Wigan Council

Wigan Pier Quarter

Conservation Area Management Plan

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Contents

1. Introduction 2
2 Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area SWOT Analysis 3
3 Management Issues and Actions 4
4 Guidance for Development and Planning Decisions within the Conservation Area 5
5 Appendix A 8

1. Introduction

1.1 The primary purposes of this Management Plan is to set out how the Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area can be preserved and enhanced. It should be read alongside the Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area Appraisal which describes the historic development of the conservation area and assesses its current condition in relation to character, open spaces, key views, architecture and townscape, and concludes by identifying issues and opportunities for enhancement.

1.2 This Management Plan aims to:

- Encourage high quality development that is sympathetic to and enhances the conservation area.
- Raise awareness of the need for owners to maintain their properties to avoid deterioration and harm to the conservation area.
- Inform Council strategies and activities to ensure that where possible they prioritise the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.
- Promote awareness of the opportunities to enhance the conservation and harness the positive benefits of proactive conservation management.
- Provide a quick reference guide for applicants and planning officers to the main considerations affecting development in the conservation area.

1.3 To achieve these aims the Management Plan is divided into three sections, the first lays out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the conservation area, displayed as a simple table. The second section lays out management issues derived from those identified in the appraisal and sets out actions to deal with those issues. The third section is a 'Guidance for Development and Planning Decisions within the Conservation Area' table which connects general conservation area considerations with specific sites, types and details relevant to the Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area.

1.4 These three sections when read together with the appraisal should allow for the better management of Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area and result in better protection of it so it can continue to be enjoyed by current and future residents and users of the borough.

2 Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area SWOT Analysis

2.1 The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats summarise the analysis of the Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area in the Conservation Area Appraisal and provide the basis for the actions proposed in this Management Plan.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
• Small conservation area with notable surviving fabric • Attractive industrial architecture including vernacular and Edwardian style • Leeds – Liverpool Canal attractive feature • Use of traditional materials • Large scale buildings providing landmark features • Collection of large-scale industrial buildings	• Loss of character through erosion of fabric and loss of historic buildings • Poor condition of Eckersleys' Mills complex • Modern development to north of the conservation area • Road layout segregates the area and heavy traffic dominates streetscape • Vacant sites detract from quality of the environment • Loss of historic floorscape erodes historic fabric
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Redevelopment of Wigan Pier buildings can be catalyst for regeneration to build upon • Wigan Pier brand is well known • Vacant sites provide opportunities for development or active use • Proposals for the redevelopment/ refurbishment of Eckersleys' Mills given the change in ownershp • To promote understanding and appreciation of historic environment through implementing the Historic Environment Strategy in partnership with stakeholders and community	• Further loss of fabric due to neglect and viability • Lack of funding for major projects • Vacant sites not coming forward

3 Management Issues and Actions

1. Issue: Need to encourage high quality development that is sympathetic to the conservation area and steer away from poor quality development

Action a: To have an appropriate level of conservation and design policy and guidance in place to inform planning and development decisions.

Planning decisions have to be made in accordance with the council's published 'development plan' unless there is a very good reason not to do so. The Wigan Borough development plan comprises the Local Plan Core Strategy and saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), the most relevant policies to conservation being Core Strategy Policy CP11 and saved UDP Policy EV4a. Supplementary planning documents elaborate upon adopted policies and are also taken into account in decision making, of particular relevance in the Wigan Pier Conservation Area is the Residential Design Guide. The guidance in this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, in particular the section 'Guidance for Development and Planning Decisions within the Conservation Area' supplements other policy documents as an adopted Supplementary Planning Document. It offers targeted guidance specific to the historic environment and to the Wigan Pier Quarter, the application of which will benefit the conservation of area.

2. Issue: Loss of historic fabric through underinvestment and neglect.

Action b: where appropriate and cost effective, the Council will use statutory powers of enforcement to address and halt decline.

The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides Local Planning Authorities with the power to serve Urgent Works Notices, Repairs Notices and Section 215 Notices, all aimed at halting decline and improving amenity. There are financial risks associated with use of these powers, and consideration has to be given to this risk to the Local Authority.

3. Issue: Large amount of car parking.

Action c: Carefully consider need for and design of any new car parks associated with new development in the area. Continue to promote active travel as a means to reducing non-essential car use.

The conservation area has significant areas of surface car parking that serve residential and commercial uses. Car parking often detracts from the quality of the environment and also contributes to a sense of severance across key routes in the area. Proposals that ease traffic flow, relieve congestion and promote sustainable modes will generally be supported. Opportunities to release land for more productive uses this will be supported in principle. Any proposals for new car parking to serve developments in the area will be assessed carefully and should consider location (e.g., avoid prime frontages), format (e.g.. surface, under-croft or quality multi-storey car parks), and structural landscape to provide screening and reduce expanses or hard-standing.

4 Guidance for Development and Planning Decisions within the Conservation Area

Theme	General Considerations	Specific to Wigan Pier Quarter Conservation Area
New development within the conservation area or which affect its setting	Must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area	There are various opportunities for new development across the Pier Quarter, including but not exclusively: • **Eckersleys Mills** – proposals should relate in form, size and scale to the mills and should not dominate or compete with the existing building stock. • **Former Depot** – any proposals should respect the existing buildings on site and the canalside location, paying attention to the contribution of the site as space between buildings and the canal • **Pottery Road / Former Ambulance Station** – Ambulance station and petrol station is a large gateway site and there is an opportunity for a good quality that relates well to the conservation area.
	Respect existing architectural character	Large scale buildings of up to 5 storeys dominate with some embellishment in terms of detailing and materials, with smaller buildings punctuating
	Protect or enhance key views	Need to protect and where possible enhance the key views identified in the appraisal. Chimneys form an important feature in many key views of Wigan Pier CA and should be protected.
	Should not dominate historic buildings through inappropriate scale and massing	Development should pay particular attention to listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit
	Should reflect existing materials	Dominant materials are red brick, terracotta, natural slate and stone, with timber windows. New materials should relate to existing materials Where traditional materials are not proposed, modern alternatives should relate well to existing dominant materials in the area).
	Utilise under used sites and buildings to reduce vacancy,	Re-use of undeveloped sites and buildings (most notably along Pottery Road) will be encouraged where

