

# CLITHEROE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



This document has been written and produced by The Conservation Studio, 1 Querns Lane,  
Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1RL      **Final revision 25.10.05/photos added 08.12.06**

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## CLITHEROE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

### Introduction

#### Purpose of the appraisal

This appraisal seeks to record and analyse the various features which give the Clitheroe Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest. The area's buildings and spaces are noted and described, and marked on the Townscape Appraisal map along with listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, significant trees and spaces, and important views into and out of the conservation area. There is a presumption that all of these features should be “preserved or enhanced”, as required by the legislation.

This appraisal builds upon national policy, as set out in PPG15, and local policy, as set out in the Local Plan 1998, and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Chipping Conservation Area can be assessed.



*View along Castle Street from Clitheroe Castle*

#### Summary of special interest

Clitheroe is a small market town located on, and around, a natural rock outcrop in a rural location at the centre of the Ribble Valley in Lancashire. The Clitheroe Conservation Area covers the historic core of the town whose most notable asset is the 12<sup>th</sup> century castle which, though small, holds a commanding position and is a major landmark both in the wider landscape and within the town itself.

The spine of the town, leading along the ridge from the castle to the parish church, contains an attractive collection of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, many of which are statutorily listed for their special architectural and historic interest. The celebrated architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner in *'The Buildings of England'* describes Clitheroe as “a townscape pleasure”.

The special interest that justifies designation of the Clitheroe Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- Clitheroe Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- The relatively intact medieval layout of the original settlement;
- The Castle Grounds which is included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, 88 of which are listed;
- Church Street, the best area of Clitheroe's historic townscape;
- Historic late 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape along King Street including Police Station (1886), former Post Office (1879) and Victoria Buildings;
- Planned grid pattern of typical late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing (Railway Terrace, Waddington Road, St Mary's Street and Brennand Street);
- Good examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses in Eshton Terrace;
- The prevalent use of local building stone;
- The distinctive skyline, especially as viewed from the Bashall Eaves area of the Borough;
- Open space beside Mearley Brook at the rear of SS Michael and John's Church;
- The Market Place;
- Traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts;
- Views of Pendle Hill and distant fells to the west;
- Panoramic views from Clitheroe Castle;
- A pleasing historic townscape enhanced by the town's changes of level and curves in the old streets and areas of historic stone floorscape;
- Stone paved pedestrian alleys off Moor Lane and Church Street;
- Individual trees and groups of trees in the area's three significant open spaces.



*Market Place*

## The planning policy context

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. It is the quality and interest of an *area*, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment. The layout and content follows guidance produced by English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the English Historic Towns Forum.



*St Mary Magdalene's Church*

## Local planning policy

Local planning policies for the preservation of scheduled monuments and conservation of historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and conservation areas are set out in the Ribble Valley Local Plan which was adopted in June 1998 (Policies ENV14, ENV15, ENV16, ENV17, ENV18, ENV19, ENV20, ENV21) and the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001-2016 which was adopted on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 (Policies 20 and 21, supported by draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) entitled 'Landscape and Heritage').

The Clitheroe Conservation Area was designated in October 1973 and extended and given Outstanding Conservation Area status in December 1979. This document updates and replaces the Conservation Area Appraisal for Clitheroe which was prepared in May 1994.

## Location and setting

### Location and context

The town of Clitheroe is situated on a triangle of land between the River Ribble to the west and the Mearley Brook to the east. Up until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, development was restricted to the historic core of the town and its immediate surroundings, laid out at the foot of Clitheroe Castle along the main highway from Preston to Blackburn and Skipton. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the growing industrial base, development spread south-west (Whalley Road and Moor Lane) and north-east (York Street and King Street).

The Clitheroe Conservation Area contains the historic core of the medieval town including its principal medieval streets: Castle Street, Market Place, Church Street, Wellgate, Lowergate and Duck Street. In addition, the conservation area's boundaries have been drawn to include the whole of the Castle Grounds, the 19<sup>th</sup> century streets of Moor Lane, York Street and King Street together with areas of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses along Eshton Terrace, Parsons Lane (Wesleyan Terrace), Brennand Street and St. Mary's Street.



*Junction of Castle Street and King Street*

The Clitheroe Conservation Area is surrounded by urban development in the centre of the town of Clitheroe which is a market town with a rural setting within an area of lowland fringe farming. The spine of the conservation area runs in a north-easterly direction from the castle to the parish church along a low ridge approximately 80 metres above sea level. From the spine, the land falls away to east and west, to Mearley Brook and the River Ribble respectively. East of Clitheroe is rural countryside characterised by enclosed fields then open moor as the land rises up to Pendle Hill, which overlooks and dominates the entire area.

The underlying solid geology of the locality consists of Carboniferous Limestone, characterised by knoll-reefs in the Lower Carboniferous basin areas and the town is

dominated by the Clitheroe Knoll, on which the castle is sited. The knoll extends north-north-west from the grounds of the castle to the north end of the town.

### **General character and plan form**

The core of the conservation area which is centred on Castle Street, Church Street, Wellgate and Lowergate is also the core of the town's original 12<sup>th</sup> century settlement. Historic burgage plots are evident in, for instance, the long, thin strip of land occupied by today's Rose and Crown (formerly the Starkie Arms c1850) and the sites of two large dwellings, Stanley House in Lowergate and Hazelmere beside Well Terrace. The latter has a stone set in the boundary wall reading "Borough Croft late Fishs No 46" identifying the burgage plot number.

Along the town's central spine, buildings are built close to back-of-pavement line and occupy long and narrow plots though many original burgage boundaries have been obscured by sub-division, by 19<sup>th</sup> century roads (e.g. Moor Lane and York Road) and by modern development. Frontages are composed of short rows, broken intermittently by arched entrances to the rear of properties, sometimes pedestrian width such as between nos. 31 and 33 Castle Street, sometimes the width of a carriage such as at nos. 1 and 4 Church Street or the Rose and Crown, Castle Street.



