



Whitegate and Marton *Village Design Statement*

Adopted by Vale Royal Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance



What is a Village Design Statement?

The purpose of a Village Design Statement is to manage change in both buildings and landscape, whether large or small or simply additions and alterations, in a way which reflects and harmonises with the local character of its buildings, spaces and landscape setting.

It is not about whether or not development should take place, that is a job for the Local Plan. It is not meant to, and will not stop development and change from happening, but it will help to influence how a new development fits into the village by setting out the qualities and characteristics that people value in their village and its surroundings, and by providing clear and simple guidance for the design of all development.

The Local Plan is the Vale Royal Borough Local Plan approved by the Borough Council in June 2001. This establishes broad policies and guidelines for the location of new development and general design criteria in the interests of good planning.

The Whitegate and Marton Village Design Statement, (VDS) sets out localised guidance within this broader framework.

The Village Design Statement for Whitegate and Marton has been agreed by the parish council and approved by the Borough Council and forms what is called Supplementary Planning Guidance sitting side by side with Vale Royal Borough Local Plan as an aid for development control.

The arms shown on the cover are those of the Abbots of Vale Royal Abbey

Who should use the Village Design Statement?

The Village Design Statement has been written for:-

- Developers, their architects and designers in order to explain what the village community would reasonably expect to see in new development so that they can incorporate them in their planning applications.
- Residents, giving guidance to enable alterations and extensions to harmonise with and respect the character of the village area.
- Anybody else who wishes to promote some form of development or alteration in the Whitegate and Marton VDS area, including local authorities and statutory undertakers.

- Councillors and Development Control Officers at the Borough Council to guide their consideration of relevant planning applications.

Compliance with the guidance of the VDS does not remove the obligation where necessary to seek planning permission for new development from the Local Planning Authority.

How has the Statement evolved?

The Whitegate and Marton Village Design Statement is not unique. There are others, but not many, and the Whitegate and Marton VDS originated through the desire of local residents in the Community Projects Group to raise everyone's awareness of what is so special about Whitegate and Marton, so that its character and tradition could be maintained.

Through public meetings, a "workshop" day, discussions and responses to a questionnaire, further consultations and an exhibition, all villagers as far as we are aware, have been consulted and many have expressed their views, some participating in drafting out the various sections of this VDS, so that it truly represents the views of the villagers based on their local knowledge and experience.

What area does the VDS cover?

The VDS area extends to approximately 17km², with a population of about 1000, its boundaries coincidental with those of the Parish of Whitegate and Marton. It lies immediately to the north west of Winsford and to the south west of Hartford and Northwich. It is bounded by A556, Manchester – Chester road to the north, the River Weaver to the east, Shays Lane Brook and A54, Winsford Road, to the south and by A49 Warrington Road to the west (See O.S. Map left)



The Parish Church of St Mary, Whitegate

The Landscape Setting

The scattered spread of individual buildings and small settlements is interwoven with a rich and varied landscape of considerable beauty, from fairly flat farmland in the south to the more varied and interesting landscape which lies around Whitegate village. This landscape includes farmland, woods and coppices, lakes, streams, pools and mosses set in and around undulating hills and valleys.

East of Whitegate Lane the landscape has a parkland appearance reflecting the character of the former Vale Royal Abbey Estate, with farmland, golf course and tree lined watercourses all falling down to the attractive valley of the River Weaver.

To the north and west of the Parish large tracts of woodland dominate the landscape with the central and southern parts of the Parish characterised by fields and hedgerow around country lanes. West of Marton the fields are larger and the landscape more open as a result. Between Marton and Whitegate the field pattern is on a smaller, more intimate scale.

Throughout this varied landscape there are to be found many large areas of water, some historical, such as Rookery Pool, New Pool and Petty Pool, original fishing waters for the former Vale Royal Abbey, others of later origin, mainly comprising water filled former sand quarries such as the extensive lakes around New Church Common and Nunsmere Hall Hotel, or created by former brine subsidence such as Marton Hole and Sixes Pool.

These water features combine with the woodland, farmland and parkland areas to form a landscape of distinctive and delightful character, which reaches into all the settlements within the Parish, giving almost every dwelling a direct view over attractive open countryside.

Close access to it is provided by a network of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, most notably Whitegate Way, a disused railway line linking the village of Cuddington to the north with Winsford to the south, passing through the middle of the Parish, with access to it for walkers, cyclists and horses at various points.

The Vale Royal Borough Local Plan shows the whole of this area as Open Countryside where there are strict policies which control development.

The Weaver Valley and its immediate environs are designated as Areas of Special County Value (ASCV) for their high landscape quality. Within the VDS area, particularly between Sandiway and Whitegate village, there are attractive areas of woodland and lakeland, some of ancient origin, and some of which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and Sites of Biological Interest (SBI) in the Local Plan.

This part of the VDS area is therefore not only attractive but also ecologically rich and much treasured by local people. At the first opportunity villagers would very much like this landscape to be considered for designation in the Local Plan as an Area of Significant Local Environmental Value (ASLEV).

Petty Pool and many of the other lakes and ponds within the parish are used for recreational fishing. They are also home to various species of flora and fauna, as are also the many areas of woodland and copse which form wildlife corridors, giving cover and continuity for wildlife, particularly the larger forestry areas around Petty Pool, Abbots Moss, Sherratts Rough and the wooded slopes of the Weaver Valley.

Vale Royal Abbey Great House in what was Vale Royal Park, which is now Vale Royal Abbey Golf Course, demands an appropriate landscape setting, particularly because of its proximity to the Weaver River Valley environment (ASCV and SBI).

Guidelines

Any new developments should:-

- **Be of a size so as not to significantly increase the size of the settlements any further.**
- **Not detract from the open rural character that exists throughout the Parish.**
- **Ensure that important public views of open countryside are maintained.**
- **Not detract visually from the setting of the numerous forest, lakeland and river valley areas.**
- **Not compromise the attractive setting of Vale Royal Abbey Great House.**

continued opposite

- Respect the traditional farm landscape with its pattern of tree and hedgerow which should be maintained.
- Respect the character, architectural styles and the traditional materials of existing dwellings.



Petty Pool brook SBI



Rookery Pool SBI



The valley behind the Recreation Room possibly caused by brine subsidence centuries ago



The Beeches Crossroads



SSSI Moss near Abbotts Moss



Public footpaths abound in the area.

