

Advice on Heritage Issues Around the Potential



Plate 1. Vincent Avenue

Private and Confidential

Hinchliffe Heritage for Emery Planning

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1. Introduction

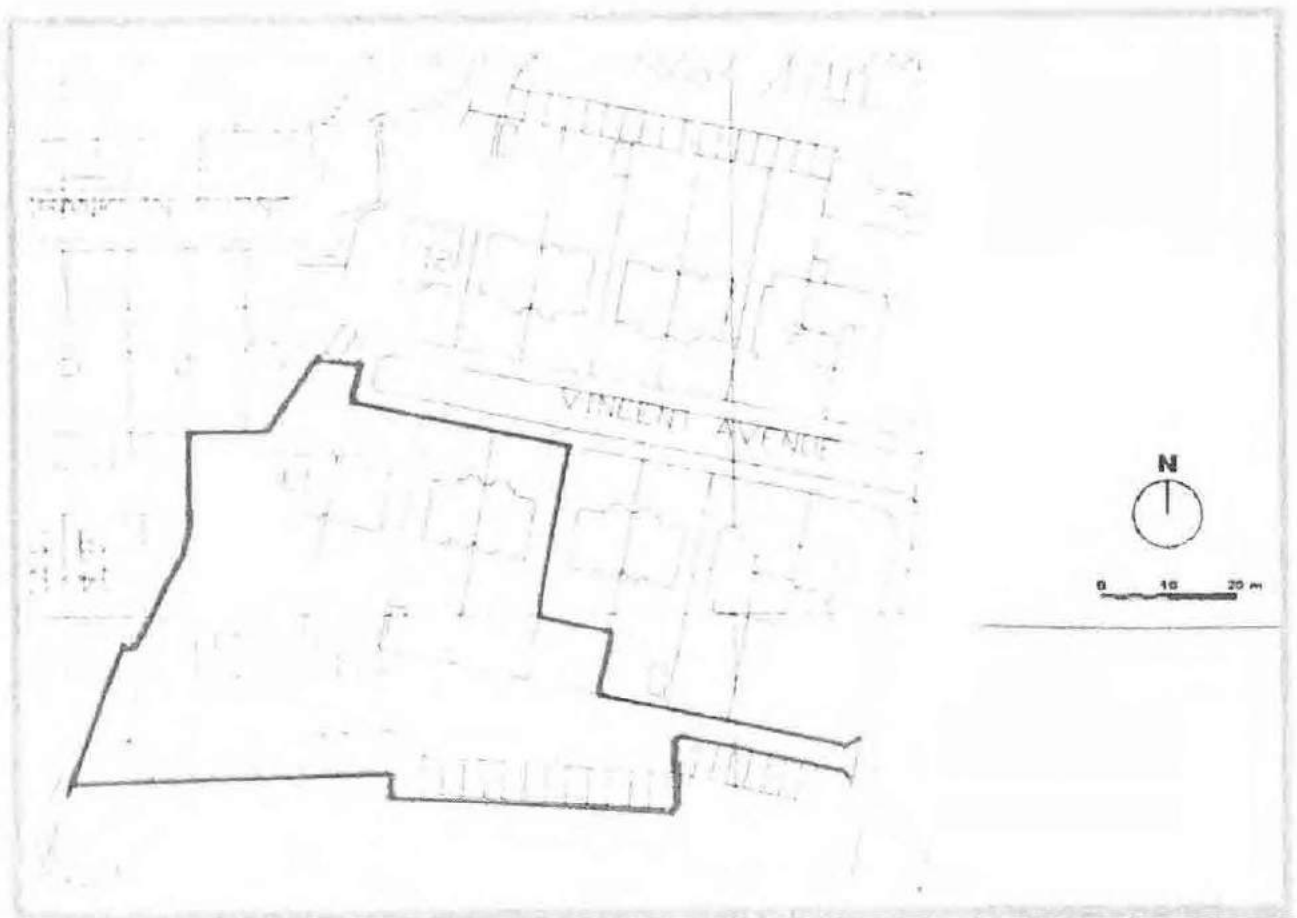
1.1 This advice is provided in accordance with a brief from Caroline Payne of Emery Planning dated 16th January 2019 and subsequent discussions. The basic purpose of the advice is to inform the client on heritage implications for the potential redevelopment of the site (Plan 1) on Vincent Avenue/Oswald Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy (Chorlton).

1.2 The advice was requested in response to a pre-application meeting with Manchester City Council on 12th September 2018 and a summary letter dated 20th December 2019 from Caroline Payne to the client, both on the potential redevelopment of the site.

1.3 A site visit was undertaken by John Hinchliffe on 12th February 2019 when the client was present and gave further advice on the issues.

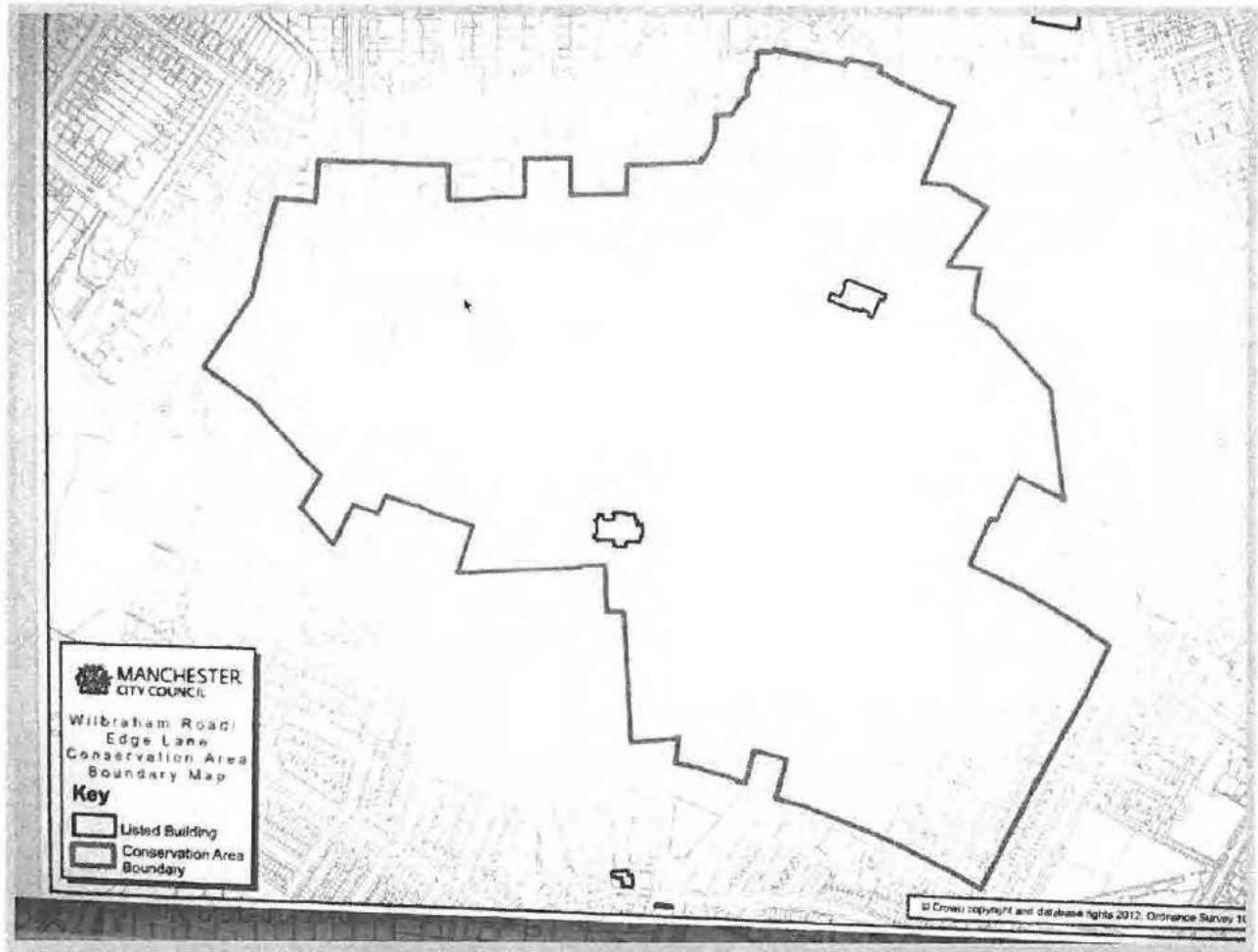
1.4 The advice is given on the basis of current heritage legislation, guidance and policies.

1.5 The key heritage issue is the site's location within the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area, which has been designated by Manchester City Council.



Plan 1. Potential development site

Heritage Advice: Vincent Avenue, Chorlton



Plan 2. Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area

2. Summary of Character and Appearance of Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area

2.1 Historic Evolution

The historic evolution of Chorlton and the site is illustrated in Historic Plans 1-6 (below). In 1845, the site of the future settlement of Chorlton was just a small hamlet to the N of Chorlton Brook, consisting of a few cottages, a school and (an earlier) St Clement's Church and was centred around the junction of the current Edge Lane and St Clements Road. At that time that part of Wilbraham Road to the E of St Clements Road was known as High Lane and that part to the W was Edge Lane. The current length of Edge Lane to the W of St Clement's Road had not been connected to the current Wilbraham Road. The surrounding land was almost all open fields but the area immediately around the settlement appears to have been more intensively cultivated as market gardens and orchards. The future site of Vincent Avenue appears to have been such market gardens and orchards and lay between the properties known as *Pits Brow* and *Ash Tree*.

