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Withington Conservation Area Regeneration Plan

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Defining Conservation Areas	1
1.2	Aims of the Regeneration Plan	1
1.3	Significance Statement	1
1.4	Community Consultation	2
2.	Issues affecting the Conservation Area	4
3.	Key Interventions and Actions Plan	5
3.A	Withington Shopfront Enhancement Guide	6
3.B	Building Preservation and Maintenance	16
3.C	Wilmslow Road	18
3.D	Gledhill Street Car Park	20
3.E	Pocket Spaces	22
3.F	Gateways, Wayfinding, Street Furniture and Street Art	26
4.	Indicative Materials Palette	28
5.	Vision Plan	30
	Appendix I – Summary of Public Consultation	32

Donald Insall Associates



MANCHESTER
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Historic England



1. Introduction

1.1 Defining Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are *'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*,¹ and are recognised for their distinctive townscape, including their buildings, streets and public realm. With regard to the English planning system, conservation areas are considered as *'designated heritage assets'*; any proposals for change or development must assess the effect that they might have on the character and appearance of the area.

1.2 Aims of the Regeneration Plan

Since 1983, Withington has been a designated conservation area, recognising its architectural and historic interest and the need to preserve or enhance its character and appearance. This Conservation Area Regeneration Plan (CARP) is underpinned by an Appraisal (2023) by Donald Insall Associates and LDA Design, which explores what makes the area so special. Based on this understanding the CARP, placing the historic environment in its social and economic context, provides the framework to help unlock the regenerative potential of Withington's heritage for the people that draw value from it. In partnership with Manchester City Council, Historic England and the local community and with funding support from Historic England, it outlines interventions and actions to stimulate collective interest from the Council, funding bodies, local people, and owners in collaborative and meaningful placemaking in Withington, enhancing what makes it so special.

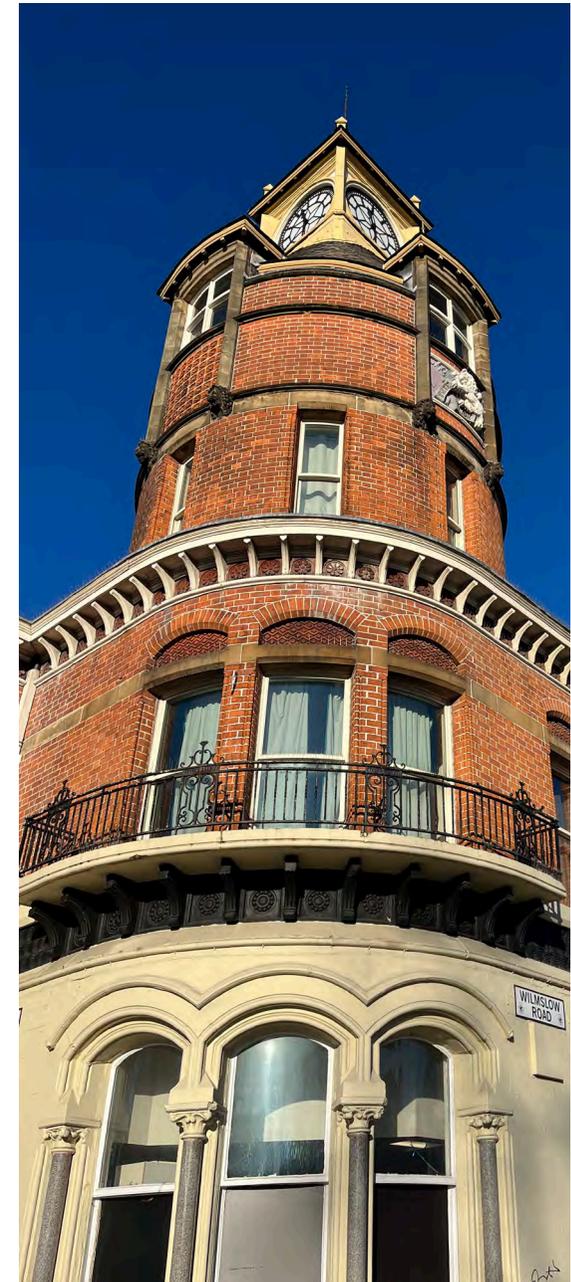
1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69.

1.3 Significance Statement

The significance of the Withington Conservation Area is founded in the vibrancy that is derived from its central linear axis – the historic village high street – and the variety in the ranges of Victorian buildings that make up this townscape, punctured along its length by local landmark buildings, which are both listed and non-designated heritage assets. The commercial uses along the high street create an active environment, enhanced by an engaged local community drawn from the diverse population that lives, works and plays in the conservation area. There is also sense of local distinctiveness, drawn from the varied architectural styles, the commercial uses, and a sense of cultural vibrancy as expressed by recent local initiatives.

Fragments of the conservation area, including The Red Lion Inn (Grade II) and facing milestone (Grade II), reflect its much more modest early development as a hamlet clustered around the early turnpike road (Wilmslow Road) before being engulfed by the 19th century urban development which defines its character today. This includes a range of buildings constructed to serve the growing population, such as Withington Library and Fire Station, the former White Lion Inn, former NatWest Bank as well as St Paul's, St Cuthbert's, and Withington Methodist Churches. This variety and quality is reinforced by the mix of grand houses and more intimate-scale terraces, such as Tatton View, which continue into the area's wider setting which includes further landmarks such as Withington Baths, central to the supporting area's continued vitality.

On account of its architectural and historic interest, the significance of the conservation area needs to be recognised and measures taken to prevent its erosion through, for example, small-scale changes, inappropriate shopfronts, excessive signage and poor-quality interventions in the private and public realm.



1.4 Community Consultation

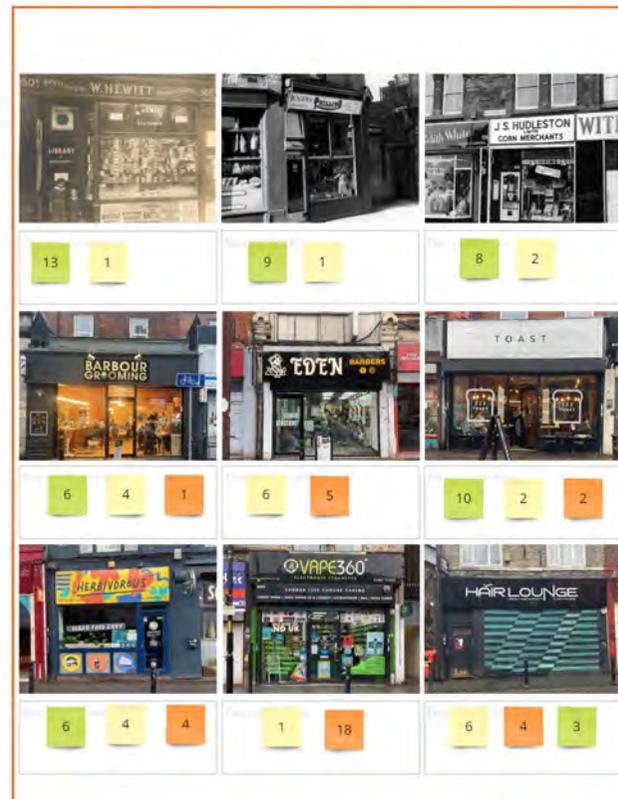
The following provides a summary of comments received through an online survey completed in December 2023 and a public consultation event held on 11 December 2023.

The consultation responses highlight a desire for positive changes to enhance the overall quality of life and appearance of the local area; common themes include improvements to public spaces, shopfronts, cleanliness, safety, and the diversity of local businesses. The consultation responses underscore a collective vision for Withington Village that prioritises heritage, aesthetics, diversity, safety, and community engagement. The community seeks a balance between development and heritage preservation, aiming for a vibrant, inclusive and attractive place to live.

Public Realm and Aesthetics

A prevalent concern is the enhancement of the public realm. Respondents expressed a desire for the removal of detracting signage and advertising and the implementation of public art. There is a call for better-designed shopfronts and for cleaner environments. Suggestions for improvement involve a design guide for shopfronts, the introduction of more wall murals, and a targeted approach to address graffiti. The idea of pedestrianisation and improving the environment for cyclists, low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN), and infrastructure for active travel is widely supported. Many respondents advocate for a heritage-led approach, focusing on architectural features and the overall appearance of the streets.

