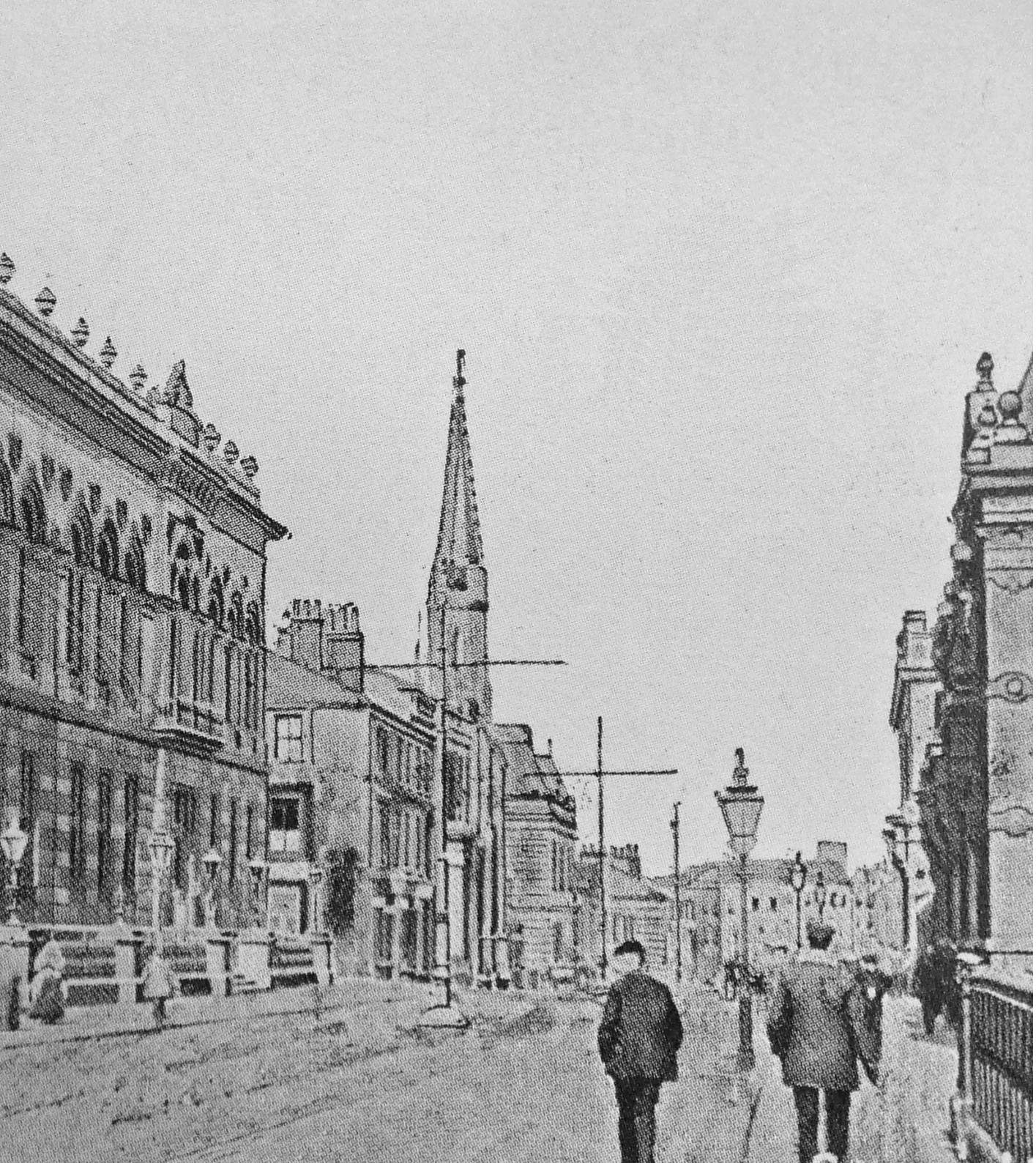


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Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document



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Preface

This is such an important time for Oldham Town Centre.

At Oldham Council we have huge ambition for regeneration in the town centre. We have already achieved one key project in the transformation of the Old Town Hall into a state-of-the-art cinema and restaurant complex and we have plans to breathe new life into the old library building as a Heritage and Arts Centre.

A common theme of both of these projects is how we've moved Oldham forward but protected our town's history and heritage at the same time.

Oldham Town Centre has some beautiful architecture and many of these buildings may have gone unnoticed or unused for too long.

We want to better celebrate and better use what we already have and make sure that any future development complements it.

This also means better enhancing and protecting new additions to our landscape such as Parliament Square which has quickly become a social hub.

We want to shape the regeneration of our town centre to encourage people to enjoy the many unique assets we have to offer; we must find new sustainable uses for our buildings while protecting and promoting our heritage.

Hannah Roberts



Cllr Hannah Roberts
Cabinet Member for Housing at Oldham Council

Status of the Supplementary Planning Document

The Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was commissioned to provide further guidance on the relevant policies contained within the Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document ('the Joint DPD'), in particular it will assist council officers and applicants in implementing Policy 24 'Historic Environment' in planning decisions and enforcement. It was also commissioned to provide updated evidence for the Local Plan review and its implementation when adopted and to support regeneration plans for Oldham Town Centre.

The appraisal and management plan is a high priority as the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area has been surveyed as part of the Historic England Heritage "At Risk" Assessment. As a consequence of this assessment, the conservation area has been included on the conservation area "At Risk" Register. An up to date appraisal was required in order to re-assess the designated area and evaluate and record its special interest.

It was determined that to give the appraisal and management plan more weight in planning decisions and enforcement action the document would be prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The SPD has proposed four extensions to Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area. These have been designated under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. However, to be reflected on the Local Plan Proposals Map these would need to be formally adopted through the Local Plan review to carry more weight in planning decisions and enforcement action. Until the proposed extensions are adopted through the Local Plan review the proposed extensions should be treated as a material planning consideration in planning decisions and enforcement action so that consideration will still be afforded to these areas recommended for inclusion within the conservation area.

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Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants
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Defining Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are *'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*,[1] and are recognised for their distinctive townscape, including their buildings, streets and public realm. With regard to the British planning system, conservation areas are considered as *'designated heritage assets;'* any proposals for change or development must assess the effect that the development might have on the character and appearance of the area. The Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area was first designated in November 1975.

Related Policy and Guidance

Once designated, Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to review the character and boundaries of its conservation areas; this appraisal of the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area by Donald Insall Associates provides the evidence base for this review process. As a Supplementary Planning Document it will also support the implementation of the existing adopted Joint Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development (Joint Development Plan Document, 2011) policies, including Policy 24 Historic Environment, inform the review of Oldham's Local Plan and support wider town centre regeneration initiatives. The overall appraisal strategy is based on Historic England's Guidance, in particular, Historic England's *2016 Advice Note 1 – Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* which clearly sets out guidance on the production of management plans and conservation area character appraisals.

Aims of the Appraisal

The Oldham Joint Development Plan Document, 2011 guides development in the Borough and recognises that the aim of conservation area designation is more likely to be fulfilled if there is detailed agreement and understanding of the particular characteristics of an area which contribute to its special identity.

This appraisal builds upon the *Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal* prepared by Stephen Levrant: Heritage Architecture for Oldham Metropolitan Borough in 1997. It describes the historical development and character and appearance of the conservation area. It aims to identify and explain important local features, identifying buildings which contribute to the area, distinctive streetscapes and important local views. It also identifies features which detract from the area's character and outlines opportunities for positive change.

Paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that *'when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.'* The appraisal has carefully considered opportunities to extend the boundary of the conservation area and makes recommendations for four extensions. It also suggests a number of buildings with *'a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated'*[2] for inclusion on a proposed local list of heritage assets and identifies buildings which may benefit from inclusion on a local heritage at risk register.

1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69.

2 National Planning Policy Guidance, paragraph 39.

Future Use

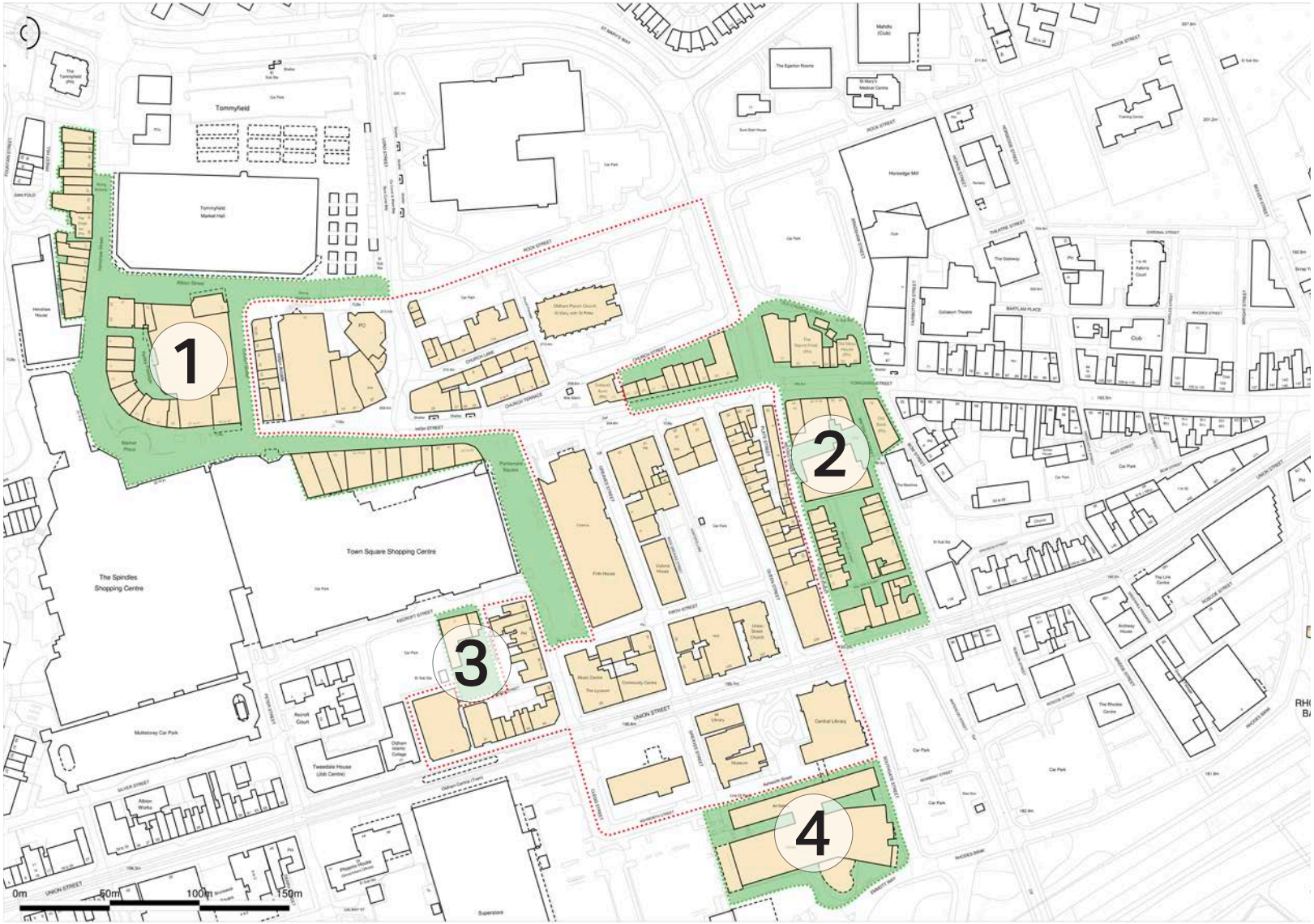
This document serves as a precursor to a wider *Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan* document by Donald Insall Associates, which has been generated following consultation by both the local authority and local community. Upon completion of both elements of the conservation area appraisal and management plan, the document will be adopted to serve the following key purposes:

- Address the challenges facing this 'at risk' area;
- Understand the significance of the conservation area and suggest opportunities to enhance its character and appearance;
- Stimulate local interest in both the protection of and careful development of the conservation area for present and future generations;
- Encourage wider use and enjoyment of assets within Oldham Town Centre;
- Encourage the conservation, repair, reuse and management of the area's historic features;
- Inform the Local Plan review and its implementation and future development management;
- Support town centre regeneration;
- Achieve the removal of the area from Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register.*

Interactive Format

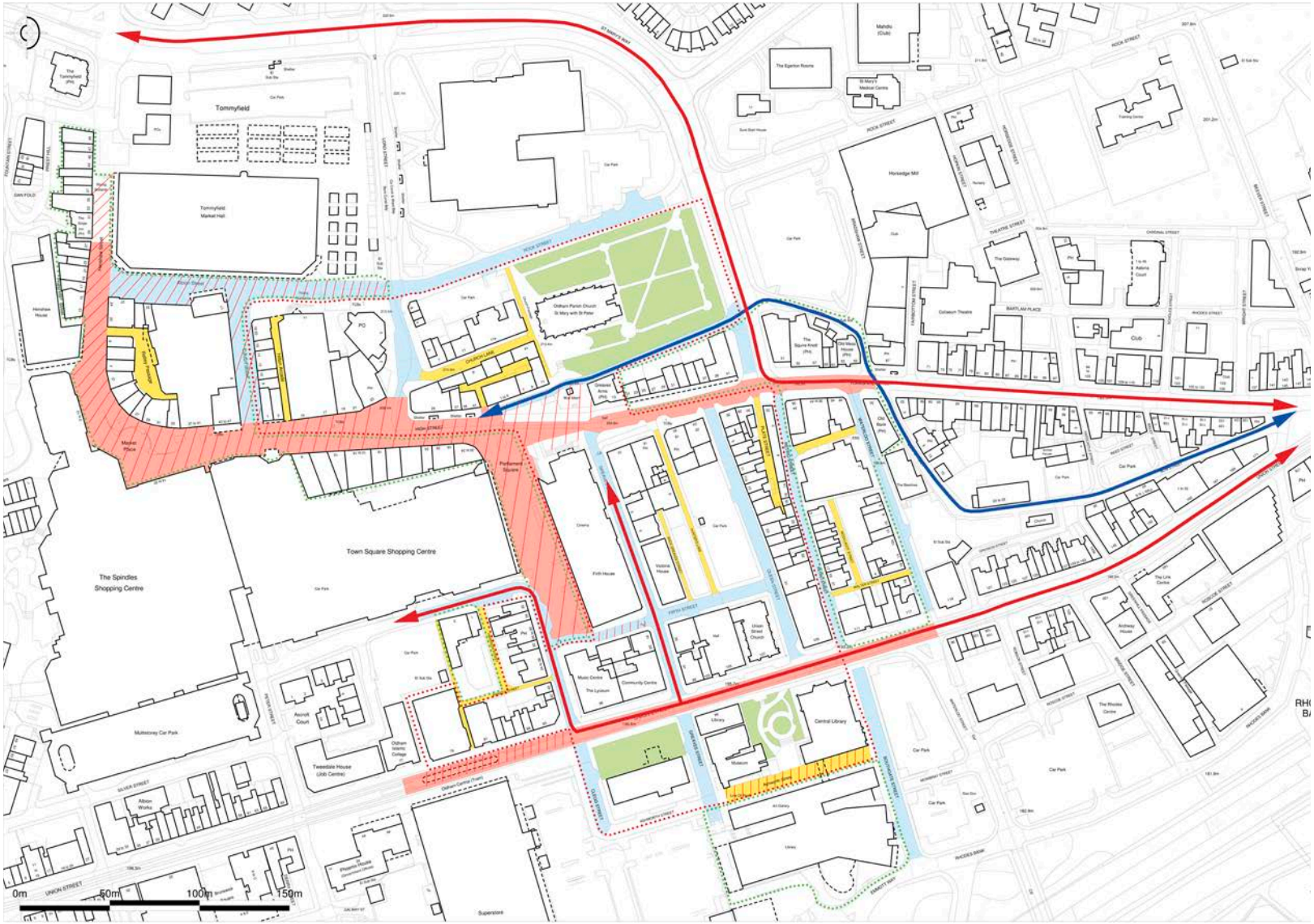
This document has been designed to serve as a practical guide for the present and future care of the conservation area. The digital version features interactive navigable elements which enhance its range and ease of use by both the Council and local community. These include:

- Front cover links which navigate directly to the Appraisal, Management Plan or Gazetteer sections as required;
- A contents page with headings which directly link to the different sections within the appraisal and plan;
- Navigable headings at page corners, including one which returns users to the contents page;
- Interactive map keys which link to relevant sections within the text where applicable; and
- Interactive icons at the base of the Gazetteer pages which navigate to conservation area buildings and buildings within proposed conservation area extensions.



1. High Street east and Parliament Square
2. Yorkshire, Retiro and Waterloo Street
3. Harrison Street
4. Cultural Quarter

- Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed extensions



- Historic route
- Key vehicle routes
- Primary spaces
- Secondary spaces
- Intimate spaces
- Green spaces
- Pedestrianised public realm areas
- Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed extensions



Early-mid 19th century

Late-19th century

Early-20th century

Mid-20th century

Late-20th/early 21st century

Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary

Proposed extensions



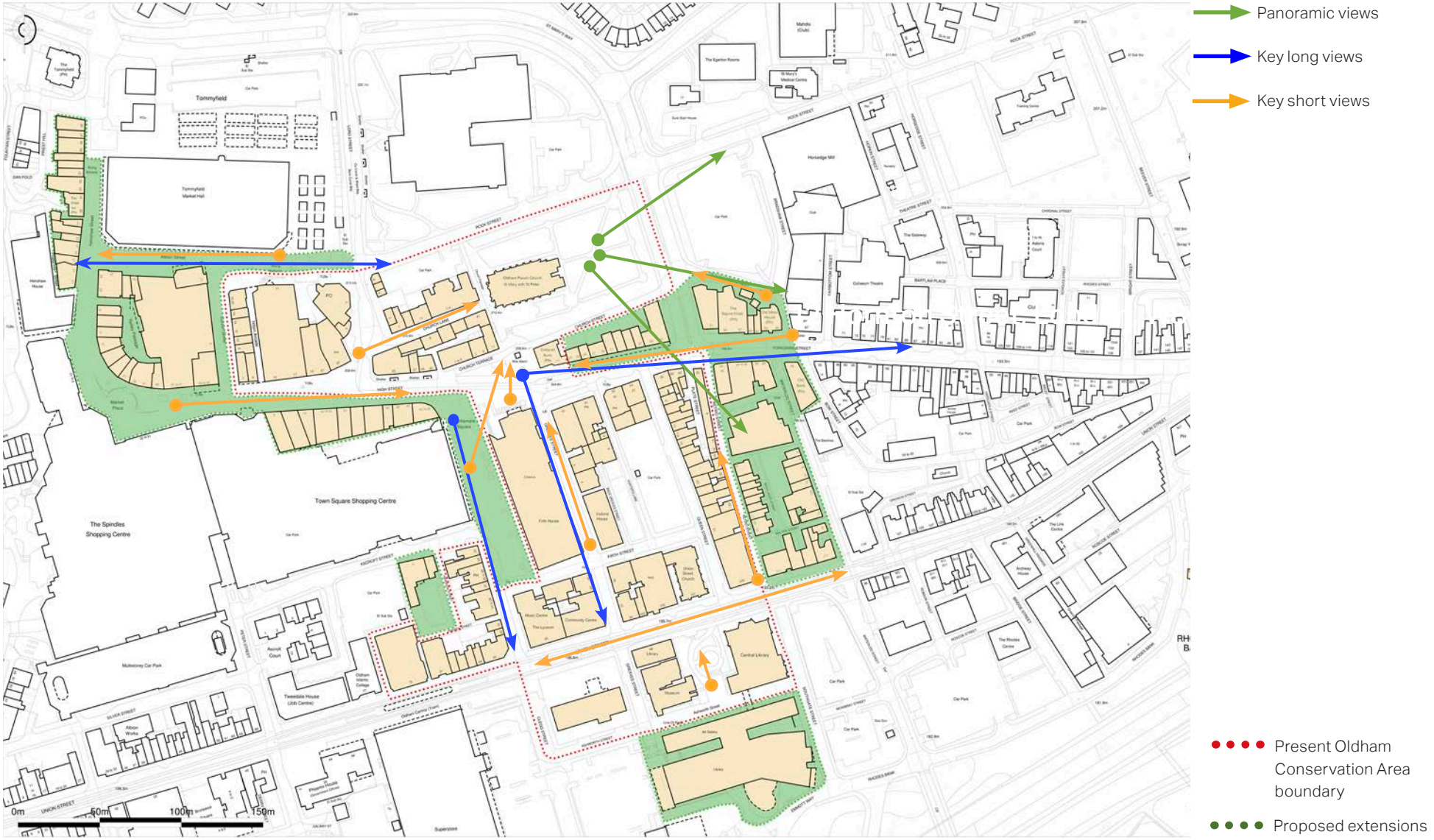
- Statutorily listed
- Recommended for local list
- Positive contributor
- Neutral contributor
- Detracting building
- Detracting elements

- Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed extensions



- Sui generis
- A1/A3 shops/restaurants and cafes
- D1 non-residential institution
- A2/B2 financial and professional services/offices
- D2 assembly and leisure

- Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed extensions


Panoramic views
Key long views
Key short views
Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary
Proposed extensions
Tommyfield
Town Square Shopping Centre
The Spindles Shopping Centre
0m
50m
100m
150m

2.0 Assessment of Significance

Oldham is a characteristic industrial town in this region, its early development largely overlaid by the physical manifestation of rapid industrialisation. The principal defining feature of Oldham however, which sets it apart from other former mill-towns near Manchester, is the hilly topography of the town centre. This topography affords striking views of the surrounding area and contributes to both historic context (with a number of mills visible) and setting with the hills in the distance, capturing an entire cross-section of Oldham and its surroundings in a single frame **[Plate 2.1]**.

The Town Centre Conservation Area is located near the summit of the hill. As the town's historic expansion generally followed a pattern of ribbon development, the conservation area's main arteries comprise High Street and Yorkshire Street to the north and Union Street to the south, which eventually intersect before continuing eastward on to Mumps. While the shopfronts of High Street and Yorkshire Street maintain a sense of lively commerce, Union Street retains much of its original air of formality, a lasting result of its mid-late 19th century grand civic architecture. The smaller north-south streets connecting the two thoroughfares generally offer a more intimate, domestic scale, and comprise a good deal of quaint, 19th century terraced cottages now converted for office and retail use. When viewed collectively, such elements exude a rich and diverse historic character representative of a thriving Victorian industrial town. They cumulatively provide a sense of Oldham's dramatic history; a modest hill-top wool town (not unlike those of the Cotswolds) transformed in the space of half a century into a global manufacturing hub that linked cotton plantations of the American south with Britain's colonies in Asia.

Green space has been allocated by way of the broad expanse of the Church of St. Mary and St Peter's churchyard at the north of the conservation area and via the verdant library garden south of Union Street. Otherwise, the streetscape largely reflects its industrial history, and with the exception of small garden spaces and local efforts to provide container plantings, greenery is somewhat scarce. Instead, a diverse mix of mid-19th century to early-21st century building stock nestled within a 19th-century streetscape is what defines the immediate setting of the conservation area and generates the most interest.

Oldham Town Centre has a high density of listed buildings and numerous buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the area, some of which exhibit qualities worthy of inclusion on a local list.

The conservation area, however, is not without its issues; it appears on Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register*, principally owing to its number of existing vacant and deteriorating heritage assets. While a considerable number of buildings make a positive contribution to the appearance of the conservation area overall, they frequently exhibit detracting features, including modern windows, poor condition and, most detrimentally to the overall character of the area, poor shopfronts and signage.

There have been enhancements to the public realm in recent years which have uplifted the general character; however, even Parliament Square at the heart of the conservation area and adjoining the landmark former Town Hall conversion feels underused. The conservation area lacks a sense of identity (metaphorically and literally); it would benefit from extension to allow for a more coherent boundary and the inclusion of surrounding buildings which reinforce its character. It also faces significant challenges in terms of wayfinding into the town centre and commercial core from the tram stops along Union Street and addressing the dead-end which the Spindles Shopping Centre has created to the west of the High Street and Market Place.



Plate 2.1 Views form part of a wider historic context

The Borough of Oldham is located roughly five miles northeast of central Manchester and forms part of the wider municipality of Greater Manchester. While its relationship to this urban centre has played a significant role in town development, Oldham also enjoys close proximity to the hills of the Peak District National Park, and views of the neighbouring countryside make an equally significant contribution to its character.

The Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area is located at the heart of the town, concentrated around Oldham's highest point crowned by the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter **[Plate 3.1]**. From this apex a conglomeration of major thoroughfares and close-knit streets fall away to Mumps in the east and Union Street in the south, offering sloping, long-range views of the surrounding industrial and natural landscape.

In terms of the immediate setting of the church and conservation area, an open green area directly to the north where the leisure centre previously stood is now cleared for redevelopment **[Plate 3.2]**. This area sits at a higher point than the conservation area itself, and therefore is an especially sensitive location in terms of its potential impact. The area directly east of the churchyard (to the north of the conservation area and historic route comprising Old Church Street) is also an open space, left vacant after the demolition of a former mill. While this area sits lower and somewhat screened in views by trees, this is presently underutilised as a car park **[Plate 3.3]**. A number of what appear to be former industrial buildings in red brick, some more attractive than others but all with impressive massing, lie to the east of this.



Plate 3.1 St. Mary's Church at the apex of the conservation area

The northwest area of the conservation area is largely bounded by the 1990s red brick neo-vernacular Tommyfield Market premises, which front directly onto Albion Street **[Plate 3.4]**. West of the High Street, three to four storey mid to late-20th century buildings faced predominantly in brick and stone, form the southwest edge of Market Place **[Plate 3.5]**. This includes the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre, a large, late-20th century retail development which resulted in the loss of a number of 19th century streets and drastically changed the historic streetscape. The topography slopes away eastward behind this, where Oldham Civic Centre is the prominent and isolated 20th century feature of the skyline **[Plate 3.6]**.

The area immediately south of the conservation area is largely dominated by car parks, including the area directly south of the Oldham Central tram stop, which services a large Sainsbury's **[Plate 3.7]**. However, these carparks slope away from the higher ground where the more significant buildings are located and their impact is lessened. Union Street continues in either direction from the conservation area; to the east it extends downhill into Mumps and includes additional Grade II-listed buildings at nos. 115, 117, 121 and the Royal Oak Public House. These assets are interspersed with a mix of late-19th century, early-20th century and post-war buildings. Most share the same scale and materials but overall the street lacks a sense of architectural cohesion. To the west, Union Street comprises a mix of late-Victorian and modern architecture **[Plate 3.8]**. Just north of Union Street and to the southwest of the conservation area, a 19th-century range of close-knit buildings known as Jackson Pit straddles George Street and slopes downhill. This area is, however, separated physically from the wider conservation area by the Spindles development, and forms its own small enclave of late-Victorian domestic and small industrial buildings.



Plate 3.2 Open area immediately north of conservation area



Plate 3.3 Car park fronting the Church Street historic route



Plate 3.4 Tommyfield Market along north side of Albion Street



Plate 3.5 Mid-to-late-20th century architecture to southeast of Market Place



Plate 3.6 Oldham Civic Centre to east



Plate 3.7 Car park and Sainsbury's to south



Plate 3.8 Diverse range of buildings along Union Street to west

The following history included in **Sections 4.1-4.5** is derived from the April 1997 *Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal* by Stephen Levrant: Heritage Architecture. **Section 4.6** includes a summary of major development within the conservation area since the preparation of this document. Accompanying maps and images have been sourced from Oldham Local Studies and Archives, unless otherwise stated.

4.1 Location and Population

Oldham is situated to the immediate north east of Manchester and now forms part of the Greater Manchester conurbation. The name "Oldham" originates from a combination of old English: ald; and old Scandinavian: holmr, meaning "old promontory".

The town does indeed spread over a high prominence commanding views over the surrounding countryside, a characteristic, which in past times, was regarded as a positive criterion and distinct topographical advantage ***[Plate 4.1]****.*

Until the middle of the 18th century Oldham was surrounded by farms that the freeholders occupied and worked. They provided wool for the north midlands weaving industry that covered an area from Bolton in the east, to Leeds and Wakefield in the west. This was almost entirely cottage based, the farmers and their labourers also weaving and spinning the wool. The balance of industry (home weaving) and farming became tipped in favour of the former as the industrial revolution gathered pace and a new class developed. Its origins, if not actually in Oldham, certainly stem from the new milieu generated in the area generally. Thus the same families who in the mid-18th century were farmers and yeomen had 50 years later become heads of the town's chief manufacturies. At the height of its fame as a world renowned industrial centre Oldham boasted the largest number of cotton spindles in the world.[3]

4.2 Origins and Development

Origins

The town developed from a small hill-top settlement situated on an ancient cross-Pennine route that linked Manchester and York. It was not served directly by any Roman road of consequence, and until the Industrial Revolution it remained a very small settlement with an agrarian economy, providing wool for export to Yorkshire for spinning. The Church has ancient origins and was a prominent landmark until the late 18th century ***[Plate 4.2]****.*

The streets of Oldham provide the most evocative link with the past growth of the town. The exposed elevation – regarded in the past as a major attribute – prevented any central connection with the canal system, and it was not until 1842 that the railway was navigated through a precipitous terrain to provide the transport link demanded by the enormous expansion of trade produced at the peak of the Industrial Revolution.

It is from the streets that the pattern of development and history are traced. The colonisation of the hilltop prominence was dictated largely by the advances in road building technology, which exploited advantageous routes over the irregular topography.



Plate 4.1 The ancient highway through Oldham, 1760 (McPhillips 1997)

3 Levrant, S. 1997. *Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal*, p. 3.



Plate 4.2 Oldham c. 1780, looking from Horsedge toward Bardsley (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Early Days

The earliest known map of the town is a depiction of c. 1756 by Butterworth, which was drawn in 1817, to enable comparison of the town at those two dates (Butterworth orientated the map incorrectly by lining up the route from Manchester with West Street, which was the principal route at that time; in fact, the early route from Manchester actually entered Oldham via King Street from the south) ***[Plates 4.3 and 4.4]****. Butterworth's source for the early map is uncertain. The principal thoroughfare was called Goldburn, which from Mumps (then a separate settlement) followed the line of Bow Street, Church Street and, possibly, Church Lane, then becoming Main Street at the same point as today's High Street* ***[Plate 4.5]****. The main through road to Manchester, running south from High Street, was Water Street, later George Street. The road to Rochdale also joined Main Street at this point, forming an important junction which is now beneath the Spindles Shopping Centre.*

The most historically intact area of the town is thus, the "Square" by the Church, at the junction of Yorkshire Street and High Street, known in the early 19th century as Mill End. At that time, it was more definitely a square, but the steep terrace at Church Street always prevented a uniformity of a formal square. It was balanced at the west end of the High Street by Market Place, then at the junction of Henshaw Street and George Street. From that nucleus the town streets then spread north/south, starting as passages between the ribbon-developed buildings, hence their narrow width today.[4]

Yorkshire Street provided a more direct route to Mumps, cutting across the steep hillside at the end of the 18th century, and eventually marooning many of the older properties in what became Bow Street. Union Street was driven through a series of gardens at low level to provide a bypass, but it was not developed fully until well into the 19th century, after achieving turnpike status in 1825 ***[Plate 4.6]****. It assumed a grand civic dignity following establishment of a Charter of Incorporation making Oldham a Borough in the mid-century.[5]*

Traffic

The principal traffic to and from the town were merchants and goods on waggons, travelling between Lancashire and Yorkshire. The route via Oldham had been established in pre-Roman times. The main centre for production of cloth was West Riding and transport and distribution westwards, was via trains of pack-horses. The first Turnpike Trust which affected Oldham was not created until 1734, but until well into the latter part of the 18th century Oldham was relatively isolated.

