



Character Appraisal
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The Orchard Conservation Area

**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 2397

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Orchard Conservation Area

The Orchard 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. However, 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 Orchard Conservation Area serves as an attractive, and to a large extent, well preserved example of a Victorian suburb, characterised by large villa style houses and extensive gardens. The mature trees which populate the entirety of the area form an important feature, with many overhanging the gardens and lane; significantly enhancing the visual appearance of the area and helping to create a strong sense of place.

The sandstone wall surrounding Huyton Hall Crescent, off Blacklow Brow, serves as natural boundary for the western side of the conservation area, dominating the local street scene.

The entrance to the hall is via an 1860's stone Florentine style archway, which was once the original entrance to the 1850's Victorian

estate contained within. Huyton Hall was formerly an important administrative building for Huyton College, though much of the building has been modernised in recent years. The surrounding grounds have also been partially developed and the site now contains a small number of attractive modern houses which overlook a large grassed area which forms a green. By contrast, the street scene has changed little over time, due in part to the mature trees that extend beyond the private estate onto Blacklow Brow. The presence of these trees helps retain the character of a peaceful Victorian suburb, despite the fact the modern town centre is located close by.

The Conservation Area currently extends to a small area on the opposite side of Blacklow Brow, including Pinnington Place. There is, however, the possibility to extend the current boundary to include the Queen's Arms Public House and Huyton Station, originally called Huyton Gate Station. Located on this side of

Blacklow Brow is a number of positive buildings; including, the old Independent Chapel and No. 37 Blacklow Brow (Shop). On the opposite side of the road the Conservation Area continues, extending to The Rooley; much of the designated area on this, the most westerly point in the Conservation Area is contained within the



boundary wall of Aaron Grange, a residential care home. Although largely sheltered from street view by the mature trees that surround the site, a substantial part of the now extended care home could be considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

The Orchard, the road that essentially divides the area into two, is possibly the best location within the site to gain an appreciation for the large Victorian houses and villas that adorn the street; including, Fernwood and Willow Lodge. Typical of other areas within the site, the road is complimented by mature trees, and a series of well kept and largely original boundary walls. At the eastern end of the Conservation Area is a traffic barrier that helps to maintain the low volume of traffic in the area; although not original, the current gate is located in the same position. The current purpose has changed substantially, as it was originally erected as a constructive barrier to deter snoopers in 1865.

1.2 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”*.

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 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 Orchard Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It 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)*

2. Location and landscape setting

2.1 Location and activities

The Orchard 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, and has been since its creation in 1972. 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 Orchard also benefit from easy access to Huyton 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 substantial number of commercial premises from a variety of use classes (shops,

residential institutions, offices and a builder's yard). The two shops, located next to each other on Blacklow Brow, have been in situ since 1846 and as such are very important not only to the Conservation Area, but also to Huyton town. Currently operating as a gentleman's barbers and ladies hairdressers, the shops once traded as a footwear store and general hardware store; in fact, it was not until recently that the hardware store changed use.

There are three residential institutions: Aaron Grange Residential Care Home, The Orchard Nursing and Residential Care Home, and Margerita's Nursery. All of which are located in attractive, largely traditional buildings within extensive grounds. There is also a builder's yard on Pinnington Place, part of which is located in the old Independent Chapel, a building steeped in local history.



2.2 Topography and geology

The Orchard Conservation Area sits on a natural outcrop, something which incidentally formed an important component in the development of the land. In fact, it was not until the inter-war period that much of the surrounding lower land was developed. This was because there was little demand and because much of the surrounding area was unsuitable marshy land.

The town lies on an outcrop of Upper Carboniferous red sandstone which contains coal measures, referred to as Westphalian 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 building walls, or for the use of paving or roofing material. This is completely overlain with boulder clay and some sands and gravels.

2.3 Relationship of The Orchard Conservation Area to its surroundings

The Orchard Conservation Area is located in close proximity to Huyton town centre; in fact, it is within a two minute walk. As a result, the area's residents enjoy the benefits of being within a 'stones throw' from all the local amenities; including, a public library, health centre, council offices, and an abundance of independent and chain retail units. South east of the site is McGoldrick Park, an extremely popular area which offers access to attractive green space and a variety of open space provision; including, a playground, tennis courts and bowling green.

Possibly the most interesting relationship is with the seemingly unrelated areas of St.

Michael's Church Conservation Area, and Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road Conservation Area; both of which are in Huyton. The histories of all three areas seem intrinsically linked, forming important residential parts of the former village - in the true sense of the word - of Huyton.

Although Huyton is an ancient Parish with records predating the Norman Conquest, especially the area surrounding St Michael's Church, the three areas' shared history can be seen most clearly after the Victorian era. All three areas boast impressive Victorian villas, especially The Orchard, and Victoria Road and Huyton Church Road; and as a result, 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. However, when considered in the context of a much greater, largely Victorian settlement, their function appears both just and 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.

"To walk from Huyton village today into the tree-sheltered calm of The Orchard is to enter a different world where one may enjoy for a few moments something of the atmosphere sought and created by a wealthy few more than 100 years ago".

Huyton & Roby – A history of two townships 1988

3. Historic development and archaeology

3.1 Historic development

With its villa style houses, some of which are built in the Italianate/Greek style, the buildings are both architecturally impressive and historically important, not only within the Conservation Area but also to the wider town. Standing in extensive gardens with mature trees, The Orchard is a classic example of a Victorian suburb.

The area around the Queens Arms Pub, a recent addition to the 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. Development increased significantly in the years that followed, in fact this is when the 'villa estates', namely Church Road, Victoria Road and The Orchard were developed. However, the area was already becoming popular in the years leading up to the arrival of the railway, with documentary evidence providing proof that the lower gentry were beginning to settle in the area as early as 1825.

