

Vale Royal Borough Council

FRODSHAM (OVERTON, ST. LAWRENCE'S) 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 Frodsham 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 provided water.
- Probable post-Roman royal estate centred on Overton.
- Site of St. Lawrence's – an ancient mother-church.
 - Carved grave cover of pre-conquest date suggests Church was of high status.
 - Church built early C12th.



Extract from Burdett's map of 1777

1.2 Topographic elements that have influenced the development form

- Located approximately mid-way up a north-facing escarpment on a shelf overlooking the Mersey Estuary.

- Located between the Frodsham and Overton Faults where the permeable Tarporley Siltstones overlie the Helsby Sandstone.

- Small streams flow from the spring line located along the junction of these rocks.
- Red Helsby Sandstone is exposed along some sections of Howey Lane.
 - Part of the Frodsham Railway and Road Cuttings Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
 - Locally quarried Helsby Sandstone used in many of the earlier buildings such as St. Lawrence's Church and for property boundaries.

1.3 Influence of current or previous land uses on the area

- St. Lawrence's Church influential focal point upon which early settlement would have developed.
- Previous agricultural activity.
 - Few remnants remain e.g. 'Church House Farmhouse' & barn adjacent to 'Ring O' Bells' Inn.

2. Archaeological significance and potential of the area

- No scheduled ancient monuments within the Conservation Area.
- Roman road may have passed through the area along Howey Lane.
- Identified as having archaeological potential in Cheshire Historic Towns Survey (2002 final report).
 - Reference to the early medieval site of St. Lawrence's and ancillary settlement as well as possible medieval market place.

TOWNSCAPE

3. Form and structure of the settlement

3.1 Boundary of the conservation area

- Commencing in the northwest corner and running clockwise –

- The boundary goes east, following the northern edge of 'Churchfields' playing field (partly defined by Froda Avenue), crosses the footpath and reaches the boundary wall of St. Lawrence's northern graveyard;
- It follows this boundary wall east, then goes on to the Ashlands cul-de-sac where it turns south and follows the centre-line of the access road and then the footpath as it sweeps to the east until it arrives at the road centre-line of Field Way;
- It proceeds south along this centre-line until it reaches that of Church Road which it follows for a short distance east before heading northwest following the western boundaries of 'Brockton Mews' and 'Brockton House';
- Following the northern boundary of 'Brockton House' east it arrives at the road centre-line of Red Lane;
- Here it proceeds northeast arriving at the northern curtilage boundary of 'Thornhill' and 'The Hollies' (Nos. 93 & 95 Fluin Lane) which it follows east and then south arriving at the road centre-line of Townfield Lane;
- It follows this west, arriving at the junction with Vicarage Lane at which point it proceeds south along the road centre-line;
- Upon reaching the 'Coach House' the boundary heads west along its southern curtilage boundary arriving at and following the curtilage boundary of 'The Old Vicarage' south;
- Proceeding clockwise it then arrives at the garage of 'Glebe Cottage' at which point it proceeds west reaching the centre-line of the driveway;
- It then follows this briefly north before turning west to meet the southern curtilage boundary of 'Roebuck Cottage' which it briefly follows west;
- It then turns south and follows the western curtilage boundary of 'Glebe Cottage' until it arrives at the northeast corner of Frodsham Church of England Primary School car park;
- Here it proceeds west before turning south to follow the car park's western boundary and arrive at the rear of No. 42 Hillside Road;
- The boundary then heads west skirting the rear gardens of Nos. 42 – 54 before proceeding southwest along the north western boundary of No. 54 and the adjacent MANWEB sub-station, arriving at the road centre-line of Hillside Road;
- It follows this briefly in a south-easterly direction before heading south-westerly to meet and include 'Roseville' and its curtilage;
- Arriving back at the road centre-line it proceeds in a northwest direction, crossing Bellemonte Road, and arriving at the sandstone wall to the south of the 'Bulls Head';
- Following this and the rear boundaries of the 'Bulls Head' and 'Ring O' Bells' Inn north the boundary arrives at the road centre-line of Howey Lane;
- It follows this in a northwest direction until adjacent to 'Pinmill Cottage' whose curtilage boundary it then follows southwest before arriving at the road centre-line of Hillfield;
- It then proceeds northwest along this centre-line before turning west to pick up the curtilage boundary of No. 2 Hillfield which it follows west;
- The boundary continues west along the southern curtilage boundaries of Nos. 21 & 25 Howey Lane arriving at the centre-line of the bridleway;
- Once here it heads south picking up and following the curtilage boundary of 'Woodlands' (No. 31 Howey Lane) before arriving back at the bridleway;
- Crossing this and briefly to the west it meets the western boundary of No. 43 Howey Lane whose curtilage and the road centre-line of Howey Lane it follows, enclosing the property, before arriving back at the bridleway centre-line;
- Following this north-easterly it meets and then follows the western curtilage boundary of Nos. 33 & 35 Howey Lane north arriving at the road centre-line of Howey Lane;

- The boundary follows this north easterly until it arrives at No. 26 Howey Lane whose western curtilage boundary it follows north;
- The boundary then crosses the footpath and follows the allotment boundary southeast and then north eventually arriving back at the northwest corner of 'Churchfields' playing field.

