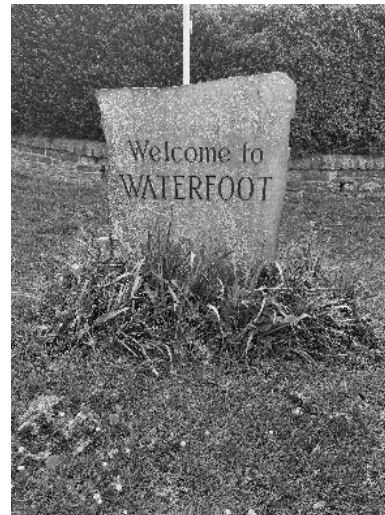


Waterfoot Proposed Conservation Area Appraisal

August 2025



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Executive Summary

An area of Waterfoot is proposed to be designated as a new conservation area. This appraisal will outline the special historic and architectural interest of the area that warrants its designation. The appraisal work was undertaken in June 2024 and updated in August 2025.

The conservation area appraisal is supported by a management plan that sets out a series of recommendations following on from identification of issues that are threatening the special qualities of the proposed Waterfoot conservation area.

This document should be periodically reviewed to ensure that the information remains accurate and recommendations reflect the present condition of the conservation area.

Introduction

1.1 Proposed Waterfoot Conservation Area

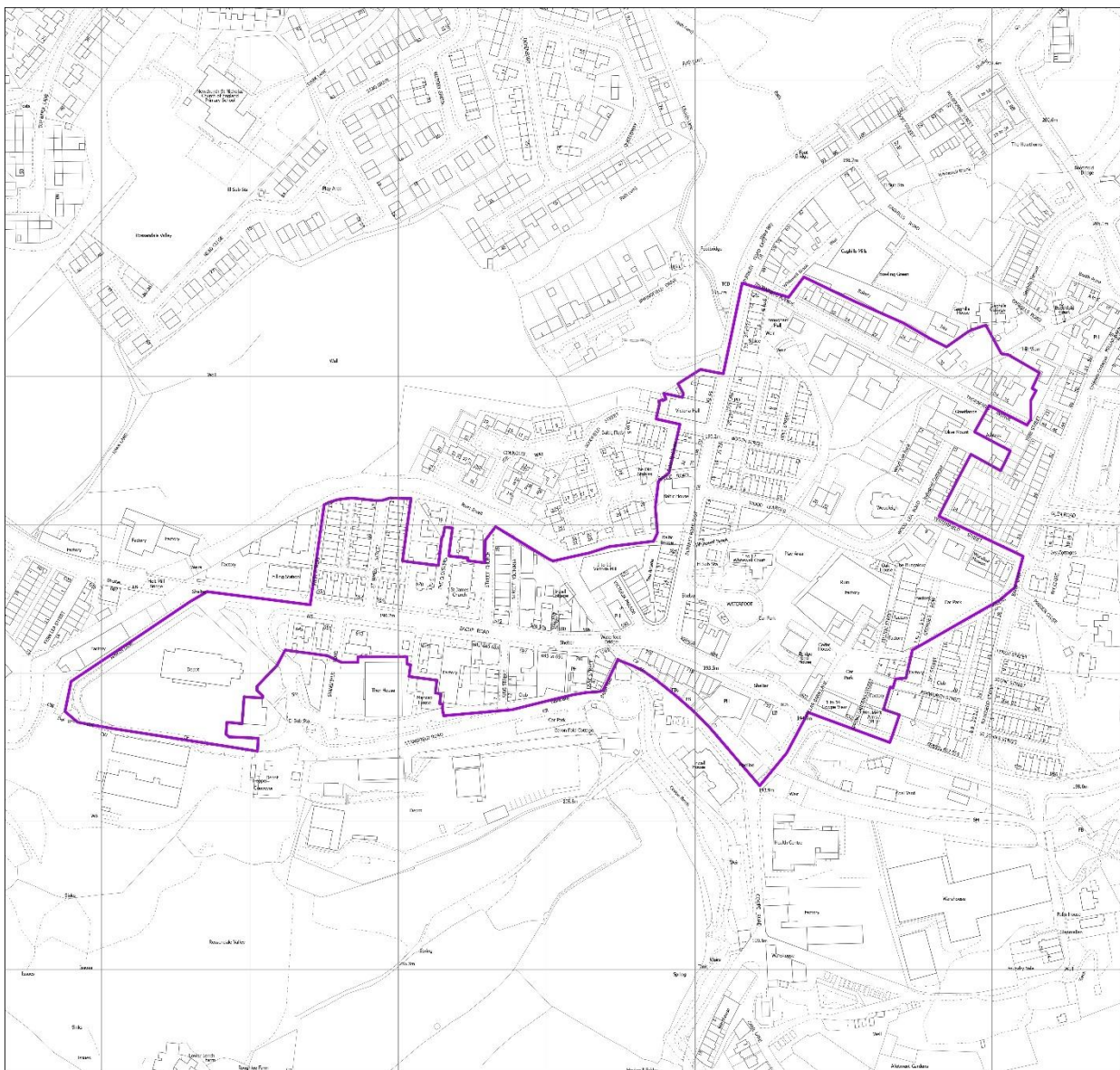
A conservation area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'¹. Designation of a conservation area increases the control over significant or total demolition of unlisted buildings, strengthens control over minor development and protects trees within its boundaries. It also ensures that any new development maintains or enhances the character of the area.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Proposals must be publicised and incorporate public comment. The purpose of a conservation area appraisal is, in accordance with the methodology recommended by Historic England, to define and record the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area².

A conservation area appraisal provides a basis for development management decisions which may impact on the area and for the development initiatives for improving the area. The appraisal also provides an opportunity to raise public awareness of the area's historic character and engage the local community in the process. The final version of the appraisal will set out how the views of the community have been incorporated into the document.

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

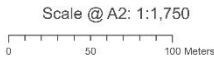
² *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management*, Historic England Advice Note 1 2016.



Conservation Area Assessment
Waterfoot

Key

 Conservation Area



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1.2 Statement of Special Interest

The special character of the proposed Waterfoot conservation area derives from the following elements:

- The group value and townscape quality of mid to late 19th century and early 20th century dwellings.
- Waterfoot's development as a main thoroughfare with a strong urban character derived from its manufacturing, commercial and residential buildings.
- Distinctive topography with rural views and a steep, verdant valley backdrop.
- Harmonious use of materials that unifies the contrasting architectural scale, massing and styles..
- Large-scale 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings, small-scale stone cottages and detached high status dwellings, which illustrate the town's development, and provide a distinctive townscape quality.
- Traditional, high-quality craftsmanship embodied in a range of well-preserved architectural features.
- Evidence of domestic woollen weaving with evidence of taking-in doors and mullioned windows.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

2.1 Conservation Areas

A conservation area is defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (referred to as ‘the Act’) as an ‘area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Designation places certain duties on local authorities including the requirement to review the overall extent of designation in their areas regularly and, if appropriate, to designate additional areas.

Buildings and some structures within a conservation area become subject to special controls to ensure the character or appearance of the conservation area is protected from inappropriate development. These are:

- Planning permission is required for total demolition of unlisted buildings over 115 cubic metres (known as relevant demolition)
- Planning permission is required for demolition of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure with a height of one metre or more if next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway), waterway or open space, and a height of two metres or more elsewhere (relevant demolition).
- Minor development is slightly more controlled. Further information can be found in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- Notification to the Council for works to trees is required.