Although now demolished, the Ewanville estate remains very important to the historic development of the area. Sir Joseph Beecham, 1st Baronet moved in to the property with his family in 1895, where he remained until his death in 1916. He played an influential part in the growth of his father's medicinal pill business, Beechams', in St Helens. He was also made a baronet of Ewanville in the Parish of Huyton, in the county Palatine of Lancaster. He was later succeeded in the baronetcy by his eldest son, also Thomas, who was knighted in his own right in 1916 for his services to music as an orchestral conductor. Both of whom are recognised on the Knowsley wall of fame, located outside Huyton library, for their respective contributions to the borough's history.

The building of the railway marked a significant change in the future of Huyton, and indeed for many of the small villages 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; he later went on to become something of a 'celebrity' of his time, gaining the widespread admiration of the Victorians.



The changes were so significant for the area that Huyton, almost overnight, 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, namely 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 passed, 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, Huyton's popularity grew, leading to the development of The Orchard 'villa estate'; which provided high quality houses for the merchants and traders of Liverpool. The estate was built in close proximity to the station because of a distinct lack of suitable sites in surrounding areas, but also because houses such as Ewanville provided a precedent for the building of large houses in the area.

The estate originally comprised of around 20 houses, many of which stood in their own extensive grounds. It is recorded in Gore's Directory of Liverpool, that some of the inhabitants proceeded to change their occupation to 'Gentleman'; leading to the idea that the original aim of the estate was to lend an air of gentility to rural village life. It 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. The Orchard typifies the type of exclusive suburbia that cropped up in small villages purely because the railway gave convenient access to the economic, social and cultural offer of the nearby towns and cities.

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 title 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 Orchard 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 Orchard Conservation Area retains much of its historic layout, with the four main access roads running through the area; Blacklow Brow, The Orchard, The Rooley and St Mary's Road, following the same street pattern as they have done for over 150 years. The majority of houses are located on The Orchard, a serpentine road that effectively divides the area into two. Many of the houses have retained their mid-Victorian character, with many set back from the road standing in extensive grounds. A gate exists at the east end of The Orchard to mark the start of St Mary's Road, and proving a useful measure for controlling traffic in the area.

Huyton Hall Crescent is its own distinct area, located off Blacklow Brow and accessed via a stone archway; much of this private residential estate once formed Huyton College. The complex is a combination of traditional housing, such Huyton Hall, and a selection of modern family housing.

Pinnington Place towards the north west of the Conservation Area is, by contrast, very different in layout to the rest of the Conservation Area, and the buildings are far simpler in design; possibly due to the fact that this particular area is much older than the villa estates located close by.

The railway line to the north creates a natural boundary, while The Rooley, and to a lesser extent Blacklow Brow, also provide an indication of the westerly side of the Conservation Area. Boundary lines for the south and east are less clearly defined, and are out of sight from public view.

4.2 Open spaces, trees and landscape

The Conservation Area contains a large amount of green space, however most is privately owned. One of the largest and most attractive areas is the green in the grounds of Huyton Hall, which like much of the Conservation Area, benefits from good tree cover. Trees form an important element of The Orchard, not only do they significantly enhance the visual appearance of the area, but their presence is important in retaining the original character. Many of the houses located in the Conservation Area stand in their own extensive grounds, out of public view and hidden behind walls and hedges.

This helps the area to retain its semi-rural atmosphere. There is some limited public green space, with the largest and most attractive area being a thin stretch of land on The Rooley; the area benefits from the over hanging trees above and a well positioned



bench below.

The public footpath located next to The Orchard Nursing & Residential Care Home has recently been added to the Conservation Area boundary, it contains a number of mature trees which should benefit from the protection afforded by the designation.

4.3 Focal points, focal buildings and views

Focal Points

One of the most obvious focal points in the Conservation Area is the gate that separates The Orchard and St Mary's Road, and although the original function has long since ceased, it is probably one of the easiest and most recognisable features to locate. The entrance to Huyton Hall also serves as useful focal point within the Conservation Area; the use of the archway as a functional (meeting destination) focal point is probably overshadowed by its close proximity to Huyton Station and the Queen's Arms.

Focal Buildings

The Orchard is fortunate to have a number of focal buildings including:

- Huyton Hall
- The former Chapel to Huyton College
- Greenhill (Grade II Listed Building)
- Old Independent Chapel
- No 37 Blacklow Brow (Shops)
- Huyton Train Station
- The Queen's Arms Public House

Huyton Station and The Queens Arms, both recent additions to the Conservation Area, are probably two of the most important focal buildings for the general public. The area surrounding these buildings has lost much of

its former appeal, due in part to the loss of some historic features; including, a small group of trees and a reduction in the size of the cobbled area outside the station.

Views

The high boundary walls and tree cover, typical of a Victorian estate, make the area feel very enclosed. However, there are a number of notable views within the Conservation Area.

One of the best views is that of The Bell Tower from St Mary's Road, outside The Orchard Nursing & Residential Care Home. From here you can clearly see the side elevation of the building; the view is particularly pleasant due to the tall trees and care home which seem to frame the view. The Bell Tower would ordinarily be out of sight from members of the public, as it is located on private land

Possibly the best views are those that can be seen along The Orchard. This serpentine road is probably the best example of a Victorian villa estate within the Conservation Area, affording passers-by views of various buildings, boundary walls and mature trees; features which incidentally make up the Conservation Area. The Orchard could be described as a series of closed views, with the winding road offering only limited views along its course, which in turn creates a sense of anticipation. Although there are very few uninterrupted views on The Orchard, there are a few of note that can be gained intermittently, including those of Huyton Hall and Greenhill.

4.4 Boundaries

Boundaries form an important feature of The Orchard, in fact, from a pedestrian's point of view, boundary walls are of greater prominence than many of the buildings. The walls are of varying designs, heights and materials, but for the most part work together to help create a distinct area; there are few notable exceptions, namely modern walls which seem unsympathetic to the surrounding area. There are two traditional materials used for within the Conservation Area, yellow sandstone and red brick.