3.2 Views within, into and out of the area

- Notable views within:
 - Back across 'Churchfields' playing field from the northwest towards the prominent 4-storey tower of St. Lawrence's Church.
 - North along Bellemonte Road – The side elevation of St. Lawrence's Church provides a strong closure of this short linear view.
 - Reverse view up rising road towards heavily wooded steep slope of Overton Hill – potentially adversely affected by development at foot of hill.



View north along Bellemonte Road towards St. Lawrence's Church

- Most views into area are short and terminated quickly due to the sweeping nature of the highways.
 - Closure often provided by features of no special interest.
- Panorama of open views out of the area from 'Churchfields' and St. Lawrence's Church car park and churchyard.

- Clear views of Mersey Estuary and south Merseyside to the northwest.
- Clear views north, over Frodsham below, towards industrial clutter of distant pylons, smoking oil refinery stacks and chemical works.
- Clear views northeast, over Frodsham and the distant motorway below, to Runcorn.



View north towards industrial clutter of distant chemical works

- Clear views south over the roof tops toward the heavily wooded higher ground of Overton Hill.
 - War Memorial Obelisk on top of Overton Hill – a prominent landmark and focal point.

3.3 The importance of spaces within the conservation area

- 'Churchfields' playing field in the north-west is an important open space although somewhat devoid of any special features.
 - Important recreational area for the local community.
- The churchyard, graveyards and the adjacent car park cumulatively form an important open space.
 - Associated are the private open frontages of 'Church House Farm' and 'Roebuck Cotage'.
- The relatively large road junctions and associated grassed seating areas together, help provide a sense of openness at -

- Townfield Lane with Red Lane.
- Church Road with Vicarage Lane.



Seating area at junction between Church Road and Vicarage Lane

- The churchyard, graveyards and the adjacent car park cumulatively form an important open space.

3.4 Enclosure within the settlement

- Most properties within the area have retained their original boundaries.
- Boundary treatment varies throughout.
 - The most common form is a low sandstone wall in conjunction with hedging, railings or wooden fencing.



Cleft timber pale fence and low sandstone wall to No. 26 Howey Lane

- Cheshire railings are used to define a section of 'Roebuck Cottage' on the junction between School Lane and Church Road.



Cheshire railings at 'Roebuck Cottage'

- Hedges of varying species form some property boundaries.
 - Prominent feature along western School Lane.
 - Significant holly hedge to the rear and sides of Nos. 24 and 26 Howey Lane.
- Good ashlar wall with rounded copings to 'Roseville' – property name carved into gate piers.



Wall and gate piers to 'Roseville' Hillside Road.

- Red brick walls used by some properties e.g. eastern boundary of 'Church House Farmhouse'.
- The most prominent and important walls are around the Church and graveyard;
 - Made from large blocks of coursed red sandstone with sloping stone coping – broken at entrance points by tall substantial piers.

- Adjacent car park boundary (facing Church Road) consists of a stonewall, with concrete coping and decorative spike-topped metal railings on top.



Decorative spikes to church car park railings

- Along Bellemonte Road most properties directly adjoin the highway – reflecting the historic nature of the street.
 - No. 3 features metal railings, which importantly maintain the traditional building line of the street.



Metal railings to the front of No. 3 Bellemonte Rd.

- Plain, spike-topped, metal railings a key feature in the west predominantly around 'Woodlands' (No. 31 Howey Lane).
- Unsympathetic slatted wooden and concrete post fence to section of 'Brockton Mews'.
- Recent new 6ft high close boarded fencing to No. 2 School Lane and 'Glen

Holme' on Church Road – alien and unsympathetic.

- Along Howey Lane, the narrow highway and in places steep sides combine to create a strong sense of enclosure.
 - This is further added to in places where there is no footpath.
 - Exposed (Site of Special Scientific Interest) sandstone bedrock and high sandstone walls combine to create a dramatic form outside of No. 24.



Exposed sandstone bedrock along Howey Lane

- Tall steel security railings are used to define the boundary of the allotments, at the western edge of the playing field.
 - These are in stark contrast to the more rural and traditional forms of enclosure existing throughout the rest of the area.



