



## BROMBOROUGH POOL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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### PART 1 – CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Prepared for Wirral Council by Donald Insall Associates Ltd, 2007 – Wirral Council 2009

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## PREFACE

### Background to the Study

This report has been prepared by Donald Insall Associates Ltd on behalf of Wirral Council. Its purpose is to clarify the designation of the Conservation Area, which will protect and enhance the character of the historic core of Bromborough Pool.

### Scope and Structure of the Study

The scope of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is based on the guidelines published by English Heritage ('Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' and 'Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas', both dated February 2006) and represents a factual and objective analysis. In accordance with the guidelines, the following framework has been used as the basis for this analysis:-

- Location and population
- Origins and development of the settlement
- Prevailing or former uses and their influence on plan form or building type
- Archaeological significance
- Architectural and historic qualities of buildings
- Contribution made by key unlisted buildings
- Character and relationship of spaces
- Prevalent and traditional building materials
- Local details
- Contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, etc
- Setting of the Conservation Area and its relationship with the surrounding landscape
- Extent of loss, intrusion or damage
- Existence of any neutral areas

The document has been structured to encompass these areas of study and concludes with recommendations for the Conservation Area boundary and other matters such as provision of Article 4 Directions.

### Existing Designations, Legal Framework for Conservation Areas and the Powers of the Local Authority

Since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act local authorities have been empowered to designate as Conservation Areas those areas within their districts which were considered 'special'. The subsequent Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 consolidated those powers and defined Conservation Areas as:-

*"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".*

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Such areas are diverse. They may be large or small; residential or commercial; civic or industrial; old or relatively modern. They may represent social ideals or civic pride. They may be specifically designed or speculatively produced; modest or grand. They may contain Listed Buildings of architectural or historic interest or may simply have local historic association. However, common to all will be an identifiable environmental quality which should be protected from unsympathetic redevelopment or alteration.

Wirral Council has declared 25 Conservation Areas throughout the Borough reflecting the variety of building styles and environments exhibited within its borders.

The content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is clarified by national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment and is supported by more recent Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), which identifies as a key objective the need to ensure active management of the regions environmental and cultural assets.

The principles of these documents are further supported by Wirral Council's local Heritage Conservation policies contained within its Unitary Development Plan.

This legislation and policy framework enables the authority to exercise greater control over development within Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, this may be supplemented by the use of 'Article 4 Directions' to remove permitted development rights. In this way, minor changes, such as window replacement or loft conversions, which may be cumulatively detrimental, can be controlled.

National policy stipulates that local authorities have a duty to review, from time to time, their regions to ensure that places of special architectural or historic interest are being protected. The boundaries of existing Conservation Areas may be revised, new areas may be designated and those areas which have been eroded to the extent that their special character has been lost may be de-designated.

Whilst the Council recognises that, for Conservation Areas to remain 'live' and responsive to a changing society, changes must and will occur, it nevertheless undertakes to ensure that all changes make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its Conservation Areas and do not result in any serious loss of character or features.

Planning legislation supports the authority in this by increasing its control over development. It does this in the following ways:

- Buildings and structures may not be demolished without formal consent from the Council (Conservation Area Consent).
- Trees are protected and all work to them requires consent from the Council.
- New development is expected to reflect the quality of design and construction of the surrounding area and should make a positive contribution to the area's character.

- Local planning authorities may, if necessary, exercise even greater control by removing the basic permitted development rights of householders.
- Under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of the area when formulating decisions on planning applications.

The first step to protecting the inherent qualities of a Conservation Area is having a thorough understanding of its character and Planning Policy Guidance PPG15 advises that "the definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it".

This should then underpin local policies for the areas protection. Such a definition requires a thorough appraisal of the area to assess the contribution of each element (e.g. buildings, boundaries, trees, surfaces, etc.) to the areas overall character. PPG15 notes that "the more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded; the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions".

Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements which give an area its character, it is not intended as a detailed evaluation of each building and feature. Therefore any buildings, features and details may still have importance even though not specifically referred to in the document and any omissions do not indicate lack of merit or interest.

## PART 1 – CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

### 1.0 LOCATION

#### 1.1 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

- 1.1.1 Bromborough Pool Village is located on the eastern side of the Wirral Peninsula, close to the banks of the River Mersey. It is nestled within a primarily industrial area and is immediately adjacent to the Unichema chemical works. It is near to the residential areas of Bromborough, Bebington, Port Sunlight and New Ferry and approximately 3 miles south-east of the town of Birkenhead.

#### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The area is almost flat, sloping slightly down towards the Mersey. It is about 10m above sea level. The geological conditions are thought to be bunter pebble beds.

#### 1.3 GENERAL USAGE

- 1.3.1 There are just under 100 dwellings within the conservation area, of which most are part of semi-detached or terraced groups, with a small number of apartments within larger converted buildings. The non-domestic buildings in Bromborough Pool include a church, primary school, village hall, cricket and bowling pavilions, garden centre and social club.

#### 1.4 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY AND STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

- 1.4.1 The conservation area boundary follows along Dock Road South around the north-eastern and south-eastern sides of the area, with a small area excluded around a modern building on its corner. It then extends along Old Court House Road and over Pool Lane to include a small area of trees that forms part of a scheduled monument. It then continues north-eastwards along Pool Lane, skirting around an area now used for industrial purposes to once again meet with Dock Road South.

- 1.4.2 There are 16 grade II listed buildings or groups of buildings within the conservation area. These designations include all of the remaining houses built during or before the 1870s and a number of the principal 19<sup>th</sup> century public buildings such as the church, school and village hall.

- 1.4.3 There is a scheduled monument site on the south-west corner of the conservation area designated to protect the archaeological remains of the old Court House.