The wall surrounding Aaron Grange Residential Care Home is made from random coursed sand stone; offering only limited views into the grounds. The wall continues into The Orchard, on the right hand side of the road (when entering via Blacklow Brow), before reducing to a much smaller wall. Although similar in colour the design is quite different, with the smaller wall being laid very roughly. This wall extends to Greenhill. Along its course the wall's height changes, this is particularly noticeable at the end of the modern housing estate located on the other side of the wall; the change in height however, does appear to be a later alteration. Along the remainder of the wall, the height of the boundary is increased with the addition of railings and/or wooden fencing.

One of most noticeable boundary changes is the outbuilding/former stable on the Greenhill site, which incidentally forms part of the boundary wall. The building's facade fronting The Orchard appears to be a later addition, and possibly done as a result of repair works. Built in red brick, the appearance of the outbuilding is a contrast to the sandstone of the original wall. The building does appear a little 'run down', suffering at the hands of vandals in recent years.

After Greenhill the boundary walls appear notably different, as a whole they are built from red brick with coping stone detailing on the top. This type of wall continues past the gate and into St Mary's Road.

Similarly, the boundary wall on the opposite side of the road is also in red brick of varying designs and ages, including many with recessed panels. Taken as a whole, the different walls work well together, culminating in a continued boundary that is similar in design and appearance along much of its course. A recent addition across the road from Greenhill however, does not appear in-keeping with the general character of the boundary wall.

Between this point and Leafy Acre the boundary is provided by a mixture of vegetation and trees; enhancing the character of the area as a leafy Victorian suburb. This particular stretch of wall has probably changed the most in recent years, with records indicating that the boundary here was once served by a small sandstone wall and iron railings. Fragments of this original wall can be seen beneath the vegetation.

The boundary wall at the rear of Rooley Lodge is another prominent wall in the area, and although it seems a later addition, it appears reasonably sympathetic to its surroundings, using traditional sandstone, but of a different coursing style.

Possibly the most significant boundary wall in the Conservation Area is that which surrounds Huyton Hall Crescent. This particular wall is built using random coursed sandstone and is a prominent feature on Blacklow Brow. The stone archway provides the main access point into the private complex, and it also has a positive contribution on the streetscape. The wall continues until the end of Blacklow Brow,

where it is replaced by wooden fencing that continues along the course of the public footpath (running between the railway line and the rear of Huyton Hall Crescent). It is of no particular merit.

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 significantly to the appearance of these spaces. Most of the public realm in the Conservation Area is the responsibility of Knowsley Borough Council.

The quality of the public realm is relatively poor throughout the Conservation Area, this is particularly apparent outside the station. Currently the area suffers from neglect, with fading road markings and a patchwork of different coloured tarmac. The area could benefit from a comprehensive enhancement scheme, to integrate new natural stone paving with existing stone paving. The reinstatement of historic paving outside the Huyton Station could significantly enhance the character of the Conservation Area. At the end of Blacklow Brow is a public footpath that continues until St Mary's Road. The area around St Mary's Road would benefit from a landscaping initiative, as some of the vegetation appears overgrown.

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.

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 area would benefit from a review of road safety signs, as some seem unnecessary, especially those located on The Orchard, which is a private, one way housing estate; and as such you would expect that road safety signs would be kept to a minimum. Roads within the Conservation Area are particularly poor, with a patchwork of tarmac used throughout the site having a negative visual impact. This is particularly evident outside many properties in the easterly end of The Orchard, close to the dividing gate. It appears that there was once a thin stretch of vegetation that continued along many of the properties, in front of the boundary walls, providing a soft edge to the roadway, and contributing to the green suburban character of the area. These areas' currently appear unkempt and lacking in vegetation.

The Conservation Area contains relatively few special public realm details and would benefit enormously from financial investment and comprehensive enhancement scheme. Despite its shortcomings, 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 Orchard Conservation Area largely date from the 19th Century. There are some later buildings, the majority of which are located on Ewanville, and although attractively designed with 'traditional features' they are of little merit architecturally. A number of modern buildings can be found elsewhere in the Conservation Area, including Huyton Hall Crescent and St Mary's Road.

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 and cover much of the area; supporting the idea of the area being a purpose built Victorian suburb.

The area also includes a number of Georgian buildings, particularly those located on Pinnington Place and Blacklow Brow. This area is quite distinct from the rest of the Conservation Area, with its own unique character. The majority of the residential buildings are, by comparison with other areas with the Conservation Area, small terraces with petite gardens. Huyton Train Station,

formerly known as Huyton Gate Station, also dates from the late Georgian period. The largest building is Huyton Hall, with other buildings associated with the former College being of similar size; including, The Auditorium and Fernwood Hall.

5.2 Listed buildings

There is currently only one listed building in the Conservation Area – Greenhill – which is grade II listed. The statutory list covering the Borough of Knowsley was last reviewed in 1992 by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. 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 Orchard, could benefit from statutory listing.



Grade II

Greenhill

Greenhill was first listed in 1992. Dating to the mid 19th Century, the villa is built in an eclectic style with some classical features, including channelled stucco at ground floor, red brick in Flemish bond at 1st floor and a slate roof. The building stands in extensive grounds with mature trees and high boundary walls. The building is also oriented so that its principal elevation faces south, away from the roadway; this was fairly common practice, with a number of neighbouring dwellings also adopting this approach. Buildings were built in this way so that only home owners and guests were able to enjoy the 'view'; house staff would traditionally use a front or side entrance, and have only limited access to the garden.

The house was originally inhabited by Lord and Lady Cozens-Hardy. The family originally based in Norfolk had financial interests in St Helens, in particular with Pilkington Glass, a significant employer in the area at the time. The house was later donated to the College, and functioned as the house of the headmistress for a number of years.

5.3 Locally listed buildings

There are currently no locally listed buildings in The Orchard.