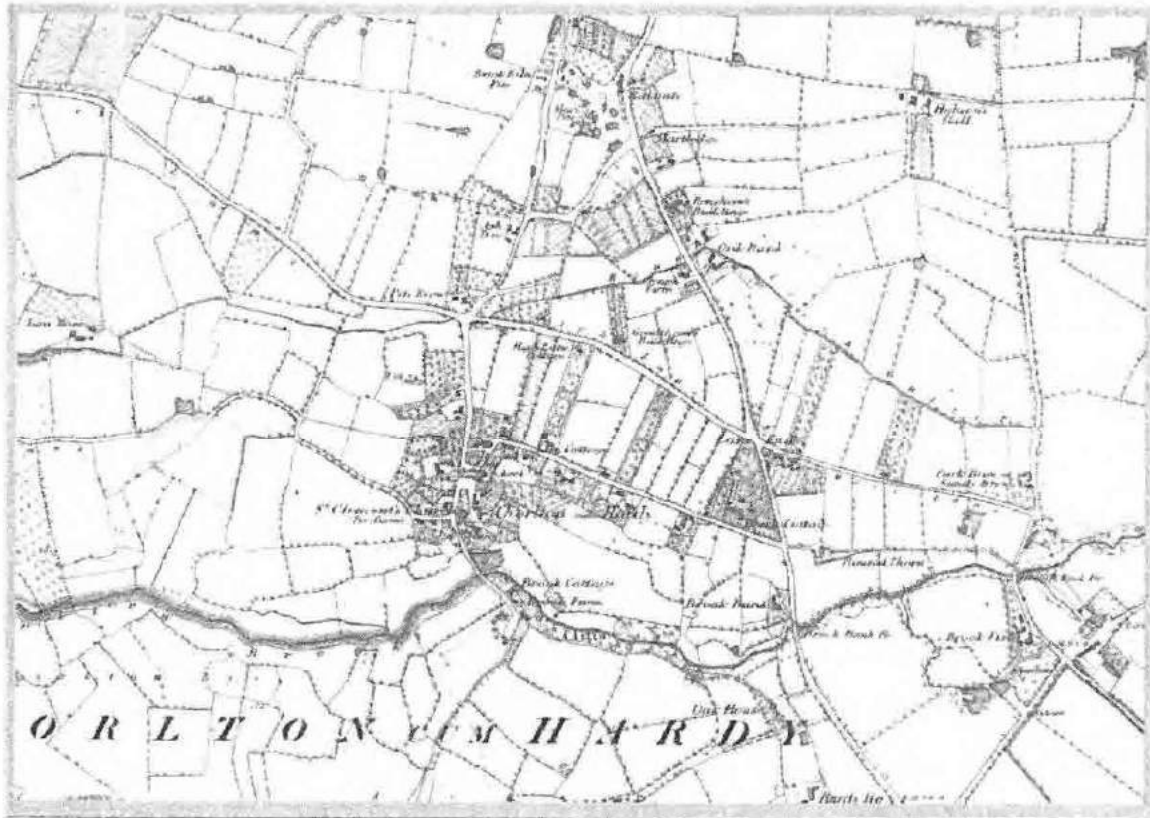
With the growing industrialisation of Manchester in the 2nd half of the 19th C and the arrival of the railway line to the E and trams, Chorlton grew rapidly as a commuter settlement. By 1892 Chorlton had expanded considerably with a wide range of house-types from impressive detached villas to terraced houses, as well as pubs and religious, community and commercial properties but it was still surrounded by open fields. Historic Plan 4 shows that Vincent Avenue had been developed by 1892 with the existing semi-detached villas but that the land beyond to the W had not been developed. The strip of land which is currently occupied by the lock-up garages had not been developed and it separated the villas on Vincent Avenue from similar villas on Wilbraham Road.

By 1946, Chorlton had grown further with a wider range of properties and facilities but little had changed on Vincent Avenue or the site of the lock-up garages. The land to the W had been developed with a chapel and dwellings on Sibsden Road.

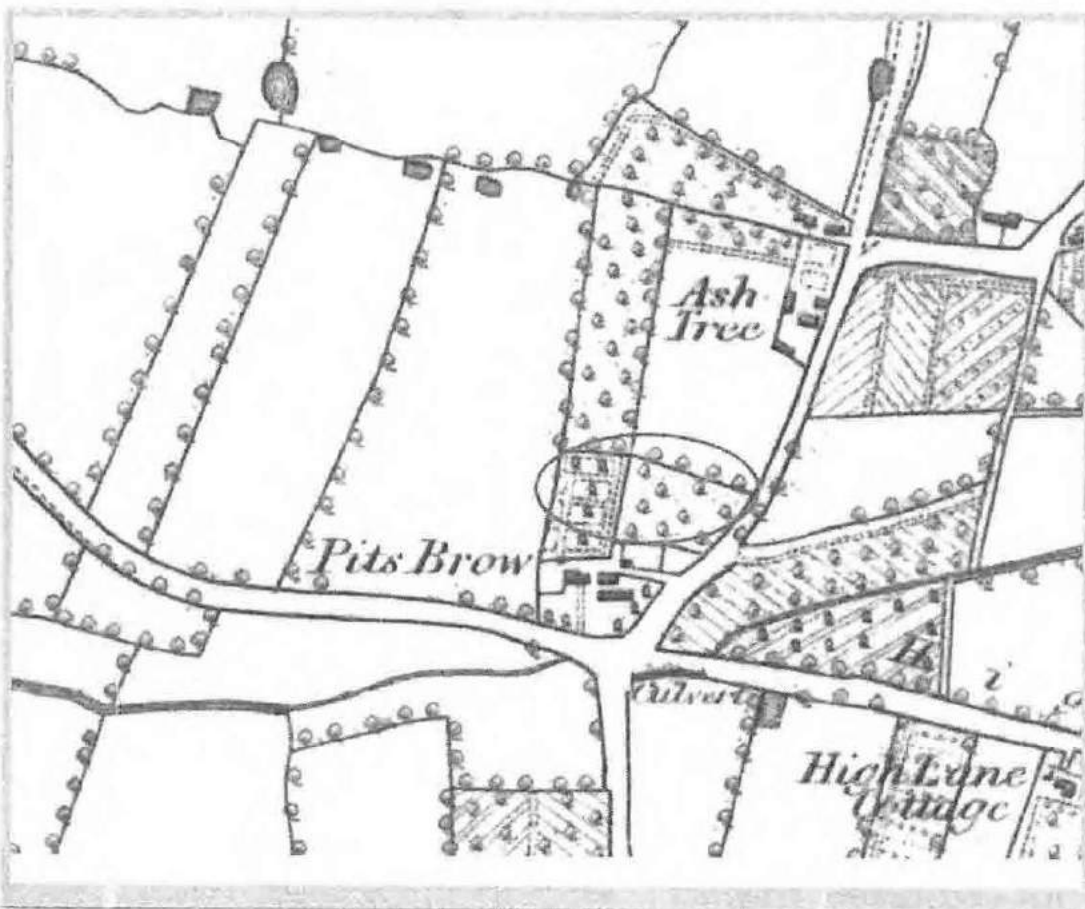
During the 2nd half of the 20th C and early 21st C: Chorlton continued to expand; most of the large Victorian Villas were converted to flats (including 7-13 Vincent Avenue); some sites have been redeveloped in a variety of building forms; the lock-up garages on the site have been built; the Spread Eagle pub was created out of a pair of semi-detached villas and; the the land to the W of the site has been further developed with apartments and houses.

No historic photographs of Oswald Road or Vincent Avenue have been found but Plates 2-5 illustrate the general appearance of the surrounding area, on Manchester Road and Wilbraham Road at the beginning of the 20th C.

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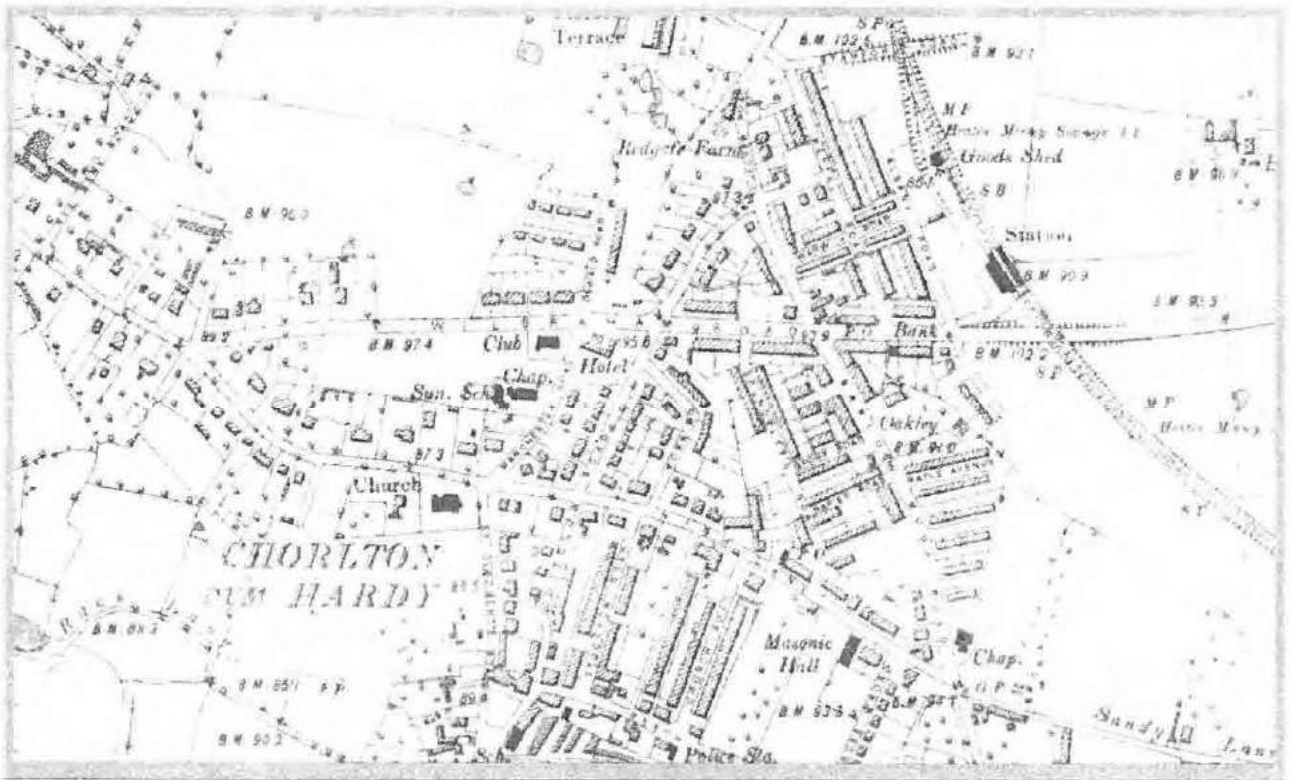