The Settlement Pattern

Whitegate and Marton is a very rural parish and the settlements within it, including Whitegate village, are all relatively small. Whitegate village is the largest of the settlements and most of the roads and country lanes in the Parish lead to it. Marton comprises a number of small hamlets such as Nova Scotia, Marton Green and Marton Sands, which are located to the west and south of Whitegate village with Foxwist Green, another small hamlet with medieval origins in between. Two long rows of substantial detached houses straddle Dalefords Lane at the northern end of the parish.

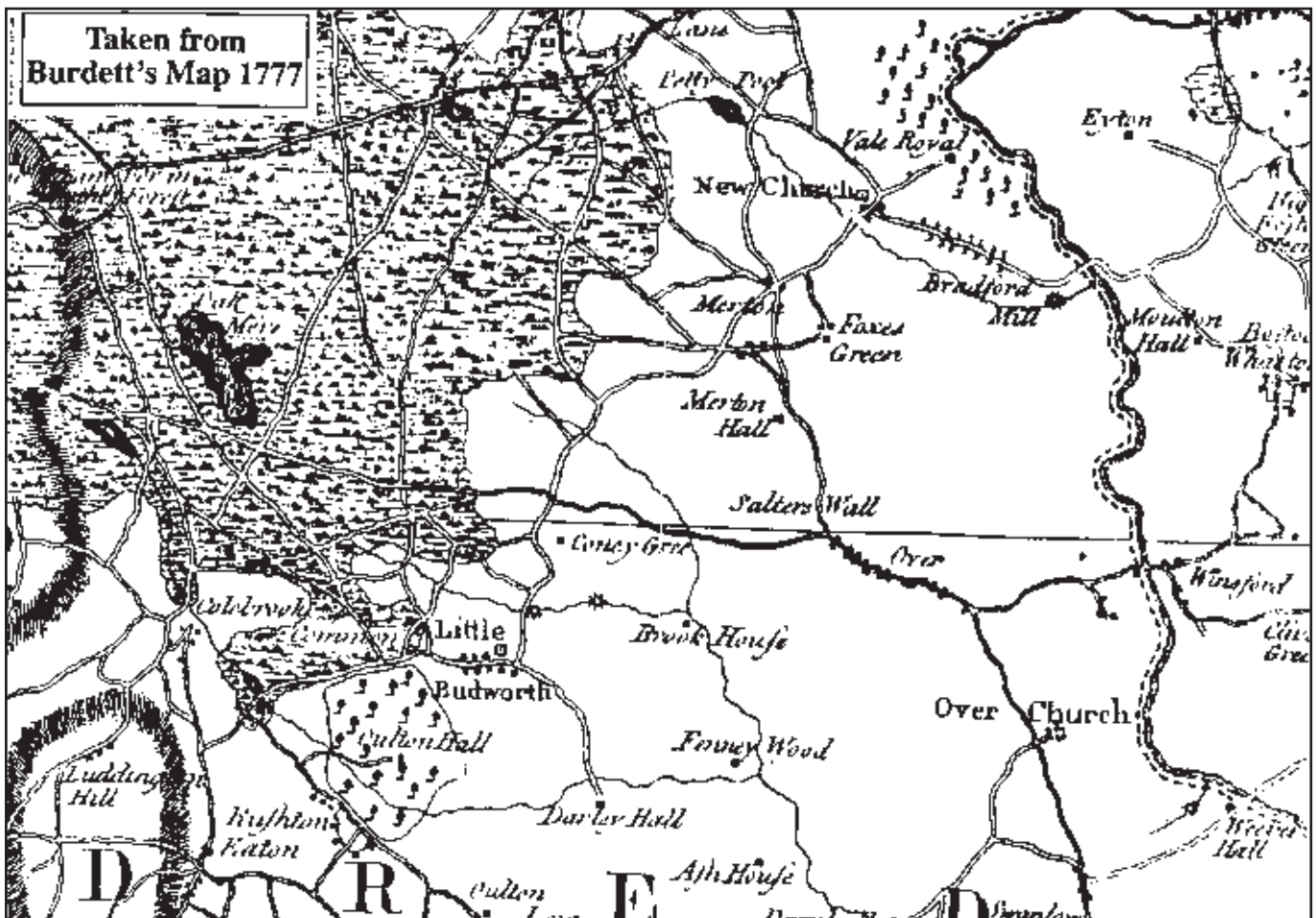
Outside these settlements there are many farmhouses and single properties spread fairly evenly throughout the area. There are also a number of large mansion houses spread throughout the Parish, some of which have been converted to other uses, such as Nunsmere Hall, now a hotel, Daleford Manor, converted into flats and apartments, Abbots Moss, still a substantial country house and, most importantly, the Great House situated on the site of Vale Royal Abbey, a former Cistercian monastery. The Great House has been converted in recent years, half of it as a clubhouse for

Vale Royal Abbey Golf Course, the other half converted into luxury apartments.

Whitegate village developed along Grange Lane and the road parallel to it, Sutton Field, with a variety of house styles of mainly traditional design. Away from Whitegate village the settlement has grown in ribbon form along the roads which lead from the village. Over the years the density of housing in these areas has increased by infilling between existing properties and by the division of gardens to create building plots.

Developments in recent times comprise the Paddocks, Marton, consisting of about a dozen large modern style bungalows on the site of former institutional buildings; a development of 9 sizeable detached homes at Cassia Green on the site of former commercial premises and most notably, the development of 50 new houses, many of considerable size adjacent to the recently constructed Vale Royal Abbey golf course alongside a new road, St Mary's Drive, linking the Great House with Whitegate Lane.

The overall settlement pattern is one of rural spaciousness and small developments, all enjoying many views across a very attractive landscape.



Whitegate was called New Church for some time after the rebuilding of the Parish Church in 1728.

The Historical Context

Whitegate and Marton emerged in the thirteenth century as satellite settlements to the Cistercian Vale Royal Abbey, founded by Edward 1 in 1277.

The King named the site Vallis Regalis (Vale Royal) and declared it to be 'the fairest vale in all England'.

The monks possibly established a small wooden chapel for tenants just outside the "white gates" to the monastic settlement and the present St Mary's Church on the Church Green is the result of several rebuildings over the last seven centuries.