*'Almonds', Church Street, a good example of Clitheroe's Georgian architecture*

Three storey development is common in the commercial centre of the town declining in height to two storeys in peripheral areas like Moor Lane, Duck Street and the lower end of York Street. Nos. 2 -16 York Street is a three-storey row of houses just outside the town centre. Victoria Buildings, 12 King Street and no. 6 Shaw Bridge are exceptions to the norm, being four storey former warehouses, both of which stand noticeably above adjacent developments.

There are exceptions to the characteristic back-of-pavement line. Clitheroe Royal Grammar School and the conservation area's places of worship all stand apart from neighbouring property with a commanding outlook over the street. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century

Council Offices, modern health centre and two small housing developments (Church Brow Gardens and Candlemakers Court) break into the town's historic layout. Domestic gardens, where they exist at all, are small and at the rear of properties, rarely visible from a public viewpoint.

## Historic development

### Origins and historic development

The name Clitheroe is derived from the Old English *clyder* and *hoh*, meaning the hill with loose stones.

The origins of the settlement at Clitheroe are unknown. Clitheroe is not mentioned directly in the Domesday Book but the Castle was probably in existence by 1100 and it is likely that the settlement was founded at the start of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The parish church of St Mary Magdalene was in existence in 1122 but nothing now remains of the Norman church. The borough, initially composed of 60 burgages, was created by Henry de Lacy. The reputed date of the town's first charter is 1147.

The castle was not only a defensive building. It contained within its outer enclosure the chapel of St Michael in Castro although by 1717 nothing but the walls of the chapel remained. It was also an administrative centre and was the main court of the Blackburn Hundred, with a court house, gaol, stables and other important buildings to enable the de Lacy family to control their land from one regional centre. It was not until the construction of a town hall in Church Street in 1820 that local government finally shifted from the Castle to the town.



*No. 12 Church Street*

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Clitheroe was a successful market town and records show a wide variety of trades. In 1789 the population was about 1,000. Agriculture was the main form of employment but by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, weaving had also become an important means of income for many inhabitants.



The first major mill to be opened was that at Low Moor in 1784. Other mills opened in the following years as the textile industry became established on a factory scale. In addition, the local extraction of lime boosted the town's economy.

A trade directory of 1830 describes Clitheroe thus: "within the last twenty years the manufacture of cotton has been rising...and at this period, is carried on to a considerable extent; cotton spinning, power-loom manufactories, and print works, are of magnitude; and an immense body of machinery, in operation here, is turned by iron water wheels...to the north of the town, on the banks of the Ribble, is a valuable and inexhaustible bed of lime-stone, and there are seldom less than ten kilns burning, supplied from this source."

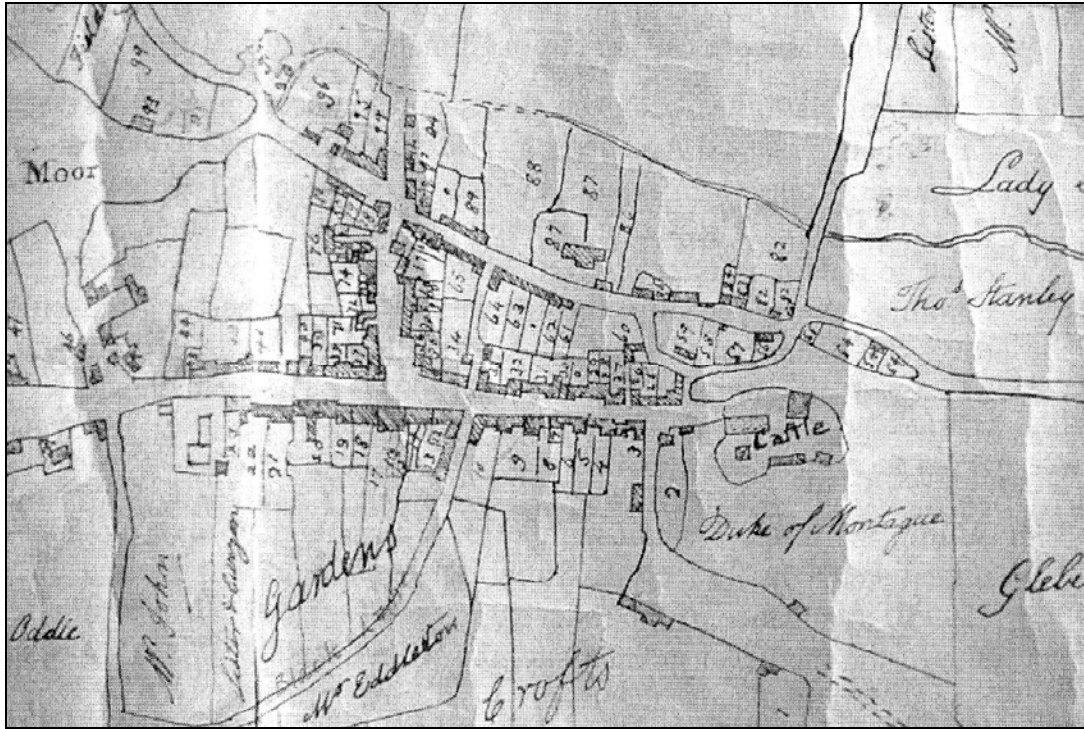
The construction of the first textile mills and the opening of new turnpike roads led to the first major expansion of the town and the construction of new streets, Moor Lane, York Street and King Street. By 1851 the population had risen to 7,000 and there were nine textile mills working in Clitheroe. Housing for the mill workers was located away the town centre beside the new mills.



