Church.
  - New, modern stained-glass windows inserted during recent refurbishment.
  - Designed by local resident and Church member Hilary Pickett.

5. Street scene

5.1 Street furniture, wirescape, water pumps/throughs

- A variety of differing styles of lamppost are used throughout the area – none of which are sympathetic to their setting.
  - Tall, modern, galvanised steel standard highway lampposts to Vicarage Lane and Kingsley Road.
  - Ageing, crude concrete lampposts to Bradley Lane and Manley Road.
  - Low timber knee rails to the junction of Manley Road and Kingsley Road.
  - Road signs are standard and conform to highway regulations.
  - Traditional horizontally striped black and white cast iron fingerpost at the junction between Kingsley Road and Manley Road is a unique highway feature to the area.
  - Remains of damaged older original found a few metres to the north.
• Generally standard modern street signs throughout.
  • Traditional street name sign for Bradley Lane located on sandstone wall of 'Overton Hall'.

![Traditional street name sign on ‘Overton Hall’ wall](image)

• Seating is provided at the grassed area - junction of Bradley Lane with Kingsley Road.
  • A modern steel and timber bench.
  • Also a decaying log seat – carved from a horse chestnut formerly on the site.

![Carved log seat at the junction of Bradley Lane and Kingsley Road](image)

• Also in this location;
  • Original K6 public telephone kiosk.
  • Cast iron litterbin incorporating Vale Royal insignia.
  • Inappropriately sited green fibre optics/telecommunications cabinet.
  • Road signs are standard and conform to highway regulations.
  • Zebra crossing on Kingsley Road, south of the junction with Bradley Lane conforms to highway regulations but offers no streetscape value.

5.2 Shop fronts, advertisements

• No commercial advertisements within the conservation area.
• Two forms of low-key advertisement;
  • Five Crosses Church notice board.
  • Wall mounted emblem adjacent to the doorway of the Scout Hall.

![Emblem on Overton Scout Hall](image)

5.3 Landmarks and focal points with historic connection or visual interest

• Five Crosses Methodist Church – significant local landmark upon entering the area from the south.
  • Primarily due to its distinctive yellow brickwork and gothic architectural style.

![War memorial in Methodist Churchyard](image)

• Engraved sandstone cenotaph in Five Crosses Churchyard.
• War Memorial/Cenotaph on Overton Hill a significant focal point looking west from the bowling green at Overton Memorial Hall.
• Overton Memorial Hall – a local landmark due to its importance as a public meeting place and recreational facility.

5.4 **Floorscape – materials, colour and texture**

• Pavements and highways throughout are generally tar-macadamed with modern concrete kerbs.
  • Often in a poor state of repair with considerable patch reinstatement.
  • Traditional stone kerbs to footpaths along some sections of Vicarage Lane and Oakdale Avenue should be retained.
  • Grass verges to roadside in Oakdale Avenue soften the hard landscaping impact.
  • Royleen Drive – Un-metalled surface consisting of compressed bound gravel.
  • Zebra crossing located on Kingsley Road with standard features – white lines, steel studs and tactile paving.

**LANDSCAPE**

6. **Landscape setting**

• Located on elevated land south of the confluence of the River Weaver with the Mersey Estuary.
• Sits on gently sloping land below the northeast-facing scarp of Beacon Hill, which is heavily wooded in places.
• Heavily enclosed to the west and east by predominantly late C20th housing.
• Pastoral setting to southeast with open fields and long-distance views over extensive agricultural land in Weaver Valley.

7. **Green spaces, trees, hedges**

• Green spaces of note:
  • Bowling green at Overton Memorial Hall although hidden from general view.
  • Paddock adjacent to Royleen Drive although currently un-maintained and overgrown is an important link to open countryside.
  • Small maintained grassed areas at former ‘Five Crosses’ road junctions softens hard floorscape of the highways.
  • Extensive front lawns such as at ‘Overton Hall’ are important green spaces that contribute to the overall character.
  • Fields to the southeast although outside the area.
  • Trees are an important feature of the conservation area.
  • Many large mature trees mostly confined to individual gardens, in particular;
    • ‘Heathdale’.
    • ‘Hallgarth’.
  • Smaller ornamental trees are an equally important feature in many gardens.
• Important group of lime trees in highway verge outside Nos. 3 to 7 Manley Road.
• Replacement chestnut sapling at road junction of Bradley Lane and Kingsley Road.
• Hedges are also an important feature of the conservation area, most notably in boundary treatments.
  • Species include beech, holly and privet.
• Most significant hedges;
  • High holly hedge along northern boundaries of ‘Afton’ and ‘Tynedale’ on Oakdale Drive.
  • High privet hedging around ‘Inglenook’.
  • Unkempt hedge around the paddock adjacent to Royleen Drive.