SHOPFRONTS



LDĀ DESIGN

Donald Insall Associates

Example of boards at public consultation

STREETS & SPACES IDEAS

WHICH ONES DO YOU LIKE / DISLIKE?



LDĀ DESIGN

Donald Insall Associates

Business and Diversity

The community emphasised the importance of attracting a diverse range of shops, services and hospitality. There is a desire for more local, independent businesses, and for a resistance to the dominance of big chains. Suggestions include grants for shopfront improvements and initiatives to attract a variety of businesses. There is a call for more frequent street cleaning and better lighting for safety.

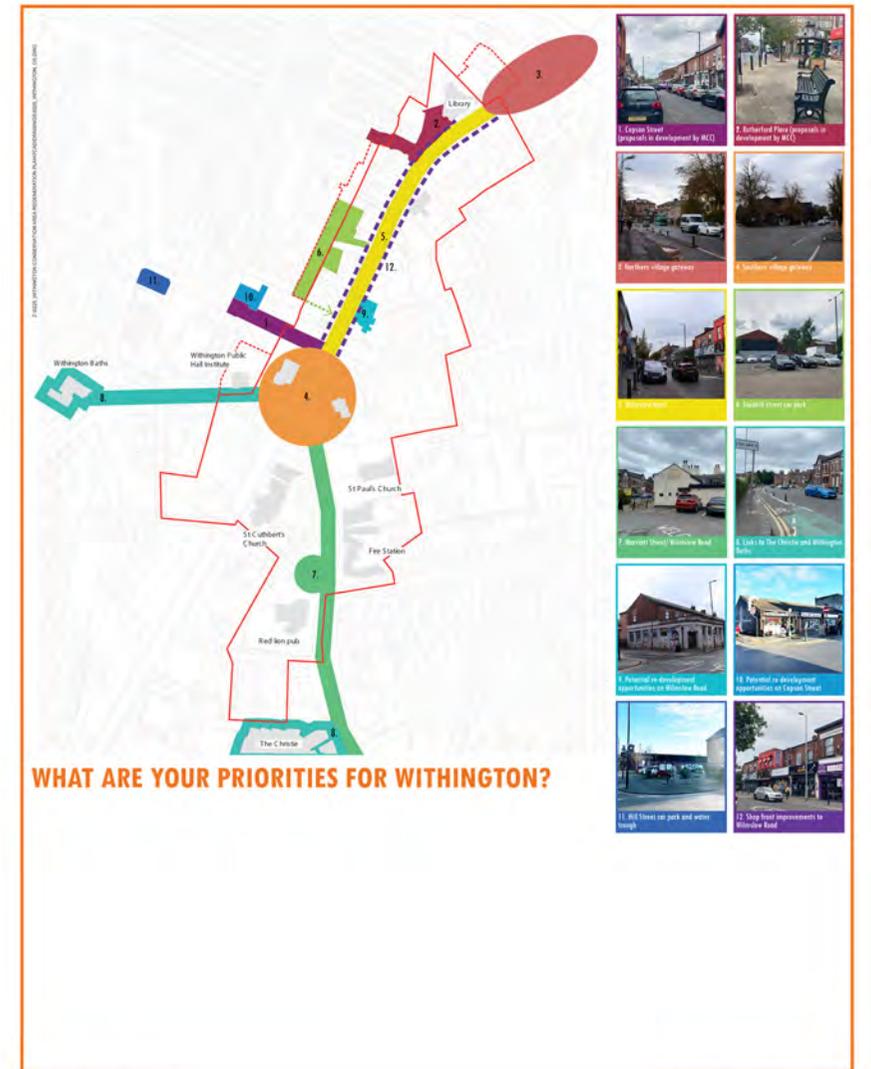
Community and Safety

The responses emphasise the importance of community-focused spaces, inclusive activities, and a sense of safety for all residents. There is a desire for local policing, reduced crime, and the creation of a more pleasant environment for families. Safety concerns extend to traffic management, with requests for better pedestrian crossings, average speed cameras, and restrictions on certain businesses. The need for a vibrant community hub and public events that bring people together is highlighted.

Future Vision

Respondents envision Withington as a vibrant, attractive, and clean area that attracts both residents and visitors. They stress the importance of heritage preservation, cleaner streets, and a variety of businesses. Their aspiration is to create a destination with a unique character, encouraging growth, and providing a high quality of life for everyone. Suggestions include making the area more accessible, encouraging local businesses, and fostering a sense of community pride.

POTENTIAL FOCUS AREAS



LD&A DESIGN

Example of boards at public consultation

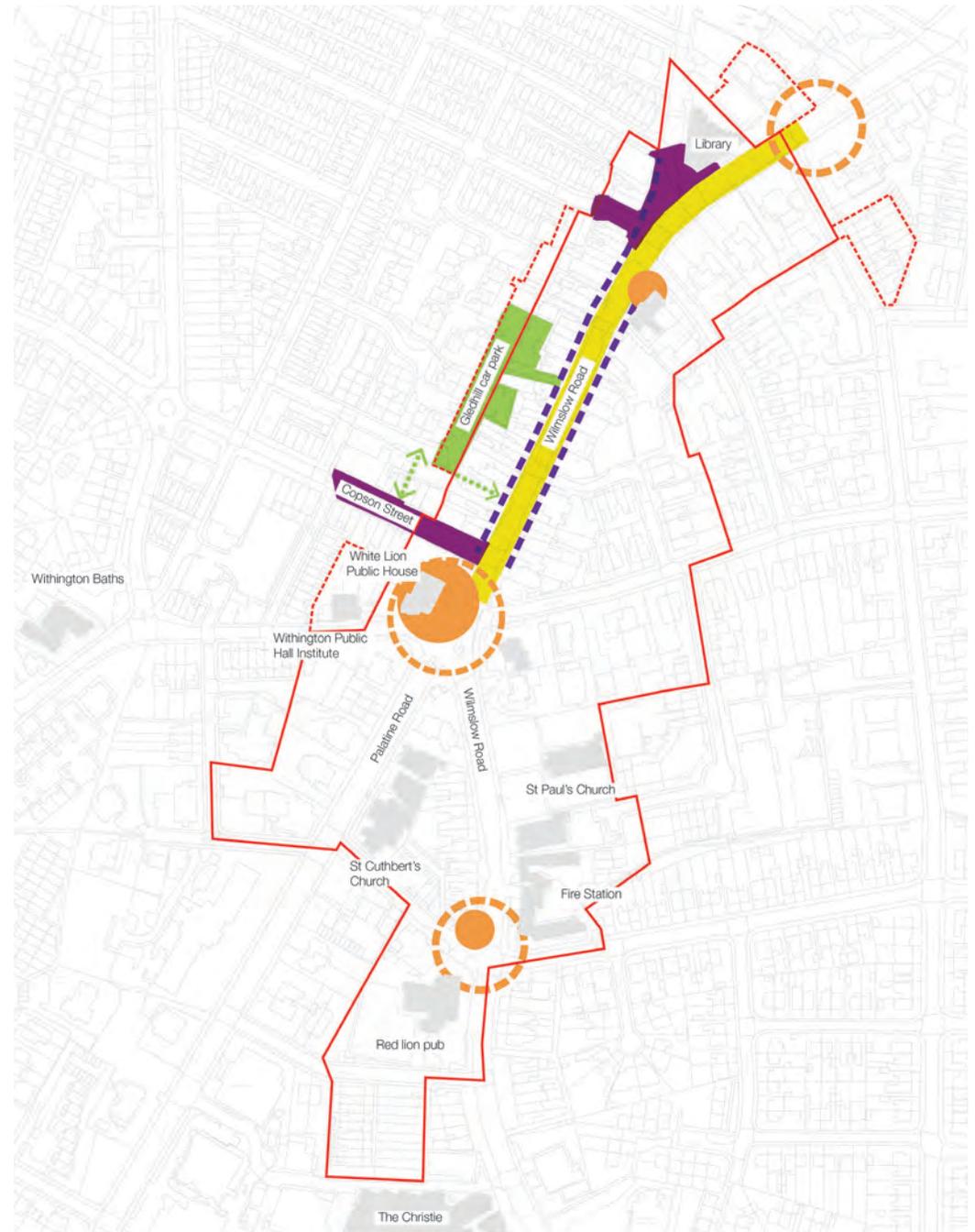
Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Planning Consultants

2. Issues affecting the Conservation Area



3. Key Interventions and Actions Plan

- Key:
-  Conservation Area Boundary
 -  Suggested extension to Conservation Area Boundary
 -  Shopfronts
 -  Wilmslow Road
 -  Gledhill Street Car Park
 -  Pocket Spaces
 -  Gateways
 -  Public Realm improvements areas - already in development



3.A Withington Shopfront Enhancement Guide



Shopfronts and signage



Sense of pride, celebrating heritage and identity

Opportunities



Remove

Removal of shopfronts, signage and clutter which detract from buildings and streetscapes.