*Traditional shopfront, 24 Wellgate*

The opening of the railway in 1850 (although there was not a purpose-built railway station until 1871) appears to have had little impact on stimulating further industrial growth. The present urban area had largely developed by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Over the past 100 years, since the decline in the cotton industry, Clitheroe has continued in its role as market town, administrative centre and local industrial centre based on cement, clothing, electrical and chemical manufacture. There has been some 20<sup>th</sup> century development within the conservation area but most modern development, comprising housing estates on open land, has taken place on the outskirts of the town. In recent years, three superstores have opened close to the town centre.

The town's population has risen from 11,000 in 1904 to today's 14,000.



Sketch map of Clitheroe c. 1740



Lang's map of 1766



O.S. 1846



O.S. 1886

## Spatial analysis

### Key views and vistas

Clitheroe Castle is the most prominent feature, not just of the surrounding countryside but within the conservation area and the town itself. The keep is perched on the highest point of the limestone ridge and is surrounded by open land, mostly landscaped parkland. Castle and development along the limestone ridge give the conservation area a distinctive skyline.

The view of the Castle looking south along Castle Street is a defining image of the conservation area. The Castle provides panoramic views across the town and surrounding countryside. There are also good views from St Mary Magdalene's churchyard.

The church, although on a slight rise above the borough at its north end, is not a dominant feature within the town centre. Its lack of prominence is a result of its location behind closely packed buildings on Church Street, a relatively narrow road. The church is more visible in upward views from lower-lying land to the west.

The Public Library of 1905, with its conical roof and clock face, has been well designed to take advantage of its corner location and is a notable landmark overlooking the historic Market Place which is still the focus of the town centre. The town's banks are also located on corner sites, giving them prominence in the streetscene.



*Clitheroe Royal Grammar School a key building at northern approach to the town*

Views of distant uplands are one of the distinctive features of the conservation area. Looking east, Pendle Hill can often be seen and, looking westwards, good views of distant fells can be gained from St Mary Magdalene's churchyard and from the rear of the Rose and Crown in Castle Street.

### **The character of spaces within the area**

The conservation area contains three notable open spaces the most significant of which is Clitheroe Castle Grounds, considered in Section 4.11 below.

The second important open space lies between Lowergate and Mearley Brook at the rear of SS Michael and John's Catholic Church. This grassed area, with individual and groups of trees, appears to have never been developed, perhaps because of the risk of flooding. Being located on the periphery of the conservation area, both open spaces are important to the setting of the conservation area.

A third, much smaller area of open space is the churchyard of the church of St Mary Magdalene. Together with gardens north of the churchyard and at rear of 15-21 Church Street, this is a major open space within the conservation area.

In addition to the above green areas, there are a number of other important open spaces which make a valuable contribution to the area's character and appearance. The foremost is the Market Place which, after 800 years is still the principal public open space in the centre of the town, enhanced with benches and other street furniture. Other important spaces are the car parks at Clitheroe Royal School, the Council Offices, and Lowergate.



*Clitheroe Royal Grammar School (1782), York Street*

## Definition of the special interest of the conservation area

### Activities/uses

The conservation area hosts a mix of primarily business, commercial and residential uses. It encloses the entire principal shopping frontage of the town, which is located along Moor Street, Castle Street and Market Place, and almost all the main shopping centre (the town's modern superstores are not included within the conservation area). The main offices of Ribble Valley Borough Council, the Clitheroe Royal Grammar School (c. 650 students), St Mary Magdalene's Church and several other places of worship, and a variety of pubs, restaurants and cafes lie within the conservation area. There is no major industry within the conservation area.

The Castle Grounds provide pleasant flower gardens and extensive recreational facilities including tennis, bowls, a children's play area and an open air theatre. The town has its own museum, beside the castle, and gallery, in the old railway station.

The railway line, closed to passenger services in 1962, was re-opened in 1994 and a regular service runs from Clitheroe to Blackburn.

In brief, the Clitheroe Conservation Area contains the commercial, administrative and business heart of a Lancashire market town with a population of 14,000. Clitheroe's castle, specialist shops and historic ambience make it a popular tourist destination. The town as a whole has below national average unemployment and generally the town is regarded as being relatively prosperous.



*Nos 2-18 York Street, a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace*

### The effect of historical development on plan form

The layout of the town has been shaped by the topography of the limestone knoll at the southern end of which stands Clitheroe Castle, the *raison d'être* of the original settlement. At the northern end of the low ridge is the Church of St Mary Magdalene, also

established in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century. The position of church and castle indicates the likely size of the original settlement of Clitheroe which would have been situated between them. This borough settlement took the form of the classic, two-row planned settlement with castle and church at either end.

The main axis of the borough was Castle Street, which led into the Market Place, which itself continued north as Church Street and Church Brow. Lowergate formed a second axis, more or less parallel to the main thoroughfare, on its east side. These two routes were joined by Wellgate, an important street in the borough as it contained one of the public wells, and also formed part of the Market Place at its west end. It was also the main route out of the town to the east and Burnley.

A track led north from Wellgate to Worston, called the Brookgate, which followed the line of present-day Duck Street. Duck Street once played a more important role in the street pattern of the emerging town - hence the unusually wide junction at the meeting of Duck Street, Wellgate and Lowergate.

The highway from Skipton originally entered the borough from the north (now Pimlico Road and Church Brow) and, on the south side of the town, the main road into the town came from Edisford. This route curved round the north side of the Castle on its west side, today's Parson Lane. This medieval pattern of streets remained relatively unaltered until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is illustrated in Lang's map of 1766.

The opening of the new Whalley Road in 1809 brought about the construction of a new southern approach to the town centre, today's Moor Lane, which necessitated the demolition of buildings in burgage plots at the base of the Castle gates. Similarly the Chatburn turnpike, to the north of the town, stimulated the construction of a new northern approach road, York Road (c1820), leading directly to the Market Place, cutting through burgage plots on Wellgate.



