

HERITAGE STATEMENT

WREA LODGE, THE GREEN, WREA GREEN, PRESTON



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement follows the form based upon guidelines laid down by Historic England. The examination has been made from material available from various sources which are references in the report.
- 1.2 The subject is a brick built boundary wall erected to the front and side of Wrea Lodge, a modern property, located on the north side of Wrea Green, Preston.
- 1.3 This statement is intended to provide an understanding of the significance of the site and its value to the wider context of Wrea Green. The findings are intended to help in the discussion regarding the proposed planning application to retain the existing boundary wall.
- 1.4 The report has been prepared by Ian Bond MRTPI IHBC who is a qualified Heritage Planner with over 30 years' experience working in the public and private sectors.
- 1.5 Growth Lancashire is a regeneration and economic development company owned by the local authorities of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Burnley, Chorley, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Rossendale, West Lancashire and Lancashire County Council. Part of its role is to support the delivery of relevant expertise across Lancashire and the North West including caring for and sustainably developing the areas heritage and cultural assets.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

2.1 *Wrea Green Conservation Area*

- 2.2 Wrea Lodge is located in Wrea Green, a large, predominantly residential settlement in the Fylde. The village has a compact largely sub-urban form with some local services and community facilities and has seen post war residential growth with extensive modern estate developments expansion.



Photograph 1. View from village Green looking north across pond

- 2.3 The village is characterised by a large 'Green' (*Wrea Green*) which now lies towards the south-western edge of the modern settlement. The village green is said to be the largest in Lancashire and provides the focus for the designated Wrea Green Conservation Area, which was designated in May 1975.
- 2.4 The Wrea Green Conservation Area confines itself to the land and buildings located immediately around the village green. The Green itself is bounded by the B5259 which forms the northern and western edge and The Green to the south and east. Properties, in the main, face onto the Green and are a mix of ages with some dating from the Victorian and Edwardian period interspersed with a variety of post war and modern development.



Extent of Wrea Green Conservation Area (marked in green)

- 2.5 The Green is largely open with no enclosure around it, laid out as open grass with a large pond (*the Dub*) in the north western part.
- 2.6 At the north eastern extent of the conservation area is the Parish Church of St Nicholas (Grade 2 Listed Building) which dates from 1848 with the steeple added later in 1884. The Church is set back from the Green and lies at the intersection between the B5259 and Station Road. The building constructed from sandstone with a grey slate roof has an impressive 3 stage tower, which incorporates a porch doorway into the Church, which was added to the south side of the 2nd bay.
- 2.7 Immediately east of the Church, set back on a similar line is Church Grove house, an early C19 brick built house (Grade 2 Listed Building) with a distinctive pyramidal slate roof.
- 2.8 The Church, the Grapes Hotel, immediately to the west, and the red brick Edwardian period Ribby and Wrea Endowed Church of England Primary School, which lies on the opposite side of Station Road form a prominent and noteworthy group (see photograph below) in the conservation area which with exception are typically domestic in appearance. Buildings largely are 2 storey in scale and of a mixed grain with the older cottages forming groups of small terraces with the more modern detached houses infilling the spaces and gaps in between.



Photo 2. Historic view looking north-east from Green

- 2.9 The character of the conservation areas derives, in part, from the original agricultural settlement with some of the original buildings still forming a looser urban form on the southern edge of the conservation area. This is illustrated in the First edition map of around 1845 and published in 1848 (see plate below). To the north, east and west the enclosure of the Green by development is more evident and is denser in nature. This is reinforced by the domestic garden enclosures and boundaries fronting on to the road sides.
- 2.10 On the west side the frontage is characterised by formal hedge enclosures to gardens elsewhere boundary treatments are more mixed with a variety of walls of differing heights and construction (brick and stone) and less formal hedging.
- 2.11 The historic mapping on both 1848 and 1893 show little change in the form of the settlement, with the loose agricultural settlement surrounding the village Green. Later phases of development in the early C20 and then the more modern infill have, on the whole, retained the historic relationship to the Green as being the central focus.