Guide

Provision of guidance to business owners on how replacement shopfronts and signage can be sensitively accommodated, particularly when changing use.

Enhance

Installation of shopfronts and signage which are sensitive to the host building and reinstate a sense of uniformity ranges of shared architectural style.

Benefits

- Better reveal significance of host building and shared architectural character across ranges
- Revitalise historic high street and character and appearance of conservation area
- Reinforce a sense of local distinctiveness
- Enhance perception of commercial offer and desirability as visitor definition

Challenges

- Fostering a sense of responsibility for sensitive upgrades by building owners
- Perception of ongoing maintenance and insurance requirements
- Financing shopfront and signage improvement scheme

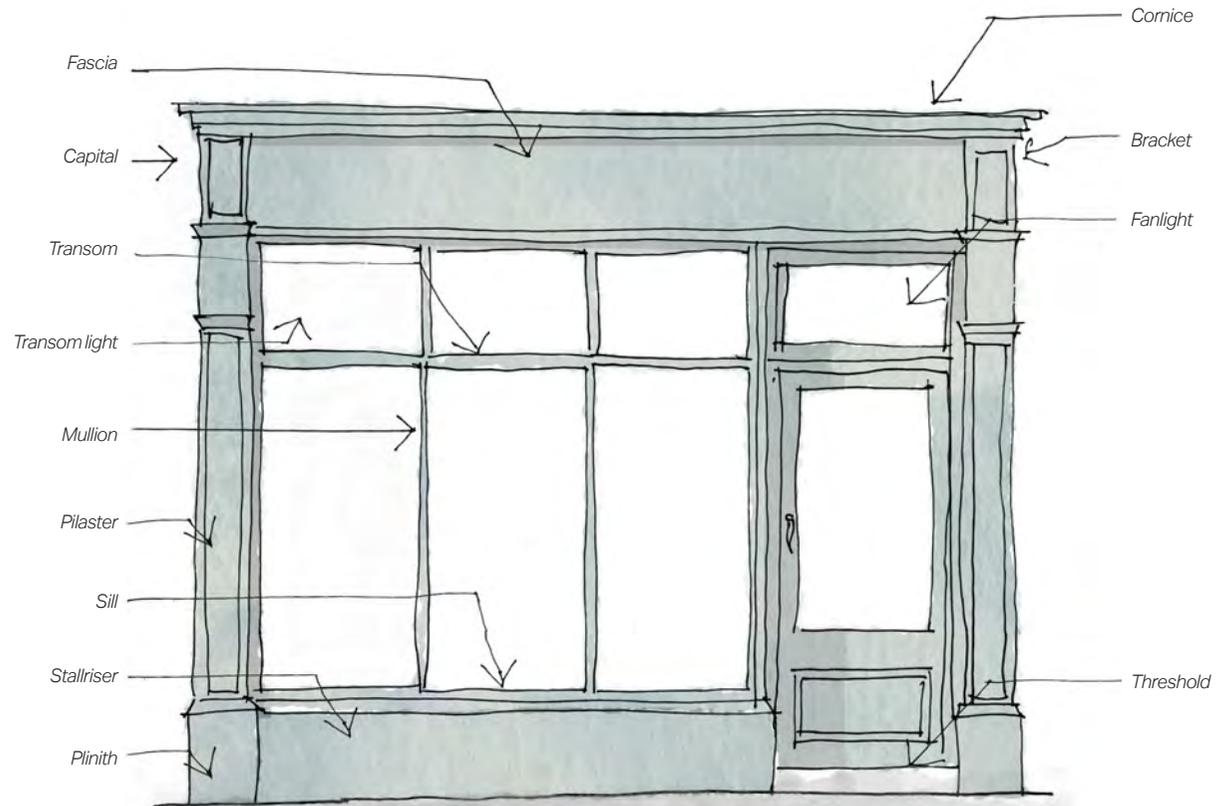
Typical Features of a Shopfront

Stallriser, a solid visual base of a shopfront, protecting the area below the display window from damage. Traditionally this was part of a window display table, when shopfronts were open. The **threshold** marks the entrance.

A traditional shop window is often divided by **mullions** – the vertical part of the frame – and a **transom** – the horizontal element. Over entrance doors, **fanlights** often provide illumination and align with the transom.

Pilasters are half-columns which frame the sides of a shopfront and provide visual support to the fascia and upper floors of a building. They can be elaborate, supported by **plinths**, and capped by projecting **capitals** and decorative **corbel** or **console brackets**. To many of the terrace groups in Withington the pilaster is an integral part of the overall building façade.

The **fascia** is the horizontal band over the window, fixed between the capitals and defining the ground and upper floors. It provides the main area for displaying the name and function of the shop. Over it is a **cornice** – to shed water and visually complete the shopfront - it sometimes features casings for awnings.



Principles of Good Shopfront Design

- Existing historic shopfronts should be retained; where parts survive (such as pilasters) either visible or hidden, they should also be retained and incorporated into a new design.
- New shopfronts must be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the host building, relate satisfactorily to the period and style of the upper parts of the façade and respond to the rhythm and characteristics of the street including any intended uniformity across differing ranges.
- New shopfronts within historic buildings should incorporate those elements that contribute to the traditional character of the building including historic corbels, pilasters, fascias and stallrisers, or seek to reinstate them where missing.
- Appropriate size, scale, proportionate design and detailing, the use of correct materials and complementary colour schemes are all important in ensuring a sympathetic design.
- Where businesses span two buildings, the distinction between the two should be maintained.
- Shop displays and dressings should be placed behind shopfront glazing to enliven the street frontage.
- When works are proposed it will be expected that the opportunity is taken to make improvements, such as removing detracting elements (see shopfront enhancement chart).
- Should a shopfront no longer be required owing to a change of use, any proposed alterations must still consider their impact on the architectural character of the host building and the role of the active frontage in the streetscene, with the retention of historic frontages and features being a priority.



Elements of Shopfront Design

Pilasters

Pilasters should frame each shopfront and relate to the rhythm of the façade above; paint schemes should end on either side of a shared pilaster, they should not be half painted.

Doors

New doors and ironmongery should be in keeping with the age of the shopfront and building above.

Shop Windows

Fully glazed shopfronts are discouraged other than to contemporary buildings; transoms, mullions and stallrisers should be incorporated to following detailed composition of floors above.

Materials

Alteration and renewal of elements of the shopfront as a whole should use traditional materials such as painted sustainable-sourced hardwood timber, brick, stone and ironwork. Plastic, sheet metal, reflective modern materials and painted ply should be avoided. The use of rendered brick stallrisers finished to match the shopfront above can overcome maintenance issues with timber stallrisers.

Colour

Colour should be used to enhance the character and appearance of the individual frontage and wider townscape.

Colour palettes should relate to the architectural character and date of the building and allow for variety in the streetscene between terrace groups.

Accessibility

Following the Equality Act 2010, level access through the principal entrance of the shopfront is required; sensitive alterations that remove the need for step access into the shop are encouraged.

Services

Whenever new services are installed redundant wires, cables, pipes etc should be carefully removed; surface wiring and air extract grilles should be avoided. Visually intrusive services such as air conditioning units should be located to the rear of premises and vents incorporated into shopfronts should be avoided.

