

# HEATON MERSEY

## CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

March 2006 (Updated 2012)



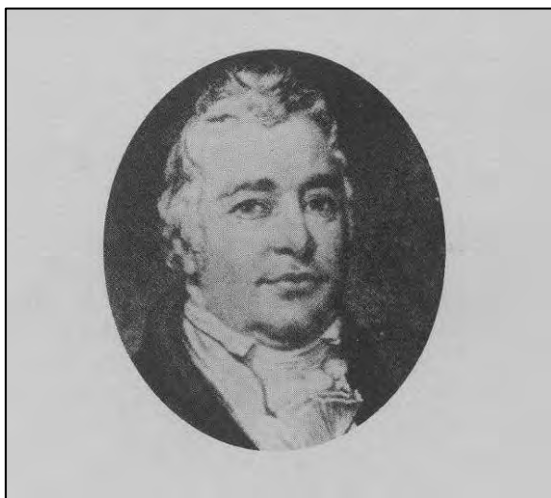
## **Special Character of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area**

The special character of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area derives from the following elements:

- Contrasts of topography: elevated plateau above a steep-sided valley
- Relationship between built form and open green space to south, comprising the Vale, Heaton Mersey Park and Didsbury Road Primary School playing fields
- Terraces of small two-storey former workers' houses built into and down the hillside, with abrupt changes of level defined by steep banks and stone retaining walls
- Spacious and formal layout of the Victorian church and its associated building
- Busy local shopping centre aligned along heavily trafficked main road
- Mixed residential, commercial, ecclesiastical and community use
- Buildings of architectural merit dating largely from the late 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Traditional craftsmanship embodied in original building materials and architectural features
- Harmonious relationship of scale, height and massing in streetscene
- Visual harmony resulting from use of a limited palette of natural building materials
- Survival of traditional stone setted street surfaces
- Panoramic views over the Mersey valley
- Consistent building line in the street scene, formal relationship between buildings and the street
- Differentiated spaces and building groups reflecting distinct phases of development, linked by the main road route, views and groups of trees
- Open spaces, including private front and rear gardens
- Significant groups of trees and areas of woodland
- Associations with the pioneer industrialist Samuel Oldknow, whose activities influenced the historic development of the area

A definition of the special interest of the conservation area is set out at the conclusion of this document.

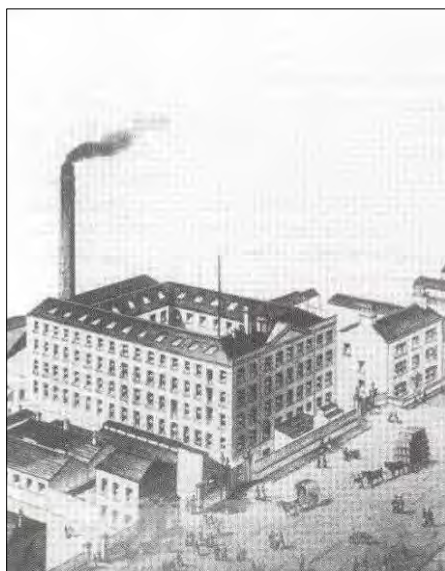
**Samuel Oldknow 1756 – 1828**  
***Pioneer Industrialist, Agriculturalist, Road and Canal Builder***



*Source: Oldham 'Samuel Oldknow' 1990*

This conservation area is one of several across the borough that are associated with Samuel Oldknow, and where his activities have shaped the character or appearance of the present locality. These are the Hillgate, Heaton Mersey, Peak Forest Canal, All Saints', Marple, Station Road/Winnington Road and Marple Bridge Conservation Areas.

Samuel Oldknow's influence on the development of the wider Stockport area during the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries was immense. Always keen to become involved in every new possibility for the development of his businesses and the wider community, Oldknow was perpetually in debt to his friend and sometime partner, the great Richard Arkwright. No development in scientific thinking or technology as applied to textile manufacturing, agriculture or transport escaped his attention. With his brother Thomas, he opened one of the earliest bleachworks in Stockport on a rural site at Heaton Mersey in 1785, whilst simultaneously engaged in building warehouses for muslin and calico at Higher Hillgate, the main road into Stockport. Initially weaving and spinning in Stockport was carried out by outworkers, then in rented premises in the Carrs, and by 1786 Oldknow had become the foremost manufacturer of fine muslins in the country. In 1791 he opened his great mill on the Hillgate site, next to the house he had bought in 1784 and which still stands. The mill was innovative in design, being of massive scale and arranged around a central courtyard. By this time ninety percent of his production was devoted to the fashionable muslins, but fickle public taste led immediately to a need to reorganise production in favour of plainer goods.



*Hillgate Mill 1880. (Source: Arrowsmith 'Stockport A History' 1997)*

Financially overstretched by the sheer scale of his activities, and hit by the death of Thomas and a trading depression in the early 1790s, Oldknow was forced to jettison both his Stockport and Heaton Mersey enterprises and throw his resources into his developing plans for Marple, in the Pennine fringe to the east. The Heaton Mersey finishing works was purchased by Robert Parker, owner of the slightly later Upper Bleachworks just to the

north of the Oldknow establishment. Spinning and weaving were later carried out here, the mill being demolished and its site redeveloped in the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Although the Oldknow's tenure of the works was brief, their choice of the Heaton Mersey site was instrumental in bringing the original industrial village into being and in influencing the form of the modern suburb. Oldknow's Hillgate Mill was rented out, eventually becoming part of Christys' Hillgate Works, which in 1868 was said to be "the largest hat-factory in England, probably in Europe". This, too, has now been demolished.

Oldknow had begun amassing land in the Marple area in 1787, both by purchase and in exchange for property in Stockport. On one of his first acquisitions, the Bottoms Hall Estate in the valley of the River Goyt, he began building his second great mill in 1790. Completed by 1792, Mellor Mill was the largest and most imposing mill in the area. The central six-storey block was 64m long with 25 bays, and the two storey flanking wings added 9 bays each. Nothing like it existed in the vicinity, and it must have been seen as a wonder of its age. Other improvements to the estate included the rebuilding of Bottoms Hall Farm as a model farmstead where Oldknow could put into effect the latest scientific ideas on the breeding and raising of livestock. He also built substantial houses for himself and his mill manager and half-brother, John Clayton, as well as planting large numbers of trees and creating a market garden near the mill. The course of the Goyt was diverted to permit the construction of massive reservoirs to power the mill; these are the present Roman Lakes. Together with his model farm, these are all that survive extant of the huge productive complex built by Oldknow. Tantalising archaeological traces of buildings and power features can be seen throughout the site, conjuring the massive impact that this unprecedented project had on the appearance and fortunes of late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Marple.



*Mellor Mill. (Source: Arrowsmith 'Stockport A History' 1997)*

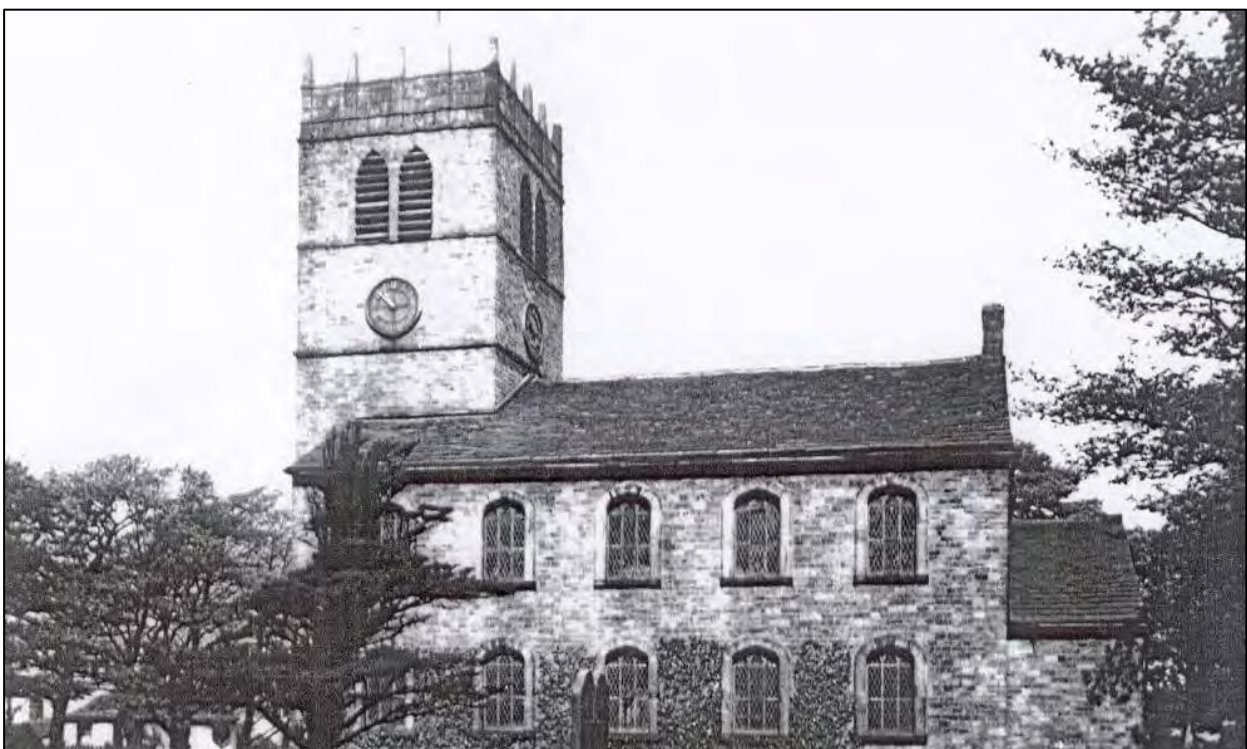
Oldknow's involvement at the Mellor Mill site was the catalyst for a whole raft of developments which changed the face of the township, previously a place of small-scale scattered settlement based on agriculture and the domestic production of textiles. During the 1790s and the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Oldknow was a trustee for the several new turnpike routes that revolutionised transport and trading opportunities in the Marple, Mellor and Compstall area. Oldknow's desire for agricultural improvement on his Marple estate also involved him in enthusiastic promotion of the Peak Forest Canal from 1794. He and Arkwright were the major shareholders in the enterprise, which was designed to bring lime from Derbyshire. Lime was much in demand as a fertiliser, as well as essential to the building and textile finishing trades. The passage of the canal across Oldknow's estate

was to permit the diversification of his business interests and to place Marple on a major trading artery, a competitive position enhanced by the town's location at the junction with the Macclesfield Canal from its opening in 1831.

Oldknow built limekilns beside his new canal; these were designed to resemble a medieval castle, providing an eyecatcher in the landscape. He had a keen interest in rugged, massive construction which combined fitness for purpose with a distinctive aesthetic, and buildings can still be seen across the Marple area which bear his hallmark, particularly in the vicinity of the surviving tower of the Georgian All Saints' Church which he financed in 1808-12. His canal structures have the same qualities of robust, rough-hewn masonry and he was responsible for a second eyecatcher in the false façade of Chapel House Farm (since altered).

Oldknow's building interests extended to workers' housing, not all of which has survived, notably Stone Row (1794). This scheme was unusual in being arranged in a three-sided court around a projected Market Hall, which was never used for its intended purpose. The site is now a small modern housing development. Brick Row (also 1794) has also been demolished, but Red Row (1790) survives in Mellor. The pioneering Mellor Mill burnt down in 1896; ever-resourceful, Oldknow had built a small reservoir high on the hillside to feed a sprinkler system in the event of fire. It was so long before it was needed that in the event nobody knew how to access the mechanism.

Samuel Oldknow died in 1828 at the then grand old age of 72. His had been a fulfilled life, replete with enthusiasms and achievement, and seemingly unclouded by anxiety over his constant indebtedness to the Arkwright family. His great good fortune was his friendship with Richard Arkwright, who had been prepared to finance the boundless possibilities that the fast-changing world offered Oldknow around the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. When Oldknow died, he owed so much to Richard Arkwright's heir that his entire estate was required to cover the debt. Fortunately he never married and had no family. The Arkwrights spent many years trying to sell his assets and recover their money, finally completing the sale of the Oldknow estate at Marple in 1924.



*All Saints Church (Source: Ann Hearle)*

Oldknow's memorial, a marble wall tablet carved by one of the foremost sculptors of the period, was placed on the wall of All Saints' Church, within the nave at the foot of the tower. It still lies in the tower of the church that he built, although it now languishes in a neglected corner. A long and appreciative inscription records his virtues and his legacy to those whose lives he influenced. The opening lines of his elegy declare:

"He was the zealous promoter of every useful and benevolent measure calculated to aid the progress of general civilisation and local improvement, to encourage the pursuits of honest industry, to increase the comforts, amend the morals, and enlarge the happiness of the people amongst whom he dwelt."

## References

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## Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Review and Updating</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Boundary Review	2
<b>3.</b>	<b>Character Appraisal</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1	Location and Context	5
3.2	Origins and Development	5
3.3	Archaeology	14
3.4	Character and Appearance	14
	3.4.1 Industrial Village and Vale	14
	3.4.2 St John's Church Quarter and Didsbury Road	17
	3.4.3 Edwardian and Interwar Residential Development	17
	3.4.4 Mixed Character on the Spur of the Ridge	19
3.5	Landscape Setting, Views and Vistas	21
3.6	Key Historic Buildings	22
	3.6.1 Listed Buildings	22
	3.6.2 Locally Listed Buildings	32
	3.6.3 Key Unlisted Buildings	50
3.7	Architecture and Building Materials	51
3.8	Contribution of Trees, Hedges and Green Spaces	52
3.9	Floorscape and Street Furniture	54
3.10	Definition of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area	55
<b>4.</b>	<b>Preservation and Enhancement Issues</b>	<b>55</b>
4.1	Condition of the Building Fabric	55
4.2	Extent of Loss and Intrusion	55
4.3	Development Issues	55
4.4	Preservation and Enhancement	56
<b>5.</b>	<b>Community Involvement</b>	<b>56</b>
5.1	Public Consultation	56
5.2	Response to Stakeholder Input	57
<b>6.</b>	<b>References and Further Reading</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Contacts</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Summary of Public Consultation Questionnaire Response</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>Townscape Appraisal Map</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>Map of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>Heaton Mersey Conservation Area Phasing Map</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Appendix 5</b>	<b>Historic Environment Record Entries</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Appendix 6</b>	<b>Historic Environment Record Map</b>	<b>74</b>

## 1. Background

A conservation area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (according to Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within a framework of controlled and positive management of change. Designation automatically entails control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens controls over minor development and gives special protection to trees within an area. Further controls over minor developments may also be put in place under Article 4(1) or 4(2) of the Act.

Section 69(2) of the Act imposes a duty on Local Authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time, while Section 71 requires them to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas. The Council’s Conservation & Heritage Strategy (approved in 2008) identifies the following key tasks as short to medium term objectives:

- Ensure all Conservation Areas are adequately protected and have up to date character appraisals and management plans in place:
  - Examine potential for further conservation areas.
  - 100% of conservation areas have recent appraisals (5 years old or less)
  - 100% of conservation areas have management plans
  - Implement actions of management plans
  - Article 4 directions, where appropriate, in place and monitored

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government’s requirements for the planning system and provides a framework for the production of distinctive local and neighbourhood development plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of these local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in development management decisions. Planning policies and decisions must reflect relevant EU obligations and statutory requirements.

The policies and principles set out in the NPPF apply to the consideration of the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment in relation to the heritage-related consent regimes for which planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets. Some heritage assets possess a level of interest that justifies designation and particular procedures apply to decisions that involve them. For the purposes of the NPPF, Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets.

Public consultation is at the heart of local authority responsibilities in protecting and enhancing conservation areas. In April 2005 Stockport Borough Council canvassed the views of the public and local amenity bodies as part of a borough-wide review of both existing and possible conservation areas. Stakeholders were invited to put forward suggestions for areas that they considered to be worthy of designation and a report was taken to Executive on 6th June 2005 outlining areas considered to merit further



investigation. A number of criteria have been taken into account in judging the suitability of areas for designation:

- buildings and spaces should be of special architectural and townscape merit
- areas should possess special qualities which contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place
- areas should be representative of the historic, social and economic development of the borough
- areas should have largely unspoilt character and appearance

The Heaton Mersey Conservation Area was first designated in 1978. This document is one of a number prepared during 2005-08 and is the outcome of the process of consultation and appraisal. This document has been further reviewed and updated in 2011-12.

