

4. Landscape Appraisal

4.1 Landscape Character Areas

4.1.1 The study area has been separated into zones of more or less homogenous landscape character. These are defined on **Map 4 Landscape Character Areas** and are listed below:

- Zone A – Historic Core/ Church Lane
- Zone B – Commercial Gateway and Rectory Lane
- Zone C – St Mary's Park and Prestwich Clough
- Zone D – Prestwich Park Villa Landscape
- Zone E – Eagle's Nest Wooded Crest

4.1.2 Each zone will now be described in more detail particularly with reference to the condition of the component parts from which each zone's character is derived such as vegetation, paths, structure etc. Reference will also be made to photographs used on the photo sheets at the end of this section.

4.2 Landscape Condition

Zone A: Historic Village Core

- 4.2.1 This zone embraces the historic core of the site including St Mary's Church. It also includes sub zones A1 to A6 which possess subtly different landscape characteristics. Church Lane and the properties that are situated along it, including the present Rectory, comprise **Zone A1** and runs down to St Mary's Church. Although the surface of the road is currently tarmac this conceals stone setts beneath, as the photographs in **photo sheet 2** demonstrate. The street is devoid of mature street trees and vegetation is restricted to a tall, mature privet hedge which surmounts an old brick wall below George's terrace and a few, semi-mature trees that occur sporadically down the street. The Rectory and the Church Inn reinforce the built historic character of the central part of this zone.
- 4.2.2 **Zone A6** is also within the overall zone but is a modern housing development with concrete block service road as **photo 10** illustrates.
- 4.2.3 The centrepiece of this character zone, however, is St Mary's church and the graveyards which surround it which occupy **Zones A2 to A5**. The character of this zone has already been described in great detail in the CMP for St Mary's by Kathryn Sather Associates. Although the church dominates its immediate surroundings, it is concealed from view by a dense tree cover which occupies the bulk of this zone. **Zone A2** is the churchyard itself which is open and consists of flush gravestones and managed grassland (**photo sheet 3 / 14 - 16**). **Zone A3** consists of mostly self-seeded trees, which are located amongst a dense coverage of gravestones and managed grassland, **photos 17 and 18**. The canopy is dense and the area is heavily shaded as a result. **Zone A4** is more open in parts with scattered groups of trees providing conditions of dappled shade. Gravestones, which are also abundant in this area, occur amongst unmanaged grassland, as **photos 19, 20 and 21** on photo sheet 3 demonstrate. **Zone A5** is an area of dense young woodland with gravestones restricted to the northern part of the area. Paths are also notably absent from this zone.

Key to Landscape Character Areas

- A1 - HISTORIC CORE/OLD TOWN
- A2 - Church Lane
- A3 - St Mary's - open churchyard
- A4 - St Mary's - mature trees enclosed greenery
- A5 - St Mary's - grassed extension with mature trees
- A6 - St Mary's - dense canopy young woodland
- A7 - The Crispie housing area
- B1 - COMMERCIAL, GATEWAY & RECTORY LANE
- B2 - Bury Lane Road
- B3 - Church Hill & Rectory Lane
- C1 - ST MARY'S PARK & PRESTWICH CLOUGH
- C2 - St Mary's Park and Tower Garden
- C3 - Enclosed private spaces
- C4 - Enclosed woods / young woodland
- D4 - Wooded Clough
- E1 - PRESTWICH PARK VILLA LANDSCAPE
- E2 - EAGLES NEST WOODED CREST

