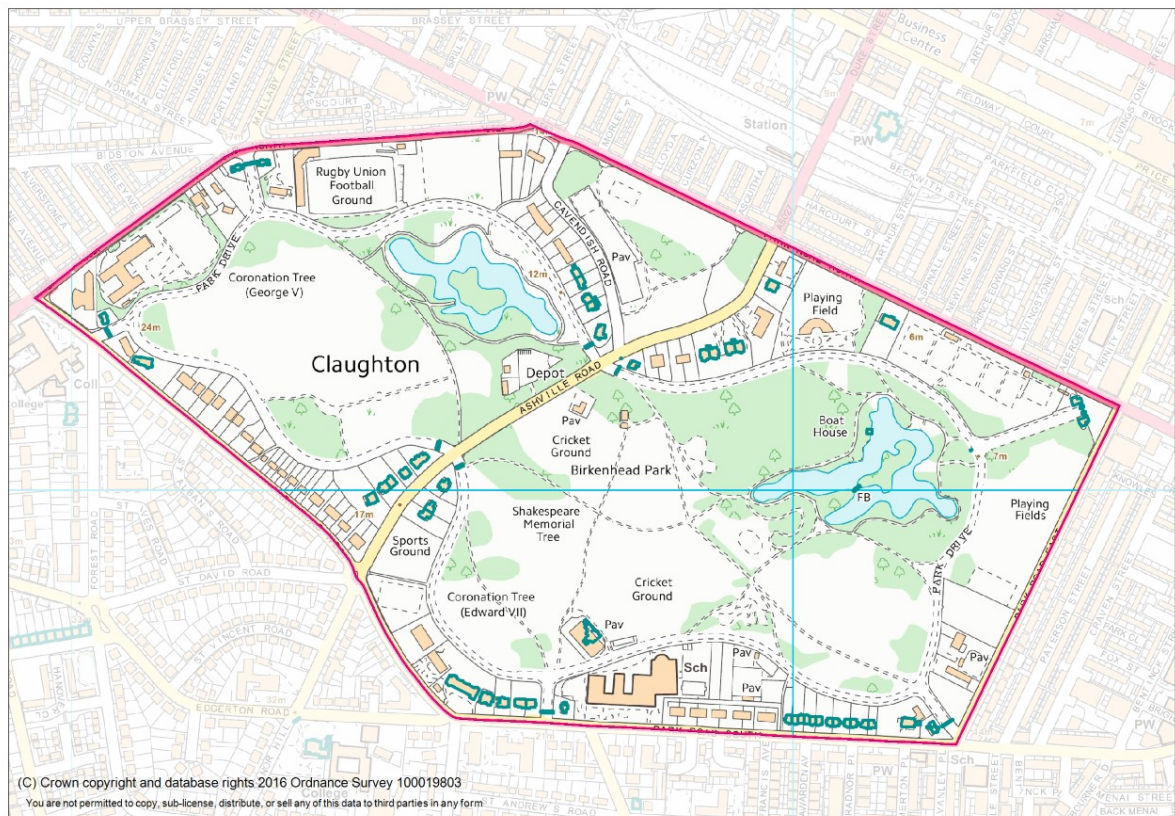


Birkenhead Park – Hamilton Square:



Birkenhead Park:

Birkenhead Park is universally acknowledged as the first publicly funded park in the world. It is recognised as one of the six most important parks in the world and one of Britain's gifts to urban civilisation. It served as the inspiration for Central Park, New York, and numerous other major parks in North America landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted who visited Birkenhead Park for the first time in the summer of 1850. It was (Sir) Joseph Paxton's most important and influential park design and until recently the only Grade I urban park on Historic England's register. Paxton, who was then employed by the 6th Duke of Devonshire as his Head Gardener, was commissioned to design the park in August 1843. The international reputation of Birkenhead Park also depended on the contribution of the landscape gardener, Edward Kemp (1817-91) in his role as its first 'fixed' superintendent from 1843 until his death.

Birkenhead Park is also internationally important for its architectural heritage, in particular the Grand Entrance and eight separate lodges which reflect different building styles (Classical, Medieval, Italianate and Gothic) all of which are Grade II* or Grade II. Currently, there are 42 Grade II* or Grade II listed buildings surrounding the park, including the Grand Entrance with its two adjoining lodges.