The purpose of this document is to:

- set out the conclusions of the 2006 boundary review
- assess and define the special interest of the Conservation Area
- set out the results of public consultation on the revisions to Conservation Areas
- assess the action needed to protect and enhance the special qualities of the Conservation Area

It is, however, not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content. Omission of any specific building, space, feature or aspect of its appearance or character should not be taken to imply that they have no significance.

## **2. Review and Updating**

English Heritage advice states that conservation area character appraisals need to be reviewed regularly and that ideally existing appraisals should be reviewed every five years (Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals 2006 p22). This process of review and updating of appraisals will provide an opportunity to record any changes that have occurred, to confirm (or redefine) the special interest that warrants designation, to set out any new recommendations and to revise the management strategy.

In accordance with English Heritage recommendations, the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area Appraisal was reviewed and updated in 2012

### **2.1 Boundary Review**

English Heritage guidance stresses that a conservation area review should address the desirability of both the extension and reduction of the existing designated area. The removal of conservation area status can be an appropriate course of action where alterations and redevelopments since designation have resulted in the loss of the special architectural or historic character that the original designation was designed to protect and enhance. Conversely, tightly-drawn boundaries may require extending to reflect the need to protect an area's setting, to take advantage of new planning controls or respond to present development pressures, or to reflect new attitudes to architecture or advances in knowledge of the history of an area.

Heaton Mersey Conservation Area was originally designated in 1978. Following the consultations set out in this document, an extension was designated in March 2006 to include:

- Late Victorian / Edwardian terraces of houses along Mersey Road, Beech Street, Lyme Street, Poplar Street and Hawthorn Street
- 1930s developments, including the locally listed Pleachway residential enclave and adjacent houses
- Methodist Church on Cavendish Road
- Didsbury Road Primary School
- Listed Highfield and its former Lodge on Highfield Park

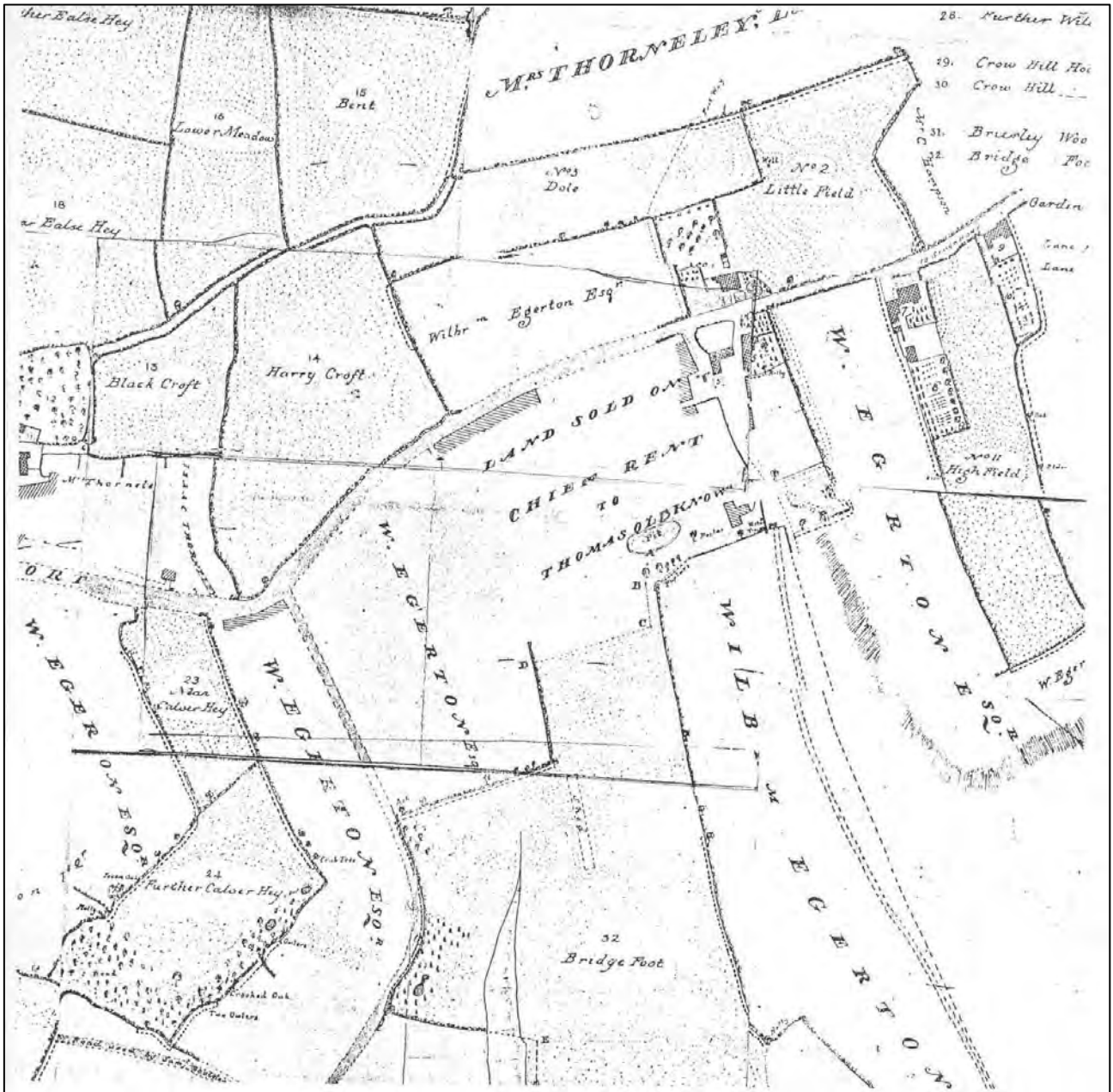
This extension reflects the contribution to the historical development and townscape of Heaton Mersey made by the buildings of the late Victorian, Edwardian and Inter-War periods. The designations also protect the gateways to the original conservation area from the north at Mersey Road and east at Didsbury Road. The Griffin Hotel, at the western gateway to the conservation area, is a building of special architectural interest in the area but has become divorced from its historic context by modern development along Didsbury Road. It was felt that its importance would be best recognised by its identification as a locally listed building rather than by inclusion in the conservation area.



**Griffin Hotel, Didsbury Road.**

*The Inn was built around 1831 and is a well-crafted essay in local brick with attractively proportioned sash windows and a decorative fanlight over the main entrance.*

Appendix 3 contains a map of the conservation area boundary. As part of a review in 2012, the boundary of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area has been assessed and it has been agreed that there are to be no boundary changes made as part of this review.



**Excerpt from Plan of the Estates of Sir Samuel Golden** situate in the townships of Heaton Norris and Cheadle c. 1830

### 3. Character Appraisal

#### 3.1 Location and Context

Heaton Mersey Conservation Area is located in the suburb of Heaton Mersey on the Didsbury Road, two miles to the west of Stockport town centre. The former village is located to the north of the River Mersey, on an elevated level site at a point where a spur of high land extends out from the steep-sided ridge into the Mersey Valley. It is from this distinctive topographical setting that the conservation area derives much of its special character and appearance.

#### 3.2 Origins and Development

Heaton Mersey owes its existence as a settlement to the industrial developments in the area during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Prior to this, the area was agricultural in character, with small hamlets scattered along the historic route between Stockport and Didsbury. Three of these, Grundy Hill, Top O' Th' Bank and Parrs Fold were eventually to coalesce to form the nucleus of modern Heaton Mersey.

The first major change occurred around 1785, when Samuel Oldknow and his brother Thomas established a bleachworks on the north bank of the River Mersey at the foot of Vale Road. Bleaching, dyeing and printing of cloth were carried out here. Samuel Oldknow is best known for his industrial and canal-building activities around Marple and Mellor, but at this date he was involved in pioneering industrial development in both Stockport and what was to become Heaton Mersey. The Oldknows' ownership of the Lower Bleachworks was relatively brief, a recession in the textile trade around 1793 forcing them to shed their Stockport and Heaton Mersey commitments in order to develop Samuel's extensive enterprises in the Marple area.



**Upper Bleachworks**, photographed around 1950. Now demolished and the site developed for housing. (From *Heaton Mersey: A Victorian Village*, 1985)

The building of the Upper Bleachworks followed fairly soon after the Oldknows set up their finishing works. This was situated on the steep land at the head of the Vale and was also accessed from Vale Road (now Vale Close). The 1848 Tithe Map shows the extent of both works. By this time the Lower Bleachworks was substantially engaged in cotton textile manufacture, with a five storey spinning mill and an extensive weaving shed occupying the site in addition to the bleachcroft and extensive reservoirs to the east. The Upper Bleachworks was smaller in extent, having its own reservoirs, and is shown together with the adjacent terraces of workers' houses that were constructed in a piecemeal fashion over several decades by successive owners of the Heaton Mersey Bleachworks. The Oldknows do not appear to have built workers' housing, but Robert Parker, who owned the Upper Bleachworks and bought the Lower Bleachworks from the Oldknows in 1793, is thought to have later provided houses for his workers. Surviving late 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages on Vale Close may have been built by him. The houses of Park Row and Park Place were built after his death, probably by the next owner, Samuel Stocks, in the 1830s. Further terraces on Vale Close were built through the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Levator Mortimer Tait, who acquired the works in 1852, erected Tait's Buildings (now demolished) a few years later. Just off Vale Close on its east side, these were two three storey blocks of small back to back dwellings, known locally as 'Barracks Square'. The first occupants were apprentices, many of whom were older children brought from workhouses and orphanages to be employed in the Heaton Mersey works.

Around 1830 the character of Heaton Mersey underwent further change, the village becoming a fashionable suburb for the fast-growing industrial aristocracy. The status of these newly-rich industrialists was reflected in their elegant villas set in substantial grounds and arranged along the line of the ridge to the east of the industrial village. This location allowed the incomers to take advantage of the convenient road connections to Stockport and Manchester, as well as the beauty of the Mersey valley panorama and the salubrious open setting of this still-rural area.



**Tithe Map, 1848** Showing the development of the industrial village around Vale Road and Top O' Th' Bank, and the string of fashionable villas along the spur of the ridge above the Mersey Valley. St. John's Church was under construction at this date.

Subsequent developments in Heaton Mersey reflect the profound social change brought about by this influx of prosperous residents. In 1840 the Congregational Church at the junction of Mersey Road and Didsbury Road was opened for worship. Among its patrons were several major textile manufacturers and their families, such as Sir James Watts, who lived at Heaton Villa, then later in West Bank House, before building and moving to Abney Hall at Cheadle. The Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist was completed in 1850. Together with the Church School, the adjacent School House built in 1858, and the imposing Rectory, the church was to become the nucleus of a new area of residential development.



***Congregational Church, photographed 1904. Shown with the triple-gabled porch that formed part of the 1855 enlargement and embellishment of the original chapel. A graveyard then occupied the land between the chapel and Didsbury Road. (From Heaton Mersey: A Victorian Village, 1985)***



**Heaton Mersey Village, photographed in 1914.** Panoramic view to the North-West. On the skyline to the right are the spire of St. John's and the brick works chimney; to the left are the 1805 Heaton Mersey Sunday School built by Robert Parker and the original Methodist 'Tin Chapel'. (From *Heaton Mersey: A Victorian Village*, 1985)

The importance of the village's natural amenities in the continuing growth of the settlement is reflected in an 1851 advertisement for a new "semi-detached gothic cottage" in St. John's Terrace. This extols the virtues of its situation, being "...on dry, healthy soil plentifully supplied with pure spring water and commanding a most extensive prospect over the adjacent county". (*Heaton Mersey Research Group Heaton Mersey: A Victorian Village, 1851-1881*)

The siting of St. John's Church certainly exploited the spectacular landscape setting to the full, occupying a vantage point on the edge of the ridge and linked to the steep hillside by a formal axis terminating in a valley-wide panorama.

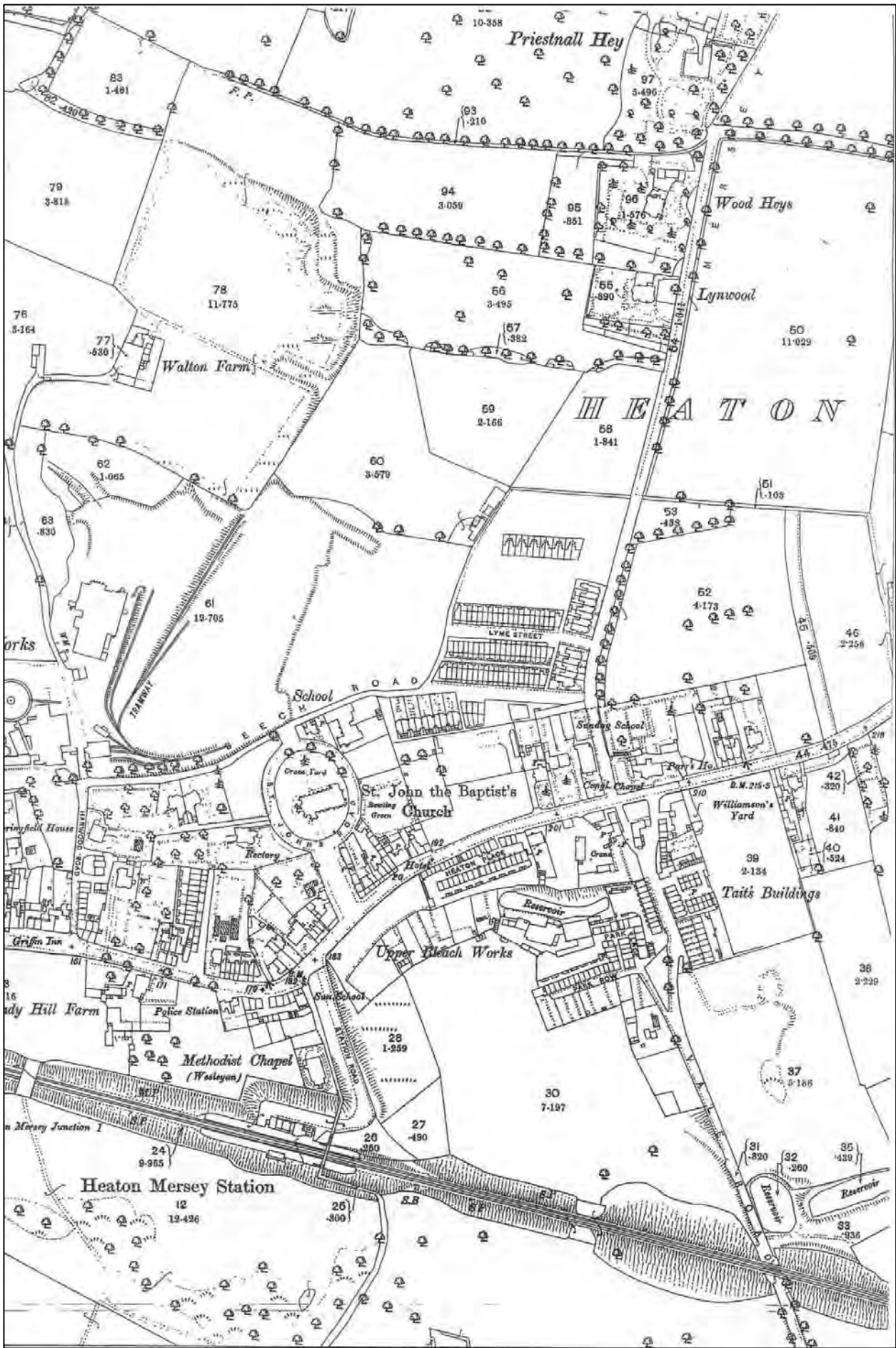
The number of houses in the Grundy Hill area to the west had also been increasing during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to the growth not only of the textile industry, but also of the brick and pottery works to the north of St. John's Church. The largest inn in the area, The Griffin, had been built in this area around 1831. Census returns show that between 1851 and 1881 the population of Heaton Mersey rose from 1,436 to 2,128. This growth was increasingly fuelled by residents of non-local origin, and by an influx of professional and trades people. This trend accelerated after 1880 when the Midland Railway extended its route from Tiviot Dale to Heaton Mersey and thence to Didsbury, Chorlton and Manchester, facilitating commuting over a wider area. Consequently, both larger villas and substantial terraced houses were built along Mersey Road and Didsbury Road in the last twenty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Further developments occurred in the inter-war period as increasing mobility and the desire for better standards of living inspired the spread of