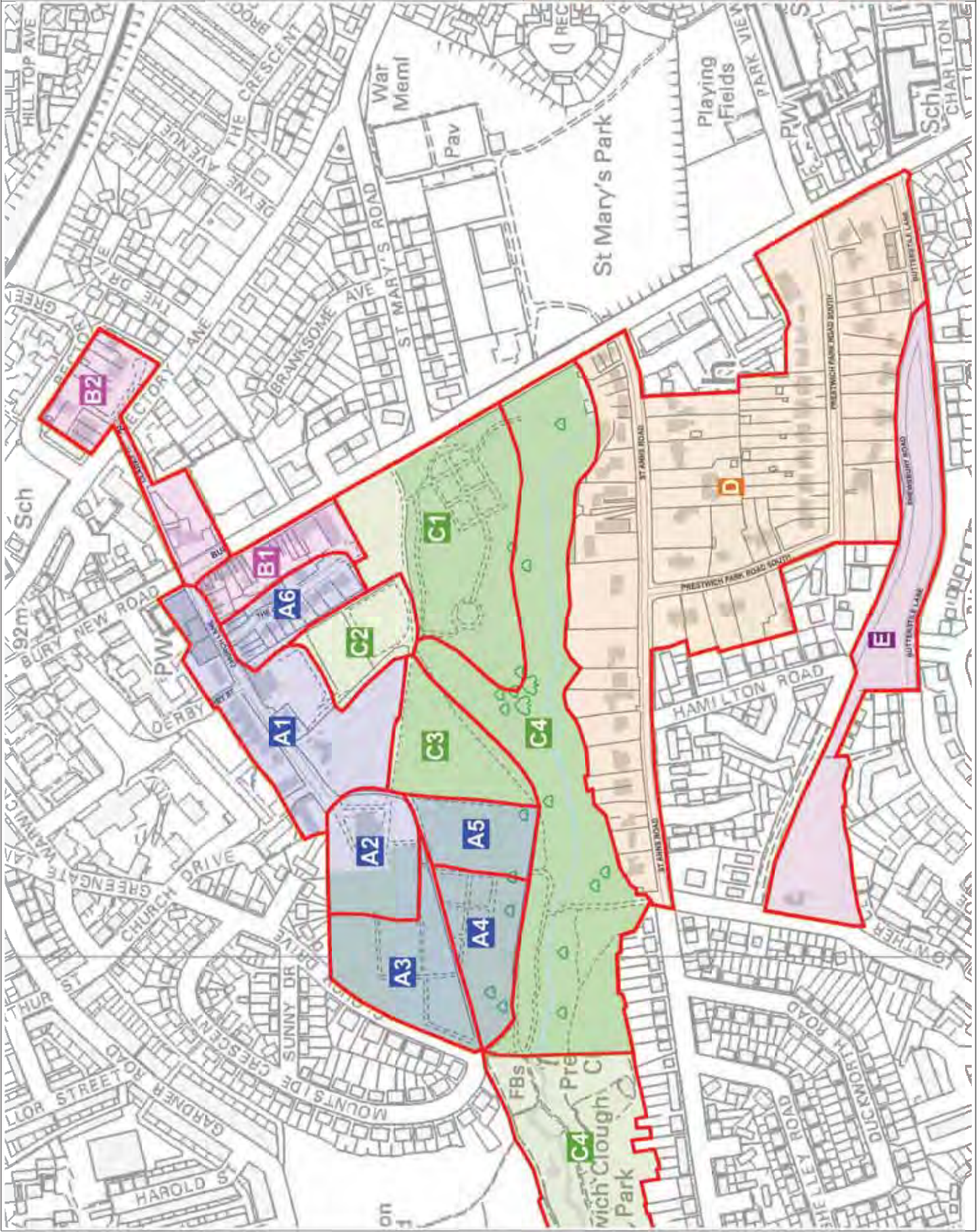


Date	Drawing Details	Revision
10/1/06	Amendments to character areas	1

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Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
St Mary's Conservation Area
 Map 3. Landscape Character Areas
 Scale: 1:3,000 @ A3
 Date: 10/1/06
 Drawing: 03
 Project: 03
 Revision: 1
 Drawing No: 03/06/03
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- 4.2.4 The trees of **Zone A** are typically mainly sycamore of various age classes and ash with occasional lime and beech. Most trees are in good condition, however, a detailed arboriculture survey of the trees in the churchyard, **Zone A2** is recommended. The zone is very dark and shaded as a result of this dense tree cover with only one area, **Zone A2** and parts of **Zone A3** which are open. The southern perimeter to this zone is marked by a line of mature trees planted 1886. Paths run throughout **Zone A** and vary from grass covered sett paths to more recently surfaced bound gravel paths. The condition of the paths is mixed with substantial lengths in poor condition. The path network connects the church with Clough Drive through a metal kissing gate in a sequence of perimeter railings. Although in reasonable condition, this entrance and perimeter is unwelcoming and the black painted railings are looking tired and are of a typical municipal style. The paths also serve to connect the Church with the Clough itself and one cobbled path is still in good condition which runs down between **Zones A4** and **A5**

Zone B: Commercial Gateway and Rectory Lane

- 4.2.5 **Zone B1** is represented by a continuous strip of buildings of mixed origin and age lining Bury New Road. The zone extends across Bury New Rd as sub-zone **B2** which still retains a limited amount of evidence that relates to its historic origins with dry-stone retaining walls, privet hedges and mature trees. These characteristics are found in Clarks Hill which is a narrow alleyway connecting Bury New Road with Rectory Lane and was the principal route between St Mary's Church and the old Rectory. The buildings, however, as the Conservation Area Appraisal points out, have long since disappeared. Sadly elements such as modern-day railings, a concrete panel fence and an uneven tarmac surface laid over stone setts detract from the historic character. The alleyway opens out into Beech Tree Bank which is embellished by a series of mature trees, largely sycamores, shrubs and lawns that decorate the front gardens of some imposing 19th century villas.

Zone C: St Mary's Park and Prestwich Clough

C1 St Mary's Park and Flower Garden

- 4.2.6 The character and condition of this part of the Conservation Area has changed markedly in recent years. In general, the flower beds have been planted with low shrubs and former shrub beds have become overgrown. Former distinctions between the flower garden and ornamental beds and the surrounding lawn areas and former links into the Clough have also become obscured. The current condition of the main areas of this sub-zone are summarised below.
- 4.2.7 The shrubberies on the sloping bank alongside the main road, whilst providing a screen to the busy traffic, have become unkempt and straggly and in need of rationalisation. Original shrubs such as aucuba, viburnum and holly have become overgrown and sycamore and birch have invaded in places. This condition is particularly acute around the main flight of stairs, where former views of the flower garden and park are now obscured by buddleia, elder and sycamore regeneration (**photo sheet 6 / 36**). At the same time there are fine specimen trees such as lime and holly that add to the character of this area.
- 4.2.8 The layout of the 1931 Flower Garden still survives in its original form. It consists of four grass quarters with a circular bed at its centre surrounded by bound gravel paths. The central path leading down from the main steps goes onto form a curving 'avenue' approach to the

former bandstand site. The shape of the beds within the grass quarters are not original and are now filled with low growing shrubs such as photinia, berberis, hebe, and ornamental grasses (**photo 37**). A recent bird bath feature has been placed in the central circular bed. The grass surface is well maintained but the surrounding bound gravel paths are in poor condition.