*Bank building prominently sited at the junction of Castle Street and King Street*

A third new street, King Street, was laid out after the opening of the railway in 1850, following part of the course of an ancient back lane leading westwards from the Market Place.

The historic street pattern is augmented by narrow pedestrian lanes or alleys, still paved with stone setts, which lead laterally between the main north-south streets. These follow the boundary of the historic burgage plots.

Clitheroe Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and there are a large number of other sites within the conservation area that are recorded on the Sites and Monuments Register. The conservation area has considerable archaeological potential and, as part of the Lancashire Extensive Urban Survey, has been the subject of a detailed archaeological assessment (2003) which states that, "Given that Clitheroe is a well-documented medieval borough, the small number of known medieval sites is a reflection of the lack of archaeological work carried out in Clitheroe to date".

### **Architectural and historic character**

The buildings within the Clitheroe Conservation Area are a mix of types and uses and, with the exception of the 12<sup>th</sup> century castle, range in date from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. There are 88 listing entries for the conservation area.

The conservation area is most notable for buildings from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century, many of which replaced earlier structures - even the Church of St. Mary Magdalene dates primarily from a rebuilding in 1828. The town's 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion has mostly taken place outside the conservation area.

In Clitheroe, as in other market towns, the 18<sup>th</sup> century marked a movement away from traditional vernacular building to a more consciously designed 'polite' form of architecture. Buildings from this period are influenced by a sense of proportion and incorporate sliding sash windows and elements of classical detailing such as pediments and friezes. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Church Street was the main route into and out of the town and No. 21 Church Street is a good example of Clitheroe's Georgian architecture.



*Stone paving, steps and iron boot scraper in Church Street*



As the town's economy expanded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, based on the cotton industry, its population grew and many town-centre civic, commercial and religious buildings were built. The core street of the conservation area, extending from the Castle to St Mary Magdalene's Church, contains four 19<sup>th</sup> century stone-built banks, the former town hall (1822), public library (1903) and several late 19<sup>th</sup> century shops (some with surviving historic shopfronts). Elsewhere the Court House (1864) was built in Lowergate and the Police Station (1871) and post Office (1879) were built in King Street.

Clitheroe's role as a market town resulted in a large number of pubs, inns and hotels but few can be dated to earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant are the grade II listed Swan and Royal, the Rose and Crown, the Victoria Hotel and the White Lion but lesser hostelries such as the Dog in Wellgate, the former Crown Chambers in Waddington Road and the New Inn in Parson Lane are also listed for their special architectural or historic interest.

The conservation area is notable for the number of religious buildings including an Anglican and Catholic church and several non-conformist chapels, some of which, like The Emporium, are no longer in religious use. Earlier religious buildings such as the Independent Chapel (1815) on Shaw Bridge Street or the former Roman Catholic Church (1899) on Lowergate have a simple plan form and round arched windows. Religious buildings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have a 'gothic' appearance with pointed arched window and door openings, and a strong vertical emphasis.

On the periphery of the conservation area are several streets of characteristic late 19<sup>th</sup> century artisans' terraced houses. They are all two storeys in height and typically present a strong rhythm of regularly spaced doors, windows and chimney stacks. In recent years many original timber doors and windows have been replaced and front garden boundary walls have been altered. Most have small front gardens but earlier terraces such as Wesleyan Terrace, Albion Street and Well Terrace open directly onto the pavement.



*Natural stone paving, Church Street is a remnant of Clitheroe's historic floorscape*

## Building materials and local details

In the medieval period it is likely that the Church and Castle were the only stone-built stone-flag roofed structures in the town, the rest being timber-framed with thatched roofs. Many of the buildings remained timber-built and thatched into the 17<sup>th</sup> century but, as noted above, the town's buildings were replaced and/or rebuilt from the second half of the c18 onwards and there are no surviving examples of external historic timber framing. Some historic fabric does remain, for instance no. 23 Church Street has a re-used 17<sup>th</sup> century stone doorway with cornice and chamfered jambs.

Stone is the most prevalent walling material, used for the construction of prestigious banks and chapels as well as modest cottages. Boundary walls of local stone are also common and stone setts and stone paving slabs are a feature of the conservation area's historic floorscape. Prominent commercial or religious buildings are built with smooth ashlar stone with narrow lime mortar joints, for example the Public Library and the NatWest Bank in York Street. Less important buildings and minor houses are built with coursed rubble stone, often with rusticated stone quoins as in Duck Street.

Brick is not common but there are a few brick buildings in King Street reflecting the post-railway development of this area. Brick is so uncommon that large brick buildings such as the former Post Office in King Street and former Court House in Lowergate appear as a startling intrusion into a streetscene that is mostly dominated by local stone.

Many buildings are covered in stucco, a form of render that was popular in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly a large number of buildings have either by design or at a later date been rendered with a smooth or roughcast coat of plaster which conceals the walling material.



*The Carnegie Library (1905) closes the view north along Castle Street*

For roofing materials, Clitheroe's position in the Ribble Valley placed it at some distance from quarries producing stone flags but the river would have been a plentiful source of reeds for thatch. There is no local source of clay for making tiles and bricks. Although

many medieval buildings would have been thatched, the prevalent roof material in the conservation area is Welsh slate which became more readily available after the arrival of the railway in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Viewed from a high point such as the Castle, the roofscape is dominated by slate but there are also examples of clay tile roofs on late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings such as the former Parish School in Church Street where bands of plain and rounded tiles have been used to decorative effect. Stone flags are characteristic of the locality but there are few examples remaining within the conservation area, notably on the roof of the Clitheroe Castle outbuildings, 14-16 Duck Street and the old school building of Clitheroe Royal Grammar School.