## 2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 EARLY HISTORY AND ORIGINS OF SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1.1 The manor of Bromborough is thought to be of great antiquity. Although it is not mentioned directly in the Domesday Survey, the settlement was likely to have been listed as part of Eastham with the church and manor house held by Earl Hugh.
- 2.1.2 It is thought that the manor house referred to at that time may have been on the site the later Court House, on the edge of the current conservation area. The Court House is understood to have been a moated monastic house and grange, described by Harold Edgar Young in his 1909 book entitled ‘A Perambulation of the Hundred of Wirral’ as having been built around the year 1680 by the Hardwares, a celebrated Chester family.
- 2.1.3 The house and surrounding land and water mills were purchased in around 1770 by James Mainwaring and this area, together with much of the township remained in his family’s ownership until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

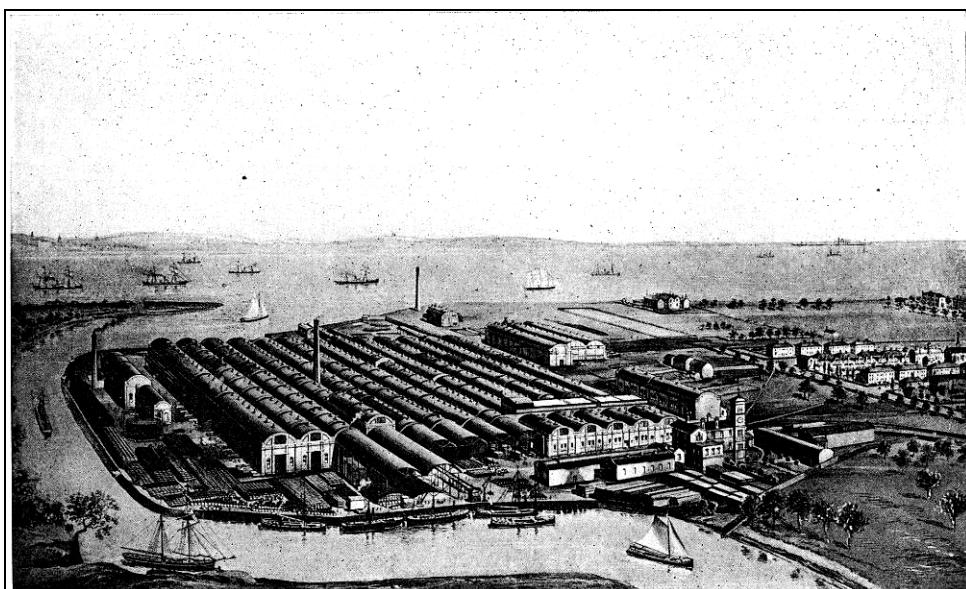


*The Court House photographed in Young's book of 1909*

### 2.2 19TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

- 2.2.1 In the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wirral’s population began to grow as the Mersey became one of the world’s busiest hubs for mercantile transportation. A new turnpike road was built between 1839 and 1840 for the increased traffic between Chester and Birkenhead from Tranmere Ferry to Bromborough Village. This was a costly exercise as the road had to span over the Bromborough Pool river inlet and it had a tarmacadam surface, which was expensive and relatively unusual at that time.

- 2.2.2 The new road, together with the Chester to Birkenhead Railway, which had opened in 1838, bought new development impetus for this area of the Wirral, which was at that time dominated by scarcely populated marshland.
- 2.2.3 In 1853, construction began on a factory at Bromborough Pool. The new works were created by Price's Patent Candle Company. Prices had been making candles in London since 1830 and were already a household name. Their original factory in Battersea had 700 employees at that time. The site was chosen due to its proximity to Liverpool, through which one of the critical materials in the candle making process in that time, palm oil, was imported.
- 2.2.4 Many of the key workers from the Battersea works were brought to Bromborough and used to train the local workforce. As the new site was some distance away from existing residential areas, it was necessary to construct new housing for the workers. The factory's owners, the Wilson brothers, already had a good reputation for the empathy and attitude they had towards their workers and this was further displayed in the layout and management of the Bromborough Pool site.



A 19<sup>th</sup> century aerial image of the Bromborough Pool works. Bromborough Pool Village is to be seen on the right hand side.

- 2.2.5 Although simple in character architecturally, the housing in Bromborough Pool was constructed with the wellbeing of the occupants in mind. Terraces had four houses each and were spaced out to allow good light into the buildings and provide areas for gardens. Unusually for workers' housing of that time, each house had running water and was connected to a drainage system with internal water closets.

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- 2.2.6 The Wilsons were a deeply religious family and were keen to attend to the spiritual and educational needs of the workers. Services were arranged every morning in the factory and schooling was provided in the evenings. Cricket matches and outings were laid on in the summer months. Following the abolition of the slave trade at the beginning of the century, there was increasing disquiet for conditions in which many children worked. The Wilsons shared the concerns of the campaigners. Although boys were still employed, their working conditions at Bromborough were widely praised. Court House Farm was used as a hostel for boys during the early years of the factory.



*Historical photograph, looking towards the cricket ground along York Street. The two buildings in the foreground on the right and all the buildings on the left have subsequently been demolished. The first building on the right was understood to have been the village shop for a while.*

- 2.2.7 The first housing had been constructed in Bromborough Pool in 1854. The first 32 houses appeared on York Street and 16 further, 2 years later, on Manor Place in 1856. By 1858 there were 76 houses, including 4 large manager's houses on The Green. A second phase was completed between 1872 and 1878 of 27 houses on Manor Place before a third and final phase in 1896-1901.
- 2.2.8 The first purpose-built school was constructed in 1858. This was later to become the village hall when the current school building was built in the 1890s. Prior to 1858, school lessons had taken place in one of the houses, number 5 York Street.
- 2.2.9 Together with the physical measures put in place to benefit the welfare of the factory workers, ground-breaking pension, profit-sharing and saving schemes were initiated. Price's contributed to employees' pension schemes provided that they 'exercised thrift'.
- 2.2.10 Despite the comparatively good living conditions of workers and village residents, there were 20 deaths reported in Bromborough Pool in 1877. Many of these were apparently caused by diphtheria. At that time Liverpool Corporation had been dumping waste nearby, possibly causing the bacteria

to spread. When this practice was stopped and a fever hospital built in the village, the rate of mortality quickly fell.

- 2.2.11 It is somewhat surprising that a church was not built in the village until 1890, although services had been laid on throughout the early period of the village. St Matthew's Church was non-denominational and constructed from sandstone quarried from a site off South View.

