

## Advisory Leaflet

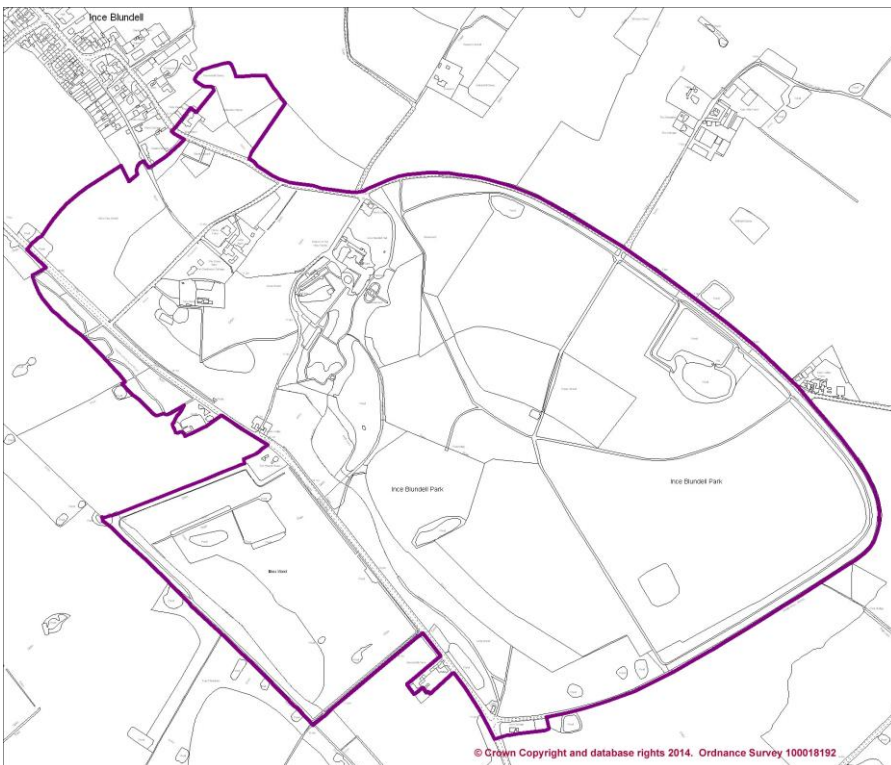
# Ince Blundell Park Conservation Area

### Architectural and Historic Significance

The name Ince is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as 'Hinne' as in "three thegns held Hinne." It is considered to be of Celtic derivation similar to "ynys" meaning island. The name reflects the origin of the settlement as an island of dry land within the surrounding marshy area of south-west Lancashire. The Blundell family held land in the area from the 12<sup>th</sup> century and consolidated their position over the centuries. Before this it seems there was no single dominant demesne in the area to impose a typical medieval system of land holding, it is more likely that strips of arable land were fixed and divided according to family groupings and passed on from one owner to another. At this time the population of Ince (including the two neighbouring hamlets of Lady Green and Carr Houses) was probably little more than a few score.

Topographically the area of land available for arable use was relatively small. The surrounding low lying land being susceptible to flooding by the River Alt, though the river itself was an important resource.

In the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century the suffix "Blundell" was attached to Ince and the township became known as Ince Blundell which distinguished it from the Ince near Wigan. A manor house was established at Ince, part of which remains today and is referred to as the 'Old Hall' and was once possibly the servants' wing of the original house. This was built around 1590-1620, a brick mullioned structure with projecting chimney. The rarity of brick buildings at this time in Ince Blundell indicates a residence of some status. It is probable that the "Old Hall" was set in a formal garden surrounded by farmland. The Cross Barn, at Cross Barn Lane, a cruck framed building, was also built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological evidence suggests the existence of a windmill in the township.