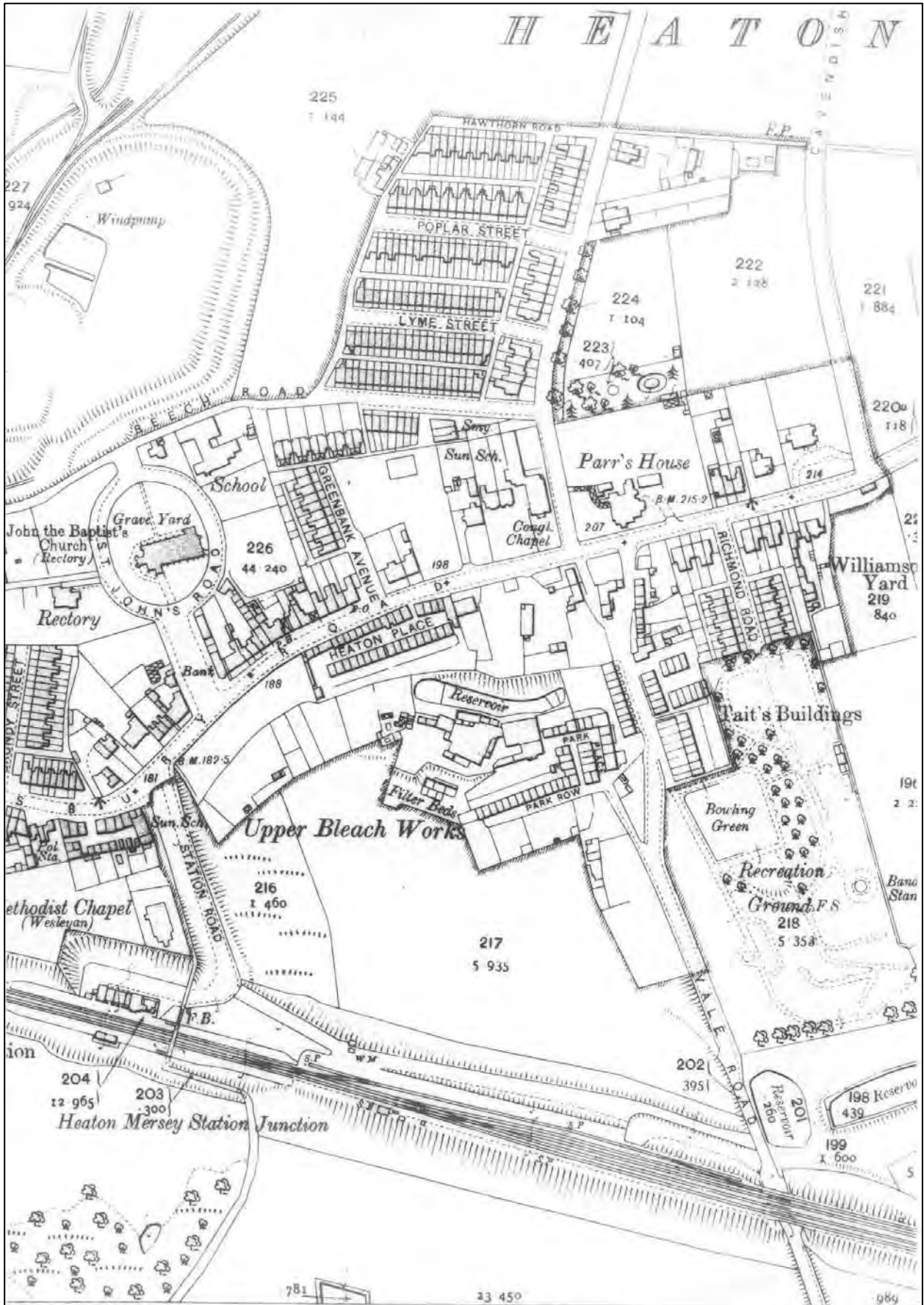
suburbia and the infill of large areas of open land, eventually bringing Heaton Mersey into the built-up area of Stockport.

Both the Upper and Lower Bleachworks have now been demolished and their sites redeveloped, along with Heaton Mersey Railway Station. Some of the 19<sup>th</sup> century workers' housing has also been lost, notably Heaton Place, a substantial group of terraces built c. 1820 on the south side of Didsbury Road. Other losses include a number of the early villas built on the ridge spur: Highfield and Parrs Mount remain, while Parr's House, Heaton Lodge, West Bank and Mersey Bank House have disappeared and their sites built over. Some later villas of architectural merit survive on Didsbury Road to the east of the conservation area, including No. 279 (in the Vernacular Revival style, designed by Alfred Darbyshire) and Nos. 241-243 (early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the Arts and Crafts manner). These could be considered as locally listed buildings along with the Griffin Hotel and other buildings (listed below) within the conservation area.

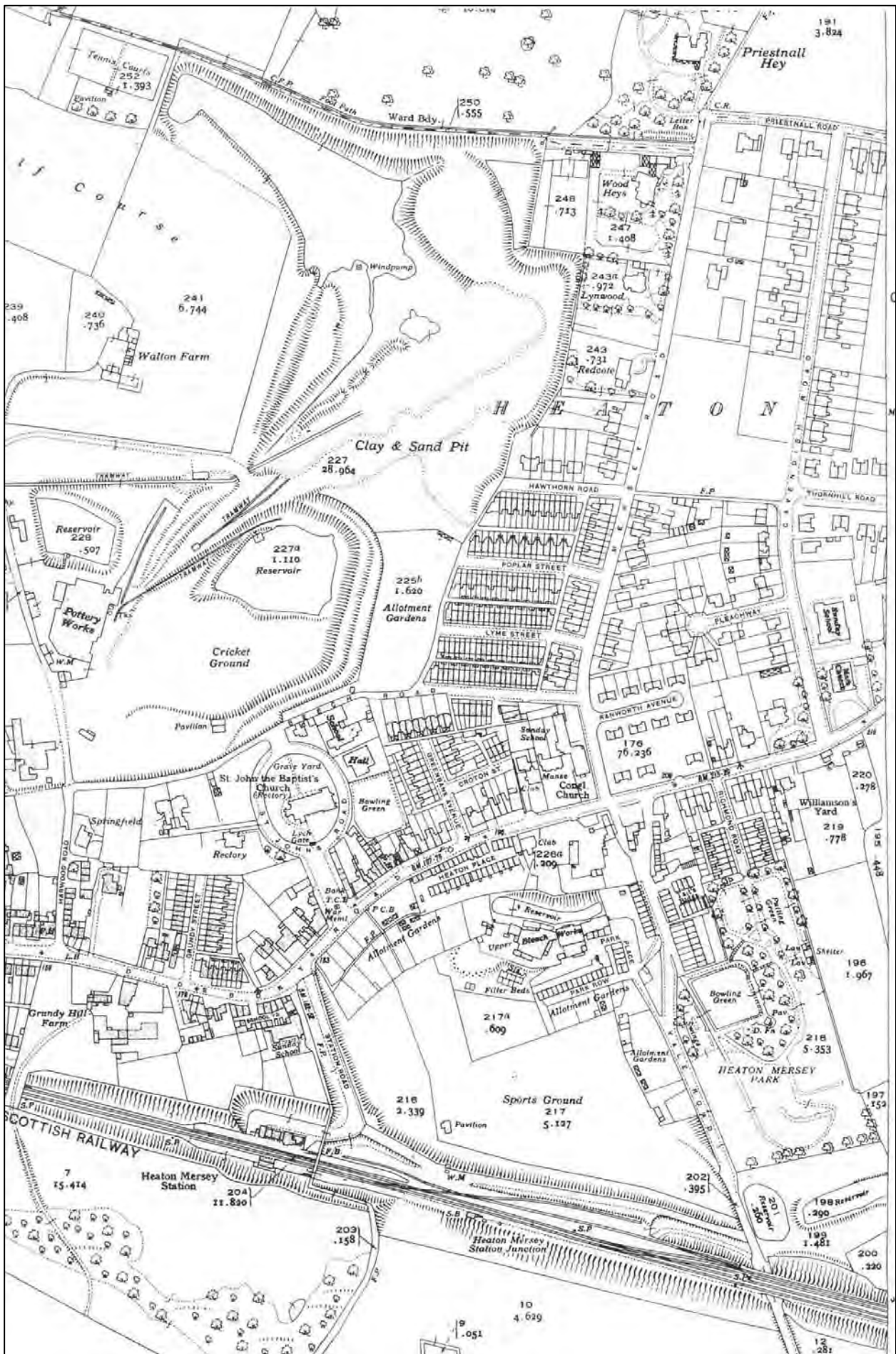
Appendix 4 shows the phases of development within Heaton Mersey.



Ordnance Survey Map 1894, Surveyed 1891-2



Ordnance Survey Map 1907, Surveyed 1904



Ordnance Survey Map 1934

### 3.3 Archaeology

The Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit has undertaken an enhancement survey to improve the quality of information within the Stockport Historic Environment Record (HER). This document utilises results from this survey to identify sites and features of historic interest. Sites, monuments and extant buildings identified on the HER are described at Appendix 5 of this document, and located on the plan at Appendix 6.

### 3.4 Character and Appearance

The analysis developed in this appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Townscape Appraisal Map (Appendix 2).

The character and appearance of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area derive from distinct phases of urban development which are clearly identifiable in the built form of Heaton Mersey:

- Development from a rural area to an industrial village in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries
- Growth as a select and fashionable residential suburb for the industrial aristocracy in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century
- Development as a Victorian railway suburb from 1880
- Further suburban development in the inter-war period continuing to the present

These phases of development give rise to several distinct character areas.

#### 3.4.1 Industrial Village and The Vale

- In the industrial village 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces of small two storey houses are built into and down the hillside, with abrupt changes of level defined by steep banks and stone retaining walls.
- The village grew up around the hamlet of Top O' Th' Bank and older buildings remain in the form of 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed cottages, late 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages of brick and the broadly contemporary Crown Inn. These are grouped around the top of Vale Close, once an important route between Didsbury Road and the Upper and Lower Bleachworks, and now a quiet vehicular cul-de-sac affording access for residents of the terraced cottages.
- The road is steep and setted, descending through woodland which gives a leafy and intimate character to this part of the conservation area and a green setting for the remains of Heaton Mersey's industrial past.
- Beyond the trees to the west lies the open bowl of the hillside, dotted with scrub and clumps of young trees and opening out onto playing fields on the lower slopes. This is a major recreational area and an important resource for local residents.



*Houses of Vale Close, Park Row and Park Place*



*Tall backs of 56-65 Vale Close, built into the steep hillside*



*Former Schoolmaster's house, No. 10 St. John's Road*



*Commercial buildings on Didsbury Road, looking west*

### 3.4.2 St John's Church Quarter and Didsbury Road

- At the heart of this area is the distinctive oval arrangement of the ecclesiastical quarter.
- Spacious and formal layout of the Victorian church and its associated buildings – formal approach with axis aligned on lychgate, war memorial, and south porch. Churchyard is an important open space, historical record (in the form of tombstone inscriptions) and green leafy setting for the church.
- Ecclesiastical enclave has a quiet and tranquil character which is briefly transformed twice a day as the Stella Maris School pupils arrive and depart.
- Prominence of the St. John's west tower in the streetscape, set on a rise, and its visual relationship with the former parsonage.
- Prevailing architectural style is that of the Gothic Revival, with bold massing, steep gables, prominent chimney stacks, and stone and brick polychrome detailing.
- Trees and evergreen shrubberies are important in preserving the intimate, enclosed character of the church enclave.
- Church development became a focus for mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace building on Grundy Street and the erection of "gothic cottages" at St Johns Place.
- Commercial character of the local shopping centre on busy Didsbury Road which developed in an easterly direction between the church and the earlier industrial hamlet, on one side of the road only and overlooking the Mersey Valley.
- Buildings of the shopping centre date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, from the classically detailed Frog and Railway and two storey terrace with later bay windows to the tall three storey buildings with prominent dormers or shaped dutch gables (with date panels for 1903 and 1911) of later purpose-built shop premises. There is a mix of traditional and modern shopfronts.
- Contrast between spacious and leafy church enclave and busy through route and local centre; these areas linked visually by the formal vista between church and main road.
- Panoramic view out over The Vale from vantage point at the head of the steps.

### 3.4.3 Edwardian and Interwar Residential Development

- To the north of Didsbury Road, setted streets of modest late Victorian and Edwardian terraces, with small villas and larger terraces on Mersey Road. All are of brick and Welsh slate, many show vernacular revival features in their patterned 'half-timbered' gables, and variety of brickwork and joinery details. 11-23 Mersey Road is a particularly well-composed and little altered example of a well-detailed terrace, with latticed panels finishing the eaves of its paired porches.
- Regular street layout with Hawthorn Road, Poplar Street, Lyme Street and New Beech Road arranged as ribs to west of Mersey Road, linked by an informal path. Residential streets lined by continuous terraces with consistent building line, important boundary walls and small front gardens to the street.
- Interwar developments including Pleachway and adjacent houses. Street plan based on cul-de-sac terraces with turning heads. Arrangement of houses based on more informal groups, pairs and individual buildings, still with consistent relationship between houses, front gardens and the roadway. Pleachway is a particularly good example of an interwar housing scheme, combining a formal avenue of pollarded limes with an apparently informal grouping of simple vernacular-inspired brick houses around the axis, the whole successfully integrated by a formal evergreen landscaped setting





*Terraced houses on Lyme Street*



*Attractively detailed windows and doors, Lyme Street*



*Mersey Road. Pair of Interwar houses of traditional pitched-roof design, with oriel windows to the upper storey and timber casement windows, but with modern touches in the window arrangement and a mid-elevation band breaking out to form porches*



**Cavendish Road.** *Interwar house with vernacular revival features in the tiled hipped roof, cat-slide porch, steep waney-boarded gable and half-timbering. The panelled door and leaded-glass staircase window are also original features.*

### 3.4.4 Mixed Character on the Spur of the Ridge

- Heaton Mersey Park is an important open green space offering views over the Mersey Valley and its wooded slopes. Richmond Road forms a formal approach to the park gates, being lined with uniform terraces set back behind substantial front gardens. Larger terraced houses with high half-timbered gables form uniform flanking blocks on Didsbury Road, creating an architectural 'gateway' to the park.
- Didsbury Road Primary School dates from the 1950s, but appears to have been built to a pre-war design. It forms a series of well-grouped flat-roofed brick built blocks with an open green setting to both front and rear.
- The playing fields to the rear of the school contribute to the green and open character of spaces framing the conservation area to the south.
- On the Didsbury Road school frontage, green space, trees and a strong boundary wall provide continuity in the streetscape and visually link the Victorian, Edwardian and modern village with earlier developments.
- Survivals of prestigious 19<sup>th</sup> century residential development along the ridge are evident here, exemplified by the substantial villas of Parrs Mount (c.1820) and Highfield (c.1830), and by the former Lodge to Highfield. Highfield was built in the 'gothick' style of the early gothic revival with pointed arched openings, hoodmoulds to the windows and hints at crenellation (battlements) around the bay windows and porches. The former Lodge echoes these qualities on a much more modest scale.



***Didsbury Road Primary School*** The attractive lawned Didsbury Road frontage, with the tall-windowed Assembly Hall in mid-picture and the clock tower to the left.



***Rear of Didsbury Road Primary School, viewed across Heaton Mersey Park***

### 3.5 Landscape Setting, Views and Vistas

The elevated position of the village on the level summit of a ridge above the Mersey valley affords a fine panoramic view across the tree-covered green bowl of the hillside to the south from Didsbury Road. This view would originally have been available along the length of the road as it passes through the heart of the village. Trees and hedges edging the road now obscure the wider prospect, a view of which is obtained from the long steep flight of steps down the hillside into the Vale. Extensive views are also visible from Heaton Mersey Park.

Views into built spaces are obtained at various points in the conservation area. With the exception of the view into the leafy and picturesque building group at the head of Vale Close these have the character of formal vistas along narrow corridors, defined by buildings and/or trees, and terminated by a focal point. Views along St. John's Road, Pleachway and Richmond Road are noteworthy in this respect.



*St. John's Church, set on a formal approach along St. John's Road with the axis defined by the war memorial, monumental lych gate and the south porch.*

## 3.6 Key Historic Buildings

### 3.6.1 Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are shown on a map of Heaton Mersey Conservation Area at Appendix 3.