- 4.2.9 Shrubs surrounding the Flower Garden have now grown to obscure the former lavatory site and hollies planted as shrubs and seen on early photographs, have over the years been allowed to grow unchecked and now screen views from the garden to the church.
- 4.2.10 A narrow tarmac path in poor condition leads off from the north side of the rectangular Flower Garden, past the concrete base of the former park pavilion, to the kissing gate entrance into Church Bank / Prestwich Clough. From the south side of the Flower Garden a similar tarmac path leads through a grassy lawn with mature lime trees to a set of steps leading down into the wooded Clough. The path can be followed to the bottom of the Clough but then becomes obscured, although a desire line shows that some people do walk alongside the water-course towards the bridging point further down.
- 4.2.11 The border area between the currently maintained Park and the wooded Clough is now ill-defined. Originally there were open spaces / grassy glades along the length of the border and evidence of steps and paths connecting these areas and leading into the Clough area can still be found (**photo 38**). These spaces are now characterised by rough grass, bracken and some remnant shrubs.
- 4.2.12 The character of the 'avenue' approach to the former bandstand site has also changed in recent years. The elms have been replaced with a mix of tree standards including hornbeam, beech and sycamore and the former red shale surface of the bound gravel drive has since been superseded by the current path material (**photo 39**).
- 4.2.13 The grass area around the bandstand site is well maintained and well used, especially by dog walkers. There is no apparent access from this area into the Clough. There appears to be an informal desire line into the main Clough but any access to the subsidiary Clough is prevented by an iron railing fence, probably due its steep nature in close proximity to the informal area around the bandstand site.
- 4.2.14 Finally, the former Centenary Garden area is now separated from the main area of St Mary's Park by a privet hedge supplemented with shrubs and small trees (**photo 40**). This area is now given over to grass and is poorly drained. Some ornamental trees have been planted, including fastigiate hornbeam, and along the top of the bank, adjacent to the road, a variety of street trees (8No.) have recently been planted including birch and hornbeam. The path leading down from Bury New Road consists of stone steps and cobbles for the first part but then reverts to a bound gravel surface that suffers from poor drainage, necessitating the introduction of a timber boardwalk (**photo 41**). The path corridor is narrow and confined as it follows the side of the Conservative Club bowling green. As an ancient trackway from the former Rectory to the Church it remains historically important.

C2 Conservative Club Grounds

- 4.2.15 Part of the green space that characterises this area, this small sub-zone is in the private ownership of the Conservative Club. A tall hedge and scrub boundary screens the lower

bowling green which is regularly used by Conservative Club members. The middle terrace, a former tennis court, is now used for car parking for bowling club members. Both terraces are enclosed by shrub borders of indeterminate character.

C3 Church Bank

- 4.2.16 The main gateway between St Mary's Park and Church Bank is formed by a metal kissing-gate. This threshold acts as a relatively stark transformation from a managed, municipal park to an un-managed, country park type area (**photo sheet 7 / 42**). The footpath surface also changes from 'urban' tarmac to unconsolidated bound gravel, which is subject to poor drainage at the gateway. This is an important junction between the formal park and the informal Clough and at present lacks a clear and defined quality. From here an ill-defined un-made path leads up the bank to the church, while the main path leads down to the Clough.
- 4.2.17 Church Bank itself is now totally covered with dense oak scrub with no discernible understorey (**photo 43**). This was an open grassy bank as recently as the 1980s. The main path running along the foot of Church Bank is formed of unconsolidated bound gravel and is fairly narrow. It is edged by narrow strips of rough grass but for most of its length it is very enclosed by regenerating trees and scrub (**photo 44**). Further down this path, willows (either planted or colonising?) have recently in-filled an open grassy area which gave visual access to the stream (**photo 45**) and nearby there is an unsightly service building marked with graffiti (**photo 46**).
- 4.2.18 Views up Church Bank along this path are restricted by tree growth, which further down change from oak scrub to dense clumps of silver birch (**photo 47**).

C4 Prestwich Clough Ornamental Recreation Ground

- 4.2.19 Within the existing Conservation Area there are three main entrances into Prestwich Clough, including the approach from St Mary's Park, the historic route down from the church and the 'formal' gateway on St Ann's Road. Below St Mary's Church a cobbled path leads to a major set of steps curving down to the main bridging point. Whilst the flight of steps, which are very wide, appear to be in reasonable condition, major erosion of the adjoining earth bank has taken place creating an unsightly and potentially dangerous approach down to the bridge (**photo sheet 8 / 48**).
- 4.2.20 The other main entrance into the Clough is off St Ann's Road and consists of an original set of stone gate pillars with 'Prestwich UDC 1906' carved into the front face (**photo 49**). However, this original entrance is compromised greatly by a plethora of design styles and the dominance of the unsightly electricity sub-station. The path down into the Clough is reasonable but the bridging point is shady and the disrepair of the masonry walls that retain the stream bank makes for a dispiriting experience (**photo 50**). The entrance from St Mary's Park has already been described.
- 4.2.21 The wooded Clough area within the existing Conservation Area is dominated by Sycamore with some oak and discrete clumps of rhododendron survive from the ornamental planting schemes of the early 20th century. The problem with Japanese knotweed seems to have been controlled for the moment. The course of the stream meanders through the bottom of the Clough and periods of flooding have caused erosion to the banks. The discharge of surface water and occasional problems with sewage overflow impair the water quality and leads to problems of

bad smells and scouring. This is compounded by the sewage pipe and culvert which cause pinch points. No formal access along the Clough bottom is evident although desire lines can be detected and there is evidence of steps leading down into the Clough from an earlier period of its history.

