

BROMBOROUGH VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

PART 1 – CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Prepared for Wirral Council by Donald Insall Associates Ltd, 2007 – Wirral Council 2009

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PREFACE

Background to the Study

This report has been prepared by Donald Insall Associates Ltd on behalf of Wirral Council. Its purpose is to clarify the designation of the Conservation Area, which will protect and enhance the character of the historic core of Bromborough Village.

Scope and Structure of the Study

The scope of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is based on the guidelines published by English Heritage ('Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' and 'Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas', both dated February 2006) and represents a factual and objective analysis. In accordance with the guidelines, the following framework has been used as the basis for this analysis:-

- Location and population
- Origins and development of the settlement
- Prevailing or former uses and their influence on plan form or building type
- Archaeological significance
- Architectural and historic qualities of buildings
- Contribution made by key unlisted buildings
- Character and relationship of spaces
- Prevalent and traditional building materials
- Local details
- Contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, etc
- Setting of the Conservation Area and its relationship with the surrounding landscape
- Extent of loss, intrusion or damage
- Existence of any neutral areas

The document has been structured to encompass these areas of study and concludes with recommendations for the Conservation Area boundary and other matters such as provision of Article 4 Directions.

Existing Designations, Legal Framework for Conservation Areas and the Powers of the Local Authority

Since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act local authorities have been empowered to designate as Conservation Areas those areas within their districts which were considered 'special'. The subsequent Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 consolidated those powers and defined Conservation Areas as:-

"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Such areas are diverse. They may be large or small; residential or commercial; civic or industrial; old or relatively modern. They may represent social ideals or civic pride. They may be specifically designed or speculatively produced; modest or grand. They may contain Listed

Buildings of architectural or historic interest or may simply have local historic association. However, common to all will be an identifiable environmental quality which should be protected from unsympathetic redevelopment or alteration.

Wirral Council has declared 25 Conservation Areas throughout the Borough reflecting the variety of building styles and environments exhibited within its borders.

The content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is clarified by national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment and is supported by more recent Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), which identifies as a key objective the need to ensure active management of the regions environmental and cultural assets.

The principles of these documents are further supported by Wirral Council's local Heritage Conservation policies contained within its Unitary Development Plan.

This legislation and policy framework enables the authority to exercise greater control over development within Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, this may be supplemented by the use of 'Article 4 Directions' to remove permitted development rights. In this way, minor changes, such as window replacement or loft conversions, which may be cumulatively detrimental, can be controlled.

National policy stipulates that local authorities have a duty to review, from time to time, their regions to ensure that places of special architectural or historic interest are being protected. The boundaries of existing Conservation Areas may be revised, new areas may be designated and those areas which have been eroded to the extent that their special character has been lost may be de-designated.

Whilst the Council recognises that, for Conservation Areas to remain 'live' and responsive to a changing society, changes must and will occur, it nevertheless undertakes to ensure that all changes make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its Conservation Areas and do not result in any serious loss of character or features.

Planning legislation supports the authority in this by increasing its control over development. It does this in the following ways:

- Buildings and structures may not be demolished without formal consent from the Council (Conservation Area Consent).
- Trees are protected and all work to them requires consent from the Council.
- New development is expected to reflect the quality of design and construction of the surrounding area and should make a positive contribution to the area's character.
- Local planning authorities may, if necessary, exercise even greater control by removing the basic permitted development rights of householders.
- Under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of the area when formulating decisions on planning applications.

The first step to protecting the inherent qualities of a Conservation Area is having a thorough understanding of its character and Planning Policy Guidance PPG15 advises that "the definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it".

This should then underpin local policies for the areas protection. Such a definition requires a thorough appraisal of the area to assess the contribution of each element (e.g. buildings, boundaries, trees, surfaces, etc.) to the areas overall character. PPG15 notes that "the more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded; the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions".

Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements which give an area its character, it is not intended as a detailed evaluation of each building and feature. Therefore any buildings, features and details may still have importance even though not specifically referred to in the document and any omissions do not indicate lack of merit or interest.

In undertaking this conservation area appraisal, age has been estimated on the basis of visual inspections from public areas only, map evidence (c1755 Mainwaring Estate Map, 1840 Tithe map, OS maps from 1876, 1899, 1911, 1936 and the present) and the 2002 publication by Stephen J Roberts, *A History of Wirral*.

Many buildings have been altered considerably over time and would require detailed study to fully interpret. The dates provided in the gazetteer, unless otherwise stated, are approximate and relate to the original phase of construction or if that cannot be determined the most prominent parts. Unless clear documentary evidence is referred to, the periods ascribed to buildings should not be regarded as definitive. Where the original period of construction has been estimated, fabric from earlier periods may exist. This is particularly true of vernacular buildings in ancient settlements where building facades can have been successively remodelled and roofs changed, for example from thatch to slate. Date stones cannot always be relied upon as they could have been incorporated into substantial rebuilding or mark an important event such as a marriage or change of ownership.

- 1.1.4 Bromborough is a fairly densely populated suburban settlement, which has expanded in all directions from its historic centre. It is one of a number of similar settlements lying alongside the route of the A41, running from Birkenhead to Eastham in the south and on to Chester and beyond. Towns and villages along the eastern coast of the peninsula have extended and coalesced as a result of urban development and expansion of the commuter belt.
- 1.1.5 The residential and commercial areas surrounding the Bromborough Village Conservation Area are laid out in a variety of plan forms suggesting planned suburbs: some have a series of crescent-shaped roads, some lie in a triangular formation and others are set out in a grid. However, none of the layouts has a strong north-south or east-west orientation. In contrast to these fairly densely packed areas, the conservation area in the centre has a good proportion of open space, particularly around the church, and the dwellings are set in more generous plots.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The Wirral peninsula is a low lying undulating plain, interspersed with wooded sandstone ridges, the highest point at Poll Hill in Heswall being a little over 100m above sea level. The peninsula is formed of Keuper and Bunter sandstones and marls belonging to the Triassic formation, with a small area of Carboniferous sandstone near Neston. The sandstones are generally hidden under superficial glacial deposits of boulder clay.
- 1.2.2 The settlement of Bromborough lies within a gently undulating landscape, varying between approximately 27m and 32m above sea level. To the west is a deep cutting for the Chester to Liverpool railway line, beyond which lies the pastoral landscape of central Wirral. Bromborough, as a settlement which encloses the village, is bounded to the north and south by other suburban settlements and to the east by the Wirral Business Park. Views into and from the conservation area in the centre are therefore largely obscured by buildings.

1.3 GENERAL USAGE

- 1.3.1 The boundary of the conservation area is approximately 970m (0.6 miles) long, within which lies a mix of residential, commercial and public buildings. There are around a dozen residential properties, which are predominantly modest detached and semi-detached cottages with the exception of Church House, Church Cottage and the Master's House. There is a mix of commercial premises, including banks, shops, restaurants and offices. The area includes the church of St Barnabas and associated buildings such as the Village Centre (formerly the school and master's house) and two community halls.

1.4 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY AND STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

- 1.4.1 Bromborough Village was designated as a conservation area in July 1982 and maintains its original boundary. The conservation area includes the churchyard and much of the historic core of the village.

- 1.4.2 To the north the boundary runs from the west along the line of the wall and mature hedgerow separating the Rectory garden from the churchyard, continuing eastwards along the southern edge of the bowling green then along the south side of a vehicular access point between No 8 (Christopher Hall's Barber Shop) and Nos 12-16 (Valatech Computers).



The building housing Valatech Computers (Nos 12-16 Bromborough Village Road) marks the north-eastern corner of the conservation area, the boundary running immediately to the left of the Weaving Builders Services sign

- 1.4.3 The eastern boundary follows Bromborough Village Road southwards from Nos 12-16 to its junction with The Rake (at No 58). However, Nos 36-46, a group of 20th-century buildings housing Bromborough Paint and Building Supplies, are excluded from the conservation area.



The boundary runs along the edge of the car park adjacent to No 52 Bromborough Village Road (Village Road Laundrette, left), behind Nos 36-46 (centre, excluded from the conservation area) and re-emerges along the pathway adjacent to Nos 32-34 (Bhulu Tandoori, right)

- 1.4.4 The southern boundary extends westwards along The Rake to just beyond its junction with Allport Lane, and then runs northwards for a short distance along the plot boundary of No 22 The Rake, where it turns eastwards and follows the plot boundaries of Nos 20 to No 2 The Rake before joining the westernmost boundary of the churchyard.

1.4.5 There are six listed buildings and structures within the conservation area:

54/56/56a Bromborough Village Road (west side)	Grade II
Church of St Barnabas	Grade II*
Cross, St Barnabas Church grounds	Grade II
Pear Tree Cottage, 6 The Rake (north side)	Grade II
School and Master's House, Church Lane	Grade II
Sundial, St Barnabas Church grounds	Grade II

The cross is also a Scheduled Monument (No 1111138).

A number of trees within the curtilage of the church are protected by individual Tree Preservation Orders in addition to the protection afforded by their being within a conservation area.

1.4.6 In the immediate vicinity of the conservation area are the 13th-century Market Cross near Allport Lane (Grade II*), the 19th-century milestone on Bromborough Village Road (Grade II) and Stanhope House, Mark Rake (listed Grade II along with the wall to its grounds).

2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 EARLY HISTORY AND ORIGINS OF SURROUNDING AREA

Prehistoric

- 2.1.1 Although there is evidence of human occupation in Wirral since Mesolithic times, particularly in the north, the earliest evidence of human activity at Bromborough comes much later in the form of a Neolithic leaf-shaped flint arrow head, discovered near what is now 9 Croft Lane (outside the conservation area boundary).

