

Knowsley – Area Statement for Local Listing project

BACKGROUND

This is the area statement for Knowsley which should be read in conjunction with the Merseyside Selection Criteria. Here we have provided some background to the area and given indication of the types of candidates you can nominate. Knowsley are looking for a wide range of nominations to be brought forward and want to encourage you to nominate buildings or structures that are of value to you even if the structure is not pristine or you don't have much information about its history.

The Borough of Knowsley has most of the population residing largely in 3 areas of development. Kirkby in the North, Huyton, Roby, Prescott and Whiston across the centre and Halewood in the South. Outside of these built-up areas the remainder of the area is largely rural, including the villages of Knowsley Cronton and Tarbock. These rural areas tend to include some of the oldest buildings in Knowsley reflecting the area's historic agricultural roots with small villages, scattered farmsteads, and cottages featuring in the landscape.

The townships of Prescott, Huyton, Kirkby and Halewood have localised areas with distinct historic character. Some of the earliest urban development was in the medieval town centre of Prescott, which was a centre for pottery, utilising local clay.

Prescot and the surrounding areas were also important to the economy as local coal seams were mined to serve the growing port of Liverpool. During the mid-18th to 19th century Prescott became one of the European centres for watch-making and experienced expansion during this time Prescott retains some Georgian properties and some of the medieval street patterns. Recent regeneration activity in Prescott has breathed new life into the historic town centre and seen restoration of several historic buildings.

Kirkby, Huyton and Halewood have pockets of Victorian development, notably this includes planned development around the railway stations which had opened opportunities for travel across the region and beyond, and encouraged aspirational and wealthy industrialists to move out of dirty cities to enjoy genteel lives in the country. Spur lines from the Manchester to Liverpool railway served the local collieries and also, over time, expanded travel to more areas. Much of the development in Knowsley was built during the 20th century, much being large-scale social housing developments undertaken to alleviate pressure from Liverpool. Some of the early social housing layout suggests they were influenced by the model villages of late 19th century, with large gardens to the properties, boundary hedges and wide-open spaces. This mid-later 20th Century period also saw a remodelled town centre in Huyton and a new centre created in Kirkby. Regeneration activity and remodelling continues in these centres.

The geology of the area; red and yellow sandstone ridges to the east and carboniferous material (coal measures) to the central east of the borough, has shaped the materials used in the built environment and development of industry in the area.

Some of the notable people in the area who affected development include the large-scale landowners e.g. the Earls of Derby, Earls of Sefton, and the Willis family based at Halsnead.

Some buildings and features are also associated with significant events such as WWII or the influence of key local businesses, such as the BICC.

The types of buildings and built structures that could be considered for local heritage listing should reflect the various stages of development in the townships. So those relating to watchmaking in

Prescot, early developments in transportation/communication such as railway structures would all be positively welcomed. Acknowledging the importance of later development to the heritage of Kirkby, Huyton and Halewood, social housing which reflects unusual styles or construction methods and significant, well-designed modern churches and schools could be considered.

Finally, traditional slab walls, cast-iron street signs, village crosses, ancient wells, way crosses and milestones would also be considered.

ASSETS THAT WILL BE CONSIDERED:

Agricultural: The extent to which farm buildings retain their character and historic features varies; good examples are likely to be eligible. Of particular regional interest are shants (old farm outbuildings used for migrant workers), and farm buildings which have been engulfed by towns (where development built up around them) would be of interest.

Industrial: Car manufacturing in Halewood, coal-mining and related rail infrastructure such as railway bridges and structures would all be considered. Buildings or structures relating to the Royal Ordnance factory in Kirkby where munitions were made are of interest. Buildings or structures associated with other key industries such as watch making, pottery or quarrying would also be suitable candidates.

Traditional/Vernacular: Assets which really show traditional building techniques and forms - could be stone slab walls that enclose parts of town, or property. Properties or structures built in local brick or stone, stone slab roofing. Buildings of vernacular character in Knowsley are generally very simple structures.

There is a proportion of buildings built in Domestic revival styles found across the Knowsley area, these are often associated with estate development by the Earls of Derby and Earls of Sefton, and often situated in prominent locations.

Modern (20th Century): Churches, schools, some commercial buildings of architectural interest or unusual social housing would be considered, especially if associated with a noted architect.

Other Structures/Landmarks: WWII bunkers, cast iron street signs, village crosses and way crosses. Stocks, ancient wells, and milestones. Structures and sculptures in open parks and gardens would be considered, public artworks that shape the identity of the place could also be considered.