

ABERCROMBIE STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas Appraisals aim to define and analyse the special interest which constitutes the character and appearance of a place. They give an overview of the history and development of each area and try to define what it is that makes them special. They also identify specific features, which contribute towards their character, for example, historic buildings, and buildings, which are locally significant, important green and open spaces, significant views, natural elements such as trees, and features, which help make an area locally distinctive. It is these qualities, which warrant the designation of a Conservation Area.

The main function of a Conservation Area Appraisal is to ensure that any works in the Conservation Area have regard to the special qualities of the area and to devise a strategy to protect these qualities. Appraisals help us to understand the impact that development proposals would have on a Conservation Area and whether these are acceptable and/or appropriate. Consequently, this Appraisal will be a material consideration when determining applications for development, considering planning appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the Abercrombie Street Conservation Area. It will also form the basis for any future subsequent Management Strategy, which will contain proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area.

Defining the character of an area is not a straightforward exercise and it is impossible to reach a truly objective view. The statement of character and appearance in this appraisal is based on various detailed methods of analysis recommended by English Heritage. As the guidelines point out that “the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms”.

Abercrombie Street was originally designated as a Conservation Area in March 1979. The Appraisal describes the Conservation Area as it is today and identifies the special character and distinctiveness of its setting, buildings and open spaces.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

A Conservation Area is an **'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'**. Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Local Planning Authorities have a duty to designate such areas as conservation areas. The same Act also requires local planning authorities to review periodically Conservation Areas.

Government policies and guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPG 15 advises local planning authorities to define the elements that make the special character or appearance of conservation areas in order to provide a sound basis on which to develop local planning policies, preservation or enhancement strategies and to make development control decisions.

In determining planning applications for development within the Conservation Area and applications for Conservation Area consent, the Council will give considerable weight to the content of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. Consideration of proposals in the context of the description contained in the appraisal will be an important factor in deciding whether a proposal has an adverse affect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and therefore, whether it is contrary to saved Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan Policy EVR30 which is the key policy for the control of development in Conservation Areas. The scope of Policy EVR30 also covers development proposals outside Conservation Areas, which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

3.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The special interest of the Conservation area relates to its historical interest as a wealthy residential development of the Victorian period and its later additions.

- Representative sample of the Victorian housing large detached and semi detached villas and row of terraced houses, and institutional buildings.
- The high proportion of listed buildings particularly the collection of buildings at Abercrombie Street, which has more listed buildings than any other residential road in Chesterfield.
- Harmonious relationship of scale, height and massing in street scene.
- The traditional craftsmanship embodied in traditional building materials, architectural features and detailing consistent throughout the area.
- The leafy character derived from mature trees and shrubs in both private and public gardens and the churchyard in the centre of the Conservation Area.
- The contribution to the character made by the boundary walls and hedges.
- Combination of contained and inward looking views.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

4.1. Location and Context

The Abercrombie Street Conservation Area is located close to the middle of Chesterfield, a few minutes walk north of the town centre. The area is centred on Holy Trinity Church and is bounded to the southeast by the Town Centre Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area comprises the streets and properties enclosed by Abercrombie Street, Sheffield Road and Newbold Road together with a additional contiguous properties including: Nos. 4 to 28 (even) Abercrombie Street, No. 52 Sheffield Road. It also includes the westernmost building Chesterfield College of Art and Technology, together with the immediate site, the St. Helena School Building together with the immediate site area, No.1 Sheffield Road and Holywell House on Holywell Street and the Social Services Office, the site of the Scarsdale Hospital and Nos. 14, 16, 49 and 53 Newbold Road.

4.2 General Character and Plan Form

The Conservation Area follows an informal plan form. The historic street layout and the relationship of built form to open space define the framework of the area. The area is characterised by low-density development of spacious plots with buildings well set back from the streets enclosed by boundary walls. The traditional pattern of development and plot sizes should be respected and used to dictate the scale and level of enclosure or openness appropriate to the Conservation Area.

Two principal roads leading into the town, Newbold Road and Sheffield Road cuts through the Conservation Area and join at its south side into Holywell Street. These principal routes effectively divide the area into three sections. Abercrombie Street running between Newbold Road and Sheffield Road, links them to form a triangular route link within the Conservation Area.

4.3 Landscape setting

The topography of this area has been a key consideration in the development pattern of Abercrombie Street Conservation Area. The area stands on elevated ground with land sloping gently down on the eastern side towards the River Rother. The sloping terrain provides excellent vantage points allowing interesting views across the area and out. These views from within the area to the wider surrounding testify to its areas' setting in the landscape and make a significant contribution to the overall character. To the west, the landscape is flatter in character.

The geology of the area is defined by Coal Measures sandstone sandwiched between the Peak District grit stone to the west and Bolsover magnesia limestone to the east, which together give its surroundings a unique undulating landscape.

5.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

5.1 Historical Background

The development of Chesterfield town centre since the Middle Ages has been mostly to the west of Holywell Street and away from the Parish Church. Not until the late eighteenth century did the first outward movement north of the centre start, when the most ambitious late Georgian architectural terrace was built at Saltergate. Apart from this development, most of the present Abercrombie Street Conservation Area's development took place during the nineteenth century, in particular the Victorian period.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, most of the land between the houses at Saltergate and Newbold Road as well as land between Newbold Road and Sheffield Road were still fields, which may have been earlier strips in the open fields of the medieval town. A few buildings may have existed near the junction of the two roads, probably built in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century and presumably, these could have had post-medieval origins. The surviving remnants of these buildings include Nos. 3-5, 21-23 and 27 (odd) Newbold Road and No. 1 Sheffield Road. According to Porter's map of 1803, there were a few houses built on the west side of Sheffield Road and a chapel school on the east side, on the present site of the west wing of Chesterfield College.

Newbold Road still lay across fields by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The building up along the road began in 1830s. Holy Trinity Church, on the north side of the road, was built in 1837-8 and the former Workhouse of Chesterfield Poor Law Union was built on two fields on the south side of the road in 1838-40.

Abercrombie Street was laid out between Newbold Road and Sheffield Road as the first residential street within the area in the 1840s. The street was named after the Rt. Honourable James Abercrombie (1776 – 1858), a Speaker of the House of Commons who had great interest in education in Chesterfield. It was a purpose-built residential road, which attracted a few prosperous families who built their homes there, with the tone being set by the presence of the Holy Trinity Church. By the mid-nineteenth century, Abercrombie Street was already built up.

5.2 Archaeology

The area may be of archaeological potential, as there is evidence of early mining activity and "Roman urns" were uncovered in Holy Trinity churchyard in the late nineteenth century.

6.0 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Character and Interrelationship of Spaces

The character of the Abercrombie Street Conservation Area is provided by different elements, which combine to give this part of Chesterfield town its distinctive layout and appearance. Apart from certain amount of change, the Abercrombie Street Conservation Area has retained most of its street pattern and its Victorian development. On the other hand, its physical character derives from its relationship with the subsequent industrial prosperity of Chesterfield town through the nineteenth century. Not only did this bring this part of the town into existence, but it also influenced the form of development of the area.

Though there are no significant open spaces, private gardens to the properties with mature trees and shrubs are a vital element to the character of the area. These are intertwined across the whole area providing cohesion between them and when considered as a whole, together with the planned setting out of the streetscape, they give the Conservation Area its unique interest and character.

The Holy Trinity Church, tucked away in the middle provides a focal point to the Conservation Area and its tower may be glimpsed through gaps between buildings. The open space within the Holy Trinity's churchyard provides a contrast to the urban grain of the area and makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The grounds also provide an idyllic setting for the church, which is the most prominent listed building in the Conservation Area.



Private gardens with mature trees and stone walls



Churchyard providing idyllic setting to the church

6.2 Views and Vistas

Views enjoyed throughout the Conservation Area are also fundamental to its special interest. The topography of the area is unique by providing views across it and making an important contribution to the Conservation Area's townscape and character.

Views outside the Conservation Area are limited to the streets, paths and open spaces, which form corridors along which they may be obtained. From the south of the Conservation Area, these corridors provide glimpses of buildings in the town centre and of the landmark - the crooked spire of Parish Church of St Mary's and All Saints - which

makes the town famous, towering over their roofs. To the east of the Conservation Area the land drops away steeply toward the River Rother providing more dispersed views out across the surrounding countryside.



