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## **Heritage Appraisal**

**in connection with a  
proposed new housing development  
on**

**Land to the southern side of Accrington Road,  
Whalley, Lancashire**

NGR SD 7352 3650

Prepared by

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January 2012

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose and Format**

This appraisal has been prepared in connection with a proposed housing development on land to the south side of Accrington Road immediately to the east of Whalley centre, Lancashire. The purpose of the appraisal is to conduct an assessment of the heritage values associated with a heritage asset – namely the Whalley Conservation Area - present in the vicinity of the proposed development, and to analyse level(s) of significance that may be attributed to those heritage values. This provides the basis for a heritage-led appraisal of the proposals, identifying where the proposals may compromise the significance of the heritage asset and where alternative approaches may prove necessary in order to minimise impact. The document has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the English Heritage publications 'Informed Conservation'<sup>1</sup> and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'<sup>2</sup> and in particular responds to policies outlined in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5)<sup>3</sup>. It also responds to a range of relevant planning policies adopted by Ribble Valley Borough Council, as outlined later.

### **1.2 The Author**

Chris O'Flaherty, the author, is a Chartered Building Surveyor and professional member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS). With a background in the recording, analysis and conservation of historic buildings, the author holds a Masters Degree in Building Heritage and Conservation and provides specialist heritage planning advice to public and private sector bodies.

### **1.3 Methods of Research and Investigation**

Physical inspections of the site were carried out in January 2012 in order to assess the physical nature of the local area. Background research has also been conducted in order to fully ascertain all contextual matters appertaining to the site. The scope of this research has, in accordance with PPS5, been proportionate to the nature of the

<sup>1</sup> Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation*, English Heritage 2003

<sup>2</sup> English Heritage, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, 2008

<sup>3</sup> CLG, *PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, HM Government 2010

proposed works, with particular emphasis placed upon the special architectural and historic interest of the site and those planning policies that affect/control change.

## 2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Site Location

The site is located at National Grid reference SD7352 3650 on the eastern edge of Whalley between the B6246 Accrington Road and the River Calder.

### 2.2 Site Description

The site comprises an open tract of former arable land with poultry sheds bordered by housing to the west, a public footpath with fields beyond to the east, Accrington Road to the north and the River Calder to the south. For the most part the land is reasonably level but slopes steeply up to the roadside at the north and footpath to the east. Accrington Road adjacent to the site is set on an incline that rises to the east. The Whalley Conservation Area is located to the west of the site. The map shown below in figure identifies the site and the adjacent Conservation Area, with the band of housing between the two forming a physical and visual buffer zone.

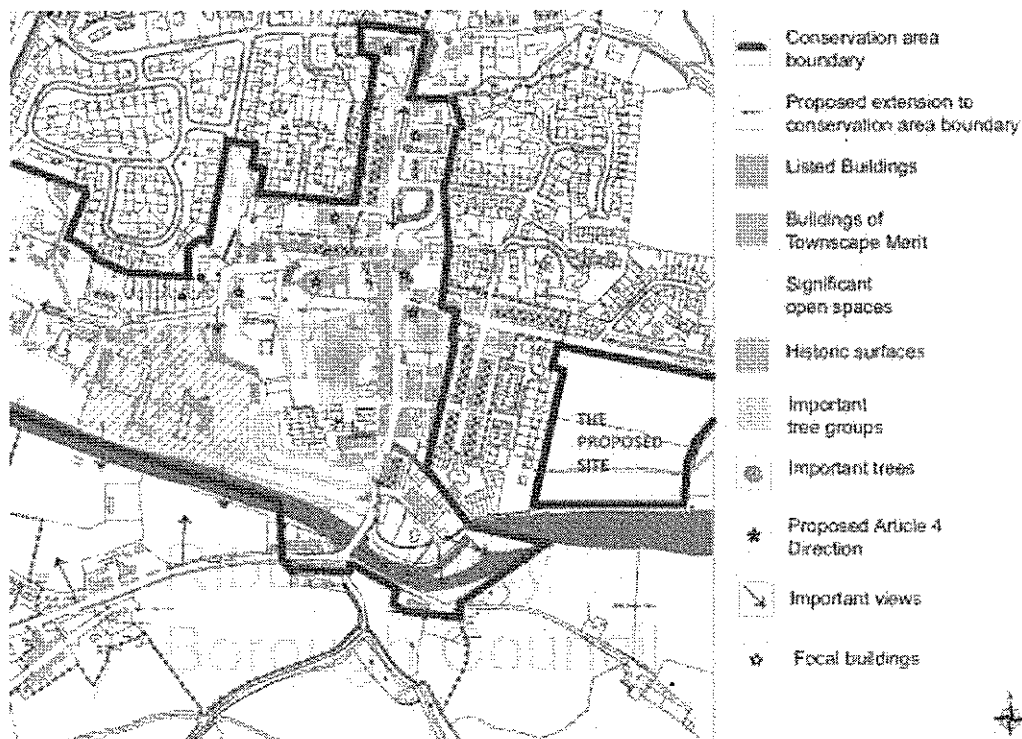


Figure 1. Extract of RVBC map (adapted) showing Whalley Conservation Area and the proposed site to the east. The dotted proposed extension has now been verified as being the new boundary: hence this map is now outdated.

## 2.2 Heritage Assets

This appraisal is concerned with the possible impact upon the setting of the Whalley Conservation Area which is a designated heritage asset. Whereas there are additional designated heritage assets within the Conservation Area in the form of listed buildings and monuments, these are outside the potential zone of influence of the proposed development (the nearest listed buildings are on King Street and Calder Cottage south of the river weir).

