

# PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT LANCASTER STREET

KIRKDALE, LIVERPOOL



## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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*Historic Building Consultancy*

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## 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report supports proposed development at Lancaster Street in the Kirkdale district of north Liverpool. An application has been submitted for a new apartment building on the site, which stands at the junction with Stanley Road. The site lies within the setting of a row of early 19<sup>th</sup> century town houses numbered 107 and 109-117 Great Mersey Street, which are all Grade II listed.

The heritage issue arising is the proposal's impact upon the setting, and therefore the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value) of the listed buildings. The scope and purpose of this report is to describe this significance and to evaluate the proposal's impact upon it.

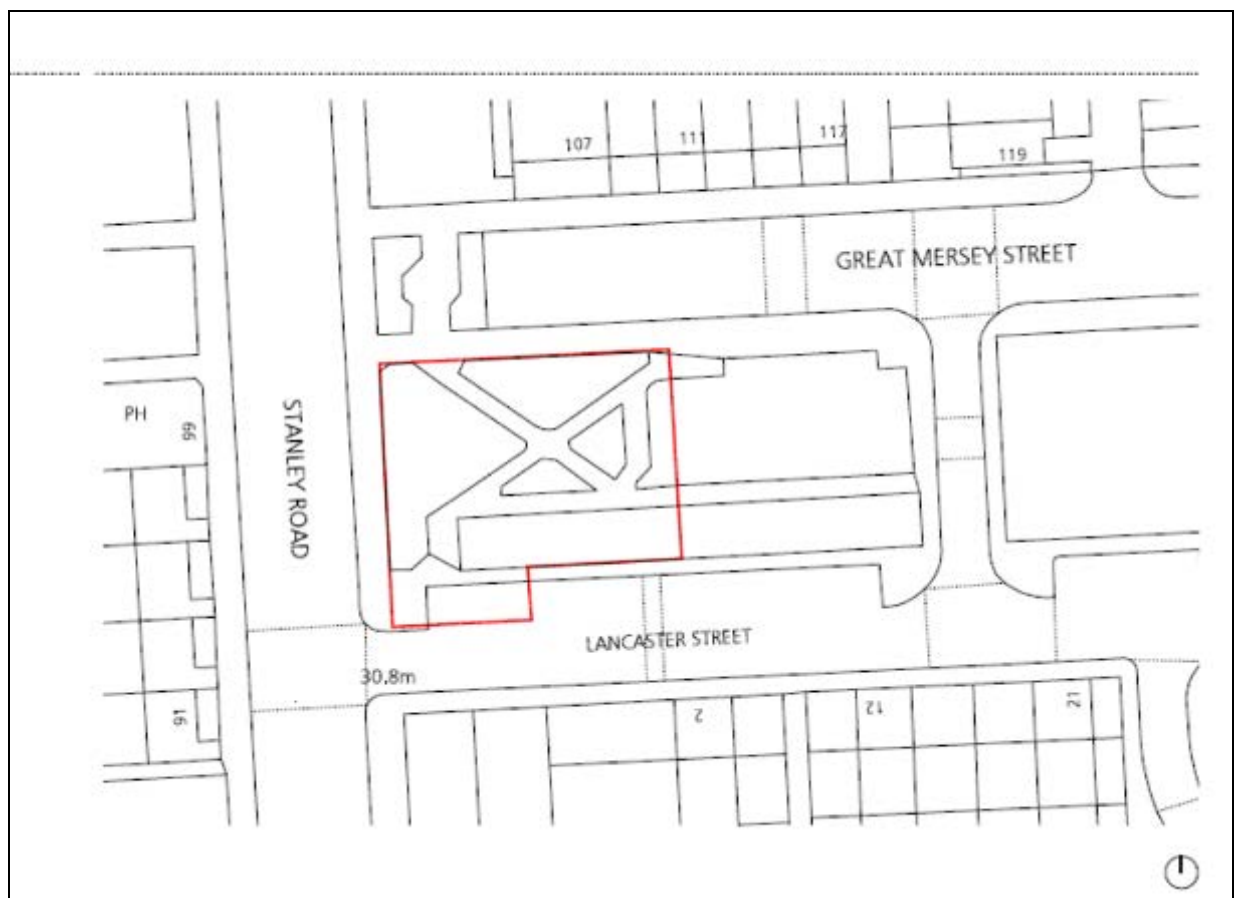
Kirkdale was historically part of the rural coastal hinterland north of Liverpool but in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was colonised by the affluent commuting middle classes. The Great Mersey Street houses were built probably in the early-mid 1830s and were fine town houses akin to those found in central Liverpool. Development intensified during the next four decades, with a grid pattern of streets laid out by 1890, of which Lancaster Street formed part. However this later development was of a different nature as during the intervening years the spread of the railways had whisked the affluent away to more distant areas, leaving the area to be filled by terraced homes of the working population. Historic mapping shows the application site was subsequently covered by narrow-fronted houses along with a three-storey pub at the Great Mersey Street junction. Clearance began in the 1970s, and the listed buildings now stand predominant amid a landscape of two-storeyed late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century housing and open space.