### **2.3 20<sup>TH</sup> AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHANGES**

- 2.3.1 A new hospital and nurses home was opened in 1903 (the building is now used as the social club). The original hospital, at the far end of the cricket pitch, was demolished in 1919.
- 2.3.2 By 1908 90% of candles were being made using paraffin wax. This increased the volume that could be produced and kept costs low. At this time Prices were the world's leading manufacturer of candles, however, the use of gas and electricity for lighting was becoming increasingly popular and the market ever-more competitive.
- 2.3.3 In 1919 the company was taken over by Lever Brothers, who owned the nearby works at Port Sunlight. By 1938 Price's Patent Candle Company was split up following further complicated changes to its ownership. Candles continued to be made in London, but the Bromborough Plant focused solely on the manufacture of substances that had previously been made as bi-products of the candle industry. The factory has since remained in the same ownership and producing specialist fats and glycerides used in the manufacture of cosmetics, polishes, soaps, detergents, ice-cream and confectionary.
- 2.3.4 No further residential buildings were constructed within the village boundary after 1901, although improvements were made to the existing houses, with, for instance, electricity provided in homes from around 1937 onwards. Being within an industrial area, the village at Bromborough Pool sustained considerable damage during the Second World War. From around this time the level of maintenance and repair on the houses decreased and by the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many were in a very poor condition. The factory, however, continued to physically expand and redevelop and by this time virtually all that was left of the original building was the tall campanile. The expansion of the factory together with the poor condition of many of the houses was eventually to result in the demolition of around 1/3 of the village's buildings. However, the loss of this large extent of building fabric seemed to instigate a move to protect the remaining buildings and raise awareness of the village's significance. The earlier houses and public buildings, together with the church were all listed in 1986 shortly after the village was declared a conservation area in 1984. In 1989 the village came

under the ownership and care of Riverside Housing, who undertook extensive repair and improvement schemes.

2.3.5 There were also a number of changes to the setting of the village and its infrastructure in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, the Court House complex was lost. The lodge was demolished in 1961-2 to allow for road ‘improvements’, although the toll gates had been dismantled in the Second World War. Pool Lane has in that time been realigned and entirely new roads constructed around the conservation area boundary – Old Court House Road and Dock Road South.

### **2.4 OTHER PHILANTHROPIC DEVELOPMENTS**

2.4.1 Bromborough Pool stands in history as one of the villages constructed by wealthy industrialists that revolutionised the working and living standards of their workers. The following is a list of other villages in Britain built by philanthropic factory owners that either may have influenced or been influenced by Bromborough Pool:

- New Lanark - mostly built by Robert Owen between 1800 and 1825
- Colonel Akroyd’s Copley of 1847-9
- Sir Titus Salt’s Saltaire - started from 1850-1
- Later - the more decorative Port Sunlight (from 1887) and Bourneville (from 1895)

2.4.2 Many of the ground breaking elements seen in Bromborough Pool, such as the system of allotments, company pension and medical schemes were seen and used on a larger scale in the garden cities and suburbs of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **2.5 ARCHAEOLOGY**

2.4.1 Recent speculation has argued that the nearby settlement of Bromborough was the site of the battle of “Brunanburgh” (approx. 937 AD) attested to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. If this were correct, the tidal inlet at Bromborough Pool would have been an obvious landing location for the Hiberno-Norse forces that were then to be defeated by the Anglo-Saxon army of Aethelstand and Edmund. The nearby site of the Old Courthouse is ancient, and although the construction of the factory and associated housing has probably obliterated any archaeological remains, the presence of significant deposits can never be discounted.

### **3.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISTAS**

#### **3.1 SETTING AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA**

3.1.1 Bromborough Pool Village is almost surrounded by modern industrial units and their associated infrastructure. It is cut off from other residential areas and the busy thoroughfare of the A41 New Chester Road has a particularly large effect, severing it from many facilities. Although Bromborough Pool is within a short distance of the River Mersey and was built in its current position because of it, today their physical relationship is very weak with little access or viewing points nearby.

#### **3.2 CHARACTER AND RELATIONSHIP OF SPACES**

3.2.1 The terraces of houses are set out in a small grid. There is a relatively small distance between the front building lines of the houses on either side of Manor Place, although the terraces are staggered so that there is a certain degree of open space in front of the houses, presumably to maximise the daylight into the buildings. This gap is typically around 11-12m,

3.2.2 The gardens are also important and set the housing apart from other industrial residential areas. The back gardens are 19-25m deep and there is a small area in front of the houses, giving a buffer of about 2m from the pavement.

3.2.3 The primary public buildings of the church, school and housing are all situated within the grid of housing. However, few other buildings such as the cricket and bowling pavilions, the former managers' houses and the social club (former hospital) are clearly deliberately positioned at a distance from the housing.

#### **3.3 VIEWS AND VISTAS WITHIN THE AREA**

3.3.1 The flatness of the surrounding area and its modern industrial character largely preclude any interesting views into or out of the conservation area. The only feature of visual interest immediately outside the boundary appears to be the office building with the tall campanile, which is a rare surviving reminder of the original factory.

3.3.2 All other views and vistas of interest are short range and are better described at 'streetscapes', as they feature a group of buildings, often of an equal hierarchy. The view down Manor Place, for instance, is important although it does not terminate in an interesting feature.

- 3.3.4 The open views across the cricket and football grounds are a part of the visual character of the conservation area and provide visual connections between the former managers' houses and the public buildings on York Street, for instance.



*The view from The Green, across the cricket field towards the houses on York Street.*

### **3.4 GREEN SPACES AND PLANTING**

- 3.4.1 The green spaces and planting in the village is important to its current visual character, but its most important role is in acting as a buffer, often blocking out the poor quality industrial units and installations from view. The area of trees and shrubs to the western ends of the York Street and Manor Place is particularly important to their streetscapes giving an attractive green 'bookend' to the vista. This happens to a lesser extent on the eastern side of the green as although the hedges provide some greenery, they are not of sufficient height to block out the factories beyond. There are stretches of single rows of trees planted around the perimeter of the conservation area that also visually soften the impact of the industrial structures. In a similar respect, the two rows of trees along the modern link road, running parallel to South View also helps to lessen the visual effect of the neighbouring industry.
- 3.4.2 The sports grounds have always played an important role in the social as well as visual significance of the village. The provision of sporting facilities for workers was part of the revolutionary concept of the village, with cricket, football and bowls encouraged to be played to enhance the welfare of the residents. Although not necessarily used fully for their intended sports today, they remain important for the recreational needs of local residents.