The first coach service through Oldham began in 1790, as a stopping point on the Manchester to Wakefield route. The remaining years of the century saw an expansion of road construction to accommodate coaches, with routes through Oldham linking to Huddersfield, Ripponden and Hull. All traffic passed through the Town Centre of High Street/Yorkshire Street (then part of Goldburn) and through what is now Bow Street. The High Street was thus very narrow for a major thoroughfare even by late 18th century standards, and there were complaints due to the congestion of traffic. Land was acquired in 1823 and 1828 to widen the route.[6]

The Population

The large population explosion from the late 18th century saw the transformation from an obscure village into an internationally known town. In 1714 there was a population of 1,732; in 1801 this had risen to 12,024, by 1826 it reached 20,000, and by 1901, had reached 137,246. The chief industry was cotton milling, but coal was a major contributor and later, engineering. These three industries had a major effect on the development and character of the town. Pits, mills and workshops developed and were operating within the town, co-existing with residential and commercial properties.

4 Levrant, 1997, p. 4.

5 Levrant, 1997, p. 5.

6 ibid

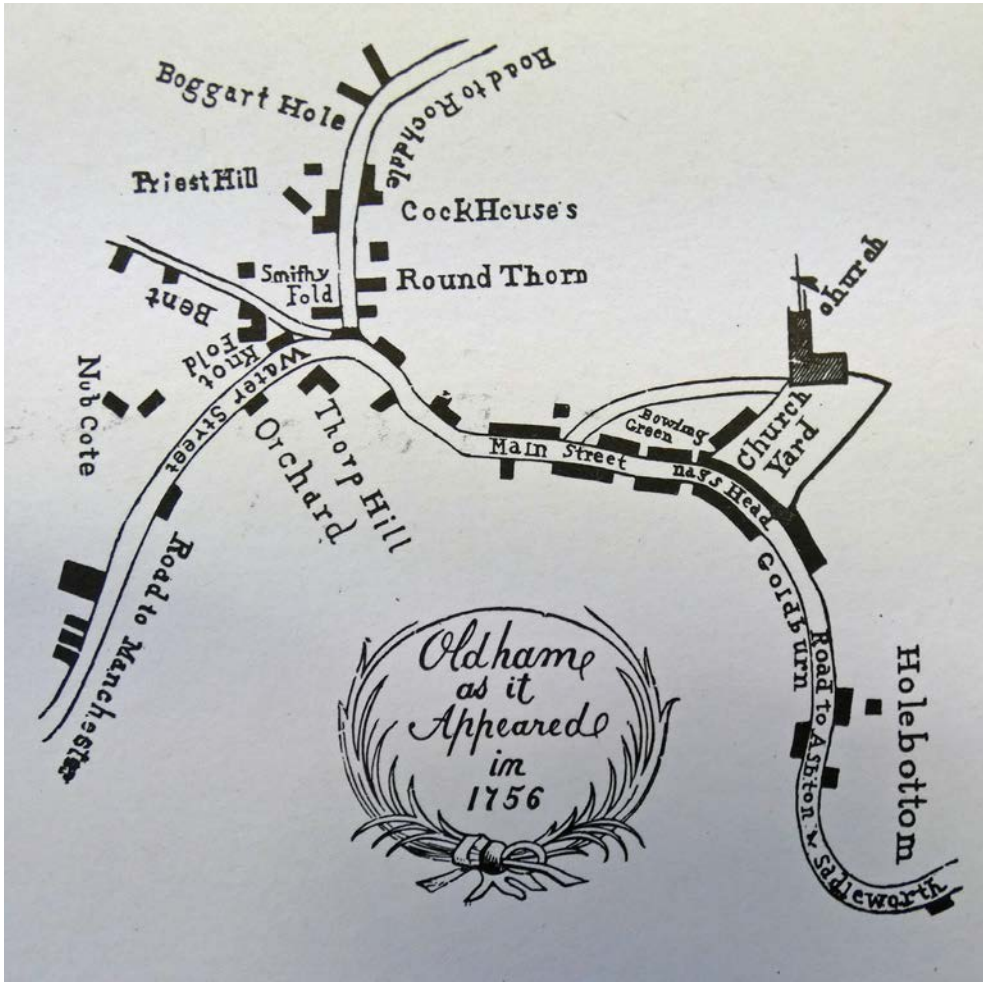


Plate 4.3 Oldham in 1756, by Butterworth (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

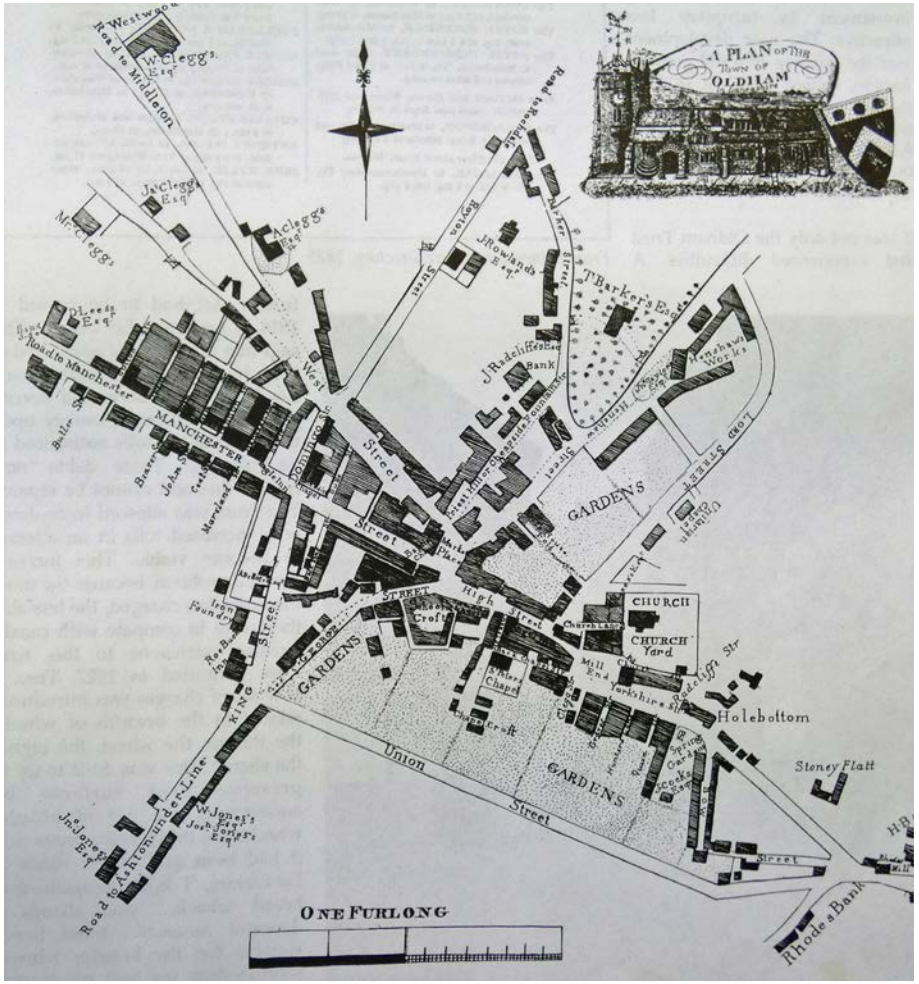


Plate 4.4 Butterworth's map of Oldham, 1817 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

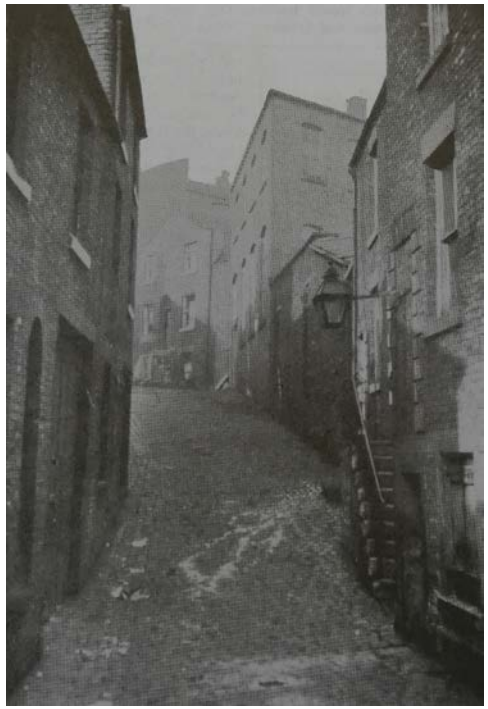


Plate 4.5 The principal thoroughfare of Goldburn (McPhillips 1997)



Plate 4.6 1848 Ordnance Survey, 19th century ribbon development (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Industry

Milling

Prior to the bulk importation of cotton from America and India, wool weaving had been the principal cottage industry, centred on Yorkshire. The hills around Oldham were heavily grazed by sheep, providing the raw material. Introduction of cotton, together with the development in technology and working practices, fuelled the Industrial Revolution. The first mills appeared in Oldham in the last quarter of the 18th century, and there were 12 within the parish by 1778, all using water power. A further 20 years saw the introduction of steam power and the further expansion of business. By 1794, Oldham was established as a centre for the manufacture of fustian – a mixture of cotton and linen, and for hat making.

Among the earliest mills was that erected at Water Street (later Manchester Street) very near the Market Place by James Smethurst, and James Lees built one at a similar date in Church Lane. Others were sited at Holebottom, off Yorkshire Street, and Sheepwashes off Union Street. The coming of steam power demanded newer and bigger buildings, and by 1805 there were 30 mills.

By 1825 there were 65 mills in the area, all built since 1800, most were spinning cotton and all were steam powered ***[Plate 4.7]****. They provided employment for over 6,600 families. By 1833 there were 11,000 cotton mills in the entire region, of various sizes. It was the siting of the mills on the outskirts and further reaches of the town from the 1770s onwards which shaped the pattern of development. These grew to house and service the workers, and eventually coalesce with themselves and the town* ***[Plate 4.8]****.*[7]

Hat Making

The origins of hat making in Oldham are obscure, but by 1817 there were 22 firms producing 1,000 hats per week, an output second only to London.

Coal Mining

Mining was carried on extensively throughout the area from an early date, mainly for local domestic heating, until the improvements in roads and canals allowed export further afield. By 1714 there were 14 collieries in Oldham and like cotton, the industry expanded dramatically with the introduction of steam power. Unlike the mills, the number of mines did not increase gently, but production of coal accelerated. The ready supply of coal assisted the spectacular growth of the cotton industry and its export to Manchester assisted the prosperity of the town.

Engineering

Engineering developed from the late 18th century as an off-shoot of the cotton industry – for maintaining and repairing the spinning machinery. This developed into machine making and by 1821 there were 21 engineering firms. The growth in the use of steam also required engineering services, and by 1832 there were 92 steam engines in use in the town.

Growth

Throughout the remainder of the 18th century the town consolidated and expanded upon the foundations laid early in the century. The 62 mills of 1832 had become 265 by 1880, and at that time Oldham was converting 25% of the entire raw cotton imports to England.[8]

7 ibid

8 Levrant, 1997, p. 6.



Plate 4.7 Oldham from Glodwick, 1831 by J.H. Carse (Gallery Oldham)

Development Pattern

The shape of the town can be clearly traced from the original nucleus at the summit of the hill, around the Church at the confluence of roads and trackways to High Street. Each phase of subsequent development and expansion has left its mark on the town and its buildings as the town progressed from agrarian through manufacturing to commercial economy. The topography dictated the size, position and direction of routes; the siting of mills and mines led to concentrations of population. The increase in working population led to demand for commercial development. The Tommyfield Market was an outdoor market started as a private venture in 1856 and was purchased by the Corporation in 1865 (the present Tommyfield Market building was erected in the 1970s after fire destroyed the earlier Victoria Market Hall).The construction of the Market Arcade in 1880 by Oldham's most prestigious architect, Sir Sydney Scott, was followed by the Hilton Arcade in 1893. The decline of industry forced the development of services, leisure and commercial industries, and the town is now poised for a new phase of cultural renaissance, fuelled by the new financial and social environment.

The Elevated Position

The elevated position was regarded as an advantage in the past, the town being regarded as "pleasantly situated on an eminence, commanding an extensive and delightful prospect..." The distant views across the countryside are particularly important today, when set as a backdrop to the built environment.

The transformation over a relatively short period from village to large town is very apparent in the buildings, and many examples of the stages of this development survive.[9]



Plate 4.8 Oldham, mid-19th century, view from south (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

9 ibid

4.3 Historic Uses and the Built Environment

Former Uses

Early Development

The pre-industrial town served the agrarian community as the primary activity, the industrial town was dominated by the secondary factors and the services for it. The post-industrial town of today is a centre for the tertiary sector providing services for the informal economy which replaced the structured system of the industrial era. In the early development of the town, intensive mixed uses were located in the centre, and there was no distinct separation of residential, commercial and industrial. Early maps show a quarry in Yorkshire Street, coal pits in Greaves Street, Union Street and Rhodes Bank, and mills throughout the area.

It was only in the latter years of the last century that some polarisation of uses took place, driven by the improved transport facilities and the development of the commercial/retail element. The decline of traditional manufacturing industries was followed by the emergence of an informal economy. Oldham, like many similar towns, changed from being largely a centre of production to become largely a centre of consumption.

The Plan Form

The plan form of the area is substantially the result of the road developments. The earliest buildings were erected in ribbon fashion, adjacent to High Street, Goldburn (Yorkshire Street and Bow Street) and George Street. Increased traffic demanded road improvements, resulting in the formulation of Yorkshire Street and Union Street, and Rhodes Bank, serving mills and mines. As more mills were built, roads were constructed or enlarged to serve them. Henshaw Street, for example, is named after the owner of the mill it served.

The narrow north/south roads linking Yorkshire Street and Union Street developed from the alleyways, defining the plots of individual buildings originally fronting Yorkshire Street. Many of the early buildings still remain in situ. The semi-regular grid is a result of this later development, whereas the earliest route (Goldburn) followed the easiest contour around the hill ***[Plate 4.9]****.*

The maze of smaller streets which originally marked the western entrance to the town via George Street, Water Street and adjoining streets were swept away in construction of the Shopping Centre. Some of this early route still survives, but is largely outside the conservation area, in Jackson Pit.

Union Street

Union Street developed into the grand civic route containing the finest buildings. Despite its relatively early creation, it did not flourish until well into the 19th century. It remains surprisingly undisturbed, although there are modern replacement buildings on several sites. It also contains the main concentration of listed buildings, some outside the conservation area.

Linking Streets

Greaves Street and Queen Street being particularly fine. The smaller streets contained the earliest urban housing of modest artisan dwellings or shops, and there is a surprising harmony between the larger commercial buildings and these smaller ones, which has to do with detail, scale and proportion.

Spread of Development

The rapid spread of development during the Industrial Revolution, which saw enterprises fail as fast as they grew, was not conducive to carefully orchestrated urban planning. The interspersion of large-footprint industrial buildings with smaller buildings set a pattern which remains up to the present day ***[Plate 4.10]****.*[10]

10 Levrant, 1997, p. 8.



Plate 4.9 Baines Lancashire map of 1824 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

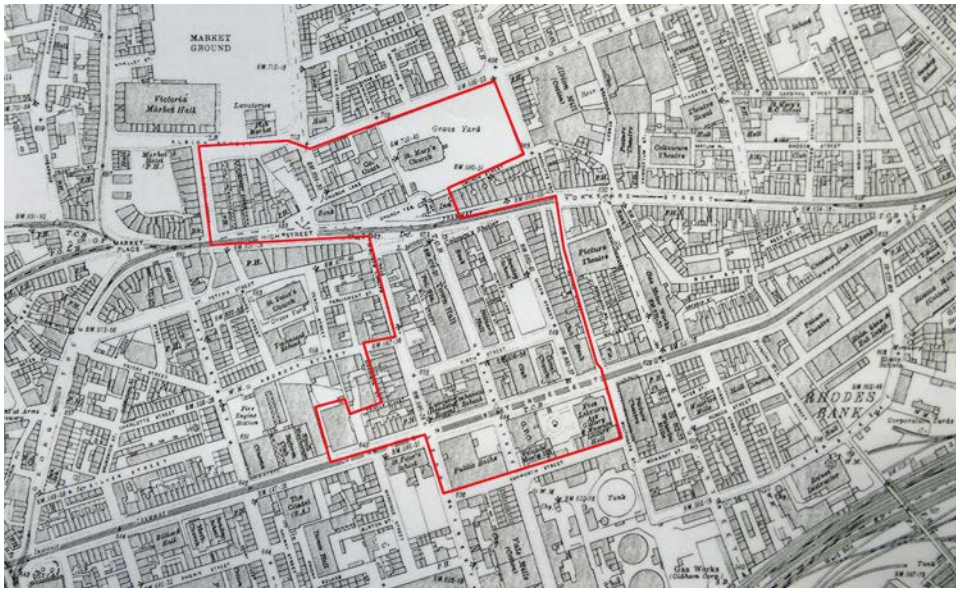


Plate 4.10 1932 Ordnance Survey, present Conservation Area site marked in red (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

4.4 Key Space Development

Town Hall (Parliament) Square

The most important space within the conservation area is undoubtedly the Town Hall Square or Old Market Place, also known for a short time in the early 19th century as Mill End ***[Plate 4.11]****. Although not the exact topographical apex of the Hill on which Oldham was founded, it is very near that and forms a base for the Church of St. Mary set high above the terraced roadway. Until recent years, this formed the prominent landmark for some considerable distance, although it had to compete with numerous mill chimneys (including one next door on the County Court site).*

This highly distinctive space had always been enclosed by prominent and high-status buildings, and its idiosyncratic terrace marking the line of the old road at the formation of Yorkshire Street, now provides a major landscape element which emphasises the propitious topography of the town. The formation of "space" rather than an enlarged street dates from the time of the Yorkshire Street construction in c. 1808. Certain characteristics have remained from that date, in the form of surrounding buildings.

The two periods of road widenings at the entrance to High Street have both times preserved the rounded form of buildings to the corner of Clegg Street, and the steep fall away down Yorkshire Street has always provided a view out over the surrounding countryside ***[Plate 4.12]****. As the topography falls from north to south as well as west to east, the larger buildings to the south being set lower tend to present a more even skyline than would otherwise be the case.*[11]

Union Street

Union Street, driven through an undeveloped area of the town in the early years of the 19th century sometime between c. 1806 and c. 1814, was the first "modern" thoroughfare in Oldham ***[Plate 4.13]****. Probably intended to bypass the congested and narrow town centre, it did not really achieve that until much later in the century, following the construction of the north/south linking streets to High Street and Yorkshire Street. The uninterrupted straightness creates a unique space in the town, and one which is uncommon in many urban settlements of similar date* ***[Plate 4.14]****.*

Yorkshire Street

Yorkshire Street is the other principal thoroughfare within the conservation area, its present form indicated on a map of c. 1805. This broad street was to replace the winding, narrow Goldburn (Church Street/Bow Street) and act as a continuation of the High Street. It lacks the civic formality of Union Street, is far steeper and less uniform ***[Plates 4.15 and 4.16]****.*

11 Levrant, 1997, p. 20.



Plate 4.11 Town Hall Square looking west, c. 1890 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)



Plate 4.12 Town Hall Square looking east, c. 1900 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)



Plate 4.13 Union Street looking east, nos. 87-93 on left, c. 1880 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

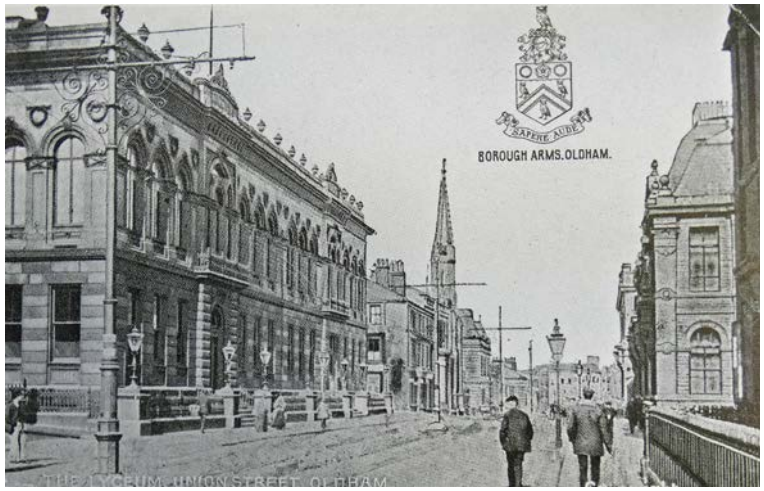


Plate 4.14 Union Street looking east, spire to Union Street Chapel in background (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)



Plate 4.15 Jubilee celebrations, Yorkshire Street, 1899 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)



Plate 4.16 Yorkshire Street from Waterloo Street, c. 1890 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

4.5 Archaeological Significance

Ancient Monuments

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the conservation area or its immediate surrounds. There are no ancient above-ground structures in evidence. The oldest recorded building was the previous parish church, demolished to make way for the present structure, and its foundations may still remain beneath the present churchyard.

Early Settlement Records

Although only written records tell of early settlement on this route to Yorkshire, there is little or no above-ground evidence. There may be remains of early buildings adjacent to Bow Street, but later developments are likely to have damaged them. There were records of some early thatched buildings noted in the latter years of the 19th century, but all trace of these has now gone.

Industrial Archaeology

The area is still rich in industrial archaeology but is fast losing many of the remaining buildings. The advances made during the Industrial Revolution were responsible for a proliferation of mills and workshops, and the rise and fall of various business concerns resulted in many changes over a relatively short timescale. The important feature of this development was the construction of mills within the urban fabric. Some of these still remain on Bow Street and behind Union Street, but the majority lie outside the conservation area, or have now been demolished. The demand for larger premises required development outside the concentrated town centre. There is an excellent survey of Oldham's mills,[12] and it is recommended that some surviving examples might be worthy of inclusion on the local list.

Canals and Railways

The canal and basin are too far from the conservation area to be included in this assessment, and the impact of the canal has little recognisable effect on the remaining character, although it was a prime instigator of wealth, particularly in respect of mines.

Very little now remains of the railway systems which served the town and surrounding areas. The earlier stations have all vanished, and the iron bridge over to Glodwick still survives, though outside of the conservation area.

Mines or Pits

There appears to be no visible physical remains of mines or pits within the conservation area or town centre, although the whereabouts of several are shown on the maps. Archaeological assessments may be pertinent before development on vacant sites to ensure that no unsecured shafts are breached, as well as allowing recording of any remains, as so much has already been lost.

Foundries and Workshops

Foundries and workshops which did exist in the town centre have not been recorded or researched in detail. There is some interesting and pertinent data to be gathered on this subject, particularly where architectural or building ancillary materials may have been locally manufactured. The building construction of many early industrial buildings is important and can often be demolished without true understanding of its importance. For example, the highly important Dronsfield Offices in King Street seem to have escaped listing and vanished. This was a pioneering concrete construction, designed by J. Henry Sellers in 1906-7 and noted in several books.[13]

12 Gurr, D. and Hunt, J. 1989. *The Cotton Mills of Oldham.*

13 Levrant, 1997, p. 11.

4.6 Recent Development within the Conservation Area

In addition to general changes in building use, renewal of shopfronts, etc., a number of new schemes have been implemented within the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area since it was last appraised in 1997.

Proposals to create a new 'Cultural Quarter' in Oldham were approved in c. 2000 just south of the conservation area, comprising the construction of a new library building, and Listed Building Consent was granted for adaptations to the Grade II-listed Oldham Library for its conversion into a community heritage centre in c. 2014. The resulting 2002 construction framed the existing library garden along its southern edge and created a new pedestrian route linking the former museum and Friends' Meeting House on Greaves Street to the east with the library complex; related works for the conversion and enhancement of the historic library building are presently underway.

Additional public realm improvements were implemented just north of the conservation area by way of a public realm art scheme in 2001, located in the space between Curzon Street, Albion Street and Tommyfield Market featuring semi-permanent, sculptural works. Just south of this, a fenced-in children's playground was installed within the open space of Market Place in 2014 along with a planted garden space, and further greenery schemes have been introduced throughout the conservation area in recent years along its pedestrian routes.

The most significant change to occur within the conservation area townscape has been the erection of the Town Hall extension designed by BDP in 2016, which had a dramatic impact on the public realm through the renewal of Parliament Square. Previously in use as a bus station and car park, the space was re-imagined as pedestrian-only public realm. The scheme also included the conversion of the Grade II-listed Town Hall from a redundant civic building into a café, cinema, gallery and event space with a modern glazed frontage to Parliament Square **[Plate 4.17]**. The stark brick façade of the shopping centre to the east was re-clad in updated modern and sympathetic materials, further framing the square and southward views into the surrounding landscape. A commemorative statue of suffragette Annie Kenney was erected to the northwest of the Town Hall in late 2018, providing a meaningful addition to the public realm.



Plate 4.17 Oldham Town Hall, 2018

4.7 Research Resources

The following items were listed as consulted references in the 1997 Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal by Stephen Levrant.

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5.1 General Character

Oldham town centre benefits from a dramatic topography which rises up to the Former Town Hall and Parliament Square and then again up the terraced steps surrounding the war memorial to the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter **[Plates 5.1 and 5.2]**. This gives an inherent hierarchy to the town, skewed only by the prominent civic-style buildings running along Union Street which followed later in the 19th century. It also affords long-range views to the mills in the middle-distance and the hills in the long-distance, which enriches the understanding of the town's historic and geographical context **[Plates 5.3 and 5.4]**. Alongside the density of listed and unlisted buildings of merit, this also serves to elevate the conservation area above the general urban sprawl it is set within.

The retail core of the town centre runs westwards from Parliament Square; mixed in character it is defined by a handful of high-quality, four/five storey, 19th century buildings faced in brick and stone that provide anchors between which more typical (and frequently detracting) retail frontage lies **[Plate 5.5]**. The streets which run north-south connecting the two principal routes of the town (High Street/Yorkshire Street and Union Street) are more domestic in scale, occupying typically uniform plots **[Plate 5.6]**; the east of Greaves Street is the exception to this with set-piece buildings of higher status reflective of their position opposite the former Town Hall. In contrast to this regular street pattern the remains of the older route through the town is still legible in Church Street/Old Church Street and leading out of the conservation area along Bow Street **[Plate 5.7]**. Isolated by the rerouting of roads, indeed, Church Lane and Church Passage have an atmosphere which recalls Oldham as an isolated hill-top town before its 19th century industrial development and expansion.

Despite the high quality of the built environment, large pedestrianised areas and the flagship conversion of the Old Former Town Hall, the conservation area has a generally down-at-heel atmosphere. At ground level, poor quality retail frontages of inappropriate designs dominate the streetscape. Many important and substantial buildings are clearly vacant; and the resulting lack of maintenance and human activity detracts from the character and appearance of the area.



Plate 5.1 The rising topography builds up to the former Town Hall, Parliament Square and Church of St Mary and St Peter at its peak



Plate 5.2 The Church of St Mary and St Peter crowning the centre of the conservation area (Jody Hartley 2019)



Plate 5.3 View south from churchyard which surmounts the town centre



Plate 5.4 Views through the heart of the town centre out to the country beyond (Jody Hartley 2019)



Plate 5.5 High Street looking east with Hilton Arcade and Barclays Bank acting as anchors in the streetscape



Plate 5.6 Domestic character of Queen Street with change in topography accommodating the grander HSBC bank on the corner with Union Street



Plate 5.7 Historic route through town centre along Bow Street (as it approaches junction with Yorkshire Street)

5.2 Streets and Spaces

Primary Spaces

Union Street

Union Street is a large-scale and grand thoroughfare. Constructed between 1806 and 1814 it has a formal boulevard character framing views to the west and east (it became a tram route in 2014, with the Oldham Central tram stop at the western end of the conservation area boundary). Despite only being within the conservation area for a relatively short length and forming its southern boundary for an even shorter length (with the Cultural Quarter buildings which front on to it extending further south), visually it demarks the southern edge of the town centre. The vista is terminated to the west by St. Mary's with St. Patrick's RC Church whilst to the east the street curves away down the hill. The changing topography allows more substantial buildings such as the 2002 Gallery Oldham and Oldham Library constructed as part of the new Cultural Quarter to be discreetly tucked away behind the buildings fronting Union Street **[Plate 5.8]**.

The street is dominated by grand late 19th century civic architecture. The principal buildings are of the highest quality and are all listed, although they lack the architectural cohesion of other parts of the conservation area. The use of these buildings is civic and commercial, the civic buildings now largely positioned within the group defined as the Cultural Quarter (including the library, forthcoming Heritage Centre, Old Museum and Oldham Gallery and Library). The sheer scale and grandeur of the buildings, however, makes them vulnerable to loss of active use and a number are currently (or are to become) vacant including the Prudential Building, the former post office and the Lyceum.

Small-scale buildings and 20th century replacements are visually dominated by these landmark buildings but also form an important part of the urban fabric **[Plates 5.9 and 5.10]**. To the south-west corner of the conservation area is Medtia House, a modern building which stands in the location of the former public baths. In itself it makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area; however its set-back from the street introduces an uncharacteristic piece of landscaped public realm at odds with the robust architectural character of the town centre.

High Street

Only one townscape block on the northern side of the High Street is currently located within the conservation area. In townscape terms it has a weak corner, with the modern buildings at nos.1 and 3 cutting into the corner of the Hilton Arcade block (an important local landmark containing a Victorian arcade recommended for inclusion on the local list of buildings of merit). Typical of many high-quality buildings in the conservation area, they in the main part form a dead frontage, despite the replacement of the poor arcade shopfronts in recent years, giving an overall atmosphere of vacancy and neglect. Externally the retail frontages to almost the entire townscape block are poor **[Plates 5.11 and 5.12]**.

This group banks away, reducing the prominence of the modern block which turns the corner onto Lord Street to reveal the Grade II-listed Barclays Bank. A prominent feature in the townscape, this terminates views below Church Terrace, which again banks away to reveal to Greaves Arms **[Plate 5.13]**.