Security

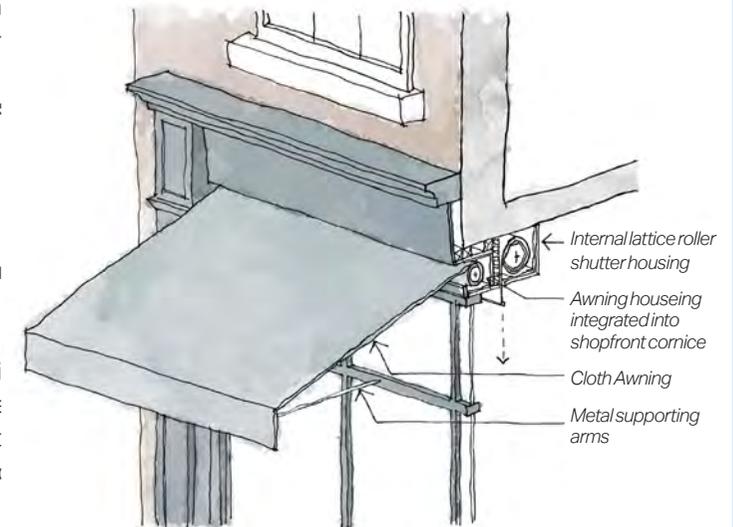
Consideration should be given to the principles as outlined in Secured By Design. Security requirements need to be balanced against their impact on the appearance and features of a building. 10mm toughened glass can provide robust security and be incorporated into double glazing. If roller shutters are required these should be lattice rather than solid and located internally - discretely concealed within the joinery behind the fascia. External security cameras and alarms to be incorporated into the joinery or located discretely on the façade.

Awnings

Awnings are not common features in Withington due to the limited pavement widths, existing character of the area and potential conflict with the highway safety. Awnings/canopies should be avoided in most locations; in the limited instances they may be supported they should be traditional cloth awnings with metal supporting arms and retract fully into the fascia cornice and not surface mounted canopies.

Shopfront Enhancement Chart

The following chart is intended to guide minor incremental improvements which are economically realistic to uplift the quality of Withington's commercial frontage over time.



Shopfront Enhancement Chart



Historic shopfront:	Intact or largely intact historic shopfront.	Historic shopfront with minor alterations, missing features or damage.	Largely altered historic shopfront but maintaining some key features / proportions.	No historic features visible.
Modern shopfront:	High quality modern shop design and materials which respects the overall design of the building	Simple modern design with some detailing in good materials which respects the overall design of the building	Plain modern design in reasonable materials.	Poorly detailed plain frontage, poor materials.
Reproduction shopfront:	Authentic reproduction of traditional shopfront, respects the overall design of the building.	Well-designed traditional shopfront which exhibits a number of features and respects the overall design of the building.	Traditional design with some awkward or clumsy elements and/or which relates poorly to overall building.	Clumsy attempt at traditional design, badly detailed.
Security measures:	Discreet heritage-led measures including internal lattice shutters, toughened glass and sensitively positioned CCTV.	Integration of heritage-led measures including grille or lattice shutters, toughened glass and sensitively positioned CCTV	Well integrated external perforated roller shutter.	External solid roller shutters, obvious tracks and/or box external housing.
Awnings / canopies:	Traditional fabric roller-retractable awning on hinged or scissor supports, in original and/or fully integrated housing.	Traditional fabric roller-retractable awning on hinged or scissor support, well integrated new housing / existing external box.	Modern awning with telescopic supports and/or external boxing.	Plastic, Dutch canopies or other similar awning types.
Colours / finishes:	Matt or soft sheen paint in dark, muted or neutral colours, or polished hardwood.	Glossy paint in dark, muted or neutral colours, or varnished timber. Limited use of brighter colours for emphasis.	Glossy monochrome or modern colours. Use of brighter colours for emphasis.	Garish decoration, bright primary / secondary colours, day-glo and other vivid colours.
Vents / service:	No vents or other services to main elevations.	Well-designed and discrete vents/grilles or other services to main or rear elevations.	Well-integrated vents and other services to main elevation.	Standardized and prominent vents and other services.

Case Study 1: 467-487 Wilmslow Road



467 - 487 Wilmslow Road (1972)



467 - 487 Wilmslow Road



467-487 Wilmslow Road, indicative positive shopfront design

Case Study 2: Oak Bank Buildings



Oak Bank Buildings (1959)



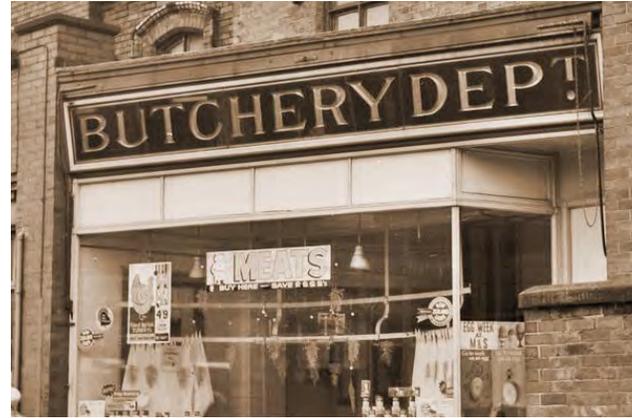
Oak Bank Buildings



Oak Bank Buildings, indicative positive shopfront design

Principles of Good Signage Design

- Signage must be sensitively designed and integrated into the shopfront and streetscene; the proliferation of multiple advertisements should be avoided.
- Signage must not dominate the building façade and should relate to its character, scale and architectural features.
- Internally illuminated box fascia or projecting signs should be avoided.
- Shop signs should be located at fascia level and follow the pattern within the street.
- The location of signage on non-retail buildings must be carefully considered so as to not harm the appearance of the building.
- The use of standard corporate signs may not be acceptable in the historic context and firms may need to adapt their standard design and image in order to be acceptable.
- When preparing designs for new advertisements, the opportunity should be taken to improve their impact on the appearance of the building, reduce the number of signs and remove those which are redundant (see signage enhancement chart).



Signage Renewal and Replacement

Fascia Signs

- Signs should fit within the fascia and not cover surrounding corbels, console brackets, cornices and other features of interest.
- The depth of the fascia should be in proportion to the design of the shopfront as a whole and should not encroach on the upper floors above.
- The fascia should respect the original division between properties even where a business extends into the neighbouring property.
- On traditional shopfronts, opportunities to install or reinstate painted timber fascias would be encouraged. Where these remains, these should be retained or exposed.
- On any new or existing shopfronts, bulky box signs and internally illuminated box signage should be avoided.
- Acrylic or shiny materials, and use of fluorescent colours clash with traditional finishes and are visually inappropriate.
- Information on the fascia should not be excessive and limited to the essential information, such as the name of the shop, trade and street number.

Lettering

- Lettering should ideally be hand painted or individual letters formed from another suitable material.
- Modern plastic or reflective material should be avoided.
- Lettering should be in proportion to the fascia.

Other Signage and Features

- Traditional hanging signs are appropriate when located to follow the prevailing street character, either positioned centrally on a pilaster or frame.
- Hanging signs should be a clear distance from vehicles and above pedestrians - the minimum ground clearance is 2.4m with 0.5m clearance from the edge of the carriageway.
- Hanging signs should be limited to one per building.
- Traditional signs such as hanging pub signs are welcomed.
- Projecting box signs are inappropriate.
- Fixing points for signs should be made into mortar joints or render which is easily repairable wherever possible, breathable paints should be used for painted signage.
- Window vinyls which cover the whole or the majority of a window are not appropriate due to their negative impact on the streetscene and commercial vitality of a place. Discrete and limited internal vinyl signage, especially where there are no fascias and/or where projecting signage would not fit, can be acceptable, depending on design, coverage, location and reversibility.

Lighting

- Large, internally illuminated fascia signs and internally illuminated lightbox projecting signs are inappropriate.
- There may be instances where subtle illumination of signage would be acceptable (i.e. discrete through LED lights, halo-illuminated letters).