Historic Plan 1. Chorlton 1845

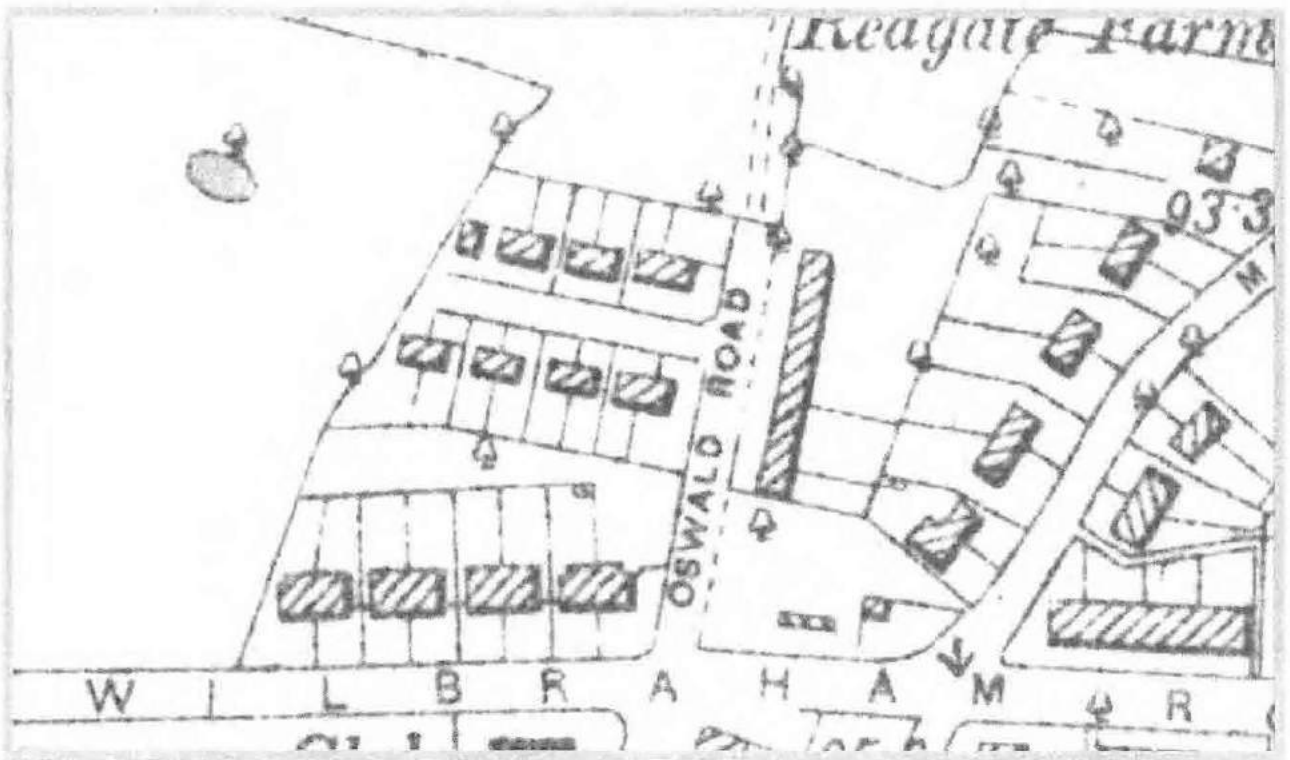


Historic Plan 2. Approx site of Vincent Avenue 1845

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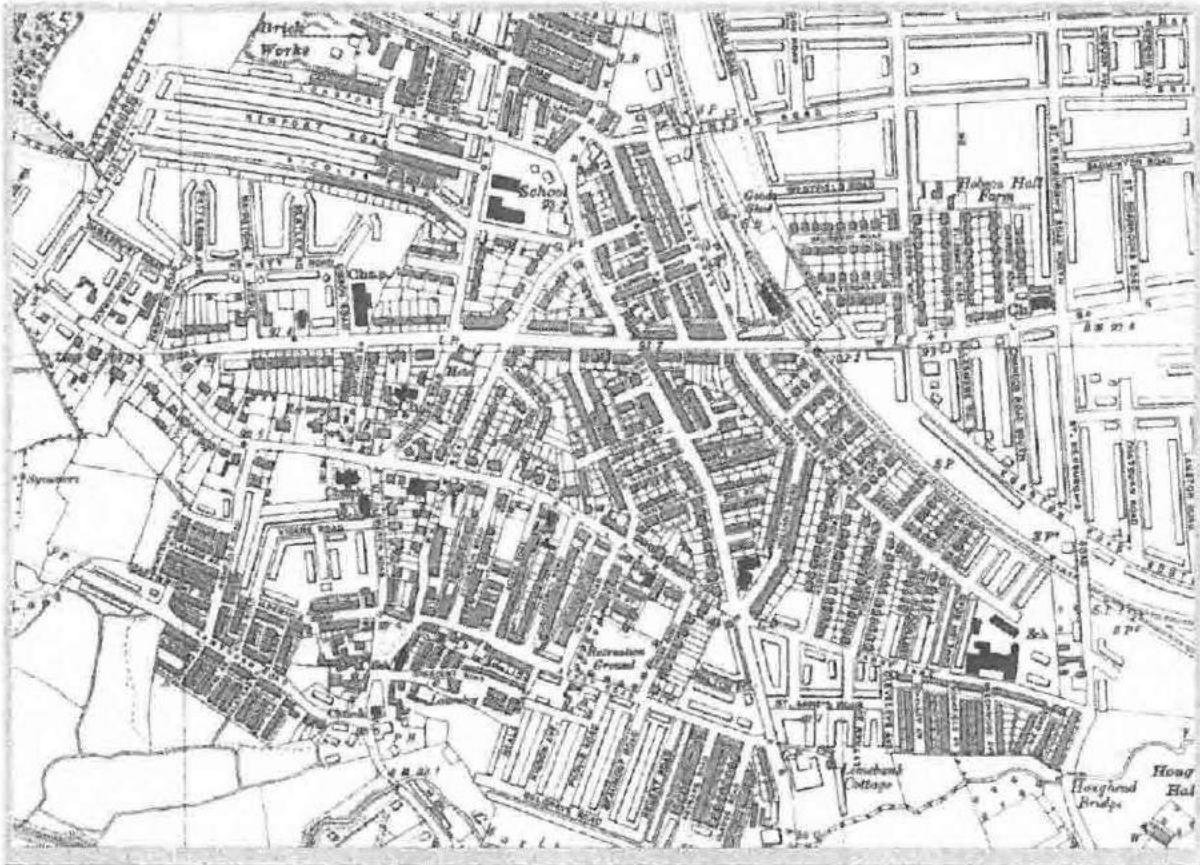


Historic Plan 3. Chorlton 1892

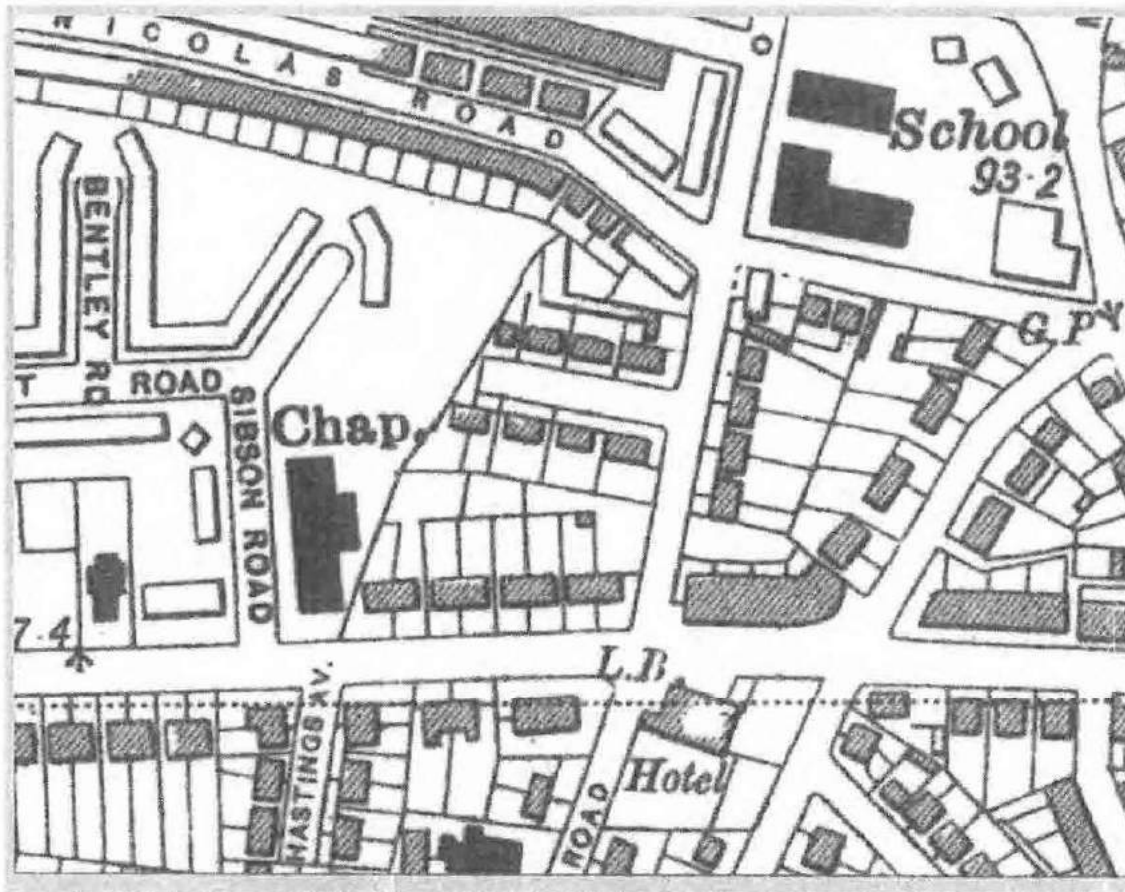


Historic Plan 4. Vincent Avenue 1892

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Historic Plan 5. Chorlton 1946



Historic Plan 6. Vincent Avenue 1946

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Plate 2. Manchester Road c.1900 (with barn in background!)



Plate 3. Wilbraham Road c.1900



Plate 4. Conservative Club and Lloyd's Hotel c.1900



Plate 5 Wilbraham Road c.1920

2.2 Description of the Conservation Area

The Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area covers a substantial part of the settlement of Chorlton. Pevsner describes the settlement (in 1969):

Chorlton-cum-Hardy still has its village centre, Chorlton Green, but how dismal it has been allowed to become. Just trees along the border of what was once grass, and just the arched gateway with a timber-framed turret to the churchyard and the former church of St Clementine, built in 1779. Not a stone remains of this now.