- *Crown Inn (listed grade II 1975)*

Group Value: Crown Inn forms a group with Nos. 2 & 4 Vale Close.

Late C18 or early C19. Two storeys in painted brick with slate roof. 2x1 windows, segmental arches, hung sashes with glazing bars on both floors. Entry to the side.

Summary of Importance/Criteria Decision: Public house with C18 origins with group value with listed 2-4 Vale Close and with locally listed buildings and terraces on Vale Close.

Historic Asset Description: Public house, Of painted brick with a slate roof. L-shaped plan probably of more than one phase with C20 extensions. Windows are generally multi-paned sashes, including many C20 replacements. Elevation to Didsbury Road has to the left a wing with two windows on each floor with painted stone sills and very slightly cambered brick heads. They are offset to the right, and the neighbouring windowless range is probably a later addition, perhaps of early C19 date. Gabled range running at right-angles to the right is slightly recessed and has similar windows in the gable end. The return elevation on this side appears to have been partially rebuilt in more regular brickwork. Openings with replacement glazing detail, door with a cambered head towards the right-hand side. The rear gable of this range is unpainted and laid in random and English garden wall bond showing signs of alterations and rebuilding. C20 rear extensions are attached to the rear of this range and in the angle at the rear. Interior has been opened out with substantial loss of original plan form. A ceiling beam in the rear range is roughly chamfered and stopped, another in the front range is plain and may be a replacement. Upper floor not accessible at the time of the survey.



***Crown Inn,  
Vale Close  
(Nos. 2 & 4 in the  
background)***

- *2 & 4 Vale Close (listed grade II 1971)*

Group Value: Nos. 2 & 4 form a group with The Crown Inn, Didsbury Road.

Probably late 16<sup>th</sup> century, certainly the oldest surviving structure of the three hamlets that were the precursors to modern Heaton Mersey.

2 storeys in timber-framing with square panels and brick nogging. Some sections replaced by brick. Gable end to road of brick surmounted by gable top of herringbone framing. Plain casements. Welsh slates roofs with brick stacks.

Summary of Importance/Criteria Decision: C17 timber-framed house, originally of the three-unit cross-passage type, which has group value with the listed Crown Inn.

Historic Asset Description: House, now two dwellings. C17 with C18 and C19 alterations. Timber framing, brick infill, brick extension, slate roof, brick chimneys. Windows include six and nine-pane sashes with some side-sliding sashes (probably including replacements), including one with ten small panes in the north elevation.

The southern end of the building is of brick, representing an extension probably of C18 date. The remainder is timber-framed in square panels with brick nogging replacing the original wattle-and-daub infill. Two doors are adjacent to one another near the south end of the building the northernmost of which was probably inserted when a single dwelling was converted into two cottages. The southern door appears to be in its original position and relates to a former cross-passage position. The northern gable end is of brick with an exposed roof-truss. This has a cambered tie beam, kingpost and fishbone struts. The rear elevation has a range of gabled dormers probably of C20 date.

Interior not inspected but a recent survey suggests that the services were at the south end, where evidence for two adjoining doorways and the dividing wall survives in the internal timber framing. There was a heated housebody in the centre and a parlour at the north end.



**2 & 4 Vale  
Close**

- *St John the Baptist Church (listed grade II 1975)*

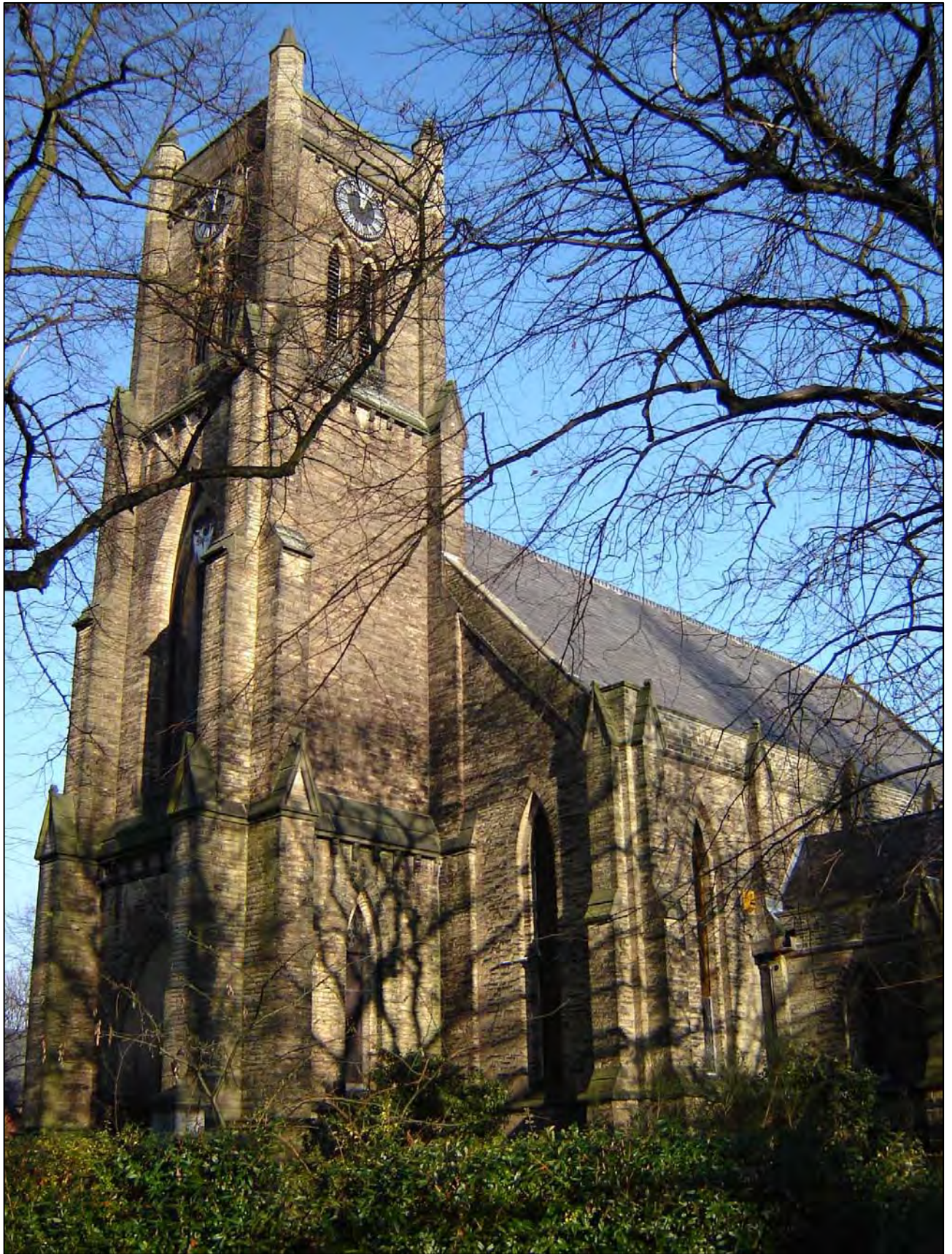
Group Value: Church of St. John The Baptist, St. John's Church of England Primary School and Nos. 10 & 12 form a group.

Church, 1846-50 by Peter Walker, with additions in 1891 by Preston & Vaughan and alterations in early 1990s. Built in First Pointed style in coursed large and small sandstone with ashlar dressings with a Welsh slate roof. Chancel, north vestry, south chapel, nave with south porch, and west tower. Chancel, under a separate roof, has a stepped three-part tall plain lancet east window with drip mouldings, and slim corner buttresses. South chapel occupying full length of chancel with monopitch roof and parapet, angle and 3 side buttresses, 2 pairs of lancet windows to south and 1 pair to east. North vestry with north-facing gable, east door and triple lancet window with transoms and a relieving arch. All 3 east end items added in 1891. Nave of 6 bays with plain lancet windows between gabled buttresses, parapet to eaves, string course at cill level between buttresses. Gabled porch on south side between first and third bays, with gabled angle buttresses, lancet arch door and quatrefoil decoration in gable. West tower has 3 stages, with lancet arch west door, single large lancet window with simple plate tracery at first floor above and 2 small lancet windows under clock in top section. North and south faces have lancet windows to ground floor and matching pair of windows to top section. Angle buttresses, parapet, pinnacles on top stage.

Interior: Chancel with segmental vaulted ceiling, stone reredos with blind arcading below east windows which have decorative leading. Pink and cream marble pulpit to left and wooden reading desk to right at entrance to the chancel. South chapel with similar windows to chancel, exposed roof trusses and arched openings to chancel and nave. There is an organ loft to north side of chancel and a door to a vestry, both with drop-arch openings. Nave has exposed roof trusses of slender hammer beam construction, with iron tie-bars at eaves level. 2 decorative vents in roof at ridge. Windows mainly with simple, geometric stained glass in subdued colours. Walls wood panelled below window level. At west end a raked gallery supported on 2 cast iron columns with organ loft above within the tower. Large tower window acts as west window, with subsidiary windows to each side. At ground floor, doors to porch and tower, with spiral staircase to tower in north-east angle. Numbered, gated box pews throughout majority of nave with cast iron hoops and ceramic trays for umbrellas. Octagonal stone font with pointed wooden cover under the gallery.

History: Original plans for the church show a small chancel at the east end with either a vestry or chapel in the north-east corner. This east end was replaced in 1891 by Preston & Vaughan by the current arrangement. A substantial stone lych-gate by Taylor & Young is dated 1927. Prior to the early 1990s there was a spire, but this was removed when it became unsafe and the tower was given a parapet and pinnacles at that time.

Summary Of Importance: This mid-nineteenth century church has a west tower and a well-executed and consistent early gothic style, together with a well preserved interior including gallery and box pews, making it suitable for listing at Grade II.



*St. John's Church. West tower*



- *St John's C Of E Primary School (now Stella Maris School) (listed grade II 1975)*

Group Value: Church of St. John The Baptist, St. John's Church of England Primary School and Nos. 10 & 12 form a group.

Mid C19 school of 1 storey in red brick with steep Welsh slate roof with ridge tile. Lancelot windows and relieving arches. Included as a group with the church of St. John and Nos. 10 and 12.

Summary of Importance/Criteria Decision: Former Church of England primary school in Gothic style which has group value with neighbouring listed and locally listed buildings.

Historic Asset Description: Said to have been built in 1857 with an infants' department added in 1869. Irregular I-shaped plan with bays projecting from a central hall range. Red brick with stone dressings, slate roof, truncated brick chimneys with stone banding. Single-storey, eclectic Gothic style. Elevation to St John's Road has on the return elevation a low truncated turret. Projecting gabled bay, right side, with a large window of five tall lights with cusped heads. The central range has a tall window with cusped lancets which breaks through the eaves as a half dormer, with an irregular eight-pointed star window in the gable. Beside it is a smaller window, possibly a later addition, with stone mullions. The projecting bay on the left side has in the inner side a mullioned-and-transomed window which breaks through the eaves with a foiled circular window in a gabled head. The gabled front elevation has a window with a pointed arch and cusped lights and an upper circular opening in the apex of the gable. The return elevation on this side has a range of four windows breaking through the eaves as gabled dormers, each with foiled circular windows in the gable and lower mullioned-and-transomed windows. Rear elevation in similar style, more simply treated.



**Former St. John's C of E Primary School and the Parish Hall (foreground)**

- *10 St John's Road (listed grade II 1975)*

Group Value: Church of St. John The Baptist, St. John's Church of England Primary School and Nos. 10 & 12 form a group.

Built as the school house of St. Johns Church of England Primary School. Mid-C19. L-shaped. Gabled house of two storeys in red brick with stone quoins and steep slate roof. Gable has 2 trefoil-headed lights over a similar window of 3-lights. Penticed entry to side. Included as part of a group.

Summary of Importance/Criteria Decision; Former school house in distinctive Gothic style associated with the neighbouring former Church of England School, which has group value with the school and other listed and locally listed buildings in the area including the church of St John the Baptist.

Historic Asset Description: Mid C19, probably broadly contemporary with the neighbouring school (said to date from 1857). Red brick in English garden wall bond, stone quoins and dressings, slate roof, tall brick chimneys. Modified L-shaped plan, two storeys. Gothic style.

Gabled bay with stone copings and a cross finial to the gable, windows on each floor with cusped arched heads. The adjoining gabled range has in the angle a lean-to porch with slate roof and trefoil window. This range has upper windows in the form of paired and single trefoils, a lower window with a flat head and angle-buttresses to first-floor level. Projecting gabled bay at the rear has trefoil ground-floor windows in the side elevation and arched windows with cusped heads in the rear elevation.



**10 St. John's Road**

- *Beechwood (listed grade II 1975)*

Group Value: Church of St. John The Baptist, St. John's Church of England Primary School and Nos. 10 & 12 form a group.

Built as the rectory to the Church of St. John. Steeply-gabled house of two storeys in red brick with carved bargeboards. Two windows to both floors, mullion and transoms.

Summary of Importance/Criteria Decision: Former vicarage to the listed St John's Church which is a good example of a large house of the period with group value with the church and neighbouring listed and locally listed buildings.

Historic Asset Description: Vicarage, mid C19, converted to flats late C20. Red brick with blue brick dressings, including flush dressings in the form of quoins, stone window lintels and sills, slate roof. Irregular plan. Austere Gothic style with steep gables and mullioned windows with flat heads. The elevation to St John's Street has a projecting near-central gabled bay with cusped barge-boards with pendants and a ground-floor bay window with a roof of graduated stone slabs. To the right the entrance has a gabled porch with decorative timbering in the form of an arch-braced tie-beam with diagonal struts.

To the rear a large block with a hipped roof is a later Victorian extension. It has similar blue brick dressings but the red brick is paler in colour and there is channelled brick eaves detail. This part has gabled dormers with barge-boards and finials.



*Beechwood, 12 St. John's Road*

- *War Memorial, St Johns Road (listed grade II 2009)*

Group Value: Church of St. John the Baptist

War Memorial, 1920s, plaque added after the Second World War.

Materials: Grey dimension-stone cross and pedestal, rock faced granite steps, bronze embossed plaques.

Form: Alisee patee cross head with halo, set on a tall, tapering, rectangular section shaft. The south face is ornamented with Celtic knotwork. The cross is set on a coped pedestal which carries a First World War plaque on the southern face and a Second World War plaque on the northern face. Fixed to the coping on the southern side there is another much smaller plaque. The pedestal is raised on a flight of 3 steps so that the memorial forms a Calvary cross.

Inscriptions:

South face:

IN MEMORY SACRED FOR ALL TIME OF THE HEATON MERSEY MEN WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR FOR THE WORLD'S FREEDOM. 'GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS, THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS'. Followed by an alphabetical list of 72 men (surname, forename(s) without note of rank or other information).

South face coping:

'THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE'

North face:

IN THANKFUL MEMORY OF THE HEATON MERSEY MEN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1945. Followed by an alphabetical list of 30 names (forename, surname) and then the text: GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

Setting: The memorial is set in the middle of St John's Road facing the main road to the south, and is aligned with the lych gate and main entrance (the south porch) of the grade II listed Church of St John the Baptist.

History: The date of the unveiling, designer or commissioner of the monument are all unknown. The memorial is not shown on the 1:2500 map published in 1922, but it is marked on the 1934 map. The memorial's apparent deliberate placement in relationship with the lych gate might suggest that it was designed by Taylor and Young who built the lych gate in 1927.

Reasons for Designation: The war memorial on St John's Road is designated at grade II for the following principal reasons:

\*As a poignant reminder of the effects of tragic world events on the local community;

\*As a good example of a First World War memorial displaying good quality materials and craftsmanship;

\*For additional group value with the grade II listed Church of St John the Baptist, the monument being aligned with the lych gate and the south porch.



*War Memorial, St. John's Road*

- 1 & 3 Highfield Park (listed grade II 1988)

Group value.