Between 1720 and 1750 the new hall at Ince Blundell was constructed, replacing many of the earlier structures. A rectangular building facing south, comprising two main storeys and an attic, with nine bay windows, the service wing is set at right angles to the main building. Henry Sephton, a leading mason-architect, has been identified as the designer. In 1761, Henry Blundell inherited Ince Blundell Hall. Following the death of his wife in 1767 he devoted himself to a study of the arts. He acquired a vast collection of classical sculptures and antiquities, many brought from the palaces of Rome. Known as the Blundell Marbles, they were removed to the custody of Liverpool Museum in the 1960s. To house these treasures he built the "Garden Temple", constructed in the grounds in 1780 to the design of William Everard and the

Pantheon, modelled on the Pantheon in Rome, completed in 1810. Between 1760 and 1780, the grounds of the Hall were radically redesigned. Excavations for a lake, formation of pathways and extensive tree planting took place, removing virtually all traces of the previous late medieval garden layout. The grounds were emparked, by surrounding them with a belt of woodland and a wall, built over six years with clay dug from inside the park.

Up to the late 18th century the economy of Ince had remained fairly consistent, but as Liverpool began to flourish and expand, the possibility of increased profits from agricultural production became evident. The tendency of the River Alt to flood and also to impeded land drainage led to The Alt Drainage Act in 1779. This aimed to bring more land into agricultural use. Gradual management of the river led to a rise in value of the surrounding land and the extension of arable farming. Human intervention, through land drainage, emparkment and increased agricultural production, had altered the physical face of the Ince Blundell landscape forever.

In 1847 part of the Hall was rebuilt by Thomas Weld Blundell. He also had an impressive church built by the architect J. J. Scoles to form part of the main Hall. It is now the Catholic Parish Church of Ince Blundell. Many other buildings and structures, from lodges to archways, situated within the estate are also of significant historic and architectural interest. Ince Blundell Hall remained in the possession of the Weld Blundell family until the 1960s, when it was sold to the present owners of the Augustinian Sisters who have run the Hall as a convalescent home ever since.

Outside the grounds of the Hall there are several noteworthy grade II buildings, including the Cross Barn as mentioned previously; Sunnyfield Farmhouse, Moor Lane, a mid 18th century red brick property and the Priest's House, Moor Lane, a circular brown brick building with flattened sides. The village of Ince, which is not included within the conservation area, lies north of the Hall. It has grown and developed over the centuries as the village to the manor. Little of the early Ince remains, having been replaced by modern development in the 1930s and 1960s, but some of the properties in the village are of 18th century origin, such as Gable Cottage on Victoria Road.

## The Conservation Area

The Ince Blundell Park Conservation Area was designated by Sefton Council in April 1981. The hamlet of Carr Houses to the east is a separately designated conservation area.

Ince Blundell Hall and its park are of national importance, being outstanding both in architectural and in landscape terms as well as being a notable example

of the social and economic development of the large country house in its own parkland setting. The woodlands and ponds within the Hall grounds are also a valuable natural resource as a varied habitat for birds and mammals.

There are a number of listed buildings in the conservation area, including a very significant grouping of five grade II\* listed buildings within the Hall grounds. Ince Blundell Hall and park is included, graded II\*, on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. The area is within the Green Belt and is part of a landscape of considerable historic interest.

The character of the area has regrettably suffered from some unsympathetic agricultural works, and post-war infill development of houses and bungalows interspersed with the more historic properties have tended to detract from the homogenous nature of the settlement.

The unique combination of historical, archaeological, scientific and aesthetic interest that exists in an area that is close to, but relatively unaffected by, modern urban development is of great importance. These essential elements that give Ince Blundell its special character should be protected and enhanced.

Within the Conservation Area, it is not the intention to prevent change but rather to ensure that any new development, alterations or extensions are in keeping with its character and that any harm is balanced against wider public benefits.