Manchester City Council has produced a description of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area, which is reproduced in full at Appendix 1. The description summarises the area:

...as possessing buildings and spaces of character and quality dating back to the late 19th century. The buildings continue to be complimented by a substantial and mature tree coverage.

It goes on to state:

Many of the buildings that line the streets within the area are architecturally impressive and most of them can be regarded as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. It is the relationship of these various buildings to each other, to their sites and to the streets that mostly determine the character of the area, rather than individual buildings of high architectural or historic quality.

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The Council's description of key unlisted buildings focusses on landmark buildings and says little about the range of houses within the area, other than:

...a combination of substantial individual houses, semi-detached villas, terraces and apartments within either converted older properties or purpose-designed contemporary buildings.

Along Edge Lane and Wilbraham Road are mostly grand residential villas, both detached and semi-detached and in varying architectural detailing. By contrast, in the SE corner of the CA, between Chequers Road and Whitelaw Road, the houses are predominantly more modest terraced houses. Further N, around York Road, on Oswald Road and Vincent Avenue, the houses are mid-sized villas, generally of less architectural quality than those further W.

The Council's description makes no specific mention of the properties on Oswald Road or Vincent Avenue.

Other relevant aspects of the CA which are relevant to the site and which are highlighted in the Council's description are:

The spaces within the conservation area are based on the street pattern, so spaces are essentially linear, their width determined by the distance buildings are set back from their road boundaries.

The spaces are characterised by the front gardens to individual properties, sometimes containing mature trees, by the brick or stone boundary walls and their related gateposts, by the pavements, kerbs and highway surfaces.

Bracketed eaves supporting an overhanging pitched roof covered in blue/black Welsh slate are repeated throughout the area.

Window openings are almost exclusively vertically proportioned, originally with timber vertical sliding sash windows, the frames of which were well set back from the outer face of masonry, creating a modelled façade.

The modelling of the late 19th century buildings was enhanced by projecting bay and oriel windows, corbelling and mouldings around windows. Bays are sometimes single storey high and two storeys in other cases.

The use of timber windows and associated detailing not only helps to establish the architectural character of individual buildings, but also contributes to the character of the wider area. Where other replacement materials have been used it has resulted in a loss of the area's established character.

Rooflines are generally punctuated with gables, pikes, dormers and chimneys. Even ridgelines were occasionally ornamented with crested ridge tiles and finials, although some of these appear to have been removed.

The trees and garden hedges to the front of properties make a significant contribution to the character of the street 'corridor'.

The trees planted within the private gardens make an important contribution to the public realm,...

Spatially, the area behind street fronting properties is often ignored, but this is often a space of great significance, particularly where large properties in large gardens back onto each other.

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These gardens and the trees within them are in the public realm by virtue of the fact that they can be viewed from the adjacent streets. This space, and other extensive rear gardens to properties throughout the area are important elements in contributing to the character of the conservation area.

In assessing the negative factors of the CA, the council's description states:

The removal of original boundary walls, gateposts and their replacement with weakly detailed fencing or railings generally throughout the area is a significant loss to the character of the area.

The replacement of original timber windows with flat faced alternatives, especially in older buildings, has resulted in a loss to the character of both the building in question and to the wider area.



Plate 6. Well-proportioned and detailed two storey house on York Road



Plate 7. More modest and plainer two storey terraced houses on Hardy Avenue, with 3 storey behind



Plate 7. The listed Loyd's Hotel and recent large apartment block adjacent



Plate 8. Impressive Venetian gothic style semi detached houses on Edge Lane, with development at rear and side inspired by them

2.3 Heritage Significance of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area.

2.3.1 The key issue in decision-making in respect of heritage assets under current government guidance is "Heritage significance". The Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018) defines "Significance" (for heritage policy):

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The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

2.3.2 In assessing the heritage significance of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area (below) regard has been had to the potential heritage interest of the building as identified in the NPPF and the heritage values, as defined in Historic England's *Conservation Principles* (2008). This document asserts that a tangible heritage asset can have the following four values:

Evidential value - the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value - the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

Aesthetic value - the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value - the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

2.3.3 *Conservation Principles* also clarifies that:

The significance of a place embraces all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve.

In order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time; and then to consider:

- *who values the place, and why they do so*
- *how those values relate to its fabric*
- *their relative importance*
- *whether associated objects contribute to them*
- *the contribution made by the setting and context of the place*
- *how the place compares with others sharing similar values.*

Understanding and articulating the values and significance of a place is necessary to inform decisions about its future. The degree of significance determines what, if any, protection, including statutory designation, is appropriate under law and policy.

2.3.4 Important considerations when assessing levels of significance are the authenticity and integrity of the heritage assets. These are defined as:

Authenticity is a measure of truthfulness. Understanding of the concept of authenticity is guided by ICOMOS's *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994)

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of cultural heritage and its attributes

2.4 Brief Statement of Heritage Significance of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area.

The Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane Conservation Area has evidential value in demonstrating the evolution of a South Manchester settlement during the second half of the 19th C and the during the 20th C, from an agricultural hamlet into a residential suburb. The distribution of the development and its shift of its centre bear witness to the important role of public transport

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systems, notably the railway and tram networks which radiates from the city centre, enabling easy commuting to places of work. In particular, the CA illustrates a range of accommodation for differing social and economic classes in that period. It illustrates both piece-meal planning and development with a general consistency of layout within pockets of development, rather than uniform development across the whole area.

The CA has historical value in illustrating both the continuity of uses of some of the buildings for residential, commercial, religious and social uses. It also illustrates the tradition of adaptation, change of use and redevelopment of other buildings, perhaps most noticeably the sub-division of large houses into apartments.

The CA has some aesthetic value in illustrating various architectural styles of the period, notably in the landmark public and religious buildings and to a lesser degree in the housing. The area displays both simple terraced housing and more ornate details such as: painted timber sliding sash windows, eaves and barge boards; much use of bracketed eaves supporting overhanging pitched roofs; projecting bay and oriel windows, corbelling and mouldings around windows; bays and rooflines punctuated with gables, pikes, dormers and chimneys. The area also demonstrates the predominant of: natural slates for the roofs; local red/orange brick for elevations and; terracotta panels and polychromatic brickwork, although there are some exceptions and; natural stone for dressings and many of the boundary walls. In some senses the variety of styles, detailing and house types could be said to illustrate the wide range of influences during the period of its development but ultimately the area lacks a universally distinctive architectural character and this limits its distinctiveness as a clearly defined area.

The open spaces and gardens around the buildings reflect the street pattern. Together with the mature trees, brick and stone boundary walls and their related gateposts, the pavements, kerbs and highway surfaces, they are important spatial and visual characteristics of the conservation area.

The CA has high communal value as a popular place in which to live and work.

The authenticity and integrity of the CA have been substantially eroded by piecemeal interventions in historic fabric and detailing and by some redevelopments but the CA retains its fundamental attribute in representing an example of a residential suburb of its time.

3. Heritage Legislation, Policy and Guidance

3.1 Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72 (1) of the act is:

In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, ...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Manchester City Council therefore has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Lane CA.

3.2 Policy

3.2.1 Manchester City Council adopted the *Core Strategy Development Plan Document* of its Local Development Framework in July 2012.

Chorlton is identified in the Core Strategy as being within the Southern Character Area. The Core Strategy includes policies:

Policy EN1 "Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas"

...8. Southern Character Area

There is a notable presence of older development (1750-early 1900) at key junctions and along historic radial routes such as Oxford Road/Wilmslow Road, often but not exclusively associated with District Centres. The largely flat terrain has enabled the subsequent infilling of land between these routes with a more regular layout of predominantly residential development up to the 1960s. Much of this subsequent development was associated with the purpose built radial parkways, serving the City Centre. Princess Parkway now forms the principal road link between the City Centre and the Airport. The area contains pockets of formal open space including some significant historic parks.

New development needs to retain the identity and focus of activity associated with the historic District Centres.

Where appropriate development along the radial routes such as Princess Parkway should be commensurate in scale with the prominence of its location...

Policy EN 3 "Heritage"

Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

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Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

3.2.2 Manchester City Council's Local Plan has retained Policy 18 Conservation Areas from its former Unitary Development Plan and it remains its adopted policy on development affecting conservation areas:

18. CONSERVATION AREAS

DC18.1 The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

- i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;*
- ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;*
- iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);*
- iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;*
- v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.*

b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area.

d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.

3.3 Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework ((NPPF)(2018) represents the government's policy guidance on a wide range of planning issues. Section 16 is on the broad issue of "Conserving and enhancing the historic environment".

The NPPF states in Section 16, amongst other things:

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets (which includes conservation areas) and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.***

193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

194. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

195. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

4. Assessment of: contribution of 7-9 Vincent Avenue to CA; its structural condition and; the potential of securing permission for its demolition

4.1 No.s 7-9 Vincent Avenue are a pair of three storey (plus basement) semi-detached villas, which are examples of large mid-quality late 19th C houses built in the period of Chorlton's rapid growth. They are part of a group of similar buildings which are regularly sited on both sides of Vincent Avenue.

They are built in red engineering bricks on the front elevation in Flemish bond and red/orange common bricks on the side and rear elevations; have a dentil string course between ground and first floors in the side wings and; have some plain, bevelled stone dressings for window cills and lintels and for a string course at cill level of ground floor windows. They incorporate small panels of terracotta plaques and bands between ground and first floor windows. They have some traditional painted timber vertically sliding sash windows and some replacement UPVC windows. They have two-storey canted bays and painted timber porch hoods supported on brackets and turned spindles.

The buildings have natural slate roofs.

4.2 The buildings are set-back behind front gardens with mature trees and a dwarf wall of panelled bricks with a stone coping, which has been pushed considerably out-of-plumb by trees inside the boundary and; have a generous rear garden with further mature trees. On the rear boundary is a tall non-original brick wall with a doorway through to the lock-up garages.

4.3 The buildings have not been extended or partly demolished and so, externally at least, retain a high degree of integrity.