Steel security railings – harsh form of enclosure

3.5 Urban form

- Conservation area is an irregular shape generally dictated by Howey Lane/Church Road.
- Contains the historic core of Overton – centred upon the triangular area formed by Church Road, School Lane, Bellemonte Road and Hillside Road.
 - Development in this area denser than elsewhere.
- Properties generally detached or semidetached, many set in large pleasantly landscaped gardens especially along Howey Lane.
- Backdrop of the heavily wooded Overton Hill and extensive greenery throughout give the area a rural feel.
- ‘Woodlands’ (No. 31 Howey Lane) occupies a particularly dramatic setting – set well back in a large and spacious semi circular plot against the backdrop of the heavily wooded Overton Hill and War Memorial.



‘Woodlands’ (No. 31 Howey Lane) occupying a dramatic setting

3.6 Road pattern

- Primary highway is Howey Lane/Church Road, which meanders from West to East through the area.
 - No footpaths along some sections – whilst this reflects the historic nature of the highway it makes walking a daunting and dangerous task.

- In the west Howey Lane is joined by a bridleway and Hillfield.
 - Only a small section of each is however within the conservation area.
- Bellemonte Road and School Lane join Church Road from the south.
 - Together, along with a small section of Hillside Road, they combine to create a triangular island.
- In the east Vicarage Lane/Red Lane passes briefly through the area in a south to north direction.
 - A T-junction is created where Church Road meets Vicarage Lane
 - Opposite this, to the north, another T-junction is created where Townfield Lane joins Red Lane from the east.
- Howey Lane/Church Road is a busy road subject to large volumes of traffic and congestion around school drop off and collection times.
 - Despite speed calming measures, speed cushions and tables, the speed limit is frequently not adhered to.
- ‘Sandstone Trail’ (long distance footpath) runs north to south through the centre of the area, along the path to the west of the churchyard and then Bellemonte Road.

4. Buildings

4.1 Age profile

- Buildings range from C12th through to the C20th – good range of examples.



St. Lawrence’s Church and tower

- St. Lawrence's Church dates from C12th.
 - Contains earlier fragments – some Norman zig-zag moulding and carved figures of probable Saxon date built into interior of southern tower wall.
 - Later additions and late Victorian restoration.
- Several buildings dating from C17th – interestingly all previously in agricultural use.
 - 'Roebuck Cottage' (much altered) – dated 1669 in stone frieze over fireplace.



'Roebuck Cottage' Church Road

- No. 56 Hillside Road (early C17th).
- 'Church House Farmhouse'
- 'Ring O' Bells' Inn and adjacent outbuilding.
- Several C18th buildings of note:
 - 'The Old Vicarage', Church Road originally dates from the C18th although has been significantly altered.
 - No.26 Howey Lane (early C18th).
 - 'Overton House', School Lane (mid C18th) – inappropriate late C20th windows
- Some C19th buildings of note:
 - No. 25 Howey Lane – (1878)
 - Frodsham Church of England Primary School, School Lane – original building.
- Some C20th properties on School Lane, Hillside Road and Bellemonte Road without any special architectural or historic interest.

4.2 Dominant architectural styles and types

- St. Lawrence's Church – Norman Church later added to and considerably restored in C19th Gothic Revival style.
- Common Gothic Revival detailing including;
 - Buttresses.
 - Pointed arched and tracery windows.
 - Decorative pinnacles ornamented with crockets.
 - Ornate cross finials to gables.



Revival gothic detailing to south elevation of St. Lawrence's Church

- Some vernacular cottages and barns, with simple door and window detailing such as half-timbered No. 56 Hillside Road.
- Three Edwardian semis on Church Road.
- 'Overton House', School Lane – good example of Georgian property including common detailing such as:
 - Simplistic, symmetrical design.
 - 6-panel front door.
 - Projecting stone quoins.
 - Keystone-and-voussour lintels and plain projecting sills.
 - Inappropriate late C20th top hung sashes have replaced original vertical sliding sash windows.



'Overton House' Georgian property, School Lane

- 'Roseville', Hillside Road – also originally Georgian with later additions.
 - Later porch – crude and out of place.
 - Prominently located uPVC soil and vent pipe up front elevation is unfortunate.



'Roseville' Georgian property, Hillside Road

- Many large elaborate Victorian properties to the west along Howey Lane – featuring;
 - Prominent gables and chimney stacks.
 - Bay windows.
 - Victorian sash windows.
 - Decorated gables.
 - Decorative bargeboards.
 - Contrasting brickwork, decorative banding and stringcourses.