Chimneys are a significant element of the conservation area's lively roofscape which is also enhanced by the turrets and pinnacles of the town's many churches and chapels. Typically, chimneys are constructed in stone with clay pots. Dormers are not common but can be seen on some late 19<sup>th</sup> century properties, especially in Moor Lane.

Historic windows are generally timber sliding sashes deeply recessed in the stone- or brickwork. Window openings in stone buildings often have stone surrounds, commonly painted in a contrasting colour to the main colour of the walls. This practice is often extended to the stone quoins which can be found on many buildings, for example at the Swan and Royal Hotel and no. 11 Castle Street.

A particular architectural feature of interest is the different ways in which rainwater gutters are supported with curled metal or carved stone brackets at eaves level. Variety in design can best be appreciated in Church Street. Nos. 12-16 York Street have a moulded stone eaves cornice behind which the gutter is concealed.



*White Lion, Market Place*

### **Buildings of Townscape Merit**

In addition to the conservation area's listed buildings, there are a large number of *unlisted* buildings which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal

map. This follows advice provided in English Heritage guidance on conservation area character appraisals, and within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15), both of which stress the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings.

Buildings of Townscape Merit in Clitheroe vary, but generally date to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. They may be modest terraces, such as St Mary's Street or Eshton Terrace, or much larger and more significant religious or commercial buildings, such as SS Michael and John's Church or the former Post Office, which are considered to be good, relatively unaltered examples, of their type. The survival of original materials and details, and the basic, historic form of the building, is important. Where a building has been adversely affected by modern changes and restoration is either impractical or indeed, not possible, they are excluded but there are few of these within Clitheroe Conservation Area.

### **Historic shopfronts**

The Clitheroe Conservation Area contains a high proportion of commercial premises and a special feature of the conservation area is the remaining number of complete and partial 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts. Good examples of reasonably complete historic shopfronts are 11 Castle Street, 31 Castle Street and 24 Wellgate. In Moor Lane there are examples of two-storey shopfronts; no.17 Moor Lane is a particularly good example, listed grade II. Many modern shopfronts incorporate elements of earlier traditional shopfronts such as timber fascia or scrolled consoles. These should be preserved.



*Stanley House, Lowergate*

### **Landscape and trees**

Clitheroe Castle Grounds are listed grade II on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. They comprise a castle mound, once used as the grounds of a private residence, with garden terraces laid out in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the mound and adjacent land being developed for use as a public park in the 1920s. The grounds are assessed in detail in the English Heritage Register.

The area is now a well used open space with the Castle and yard dedicated to museums and the public display of the monument and the surrounding open land landscaped as a public park with recreation grounds, tennis courts, bowling greens and open-air auditorium.

Most of the conservation area's trees are to be found in the open spaces described above but there are small groups of trees in other locations which further add to the conservation area's distinctive character and appearance. Roadside trees in Church Street and York Street are important and other small but significant groups of trees can be found beside the modern health centre, outside the Clitheroe Royal Grammar School and in the vicinity of The Alleys and Hazelmere. These, and other significant trees or tree groups, are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map - lack of a specific reference does not imply that a tree or group is not of value.

### **Historic floorscape**

There are a variety of modern and traditional paving materials in the conservation area. The most notable floorscape is the large stone paving slabs and wide kerb stones along Church Street. A particularly distinctive feature of the conservation area is the narrow lanes and alleys, paved with stone setts. There are three in Moor Lane, the largest of which, at the upper end, is the remnant of an old route between Lowergate and Castle Street, shown on Lang's map of 1776. There is also a long steep stone paved alley between York Street and Church Street and a stone paved alley and open space beside the Swan and Royal, although this may have been recently repaved.

Stone setts are still present in Wilkin Square and setted stone kerbs and gutters can be seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced streets north-west of St Mary Magdalene where the backstreets are also stone setted.



*The former Court House is one of the few brick buildings in the conservation area*

## Local details

There are a number of local details and features which add to the area's distinct identity and form part of the special interest of the area.

Most notable are the three wells, St Mary's Well, Stocks Well and the Town's Well, which were the chief sources of water for the people of Clitheroe until the mid 1850s when a piped water supply was introduced. All three are listed.

The use of local stone for boundary and retaining walls helps to give the area its distinct identity. Many, at the rear of properties on Castle Street, Market Place and Church Street divide historic burgage plots. There is an old stone water trough in York Street and examples of stone gate piers can be found throughout the area.

Other features of interest include the red telephone kiosk in Well Terrace, boot scrapers in Church Street, cast iron rainwater goods and iron street name signs such as 'Waddington Road' attached to no. 1 Waddington Road. These and many other small items of local interest make a significant contribution to the overall historic character and appearance of the conservation area.



*Castle Grounds in early springtime*

## Character areas

The Clitheroe Conservation Area can be divided into three character areas defined and unified by a similarity of history, use or architectural character. The character areas are defined broadly and may overlap.

### Character area 1: Clitheroe's historic core

This character area is large and diverse but it is unified through its concurrence with the medieval extent of the town – it roughly follows the coverage of Lang's 1766 'Plan of the Borough of Clitheroe'. The area includes Castle Street, Market Place, Church Street, Church Brow, Wellgate, King Lane, Lowergate, Duck Street and Parson Lane. For convenience, Moor Lane and the Castle Grounds, both mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century creations, are included in this area.

This area contains the commercial core of the town, mainly located on Castle Street and Market Place but also spilling onto Wellgate, York Street and King Lane. The central 'spine' of the conservation area contains an excellent collection of historic buildings built on a strong back-of-pavement line but with occasional buildings breaking forward with a gable. There is a fall in the street from the Castle entrance to the open space of Market Place from where the land rises up Church Street but down York Street and Wellgate. Looking south there are views of the Castle and to the east, from outside The White Lion, distant views of Pendle Hill.