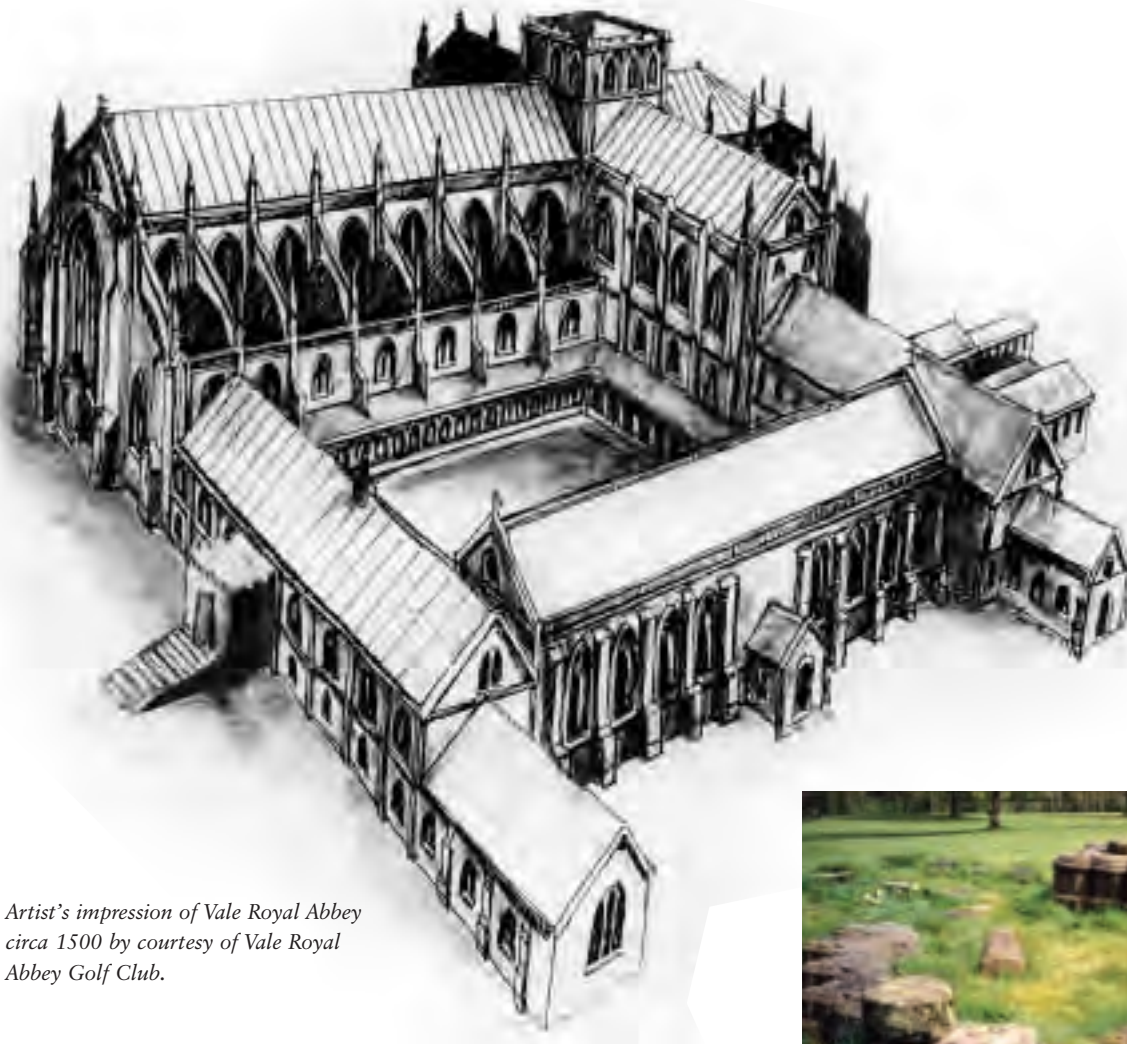
Vale Royal Abbey, the largest Cistercian abbey in the land, was administered by 21 abbots from 1270-1535 and was demolished by Henry VIII at the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538.

Thomas Holcroft was charged with 'plucking down' the buildings and did it extremely thoroughly, though retaining enough timber and brickwork to build himself Vale Royal Great House alongside the ruins.

He sold this in 1616 to Lady Mary Cholmondeley and the Great House became the Cholmondeley's family seat, the estate growing to some 5,000 acres and 86 farms, until 1931 when Thomas Cholmondeley, the fourth Baron Delamere, left to settle in Kenya.

Since then the Great House, with its 80 rooms, has served many short lived functions until 1995 when exceptionally, planning permission was granted to develop the house and grounds for a golf course and clubhouse and to build 50 substantial homes alongside a new St Mary's Drive. This was the last major development in the village.

For some 200 years villagers were tenants of the feudal Vale Royal abbots and afterwards tenants of the Cholmondeleys/Delameres for 300 years. This distinctive history has shaped the topography of the area and accounts for the score or more of listed buildings and for the extensive woodlands and waters to be found in the parish, all of which were once owned by extremely wealthy landowners.



Artist's impression of Vale Royal Abbey circa 1500 by courtesy of Vale Royal Abbey Golf Club.

All that is visible now is the stone which reputedly marks the site of the High Altar



A rich architectural heritage

Whitegate and Marton has a rich architectural heritage, of which villagers are proud and which they want to protect. To appreciate this perhaps the best way of approaching the village is from the direction of the A556 travelling along Whitegate Lane, using various listed buildings as stepping stones from the past to the present. As the sketch map opposite shows, most are located along the 'spine' of the village and a schedule of all 25 listed buildings in Whitegate and Marton is appended.

Adopting this linear approach the first listed building is **Monkey Lodge (1)**, which was built in 1814 as a lodge to Vale Royal Great House. Its name derives from a plaster bas-relief of a monkey among its many ornate panels.

The next building on the linear approach is **The Old Vicarage (2)**. This is a black and white house of brick and timber construction built in 1878 to the design of the acclaimed architect, John Douglas.

Opposite the Lodge, a listed building at the entrance to the old Vale Royal Drive, is the Grade II listed **Parish Church of St Mary (3)** of which the first recorded mention is in 1540. It was rebuilt in 1728 in classical style and again in 1875, in the Victorian vogue for rebuilding, also to the design of architect John Douglas.

Whitegate House (4) was built in 1700 and was known as the Rifleman Inn until it lost its licence in 1870 following objections by Lady Delamere to the 'unseemly behaviour on the Green'. It has since then been occupied as a house. **The Mews (5)** was built as a stable block and coach house for Whitegate House and was used by the extensive Delamere family living in the vicinity.