House now 2 dwellings. c1830, altered late C19, subdivided c1928. Stuccoed brick, graduated Welsh slate roof. 2 storeys with cellars, 5 bays with 1-storey, 1-bay addition to front left and 2-storey, 3-bay wing to rear right. Bay 3 is narrow, recessed and has original porch with part-glazed double door and cusped-tracery fanlight beneath chamfered Tudor arch with headmould; embattled parapet rising to peak over door. Across bays 4 and 5 is a canted, 1-storey bay window having large 4-pane sashes with hoodmoulds; blank shield to parapet as porch. To bays 1 and 2 are later, rectangular bay windows having casements with transoms and flat roofs. 1st floor: blocks to projecting sills of tall paired sashes with margin-glazed, Tudor-arched lights; bay 3 has later casement; windows of bays 3 and 4 have hoodmoulds and are set beneath gables with applied studding and plain bargeboards. Altered brick stacks to left end, to near-centre of ridge and behind ridge on right. C20 addition to left of main range has 4-light transom window and parapet as main porch. Right return: gabled main range; windows as front. Wing set back on right has 1-storey rectangular bay window with shield beneath parapet as porch.

Interior: Main ground floor rooms of No. 1 have floral-tile insets to cast-iron fireplaces in Gothic-style marble surrounds (the left room has later mahogany overmantel); both bay windows have stained-glass transom lights and both rooms have moulded plaster ceilings with geometric design incorporating fleur-de-lys and fruiting vines. The 1-storey addition has an Edwardian chimneypiece and dado panelling said to be from a former, detached billiard room to rear of the house. 1st floor: patent, Edwardian bath/shower compartment; mid C19 cast-iron/tile fireplaces in marble surrounds. No. 3: part-glazed, panelled inner porch doors have Tudor-arched lights and painted-glass Gothic fanlight. Front-right room has enriched cornice; room to rear wing has moulded plaster ceiling with clustered-heart motifs. Staircase and landing balustrade of cusped, cast-iron panels to wooden handrail; Tudor arches off landing lit by painted-glass lantern. Highfield House, as it was known, has James Pritchard as its first recorded occupant; he was succeeded by Samuel Lamb in 1832 then members of the Marsland family from 1847 (Eaton p.18). The house is clearly shown in an established setting on the 1848 Tithe Map; it then occupied a fashionable, elevated site overlooking the Mersey Valley.



**Highfield,  
Highfield Park.** Early  
19<sup>th</sup> century 'Gothick'  
with Edwardian  
alterations

### 3.6.2 Locally Listed Buildings

Locally Listed buildings are shown on a map of Heaton Mersey Conservation Area at Appendix 3.

- *1-10 Pleachway (locally listed 1997)*

A planned group of interwar houses of distinctive character which form an attractive group of houses arranged informally on each side of Pleachway, with a terrace as a terminus to the road. Of dark brownish-red brick laid in stretcher bond, tiled roofs, C20 replacement windows beneath flat heads of brick laid on end. Influences are Arts and Crafts, evident in the sparing brick detail in the gables and at eaves level, and the prominent roofs. The buildings are of very simple design, however, with few decorative features, but the clean lines and homogeneity of features gives the group strong cohesiveness. The terrace at the head of the street has a central archway, leading to the rear. Moulded surround with brick 'keystone' console, round-arched with a painted moulded spoke pattern in the tympanum.



*Neo-vernacular cottages and landscaping at Pleachway*



*Formal axis and avenue of lime trees at Pleachway*

This formally planned group of houses is locally listed as a particularly interesting example of 1930s housing design. The houses themselves are architecturally unpretentious, being modest vernacular-style brick cottages with hipped tiled roofs and small paned windows (the original metal frames having been replaced with uPVC windows prior to the introduction of the Article 4 Direction), but the way that they are grouped around a central axis lifts the design of the housing scheme out of the ordinary and creates an attractive residential enclave.

The central broad avenue is lined with pollarded trees and terminates in an ornamental archway, allowing servicing and car parking to the rear of the buildings and freeing the frontages for landscaping. Uniformly planted front garden areas, with their edging of low evergreen hedging, form an attractive green setting and an effective foil to the brick facades.

- *50-62 Cavendish Road (locally listed 1997)*

A planned group of detached and semi-detached interwar houses, with vernacular revival features, of distinctive character which form an attractive group of buildings.



**50 & 52 Cavendish Road**



**54 Cavendish Road**



**56 & 58 Cavendish Road**



**60 & 62 Cavendish Road**



The houses are constructed of a dark brown-red brick laid in stretcher bond with strong influences from the Arts and Crafts movement, evident in the sparing brick detail in the gables and at eaves level, and the prominent clay roofs with steeply pitched gables and deep eaves, timber boarding to gables and timber-framing decoration to parts of some elevations, and decorative features such as door hoods and window shutters. Other than these key characteristics the buildings are of very simple design, with few decorative features, but the clean lines and regularity of features, gives the group strong cohesiveness. Mature, well maintained privet hedges remain as the boundary treatments for properties 56 – 60 Cavendish Road which contributes to the special character and appearance of the group. Properties 50 – 54 Cavendish Road have lost their hedge boundaries to low brick built boundary walls.

- *Heaton Mersey Methodist Church (locally listed 1997)*

Early C20 Methodist Sunday School, now a Methodist Church, of some architectural quality and with local historical associations.

Built 1911-13 as a Sunday school relating to a demolished Methodist Church. Coursed sandstone rubble, red sandstone dressings, slate roof, red ridge tiles. Stripped Gothic style. The full-height school hall has in front of it a low range with semi-octagonal pavilions at each end, and other single-storey extensions, perhaps later in date, extending in front of the hall. The hall has a dormer with three pointed lights, and a large mullioned-and-transomed window in the gable end. Prominent hipped roofs are clad in slate with a strong eaves line broken by coped dormers surmounting tall gothic arch headed windows, also dressed in red sandstone.



*Heaton Mersey Methodist Church, Cavendish Road*

- *Didsbury Road Primary School (locally listed 1997)*

Primary school of with relatively few alterations, which is a good example of a post-war design.

The school stands set back from the main road behind an original perimeter wall with entrances with brick piers. The frontage appears to retain original formal elements of approach paths and low brick walls in front of the hall.

Opened 1951, probably designed by Stockport Borough Architects Department. Of pinkish- brown Fletton brick, with some original metal windows, the school comprises well-grouped single storey flat-roofed blocks with low spreading plan form of informally grouped elements on each side of a taller double-height assembly hall, prominently placed on the frontage. This has well proportioned small-paned full height windows .To the left is a wide low clock tower with clock face to two sides. Favourable mention is made of the building in Hartwell, Hyde and Pevsner (2004).



*Didsbury Road Primary School. Clock tower to Didsbury Road frontage*

- *2 Highfield Park (locally listed 2009)*

Early C19 lodge relating to the listed Highfield House, with group value with the house.

Lodge, circa 1830, possibly by the Manchester architect Richard Lane. Slate roof, stuccoed walls, single storey. Tudor Gothic style. The building has a low gabled projection with an arched window, and a lean-to porch in the angle between this and the main range. Replacement windows and doors of late C20 date.



*Former Highfield Lodge (2 Highfield Park), part of east elevation with Tudor-arched window*

- *435 Didsbury Road & Parrs Mount Mews (locally listed 2009)*

Early C19 house with an attached range probably originally incorporating services and staff accommodation. The survival of a service wing of this type is locally rare.

House and attached service range shown on the 1848 Tithe Map, probably the building shown on an estate map of circa 1830. Red brick and rendered brick, slate roof, end chimneys, two storeys. Symmetrical rendered front elevation with slightly projecting entrance bay with a portico with Doric columns and pilasters. The entablature has in the frieze raised motifs including paterae, oval cartouches and a central urn. Moulded eaves cornice. Window are C20 replacements, and two bay windows are probably later additions. The rear brick elevation includes a central tall arched stair window with margin lights.

Attached range to the right is of brick, with a carriage entrance and a long return block of two storeys, now converted to flats. This range, which incorporates some sash windows, beneath slightly cambered heads, probably originally incorporated services and staff accommodation.



**435 Didsbury Road**



**Parrs Mount Mews, attached range with carriage entrance**



**12 & 14 Parrs Mount Mews**

- *440-442 Didsbury Road (locally listed 2009)*

Mid C19 former manse to Heaton Mersey Congregational Church created from earlier buildings possibly of C18 date. Included as a distinctive building with local historical associations.

The house is set back from the main road behind extensive gardens. Rendered with a slate roof (being replaced at the time of the survey) and rendered chimneys. Two low storeys and five bays. Two unequal projecting gabled bays in bays two, with an altered entrance, and in bay four. Both have plain bargeboards. A range of three single-storey bay windows are probably later C19 or early C20 additions.

The house is said to have been created from two cottages as a manse for the formerly neighbouring Congregational Church.



***440-442 Didsbury Road***

- *Congregational Church, New Beech Road (locally listed 2009)*

A former Sunday school of distinctive, highly decorative, appearance which has strong architectural and historic character and associations with the notable Manchester industrialist and merchant James Watts of Abney Hall Cheshire.

The Sunday school is fronted by a small graveyard with standing C19 monuments bounded by a brick wall.

Polychromatic brick and pale pink brick, much of it laid in header bond, timbering and render, fishscale slate roof, of two storeys. To the left is a short L-shaped link of brick which connected with the demolished church. This has a shallow dormer with three small casement windows, two windows, upper floor, each with low arched heads and small panes at the base. A slightly projecting bay has a blocked pointed archway, right, and a window similar to those above, but larger, right. A short return elevation is connected to a late C20 building which replaced the church. The school has a two-storey porch. The upper part is half-timbered and has a polygonal oriel with a fishscale slate roof. The lower part is of brick with a gabled entrance. Within the gable is a commemorative date, 1825. The main body of the building consists of an offset gabled bay with a covered stair leading to the upper hall. This is flanked by one gable, right, and three gables, left, all with deep eaves. Each contains a window with a pointed head beneath a brightly banded brick head. Beneath the windows is a band of diaper work in orange, buff and blue brick. The rear elevation is treated in similar fashion.

The principal upper room, formerly a schoolroom and now a place of worship, has an open timber roof and stained glass with floral and geometric patterns. Furnishings include an oak pulpit and screens from the demolished church. A brass plaque by Shrigley & Hunt commemorates James Watts of Abney Hall, nearby in Cheshire, d. 1892, patron of the church and one of the most successful of Manchester's C19 merchants who was proprietor of Watts' warehouse.

Heaton Mersey Congregational Church was built circa 1840 and demolished late C20. The late C19 Sunday school was subsequently converted for church use when certain monuments and furnishings from the original building were transferred to it.



**Heaton Mersey Congregational Church, New Beech Road**

- *11-23 Mersey Road (locally listed 2009)*

Little altered terrace of late C19 houses which retain attractive decorative features and contribute to the character of the area. Group value with the locally listed Congregational Church.

Terrace of unified design, probably built in the 1890s. Red brick and stock brick, slate roof, chimneys with raised brick banding, two storeys and attics. Windows are generally sashed, and each house has one small arched and one larger cambered window to the upper floor. Ground floor bay windows are ranged beneath one roof line along the terrace, which has continuous open timber latticework between, beneath decorative cornices. Broad eaves with raised decoration of the same type. Each house has an attic space lit by a small triangular dormer set in the roof. End elevations are of pale brick laid in header bond with polychromatic banding and diaperwork. The gables have decorative barge boards.

Houses generally have low garden walls with pairs of brick or stone gate piers, partially altered or replaced in some of the properties.



***11-23 Mersey Road***

- *Frog & Railway PH (locally listed 2009)*

Mid C19 public house with much original exterior character which has local historical associations and contributes to the character of the area.

The pub was formerly called the Bleachers Arms, a reference to a principal local industry.

Render with painted stone dressings and prominent painted long-and-short stone quoins, slate roof, brick chimneys. Windows are sashed and have stone sills and rendered wedge-shaped keystones to the lintels. Of two builds, with a taller two-storey two-bay section to the right which incorporates a large arched entrance which probably gave coach access to a yard to the rear, but has been infilled. Smaller arched entrance to the right. The left-hand part is symmetrical, of two lower storeys and three bays. Central entrance in a stone architrave with a shallow canopy.



***Frog & Railway PH***

- *486 Didsbury Road (locally listed 2009)*

Former premises of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Bank, which contributes to local architectural and historic character and has group value with the locally listed war memorial.



Bank, circa 1900. Red brick with stone dressings, including lintel bands and a plinth, slate roof with decorative red ridge-tiles, of two storeys with a single storey entrance block. Unostentatious eclectic style. The principal elevation facing Didsbury Road has a coped gable with pinnacles on each side terminating with ball finials and an upper window surmounted by a round arch containing a red terracotta panel. The entrance has a stone architrave with pilasters, consoles and a flattened segmental pediment broken by a pair of stylised shields with mantling. The elevation to St John's Road consist of a pair of central bays with upper windows treated as gabled dormers, and lower windows with shallow arched heads and stone mullions and transoms. To the left is another similar window and a secondary entrance, to the right a transomed window.



**486 Didsbury Road**

- *6 St Johns Road (locally listed 2009)*

Mid or later C19 house with group value with the listed church of St John and neighbouring listed and locally listed buildings.

House, rectangular plan, of brick and rendered brick, slate roof. Front elevation is rendered, with slightly projecting narrow gabled bays which extend above narrow projecting bay windows with stone coping. Similar central bay with entrance. The left-hand return elevation is of exposed brick with an upper window set in a blind arch. Included as part of a group on St John's Road.



**6 St Johns Road**

- 8 St Johns Road & 1, 2, 3, St Johns Place (locally listed 2009)

House and attached terrace dated 1858 which form part of a group of listed and locally listed buildings on St John's Road.

House facing on to the road, with a terrace at the rear, rendered brick, slate roofs. The principal building is symmetrical with large windows with painted stone cambered lintels and stone sills. A central porch with a slated roof has narrow side windows (blocked) and a doorcase with attached slender columns with finials and a notional pediment. A plaque with the words 'St John's Terrace' records the date. Terrace to rear is rendered with generally altered openings. Included for group value.



**8 St Johns Road**



**1, 2, 3 St Johns Place**

- *Hall, St Johns Road (locally listed 2009)*

Early C20 Parish Hall with group value with neighbouring listed buildings on St John's Road.

Parish Hall dated 1906. Pale brick in header bond with red brick and red terracotta dressings and banding. Slate roof with red ridge tiles. Approximately T-shaped plan, single storey. The main hall range is gabled to the street with terracotta copings and finial. It is flanked by red brick piers with red terracotta banding. A large central window is flanked by lower windows, all with segmental relieving arches picked out in red brick, terracotta sill band and similar lintel bands to the lower windows. Entrance in the angle of the main range and a lower subsidiary block. This has a segmental head in red terracotta with the words PARISH HALL and the date 1906.



**Parish Hall, St Johns Road**



**Lavater Tait Monument**

- *Lavater Tait Monument, St John the Baptist Church (locally listed 2009)*

Tomb monument with local historical associations and group value with the listed church of St John.

Monument to the Lavater Tait family, d. 1856, 1893, etc. the family were prominent local industrialists who took over the local bleach works in 1852. It is in the form of a large stone chest on a stepped plinth with bowed sides bearing names associated with secondary burials. The large flat slab on the top is in memory of Mrs Mortimer Lavater Tait d. 1856, with well-cut lettering.

- *2 & 4 New Beech Road (locally listed 2009)*

Large late C19 semi detached house with distinctive decorative features.

Semi detached house, late C19 (shown on the 1894 OS map), irregular plan. Bright red brick with terracotta or pressed brick panels, stone sill bands, stock brick rear, slate roof, crested ridge tiles. Windows are generally sashed with cambered heads. Ash Field, right hand side, has to the right a full-height polygonal bay with a pyramidal roof. The upper part of the bay is richly decorated with relief floral motifs which are separated by pilasters rising from the scrolled keystones of the windows. Narrow-projecting bays have bands of similar

decoration and the gables are treated as pediments. Side elevation with a single-storey polygonal bay. Oak Mount appears to be similar but was not fully visible at the time of survey.

Entrances with stone gate-piers with shaped tops and the names of the respective houses carved on them.



**2 & 4 New Beech Road**



**563-565 Didsbury Road**

- *563-565 Didsbury Road (locally listed 2009)*

Former Police Station, circa 1870, included for its distinctive style and local historical associations.

Former Police Station, now houses. Of brick laid in English garden wall bond, stone plinth, slate roof, prominent central brick chimney with decorative banding. Two storeys. The left hand return elevation is of scored render. Central four-bay range is flanked by projecting gabled wings. Windows have stone sills and wedge lintels. Central range has a row of four upper windows, those at each end blocked. An entrance on each side is positioned beneath the blocked windows. The wings each have gables with plain barge boards and finials.

Rear not accessible at the time of the survey but it is said to retain cells.