(Left) the green 'buffer' at the eastern ends of York Street and Manor Place; (right) the view across the football pitch towards the housing on South View.

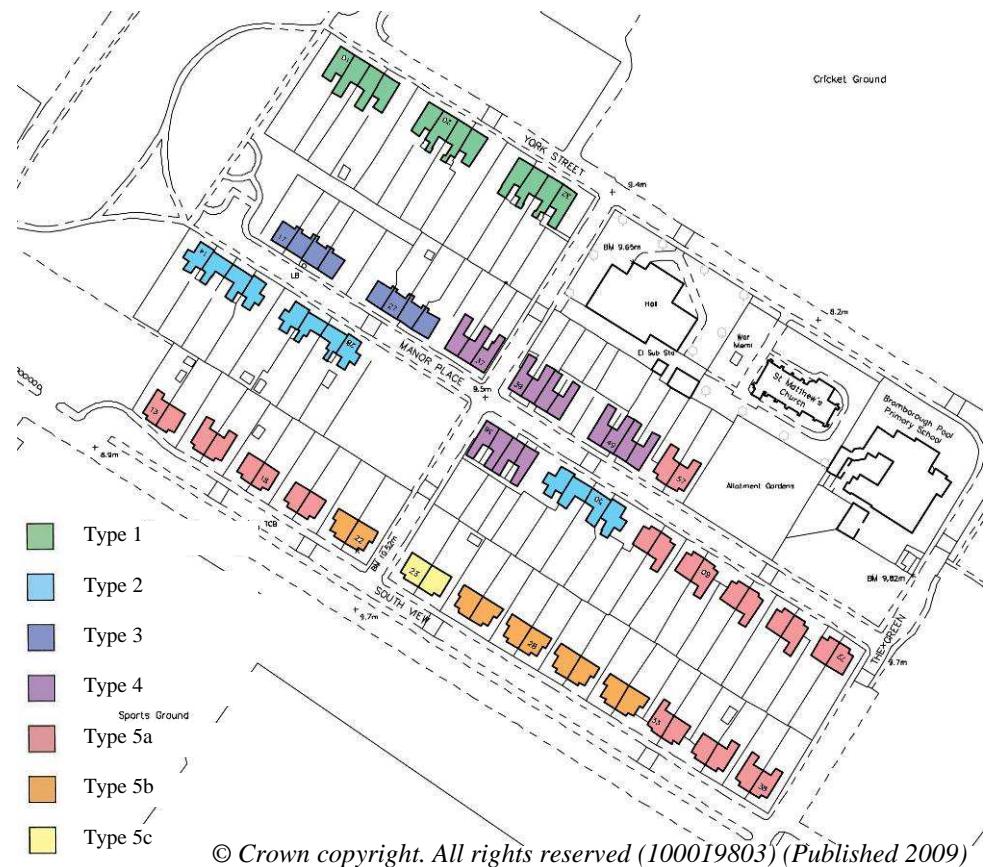
- 3.4.3 The provision of allotments, which were made available to all residents, was an important part of the original social concept of the village. Up until recently these have been well used and have been an attractive feature of the village, even though the allocated area has shrunk considerably. Recent proposals have indicated a wish to relocate the allotments as part of a scheme of new housing.
- 3.4.4 The quality of planting within privately owned gardens is inevitably mixed although there has been little or no loss to their size over their history. Mature shrubs and occasional trees in rear gardens contribute to the setting of the village. The small front gardens allow little scope for planting. Originally each of these would have had a small railing and hedge – which the regulations of the village stipulated should be kept to 24 inches in height. Where these gardens have well-kept lawns or are planted out with shrubs they are attractive and contribute to the setting of the buildings and streetscape as a whole.
- 3.4.5 The garden centre to the South of The Green contains an array of greenhouses and cultivated plants for sale, which adds some horticultural richness to that part of the conservation area.

## 4.0 TOWNSCAPE AND PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

### 4.1 GRAIN, SCALE, REPETITION AND DIVERSITY

- 4.1.1 The houses within Bromborough Pool are all variants of two types. The first are terraces of mostly 4 houses built between 1854 and 1872 (types 1-4); the second semi-detached houses built between the years of 1896 and 1901 (type 5). Almost all of these variant housing blocks are repeated within the village. The existing variants (one other type, used to exist on York Street) can be listed as follows:

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## Type 1 – Built 1854

10-16, 18-24, 26-32 York Street

### Terraces of 4 houses

Simple, rectilinear form with rear projections. Handmade brick with slate roof. Brickwork in stretcher bond. Sash windows and pointed-arched door openings. 3 chimneys with 5 / 10 pots.



## Type 2 – Built 1856

14-20, 22-28, 46-52 Manor Place

### Terraces of 4 houses

Slightly projecting end bays with ground floor bay windows. Middle houses wider. Handmade brick with slate roof. Brickwork in Flemish bond to front. Sash windows and rectilinear openings to doorways with fanlight over. 3 chimneys each with 4 pots.

