



Adopted Character Appraisal 2015

Victoria Road & Huyton Church Road

Conservation Area



Knowsley Council

**This document has been written and prepared
by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council**

Department of Regeneration Economy and Skills
Planning Department
PO Box 26
Huyton Knowsley
Merseyside L36 9FB

Telephone: 0151 443 2381

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1. Introduction

1.1 Victoria Road & Huyton Church Road

The Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area is located in Huyton, formerly part of south west Lancashire and part of an ancient Parish with records predating the Norman Conquest. The earliest settlement in Huyton was situated to the south of St. Michael's Church with arable fields at either side. It was not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that further significant development started to occur, in particular at the junction of the former fields of Townfield and Rooley.

The two roads of Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road were developed following the opening of Huyton railway, which is located nearby. The Conservation Area serves as an attractive, and to a large extent, well preserved example of a Victorian suburb characterised by large villa style houses with extensive gardens. Such estates proved popular with wealthy merchants and lower gentry, who were drawn to the appeal of living in leafy rural surroundings and the easy access that the railway provided to both the commercial and leisure amenities of the nearby centre of Liverpool.

The mature trees that populate the entirety of the area form an important feature. They help to retain the character and peacefulness of the suburb, despite the modern town centre being located close by. Many of the trees overhang the gardens and roads, significantly enhancing the visual appearance of the area and helping to create a strong sense of place.

In the mid-nineteenth century, when both roads were designed and constructed, they were part of a grandiose master plan, which also included the immediate surrounding area to the east. These plans proposed multiple streets lined with congruous villas, collectively the properties would have come together to form a prestigious and highly desirable residential address. However, this was not to be. As road transport began to improve around the turn of the century, the close proximity of a railway station to one's property became less important. It is believed this may have had a detrimental impact on those who were thinking of purchasing a semi-rural retreat in the area, they instead began to consider other places to live.

This change in attitude ensured that Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road were the only two streets of the scheme to be completed. During the original grand scale design proposals a site adjacent to the road was left



vacant, this site is now occupied by a neighbouring school.

The key aim of this appraisal document is to conserve and manage change in Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area, so that the remaining historical value of the area is retained. The document will create a reference point and an assessment of the area. Residents and businesses alike will be consulted and encouraged to participate in the sustainability and place making of their own community. Not only will this safeguard the continued enjoyment of the area by its residents and visitors, it will also ensure both the tangible and intangible heritage values of the area are protected for future generations.

1.2 The planning policy context

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) 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*”.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish

proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. This document adheres to English Heritage guidance as set out in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (March 2011)*.

Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within the *National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)* and supersedes *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPS5)* though the PPS5 Practice Guide remains as an advisory English Heritage document.

2. Location and landscape setting

2.1 Location and activities

The Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area is architecturally one of the most important areas of Huyton, contributing significantly to the town's rich cultural heritage. Traditionally part of Lancashire, the town is now located in the County of Merseyside, in the Borough of Knowsley, and has been since its creation in 1972. As of 1st April 2014, the Borough became part of The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, which is responsible for economic development, transport, employment and skills, and strategic housing in the Region.

The town is located approximately 6 miles (9.7 kilometres) from both Liverpool City Centre to the west, and St. Helens to the east. The area is well served by good transport links, including the M6 and M57 motorways.

Residents of the Conservation Area also benefit from easy access to Huyton train station. The wider township is land locked by other significant urban areas including Dovecot, Knotty Ash, Belle Vale, Prescot, and Whiston.

Activities within the Conservation Area are fairly limited. The primary land use within the

area is residential, with the area benefiting from a diverse mix of housing types, including large Victorian villa style houses, apartments and modern family housing. There are also a small number of commercial premises located within the Conservation Area. These include Beech House children's day nursery, and the purpose built commercial property Prospect House. This is a single storey brick building, under a shallow pitched roof, set in its own grounds with a private car parking area for staff and visitors. At the time of writing there are a number of properties currently for sale in the area including Prospect House. Both the commercial properties mentioned are located on Huyton Church Road.

2.2 Topography and geology

The town lies on an outcrop of Upper Carboniferous red sandstone which contains coal measures, referred to as Wesphalian rock. Huyton forms part of the Lancashire Coalfield which stretches from Skelmersdale in the west to beyond Oldham in the east. The sandstone is tough and erosion resistant, which makes it ideal for constructing buildings, walls, or for the use of paving or roofing material. This is completely overlain



with boulder clay and some sands and gravels. Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road are located north of the railway and run parallel to one another. The roads are of a fairly equal length with Huyton Church Road being flat and straight while in contrast Victoria Road is on a slight inclined hill going up towards the Huyton Reform Church, with Seel Road bisecting the road to the east. The Conservation Area's roadways are reasonably wide and well spread out, with significant gaps in between the houses. It is these characteristics that create an attractive character of low-density housing in what is generally quite a built up area of the borough.

2.3 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings

Possibly the most interesting relationship is with the seemingly unrelated areas of St Michael's Church Conservation Area and The Orchard Conservation Area, both of which are located a short distance away in Huyton. The histories of all three of these areas seem intrinsically linked, forming important residential parts of the former village.

Although Huyton is an ancient Parish with records predating the Norman Conquest, especially the area surrounding St Michael's Church, the three Conservation Areas' shared history can be seen most clearly after the Victorian era. All three areas boast impressive Victorian villas, and as a result they prove popular places to live today. However, their existence seems a little confusing given their close proximity to Huyton Village, which is for all intents and purposes a modern shopping centre that is at odds with the splendour of the surrounding suburbs. When considered in the context of a much greater, largely Victorian settlement,

their function appears appropriate for an area designed to house merchants and lower gentry. Unfortunately, much of what is now Huyton Village was demolished in the 1960's, leaving behind little as a reminder, except to some degree, the original street pattern of Popular Bank and Westmorland Road.

The Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area is located in close proximity to Huyton Village Town Centre. The area's residents enjoy the benefits of being conveniently located within easy walking distance from all the local amenities. These services include a public library, health centre, council offices, and an abundance of independent and chain retail units.