No. 35 Howey Lane, large Victorian property

4.3 Building materials – texture and colours

- Many early buildings constructed from locally quarried sandstone.
 - Some later pebble-dashed such as 'Ring O' Bells' Inn.
- Red brick predominates, often in Flemish bond.
 - Especially to Victorian properties along Howey Lane.
- Some use of yellow bricks e.g. 'Thornhill' & 'The Hollies' (Nos. 93 and 95 Fluin Lane).



'Thornhill' (No. 93 Fluin Lane) – Yellow brick with decorative brick banding

- Terracotta – common feature on some Victorian and Edwardian properties.



'Pinmill Cottage' featuring terracotta detailing

- Blue/grey welsh slate roof tiles predominate.
- Red clay tiles to some Victorian properties on Howey Lane.
 - Many featuring decorative ridge tiles and finials.
- No. 56 Hillside Road – timber framed, infill uncertain. Originally thatched – now corrugated asbestos sheets.
- Some timber framing to gables of Edwardian and Victorian properties.
- Timber windows, many original, throughout.
 - Some featuring original lead work such as the 'Old Vicarage' and No. 35 Howey Lane.
- Non-horn sash windows to 'Roseville' – most likely Georgian.
- Intrusion of inappropriate uPVC windows on some properties.
- Cast iron rain and water goods retained by many properties.
- Cast iron balcony railings on 'Brockton House'.

4.4 Key buildings – listed and unlisted

- Conservation area has eight listed buildings:
 - St. Lawrence's Church (grade I): Late C12th Church with several later additions.
 - Extensively and sympathetically restored during early 1880's by the well-known firm of Victorian church architects, Bodley and Garner.

- Local architect Samuel Davies also involved in the restoration.
- Sundial in the yard of St. Lawrence's Church (grade II): Copper dial and gnomon on a sandstone stem and base dating from 1790.



Sundial in the yard of St. Lawrence's Church

- Wright Tomb located adjacent to the south pier of the west gate to St. Lawrence's Church (grade II): A truncated obelisk on a panelled square plinth constructed from grey stone and dating circa 1806.
- 'Church House Farmhouse', Church Road (grade II): A late C17th building with later additions.



Grade II Listed 'Church House Farmhouse'

- 'Ring O' Bells' Inn, Bellemonte Road (grade II): C17th possibly earlier public house with later additions.
- No. 56 (formerly listed as 'Flower Cottage') Hillside Road (grade II): oak frame and sandstone cottage, partly rendered probably dating from the early C17th although later altered.



Grade II Listed No. 56 Hillside Road

- 'Overton House', School Lane (grade II): Mid C18th Georgian house once home to the schoolmaster – now sadly with late C20th top hung replacement windows.
- 'The Old Vicarage', Vicarage Lane (grade II*): Early C18th although later altered, extended and refaced in the materials and expression that strongly suggest the architect was the famous John Douglas.
- Also several locally important buildings:



Outbuilding adjacent to 'Ring O' Bells' Inn

- Outbuilding adjacent to 'Ring O' Bells' Inn, Bellemonte Road.
- 'Roebuck Cottage' (formerly known as 'Roebuck House') Church Road.
- 'Brockton Mews', Church Road.
- 'Pin Mill Brow House' (No. 26 Howey Lane).
- 'Roseville', Hillside Road.
- K6 telephone kiosk, adjacent to the 'Bulls Head', Bellemonte Road.

4.5 Interesting and unusual details

- Timber framing on late C19th houses.



Timber framing and interesting dentil course on No. 25 Howey Lane

- Half timbering on No. 56 Hillside Road.
- Flush casement windows to No. 56 Hillside Road featuring decorative arch glazing bars to upper row of panes.
- Brick banding and detailing on Victorian properties – Diaper brickwork a feature of 'The Old Vicarage'.
- Interesting arts and crafts detailing to No. 35 Howey Lane including corbelled work below window and off-set window sills.
- Butressed chimney and pebble dashed pseudo-gothic style extension to 'Roebuck Cottage', Church Road.
- Good portico'd entrance to the much-altered 'Woodlands' (No.31 Howey Lane).
- Gates at entry points to Church grounds.
- Circular vestry crypt west of the Church tower adjacent to the western entry gates.



Circular vestry crypt within churchyard of St. Lawrence's

- Bell tower on Frodsham Church of England Primary School – recently restored.



Bell tower upon the original Frodsham Church of England Primary School building

- Cupola, louvered at its base with weathervane on top, on 'Brockton Mews'.
- Circular windows on a number of properties within the area.
- Stained glass above transom on porch to 'Roseville'.

5. Street scene

5.1 Street furniture, wirescape, water pumps / troughs

- A variety of differing styles of lamppost are used throughout the area.

- Modern galvanised steel lampposts around churchyard and recreation ground.

