

Mickle Trafford and District

VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

November 2003



INTRODUCTION

The Mickle Trafford Village Design Statement aims to describe Mickle Trafford and the surrounding area as it is today, to identify the features that make the area special and to set out guidance for the design of any future development in the village. The Village Design Statement reflects the views of residents and has been produced by Mickle Trafford Parish Council in consultation with the local community, community and local interest groups and the Local Planning Authority.

Mickle Trafford Parish Council appointed a Sub-Committee to produce this Village Design Statement. The consultation process included:

- A public exhibition
- Public consultation by distribution of questionnaires
- The circulation of the Draft Design Statement to local interest groups.

The Village Design Statement was approved on 13th November 2003 in full by Chester City Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will be used by developers and the Local Planning Authority to ensure that new development enhances the unique character of the area and respects the aims of the local community in the future development of the area.



Aerial Photo (May 2001) – Copyright Van Rhijn Photography

CONTEXT

Mickle Trafford and District comprises the village of Mickle Trafford and the hamlets of Hoole Village, Picton, Wimbolds Trafford and Bridge Trafford. The total population is approximately 2,500 people in about 1,000 households, most of which are located within Mickle Trafford itself (See Appendix A). Car ownership is high and many commute to work in areas ranging from Manchester to Liverpool and Wrexham.



Oak Bank Lane/Mannings Lane



Sandfield Farm

Mickle Trafford and District has its own Parish Council and lies within the administrative area of Chester City Council, within the County of Cheshire

PLANNING POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Development Plan consists of the Cheshire 2011 Structure Plan and the Chester District Local Plan 1997-2011. The Structure Plan sets out a framework of strategic policies to guide development within the County and the Local Plan sets out detailed site specific policies. The Structure Plan was adopted in July 1999 and the Chester District Local Plan was considered at a Local Plan Inquiry during 2001 and is expected to be adopted during 2005. The District Council has also published supplementary planning guidance, including the Chester District Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines, which must be taken into account when considering applications for development.

Mickle Trafford lies within an area designated as Green Belt in the Local Plan. The aim of Green Belt policy is to keep land permanently open to prevent urban sprawl and to safeguard the countryside from development. The construction of new buildings is generally considered to be inappropriate within Green Belts. Development considered to be appropriate within Green Belts includes:

- new buildings for essential agricultural or forestry purposes;
- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt;
- Limited extensions, alterations or replacement of existing dwellings.

Villages 'washed over' by the Green Belt such as Mickle Trafford are not considered to have any remaining unallocated sites suitable for building groups of dwellings although infill development may be permitted. This is defined as 'the construction of one or two dwellings in a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage.'

Planning Applications are also considered against Government guidelines published in Planning Policy Guidance Notes. PPG 1 of 2001 states that:

'Local planning authorities should reject poor designs, ...

Poor designs may include those inappropriate to their context, for example those clearly out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.'

LANDSCAPE

The complex landscape setting of Mickle Trafford and District comprises two landscape character areas and the edge of a third. These are

- Mickle Trafford, Hoole Village and Picton;
- The River Gowy Valley; and
- The urban/rural fringe of Chester.

The Parish from east to west can be described as a 'shallow saucer'. From South to North, the landscape is gently undulating, falling from 40 metres at Hoole Bank (The Street) to 6 metres on the northern boundary north of Wimbolds Trafford.

Mickle Trafford, Hoole Village and Picton

- A gently undulating landscape cut by the course of the River Mersey at the end of the last Ice Age.
- A diverse landscape of mixed farming, which takes place in medium sized regular fields. Divided by fragmented hawthorn hedges with single oak, ash and sycamore trees at intervals. The fields contain ponds, which are often colonised by alder and willow species and ditches, which in some cases are of significant wetland conservation value.



- While there are no large areas of woodland, scattered small scale bands of oak, Scots pine and birch often screening new developments and ornamental species in gardens.
- There is a diversity of built forms. Historically the characteristic building is the single Cheshire red-orange brick cottage with a blue slate roof. There is a strong Victorian influence in the design of many villas, farm cottages and farms. Some of the farmhouses date from the main period of enclosure during the Nineteenth Century. In recent times there has been a number of significant modern housing developments including the infilling and the construction of industrial buildings, including those for agricultural use.
- The railway heavily influences the landscape and in particular the dominant road network which includes the M53, M56, and A56.