4.4 The buildings have each been converted into two apartments and have undergone some interventions which have slightly diluted their authenticity:

- converted from single dwellings to apartments
- some windows replaced with non-authentic styles and materials
- front garden hard-surfaced to create car parks
- loss of decorative barge boards (as retained on house opposite - Plate 14)

4.5 It is understood that the apartments are in need of upgrading internally. The buildings display some signs of structural movement, with cracked brickwork on the front elevation but, in the absence of a Structural Engineers report, there is no evidence that the condition of the buildings is so poor that it would justify their demolition.

4.6 Despite the interventions, the buildings have a medium degree of heritage significance, as examples of their building type and date within the CA. Their original design, materials and role in the wider townscape can still be read and appreciated. The buildings, their gardens and setting are typical of the area, embody many of the attributes of the CA which are described in Manchester City Council's description of the CA and they make a medium contribution to the CA.

4.7 In view of this assessment, the demolition of the buildings would:

- not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA;
- be contrary to Manchester City Council's Policy EN3 and DC18.1 d) and
- would cause harm to a designated heritage asset (the CA).

4.8 There is no obvious justification for the demolition of the buildings and **an application for their demolition is would probably be refused by Manchester City Council** and any appeal would probably be dismissed by an inspector.

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Plate 9. Front elevation



Plate 10. Rear elevation



Plate 11. Sign of structural movement



Plate 12. Sign of structural movement



Plate 13. Brick-panelled front boundary wall with stone coping



Plate 14. Opposite side of Vincent Avenue

5. Assessment of: contribution of 11-13 Vincent Avenue to CA and the potential of securing permission for its demolition

5.1 No.s 11 and 13 Vincent Avenue are a pair of three storey (plus basement) semi-detached villas, which are examples of large mid-quality late 19th C houses built in the period of Chorlton's rapid growth.

Parts of the front elevation are built in red engineering bricks in Flemish bond but the two-storey bays have been rebuilt in non-matching red/orange bricks on square plan, unlike the canted plans elsewhere in Vincent Avenue. The side and rear elevations are partly red/orange common bricks and have been partly rendered. Any stone lintels and cills and terracotta detailing which may have been in the front elevation have been removed. The size and proportions of almost all window openings have been altered and all fenestration is brown UPVC with non-traditional proportions and method of opening. The buildings have natural slate roofs.

5.2 The buildings: are set-back behind a front parking area and a dwarf wall of panelled-bricks with a stone coping in front of 11 only. They have a generous rear garden with some small immature trees. On the rear boundary is a tall non-original brick wall. On the side boundary is an unsightly combination of a re-built brick wall, concrete panels and timber boarding.

5.3 The buildings have been substantially rebuilt and under-pinned. Enlarged porch hoods have been built on each side, supported on brick piers.

5.4 The buildings have been converted into a total of 7 apartments. Further interventions have been undertaken which have diluted their authenticity are: the loss of decorative barge boards (as retained on house opposite - Plate 14) and the original porch hoods and; the partial building up of the front elevation between the two gables. The buildings therefore have only a low degree of heritage significance, historic integrity and authenticity.

5.5 It is understood that the apartments are well-maintained internally.

5.6 Despite the interventions, the general form and siting of the buildings within their extensive gardens is consistent with the general grain of this part of the CA and they still make a small contribution to the CA, when seen from a distance (Plate 18). However, much of the original design, materials and aesthetic value has been lost and they can no longer be read and appreciated as historic buildings. The buildings longer embody many of the attributes of the CA which are described in Manchester City Council's description and they make a very low contribution to the CA.

5.7 In view of this assessment, the demolition of the buildings could:

- preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA;
- be consistent with Manchester City Council's Policy DC18.1 d) and
- cause no harm to a designated heritage asset (the CA),

provided that it is linked to a suitably well-designed redevelopment proposal.

5.8 There is strong justification for the demolition of the buildings and **an application for their demolition would probably be approved by Manchester City Council**, provided that it is linked to a suitably well-designed redevelopment proposal.

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Plate 15. Front elevation



Plate 16. Rear and side elevations



Plate 17. Rear boundary wall



Plate 18. Rear view of 7&9 and 11 & 13 from within Lock-up compound



Plate 19. Untidy side boundary

6. Assessment of: contribution of the lock-up garages to CA and the potential of securing permission for their demolition

6.1 The site of the lock-up garages is identified as a separate plot on the 1845 OS map. It is a strip of land which has been an anomaly, separating the Victorian villas on Vincent Avenue from those on Wilbraham Road since they were built.

6.2 The garages on the site were built at some point after 1946 and have no historic interest.

6.3 The garages are in rows facing on to a rough hardstanding and have mono-pitch roofs, brick piers and painted timber or metal doors. The garages have no architectural merit but have a consistent appearance and are well-maintained. It is understood that some are used simply for storing cars but others are used by small businesses as workshops and for storage of materials.

6.4 The boundaries on to the rear of the villas on Wilbraham Road are mostly tall brick walls and there are several mature trees, adjacent to the boundary, within the gardens.

6.5 The entrance into the site is from Oswald Road and is the width of a single-carriageway. It has a low splayed stone wall adjacent to Oswald Road with a privet hedge behind on the Vincent Avenue side. Along the access track on the Wilbraham Road side is a row of garages (in separate ownership) which are accessed from the car park of the Spread Eagle pub. Partway along the access track is a tall metal gate which is locked at night.

6.6 Although the site of the lock-up garages has no architectural or historic interest and does not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the CA, it is well-screened from public view, well-maintained and well-managed and so does not detract from the character or appearance of the CA to any great degree.

6.7 In view of this assessment, the demolition of the buildings could:

- preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA;
- be consistent with Manchester City Council's Policy DC18.1 d) and
- cause no harm to a designated heritage asset (the CA),

provided that it is linked to a suitably well-designed redevelopment proposal.

5.8 There is strong justification for the demolition of the buildings and **an application for their demolition is would probably be approved by Manchester City Council**, provided that it is linked to a suitably well-designed redevelopment proposal.

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Plate 20. Lock-up garages



Plate 21. Lock-up garages



Plate 22. Parking at lock-up garages



Plate 23. Entrance to lock-up garages on Oswald Road

7. Advice on the pattern/form of development which is most likely to secure consent for redevelopment on heritage and design grounds, if consent for demolition is granted

7.1 Generic Advice

7.1.1 The NPPF acknowledges at para 192 that "...new development (can make) a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

7.1.2 Under its Policy EN 3 "Heritage", the Council will encourage new development provided that that it complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its locality and does not cause harm to its heritage significance.

7.1.3 Under its Policy 18. CONSERVATION AREAS, Manchester City Council will resist applications for outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas but will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas and the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

- i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
- ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;
- iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees)

7.1.4 Manchester City Council states in its description of the CA:

...almost all of the late 20th century/early 21st century developments for apartment buildings lack the vitality of earlier designs and fail to exhibit any creative contemporary design qualities. In that regard such properties may be regarded as having a neutral impact in the conservation area.

Conclusion

Analysis of the characteristics should enable new developments, extensions and alterations to be designed so as to complement, or at least maintain, the character of the area. Generally, demolition of existing buildings and boundary walls should not be considered unless it can be clearly shown that new proposals on such sites will maintain or enhance the character of the area.

Particular attention will be given to overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, site layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and to the wider area.

This should not be seen as an attempt to impose particular architectural styles or tastes, nor is it intended to stifle innovation or originality. It is however seeking to promote and reinforce local distinctiveness.

The key message from Manchester City Council in this summary is that new development should be based upon an understanding of the historic context of a site and should respond positively to it without being a pastiche (poor copy) of it.

7.1.5 Historic England acknowledges in its *Conservation Principles - Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008) that change in the historic environment is inevitable and that good conservation involves the careful management of change. It states:

14. New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:
- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;

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- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;*
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*
- d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.*

On "New work and alteration ", it states:

'The proposals (should) aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future'

142. The need for quality in new work applies at every level, from small interventions in an historic room, to major new buildings or developments. Small changes need as much consideration as large ones, for cumulatively their effect can be comparable.

143. There are no simple rules for achieving quality of design in new work, although a clear and coherent relationship of all the parts to the whole, as well as to the setting into which the new work is introduced, is essential. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting the values established through an assessment of the significance of the place.

7.1.6 Historic England and CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) produced some guidance on new buildings in historic areas in its Building In Context (200). It states:

A successful project will:

- relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land*
- sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it*
- respect important views*
- use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings*
- create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting*

Further generic advice and case studies can be found at <http://www.building-in-context.org/the-bic-toolkit/>

7.2 Existing Redevelopments in the CA

Manchester City Council's Description of the CA is critical of most of the redevelopments within the CA and seeks to raise the bar in respect of the quality of the urban design of future redevelopments in the CA. However, the date of the preparation of the description is not provided and, a brief assessment of some of the more recent redevelopments in the CA is worthwhile.

a) Apartment blocks at corner of Wilbraham Road and Whitelaw Road (Plates 7, 24 and 25)

- adjacent to a listed building*
- up to 4 storeys high*
- responds to form, mass and detailing in some respects/views*
- traditional materials*
- bland and not innovative but inoffensive?*

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Plate 24. Corner of Wilbraham Road and Whitelow Road



Plate 25. Corner of Wilbraham Road and Whitelow Road

b) Commercial and residential blocks at corner of Beech Road and Acres Road (Plates 26 and 27)

- 2 and 3 storeys
- form and mass of residential block responds to its surroundings
- form of commercial block does not respond to its surroundings
- contemporary designs, albeit not obviously innovative
- little precedent for principal facing material (render) in immediate surroundings



Plate 26. Corner of Beech Road and Acres Road



Plate 27. Corner of Beech Road and Acres Road

c) Linked House extension on Manchester Road (Plate 28)

- 2 storey
- form and design do not respond to its surroundings
- set back from building line
- principal facing material (render) replicates that on existing building
- overtly contemporary and innovative design
- high quality gates in traditional design

d) Retail/leisure (?) and residential on Beech Road (Plate 29)

- 3 storey
- traditional materials
- form, mass and details respond positively to prevailing character of street