Views out of the area to the south east



Views out to the east

The views within the Conservation Area are contained and intimate in character. They tend to be shorter and contained by buildings, streets, open spaces, boundary walls and groups of mature trees. Most of the properties are set back with front gardens, adding to the quality of the views within the Conservation Area itself, as do the presence of garden trees and shrubs. The front gardens and the stone walls dominate views along most of the streets. Houses are hidden or shielded from the road by these strongly defined enclosing boundary walls creating a sense of seclusion, as the buildings are often not very visible. Glimpses of buildings are obtained from the streets and beyond through garden tree foliage, shrubs and the garden walls. The pinnacles of the tower of the Holy Trinity Church can also be glimpsed in some locations and on top of buildings roofs capes within the Conservation Area.



View along Abercrombie Street east side



Glimpses of the Holy Trinity Church tower

Key views into the Conservation Area include those on the south east from the town centre along Holywell Street; from the north west along Newbold Road; from the north along Sheffield Road and on the south from Scarsdale Health Centre. From the east, looking towards the Conservation Area from across the Hipper River valley, views of the tower of the Holy Trinity Church and those of the St Helena and former Chesterfield Grammar School buildings, as well as glimpses of chimneys above tree foliage are of strategic importance and are a defining feature of the Conservation Area's skyline. Further glimpses of the Holy Trinity Church tower can be experienced when

approaching the Conservation Area from north along Sheffield Road. These views also illustrate the dignified and green leafy nature of Abercrombie Street in contrast to the nearby busy commercial core of Chesterfield town centre.



View from south east along Holywell Street



View from north along Sheffield Road



Views Church tower from Brimington Road



Glimpses of the Church tower over trees from Sheffield Road

7.0 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The urban atmosphere created by the quality of its Victorian development gives the Conservation Area its special character and sense of place. Most of the buildings are well set back from the street frontages, screened by boundary walls. In some places they are complemented by hedges and mature landscaping which provides a generally leafy and peaceful feel. The streets are lined with stone boundary walls which contribute its character in a number of ways; as a unifying element along the street frontages by creating privacy and exclusivity, and because of the visual contribution made by the materials.

7.1 Character Areas

There is a recognisable development hierarchy in the Conservation Area, which can be divided into three character areas as shown on the character area map. The character area boundaries are inevitably subjective in places and not based only on architectural or historic characteristics, but also on their context. The areas are influenced by the cohesive qualities and spatial distribution of development enhanced by land uses, and how it is perceived when walking or driving through them.

7.1.1 Character Area 1: Abercrombie Street

This character area comprises Abercrombie Street, one of the earliest residential streets to be developed in this part of the town and runs between Newbold Road and Sheffield Road. It is also one of the most attractive streets in the town.

The area is a representative sample of mid to late Victorian housing with large detached and semi-detached villas and a row of terraced houses, which create a distinctive street scene. The houses of Abercrombie Street stand as a monument to the wealth, respectability and desire for privacy of their early Victorian builders, some of whose names they still carry, for example Hurst House, which was built by Francis Hurst who was a draper.



Victorian villas at Abercrombie Street



The area also has a leafy character, derived from trees and shrubs in front and rear gardens enclosed by stonewalls. Massed foliage enhances the quiet atmosphere and sense of privacy within the area, characteristics which are a result of low-density development and the seclusion of the street between major road routes. The size and quality of the houses, the feeling of spaciousness and salubrity, and the overly

planned form of development play a major role in emphasising the characteristics of the area. An overall harmony derives from its human scale and consistency in materials: ashlar and rubble stone occasionally “parallel-grooved”, timber joinery and slate roofs.



Stone Terrace



Leafy character (Abercrombie Street)

7.1.2 Character Area 2: Sheffield Road

This character area contains an important group of large buildings along Sheffield Road. It is mostly dominated by institutional buildings including the west wing building to Chesterfield College and St Helena School, and the Holy Trinity Church. Other buildings include the Rutland Residential Home.

The buildings are set in large plots with mature trees and planting which soften the hard landscape and add lushness providing an important character feature of the area. The whole area has commanding views over the Valley of Rother River.

The architecture here includes large scale and impressive buildings with a mixture of architectural styles. Unifying this variety of architecture as well as the common palette of materials is the embellishment of high quality architectural details. High stone boundary walls with gate piers add to the quality of the area’s character.



Sheffield Road



Rutland Residential Home Sheffield Road

7.1.3 Character Area 3: Newbold Road

The area is characterised by a mixture of late twentieth century and early twenty first century developments on earlier built sites and mid Victorian buildings. It is mostly comprised of the housing development on the former Scarsdale Hospital site consisting

of flats, houses and a nursing home partly in the converted former Chesterfield Union Workhouse and St Helen's Close apartments.

The area has a visual harmony resulting from use of a limited palette of materials and a harmonious relationship of scale, height and massing in the street scene.



Development along Newbold Road



7.2 Quality of the Buildings and their contribution to the area

Buildings of all periods contribute to the diversity and interest of the area. Many are of high quality and are listed. Along with the buildings, the planned setting out of the streetscape, with boundary walls and mature planting, make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

The most distinctive characteristic of the area is the defined built environment of high quality Victorian architecture. A broad mix of buildings in classical Regency, Gothic Revival and Italian architectural styles creates a picturesque townscape. Most of the buildings represent good examples of the styles of the period during which they were built. Most were designed to conform to an established high quality design principle. The speculative nature of development in the area produced the individuality of building styles with some of the styles being repeated throughout the area, many with the same design principles, features and details which had been employed already. This created an area with a cohesive character, clearly distinct from that of other areas in the town.

Most of buildings within the Conservation Area are of two to three storeys. The consistent use of local materials and same basic approach gives cohesion to the area. A characteristic feature in many of the buildings is the use of local Derbyshire coal measures sandstone and red brick. The stone is usually coursed, with the surface of the blocks showing a tooled finish in some buildings. A harder grit stone was used mostly for dressings including lintels, quoins, window surrounds and ashlar finish on walls.

Roof profiles are fundamental to the architectural character of a building or group, and contribute greatly to the character of an area. The roofs in the Conservation Area contribute significantly to the character of the individual buildings and the area as a whole. Most of the buildings have hipped roofs punctuated by elaborate stone and brick chimneys situated at the ridge, either at the gable end or part way along the ridgeline. The gable chimneys are built within the thickness of the external wall or expressed on the gable wall. Chimney stacks and pots form striking features when seen against the skyline.

Original windows and doors, including their detailing, materials and method of opening make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Typically, the windows are single glazed, double hung, timber sashes or timber casements and painted white. Some of the buildings incorporate canted bay windows with marginal-light sash. There is a variety of doors, many with rectangular fanlights.

7.2.1 Listed Buildings

Listed buildings in the Conservation Area tend to comprise the Victorian buildings built during the mid and late nineteenth century.

Abercrombie Street

Hurst House stands at the Sheffield Road end of the street on the south side, built in circa 1840 on an enviable position overlooking the whole valley of the Rother River. The house is of two-storeys in a mock Italian style. The building as well as the gatepiers, gates and street boundary wall to its garden is grade II listed . It is currently used as an Adult Education Centre. Almost opposite Hurst House on the north side of the street is **No.28** which was also built circa 1840. It is two-storeys and built of ashlar with quoins and band at first floor, a hipped slate roof with wide eaves. The building as well as its garden wall, gate piers and corner pier is grade II listed.



Hurst House



No. 28

At the Newbold Road end on the north side there is a terrace, **Nos. 4 to 16 (even)**. The terrace is of two storeys, seven bay wide. Built in early nineteenth century, it is of coursed stone with wide eaves and a hipped slate roof. The terrace is grade II listed.



Nos. 4 to 16



Listed wall to Hurst House

Newbold Road

Nos. 21-23 (odd) and No. 27 form part of the first group of houses on Newbold Road on the south side. Nos. 21-23 are late eighteenth/early nineteenth century cottages forming one building. The cottages are of three storeys, built of red brick facade with end chimneys and stone slate roof. Next to the cottages is No.27, also two storey and built of roughcast rendered façade with a pantile roof. Nos.21-23 and 27 are grade II listed.