The Grade II designation of the listed buildings denotes they are of national importance for their special architectural and historic interest. This intrinsic special interest is the basis of their significance, being good examples of late Georgian town houses built for Liverpool's affluent middle classes and illustrating the port's suburban growth during this period. The contribution of the building's setting to this significance is limited, as they no longer stand within the 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape of which they were part. The application site forms part of this setting, and in its present use as a grassed open space and car parking makes a neutral contribution.

The intrinsic qualities of the listed buildings will be unharmed by the proposal. The design of the proposed building has been drawn from the listed terraces and will introduce a degree of architectural diversity into the townscape, echoing the 19<sup>th</sup> century streetscene that once existed. While the proposal will introduce a notable building in proximity to the listed buildings, the latter are so distinctive architecturally that their strong visual and historic presence will be maintained and the retention of open space east of the site will still enable uninterrupted key views of the buildings to be obtained. The proposal will therefore involve only a limited impact upon the setting of the listed building, which is considered to be outweighed by the public benefit of meeting the demand for new housing.

## 2: THE SITE

The application site is a plot of land located on the north side of Lancaster Street in the Kirkdale district of north Liverpool. It is bounded to the west by Stanley Road, and on the north by Great Mersey Street and to the east by further open space in which stands the Rotunda Biennial Pavilion public artwork. Originally part of a densely-built 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape, the last building on the site was cleared in 2008 and it now principally forms a grassed open space crossed by footpaths with a smaller portion used for car parking.



*Map 1. Location of the application site*

### 3: THE PROPOSAL/SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

#### *3.1 The proposal*

Planning consent is sought from Liverpool City Council for a four storey building upon the site, consisting of 33 no. one and two bedroom apartments.

#### *3.2 Heritage impact*

The application site stands opposite a row of listed town houses, numbers 107 and 109-117 Great Mersey Street. The heritage issue arising is the impact upon the setting, and therefore the significance (i.e. heritage interest and value), of the listed buildings.



#### *1. Relationship of the application site to the listed buildings (indicated)*

### *3.3 Scope and purpose of this report*

Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is therefore to describe the significance of numbers 107 and 109-117 Great Mersey Street including that of their setting – along with the contribution made by the application site to the latter – and to evaluate the proposal's impact upon this significance. In accordance with paragraph 128, it is considered its level of detail is proportionate to this significance and to the scale of the impact. The report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation supporting the application.

### *3.4 Report structure*

This is as follows:

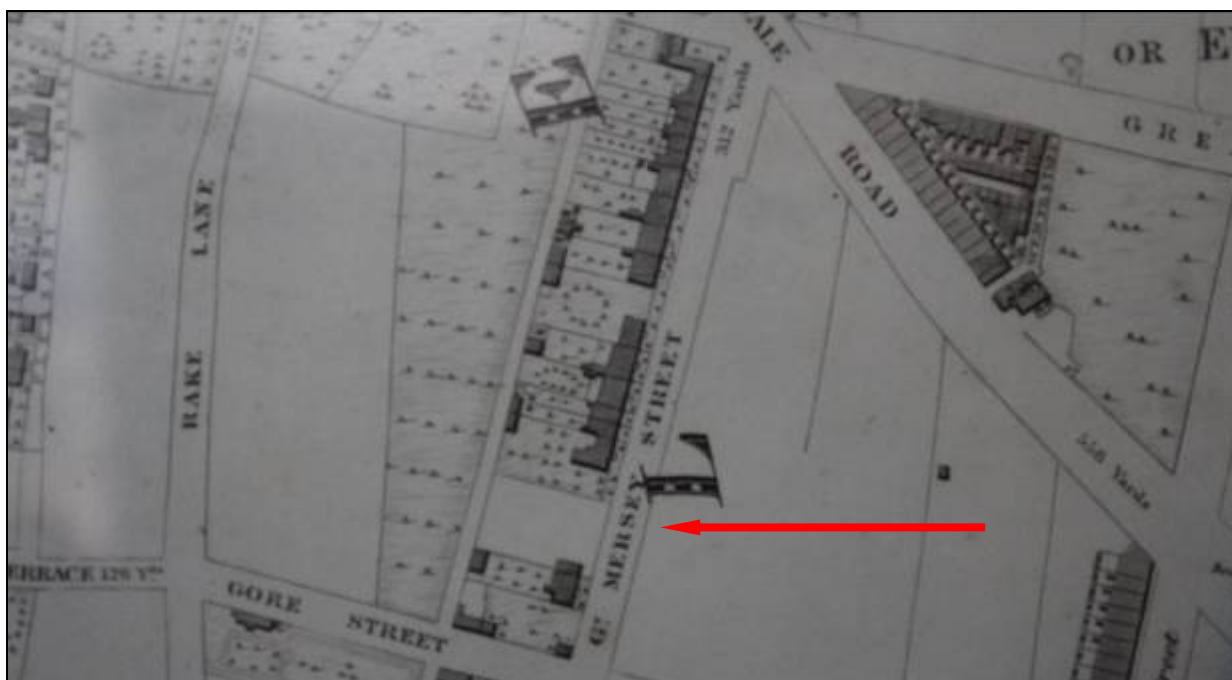
1. A short summary of the historical background relating to the site (Section 4)
2. A brief analysis of the listed buildings and their setting (Section 5)
3. A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
4. A review of the relevant planning policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 7)
5. Evaluation within this policy context of the impact of the proposal upon the setting and significance of the listed buildings (Section 8).



## 4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### 4.1 Background

Kirkdale was, until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, part of the rural hinterland north of Liverpool, adjoining the Mersey shoreline. By the time the century closed, its rural character had been erased by the port's rapid urban expansion. This process had begun by the 1830s, by which time small pockets of suburban housing had been built for affluent commuting merchants and professionals. Great Mersey Street was among the earliest elements of this development, existing by the mid-1830s as Map 2 shows (below). The appearance of the surviving listed buildings – tall three or four-storey-town houses, elevated above the street – was similar to their central Liverpool counterparts and indicates this early development was of high status. Great Mersey Street's occupants, as recorded by *Slater's Liverpool Directory* of 1844, included merchants, managers, sea captains, a surgeon and industrialists. During the next four decades development intensified with a grid pattern of streets laid out by 1890, of which Lancaster Street formed part. However this later development was of a different character as in the intervening years the railways had whisked the affluent away to more distant areas such as Aughton and the Wirral, leaving Kirkdale to be built over with working-status terraces. The application site was then occupied by narrow-fronted houses along with a three-storey pub at the Stanley Road junction. This townscape still remained by the late 1950s (Plate 2, following page) but clearance began during the following decade, leaving the listed terrace in isolation by the late 1970s (Plate 3).



Map 2. Bennison's map of 1836 shows 107 and 109 present, but 111-117 had yet to be built





Map 3. By 1890 the area was covered by a grid of tightly-built terraced houses, as the 25-inch OS mapping of that year records. Application site indicated approximately



2. Circa 1959 view eastwards along Great Mersey Street from Stanley Road, with three-storey pub on right of image occupying part of what is now the application site

## 4.2 Date of the listed buildings

Numbers 107 and 109-117 Great Mersey Street date probably from the early-mid 1830s and were part of a long row extending along the north side of the street, initially looking south across open countryside towards the port and the Mersey. The row was built in piecemeal fashion, for Bennison's map of 1836 (Map 2) shows that while number 107 was present, it appears numbers 109 to 113 had yet to be built. These were in existence by the mid-late 1840s (Map 4, below). The row originally continued further west, but numbers 119-125 were demolished in the early 1980s.