## Additional Planning Powers

Conservation Area status means that the Council possesses a number of statutory powers to safeguard against some changes. These are special planning controls which relate to specific works which would normally be considered 'permitted development', i.e. works which would not require planning consent. Within the Conservation Area the following additional planning powers apply:-

### **If a building is a Listed Building additional special controls will also apply.**

- Any proposal involving the demolition of any building, wall or other structure within the Conservation Area (with minor exceptions) will require planning permission.
- It is an offence to carry out tree works without permission. Anyone wishing to cut down, top, lop or uproot a tree with a stem diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above ground level must give the Local Planning Authority six weeks written notice before any work is started (a "Section 211 notice" under

the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) subject to specific exemptions. Within this time the Authority may grant consent for the proposed work, or they may consider making a Tree Preservation Order.

- There are greater restrictions over 'permitted development' rights for the enlargement of dwellinghouses, and on the provision, alteration or improvement of outbuildings within their curtilage.
- Dormer windows will require planning permission, and in some cases, other changes to roofs and chimneys may require planning permission.
- Cladding of external walls in stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles is not permitted. The cladding of any part of external walls would require planning permission.
- Planning permission is needed for satellite dishes where they are to be located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto a highway.
- Micro-generation (e.g. wind turbines/solar panels) installations will require planning permission in some cases.
- The Council has powers under the Act to require owners to carry out essential repair works to empty or partly occupied buildings in order to protect the fabric of buildings important to the conservation area.

For up to date advice on what needs planning permission go to [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) In determining applications for the development of land and alterations or extensions to buildings within the Ince Blundell Park Conservation Area the Council will pay special regard to:-

- The overriding restriction on new development within the Green Belt whereby new development will only be permitted in very special circumstances and for uses appropriate to a rural area. See Council's website for further details.
- The retention, replacement and restoration of historical details and features of the buildings and their gardens including boundary walls and hedges.
- The design, materials and detail of extensions and alterations to existing buildings which will be expected to be in sympathy with the architectural and historic character of the building as a whole and to the setting of that building.

- The design of any new building (including form, massing, scale and materials) and its integration with its immediate surroundings and the special architectural and visual qualities of the Conservation Area.
- The retention and preservation of existing trees and the provision of further appropriate landscaping.
- The retention and enhancement of views into and out of the area, vistas within the area and the general character and appearance of the rural estate.

### **Guidance Notes for planning applications and use of materials:**

#### **Pre-Application Advice**

You can request advice from the planning department prior to submitting a formal application. In some cases we make a charge for this service. Forms are available on the Council's website.

#### **Planning Applications**

A Heritage Statement will be needed to support your planning application. This should include an explanation of the heritage significance of the site and how the design takes account of this.

Outline applications will not usually be considered.

#### **Demolition**

The demolition or redevelopment of any building of individual or group value will not be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the building cannot be used for any suitable purpose and it is not important enough to merit the costs involved in its preservation. Any consent to demolish would normally be conditional on the building not being demolished before a contract is made to carry out redevelopment. This redevelopment must be of a high standard of design and already have planning permission.

#### **Trees**

Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree over 75mm in diameter measured at 1.5m above ground level is required to give the local planning authority six weeks prior notice (a "Section 211 notice" under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Within this time the Authority may grant consent for the proposed work, or they may consider making a Tree Preservation Order. It is an offence to carry out tree works without permission.

#### **New development on vacant sites**

Any new development should be conceived with the rural architectural character, loose layout and scale of the area in mind. Early discussions with Planning

Services are advised. The services of a qualified architect are strongly recommended.

### **Conversion of existing buildings**

Where planning permission to convert buildings into new uses is sought, the new use and internal layout of the building should be carefully considered. Particular attention will be paid to plan form, character of the building and its external appearance, and the layout of gardens, car parking and the position of bin stores.

Every effort should be made to minimise external alterations, such as fire escapes and new windows (including dormer windows). Where external changes are required it should be made to a non-prominent elevation. Alterations or extensions should use carefully chosen materials that match or complement that building. The services of a qualified architect are strongly recommended.