## 3.0 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

### 3.1 Historic Background

The Whalley Conservation Area was designated in 1972. A Conservation Area Appraisal was produced in 2005 by the Conservation Studio and adopted by Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC). The Appraisal is fully accessible via the RVBC website<sup>4</sup>. Subsequent to the Appraisal, the Conservation Area boundary was extended as shown in figure 1 (a revised boundary plan has yet to be published by RVBC).

The historic development of Whalley is covered in some detail within the Conservation Area Appraisal. A 'Historic Town Assessment' was also carried out in 2006 by Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy. Both of these documents trace the origins of the settlement from the late C8th through to the development of Whalley Abbey in the early C14th and the subsequent history after the C16th dissolution. A period of slow growth is charted up to the mid C19th when the arrival of the railway resulted in some modest expansion and the development of mechanised industry. The most significant period of growth is cited as having been over the last 40 years, with new housing developments having surrounded the historic core of the town to the west, north and east. The impact of expansion from the mid C19th is shown in figures 2-5 below which are extracts of Ordnance Survey mapping of Whalley.

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<sup>4</sup> Accessible 25/1/12 at

[http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/3709/whalley\\_conservation\\_area\\_appraisal](http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/3709/whalley_conservation_area_appraisal)



Figure 2. Extract of c. 1848 OS map showing compact development along the north-south King Street axis.

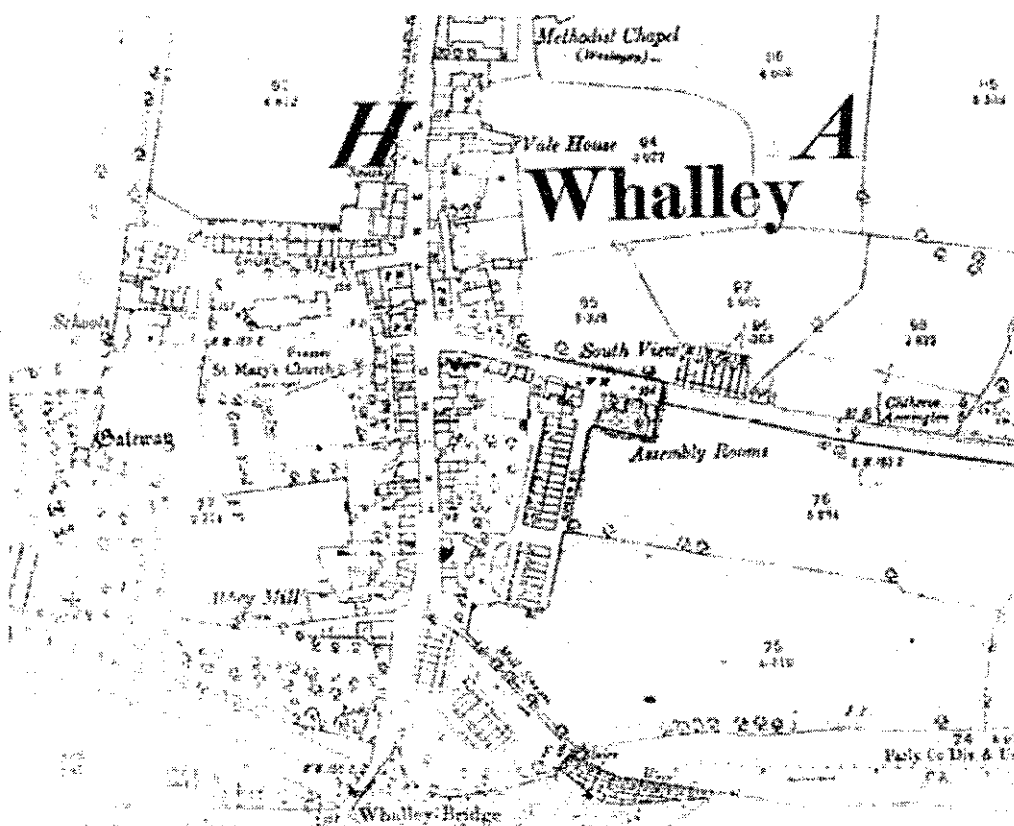


Figure 3. OS map of c. 1890 showing new housing to the east of King Street and on the north side of Accrington Road.