Pre Norman Conquest

- 2.1.2 The name Bromborough is Anglo-Saxon in origin, meaning ‘Bruna’s fortified place’ (from the Anglo-Saxon personal name and *burh*). Whether it was an entirely new settlement or the continuation of an earlier settlement is unclear. However, a Domitian coin found in 1900 and a Vespasian Coin found in 1936 both might suggest the area was occupied in the 1st century AD by the Romans. The circular form of the original Bromborough churchyard also indicates the area was settled before the Anglo-Saxons arrived¹.
- 2.1.3 There is evidence to suggest the Wirral was colonised by the exiled Norse people after they fled Dublin in AD902². Indeed, “there are 600 possible examples of Norse names in Wirral – townships, small and lost settlements, field and road names.”³ The Rake and Mark Rake derive their names from *rak* (‘lane’) and Wood Clints and The Clints are derivations of *klint* (‘projecting rock’). It may be however that these nomenclatures were not assigned by the Viking settlers, but through the adoption of Norse words by successor Anglo-Saxon generations to describe previously unknown concepts⁴. Although there was Norse influence locally, Bromborough was outside the initial Norse settlement area.
- 2.1.4 Further evidence of the Norse occupation of Bromborough and other settlements such as Hilbre, West Kirby and Wallasey is in the discovery of heads and shafts of stone crosses, intricately carved and decorated by the settlers as symbols of their prosperity. During the demolition of the church at Bromborough in 1863, fragments of such a cross were found incorporated into the building. Recently reassembled, the cross is now a Scheduled Monument (No 1111138) and is a typical West Cheshire design with some Norse influence. It sits near the south door of the present church in a prominent location.

¹ Roberts, Stephen J (2002) *A History of Wirral* [Phillimore & Co Ltd, Chichester], p51

² Ibid, p55

³ Ibid, p56

⁴ Ibid, pp56-7

- 2.1.5 Tradition has suggested that Ethelfleda (or Aethelflaed), the Countess of Mercia and daughter of Alfred the Great, founded a monastery at Bromborough (“Brimesburgh” or “Bremesburh”) in about 912AD although this was demolished prior to the Norman Conquest⁵. However, recent place name research suggests that Bromesberrow or Bromesberrow (both in North Gloucestershire) are more likely to have been the site.
- 2.1.6 The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* of 937 included verses on the “Battle of Brunanburh”, recounting an invasion of England by the Scots and the Danes of Ireland, which ended in their slaughter by Athelstan and his brother Edmund. The exact location of Brunanburh is not known and has been subject to much academic debate; one argument is that it is present-day Bromborough.
- 2.1.7 The early plan form of Bromborough Village settlement is difficult to determine but it is likely to have centred around the Saxon church or monastery (to the north east of the present church). Nearby land would have been cultivated for crops and the stream may have been managed to provide fish ponds.

Medieval

- 2.1.8 The most significant find from the medieval period is a 14th-century coin found in 1958 near the site of the chancel of the Saxon church (SMR Ref 3482-028). Although Bromborough Village is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, but is believed to have been the centre of “Estham” Manor. Indeed, Bromborough had a priest but there was no church in Eastham in 1086 so it seems Eastham manor lay within Bromborough parish.
- 2.1.9 Although Bromborough was the centre of a large medieval parish with a number of roads converging on it, its present historic core belies its status. The settlement grew up around the church in a roughly rectangular form, but with the area to the west remaining as meadow land. The surrounding landscape was given over to agriculture and grazing for animals.
- 2.1.10 By 1153 Eastham and Bromborough had become separate manors; at his death in 1153, Ranulph de Gernon, Earl of Chester admitted that he had done great harm to the Abbey and offered in compensation the ‘valuable manors of Eastham and Bromborough’.⁶ There is field evidence of the existence of a moated monastic grange and court to the north east, at Bromborough Pool. The first was burnt down in 1284, according to an early chronicle the “*Annales Cestriensis*” and the second one was built on the same rather remote spot at the northern end of the township.

⁵ From: ‘Brockhampton - Bromeholme’, *A Topographical Dictionary of England* (1848), pp. 392-395. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=50833>. Date accessed: 25 January 2008.

⁶ From: ‘Houses of Benedictine monks: The abbey of Chester’, *A History of the County of Chester: Volume 3* (1980), pp. 132-146. URL: [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39975&strquery=Mainwaring Bromborough](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39975&strquery=Mainwaring+Bromborough). Date accessed: 25 January 2008.

- 2.1.11 Edward I is known to have visited Bromborough on at least two occasions, in 1277 and 1283, as part of a tour of the region to muster support for his Welsh campaigns. In February 1278, Edward I granted by Royal Charter the right of the Abbey of Chester to hold in Bromborough a weekly market and annual three-day fair in June. This was an important factor in improving the economic prosperity of the settlement and was further added to by the Abbot bringing 140 acres of waste ground in Irby, Greasby, Bromborough and Plymyard under the plough by the 1290s.
- 2.1.12 Economic prosperity and subsequent expansion of the settlement seems to have continued until the arrival of the Black Death in 1349, which left between 20% and 50% of the population dead. By this time, the Abbey of Chester had become increasingly powerful and owned many manors, including lands and rents in Bromborough, Bebington, Eastham, and the monastic grange of Plymyard within Eastham township.
- 2.1.13 The Hundred of Wirral had been a Royal Forest since c1120 but on 20 July 1376 Edward III granted a Charter of Disafforestation after much petitioning by the people, although this did not immediately halt the tradition of extortion enjoyed by gentry families such as the Stanleys. It did mean however that the villagers could once again use timber for buildings and this may have marked a period of rebuilding and expansion over subsequent decades.

Post medieval

- 2.1.14 The years 1509 to 1547 were marked by a huge upheaval in the English way of life under Henry VIII, who changed the country's religion and introduced new forms of local and national government. The impact of these reforms was widely felt, particularly in settlements that had grown up around monasteries and Abbeys. After the dissolution of Wirral's monasteries in the 1530s, the government confiscated all monastic lands and properties and sold them on to secular landlords. The manor of Bromborough was thus owned by one John Gryce until December 1548, when he assigned his rights to Sir Rowland Stanley of Hooton⁷, a member of a powerful gentry family.
- 2.1.15 During the 16th and 17th centuries it seems the population remained fairly constant with parish records recording 63 households in 1563 and 54 in 1664.
- 2.1.16 The Manor House was built some time before 1638 at the junction of Allport Lane and The Rake (its datestone of 1676 probably marks a rebuilding)⁸. On the opposite side of Allport Lane stood The Royal Oak, reputedly one of Wirral's oldest public houses dating back to the time of Charles I (although tithe map evidence does not support this).

⁷ Roberts, op cit, p93

⁸ It can be seen in photographs from 1925 but was demolished and replaced by shops in 1929.

- 2.1.17 In 1638 the new Bromborough Hall was erected and the former Manor House may have become Manor House Farm. The Hall eventually came into the hands of the Mainwaring family (later Lords of Bromborough). The Hall had extensive grounds, with a long boundary wall running along the eastern side of what is now Bromborough Village Road.
- 2.1.18 The earliest extant house (Nos 54/56/56a Bromborough Village Road – Tellett’s Farm) within the conservation area boundary dates from the late 17th century; archaeological investigation could possibly determine whether this and later houses were built on the sites of medieval dwellings.
- 2.1.19 Throughout the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries Bromborough remained a rural settlement. Landowners and prosperous tenant farmers lived comparatively comfortable lives, and housed most of the remaining population as workers or servants, either within their own household or in separate small cottages. The ‘lower classes’ received little pay, but were protected from destitution by living as part of their masters’ extended families⁹. Apart from agriculture, seafaring was an important part of the local economy.
- 2.1.20 During the 18th century the church building was in decay. The parish seems to have been served for periods by clergy who visited monthly either Bebington or Eastham. The parish register during the 17th and 18th centuries is incomplete and there are periods for which there are no records at all; the records that do exist are somewhat confused. However, the population seems to have grown slightly from 68 households in 1720 to 80 in 1778. The effects of the Inclosure Acts of 1750-1860 are shown on an estate map of c1755, where the lands surrounding the settlement began to be divided into rectangular fields. Within the conservation area, smaller enclosures held a number of cottages and gardens. The boundaries of these enclosures remained substantially the same into the mid-19th century, although within the Bromborough Hall estate, crofts, ancillary buildings and field boundaries were removed to provide pleasure gardens, a park, a kitchen garden and large areas of cow pasture.
- 2.1.21 By 1801 the settlement had grown to 404 households, rising to 538 by 1851. The greatest period of expansion however came during the 19th century and by 1901 2,070 households were recorded in the census.

2.2 19TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

- 2.2.1 Between 1801 and 1851, the settlement had grown from 404 to 538 households. The Tithe Map of 1840 shows 359 apportionments within Bromborough parish, 78% of which were held by the Reverend James Mainwaring (of Bromborough Hall). Mrs Kitty Backhouse and Lady Elizabeth Murray jointly owned a little under 10% and the remainder was divided between 14 other people, including Sir Thomas Stanley Massey Stanley.

⁹ Roberts, op cit, p119

- 2.2.2 By 1822, the village had a hotel, known as Mainwaring Arms. Its name was changed in 1850 to Sportsman's Arms and in 1896 it became the Bromborough Hotel (now known simply as The Bromborough).
- 2.2.3 The Saxon Church was demolished in 1828/9. Its successor proved too small for the increasing population and the present church of St Barnabas was built in 1862-4 on a site south-west of the Saxon church site. The associated rectory built in 1856 was demolished in 1934, and a replacement built in the 1936.
- 2.2.4 The Chester to Birkenhead Railway opened in 1840. In addition, a new turnpike road (New Chester Road) between Tranmere Ferry and Bromborough Village was opened in the mid to late 1830s, one of Thomas Brassey's largest local undertakings. These improved transport links and increasing industrialisation marked a turning point in the development of Bromborough. The river Mersey had become one of the UK's busiest shipping routes, which benefited villages such as Bromborough as wealthy Liverpool merchants and businessmen chose to make their homes on the Wirral. This was the beginning of the 'commuter belt'.
- 2.2.5 In the third quarter of the 19th century, a number of new dwellings were built, principally along Bromborough Village Road and The Rake.
- 2.2.6 Bromborough National School, funded by the occupier of Bromborough Hall, was inaugurated in 1869, replacing the earlier school on Village Road. A farm and cottage were demolished to make way for the school, but the materials were re-used along with stone from the local quarry. Although the school closed in 1983, the building has since found a new use and now serves as the Village Centre. The 'Big Stone' at the entrance is said to be a glacial erratic.
- 2.2.7 The Mission Hall and Reading Room, funded by Thomas Matheson, were built on Village Road in 1868 to provide worship and recreation facilities for the expanding population. A number of businesses were established in the village, many of which benefited from trade with those working on the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, which opened in 1894.