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 Orchard Nursing & Residential Care Home, St Mary's Road (Formerly four individual properties – St Hilda's, St Mary's, St Margaret's, and St Clare's)*
- The former Chapel to Huyton College, off The Orchard
- Fernwood Hall, off The Orchard
- Huyton Hall, Huyton Hall Crescent*
- Margerita's Nursery, The Orchard*
- Nos. 22, The Orchard
- St Anne's, The Orchard*
- Leafy Acre, The Orchard
- The Rooley, Blacklow Brow*
- Aaron Grange, Blacklow Brow
- No. 37 Blacklow Brow*
- The Rooley, Blacklow Brow*
- Nos 33 – 37 Blacklow Brow
- The Old Independent Chapel, Pinnington Place*
- Nos. 1 – 9 Pinnington Place
- Huyton Train Station, Blacklow Brow

*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 areas 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 between the 1850's and 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 Georgian buildings located on Pinnington Place are mainly houses; two storeys' high and built in brick, these buildings would have traditionally presented a uniform front. In recent years however, many of the buildings have suffered from unsympathetic modernisation, which include the use of upvc windows and doors, dormer extensions and render.

Huyton Train Station, built using local sandstone in the late Georgian period, is probably one of the most unique buildings architecturally in the area. The building has changed significantly in recent decades, and what exists today is essentially a 'stripped back' version of how it once looked. Although the building has been altered, the station

building nonetheless makes a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance.

The remaining buildings of architectural interest are 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 over hanging roofs, with many also having traditional 'dressed' welsh heather blue slate which has purple hues.

The following buildings, although not officially recognised, have been selected for their positive contribution.

Huyton Hall, Huyton Hall Crescent

The first building of The Orchard estate dates back to 1850. It was initially owned by Frederick Chapple, a ship owner and merchant, although he only lived there for a few years. By 1871, the building had become a school, and by 1894 the building became Huyton College and remained so for nearly 100 years. The building is in an Italianate style with stone facing. It has a number of balconies that further enhance the grand appearance of the building and is similar to many other villa style buildings in the area, and the over hanging roof is supported by detailed timber brackets.

Fernwood Hall, off The Orchard

This building has a shared history with Huyton Hall, and indeed many of the surrounding buildings. Built from red brick, with painted

stone detailing around the windows and over hanging brackets to support the roof, it is architecturally less impressive than Huyton Hall but nonetheless, an important building in the area.

The Orchard Nursing and Residential Care Home, St Mary's Road

Originally four separate buildings, St Hilda's, St Mary's, St Margaret's, and St Clare's are now, rather unsympathetically, connected by suspended bridges and extensions to make one large residential care home. In comparison to surrounding buildings, they are unpretentious and are the only villas in the Conservation Area to be built following a similar, if not identical design. Built from red brick, each house has a decorative roof canopy between the ground floor and first floor. The doors are located at the centre of each building, creating a grand entrance. Similar to other buildings in the area, the buildings also have shaped brackets to carry the over hanging roof and stone detailing around the windows. During the building's history, the four properties were also used as dormitories to Huyton College.

Margerita's Nursery, The Orchard

Originally known as Beaconsfield, this property dates to the mid 19th century. Built from red brick, the building is similar in design to St Anne's (No 22, The Orchard). The building now appears 'back to front' with what looks to be the rear elevation facing The Orchard. However, when looking at historic maps, it becomes apparent the main entrance to the property was originally from Park Road. The building retains many original features, including shaped bracket to carry the over hanging roof. The roof is covered in traditional slate and has retained many of the original chimney features, including traditional pots. Although many original

windows and frames have been retained, some window openings have been in-filled with brick in recent years. No. 22 The Orchard, now a separate dwelling, was once ancillary to the property, built as the 'coach house' to Beaconsfield.

The former Chapel to Huyton College, off The Orchard

This building dates back to the early 20th century, and was originally built as a Chapel for an expanding Huyton College. Built in a gothic revival style, with large pointed arch windows, dividing buttresses, and hood moulds, the building appears much older than its years. In recent years, dormer windows have been erected; their size and scale have minimal impact.

Rooley Lodge, Blacklow Brow

Rooley Lodge dates to mid/late 19th century. Architecturally this building is unique, differing greatly to other buildings in the area. It is comprised of six bays, with two central bays set foreword and gabled. The central doorway has a fanlight above and Ionic columns either side. The roof above is dressed, welsh slate.

No 37 Blacklow Brow

This building has been two shops since it was built in the mid 19th century. The front elevation is symmetrical, and on the ground floor the building is split into two shops, a gentleman's barbers and ladies hairdressers respectively. The building still retains a number of original features, stucco stall risers and pilasters, and a traditional fascia with corbel brackets at either side of the building. The two shop doorways have a fan light above. On the first floor, the building's red brick is visible, while shaped brackets carry the over hanging roof. Traditional slate covers the roof.

St. Anne's, The Orchard

This property dates to the mid 19th century and is built from red brick with stone dressings. The doorway is set back within an arch, with a large bay window to the right of the property. The building also contains the traditional shaped brackets to carry the over hanging roof. Similar to Margerita's Nursery, the roof is covered in traditional dressed welsh slate and the chimneys are an important visual feature, retaining the original chimney pots. Unfortunately, the ground floor of the property has been painted over in recent years. Interestingly, the property still retains a front carriage sweep, something which many properties within the Conservation Area would have once had.

6. Character areas

Based on building density and type, street layout, the relationship of buildings to open spaces, the landscape details, The Orchard Conservation Area provides four areas of very distinctive character, as follows:

- Pinnington Place and Blacklow Brow
- Huyton Hall Crescent
- The Orchard and St Mary's Road
- Ewanville

6.1 Pinnington Place and Blacklow Brow

Key positive features:

- The area around the 'Queens Arms' is one of the oldest parts of Huyton, and it has changed little since 1830s.
- Huyton Train Station is fundamentally important, not only to the Conservation Area, but also to the wider historical development of Huyton
- The old Independent Chapel on Pinnington Place is important as it is the first building to be built by Congregationalists in Huyton
- The Queens Arms Public House has been in situ for nearly 200 years; housing many of the railway and turnpike workers. As a result, the building is of merit in terms of

townscape and historical association.