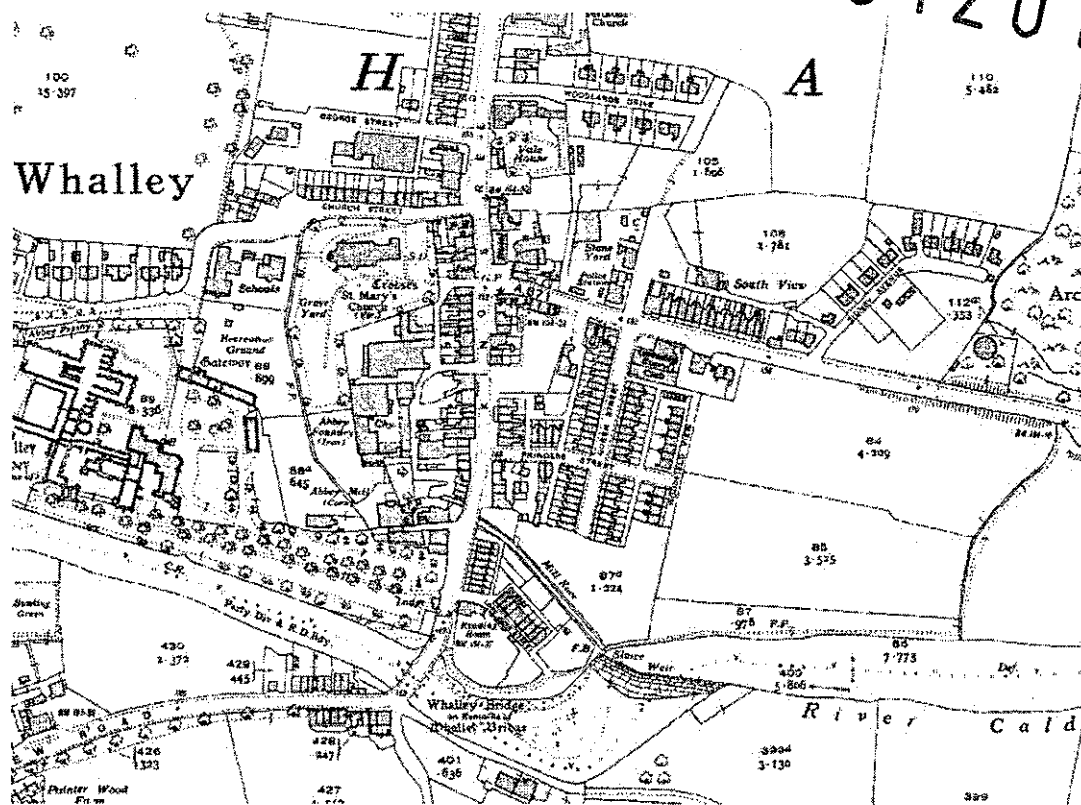


Figure 4. OS map of c.1930 showing more significant expansion in the early C20th

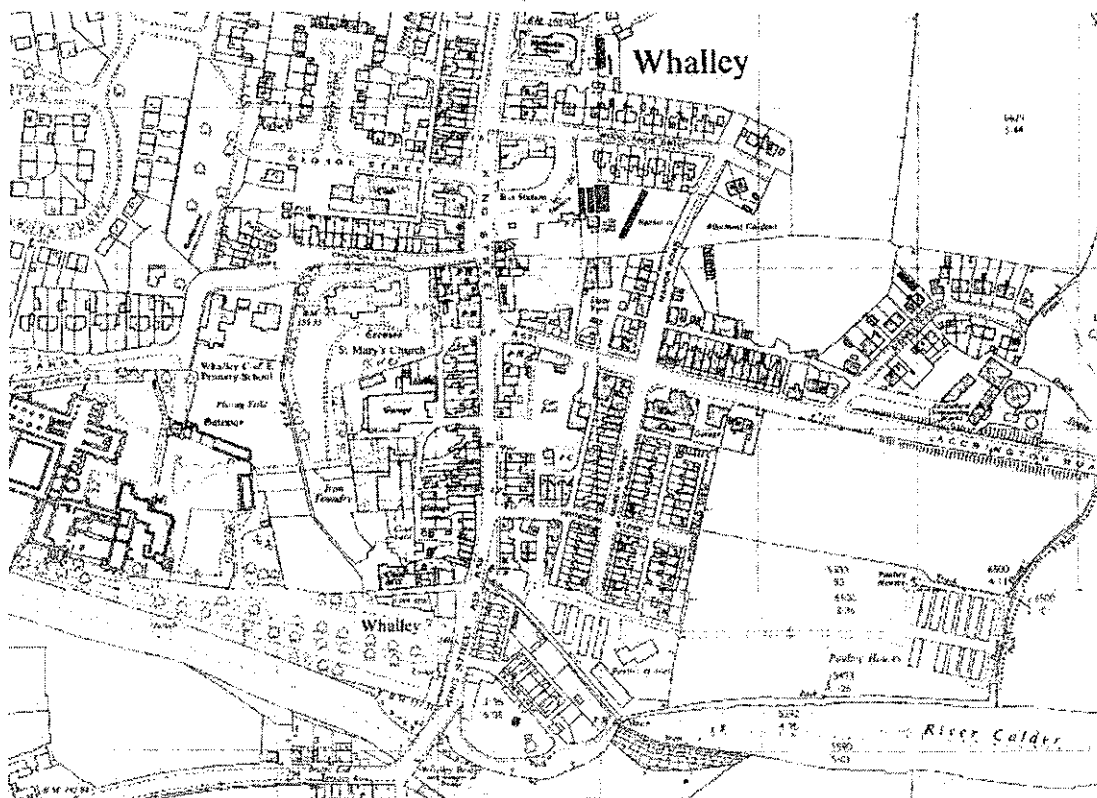


Figure 5. OS map of c.1960 showing further development along the river side to the immediate west of the site and chicken houses on the eastern side of the field

Subsequent to the 1960s map shown in figure 5, further recent development has occurred to the east of the eastern-most residential road on the west side of the site (Woodfield Road), which effectively forms a barrier between the site and the late C19th) development of Queen Street. This issue becomes of particular later in the assessment when the question of setting is considered.

In essence the Conservation Area is drawn around the extent to which Whalley existed c.1900 as generally shown earlier on the map in figure 3. When drawn and later extended, the boundary of the Area was surrounded by later housing to the north and east and therefore specifically excluded this more recent development from the protected space.