2.3 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY CHANGES

- 2.3.1 By the outbreak of WWI, Bromborough had expanded rapidly and was becoming less reliant on agriculture. Within the conservation area a small number of semi-detached and terraced cottages were built along The Rake. The Church Institute was built in 1908 for Richard Hobson in memory of his wife, Eleanor, south of The Smithy and Smithy Cottage (which had been in existence since at least c1755 and were demolished in 1982). A barn fronting onto the market square was converted to house RA Roberts's Central Garages in 1925 and stood to the east of the Church Institute. Murphy's Taxi Office was established next door, and that building still stands.

- 2.3.2 Outside the conservation area boundary, the Council built half-timbered offices on the west side of Allport Lane in c1911 (demolished in 1973 and replaced by the Civic Hall and Library).
- 2.3.3 Despite the Great Depression (1929-35), the inter-war period marked a period of further expansion, with a number of buildings being demolished and replaced.
- 2.3.4 The 17th-century Manor House Farm was purchased by John Irwin & Sons, grocers, in 1928 and was subsequently demolished and replaced with shops. Similarly, some buildings on the east side of Allport Lane were replaced by shops in the late 1930s. These changes emphasised the transition from an agricultural, rural settlement to an increasingly commercial and suburban one.
- 2.3.5 The building of the by-pass (A41/New Chester Road) in the mid-1930s led to the demolition of Bromborough Hall and White Row Cottages (which had stood on the east side of Bromborough Village Road and housed workers at the Hall). New banks were built around the market square and infill development occurred along Bromborough Village Road, giving a more urban feel to the streetscape. Tellet's Farmhouse (now Nos 54/56/56a Bromborough Village Road) was renamed Allport House and converted for use as a chandler's shop by 1930, and the farm buildings were demolished.
- 2.3.6 The rural landscape along Mark Rake was given over to providing semi-detached houses for the increasing population, encroaching on the fields surrounding the church. The plots along The Rake were severed by a new access lane to serve buildings at the rear (between Nos 10 and 12).
- 2.3.7 In the latter half of the 20th century, Bromborough became part of an urban conurbation, coalescing with other settlements along the A41. The lands surrounding the church were given over to housing development and the village expanded in all directions. A number of buildings along Bromborough Village Road were demolished and Nos 36 to 46 built in their place (excluded from conservation area). Terraced housing along the south side of The Rake was demolished to make way for retail units, and more shops were built along the east side of Allport Lane.
- 2.3.8 By 1958 the Royal Oak, owned by Birkenhead Brewery, was too small to accommodate increased trade and its licence was transferred to a new Royal Oak across the road.
- 2.3.9 Hodgson's shop (opened c1885), which stood next door to the Royal Oak, was demolished to make way for an expansion of London County, Westminster and Parr's Bank, which had started life in Miss Glover's former sweet shop on the junction of The Rake and Allport Lane (now NatWest). The shops to the south were also demolished for an extension. However, a small number of adjacent cottages and outbuildings survived this expansion; shown on the 1840 tithe map, they have been adapted for new uses and still remain today although they lie outside the conservation area boundary.

- 2.3.10 The market cross, which once stood in an open ‘square’ has been subsumed by the widening of pavements and the consequent narrowing of roads. It no longer acts as the focal point of the village and its former importance is now barely legible to passers-by.

2.4 ARCHAEOLOGY

- 2.4.1 The Merseyside Archaeological Service Historic Environment Record holds details of 34 sites of interest relating to the historic environment of Bromborough, many of which are within the conservation area boundary. The most significant find was a 14th-century coin found in 1958 near the site of the chancel of the Saxon church (Ref 3482-028). The present churchyard is believed to be the site of the Abbey founded in AD912, which had disappeared before the Norman conquest, although there is no field evidence to support this.
- 2.4.2 The 13th-century market cross, although repaired and altered in the 19th century, is an important feature in understanding the form of the medieval settlement. Half of the HER entries relate to the post-medieval settlement up to 1750 and there may be potential for archaeological remains from earlier times within or near buildings dating from the mid-18th century and earlier. The lack of known finds should not be interpreted as a lack of potential.

3.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISTAS

3.1 SETTING AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA

3.1.1 The conservation area has a higher proportion of green space than the more densely packed areas surrounding it.

3.1.2 The northern-most point of the conservation area is bounded by the Rectory on Mark Rake with its large garden, providing a buffer between the Church grounds and the residential areas further to the north. Further west along Mark Rake are inter-war semi-detached dwellings, and the intervening space to the western part of the conservation area has been infilled with more recent housing development and new roads (eg Athelstan Close).



To the west,, the conservation area boundary runs along the edge of the churchyard, which here is overlooked by the modern houses on the south side of Athelstan Close

3.1.3 The main vehicular approach to the village from the north and south is Bromborough Village Road, which adjoins the eastern zone of the conservation area. It is a wide and very busy thoroughfare, linked to the A41 (New Chester Road) at points both north and south of the village.



No 10 (left) to No 2 (right, The Bromborough public house) are the buildings immediately adjacent to the north-east corner of the conservation area where it meets Bromborough Village Road

3.1.4 The immediate setting to the east of the conservation area is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial buildings; the area between Bromborough Village Road and the A41 is commercial north of High Street and predominantly residential to the south, with industrial/commercial units of the Wirral Business Park lying further east, between the A41 and the banks of the Mersey.

- 3.1.5 To the south, the conservation area includes the eastern section of The Rake, which contains the majority of its domestic dwellings. Although it is a fairly narrow road, it is well used by traffic, being one of the main routes into the shopping centre and car park on the south side of The Rake (outside the conservation area).



The Rake, viewed from the west, at its junction with Allport Road. The conservation area lies to the north side (left in photograph)



The setting of the conservation area to the south has a mix of commercial and residential buildings lining the south side of The Rake

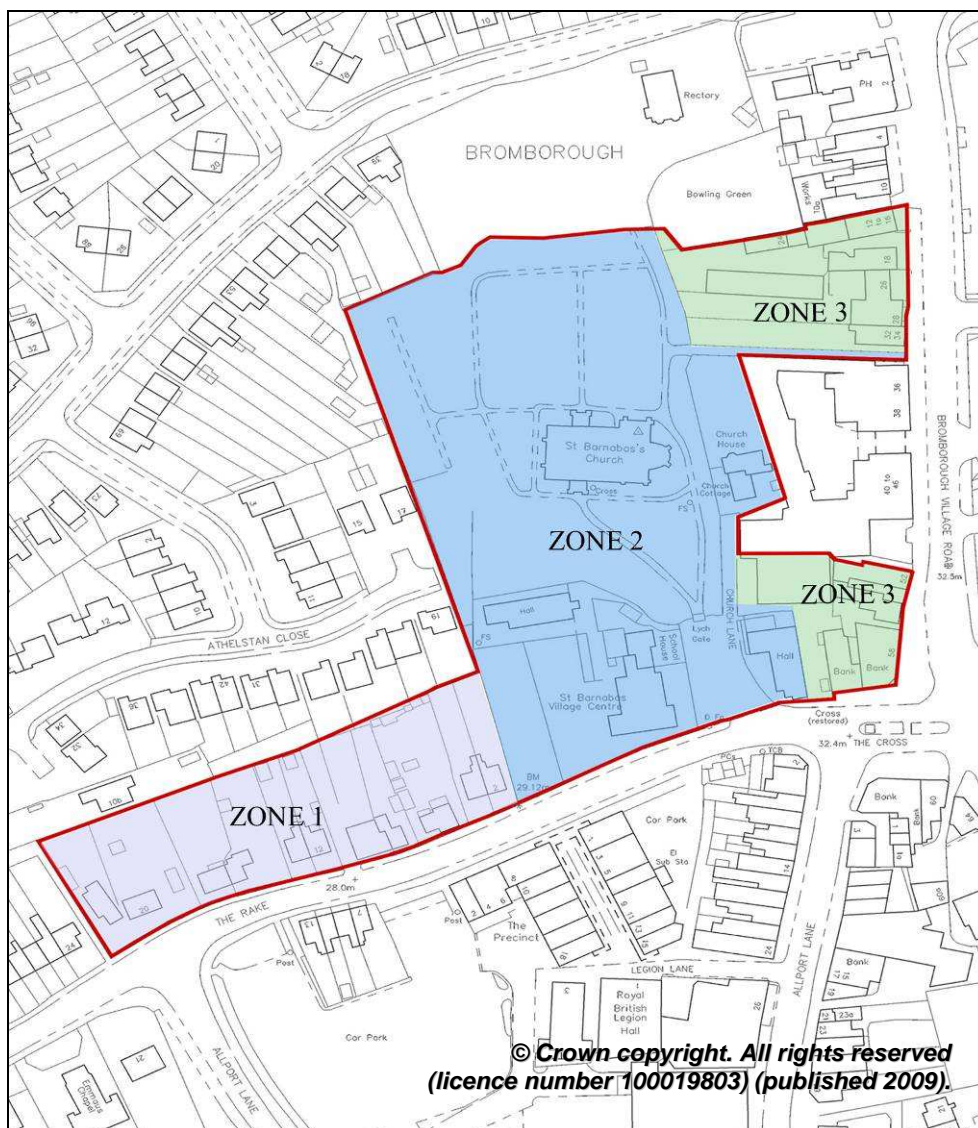
- 3.1.6 Those arriving by train alight at Bromborough Rake station, on the Liverpool to Chester Merseyrail line. The railway is in a deep cutting some 0.4 miles (0.64km) from the nearest part of the conservation area and no glimpses of it are afforded when travelling by train.
- 3.1.7 The pedestrian approach from the station is along The Rake. At its western end are a number of roads leading off into post-war housing developments, with substantial green space along the southern side up to its junction with Valley Road, and a recreation ground to the north. Thereafter the housing becomes more densely packed, in short terraces, until the conservation area is reached.
- 3.1.8 Public access to some parts of the conservation area is restricted where the boundary runs across private land or between neighbouring properties, as indicated on the map below.