Map 4. The six-inch OS map surveyed in 1845-1849 shows the original extent of the houses along the entire north side of Great Mersey Street



3. Circa 1980 image shows how the listed town houses now stood amid a cleared landscape



## 5: THE LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTING

### 5.1 Overview

A row of late Georgian town houses dating probably from the early-mid 1830s and the survivors of a long run of similar houses that characterised the north side of Great Mersey Street. Number 107 is a three-storey single house while the remainder are a terrace of four-storey town houses. Following clearance of the surrounding streets in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the listed buildings now stand predominant amid a streetscene of largely modern two-storey housing punctuated by open spaces.



4. The listed buildings, from left 107 and numbers 109 to 117

### 5.2 Description

- a. **Listing text.** Numbers 107 and 109-117 Great Mersey Street were all listed on March 23, 1975. The National Heritage List for England description of the buildings, compiled in the early 1980s, is brief and does not take account of their setting. That for number 107 reads:

*House, early C19. Brick with stone dressings, slate roof. 2 storeys and basement, 3 bays. Rusticated basement with lintel band, 1st floor sill band, top cornice and parapet. Windows have wedge lintels and are sashed without glazing bars. Central 1st floor window removed. Central entrance has doorcase lacking columns. 4-panel door and fanlight with 2 mullions. Rusticated front wall has plain iron railings.*



*5. Number 107 Great Mersey Street*

The description of numbers 109-117 reads:

*Terrace of 5 houses. Early C19. Brick with stone dressings, slate roof, 3 storeys with basement, 2 bays to each house. Stone lintel band to stuccoed basement, 1st floor sill band, top frieze, cornice and blocking course. All windows have wedge lintels. Rounded entrances have Doric doorcases with fluted columns, stucco extradoses and 4-panel doors; fanlights have 2 mullions. Rusticated front walls with iron railings with fleur-de-lys heads. Nos 107 and 109 have casements to windows. No 111 and 113 have sashes without glazing bars; No 113 has C20 door. No 117 is in state of dereliction, bricked up ground floor, upper windows decayed.*





*6. Numbers 109-117, listed survivors of a longer row that originally extended along the north side of the street*

- b. Further analysis.** All the houses are unusual in that they are raised above a basement rather than with the latter being below ground level, which was the typical practice in central Liverpool. They were built piecemeal, with a straight joint between 107 and 109 and a similar joint between 117 and the now-demolished number 119.

### *5.3 Their setting*

The original, densely-built 19<sup>th</sup> century urban setting which surrounded the listed buildings, as recorded in Plate 2, was swept away in the 1970s and thereafter. The setting of the listed buildings is now predominantly one of late 20<sup>th</sup> century clearance and early 21<sup>st</sup> century regeneration. They are viewed within a streetscene which primarily comprises distant Corbusian tower blocks of the 1960s and unremarkable two-storeyed housing of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, interspersed with open spaces. Amid this townscape, surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings are few, and are notably three-storey former pubs such as the Stanley Bar on Stanley Road directly opposite the site and the Crown Vaults public house on Kirkdale Road around 150 metres southeast.



*7. Present-day setting looking east along Great Mersey Street. Compare with Plate 2 of 1959*



*8. Looking to rear of the terraces across open space to the north*





*9. Westwards view from Great Mersey Street to former Stanley Bar on Stanley Road and adjoining late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing*

#### *5.4 Contribution of the site*

Following demolition of the last buildings in 2008, the site is presently in use as a grassed open space crossed by pathways, with part also used as a car park. It therefore forms part of the late 20<sup>th</sup> /early 21<sup>st</sup> century post-clearance streetscene that now characterises the setting of the listed buildings.





*10. Looking north across the site to the listed buildings*



*11. Looking from the listed buildings south across the application site along Stanley Road*

## 6: ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### 6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'*

The Glossary defines setting as:

*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

### 6.2 Significance of the listed buildings

The Grade II designation of numbers 107 and numbers 109-117 Great Mersey Street denotes they are of national importance for their special architectural and historic interest. This intrinsic special interest is the basis of their significance, as they represent good examples of early-mid 1830s town houses built for Liverpool's affluent middle classes and illustrating the outward suburban growth of the port during this period. The contribution of the building's setting to this significance is limited, as they no longer stand within the 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape of which they were originally a notable component. Their present unremarkable surroundings are the result of late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century clearance within only a handful of 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, notably three-storey former pubs, remaining.