The two thatched cottages, **Hamlett's House** with the erratic boulder on the corner of Grange Lane and the adjoining **Whitegate Cottage (6)**, served many purposes since their construction around 1650, including a boys' school, tailor's shop, doctor's house and sweet shop.

Most of the dwellings along Grange Lane, the start of Mill Lane, the Sutton Field Estate and those in the old Vale Royal Drive are of relatively recent construction, dating from the 1950s. Carrying on past the new Vicarage and up Cinder Hill between a parade of lime trees, one arrives at what until recently was the Village Post Office with the adjoining thatched **Old Post Office (7)** built around 1650 to house farm workers.

It became the Village Post Office in 1914 and served the community until the 1950s when the new Post Office was built. The communal bake-house was

located next to the old Post Office, the cinders from which were used to surface 'Cinder Hill' to give horses a better grip.

Next we reach 'The Beeches' crossroads, the hub of the road system and now lacking a number of the fine old beech trees felled due to disease. However, a striking example of a genuine historic 'magpie' building, **'Rivendell' (8)**, stands here in Clay Lane. Originally built in the late 17th century as a farmhouse with shippon for cattle under one roof, it was carefully reconstructed in 1970 and is yet another of the Parish's many Grade II listed buildings.

Continuing along Clay Lane one comes to **Friarstone (9)**, which was once the stables and smithy belonging to a small estate centred on a residence of the Delamere family. The estate laundry was housed in Pear Tree Cottage and the gardener's bothy at Garden Cottage.

Off the linear route at the end of Mill Lane is the ancient **Bradford Mill (10)**. A water mill on the site of Bradford Mill is mentioned in Vale Royal Abbey records of 1283 and 16th century records show at least four mills working at Bradford. In 1690 iron smelting was carried out there for several years before it reverted to a corn mill until the mid-1930s. It was converted for residential use in 1968.

Last, but by no means least, is **Vale Royal Great House (11)**. As mentioned earlier, many alterations were made to the Great House over the 320 years of the Cholmondeleys'/Delameres' tenure. During the Civil War (1642-1648) the Royalist house was occupied and plundered by Cromwell's troops, who burnt down the south wing.

Its appearance today owes much to the work carried out by the architects, Edward Blore, employed by the first Lord Delamere and John Douglas, employed by the second between 1810 and 1870. The Great House's Grade II* listing is due to its mediaeval core which is regarded as particularly important, rather than its Victorian shell.

New development should respect historic Whitegate village, its Conservation Area, its listed buildings and their setting.

Outside Whitegate village and the smaller hamlets the Parish is largely a farming community.

Perhaps the most significant change in the landscape has occurred as a result of extensive sand quarrying, particularly in the western part of the Parish where extraction sites have subsequently been water filled to create lakes. The various quarrying operations have however ravaged the local landscape over the many years of activity.



This is an artist's impression in which the listed buildings shown have been re-orientated and enlarged to show their architectural features

Villagers feel that sand extraction in the Parish Council area should be resisted if it is likely to give rise to visual and ecological harm to the environment and noise, dust and traffic.

The other significant change in the landscape has been the creation of Vale Royal Abbey Golf Course. This is pleasant and attractively set but bordered on its length by a ribbon development of 50 large houses lining the new St Mary's Drive up to the golf clubhouse. These were permitted as an "enabling development" to fund the restoration of the Grade II* listed Vale Royal Great House. Building started in 1998 and has been completed but it will take many years before planting will soften the harsh outline of this recent addition to the village, particularly prominent from the approach to the village along Whitegate Lane.

The character of the Area

The character of the parish of Whitegate and Marton is very much influenced by its history as a great country estate. Few properties were built that did not have some connection with the estate. The original estate buildings tend to form hamlets where farm workers, domestic servants or craftsmen were housed close to their place of work.

The administrative core of the estate was centred in Whitegate outside the main gates of the old Vale Royal Drive. This consisted of the Estate Office, the School, the Church, the Mews, Whitegate House and Whitegate Cottages, many of which have had various uses over the years and surround the Green which still forms the central landscape feature of the village.

The power base, however was Vale Royal Great House itself which, together with its coach house, stables and accommodation for domestic servants formed a hamlet of its own within its parkland setting.

Agricultural land extends into the heart of the village and most houses are adjacent to open countryside, which is easily accessible due to the historic network of public footpaths. This means that the population is in close contact with nature and rural activities, which adds greatly to the quality of life and should be respected in any new development.

The character of the area is enhanced by many fine views around the village (See map right), particularly:-

- A. *The Church and Whitegate village against the backdrop of mature trees as seen from Cinder Hill and surrounding fields and woodland.*
- B. *The recent Post Office and Old Post Office when travelling up Cinder Hill.*
- C. *Views across the open fields and a valley behind the Recreation Room, where several historic half-timbered cottages are set in rolling pastureland.*

- D. *From the north end of the churchyard a fine view of New Pool and the Old Vicarage, despite the unkempt appearance of the fisherman's car park and the row of electricity poles across the field.*
- E. *Views of Vale Royal Great House from all directions. Although the building of the new housing and golf course has intruded on some of these views, further development should not be allowed to compromise this area.*
- F. *Looking down the avenue of old beech trees of Vale Royal Drive towards the village gives a great sense of place; the terminal view is of the lychgate and east window of the Church framed amongst the trees.*
- G. *From the junction of Grange Lane and Whitegate Lane a splendid view of the heart of Whitegate unfolds, which must be the signature view of the village. Across the Church green from the Mews to the grassy bank which slopes up to the white gates of the Church, the Church itself with its yew trees and lychgate and, finally, Lodge Cottage seen through the arch of beech trees on the apex of the bend in the road.*

Travelling along Dalefords Lane from Sandiway as one enters Marton, the view along the road is most appealing. The houses are set well back and the mature trees at the roadside create a natural tunnel as they form a canopy overhead.