Additional information on works that require consent can be found on the Planning Portal.

It is an offence for a person to carry out or cause or permit to be carried out relevant demolition without the required planning permission.

It is also an offence for a person to fail to comply with any condition to which planning permission for relevant demolition is granted.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states: 'In the exercise, with respect to any building or any other land in a conservation area, of any functions... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'. This places an increased weight on the consideration given to preserving or enhancing conservation areas in planning decisions that affect them.

2.2 Review and Updating

Section 69(2) of the Act imposes a duty on local authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time, to ensure that standards remain sufficiently high and their distinctive character is preserved and enhanced. Section 71 requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. When reviewing a conservation area it is important to reassess the special interest identified through surveying and recording the streets, buildings, thoroughfares and open spaces within the area's boundary. If the original outlined area has been so eroded by subsequent changes that its character is no longer special, boundary revisions or even cancellation of designation may need to be considered. Fittingly the assessment should be considered against the current legislation, planning policies and conservation principles. This will provide an accurate and valid appraisal.

2.3 National Planning Policy

The Government's planning policies for England are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which was first published in March 2012. The policies directly addressing the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are contained in Chapter 16. The Framework states 'When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not

devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest’. Furthermore, when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

2.4 Local Planning Policy

The Rossendale Local Plan (2019-2036), adopted by the Council on 15th December 2021, provides guidance on planning and development across the area.

The planning policy guidance and strategy under Strategic Policy ENV2: Historic Environment in the Local plan (2019-2036) is relevant to any development proposal in the conservation area.

3.0 Location and Setting

3.1 Geographical Location and Landscape Setting

Rossendale is located between the West Pennine Moors and the main range of the Pennines. The area is characterised by its steep sided valley, through which runs the river Irwell and its tributaries. The surrounding landscape is largely open, unwooded land and moorland. However, there are areas of tree cover on the valley slopes which includes remnants of ancient woodland as well as newly planted woodland. The area is geologically made up of layers of gritstone and glacial deposits of sand and gravel.

Waterfoot is located along the river Irwell and Whitewell Brook, with the confluence of the two rivers located towards the centre of the town. The town is situated centrally in Rossendale and the immediate centre lies largely flat, rising upwards towards the east. The edges of the town rise further towards the surrounding landscape and adjacent areas. The principal route of Bacup Road travels through the town, meeting Burnley Road East which travels north. Off these principal routes are smaller roads, including Millar Barn Lane, Wood Lea Road, and Thornfield Avenue.

3.2 Layout and Uses

The proposed Waterfoot Conservation Area focuses on the 19th century commercial centre of the town and includes several residential streets. The street pattern is made up of a central crossroads from which Bacup Road and Burnley Road East radiate. Numerous other streets radiate from these principal routes, including Thornfield Avenue, Millar Barn Lane, Tenterfield Street, and Wood Lea Road.

The residential streets of Wood Lea Road, Tenterfield Street and Thornfield Avenue occupy much of the north east corner of the proposed conservation area, with the west of Bacup Road also forming part of the residential extent of the proposed conservation area. The central core is made up of Bacup Road and Burnley Road East, joining together at a roundabout in the centre. Smaller residential streets such as Church Street, Victoria Street and St James Street lead off from the western stretch of Bacup Road. The roundabout creates a focal point within the town centre, with Bacup Road and Burnley Road East being made up of rows of two and three storey commercial/retail buildings, with shopfronts at ground floor level.

The central and western parts of the proposed conservation areas have predominantly commercial/retail functions, whilst the areas to the north east and west of Bacup Road are largely residential. The two and three storey commercial/retail buildings found in the central core of the proposed conservation area generally have their principal elevations fronting onto the street level with the rear elevations accessed via secondary streets/alleyways. The commercial/retail buildings have varying plot sizes, with some of the larger, three storey buildings being more substantial in scale and therefore having larger plots. Many of the residential buildings within the proposed conservation area are positioned within rows, though some detached and semi-detached dwellings can be found throughout, most of which have front and rear gardens. Some of the dwellings, particularly those in terraced rows, front straight onto street level or have small front gardens bounded by low walls.

The rows of shops and commercial buildings are often grouped, with gaps between leading to residential streets. The bus turning circle in the centre of the proposed conservation area also creates a large open space between the buildings. Open spaces can be found elsewhere within the proposed conservation area, such as the green space to the front of the former Bridge End House which contains a number of large trees, and a play park located to the north of this. Overall, the built environment is well defined with rows of buildings and streetscape making up much of the conservation area.

3.3 General Character, Form and Appearance

The central core is made up of tightly packed rows of buildings with shopfronts at ground floor level, as well as a number of individual commercial/retail buildings. The proposed conservation area is predominantly made up of commercial and residential buildings, with some large-scale former manufacturing buildings remaining such as Orchard Works and adjacent Preserve Works on Millar Barn Lane.

The common building type found throughout the proposed conservation area are two or three storey 19th century buildings. Whilst the shopfronts of several commercial buildings have been altered and modernised, their general historic form has been retained. It is visually evident that many buildings were built in groups, with a large number of terraced rows found throughout the proposed conservation area. As a result, many of the building groups share architectural features with neighbouring properties and the lack of any substantial modern intervention means that many building clusters retain a good level of group value.

The continuous built development contrasts with larger, stand-alone buildings such as at the western boundary of the proposed conservation area which is dominated by the former Railway Goods Shed, a large and imposing building along Bacup Road, seen immediately upon entry to the proposed conservation area from the west. The Church of St James the Great and adjacent Vicarage are visually distinctive buildings located along Bacup Road, as well as the former Liberal Club, opposite the church. The former Bridge End House contrasts from the predominantly densely developed street scape found throughout, standing alone within an open garden fronting Bacup Road. Opposite the former Bridge End House sits a three-storey (with attic) former public house with Mansard roof and dormers, giving a distinct French Baroque appearance, and the three-storey former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, with a corner turret fronting the street. Along Burnley Road East sits the former Conservative Club (Victoria Hall) as well as the former Assembly Room, both of which break up the two-storey terraced form of the street with an increased scale of three storeys. The former Waterfoot Primary School also deviates from the principal building type and dominates the south side of Thornfield Avenue.

Whilst the majority of the proposed conservation area retains its historic form, some areas have been impacted by modern development and demolition. This includes the demolition of Mytholme House, a 19th century dwelling, and its replacement with Whitewell Court, and the adjacent bus turning circle and a substation. The 19th century Waterfoot Station building has also been demolished, leaving exposed the gable end of the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank along Bacup Road. The area is now a small green space.