Even with this central location, Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road still give visitors to the area the impression of being a considerable distance away from the town's commercial core. They are both quiet and sedate residential roads with a few commercial properties scattered about. Both of the roads benefit greatly from the impressive mature trees and greenery, which provide attractive green archways and a sense of enclosure.

It is only possible for vehicles to access the roads from Huyton Hey Road and Seel Road, with the northern ends of the roads being closed off. This limited access to the area prevents the roads being used as a thoroughfare, and cumulatively these points have a significant impact on the tranquillity and sense of place.

This tranquillity is a stark contrast to their connecting Huyton Hey Road, which at times is extremely busy as it is used as a main arterial route for people wanting to access the

amenities of Huyton Village. The Conservation Area is also in close proximity to Huyton bus station, which is situated on the opposite side of the road to Park Hall and provides access to a large section of the wider City Region.

3. Historic development and archaeology

3.1 Historic development

Huyton was already proving popular in the years leading up to the arrival of the railway. The area around the Queens Arms Pub, a recent addition to The Orchard Conservation Area boundary, is believed to be one of the oldest parts of Huyton. The Queens Arms was a significant lodging house, especially during the 1820's, housing many of the workers who constructed the turnpike and railway. There is also documentary evidence providing proof that the lower gentry were beginning to settle in the area as early as 1825.

The building of the Railway marked a significant change in the future of Huyton, and indeed for many of the small village along its course. The Liverpool – Manchester Line was the first commuter line in the country. George Stephenson a civil and mechanical engineer was responsible for building the railway. Stephenson later went on to become something of a 'celebrity' of his time, gaining the widespread admiration of the Victorians.

A number of railway bridges along the route are designated as national heritage assets because of their historic importance. In Knowsley alone there are three listed bridges; Archway Road Bridge, Greystone Road Bridge, and Pilch Lane Bridge have all been recognised for their substantial historical importance. There are also other listed bridges along the route that are located in the neighbouring areas of Liverpool, Rainhill, and St Helens.

The changes that took place after the railways completion were so significant for Huyton that, almost overnight, it was transformed from an isolated farming community into a small country village, where people with sufficient wealth could reside in the countryside and travel to Liverpool on a daily basis. At the time there was opposition, particularly from local farmers who expressed concerns about pollution, amongst other issues. Interestingly, the original railway line was not intended to go through Huyton but Knowsley, four miles to the north.



The development of the railway not only marked a significant change for the communities through which it past, but also for the technical revolution, or second industrial revolution. It was during this time that increased productivity and advancements in medical and technological advancements led to a significant rise in living standards.

Following the opening of the railway in 1830, development increased significantly as Huyton's popularity grew, leading to the development of the 'villa estates'. The Orchard Conservation Area was built in close proximity to Huyton train station because of a distinct lack of suitable sites in the surrounding area, but also because houses such as Ewanville provided a precedent for the building of large houses in the area. Although now demolished, the Ewanville estate remains very important to the historic development of the area.

The area located off Huyton Hey Road containing both Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road was also known as Huyton Park. Development started in this area, on the north side of the railway, from the 1850s onwards. Although Huyton Park could be described as a more modest development than The Orchard, it still displays many of the characteristics of a wealthy rural Victorian retreat. The roads were undoubtedly one of the wealthiest developments in the area, providing high quality houses for the merchants and traders of Liverpool.

The houses were built in a variety of styles typical to the period and there are some excellent examples of stucco, brick and cast iron work, which illustrates the skills of Victorian craftsmen.

With the villa style houses in the area, some of which are built in the Italianate/Greek style and its two imposing neo-gothic (Grade II Listed) Churches, namely the Congregational Church, now known as Park Hall, and the United Reform Church. The buildings in the Conservation Area are both architecturally impressive and historically important; not only within Huyton, but also to the Borough and the City Region. It is widely accepted that Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road are a fine example of a Victorian suburb.

The 1871 census gives an intriguing insight in the occupations and backgrounds of the inhabitants of the area. The majority of homeowners in the area created their fortune whilst successfully running their own businesses. These shrewd business men were drawn to the elevated social status that the estate offered. It is recorded in Gore's Directory of Liverpool, that some of the inhabitants proceeded to change their occupation to 'Gentleman'. This added to the idea that the original aim of the estate was to add an air of gentility to rural village life. It was not uncommon for their wives to simply list their occupation as 'lady'.

The census also provides an insight into the cultural attitudes of the time – successful self-made men in trade and industry aspired to be higher up the social ladder, so in their new modest country houses they disguised the fact that they worked for a living.

Their occupations covered many of the lucrative industries of the time such as oil merchants, landowners, tobacco manufactures, cotton brokers and wine merchants. Very few of the residents originated from the wider Lancashire area, with many hailing from locations such as

London, Scotland, Ireland, Yorkshire and Somerset. This eclectic mix of professions and backgrounds insured the new wave of Huytonians brought with them a new found cosmopolitan attitude and an air of sophistication.

The villa estates in Huyton typify the type of exclusive suburbia that cropped up around this time in small villages, purely because the railway gave convenient access to the economic, social and cultural offer of the nearby towns and cities.

The Conservation Area first appeared in Gore's Liverpool dictionary in 1865, when sixteen resident's names are listed. Amongst the newcomers to the area there were some local residents. William Baker was born in Huyton and lived in Victoria Road. He was generally known as a brewer, but it seems he had an unlikely side-line because he gave his occupation on the census as a 'brewer and cement merchant'. Although a native himself, his wife Julie Ann was born in Devonshire. They had three sons and three daughters, all born in Huyton. The family also had three female servants, one of whom, Mary Ambrose, was originally from Roby. It was entirely appropriate that William Barker and his family should move in with the newcomers, because he was that rare person in the history of Huyton and Roby up to that time, a self-made businessman independent of the landowners.

Markland Lodge and Ravenscroft were built by the builder Thomas Lings after he purchased the land from Thomas Molyneux Seel, who at the time owned most of the land around what is now Seel Road. There were some interesting covenants on the land that was sold to Thomas Lings. This included the

prohibition of the land being used as a public strawberry or tea garden, or for any other public amusement. It was also a condition that no steam engine was to be erected on the land.