*Two-storey shopfront in Moor Lane*

Church Street contains Clitheroe's best examples of Georgian building and, together with the street's stone paving, trees and well kept historic buildings is the town's best area of townscape culminating in St Mary Magdalene's Church at the top of the rise. Street lighting columns are short and unobtrusive. From the top of Church Street, Church Brow falls steeply to residential developments at the foot of the northern end of the limestone outcrop.

Wellgate descends from Market Place towards its junction with Lowergate where there is a spacious intersection. Development is both two- and three-storey presenting a disjointed eaves line to the street. The building line, on both sides of the road, is irregular: the gable end of no. 24 juts into the pavement, The Dog pub is set back behind the well. With the exception of nos. 2-6 Wellgate, the street contains a good collection of historic buildings of which nos. 29-33 are grade II listed. Shaw Bridge Street, the continuation of Wellgate, is narrower and there is a greater sense of enclosure which is lost at the wide modern road junction, where traffic noise level is high. On the north side, no 5 Shaw Bridge Street (a former chapel) is set back from the pavement behind an area of tarmac parking; further along the street, nos. 11-15 are also set back behind small enclosed front gardens.



*Nineteenth century bank building in Castle Gate*

Duck Street, though at some distance from the Castle, is part of the medieval layout of Clitheroe. All the buildings in the street are listed. They are all stone-built but some have been painted, rendered or pebble-dashed. The street is noticeably much wider at its southern end at the junction with Wellgate. A terrace on the west side ends abruptly before a parking area and views eastward include the supermarket car park dispelling the street's historic character.

Lowergate is an ancient route which meanders, with varying width, from Wellgate to the lower end of Moor Lane. It contains some important historic buildings but west of Stanley House its townscape is marred by the blank aspect of the car park and the 'backstreet' atmosphere of its southern end. The former Court House and adjoining buildings form an attractive group that closes the view along King Lane.

Moor Lane is a 19<sup>th</sup> century street lined with shops. It is one-way with car parking on one side only. The street is composed of two-storey developments, rising to three storeys at the upper end, which lie on the back of the pavement. Facing materials are a mix of stone, render, roughcast with some brick at the lower end. Street lights are fixed to buildings. At the south end of the street there are views up to the castellated Castle Museum and the greenery of the Castle Grounds softens the streetscene. At the other,



northern, end of Moor Lane the street curves westward at the brow of the hill and there are views to the fells. The street lacks the architectural quality of the town's main shopping street but collectively the row of buildings make a valuable contribution to the conservation area's architectural diversity.

The principal *positive* features are:

- Clitheroe Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- The limestone knoll upon which the main axis of the town lies;
- The relatively intact medieval layout of the original settlement;
- The Castle Grounds which is included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens;
- Open space beside Mearley Brook at the rear of SS Michael and John's Church;
- Open space in and around St Mary Magdalene's churchyard;
- The Market Place;
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's buildings, 88 of which are listed;
- Good examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses in Eshton Terrace;
- The prevalent use of local building stone;
- Traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts;
- Views of Pendle Hill and distant fells to the west;
- Panoramic views from Clitheroe Castle;
- A pleasing historic townscape enhanced by the town's changes of level and curves in the old streets;
- Mix of commercial, religious, administrative and residential uses;
- Stone paved pedestrian alleys off Moor Lane and Church Street;
- Individual trees and groups of trees in the area's three significant open spaces
- Roadside trees in Church Street;
- Areas of historic stone floorscape;

The principal *negative* features are:

- Loss of architectural detail (original windows, doors etc) e.g. no. 14 Castle Gate;
- Insensitive alteration of historic buildings, including some modern shopfronts;
- Garish commercial signs and advertising e.g. bright red fascia at 15 Moor Lane;
- Twentieth century development that fails to preserve the historic character and appearance of the conservation area, particularly in King Lane;
- The low quality of the materials used in the environmental enhancement and traffic calming in Castle Street;
- Poor state of repair and neglect of the rear of Moor Lane (facing Lowergate);
- Tarmac at top of stone setted lane between Moor Lane and Lowergate;
- Obtrusive banner advertisements on railings at Lowergate car park;
- Poor quality concrete paving slabs (red and white) in Market Place;
- Poor condition of building at rear of New Inn and no. 16 Parson Lane;
- Sub standard road surface beside gates to Castle Grounds;

- Boarded up, vacant property at 44 Parson Lane;
- Nos. 38 and 40 Castle Street has a prominent corner location but is in need of maintenance and has a poorly designed shopfront; (Johnson's);
- Modern development on the corner of Market Place and Wellgate;
- Lack of historic character and appearance of King Lane;
- Red dressing to tarmac in Castle Street;
- Poor quality concrete paving;



*Methodist Church (1868)*

### **Character area 2:**

#### **King Street, Railway Avenue View, St Mary's Street and Brennand Street.**

This character area, west of the town's central spine, was not fully developed until after the coming of the railway in 1850. It comprises a late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial street and a compact area of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing.

King Street is an extension of the town's shopping area extending from the large bank building (1870) and hotel at the junction with Castle Street to the single-storey former railway station (1870) at the bottom of the hill, though a bend in the street prevents views of one from the other. The street contains a mixture of large imposing buildings such as the bank, former post office, police station and two hotels together with short rows of two-storey houses, some of which are set back behind small front gardens. Towards the top of the hill, no. 12 King Street (Victoria Buildings) is a former warehouse that rises to five storeys. The street is wider than other shopping streets and, between Railway View Avenue and the station, has a generally less commercial atmosphere than the upper part of the street.