Signage Enhancement Chart

The following chart is intended to guide minor incremental improvements which are economically realistic to uplift the quality of Withington's commercial frontage over time.



	Excellent			Poor
Signage	Fully integrated and well-proportioned fascia signage.	Well integrated and/or well-proportioned fascia signage.	Fascia sign too large or not well integrated into overall shopfront.	Oversized, poorly aligned and/or projecting box fascia signage.
Fascia design	Timber fascia with painted lettering or small non-illuminated mounted lettering, matt or soft sheen finish.	Fascia sign with painted, printed, mounted or halo-illuminated lettering, small to medium size in matt or soft sheen material.	Glossy modern materials, visible joints in fascia and/or printed or mounted lettering of medium to large size, bright halo illumination or small external lights.	Shiny modern materials or plywood, unsightly joints, very large / bright / brash lettering, internal illumination or large external lighting.
Additional signage	Any additional / alternative signage sits within the overall design of building, is appropriately sized and is kept to a minimum.	Any additional / alternative signage pays attention to the overall design of building and is appropriately sized.	Any additional / alternative signage is poorly located within the overall design of building or is too large.	Extra signage which proliferates, is poorly located, oversized and/or ignores overall design of building including projecting box signs.
Branding	Minimal or no corporate or chain brand identity.	Low key corporate or chain branding or heavily modified to suit historic setting.	Low key corporate or chain branding or slight modifications to suit historic setting.	Overtly dominant corporate or chain branding with no modification to suit setting.

3.B Building Preservation and Maintenance



Shopfronts and signage



Sense of pride, celebrating heritage and identity



Opportunities



Maintain

Undertake regular maintenance of historic fabric and features and the systems designed to protect them such as gutters and rainwater pipes.



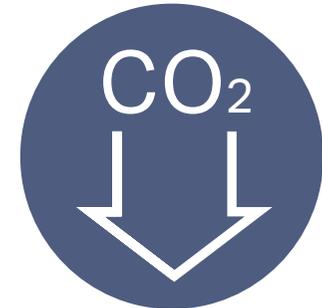
Repair

Repair damaged fabric, remove poor quality interventions which are likely to cause damage and reinstate historic features where missing.



Stimulate

Empower building owners to undertake minor regular maintenance in inappropriate materials to reduce maintenance burden.



Adapt

Adapt historic and modern properties to meet future needs and requirements, including climate change, through sensitive refurbishment and adaptation.

Benefits

- Maintain the significance of historic buildings by preserving fabric and features
- Reinstate the shared architectural character across ranges through repair and reinstatement of features
- Revitalise streetscape and character and appearance of conservation area
- Reinforce a sense of local distinctiveness
- Respond to the climate emergency

Challenges

- Fostering a sense of responsibility for regular maintenance and repair by building owners
- Uncoordinated and ill-advised alterations, repair or replacement and inappropriate sustainability measures can cause further harm

Preservation, Maintenance and Repair

- Get to know your building to identify issues and understand its significance.
- Carry out regular inspections of roof coverings, gutters, down pipes, air vents, mechanical ventilation systems, below-ground drains and gullies.
- Small cracks in paint or dust in vents can begin to allow decay to take hold. Regular repainting and cleaning of ventilation (passive or mechanical) will avoid more expensive repairs in the future.
- Default position should always be to retain and repair existing features and fabric which contribute positively and repair on a like-for-like basis as required; this retains the historic character, uniformity across terrace groups, is often cheaper, typically offers a more long-lasting solution and is sustainable.
- Be cautious of products and materials boasting to be 'maintenance free', as this often means that they are unmaintainable and often have a short life span.
- A repair or refurbishment project offers the chance to incorporate sensitive upgrades to ventilation, thermal performance and energy efficiency.



3.C Wilmslow Road



Streets and spaces



Sense of pride, celebrating heritage and identity

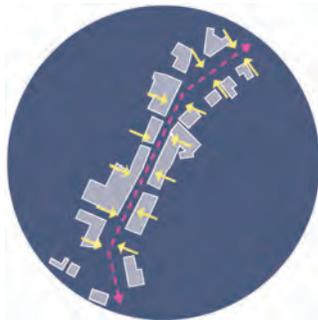


Opportunities



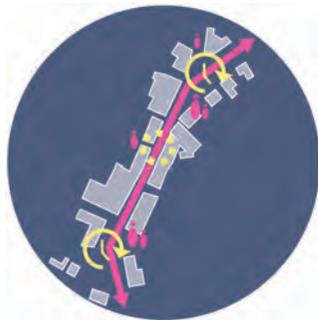
De clutter

De cluttering of the street to remove unnecessary elements which clutter footways, restrict movement and detract from buildings.



Re-align

Investigate opportunities to realign and narrow carriageway, giving more space to footways and spill out space from units.



Borrow back

Investigate opportunities to 'borrow' back areas for pedestrians from the carriageway such as introducing dutch kerbs to loading bays and timing restrictions so that when not in use they can be used by pedestrians.



Enhance

Street enhancement through an uplift to materials, street furniture and softworks. Consideration given to improved accessibility, in particular for different age groups and those with accessibility needs.

Benefits

- Uplift to the quality of the street environment.
- Reducing the dominance of traffic on the street scene by restricting timings for loading/standing vehicles without effecting road capacity.
- Improved pedestrian experience could lead to increased footfall.
- Wider pavements would allow for appreciation of the building facades, particularly above ground floor.

Challenges

- Wilmslow Road is a strategic movement corridor including buses and therefore interventions would have to balance vehicular movement considerations as well as pedestrians.
- Further engagement required to understand the servicing requirements of businesses on Wilmslow Road.



De-cluttered streets and an uplift of materials improve the pedestrian environment



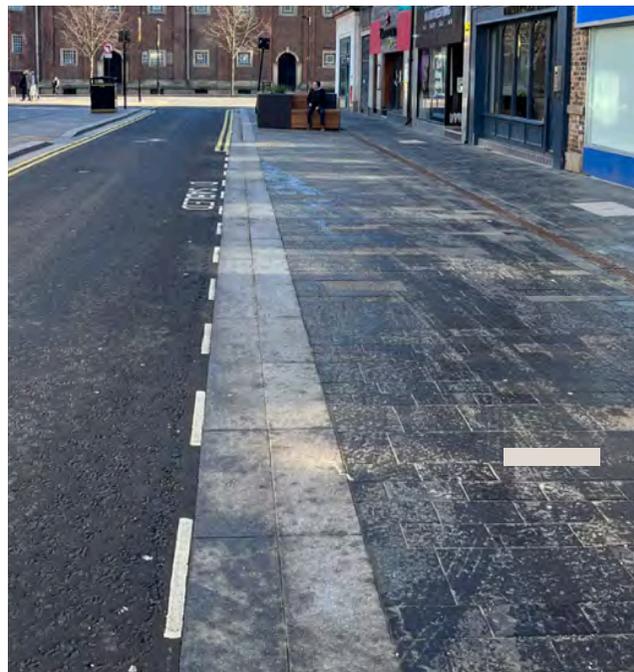
Parking areas designed so that visually they appear part of the pedestrian space whilst not in use



On-street parking and loading bays are of the same palette of materials at the pedestrian areas rather than the carriageway.



Raised-table crossings



Parking areas designed so that visually they appear part of the pedestrian space whilst not in use



On-street parking and loading bays are of the same palette of materials at the pedestrian areas rather than the carriageway.

3.D Gledhill Street Car Park



Streets and spaces



Community and events



Sense of pride of place, celebrating heritage and identity

Opportunities



Review

Review parking need and servicing requirements for the car park on different days of the week and times of the day.



Resurface

Re surface car park to uplift and visually improve the area, and to make more accessible for people with mobility and accessibility needs.



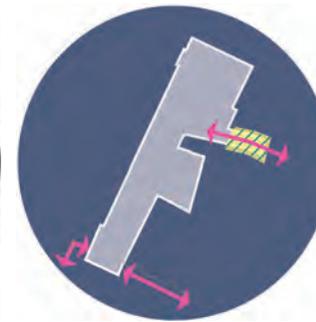
Rationalise

Consider rationalising the car parking layout to see if there are opportunities for some areas to act as a flexible public space for events at times when less car parking is required.