- *11-24 Park Row (locally listed 2009)*

Terrace of early C19 houses probably built as workers' housing by Samuel Stocks, owner of the Heaton Mersey Bleachworks, during the 1830s. Group value with the neighbouring locally listed terrace on Park Place, which is part of the same development.

This terrace of houses, all of the same basic design, are constructed of rendered brick, brick, generally slate roofs of shallow pitch, and brick chimneys. Windows and doors vary and most are C20 replacements. The houses are built on a steep slope, and the roofline of the terrace is stepped, forming a distinctive profile. Each unit consists of one bay with a door offset to one side and large windows with narrow stone lintels on each of the two floors. Cast-iron street name probably of late C19 or early C20 date.



**Park Row**



**25-28 Park Place**

- *25-28 Park Place (locally listed 2009)*

Terrace of early C19 houses probably built as workers' housing by Samuel Stocks, owner of the Heaton Mersey Bleachworks, during the 1830s. Group value with the neighbouring locally listed terrace on Park Row, which is part of the same development.

Pair of houses which adjoin those at the top of Park Row, but are larger properties, of two bays, perhaps for senior members of the workforce. Brick with slate roofs, brick chimneys. No. 3 has a raised stone lintel to the door. C20 replacement windows and doors.

- *56-65 Vale Close (locally listed 2009)*

Terrace of mid C19 houses with group value with neighbouring buildings on Vale Close.

Of brick with slate roofs, brick chimneys, two-storeys. The terrace is built on a slope and the properties stepped with the fall of the land in pairs. Each house has a round arched door opening, perhaps originally with fanlights, and a window on each floor with stone lintel and flat brick head. Window and door details vary and include C20 replacements.

The houses are fronted by low stone walls surmounted by cast-iron railings.



**56-65 Vale Close, two storey elevations to street frontage**

- *3 Vale Close (locally listed 2009)*

Late C18 or early C19 house with group value with the locally listed terraces on Vale Close and the grade II listed Crown Inn.

House, probably of brick beneath render, brick chimney, slate roof. Two low storeys and two bays. Entrance offset to the right in the gable end. Windows are generally multipaned casements. Chimney at the centre suggests the property may originally have been two cottages with back-to-back fireplaces. No.3 stands beside Nos. 5-13, a terrace of similar buildings built at about the same date probably for workers at the Heaton Mersey Bleachworks.



**3 Vale Close**

- *5-11 Vale Close & 1-4 Tait Mews (locally listed 2009)*

Irregular terrace circa late C18 and probably built as housing for workers at the Heaton Mersey Bleachworks. Group value with the listed Crown Inn, with 3 Vale Close and with neighbouring locally listed terraces.

Rendered brick, slate roofs. Windows are generally casements, plank doors. The terrace is fronted by railings of simple design and the houses are reached by steps from a raised walkway which increases in height with the slope of the land. The house on the corner of Tait Mews projects forward of the line of the terrace is of two taller storeys than the others, and has sixteen-pane sash windows



**5-11 Vale Close**



**1 & 2 Tait Mews**



**3 & 4 Tait Mews**

- *17-27 Vale Close (locally listed 2009)*

Terrace of mid-C19 houses with group value with neighbouring buildings of Vale Close.

Terrace of brick houses with slate roofs, No. 27 is rendered and has slate hanging to the return side elevation. Each house has a round-arched door opening and one window per floor. No. 25 has a radial fanlight, wedge lintels and four-pane sash windows. Other properties have generally lost the original fanlights and window details, but a coherent group is formed. The houses are built on a slope and a walkway, increasing in height with the fall of the land, has a cast-iron railings.



**17-27 Vale Close**



**29-43 Vale Close**

- *29-43 Vale Close (locally listed 2009)*

Terrace of early - mid C19 houses with group value with neighbouring houses on Vale Close. The terrace is set back from the road with brick garden walls with terracotta coping and simple stone gate piers. Of brick with slate roofs and brick chimneys; two storeys. Each house has an arched door opening, perhaps originally with a fanlight, and one window per floor with stone sills and stone wedge lintels.

Each house has a long front garden bounded by a brick wall with pairs of monolithic stone gate piers, this feature also contributing to the character of the area.



### 3.6.3 Key Unlisted Buildings

These have been identified on the basis of their historic, architectural and townscape importance and are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map (Appendix 2).

- *410 Didsbury Road / 68 Cavendish Road*

Large villa, c.1900, now two houses. Red brick. Two storeys plus attics, with symmetrical façade, central battlemented porch flanked by generous gabled two-storey bay windows (sashes on ground floor, ranges of casements above). Single storey bay to side also battlemented. Prominent slate roof and tall well-detailed chimney stacks.



*410 Didsbury Road/68 Cavendish Road*

- *Richmond Road Terraces*

2-16 and 1-15, *Richmond Road* Uniform two storey terraces flanking the approach to Heaton Mersey Park, c. 1900. Red brick with chamfered lintels, paired doorways and windows over, ground floor windows paired with central mullion, timber framed sliding sashes (some alteration). Tall corbelled chimney stacks. Red brick front garden walls with copings.



**Richmond Road terraces**, contemporary with Heaton Mersey Park and forming a unified composition flanking the park entrance



**445-451 Didsbury Road**, forming with its mirror image and the Richmond Road terraces an architectural set piece on the edge of Heaton Mersey Park

- **437-443 and 445-451 Didsbury Road**

On Didsbury Road, flanking the entrance to Richmond Road are c. 1900 uniform four-unit terraces, rather tall and grand, of three storeys with substantial half-timbered dormers surmounting projecting double bays. Red brick walling, blue slate roofs, wide ranges of casement windows to ground floor, paired sashes above with small-paned upper frames. Lean-to porches in pairs, with joinery trim.

### 3.7 Architecture and Building Materials

The predominant building material in the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area is brick. This was always a locally available material in this part of Stockport, and the area boasted a major Brick and Tile Works in the area behind the Church during the Victorian period. The use of brick as a building material throughout the history of the settlement up to modern times creates visual continuity across buildings of different periods and architectural styles.

Vernacular use of brick is exemplified in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century 2 & 4 Vale Close where brick nogging is used as infill to the timber framed structure (possibly as a later replacement for wattle and daub). Nearby Crown Inn and the early terraces of the industrial village were all built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century period using plain brickwork, while the fashionable status of Heaton Mersey in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century is reflected in the up-to-the-minute gothic architecture of the ecclesiastical group around St. John's Church. Polychrome brickwork distinguishes the former rectory, while the Schoolmaster's house and St. John's School are also designed with the steeply pitched gables of Puginian Gothic. The Schoolmaster's house is a particularly good example of the crisply-detailed 'Parsonage Gothic' of the period, with its high quality handmade brickwork and ashlar stone dressings in the form of quoins and trefoil-headed windows. A contemporary example of virtuoso polychrome brickwork is the c.1860 Congregational Church (originally Sunday School) on Mersey Road.

Prior to this, stucco had enjoyed a brief vogue in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, being used at the former Highfield villa, once part of a series of grand mansions set in their own grounds along the edge of the ridge, and now divided into two dwellings. This shows the

characteristic pointed openings and embattled detailing of the early Gothic Revival, motifs which are echoed on a more modest scale at the villa's former lodge, opposite.



**12 St. John's Road**, originally the Rectory and a good example of 'Parsonage Gothic'



**Former bank at the corner of Didsbury Road and St. Johns Road, c. 1900.** Glowing local red brick with carved stone dressings: a good local example of the free use of classical detailing in the Edwardian period.

St. John's Church is built of stone, reflecting its status as the spiritual and cultural heart of the village as well as its landmark qualities. Brick continued to be used for lesser buildings through the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and the village contains some well-detailed red brick terraces as well as commercial buildings. The tradition of building in brick remained strong in the area well after local brick production declined, and later architects and builders took advantage of the great variety of colours, textures and types of brick available as imports from all parts of the country. Developments of the 1930s show an appreciation of the architectural qualities of brickwork, Pleachway and nearby houses being designed in a neat neo-Vernacular style using dark-coloured brick. Didsbury Road School uses pale pinkish-brown bricks to good effect on an unprecedented scale in its well-grouped flat roofed blocks, while recent building in the conservation area around St. John's Church also employs red brick.

### **3.8 Contribution of Trees, Hedges and Green Spaces**

There are four key green open spaces in the Heaton Mersey Conservation area:

- St. John's Churchyard
- Bowl of the Hillside ('The Vale')
- Heaton Mersey Park, where trees on the banks below the park perform an important role in screening the bulky modern sheds of the industrial estate set lower in the valley
- Land to the rear of Didsbury Road Primary School

These last three areas together form a significant green frame to the south of the conservation area.

Trees are important in long-distance views out of the conservation area to the south, and to the north they form a visual stop to contain the view beyond the formal setting to St. John's Church. St. John's Road is fringed with trees and shrubs, and this leafy quality is an important aspect of its character and appearance as a high-status Victorian ecclesiastical enclave. Mature trees are also important in the industrial village, where they cover the hillside, providing a natural setting for Vale Road as it drops steeply down the valley side and for the various groups of terraces which are set into and across the contours.



**St. John's Churchyard,** distinguished by ashlar stone gatepiers, good Victorian memorials and an encircling group of mature trees



**The Vale,** Long-distance view across the Mersey Valley with the tree-covered slopes of the Vale in the foreground

### 3.9 Floorscape and Street Furniture

Carriageway and footway materials in the conservation area are generally modern, although stone setts are a significant survival along the length of Vale Road and on the residential streets off Mersey Road. In these locations they make an important contribution to a harmonious townscape of trees and/or natural materials. The retention of these traditional paving materials is essential to the preservation of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Stone setts play a similar role at the cross-overs where St. Johns Road joins with Didsbury Road.

Traditional streetlighting columns in St. Johns Road and Vale Close are visually successful and make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Public realm improvements have been carried out in 2009 on approaches to the conservation area (at the Thorniley Grave outside the Griffin) and within the conservation area itself, including new bench seating and a Christmas Tree at the car park on Didsbury Road, black bins in place of concrete ones, and a general rationalising of streetlighting and signage clutter. New streetlights have been located in order to minimise their impact on key locations (e.g. on the setting of the Listed 2-4 Vale Close)

Road junctions have been simplified with the removal of the majority of pedestrian guardrails and the painting of those that remain. New traffic lights and streetlighting columns have also been painted black. Tactile paving is buff coloured instead of red which is less intrusive. Unfortunately, red textureflex has been laid across pedestrian crossings, and green textureflex used on cycle paths and boxes at junctions.

At the junction of St. John's Road, tumbled conservation setts used on the pavement have replaced the former tarmac and the granite setts here have been re-laid. These works have dramatically improved the setting of the listed war memorial.



*Junction of St Johns Road/Didsbury Road*



*Manhole cover, Vale Close*

Other examples of surviving historic street furniture which make a positive contribution to the conservation area include:

- Royal Mail EIR Pillar Box on Didsbury Road
- Cast iron street name plates
- Square knob manhole / drain covers

- Boundary treatments including brick and stone boundary walls, stone gatepiers, gates and railings

### **3.10 Definition of the Special Character of the Conservation Area**

The special interest of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area derives from its elevated location on level ground above the steep-sided Mersey Valley; the arrangement of built and open spaces in relation to this topography and the role played by Didsbury Road, views, groups of trees and areas of woodland in linking the various differentiated spaces. Buildings date largely from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries and illustrate a variety of gothic and vernacular revival styles.

A detailed analysis of the special character of the conservation area is set out as an introduction to this document.

## **4. Preservation and Enhancement Issues**

### **4.1 Condition of the Building Fabric**

The overall condition of the buildings of the conservation area is good.

### **4.2 Extent of Loss and Intrusion**

Whilst the conservation area retains a coherent character and appearance, there have been losses. The original buildings which formed the western edge of the approach to St. John's Church were demolished in the last few decades. Although their replacements are architecturally unobtrusive and within the local tradition of brick building, their greater set back from the street and slightly diminutive scale lessens the visual impact of the formal approach avenue which once framed the view of the Church.

The visual relationship between topography, mature tree cover and terraced rows of workers' cottages on the valley side is strong. However, the original brick-built character of these terraces has been eroded by wholesale rendering as part of housing improvement works in recent decades.

Only Highfield remains from the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century group of fashionable villas, and later suburban infill development has obscured the former layout of mansions in their own grounds. The loss of the original Congregational Church, which was embellished with a fine triple-arched Gothic frontage in the 1880s, is to be regretted. More recently, the landmark broach spire of St. John's Church was demolished in 1995.

### **4.3 Development Issues**

There has been development pressure in within the conservation area for the subdivision or demolition of larger villas and the intensive redevelopment of their generous garden plots with blocks of flats. Housing phasing policy has recently curtailed this pressure but larger properties on Didsbury Road remain vulnerable. Other development issues include alterations to shopfronts and signs and householder extensions.

## **4.4 Preservation and Enhancement**

Detailed proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area will be set out in a future Conservation Area Management Plan. The plan formulates objectives and outlines a programme to address the issues identified within this appraisal.

Initial suggestions of management measures that came out of the 2006 public consultation included:

- Making of an Article 4 Direction, as appropriate, to protect vulnerable traditional materials and original architectural features on houses
- Preparation of design guidance for residents and business people to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Review of protection afforded to trees through Tree Preservation Orders.
- Preparation of management guidelines to protect the important contribution made by trees to the conservation area
- Consideration of management issues relating to Heaton Mersey Park
- Consideration should be given to adding key unlisted buildings to Stockport's Local List
- A management plan should include guidance on future development within the conservation area

### *Heaton Mersey Article 4 Direction (2008)*

The retention of original materials and architectural details is crucial to the character and appearance of the conservation area. At the same time, such features are vulnerable to loss through permitted development rights. Following the designation of the conservation area approval in principle for putting an Article 4(2) direction in place was given by the Council's Executive on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005. Following this and further consultation with residents an Article 4(2) Direction has been made in 2008 to extend control over householder alterations in the conservation area.

### *Local List Review 2009*

Following the review of the 2006 review of the Heaton Mersey Conservation Area, Stockport Council has undertaken a review of key historic buildings in certain areas of the Borough. This review has resulted in the inclusion of a number of buildings on Stockport's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest' from 2009, as set out in this document

## **5. Community Involvement**

### **5.1 Public Consultation**

Public consultation has been an integral part of the conservation area extension and appraisal process. Proposals were posted on the Council's web site together with an electronic questionnaire. A Press Release was issued. Letters were sent out to all residents of the conservation area informing them of the proposal for designation and inviting them to an afternoon and evening drop-in session held at Heaton Mersey

Community Centre on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006. Each letter contained a questionnaire canvassing residents' views and information on the link to the draft conservation area appraisal on the Council's web site. Fliers and posters were also distributed in the wider Heaton Mersey area and local history and amenity groups were contacted directly. The drop-in session was well attended and gave residents the chance to ask questions of Council Officers related to designation and possible Article 4 Directions. Copies of the draft conservation area appraisal were made available to read and take away. An exhibition was mounted on the history and special interest of the conservation area, and this was moved to Heaton's Library for a week following the close of the drop-in session.

A summary of responses to the public consultation exercise is included in Appendix 1

## 5.2 Response to Stakeholder Comments

*"In the final analysis, heritage is what people value"*  
(English Heritage, 2006)

The consultation exercise generated a significant level of response from stakeholders. Letters and completed questionnaires were analysed to assess the level of support for both the designation of the proposed new extended conservation area and for the imposition of extra controls to protect the area's special character. Comments were also evaluated to determine those aspects of the area which stakeholders consider to be important to its appearance and character. English Heritage's *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, published in August 2005, highlights the importance for local authorities of recognising the values which are ascribed by stakeholders to historic environments when preparing appraisals of the special character of conservation areas.

Strong support for the proposed new conservation area was indicated, with 91% of respondents considering that the area is of special architectural or historic interest which should be protected by designation. Residents of Heaton Mersey considered that the following aspects of the conservation area were important to its character: historic buildings, open space, trees, boundary walls, street furniture, street surfaces and local shops and shopfronts. Of these characteristics, historic buildings, open space, trees, boundary walls, street surfaces and local shops and shopfronts were seen to be the most significant in defining the special character of the area. The weight accorded these elements is reflected in the character analysis and the definition of the area's special character set out in this appraisal.