Railway View Avenue, which links King Street to residential development at the foot of the hill, probably follows the route of an ancient track from Castle Street to Waddington. The O.S. map of 1886 shows that the only development along this street was no. 1 (Lowfield) and nos. 3 to 9, which are now listed. The street still retains some fine trees but has little historic appearance.

St Mary's Street, Brennand Street and the south side of Waddington Road are typical late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces aligned in a grid pattern so that these streets rise up the incline towards St Mary Magdalene Church whilst Railway Terrace (dated 1892) runs roughly north-south, on the level. From the churchyard there is a view over the slate roofs enlivened by a regular parade of stone chimneys to the distant fells.



*Nos. 6 – 12 Duck Street*

The principal *positive* features are:

- Historic late 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape along King Street including Police Station (1886), former Post Office (1879) and Victoria Buildings;
- Planned grid pattern of typical late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing (Railway Terrace, Waddington Road, St Mary's Street and Brennand Street);
- Significant trees beside Railway View Avenue;
- The former railway station, now a gallery;
- Stone kerbs and gulleys;
- Stone setts in rear access to St Mary's Street, Brennand Street and King Street (south);
- Specialist shopping close to town centre;
- Upward views of St Mary Magdalene church and spire;
- View of Pendle Hill from top of Waddington Road;

The principal *negative* features are:

- Loss of architectural detail (original windows, doors etc) e.g. nos 3-5 King Street;
- Insensitive alteration of historic buildings, including some modern shopfronts e.g. no. 31 King Street,
- Garish commercial signs and advertising e.g. no.34 King Street;
- Modern development out of character with the conservation area e.g. Health Centre, extension to Barclays Bank, junction of King Street and Railway View Road (Dawsons/Maxwells);
- Loss of original front boundary walls in the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces;

**Character area 3:****York Street and the environs of the Grammar School including Well Terrace and the southern end of Pimlico Road.**

York Street descends in an open sweeping curve from Market Place to Clitheroe Royal Grammar School. At the top end are three large three-storey stone buildings (NatWest Bank, Public Library and the White Horse pub) but as the street continues northwards, and downhill, commercial uses give way to residential and the scale of development declines. The central length of York Street is notable for two opposing rows of early/mid 19<sup>th</sup> century three-storey terraced houses. On the west side, opposite the grade II listed nos. 2-18 there is a small open space with trees beside a picturesque stone-paved lane leading up to Church Street. Two key historic buildings, Stanworth House and the historic building of Clitheroe Royal Grammar School, uncharacteristically stand well back from the road.

The northern end of this character area, and the conservation area, is dominated by the Clitheroe Royal Grammar School which is set back from the road behind a car park and a row of roadside trees and hedge. Though some buildings are modern, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century core of the school building with tall bellcote and twin cupolas is an impressive gateway to the northern approach to the town.



*The Old Post Office Hotel, King Street*

Well Terrace (1890) is a row of terraced houses that open directly onto the pavement without front gardens. At its western end, Hazelmere is a red brick house in a large well-tree'd garden. The widening of the roads at the crossroads outside The Alleys, Pimlico Road, is a featureless area of tarmac and highway signs but there are wide views eastwards to Pendle Hill.

The principal *positive* features are:

- Listed and unlisted rows of early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses of architectural merit;
- Good, varied historic townscape;

- 
- Good quality traditional shopfronts;
  - Roadside trees and open space in front of Clitheroe Royal Grammar School;
  - Open space on west side of York Street;
  - Attractive view up stone setted pedestrian alley to Church Street;
  - Clitheroe Royal Grammar School a key building at northern approach to the town;
  - One of Clitheroe's historic wells opposite Well Terrace;
  - Key listed buildings: The Alleys, Stanworth House and old Clitheroe School;
  - Hazelmere, a former burgage plot with large house and significant trees;
  - Typical 19<sup>th</sup> century housing at nos. 46-64 York Street and Well Terrace, the former with enclosed front gardens, the latter without;
  - View of the escarpment of Pendle Hill from bottom of Church Brow;
  - Red K6 type telephone kiosk and old stone water trough;
  - Stone paving slabs in Albion Street (north side);

The principal *negative* features are:

- Loss of architectural detail (original windows, doors etc);
- Insensitive alteration of historic buildings, including some modern shopfronts;
- Poor state of repair of no. 2 Waddington Road;
- Poor road surface in Albion Street;
- Vacant properties in Back York Street;
- Obtrusive extension to rear of former Parish School on Church Street;
- Modern steel lighting column in centre of stone path to Church Street;
- Characterless open space at roundabout outside The Alleys;
- Traffic noise in vicinity of Well Terrace;

## Issues

This section provides a summary of the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) identified during the appraisal process.

### **Strengths: The most important *positive* features of the Clitheroe Conservation Area are:**

- Picturesque Lancashire market town;
- Clitheroe Castle and other tourist attractions;
- Mix of commercial, religious, administrative and residential uses;
- Open air market and wide range of specialist shops;
- Historic character and appearance including 88 listed buildings;
- Good transport links by road and rail within the Ribble Valley;
- Surrounded by open countryside.