The second owners of Markland Lodge were the Leach Family, who purchased the house from the first owner Mr George Lloyd. The family moved into the premises in 1879, and stayed at the property for over 45 years. Sir J B Leach was a successful business man who ran his estate agency business from offices in Liverpool, St Helens, and Runcorn. He was married to Jane Haswell, from Chester, and they had two daughters and two sons. The family were devout Christians and worshipped at the nearby Congregational Church. It is known that one or more of the women in the family helped to run the Sunday school for the church, and from time-to-time, the school actually took place in Markland Lodge.

3.2 Archaeology

The HER (Historic Environment Record) for Merseyside is responsible for archiving all the archaeological information for the five boroughs of Merseyside, storing data of Liverpool, Wirral, Sefton, St Helens and Knowsley. The data is stored in a variety of formats including paper and electronically stored information. These incorporate historical and tithe maps, specific site information of settlement and development and other archaeology such as scatter finds including pottery and coinage.

The Rural Fringe Report identifies a number of findings, and areas of archaeological interest within the wider township. These include:

- Two spot-finds of Neolithic axes in the south of the township
- A Romano-British coin

It should be noted that lack of finds within the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area generally indicates a lack of investigation, rather than a lack of archaeological/ historical interest

4. Spatial analysis

4.1 Layout and street pattern

The Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area retains much of its historic layout, with the two main roads primary form of access being from Huyton Hey Road. This is with the exception of Victoria Road, which is also accessible from Seel Road to its eastern side. Huyton Hey Road acts as a natural barrier between the Conservation Area and the modern Huyton town centre. Historically, these roads have followed the same street pattern for over 150 years.

The section of the Conservation Area that has the largest collection of historic buildings is located on the eastern side of Huyton Church Road. The buildings here, namely Beech House, The Anchorage, and Lawrence House are fine examples of Victorian villas set in their own private grounds and reinforce the reasoning behind the area's designation. In contrast, the buildings on the western side of Huyton Church Road are mostly a mix of modern infill housing. The buildings around Victoria Road are also mainly historic, with the exception of 3-11, 31-33 and 26-34. All of the newer properties located in the Conservation Area appear to have been construction roughly around the same period.

The majority of the late-twentieth century and early 21st century buildings, in and around the Conservation Area, are widely regarded to be of little or no architectural significance. However, it should be noted that in more recent developments such particular attention has been paid to detail and the use of quality materials has been a valuable contribution to the Conservation Area. The majority of buildings in the Conservation Area, old and new, have been kept in a desirable and good state of repair. There are many properties that have retained their mid-Victorian character with a plethora of historic features.

The nearest Conservation Areas in Huyton are The Orchard Conservation Area and also St Michael's Conservation Area. Both are located within fifteen minutes walking distance. All three Conservation Areas are within easy reach of Huyton train station.

4.2 Open spaces, trees and landscape

The Conservation Area contains a large amount of green space, however most is privately owned. Many of the properties are set back from the roads and stand in their own substantial grounds with the majority



benefiting from good tree cover. Trees form an important element of both Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road.

Not only does the greenery significantly enhance the visual appearance of the area, its presence is important in retaining the original character, with many individual trees having their own historic interest. The mature trees aid with the seamless continuity from street level and ensure that there is a tangible historic connection between all of the plots. The heavy foliage also provides the plots with an aesthetic connection. It is the serenity that is created by the surrounding trees which helps the area to retain its semi-rural atmosphere, and helps visitors to forget about the 'hustle and bustle' of the nearby town centre.

The properties in the Conservation Area are not set as far back from the road as the properties located in The Orchard Conservation Area. However, due to the maturity of the trees in the area, many of which over hang the boundary walls and hedges, there is still a strong sense of privacy. In large, the trees help to keep the buildings moderately out of public view, with some only offering a glimpse of their grand exteriors to passers-by.

There is a public footpath that connects both Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road. The footpaths edge is bordered by the neighbouring school's playing field. The footpath is a clear end to the Conservation Area's boundary with the area being divided by fencing. The path contains a number of mature trees which should benefit from the protection afforded by the designation.

Tree coverage provides a vital aspect of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; therefore they too are protected through legislation. Trees over 7cm in diameter are protected in a conservation area and permission is required from the council prior to any work being undertaken.

4.3 Focal points, focal buildings and views

Focal Buildings

The Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area is fortunate to have a number of focal buildings including:

Park Hall (Grade II Listed Building): The church is small, picturesque and gothic, built in 1836 using rubble with red sandstone dressings from nearby Huyton quarry.

Huyton Reformed Church (Grade II Listed Building): The church is influenced by Truro Cathedral with a prominent steeple, interior with aisles, and arches thrown across the nave between each set of piers and across the aisles too.

Newlands and 1a Huyton Hey Road (Grade II Listed Building): Ground floor windows have narrow flanking lights and a continuous label mould with rosettes. The main windows have friezes and cornices.

Ravensdale & Markland Lodge: These houses were built in Flemish bond with, perhaps surprisingly for the period, no bay windows (there have been some later additions). They

both have shallow hipped slate roofs that have strong projecting bracketed eaves.

Huyton Hey Cottage: The detailing is inspired by medieval architecture, but the building is unmistakably Victorian. At first floor level, slightly projecting bright red engineering bricks provide a frame not unlike timber framing around panels of mellow brown brick.

The Anchorage: Detached villa, probably 1870s. Typical three bay arrangement with central doorway flanked by windows. There is a hint of Tudor detailing through the shallow arches to the window openings and the solid parapets over the bay windows.

Focal Points

The views from the Conservation Area's boundary on Huyton Hey Road, give a glimpse of the historical importance of the buildings that are located once inside the designated area. The entrances to both Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road are bordered by the Grade II listed Park Hall and Newlands. The buildings stand dominant in their setting, custodians of the past that are symbolic of the aspirations of their time. Most of the historic fabric around them has been demolished or altered to accommodate the changes that have taken place in the town centre, which makes their observation all the more intriguing.