Historic map – Lancashire OS six inch surveyed 1845 showing the area of the Wrea Green Conservation Area in green.

3.0 NATIONAL GUIDANCE AND PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 The principle statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is to preserve the special character of heritage assets, including their setting. Local Planning Authority's should in coming to decisions consider the principle Act which states that in respect to conservation area (s.72) that in undertaking its role the Council should *pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.*
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 states that when determining planning applications Local Planning Authority's should take account of;
- a. The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b. The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.3 NPPF - P.193 states that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be applied.
- 3.4 NPPF - P.196 identifies that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 3.5 Policy ENV5 - Historic Environment of the Fylde Local Plan (adopted October 2018) states that proposals affecting conservation areas should conserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution to their special character and appearance and setting, unless the harm can be outweighed by the public benefits. Proposals should:
- a) Be appropriate to their context including setting, scale, density and physical characteristics;
 - b) Preserve or enhance features making a positive contribution. In particular, design, massing and height of any building should closely relate to adjacent buildings and should not have an unacceptable impact on townscape and landscape;
 - c) Not have an unacceptable impact on historic street patterns or roofscape;
 - d) Not result in the loss of open space (the Green Infrastructure network);
 - e) Retain individual features of interest, e.g. doorways, cobbles, trees, hedges, railings and garden walls;
 - f) Reinforce distinctiveness of the area, reflecting the local pallet of materials and local building styles.
- 3.6 Policy GD7 of the Fylde Local plan identifies the need for development to be of a high standard of design taking into account the character and appearance of the area.

4.0 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.1 It is understood that the sustainable management of heritage assets depends on a proper understanding of the value or significance of the historic environment. Understanding significance, whilst subjective in nature and open to scrutiny is therefore key in managing change to buildings and places which form part of our heritage.
- 4.2 The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework, 2018) states that a key objective of the Governments planning policy is the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater weight should be given to its conservation.
- 4.3 The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines significance as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage assets physical presence, but also from its setting.”
- 4.4 English Heritage (now Historic England) issued its Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance in 2008 which set out the practice of recognising the heritage value so that informed decisions can be made, helping to manage changes in a coherent and sustainable way. The Conservation Principles sets out four main aspects of significance (or values) to be: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. The purpose of identifying these values allows a proper consideration of the impacts of any work or proposals on them. Assessments of significance however depend on experience and judgement and are open to subjectivity and scrutiny.
- 4.5 The accepted levels of significance can be classified as being *Exceptional* (reflected in statutory designations Grade 1 Listed Buildings and Scheduled monuments); *High* (having national importance i.e. other statutory designations); *Medium* (being of regional importance and demonstrating special interest including important group interest); *Low* (values that make a positive contribution within a local context) and *Neutral* (making little or no contribution to the special interest of the asset).

These levels are intended to address the heritage values outlined below. The following Statement of Significance addresses these tangible values and aims to provide a view on the significance of Wrea Green Conservation Area.

4.6 *Wrea Green Conservation Area*

4.7 *Evidential value – or archaeological interest*

Evidential value is described by Historic England (p.35-38 EH – CPPG 2008) as being “physical remains of past human activity” which derives value from the “ability to understand and interpret the evidence”.

4.8 The focus of the Wrea Green Conservation Area is the central Green which, is a good example of an open grazing common at the heart of a former agricultural settlement. Over time the early settlement has been overlain by more modern development of a variety of ages and quality.

4.9 Whilst the footprint of the Green remains largely unchanged and is very likely to show signs of past activity in its buried archaeology the ability to interpret the buildings within the wider conservation has been affected by the fundamental changes that has occurred to the village over time. Its evidential value in this respect is likely to have a **low** significance.

4.10 *Historic value*

The historic value is the significance of a building or place which is derived from the ways in which past people and events can be connected to a building or place. Historic value can be illustrative or associative. Illustrative value derives from how a building can be seen to represent an important event or phase in history whereas associative value relates to the connections a building or place, may have, to important events or people.