- 4.2.22 Outside of the existing Conservation Area the Clough continues downstream to eventually meet the River Irwell. Early photographs of the 'ornamented' Clough (see **Appendix 2**) contrast with the same views today, illustrating how the character of the space has changed from a glade strewn, wooded Clough with open pasture on the tops to a predominantly wooded landscape. Although there is a lot of regenerating sycamore and ash in previously open glades, some of the spaces still remain open, particularly on the top areas (**photo 51**). Evidence of the former footpath network still survive, although all of the 'rustic' bridges have gone and been replaced by utilitarian concrete and steel footbridges. Also, the slopes are in places unstable causing sections of path to collapse.
- 4.2.23 In contrast to the steep-sided Clough, Gardner Mount, purchased at the same time as the Clough, survives as a predominantly open space. Footpaths, some informal, lead up to the Mount through oak scrub (similar to Church Bank) but the main entrance, with the same gateposts to St Ann's Road, is off Gardner Road (**photo 52**). The park is the site of a play area and a large playing field. From the entrance gates a track leads to a viewing area above the Clough (**photo 53**). This became the site of the war memorial which has since been relocated. Views over the Clough are now obscured by scrub, although some tree management in terms of felling and clearance has recently taken place. The entrance area, along with the approach track to the former memorial site, is now unkempt in appearance and would benefit from a restoration management scheme. Part of Gardner's Mount is given over to allotments.

Zone D: Prestwich Park Villa Landscape

- 4.2.24 The landscape of this zone is heavily influenced by a population of mature street trees, mainly limes with the occasional beech as **photos 54 to 56** on **photo sheet 9** demonstrate. The 19th century villas which populate this zone also have large, front and rear gardens, often limited by dwarf stone walls and privet hedges which contribute the soft feel of this zone. Street trees can cause problems, however, with pavement heave, limb drop and leaf dew potential distractions to the principal contribution the mature trees make as soft foils for built development and as havens for wildlife. The zone rises up the slope to meet Zone E Eagles Nest Wooded Crest.
- 4.2.25 The entrance to the Clough from this part of the Conservation Area however, is not auspicious, as photo 35 demonstrates. As previously described, a collection of different gate and fence details, poor signage, a small electricity substation, indistinct and poor path surfacing and an absence of vegetation management, leads to an uninviting entrance.

Zone E: Eagles Nest Wooded Crest

- 4.2.26 The highest part of the Conservation Area, Eagles Nest overlooks the Clough below and comprises mature woodland and an informal access track which is called Shrewsbury Road. The ridge overlooks the Clough below but only at one location, along Butterstile Lane, is this connection made with a glimpsed view of St Mary's Church. The mature, possibly ancient woodland at the western part of this zone is populated by mature oak and beech with a dense

holly understory which is good for wildlife. Shrewsbury Road is a muddy track in poor condition for the most part, occasionally providing rear access to dwelling as **photos 57** and **59** indicate.

4.3 Visual analysis

4.3.1 This section should be read in conjunction with **Map 5 Visual analysis**, which records the nature and location of the principal viewpoints.

Views

4.3.2 The principal conclusion that arises from this study is that the area is very enclosed with only a limited number of panoramic views. The woodland of Prestwich Clough is the key instrument of enclosure but the individual trees that occur along the bank below St Mary's park, despite the elevated nature of Bury New Road at this point, the trees that occupy Prestwich Park Villa Landscape and the woodland along Eagles Nest ridge all conspire to reduce visibility and restrict views. As such then views fall into four categories:

- a) Prospect or linear views
- b) Open views
- c) Filtered views
- d) Contained or interrupted views.

4.3.3 Naturally, the key views in the first category, prospect or linear views are associated with the streets and roads that form the built fabric of the Conservation Area. Occasionally however, as in St Mary's Park, a glimpse of the church tower emerges through a gap in vegetation.

4.3.4 Open views are restricted to a few high points within the enclosed landscape of St Mary's Park, namely the site of the old bandstand and also looking over the playing fields on the eastern side of Bury New Road. More often than not, however, they are filtered in nature.

4.3.5 Once in the Clough itself, most views are short distance contained views that follow short sections of path or stream.

Visual Character

4.3.6 The visual character of the Conservation Area is related directly to its association with the urban fabric or wooded Clough, but trees and vegetation play a part in both. The mature street trees that are such a dominant part of the Prestwich Park Villa landscape and Eagles Nest are largely absent from the central part of the Zone A, Church Lane and Bury New Road, with the exception of the Rectory. But even at this location one mature beech has been severely lopped and the remaining horse chestnut, which is diseased, should be removed.

4.3.7 The visual character of Prestwich Clough itself is obviously heavily influenced by trees. In some cases this has a negative effect on landscape character where a lack of positive management has created a density of trees and shrubs. This occurs regularly and is manifest either as a fringe of shrubs and young trees along path edges or as dense areas of woodland, as in Church Bank, which was previously meadow and where a dense stand of young oak has developed over the past twenty years or so. The net effect of this is to curtail permeability,

restrict niche views of historic features such as the Church, or the bridge over the stream, and make the experience of walking through woodland less interesting and enjoyable as a result.

- 4.3.8 The quality of the paths also detracts from the visual environment. The edges or the paths are not cleanly defined or laid out in a way that draws the visitor through the landscape. The surfaces are also erratically laid with a variety of surfaces that implies a lack of hierarchy or historic evolution.
- 4.3.9 Similarly most the entrance gates or barriers, and signage are unattractive, poorly maintained and do nothing to invite the visitor in or to any destination beyond. The gardens of St Mary's are also looking tired with over-mature shrubs and gaps in planting that do not enhance the visual character of this more municipal part of the conservation area.
- 4.3.10 However, the shortfalls identified above should not detract from the fact that the Clough is a green lung that is easily accessible and provides a complete contrast to the dense urban settlement of nearby Prestwich. It is clearly a popular resource in its present state as the state of the paths testify. The fact that it could be made more attractive should only help to increase the popularity of this resource.