Guidance

Any new residential development proposed to be constructed either as infill development or on allocated sites should not be developed to a greater density than the surrounding area and should provide adequate space around dwellings. (See Local Plan Policies HO 4 and HO 6)

Any conversion of garages to extra rooms should not reduce parking areas in a property so much as to necessitate householders parking on roads outside their curtilage

The play areas and other recreational and community facilities provided in the larger developments should be retained. (See Local Plan Policy ENV 17)

This network has visually fragmented the landscape and generated significant levels of traffic noise and visual intrusion.



- The landfill site is mellowing views of industrial Stanlow and Ellesmere Port, which dominated the landscape in the north of the area.
- A major electricity transmission line crosses the area making a significant impact in the landscape.
- A detrimental but significant landscape feature is the 'Tar Lagoon' off 'The Street' in Hoole Bank on the site of a former brickworks.
- Landscapes evolve: change is an ever-present factor. An example being the Meadow Fishery adjacent to the A56 near Trafford Mill.



Guidance

Mickle Trafford, Hoole Village & Picton

- *Maintain field patterns by gapping up hedgerows;*
- *Maintain hedgerows in a way conducive to their wildlife;*
- *Introduce a programme of planting hedgerow oaks to eventually replace the existing over mature stock;*
- *Emphasis should be put on landscape quality towards the eastern rural/urban fringe of the area;*
- *Link landscaping improvements with the adjacent Mersey Forest proposals;*
- *Restore ponds as key landscape and wildlife features;*
- *Consider planting small copses within existing field patterns;*
- *Consider the feasibility of restoring the land around the 'Tar Lagoon', being mindful of any nature conservation value of the site*
- *New planting should be of native species;*
- *Where fast growing conifers are used in private gardens, they should not be allowed to grow too large;*
- *Any changes in landscape around the former stations and the redundant railway pathway should not prejudice speculative future use.*

River Gowy Valley

- A low-lying shallow meandering river valley, with an undisturbed windswept feel as one reaches the northern edge of the area.
- Originally the area was part of the tidal estuary of the River Mersey until it was drained towards the end of the Middle Ages, with further significant work being undertaken during the end of the Nineteenth Century when the Manchester Ship Canal was cut.
- This area of former marshland on either side of the river is, to a large extent, devoid of settlement. The river separates Bridge Trafford and Wimbolds Trafford from the remainder of the Parish. The hamlet of Bridge Trafford, on the A56 is located on the slightly higher ground marking a key crossing point in earlier times.
- The M56 and the oil refineries at Stanlow are a major influence on the northern part of the valley and are highly visible across the open landscape, which is for the most part devoid of hedgerows and with few trees.



- A network of drainage ditches dominates the field pattern north of Bridge Trafford. Hedgerows are absent.
- In Wimbolds Trafford, the Gowy Landfill Site, the subsequent landform being at variance with the rest of the area, dominates the

landscape. Adjacent to the settlement of Bridge Trafford, a further new landscape is being created, the Gowy Woodland Park.



- On the northern edge of the area, a poplar plantation partly breaks up the impact of the M56.
- Open views exist towards the urban edges of Chester and Ellesmere Port to the west and the northern Sandstone Ridge to the east.
- A major electricity transmission line crosses the area making a significant impact in the landscape.
- In the tenth century, St Plegmund selected the then remote and peaceful Gowy Valley as the place to build a hermitage. Later, he left the valley to become Archbishop of Canterbury (890-923) and act as advisor to King Alfred. Today the historic St.Plegmund's Well reminds us of this Eremite monk who lived here on the 'Isle of Chester' long ago.

Guidance

River Gowy Valley

- *Maintain the openness of the flat River Gowy Valley, particularly north of the area;*
- *Plant occasional single trees, black poplar, alder and willow along the riverbank;*
- *Conserve unimproved wet and neutral grasslands, and areas of fen;*
- *Reduce the impact of the M56 motorway corridor by tree planting, while maintaining some long views along the Gowy Valley*

MICKLE TRAFFORD AND DISTRICT

History and Description

Bridge Trafford

The hamlet is dominated by the Nag's Head, which was rebuilt between the wars. Next to the Inn is the old water pump which would have been the only source of drinking water for the hamlet when the Gowy Valley was tidal.

Picton

Notable for Picton Hall, recently refurbished.

Mickle Trafford

Mickle Trafford is bisected by the A56 Warrington Road and lies approximately 3 miles from Chester City centre within 1 mile of junction 10 of the M53. It is an old settlement and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. St Peter's Church was built in the 12th century with later additions and replaced an earlier church on the same site. The site was originally known as 'The Isle of Chester' and the original church was thought to have been built by a shipwrecked sailor, grateful to be on land again.