Historically, there was once a substantial property named Huyton Hey that was located opposite Park Hall, at the lower aspect of Huyton Church Road. This property is not to be confused with Huyton Hey Manor, which was once moated and located on Huyton Hey Road. Huyton Hey is no longer present and

instead the land is dominated by well-maintained vegetation and mature trees. There is a pathway through the land that acts as a clear route from the Conservation Area to the nearby town centre. Although the retention of the original property would have been more desirable, the small coppice of trees is a pleasant addition to the Conservation Area and allows for long views towards Park Hall.

Once inside the Conservation Area, there are no set focal points to speak of. However, there are many notable views. Both the roads are long and straight, meaning the buildings run parallel to each other on either side of the road. This spatial layout allows for long uninterrupted views throughout the Conservation Area. Once at the northern end of the Conservation Area, facing towards Huyton Hey Road, the sense of privacy and enclosure can be fully appreciated. The mature trees tower high, with many overhanging the streets. The trees give a picturesque quality to the roads and are instrumental in setting the sense of place. This is particularly true of Huyton Church Road.

Once inside Victoria Road, direct views towards the Huyton Reform Church are partially obscured by the prodigious mature trees that are located before the start of Seel Road. The trees create an aesthetically pleasing natural archway, and it is not until halfway up Victoria Road that there is a small island road crossing which is the ideal place to observe panoramic views of the surrounding street scape. The crossing is directly opposite the Huyton Reformed Church, and gives impressive direct views of the building. Although part of the church is obscured by the mature greenery, the towering spire and

impressive boundary wall make it a view worth noting.

4.4 Boundaries

Boundaries form an important feature of the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area. The walls are of varying designs, heights and materials. The historical walls in the area are either built using red brick or red sandstone. There are still many historical gate posts present, with the name of the property engraved into them. This is an important historical feature, as the naming of one's property was usually reserved for the more affluent homeowners, as a way of displaying their status and individuality. There are some properties that appear to still have historical gates present, but many of the original gates appear to have been lost or replaced.

There has also been a substantial amount of modern boundary walls erected in the Conservation Area, with many having unsympathetic use of brick, breeze block, and timber panelling, as well as the inclusion of high iron gates. Although these new boundary walls are helpful in the retention of the sense of privacy in the area, it would be beneficial to the aesthetic appearance of the roads if more historically accurate walls were reinstated.

One of the most notable boundary walls in the area is surrounding the Huyton Reform Church. The wall is made from random coursed sandstone and runs around the entirety of the building. There is a slight hedge that is kept in a presentable state, behind which are numerous mature trees that give the church a strong sense of privacy. The

wall is constructed of iron rich red sandstone, which is a locally sourced material prominent in the Conservation Area. The wall is randomly coursed with rounded red sandstone coping stones and is entirely complete. The wall is eye catching in its setting due to its prominent location.

There are numerous mature trees in the Conservation Area that are important when defining boundaries, not only between individual properties, but also the public realm.

4.5 Public Realm

The public realm covers the public spaces between the buildings and utility equipment, such as street lighting or signage, which contribute to these spaces. Most of the public realm in the Conservation Area is the responsibility of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

In line with the outlined improvements for street signs, other areas of improvement could include the replacement of street lighting with a design that is more sympathetic to the historic surroundings.

The quality of the public realm throughout the Conservation Area is generally in a satisfactory condition. However, there are parts of the public realm, namely the easterly aspect of Huyton Church Road, that have started to become worn, with signs of aging and a patchwork effect of tarmac. The Conservation Area could benefit from a comprehensive enhancement scheme; possibly integrating new natural stone paving that would significantly enhance the character of the area. A further area of improvement

could be the replacement of free standing name plates with a more traditional design that is fixed against buildings or boundary walls.

The Conservation Area contains relatively few special public realm details, and would benefit enormously from financial investment and comprehensive enhancement scheme.

Despite its short comings, the public realm remains well-defined due to the presence of boundary walls that exist throughout the area.

5. The buildings of the Conservation Area

5.1 Building types

The buildings of the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area largely date from the 19th Century. The majority of buildings are large Victorian villa-style houses built in the 1860's, following the arrival of the railway. As mentioned previously, these villas stand in extensive gardens with mature trees that cover much of the area, supporting the idea of the area being a purpose built Victorian suburb.

Following the development of the Victorian era, there has been sequential developments both within and immediately surrounding the Conservation Area. Many of these properties have been built on existing plots that fall into two categories, either the land historically formed part of the grounds of one of the remaining villas, or it was the location of a substantially superior building. These buildings would have originally been built as part of the grandiose estate, and for various reasons, including the changing demographic of households and a change in attitude to house styles, have been lost over time.

This sporadic pace of development has inevitably led to a large and heterogeneous collection of buildings. Although many of the buildings are in keeping with the grain of the area, and have been influenced by the importance of their surroundings, there are a number of characteristics depicting the local architectural style. When observed, this attention to detail can at times feel contrived and unintentionally distracts from the authentic homogeneity of the historical buildings. Although the original topography of the area remains relatively unchanged, heading east down Seel Road the Conservation Area comes to an abrupt end. There is a complete contrast in the architectural styles of this area. This is largely because the properties on the easterly side of Seel Street have now been replaced by the Hey Park Estate.

The estate is made up of four separated three storey apartment blocks and one row of terraced properties. They appear to have been built during the 1960s. All the buildings have been constructed from red brick in a



stretcher bond, with painted timber panelled detailing throughout. The buildings are in keeping with the architectural style of their time, but their close proximity to the (Grade II Listed) Huyton Reform Church, coupled with the contrasting aesthetic appearance of the neighbouring semi-detached Victorian villas, largely creates a juxtaposition of architectural styles that detracts from the authenticity of the Conservation Area.

There has also been a small development of new houses within the Conservation Area boundaries, which was built in the 1980s and is located at the northern end of Victoria Road. This development consists of five detached properties all double storeyed. The investigations of historical maps show that this land was once previously used as a bowling green. The maps also show that in 1908 two large semi-detached properties were located directly to the north of this land. Again, for unknown reasons these properties have been lost and their plots have been amalgamated into the playing fields that are now on the opposite side of the street's boundary.

Since the designation of the Conservation Area in 1978, this has gone some way to prevent further loss of locally important historic buildings and forms of architecture.