Plate 28. Manchester Road

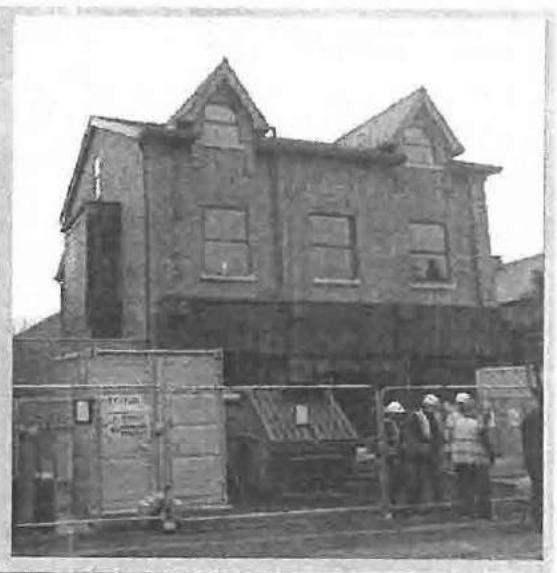


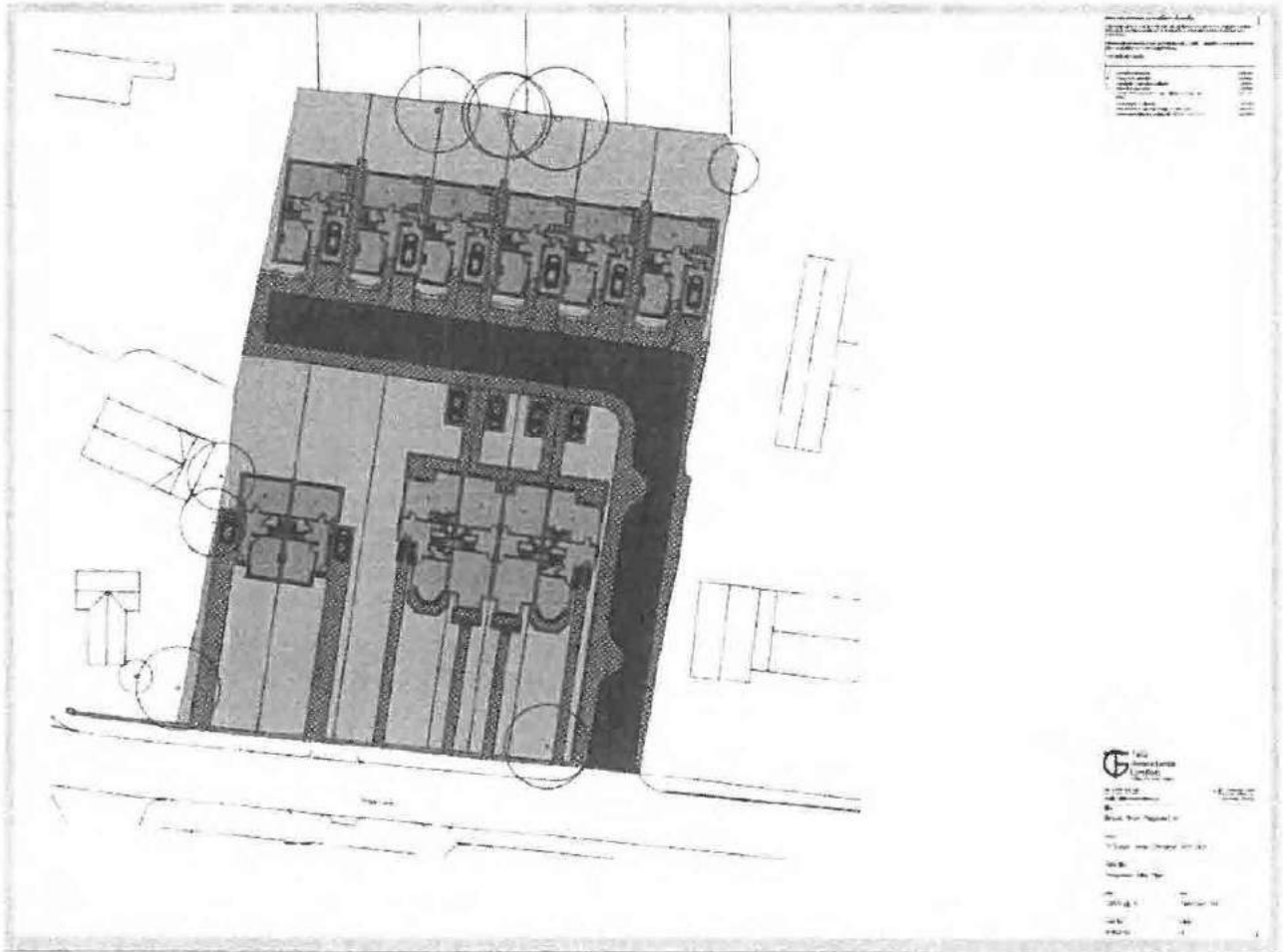
Plate 29. Beech Road

e) Restoration of existing pair of semi-detached villas and erection of 8 new dwellings (detached and semi-detached) William Hunt Gardens, Edge Lane (Plates 8 and 30) approved under application 096370/FO/2011/SI

- sensitive restoration of existing Venetian gothic villa - originally a Masonic Lodge (tall 2 storey with accommodation in roof)
- new buildings are 3 storey but similar height to existing
- exciting combination of contemporary design and traditional features which respond to the character of the historic building
- traditional materials
- stone boundary wall and piers retained (but close-boarded fence is excessively high, suburban and detracts from the overall appearance)



Plate 30. Aerial View of William Hunt Gardens



Plan 3. Site Plan of William Lunt Gardens



Plan 4. Elevations of William Lunt Gardens

7.3 Advice in Respect of The Site

The minutes of the meeting with Manchester City Council in September 2018 record, inter alia, that:

- *...the development of the backland site was acceptable in principle...*
- *...avoid a scenario where there is a "sea of parking"...*
- *...no problem with the extension of the semi-detached properties...*
- *...something needs to be put back into the conservation area...*

7.4 Previous schemes

On the assumption that the demolition of 7-9 Vincent Avenue would be refused, neither the redevelopment scheme (Plan 5) which was proposed at the meeting in September 2018 nor the 2004 scheme (Plan 6) could be approved, as they involve their demolition.

7.5 Recommended Options To Explore

7.5.1 Assuming that 7-9 Vincent Avenue are to be retained, there is unlikely to be any objection on heritage grounds to:

- a) the sensitive restoration and upgrading of the existing apartments
- b) extensions at the rear to provide additional accommodation (as shown elsewhere in the CA in Plate 31), although the existing internal layout and arrangement of windows would make this difficult in practical terms and/or
- c) the conversion of the buildings back into single dwellings

7.5.2 It is understood that there is a reluctance to explore the demolition of 11 and 13 Vincent Avenue, as they are in good structural and decorative condition and provide a good income. However, if 7 and 9 cannot be demolished and 11 and 13 are not demolished then there is no possibility of providing a vehicular access to the site of the lock-up garages which would be acceptable for a redevelopment (without acquiring additional land).

7.5.3 If the character and appearance of the CA is to be preserved or enhanced, the only realistic option to be explored for the redevelopment of the lock-up garages site is the demolition of 11 and 13 with a vehicular access from Vincent Avenue. The restricted width of Vincent Avenue may mitigate in favour of a one-way circulation system through the site, also using the existing access at Oswald Road. A valuation exercise would then be needed to assess the value of the redeveloped site against the loss of income/value of 11 and 13 and the existing lock-ups.

7.5.4 Assuming that 7 and 9 Vincent Avenue are retained and 11 and 13 Vincent Avenue are demolished, the character and appearance of the CA could potentially be achieved with a redevelopment with:

- a) vehicular accesses: i) over the site of No 11 and 13 and ii) using the existing access
- b) retention of all healthy mature trees on site
- c) retention of existing traditional boundaries and enhancement where possible
- d) a supporting Design and Access Statement and a Heritage Statement which: i) demonstrate an understanding of the heritage significance of the CA; ii) provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the heritage significance and
- e) a development designed in such a way as to create an exciting combination of contemporary innovative design, and using traditional materials and features, responding to the character of the existing historic buildings, in a similar manner to those at William Lunt Gardens (see Plate 8 and Plan 4)

7.5.5 The form, mass and layout of the redevelopment which should be explored are:

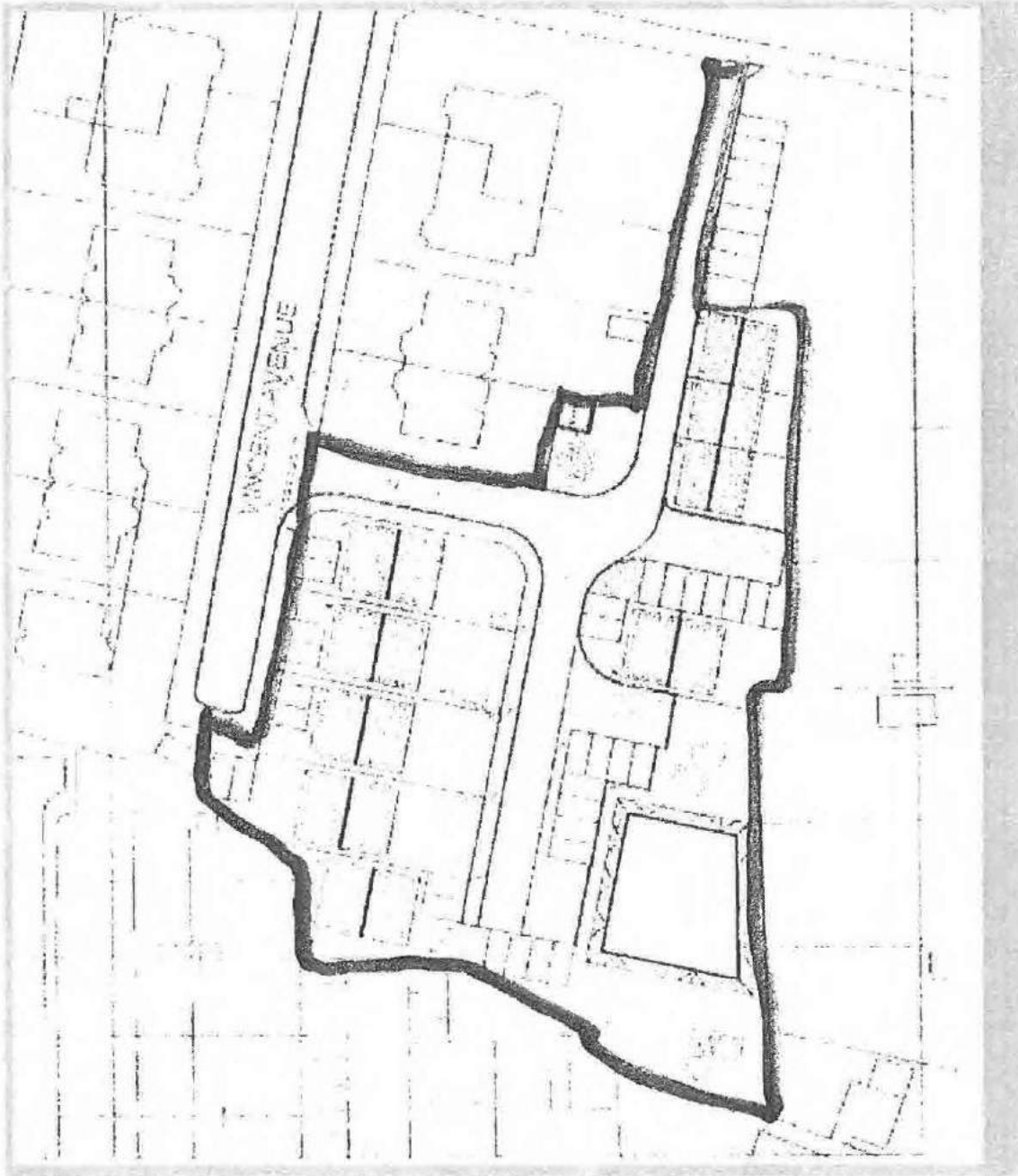
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- a) a new block of apartments with similar height, form, mass and materials as 11 and 13 but sited slightly further W and S and orientated to avoid over-looking on to Shanklin Close with a row of detached and semi-detached houses and/or a short terrace, possibly up to 3 storeys, along the S boundary of the site, or
- b) a new block of apartments with a more N-S axis inside the W boundary, with similar height, but longer than 11 and 13 and with a shorter row of detached, semi-detached or short terrace of houses of, possibly up to 3 storeys along the S boundary of the site.