Birkenhead Park is a major heritage landmark of international significance, but it suffered from serious neglect and underfunding in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In 1976 the Friends of Birkenhead Park were founded in order to campaign for its conservation and improvement. Finally, in 2004 a major restoration

programme (£11.3 million) was initiated. The original design, as laid down by Paxton, has been preserved virtually unaltered and the park can now be enjoyed in all its splendour. The Friends of Birkenhead Park continue to play an important role in raising the profile of the park, in collaboration with Council staff, and over £1 million has been raised since 2007 to support community involvement and heritage education, as well as developing the Edward Kemp Community Garden and Growing Area as a site for community allotments and training in horticultural and gardening skills. Birkenhead Park remains a focal point for landscape designers, architectural historians, and town-planners from around the world and plans are currently being developed to secure World Heritage Site status for the first publicly funded park ever created.



The sweeping curves of the paths and driveways create a sense of intrigue and suspense, while offering visitors constant vistas to enjoy and 'exquisitely varying scenery', picturesque lakes, rural and ornamental bridges, rockery, sloping mounds, and serpentine walks.



Birkenhead Park collage



Birkenhead Park's Grand Entrance



One of the Park's eight separate lodges



Birkenhead Park visitor centre, part of the £11.25 million restoration scheme, which is a glass pavilion housing a new visitor facility with café and exhibition gallery.

Wirral Council website:

bit.ly/bheadpca

Conservation Areas Wirral website:

www.cawirral.co.uk

Walking, Cycling and Driving all follow the same route to Hamilton Square:

Leave Birkenhead Park from the south end of Ashville Road and straight on at the roundabout into Manor Hill and **Outwood, St Anselm's** can be seen on the left on the corner of Egerton Road.

Heritage Site 11 Outwood, St Anselm's.

Built for the Liverpool merchant, Halsall Segar, from 1862, it was one of a number of substantial mansions erected to the south of the Park. In 1872 it became the home of the Heap family and in 1931 was purchased by the Christian Brothers for a school. Faced in stone it is Italianate in style. Both the house and its grand gateway are listed Grade II.

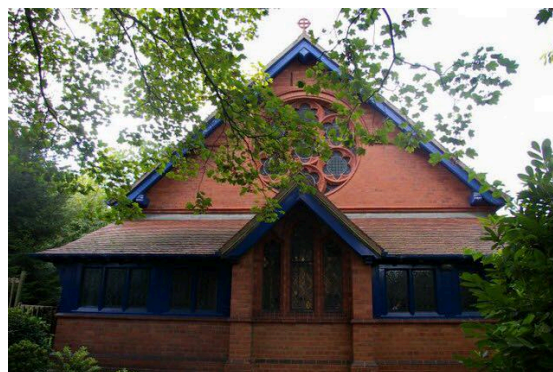


Take the next right, Grosvenor Road, left into Howbeck Road up to Bidston Road, turn left and along past Birkenhead School and left into Beresford Road with **Holy Name Roman Catholic Church** on the left:

Heritage Site 12 Holy Name of Jesus Roman Catholic Church:

An important example of the work of the notable ecclesiastical architect, Edmund Kirby (1838 – 1920) and erected in the orchard of his own home, Overdale, 1899-1900. (The porch, baptistery, Lady Chapel and sacristy were added in 1909.)

The fixtures and fittings are by Kirby himself and his son Edmund Bertram Kirby and the stained glass is by Hardman (1903) and in Arts and Crafts style, by Margaret Agnes Rope (c1918 and 1929) G.II



Continue along Beresford to the end and right into Palm Grove and 2nd left into Mather Road, then right at the crossroads into Slatey Road and the **Williamson Art Gallery** is on the left:

Heritage Site 13 Williamson Art Gallery and Museum

Opened in 1928 and neo Georgian in style, the Williamson was Birkenhead's first purpose built art gallery and museum, replacing the adapted library building that had served that function since 1912. Named after two wealthy benefactors, John and Patrick Williamson, it houses an important collection of artistic and historic works. Extensively refurbished, it is also home to a café, craft and book shops and an art space and offers facilities for educational and group visits.