### **3.2 Heritage Values**

An appraisal of the heritage values associated with the Conservation Area has been carried out. This process relates to the range of heritage values as outlined by English Heritage (2008), which are distilled under the following headings: evidential value; historic value; communal value; aesthetic value. The purpose of assessing these values is to develop a clearer understanding of the site's significance - whether physically manifest (e.g. architectural features) or in some other less tangible form (e.g. historical associations) - so as to enhance the objective appraisal of proposals for change in the vicinity. In essence this follows the approach generally advocated by English Heritage, whereby necessary change in the historic environment is intelligently managed.

A summary of the heritage values associated with the Conservation Area is given below, together with an indication on how these contribute to the appraisal of significance. As with any such appraisal, the consideration of heritage values and associated significance is carried out in a manner considered appropriate and proportional to the proposed change, which in this instance relates to the impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area. The Whalley Conservation Area Appraisal (2005) referred to earlier has played an important role in this process, not least because this establishes the local policy context.

### 3.2.1 Evidential Value

Of undoubted primary evidential importance within the Conservation Area is the site of Whalley Abbey. This is situated some way west of King Street and a significant distance away from the site under scrutiny. Otherwise, closer to the site, the historic north/south route of King Street is lined either side with buildings that mostly pre-date 1850 and thus offer evidence of the Whalley prior to the changes that began on the arrival of the railway in 1850. The development of architectural trends is displayed in the buildings that line the street, with evidence of the gradual shift from the vernacular to the polite and the strong gothic influence probably originating from the Abbey. Housing of the later C19th industrial era is also represented. Closer to the site, the weir and river to the south west of the site offer evidence of human intervention which is believed to have connection with Whalley Abbey.

With reference to the relationship of these evidential values and the proposed development site, whereas great significance is derived from the historic core of Whalley, the values and significance imbued therein have very little if any direct relationship to the subject site. Had the site been immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and had the Conservation Area not already been enveloped by later development this viewpoint would be markedly changed, but as it is the evidential values of the Conservation Area in closest proximity to the site exist primarily within its boundaries rather than within its broader setting. This matter is further explained by way of the Conservation Area designation process, which specifically provides a boundary within which evidential values (historic fabric) are protected by planning powers. That the Conservation area boundary at Whalley was drawn to dissect historic phases of housing development demonstrates the desire to exclusively conserve selected building/built environment fabric. Boundaries can also be drawn to help protect setting<sup>5</sup> – as indeed is the case the southern part of the Conservation Area and River – however the recent extension of the boundary to the east of the Conservation Area was specifically intended to conserve buildings and not their setting.

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<sup>5</sup> Ensligh Heritage (2010), *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal & Management*

### 3.2.2 Historical Value

Historical and evidential values commonly share similar traits, with the latter providing a physical connection to the modern era in a way that pure historical records (such as photographs and maps etc.) cannot. Conversely, historical values exist beyond the mere physicality of a feature and include consideration of such matters as associations and related stories.

The historical values associated with the Whalley Conservation Area are multifaceted and extensive. Without doubt the story of the Abbey, its role in establishing first the village and later the small town, and the broader influence it exerted across the area represents the most important source of value in this respect. The subsequent development of the village, the stories of those lived there and those who passed through or visited are also of great historical value, as is the interrelationship and co-dependency of the village's domestic, civic, ecclesiastical and commercial buildings.

Arguably, the historical value of Whalley became diluted by the arrival of C20th development, although equally this expansion may be viewed as history in the making, or the historical continuum. Whereas perceptions of this issue will doubtless differ, it would be difficult to dispel the notion that, owing to more recent development, the Conservation Area's historical values are now less sensitive to change - where that change occurs outside its physical boundaries - than they would have been if Whalley had remained as it was, say, in 1900.

### 3.2.3 Communal Value

An informed appreciation of the communal values associated with a heritage site is often very difficult to gauge. That said, within Whalley there is an undoubted sense of communal pride in the rich history of the place, its buildings and setting. Once again, the Abbey almost certainly acquires the greatest degree of communal value, with interest in the site being truly global rather than limited to the immediacy of the region. Otherwise, publicly accessible buildings, such as churches and civic facilities, often represent the community's most cherished historical and architectural assets, and when these are grouped together, along with houses and other private buildings, as in the case of Whalley's Conservation Area, the value is increased. In this, the historic environment becomes the context of day to day life; some might say it is

almost a lifestyle choice. And the attraction of living and working in Whalley is doubtless enhanced by the historic environment, whilst visitors to the town are of course drawn by the history of the place.

In any location the threat of change will often inflate the value a community attributes to its extant environment. In Whalley, the C20th brought many changes to Whalley with expansion on all sides of the historic core. An inherent problem develops in such circumstances whereby it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine where resistance to change stems from a real concern that the communal values of a historic place are under threat as opposed to a more general desire to maintain the status quo. For the outsider (or visitor), it may be that controlled development around the perimeter of Whalley is unlikely to have a negative impact on historical and architectural interest, whereas for the local community the historic core might in fact increase in importance in light of change as is so often the case with larger towns and cities. Indeed it is this reaction to change that first initiated the Conservation Area concept, as brought in the Civic Amenities Act of 1967.

Returning to a theme presented earlier, the issue of communal value would be very different had Whalley not been subject to quite extensive C20th expansion, since conservation of a wholly authentic historic environment within a similarly authentic setting presents a range of priorities that differ from the case in point. The historic core of Whalley as designated a Conservation Area in 1972 was already enveloped by quite recent development; yet that did not prevent designation nor detract from the communal values derived from the place. The same can be said for the boundary extension proposed in 2005.