- 4.11 Up until the late C19 Wrea Green was known as Wray but was said to have changed its name to avoid confusion with another Lancashire village called Wray near Hornby. The Parish of Ribby–with–Wrea consisted of Ribby (*Rigbi* - Norse origin meaning ridge settlement) and Wray meaning a ‘corner nook’. *Rigbi* referred to above is identified in the Domesday Book with Roger de Poictou, a resident who provided food to the monks of Lancaster Priory. The manor of Ribby (*Rigbi*) was presented by Henry III to the Earl of Lancaster in 1286.
- 4.12 Wray Green developed as a small agricultural settlement until the residential expansion of the mid to late C20 greatly changed its urban form. Historic mapping shows how development has filled in the space around the Green replacing the farm land and orchard enclosures with housing. The conservation area with the Green at its core retains that important link to the agricultural past and helps preserve the Green as the focus for the settlement. The conservation area has an illustrative value relating to the presence of the large Green and the evolution of the settlement and its buildings. It is a good regional example of village with a Green. In this respect I would regard the conservation area to have a **medium** significance.
- 4.13 *Aesthetic value – or architectural interest*
- According to Historic England aesthetic value derives “from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place” (p.46 EH – CPPG 2008). The significance can be attributed to either planned conscious design and/or can be also involve the fortuitous evolution of a building or place.
- 4.14 Wrea Green, like so many villages, has evolved over time and this has contributed to the creation of a multi layered and much altered sub-urban form. Visually the village Green remains an important focus at the heart of the village and is an attractive space. The conservation area is characterised by the presence of the Green and the mix of house styles which surround it. The area is open and allows views around the Green especially to the impressive Parish Church located to the north-east
- 4.15 The residential development which encloses the Green contributes to the areas character and appearance largely due to the visual enclosure they provide. This key characteristic is further enhanced by the fact that development which fronts on to the Green have enclosed gardens fronting onto the road sides. Boundary treatments are varied with a mix of hedges and walls and railings. Hedges are more commonly used on the properties on the western side of the Green moving to brick walls and railings across the northern end. Some traditional stone walling exists (front of the Parish Church) albeit it is not typical of the area. Similarly timber is not a commonly used material.
- 4.16 The houses themselves are of a mixed age, style and architectural quality. They are 2 storey in height and a mix of short terraces and detached properties. Modern properties exist around the Green on all sides and are evident around The Brooklands in the north

and around the junction of The Green and Bryning Lane in the south of the area. In the main the impact of modern development on the key characteristics of the area is minor.



4.17 The Council's Wrea Green Conservation Area document (1977) identifies that the character of the area stems largely from the enclosed open space of the Green rather than the quality of the buildings themselves (paragraph 1.11 – page 3).

4.18 Wrea Green Conservation Area has been designated as an area of special architectural and historic interest. Whilst no formal review or appraisal of the conservation area has taken place since its designation it would, in my view, still meet the requirements for designation laid out under the Planning (Listed Buildings Conservation Areas) Act 1990. I would regard the aesthetic significance of the conservation area to be of **medium** value.

4.19 *Communal value*

Historic England describes communal value as coming from “the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory” (p.54 EH – CPPG 2008). Communal values are commonly closely related with significance attributed to associative historical and aesthetic values. Communal value can be commemorative and symbolic or social and have a significance which is bound up in memories and how a building continues to contribute to the character and appearance of its surrounding area.

4.20 The Wrea Green Conservation Area has a well-defined sense of place. The village Green is a well-known and well used local feature and one which is seen, evidenced by the Parish and village web sites, as being a positive attribute to the village. The Green is used for local village activities including sporting and social events. Whilst I have not gathered any further evidence of its social value it is reasonable to regard the area as being important locally and having a **low/medium** communal significance.