Map showing parts of conservation area where public access is restricted, denoted by a dashed red line

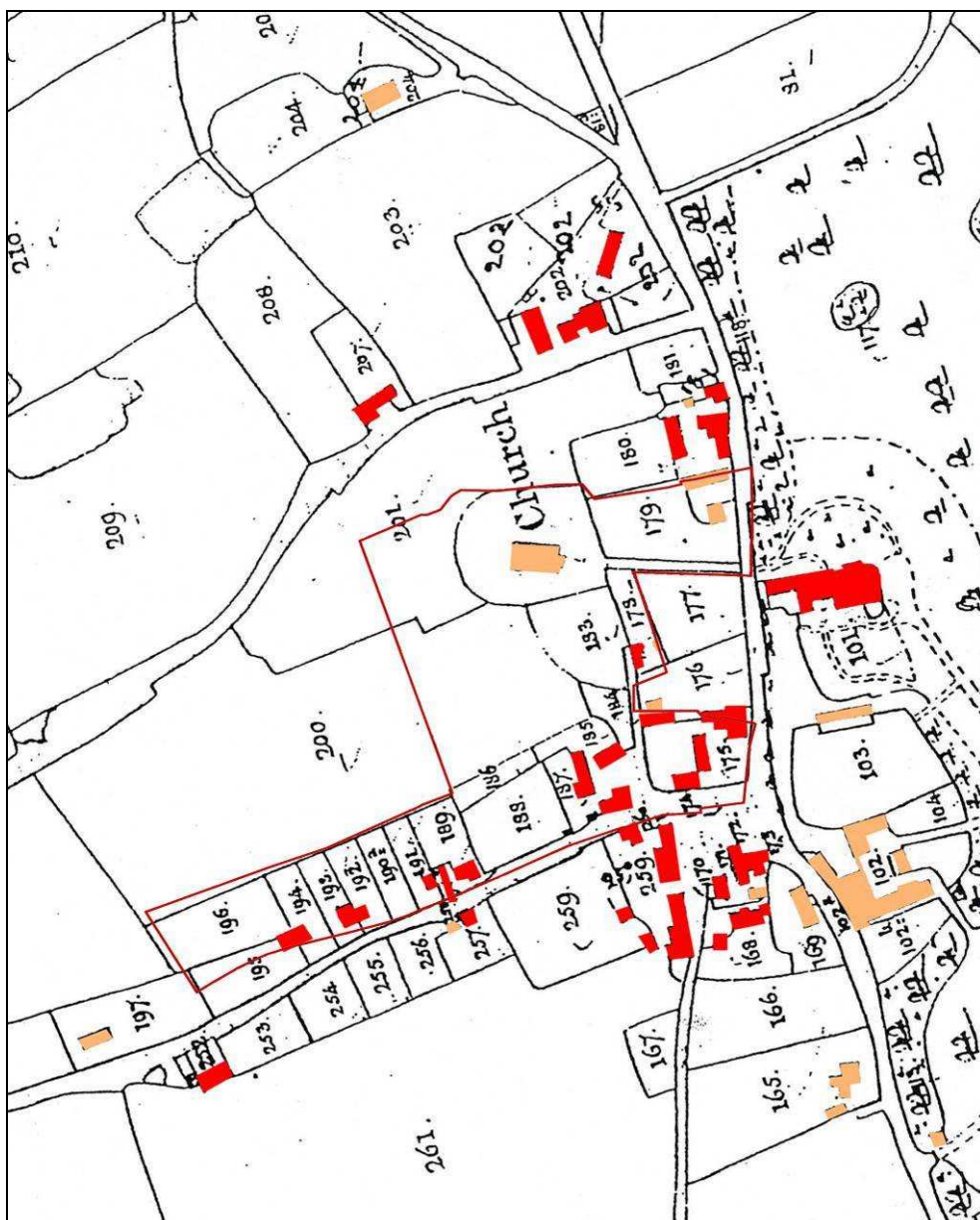
3.2 CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIP OF SPACES

- 3.2.1 In general, the character of the conservation area can be described as a formerly rural village of medieval origins enclosed within an urban conurbation. It has a range of housing, including small cottages, semi-detached houses and larger detached houses. The public buildings include a sizeable church and former village school, and there is a range of shops and commercial premises.



Map showing character zones within the conservation area

- 3.2.2 The conservation area can be broadly divided into three zones:
- Zone 1: Nos 2 to 22 The Rake, a residential area of generally modest dwellings
 - Zone 2: the area around the Church and Village Centre, being the churchyard and public buildings
 - Zone 3: the eastern area alongside Bromborough Village Road, which consists of predominantly commercial premises
- 3.2.3 Each of these areas has its own character and it is their inter-relationship that contributes to the character of the conservation area as a whole.
- 3.2.4 The special interest of the area lies in its history and development. Although the setting of the village has changed considerably over the centuries, the core of its historic plan form remains almost intact.



The historic core of the village was centred around the earlier church and market cross as can be seen from the location of buildings erected by c1755 (red) and by 1840 (orange) Note the new access to the Church and the churchyard from the east and the residual and truncated earlier access from the south.

Zone 1

- 3.2.5 Approaching from the west, the conservation area becomes apparent where there is a change from short terraces of houses (eg Nos 24 to 34 The Rake) to detached and semi-detached dwellings. There is also a change in street frontage from open-fronted gardens/parking spaces to more private enclosed front gardens and driveways.
- 3.2.6 The dwellings along The Rake that lie within the conservation area (Nos 2 to 22) are intermittently spaced in generous plots that vary from 6m to 19m in width and 36m to 41m in depth. Some are set well back from the pavement (eg Nos 20 and 22) while others are only 1m or so away. This lends interest

to the spatial relationships in this part of the conservation area and gives a certain individuality to each of the properties.



(left) Nos 24-34 The Rake, viewed from south-east, lie outside the conservation area which is demarcated by (right) the detached house at No 22

Zone 2

- 3.2.7 The Rake rises slightly as it moves eastwards and the domestic garden walls give way to the sandstone wall bordering the lands around the Village Centre and Church.



Eastern end of The Rake, viewed from the south-west, showing the change from residential use to community use, denoted by the long sandstone wall enclosing the village centre and car park



The Village Centre and associated buildings viewed from the south-east

- 3.2.8 The Church is set some way back from The Rake, beyond the car park serving the Village Centre. The churchyard is generally not visible from afar, being bordered by a number of mature trees, and is revealed only upon entering through the Lych Gate. There is a marked contrast in atmosphere between the busy road and the green space around the church, which is quiet and peaceful.



The Church of St Barnabas, viewed from The Rake



View from churchyard south to the Lych Gate, which marks the edge of the car park to the Village Centre

Zone 3

- 3.2.9 At the eastern end of The Rake, the south-eastern corner of the conservation area is marked by 20th-century bank buildings, with the corner building (HSBC bank) masked somewhat by mature trees.



Barclays Bank at Market Cross, which lies at the eastern end of The Rake



HSBC bank at the junction of Market Cross and Bromborough Village Road (No 58)

- 3.2.10 The west side of Bromborough Village Road is lined with commercial buildings giving a denser, more urban, feel to this zone compared with the more ‘village’ type atmosphere of The Rake. The buildings are a mix of styles and from various periods although the 20th-century Nos 36 to 46 are excluded from the conservation area.



Views of Bromborough Village Road

3.3 VIEWS AND VISTAS

- 3.3.1 The westernmost parts of Bromborough Village Conservation Area lie in a slight dip in the landscape and the surrounding area is generally flat. Long-range views into the conservation area are often obscured by the built-up nature of the approach roads.
- 3.3.2 Most of the views within the conservation area are short-range and may be better described as ‘streetscapes’ with limited focal points.
- 3.3.3 The key landmark building is the Church of St Barnabas, and its tower and spire are visible from a number of vantage points both inside and outside the conservation area.



Glimpses of the Church tower can be obtained from many points eg from High Street (left), from near The Bromborough (centre) and from outside Nos 36-46 Bromborough Village Road (right)

- 3.3.4 However, there are no long-range views of the body of the church and it can best be appreciated from within the church grounds.
- 3.3.5 **Views into the Conservation Area**



View north east from The Rake showing the Church tower in the distance



View from the junction of The Rake and Allport Lane (west end) showing the mature trees that contribute to the character of the conservation area



The meandering route of The Rake precludes long-range views and there is no focal point until the market cross becomes visible towards the easternmost end



View into conservation area from the raised walkway on the south side of The Rake, showing the prominence of the church tower and spire



View into the conservation area from junction of Allport Lane (east end) and The Rake showing the focal group of buildings near the Church



The Market Cross was historically an important focal point within the village although it lies outside the conservation area

3.3.6 Views out of the conservation area

- 3.3.7 The setting of the Conservation Area is dominated by a variety of mainly 20th-century development, the density of which precludes key views out to the surrounding landscape.

3.4 GREEN SPACES AND PLANTING

- 3.4.1 Although the main area of green space within the conservation area is the churchyard, the gardens of the domestic properties make a valuable contribution in providing greenery and interest by way of shrubs, plants and mature trees. The variety within the gardens along The Rake adds a picturesque quality and acts as a counterpoint to the tarmacadam around the Village Centre, which is relieved by planters at the car park entrance. Along Bromborough Village Road the mature trees in the pavement area add to the character of this more urban part of the conservation area.





The conservation area is characterised by a variety of planting and mature trees, which frame the buildings beyond

- 3.4.2 The extent and impact of the greenery around the church is particularly well illustrated by the aerial photograph below and shows that the church and its grounds occupy around half of the entire conservation area.



Google Earth image showing the green areas around the church

- 3.4.3 The variety of trees, shrubs and other plants within the churchyard lends it a special atmospheric quality, particularly to the areas north of the Church. A tomb tucked away in a corner, a glimpsed view of the path leading to Bromborough Village Road, a peek through dense trees to the rectory garden beyond, and areas where tombstones are being subsumed by undergrowth all lend an interesting ‘secret garden’ atmosphere to the churchyard, in contrast to the more formal architecture of the church.