Guideline

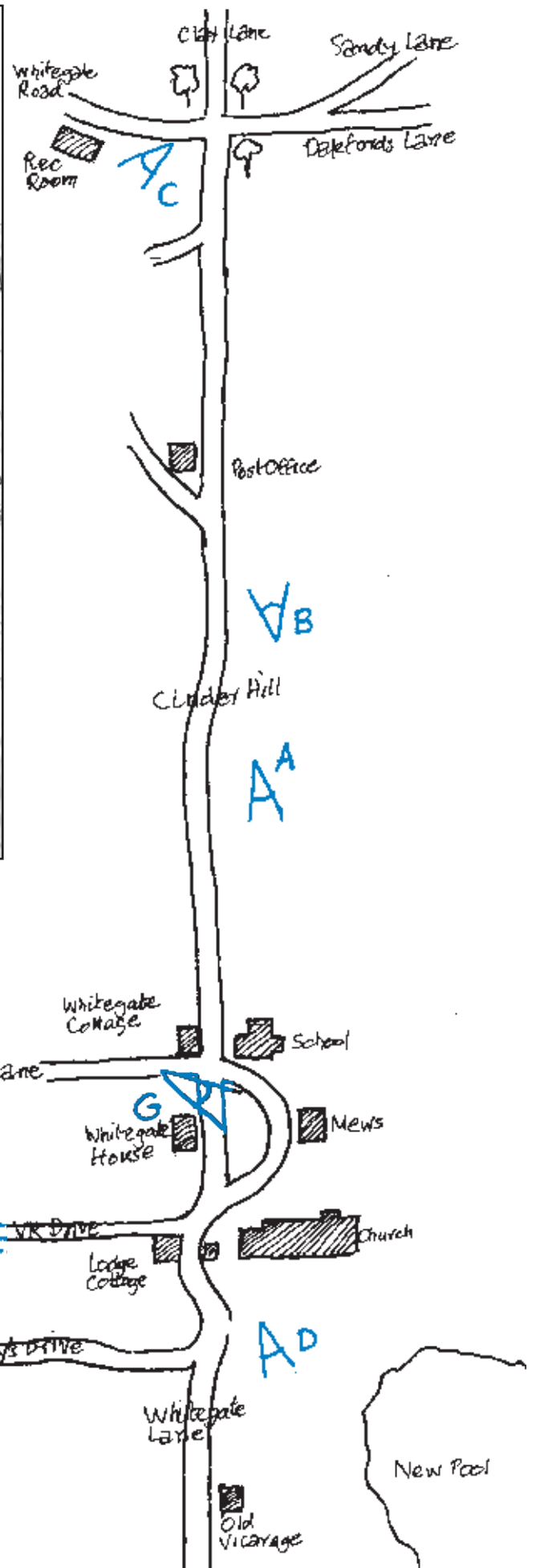
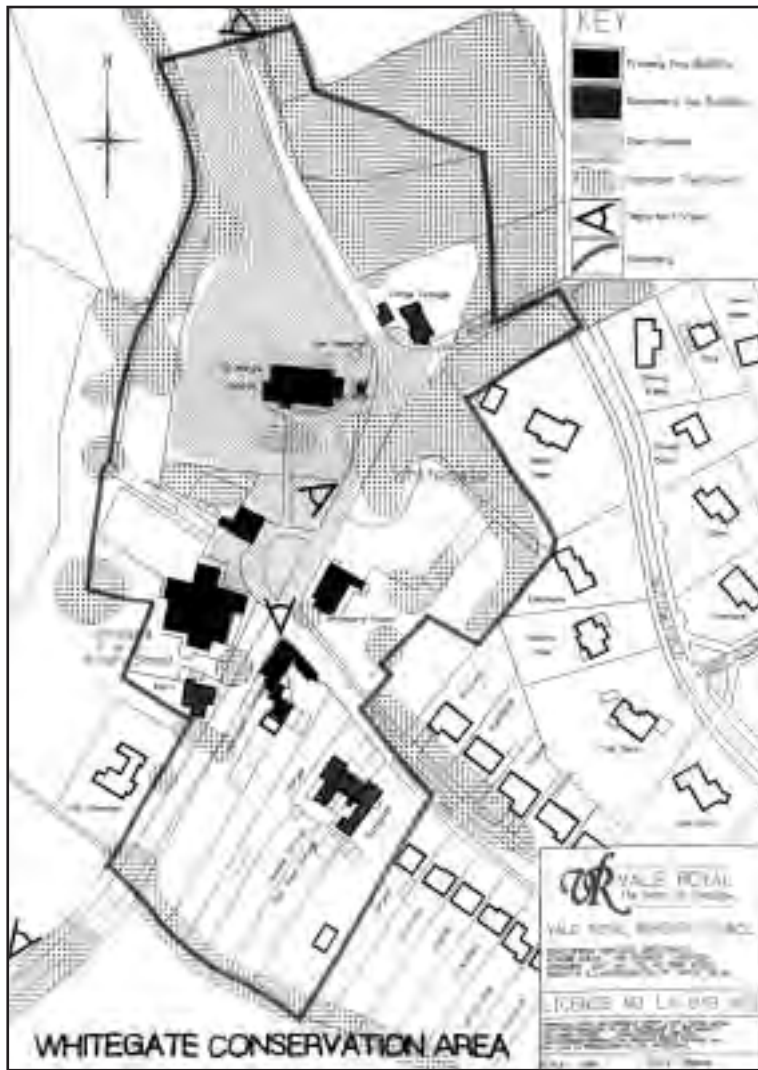
Any new developments should not spoil these fine views and others throughout the parish

The Conservation Area

Much of the centre of Whitegate lies within a Conservation Area that was originally designated by Cheshire County Council in 1974 and whose boundary was revised in 1998 (Map). This also Comprises Supplementary Planning Guidance many of the listed buildings in Whitegate and Marton are located within the Conservation Area.

The primary key buildings are the Church of St Mary, the School and Mews, Whitegate House and the timber framed thatched cottages. These buildings surround the Green and the grassy bank rising up to the churchyard wall. They are well spaced and apart from Whitegate House, have low rooflines providing an open airy feel to this important central area.

Other important buildings within the area are the Church lychgate, Lodge Cottage at the entrance to Vale Royal Drive and the four houses at the start of Grange Lane built in 1840 for estate employees.



Architectural Style

Buildings

Many building styles can be found in the area as the architecture has evolved over the centuries. However because until 1930 the entirety was under the control of a rich landowner, they tend to be interesting structures that are well designed and constructed from high quality materials which have lasted well. This gives the area its unique identity, with key design details linking the overall feel of the buildings and which provide useful references for the design of new houses, or the modification and extension of existing buildings.