	enhance vitality and reduce deterioration of historic fabric	proposals add value and activity to the conservation area
Demolition	Presumption against demolition of historic buildings	Most demolition within conservation areas requires planning consent, and demolition of historic buildings will be resisted in favour of schemes and proposals that refurbish historic buildings. It is acknowledged that there are occasions where demolition is required to facilitate wider refurbishment of historic buildings, and full justification will be required in these instances. Where buildings make a negative contribution to the character of the conservation area, their demolition may be supported provided a high quality development is secured. Examples include Swan Meadow Industrial Estate and modern buildings on Pottery Road.
Trees and Landscaping	Opportunities for planting or replanting should use new species	There is a limited amount of greenery within the conservation area, but there is scope for enhancement. New developments should carefully consider landscape as a holistic part of the scheme.
Streetscape and public realm	Street light columns and other street furniture should be of consistent design and painted in a dark colour where possible	Ensure that any new furniture is consistent with existing furniture.
	Double yellow lines where necessary should be painted using narrow lines and be of a primrose or deep cream colour	Standard yellow lines in conservation areas can impact in a negative way upon character
	Road signs should be of minimum size and number allowable to prevent clutter	Signage is at a minimum across the area and should be kept so, utilising existing signage for any new signs that may be required.
	Any new highways features such as speed control measures, railings, widening of footpaths, new signs and lines are justified and of an appropriate, sympathetic design which takes account of the sensitive nature of the area	To ensure that the design of highway schemes is sympathetic to the character of the conservation area and takes account of the sensitive nature of the area.

	Public realm improvements such as paving, setts and general public realm should be of high quality and designed to be sympathetic to the historic character of the area.	Where possible improvements should utilise traditional materials.

5 Appendix A

5.1 **Article 4 Directions**: - An article 4 direction is a direction under article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order which enables the Secretary of State or the local planning authority to withdraw specified permitted development rights across a defined area. This can remove the right of homeowners to change things such as windows/doors etc… that would not normally need planning permission.

5.2 **Enforcement Powers**: - The Council, as a Local Planning Authority has a number of statutory powers that it can use to ensure the historic environment, including Conservation Areas are protected. Although the Council does have these powers we will always, in the first instance, attempt to work with the owner of the property to come to a solution on an informal basis without resorting to these statutory powers.

5.3 A summary of the powers is below:

Section 215 Notices

5.4 If it appears to the local planning authority that the amenity of part of their area, or of an adjoining area, is adversely affected by the condition of land in their area, they may serve on the owner and occupier of the land a Notice under section 215, Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5.5 This notice will explain what the issues are and the steps that need to be taken to resolve the issues. It will also set out a timeframe of no less than 28 days for the steps to be taken

5.6 In this context 'land' also covers buildings on that land and 'amenity' means everything from how the building looks to community and safety issues that the land is causing or contributing to. The scope of works that can be required in section 215 Notices is wide and includes planting, clearance, tidying, enclosure, demolition, rebuilding, external repairs and repainting.

5.7 If the owner does not carry out the works themselves, the local authority can and recover costs from the owner. Non - compliance with a Section 215 notice is a criminal offence and can result in a fine.

Urgent Works Notices

5.8 The power to execute urgent works to preserve unoccupied listed buildings may be exercised by any local authority under section 54(1) of the Listed Buildings Act 1990. 5.9 An urgent works notice may be served where works are urgently necessary for the preservation of a listed building and should generally be restricted to urgent repairs to keep a building wind and weather-proof and safe from collapse, or action to prevent vandalism or theft. The steps taken should be consistent with achieving this objective.

5.10 The owner will given a minimum of seven days written notice of the local authority's intention to carry out the works and the notice must describe the proposed works.

5.11 If the owner does not carry out the works themselves, the local authority can and recover costs from the owner. Such cost may include the continuing expense of providing temporary support or shelter of the building. Repair Notices

5.12 Section 47 of the Listed Buildings Act 1990 provides that an appropriate authority or the Secretary of State may compulsorily acquire a listed building in need of repair if it appears that reasonable steps are not being taken for its proper preservation. This is most often the case where there has been protracted failure of the owner to address the building at risk.

5.13 Under section 47, there is a two-stage process: (i) service of a Repairs Notice; and (ii) service of a Notice of compulsory acquisition on every owner, lessee and occupier if, after the expiry of two months it appears to the appropriate authority that reasonable steps are not being taken for properly preserving the building.

5.14 The scope of a repairs notice is broad and depends entirely on the context and situation of each building and site. The repairs notice is often seen as the first step of a Compulsory Purchase route. Compulsory Purchase Orders

5.15 This is the ultimate power of the Local Authority and will allow for the acquisition of a site if previous efforts to encourage the owner to act to preserve its historic importance have failed.

5.16 Owners will usually be compensated at open market value. However, there are some differences in the case of a listed building in disrepair.

5.17 The local authority may include within the Compulsory Purchase Order application a direction for minimum compensation if it considers that the owner has deliberately allowed the building to fall into disrepair in order to justify its demolition and secure permission for redevelopment of the site.