4.21 *Summary Statement of Significance*

The significance of Wrea Green Conservation Area lies extensively in the quality of the open space created by the village Green and the way that residential development has sought to enclose it. Its aesthetic (architectural value) and historic values derive from the Green and how the village has grown around it, in response. The sense of enclosure created by the properties is enhanced by the walls, hedges and railings which provide garden enclosures on to the road frontages. The community use of the Green and its potential to yield evidence of past activities adds further to its overall significance. As indicated in the early Council document (1977) character of the area is not defined by the quality of the buildings themselves although we should acknowledge that there are a number of notable buildings in the conservation area. Overall I consider the significance of Wrea Green Conservation to be of **medium** value.

5.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Retrospective permission is sought for the erection of a new boundary wall, gates and railings on the front and side of Wrea Lodge, The Green, Wrea Green.

5.2 The works involve the provision of a new decorative brick wall located on the back edge of footpath along the full extent of the elevation fronting onto The Brooklands extending up to the junction with The Green and continuing across the frontage of the site. The wall of a contiguous height drops down to become a low wall and railings on either side of the double gated entrance drive into the property. A new timber gate onto The Brooklands has been provided.

- 5.3 The wall is constructed from red/orange brickwork with a brick header course coping. Each panel has an 8 course recessed panel in an *English Garden Wall* bond utilising a canted brick cill and a corbelled head with the last course under the top coping projecting slightly. This detail is replicated for 16 panels on The Brooklands elevation and for 6 across The Green.
- 5.4 The wall/railings sections follow the same height as the wall and are set either side of a curved headed pair of inset metal gates to match the railings. The walls splay and return into the property to allow for an in-set entrance.



Photo 6. Entrance to Wrea Lodge from the Green



Photo 7. Brick wall detail showing recessed panel and corbelled upper courses.

- 5.5 Planning permission was granted under application 14/0175 for works to the property including the new boundary wall. The application was approved in April 2014. The approved details shown on plans 13/1883/PO7, 13/1883/PO5 – Rev B and 13/1883/PO4 – Rev E show a brick wall of the same height with the same recessed panel detail and brick coping. The approved wall across the The Green frontage has 2 brickwork panel sections on the left hand side then changing to 4 sections of wall with brick piers and railings to the right. The scheme shows a splayed and recessed metal entrance gates at the same height of the wall/railings either side.
- 5.6 In this respect the material differences in the appearance between the approved wall/boundary treatment, which was subject to approval of materials (under Condition 2 of approval 14/0175), and the current scheme can be summarised as being;

- a) The inclusion of an additional section of solid brick panels resulting in less sections of wall/railings;
- b) A revised design for the entrance gates from a flat top to curved top railing;
- c) A stepped wall height along The Brooklands (side) elevation.

6 HERITAGE IMPACT ASESMENT

- 6.1 This impact assessment relies on the understanding of the heritage asset and its significance. This impact assessment is a subjective judgment on the impacts of the proposed works on the designated heritage asset. It provides a reasoned professional view on the overall level of impact and how this might be interpreted under legislation and national planning guidance.
- 6.2 In assessing the impact of a proposal which entails the impact on a heritage asset, this assessment draws on a number of key guiding documents where applicable, such as English Heritage Conservation Principles, 2008 and Historic England Guidance Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes 2 and 3 (*Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment and The Setting of Heritage Assets - 2nd edition*) where required. I have also considered the impact of the proposal upon the heritage assets by relating directly to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Fylde Local Plan.
- 6.3 ICOMOS published guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (albeit for Cultural World Heritage properties) suggests that the impacts or changes caused by proposals on the significance of heritage can be judged taking into account their direct and indirect effects and whether they are permanent and reversible or not. They can be ranked, having regard to the significance/value of the particular asset or feature as being neutral/no change, causing negligible change, minor change, moderate change or major change. Impacts can be adverse or beneficial.
- 6.4 The impact assessment below provides a qualified judgement on the impact of the development on the significance of the Wrea Green Conservation Area.
- 6.5 ***Impacts on the Wrea Green Conservation Area***
- 6.6 The character and appearance of Wrea Green Conservation Area is very much centred on the importance of the village Green. The Green formed as the key characteristic of the historic (agricultural) settlement for grazing of stock and has remained through late C19 and C20 residential expansion of the village. The special interest derives largely from the Green and its open space and the enclosure created by the properties which front onto it. This includes the enclosures provided by the variety of boundary treatments.
- 6.10 Wrea Lodge is a modern infill property built around the same time as the modern cul-de-sacs of The Brooklands estate which adjoins the site. Map evidence shows that the property and modern development around it replaced a range of older farm buildings to the rear of The Elms. The building cannot be said to contribute positively to the significance of the conservation area. However the property follows the simple design approach taken elsewhere, whether fortuitously or by design, around the Green by being set back from the roadside, having an enclosed garden space and facing onto the Green. In this respect the property follows the general well established de-facto *Design Code* found in the conservation area.