8. **Water features**

• None noted.
OTHER FACTORS

9. Negative factors

Elements which detract from the special character of the area.

- Speed and volume of traffic along Kinsley Road is detrimental to safety and amenity of the area.
- Timber knee rails at junction of Manley Road with Kingsley Road badly damaged due to frequent vehicular impact – alignment encourages fast cornering.
- K6 telephone kiosk at the junction of Bradley Lane and Kingsley Road is badly discoloured, faded and damaged.
- Five Crosses Methodist Church ground and car park – no landscaping and poor quality fence.
  - Creates a harsh and bland open space, which is in stark contrast to the pleasant character of the conservation area.
  - Roads and pavements are badly potholed and uneven in places.
  - Entrance to Oakdale Avenue badly in need of attention.
  - Royleen Drive currently untidy and without definition – untidy hedge of adjacent paddock affects visibility at access.

10. Neutral areas

10.1 Areas which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the area.

- Nos.1 to 7 Manley Road are modern dwellings of no special architectural interest, well screened by lime trees on Manley Road
- Paddock adjacent to Royleen Drive provides an important link to the open countryside although devoid of any special features and currently un-kempt and overgrown.

10.2 Areas and opportunities for development and/or enhancement

- There are few, if any parcels of land capable of accommodating further development without having an adverse impact on the conservation area character.
- The corner plot (Bradley Lane/Kingsley Road) adjacent to ‘Little Hurcot’ is heavily screened by trees and hedges.
  - During the preparation of the appraisal, consent was granted for a new dwelling on the site that will screen the recent development at the rear of ‘Little Hurcot’.
  - The new development itself should be screened by retention of the original perimeter planting.
- Paddock adjacent to Royleen Drive could be tidied up and brought back into use whilst...
maintaining its important link to open countryside.
- Condition of pathways and roads could be generally improved throughout.
  - In particular, Oakdale Avenue entrance.
  - Royleen Drive could be surfaced with a more permanent finish.
  - K6 telephone kiosk could be repainted.

11. Ambience/uniqueness

11.1 Sounds and smells

- Busy traffic along Vicarage Lane/Kingsley Road – intrusive.
- Wildlife and bird noise due to extensive hedge and tree cover throughout the area.
- Bells from nearby St. Lawrence’s Church at regular intervals in the north of the area.

11.2 Vitality and vibrancy of the area

- Residential area with few local amenities.
- Five Crosses Methodist Church and Overton Memorial Hall provide a focus for many community activities.
- Tranquil and pleasant setting disturbed by busy main road – Vicarage Lane/Kingsley Road.
- Frodsham Church of England Primary School, although outside the area, generates a significant movement of traffic around drop off and collection times.

11.3 Historical associations with unusual crafts, famous people and events

- Sunday School, Bradley Lane, now a residence, was previously a Methodist Chapel until approximately 1885 when it was superseded by Five Crosses Methodist Church to the southwest.
- Scout Hall (former Infants School), Hillside Road – example of work by the well-known local architect John Douglas.
  - Referred to by Pevsner as “The Little School”.
- ‘Overton Memorial Hall’ – erected as a monument to the wife and daughter of J.C. Sutton esq. of Heath Dale in 1900.

- Engraved stone on east elevation in memory of same two individuals.

Memorial Stone at Overton Memorial Hall

11.4 Other characteristics which make the area unique

- Contiguous with Frodsham (Overton, St. Lawrence’s) Conservation Area.
- Although Methodist Church and former Smithy originally use the name Five Crosses the area was also known as Fivelanes End.
Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements that give an area its character, it can only be a ‘snapshot’ in time. Elements and details of an area may be important even if they are not specifically referred to in the document.

This document should be read in conjunction with “Conservation Area Appraisals”, produced by Vale Royal Borough Council in July 1997.

Based on an initial survey and evaluation by Woodhall planning and Conservation, 56 Woodhall Lane, Calverley, Leeds, LS28 5NY

Overton Conservation Area was designated by Vale Royal District Council on 8th April 1976. It and reviewed in 2005 when the boundary was revised and two separate conservation areas formed.

This appraisal relates to the Frodsham (Overton, Five Crosses) Conservation Area. This was designated by Vale Royal Borough Council on 29 September 2005 when the appraisal was adopted as supplementary planning information for the purpose of informing relevant planning decisions.

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