The former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank and the Royal Hotel



Orchard Works



Former National Westminster Bank

4. Historical Development

4.1 Historical Development of Waterfoot

Waterfoot as a named district is relatively new and prior to the Norman Conquest, it was a largely unsettled area. Following the Conquest, the Chase, or hunting grounds, of Rossendale were part of the Honor of Clitheroe, a very large estate granted to the de Lacys. Place names such as Wolfenden Booth, Boarsgrave, Swinshaw and Stacksteads attest to the wolves, boars, swine and stags that lived here.³

The first part of the Waterfoot area settled was “the waste of Brandwood”, between the Irwell and Cowpe Brook, which was granted to the abbots of the Monastery of Stanlawe in around 1200, then to the abbots of Whalley in 1285. Families were brought from Ashworth, near Rochdale, to cultivate this land; there are still some thousands of people known as Ashworth in the valley.⁴ The forest was used for cattle rearing, and was divided into vaccaries, each kept by a herdsman who lived in a booth, which gave its name to hamlets such as Boothfold that grew up around their dwellings.⁵

The most important road through the valley did not traverse the muddy bottom, but along the northern hillside from Rawtenstall, through Newchurch and Boothfold, then through Higher Tunstead to Bacup and thus Rochdale. A church was built at Newchurch in 1511. Soon afterwards, a corn mill was erected by the Lord of the Manor at Boothfold, where residents were obliged to have their grain ground, thus making the village a more significant centre. The area was particularly known for cock-fighting. County matches between gentlemen of Lancashire and Yorkshire were frequently fought in Newchurch.⁶

The valley was then divided administratively by the river Irwell. The area now occupied by the town to the north of the Irwell was previously part of the parish of Newchurch; whilst the area to the south east was Brandwood (in the parish of Rochdale); and that to the south west

³ Jessop, 1880

⁴ Hardman, nd

⁵ Hartley, 2005

⁶ Hardman, nd

was Cowpe Lench and Hall Carr (in the parish of Bury). Most people worked the land, with spinning and handloom weaving in homes on the hillsides. The district was particularly known for production of baize, which was sold in a weekly market in Newchurch from 1746.

The earliest mention of the name Waterfoot was in a 1746 covenant, when it was agreed to keep the road in repair leading from Boothfold across the river to Cowpe. The road is described as leading down Millar Barn Lane to a place called “the Waterfoot”, which was a ford through the river Irwell, then up Carr Lane and over the newly erected stone bridge over Cowpe Brook at Hugh Mill. The residents of Lench, also on the south side of the Irwell, to the west of Cowpe Brook, covenanted to keep in repair Holt Bridge, the way over the bridge being described as their church road.⁷

Better roads brought travelling preachers such as William Darney, a Scottish pedlar and cobbler who moved to Millar Barn. Walking the packhorse trails, he formed the Darney societies on similar lines to Methodism. In 1748, John Wesley preached at his invitation, standing on a mounting block, to “the wild men of Millar Barn”.⁸ The United Gospel Mission Hall on Tenterfield Street, was built in 1886 close to the spot.⁹

The first mill of the modern age was Hareholme, built in 1798 and now demolished, which stood at the site of the brick Electricity Generation plant on Bacup Road to the west of the centre. It was built for the Dockray family, who were Quakers from Lancaster, to produce worsted, and was the first in Rossendale to be lit by gas.¹⁰ The gasometer and mill ponds can be seen marked on the 1849 map.

Between 1800 and 1830, many more mills were built in the area on the river Irwell, Cowpe Brook and Whitewell Brook. A trade directory of 1828 lists 19 manufacturers of bockings, baizes and worsteds, four cotton manufacturers, two worsted spinners (including Hareholme Mill, later converted for cotton), and a reed maker. It does not mention Waterfoot, but gives their addresses variously as Newchurch, Boothfold, Waterbarn, Whitewell Bottom, Warth Mill, Holt Mill etc. Eight of the woollen mills were run by Ashworth families, including one woman, Ann Ashworth. Local historian W Hardman stated:

⁷ Hardman, nd

⁸ Jessop, 1880

⁹ LFHHS, nd

¹⁰ Hardman, nd

They had been for five hundred years tending sheep on these hillsides, producing and utilising wool, trading in it, spinning and weaving it in their own homes, and when factory production began to take the place of homespuns, it might have been confidently expected they would take to wool as against cotton. The pioneer work of the Ashworth's in the valley received no recognition from the historian of Rossendale, which it certainly deserves to have done....

This was the hey-day of Rossendale's prosperity, which earned for it the name of the "Golden Valley."

There were at this time (1828) more mills in the Waterfoot district, or in Newchurch, as it then was, than in all Rossendale besides. Handsome private dwellings of the time include Baltic House, Mytholme House and the now rear of number 31a Burnley Road East. They all predate the creation of Burnley Road East, as can be seen from their orientation.

At the end of the 18th century, an Act was passed for the creation of the turnpike roads that brought Waterfoot as a settlement into existence, but it took some time for these to be constructed. The present main road from Rawtenstall to Waterfoot was created in 1826, and the road onwards to Bacup was completed in 1828. The tolls were collected at toll bars, which can be seen marked on the 1849 map as Mill End TP (turnpike) and Waterfoot TP. Willow House, Willow Street and Duke Street were all built immediately after the road was constructed. Burnley Road East was also constructed around this time. One of the tollhouses can still be seen at the corner of Duke Street and Stansfield Road.

Several blocks of houses were built in the valley bottom, which were subsequently demolished with the coming of the railway in 1848. The first station was called Newchurch



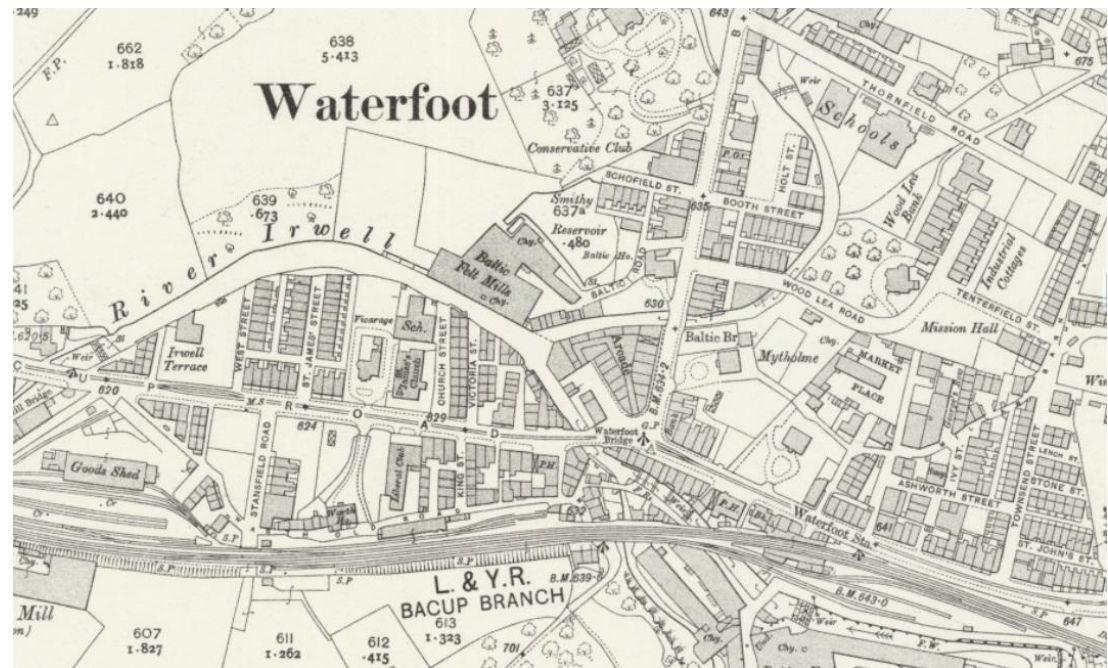
Waterfoot, 1830s-1880s OS Six Inch Map

station, and trains terminated there. It was another four years before the line extended on to Bacup due to the formidable engineering works required to go through the Thrutch.¹¹

Waterfoot was officially recognised with the opening of the first post office on Bacup Road in 1851, on the corner of King Street.¹² This block has since been given an Art Deco façade and is now a paint shop. The Post Office moved in to Trickett's Arcade in 1902 and shortly afterwards moved opposite the Conservative Club.