- 6.11 It has been shown above that front boundary enclosures are an important part of the Wrea Green Conservation Area. There is however no dominant type or style and the conservation area is characterised by a variety including walls, railings and hedges of differing heights. Visually the variation contributes to the fortuitous, evolved design of the village around the Green. The brick wall at Wrea Lodge is of a high quality design, having features which shows a keen 'eye' to more traditional or period wall design. The property is located in the northern part of the conservation area which already has a number of other properties with walls and/or walls with railings including the long section of unbroken wall adjoining to the left (illustrated in photo below) and the Church School.



Photo 8. View looking north from the Green.

- 6.12 Into this context the wall as built is largely the same as approved under the 2014 planning permission, which was presumably considered to cause no harm to either the character or appearance of the conservation area. The altered design does not alter the basic premise of the approved scheme for the wall and the changes applied in the finished design do not cause any harm to the key significance of the conservation area.
- 6.13 The brick used has variety in its colour and has a uniform texture. The pale uncoloured mortar matches that used commonly on other buildings in the conservation area. It seems to me that the brick matches the local distinctiveness of the Wrea Green Conservation Area.
- 6.14 Viewed in the wider context of the Green the wall, as it presently stands, does not look out of place. It lies adjacent to other brick walls at the northern side of the Green. The section of side wall along The Brooklands whilst being in the conservation area is not prominent from any important viewpoint, either looking into or out from the conservation area. Its immediate context is one of a modern estate development. Indeed other long sections of walls exist in the conservation area which are more prominent because of their finish (section of white wall on the south side). Regardless the variety of finish to the front garden enclosures surrounding the Green is part of the character of the area, which no uniform or traditional treatment being evident.
- 6.15 On this basis the application for the new side and front boundary wall including the access gates and railings has a **neutral impact** on the significance of the Wrea Green Conservation Area.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 In determining applications affecting Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, Local Planning authorities have to have regard for the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act and the duty to preserve heritage assets. Chapter 16 of the NPPF (paragraphs 184 -202) reinforces the need to conserve the significance of heritage assets.
- 7.2 The NPPF in this respect emphasises the need for new development to make a positive contribution to local character and in doing so stresses that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance (reference P.201). The local authority should identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets and take account of available evidence and necessary expertise in its decision making.
- 7.3 This report provides an appropriate level of assessment for considering the impact of the proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal' (paragraph 189). The NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposal 'great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be' (paragraph 193). More weight is therefore given to assets of national importance such as listed buildings and more weight should be given to features and elements of high significance than those of lower importance.
- 7.4 In summary the Wrea Green Conservation Area has been shown to be of **medium** significance and is identified as being of importance demonstrating a special architectural and historic interest, including important group interest. The above impact assessment identifies that the new wall, subject to this application, causes **no harm** to the significance of Wrea Green Conservation Area.
- 7.5 As such the proposed development meets the Statutory test 'to preserve' as laid down in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and preserves the character and appearance of the Wrea Green Conservation Area.
- 7.6 The works are in accordance with parts (a) through to (f) of Policy ENV5 of the Fylde Local Plan, which seeks to preserve heritage assets and Policy GD7 which focuses on the need for high quality design which responds to the character and appearance of local areas.