Leaving the Williamson Art Gallery on your left, turn left at the traffic lights into Ball's Road and as you turn right at the next traffic lights the **Wirral Christian Centre** is on the right:

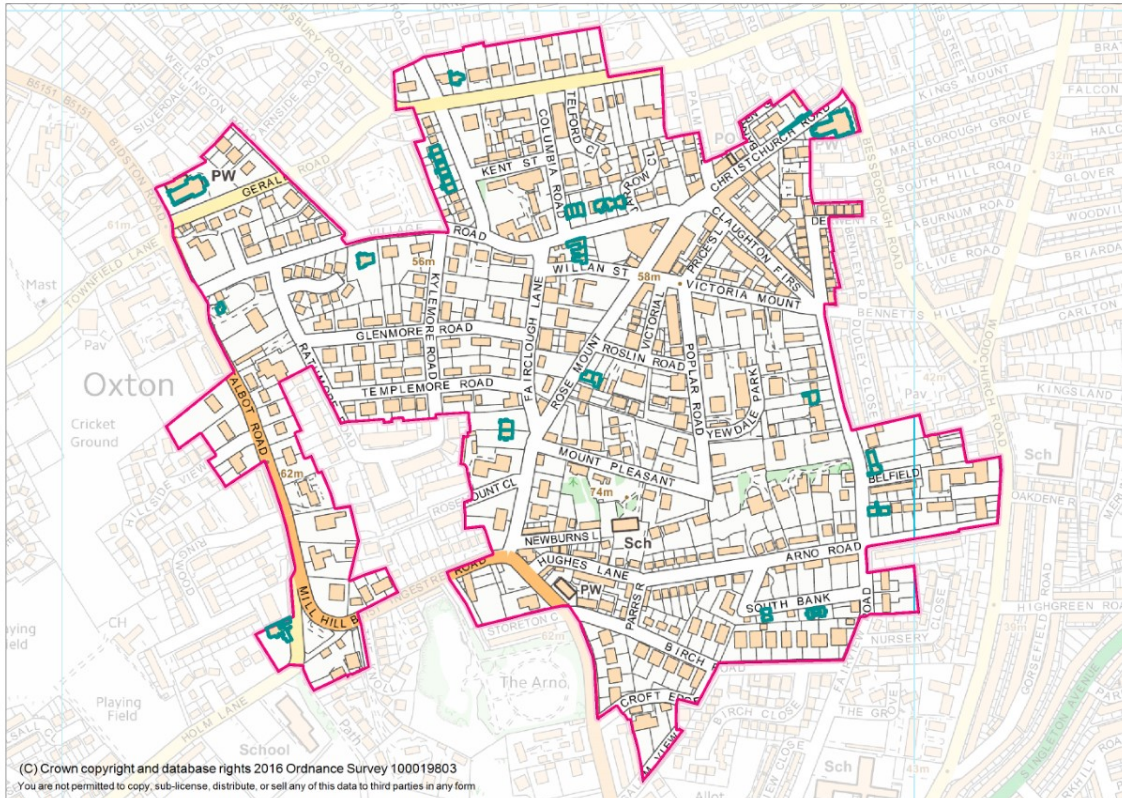


Heritage Site 14 Wirral Christian Centre

Originally Oxton Road Congregational Church, designed by William Cole, it was built 1857-9 in stone with a Welsh slate roof. Its large tower is an important landmark. Left almost derelict, it has now been fully restored.

Having turned right, turn right again after the Vauxhall Garage into Kings Mount, at the end turn right and 1st left around Christ Church up Christchurch Road, turning right into Rose Mount and through Oxton Village:

Oxton Village Conservation Area:



Oxton Village Conservation Area was designated in 1979. The general character of the area reflects its history as an early rural hamlet and subsequent expansion as an early Victorian commuter settlement. A significant area of Oxton was part of the Estate of the Earl of Shrewsbury- this is commemorated in many of the road names, which bear the family names and titles of the various Earls - hence Alton Road, Shrewsbury Road, Talbot Road, Beresford Road, and Ingestre Road.