The Church of St James the Great was built on Bacup Road as an offshoot of Newchurch and opened in 1865. The spire was added in 1873. The church faced a crisis in 1994 when the long-standing vicar, who opposed the ordination of women, defected to the Roman Catholic Church. The last service was held in 1998, and the church is now in use as offices.¹³

The co-operative movement was strong in the Rossendale valley, with 21 co-operatively owned mills and about 9,000 shareholders by 1867. Absent landlords were rare and most mill owners remained to reinvest in their local communities.¹⁴ The prosperity of the later part of the Victorian age thus saw an increase in civic life. Public buildings still extant include the Brougham Club (Assembly Room), on the corner of



Waterfoot, 1892-1914 OS 25 Inch Map

¹¹ Wright and Young, 2017

¹² Hardman, nd

¹³ LFHSS c

¹⁴ Newbigging, 1867

Burnley Road East and Thornfield Avenue, which was built prior to 1870 with an assembly room for 200 people. Balls and musical evenings were held there for workers at Gaghills Mill.¹⁵

A Conservative Club opened 1890.¹⁶ It was described as the finest public room in the district with accommodation for 400 people in the ground floor assembly rooms, with club rooms on the first floor still in use. A former Baptist Chapel on the corner of King Street and Stansfield Road was used as a Liberal Club, then became the Palatine Club in 1913. An elegant new Liberal Club was opened 1895, which later became a cinema, and is now the Horse and Bamboo Theatre.¹⁷

During this period, Waterfoot's industry continued to evolve. It had become a centre of felt production, and it was common practice for workers to make themselves a pair of slippers from the tab ends of the roll to allow them to walk on the felt without damaging it. Many made a pair or two for their families. This practice grew into a major industry, starting with Mr J W Rothwell at his home on Millar Barn Lane, using material from his uncle's business at Bridge End Felt Works. The idea was later taken up by several other businessmen including Henry Trickett, later Sir Henry, who took over the disused Gaghills cotton mill in 1889, employing more than 1,000 people by 1900.¹⁸ Just behind Victoria Parade is one of the remaining mills, Victoria Mill, dated 1896, former premises of the British United Shoe Machinery Co.

The major trade union, the Rossendale Union of Boot, Shoe and Slipper Operatives, came about as a result of a strike by lasters and riveters at Gaghills, who met at the Brougham Club to discuss the formation of the union. The union was very successful, ultimately buying office premises in 1927 that can still be seen on Tenterfield Street.¹⁹ The slipper trade brought more prosperity to the area, and in the commercial town centre, this wealth is shown by a number of fine late Victorian buildings, including the Royal Hotel. The most notable is Victoria Parade, also known as Trickett's Arcade after the sponsor Sir Henry Trickett, opened in 1899 on a triangular site with a glazed

¹⁵ Preston Herald, 1870

¹⁶ Manchester Courier, 1890

¹⁷ Rossendale Free Press, 1995

¹⁸ Hardman, nd

¹⁹ Whalley, 1984

canopy and inner courtyard.²⁰ Nearby is the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, possibly rebuilt in the early 20th century with a polygonal turret.²¹

The beginning of Waterfoot's decline was possibly the result of the First World War; however, the shoe, slipper, felt and associated box works industries retained some level of employment in the area. However, the felt and print works in the valleys were overtaken by modern industrial processes elsewhere and eventually closed down. The decline of the shoe and slipper works also occurred in the 1960/1970s with the introduction of outside imports.²² Further decline occurred with the slum clearances which followed the 1957 Housing Act, as well as the loss of the railway line to Bacup.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, a cinema was located between Booth Street and Holt Street, though this was a small 'shed' like structure with an Art Deco façade. In the 1960s, this site became council housing. Other changes to the area during this period include the demolition of Mytholme House after the Second World War and the modernisation of the Co-operative store in the 1950s by architect Arthur Brocklehurst,



Waterfoot, 1944-1973 OS Map

²⁰ Hartwell and Pevsner, 2009, page 568

²¹ Hartwell and Pevsner, 2009, page 567

²² Fishwick, page 18

though the building's 19th century origins can still be seen despite its modern frontage.²³ Since the end of the 20th century, little development has occurred in Waterfoot, the most notable change has been the rebuilding of the sheltered accommodation along Burnley Road East, which stands out as the most modern development in the area. The slow decline of the area and lack of change has resulted in the historic core being substantially retained, though a number of buildings lack maintenance and cumulative alterations, such as modern signage and shopfronts, has had a negative impact on its overall character and appearance.

²³ Fishwick, page 19

5. Character and Appearance

5.1 Overview

Waterfoot is located to the east of Rawtenstall and west of Bacup, all of which is connected by a continuous route through the valley. The proposed conservation area consists of a relatively dense built environment which is surrounded by greenery from trees and fields, and the sloping valley sides providing an attractive backdrop. In the mid to late C19, the area developed a commercial and industrial core with three storey manufacturing buildings, such as Rostron buildings, small shops and larger banks and public houses. Dwellings were erected around the commercial centre, often in the form of two storey terraces, and larger higher status detached dwellings set back from the road. Some large buildings that predate the 19th century layout can be found at Baltic House, Mytholme House and the now rear of number 31a Burnley Road East.

The character and appearance of the proposed conservation area is derived primarily from its 19th century buildings, with some earlier and some 20th and 21st century development. The commercial centre has shopfronts at ground floor with associated uses at first floor or private flats, many of the shops are uniform in design and character with some unique examples. Earlier stone terraces are uniform in design, with later slightly higher status terraces possessing finer architectural embellishments.