#### 3.2.4 Aesthetic Value

The Whalley Conservation Area possesses high levels of aesthetic value, derived from the buildings, streets, public spaces and the landscape. The river side location is of major importance in the latter regard, whilst the buildings individually and collectively present a appealing composition particularly in the centre of town. How the aesthetics of the place are enjoyed by the observer is largely dependent upon available aspects or views, both into and out of the site, include the distant and the close up experience. The Whalley Conservation Area Appraisal includes specific

consideration this issue, determining the most important views which were illustrated upon an explanatory map. An extract of this map is shown below in figure 6.

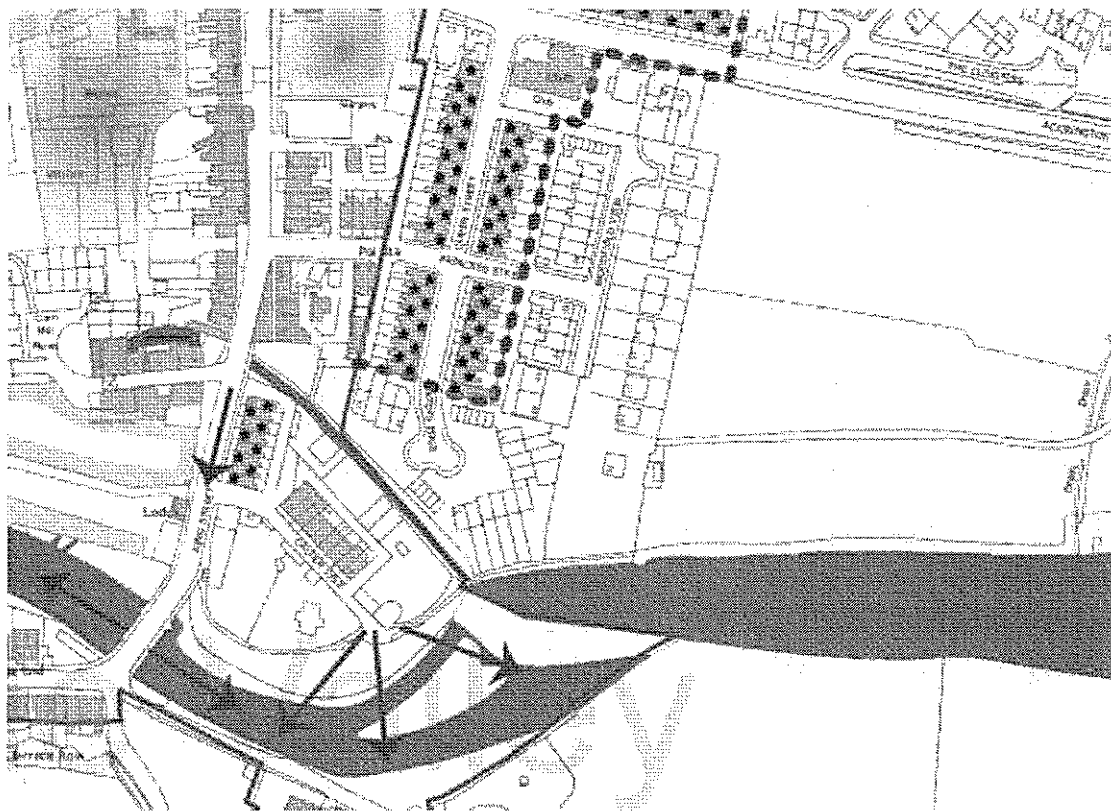


Figure 6. Extract of Conservation Area Appraisal map, showing important views along King Street, the River and across the weir. The subject site is to the right.

As can be seen in figure 6, the important views from the Conservation Area do not include the easterly aspect. This, quite simply, is because of the visual buffer provided by the band of housing on the east side of the town. For the same reason, there are no views of real value – other than a glimpse of later C19th housing from Accrington Road - from the east looking into the Conservation Area (as identified in the 2005 Appraisal), and whereas the aesthetic values associated with historic core of the town are of major significance, they are neither enhanced nor negated by the site under scrutiny. Otherwise, the later C19th and C20th development that envelopes Whalley's historic core certainly influences the visual experience of the place, and it would be difficult to argue that these more recent interventions enhance the visual amenity of the Conservation Area. But they do establish the historical context and enable visual interpretation of the phases of expansion by way of contrasting architectural styles, material use and road configuration. In the latter regard, the favoured linear/grid pattern of roads characterises the C19th and early C20th

development, whereas later interventions primarily adopt less formal layouts. Material choice tends to centre on the use of stone, slate and render: building scale is principally conservative.

Distant views of Whalley Conservation Area are to be found primarily from the south (e.g. from Whalley Nab). These do not focus solely on the Conservation Area, but instead allow a full view of the town with its historic core and later C19th and C20th development. They also facilitate a more comprehensive experience of the town in the landscape and highlight how relatively compact the historic core of the earlier village is (excluding the Abbey site) when compared with later expansion. English Heritage's publication 'Seeing Heritage in the View' (2010) considers the impact of new development on views of historic places and suggests methods of appraisal to enable informed decision making. This begins with conducting what is called a 'Phase A' analysis, which essentially establishes the significant views and the role heritage assets play within those views. Mindful that important views of Whalley Conservation Area primarily exist from the south, the most significant heritage features of those views are undoubtedly the site of the Abbey. Further consideration of this matter is given in the 2005 Conservation Area Appraisal below:

*The dramatic location of Whalley on the banks of the River Calder, and the close proximity of the surrounding hills, provide ample opportunities for stunning views into and out of the town. The most important are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. Of special note is the significance of the ruined Abbey site, the river Calder (with particularly important views from the bridge), and St Mary and All Saints Church.*

(Conservation Studio 2005)

### **3.3 Statement of Significance**

Drawing upon the analysis of heritage values conducted above, it is possible to objectively appraise the significance of the Conservation Area in the specific context of its relationship to the proposed development site, all as follows.