5.2 Listed buildings

A listed building is a building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest and included on a special register, called the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The Department for Culture, Media and Sports

compiled the list under the guidance of English Heritage, who is the Government's statutory advisors on the historic environment. The list is compiled under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990, and includes a wide variety of structures, from castles and cathedrals to milestones and village pumps.

The statutory list covering the Borough of Knowsley was last reviewed in 1992, by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. At present there are 122 listed buildings located within the Borough. There are three listed buildings within the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area. There are plans within the Historic Environment Strategy 2013 to provide nominations for the statutory list. As a result, it is possible that in the future a number of other buildings within the Borough, and indeed the Conservation Area, could benefit from statutory listing.

There are currently three listed buildings within the Conservation Area, all of which are of substantial architectural merit. The buildings can be used as a benchmark to give their observers a brief insight into the scale and ambition of the original scheme. The buildings help to form an understanding of the specification that other landmark buildings would have been designed to, had the estate been successfully completed.

Grade II

Park Hall

Park Hall was the original Huyton Congregation Church. The first Huyton Chapel was in Pinnington Place and was built to seat

220 to 230 people. The church was opened in June 1836, but was quickly succeeded by the much larger church built in 1856. The building was extended by H.H.Vale in 1861 to incorporate a small school. The school entrance is in a little turret with an extremely tall and slender splayed pyramid roof. The building is rock-faced stone with ashlar dressings and has a slate roof with cresting. The Church is a classic example of a neo-gothic church building and was built using stone from the nearby Huyton Quarry. In 1890, due to the growing numbers of the church's congregation, the church transferred to the new larger 'United Reformed Church' on the neighbouring Seel Road. The old church was then renamed Park Hall and was used solely as a day school until the early 1930's. When the day school moved to new modern premises in St John's Road, the building then became a community hall, hosting dances for the local residents until it closed and was sold in 1986. The building was first listed in 1987 and at present is unoccupied.

Huyton Reformed Church

The church was formerly the Huyton Congregational Church and historically this is the fourth building to house the congregation. The building was completed in 1890 and it replaced the previous purpose built place of worship on Huyton Hey Road (see Park Hall). The church was designed by the architect W D Caroe who, at the time, was also commissioned to design numerous ecclesiastical building around the country. These included St David's and Durham Cathedral, to name but a few. The church was a typically inventive and spatially interesting exercise by Caroe, who was one of the few architects to span the Anglican-Nonconformist divide. The church was first

listed in 1987 and was built with an impressive broach spire, which has several lucarnes and a weather clock. The church stands in a prominent location on the corner of Victoria Road and Seel Road and the spire is also the highest point in the immediate sounding area. These impressive characteristics would have ensured that the church's imposing appearance resonated with the local population, not only reinforcing its authority and influence with its own congregation, but also with the wider area.

Newland and 1a Huyton Hey Road

The semi-detached pairing of 'Newlands and 1a Huyton Hey Road' is located on the corner of Huyton Hey Road and Victoria Road and is of particular significance. The building was first listed in 1981 and is an exemplar in the area of a pairing of mid-19th Century villas. The building is built in red brick with a stone base and plaster dressings. The roof is typical of the time and is tiled with slate. There are numerous design features that adorn the building, such as ornate rosettes and intricate cornices, which when witnessed, significantly add to the quality and aesthetic appearance of the building. It is this acute attention to detail that not only enhances the architectural significance of the building, but it also ensures that the building retains much of its historic authenticity. These varied combinations of heritage values inevitably have an extensive impact on the Conservation Area. It is a reasonable observation that the prominence of the building is instrumental in the retention of the wider area's sense of place.

5.3 Locally listed buildings

There are currently no locally listed buildings in the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area. The Council is currently in the process of drafting the criteria and a list of potential buildings to be included on a local list for Knowsley. This is being undertaken referring to the guidance as published by English Heritage.

5.4 Unlisted historic buildings

In addition to the listed buildings, a large number of unlisted historic buildings can be found in the Conservation Area, most of which were built for residential purposes, but there are now a small number of commercial or residential institutions. They are marked in purple on the Townscape Appraisal Map and are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Examples include:

- The Anchorage
- Beech House
- Hollinside
- Huyton Hey Cottage
- Laurel Bank
- Lawrence House
- Middle Wood
- Ravensdale & Markland Lodge
- Sussex Lodge

*Note: These buildings have been recognised for their greater historic importance, and may benefit from becoming Locally Listed in the future. For an up to date account of which buildings have been granted this status please visit www.knowsley.gov.uk

Individual planning applications to demolish such buildings will be assessed by the Borough Council on a case-by-case basis, but generally, permission will be refused. All planning applications for demolition will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification for the demolition of the building (as is already required for the demolition of a listed building), and the applicant must prove the following:

- The building is incapable of beneficial use
- The building is beyond the point of economic repair
- The building does not make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area
- That the building has been marketed and an alternative use/owner has not been found.

Note: Conservation area consent for demolition in conservation area has been removed and is now applied for as a planning application. This was brought in under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

5.5 Building styles, materials and colours

Most buildings in the Conservation Area date from across the 19th Century, but the vast majority were built over a short period of time in the 1860's. Most, if not all of the buildings within the Conservation Area were built from brick or sandstone, some of which has subsequently been rendered or painted.

The buildings of architectural interest are mainly Victorian, and due to their nature - as houses for the affluent, very few similarities exist between buildings. Instead the buildings

represent a rich variety of styles and individuality. The parallels that do exist between buildings are subtle, and the relationship between neighbouring dwellings are primarily reliant upon a number of external features such as boundary walls, mature trees and a continued low density of development. In addition, many of the properties also have ornate brackets to support the overhanging roofs, with many also having traditional dressed welsh heather blue slate which has purple hues.

6. Character Areas

Based on building density and type, street layout, the relationship of buildings to open spaces, the landscape details, the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area provided two areas of distinctive character, as follows:

- Victoria Road
- Huyton Church Road

There are both key positive and negative features that collectively apply to both roads.