Baltic House which predates the construction of Burnley Road East

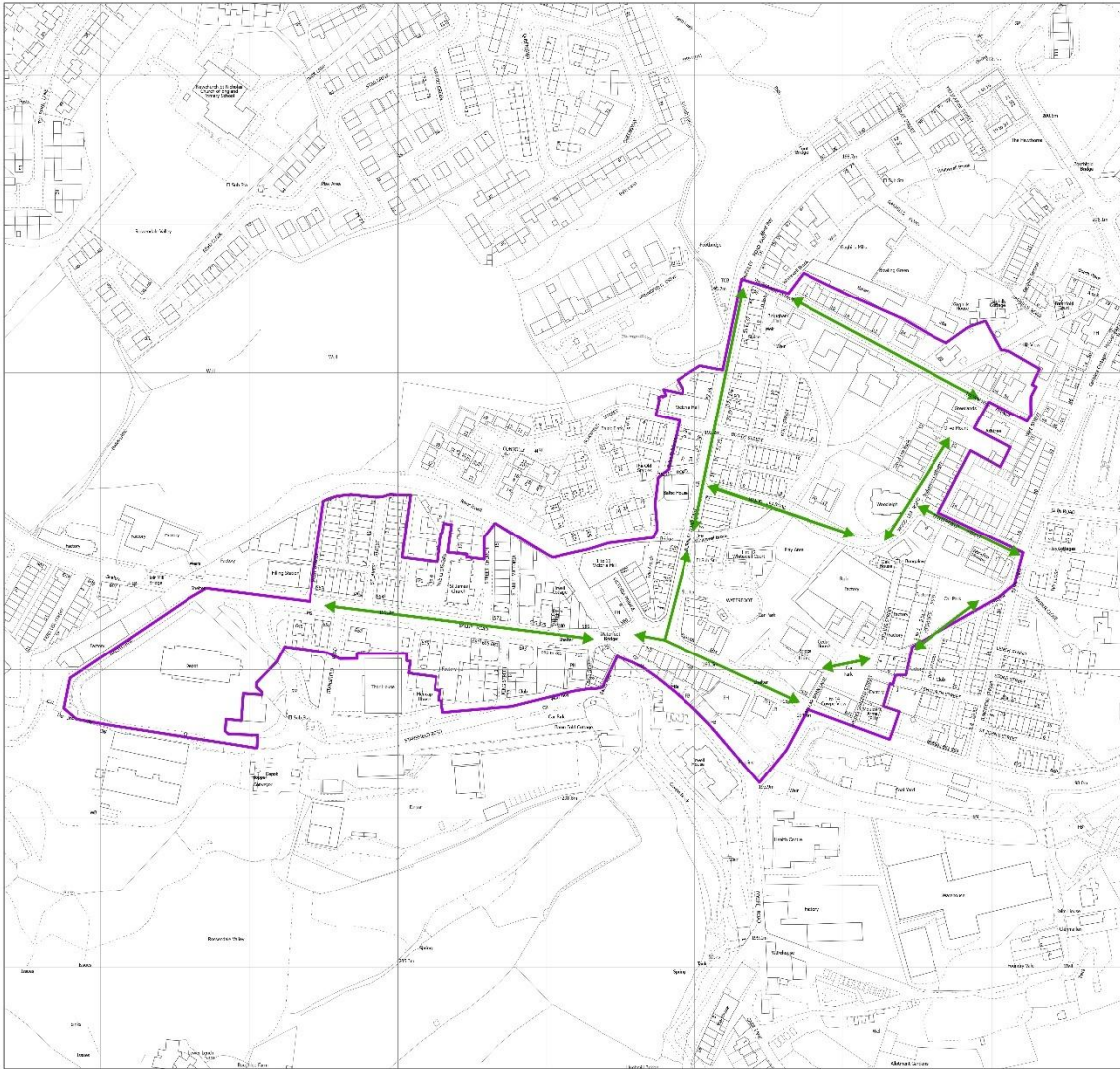


Detached higher status, symmetrically fronted 19th century dwellings



Three storey Rostron buildings

5.2 Setting, Views and Approach



Conservation Area Assessment Waterfoot

Key

- Conservation Area
- Views
- Prominent View

Scale @ A2: 1:1,750

0 50 100 Meters

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Views in the proposed Waterfoot conservation area are made up of hard urban landscape which incorporate rows of commercial or residential buildings, though there are several open spaces which include trees or the river. Many perspectives within the proposed conservation area stretch beyond the boundary to include the landscape and valley beyond, which forms an important part of its setting.



Bacup Road



Wood Lea Road



Millar Barn Lane

When entering the proposed conservation area from the west along Bacup Road, views are dominated by the former Railway Goods Shed to the right and a petrol filling station and lumber yard to the left (which are excluded from the proposed conservation area boundary).



The Church of St James the Great



Former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank

lined valley backdrop beyond.

Beyond this lies rows of terraced, semi-detached, and detached dwellings which are set behind small front gardens. From this perspective, there are views directly into the commercial centre of the town, which are punctuated by the spire of the Church of St James the Great and tall trees. When entering the proposed conservation area from the east along Bacup Road, the views are less enclosed and include a row of three storey dwellings to the right and an open grassed area to the left, beyond which the former Waterfoot train station platform was located. The now exposed side elevation of the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank can be seen from this perspective; the open grassed area is where the train station building once stood. Views from this perspective are also terminated by the central commercial core of the town. From the green space outside Bridge End House, views encompass the imposing former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, the Royal Hotel, two storey shops and the continuous development line along Bacup Road, punctuated by the spire of St James the Great with a tree



View from Bacup Road including the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, The Royal Hotel and the Church of St James the Great

The other key route into the proposed conservation area is from along Burnley Road East, with views terminated by buildings at the commercial centre. The left side of this perspective is dominated by the three storey former Assembly Room and to the right, a sloped wooded area behind a retaining wall. From this perspective, there is a notable view of the valley beyond the proposed conservation area boundary. Important views of the valley can also be seen from Wood Lea Road, these views are enhanced by the gradient of the road resulting in lower rooflines and uninterrupted views of the hillside. The long view looking south east along Thornfield Avenue is terminated by the gradient of the road and Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School. This view is framed and screened by the mature trees which run along each side of the pavement. Looking north west along Thornfield Avenue, the view is also screened by the trees along the pavement, and it is terminated by the retaining wall and the sloping hillside along Burnley Road East.



View of the River Irwell and buildings along Bacup Road



Thornfield Avenue

5.3 Architectural Built Form

The proposed conservation area is largely characterised by impressive 19th century buildings and includes both commercial and residential buildings. The buildings range in size from the large-scale Trickett's Arcade and former bank buildings, to the small-scale stone cottages. The proposed conservation area also features early-to-late 20th century and 21st century buildings. The small number of 20th and 21st century buildings are generally infill developments, constructed where there has been previous demolition or on gap sites. The later developments are largely residential, though there are a small number of early to mid-20th century commercial buildings found within the proposed conservation area.

The development of the commercial centre of Waterfoot started around the mid-19th century, and by the late 19th - early 20th century, the town had grown considerably larger in scale with development further to the north, east and west.. The general layout and historic form of Waterfoot has largely been retained from the mid-to-late 19th century onwards though some mills and industrial buildings have been demolished. Later 19th century development included terraced dwellings, much of this development occurred to the north of the then existing railway line, with development spreading north to include other building types such as a school and Trickett's shopping arcade.



Trickett's Arcade



Waterfoot Primary School

The buildings within the proposed conservation area feature a range of design styles and are almost exclusively built of stone. Many are simple unembellished buildings whilst others are more ornate and include classical features, such as the Duke of Buccleugh, which appears to be a re-fronted earlier building, possibly associated with weaving/manufacture given the retained stone mullion windows to the return. Gothic design features can be found in the pointed arched doorway of the Vicarage adjacent to the Church of St James the Great, whilst Taylor's Paints features an art deco style façade treatment. Other buildings within the proposed conservation area feature distinctive designs, for example the former National Westminster Bank on the corner of Bacup Road and Burnley Road East features red brick, a material rarely seen throughout the area, a highly ornate oriel window and prominent Dutch gables. More visually prominent design can also be found at the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank further along Bacup Road which features a corner turret with a lantern above the arched doorway on the ground floor. The use of stone and slate unifies the buildings' contrasting scale, height and style.