Activate

Opportunity to introduce temporary units which could be used for pop up markets and events, which visually screen the rear of properties and servicing areas to improve the appearance of the car park.



Link

Introduce lighting installations, planting and public art to ginnels linking to the car park from Wilmslow Road and Copson Street highlighting connections and improving safety.



Identity

Opportunities to activate the space with public art celebrating heritage and place identity.

Benefits

- An arrival area into the conservation area by those arriving by car, an uplift in materials would have a positive impact on perception of place.
- Pop up units could screen the back's of the existing buildings which back onto the car park, visually improving the area and activating it.
- Improved lighting and activation of spaces connecting the car park and Wilmslow Road.
- Provides a flexible space for community gathering/ pop ups on days when car parking can be reduced.
- Reduction of opportunities of anti-social behaviour and crime.

Challenges

- 3rd party co-operation and consideration of servicing needs to existing units may be required.



An example image of re surfacing of car park area, to visually improve area, choice of materials and temporary street furniture could allow for a flexible space for events



An example image of catenary lighting to ginnels or lighting installations highlight links and improve safety



An example image of temporary 'pop up' units to the backs of existing buildings to visually screen and activate the space



An example image of temporary 'pop up' units to the backs of existing buildings to visually screen and activate the space

3.E Pocket Spaces



Streets and spaces



Community and events



Sense of pride of place,
celebrating heritage and identity



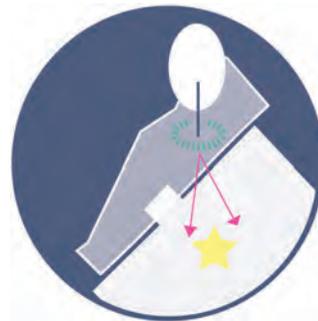
Area outside the Former Westminster Bank (Grade II)

Opportunities



Understand

Consider movement
desire lines across the
space to define an area
for intervention.



Green

Retain existing mature tree.
Introduction of planting and
seating set around the existing
tree, to allow a setting to view and
appreciate the building.



De clutter

Improvements to the bus stop
street furniture, such as a
green roof, etc) and de-clutter
where possible.

Benefits

- Improve the setting of the former National Westminster Bank (Grade II)
- Visual uplift to area
- Encourages social interaction.

Challenges

- Proximity of the bus stop and associated infrastructure which obscures the building, particularly when buses are stationary.



An example image of a small pocket space set around a tree

Area outside the Former White Lion (Grade II)

Opportunities



Realign

Realignment of the junction of Burton Road and Wilmslow Road to tighten up the highway geometry, removing the pedestrian island to increase the area of public realm in front of the building and improve the crossing for pedestrians.



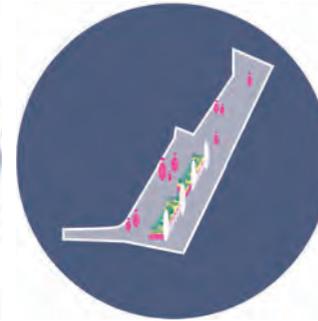
Enhance

New public realm treatment to the junction and area in front of the buildings. Paving pattern/ layout and details could reference from the circular clock tower of the building and radiate out from this.



Restore

Repair and re paint stone pillars, replacing railings with more sympathetic design.



Re-purpose

Incorporate planting at the base of the pillars and a bespoke piece of street furniture which protects and celebrates the pillars, giving them a new purpose and function.

Benefits

- Restores and integrates the listed bollards into street furniture getting new lease of life
- Improves setting of listed building
- Restoring space for pedestrians and reducing the impact of cars on Wilmslow Road.

Challenges

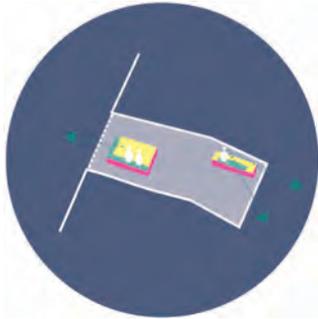
- Area within private ownership
- Access and servicing considerations.



An example image public space in front of a heritage asset being re-purposed

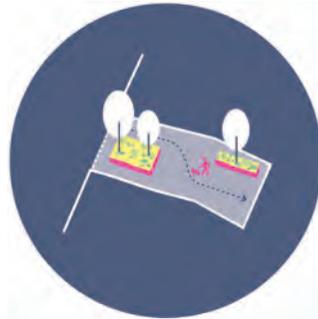
Barbican Street

Opportunities



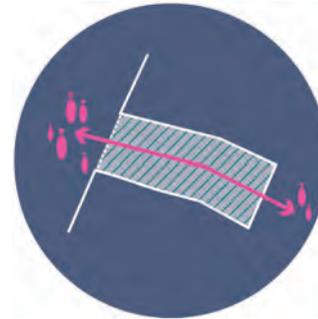
Green

Opportunity to introduce planting and greenery into the compact space whilst not restricting through movement.



Activation

Opportunity to introduce planters and street furniture to activate the space, with a focus on creating opportunities to rest, view local street art and interact with other members of the community.



Lighting

Opportunity to improve lighting and wayfinding to the car park and Wilmslow Road.



An example image of the type of street furniture that could be considered

Benefits

- The pocket space at the former junction of Barbican Street and Wilmslow Road which has now been closed off to vehicular traffic, is an important transitional space as many visitors to Withington Village access Wilmslow Road on foot from Gledhill Car Park and improvement to this area would have a beneficial impact on the conservation area.
- A well designed pocket space here could facilitate community interaction, and introduce places to rest and chat.

Challenges

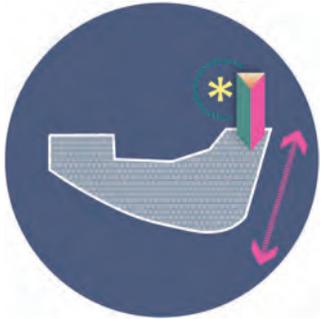
- Engagement with neighbouring units.



An example image of how a small space can accommodate seating and planting

Marriott Street/Wilmslow Road - opposite the Red Lion Inn (Grade II)

Opportunities



Enhance

Enhance pocket space through improvements to hardscape works. Street furniture/ materials could reference the significance of location to Withington and historic milestone opposite.



Feature

Retain existing tree as a feature of pocket space.



Rest

Incorporation of street furniture to act as marker or resting point on the walk from the south (The Christie Hospital) into the Village, and to appreciate the setting of the listed buildings in proximity



An example image of how street furniture could be set around an existing tree

Benefits

- Enhancements to setting of the listed building
- Contributes to defining a gateway into the conservation area and beyond from Wilmslow Road to the south
- Potentially could encourage people to walk into Withington village from the Christie, providing a visual link and opportunities to rest on the way.

Challenges

- Limitations because of the size of the space.



An example image of the type of street furniture that could be considered

3.F Gateways, Wayfinding, Street Furniture and Street Art



Streets and spaces



Sense of pride of place, celebrating heritage and identity.

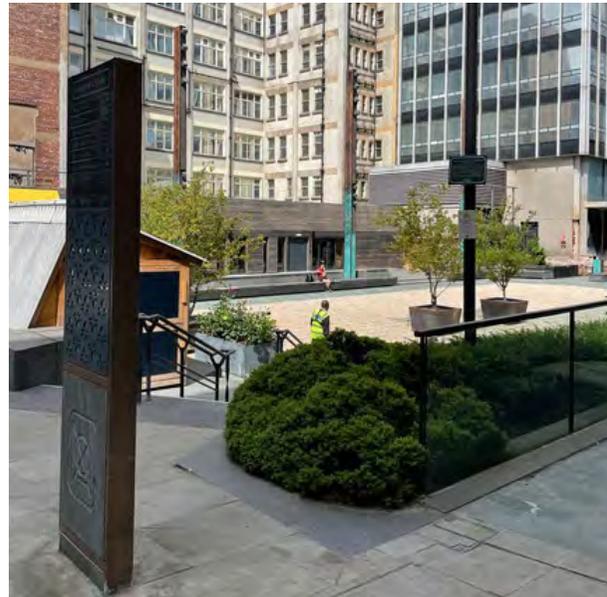


Opportunities

- Opportunities to announce arrival into the conservation area at strategic gateways by developing a bespoke piece of street furniture/art that signals the arrival gateway, reinforcing local identity.
- Opportunities to reference the Withington milestone in the design of street furniture, for example using the geometry or reinterpreting the milestone in a contemporary way.
- Opportunity to tell the story of Withington through the design of the public realm. For example through marker stones or embedding imagery or text into the design of the public realm.
- Opportunities for targeted areas of public art, for individual expression in appropriate areas to continue to express the culture and identity of Withington through locally commissioned street art or through local design competitions.
- Opportunities for street furniture to be multi-functional in use to avoid unnecessary street clutter.