- The shop at No. 37 Blacklow Brow has been in existence since 1846, and retains much of its original character.
- Rooley Lodge is built in the Italianate/Greek style
- Two areas, one outside the station, the other on Pinnington Place, still have some of the original cobble setts; an important surface and part of the areas character

Key negative features:

- Some of the houses on Pinnington Place have large roof extensions, which detract somewhat from the buildings original character
- The road markings on Blacklow Brow are not in-keeping with the area's historical character, and may benefit from review
- Dominant signs on the old Independent Chapel are not in-keeping with the building. The building is generally in an unkempt and poor condition.
- Signage outside the station is too corporate, and the bright colours are a little 'garish' considering the station's historic character
- Dominant signs and advertising boards on the stone archway



6.2 Huyton Hall Crescent

Key positive features:

- Attractive location, with a mixture of housing types
- Huyton Hall and associated building are important to the areas local history, formerly Huyton College
- Huyton Hall is generally well preserved
- Large 'green' in the centre of the development
- Modern housing appears well built and attractive; following the low density character of the surrounding area
- The new houses built along the southern edge of the site are screened from view of the Orchard by high hedges

Key negative features:

- Much of the historic character has been lost due to the high number of modern buildings
- Although the modern houses are generally well designed/built, they are of no architectural merit

6.3 The Orchard and St Mary's Road

Key positive features:

- Highest concentration of positive buildings
- Contains the only listed building in the Conservation Area, Greenhill Place
- Both streets retain much of their original character, as a leafy Victorian suburb
- A mix of architectural styles
- Most buildings appear in reasonable condition
- Mature trees overhang the road, enhancing the areas 'countrified character

- The boundary walls are an important feature in the Conservation Area, with many walls having a positive contribution on the streetscape

Key negative features:

- The roadways, highway verges and paving require maintenance and improvement
- The unlisted, but positive buildings need to be protected from unsympathetic alterations, such as UPVC windows, doors and guttering.
- Additional control 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.
- Traffic barrier that separates The Orchard and St Mary's Road consists of a mixture of rusting metal and wooden fencing. Consider replacing it with a more sympathetic design.
- Better management of the over grown and unkempt hedges on The Orchard.
- Aaron Grange has been extended significantly over time, which has compromised the original character of the building
- The 'stalled' construction site next to St Anne's, The Orchard(The former tennis courts)

6.4 Ewanville

Key positive features:

- The modern housing on Ewanville is generally attractive. The estate has been built with the surrounding character in mind, picking up many of the design details, including shaped brackets to carry the over hanging roofs.
- The estate also contains a number of mature trees, which are remnants of the

gardens to the villas that were once on the site.

- The area surrounding the dividing wall/railings between the estate and The Orchard has been particularly well done; minimising the impact the estate has on The Orchard.

Key negative features:

- Although the houses on Ewanville are generally well designed/built, the area has suffered from the loss of the two original villas that once occupied the land.

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 Orchard 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, thanks in part to the protection afforded by the official designation. The Conservation Area has been extended to include other areas, located just outside the current boundary, which would also benefit from further protection, and have been deemed to have a positive contribution on the historic streetscape.

Additions:

- (i) Add the land surrounding and including Huyton Train Station and the Queens Arms, which lies to the north and west of the existing Conservation Area. The station is particularly important to the development history of the

Conservation Area, as well as dating back to 1830; thus being an important building in its own right. The Queens Arms, although notably different in appearance to how it once looked, is also an important building by association, especially in relation to the development of the area;

- (ii) Add the public pathway to the side of The Orchard Nursing & Residential Care Home, which lies to the north and east of the existing Conservation Area. This particular narrow stretch of land is proposed for inclusion in order to provide further protection for the mature trees, which incidentally have a positive contribution on the overall appearance of the area;
- (iii) Consider adding the thin stretch of land that lies just outside the boundary wall of Aaron Grange. The Conservation Boundary is to be extended to the public footpath.



7.2 Traffic and pedestrian movement

The current flow of traffic through much of the Conservation Area is controlled by the gate which divides The Orchard and St Mary's Road. The gate is particularly useful in this area for a number of reasons; including:

- Reduces traffic flow through the area
- It is an historic feature
- Helps to preserve the quiet character of the area
- Safety – due to the lack of pedestrian footpaths along The Orchard, the gate helps to improve safety for pedestrians

While the gate does have a number of benefits for the Conservation Area, it currently allows for motor cycles and other 'slim' forms of motorised transport to still cut through the area; which in turn can pose a greater risk for pedestrians due to the lack of footpaths, and limited visibility (due to the meandering nature of the road).

An additional problem identified in the Conservation Area is the area outside Huyton Train Station. This area currently suffers from congestion and illegal car parking; a problem quickly identified from surveying the area. This exists despite the box junction outside the station and Pinnington Place. A review of traffic signs and road markings is recommended.

Clearly a balance between pedestrian movement, the demands of road users and the need for accessible and cheap car parking all need to be attended to if the problems identified are to be addressed.

7.3 Vacant or derelict sites

Construction work on the site adjacent to number 20 The Orchard (former tennis

courts) appears to have stalled, with the building currently incomplete and uninhabited. It is hoped that the building will be finished promptly and in a style that befits the area.

7.4 Buildings at risk

No buildings within the Conservation Area are currently at risk.

7.5 Public realm

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

Further improvements could include:

- The imposition of a common palette of materials, signage and colours for the whole Conservation Area
- The erection of a replacement gate in the highway at The Orchard / St Mary's Road that is more aesthetically pleasing and appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The protection of cobble setts outside the station and Pinnington Place. For example, ensuring the cobbles are returned if future works require them to be lifted
- Lighting – There is currently a PFI (Private Finance Initiative) which is updating all the street lighting within the borough. It has been 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. In instances where part of the road is in the Conservation Area and part of it is located just outside, a pragmatic approach has been adopted

and these additional lighting columns will also be painted black for completeness.