Parliament Square/Yorkshire Street

Parliament Square is a new piece of public realm laid out in association with the adaptive reuse of the Grade II-listed former Town Hall as a cinema and leisure complex. The scheme by BDP opened in 2016 and includes a substantial contemporary extension which runs down the side of Parliament Square facing the re-fronted Town Square Shopping Centre and curved façade at nos.32-24 High Street, which draws the eye along the pedestrianised High Street (this area is currently located outside of the conservation area). Parliament Square itself is a substantial new piece of urban public realm which adds to the civic atmosphere of the town centre core; the street planters featuring skyline maps of the surrounding mills are noteworthy, as are the Oldham owls positioned on plinths (one within the conservation area and the facing three currently in an area outside at the southern end of the square) **[Plate 5.14]**.



Plate 5.8 Union Street, view into conservation area showing boulevard character, centrally running tram and new library housed discretely behind former library



Plate 5.9 Union Street, tram stop and the Prudential Building in the foreground



Plate 5.10 Union Street smaller scale buildings between the larger set-piece architecture, in this case the Lyceum



Plate 5.11 Hilton Arcade, recommended for inclusion on local list but marred by poor retail frontage and detracting building at nos.1-3 which cuts away corner



Plate 5.12 Poor retail frontage along Curzon Street at ground floor to Hilton Arcade group



Plate 5.13 Grade II-listed Barclays Bank on the corner with Church Terrace and the Greaves Arms positioned behind



Plate 5.14 Converted former Town Hall and new public realm surrounding

Set below the church, this is the heart of the town centre, where retail and leisure meet civic and religious uses. It is also the original centre of the settlement as reflected in the different types and architectural styles of high-status buildings and dominated by the colonnaded façade to the Former Town Hall and its contemporary extension. From the peak of the hill (with only the war memorial and church set above), the manner with which the topography falls away in views along Yorkshire Street and down Parliament Square provides dramatic long-distance vistas of mills and countryside which informs the broader context of the heart of Oldham, and its origins as a Victorian mill town **[Plates 5.15 and 5.16]**

Secondary Spaces

Church Terrace/Street

Church Terrace banks away at the end of High Street and rises up to the war memorial and the church steps, revealing a key piece of public realm in the town centre formed at the time Yorkshire Street was laid out, and the historic path through the town rerouted at the beginning of the 19th century. The Greaves Arms is located at the top of the terrace and is a highly prominent feature centred on the same axis as High Street; it is currently vacant and in need of reuse to maintain its important contribution to the local townscape. The street is cobbled and leads to Church Street which falls dramatically down the side of the churchyard, picking up the early route through the area. No.11 Church Terrace stands on the corner with Church Passage and is Grade II-listed – displaying the vernacular sandstone on its return elevation. The railings to the distinctive raised pavement and terrace and the war memorial are also listed and provide a dwelling space at the heart of the town centre partially enclosed by the sandstone ashlar walls set away from its busy activity, looking out over Parliament Square and to the long-range vistas of the conservation area's wider setting **[Plates 5.17 - 5.19]**.

Greaves Street

Greaves Street runs north-south between the principal routes; its western edge is bound by the former Town Hall extension **[Plate 5.20]**. Its eastern edge manages the topographical transition with a series of individual high-quality buildings of differing characters, but all of interest (including the Nat West Bank on the corner and Edgar Wood building at no.5 (both Grade II-listed), and No.3, Victoria House and the Old Bill both proposed for inclusion on the local list). These buildings give a formal edge to the framed southward long views of the highest quality and lead down to the high-status buildings on Union Street.

Curzon Street/Albion Street/Rock Street

The east side of Curzon Street and south-east side of Albion Street are included in the conservation area. However as they are experienced, they are not distinguished from their surroundings which are located outside of the conservation area which also contribute to its character (as reflected by the extension proposed) including the modern Tommyfield Market, which forms the northern edge to the street and, to a casual observer, the conservation area. Despite being modern in aesthetic, the late-20th century additions which front Albion Street and Lord Street do not detract from the character of the conservation area and successfully navigate the corners they occupy. The fabric of the pedestrianised public realm is high quality and the townscape features are well ordered, although it still feels like a back-of-town space and would benefit from a better sense of identity and vibrancy when not in use by the market **[Plates 5.21 and 5.22]**.

Rock Street forms the northern edge of the conservation area and very much has this character, with the rears of the buildings lining Church Lane backing on to it with car parking behind and the open former leisure centre on its northern side **[Plate 5.23]**.

Queen Street and Retiro Street

These streets follow the north-south axis running between Yorkshire Street and Union Street. Typically lined with domestic-scaled terraces of small-scale plot sizes and continuous rooflines which follow the slope of the hill. Whilst residential in character the buildings are typically in office/commercial use. A number of shared features are retained, including a continuous cornice to the eaves line, chimneys and window/door compositions; whilst numerous windows have been replaced these tend to be sash-style windows which do not shout out as modern features, however oversized casements and poor signage detract. The significant change in levels allows for larger-scale buildings to be accommodated; at their southern end they meet Union Street, providing bookends of more substantial buildings at both the northern and southern terminations **[Plates 5.24 and 5.25]**.



Plate 5.15 Parliament Square leading into Yorkshire Street with long-views eastward and rising Church Terrace to War memorial on the left



Plate 5.16 Raised pavement at eastern end of Yorkshire Street with decorative railings and lamps

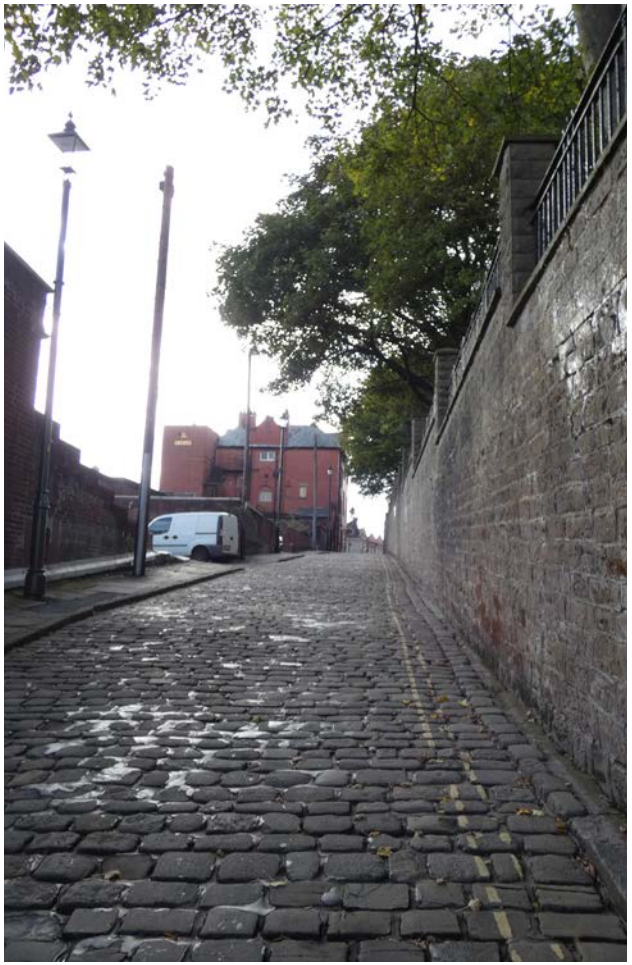


Plate 5.19 Church Street which falls away dramatically with tall retaining wall to churchyard garden



Plate 5.17 Church Terrace looking towards High Street



Plate 5.18 Listed war memorial set on terracing with Church of St Mary and St Peter behind and the Greaves Arm to its right



Plate 5.20 Eastern facade of former Town Hall extending southwards along Greaves Street



Plate 5.21 Looking east along Curzon Street across pedestrianised public realm



Plate 5.22 Looking southwards down Curzon Street



Plate 5.23 Looking north along Retiro Street, only left side is currently within conservation area



Plate 5.24 Looking north along Greaves Street and run of high quality buildings which mediate change in levels and form worthy neighbours to listed Town Hall



Plate 5.25 Rock Street fronted by the rear of buildings on Church Lane

Intimate Spaces

Church Lane

Church Lane has an intimate and domestic character which is unique to the remainder of the conservation area. It is the oldest intact street in the conservation area marred only by poorly-considered road markings, signs and poor infill to the cobbled streets. The narrow road width, the height of the flanking buildings and their architectural character gives a deeply historic atmosphere, as if one has stepped into another world from the town centre. Whilst the later (1827-30) Church of St. Mary and St. Peter now terminates the view, Church Lane forms part of a prehistoric route which passed through the town, running in front of the former parish church before the enlargement of the churchyard and lowering of the now-severed Church Street, in 1805. The buildings are almost entirely listed – including the cobbled road. The use of the street is predominately legal/office use following the opening of the County Court in 1894, which steps up in scale towards the church; however, this is now run by the Methodist Church as café and youth centre and the buildings which originally stood at the south-western end of the street have long since been demolished and replaced by the chambers of Barclays Bank and to facilitate road-widening schemes **[Plate 5.26]**.

Alleyways, Back Streets and Passages

Church Passage is a narrow passage which runs alongside the church grounds and connects Church Terrace, Church Lane and Rock Street **[Plate 5.27]**. A further alleyway runs up the side of the Prudential Building; this is a tight space which currently feels underused and not particularly inviting, not least because of the obviously vacant and deteriorating character of the Prudential Building itself **[Plate 5.28]**. The pedestrianised area which forms the southern boundary of the Cultural Quarter also has an intimate character, set within the heart of the key buildings which surround it, away from the principal thoroughfare of Union Street **[Plate 5.29]**.

Set behind the secondary streets which run north-south there are a number of back streets which are typically lined by the rears of the buildings facing the secondary streets, often including car parking and exhibiting poor-quality extensions and alterations and plant equipment **[Plate 5.30]**. These necessary, 'back-of-house' streets are in places given undue prominence owing to the large surface level car parks which have formed chasms in the tight built form. These become even more intimate in places where buildings are tightly knitted together, such as between Church Terrace and Church Lane and along Plate Street **[Plate 5.31]**.



Plate 5.26 Church Lane with the Church of St Mary and St Peter teminating the view and the return elevation of Barclays Bank in the foreground



Plate 5.27 Church Passage connecting Church Terrace and Church Lane



Plate 5.28 Alley running alongside Prudential Building



Plate 5.29 Public realm set in the heart of the Cultural Quarter



Plate 5.30 Typical 'back-of-house' appearance of buildings as seen from back streets behind

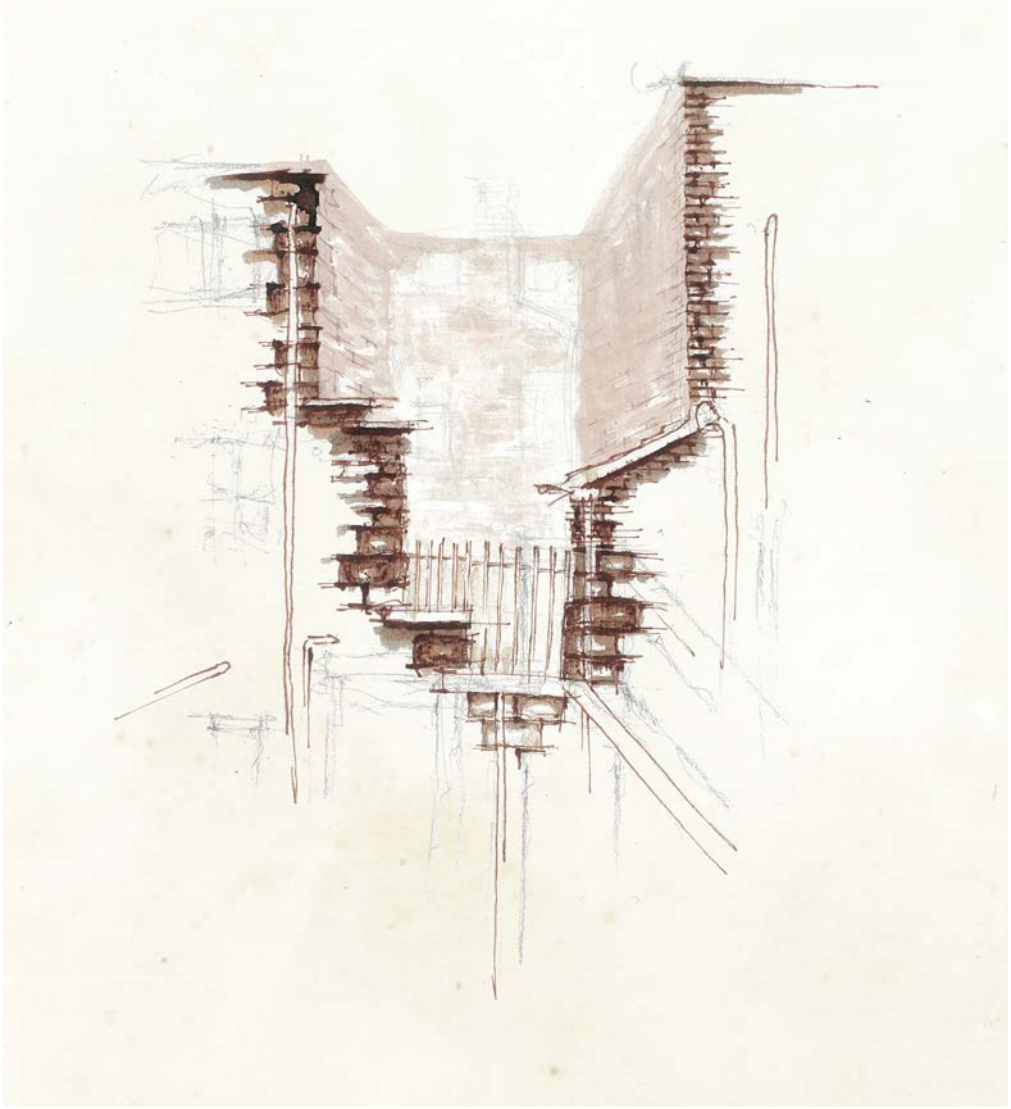


Plate 5.31 Forgotten backland spaces

5.2 Land Use

The Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area covers a relatively small area which comprises the uses expected of the town centre core, ranging from civic and religious use to retail and entertainment. A town centre is the sum of such parts and, given the size of the conservation area, is not considered necessary to break it down into character areas. Instead these uses are typically grouped and expressed through the architecture of the buildings they inhabit and the surrounding public realm.

Shops/Restaurants and Cafés

The conservation area's commercial core is centred on the townscape block bound by High Street and Curzon Street; this extends out of the conservation area along Market Place, north into Henshaw Street and within the Spindles Shopping Centre opposite. At the other side of Parliament Square this commercial activity continues along Yorkshire Street and again extends out of the conservation area. This strong commercial character means that the often poor-quality retail frontages dominate what are otherwise handsome buildings forming a disjoined relationship between the human experience at ground floor and the robust 19th facades above **[Plate 5.32]**. Small pockets or individual buildings of shop or restaurant use are found elsewhere in the area, typically housed in domestic-style buildings.

Financial and Professional Services/Offices

Professional services, particularly legal offices, are prevalent within the conservation area and, broadly speaking, are located in three areas: Church Lane adjacent to the former Magistrates Court; within the domestically-scaled terraces on Queen Street and Retiro Street; and also in pockets along Union Street. These uses can typically be accommodated within existing buildings without any major impact, although signage in places is poor and the buildings still tend to suffer from neglect and poor replacement windows **[Plate 5.33]**.

Non-Residential Institutions

The large-scale buildings along Union Street in the area now designated the Cultural Quarter are of a grand scale and architectural style characteristic of such uses. These buildings read as architectural set-pieces and include the former library, former post office, Masonic Hall and the Lyceum, and are set to either side of the grand boulevard of Union Street with Oldham Park set below street level at the heart. Currently these buildings suffer from a high proportion of vacancy, indicating the need for adapting buildings of scale for new 21st century uses. **[Plate 5.34]**. Religious buildings are similarly architecturally distinct, with the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter at the northern end of the conservation area, the now-religious use of the former Magistrates Court and the United Reform Church within the heart of Cultural Quarter **[Plate 5.35]**.

Assembly and Leisure

Assembly and leisure buildings share a similar typology to the institutional uses outlined above, reflected by the mix of these uses within the Lyceum. The former Town Hall has now been successfully adapted and extended to house a cinema **[Plate 5.36]**, reflecting the ability of such buildings to accommodate major change and reinvention, whilst Victoria House's conversion to a boxing gym is reflective of a more low-key but equally successful scheme of adaptation.

Sui Generis

There are some uses which do not have a use class which are known as 'sui generis'. Those highlighted on the map are currently outside of the Town Centre Conservation Area boundary (such as the nightclub on Waterloo Street) although it should be noted that there are buildings with 'sui generis' uses within the general defined use character areas outlined above.



Plate 5.32 Impact of poor quality retail frontage, roller shutters and signage on quality of buiding above at 22-24 Yorkshire Street



Plate 5.33 Professional services on Queen Street



Plate 5.34 Former Post & Telegraph Office, most recently the Local Studies Archive and about to be vacated



Plate 5.35 Masonic Hall and Union Street Church



Plate 5.36 Extension to former Town Hall to house new cinema

5.3 Buildings

The architecture of Oldham is centred on its period of growth and prosperity, and principally dates to the mid-to-late 19th century, with some 20th century redevelopments and infill buildings. The style of architecture is typical of many northern industrial towns, including a number of high-status buildings for civic use and banks; this character is interwoven with smaller buildings of a domestic scale on the smaller connecting streets which run on a north-south axis, the now much-altered Market Place/High Street and the quiet environs around Church Lane, the latter terminated by the prominent Grade II*-listed Church of St. Mary and St. Peter.

Oldham Parish Church of St Mary with St Peter (Grade II*)



Plate 5.37 Church of St Mary and St Peter

The Church of St Mary and St Peter is Oldham's Parish Church, built in a simple gothic style in coursed and squared rubble to designs by Richard Lane between 1827-30. It comprises a west tower with clasping porches, nave and aisles accommodated under a single Welsh slate roof. The lining buttresses break the roofline with decorative pinnacles. A church has existed on this site since 1280, the current church being constructed to meet the growing population that the Industrial Revolution brought to the town.

War Memorial (Grade II*)



Plate 5.38 War Memorial

The listed status of the war memorial also includes the memorial wall, piers, gates and steps to St Mary's churchyard and forecourt walls, steps and balustrade (south side) and the railings to St Mary's Churchyard (west side). The list description notes that whilst the ensemble is listed as a group, it is only the war memorial components which warrant the II* status.

The memorial stands on a raised stone-paved area and aligns on the same axis as the churchyard entrance and the church's south porch. It was erected as a permanent memorial to the men of Oldham killed in the First World War and consists of a granite base surmounted by a bronze sculpture by Albert Toft depicting five soldiers making their way along the trenches in order to go 'over the top' into battle.

Former Town Hall (Grade II)



Plate 5.39 Former Town Hall (Jody Hartley 2019)

The Town Hall was constructed in 1841 and extended in 1879-80 by George Woodhouse of Bolton and Edward Potts of Oldham. The main block facing Yorkshire Street is in an austere Greek revival style, faced in ashlar, rusticated to ground floor and with an Ionic portico spanning the central three bays of seven. The long ranging extensions to Greaves Street and Firth Street also remain. The building was vacant and in a very poor condition from the 1980s until a major scheme to convert it into a leisure complex including a cinema and restaurants by BDP was completed in 2016. This scheme has brought about major change at the heart of the conservation area including a substantial extension to its west side and new surrounding public realm.

Prudential Assurance Buildings (Grade II)



Plate 5.40 Prudential Assurance Building

The Prudential Building was constructed in 1889 to designs by Alfred Waterhouse. It is constructed in red brick with elaborate terracotta dressings set on a polished granite plinth with polygonal towers over the entrance to each side and rich ornamentation. The western return façade is clad in glazed brick. The building is vacant and in a very poor state of repair and is recommended for inclusion on a local heritage at risk register. It occupies a prominent location adjacent to Oldham Central tram stop and is in urgent need of reuse and restoration both for the conservation of the building itself and owing to the significant potential it presents for improving the identity of, and wayfinding into, the conservation area.

The Lyceum and Art School (Grade II)



Plate 5.41 The Lyceum

The Lyceum and Art School were built in a single block and form one of Union Street's earliest buildings. The Lyceum was constructed in 1856 with the art school added in 1881 to designs by Pennington's of Manchester; it is of outstanding quality and is an important part of the Union Street townscape. The block exhibits an elegant neoclassical stone frontage with cast iron lanterns and robust railings, urns at the roofline and well-kept greenery all contribute positively to streetscape. Pediments to bays within each half of the building are inscribed with 'Lyceum' and 'Science and Art'. The Neoclassical design and fenestration pattern continues across the return elevations wrapping around to both Clegg Street and Greaves Street. Later white railings within the lightwells detract from the otherwise high quality decorative ironwork; the vacant half of the building is in a poor condition and a new use is required.

The Masonic Hall (Grade II)



Plate 5.42 The Masonic Hall

The Masonic Hall was constructed in 1880 again in rusticated rubble in the Greek revival style including a portico with fluted Doric columns. A further red brick rear wing was added in 1924. It counterbalances the former post office and library on the facing side of the street and collectively they have a strong visual presence. The building is vacant and in a poor condition; it is in need of reuse, repair and refurbishment to secure its long-term conservation.

Union Street Church (Grade II)



Plate 5.43 United Reform Church

The United Reformed Church was built in 1877 and was formerly a Congregational chapel. It follows the pattern for rusticated rubble with a squat central tower in the south wall with a six- light decorated window and wide plain stepped Early English arch to porch. The church sits next to the Masonic Hall and forms part of the grand architectural group with the former post office and library. The church is currently on Historic England's At Risk Register although it is noted that it has recently been the subject of a scheme of repair and refurbishment.

The Central Library (Grade II)



Plate 5.44 Former Central Library

The Library and Art Gallery were constructed in 1883 (with additions in 1894) in rusticated rubble, with a Romanesque style entrance and cresting to the pitched roof ridge. To the street frontage the cast-iron railings and terminating piers flanking the entrance steps with cast-iron globe lamps are good examples within the conservation area. Vacated by the new library and gallery constructed to the rear, the building is soon to be brought back into use as a Heritage Centre.

Former Post Office (Grade II)



Plate 5.45 Former Post Office

The Post Office building was built in 1877; constructed in brick with stone dressings and a shallow pitched roof in the neoclassical style. In most recent times it has been in use as the Local Studies Archive which is now to be relocated into the former library building.

109 Union Street (Grade II)



Plate 5.46 109 Union Street

The bank building dates from 1892; it exhibits a French Renaissance style; the steep hipped roofs of the outer pavilion towers are of particular interest crested with ironwork detailing.

5 Greaves Street (Grade II)



Plate 5.47 5 Greaves Street

The office building by Edgar Wood was built in 1901-02; it has a handsome ashlar frontage with full height pediments defining the three bays and Arts and Crafts detailing.

10 Yorkshire Street (Grade II)



Plate 5.48 10 Yorkshire Street

Constructed as a bank in 1890 to a neoclassical design, the stone-faced facade forms an elegant pair with the former Town Hall.

Listed Buildings on Church Lane (Grade II)



Plate 5.49 Listed buildings on north side of Church Lane

The listed buildings on Church Lane include the former Court House and Offices constructed in 1894 to designs by Henry Tanner in red brick with white terracotta dressings. The decorative and grand building at the north-west end of Church Lane is now in religious use as a café and community centre.



Plate 5.50 Listed buildings on south side of Church Lane

7, 9 and 11 Church Lane were originally constructed as houses c.1800 in brick with stone dressings; on the facing side of the road 8 and 10-14 Church Lane were also constructed c.1800 – 10-14 a grander group of three-storeys with stone dressings.

25 - 37 High Street (Grade II)



Plate 5.51 25 and 37 High Street

The Barclays Bank occupies a prominent location on the corner with Lord Street with four principal bays to High Street, a single return bay to Lord Street and a seven bay rear elevation fronting onto Church Lane; all ashlar faced. The main entrance is set in a canted angle with a tower and dome over.

11 Church Terrace (Grade II)



Plate 5.52 11 Church Terrace side return to Church Passage with sandstone finish

Originally constructed as a house in the early 19th century, although an earlier 18th century structure may also remain. The façade is constructed in brick on a stone plinth; the return elevation to Church Passage is stone – with poor quality uPVC windows.

Buildings Proposed for Inclusion on a Local List

Throughout the conservation area there are buildings and groups of buildings which reinforce its character – these are identified as buildings where the external appearance is considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

In addition, there are a number of buildings which have 'a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated'[14] above and beyond the contribution they make to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These include structures or features which have been identified as an important part of Oldham's heritage due to architectural, historic, or archaeological significance, and are recognised as irreplaceable heritage assets which contribute to the quality of the local environment and sustain a sense of distinctiveness.

As such, we propose their inclusion on a 'local list' of buildings of architectural and historical merit; this would not grant a building or structure statutory protection nor would works to a locally listed building require listed building consent, but the special interest of the building would be a material consideration in the planning application process.

In addition, on the basis that Grade II-listed buildings outside of London (except for places of worship) are not eligible for inclusion on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, it is proposed that a local heritage at risk register be created for both Grade II-listed building and those otherwise of merit within the conservation area. This would include those buildings at risk as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development, or which are considered vulnerable to becoming so.

In the first instance these lists would be limited to buildings or structures within the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area; however, the following lists have been drafted in a manner which would allow them to be extended to include buildings throughout Oldham Metropolitan Borough.[15]

14 National Planning Policy Guidance, paragraph 39

15 Criteria for inclusion is taken from Historic England Advice Note 7: Local Heritage Listing (May 2016), p.9

Local List of Heritage Assets

Building: Hilton Arcade



Plate 5.53 South face of Hilton Arcade



Plate 5.54 Interior of Hilton Arcade

Date: 1893

Rarity: Unique within the conservation area; the last remaining arcade and fragment of the early commercial development.

Aesthetic Interest: High quality Victorian arcade design with modern shopfronts replacing a previously detracting ground floor frontage and a restored glass roof set above streel trusses. The upper floors and windows are almost entirely original including rare light fittings.

Group Value: The Albion Street and Curzon Street facades are largely intact, forming a prominent feature in the conservation area with handsome stone detailing (although the modern shopfronts and signage and in places the condition detract). The corner building at 1-3 High Street is a modern building which bears no relationship to the arcade in terms of its scale, composition or design and as a consequence detracts to both its High Street and Curzon Street elevations. Nos. 15 and 17 High Street to its western side have been redeveloped and have a more comfortable relationship to the High Street elevation (and unapologetically contrasting to Albion Street replacing Market Avenue, the original arcade).

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: The arcade was built to designs by Wild Collins and Wild, a partnership established in 1876 who designed at least 22 mills in the Oldham region at the end of the 19th century as well as churches and schools (including St. Peter's Oldham (1900) and St. Mark's Glodwick (1875).

Landmark Status: The arcade and its wider block form a prominent feature in the High Street townscape which dominates the modern retail development which has occurred around it. In long views along High Street it forms a significant historic landmark which allows the eye to then bypass to the next striking landmark of Barclays Bank looking eastwards.

Social and Communal Value: The arcade forms part of Oldham's social history and the development of retail around the Market Place/High Street all of which established Oldham as a regional shopping centre.

Building: Greaves Arms



Plate 5.55 Greaves Arms

Date: 1925

Rarity: The Greaves Arms forms part of a fairly common typology of pubs constructed in the early 20th century in Oldham.

Aesthetic Interest: The building is a substantial stand-alone building of an eclectic architectural style; constructed in terracotta and red brick with stone dressings, it successfully juxtaposes the surrounding architectural styles and materials.

Group Value: The building forms part of the heart of Oldham Town Centre, set at an elevated level between St. Mary's and St. Peter's Church and the Old Former Town Hall it is one of the town centres most prominent buildings and forms an important backdrop to Parliament Square. It also stands as the final of three key historic nodes in the High Street including Hilton Arcade and Barclays Bank.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: The Greaves Arms replaces an earlier inn which stood on the site, originally known as the Blue Ball dating to the first half of the 18th century; it was lastly named after its owner in 1826 becoming the Greaves Arms.

Landmark Status: The building occupies a landmark position in views eastwards along High Street as Church Terrace rises and banks away; its prominence is emphasised by manner which Yorkshire Street falls away and the elevated pavement which runs alongside with handsome iron railings and the wider public realm in this location which provides a setting for the war memorial.

Social and Communal Value: The reconstruction of the pub in 1925 allowed it to be set back further from the war memorial which had been erected in 1923, allowing a greater public space for remembrance around the memorial. The pub is now vacant and a new use needs to be found to retain its communal and landmark value.

Building: 3 Greaves Street



Plate 5.56 3 Greaves Street

Date: Early 20th century

Rarity: The stone frontage and composition of the building is at odds with the prevailing character of the conservation area.

Aesthetic Interest: The building has a classical stone facade with corner quoins and lugged architraves at first floor and prominent details, and downpipes add interest. The original rear elevation is concealed by a later extension in red brick.

Group Value: Located opposite the Former Town Hall it stands in a run of 'set-piece' architecture just to the north of the Grade II listed building by Edgar Wood. Again differing from the common typology within the conservation area, the buildings forms a part of this important piece of townscape.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Landmark Status: No.3 forms the northern end of a run of 'set-piece' buildings and is a worthy neighbour in terms of its quality to Edgar Wood's Grade II listed building adjoining.

Building: Victoria House, Greaves Street



Plate 5.57 Victoria House, Greaves Street

Date: Early 20th century

Rarity: Purpose built as a billiard hall, the building has a low height and large footprint which reflects its original function and at odds with the prevailing composition of the surrounding buildings.

Aesthetic Interest: The building has a handsome façade constructed red brick with distinctive faience detailing providing visual interest which breaks down its massing. The steep pitched roof has large rooflights again reflective of the internal function.

Group Value: Victoria House is located opposite the Former Town Hall and in a run of 'set-piece' architecture including the Edgar Wood office building to the north. Its low height and the change in topography causes a crescendo effect as the road rises to Yorkshire Street – enhancing the setting of the more important buildings.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: The building was originally used as a snooker hall, then council housing offices and a college before becoming vacant. Oldham Boxing moved into the building in 2011, a use well suited to the building's form.

Landmark Status: The building occupies a prominent location on the corner of Firth Street and Greaves Street; further emphasised by the open car park to its rear. It stands at the southern end of a run of 'set-piece' buildings, opposite the Former Town Hall and is subservient to their status, expressed in their architectural design.

Social and Communal Value: The building has been used for different social and community functions throughout its lifespan – most recently as the home of Oldham Boxing which has brought the building back into use providing a key community facility.

Building: The Old Bill, Greaves Street



Plate 5.58 The Old Bill, Greaves Street

Date: Late 19th century

Rarity: The highly decorated facades of the Old Bill, dominated by numerous openings, give it prominence in the locality.

Aesthetic Interest: Constructed in sandstone, the building exhibits a high detailed façade with decorative arched window openings, quoins and pilasters and a prominent dentiled pediment. The side return is similarly detailed with a dentiled cornice and numerous arched window openings.