Benefits

- Reinforces place identity
- Engages locals and visitors in the history of Withington and the conservation area.



An example image of totems which could be used to define gateways



An example image of totems which could be used to define gateways



Geometry of the Withington Milestone could be referenced in contemporary street furniture



Incorporation of targeted street art



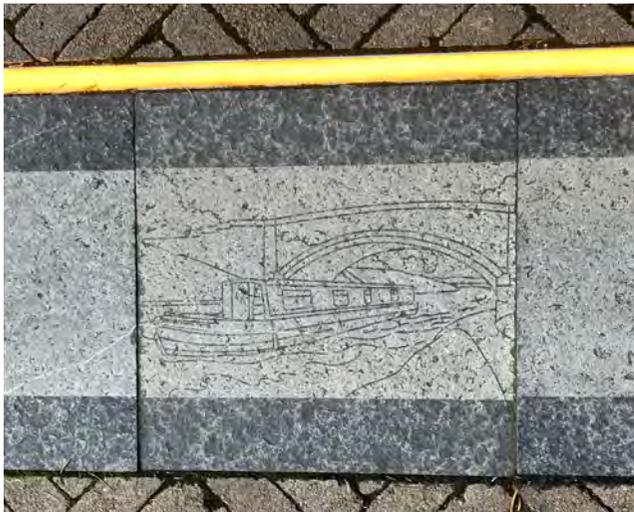
An example image of elements of public realm used to tell the story of the place



An example image of how place motifs can be integrated into street furniture



Targeted areas for curated street art



An example image of elements of public realm used to tell the story of the place



An example image of the types of street furniture that could be considered

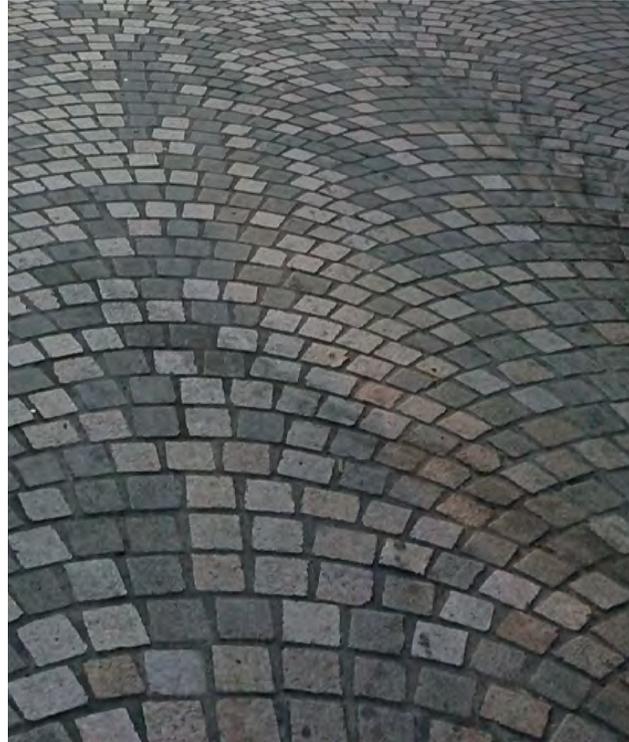


An example image of the types of street furniture that could be considered

4. Indicative Materials Palette



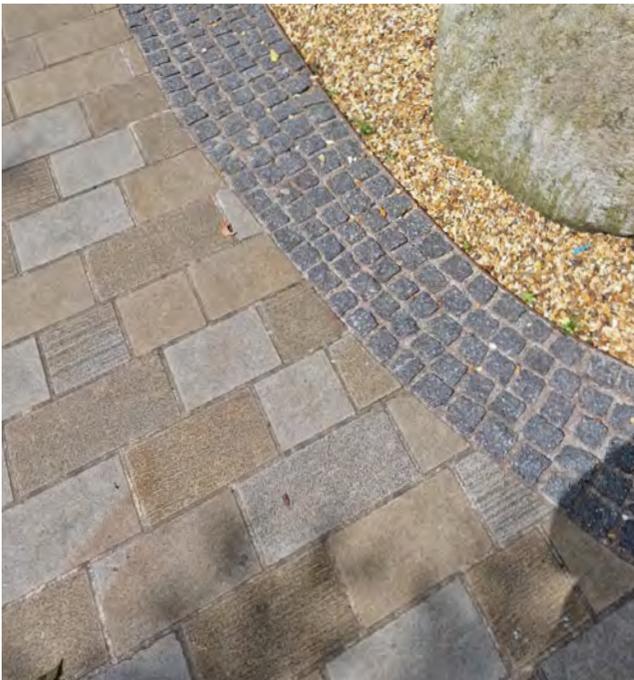
Use of cobbles for accent paving



Stone setts in radial pattern



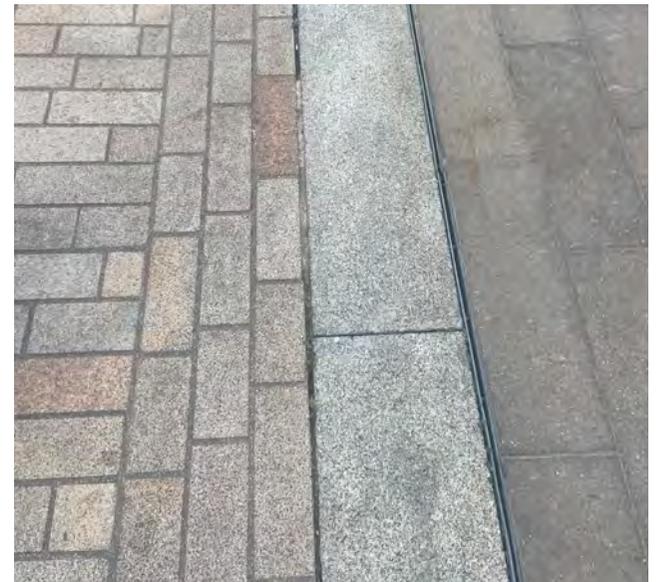
Pennant Sandstone - photo credit Hardscape



Pennant Sandstone - photo credit Hardscape



Cobble detailing to highlight features



Variation of paving sizes in natural stone to delineate different spaces



Use of feature paving in floorscape to reference heritage



Use of change of material/colour to define parking bays



Use of smaller setts as accent paving



Use of smaller setts as accent paving

The proposed materials palette for the conservation area will be high quality and should respond to the historic townscape of Withington and its identity. It takes inspiration from the historic materials still found in areas of the Conservation Area today and local materials such as Yorkstone cobbles, whilst blending this with the more recent artistic identity within the community.

Recommendations include:

- Use of high quality materials such as natural stone and sandstone and granite.
- Use of a variety of different size paving, such as setts, cobbles and flags within a consistent and complementary material palette, for coherence.
- Highlighting key buildings with areas of accent paving, particularly around heritage assets. Opportunity to use small setts or cobbles to reference historic streetscapes still intact in the Conservation Area.
- Using a variety of paving sizes along the streets to delineate different uses such as parking bays.
- Use of a threshold detail along the building edge, such as rows of setts.
- Use of granite kerbstones where appropriate
- Integrate vibrancy and art through a suite of furniture items. Opportunities include: Bold coloured items of furniture reflective of the more recent street art. Integrate artwork within the furniture and wayfinding, which reflects the heritage of the area.