### **Weaknesses: The principal *negative* features of the Clitheroe Conservation Area are:**

- Loss of architectural detail (original windows, doors etc);
- Insensitive alteration of historic buildings, including some modern shopfronts, spoiling the conservation area's strong historic character and appearance
- Garish commercial signs and advertising;
- Twentieth century development that fails to preserve the historic character and appearance of the conservation area;
- The low quality of the materials used in the environmental enhancement and traffic calming in Castle Street;
- Tarmac at top of stone setted lane between Moor Lane and Lowergate;
- Obtrusive banner advertisements on railings at Lowergate car park;
- Poor quality concrete paving slabs (red and white) in Market Place;
- Nos. 38 and 40 Castle Street has a prominent corner location but is in need of maintenance and has a poorly designed shopfront; (Johnson's);
- Modern development on the corner of Market Place and Wellgate;
- Lack of historic character and appearance of King Lane;
- Red dressing to tarmac in Castle Street;
- Poor quality concrete paving;
- Loss of original front boundary walls in the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces;
- Obtrusive extension to rear of former Parish School on Church Street;
- Characterless open space at roundabout outside The Alleys;
- Traffic noise in vicinity of Well Terrace;

## **Opportunities within the Clitheroe Conservation Area**

### *Sites for enhancement*

- Building at rear of New Inn and no. 16 Parson Lane is in a poor condition;
- No. 2 Waddington Road is in a poor state of repair;
- Sub standard road surface beside gates to Castle Grounds;
- Vacant properties in Back York Street;
- Modern steel lighting column in centre of stone path to Church Street;
- Poor state of repair and neglect of the rear of Moor Lane (facing Lowergate);
- Boarded up, vacant property at 44 Parson Lane;
- The important open green spaces marked on the Townscape Appraisal map, are a particularly valuable asset and should be protected from development.

## **Threats to the Clitheroe Conservation Area**

### *Loss of original architectural details.*

Many of the unlisted, and some of the listed, buildings in the conservation have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Common faults include:

- the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC or stained hardwood;
- the loss of original panelled front doors and their replacement with stained hardwood, uPVC or aluminium doors;

Some of the detrimental changes are beyond the control of the Planning Acts.

### *Poor quality shopfronts*

Despite the presence of a number of attractive historic shopfronts, many of the commercial properties have modern shopfronts of no special merit.

### *Street clutter*

Historic streetscape and local distinctiveness is under threat from the needs of traffic management and public amenity bodies.

## Recommendations

### Clitheroe Conservation Area boundary review

It is recommended that the conservation area boundary is extended to include nos. 42 to 60 (even) Moor Lane, Holme Cottage and the site of Holmes Mill between Woone Lane and Mearley Brook. The proposed extension has considerable historic interest and includes The Brown Cow (listed grade II), nos 48-52 (listed grade II) and nos. 56-60 listed (grade II). Holmes Mill is one of Clitheroe's early mills, built as a size house and spinning mill around 1823. A second spinning mill was built around 1830 and a weaving shed was added in 1853. The original mill became the Technical School up to 1916 and the rest was extensively renovated in 1905-6 and 1910-11. It survives largely intact.

The proposed alterations are marked on the accompanying Townscape Appraisal map.

### Improvements to the public realm

The following list, drawn out of the list of 'negatives' listed above, identifies where, and how, the qualities that provide the special interest of the conservation area can be reinforced:

- Review of design and materials of paving/streetscape throughout the area with a view to publication of a streetscape manual setting out principles for public space design. English Heritage's 'Streets For All' publication sets out general principles for a co-ordinated approach that can help provide an environment that is safe, enjoyable and appropriate to its surroundings.
- Poorly designed shopfronts with little regard for the host building and the streetscene spoil the historic character and appearance of a building or street. A Council *Shopfront Design Guide* would assist the promotion of good design.
- A modern steel lighting column stands in the centre of the stone path between Church Street and York Street to the detriment of the view of this traditionally paved alley. A less obtrusive site for the light fitting would enhance the area.
- Small and localised areas of historic floorscape are part of the area's special interest. This appraisal has identified the most important examples of these surfaces which should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials. Existing granite kerbs should be retained in any scheme of improvement or repair.
- A number of historic buildings are in a poor state of repair e.g. no. 2 Waddington Road, 44 Parson Lane and building at rear of New Inn and no. 16 Parson Lane. Building owners should be encouraged to undertake repair and restoration works,



possibly through contribution to costs from the Council's Conservation Grant Scheme.

- Small historic items such as boot scrapers, cast iron rainwater goods and iron street name signs add to the conservation area's distinct local identity but may not be statutorily protected from removal or demolition. An inventory of historic street furniture would be welcome. Owners and those responsible for street furniture could then be informed of each item's importance and an agreed code of conduct drawn up for their maintenance.

### **Monitoring and review.**

This document should be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- An evaluation of changes that have taken place in the conservation area, ideally by means of an updated photographic record;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, including opportunities for enhancement;
- A building condition survey;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

### **Bibliography**

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July 2005/amended August/10 October/25 October/

**Clitheroe - list of photographs**

- Photograph 1* View along Castle Street from Clitheroe Castle
- Photograph 2* Market Place
- Photograph 3* St Mary Magdalene's Church
- Photograph 4* Junction of Castle Street and King Street  
'Almonds', Church Street, a good example of Clitheroe's Georgian architecture
- Photograph 5*
- Photograph 6* No. 12 Church Street
- Photograph 7* Traditional shopfront, 24 Wellgate  
Clitheroe Royal Grammar School a key building at northern approach to the town
- Photograph 8* Clitheroe Royal Grammar School (1782), York Street
- Photograph 9*
- Photograph 10* Nos 2-18 York Street, a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace  
Bank building prominently sited at the junction of Castle Street and King Street
- Photograph 11*
- Photograph 12* Stone paving, steps and iron boot scraper in Church Street  
Natural stone paving, Church Street is a remnant of Clitheroe's historic floorscape
- Photograph 13* The Carnegie Library (1905) closes the view north along Castle Street
- Photograph 14*
- Photograph 15* White Lion, Market Place
- Photograph 16* Stanley House, Lowergate  
The former Court House is one of the few brick buildings in the conservation area
- Photograph 17*
- Photograph 18* Castle Grounds in early springtime
- Photograph 19* Two-storey shopfront in Moor Lane
- Photograph 20* Nineteenth century bank building in Castle Gate
- Photograph 21* Methodist Church (1868)
- Photograph 22* Nos. 6 – 12 Duck Street
- Photograph 23* The Old Post Office Hotel, King Street