### 6.3 Contribution of the application site

The site is an element of the streetscene created around the listed buildings in the late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century. In its present use as an open space and a car park it makes no

particular contribution to their setting and therefore their significance. The nature of this contribution is probably best described as neutral.

## 7: POLICY CONTEXT

### 7.1 Statutory duties

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

### 7.2 Relevant policies

The relevant national guidance is established by Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, March 2012). Paragraph 131 states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- The positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Paragraph 132 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset, and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; that significance can be lost through development within its setting; and that as heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of, a Grade II listed building should be exceptional; substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including Grade II\* buildings, wholly exceptional. Paragraph 133 states that where a proposal will lead to substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Locally, the relevant heritage policies are those saved from the 2002 Liverpool Unitary Development Plan:

- **Policy GEN3 (Heritage and Design in the Built Environment)**, which states that the UDP aims to protect and enhance the built environment of the City by encouraging a high standard of design and landscaping in developments and creating an attractive environment which is safe and secure both day and night.
- **Policy HD1 (Listed Buildings)**, which states that the city council will take positive action to secure the retention, repair, maintenance and continued use of listed buildings. The City Council will relax planning and other City Council policies in order to secure the retention of a building of special architectural or historic interest.

## 8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

### 8.1 Scale of the building

This report has demonstrated that the historic setting of the listed buildings has been vastly altered from the original densely-built 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape and now comprises a largely low-rise environment of two-storey late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century housing. The listed terrace now stands predominant within this landscape along with a handful of surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, primarily some three-storey former pubs. The application site was previously occupied by a three-storey building, as shown in Plate 2, which was demolished probably in the 1970s. A building of the scale and height that is proposed is therefore not out of character with the area, given this historical context. It would also add visual diversity to a streetscene which, beyond the terrace, is low-scale and somewhat drab, restoring some of the individuality that once existed and which is recalled by Plate 2. In terms of building's height, it is understood to be slightly lower than the ridge of the listed buildings. Coupled with the width of Great Mersey Street, and the fact that listed buildings are set-back from it, this will counter any risk of overshadowing by the proposed development.



12. Streetscene view from Stanley Road showing the proposed structure and listed buildings (FCH Architects)

### 8.2 Design considerations

The design lead for the proposed building has been taken from the listed buildings, borrowing their key qualities of strong vertical emphasis and regular window rhythm.

The appearance has been modified from the original designs as a result of advice given by Liverpool City Council during pre-planning discussions, and seeks to create the impression of a series of town houses rather than an apartment block. In terms of its materiality, the building complements the terrace and the local vernacular by use of facing brick as the chief material.



*13. Streetscene from Lancaster Street showing the proposed building in relation to the listed terrace beyond and how the design lead has been influenced by it (FCH Architects)*

### 8.3 Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that the significance of the listed buildings lies primarily in their intrinsic qualities rather than their setting, which is no longer that of a densely built 19<sup>th</sup> century townscape but one of modern low-scale two-storey development punctuated by occasional three-storey 19<sup>th</sup> century former pubs. In its present use the site makes a neutral contribution to this setting. The proposed building will introduce a degree of architectural diversity into this townscape, complementing the three-storey former Stanley Bar pub that stands directly opposite on Stanley Road and echoing the streetscene that existed into the late 1950s (Plate 2). While the proposal will introduce a notable building in proximity to the listed buildings, the latter are so distinctive architecturally from the somewhat drab surrounding townscape that they will continue to retain a strong visual and historic presence and the retention of open space east of the site will still enable uninterrupted key views of the buildings to be obtained. The proposal will therefore involve only a limited impact upon the setting of the listed building, which in the context of the NPPF guidance is considered to represent less than substantial harm. Where this is the case, the guidance requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefit of a proposal, which in this instance is the provision of new homes to meet current demands. It is considered this benefit outweighs the scale of harm and therefore planning consent should be granted.



## APPENDIX: GARRY MILLER HISTORIC BUILDING CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is an architectural historian who has spent more than 35 years studying buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. Among the many positive reviews, it was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); the work was extensively cited in the revised *Buildings of England* volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire (2006). Research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller has established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings. His specialism are the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment, and his area of operation extends throughout the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Projects range from the £40m Wolstenholme Square development in central Liverpool and the Grade I Barkisland Hall, Ripponden, West Yorkshire, to cottage extensions and barn conversions. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and on average reports on more than 100 buildings or sites are produced annually.