ARRIVAL

FORMER WHITE LION PUB

WITHINGTON



Conservation Area

THE MILESTONE

4
Miles to Wilmslow
Miles to Manchester
to Centre of the Arts

ARRIVAL

Appendix I – Summary of Public Consultation

The following comments are captured from an online survey held in December 2023 whilst the supporting visuals are taken from a public consultation event held on 11 December 2023.

1. What is special to you about the village?

People have varied opinions and feelings about Withington Village, reflecting a mixture of positive and negative aspects.

Common positive elements include:

- **Community Feel:** Many appreciate the sense of community and the vibrant mix of people in Withington.
- **Local Businesses:** The variety of shops, independent businesses, and the retail offer are seen as positive aspects.
- **Historic and Architectural Features:** The mixture of old and new buildings and the historic significance and architectural merit are appreciated by some.
- **Proximity to Amenities:** The convenience and accessibility of amenities such as libraries, swimming pools, schools, and parks are highlighted.
- **Cultural and Recreational Facilities:** The presence of Withington Baths, local libraries, and community initiatives contribute to the positive aspects.
- **Transport Links:** Good bus services, Metro links into Manchester, and proximity to other areas contribute to the overall convenience.

However, some negative aspects mentioned include:

- **Negative Changes:** Some express disappointment with the changes in the village, such as an increase in takeaways, loss of amenities, and what is perceived as a decline in the area's overall character.
- **Traffic Issues:** Concerns about traffic congestion, fumes, and the impact of certain schemes are mentioned by some residents.
- **Loss of Identity:** Some feel that the village has lost its identity, due either to changes in the demographic or to urban planning decisions.
- **Perceived Decline:** A few express a sentiment that the village has seen better days and may have declined in its appeal.

Summary: It is clear that the village means different things to different people and that opinions are shaped by individual experiences and perspectives. The varying sentiments highlight the complex nature of community identity and the impact of changes over time.

2. Are there any issues which you think present a threat to its character and appearance?

The issues mentioned by residents pose significant threats to the character and appearance of Withington Village. Some key themes that emerge are:

Poor Aesthetic Maintenance:

- Lack of investment in the public realm, with issues including poorly laid tarmac, ugly benches and unattractive planters.
- Concerns about the appearance of shopfronts, signs and visual clutter, and the general care and maintenance of buildings.

Traffic and Parking Issues:

- Dominance of cars over pedestrians, with narrow pavements, unmanaged loading bays, and traffic congestion.
- Increased traffic due to road schemes, planters, and modal filters, causing pollution and inconvenience.

Decline in Variety of Shops:

- Frustration over the lack of variety in shops, with a dominance of takeaways, vape shops, and low-quality retail units.
- Desire for more independent shops and a broader range of amenities to attract diverse visitors.

Graffiti and Street Art:

- Concerns about graffiti and street art affecting the visual appeal of the village.
- Divergent opinions on the quality and appropriateness of street art, with some appreciating it and others finding it detrimental.

Safety Concerns:

- Perceived decline in safety, with references to feeling unsafe due to anti-social behaviour and muggings.
- Issues with cleanliness, litter, and a perceived general sense of neglect.

Commercial and Residential Developments:

- Criticisms of the proliferation of certain types of businesses, such as takeaways and e-cig shops.
- Concerns about the impact of commercial and residential developments on the village's character and heritage.

Enforcement and Planning Issues:

- Concern with the detracting impact of incremental interventions such as poor signage, unauthorised advertisements and inappropriate replacement windows.
- Calls for improved investment in public areas and enforcement actions towards preservation of listed buildings and heritage value.

Summary: it is clear that residents have strong opinions about the current state of Withington Village and the challenges it faces. Addressing these concerns may require collaboration between the City Council, local groups, businesses, and the community to find solutions that preserve the village's unique character whilst meeting the needs and preferences of its residents.

3. What are your priorities for improvement in the village?

The priorities for improvement in Withington Village, as highlighted by residents, can be summarised as follows:

Improved Public Realm:

- Investment in public spaces and art.
- Removal of detracting signage, advertising, and graffiti.
- Pedestrianisation of certain areas, like Copson Street.

Diverse and Quality Businesses:

- Attracting more independent and diverse shops.
- Protection and restoration of heritage character.
- Encouragement of responsible businesses that contribute positively to the community.

Cleanliness and Safety:

- Litter clearance and regular street cleaning.
- Safety improvements, including better lighting and pedestrian crossings.

Traffic Management:

- Reduction of traffic dominance, possibly through pedestrianisation and improved traffic flow.
- Consideration of the impact of road blocks, planters and traffic schemes on congestion and air quality.

Conservation:

- Preservation of heritage assets and architectural features.

- Enforcement of a shopfront design guide to maintain the historic character.

Community Engagement:

- Promotion of community events and spaces.
- Collaboration with the community to ensure that the village remains open and accessible to all.

Regulation and Enforcement:

- Stronger regulation of business types and practices.
- Enforcement of rules on shopfronts, signage, and commercial waste.

Traffic and Pollution Mitigation:

- Solutions to reduce traffic congestion and associated pollution.
- Consideration of alternative traffic management systems that do not negatively impact on residents.

Community Safety:

- Measures to address anti-social behaviour and improve overall safety.

Collaboration with Council:

- Collaboration with the council to address concerns and implement positive changes.
- Consideration of successful models from other areas, such as Lewisham Council's approach.

Promotion of Local Culture:

- Promotion of local culture and character through art and wall murals.
- Balancing modern elements with the preservation of Withington's unique identity.

Summary: It is evident that residents are passionate about maintaining the historic character of Withington Village whilst addressing contemporary challenges. A collaborative and holistic approach involving the local community, businesses, the City Council and local groups is crucial to achieving the desired improvements.

4. What do you think Withington should be in 2030?

The aspirations for Withington Village in 2030, as expressed by residents, can be summarised as follows:

Vibrancy and Attractiveness:

- A vibrant and attractive area that people want to live in and visit.
- A hub for cafes, businesses, and community activities, encouraging growth and development.

Community Focus:

- A neighbourhood with a strong sense of community innovation and independence.
- Inclusive, diverse, and family-friendly, with community activities and events.

Respect for Heritage:

- Smarter and more respectful of heritage, preserving historic architecture.
- Balancing modern elements with the preservation of Withington's unique identity.

Tourist Attraction:

- A tourist attraction with wall art, history tours, and a place on the Tourist Map for visitors to Manchester.

Quality of Life:

- A clean, safe, and habitable village with well-maintained public spaces.
- A pleasant, safe, and desirable place to live, attracting families and young professionals.

Cultural Hub:

- A valued person-centred hub focused on local amenities, culture, and community.
- A place full of local businesses and services that are accessible to all.

Environmental Considerations:

- Greener areas, more trees, and cleaner, tidier, and pedestrianised spaces.
- Reduction in pollution, possibly by addressing traffic congestion and encouraging alternative transport.

Commercial Diversity:

- A mix of diverse shops, eateries and independent businesses.
- Fewer pound shops, takeaways and vape shops, with a focus on quality offerings.

Balanced Growth:

- Sustainable development that balances the needs of families, students and different income groups.
- Affordable housing options and support for local charities that contribute to community welfare.

Safety and Accessibility:

- Improved safety measures, including the presence of police and well-lit areas.
- Accessibility for everyone, including cyclists, pedestrians, and those with disabilities.

Traffic Management:

- Consideration of the impact of road closures, planters, and traffic schemes on congestion and accessibility.

- Balanced traffic policies that accommodate both cars and pedestrians.

Civic Pride:

- A place that residents are proud to call home, with a clean, smart appearance.
- Preservation of historic character and proper maintenance of buildings.

Cultural Promotion:

- Promotion of local culture through art, history tours and community engagement.
- Wall art and other cultural elements that make Withington a distinctive destination.

Learning from Other Areas:

- Learning from successful models like Didsbury and Chorlton, with a focus on their positive aspects.
- Emphasis on maintaining a unique identity rather than following trends.

Summary: it is evident that residents envision a Withington Village that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also inclusive, sustainable, and economically vibrant. A balance between growth and preservation, along with community engagement, is seen as key to achieving these aspirations.

Donald Insall Associates