Key

- Prospect / linear views
- Open views
- Filtered views
- Contained / interrupted views

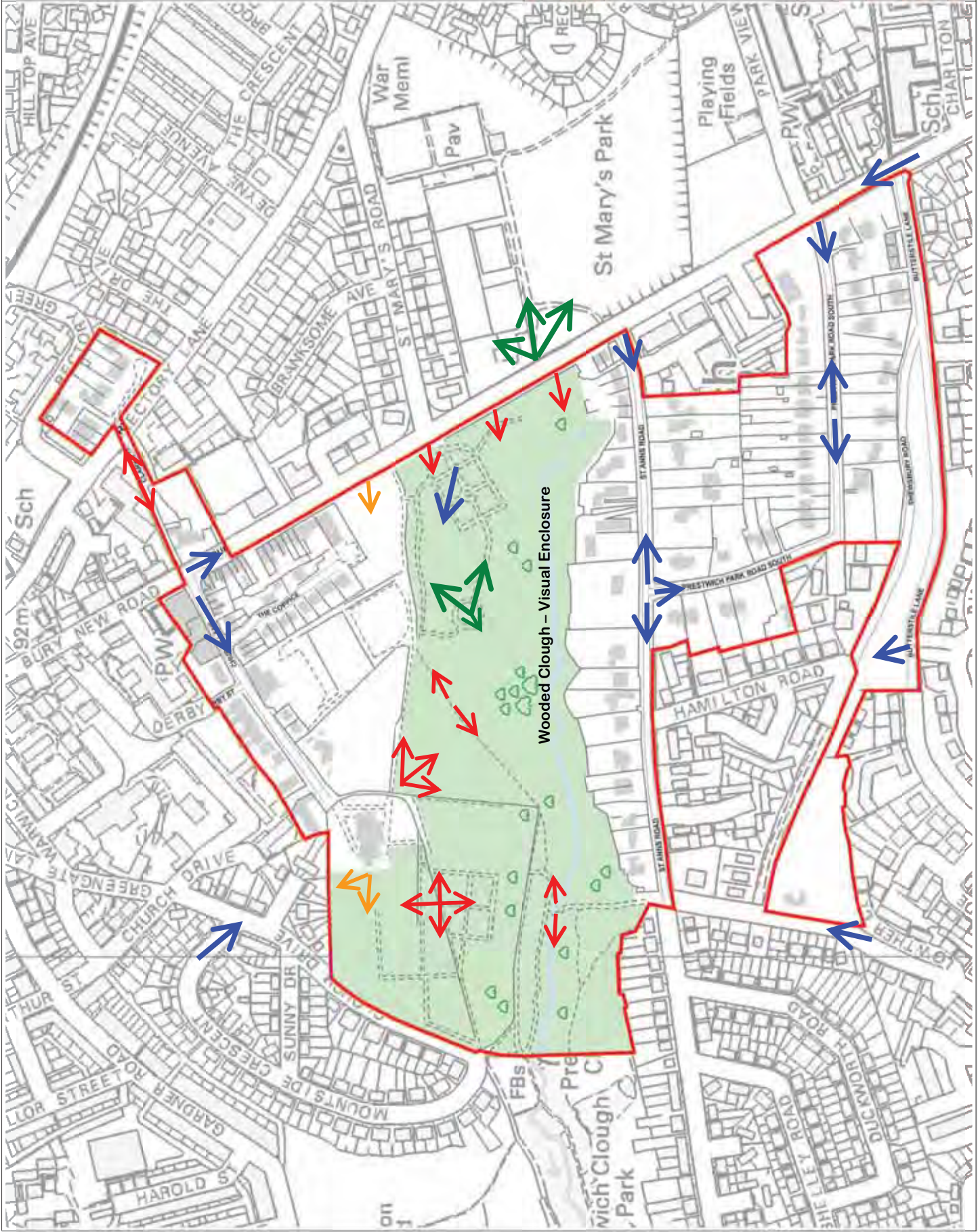




Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
St Mary's Conservation Area
Map 4. Visual Analysis

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 Date: 28/10/2016
 Drawing Details: []
 Revision: []

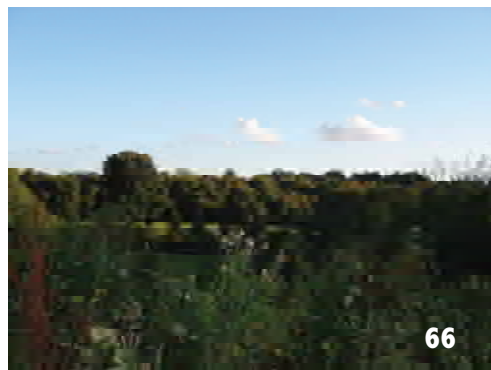
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Photos 1 to 8 illustrating the Rectory lane character area (A2) with Bury new rd (below) and Clarks lane.