6.1 Victoria Road

Key positive features:

- Contains two Grade II listed buildings (Newlands and The Huyton Reform Church)
- Attractive location on north-facing slope, with good views towards Huyton Reform Church

Key negative features:

- Two buildings at risk
- The close proximity of the Hey Park Estate, a large 1960s block of flats and terraced properties facing Huyton Reform Church

6.2 Huyton Church Road

Key positive features:

- Highest concentration of historic buildings in the Conservation Area
- Contains a Grade II listed building (Park Hall)
- Mature trees overhang the road, enhancing the Area countrified character
- Most of the historic buildings appear to be in reasonable condition



Key negative features:

- Some of the historic character has been lost due to the high number of modern infill buildings
- Undesirable paintwork and boundary walls to some properties

6.3 Entirety of the Conservation Area

Key positive features:

- Both Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road are important to the local area's history
- Both streets retain much of their original character as a leafy Victorian suburb
- The listed and historic buildings are generally well preserved
- Attractive location, with a mixture of housing types and architectural styles
- Generally the modern housing appears well built and attractive; following the low density character of the surrounding area
- Most of the modern buildings appear in reasonable condition
- The grounds to the modern houses still contain a number of mature trees, which are remnants of the gardens to the villas that were once on the site.
- The area feels enclosed and tranquil given its central location
- Restricted traffic flow prevents the area being used as a thoroughfare

Key negative features:

- Some paving may require maintenance and improvement
- Although the modern houses are generally well designed/built using quality materials, they are of no architectural significance and the area has suffered from the loss of some original villas that once occupied the land
- The unlisted but positive buildings need to be protected from unsympathetic alterations, such as UPVC windows, doors, fascias, barge boards and guttering.
- Free standing concrete street name plates would be better replaced with a more appropriate design
- Additional controls should be put in place to restrict the construction of modern boundary walls; especially those that are not in-keeping with the existing character of the area.

7. Issues

Based on the negative features identified in the previous chapter, the following issues are considered to be the principal matters which the emerging Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area Management Plan needs to address:

7.1 Conservation Area boundary review

The Conservation Area boundary has remained the same since designation in 1978. Since then, only a limited amount of development has taken place, this is in part to the protection afforded by the official designation. It is recommended that the Conservation Area's boundary should be extended to include the properties 100-102 Seel Street and Middlewood, which are currently located outside of the boundary.

This would offer the properties extra protection, as an investigation of the area highlights that these buildings are a positive contribution to the historic streetscape. It has been identified that these buildings are instrumental in retaining the character of the easterly aspect of Victoria Road, and any loss or dramatic alterations to the properties would not only be detrimental to the historic

fabric of the road, but would also have a significant visual impact on the Conservation Area.

7.2 Traffic and pedestrian movement

The current flow of traffic through much of the Conservation Area is controlled by the limited access to the roads that is available. This is due to the northern ends of the roads being closed off to traffic. Both of the roads primary points of access is from Huyton Hey Road only, with the exception of the lower part of Victoria Road being accessible from Seel Road. However, there is a public footpath that runs across the entirety of the northern aspect of the Conservation Area and gives access to the nearby shopping centre and other nearby residential area. This limited access has various effects such as:

- Reduction in traffic flow to the area
- Prevention of the roads being used as a thoroughfare
- Helps to preserve the character of the area



There are also parking restrictions within the Conservation Area that prevent the public from parking there Monday to Saturday, between the hours of 8am and 6pm. This is to prevent workers and visitors to the nearby town centre using the roads as a convenient place to park their vehicles. The restrictions are successful in preventing the area appearing congested and cluttered, and they help to retain the rural atmosphere.

7.3 Buildings at risk

At present there are two buildings in the Victoria Road Conservation Area that are unoccupied and in the future this could potentially lead to problems. The former college of occupational therapy building and the neighbouring property are located at the top westerly aspect of Victoria Road. The buildings were also formerly known as Victoria Gardens nursing home and are detached double fronted period properties. The windows and doors to both buildings have been covered by timber boards or perforated metal sheeting to prevent access but allow ventilation.

The buildings are adjacent to each other and sit at a prominent location facing the Huyton Reform Church. It would be beneficial to both the local area and its residents for these properties to be brought back into a usable state in the near future. The best way to protect a building is to ensure that it is kept in active use, as stated in English Heritage's guidance on vacant and historic buildings. This would prevent any issues arising with anti-social behaviour. It would also stop the buildings from deteriorating further into an undesirable state of dilapidation.

There has been recent work performed to the buildings, and their grounds, to bring them into a safer and more desirable condition. The work included the removal of all unwanted growth from both the properties façades, as well as their grounds being cleared of any waste and overgrown vegetation. Plants and trees are continually germinating, growing, dying and decomposing. Unchecked and unmanaged, their effects can cause serious problems to empty buildings. Although the buildings remain vacant, this management of the site can be viewed as a positive action in assisting with the short-term conservation of the properties whilst they await a sustainable use.

There are also concerns regarding the sale of Prospect House. If any redevelopment on this site is to take place once the building has been sold, then the new designs must be in keeping with the character of the area. The massing of any proposed development must also be within an acceptable height that correlates with the mainly residential use of the surrounding buildings. Any future development proposals must comply with local and national planning policy.

7.4 Public Realm

Public realm improvements within The Conservation Area would greatly improve the streetscape.

There has previously been a PFI (Private Finance Initiative) that funded the updating of all the street lighting within the borough. It was agreed that all new lighting columns that are erected in Conservation Areas will be painted black, to differentiate between conservation areas and all other areas. The

lights directly inside the conservation area boundary have all been painted black, but two on the periphery of Victoria Road still remain unpainted. In this instance, it is recommended a pragmatic approach should be adopted and the additional lighting columns should also be painted black for completeness.

Further improvements could include:

- A suggested common palette of materials, signage and colours for the whole of the Conservation Area

7.5 Advertising, shop-fronts, signage

The Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area is primarily a residential area, and as a result, there are no problems concerning poor quality shop fronts and over dominating advertising and signage.

