

Slyne Road (proposed): Conservation Area Assessment

The proposed Conservation Area is associated with the development of a Victorian suburb with villas built outside the boundary of the city for the growing middle classes. The boundary of the proposed Conservation Area is situated in Skerton, to the north of Rylands House and Park. The area is characterised by a cluster of civic and public buildings together with terraced rows of stone-built villas, fronted by gardens with boundary walls.

Villas located on the outskirts of towns and cities became a popular type of house for the wealthy in the late-18th and early-19th century as they embodied the ideas of a rural retreat in an accessible location, along with the social status that was so often associated with the gentry and the 'country house'. The growing middle classes had similar aspirations to live away from the dense and often squalid conditions of urban areas.

Historically, the river marked the boundary of the old town of Lancaster and Skerton. Dacrelands, a pair of early 19C houses marked the first example of early 19C villa development. Larger country houses soon followed with Rylands House and Lune Villa (now demolished) to the south (both outside the proposed conservation area). This provided the likely stimulus for other more modest villa development to the north. Richmond House was one of the first of these more modest late 19C residences to be constructed, set within its own formally landscaped grounds fronting Slyne Road.

Skerton was incorporated into the city of Lancaster in 1888, prompting a surge of construction locally. A number of large civic buildings were erected, each reflecting the image and aspirations associated with the township's new status. The following decade or so saw the emergence of a small community along Slyne Road just north of Aldren's Lane, with the construction of the Police Station (1889), St Joseph's Church and Presbytery (1900-1), Parish Hall (now demolished) and St Joseph's School.

The small cluster of historic buildings at the south-east of the area is especially notable for generous grounds and large areas of greenery and trees. Terraces of smaller villas, with distinctive architectural design and accentuated by their elevated position, soon followed to the immediate north, with front gardens positively adding greenery to their wider setting.

Overall, the cluster of fine public and church building, the greenery of their setting and the neat row of terraced villas marks an important group of buildings that form a distinctive late Victorian suburb. The area forms an important and distinctive element of the approach into Lancaster from the north.

ANNEX 2 – SLYNE ROAD CONSERVATION AREA ASSESSMENT

In summary, the area has the following qualities:

General

- A late Victorian suburb grouped in a linear arrangement along Slyne Road
- Includes a core of civic and public buildings to the south set within generous grounds and greenery
- Distinctive mixture of Classical, Tudor, Perpendicular and Gothic revival styles
- Modest terraced villas with rhythm of bay windows with distinctive polygonal piend form, sliding sash windows, canopied entrances and decorative joinery, ridges and finials
- Prevalent use of sandstone walling and slate roofs
- Mature trees and greenery, with planting to gardens fronted by stone boundary walls topped with decorative limestone

Important buildings and features

- St Joseph's Church (Grade II) and Presbytery- perpendicular revival church by acclaimed London ecclesiastical architects Pugin and Pugin dated 1900-1.
- Dacrelands (Grade II) – classical styled house circa early 19C in ashlar with bow fronted west elevation within a generous garden setting
- Police Station (unlisted) symmetrical range in Tudor Gothic style, with characterful stepped gables and bay windows
- St Joseph's School – c1896, gable fronted, including canopy and Crucifixus, with Chapel. Probably wholly by Pugin and Pugin, although only Chapel is by them for certain.