Nos. 21 -23 Newbold road



No. 27

The Holy Trinity Church, was designed by Architect Johnston and built in 1838 on land provided by William 6th Duke of Devonshire. The church was built to meet the needs of the local people who could not fit into the existing Parish Church of St. Mary and All Saints. It is built of hard gritstone in plain Gothic style with a pinnacled west tower. The Church was altered in 1889 and in 1938 a stone porch was added to the west of the tower. The remains of the great engineer, George Stephenson, who died in 1848 are buried beneath the altar, where a slab simply bears his initials G.S. In more recent years a memorial slab was laid in front of the altar with the inscription "George Stephenson, 1781-1848, Railway Pioneer. First President of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers." The church is grade 'C' listed.



Holy Trinity Church



Boundary wall railing at the Holy Trinity Church

Almost opposite south side of the church is the **Derbyshire County Council Social Services Department building** built in 1895, an elaborate classical building of red brick with stone dressings. The building is two storeys and a slate roof with coped gable

ends. It is one of the most architecturally detailed buildings in the Conservation Area and is grade II listed.



Social Services Department Building



Central entrance details

The Scarsdale Hospital (former Chesterfield Union Workhouse) building was built in 1838-40 and was designed by George Gilbert Scott and his partner William B. Moffatt. Originally, it comprised three main buildings, the main workhouse block, an entrance range, and a U-shaped hospital flanked by workshops. Of these only the main workhouse survives, the rest have been demolished and new blocks of buildings built in their place. The main workhouse block is rather austere, built of red brick with stone dressings and has a slated roof. The building has mid nineteenth century additions and mid twentieth century and early C21 alterations. It is a grade II listed building.



Former Chesterfield Union Workhouse



Rear of the Workhouse



No. 47 Newbold Road



No. 47 at the junction of Newbold Road and Abercrombie Street, south side, is two storeys with a hipped slate roof and bracketed eaves. It is built of red brick to Newbold Road, with ashlar façade to Abercrombie Street. The building has a centre trellis porch and is grade II listed.

Sheffield Road

Holywell House, at the junction of Sheffield Road and Holywell Street on the site of the former Royal Hospital is a Georgian two-storey building, early nineteenth century which was used by the hospital as a postgraduate medical centre. The south east faced ashlar with eaves band and hipped roof. North eastern façade facing the street, is of red brick and has triple span hipped roof. Windows are sashes with glazing bars. The building is grade II listed and now used as Medical Centre.

No. 1 Sheffield Road is a C18 house, built in red brick with stuccoed quoins and band above plinth and above ground and first floor. Two storeys (building apparently reduced to this height in nineteenth century), slate roof, shallow pitch with bracketed eaves. The building is grade II listed and currently used as a restaurant.



Holywell House



No. 1 Sheffield Road

St Helena School was designed by Architect George H. Widdows in a Baroque and Jacobean influence and built in 1911. It is of red brick with stone dressings and tiled roof. The plan is a St. Andrew Cross with north south wings across centre and along façade, the later of two and half storeys with three gables.



St Helena School



West wing Building Chesterfield College

Next to St. Helena School is **Western Building to Chesterfield College** formerly Chesterfield Boy's Grammar School. The boy's grammar school was re-founded in 1594 when it occupied St. Helen's Chapel. A plaque in the stone wall bounding the present school commemorates the site. The school was rebuilt in 1709 and after a considerable decline in the early nineteenth century the school was rebuilt in 1846. Famous pupils include, in early C18, Thomas Secker later Archbishop of Canterbury, Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin. It is built of coursed stone with quoins and moulded band at first floor with a fishscale and plain tile banded roof.

No. 52 Sheffield Road is a mid nineteenth century building built in Gothic style. The building is three storeys high with symmetrical façade and built in red brick with stone dressings and slate roof. It has coped gables with finials linked by balustraded parapet with finials.

7.2.2 Buildings contributing to the character of the area

Abercrombie Street Conservation Area contains a high concentration of listed buildings reflective of the quality of the environment. However, buildings of all periods contribute to the diversity and interest of the area. This may be due to their value within the townscape, their architectural qualities or local historic or cultural associations.

Many of the buildings are constructed and detailed using natural materials and consist in the main of Regency-style detached houses on Abercrombie Street, built in stone. Of most interest, forming a group and contributing positively to the character of the area are Nos. 24, 26 and 9 (Pine Bank). Although these buildings are not given the legal protection it is expected that particular care will be given to the repairs, alterations and extensions and that there will be a presumption against their demolition. Additionally their setting will be given special consideration when planning applications are considered.



No. 24 Abercrombie Street



No 26 Abercrombie Street



No 14 & 16 Newbold Road



No. 18 Abercrombie Street

Some of recent development in the Conservation Area do also contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. These include the development on the former site of Scarsdale Hospital along Newbold Road incorporating the former Chesterfield Union Workhouse which is listed.



Development along Newbold Road on former site of Scarsdale Hospital



Policies to protect buildings of particular local importance for their architectural or historic interest will be included in the *Local Development Framework* (emerging) and will also be considered for inclusion on the Local List of Buildings of Interest, which is currently being prepared by the Council.

7.3 Activity and Land Use

The predominant uses within the Conservation Area are residential and institutional. Detached and semi-detached houses and terraces constitute the vast majority of residential properties. There are also a number of flatted properties within the Conservation Area. The institutional uses constitute properties providing for education, health and care services including Chesterfield College, St Helena School, Derbyshire Social Services Offices, Rutland Residential Home and Stirling Court.

There are limited local amenities within the area. There are two small groups of shops one forms part of a local shopping centre at the north-west end along Newbold Road. The other is located at the junction of Newbold Road and Sheffield Road including two restaurants, dance wear shop and music shop.



Shops along Newbold Road



Shops at Newbold & Sheffield Roads junction

A number of properties are of commercial use including Hurst House, Nos. 9 (Pine Bank) and No. 28 along Abercrombie Street. There is one church in the Conservation Area: Holy Trinity Church along Newbold Road and a Medical Centre situated at the junction of Sheffield Road and Holywell Street.

7.4 Prevalent Building Materials and Public Realm

The materials of construction of buildings are important as they provide character and when used consistently on a number of buildings, they enhance the character of an area. This is true to Abercrombie Street Conservation Area where the materials used contribute to the unifying features within the Conservation Area – especially stone and brick. The geology of the area has given rise to the locally based building materials, the predominant building material being the local coal measures sandstone. The stone weathers to a warm brown colour and it is relatively soft and splits rather too easily. Consequently, a harder grit stone was preferred material for dressings including lintels, quoins and window surround. This lighter coloured less weathered detailing makes a pleasing contrast with the thin irregular courses of dappled sandstone and gives buildings much of their character.



Ashlar stone



Slate roof



Tooled stone wall



Red Brick wall in Flemish bond

There is little of historic interest in ground surface treatments and street furniture within the Conservation Area. The traditional street surface materials have been altered over the years. All the main routes and footpaths are covered with tarmac. Schemes to restore the traditional street surface would greatly enhance the character of the area and promote its context. Abercrombie Street, which once was covered with stone sets, could benefit to such schemes and would greatly enhance the street.

7.5 Architectural details

The preservation of so many traditional architectural details contributes to the special interest of the area. The variety of windows, doors and roofs enliven the area and give variety and interest to the street scene. Below are examples of prevailing architectural details within the Conservation Area.



Architectural details within the area

7.6 Walls, Trees and Green Spaces

The Conservation Area is rich in local townscape details that cumulatively give interest and quality to the street scene and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. They range from distinctive boundary treatments and street furniture, to trees and hard landscaping. Individually and collectively, contribute to the overall quality of the area.

Walls, hedges and trees are all important in creating the character of the Conservation Area. It is their spatial distribution linking buildings, gardens and open spaces; their visual appearance and their colour which combine to give the area's unique character.



Stone boundary walls



The treatment to the property boundaries is critical for defining the street scene within an area. Stone walls are a defining and reoccurring feature throughout the Conservation Area. The walls vary in height, in some parts, they are a metre or so and in other parts, they are close to two metres and more. Some sections of the walls to front gardens have been supplemented with hedge planting providing additional screening and in some are topped up with railings. They line the streets, provide a link between buildings and give privacy for their occupiers.