The commercial property Beech House day nursery has some fine detailing, that include both a mixture of Italianate features and Jacobean revival details. At present, the building appears to have recently been painted in colours that are not in a traditional palette. The red, beige and cream paintwork would benefit from being replaced with more subdued and muted tones to help the building realise its full potential, and continue being a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

7.6 Article 4 Directions

The use of Article 4 Directions enables local planning authorities to control minor alterations to unlisted residential property which could otherwise be carried out by

property owners without planning permission under 'the permitted development' rights. Alterations such as the installation of replacement doors and windows, reroofing in modern materials, the removal of chimneys, the addition of porches, or the removal of front boundaries and the creation of car parking in front gardens, can all be controlled by an Article 4 Direction. The aim of any such Direction is to encourage property owner to use traditional materials and details appropriate to the Conservation Area, and to prevent the gradual erosion of its special interest which can result from uncontrolled incremental changes to the buildings within it.

As Article 4 Directions do not apply to buildings in multiple occupation, flats, non-residential buildings or to listed buildings (all of which are already controlled through separate legislation).

An article 4 Direction can be applied to cover all such properties in a conservation area (usually referred to as a 'blanket' Direction) or it can be applied to individual properties or groups of properties as required. For the Conservation Area, it is recommended that a blanket Article 4 Direction is considered.

Whilst it is recognised that the introduction of an Article 4 Direction would be an effective way of safeguarding the remaining historical character of the Conservation Area, the introduction of one would require a substantial amount of support and recommendation from the local residents. It would then have to go through a public consultation process before it was implemented.

7.7 Heritage Assets

The statutory list for the Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area was prepared in the 1978. The National Planning Policy Framework and the widening of the range of 'heritage assets' may be of sufficient interest to consider submitting additional local heritage assets to English Heritage for consideration and inclusion on the national list of designated heritage assets. There has also been raised awareness of the significance of 'local' heritage assets which could include buildings, structures such as boundary walls, archaeological sites, historic parks and gardens, and sites or buildings associated with famous people or events.

It is possible that several of the buildings in the Conservation Area may contain interesting features which may have not been previously recorded which could be suitable for statutory listing. In addition, a number of the positive buildings which have been identified as part of this character appraisal may be eligible for local listing although the criteria for such a list must be first agreed and the local community's views sought. Buildings which may be considered for either statutory or local listing include:

Ravensdale & Markland Lodge

The buildings were constructed by Thomas Lings between 1860-1870 after the land was transferred from Thomas Molyneux Seel. There was originally permission to build seven houses on the plot. The general simplicity of decoration to the buildings all point to them being Italianate in style.

Hollinside

This building is one of the more assertive examples of Italianate architecture in the Conservation Area. Faced with painted stucco, the three bays are separated by rusticated strip pilasters, details that are repeated at the corners of the front elevation.

Beech House

The front elevation has a mixture of Italianate features and Jacobean revival details. The latter include the odd expression of the jambs of the front doorway, and central first floor windows as pilasters that carry a plain section of jamb, which in turn carries the door hood or window lintel. The faceted keystones to the windows and small crest above the first floor window also hint at a Jacobean influence.

Huyton Hey Cottage

Historic maps suggest this was built as a pair of cottages (or possibly cottage and coach house) serving a now-demolished large detached villa that stood at the corner of Huyton Hey Road and Huyton Church Road. The cottages stood at the far end of the rear garden of the villa.

Lawrence House

This detached villa probably dates from the 1870s or 1880s. The villa is faced with a dark mottled brick with bright red brick 'dressings' around the openings, it also retains a dwarf stone wall with ashlar copings and ashlar gateposts. Unique in the Conservation Area, the ground floor this property has a glass-roofed cast iron open verandah with slender columns.

Sussex Lodge

Three bay villa was built between 1860-1970 and has a symmetrical front. Built in an Italianate style, it is possible that the render and/or paint conceal polychromatic brickwork, otherwise the brickwork to the doorcase in particular would have looked very plain, and this is meant to be the focal point of the elevation.