Group Value: The building sits on the south-east corner of the junction with Firth Street and opposite Victoria House, the domestic scaled buildings on the south side of Firth Street and the southern corner of the

Former Town Hall. Although all distinctively of their own architectural character they form a group of high quality buildings reflective of the town's Victorian prosperity.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: Originally a good quality warehouse or office its use was typical of the Victorian expansion of the town.

Landmark Status: The decorated façade and prominent dentiled pediment give the building prominence in views in which it appears such as along Firth Street.

Social and Communal Value: The building is reflective of the industrial prosperity of the town in the 19th century.

Building: 31 Queen Street



Plate 5.59 31 Queen Street

Date: Late 19th century

Rarity: Whilst not a rare typology in its own right the building occupies an important role terminating views eastwards along Firth Street and flanked by Victoria House and the Old Bill which stand on the corner of Greaves Street.

Aesthetic Interest: The prominent white painted stone detailing and arched window openings add richness to the Victorian red brick building with the central projecting bay with pediment and flanking pilasters forming a pleasing composition. The rear elevation has a modern bulky extension.

Group Value: In views along Firth Street the building forms part of the group of high quality buildings including the two corner buildings on Greaves Street (all either listed or proposed for inclusion on the local list).

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Landmark Status: The decorated façade gives the building prominence as the terminating feature in views along the new public realm of Firth Street.

Social and Communal Value: The building is reflective of the industrial prosperity of the town in the 19th century.

Building: The Old Museum (Former Friends Meeting House and Former Museum), Greaves Street



Plate 5.60 Former Museum and Friends Meeting House, Greaves Street

Date: Late 19th century

Rarity: The building's decorative classical design is reflective of high status community buildings of the period, however rare in terms of the design of Friend's House which typically have a more restrained character – better reflected in the side wing (former museum building) immediately to the north also included within this entry.

Aesthetic Interest: Constructed in red brick the building has numerous classical decorative features including a substantial pediment over the central bay set above a dentiled cornice, arched openings to entrance porches set on pilasters and interesting brick detailing to the arched window openings. The iron lanterns are particularly fine.

Group Value: The Old Museum sits within a group of buildings now designated as 'The Cultural Quarter' which includes the former post office to the north, the former library and the modern library building. Located on a 'side street' to Union Street the building serves a secondary role within the group.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: The Old Museum occupies the former Friends Meeting House and adjoining former museum building.

Landmark Status: The buildings stand on the southern boundary of the conservation area but not at a key point of entry with the Oldham Gallery bookending the street.

Social and Communal Value: The buildings are reflective of the urban industrial prosperity and culture of the town in the 19th century.

Feature: 1870s cast-iron railings and lamp standards between the War Memorial and Parliament Square

Date: 1870s

Rarity: Whilst railings are found throughout the conservation area, this stretch of Victorian cast-iron railings is poised near the centre and peak of the conservation area and in the foreground of a number of local views. It also includes a number of lamp standards with globe lanterns.

Aesthetic Interest: The railings and lamps act as a strong complement the War Memorial above them, framing it and adding depth to the view of the memorial and St. Mary's Church from the street.

Landmark Status: The railings mark the transition between the High Street, Parliament Street and Yorkshire Street.

Social and Communal Value: The railings and lamps are reflective of the urban industrial prosperity and culture of the town in the 19th century.

5.3.3 Buildings Which Make a Positive Contribution to the Conservation Area

Many more modest buildings make a positive contribution to the character and quality of the conservation area; this may be for a number of different reasons. These include their townscape contribution, such as the domestic-scaled terrace groups on Queen Street and Retiro Street; architectural quality; and decorative features across many buildings on the principal streets that are reflective of the town's prosperity through its rapid development, or historic or cultural associations including public houses **[Plates 5.61 – 5.64]**.

Whilst there are numerous buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area (as identified on the map) in many instances their architectural quality has been compromised by poor alterations. With respect to those with retail frontages, many facades have almost been severed in two between the ground and upper floors. Despite this, these buildings still exhibit strong qualities; positive contributions that could be greatly enhanced by remedying the detracting alterations.

5.3.4 Buildings Which Make a Neutral Contribution to the Conservation Area

In some cases, buildings may have been so severely altered that their character has been irreversibly damaged however their scale and materials still blend into the surrounding townscape. These have generally been identified as neutral. Similarly, buildings which do not strictly follow the established character and appearance of the conservation area but not to the extent that this is immediately apparent or considered harmful are also identified as making a neutral contribution.

Negative buildings are identified as those which, due to their scale, detailed design or materials, are incongruous in relation to the predominant character of the conservation area. These are described in more detail in Section 8.



Plate 5.61 18-20 Greaves Street turning into Firth Street and the domestic-scaled building to rear of Lyceum



Plate 5.62 39-40 High Street



Plate 5.63 Town Hall Tavern at 18-20 Yorkshire Street



Plate 5.64 Queen Street Barbers

5.4 Materials

Levrant's 1997 *Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal* outlines the prevailing materials utilised within the area, other than isolated new buildings constructed in the last 20 years (largely referred to elsewhere in this document and typically contemporary, including the use of glass and render); this remains unchanged and is detailed below.

Whilst stone was the prevailing building material until the introduction of the railway, this is no longer a defining feature of the buildings in the conservation area (other than as decorative dressings ***[Plate 5.65]****, although it is possible stone remains but is now refaced in brick. The buildings within the conservation area can be generally divided into two construction materials: brick with stone dressings for the majority, with the higher status and/or civic buildings faced in sandstone. The latter is principally York stone, although there are interesting exceptions such as the Old Bill on Greaves Street* ***[Plate 5.58]*** *faced in local sandstone (from Oldham Edge, easily transported owing to its close proximity) and Edgar Wood's building at 5 Greaves Street* ***[Plate 5.47]****, faced in Bath limestone.*

The two banks at the heart of the town centre (Nat West and Barclays ***[Plates 5.48 and 5.51]****) are both faced in stone; Darley Dale gritstone above on imported black gabbro; and coal measures sandstone above on Scottish Delbeatie Granite, respectively. The Former Town Hall is also constructed in coal measure sandstone; with Millstone Grit used for the plinth to the extension in Firth Street.*

The church is constructed in Kinder Scout Grit with the late-20th century vestries at the eastern end constructed in Liverpool Red sandstone taken from St. Peter's Church, demolished for the construction of the Spindles Shopping Centre ***[Plate 5.66]****. Church Lane contains original local sandstone buildings refaced in brick, but with sections of sandstone exposed on Church Passage* ***[Plate 5.52]****. The church retaining wall which runs along Church Street comprises a mix of Oldham Edge stone at the bottom with local sandstones on top* ***[Plate 5.19]****.*

Terracotta and faience-faced buildings are also found within the conservation area. The materials are used principally as decorative devices on buildings of architectural quality, such as Victoria House in Greaves Street which incorporates faience elevations to break down and model the massing of its large footprint ***[Plate 5.57]****. Glazed bricks are also found within the conservation area, typically in more confined, intimate spaces to reflect light into tight-knit spaces.*[16]

Ironwork is used as a decorative feature to the buildings of higher status in the area; the best example of this is to the Lyceum, where the high-quality detailed ironwork forms a key part of its overall aesthetic, although the utilitarian white handrails, etc. to the lower ground floor detract. Lanterns mounted on piers flanking the entrance stairs are also handsome features. Good examples also feature to the former library and within the Hilton Arcade; the decorative ironwork on its front façade is also a feature of interest ***[Plates 5.67 - 5.69].*** *The ironwork cresting to the steeply pitched roof of the HSBC building is handsome in its own right, but also an attractive skyline feature in a number of surrounding views.*

Roofs are largely Welsh slate.

16 Levrant, 1997, pp.23-25.



Plate 5.65 Stone doorcase to vernacular brick building on Clegg Street



Plate 5.66 Liverpool Red sandstone to Church of St Mary and St Peter eastern vestries



Plate 5.67 Decorative lantern and railings to Lyceum

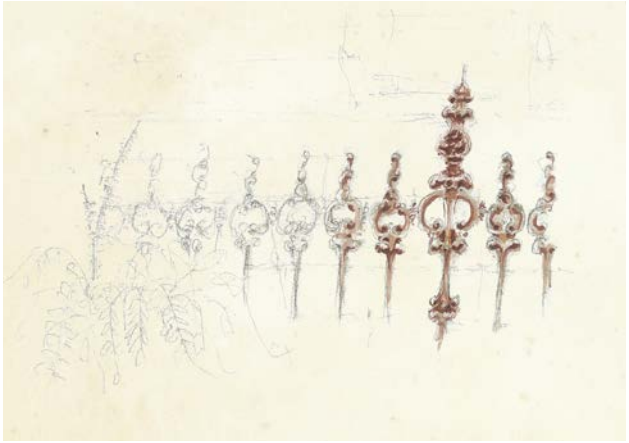


Plate 5.68 Decorative railings



Plate 5.69 Decorative ironwork at entrance to Hilton Arcade

6.0 Views and Vistas

Oldham's position on a hill sets it apart from the general urban environment which connects it to Greater Manchester. As outlined above the topography plays an important role within the town centre in terms of the relationship of buildings and spaces to one another and the crescendo towards Parliament Square and the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter. This is not also without its negative impact, however, such is the poor sense of arrival via the tram into the town centre brought about by the need to run the tram line along the lower southern boundary.

However it is looking out from within the conservation area where the topography really underpins its significance **[Plate 6.1]**.



Plate 6.1 Impression of view south from Parliament Square

6.1 Panoramic Vistas

Oldham is a dense urban environment; therefore views are also entirely framed by buildings. However, the position of the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter at the peak of the town and the open churchyard allows for a panoramic vista eastwards over the suburbs of Oldham to the hills which form the northern end of the Peak District and the geological divide from Yorkshire. This is a powerful backdrop which roots the town in its context and, both literally and metaphorically, elevates it above its surroundings, further emphasised by the currently vacant site to the north side of Rock Street **[Plate 6.2]**.



Plate 6.2 Panoramic views from church yard (Jody Hartley 2019)

6.2 Key Long Views

The long views are particularly powerful in terms of the understanding of Oldham and its historic and geographical context. From the peak of Yorkshire Street, stood in the formal setting of Parliament Square, the land falls away, framed by the flanking retail terraces, their lower roofline creating perspective which over sails the foreground of trees and dense housing to reveal a powerful view towards the hills beyond **[Plate 6.3]**.

Looking southwards through Parliament Square and Greaves Street are more significant long range views. To Greaves Street this view is lined by the handsome collection of buildings on its east side and the Former Town Hall, whilst to the west side of the Former Town Hall the new public realm of Parliament Square provides an open vista before the rear of the Lyceum comes into view; although a substantial building in its own right, the fall in the topography comfortably accommodates it. Otherwise the fall in the land draws the buildings down out of view and over a swathe of housing to reveal a wall of mills in the middle distance, their rooflines punctured by a chimney and tower, overlapping into the interlocking spurs of the countryside behind. In a single frame so much of Oldham's history is captured **[Plates 6.4 and 6.5]**.

At the eastern end of Albion Street and at the crossroads with Lord Street there is an important long-range view looking eastward and westward where the religious church spire and civic centre tower act as nodes which communicate to each other in terms of their apparent scale (the civic centre set further in the distance and at a lower level). The spire and tower are the only two buildings which currently puncture the roofline in any meaningful manner, clearly articulating the status of the religious and civic centres of the town **[Plates 6.6 and 6.7]**.



Plate 6.3 Long-range views eastwards afforded by steep topography



Plate 6.4 Long view south through Parliament Square



Plate 6.5 Long view south along Greaves Street



Plate 6.6 Church of St Mary and St Peter spire sat at the opposite end of the town centre from the civic centre tower



Plate 6.7 Civic centre tower sat at the opposite end of the town centre from the Church of St Mary and St Peter spire

6.3 Key Short Views

The topography leading to the core of the town also creates a number of short-range views which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In these cases key listed buildings and those which make a positive contribution to the conservation area are visible in sequence, formally framing the view, and often with the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter, former Town Hall or Parliament Square terminating them.

Looking eastward along High Street the Hilton Arcade and Barclays Bank puncture the more typical retail frontage to draw the eye along to the Greaves Arms which occupies a prominent position before Yorkshire Street falls away, leading the eye over this 'edge' into the long view outlined above **[Plate 6.8]**. Yorkshire Street provides pleasing views from the opposite direction, highlighting the curve of the thoroughfare and also looking in the direction of Parliament Square **[Plate 6.9]**.

A number of short-range views look towards the Church of St. Mary and St. Peter, including across Parliament Square, above the war memorial terracing and looking northwest from Old Church Street **[Plates 6.10 and 6.11]**. The key short-range view of the church, however, is the framed view along Church Lane, with the church and its spire as the terminating feature **[Plate 6.12]**. Further short views of interest include the framed view along Albion Street, across the pedestrianised space to the handsome run of 19th century shopfronts on Henshaw Street **[Plate 6.13]**, and from the southeast corner of Firth Street and Greaves Street looking northward up Greaves Street toward the Town Hall, which affords perhaps the only view where the building's south and



Plate 6.8 Looking eastwards along High Street from Hilton Arcade, past Barclays Bank and to the Greaves Arms and into the long view beyond

eastern elevations can be appreciated nearly in their entirety **[Plate 6.14]**. Likewise, looking northward along Retiro Street from its base at Union Street provides a key view of the conservation area's domestic-scale buildings in the middle-ground and distance **[Plate 6.15]**.

Union Street is a wider urban boulevard with views in both directions, framed by the grand set-pieces of architecture and with the tram line further serving to draw the eye along the linear path. The straight and open character of Union Street gives the conservation area a blurred boundary which the short range views pass through; to the west this is terminated by St. Mary's with St. Patrick's RC Church and to the east as the road curves and banks away toward Mumps **[Plates 6.16 and 6.17]**.

Just south of Union Street, the northward view from Gallery Oldham looks upward through Oldham Park and its gates onto the north side of Union Street and is framed by some of the conservation area's most significant buildings. The view includes the Grade II-listed late-19th century Union Street Church, Masonic Hall and the bank at 109 Union Street, and is flanked by the Grade II-listed former post office and former central library **[Plate 6.18]**.



Plate 6.9 Short-range view looking west up Yorkshire Street toward Parliament Square



Plate 6.10 Short view across Parliament Square to war memorial and Church of St Mary and St Peter



Plate 6.11 Short view across Parliament Square to war memorial and Church of St Mary and St Peter



Plate 6.12 Short view along Church Lane terminated by the spire of the Church of St Mary and St Peter



Plate 6.13 Short view along Albion Street framing the handsome 19th century shopfront



Plate 6.14 Short view from the southeast corner of Frith and Greaves Street toward the Town Hall



Plate 6.15 Short view looking north along Retiro Street from Union Street



Plate 6.16 View east from Union Street with flanking civic buildings before the street falls and banks away



Plate 6.17 View west along Union Street with St Mary's and St Patrick's RC Church in the background



Plate 6.18 Short view from Gallery Oldham looking north toward Union Street

7.1 Public Realm

Oldham Town Centre benefits from being largely pedestrianised with areas of shared surfaces allowing access. This gives emphasis to the pedestrian experience and allows the buildings which line the streets to be better appreciated. Conversely, this allows detracting features such as poor retail frontages to also dominate.

7.2 Hard Landscaping

Outside of the largely pedestrianised/shared surface areas discussed below, the roads are typically tarmacked with large York stone flags for the pavements with kerb edges. To the southern end of Greaves Street a rare section of riven-finished York stone flags remains and Harrison Street on the western edge of the conservation area has a cobbled roadway **[Plate 7.1]**.



Plate 7.1 Cobbled roadway to Harrison Street

7.2.1 Retail Core

The entire town centre retail area (both inside and outside of the current conservation area boundary) benefits from a uniform hard surface of large York stone flags to the footpaths and smaller setts within the roadway, which is both attractive and durable and very much adds to the character of the area. Larger granite setts define crossing points and add visual interest to larger open areas of paving such as to Albion Street. The town centre has a shared surface with no level change between the footway and roadway, instead defined again by the granite setts and bollards (discussed below). As High Street extends in front of the former Town Hall the roadway is tarmacked, but otherwise the finish remains the same **[Plates 7.2 and 7.3]**.

7.2.2 Parliament Square

Parliament Square is a new urban realm laid out and associated with the adaptive reuse of the former Town Hall. The surface is laid in York stone flags with large curved planters housing street trees. Public art is provided through the inscription of the mills which surrounded the town on the planters and a plinth with an owl seated on top – taken from the Oldham Coat of Arms. The square is largely outside of the conservation area but the whole space down to the pedestrianised area along Firth Street very much forms part of the experience of the area with three opposing owls at its southern end (and forming a parliament), integrated benches and steps and terraces mediating the change in levels and providing outdoor space for the restaurants housed in the lower level of the former Town Hall.
The square was laid out to also provide a large event venue which gives the feeling of a large empty space – although with the benefit of affording an open vista to the long-range view looking south **[Plates 7.4 and 7.5]**.

7.2.3 Church Environs and War Memorial

Church Lane, Terrace and Street retain large square setts; whilst asphalt infilling and recovering, road markings and parking detract they still make a significant contribution to the overall quality and historic character of these spaces. Church Passage, the steps and area in front of church and surrounding the war memorial are all laid with York stone flags **[Plate 7.6]**; to the churchyard these include memorial flags **[Plate 7.7]**.

7.2.4 Union Street

Union Street public realm was upgraded as part of the introduction of the tram in 2014, including York stone and granite-style kerbs around the Oldham Central tram stop and new planters. The tram stop is integrated into the public realm as a raised platform in the centre of the street with a shelter following the TFGM designs, branding and yellow colourway; the tramline itself is a fairly inconspicuous feature.



Plate 7.2 Level pedestrianised surface demarked by granite setts and bollards



Plate 7.3 Shared surface running along northern edge of Parliament Square with tarmacked roadway



Plate 7.4 Parliament Square open space



Plate 7.5 Parliament Square extending south with three owls on plinths at southern end



Plate 7.6 Terrace in front of war memorial



Plate 7.7 Memorial stones in church yard

7.3 Trees and Soft Landscaping

Oldham is a town which developed during industrial expansion where luxuries such as trees and green open spaces were not considered, and therefore do not form part of its character. Whilst the town centre still retains a sense of a hard urban environment, the addition of street trees to the public open spaces on Albion Street and within Parliament Square has not diminished the overall character of the area or the sense of its industrial past. The way the town centre is used and occupied has changed since this time and the introduction of attractive planting, such as the planters laid out as part of Oldham in Bloom only serves to soften and uplift the appearance of the area for occupants and visitors alike **[Plate 7.8]**.

Churchyard

The churchyard sits on the north-western corner of the conservation area; despite being one of the few lungs of open green space in the town centre it has an air of being underused. This is quite possibly brought about by the terracing and stairs which separate it from the main thoroughfare and its high retaining wall which borders its southern front. The more penetrable boundary walls along St. Mary's Way and Rock Street front roads which feel outside of the town centre. Regardless, it is a historic space of high significance occupying the summit of the town centre which contributes to the setting of the church. Immediately to the north is the now-open site of the former leisure centre which rises slightly above – currently its landscaped edge makes a positive contribution, however owing to its further elevation any development proposed has the potential to impact the character of the area **[Plates 7.9 and 7.10]**. Trees have been added to the car parks which surround its north-eastern edge, softening their impact on the setting of the churchyard.



Plate 7.8 Street planter and plants hanging from street furniture

Oldham Park

This is a semi-enclosed, formal garden area of late 19th century origins set between the former post office and former library on the south side of Union Street. It is open to the pedestrianised area and modern gallery on its southern side and allows views of civic buildings flanking on three faces and north to the United Reform Church **[Plates 7.11 and 7.12]**.

Medtia House

A small area of landscaping and planting exists in front of Medtia House on Union Street. This is uncharacteristic for the hard urban town centre and breaks the consistent pavement line. **[Plate 7.13]**.



Plate 7.9 Church yard garden



Plate 7.10 Church yard garden



Plate 7.11 Oldham Park from Union Street level



Plate 7.12 Oldham Park looking back at Union Street Chapel



Plate 7.13 Medtia House, 80 Union Street

7.4 Street Furniture

Iron railings are a feature within the conservation area – particularly to the listed buildings along Union Street, as would be expected of their set-piece design and location on a boulevard of this nature. The Grade II-listed 19th century cast iron railings with integrated street lamps around the churchyard and war memorial are of the finest quality, reflective of the importance of this civic space at that time. They now occupy a prominent feature within the reworked public space alongside the steps, rising footpath and walls **[Plate 7.14]**.

Street lamps are predominately modern but of a consistent decorative design throughout the High Street and down into Yorkshire Street up to St. Mary's Way; here the design changes but remains consistent **[Plate 7.15]**. Along Union Street, which includes the tramway are utilitarian highways lamps, as well as to some of the side streets. The area surrounding Parliament Square and the war memorial becomes confused where a number of different street lamp styles (linked to different public realm schemes) meet. Within the streets surrounding the former Town Hall this includes ornate lanterns which reflect the design of the remaining historic lamp standards on Rock Street, to Church Terrace and those which have been repositioned in front of the Former Town Hall **[Plate 7.16]**. Supplementary street cameras and lighting are utilitarian in character and of no merit but are a necessary evil.

Bollards feature heavily in Oldham, in part of owing to the shared surface through the town centre. They are typically finished green with gold bands and the remaining original ones are also embossed with the Oldham owl (these have been reinstalled with no consistency to the direction the owl faces) **[Plate 7.17]**. Planters throughout the retail area are a mix of more substantial stone planters and round units in the same green finish with gold bands. There is a general build-up of street clutter, however this is largely all set on the same line and other than the proliferation of litter bins and unsightly telecommunications cabinets this is largely limited to the planters, bollards and benches – although food vans which park on High Street add further obstructions **[Plate 7.18]**. At the ends of the pedestrian areas are gates; these typically follow the style of the traditional green bollards **[Plate 7.19]**, although to the southern end of Parliament Square these are modern bollards which can be lowered into the ground. Discreet, modern wayfinding signs have been installed, although they struggle to compete with the busy retail environment along High Street, whereas near the tram stop on Union Street wayfinding is distinctly lacking **[Plate 7.20]**. The 'historic' street signs again in green with a gold trim are attractive and give a sense of the historic town centre; although these are perhaps too subtle as markers of the conservation area **[Plate 7.21]**.



Plate 7.14 Railings and lamps integral to quality of terracing surrounding war memorail and leading up to church



Plate 7.15 Modern decorative street lights



Plate 7.16 Traditional street lamps



Plate 7.17 Street bollard with owl



Plate 7.18 Street furniture is fairly restrained in the conservation area although food vans add clutter to streetscene

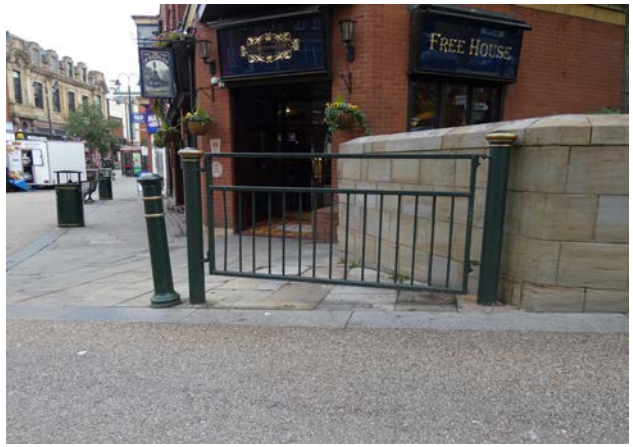


Plate 7.19 Street gates



Plate 7.20 Modern wayfinding signs



Plate 7.21 'Historic' street signs

7.5 Public Art

Parliament Square is framed by the 'parliament of owls' on tall plinths facing one another and the low level planters giving context to the surrounding industrial landscape, inscribed with the mills and suburbs which surround **[Plates 7.22 and 7.23]**. In addition, a statue dedicated to suffragette and Oldham native Annie Kenney was unveiled in Parliament Square on 14th December 2018, marking the centenary of the Representation of the People Act, which gave some British women the right to vote **[Plate 7.24]**. In the area of public realm to Curzon Street/Albion Street are the rather kitsch, colourfully-tiled mill and a number of decorated inserted metal sponsored setts **[Plates 7.25 and 7.26]**.

The predominate feature within the townscape, however, is the war memorial located on the raised area above Parliament Square outside the Greaves Arms, alongside the bronze plaques attached to the church wall immediately behind **[Plates 7.27 and 7.28]**. The memorial comprises a large granite pedestal resembling a mausoleum set on a shallow base with a large bronze sculpture place on top depicting five infantrymen going 'over the top' by Albert Toft. The memorial occupies a prominent elevated location above the town centre and aligns with the church steps and south porch behind.



Plate 7.22 Owl on plinth at northern end of Parliament Square



Plate 7.23 Planters with surrounding setting inscribed



Plate 7.25 Kitsch public art in Albion Street



Plate 7.24 Annie Kenney memorial statue, unveiled December 2018 (Jody Hartley 2019)

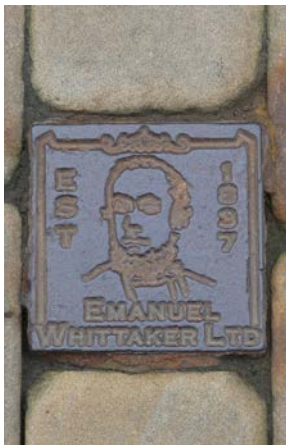


Plate 7.26 Metal sett inserted in Albion Street



Plate 7.27 War Memorial



Plate 7.28 Bronze plaques with memorial dedications

7.6 Heritage Plaques

There are a number of Oldham heritage plaques commemorating interesting historical events and people associated with the borough found throughout the town centre. According to Oldham Council,

> *There are no formal criteria for the selection of subjects for plaques although the general principle followed is that the event or person should be eminent and sufficiently famous to be familiar to a succeeding generation.*

Plaques located within the conservation area include those marking the incorporation of Oldham as a Borough in 1849 **[Plate 7.29]** and the service of Winston Churchill, MP for Oldham in 1900 **[Plate 7.30]**, both located at the Town Hall; that commemorating Oldham's Victoria Cross Holders at 11 Church Terrace **[Plate 7.31]**; that marking the site of the first Yates's Wine Lodge at 8A High Street **[Plate 7.32]**; that commemorating John Lees, originator of fish and chips at Market Hall **[Plate 7.33]**; that commemorating Joseph Platt, a figurehead of the Northern Union rugby league at 11 Queen Street **[Plate 7.34]**; and that marking the former home of John Bunting, Lancashire mill magnate at 115 Union Street **[Plate 7.35]**.



Plate 7.29 Plaque commemorating the incorporation of Oldham as a borough, Town Hall



Plate 7.30 Plaque commemorating the service of MP Winston Churchill, Town Hall



Plate 7.31 Victoria Cross Plaque, 11 Church Terrace



Plate 7.32 Plaque noting the site of the first Yates's Wine Lodge, 8A High Street



Plate 7.33 Plaque commemorating John Lees, Market Hall



Plate 7.34 Plaque commemorating Joseph Platt, 11 Queen Street



Plate 7.35 Plaque marking the former home of John Bunting, 115 Union Street

8.1 Detracting Buildings

Only a couple of buildings within the conservation area detract from its overall character and appearance in their entirety; more typically, buildings are marred by negative features and alterations which could be remedied. There are also some buildings which detract from the setting of the conservation area. These are located within areas for identified for the proposed extension of the conservation area boundary, and as such they are discussed in Section 9 below.

1 – 3 High Street

1 – 3 High Street is an unassuming building of the late 20th century; the red brickwork with inset channels and pitched, slate-clad roof behind have some aesthetic quality. However, its small scale is completely at odds with Hilton Arcade adjacent, and the block which extends north along Curzon Street. Occupying a prominent corner location (currently on the boundary of the conservation area) nos. 1 -3 appear as if they have eaten away at the original handsome group, completely diminishing the strength of this townscape block. This is exacerbated further by the poor retail frontage and signage **[Plate 8.1]**.

19 – 21 Queen Street

The pair form part of a continuous early-to-mid-19th century terrace group which is otherwise faced in brick. However, the rendered facades at 19 and 21 interrupt the uniformity of the terrace group and substantially detract from the overall appearance of the group, exacerbated further by the modern uPVC casement windows **[Plate 8.2]**.



Plate 8.1 1-3 High Street detracting from the composition, scale and detailing of the Hilton Arcade block



Plate 8.2 19-21 Queen Street

8.2 Detracting Features

Vacancy

A number of key buildings within the conservation area are vacant and in poor condition; typically they are large-scale buildings occupying prominent locations and significantly detract from the character of the conservation area. Most critical is the Prudential Building, which is clearly in a deteriorating condition and is recommended for inclusion on a local heritage at risk register **[Plate 8.3]**. Others include the vacant half of the Lyceum, the soon-to-be-vacated former post office, the Masonic Hall and the Greaves Arms (see entries in the Gazetteer for further details). Whilst not strictly vacant, the Hilton Arcade has an air of vacancy owing to the dead frontage that the shops backing on to the central arcade have created **[Plate 8.4]**.



Plate 8.3 The Prudential Building, vacant and in a deteriorating condition



Plate 8.4 Blank shopfronts along the Hilton Arcade

Condition

As well as the more critical condition issues associated with the vacancy of the key buildings listed above, there is a widespread issue with the general condition of buildings within the conservation area that is principally centred on general upkeep, repair and decoration – in the main part this is linked to economic factors and a poor understanding of the heritage value of building **[Plate 8.5]**. Typically this worsens in the back street areas with poor extensions, alterations and addition of plant, etc. **[Plate 8.6]**.

Retail Frontage

The most significant detracting feature within the conservation area is the retail frontage. Oldham Town Centre benefits from being largely pedestrianised, and as a consequence the human experience at ground level is dominated by a ground floor-level of buildings unhindered by traffic. Whilst the absence of traffic is a major benefit, the poor-quality contemporary shopfronts, often comprising large, single-glazed openings, projecting box signs and internally illuminated and often oversized fascias, dominate otherwise typically handsome buildings above and overly intrude into the streetscene. Roller shutters are also commonplace, creating a deadening frontage when closed and adding to the perception of crime and antisocial activity at night time **[Plates 8.7 – 8.9]**.



Plate 8.5 Poor condition typical of many buildings within the conservation area



Plate 8.6 Plate Street typical of 'back-of-house' areas within the conservation area



Plate 8.7 32 Yorkshire Street with poor shopfront and signage, roller shutters and unsightly flues



Plate 8.8 Poor shopfronts and signage across 15 -17 High Street which fails to relate to architecture of building above



Plate 8.9 Poor shopfront infilling historic arhcway at southern end of Clegg Street

8.3 Public Realm

The public realm is generally positive with good-quality, hard landscaping, two large public spaces and two smaller pockets of landscaped areas. Whilst the area in front of Medtia House is at odds with the prevailing character, attempts to soften the hard urban industrialised character of the conservation area through the introduction of street trees and planting in association with Oldham in Bloom have not diminished its inherent character, whilst making it a more pleasant environment for its inhabitants and visitors. Subsequently, there is no reason why the area in front of Medtia House could not be embraced as a small pocket of soft landscaping, particularly given its key location opposite the tram stop.