The stone boundary walls with stone copings – some in vermiculated rustication, gate piers and timber and iron gates are prominent features from the road and their diverse designs enriches the streetscape. Many of the walls have gateposts that have been designed to match the architecture of the corresponding property. The walls and posts are in keeping with the character of the buildings, and they help to provide cohesion to the whole character of the area. Without these, the character of the area would be completely altered.



Stone boundary walls copings



Gate and gate piers



Hedges over stone walls



Stone coping showing removed railings holes

Evidence of cast iron railings once enclosed the front gardens of properties with short stone walls providing an attractive secure edge to the properties. However, many of these railings were removed during the Second World War and boundary treatments subsequently have become a mixture of modern railings, hedges and timber panels. Original railings survive on the boundary wall of the Holy Trinity Church churchyard along Sheffield Road and Newbold Road.

Formal landscape and publicly accessible spaces in the Conservation Area are limited. The St Helena School walled garden to the east of the building is the only formally conceived open space, however it is in a poor state of maintenance and almost abandoned. The Holy Trinity Church churchyard is the only publicly available space. Private gardens and spaces are the main landscape feature and have biodiversity value. They contribute in providing a soft edge between properties and form a vital element to the character of the area.

The Conservation Area is abundant in mature trees with a significant number of the trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The trees provide a scenic and dramatic feature and contribute to the street scene throughout the area. The penetration of open space afforded by Holy Trinity churchyard provides an opportunity for mature trees. This cluster of mature trees adds to greenery into the area. There are also mature trees to the north along Sheffield Road (west side) which contribute to the street scene together with trees between Chesterfield College and St Helena School.



Trees in the churchyard



Trees to north of St Helena School building

8.0 Problems and pressures

The consistency and survival of most the historic buildings in the Conservation Area has resulted in a rich urban context. Lack of understanding of this architectural and space composition would result in loss of detail and threaten the integrity of the buildings and the area as a whole.

The main problems of the Conservation Area are those associated with the care and management of historic buildings and spaces in relation to modern pressures on land and building uses. These problems and pressures are considered in more detail below, followed by recommendations for the future management of the Conservation Area.

8.1 Inappropriate development and extensions

Loss of traditional garden plots to infill and boundary walls for off-street parking is affecting the landscape and biodiversity value of the area. The original environment of some of the gardens has been eroded by infilling with new developments or paving. Unsympathetic infill developments undermine the character and special interest of the Conservation Area. Recent new developments ignore to follow the predominant design, scale and local architectural features and use of traditional materials. Some buildings have inappropriate extensions which detract from their character.



Loss of front gardens for parking



Inappropriate infill development



New developments





Extensions to properties



8.2 Use of inappropriate materials

Use of inappropriate materials is a threat to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Traditional windows, doors and rainwater goods have been replaced with uPVC, stonework repairs on boundary walls and buildings by inappropriate use of cement and replacement of original slate roofs has made considerable impact on the deterioration of the quality of the Conservation Area. The use of timber panel fencing on top of stone garden walls is remarkably unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Non-matching uPVC replacement window on the left



Timber panel fencing on top of stone wall

8.3 Poor Maintenance of buildings and gardens

The care and maintenance of individual properties and private gardens affects the character of the area as a whole. Poor maintenance/inappropriate alterations to properties has affected the Conservation Area resulting into dilution of its character and appearance. Overgrown shrubs can also create hazards for people in the public realm. A neglected empty plot behind No. 9 Abercrombie Street is overgrown with vegetation and makes it vulnerable from waste dumping. An unmaintained walled garden to St Helena School dilutes the character of the Conservation Area. Another problem is the creation of hard-standing in some of the gardens for parking. Proper use and maintenance of these gardens will enhance this part of the area.



Overgrown plot behind Pine Bank building



Unmaintained garden at St Helena School

8.4 Unsympathetic alterations and loss of architectural details

Unsympathetic alterations and repairs is a common phenomenon in the Conservation Area. These alterations have resulted in the loss of certain architectural and historic features adversely diluting the character and special interest of the area. Poor quality replacement doors and windows have been inserted in properties. These have had a significant and detrimental impact on the architectural integrity of individual buildings.



Inappropriate window replacements



Inappropriate repair of traditional stone walls



Loss of chimney pots - left



Replacement plastic gutters - right

8.5 Small-scale accretions

Changing trends and requirements have led to the modernisation of traditional properties, with many of the properties having been altered to accommodate the requirements of modern users. These changes have significant cumulative impact on the character of individual buildings. Satellite dishes, telephone wires and poles, alarm boxes and other minor additions may also have an adverse impact on the character of the area. Careful siting and choice of materials and colours can significantly reduce the impact of these elements. Redundant wires should be removed.

8.6 Loss of single-family dwellings

Some of the buildings within the Conservation Area have been adapted to new uses other than their original use. Loss of single-family dwellings to flats and businesses has an impact on the architectural integrity of historic buildings through subdivisions and extensions, additional buildings and associated pressures on public realm for parking and fire escapes etc. The conversion of the properties has also resulted into loss of original interiors and fabric as well as changes to the exterior.

8.7 Traffic Issues

Parking has become a problem to the Conservation Area particularly on Abercrombie Street, which may be associated with the proximity to the town centre and conversion of some of the properties in business and institutional use. The volume of commuter parking creates significant pressures for on-street parking on the street. The excessive on-street parking is usually intrusive and degrades the quality of the street and the Conservation Area as a whole.

9.0 Recommended Management Proposals

In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990, Chesterfield Borough Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. All development proposals in a conservation area will also need to be judged on their effect on the character or appearance of the area as set out in Policy EVR 30 of the Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan 2006, as well as the Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15).

All development proposals within the Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the area's character or appearance. Development within the setting of the Conservation Area should also respect the character of the area. The Council has a duty to draw up proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. These proposals seek to establish guidelines for the controlled and positive management of change in the Conservation Area to allow for development and alterations to keep the area's characteristics and appearance, which make it special.

The established character of the Abercrombie Conservation Area must be protected in order to maintain its special architectural and historic interest. Any alteration or extension of existing buildings in the Conservation Area should be carried out in a sensitive way and which takes account of the established character. There are no sites, which could accommodate substantial development within the Conservation Area. Infilling existing open space would alter the historic and locally distinctive form of the area. Some improvement or enlargement of existing buildings may be possible, however, the Council will seek to secure high quality schemes that respond positively to their historic setting. The following guidance is recommended for future management of the area.

9.1 New Development

All development must respond to its immediate environment – its context, in terms of scale, density, form, materials and detailing. Applications for planning permission must provide a "Design and Access Statement", to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme was developed and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context.

The emphasis in any proposed development or replacement building must always be on the need to provide a high quality of design. Whilst the Council will expect new development within the Conservation Area to display sensitivity to its visual and historic context, in terms of massing, materials and detail, there may be scope for innovative modern design. New development should not necessarily aim to slavishly copy details of earlier styles, but that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole, which has a well-established character and appearance. Good contemporary design can be used to create positive change in historic areas and may be appropriate in listed buildings provided it respects their scale, form and historic development.

The Abercrombie Street Conservation Area has a distinct "grain" or built form, of historic development. This gives the Conservation Area great individuality, characterised by

well-designed and detailed large buildings. This “grain” is an important part of the character of the Conservation Area and has to be protected. Proposals for development must include a detailed analysis of the area and demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the streetscape and how it developed and including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

Scale, which is a combination of building’s height and bulk when related to its surrounding, is an important consideration in new or replacement developments. For proposals for new or replacement buildings, such as garages or outbuildings, applicants must provide accurate elevations of the surrounding buildings showing how the new structure will relate to them.

Views within, into and out from the Conservation Area make an important contribution to the character of the area. These should be respected and protected from inappropriate forms of development.

9.2 Demolition, extensions and alterations

Conservation Area Consent is required for demolition of a building within a conservation area. Demolition of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to area’s special architectural or historic interest will be resisted unless it can be shown that they are wholly beyond repair, incapable of beneficial use or their removal or replacement would enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council will ensure that all unlisted buildings and structures, which positively contribute to the character or appearance of the area, are protected from inappropriate alterations, extensions or unjustified demolition.