Duke of Buccleugh



St James' Vicarage



2 Market Street



Taylor's Paints, Bacup Road



Former National Westminster Bank



Former National Westminster Bank

There are numerous buildings which do not follow the traditional character, form or material type typical of the conservation area. This includes four modern bungalows on Tenterfield Street and Wood Lea Road, one of which is partially constructed from red brick, and the old Market Hall on Market Street, which is a large red brick building that is partially enclosed behind other buildings. One of the largest buildings in the proposed conservation area includes the former Railway Goods Shed, an imposing building with Classical influences including decorative blind arcading, set back from Bacup Road on the western boundary of the proposed conservation area. Further along Bacup Road sits the Neo Gothic Church of St James the Great, another prominent building in the street scene that breaks up the terraced form seen across this part of the proposed conservation area. The Neo Tudor former Waterfoot Primary School, built on a slope, is single, two and three storeys in height with a large footprint, standing out amongst the terraced rows on Thornfield Avenue. The shopfronts in the area are generally of a traditional timber or modern uPVC/aluminium design. A number of the traditional shopfronts have retained their general form and include features such as corbels, pilasters and stallrisers. One notably unique shopfront is Taylor's Paints which is a characterful early 20th century design with hand painted signage. These make a good contribution to the commercial core of the proposed conservation area.

5.4 Archaeology

Whilst there are a number of archaeological finds within the area, none fall within the proposed Waterfoot conservation area boundary.

5.5 Key Historic Buildings within the Proposed Conservation Area – Listed Buildings and Buildings of Local Importance

There are two Listed Buildings within the proposed conservation area, details provided below:

1. Church of St James the Great – Grade II listed (List entry number 1072791)
[CHURCH OF ST JAMES THE GREAT, Non Civil Parish - 1072791 | Historic England](#)
2. Nos.1 to 23 (odd) and Nos.2 to 28 (even) Victoria Parade (List entry number 1254284)
[Nos 1 to 23 \(odd\) and Nos 2 to 28 \(even\) Victoria Parade, Non Civil Parish - 1254284 | Historic England](#)

The appraisal map identifies buildings considered to contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, but this should not be treated as exhaustive. Other buildings of local significance may be identified as part of the planning process.

5.6 Negative Buildings and Areas

The quality of the buildings and open spaces within the proposed Waterfoot conservation area vary. A number of these building and open spaces conflict with the prevalent design, materials and form of the area and visually detract from the overall character.

1. Substation, Burnley Road East
2. Public toilet, off Burnley Road East
3. Car Park, Bacup Road
4. Car Park, Spring Gardens Street
5. Car Park, Millar Barn Lane
6. Ruinous building, Thornfield Avenue

5.7 Building Significance

The following map highlights the level of significance each individual building and area contributes to the proposed conservation area.

Conservation Area Assessment Waterfoot

Key

 Conservation Area

Buildings Assessment

-  Listed Buildings
-  Positive Buildings of Medium Significance
-  Positive Buildings of Low Significance
-  Neutral Buildings
-  Negative Buildings

Spatial Analysis

-  Important Green Space
-  Neutral Open Space
-  Negative Open Space

Views

-  Prominent View



Scale @ A2: 1:1,750



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5.8 Open Spaces and Trees

The proposed Waterfoot conservation area has a largely defined urban grain, most of which developed in the 19th century. It is generally formed of long rows of continuous development, with buildings of differing scales and masses situated alongside terraced rows. Due to its position at the bottom of the valley and relatively dense urban grain, the area has a limited number of open spaces. However, the open spaces that do exist within the proposed conservation area include both positive spaces that contribute to its overall character and appearance, and spaces which could be further improved.



Bacup Road



Bacup Road

One of the main positive open green spaces is the area surrounding the former Bridge End House with mature trees, bushes and a flower planting area, set behind a low stone boundary wall. This area provides a break in the urban grain along Bacup Road and creates an attractive setting for the former Bridge End House, which is a characterful building of local significance. Further along, the continuous development of Bacup Road is also broken up by the river Irwell, which flows close to the commercial centre where Bacup Road meets

Burnley Road East. The Waterfoot bridge connects the west side of the river to the east with development occurring directly to each side of the river, as well as along its banks. The break in the development as a result of the river positively contributes to the appearance of the proposed conservation area and provides direct views to the hillside and trees beyond Waterfoot to both the north and the south. The eastern boundary of the proposed conservation area includes a small grassed area with a stone sign reading 'Welcome to Waterfoot'. This small open space provides an attractive entrance into the area.



Waterfoot Bridge, Bacup Road



View from St James Street

A second bridge, over Whitewell Brook, provides a similar break in the continuous development along Burnley Road East. Again, this open space contributes to the appearance of the proposed conservation area. Whitewell Brook also flows under Thornfield Avenue, where a third bridge is in situ. The rear elevations of a row of dwellings beyond the proposed conservation area boundary can be viewed here, as well as the rear elevation of the Assembly Room and Holt Street beyond. From the Holt Street perspective, the area along the river feels more enclosed, with the high wall of the former Waterfoot Primary School's playground and the primary school itself sitting higher above the riverside. A large, wooded area can be found at the end of Bolton Street, enclosed behind a low stone wall. The land slopes upwards

towards Wood Lea Bank and Woodleigh House providing a large enclosed green space within the centre of the proposed conservation area.

Whilst there are a limited number of open spaces within the proposed conservation area, mature trees are a relatively prominent feature and can be found across the area

There are a few open spaces in the proposed conservation area where improvements could be made. Most notably, the bus turning circle which sits adjacent to the former Bridge End House. It is positioned centrally within the proposed conservation area and is largely tarmacked, contributing little to the appearance of the area, though it is somewhat enclosed behind the row of shops where Bacup Road meets Burnley Road East, reducing its overall visual impact. The proposed conservation area also includes three car parks, located along Spring Gardens Street, Millar Barn Lane and Bacup Road. These open spaces contribute little to the appearance of the area overall, though the trees within the Bacup Road car park provide verdant character and soften the large areas of hard landscaping.



Trees in the Bacup Road car park soften the hard landscaping

There are two Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) within the proposed conservation area. TPO T2-98 includes the ash, sycamore and lime trees in the former Vicarage to the Church of St James, which overhang the pavement and enclose the vicarage. TPO 3 covers the beech and cheery trees that surround Bridge End House (the Old Library). Both groups of trees make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of Waterfoot.

Along Bacup Road, trees in private gardens contribute a verdant character, and soften the continuous built development. Trees along the banks of the river Irwell, which can be seen from the bridge along Bacup Road, also contribute. Trees can be found along the western and eastern edges of Burnley Road East, along both the banks of Whitewell Brook and to the front of Baltic House. Two rows of trees are located on each side of the pavement along Thornfield Avenue. These mature trees contribute significantly to the appearance of the street, enhancing the overall character of this part of the proposed conservation area.

It should be noted that trees in a conservation area that are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order, are usually protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, so that an application must be made to the LPA for works to trees, allowing six weeks for the LPA to respond prior to works commencing.



Trees in the grounds of Bridge End House are covered by a TPO and make a significant contribution to character and appearance.

5.9 Boundaries

The buildings within the proposed Waterfoot conservation area are generally a mix of commercial and residential properties. As such, they either front directly onto the pavement or are set back behind small gardens or yards. The boundary treatments to the front gardens and yards generally include low coursed stone walls with or without railings or hedges above, or timber fencing. Some boundary walls, for example along 564-568 Bacup Road, are made of larger stone slabs rather than individual coursed stones. Some dry stone walling is also retained. Boundary treatments are finished with decorative pillars, for example at the entrances to the Church of St James the Great and the Vicarage. The walls that form the bridges along Bacup Road and Burnley Road East are made of coursed stone with stone copings, which make a good contribution to significance.