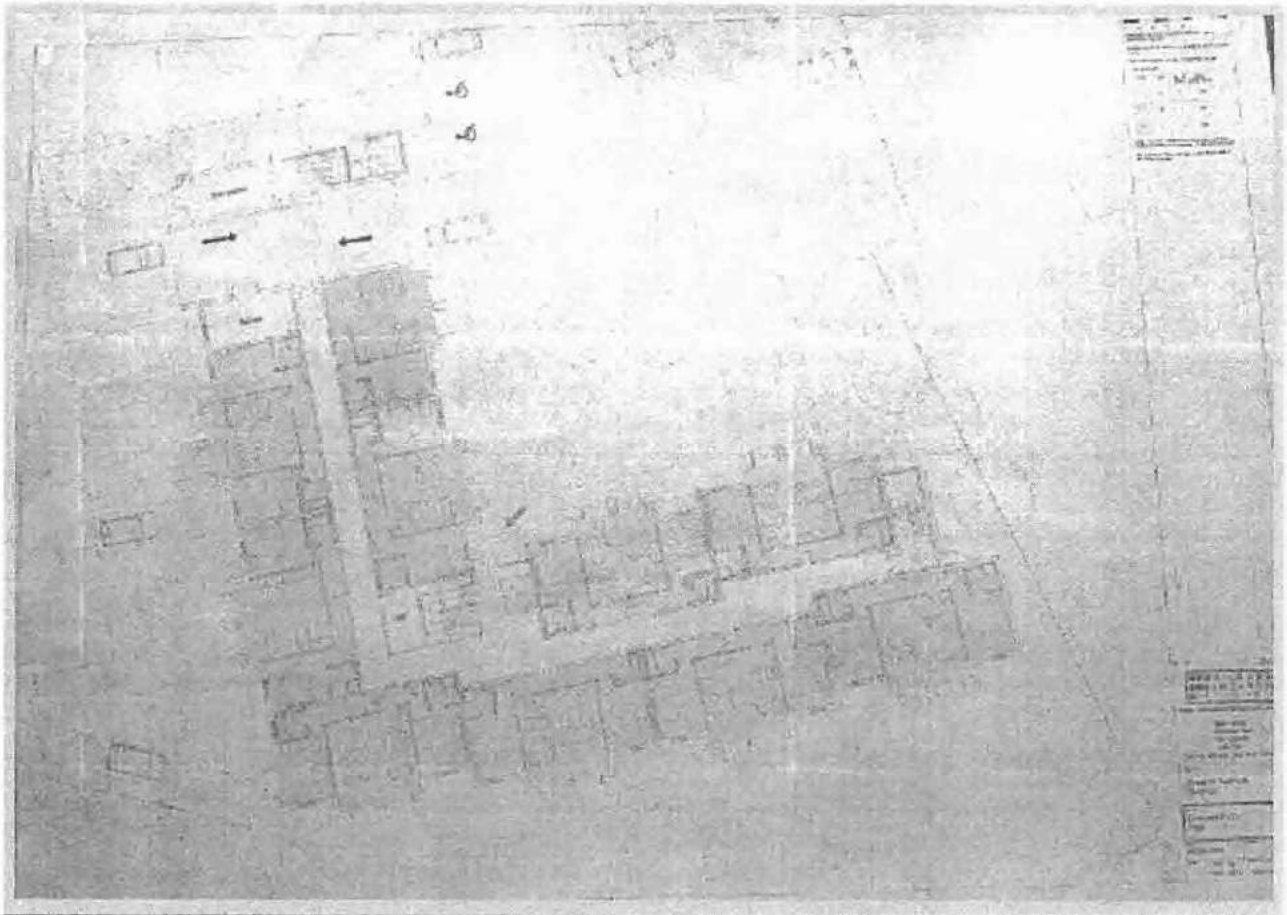
NB. 1) Any development proposal would need to meet all usual planning standards of highway safety and residential amenity and retain all healthy mature trees

2) The general form of the layout at William Lunt Gardens (see Plan 3 and Plate 30) could be used to inform a potential layout for further discussion with Manchester City Council Planning Service.

7.5.6 Given the complex constraints of the site, it is recommended that an architect should prepare a number of further sketch options based on these guidelines and accurate platting of mature trees (and root protection areas) for further consideration.



Plan 5. Redevelopment scheme discussed at meeting in September 2018



Plan 6. 2004 Redevelopment scheme

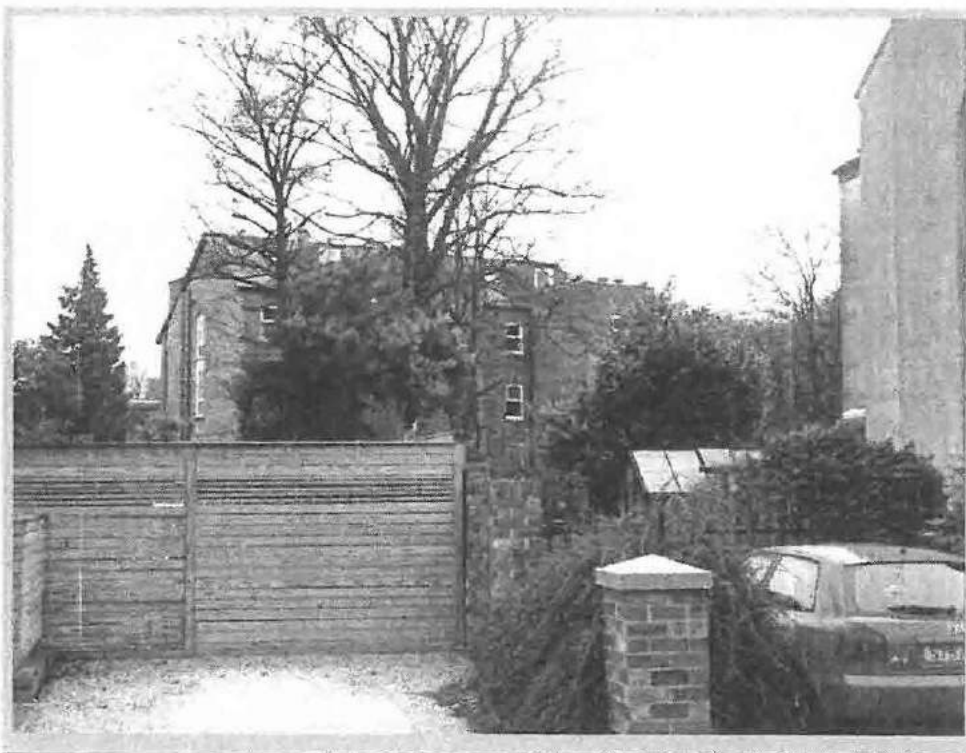


Plate 31. Large extensions at rear of villas in the CA

8. Conclusion

8.1 The site of 7-13 Vincent Avenue is not an easy site to redevelop due to the constraints the conservation area, trees, restricted access and neighbouring properties.

8.2 It is likely to be difficult to secure consent for the demolition of 7 and 9 Vincent Avenue in order to provide an acceptable vehicular access. Their conversion back to two single dwellings would not be a problem. Their extension could be acceptable, although difficult, given the layout of the building.

8.3 It is likely that consent could be secured for the demolition of 11 and 13, as part of a comprehensive and acceptable redevelopment.

8.4 The redevelopment of the site of the lock-up garages is likely to be acceptable in principle without causing harm to the character and appearance of the CA but the demolition of 11 and 13 Vincent Avenue is likely to be required in order to provide access to it.

8.5 Any proposal for the redevelopment of the site of 11 and 13 and the lock-up garages will need to demonstrate that it will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, as discussed above.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Manchester City Council's Assessment of the Character and Appearance of the Wilbraham Road/Edge Conservation Area

Introduction

The junction of Wilbraham Road, a major arterial route within the City of Manchester, and Edge Lane in Chorlton has long been recognised as possessing buildings and spaces of character and quality dating back to the late 19th century. The buildings continue to be complimented by a substantial and mature tree coverage.

Increased development pressure in the late 20th and early 21st century had the potential to destroy the character of the area, thereby contributing to the reduction in the quality of Manchester's suburbs.

The area is located approximately 3 miles south east of the City Centre and is immediately north of the previously designated conservation area of Chorlton Green. They share a common boundary.