The Cross and Fingerpost, Mickle Trafford

The A56 has wide grass verges with some trees and these features are repeated within the modern housing developments. The public consultation process identified a need for the provision of pavements adjoining the carriageway of routes through the village, including Station Lane and Plemstall Lane.



A56 Warrington Road at the junction with Plemstall Way

Wimbolds Trafford

Wimbolds Trafford is notable for Trafford Hall, built in 1756, now a training centre for the National Tenants Resource Centre. It also has a modern golf driving range. The landfill site as it nears completion is being planted with appropriate trees to create a park to which there is public access.

Hoole Village

Among a scattering of houses there is a nationally recognised school of Ballet housed in a fine eighteenth century mansion and also two substantial hotels. Abundant tree growth, other vegetation and wildlife, make a stark contrast to the urban environment south of the A41.

An increasing level of environmental noise is being experienced in the hamlets due to increased traffic and poor surfacing on the M53/A55.



The older part of the Village is centred around the Cross and two modern housing developments are located on either side of the A56. Following the closure of the railway station in the 1950's, the Village went through a period of tremendous growth and the majority of the housing development dates from the 1970's and 1980's. Boundaries to the Village are well defined and the surrounding land is in agricultural use with sporadic dwellings located within the Green Belt. A high volume of traffic travels along the A56, due in part to the presence of the Gowy Landfill Site.

Within the larger areas of housing development, properties are a variety of styles and appearance. Over the years many have been altered and extended, some sympathetically and some less so. Good examples of sympathetic extensions include the following examples:



Extended house on St Peter's Way



Similar house without extension



Extended house on Wayside Court between similar un-extended properties

Guidance

Extensions to existing properties should respect the original design of the building and should not cause the building to stand out in the road frontage

(see Local Plan Policies HO 8 and ENV 66)

Covenants exist to prevent boundary walls, fences or hedges being erected in the front gardens and conditions attached to many of the original planning permissions mean that planning permission should be sought for such development. The original vision was that views along the residential roads should not be restricted by high structures in front gardens.



St Peter's Way

Guidance

New development should ensure that the existing network of open spaces is not detrimentally affected.

Significant new development should provide play space in line with the Local Planning Authority's Standards.

The land between The Street and the School should continue to be protected for sports and recreation in accordance with Local Plan Policy SR 3.

Guidance

Care should be taken to ensure that new development does not limit views along residential roads and that any front boundary treatment is low level.



Hurlstone Close



Plemstall Way/Warrington Road

Guidance

The layout of Mickle Trafford is distinctive and characterised by a feeling of openness. Any future development should respect the existing pattern of development and should not result in the loss of open space adjoining a highway.

New development should be set back from the highway, should protect the existing trees and should not encroach upon verges. (See Local Plan Policy GE 7)

Facilities within the Village include a shop/post office, the Village Hall, a scout hut, Mickle Trafford Village School and two churches. Play areas are located within housing developments and Springfields Field is being developed to provide outdoor recreation facilities for a wide age range. Within the wider area there are a number of hotels and public houses and a small number of business premises.

The resident's questionnaire indicated a preference for the creation of a country park or wildlife area following the completion of tipping and restoration of the Gowy Landfill Site.



Mickle Trafford Post Office



The Village Hall

Important Locations

A number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments are located within the Parish. These include:

- St Peter's Church
- St Plegmund's Well
- Mickle Trafford Mill
- Pinfolds
- The Methodist Church
- The Street (part of a Roman road)



Part of The Street



Methodist Church

Listed Buildings are a finite resource and their preservation and conservation is an important part of national and local planning policy. The protection of listed buildings and their settings is essential to maintain the character of the area.

Guidance

The advice of the Conservation Officer should be sought in any proposal to alter or extend any listed building. Care should be taken to ensure that the features that have led to the listing of the building are not harmed. Development within the setting of a listed building should be carried out sensitively to ensure that its contribution to the local scene is maintained and enhanced.

(See Local Plan Policy ENV 45)

Conservatories

The addition of conservatories to existing properties is becoming an increasingly popular method of creating additional living space. Conservatories are available in numerous styles and materials and are relatively inexpensive and quick to construct. Planning permission may be required for the construction of a conservatory and the advice of the Local Planning Authority should be sought prior to development taking place.

Guidance

Care should be taken to ensure that conservatories enhance the property and do not have a negative impact on the property or its neighbours. The size and scale of any conservatory should not dwarf the building to which it is attached.