The zone around the Church is characterised by a variety of planting and secluded areas including a footpath providing a pedestrian link from the busy Bromborough Village Road to the tranquillity of the churchyard

- 3.4.4 Along The Rake, there is a variety of planting and green spaces within privately owned gardens. Some houses are well set back from the pavement, with space for car parking areas, whilst others have very small front gardens with little scope for planting.
- 3.4.5 The boundaries to each garden are characterised by low sandstone walls with triangular copings, sometimes surmounted by manicured hedges. The larger gardens are generally enclosed, with only glimpses afforded to passers by. The quality of planting and degree of maintenance varies between properties, adding a variety to the character of the area, and contributing to the setting of the buildings and the streetscape generally. Views of some houses are particularly enhanced by mature trees and colourful shrubs nearby, whilst others are unscreened from the 20th century dwellings bordering the northern part of the conservation area.



Some houses along the Rake are well-screened from the road



C20th development overlooking the conservation area is only partially screened from view along the access lane between No 10 and No 12 The Rake



C20th commercial development intrudes on the setting of Nos 8 to 10 The Rake, which have no front gardens



The C20th insertion of an access lane between No 10 and No 12 The Rake has created an unsightly gap in the streetscape and an interruption to the planted up gardens

4.0 TOWNSCAPE AND PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

4.1 GRAIN, SCALE, REPETITION AND DIVERSITY

- 4.1.1 Although Bromborough Village Conservation Area is comparatively small, its grain is diverse and a legible story of its historic development. The village grew up in the vicinity of the church, mainly along The Rake to the south (running west to east) and Bromborough Village Road to the east (running north to south). The dwellings were in fairly regular rectangular plots along these two roads.

Zone 1

- 4.1.2 The plots along The Rake contain houses of varying sizes, set back at varying distances from the pavement, which are either detached or semi-detached, with some having been extended. The plots vary in width from 6m to 19m and in depth from 36m to 41m.
- 4.1.3 The houses are all two-storey and of modest height. The form and style of the detached house at No 22 clearly separates it chronologically from the older neighbouring properties, yet enforces its position as a prominent building demarcating the edge of the conservation area along the line of an historic enclosure boundary.
- 4.1.4 The grain of the north side of The Rake has changed little since the mid-18th century. Although some dwellings have been rebuilt and extended, and additional houses have been built in former gardens, the grain is still reminiscent of a medieval village with its rectangular strips of land cultivated to support the cottagers living there. Beyond the conservation area boundary to the north, however, the former field boundaries are difficult to discern within the 20th century residential development.

Zone 3

- 4.1.5 The grain of Bromborough Village Road is much denser with little or no space between the buildings that line the pavement. They vary in form from single storey (No 58, HSBC bank) to 2½ storeys (Nos 54-56), although there are only minor variations in ridge height. These buildings are generally larger in scale than those along The Rake and there is such a diverse range of building types that there is no repetition.
- 4.1.6 The dense grain of the street is interrupted by Nos 36-46 (Bromborough Paints) and the car parking area to its south; however, these lie outside the conservation area.

Zone 2

- 4.1.7 The northern zone of the conservation area is occupied by the church, churchyard, Village Centre and Church Institute. These buildings are necessarily larger in scale, reflecting their community use.

- 4.1.8 Along the eastern edge, behind Nos 36-46 Bromborough Village Road, lies the secluded Church House and Church Cottage, which can only be glimpsed from a distance but appear to be of a traditional form.



Views along Church Lane towards the secluded Church House and Church Cottage

- 4.1.9 Although the scale of buildings within the conservation area varies from zone to zone, the grouping together of buildings of similar size contributes to the character of the conservation area and gives a certain homogeneity to an otherwise diverse range of buildings.
- 4.1.10 Outside the conservation area, the dense grain of Allport Lane at its junction with The Rake reflects its historical importance as part of the core of the village, centred around the market square and cross. Largely hidden from view behind the 20th century NatWest bank buildings and the former Royal Oak public house is a group of much older buildings, which may be those shown on the 1840 tithe map or the earlier estate map of c1755 (fuller investigation of these properties, beyond the scope of this appraisal, would be necessary to determine this).



These buildings behind the NatWest bank and former Royal Oak public house may be remnants of the agricultural properties that stood on this site

4.2 PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS AND FEATURES

4.2.1 Although long-range views of the Church are limited to sight of its tower and spire, and views of other buildings are generally short-range, there are a number of notable historic buildings within the conservation area.

- Church of St Barnabas
- Village Centre (formerly the School)
- The Master's House
- Nos 54/56/56A Bromborough Village Road (formerly Tellet's Farmhouse)
- Pear Tree Cottage (No 6 The Rake)

Other historic features include:

- Church Cross (probably 10th century, re-erected by The Bromborough Society 1958)
- Sundial (dated 1730)
- A number of early-19th century gravestones echoing the style of the Church Cross

4.2.2 Buildings and features that are not listed but have historic interest in terms of the development of the village and which contribute to the character of the area include:

- Church Institute
- Nos 8-10 The Rake (date stone showing 1835)
- Nos 16-18 The Rake (two dwellings, date stone showing 1836)
- No 20 The Rake (a single dwelling with a date stone of 1815, possibly formerly a pair of cottages)
- Nos 2-4 and Nos 12-14 (built between 1899 and 1911 and typical of early Edwardian semi-detached cottages, the only 'repetitive' feature along The Rake)
- Nos 18 and 26-28 Bromborough Village Road, which form a group. No 18 was formerly used as the Mission Hall/Lecture Hall and Reading Room

4.2.3 The omission of the market cross from the conservation area, together with the buildings to the rear of the NatWest bank building on Allport Lane (see 4.1.10 above) does not preclude their historic interest nor their potential contribution to the character of the conservation area.

4.2.4 Similarly, the buildings to the north of the conservation area along Bromborough Village Road contribute to its character. The Bromborough public house, though much altered over its lifetime, visually punctuates the streetscape and marks the transition from Stanhope House to the more commercial areas of Bromborough.

4.2.5 The Rectory and its large gardens to the north of the conservation area affect the setting of and contribute to the character of the conservation area, acting as a buffer between the historic parts of the village and the peripheral

housing developments. The Rectory grounds are enclosed by a long brick and sandstone wall together with mature trees running along the south side of Mark Rake, complemented by the grade II listed Stanhope House at its eastern end.



Entrance to the Rectory (left) and the long boundary wall beyond running westwards (right)



View of Rectory from Mark Rake (left) and Stanhope House, Mark Rake (right)

4.3 BOUNDARIES AND SURFACES

- 4.3.1 Roads surfaces and pavements are generally excluded from the boundary of the conservation area, apart from the large car park and service areas at the Village Centre, which are surfaced with tarmacadam.
- 4.3.2 Pathways within the conservation area vary from grass and concrete in the churchyard to the untreated surface of the pathway from the churchyard to Bromborough Village Road. Generally the surfaces of the pathways are in poor condition.
- 4.3.3 Bordering the conservation area, the pavements are a mix of concrete slabs and tarmacadam, and there is no evidence of historic surface treatments remaining in situ. In places the condition of the pavements is very poor, particularly where there is a mix of materials within a short distance.



(left) The concrete pathways within the churchyard are in need of repair or replacement and do not enhance the setting of the church. The pathways turn to grass towards the northern end of the churchyard, making them uninviting and potentially dangerous in wet weather (right).



Poor quality surface treatments do little to enhance the setting of the conservation area



The block paved drive within the conservation area boundary contrasts with the broken flags at its entrance; to the left the pavement is surfaced with tarmacadam, to the right there are mixed paving slabs.



An early C20th inserted access lane between Nos 10 and 12 is surfaced with loose gravel but the border treatment does not enhance the setting of the adjacent dwellings

- 4.3.4 Private driveways within the conservation area are surfaced with a variety of materials including paviers, gravel, stone and tarmacadam. Whilst this adds variety to the area, the treatment of the pavements abutting them detracts from their appearance.
- 4.3.5 Most boundary walls are of the local red sandstone with triangular copings and are a defining feature of the conservation area. Boundary walls to the dwellings along The Rake are generally sandstone and some have a hedge planted immediately behind.
- 4.3.6 However, there are noticeable differences between properties in the quality of construction of boundary walls and particularly in their pointing.



Different treatments of sandstone walls to neighbouring properties



The red sandstone wall enclosing the grounds of the Village Centre along The Rake

- 4.3.7 Around the church, there is a mix of boundary treatments. To the north, east and south the boundary walls are of sandstone although the walls are obscured in places by vegetation, mature trees and gravestones.



The eastern boundary of the churchyard is a mix of mature trees, overgrown vegetation and clipped hedges which mask a sandstone wall



The panel fence that runs along the western side of the churchyard marking the conservation area boundary



The entrance to the Rectory Garden, on the northern boundary of the churchyard



A mix of panel fencing, sandstone wall and post-and-rail fencing marks the southern boundary of the churchyard

5.0 ARCHITECTURE, MATERIALS AND DETAILS

5.1 PROMINENT STYLES

- 5.1.1 The houses within Bromborough Village Conservation Area are generally simply designed and detailed vernacular buildings with later alterations.
- 5.1.2 The public buildings are identifiable as late 19th-century Gothic and Tudor revival.
- 5.1.3 The church is in the 'Early English Style' which was much revived in the 19th century and is typified by the use of lancets (narrow pointed arches, often grouped in twos and threes), vaulted stone roofs, buttresses with plain, steeply pitched gablets, cusped arches to decorative arcades, circles enclosing trefoils/quatrefoils in the tracery, large rose windows, and decorative foliage. Many of these features were incorporated into the Church of St Barnabas.



Typical 'Early English' details: paired lancets beneath a large rose window (top left); blind arcading (top right); a buttress to the apsidal east end (bottom left); and a typical window with paired lancets, cusped plate tracery and clustered shafts (bottom right)

- 5.1.4 The Village Centre (former school) was completed in 1869 in a Gothic revival style, re-using materials from the farmstead that previously occupied the site. Although the Church Institute was built much later, in 1908, and is different in style and detailing, it complements the architecture of the former school. The Church Institute is typical of many buildings in Cheshire (to which Bromborough belonged in the 19th century) where local red sandstone is combined with mock timber-framing to produce a distinctive Tudor revival style.