- Those around the Church and historic core are painted black.

- These appear far less visually intrusive and sit more sensitively within the setting of St. Lawrence's Church, matching the character of the sets of iron entrance gates.

- Concrete lampposts on Bellemonte Road detract from the setting of the street scene within the historic core.

- The Church is illuminated by 5no. ground and 1no. parapet based floodlights, those on the ground being well concealed in sandstone housing.

- Modern steel/wooden benches adjacent to pathway crossing playing field.

- Some contain memorial plaques.

- Modern steel/wooden bench on junction of Church Road with Vicarage Lane.

- In memory of F J Cox MBE, Town Councillor 1983 – 1990.

- Litterbins around the recreation ground and on Bellemonte Road are constructed from concrete pebbledash – crude appearance does not fit in with the character of the area.

- Some cast iron bins featuring Vale Royal insignia.

- Decorative cast iron trough mounted on wall of 'Ring O' Bells' Inn.

- Galvanized steel pedestrian barrier railings on Pinmill Brow and Church Road.



Modern pedestrian barrier railings, Pinmill Brow

- Effective pedestrian safety feature but the design and colour do not sit comfortably within the conservation area.
- Crude concrete bollards prevent vehicular access to the playing field from Pinmill Brow (Howey Lane).
- Standard modern street signs throughout.
- Introduction of speed calming measures along Church Road has led to an increase in signage, which clutters the street scene.
 - Most notably at the junction of Bellemonte Road with Church Road.
- The area contains two post boxes;
 - An 'ER' post box set into the sandstone wall adjacent to the 'Bulls Head' public house.
 - A 'GR' post box set into the sandstone wall at the junction of Church Road with Vicarage Lane.



'GR' post box set into sandstone wall

- The area also contains one original K6 telephone kiosk, located adjacent to the 'Bulls Head' public house.
- Small green telecommunications unit poorly sited in front of listed No. 56 Hillside Road.
- Two glacial erratics, one painted black, are located adjacent to the northwest elevation of 'Ring O' Bells' Inn.



Glacial erratics adjacent to the 'Ring O' Bells'

- Limited wirescape – most intrusive when radiating from poles close to the School and No. 26 Howey Lane.
 - Also overhead electricity supply lines in vicinity of Nos. 25, 25 and 26 Howey Lane.
- Recent intrusion of satellite dishes on some chimneystacks and front elevations.

5.2 Shop fronts, advertisements

- 'Bulls Head' and 'Ring O' Bells' Inn, provide the only form of commercial advertisement within the area.
- 'Bulls Head' features:
 - A suspended sign on a gallows bracket above the main entrance.



Main sign to 'Bulls Head' public house

- Wall mounted wooden signs on the north and south elevations advertising the pubs name, brewery and amenities.



Advertisement on south elevation of 'Bulls Head'

- 'Ring O' Bells' Inn features:
 - Wall mounted advertisements above and adjacent to the main entrance door.
 - Wall mounted black lettering on the north elevation.



Advertisement on north elevation

- Low key, plain fascia board on No. 60 Hillside Road – C.K. Charles hairdressers.
- Only other form of advertisement is St. Lawrence's Church notice board.
 - Traditional wooden, painted signage.
- All advertisement signs are sympathetic to the character of the area.

5.3 Landmarks and focal points with historic connection or visual interest

- War Memorial/Cenotaph on Overton Hill is a significant focal point looking south from

the area around St. Lawrence's Church, the recreational ground and along western Howey Lane.

- St. Lawrence's Church (particularly its 4-storey tower) is a distinctive local landmark.
 - Situated on a gently sloping shelf mid-way way up the steep north side of the escarpment the tower can be seen within the immediate vicinity and from lower elevations.
 - Also provides a focal point looking north along Bellemonte Road.
- Stone War Memorial on stepped plinth within churchyard draws the eye.



War memorial in grounds of St. Lawrence's

- 'The Old Vicarage' acts as a local focal point looking to southeast through the trees at the rear of 'Roebuck Cottage' from the junction of School Lane and Church Road.



'The Old Vicarage' viewed from Church Road

- Most obvious when trees not in leaf.
- The distinctive plastered gables with red brick diapering draw the eye.

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 Church Road and around the historic core need to be retained.
- Small cobbles set in concrete provide an interesting change of colour and texture to the floorscape adjacent to the east elevation of the 'Ring O' Bells' Inn.



Cobblestones adjacent to 'Ring O' Bells' Inn

- Crazy concrete paving outside the Church provides a distinctive change in texture to the highway edge.
- However, this is not an appropriate material for the area.
- A mixture of stone paving flags and the use of gravestones provide an unusual and interesting floorscape immediately around the Church and on approaches from the main entrance gates.
- Many grave stones now weathered and inscriptions unreadable.