Stakeholders were also asked whether they considered that certain types of work were harmful to the special character of the conservation area. Responses indicated that, amongst other issues, a range of householder alterations are seen as inappropriate in Davenport Park. Specifically, these included the replacement of original roofs, windows, and doors with modern materials; the loss of original architectural features from buildings; the demolition of boundary walls; the addition of porches and conservatories; the removal of historic features from the street scene and the painting of exterior walls of buildings. This concern is reflected in a 88% level of support for special controls over permitted development .

Preliminary suggestions for conservation area management measures have been made in this appraisal document, addressing concerns raised by stakeholders. These include the making of an Article 4(2) Direction to control permitted development in the conservation



area. This proposal was authorised in principle by SMBC Executive on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005. Public concern over inappropriate alterations to buildings can also be addressed in ways that complement the extra planning controls put in place by an Article 4 Direction, including the preparation of local generic guidance to facilitate a sympathetic approach to design and choice of materials. Identification of further locally listed buildings can also help promote interest in, and respect for, the architectural qualities of buildings.

Concern was expressed more generally over inappropriate development which does not reflect the character of the conservation area. In particular, unsympathetically designed extensions, the use of modern materials, infill development involving loss of open space and the introduction of mobile phone masts were criticised. It is suggested that a future management plan should include guidance on these aspects of development within the conservation area.

Another issue is the importance of trees in the area and the need to protect them. This is reflected in the suggestion of a review of protection afforded to trees through Tree Preservation Orders and the preparation of management guidelines to protect the important contribution made by trees to the conservation area.

The quality of the public realm also emerged as an area of concern, with high traffic levels on Didsbury Road and car parking problems being highlighted. A need was identified for traffic calming in the conservation area and the management of parking. More generally, the poor condition of street surfaces and lighting, as well as the design of street lights, were highlighted for improvement. Improvements in the security and management of Heaton Mersey Park were requested. Greater community involvement in the area was seen to be important. Financial incentives for the restoration of historic architectural features were suggested. Resolution of these issues requires a corporate approach, and could be addressed as part of a future Conservation Area Management Plan.

## **6. References and Further Reading**

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### ***Unpublished Maps and Plans***

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Plan of Heaton Mersey Bleach Works  
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### ***Published Maps and Plans***

Heaton Mersey Tithe Map 1848

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 Yale University Press 2004  
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Heaton Mersey Research Group Heaton Mersey: A Victorian Village, 1851-1881  
 Stockport Historical Society/Stockport MBC, 1985

## **7. Contacts**

General enquiries concerning the Conservation Area should be referred to the Council's Conservation Officer.

Telephone: 0161 474 2620 / 4561

Enquiries relating to development proposals and planning applications should be addressed to the Council's Planning Services department

Telephone: 0161 474 3896

Enquiries relating to trees within the conservation area should be addressed to the Council's Arboricultural Officer

Telephone: 0161 217 6111

Enquiries relating to the Historic Environment Record should be addressed to Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Joule House,  
School of the Built Environment  
1 Acton Square,  
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### **National Organisations**

#### **English Heritage**

North West Office

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#### **Victorian Society**

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## Appendix 1

### Summary of Heaton Mersey Questionnaire Responses

Total response = 59

#### Conservation Area Status

Agree = 54 = 91.4%  
Disagree = 4 = 6.9%  
Don't know = 1 = 1.7%

#### Article 4 Directions

Agree = 52 = 87.9%  
Disagree = 4 = 6.9%  
Don't know = 3 = 5.2%  
Agree in reservation = 0 = 0%

#### Most important features in defining the special character of the area

- Buildings
- Trees
- Boundaries
- Open Space
- Street furniture
- Street surfaces

#### Others specified

- Shop fronts.
- Regular maintenance of all roads and pavements.
- Roadside grass verges.
- Keeping open spaces free from litter.
- Cobbled streets.
- Strong sense of community.
- Specific types of brick.
- Litter free streets.
- Shops with local character.
- Building roofs.

#### Works which could harm the special character of the area –

- Replacement of original roofs, windows, and doors with modern materials
- Loss of original architectural features from buildings
- Demolition of boundary walls
- Removal of historic features from the street scene
- New or replacement signs and shopfronts (where applicable)
- Painting of exterior walls of buildings

## **Others specified**

- Cars lining the streets.
- Notices on lampposts.
- Subletting of property.
- Lack of parking spaces.
- Extensions using brick not in keeping with rest of the property.
- Addition of porches and conservatories.
- In-fill building permissions.
- Modern materials have a negative environmental impact.
- Removal of trees and loss of open space generally.
- Unsympathetic extensions generally.
- Increase in the number of take-away food outlets, bars and cafes.
- Introduction of mobile phone masts.

## **What can the Council do to further protect or enhance the conservation area?**

- Revisit what constitutes acceptable property development.
- Make a feature of the Didsbury Road shopping area.
- Produce a guide of recommending companies for sympathetic home improvements.
- Prevent building development resulting in loss of open spaces.
- Consider financial incentives to support restoration projects.
- Encourage and promote environmental issues.
- Promote community involvement by developing information sheets, articles, newsletters about the area.
- Consider inventive solutions to car parking.
- Need for coherent street cleaning strategy.
- Prevention of out of keeping modern architecture and building developments.
- Replace concrete street lamps with period street lamps.
- Prevent unregulated developments.
- Ensure maintenance work is carried out when required.
- Offer advice to homeowners about in-character renovations/alterations.
- More consultation and engagement with the local community.
- Review traffic flow and parking on Didsbury Road, and the need for traffic calming in the CA
- Protection and active maintenance of trees including new planting.
- Improve security and management of the Richmond Road Park.
- Provide cycle racks to encourage reduction in the use of cars.
- Patrol illegally parked cars and offer residents parking permits.
- More control over commercial properties.

## **Other comments**

- Include all of Mersey Road in the Conservation Area to protect the open space surrounding some of the large detached properties at the northern end.
- Use Heaton Mersey Park as a site for local people to celebrate May Day, hold Farmer's Markets, and listen to a band on Sundays with a better children's play area.
- Concern over the Benefits of Article 4 do not justify such restrictions

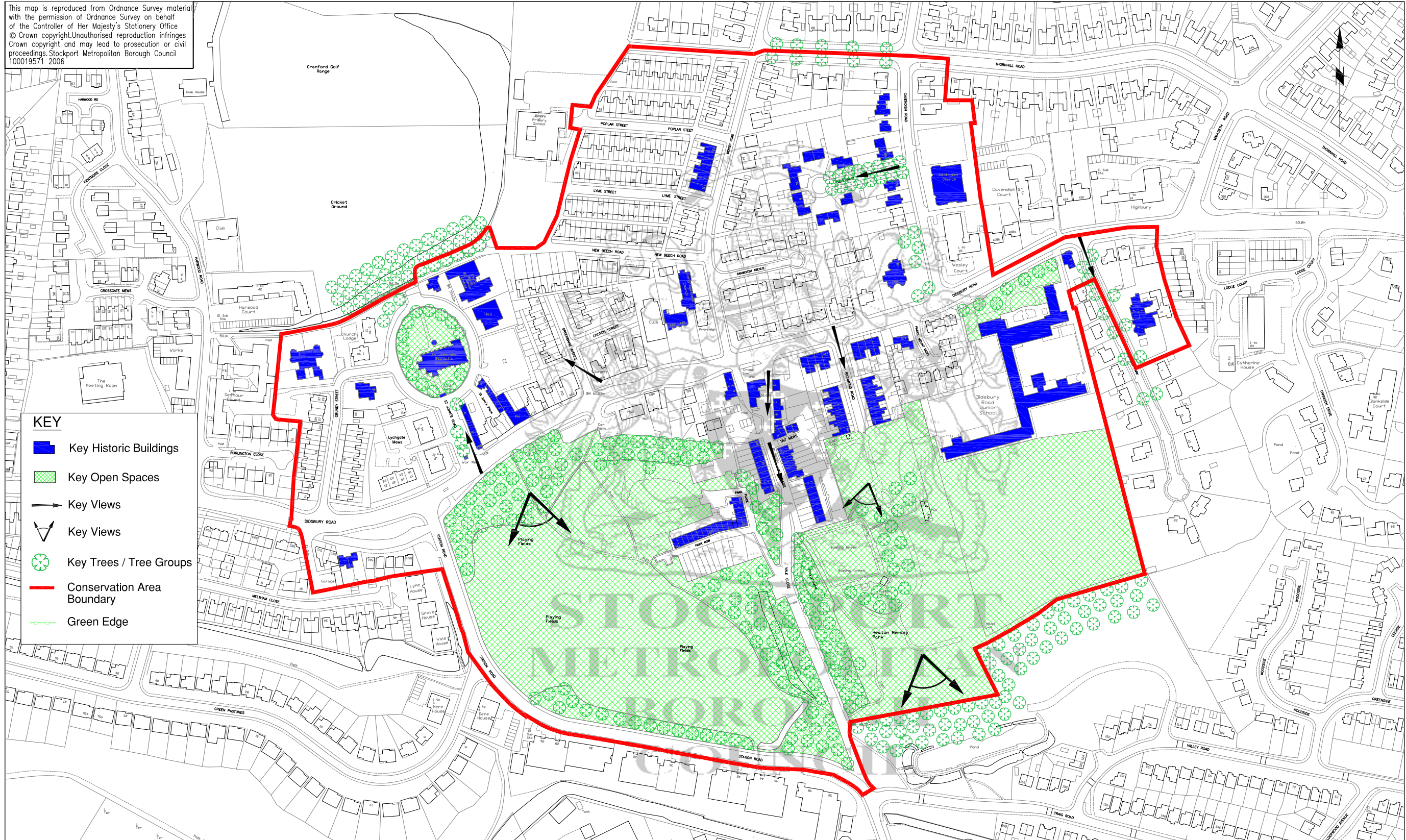
- Include St. John's school ground to preclude any potential development.
- Little perceived difference to the extension, current area not policed.
- Addition of gates on alleyways to reduce crime.
- Protect wildlife and especially wildflowers.
- Provide a clear simple guidance note in partnership with local residents/businesses on shop fronts, boundary treatments, signage etc.
- Demonstrate commitment to the area by funding deliverable appropriate environmental improvements
- More regular contact needed with the Conservation Officer.

## **APPENDIX 2:**

# Townscape Appraisal Map



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**KEY**

- Key Historic Buildings
- Key Open Spaces
- Key Views
- Key Views
- Key Trees / Tree Groups
- Conservation Area Boundary
- Green Edge

Produced by Survey, Cartography and Ground Modelling Section SCGJOBNO.D721\_11  
Environment and Economic Development Services



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING SERVICES  
STOPFORD HOUSE  
PICCADILLY  
STOCKPORT  
SK1 3XE

AMENDMENTS				
DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE	No	AMENDMENT

JOB TITLE  
**HEATON MERSEY CONSERVATION AREA**

DRAWING TITLE  
**APPRAISAL MAP**

Filename Z:\SCG\ARCHIVE\JOBS\D_JOBS\D721\SCG\DATA\D721_11.DWG			
Drawn PM	Cad DP	Amended DH	Approved .
Date 14/03/06	Date 14/03/06	Date 31/03/12	Date .
Scale NTS			
Drawing No. .			Revision .

## **APPENDIX 3:**

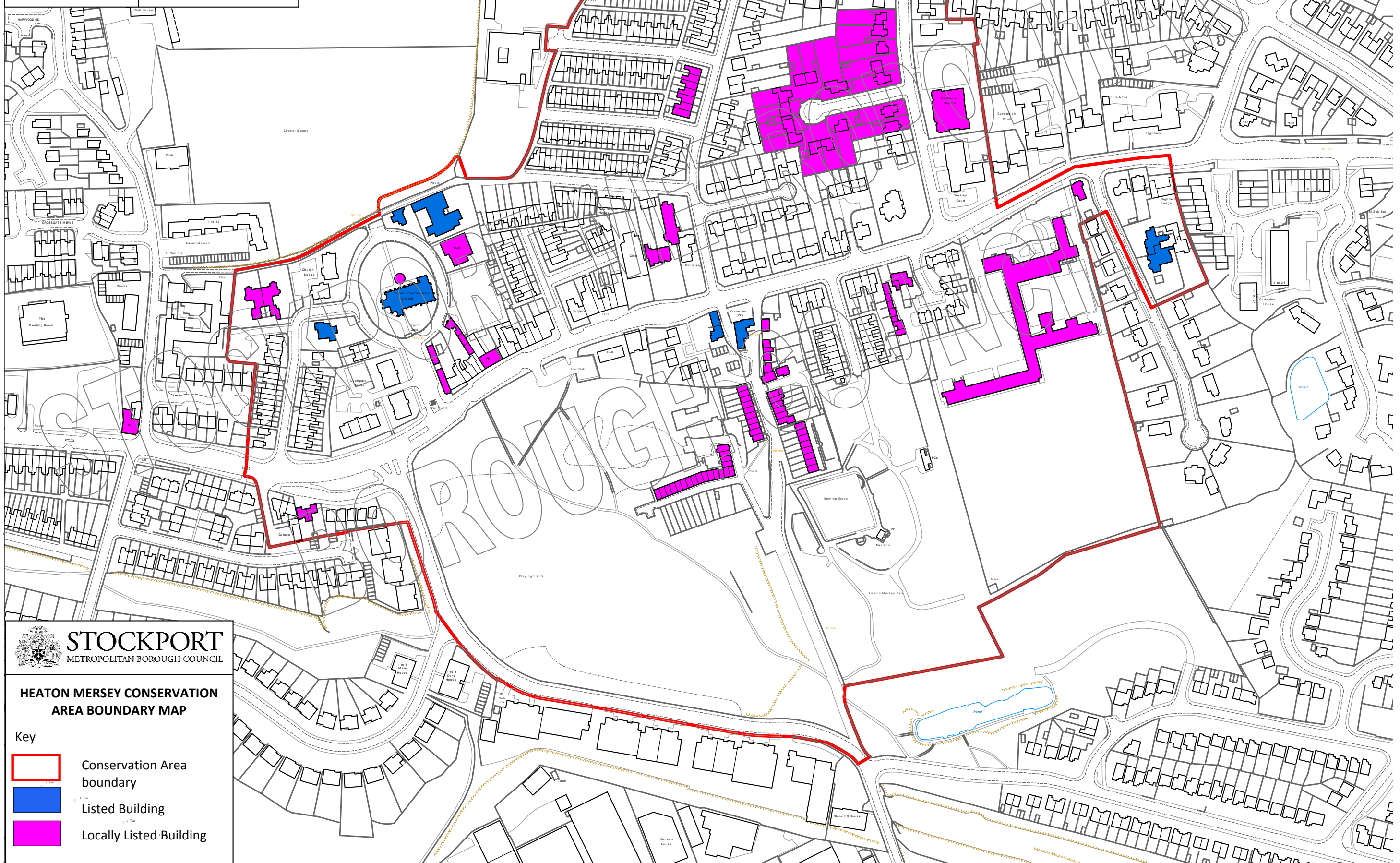
# **Conservation Area Boundary Map – Listed & Locally Listed Buildings**