The nature of the older structures in the area is one of low density, traditional rural designs, constructed using local materials. They range from timber framed thatched cottages built to house farm workers, to large mansions with slate roofs originally occupied by members of the Cholmondeley family. All these buildings are sparsely spread over a wide area including such fine examples as Bradford Mill, Marton House Farmhouse, Abbots Moss and Daleford Manor.

Latterday owners of Vale Royal House have continued to influence the development of the village long after Lord Delamere's departure. During ICI's days as proprietors, houses of various styles were built along Vale Royal Drive, Sutton Field, Abbey Close and some along Dalefords Lane, mostly occupied by many of their managers. Those on Vale Royal Drive, Sutton Field and Abbey Close are an obvious creation of the 1950s. Those on Dalefords Lane were built generally between the 1930s and 1950s with one or two later infill plots.

In more recent times private developers have also built houses along Grange Lane, The Paddocks estate and on individual plots throughout the area. Unfortunately many of these properties fail to make any reference to local character, in design, layout or materials used and many have large windows and integral garage doors that dominate their frontal aspect.

With regard to the 50 houses leading up to Vale Royal Abbey Great House efforts were made to reflect local character in the house designs, but a wider variety of building materials could have been included. A few houses could have been rendered and painted white, some windows could have had leaded lights and roofing materials could have included slate or even some thatch, thus breaking up the mass of red brick and tile that was used on all properties. The development would then have appeared more organic and in keeping with its surroundings.

Council housing has been built at Beauty Bank and Sandy Lane which, like most council housing

throughout the country, is to standard pattern and lacks harmony with its surroundings. Some of these properties are now owner occupied and attempts have been made to personalise them, which does not always harmonise with neighbouring properties or the street scene.

A few modern bungalows, built to house farm workers, have appeared in the open countryside alongside old farms. These developments look out of place as they do not reflect the style of the original farm buildings with which they are associated. However, barn conversions when done sympathetically, can utilise and improve otherwise unused property.

Building Materials and Design Details

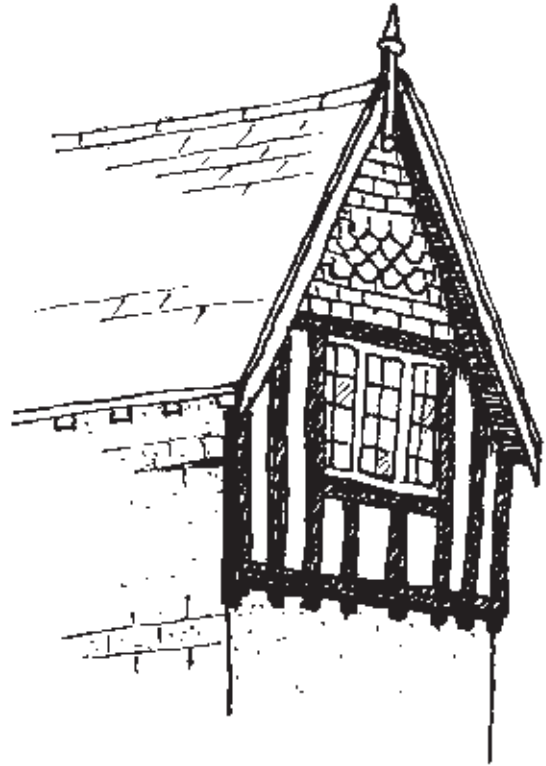
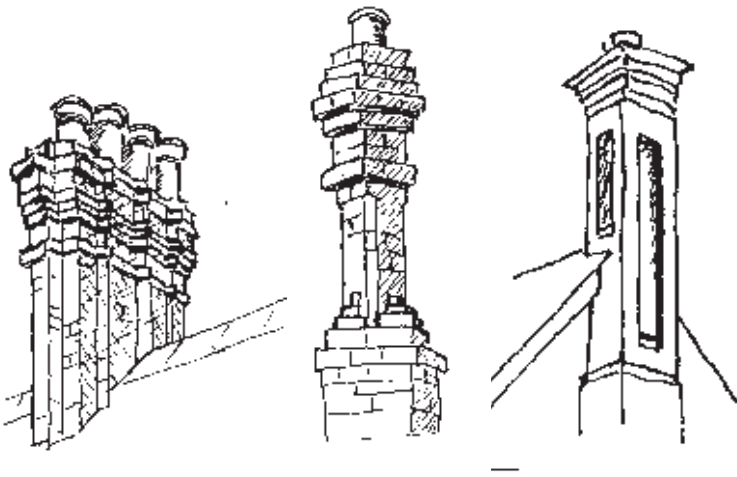
For many centuries before standardisation local materials dictated local building methods, so that in any region buildings tended to be similar in style and sat harmoniously within the countryside.

Many examples of these local materials can still be seen throughout the parish such as, smooth saw red sandstone, oak beams used for timber framing, reeds or straw for thatch and soft red Cheshire bricks. Materials introduced a little later include:- flat reddish brown/blue clay tiles or welsh slate for roofing, and brick with smooth rendering painted white has replaced most wattle and daub or cob walls.

The more sympathetic and interesting drives and paths are surfaced with loose pebbles, cobbles or setts, bricks or block paving and York stone paving. The cobbled pavement at the side of Whitegate Cottage is a particularly attractive feature and there are old cobbles beneath the tarmac at the entrance to Vale Royal Drive and Holly Bank Cottage on Cinder Hill which could be uncovered and restored.