Former Railway Goods Shed



The Church of St James the Great



Rear elevations of 1-15 West Street

5.10 Public Realm

The proposed Waterfoot conservation area has a variety of surfacing types with modern block paving and tarmac covering most areas. There are some instances of historic stone setts and flagstone paving covering alleyways and smaller side streets, for example along Duke Street. Flagstone pavements have been retained on Millar Barn Lane and Market Street. However, most pavements are either modern grey block paving or tarmac. The road surfaces are almost exclusively covered in tarmac but setts and flags are likely to be retained underneath.



Stone flags



Stone setts



Stone setts

The modern block paving generally has a neutral impact. The retained historic stone setts and flagstones contribute to its character and significance. Some of the repairs to the pavement and road surfacing have created an unattractive appearance and have a negative visual impact. e the commercial areas have tall modern lamps and the residential areas feature shorter modern street lamps. There are = four modern gas lamp style street lamps along Bacup Road, within the commercial centre.

One historic street lamp is located in the centre of the proposed conservation area, contributing to the appearance of this key focal point. The modern road signs and associated lighting have a negative visual impact on the appearance of the proposed conservation area.

Two Elizabeth II post boxes located on Bacup Road and Burnley Road East are in good condition. Utility boxes, and a modern telephone box and are of a standard design. Wheelie bins have an unattractive visual impact on the proposed conservation area.

Some bollards are of a more traditional cast iron design that compliment the surrounding area, but some standardised plastic types do not contribute and are in poor condition, and would benefit from maintenance. Along Bacup Road, there is a small area of public realm with planters, a timber bench with cast iron ends and the historic street lamp. This area is enclosed behind metal fencing that is of a

complimentary, traditional style. This small area of public realm contributes to the appearance and character of the proposed Waterfoot conservation area.



Traditional Street Lamp



Modern Street Lamp



Lamp over street sign

Bike locking stands are located along Bacup Road, the stands are simple metal arches which have a neutral impact on the appearance of the proposed conservation area. SBus stops are modern and have a generally neutral appearance..

Benches are of simple timber design whilst a singular more traditional style bench can be found on Bacup Road. Planters along Bacup Road are timber or plastic tub type. Whilst not contributing to the historic character of the proposed conservation area, the planters provide some additional greenery.

6.1 Shopfronts and Upper Floors

Most 19th century retail buildings in Waterfoot have a traditional shopfront at ground floor with accommodation above. Trickett's Arcade retains its historic layout with shopfronts at ground floor and access to accommodation above to the side of each shopfront. Traditional 19th century style shopfronts, perhaps original or still retaining some of their original features, can be found along both Bacup Road and Burnley Road East. Individual architectural features, most notably corbels and pilasters, have either survived intact or have been replicated over the past few decades. Some reproduction shopfronts help preserve the appearance of the proposed conservation area, and follow the traditional 19th century design.



719 Bacup Road with traditional style shopfront



32-38 Burnley Road East with modern aluminium shopfronts

From the mid to late 20th century, traditional shopfronts began to be altered and modernised with new signs and layout. Many shopfronts across the proposed conservation area still retain a generally traditional layout, with numerous shopfronts having stall risers, corbels, pilasters and with doors having transom windows and sometimes recessed entryways.

Unsympathetic alterations, including overly deep fascias with inappropriately bright signage and lighting, illuminated signage, inappropriate plastic materials, colours and lettering, removal of transoms and mullions resulting in large areas of glazing; and external roller shutters and boxes have caused loss of traditional architectural elements and detailing, and diminished the appearance and character of the area, creating an unwelcoming appearance and causing visual clutter. This issue is particularly evident along Bacup Road and Trickett's Arcade. Modern shopfronts do not possess the same refined proportions or fine detailing as the 19th century replicas, and are usually in PVC or aluminium. Where modern shopfronts have been installed into stone fronted buildings this has had an extremely detrimental impact on character and appearance.



707-717 Bacup Road



Trickett's Arcade

There are a number of upper floors which appear vacant or underused: The continued use of these spaces and retention of their traditional form contributes to the character and appearance of the proposed conservation area and is more likely to result in continued maintenance.

Poorly maintained and inappropriately altered can be seen along the row of shops between numbers 707-727 Bacup Road. A number of the upper floors within this stretch of shops suffer from a lack of maintenance, discoloured or painted stonework and unsympathetic alterations, mainly with the installation of unsympathetic window types, most notably uPVC, resulting in loss of historic timber sashes. Trickett's Arcade also demonstrates under use and vacancy at upper floor levels, and lack of essential maintenance. The prolonged vacancy of the upper floors has the potential to result in the further decline of the historic properties in the area due to a lack of maintenance, as a consequence of their vacancy. The long-term vacancy of the upper floors creates the appearance of low economic activity in the area, which has an overall negative impact on the proposed conservation area.

6.2 Residential and Other Buildings

The residential buildings in the proposed conservation area are generally terraced dwellings, and are generally two storey stone buildings constructed in the mid to late 19th century or early 20th century. Those along Church Street and Duke Street possess the simplest appearance with uniform openings with stone cills, lintels and door surrounds. These may have been built as back-to-backs. The Duke Street was the old Toll House and possesses a curved elevation to the north. Terraces along Thornfield Avenue, Wood Lea Street and Booth Street possess simple stone architraves to openings with flat pediments to doors, and the later, higher status 552-560 Bacup Road have pointed stone heads to openings and are set back behind low stone walls, with a third storey in the roof space lit by a gabled dormer. 562-566 Bacup Road are higher status still with contrasting rock faced masonry walls, fine tooled chamfered lamb's stop moulding to openings and dormers in the roof space providing a second floor, set behind low walls. Terraces along Bacup Road are three storeys to the river with substantial stone balconies supported on deep stone cornices, enclosed by simple wrought iron railings.

A three storey terrace along the east side of King Street has simple openings and appears to retain evidence of a former weaving or industrial function, with taking-in doors altered to form windows at first and second floor. Those on the west side of King Street appear to

have been back to backs with two symmetrical windows in the roof space. Three storey terrace Rostron buildings on Bacup Road retains openings that resemble taking-in doors and supports for platforms (now removed). Richard Rostron is identified as a Woollen and Felt manufacturer in 189 in the Grace's Guide to British Industrial History. Higher status semi-detached late 19th century dwellings along Thornfield Avenue have two storey canted bays in stone and voluted corbels to the door pediments, and d semi-detached Greetlands and Olive Mount have decorative bargeboards, and canted stone bay windows with balconies and decorative wrought iron railings.

The proposed conservaton area's mid 19th century detched, high-status dwellings are primarily symmetrically fronted, with generous Classical proportions and centrally placed doors, such as 26 Thornfield Avenue, with symmetrical canted bays and semi-circular headed dormer in the roof space, and Brige End House with Doric stone portico. The Vicarage along Bacup Road, is in distinct Neo Gothic with some lancet heads and a steep roof pitch. Many retain decorative gate pillars and pier caps. The Old Union House along Tenterfield Street is remarkable for its retention of all of its original decorative leaded glass windows and front door.



One of the former Toll Houses on Duke Street and evidence of altered taking-in doors on King Street at first and second floor.



Shops/cottages along Bacup Road are two storey to the road and three storeys to the river with substantial stone balconies.



The return of the Duke of Buccleugh, a possibly earlier, re-fronted building with evidence of weaving windows and a taking-in door (now blocked to form window) in the attic space.