The boundaries have been drawn to include the "best" and the "ordinary" so that practically the whole of the original hilltop settlement has been included. The village includes a variety of housing, ranging from terraces, to stone built cottages and detached stuccoed villas. They give the area a character which is unique in Birkenhead. A substantial number of houses stand on their own or are semi-detached in spacious gardens. Another key feature of the conservation area is the strong presence of mature trees.

- There are 35 listed buildings and structures within the current conservation area boundary. The majority are listed at Grade II, with the Church of St Saviour listed at Grade II*
- *Alton Road – 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15
- *Arno Road – 14
- *Bidston Road – Oxton Hall Cottage, Church of St Saviour
- *Christchurch Road – Christ Church; entrance gateway, garden wall and corner tower to No 32
- *Fairview Road – 14, 16, 17, 20
- *South Bank – 3, 5, 7, 11, 13
- *Shrewsbury Road – 30
- *Village Road – 3, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 39 (Holly Lodge)
- Willan Street – 2, 4
- Roslin Road - 2
- Rosemount – 16, 18, 39, 41



Oxton Village collage



St Saviour's was built between 1889 and 1892 to replace a church of 1846 that had become too small for the needs of its congregation. The architects were C. W. Harvey with Pennington and Bridgen. The foundation stone was laid on 26 March 1889. The first service was held in the church in 1891, although the tower was not fully built at that time. The building of the tower was completed in the following year, and the church was dedicated on 26 May 1892.



Oxton Villas in Rose Mount (above) and Village Road (below)



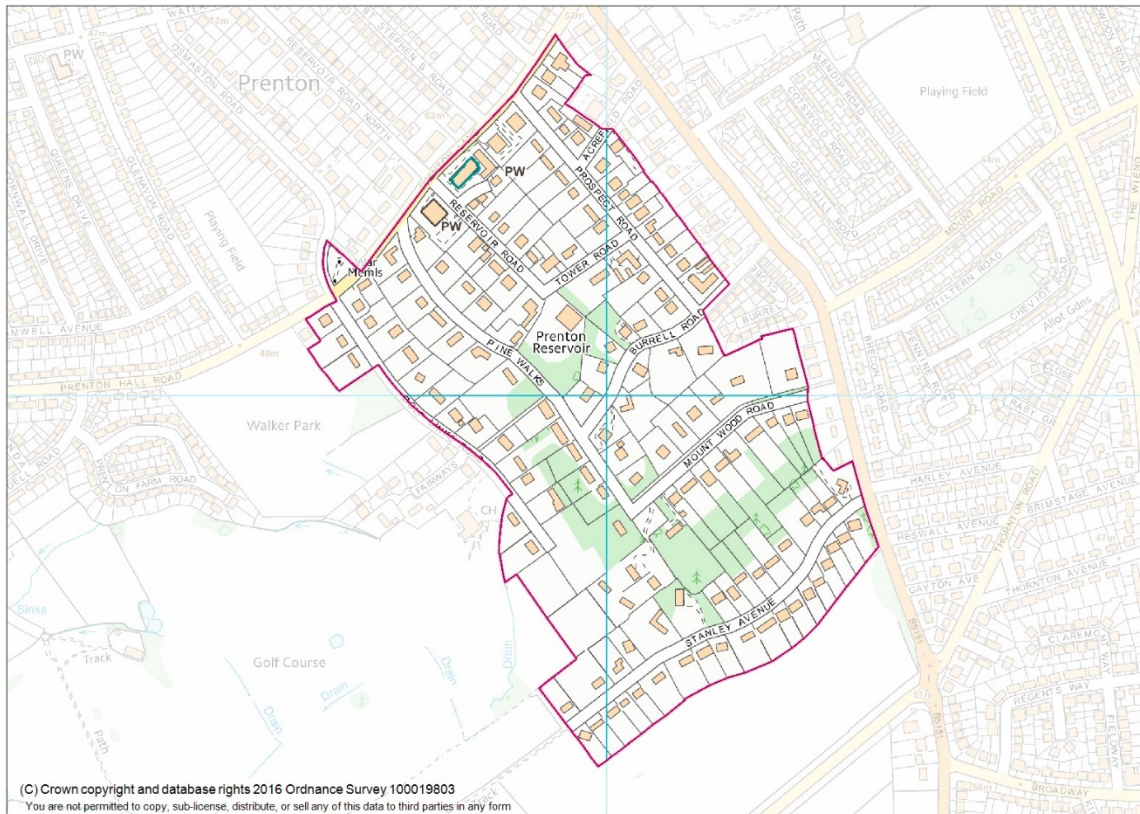
Wirral Council website
Conservatin Areas Wirral website
Oxton Society website

bit.ly/oxtonca
www.cawirral.co.uk
www.oxtonociety.org.uk

From Oxtou:

Continue by turning left into Storeton Road over the 1st set of lights, past The Halfway House and right at the next set of traffic lights into Prenton Lane, then 2nd left into Reservoir Road and Tower Road in **Mountwood** and follow the road right into Prospect Road, right into Burrell Road, left into Pine Walks and left into Mount Wood Road.

Mountwood Conservation Area:



Mountwood

Mountwood Conservation Area was designated in January 2005. Located between Prenton and Higher Bebington, on the outskirts of Birkenhead, Mountwood is an 'unplanned' development. The road layout nevertheless sits comfortably within the landscape, following elements of topography. Burrell Road curves around a former quarry; Mount Wood Road and Pine Walks follow the line of woodland tracks and Acrefield and Prospect Roads follow the lines of former field boundaries.

The houses form an exceptional collection of individual and substantial properties, designed mostly by known architects of the time. The woodland setting has been maintained in their spacious plots which have allowed planting and trees to mature. Greenery therefore now dominates the street scene and plays an extremely important part in defining Mountwood's character.

Many of the houses are by known architects, but Pevsner and Hubbard advise that the best are by Briggs Wolstenholme & Thornley or Sir Arnold Thornley on his own. These include:

- *The White House* Burrell Road
- *West Hill* 1923 Golf Links Road
- *The Homestead* c.1909 Mount Wood Road
- *Pine Grove* c.1910
- *Birch Howe* c.1901 Pine Walks
- *Pine Ridge* 1910
- *Picardy* 1908 Tower Road

Briggs Wolstenholme and Thornley practised throughout Merseyside and their non-domestic work includes Wallasey Town Hall, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Building on Liverpool's Pier Head and (in collaboration with Herbert Rowse) India Building also in Liverpool.



Mountwood collage



The Homestead 1909 Mountwood road (Architect Sir Arnold Thornley designed for himself. Largely hidden from public view)



The White House 10 Burrell Road c1908 (Architects Briggs Wolstenholme and Thornley)



Pine Grove 11 Mountwood Road 1910 (Architects Briggs Wolstenholme and Thornley)



Manor House 1909 Mountwood Road (Architects Briggs Wolstenholme and Thornley. Hidden from public view)



The War Memorial on Prenton Lane (1919) was also designed by Briggs Wolstenholme & Thornley, although Pevsner and Hubbard consider it "an unfortunate design"!