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NTS

March 2012

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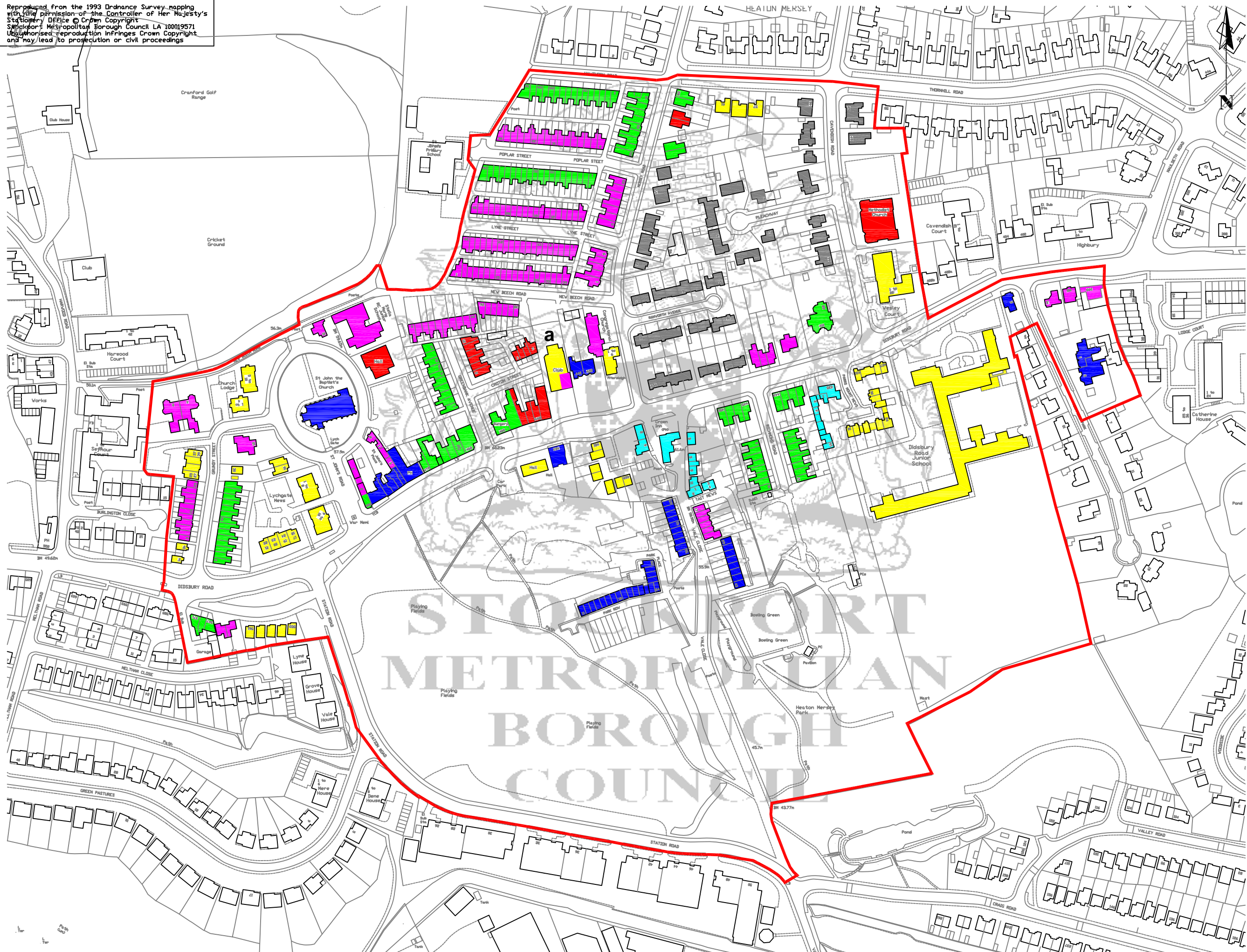
### HEATON MERSEY CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY MAP

- Key
-  Conservation Area boundary
  -  Listed Building
  -  Locally Listed Building

## **APPENDIX 4:**

# **Heaton Mersey Conservation Area Phasing Map**

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**Notes**

- 1 No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing
- 2 The contractor shall verify all dimensions on the site

- Pre 1830
- 1830-1848
- 1848-1892
- 1892-1904
- 1904-1916
- 1916-1934
- Post 1934
- a altered

nr.	date	initial	amendment	note

**STOCKPORT**  
 METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
 E. McLean  
 BA(Hons), B.Phil. MBA  
 Director  
 Environment and Economic  
 Development Services

Regeneration Section  
 2nd Floor  
 1 St Peters Square  
 Stockport SK1 1NN

**Committee**

**Project**  
 Heaton Mersey Conservation  
 Area

**Title**  
 Phasing Map

Scale 1:2500

Date	Drawn	Authorised
Mar 06		

Drawing/Amendment Number

## Appendix 5

### Heaton Mersey Conservation Area Historic Environment Record (HER) Entries

This appendix includes sites and monuments recorded in the conservation area and its immediate vicinity.

#### 1. MonUID: MGM14854

**Name:** Police Station (Didsbury Road)

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Built c 1870 comprising police station with cells at rear, and housing for two policemen and their families. Depicted on the OS 2nd edition 1892 map. In 1913 building converted to 2 police houses, the cells being converted to bathrooms. Now in private ownership. 2 –storey, brick-built range, with projecting bay at either end.

#### 2. MonUID: MGM14859

**Name:** Heaton Mersey Sunday School (site of)

**Record Type:** Monument

**Description:** Established in 1801 as offshoot of Stockport Sunday School. Purpose-built school opened in 1805, financed by Robert Parker of Heaton Mersey Bleachworks. After his death in 1815 a nephew, also named Robert Parker added a storey. Photographic evidence shows school to have been brick-built, with main, 3-storey block of 6 x 2 bays. Demolished 1967 (Jones E 1997 Old Heatonians, 62).

Site now occupied by road widening and carpark area (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

#### 3. MonUID: MGM14848

**Name:** Railway Hotel (Frog and Railway) Didsbury Road

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Built by c 1850. First depicted on the OS 2nd edition 1892 map. Originally Bleacher's Arms, changing name when railway station opened in 1880. Symmetrical façade with arch to right led to yard and bowling green to rear, later a carpark. Pub is of 2 storeys, rendered with the symmetrical façade defined by quoins. The arched entrance to bowling green is now blocked and is situated in an extension to the pub, likewise of 2 storeys, rendered, with quoins. Pub is now known as the Frog and Railway (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

**4. MonUID:** MGM15207

**Name:** St John's Terrace

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** 2-storey house; rendered; symmetrical façade, with stone inscribed 'St John's Terrace 1858'; porch with iron columns flanking the door. To the rear is a row of tall 2-storey cottages; rendered (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

**5. MonUID:** MGM15205

**Name:** Parish Hall, St Johns Rd

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Single storey gabled hall, built in machine-made brick, with inscription 'Parish Hall 1906' (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

**6. MonUID:** MGM15212

**Name:** Heaton Place (site of)

**Record Type:** Monument

**Description:** Buildings shown in general area on Johnson's map of 1819-20. Possibly the location of 32 houses known to have been constructed for workers at the Heaton Mersey bleachworks in the 1820s.

**7. MonUID:** MGM118

**Name:** Heaton Mersey Upper Bleach Works

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** On the OS 6" first edition map of 1845-46 the buildings of the bleach works are shown with a large reservoir to the north and a smaller one to the south. The second edition OS 25" map of 1892 shows the buildings expanded. On the revision map of 1904[c] filter beds are shown to the south. 'Top Mill', at head of Vale Road, built in 1833 by Samuel Stock of Heaton Mersey bleachworks. In 1848 site separately occupied from lower bleachworks, by J Whittaker and others. Later taken over by John Walton, described in 1871 as cotton yarn bleacher. Park Row, two-storey bleachworkers' cottages, still standing; upper bleachworks site now housing.

**8. MonUID:** MGM119

**Name:** 11-22 Park Row

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** 12 unit terrace, built in the 1830s, climbs progressively from West to East, each unit gaining in height 4cm. Renovated on general improvement area project. Brick rendered. Reversed L shaped two storey six unit terrace. Built in the 1830's. Renovated, general improvement area project. Almost certainly workers housing associated with Heaton Mersey Upper Bleach Works . Shown on the OS first edition 6" Of 1845-6. Park Row is L-shaped terrace of small 2-storey workers houses; brick-built and now mostly rendered (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005) .

**9. MonUID:** MGM15215

**Name:** Vale Close (Settlement)

**Record Type:** Place

**Description:** Vale Close contained workers housing associated with Heaton Mersey bleachworks; built as part of piecemeal process, which was underway in 1800s and continued into late 19th century.

Surviving cottages at Nos 5-9 (SMR 58.1.0), No 11 (SMR 58.1.1) and No 1 (SMR 13239.1.0) appear to be of 18th century. Rows of later 2-storey cottages, brick-built and with round headed door openings, at Nos 17-27 (with stone inscribed 'Heaton Mersey Buildings 1854', Nos 56-65 (shown on 1845-6 map, stepped as the row descends the hill, and for the most part with noticeably tall elevations) and Nos 29-43 (mid- to late 19th century, set back with front gardens). Tait's Buildings have been demolished (SMR 13236.1.0) (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005) .

**10. MonUID:** MGM15208

**Name:** Tait's Buildings (site of)

**Record Type:** Monument

**Description:** 'Tait's buildings' shown as 2 east-west ranges to rear of Vale Close on the OS 2nd edition 1892 map(a). 2 blocks of back-to-backs, 3 storeys; built by Mortimer Lavater Tait, manager of lower Heaton Mersey Bleachworks in mid-19th century for his workforce. Demolished in 1970s (1,2). Site of Tait's Building now carparking area and gardens (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005) .

**11. MonUID:** MGM130

**Name:** 13 Vale Close & 1-2 Tait Mews

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** 2-storey cottages, raised above street level of Vale Close; pebble dashed exterior; dog-legged façade. Renovated under Vale Close General Improvement Area Project. Group presents a dog-legged façade to street, with right bay of 13 Vale Close



projecting slightly forward and 1-2 Tait Mews projecting further still. Appear 18th century (P Arrowsmith, site visit, 23/8/2005).

**12. MonUID:** MGM129

**Name:** 5-9 Vale Close

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Three 2-storey cottages, raised above street level of Vale Close; pebble dashed exterior; stepped gable on north. Renovated under Vale Close General Improvement Area Project. Appear 18th century (P Arrowsmith, site visit, 23/8/2005).

**13. MonUID:** MGM15211

**Name:** 1 Vale Close

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Buildings shown in the general location on Yates' map of 1770. 2 storey, 2 bay cottage; rendered; central stack; modern roof and windows. Possibly 18th century (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

**14. MonUID:** MGM122

**Name:** 440-442 Didsbury Road

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Buildings in approximate location on Johnsons map of the Parish of Manchester (1819-20). Originally one house built in 1830 now subdivided. Both units pebble dashed No 442 large extended porch at the rear. Alterations have been made with the inclusion of a dormer storey and extension.

**15. MonUID:** MGM187

**Name:** Heaton Mersey Congregational Church

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Church opened 1840; enlarged in 1855, when ornamental Gothic façade was added, and again in 1864. Sunday School building added in 1860. Church was demolished in 1988, and flats erected on its site and also on part of the churchyard, but many graves have been preserved, including that of Henry Kendal, founder of the Manchester store (Jones E 1997 Old Heatonians, 63). Church distinguished by grand stone façade with three-gabled porch.

Sunday School still standing to rear of site, and now used as Heaton Mersey Congregational Church; 2 storeys, with multi-gabled elevation to Mersey Road; one gable breaks forwards and contains stairs to upper floor. Built in pale brick, with yellow, blue and red brick used in band of lozenge decoration at 1st floor level, and yellow and red brick around windows. Porch at south end, with mock-timber framing above. Graveyard on east side with headstones (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

**16. MonUID:** MGM14508

**Name:** Parrs House (site of)

**Record Type:** Monument

**Description:** Shown as "Parr's House" on the first edition 6" OS map of 1845-6. Demolished and mid-20th century housing on site (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

**17. MonUID:** MGM3324

**Name:** Heaton Mersey Settlement

**Record Type:** Place

**Description:** Yates shows several buildings south of the present Pars Wood Lane / Didsbury Road. Some are named "Fold", probably referring to a farm site. 1895: as before, showing the linear scatter along the route, the area now named Heaton Mersey. See SMR 2603.1.0 for placename.

**18. MonUID:** MGM1713

**Name:** Parrs Mount

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Building on location on Yates 1770s map. Named 'Parrs Mount' on the OS 1st edition 1845-6 map. Whitewashed, pebble-dashed, 2 storey "detached" house - detached in intention although it is linked to Parrs Mount Mews by way of a first floor west ward extension crossing the passageway which grants access to the mews. The house stands in its own ground and boasts a stylish classical porch. Behind Parrs Mount is a 1980's extension. Said to be built 1820.

Still extant (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005) .

**19. MonUID:** MGM27

**Name:** Parrs Mount Mews

**Record Type:** Building

**Description:** Eight modernised terraced houses C1820 with cobbled courtyard reached from Didsbury Road through high gate-posts marked Parrs Mount beyond tunnel. Shown on Johnson's map of 1819-20.

**20. MonUID:** MGM15209

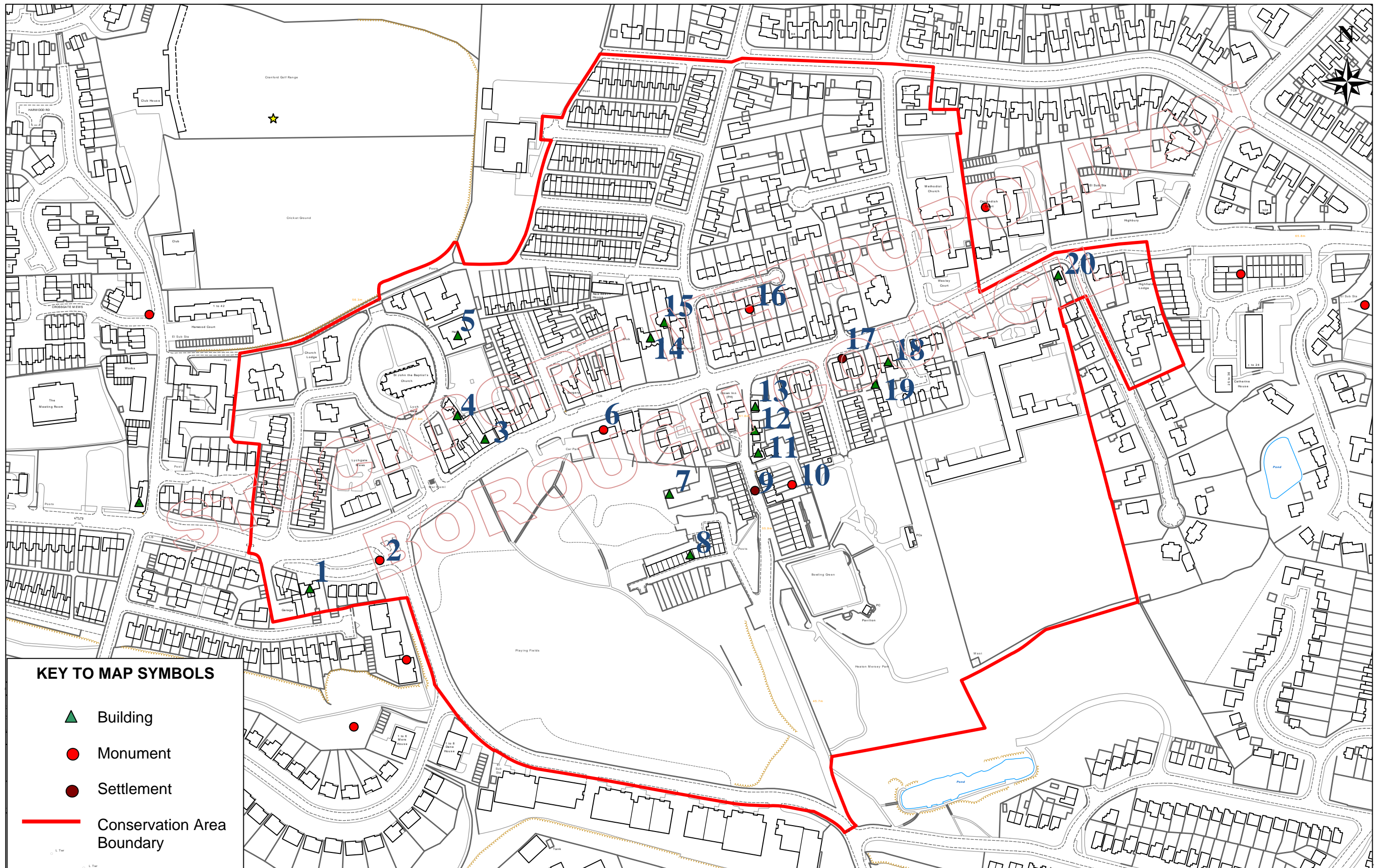
**Name:** The Lodge

**Record Type:** Building





**Description:** Shown on the OS first edition 6" of 1845-46. Former lodge of Highfield (SMR 12000.1.0). Single storey; rendered; original build as shown on early mapping is aligned east-west, with porch at east end. Building has been extended on the south (Site visit, P Arrowsmith, 23/8/2005).

## **APPENDIX 6:**

# **Historic Environment Record Map**



**KEY TO MAP SYMBOLS**

-  Building
-  Monument
-  Settlement
-  Conservation Area Boundary

Title: **Historic Environment Records within Heaton Mersey Conservation Area**

Date: March 2012

Place Directorate

Scale : Not to scale



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