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	<p><b>Type 3 – Built 1856</b></p> <p>17-23, 25-31 Manor Place</p> <p>Terraces of 4 houses</p> <p>Similar to type 1, although different configuration. Simple, rectilinear form with rear projections. End houses larger and entered from the side. First floor shallow floor plan. Handmade brick with slate roof. Brickwork in stretcher bond. Sash windows and pointed-arched door openings. 2 chimneys each with 8 pots.</p>
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	<p><b>Type 4 – Built 1872</b></p> <p>33-37, 39-45, 47-52, 38-44 Manor Place</p> <p>Terraces of 3 / 4 houses</p> <p>Narrower frontages but with deeper floor plan and rear outriggers. Handmade brick with slate roof. Header course to every 5<sup>th</sup> course of bricks. Sash windows and round-arched fanlights over doorways. 4 chimneys each with 4 pots.</p>
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	<p><b>Type 5a – Built between 1896 &amp; 1901</b></p> <p>13/14, 15/16, 17/18, 19/20, 33/34, 35/36, 37/38 South View</p> <p>54/56, 58/60, 62/64, 66/68, 70/72 Manor Place</p> <p>Pairs of semi-detached houses</p> <p>Red pressed brick with slate roof. Painted timber barge boards with framing detail and finial to front pair of gables, linked with central hopper and downpipe. Roofed ground floor porch. One central chimney with 8 pots. Buildings would have originally have had sash windows, with the exception of the large ground floor front window, which was fixed with central opening casements.</p>
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	<p><b>Type 5b – Built between 1896 &amp; 1901</b></p> <p>21/22, 25/26, 27/28, 29/30, 31/32 South View</p> <p>Pairs of semi-detached houses</p> <p>Red pressed brick with slate roof. Painted timber barge boards with framing detail and finial to front pair of gables, linked with central hopper and downpipe. Plan form steps back twice. Two central chimneys. Buildings would have originally have had sash windows, with the exception of the large ground floor front window, which was fixed with central opening casements. Slightly larger than type 5a.</p>
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	<b>Type 5c – Built between 1896 &amp; 1901</b> <b>23/24 South View</b> <b>Pair of semi-detached houses</b> Wider gables than 5a and 5b. Red pressed brick with slate roof. Painted timber barge boards with framing detail and finial to front pair of gables, linked with central hopper and downpipe. Two central chimneys. Buildings would have originally have had sash windows, with the exception of the large ground floor front window, which was fixed with central opening casements.
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## 4.2 BOUNDARIES AND SURFACES

- 4.2.1 Most road and path surfaces within the conservation area are modern and do not contribute positively to its character. Roads are tarmacced and footpaths have modern concrete pavements, however, the original stone kerbstones generally remain.
- 4.2.2 Most of the railings within the village, particularly those to the front gardens, have been removed, possibly at the time of the Second World War. A few examples still exist of the railing as seen in the early photographs. Most of the other railing and fencing in the village are modern and are of a basic quality of no visual merit. A 19<sup>th</sup> century wall still exists on Dock Road South, along the side of the sports grounds. This, like the trees, is important as a visual buffer, but also is likely to be an early or even original boundary to the village.



*The wall on Dock Road South and the fencing around the allotments which is to the original or an early design*

### **5.0 ARCHITECTURE, MATERIALS AND DETAILS**

#### **5.1 PROMINENT STYLES**

- 5.1.1 The houses within Bromborough Pool are very simply designed and detailed and therefore cannot be said to be following any one architectural style.
- 5.1.2 The public buildings, however, each have distinct architectural characters. The school and church are dominated by their steeply pitched roofs and pointed-arched windows. These features, together with their irregular plan form give them a slightly gothic character. The village hall is contrasting in style. The curved metal roof relates to those within the original industrial units, but the details such as the cornice and semi—circular arched windows has some Italianate characteristics, which would have been a popular style at the time of its construction in the 1850s.



*The village hall and church*

#### **5.2 KNOWN ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS**

- 5.2.1 The first houses in Bromborough Pool were reportedly designed by Julian Hill, a London architect. The church is reported within the Pevsner guide to Cheshire as being designed by a Leach of London. However, no further information has been identified concerning the architects of the buildings at Bromborough Pool.

#### **5.3 MATERIALS**

- 5.3.1 All houses have slate roofs with red/brown brick walls. Handmade brick is used in the earlier houses with a much harder, pressed brick of a brighter and more even colour used. It is understood that the bricks to the original houses were made from clay taken from near the river. Sandstone is used for cills only.
- 5.3.2 Other materials, outside of the limited palette described above, are only used in the public buildings or those originally built for non-domestic purposes.

The school and church are constructed using red sandstone, reportedly quarried from within the village. Both of these buildings have plain clay tiled roofs although it is possible that at least the church would have originally have been slated as the slender spired roof of the turret is of that material.

- 5.3.3 The village hall has a more apparent visual contrast to the residential buildings. A buff / yellow brick is used with occasional dressings of matching coloured sandstone. The roof is unusual in that corrugated metal would have been used to clad the curved shape, although this has been subsequently replaced in modern alternative materials. Corrugated metal was also used on the original section of the cricket pavilion.
- 5.3.4 The Social Club and adjacent Cottage building both use the bright pressed brick and slate roofs seen used on the later housing.

### **5.4 TYPICAL FEATURES AND DETAILS**

- 5.4.1 **Windows** with the Bromborough Pool houses would have for the most part have been vertically sliding sashes at the time of the buildings' construction. The earlier, listed, houses all currently have sash windows to their front elevations in a 6 over 6 or 8 over 8 configuration. Some are arched-headed, or have swept heads. These buildings would have also have originally had sash windows on their side and rear elevations. The sash windows all have horns, although it is not known whether this is an original detail. A small number of the earlier terraced houses have square bay windows on their ground floors. These currently have casement openings with multiple panes, although it is possible or even likely that these were originally sashes.

The unlisted houses, built around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, would have originally have had sash windows, with the exception of the ground floor front window which had a central casement and transom, flanked by fixed lights. These buildings each have a large, arched headed window divided into 6 parts in the centre of the ground floor, presumably to maximise the light entering the main living spaces. Other windows vary in size a shape according to the use of the room behind. The vast majority of these windows have been replaced with modern alternatives.



*Windows to the houses in Bromborough Pool*

There is considerable variety in the windows to the other buildings in Bromborough Pool. Each building uses its windows to express its architecture character. Leaded windows set within sandstone surround are seen in the church and cottage next to the old hospital building. The village hall has half-round arched sash windows repeated around the building. The school has a mixture of timber sash and casement windows between stone transoms and mullions. The former manager's house has fairly simple sash windows, making it visually part of the group of domestic buildings, although its deep painted stone surround is used to clearly raise its status.



*Windows at the church, village hall, former manager's house and cottage next to the former hospital.*

### 5.4.2

**Doors** and door openings within the conservation area are typically simple with little ornament or decoration. Both panelled and vertically boarded doors are seen within the village, but it is unclear which were used historically as there are few, if any, original doors remaining. Both are appropriate to the style and age of the house, but consistency of door design is important within an individual block. A number of more modern types of door construction also exist. Front doors to the terrace blocks have a fanlight

over them, allowing daylight into the hallway or room beyond. These vary in shape and fenestration, helping to form the individual character of the building. Many of the later houses have doorways at the sides, making them largely invisible from the street.



