

## LANCASHIRE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

## ANCIENT & POST-MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT

### Definition:

Settlement that was established by c AD1850. Many of today's rural settlements have not expanded significantly since the mapping of the 1850s while the majority of the present day urban settlements developed after this time and are therefore **Modern** Settlement. Exceptions include Lancaster, Preston and Blackburn. Only the larger nucleated settlements have been included within this HLC type, the remainder being attributes of other HLC types such as **Ancient Enclosure** and **Post-Medieval Enclosure**.

### Typical historical and archaeological components

The archaeological components of the **Ancient & Post-Medieval Settlement** HLC type include a wide range of buildings, open space and the course of the road systems and public rights of way. The majority of the extant buildings are post-medieval or modern in date, with the notable exception of the churches, but the type still maintains a diversity of function, materials, form and period. By contrast the building plots, tenement boundaries, open areas and lanes may all date to the medieval period, or earlier. Most **Ancient & Post-Medieval Settlement** may contain rich sub-surface remains that could be disturbed by new development.

### Enhancing and safeguarding the type

- Guidance on the historic urban environment has been broken down into three interrelated parts. These comprise historic buildings and structures, below-ground archaeological deposits and the general historic character of settlements. More detail on each of these components of the historic environment will be included in the strategy resulting from the Lancashire Historic Towns Survey, carried out by Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy in partnership with English Heritage and the Lancashire local authorities. This guidance provides a strategic framework within which that advice is nested.
- *Historic buildings and structures.* A large proportion of the key historic buildings and structures located within the **Ancient & Post Medieval Settlement** HLC type will be either listed or within conservation areas, and therefore afforded additional protection through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Such buildings and structures should be viewed as assets and potential catalysts for heritage-led regeneration. Proposals that affect either listed structures or those within conservation areas should be accompanied by an appropriately detailed assessment of the impact of those proposals upon the historic interest of the structure. The presumption in favour of the preservation and enhancement of listed buildings, or others integral to the character of a conservation area, is reiterated through their designation and their position within Lancashire's hierarchy of designations (draft Joint Structure Plan, 2002, Policy 21). Consideration should also be given to identifying locally important historic structures and buildings (through the Lancashire Historic Towns Survey, Local Lists, or identification in Parish Plans, Village Design Statements or Town Strategies) in order that individual sites of local significance can be properly assessed as a part of proposals for change.
- *Below-ground archaeological deposits.* The **Ancient & Post-Medieval Settlement** type will, in the majority of cases, contain the most significant below-ground archaeological deposits of the urban types (and many others). Such significance is often a result of the concentration of human activity, increased evidence for time depth, evidence for higher levels of specialisation (resulting from a centralised hierarchical function), greater varieties of activities and a greater range of social types, roles and functions. Evidence within the type will take the form of both an earlier urban activity and its rural

predecessor. Given that the historic core of most settlements still corresponds with the modern core, it is also a type within which there is a rapid rate of development (in terms of turn-over and demand), often on a large scale. Such dynamism, through modern commercial, industrial or service activities, has the potential for significant detrimental impact upon below-ground archaeological remains. Recommendations for mitigation can be broken down into three management areas defined by the Lancashire Historic Towns Survey:

- ✓ *Scheduled monument.* This included any monument that is included in the Schedule as defined in the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979* (1979 c.46) amended by the *National Heritage Act 1983* (1983 c.47). Responsibility for these rests with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister who are advised by English Heritage. The Lancashire Archaeology and Heritage Service will work with them regarding any proposals within these areas. Scheduled monuments are of national importance, and the PPG16 (DoE 1990) presumption is in favour of preservation *in situ*.
- ✓ Areas of archaeological potential. This includes areas of the historic town. Development proposals within this area will be treated in accordance with PPG16 (DoE 1990) or PPG15 (DoE & DNH 1994), using the Historic Town Assessment Report as the basis for the archaeological appraisal of the site and recommendations made as a result.
- ✓ Areas of archaeological destruction. Within the historic town extent but known to contain no surviving archaeological remains. No archaeological recommendations required.
- *Maintaining Urban Character.* The towns of Lancashire are a unique, distinct and irreplaceable asset representing the investment of centuries of skills and resources. The need for change within towns is both desirable and necessary – indeed the diverse character of the urban historic environment is the product of such change in the past. Government policies and approaches to national and regional regeneration, and the brownfield agenda, will ensure increased pressure for change within urban areas. But such change should take place in the context of the historic environment in order to maintain historic character, to protect the best of the past and to afford the opportunity for heritage-led regeneration.
- In order to maintain and enhance the distinctive historic character of Lancashire's towns, development and other proposals for change should have due regard to the historic dimension of:
  - ✓ local distinctiveness,
  - ✓ the layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces,
  - ✓ the quality and character of the built fabric, and
  - ✓ historic patterns and attributes of the landscape.
- In order to do so proposals should acknowledge and respect the following broad principles:
  - ✓ Lancashire has a diverse and locally distinct range of townscapes. These are all a product of the past and vary because of different local styles, industries, personalities and materials.
  - ✓ Townscape is important: it gives people and places an identity and a significance. It gives localities their distinctive character and marks their individuality. It enhances quality of life and provides a sense of belonging.
  - ✓ Change is inevitable and desirable, but needs to be managed in order to preserve that which is valued.
  - ✓ Proposals for change on a townscape scale should include an assessment of the existing (historic) character of an area and its surrounds, and an assessment of the impact of proposals upon such character. A strategic framework for this assessment will be in place through the county-wide historic towns survey carried out by Lancashire County Council in partnership with English

Heritage and the Lancashire local authorities (the Lancashire Historic Towns Survey). More detailed local studies, such as Conservation Area Appraisals, town studies or area masterplanning, may also already be in place.

- ✓ Where there exists a high quality historic townscape, then consideration should be weighted towards heritage-led regeneration and renewal by refurbishment and restoration.
- ✓ Where the heritage-led regeneration option is not taken, and renewal takes place through either major site redevelopment or housing clearance, then proposals should contribute positively to the character of urban landscape, and enhance local distinctiveness.
- ✓ Neither approach precludes new design or innovation; indeed both encourage innovation within a regionally and locally sympathetic framework.
- More specific strategic guidance within the **Ancient & Post-medieval Settlement** HLC type relates to the preservation and enhancement of key attributes of local historic distinctiveness, in particular the street pattern, principal townscape vistas and buildings and use of materials. Given the visible time-depth apparent in most historic town centres these will almost certainly include both local variety (of materials, scale, forms and functions) and seeming irregularity (of plots and street-pattern).