



Lancaster Conservation Area Appraisal

## Character Area 9. Residential: South West

March 2013



### 3.9 Character Area 9. Residential: South West

#### 3.9.1. Definition of Special Interest

*"This character area is a well-established late Victorian residential suburb, defined by stone terraced housing designed in long blocks with mostly consistent features. Some steep changes in levels, street trees and the pleasant leafy environment of Dallas Road Gardens contribute to the attractive character of this residential area."*

#### 3.9.2. Topography and Views

The area has quite marked topography, with the ground level falling southwards to a low point around Carr House Lane. This change in level is incorporated within the terrace, which typically includes a half-basement level. The gradients are often surprisingly steep, especially in the southern part of the area, and the visual effect can be quite dramatic.



*Dramatic change in level within the terrace.  
(Regent Street)*

#### 3.9.3. Current Activities and Uses

This is an established residential area lying just outside the south-west edge of the City Centre. The housing is generally middle-class late Victorian housing with bay windows. It is a peaceful area, largely free of busy traffic.

#### 3.9.4. Historical Development

This area east of the railway line and south of Meeting House Lane was mostly still fields and gardens until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, although there was some development along the south side of Meeting House Lane by 1684, when it was known as Kiln Lane. The northern part of the area was laid out with fields and gardens, known as Kendal Fields Nursery, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century,. Dallas House was one of the earliest houses to be built in the area, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.



*Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Dallas House, Dallas Road*

Growing demand for housing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century encouraged landowners to sell land for development. The earliest development was to the south, where Lindow Square ( 1870s). Regent Street and Portland Street, north of Carr House Lane, were laid out and developed for terraced housing between 1876 and 1885, with some larger houses such as Lansdowne Villas built in 1882. South of Carr House Lane, the housing was developed in 1879-86. To the north, Castle Nursery prevented development in the area of Dallas Road and Blades Street until the land was bought by the Corporation in 1890; plots were then sold for development to separate builders between 1894 and 1901. Dallas Road Gardens were laid out on part of an earlier open space called Hargreaves Gardens. Local bye-laws were used to control the density of buildings, road widths, privacy and drainage and resulted in a regular street pattern, and standardised house designs which could be adjusted to suit different social classes and anticipated rent levels.





Part of the area during development in 1877, on Harrison & Hall's map (Lancaster Library)

### 3.9.5. Archaeological Potential

This area on the west edge of the town was fields and gardens until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and UAD does not indicate finds or records to indicate earlier activity in most of the area. There was some linear development along the south side of Meeting House Lane from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century which could offer potential for post-medieval archaeology. Most of the area south of Meeting House Lane was developed after 1870, and the houses generally have cellars except for some on the south side of Lindow Street; archaeological potential is generally low.

### 3.9.6. Buildings and Architectural Quality

This quiet residential area is characterised by late 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing arranged in linear grids with back alleys. The houses built in this area varied from medium-sized terraces with front gardens, bay windows and larger rear gardens on the west side of Regent Street to smaller terraces with rear yards on Dallas Road, Blades Street and Portland Street. All houses had a private yard to the rear, each with a privy and drying space. There is a group of larger semi-detached or detached houses on the west side of Regent Street.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century terraces along Blades Street and the northern part of Dallas Road have a similar style as they are part of the same period of early 1900s development. Exceptions to the terraced housing are on Meeting House Lane which was on the fringe of the historic core and includes some more austere late 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages, some adapted for retail use, and a Georgian town house with restrained ashlar detailing. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Dallas House, and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century barn on Carr House Lane reflect an earlier pattern of development.

Building materials here are almost exclusively dressed coursed sandstone with some rubble stone to rear elevations. The barn on Carr House Lane is a vernacular building constructed in rubble-stone. Roofs are generally laid with Cumbrian slate in diminishing courses, but some have been replaced with concrete tiles. Stone slate roofs survive in Meeting House Lane.

Buildings are of two to three storeys and generally have small front gardens behind low stone boundary walls with iron railings or hedges.



Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century buildings on Meeting House Lane with inserted shop-fronts and altered windows



1880s terraces



Vernacular barn on Carr House Lane



Gabled terrace houses on Lindow Square, 1870s



Dallas Road terraces, late 1890s

Architectural details are associated with particular periods of architecture: earlier buildings such as Dallas House have restrained details and small pane sliding sashes in moulded architraves. Victorian and Edwardian terraces share some common features including larger paned sash windows, ground floor canted bay windows, decorative door canopies, panelled timber doors, gables with finials and barge boards, occasional bell-pulls, some leaded and stained glass windows, stone gutter brackets, dormer windows, stone chimneys and slated canopies running the length of the terrace. Some of the 18<sup>th</sup> century former cottages on Meeting House Lane have good quality late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century shop fronts inserted to the ground floor. Most buildings have cast-iron rainwater goods with decorative timber brackets which should be retained where possible.





*Moulded cornices above panelled doors with bell-pulls, Dallas Road*

and the front roof slope. The survival of historic features is fairly high here, but most sliding sash windows have been replaced on other terraces by windows in modern materials in a variety of styles. Some original slate roofs have been replaced with concrete tiles and dormers altered in modern patterns. There are some cases of exterior stone work being over-painted, and frontages altered in which has interrupted the designed homogeneity of terraces, including installing basement access and hard standings in front gardens. Non-traditional doors and windows can erode the unity of terraces, to the detriment of the conservation area. Modern installations, such as satellite dishes and skylights on front elevations can be highly visible and also detract from the streetscene.



*Square bays and gables*



*Modern frontages to large terraces*

On Meeting House Lane, shop-fronts were inserted into some former houses in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Otherwise, buildings in most of the area remain in domestic use.

### **3.9.7. Assessment of Condition**

Buildings in the area are in generally good condition and have been well maintained. The west side of Dallas Road, the north side of Lindow Square and part of the west side of Regent Street is covered by an Article 4 Direction, which controls new doors, windows

### **3.9.8. Urban Form**

The planned development of the area in the late nineteenth century resulted in a uniform and well organised street form. In line with typical developments of this period, long linear terraces of houses front straight streets (running north-south) with no attempt to turn the corners to the secondary east-west streets. A hierarchy of streets and routes includes back-alleys for access to the rear yards behind the long terraces and east-west

alleys for pedestrian permeability through otherwise long blocks.



Houses on Brook Street

Houses are mostly two to three storeys and set back 2-3m from the street behind low boundary walls. Roofs have traditional pitches, with eaves parallel to the street frontage. The vertical form of buildings varies according to the period they were built and the status of their intended occupants, but mostly in response to the falling ground level. Terraces are grouped by scale is grouped into a largely consistent pattern, heading southwards from Meeting House Lane:

- Northern part of Dallas Road: two storeys
- Blades Street: two storeys with semi-basement level
- Middle part of Dallas Road (facing Dallas Road Gardens): two storeys with semi-basement level and attic level.
- Lindow Square: two storeys with semi-basement level and attic level at end of terraces.
- Regent Street north: mix of three-storey Victorian semi-detached properties with half-basement level, two storey terraces and out of character modern infill development.
- Regent Street south: two storey with half-basement and attic dormers.
- Portland Street: two storey with half-basement

- Brook Street: two storey (these are plainer workers' houses)

Exceptions to the dominant linear street grid form occur in a few notable places:

- the southern part of Dallas Road - where properties on Regent Street back onto the street. These houses have long back gardens and the Dallas Road frontage is defined by outbuildings and boundary walls. There is also modern infill development on this road.
- Lindow Square: where good quality Victorian housing faces the square on four sides in a pleasing townscape set-piece.
- the block between Wheatfield Street and Meeting House Lane, which is squarer in form and contains properties of a mix of ages fronting the street, with some infill to the interior

### 3.9.9. Nodes and Gateways

There are no real gateways into this area. This is a discrete residential neighbourhood where privacy is important; the edges are subtle and one enters this character area without really noticing. This seems entirely appropriate.

### 3.9.10. Landmarks

There are no landmarks in this character area, which is not surprising given its homogenous residential use. There are some significant listed buildings but these generally have group value, rather than individual significance in the townscape.

### 3.9.11. Frontages

The consistent long terraces in this area create very strong street frontages. Terraces front the street without interruption and with many consistent features. The bay windows provide a large amount of surveillance to the street and create a strong rhythmic feature along the street.