### 5.4.3

**Chimneys** are particularly important to the streetscapes within the village and help to break up the relatively long, plain sections of roofs on the terraces. Chimneys are rectangular in plan form and are constructed in the same material as the elevations of the buildings. Chimneys vary in height and shape, depending on the number of rooms served. Chimneys can have up to 10 flues. Decoration on most chimneys is relatively modest, with just a stringer course used on the higher ones together with a coupe of projecting courses at the top. The condition of the chimneys appears generally to be good and most pots are present, although they are very often varied in colour and design. As with other architectural features, the chimneys on the terraces are simpler in design to those on the public and higher status buildings. Those on the managers' housing for instance, have a dog-toothed detail at their cornice and each flue is expressed individually by splitting the volume in the central section of its height.



*Chimneys within the conservation area. The right-hand photograph shows the split chimneys of the manager's house.*

5.4.4 The **roof details** are also simple, reflecting the modest design of all of the workers houses. All of the houses constructed in or before the 1870s have hipped grey Welsh slate roofs with grey clay ridge and hip tiles. At the end of each hip are often scrolled hip-irons. Leadwork is used for valleys and flashings. The very small roof overhang is concealed behind the gutters.

The turn of the century houses have more complex roof forms. The houses use gable ends fronting onto the road as a feature to their architectural form. These verges have a slightly greater projection with bargeboards that are often linked with a horizontal member and have a finial down below their ridge. These roofs are slightly steeper in pitch than the earlier houses.

The church and the school have steep roof pitches and relatively complex roof plans. Both buildings generally use stone parapets at their gable ends. These roofs overhang at the eaves and the underside of the rafter ends are visible. Terracotta ridge tiles are used, and in the case of the church these are decorated with a dogtoothed profile.



(Left) A scrolled hip iron on one of the older terraced houses; (middle) the complex roof form of the school; (right) a modern street light replicating the design of a traditional gas lamp.

5.4.5 **Construction:** It is reported that many of the earliest houses were built using a cavity wall construction, with each leaf of brickwork linked using metal ties. Although no evidence has been made available in the form of drawings or photographs, this theory appears to be supported by the fact that the York Street houses and some of those on Manor Place are constructed using stretcher bond brickwork.

5.4.6 Most **public realm** fittings such as signs are entirely modern and neither detract from or add to the character of the conservation area. Although the street lights are also from the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a few have been carefully chosen to contribute to the appearance of the area, with their design inspired by traditional gas lamps.

## **6.0 NEGATIVE FACTORS**

### **6.1 OVERVIEW**

6.1.1 A study of this nature cannot attempt to highlight every part of the built environment that has a detrimental impact on the character or setting of the conservation area; instead this report summarises the most apparent of examples and key problems within the conservation area as a way of encouraging an understanding and awareness of these issues.

6.1.2 Appended to this document is a plan showing the contribution of buildings to the character of the conservation area. The plan was produced as a tool to gain an understanding of the significance of different parts of the village and to inform as to the appropriateness of the boundary. This plan categorizes each building, or group of buildings into the following groupings:

- A: (Red) – Buildings that are critical to the character of the area: typically these may be landmark buildings and / or buildings with most of their original character retained
- B: (Yellow) – Buildings that contribute positively to the character of the conservation area: buildings may have some alterations but original character is still prominent
- C: (Green) – Neural - Either modern buildings of little interest or buildings where character has been lost beyond economic redemption.
- D: (Blue) – Buildings that detract from the significance or character of the area.

### **6.2 RECENT DEVELOPMENT**

6.2.1 There have been no new buildings of significant size constructed within the conservation area boundary since the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **6.3 UNSYMPATHETIC EXTENSIONS**

6.3.1 There are relatively few extensions within the conservation area of a significant size. Most extensions have been to the rear or sides of houses to provide single storey ancillary accommodation such as porches. The most unsympathetic of extensions are likely to be those that confuse the original form of the building and lessen the overall perception of quality. Good extensions would either use the materials and detailing of the original

building or be of a modern design and construction that is of a high quality but adequately contrasting to the original.



*Unsympathetic extensions to buildings in the conservation area*

- 6.3.2 Although not significant in size, or overly prominent in position, there are a number of extensions to the unlisted houses that are detrimental to their character. Most of these small extensions seem to form a porch or small shelter adjacent to the doorway. In most instances poor quality, modern materials are used, such as UPVC and stained softwood, which are alien to the character of the conservation area. Furthermore, the design and appearance of these additions varies considerably along the street (most are on South View), which is detrimental to the sense of rhythm and repetition that is particularly important to this conservation area.

### **6.4 UNSYMPATHETIC ALTERATIONS**

- 6.4.1 There have been many changes to the buildings within the conservation area, particularly to the unlisted buildings. These changes are often detrimental to the architectural character of the building and adversely affect the perceived quality of the street or even village as a whole. These changes include:

- Replacing original windows, within modern designs and materials such as UPVC
- The replacement of doors
- Pebbledashing over originally exposed brickwork
- Poor quality repairs, particularly where using a change of material



*Unsympathetic alterations within the conservation area: (left) pebbledashed end walls to the terraces; (middle) poor quality pointing; (right) the effect of installing double glazing – making the window frames wider, therefore leading to an odd configuration of glazing bars.*

### 6.4.2

The foremost alteration to historic fabric within the conservation area is the replacement of original doors and windows. These alterations are often well intentioned – to improve the thermal or acoustic performance or to reduce maintenance requirements for instance, but the visual effect, particularly on the architecturally simple buildings is immense. The original windows would have had very slim profiles, giving an elegant appearance. In contrast, a UPVC or aluminium replacement, particularly when holding a thick double glazed unit, have considerably thicker frames, which are more obtrusive visually and will let much less light into the building. The reconfiguration of opening panes (particularly when replacing sashes with top-hung casements) dramatically changes the architectural character of the building. Where windows are replaced in timber, these can also adversely affect the appearance of the building where the original detailing is not following and often the quality of the timber is far substandard to the original, giving it a short lifespan. It seems likely that windows have been replaced with inferior alternates when the originals would have been readily repairable and upgradeable. There are a few instances where secondary glazing has been used in the village (e.g. in the village hall), which will always produce a more satisfactory visual result than a double glazed equivalent. The recent advent of slimline double-glazing units placed within existing frames may offer a less visually obvious solution to the need to improve thermal performance – provided that there is no loss of historic glass.