Street clutter is not a major issue across Oldham Town Centre. However, there are areas where the build-up becomes obstructive, particularly along High Street where the number of planters, bollards and benches are further cluttered by excessive bins, unsightly telecommunication cabinets and phone boxes principally serving commercial advertising. Temporary street food vans also create an additional obstruction **[Plate 8.10]**. Around the tram stop there is also a proliferation of signage, and the change in design of street furniture between areas – particularly around Parliament Square, can become unsightly.

The two key areas of public realm, to Albion Street and Parliament Square, whilst attractive in terms of their surfacing and the features within Parliament Square, suffer from a lack of vibrancy. The area has a 'back-of-town' feel in Albion Street when not in use by the market, whilst in Parliament Square the need for a versatile space for hosting events creates a large, open expanse that otherwise goes unused **[Plates 7.4 and 7.5]**.

In isolated areas the pavements are tarmacked rather than flagged, which detracts from the quality of the urban realm, and in some areas the dominance of concrete surfaces creates a drab character.

Wayfinding/Connectivity

In terms of wayfinding, the elevated position of the town centre does it no favours, hindered further by the substantial intervention that the construction of the Spindles Shopping Centre created. In essence the town is closed off to the western side; this and the lower level of the tram stops prevent a natural route into the town centre. In addition, Parliament Square does not align with the new tram stop, so the natural processional boulevard which Parliament Square could offer, drawing people up into the heart of the town centre and capped by the church behind, appears incidental **[Plate 8.11]**.

Identity

Once inside the heart of the town centre the retail activity of the High Street dominates, but otherwise there is a lack of definition of the conservation area, and it has been noted through public consultation that some parts of the area feel 'ignored' and that Oldham lacks an identity more generally. The conservation area diffuses into its surroundings, and areas such as the Cultural Quarter and Parliament Square lack the buzz of activity that their names would suggest. The whole conservation area and proposed extensions would benefit from a clearer definition and celebration of what is there.

Vacant Sites

There are a number of cleared vacant sites within the conservation area and along its boundary (or within the proposed extensions) now used for parking. The most substantial are the cleared sites between Back Greaves Street and Queen Street which form a chasm in the conservation area and would benefit from appropriate redevelopment **[Plate 8.12]**. The small empty site to the west of the Prudential Building on the fringe of the conservation area is overgrown and is a detracting feature which does not draw people northwards or give any sense of the town centre which lies beyond (see Plate 8.3).

Other areas where car parking dominates, such as the rear of Church Lane buildings facing Rock Street and on back streets, would benefit from enhancement. However, parking needs to be accommodated, and on the conservation area boundary and tucked away within the back streets is the most appropriate location **[Plate 5.25]**.



Plate 8.10 Street clutter including advertising on telephone boxes, advertising boards, food vans, bins, planters and benches



Plate 8.12 Large vacant site between Back Greaves Street and Queen Street



Plate 8.11 The southern end of Parliament Square peters off into Clegg Street and does not align with tram stop or provide natural wayfinding into the town centre

8.4 Threats / Risks

The biggest threat facing the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area involves economic factors. The care and maintenance of the historic environment, particularly those buildings in private ownership, cannot occur without the finances to do so. Whilst owners can be incentivised financially, this is a burden on the local authority at a time of diminishing resources. Recognition also needs to be given to the fact that private building owners also face other challenges economically, and indeed there are competing factors when it comes to long-term maintenance and security (for example, preference for modern materials and measures such as roller shutters and CCTV cameras).

There has been a significant shift in the nature of retail in recent times; this can have a particularly significant impact on towns such as Oldham, which already suffer from economic deprivation. Creativity and forward thinking is required to ensure that the High Street stays ahead of its time and adapts and changes as necessary.

A lack of engaged ownership of the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area by the communities who inhabit it can also be one of its biggest threats – if building owners and the general public more widely understand the significance of the heritage assets within the town centre and have a sense of pride in them, it will be easier to steer the area through a process of enhancement.

8.5 Wider Context and Development Proposals

Oldham Council is actively pursuing regeneration initiatives as part of the requirements of Greater Manchester for improved residential provision in conurbation centres which focus on the areas surrounding the conservation area. The management plan provides guidance on how regeneration, and development more generally, could be better-rooted in the conservation area and could assist in its enhancement and the reuse of vacant buildings.

8.6 Opportunities

There are numerous opportunities for enhancement of the conservation area, which are outlined in detail in the management plan. These range from small-scale reinstatement of historic features and improvements, to shop fronts and signage, to the redevelopment of vacant sites and adaptive reuse of vacant heritage assets.

The management plan will also outline ways in which the planning system can assist in achieving the enhancement of the conservation area through directives such as Article 4 Directions and Local Development Orders. There are also initiatives such as Heritage Action Zones and Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas which will be explored alongside other transport and public realm schemes currently being pursued through Transport for Greater Manchester.

9.0 Proposed Extensions

Oldham Council has a statutory duty to review the character and boundaries of its conservation areas. As part of this appraisal four extensions are proposed to the existing conservation area which extend beyond its current boundary. Whilst these extensions commonly exhibit more negative and neutral features, they also include fine individual buildings and shared characteristics with the conservation area.

9.1 High Street East and Parliament Square

Parliament Square is a substantial public space which sits at the heart of the conservation area; its partial exclusion from the conservation area is a symptom of the poor-quality townscape which previously existed before this part of Clegg Street was redeveloped. The square experientially forms part of the core of the conservation area in its entirety, benefitting further from the new façade to the Town Centre Shopping Area implemented to reflect the new cinema extension to the former Town Hall which it faces, and turning the corner into High Street **[Plates 9.1 and 9.2]**.

Currently only a small section of Oldham's retail centre forms part of the conservation area, with only one side of the street included along High Street, Curzon Street and Albion Street. In the first instance the extension proposes to include the public realm up to the building line to ensure that areas of public realm are not severed in two by an imaginary boundary; rather, it is suggested that the whole environment that is experienced is included **[Plate 9.3]**. It is also proposed to extend the boundary to include a larger swathe of the retail core, including buildings on the south side of High Street into Market Place and north to include Henshaw Street **[Plate 9.4]**. This has the added benefit of linking the north side of the town centre across Albion Street and including almost all the area of pedestrianised public realm contained by the varied and often positively-contributing buildings which flank it.

The hard landscaped, pedestrianised public realm continues through this area; townscape features of particular interest include the striking fountain and lighting standard in Market Place in front of Spindles Shopping Centre, the large planted bed associated with the Oldham in Bloom project and a playground adjacent **[Plates 9.5 and 9.6]**.

The extension includes many buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area; of particular merit is the curved group of buildings turning the corner from Market Place into Henshaw Street with a distinct form and Art Deco design **[Plates 9.7 and 9.8],** and the carved-and-painted sandstone capitals and corbel brackets depicting different trades to the fine row of 19th century shops on Henshaw Street **[Plates 9.9 – 9.13]**. At the heart of the proposed extension, a group of modern buildings at 35-47 Market Place, which in part extend the full depth to Albion Street, detract from the established character of the area, although in instances such as the Yorkshire Bank with its substantial cantilevered overhang, buildings comprise architectural interest in their own right **[Plate 9.14]**. This area suffers from the same issues with detracting shopfronts and signage as found elsewhere within the conservation area **[Plates 9.15 and 9.16]**.



Plate 9.1 Parliament Square and facade of Town Centre Shopping Centre



Plate 9.2 Early-20th century terrace which turns corner into High Street



Plate 9.3 Extending boundary to include the whole width of public realm



Plate 9.4 Proposed extension to include wider pedestrianised public realm



Plate 9.5 Market Place fountain and lighting standard



Plate 9.6 Play area in centre of Market Place



Plate 9.7 Art Deco building turning the corner between Market Place and Henshaw Street with large planted bed in front



Plate 9.8 Art Deco detailing



Plate 9.9 19th century terrace of shops on Henshaw Street



Plate 9.10 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street



Plate 9.11 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street



Plate 9.12 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street



Plate 9.13 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street



Plate 9.14 Interesting cantilevered design but detracts from overall character of conservation area



Plate 9.15 Poor signage and shopfronts within proposed extension



Plate 9.16 Poor signage and shopfronts within proposed extension causing harm to overall appearance of building which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area

9.2 Yorkshire Street, Retiro Street and Waterloo Street

Yorkshire Street is a principal street within the conservation area which extends from Parliament Square and High Street, and as such links into the heart of the conservation area. It was constructed as an extension of the High Street at the turn of the 19th century, replacing the historic route which meandered up to the church. Its steep topography means that it falls away quickly and the building typology becomes fairly indistinct as a secondary retail street. At the top end of the street, however, is a collection of buildings which extend the established character of the conservation area, and are proposed for inclusion **[Plates 9.17 and 9.18]**. The proposed extension also picks up the historic route (Goldburn – the main route over the Pennines from Manchester to Yorkshire) through the town as it crosses over from Bow Street into Old Church Street, and then alongside the church gardens up Church Street. The large surface car parking to the north of Old Church Lane currently offers a 'quiet' backdrop, in the place of a former mill **[Plate 9.19]**. However, it is a sensitive location on the historic entry into the conservation area which requires careful redevelopment that takes into consideration the sensitivity of its location and successfully addresses the steep, changing topography.

The modern block between Church Street and Yorkshire Street at 21 – 41 Yorkshire Street is a detracting feature at odds with the prevailing character of the conservation area, and has diminished the historic character of Church Street. However, it occupies a key location mediating between the differing levels of the two streets which bound it. It is of particular importance to the setting of historic Church Street, and its suggested inclusion within the conservation area recognises both this and the opportunity for future enhancement. This follows for the detracting block which stands on the corner with St. Mary's Way **[Plates 9.20 – 9.22]**.

The extension also includes The Old Bank Public House, which is proposed for inclusion on the local list.



Plate 9.17 Handsome group of late 19th century buildings at 34 - 48 Yorkshire Street which make a positive contribution to the conservation area



Plate 9.18 Old Mess House which sits on corner of historic route through town



Plate 9.19 Old Church Street, part of the historic route through the town and with the currently 'quiet' backdrop



Plate 9.20 21 - 41 Yorkshire Street, a modern block at odds with the prevailing character of the conservation area



Plate 9.21 Rear side of 21 - 41 Yorkshire Street block providing poor backdrop to the historic character of Church Street



Plate 9.22 Modern block on corner of St Mary's Way and Yorkshire which does not follow the established character of the conservation area

Building: Old Bank Public House, Yorkshire Street



Plate 9.23 Old Bank Pub stood on narrow site between Bow Street and Waterloo Street

Date: Late 19th century

Rarity: The building occupies a prominent isolated position at the junction of Yorkshire Street with the historic route which curves away south-eastwards.

Aesthetic Interest: It is a neo-classical design in channelled ashlar to Yorkshire Street with a central projecting entrance bay with return elevation in red brick with stone dressings to Waterloo Street and Bow Street. The stone string courses extend along the return elevations with handsome window surrounds and keystone detailing. Vegetation growing out of the roof and the state of some windows suggests it may be in a poor condition.

Group Value: The building occupies an isolated position at the head of Bow Street and Waterloo Street.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: The building was originally a bank, the quality of its architecture reflective of the town's prosperity in the 19th century.

Landmark Status: The building occupies a prominent position in the townscape, emphasised by its isolation and that it stands at the junction with Bow Street – part of the historic route through the town.

Social and Communal Value: The building is reflective of the industrial prosperity of the town in the 19th century.

The last area of the proposed extension covers the remaining linking streets between Union Street and Yorkshire Street; whilst subject to alteration and exhibiting detracting features, they share the same character as the west side of Retiro Street at least in part (already within the conservation area), featuring continuous terrace groups of domestically-scaled buildings with continuous sloping eaves, slanted to follow the gradient of the street and unbroken by party walls, and elements of early shopfronts on Waterloo Street which make a positive contribution the conservation area **[Plates 9.24 to 9.26]**. The nightclub which spans between Retiro Street and Waterloo Street is a major intervention which detracts from the established character of the area, and the Limo Lounge garage-style infill to the terrace group on Waterloo Street breaks its historic building line, which is further marred by alterations to the remaining facades **[Plates 9.27 and 9.28]**.

9.3 Cultural Quarter Public Realm

Gallery Oldham and the attached library are integral to the character and public focus of the Cultural Quarter of the conservation area and form a sympathetic modern addition which takes advantage of the changing gradient to sit comfortably behind the Victorian streetscape on Union Street despite its scale; the area of public realm formed by the pedestrianisation of Ashworth Street is also integral to the character of this space. They are therefore proposed for inclusion within the designated area **[Plate 9.29]**.

9.4 Harrison Street

Harrison Street currently lies on the western boundary of the conservation area, tucked away behind Clegg Street and Union Street, and retains its historic cobbled setts within the roadway. The buildings at 1 and 3 Ascroft Street and their rear boundary wall are dominant features within this backland area almost forgotten behind the Town Square Shopping Centre. However, the buildings are steeped in historic industrial character and are thus worthy of inclusion in the conservation area, as well as inclusion on the local list **[Plates 9.30 - 9.32]**.



Plate 9.24 Handsome terrace on east side of Retiro Street



Plate 9.25 Poor quality alterations including modern windows, roller shutters and signage to southern end of terrace group



Plate 9.26 Examples of poor ground floor frontage and more sensitive solution within proposed extension on Union Street



Plate 9.27 Modern nightclub which spans between Retiro Street and Waterloo Street



Plate 9.28 Unsightly infill within terrace group on Waterloo Street



Plate 9.29 Pedestrianised public realm to south side of Cultural Quarter



Plate 9.30 Rear elevation of Ascroft Street buildings including historic boundary wall and cobbled roadway to Harrison Street



Plate 9.31 Vacant site adjacent to 1 -3 Ascroft Street and behind the Prudential Building on Union Street

Building: 1 and 3 Ascroft Street



Plate 9.32 1 - 3 Ascroft Street, front elevation

Date: Late 19th century

Rarity: The buildings are some of the only historic industrial buildings remaining in the conservation area; others having being cleared previously for redeveloped or leaving detracting chasms in the townscape.

Aesthetic Interest: The buildings exhibit charming industrial character although they are in poor condition and in need of refurbishment and in the case of No.3 reuse. No.3 retains numerous original features; replacement modern windows at No.1 detract.

Group Value: Nos. 1 and 3 Ascroft Street are an isolated group set in this backland area; No. 1 is in residential use whilst the No.3 is currently vacant. They are surrounded by open spaces including the rear yard to the buildings themselves, now used as car parking, and a carpark to the west which may offer potential for redevelopment to support the reuse and refurbishment of the main buildings.

Archaeological Interest: Founded principally in interest of built form discussed above and below.

Historic Association: Links to the industrial development of the area.

Landmark Status: The buildings are a prominent feature on the north west side of this tight backland area, otherwise largely concealed from the conservation area other than oblique views westwards along Ascroft Street.

Social and Communal Value: The building is reflective of the industrial prosperity of the town in the 19th century.

Section 2 – Assessment of Significance

Plate 2.1 Views form part of a wider historic context

Section 3 – Location and Setting

Plate 3.1 St. Mary's Church at the apex of the conservation area

Plate 3.2 Open area immediately north of conservation area

Plate 3.3 Car park fronting the Church Street historic route

Plate 3.4 Tommyfield Market along north side of Albion Street

Plate 3.5 Mid-to-late-20th century architecture to southeast of Market Place

Plate 3.6 Oldham Civic Centre to east

Plate 3.7 Car park and Sainsbury's to south

Plate 3.8 Diverse range of buildings along Union Street to west

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Plate 4.1 The ancient highway through Oldham, 1760 (McPhillips 1997)

Plate 4.2 Oldham c. 1780, looking from Horsedge toward Bardsley (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.3 Oldham in 1756, by Butterworth (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.4 Butterworth's map of Oldham, 1817 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.5 The principal thoroughfare of Goldburn (McPhillips 1997)

Plate 4.6 1848 Ordnance Survey, 19th century ribbon development (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.7 Oldham from Glodwick, 1831 by J.H. Carse (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.8 Oldham, mid-19th century, view from south (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.9 Baines Lancashire map of 1824 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.10 1932 Ordnance Survey, present Conservation Area site marked in red (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.11 Town Hall Square looking west, c. 1890 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.12 Town Hall Square looking east, c. 1900 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.13 Union Street looking east, nos. 87-93 on left, c. 1880 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.14 Union Street looking east, spire to Union Street Chapel in background (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.15 Jubilee celebrations, Yorkshire Street, 1899 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.16 Yorkshire Street from Waterloo Street, c. 1890 (Oldham Local Studies & Archives)

Plate 4.17 Oldham Town Hall, 2018

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Plate 5.1 The rising topography builds up to the former Town Hall, Parliament Square and Church of St Mary and St Peter at its peak

Plate 5.2 The Church of St Mary and St Peter crowning the centre of the conservation area (Jody Hartley 2019)

Plate 5.3 View south from churchyard which surmounts the town centre

Plate 5.4 Views through the heart of the town centre out to the country beyond (Jody Hartley 2019)

Plate 5.5 High Street looking east with Hilton Arcade and Barclays Bank acting as anchors in the streetscape

Plate 5.5 View south from churchyard which surmounts the town centre

Plate 5.6 Domestic character of Queen Street with change in topography accommodating the grander HSBC bank on the corner with Union Street

Plate 5.7 Historic route through town centre along Bow Street (as it approaches junction with Yorkshire Street)

Plate 5.8 Union Street, view into conservation area showing boulevard character, centrally running tram and new library housed discretely behind former library

Plate 5.9 Union Street, tram stop and the Prudential Building in the foreground

Plate 5.10 Union Street smaller scale buildings between the larger set-piece architecture, in this case the Lyceum

Plate 5.11 Hilton Arcade, recommended for inclusion on local list but marred by poor retail frontage and detracting building at nos.1-3 which cuts away corner

Plate 5.12 Poor retail frontage along Curzon Street at ground floor to Hilton Arcade group

Plate 5.13 Grade II-listed Barclays Bank on the corner with Church Terrace and the Greaves Arms positioned behind

Plate 5.14 Converted former Town Hall and new public realm surrounding

Plate 5.15 Parliament Square leading into Yorkshire Street with long-views eastward and rising Church Terrace to War memorial on the left

Plate 5.16 Raised pavement at eastern end of Yorkshire Street with decorative railings and lamps

Plate 5.17 Church Terrace looking towards High Street

Plate 5.18 Listed war memorial set on terracing with Church of St Mary and St Peter behind and the Greaves Arm to its right

Plate 5.19 Church Street which falls away dramatically with tall retaining wall to churchyard garden

Plate 5.20 Eastern facade of former Town Hall extending southwards along Greaves Street

Plate 5.21 Looking east along Curzon Street across pedestrianised public realm

Plate 5.22 Looking southwards down Curzon Street

Plate 5.23 Looking north along Retiro Street, only left side is currently within conservation area

Plate 5.24 Looking north along Greaves Street and run of high quality buildings which mediate change in levels and form worthy neighbours to listed Town Hall

Plate 5.25 Rock Street fronted by the rear of buildings on Church Lane

Plate 5.26 Church Lane with the Church of St Mary and St Peter teminating the view and the return elevation of Barclays Bank in the foreground

Plate 5.27 Church Passage connecting Church Terrace and Church Lane

Plate 5.28 Alley running alongside Prudential Building

Plate 5.29 Public realm set in the heart of the Cultural Quarter

Plate 5.30 Typical 'back-of-house' appearance of buildings as seen from back streets behind

Plate 5.31 Forgotten backland spaces

Plate 5.32 Impact of poor quality retail frontage, roller shutters and signage on quality of buiding above at 22-24 Yorkshire Street

Plate 5.33 Professional services on Queen Street

Plate 5.34 Former Post & Telegraph Office, most recently the Local Studies Archive and about to be vacated

Plate 5.35 Masonic Hall and Union Street Church

Plate 5.36 Extension to former Town Hall to house new cinema

Plate 5.37 Church of St Mary and St Peter

Plate 5.38 War Memorial

Plate 5.39 Former Town Hall (Jody Hartley 2019)

Plate 5.40 Prudential Assurance Building

Plate 5.41 The Lyceum

Plate 5.42 The Masonic Hall

Plate 5.43 United Reform Church

Plate 5.44 Former Central Library

Plate 5.45 Former Post Office

Plate 5.46 109 Union Street

Plate 5.47 5 Greaves Street

Plate 5.48 10 Yorkshire Street

Plate 5.49 Listed buildings on north side of Church Lane

Plate 5.50 Listed buildings on south side of Church Lane

Plate 5.51 25 and 37 High Street

Plate 5.52 11 Church Terrace side return to Church Passage with sandstone finish

Plate 5.53 South face of Hilton Arcade

Plate 5.54 Interior of Hilton Arcade

Plate 5.55 Greaves Arms

Plate 5.56 3 Greaves Street

Plate 5.57 Victoria House, Greaves Street

Plate 5.58 The Old Bill, Greaves Street

Plate 5.59 31 Queen Street

Plate 5.60 Former Museum and Friends Meeting House, Greaves Street

Plate 5.61 18-20 Greaves Street turning into Firth Street and the domestic-scaled building to rear of Lyceum

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Plate 5.63 Town Hall Tavern at 18-20 Yorkshire Street

Plate 5.64 Queen Street Barbers

Plate 5.65 Stone doorcase to vernacular brick building on Clegg Street

Plate 5.66 Liverpool Red sandstone to Church of St Mary and St Peter eastern vestries

Plate 5.67 Decorative lantern and railings to Lyceum

Plate 5.68 Decorative railings

Plate 5.69 Decorative ironwork at entrance to Hilton Arcade

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Plate 6.2 Panoramic views from church yard (Jody Hartley 2019)

Plate 6.3 Long-range views eastwards afforded by steep topography

Plate 6.4 Long view south through Parliament Square

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Plate 6.6 Church of St Mary and St Peter spire sat at the opposite end of the town centre from the civic centre tower

Plate 6.7 Civic centre tower sat at the opposite end of the town centre from the Church of St Mary and St Peter spire

Plate 6.8 Looking eastwards along High Street from Hilton Arcade, passed Barclays Bank and to the Greaves Arms and into the long view beyond

Plate 6.9 Short-range view looking west up Yorkshire Street toward Parliament Square

Plate 6.10 Short view across Parliament Square to war memorial and Church of St Mary and St Peter

Plate 6.11 Short view across Parliament Square to war memorial and Church of St Mary and St Peter

Plate 6.12 Short view along Church Lane terminated by the spire of the Church of St Mary and St Peter

Plate 6.13 Short view along Albion Street framing the handsome 19th century shopfront

Plate 6.14 Short view from the southeast corner of Frith and Greaves Street toward the Town Hall

Plate 6.15 Short view looking north along Retiro Street from Union Street

Plate 6.16 View west along Union Street with St Mary's and St Patrick's RC Church in the background

Plate 6.17 View east from Union Street with flanking civic buildings before the street falls and banks away

Plate 6.18 Short view from Gallery Oldham looking north toward Union Street

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Plate 7.1 Cobbled roadway to Harrison Street

Plate 7.2 Level pedestrianised surface demarked by granite setts and bollards

Plate 7.3 Shared surface running along northern edge of Parliament Square with tarmacked roadway

Plate 7.4 Parliament Square open space

Plate 7.5 Parliament Square extending south with three owls on plinths at southern end

Plate 7.6 Terrace in front of war memorial

Plate 7.7 Memorial stones in church yard

Plate 7.8 Street planter and plants hanging from street furniture

Plate 7.9 Church yard garden

Plate 7.10 Church yard garden

Plate 7.11 Oldham Park from Union Street level

Plate 7.12 Oldham Park looking back at Union Street Chapel

Plate 7.13 Medtia House, 80 Union Street

Plate 7.14 Railings and lamps integral to quality of terracing surrounding war memorail and leading up to church

Plate 7.15 Modern decorative street lights

Plate 7.16 Traditional street lamps

Plate 7.17 Street bollard with owl

Plate 7.18 Street furniture is fairly restrained in the conservation area although food vans add clutter to streetscene

Plate 7.19 Street gates

Plate 7.20 Modern wayfinding signs

Plate 7.21 'Historic' street signs

Plate 7.22 Owl on plinth at northern end of Parliament Square

Plate 7.23 Planters with surrounding setting inscribed

Plate 7.24 Annie Kenney memorial statue, unveiled in December 2018 (Jody Hartley 2019)

Plate 7.25 Kitsch public art in Albion Street

Plate 7.26 Metal sett inserted in Albion Street

Plate 7.27 War Memorial

Plate 7.28 Bronze plaques with memorial dedications

Plate 7.29 Plaque commemorating the incorporation of Oldham as a borough, Town Hall

Plate 7.30 Plaque commemorating the service of MP Winston Churchill, Town Hall

Plate 7.31 Victoria Cross Plaque, 11 Church Terrace

Plate 7.32 Plaque noting the site of the first Yates's Wine Lodge, 8A High Street

Plate 7.33 Plaque commemorating John Lees, Market Hall

Plate 7.34 Plaque commemorating Joseph Platt, 11 Queen Street

Plate 7.35 Plaque marking the former home of John Bunting, 115 Union Street

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Plate 8.1 1-3 High Street detracting from the composition, scale and detailing of the Hilton Arcade block

Plate 8.2 19-21 Queen Street

Plate 8.3 The Prudential Building, vacant and in a deteriorating condition

Plate 8.4 Blank shopfronts along the Hilton Arcade

Plate 8.5 Poor condition typical of many buildings within the conservation area

Plate 8.6 Plate Street typical of 'back-of-house' areas within the conservation area

Plate 8.7 32 Yorkshire Street with poor shopfront and signage, roller shutters and unsightly flues

Plate 8.8 Poor shopfronts and signage across 15 -17 High Street which fails to relate to architecture of building above

Plate 8.9 Poor shopfront infilling historic archway at southern end of Clegg Street

Plate 8.10 Street clutter including advertising on telephone boxes, advertising boards, food vans, bins, planters and benches

Plate 8.11 The southern end of Parliament Square peters off into Clegg Street and does not align with tram stop or provide natural wayfinding into the town centre

Plate 8.12 Large vacant site between Back Greaves Street and Queen Street

Section 9 – Proposed Extensions

Plate 9.1 Parliament Square and facade of Town Centre Shopping Centre

Plate 9.2 Early-20th century terrace which turns corner into High Street

Plate 9.3 Extending boundary to include the whole width of public realm

Plate 9.4 Proposed extension to include wider pedestrianised public realm

Plate 9.5 Market Place fountain and lighting standard

Plate 9.6 Play area in centre of Market Place

Plate 9.7 Art Deco building turning the corner between Market Place and Henshaw Street with large planted bed in front

Plate 9.8 Art Deco detailing

Plate 9.9 19th century terrace of shops on Henshaw Street

Plate 9.10 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street

Plate 9.11 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street

Plate 9.12 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street

Plate 9.13 Carved capital and corbel brackets to 19th century retail frontage on Henshaw Street

Plate 9.14 Interesting cantilevered design but detracts from overall character of conservation area

Plate 9.15 Poor signage and shopfronts within proposed extension

Plate 9.16 Poor signage and shopfronts within proposed extension causing harm to overall appearance of building which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area

Plate 9.17 Handsome group of late 19th century buildings at 34 - 48 Yorkshire Street which make a positive contribution to the conservation area

Plate 9.18 Old Mess House which sits on corner of historic route through town

Plate 9.19 Old Church Street, part of the historic route through the town and with the currently 'quiet' backdrop

Plate 9.20 21 - 41 Yorkshire Street, a modern block at odds with the prevailing character of the conservation area

Plate 9.21 Rear side of 21 - 41 Yorkshire Street block providing poor backdrop to the historic character of Church Street

Plate 9.22 Modern block on corner of St Mary's Way and Yorkshire which does not follow the established character of the conservation area

Plate 9.23 Old Bank Pub stood on narrow site between Bow Street and Waterloo Street

Plate 9.24 Handsome terrace on east side of Retiro Street

Plate 9.25 Poor quality alterations including modern windows, roller shutters and signage to southern end of terrace group

Plate 9.26 Examples of poor ground floor frontage and more sensitive solution within proposed extension on Union Street

Plate 9.27 Modern nightclub which spans between Retiro Street and Waterloo Street

Plate 9.28 Unsightly infill within terrace group on Waterloo Street

Plate 9.29 Pedestrianised public realm to south side of Cultural Quarter

Plate 9.30 Rear elevation of Ascroft Street buildings including historic boundary wall and cobbled roadway to Harrison Street

Plate 9.31 Vacant site adjacent to 1 -3 Ascroft Street and behind the Prudential Building on Union Street

Plate 9.32 1 - 3 Ascroft Street

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants



Management Plan

Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan SPD

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'* as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69). When dealing with planning applications in conservation areas the Council is required to ensure that *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'* (Section 72). Also, Oldham Council has a duty *'from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas'* (Section 71). The 1990 Act (as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (2013)) prevents the demolition of buildings in conservation areas without planning permission and allows for the service of Urgent Works Notices for vacant buildings in a similar way to those for listed buildings. This Management Plan is an example of the sort of proposal envisaged in Section 71.

The sections of the 1990 Act form the foundation for the Council to help manage the built environment in such a way as to retain the special qualities of conservation areas. There are, however, a wide range of other pieces of legislation, national guidance and local policy which assist in this task. They deal with other types of heritage assets, such as listed buildings, additional controls to supplement those included in the 1990 Act (often called Article 4 Directions), various types of repair and enforcement notices, and advice on how to assess the impact of development on the setting of an area or building and many other related topics.

Consequently, it is important that this document is not read in isolation from additional guidance and policy documents. Where applicable, links to the documents have been listed in the relevant policy sections below to provide additional guidance.

The following set of management aims and policies are based upon the understanding of the conservation area outlined in the Appraisal, most critically the negative features and opportunities for enhancement identified in Section 8. They seek to provide guidance to both Oldham Council in determining planning applications for development, but also to building owners and developers when preparing development proposals.

It is essential that any Management Plan supports a modern community and is considerate of both social and economic factors. In view of this, a stakeholder consultation process has been undertaken and has formed an important aspect in formulating these policies and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will now be subject to full public consultation prior to adoption. Conservation areas are not frozen entities and should not be seen in isolation from their surrounding context. Therefore, it is essential that these policies remain flexible and are reviewed and monitored on a regular basis to ensure that they remain relevant to the changing ambitions, issues and priorities of Oldham Council and the people who live in, work in and visit the town, as well as the conservation area's contribution to the broader context of Oldham.

The principal aim of the following policies is the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area through the protection and improvement of existing buildings and townscape features which make a positive contribution and the introduction of good quality, contemporary design. There is also a presumption against demolition, except where buildings have been identified as having a negative impact on the conservation area.

There will be some cases of overlap between this Management Plan and existing policy documents and guidance. It is not the remit of this document to address those matters associated with the wider management of items such as parking, housing or crime.