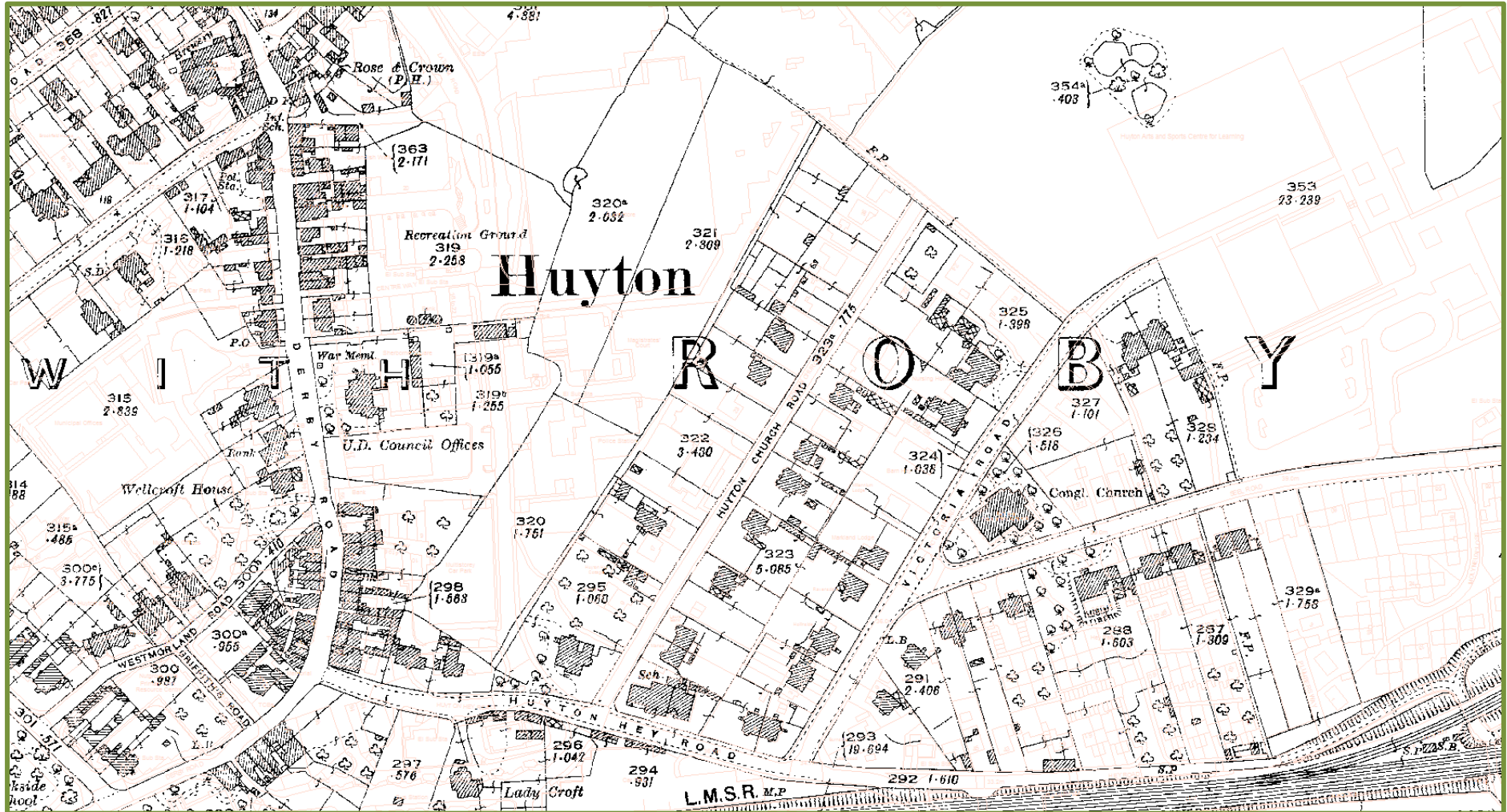
Saxon Lodge

This building is a symmetrical three bay villa. It is a mix of Italianate and Tudor revival. The massing and use of a shallow hipped roof that is barely visible from ground level suggest Italianate, as do the projecting moulded cornice and blocking course above. The central bay, however, has Tudor revival details, namely appointed arch surround to the first floor window with central four cusp carving.

The list of properties is not exhaustive and further research or survey may reveal the significance of other non-designated heritage assets.

Appendix 2

Historic map 1927



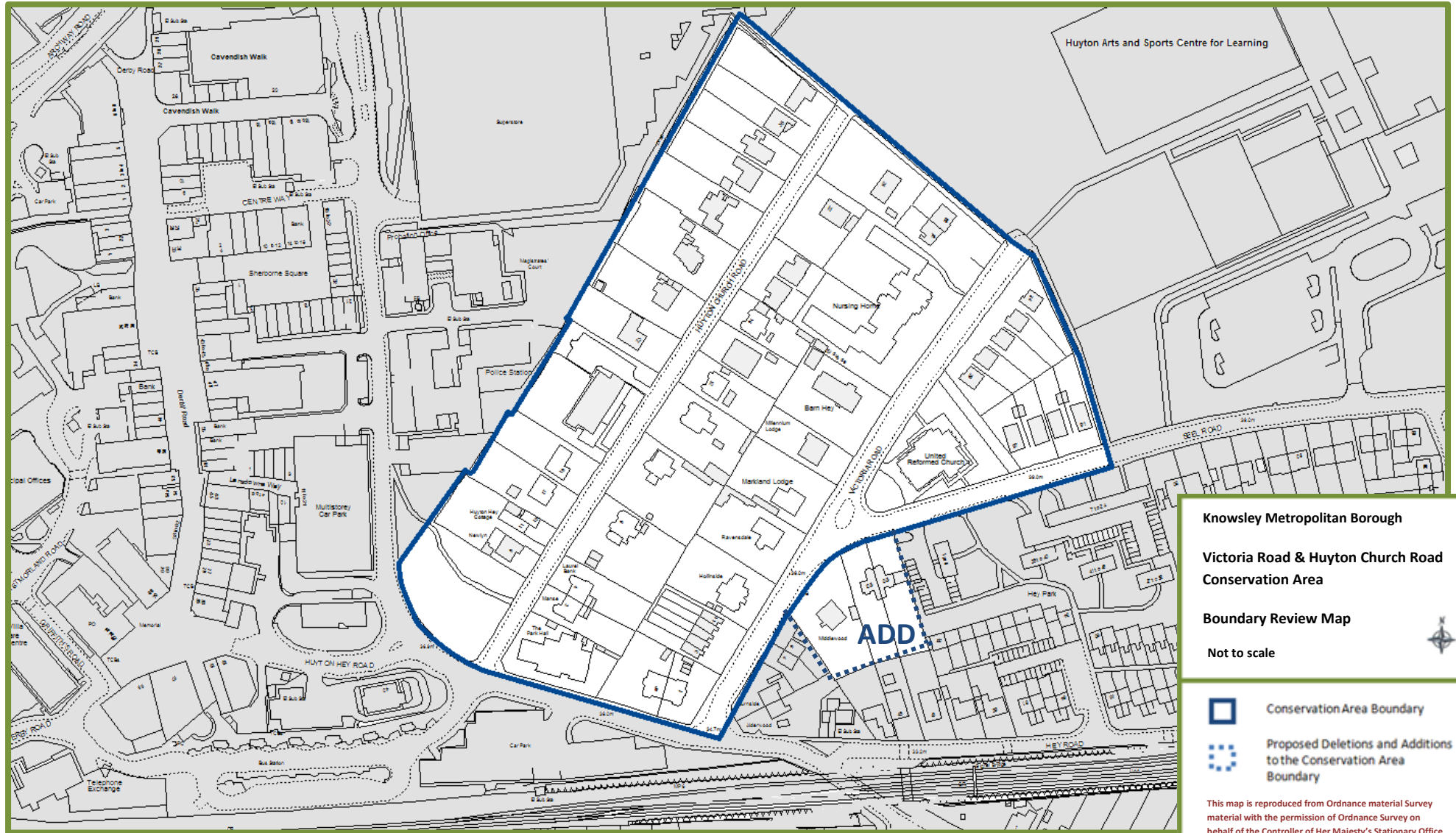
Appendix 3

Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Townscape Appraisal Map



Appendix 4

Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area Boundary Review



**Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Directorate of Place
Planning Services
PO Box 26
Huyton Knowsley
Merseyside L36 9FB
Telephone: 0151 443 2381**



Knowsley Council