Extensions must respect the form and character of the original building its location and use of high quality material and detailing. Almost all the original houses in the Conservation Area are finely detailed. Similar standards of detailing and quality of building materials will be expected on any proposed extension. For listed buildings, this is particularly important. Design should be of high quality, whether modern or traditional. Extensions should not overlook neighbouring properties, lead to an unacceptable loss of garden space, or result in the loss of historic plot boundaries. Extensions must take into account the scale of the existing building, and should not dominate or overwhelm it.

Some alterations to traditional buildings in the area have not been sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area, such as additional of porches. Applications for development of this type will be carefully assessed and inappropriate proposals will be refused. Enforcement action is recommended in cases of unauthorised works, which adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area.

The commonest window type within the Conservation Area is glazed painted timber windows either in the form of sliding sashes and side hung casement windows. Listed Building Consent is always required to alter the form of fenestration in listed buildings. It should be emphasised that the presence of windows of traditional design which are in-keeping with the building they belong to and which respect the historic character of the area, make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Modern top-hung lights and modern materials such as uPVC or aluminium are generally unacceptable in the Conservation Area. Front doors should also usually be painted timber reflecting local styles. Plastic windows and doors on unlisted buildings are unsustainable and detract from the character of the area. Consideration should be given to alternative ways of complying with Building Regulations if traditional windows are to be used. In all cases, joinery details should be submitted with Listed Building Consent and planning applications. All windows and doors that are of historic interest must be retained.

Alterations to the roof of a dwelling, which materially alter its shape including dormer windows, will not normally be permitted.

9.3 Repairs

Repairs to existing historic buildings and structures must be taken sensitively to ensure that the appearance and condition of their fabric is not harmed. Regular maintenance of historic buildings can help to avoid the costly repair work required to rescue a building from dereliction. It is especially important to ensure that buildings are kept weather-tight to prevent further deterioration and for this reason, it is necessary to keep roofs and rainwater goods in particular in a good state of repair. Attempts should be made to repair traditional windows where possible in order to conserve the historic character of the Conservation Area, and many cases to prevent the loss of historic fabric.

9.4 Boundary treatments

Throughout the Conservation Area, stonewalls contribute positively to its character. Alterations to boundary walls or inappropriate repair techniques such as use of cement mortars or unsuitable pointing has occurred in some cases. Protection of boundary walls is a high priority and they should not be neglected. Traditional repairs with lime mortar should be encouraged. For new or replacement boundaries in the Conservation Area it is important that local materials and detailing are used. Modern alternatives such as timber-panelled fencing are not acceptable.

9.5 Landscape management

The trees and other soft landscaping within the gardens and grounds of buildings are valuable and attractive components of the Conservation Area. Trees provide a significant contribution to the special character and appearance of conservation areas and there are special provisions for their protection. The designation of the Conservation Area protects trees by requiring owners to give the local planning authority six weeks notice of an intention to carry out any tree work on trees that are 75mm or over in diameter at 1.5m from the ground. The notice is to allow the local planning authority an opportunity to inspect the tree(s) and determine whether they are worthy of a Tree Preservation Order. Where appropriate the Council will use its powers to make Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees that are under threat. Planting new specimen trees should be encouraged to provide and maintain a varied age range of trees and sustain the appearance of the area for the future.

9.6 Satellite dishes, antennae and security fittings

Satellite dishes, antennae and security fittings should be positioned so as to minimise their visual impact on the character and appearance of the properties within the Conservation Area. Antennae and satellite dishes will not be permitted on a chimney, wall or roof slope, which both faces onto and is visible from a road.

9.7 Proposed Article 4(2) Direction

Unlisted residential buildings in conservation areas are afforded very little protection from unsympathetic alterations. A certain amount of unsympathetic change has occurred across the Conservation Area eroding its character and appearance, but not to such an extent that the Conservation Area has completely lost its value. The Conservation Area has experienced some changes such as replacement upvc windows, removal of boundary walls and replacement of chimneys. Although such changes may be minor, cumulatively, can contribute to a decline in the appearance and harm the character of the Conservation Area.

One of the tools for preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas is an Article 4(2) Direction. An Article 4(2) Direction has been introduced within the Conservation Area to encourage the retention of historic and architectural features which contribute to the character or appearance, and to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

The Direction includes some dwelling houses within the Abercrombie Street Conservation Area (see map), but only affecting those elevations which front onto a road (including side elevations of corner properties). Rear elevations facing the back lanes are not included. Any new building work at the rear is likely to require planning permission under existing legislation. Commercial properties and flats do not benefit from permitted development rights and changes are therefore already controlled.

10.0 Boundary Changes

As part of the process of producing this appraisal, variation to the existing Conservation Area boundary has been made and some areas added. The inclusion of these areas received support from the public consultation and it was determined have they have special architectural or historic interest or contribute positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and are desirable to be preserved and enhanced. The variations to the current boundary include:

- (a) **Boundary extension to the north of the Conservation Area to include Abercrombie Primary School buildings and No. 43 Victoria Street, No. 68 St Helen's Street, No.54 and Nos. 5 to 17(odd) Sheffield Road plus No. 19 Sunny Springs and the north west building, Chesterfield College.**

The area consists of some buildings, which contribute to the special interest of the area. This also applies to walls and gates, which help to define the approaches to the Conservation Area. The inclusion of this area would benefit from the protection afforded by the Conservation Area designation and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.



Abercrombie Primary School



Nos. 13 to 17 Sheffield Road

- (b) **Include the walled garden to St Helena School to the east of the building.**

The garden forms part of the original setting of the building and, although not maintained and partly used as a car park, has inherent value and is important when viewed from within the Conservation Area and indeed from outside. Its inclusion may provide an opportunity for future enhancement strategies.

11.0 Community involvement

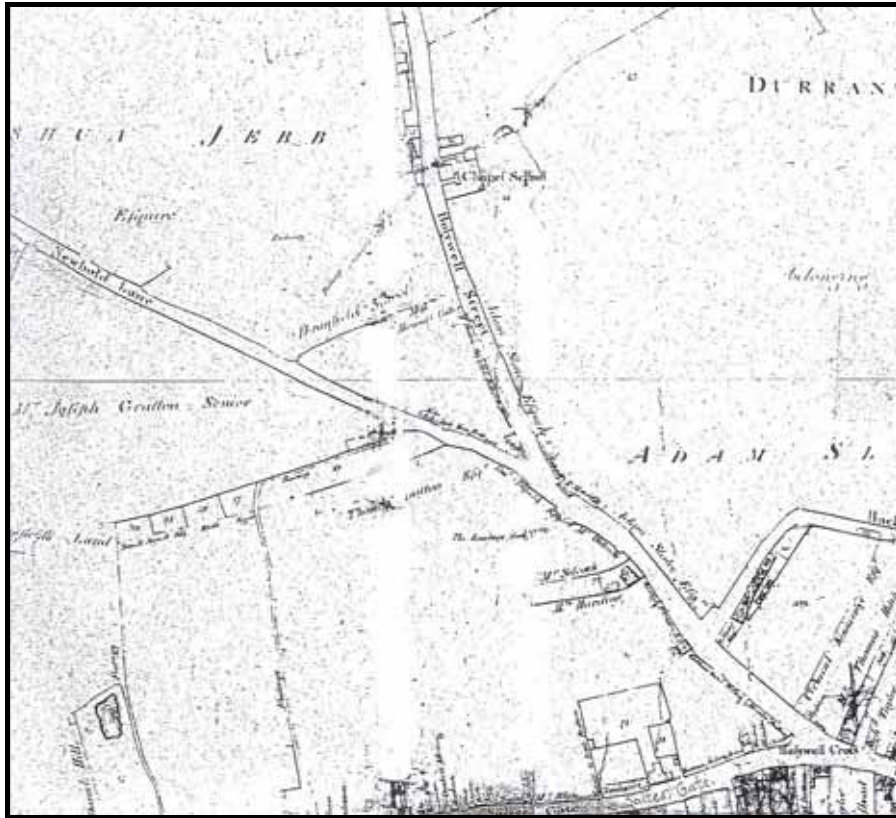
The character of the Conservation Area derives not only from its physical layout and appearance, but also from its land uses and the community who live and work in it. The community and the Council can, working together in partnership, achieve the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

While the Council has certain statutory duties and obligations, property owners are also responsible for the continuing maintenance of their properties and gardens. Regular maintenance and repair using appropriate traditional materials and details will help sustain the quality, character and special interest of the area. Local residents and groups can help preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area by recording the local history and features of the area and passing on information about craftsman and resources or suppliers of traditional materials.