Each set of management policies is prefaced by a series of aims which sets out the overarching strategic principles that form the basis of the management policies. Recommendations have also been included where additional guidance on management processes could be adopted to further support the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

Through the understanding of the Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area provided in the Appraisal it is clear that there are a number of key objectives that, if implemented, would contribute to achieving the following key ambitions:

- Address the challenges facing this 'at risk' area;
- Understand the significance of the conservation area and enhance its character and appearance;
- Stimulate local interest in both the protection of and careful development of the conservation area for present and future generations;
- Encourage wider use and enjoyment of assets within Oldham Town Centre;
- Encourage the conservation, repair, reuse and management of the area's historic features;
- Inform the Local Plan review and its implementation and future development management;
- Support the regeneration of the Oldham town centre which could be delivered via a masterplan approach;
- Achieve the removal of the area from Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register.*

The following policies and recommendations therefore include opportunities for both long-term and short-term change which cumulatively would secure the following three key objectives:

A. ENHANCEMENT

B. REGENERATION

C. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Oldham Council recognises that whilst change can be achieved through the development management process this will generally only bring about change in the long-term; as such, recommendations are also made in D. MANAGEMENT regarding other avenues the Council may wish to explore to secure more immediate change.



The Conservation Area contains a diverse array of assets

A. Enhancement

A.1 Vacant Heritage Assets

Aim: To secure the viable reuse of vacant heritage assets to prevent their decay and dereliction and ensure their long-term preservation and contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Policy A.1a Building owners must keep their buildings and grounds in good condition to prevent long term maintenance issues and decay. A clear legal process exists to compel owners to undertake essential repairs to listed buildings and those whereby the preservation of the building is important to maintaining the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Policy A.1b Vacant buildings must be correctly maintained by their owners to ensure their preservation whilst new uses are sought.

Policy A.1c Short-term temporary uses should be sought for vacant buildings which would engage the local community with the conservation area.

Policy A.1d Proposals which enliven the frontage of vacant buildings such as public art should be actively pursued as a means of engaging the local community with their built heritage.

Policy A.1e Oldham Council will pursue enforcement action for neglected or dilapidated buildings.

Policy A.1f New development schemes within and around the conservation area should consider how they can introduce new uses into the town centre to support its vitality and, where possible, bring vacant buildings back into use.

Recommendation A.1i Oldham Council to lead by example and use a vacant building in their ownership to demonstrate best practice to local building owners through engagement exercises, this could also be brought forward to work in tandem with wider social and well-being projects.

Recommendation A.1ii Oldham Council to monitor those buildings identified as 'Buildings at Risk' in the accompanying Gazetteer and develop a strategy for their reuse. Oldham Council should consider the inclusion of further buildings at risk i.e. those at risk as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development, or which are vulnerable to becoming so, should they arise as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan review process.

Recommendation A.1iii Oldham Council to engage with stakeholders to identify short-term, temporary uses that would be attractive to them.

Recommendation A.1iv Future town centre redevelopment proposals and Oldham Council regeneration initiatives should consider how they can stimulate the reuse of vacant buildings in the conservation area.

Further Guidance Links:

Vacant Historic Buildings: Guidelines of Managing Risks (Historic England, updated 2018)

https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/vacanthistoricbuildings/heag183-vacant-historic-buildings/

Stopping the Rot: A Guide to Enforcement Action to Save Historic Buildings (Historic England, updated 2016)

https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot/heag046b-stopping-the-rot/



Effective care of vacant buildings is key

A.2 Repair and Maintenance of Heritage Assets

Aim: To reverse the cumulative negative impact that the poor upkeep and maintenance of buildings and inappropriate alterations have on the appearance of buildings and the character of the conservation area.

Policy A.2a It is essential that the buildings are subject to general maintenance by their owners on a regular basis. This should include the following:

- Re-painting of window, door and shopfront joinery;
- General minor repairs to fenestration, including replacement of glazing where necessary;
- Re-painting and/or re-rendering of façades;
- Repointing;
- Removal of debris from gutters;
- Repairs, including repair of missing or slipped roof slates to prevent water ingress.

Policy A.2b When undertaking repairs, materials must be used on a like-for-like basis and be appropriate to their architectural period. Salvage and existing materials should be used as far as possible; unpainted external walls such as stone or brick should not be painted or rendered.

Policy A.2c When applications for works to historic buildings are proposed it will be expected that poor-quality modern windows are replaced with timber windows following the historic fenestration pattern.

Policy A.2d Parking spaces which have eroded the definition of original plots and caused harm to the setting of the buildings and character of the conservation area should be removed; proposals for future parking in these locations will not be acceptable.

Policy A.2e When applications for works to buildings are proposed it will be expected that ventilation ducts, air-conditioning units, security equipment and wiring will be relocated to more discreet locations and redundant services/wiring removed. Applications for future proposals must take into consideration the impact on the appearance of buildings and the conservation area.

Policy A.2f Enforcement action such as urgent works notices, enforcement notices and listed building enforcement notices will be pursued where it can be demonstrated that it is expedient to do so.

Recommendation A.2i It is recommended that Oldham Council consider the introduction of the following Article 4 directions: Terraces with a domestic character on Clegg Street, Queen Street, Waterloo Street, Retiro Street: removal of permitted development rights for works to the front elevations and front roofslopes.

Further Guidance Links:

Historic England online guidance: Looking after Historic Buildings

https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/

Historic England online guidance: Article 4 Directions

https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/historic-environment/article4directions/

A.3 Shopfronts, Retail Frontage and Signage

Aim: To uplift the human experience of the conservation area at ground floor level and the perceived quality of the urban environment in order to bring about major enhancement to its character and appearance.

Policy A.3a New shopfronts must be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the host building and relate satisfactorily to the design of the upper parts of the facade.

Policy A.3b New shopfronts within historic buildings must preserve those elements that contribute to the traditional character of the building including historic corbels, pilasters, fascias and stallrisers, or seek to reinstate them where missing. Size, scale, elaborate or simple design and detailing, the use of correct materials and colour schemes are all important in making shopfronts acceptable as parts of existing buildings and areas.

Policy A.3c Signage must be sensitively designed and integrated into the shopfront and streetscene.

Policy A.3d Signage must not dominate the building façade and should relate to its character, scale and architectural features.

Policy A.3e Internally illuminated box fascia or projecting signs will not be acceptable.

Policy A.3f Shop signs must be located at fascia level and follow the pattern within the street.

Policy A.3g High level signs will not be acceptable.

Policy A.3h The location of signage on non-retail buildings must be carefully considered so as to not harm the appearance of the building.

Policy A.3i When applications for works to buildings are proposed it will be expected that detracting elements of shopfronts and signage will be removed. Enforcement action will be taken where it is expedient to do so.

Policy A.3j Solid external roller shutters will not be permitted unless the need for them can be robustly justified and enforcement action will be taken to secure their removal where it is expedient to do so; lattice grilles or internal roller shutters would be acceptable alternatives.



Example of appropriate stallrisers


Well-proportioned pilasters and fascia



Appropriate contemporary shopfront

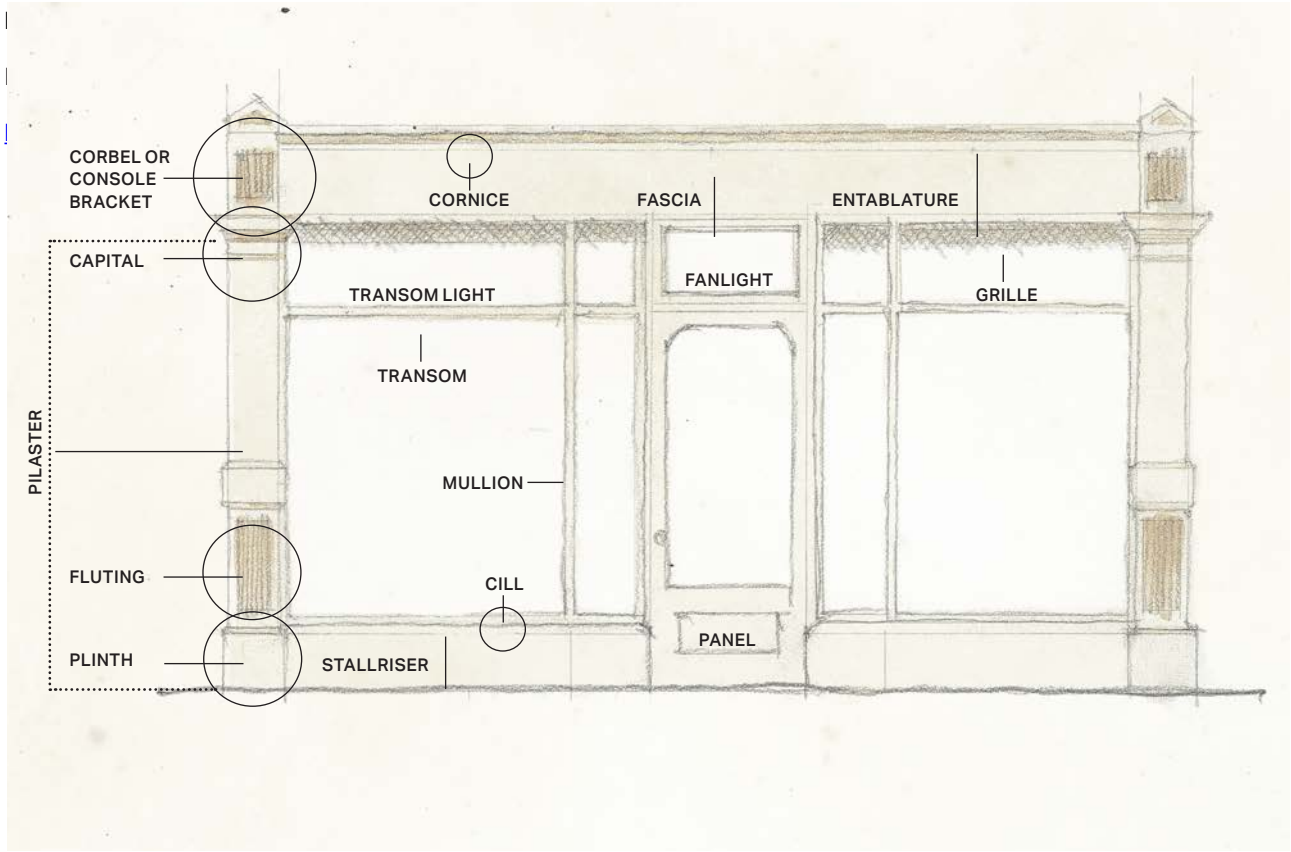
Recommendation A.3i It is recommended that Oldham Council pursue enforcement action where expedient to do so to secure the removal of unauthorised detracting shopfronts and signage, including serving discontinuance notices for advertising which benefits from deemed consent.

Recommendation A.3ii Oldham Council should collaborate with shop owners to create an active frontage through Hilton Arcade.

Recommendation A.3iii Given the particular impact that the poor retail frontage has on the character and appearance of the conservation area it is advised that Oldham Council produce more detailed guidance relating to shopfronts, shutters and signs and consider the introduction of a Local Development Order to incentivise the use of good design principles.

Recommendation A.3iv It is advised that Oldham Council liaise with national retailers to pursue the introduction of appropriately detailed shopfronts and signage to uplift the general character and incentivise smaller business owners to follow suit.

Recommendation A.3v It is recommended that Oldham Council consider implementing directions under **regulation 7** to restrict deemed consent for advertising on buildings with a domestic character on Union Street, Clegg Street, Queen Street, Waterloo Street and Retiro Street.



B.1 Demolition

Aim: To ensure the significance of the conservation area is preserved and that any future development enhances its positive characteristics.

Policy B.1a Demolition will only be permitted for the replacement of buildings identified as negative or neutral contributors to the conservation area.

Policy B.1b The current condition of a listed building will not be accepted as rationale for demolition. This is underscored by the NPPF and Historic England guidance.

Policy B.1c Any replacement buildings must complement the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of heritage assets.

Policy B.1d New buildings must be fully accessible and provide an active frontage where they address the streetscene to ensure that 'dead' frontages are not created which would impact detrimentally on the conservation area.

Recommendation B.1i Future town centre development proposals in Oldham Council regeneration initiatives should consider opportunities to enhance the character of the conservation area and its setting through the provision of solutions to address buildings and sites which are identified as making a negative contribution to the conservation area and to support the reuse of vacant heritage assets.



New development can enhance the conservation area

Further Guidance Links:

National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2019)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740441/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf

National Planning Practice Guidance (updated 2019)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment

B.2 Development

Aim: To ensure that only applications for development which reflect careful consideration of the character and appearance of the conservation area are approved, and to encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites within the conservation area and its setting.

Policy B.2a All new development must be of high quality. It should respect the character and appearance of the conservation area and should be of appropriate scale, density, height, form, massing, layout, plot position, materials, colours, composition and detailed design.

Policy B.2b Exemplary modern design is encouraged where it is well-designed, of an appropriate scale, using good quality appropriate materials and carefully considered to respond to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Imitation of earlier styles is not encouraged.

Policy B.2c Original building plots, where their relationship with the pattern of development and other plots makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, should be retained.

Policy B.2d The change of use of buildings should include careful consideration of the consequent changes to, among others, delivery access, parking, and external services, such as condensing units. Changes that have a detrimental impact on the conservation area will not be permitted.

Policy B.2e New extensions must have regard to the character and appearance of the principal building. They must be of an appropriate design, mass, scale, height, colour, material, layout and form to ensure that they are subservient to the original building and that it is not obscured or overdeveloped.

Policy B.2f Development proposals must protect existing street patterns, open spaces, walls, railings, materials and other elements that are an integral part of the conservation area.

Recommendation B.2i Oldham Council, via its town centre regeneration initiatives, should consider opportunities to redevelop vacant sites within the conservation area and its setting.

Further Guidance Links:

National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2019)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/740441/National_Planning_Policy_Framework_web_accessible_version.pdf

National Planning Practice Guidance (updated 2019)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment

B.3 Views and Setting

Aim: To protect the established and valued views of the surrounding area which contribute to the historic context and setting of Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area, as well as local views within the conservation area.

Policy B.3a Any future development within the setting of the conservation area must preserve (or better reveal) those elements of its setting that make a positive contribution to its overall character.

Policy B.3b Development within or outside of the conservation area which would harmfully intrude into the views and vistas identified in the Appraisal and cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area overall will not be permitted.

Policy B.3c Development within the setting of Church of St. Mary and St. Peter must preserve its significance and respect its important townscape role in forming the peak of the conservation area.

Policy B.3d Verified views may be requested by Oldham Council in support of applications for redevelopment to impartially show the impact on the setting of the conservation area and its views.

Recommendation B.3i It is recommended that Oldham Council undertake a comprehensive study of views across the conservation area and beyond to inform future development proposals and allow for their impact on views and setting to be impartially assessed.

Further Guidance Links:

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Historic England, updated 2017)

https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/



Wider views contribute much to the context of the conservation area

B.4 Public Realm

Aim: To ensure new interventions in the public realm are considered carefully in the context of good surviving examples of street furniture, surface coverings and public art/sculptures/monuments to preserve and enhance its essential character and to encourage the introduction of appropriate greening and landscaping.

Policy B.4a Proposals for additional street trees and planting need to be carefully considered and not be positioned so as to obscure positive buildings or block views.

Policy B.4b Options for additional green spaces in which to sit and dwell should be considered as part of future redevelopments within the conservation area or its setting.

Policy B.4c In the main retail core street furniture should follow the established green/gold design, and bollards must be repositioned to align the extant owl motif where present.

Policy B.4d New street furniture must be limited to that required and not lead to the build-up of street clutter. It must be of a suitable standard of design, accord with the patterns of items already in use and generally be sited so as to be visually unobtrusive, having regard to the character and quality of the existing townscape.

Policy B.4e Change in street furniture design will be permitted where it helps to define different uses and spaces within the conservation area; however, the interface between these needs to be carefully considered.

Policy B.4f Opportunities for public art which reinforces the identity of the conservation area should be pursued as part of redevelopment proposals.

Policy B.4g Suitable paving materials should be used in all areas, including new developments, and existing historic and sympathetic modern coverings must be preserved.

Policy B.4h New interventions into the public realm should consider the needs of those with mobility problems, pushchair use and disabilities.

Recommendation B.4i Opportunities to create fully shared surfaces and remove unnecessary bollards and gates should be pursued.

Recommendation B.4ii Action should be taken to control the build-up of street clutter, including the use of public telephone boxes for advertising and interventions by statutory undertakers.

Recommendation B.4iii A public realm strategy should be developed and routes into and across the conservation area made central to future development proposals and regeneration initiatives.

Recommendation B.4iv Opportunities to enhance the usability of existing green spaces in the conservation area should be sought, including the management of anti-social behaviour.

B.5 Wayfinding

Aim: To improve wayfinding into and around the conservation area, between key transport links and better define the conservation area.

Policy B.5a New connections into the conservation area must be formed in a creative manner which does not add further street clutter.

Policy B.5b Proposals for sites at key points of entry into the conservation area must be mindful of their important position and enhance wayfinding.

Policy B.5c Tactile approaches to wayfinding and to define the conservation area boundary such as art, colour and materiality should be pursued.

Recommendation B.5i Oldham Council should invite proposals for new, creative solutions to improve wayfinding into and across the town centre.

Recommendation B.5ii A public realm strategy should be developed and routes into and across the conservation area made central to future town centre development proposals and regeneration initiatives.



Clear wayfinding helps to define a conservation area

C. Community Engagement

C.1 Identity

Aim: To give the conservation area a clear identity, engage the public and celebrate the heritage of Oldham whilst incentivising the care and conservation of its buildings and character and appearance overall.

Policy C.1a The full interactive Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be made available on the council's website and in interactive format to encourage its use.

Policy C.1b Oldham Council will continue to engage with stakeholders to deepen their understanding of the significance of the conservation area and invite their input into how its character and appearance can be conserved.

Policy C.1c Public art should be explored as a means of engagement; enlivening the conservation area and defining Oldham's identity.

Recommendation C.1i Oldham Council should work with stakeholders to develop proposals to engage the community with the conservation area and its heritage assets.

Further Guidance Links:

Heritage Schools (Historic England, updated 2018)

https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/heritage-schools/

C.2 Well-being

Aim: To create a place that people find welcoming and which contributes to their sense of identity, local pride and well-being.

Policy C.2a Oldham Council will lead on the overall uplift of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Policy C.2b Proposals which introduce short-term temporary uses into vacant buildings that are focused on community engagement and well-being will be welcomed.

Recommendation C.2i Oldham Council should work with stakeholders to develop proposals to engage the community with the conservation area and its heritage assets including heritage walks etc as well as exploring links to wider social and well-being projects.



The town centre can be a healthy and comfortable place to dwell

Further Guidance Links:

Heritage Counts (Historic England, updated 2018)

https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/

D. Management

D.1 Adoption and Enforcement

Aim: To ensure that the conservation area is correctly managed and the tools available to Oldham Council are used to effectively enforce the conservation area status.

Policy D.1a Building owners are responsible for ensuring the appropriate consents are in place before undertaking any changes to their property.

Policy D.1b Oldham Council will investigate unauthorised development and take necessary action to ensure compliance with national and local policy, including the management principles set out above.

Policy D.1c Utilising the Gazetteer as a record of every building in the conservation area, Oldham Council will actively pursue unlawful works where it is expedient to do so.

Policy D.1d Oldham Council will undertake a regular review of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, updating policy as required ensuring the plan remains a useful, relevant working document. A full review should be undertaken within three years of adoption and every five years thereafter.

Recommendation D.1i Oldham Council should adopt the extensions proposed within the Appraisal to provide a clearer definition and boundary of the conservation area.

Recommendation D.1ii Oldham Council should ratify the buildings recommended for inclusion on the local list and extend this to cover the entire borough.

Recommendation D.1iii Oldham Council to appoint a conservation officer or heritage champion to provide guidance and support to building owners and development control colleagues.

Recommendation D.1iv Oldham Council to provide training to development control and enforcement officers following the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Further Guidance Links:

Stopping the Rot: A Guide to Enforcement Action to Save Historic Buildings (Historic England, updated 2016)

https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/stoppingtherot/heag046b-stopping-the-rot/

D.2 Additional Powers

Aim: The Council seeks to make best use of the powers available to it to secure the enhancement of the conservation area and its removal from the 'At-Risk' register.

Policy D.2a Oldham Council will actively pursue relevant heritage funding streams including Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSICA) and Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) to secure funding.

Policy D.2b Oldham Council will support applications for heritage outreach projects including Sharing Heritage and Young Roots grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Policy D.2c Oldham Council will consider the use of additional planning powers including enforcement action, serving Article 4 Directions and introducing Local Development Orders where it is expedient to do so.

Further Guidance Links:

Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (Historic England)

https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/grants/our-grant-schemes/partnership-schemes-in-conservation-areas/

Breathe New Life into an Old Place - Make It a Heritage Action Zone (Historic England)

https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/breathe-new-life-into-old-places-through-heritage-action-zones/

National Lottery Grants for Heritage

https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/national-lottery-grant-heritage

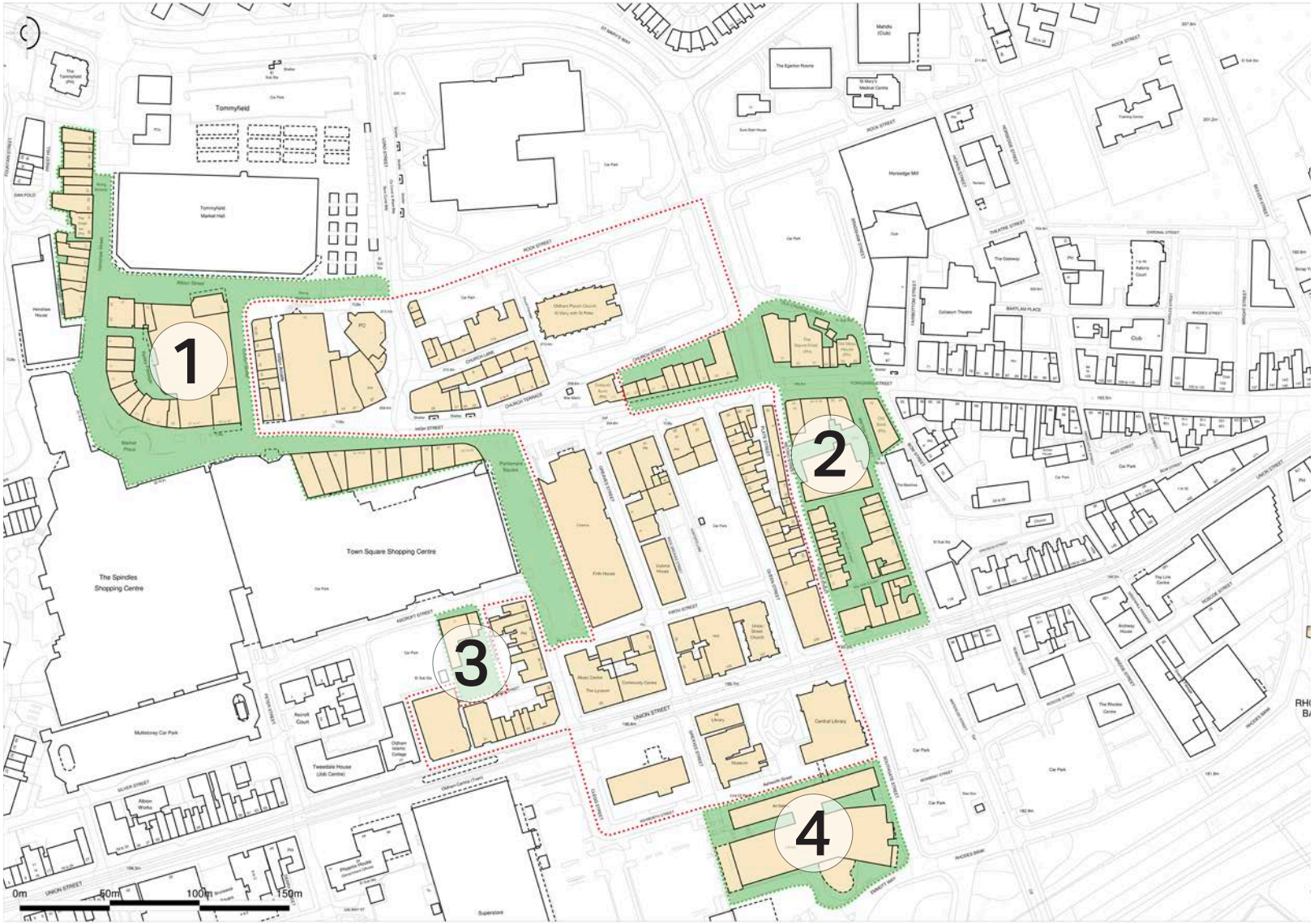
Future High Streets Fund

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals



Gazetteer

Oldham Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan SPD



1. High Street east and Parliament Square
2. Yorkshire, Retiro and Waterloo Street
3. Harrison Street
4. Cultural Quarter

- Present Oldham Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed extensions

Gazetteer Draft

The following provides a concise, illustrated character description of each building within the Oldham Conservation Area, grouped by street. Streets within proposed extensions to the conservation area are also included, as identified by headings. Please use the blue icons at the bottom of the pages of the digital version of the Gazetteer to jump directly to building descriptions for the existing Conservation Area, and the buildings within each of the proposed conservation area extensions.

Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4



Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

North Side

1-3 High Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Late-20th century office building in red brick with recessed tiled shopfront, west return elevation onto Curzon Street. Visible slate mansard and vertical brick detailing provide some character; projecting upper storeys give a Tudor-esque effect. Poor metal link to Hilton Arcade to east. Shopfront signage also detracts.



1-3 High Street, south elevation to High Street



1-3 High Street, west elevation to Curzon Street

Hilton Arcade

Status: Unlisted; positive, recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century (1883)

Overall condition: Fair-to-poor

Use: Vacant walkway

Notes: Particularly handsome late-Victorian arcade, though has fallen on hard times due to vacancy. Ornate, carved stone archways to High Street and Albion Street; in red brick at upper storeys with elaborate stone dressings, including tripartite window arrangement at second floor. Original domed roof has been lost. Much of the interior has been retained, including glazed brick and iron work, but the dead frontages significantly detract from the character of the building and streetscape. Active use is gravely needed. Internally, one of three bays on the east side appear to have been historically infilled. No. 12 Curzon Street provides a good example of a retained arcade frontage (though plant detracts). Opaque pigeon netting has collected dust and detracts, but could be improved. Externally, visible vegetation growth at both ends detracts, as do modern floodlights. Deteriorating condition facing Albion Street and projecting services are also a concern.



Hilton Arcade, north elevation to Albion Street



Hilton Arcade, disused shopfront



Hilton Arcade, interior roolight and glazed brick at upper storeys



Hilton Arcade, south elevation to High Street

15-17 High Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late 19th and Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Forms three-four storey brick range. Surviving historic frontage has been painted white. Group has been awkwardly split into two to form nos. 15-17. Enlarged rebuilt shopfronts and box facias detract, the latter overlapping over pilaster, shop windows facing into Hilton Arcade also detract. Modern sash windows at upper floors are acceptable



15-17 High Street, west side of frontage



15-17 High Street, east side of frontage



15 High Street, detracting shopfront to Hilton Arcade


15-17 High Street, box signage detail

19-21 High Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: :Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Forms part of group with no. 23. Late-20th century retail unit has been sensitively designed to not detract from streetscape. Red brick with stone bandking and lintels. Corner glazing lined with film, enlarged signage and Juliet balconies at first floor detract.



19-21 High Street

23 High Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/café (public house)

Notes: Prominent corner position with Lord Street, but angles back from High Street to create gateway effect. Two storeys in red brick with stone courses. As at nos. 19-21 there are Juliet balconies to first floor windows; however these have been painted dark and better integrate into the façade. 'Traditional' pub signage at odds with character of building, but the frontage is well-kept and responds architecturally to the corner.


23 High Street


23 High Street, return to Lord Street

Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

25-37 High Street, Barclays Bank

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Early-20th century (c. 1900)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Financial/professional services (bank)

Notes: Four-storey ashlar façade in prominent corner position, forming part of key views from High Street and sitting at the base of Church Lane. Neoclassical with elaborate detailing, including a domed, canted corner tower and smaller dome to the rear, stepped gables, arcaded fenestration and a highly-decorative principal entrance. Main elevation to High Street is divided into four asymmetrical bays. Rear elevation to Church Lane features pedimented, gabled dormers and a lower four-bay range. No. 37 is in separate shop use; shopfront and windows detract. Additional detracting elements include roller shutters, satellite dish and servicing, and modern entrance doors and double-height glazed infill to bank. Good example of subtle signage, though it obscures the frieze.



25 -37 High Street, principal entrance



25-37 High Street, principal south elevation



25-37 High Street, north elevation to Church Lane



25-37 High Street, example of appropriately-scaled signage

39-41 High Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th

Overall condition: Good

Use: Financial/professional services

Notes: Attractive Victorian office frontage in red brick with subtle stone details. Two small gables at roof line feature spherical spheres. Modern shopfront detracts but fascia is of appropriate proportion; this wraps to side elevation to the south. Ground floor brickwork appears rebuilt. Security camera projects egregiously from southeast corner of the building on unattractive metal arm.



39-41 High Street

1-5 Church Terrace

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th/early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Former bank, now vacant

Notes: Three-storey Neoclassical frontage in ashlar, channelled with a course of granite at the ground floor; flanking bays project slightly. Prominent corner location opposite Parliament Square, from which slate roof is visible. Noticeable vacancy and alterations to ground floor windows and insertion of ATM detract. Stone continues to return west elevation which faces a cobbled alley; exterior security bars and large fire escape stair affixed to this side is visible from High Street and detract. Rear elevation in white glazed brick, red brick at ground floor. Security bars also present here; elevation obscured by modern metal security gate and barbed wire.



1-5 Church Terrace



1-5 Church Terrace, rear elevation

7-9 Church Terrace

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Early-19th century (though date plaque affixed at 2nd floor appears older)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/café, retail

Notes: Plain three-storey elevation in red brick, modern shopfronts, though shopfront to no. 7 is of good quality. Modern windows – those at second floor are single pane and of the wrong style. Rear elevation partially visible from rear alleyway.



7-9 Church Terrace

11 Church Terrace

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Early-19th century (possibly includes 18th century elements)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Simple three storey façade in red brick with stone plinth, handsome east return in coursed rubble with two gables faces narrow pedestrian passage to Church Lane and churchyard. Prominent, elevated position within conservation area facing Parliament Square. Stone quoin detailing where it turns the corner, pronounced stone window lintels and cills. Recessed entryway. Modern windows are suitable enough. Local blue plaque from 2003 commemorates Oldham citizens who awarded the Victoria Cross, linking the building with the adjacent war memorials.