7.6 Advertising, shopfronts, signage

The Orchard Conservation Area is primarily a residential area, and as a result, there are few problems concerning poor quality shop fronts and over dominating advertising and signage.

The area around the station however, would benefit most from a concentrated improvement scheme; although even here, the problem is fairly acute. The train station which dates back to 1830, is an important building in the Conservation Area with many original features. However, as part of Merseyrail's design objectives, and for the purpose of completeness, all train stations within the county to be of a similar design. Discussions with Network Rail have taken place to secure the most appropriate alterations, whilst respecting the corporate identity. For example, it has been agreed that accepted railings will be painted black to help protect the impact of further alterations. In addition, some signage does not require planning permission and as such the Council has limited ability to control minor alterations. It is for this reason an Article 4 Direction has been recommended.

7.7 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, reproofing 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 Orchard, it is recommended that a blanket Article 4 Direction is considered.

7.8 Heritage Assets

The statutory list for The Orchard 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

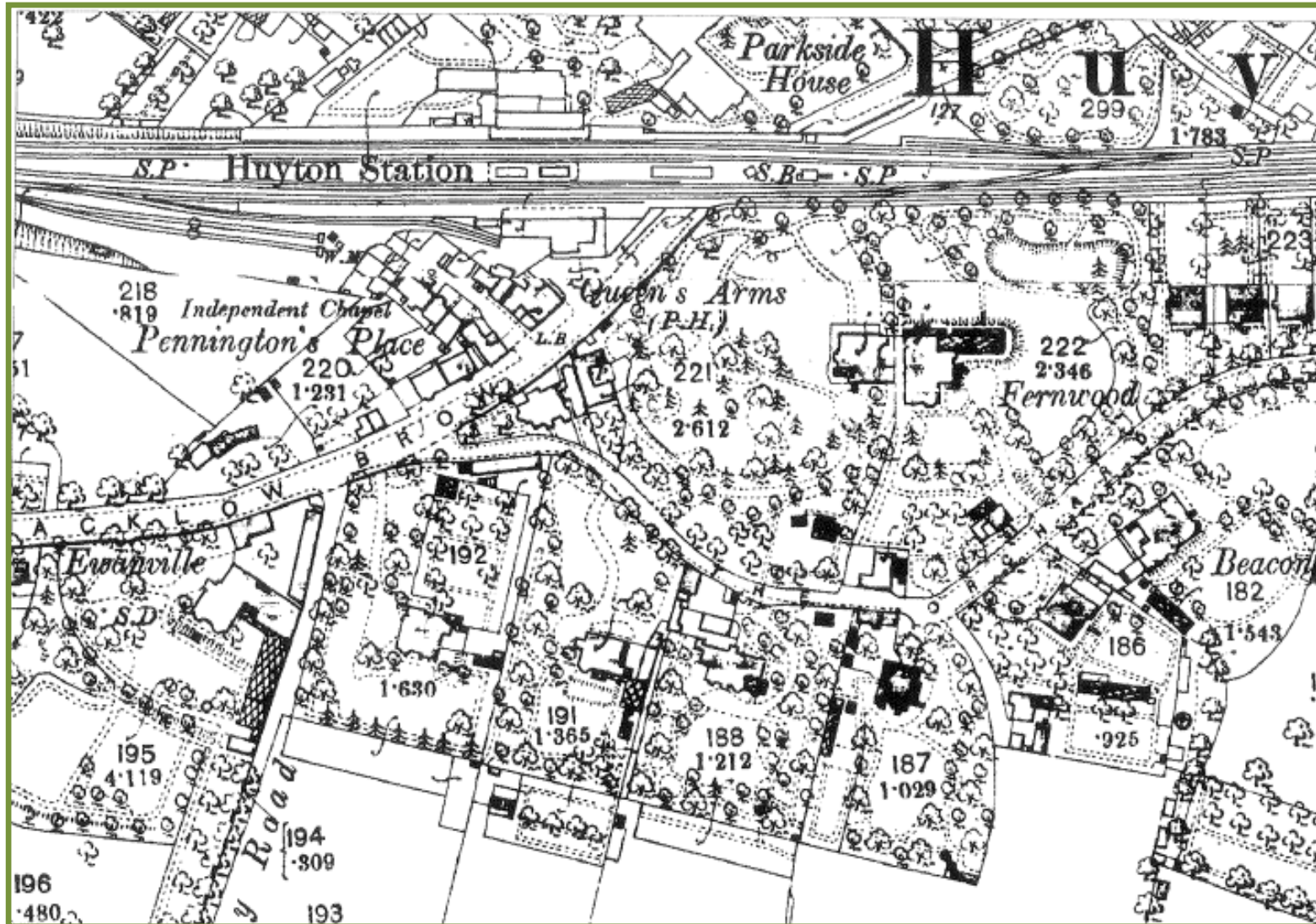
previously recorded which could be suitable for statutory listing. In addition, a number of the 'positive' buildings which have been identified as part of this Character Appraisal may be eligible for 'local listing', although the criteria for such a list must be first agreed and the local community's views sought. Buildings which may be considered for either statutory or local listing include:

- The former Chapel to Huyton College, off The Orchard
- Huyton Hall, Huyton Hall Crescent
- The Orchard Nursing & Residential Care Home, St Mary's Road (Formerly four individual properties –St Hilda's, St Mary's, St Margaret's, and St Clare's)
- Margerita's Nursery, The Orchard
- St. Anne's, The Orchard
- The Rooley, Blacklow Brow
- No. 37 Blacklow Brow
- The Old Independent Chapel, Pinnington Place