The advice of the Local Planning Authority should be sought as to whether planning permission is required.

Replacement Windows

Guidance

The advice of the Conservation Officer should be sought in the sourcing and design of replacement windows for older properties.

Windows should be replaced sympathetically to suit the style of the property

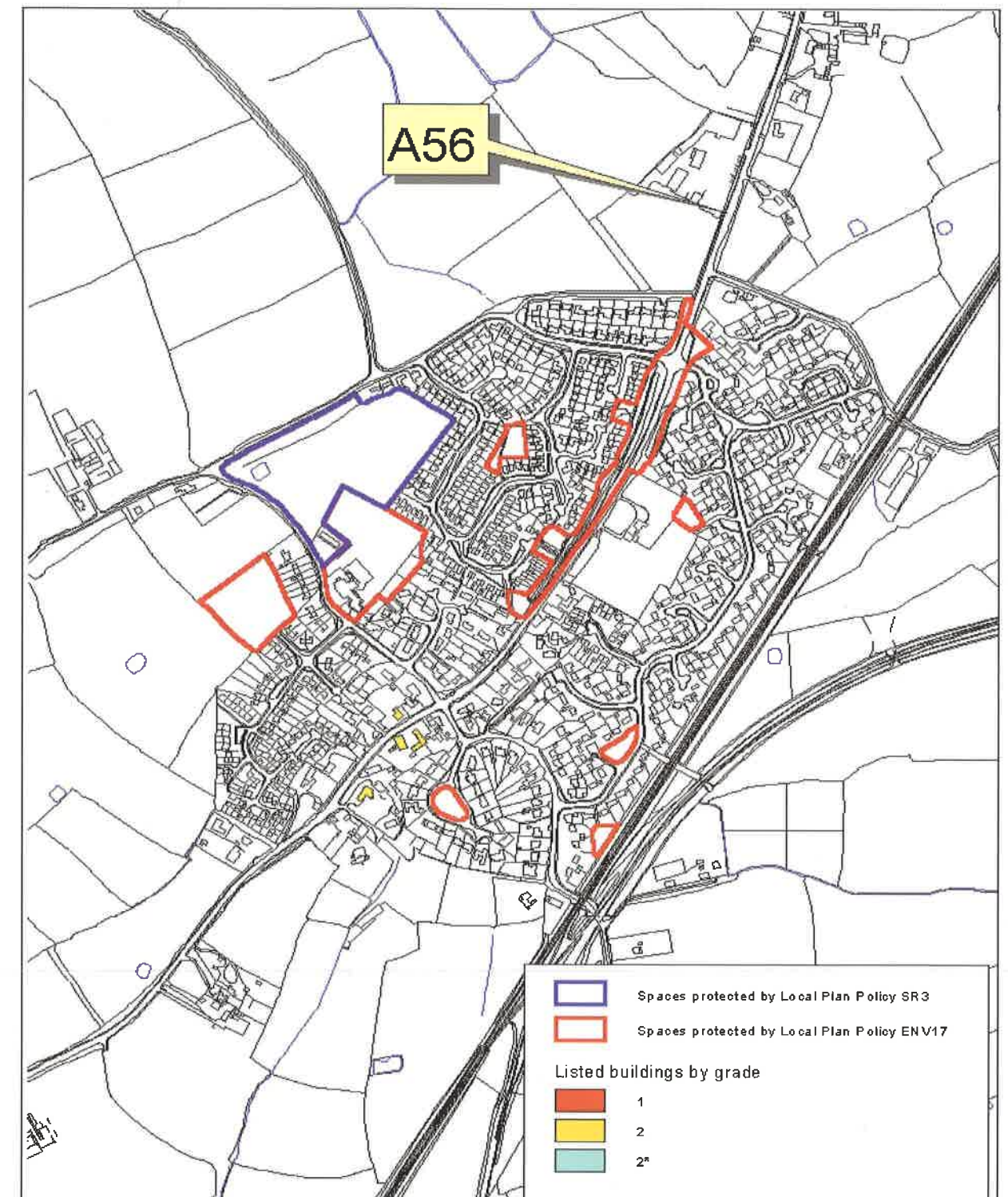
The windows of many residential properties in the area have been replaced with pre-fabricated double glazed units in either uPVC or hardwood. In the majority of cases this is perfectly acceptable and causes no harm to the appearance of the building and surrounding area. However, it is not possible to replicate older window styles using modern methods and modern pre-fabricated replacement windows are rarely suitable for use on older properties in which the style of the windows are an important feature. Listed Buildings and unlisted buildings within Conservation Areas that are subject to Article 4 Directions require specific consent for the replacement of windows.