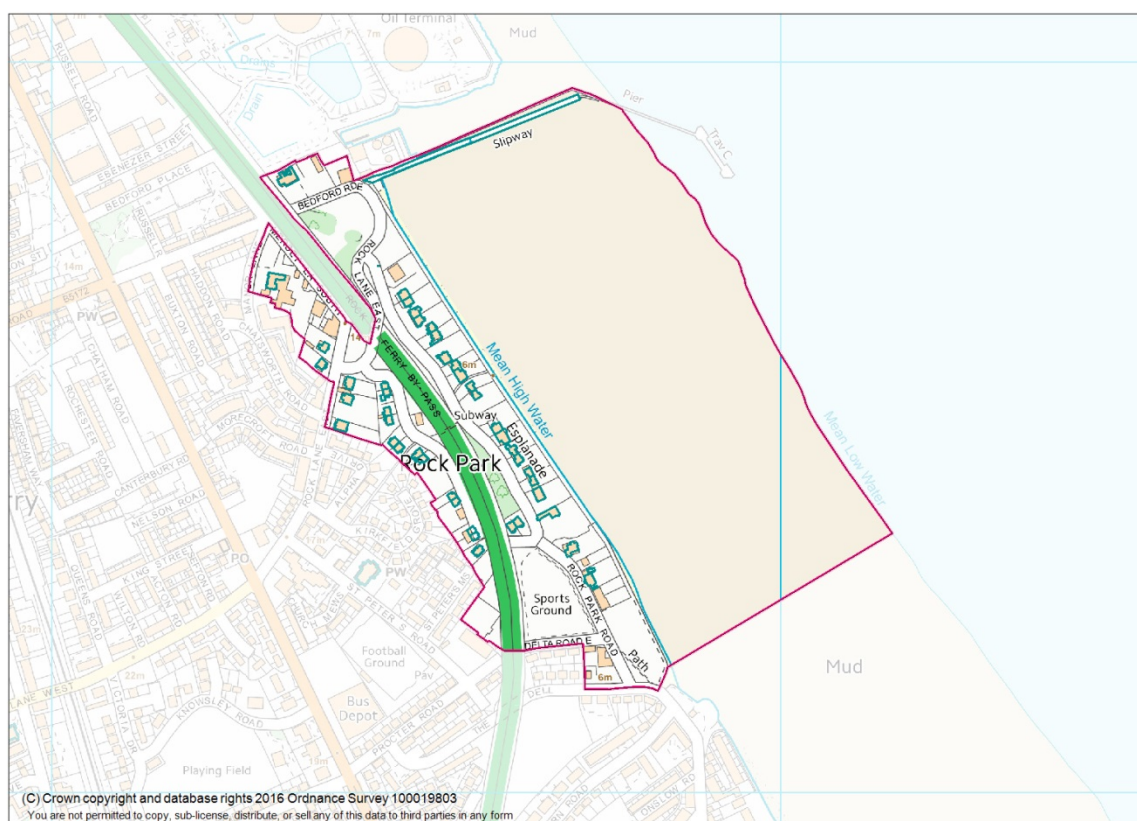
bit.ly/mwoodca

www.cawirral.co.uk

Exit **Mountwood** by turning left into Storeton Road and right at the traffic lights into Mount Road.

Follow the road straight on at each of the next junctions and roundabout into Bedford Drive and Bedford Road past Rock Ferry Station and crossing The Chester Road following the Wirral Circular Trail signs into Rock Park:

Rock Park Conservation Area:



Rock Park, designated in 1979, is one of Merseyside's oldest planned villa estates, begun in the late 1830s, on land bordering the Mersey. Laid out as a residential park by Jonathan Bennison, it catered for the well to do of Liverpool, who could enjoy living in its leafy surroundings with their river views yet be within easy reach by steam ferry of their place of work. The houses were substantial and incorporated much fine architectural detailing. Among prominent former residents was the American author and consul, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Sadly the construction of the New Ferry bypass in the 1970's dissected the Park and destroyed a number of its properties, including Hawthorne's house. Nevertheless 35 Grade II listed buildings still remain.

The conservation area contains 35 buildings that are recorded in the National Heritage List for England as designated listed buildings, all of which are listed at Grade II. The original villas are almost all of a similar status architecturally, therefore one or another cannot be individually singled out as being most significant. The Esplanade is included on the list but is presently unavailable due to its dangerous state of deterioration.

The houses are mainly in the Classical / Italianate and Vernacular Revival / Gothic styles. They share similarities with the slightly later (1840s) buildings in nearby Clifton Park and Birkenhead. Architect Walter Scott (1811-1875) designed numerous

buildings in the Classical / Italianate styles in these two areas. Although these buildings bear some resemblance to the houses in Rock Park, there is no replicated detailing apparent which would indicate that Scott worked there as well.