Combination of gravestone and flag paving

- Grass verges along some sections of Church Road – change of texture softens impact of hard landscaping.
- Footpath beside playing field and related paths to Pinmill Brow – relayed Spring 2005 – tarmac with timber edging.
- Work revealed original red sandstone edgings at low level – some damaged by the works – all repaved over.
- At the end of this path, to the rear of No. 24 Howey Lane, 'Hargraves steps' (named after gentleman who built No. 24), flagging and an old gate pier, all in sandstone, provide a historic feature.

LANDSCAPE

6. Landscape setting

- Located on elevated land south of the confluence of the River Weaver with the Mersey Estuary.
- Sits on a gently sloping shelf mid-way up the north-facing scarp slope with lower ground to the north and rising ground to the south, which is heavily wooded in places.
- Looking south from the northwest of the conservation area the adjacent C20th properties set against a heavily wooded backdrop creates a mixed residential and rural setting.
- To the north the area is enclosed by mid C20th housing. However, the views across the Mersey Estuary enable a wider local setting to be established.

7. Green spaces, trees, hedges

- Green spaces of note:
 - ‘Churchfields’ recreational ground in the northwest – most prominent public space
 - St. Lawrence’s churchyard – attractive trees, planting and gravestones together provide an important maintained space.
- Small maintained grassed areas at the road junctions in the east of the area soften the hard landscape of the highways.
- Extensive front lawns, such as those at ‘Church House Farmhouse’, are important green spaces that contribute to the overall rural character of the area.
- Trees are an important feature of the conservation area (although only small parts of 3 no Tree Preservation Orders are within it – at western edge) – most notable groups:
 - Along Howey Lane trees define the highway, in places creating an avenue effect, as well as providing a boundary to the adjacent playing field.
 - Large group of mature trees between Church and the northern graveyard.
 - Smaller group of mature trees to the east of the Church.
 - Various smaller trees and yews throughout the churchyard.
 - Group of medium sized evergreen trees at the junction of School Lane with Church Road.
 - Group of large mature trees in the grounds of ‘The Old Vicarage’ partially screening it from Church Road and Vicarage Lane.
 - Heavily wooded Overton Hill to south – outside the area although an important contribution to the rural character of the area when viewed from within.
- Hedges are important features throughout the area and again make a significant contribution to the rural character.
 - Most commonly used as boundary treatment for private dwellings.
 - Most common species include privet, holly and conifer.



Conifer hedge to rear of No. 25 Howey Lane

- Significant holly hedge, reinforced in places by wire fencing, encloses and screens the rear gardens of Nos. 24 & 26 Howey Lane.

8. Water features

- There are three natural springs within the area located along Howey Lane.
 - However, only one is visible on the south side of Howey Lane approximately opposite the Church car park.



Natural spring emerging on Howey Lane

OTHER FACTORS

9. Negative factors

- Pointing on section of recently repaired churchyard wall facing Church Road – harsh, careless and inappropriate.
- Various issues at Church car park;
 - Refuse bin has no storage area and therefore sits awkwardly within.

- Parking space allocations crudely sprayed on sandstone wall.



Parking allocations crudely sprayed on Church car park wall

- Fluorescent spray on Church steps – crude safety feature – detracts from the character and setting of the Church.
- Various issues with boundary hedge and wall between playing field and Church car park:
 - Un-maintained, overgrown and acting as a rubbish trap.
 - Root growth also causing substantial damage to the underlying sandstone wall.
 - Wall further damaged by the creation of a shortcut in the northeast corner of the car park.



Shortcut and graffitied sub station in northeast corner of car park

- Various maintenance issues at and around 'Churchfields' playing field;

- Spray paint graffiti on benches, street lamps and elsewhere is a visual eyesore.
- Street furniture such as lampposts, benches and bins, varied and often inappropriate character and suffering from physical vandalism.
- Pathway edges affected by grass encroachment, an issue addressed by relaying and edging paths – Spring 2005.
- Frequent acts of vandalism have been reported during summer months.
- Lack of footpath along part of Pinmill Brow (Howey Lane) creates hazards for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
 - Part of alternative footpath link to the north (at rear of No. 26 Howey Lane) is unwelcoming at night – not lit.
- Traffic signage clutter along highways, in particular Church Road.
- Modern street name signs ignore the historic setting of the area – traditional wall mounted signs on No. 1 Bellemonte Road have been replaced with modern designs.