### **External alterations to existing buildings including extensions**

The following deals with some of the details of alterations and extensions to buildings.

#### **Windows and Dormers**

Traditional windows and detailing need to be retained, renovated or if necessary, replaced to match the original design. Additional windows should be restricted to the non-prominent elevations and also match existing designs. Imitation leaded lights, aluminium and UPVC windows should not be used as they completely change the original character of the building. Advice should be sought from Planning Services.

New dormer windows are not generally accepted on principal elevations. Any new dormer windows should be well-proportioned and kept to non-prominent elevations and any new cladding must match roofing materials.

#### **Wall Surfaces**

Brickwork and stonework should not be painted or rendered. Areas of brickwork or stonework requiring renewal should be repaired or replaced in their original form or pattern. Brick pointing should be compatible with existing construction, which is generally flush finish. Repointing with cement slurry, bagging or bag-rubbing is not acceptable. Where stonework is to be cleaned, professional advice should be sought, to prevent damage.

Brick and terracotta features such as keystones, corbels, finials and leaf designs should be retained wherever possible. 'Stone cladding' of brickwork should always be avoided again for practical as well as aesthetic reasons. If missing or damaged, stucco or plaster mouldings and similar details should be

replaced in their original form or pattern. Care should be taken to use correct mixes and finishing coats.

#### **Roofs**

Original roofing materials and existing rooflines and views should be retained. Any renewals or repairs should use reclaimed or new materials to match those on the existing roof. Care should be taken to retain roof features such as decorated ridge tiles and barge boards.

#### **Chimneys**

Original chimney stacks and pots form an integral part of the design of buildings. If they become unsafe, they should be repaired or rebuilt to the original height and design, taking care to replace chimney pots, even if no longer in use.

#### **Porticoes and Porches**

These features should be retained and repaired where necessary. Mineral felt or other similar roofing materials should not be used. Where new porches and porticoes are proposed they should be appropriately designed with materials that are sympathetic to the age and style of the building. Where porches are not part of the original design of the building, their addition should be avoided.

#### **Satellite Dishes and Aerials**

Aerials and satellite dishes should be located as sensitively as possible and should avoid main street elevations. The use of dark grey semi-transparent dishes on the rear or sides of houses is advised as they are the least obtrusive. Advice should be sought from Planning Services.

#### **Front Doors**

Original doors and door surrounds should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Replacements should be to a sympathetic design. Wooden moulded and panelled doors are likely to be the most suitable. "Georgian style" doors with imitation semi-circular fanlights and uPVC should be particularly avoided. Again, advice should be sought from Planning Services. Care should be taken to retain and repair details around openings, such as architraves, thresholds, transoms and fanlights.

#### **Boundary Walls, Fences, Gates and Gate Posts**

Original brick and stone boundary walls, including their stone copings, should be repaired or rebuilt to the original design, using reclaimed or matching materials. Boundary walls and gateposts should not be painted. Gate posts should not be painted. The street scene can be 'softened' and enhanced by the planting of boundary hedges, which has the added benefit of improving privacy. Existing gates should be repaired or replaced to the original design.



Openings in boundary walls should be kept to a minimum especially on principal street elevations so that the streetscape is not adversely affected.

### Services

Wherever possible original rainwater gutters and downpipes should be replaced in cast iron to the same patterns. If replacements cannot be obtained then cast aluminium of similar colour and profile could be considered. Care should be taken in the siting of burglar alarms, central heating flues, meter boxes and permanent dustbin locations so as not to detract from the appearance of principal elevations.

### Maintenance

It is strongly advised that owners keep their property in good repair and condition. As with all buildings regular and thorough maintenance can help avoid major structural repairs that can develop through neglect.

### Website & email:

[www.sefton.gov.uk/planning](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning)

[planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@sefton.gov.uk)

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