Rock Park Esplanade



Rock Park collage



Rock Park Villa with Vernacular Revival and Gothic influence



Rock Park Villas with Classical influence

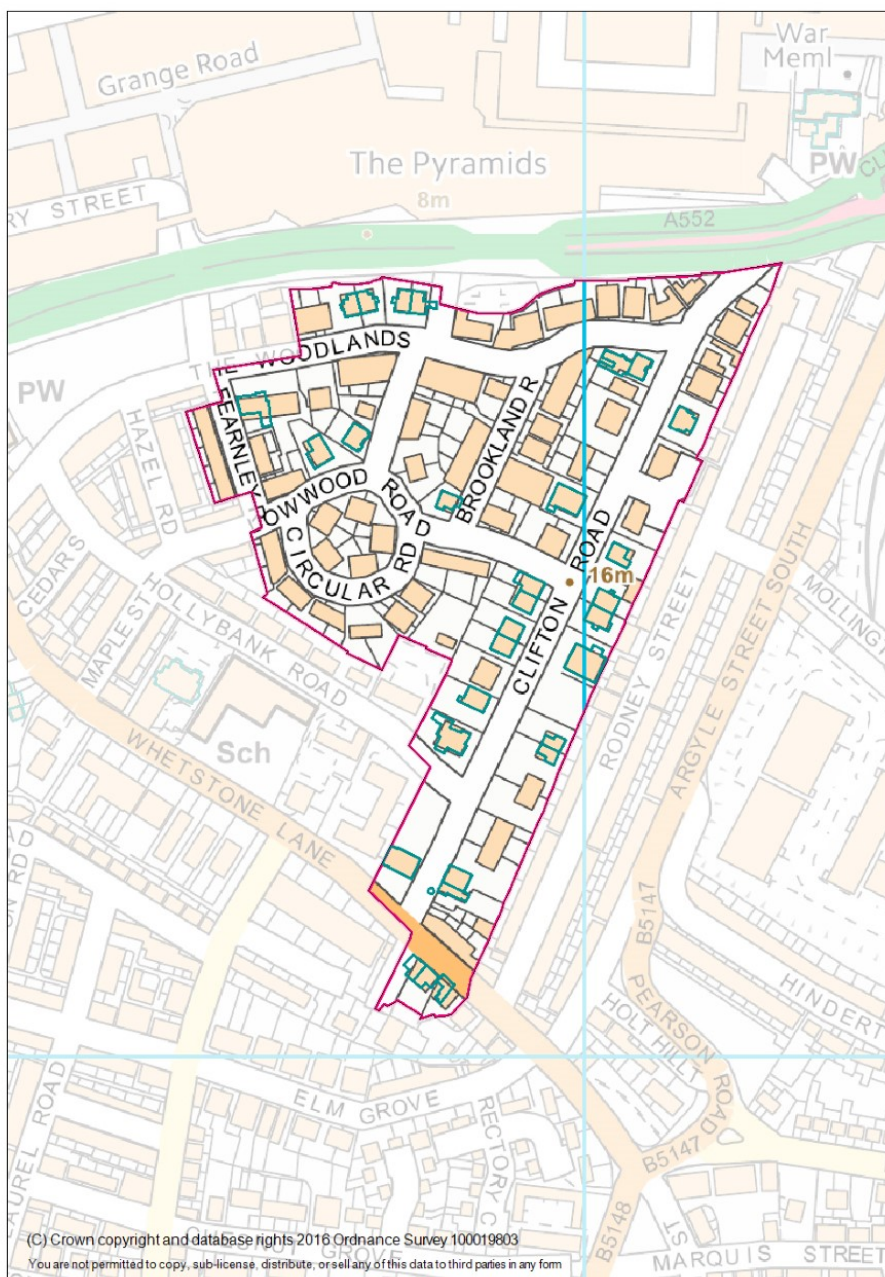
Leave Rock Park via Bedford Road and turn right into New Chester Road:

Walkers and cyclists follow the signs for the Wirral Circular Trail and into Campbelltown Road, continue past the Shipyard buildings on your right to the next big roundabout with Wickes straight ahead.

Drivers: at the large roundabout with KFC on your right, join the main dual carriageway to the next big roundabout with Wickes on the left.

Walkers, Cyclists and Drivers: Take Green Lane, leaving Wickes on your right, keep right and then turn right into Hinderton Road and keep left into Holt Hill, left into Pearson Road and right into Whetstone Lane, right into Clifton Road and into **Clifton Park**.

Clifton Park Conservation Area:



Clifton Park, designated in 2004, dates from the 1840s, when it was laid out as a high quality villa estate, catering for the wealthy merchants of Liverpool, who were able to commute to their offices using the Mersey steam ferries. The park itself and many of its houses were designed by the Birkenhead architect, Walter Scott. Today, though there has been much later development, some two dozen substantial and architecturally interesting properties still survive from the 1840s and 50s and are Grade II listed.