30



31



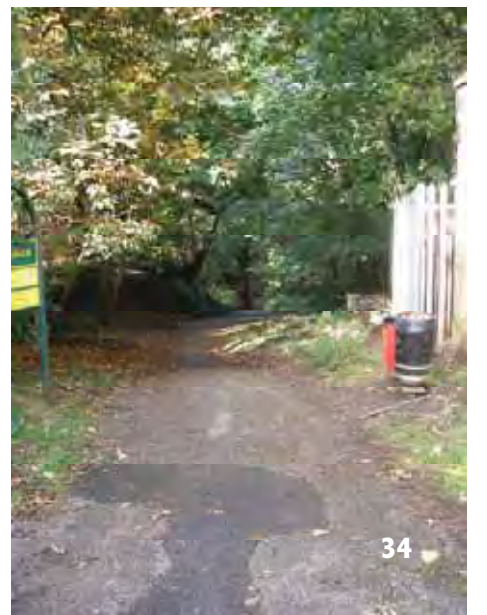
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33



33a



34



35





36: View of Flower Garden from top of main steps



37: Flower beds now planted with low shrubs



38: Steps from Park down to the Clough now largely hidden



39: Approach to bandstand site with new tree planting



40: Former centenary garden screened by hedge and trees



41: Path leading down from Bury New Road is in poor condition





42: The path leading to the Park is in poor condition



43: Dense scrub on Church Bank



44: Path at foot of Church Bank visually enclosed



45: Tree regeneration / planting in a former open area



46: New service building with recent graffiti



47: Dense birch cover forms a barrier with Church Bank



48: Erosion of steps leading down to the main footbridge



49: Poor entrance to the Clough from St Ann's Road



50: Dense canopy shade and fallen masonry not inviting



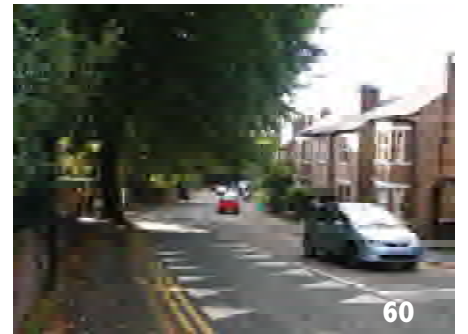
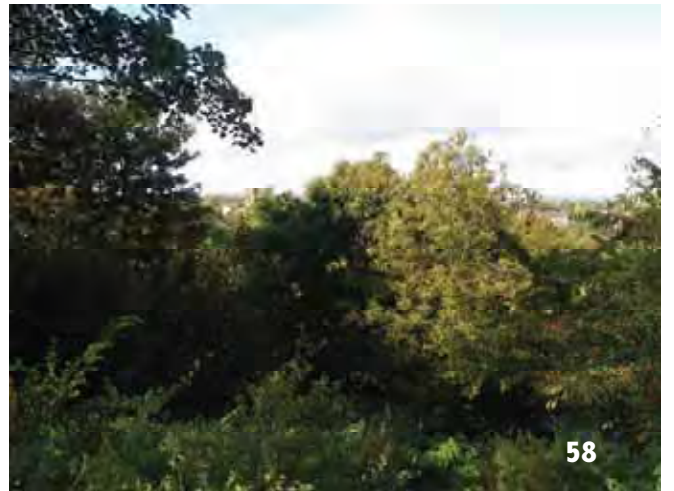
51: One of several open glades at the top of the Clough slope



52: Entrance to Gardener's Mount in poor condition



53: Former War Memorial site now enclosed by scrub



5. Heritage Merit and Significance

Statement of Significance

- 5.1 With St Mary's Church at the heart of the Conservation Area the combination of 19th and early 20th century development, particularly in terms of the extensive villa development and the ornamentation of the Clough and St Mary's Park, and the inclusion of important industrial archaeological sites helps form a coherent historic landscape unit. It therefore makes sense, if the present boundary is to be extended, to include all those areas and features that make a significant contribution to the historic character of the area.
- 5.2 In broader terms, St Mary's Conservation Area forms a natural gateway into the Regional Park being promoted by the local authorities. Along with Philip's Park to the north it forms a major, integral part of Prestwich Forest Park.

Individual Significances

- 5.3 St Mary's Church and several of the monuments in the Churchyard are seen as being of national significance and the physical landscape setting is of equal importance. The Church forms the historic core of Prestwich Village and the visual relationship with its surroundings is important to maintain.
- 5.4 The development of Prestwich Park residential area is an important example of the Victorian expansion of Manchester and with its architectural villa styles, mature street trees and generous gardens it remains locally significant.
- 5.5 The landscape improvements to the Clough at the beginning of the 20th century was an important part of the development of Prestwich as a place to live and continued with the creation of St Mary's Park some 20 years later. If some of the quality has since gone from these areas the footprint and integrity of this important public recreation space still remains and is locally significant.
- 5.6 The substantial earthwork remains of the former bleaching and dyeing works at the south western end of the Clough represent an important resource in the understanding of early industrial operations, and as such are regionally significant.

6. Management Issues and Recommendations

- 6.1 This section outlines strategic and specific landscape proposals that stem from the visual, landscape and historic analysis and consultation processes. In each case a rationale is offered as a justification for each recommendation.

General Recommendations

- 6.2 The Conservation Area should be extended to include all aspects of Prestwich Clough so as to form an integral heritage landscape. The development of St Mary's Park follows on from the acquisition and ornamentation of Prestwich Clough and Gardner Mount as part of the continuing evolution of the area as a major public recreation ground and its continuing significance is dependent on the management of the whole rather than as separate entities. The lower end of the Clough also includes important industrial archaeological remains. We therefore recommend that the Conservation Area boundary include the length of the Clough to the boundary with the old sewage works and also include Gardner Mount Recreation Ground (**Map 5**).
- 6.3 In terms of future funding it may also be beneficial for the Conservation Area to be seen as part of a greater area of significance and for the management policies to integrate with a broader area than at present.

Specific Recommendations

- 6.4 **a) Rectory Lane** Improve the surface and boundary treatment of Clarks Hill including the replacement of paling and pedestrian fences with more appropriate alternatives. Crown raise trees, thinning where appropriate and restore boundary walls where necessary.