5.2 KNOWN ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS

- 5.2.1 The present Church was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1862-4, with the broached spire added in 1880. Most glass is by Clayton and Bell, c1870 although the east window was designed in 1863 by Ballantine and Son. No further information has been identified to suggest other buildings were designed by known architects.

5.3 TYPICAL FEATURES AND DETAILS

- 5.3.1 **Windows:** Part of the character of a building is derived from the form of its windows. Differences in shape, style, materials and glazing can strongly influence the appeal and aesthetic qualities of a building. Detailing carried through a number of properties enhances the character of, and provides cohesion to, an area.
- 5.3.2 Regrettably a large number of historic windows have been replaced within the conservation area, although information as to their original form can be gleaned from the structural window openings that remain.
- 5.3.3 Fairly small, rectangular openings that are wider than they are tall were generally favoured in cottages of the 17th and early 18th centuries, where they would be unglazed and covered with waxed linen to minimise draughts. Such openings appear in a number of the cottages along The Rake (Nos 6, 8, 10 and 20); the 19th-century date stones may mark a period of rebuilding rather than the original date of construction and there is map evidence to suggest that No 20, for example, may date from the mid-18th century rather than 1815 as per its date stone.



Small rectangular openings at Nos 8, 10 and 20 The Rake (unfortunately fitted with replacement windows)



No 6 The Rake (listed grade II):- (left) to the east elevation of the original cottage are 4-light single chamfered mullioned windows (extended at some point), those to the west are single-lights (centre). The windows to the extension are later, being 8-light fixed windows (right). The upper window is probably contemporary with the extension but the lower window is a later replacement.

- 5.3.4 From the later 18th century, window openings became larger with the emphasis on the vertical, and there are numerous examples within the conservation area of this type of opening. The windows themselves were treated in different ways, from the delicate two pane sliding sash to the heavy mullions and transoms of the Gothic revival.



Larger, vertical openings at Nos 2, 4, 12 and 14 The Rake with canted bay windows on corbels to the ground floor, typical of the late C19th/early C20th. The original windows would have been two pane double-hung sashes with horns, though regrettably none remain.



Nos 16 and 18 have been much altered and extended over their lifetimes, illustrated by the unusual variety of window types and openings (see examples below). Although each window is different, they are of an historic form and enhance the character of the cottage.



(top left) modern wooden-framed 12-pane casements in square opening; (top right) modern wooden-framed 9-pane casements; (bottom left) a Yorkshire (horizontal sliding) sash in a square opening; (bottom right) 16-pane double hung sash with horns, in an altered opening (possibly the original doorway and contemporary with the later C19th extension to the left)

- 5.3.5 Along Bromborough Village Road, a great variety of window types can be seen. Although replacement uPVC windows are prevalent, a number of them are fitted to the original window openings which show the development from the small, horizontal windows of the 17th century and early 18th century to the larger, vertical windows of the later 18th century and 19th century (eg at Nos 54-56 and at Nos 26-28).



(left) Nos 54-56 Bromborough Village Road, C17th window to dormer; (centre) No 26, square mid-C18th window opening with modern toplight; (right) Nos 54-56, C19th 12-pane double hung sash



The distinctive 19th-century Gothic revival windows at 18 Bromborough Village Road have heavy, painted stone, chamfered mullions and transoms with a shallow arched head and carved finials to heavy hood moulds, set with wooden-framed lights.



The late C19th Tudor revival window at 52 Bromborough Village Road: window has replacement glass to lower section

- 5.3.6 The windows in the public buildings such as the church and village centre are suggestive of the 19th-century revival of the 'Early English' style, and are contemporary with the date of construction.



Village Centre windows have lancet openings with shouldered lintels, chamfered sandstone mullions with 8-light windows, and are arranged in groups of two, three or four.

- 5.3.7 The windows to the Church Institute and Master's House are typical later C19th Tudor revival windows designed to mimic the mullions and transoms of C16th windows.



(left) The Master's House (centre, right) the Church Institute

- 5.3.8 **Doors:** Doors and door openings are generally plain and unornamented and are not a particular defining feature of buildings in the conservation area. A few have plank doors with strap hinges (eg Village Centre and Master's House) but generally there are no typical styles that contribute to the area's character. The vast majority of doors have been replaced by more modern styles, either in white uPVC or painted wood. It is therefore difficult to determine the historic form of the doors that would have characterised the area in the past. A few houses have a small canopy over the doorway, generally roofed with tiles supported by decorative brackets, to afford some protection from the elements. Some of these are original.



Doorways to dwellings along The Rake

- 5.3.9 **Chimneys:** Most of the chimneys are of a plain, simple rectilinear design, although some have oversailing courses. They are generally built of brick (some rendered and painted) and surmounted with clay pots, but the style and colour of pots can vary within the same stack. Semi-detached dwellings share a central stack of up to eight flues, passing through the ridge. Detached dwellings have gable end stacks, either in the gable wall or projecting from it from ground floor level. One stack to the Church Institute, however, is of sandstone ashlar and is positioned at the junction of two roof slopes, in an 'Arts and Crafts' manner. The remains of the stack at 52 Bromborough Village Road show the use of tumbling-in brickwork in chimney construction. The gable end stack to 18 Bromborough Village Road is of an unusual shape although probably constructed using a similar technique.



Examples of different chimney types within the conservation area

- 5.3.10 **Roof details:** buildings within the conservation area display more variety in roofs than in chimney types. The cottages tend to have fairly shallow-pitched roofs of slate or tile, although some may have been thatched originally as elsewhere in Wirral. Earlier cottages have stone copings to flush verges, whilst buildings of the late 19th/early 20th century sometimes have overhanging verges. Ridges generally run parallel to the front of the building and some have clay ridge tiles.
- 5.3.11 The roofs to the commercial premises have more varying pitches, from the flat roof of Barclays Bank (at Market Cross) to the more steeply pitched roof of Nos 54-56 Bromborough Village Road. Some buildings have the ridge at right angles to the street with the gable being presented to the street. The only Listed commercial building (Nos 54-56) has gabled dormers with stone copings and kneelers, together with overhanging eaves to the main roof slopes.



Nos 54-56 Bromborough Village Road

- 5.3.12 The public buildings have more complex roof lines necessitated by their plan form, and add a pleasing variety to the roofscape of the conservation area. For example, the Master's House has projecting purlins on corbels, with overhanging eaves and verges, decorative bargeboards with finials, a gabled dormer and terracotta ridge tiles.



Roof details of dwellings along The Rake: earlier buildings (above) have stone coping to flush verges; later buildings (left) have overhanging verges and projecting purlins



The Master's House (left) and Church Institute: North elevation (centre) and West elevation (right)



Gable end fronting the street at No 28 (left) and the flat-roof to Barclays Bank at Market Cross (right)

- 5.3.13 **Date stones** are found on a number of buildings. Some clearly mark the date of, and are contemporary with, the building's construction, such as that on the school (now Village Centre). On the dwellings, the date stone might relate to the date of construction but it was quite common for date stones to

commemorate a rebuilding or an important event such as a marriage. The newest dwelling within the conservation area, No 22, continues the tradition with a date stone of 1994 marking its construction. The oldest date stone is that at No 56 Bromborough Village Road (formerly Tellet's Farmhouse), which reads "TIE 1683".



- 5.3.14 The presence of external render, replacement roofs and the insertion of uPVC windows can obscure the legibility of a building. There is map evidence to suggest some properties may have been built earlier than their date stones imply (eg No 20 The Rake) and only an internal inspection might offer clues to the history of such buildings.

5.4 MATERIALS

- 5.4.1 Throughout the Conservation Area a varied palette of construction materials has been used and no single material is particularly dominant. The most common materials are:

Facades:

- Exposed red sandstone masonry
- Brickwork
- Render or white wash
- 'Mock' timber framed upper storeys and dormers with rendered or painted stone/brick panels.

Roofs:

- Welsh slate
- Terracotta ridge tiles
- Stone verges

- 5.4.2 The domestic properties are built of common brick or sandstone rubble, or a combination of both. Some dwellings have rendered and painted elevations (generally white), sometimes with mock timber framing.
- 5.4.3 Traditionally, cottages built of rubblestone would be painted with a single coat of lime render, which would effectively resemble a very full flush pointing with some stone faces revealed. More prestigious houses may be rendered with further coats to achieve a smoother finish or have a final coat of rough-cast (a lime mortar slurry containing coarse grit). The removal of lime render, or its replacement with a cement-based render, can often lead to

water penetration problems and render breaking away from the wall, as at No 6 The Rake and 28 Bromborough Village Road.

- 5.4.4 The public buildings are primarily of coursed and squared sandstone, with terracotta and/or brick detailing.
- 5.4.5 The commercial buildings are constructed of the same variety of materials found elsewhere in the conservation area, although the use of Portland stone at Barclays Bank is out of character with the conservation area.
- 5.4.6 Public realm fittings within and bordering on the conservation area boundary are entirely modern, although generally unobtrusive. However, the surface treatments in the area around the market cross do little to enhance the setting of the conservation area.
- 5.4.7 **Brick:** The brick used is generally common Cheshire brick, with some hard red pressed brick used for detailing such as around window openings.
- 5.4.8 **Terracotta:** Terracotta details are found on some buildings within the conservation area, such as the drip-moulding and corbelling on the Master's House, but is not a particularly prevalent feature.
- 5.4.9 **Sandstone:** The local red Triassic sandstone is coursed and squared when used on the public buildings, but domestic buildings are constructed of rubblestone.
- 5.4.10 **Wood:** A few buildings within the conservation area have mock timber framing, which is used for decorative effect rather than being a constructional necessity. These buildings tend to date from the later 19th century, when the Tudor revival in nearby Chester was in full swing.
- 5.4.11 **Slate:** Roofs would historically have been of slate, although it is possible some of the earlier cottages with shallow pitched roofs may have originally been thatched, as elsewhere in Wirral. Today, however, whilst many buildings have retained their slates, a few have had replacement roofs in unsympathetic interlocking profiled tiles.