Some two dozen properties survive from the 1840s and 50s and are Grade II listed. These are mainly in Clifton Road and consist of large detached houses or pairs of semis, built in a variety of styles and retaining much of their original detailing. One of the earliest is Fearnley Hall, standing on the corner of The Woodlands and Fearnley Road and dated 1843. It was designed by Walter Scott and has an unusual octagonal lantern turret over its side gable. Also by Scott is the property on the corner of Hollybank and Clifton Road. Built in elaborate Tudor Gothic style, it was at one time the home of F.E. Smith, Lord Birkenhead and former Lord Chancellor. Also in Clifton Road and listed Grade II is the Masonic Temple, built as a dwelling in c. 1845 and part of the original development.



Clifton Park collage



Masonic Temple built as a dwelling c1845



Number 42 and 44 Clifton Road, both designed by Scott and built between 1840 and 1850.



Number 47, Clifton Road 1850s, an original house by Walter Scott

Clifton Park to the Priory:

Walking and cycling: with cycles being pushed where necessary:

Walk down the hill to the bottom of Clifton Road. Turn right into Borough Road. At the lights cross over Borough Road under the flyover into Clifton Crescent. (Note the Clock Tower commemorating Edward VII on the roundabout to your right.)

Turn left into Argyle Street (once the location of Birkenhead's Argyle Theatre). Cross Oliver Street and continue along Argyle Street, using the crossing to your left in Conway Street, until you reach the Wilfred Owen Story. (Open to the public at given times) Cross Argyle Street at the brown sign to the Priory. Walk down Market Street. Cross Hamilton Street and Albion Street. Continue down Market Street to Chester Street (A41). Turn right and cross Tunnel exit at traffic lights then proceed along Ivy Street. Turn right into Priory Street and pedestrian entrance to **The Priory and St Mary's Tower is on your left.**

Driving: return back up Clifton Road and turn left into Whetstone Lane, right into Pearson Road, right into then Holt Hill, right into Hinderton Road and left into Green Lane and return to the A41 roundabout with Wickes on your left. Enter the roundabout taking the 2nd exit in lane 2 and **take the 2nd fork right following the signs for the A41.** As you exit the underpass turn right at the traffic lights into Ivy Street. Take care not to finish up entering the Mersey Tunnel otherwise it will cost you a few extra mile and two lots of tunnel fees !

Follow the Birkenhead Priory signs to go right into Priory Street and The Priory is at the end on the left.

Birkenhead Priory, St Mary's Tower and **No. 4 Dock** are all at this one location.



Heritage Site 16a Birkenhead Priory

The oldest standing building on Merseyside and a Scheduled Monument. Founded in the mid-12th century as a Benedictine monastery, the priory was granted the right to ferry travellers across the Mersey in the 14th century. It was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1536 and the priory church demolished. Today the former Chapter House is consecrated as a place of worship and forms part of the Priory parish. Above it the Scriptorium houses a chapel dedicated to the training ship, HMS Conway. A Museum is located in the north range. The whole site is open to visitors, five days a week.

www.thebirkenheadpriory.org

Heritage Site 16b St Mary's Tower: Once part of Birkenhead's first parish church, designed by Thomas Rickman and consecrated in 1821. The body of the church was demolished in the 1970s but the tower retained. Today it provides an excellent viewing point of the river and a memorial to those who died in the submarine *Thetis* disaster.

Heritage Site 15 Number 4 Dry Dock. (Visible from St Mary's Tower)

Built c. 1857, the dock is 400 feet (c120m) long, with stepped sides. Cut out of natural red sandstone and reinforced by sandstone piers, it still has its original wrought iron gates. On the walls are bollards and cobbles. It is important because a number of historical ships, including the *Alabama*, were built there.



The Priory to Hamilton Square:

Walkers and Cyclists: Exit Priory Street left into Ivy Street and turn right into Chester Street. Cyclists to dismount and walk the short distance and with those walking cross Chester Street at the Pelican Light Controlled Crossing and go down Brandon Street into **Hamilton Square**:

Drivers: Exit Priory Street left into Ivy Street and turn right at the traffic lights into Chester Street, continue to the roundabout, (the very end of the London – Birkenhead A41) and take 1st available left A554 Canning Street then 1st left and 2nd left into **Hamilton Square** with **Birkenhead Town Hall** straight ahead:

RT 24th November.