Roofs and Chimneys

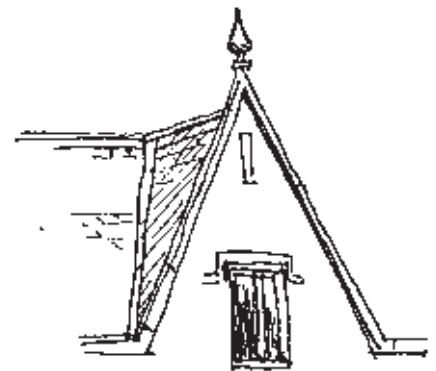
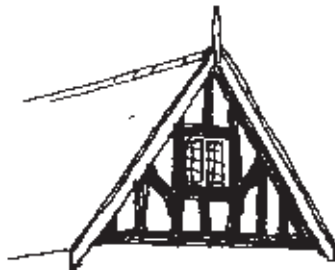
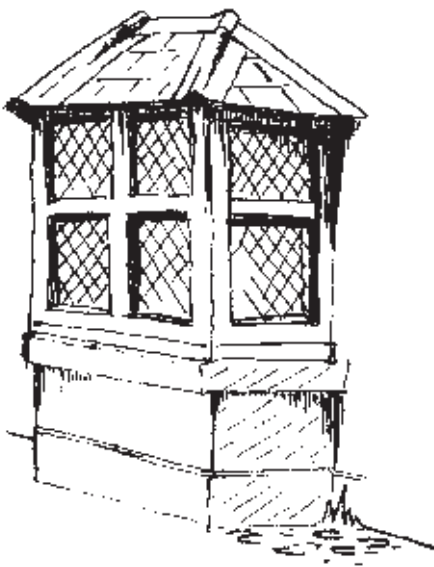
Many of the older buildings in the parish have low rooflines with dormer windows either at eaves level or in the roof itself. The roof verges overhang the gables and have deep bargeboards or alternatively, have stone capped parapets reflecting the style of Vale Royal House. Roofs with hips or valleys and variations in pitch and materials add variety to the roofscape. Decoration has been added to the dormer fronts and gables in many cases in the form of timber framing, or hung tiles similar to those on Lodge Cottage. Chimneys are generally constructed from local brick and are large and decorative and many examples of fine chimney designs by John Douglas can be seen in the area, such as those at the Old Vicarage and on Vale Royal Great House.

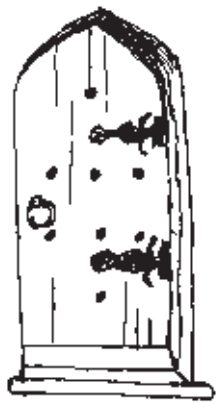


Windows and Doors

Windows are generally modest in size with the first floor windows tending to have two casements and the ground floor three. They are side hung with no top lights, and lead or wooden glazing bars divide them into small panes. Larger window openings have been created by the introduction of bay windows with sloping tiled or slate roofs similar to that at the front of Whitegate House. Many windows have low arched brick lintels; stone or timber sills and the frames are painted white. These are principal features that give cohesion to the overall village scene.

Doors are of traditional design, panelled or boarded in painted softwood, or treated oak. Areas of glass are made up of small panes and brass or cast iron door furniture fitted. A simple open porch or canopy usually affords protection from the weather.





Guidelines

- Limited infilling should have regard to plot sizes of adjacent properties.
- Closely spaced housing should be avoided where this would harm the character of the surrounding area.
- Spaces between existing settlements should be maintained.
- Whenever change is contemplated, whether to existing buildings or new construction, consideration should be given to the potential impact of the change on the street scene and those proposals should be of a scale and design which does not harm the character of the surrounding area.
- Building designs and materials used in new developments should reflect the examples given in the previous sub-sections which give character to the village. Standard house types which do not reflect the local vernacular must be avoided.
- Materials that should be avoided are:- smooth surfaced, hard or uncharacteristically coloured brick, concrete roof tiles, pantiles, shiplap boarding, pebbledash or Tyrolian finishes, prefabricated concrete.
- Garages should be positioned so that their large doors do not dominate the view from the road or spoil front elevations.
- Window frames and doors (including garage doors) of metal or plastic or with large panes of glass are inappropriate and should be avoided, particularly in the Conservation Area.
- Flat roofs and modern skylights on public elevations should be avoided.

Public and Private Open Spaces

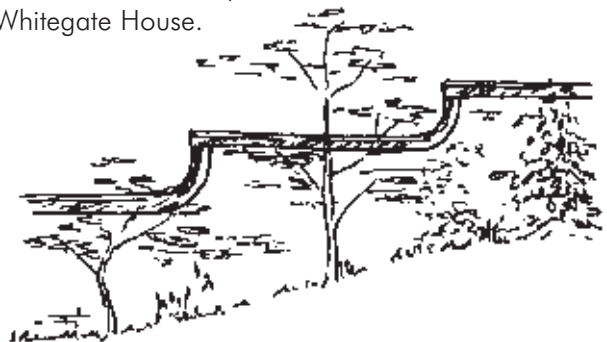
In Whitegate village there are several distinctive open spaces in addition to The Green, which are important and give character to the village. The Beeches cross-

roads is a distinctive focal point when passing through the area in almost any direction and as such would benefit from some visual improvement. The Tesco field on Whitegate Road, is in private ownership but leased to the Parish Council and is an important recreational space in the centre of Marton and should be preserved as such.

The entrance to Sherratts Rough looks inviting but is spoiled by the insensitive placing of four recycling bins. The parking area by the recent Post Office and the wide verge opposite form large open space that provides an uninterrupted view of the old and new Post Offices. However, the loose and potholed surface of this area is very detrimental and would benefit from resurfacing using setts or cobbles similar to that around the loop on The Green

Boundaries

There are many interesting boundary features throughout the village. Fine examples of these are the sandstone walls of Vale Royal Great House, Lodge Cottage and the church, the stone capped brick wall with curved risers along the side of the bank above the Green, and the picket fence at the front of Whitegate House.



Many of the walls have been softened by planting in front of them either deliberately or by nature. More recent additions to this mix are the stone walls topped with railings at the entrance of St Mary's Drive and the Cheshire style black and white railings fronting the new development at Cassia Green. These features and many of the hedgerows give an attractive diversity to the street scene and avoid the blandness of open plan, suburban style development.

Trees

Whitegate and Marton have several groups of roadside trees, which add greatly to the village atmosphere, such as the Scots pine, oak and silver birch on Dalefords Lane, the beech trees which line the old Vale Royal Drive and the beeches at the crossroads. There are two fine oak trees at the top of Foxwist Green and another one opposite the Old Post Office, which is particularly important as it gives a focal point to this stretch of road. Further down Cinder Hill is a fine avenue of lime trees and the yew and beech trees around the church lychgate and along the old Vale Royal Drive give a pleasant feeling of enclosure to this area.

In the wider landscape belts of trees and woodland as described earlier form prominent visual features giving a sense of place and adorn many of the lakes and pools in the area, adding to their attractive character such as those around Petty Pool, New Pool and Rookery Pool.