6.0 NEGATIVE FACTORS

6.1 OVERVIEW

6.1.1 A study of this nature cannot attempt to highlight every element of the built environment that has a detrimental impact on the character or setting of the conservation area. Instead, this report summarises the most visually evident examples and identifies key issues to encourage an understanding and awareness of the challenges.

6.1.2 Appended to this document is a plan showing the contribution of buildings to the character of the conservation area. The plan was produced as a tool for understanding the significance of different parts of Bromborough Village and to inform as to the appropriateness of the conservation area boundary. Each building, or group of buildings, is categorised as follows:

- A: (Red) Buildings that are **critical** to the character of the conservation area – typically these may be landmark buildings and/or buildings with most of their original character retained
- B: (Yellow) Buildings that make a **positive** contribution to the character of the conservation area – buildings may have some alterations but their original character is still prominent
- C: (Green) Buildings that have a **neutral** contribution to the character of the conservation area – they neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area but might have potential for enhancement
- D: (Blue) – Buildings where the extent of intrusion or damage is so great that their appearance detracts from the significance or special character of the area and their impact is **negative**

6.2 RECENT DEVELOPMENT

6.2.1 The 20th century has seen a significant amount of development in Bromborough Village, as groups of buildings have been demolished and replaced, and pressure for new housing has led to the loss of green space and open land around the village. Within the conservation area, a few buildings have been demolished and replaced with 20th-century alternatives.

6.2.2 The late 19th/early 20th century buildings along The Rake contribute to the character of the conservation area; the pairs of semi-detached dwellings are reminiscent of the cottages that formerly lined the south side of The Rake (demolished 1930s?).

6.2.3 The single ‘new build’ along the north side of The Rake is clearly modern but has been designed with some vernacular details such as terracotta ridge tiles, slate roofs, a square chimney stack, corbelled eaves, sandstone cills and appropriately sized window openings. However, elsewhere in the

conservation area, painted render tends to cover an entire elevation and be in more muted colours.



22 The Rake: a late C20th house generally sympathetic to the character of the conservation area

- 6.2.4 The Barclays Bank building at Market Cross is less sympathetic to the character of the conservation area, being clad in Portland stone and having a flat roof. However, this appears to be a remodelling and extension of the brick and slated gabled building (Roberts Garage) that it replaced as there is evidence of historic brickwork to the ground floor at the rear of the building.



- 6.2.5 The biggest change to Bromborough Village has been brought about by development *outside* the conservation area, which immediately impacts upon its setting and restricts views out of the conservation area.
- 6.2.6 The south side of The Rake has seen the loss of dwellings and gardens, and now accommodates a shopping centre and associated car parking that directly affect the setting of the cottages on the north side of The Rake.



Views of the south side of The Rake: shopping centre (top left); car park (top right); the one remaining short terrace of cottages at Nos 7 to 13 (bottom left), and the proximity of the shopping centre to the conservation area (bottom right)

- 6.2.7 The development of part of the open space around the church has resulted in the churchyard being overlooked by modern housing to the north, west and south-west.



View out of the conservation area from the churchyard to the houses on Mark Rake (south side)

View out of the conservation area from the churchyard to the houses on Athelstan Close (south side)

- 6.2.8 Slightly further north and west of the conservation area, new houses were built to accommodate the increasing population, fundamentally changing the setting of the conservation area from a rural village to a suburban settlement. These houses are typical of many inter-war and post-war housing developments elsewhere in the country; their design and construction is not

rooted in a strong local tradition and they are unremarkable in appearance. Views out of the conservation area are now no longer of a rural character.



Inter-war houses along the south side of Mark Rake, viewed from north; the detached house (left) borders the grounds to the Rectory

- 6.2.9 Along Bromborough Village Road, the immediate proximity of Nos 36 to 46 to the conservation area has an impact on its setting. The building is anonymous, brick-built, and flat-roofed with a large glass ‘shop front’ relieved by cream mosaic tiles and white painted timber window frames. It is disproportionately scaled in the context of the other buildings along Bromborough Village Road although its height is appropriate and it is obscured slightly by large trees.



Nos 36-46 Bromborough Village Road viewed from north east: the southern section (left) has a largely glass frontage and the northern section (right) is predominantly of brick

- 6.2.10 The setting of the conservation area is particularly affected by development around the area of the Market Cross. Manor House Farm on Allport Lane was demolished in 1928 and replaced by Irwin’s Grocery Shop. Other shops were built along Allport Lane, where previously there had been cottages and orchards. These buildings mark an important development for the setting of the market cross as the open square became increasingly built up.



Shops on the west side of Allport Lane (left) lie on the site of Manor House Farm; the shops on the east side (right) had interesting art deco elevations when built in the 1930s but have since been unified under a plain single roofline

- 6.2.11 The design of the NatWest building at the junction of Market Cross and Allport Lane pays homage to the sweet shop, later bank, that formerly stood on the corner and has typical 1920s ‘stripped’ classical detailing. The later extension to the south has adversely affected its massing and it now appears slightly ungainly.



NatWest Bank on the corner of Market Cross and Allport Lane (left) with a further extension built to the south (right)

6.3 UNSYMPATHETIC ALTERATIONS

- 6.3.1 Although few of the buildings within the conservation area are listed, most are historic in form and construction. Many of these have been altered and some of these changes are detrimental to the architectural character of the building. This then adversely affects the quality and character of the area as a whole. Examples of such changes include:

- Replacing original windows with unsuitable modern designs and materials such as uPVC
- Replacement of original roofing materials with unsuitable alternatives, such as profiled interlocking tiles instead of slate
- The insertion of new, or alteration to existing, openings that affect the aesthetic appeal and proportions of a building
- Poor quality repairs, such as cement based pointing spreading over the face of stone or brick.
- Rendering over originally exposed brick/stone with unsuitable cement-based render

- 6.3.2 Windows, along with roofs, are the most commonly replaced elements in buildings. They are the most vulnerable to deterioration and changes in popular taste have influenced the loss of original windows in historic buildings. In today's climate, with increasingly stringent building regulations in force, building owners may consider it more economic to opt for off-the-shelf double/triple glazed uPVC windows than to commission bespoke replacements in the spirit of the original.
- 6.3.3 The most prominent alteration to historic fabric within the conservation area is the replacement of original windows. Although these alterations may be well intentioned, *eg* to improve thermal or acoustic performance or to reduce maintenance requirements, the visual effect can damage the authenticity of the building's original design.
- 6.3.4 In some cases an attempt has been made to emulate the form of original windows but with limited success. Two-light windows would have held either small-paned casements or a Yorkshire sash (as in cottages to the south side of The Rake, now demolished). Three-light windows were also common, with a central side-hung casement. The framing elements of a modern, double-glazed uPVC window are by necessity much thicker and differently proportioned to the slim profiles of the originals, and can detract from the true character of the building. The reconfiguration of opening panes can also change the architectural character of a building as can the inappropriate addition of cills.



No 16 The Rake: Replacement uPVC two-light windows with single side-hung casements and imitation diamond-shaped leading. The upper window is almost flush with the wall face, instead of being recessed in the same way as the earlier windows to No 18 adjoining. The inserted timber reveal to the lower window stands proud of the wall face and is totally out of context.



No 20 The Rake: The outer lights have side-hung casements and the central one a small top-hung casement, a feature alien to the original form of such cottage windows. Each light has imitation glazing bars sandwiched between the panes of glass. If the window openings are original, they would have most likely contained a three-light window with a central side-hung casement. The cluttered design of these windows does little to preserve or enhance the character of the building.



No 26 Bromborough Village Road: although the lights are appropriately sized, the square window openings now contain top hung casements, which are out of character



No 28 Bromborough Village Road: the openings originally would have been fitted with sliding sash windows, probably 8 panes over 8 and although an attempt has been made to emulate the historic glazing pattern, the use of uPVC top-hung casements has resulted in windows with ungainly proportions



No 6 The Rake: A wooden replacement window in the spirit of the original but with a protruding cill and an extractor fan inappropriately placed. Its slightly awkward appearance suggests the original window may have had 12 panes rather than 8.

- 6.3.5 The enlargement of door and window openings, and its detrimental effect on the character of a building, can be seen particularly at the HSBC bank at 58 Bromborough Village Road. It was constructed in the 1940s to replace an earlier temporary wooden structure and it made a positive contribution to the street scape around the market cross. The subsequent insertion of plate glass doors and windows has significantly altered its character.



58 Bromborough Village Road: unsympathetic alterations are illustrated by comparison with a photograph from the 1950s

- 6.3.6 Most doors within the conservation area have been subject to replacement, with the exception of the public buildings. As with windows, many of them have been replaced with uPVC alternatives, inconsistent with the character of the originals.
- 6.3.7 Within the conservation area, roof replacement has generally been carried out sympathetically using traditional slates and ridge tiles. However, notable exceptions to this include the 17th-century former Tellet's Farm at Nos 54-56 Bromborough Village Road. Now in shared ownership, this building has been partially reroofed with profiled interlocking tiles, which do not preserve or enhance its character and emphasise the splitting of the former farmhouse into two properties. Similarly, the roof to No 52 has been much altered; the building has lost its projecting gable ends and the profiled interlocking tile roof is alien to its original character.



No 52 Bromborough Village Road: The north elevation (left) illustrates the loss of the east and west projecting gables and chimney shown in a 1920s photograph (right). (Note the open space beyond the building is the site of 36-46 Bromborough Village Road)



Nos 54/54a Bromborough Village Road demonstrates the difference in appearance between a slate roof (right) and modern interlocking profiled tiles (left)

- 6.3.8 The conversion of the former Tellet's farm house to shops in the first half of the 20th century appears to have been carried out without much radical alteration to the original fabric. However, subsequent alterations have been more intrusive and the building's legibility as a former, fairly substantial, farmhouse has been considerably diluted. Similarly, the conversion to a laundrette of the neighbouring building, once a handsome Tudor revival house, has been less than successful and unsympathetic to the character of the original building.