The connection between Rectory lane and the historic core is weak and if it is to be retained as part of the Conservation Area, then it is recommended that the link should be reinforced. In simple terms a surface other than tarmac i.e .cobbles or stone setts would make a big difference. If not, then a cheaper alternative such as resin bound gravel or tar spray and chip would mark this path as a special link. The current pedestrian fencing could be replaced with railing of a more ornate historic design and this could extend to the leaning wooden paling fence with landowner consent as appropriate. Trees should be crown raised and / or thinned.

b) Bury New Road Support proposals made by URBED for improved pedestrian access, street trees and better street furniture. One initiative would be to install a pedestrian refuge between the two park areas to facilitate better access.

The 'Love Prestwich' initiative recognises the importance of Bury New Road as a major contributor to the character of the 'village' and particularly, the link via Church Lane into Prestwich Forest Park. Recommendations for St Mary's Conservation Area should therefore link into this major planning scheme.

c) Church Lane Restore the surface of Church Lane by exposing the cobbles or in a combination which involves new tarmac and cobbles.

Key

- St Mary's Conservation Area
- - - proposed extension
- ← view management priorities
- A = significant 1-4
- B = desirable 1-4

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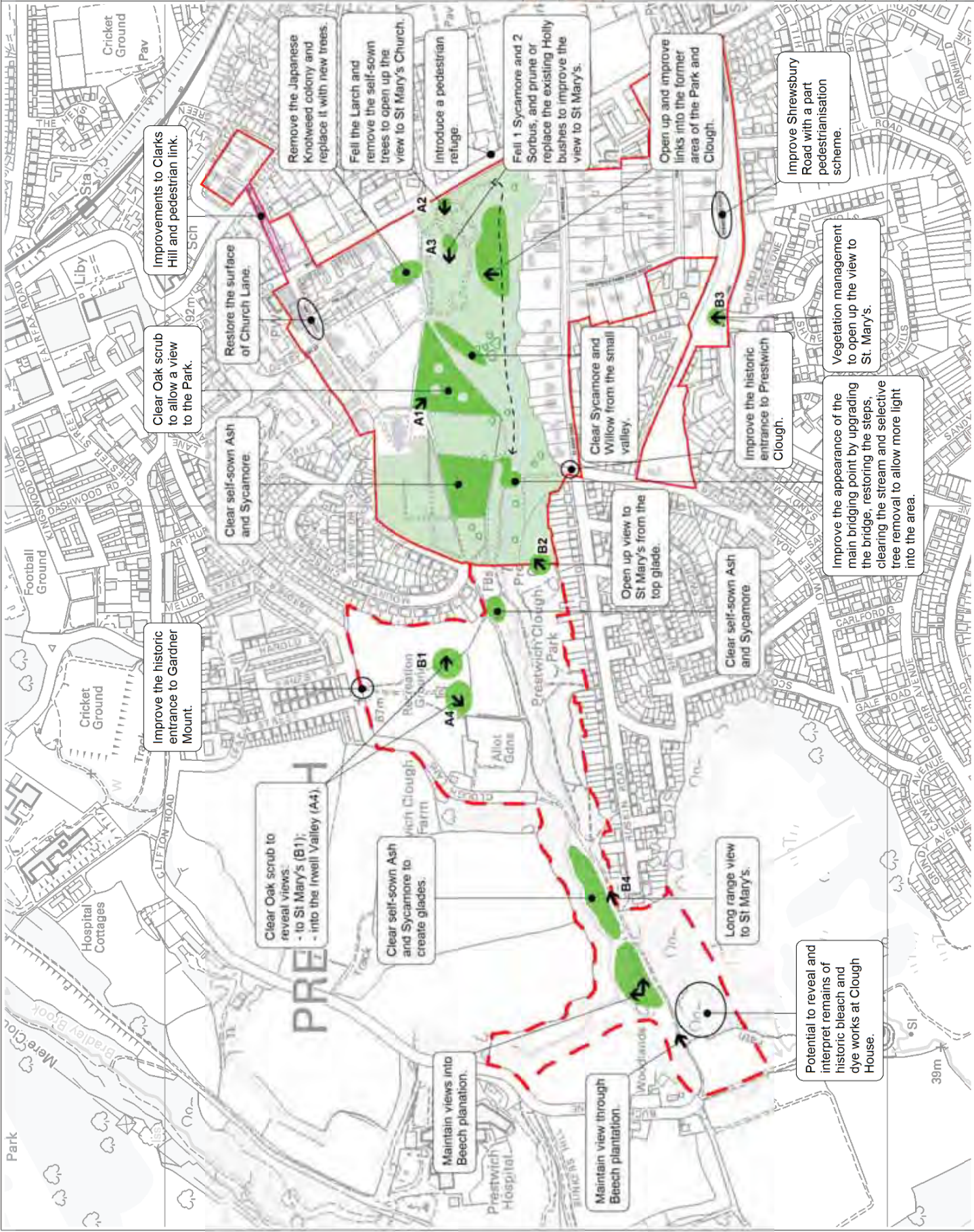
Date: 26/01/09 Drawn: JHD Checked: CB

Dwg No: SMCA08.07 Revision:

Client: **Bury Metropolitan Borough Council**

Project: **St Mary's Conservation Area**

Title: **Map 5 - Conservation Area - Proposed Extension and Main Recommendations**



Improvements to Clarks Hill and pedestrian link.

Clear Oak scrub to allow a view to the Park.

Restore the surface of Church Lane.

Improve the historic entrance to Gardner Mount.

Clear Oak scrub to reveal views - to St Mary's (B1); - into the Irwell Valley (A4).

Clear self-sown Ash and Sycamore to create glades.