Modern street name sign below neglected traditional one

- Area subject to heavy volumes of traffic especially around school drop off and collection times – ambience disturbed.
- Parking and congestion issues around the small group of shops centred on the junction of Hillside Road with Bellemonte Rd



Mass sprawl of vehicles reinforces parking issues in the vicinity of Hillside Road

- K6 kiosk adjacent to the 'Bulls Head' badly faded and missing glass panes.



Badly faded K6 kiosk with missing glass panes

- Small green telecom box – poorly sited in front of a listed building, No.56 Hillside Road
- Encroachment of uPVC windows and roof lights is having an adverse effect on the character of the area.
- Although the properties Nos. 10, 12 and 14 School Lane, Nos. 58 and 60 Hillside Road and Nos. 5 and 7 Bellemonte Road do not have any special architectural or historic interest, their sites are within the medieval historic core and have therefore been included in the conservation area.

10. Neutral areas

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

- Playing field and children's play area in the northwest – devoid of any special features but important local amenities.
- Extension to Frodsham Church of England Primary School – although not in keeping with the original building is simple enough not to detract from it.
- Extensions to Nos. 2 & 8 School Lane – good examples of how extensions can be sympathetically added in a sensitive area.
 - Although different at each end the addition of two extensions maintains the symmetry of the semis which helps further neutralise their impact.



New, sympathetic extension to No. 8 School Lane



New, sympathetic extension to No. 2 School Lane

10.2 Areas and opportunities for development and/or enhancement

- There are no obvious opportunities for further development within the conservation area.
 - Any future house extensions need to be carried out in a sympathetic manner, as described in section 10.1 above.
- Playing field is the area in most need of enhancement.
 - Street furniture badly in need of repair/painting.
 - More suitable style could be installed.



Crude concrete bin unsympathetic to the character of area

- Removal of extensive graffiti should help make the area more visually attractive.



Graffited park bench in poor state of repair

- Boundary between playing field and car park in need of tidying.
- Barn adjacent to 'Ring O' Bells' Inn currently under-used – could be brought back into use.
- Both public house car parks on Bellemonte Road could feature an element of enclosure to help maintain the traditional building line of the historic street.
- Reinstatement and repair of traditional street name signs.
- K6 telephone kiosk could be restored.
- Street trees could be introduced into the wide footpath outside the shops on Hillside Road at the Bellemonte Road junction, softening the urban impact.

11. Ambience/uniqueness

11.1 Sounds and smells

- Wildlife and bird noise due to extensive hedge and tree cover throughout the area.
- Bells from St. Lawrence's Church at regular intervals.
- Running water along Howey Lane from the presence of a natural spring emerging.
- Dull drone of distant motorway traffic.
- Children playing (at some periods) in the school play ground and on 'Churchfields'.
- Woodland smell.
- Smoke from the local coal/wood fires.

11.2 Vitality and vibrancy of the area

- Residential village with traditional local amenities e.g. Church, school, shops, public houses and recreational facilities.
 - Focus of a separate community within the wider context of Frodsham Town.
- The Church, School and 'Churchfields' playing field provide a focus for many community activities.
- Frodsham Church of England Primary School generates a significant movement of traffic and people during term time at drop off and collection times.
 - Small catering business operates out of No. 26 Howey Lane.

- Two public houses and a number of small shops, radiating around the junction of Bellemonte Road with Hillside Road, provide the main form of commercial business within the area.



'Bulls Head' public House, Bellemonte Road

11.3 Historical associations with unusual crafts, famous people and events

- Prince Warabo from Opobo in Nigeria, who died on the 18th of April 1882 whilst attending the Manor House School in Frodsham, is buried in St. Lawrence's churchyard.
- Frodsham Church of England Primary School original building previously featured in early architectural textbooks as an example of good design.
- 'The Old Vicarage', most probably an example of work by the well-known and famous local architect John Douglas.

11.4 Other characteristics which make the area unique

- Contiguous with Frodsham (Castle Park Locality) and Frodsham (Overton, Five Crosses) Conservation Areas.
- 'The Sandstone Trail' long distance footpath passes through the centre of the area.
- Plaque on a concrete post at the junction of the paths beside the Church and beside the playing field notes –

**"THE CONCRETE PITCH IN THIS GROUND
WAS PROVIDED BY
"THE PEOPLE"
DON BRADMAN FUND
IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL
PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION"**



– concrete pitch no longer exists.

**Frodsham (Overton, St. Lawrence's)
Conservation Area Appraisal
(one of a series to be produced)**

**Revised after public consultation
VRBC Cons 15/X August 2005**

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.