Nos 52-56 Bromborough Village Road: the early C20th conversion of the former Tellet's Farmhouse to a chandler's shop was sympathetic to the character of the building (top left), as was its division into two by the 1950s (top right).

Subsequent alterations to Tellet's farm, the adjacent No 52 (now Laundrette) and to the public realm have had a more significant impact (left)

- 6.3.9 The character of older dwellings can be affected by the insertion of modern services installations. Unsympathetic rainwater goods or visible external

pipe work not only impact upon the simple aesthetics of a rural cottage but can also affect the structural integrity of the building if poorly managed.



Intrusive waste pipes and rainwater goods



More considered placement of the rainwater downpipe, satellite dish and burglar alarm would improve the aesthetic appeal of this cottage

6.4 UNSYMPATHETIC EXTENSIONS

- 6.4.1 There are few recent extensions of any significant size to residential buildings within the conservation area; they tend to be outshuts to the rear and do not impact upon the streetscape significantly. Such extensions are generally well sited and do not confuse or detract from the simple form of the vernacular buildings.

6.5 CONDITION, LOSS AND DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

- 6.5.1 Whilst most buildings appear to be reasonably well maintained and fully occupied, there are some buildings that appear underused or in poor condition. Nos 32-34 Bromborough Village Road appears in good order from the street, but viewed from the path to the churchyard it is clearly in need of some care.

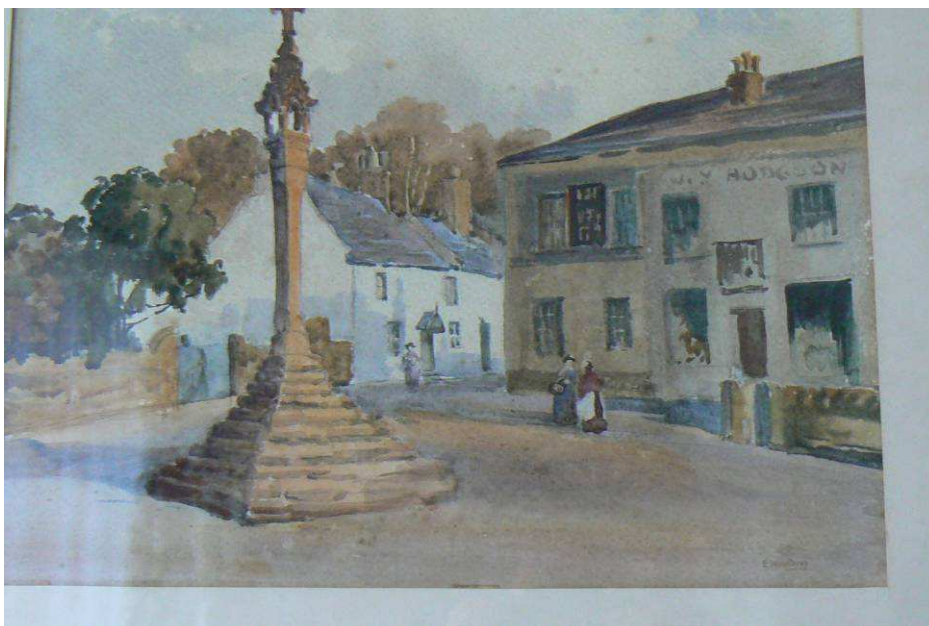


The rear of Nos 32-34 Bromborough Village Road sits alongside the pathway to the church and is in need of some improvement

- 6.5.2 Similarly, buildings such as Tellet's Farmhouse (Nos 56-56 Bromborough Village Road) are in need of repair and maintenance works, as well as a considered approach to how best to secure their future and preserve or enhance their character.
- 6.5.3 There has been a great deal of physical and social change in Bromborough Village particularly from the early 20th century onwards. The most significant changes within the current conservation area boundary are as follows:
- The construction of 22 The Rake
 - Building of the Church Institute
 - Demolition of the Smithy and Smithy Cottage
 - Infill development along Bromborough Village Road
 - Conversion of Tellet's Farmhouse (later renamed Allport House) into a shop, and demolition of the associated farm buildings
 - Closure of the school and re-opening the building as the Village Centre
 - Construction of the Barclays Bank building at the cross
 - Alterations to the HSBC bank building
 - Construction of a new village hall to the rear of the Village Centre
- 6.5.4 At present there seems to be little development pressure within the Bromborough Village Conservation Area; indeed, Policy CH20 in the UDP specifically prohibits infill development between No 2 and No 22 The Rake and there are no gap sites along Bromborough Village Road that might be developed.
- 6.5.5 However, commercial pressures have meant shop fronts have been changed and corporate signage installed, rarely sympathetic to the character or setting of the conservation area.

6.6 CHANGES TO PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

- 6.6.1 Although the construction of the by-pass has undoubtedly alleviated traffic pressures on the village, there is still a relatively high volume of traffic using Bromborough Village Road and The Rake. The associated public realm including traffic signage, road markings and pedestrian amenities, notably around the market cross, does little to preserve or enhance the setting of the conservation area or the buildings within it. The exclusion of the listed market cross from the conservation area may have had an adverse effect on subsequent public realm works; the siting of the cross on what is effectively a pedestrian refuge detracts from its importance visually and historically.

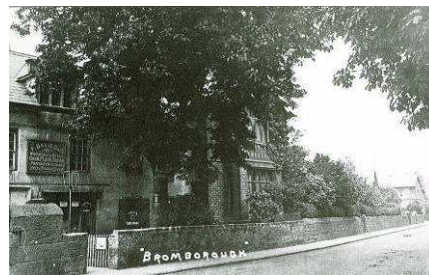


An old painting indicates the extent to which the area around the cross, formerly a large market 'square', has been developed. (image courtesy Rob Fraser)



The Market Cross today sits on a pedestrian refuge in the middle of a busy thoroughfare

- 6.6.2 A notable change to the public realm that has had a detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area is the loss of numerous sandstone walls, both within and without the conservation area. Properties along Bromborough Village Road that once had small front gardens behind low sandstone walls now sit at the back of a widened pavement. The conversion of the road into a predominantly commercial street has underlain this change of character.
- 6.6.3 The largest open space within the village is the land around the church. As noted above (6.2.7), part of this space was given over to new housing which is visible from within the churchyard and affects the setting of the conservation area.



Bromborough Village Road before it was widened and sandstone walls demolished

- 6.6.4 Signage on some buildings within the conservation area is inappropriate and detracts from its character. This is most noticeable along Bromborough Village Road.
- 6.6.5 The setting of the conservation area, particularly around the market cross, is also affected by signage on nearby shops particularly where it is illuminated. A notable example is the illuminated signage to the former Royal Oak public house, now housing an estate agent, near the Market Cross.



Subtle signage can enhance the setting of the conservation area. Along Allport Road, Nos 3 to 5 (left) for example have pleasantly designed shop fronts and appropriate signage, whereas the illuminated signage to the former Royal Oak (No 60 Bromborough Village Road, (right) is insistently bright and overly conspicuous.

6.7 CHANGES TO THE SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 6.7.1 Immediately outside the conservation area, the most significant developments that have impacted on its setting are:
- The building of the by-pass and demolition of Bromborough Hall and White Row Cottages, with the subsequent loss of the long sandstone boundary wall (see image at 6.6.1) on the east side of Bromborough Village Road
 - Conversion of the former Royal Oak into a shop, demolition of the adjacent shop and expansion of the bank premises
 - Demolition of Manor House Farm and construction of the Allport Lane shops

- Building of new housing along the south side of The Rake, and the subsequent demolition of a number of them to make way for a shopping centre
- Guardrails along the south side of the Rake
- A new Rectory and new housing along Mark Rake
- Demolition of buildings along the west side of Bromborough Village Road and their replacement with Nos 36-46
- Construction of the A41 New Chester Road by-pass, and the industrial/commercial units alongside it.

6.7.2 The overall effect of these developments is that the formerly rural village has been subsumed within an urban conurbation and views out of the conservation area are no longer of a rural character but include views of the rears of dwellings with loft conversions.



View looking west along The Rake near its junction with Allport Lane (western end)



View from the churchyard to the houses on Athelstan Close built on former open fields



View from the pathway leading from the churchyard onto Bromborough Village Road showing proximity of busy thoroughfare and modern commercial premises, where formerly the sandstone boundary wall of the Bromborough Hall estate stood



The setting of the southern section of the conservation area is affected by a large shopping centre



The setting to the east of the conservation area has changed considerably following the demolition of Bromborough Hall and the development of the estate grounds for commercial/residential use.

(left) northern junction of Bromborough Village Road with New Chester Road (A41), viewed from north west

(right) the commercial area between Bromborough Village Road and New Chester Road (A41), viewed from the north west

- 6.7.3 Whilst conservation of the special character of Bromborough Village has to be a major consideration, controlled and positive management of change will allow the area to continue to prosper whilst respecting its special architectural and historic interest. Any opportunity to preserve or enhance its character can be positively encouraged through education and awareness without the need for over-prescriptive controls and restrictions on businesses and residents.

7.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

7.1 The special character of Bromborough Village Conservation Area derives from:

- The form of the medieval settlement, which was centred around the church and market cross, and can be discerned from the remains of the historic core. It is a formerly rural village now enclosed in an urban conurbation
- A variety of vernacular residential buildings along The Rake
- The eclecticism of buildings along Bromborough Village Road now in commercial use and with a denser and more urban character
- Despite differences in scale from zone to zone the grouping of buildings of similar size gives some homogeneity to an otherwise diverse range of buildings
- The church, designed by a renowned 19th-century architect, and the associated public buildings around a 'square'; its broached spire being a key landmark both inside and outside the conservation area
- The grounds around the church and the site of the former Saxon church with a variety of trees and shrubs lending it an atmospheric quality
- The variety of experiences within a small geographic area, from the quiet solitude of the churchyard to the busy commercial area along Bromborough Village Road
- The use of local, traditional building materials particularly the local red sandstone
- Boundary walls of local red sandstone with triangular copings along The Rake