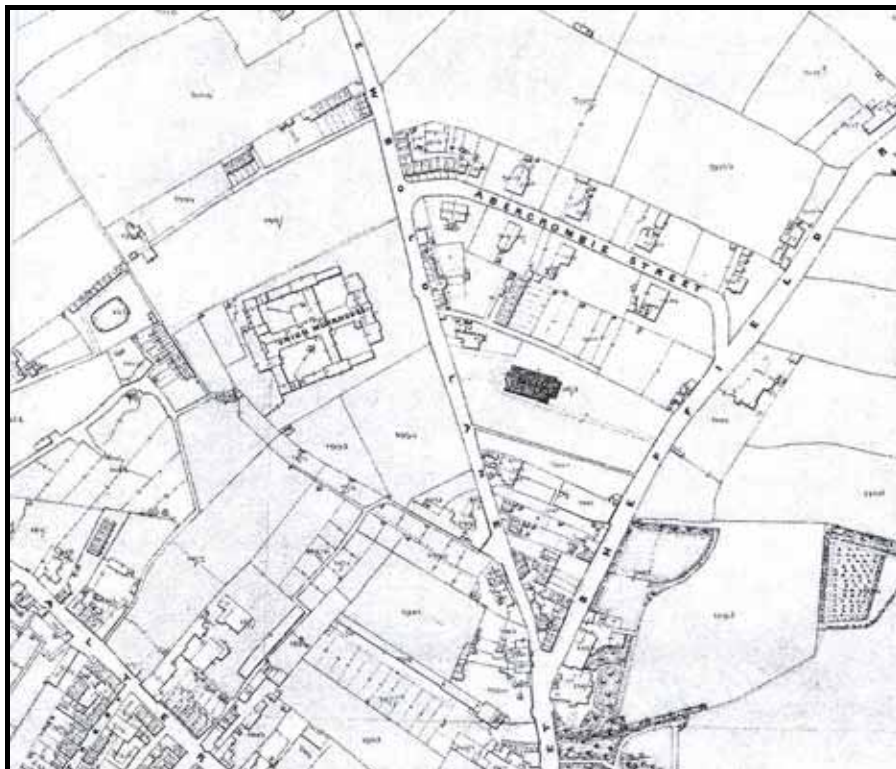
Public support and involvement is essential to the successful Conservation Area Appraisal. Involving the community and rising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and ownership to proposals for an area. The preparation of the appraisal also enables local residents to participate in the identification of features, which are important to the special character of the area in which they live or work. Visitors to the area also may find this statement provides interesting information about special and interesting local features. This Appraisal was a subject to a public consultation exercise to allow comments, and the contribution made has been taken into consideration in this Appraisal.

This Appraisal was a subject to a public consultation between 20th October and 28th November 2008. Following consideration of representations received, Chesterfield Borough Council adopted the Appraisal as a Supplementary Planning Guidance on the 10th February 2009.

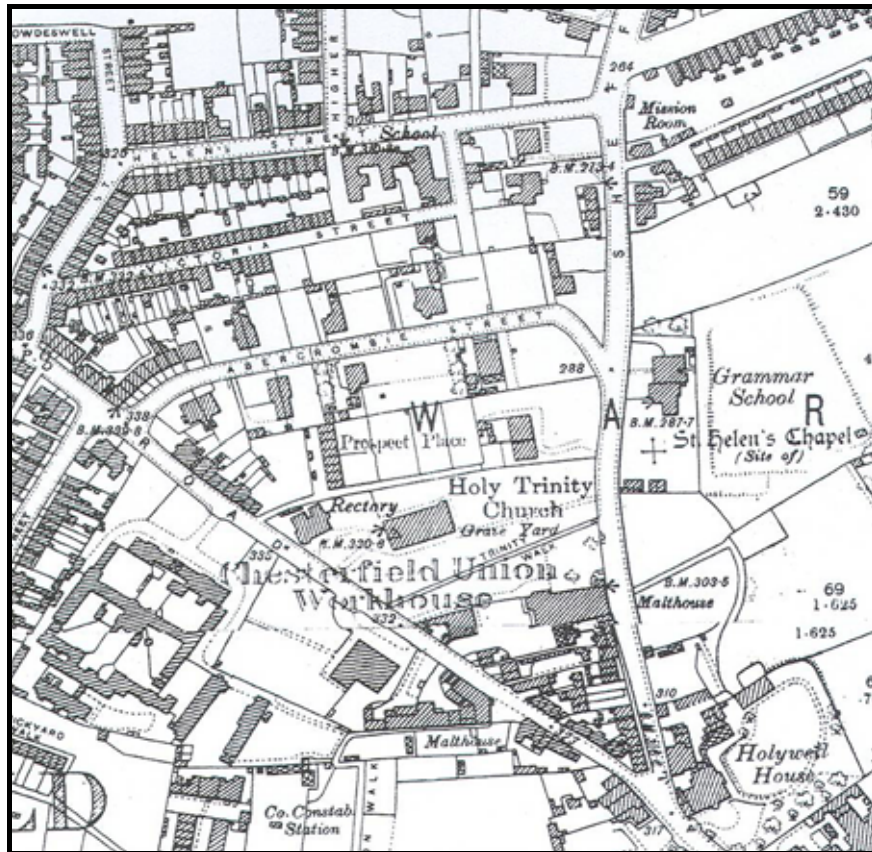
Abercrombie Street Conservation Area Maps



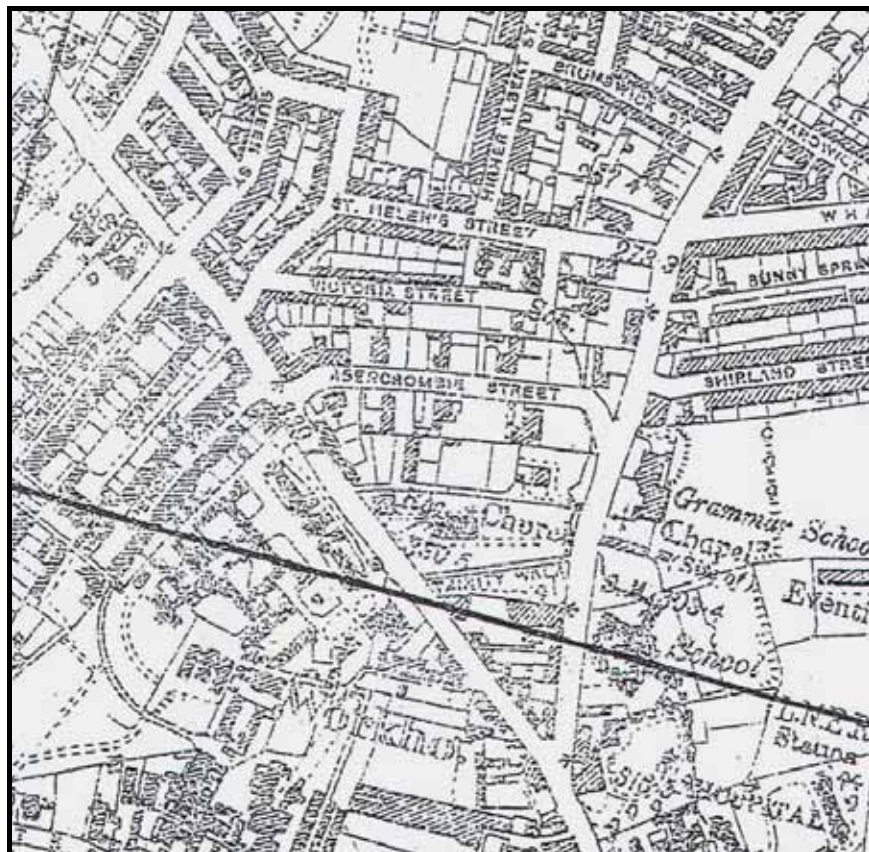
1. Peter Potter's Map of Borough of Chesterfield 1803 extract