11 Church Terrace



11 Church Terrace, east return elevation

13 Church Terrace, Greaves Arms

Status: Unlisted; positive, recommended for local list

Date: Early-20th century (1925)

Overall condition: Fair-to-poor

Use: Vacant

Notes: Prominent position at summit of Yorkshire Street, features heavily in views down High Street. Interwar red-brick hotel/public house building with lively frontage facing war memorial. Rear and north return elevations detract with infilled windows and doors, fire escape, extract vents and plant. Ground floor windows and door to principal elevation also blocked. New use strongly needed, particularly given its important relationship with the public realm. South return elevation to Yorkshire Street includes a detracting betting shop shopfront and poor signage.



Greaves Arms



Greaves Arms, rear elevation



Greaves Arms, north return elevation

South Side

Former Town Hall

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Mid-19th century, late 19th-century extension (1841, extended 1879-80)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/café and leisure (coffee shop, event space, cinema)

Notes: Former town hall building by George Woodhouse and Edward Potts in robust Greek revival style. Dominant Ionic portico projects into square, mirrored in pilasters to either side. Channelled ashlar finish to Yorkshire Street, east return to Greaves Street starts in red brick with stone dressings before continuing again in stone as part of the late-19th century extension, where Classical elements dramatically repeat. West return to Parliament Square also begins in red brick; late-19th century elevation is now enclosed by a bold, 2016 glazed two-storey extension, though the historic façade can still be articulated through the glass. A number of modern windows, but of sensitive design.



Town Hall and east return to Greaves Street



Town Hall and west return to Parliament Square

10 Yorkshire Street

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (c. 1890)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Financial/professional services (bank)

Notes: Strong classical frontages to Yorkshire Street and Greaves Street in ashlar, pairs elegantly with adjacent Town Hall. Architectural details include dentilled cornices, first floor window pediments and corner quoins. Ground floor windows to Yorkshire Street have been infilled with cashpoint machines and detracting signage. Rear elevation in red and yellow brick is visible from Greaves Street.



10 Yorkshire Street



10 Yorkshire Street, west return elevation

16 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Restaurant/café (public house)

Notes: Three storey public house in red brick; stone detailing provides attractive contrast but would benefit from cleaning. Conspicuous cabling and later windows at first and second floors detract; secondary glazing within visible from street level. East return elevation to Hunter's Lane built in three visible phases, stepping down to a single-storey elevation at rear. Conduit and condition of brickwork and windows detract.



16 Yorkshire Street



16 Yorkshire Street, east return elevation

18-20 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/Café (public house)

Notes: Robust Art Deco-style frontage in ashlar; canted corner entrance and second storey gable to the corner of Yorkshire Street and Hunter's Lane. Granite banding and door surround, carved figures accentuate a first floor tripartite window facing Yorkshire Street. Roofline comprises mansard extension with three conspicuous dormers to Yorkshire Street, creating imbalance in southeast views. Long west return elevation to Hunter's Lane in red brick; use of ground floor roller shutters detracts. Rear elevation is blind, three storeys in red brick face a car park. Modern windows throughout detract from streetscape, including large public house/shopfront windows to ground floor and first floor windows (without glazing bars) and inappropriate casement at the second floor of the canted corner. Oversized signage to canted corner.



18-20 Yorkshire Street



18-20 Yorkshire Street, west return elevation

Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

22-24 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Charming two-storey early-20th century office building with attic mansard, in stone at ground floor and red brick above. Large and robust shopfront at the ground floor obscures ground floor detailing almost completely and substantially detracts from the character of the building. Signage continues to obscure ground floor windows along east return elevation to Queen Street, where plant fixed to the façade and a poor service door arrangement also detract. Windows to rear elevation have been infilled.



22-24 Yorkshire Street



22-24 Yorkshire Street, east return elevation

26 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Fair to poor

Use: Sui Generis (nightclub)

Notes: Three storey office building in Queen Anne revival style. Red brick with elaborate stone detailing to the principal façade; stone has been painted at the first floor, which detracts from the appearance of the building. Twin gables, stone finials and column detail to second floor tripartite windows enrich the elevation to Yorkshire Street. Red brick and stone string courses continue along the west return to Queen Street; ground and first floor windows here have been blocked. Plant and modern infill along the rear of the building visible from Queen Street. Modern windows and signage, paint and roller shutters to the ground floor shopfront detract from character. Substantial vegetation growth at first floor, second floor and roofline.



26 Yorkshire Street



26 Yorkshire Street, west return elevation

Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

28-30 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Office/retail

Notes: Neoclassical frontage in red brick with stone detailing, including modillion cornice and pedimented windows at the first floor. Ground floor shopfront in ashlar. Stonework in need of cleaning; state of stone, poor shopfront signage and modern alterations to shopfront windows detract from the streetscape. Narrow east return elevation to Plate Street, where red brick and stone work wrap around.



28-30 Yorkshire Street

32 Yorkshire Street, York House

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Restaurant/Café

Notes: Striking solitary façade to Yorkshire Street, flanked by Plate Street and Retiro Street; forms terminus to south-facing views into conservation area from St. Mary's Way. Poor ground floor shopfront, signage and roller shutter detract. In red brick with gable at roofline; stone detailing at first and second floors has been painted white, with elegantly carved 'York House' lettering to fascia between floors. Return elevations highly visible, blind to Plate Street with modern ventilation pipes, roller shutter and vegetation growth near roof. First floor windows span elevation to Retiro Street, back of modern interior stud wall obscures windows and is visible from the street. Projecting extract servicing projects from brickwork and through windows, also detracting.



32 Yorkshire Street, view from St. Mary's Lane



32 Yorkshire Street, east return elevation to Retiro Street



32 Yorkshire Street and east return elevation to Plate Street



32 Yorkshire Street, visible stud wall and extract services to Retiro Street

North Side

79 Union Street, Prudential Assurance Building

Status: Listed, Grade II; detracting

Date: Late-19th century (1889)

Overall condition: Poor

Use: Vacant

Notes: Office building of high architectural quality by Alfred Waterhouse, flanked by towers (which have lost their roofs) with elaborate terracotta and polished granite dressings. Rich ornamentation and powerful form provide a dramatic anchor for the wider conservation area, broad rear elevation is highly visible in views from Ascroft Street. The building is in need of reuse (which the LPA is pursuing); its current dilapidated condition presently detracts from the character of the conservation area. Pedestrian walkway to the east of building provides close appreciation of architectural detail. Placement on a local heritage at risk register is recommended.



79 Union Street, front elevation



79 Union Street, southwest turret & west elevation



79 Union Street, rear elevation



79 Union Street. detail

81 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Mixed, retail and education

Notes: Typical mid-century commercial frontage, large shopfront windows in-keeping with architectural character of building; signage, conduit and roller shutter detract. The massing, mixed materials and detailing of the rear of the building facing Printer Street detract from the character of the area, however, and hinder views of the Prudential Assurance Building.



81 Union Street



81 Union Street rear elevation, Prudential Assurance Building to west

83-85 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Charity and office

Notes: Retained Victorian domestic scale and use of red brick and stone are positive elements, windows are modern. Present shopfront and signage detract.



83-85 Union Street

87-93 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Mixed; restaurant, retail, office

Notes: Retained Victorian domestic scale and use of red brick and stone detailing are positive elements, canted SE corner (a 20th century alteration) provides a gateway effect into Clegg Street. Windows are modern. Alterations, signage and roller shutter at no. 87 detract.



87-89 Union Street

95 Union Street, Lyceum and Art School

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Mid-19th century (Lyceum 1856, Art School added in 1881)

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Partial use as music school and theatre (extending into building to rear), otherwise vacant

Notes: Elegant Neoclassical stone frontage is one of Union Street's earliest buildings; cast iron lanterns and robust railings, urns at the roofline and well-kept greenery all contribute positively to streetscape. Condition of vacant section of the building detracts; use needed throughout. Railings painted white at lower ground floor also detract. Neoclassical return elevations and fenestration pattern wrap around to both Clegg Street and Greaves Street.



95 Union Street, east elevation to Greaves Street



95 Union Street, Lyceum



95 Union Street, west elevation to Clegg Street



95 Union Street, lantern detail

Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

99-103 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Charity and LPA offices

Notes: Domestic scale and use of red brick and stone are positive elements found throughout the conservation area, windows are modern. Nos. 101-103 are of two bays at upper floors, whilst. No. 99 at the corner features tripartite arrangements with stone dressings. Present signage and heavy shopfront fascia detract.



99-103 Union Street

105 Union Street, Masonic Hall

Status: Listed, Grade II; detracting

Date: Late-19th century (c. 1880 with 1924 rear extension)

Overall condition: Poor

Use: Vacant

Notes: Asymmetrical frontage in Greek revival style provides interest, but present condition detracts from the character of the conservation area, including laminating brickwork, poor repointing repairs, visible water ingress, broken pipes, etc. To the rear, a four-storey wing in red brick with stone detailing; blocked windows and a modern upper-storey extension are visible from Firth Street and detract. New use needed.



105 Union Street, Masonic Hall



105 Union Street, Masonic Hall lightwell



105 Union Street, insensitive repointing



105 Union Street, rear elevation to Firth Street

107 Union Street, United Reformed Church

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Mid-19th century (1855)

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Church

Notes: Improved condition following a recently-awarded HLF repairs grant, but remains on the Buildings at Risk Register. One of few remaining churches by Moffat Smith; Gothic, non-conformist style in sandstone. Distinctive spire lost in 1930s. Rear is in good condition.



107 Union Street, United Reformed Church

109 Union Street

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (1892)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Bank

Notes: Ashlar-faced in French Renaissance style by Thomas Taylor. Highly positive contributor to character of conservation area with decorative frontages to Union Street, Queen Street and Retiro Street, including dominant portico with granite columns and cast iron railings. Rear elevation in red brick. Appropriate signage. Detracting elements include an ATM which cuts into stonework, modern doors and infill panels to some windows. A single-storey rear extension facing Retiro Street also detracts, painted white.



109 Union Street



109 Union Street, west elevation to Queen Street



109 Union Street, east elevation to Retiro Street

South Side

80 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Charity and LPA offices

Notes: Typical late-20th century office building in red brick. While the building line detracts, it allows for greenery and public realm space; this could be enhanced or better-utilised, particularly given its location at the base of the conservation area.



80 Union Street

84 Union Street, Former Post Office/ Oldham Local Studies and Archives

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Mid/Late-19th century (1877)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Presently houses the Oldham Local Studies and Archives centre, but this is relocating; the building will be vacant and will need a new use.

Notes: Neoclassical façades in red brick with stone dressings in a corner location make a highly positive impact on the character of the conservation area; modern vents inserted in several windows detract. Engraved 'post & telegraph office' lettering indicates its original use. East side of building faces the greenery and tranquil public realm of Oldham Park.



84 Union Street, former Post & Telegraph Office

88 Union Street, Oldham Library

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (1883, additions 1894)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Oldham Local Studies and Archives is moving to this building as part of a wider library consolidation scheme.

Notes: Imposing, Gothic elevations to the north and east; gables enliven the roofline. Rusticated rubble façade with stone dressings and cast iron railing and lanterns are positive contributors to the conservation area, though the eastern side elevation facing a car park is somewhat drab; the setting here could be enhanced. The modern wall, plant area and fence to the rear of the building, as well as some blocked windows and doors, are visible from the new library and its public realm space; these detract from the area.



88 Union Street, Oldham Library



88 Union Street, Oldham Library west elevation



88 Union Street, Oldham Library rear elevation



88 Union Street, Oldham Library east elevation

South Side

11 Albion Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Late-20th century shop, a building of its time that attempts to follow historic monochromatic brickwork and keystone features of Hilton Arcade to west, and its position remains subservient. Signage and shopfronts are appropriate to building. Meets public realm to the north via curved flight of concrete steps. A service alley and public realm gate separate it from the modern post office building to the east. Blind east return elevation.



11 Albion Street, frontage respectful of Hilton Arcade

8-20 Curzon Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century (1893)

Overall Condition: Fair to poor

Use: Office/Professional Services, Retail

Notes: Victorian retail and office building in red brick with stone dressings. Gabled roofline to north, stone dressings to arched first-floor fenestration are especially ornate, some with carved terracotta friezes above. Most windows retain decorative overlights. Detracting elements include second floor windows at no. 16 which have been replaced with louvered vents, projecting signage to no. 14, vegetation growth visible at roofline, roller shutters, projecting CCTV, poor concrete stallrisers in places enlarged fascias and poor shopfronts across the range, except for no. 8 which is of appropriate proportion. Frontage of no. 8 wraps around to Albion Street, and meets the Hilton Arcade. Nos.18-20 are somewhat narrower; no. 18 appears to have been recently cleaned.



8-16 Curzon Street



8-16 Curzon Street, decorative panel



8 Curzon Street

West Side

3-5 Lord Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services, Retail

Notes: Late-20th century retail building in red brick, forms part of wider range of uniquely-shaped frontages. Greets corner of Lord Street and Albion Street well and steps back. Odd space created with street, owing to footprint. Signage and shopfronts are not in-keeping with character of the conservation area, but are suitable for the character of the building.



3 Lord Street



5 Lord Street

East Side

4-8 Lord Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services, Retail

Notes: Two-storey late-20th century commercial building in red brick. Canted principal entrance to shopfront at corner of Lord Street and Rock Street. Inconsistent signage, canopy and roller shutters detract. Cobbled alley to south, views of St. Mary's church and handsome rear elevations of Church Lane buildings beyond.



4-8 Lord Street

North Side

7-9 Church Street

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (c. 1880)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: Pair of three-storey Victorian houses, in red brick with stone dressings and slate roofs. Rusticated stone entrance architraves, windows are later replacement. Detracting factors include visible alarm boxes and interior security grills to ground floor windows.



7-9 Church Lane

11 Church Lane

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (c. 1880)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: Three-storey Victorian house in red brick with stone dressings and slate roof. Symmetrical frontage of five bays. Detracting factors include horn detail to multiple replacement windows, visible cabling and alarm boxes.



11 Church Lane

11A Church Lane

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (1892)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Café

Notes: Former court house by architect Henry Tanner. Redbrick with elaborate white terracotta dressings and fenestration. Lively gabled roofline. Returns on to Church Passage to the east; brick infill on Rock Street detracts. Other detracting elements include visible alarm boxes, louvres to window openings, grilles on lower ground floor windows and parking signage.



11a Church Lane, County Court, looking west



11a Church Lane, east elevation



11a Church Lane, County Court



11a Church Lane, first floor window detail

South Side

8 Church Lane

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (c. 1880)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: Two storey Victorian frontage in red brick with central principal entrance, domestic scale. Replacement windows in original openings. Extends into rear of bank building to west and south. Detracting elements include opaque window treatments, modern vents inserted in windows, CCTV cameras and inappropriate signage.



8 Church Lane

10-14 Church Lane

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century (c. 1880)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: Terrace of three, three-storey Victorian houses in brick, rear elevations in white glazed brick. Chimneys have been truncated. Detracting elements include modern lighting, signage to nos. 10-12, secondary glazing visible from the street, and opaque glazing and window vents at no. 12. Air of partial vacancy also detracts.



10-14 Church Lane

North Side

Church of St. Mary and St. Peter

Status: Listed, Grade II*; positive

Date: Early-19th century (1827-30)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Church

Notes: Parish church by architect Richard Lane, in coursed rubble with slate roof. See list description for further architectural details. Prominent position at summit of conservation area, providing a number of key views. One of Oldham's most important buildings, the church and churchyard form the heart and visual focus of the conservation area.



St. Mary's Church, south elevation



St Mary's Church, view from war memorial



St. Mary's Church, north elevation



St. Mary's Church, churchyard to east

West Side

22-26 Clegg Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Restaurant and office space, no. 26 extends into public house

Notes: Forms part of attractive group including buildings to either side of public house at nos. 28-30; group shares similar architectural detailing. Modern windows, but only wider windows at no. 24 detract. Modern conduit and cabling also detract. Rear elevations face Harrison Street, where a car park and substantial addition to nos. 24-26 extends to the street. The bottom half of this has been rendered and altered with modern brickwork, A/C units. Rear of no. 22 appears to have been rebuilt.



22 Clegg Street, north elevation to Ascroft Street



22-26 Clegg Street

28-30 Clegg Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Public house

Notes: Pub in red brick; forms a change in scale at the centre of the terrace; ground floor appears to have been rebuilt.



28-30 Clegg Street

32-36 Clegg Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office

Notes: Terrace (no. 36 is double-fronted) forms part of a group with the rest of Clegg Street in red brick, charming domestic scale. Modern windows, but only large ground floor window to no. 32 detracts, as well as modern cabling. Chimneys have been lost. Side return to Printer Street in red brick also positively contributes to the Victorian domestic scale of the conservation area.



32-36 Clegg Street



36 Clegg Street, south elevation to Printer Street

40-44 Clegg Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office

Notes: Terraced buildings in red brick in-keeping with the domestic scale of Clegg Street. Attractive stone porticoes to nos. 40-42. Modern shopfront and signage inserted within an arched brick opening at no. 44 detracts.



40-42 Clegg Street



40 Clegg Street, northern return to Printer Street



40 Clegg Street, door to Printer Street



44 Clegg Street & eastern return of 93 Union Street

East Side

Town Hall Extension

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Early-21st century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Forms part of town hall complex; commercial/retail; cinema

Notes: 2016 Town Hall extension by BDP. Modern mix of tile and glazing, enlivens town square to west. Shopfronts, gallery and event space at the ground floor face onto Clegg Street.



Clegg Street, Town Hall extension

Lyceum rear block & Oldham Music Centre

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Form part of Lyceum and music centre to Union Street

Notes: Attractive pair of buildings in red brick face Clegg Street, connected internally to Lyceum to south and included with the wider Lyceum list description. In good condition with attractive fenestration pattern. Frontage use could be improved; subsidiary use as rear wing of Lyceum renders the façades to Clegg Street somewhat dead. Some blocked windows, internal security shutters visible from street. Northern return forms a pleasing frontage to Firth Street in red brick, adjacent to a rear entrance to the Lyceum through modern glazed doors. Elevation continues along Firth Street, and includes another range of handsome two-storey cottages in red brick, also 19th century. Windows are largely original, with Gibbs' stone surround to ground floor entrance. The domestic scale here provides interest and contrast with the robust Town Hall and its modern extension opposite.



Clegg Street, Lyceum rear block



Clegg Street, Oldham Music Centre

West Side

18-20 Greaves Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office

Notes: Quaint terraced pair in red brick. Cabling, blocked lightwell, modern window vent detract from Victorian character. Modern shopfront at no. 18 also detracts, comprising modern infill in a prominent corner position; portico to no. 20, angled roofline and first floor fenestration provide contrast to height and stone of Lyceum return and contribute positively to the streetscape.



18-20 Greaves Street

East Side

3 Greaves Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th/Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office

Notes: Classical two-storey façade in stone, return elevation to the north in yellow brickwork with stone dressings visible behind stone gate. Corner quoins and lugged architraves at first floor and prominent details, and downpipes add interest. Modern floodlights project from the cornice and ground floor level plant visible in the north courtyard through the adjacent gate detract. Original rear elevation is concealed by a later extension in red brick; security grilles to windows detract.



3 Greaves Street



3 Greaves Street, rear extension

5 Greaves Street

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Early-20th century (1902)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Local authority/community use

Notes: Handsome two-storey frontage in ashlar; full-height pediments separate three bays; Arts-and-Crafts details. Elaborate projecting keystone over central entrance. Rear elevation in red brick features projecting bays and leaded windows, and also makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.



5 Greaves Street



5 Greaves Street, rear elevation

Victoria House

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Recreational/commercial use (boxing gym)

Notes: Broad, attractive frontage to Greaves Street in red brick with dressings and keystone motifs in glazed green tile, modern windows and doors. Rear elevation comprises a large blind section in red brick, and modern windows to south.



Victoria House, Greaves Street



Victoria House, south elevation to Firth Street



Victoria House, blind rear elevation

35 Greaves Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Fair, poor at upper floors

Use: Public house

Notes: Pitched roof with heavy bracketed cornice and distinctive stone dressings to arched first floor windows, double-height channelled pilasters further enliven the frontage. Upper storeys are in poor condition, particularly the windows, which are visible in views further down the street. Loose wires and conduit also detract. Return north elevation to Firth Street with lively fenestration also contributes positively to the conservation area.



35 Greaves Street



35 Greaves Street, north elevation to Firth Street

37-39 Greaves Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Offices

Notes: No. 39 forms the western return of 99 Union Street, prominent corner position. Modern windows and doors, but most of simple, late-Victorian elevation has been retained, including attractive arched entrance architraves. Modern shopfront at no. 37 has a neutral impact on the conservation area. Conduit detracts.



37-39 Greaves Street

Former Museum building

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Community arts centre, linked to neighbouring building

Notes: Single storey frontage in red brick over a basement, flat roof. Simple stone dressings and carved lettering emphasise the building's historic role within the community. Charmingly infills gap between former post office and former Friends' Meeting House, presenting a unified frontage to the street.



Former Museum, Greaves Street

Former Friends' Meeting House

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Fair, with some visible deterioration

Use: Community arts centre, linked to neighbouring building

Notes: Lively late-Victorian frontage features modillion cornice, portico, and projecting central bay. Decorative red brick window surrounds, though some windows are presently blocked by signage and infill. Modern wheelchair access has been implemented insensitively; this and the brickwork to the front boundary wall could be improved. Stonework brought in from elsewhere features in the front garden and entrance porch, adding interest. Arched fenestration and contrasting brickwork of the rear elevation presents a lively frontage to the pedestrian area to the south.



Former Friends Meeting House, Greaves Street



Former Friends Meeting House, south elevation

West Side

8 Hunter's Lane

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office

Notes: Quaint 19th-century house in red brick, stone cills and lintels. Modern windows, timber panelled garage door in arched opening. Blind north return elevation visible from street.



8 Hunter's Lane

6 Hunter's Lane

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/Charity

Notes: Three small, red-brick Victorian houses amalgamated into one; two southernmost doors have been infilled with modern windows and brick, detracting from the character of the frontage. Modern windows throughout. Return elevation is painted with roller shutter and concrete access ramp to a side entrance door; this and a modern bin store affixed to building also detract.



6 Hunter's Lane



6 Hunter's Lane, south return elevation

East Side

5 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Early-to-mid-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail at ground floor, office above

Notes: Particularly attractive frontage in the Queen Anne revival style, in red brick with gabled roofline and oriel bay to first floor. Stone entrance surround with pilasters, and prominent stone string courses. Modern shopfront and roller shutter detract somewhat.



5 Queen Street

7-17 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-to-mid-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Victorian terrace comprising three storey houses of two bays in red brick with continuous cornice. Original windows survive at no. 11, and in partial form at nos. 7 and 9; unique pattern at borders. Modern replacements and sensitive and in a similar style to originals. Fenestration at no. 15 has been altered; modern single-pane window at second floor detracts from the wider character of the terrace, and widened shopfront window detracts from residential character. Signage at nos. 9 and 15 could also be improved. Local blue plaque at no. 11 marks the site as the former offices of Joseph Platt and Northern Union (later Rugby League).



7-17 Queen Street

19 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Early-to-mid-19th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Part of Victorian domestic terrace at nos. 7-17, but render at first and second floors substantially detracts from the continuity of the range. Modern casement windows throughout. Ashlar courses and modillion cornice to ground floor shopfront; these are positive features.



19 Queen Street

21 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Early-to-mid-19th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Fully rendered and modern windows throughout detract from the red brick of the wider range. Cracking to render visible in places.



21 Queen Street

23-27 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Early-to-mid-19th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Three-storey, two-bay Victorian houses in red brick offer continuity to the wider terrace, but poor signage, enlarged window openings to the ground floor, substantial cabling and conduit and the modern window arrangement at the second floor of no. 25 all detract from the character of the buildings.



23-27 Queen Street

29 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-to-mid-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Striking three-storey Victorian building in red brick, with stone detailing, and projecting central bay at the ground and first floors and a gabled roofline. Stone has been painted white, including banding to two entrances which flank a central window. Attractive use of slates above ground and first floor windows. Modern windows of mixed styles detract from the character of the frontage.



29 Queen Street

31 Queen Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Red brick Victorian office building with prominent stone detailing, painted white. Arched fenestration openings at second floor; pilastered central bay projects slightly beneath pediment. Basement windows have been infilled with brick, but maintain stone architraves. Modern entrance porch detracts, as does an internal mezzanine floor which cuts across windows at the second floor and is visible from the street. Plant growth at roofline. Rear comprises a modern, two-storey extension and bulky metal fire escape to Retiro Street, which detract. Arched fenestration pattern to second floor continues at the rear and is visible from Retiro Street behind the extension.



31 Queen Street



31 Queen Street, rear elevation

West Side

2 Retiro Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th/Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail/office

Notes: Two-storey red-brick buildings (possibly originally offices) with stone surrounds to windows; pattern corresponds with that of 32 Yorkshire Street. Modern casement windows throughout. Detracting elements include infilled ground floor window to south, roller shutter and modern entrance door, and roller shutters to broad modern shopfront.



2 Retiro Street

8 Retiro Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant at ground floor, residential above

Notes: Modern brick apartment building of five bays in red brick. Box sign over ground floor entrance door detracts somewhat, as does conspicuous cabling at the first and second floors. Eaves have been sensitively designed to mirror those of the historic building to the north.



8 Retiro Street

14-16 Retiro Street, Retiro House

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Residential

Notes: Modern three-storey apartment building in red brick, with interesting brown-brick surrounds to the windows, which maintain Victorian proportion found elsewhere throughout the conservation area. Modern security grilles at the ground floor detract.



14-16 Retiro Street

18-26 Retiro Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th/early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services, restaurant at no. 20, residential at no. 22

Notes: Three-storey block in red brick appears historic, but rebuilt in places. Modern fenestration to all windows except for no. 26, which also retains original arched entrance architrave. Wider ground floor shopfront openings at nos. 18-20. Modern doors detract from character, particularly at nos. 18-22, as do security grilles at no. 24.



18-26 Retiro Street



26 Retiro Street, original fenestration

28 Retiro Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-19th/Early 20th-century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Glazed brickwork and fenestration matches rear of 29 Queen Street, linked at rear. Three-storey red brick office building extension with stone cills; north return elevation faces into courtyard/ alley screened from Retiro Street by a brick wall. Modern windows throughout. Heavy roller shutters to ground floor door and windows detract from the character of the street.

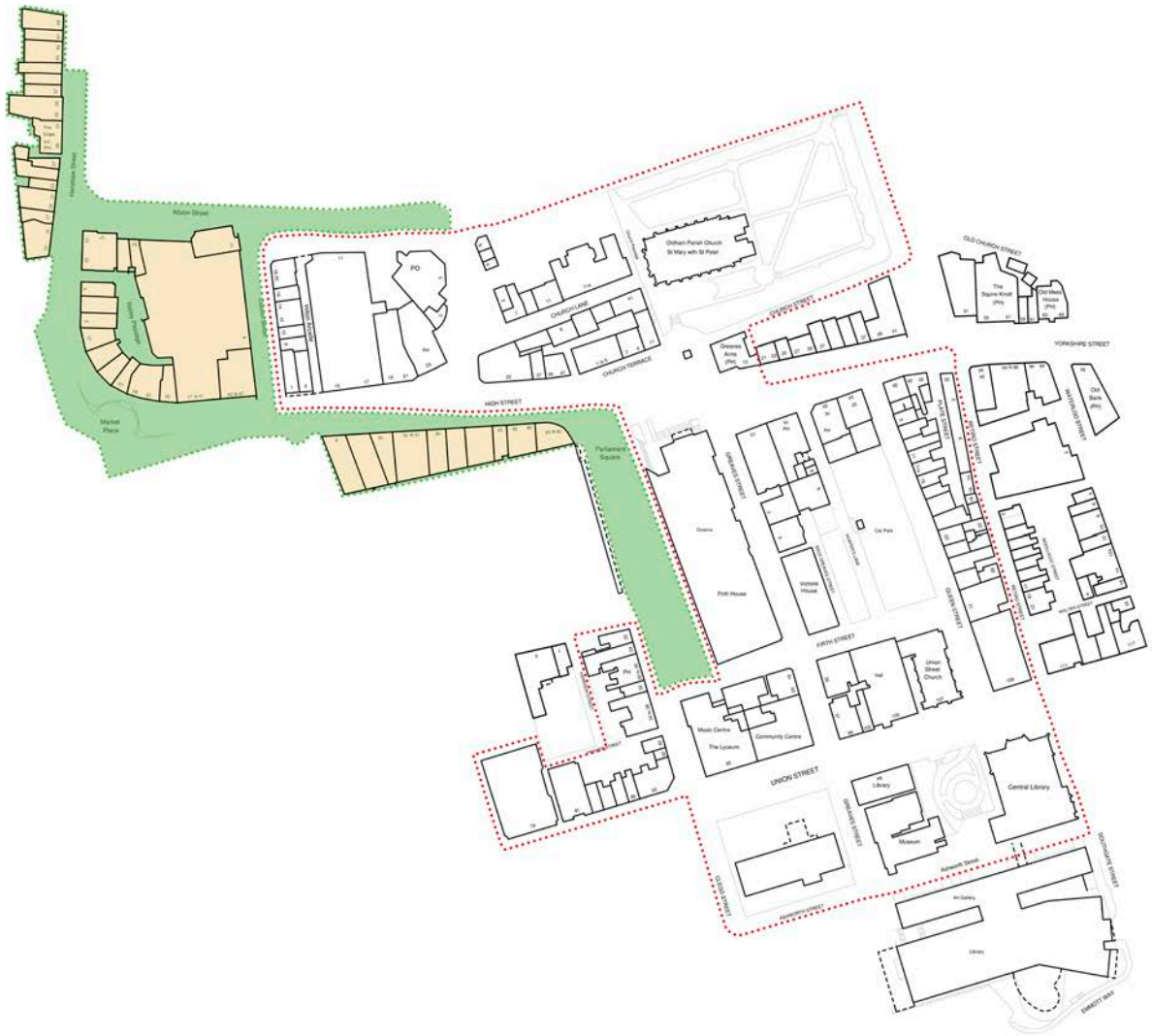


28 Retiro Street, north return elevation



28 Retiro Street

Proposed Extension Area 1: High Street East and Parliament Square



Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

West Side

49 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Two-storey building in red brick with ground floor shopfront, terminating the range of buildings along the west side of Henshaw Street. Modern glazed ground floor shopfront, two modern windows at first floor with contrasting surrounds in darker brick. North return elevation turns west, where first floor fenestration continues and another shopfront is situated on the ground floor. Roller shutters and signage detract.



49 Henshaw Street

37-47 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Fair to poor

Use: Restaurant/Café, Retail

Notes: Range of quaint, two-storey brick commercial buildings, some rendered, no. 39 with weatherboarding at the first floor. Full-width modern shopfronts at the ground floor; nos. 43 and 47 retain original shopfront joinery to pilasters and fascia, though this appears to have been lost elsewhere in the range. Single modern casement windows at the first floor in various positions detract. Awnings, roller shutters and signage also detract.


37-47 Henshaw Street

33-35 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Mid-to-late 19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Pair of two-storey shops with frontages similar to nos.37-47, but buildings are deeper and project into Henshaw Street slightly. Faced in rendered brick with ground floor shopfronts and single modern casement windows at the first floor. Large, projecting awnings conceal much of the ground floor from street views and detract, modern signage affixed at first floor also detracts.