Whalley Conservation Area is an important designated heritage asset containing numerous features of architectural and historic interest, including several listed buildings, principal amongst which is the C14th site of Whalley Abbey. The

Abbey is of high significance, possessing the full range of values and comprising a complex of buildings and ruins that are of great historical and evidential importance. Of comparatively less significance are the heritage values associated with the adjacent historic core of the Whalley, which mostly predates the mid C19th but includes some later C19th housing to the east. Herein there is rich evidence of changing architectural trends including the gothic influence of the Abbey, and multiple historical associations can be drawn from the relationship of the buildings and the past communities that lived (and visited) in the place. In terms of the present day, local pride in Whalley's rich historical legacy remains strong whilst interest in the town and more particularly the Abbey draws visitor from far and wide. The aesthetic appeal of the Whalley Conservation Area centres upon the Abbey, King Street and the River Calder to the south. These primary features are experienced at close quarters whilst moving through the place, whereas distant views are also afforded primarily from elevated land to the south (e.g. Whalley Nab). The main significance of the aesthetic appeal therefore exists within the historic core rather than from exterior vantage points.

In respect to the site of proposed new development on the eastern side of the town, for the most part this is physically and visually detached from the Conservation Area by a buffer of C20th housing to the east side of the historic core. To the very north west corner of the plot, late C19th housing along Accrington Road which sits within the extended boundary is closer in proximity, but this represents a relatively isolated projection of buildings set firmly amidst more recent dwellings as seen in figure 6. The significance of the eastern-most part of the Conservation Area – i.e. that in closest proximity to the proposed site – exists in the physical fabric of the late c. 19<sup>th</sup>/early c. 20<sup>th</sup> buildings, which were captured by the recent boundary change. The setting of these buildings, being cheek by jowl with later c20th housing, is by contrast of very little significance.

## 4.0 ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED WORKS

### 4.1 General Principles

Given the consideration of significance included in section 3.0 above, it is possible to develop a more objective assessment of those proposals which are deemed to have a potential effect on the Conservation Area. In this it is usually important to give due consideration to the principles of building conservation (e.g. honesty, reversibility, like for like materials etc.) outlined in various documents pertaining to heritage protection in England, including PPS5 and its Practise Guide (CLG, 2010), 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' etc. (English Heritage 2008) and British Standard (BS) 7913: 1998 'Guide to the Principles of Building Conservation'. However since the proposals essentially relate to the question of setting rather than any physical modification of the heritage asset, it is more appropriate to analyse the new design work associated with the development and how this relates to the Conservation Area. This analysis has been conducted with reference to the design principles advocated in the 'Building in Context Toolkit', jointly published by English Heritage and CABE in 2001<sup>6</sup>, 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal & Management' (English Heritage 2010) and also local policy documents published by Ribble Valley BC. It should be stressed that the analysis is specific to the aspect of heritage and not the broader context of urban design *per se*.

The Building in Context principles, summarised as follows, are intended as a guide to enable the assessment of whether a proposal is likely to produce a successful outcome:

1. A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.
2. A successful project will relate well to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land
3. A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.
4. A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it
5. A successful project will respect important views
6. A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings

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<sup>6</sup> Now accessible at, [www.building-in-context.org](http://www.building-in-context.org) (last accessed 30/6/11)

7. A successful project will use materials and construction methods which are at least as high in quality as those in the existing context
8. A successful project might create new views and juxtapositions and add to the variety and texture of the setting

#### 4.2 Summary of the Proposals

Full details of the proposed development will be otherwise included as part of the planning application process. In order to avoid duplication, this appraisal refers to the proposals but does not include full copies of the scheme drawings etc.

The proposals comprise building a new estate of housing upon the subject greenfield site with associated roads, pavements and soft and hard landscaping features including tree screening to the perimeter site boundaries. In addition there will be an apartment block situated to the north eastern corner. The proposed site plan is provided in figure 7 below:

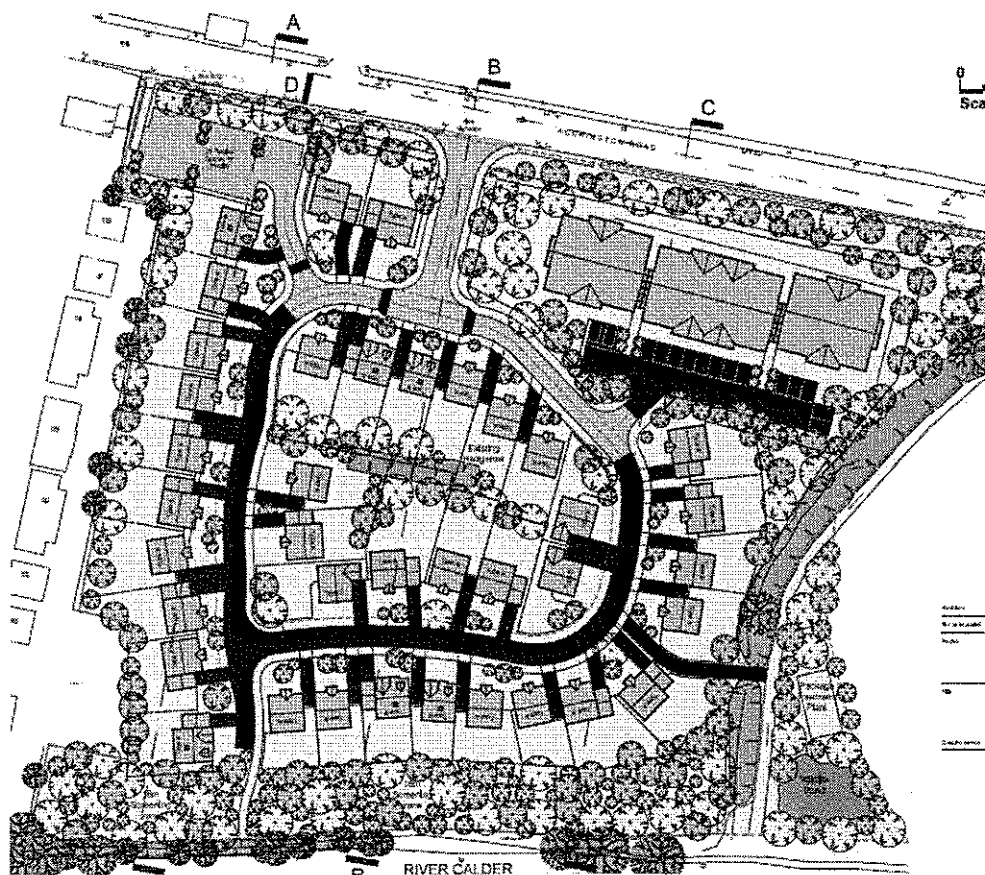


Figure 7. Proposed site plan, with Accrington Road running east/west at the top (north) and the River Calder to the south. The apartment block is to the top right.

#### 4.3 Analysis of the Proposals: Building in Context

An objective assessment of the proposed scheme and its likely/possible impact on the Conservation Area is conducted below, in accordance with the aforementioned principles set out in the Building in Context Toolkit.

4.3.1 A successful project will start with an assessment of the value of retaining what is there.

The proposal will not physically alter or effect the Conservation Area therefore this principal does not apply to the project.

4.3.2 A successful project will relate well to the geography and history of the place and lie of the land.

The proposed development is situated on open land to the east side of the town and detached from the Conservation Area. It therefore does not have a direct physical impact upon the Conservation Area and it is arguable to what extent this Building in Context criterion applies. That said, the development does not represent the first expansion to the east of the town and in fact continues a trend that began in the late c19th and continued in the C20th. Land to the immediate north of the site has C20th housing, and very recent housing development is also present to the south western corner of the site and along the length of the western boundary. These houses are therefore closer to the Conservation Area than the proposed housing, and it may be presumed that permission to build in these instances acknowledged the limited impact such development would have on the heritage asset.

4.3.3 A successful project will be informed by its own significance so that its character and identity will be appropriate to its use and context.

The simple functional purpose of the new housing and apartment block does not require flamboyant or complex design solutions. Traditional methods are therefore both possible and appropriate, respecting the mainly utilitarian nature of much housing in the town. The proposed scheme comprises relatively simple buildings composed of a palette of materials that harmonise with much of the town and the local area. Overall the design is low key and low impact, with perimeter screening which will serve to lessen visual impact from street level. These measures acknowledge the

primacy of those buildings that constitute the historic core of the town and the relative insignificance of the new housing development when compared to the architectural and historical assets that characterise the Conservation Area

4.3.4 A successful project will sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it

C20th housing development in Whalley introduced new methods of setting out buildings and streets which were a notable departure from the mainly linear/grid iron arrangement of the C19th development. As a result, much of the town's housing is set out with looping road layouts and these proliferate on all sides (except the south) of the Conservation Area as can be seen in figure 1. It is therefore difficult to propose a 'correct' layout for the proposed development, as in one which would sit happily in the exiting pattern of development. Continuing the linear north/south alignment of roads to the west side of the site, some of which are C19th, may be seen by some as the most appropriate approach, and had the rest of the town adopted such configuration there would be little doubt in the matter. But the extent to which the historic linear precedent was ignored by C20th development in Whalley means that insisting upon a linear configuration on the proposed site amounts to too little too late. Furthermore, modern highways design guides would prove difficult to satisfy in this regard.

An alternative perspective on the issue might promote contrast as an important defining factor. The C20th housing in Whalley is interpretable by the very nature of its layout (and of course the house construction), and by providing a readily discernible contrast in the pattern of road design it could be argued that historic core of the town becomes more distinct and 'readable'. The proposed development in this instance mirrors the looping design of much that surrounds the historic core and therefore does follow the linear tradition. Whether this detracts or enhances the heritage values and significance of the Conservation Area remains, in the view of the author, open to conjecture.

4.3.5 A successful project will respect important views

Important views of the Conservation Area are discussed earlier in the assessment of heritage values. Reference is made to the 2005 Conservation Area Appraisal and

figure 6 illustrates the location and direction of important views as assessed in that document. In essence close up views throughout the Conservation Area afford an intimate experience of the historic buildings and sites, whereas distant views which allow fuller appreciation of the Conservation Area within the setting of the town and broader landscape principally exist from elevated land to the south. In respect to close up views, the proposed development has no physical impact, other than perhaps the view west down Accrington Road where a late C19th terrace which now sits within the Area. This could be seen (to the viewer's right) whilst the new development could be seen to the viewer's left. But since the terrace is also already surrounded by later C20th housing the quality of the view is limited as is the likely impact of the new development. The issue of distant views is considered below.