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

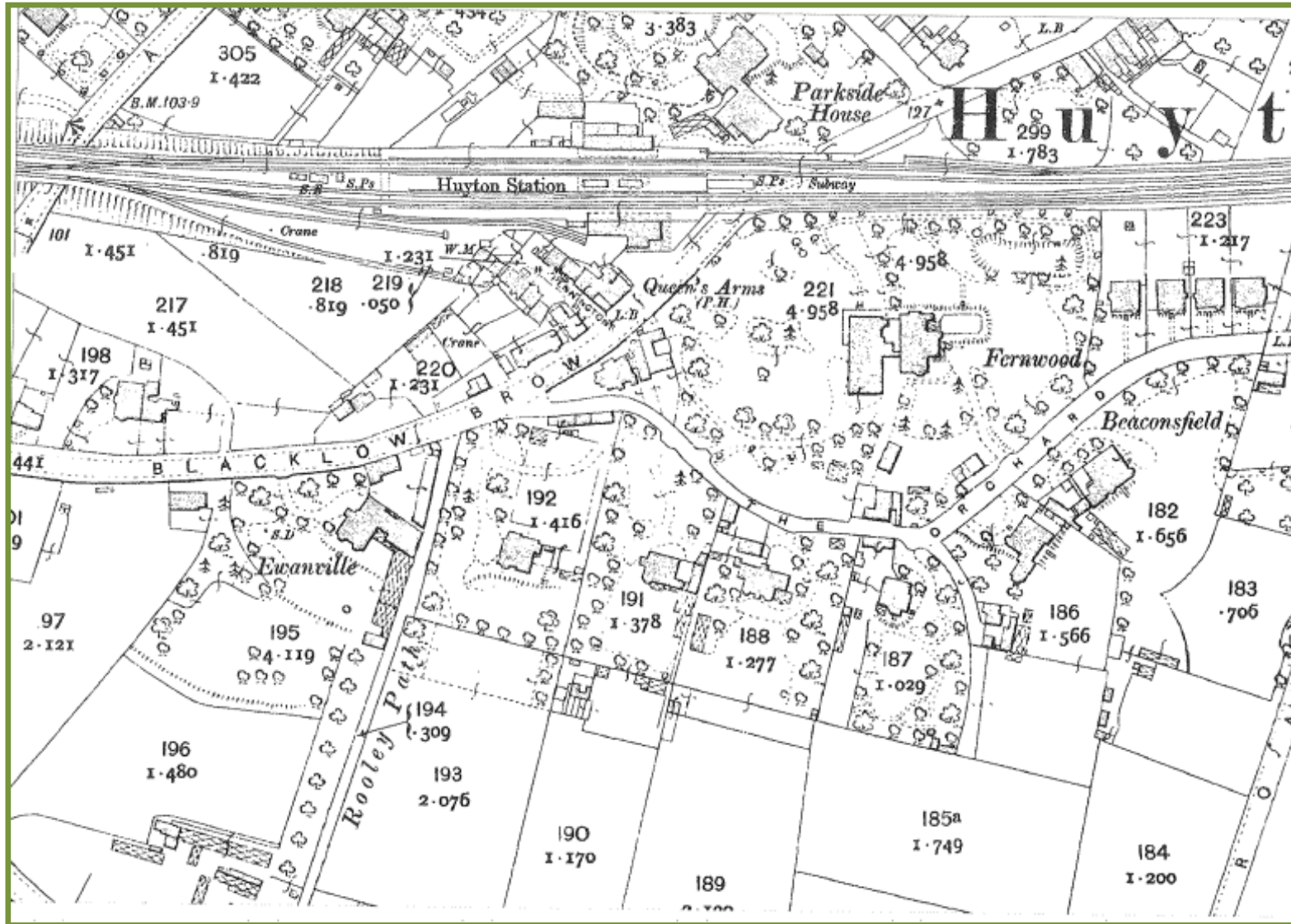
Appendix 1

Historic map 1891



Appendix 2

Historic map 1927



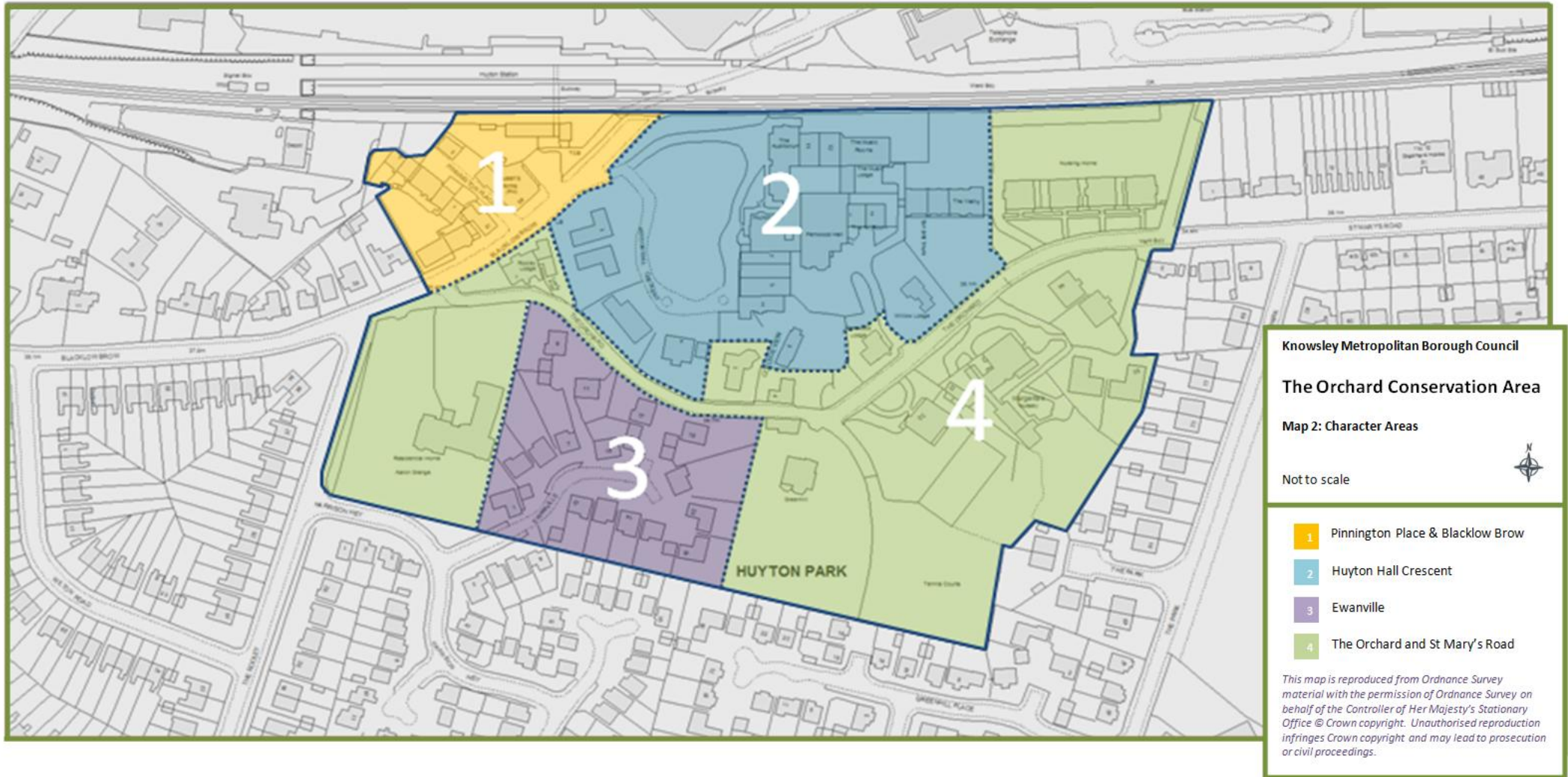
Appendix 3

The Orchard Townscape Appraisal Map



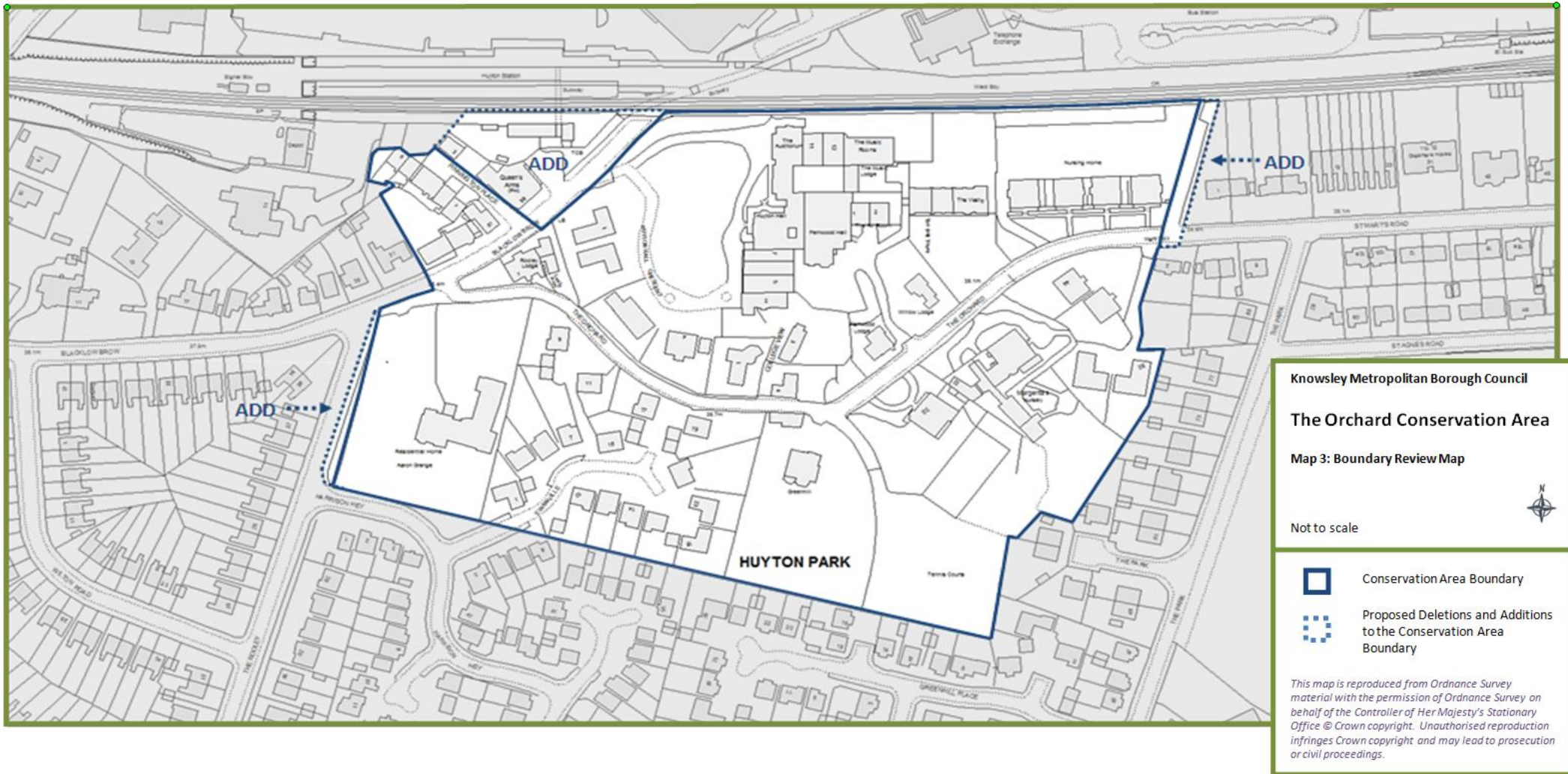
Appendix 4

The Orchard Character Areas Map



Appendix 5

The Orchard Conservation Area Boundary Review



Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Department of Regeneration Economy and
Skills
Planning Department
PO Box 26
Huyton Knowsley
Merseyside L36 9FB
Telephone: 0151 443 2397



Knowsley Council