33-35 Henshaw Street

The Snipe Inn Public House

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Mid-to-late 19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/Café

Notes: Two-storey public house extending over four bays, full-width timber pub frontage at the ground floor and rendered at the first floor. Multi-pane sashes at the first floor appear historic; modern multi-pane casements at the ground floor detract. Signage is appropriate to the building, modern conduit and satellite dish to frontage detract. Narrow pedestrian alley to south between the Snipe and 27 Henshaw Street with lantern overhead provides interest.



The Snipe Inn Public House

17-27 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Mid-to-late 19th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/Café, Retail

Notes: Range of quaint, two-storey commercial buildings in red brick that form the terminus of west-facing views from Albion Street. Tripartite window arrangements at the first floors; windows at nos.17, 19, 25 and 27 are replacements; originals with intricate glazing bar pattern to overlights at nos. 21-23. Dormers visible from street at nos. 25 and 27; these break up the roofline and detract. Poor shopfronts with oversized fascias which lack cohesion with the character of the range. Pilasters survive; carved corbels depicting 19th century trades add substantial interest; corbels painted over at no. 17.



17-27 Henshaw Street





17-27 Henshaw Street, decorative corbel



27 Henshaw Street, narrow passage to north

13-15 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th/early-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Sui Generis (betting shop)

Notes: Victorian commercial buildings, three-storeys in red brick with contrasting painted dressings. Windows at first floor are pedimented. Large shopfront with black tiles and full-height glazing and oversized fascia detract and do not relate to upper floors. South return elevation are visible behind low service gate; decorative fenestration dressings wrap around, pedimented side entrance.



13-15 Henshaw Street

East Side

22-24 Henshaw Street and 37 Albion Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century (1999)

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Office, Retail

Notes: Corner retail and office building in three sections facing Henshaw Street and Albion Street in render and red brick. Whimsical design with domed tower at corner with projecting first floor balcony. Detracting elements include poor signage (including one at high level), louvres over doorways, visible plant affixed return elevation, a roller shutter to no. 34, and adverts obscuring ground floor shopfront windows. Entrance to Ratley Passage is directly south of the building, exposing service yard and rears of late-20th century commercial buildings behind.



22-24 Henshaw Street



22-24 Henshaw Street, views to rear service yard

6 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall Condition: Fair

Use: Retail

Notes: Three-storey retail building in red brick, brick quoins at corners and dentils at roofline. Attractive tripartite window arrangement at first floor, modern casements detract. Poor ground floor shopfront with oversized box sign detracts.



6 Henshaw Street, with north return elevation

4 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-late-20th century

Overall Condition: Fair

Use: Retail (arcade)

Notes: Plain three-storey retail frontage in red brick, four bays of modern casements. Poor detailing to windows. At ground floor, oversized fascia, projecting signage and advertisements blocking windows detract.



4 Henshaw Street

2 Henshaw Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Retail (charity shop)

Notes: Three storey brick frontage with robust stone cornice and pediment at roofline. Modern casements at upper floors, modern shopfront with recessed central entrance. Oversized fascia and visible internal balustrade at the first floor detract.



2 Henshaw Street

North Side

21 Market Place

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail/Professional Services

Notes: Three storey building in Tudor-esque style with gabled roofline adds interest to Market Place. Upper floor windows are modern but appropriate. Ground floor modern shopfronts have a poor relationship to upper floors, excessive signage and signage to upper floors detract.



21 Market Place

23-25 Market Place

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Mid-Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services, Sui Generis (betting shop)

Notes: Three storeys in red brick with stone course near roofline, relatively plain frontage wraps around the curve of Market Place – a sensitive location in the visual transition between Henshaw Street with the High Street. Detracting elements include large shopfront to no. 23, over-boarded windows, high-level signage (both flat and projecting). Side entrance on northern end provides access to offices above.


23-25 Market Place

27-31 Market Place

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Fair-to-good

Use: Retail; Office/Professional Services

Notes: Striking ashlar frontage at the centre of the curve of Market Place, of three storeys. Pilasters and elephant motifs generate interest; frontage helps to frame the greenery and pedestrian area in front. Modern windows to upper floors are consistent, detracting elements include oversized shopfronts, rendered ground floor pilasters, poor signage and a bulky, projecting canopy to nos. 29-31.



27-31 Market Place



27-31 Market Place, pilaster detail



27-31 Market Place, window decoration

35 Market Place

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall condition: Fair-to-poor

Use: Professional Services/Retail

Notes: Squat two-storey building reads as infill. Brick and original windows at first floor. Oversized fascia detracts.



35 Market Place

37-41 Market Place

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Bland retail façade with large, metal panels above shopfront. High-level advertising and large signage detract.



37-41 Market Place

43-47 Market Place

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: As a set piece of architecture this is a building of quality with a clear expression of structure, cantilevered at upper floors. However, the bold projection over the streetscene compromises the character of the townscape. Fascia also detracts, obscuring textured concrete.



43-47 Market Place



43-47 Market Place, projecting canopy

South Side

33-35 Albion Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Two-storey retail frontage, nondescript in brick at the first floor. Small windows lack proportion. Elevation steps back from 37 Albion Street. Shopfronts, oversized signage and visible handrail at roofline detract. Neighbouring buildings to east comprise a retail service entrance; windows are obscured by signage and add to an overall back-of-house character.



33-35 Albion Street

17 Albion Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Financial/Professional Services

Notes: Bold, glazed massing projects into Albion Street. Interesting building in its own right, but projecting frontage detracts from the public realm, and interrupts eastward views. Signage has a temporary character and also detracts.



17 Albion Street

West Side

9 Curzon Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail

Notes: Late-20th century retail and office building in red brick. Modern shopfront suits the building, but enlarged facia detracts. Modern widows and metal roofing above are unassuming. Neighbouring building appears to be of the same scheme, also in red brick but in much heavier massing, with projecting brick bays and metal cladding to the upper floor; this is recessed. Shopfront display continues the full width of the building to the north, but fascia size here is appropriate.



9 Curzon Street, modern facade on right

6-8 High Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/café, retail

Notes: Elaborate Neoclassical retail building, two storeys with attic dormers. Ground floor in granite, first floor in sandstone, elaborately decorated. Original shopfront has been substantially altered to accommodate two units; fascia is of appropriate size but box sign to no. 6 and infill above both is inappropriate and detracts from the character of the building. Original pilasters still visible. Replacement windows at first floor are well done. Local blue plaque states the building is on the site of the former Yates's Wine Lodge, opened in 1884.



6-8 High Street

10 High Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: Three storeys in brick with prominent stone band above first floor and dentilled cornice. Oversized shopfront and box signage detract; panel above fascia appears unnecessary and also detracts.



10 High Street

12-20 High Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Retail

Notes: Late-20th century retail and office building in mixed materials. Design has interest and follows scale of street, including vertical brick definition between shopfronts. Projecting canopy particularly detracts from the streetscape. Shopfronts at nos. 12-16 and signage detract; shopfronts at nos. 18-20 are better, but no. 20 is vacant.



12-20 High Street

22-24 High Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: c. Early-mid-20th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Restaurant/café, but largely vacant

Notes: Vacancy is what detracts from the character of this building the most, but overall a positive contributor to streetscape. Three storeys in red brick with full-height stone pilasters and gabled roofline. Granite surrounds at ground floor. Large modern shopfront windows at centre of frontage detract; shopfront to no. 24 is of better scale, but of poor quality.



22-24 High Street

26-34 High Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant/café, retail

Notes: Three storey retail and office building in red brick with stone banding, wraps around to Parliament Square. Gables to High Street elevation. Windows are modern replacements in a style which detracts from the character of the building. Loss of original pilasters detracts from the frontage at the ground floor; shopfront are large and bulky for the most part. Signage to Parliament Square is fine, but background is poor. Poor signage to shoe shop.



26-34 High Street

Town Square Shopping Centre Facade

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Early-21st century

Overall condition: Good

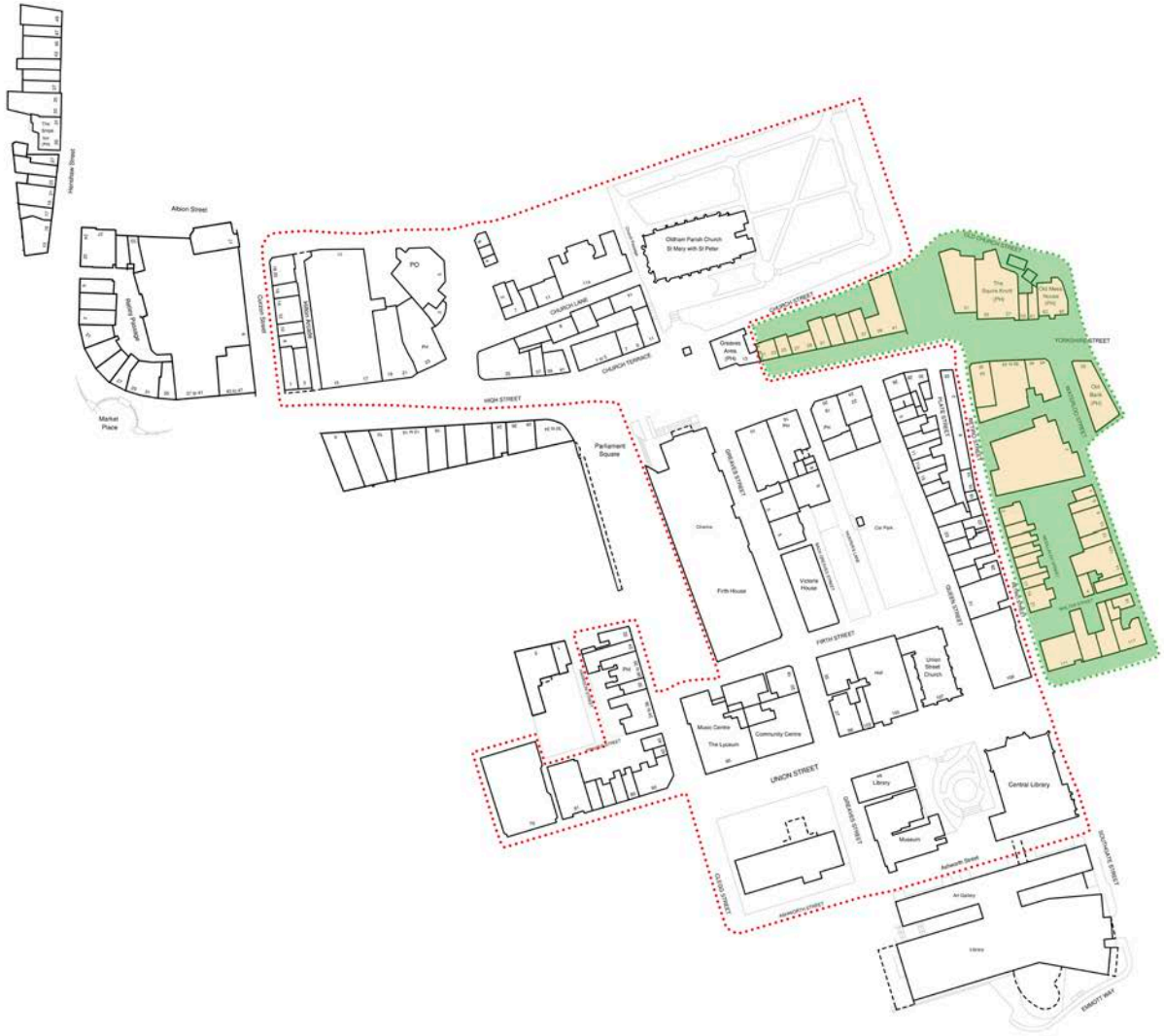
Use: Retail

Notes: Façade has been upgraded in response to adjacent Town Hall development; thus, the two read together. Overall the improvement is effective and contributes to the 'square' character, but areas of blank space detract.



Town Square Shopping Centre facade, Parliament Square

Proposed Extension Area 2: Yorkshire Street, Retiro Street East and Waterloo Street



Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

North Side

21-41 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall condition: Fair-to-poor

Use: Retail

Notes: While this frontage offers interest as a mid-century commercial block in tile which appropriately steps down from the top of Yorkshire Street, its projecting canopies, mixed signage and overall condition clutter and jar with the adjacent late-Victorian streetscape. East return elevation to St. Mary's Way is blind, in red brick, turning its back onto a vehicular route into the conservation area. Cluttered rear elevations, roller shutters and car parking facing historic route of Old Church Street also detract.



21-41 Yorkshire Street



21-41 Yorkshire Street, return to St. Mary's Way



21-41 Yorkshire Street, rear clutter

51-57 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall condition: Fair-to-poor

Use: Retail, restaurant/café (public house)

Notes: Mid-20th century block of lesser interest than nos. 21-41. Upper floor in concrete with modern casements, ground floor in a mix of brick and granite tile. Corner unit at no. 51 is vacant, with shopfront windows infilled. The 'historicised' public house frontage to the east of the building jars with architecture above.



51-57 Yorkshire Street

59-61 Yorkshire Street

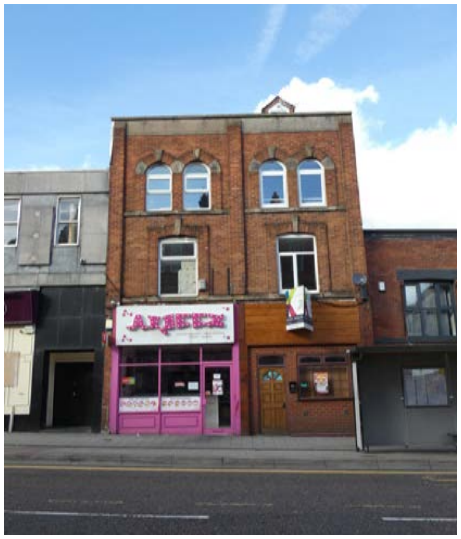
Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Retail, restaurant/café (public house)

Notes: Three storey Victorian frontage in red brick with simple stone dressings and keystones. Modern casements at first and second floor detract, single dormer to no. 61 visible from street is awkward. Ground floor shopfronts and windows are inappropriate for style of building and detract.



59-61 Yorkshire Street

63-65 Yorkshire Street, Old Mess House

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services (dental centre)

Notes: Low two-storey frontage drops dramatically and is set back from no. 61. Former public house. Stone lintels and quoin detail to corner. Modern windows are grey in colour and blend well. Highly-decorative front portico retains original signage. Front garden wall appears to be a later addition, with modern metal railings. South return elevation appropriately angles back around curve into Old Church Street, creating gateway effect.



63-65 Yorkshire Street



63-65 Yorkshire Street, east return elevation

South Side

34-36 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services, retail

Notes: Early-20th century Art Deco-style frontage creates interest and forms the terminus to a uniquely diverse block of frontages. Ground floor shopfront is poorly done. Modern windows and vents to return elevation also.



34-36 Yorkshire Street

38-44 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century (York Chambers 1892)

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services; co-working space

Notes: Victorian office frontage formed of two buildings, including the single-bay York Chambers building in stone with a crenellated oriel window at the first floor and dramatic range of chimneys. The rest is Queen Anne revival in red brick with stone banding and dressings below brick gables. Oversized shopfront windows detract, as well as poor entrance into York Chambers. Pilasters have been retained but are difficult to read. Building extends into large block facing a rear alley.



38-44 Yorkshire Street

46-48 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services, retail

Notes: Continuation of red brick range at nos. 40-44, wraps elegantly around to Waterloo Street below gables which step down. Delicate oriel window at first floor projects from a canted corner. Original windows largely retained, but inappropriate secondary glazing is visible from street level. Oversized shopfront windows and fascia boards detract.



46-48 Yorkshire Street

50 Yorkshire Street

Status: Unlisted, positive; recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Fair

Use: Restaurant/café (public house)

Notes: Neoclassical bank building, in channelled ashlar to Yorkshire Street with return elevation in red brick with stone dressings to Waterloo Street and Bow Street. Prominent isolated position at the junction of a historic local route, emphasised by single central projecting entrance bay with arched doorway and first floor window. String courses continue stone along returns to either side, handsome window surrounds and keystone detailing. Present condition detracts somewhat, with vegetation growth visible at the facades, as well as poor condition of some windows. Single-storey service extension to rear, also in red brick.



50 Yorkshire Street, east return elevation to Waterloo Street



50 Yorkshire Street

East Side

Liquid

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Late-20th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Sui Generis - nightclub

Notes: Large modern building comprising entire block between Retiro and Waterloo Streets. Substantial massing, lack of fenestration and use of modern materials detract from the character of the conservation area. Principal façades step back from the street in views from Yorkshire Street.



Liquid, Retiro Street

3-21 Retiro Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th-century

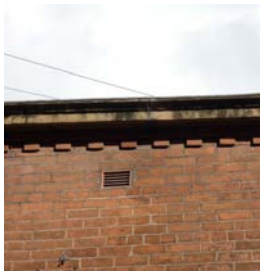
Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Terrace of quaint, two storey Victorian houses in red brick; charming domestic scale. Stone entrance pilasters and surrounds, cornices, cills and lintels, and brick dentil detail below the cornice. All windows are modern replacements but generally sympathetic in design. Return elevations to north and south are largely blind. Excessive signage at no. 7, detracting door and windows to no. 13 and detracting windows and roller shutters at nos. 15-21. Most chimneys appear to have been demolished. Pattern of projecting closet wings to rears, except for at nos. 3-5; render and roller shutters in places detract from the close-knit space of Woolacott Street.



3 Retiro Street, typical range facade



3-21 Retiro Street, dentil detail



3-21 Retiro Street, rear closet wings



3-21 Retiro Street

North Side

4 Walter Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Late-19th/Early-20th century

Overall condition: Poor

Use: Unknown; possibly office or residential

Notes: Single bay rendered elevation to Walter Street; render is deteriorating in places. Modern roller shutter obscures entrance. Modern casement window to first floor. Modern conduit. Reads as a later extension.



4 Walter Street

West Side

4-6 Waterloo Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th-century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/professional services; retail

Notes: Victorian cottages in red brick, of two bays each. Domestic scale and some details are positive elements, but rendered north return elevation and rear elevations and ground floor façade alterations detract substantially, including enlarged window openings and inappropriate signage.



4-6 Waterloo Street

8-12 Waterloo Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-19th-century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Restaurant and Sui Generis (nightclub)

Notes: Victorian houses of attractive scale, but later alterations have detracted from their character. No. 8 has a curved, multi-pane shopfront window but it is completed back painted in black, and obscured by a large security grille. First floor window and all windows to no. 10 also backpainted. Pilastered entrances remain; signage to no. 8 is appropriate. Signage, roller shutter and first floor casement window to no. 12 detract. Rear elevations have been rendered, and windows removed from nos. 8-10. Closet wing extension to no. 8, modern single-storey extensions to nos. 10-12.



8-10 Waterloo Street



10-12 Waterloo Street

14-16 and 12A Waterloo Street

Status: Unlisted; nos. 14-16 neutral, no. 12A detracting

Date: Late-19th-century

Overall condition: Fair; poor at south return elevation

Use: Retail/Sui Generis (nightclub)

Notes: Pair of Victorian two-storey houses in red brick with visible original chimneys, rendered at the ground floor. Replacement timber doors set within arched stone architraves; roller shutters cover door at no. 14 and ground floor window at no. 16. Window to no. 14 is blocked by signage, all of which detract. Modern windows to the first floor. No. 12A is a modern extension to no. 14 which detracts from the wider range; this is 'temporary' in appearance, with roller shutters spanning the full width and inappropriate signage. Return south elevation to Walter Street in red brick, with arched window and door openings; windows and doors at the ground floor level have been infilled but retain lintels and cills. Windows at upper storeys are largely modern replacements, save for a surviving example of an original window with arched, coloured margin light. Brickwork has been replaced in places also.



14-16 Waterloo Street



16 Waterloo Street, south return elevation



16 Waterloo Street, original stained glass

18 Waterloo Street

Status: Unlisted; neutral

Date: Late-19th-century

Overall condition: Fair; poorer along north return elevation

Use: Office/professional services

Notes: Two-storey Victorian building in red brick, with heavy stone lintels and pitched roof. Modern entrance door, casement windows and window signage detract. North return elevation to Walter Street is rendered; one rear door opening had been bricked up. Modern security bars to replacement sash window at first floor, conspicuous downpipes and ventilation pipes.



18 Waterloo Street



18 Waterloo Street, return north elevation

Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

North Side

111 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; detracting

Date: Mid-20th century

Overall condition: Fair

Use: Professional Services

Notes: Plain mid-20th century office block, two storeys in brown brick. Overall composition, proportion and relationship to bank to north and late-19th century houses to east all detract, as well as modern windows and canopy. Return elevation partially in concrete, symmetrical range of modern windows face Walter Street to rear; fire escape stairs project into car park and detract.



111 Union Street, rear elevation to Walter Street

113 Union Street

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Poor

Use: Offices

Notes: Positive character in virtue of its shared scale and details with neighbouring buildings to east. Poor condition and ground floor shopfront detract. Deep rear closet wing in red brick; poor condition and windows.



113 Union Street



113 Union Street, rear closet wings with no. 115

115-117 Union Street

Status: Listed, Grade II; positive

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Good

Use: Office/Professional Services

Notes: Late-19th century cottages form an attractive grouping, together with no. 113. Both buildings are in good repair and signage is appropriate. No. 117 has return red brick elevation to Waterloo Street, forming a pleasing corner; original windows to this façade, some openings have been infilled. Access to car parking with roller shutter, off-street yard to rear.



115 Union Street



117 Union Street

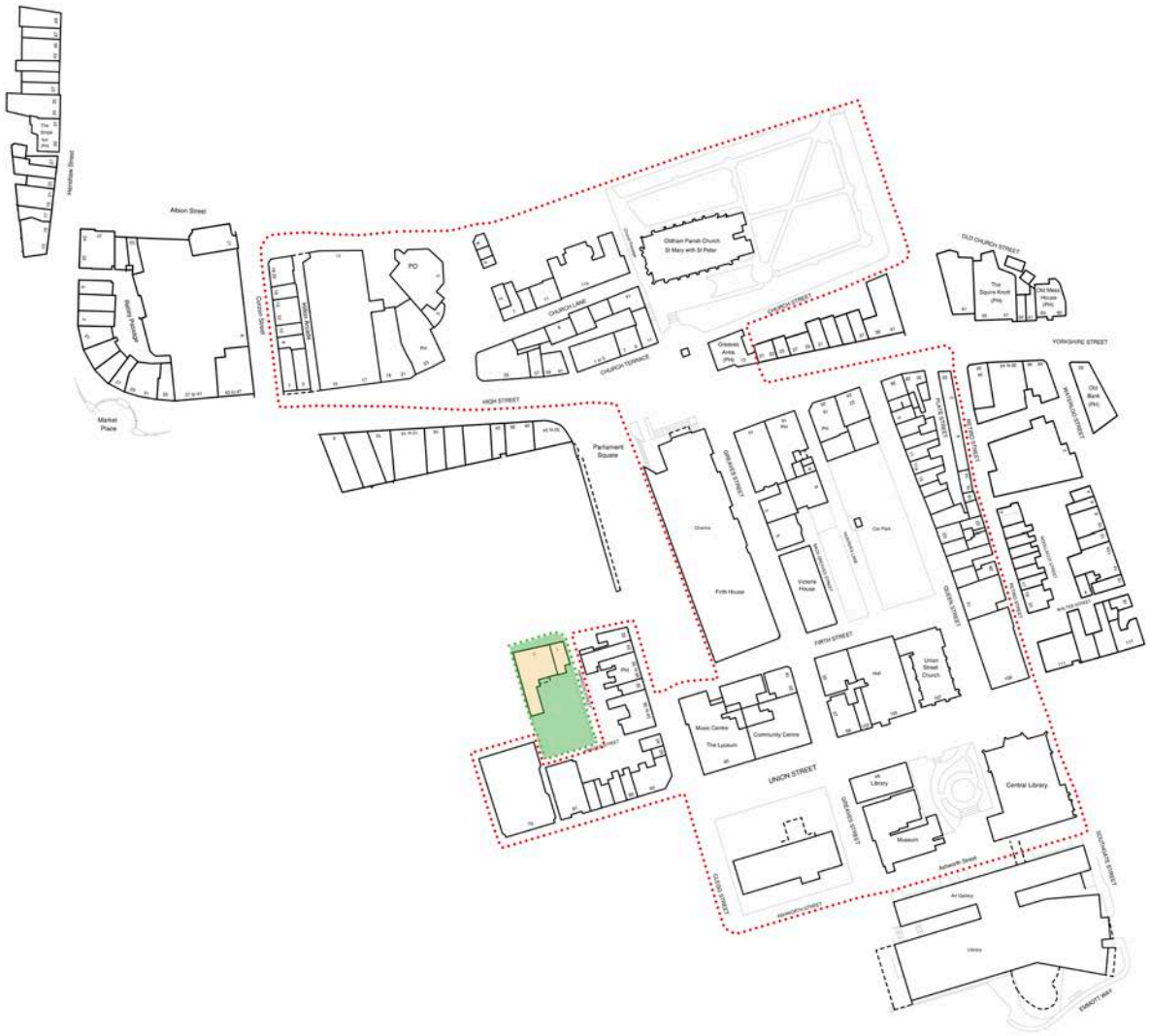


117 Union Street, rear elevation and yard



117 Union Street, east return elevation to Waterloo Street

Proposed Extension Area 3: Harrison Street



Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

South Side

1 Ascroft Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall condition: Poor

Use: Residential

Notes: Forms end block of handsome group in red brick with no. 3. Modern windows. Requires repair and refurbishment. Rear faces into intimate space of Harrison Street.



1-3 Ascroft Street, no. 1 to left

3 Ascroft Street

Status: Unlisted; positive – recommended for local list

Date: Late-19th century

Overall Condition: Poor

Use: Vacant

Notes: Handsome 19th-century industrial building presents a charming frontage to the streetscape, but needs re-use; condition detracts. Windows blocked to side and rear elevations but are largely original; yard presently used as car park; boundary wall damaged with substantial overgrowth.



1-3 Ascroft Street.

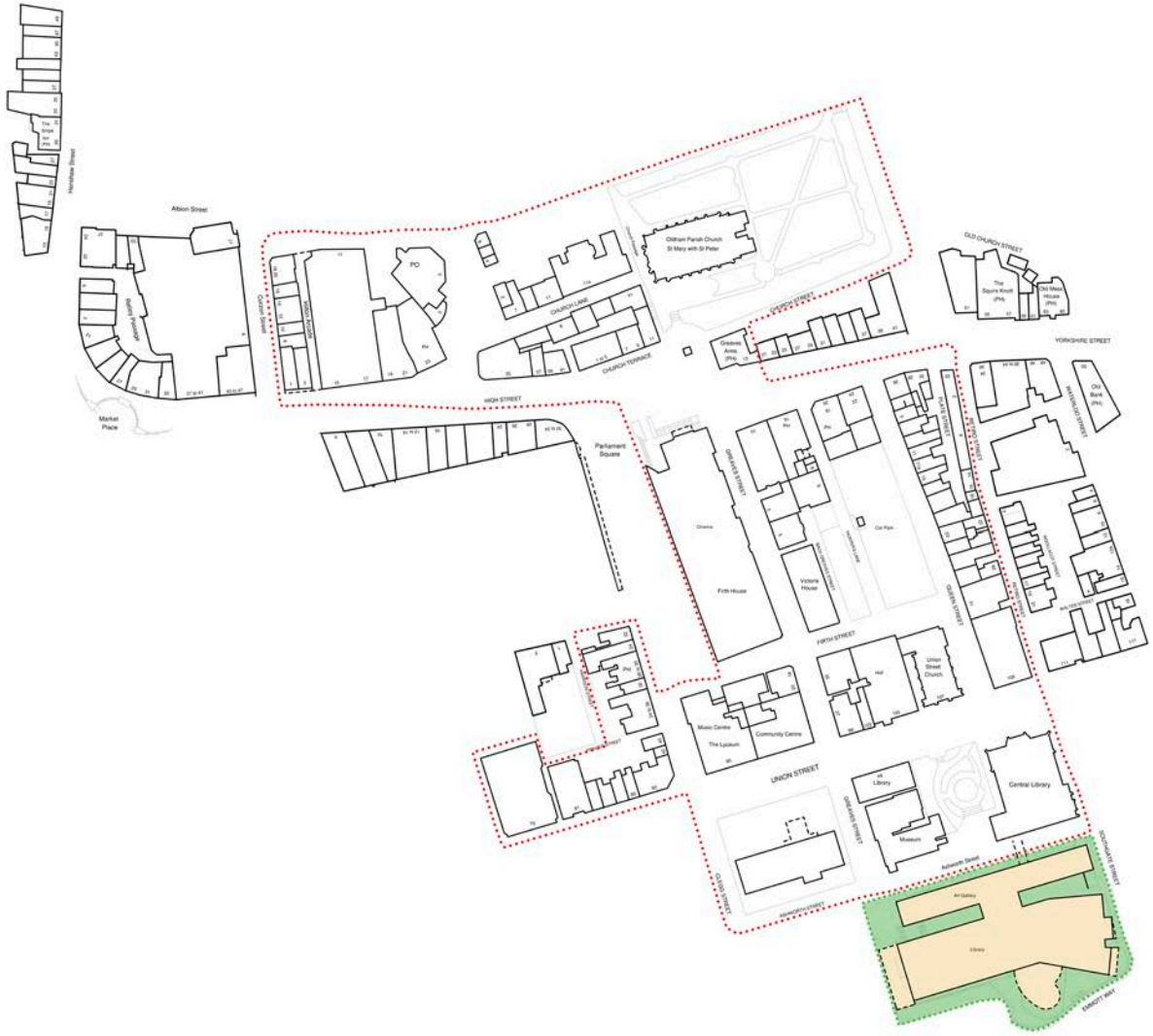


3 Ascroft Street, west return elevation



3 Ascroft Street, rear elevation

Proposed Extension Area 4: Cultural Quarter



Conservation Area | Proposed Extension Area 1 | Proposed Extension Area 2 | Proposed Extension Area 3 | Proposed Extension Area 4

Ashworth Street

Gallery Oldham and Oldham Library

Status: Unlisted; positive

Date: Early-21st century

Overall Condition: Good

Use: Civic/non-residential institution

Notes: Art gallery and museum completed in 2002 to the designs of Pringle Richards Sharratt; the library was completed as an extension in 2006. Lower floors of the gallery are in in rectangular terracotta tiles, upper floor features a projecting steel hoop design and is glazed. Large glazed entrance faces north, and is visible through the park from Union Street. A glazed bridge links to the rear of the Central Library building. The library to the rear sits a storey lower, but also in terracotta tiles. A two-storey glazed link runs between the gallery and its extension. The façade of the building forms a unique and pleasing contrast within the setting of the surrounding Victorian streetscape, and frames views of the park.



Gallery Oldham


Gallery Oldham from Union Street


Oldham Library to rear of Gallery Oldham

Donald Insall Associates