*Long frontages with bay windows (Blades Street)*

The weaker frontages occur when the blank gable ends of terraces front east-west streets (for example on Wheatfield Street and the east-west section of Blades Street) and on the southern part of Dallas Road, where properties back onto the street. The consistency of the frontages have been somewhat diluted on parts of Regent Street and Portland Street with unsympathetic 20th century infill development and alterations to the original features of original properties.



*Typical frontages in different parts of the area*

Properties on Lindow Street were built by 1877, and are earlier than the planned late

Victorian housing of the rest of the area, arranged in a different pattern. The buildings here generally directly adjoin the back-of-pavement. Properties do not always front the street but a strong building line (although not activity) is maintained by tall stone boundary walls and gable ends.

### **3.9.12. Positive Spaces**

Lindow Square is a positive feature of the area. Here the traditional linear street grid is replaced by shorter terraces and semi-detached Victorian properties that face the square. These have been designed as a set-piece (with taller gables book-ending the short terraces) and the effect is a pleasing townscape composition and relief in the otherwise monotonous linear street form. However, the square itself currently comprises only a widening of the highway, with some incorporated on-street parking. The square would benefit from a better public realm treatment to define the space and slow traffic and could be enhanced by new street furniture.



*Lindow Square*

### **3.9.13. Significant Open Spaces, Parks, Gardens and Trees**

Dallas Road Gardens is a strong green space within the area that provides a positive environment at its heart. The garden lies on land that falls markedly from east to west. Although simply furnished it has many trees, well maintained grass and ample seating. It is a pleasant place to sit or to pass through. Its greatest value however is the amenity it provides to the surrounding streetscape. This



also works as a composition - with facing buildings, such as the listed Lancaster Girls' Grammar School, Victoria House and the adjacent terrace on Dallas Road (which increase in height where they overlook the park). These buildings both add value to the Gardens and their setting benefits from it. Hedgerows on the Gardens boundary and street trees alongside the park also enhance the character of this area.



*Dallas Gardens*

### 3.9.14. Listed and Unlisted Buildings

There is only one listed building in this area, at 2 Dallas Road. All the buildings on the south side of Meeting House Lane contribute to the character of the area, and include cottages with ashlar window surrounds and some good quality inserted shop-fronts. The remainder of the area is different in character, consisting largely of late Victorian and Edwardian stone terraced houses, built for the middle classes, which illustrate the planned growth of the town, and contribute positively to the character of the area. Important details include panelled timber doors in ashlar surrounds, bay windows below slate-covered canopies and stone boundary walls defining front gardens. Lindow Square is particularly positive with good quality terraces and a few handsome detached houses.

### 3.9.15. Public Realm

Street trees extend along the whole of Dallas Road (with hedges for property boundaries along the middle part of the street) making this the most attractive residential street in

this area. Other streets do not have street trees but often benefit from planting to the front of properties.



*Street trees on Dallas Road*

### 3.9.16. Boundary Features

Boundary treatments almost always comprise low stone walls with monolithic stone gate piers. Some front gardens have stone walls with distinctive limestone toppings. Walls are often supplemented with railings or hedges; most railings are modern although some iron railings have survived where they separate front paths. Street furniture is standard and utilitarian but the public realm remains strong due to the use of historic stone flags and kerbs throughout most of the area.



*Low front walls with decorative limestone*

### 3.9.17. Low Grade Environments and Detractors

The back-alleys behind the long terraces are accessible to the street. Although an important historical part of the urban form, and retaining historic features such as cobbles and central stone drainage channels, some are untidy with overgrown vegetation and poor (or missing) boundaries. The alleys may also present security issues to the dwellings and to those using them. They also expose views to the rear of dwellings, which are much less attractive and unified than the front elevations, and less likely to be as well maintained. In many cases back-alleys could be enhanced by consistent boundaries and improved maintenance. In other cases alleys are in a better condition, with strong boundary treatments to the rear of dwellings and with well- maintained floorscape. This approach could be further extended.

The western part of the area adjoins the railway cutting. This is often not visible from the street but on the north-south stretch of Wheatfield Street this directly faces residential dwellings on the opposite side of the street. This results in a poorly defined street which 'leaks' into the adjacent area. The environment is worsened by the presence of an industrial use here that creates a rather grim and hostile environment. The residential amenity of this area, and its interface with other uses, could be significantly improved.