Greetlands, Thornfield Avenue



Olive Mount, Thornfield Avenue

The Church of St James the Great, Waterfoot Primary School, the Conservative Club/Victoria Hall and the former Liberal Club (Horse and Bamboo) are notable, key buildings within the proposed conservation area. The former Liberal Club is a large, two storey building set back from the pavement behind a small garden. The building has some decorative detailing, including carved stone lintels above the window openings, and a carved stone coat of arms and datestone between ground and first floor level. The building is in a good condition and positively contributes to the street scene.

The Church of St James the Great is a Grade II listed building constructed 1863-5 by Robinson and Stephens. It is built from rock-face sandstone with a slate roof and south west steeple fronting Bacup Road. The principal elevation has its gable to the road and an arched doorway with two orders of moulding, with a three-light plate-traceried window above. The Church of St James the Great is an important building contributing substantially to the character and appearance of Bacup Road.

The former Waterfoot Primary School is a stone-built late 19th century school with a slate roof and gables fronting the road, with large arched windows. The school has string courses and finial details to the gables and is set behind a low stone wall with railings. The school and its playgrounds take up much of the south side of Thornfield Avenue, making it a key feature building within the street scene. The building has been converted into residential apartments and is in relatively good condition.

6.0 Assessment of Condition

The condition of the dwellings varies throughout the proposed conservation area, from excellent to somewhat deteriorated. A notable issue, mainly found on the terraced rows, is discoloured and weathered stonework or painted stonework that has suffered from a lack of maintenance. The rear elevations of dwellings are often in a poorer condition than the front elevations and as a number of rear elevations front onto alleyways or roads, they are visible from public vantage points. Examples include the rear elevations of West Street, St James Street and Wood Lea Bank.

A substantial issue found throughout the proposed conservation area is the widespread use of uPVC and unsympathetic window and door styles. The lack of appropriate windows and doors has had a considerable impact on the appearance of the proposed conservation area, altering the character and traditional form of the historic dwellings. Other key issues include the presence of satellite dishes and aerials, pipework and wires on the principal elevations of the dwellings, as well as unsympathetic masonry repair work and pointing. Bins stored at the front of properties is also a common issue throughout the proposed conservation area.

A number of the commercial/retail buildings suffer from unsympathetic alterations and a general lack of maintenance, with the most notable impact arising from the installation of modern shopfronts and windows that do not follow traditional designs. Generally unsympathetic 20th and 21st century alterations and developments have occurred primarily to the shopfronts of commercial buildings, and shopfronts have been inserted without express planning consent.

Multiple 19th century buildings along Bacup Road and Burnley Road East have modern ground floor shopfronts which contribute little and do not respect the historic character of the proposed conservation area. Some, but not all, of the buildings between 707-727 Bacup Road and all shops within Trickett's Arcade, a Grade II listed building, have undergone unsympathetic alterations and are generally neglected.

The impact of the lack of maintenance and subsequent poor condition is amplified by the arcade's large-scale three storey massing and its extremely prominent position in the centre of the proposed conservation area. There are several vacant shops within the conservation area which have been left to deteriorate and as such have a negative visual impact on its overall appearance.

Unsympathetic alterations also occur within the proposed conservation area, again this issue is largely found where modern shopfronts have been introduced resulting in the erosion of the historic character. Some upper floors have deteriorated timber windows or timber windows of an inappropriate design, and others have uPVC windows which appear unsympathetic and impact on the character of the proposed conservation area.

7.0 Management Plan

7.1 Introduction

The management plan sets out recommendations to support and encourage the long-term management of the proposed conservation area's significance, addressing threats identified in the appraisal above. The main threats to significance are:

- Piecemeal repairs to surfaces has created an unattractive appearance and has a negative visual impact.
- Bollards, bins and wheelie bins have a cluttering effect on the appearance of the conservation area.
- Inappropriate alterations to shopfronts, including removal of historic features, installation of roller shutters and box housing, overly deep fascias, inappropriate signage, materials, illuminated signage, and lighting have had a significant detrimental impact, and create a cluttered appearance.
- Installation of PVC windows and loss of sash windows causes harm to character and appearance.
- Vacant upper floors have contributed to a sense of economic decline.
- General lack of maintenance particular to some commercial premises, particularly Trickett's Arcade. This adds to the sense of economic decline,

Recommendations

- Consider providing clear guidance to businesses and homeowners on works that require express planning consent, including best practice examples using sympathetic materials. Within the guidance, identify the kind of work that is not considered appropriate, such as roller shutters, deep fascia signage, illuminated signage and use of plastic materials.
- Consider creation of a shopfront guidance note specifically for the Trickett's Arcade that identifies original joinery features that should be retained, guidance on replicating traditional features and suitable paint colours. The guidance should state clearly that alterations that affect any of its features or character will require listed building consent.
- Where no justification is provided for removal of historic windows and doors, promote the use of secondary glazing and other measures as set out in Historic England guidance.
- Consider carrying out a public realm audit to identify specific areas for improvement, and any areas where unnecessary and redundant signage and bollards can be removed. This process could be carried out by volunteers.
- Consider adoption of a consistent design and material palette for benches and bollards. Materials chosen should be sympathetic to the area's character and appearance, and be hard wearing and easy to maintain and replace.
- Consider adopting a strategy to improve or enhance the quality of the public realm including reinstatement of more appropriate surfacing materials and consistency in the repair of pavements and roads, in consultation with all relevant statutory undertakers and Lancashire County Council.
- Identify buildings that have been subject to unauthorised works and take appropriate enforcement action.

- Adopt a strategy to deal with sites and buildings that are considered to negatively affect the area. Consider investigating funding potential routes for buildings having the most detrimental impact, and sources of potential match funding.
- Update the Rossendale Shopfront Design Guide to include suggestions on potential colour schemes, lettering and materials, and circulate to owners and occupiers of commercial premises

7.2 Future Management Proposals

Future management proposals should aim to re-establish this character in order to enhance the appearance of the proposed conservation area overall.

8.0 Public Involvement

Public consultation is an important part of the appraisal process, not only to include the community but also to raise awareness and appreciation of heritage issues.

The need to explore the potential for parts of Waterfoot to be designated as a Conservation Area was a key highlight arising from various consultations on the 'Waterfoot Masterplan'. Public consultations on the Waterfoot Masterplan to date are listed below:

- Business drop in session (April 2023)
- Initial public engagement (July / August 2023) – 6 week consultation
- Draft Masterplan engagement (August 2024) – 5 week consultation
- Draft Masterplan drop-in session (August 2024)

As part of the public consultation carried out in July / August 2023, question 13 of the online and paper surveys asked “We are currently exploring the possibility of Waterfoot's centre becoming a conservation area. This will help to protect the unique character and heritage of the area. Does this pose any issues to you?” Of the 536 responses received, 479 answered “No”; amounting to 89% of the responses received. More information on the Waterfoot Masterplan can be found here: www.rossendale.gov.uk/regeneration-3/waterfoot-projects

At a Cabinet meeting on the 16th October 2024 it was resolved to approve the proposed Waterfoot Masterplan as a strategic document as well as begin work on designating areas of Waterfoot as a Conservation Area. This Cabinet meeting agenda, reports and minutes can be found here: www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1415/cabinet

9.0 References

9.1 Legislation and Guidance

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- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
- Historic England Advice Note 1 – Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management
- Rossendale Local Plan (2019-2036)
- Planning Portal

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