Approximately 660 people live in the area in a combination of substantial individual houses, semi-detached villas, terraces and apartments within either converted older properties or purpose-designed contemporary buildings.

There are no dramatic changes in levels throughout the area, although there is a general fall of approximately 3 metres from a high in the north to a low in the south.

Architectural and historic qualities of buildings

Surprisingly, in an area of fine individual and often historic properties, only two buildings are formally listed as for their architectural or historic interest: Lloyd's Hotel on the junction of Wilbraham Road and Manchester Road and St Clements Church on Edge Lane.

Built in the typical Manchester red/orange brick with buff coloured sandstone dressings Lloyd's Hotel is a high two-storey building with a third storey contained within the steeply pitched roof that is covered in blue/black welsh slate. Brick and sandstone corbels form the brackets to the eaves and are emphasised by a course of blue brick at the lower level with the wall junction. Vertical sliding sash windows are evident in all window openings. A single storey bay window on the Manchester Road elevation is linked by a horizontal stone balcony to an adjacent doorway. A brick faced dormer window breaks up the roofline to this elevation.

At the corner of the building a double height curved bay is surmounted by a conical roof, providing an architectural statement at the Wilbraham Road/Manchester Road junction. A double height splayed bay window, with its own roof, characterises the Wilbraham Road elevation.

The building would have had an increased presence in the area by virtue of its tall chimneys, but these structures have been reduced in height and capped.

The bowling club building, located at the rear of the hotel, effectively at right angles to Manchester Road, is also two storeys high, the upper storey projecting beyond the ground floor and supported off four cast iron columns.

The ground floor elevation is a screen wall of glass and timber. An adjacent single storey building, rising from back of pavement on Manchester Road, also in red/orange brick, is covered with a hipped roof with patterned slates.

Clearly built at a time when the adjacent area was being expanded, the hotel and associated bowling club with clubhouse provided recreational facilities for the local residents, helping to fulfil a social role. It was listed grade II in 2005.

The stone built St Clements Church was constructed between 1861 and 1866 to the designs of Pennington and Bridgen, following the poor condition of the old church which was located near Chorlton Green close to the Bowling Green Hotel. The south transept and chapel are by Higginbottom and constructed in 1895. The building was listed grade II in June 1988.

Contribution of key unlisted buildings

Many of the buildings that line the streets within the area are architecturally impressive and most of them can be regarded as making a positive contribution to the conservation area.

It is the relationship of these various buildings to each other, to their sites and to the streets that mostly determine the character of the area, rather than individual buildings of high architectural or historic quality. The fact that only two buildings in the area are formally listed bears out that fact.

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There are four places of worship that contribute to the character of an essentially residential area: the previously mentioned St Clement's Parish Church on Edge Lane, Wilbraham road Unitarian Church, Our Lady and St John Roman Catholic Church and Chorlton Methodist Church.

Wilbraham Road Unitarian Church, located between numbers 548 and 550 is set behind a 1990s residential development. The place of worship appears to be the rear remains of a larger building on the site. It opened in 1901, although it was founded in 1890, and built in Accrington brick.

Our Lady and St John RC Church is located on the St. Clements Road/High Lane junction, on the east side of St. Clements Road and directly opposite St Clements Church. The two buildings have a major urban and architectural presence in the wider area. The red brick and yellow terracotta church was opened in 1927. It has Decorated (14th century) and Perpendicular (15th century) window tracery, does not have a tower, but has an aisleless wide interior. The pews and fittings are reputed to be from St Andrews church in Ramsbottom.

Chorlton Methodist Church on Manchester Road opened in 1873, but needed to be restored following a fire in 1883. A church hall and Sunday school was also added at the rear of the site. The buff coloured sandstone building, with a steeply pitched roof covered in Welsh blue/black slate, was designed by H.J. Paull. It has geometrical tracery to a large east window facing the road and a south-east turret, also close to the road.

The Conservative Club on Wilbraham Road was built in 1892 and its basement in particular seems to have been used for a variety of uses, such as a skittle alley (1897) a rifle range (1904), and a bike park (1900).

The Lauriston Club (former Liberal Club, prior to 1962) at 12 Manchester Road, The Hellenic Centre at 562 Wilbraham Road and the South Manchester Freemasons Hall at 12 Edge Lane all provide facilities for local residents.

Chorlton C of E Primary School located alongside St Clements Church is accessed from Vicars Road. It was built in 1901 and extended upwards in 1970.

William Hulme Grammar School, Day Nursery and Early Years Centre at 643/5 Wilbraham Road are located in a pair of converted semi-detached houses.

The Spread Eagle hotel, on the northern side of the junction of Wilbraham Road and Oswald Road, is in a 1980s conversion of two large semi-detached houses and in a visually prominent location.

Character and relationship of spaces

The spaces within the conservation area are based on the street pattern, so spaces are essentially linear, their width determined by the distance buildings are set back from their road boundaries.

The spaces are characterised by the front gardens to individual properties, sometimes containing mature trees, by the brick or stone boundary walls and their related gateposts, by the pavements, kerbs and highway surfaces.

There is evidence of earlier floor surfaces throughout the area. It is clear that the characteristic pavement detail was comprised of riven surfaced natural stone flags, bonded at right angles to the boundary walls, contained by a 300mm wide stone kerb.

Road surfaces, as seen on St Clements Road, had 3 or 4 courses of either granite or gritstone setts bonded parallel with and next to the kerb, whilst the rest of the carriageway was bonded at right angles, but in the same sett.

As identified in other suburban districts within the city the rear gardens of properties that line streets provide an important amenity facility to the wider area, because they can be viewed from the roads between buildings. They can be regarded as being within the public realm, even though they are privately owned.

Collectively, gardens, both front and rear, provide important spatial characteristics relevant to the conservation area.

Whilst the size and shape of the spaces between buildings vary they are essentially street dominated. There are no consciously-designed contrasting spaces, although the spaces around the larger public buildings, such as the churches, tend to be bigger.

Prevalent materials and local details

Most of the buildings in the area are constructed in Manchester red/orange brick, sometimes in conjunction with buff coloured sandstone dressings. Occasionally blue brick is used to provide detail within the mainly red/orange brick facades.

Timber details are also commonly used for windows, eaves and barge boards, whilst render is employed to create contrasting surfaces, eg. Hastings Avenue. All the 19th century buildings have pitched roofs covered in blue/black Welsh slate.

Local details

Bracketed eaves supporting an overhanging pitched roof covered in blue/black Welsh slate are repeated throughout the area.

Window openings are almost exclusively vertically proportioned, originally with timber vertical sliding sash windows, the frames of which were well set back from the outer face of masonry, creating a modelled façade.

The modelling of the late 19th century buildings was enhanced by projecting bay and oriel windows, corbelling and mouldings around windows. Bays are sometimes single storey high and two storeys in other cases.

In Hastings Avenue some of the houses have two storey bays surmounted by a bracketed and projecting third storey clad in black and white half-timber. This adds to the heavily modelled characteristic.

The use of timber windows and associated detailing not only helps to establish the architectural character of individual buildings, but also contributes to the character of the wider area. Where other replacement materials have been used it has resulted in a loss of the area's established character.

Rooflines are generally punctuated with gables, pikes, dormers and chimneys. Even ridgelines were occasionally ornamented with crested ridge tiles and finials, although some of these appear to have been removed.

Contribution of green spaces

As identified earlier, the spatial characteristics of the area are determined by the street pattern. The trees and garden hedges to the front of properties make a significant contribution to the character of the street 'corridor'.

The trees planted within the private gardens make an important contribution to the public realm, to which can be added the street trees planted within pavements, as in Wilbraham Road and Hastings Avenue.

Spatially, the area behind street fronting properties is often ignored, but this is often a space of great significance, particularly where large properties in large gardens back onto each other. The largest such space in the area is that of the rear gardens to houses facing Wilbraham Road and Edge Lane.

These gardens and the trees within them are in the public realm by virtue of the fact that they can be viewed from the adjacent streets. This space, and other extensive rear gardens to properties throughout the area are important elements in contributing to the character of the conservation area.

The setting of the conservation area

The conservation area is surrounded by suburban development, mostly carried out in the 20th century; consequently there is no relationship with surrounding countryside.

Wilbraham Road, provides the most public experience of the conservation area, with views into the area on both sides. The same road also provides the location for one of the area's most important landmark buildings, Lloyds and Platt Hotel.

As a consequence of its location at the junction of two important roads in the area and because of its angled geometry in relation to the roads, the building can be viewed from long distances in both directions along Wilbraham Road and from both Manchester Road and Oswald Road.

Views into the designated area along the length of Wilbraham Road are significant, but views both into and out of the area at its junction with Edge Lane are particularly important. The relationship of this area to Chorlton Green is important and the views in both directions along St. Clements Road are of considerable significance.

Negative factors

The removal of original boundary walls, gateposts and their replacement with weakly detailed fencing or railings generally throughout the area is a significant loss to the character of the area.

The replacement of original timber windows with flat faced alternatives, especially in older buildings, has resulted in a loss to the character of both the building in question and to the wider area. Similarly, the loss of original external floor surfaces and their replacement with bland alternatives is a negative factor in the area.

A particularly bland large apartment building at the junction of High Lane and Whitelaw Road pays little regard to the geometry of the adjacent road.

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Constructed in the early 1990s the development's low roof pitch, long horizontal ridgelines, and lack of modelling on the elevations contribute to its inappropriate character.

Little consideration has been given to the boundary treatment: a three plank, horizontal stained timber fence is not characteristic of this suburban area. The architectural character and urban form of the surrounding area has not been considered in designing this development. It is intrusive and significantly damages the character of the area.

Neutral areas

A pair of 20th century semi-detached properties and an adjacent detached house of similar design on York Road are bland in comparison with the late Victorian buildings that provide the most architectural interest in the area.

Similarly almost all of the late 20th century/early 21st century developments for apartment buildings lack the vitality of earlier designs and fail to exhibit any creative contemporary design qualities. In that regard such properties may be regarded as having a neutral impact in the conservation area.

Conclusion

Analysis of the characteristics should enable new developments, extensions and alterations to be designed so as to complement, or at least maintain, the character of the area.

Generally, demolition of existing buildings and boundary walls should not be considered unless it can be clearly shown that new proposals on such sites will maintain or enhance the character of the area.

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