*Typical back-alleys :*

*Top: poor example – exposed backs of properties and overgrown planting.*

*Bottom: good example – good secure boundaries to properties and well maintained alley.*



**Figure 3.8: Conservation Designations (West)**

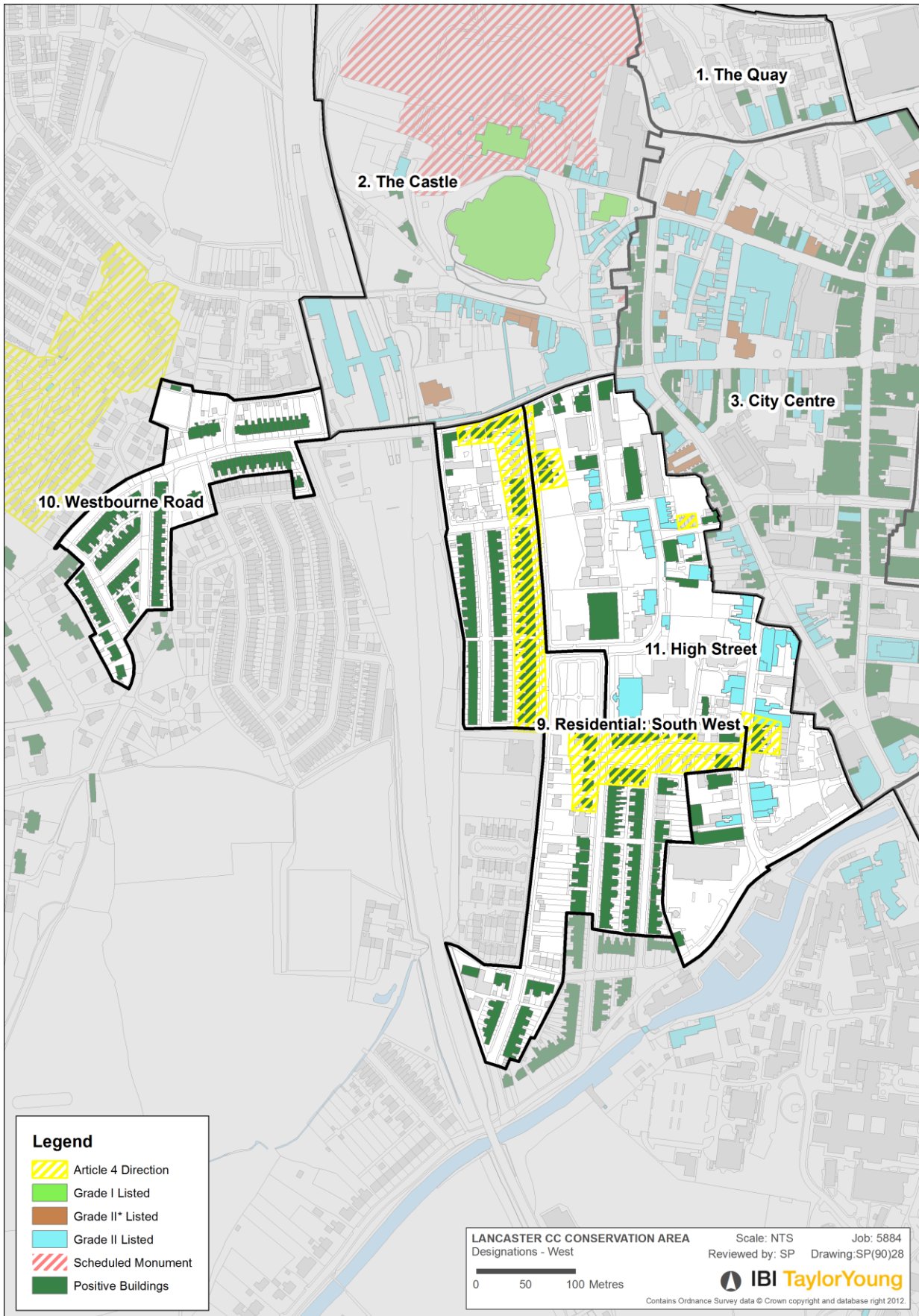




Figure 3.9: Townscape Analysis (West)