Maintain views into Beech plantation.

Maintain view through Beech plantation.

Long range view to St Mary's.

Potential to reveal and interpret remains of historic bleach and dye works at Clough House.

Clear self-sown Ash and Sycamore

Remove the Japanese Knotweed colony and replace it with new trees.

Fell the Larch and remove the self-sown trees to open up the view to St Mary's Church.

Introduce a pedestrian refuge.

Fell 1 Sycamore and 2 Sorbus, and prune or replace the existing Holly bushes to improve the view to St Mary's.

Open up and improve links into the former area of the Park and Clough.

Improve Shrewsbury Road with a part pedestrianisation scheme.

Vegetation management to open up the view to St. Mary's.

Improve the appearance of the main bridging point by upgrading the bridge, restoring the steps, clearing the stream and selective tree removal to allow more light into the area.

Clear Sycamore and Willow from the small valley.

Improve the historic entrance to Prestwich Clough.

Open up view to St Mary's from the top glade.

Clear self-sown Ash and Sycamore

This road links to the historic core of the site and is a no through road. Its surface could be restored to entirely cobbled surface or a central narrower strip of new tarmac with cobbled margin slowing traffic and providing a more attractive surface and reflect its historic origins.

d) Churchyard and surroundings Thin trees, improve path surfaces, repair boundary walls and replace fences.

Thin tree cover sensitively to reduce shading and create more dappled shade with glades. Improve walls and paths consistent with recommendations made in St Mary's CMP. Remove concrete panel fence along path between Church and Rectory and replace with a more appropriate alternative eg bar railing or vertical metal railing. Remove tarmac surface to this path also to expose cobbles.

e) Church Bank Clear most of the oak scrub on this bank to improve views to and from St Mary's church. Retain several groups or individual oaks but restore the bank to wildflower meadow. In particular handle the clearance sensitively with respect to opening up views of more modern development across the valley.

Historic analysis has shown that the oak trees on this bank have grown up as a result of natural regeneration as this area was previously a meadow. The oak trees are circa 30 years old. Removing almost all of them would allow views out over the clough and also improve views of the Church from the clough path and also St Mary's Park. The retention of a few individual clumps or individual trees would help to reduce the impact of the clearance and the creation of a wildflower meadow would help to improve ecological and visual diversity.

f) St Mary's Park Allowing for difficulties with current revenue budget costs seek to restore the flower garden to its 1930s design incorporating improvements to paths and flower beds. Improve both physical and visual connections with the Clough by restoring paths, steps etc and thinning trees and understorey of the Clough. Widen and re-surface the main path link from flower garden to the entrance to the Clough.

The present garden does not read well and has substantial gaps in the planting cover. The paths are also in need of restoration with better defined edges. The plant mix is based on shrub rather than herbaceous perennials and lacks colour and interest as a result. Substituting a more diverse and colour orientated planting pattern perhaps with more emphasis on bedding plants at key points would transform the attractiveness and appeal of this garden. It would also become more maintenance intensive. We also recommend some low level enclosure on the open north and west sides to improve its definition. More seating should be provided throughout. Also the links to the Clough could be improved such as restoring the path connecting the Flower Garden area to the sides of the Clough and the main bridging point.

g) Prestwich Clough Improve existing path surfaces. Thin trees and understory sensitively near main bridge crossing between churchyard and St Ann's Road and consider replacing bridge with a new pedestrian bridge restored to its original historic position. Restore steps on both sides of stream and tidy up stream, removing old stone revetments in disrepair and allowing stream to take its natural course. Further west, restore links to Gardner Mount and thin trees to expose views across the Clough from this high point. Within the Clough clear select areas of self-seeded ash and sycamore to create glades and open up views. Maintain

beech plantation and explore potential to reveal and consolidate remains of the former bleach works.

Tree cover within the clough has largely grown up in an unmanaged way and as a consequence natural regeneration, particularly of sycamore is choking views, reducing permeability within the clough and creating an overly enclosed effect particularly along path edges. A programme of thinning and crown raising especially at key nodal points such as the bridge crossing, entrance and exit points and viewpoints such as Gardner Mount should allow sunlight in and create more open, but still wooded, environment. The path network needs to be completely overhauled with new surfaces, new entrances and gateways, with cobbles or stone setts at each entrance which signify entrance into the Conservation Area along with improved signage and seating. The former bleach works at Clough House are a significant industrial archaeological site that requires sensitive management.

h) Prestwich Park Villa Landscape Replace street trees as necessary. Improve historic entrance into Prestwich Clough from St Anns Road.

The landscape character of this area is largely derived from its population of street trees consisting of sycamore, beech or lime. It is important that this character is perpetuated and so a replacement policy should be adopted where appropriate. It should be noted, however, that in some instances it might be prudent to wait until two consecutive trees have failed before replacements are made as light is an important factor in a tree's growth and lack of it can induce poor vigour. However, this strategy will need to be assessed on a case by case basis. The experience of entering the Clough from St Anns Road is very poor and needs an improved design.

i) Eagle's Nest Improve management of woodland. Convert the central section of Shrewsbury Rd to pedestrian / cyclists only and improve path surface throughout. Maintain view across the valley to the Church.

Shrewsbury Road is in poor condition and is both uninviting at its eastern end and subject to fly-tipping, and poorly surfaced with pedestrian / vehicle conflicts in the central section. Consideration should be given to improving the route for pedestrians and cyclists and to prohibiting vehicles from using this road. The woodland might benefit from improved management by way of light thinning to allow more light on to the woodland floor and the view from the seat to St Mary's Church on Butterstile Lane should be maintained and widened if possible.