2. Chesterfield 1849 Tithe Map extract

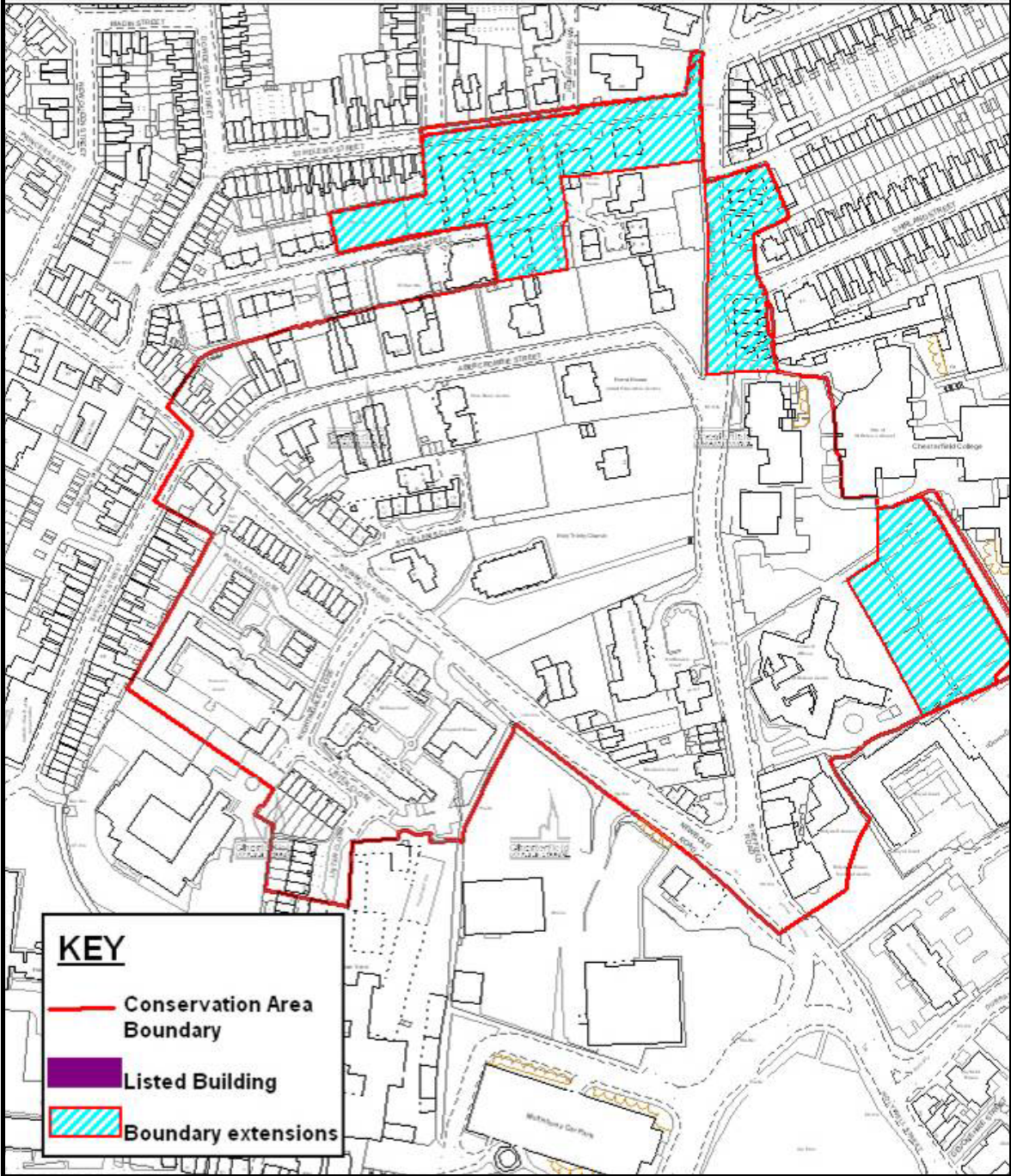


3. 1878 Ordinance Survey Map extract



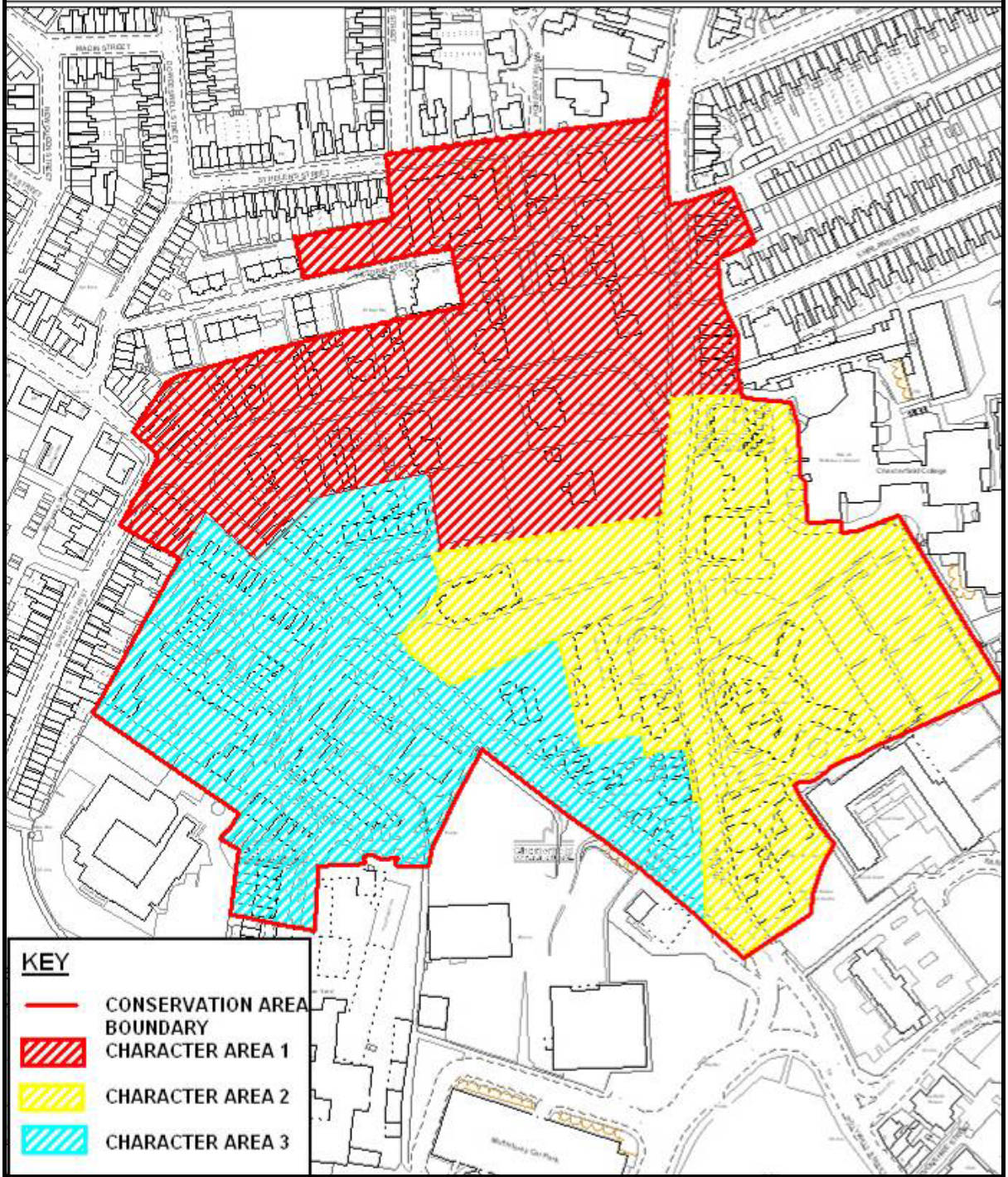
4. 1918 Ordnance Survey Map extract

ABERCROMBIE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

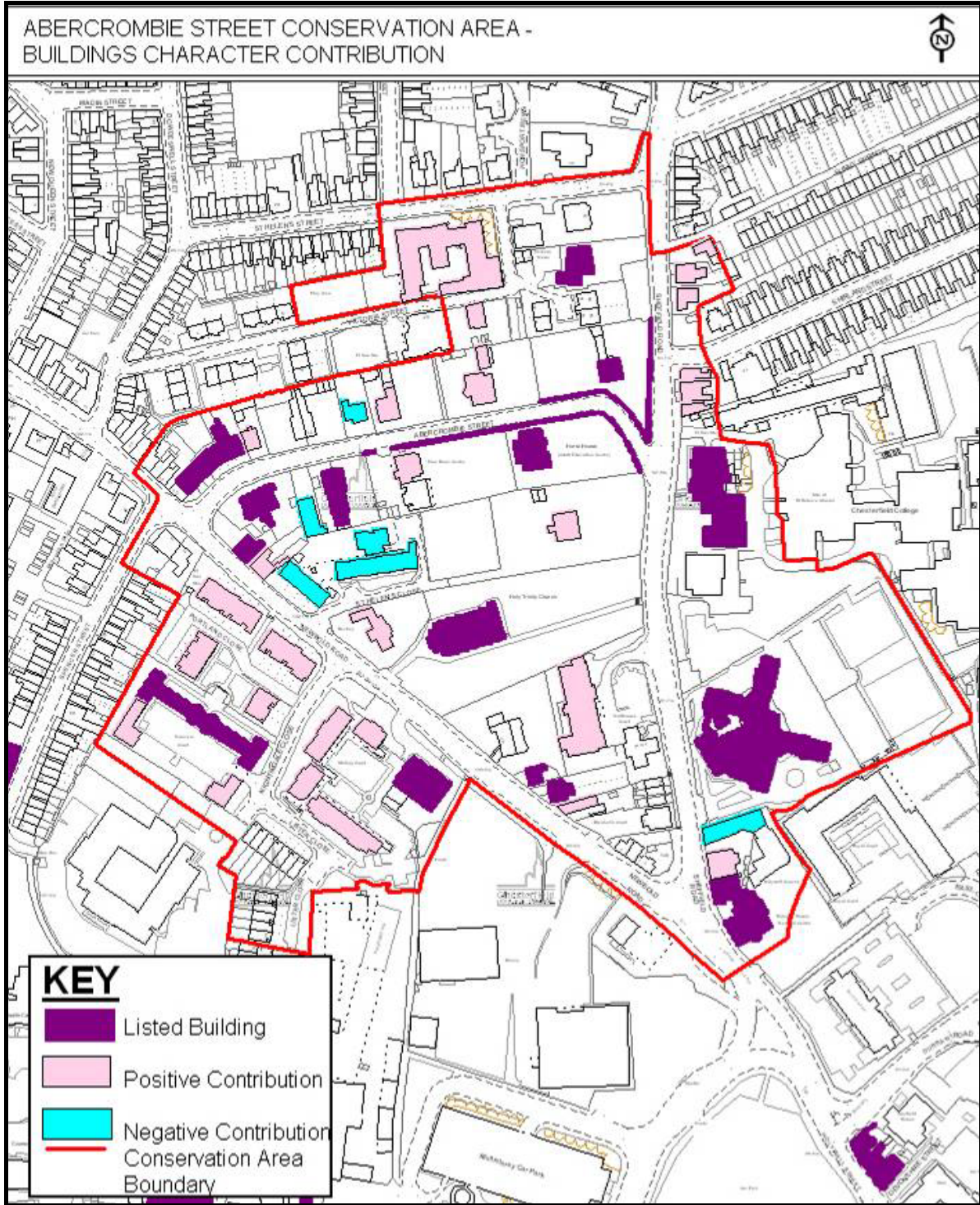


5. Abercrombie Street Conservation Area

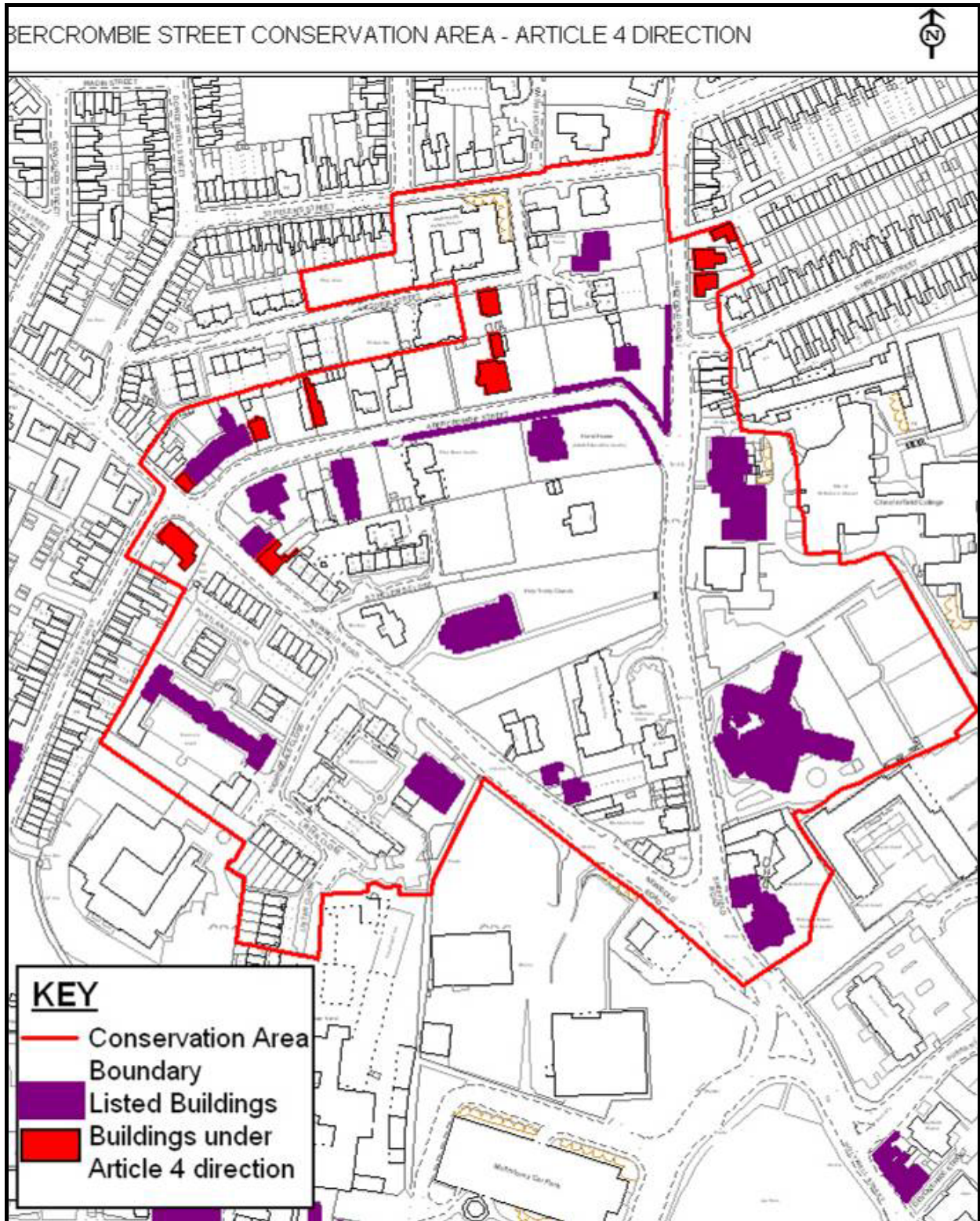
ABERCROMBIE STREET CONSERVATION AREA - CHARACTER AREAS



6. Character Areas



7. Buildings contribution to the character



8. Properties affected by an Article 4 Direction

12.0 Further Reading

Bestall J. M. - History of Chesterfield Vol: III, 1978.

Watson, A. – The Chesterfield Union Workhouse 1839-1847, Journal of the Bakewell and District Historical Society, VIII, 1981

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English Heritage – Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas, 2005.

English Historic Towns Forum – Conservation Area Management, A Practical Guide

CBC – Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan, 2006

CBC – Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, 2006.