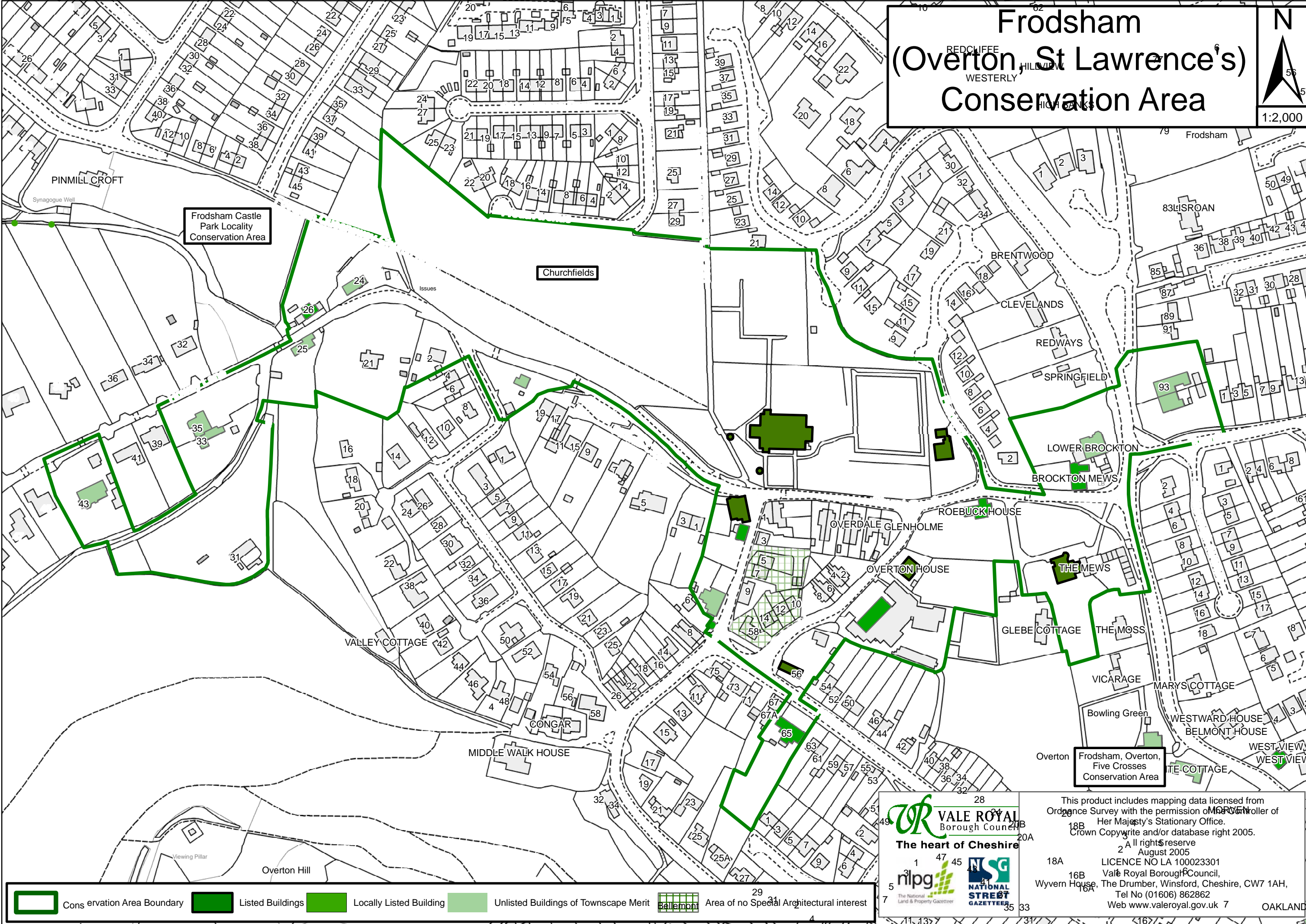
This document should be read in conjunction with "Conservation Area Appraisals", produced by Vale Royal Borough Council in July 1997.

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, St. Lawrence's) 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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Frodsham (Overton, St Lawrence's) Conservation Area



Frodsham Castle
Park Locality
Conservation Area

Churchfields

BRENTWOOD

CLEVELANDS

REDWAYS

SPRINGFIELD

LOWER BROCKTON

BROCKTON MEWS

ROEBUCKHOUSE

OVERDALE GLENHOLME

OVERTON HOUSE

THE MEWS

GLEBE COTTAGE

THE MOSS

VICARAGE

MARYS COTTAGE

WESTWARD HOUSE

BELMONT HOUSE

WEST VIEW

WEST VIEW

Frodsham, Overton,
Five Crosses
Conservation Area

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Building
- Unlisted Buildings of Townscape Merit
- Ballroom
- Area of no Special Architectural interest

VALE ROYAL
Borough Council
The heart of Cheshire
nlp
The National Land & Property Gazetteer
NATIONAL STREET GAZETTEER

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