Building Regulation Approval is now required for the replacement of any window in a property.

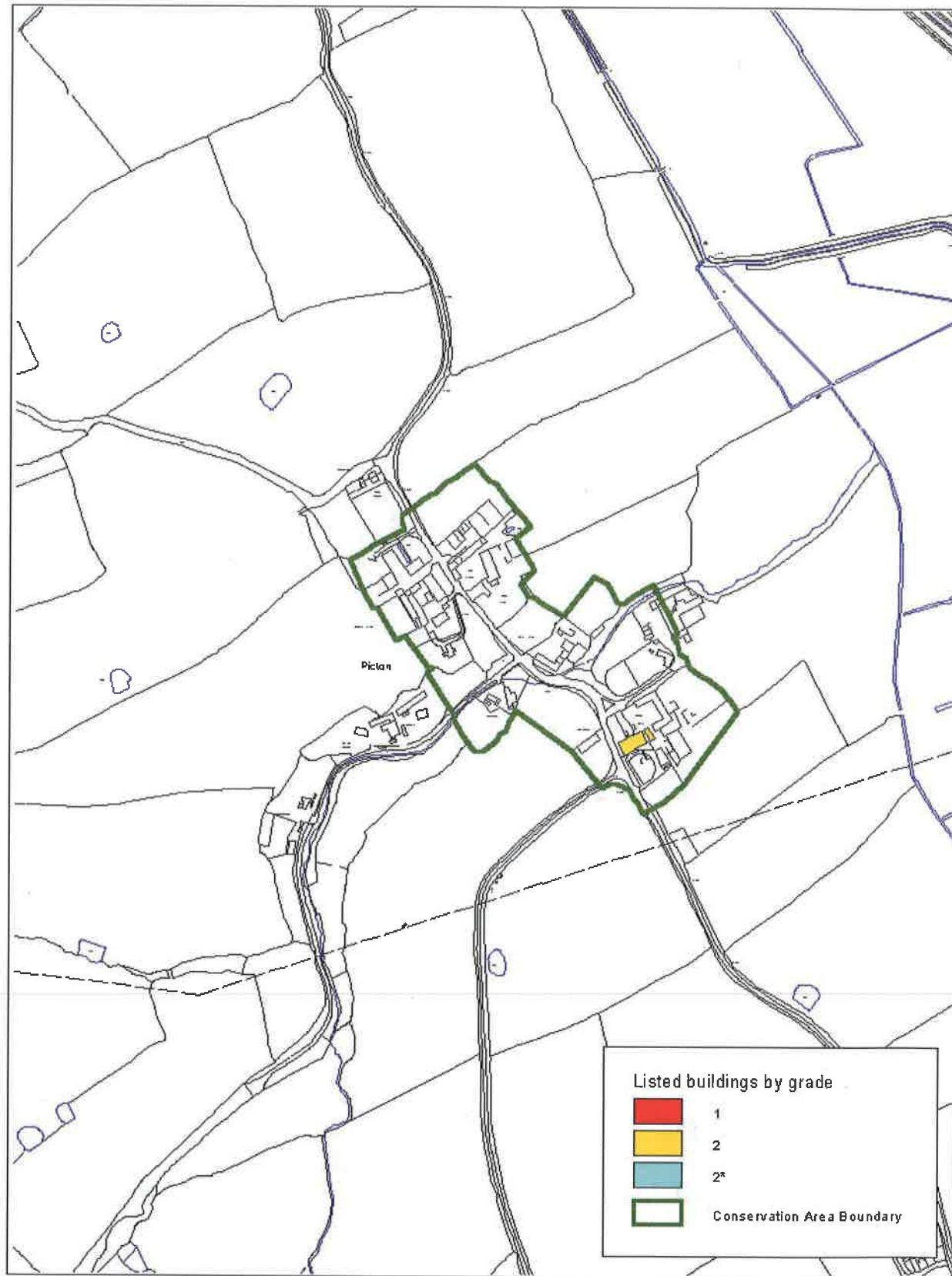
Appendix A

Please note: Maps not to scale

MICKLE TRAFFORD VILLAGE



CONSERVATION AREA



Chester City Council

Picton Conservation Area

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Acknowledgements

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- Shell Manufacturing Complex
- Shrewsbury Arms

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