*A comparison between replacement and original windows.*

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- 6.4.3 Almost all doors within the conservation area have been replaced at some stage. Although most doors are of an appropriate form from a glance, following a traditional 4 panelled or vertically boarded arrangement, on closer inspection most are of a mediocre or poor quality. Many appear to be of as flush construction with mouldings simply applied to the front. Very few have historic or appropriate quality ironmongery. A small number of the listed buildings have entirely inappropriate doors, for instance with a stained finish or glazing panes.
- 6.4.4 There are a number of instances of inappropriate alterations to the fabric of the buildings in the conservation area. Whilst the listed status of the buildings seems have in most cases restricted changes to windows, roofs and chimneys, the historical importance of the building does not seem to have been considered in repair and maintenance works. A number of the terraces have their end walls pebbledashed. This not only changes the appearance of the building, but also will adversely affect the performance of the wall, often causing the structure to retain dampness if the render is cementitious. Pointing is a similar problem. Hard, cementitious pointing will accelerate the rate of deterioration of the bricks, particularly where they are handmade, and therefore softer. There are instances of particularly poor workmanship in the pointing of brickwork making it visually obtrusive.
- 6.4.5 There are a number of further issues, which do not involve the loss or damage to historic fabric but have a detrimental affect on the appearance of the conservation area. All of these matters could be changed without or with little cost, therefore can be considered management issues. These include:
- The installation of satellite dishes and aerials.
  - Inappropriate colour schemes – detracting from the quality of the historic fabric.
  - Bins stored in front gardens, presumably due to a lack of facilities at the rear.
  - Neglect and loss of front gardens – particularly where gardens are fully paved over



*Management issues: (left) inappropriate colour scheme to the school; (middle) bins store in the neglected front garden of a house; (right) a garden that has been completely paved over*

### **6.5 PUBLIC REALM**

- 6.5.1 It appears as though most street paving was replaced in the late 1980s. Pavements consist of a pattern of concrete slabs with red concrete setts. These are now clearly dated and tired looking and their quality is inappropriate within this historical area. Furthermore, the pattern is distracting from the streetscape. Roads are tarmacked with occasional speed humps. Where there have been works to services under the roads, the repairs are generally crude and the resultant patchwork of services again this is detrimental to the character of the village.



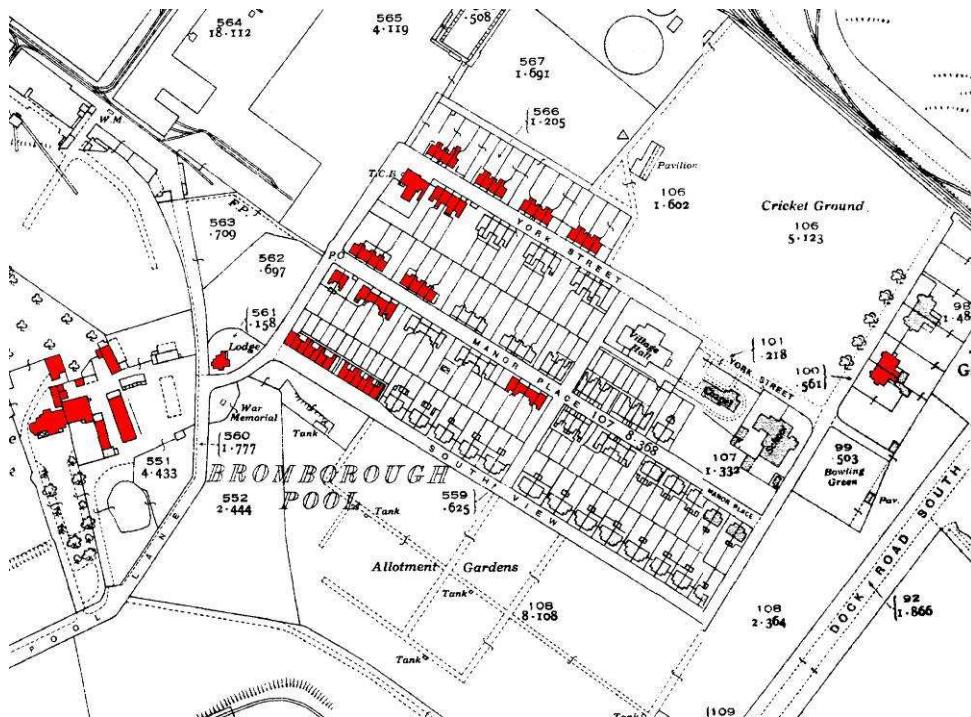
- 6.5.2 The treatment of the roads and parking areas associated with the works is particularly poor and adversely affects the initial impression of visitors entering the village.

### **6.6 LOSS AND DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES**

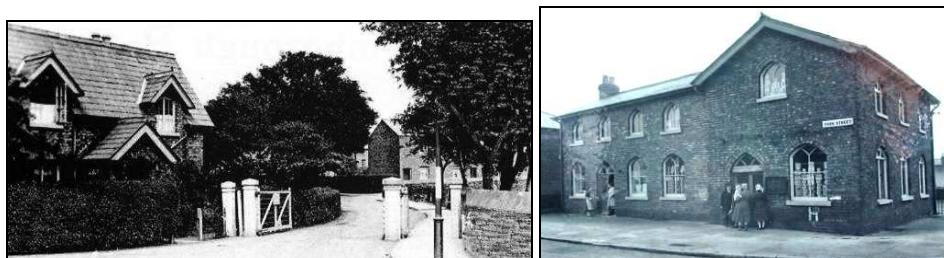
- 6.6.1 The presence of the neighbouring factory works and other aspects of industrial setting of the village are the primary factors affecting the survival of the historic buildings and construction of new buildings.
- 6.6.2 The factory buildings on the former Price's site are hemmed in on three sides by the winding water inlet of Bromborough Pool which has meant that expansion has always been towards the village.
- 6.6.3 Industry has also encroached from the south and east since around 1900, first with the large Bromborough Pool construction works and later from the north as land was reclaimed from the Mersey. The Lodge and many of the subsidiary Court House buildings were presumably demolished to make way for additional factory facilities. The north-westernmost of the terraced houses were lost as the factory was expanded right up against the village boundary. Although not under the footprint of the new industrial buildings, they were demolished to create a planted 'buffer zone' for the remaining houses. Around this period many of the houses were in a poor state of repair and some of the building sites were simply levelled for economical reasons.