Guidelines

- **Types of walls and fencing which should be avoided include panelled, feather boarded or close boarded fencing, concrete block walling, high ornate railings and gates.**
- **The planting of non-native species such as Leylandii should also be avoided. An example is the two cypress trees in front of the church which detract from its beauty.**
- **The overall height of roadside boundary walls and fences should be kept to 1.25 metres or less in order to give a wide vista along roads to increase the open aspects that one expects in the countryside.**
- **Development should maintain the integrity of important local features such as the groups of trees along Vale Royal Drive and at the "Beeches" which should be protected from new development**
- **Where screening is required the planting of native species is preferred.**
- **Additional planting of native species of trees or shrubs should be encouraged. For example informal groups planted in the verge along Whitegate Road and at the "Beeches" would provide pleasant approaches to the village when travelling from Winsford.**

Highways and Traffic

The parish of Whitegate and Marton is contained within major traffic roads A556, A49, A454. Because of this, longer distance through traffic does not usually pass through the VDS area, which ensures a relatively

noise-free environment. However, Dalefords Lane and Whitegate Road/Whitegate Lane/Cinder Hill carry substantial amounts of traffic, particularly during morning and evening peak hours as local routes between Winsford, Sandiway and Northwich and so detract from the otherwise quiet enjoyment of the countryside.

Other country lanes within the area are relatively lightly trafficked and share use with walkers and cyclists. Those within an appropriate area could be designated "quiet lanes" following a successful campaign by CPRE calling for Government to give priority to walkers, cyclists and horse-riders over vehicular traffic where there is evidence of such regular use.

Appropriate traffic calming measures would help to reduce vehicle speeds, particularly along Dalefords Lane, Whitegate Road and Lane which are de-restricted and where signs limiting speed to 40 m.p.h. would be appropriate. On Cinder Hill, traffic travelling down the hill towards Whitegate village and school often considerably exceeds the 30-mph speed limit.

Other measures should be considered to reduce the intrusion of traffic in the quieter areas, for example by vehicle weight limits in areas of minor roads, apart from farm vehicles and signage to raise people's awareness of the need to respect the quiet beauty of the area, asking them to drive slowly and watch out for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.

The traditional black and white direction street signs should however be retained.

Signs for public rights of way which or exit onto roads need to be prominent to avoid conflict between pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders and vehicles.



No footway and no speed limit is a potentially hazardous combination



Delivering and collecting 120 Primary School children causes parking problems.

Parking is a particular problem in Whitegate village around the primary school and Church green, particularly during school drop-off and pick up times and at Church services. During the morning peak hour, school drop-off conflicts with through traffic. There is little room for additional off-street parking and so development which could lead to additional pupils over and above usual intakes and which could generate more vehicular traffic, should be avoided.

Street furniture such as telegraph poles with overhead cabling, street lights and street signs can look harsh and there are several examples in the parish area. The traditional style of new street lights along St Mary's Drive could be copied in other village locations, particularly the Conservation Area.

Guidelines

- **Traffic calming schemes, based on lower speed limits, should be introduced where appropriate on all roads within Whitegate and Marton.**
- **The design of such schemes should be sensitive to the rural nature of the roads and avoid where possible the use of urban materials and unsympathetic road signs.**
- **Pedestrian safer routes to school should be provided from the Beeches down Cinder Hill and from the bottom of St Mary's Drive.**
- **Locate garages and car spaces attached to new residential development as unobtrusively as possible.**

A Vision for the future

The tranquil beauty of the landscape and the attractiveness and special character and quality of its buildings and spaces, many with fine architectural detail, have been enjoyed by Whitegate and Marton villagers and visitors over the centuries, reflecting a strong sense of history and tradition.

Some major developments have taken place in recent years and integrated into the village and landscape framework, but not without some difficulty and where it is hoped time will improve the situation.

For the future, the pattern of development and change should become more settled and be on a more intimate scale respecting its fine historical and landscape character.

Development which is unobtrusive, sympathetically designed and laid out following the guidelines in this Village Design Statement, whether new building, alteration or extension, will be welcomed as change for the better of which villagers can be as proud in the future as they are in the present and were in the past.



Listed Buildings

PARISH Village or Street	WHITEGATE & MARTON Listed Building Name	Grade	Group Value
Cassia Green Road	Friars Stone	II	
Chester Lane	Marion House Farmhouse	II	
Cinder Hill	The Old Post Office, Cinder Hill	II	
Clay Lane	Rivendell (formerly listed as Beech Farmhouse off Daleford Lane)	II	
Clay Lane	Rookery Cottage and Swan Cottage	II	
Clay Lane	Vale View Cottages	II	
Daleford Lane	Rookery Cottage	II	
Foxwist Green	Foxes Green Farmhouse	II	
Off Grange Lane	Bark House Farmhouse (formerly listed listed under Mill Lane)	II	
Marion Green	Marion Villa Cottages (originally listed as Calderstones)	II	GV
Mill Lane	Bradford Mill House	II	
Off Tarporley Road	Abbotsmoss Hall	II	
Vale Royal Park	Former stable block at Vale Royal Abbey	II	GV
Vale Royal Park	Vale Royal Great House	II*	GV
Whitegate Road	Beeches Cottage	II	
Whitegate Road	Briary Farmhouse	II	
Whitegate Lane	Church of St Mary	II	GV
Whitegate Road	Falcon Cottage and Cottage adjacent (formerly listed as Falcon Cottage, Marion Sands)	II	
Whitegate Lane	Keeper's Cottage	II	
Vale Royal Drive	The Lodge	II	GV
Whitegate Lane	Monkey Lodge	II	
Whitegate Lane	Sandway Bank Farmhouse	II	
Whitegate Lane	The Old Vicarage	II	
Cinder Hill	Whitegate Cottage (now divided to include Hamletts House on Grange Lane)	II	GV
Whitegate Lane	Whitegate House	II	GV

• Guideline

Any new development must respect this historic village conserving and enhancing its built environment and natural setting.

Produced by Whitegate and Marton VDS Group and Vale Royal Borough Council

The regular VDS Design Team consisted of the following residents of Whitegate and Marton

- Adrian Badger, St Mary's Drive, Whitegate
- Margaret Baldini, Holly Bank Farm, Whitegate
- Robin Creed (PC Representative), Dalefords Lane, Marton
- Stuart Hogg (Secretary), Cinder Hill, Whitegate
- Jo and John Jordan, Whitegate Road, Marton
- Ben McDyre (Co-ordinator), Whitegate Lane, Whitegate
- David Nichols, St Mary's Drive, Whitegate
- Lynne Starkey, Petty Pool Farm, Whitegate
- Peter York, Gooseberry Hollow, Martonsands

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