From the easterly direction entering Whalley on Accrington Road, the development site will be visible but will not in any way impact upon appreciation of the Conservation Area. From the south however, such as the main vantage point of Whalley Nab, the Conservation Area and the new development will be jointly visible, albeit separated by the band of existing housing to the east side of King Street. As mentioned earlier in this appraisal, English Heritage's 'Seeing Heritage in the View' (2010) suggests ways in which assessment might be made of possible impact of new development on significant views of heritage sites/areas. The 'Phase B' assessment hinges upon the magnitude of impact, mindful that, as with the case in point, almost any development will be visible and views will change. But it is the extent to which these changing views impact upon heritage significance that matters, with the most significant assets being the most sensitive to change. In the Whalley Conservation Area the Abbey is without doubt the asset of greatest significance, and also the most visible feature on account of its size and spatial setting. Otherwise the St Marys and All Saints church is a tall distinct feature, whereas much of the Conservation Area comprises relatively low rise and compact buildings which sit amongst a wider townscape of similar sized buildings. Distant views of the Conservation Area are thus not particularly discernible from distant views of the town, and whereas the proposed development would certainly have an impact on views, the impact on heritage significance is likely to be minimal.

Further consideration on visual impact aside from pure heritage matters is given in other documents that accompany the planning application.

4.3.6 A successful project will respect the scale of neighbouring buildings

The houses associated with new development reflect and respect the general scale of housing the vicinity. The apartments, albeit much larger than the houses, are positioned well away from the Conservation Area and adapt a low rise massing which minimises the impact of comparatively large ground plans. Otherwise the apartments are too distant to be considered as impacting upon the historic core and are only considered within this appraisal because of their relationship to the new scheme.

4.3.7 A successful project will use materials and construction methods which are at least as high in quality as those in the existing context

The quality of materials and detailing is largely a task that is managed in the procurement and construction phase. As mentioned earlier, the palette of proposed materials draws upon what already exists in the town, harmonising the old and new and hopefully, when built, adding to the quality of the townscape.

4.3.8 A successful project might create new views and juxtapositions and add to the variety and texture of the setting

As discussed earlier, the proposed development will certainly alter views of the town without specifically impacting negatively on the Conservation Area. Owing to the nature of the town with the Conservation Area at its heart, it is unlikely that a development that is spatially detached from the Conservation Area will create new views and juxtapositions as suggested by the criterion.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The assessment has revealed a range of issues which relate to the proposed development and its likely/possible impact upon Whalley Conservation Area, but does not identify any clear evidence that the significance of the Conservation Area will be damaged by the scheme. This is largely due to the relative location of the two sites and the buffer which exists in the form of late C19th and C20th housing which lies in a band to the east side of the historic core. Where the new development comes closest to the Conservation Area at the north west corner of the plot, Accrington Road forms a boundary between the plot (south side) and a c.1900 terrace (north side), and

the terrace is in effect already enveloped by later C20th housing therefore not sensitive to changing views.

Where physical detachment exists between a conservation area and new development, it is normally sufficient to discount the potential effect on setting, all as considered in PPS5, given that setting normally relates to the immediacy of that space which borders the heritage asset. But the sensitivity of setting is arguably greater when the Conservation Area occupies a comparatively small settlement, as in the case of Whalley, and whilst development in larger towns can occur near to, not bordering, Conservation Areas without too much risk of harming significance, in a smaller place that risk requires more careful management. Perhaps the relevant question here is, to what degree is the Whalley Conservation Area sensitive to change?

In assessing this sensitivity to change, it must be acknowledged that when designated in 1972 and extended more recently, Whalley was already a very different place than it had been some hundred years earlier. As shown with the historical mapping given earlier in the appraisal, the village as it existed in 1900 is essentially the designated Area, and as with all such designations part of the aim was to protect the place from harmful intervention. This was done at a time when the historic core was already surrounded by more recent development (see figure 5), and the threat of harm existed primarily from within the space rather than from what might be referred to as the exterior. For the most part the Conservation Area boundary was drawn to provide a buffer zone around the Abbey, whilst extending to include King Street and the impressive setting of the bridge and weir to the River Calder. Otherwise Whalley was already a very large village/small town with the C20th expansion being significantly greater in area than the pre 1900 core. In this context, whereas sensitivity to change within the Conservation Area remains high, sensitivity to further outward expansion is comparatively low in the specific realm of heritage significance. In this regard, it is important to note that the 2005 Conservation Area Appraisal does not cite development on land to the east of the town as a threat to the Conservation Area.

On the issue of important views, there can be little doubt that the prime views from the south will be changed by the proposed development. But the extent to which this change will harm the significant views of the Conservation Area is debatable. No physical barriers will be formed to obscure views and the Abbey will be sufficiently detached from the new housing site. That is not to say that visual impact is an issue

unworthy of consideration: but in the sense of harming views of Whalley's historic core it is difficult to see how the development can have any major impact, not least because the historic core is already surrounded by later development.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

Having appraised the heritage values and significance of the Conservation Area and the possibility that these might be harmed by the proposed development on land to the east of the village, it is clear that there is no risk of direct physical harm. In respect to harming the setting of the Conservation Area, the likelihood of this also seems minimal given that the new development is physically detached from the Conservation Area and the Area is already surrounded by a large amount of C20th housing development. Where the Conservation Area and development site are in closest proximity at Accrington Road, the road here provides an effective buffer zone between the two and in this specific location it is the fabric of the late C19th terrace that is conserved and not its setting. Elsewhere, there will be an impact upon distant elevated views from the south, but this impact relates more broadly to landscape and townscape assessment than it does the specific issue of heritage value.