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Sadly, 20 out of the 32 houses first built on the village on York Street were demolished at this time together with a number of terraces on Manor Place and South View, the village shop and one of the managerial houses on The Green.



*Diagram illustrating some of the buildings lost in the conservation area since the 1930s.*



*Photographs illustrating some of the buildings that have been lost within the conservation area: (left) the lodge and gates on Pool Lane and (right) the shop at the western end of York Street*

### 6.6.4

Another conflict comes in the desire to retain both the visual character and historic fabric of the village but also the philanthropic intentions of the village. The buildings were constructed to provide good facilities for the working classes. The houses were of simple, readily available materials and money was put into providing for the residents needs (such as sanitation, gardens etc) instead of applying unnecessary ornament or decoration. However, whilst the buildings may not have been unduly frivolous in their time, today the use of hardwood sash windows, handmade brick, rubbed masonry arches over windows and slate roofs are primary associated as being

used by more wealthy building owners. When repair or alteration work is undertaken there is inevitably conflict between the need to preserve, reinstate or replicate historical details at cost and the consideration that the level of money involved (particularly in the case of the housing association) might be better used elsewhere if a poorer quality alternative was used.

- 6.6.5 The high cost of repair and reinstatement work also puts pressure on the undeveloped areas of the village. New housing could be justified as ‘enabling development’, with some of the profits from its sale being used for improvements to the existing buildings.
- 6.6.6 The lack of facilities (such as shops, healthcare etc) in or immediately near the village also puts pressure on to increase the increase size to the critical mass so it can support them. This pressure is heightened by the large extent of unused or underused land and the inclusion of the area within the allocated zone of the Wirral set out in the Interim Policy for New Housing Development.
- 6.6.7 Whilst any new housing would bring with it some advantages in terms of enhancement of facilities, it will inevitably change the character and appearance of the area. This effect will of course increase as the volume of new development increases.
- 6.6.8 In 2007 planning permission was granted for the construction of 40 new dwellings within the conservation area. These terraces and semi-detached houses would be built on a number of different sites including on the bowling green site to the east of the end of Manor Place, on the site of the current garages at the end of The Green, a site to the north of York Street and on a couple of additional gap sites.
- 6.6.9 In 2008, the local school was closed by the local authority and this may act to dissuade vital investment in the village, as it becomes less family-friendly. The school is now vacant and “at risk”, having been subject to a series of vandal attacks. Stakeholders and the local authority are pursuing alternative uses for the building.
- 6.6.10 Conversion of the roof spaces to habitable accommodation within the village is not permitted, nor is the use of rooflights that would mar the harmony of its roofscape.
- 6.6.11 Although fulfilling an obvious community need and social objective, the garden centre on the green contains a rather motley array of quasi-temporary structures of rudimentary character. An application for a new timber outbuilding at the centre of a richer and more genteel character has recently been approved, and it is hoped that this new structure could help to set a new standard of design for horticultural or utility buildings within the village.

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6.6.12 Vandalism has caused severe damage to the former bowling green pavilion off The Green, but it is hoped that proposals for a new parking facility for the Garden Centre will see its full refurbishment as a set of conveniences for visitors to the Garden Centre.

6.6.13 Whilst much of the village is in a fair condition, some smaller structures are in a poor state of repair and require refurbishment, as follows:

- (i) Outbuilding (or wash house?) to the rear of South Cottage, adjacent to Price's Social Club:



- (ii) Outbuilding adjacent to the community centre.





(iii) The cricket pavilion next to The Green.



### **6.7 CHANGES TO THE SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

6.7.1 Industrial activities around the site in many ways affect the setting of the conservation area. They are often these are fundamentally detrimental to the conservation area's special characteristics. The neighbouring landfill site is fortunately no longer being added to, but it remains a considerable eyesore. Vehicles working on the landfill heap also contribute to the noise associated with the factories and general industrial traffic. At times this can considerably influence the character of the village and although sounds from

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the factory would have been heard within the village in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this will have worsened with the use of loudspeaker and tannoy systems together with the greater proximity.



*The nearby landfill site, as viewed across the cricket pitch*

6.7.2 Whilst the industrial buildings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century may not have been perceived as being attractive in their time, much greater care was taken in their design and construction. Modern industrial buildings are comparatively crude and are much larger than their historic counterparts. Whereas in the past a large building would have been broken up with a series of individual roofs and bays, today much larger and higher building masses are used which have much greater visual impact. In addition, much larger vehicles need to access them, requiring obtrusive, modern roads.



*(left) Modern roads serving the industrial units, but within the conservation area; (right) looking south-east towards the industrial units and the Village Hotel.*

## 7.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

7.1 The following is a list of features that are part of Bromborough Pool Conservation Area's special character:

- Important example of a village created by wealthy industrialists that helped to revolutionise the working and living standards of its occupants.
- Historic residential area surviving within a large industrial area.
- 16 individual or groups of listed buildings, reflecting the high level of significance of the village.
- The ancient site of the Court House – designated as a scheduled monument and an important local history site.
- Buildings dated back to the early 1850s.
- Simple, but carefully detailed terraced housing
- The architecturally interesting public buildings of the school, church, village hall and social club
- Buildings within the area are almost entirely from the Victorian period and have escaped the wholesale alteration that has significantly damaged the character of other historic areas.
- Residential and primary public buildings set out on a grid surrounded by open green spaces.
- Houses are of 5 different types
- All houses are constructed of red brick with a Welsh slate roof. Other materials are confined to the public, factory and higher status buildings.
- Timber sliding sash windows would have featured on all of the houses. These are generally still present on all of the listed terraces and some of the semi-detached houses.
- There are relatively few extensions within the conservation area of significant size.